

'Chris' shows us what few do: kids being kids

'Everybody Hates Chris' (8 p.m., UPN, TV-PG) returns with a brand new episode, one that reaffirms this show's position as one of the best comedies of the year.



Kevin McDonough

Chris covets a leather jacket, a 1983 fashion statement that threatens to set the family back \$99.

We discover quickly that Chris' dad, Julius (Terry Crews), considers an allowance to be a foreign concept, a position he explains in a three-hour lecture, telling Chris just how lucky he is that he allows him to eat food, sleep in a warm bed, etc.

Chris' efforts to score a part-time job prove fruitless, so Julius, a newspaper delivery truck driver, "hires" him to help out on his 3 a.m. shift.

This introduces Chris to a mysterious world of blue-collar esprit de corps, blue humor, grueling work and night-shift exhaustion. It also shows him a looser side to Julius that he had never imagined. Being with his father is special, but doing it in the middle of the night, when mere kids are tucked in bed, makes it magical.

Too many TV comedies depict children and teens as pint-sized adults, wisecracking know-it-alls with the jaded worldview of standup comedians. That's why the show's creator, Chris Rock, provides his brand of standup as narrator, not performer.

'Chris' does a wonderful job of hewing to simple basic truths: that children and adults see the world through different eyes and that children often look on adults and their world with a combination of envy and trepidation.

Born Steven Georgiou, he has called himself Yusef Islam for the past three decades. But he was best known as Cat Stevens and is profiled on tonight's "Biography" (8 p.m., Biography).

Raised in London's theater district, Stevens became an overnight sensation in 1966 with the quirky song "I Love My Dog." "Biography" follows his career through his renunciation of his music and his conversion to Islam, a choice that left many puzzled and confused.

In fact, the Department of Homeland Security was so baffled that it recently put Islam on a "no-fly" list, an act they later considered a mistake.

"Biography" does a good job of weaving old clips and newer interviews to follow Islam's unique creative and spiritual odyssey, but, like too many E! and VH1 celebrity profiles, it falls into maddening repetition.

Each segment regurgitates previously seen material.

Tonight's other highlights

A filmmaker uses stock footage, home movies and inter-

views to mourn his long-dead brother and explore the nature of death, loss and grief in the short film "Phantom Limb" (7 p.m., Cinemax).

Tom Bergeron hosts "Dancing with the Stars" (8 p.m., ABC, TV-G).

A young man's body is discovered in his girlfriend's garage on "CSI" (9 p.m., CBS, TV-14, V).

Hot dog competition on "My Name is Earl" (9 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

Kaitlin returns full of sass on "The O.C." (9 p.m., Fox, TV-14).

Suzanne wants a new baby, too, on "Crumbs" (9:30 p.m., ABC, TV-14).

A therapist is last spotted in a parking garage on "Without a Trace" (10 p.m., CBS, TV-PG, V).

Sam's son bolts to find his dad on "ER" (10 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

Scheduled on "Primetime" (10 p.m., ABC): a victim of molestation speaks out; a violent predator.

"They Started on Soaps 5" (11 p.m., Soapnet) looks at A-List talent whose careers began in the afternoon.

Cult choice

Two young girls encounter a likable, furry forest spirit in director Hayao Miyazaki's 1988 animated fantasy "My Neighbor Totoro" (8 p.m., TCM).

Series notes

Blind dates on "Four Kings" (8:30 p.m., NBC, TV-14) ... A mother in the house on "Love, Inc." (8:30 p.m., UPN, TV-PG) ... J.T.'s choice on "Eve" (9 p.m., UPN, TV-PG).

New means of expression on "Beauty and the Geek" (9 p.m., WB, TV-PG) ... Jim goes to great lengths to keep a secret on "The Office" (9:30 p.m., NBC, TV-14) ... Surgical enhancements on "Cuts" (9:30 p.m., UPN, TV-PG).

Late night

Jay Leno hosts Albert Brooks, Jenna Elfman and Mary J. Blige on "The Tonight Show" (11:35 p.m., NBC) ... Kate Beckinsale and Brian Posehn chat on "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" (12:35 a.m., NBC).

