

Cable TV is pushing networks out

I vividly remember the deliverymen hauling the big, blond box into our living room.

Blond furniture was the "in" thing in those days. If a piece of furniture wasn't blond, my mother made it so.

In a matter of seconds, it was plugged in, turned on and spewing out its bizarre mixture of garbage and knowledge. Our first television, purchased at minimal cost, was to do its duty for nearly two decades.

It was cheap entertainment. It also was an inexpensive way to open up a whole new world to a family that would have otherwise been financially cut off.

Like many persons my age, I grew up on Mighty Mouse, the Lone Ranger, American Bandstand and a beaver hawking toothpaste — all junk to be sure.

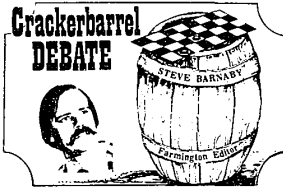
But that blond box also brought into my life Walter Cronkite, Playhouse 90, the Kennedy-Nixon debates, the space race and countless documentaries outlining significant people, places and things.

The latter changed my life. It aided in elevating me out of a working class ghetto and into a college classroom where I learned to be a journalist. The former — the junk — at least kept me off the street and probably saved me from getting my head bashed in fewer times than I did.

TODAY, WE are about to see that free access fade away to be replaced by pay television. And that's a shame.

We already have subscription television. You know, ON TV, where subscribers pay a flat fee per month to watch first-run movies and sporting events, along with some night club acts.

In a matter of a year or two, cable television will have inundated the metropolitan area. That's another pay scheme which promises you the world without commercials.



There's a lot good you can say about cable television. It will bring a city council meeting into your living room (ho-hum) or tell you about community events.

But a closer examination shows there is more bad than good. Successful cable television in the country

eventually will force the commercial networks right out of business. Public television, especially in this town, won't have a chance.

Viewers will pay to watch everything — including commercials.

Remember, it was a cable outfit which came very close to outbidding NBC for the 1980 Olympics.

It was cable television which kept the Roberto Duran-Sugar Ray Leonard fight off the commercial screen. Cable viewers, by the way, had to pay an additional fee to see that event.

AND TV NEWS also will go the way of pay television. Already there is a 24-hour cable news network drawing away the big talent from commercial networks.

In the end, television only will be for those who can afford to pay the monthly fee. No longer will the kid from the working class ghetto be able to watch the world around him for free.

Council logic is foolish

Farmington Hills residents have just cause to be angered with a majority of the city council.

At this week's council session, the majority voted to reject a tornado siren warning system.

Cost to city taxpayers would have been \$60,000 or a paltry \$1 per resident.

The excuse given by the majority was that \$60,000 was just too much to expect in these days of budget cutting.

The majority rejecting the proposal are Joe Alkateeb, Jack Burwell, William Lange and Donn Wolf.

Their faulty logic flies in the face of sound thinking. All residents wish to see their tax dollars spent wisely, but few honestly can say Monday's action meets prudent guidelines.

Every city legislative body is mandated to foster the health, safety and welfare of the residents. The majority vote denies that responsibility.

Alkateeb noted the sparse resident turnout at the public hearing implying that a majority of residents must be uninterested in having a tornado warning system installed.

Apathy is nothing new in Farmington Hills. Neither is Alkateeb's faulty judgement when it comes to making decisions for the community's benefit.

PRESENTLY, THE COUNCIL has squandered away \$450,000 for what it calls inappropriate surplus. In laymen's terms that means extra bucks.

That time-worn cliché "penny-wise and pound foolish" best fits the council's irresponsible action.

As one resident so aptly put it: If only one life is saved by the warning system, the money has been well-spent.

Civil defense experts give much credence to the siren system, giving it credit for saving lives during the recent Kalamazoo tornado disaster.

There is nothing in nature which prohibits a tornado from touching down in Farmington Hills — not even the fury of a fiscal conservative.

