

# The use and abuse of public opinion polls

(TN)—In a special series of four one-hour programs beginning October 16, Vista presents *A Matter of Opinion*—a provocative look at the dynamic relationships of the public, the people who measure its opinions, and those who try to manipulate them.

Hosted by journalist and broadcaster Peter Trueman, the series tracks the evolution of the Canadian opinion and attitude research industry, its relationship with the mass media, the methods of targeting consumer trends, and the use and abuse of opinion measurement during and between elections.

A lively blend of documentary and panel discussion segments, *A Matter of Opinion* will feature interviews with experts, including Flora MacDonald; political strategists Senator Norman Atkins and Bill Neville (PC); Senator Michael Kirby (Liberal); Robin Sears (NDP); pollsters Allan Gregg, Ian McKinnon, Michael Adams, and Michael Marzolini; journalists Rosemary Speirs and Claire Hoy; and former Pollution Probe director Colin Isaacs.

Program 1, "Who's Counting?" (October 16), looks at the rise of the polling business since World War II in both Canada and the U.S., the evolution of media technology, and measurement technology as the impetus to the evolution of the modern polling profession.

"Hitting the Target" (October 23) explores marketing methodology—finding the consumer target and hitting the bull's-eye at the centre of every pocketbook. Advertising, consumer trend tracking, and psychographics are the tools of the marketers, and buzzwords such as "environmentally friendly" and "lite" are popular current bullets. The game is packaging a product that appeals to values.



Peter Trueman.

"Prime-Time Politics" (October 30) will focus on the use of polling information and media handling in the political process. The Canadian federal election of 1988 shows how modern public opinion survey methods affect the political parties, media, and electorate. Does the "information age" really serve the voter, or are we being manipulated by marketing strategists who sell us "packaged" politicians?

"The Future Poll" (November 6) examines the possible future impact and consequences of polling and survey technology on politics, social policy, and personal freedom. Are we moving toward an era of more responsive and sensitive power, or a Big Brother society where information is concentrated in the hands of New Age manipulators? **FH**

# Here comes Paul McCartney again

## ROCK ON



ETHLIE ANN VARE

Paul McCartney will start his first world tour in 13 years on Sept. 26 in Norway. He'll continue throughout Europe, the Far East and North and South America until the summer of 1990. The concert dates start 25 years plus one month since the Beatles' first major tour of America. And Paul says that he will indeed include Beatles songs in his repertoire.

In keeping with his elder-statesman stature, McCartney has invited the environmental organization Friends of the Earth to use his tour to promote their cause. He has also promised a free 100-page souvenir booklet to all concert-goers, a nice touch from someone who can well afford it.

Another long-awaited tour is the new one from Stevie Nicks, a performer with some of the most loyal fans around. And Nicks is loyal to her followers as well: She's hitting the road as scheduled, even though she broke a bone in her foot (a swimming pool mishap, apparently) during rehearsals. She has to step into a removable cast as soon as she steps (hobbies?) offstage.

• Also on the road are Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers. The children of reggae giant Bob Marley are now an important international act in their own right. As their reputation grows, so does the Marley clan: On tour with the group are Sharon Marley Prendergast's three children (ages 4, 3 and 1) and Ziggy Marley's newborn son, Daniel. Road Trek: The Next Generation.

something that Straits fans all know: Nobody but nobody plays guitar like Mark Knopfler. So he got Knopfler himself to come in and do the solos on the disc.

• Billy Vera's Beaters haven't been hitting the charts since their unexpected No. 1 hit of 1986, "At This Moment." But rock veteran Vera hasn't been idle. He's just finished a job as archivist for RCA Records, selecting 20 classic R&B tracks for the compact disc release "Rock 'n' Roll Party: The Early '50s."

Vera's personal favorites from the era include tracks by The Coasters, the Robins and Laverne Baker.

• New faves on the college circuit are the Santa Barbara, Calif.-based band Toad the Wet Sprocket. And before you give them credit for thinking up the oddest name on the alternative music charts, note that they stole the moniker from an old Monty Python routine. It was a stopgap when they had to come up with a name *fast* before their first gig.

"We were going to think of something better," says vocalist Glen Phillips, "a good name, a real name. But it just never happened."

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Paul McCartney

• Rock parodist Weird Al Yankovic has always done a great job of duplicating the original sound of the hit records he spoofs, thanks to an extremely competent backing band of studio musicians. But when he set out to do his latest, a parody of Dire Straits' "Money for Nothing," he discovered

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