

Take an 'Adult Swim'

By JOE KEO
The Tattoo

Tired of corny kid cartoons? No worry — the Cartoon Network's "Adult Swim" will please the older audience of animation lovers and cartoon fanatics.

Adding an adult twist to the network's already fun-packed arsenal, "Adult Swim" is a block of cartoons targeted for ages 18 through 34. It airs late night on Saturdays and Sundays.

Daytime television is stuffed with boring and unrealistic soap operas (why do they call them soap operas anyway?) or cartoons mostly aimed at preschoolers and innocent toddlers who have yet to develop minds of their own.

"Bob the Builder," "Blue's Clues," "The Big Comfy Couch," "The Teletubbies" — the list of kiddie shows goes on.

The young viewers soon become zombies who think the world revolves around a blue dog and a dude with a green striped shirt.

It's different for older viewers. We like action and excitement, and even some slapstick comedy.

Look no further. "Adult

Swim" has it all.

Saturday's lineup consists of mostly popular imported Japanese animation, known as "anime" by hardcore fans. It airs from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. Some of the cartoons slated for the Saturday night block include "Yu Yu Hakusho," "Cowboy Bebop," and "Gundam 0083."

On the tube

"Yu Yu Hakusho" is a show about a teenage boy who dies and comes back to life as an evil-fighting ghost detective. "Cowboy Bebop" is a tale of bounty hunters who wander the universe in search of good pay and some food.

"Gundam 0083" is about huge robots piloted by humans who fight in order to keep peace between Earth and its space colonies.

These cartoons are built on a lot of imagination and are packed with thrilling action and witty dialogue. But they contain some violence and unsuitable content for younger

kids. (Parents, pay attention to the disclaimer at the beginning of every show.)

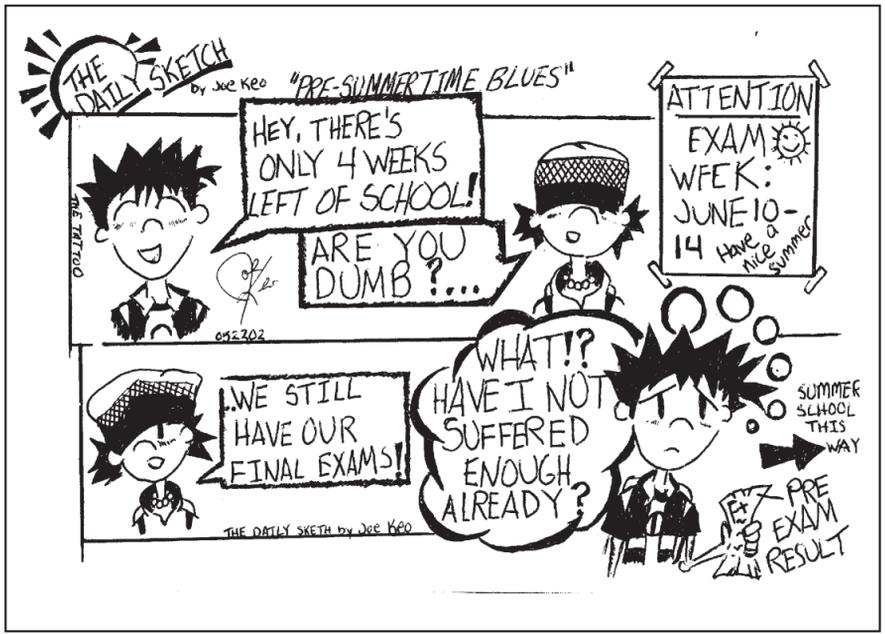
Sunday's package of animation is on the more comedic side than the smash-bang action shows on Saturdays. The Sunday "Adult Swim" block runs from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. and is comprised of funny shows such as "Home Movies," "The Brak Show," and "Aqua Teen Hunger Force."

This bundle of cartoons explode with hilarious and hysterical situations that can even make your great-grandparents break out on the floor laughing.

Sunday's grown-up humor and Saturday's kick-butt attitude combined creates a great weekend for true cartoon fans.

With the addition of the popular "Adult Swim," the Cartoon Network is no doubt seeing a ratings boost. With the help of its other programs like "Toonami," "Boomerang," the channel seems to have a bright future ahead.

To view "Adult Swim," check your local listings or go online at www.adultswim.com for more information. Bristol viewers can watch the show at the above times on standard cable channel 52.



Joe Keo / The Tattoo

Teen mayor rules

By KAISHI LEE
The Tattoo

Don't ask Christopher Portman to pick up a six-pack on the way home from work because the mayor of Mercer, Penn. is strictly a soda pop man.

After all, he's only 19.

The mayor can, however, perform marriages, oversee the police department and break tie votes on the town council.

