

TV violence has little effect—television executive

By Susan MacDonald

Television is a "miracle of our own making" that is too often blamed for society's problems, said a network executive at a Thursday Town and Gown Breakfast Forum.

Jack Blessington, director of educational relations for the CBS television network, said he doesn't believe television causes aggression in children.

"I've never seen it in 20 years in the classroom, or in my own family experience," said Blessington, whose visit was sponsored by the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, UNL and the Town and Gown Committee. "You shouldn't use it (television) as a scapegoat," he said.

Blessington said there is a difference between a child being hyperactive in the classroom and perhaps pushing another child, and committing violent acts against society, such as beating people or robbing banks.

He cited an example of a 9-year-old boy who tried to hold up a bank in New York. The boy's lawyers, Blessington said, attempted to use a defense of "too much television violence."

He said he finds it hard to believe that "a television set would change the character of a human being."

"It is hardly likely that anybody raised in a condition of human concern would rob a bank," Blessington said.

The U.S. Surgeon General's report on television violence and aggression in children showed no causal relationship between the two — only correlations, he said.

"It's not that it (television violence) doesn't cause aggression, but that it hasn't been proven," Blessington said.

He added that he hears research being "constantly misquoted."

"We have created myths in the face of reality," Blessington said. "Explaining problems away is no solution."

Blessington, the author of *Let My Children Work*, also said he doesn't believe there is a relationship between the supposed "toxicity" of television, and potential television addiction of children who aren't learning properly.

Blessington said too many people would rather do things for children, rather than making children do things for themselves.

Blessington said children's programs contain a lot of information and are watched by many adults. Saturday morning cartoons, he said, aren't "brain-wasters, they are fairy tales."

Television, Blessington said, has "a great deal more to offer us if we stop this incessant demand for figures on television violence and child learning."

As for the future of television, Blessington said industry technology is going to "explode."

"We don't know what the implications are for our own industry," he said.

Blessington predicted many more "learning shows" in which universities will play a major role.

There will also be human service systems on some channels, Blessington said, connected to banks, libraries, airports and other service institutions.



Daily Nebraskan photo

The eagle is landing, and it's right here in Lincoln. The eagle here is perched on the roof of the State Federal Savings and Loan Building at the corner of 14th and N streets.

Entries taken for competition

UNL students wishing to enter the All-American Collegiate Talent Search must have their entries in by 5 p.m. Dec. 4.

Students must submit their entries on video cassette or cassette tapes with photographs. The entry fee is \$25.

Any type of performing talent is considered for the award.

The winners of the competition qualify for \$14,000 in cash and scholarship prizes.

Entries should be sent to: All-American Collegiate Talent Search, Box 3SE, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M. 88003.

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