January 5, 2010

**THEY PUT THE WORST PEOPLE ON TV ON NEW YEAR’S EVE**

1. **. . .** It’s the absolute truth. It’s amateur night through and through. I’m sorry, I’m over the silliness.
2. **. . .** So here we go. We’re cutting to the chase. It’s ***Curmudgeon’s Corner to the Max***:
3. **. . .** **Kathy Griffin** (on ***CNN***) should not ever be allowed to co-host a “news” network’s ***New Year’s E***ve celebration ever again. She never shuts up, interrupts (**Anderson Cooper** was a good sport and played along with her) and generally tooted her own horn for over two hours.
4. **. . .** **Dick Clark** on ***ABC***. I’m sorry, I’ve been a fan of “***America’s oldest teenager***” but it’s time to pass the torch on solely to **Ryan Seacrest** (not to say he’s any good). It’s painful to watch. I did a doubletake when I heard **Clark** speak. I hardly recognized his now deeper voice. He’s always put way back in the shot, you’d think he was some ***Buddha*** or something. And all **Seacrest** does is agree with everything he says. It’s a bit sad.
5. . . . **Carson Daly** on ***NBC***. The most boring “young” late, late night host on the network planet. Just standing there, bug eyes, asking his trusty on-air talent in the ***Times Square*** crowd what they have next for him to watch. He’s a stiff. Talent for his show**? Rihanna**, parading around (pre-taped) in some veiled **Mad Hatter** top hat with midriff showing (naturally; whenever she has the chance she shows herself off), and **Green Day**, with lead man **Billy Joe Armstrong** wearing a little less eyeliner than normal. I guess he didn’t have time before the show to stop off at ***Duane Reade*** to buy his ***Maybelline***.
6. **. . .** **Jennifer Lopez** on ***ABC***, acting ridiculously girly (she’s 41 now) and excited and bouncing and jumping around with some big fur-looking coat on under which she wore a revealing “naked catsuit.” She was totally tickled about the “occasion” of ***New Year’s***. (The occasion is for losers, period, and it’s nothing but a media-created event.)
7. **. . . J.Lo** (is she still called that?) even admitted that it was the first time she was in ***Times Square*** on ***New Year’s Eve*** ***ever*** in her ***New York*** life. (I’d be ashamed to mention that. She was ***Jenny From the Block*** once upon a time, wasn’t she?
8. **. . . Poppy Harlow** (who’s she?) on ***CNN***, acting like a teenager (she looked it too), dancing around the rope lines and asking (in her annoying voice) idiots in the crowd how they feel and describing the scene in an endless babble of childish banter and half-“singing.” News anchor **Don Lemon** was teamed with her as another “roving correspondent “ in the crowd. He was the least offensive.
9. **. . .** When they went back to “anchor team” **Anderson Cooper** and **Kathy Griffin**, even **Griffin** acted dumbfounded and needed a moment to collect herself from what she had just seen and heard from **Ms. Harlow**.
10. **.** . . Where do they get these people?
11. . . . **Carmen Elektra** (isn’t her time over?) hosting a ***Billboard*** countdown to the decade’s biggest hits on ***FOX***. Snore. **Kris Allen**, last year’s ***American Idol***, performed. So what.
12. **. . .** (**Chris**)**Daughtry** with his brand of ***constipation rock*** on ***ABC***, squeezing out every anguished note from his bulging neck veins. ***Gimme a Break!*** And **Fergie** and the **Black-Eyed Peas** (haven’t we seen/heard enough of this group, gallivanting on every stage in the world with their in-your- face performances?
13. **. . .** ***MTV*** featured a show with the “stars” (term used loosely) of ***Jersey Shore***, of its popular reality show about ***Italian-American*** housemates which has been harshly criticized by many but is enjoyed by others who don’t mind stereotyping by the kids who are referred to as ‘***guidos***” and “***guidettes***.”
14. . . . My mother was watching ***ABC*** and said you couldn’t even see the ball drop. They had too many things on the screen. Of course. She switched over to the local ***Baltimore*** channel to see what was going on down at the ***Inner Harbor***, for God’s sake.
15. **. . .** ***CBS*** opted to show a rerun of ***Late Night With David Letterman***. Best decision of ‘em all.
16. Over the holidays, could ***HLN***, ***CNN’s*** sister network, have provided anything more than continually repeated “episodes” of ***The Joy Behar Show***, ***Nancy Grace*** and ***Larry King (Not) Live***? (The repeated ones were repeated.) What do they think the ***American*** TV-viewing public is, a bunch of idiots that don’t pay attention? Do they think we won’t notice the duplication?
17. . . . They need more competition, that’s what they need. They just slide along with what they’ve got and think the American public will eat up anything that’s on the idiot tube. Well they’re wrong. We want original programming and if they’re not gonna provide it, we’ll channel surf ourselves away from their channels. So think about that the next time a holiday comes along.
