Opinion

PIK: did the feds finally do something right

People like to say quick fixes don't work. President Reagan likes to say that government isn't the answer, it's the problem. Well, here's a quick fix that appears to be working — an answer provided by the government, proposed by Mr. Reagan's own agriculture secretary, John R. Block, and accepted by Mr. Reagan.

"It's a crazy idea, but we've got to do something," Secretary Block had declared, almost desperately. The idea is to pay farmers not to plant some of their land, and to pay in kind (whence the acronym, PIK) out of the mounds of surpluses that have piled up in bins and warehouses.

Farmers have signed up in droves. They've got to do something. They've been having fat years, in terms of production, which means ever leaner years, in terms of income.

In 1979, total farm income hit a record of nearly $33 billion. With record crops in 1981, followed by another record in 1982, farm income fell off by more than a third last year, to the lowest level (taking inflation into account) since 1933, the depth of the Great Depression. Farm bankruptcies have soared.

The higher the production, the lower the prices, and the higher the costs to the taxpayers for storing the surpluses. On the average, price support outlays have come to around $4 billion a year over the last dozen years or so. Without PIK, it is estimated that the total could reach $18 billion or even $20 billion this year.

So what's good for the farmers is good for the taxpayers and good for the federal budget, since the farmers will be paid for not planting wheat and corn and cotton and rice and other commodities with the stuff already in storage instead of in dollars. As for prices to the consumers, the PIK program is expected to be neutral.

To be sure, PIK does not solve the underlying problems of the farms, one of which, paradoxically, is that the American farmer is the most efficient in the world. It does, however, give the farmers some breathing time and the government the opportunity to address itself to the knotty problems of getting supply and demand into balance, of keeping the farmers on the land, and of using their resourcefulness and America's resources to feed the hungry at home and abroad.

A right call

The Reagan administration has made the right call in granting political asylum to Hu Na, the 19-year-old Chinese tennis champion who defected in California last July. The administration overruled objections from some officials in the State Department, who feared that the decision would upset relations with the Chinese government, and from the Chinese government, which insisted that Hu had no reason to fear political persecution if she returned to China.

Hu, obviously, was not persuaded, for understandable reasons. It is true that under Deng Xiaoping China has repudiated the "great cultural revolution" of its late leader Mao Tse-tung, but as dissidents like Wei Jing-sheng and Liu Qing would testify (wherever they are), China is far from being a society in which freedom of expression is tolerated.

In a protest, the Chinese Embassy in Washington warned that the decision "will certainly affect bilateral exchanges." So it might, but Peking is well aware that most of the 10,000 Chinese now studying in the United States (as against, by the way, only 200 or 300 Americans allowed to study in China) will return. Last year, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, only 102 Chinese applied for political refuge, and only eight applications were approved.

Criticism also has come from another quarter. Why shouldn't Salvadorans, of whom about 25,000 have applied for political asylum, be treated in the same way? They should be. Those who have a well-founded fear of political persecution should be granted asylum. That may offend other governments, but it is what the American government stands for.

Space-station industry

What came out of the cargo bay of the Challenger space shuttle recently was a big communications satellite. It might as well have been a component for a space station.

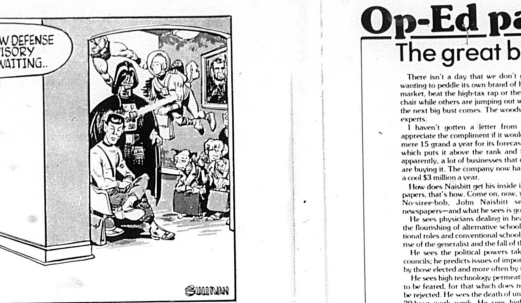
The cargo-carrying capacity of the space shuttle has made it plausible to build a permanent, manned station in orbit, and the Reagan administration has been soliciting ideas from the aerospace industry about how to proceed with such a project.

There is every reason why American industry should consider branching out into space. Certain products like pharmaceuticals can best be manufactured in a gravity-free environment. There is the tantalizing idea of obtaining rare minerals from the moon. Theoretically at least, electricity could be generated by solar energy in space and beamed back to earth.

According to the study group at the Convair Division of General Dynamics in San Diego, a basic space station could be constructed in orbit by the early 1990s, with an expanded version in place by the year 2000.

