

ISLAND LIFE

Number 36 in a monthly series

Trading in your tube time

by Jed Gaines

Since 1992, when I began giving workshops statewide on the importance of reading aloud, one of the key points I have discussed is turning off the television.

My simple formula for helping children do well in school is to read good literature aloud on a regular basis in school and at home and to turn off the TV from Monday through Thursday.

I recommend this rule be followed on a consistent basis right through intermediate and high school. This applies to adults too, as children always learn by example. It also means no video games and only school-related computer use during the week.

I have received a great deal of feedback about this television rule. Here are just a few written responses from parents:

■ "I'm amazed at the progress my daughter has made the past few years in school. The 'no TV' rule has been very successful in our home. Many more books are being read

by us to our children."

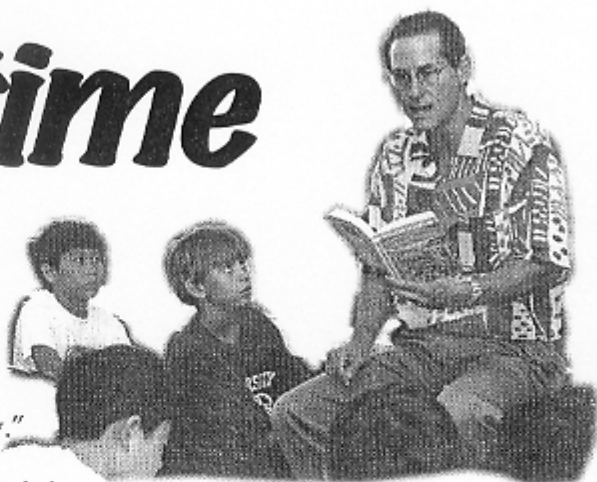
■ "My older daughter's teacher has told me that she focuses better in class since we turned off the TV Monday through Thursday."

■ "We have moved our TV out of the living room so it is not the focus of our home. The TV is now in a small room and is watched on weekends only."

"We have cut out TV time and it is allotted only on the weekends. It has made a difference in the attitude my two sons have toward reading and toward life. They prefer to be outside more on the weekends."

"Last summer for 70 days my family traveled across the country in our camper without a TV; it just wouldn't fit. I thought it would be miserable, but I was wrong! My children were different - as they were calmer, more attentive and more creative. This trip, they remembered the things we did, and the change in them was amazing."

Gloria DeGaetano, the author of



Jed Gaines, the father of two public-school children, has been working with the read-aloud concept for the past 14 years. He conducts presentations for educators, parents and their Hawaii School communities. Send questions or a self-addressed stamped envelope for his K-8 reading list to: Jed Gaines, **Read Aloud America**, 1937 Keeaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822. Call 531-1985, fax 531-1984 or email to: readaloudamerica@lava.net.

TV and the Lives of Our Children and *Screen Smarts*, puts it this way:

"Listening to a story read aloud without any pictures requires different brain processes than watching TV. First of all, it exercises the child's imagination and enables her to create pictures in her head. In addition to enhancing creativity, this is an essential component for higher-level thinking skills such as predicting outcomes and problem solving. Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent can do to increase a child's thinking abilities and to better ensure school success."

Please join me at my monthly read-aloud at 7:00pm on Wednesday, October 27, at Barnes & Noble in Kahala Mall.

"It's easy to read aloud to anyone. Simply pick up a book and start!"



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