

Mosaic

NEWS

1985. George Orwell told us what to expect for 1984, but what about 1985? For one thing, we won't be reading post reports for Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans, Birmingham, Bordeaux or Ouagadougou. These missions have been closed. Plus, our people in Washington, D.C. will not be working out of a new chancery in 1986, as was originally planned. This project has been deferred until a later date.

TECHNOLOGY

Another solar system has been discovered. Astronomers for the first time have photographed evidence indicating a previously unknown solar system exists around a star twice as big and 10 times as bright as the sun. Earlier this year infra-red radiation detected the first evidence of it but the photographs provide the first visual proof to support the finding. The star, Beta Pictoris, which is about 50 light years from Earth has a vast swarm of solid particles that form a disk 40 billion miles in diameter around it.



New solar system.

VCR's. More than 1.8 million Canadian households will have a video cassette recorder by the end of the year, but conventional television is not seriously threatened. Such is the conclusion from a recent study done by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. The two major concerns were that the machines would replace conventional TV and that they would be used to edit out or "zap" commercials. Such is not the case. A typical VCR home uses the machine for four to six hours a week, three quarters of which is recorded from network TV. (The number of rented movies tends to decline the longer the machine is owned). Zapping is a problem, but not to extent it was thought. Respondents indicated that they regularly zapped commercials, but a U.S. study using meters to measure the actual extent of zapping found it was only 5%. Zapping also declined the longer the machine is owned.

Computers do not disrupt family life. That was the finding after the first year of a two year project conducted under the auspices of the NYU School of Education in New York. After studying 100 family members including 40 children, it was determined that: the motivation for many parents in buying a computer was as an "educational investment in their children's future; that in general the computers were underused; that despite the multi-million dollar investment of many software companies, relatively few families used educational software prepared by professionals; that the most popular kind of software was games, that the most popular activity involved programming and that the second most popular was word processing. (Researchers were surprised by the number of families that knew nothing about word processing and many of the other applications.)

HEALTH



Infant Intensive System.

Babies. There is now a new type of incubator that does not completely enclose a baby. Called an Infant Intensive System, it is an open plastic bassinet with a computerized heater a few feet above it that keeps the air around the baby at a constant temperature. Both the medical staff and the parents are enthusiastic about the machine in that, as Dr. B. MacMurray, head of neonatology at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario says, "By allowing better accessibility to the baby, it really does allow for optimal care. It's particularly good for babies who have had operations and need a lot of handling...plus families like it because they can see and touch their baby more easily."

Three Canadian doctors were the recipients of this year's Gairdner Foundation awards (Four former Gairdner winners won Nobel prizes this year) Dr. Douglas Cameron from Montreal won the \$25 000 Wightman Award for "outstanding leadership in Canadian medicine and medical science; Dr. Robert Noble of the University of British Columbia, for

discovery of treatment for leukemia and Hodgkin's disease and Dr. Kresimir Kryjevic of McGill for work in brain cell communication which may help in the treatment of epilepsy and Alzheimer's disease.

PEOPLE

With a new government, come new people, in new positions. Stephen Lewis, the former Ontario NDP leader has been appointed as ambassador to the United Nations, (among NDP figures only Edward Schreyer has attained a higher political position) and Lloyd Francis, who served as Liberal MP for Ottawa West for 18 years and was the speaker of the house, was appointed as ambassador to Portugal. Of particular interest to us is that Gordon Smith has replaced de Montigny Marchand as the deputy minister for political affairs, Robert Richardson has been appointed as deputy minister for international trade and Sylvia Ostry is now the ambassador for multilateral trade negotiations and the prime minister's personal representative for the economic summit.



Tommy Douglas

Tommy Douglas, four months after a serious accident, has recovered sufficiently to be back to his regular regime.