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The Twin Peaks Mystery Deepens 25 Years Later

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<http://www.scarymommy.com/the-twin-peaks-mystery-deepens-25-years-later/>

Twenty-five years ago, when *Twin Peaks* premiered on ABC, we were left wondering who killed Laura Palmer. Today, we are left wondering who killed the show's return.

Fans who had rejoiced last year when David Lynch first announced the return of *Twin Peaks* for a new season had their hopes dashed earlier this week when he tweeted that he was no longer associated with the project due to budget issues with Showtime.



The show may technically still be alive, but the faithful cannot help but see this as anything more than life support with prospects fading fast.

When it premiered a quarter century ago, *Twin Peaks* was a game changer, bringing Lynch's eccentric style of storytelling to mainstream television audiences that were more used to *Mr. Belvedere* and *Jake and the Fatman* than they were to an off-beat mystery that would take two seasons to find its killer. But although the general public may have rejected Lynch's groundbreaking TV experiment by the end of its second season, it certainly found a loyal audience among viewers who were hungry for something different. And if a David Lynch project is anything, it is different. And those fans never forgot just how good different could be in his hands.

Even though it had only 30 episodes to make its mark, it more than secured its place in television history. *Twin Peaks* was now just a memory—a damned good

memory, but still something that was a part of our pop culture history, not of our future.

Which makes Lynch's departure from the new series this week all the more frustrating. The show was over. If we needed to return to *Twin Peaks*, we could do so anytime that we wanted to, thanks to home video. Between the regular edition, Complete Series edition, and Entire Mystery edition, there are certainly enough options to choose from.

But Showtime had to go and tease us with the return of *Twin Peaks* in the form of a limited series for 2016, set in the present day, that would "continue the lore of the original series, providing long-awaited answers for the series' passionate fan base." This was certainly one of the most exciting developments in television in a very long while.

According to Lynch, he ran into irreconcilable differences with the network over the budget. One major sticking point is rumored to be over the filming format, with Lynch insisting on film and Showtime opting for digital. Regardless, the man who guided the show to its original greatness has walked away from its return.

Is all hope lost? For their part, Showtime says that they "continue to hold out hope that we can bring it back in all its glory with both of its extraordinary creators, David Lynch and Mark Frost, at its helm."

Unfortunately, now without Lynch, a new season of *Twin Peaks* is no more alive for most fans than a body wrapped in plastic on the beach.

The cast of *Twin Peaks* isn't letting Lynch off the hook either. They've banded together in a video tribute to spread the message that the show can't possibly go on without him.

How Can Your Kid Win \$3,000 From Disney?

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<http://www.scarymommy.com/how-can-your-kid-win-3000-from-disney/>

If your kids are looking for a step up in their allowance, Disney might have the answer.

The upcoming film, Tomorrowland, is about a place where nothing that can be imagined is impossible. Now, Disney wants to put your child's imagination to work inventing the future for their [Create Tomorrowland XPRIZE Challenge](#), a contest that calls on children ages 8 to 17 to share their vision of the world of tomorrow. The six most exciting entries will win their creators \$3,000, a "mentorship experience," a 3D printer from 3D Systems, and more.

What new inventions and innovations will they find in the future? How will technology change as they grow up? And how will it impact their world?

To enter, contestants will need to power up their time machines and take an imaginary trip to the future to report back on the technology that they encounter. They can write it, draw it, or film it, but they need to tell the story of what they discovered, how it works, and why it matters in the future.

"The future will be steered by the imaginations of our young people," according to Sean Bailey, the President of Walt Disney Motion Studios Motion Picture Production, "and Disney is thrilled to work with XPRIZE to encourage and inspire the next generation of thinkers and dreamers to build the future they imagine is possible."

However, a good imagination alone is not going to win this. A good grasp of the science behind the imaginary technology will also be key. In addition to the 50 percent that goes toward originality and creativity, 30 percent of each entry's score will be based on attention to the science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (S.T.E.A.M.) on which the invention is based. The final 20 percent will be based on your child's plan for how this idea from the land of tomorrow can begin to be brought to reality in the world of today.

