

\$1.25

# The Rubber's Voice

Number Five

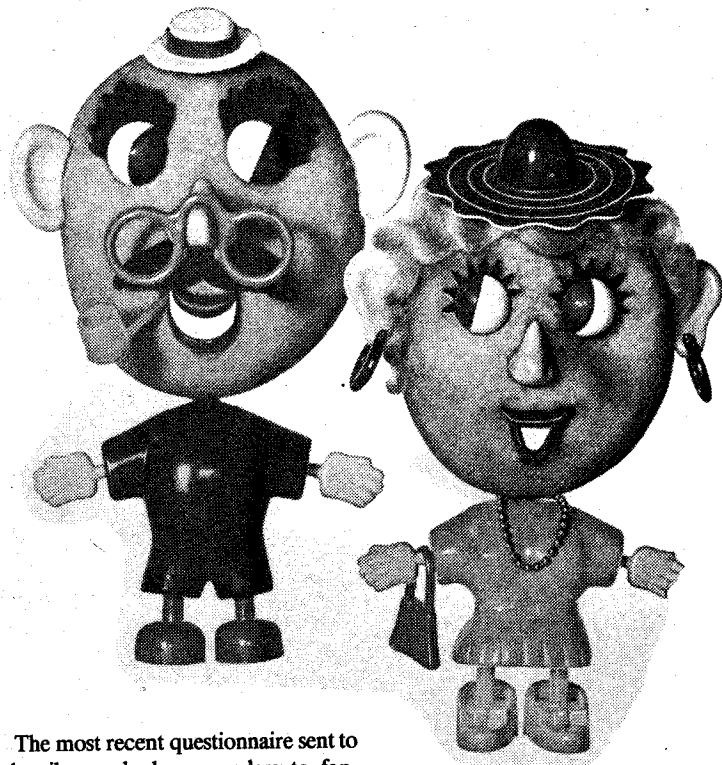
COUCH POTATO NEWSLETTER

MCMLXXXIII

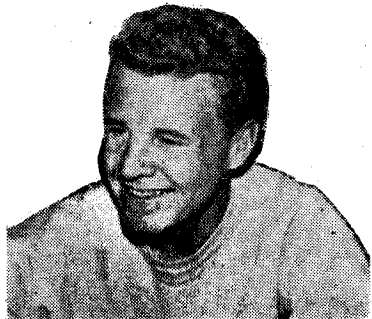


Armst

# All in the Family QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS



The most recent questionnaire sent to subscribers asked our readers to fantasize about their ideal families, to be composed (of course) of TV characters. Some of the most desired relatives are listed below, along with the reasons they were appealing.



## Father

The number one choice for the most appropriate dad was Ozzie Nelson. Reasons ranged from "He never got excited" to "I want to do the same job he never did."

Ward Cleaver came in as a very

- **June Lockhart** (*Lassie, Lost in Space*) — "She had lots of experience as a TV mom."
- **Mrs. Olsen** (Folger's coffee ads) — "Generous to a fault."
- **Annette Funicello** — "Peanut butter and a purple Thunderbird . . . Oh Mama!"
- **Ethel Mertz** — "Ready for anything." "Non-judgemental."
- **Ginger Grant** (*Gilligan's Island*) — "Great wardrobe."



## Husband

- **John Beresford Tipton** — "He's rich and you never see him."
- **Gomez Addams** — "I love arm kissing."
- **Tristan Rogers** — "Probably a good lay."
- **Mick Belker** (*Hill St. Blues*) — "I like being bitten."



## Grandfather

- **Amos McCoy** — "Who would question Walter Brennan," "He wouldn't be able to read the police report."
- **Mr. Wizard** — "So I could have fun in his laboratory."
- **Floyd the Barber** — "Free haircuts, wit and wisdom."
- **Little Ricky** — "It would mean I was very young."
- **Grandpa Munster** — "For arcane occult knowledge and powers, also for vaudeville routines."

## Aunt

- **Aunt Bea** — "Good cookin' if not good lookin'."
- **Betty White** — "She would keep family events, especially funerals, in the right perspective."

## Children

- All of the **Cartwright Boys** — "Handy in a fight."
- **Gary Coleman** — "Large income," "Wouldn't have to buy him clothes too often since he doesn't grow much."
- **Ellie Mae Clampett** — "Bad girl, bringing all those animals in here...I'll have to spank you."
- **Johnny Carson** — "To support me."
- **Bam-Bam Rubble, Rusty Hamer, Cindy Brady and Larry Mondello** — "I'd demand that they entertain the hell out of me."

## Neighbors

- **The Coneheads**
- **Thorny Thorndike**
- **The Addams Family**

## Pets

- **Tennessee Tuxedo** — "What could be better than a talking penguin?"
- **Spot** (*The Munsters*) — "He'd keep undesirables out of the neighborhood."
- **Barreta's Cockatoo and Morris the Cat** — "They're neat-o."
- **Cleo the Basset Hound** (*People's Choice*) — "Pithy wit and great hiccup."
- **Jethro Bondine** — "To crush people on command."
- **Arnold** (the pig) **Ziffel**

All respondents were more than happy to suggest replacements for the current First Couple. Here are just a few of the characters our readers would like to see in the White House:

## President

- Doug Whiner
- Lou Grant
- Ben Cartwright
- Lash LaRue
- Rodney Dangerfield
- Pee Wee Herman
- Ma Kettle

## First Lady/Mate

- Wendy Whiner
- Dale Evans
- Edith Bunker
- June Cleaver
- Joan Rivers
- Loni Anderson
- Ma Kettle

- **James Beresford Tipton** — (*The Millionaire*) — “The money, only the money.”
- **Capt. Video** — “So we could go for spaceship rides.”
- **Number Six** (*The Prisoner*) — “Superior genetic material.”
- **Jack LaLaine** — “So strong.”
- **Percy Dovetonsils** — “Good looks, charm, charisma.”
- **Bentley Gregg** (*Bachelor Father*) — “He had a good job and Peter the houseboy.”
- **Joe E. Ross as Gronk** (*It's About Time*) — “Great to have a dad that stupid.”
- **John Steed** (*The Avengers*) — “Nothing bothers him and he could pass on survival skills necessary for any life I chose.”
- **Maynard G. Krebs** — “I wouldn't have to work.”



### Mother

Gracie Allen was mentioned most often as the most desirable TV mother figure. Some of the reasons: “She'd give me a unique outlook,” “Life would be fun,” and “She'd never know how fucked-up I was getting.”

- **June Cleaver** — “Most sympathetic,” “Submissive.”

### Siblings

- **Wally Cleaver** — “A self-effacing type dude.”
- **Kathy “Kitten” Anderson** — “I wouldn't have to feel guilty about hating my sister.”
- **Bobbie Jo, Billie Jo, and Betty Jo** (*Petticoat Junction*) — “I like the middle name Jo.”
- **Beaver Cleaver** — “To have a brother dumber than me.”
- **Mr. Peabody's boy, Sherman** — “Great straight man.”
- **Eddie Haskell and Rollo Larson** (*Sanford and Son*) — “They could get me a good price on a color TV.”



### Wife

- **Ellie Mae Clampett** — “Rich, gorgeous, dumb.”
- **Jeannie** (Barbara Eden) — “She lived to please her master.”
- **June Cleaver** — “I want pearls dragged through my oatmeal.”
- **Emma Peel** — “Great looks and brains.”
- **Charo** — “I understand she's quite ‘talented.’”



### Grandmother

Granny Clampett from *The Beverly Hillbillies* got the most votes for grandmother. Here are some of the reasons: “Spring Tonic,” “Dinner on the pool table,” “She didn't take shit from anyone, including the U.S. Govt.”

Other favorites:

- **Aunt Bea** — “Her homemade pies and advice.”
- **Jane Pauley** — “I want a grandmother who keeps up with current events.”
- **Mrs. Davis** (*Our Miss Brooks*) — “Not too much advice.”
- **Julia Child** — “When I visited her, she'd feed me,” “Sunday dinner.”
- **Loni Anderson** — “People would stare.”

### Uncle

- **Uncle Fester** — “Human light bulb.”
- **Rod Serling** — “Intellectual stimulation.”
- **Frank Nitti** (*Untouchables*) — “Source of explosives and arms.”

“Sock” Miller  
Floyd the Barber  
John Candy

Mandy Peoples  
Natasha Fataley  
Barbara Eden

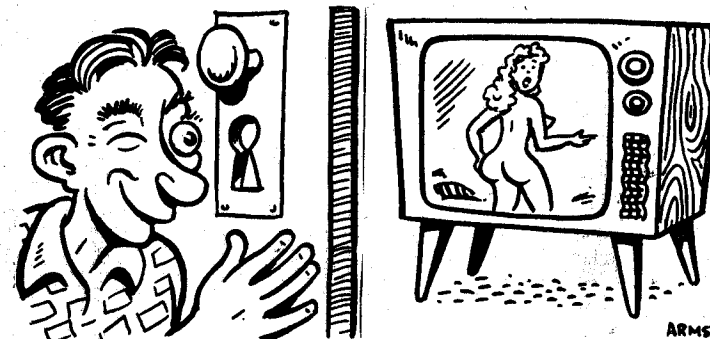
We also asked readers to mention some TV characters they'd like to see naked. Below is a list of a few of the responses. Now we're sorry we didn't ask “why?” for these too.

### Male

Paul Lynde  
Pierce Brosnan  
Walter Cronkite  
Jerry Falwell  
Don Knotts  
Dick Clark  
Tom Brokaw  
William Conrad  
David Letterman  
Ronald Reagan  
Ironsides  
Mr. Greejeans  
Mr. T  
Tom Snyder  
Jim Baker

### Female

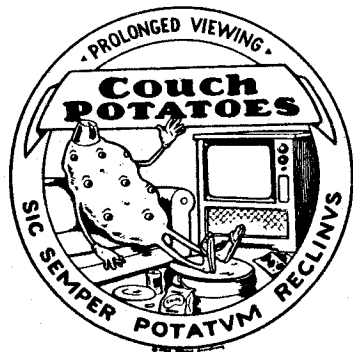
Loni Anderson  
Julie Newmar  
Joyce Davenport  
Mrs. Emma Peel  
Angela Cartwright  
Nancy Reagan  
Mrs. Odetz  
Almost any weather girl  
Barbara Walters  
Barbara Billingsly (semi-nude)  
Ellie Mae Clampett  
Nell Carter  
Corrine Tate  
Dorothy Kilgallen  
Marie Osmond (rumor is she looks just like a Barbie Doll)  
*Petticoat Junction* girls



### Other

Gary Coleman  
Pillsbury Doughboy and Swiss  
Miss, together  
Howdy Doody

Mr. Ed  
Mr. Whipple  
Miss Piggy  
Entire cast of *60 Minutes*



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### SHARES NUMBER ONE COUCH

When first introduced, by my niece Diane, to the Halladonian, little did I know what honor was bestowed on me. For there I sat on the Numero Uno's couch. The All Mighty Potatato stood before me in the flesh. The famous Numero Uno Couch Potato himself!

Well, it truly was a beginning and many hours have been spent sharing that famous spot with the exalted number one.

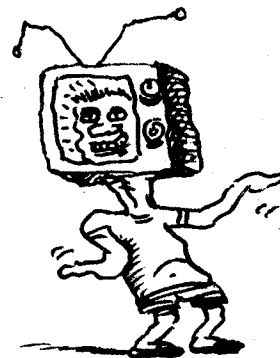
One night things got kinda hot! The southern Alabama summer was encroaching, and so was Numero Uno. And I began to feel the heat. Now, let me tell you, there's nothing to compare to the kind of heat I'm talking about, and I began to generate some of my own. Soon I began to feel myself sticking to Numero Uno's black naugahyde.

It wasn't until the next morning that Number One discovered the array of tiny salmon-colored rosettes embellished on his couch.

I had sat there, overheated, and imprinted the famous couch with the pattern off the backside of my dress like an iron-on transfer. The print is still there, and so are we. Now that's HOT!

AUNT DEB  
Tuskaloosa, Alabama

# Letters



Gary Leib

### TV BASEBALL UPDATE

Thanks for sending me #4 of the *Tuber's Voice*. It gets better and better. Hey, you'll be glad to know that poor Salvatore Balesteri at Monterey Peninsula Cable TV cracked under the pressure of my letter-writing crusade. We still don't get WTBS, but Balesteri has informed me personally we'll get USA Network and ESPN by next month. He even offered me a free conversion box. Ah, the power of the penis ever strong.

RAY MUNGO  
Pacific Grove, California

### NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER

I have just finished perusing your Couch Potato Newsletter. I noticed that one of my good friends, Carl Castagnola, has an article running, and that you promise further installments in upcoming issues. Transistor Ted seems well entrenched in your publication.

He is so full of information that I would feel a slaggard if I did not offer to add my own. These helpful hints, I extend to you, have brought me endless hours of blissful cathode wrangling. Like Carl, I feel I should share my good fortune with you, and if your wisdom sees fit, with your readers.