President Reagan has suggested that some of the satellite services now provided by government could be handled as well by private industry. He's right, and the prospect of conducting commercial activities in a space station makes it logical that private enterprise should share in the development costs.

The Challenger represents a refinement of the technology proved in earlier flights of the space shuttle Columbia. We now have the capability of carrying freight into space. The train is in the station, waiting for American industry to climb aboard.



Agree or not

Financial situation for next governor is not that optimistic

by S.C. Van Curen

While the candidates are scrapping over who may become governor next year, a look at the financial picture for Kentucky isn't too optimistic according to information gleaned from the Finance Commissioner in a telephone interview last week.

In looking ahead to fiscal 1985, "There will be sufficient resources for the next governor to get by on a continuation budget," Finance Cabinet Secretary Robert Warren said of the present financial situation.

"There will be enough growth to take care of the cost-of-living increases for teachers and government employees and sufficient income to take care of normal growth costs," he said. "However, unless the financial picture changes drastically, there won't be enough money for new projects or programs."

Growth of 6 percent

Warren said the projected growth rate for fiscal 1983 over 1982 is only 6.2 percent which is about the rate of inflation for the general fund. This is in comparison to the growth rate of about 15 percent on an average during the 1970s, he explained.

Basing his future estimates on general fund income for the first three months of this calendar year, although the figures were not official last week, Warren said, "Based upon March income, we'll be lucky to stay even with inflation," adding, "we'll do good to stand still."

Income from the sales tax showed an increase of only 3.9 percent, he said. This tax provides about 35 percent of the state's general fund.

If tax receipts continue their March trend, he explained, the 3.9 percent growth rate appears to be optimistic.

The coal severance tax presents a real problem for the next budget, Warren said a 12.4 percent decline in tax receipts is being projected for the near future, based upon March receipts from this source.

"This could be optimistic," he warned. He said what happens in the coal industry may depend a great deal upon what happens in the petroleum industry.

If petroleum prices keep falling, "the utilities may scrap plans to convert to coal from oil," Warren said.

Road fund impact

The recession is having a continued impact upon the road fund. Warren said this fund is expected to grow about five percent. This should be enough to take care of operational inflationary actions on a continuation budget basis only. In effect, there will be sufficient money for maintenance and general operations, but nothing for new road projects.

Last people in Northern Kentucky get alarmed about their proposed AA highway, Warren said the money for this road will come from a 25-year bond issue authorized by the 1982 legislature.

Governor John Y. Brown Jr. has had to cut and trim in almost every department in government while trying to maintain the essential services and he has done so in every essential case, Warren indicated.

One of the real problems the present administration has had to face, and the one the next administration must face is the 20 percent increase in operational costs for the state's prison system mandated by the federal courts. This doesn't address the issue of overcrowding or provide for any new construction for this service.

From this financial forecast, some may wonder why anyone would want to be governor the next four years.

Down Memory Lane

Cabins winterized at 4H Camp;

War Bond quota is over the top

Thursday, April 25, 1963

Construction work is well underway at the North Central District 4-H Camp in Nicholas County on winterized cabins for year-round use. Another feature will be an 11-acre lake to be used for boating, swimming and water supply.

Frank Caldwell of the Headquarters section was injured Tuesday afternoon by a ball which crashed through a gate knocking Caldwell to the ground. He suffered a broken hip and was taken to Bourbon County Hospital for emergency treatment, then later moved to the Good Samaritan Hospital.

An unoccupied house on the farm of Herbert Hamilton at Rose Hill was destroyed by fire Saturday afternoon. It was being used for storage and contained 100 tons of fertilizer and 1,000 feet of new lumber. Cause of the fire is unknown.

The Girl Scouts of Troop 170 from Carlisle collected clothing for the Cuban refugees in Miami, Fl. and received a thank you note from Singonde, of the International Public Relations Department.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Smith, a son, Ronald Warren, April 18 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. James Mitchell, Medford, a son, April 21 at Nicholas County Hospital.

MARRIED — Miss Donna Scott and Ray Earlywine, April 12 at Carlisle Christian Church by the Rev. Norman Kiser.

DIED — Joe Clay, 85, April 18 at Nicholas County Hospital. — Samuel Levi Ishmael, 92, April 18 at St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington. — William H. McCarty, 81, of Ewing, April 19 at Fleming County Hospital. — Harvey Holton Keller, 65, April 19 in a hospital in Pittsburgh. — William Taylor Kimes, 90, April 20 at Odd Fellows Home in Lexington.

