

# IS PAY-TV WORTH PAYING FOR?

In Hartford, Connecticut, a housewife shows her late guest to a spot on the floor; she has simply run out of chairs.

In Etobicoke, Canada, another housewife passes cheese and crackers to a dozen guests she has somehow managed to squeeze into a 12-x-8 living room.

In Denver, Colorado, a husband grumbles: "Where'd we get so many friends all of a sudden?"

His wife simply smiles; they'd been through all this before, years ago when they were the first people on the block to get a TV set and all the neighbors had come to stare at Milton Berle mugging on a ten-inch screen.

Now neighbors are making reservations for the coming months, when there'll be a new phenomenon to come and stare at.

Pay television.

Pay-TV is here — in at least these three cities. It is on its way to many more and it doesn't look as if anyone can stop it — even if they wanted to. In fact, the inside word is that even the networks, having found they can't lick it, may join it!

What does this mean to you? Well, it's your money — you pay and take your choice.

The people against Pay-TV have tried to claim that this system is one more way to pinch your pocketbook, that you'll be paying money for what you already see for free.

The people for Pay-TV — or subscription TV, as they prefer to call it — claim that their system may be the best thing that ever happened to your budget. Their idea is not to replace the free TV that you already have, but

to add to it a new theatre-in-the-home. They claim that you and your family — plus the neighbors you'll probably invite in as you did when there were only a few TV sets in the neighborhood — will see events in the living room that you would have had to go out to see before . . . that you'll see first-run movies, plays, night-club acts, concerts, big-time sports events, etc., for less than the cost of a single ticket at the box office — and without any of the cost of babysitters, parking and so on.

Who's right — the people for or the people against? Is Pay-TV worth paying for — or not? Here are the facts. Why don't you decide for yourself? After all, when Pay-TV comes to your city, that's what you'll have to do.

Here's what they'll offer you — and what they'll charge you — based on what is now happening in those three cities.

In Hartford, they call the system Phone-vision and it costs a subscriber a \$10 initial fee to be connected to it. In addition, there is a monthly service charge of \$3.25. For this, a decoder and a billing system are installed in your home. Your television set is modified so that, with the decoder, you can unscramble the picture and the sound on the Pay-TV channel. A tape in the billing system shows what you have watched during the month. You tally up the tape at the end of the month and then send in your monthly bill. At a later date, a collector may visit you and audit the tape to see that you have been paying the correct bill.

In Etobicoke, it's Telemeter, a closed-circuit, coin-box operated Pay-TV system. Without going into the technicalities, this system is installed in an area by cables strung along the existing telephone poles and works well in suburban and rural areas, though it would probably be impractical in cities. Installation in your home costs ten dollars and there is no monthly service charge, only a monthly minimum. With Telemeter, you tune in the Pay-TV channel and an announcer tells you what's on. If it's something you want to see, you deposit the appropriate coins in the box and in this way you get your picture and sound. The coins are collected at regular intervals.

In Denver, they are launching a third system—Macfadden-Teleglobe. Installation costs \$10, and consists of a speaker hooked onto an audio line — *not* onto your TV set. With Macfadden-Teleglobe, you turn to the Pay-TV channel and you can already see a picture. The theory behind this is that if it's a movie or a play or a concert you're interested in, you'll be teased into tuning in the sound, too. This comes in over a telephone-like party-line and, with this particular system, you are billed very

much the same way as with your telephone. By a scanning system, the Teleglobe people can tell when you're tuned in for sound and they then send you a monthly bill. Payment is through the mails rather than by collectors. There is a monthly service charge of \$3.25, but this also includes all-day music like the kind you hear in restaurants who have Muzak. The only time there will be a scrambled picture with Teleglobe is for sporting events — which you could presumably enjoy without sound — and for people interested in sports there is a Sportsdecoder, available at a nominal fee, to unscramble the picture.

With all three systems, the charge for events is the same.

A championship fight: \$2 to \$3.00

A first-run movie: \$1.00

A night-club show: \$1.00

A performance of the Bolshoi Ballet: \$2.00

(To see how this compares to entertainment *outside* the home, a man and wife going out to a movie would probably spend at least \$2 for the tickets, plus the cost of transportation, parking and so forth. In most cases, the cost would also include 75¢ to a babysitter for every hour away from home.)

In practice, the Pay-TV people find that most subscribers spend an average of ten dollars a month. They urge you to compare your current entertainment budget — and what it buys — with that figure. Then make up your mind on whether Pay-TV is worth it.

