

VIEW

It's been 6 years, but I'm no longer video illiterate

I am no longer video impaired. I can put the R back into VCR. And in at least one regard, I have caught up with the '80s. Something snapped in me six years ago, the last time I was able to video record television programming. And I am the proud possessor of the only existing videotape in the country of the full text of Michael Dukakis' speech accepting the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination. It's quite a collector's item now, and some day I'm going to watch it.

After taping that forgettable speech, I could videotape nothing. I just figured I was being punished for such abject misuse of videotape technology.

I described my video deficiency in this space a few months ago. And mentioned I was determined to overcome it.

In the meantime, I pulled out the comprehensive user's manual and studied it. And almost all of it made no sense.

So I did the reckless thing. I pushed the tape into the slot and hit the button that says "record." And wouldn't you know, it recorded.

For six years I was unable to do this? Insert tape, select channel to be recorded, push record button. That's it?

Sitting there watching the tape, I felt a strange sense of elation at conquering this task and at the same time a deep embarrassment that it took six years to figure out.

Don't get me wrong. It's not as if I was trying every night for six years to figure out how to make the machine work. Oh, no. I gave up trying years ago.

From what I understand, the neat thing about taping television programs is that you can set the machine ahead of time to turn on at a specific time to record a particular program. The concept behind this is that you can tape something you really want to watch but don't have time to view while it is being aired.

And I can't begin to do that.

It's more than pushing a tape in and pressing "play." There's an intricate sequence of steps, all them involving tiny buttons, that must be carried out in precise order in order to tape future programs.

Although I do understand the value of being able to record future programs, I still haven't figured out where the additional time is to come from to watch the program you didn't have time to watch originally. It's not as if recording television shows freezes time, although that might be covered in the appendices to my VCR comprehensive user's manual.

I've had the Dukakis tape for six years, and I have yet to watch that. I also haven't watched the program I successfully taped a couple weeks ago.

During those six years that I was video deficient, I often thought it would be great to tape some of those 17-part, 59-hour programs on educational TV. You know, do something worthwhile with this equipment.

But I don't think it ever would be watched. Who's got the time? What about all the other great stuff you're missing while you're watching it?

I can just imagine the tape collection I could have acquired over the past six years. And none of it watched a second time.

Before I invest the time and frustration of figuring the future record mode of our VCR, I want to know what I would tape and the odds of it ever being watched.

The only thing I've been able to come up with is "Barney." And that's reason enough to leave well enough alone.



DICK PETERSON
EDITORIAL PAGE
EDITOR

Atomic bombers criticize Enola homosexual exhibit

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — They dropped the atomic bombs that destroyed two cities and ended World War II. Forty-nine years later, they're fighting another battle — this time over how they'll be remembered.

Survivors of the top-secret 509th Composite Group, which was formed to drop the new weapons on Japan, say an exhibit on the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Smithsonian Institution will be too apologetic.

"It's slanted more in sympathy to the Japanese than it is to us," said Fred Olivi, copilot of the B-29 that dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945.

"They say nothing about Pearl Harbor, the Bataan Death March, China and Singapore," he said Saturday.

About 100 of the top-secret unit's survivors concluded their semiannual four-day reunion Sunday. And many were critical of the exhibit, which is scheduled to open in May.

Some veterans haven't read the detailed, 559-page script of the exhibit, but they don't like what little they have seen.

"I happened to glance to an open page at random, and the heading of that page said 'Did They All Go Crazy?'" said Ted "Dutch" Van Dirk, who navigated the Enola Gay on its run to bomb Hiroshima.

"They focused on the problems of one man," he said Saturday. "It's just an example of the types of things in there. That's a perfect example."

The Smithsonian exhibit landed in hot water shortly the script was circulated among veterans groups. The display at first was only to concentrate on the last few months of the war.

Veterans complained that left out the Japanese aggression that brought the United States into the global conflict.

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STATE

Pullman strike of 1894 helped ignite modern labor movement

By MATTHEW FORDAHL
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The industrialist who made Pullman Palace Cars for tired railroad travelers also built a company town for his workers, a move of goodwill he thought would help prevent labor strikes.

Instead, George Mortimer Pullman's policies backfired, igniting a nationwide labor war a century ago that helped plant the seeds of the modern labor movement.

After a bloody strike against Pullman, labor unions reorganized, company towns in industrial areas declined and negotiators began using arbitration to settle disputes.

"What people carried away was the conviction something needed to be done," said Jim Barrett, professor of history at the University of Illinois. "Even conservative business leaders looked at creative ways they could deal with the labor problem."

"The people of Pullman are not happy and grumble at their situation even more than the inhabitants of towns not model and accustomed to do."

New York Sun

It wasn't the first strike to attract national attention. Unlike its predecessors, however, the Pullman dispute spread across 27 states and shut down the nation's main transportation network.

Pullman built the town bearing his name on what is now Chicago's far South Side in the early 1880s for house workers for his factory. He owned the houses and charged workers rent.

He said the town represented a great step forward in labor-industrial relations.

The workers who lived there disagreed.

"The people of Pullman are not happy and grumble at their situation even more than the inhabitants of towns not model are accustomed to do," the New York Sun wrote in 1885. "They secretly rebel because the Pullman Company continues its watch and authority after working hours."

"When (Pullman) was 30 or 40 years old, he had ideas," said Paul Petraitis, a current resident of the Pullman area of Chicago and local researcher. "When he was 50s and 60s, he didn't want the responsibilities."

An economic downturn in 1893 and 1894 forced Pullman to cut wages, but he didn't lower the rents on his houses.



Amateur historian Paul Petraitis sits in front of the Hotel Florence in the Pullman neighborhood of Chicago.

Gangs offer love that neglected youth crave: experts

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — The Universal Code of Laws for the Almighty Black Disciple Nation, the gang that 11-year-old Robert Sandifer belonged to, hints at the toll a gang can take on a young life.

Law No. 8: "I pledge my soul, heart, love and spirit to the Black Disciple Nation and will be part of it even in death."

Police say Robert, who was being sought in shootings that killed a 14-year-old girl and wounded a 16-year-old boy, was executed last week by teen-age members of his own gang.

Higher-ranking gang members were probably afraid Robert might reveal who gave him his gun or the orders to shoot, police say.

Children like Robert, who had been abused and neglected, don't realize how deadly serious some of the gang's rules are, experts say. The rules don't say, for example, the code of loyalty is shed when the self-

side of the membership never gets mentioned. Robert probably never imagined he would become expendable to his own gang, but in the Black Disciples' code of laws, there are a lot of clues:

"I will abide by all commands given to me by the King and all appointed chiefs."

"I will not fight or mistreat any Nation member unless told to do so otherwise."

"I will sacrifice my life for the Nation's causes."

Robert will be buried Wednesday after a funeral at the same church where services were held for the girl he was suspected of killing.

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Robert will be buried Wednesday after a funeral at the same church where services were held for the girl he was suspected of killing. Two boys who belong to his gang, brothers ages 16 and 14, are charged with first-degree murder in Robert's killing.

"There's nothing new about this," Knox said.

"You'll find gang members killing wives, brothers, family members. That's not an issue. Age is not an issue. The kid could testify."

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