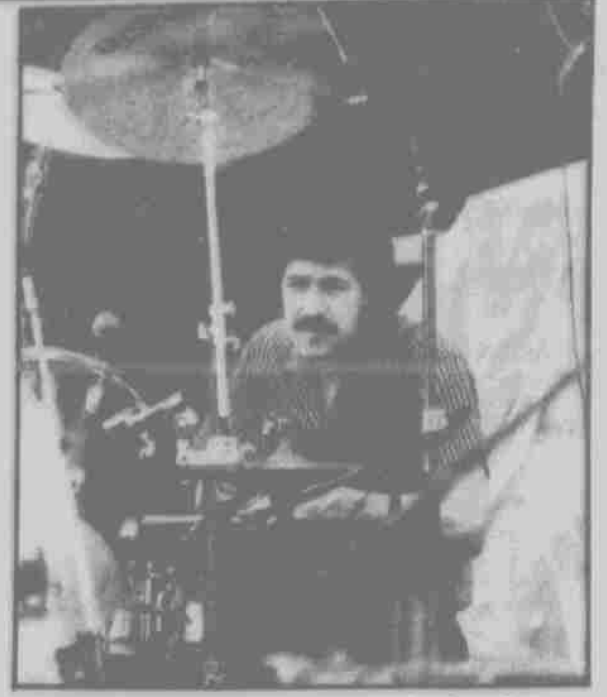




Staff photos by Craig Andresen
Tim Roper of Hit N' Run



Despite cloudy skies, a sizeable crowd took in an afternoon of outdoor entertainment at Cornstock XIII Friday. Music was provided by the Star City Players, Hit N' Run and Sneak Preview.



Drummer Ron Jester of the Star City Players

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Kris Keim, left, a junior human development and special education major, and Candy Samek, a junior language arts major, share a little liquid refreshment at Cornstock.

You can be a TV critic

A good case could probably be made that the only two activities that are greater wastes of time than watching television are writing about watching television and reading about watching television. We are characteristically wasteful lot in this country, however, so it somehow makes sense that we do a lot of all three. One of the more revealing statistics about us, for example, is that TV Guide is our best-selling magazine. This is true despite the fact that the daily newspapers run the complete television listings and a large number of local television markets have their own publications about television, such as Lincoln's TV Week. Obviously, people must be doing with TV Guide what they say they are doing with Playboy — reading the articles.

With such a large and hungry market for stories about television, the hack in search of the monthly rent might be able to make a go of it as a television critic. There are not sure bets, of course, but if ever there was a bandwagon on which to jump, it is the streamlined screamer

Television

that drives nonstop into the heart of "Prime Time," where the television critic holds court. Anybody can do it. Hell, anybody does do it. All you have to remember are a few simple rules:

1. **YOU DONT LIKE IT.** If it was really good, it wouldn't be a television show. If you can only remember one thing about being a television critic, make this be the one, as it sets up the snob appeal that a critic absolutely has to have in television. Film critics can love films, and convey that love in print; theatre and art critics can even afford to be condescending and downright chatty in efforts to bring their highbrow art forms to the Great Unwashed. A tradition that may have been established by Cleveland Amory at TV Guide, however, dictates that the television critic has to pretend like he or she was all but forced at gunpoint to sit and watch television.

2. **THE MORE OBSCURE SHOW IS, THE BETTER SHOW.** While no television show is great (see 1), the worst shows are the ones that draw the highest ratings. CBS' "Sixty Minutes" is the exception that proves the rule here, but for the most part critics like a television offering in inverse proportion to its Nielsen rating. If nobody out there is watching a show, it is safe for you to praise it without smudging your snob reputation. The ultimate in safety is to praise shows that have already been taken off the air.

As a corollary, the critic assumes television is constantly getting worse. His or her favorite shows all come from what has been called "The Golden Age of Television" and are no longer available to the American public because an unfortunate fire destroyed the only prints of them in 1956.

3. **NEVER BE CONCISE WHEN YOU CAN BE VERBOSE.** It's never enough to say that the script was bad, the acting terrible and the filming atrocious. Anybody can say a script is bad — only you, the television critic, can say "the script lacked the elements necessary for the production of a continuously interesting and engaging piece of quality programming." It's no more informative, and it's about 15 extra words. If you are feeling cocky about your ability to produce this fog, or (dream-of-dreams) you have some basis in the actual show to back you, you can even go into specifics, like the always safe "The script did not allow for character development; the (character's name) we see at the end is not perceptibly different from the (name again) we see at the beginning, despite all that has happened in the course of the show."

There's more to it than this, of course, but what remains are mere refinements of and variations on this modest list of basics. But if you are going to get in on the ground floor of this little scam, you may have to settle for a degree of on-the-job training, because the day is not far away when the idiots of the world discover that they would rather watch television than read about it. So, in the grand tradition of television, you'd better get in quick and take them for all you can.



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