18. **THE WORST VERSION OF AULD LANG SYNE EVER HEARD**. That’s what ***Fox News Sunday*** ended their show on this past weekend. (They used it to run credits with the names of the people who work on the program throughout the year.) It was an acoustic guitar-version of the evergreen that sounded like whoever was playing it didn’t know where the notes were and was hunting and pecking to get the sound out. Good **God**, what were they thinking?
19. And as far as how to pronounce the new year and the “controversy” surrounding it? Who’s ***controversed*** about it? It’s ***two thousand ten*** -- not ***twenty-ten***, like ***20/20*** the TV show or something. Go ahead, disagree with me.
20. I wonder if **Tiger Woods** and the **Salahis** (***White House*** gate crashers) had nice holidays. They stayed out of the news pretty much. Good, we all needed the break.
21. **WHEN WHAT TO MY WONDERING EYES SHOULD APPEAR**?
22. **. . .** But two escalators at the same station (in the ***Washington Metro*** system) working at the same time: one up, one down. What an unusual sight? What a holiday gift. I ran from my ***Metro*** car to see what was the matter …
23. **. . .** It’s a cottage industry … repairing broken escalators. Don’t get me started. Why they even build workshop areas for the extended repair process (which takes months). Wooden houses for the elves (**Santa’s** helpers?) and their equipment with latches and locks on the doors and safety tape on the walls. All they need is a wreath. Or how about a cresh?
24. **. . .** Often you can see the workers inside the restricted areas gathered together, tap, tap, tapping their tools on the way to making passengers happy by fixing their ***Erecter Set*** of a metropolitan subway system.
25. **. . .** Featherbedding at its height. Someone should be fired … even on ***Christmas***.
26. **DIDN’T SOUND RIGHT.** **Reba McIntire** singing ***I Saw “Mama”*** – ***Not Mommy*** – ***Kissing Santa Claus***. I heard it on the road while I was traveling on ***Christmas*** day and ***mama*** sounded odd. But then again it’s pretty odd that **McIntire** would do a version of that children’s song (originally recorded by **Jimmy Boyd** in 1952 (***Columbia Records***). Who gets these ideas?
27. **. . .** When I heard her sing “***mama***” I thought of **Vicky Lawrence** (from ***The Carol Burnett Show***) on ***Mama’s Family***, for crissakes.
28. That movie ***Nine*** looks too much like ***Chicago*** to me (same director, **Rob Marshall**). I’ve seen my fill of high-kicking, chair straddling, “hot-blooded” musicals, thank you.
29. **. . .** if I see **Penelope Cruz** with her big mouth wide open with her ***S&M*** dancing pose one more time I’ll …
30. **. . .** The whole crew – but of course – was on ***Larry King (Not) Live*** the other night. Guess they thought it would be a good ***Christmas*** show idea. Every actor was fawning over director **Rob Marshall** like he was the second coming of **Christ**. And **Sophia Loren** joined the show from somewhere else, possibly ***Italy***.
31. **. . .** The movie’s won a lot of pre-awards (***Golden Globes***, who cares?) but the reality is that not that many people are interested in going to see it.
32. **. . .** And if I see **Kate Hudson** do that musical number one more time I think I’ll jump off the nearest cliff. How’d she get in with that cast? She seems to be the focus of the film the way their publicizing it. Does **Marshall** like her more?
33. **GOOD HOLIDAY ALBUM**. **Andrea Bocelli’s** ***My Christmas***. I bought it because I liked his ***PBS*** special with his record producer/arranger **David Foster**, even though they cheapened it and turned it into a pledge drive. **Bocelli’s** got a nice, warm-sounding voice that’s not too operatic but he can really kick it in for an extended high note in an opera-like way. The ***British*** classical singer has some guests on the album (same as the TV show), including **Natalie Cole**, **Mary J. Blige** (who turns ***What Child Is This*** into a blues song), the **Muppets** and someone who I hadn’t heard of before, **Katherine Jenkins** from ***Wales***. Traditional and very beautifully done.
34. **President Obama** was renting a beachfront house (and the two houses next door) in ***Hawaii*** for his ***Christmastime*** family vacation, according to a report by ***ABC News***. The house rented for ***$4,000 per night***. Should the president be spending this much for a vacation spot?
35. **. . .** It is a bit hefty. It is ***Hawaii***. He is the president. But tax payer money is being spent, right? Is it right for him to get away with it? Can the country afford it? Isn’t the deficit too high? Just asking.
36. A friend of mine has one of those ***Roombas*** (round, remote-controlled robot-like vacuum cleaner) and complained about it because it got all “gummed up” when his dog pooped on the floor and the ***Roomba*** rolled over it. Ha Ha Ha.
37. **. . .** They don’t show that on ***QVC*** or ***HSN***, now do they?
38. **IT’S NOT SAFE ANYWHERE.** The same woman (unidentified) who tried last year to jump a barricade to get at the pope did it again this year but this time she caught hold of **Pope Benedict XVI’s** vestments and pulled the pontiff down to the floor of ***St. Peter’s Bascilica*** at ***Christmas*** mass, a sacrilege. In the melee, a ***French cardinal*** in frail health, according to ***Reuters News Agency***, also fell and suffered a broken thighbone.