Thursday, April 29, 1943

Nicholas County's second war bond drive quota went "over the top."

Sufficient doughnut flour and shortening to make 1,500,000 doughnuts for American servicemen in North Africa were part of a huge shipment of Red Cross supplies recently cleared from the United States.

Mrs. W.J. Reed and daughter, Mrs. George Linville, were at the St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington, to see Pvt. John Squires Reed, who submitted to successful surgery on Thursday.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Albert Curry, Moorefield, a son, Tuesday at Johnson Memorial Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Stery, Myers, a son, at Johnson Memorial Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Saunders, Fort Thomas, a son, at Good Samaritan Hospital, Lexington.

MARRIED — Miss Frances Vice and Pvt. Everett Preston Smart, April 5. — Mrs. Wilhelmina Sapp and John F. Sapp, April 24.

DIED — John Thadious Bowe, 88, Tuesday at home in the Headquarters section. — Ora Hamlet Collier, 73, Monday at home in Paris.

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Letters from our readers

Ruby Wrench writes of old days at Myers

To The Carlisle Mercury:

Attached is a copy of a letter written by my mother, Ruby Buchanan Wrench, in January of this year. Shortly afterwards, my mother suffered a near fatal stroke and is recuperating in Abingdon, Va.

I thought that the letter would be of interest to you, as I found it when I was going through her things.

I too, remember the Mercury from years back.

Very truly yours,
William B. Wrench

Thank you for sending the Mercury to my new address. The Mercury has been in my family since we moved from Hidden, W.Va. to Myers, Ky. in the fall of 1908. Is there anyone still living in Nicholas County who was in the third grade at Carlisle City School in 1908? I was there that year and Miss Sue Tuttle taught the third grade. She was a good Christian and dedicated teacher. She lived alone in a little house in Carlisle.

I stayed all night with her once when the Licking River backed up Cassidy Creek and a horse and buggy couldn't cross. There were no bridges except foot bridges swinging across, which got washed out frequently and cost $25 to replace. We had an ice cream supper every summer to replace ours.

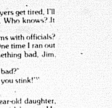
The county roads were hard to travel, muddy in the winter and dusty in summer. The L&N ran a branch line from Maysville to Lexington, making about a dozen stops on the way.

The Mercury has outlived the other publications read in my childhood such as The Cincinnati Post, The Delineator, Youth's Companion, Cosmopolitan and McClure's.

Ruby Wrench
Route 3, Box 51
c/o Sam Gibson
Castlewood, Va. 24224

Op-Ed page

The great birdcage forecast . . newspapers can line your brain with a lot of facts



RUSS METZ

There isn't a day that we don't get a letter from some outfit wanting to peddle its own brand of how to get rich, play the stock market, beat the high-tax rap or the way to lay back in your easy chair while others are jumping out windows of tall buildings when the next big bust comes. The woodwork is full of these self-styled experts.

I haven't gotten a letter from the Naisbitt Group, but I'd appreciate the compliment if it would send me a flyer. It charges a mere 15 grand a year for its forecasts, analysis and expert advice, which puts it above the rank and file mail-order peddlers. And, apparently, a lot of businesses that can afford that kind of scratch are buying it. The company now has 50 employees and generates a cool $3 million a year.

How does Naisbitt get his inside information? By reading newspapers, that's how. Come on, now, you say. You're putting me on. No siree-bob. John Naisbitt sees the future by reading newspapers—and what he sees is good.

He sees physicians dealing in health and not sickness. He sees the flourishing of alternative schools, computers assuming educational roles and conventional schools imparting values. He sees the rise of the generalist and the fall of the specialist.

He sees the political powers taking leave of capitols for local councils; he predicts issues of importance will be decided less often by those elected and more often by referendum.

He sees high technology permeating the life of the nation but not to be feared, for that which does not increase human contact will be rejected. He sees the death of unions for lack of need. He sees a 20-hour work week. He sees high-tech consumers deciding on their own news content of newspapers and magazines.

Says John Naisbitt: "There's a shift from being competitive to being cooperative and to values that have nourishment. What is happening in America is the exact opposite of Orwell's scenario in 1984—Big Brother, centralized government and all that. Citizens are taking over from the bottom up, they're running things and power is ebbing from Washington."

