

**W**hen you were eight and wore Dino pajamas, *The Flintstones* were really hip. By the time you got to college, you probably thought you'd outgrown them both.

Well, don't count on the folks in Hollywood thinking so. And don't think for a moment they're above exploiting those lovable childhood characters to make a buck. Next summer, Fred and his gang will be yabba-dabba-dooing to theaters across the country.

And in case you haven't outgrown the Brady clan, or aren't tired of the Christmas reunions, kiss-and-tell book, spoof play, *Sunshine Day* albums and talk show appearances, you can expect to see them at your local cinema before long as well.

What's up with the TV shows that never die? *The Flintstones* and *The Brady Bunch* follow *Star Trek*, *Dragnet*, *The Fugitive*, *Dennis the Menace*, *The Addams Family*, *Wayne's World* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* as some of the latest popular TV concepts to make the transition to the silver screen.

And even though you may not want to admit it, people are watching this stuff. (You know who you are.)

According to Lynn Spigel, an associate professor of critical studies at the U. of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television, shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies* provide a sense of shared history in a world of alienating circumstances. Spigel, author of *Make Room for TV*, also says the regeneration of these shows eventually forms a "new cultural literacy."

"People really do relate through this stuff," she says.

In other words, you'd be laughed out of college if you couldn't snap your fingers to *The Addams Family* theme song (da-na-na-na, snap snap, da-na-na-na, snap snap) or sing the lyrics to *The Beverly Hillbillies* ("Come 'n' listen to my story 'bout a man named Jed...").

And the film industry counts on just that kind of familiarity, knowing it can mean big bucks. The first Addams Family flick made more than \$110 million and raked in \$14.5 million the week it opened. It's not surprising that it spawned a sequel — and already there's talk of a third.



## Soon, even the most dubious TV show will get its own picture deal

By Anne Bergman, *Daily Trojan*, U. of Southern California

Screenwriter Paul Rudnick, who worked on the first Addams Family film and wrote the sequel, says, "I think there's a sense of familiar characters. I also think there's a certain reason the Addams Family have endured through the cartoon family, through the TV shows and through the film. They're icons, part of the culture."

Jill Young, a senior at the College of William and Mary and a big fan of the Addams family, watched the first movie several times. "I liked the movie better than the series," she says. "It was more current, in color and more three-dimensional."

Even Kevin Connolly, the 19-year-old who plays Morgan Drysdale in *The*

*Beverly Hillbillies* movie, says when moviemakers get their hands on the shows from his night-light days, he gets sucked in by his own curiosity. "As far as *The Hillbillies* is concerned, I didn't really watch them growing up because that was a little before my time," he says. "But I watched *Batman*." And he watched *The Flintstones*.

"I actually want to see *The Flintstones* [movie] because I want to see how the cast looks. Is John Goodman a good Flintstone? That's what I'm interested in seeing," Connolly says.

Universal Pictures is banking on both baby boomers and Generation Xers to fork over big bucks for a peek at the new and improved, live-action Bedrock.



You thought they were goners, but *Car 54, Where are You?* (above), *The Addams Family* (below left) and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (below right) are among the relics being resuscitated by Hollywood's latest retro movement.



Along with Goodman as Fred, *The Flintstones* stars Elizabeth Perkins (Wilma), Rosie O'Donnell (Betty) and Rick Moranis (Barney). And according to producer Bruce Cohen, the movie offers dialogue for adults, sets and props that capture the essence of the original cartoon, and even an Industrial Light and Magic Dino (from the special effects folks who brought you *Jurassic Park*). Plus, he says it will have a wide-range appeal. "Everyone knows the Flintstones," he says.

Retreading successful ideas is certainly not a new trend in entertainment. The evolution dates back farther than some might guess — even farther than prehistoric Bedrock.

Consider this: Fred and Wilma are loosely based on the characters in the 1950s television series *The Honeymooners*. Both *Dennis the Menace* and *The Addams Family* began as cartoons and comic strips. And Batman and Superman leapt from comic book pages into radio, movie and television before finally landing in feature films.

And you can expect even more resurrections in the future. *The Love Boat* soon will be making another run, as will *Lassie*, *The Little Rascals*, and, in January, that all-time favorite *Car 54, Where Are You?* (which will star none other than Al Lewis, known to you as Grandpa from *The Munsters*). Touchstone is even making a movie about Pat, that androgynous character of *Saturday Night Live* fame.

But is there a danger to all this rehashing? What if some of us have just plain matured past the appeal of Uncle Fester and Elly May?

Stephanie Evans, a freshman at Pepperdine U., says, "I think they should let those sitcoms from the '70s die because they were good and not try to revive them again because it's become trendy. Too much of a good thing can be bad."

Even Connolly, who is profiting from the trend, admits, "It's going to get old pretty quick."

And when it does, then what? When they run out of '70s shows, will studios green light a live action *Ren and Stimpy* or *Beavis and Butt-head*?

Well, yes. As a matter of fact, the *Beavis and Butt-head* project is already underway. "Beavis and Butt-head the movie?" Connolly asks incredulously. "Wow, I think that I'll probably have to go see that." □

