

I May Be Smarter Than But I Am Not A Better Gamer Than A 5th Grader

Tonight I had the privilege(?) of watching my brother's three children (ages 3, 9, & 12). Pretty wild until about 8 o'clock when I stated that it would be silent while we watched "Smallville" after playing the Wii. I did pretty well but got my brains beat in by a 5th grader playing Super Smash Brothers Brawl. This is DEFINATELY NOT my Super Mario Brothers game. Speaking of getting beaten by a 5th grader., I allowed the two oldest tykes to stay up and watch "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?" This is a very fun show with America's redneck, Jeff Foxworthy, serving as host. Tonight's first contestant was a very pregnant female who seemed to draw inspiration by rubbing her belly. I hate true or false questions: "Africa is the only continent where elephants exist naturally in the wild."

Katherine eventually answered enough questions with the help of 3 of the five 5th grade students to win \$50,000. The second contestant did not fare as well. The orange grower needed help on his first three questions. If not for the assistance of two 11 year olds, Vince would have been one of the poor, unfortunate souls who left the show with zip, zero, nada.

"How many times does the letter z appear in the word (lizard)?" Vince's answer: 2. Two other equally challenging questions followed. The orange man did however manage to go home with \$25,000. All in all a comparatively calm night to some I have had with the three little darlings. Since spring break begins tomorrow, I do not think big brother would mind the kids staying up one hour past their bedtime. Who knows when he will return from his poker game?

Horton Sees the Idols

What better way to promote a new movie than on America's number one television show which is seen by millions every week. Last season two movies peddled themselves on American Idol, [Shrek 3rd](#) and [The Simpson's Movie](#). The top ten finalists were treated to the premiere showing of Shrek and got to go backstage for the behind the scenes work of The Simpsons. The Shrek connection kind of threw me since Dreamworks is not affiliated with FOX (that I am aware). Of course, money talks.

Last night's result show also featured a promotional opportunity for 20th Century Fox's latest attempt to transform a Dr. Seuss book into a theatrical masterpiece. The last two (The Grinch and The Cat in the Hat) were mediocre at best. I'm not sure if Horton Hears a Who will follow in their footsteps, but the cast list seems promising. Jim Carrey, Steve Carell, Carol Burnett, and Amy Poehler are a few of the talents who are lending their voices to the animated feature.

In order to further promote the film, Jim Carrey was in the American Idol studio audience with a giant set of elephant ears on his head and humongous elephant shoes on his feet. I personally felt sorry for the man who sat behind him. Later, the man of a thousand faces blended in with the finalists who were nervously awaiting the announcement of the contestant who would be getting the hook, axe, or otherwise sent packing.

I hesitate to tell you that the poor soul who was voted off the island (oops wrong show) was a young man who (according to newspaper articles) previously was employed as a male stripper at an establishment that catered mostly to male clientele. It would not be American Idol if there was not a bit of controversy.

Baby You Can Drive My Car

Finally, after 7 seasons on the air, American Idol contestants can sing songs from the Lennon/McCartney songbook. Of course, what better way to celebrate the feat of convincing Michael Jackson to allow it (since he owns the rights to the Beatles works) then to have an all Fab Five show. Let me also point out that (IMHO) after seven seasons, the show has lost some of its luster. It is no longer the "must see show" of the week. It is becoming tedious watching Randy say: "It was just awiight fo' me Dawg." Or Paula exclaim: "You look beautiful" when what she really means is "That was really bad." Or even Simon bashing the hopefuls. It has all become a bit formulaic.

Two of the performances stood out to me (one good; the other... welllll). The first was a performance of "Let It Be" (the final single released by the Beatles in 1970). Brooke White chose to perform the song while accompanying herself on the piano. It was a truly heart-felt performance.

However, Kristy Lee Cook decided to change the classic "Eight Days a Week" and give it a country flavor. Not only did the judges totally dismiss the brave choice, she will probably be in the bottom three tomorrow night. I am not what one would call a country music aficionado, but it was just a strange rendition.

So while it is becoming a bit tedious, I still do try to catch American Idol when I can. I can actually say I know where Carrie Underwood came from... and she is a country singer.

TV to Movie

One of the strangest trends in movies for the past several years has been to turn television shows of days gone by into big screen extravaganzas. For the most part, I do not see them as being over successful. Probably, the most profitable venture into this phenomenon has been the Star Trek series. This is primarily because there was a built-in audience of fans who wanted to see the further voyages of Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, and company. However, several other television shows have attempted to cross over and most have failed.

The Flintstones tried twice with live-action versions of the classic cartoon. While the first movie was relatively entertaining, *The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas* was a disaster. It featured a ridiculous looking computer generated version of the Great Gazoo (voiced by Alan Cummings). Even Ann-Margaret (reprising her role as Ann-Margrock from the original series) could not save the movie. Perhaps the *Jetsons* live-action movie (which has been in pre-production for about 5 years) will do better. Or maybe it is better to leave animated series as they are... animated.