"I decided to run for mayor as I wanted to give back to my community and bring new innovative ideas to the borough council," said Portman, who was sworn in as mayor of Mercer, Penn. on Jan. 3.

Make no mistake, though, Portman is just another American teenager, who fishes with his girlfriend's dad, is a huge fan of Major League Baseball and lives with his parents and twin brothers.

But he's appeared on national television and stories about him have appeared in at least six different languages in more than a dozen countries, making him one of the best known small-town mayors in the world.

He's certainly known at Westminster College, where he's majoring in broadcast communications and minoring in political science.

"Many students know who I am because of the media coverage but for the most part when I'm at college, I'm a college student," Portman said.

"Some of my college friends are now used to the television cameras," he said. "They usually say, 'Well here are those cameras again. I bet they're here for Chris.'"

Portman defeated 55-year-old Councilman Kenneth Vernon and John Kish, 19, in the Republican primary to win

the \$1,875-a-year, part-time mayoral post. He also won the Democratic nomination with a write-in vote.

"In the past, I saw that we recycled the same individuals and I felt it was time that a younger individual come in with a fresh new perspective and create a new vision for our town," Portman said.

Located in northwestern Pennsylvania on the Ohio border, Mercer is a small borough with 2,391 residents.

Portman ran a successful grassroots campaign, sending out letters into the community soliciting campaign donations.

"I got a wonderful response," Portman said.

He raised about \$2,000 which went into purchasing yard signs, flyers, buttons and pens.

"I went door to door, meeting as many residents as possible, talking and sharing with them my goals and plans for the borough. I also stood outside polling places on Election Day handing out my flyers," he said.

Portman said teens should play an active role in politics.

"We are the future of our nations," he said.

"So my feeling is why not start now and understand the government giving us a broader base for the future."

He said his own aspirations go beyond serving as Mercer's mayor.

"I would like to be a political analyst after college and then run for state representative, U.S. House, U.S. Senate, governor of Pennsylvania and one day run for president of the United States," Portman said.

But, he added, "That is a dream, not a goal."



Joe Keo / The Tattoo

Destined to be a classic

By KAISHI LEE
The Tattoo

For the uninitiated, all the frenzy over *Star Wars* is baffling and inexplicable.

They squirm at the greenish gnomelike blob of Yoda, scorn the weird names like Obi-Wan Kenobi and Count Dooku and prefer to stay home watching television (it's free anyway).

Thankfully, I'm not one of them. *Star Wars* is not just some sci-fi movie, it's a phenomenon. Plus, the excitement over the film is cross-generational.

I admit that the most-anticipated movie of all time may have evolved to be a marketing delirium, a triumph of hype.

But it's inspired a cult following that waited 16 long years for the drab *Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* to hit the silver screen. Ok, it was crap, but we loyal fans were satisfied and still live, speak and breathe in the galaxy.

Indeed, in 1977, *Star Wars*, with its good-versus-evil and internecine-thick plot, became an inextricable part of modern culture. Undeniably, "may the force be with you" was the youth-speak of the time.

So, I waited with bated breath and shivered as the music swelled to a deafening crescendo and the title of the second sequel to the *Star Wars* trilogy: *Episode 2: Attack of the Clones* blazed across the screen.

Episode 1 traced the childhood of Anakin Skywalker, who has a connection to The Force, the lifeline that binds everyone. He would later grow up to sire the twins, Luke and Princess Leia, and renounce the Jedi cause to embrace the dark side of Darth Vader. It covered how the plucky nine-year-old slave (Jake Lloyd) was found, and freed, by Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn, when the latter stopped over at planet Tatooine.

Attack of the Clones opens with a bang and takes place 10 years after the events of *The Phantom Menace*. Described by director, George Lucas, as "a love story," it is however more darker and intense. After spending a decade under the tutelage of his mentor, Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor), Anakin (newcomer Hayden Christensen), is anxious to be acknowledged as a full-fledged Jedi. Knowing that Anakin may be tempted into the Dark Side, Obi-Wan advises patience.

Padmé Amidala (Natalie Portman), formerly the Queen of Naboo and now a Senator, arrives on the planet of Coruscant, the Republic's capital, to voice out on the seceding systems in the empire. When an assassination attempt is made on Padmé, peace-loving Jedi Master Mace Windu (Samuel L.

Jackson), assigns Obi-Wan and Anakin to protect her.

Obi-Wan pursues the assassin, a bounty hunter called Jango Fett (Temeura Morrison), to Genosia, a world which develops clones. Meanwhile, Anakin accompanies Amidala to Naboo. Naturally, both fall in love.

