

## Cable connections

### Council to vote on amendments that would change two channels

By ALAN MARKS  
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council will vote Monday night on two amendments to Village Cable's franchise agreement and hear a report from the Town Attorney concerning Village Cable's authority to establish monthly rates for basic Tier One service.

The amendments to the cable franchise would substitute Cable News Network 2 for the Satellite Programming Network on cable channel 32, and substitute the Weather Channel for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration information now available on channel 25 of Village Cable's Tier Three service.

Village Cable has requested to drop the SPN because of a switch in satellites from which the company receives most of its programming. Because of the change, Village Cable would have to purchase a

differs from CNN on cable channel 23 which provides feature length news as well as summaries.

Town Manager David Taylor, in a memorandum to the council, said, "Since Village has purchased three receiving dishes and the franchise refers to two, we believe it would be unreasonable to require Village to acquire a fourth dish only for the purpose of continuing SPN. The cost of an additional dish would likely be borne ultimately by cable subscribers through monthly fees."

Taylor also recommended approval of Village Cable's request for the Weather Channel because it would improve the weather information provided to customers.

Town Attorney Emery Denny Jr. advised the council in an opinion dated August 18, 1982, that Village Cable has the authority to begin charging a minimum monthly fee of \$8.50 to all 12-channel and



David Taylor

following two-year period. Jim Heavner, president of The Village Companies, said in a letter to Taylor on June 24, that a rate increase to cable subscribers was needed to help reduce the debt incurred by the cable company during the past three years.

Village Cable lost more than \$1 million last year and predicts losses this year of \$600,000, Heavner said.

The current cost to deliver service is \$33.83 per customer, he said. Village Cable charges \$6 for 17-channel service, \$9.45 for 35-channel service, and provides free 12-channel service.

To offset losses, Village Cable plans to raise the fee for 17-channel service to \$8.50 and 35-channel service to \$11.95. Free service will still be provided to customers already on 12-channel service, but a minimum monthly fee of \$8.50 will be charged to new customers.

### UNC graduate works way up media ladder

By ALAN MARKS  
Staff Writer

He hitchhiked from his Kings Mountain, N.C., birthplace 25 years ago, came to a place where there was only one girl for every nine guys and hasn't left since.

He lived in then-male Cobb dormitory and his biggest problem was where to get his hair cut and eat during the summer. During the past 25 years, he has worked his way up from part-time radio announcer at Chapel Hill radio station WCHL to the head of a company that owns radio station WCHL, four other radio stations, a publishing company, a retail print shop, a sports network and a cable television company.

The man is Jim Heavner, president and principal owner of Chapel Hill-based Village Companies Inc. "There was never any question about what I wanted to do," he said. "I came here (to UNC) as a freshman in 1957 and never left. And probably never will."

Heavner worked as a radio announcer during high school and came to UNC with the goal of pursuing a career in radio. At the end of his freshman year, he got a job as a part-time announcer at WCHL.

Three years later, he became a full-time announcer, replacing Ty Boyd as sales manager, program manager, morning man and copy writer.

And, by 1967, he began buying stock in the company. The objective of WCHL has remained the same over the years, despite the many changes in the company, Heavner said.

"Its objective is still to be Chapel Hill's radio station," he said. "Occasionally, a

program director has wanted us to be Chapel Hill and Durham's radio station and we have always resisted that."

The "I'd Rather Be In Chapel Hill" bumper sticker, a trademark of WCHL, says a lot about the way the station feels, he said.

*"There was never any question about what I wanted to do. I came here (to UNC) as a freshman in 1957 and never left. And probably never will."*

Jim Heavner  
President of Village Companies

The Tar Heel Sports Network originates from WCHL, covering all UNC football and basketball games. The network broadcasts more than 62 stations during football games and 42 stations during basketball games, making it the largest network in the Atlantic Coast Conference, he said.

The Village Advocate is also a part of Village Companies Inc. Heavner started publishing the shopping guide in 1969.

Heavner's most recent interest, and perhaps his most controversial, is the cable television company he started three years ago. The company, Village Cable, holds franchises in Chapel Hill, Orange County and Chatham County.

Controversy was sparked when the Chapel Hill Town Council awarded the cable franchise to Village Cable in 1979. The company had no prior experience in cable television and many area people felt the franchise would give Heavner and The Village Companies too much power in Chapel Hill.

Heavner said he decided to start the cable company because he wanted to make sure good cable service was provided in Chapel Hill.

"We (The Village Companies, Inc.) are in the communications business," he said. "In my heart, I'm an old disc jockey. But from a business standpoint, we want to be on the cutting edge of the communications

business, and its clear that cable is going to be a very important communications medium."

The Village Cable system is "easily the most advanced system in the state," he said, referring to its 35 channels of service in a 42-channel system.

Heavner also conceived the "I Like Calling North Carolina Home" promotional campaign, and he lectures occasionally in the UNC Department of Radio, Television and Motion Pictures.