First on my list is a method of viewing I call "Zenith Viewing." This name has no relation to the television set manufacturer. It refers to the ability to view looking straight up, towards the heavens. It also requires some minor construction in your home. But these tiny inconveniences and costs are inconsequential to the great pleasure derived from their accomplishment. The system is simple. You just mount your bedroom television in the ceiling directly over your head. This way you can view totally flattened out, in complete comfort, without any strain whatsoever on neck or body muscles. Also, you don't need any remote control device because all one has to do is stand up on the bed to alter channel or volume. Unless you are a very short person [or have a very high ceiling], all is well. Of course some of our Trinatronettes may not be able to reach as well as our larger Tuber Titans, so a remote or even a broom handle will make do very well. (Some Couch Tomatoes may not know what a broom is; consult your dictionary.) Zenith Viewing will offer untold happy hours of lifeful Television.

Next is my system called "Circle-

### FULL GOSPEL OF SLACK

Have been digging the hell out of the new *Tuber's Voice*. YEAH! Eatin' it UP! I got 80-channel cable and a Betamax now, so my *mind is going fast*, and I have you guys partly to thank for that, for giving me the excuse I needed, to just let go, to be able to just sink down into that video dream cushion.

Lord knows the world needs you folks to assuage their guilt and fear of FULL VIEWING. Yours is a FULL GOSPEL of SLACK.

Your Proudest Chapter,  
THE IVAN STANG FAMILY  
Dallas, Texas

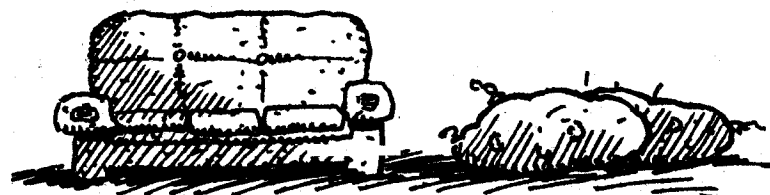


Gary Leib

### TIDY TV

I finally figured out what is wrong with today's situation comedies: every episode ends so "neatly." There is never a reason to watch the next episode. I'll show you what I mean:

Take your mind back 15 years, to the Silver Age of Television (the Golden Age was thirty years ago). A show like *Gilligan's Island* never had a real ending—you sat there waiting for the next



Ed Bishop

Joe Schwind  
Elayne Wechsler  
Ned Wynn

## VIEW This

All subscriptions will expire after the NEXT issue (# 6). If you'd like to subscribe in 1984 (Issues # 7-10) and check out our unique election coverage, along with the rest of our Orwellian video perspective, send \$6 A.S.A.P. to:

### Couch Potatoes

Rt. 1 Box 327  
Dixon, CA 95620

*Tuber's Voice* is published sporadically as the official forum of the Couch Potato movement. Letters, ideas, discussion, and articles are encouraged. Write to: Couch Potatoes, Rt. 1, Box 327, Dixon, CA 95620.

### X—TOMATO AMUSED

I come from a town called Amherst, Massachusetts; let me tell you a little about it. There are four colleges and a major university within a 20-mile radius, making it a pretty progressive, open-minded environment. And even with all of this cosmic awareness (eat natural foods, get lots of exercise, read a lot and call me in the morning) everyone still owns their 20-inch console color and spends their evenings getting mind-fucked by the media. Why? Good question.

But I am interested in hearing a different view of the television syndrome and even with a sense of humor! What more could I ask for.

P. VOGT  
Amherst, Massachusetts

ED NOTE: *Mind-fucking CAN be orgasmic.*

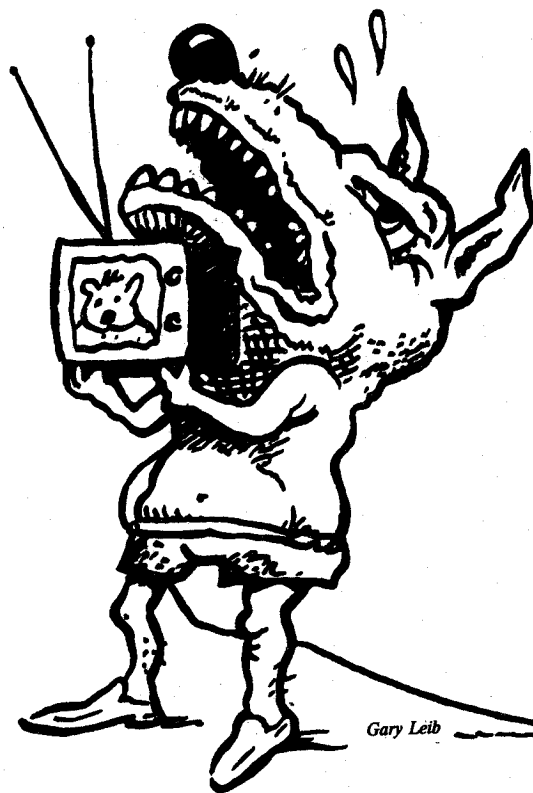
### BURGESS SIMULVIEWS

I respectfully submit the name of Anthony Burgess as an honorary Couch Potato for his honorable performance on the *CBS Morning Show* this morning. He advocated the 3-screen viewing method as the pattern of the future because he felt one screen was not capable of emitting the information level the human brain can assimilate, making one screen ultimately inferior and frustrating.

In making this recommendation, I must also include Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter for providing Mr. Burgess with the original concept of multiple-viewing.

Mr. Burgess's new book is *The End of the World News*.

WANDA PRONK  
Minnesota, Minnesota



Gary Leib

aimed, in a perfect circle, around a swivel Vibro-heat easy chair. The chair must be equipped with arm shelves and form trays to hold various items of life support (i.e., *TV Guide*, potato chips, beer or Pepsi Free, Tobacco supplies, clock, intercom to Couch Tomato or children, slot for *Tuber's Voice*, and a large supply of room deodorant for prolonged viewing sessions, etc.) This system is still in its prototypical stage, but the solution holds untold horizons of viewing ecstasy.

I hope these meager hints will be of some small service to all my new friends at *The Tuber's Voice*.

In Glorious Residuals,  
W. RICHARD LANG, JR.  
Los Angeles, California

### FURTHER DETAILS

I wanted to tell you about our home-made remote control we have rigged up here. It's manually-operated but there's no need to get up from the couch. It's a simple household boom-stick (sans broom, of course). One end has a notch carved out of it that fits over the channel selector. The other end has a larger wedge which fits around the volume knob. We have to be careful not to push too hard & turn the thing off—but we're pretty good at it by now.

ELLEN K. BEHRENS  
Santa Rosa, California

### VICIOUS GOSSIP

I don't know if your newsletter prints gossip, but last night—and I swear on my stack of *TV Guides*—I sat next to Marlon Perkins and the most gorgeous mid-20s blonde you have ever seen. He shakes more than he does on TV, but you'd shake too if you were sittin' next to somethin' like this. I know it cost him a grand or a bit part on *Wild Kingdom*. She was just slaving over his every word. That kind of attention has to be bought. Granny will be shocked.

WILLY CLYDE  
Australia

wouldn't). But today, a sit-com like *Three's Company* has one basic idea—a normal situation happens, a misunderstanding erupts from it, the misunderstanding is cleared up, the show ends. No suspense, just junkfood comedy.

But, just imagine if Colonel Bellows found definite proof that Jeannie (*I Dream of Jeannie*) existed. Or, if Oscar really did throw Felix out of his apartment?

Today, Bellows would find Jeannie in Tony's house. He'd confront Jeannie, she'd admit everything, he'd have a nervous breakdown and go for psychiatric treatment, and then Bellows would become an admiral. All in one episode.

Or, take the *Odd Couple*. Oscar and Felix would have an amazing argument over who cooks better, Roy Rogers or Craig Claiborne. Felix then gets thrown out of the apartment, they moan and groan without each other, they reconcile, and go out for pizza-in-pita. Again, in one episode.

Isn't comedy tidy in 1983? Bring back comedy shows that don't "click off" after just 23 minutes!

SUSAN G. RESNICK  
Old Bethpage, NY

ED NOTE: *Yes, but junkfood is in a class by itself.*



# TRANSISTOR TED: Journey to Pixley

I don't know how long I was out. Maybe days, maybe weeks. There were shows, thousands of shows. Every Grammy award show ever produced. I sat through them all. Every show Arthur Godfrey ever made, I saw. Every episode of *Gilligan's Island*, but not one *Dobie Gillis*. *Father Knows Best* and *My Three Sons*, but never *The Honeymooners*. *Dennis the Menace* but never *I Love Lucy*. I knew something was wrong but I was helpless to change the channel. I had to sit through what seemed like ten lifetimes of commercials. Not Speedy Alka Seltzer. Not the Pillsbury Doughboy. Never a Spicy Meatball. No. Just Catherine Deneuve lying on her side talking about blueberries and bicycles. Or Lowenbrau ad after Lowenbrau ad filled with these immensely self-confident upper-middle class lawyers and account executives who played lacrosse and drove Porsche 944's and lived for timeouts and sunsets in beachfront homes with girls whose nipples were the color of mocha ice cream and whose panties smelled of blueberries and bicycles. . .

I woke up in Cedars of Turlock Hospital. What had happened to me? How much time had passed? And why was there this ever-present stench of shit in the room? I checked myself immediately, but I was OK. Then I heard a moan from the bed on the other side of the divider. More moans and sobs, then a nurse walked out from behind the curtain peeling off rubber gloves as she went. I pretended I was asleep, hoping she wouldn't notice me in case she had ideas about doing to me whatever it was she was doing to the person next door.

When she was gone I whispered to my suffering roommate. "What's wrong?" I asked. For a long time there was no answer. "Are you in pain?" There was a sharp burst of laughter, cynical, cold. In the background I could hear chanting

concerned. "Of course, there is always the possibility that I'll be transferred there. It has happened before."

I tried to encourage him on this upbeat note. After all, it could happen. I like to accentuate the positive. Although elective bowel surgery seemed to me to be going just that double shot over the line, I had to admit that it was an unusual way to maybe get to meet Red Buttons someday and go "hey hey" after the Master goes, "hey hey." I understand the force of one man's dream, and that was my roommate's dream. The pain he endured was worth it. The fact that a nurse had to come in and relieve him of his collected feces every day was small potatoes compared to what he had as a goal.

It made me think. I began to question my own goals. What had happened to me? Had I over-prioritized my need to view? And where had that gotten me? In a room with a guy who stunk of shit, with little or no hope of getting into the Red Buttons Wing never mind learning the art of viewing, the secret of vertical hold.

Perhaps in the past I had put too much emphasis on *viewing*. Being in the hospital gives you time to think of things like that. In fact, I was there for hours before I realized there was no TV.

The reality struck me like a hammer blow to the solar plexus. I had lain in that bed for eons, and there was no TV. That meant that since I had eaten the In-n-Out fries I had had some form of *viewing* taking place.

"What's on?"

"Huh? I . . . there's no TV," I mumbled.

My roommate's reply was quick and

It turned out that Todd-A-O had met Transistor Ted several years before I had, but that his teacher was really Don Kartoffel. To view, he told me, one had to have implacability. His operation was a sign of his incredible implacability.

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**To view, he told me,  
one had to have  
implacability. His  
operation was a sign of  
his incredible  
implacability.**

---

We decided that I had to find Ted again to ask him what had actually happened.

"Let me get my clothes," whispered

an absurd little man with a conical hat and a checkered coat doing some kind of comedy routine on a makeshift stage. Years would pass before I realized that this was the immortal Pinky Lee. As I hurried by one disgusting old woman grabbed my ankle.

"Please, kind sir, have pity. . . take me to the Red Buttons Wing. Even the Julius La Rosa Wing. . ." I back-kicked her sharply to the jaw and kept running.

I don't know how many corridors, how many floors, how many miles of linoleum I raced across. Cedars of Turlock was huge. Wing after wing: the Don Ameche Wing, the Snooky Lansen Wing, the Don Wilson Wing, the Shari Lewis Wing, the Tina Louise Wing, the Don Taylor Wing, the Sarah Rawls Wing. . . my nose did a sharp right turn and my feet followed. Unbelievable odors emanated from the Sarah Rawls

reached out to pick up one of the sumptuous looking tidbits when someone knocked the tray flying, grabbed my arm and started pulling me out of the room.

I was halfway down the hall when I realized that my captor was Todd-A-O Cinemascope, my erstwhile roommate, he of the youthful-appearing ileum. "You jerk," he said. "Don't you know what'll happen to you if you eat Sarah Rawls' food?" I mumbled as how I didn't. "You'll end up wearing iridescent green suits, saying things like "hey, Bro," and "what it is," and "sheeee-it, muh-fuh," and having to learn complicated handshakes. Then you'll develop high blood pressure, hypertension, and chronic heartburn. You'll only own stolen goods, you'll beat your wife, you'll hang around the Lucky Liquor parking lot drinking J&B Scotch from half-pint bottles."

"Won't anything good happen?"

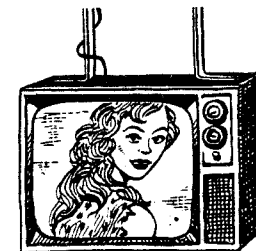
"Well," he thought a bit. "Your dick will get longer, but that improvement will be offset by the fact that every time you shave you'll get really bad razor bumps." That was the clincher. One thing I didn't want was razor bumps.

I don't really remember how long we ran, but eventually we found our way out a side door of the hospital. I turned to Todd-A-O. "Wheee, momma, dat was sho close," I said. He looked at me in horror. I grabbed my throat. "Ah musta drunk some dat bahbeque sauce," I said. "Shit," exclaimed Todd. "We gotta get you to a Wienerschnitzel or a Wendy's and fast."

