

Use of unscramblers worries pay-television corporations

NEW YORK — The pay television business has run into a piracy problem. So far, it's small potatoes — even if it has the potential for big profits. Nobody is stealing programs and reselling them the way popular phonograph records and tapes are pirated and marketed by the millions. Nor does the theft of the large satellite-transmitted pay television shows come anywhere near the "blue-box" piracy of long-distance transmission time that cost the telephone companies real money some years ago.

But the theft of pay-TV off the air by means of homemade unscrambling devices is big enough to worry companies like Home Box Office, Startime and Viacom, which market the programs, and the local television stations, through which they reach the public. The industry has quietly taken its troubles to the manufacturers of scrambling devices for a solution, according to Frank Misso, chairman of Electronics, Missiles & Communications, Inc., of White Haven, Pa.

Misso said stations in areas as far apart as Texas and New England recently have installed new "piracy protection" equipment. He said the companies' concern helped boost sales of his firm's newer scrambling transmitters twofold to threefold over the past year. He said other makers of the devices also are receiving big orders. Misso said estimates vary as to the value of the programs stolen, but he believes \$3 million a year would not be an unreasonable estimate. Some in the industry, he said, believe at least 25,000 homemade un-

scrambling devices have been turned out by amateur electronics enthusiasts. Since the subscription fees for pay-TV programs run from a flat \$10 a month to \$4 or more per program, the piracy could amount to real money if the practice became widespread. "As a group," Misso said, "the so-called pirates appear to be electronics buffs to whom the challenge to 'beat the system' appeals as much as the prospect of not paying to watch premium programs. Nevertheless, telecasters fear a trend toward more widespread piracy could be developing and for that reason, Misso said, they are quietly pressing the Federal Communications Commission to consider ways of stamping it out. The pay-TV industry people say their only real defense lies in better scrambling transmitters because, even though there are laws on the books against piracy, it's a legal gray area. Misso said, "The airways are free

and the mere act of picking a television signal off the air is not illegal. The courts decided against the broadcasters and program producers who sued makers of video recorders in an attempt to keep people from taking programs off the air for their own use. It's quite different from stealing long-distance telephone time or even from tapping illegally into a cable television system which charges for its transmission facilities rather than for its programs. The problem for the pay-TV people and the broadcasters is complicated, Misso said, by the fact that electronics magazines sometimes publish articles detailing devices to break the scrambling code of a pay-TV system. Some electronics manufacturers even make the unscrambling devices available in kit form. Misso said it's a sort of guerrilla warfare but the pay-TV industry so far is keeping the upper hand with new and better scrambling transmitters.

Bleaching dries skin

NEW YORK — Someone who uses over-the-counter bleaching creams may be trading freckles or age spots for new skin problems, says Dr. Fredric Haberman, a dermatologist. Haberman says the use of such

preparations exposes the skin to severe sun damage and untimely dryness.

To prevent such damage, he recommends the use of sunscreens when you're going skiing or to the beach.

Charges filed to avenge criticism, officer says

ABILENE — A female officer at Dyess Air Force Base will undergo an investigative hearing to determine whether she ultimately may face a court-martial for failing to button her topcoat on three occasions last month. Capt. Rina Kelley called today's hearing a subterfuge to cover an attempt by her superiors to remove her from the Air Force. The 34-year-old officer, who has five names in her past criticism of a mobility program and now is suffering the consequences. In recent months, she claimed, she has been targeted for harassment because of her criticism of the Air Force Base superiors. Now, she said, "They are maintaining this discipline guise to kill my

career." The Air Force is expected to begin the hearing today to determine whether she should face either a special or general court-martial or none at all. Complaints signed by three different witnesses allege she failed to keep her topcoat buttoned on Jan. 24, 25 and 28, in violation of Air Force regulations. Kelley, who has never admitted her coat was unbuttoned, said Tuesday such violations by male officers commonly are ignored at Dyess and other bases. An "Article 32" investigative hearing, as it is known in the military, is roughly equivalent to a civilian grand jury proceeding, said Maj. Arthur Swerdlove, one of two military attorneys representing Kelley. Swerdlove, who said Kelley would not face any court-martial before

March at the earliest, said the complaint could be thrown out. The decision on whether to proceed lies with the investigating officer, who is stationed elsewhere and must come to Abilene for the hearing, Swerdlove said. Kelley, who speaks French, Spanish and Italian and began her Air Force career as an interpreter, has talked candidly about previous disputes with superiors at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. On two occasions she was ordered to undergo psychiatric examinations, both of which, she said, ended with her prompt release. Kelley said she received a letter of reprimand, later dropped, at Dyess last October for missing two combat drills, one after she had been in an automobile accident and the other after she fractured her toe.

Crews celebrate late Christmas

SAN DIEGO — It's "Christmas at sea" for more than 5,000 sailors and their families who spent the yuletide holding different floating battle stations in the Pacific Ocean. Crewmen from the returning air-sea rescue carrier USS Kitty Hawk and three escort vessels were met by families and friends Monday at dockside — a welcome complete with a Christmas tree and Santa Claus. The balloons, banners and children some had never seen didn't, however, erase the memories of the tense days near the Persian Gulf, where Russian ships and aircraft appeared in strength. "They were with us all the time," Petty Officer 2nd Class John Reese said. "Their destroyers came within about two miles of us. They followed us around." Reese said the Navy could have rescued the hostages from Iran if

given the opportunity. "Our government lacks leadership," Reese said. An aviation crewman, Jack Althaus, expressed similar sentiments. "We were frustrated they didn't let us go into Iran and get the hostages out," he said. "Our hands were tied. We felt helpless."

Traffic in the Phoenix area has been severely hampered by the closure of all but two bridges across the normally dry Salt River bed — now running bank-to-bank because of water releases from brimming reservoirs upstream. The last time The Republic published without advertising was March 29, 1944, when newsprint was rationed during the war. The newspaper said advertising would return Wednesday.

Weather conditions force newspaper to delete ads

PHOENIX, Ariz. — For the first time since World War II The Arizona Republic published without advertising Tuesday. Arizona's largest morning newspaper appeared as a single 20-page section encompassing national and local news, sports, human interest and entertainment pages. The newspaper said the step was taken "because of a critical shortage of newsprint caused in part by recent weather conditions."

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