

Forum

Meaningful children's television programs overshadowed by newer, shallower shows

ALISON FIELDHOUSE

"It's time for the Thinking Chair!" Steve brings us all to the big red comfy chair to piece together the clues that Blue left behind. Unfortunately, those familiar and comforting scenarios from "Blue's Clues" are on the decline as good children's television shows are starting to disappear.

Where have all the good shows gone? In the past decade or so, legitimate and appropriate children's television shows have slowly started to disappear. Shows such as "Arthur," "Zoom," "Scooby-Doo," "Out of the Box" and many others have been overshadowed by a wave of fairly new (in comparison) television shows from Disney Channel, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon.

"I think it's a shame that shows such as Arthur are being replaced by shallower shows from Disney and Nickelodeon. Kids can still enjoy television without the superficiality of modern day television," Sara Crawford, junior, said.

The likes of "Hannah Montana," "Chowder" and "iCarly" have taken children's television by storm. Featuring recognizable names and faces in the media world, "Hannah Montana" is not only watched by 5.5 million viewers, but it has grossed millions for the star, Miley Cyrus. Although the show is aimed towards the youth and tween age, it often features topics and themes

that are not as suitable for children. Not only this, but Cyrus has been a target of the media for numerous occurrences, including less-than-appropriate photos when she was only 15.

Shows that will have a good lasting impact on children are now few and far between. The simplicity and creativity behind "Arthur," the story behind "Scooby Doo," and the lessons taught by both "Out of the Box" and "Zoom" are dwindling. These factors are what made the shows great. Although some of these shows weren't technically educational, they were still worth watching and often had valuable lessons to teach, pertaining to children.

Not all of the Disney, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon shows have nothing to offer. Often, these shows teach values such as friendship, responsibility and the consequences of certain actions. It is the way that these shows teach these messages that makes them unsuitable for children. For



Photo by Mark Poppert

Children's television has, over the years, become host to shallower shows. Kids now spend more time indoors than outdoors. The average child watches 1500 hours of television a year.

11-12 year olds, it would be fine because the shows deal with teenagers and the trials of being that certain age, for

children between 6-10 years of age, not so much.

A way to bring back the meaningful kids shows is to

slowly wean the kids off of the pointless fluff that they normally watch. Parents could limit how long their child watched these types of shows or they could not allow their kids to only watch these shows. They could try to encourage their child to watch different types of shows like "Arthur" or "Zoom". These will help to limit the effect that these types of shows have on children.

The OPB channel is also a good place to look for children's television shows that teach while they entertain. This channel is the one that was and is host to "Arthur," "Sesame Street" and "Zoom". Educational shows can be fun.

Not all hope is lost. Cartoon Network still frequently airs "Scooby Doo" and with new shows always coming out, the industry may have more to offer. Making the simple switch from "Hannah Montana" to shows like "Arthur" is a touch of a button away.

LGBT community seeks gender neutral bathrooms

MARK POPPERT

Bathrooms are rarely given considerable thought. But in the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual community, a bathroom or locker room can be an uncomfortable place. Be it the fear of being insulted by classmates, the uncomfortable feeling of changing with people

you are attracted to, or the dislike of being branded as a gender you don't associate with; gender specific bathrooms can be a major roadblock for orientation-based equality.

WLHS has two gender neutral bathrooms for students, both in its outbuildings. Building or converting a bathroom in the main building would be a major step and a loud statement that our school is a safe place for all students. It would also benefit the LGBT community by providing a safe place to use the bathroom and change for sporting events.

Arguments against a gender neutral bathroom are many, ranging from cost to indecency, but with more bathrooms being converted in schools and public places, the arguments are dwindling. People have a right to be concerned about how the changes will affect them. It's true that people could take advantage, but at Lincoln High School in Portland there has not been any issues with how the gender neutral bathroom

has been used.

The cost of building a new bathroom would be approximately \$2,000 but converting a gender specific bathroom into a gender neutral one can be as easy as changing the sign on the door. People are more than

people probably don't pay attention to who uses which bathroom.

When push comes to shove, a gender neutral bathroom is as much a public statement as a utilitarian object. It allows the LGBT community to feel accepted and would



Photo by Mark Poppert

The gender neutral bathroom in the music building is one of the two gender neutral bathrooms that WLHS already has. This bathroom is always kept locked and is not available for student use.

willing to use a bathroom in their home which other genders use, why shouldn't they use one at school? Some people fear being branded as gay for using a neutral bathroom. However, most

let the public know that WLHS is a safe place for all. Pushing toward this easy and cheap option is a no brainer, but without the support of the WLHS community we alienate the LGBT community.

Amplifier

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