How does Naisbitt come to all of this? By research done by the Washington-based company he founded 12 years ago called the Naisbitt Group. His method, known as "content analysis," involves combing every day through 125 newspapers covering 94% of the United States population, gleaning about 500 significant items from them daily and filing them under more than 200 categories. By measuring the changing amount of space devoted to issues, patterns presumerably surface.

His theory is that since newspapers are a closed system (there's about the same amount of news space from week to week) emerging concerns will push old ones from the space as they become more urgent. The Naisbitt Group packages its findings three times a year in two-inch thick binders called the Trend Report, which 90 customers, mostly large companies pay, $15,000 a year to get.

Naisbitt said he happened on the method while trying to figure out the long-range implications of Great Society legislation that he was pushing on Capitol Hill as a special assistant in President Lyndon Johnson's White House. At the time he was reading a Civil War history by Bruce Catton.

"I realized he was using newspapers of the day as his primary source material. I went out and bought 50 or 60 newspapers from all over the country and spent a day reading them. I was absolutely blown away by how much I learned.

"I had a sense of what was going on all over the country. I thought if I could systemize it, I could really find out what was going on."

I have been studying this changing scenario of our world for years from reading newspapers and have learned some interesting facts, too: Beetle Bailey is never going to get out of the army, Hagar the Horrible cannot conquer even his wife, Dagwood has been fired 375 times by Mr. Dithers, and Shoe is never going to understand how computers work if he doesn't climb down out of that silly tree.

Naisbitt's report should stifle the sarcasm of some of my buddies who claim they read my newspaper just before going to bed, so they can go to sleep without a thing on their minds.

— RM —

It's been that kind of spring. Bob Collins says in the Indianapolis Star: Use the first day of spring he saw

- A shivering groundhog wearing his shadow.
- A yapper shouting his teeth were chattering at a motorist when his mouth froze.
- A snow plow following an ice breaker down Meridian Street.
- Three Eskimos at the airport. They'd cut short their vacation and were going home to get some sun.
- Pedestrians wearing tire chains.
- A sign outside a saloon offering a "2 for 1 Pre-snow hour."
- The Siberian Army in University Park. It was here for survival training.
- A beauty queen in a fur bikini—full length.
- "Maybe spring here is the result of divine intervention." Bob says. "We are impatient. We like to do it and get it over with and get on to the next thing."

— RM —

You may have heard this one, about a farmer and a lawyer whose cars collided. The farmer took a look at the lawyer, then reached back in his car for a bottle of whiskey.

"Here, you look pretty shook up," he told the lawyer. "I think you ought to take a nip of this. It'll steady your nerves."

"You still look pale," the farmer said a few minutes later. "How about another?"

After taking several swigs at the farmer's urging, the lawyer suspected that the farmer also have a drink.

"Not me," said the farmer. "I'm waiting for the state trooper.

— RM —

Someone asked Jim Valvano, North Caroline State's basketball coach, about the possible effects of Ogden, Utah's high altitude on his gang of free-shooting squad.

"It'll have very little impact," he said. "If the players get tired, I'll just call a timeout and tell them to crouch a little. Who knows? It might help."

And what college coach doesn't have his problems with officials? Valvano pleads guilty, laughing, then recalling: "One time I ran out onto the court and the ref says, 'If you say something bad, Jim, I'm going to call a technical.'

"So I said, 'Is it all right if I just think something bad?'

"The ref says "Sure." So I say, "All right, I think you stink!"

— RM —

A frustrated father was shopping with his six-year-old daughter, who kept informing him that she had to go to the girls' room. He didn't know what to do and his child became more insistent. However, a saleswoman came to his rescue.

"It's all right," the lady said. "I'll take her."

About five minutes later they returned. "Now don't forget to thank the nice lady," said the grateful father.

"Why should I thank her?" said the girl. "She had to go, too."

— RM —

It depends on how you look at it: A few years back, Sen. Ted Kennedy was conducting hearings on the drug industry. On one particular day, the subject under discussion was drug prices.

The senator's publicity-wise staff had assembled a panel of elderly consumers to kick off the day's show. Kennedy, who plays to TV cameras with the aplomb of a professional actor, read a short statement, then went directly to questioning the senior citizens about their experiences with drug prices.

A state-barred old gentleman was the first to be questioned. After several "mood-setting" questions, the senator asked, "Do you think the drugs you use are expensive?"

