

Scottsdale, AZ 85253-1459

February 3, 1997

C-Span

Attn: Brian Lamb

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I'm almost tempted to address you by your first name since you're an absolute "must" in my home.

Anyway, after this morning's program, I thought you'd be interested in the enclosed article. Just for a little background, the day I read about the possibility of C-Span going off the air, I immediately contacted TC1 and was told that I was only the third person to register a complaint — proof of low viewership in the area — and that unless more calls objecting to the change were received, TC1 was going ahead as planned; hence my letter to the editor the same day.

As you can see, the paper not only printed it but came back fully supporting my position. The only other person I heard from was Elizabeth Patterson referred to in the article.

I don't know how readers responded; I can only tell you TC1 reversed its decision and, not only that, later added C-Span II.

O. M. Cable

Maybe you can pass this on as another way viewers faced with the same dilemma can take action against their cable company. I've since relocated and am fortunate in that I have access to both C-Span and C-Span II.

Thank you for your good work — I feel I'm a better citizen as a result,

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Loss of C-SPAN would be blow to RGV viewers

Hooray for Cecilia Simmet!

Cecilia who?

Cecilia Simmet is the woman who sent a letter to the editor of The Brownsville Herald, protesting the possible cancellation of C-SPAN from TCI Cablevision of South Texas lineup of programming for the Rio Grande Valley.



Marcelino González

Editor of El Herald

But let Cecilia Simmet tell it herself, because I couldn't have said it better. I quote:

"Editor:

"While I know this may be outside your realm, I'm asking for your assistance.

"TCI Cablevision has decided to drop from this area's channel line-up effective June 1, 1994, the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network or C-SPAN as we all know it — this because of the lack of viewership (at least that's what they're telling me). What a disservice to the public this action is!

"Anyone who has watched or listened to even just portions knows that C-SPAN provides the most effective source for viewing the workings of our government and hearing "verbatim" the words of our elected officials; those of the printed and TV media on whom we depend for news, and the concerns of the public nationally. If we're to function as informed citizens, we need all the education we can get and, fortunately for us, C-SPAN in its well-rounded programming provides all sides of issues affecting the future of our nation and its people.

"I'm certain that among your readership there are many who feel as I do about the continued need for C-SPAN. A call to TCI (1-800-CABLE55) to let them know we want more than just entertainment in cable-viewing may cause them to change their minds about dropping one of the most effective educational tools we as the public have going for us.

"As editor, I know you can get this message throughout the Valley."

The Herald ran a story about C-SPAN Friday, April 22. Edwardo Campirano, general manager for TCI, said the change was not prompted because of programming.

"TCI," he said, "had originally planned to remove Eternal Word Television Network, EWTN, from its lineup." But due to "a lot of response from the customers," the channel will stay, he said.

Campirano said "C-SPAN, like EWTN, was also in the least favorable category and so was chosen for removal," he said. I understand he meant C-SPAN had low viewership ratings.

In the same story, Brownsville resident Elizabeth Patterson said, "I was horrified to learn that they are canceling C-SPAN in this area." "I feel that I have learned much more about how

my government operates and how my representatives are influenced since C-SPAN has been down here," she said.

So now we are three who oppose the change.

Anne Sweeny, chairwoman and CEO for fX, the channel that eventually would replace C-SPAN, said the new channel will include programming such as "Hart to Hart," "Mission Impossible," "Batman," and "Dynasty."

I don't have anything against the aforementioned programs. No doubt they have an audience; and TCI, as any other business, goes by the rule of profits. It is the American way.

Call it a social responsibility, call it good public relations, or call it plain common sense. You can even call it prestige.

But TCI, as many well-managed concerns that look at the full picture, could reflect on the way large companies keep in stock items they sell to certain customers, even though this may mean a little added cost of operations. They realize they need to keep all the customers they can.

Call it a social responsibility, call it good public relations, or call it plain common sense. You can even call it prestige.

I agree with Simmet and Patterson. We need C-SPAN to keep us abreast of the inner workings of the governing process. Many of its programs give us more insight on the intricacies of public office.

I particularly enjoy the great public debates in Congress, when something especially important for the American people is being debated.

I remember the impassioned speeches by congressmen in favor, and against, U.S. involvement in Iraq. I recall one lawmaker who said he couldn't, in all conscience, approve the possible bloodletting of American servicemen if the upcoming war was not fully justified.

I have learned a lot seeing C-SPAN, too. Those debates, plus press conferences, important speeches by public figures, and the lively discussions by moderators and participants in other cases make for a program worth keeping.

Other programming worth keeping and promoting are such TV stations as Discovery, A&E, Public Viewing, etc. There's more to TV than sitcoms, rap sessions, tedious square dancing by senior citizens, not to mention the mediocrity, violence, pornography and general bad taste that invade the American households.

Why don't we demand they give us more educational programs, more ballet, opera, symphony orchestras, and even light-hearted folkloric dance troupes from the United States and other countries?

America could use a great deal more edifying TV viewing.

os tortoises come ige from wildfire

It was here, in 1835, that British naturalist Charles Darwin found species unseen anywhere else and distinct from island to island. His observations formed the basis for his theory of natural selection and evolution, outlined in the "Origin of Species."

Among the unique reptiles are the huge land tortoises, five subspecies of which live on the flanks of each of the five volcanoes towering above Isabela Island.

Isabela has been wracked by fires from volcanic eruptions for millennia but probably never before has it endured two major fires within less than a decade. It has now — a devastating one in 1985 and the present fire, both caused by humans.

Wildfires on Isabela can be diabolical in their ability to stay alive. They seep through underground air passages known as lava tunnels and burn roots in the porous volcanic earth, smoldering for weeks.

A drought has left the forest tinder-dry and brisk winds can pick up quickly.

Guay, the Canadian fire expert, said: "There is no water throughout that area. We have to get water from the ocean and bring it to the fire line."

More than 120 Ecuadorean soldiers, firefighters and park rangers are still battling the blaze, dousing the flames with sea water held in backpack tanks and plowing trenches with six earthmovers.

Firebreaks — areas cleared of vegetation to interrupt the advancing flames — up to 40 feet

wide extend nearly 10 miles along the fire's flank, said Felipe Cruz, director of the Galapagos National Park.

If the fire bursts through the bulldozed firebreaks, scientists would have to rescue the giant tortoises, for there is no way they can move fast enough to escape the flames.

"Forget it. A tortoise, if it decides to start walking all the time, might move 3 kilometers (1.86 miles) in 24 hours," Cruz said.

During the 1985 fire, park rangers moved dozens of giant tortoises to a corral protected by volcanic rock on the south shore of the island.

"In case the fire goes wild and out of control we still have that as security. We could go and very quickly repair that corral and put tortoises inside. But I truly believe it won't be necessary," Cruz said.

Hunters going after wild pigs reportedly started the fire early this month at a campsite about 10 miles from Puerto Villamil, a village of about 1,000 residents that is the only inhabited place on Isabela Island.

The tortoises are far from the only concern of scientists.

"Yes, the whole world is worried about the tortoises. I am also worried about the tortoises. I don't want any tortoises to be burned. That's for sure," Cruz said. "But I'm also worried about the whole ecosystem that has been affected. It has many communities of invertebrates, plants and land birds that I have to worry about."



**"The Port's
Doing Great
And Getting
Better!"**

—JOHN ALLISON
Port Commissioner, Place 4



**"With Each
New Project,
We Attract More
Business And
More Jobs!"**

—AL SOTO
Port Commissioner, Place 2

nt Board of Commissioners
Brownsville has been extremely
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ult of the team effort of all the