At the movies: *Star Wars*

Later, Anakin and Padmé leave for Tatooine, to learn more about Anakin's mother. Then, Obi-Wan discovers a disturbing plot that exposes the villains Count Dooku (*Lord of the Ring's* Christopher Lee) and the Sith Lord Dark Sidiious (Ian McDiarmid).

The cosmically bad dialogue aside, this intergalactic adventure gives me no fault to pick on.

Nor, in fact, does it give me time to breathe or think with its non-stop bombardment of thrills and antics and fantastical creatures and panoramic vistas.

As director, Lucas impresses with his imagination and energy. True, his work has lost some of its crude charm and sense of wonder (remember 1980's *The Empire Strikes Back* and 1983's *The Return of the Jedi*).

So much has been written about his latest space odyssey my feeling of déjà vu will be common, and, besides, the techno-guru has taken a break to fine-tuning his special effects. The payoff is tremendous: the mind-blowing visual effects are stunning.

Christensen's first foray into a blockbuster is promising. Fans will no doubt await his turn as the foreboding and vicious Darth Vader. With experience and more movies, he is poised to take flight as the Next Big Thing.

How do you slap a static label on an actor who has defied categorization and moves from stage and cinema to singing (*Moulin Rouge*) with chameleon ease? McGregor is excellent and manages to recite his lines not only without laughing, but with gravitas.

As always, Yoda (Frank Oz), the tiny, rubbery, frog-like creature, is delightful. Even as a younger, fresher frog, the grand old sage has an affectionate spot in all fans' hearts.

Star Wars is spectacular entertainment. No less. But, certainly, no more. Still, considering what we've seen so far, it has all the earmarks of a classic.

Xtremely rewarding

Nine teen journalists from *The Tattoo* scooped up statewide awards in the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists' annual contest recently.

The *Tattoo's* student writers claimed top honors in the SPJ arts and entertainment category and shared a first-place win for a feature series with *Bristol Press* reporters and correspondents who worked with them to cover ESPN's X Trials last year.

"The writers went to extremes to cover every possible angle of the X Trials in Bristol last summer," the judges noted.

Tattoo writers Katie Jordan, Sarah Jordan, Mike Nguyen, Sam Yosafi, and Sara Greene, all from Bristol Eastern High School, Jen Plonski of Chippens Hill Middle School and Kaishi Lee, a Singapore teen, shared the award with Press staff writers Jackie Majerus and Steve Collins, who serve as volunteer advisors to *The Tattoo* and *Press* correspondents (and former *Tattoo* staffers) Joe Wilbur and Amanda Lehmert.

In the SPJ arts and entertainment category, five *Tattoo* writers — Plonski, Nguyen, Yosafi and Danielle Letourneau and Cassie Nowak of Bristol Central High School — took first place. It was the fifth year in a row *The Tattoo* has claimed the top prize in that category.

The students produced a package of stories and photographs that offered dueling reviews of The Haunted Graveyard Halloween attraction at Lake Compounce.

In the investigative series category of the contest, *Tattoo*



Tattoo staff and alumni Sarah and Katie Jordan, Jennifer Plonski, Hila and Sam Yosafi, Mike Nguyen and Amanda Lehmert at the X Trials last summer.

writers Katie Jordan and Nguyen placed second for their work on a package of stories about safety in extreme sports.

Nguyen and Sarah Jordan won an honorable mention in the SPJ investigative category for a two-story package about an alleged bomb threat against Eastern called "Memo details school response to threats."

In the nation's top scholastic journalism contest, Nguyen and Katie Jordan this spring won Gold Key awards from the National Newspaper Association Foundation and the Quill and Scroll Society.

Nguyen, a junior, won in the sports story category for a profile on stunt bike rider Jamie Bestwick, who competed in the X Trials in Bristol last summer.

Jordan, a freshman, won in the editorial cartoon category for "Officer Stan's reinforcements," a whimsical play on words about a police officer who got a sheet of office paper reinforcements instead of back-up when he called for help.

Two other staffers, Plonski and Eastern freshman Joe Keo,

won prizes this spring for cartoons they drew for *The Tattoo*. They each nabbed honorable mentions in the Scholastic Press Forum's annual contest for New England student journalists.

One of Keo's *Daily Sketch* cartoons entered addressed "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh. Keo said he felt compelled to comment on the issue through his drawing.

"It was an issue that touched home," he said. "As a citizen I must respond with my reaction."

In that regional contest, *The Tattoo* won a special prize for its X Trials coverage as well as three first places and two other honorable mentions.

The Tattoo also captured a national award this year from the Suburban Newspapers of America for "Best Young People's Coverage." The group, which has 2,000 member papers, is based in Michigan.

All of the winning stories and cartoons are available on *The Tattoo's* Internet site at: www.ReadTheTattoo.com.