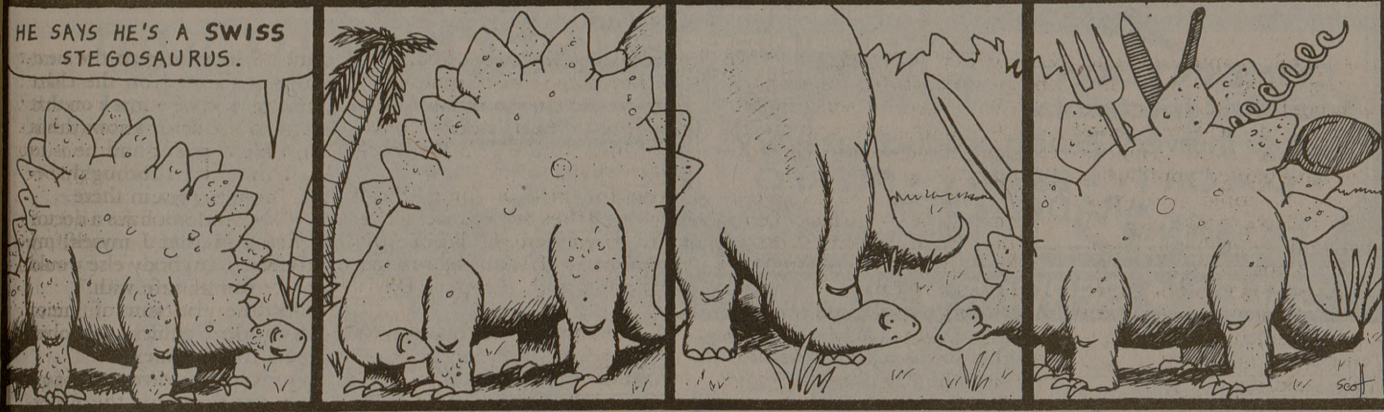


Warped

by Scott McCullar



Cutbacks

(continued from page 1)

The show still can be shown if the station cannot afford the program that year, he said. A station buys the rights to a program for more than one year, so the programs can be rerun, Chastain said.

Such budget cuts as these have forced public broadcasters to consider advertising as a source of revenue. KAMU is interested in advertising experiments being conducted by public broadcast stations around the country, Chastain said.

Congress approved an 18-month experiment in 1981 to allow 10 public television stations to try advertising; National Public Radio decided not to participate in the experiment.

Chastain said the New Orleans public broadcasting service, WYES, made \$200,000 in four and a half months by running advertisements from such institutions as banks and savings and loan companies.

Advertising experiments in progress at various PBS stations are carefully regulated, he said. Programs aren't interrupted, and advertisements are sandwiched between station identifications and promotional announcements.

"I find 30 seconds of institutional commercials less offensive than having a good program interrupted by seven or eight minutes of begging for money," he said. "We do it three times a year; some do it every month."

After the advertising experiment has ended, the Federal Communications Commission will make recommendations on the use of advertising in public broadcasting.

"I think after the 18-month experiment, even if the powers that be say it's OK to advertise, we will see a very, very gradual transition," he said.

"Public broadcasting is extremely sensitive to the wants and will of viewers. If there's a

big negative reaction, we would quit. The only product we have is what's on the air.

"We'll have to wait and see. If we're free to pursue it, we'll pursue it — pending University approval, since we're licensed by the University."

Some stations are afraid to use commercials, Chastain said. He cited two reasons for the reluctance to use commercials.

"Public broadcasting belongs to the public and shouldn't look commercial," he said. "Also, there is a fear among some that if they run commercials, commercial entities will influence programming."

Public broadcasting stations must maintain their integrity and continue with programs for minorities, despite small audiences, he said.

Audience size dictates rates for commercials, he said. This is contrary to what public broadcasting is all about, Chastain said.

The objective of public broadcasting is to be an alternative broadcast source that can offer such programs as "Over Easy," Chastain said. The primary audience for this show is composed of retired people.

Statistically speaking, retired people are not big buyers, he said. On a commercial basis, the program probably wouldn't sell. Groups that aren't statistically big buyers don't get special programming on commercial stations. Public broadcasting is the place for special group programming, he said.

Audience surveys of public broadcasting match the general population breakdown of the United States almost perfectly, Chastain said.

In the last two or three years, public broadcasting has made across-the-board gains, he said.

According to United Press International, public television's viewership, which is now at 90 million, has more than doubled in the last five years. Its image as

a service for the elite is crumbling.

Nationally, the three commercial networks have lost 10 percent of their viewers. PBS gained 7 percent of these; the other 3 percent of the viewers have gone to cable or have quit watching television, Chastain said.

So PBS needs to maintain its program strategy — broadcasting shows viewers can't see else-

where, he said. This should help solve funding problems, he said.

"I think it's in many ways a more energetic environment if public broadcasting seeks money from a variety of areas," he said. "We can't sit back waiting for money — that's not responsive."

"Ask for support and viewers will give it to us. That's the way it ought to be — a marketplace."

H-E-B

There will be a meeting of the Hurst-Eules-Bedford Hometown Club on Wednesday, September 22 at 8:30 p.m. in Room #302 Rudder.

The meeting will last about 40 minutes and will be followed by a get-together at Bennigan's.

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A&M Hometown Club
1st Organizational Meeting
and election of officers

Thursday, Sept. 23 1982
501 Rudder 7:00 p.m.

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED