

The Sacramento Bee

PARADE

Best Trend

From *The New York Times*:

The hot place to be this year is at home. The young and the stylish—now the professional and the tired—are spending supine evenings in front of the television. “Couch potatoes” like these are rapidly gaining attention as the new “in” crowd, and they are inspiring a raft of novelty items.

Now there are Couch Potato dolls, a Couch Potato board game and a Couch-potato down comforter... In January, the Hyatt Lincolnwood hotel in suburban Chicago will hold a Couch Potato Convention, featuring game-show and soap-opera seminars, a TV dinner buffet and an *L.A. Law* look-alike contest.

Robert Armstrong, a cartoonist and freelance illustrator in Dixon, Calif., is credited with coining the term Couch Potato in 1976, and he registered it as a trademark in 1982... His *Official Couch Potato Handbook* was published in 1983, followed by *The Couch Potato Guide to Life* in 1985. He is also the founder of the Couch Potato Club and editor of its newspaper, *The Tuber's Voice*. The club, he said, now has more than 8000 members, with 242 chapters in the U.S. and Canada, plus international offices in Japan, Australia, Germany and Britain.

Though Mr. Armstrong's brainchild has yet to make him rich, he is still undaunted, spreading the Couch Potato gospel: “We feel that watching TV is an indigenous American form of meditation. We call it ‘transcendental vegetation.’”