Several classic television comedies have also tried to become big screen movies. *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *Bewitched* to name a few. Does anyone even remember them? Nicole Kidman attempted to portray Samantha in a movie whose plot was a convoluted mess. *Beaver* tried to be a movie centered around plot devices audiences could watch on TVLand reruns that were considerably better (for example, Beaver stuck in the giant coffee cup on top of a giant billboard). I think I have seen *The Beverly Hillbillies* once and remember NOT laughing at the hicks trying to integrate themselves into Beverly Hills life.

This summer audiences will be delight in two television

comedies coming to the big screen. *Sex and the City* will star Sarah Jessica Parker and the rest of the cast of the original series. *Get Smart* brings the tremendous Steve Carell to the iconic role of Maxwell Smart, agent 86 of CONTROL.

Imagine

WOW... that is all I can say about the final singer on American Idol tonight (and I know that I am going off on another tangent here). When a 17 year old hopeful performs one of the most difficult songs from any era as if it were made for him then it deserves some acknowledgment. This is the first night I have actually had a chance to enjoy an episode with play practices going on and such. There were probably 3 of the top 10 guys whom I would even consider voting for (I do not vote). However when young David Archuleta came out and nailed John Lennon's "Imagine," I thought that he is sure to be one of the final contestants. Strangely, the performer chose to start on the final verse of the song. Randy Jackson even commented on the choice. Contestants are only allowed so much time to perform so David brilliantly chose to sing the verse that meant the most to him. The young man's tone, range, and overall execution of the classic song just sent chills throughout my whole body. I find it totally flabbergasting how a 17 year old (who was not alive when John Lennon wrote and sang the classic) could even attempt such a remarkable, challenging piece. I'm not sure that I would even try to master such a memorable selection.

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man*

*Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world*

Superman 2×2

When you are 8 years old sitting in a movie theatre watching one of your favorite characters on the screen, you have no idea how much turmoil goes into putting that action on film. Richard Donner directed *Superman the Movie* and simultaneously his version of its sequel. However, following the release of *Superman*, Donner was fired and a new director for *Superman 2*, Richard Lester, was hired. The funny thing is nearly 80% of what was seen in theatres in 1981 is what Donner had filmed. So 25 years later, Donner released his version of *Superman 2* from the rolls of film shot while making *Superman the Movie*.

Richard Lester's version is a good film. However, it does have many problems. In the Fortress of Solitude battle scene with the three Kryptonian villains, the Man of Steel is given powers that he never had before and were cheesy powers to begin with. From his "S" shield on his costume he pulls out a cellophane shield which he hurls at the evil doers.

Also during the Fortress battle, Superman and General Zod participate in a game of hide and seek. They apparently were endowed with the power to magically appear and disappear anywhere within the fortress. Or maybe it was a trick ice crystals within the fortress. But that was meaningless as well.

Richard Donner's version had no such new powers for Superman. However, it also has ONE BIG FLAW!!!! The same thing that plagued the climax of *Superman the Movie*. I will not spoil for the uninitiated.

Personally, I prefer Donner's version. Both are flawed, but Donner's version also has a brilliant scene with Superman and his father Jor-El (Marlon Brando) at the Fortress. Both do include the diner scenes which are some of my favorite scenes from the movie.

Richard Lester's version also lead to the ultimate demise of the Christopher Reeve starring movies. The final two films of the series took a horrendously comedic tone. Richard Pryor was added to the cast of *Superman III* as a comedic foil. *Superman IV* was just an awful mess which spelled the end of the Last Son of Krypton on the big screen for 20 years .

Relief On Board the Enterprise

And now we present... Deep Thoughts by Jack Handy. I remember these bits from Saturday Night Live back a few years ago when it was worth watching... haven't caught it for proolly 5 years.

An interesting question was posed to me about Star Trek. Where does one go when he/she has to go to the bathroom? I asked myself this question when it was brought to my attention that in *Star Trek II*, there was no way that Khan could have known Chekov when they were in the same scene for the first time during the movie. Khan's first words to the Enterprise crewman are : "I never forget a face. Mr... Chekov, isn't it. I thought never to have seen your face again." The original

television episode "Space Seed" was shown at least one season prior to Chekov coming on board. I came up with the wild supposition that Khan and Chekov had to have met somehow. Why not while in the little spaceman's room? A five-year mission is an awful long time to have to hold it in. Laugh if you must and I know that it is just a movie/tv show. What would you do if you were on a 5 year trip and didn't know where to go? So... where does one find relief aboard a starship? The universe may never know. Maybe they used the transporter to "beam it up" into deep space. That would give new meaning to the term... space garbage. 