

# AS I SEE IT Pot Costo

First we listened to Christmas carols on the radio as the kids were raving the packages under the tree. Then we played some more carols on the record player. Then we did a little a cappella singing of holiday tunes. Eventually, however, as Christmas Day wore on somebody turned on the television.

Perhaps it was only because it was raining outside, the closest relative was 150 miles away and the kids so engrossed with new toys that the boob tube made such an impression on me.

Anyway after watching the set on Christmas Day I am ready to report that the state of American television programming has never been in such dire condition.

First, there was not a football game in dialing distance, a situation I at first applauded and later regretted when it became apparent that none of us knew how to act around the dining room table with no set to crane our heads toward, no half-time show to add a syncopated note to our dessert.

Earlier in the day I had turned on a favorite soap opera "All My Children" to peel potatoes by and found I might as well have been

skinning onions. Just because it's Christmas don't expect the misery to take a holiday. Ditto the "New Match Game." Just substitute suggestive smut for misery.

At 7 p.m. there was an updated special on "Sleeping Beauty" the kids wanted to see. Quite literally it was the worst Christmas show that has been screened since the networks jumped the gun with holiday programming back on Nov. 29.

We checked the schedule and found that "Hawaii Five O" had a story about a firebug. ABC gave us a mystery murder repeat from last year and NBC dished up an episode about "Hawkins."

We finally turned off the set and played "Monopoly" around the kitchen table for the rest of the evening but I couldn't help thinking about how the energy crisis is going to mean spending more holidays at home for more Americans.

If the Christmas TV fare is the kind of programming we can expect on all our homebound holidays then we might all do well to stock up on old time entertainment including family games, books and player pianos.

## Once Over Briefly

**AMERICAN GRAFFITI** — Adults — For a good time, call on theaters showing this film. It's a 1962 teenage world revisited, completed with T-Birds, blonde bombshells, and Wolfman Jack.

**ASH WEDNESDAY** — Adults — Story of an old bag (Liz Taylor) that segged. Don't gag.

**CHARLEY VARRICK** — Adults — Splendid performance by Walter Matthau as a small-time bank hoodlum. A brutal, unfunny film.

**COPS AND ROBBERS** — Adults — Two blue knights errant set out to pull off the perfect crime. Cool and refreshing comedy.

**DON IS DEAD** — Objectionable — Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola should sue for plagiarism.

**ELECTRA GLIDE IN BLUE** — Adults — Rock mogul James William Guercio enters a new medium, and produces an imitation "Easy Rider" that's pure pretention. Give him credit for trying.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION** — Adults — Written by Dalton Trumbo, directed by David Miller and starring Burt Lancaster, Robert Ryan and Will Geer, all for free. It deals with a right-wing conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. More than mere what-if fantasy.

**HEAVY TRAFFIC** — Condemned — A gross cartoon from the people who brought us Fritz the Cat. This time out they're Crumb-er, but still Crumb-y.

**I LOVE YOU ROSA** — Adults with reservations — Because of Deuteronomical law, a boy of 11 marries his brother's widow. Charming poetic, humorously sentimental.

**JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL** — Everyone — The word from a bird. Chirp, chirp.

**LE SEX SHOP** — Condemned — Claude Berr's soft-edged satire on sexual attitudes can at best be described as tasteless.

**MANSON** — Condemned — A new low in documentaries. A foul movie about a foul act, put together helter skelter.

**MASSACRE IN ROME** — Adults — A provocative war film that, despite historical inaccuracies, introduces some moral issues that deserve thoughtful consideration.

**NEW LAND** — Adults and adolescents — Sequel to The Emigrants, and perfect complement to that. With Liv Ullman, Max von Sydow.

**OPTIMISTS** — Everyone — Peter Sellers plays a London street entertainer. If you go in with a smile on your face, you'll come out with one.

**PAPER CHASE** — Adults — Timothy Bottoms, Lindsay Wagner, and John Houseman in a drama of a law student's battle between intellect and emotions. As the professor, Houseman is stunningly convincing.

**PAPILLON** — Adults — Autobiographical story of a fugitive from Devil's Island. With the talent and charisma of both Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman, it can't miss.

**ROBIN HOOD** — Everyone — Disney is alive and well with this new full-length

### ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Schmid of Robin Street celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Nov. 25 at a Mass at St. Peter and Paul and a reception for 80 guests at the Lyon's Den.

# At Home With the Movies

**DON'T DRINK THE WATER** [1969]  
Thursday, Jan. 3 [CBS]

This is the film version of Woody Allen's 50's Broadway comedy involving a hapless caterer (Jackie Gleason) from Newark who does the Grand Tour of Europe with his wife (Estelle Parsons) and daughter (Joan Delaney), and in the process finds his plane hijacked to Vulgaria, an Iron Curtain country where the family is sought by the Russians as American spies. "Water" will no doubt please that forgotten older generation of filmgoers and turn off younger viewers in exactly the same proportions, especially since only a few of the original Woody Allen one-liners have survived the recycling process of play-into-movie. **A-III**

**THE GYPSY MOTHS** [1969]  
Friday, Jan. 4 [CBS]

John Frankenheimer's action drama stars Burt Lancaster, Gene Hackman and Deborah Kerr in an unusual story about rough-and-tumble men who make a living as skydivers performing at state fairs across the Midwest. The aerial photography, especially the actual dive sequences, is absolutely breathtaking, but the dramatic portions unfolding on terra firma, having to do with the personal lives and problems of the divers, lack credibility. **A-III**

**SILENT RUNNING** [1972]  
Saturday, Jan. 5 [NBC]

Drama about ecological disaster, circa the not-too-distant future, centers on a shipload of scientists floating ark-like through space with a precious cargo of plants and living things that can no longer survive on earth. The themes of man's relationship to his environment, especially regarding its despoilment, are thoughtful. **A-II**

**THE DEFIANT ONES** [1958]  
Monday, Jan. 7 [NBC]

Sidney Poitier and Tony Curtis topline this action-morality drama about two Deep South

**ENVOY DIES**

**Madrid** [RNS] — Spain's Ambassador to the Holy See, Juan Pablo de Lojendio, the Marquis of Villisca, died here Dec. 13, 1973, after a long illness. A career diplomat, de Lojendio served as ambassador to Cuba and to Switzerland before appointment to the Vatican post on Dec. 30, 1972.

convicts who escape from their prison gang but remain chained together. The racial issues are explored with characteristic heavy-handedness by director Stanley Kramer, and the result is a

melodrama that was pretty daring and "relevant" back then, but rather awkward and out of date today. There's good acting, though, by Curtis and Poitier, and occasional good humor. **A-III**

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