There was never any question of where he wanted to go to school, he said, describing Chapel Hill as a "magical place. This is a town where the postman and the professor play golf together — and that's special."

Heavner said he loves the character of Chapel Hill. The town is one of only two places in the world where he would want to live, he said, the other being Hilton Head, S.C., where his family spends their vacations.

"People scoff at me by saying this isn't a village any more," he said. "Village" is a state of mind. We (The Village Companies) feel we have as much to do in perpetuating the village concept as any other entity."

He never had any regrets about staying in Chapel Hill, he said.

"We're all accidents. You either have good or bad parents, good or bad friends, and you live in either a good or bad town. I was blessed with good parents who had the good sense to ship me off to Chapel Hill. And I had the good sense to stay here."

**Town Attorney Emery Denny Jr. advised the council ... that Village Cable has the authority to begin charging a minimum monthly fee of \$8.50 to all 12-channel and 17-channel subscribers.**

fourth satellite dish for the purpose of continuing SPN, or drop the CBS cable and other programming. The cost of the dish would be approximately \$10,000.

SPN carries old movies and TV series, talk shows and some foreign TV programming. The CNN2 service provides headline news in 30-minute segments. The service

17-channel subscribers, effective August 17, 1982.

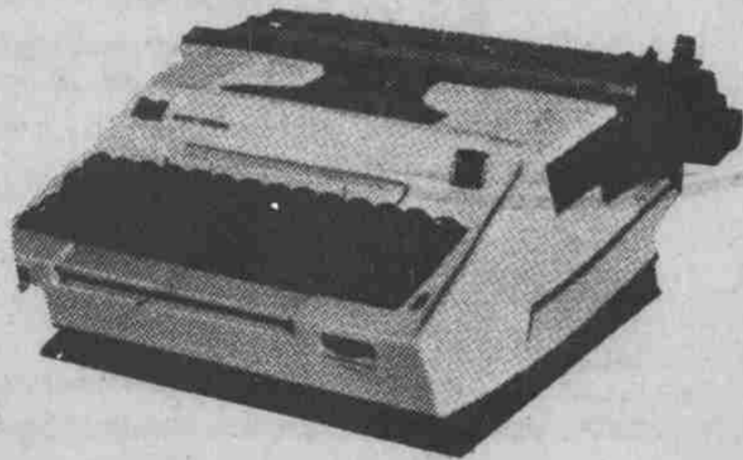
The opinion stated that Village Cable has the right to set its own rates during the current two-year period of the franchise. The town will have the opportunity to modify the rates between Sept. 1, 1983, and Nov. 30, 1983, for the

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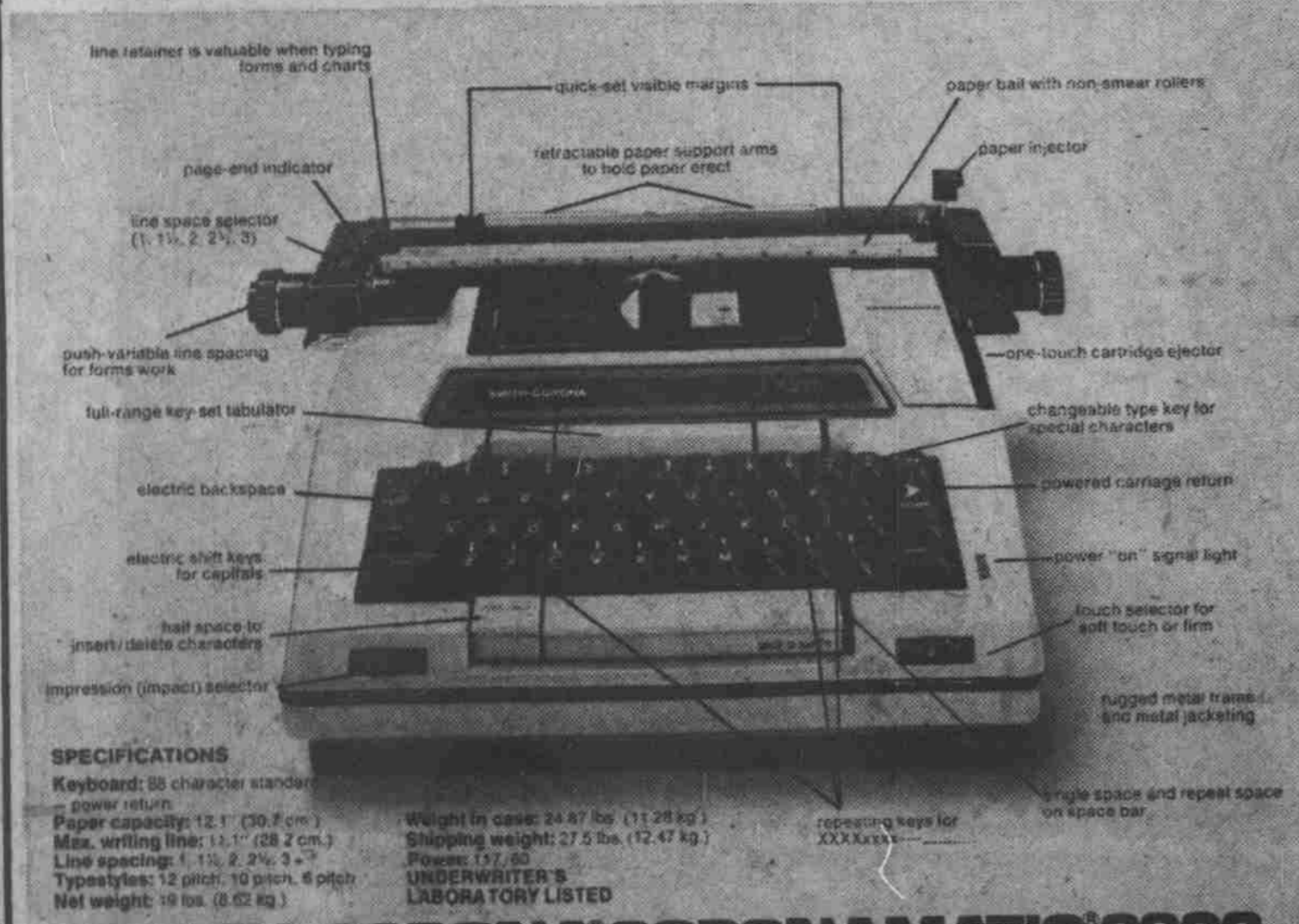


