

C-Span
400 N. Capitol St. NW
Suite 650
Washington, DC. 20001

January 13, 1998

DEAR C-SPAN (BRIAN AND STAFF):

I had a ball watching the Tocqueville program. I'm newly retired and it has been such fun to be home with the dog and cat and watch a TV program like Tocqueville, in almost its entirety, for months at a time. My hubby has been a bit jealous as he trudges off to work and we're at home with the fireplace going and coffee and C-Span. The following are a few of the things that I discovered (maybe relearned) as I watched:

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT TOCQUEVILLE?

- IT'S ABOUT US ALL **LOVING THE IDEA OF EQUALITY**, MAYBE SOME OF US AREN'T SO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE REALITY-- OTHERWISE, HOW COULD WE HAVE ALLOWED SLAVERY AND TREATED OUR NATIVE AMERICANS SO SHAMEFULLY? OUR TRADEMARK IS TAKING THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO ACHIEVE A GOAL--WE'VE EVEN BEEN TO THE MOON, WHY IS IT TAKING US SO LONG TO ACHIEVE TRUE EQUALITY? ESPECIALLY SINCE WE ALL AGREE THAT EQUALITY IS THE HEART OF OUR DEMOCRACY? WILL IT COME TO A RACE WAR AS TOCQUEVILLE PREDICTED?
- IT'S A **GRAND EXPERIMENT** THAT PROBABLY WON'T EVER WORK AS WELL ANYWHERE ELSE. BECAUSE IT IS INGRAINED IN OUR BEGINNINGS AND GEOGRAPHY, IT CAN'T BE EXACTLY DUPLICATED ELSEWHERE. WE'RE THE FIRST COUNTRY THAT IS TRULY A MIXTURE OF ALL NATIONS AND RACES. IT MAKES THINGS HARD AND EASY AT THE SAME TIME.
- WE TRULY **LOVE FORMING ASSOCIATIONS** AND BANDING TOGETHER FOR A CAUSE. WE STAND TOGETHER AGAINST CAUSES, TOO. WE'RE SPIRITED JOINERS AND MOVERS AND SHAKERS. WE LIKE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WITH EACH OTHER AND VOLUNTARILY DECIDE THINGS NEED CHANGING AND FIX THEM. OUR ACTIVE CITIZENRY YEARNs TO DO EVERYTHING FAST AND BY THE SHORTEST ROUTE. WE LOVE OUR TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES AND WE OPENLY DISPLAY OUR PASSIONS FOR OUR INSTITUTIONS AND EACH OTHER. WE ARE STILL WORKING ON THE PROBLEMS OF RACIAL DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE US AND KEEP US FROM REAL EQUALITY.

- **FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND OUR MORAL BELIEFS** ARE CRITICAL IN KEEPING US A STRONG DEMOCRACY WITHIN OUR WEALTH DRIVEN SOCIETY. OUR MORALS PROVIDE TEMPERING TO WHAT OTHERWISE MIGHT BE WILD DISREGARD FOR OTHERS.

- WE BELIEVE IN **SUPPORTING PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL**. WE DEBATE ABOUT HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE, BUT NO ONE QUESTIONS THE NEED OR DENIES THAT IT IS **ALL** OUR RESPONSIBILITY. MOST OF US SUPPORT GOVERNMENT DOING WHAT WE, AS INDIVIDUALS, ARE UNABLE TO DO AS WELL .

- **WE SUPPORT A FREE PRESS AND FREE SPEECH** AND ALL THE HEADACHES AND HEARTACHES THAT GO WITH THEM. WE LOVE THEM FOR KEEPING US HONEST. THE PRESS/MEDIA HELPS US TO MAKE WISE CHOICES. WE ALSO HATE THEM FOR THE POWER THEY HOLD, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HURT AND ABUSE INDIVIDUALS.

- **WE LOVE MONEY AND WEALTH**. WE LOVE IT AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A SOCIETY. IT DRIVES OUR COUNTRY AND DAILY LIVES AND WE WORK HARD TO ACQUIRE MORE AND MORE AND MORE. IS THIS DRIVE FOR WEALTH OUR NATIONAL GOD? WILL OUR SELF INTEREST RUIN IT ALL? WE PROUDLY POINT OUT THAT THE ROUTE TO WEALTH IN OUR DEMOCRACY HAS WINDOWS IN AND OUT FOR ALL OUR MEMBERS. WE LUST AFTER THE WINDOWS THAT GO IN AND ARE ALWAYS ANXIOUS ABOUT THE ONES THAT GO OUT.

- **WE BRAG ABOUT OURSELVES AND OUR COUNTRY** WHEREVER WE GO. IT'S EMBARRASSING THAT WE ARE SO VAIN. WE ALL TESTIFY THAT WE HAVE THE FREEST, MOST VIABLE AND STABLE SYSTEM IN THE WORLD. MAYBE WE DO, BUT WHY ARE WE SO BOASTFUL? BECAUSE WE'RE SUCH A YOUNG COUNTRY AND WE'RE IMMATURE AND PUFFED UP? WE BRISTLE AT CRITICISM AND CONSTANTLY SEEK PRAISE. DO WE JUST NEED TO GROW UP? WE EVEN THINK WE HOLD A SPECIAL PLACE WITH GOD, WE SING-- "AMERICA . . . GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE AND CROWNED THY GOOD. . ." BOY, DO WE THINK WE'RE A HOT TICKET OR WHAT?

- WE SUPPORT AN **ELABORATE COURT SYSTEM** THAT PROTECTS INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND OUR LIBERTY. WE LIKE THE JURY SYSTEM AND BELIEVE THAT OUR NEIGHBORS CAN JUDGE US FAIRLY. WE ALSO SUPPORT A **VOLUNTARY MILITARY SYSTEM** THAT HAS PROVEN ABLE TO PROTECT OUR INTERESTS TIME AND TIME AGAIN. OUR **PENAL SYSTEM STILL**

DOESN'T WORK TO REHABILITATE MANY--AND THE POOR AND MINORITIES ARE OVER REPRESENTED. AS THE YOUNG WOMAN IN PITTSBURGH SAID, THE GOOD THINGS HAVE REMAINED GOOD AND THE BAD HAVE STAYED BAD.

Well C-Span that's the short of it. Congratulations to you on all your hard work. The program was a wonderful success and I enjoyed every minute of it, especially the day in France with the Tocqueville family (Susan looked like she was enjoying herself--I hope she was) and the segment from the Ellis School in Pittsburgh (my home town). Your American guests throughout the tour were true to form and validated Tocqueville's observation that we are all sweet on ourselves and our communities. The people in the little river town near St. Louis were neat. The day at Sing Sing was sad--for the inmates, their families, the victims and all of us who haven't come up with better solutions for crime in our society.

Finally, I've never called in and probably never will--my phone is in the kitchen, but I've always wanted to say (like most of your callers do)--"Thank you for C-Span and keep up the good work"--and now I've done it!

Sincerely,

Trenton, NJ 08618

P.S. I planned to enter your contest and had a grand idea for a little art work, but it didn't work out to my satisfaction so I am just sending you this letter of thanks. Since "letters" wasn't one of your contest categories, this is not an entry, but I do think it might make a nice monologue for Charles Grodin (another Pittsburgher). JUST KIDDING.