The choice is yours — but, we'd like to know what you decide. Would you fill in the coupon below and mail it to: Pay-TV Poll, Box 3744, Grand Central Sta., N. Y. 17, N. Y.

We'll send a gift copy of the sensational best-seller — "The Decline and Fall of Hollywood" — to the first 300 people whose ballots we receive.

I think Pay-TV is worth paying for:

I think it's not:

My name \_\_\_\_\_

I live at \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

# PAY-TV IS HERE!

**It's the biggest news since the 10-inch screen.**

Today, in Denver, Colorado, there is an entertainment revolution going on that promises to reshape the leisure habits of 180 million Americans. What's happening in Denver might well happen throughout the rest of the country in the near future. What's happening in Denver is pay-television, the most controversial subject in broadcasting history; indeed, in all of the entertainment industry.

If the Denver experiment is successful, Americans will have access to more entertainment for less

money and less effort than at any time in history. For a few dollars a month, the American family will be able to sit in its living room, in the basement den, or on the patio and watch just about anything from a Bolshoi Ballet to a Boston Celtics basketball game, from a Sonny Liston lesson in boxing to a Franz Liszt concert, not to mention hundreds of movies that would be produced exclusively for the pay-TV audience.

Pay-television is certain to have an effect upon

## HOW YOU CAN GET IN ON PAY-TV

If you live in Denver, here's how you can bring pay-TV into your home. The same simple procedure may be followed in other cities which Teleglobe eventually will serve. So, if you live elsewhere, clip out and save till pay-TV comes to your city.

1. Once you've decided you want Teleglobe's service, you merely call 222-5933 (in Denver) and request an application card. Or you may write the company, if you wish, at 1275 Sherman Street, Denver, Colo.

2. After you fill out and return the card, the telephone company installs the speaker in your home. The process takes only as much time as it requires the company to install a telephone. (It is important to remember that no one tampers with or touches your television set.)

3. Once the speaker is installed, the viewer has pay-television merely by turning the speaker's ON dial and turning to Channel 2. At that time—and not before—an electrical billing system located in a downtown office begins recording your program selections.

4. At the end of the month, the subscriber receives a bill from Teleglobe. It's as simple as that.

## Here's how pay-television will change your life!

movie houses, concert halls, theaters and sports arenas. Many performances previously given there exclusively may be made available to the home at low cost.

Yet, for all of its advantages—and despite the fears of the three television networks—it will not replace so-called “free” TV. “The Defenders,” “Gunsmoke” and “The Beverly Hillbillies,” plus Lucy and Viv, Chet and David, and Ozzie and Harriet, will still be yours for free—providing the ratings are

charitable. Pay-TV won't kill them off, nor does it want to.

The advocates of pay-TV look upon the venture as a supplement to regular, commercial television—an extension of the present system. The purpose of pay-TV is to program top-flight entertainment that is not now available on “free” television, or that is available only in bits and dabs, or only in short interludes between long commercials.

The Federal Communica- (Continued on page 84)

## PAY-TV

(Continued from page 63)

tions Commission is on record as saying it would never allow pay-TV to push "free" television out of existence. And the viewing public would never stand for it.

The Denver experiment, just getting underway, is being conducted by the Macfadden-Teleglobe Denver Corporation. It was given the green light in October by the F.C.C. as the second government-authorized test. The first major U.S. experiment began in Hartford, Connecticut, a year ago, although a test employing a house-to-house cable system has been underway in the Toronto (Canada) suburb of Etobicoke for more than two years.

The Denver operation, however, is uniquely different from the ones in Hartford and Etobicoke, and from the ones planned for Santa Monica, Cali-

fornia, and Little Rock, Arkansas. The Teleglobe system is less complicated for the viewer and far less expensive for its backers. The Hartford system (an RKO-Zenith venture) had an initial investment of more than \$10 million compared to Teleglobe's estimated relatively modest \$1 million outlay.

But the significant difference lies in Teleglobe's programming concept. The man who heads up Teleglobe, Gerald Bartell, is a former college professor who believes, as do many critics, that there is a sizeable segment of the American TV audience that enjoys and appreciates good music, good theater, good movies and good dance drama.

He believes, furthermore, that this audience isn't getting what it wants on "free" television. "There is," he says, "a tremendous amount of programming and so many exciting things to see on television. But under the present commercial-TV structure, the viewer isn't being given the opportunity to see them."

The *Denver Post*, editorially supporting Teleglobe's expedition in the Mile High City, described Bartell's programming concept as that which appeals "to people who would have television be a stimulant rather than a soporific, to those who have enough informed interest to regard the best works of man's mind as important and vital parts of living, not simply as something deadly dull called 'culture.'"

