

Editorial and Opinion

New TV Low Prompts Industry Reappraisal

Have you seen the new fall lineup of TV programs? The once promising medium of television has degenerated further with plotless shows about more beautiful girls in more meaningless adventures. The big flap over "T and A" (titillating assurance, the kids are told) raises new concern over onetime CBS researcher Marshall McLuhan's warning that the media IS the message. If the message of these fall programs represents the medium, then TV and its viewers are in trouble — like the adage, "We are what we eat."

Pioneer journalist Edward R. Murrow fled television as a wasteland dominated, he said, by commercial programming that appeals to the most common denominator — the 12-year-old mind. The average viewer spends a dozen hours daily in front of the vacuum tube, putting all those little TV dots together in his mind. The TV picture is what he per-

ceives. But how does he respond?

An article in September's "Psychology Today" tackles this question. Many TV viewers, according to social scientist John Caughey, engage in imaginary conversations with media figures. Television fantasy crowds the personal life of many, and he found many persons who imagined secret relationships with Dick Cavett, Ann-Margaret and Johnny Carson. Caughey's case studies included fantasy relationships fostered by other media as well, but no medium brings it all home as personally as television.

TV long has been regarded generally as an entertainment medium. It "heats you up and drops you cold," or so goes the argument concerning viewer involvement. Now it's apparent that TV has more lasting effect on some of its viewers — effects that should be watched carefully in the family and inside the TV industry. (VB)

Reading and Writing May Be 'Dying Arts'

A University of Florida professor says our children and grandchildren will learn to read and write but our great-grandchildren won't.

Dr. Didier Graeffe says television, computers and recording devices are replacing reading and writing. Literacy will go down, he says, "because it no longer is necessary."

Much business already is carried on in ways that do not depend on the written word, or in sentences which hardly follow the rules of grammar.

Dr. Graeffe says the thousands-of-year-old tradition of written literature will disappear as it already has in Japan, where a simplified form of writing was introduced after World War II.

Hot Ballot Issues Prompts Good Turnout

New voters have been signing up in unprecedented numbers during the last few months, and it takes no genius to guess that Oregon's tax-relief measures are the reason.

The number of new registrants is almost four times what it was in 1976, just before the last presidential election. From June 1 to Sept. 1, roughly 45,000 new voters were recorded.

Democrats still hold a substantial margin in registrations, but their percentage of the new voters was less than either Republicans or Independents.

Democrats got 19,768 of the new registrants (a 2 percent increase), Republicans 15,779 (3 percent) and Independents 9,477 (7 percent).

Only the gubernatorial race is attracting much interest, so the four-fold jump in registrations over two years ago can only be attributed to the ballot measures. Tax relief obviously is the big attraction, but decisions on the death penalty, denturism, abortions, the LCDC, etc., also are attracting attention.

So be it. We're happy with whatever brings out the voters.

Oil Wells Could Be on Oregon's Horizon

Do commercial quantities of oil and natural gas exist in Oregon?

Mobil Oil Corp. is drilling an exploratory well to 14,000 feet near Oakland (Douglas County) in an effort to find out. No well in Oregon ever has gone so deep since drilling first began, off and on, in 1902.

The new effort is not far from a similar, unsuccessful well drilled in 1923 near Sutherlin. Mobil currently has a million acres under lease in Oregon for exploratory drilling and its Oakland-area well will cost about \$2 million.

