

# Monologue Dialogue

## Idle Hands

By J. Dana Haynes

Eulogies are a little out of the normal line for an editorial page, but with the passing this week of CBS' M\*A\*S\*H, I couldn't help responding.

M\*A\*S\*H is something of a legend for television. Few shows make it past five years. This one ran for 11, more than three times the length of the Korean conflict. And throughout that time, it remained high on that sorcerous crystal ball that so few of us understand and even fewer trust: The Nielson ratings.

The show remained a fan favorite for several reasons. For one thing, it never leaned on smirky sex jokes and big bossomed, walk-on roles to keep their ratings.

Another advantage M\*A\*S\*H had was one they shared with such classic television shows as "I Love Lucy" and "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Namely, more than just good actors.

M\*A\*S\*H did have appealing characters, played by good people. But they were backed up by the finest script writers in the business, good direction, and mandatory originality.

Several people have written about this week's movie episode, and referred to it as M\*A\*S\*H's untimely demise.

It is, in fact, untimely. For it should have taken place back in 1978, when the show's orbit began to deteriorate. It was then, at the beginning of the sixth season, that creativity expert and co-creator Larry Gelbart left the show, along with Larry Linville (Major Frank Burns), who is probably the most underrated member of the cast.

The sixth season was the first one to feature several so-so episodes. Up until that time, the show had served up sensational scripts without fail.

The next few seasons declined in originality considerably, until the last three years, which have been dominated by Colonel Sherman Potter (Harry Morgan) drawing every line like Little Abner, Klinger (Jamie Farr) suddenly becoming a nationalistic Lebonese with endless references to camels and baklava, and Margaret "Hot Lips" Hoolihan (Loretta Switt) shouting every line as a threat and sounding exactly like Lucy from the comic strip "Peanuts."

It's too bad. However, before anyone writes in accusing the newspaper of heresy, let me remind you that mediocre for M\*A\*S\*H is far better than average for prime time television.

Still and all, nothing done in the later years came close to touching some of the original episodes, including my all-time favorites (doesn't everybody have some?) "Hawkeye," producer Larry Gelbart's penultimate episode, in which Alan Alda, suffering from a concussion and afraid of passing out, does a one-man show for 25 minutes, and "Abyssinia, Henry," the last show of the third season, in which Colonel Henry Blake (McLean Stevenson) prepares to leave for home and is shot down over the Sea of Japan.

There are a few people who did not particularly like M\*A\*S\*H, and they won't miss it. But I will. Captain Benjamin Franklin "Hawkeye" Pierce is my nominee for the best character to ever grace a television show and I'm sorry to see him go. I grew up with him. I've known him almost thrice as long as I've known Peggy, my wife.

I'll also miss the rest of the cast, as I've missed Henry Blake, Trapper John MacIntyre and Walter "Radar" O'Reilly.

This show also presented the finest non-regular characters of all time: Psychiatrist Sidney Freedman (Alan Arbus), crazed CIA agent Colonel Flagg (Edward Winter), and the greatest fighter pilot of all time, Five O'Clock Charley.

M\*A\*S\*H proved, if proof was needed, that good, prime-time, network television is possible. Other examples of this fact are few and far between.

And M\*A\*S\*H was the best of the bunch.

## Dignitary's visit ill-timed

Kristi Blackman

It's that time again for registration, and for students and community members to coordinate their schedules here at the College.

The class schedules have most of the general and most popular courses between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., and this is where a majority of the students schedule themselves into the system. I mean, who wants to stay at the College beyond four o'clock?

Last year the administration spent a great deal of time working on class scheduling to help recruit students and keep remaining students interested. Certain key speakers were asked to come to the College as a way of keeping student interest in school and on campus.

Governor Victor Atiyeh was invited in the fall of '81 for a press conference on campus, this happened at 2 p.m., and was received well. Two weeks ago when Swami Krishna Deva (a disciple of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), the mayor of the Rajneeshpuram, was asked to speak and answer questions, his appearance was scheduled at a peak hour, 11 a.m.

Many students were able to attend but others, due to lack of space in the McLoughlin Theater, were turned away at the door. The session went well and I believe that the students at the College are very interested and curious in the

outside events and the effects on them.

I am not complaining that the mayor spoke at the College, and the scheduling was superb, unlike the scheduling of the visit of Secretary of State Norma Paulus, where the time frame was unreasonable.

Paulus spoke at a question-and-answer session at 4:30 p.m. last Wednesday. It is great publicity, I suppose, to hold a session of the sort on a Community College campus, with all the budget problems we seem to face year after year, but at that time of day is unrealistic.

Why hold a question-and-answer session when there is not a good cross section of the faculty and students on campus?

I mean, at 4:30 in the afternoon a large majority of students have left the campus or are going to work, and the instructors have just begun to head out, if they haven't left already.

I realize that Paulus has a very busy schedule, but if common sense had been in use for the timing of the audience, and if her publicists had thought of the peak hours of the day for the audience, I think that the information and feedback would have been greater and more useful not only to Paulus, but the audience.

This was a bad choice of time frames, and politicians wonder why they do not receive any feedback . . . it's no wonder.

## Child abuse editorial very informative

Dear Editor:

I appreciated the article in the February 16 edition of *The Print* entitled, "Idle Hands." The problem of child abuse in our society must be discussed and remediated not only by human services professionals, but by all citizens. Professionals, like our staff at Christie School, tend to see and treat

child abuse after the damage has been done. Significant reduction in the incidence of child abuse will only occur through prevention and education activities conducted by neighborhood groups, schools, media and human service professionals.

I would point out that the "Child Sexual Abuse Resource Directory" lists a number of

qualified trainers who are available to speak before civic groups. Perhaps your readers should be aware of the fact that one of the best resources in the County in the area of prevention is the Clackamas County Rape Victim Advocate Program--655-8616.

Sincerely,  
Christopher J. Krenk, ACSW  
Director of Program Services

## Lack of open mindedness irks reader

To the Editor:

The intolerance of other belief systems exhibited by the letter in last week's *Dialogue* ("Rajneeshes, 'Idle Hands' draw criticism") both frightens and angers me.

In this institution of higher learning I find it appalling that some students and community members self-righteously presume to tell me what I should or should not be allowed to hear.

A college campus is a place for the free exchange of differing points of view on social, political, scientific and aesthetic subject matter. Only by having an open mind and respect for others' opinions can learning occur. Without this, blind acceptance and indoctrination, not learning, occurs.

Further, I would rather study facts based on empirical, scientific knowledge, than those offered by an authority figure spouting parables and condemning others based on his presumption of supreme knowledge.

I also resent being judged wrong and sinful for belief in scientific fact by people of such closedmindedness that they

refuse to even listen to another point of view.

If you want to insulate yourself from reality that is your

right. Just don't force me to.

Also Concerned,  
Kay Brant



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