

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

## Be strong: Turn off your television



*Be Human.*

Jesse Xavier Gurzynski  
Staff Writer

my life; I began to see the world more clearly, my very perception of the world changed, my perception of time changed, and I felt more alive.

One of the best books I have ever read is "Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television" by Jerry Mander. Mander was once president of an advertising agency, but he and his partners dissolved the agency when they realized that their growing awareness and concern for the well-being of the planet was at conflict with their corporate work. From this book I learned much about the human body and mind and why television has the effects that it does.

A friend of mine has two children who watch TV at their grandparents' house and at their babysitter's. Over the last couple years, I've seen what TV does to kids. The youngest, Nathaniel, is an excellent example. He tells jokes that make no sense, but are structured just like the jokes on TV. He doesn't have to get a joke on television because the structure and the canned laughter have taught him when to laugh. The longer he watches TV, the more ill-behaved he becomes when the set is turned off. My friend told me the way he behaves after watching Power Rangers scares her.

I recently read an essay by Marie Winn that appeared in the 1977 book "The Plug-In Drug." In this essay entitled "TV Addiction," Winn discusses the meaning of addiction and how it applies to television.

She quotes a "heavy viewer" (a college English instructor): "I find television almost irresistible. When the set is on, I cannot ignore it. I can't turn it off. I feel sapped, will-less, enervated. As I reach out to turn off the set, the strength goes out of my arms. So I sit there for hours and hours."

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## School shootings shock population



*Think about it....*

Maggie Jirasek  
Editor in Chief

When I heard that a 19 year-old, angered German teenager walked into a school armed with a shotgun and a pistol and shot 15 adults and two students before killing himself, I was in deep shock.

The shooting occurred last Friday in a small German town called Erfurt, not too far away from where I used to live. The gunman who was dressed all in black killed 14 school employees, a police officer, two girls, himself and left at least six wounded people behind.

Of course, the attack evokes images of the Columbine High School shootings in Colorado three years ago. Once again, an

angered student who supposedly couldn't handle life anymore and was upset about school decided not to only take his own life but also the ones of many other innocent people.

I know that German people have always considered their country to be far less vulnerable to the violence that has afflicted U.S. campuses. I can imagine that this incident must have sent shock waves across the whole nation. However, according to the Oregonian, this is the fourth homicidal attack in fewer than three years.

The Oregonian reports that German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said that citizens were stunned and horrified and he urged people to examine the social as well as political failures that might have contributed to the tragedy. I am pretty sure that there are social factors that contribute to incidents such as this. However, I also think that a lot of teenagers see and hear about all these tragedies happening somewhere else and get their ideas from there.

I know that handguns in Germany are largely prohibited except for members of the armed forces and police. Germans who want to buy a hunting rifle for example must undergo ex-

tensive background checks lasting up to a year. But still, it seems like for many teenagers it's quite easy to get a gun. They just have to go to a bigger city or go to a neighboring country such as Poland or the Czech Republic. Maybe this is an issue that has to be looked at. It should not be that easy for teenagers or any individuals to have a gun without acquiring a license.

I would have never thought that such an incident would happen to a city such as Erfurt. All the things you always here on the news seem so far away and you never think it could happen to you. But I guess it could happen anywhere to anybody. Now I wonder how things are going to change in Germany. I'm pretty sure they will. Just like new rules and new safety measurements have been established at schools in the U.S. to make schools a safer place, things will change in Germany as well. And probably for a good reason because you should be able to go to school without being scared of being shot at a place where you are supposed to learn something and get prepared for life.

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## Viewing t.v. show pilots is not all it's built up to be

JENNIFER KANE

Staff Writer

I wouldn't be an American if I didn't enjoy free stuff. So when a friend of mine told me she got four free tickets in the mail for a television preview session, I was more than happy to go along.

The pamphlet that came with the tickets explained that we would be joining about 200 other people in a hotel conference room to watch the pilot episodes of two T.V. shows, and some commercials. We would then have to fill out a simple survey stating out opinions on the programs. Sounded easy enough, and maybe even a little bit enjoyable. We might even get some free grub out of it.

Oh, how naïve I was. We arrived to a large group of impatient people waiting outside the room. Upon entering the room, I see four 32-inch television sets and folding chairs. Nowhere do I see the movie screen and comfortable seats that I came to expect from the pamphlet.

Then we were handed the survey. The front of it asked for our names and addresses. Not knowing exactly with whom I was dealing, this made me a bit uncomfortable. But then we were

reassured the documents were shredded in three months. Gullible, I realize. A few days later, the company tried to reach me at my house 17 times. And this is in no way an exaggeration; caller I.D. is a splendid thing.

I opened the packet to find pictures of everyday household items. We were to simply circle which items we would normally use. What this has to do with pilot episodes is still beyond me, but I was trying to keep an open mind. After the 27<sup>th</sup> page, it became a bit monotonous. Why do they need to know what barbeque sauce or feminine protection brand I prefer?

Finally after about half an hour of this silly survey, they started the television programs.

The first episode was a drama entitled "Soul Mates," and I can honestly say it was some of the worst television I have ever watched. The story line goes that a woman seems to find her soul mate in one of her therapy patients. But while under hypnosis, he confesses to committing a murder. This bothered her, but she couldn't see past the "true love." The show ended with the man parting town, only leaving behind a letter to the woman stating that if it were truly their destiny, they'd be together.

Heartwarming, eh?

Afterwards my friend and I gave each other the same look. The look that says, "What and the hell did we just sit through?" I went to give her husband the same look, but turns out he slipped out of the room within the first five minutes of the show. Smart man.

The second pilot was a sitcom called "City." Turns out it was actually made in "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" days, but they decided to show it to us for kicks and giggles. This show was not nearly as bad as the first, and I actually found myself laughing out loud on a few occasions. But I just couldn't get past the fact that it was based in 1975 and not very relatable.

All in all, two hours of my life were completely wasted with this television preview extravaganza. There wasn't anything free out of it—no food, no drinks (not even water), no stickers, no pencils even! And the television shows were on the borderline of awful. So my warning to you is if you ever get the chance to do something like this and think it sounds interesting, don't be a sucker.

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