

## The B-List: 6/19

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}  
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The B-List gets a different cast today, as Buff begs Rich to allow him to write about a different topic, and the regular baseball portion is taken over by a special guest writer. The Indians were outthit 14-5 and outscored 6-3 to complete the three game sweep at the hands of the Colorado Rockies. But you may learn less about the Indians in this column than you will about ... other things ...



<b>FINAL SCORE</b>				
<b>Indians (33-40)</b>	(4	th	8.5 GB CHW)	2
<b>Rockies (31-42)</b>	1	0	0	1

W: De La Rosa (2-3) L: Sowers (0-2) S: Fuentes (13)

To: Rich Swerbinsky  
From: Steve Buffum

Please, surely there must be another assignment on one of your websites. I can't write about this again.

*To: Steve Buffum*

*From: Rich Swerbinsky*

*Buff, I feel for you man, but we're all booked up.*

To: Rich Swerbinsky  
From: Steve Buffum

Don't you have some other websites that you're working on?  
Something else I can write about?

*To: Steve Buffum*  
*From: Rich Swerbinsky*

*Well, there is one site ... but I'm not sure you're really suited for it. It's kind of outside the scope of the kind of thing you do ...*

To: Rich Swerbinsky  
From: Steve Buffum

I'll take it. Please. I'm begging you.

*To: Steve Buffum*

*From: Rich Swerbinsky*

*Okay, don't say I didn't warn you ...*

## **1) Yo Gabba Gabba!**

This show, currently on Nick Jr., is one of the rare children's shows with a strong, unified message, and that message is: Toddlers Like Mescaline.

The main character on the program, in the Human Division, at least, is DJ Lance, a very, very happy young man with large glasses and what appears to be a Tribble stretched over packing foam on his head. He wears a brightly-colored jump suit and tosses clever bon mots like, "All right!" A lot. DJ Lance may be the happiest person in the whole world. Except when he is surprised. Then he is the most surprised person in the world. He is certainly the most DJ Lance person in the world: in the hands of a less-capable actor, like perhaps a Bavarian Acid Mole or a portabello mushroom, the role of DJ Lance would quickly devolve into a sort of absurdist caricature, but in the hands of Mr. Lance, the transformation is, in fact, instantaneous.

Lance's friends include Muno the red cyclops, Foofa the pink flower bubble, Brobee (who is a green ... thing), Toodee the blue cat-dragon, and Plex, who I secretly believe is actually Steven Baker, who has sadly used up his residuals from "Blue's Clues" and has salvaged all of his striped green shirts from the show. He is now a robot with flexible arms. These characters are all clearly hallucinating more or less constantly. They are all very excited and run around at great speed (or, that is, with as much speed as one musters in a cumbersome costume), learning lessons like "things come in different sizes" and "don't flush Daddy's car keys down the toilet." For older fans, there is a cartoon done by Evan Dorkin and Sarah Dyer of "Milk & Cheese" fame, as well as the revenant of Mark Mothersbaugh reprising his role as Pee Wee Herman's songwriter. Mothersbaugh, an Akron native, now looks approximately three hundred fifteen years old.

Children love this show because it makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. And because they apparently imbibe large quantities of psilocybin.

## 2) Max & Ruby

The delightful drawings of Rosemary Wells come to life in this series about bossy know-it-all rabbit Lucy and her

verbally-challenged brother Max. After the frantic absurdism of "You Gabba Gabba," "Max & Ruby" provides the kind of slow-paced, relaxed entertainment that is the animated rabbit equivalent of thorazine and curare. One sits stupefied as Ruby plans an elaborate activity, such as a tea party, which Max unintentionally thwarts by placing objects on his head.

This is not entirely fair, as sometimes Max branches out by running something over with his bike, stuffing things into his mouth, or blurting a single phrase over and over. Max is highly-skilled at blurting, and practices this skill in each episode. Ruby shows remarkable patience with these antics, but becomes very anxious when Max does what she perceives as the wrong thing, which is roughly every time Max is or is not on the screen.

The pace of the show can be described as "languid," if in fact one multiplies languidity by a factor of one point six zillion. There are thirty-six words per 23-minute episode. I can see why this show is popular with toddlers who have finished watching "Yo Gabba Gabba."

### **3) Mickey Mouse Clubhouse**

The classical Disney characters get a new cast in this 3-D animation update of the old cartoons. Recast as problem-solvers, the gang waft through each episode while accomplishing something of great import with the help of their jack-of-all-trades toolbox, Toodles. Whenever they need a piece of equipment, Toodles flies to the rescue with exactly what it is they need, although it is up to Mickey and his friends (primarily Mickey: his friends demonstrate the rough cognitive power of a jelly doughnut) to determine which tool is most applicable.

All of your favorites are here: the squeaky Minnie, the incoherent Goofy, the beleaguered overqualified girlfriend Daisy, and the odious Pete. It is at this point that I struggle with just the right way to describe how much, these forty years later, I still hate Donald Duck, and the best I can say is that I would pinch-hit Mike Rouse for him.

The music is written primarily by alt-rock heroes They Might Be Giants, whose lyrics for "The Hot Dog Song" rival those of "Purple Toupee" or "Youth Culture Killed My Dog."