Across the street we noticed a new shopping mall. Dashing across the street we entered. Desperately we searched for a Wienerschnitzel. There wasn't one. Finally Todd-A-O spied a Chick-Fil-A and dragged me to the counter.

"One chicken breast on a bun with mayonnaise," he ordered.

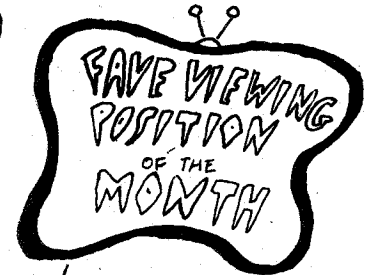
"Ah don' want no fuckin' chicken bresk ona bun wit manaise." I said. It was



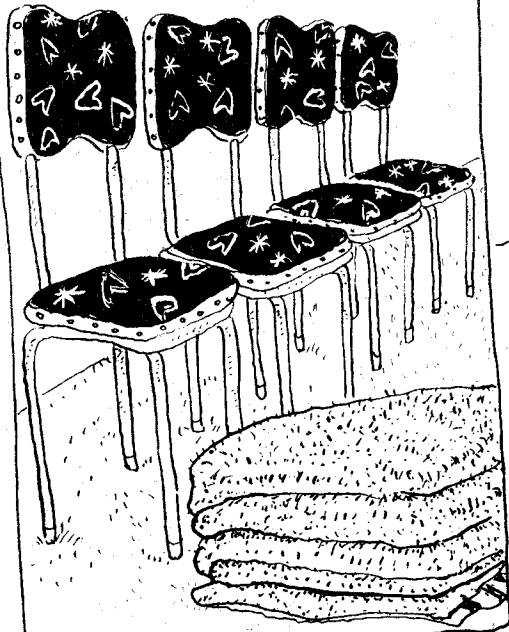
MIMI POWDS



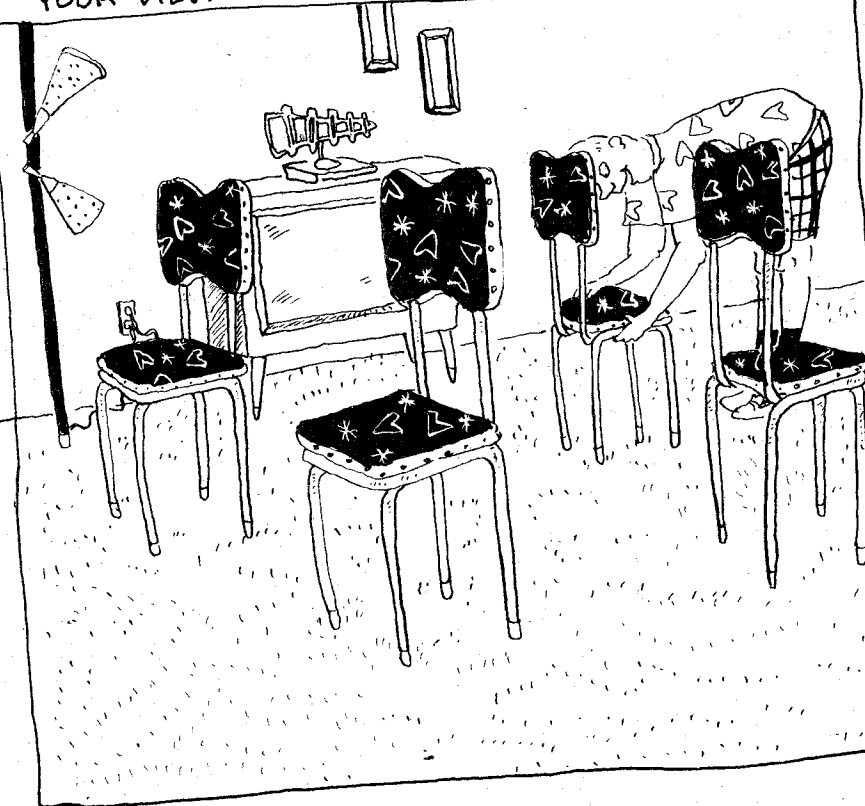
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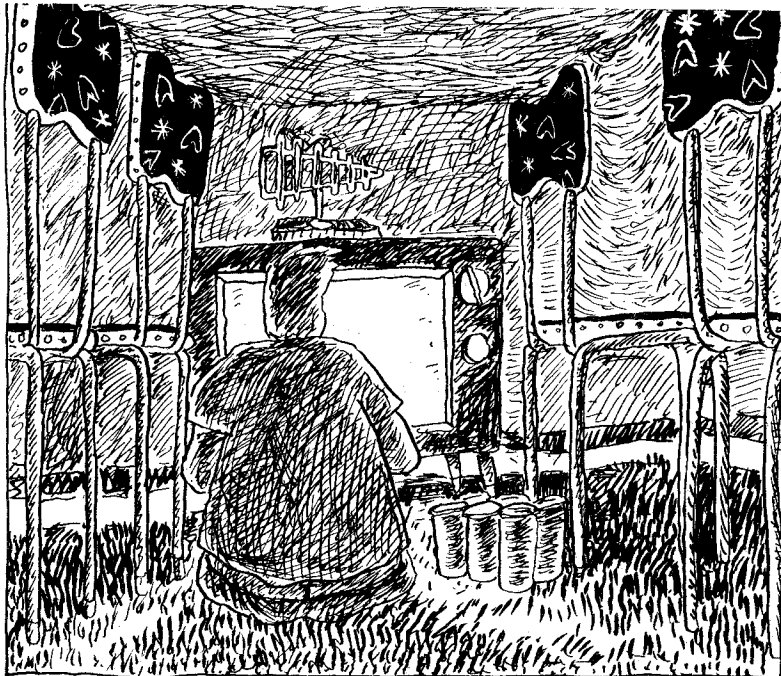


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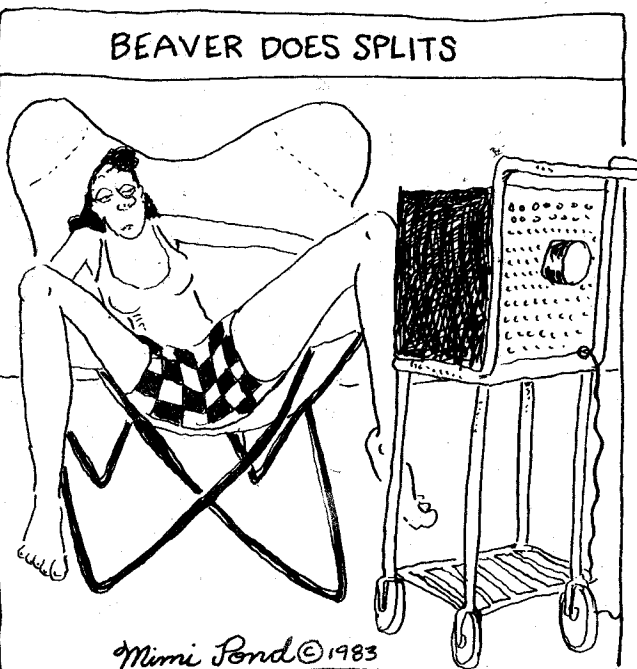
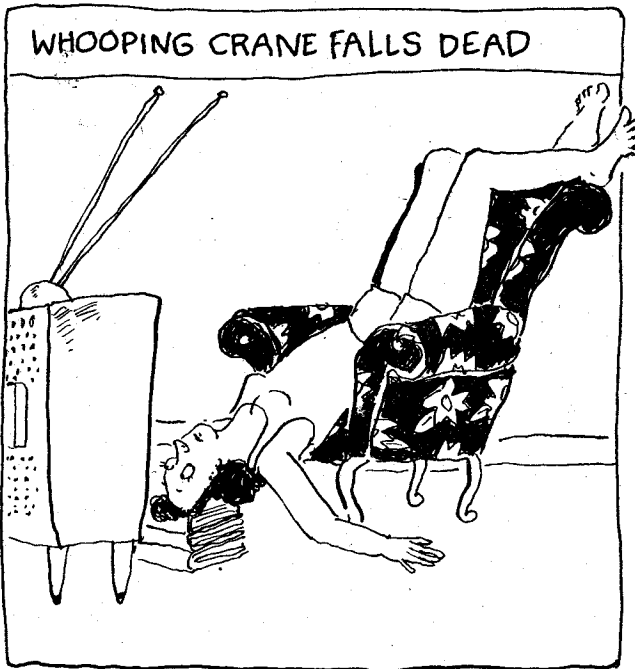
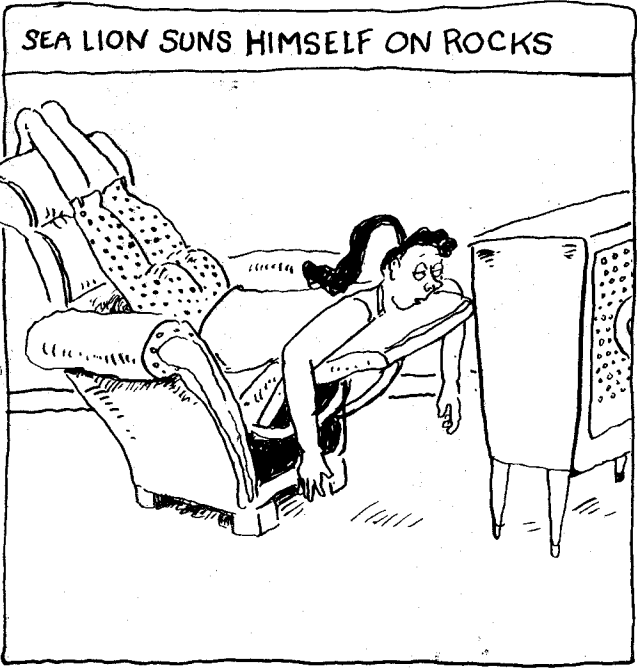
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WELL, ALMOST NO DISTRACTIONS.

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# MTViewpoint

by Elayne Wechsler

On August 1, 1981, Warner Communications played out one of their biggest cable gambles to date, and began broadcasting a new kind of television channel. This channel, which combined rock music in stereo with visual images on the TV, was christened Music Television, or "MTV." And a new art form was born.

To be fair, the concept of "televsualized" songs had been around for awhile. Time was when record companies would even pay clubs and promoters to show videos made by their contracted groups. Concert videos, and even concert movies, have been around since the days of Jerry Lee Lewis. If you look hard enough, you might even encounter (in such places as some local public TV stations) kinescopes going as far back as Cab Calloway. But the gimmick of taking rock video performances and formatting them back-to-back with "vjs" (video jocks) sandwiched in between spewing out concert information and music news (in other words, the idea of creating a television channel resembling an FM radio station) was brand new.

What is the appeal of this seemingly strange combination of rock music and television? Are those two concepts as diametrically opposed as some may believe? Well, I can only speak for myself, a slightly-post baby-boomer who grew up in the Age of TV and also the Age of Rock and Roll. Let's think back a minute and note some interesting tendencies. . . . At the height of popularity of both "new" art forms came the rallying cries of McCarthy-esque leftovers that TV/Rock 'n' Roll (depending on who was speaking at the moment) was Evil, a False Object of Mindless Adoration, a very Tool of the Devil Himself, and nauseum. Parents were urged to pull the plugs on their hi-fis and Zeniths alike. "Impressionable" youngsters were often forcefully steered toward nobler and saner and more "Christian" pursuits, such as reading and family outings. Usually with little success.



Collage by Joe Schwind

of glitter, acid rock and heavy metal) relegated Dick Clark's shenanigans strictly to pre-pubescent status. Here were real rock musicians, as accepted by real rock consumers/fans, in realer-than-life simulated concert settings, singing instead of synching! What novelty! What a gimmick! What better thing to

dorm rooms. Besides, FM stations had something out of TV's reach—stereo.

Stereo TV remains in the experimental stage; but there have been many recent "simulcasts" presented (again on late-night commercial TV) where the stereo sound that "matches" the pictures is broadcast over a local FM station.

Are You Dependent on Television?

"1. On the average, do you watch TV 3 hours a day?

"2. You have only one TV and that broke. Are you going to look here, there and everywhere to see who can lend you one?

"3. You didn't go to work because of a small toothache. Are you going to spend all morning watching TV?

"4. Your girlfriend has personal problems and is begging you to spend an evening with her. Before you accept, are you going to check what's on TV that night?

"5. Do you have the habit of changing the channel every few minutes so you don't miss anything?

"6. All day long you've looked forward to a certain program, but you can't

watch it because your husband has invited friends for a card party. Are you going to be mad?

"7. Do you remember most of the Economic Propaganda (commercials) that you hear?

"8. The minute you buy the newspaper, do you open it to the TV listings?

"9. Do you remember in detail how Olivia Mlakar was dressed in the last episode of *Kviskotekfi*?

"10. Do you remember all the main characters in the serial *The Hospital at the Edge of the City*?"

—A self-diagnostic poll from *Yugoslavian women's magazine Svijet* ("The World"), April, 1983. (Translated by Davora James). □

## Couch Potatoes In Space

### Get It Yourself, Astronaut!

Couch Potato Headquarters is now compiling a list of volunteers from our organization who are suitable candidates for space travel, to be presented to NASA.

Couch Potatoes in space? Some of us may be ideal candidates for the job according to reports issued from NASA's Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California.

