Steve Solnick

Video nightmare

One of the so-called prophets of the "media age," Marshall McLuhan, died last month. McLuhan coined the slogan "The medium is the message.

I don't like like message. At least, certainly not after watching the holiday offerings on the video wasteland.

Fred Merz litters. That was perhaps the most shocking revelation of the whole experience. Old black and white sitcoms like I Love Lucy always seemed to me to represent the best of all possible worlds. No, rather than paying in restaurants, everybody had to go to the bathroom, and the fuses never blow unless Ricky is speaking Spanish.

Well, there are Ricky and Fred in this antiseptic-looking diner. Fred orders a small glass of grape juice (a heavy drinker, he). He quickly pulls a paper wrapper off his straw (in a small grape juice!) and nonchalantly drops it on the floor.

There is no place for paper straw wrappers in the tidy world of I Love Lucy.

I had some other real problems with the fare on the boob tube. "Crest has prevented more cavities than all other toothpastes put together." How do they know if they were prevented?

"Carefree has 32 percent more taste than other gum." Huh? I'd like to see these clinical lab tests.

"Atlantic is 45 percent cleaner! Texacana is 52 percent cleaner!" These substitutions flashed below a film of the "crippling illness" ridden horse through these speaking clean cities - littering, no doubt. What the whole thing meant was beyond me.

According to the 700 Club, one of those classic Bible-believers talk shows, "Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount to get governing off your back!" I must have missed that, unless it was in the Gospel According to Dutch.

In this religious vein, there was also the ad for two rousing Christmas offerings on the video wasteland: "The Gospel According to Dutch." And not once do you ever see the same people, even if they wanted to.

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"Carefree has 32 percent more taste than other gum." Huh? I'd like to see these clinical lab tests. It's because the people who give those shows their ratings actually set the rating of their show - the closer to the highest rating the show is, the higher the rating.

It's because the people who give those ratings are the ones who are paying the most money for the show, or have the most friends who are watching a particular show.

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