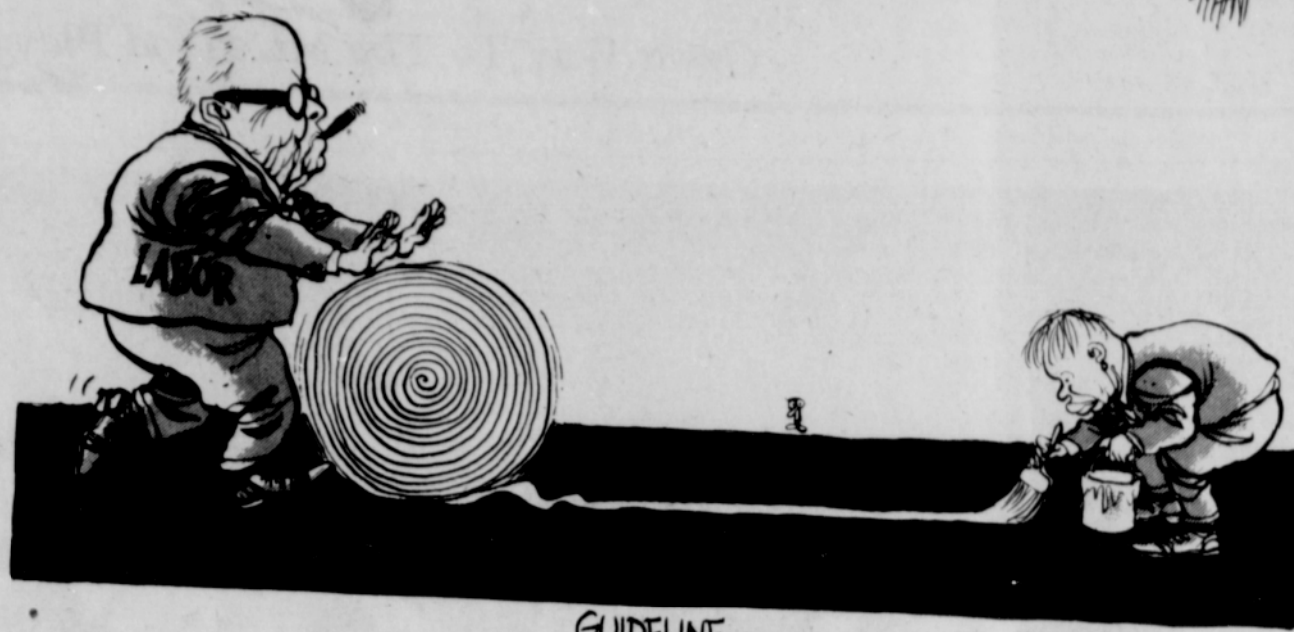
Since no well ever has reached 14,000 feet in Oregon, results are being watched closely by other companies. About 250 wells have been drilled in Oregon since 1902

and about 400 in Washington state, none with any commercial success.

However, hope persists. Exploratory wells also may be sent down soon off the Clatsop County coast. Some drilling was done a dozen years ago off Newport in Lincoln County without much success.

Locations both onshore and offshore in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties of Washington state also are being considered.

Vernon Newton Jr., petroleum engineer with the Oregon State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, says the 15,000- to 20,000-foot level — considerably deeper than Mobil's well — holds the most promise.



Letters to the editor

On detectors

To the Editor:
Suggesting the use of a metal detector to locate artifacts along the old Barlow trail recalls an article I read years ago in a Portland newspaper.

Around the turn of the century, a small amount of gold bullion was stolen from the mint in San Francisco, and the thieves took off for Oregon in a light buggy pulled by one horse. Traveling along the Barlow Trail they attempted to cross the Cascades in the dead of winter. The horse gave out while pulling the buggy through drifts of snow. Dragging the loot off into the woods, the culprits buried it and marked the spot by cutting down a tree. However, later attempts to locate the gold were unsuccessful.

On his death bed, a lone survivor of the heist confessed to the crime, but to this day the cache has never been discovered. I'm not sure if a metal detector could

locate gold, even if the approximate location of the cache could be determined. The bullion would still be the property of the mint but a generous reward might be offered to the finder.

With the rising cost of dental care one might scrape off enough to fill one's teeth with advancing age.

In the old days, worn gold coins could be returned to the bank and exchanged for newly minted ones. This often inspired repeated trips to the banks. The new coins were shaken up in a bag to simulate wear, the dust was collected and the "worn" coins were returned to the bank for redemption.