The reports conclude that NASA's been going about astronaut selection all wrong. Those tight muscles and flexible arteries of the inordinately athletic military personnel they've always picked for space travel present substantial problems in gravity-free flight. Better candidates, according to one NASA researcher, are "typical sedentary middle-aged slob" with a bit of high blood pressure and a touch of arteriosclerosis.

Obviously, many of us are right for the job (or will be after a few more years of training). But do we want it?

Patriotic considerations aside, what could be more conducive to the Couch Potato lifestyle than living in a well-equipped space capsule? Astronauts get to sit in comfy chairs for days at a time and watch closed-circuit TV. They get to eat the latest in Chef Aldo-approved "Squeeze" and reportedly can even make "pit stops" without having to go very far.

Volunteers should send their names, addresses, and qualifications to Couch Potato Astronaut Search, Rt. 1 Box 327, Dixon, CA 95620.

—J.M. □

Of course, rock and roll was sunnier and more insidious and dangerous than mere television. After all, television *could* be used for good. For example, righteous pontificators could get on TV and spout about the evils of Rock 'n' Roll. But the music — *mah Gahd, it was pyer sin, it was. Jes' lookit that Elvis fellah on Sullivan, wigglin' them there hips lahk it was an invitation fer ess-ee-ex 'n all that, ah tell ya. . .* and so on.

Then when the Beatles made this music a little too hard even for television to casually dismiss, I mean, here was this *revolution* taking place right under their turned-up noses. All these crazy kids weren't content with those Annette & Frankie beach movies any more. . . *Wait, that's it! We'll take the steam out of this rock thing, said Mr. Television Executive, by focusing on it all right, and by playing up every triviality we can. We'll make it look absolutely worthless! We'll give these kids what they think they want—heck, they're so glued to their tubes anyway it won't make any difference—we'll give 'em Beatles cartoons! And Bandstand! And Shindig! And the GRAMMY AWARDS! Yes, we'll admit to them that there are some nice boys and girls out there singing very pretty songs who deserve to be rewarded.* . . .

And so began the days of Simon & Garfunkel, Petula Clark, the (early) Monkees—the ultimate in TV twist-around hype—and a whole new bubble-gum enterprise that was more merchandise than music. Now, I'm not knocking the artists listed above, but they weren't exactly hard-driving rock. Except for a rare, highly sedate appearance on variety shows from time to time, the Who, the Stones, Mott the Hoople, Joplin, etc. stuck to radio and records. (The advent of FM rock stations and stereo was the latest advance to boost the rock music business.) The dichotomy grew. Until someone could figure out a way to make a profit out of rock on TV.

That someone was probably Don Kirshner, whose *Rock Concert* programs (which began in the early 70s days

watch late on a Friday or Saturday night. Then came NBC's *Saturday Night*, later *SNL* and *Rock Concert* sprang up. There were those of us who found late-night TV generally more intriguing than dating the local high school nerd. And we were starting to appreciate rock in more depth as we passed through our John Denver stage into the weird wired world of Lou Reed or David Bowie. This kind of schizophrenic taking-for-granted of rock music as a source of profit even went so far as to create bizarre scenes like Alice Cooper appearing on *Hollywood Squares*. Nothing exceptionally hazardous, nothing too strange, was really touched upon, as the too-far-out was more or less ignored on the average FM rock station.

It remained for cable to take the biggest leap. Cable was the testing ground for the stuff "regular" TV wouldn't or couldn't touch. And rock, in all its implications, had never really gained solid ground (with the few exceptions mentioned above) on TV—certainly not on prime time TV. Rock was still the realm of spaced-out teens smoking their brains out in clandestine

system (that will broadcast (it is presumed—I don't have a hookup) stereo only when the TV is tuned to MTV. Once this system was perfected and approved by the Powers That Be, MTV could begin its broadcast days (24 hours non-stop).

How is it working so far? Well, most critics agree that MTV still has a way to go, but we must allow for the newness of the whole venture. The channel still takes as few risks with "new" music as do most commercial FM stations (which is a bit of a shame, for while there are alternative radio stations there are still no real alternative music TV channels), but it's corporate-run, that's to be expected. Slowly, viewers are beginning to see more Third World and female representation, more unusual video work, more fringe music. While MTV has by no means brought rock around full circle, it's the biggest boost that it has had on television in a long time.

*Next time: an analysis of what to watch for and what to avoid, and why each and every vj on MTV should be forced to sit and watch Ernie Kovacs reruns until he knows how to act on TV.* □



For those rare non-viewing moments, you'll want to have on hand numerous selections from our wide inventory of underground comics and unusual books.

#### Introductory Offer

5 of the best new comics at a discount:

- Mickey Rat #4
- Eating Raoul
- Its a Dog's Life
- Freak Brothers #7
- Anarchy #3

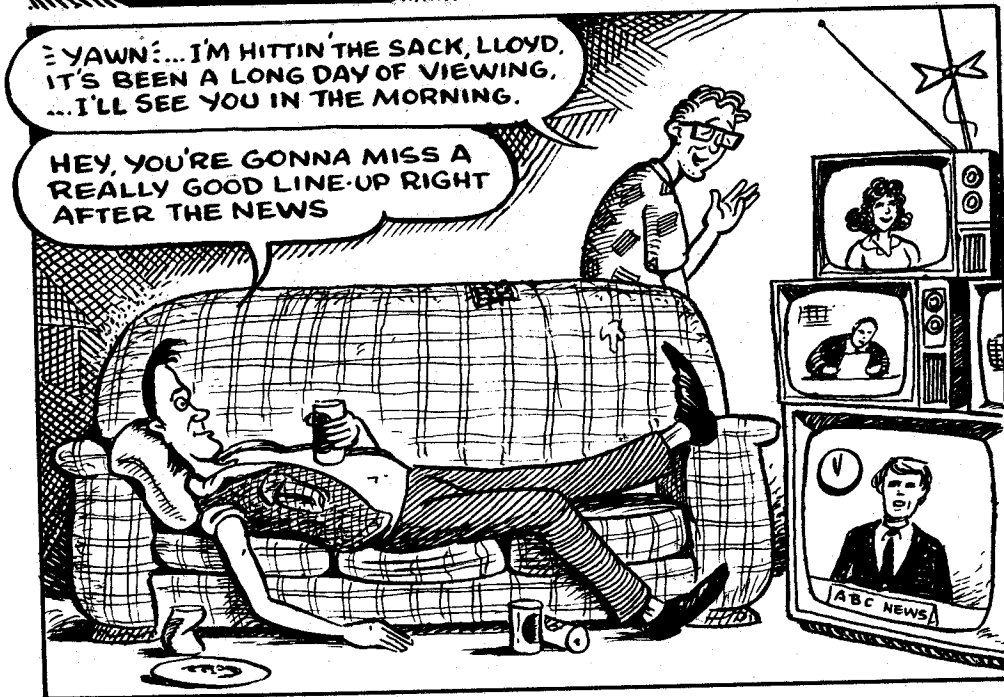
Regular retail \$9.50 — Special to the Couch Potatoes, all 5 for \$7.50 + \$1 shipping . . . or send \$1.00 for complete catalog.

SAVE THIS AD FOR A 10% DISCOUNT ON YOUR NEXT ORDER

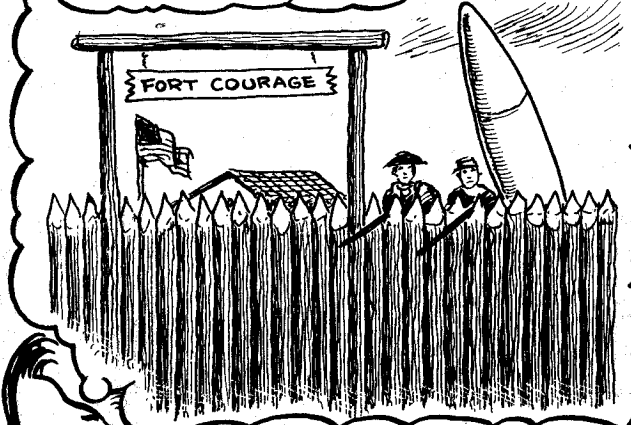
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# The COUCH POTATOES

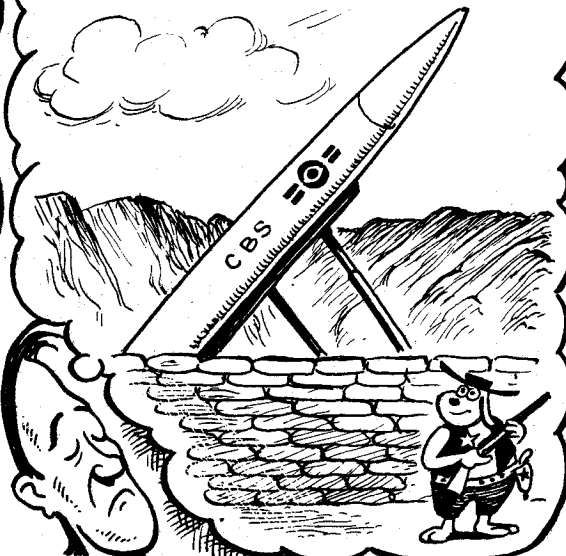


LOOKS LIKE THE REAL M'COYS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES... "F TROOP" NOW HAS A "PEACEMAKER"



TV AIN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS

MAYBE IT'S GONNA BE THE ULTIMATE BATTLE OF THE NETWORKS

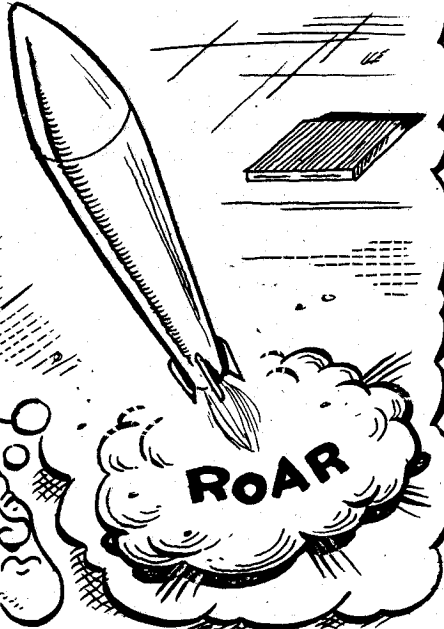


OH NO! NOW THIS BUNCH HAS A MISSILE TOO

UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS HAVE JUST APPEARED ON SCANNER. COULD BE ENEMY MISSILES... AWAITING ORDERS, SIR

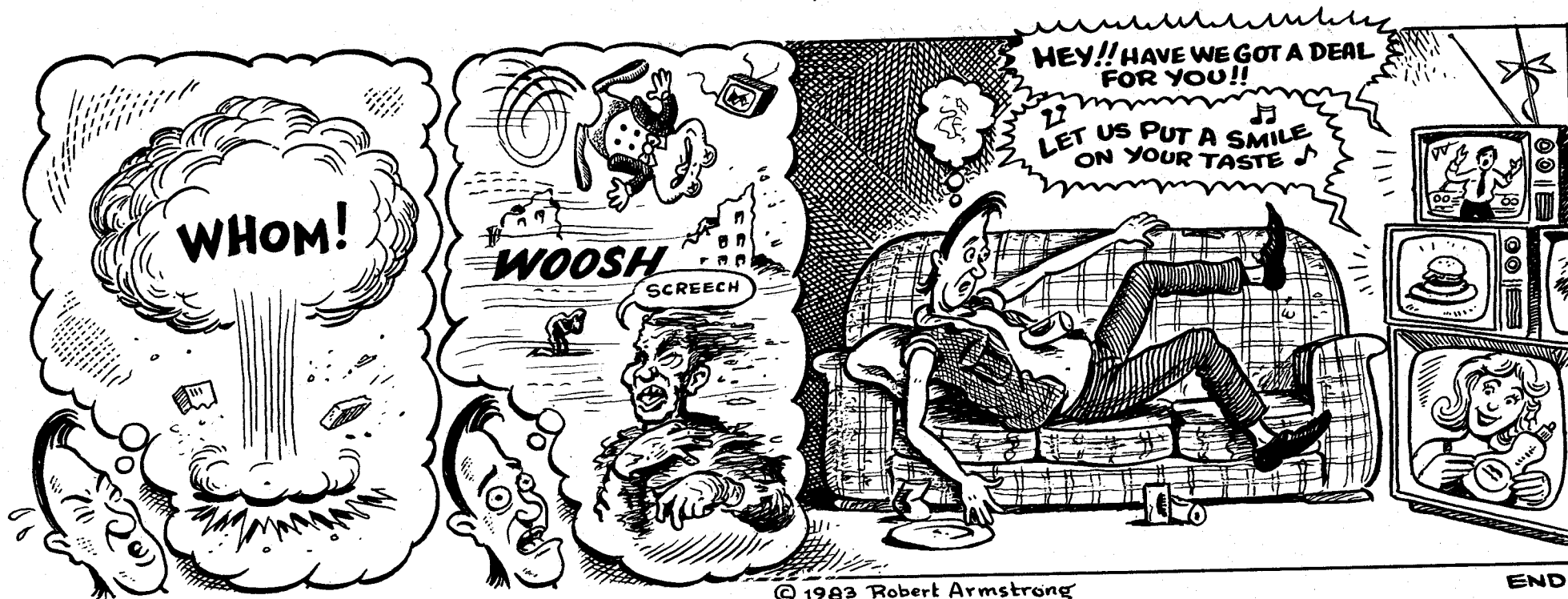


FIRE COUNTER FORCE WEAPON WHEN READY!



