

# Tis the season to put off studying and turn on the TV

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Sometime during exam week, it will happen. You'll be finished with that Philosophy final and not have another one scheduled for three days. You'll want to go out, but all of your friends will have a Poli Sci final tomorrow. Then it'll happen. The small (probably 13 inches), genuine imitation wood-grain panelled box will begin to glow. There will be people in it. Some new faces, but mostly old friends, welcome you back to escapism. Cliff Huxtable will let you join his family, and new grandchild, after a long absence; Peter Jennings will be happy to tell you what's up in the world; and Jimmy Stewart will tell you countless times and on countless channels that "It's a Wonderful Life." Of course, how can you get too much of this movie during the Christmas/Exam Season — when in your deepest Econ 101 despair, this classic will make you feel all warm inside, and maybe even that all you're going through is really worth it?

The annual Christmas specials have already begun — Rudolph was on Monday. Remember that Grinch Party you wanted to have this year? Forget that, too. You've missed it by about two weeks. But you haven't missed them all. If you want to see the unlikely idea of

slavery in a Christmas special, there's "Roots: The Gift" (ABC). LeVar Burton comes down from the U.S.S. Enterprise to reclaim his role of Kunte Kinte, and is joined by Fiddler (Louis Gosset Jr.). You know, these character names seem familiar to me. They're on next week.

Then there is the amazingly creatively titled "I'll Be Home for Christmas" (NBC). Eva-Marie Saint (recently of "Moonlighting"), Hal Holbrook ("Designing Women") and Courtney Cox ("Family Ties," "Cocoon: The Return") go back to that other joyous (and easily melodramatic) Christmas season of World War II.

But watch out. All of these aren't to be looked forward to, unless you miss Jan, and Peter, and Marcia, and Bobby, and Miss Wesonality. Yes, here's the story: Those happy people at CBS bring you "A Very Brady Christmas." When NBC was in last place, they gave us "The Brady Brides." Well, CBS is at the bottom this year, so I guess it's their turn. Maybe Jason, Freddie and this Chucky character will show up and take the Bradys from us forever. Wouldn't that be fun? Then with a light heart we could honestly say, "God bless us, every one." (By the way, I guess, a Bah humbug is in order.) Bah humbug.

Speaking of "bah" and "humbug," one of my Christmas wishes is that "thirtysomething" (ABC) will be cancelled. The version from CBS is better. That's called "Almost Grown." Okay, I'll admit it. I've only seen "thirtysomething" a couple of times. It just annoys me. It's a personal taste thing, unlike any "Brady" remake which is just doomed to be bad television.

Check out "Almost Grown" anyway. A story of Norman and Suzie who dated in high school, married and then divorced. They are now friends and dealing with their continued love for one another; dealing with it from the story in the '80s to the flashbacks of high school and college.

CBS also has the well-written comedy "Murphy Brown." Candice Bergen is a reporter in a "20/20" format. That's on Mondays.

For good, although possibly depressing, television fare (but always funny), there's Steven, Elyse, Alex, Mallory, Jennifer and Andy. Daddy Keaton may be happy to see you back in front of the TV, but he'll be even happier to recover from last Sunday's heart attack. In the final season of "Family Ties" (NBC), the writers are going for the sentimental episodes, but don't despair, they're still funny. After a bypass operation, next Sunday will be the

second of the three-parter, and my hero, Alex P. Keaton, will be allowed to examine his own mortality. Some of the political comedy of the early seasons has returned for the final, with Alex's realization about his brother: "Born under Reagan, raised under Bush. With any luck you'll have an all Republican childhood."

It will take more than seven episodes for Steven to recuperate. Following the evolution of the sitcom into more of a serialized form.

If you watch "LA. Law," you won't want to miss it tonight. Last week, Abby (Michele Greene) gave

the National Rifle Association an early Christmas present and used a handgun in self defense. (Handgun? I reckon that's opposed to a leg gun or a face gun.) Also, let's see if Markowitz can push the censors on the subject of his low sperm count, as he did last week. Remember Olympic class sperm?

Don't forget "Cheers" tonight, either. Norm's going to be an interior decorator. So much for his self respect at the bar.

Enjoy Christmas. Watch TV. If I'm working in television in the future, I will thank you. If not, who cares. Don't watch Friday night, though. It's December 9th... a special day. Party. HARD.

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