Harry Hoffman
Estacada

Many thanks

To the Editor:
I would like to thank all those volunteers who donated blood at the Red Cross Blood Drive last week

at Sandy High School. I would also like to thank all the adult and student volunteers who spent the entire afternoon escorting, typing and labeling the units, taking histories and all the other things necessary for a blood drive.

It takes a lot of "behind the lines" people to organize as well as keep it going.

The unsung heroes not mentioned in last week's story in the Post were the 26 Sandy High students who took time to give blood along with the 76 adults who also donated. They were as apprehensive as the adults but also found out it really wasn't so bad after all.

These students are to be commended for their concern and their determination to take an active part in helping others.

Judy Bowman

Old trails

To the Editor:
I recall when three bridges

once spanned Alder Creek in 1924. There was the bridge which carried traffic at the time, an earlier wooden bridge still intact but closed to traffic, and the skeletal remains of a bridge which must have carried pioneers across the stream as they traveled down the old Barlow Trail. The older bridges eventually washed in flood stage.

At Alder Creek, the Barlow Trail veered slightly off to the north and 50 years ago was still a dim path through the woods. I once found an old metal wagon tyre buried among the ferns and the mound of an old grave marked with a weather beaten cross.

If one might trace this old route of the pioneers with a metal detector, I am sure other relics might be uncovered. I've thought of doing this as a hobby in retirement... I'd best be getting to it for it's sometimes later than you think.

Gene Soesby
5902 SE Sylvan Way
Boring

Commentary:

Law of sea pact hope

It has happened so often that this time it barely got into the papers. One more meeting of the United Nations Conference on Law of the Sea, this one in New York, broke up without reaching agreement. Its 2,500 delegates decided, however, to meet again next March in Geneva.

That wouldn't be cause for concern except for one thing. At stake here is economic control of the 70 percent of the earth that lies under water.

The tough questions include who will have the right to drill, dig and dredge for these increasingly valuable goodies located under what used to be called the high seas, under whose laws and rules they will do it, and how the proceeds will be split.

The U.S. delegation appears to have done more than its share in attempts to bridge these various gaps. Chief negotiator Elliot Richardson finally has served notice, however, that this country will not wait any longer. The Carter administration now will support legislation under which American firms under American law will be permitted to launch their own recovery ventures.

That is tough talk, and other delegations were critical of it. But it seems justified and may be just what is required to dislodge the haggling delegates from their adamant and conflicting stands. Maybe one more time at Geneva will do it.

If not, there is always Caracas, or another two months in New York. Better yet, let's cancel the reservations at those fancy hotels, leave most of the delegations at home, and lock up one expert from each interested nation for a couple of weeks at Camp David. Cabin fever under those circumstances has been known to work wonders.

Washington Report:

NW energy bill possible yet

By Steve Forrester

WASHINGTON — A three-ring circus might be an apt description of how the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act is being handled by Congress.

But not a three-ring circus in the usual sense; this one is deceptive. Two of the rings may appear to be empty, but don't turn your back for long. Something big may happen.

The three rings in this circus are the two House committees and the Senate committee which must pass on the bill. They include Rep. Lloyd Meeds' (D-Wash.) subcommittee, Rep. John Dingell's (D-Mich.) subcommittee and Sen. Henry Jackson's (D-Wash.) committee.

While Meeds' Water and Power Resources subcommittee slogs away at marking up (amending) the bill for consideration by the full Interior Committee, Dingell has said the bill has problems, and he has scheduled no further action by his Energy and Power subcommittee of the House Interstate Commerce Committee.

Five Northwest sponsors of the proposed Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act agreed Friday to postpone action on the Regional energy bill until 1979 because of competition from other issues and lack of time remaining in the current congressional session.

In the Senate, Jackson has assurance from Robert Byrd, D-W. Va., the majority leader, that the Northwest energy bill can be brought to the floor before adjournment.

Will there be a Northwest energy bill this year? Interesting question.

