

TV shows that may surprise you

I don't watch loads of TV, just 10 hours of football on Saturdays, 10 hours of football on Sundays ... and on occasion I try to watch a non-sports show.

I have watched a little bit of everything: sitcoms like Seinfeld, serious modern crime solvers like "X-Files," the historical drama "Rome," and other HBO classics like "Sopranos."

10 years ago I would have told you X-Files is the best show ever. Five years ago, and I would have said "Sopranos." A few months ago, "Rome" would have been the winner. Today I don't have a favorite, because what I deem the best are found now only in reruns.

This is not to say there is nothing of quality on television. I regularly watch

the Sci-Fi Channel hit "Painkiller Jane," which stars "Terminator 3's" Kristianna Loken. The problem is, the show is being canceled.

So, in order to find quality television outside of sports, I think some of us may have to try something new or stick to the classics.

I did not like the idea of searching for ghosts in "Ghost Hunters," but I was surprised how entertaining it was. I started watching it a few weeks ago, and it does seem to be a legit look into the paranormal.

There are two shows you may think I love: "Battlestar Galactica" and "Heroes." Both have science fiction elements to them, but I haven't watched a single episode of either.



Jacob Malewitz
A&E Editor

jfmalewitz@yahoo.com

I think the best shows of the last few years have been on HBO. Let's put it simply: there is gruesome violence, loads of sex, and enough swearing to make a sailor squirm. These can be done on HBO, but not on a network station.

As I mentioned, I loved the "Rome" series that ran on HBO. It had the politics that "Sopranos" had and the episodes are just as deadly (think Caesar being stabbed countless times by

Brutus). This show is the best historical drama I have ever seen. I watched "Gladiator" and "300," but "Rome" provided a better synthesis of drama and action.

Last, we have "Band of Brothers," produced by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg. This portrayal of an army company battling Germans in World War Two would be a perfect gift for a history or war drama fan.

"Band of Brothers" reruns are occasionally shown on the History Channel, but HBO has the complete, unedited episodes.

So, there may be many quality shows on Television if you don't want to watch ten hours of football, or check out the



Photo courtesy HBO

All roads lead: "Rome" had all the elements of a classic. It worked because of strong acting, storytelling, and imagery. I loved the characters most, but HBO did more than just create worthy characters. Think "Sopranos" meets "Gladiator."

latest events on "Guiding Light."

I would consider renting some top HBO show from Blockbuster or getting HBO, and occasionally check out the Sci-Fi

channel for "X-Files" reruns or "Ghost Hunters" episodes.

Have fun killing time in front of the television when you don't want to do homework.

Odd indie flick stars SNL graduate Molly Shannon

By Greg Guro
Staff Writer

"Year of the Dog" stars Molly Shannon as a woman who is struggling with the loss of her dog. It follows her coping skills after the demise of her dog named Pencil.

The film is the directing debut of Mike White, who wrote "Nacho Libre" and "The School of Rock."

"Year of the Dog" is advertised as a cuddly comedy involving dogs. However, the film can be depressing at points.

It feels like an indie flick with a quirky and unique style, though lack of directing skills may leave the audience with the feeling they're missing out on "the joke."

The directing style can also be irritating. During much of the dialogue, the actors look directly at or near the lens of the camera, not at whom they are speaking to in the film.

One of the primary ways the character Peggy copes with the loss of her dog by saving as many animals as she can. This turns into an obsession that sends Peggy into a world of madness which is not amusing.

As the film progresses, Peggy's oblivious stubbornness provides some elements of humor. She can't help but give donations to various animal charities, and when Peggy

