

# San Diego, Moscow kids watch movies together

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** — An international children's film discussion that for one hour brought American and Soviet children together on a video screen, ended Wednesday with 105 American kids standing on their pillows, tossing confetti, and singing "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You."

The 200 Soviet children, who had stayed up late on the last day of Moscow's 13th International Film Festival to participate in the simultaneous satellite transmission, were tossing balloons and singing "Do-Re-Mi," from "The Sound of Music."

Finally, the video screens went blank and the songs faded away on both sides of the world.

The experiment in international understanding had been planned in just one month. The University of California Department of Communications found out only Saturday that it was to go forward, and children of the faculty, some students at a computer camp and children in community summer programs were quickly rounded up.

Communications professor Michael Cole had agreed on the idea with Soviet journalist Vladimir Posner when they visited in Moscow in June.

The Soviets wanted to try the children-to-children discussion and thought the film festival would be a good medium. They were pleased with a simultaneous satellite hookup last May between the US Festival in San Bernardino and a group of musicians and students in a Moscow sound studio.

Three Soviet and three American filmmakers were on hand to introduce brief clips from their work to children aged 5 to 11.

Director Robert Radnitz introduced a scene from "Sounder" in which the father tries to reassure his son that going away to school will not alienate him

from his family.

"Why was the boy so afraid to go to school?" asked a Soviet girl.

"Because he didn't want to leave his father," Radnitz answered. "Would you want to leave your father?"

The answer to that question, and many others, got lost under the pressure of time and the occasional miscue that is natural to live television.

There were other problems. As Posner tried to get things rolling by introducing the first Soviet film clip, a group of girls, dancing in lacy blue and white ethnic costumes, wouldn't get off the stage in Moscow.

But the idea, according to Shanta Herzog, executive director of the American Center of Films for Children, was to "show these children they can communicate and meet over many common grounds."

Sometimes that happened.

After seeing an American film about a monkey, "Curious George Goes to the Hospital," and a Soviet version of an animated "Winnie the Pooh," a bespectacled boy in Moscow volunteered: "In the Soviet Union, we love animals. Almost every family has some pet, perhaps a dog or parrot. Now that teaches kindness. Do you like animals?"

Although, a dozen American kids raised their hands to respond, the boy in Moscow got his answer from Cole. "Yes, we like animals," said the moderator, and moved on to the next segment.

But the juvenile attempt at international understanding wasn't futile. After the singing and celebrating were over, Lisa Vargas, 11, of La Jolla, remembered.

"I thought they looked nice," she said of the Soviet children. "They wanted to be friendly with us. They said they liked animals, and I do too."