

"I Watch C-Span because...." By

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I watch C-Span because it puts me in touch with my country: her people, her problems, her leaders, her future.

It is the people on call-in sessions that I like best to view and hear. Even when I know I should be paying close attention to what they are saying, I find myself listening to names of the dozens of places from which they call, many of them as unknown to me as my small town is to them. I try to visualize these people in their home or at their job, to see the streets of their town -- "our town." I notice their names, and gather from them indications of the many countries from which our country has drawn its citizenry. I become involved in the great variety of accents with which compliments or complaints are voiced, and from these recognize how many we are to be involved in this one common interest, the welfare of the nation.

But I pay attention to the substance of their statements, too, and find myself in touch with national problems I otherwise would not have considered sufficiently, and with suggested solutions that had not occurred to me at all. I always turn from my C-Span sessions reluctantly, but encouraged. With all the apathy, even hostility, of which we must take account, I am able to see that there are many like myself, who are genuinely interested in what is best for our whole people, and for our place in world society.

The newsworthy people who appear on C-Span programs intrigue me. I am able to "put faces on" the columnists I've read, the elected or appointed officials whose names I've heard mentioned, political candidates, visitors to our country. And all of this without restriction to the little snippets of visage or voice that the news commentators deign to let us see. I get

to see these people in the dullness or electric tension of the congressional committee, the stress of presidential-candidate debate, the rapid-fire requirements of full news conferences or telephoned question sessions. I find that some of the ones I hear about regularly are more trivial than tremendous, that others who have attracted little or no attention are well along toward possible statesmanship. Of course I realize that this is not a scientific method, but it can help form a "voting opinion" on a candidate or an issue for me, a better informed opinion than I could have formed before C-Span.

Watching C-Span, I am a better informed, more enthusiastic citizen, one better able to contribute to the country's future. In short, I watch C-Span because it is "America's Network."

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