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Damien Leffler/Daily Nebraskan

Papa Smurf and Mr. T mold minds of tomorrow's leaders

By Toger Swanson

One recent Saturday morning, I managed to awaken before noon. For some strange reason I switched on the television. *The Smurf Hour*, *Plastic Man*, and (ugh) *The Mr. T Show* greeted me. What a change from the days of my cartoon addiction, also called "the for-

pedic saddle shoes and Toughskins. They threw water balloons at grandparents on bicycles and chased cats with their mini-bikes. I longed for such sadistic fun.

Older siblings were so "dorky." They talked about Dylan and Tiny Tim, wore smelly ponchos and puka shell necklaces. The only thing I liked was their music, it expressed the same spastic abandon that I had at seven years and besides, it drove our parents crazy.

If you said "poop" or "butt" you were subjected to the confusing ritual of washing your mouth out with soap. It was only recently that I grasped the symbolic meaning of this. I used to think that it was only to make you cry and spit for hours.

Getting along with girls was much easier. If you didn't like a girl, you simply ignored her. Of course it was impossible to avoid going to her birthday party under serious parental duress. If you liked a girl it was even easier, you simply threw rocks at her or squirted glue in her hair. Today you've got to write cute mush in the Personals or send roses. I think I'll carry a tube of glue along on my next date.

School was a boring blur of flash cards, fire drills, and dental hygiene weeks. Life really began at 3 p.m. when my friend and I would chase each other through his garage. We wore our underwear with blankets tucked in back while pretending to be Superman or Batman. His dog was always the "Smog Monster" (actually a golden retriever prone to gas attacks) which we chased without mercy.

Possibly the dumbest thing I can remember doing is chasing the mosquito sprayer. The city had a pickup with a large sprayer tank which poured out a thick green cloud visible for blocks. All of the kids on the block would chase the truck down the alley screaming and coughing until our lungs ached. We thought it was fun. Were we stupid or what?

Childhood is the time when we learn values from those around us and begin to become neurotic adults and the leaders of our society. Thank you Papa Smurf, thank you Captain Caveman, thank you Mr. T. I know that you and your sponsors will help raise an assemblage of leaders equal to the challenges of the year 2000 and beyond.

Serendipity

mative years" by psychologists. (Maybe that's why I remember the *Hair Bear Bunch* more than high school algebra.)

What "childish" things we used to do. Saturday mornings were a paradise, nothing but good television, no boring *Masterpiece Theatre* or stupid *National Geographic* specials. It was all *Johnny Quest* and *The Banana Splits* with lots of G.I. Joe commercials in between. Those were the days of Vietnam, but it's strange lately that G.I. Joe is a pretty big deal again. I wonder...

You knew it would be a good day if the last Fruit Loop in your bowl was a red one. Don't ask me why; it just was. Sometimes it took four or five bowls to end up with the magic red cereal, which surely aided our healthy hyperactivity and our mothers' collapsing mental state.

Kites were a lot of fun too. Within a couple of weeks you could gather enough dirty string around the spokes of your bicycle to plug up the toilet. One day I found out that string had a purpose other than giving your parents something to follow when they wanted to take you home. On this day I was flying my favorite Gala "Baby Bat" kite, that is until my "friend" bit the string in half and suddenly revealed to me that string had something to do with keeping the kite in the air. Slowly it toppled end-over-end like a drunken sea gull until it landed in the backyard of those "big" kids down the street.

"Big" kids were three years older, 50 pounds heavier, never brushed their teeth and could grow beards in the sixth grade. I hated those kids. They always got to wear real jeans and tennis shoes. I was the pariah in my black ortho-