

Discuss Films**Coming to You Live: U.S., Russian Kids Exchange Ideas**By MILES CORWIN, *Times Staff Writer*

The professors called it a "communication experiment." The technicians called it a "simultaneous bi-directional video teleconference." The parents called it a "cultural exchange."

But to the 40 elementary school children gathered at UC San Diego Wednesday, it was just a day at the movies... with an exotic twist.

The film segments they viewed were shown simultaneously to a group of Russian children in a Moscow studio. The American and Russian children were able to discuss, with the help of translators, the film clips—shown via a live two-way television transmission—and then ask and answer questions.

It was the first international videocast used for educational purposes, said Helene Keyssar, chairwoman of the UCSD department of communication. The success of the children's film videocast, she said, could revolutionize the way countries

exchange educational information.

"This can set a model for the exchange of information between countries in science, technology, humanities," Keyssar said. "Travel between countries is very expensive and often difficult to arrange. This kind of exchange suggests new ways of using technology to provide Americans a better view of what goes on in the world."

Shanta Herzog, director of the American Center of Films for Children, said the best way to initiate an exchange between hostile nations is through children.

"Both countries are comfortable with the subject matter; it's an easy place to start," she said. "Then we can move on to other subjects of common interest, including the sciences and medicine. Maybe we will learn that, no matter where you live, you can help yourself and others by sharing information."

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The children had the opportunity to see fairy tales from both countries, ask the directors questions and gauge their counterparts' reactions. And Robert Radnitz offered the Russian youths a glimpse at the stereotypical image of a Hollywood producer. Dressed in Italian tennis togs, with designer labels on the socks, shorts and shirt, and wearing a white scarf around his neck, he strode into the room carrying a pipe in one hand and a white shoulder bag in the other.

Radnitz, producer of "Sounder," showed an excerpt of the movie and then answered questions from the Russian children. Actress Shelley Duvall, executive producer of Faerie Tale Theater, and John Matthews, director of an animated film called "Curious George Goes to the Hospital," also offered excerpts and then discussed their films.

Three weeks ago, Michael Cole, a UCSD professor of psychology and communication, had presented a paper and was doing research in Moscow when he was approached by Soviet media representatives. The Soviets had just seen a live videocast of the US Festival, and were interested in arranging another broadcast to

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coincide with their 13th International Moscow Film Festival. Children's films, they told Cole, would be an ideal subject matter.

Cole began making arrangements for the videocast as soon as he landed in New York. He obtained funding—about \$20,000—from such institutions as the Carnegie and Price Foundations and UCSD. And then he began making the technical arrangements.