For his Denver audience, Bartell has negotiated for the American premiere performance of a Joan Sutherland spectacular, the famed Bolshoi Ballet, a series of Shakespearean dramas produced in Britain, and is seeking out Italian operas. All of these would be in the original, uncut, unedited versions and uninterrupted by sales pitches for aspirin, shampoo and beer. *In short, no commercials!*

But all is not "sophisticated" and "cultural" on the city's pay-TV schedule. Teleglobe has its sights on the next world's heavyweight championship

## Is Commercial TV Afraid of Pay-TV?

Here's what a Denver broadcaster has to say about his new rival

(In our article, "Pay-TV Is Here," beginning on page 62, we outline what pay-TV will mean to you, the viewer. But what about the TV broadcaster? What will it mean to him? Here is the answer, as written by Alvin G. Flanagan, Vice President and General Manager of Station KBTU-KBTR in Denver.)

During this year, America's second pay-TV operation will go on the air in Denver, Colorado. When it does, it will add a fourth dimension to the Denver television market, which now includes three network-affiliated commercial stations, an independent station and an educational station. As Vice President and General Manager of KBTU, the ABC affiliate in Denver, I will become one of a handful of broadcasters who, rather than talk about pay-TV, must now face it as a competitor in his own television market.

Will it be a competitor? If so, how strong will the competition be for the rest of us? Will pay-TV, as many broadcasters believe, be the ruination of commercial television as we know it today? Is pay-TV a novelty like 3-dimensional movies, arousing considerable controversy before fading into oblivion and leaving behind only the souvenirs of speakers and coin-boxes? Or will it become the "fourth dimension" of television, alongside commercial affiliates, independents and educational stations, and, as such, act as a stimulant upon the viewing audience as a whole?

At present, there is a 65% to 70% set tune-in of the television homes in the Denver metropolitan area, according to the American Research Bureau. That is to say that, among the more than 275,000 homes equipped with tele-

vision sets in the Denver metropolitan area, approximately 179,000 are watching their sets sometime during the day or evening. Studies indicate that almost all television set owners regularly watch certain programs during the week and that only a small proportion of set owners habitually leave their sets off all of the time. Among this minority are those who consider themselves to be "disenfranchised" by commercial television broadcasting.

The "disenfranchised" feel that commercial television has nothing to offer them in the way of entertainment, information, education or news. They have turned off their sets in disgust, and, in so doing, have fallen into the habit of "not watching" television. The advent of pay-TV will arouse their curiosity and their desire to view television programming tailored to their particular tastes and uninterrupted by commercials.

Whether pay-TV will fulfill this desire remains to be seen. However, what will happen in the interim is that these "non-viewers" will return to their television sets and fall into the habit of watching once more. When this habit is re-established, the former "non-viewer" will monitor the commercial channels and discover that, contrary to his former beliefs, there is a great deal to be seen. Unless pay-TV is able to maintain the programming promised in its prospectus, these newly begotten viewers will turn more and more to the commercial channels—thus increasing the percentage of set tune-in from 65% to as high as 75%.

What, in the way of programming, has pay-TV offered the "disenfranchised" that has aroused their interest sufficiently to cause them to return to their sets in anticipation? First of all,

pay-TV claims to fill the cultural void left open and ignored by the commercial broadcasters. Programs of symphony, opera, ballet and drama will be offered to subscribers.

Should pay-TV succeed in filling this cultural void, the public will be well-served for its money. But, is there a cultural void? One network programs weekly presentations of opera performed by a highly regarded company of singers and musicians. Another network now plans to present London's Royal Ballet in prime evening time. Scarcely a week goes by that viewers are not offered "culture" in one form or another by one or all of the networks. The educational stations across the country offer Shakespeare, and many independent and affiliate stations offer the finest Broadway plays produced, directed and acted by Broadway personages. These offerings are made free to the public.

The question is, how many people will be willing to pay to see that which is available to them on free, commercial television? I cannot in all honesty say that I am against the advent of pay-TV to the Denver market. I feel that pay-TV will cause viewers to compare and, in the comparison, realize the service that commercial television has been giving all along. Few of us look with any special favor on that which is given to us free. We take free samples in the stores, use them and forget about them. We seldom take the time to study and analyze that which is free in the same way we do that which we must pay for out of our own pocket. Pay-TV will force just that sort of study and comparison, and I can't help but believe that commercial television will emerge as the people's choice.

