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I watch C-SPAN because it translates the proverbial lone, still picture equal to a thousand words, into a non-stop cavalcade of living pictures -- direct and unedited -- showing what life is really like for the crowd in the back of the congressional tram or the probers and strokers on the press bus.

C-SPAN takes you for a frantic, breathless ride on the political rollercoaster as it bumps along the ups-and-downs of the presidential campaign trail from New Hampshire to California. It's a march to Washington to remember Martin. It's a steady-paced tour through a day in the lives of USA Today, Washington Post or the Manchester Union. Who can forget the jet speed orations of Chicago's own "radical conservative" crown prince, Studs Terkel? Or, meandering along the air waves into the wee small hours of the morning with the King (Larry, that is!) of late night radio. How many millions of taste buds were jolted into motion that night as they watched Hedrick Smith munch his way through the radio/C-SPAN simulcast? Viewers have been rewarded with ring-side seats to laugh their way up and down the musical scales of satirical humor with the Capitol Steps; or, we could beat our feet to the rhythms of the U.S. Army, Air Force or Navy Bands.

Lifeless print by-lines come alive when they are matched with the sight and sound of their owners. There really is a Penny Pagano with the Los Angeles Times or Aram Bakshain with the Washington Times. When C-SPAN's Lamb (of the human kind) fixes his gentle gaze into the eye of the camera and inquires, "Caller, do you have your morning paper there?", the caller best be prepared for a not-so-gentle failing mark if the hometown morning newspaper isn't!

After Editor-turned-pitchman, Louis Lapham, appeared recently extolling the "new" look of Harper's, it ^{took} almost the ~~the~~ equivalent of a year's subscription price ^{single} in gas money after I drove around half a day just to find a copy to purchase.

All of our kids aren't going to "pot" . I saw a whole group going into the White House to quiz the President. C-SPAN was there! I've gone on location, behind the scenes with the Speaker of the House, and visited with the "upkeeper" of the Capitol, George White. And sooner or later, everyone who is anyone turns up at the National Press Club luncheons. Miss America, Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole, Argentina's Dante Caputo and our own Leonard Bernstein have all had their turn.

The single most thing I would like to see C-SPAN do in the future is: Follow a single piece of legislation from birth to law or death. The intricate mechanics as it passes from committee to sub-committee to hearings, debate and vote, as it is signed into law at the White House or "deep-sixed" into a multi-digitated file of lost causes. C-SPAN can do it!

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