

New 'Modern Men' a classic disappointment

The new comedy "Modern Men" (9:30 p.m., WB, TV-14, D, S) appears destined to become a footnote in TV history.

It happens to be the first comedy produced by the prolific Jerry Bruckheimer, and quite possibly the last sitcom to debut on the soon-to-depart WB network.

Like a million comedies before it, "Modern Men" concerns three single perpetual adolescents who sit around a huge loft that none of them could possibly afford. Kyle (Max Greenfield) is a handsome lady's man, prone to one-night stands.

Divorced Doug (Eric Lively) pines for his ex-wife and says a lot of dimwitted things. Tim (Josh Braaten) can't hold onto a girlfriend.

Afraid that he and his pals are becoming sad, slacker losers, Tim takes the harsh advice of his brainy sister Molly (Marla Sokoloff) and agrees to take himself and his friends to a therapist, or life coach, Dr. Stangel (Jane Seymour).

"Dr. Quinn" fans should avert their eyes. And Seymour isn't the only actor to attempt a return here. George Wendt ("Cheers") stars as Tim and Molly's dad, Tug Clark, a glib restaurant owner who laughs at Tim's "girly" problems and jokes about dumping his wife (their mother) and never looking back.

If you find that funny, you'll love the undistinguished characters, throwaway gags and predictable situations that make up "Modern Men."

For all of his success, Bruckheimer ("CSI," "Pirates of the Caribbean") isn't bulletproof. His drama "Just Legal" was the first show to be canceled this past fall. "Modern Men" might be the final show to be yanked from the WB schedule.

Now that's a fearful symmetry. ● Happy St. Patrick's Day. It's a great day for the Irish and normally an excuse to air silly movies about shamrocks, wee ones, pots of gold and other crocks.

The History Channel challenges that tradition with "Paddy Whacked" (8 p.m., History), a captivating survey course in Irish-American mobster history.

Colorful thugs like the 19th-century mob boss James "Old Smoke" Morrissey are depicted in mute dramatic re-enactments.

The parade of criminals includes Chicago criminals "King" Mike McDonald, prohibition figure Dean O'Banion and New York's Owney Madden, as well as more contemporary bad seeds of Erin, including the notorious and bloody Westies gang and Boston's infamous "Whitey" Bulger, who spent decades at large due to his good connections in politics and the FBI.



Kevin McDonough

"Whacked" backs up its dramatic re-creations presenting interviews with a half-dozen authors and experts who place the mobster experience at the center of the American immigrant story of arrival, rejection, assimilation and success.

Tonight's other highlights

● The NCAA Basketball Tournament continues (7 p.m., CBS). A second game (9 p.m.) follows.

● An Earth Kingdom general proves quite demanding on a new episode of "Avatar: The Last Airbender" (8 p.m., Nickelodeon).

● After a young girl's suicide, an autopsy reveals a life of deception on "Conviction" (10 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

● Adrian finds jury duty captivating on "Monk" (10 p.m., USA).

Cult choice

A teen (Ryan Merriman) tangles with an evil leprechaun in the 2001 fantasy "The Luck of the Irish" (8 p.m., Disney).

Series notes

Tom Bergeron hosts "America's Funniest Home Videos" (8 p.m., ABC, TV-PG) ... Grown men grapple and grunt on "WWE SmackDown" (8 p.m., UPN) ... Wedding preparations proceed on "What I Like About You" (8 p.m., WB, TV-PG, D) ... Fran moves to Splitsville on "Living with Fran" (8:30 p.m., WB, TV-PG, D, L).

A whale walks down the aisle on "Las Vegas" (9 p.m., NBC) ... Wives lock horns on "Trading Spouses: Meet Your New Mommy" (9 p.m., Fox, TV-PG) ... An anonymous tip proves interesting on "In Justice" (9 p.m., ABC, TV-14) ... A house is not a home on "Reba" (9 p.m., WB, TV-PG).

Late night

Mike Vanderjagt, Cheryl Hines and Anna Nalick appear on "Late Show With David Letterman" (12:35 p.m., CBS, time approximate due to basketball) ... Jay Leno hosts Megan Mullally, Kevin Brauch and Busta Rhymes on "The Tonight Show" (11:35 p.m., NBC) ... Justin Chambers and The Tossers appear on "Jimmy Kimmel Live" (12:05 a.m., ABC).

Kevin McDonough is a TV columnist for United Features Syndicate.