GOOD LORD! HERE THEY COME!





## CHEF ALDO'S HANDY HINTS CONTEST

*Turner's Frank Turner*

Dear Chef Aldo,

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the "View In" I attended last March in Berkeley. It was a thrill to view side-by-side with such noteworthy Couch Potatoes as Elder Armstrong and the infamous Dr. Spudd. I was particularly impressed with your Squeezine demonstration and how effortlessly you put together those great-tasting snacks. I went home and closed the door to my kitchen for good! I'm practicing "Couch-side Cuisine" from now on! Your use of an ordinary electric drill as a food prep tool was inspirational. I loved the stuffed sausages! May I respectfully submit yet another electric drill recipe.

I also use an ordinary electric drill, but mine has a variable speed motor. In it is a 3/16 drill bit that is twelve inches long. (This length bit can be obtained at any hardware store.) Rather than a toaster oven I have a double burner hotplate next to my beloved couch. I like to place a couple of franks on the long drill bit and hold them over the glowing hotplate. The drill is turned on to the lowest speed and the franks cook evenly on all sides. Next, while the franks are still revolving on the bit, I plunge the end frank into a large mayonnaise and then mustard jar. When the end frank is suitably

## The Potato's Not for Burning

By Jack Mingo

I have been receiving disturbing mail lately in reaction to an article I wrote a few issues back defending Reagan as the ideal Couch Potato President. I still defend one basic premise of the piece—record unemployment has been proven to have increased people's commitment to TV viewing by freeing them of the dual burdens of work and expendable income—but I am having second thoughts about the other major premise.

I have been accused of war-mongering for welcoming Reagan's obsession with arms as a way of increasing shows in the military genre like *Bilko*, *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Combat*, and *Gomer Pyle*. I am not a war-monger. I believe war has no place in

*Homo reclinus.*"

This fatalistic and profoundly naive view of the world, although appealing, is wrong on two counts. In the first place, the world of viewing is diminished with every dollar spent for weapons. Consider these examples:

- With the funds earmarked for the B-1 bomber we could put a hefty down-payment on a color TV for every home in the country that doesn't already have one.

- For the cost of deploying the first batch of MX missiles the government could provide a video copy of *Debbie Does Dallas* to every heterosexual male east of Fort Worth, Texas.

best technical minds and research resources go to the development of more and more devastating weapons.

How destructive are they? Consider these facts:

- In a full-scale nuclear exchange, over 86% of the world's TV equipment would instantly be turned into small puddles of molten glass, metal and plastic.

- 96% of all TV transmitter towers would be toppled. In targeted areas not a single rooftop antenna would remain standing.

- Even one smallish atomic bomb exploded miles above the United States would cause an Electromagnetic Pulse



Sincerely,  
Geoff Turner  
San Francisco, CA

Thanks for the idea Geoff, your autographed photo will be in the mail before too many spins of the dial and your idea is officially entered in the Handy Hints Contest (see details below).

Now I have a couple of suggestions for couch cuisine using the electric drill. First, try making what I call a Chef Kabob. Using the same drill setup described by Geoff, place one-inch chunks of Spam or generic lunch meat in between marshmallows and warm over the hotplate until the marshmallows begin to sag off the drill bit. Simply remove the pieces of Chef Kabob and dip in maple syrup or other suitable sauce and serve.

NOTE: If your drill motor is interfering with TV reception try one of the new cordless battery-operated drills. They're unbeatably convenient!

Send your Handy Hints for the Couch Potato to Chef Aldo c/o the T.V.\* If we use your idea you will receive a personally autographed photo of Chef Aldo! At the end of the year the elders will choose the best idea published and the Grand Prize Winner will have Chef Aldo come to his or her home and personally demonstrate his couchside cuisine.†

\*All submissions become property of *The Tuber's Voice* and cannot be returned without a S.A.S.E.

†The winner is responsible for: roundtrip travel, accommodations, and all material and incidental expenses Chef Aldo may incur. (The winner has the right to refuse the Grand Prize in the Chef Aldo Handy Hints Contest.)

## TV COULD BRING PEACE IN EL SALVADOR

Peace cannot be won by massive American arms shipments, according to a Couch Potato Institute study on War and TV. The Reagan administration is asking for \$120-140 million in military aid to El Salvador in 1984 to fight an estimated total of 6,000 to 8,000 guerrillas—between \$15,000 and \$23,333 per guerrilla.

The Institute suggests a more cost-effective strategy: Use the money to provide Spanish-dubbed American TV fare, with commercials included, to Salvadorean TV stations. Airlift thousands of crates of viewing equipment and snacks into the country.

The commercials are an important part of the strategy, suggests the Institute. How long can a rebel's desire for justice, land, and dignity hold out before being

supplanted by a longing for Big Macs, designer jeans, and fancy cars? Would rebels risk aligning themselves with Communists who can only offer borscht, Chairman Mao jackets and bicycles?

A favorite sport of the rebels is blowing up electrical power stations. If you were the proud owner of good video equipment, would you blow up the source of your electricity? Of course not. And if you were a member of a right-wing death squad, wouldn't beheading peasants and raping nuns pale against kicking your shoes off and watching *The A-Team* in your own little viewing hacienda?

Soon the countryside would be pacified, the Institute says, at a fraction of the blood and money required by the Reagan plan. □



today's modern world except on our TV screens. It is disturbing to get letters from people who believe war should not even be portrayed on TV, but I can understand their viewpoint.

I have a lot more trouble with the Couch Potato Survivalists who have written in large numbers to say that I am too moderate. They say that a nuclear holocaust would be a great opportunity for holing up somewhere to watch TV until the radiation levels go down.

Many of the letter writers boasted of their elaborate secret underground viewing shelters in isolated spots around the country stocked with video equipment, massive cassette libraries and a one-year supply of Doritos, soft drinks, Mickey's Dream Cakes, Ding Dongs and Viewmeister Beer. They argued that a nuclear disaster is not only inevitable, but desirable; so that every new arms system should be welcomed as one more step toward "a great cleansing" of non-viewing humanity. "Only a Potato can live underground for a whole year without rotting," wrote one. "We will be the seed potatoes for a new species,

— A fraction of the money authorized for nerve gas deployment would be sufficient to upgrade non-commercial TV into something worth watching. No longer would PBS be forced into buying second-grade yawners from the BBC—they could afford to produce programs of the same quality as ABC, CBS and NBC.

— Military spending for 1984 alone will top \$200 billion. That's roughly \$900 for every man, woman and child in the country. Think of the video equipment you and your family could buy with that!

Worse, Survivalist Tubers fail to fully grasp the terrible ramifications to viewers should these weapons actually be used. In war the first casualty is often TV. The first TV network ever, built by the Germans in 1935, was wiped out on November 23, 1943 by a single Allied bomb. The same war slowed TV research and development to a standstill in this and other countries. Without the Depression and the war, we could have had TV at least ten years earlier. Even today, as the world cries out for better video equipment at reduced cost, our

(EMP) to surge the electronic circuits of America's appliances strong enough to burn out the components. All TV sets, all VCRs, all automatic channel changers—yes, even those hidden away in Survivalist Viewing Shelters—could have their guts burned out by EMP.

— Perhaps a post-nuclear war society could rebuild our video equipment. But some things would be lost forever. The same Electromagnetic Pulse would wreak havoc on our videotape recordings. Not only would your own personal library be wiped out, but quite possibly every copy of every TV classic. Gone forever!

Survivalist Couch Potatoes must join with the rest of us in opposing nuclear war in order to preserve TV viewing as we know it. And we may need to remind the president that without TV he would lose a lot of residuals from his old movies. Couch Potatoes want to see their fellow viewers everywhere—even those in secret viewing lodges throughout the Soviet Union—viewing freely and without of fear of war. Most Couch Potatoes do not want to risk ending up steamed, fried, boiled or baked. □

# The STATION BREAK *Gourmet*



## NOSTALGIA Part II

Before we take a look at the fabulous fifties, I'd like to say a special hello to Ann Pierson and all the viewers in Lodge 39 up in Eureka, California. Thanks for the note on Tater Tot preparation. Also I'm interested in hearing details on your "Mendocino Mustard" dip!

### THE FIFTIES

The Fifties was the era of the great dawning of the true Couch Potato lifestyle. For the first time, uninterrupted programming gave credence to a total dedication to the couch. Food and eating were becoming very closely associated with the couch.

The ancestor of the modern toaster oven was invented in 1953 in Little Rock, Arkansas by George B. Munsey. It was a primitive device in which buttered bread could be toasted horizontally. Society was feeling the need to move from the traditional food prep setting towards the hub of the modern household, the viewing module. It was the age of the flowering of the media chefs. Chef Milani was reminding the Couch Potato of nutritional needs from the screen while Chef-Boy-Ar-Dee was adding new flair to his canned meals in an attempt to capture the hearts of the rapidly blossoming ranks of Potatodom.

Basically, the can was still King, but as early as 1952 the E.H. Swanson Co. of Omaha, Nebraska was unloading huge quantities of MSG and related spices for their experimental TV Dinner division. These early dinners and the advent of the TV tray were instrumental in causing one of the giant steps out of the traditional kitchen, and more involved setside food prep was becoming a reality.

Here's an example of a pioneering recipe which divides the preparation between the traditional kitchen and the couchside prep area:

### LITTLE POTATOES AU GRATIN

Can New Potatoes  
Jar Thousand Island Dressing  
American cheese slices (pre-sliced)  
¼ chopped onion  
Bowl of vinegar

**STEP ONE:** Open the can of New Potatoes, leaving the lid affixed to the can around a third of its circumference. Place the can under a

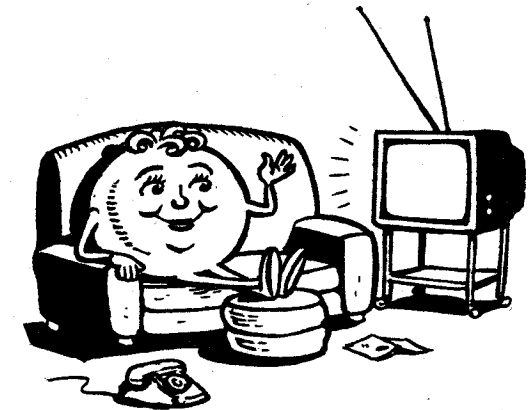
## RALPH Gets Kramden's Uniform

The bus uniform worn by Jackie Gleason as Ralph Kramden in the earliest of the 39 episodes of *The Honeymooners* was procured in July by representatives of RALPH (an acronym for the Royal Association for the Longevity and Preservation of *The Honeymooners*) for the sum of \$650. Peter Crescenti and Bob Columbe, co-presidents and co-founders of RALPH, informed us that the prized gray uniform will be presented before the local media for photos and filming, then displayed for a while in Brooklyn in its borough hall before it is returned to the members of RALPH.

A first-ever *Honeymooners*/RALPH convention will take place on March 24, 1984 in Greenvale, NY, when the uniform will again appear in public before adoring hordes. Invitations to the event have been extended to Jackie Gleason, Art Carney, Audrey Meadows, and Joyce Randolph. Festivities will include: re-creations of *Honeymooners* skits, look-alike contests, non-stop viewing of the original 39 episodes, a performance by comedian Jack Simmons of his song "I Want a Wife Like Alice Kramden," and a menu featuring all the favorite foods of Ralph and Norton.

Members of RALPH are still searching for other relics of the bygone TV series, such as the much-sought-after lunch box, candy dish, and cornet. They claim that Art Carney still possesses the Norton hat.

All true-blue *Honeymooners* fans are invited to membership in RALPH. Send \$3.00 to RALPH, C.W. Post College, Greenvale, NY 11548. □



## FROM THE TOMATO VINE *A Female Viewpoint*

By Patty Graves

Ads have been more alluring lately. Maybe it's because commercials seem to be the only relatively new material on TV during this interminable rerun season (with the exception of *Buffalo Bill*). Of course, the "material" being offered by Madison Avenue isn't exactly new. It's just constantly being decked out in new, and ever-briefer, attire. Most piches are still being thrown at female batters. . . and some are pretty hard to resist swinging at.

Annette Funicello was the Mouseketeer I longed to resemble 25 years ago. She had budding breasts and black hair. I was a pre-pubescent albino. Now, at last, I can be just like Annette. All I have to do is buy Skippy peanut butter for my kids.

Semi-attired female bodies are claiming an extraordinary amount of airtime. I can understand the use of such imagery as a way to rivet the attention of males. It has an amazingly effective pull on the consciousness of the Potatoes I view with. But it seems Tomatoes might be more swayed by the sight of cavorting, almost naked men. As a matter of fact, I am particularly fond of the Pepsi Light (one calorie men love) commercial that lets us peak at the New York Giants prancing around the locker room dressed in nothing but towels.

Apparently, though, the master sales-

years younger, tan, sleek and out-surfing all the guys. I'm sure I could be among the first 10 runners to cross the marathon finish line if I just used Joy liquid detergent — and my hands would be indistinguishable from those of a 20-year-old besides!

Summer provides countless flimsy excuses to show skin. Almost every commercial is set on a beach, at poolside, or in a dancercise class. And if I just could look like that in a bikini for one day. . . !

