

Bill Rea ? I don't miss daytime TV

One thing I do not miss about my term in the working world is being subjected to daytime TV.

Now I will grant, I have been out of this particular loop for several decades now, and I can appreciate the offerings available now are geared to an entirely different audience.

I came of awareness in the '60s, when my mother followed the likes of June Cleaver as a stay-at-home mom.

Now I witnessed tons of examples over the years of how hard housewives worked in those days, even with kids underfoot. It took a couple of years in the working world before I realized that her insistence that I spend the bulk of my pre-school days out in the backyard playing (all alone and lonesome) had a bit to do with good health and fresh air, and a lot to do with getting me out of the way of the vacuum cleaner.

But she couldn't send me outside in the dead of winter (actually, she could have, but she was too conscientious a parent to go to that extreme) or when it was raining.

Inside, there was entertainment, even after I got bored with my toys (which happens to all kids). The radio was going all the time. It only was turned off when the household retired for the night. There was also this wonderful thing called a TV. Granted, it was black and white. The Rea household waited until the early '70s before it advanced itself into the world of 'living' colour.

It was on that black-and-white that I was introduced to daytime TV.

There was, of course, stuff for kids, like Captain Kangaroo and Rocketship 7 in the morning and a host of cartoons in the afternoon (one of my main memories of the Kennedy administration was JFK had a bad habit of coming on the TV and pre-empting my programs).

But there were also the game shows that my mother liked to watch. The day's ironing used to be saved for when Let's Make a Deal was on, followed by The Newlywed Game. There were others that she might be able to fit in while doing the sewing, etc.

I will grant that some of these shows have a certain appeal, which explains why such programs like Jeopardy are still popular today (I used to watch the day-time version with Art Fleming days when I was home from school). There were other game shows I watched as a kid.

My father thought my mother and I were out of our minds for watching them, frowning any time we did, calling them a 'a waste of time' (actually, that was inaccurate - he called them 'a bloody waste of time?'). The interesting part is late in life, he would sometimes watch Wheel of Fortune. He never admitted it, but Mom was pretty sure Vanna White had a lot to do with his interest in what he once called 'a bloody waste of time?'

There were also a couple of examples on the tube in those days that could be classified as entertainment. Art Linkletter was sometimes on, although that seldom entertained me. And I have reflected over the years that his bit about 'Kids Say the Darndest Things' was probably a bit exploitive. But who asked me?

There were a couple of soap operas that would be on. Mom would sometimes watch As the World Turns, if time allowed for it, but she was never much for the concept.

There were movies on during the afternoon in those days too. They were usually crummy. The only times I would ever watch them is if I was home sick from school. Usually, the worse I felt, the crummier the movie that would be on. And since I was too sick to get out of bed to do something else, and access to the TV during the day was something of a rarity, I could seldom bring myself to turn it off.

An important factor to all of this was in those days, there were only six channels to choose from (Channels 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 11), and that was in Toronto. My wife, who lived in Caledon in those days, tells me the selection was even more limited here.

Daytime TV has changed a lot. At least that's what I glean from the minimal exposure I get to it these days.

I got a small dose of what it has to offer last Thursday, as I was obliged to spend a couple of hours in a dentist's chair. This modern dental office comes complete with TVs in some of the examination rooms. Since having a dentist work on one's teeth is well known as being stressful, I guess it makes sense to use any means possible to put people at their ease. And since the lady running the operation seems to be successful (she also laughs at my jokes - at least some of them), who am I to argue with her methods?

But the garbage I had to watch left a lot to be desired. I guess anything that gets one's mind off a drill has a certain value. Although as I watched some of this stuff, I was starting to flip coins in my head as to which was preferable.

What I saw part of was a talk show that seemed to have next to no point. I listen to such stuff on the radio all the time, and since I'm usually driving, I'm spared the visual distraction.

But on this occasion, I got lucky. In the middle of the procedure, I was moved from one treatment room to another. The new one didn't have a TV, and given the quality of the programming available at the time, the only thing I could lament was my luck is never

that good when it comes to picking lottery numbers. Even better, the new chair I was stuck into had a massage feature that was so effective, I asked if I could take it home with me (I've never made such a request regarding one of their TVs). Not surprisingly, the request was denied, but like I stated before, the dentist laughs at my jokes.

Give me a good massage over daytime TV any time.

Even while I was on my recent vacation, the only thing that could have induced me to watch the tube while the sun was up was the prospect of a Star Trek rerun.

Beyond that, who needs what they have to offer? Even the soaps seem to be a dying breed. Granted, there are some good movies on some of the specialty channels, and if there's some important breaking news, CNN will pretend to stay on top of it.

Beyond that, keep working