FRIDAY EVENING

	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
WTTV	Friends (CC)	Every-Raymond	What I Like	Living With Fran	Reba (N) (CC)	Modern Men (N)	Sex and the City	Will & Grace	Sex and the City	Will & Grace
WRTV	The Insider (N)	Be a Millionaire	America's Funniest Home Videos	In Justice "Lovers" (N) (CC)	20/20 (CC)	20/20 (CC)	News (CC)	News (CC)	News (CC)	Nightline (11:35)
WISH	College Basketball NCAA Tournament First Round -- George Mason vs. Michigan State.	College Basketball NCAA Tournament First Round -- Alabama-Birmingham vs. Kentucky.								
WTHR	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Deal or No Deal (N) (CC)	Las Vegas "Like a Virgin" (CC)	Conviction "Breakup" (N) (CC)	News (CC)	News (CC)	News (CC)	News (CC)	Tonight Show
WFYI	Business Rpt.	Religion-Ethics	Indiana Week	McLaughlin	Wash. Week	NOW "Sunshine Gang" (N) (CC)	Inside Indiana Business	Lawmakers		
WVNDY	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	WWE Friday Night SmackDown! (N) (CC)				News	Access H'wood	Frasier (11:05)	South Park
WTIU	The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer	Wash. Week	NOW "Sunshine Gang" (N) (CC)	Frank Patterson -- Ireland's Golden Tenor			The Corrs: Live in Geneva (CC)			
WHMB	The 700 Club (CC)	Harvest	Lester Sumrall	Paid Program	Life Today (CC)	Inside-Indians	Paid Program	June Israel Tour		
WCLJ	ACLJ	Primary Focus	Behind Scenes	Great Souls	Joel Osteen	Frederick Price	Praise the Lord (CC)			
WXIN	The Simpsons	Seinfeld (CC)	Nanny 911 "George Family" (N)	Trading Spouses: Meet-Mommy	News (CC)	Geraldo Large	Seinfeld (11:05)	Drew Carey		
WIPX	Balderdash	Family Feud	Paradise Virus '03	Melody Thomas Scott, Gregory Wooddell, Suspense.	It's a Miracle		Time Life	Paid Program		
WTBU	Bill Purvis	John Hagee	Rod Parsley	Joni Lamb	Celebration		Van Impe Pres	Balanced Living	This Is Your Day	Believer's Voice
A&E	American Justice	Biography: Jimi Hendrix	Biography: Janis Joplin	Bio.: Monroe	Bio.: Princess	American Justice: Scorned				
AMC	First Blood (6) (R) (82) *** Drama.	An American Werewolf in London (R) (81) *** David Naughton. (CC)	A Nightmare on Elm Street (R) (84) *** Horror.	Amer. Werewolf						
AP	Horse Power: Road to the Maclay	The Planet's Funniest Animals	Amazing Animal Videos (CC)	Animal Cops Houston (N) (CC)	The Planet's Funniest Animals					
BET	106 & Park	College Hill	Juice (R) (92) ** Omar Epps, Jermaine Hopkins. Crime Drama.	Comicview Prescott.	In Living Color					
BRAVO	Inside the Actors Studio (CC)	Waterworld (PG-13) (95) ** Kevin Costner. Science Fiction. A loner navigates a future world. (CC)	Waterworld (PG-13) (95) ** Kevin Costner. Science Fiction. A loner navigates a future world. (CC)	The Big Idea With Donny Deutsch	Heads-Up Poker Champ.					
CNBC	On the Money	Heads-Up Poker Champ.	Mad Money	The Big Idea With Donny Deutsch	Heads-Up Poker Champ.					
CMT	Dukes of Hazzard	The Cable Guy	Home Videos	Travis TV (N)	The Cable Guy	Home Videos	Travis TV	Total Access "Dierks Bentley"		
CNN	The Situation Room	Paula Zahn Now (CC)	Larry King Live (CC)	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)						
COM	Com.-Presents Reno 911! (CC)	Daily Show	Colbert Report	Com.-Presents	Com.-Presents	Com.-Presents	Com.-Presents	South Park	Drawn Together	
