

Opinion

Alan Small

Tabloid TV trash?



At its best, these shows are called tabloid TV. At their worst, they are called trash TV.

Whether it is Phil Donahue wearing a skirt, or Geraldo Rivera getting bopped on the nose by a chair, it is often interesting to watch.

Tabloid television's new man on the block is Morton Downey, Jr. It is unfortunate that we can't get his programming here in ice-cold Edmonton. Downey brings a new style of hosting a talk show: a style that allows him to verbally abuse his guests and anyone else within listening range.

"I say we ought to hang them (criminals) by their testicles," yelled an irate Downey posing with a hangman's noose.

"All you bleeding hearts that are opposed to capital punishment say that it is cruel and unusual punishment. I say it isn't cruel and unusual enough."

You get no subtleties from Downey. He hammers home point after right wing point like Mike Tyson did to Michael Spinks.

Rivera does nearly the same thing on his show. Once a respected telejournalist, Rivera used Al Capone's vaults to vault himself to the top of talk shows. He topped that with the big brawl he had on his show, when black civil rights leaders and Aryan supremacists went at it mano-a-mano on syndicated television. In the process, Rivera's nose was broken by a thrown chair. But the ratings went through the roof. Now that's sacrificing the body.

The reason ratings were so good for this and following Geraldo shows is simple: people watch TV for entertainment. Violence is television's best form of entertainment. That is why there is professional wrestling, replays of hockey fights, cop shows, and of course, replays of the fight on Geraldo.

Tabloid television critics say that these talk shows are sensationalist and biased. What none of these critics think about is that television is a totally different medium than a newspaper. Newspapers were created to inform the reader. Television was and always will be an entertainment medium. That is what tabloid television does in the disguise of informing the viewer.

Once the TV critics and viewers remember that television is just for entertaining, no one will complain about shows like Donahue or Geraldo. The viewer will glean a certain amount of information from the show after listening to the host, the guests, and the goofs in the crowd spout their views on whatever topic is being discussed. He will then forget it and watch the next TV program.

That is why it is called the idiot box.

The Gateway

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What do you want to be?

I WISH I'D THOUGHT OF THAT!



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Letters

The Gateway welcomes letters to the editor.

The name, faculty and year of study of the writer must be included for publication. The writer's phone number and University of Alberta I.D. number must also be provided, but will remain confidential.

Letters should be double-spaced, and typed if possible. They must not exceed 300 words.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit for length or clarity. Material of a racist, sexist, homophobic, or libellous nature will not be published.

Please submit letters to Room 282, SUB.

best... That was, of course the Middle Ages... But universal education has not been around even that long!

If the number of "quality" teachers is so very small, should they not be encouraged, rather than made to feel so completely dejected that they will leave the whole institution in the hands of the mediocre teachers?

Nicole Backus
 Education IV

Fin flag fuddle

It has come to my attention (via a mad pencil crayonist) that there is "something rotten in the state of Norway," and that it is not the lutefish, but me.

It appears that, while designing the club's poster, I have mistakenly inverted the colors of the Norwegian flag (red field with a blue stripe), and — the horror of it all — have come up with the Icelandic flag! (blue with a red stripe).

Please believe me when I say that it was *not* my intention to purposely delete Norway, and to deny her of her glory. It was also *not* my intention to insult in any way, shape or form the department head of Scandinavian Studies. Perhaps the fact that I am in the *Swedish* program can atone for my unforgivable flag ignorance.

I hope, Dr. Hale, that my flag faux-pas will not darken your image of me as a student and fellow lover of Scandinavia. Once again, my sincerest apologies. Ursakta!

My apologies to all Finns as their flag has now become Norwegian (via the mad pencil crayonist).

Shannon Cowan
 Arts II

Ag brag

Re: Ag week uneventful

Oh, you engineers are so big and tough, but your collective memory seems to be lacking a fair bit. The Aggies conducted a highly successful waterbombing of the Eng. 200 class just last year against a group of certainly enthusiastic but obviously stupid and unskilled engineers. What about the 600 snivel engineers who courageously bombed us out of their third floor windows and then quickly locked themselves in their classrooms. You guys were pretty brave as you were lying on the floor shouting insults at us under the cracks of your locked and barricaded doors.

To the point of semi to non-existent tradition, let's talk about Engineering Week. Do the engineers throw a dance or anything that the rest of campus can enjoy? Or does your small collective brain trust go into worrying about ways to stop (unsuccessfully) the Aggies from wrecking your whole week (remember the chickens)? Do the engineers have anything of "note" that sells 3500 \$11.00 tickets in 3 hours? We didn't think so. They have to get third rate bands to go into their classrooms to try and drum up spirit for their sorry-ass week. Ask the two Mech E's who lost their pants in the Ag Building after the parade if Bar None Week was non-existent. What about their 25 friends who fled in fear down the banks of the North Saskatchewan when they saw us 7 Aggies coming?

In the spirit of Glasnost, to make Bar None Week more eventful for the engineers next year, we are going to bring not one sheep into Quad, but a whole flock of young nubile ewes for the engineers to frolic around with. However, there will be a small admission charge which we are sure they will gladly pay. 7000 engineers x \$1.00 each = \$7,000 we will donate to the SPCA in the engineers' name. As an ending note, our cow had 4 tits and was much cuter than Lady Godiva.

Rod Turner, Ag IV
 Barry Shulta, Ag IV
 Doug Moss, Ag IV
 Brad Kolstad, Ag IV
 Steve Hughes, Ag III
 Dave Troutman, Ag III
 Jim Bannerman, Ag I



Arts retort

Re: Get bitching (Nov. 29)
ATTENTION AGGIES! EAT HORSESHIT. CHOKE. DIE. Much obliged, y'all.

Craig Elliott
 Arts III