

Opinion

Steve Barnaby editor/477-5450

23352 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48024

Philip Power chairman of the board
Richard Agnlan president
Dick Isham general manager
Dan Chovanec advertising director
Nick Sharkey managing editor
Fred Wright circulation director

14A(F)

O&E Thursday, October 13, 1983

Cable TV runs the show — Let buyer beware

WELL, LOOKEE here. Seems the folks in and around Farmington are getting a real live lesson in the free enterprise system — and feeling a little poorly in pocketbook and spirit from the fallout.

Recently, residents in the Power and 11 Mile area found out that cable television installation will cost them anywhere from \$200 to \$800 for the privilege of watching such classics as kick boxing at 2 a.m. and old movies any time of the day.

Admittedly, most participants in the Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi consortium have the honor of free installation — well, we all know that nothing really is free.

But in areas with too few houses for the cable firm to make a buck, as adjudged by the cable firm, it is allowed to charge for installation — but \$200 to \$800 up front?

Wow, that's big dough. And nobody likes to be singled out for that kind of honor.

MIND YOU, this charge is all on the up and up.

Newspaper has knack for serving, surviving

HARNESS MAKERS, lamp-lighters, bootblacks, sandwich men, knife grinders, tinkers, axsmiths, hedgesmiths, ale-mongers, tinkers, newspaper writers.

All but one of those occupations have virtually disappeared since the days when America was founded.

Sometimes radio broadcasters, television broadcasters, billboard merchants, cable-TV hucksters and direct mail mongers predict the demise of the newspaper business, too. But you the readers choose to keep us operating.

And during National Newspaper Week, we all may want to remind ourselves of why our institution survives and even flourishes.

THE BILLBOARD, the handbill, the bumper sticker and the TV commercial all tell you a candidate's name — and you will be seeing many of them as 1984 approaches.

But only the newspaper reports the officeholder's voting record, elicits the candidate's views on the tough issues of tomorrow and assembles the hard facts of a biography for you to study.

The junk mail contains circulars for a particular store and may even contain prices.

But only the newspaper contains ads for a variety of competing stores and lets you compare prices in a single publication. And the news columns contain information that makes some peddlers a little uncomfortable: what products are being recalled, which are of questionable safety, which are bad buys in this economy or at this time of year. No junk mail circular ever gave you that kind of information.

BROADCAST REPORTS are an easy way to pick up a bit of information, especially if you are feeling a little on the lazy side today.

But if you want more than 20 seconds of facts on a major happening in your community, if you want to know who in town died or got married, if you want to preserve a news item to send to Aunt Bess

New standards are needed for police chases

For the third time in less than six months, a young person has been killed in a car accident involving a police car in pursuit of another car.

In the latest case, Troy police officer William McCabe, saw a car speeding on Rochester Road about 2:30 a.m. Sunday. He gave chase and accelerated to 90 mph.

At the intersection of Long Lake Road, a car driven by Darlene DiFonzo, 23, was turning left from Rochester Road onto Long Lake Road. McCabe's police car, going nearly 90 mph, according to police, struck DiFonzo's car.

DiFonzo's passenger, Jolene Satoru, 21, of Sterling Heights, was on the side of the car which took the impact. She was declared dead at Troy Beaumont Hospital soon after. The driver suffered head injuries but was in fair condition yesterday.

IT IS likely that DiFonzo either did not see the patrol car or was not aware that it was moving so fast. McCabe had not turned on his patrol car's flashing lights or siren.

It is unfortunate that the accident involved a Troy police officer because Troy is one department which has taken steps to ensure that officers follow certain guidelines in conducting police chases.

The accident, however, points out, once again, the great danger that police chases, or hot-pursuit chases, pose to the public.

It was only April 29 that two Oakland County residents — one 20, the other 19 — were killed when a car driven by a Oakland County sheriff's deputy smashed into their automobile on Wide Track Drive in downtown Pontiac.

Take a look at the contract forged between Metro-Vison and the consortium. Sure enough.

Fair is fair or, let me see, is it caveat emptor in this case? Whatever, those residents will pay if they want cable installation.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm the last person in the western world to see much good in cable television. Frankly, I think the general populace is crazy for paying a fee, sometimes several fees, to watch on cable television what they could watch for free on commercial television.

But the days of commercial television, as we've known it since the late 1940s, are soon to leave us. Pay we will and, apparently, pay we must — to watch sporting events, movies, variety shows and yes, commercials, over and over and over again.

MOST FOLKS DON'T realize that once all the talk is over about the wonders of cable coming to your town, selling commercial time is eventually what keeps cable television in business.

in Florida, if you want the hard statistics behind the football scores and property taxes, if you want the names of the scholarship winners and the folks who got the business promotions — well, you can't clip it out of the TV screen. But it will be in the newspaper.

It's ironic, but there's a major retail chain that has shifted its promotional efforts to junk mail. Yet when the chain wanted to fight a piece of legislation in Congress which it considered harmful, what did it do? It sent news releases to the newspapers.

When people want to emphasize a point to their state legislators or congressmen, they often clip a newspaper story or editorial. But you'll never see a TV or radio tape in the legislator's or congressman's mailbox.

