

at ease

Photographer.....Bill Hughes

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Cartoons entertain young (at heart)

By CATHY RIELY
Co-editor

TOMORROW MORNING, IF you're like four out of every five college students, you'll wake up and flip on the television — and not to MTV, but to Saturday morning cartoons.

These entertainment outlets have found a significant audience over and beyond the vast kiddieland for which they were originally designed.

Or so says a recent study of college students' Saturday morning TV viewing habits conducted by Asst. Professor Albert Smith Jr. of Radford University.

Smith finds that 82.1 percent of his 1,500-plus student sample spends part of most Saturday mornings in front of the tube.

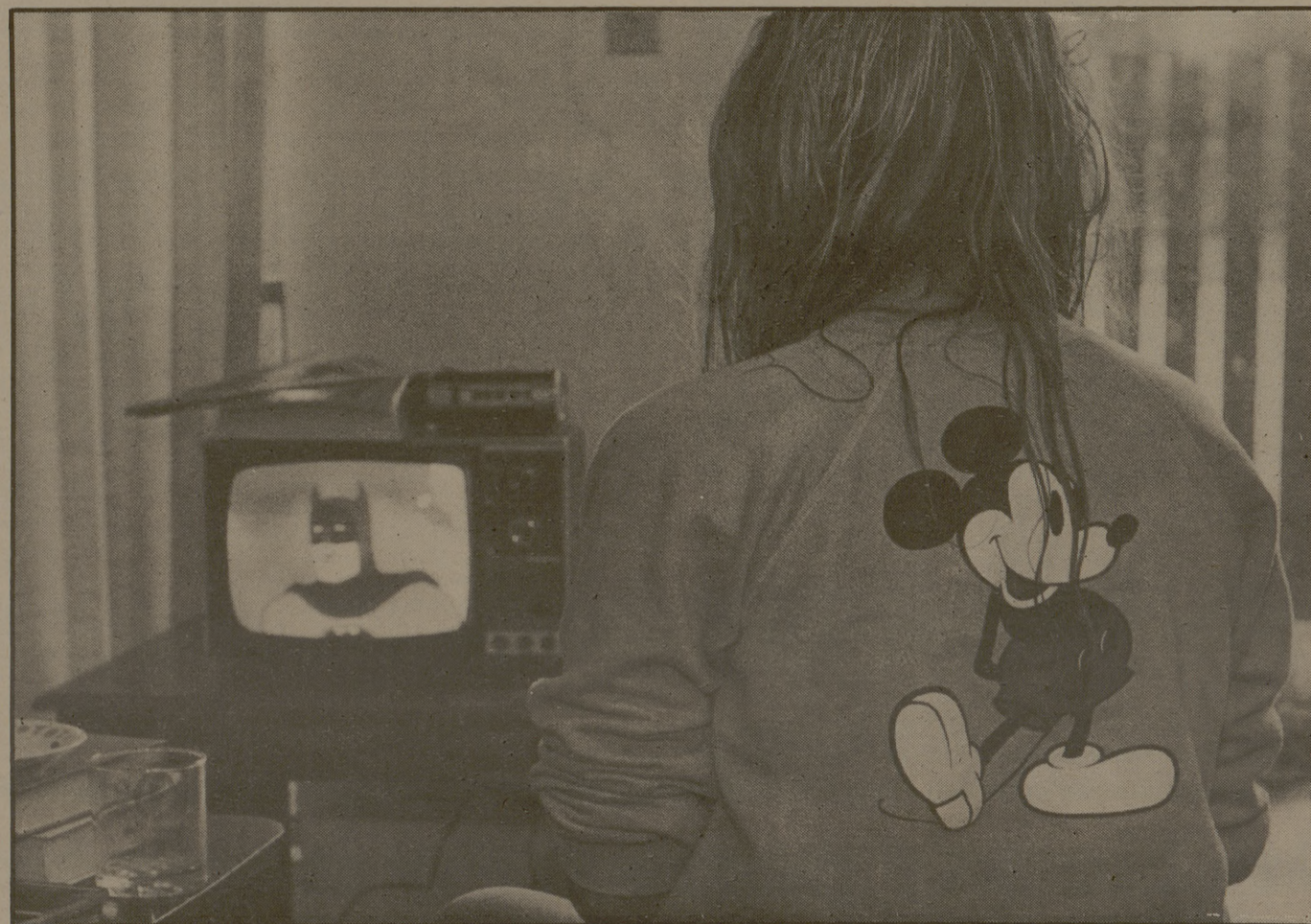
NEARLY ONE IN EVERY seven students watch cartoons every week, and one in five of tomorrow's leaders tune in every other week.

And for those who can't decide between MTV and cartoons — there's "Kidd Video," last season's top rated new Saturday morning series. The Saban Productions show has been renewed for a second season by NBC.

The series combines live rock stars (Robbie Rist, Bryan Scott, Gabrielle Bennett and Steve Alterman) with their animated counterparts.

Laurie Dominic, an assistant publicist at Saban, says the nature of the show is more sophisticated than most cartoons which helps it appeal to a wider range of ages.

"I think maybe the A-Team doesn't get as broad a response as our show



does," she says.

EARLY RESEARCH SAYS that the "Kidd Video" audience is composed of viewers between the ages of two and 17, contrasting the established assumption that Saturday morning television appeals exclusively to children 11 and younger. And the collegiate crowd is widening that

demographic spread.

Dominic says the show is successful because "kids these days are all into rock."

"It's not all cartoon," she says explaining the show. "It's live action mixed with popular rock video," she says.

"Kidd Video" is a little more universal than most cartoons, Dominic says. This also helps the show ap-

peal to a wider age group.

"You might still want to watch cartoons when you're in college," she says. "But you expect more than something cute like The Smurfs, or a cartoon with the good vs. the bad."

The audience wants something concrete — a message that they can relate to, she says.

"I think 'Kidd Video' has that," she says. □

Saturday morning TV sure has changed

Associated Press

NEW YORK — At 9 a.m. on a recent Saturday, I turned on the TV, prayed for rain, and braced myself for a morning's worth of kiddie shows — a one-time-only return to a habit I'd outgrown several decades ago.

What, I wanted to know, had changed since the golden days when the Lone Ranger thwarted evil with a wave of a hand and a hearty "Hi-ho Silver!" or when kids sang

"It's Howdy Doody Time!" with at least as much feeling as the national anthem?

To help arrive at the scholarly answer such a question clearly deserves, I was joined by an 18-month-old expert — a sort of Mrs. Miller in diapers. She proved to be useless. Barely into the fourth "Cocoa Pebbles" cereal commercial, the little intellectual snob was asleep, leaving me to draw my conclusions alone.

Truth is, Saturday morning children's programming is not all bad.

Some is quite good. A gold star goes especially to CBS's "Pryor's Place," which mixes wholesome themes with genuine, warm humor. Comedian Richard Pryor has a near genius for communicating ideas like respect for senior citizens without the slightest hint of condescension.

One recent show starred Pryor and a marvelous cast including Scatman Cruthers and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Applause, too, for "CBS Story-break," with Bob "Captain Kanga-

roo" Keeshan. NBC's "Smurfs" is OK too, if your kid's (or your) taste runs toward the cloyingly sweet.

But the bad shows are oh-so profoundly, deeply bad.

For pure stupidity, it's hard to beat ABC's animated concoction called "Turbo Teen." I hope I have this straight: it's about a teen-age boy who finds himself able, when he perspires enough, to sprout wheels

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