



[REDACTED]
Vancouver, WA, 98661

C-Span

I watch C-Span because it brings me to the center of Government. My sixty-six year-old brain wakes to anger as Cold Warrior Brzezinski addresses his elite crowd.

The Democratic Debates have made all the candidates familiar to me. I grew comfortable with Hollings' and Jesse Jackson's accents. I was glad to find other candidates and audiences, too, recognizing George McGovern's wisdom.

Congress and its committee hearings have expanded my living room. Dozens of fascinating characters come in without ever having to be offered a cup of coffee. I write them post-cards and they answer.

Sometimes I do more. In late summer 1983 C-Span showed a congressman with a scraggly Arafat beard..... Mike Lowry of my own state of Washington. His appearance embarrassed me, but I liked his ideas. Big events soon brought Mike Lowry to a Vancouver meeting, and, because of my C-span glimpse, I went.

Senator Henry Jackson died September 1. To replace him our Republican governor appointed a former three-term governor, Dan Evans. Immediately Evans began to move from his dovish positions to Jackson's and Reagan's more hawkish ones, preparing, no doubt, for the Democratic opponent he expected in November. But we were all surprised. For the special primary, the Seattle

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congressman with the ugly beard, Mike Lowry, challenged the popular mayor of Seattle. He promptly flew to remote state areas.

I wore my old "Carry on with Roosevelt" button to Mike's first Vancouver meeting. Mike noticed. He championed Henry Jackson's labor record. But he detailed his own opposition to cold war policies that had turned into Reagan's hot skirmishes all over the world. Mike claimed he had long ago vowed to keep his beard until Reagan balanced the budget.

Union leaders and other local Democrats clapped as much as I. They began to prepare for the primary and general election.

My own grain-of-sand role satisfied me completely. I went to the parking lots of shopping centers and passed out Mike's leaflets.

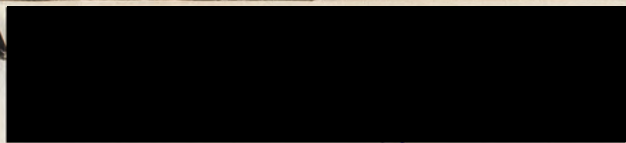
"We don't know Mike Lowry very well in this Oregon corner of the state," I told people. "But they do on Puget Sound. He's not very beautiful. But read his ideas. Read his record as a congressman."

Mike Lowry won the Democratic primary. He amazed everyone with his strong race in the general election. And, although Lowry didn't win, I think he helped Evans return to being the decent man he really is. Dan Evans voted No^{to} nerve gas.

As C-Span goes into more homes, it should bring us together as a knowing, caring country, the way we were when Roosevelt's fireside chats came in over the radio. Now we can know all of our governments' leaders better than we once knew Roosevelt.

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C-Span Essay Contest
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