#### **4) Dora the Explorer**

Plucky young Dora is joined by her best friend, Boots the Probably Non-Infectious Monkey, who wears enormous red boots but no pants, as they ask their friend Map (who is, non-ironically, a map) how to take the path that solves their problem of the day. They are routinely not thwarted by their arch-enemy, Swiper the Fox, who has a uniquely poor conception of the art of thievery, in that he takes something they need and throws it into an inaccessible location rather than simply taking it and selling it at the local pawn shop or on eBay. Each character in "Dora the Explorer" has an eye-to-body ratio of about 0.5. The music is provided by a makeshift mariachi band consisting of a snail, a frog, and a third indeterminate invertebrate, and, though not quite at the level of They Might Be Giants, is more melodious than anything DJ Lance spins.

One of the innovative features of the show is that Dora often asks for answers from the audience, which encourages young children to yell things at the screen. In this way, Dora is preparing audiences in Northeast Ohio to become Cleveland Sports Fans, who also find themselves yelling solutions at Eric Wedge, Romeo Crennel, and Mike Brown. However, the toddlers seem to have more success.

## 5) Wonder Pets

The post-production animated forms of real photos of Linny the guinea pig, Tuck the turtle, and Ming Ming the duckling grace the screen as the Wonder Pets escape from their elementary school classroom prison to don secret identities and rescue baby animals in grave danger, like being stuck in a rose bush or not being able to urinate in the house. The motto of the team is, again without irony, "What's going to work?

Teamwork!" Eric Wedge auditioned for the show, but was turned down on the grounds that no child would accept him as a pet, and that his facial hair is scary.

The Wonder Pets are very good at building makeshift craft, made all the more impressive by their aggregate absence of opposable thumbs. This is accomplished with their remarkable telekinetic powers, and Tuck in fact is able to swim from a watery terrarium into a sink drain, suggesting teleportation as well. In my favorite episode, they point out to the clearly addled full-bladdered puppy that, in fact, if he goes out the specially-designed "doggy door" in the door, he can in fact urinate in the yard instead of on himself. They celebrate by joining him in a group urination, then eating celery. I believe the drug of choice on this show is marijuana, in that they always feel peckish at the end of each episode, which is only mildly hallucinatory.

## 6) Franklin

The whiny, neurotic turtle gets ...

*To: Steve Buffum*  
*From: Rich Swerbinsky*

*Buff, look, I'm sorry, but I just don't think the readers of ToddlerNet are going to enjoy your reviews as much as the regular author's. I'm going to have to go back to him.*

*By the way, here's what he came up with for the game.*

## **The Cleveland Indians Show!**

### **By Nicholas Swerbinsky**

The Cleveland Indians played baseball last night. They lost. The Colorado Rocks got eleventy-six hits and beat them a lot. It was not fun.

Jerry Sowers was the pitcher. He throws with his left hand, like my Daddy's hero, Jesse Rosco. Daddy ties my right arm to my body to make me throw left-handed. He says I can have a

sixty-twelve year career like Mr. Rosco. Yay! I like baseball!  
And ice cream!

Jerry wears two large caterpillars on his forehead. He is funny! I like him! He gave up ten hits, but five of them were poopy hits that rolled to infielders. And one hit looked like it would go to an infielder, but the infielder never got there because he is slow, like Franklin. Maybe he is a turtle! He should snap his fingers and say, "Oh, man!" Then he would be like Swiper! Maybe that batter said, "Shortstop, no swiping!" and the guy couldn't get it.

The Cleveland guy Fran Bencisco hit the ball so far, it never came down. Yay! That was good! The Indians led 2-0, and then they all became poopy. Jamey Carroll, poopy. Ryan Garko, poopy. Casey Blake was very good and he had three hits. That's not poopy! But everyone else ... very poopy. Nobody else got a hit! Even I can get a hit in the back yard, and that is hard to do with your right arm tied to your body!

## **I Liked This!**

Grady Sizemore got a poopy hit, but stole second and scored.  
Yay!

Fran Bencisco hit it really hard. Yay!

Casey Blake had three hits, including a hard one over the wall.  
Yay!

My Daddy did not yell at Jobo Borowski. (In case you don't know, this is not Jojo, the clown, but I think that Jobo should bring a lion like Goliath to the mound with him. Then he would have a friend with him, and the other team might be scared of him because Goliath is a lion, even though he's a nice lion, but the other team doesn't know that. Also, he should wear a red wig and a clown suit. That would be better!)

Ice cream! Try it with Cap'n Crunch on it! You may think that sounds yucky, but I am telling you it isn't! It's really good! Also with chocolate sauce.

## **I Didn't Like That!**

Rosie Delageorge struck out ten Indians. Boo!

Kelly Shoppach threw the ball to nobody. Boo! Also, the ball came to him and he didn't catch it. I do that, too, so I will not be so hard on him. But he is wearing a lot of stuff and should try harder to catch the ball. His arm is not tied to his body. Maybe it should be? Maybe the scary guy should promise him ice cream if he catches the ball and throws it to people instead of to no one. I would do that for ice cream!

The guy at shortstop has a big head.

Broccoli. I don't like broccoli! It is yucky! I even put Cap'n Crunch on it, and it still tastes yucky. It's yucky!

And so are the Cleveland Indians. They're pooppy!

I love you!

Nicholas