Television makes anything possible. I can lie on the couch in the shadows of my living room on a hot summer afternoon. The milk salesperson on the screen is me, gliding through the water in a perfectly tuned body. Gone from my thighs are the extra ten pounds of white flesh that keep the light of day from ever witnessing me in swimwear. The generic beer in my hand is replaced by a tall, refreshing glass of cold milk. The sweat that's beading on my upper lip becomes drops of chlorinated water that I shake off with a toss of my head as I break the surface of the pool. It's an ideal life, and I'm a beautiful person. . . for a fleeting moment. Maybe a fraction of the fantasy is a possibility. Not much chance I'm going to look like that person in the near future. There's no large body of sanitized water I can dive into without getting in my ears and driving

place it in the dish of vinegar near the couchprep area.  
**STEP TWO:** Separate the cheese slices and set them to warm on top of the TV set. (You can leave them in their individual wrappers or place them on a pie plate).

**STEP THREE:** When the little potatoes are sufficiently warmed under the tap, drain and place them on the cheese slices. Add the chopped and marinated onions and gently form a slice of cheese around each potato, being careful not to break the cheese. Next, skewer with an ordinary fork and dip into a jar of Thousand Island dressing. Serve right on the fork, no need for a plate.

This tasty and convenient recipe is representative of the fifties struggle stereotyped by the dash to the traditional kitchen setting during a commercial. In the case of the simulviewent this dash would prove to be disastrous on many occasions. Live gems on one channel would fall on empty couches when they appeared in unison with a much-needed commercial that had already triggered that heralded dash to the kitchen or john. As the fifties progressed the frozen meal era was in full swing and advancements such as Jiffy Pop and Kellogg's Pop Tarts were considered milestones by most Couch Potatoes.

Next: *The Complacent Years*



instilled with an irresistible desire to emulate the beauties who are capturing the imaginations of our couchmates. Yes, I really should be out there on the beach drinking diet soda so that I can be 10

on. Guess my only salvation is to go in the kitchen, pour myself a glass of milk, and see if there are any Oreos left before *Solid Gold* comes on. □

# Advice to the COUCH POTATO

Write to Dr. Spudd in care of this paper.

By Dr. Davenport H. Spudd

Dear Dr. Spudd:

*My boyfriend and I are always fighting, usually about what to watch on TV. We are thinking about getting married. Do you think this is a good idea?*

—Second Thoughts

Dear Second:

I think you have good reason to be concerned. A Roeper Poll several years ago found that a leading cause of fights between married couples was about what to view on TV.

I don't know how old the two of you are, but I suggest you read my *Dr. Spudd Talks With Couch Potato Teens* pamphlet because I deal with the problems of young marrieds there. To quote myself, the leading theoretician of TV Psychotherapy: "If you're not willing to watch an occasional soap opera or football game, you're not mature enough for a serious relationship."

On the other hand, if all of us waited for that kind of maturity, few of us would ever get married. I suggest you each get your own set, with earphones, so you can watch separate programs in peace while together.

Dear Dr. Spudd:

*What would you consider sufficient grounds for expelling a member from one's Lodge?*

—Recently Dislodged

Dear R.D.:

Expelling a member is a very serious matter. In all but extreme cases I would put my efforts into changing undesirable behavior through less drastic means.

Yet, I admit there are some unforgivable transgressions. I would vote to expel a member who:

- talked chronically during viewing sessions,
- habitually and/or maliciously blocked another's line of sight, or
- made distasteful or obscene comments about Barbara Billingsley.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Dr. Spudd:

*My cat's a real Potato Pet, watching TV with me for hours on end. However, my dog refuses to. I'm sure viewing would be as good for him as it is for me, but I can't get him to join me for more than a few minutes at a time. Any suggestions?*

—Dogmatic Catatonic

Dear D.C.:

It's not surprising that your cat views more. Cats are more vision-oriented than dogs. Dogs, in contrast, depend heavily on hearing and smell. Lure your dog with shows featuring wild animal sounds, or try rubbing your set with raw hamburger.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Dr. Spudd:

*Yesterday I saw a guy watching TV while driving. Although I believe in prolonged viewing in its place, don't you think this is carrying things too far?*

—Middle of the Roader

Dear Roader:

Not really. Mixing viewing and driving need not be dangerous, despite common prejudice against the practice. Either installing the TV in your dash or setting it on the rear window ledge and viewing by way of your rearview mirror can be done safely if you limit your viewing to quick glances.

In fact, you might even drive better. A leading cause of accidents, second only to alcohol abuse, is inattention caused by boredom. A TV will keep you awake, alert. As the bumpersticker says: "TV doesn't kill people—TV kills boredom!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Readers:

*Well, the Couch Potato movement seems to be tunneling deeper into the underbelly of mainstream culture. Even my fellow advice columnists are coming around. For example, in a recent column Dear Abby listed seven rules for the young bride who wanted her marriage to be a happy one. One of the seven was "Don't interrupt when he's watching something on TV." Welcome to the video revolution, Abby.* □

## Can a Girl Get Pregnant From Watching Love Boat?

This and many other questions most often asked by teens are answered in Dr. Spudd's new pamphlet.

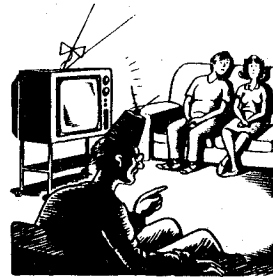
\$1.50 POSTPAID

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**The Couch Potatoes**  
 Rt. 1 Box 327  
 Dixon, CA 95620

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## DR. SPUDD Talks To COUCH POTATO TEENS

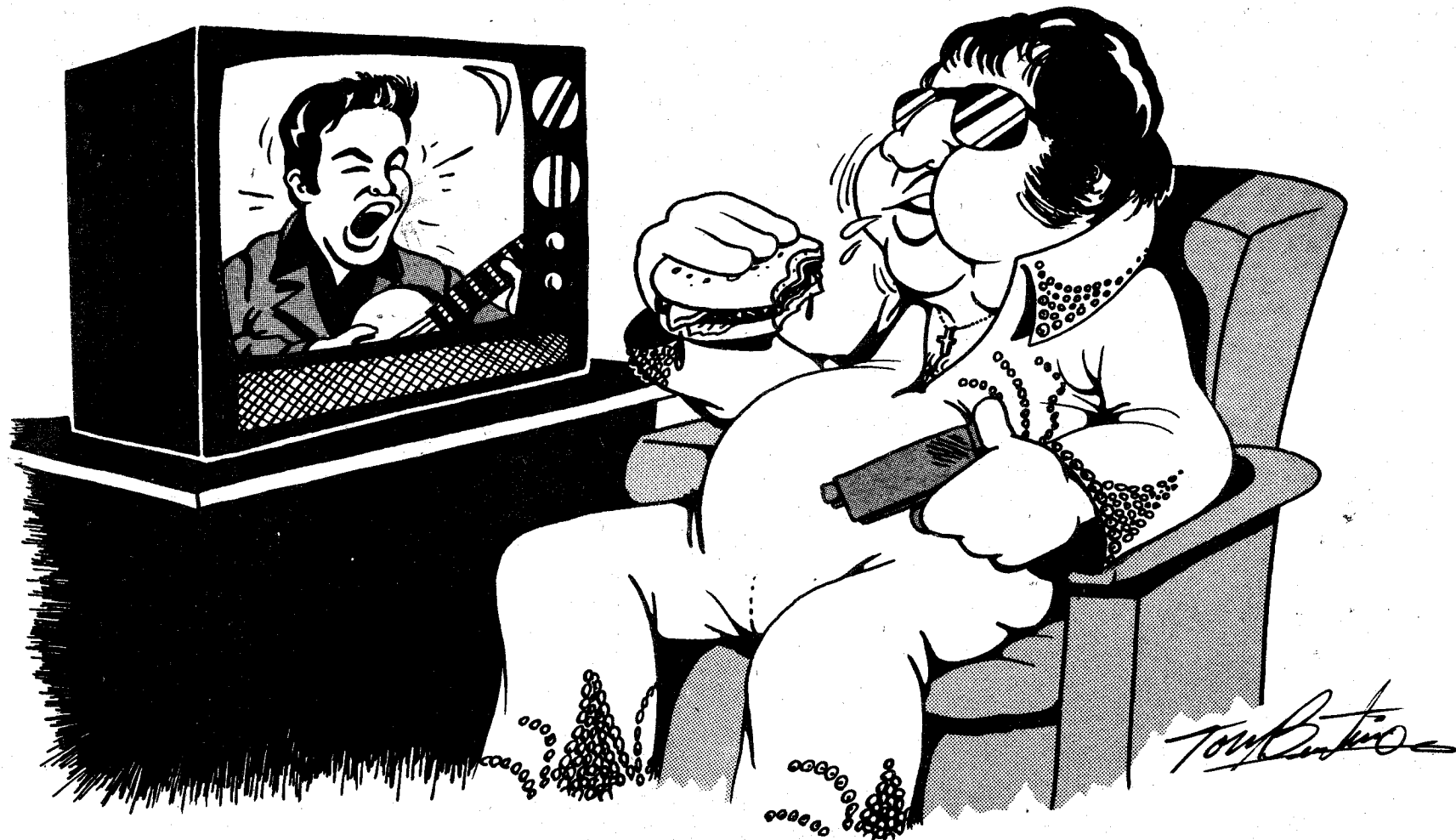


by Dr. Davenport H. Spudd



# Blue Suede Views: ELVIS ON TELEVISION

By Tom Bertino



**I**t will happen tonight, just as it has every night for the past year. You'll be dozing peacefully before the set while Lloyd Bridges or Stacy Keach is going through his paces. Suddenly, you'll be jarred awake by the throbbing notes of

there to provide the forum. The King had been drafted at the height of his popularity, and there was some consternation about his ability to regain his rightful place in the entertainment hierarchy upon his release from service in 1960. He

actually quite underrated, but most are so similar that it is hard to tell them apart, and several are unbelievably wretched. One actually features a number in march tempo staged in an IRS office, with a chorus line of accountants! Over the

wrenching rock 'n' roll and off-the-cuff reminiscences. No more tricky censorship. This time Elvis was clearly king of the jungle, and perhaps a better entertainer than even his greatest fans had ever suspected. This was the night that television saved Elvis' career, and made it

he would watch shows he *didn't* like so he could make snide comments about them between mouthfuls of his favorite viewing snacks. Elvis' TV feasts usually included bacon-cheeseburgers or deep-fried banana sandwiches washed down with Gatorade, and he apparently de-

Candide music will impress upon you the necessity of purchasing their *Golden Hits of Elvis Presley* album. When this happens, it might be well to reflect on the importance of Elvis to you, the TV viewer. There are a great many of us for whom the King will never die, and one thing that lets him live on for us is that other cultural phenomenon of the '50s, television.

It was, in fact, television and not records that started Presley on his skyrocket to fame. On January 28, 1956, he made his video debut on *The Dorsey Brothers Show*. This appearance attracted a large enough audience to warrant no less than five returns to the show in a period of three months. On each program, Elvis sang two hits, including one version of "Heartbreak Hotel" backed by the full Dorsey orchestra! In April of that year, he made his first appearance on *The Milton Berle Show*.

But it was the King's second *Berle* appearance in June that made him a household word. His astonishingly sexual performance of "Hound Dog" on this show at once boosted his following and made him the center of a roaring controversy. Those with a predisposed hatred of rock 'n' roll saw in Elvis' visuals the ultimate proof of their worst fears. Those with a predisposed hatred of TV were quick to condemn the medium that could bring such an arrogant hood's bump-and-grind antics into the home. As a result, Elvis' subsequent TV guest shots fell victim to the most intense and irrational censorship storm in the medium's history. Ever-smarmy Steve Allen did his best to make Elvis look like an emasculated buffoon, while Ed Sullivan tried to play safe by only showing "the Pelvis" from the waist up. In the end, however, all the silly costumes and awkward photography couldn't damp the fire that was Elvis. You either worshipped or despised him, but Elvis' twelve tube appearances in the space of one year had made him a force to be reckoned with.

Three years later, when Elvis needed to make another impression, TV was

attention of millions by appearing on the *Frank Sinatra Timex Special* on March 26. Included were several numbers based around an "Elvis is back" theme. Back he was, indeed, but not the same man who had left. The Elvis on this show was considerably subdued—not so much straitjacketed as lobotomized. The show regained him his audience, but his performance was the most lackluster of his video career.

Shortly thereafter, the King went into a gradual decline. He made no more live or televised appearances, and did very little studio recording. What he did do was make a staggering number of lightweight movies geared to the teenybopper audience. A few of these films are

rotato popped up in Elvis movies. Among these were Carolyn Jones (*King Creole*), Donna Douglas (*Frankie and Johnny*), Tuesday Weld (*Wild in the Country*), Barbara Stanwyck (*Roustabout*), Shelley Fabares (*Girl Happy*), Bill Bixby (*Clambake*), and Gale Gordon (*Speedway*).

By the late '60s, most of America had other things on its mind, and the now-hollow screen Elvis meant nothing to anybody, least of all to Elvis himself. Finally events took a turn for Elvis, as well as his audience, in December, 1968. In that month Presley starred in what amounted to a one-man show for NBC. The King, decked out in black leather, plowed his way through an hour of gut-

possible... successful concert schedule he was to maintain for the rest of his life.