"At XPRIZE we believe that solutions to the problems facing humanity can come from anyone, anywhere," said Trish Halamandaris, Senior Vice President Marketing & Communications at XPRIZE, "and one of these young innovators just might come up with an idea that can truly turn Tomorrowland into reality."

So is your kid up to the challenge? You can read the contest's full FAQ's [here](#).

Submissions open on April 22nd, close on May 17th, and the winners will be announced on May 22, 2015, the day Tomorrowland opens in theaters.

Is Crowdfunding Art Patented?

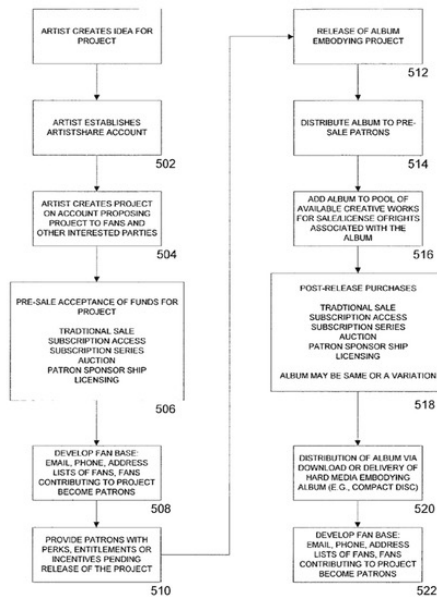
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<http://therightsreport.com/post/97771227850/is-crowdfunding-art-patented>

If ArtistShare prevails in defending their patent for “Methods and Apparatuses for Financing and Marketing a Creative Work” against a lawsuit brought by Kickstarter, then the answer may very well be yes, at least in the eyes of the court.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, ArtistShare “claims to hold a valid patent that covers “specific systems for allowing artists to manage creative works and obtain funding for them,” and in summary judgment papers revealed in a New York federal court this past week, asserts that Kickstarter is stepping on its invention.”

In its official registration, Patent No. 7,885,887 is summarized as:

U.S. Patent Feb. 8, 2011 Sheet 5 of 63 US 7,885,887 B2



“The present invention is directed to a system and method for raising financing and/or revenue by artist for a project, where the project may be a creative work of the artist. The method including registering, by at least one artist, with a centralized database, at least one or more projects, offering, by the at least one artist, an entitlement related to the artist in exchange for capital for the project of the artist. The method and system may also include searching, by an interested party, the centralized database, for the least one artist, registering, by the interested party, with the centralized database and accepting the offer by the interested party for the entitlement related to the project. The capital may then be forwarded to the artist and the entitlement provided to the interested party.”

The ArtistShare patent certainly does resemble the Kickstarter model - an artist has an idea, asks fans for sponsorship, creates the project, and delivers it the fans. But is this basic business model so obvious that a patent should never have been issued in the first place?

In fact, in their request for a summary judgement, Kickstarter's most obvious objection to the validity of the patent is its "obviousness".

In essence, Patent No. 7,885,887 seems to only cover the abstract idea of crowd funding, excluding any specific mechanics or software code that makes its take on the process original or unique.

It seems to be just a simple combination of basic and established business methods that deliver obvious results: promise a consumer delivery of a desirable reward in return for monetary support and deliver the reward when the contribution is made.

And the logical ruling on this seems obvious as well.

However, it is now up to the court... and the appeals court after that... and another appeals court after that... to decide.

Nursery University

Originally published on HonestBaby.com in April 2009

“The nursery school admission process is a war zone” declares one consultant at the beginning of **Nursery University**, and thus its filmmakers proceed to position themselves as correspondents on the front lines, following the case studies of five families seeking placement in exclusive private Manhattan preschools.

The film is a fascinating, informative and, at times, infuriating look at the cutthroat world that pits parent against parent, with the children caught in the crossfire.

Covering the full spectrum of candidates, from a rich Upper East Side couple looking to buy the most exclusive brand name they can find, to a working class Harlem family seeking a better chance for success for their daughter, the film brings us along for every step of the ride, from the initial meetings with consultants who can charge \$4,000 or more to help parents apply, to the opening of the decision letters when parents learn if their toddler was good enough to make the cut.

