

For Kid's Sake

Saturday morning. I didn't even go out last night and it feels like a small animal crawled up into my body to die. Homemade chili: the yin & yang of my existence. If we say that yin is positive and yang is negative, then I yinned out last night and I may yang on the deck any minute now.

What am I doing here?? I wouldn't normally be up before 9:30 on a Saturday morning unless it was at gunpoint. That's right, I'm doing it for the kids. What kind of programming are the children being exposed to on Saturday mornings now? Is it really as bad as the *Action For Children's TV* and other groups say it is? Can it possibly be any worse than the crap I grew up with?

7:00

Turn the set on and there's *Heathcliff* on 27. This should be fun. I hate the strip in the paper, and now it moves. In the first cartoon, *Heathcliff* has a problem with hair. All the long-hairs are winning the male beauty contests. After some comments against long hair that sound suspiciously like my dad talking fifteen years ago, *Heathcliff* gets some super plant nutrient dumped on his head and goes through the trials and tribulations of flowing locks and then turns into

The Jaded Eye: Movie & Television Reviews By C.W. Heiser

a hairball. There must be a moral here someplace, but I can't find it. Some fakey violence. Over on 29 it's Jimmy Swaggart. ACT should really do something about Swaggart on Saturday mornings; this man is venomous. Enough being yelled at, on 21 is *Abra Kadabra*. I guess this host guy must be Mr. Kadabra. He's kind of a young Fred Rogers with magic. In between alphabet and word lessons, he does some pretty neat tricks.

7:30

On 27 it's *Kidsongs*. In this deal some kids find an abandoned television station. They clean it up, fix the wiring, and start broadcasting their own kind of M-TV, all without being electrocuted or nabbed by the FCC. This one video, called "I Wanna Be A Fireman," is about how it's all right for little girls to be firemen. I think these kids were all cloned from Marlo Thomas. On 8 it's the *Muppets* and on 33 it's *Sesame Street*, which is the *Muppets* without the *Muppets*. 27 has something called *Kids are People Too*. The host, Michael Young, has got to be the most unctious human being alive. I don't trust people that are this sweet, and I certainly wouldn't trust him with my kids.

8:05

I'm starting to get confused. On 33 it's still *Sesame Street*, but on 21 there's *Hello Kitty's Furry Tale*, 27 has *Care Bears*, and over on 8 it's *Gummi Bears*, or is it 27? These all look the same: a bunch of cloyingly cute little cartoon animals that talk in a squeaky voices, all with matching toys the kiddies can get their significant adults to spring for. Even the other commercials are all the same: Sega, Pound Puppies, and Rice Krispies. For a minute there I thought my remote was broken when I kept getting the same Toys 'R' Us commercial on two different channels. I give up. I'm going to make some coffee.

8:30-9:50

I fell asleep sometime after 8:30. I know there was something called *Little Clowns* on 27 and there was *Muppet Babies* on 21. I switched over to check out the *Smurfs* on 8 and dozed off. When I first woke up I thought that now my watch is running fast. The *Smurfs* were still on, but I checked the listings and this is planned. The *Smurfs* run for an hour and a half, that's as long as a feature length movie, and it's a wonder these kids don't go into sugar coma.

10:07

I'm mesmerized. I'm watching *Pee Wee's Playhouse* on 21 and I've never seen anything like this. Has Nancy Reagan seen this show? This is like acid without the bother of chemicals. I'm sure that at least some of the people involved with this production did some recreational consciousness melting in the Sixties. It's like a surreal pantheist got into the control room at CBS: everything looks like something out of Zap comics and talks. Dinosaurs play baseball and lobsters do chorus numbers. The one intersection with outside reality comes when the secret word is announced, it's "begin" today, and Pee Wee instructs the children of America in guerrilla anarchy. For the rest of the day, whenever anyone makes the foolish mistake of saying the word, "begin", the kids are supposed to scream at the top of their voices. This must be a real joy for young working mothers trying to recuperate from the week. If you don't know who Pee Wee Herman is, just imagine that Ernie Kovacs married Soupy Sales and raised Pee Wee with his brother Gilligan. I may be overreacting, or it might be the chili talking, but either this generation of kids is on the verge of a great evolutionary leap and *Pee Wee's Playhouse* is the trigger to cosmic conscienceness, or this is the end of civilization as we know it.

11:00

I'm going back to bed. Wake me on Monday.

To Speed or Not : Why Must We Move So Fast?

By Kathleen Riley-King

In this age of fast-paced technology, *people* seem to be moving faster too--at least on the roads.

From what I have observed during eight years as a driver, many people drive at least 10 m.p.h. over the speed limit. Most of the time, I drive the speed limit or 5 m.p.h. over, but I am passed as if I am driving 15 m.p.h. *under* the speed limit.

Personally, I do not understand why everyone is in such a hurry. Have we as a society placed so many demands on ourselves that we must race with wild abandon everywhere we go?

Actually, traveling faster does not always get people to their destinations any faster. Many times, people have passed me only to find themselves behind another car, further up the road, that is going slower than I was. Or, I get to the next red light, and the car that just *had* to pass me is waiting there.

If another person's destination is 10 miles away, and he or she drives 70 m.p.h., and I drive 55 m.p.h., that person will get there only 2-3 minutes before I will. But, that person will have broken the law, risked a sizeable fine, and increased the stopping distance on dry pavement by between 50 and 100 feet, at least.

Not only are people speeding in dry weather, but many do not adjust their speeds in wet weather. According to the 1977 *Pennsylvania Manual for Drivers*, stopping distance increases from 305 feet (19 car lengths) on dry concrete to 506 feet (31 car lengths) on wet pavement when driving 55 m.p.h. Furthermore, the faster a car is traveling, the better chance it has of hydroplaning.

Besides speeding in wet and dry weather, impatience causes some people to become reckless and pass in no-passing zones. Recently, three times in three weeks I witnessed people doing this. Perhaps it would not have been so bad if other people had not been coming toward those who were passing . . . Two of those three times I came within seconds of being hit head-on. I had done nothing to cause the situations. I had done nothing illegal. In fact, I was just driving in my proper lane, and I could have died--because of impatient people.

After those two near-misses, I wondered: Do people not care if they live or die? Do they not care if others live or die? Why don't they respect my wish to live past 25 years of age? And, what was so important that they must risk smashing into me?

I do not see much sense in this

madness on the roads, but I think I understand a little of it. I do not believe that we as a society *want* to harm ourselves or others. Instead, I think we are all too wrapped up in our own lives and often have too many demands. Also, I believe that, to most of us, driving becomes so routine that we just do not think about it. But, just because we all do it does not mean it is right--or logical.

I think we need to consider why we are going so fast, why we cannot even pause to enjoy life, to savor what short time we have--instead of racing through it.

I, too, used to feel rushed. But after traveling to Barbados and seeing the Barbadians' laid-back lifestyle, I decided that they know something we Americans don't--how to take their time. No one on that island seemed to worry about time. What a relief it was not to rush. Barbados changed my life. Now, if I feel rushed, I close my eyes and think, "Barbados, Barbados," and life comes back into perspective.

I doubt that others will slow down, but I have developed a philosophy: Let them rush; I'll get there too--but I am going to enjoy myself in the process.

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