DISC	The FBI Files "Crackdown" (CC)	The FBI Files "Bad Company" (N)	I Shouldn't Be Alive (N)	A Haunting "Gateway to Hell" (N)	The FBI Files "Crackdown" (CC)					
EI	EI News (N)	EI News	101 Incredible Celebrity Slim	101 Celeb. Slimdowns	The Soup (N)	10 Ways (N)	Saturday Night Live (CC)			
ESPN	SportsCenter (6) 2005 World Series of Poker (CC)	2005 World Series of Poker (CC)	World Series of Poker Tournament of Champions	From Las Vegas. (CC)						
ESPN2	Mike Tyson's Greatest Hits	Boxing Friday Night Fights -- Jesse Feliciano vs. Vince Phillips. (CC)	Tennis Pacific Life Open -- Quarterfinal. From Indian Wells, Calif. (CC)							
FAM	Smallville "Spirit" (CC)	Half a Dozen Babies (99) ** Scott Reeves, Teri Garr. Drama. (CC)	Whose Line? Whose Line?	The 700 Club (CC)						
FNC	Fox Report With Shepard Smith	The O'Reilly Factor (CC)	Hannity & Colmes (CC)	On the Record-Van Susteren	The O'Reilly Factor					
FOOD	Good Eats	Unwrapped	Food Network Unwrapped	\$40-a-Day	Tasty Travels	Roker on Road	Foodnation	Iron Chef Sea bass.		
FOXMV	Phar Lap (6) (PG) (83) *** Drama.	Rookie of the Year (PG) (93) Thomas Ian Nicholas, Albert Hall. Comedy.	That Thing You Do! (PG) (96) *** Tom Everett Scott. Comedy-Drama.							
FOXSM	NBA Basketball Sacramento Kings at Indiana Pacers.	Pacers	Around Track	Best Damn Sports Show Period	Best-Sports					
FX	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	That '70s Show	The Shield "Of Mice and Lem"		
HALL	Walker, Texas Ranger (CC)	Walker, Texas Ranger (CC)	Walker, Texas Ranger "The Reunion" (CC)					M*A*S*H "OR"	M*A*S*H (CC)	
HGTV	Curb Appeal	House Hunters	Get Color (N)	Design Remix	Double Take	FreeStyle (N)	House Hunters	House Hunters	Debbie Travis' Facelift	
HIST	Celebrating the Green	Paddy Whacked: The Irish Mob (N) (CC)	Rumrunners, Moonshiners and Bootleggers (CC)							
LIFE	Snowbound (NR) (01) ** Erika Eleniak, Peter Dobson. Suspense. (CC)	Fatal Reunion (05) Erika Eleniak, Michael Bergin. Suspense. (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)						
MSNBC	Hardball (CC)	Countdown With Keith Olbermann	MSNBC Investigates "Lockup: Inside L.A. County"	MSNBC Investigates						
MTV	ADD Videos	V for Vendetta	Room Raiders	Room Raiders	The Real World	The Real World	8th & Ocean	8th & Ocean	Next	Trick It Out
NICK	SpongeBob	Catscratch	Avatar-Last Air	The X's (CC)	Danny Phantom	Danny Phantom	Full House (CC)	Fresh Prince	Fresh Prince	Cosby Show
OXY	Oprah After	Oprah After	Living Single	Living Single	Living Single	Living Single	The Tyra Banks Show (CC)	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (CC)		
SCIFI	John Doe "Manifest Destiny"	Stargate SG-1 "Ripple Effect"	Doctor Who "Rose" (N) (CC)	Doctor Who (N) (CC)	Doctor Who "Rose" (CC)					
SPIKE	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	The Shield "Pay in Pain" (CC)	The Shield "Cupid and Psycho"	The Shield "Throwaway" (CC)					
TBS	Every-Raymond	Every-Raymond	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Rush Hour 2 (PG-13) (01) ** Jackie Chan, John Lone. Action. (CC)	Rush Hour (11:10) (98) *** (CC)				
TCM	Bhowani Junction (6) (NR) (56) **	A Night to Remember (NR) (58) *** Kenneth More. Historical Drama.	The Wreck of the Mary Deare (10:15) (NR) (59) ** Gary Cooper. (CC)							
TLC	Wild Weddings (CC)	What Not to Wear Large clothing.	What Not to Underwear (N)	Log in for Love (N)	What Not to Wear Large clothing.					