Kevin McDonough is a TV columnist for United Features Syndicate.

THURSDAY EVENING

JANUARY 19, 2006

Table with columns for time slots (7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (WTTV, WRV, WSH, WTHR, WFI, WNDY, WTIU, WHMB, WCL, WXIN, WIPX, WTB, A&E, AMC, AP, BET, BRAVO, CNBC, CMT, CNN, COM, DISC, EI, ESPN, ESPN2, FAM, FNC, FOOD, FOXMV, FOXSM, FX, HALL, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, MSNBC, MTV, NICK, OXY, SCIFI, SPIKE, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, TOON, TVL, USA, VH1, WE, WGN, DISN, ENC, HBO, SHOW, MAX, TMC, STARZ) listing their respective programs.

ACCENT ON PEOPLE

The Associated Press

Oscar winner wants to work on marriage

Hilary Swank and Chad Lowe recently announced their separation, but the Oscar-winning actress says they hope to rescue their eight-year marriage. "We're still trying to save it," Swank told syndicated TV entertainment show "Access Hollywood" at the Golden Globe Awards, which were presented Monday in Beverly Hills, Calif.



SWANK



LOWE

Swank, who wore her wedding ring to the awards ceremony, added: "We're still married." Swank most recently won an Oscar for "Million Dollar Baby."

LOS ANGELES

'Star Trek' actor sells piece of himself

An online casino has a piece of Capt. James Kirk. William Shatner has sold his kidney stone for \$25,000, with the money going to a housing charity, it was announced Tuesday.

The 74-year-old actor reached the agreement Monday to sell the stone to GoldenPalace.com.

"This takes organ donors to a new height, to a new low, maybe. How much is a piece of me worth?" he said in a telephone interview.

GoldenPalace.com is noted for its collection of oddities, which includes a partially eaten cheese sandwich thought to contain the image of the Virgin Mary.

"This is a bold new addition to our fleet," GoldenPalace.com Chief Executive Officer Richard Rowe said in a statement.

The money will go to Habitat for Humanity, which builds houses for the needy.

By DAVID BAUDER

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PASADENA, Calif.

If you think it rang a little false when "American Idol" contestants professed their love and friendship toward one another, you're right.

"They don't all love each other," judge Simon Cowell said on Tuesday, "and they've never loved each other."

"Because they all want to win," echoed judge Randy Jackson.

The show's new season began Tuesday, and Fox is counting on it to boost ratings after two of the network's long-running comedies end in May.

Fox entertainment chief Peter Liguori and others at the network are eagerly awaiting the second half of the TV season, when "Idol" should, as it has in the past, kick the network into high gear.

The return of "24" is another winner for Fox (the conclusion of its two-part season premiere Monday was seen by almost 15 million people, according to Nielsen Media Research).

Two comedies — "That '70s

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'Idol' meanness key to network ratings CALENDAR



SCRIPPS HOWARD PHOTO

"American Idol" returned to TV this week as part of the star lineup of shows on the Fox network. Four familiar faces greeted the wannabe singers: Simon Cowell, (from left) Ryan Seacrest, Paula Abdul and Randy Jackson.

Show" and "Malcolm in the Middle" — will both be ending this season, Liguori said.

"Malcolm in the Middle" will air its final episode May 14, he said.

"That '70s Show" began in 1998

and lasted two years short of the decade it celebrated.

Its final episode will air May 18, and Liguori said he's unsure whether former series stars Ashton Kutcher or Topher Grace will return at the end.

Today Meetings

- Women's Big Book Meeting, noon, 50 N. Home Ave., Franklin
50 Plus of Greater Whiteland, 1 to 3 p.m., New Whiteland Town Hall, 401 Mooreland Drive, euchre
Woodmen Club, 6 p.m., Calvary Lutheran Church, Shelby Street. Information: 888-6146
Edinburgh Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., Lions Club building, South Walnut Street
Sertoma Club of Greenwood, 6:45 p.m., Southern Dunes clubhouse, State Road 37 and Wicker Road

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