

For the RECORD.

● BY THE EDITOR

AT HOME WITH COLOR TELEVISION

IT was with feelings of mixed emotion that your editor undertook the responsibility to "guinea pig" a color television receiver at his home during the past several weeks. We knew, for example, that no souped-up laboratory model would provide the necessary data we were seeking. For the purpose a receiver would need to be taken right off a production line in order to serve as a fair basis for our tests.

But production models for immediate delivery to the public were not generally available back in March. The only exception was the announcement by *Westinghouse* that color television sets were now in production and were available for sale and delivery to the public. We decided to request the loan of a receiver from stock for test purposes at the consumer level. Our request was immediately granted and Model 840CK15 arrived promptly at our home in Greenwich, Conn. in its sealed carton *via* truck.

This location is 35 airline miles from the television antennas atop the Empire State Building in New York City. Our antenna is a 2-bay conical, vintage of 1951. It feeds a 2-channel coupler. One channel feeds a 24-inch monochrome receiver. The remaining channel was connected to the color set after curiosity prompted the decision to personally uncrate the set and connect it before the manufacturer's technician could arrive to handle the installation, the same as would be done for a customer (apologies to *Westinghouse*). Somewhat hurriedly we read the tuning instructions and turned on the set. Controls and tuning procedures were found to be about the same as on standard monochrome receivers. All seven channels were in good alignment and monochrome reception was highly acceptable. For comparison, the 24-inch black-and-white receiver was placed near the new color set. As expected, there was an immediate reaction due to the small color screen compared to the large screen to which we had become accustomed. However, experience later showed that one can become acclimated in a hurry providing he draws his chair closer.

No colorcasts were available during the first three days of viewing. We became quite accustomed to the slight sepia tone as viewed on the color screen from black-and-white telecasts and this actually becomes pleasing to the eye. The technician from *Westinghouse* had arrived and checked all con-

trols, utilizing the color test patterns from WNBT. Three days later found us tuning in our first color television at home. It was "The New Review," *CBS*, and from the standpoint of subject matter was a poor example of color possibilities. Skin tones were yellowish and lip makeup was excessive. A slight adjustment of the flesh control partly corrected the jaundiced appearance of the actors. We experimented with the convergence control for the first time and, possibly due to aging of components, was found to be slightly out of register.

Our impatience for more color programming mounted as the days slipped by. We realized that we would have the loan of the receiver for but a limited time and that all too few colorcasts were scheduled. It seemed that we could enjoy about one hour per week of mediocre subjects, including the Scholz-Andrews fight. This editor doubts if any prospect for a color set could be sold from this example. Our enthusiasm for color reached a climax on March 28 when *NBC* set up their color cameras at New York's Botanical Gardens. This production was excellent from both color and production standpoints. It is a real thrill to enjoy the sparkle and life produced by various plants and flowers when seen in their true colors. A three-dimensional effect and an added depth to the picture results from color television. Small objects which are not even noticed on monochrome are readily identifiable. It has been noted that picture quality (at least at this writing) of color signals on the monochrome set were not as compatible as one would expect. For example, reception of color on a color set is found to be in good focus while the same signals received on the monochrome set always appear fuzzy and contrast excessive.

A total of approximately 125 hours use has now been chalked up on the color set. It is interesting to note that no corrections have been required on any secondary control since the first week of use. It is only necessary to adjust the fine tuning and the color control occasionally when receiving colorcasts. Contrary to many opinions, a color receiver is far simpler to tune than several monochrome sets used in the past.

Now that we have good quality color television receivers, the need remains for more and better telecasts in color. Yes—color TV is here and it's terrific!

. O.R.

RADIO & TELEVISION NEWS

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THE BATTLE OF THE GUNS

ONLY two major obstacles lie in the direct path of acceptable color TV. The first of these is the price (production and at consumer level) of present receivers employing already out-moded picture tubes. The second is the costly process of manufacturing the tri-color tube in its presently-used form. Only a very few manufacturers have taken the plunge into the color market and none have enjoyed any degree of acceptability.

Programming of color shows has been conspicuous by its absence (as reported in our June editorial) and shows that have been telecast in color have done little to attract the TV viewer except for occasional programs during dealers' store hours. The better colorcasts have been on Sundays or during the evening when showrooms are closed. This haphazard thinking and planning of the industry has resulted in an untenable position with the public by placing the cart before the horse. One well-known manufacturer offered to rent his color TV set at the rate of \$100.00 per month (installation and service included). Let's assume that the customer signed up for 12 months and paid 1200 smackers for the rental. If, with present color schedules, he watched all color programs each week he would chalk up about an hour or a rate of 52 color hours per year.

This figures to cost him about \$23.00 per hour to watch color. This cost, in comparison to seeing Technicolor at the local cinema, is about 45 times greater per hour. Frankly, we'd much prefer to see a good color western in a theater than "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" or "Joe's Other Wife" on a color television receiver.

This preference is based on the average colorcast seen to this date. We do not refer to the occasional well produced color "extravaganza" that was well planned and executed and telecast at an hour compatible with the television viewing audience. Unfortunately, there have been few opportunities to witness the best in color television.

Television studios are rapidly being equipped with the latest color cameras and by Fall it is expected that many

more stations will be due to telecast color through their local network outlets. But until the public is given the opportunity to witness color programs in a dealer's showroom there is little that color programming can do to spark the color parade.

Color programming will have plenty of time to develop in the months ahead.

In the meantime—the battle of the guns continues in the tube laboratories. The color tube is the greatest bottleneck in the industry.

A half dozen or more have emerged from the laboratories and each has been highly touted as the one all manufacturers should adopt for their color sets. But no picture tube has, as yet, been produced economically and with techniques acceptable to mass production. And, equally important, is the lack of color tubes of acceptable sizes that would win public favor.

At no time in history have set manufacturers been in more of a dilemma. Because of the varied circuit requirements for different color tubes, set makers are faced with an almost impossible situation. Many of them refuse to give any consideration to adopting any tube so far produced. They would rather withhold their decision to produce until a tube is developed that will result in not too complicated circuitry, one that provides a 19" or 21" picture and one that is somewhat compatible in cost. And nothing will be gained if low cost picture tubes should require an elaborate and costly circuit to make them perform satisfactorily.

Volume production of color television cannot be realized until larger sized picture tubes are available at reasonable cost to the set manufacturer and, in turn, to the consumer at reasonable selling price. Interchangeability of picture tubes will be a major problem once the industry really starts to produce. The need for standards will be far greater than for any monochrome sets ever produced. Jobbers and dealers will have new inventory problems and technicians new circuits to master. The stakes will be high—but so will the profits in color television. O.R.

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