"Yes sir, Senator Kennedy, I do," said the man. The senator leaned back, smiled in anticipation of what was to come next, and said, "How do you feel about that?"

The old man paused. "How do I feel about prices of the drugs I use?"

The senator nodded. His staff nodded. The assembled Washington reporters nodded.

"Well," said the old gent, "it beats hell out of the alternative."

Onward, ups and

This that and 'tother

by Warren R. Fisher Sr.

The landscape was typical. The gently rolling contour of the fields, the meandering streamlet, the glimpses of distant woodland of ash and oak and walnut, the rich auburn of the soil marked it as the Bluegrass. It was, too, one of those rare June mornings, warm, glistening and yet with a breeze that came cool and odorous, as if "off a rain." Waffles, golden brown waffles for breakfast! And then to sit on the porch with smoldering cigarette and be soothed by the beauties of a scene familiar, yet never to lose its charm. There is no rugged grandeur of scenery here and one wonders if its appeal of beauty is not somehow linked with poignant memories of childhood, of carefree days along a winding "branch," of the incense of the meadows, the clatter of the binder in the wheat, the smell of the grain and steaming in the windrows, or the lonesome tinkle of sheep bell at twilight, the plaintive voice of lambs, the slither of the hoofs of a galloping horse in the tall grass and plantain at dusk, the fragrance of lemon verbena at the door and the dank, sweet smell of the Virginia creeper about the old portico. Perhaps it is all this and because of these that we see this familiar landscape through the eyes of a lover, yet the charm of its quiet beauty lies before one like a pastoral stage setting of exquisite craftsmanship. One feels the need of an orchestra to complete the picture and it is then we realize that Nature is the perfect artist, setting her stage so wonderfully that she maves her wild folk, her little feathered musicians to song.

*****

Clear, liquid, penetrating comes the canary-like trill of a song sparrow from the lilac bushes. Poor little singer! His rowdy cousin, the English sparrow, has almost completed his extinction. Once he sang from every tree and hedgerow. The meadow-lark sails, partridge like, to the top of a fence rail and tosses his rippling carol into the air, to drift to us in plaintive sweetness. A quail whistles from a nearby thicket; the woodpeckers drum industriously; an orchard oriole shyly tries out a short, flute-like whistle and the friendly robin expresses his delight upon finding an especially fat worm. After feathered musicians join the chorus, contributing their part to the orchestral accompaniment of Nature's presentation of her great Festival of June. Too seldom we listen and few of us realize the importance of song birds in making perfect that season of birth and life and beauty which is Summer. Without them how sad the fields, how silent the trees, how imperfect the magnificent spectacle of Nature at her loveliest!

*****

Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field. — Ecclesiastes

Despite the tendency to pessimism and despite the "this also is vanity" attitude, the "words of the Preacher, the son of David," are not lacking in wisdom. We are all "served by the field," no matter of what rank or condition. Hunger, we are told, is the fiercest instinct, balking at nothing, neither murder nor pillage, when denied. How soon would the kings and counsellors of the earth, the wise, the rich and the poet, the beautiful, savant and simpleton alike, lose the surface polish of civilization and become frantic beasts in the face of Famine! Long life to the profession of farming, the service of the fields!

*****

We regard the extension of burley production into new areas, into states where it had not previously been grown, as the most serious menace to the Association, nor have we any solution of that problem which is practicable. — Anderson News.

Here is a real problem, truly, and in its solving The Mercury must join the News in its inability to point out a solution that is practicable. The Burley Association, through the orderly marketing of tobacco, stabilizes the price; a stabilized market causes an increased acreage, which means overproduction. The law of supply and demand enters and tends to make the market unstable. Rather a vicious circle against which a never-ending fight must be made and for this reason the effort of the Association to enroll new members in the new tobacco-growing areas seems logical and necessary. In the opinion of The Mercury the problem of a constantly growing area of tobacco production is a distressingly serious one, the more so since there seems to be no feasible solution.

