

Goin' crazy for **Soaps & 'toons**

**Toons: Animated idols still entice bigger 'kids'**

By AARON MEIER  
 THE BATTALION

Texas A&M students who were raised in the '80s grew up with such cartoon icons as Optimus Prime, Orko and Rainbow Brite. Today, many students still watch cartoons—but now they follow the adventures of Babs Bunny, Wacko and Homer Simpson.

Cartoons have come a long way since the days of Bedrock and Spacely's Space Sprockets. Recently, the animated prime time series *The Simpsons* surpassed *The Flintstones* as the longest running cartoon series ever. Cartoons are not only an outlet for children on Saturday mornings, but also a popular form of adult satire.

David Siller, a senior English major, said there is more to today's cartoons than just slapstick humor and boulders crushing umbrella-holding coyotes.

"The humor is so adult in the newer cartoons," Siller said. "They contain a lot of references to pop culture. They talk about anything from Anastasia to Milton Berle."

Siller said his favorite cartoon is *Animaniacs*, a daily show that follows the exploits

of the Warner "brothers" and the Warner sister, Dot. His favorite character is Yacko, the older Warner brother and the leader of the group.

Diana Houghton, a senior environmental design major, said her favorite character on *Animaniacs* is Wacko, the younger brother.

"I love his accent on the show," Houghton said. "My favorite episode is when he is running around talking about having to go potty in that cute accent."

Houghton said the humor in *Animaniacs* and other cartoon shows like *Pinky and the Brain* and *Tiny Toons* attracts a very adult audience.

"When you are a kid watching cartoons you laugh when you are supposed to, even if you don't get it," Houghton said. "The humor of these shows can be very adult. At times it is almost sexual."

The adult-themed plots have even expanded into such action cartoons as *Gargoyles* and *X-Men*.

Houghton said that compared to action shows of her childhood such as *He-Man* and *Superfriends*, the cartoons of today have interesting plots and well-developed characters.

"I really don't miss the cartoons I used to watch as a kid," Houghton said. "The best cartoons are the ones out now. The shows these days are not as cheesy."

Houghton said *Gargoyles*, a show about creatures who turn into stone during the day and

come to life at night, appeals to her because it draws its roots from fantasy literature and because its subject matter is more sinister than that of other shows.

Other students prefer the absurdity of cartoons with little realistic basis.

Robby Knight, a sophomore construction science major, enjoys watching a satirical superhero cartoon *The Tick*. With such characters as American Maid, a woman dressed in a red, white and blue maid uniform, and "El Seed," a giant flower who hates people, *The Tick's* absurd characters make the show memorable, Knight said.

"The show has characters whose battle cry is, 'I play with dolls,'" Knight said. "The absurdity of the entire situation is what makes it good."

Siller said cartoons not only link him to his childhood, but also with a younger generation of cartoon watchers. Siller's younger cousins share in the ritual of sitting in front of the television and enjoying the animation.

"Sometimes I'll get a joke in the cartoon they don't understand and I'll start laughing," Siller said. "They will just look at me like I am a dork and tell me to shut up."

Siller said he likes to watch both contemporary 'toons and the ones from his childhood.

"Cartoons give you a good grasp on your childhood and remind you to keep the kid inside alive," Siller said.



James Vineyard, THE BATTALION

**Soaps: Students look to serials for escape — and a few laughs**

By MELISSA PRICE  
 THE BATTALION

As long as she can remember, Christine McCabe, a sophomore speech communications major, has watched the soap opera *All My Children*.

McCabe said she is addicted to soap operas primarily because they have always been a major part of her life. She said she feels a day is incomplete if she doesn't get her dose of soap opera drama.

"Soap operas are something people use to escape from reality," McCabe said. "We're a society who likes to gossip and know about everyone's personal lives, and soap operas do that for us."

McCabe also has been watching *General Hospital* since she was a sophomore in high school. She said daytime soap operas are popular among college students because there is nothing else interesting on daytime television.

McCabe said her favorite soap opera, *All My Children*, is the most realistic of those she has seen.

"It actually has stories that real people experience — not stupid stories about devil possession and people coming back to life," McCabe said.

Erik Peterson, a sophomore biomedical science major, said it is the unrealistic storylines and unbelievable plot twists that make soap operas exciting.

Peterson, who currently watches four soap operas a day, said he always schedules classes around his favorite soap opera, *The Young and the Restless*. Peterson said he feels like he knows the characters personally because he has been watching the show since 1992.

"I care more about what happens to the characters on *The Young and the Restless* because they are like a family friend," Peterson said. "Just like you wouldn't turn away a friend if they were in need — it's hard for me to turn off the TV

and not watch what is happening in their lives."

Although he loves watching soap operas, Peterson said sometimes they are frustrating because they move at a slow pace. He said one of the primary reasons he began watching *Sunset Beach*, the newest soap opera on NBC, is it moves faster than other soap operas.

Joy Muckleroy, a junior English major, has been watching soap operas for 12 years. She said she watches *General Hospital* because the characters are close in age to college students.

Although she can sometimes relate to the characters on *General Hospital*, Muckleroy said usually their lives are so far-fetched it is humorous.

"I watch soap operas to see how stupid the characters are," Muckleroy said. "Their lives are so unrealistic — you have to watch just to see what else could possibly happen to them."

Gabriela Juarez, a sophomore industrial distribution major, has been watching telenovelas, the Spanish equivalent to American soap operas, since she was a small child.

She said the main difference between telenovelas and American soap operas is that telenovelas last from 3 months to a year and always conclude much like an extended miniseries.

Juarez said another difference is that American soap operas have complex plots and try to teach viewers a lesson, while telenovelas are less complicated and are based on fairy tales.

Juarez said she watches telenovelas because they allow her to es-

cape the realities of daily life.

"It's something different to come home to that gets you out of the regular routine of studying and going to class," Juarez said. "Soap operas

are not real — it's another world that is going on that doesn't usually happen in real life."

Peterson said he prefers watching soap operas to nighttime TV shows because soap operas are on five times a week. He said this allows characters to develop fully and gives viewers insight into what makes characters tick.

Peterson said soap operas offer viewers a slice of life some people can only dream of.

"That is a life we all want to live — you're happy, successful, good-looking and rich," Peterson said. "Their lives are so much more exciting than ours."

McCabe said there seems to be a gender difference when it comes to watching soap operas. She said there is an obvious reason more females than males watch daytime soap operas.

"Guys don't want to watch shows about who is sleeping with who, but girls are more gossipy," McCabe said. "Due to the subject matter and the fact that girls are generally more gossipy than males, the shows are more tuned in to females."

Peterson said there will always be certain activities society considers typically male or female, but this does not mean men don't watch soap operas.

"I think soap operas are more acceptable nowadays," Peterson said. "Being a male who watches soap operas makes me feel weird, but it is not going to make me stop watching them."

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Erik Peterson  
 Sophomore biomedical science major

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