

Commercials to be valuable information source in 2074

STEVENS POINT — The "real forms of our times" are television commercials, a group of writing students was told recently at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Jean Shepherd, a New York City radio talk show personality, author and occasional TV and stage humorist, was speaking to the students by way of a telephone hookup from his office.

Commercials, better than just about anything else, show the "hopes and fears of our time," he contends.

Dauphin's origin

Dauphin was the title of the heir apparent to the French throne from 1350 to 1830, from the time the future King Charles V purchased lands known as Dauphine in 1349 and acquired the title of ownership "dauphin" which accompanied them. Granting Dauphine in 1368 to his son, Charles V, he established the precedent whereby the French king's eldest son became dauphin.

They will provide fascinating viewing 100 years hence, he adds.

Shepherd spent an hour answering questions over the special telephone hookup with the class of Dr. Richard Duxtator, an English professor, and devoted much of the time to predictions on the kinds of literature, ideas and parts of Americana that will survive.

Not enough is being done, he says, to save things of the present. Just about all of the emphasis is on items from the past. His suggestion, for one thing, is the saving of a "1964-style shopping center—it will be fascinating to watch in a hundred years," he quipped.

Good humor will survive, but just whose he's not sure about. Maybe Jerry Lewis' who has a universal following because "his work is universal." Humor, he added is much more enduring than comedy because most of today's comedy acts are built on poking fun at politicians and their work, which he described as trivial.

A joke about former Vice President Spiro T Agnew no longer is funny, he advises.

In a few years, he predicts, there'll be trivia questions on, "Who was John Ehrlichman?" Ehrlichman is a principal defendant in the Watergate affair.

Meanwhile, the humor surrounding Mark Twain's character, Huck Finn, will survive as it already has for more than a century.

Shepherd has been writing since he was in high school—one of his first works was an article for a school newspaper describing what it's like to sustain a broken nose in a football game and begin experiencing pain as fans cheer.

Perhaps his best known work is a recent book entitled "Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories."

