

## State and Local

# Customers won't see any changes in cable services despite new name

By Jill Radenbaugh  
Reporter

McCaw Cablevision in Bryan-College Station officially changed its name to Cooke CableVision earlier this month, but the name is the only change their 28,000 subscribers can expect from the cable company.

Jack Kent Cooke purchased the cable system owned by McCaw Communications Inc. in January for an undisclosed price in an all-cash transaction.

The cable company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jack Kent Cooke Inc., which claims many interests, including the Chrysler and Kent buildings in New York, the Los Angeles Daily News and the Washington Redskins professional football team.

Cooke founded the American Cablevision Co. in 1964, which eventually became the largest privately-owned cable company in America.

"Nothing has changed except the name," said John Southard, systems manager of Cooke CableVision.

"All of the management will stay the same, and there won't be any policy changes," he said.

But there are many who want to see changes in the local cable situation including some students and a College Station city official.

Debbie Lemke, a senior accounting major living off campus, said she isn't happy with the cable situation in Bryan-College Station.

"I think Cooke CableVision has a monopoly on the whole cable business," Lemke said. "Students have no other choice but Cooke if they want cable. Students are trapped," she said.

But Southard disagrees.

"We do not consider ourselves a monopoly in the Bryan-College Station community," he said, "because cable is a luxury, not a necessity. Therefore, cable is not a city utility," he said.

Cable in Bryan-College Station is not a non-exclusive franchise, he said. Another cable company could come into town if the city allows them.

The College Station City Council currently does not have a specific committee overseeing the cable company, however, up until August 1987 there was such a committee.

Peggy Calliham, public information officer for Bryan-College Station, said it expired because it no longer had a function.

Steve Parker, a former cable franchise committee member said the cable franchise committee was initially formed to provide some oversight of the cable company.

"I was surprised to learn that the committee would eventually expire," Parker said. "The committee was only appointed for a specific length of time, which expired in August," he said.

Parker said the committee was formed in response to a citizen's recommendation.

"We, as committee members, were requested to evaluate the merits of the cable company sale with respect to the franchise transfer," he said.

Parker said the cable company in Bryan-College Station appears to be a defacto monopoly because there isn't another competing system now. But prior to 1985, there were two competing cable companies.

Southard said one company can offer better service.

In 1985, when Community Cablevision and Midwest Video were both operating in the Bryan-College Station area, they could only offer limited channels because of their competition with each other, Southard said.

Competition caused them to lower the rates and therefore, they had to lower the quality of service, he said. When there were two cable companies operating in Bryan-College Station, they only offered about half the channels.

"With only one cable company in the area, Cooke CableVision can offer more channels and better quality service at a higher rate," Southard said.

"Cooke CableVision offers 37 different channels. The channels range from religious programs to black entertainment programs," he said.

But Brenda Calvin, a sophomore general studies major living on campus, said cable is too expensive in the dorm.

"I would rather live with only one channel than pay those prices," Calvin said. "We, my roommate and I, would probably get cable if they offered a better deal to students on campus. If cable was added to our fee slip, I'm almost positive we would get it," she said.

But Cooke CableVision does offer a \$10 installation discount for students living on campus.

Southard said, "We can offer students on campus a discount because we do several hook-ups on the same day. But we consider students living off campus the same as anyone else in the community," he said.

Cooke CableVision bases its prices on the cost of doing business, Southard said. It's a privately-owned business and can set its own prices with little regulation.

There has been discussion of a bulk rate for all dorms on campus, Southard said.

"However, to give a bulk rate for Texas A&M University, every dorm must have cable. That creates a problem because not everyone living in the dorms wants cable," he said.

There don't seem to be any easy answers to the price problem.

Parker said, "A competing system would return the cable industry to competitive rates. However, that would not be feasible for a town our size."

There are only a few cities in the country that have two successful competing cable companies, Parker said.

"A cable franchise committee isn't necessary anymore because it is so limited in what it can do," he said.

"The Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 essentially deregulated the cable industry entirely."

It is going to take federal regulation to change this system, he said.

According to CableReports, a monthly newsletter, the Cable Communications Policy Act falls far short of protecting consumers, programmers and would-be competitors from the cable monopoly.

Since the act, time has illustrated that the cable industry is not respecting the fundamental legislative agreements between franchising authorities and cable operators, which the act was intended to embody, the newsletter said.

# A&M panel discusses program of assisting undeveloped nations

By Drew Leder  
Staff Writer

Texas A&M faculty members and administrators familiar with international aid programs told students at a Jordan Institute for International Awareness presentation Thursday the United States can be most effective in aiding undeveloped nations by assisting these nations help themselves.

About 45 students attended the panel discussion in Rudder Tower that addressed the effectiveness of international aid programs.

"Self help seems to be one of the more effective ways of helping," William A. McIntosh, an associate professor of sociology said.

McIntosh, who spent three years in Laos as an aid volunteer, said groups that go into an underdeveloped nation attempting to solve problems, won't have much success if they don't involve the local people in the process.

James Christianson, a professor of agricultural education who's done aid work in several countries, agreed with McIntosh.

"In the success stories, people took the time to find out what the real problems were instead of assuming they knew," Christianson said.

Another problem that can arise if the local people aren't involved in helping themselves is that they might become overdependent on those who are helping them, McIntosh said.

"Sometimes the effect of technical assistance is to make people believe the only people who can solve their problems are outsiders," he said.

Aid volunteers also must try not to impose their beliefs on those who they want to help, Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture Dwayne Suter said.



Dr. James Goodwin

Suter, who worked with U.S.-AID in the Philippines, said that while it is sometimes difficult for volunteers to accept the values and customs of the people they interact with, they should try to respect the different culture.

"You work on the assumption that their values are valid," he said.

Although volunteers may try not to impose their beliefs on the local people, there is no way to get around it, said James Goodwin, coordinator of A&M's international agricultural programs.

"You can't do anything without changing what's around you," Goodwin said. "We want to minimize the way we impose our personal and political beliefs."

John Norris, director of A&M's office of international coordination, said another problem arises from differing political systems.

"We have the ability to feed the world," he said, "but we don't have the ability to get (food) to the people who need it."

Although problems like governmental corruption may limit the aid some people will receive, Norris said the United States has an obligation try to help less fortunate nations.

"As long as there is inequality we have to offer aid," Norris said.

# Russian ballet dancer becomes honorary citizen of Dallas

DALLAS (AP) — Dancer Andrei Ustinov, who fled the Moscow Ballet in Dallas two weeks ago, has been made an honorary citizen of the city. Mayor Annette Strauss officially welcomed the dancer Wednesday.

"Your decision to stay in the United States and this city was a

preme act of courage," Strauss said.

Ustinov, who ran away from the hotel where the troupe was staying and pleaded in broken English with a passer-by for help, seemed bewildered at the council hearing, but said he was glad to be in Dallas.

His defection to the United States

was announced last week by federal officials.

Ustinov said, "Today, I speak English very bad. Here (I find) freedom of artist and of my religion, my pleasure. Thank you very much."

Flemming Flindt, artistic director

of the Dallas Ballet, said Ustinov will make his debut with the company Nov. 10.

Flindt said, "It was an enormous opportunity for the Dallas Ballet when he chose to begin his ballet career with us."

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