

Features

New thrust a gamble

PBS looking for profit

NEW YORK — Non-commercial public television, for years dependent for its very existence on the mercy of audience donations and federal funding, has decided at least in part, to go out and earn its own living.

New York's WNET — a prime producer of such national Public Broadcasting Service programs as the Dick Cavett Show, "The MacNeil-Lehrer Report" and "Bill Moyers' Journal" — announced a complete restructuring Tuesday. For the first time, profit in the marketplace will be the dominant motive.

General Manager John Jay Iselin admitted the thrust, which will carry the New York PBS affiliate aggressively into the marketing of programs to cable and home video systems, is a gamble. Federal funding regulations specify public broadcasting must be noncommercial in nature, and although no soap or toothpaste spots are contemplated, commercial sidelines may jeopardize funding.

Federal matching funds now are only \$1 for every \$2 raised in audience donations, however, so the stakes in the gamble are hardly astronomical. PBS affiliates will continue to launch their traditional phone and mail fund drives, asking audiences to send donations.

But, Iselin said, "Many of the financial assumptions that undergirded PBS in the '70s are in doubt now."

Not the least of those doubts is the transition of a locally conservative Reagan administration into the White House. The president-elect has vowed to cut spending, and cut it deep, and victims of the pruning may be the National Endowment for the Arts, the Na-

tional Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting itself, all of which have been used to fund PBS in the past.

Iselin said WNET is being shifted from a functional to a divisional "market base," which will seek to earn a minimum of \$25 million over the next 10 years and insulate the system, should the federal tap be turned off. Each of the four divisions — Education, Metropolitan (for the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut area), National and Enterprise — will be expected to run its own shop and sink or swim on the basis of its business ability.

Iselin said other affiliates in the loose confederation of independent stations that is PBS have tried the pay-as-you-go system, and others are contemplating it, with some ready to join WNET in a "consortium" to market services for profit.

But WNET has been sliding quietly into the marketplace for months, borrowing funds for a post-production studio outside Detroit, purchasing a Chicago syndication service and accepting advertising in the WNET trade magazine The Dial.

The last has drawn fire both from a competing publication and in Congress, but Iselin said the magazine continues on a "business as usual" basis. He added that should Congress challenge the thrust into cable and home video markets, WNET will argue public broadcasting has been ordered to seek funds in the private sector and entry into the film and cassette distribution business is no different than soliciting donations.

"Congress speaks with many diverse voices," he said, "but the ethic of self-help is age-old in this country."

Parking lot parties popular

United Press International
At Penn State, some of the football fans spend the entire game munching on burgers and hot dogs in the parking lot, despite the Nittany Lion's highly-ranked teams.

In Seattle, several University of Washington fans arrive at Husky Stadium in a 50-foot boat and prepare of 12.2 pregame meals complete with candles and tablecloths.

In Tampa, some season ticket holders beat the stadium ban on alcohol, making beverages by tanking up inside recreational vehicles before the Tampa Bay Buccaneers play. Afterward, they wait out traffic jams by cooking on barbecued ribs and cheese at the farm vans.

Whether it's pate or potato chips, burgundy or beer, football fans across America practice a fall ritual that has become as traditional as the percent forward pass or the blitz — the tail-rent party.

No one can say for sure when and where it started. Officials in St. Paul, Minn., say tailgaters have been coming to the Vikings since the early 1960's. But all agree that began at some point, probably in the 1920s, as small picnics on the substitute bleachers of station wagons has evolved into affairs that in some cases include formal dinner parties.

Any vehicle is welcome — stations, sedans, recreational vehicles, even the boats that tie up along the Washington in Seattle and on the Tennessee River near the University of Tennessee's stadium. The tailgate varies from the common to the gourmet. About the only constant is the citrus cocktail — there generally is plenty of it.

Some hard-core tailgaters even bring the games and stay outside and in raises football. The game is kind of secondary department for some people," said Michael Pillsbury, a farmer.

Tailgating has been relatively unorganized in the past, but some colleges have promoted the practice in recent years. Officials at the University of Louisville used tailgating to spark new interest in the school's football program. At Oregon State, a station and a car dealer sponsored a tailgating contest at the reunion on OSU-Washington game.

The winners were a group of Oregon State alumni whose elaborately decorated table could pass for a cocktail buffet in any setting. The table, complete with tablecloth, candles and

fresh flowers, was set under an awning in case of rain.

But another tailgater at the game, Fred Nelson, of Issaquah, Wash., wasn't impressed.

"When our group meets to attend a game in Seattle, we charter a 50-foot boat to hold our party," he sniffed, looking out at the parking lot filled with RVs, campers and cars.

"It's closer to tailgate by boat at Husky Stadium" because of nearby Lake Washington, he said.

Boaters are also big in Knoxville, Tenn. Many fans tie up on the Tennessee River before watching the Vols play.

Another school that might be expected to have a maritime tradition when it comes to parties — the U.S. Naval Academy — does not. Instead, fans are treated to the sight of white-jacketed midshipmen breaking for the parking lot parties, which often last late into the night.

Device may boost solar energy use

United Press International
BRUSSELS, Belgium — The maintenance required by current solar-powered generators is beyond the technical capability available in remote villages that need the generators most.

But physicists at the European Community's Joint Research Center at Ispra, Italy, have developed a device that may solve that problem. It generates electric power from hot air.

"The major innovation of the device is that it does not require any water, like currently known designs," a JRC official said. "That makes it particularly suitable for arid areas where you want to make sure you don't use a lot of fuel or water."

"The simplicity of the device is another big advantage. It will require a minimum of maintenance. There is no complicated machinery involved. Moreover, it is flexible, so that a fuel-powered gas turbine can be used at night."

The JRC, established 20 years ago under the Euratom treaty as a nuclear research center. But it now carries out research into new techniques, investigates environmental problems and provides support in such fields as consumer protection.

More than 30 percent of the \$8.4 million annual budget of its four establishments is now devoted to non-nuclear studies such as research into alternative sources of energy.


Under the JRC's 1980-83 program, spending for testing potential commercial equipment and exploring new directions for solar energy research will be doubled.

The new device works on the same principle as a jet engine: expanding air to drive a turbine blade. Air can be heated to high temperatures in a concentrator that focuses the sun's radiation.

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