It's easy to conjure that unsurmountable delays will keep the congress occupied with other matters, such as remaining portions of President Carter's national energy bill, Alaska Lands legislation, to say nothing of a rail

strike which Congress might have to deal with.

But one veteran of the Capitol cautions: "The minute you turn your back, you may find this Northwest energy bill at the White House. At this point in the session, a bill can go through in an hour."

In other words, the crowded agenda of the closing days of the Congress can work to the advantage of a late-starting piece of legislation, particularly when the bill is of strictly regional importance.

The different treatment which a regional bill gets was demonstrated in Meeds' subcommittee last week during mark-up sessions. Congressmen from other regions drifted into and out of the meeting room, occasionally asking questions and then leaving because of other demands or lack of interest.

The Northwest energy bill is very complicated. So at some point, a non-Northwesterner must ask himself: "What does it matter that I don't understand this? I've got more important work."

As a longtime observer of the Hill comments, "Unless some member says the bill does violence to policy in the rest of the country, the bill could sail through."

During the first mark-up session, Rep. Phil Burton, (D-Calif.) exhibited skepticism for nearly an hour, but he hasn't been back. Only Rep. Manual Lujan, (R-N.M.) the ranking Republican of Meeds' subcommittee, paid attention and voted on amendments all week.

Meeds' subcommittee has moved through the first three sections of the bill and is into the fourth. Rep. Jim Weaver, (D-Ore.) has been successful in amending the bill to his satisfaction, but he lost a major one when Meeds' proposal concerning regional participation in energy planning defeated Weaver's.

The regional participation amendment Meeds offered incorporated elements of a proposal by Rep. Don Bonker (D-Wash.) The most salient feature of the article is that two-thirds of either council which the bill establishes, or governors representing at least 45 percent of the population of the Northwest, could send Congress a referendum on the critical energy forecast developed by the Bonneville Power administrator. The amendment is a step toward giving the region some real authority in energy planning.

Meanwhile, in the second ring, Dingell has alluded to the need for field hearings in the Northwest, and he has been skeptical about some provisions of the bill. Rep. Richard Ottinger (D-N.Y.) has exhibited even more skepticism.

But Dingell appears to have an ounce or two of bluster in his temperament, and Ottinger has the reputation of being bright but not persistent — not the kind of guy who can stop a bill in its tracks.

Could Sen. Jackson do business with a recalcitrant Dingell? One evening last week, Dingell pulled

some bluster on Jackson during a House-Senate conference committee session over remaining portions of Carter's energy bill. Dingell suddenly stormed up, saying he was going to vote against other bills unless the committee voted for a particular provision of this conference report.

Jackson leaned back and told Dingell that he (Jackson) had been in Congress 38 years and had never threatened to vote against certain bills if the bill on the table weren't considered favorably.

Dingell cooled off and said he thought Jackson was right. That vignette demonstrates that Jackson

can be persuasive with Dingell on a one-to-one basis, even in a crowded meeting room.

And we must not forget the Northwest has other key congressmen who might be able to persuade the House leadership to spring the Northwest energy bill for a vote. There is Rep. Tom Foley (D-Wash.), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, and Rep. Al Ullman (D-Ore.), chairman of House Ways and Means Committee. Meeds is a member of the House Rules Committee, which would have to pass on the bill.

Meeds also has a strong appeal he might make to his fellow veteran colleagues — that they ought to give him a break on this last piece of important legislation before he leaves Congress at year's end. As Meeds said before Dingell's subcommittee, "I am looking forward to working with you and your committee during these closing days of this session in further perfecting this vital piece of legislation in the hope that we will be able to get it to the president's desk before the close of this, my last, Congress."

That brings us to the third ring, Jackson's committee, where the staff, not the committee members, will perform the mark-up function. We soon should know the manner of agreement which has emerged among Jackson, Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) and Sen. Frank Church, (D-Idaho).

At least one congressman — Weaver — believes this is not a warm-up but the main show: "They mean business," he says.

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