—THE END

fight, has scheduled movies that will be offered before they get to the neighborhood theater (it currently is showing pictures on a near first-run basis), and more than one Broadway-type offering is on the agenda. Additionally, Teleglobe has thoughts about televising some important local events.

An example is Denver University's national champion ice hockey team, which plays home games to standing-room-only crowds of 5,200—only a fraction of the fans who want to see the action. With Teleglobe, the games could be put on the pay-TV circuit, thus serving more than just 5,200 fans attending the game, and also enhancing the school's athletic fund.

There are, undoubtedly, a substantial number of people who do not necessarily see themselves as intellectually-inclined or "sophisticated," but who nevertheless would enjoy attending a good Broadway play, or an outstanding ballet, or a Leonard Bernstein concert. Many of these people can't attend, of course, because they don't happen to live in New York, or even where good touring shows are available. Even in cities where these offerings are possible, many people just don't have the money for a night on the town to see them.

For instance, when the traveling company of "My Fair Lady" came to Denver, with Brian Aherne in the leading role, prices ranged from \$3.50 upwards to \$6.50. By the time a married couple hired a babysitter, purchased tickets, perhaps had dinner before the show, or at least a drink and snack afterwards, and paid for parking, the price for that evening's entertainment could well have amounted to a conservative \$20.

With pay-TV, however, the price for "My Fair Lady," with the original Rex Harrison—Julie Andrews cast, could have been pared to a fraction of that cost, perhaps running only as high as \$3 total!

In Denver, Teleglobe is charging, on the average, \$1.25 for movies, a little more for operas, ballets, etc., and expects to go no higher than \$3 for the next heavyweight championship fight.

The economics of a pay-TV network stretching from coast to coast, and from Canada south to Mexico, staggers the imagination. In essence, though, it means that program costs would go down and quality would go up. Right now, and because it is an infant with necessarily limited audiences, pay-TV is discussed in terms of "dollars" per program. But with a national network that covered even one-fifth of the total TV homes, the pay-TV people could talk in terms of "half-dollars" and even "quarters" per program. And as the audience increased, they could discuss programs in terms of quarters, dimes and nickels.

There are approximately 55 million American homes equipped with television. If only 20 million paid ten cents to watch a Broadway play, it would produce \$2 million. With that kind of financing, a producer could well afford to get better actors, writers and directors. And the viewer would get better

entertainment for his dime.

Such inexpensive costs, furthermore, are certain to make pay-TV attractive to the most unsophisticated viewer because—even though he might not like Broadway and Bach—movies, sporting events and special variety shows would still be available.

Another attractive feature—and one which aids immeasurably in having most homes eventually equipped for pay-TV—will be technological improvement in receiving equipment. It is not far-fetched to believe that the 21-inch screen will become obsolete and replaced by a large, portable screen on which the viewer can get the full visual programming effect in both black and white and "compatible color."

It will be possible, for instance, to watch a baseball game in color on the back patio while barbecuing hamburgers, an infinitely more relaxing and cheaper way, it seems, to enjoy the national pastime.

The Denver Teleglobe system is remarkably simple and, after seeing it in operation, one wonders why it is not being used in Hartford or Etobicoke. Its simplicity could easily establish Teleglobe as the system for nationwide pay-TV of the future.

In Etobicoke, the viewer must drop coins into a box on the TV set before he can receive the picture and sound, while in Hartford a special decoding device is attached to the set and it must be activated to "unscramble" the video and audio.

With Teleglobe, the picture is always free, only the sound has to be purchased, and no one tampers with the set. If one can read lips and has no aversion to watching silent programs, then he'll be able to get his pay-TV for nothing. Teleglobe officials, however, don't believe there are many people in that category. (Try watching a movie, boxing match or basketball game on TV without the sound sometime, and you'll discover what the company means.)

In Denver, Teleglobe uses the facilities of an independent (no network affiliate) station—KCTO, Channel 2—from 9:30 P.M. to approximately 11:30 P.M. seven nights a week. The time prior to that is used by the station for its regular programming.

The sound for the pay-TV programs comes through a speaker set installed by the telephone company (because the audio is sent out over phone company lines). The speaker, which is really a small hi-fi set with its own tubes, amplifier and tone control, is a handsome, decorative piece that resembles a small set of books. The set currently comes in a dark walnut color, but Teleglobe hopes to have them eventually manufactured in different models and colors.

The speaker, though, serves as more than just a mechanism for transporting TV sound. From 9 o'clock in the morning until pay-TV commences, it offers free background music. Every half-hour, there are short announcements about that evening's upcoming programs and their cost.