39. **. . .** She sure seemed like she knew some acrobatics. She climbed right up all over the people (the video shows it) in front of her and went for her target. What was she, ***Cirque du Soleil***?
40. **Hanalie**, dog in the neighborhood, was in ***Lafayette, Calif.***, with owner **Sally** visiting her family. It was not a good start, however, when **Sally**, in a mad rush running down the corridor of ***Dulles Airport*** outside of ***Washington***, tried to make the plane while pulling her luggage cart with a tranquilized **Hanalie** stacked up on it inside a soft carry-on bag, flew off the cart, tumbled over a few times and had to be collected and put back on. Poor thing.
41. **. . .** **Le Le,** was still groggy, unhurt. **Sally** loaded her back on the cart and they made the flight.
42. **FOR THE NEW YEAR**. Can somebody bust the lockup that ***AT&T*** has on the ***iPhone*** and make it available to people with other services? I want one but I don’t want to change my carrier. There’s a growing roar of complaint in the marketplace from people who are unhappy with ***AT&T*** service and its monopoly on the popular phone. Everyone’s making their versions of the ***iPhone*** but so far they’re all wannabes (***Motorola’s Droid***, the upcoming ***Google*** phone).
43. **. . .** Somebody bust up the exclusivity and make it a level playing field.
44. **MOVIE: SHERLOCK HOLMES.** Really good film. Stars **Robert Downey Jr.** as the ***Brit*** detective, **Jude Law** as **Dr. John Watson** and **Rachel McAdams** as **Holmes’s** love interest. They’re after **Lord Blackwood** (**Mark Strong**) who is a serial killer and occult “sorcerer.” Directed by **Guy Ritchie** (**Madonna’s** ex), it’s a very blue-black looking film that rushes through the dark, dank cobblestone streets and abodes of 19th century ***London***, amidst horse carriages, ***Houses of Parliament***, secret meeting places, messy shipyards, etc. Entertaining, and the theater was pretty full. Lots of action: fighting, moving around and cringe-inducing special effects. Very detective-like and good, revealing flashbacks that explain things well.
45. **FYI:** It’s not about **Jack the Ripper**. That’s another story.
46. ***Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel***. It’s doing better than the original one did in 2007.
47. **. . .** Try saying ***The Squeakquel*** three times.
48. **. . .** I can’t stand those speeded up, overly cute voices. I don’t care who’s doing them (**Amy Poehler**, **Christina Applegate**, **Justin Long** (not him again), **Anna Faris**).
49. *White House* executive chef **Cristeta Comeford** and first lady **Michelle Obama** were on ***Iron Chef America*** on the ***Food Network*** over the weekend. Why? Because they wanted to promote healthy eating. Three judges were to decide which dishes were the best and each recipe had to include something from the ***White House*** vegetable garden which they planted this past summer.
50. **. . .** Does this have to constantly go on? Does something have to always be promoted? How addicted to being on TV are the **Obamas**? Do they have to be on the tube every time you turn around? Can’t they tell anyone no? Enough already.
51. **. . .** It cheapens the presidency and the first ladyship.
52. **NOTICED.** Cleavage on **Gwen Ifill** on ***Washington Week/National Journal***. Yes, I saw it. Just a tad, a peek. Her peach-colored top under her jacket was placed a little low to reveal it. In good taste, however. Not overly revealing but it’s a different look for her and I, frankly, was shocked. On ***PBS*** no less. They say they’re changing things over there.
53. **. . .** Did it get cause the show to get more of an audience?
54. **GOOD CHRISTMAS GIFT.** ***Dust Mop Slippers***. They look just like what you’d imagine and are advertized to “pick up dust, dirt and pet hair so you don’t have to bend over. Clean as you walk!” ***$4.99*** at ***wdrake.com***.
55. **PAYING FOR PLASTIC.** It’s the new year and already I’ve paid for about a dozen plastic bags to put groceries in. They’re charging five cents a plastic or paper bag in ***Washington, D.C.*** from now on. That mounts up.
56. **. . .** It’s a new law that became effective at the stroke of twelve in the new year. Lawmakers passed it in order to clean up the ***Anacostia River***, which full of litter, and make the city a more green-friendly place.
57. **. . .** They expect the fee to raise ***$3.6 million*** in the first year.
58. **. . .** It’s one of the toughest such measures in the country.
59. . . . **WHAT DO I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT?** Put your money where your mouth is. I wanna see my reflection in that ***Anacostia River*** when it’s all cleaned up and I don’t want any excuses. I wanna know where my money went. And I don’t wanna learn about some bureaucratic snafu a year from now saying that nobody knows where the money went and the river’s still dirty.
60. **. . .** I want results for my money.
61. **UH . . .** ***Money (That’s What I Want)*** – **Barrett Stong**, on ***Tamla***, 1959. The first national hit record for the emerging ***Motown*** record label, written by ***Motown*** founder **Berry Gordy Jr.** and **Janie Bradford**.