Elvis' final television endeavor to be broadcast during his life was the 1973 *Aloha from Hawaii* special for NBC. It was transmitted live by satellite around the world and reportedly had a larger audience than the first moon walk.

It was around this time that the King began to indulge in the lifestyle that has since become popular as Couch Potatoism. Awakening in late afternoon, he would spend whole nights slouched in front of the set with his bodyguards. His favorite shows were the late-night gospel offerings. He was also very fond of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. But just as often

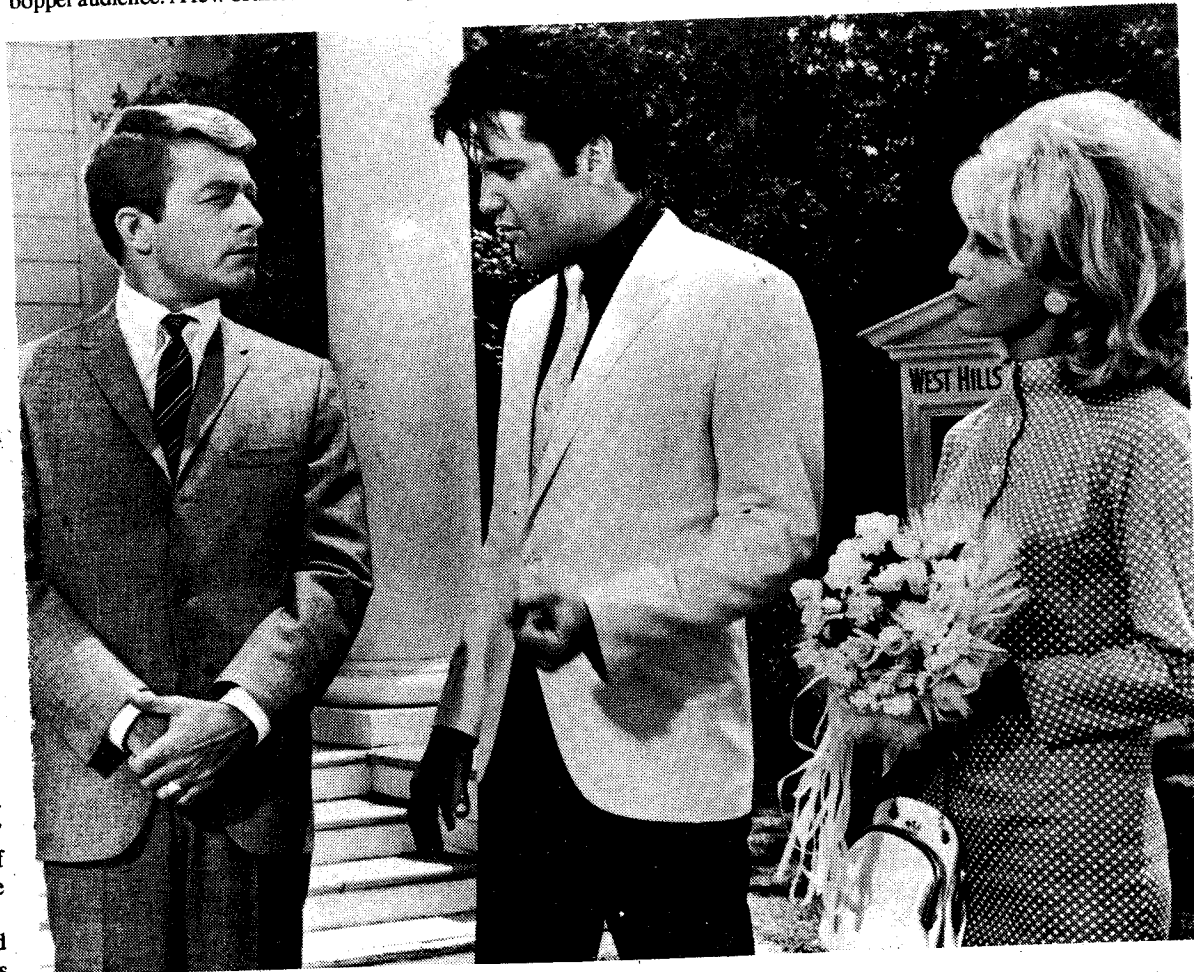
pickles always be present near any television he might be apt to use.

One story concerning this period underlines Elvis' declining mental state in his later years. Elvis, incensed by a particular television offering, allegedly drew a derringer from his pocket and calmly blew out the screen. Obviously, the poor man had to be suffering from the worst kind of derangement to turn so violently on the medium which had been such a help to him over the years.

**A**fter the King's death, we had *Elvis*. This TV-movie, starring Kurt Russell in a sensitive portrayal of Presley, won immediate acceptance among Elvis fans and has lived a vigorous rerun life on various cable networks.

Today the video airwaves seem to be more enamored of Elvis than ever before. It has been estimated that at any given moment, somebody in some part of the world is watching some form of Presleyana on television, and this would certainly not seem to be out of line. Elvis' movies have become beloved television standbys, whether good (*Jailhouse Rock*), bad (*Speedway*), or indifferent (*Fun in Acapulco*). Likewise, the cable systems have come to depend on the postmortem documentaries (*Elvis; This is Elvis*) to guarantee a certain share of the viewership.

Obviously, Elvis is a subject of such depth and interest that an article of this length can only touch on him superficially. Innumerable books of various types have been written on him, and even they haven't covered everything that could be said. The important thing for the Couch Potato to remember is that Elvis and television both sprang to prominence during roughly the same period in our history. Each of them has given us much, and they also benefitted one another. Most importantly, as long as we have television, we'll have Elvis. Long live the King! □



# BUCKLE UP FOR 1950s SCI FI ON CABLE

An Evaluation by Sam Frank



in the late 1950s (I first caught it as an afternoon rerun on KTTV in Los Angeles when I was a little kid), re-emerged briefly on UHF stations in the mid-1960s, then seemed to disappear forever, though bootleg kines did show up every so often at science fiction conventions. Now it's back with us (*Night Flight* has been running it for a year now), though the episodes Wade

Williams has chosen to show are usually the worst in the series. While it's still fun to watch, the truth is that *Space Patrol* often strains credibility. The plots are generally skimpy and loaded with outdated or inaccurate scientific details. The special effects — what there are of them — are supremely tacky: papier mache boulders, superimposed images, obvious models, etc.

What holds the show together are the charismatic leads: Ed Kemmer as handsome, brave, resourceful, humorous Commander Buzz Corry; Ken Mayer as simpatico, moustachioed Major Robbie Robertson; Lyn Osborn as naive, plucky Cadet Happy (whose favorite phrase is "smokin' rockets!"); and Virginia Hewitt as Corry's supportive girlfriend, Carol Carlyle. They are the main reason the show was successful in the first place. Their whimsical humor and sense of justice gave kids in the 1950s heroes to root for as they vanquished slimy villains on earth in the far past (one episode took place in ancient Egypt), and all over the galaxy in the far, far future.

The slimiest of all the villains they had to contend with was spitefully nasty Prince Baccarrati—the Darth Vader of his day—played by Bela Kovacs. *Space Patrol's*

as *Star Trek*, they're still exciting. I thrill to the tag opening showing model rockets blasting into space and a speedboat rippling the water in front of a futuristic model city as the announcer proclaims, "high adventure in the wild vast regions of space. Missions of daring in the name of inter-planetary justice. Travel into the future with Buzz Corry, Commander-in-Chief of the Space Patrol." And who can forget that whistling wind heard over stock footage of clouds during seques?

*Tom Corbett* was another successful live sci-fi serial on NBC (1950-1956), though it now plays flat and awful. The dialogue is trite and the acting is wooden or melodramatic, with Frankie Thomas (a hero to little boys in the 50s) blandly earnest as Corbett. I get a big kick, though, watching bald character actor John Fiedler as an intellectual mascot with a full head of hair, even though it is a wig.

The best thing about this show is the crisp, clear sound. I wonder if it sounded this great when it was broadcast live, or if Williams has boosted the soundtrack with Tough Tone, a celluloid sound enhancer. At best, *Tom Corbett* is an interesting curio. It's far more accurate scientifically than *Space Patrol* (Willy Ley was the scientific advisor), but nowhere near as well-acted and the dialogue doesn't sound even remotely human.

*Tales of Tomorrow* is something else again. Five of the six episodes being endlessly rotated on *Night Flight* are fascinating in a campy sort of way. It's hard to believe that this trashy sci-fi anthology was popular enough to last two seasons on ABC, from 1951 to 1953. The NBC radio series, *X Minus One*, airing at the same time, was and is far superior in stories, writing, direction and acting. It is *real* science fiction, a drama of ideas, not the junk concocted and peddled on *Tales of Tomorrow*.

The series is characterized by absurd concepts, Swiss cheese logic, inhuman dialogue, and shrill or wooden acting. The worst of the six is a poorly photographed kine of *Frankenstein* with a drunken Lon Chaney lurching around a

of ripping the cardboard costume to shreds.

The timeliest but most shrilly acted episode is *A Child is Crying*, with actress Robin Morgan as a 13-year-old scientific genius who predicts the American military's deadly preoccupation with "nuclear first-strike capability." The most intriguing and best acted of the series (relatively speaking) is *Substance X*, about a scientist who perfects a sponge-like manna that tastes like anything you want it to. Its side effect is that it ruins the taste buds for real food, making people feeble-minded for lack of nutrition.

Watching these series, you wonder how they could have been popular when they were, yet these *were* the general standards for juvenile science fiction series at the time. It is all too easy to ridicule the crude video technology of the early-to-mid 1950s, and forget that these were pioneering shows. They did the best they could with extremely low budgets and the constant pressure of putting on a live show every week, or six times a week in the case of *Space Patrol*. In their context, they are enjoyable, if hackneyed. *Space Patrol* is the best of the three for good old-fashioned Saturday morning fun. It's not *Return of the Jedi* or *E.T.*, but it is a good, nostalgic reminder of what some of us used to thrive on as kids when our needs were simpler.

*Night Flight* airs Friday and Saturday nights at 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. *Space Patrol* and *Tom Corbett Space Cadet* are shown as part of a feature called *Cult Theatre* and their time slots vary from week to week, though usually between 10 and 11 p.m. and again between 2 and 3 a.m.

**ED NOTE:** As this issue goes to press we've learned that *Tales of Tomorrow* has been dropped from the *Night Flight* lineup. □

## RERUN HEAVEN

CAROLYN JONES (b. 1929), best

cable is the last place you'd expect to find kinescope reruns of *Tom Corbett Space Cadet*, *Tales of Tomorrow* and the legendary *Space Patrol*, but that's exactly what nostalgia buffs can find when they tune in *Night Flight* on Friday and Saturday nights. A video entrepreneur in Kansas City, Missouri named Wade Williams acquired the rights to these shows a few years ago, hoping to syndicate them. He was unable to find a mass market distributor for them because local stations are loathe to program kinescopes; they are considered to be inferior in quality to regular filmed shows. Williams negotiated a slot for his kines on this highly eclectic, extremely popular series and had the last laugh, watching them become a cult favorite with a weekly national audience estimated at 15 million.

(filmed records of live shows) are often the best thing about *Night Flight*. Even better is the fact that some of the *Space Patrol* kines are 35mm, with audio-visual quality superior to that of regular 16mm kines. The images are so sparkling that they're one step removed from videotape quality. You get a 90% idea of what the series looked like when it was broadcast live.

*Space Patrol* ran from 1950-1955 on ABC (beginning as a local show in Los Angeles), generating thousands of TV and radio episodes simultaneously. The man behind the Terra V and its gallant crew was Mike Moser, a lifelong science fiction fan. He made the show great fun in both its 15- and 30-minute versions before the writers burned out, the novelty wore off, and the ratings fell.

The series was syndicated for a while

featured Baccarrati, who captured Buzz and Happy, took them back in time to 1692 (aboard their own ship, Terra V) and dumped them in Salem. There they were tried as witches and nearly burned at the stake. This time around, the emphasis was on character and plot, *not* hokey special effects. The dialogue was strong, the acting good, and the direction suspenseful; though I wondered why, when they were alone with a weaponless Baccarrati aboard ship, Buzz and Happy didn't simply knock the bastard out. Even so, it was a satisfying episode, making me wonder why Williams doesn't air more episodes with the evil prince, since he is obviously a formidable villain.

Primitive as these episodes are in comparison to later sci-fi TV series such

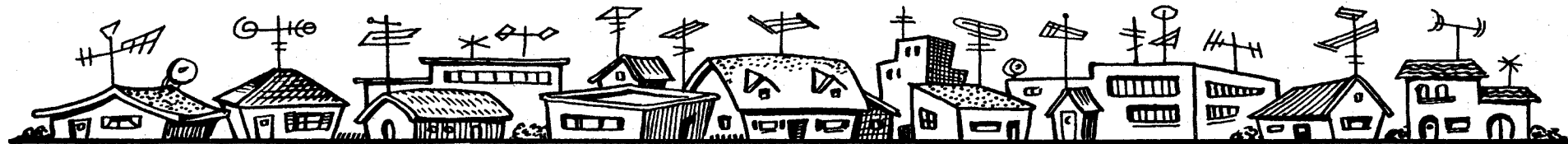
makeshift set in a confused stupor with stagehands clattering about in the background. The stupidest episodes are *The Fury of the Cocoon*, about a race of giant, invisible vampire bugs invading an African outpost; and *Dune Roller*, about a race of glow-in-the-dark aliens attacking an island outpost, with one of them looking hilariously like an encrusted, striped, lit-up bowling ball! This show was big on remote outposts and cheap special effects.