Library needs local support

Back in the early '70s, Farmington area residents demonstrated an uncommon display of unity by chipping in dollars to save the school district's sports program.

Similar action is needed today to maintain the quality of the Farmington District library system. Recently, the library was victim of the budget chopping block to the tune of \$30,000.

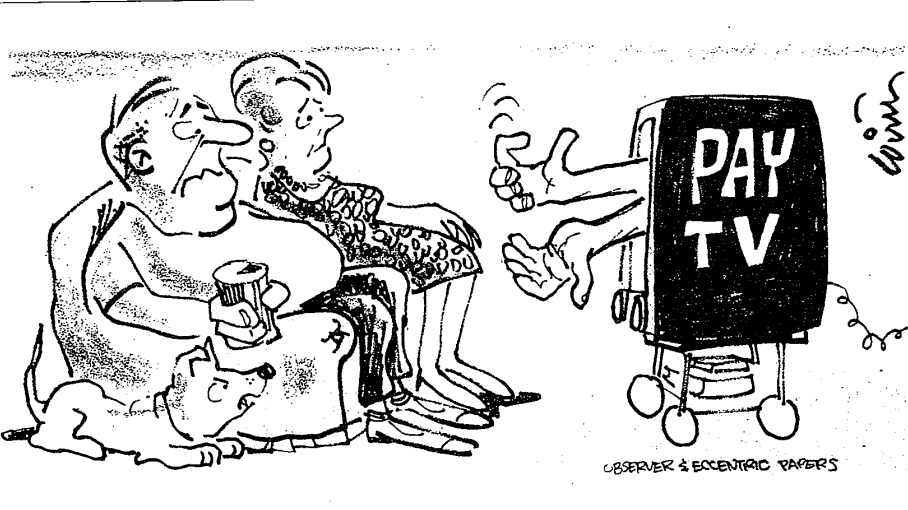
A sound library system certainly is as important to this community as is the sports program.

Now is the time for Farmington area residents to dig down deep and put their money where their mouths and minds are. Farmington and Farmington Hills can lead the way in showing other suburbs that they care for developing and maintaining culture — a quality which is sorely lacking in suburban Detroit.



discover
Michigan
Bill
Stockwell

Did you know that there are 390 residents of Michigan who are over the age of 100? As a percentage of population, our state ranks only 33rd in terms of 100-year-olds. Nationwide, the oldesters total 12,000 persons.



OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC PAPERS

Vote yourself a living — rustic version

Normally you associate the "vote yourself a living" philosophy with the political left or organized labor.

You wouldn't expect to hear the chairman of the Christians in Government State Leadership Committee espousing the philosophy of ganging up, voting your own group a tax cut and shafting the other guy.

Well, meet Mark Siljander of Fabius Township, the state representative from Cass, St. Joseph and Van Buren counties. Sunday school teacher, is fervently selling a tax cut plan which bears his name. And if you're the sort of person who believes in using the ballot box to pick someone else's pocket, sign on Siljander's dotted line.

SILJANDER SAYS the Tisch tax cut proposal would be "tipping" to the state but that people need tax relief. So far, so good.

But to quote his own news release:

"Siljander said his plan would provide a more than 50 percent cut in property taxes for Michigan homeowners, farmers, senior citizens and disabled veterans. On the other hand, foreign investors and out-of-state residents who own property in Michigan would receive no tax break under the Siljander plan."



Tim
Richard

proposal . . . Some of the lost revenue would be replaced by a 1 percent increase in the state sales tax, but the plan would mean a \$450 million cut in state revenues."

Let's analyze a couple of points.

First, his plan contains the same flaw as the Smith-Bullard plan in its favored treatment of farms compared to industry. A farm is a home, but it is also a food factory with cropland, barn, tractor, all kinds of implements, stocks and maybe irrigation equipment. Both plans let the farm factory off scot-free.

