

The Clicker

By Hap Hansen

There are many good and bad things about television. A few of the more irritating include lawyers who will promise you a million dollars if you died using a particular prescription drug. I take several prescription drugs. When I die, which one will pay me a million dollars? Some television announcers cannot read an entire sentence without using the words 'as well' or 'you know?'

It is getting more difficult for me to watch the national news on TV. Depending on the political bent of the announcers, their views will be completely opposite, even though the facts are identical. Apparently, those announcers do not consider 'alternative facts'!

For the viewers, the hand that controls the clicker controls the sights and sounds of television entertainment. The 'clicker' of course, is the remote control channel changer for a TV set. This control is one of the most unique inventions in TV history. However, if someone else is in control of the remote, one's senses can be rattled by trying to follow the instantaneous change of channels. I can only imagine what would have happened at our house 70 years ago, if my father could have had a remote control for the radio. We would have listened to parts of *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *The Shadow Knows* and the *Al Jolson Show* simultaneously. And my mother would probably have hit him with a frying pan, with the lard still sizzling in it!

The remote control, though, is a wonderful device for the bedridden. It is also a couch potato's dream come true. Actually, there are a lot of good things about owning a remote control. Let's take dinner time, the time when top advertisers choose to air their most offensive commercials, such as ads for laxatives or personal creams designed for private parts of one's body. But every remote control contains a device which can create glorious silence ... the mute button.

Whoever invented the remote control is justifiably raking in millions of dollars, but the one who invented the mute button should be awarded a Congressional Medal of Decency. Purists say that people should not indulge in television entertainment at meal times anyway, thereby avoiding loud and offensive commercials. Unfortunately, that may be the only time families spend together. But at least, the family is together, if only in spirit. One must assume that quality family time should include conversation, an impossibility if the TV is blaring. That's not likely to change, unless the individual holding the 'clicker' pushes the 'off' button and says, "Let's talk."