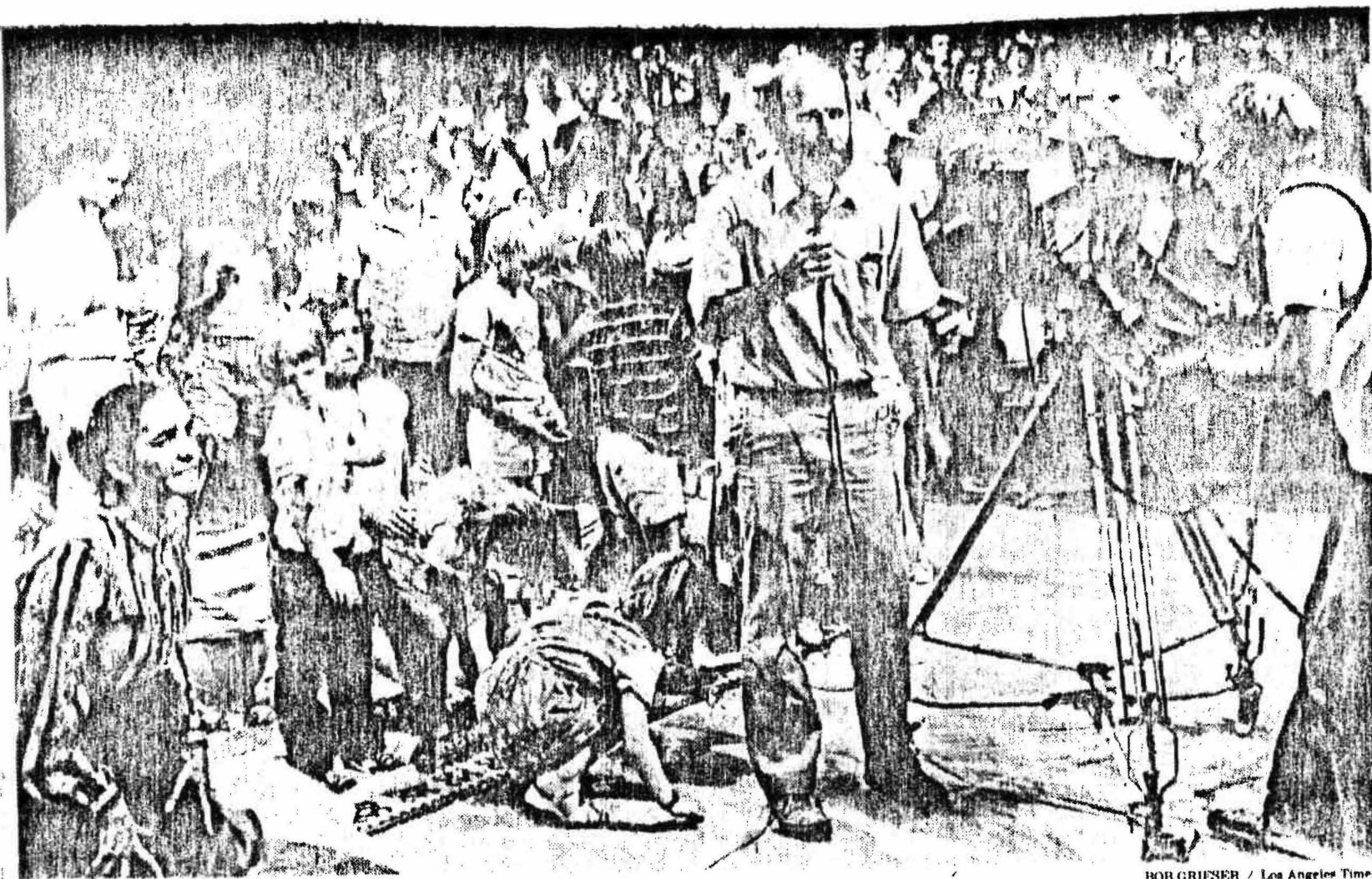
According to UCSD acting media director Sherman George, the signal is sent to a transmitter in San Diego, to a satellite 23,000 miles above the earth, to a receiving station in West Virginia, to another satellite and then to the studio in Moscow. The complicated procedure was planned and executed within a matter of weeks.

"We eased relations with China through Ping-Pong," Matthews said. "Maybe we can defrost this icy curtain through children's film. My film shows how Curious George is afraid of a shot. Kids—Russian or American—can identify with that."