The funniest episode by far is *Read to Me Herr Doktor*, in which scientist Everett Sloane constructs a domineering robot. The robot is actually a ham actor in a cardboard robot suit stuck together with scotch tape that glares blatantly in the lights. When he attacks Sloane and pretty daughter Mercedes McCambridge, they don't dare fight back for fear

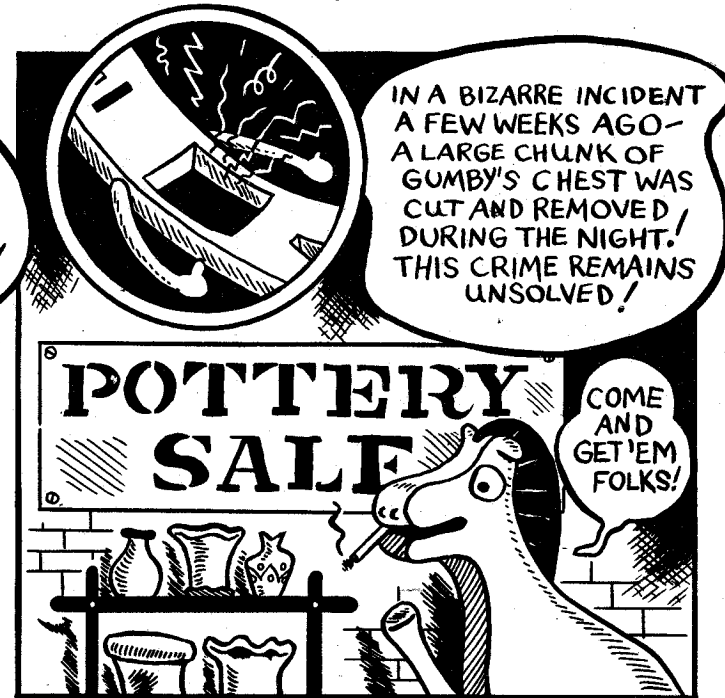
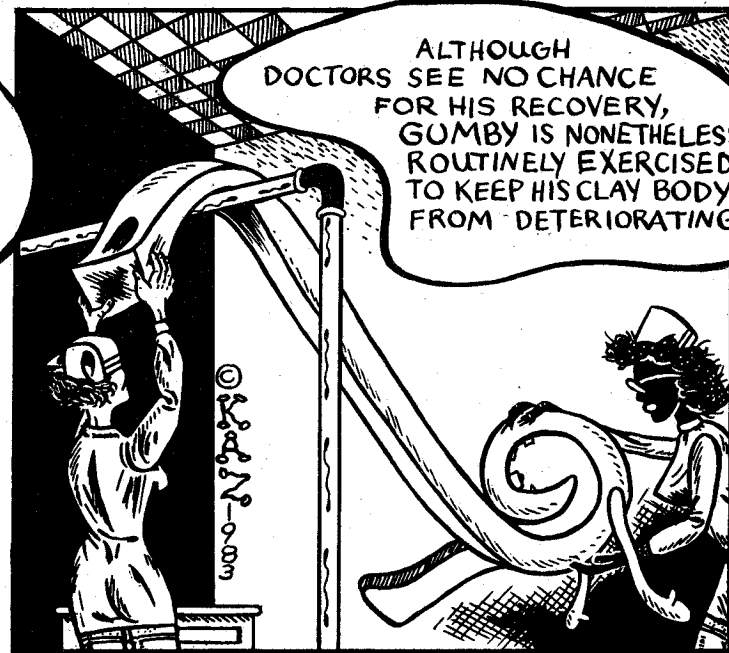
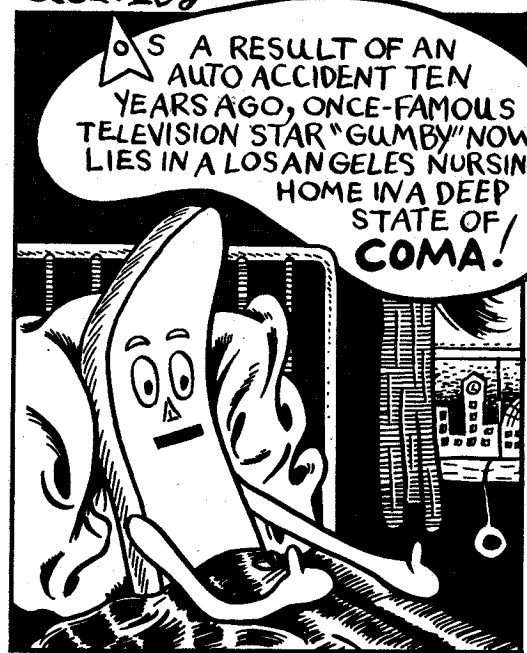
*Addams Family*, died after a long bout with cancer August 3rd. Besides her role as the attractively slinky and humorously macabre Morticia Addams, Ms. Jones also appeared in about 30 other TV programs including: *Pall Mall Playhouse* (1955), *Encore Theatre* (1956), *Panic* (1957), *Playhouse of Stars* (1960), *Burke's Law* (1965), *Batman* (1965), *Ghost Story* (1972), and *Roots* (1977).

Her film roles included "Road to Bali," "Baby Face Nelson," "Seven Year Itch," "House of Wax," "Bachelor Party" and "King Creole."

LARRY HOOPER, "the man with the deep-a, deep-a voice," featured bass singer on *The Lawrence Welk Show*, died this summer. Welk fans everywhere grieve his passing. □



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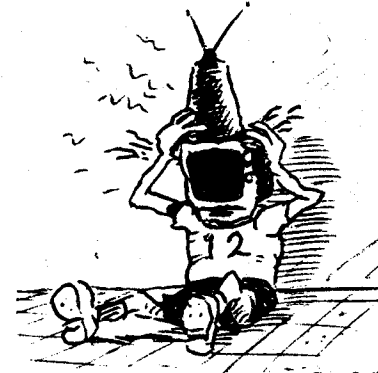
We applaud the Sampo Company for offering this triple tube wonder and highly recommend this unit for neophyte simulviewers. Yet, we wonder when an octo or deca screen model will be commercially available for the advanced tuber.

sent in by Denis Kitchen

## I Want My MTV

Deciding that some of the images on MTV are a little too weird for people trying to come to grips with "reality," a private mental institution in Hartford, Connecticut blacked out the all-rock channel.

"Some of the rough edges have to be smoothed out for our patients," said a hospital spokesman. "MTV is too much." □



Gary Leib

## Say It Isn't So, Sheriff

Andy Griffith isn't nearly as mellow as the character he played for all those years. His right hand still bears the scars of "the fourth, maybe fifth" time he put his fist through the door of Andy Taylor's courthouse, he admitted in an *Emmy Magazine* interview.

"I wish I were more like Andy Taylor," he added. "He was always under control. Andy Taylor was a much nicer person than Andy Griffith." □



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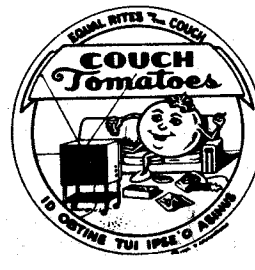
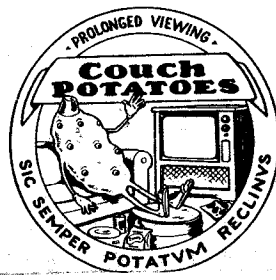
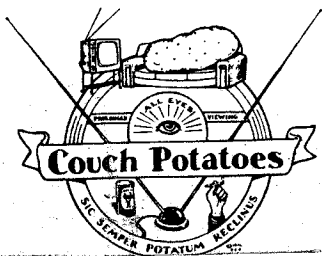
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**TUBER KRAZY!**

TV Features in *Cultural Correspondence*, #4 (1977) has Bilko, Aaron Spelling, Norman Lear, TV Evangelists, Network Identity; #8 (1978) has Johnny Carson, TV in the classroom, Project UFO, Trial Scripts; #9 (1979) features symposium, Why I Watch TV, also Sports & Kids on TV; #12 (1981) has TV Critics' Code, and 1970s: The Sitcom Decade. Large, slick format, many pics, \$3/issue. c/o Dorrwar Bookstore, 107½ Hope St., Providence, RI 02906.

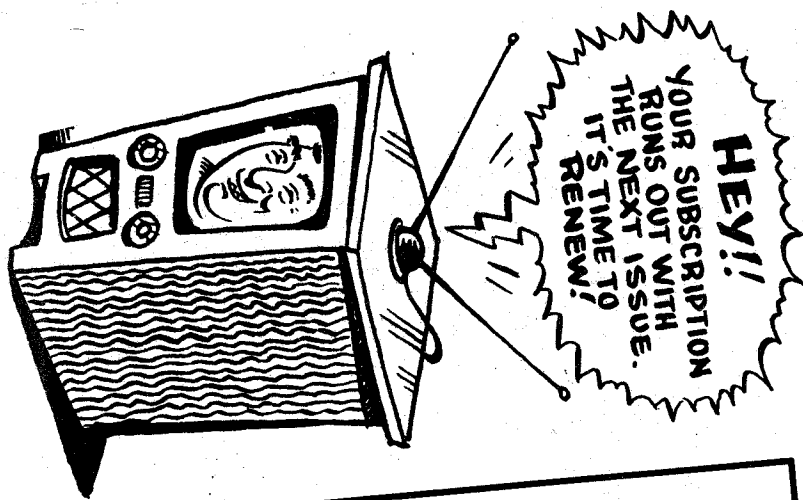
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# Junior.



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# New Chapters and Their Slogans

- #72 The Slug Saloon - Monterey, CA - "I'll do it during the commercial."
- #73 The Sunset Tubers - San Francisco, CA - "Born to view."
- #74 The Cysters of Tubal Libation - Berkeley, CA - "Tomatoes Abondanza."
- #75 The Faculty Lounge and Unhealth Spa-Foon - Shawnee Mission, KS - "Memento mori, memento meri, memento Curly, Moe & Larry."
- #76 Mel's Tender Tuners - Los Angeles, CA - "Do they deliver?"
- #77 The Remote Cotrol Video Paranoids - San Jose, CA - "Don't forget to breathe."
- #78 The First Monterey Peninsula Chapter - Monterey, CA - "TV by the sea."
- #79 The Comment Taters - New York, NY - "To think is human, to view, divine."
- #100 Notomatoes - Industrial Suburbia, NJ - "TV Tuber Alles."

## Couch Potato



Lodge News

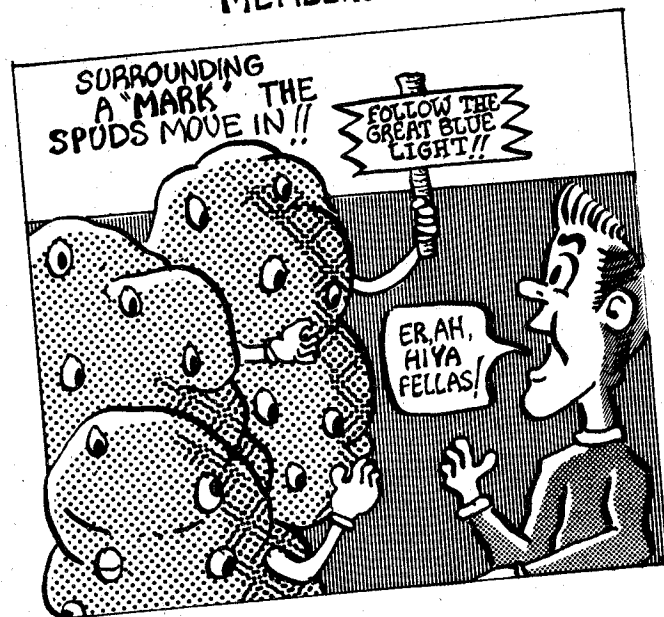
Jim Sasak and Nog of Lodge Chapter #54 out of Cleveland, Ohio dropped us a card last month while attempting to bicycle across Kansas. Although we don't condone such impetuous displays of self-abuse, we were glad to hear they got plenty of chances to sample the local video fare provided by motels along the way.

Debra Bathke of the recently-formed Slug Saloon Chapter (#72) of Monterey, California informs us that she is doing her part for community service. She works for a construction company that is building a new TV station in Salinas (KSBW - TV8). We think she is justified in sacrificing her tele-leisure time for this worthwhile of causes.

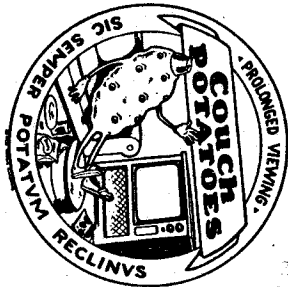
Canadien C.P. Lodge #70 (C.C.C.P.) is busy planning its "TV-set-infested rolling spud mobile" to represent the tubers of the frozen north in the annual Oktoberfest parade to be held in Kitchener, Ontario (second in the world only to the celebration in Munich). Let's raise our beers to their success!

We'd sure like to hear some news of your inactivities from the rest of the lodges out there. Reports into headquarters by Halloween will probably be included in the next newsletter.

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