WE ALL KNOW the jargon term "mass media," but how many mass media are there?

There are publications for environmentalists and manufacturers, bird watchers and hunters, feminists and traditionalists, labor and management, Democrats and Republicans, rock fans and classical aficionados, those with fortunes and those with pennies, those who consume and those who produce.

But what medium even tries to be a common ground for all points of view and all the interests that make our nation so vital and interesting? What medium even attempts to explain one group to the others? You are reading it.

Well, we've patted ourselves on the back pretty lustily and have vowed to do even better work in the future. But we also pause to thank you the reader for helping us to be good.

You invite us into your home, you read us, you praise us when we do well, you bowl us out when you think we've missed something, you give us tips, you write us the kinds of letters no broadcaster, billboard merchant, bumper sticker printer or junk mail distributor ever gets.

In short, you have kept us going for 200 or more years. All of us should be thankful for that.



Bob Wisler

The Oakland County Prosecutor's office has been pressing to try the sheriff's deputy involved for manslaughter. Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson said the decision to charge the deputy was influenced partially by a desire to warn other police officers of the dangers of driving too recklessly in hot-pursuit chases.

Troy police chief Lawrence Carey pointed out that the chase, technically, was not a case of hot pursuit, in that McCabe was only driving 90 miles an hour to close in on a speeding driver who was unaware that a police officer was after him.

WHETHER it is called a chase, or not, high-speed driving by police officers has proven to be dangerous to innocent motorists who happen to be in the area when a chase begins. There have been instances of police cars hitting the cars of innocent motorists, and, more often, cases of drivers being chased crashing into the cars of other drivers.

Police want to respond by chasing those fleeing because they think that if one driver gets away that will encourage others to do the same. Police also think that willingness to flee indicates evidence of guilt, or an attempt to cover up something more serious than unpaid traffic violations or a suspended driver's license.

Yet there are few instances in which the quarry is worth the danger involved in the pursuit.

The police certainly want to stop someone who is driving recklessly, to prevent someone from getting hurt. But there must be a better method to zero in on errant drivers. Certainly, the capture of the person speeding down Rochester Road was not worth the life of a 21-year-old woman.

It is time for police departments to review their policies regarding police chases to ensure that another innocent victim will not pay the loss of life.



crackerbarrel debate
Steve Barnaby

And watching a television will be like buying a car. For every option, there will be a fee. Oh, no, your local government won't have a thing to say about it. Let's put it this way: Cable firms are more astute than that.

After all, no sense in bothering with approval from city council for a subscription rate increase when you can charge your customers for added services — a practice of another cable firm in the area.



Teachers get a bum rap!

IT'S FASHIONABLE to be against teachers. Once they were glamorized as belonging to one of the noblest professions. Parents were proud to raise children to become doctors, clergymen or teachers.

But no more. This week parents in the Plymouth-Canton school district picketed against striking teachers. These parents blame teachers for a strike that has been going on since Sept. 30.

It's easy to fault teachers. Let's admit it, we think of teachers as persons who work from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. with three months off every summer. We're a little jealous about that.

As teachers become more strident in their unions, they lose more public support. It's "unprofessional" for them to wear ragged clothes and carry a sign saying, "No contract, no work."

Recent studies critical of our educational system such as "A Nation at Risk" — confirm what we all know. Teachers aren't doing their jobs.

I MUST ADMIT that I was among those most critical of teachers. I was particularly irked by a bumper sticker popular about a year ago, "If you can read this, thank a teacher."

How arrogant of teachers to think that everyone who knows how to read, learned it from a teacher. Many parents have taught their children to read.

But I have changed my mind about teachers. Since September my wife has been teaching full time. I have new respect for their profession.

Work days begin closer to 5:30 a.m. than 8:30 a.m. Preparing for as many as six or seven different classes in a day takes time. Also, teachers must be in the classroom 30 minutes to an hour before the first student arrives.

Students may leave at 3 p.m., but that's not the end of the work day. Discipline problems must be handled after school. That's also the time for in-service training, meetings with other teachers or the principal. Evenings are often taken up by meetings of the PTO, sessions with school board mem-



Nick Sharkey

bers or with parents. In between, time must be found to correct tests and papers.

A TEACHER faces many problems, including relatively low pay and lack of security. But perhaps the toughest is the apathy of parents.

What can a teacher do when a child refuses to do homework? The response used to be for the teacher to tell the parent. But today too many parents don't care if children do their assignments. That attitude extends to any kind of discipline given out by a teacher.

Many parents seem to regard teachers as educated baby-sitters.

Being a teacher is not all doom and gloom. Many children are enthusiastic and eager to learn. Some days a teacher reaches even the most difficult child.

Most teachers I have met in the past few weeks are dedicated and caring professionals.

Last week Peter Beldier, a teacher at Lehigh University, was named "Professor of the Year" by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

His advice to parents was: "Go up to a teacher and say, 'Thank you, you really made a difference with my child.'"

That's not a bad idea.

By the way, teachers don't take summers off. Most go to graduate school so they can retain their certification.

Be nice to a teacher today.