

AS I SEE IT



Pat Costa

Our youngest was picked up by her nursery school car pool this past week and it was some time before either her father, home with a sore throat, or I remembered to turn off "Captain Kangaroo."

"It's my favorite daytime show," I told him only half kidding.

I have been watching or at least listening to Captain longer than even I care to admit and he and Mr. Green Jeans, Mr. Moose, Bunny Rabbit and Grandfather Clock have a very firm place in my affections.

If our daughter goes to the morning session of kindergarten come September I am obviously going to have to invent an excuse to keep on watching my friends. For that is what they seem to even one of my advanced years.

They may have come along too late for my pre-school years but they were right on target for a young brother and sister born some 18 and 19 years after me.

With them I watched the exploits of cartoon character Tom Terrific, grew attached to Dancing Bear and laughed as

Bunny Rabbit tricked Captain over and over again out of one more bunch of carrots.

With the arrival of my own kids I was introduced anew to the electronic security blanket that is "Captain Kangaroo."

There are flashier shows that are good, e.g. "Sesame Street," "Electric Company," and "Zoom," but for the pre-schooler nothing projects warmth and intimacy like the CBS morning hour now well into its third decade.

As Captain's creator and alter ego Bob Keeshan once pointed out in justifiable pique when all those public television shows kept being cited by educators and critics, many of the entertaining methods used to teach youngsters on those shows were first pioneered on Keeshan's show. In fact many of the writers and staff involved in the Children's Television Workshop which produces the public shows learned their crafts working for him.

Keeshan in baggy blue pants and a jacket with large pockets and who wore his hair over his ears long before it was fashionable, conveys the image of a warm authority figure who may sometime end up on the wrong side of a joke.

Parents need not fear letting their children watch without monitoring. The only objectionable feature, cast members selling products, has long since been eliminated. And the only violence is Mr. Moose's downpour of ping pong balls on the unsuspecting Captain's head.

Important guests show up frequently. Last week Actor Alan Arkin read a story about a little boy named Arthur whose family

kept refusing him a chance to help. In a most satisfying fantasy for children Arthur went out gathered up wood, built a truly wonderful house all by himself and so impressed his family that they moved into it.

The care and love of animals makes up a large portion of the show. Sometimes kittens are brought in. Sometimes it is leopard cubs. Supplementing the live visitors are films of jungle families or denizens of other exotic lands.

Throughout, the importance of treating other creatures with kindness is emphasized. At the same time children are given a feeling of their own self-importance.

In recent years Captain has added to his retinue. Mr. Baxter, a black father type figure dressed in a business suit, is played by James Wall. Debbie (Weems) is a young white woman. If they do not cover all bases, the attempt to broaden the show's appeal is evident.

About 10 years ago, if memory serves me right, Keeshan attempted to do away with the Captain character and try something else. CBS and the public prevailed upon him to stay. It is the genuine hope here that he is around for many years to come. In a time when much of TV is bombastic and overstimulating the quiet values of a "Captain Kangaroo" are much appreciated.

PRAYER BREAKFAST

Port Byron — The Port Byron Interfaith Prayer Breakfast will be held at St. John's parish hall, Saturday, April 5 at 7:30 a.m.

At Home With the Movies

MAN IN THE WILDERNESS [1971]
Sunday, April 6

Richard Harris is once more out in the woods with the wild Indians, in *Man in the Wilderness*, a survival-adventure story written by Jack DeWitt, directed by Richard C. Sarafian and based on one of those bizarre frontier episodes that color American history. Harris plays Zachary Bass, a violent, godless man who is abandoned by a land-locked cross-country shipping-trapping expedition after he has been mauled by a grizzly bear.

Somehow Bass survives the first few days and nights, and gradually recovers well enough to begin his own trek through the wilds, hell-bent for revenge on the expedition's Ahab-like leader, Captain Henry (John Huston), and well aware of the Arikara Indians dogging the expedition's trail.

The way back is tedious but frequently absorbing, as minute and momentous events intermingle to bring Harris to a rather pantheistic awareness of life's forms and rhythms and man's cruelty to his fellow man.

Cutting from Harris to the Indians to the struggling expedition, Sarafian experiences a number of wild directorial ups and downs, just as he did in the equally episodic *Vanishing Point*, and the final confrontation he arranges is jarringly anticlimactic. The film's rewards, however, are rich if one is willing to take the story in bits and pieces.

The scenery is a magnificent vehicle for the theme of nature's power and dignity, and several things Harris sees for us,

notably the trailside birth of an Indian baby, independently have a stunning, eerie beauty.

Photographer Gerry Fisher's camera uses the great rugged wilderness to its best advantage, but one gets the impression that Sarafian made a much longer film, which was then chopped down to manageable size and which has suffered considerably for it.

A-111

ARTS FESTIVAL

The first annual Knights of Columbus Arts and Crafts Festival sponsored by the Trinity Council Charity Fund Committee has been scheduled for June 14 and 15 in Webster, N.Y. The Festival is open to a variety of media including painting, drawing, graphics, sculpture, pottery, ceramics, jewelry, woodcrafts, weaving, macrame, textiles, photography, knits, and crocheted works. All works must be original. More than 200 spaces are available in both outdoor and indoor locations. Artists and craftsmen interested in entering their works should contact Ronnie Zawacki, 265-0258 for entry blanks. Closing date is May 16, 1975.

HOLY CHILDHOOD BENEFIT PARTY

The Alhambra Ladies Auxiliary will give a dessert card party Wednesday afternoon, April 16, for the benefit of Holy Childhood School. The party will begin at 12:30 p.m. at 513 Monroe. Mrs. James Martin heads the committee, which includes Dorothy Farrell, Ruth Schenk, Janette Melville, Lorraine Hannon and Betty Nary.

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