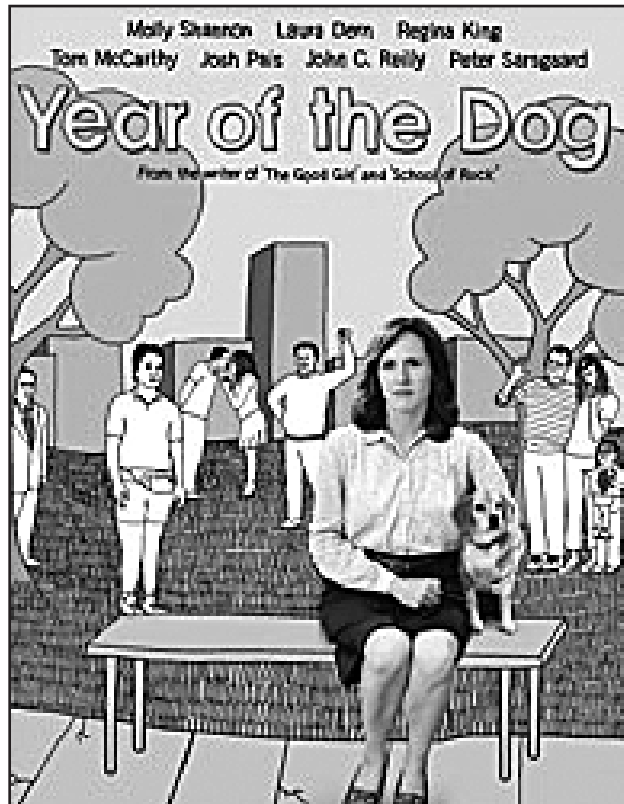


Photo courtesy of Paramount

Molly Shannon loses her dog: Former Saturday Night Live star Shannon finds herself in comedic but disappointing role.

runs out of personal resources, she steals.

Peggy gives a child a gift card stating she saved a chicken. After taking the child on an hour long drive to meet the rescued chicken, Peggy tells the child that she's going to the chicken slaughter-house one mile up the road, because everything isn't like the film "Babe."

The supporting a cast is great does a good job of becoming caricatures who are not by any means normal.

John C. Reilly is hilarious as the confused neighbor and avid hunter.

Regina King adds needed enthusiasm as Peggy's best friend, Layla. Laura Dern plays a seemingly emotionless over-protective parent. Peter Sarsgaard's animal activist "Newt" is dull and fragile.

This film has its moments, but overall the lack of realism that emanates in this film makes it difficult to get emotionally involved with the characters.

Jodie Foster's 'The Brave One' proves well worth watching

By Greg Guro
Staff Writer

"The Brave One" is a film that has an implausible and disturbing storyline. A mix of good directing by Neil Jordan and acting by Jodie Foster and Terence Howard make this film worth watching.

Jodie Foster plays the character of Erica Bain, who lives in New York City. Erica is reminiscent of a happy-go-lucky Ellen Degeneres clone.

While planning her wedding, she is constantly smiling and outgoing. She loves her job and her life seemed to be going well.

The film's turning point is when she meets up with her fiancé, David (Naveen Andrews). Together they walk arm in arm at night in Central Park with the most disloyal and stupid dog in cinematic history. The couple throws a ball under a bridge, the dog disappears after it, and the couple starts calling for the dog.

They become nervous and eventually see the dog at the other end of the bridge, but it is being held by a liquor swilling young thug. Two more hoodlums appear to complete the ambush on the couple.

The vicious attack and its aftermath becomes the catalyst for Erica's changing.

Later, Erica takes her first few steps outside and shows how every stranger around

her can be a threat.

What happens next are a mesmerizing hodge-podge of coincidences and violent actions.

"The Brave One" has a mix of emotions: drama,

funny moments and disturbing attitude.

This film treats human life as far from anything sacred. It offers a sense of sadness as to what people find entertaining.

King Crossword

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- ACROSS**
- 1 Bassoon's cousin
 - 5 Disfigure
 - 9 Galena is one
 - 12 Pub missile
 - 13 Shrek, for one
 - 14 San Francisco's - Hill
 - 15 Kerouac book
 - 17 Popcorn holder
 - 18 Quit
 - 19 Bonfire residue
 - 21 Biz abbr.
 - 22 Ball VIP
 - 24 Sticky substances
 - 27 Actress Wray
 - 28 Gape
 - 31 27-Across's "King Kong" role
 - 32 Indivisible
 - 33 Debtor's letters
 - 34 Candle cirler
 - 36 Strange
 - 37 Author Harte
 - 38 Precipitate
 - 40 Yours truly
 - 41 Bloodhound's clue
 - 43 Extra's role in "CSI"
 - 47 Army rank (Abbr.)
 - 48 1949
 - Kelly/Sinatra musical
 - 51 Literary collection
 - 52 Stead
 - 53 Be in charge of
 - 54 Sleep inits.
 - 55 Physical
 - 56 Rock concert gear
 - 7 401(k) alternative
 - 8 Olympian's prize
 - 9 Broadcasting
 - 10 Libertine
 - 11 Recedes
 - 16 Id counter part
 - 20 Crafty
 - 22 Exchange, as words
 - 23 Watched closely
 - 24 School of whales
 - 25 Yoko -
 - 26 Fleeing from the cops
 - 27 Poetic measure
 - 29 Misfortune
 - 30 Enthusiast
 - 35 Solo of "Star Wars"
 - 37 "Big" gun of WWI
 - 39 Pilfered
 - 40 Larry's pal
 - 41 Cicatrix
 - 42 Ice cream holder
 - 43 Crony
 - 44 Verse
 - 45 Trade
 - 46 Tackles' teammates
 - 49 Put the kibosh on
 - 50 Afternoon social

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