

YOUR VIEWS

Jumbotron viewing not a hit with fans

Open the Kohl Center and they will come! But only 2,400 fans showed up to watch the Badgers on the Jumbotron. This was the whole enchilada — the UW band, spirit squad, Bucky Badger, \$1 hotdogs and the Badgers on TV, with only 2,400 fans. There's a message here, Barry. Are you listening?

Any good businessman knows that to be successful, you have to give your customers what they want, when they want it, at a reasonable price. The worst thing you can do is give your customers a chance to discover that they can get along without your product.

UW Athletic Director Barry Alvarez and the Badger Athletic Department have ignored this principle and made UW basketball games less accessible to many fans. Thus, they are giving fans a chance to discover they can get along without the basketball team, the hockey team and other sports teams.

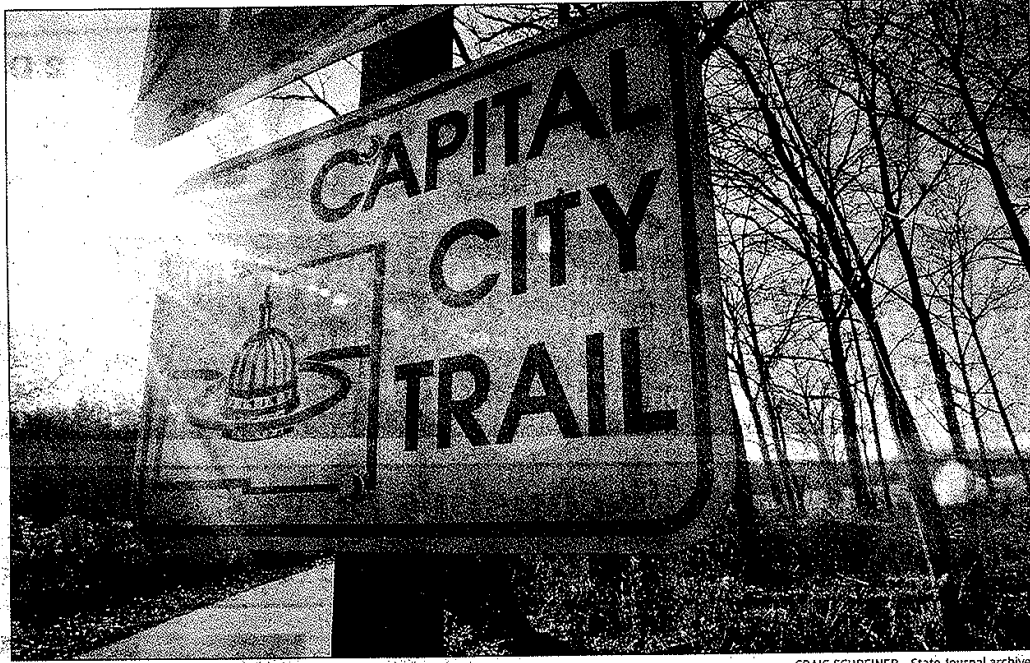
With the first season of reduced access only half over, the fans delivered the message loud and clear. Diehard fans will do anything to watch their team, but the majority of fans — folks like me — will find we don't have time or the inclination to travel across town to watch Badger basketball on TV. We want to sit in our comfortable chairs at home.

Starting the Big Ten Network was a terrible business decision which will come back to bite the athletic department. Alvarez and the other athletic directors should get rid of the BTN before they lose the fan/customers they say are so important to the teams:

— Richard Shropshire, Monona

FAN Act could restore NFL Network access

We've all been victims of



This sign marks the section of the Capital City Trail that runs through Dunn's Marsh near Seminole Highway.

Overpass welcome addition to trail

As avid users of the Capital City Trail, my husband and I were interested in Wednesday's State Journal article about the Fish Hatchery Road bike overpass.

We have written numerous letters and made phone calls regarding close calls and dangerous behavior by motorists at that crossing. We suggested some interim measures to

increase safety, including more signage warning motorists to watch for and yield to walkers and bikers, and changing the lights to prohibit right turns on red onto McKee Road.

As for Fitchburg Police Lt. Todd Stetzer's reference to the "longer than normal" walk light at Fish Hatchery and McKee, it's obvious he has never crossed that intersection by foot or on a bike. We have

never been able to bicycle even to the center island before the light changed. I can't imagine trying to cross that intersection on foot or in a wheelchair.

We applaud the building of the overpass, and we hope no one is injured or killed before it is completed.

— Maxine Austin and Dennis Dresang, Madison

the big cable companies this year.

As we witnessed in November when we couldn't see the Packers play the Cowboys on our cable channel and now with the Badgers, it's evident the big cable companies are taking advantage of us. Instead of carrying

popular channels like the NFL Network, some cable companies are loading their schedules with cable-owned channels like Versus and the Golf Network, claiming that the NFL Network is just a niche market. Tell that to the millions of Americans who watched NFL football last season.

The good news is there's a way to resolve these disputes through arbitration so fans can see the programs they want. The Fair Access to Networks (FAN) Act would establish a fast, fair and cheap process so cable companies doing business in our state can't discriminate against channels like NFL Network

and hurt consumers in the process.

I have already contacted my state representatives and asked them to stand up for consumers and football fans by supporting this commonsense solution. For more information, see www.iwantmy nfl-network.com.

— Cheryl Cummings, Madison

One-year sentence too light for Dartez

The sentence given to Dawn Dartez, who crashed through a house wall and pushed a sleeping woman in her bed into another room, killing her, then fled the scene, raises an interesting question.

She wasn't actually very drunk: .09 is just beyond the legal limit of .08. But the accident she caused was horrific — striking a house, a stationary object, with such speed that she crashed through a wall and killed the unfortunate woman who was asleep in bed.

That wasn't enough. She backed out of the house while her victim was dying and fled the scene.

But, you know, she really wasn't very drunk. Which aggravates the offense more, being more drunk, or more insanely reckless in driving and criminal irresponsibility?

Careful driving is not a defense to drunk driving. That makes sense, but why doesn't the extreme recklessness make the case worse? Though Dartez was not very drunk, her acts were atrocious. The accident indicates wild recklessness and a high rate of speed.

A sentence of one year seems light for any kind of homicide. The bigger question is the formula applied by the judge to reach that sentence.

— Thomas A. Nelson, Madison

'Smoke curtain' ruins smoke-free dinner

My wife and I enjoyed a recent dinner in a Madison restaurant and the non-smoking atmosphere increased our enjoyment.

I do, however, object to smokers standing outside the doors creating a "smoke curtain" to go through.

— Mel Stark, Marshall

Thank you, Rep. Brett Davis (R) and Sen. John Lehman (D).



We came to the Capitol by the busloads. More than 1,100 of us, including dozens from your district. We came to have our voices heard. We came to encourage the legislature to help save our schools.

You listened.

Thanks to you, thousands of families across Wisconsin may continue to have a choice. More than 3,000 children may be able to attend their favorite online public charter school. Your

delicately-balanced, **bipartisan compromise**

was the result of intense negotiations, hard work, dedication and a willingness to listen to Wisconsin's families.

Your committees passed the Public Virtual School Rescue Plan, unamended, with large, bipartisan votes. We're hopeful those efforts will result in swift passage in both the Senate and the Assembly, and that the Governor will sign this rescue effort into law.

Thanks again, Sen. Lehman and Rep. Davis. We came looking for champions. We've found them in you.

Keep up the good work and get this hard-fought, delicately-balanced compromise passed **without amendments and without delay.**

Paid for by The Wisconsin Coalition of Virtual School Families