

In praise of a TV hero: ALF

He's a cross between an ant eater and an ignoramus, the figment of an imagination that has obviously been stifled for far too long.

It seems people either love him or denounce him as tacky, tasteless, or even offensive.

He's ALF, the acronym of Alien Life Form and, like him or not, he's become the new cult hero for children and adults alike. Which probably says something about North American society as it now stands.

Every Monday night at 8 p.m., this furry, three-fingered, long-snouted midget comes shuffling across millions of television screens, with his irreverent approach to the family that



FROM WHERE I LIVE

Bruce Stapley

houses him, and to life in general.

And poor old Willie Tanner, his earthly stepfather, is forever walking around with that chagrined look on his face, saying things to his wife like, "We don't live a normal life, do we?"

It started with the revelation that on ALF's home planet, Melmac, cats are a delicacy, some-

thing to be enjoyed with a side order of fries. In one episode, ALF is seen showing the Tanner family a photograph album from his home. It includes a shot of "Mom feeding Dad a piece of the wedding cat."

When asked what he'd like for a snack, ALF looked longingly at the family cat Lucky, and replied,

"I'd like a McBLT — a bacon, Lucky, and tomato sandwich."

The big attraction on Melmac, apparently, is a sport called Bouillabaseball, which involves the throwing of fish. It seems that ALF played for years with the Southwick Softshells. His position? Home plate. What was the only record he ever broke? "In The Still of The Night." Really!

Now despite the occasional line that comes out of ALF's mouth that goes a little beyond my definition of good taste, I must confess I'm hooked — to the extent that ALF is the only television show I will actually cancel another activity to view.

A good friend has been trying for months to drag me out to the

church Monday nights to play volleyball, and I could certainly use the exercise and the fellowship. But it means I'd miss the old Alfer, and I don't know I'm prepared to make such a sacrifice.

Now I know I'm going to take some heat over this revelation. There he goes again, I can hear them saying, exposing that side of him that is best left in the closet.

But I would argue in my defence simplicity is a tonic that can go a long way towards helping a person stay sane in these chaotic times.

So while ALF doesn't exactly belong up there in the same category of moral wholesomeness as the Cosby Show, at least the show is totally devoid of illicit sex, brutal violence, and game show inanity.

And now there are ALF cards on the market, ALF buttons sporting his trademark "No Problem," slogan and talking ALF dolls. My friends have all seen me wearing my puppet-like ALF watch. It even made a guest appearance at a roast I was involved with the other week. It was brought to me all the way from Kentucky by a caring friend who understands what it is that really makes me tick. Ha!

So to all of you out there who just shake your heads at the very mention of the name, give ALF a chance. It's not supposed to make sense, so in that respect, it's really not much different than anything else in life.

But sure is going to be tough for me to walk into a restaurant and not steal my hero's classic "Siamese on rye, Stella. Tuck in the tail."

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