TNT	Law & Order "Access Nation"	What Lies Beneath (PG-13) (00) ** Harrison Ford, Diana Scarwid. Suspense. (CC)	What Lies Beneath (10:45) (PG-13) (00) ** (CC)							
TOON	Foster's Home	The Grim Ad	Camp Lazlo (N)	Ben 10	My Gym Partner Puffy AmiYumi	Foster's Home	Camp Lazlo	The Grim Ad	Ed, Edd n Eddy	
TVL	Good Times	Good Times	Little House on the Prairie (CC)	Andy Griffith	Sanford & Son	Good Times	Good Times	Happening!	Cheers (CC)	
USA	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit	Law & Order: Criminal Intent (CC)	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit	Monk "Mr. Monk Gets Jury Duty"	House "Detox" (CC)					
VH1	Top 20 Countdown (6) (N)	Spotlight: U2	20 Greatest Celebriety Moments	Behind the Music "1992" (CC)	Web Junk 20's Greatest Hits (N)					
WE	Dharma & Greg	Dharma & Greg	Sleeping With the Enemy (R) (91) ** Julia Roberts. Suspense. (CC)	John Edward Cross Country	John Edward Cross Country					
WGN	America's Funniest Home Videos	101 Dalmatians (G) (96) ** Voices of Glenn Close. Adventure.	WGN News at Nine (CC)	Sex and the City	Becker (CC)					
DISN	That's So Raven (CC)	That's So Raven (N) (CC)	The Luck of the Irish (01) Ryan Merriman, Glennon Chatman. Fantasy. An always-lucky teen learns that he is part leprechaun. (CC)	Phil of the Future (CC)	Sister, Sister "Sweet Talk"	The Suite Life	That's So Raven			
ENC	Wimbledon (6:15) (PG-13) (04) ** Kirsten Dunst, Sam Neill. (CC)	13 Going on 30 (PG-13) (04) *** Jennifer Garner. Dances With Wolves (9:45) (PG-13) (90) *** Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell. An uncool girl magically becomes a successful adult. Graham Greene. Western. A Union officer befriends the Lakota. (CC)								
HBO	Path to War (5:15) (02) *** Michael Gambon. Drama. (CC)	The Chronicles of Riddick (PG-13) (04) ** Vin Diesel, Thandie Newton. Science Fiction. A fugitive fights an invading ruler and his army. (CC)	The Sopranos Tony ponders an associate's retirement request. (CC)	Real Time Actor Richard Belzer. (CC)						
SHOW	Johnny Mnemonic (7:15) (R) (95) * Keanu Reeves, Takeshi. Science Fiction. Hired thugs stalk a courier implanted with a computer chip. (CC)	Sleeper Cell "Youmud Din" True target. (CC)	Harvard Man (R) (01) ** Adrian Grenier. A college athlete in need of cash considers throwing a game. (CC)	HUFF 2: What's New (11:45)						
MAX	Major League II (6:35) (PG) (94) * Charlie Sheen. The Cleveland Indians return for another pennant race.	The Grudge (PG-13) (04) ** Sarah Michelle Gellar. A woman and her boyfriend encounter vengeful spirits.	Meet the Fockers (PG-13) (04) ** Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller, Dustin Hoffman. Comedy. Future in-laws clash in Florida. (CC)							
TMC	Barbershop 2: Back in Business (6:10) (PG-13) (04) *** Ice Cube. A mechanic and a reporter investigate a deadly elevator. (CC)	The Shaft (R) (01) * James Marshall, Naomi Watts, Eric Thal. Horror. The Blob (R) (88) ** Kevin Dillon. A Colorado ski community is invaded by man-eating slime. (CC)	The Believers (11:35) (87) ***							
STARZ	Hidalgo (5) (PG-13) (04) ** (CC) (PG) (05) ** Taylor Lautner. Adventure. (CC)	Guess Who (PG-13) (05) ** Bernie Mac, Ashton Kutcher, Zoe Saldana. Comedy. A black man meets his daughter's white boyfriend. (CC)	National Treasure (10:50) (PG) (04) ** Nicolas Cage. (CC)							