Teleglobe also is unique in that it offers up to five minutes of free sound at the beginning of each program.

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This allows the viewer a preview and a chance to decide if he wants to pay or not to pay. If he doesn't he can switch to another channel and watch any of the regular series.

In Hartford and Etobicoke, the viewer gets no "preview," and once he activates the program, his money is committed.

Teleglobe's Mr. Bartell has called pay-television "an orderly, logical de-

velopment of TV's future." All that he and the other proponents of pay-TV ask is a chance to prove it. The F.C.C. has given them the opportunity.

Now, it's up to the people—not the government, not the press, not the TV networks. If pay-TV proves to have the audience, then Americans soon will be carried over the threshold into a new dimension of entertainment.

—HAL DEVAUGHN

## CAROL BURNETT

(Continued from page 41)

"What my sister-in-law says is her business," Gloria said slowly, every word measured. "But the statement directly concerns me. Even if I did still love Joe, I wouldn't want anyone else to volunteer it.

"But the fact is that I am completely indifferent to Joe . . . to Carol . . . and to both of them as husband and wife."

After Carol and Joe were married in Juarez, Carol's sister Christine, who had been a witness and maid-of-honor, flew back to Pennsylvania where she attends school. Carol and Joe went by plane to Los Angeles, then on to Honolulu by air for the honeymoon.

From the Coast immediately came word from Joe's attorney that a "generous" property settlement and custody rights to the eight children had been worked out in an agreement before the divorce.

Publicist Jim Eddy, of McFadden-Eddy—Carol's press agents—revealed he was told by Joe that he will have the children every weekend, holiday vacations like Easter and Thanksgiving, all other holidays, as well as one month during the summer.

Hamilton is said to have voluntarily waived any right to have the children with him at Christmas.

These terms, if true, would give Gloria very little time with the children. I asked her about the arrangement.

"I have complete custody!" Gloria said sharply, with voice rising.

"But I'll say this about it," she intoned. "He has reasonable visitation rights, of course."

Gloria indicated that the terms I recited were unrealistic and/or meaningless. Her description of Joe's recent past history with the children indicated that, even while still married to Gloria, he saw them only at infrequent intervals—and he could not be expected to give them more attention now that he was married to Carol.

"The last time Joe saw the children," Gloria said bitterly, "was several weeks ago—and then it was only for a minute. His mother was here then, too.

"If he had such a great interest in the children, he had a chance to tell them himself about the divorce and his plan to remarry. The children knew everything by that time—but he never brought it up, never mentioned it.

"I have to laugh at these stories that Joe told the children everything him-

self. He never did. I said he had no courage—and I meant it."

From Hamilton's and Carol's viewpoints, however, the future promises to give Joe—and Carol as well—plenty of time to see the children. Although for the time being they are sharing Carol's large New York apartment, they plan to find a house in Connecticut this fall. Then they'll bring the kids out there for the weekends and other times that Joe has legal custody rights to them.

Most of the children know Carol. They met her at the CBS studio in New York when they went to see their father and watch "The Garry Moore Show."

Kip Hamilton, however, wasn't certain how the children would feel toward their father's new wife now.

"They met Carol before any divorce talk," Kip told me. "They were impressed with her and thought she was very talented—but that's all."

Then with a trace of derision in her voice, Kip added, "They already have a mother, you know—and she's a very good one."

In Hollywood, where Carol had just finished "Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?" before marrying Joe, there is an undercurrent of criticism of Carol—and of Joe, although he is not as well known out there as in New York.

"Carol's present style of humor may no longer go over with her fans," said one well-known Hollywood figure who preferred to remain anonymous. "I think Carol is a great talent, but I could never buy her again as the plain girl out to hook a husband.

"That image has just gone down the drain—at least for me."

Someone also asked Richard Chamberlain about the marriage. Dick, as everyone knows, had been out on the town with Carol on numerous "friendly" dates.

"I'm as surprised as anyone else," Dick said. "But I'm delighted for Carol that it finally worked out. Marriage to Joe is what she needs to make her happiness complete. Carol and I were never more than friends.

"She's a fun person to be with. Joe's a very lucky man—and I know from what she's said about him that Carol feels she's a lucky girl."

In a marriage that brings her a ready-made family of eight stepchildren, a marriage in which in-law trouble erupted after she'd been honeymooning for only forty-eight hours, Carol Burnett will need to be lucky—and then some!

—GEORGE CARPOZI JR.

Carol's specials are on CBS-TV; she sings for Decca, stars in Paramount's "Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?"