

I LISTEN TO C-SPAN BECAUSE.....It offers me a window on the world, whether with my morning coffee or in the middle of a sleepless night, it is always there, reporting what's going on in public affairs. How does it help us? It goes something like this: We shape our society and then that society shapes our lives. We call this democracy. What we often fail to recognize is that we make changes through the political process. Less than half the eligible voters elected Ronald Reagan in 1980. The plain truth is that many citizens do not understand the political process and are afraid of it. C-Span, in presenting group meetings, hearings, and conference programs, is dissipating that fear and misunderstanding. For example anyone who heard the discussion of the Iran-Iraq war before the National Democratic Women's Club will be able to discuss the issue with candidates. C-Span is in fact a Continuing College of Political Science.

Let's look at some other examples.

In a recent Hispanic Leadership Conference on C-Span, the emphasis was on getting Hispanics to register until a woman worker pointed out that that was not enough, they need also to be shown how important the precinct meetings that take place after the election are. In this woman's first precinct meeting only 15 voters stayed for the meeting. When the chairman offered a list from which they would choose delegates, even though none of them were present, a few brave souls protested so the delegates were chosen from those present.

C-Span's great strength lies in its use of discussion—the basic tool of the democratic leader. Last night Judith Wagner and Edward Erler gave excellent presentations but it was the discussion that clarified important points. (on ERA)

quality The many call-in shows have a town hall meeting of the air waves that is interesting.

A few years ago at a TV Anniversary celebration some man who helped make TV a reality was asked how he reacted to the new medium. His answer: "What have they done with my child?" Today there is a whole family of his 'children' in the Communications field. I submit that the child called C-Span comes closest to enriching our culture as that inventor hoped would happen.

Gratefully

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