It's college admissions. But for two and three year olds.

The logic at the heart of this story is that the preschool is a lynchpin to open the gateway to the feeder school process. The “right” nursery school presumably gets your child into the right kindergarten which then opens the door to the right middle school, followed by the right high school and then finally, the right Ivy League college. The unspoken consequence of the “wrong” school puts your kid at a desk next to the poor, minority students that make up the unwashed, huddled masses of the public school system.

For many schools, the children seem to be the secondary or even tertiary concern in the process behind finding parents with the right status in order to perpetuate the status of the school itself as an exclusive club. These preschools need to continue to be filled with rich kids, pre-ordained for greatness (defined as wealth), so that rich parents will keep coming back to beg for a seat at the table. And what mom doesn't want to be able to brag that they were accepted to a school that even wait-listed Kate Winslet?

And this is not to say that the children don't play a role in the process. They do get reviewed and assessed to make sure they are well behaved and developmentally advanced enough to not put too much of a strain on the staff. Since the school holds the the power, why not take the students that will make life easier for them and make them look better in the long run? Why take on the kids who would actually benefit the most from the preparatory socialization and behavioral skill-building offered at preschool if it means dealing with issues or,

even worse, parents who can't afford it. This is politely referred to as looking for "a good match for the school".

In a moment of frankness, one white mother states, "we're not going to have him go to a public school in Harlem." Well, what about all those children that actually do go to public schools in Harlem?

Nursery University's main flaw, if it can be called that, just may be found in the dignified civility of its approach to the subject matter and its participants. Maintaining an unbiased approach, the documentary presents us with the facts for us to view and interpret on our own. And it certainly cannot be faulted for admirably maintaining its journalistic integrity, but it also left more of the story to be told. What about those Harlem school kids? And those children in the feared public schools next door to the private schools?

The other side of the story is an indictment of a system that rescues the rich and abandons everyone else. Elitism should be a dirty word when it comes to the education of children. Outside of this game in which they compete, I suppose all of these people are relevantly nice, decent members of society, but their participation just perpetuates the process. With all the time, effort and money that goes into the application and selection process itself, one can only imagine what could be accomplished if all those resources were pointed toward fixing whatever is broken in the public school system so that all children could benefit. After all, it is supposed to be about the kids, right?

Perhaps the film's directors, Marc H. Simon and Matthew Maker, are already working on a sequel that tackles this issue further. If so, it will be a welcomed addition to the discussion as, with **Nursery University**, they presented an intelligent and stylish report from the field.

"This is gonna be nasty. This is the one where the child had to be given a lollipop to cease and desist on her temper tantrum." – Gabriella Rowe

If the story has a villain, it comes in the form of Gabriella Rowe, the Director of the elite Mandell School, one of the crown jewels in Manhattan's private school system. At least for her time on camera, Rowe personifies a hypocritical approach to the issue, paying lip service to an *it's-all-about-the-kids* and *I-wish-I-could-accept-everyone* approach while making parents jump through hoops and putting them through the ringer. In the course of the same sound byte, she calls the feeder school theory laughable and then perpetuates the hysteria which feeds her business by defending its "grain of truth".

While reviewing applications, cutting those that don't make it past the velvet rope, Rowe bemoans, "How many more investment bankers and lawyers can you fit in an application pool?" Probably just enough to make sure that only one or two token blue-collar families get a seat in the classroom. One can only laugh at the

irony as she offers disdain toward the parents who, in an effort to impress her in the process that is all about impressing her, make the faux pas of trying to impress her too much by using stationary from the David Letterman show for their essay. (We don't know if their child was accepted but she did offer to give the parents the benefit of the doubt).

Another Director, Wendy Levey of the Epiphany Community Center, tells a couple that the only children she puts on the wait list are the ones that she really wants. It certainly is a cutthroat business when so many toddlers get tossed aside, apparently unwanted by a preschool. And you can feel the simultaneous power-grab and desperate need for validation when she tells these parents to "call me once a day to register interest." At this point it is obvious that the process has not been about the children for a long, long time.

