

Switched off

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

~~JEERS ... to the indifferent corporate Goliaths who switched off your cable television choices.~~

That would be Cable One, otherwise known as the Washington Post Co.

That would be the Turner networks, owned by Time Warner.

They've been battling over how much Cable One should pay Turner. When they couldn't agree, they took it out on you.

With virtually no warning Tuesday, Cable One shut off CNN and Headline news. Instead of Piers Morgan, there's a blank screen or some corporate spin directing your angst at Turner.

It also blocked Turner Classic Movies. Tonight, it's playing James Whale's "Bride of Frankenstein." You get a blank screen.

No TruTV, Bommerang or CNN en Espanol.

And just for spite, Time Warner cut the signal on the remaining services Cable One had agreed to carry.

No TBS means you'll miss today's baseball division playoff..

No Cartoon Network? You can probably find a rerun of "King of the Hill" somewhere else.

No TNT? Do you really need to see "Wedding Crashers" again?

Not that any of the people running these corporate giants need worry about where their next hamburger is coming from.

In the last quarter, Time Warner slurped up \$7.435 billion and declared a net profit of \$771 million.

The Washington Post - whose CEO Donald Graham sold off the flagship newspaper - closed the last quarter with \$44.7 million, or \$6.02 per share.

Here's a bet: When the two sides strike a deal and restore your cable service, each of them will have more of your money.

JEERS ... to Idaho Sen. Dean Cameron, R-Rupert, and Rep. Maxine Bell, R-Jerome. Under their leadership, Idaho's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee decided to continue its southeastern

Idaho tour rather than attend former Idaho Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa's funeral in Boise this morning.

Granted, postponing or canceling the trip would have cost money. Taxpayers paid to fly budget panel members to the Pocatello-Bear Lake region. They paid for lodging and ground transportation.

Cameron and Bell wrestled with forfeiting that money at the last minute. Unfortunately, they made the wrong call.

Cenarrusa was a genuine member of Idaho's Greatest Generation. There's a reason why Cenarrusa is the first Idahoan to lie in state in the Idaho Capitol Rotunda in nearly 25 years.

Between nine terms in the House and nearly as many as secretary of state, he spent more than 50 years in elective office - an Idaho record exceeded only by Cenarrusa's dedication to serving the public in an impeccably fair manner.

For a legislative committee to conduct its official business without interruption today is a sign of disrespect to Cenarrusa and all he contributed, however unintentional.

Nor is it an all-or-nothing proposition. The committee's tour began Thursday and concludes Saturday. Why not cancel this morning's events - which include tours of the Idaho State Police forensics lab, the Pocatello women's prison, Lava Hot Springs, Grace High School and Bear Lake State Park - and attend the service?

The lab, women's prison, hot springs, school and state park aren't going anywhere.

JEERS ... to U.S. Reps. Jim McDermott, Suzan DelBene, Rick Larsen, Adam Smith, Denny Heck and Dereck Kilmer, all D-Wash.

Thanks to the budget standoff in Congress, 800,000 federal workers are furloughed and not getting paid. Among the ranks of the "non-essential" government employees are people responsible for space flight, protecting the environment, keeping the national parks and monuments running, informing the public about what the government is really doing and collecting taxes.

Shouldn't House and Senate staff members join their ranks?

Yes, say Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, both D-Wash. Like most of their colleagues, they've furloughed staff and closed some offices.

And why not? If Congress is creating this mess for the rest of us, shouldn't the politicians live under the same terms?

No, says McDermott.

"All of our employees, in the district and D.C., are essential," McDermott spokeswoman Amber Macdonald told the Seattle Times.

Says the Times: All six Washington House Democrats are following that line.

~~JEERS ... to Idaho Freedom Foundation President Wayne Hoffman, He won't buy health insurance for his employees. That sets up a rather ticklish situation. Some of IFF's six employees could turn to Idaho's state-based health insurance exchange. Depending on how little Hoffman pays them, they might even qualify for a federal subsidy. (One, Rick Coffman who edits IdahoReporter.com, is 66 and draws Medicare.)~~

You know, Obamacare, the very program Hoffman has so vociferously opposed.

So Hoffman is "encouraging" his staff not to get insurance through the exchange. It's not an order, just friendly advice. Wink. Wink.

"I don't think anyone on my staff would view a short-term payout by the federal government being worth the long-term costs," Hoffman said.

If they follow Hoffman's "encouraging" message, IFF's employees will pay a small penalty to the federal government, not to mention risking financial ruin if they get seriously ill or injured.

All of which hardly makes Hoffman employer of the year. BUT if Hoffman's staffers need help, you'll pay.

Idaho taxpayers are on the hook for anyone who can't pay his medical bills through the county medically indigent and state Catastrophic Health Care program. Those programs will cost Idaho \$70 million next year.

When health care providers don't get paid, they shift the bills to the rest of us who have health insurance. Cost-shifting adds \$1,200 to your insurance premium every year.

In Wayne's World, none of that matters as much as keeping his hands ideologically clean. - M.T.