ACCENT ON PEOPLE

The Associated Press

Rapper working with company to make movie

Kanye West is bringing his music, and himself, to the big screen.

The Grammy-winning rapper has joined with New Line Cinema and the production company Anonymous Content to develop a film inspired by his music, New Line announced.

West also will appear in the film, a multi-perspective look at life in America through the eyes of West and various writers and directors.

West has won six Grammy awards for his two platinum albums, 2004's "The College Dropout" and last year's "Late Registration."

George Clooney donates Oscar gifts to charity

The Oscar was gift enough for George Clooney.

The winner of the Academy Award for best supporting actor for his role in "Syriana" has donated his overflowing Oscar gift bag to the United Way, a spokeswoman for the organization said Wednesday.

The swag will be sold in an online auction to benefit the United Way Hurricane Response and Relief Recovery Fund, said spokeswoman Sheila Consaul.

Clooney is a member of the charity's board of trustees, she said.

"This refocuses people back to the long-term nature of hurricane recovery efforts," she said.

presenters at the 78th annual Academy Awards included a BlackBerry 8700c, a Kay Unger kimono and a cultured Tahitian-pearl necklace.

The entire collection will be sold to one bidder, Consaul said. The auction will begin Tuesday on the United Way Web site.

The winning bidder will also receive a handwritten thank-you note from Clooney acknowledging the donation to hurricane relief, Consaul said.

John Ritter's family to settle with hospital

The family of late actor John Ritter has reached a tentative settlement in a wrongful death lawsuit against Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, Calif., where the actor died, an attorney for the hospital said.

"There is an agreement in principle," attorney Rory Hernandez said. "But we still have to follow the legal procedure."

Hearings will be conducted to finalize the agreement, he said, declining to disclose details of the settlement.

Ritter's widow, Amy Yasbeck, has claimed damages in excess of \$25 million, court documents show. Yasbeck and Ritter's four children accused the hospital of negligence when they filed the lawsuit on Sept. 3, 2004.

Ritter, star of the sitcom "8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter," collapsed on the set of the TV show on Sept. 11, 2003.

The 54-year-old actor was admitted to the hospital complaining of chest pain, nausea, vomiting and dizziness. He died later that night.

By MATT HURWITZ
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

Who knew we all needed the "Bladder Buddy." After all, being able to go in public without anybody knowing what you're doing under that plastic garment bag might come in handy someday.

Not, say the four judges on Simon Cowell's latest competitive concoction, "American Inventor."

The ABC show highlights some of the country's brightest and most inventive minds — as well as some of the nuttier variety — in a search for the next new "it" gadget.

Contestants will vie for a \$1 million prize and the chance to have their invention end up in homes across the land.

"It's everything I love about reality shows, which is the good, the weird and the completely and utterly disillusioned," Cowell says.

The brutally frank judge from Fox's "American Idol" is one of the new show's executive producers but does not appear in the series.

He helped develop "Inventor" after being approached by British business executive Peter Jones, one of four judges.

While similar to its musical sister, with the talented to the ludicrous petitioning a panel of judges to continue to the next step, "American Inventor" is actu-



AP PHOTO

"American Inventor" contestant Francisco Bettino created a bike with extra pedals for a passenger seated on the handlebar. "Inventor" was created by Simon Cowell and "American Idol" producers to search for the next must-have gadget.

ally more akin to "Idol's" British counterpart, "The X Factor."

In that series, the judges mentor the contestants before the

winner is determined. "Inventor" takes the same route.

"That process works very well, in that you've got a very clear A to Z path," Cowell explains. "But you've also got a sense of responsibility from the judges, who actually try to help the contestants."

As with "Idol," "Inventor" begins with a set of cattle-call auditions in seven cities, with about 10,000 would-be inventors responding.

Several hundred contestants are selected, and over the first four episodes of the show, they present their proposed products to the judges.

Besides Jones, the panel includes ad agency executive Ed Evangelista; Mary Lou Quinlan, whose business focuses on products for women; and inventor Doug Hall, who more typically deals with Fortune 500 companies.

"This is not the world I live in," Hall says. "But it's been a real roller coaster ride."

While Hall notes that of the four, he might be the "Simon" of the group, Cowell himself says, "No one's trying to be (harsh) for the sake of being (harsh), which often happens on these shows."

Easier said than done when it comes to some of the goofier

products paraded past the panel.

Besides dental hygienist Hector Ortega's "Bladder Buddy," consider the "Video Tattoo," which embeds a video screen in clothing, or one contestant's pitch for clothing for cars.

Then we have John Tang, clad in a beetle-inspired space suit, offering the "Space Beetle Utopia," a would-be amusement park for insects.

While Tang suggests his contraction is the successor to the ant farm, Evangelista responds, "I see the nut farm here."

"They're absolutely serious about these things," Cowell said.

On the more practical side, there are inventors like 18-year-old Colombian student Francisco Bettino, who's created a bicycle with pedals up front for a passenger who rides atop the handlebars.

And handyman Mark Martinez, whose simple "Sack-master" neatly and quickly fills sandbags for residents of flood