



The NEW BERN

# MIRROR

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You're missing some of television's finest acting performances, if you fail to pay attention to the commercials. Nothing surpasses those altered expressions brought about by discovery that the sponsor's product banishes post-nasal drip, a nagging headache or faulty elimination.

It almost makes the reasonably healthy wish they could be cursed with ailments so graphically portrayed. More gratifying than feeling well is the boundless joy of feeling better after you've felt worse.

Seeing as how millions of dollars are invested in keeping you thoroughly informed on corrective measures to curb the misbehavior of so intimate a thing as your assorted innards, we assume that the advertisers are getting a satisfactory return.

All of which proves that, surface sophistication notwithstanding, New Bernians and their counterparts haven't changed much since the dim distant days of the medicine show. A glib talking pitchman, waving a bottle or stirring wonders into a ready receptacle, is still the smoothest salesman alive.

Television has its advantages over the medicine shows of yesteryear, but it also has its disadvantages. Very few of us actually rush right down to the corner drug store, despite urgent instructions to do so. Given a chance to make a purchase from the pitchman himself, as Grandpa did, we would no doubt be a softer touch.

As a small boy, starved for flesh and blood entertainment, this scribbler, invariably managed to gain a vantage point near the rim of the stage whenever a medicine show came to town.

This maneuver could hardly be counted on to please the proprietor, since a disgustingly disease-free juvenile, with no coins in the pockets of his stovepipe pants, offered little enrichment for the cash box.

Of course, even a kid's presence helped to swell the crowd, and a medicine show without an audience of some size was a disaster of the first magnitude. Fortunately for the bottle waver, he wasn't confronted with such a catastrophe very often.

Unlike prospective patrons viewing TV in the privacy of their homes, the gatherings at these old-time spectacles couldn't avoid the commercial by raiding the family ice box or visiting the bath room. Standing elbow to elbow, those in attendance had to stay put for the duration.

Nobody seemed to object. In fact, sticking around gave one an opportunity to discover who among the town's leading citizens was suffering from a listless liver, acid indigestion or rheumatic pains. Naturally, they always bought first.

Measured by today's standards of brutal frankness, this wasn't much of a revelation, but mortals lived a more sheltered life then. Nudity, for example, is commonplace on modern newsstands. Past generations had to settle for models adorned in long-handle underwear in the current mall order catalogues.

But, to get back to TV and medicine show commercials, the assertions and demonstrations  
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UP IN THE AIR—Wendell Beckett must have felt like he was going into orbit Monday, when his truck overturned after running off Highway 70 near the James City end of the Trent river bridge. The vehicle, carrying 8,000 pounds of furniture was enroute from More-

head City. It was something of a nightmare in broad open daylight for Beckett, but unlike 27 Tar Heel motorists killed last weekend he's still around.—Photo by Billy Benners.



HERE IT IS—Other cameras clicked but, just as you expected, The Mirror has come up with by far the best picture of the 11 foot, 9 inch alligator that Joe W. Jones and Hurshull Hacker gunned to extinction Sun-

day in Broad Creek. Your view of the critter is excellent, and reveals every detail, but this small boy's curiosity and awe demanded even closer scrutiny.—Photo by Billy Benners.