

Classic TV Specials Are a Great Christmas Tradition

Note: This parenting column originally ran in the Greeley Tribune in December of 2013.

One of my favorite Christmas traditions as a child was watching the holiday kids' specials the networks aired every year. I'm talking about those animated classics from the 60s and 70s, namely Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, A Charlie Brown Christmas, and The Year Without Santa Claus.



Because these hallmarks of the holiday season were only aired once a year, I looked forward to seeing them almost as much as I did opening my gifts. Really!

Those specials were magical in a way, with their charming animation, larger than life characters, witty dialogue, and iconic musical numbers. The shows' creators clearly took their work to heart, investing long hours into constructing timeless, thoughtful masterpieces that brilliantly captured the Christmas spirit.

A few years ago, I bought a couple of Christmas-themed compilation DVDs that featured those very specials along with several others from the same era. Now, my own children look forward each year to watching them.

I love it when my daughter sings along with Frosty the Snowman, and when my son laughs at the words of Yukon

Cornelius or the Miser Brothers. The shows make for great family viewings because, unlike much of today's programming for kids, my wife and I like to watch them too.

I'm thankful that technology lets us keep such classics on our shelves, because I'm confident we'll never see anything like them again – at least not from the television networks.

The networks just aren't interested in trying to create quality Christmas programming for kids anymore. And for some odd reason, they even seem to have an inclination to trifle with the classics.

A few years ago, before I bought the DVDs, I was letting my kids watch Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer on television one night around Christmas time. It was the first time they saw it, and they of course really enjoyed it. I was eager to watch their reactions to one of the most memorable scenes from the special: The end credits where the Misfit Toys are being dropped with umbrellas from Santa's sleigh. It's a neat visual.

The problem was that the network decided to cut that closing scene out and replace it with an updated version featuring Sam the Snowman mixing records in some nightclub. No, I'm not joking. To me, it was nothing short of blasphemy.

Last year, I let my kids watch a 2008 sequel to The Year Without Santa Claus. It was called A Miser Brothers' Christmas and it featured the memorable Heat Miser and Snow Miser characters from the original special.



Breaking: Presidential candidate Donald Trump endorses John A. Daly's new novel.

Now, I wasn't expecting it to be nearly as good as the first one – not by a long-shot, but I did think the creators would at least TRY and capture some of the original show's appeal. Instead, it ended up being an hour-long commercial for global warming activism that really had little to do with Christmas at all.

As Charlie Brown said in the Peanuts Christmas special, "Good grief."

What sense does it make to try and modernize something that's timeless? All it does is degrade a classic and make it seem less special.

I suppose I should at least give the networks credit for still airing the originals, and making it easy for families like mine to carry on this Christmas tradition. I'll consider it their Christmas gift to the country after feeding us so many unfunny sitcoms and cheese-ball police dramas throughout the rest of the year.

Merry Christmas everyone! Whether you're a conservative, an *establishment RINO*, a *Trumpkin*, a *Democratic socialist*, or don't have any political leanings at all, I wish you all a happy and healthy new year. Peace.