But the factories, stores, offices and shops where the urban dweller works would still be taxed. The folks in Fabius Township will like that.

THE OTHER bothersome thing about Siljander is the vengeance with which he wants to keep proper-

ty taxes on non-residents. "Why give 50 percent cuts to foreigners, out-of-staters and corporations at the expense of the loss of services to Michigan residents?" he asks rhetorically.

In other words, they're Samaritans, all Samaritans are bad, so let's sock it to them.

We suburbanites have fought that line emphatically. Remember when Detroit wanted to levy a one percent income tax on non-residents who work there?

"Taxation without representation," our gang shouted, echoing the principle of the 1776 Revolution.

Suburbia won a compromise: Commuters would be taxed at half of one percent, and Detroit residents at the full rate.

In contrast, Michigan taxes property owned by non-residents at the same rate as resident-owned property.

Siljander's plan would have the effect of taxing non-residents' property at double the local rate because non-residents wouldn't share in the property tax cut.

His plan is even less fair when you consider that the bulk of our property taxes go to support schools, and non-residents get no benefit from our schools.

By Michigan's traditional standards of fairness, Siljander's plan doesn't measure up.

ball that a player was removed from the game — not because he had violated a rule but because of the fans' actions in the bleachers.

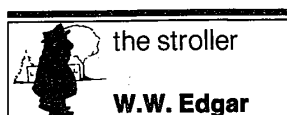
On another occasion when he was in Cleveland on a baseball assignment, The Stroller saw a spectator drop a whole basket of tomatoes on Birdie Tebbetts' head. And many have been the times when Red Wings hockey games in the old Olympia Stadium had to be held up while the ice was cleared of the many objects that came flying down from the stands.

Of times these were not just ordinary objects. In many cases they were old dead fish or tattered galoshes. And what of the Detroit Stanley Cup tradition of tossing an octopus on the ice? On one occasion the cleanup crew found a set of false teeth.

These objects were not just spur-of-the-moment things. When a fellow or a group comes to a hockey game with such things as dead fish, you know they came with the intention of throwing them on the ice during the game.

And even in the staid and haughty golf courses, The Stroller has seen big-name golfers throw their clubs into the crowd after a poor shot. And getting hit with a golf club is no fun.

It all comes under the old adage that there is among us human beings an inherent desire to throw things.



the stroller
W.W. Edgar

may be subject of discussion for a long, long time.

At the height of his emotions General Manager Jim Campbell referred to the throwers as "drunken bums." And he vowed there would be no more of such franchisees permitted in the old ball yard.

Well, The Stroller is not attempting to be a defender of those who caused the ball park scene, but over the many years that he covered the sports trail he has witnessed many folks throwing things during athletic contests — and they weren't bums.

Those of us who are old enough never will forget the scene during the 1934 World Series between the Tigers and the St. Louis Cardinals when the late Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis ordered Ducky Medwick, the St. Louis outfielder, out of the game because he was the target of fruit throwers in the left field bleachers.

It was the first time in the long history of base-

There is an inherent desire among members of the human race to throw things.

Have you ever noticed that when you hand a baby a rattle you spend most of your time picking it up from the floor? The baby's first instinct is to throw it.

As the baby grows older, the desire to throw things continues. Youngsters spend their time throwing a stick to a dog just to watch him retrieve it.

When near a body of water, they take delight in tossing stones just to have the ripples roll on and on. And there are times when a child will throw a stick into the water to help give his dog its daily exercise.

Even as grown-ups our desire to throw things continues. If you look at our sports programs, almost all call for tossing an object — a baseball, a football, a discus and even the hammer at track meets.

All these things were forgotten during the recent ruckus in Tiger Stadium when the fans tossed all manner of objects onto the field and the Tiger management became so incensed that it closed the bleachers and forbade these "throwers" from taking their points of vantage.

The move to close the bleachers was unprecedented. And the actions of the Tiger management