

# Desbarats leaving Hourglass after five years

Peter Desbarats will not return to Hourglass in the fall.

Next Friday's program, the last in the 39 week season of CBMT's public affairs show, will mark Desbarats' departure after five years as host.

Desbarats, 38 next month, says he is leaving because "a quite attractive offer" — which he won't yet talk about — has come along.

He is giving up a job that paid in excess of \$22,000 per season, gave him summers off, and allowed him to work with Paul Wright, executive producer of Hourglass for whom he has only admiration.

It was Wright who, in 1966, persuaded Desbarats, then a feature writer on The Montreal Star, to give television a try.

"Desbarats was a very different creature then," Wright was saying last night. "When he started on the program none of us knew what would come of it. He's turned out to be one of the best people in his field anywhere in television. I think we both feel there was a measure of luck there. It's an interactive process (between producer and host) that we'll have to go through again.

"We will be extremely fortunate to find someone of Desbarats' calibre. He will be very hard to replace."

Wright, just home from a vacation in England said that, in fact, he hasn't "even begun to think about a replacement."

But, says Desbarats, there will be no lack of candidates for the job. "Television is a small field and these are a lot of people who would like to be in it," he said yesterday.

By  
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Speculation on that point, bound to be rampant, is a waste of time. Wright alone will decide who's to fill the post.

As to Desbarats' own plans, we shall have to wait and see. While there stands a good chance that his "quite attractive offer" comes from the CBC, it is unlikely that he would leave Montreal.

Read into that what you will, remembering that, to be host of a national public affairs program, one need not live in Toronto.

Whatever's ahead for Desbarats, it won't present itself until autumn. Meanwhile, his summer is fully booked.

"I want to do some writing," he said. "And there's the Union National convention in June and we're working on a couple of documentaries for the network."

Both programs, for the CBC's Tuesday Night, will be

produced by Ian McLaren, an Hourglass producer who will work for the network next year

Also departing is Gilles Couture, the senior of Hourglass' three producers. He's going to Europe for two years.

Thus, Wright has three important vacancies he must fill. "People always seem to come along," he said. "When Ian McLaren applied to work for us two years ago he was just out of Carleton . . . and then Mark Blandford turned fresh form the Columbia Film School."

At the heart of Hourglass' success is Wright himself and his equanimity at all events. As long as he is around, CBMT will have the nation's exemplary public affairs show.

## Notes: Cosby will return

**Bill Cosby**, who earlier this year announced he was through with television, has had a change of heart. Though he will carry out his announced intention to pursue a Master's Degree of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Cosby will return to TV in the 1972-'73 season. Only this time he'll be doing a variety show instead of situation comedy and he'll be working for CBS instead of NBC, to which he has been under exclusive contract since 1965. That agreement has just now expired.

**Paul Keyes**, who quit as head writer of Laugh-In in 1969 because he considered the program to be inordinately lampooning the political right, has returned to the series in his old post and, additionally, as producer. A friend of Richard Nixon, Keyes this season produced "Swing Out, Sweet Land," the John Wayne hymn in praise of America.