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## Bills may keep minors from entering places where alcohol is served

By JOHN CONWAY  
Staff Writer

The crackdown on illegal drinking in Chapel Hill may become more severe if the town council adopts a proposed ordinance that would keep teenagers under 18 from entering establishments that hold on-premises beer or liquor licenses.

The newest proposal is designed to reduce the attraction of minors to bars and game rooms that have both video games and alcohol on the same premises. But the ordinance may be applied to local restaurants and convenience stores, leaving owners to question the effects of the ordinance on the businesses.

Deputy town attorney Grainger Barrett drafted two versions of the ordinance at the request of Mayor Joe Nassif.

The first draft would prohibit anyone under 18 from entering any establishment, including restaurants, grocery and convenience stores, that have on-premises beer licenses. Making refinements and exemptions to the original proposal, the second draft would allow minors to enter establishments with on-premises beer licenses when they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Another provision of the draft would exempt restaurants with a seating capacity of 25 or more and fewer than three video games. A similar exemption is applicable to convenience stores where less than 25 percent of total sales are alcoholic beverages.

"We have no intention of regulating video games," said Chapel Hill Mayor Joe Nassif. "The only problem is when there is a mixture (of video games and bars)." Bartenders have difficulty checking the age of their customers when the serving area is crowded with teenagers playing video games, Nassif said. Another provision of the ordinance would require bars with one or more games to provide a separate outside entrance to the game area.

Nassif received the second draft last week and is carefully considering each provision and exemption, Barrett said. The ordinance has been misunderstood by many as an attempt to regulate video games. However it aims to reduce minors from congregating around the bar, he said.

"It's an easier situation to police," Barrett said.

Local game room managers have voiced their approval of the proposed ordinance, although none of the video game parlors in Chapel Hill hold on-premises beer licenses.

"I think that's a good idea that they keep them (minors) out of places where they sell beer," said Jim Petri, manager of the recently expanded and remodeled Barrel of Fun video game center on Franklin St. "We are a family-oriented corporation."

Soaps, a combination laundromat, game room and bar, already has a policy of prohibiting entry of anyone under 18 unless accompanied by an adult.

"We don't depend on the 18 and under age group for our business," assistant manager Beth Cotton said. "We cater to the older crowd."

Voicing concern with the proposed ordinance, Mr. Gatti's manager Jack Rueff said he failed to see the correlation between illegal drinking and video games. The problem stems from minors not being carded, he said.

"It's not a just assumption," Rueff said. "We card every person who comes in here. The majority of people who play games are adults." If the ordinance is passed, Rueff said it might be detrimental to the customers.

"I'm a family restaurant," he said. "I am not a game store. I don't want to make my living selling quarters."

Rueff said his business could be hurt if the ordinance is passed. Mr. Gatti's has more than three video games and therefore would not be exempt from the ordinance. A number of town council members declined to indicate their probable vote on the ordinance until the matter is formally presented and studied.

"He (Nassif) hasn't shared any of his information with anybody that I know of," said council member Marilyn Boulton. The council should not rush into passing the ordinance "in the heat of this drinking crackdown," she said.

Council member Bev Kawalec also expressed a cautious mood.

"I know we have a problem," Kawalec said, "but we can't exclude minors from restaurants."

Discussion of the proposed ordinance was not listed on the agenda for tonight's council meeting. Attorney Barrett said discussion would probably take place at the Sept. 13 council meeting.

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