

HYPERGRAPHIA

People sometimes ask me, "How can you think of something to write about for each edition of the Mirror?" Maybe it's a habit by now, or maybe a compulsion. Dr. Alice Flaherty, author of several books, describes "Hypergraphia", a compulsion to write. She references a patient who wrote a ten page letter to her parents *while they were in the room*. Probably we're raising a crop of these kinds of people as our children are madly texting each other on their blackberries while sitting on the same school bus. Adults as well as children are tweeting and twittering away at all times, too. One professional basketball player received a verbal thrashing and a fine from the coach because he was twittering or tweeting or tooting during half time of a game for which he was being paid tens of thousands of dollars to play. If the coach really wanted him to get the message he would have twittered it to him.

One of the advantages of being mired in slo-speed internet is that all this stuff is effectively unavailable to me. There is no cell phone reception in the Smith's Bay Valley of Death either. We don't have satellite because there are too many trees towering over the house. Last year a contractor came all the way from Trenton to install a dish. He did all the TV connections, unpacking all the equipment, boring appropriate holes in the wall and roof, mounted the dish, *and then tested for a signal*. It was at this point that he discovered he couldn't get one. The problem can't be solved with a chainsaw either, because many of the trees blocking the signal are not on my property. He was some spleeny as he repacked all the equipment, filled the holes, etc., because as a contractor, he wasn't paid if he didn't install. I felt a bit sorry for him, but not sympathetic, because it seems to me testing for a signal would be job one. Then again, I'm not a professional installer. What do I know.

When I visit my daughter in the Big Smoke, she gets hundreds of TV channels. Unfortunately, there's nothing on them I want to see except sports, and I can't watch much of that because the women outvote me. I get NFL football on Sundays, but for some reason (spite, I think) they don't broadcast very many New England Patriot games. Earlier this year, the Patriots were playing Tampa Bay in Wembley Stadium in England! New England playing in England! You'd think that game would be shown just because of the unique venue, but Oh No, they showed those sad sack Buffalo Bills. When they finally do show a New England game, there's almost always some social thing I must attend that takes precedence. I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one. This is probably true of Doug Parker when March Madness and college basketball takes over, too.

In spite of the fact that there is not much on TV that I like, I watch way too much of it. I guess I could

solve bi-nominal equations, or upgrade my harmonica skills beyond "You Are My Sunshine", but these things take mental effort.

When my parents became aged, Dad used to drive my mother around the bend watching TV. She'd have one of her favourite programs on and he'd constantly interrupt it with questions. "Who's that?" Where did she come from? What's going on?" I find one of the advantages of getting old is gradually losing my memory. I can watch the same program two or three times, and while I may vaguely remember some of the scenes, I cannot predict how the plot will be resolved, so I do not become overly bored. There seems to be a "Law & Order" and a "C.S.I." on every night, so I don't blame myself for forgetting them. They're pretty forgettable anyway. Soon I'll be saying, "Who's that? What the hell is going on?" The thing is, Diane won't know either.

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