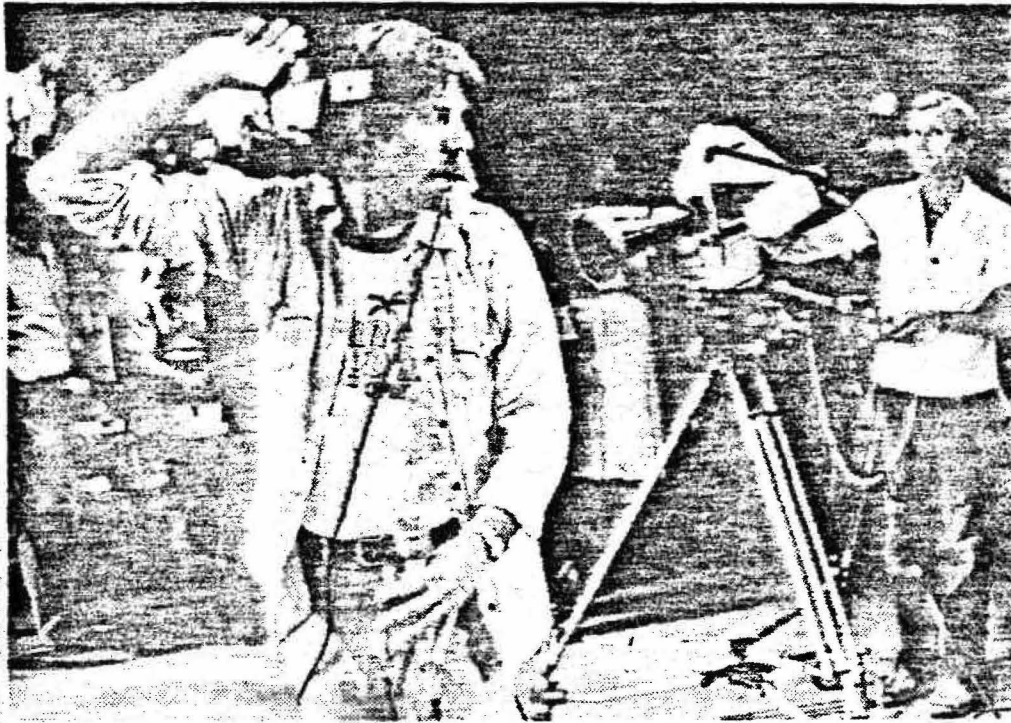
A Russian boy, above, appears on a TV screen in San Diego—as he watches and listens to Americans wave goodbye to him. Among the group are producer Robert Radnitz, left; Shanta Herzog, director of the American Center of Films for Children; director John Matthews, center background, and actress Shelley Duvall.

Photos by BOB GRIESER/
Los Angeles Times



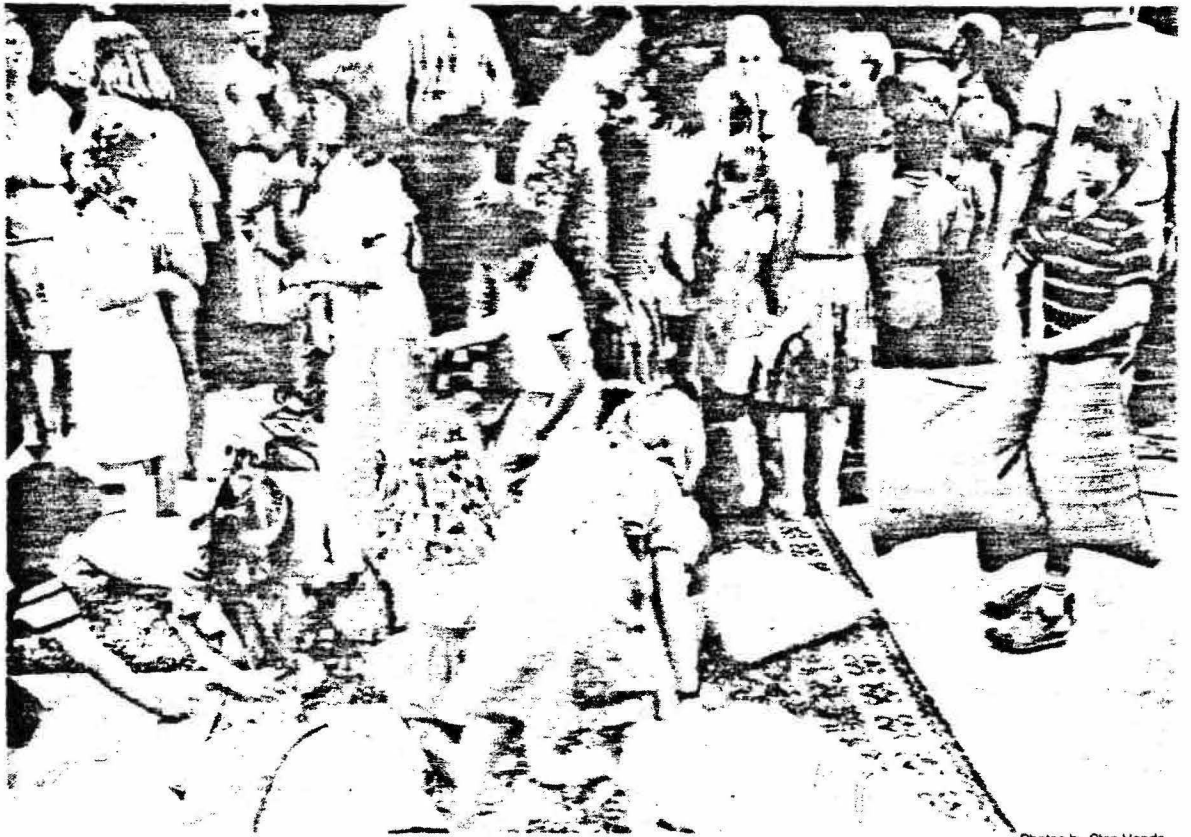
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Michael Cole, professor of psychology and communication, talks live to an audience in Moscow. Cole organized the event.