*****

Last week we were patting ourselves on the back, so to speak, that Carlisle has been able to maintain a seven day Chautauqua. Few other towns of our population in the state have this seven-day circuit, and heretofore we have had little difficulty in financing it. But this year the sale of tickets is dragging. Now, it seems to us, that there can be no valid excuse for this apathy on the part of our people. The plea that money is scarce is not sound. In the scarcity of money did not prevent a record-breaking attendance night after night at a tent-show which recently appeared here. It will be said that the Chautauqua program has not the appeal of the tent-show to all, that it is "high brow." Nothing could be more absurd than this statement. The program of the Redpath Chautauqua is arranged by experts in the art of pleasing all the people. There will be wholesome and enjoyable entertainment during the seven days for all, old and young alike. A season ticket costs $5 and counting the morning sessions, this entitles the holder to 17 entertainments, at an average admission fee of 18 cents. Surely the people of Carlisle and Nicholas County have enough county pride and loyalty to support this institution which has proven itself to be the most notably enjoyable event of the year.

*****

Something has been happening to the stratas under the earth out in California. Santa Barbara is more keenly conscious of the phenomena than other cities and buildings are wrecked and lives lost. Los Angeles, realm of the realtor glorified, reports "gentle shakes." Interpreted in San Francisco, this would mean a sizable quake, in fact a robustious quake and one may easily imagine the silver tongue of Mr. Bryan, as he pushes his real estate lectures in Florida, picturing this subterranean disturbance as a cataclysm akin to the "wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." What an opportunity to disseminate a bit of the realtor's "real lore" to the everlasting benefit of the Land of Flowers.

*****

Candidates enter the "back stretch" in the August primaries race this week. Patiently they smile and handshake and hand out their bits of cardboard. What price office holding? A venerable high school principal used to say: "I'd rather be a toad and suck the moisture from a dungeon chamber, than keep a corner cemetery!" But corner grocery keeping is not without its charms, it seems to us, as compared with the job of a seeker after political office, functioning under a July sun. Truly they "do grunt and sweat under a weary life."

*****

"Sweeping reduction" says a newspaper headline of the dropping of 400 postoffice jobs. Another of the personnel at Washington. Sort of "dry cleaning" one might say.

*****

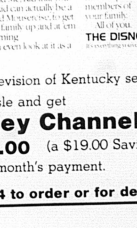
"Remember the Fourth of July," says an exchange, "to keep it safe." Advice which once applied to small boys and toy cannon, but today is more appropriately given to somewhat older lads who have their fireworks with an open cut-out.

The question no longer is "How many firecrackers does it take to make a Fourth of July?" Rather it is, "What'll we do on the Fourth?"

Gone are those reckless, glorious Fourths of July! The places that permit the old-time bang of the firecracker are growing less and less and the day has lost all its glamour for boys.

But when they grow up, with all their hands and arms, and eyes and feet and legs intact, they will probably be thankful that someone was so thoughtful as to think enough of their welfare to save them from themselves.

The youngsters do not exactly comprehend what it's all about, but they can be taught, and when they reach the age of discretion, they will come to understand the day's significance. — Boone County Recorder (Burlington)



Collins campaign HQ opens here

The Nicholas County Collins for Governor headquarters will open in Carlisle Friday, April 22, 3 p.m. in the Harper's Garage building.

It will be open Fridays 3-6 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. until the May primary. Refreshments will be served to visitors, and information may be obtained about the gubernatorial candidate.

Mrs. Thomas Hensley is chairman.

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You can look at it as the only cable channel with a daily pass to the Disney film library. Where you and your kids can run Dumbo for his first solo flight. Tumble with Alice into Wonderland. Tread 20,000 leagues under the sea. Get a few more bytes into the computer world of Tron.

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Or as a week-one source of innovative new programs to take light, tech, hand, abacus all into the young and old alike.

Programs like Dreamfinders, in which imagination becomes the great problem solver. Watch Up Up and Away, a show where dreams really do come true. And Contraption, an educational and sensory-stimulating show on a theme playing by ear.

You can also look at it as two networks for the price of one. Pay television is featuring shows like You And Me Kid that you and your kid can actually be a part of. And Mr. Moviemovies to get the whole family up and at 'em in the morning.

You can even look at it as a magazine. The Disney Channel Magazine. Not just a monthly program guide, but a cut-out, fill in, put together adventure all its own.

In short, you can look at The Disney Channel as the only cable service with 16 hours a day of magical, exciting and enriching entertainment for the most important members of your family.

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1500 POUND TUNA

Bluefin tuna are among the largest and fastest of fish. They continue to grow throughout their lifespan; an old-timer of 30 years will weigh about 1,500 pounds, National Geographic says. And they can swim as fast as 55 miles an hour.