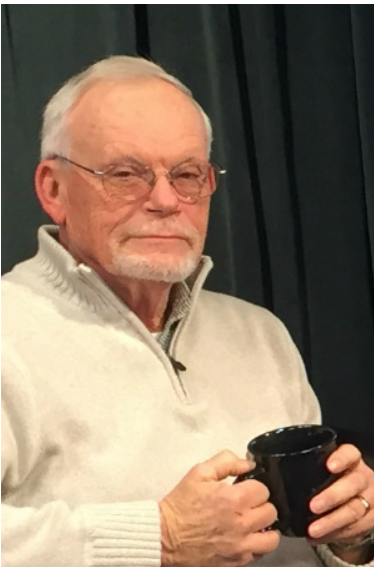


Nystrom & Markwardt: Providing information accurately and from reliable sources



*by Breanna Speth, Acting Director
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Before the advent of smartphones, the Internet, and even VHS tapes, Marshfield residents Don Nystrom and Dean Markwardt realized the value of community television and got involved. Thirty years later, they're still producing and hosting shows and they know public access television has made a difference in Marshfield.

Nystrom served on the city's Common Council from 1976 - 1986 and was the appointed member of the city's cable TV Committee. "My mission at the time was getting people more

interested in and part of the decision-making in the city," said Nystrom.

He quickly recognized the value of public access in informing and communicating with constituents. "I think we became, initially, the C-SPAN of Marshfield -- providing more in-depth information that was of use to people who had an interest."

"Prior to that, the town existed on a limited amount of information, on newspapers or rumors...and the rumors were probably 75% of the information people got." Markwardt first got involved with local TV through the school district in 1974. As Director of Learning Resources, he produced educational programs and advised a student club called "The Video Group."

"The whole push for public access was framed as a means for people to promote things they were interested in, their own values, clubs, activities... and as an outlet for creativity and personal expression," said Markwardt. "It has all those possibilities: to inform, to entertain, to provide an artistic or creative release for people. And it helps people learn about their own community -- not only governmentally, but socially, artistically. It's another medium of communication."



"I agree with Dean 100%," added Nystrom. Nystrom believes that what sets public access apart from other news media is the ability to tell the whole unbiased story so that people can make better decisions. "you feel good when you are providing information accurately and from reliable sources about what is going on in your community, things that people might not know about."

Nystrom enjoys being able to highlight organizations that do good things. "The most touching programs that I have done include a program with recovered drug addicted individuals," he said. "When you get done with those, you say to yourself, 'That was a story that people should hear,' and where else would they hear it?"