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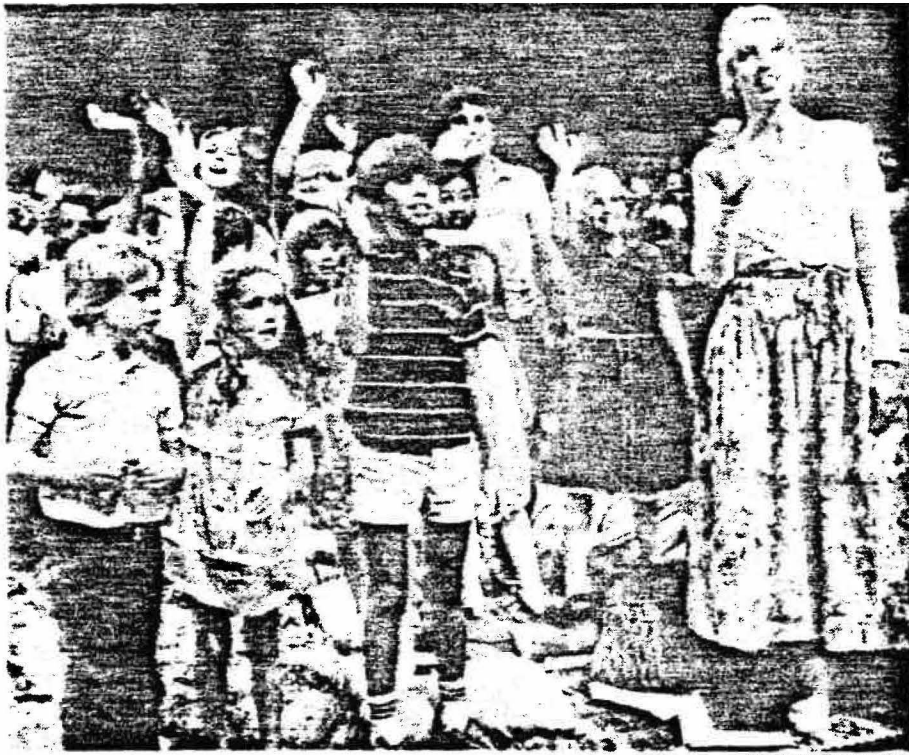
Floor director Jim McCurdy cues a cameraman during the broadcast from UCSD.



Photos by Stan Honda

The excitement continues at Mandeville Recital Hall as children from all over the San Diego area

share impressions and toss confetti following the live Moscow videocast.



Associated Press Photo

A group of San Diego youngsters and actress Shelley Duvall, right, wave goodbye to Russian children at the close of a live, simultaneous satellite videocast.