Nursery University is a well crafted and highly entertaining documentary that opens up this unique and fascinating topic in an intimate but unobtrusive manner, putting us at the kitchen table as families deal with the life or death issue of their children's college educations, albeit 15 to 16 years ahead of their first day of class.

Meditation for At-Risk Kids

Originally published on HonestBaby.com in April 2009

One million kids. All changing from within. To some parents, this might sound like trouble. Drugs? Puberty? Rock and roll music? To others it might seem like just a natural part of growing up. But what if it was a change toward a self-reflective inner peace that not only brought about a more positive mindset but also improved health, creativity and performance in school?

David Lynch thinks he has the answer to a more productive education and life for at-risk students with Transcendental Meditation, and, through his namesake foundation, has set himself the lofty goal of teaching one million children how to do this.

And just last week, Mr. Lynch worked on his dream with a little help from his friends.

Radio City Music Hall was the setting for the Change Begins Within Benefit Concert which brought Lynch together with Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Sheryl Crow, Donovan, Eddie Vedder and others in an all-star effort to promote awareness of meditation and to raise money to pursue the goals of the David Lynch Foundation. Between music sets, Laura Dern did a Q&A with Lynch, Jerry Seinfeld performed some hilarious stand-up, and Howard Stern provided a heartfelt, albeit raunchy, endorsement of meditation, which he credits with saving his mother's life from the grips of a suicidal depression.

I was lucky enough to attend this benefit concert. To be honest, I went for the music and it turned out that it was nothing short of magical. The reunion of McCartney and Starr was historic and everything that I hoped it could be. This was the closest I would ever get to a Beatles concert, a group who last performed live when I was two years old, and stand as contemporary favorites in my iTunes playlist.

Ringo did a short set featuring rousing versions of "It Don't Come Easy", "Boys" and a rollicking sing-a-long of "Yellow Submarine", before Paul took the stage and did his own greatest hits mini-concert with "Drive My Car", "Jet", "Got To Get You Into My Life", "Let It Be", "Lady Madonna", "Blackbird", "Here Today", "Band on the Run" and "Can't Buy Me Love." Paul and Ringo then joined together for a show-stopping presentation of "With a Little Help From My Friends." The two Beatles continued on in an encore that started with the apropos "Cosmically Conscious", and finished with a rocking send-off of "I Saw Her Standing There." Although the night was dedicated to quiet meditation, it came in the form of a no-holds barred celebration.

Walking in, I had little, if any, knowledge of meditation and didn't really feel the need to know more. A little skepticism is always healthy, and I would say that I have enough to make me the poster boy for it. But what I heard that night was compelling, if not downright inspiring, especially coming from the artists present that night, lead by none other than McCartney himself, and spoken in a language that I could understand - measurable results.

First, lets start with what Transcendental Meditation is not. It is not a religion. It is not a cult. And it is not mind control. In fact, TM seems to be just the opposite of all those things, in that it champions the power of the individual mind and all that it is capable of achieving. Being the cynic, I looked for the New Age kookiness in this but didn't find it after the first layer of my apprehension was removed. The goal is apparently to get its practitioners to think for themselves, and reach their maximum potential using the power of their own mind.

At its core, in a simplified layman's explanation, Transcendental Meditation is a technique to reach a deep level of thought. Physical comfort in a resting state is combined with a calm, quiet location as one allows their mind to settle down to a level described as "pure consciousness" and "enlightenment".

When performed twice a day, once in the morning, and once at night, for twenty minutes, advocates of TM claim that it increases creativity and intelligence while reducing stress and promoting health (such as a reduction in high blood pressure and a drop in heart disease). TM also seemingly reduces stress-related behaviors such as smoking (and is far more effective in this than other nicotine addiction treatments, such as the patch).

But why is this being discussed on a website dedicated to parenting issues? As always, it is because of the kids.

So far, the David Lynch Foundation has provided the funds to teach 70,000 students worldwide how to meditate, from New England to Brazil and the rest of the world, and he wants to make that number a million. Presented with training in a hybrid session of 'quiet time' and meditation, children who are able to pursue the practice of meditation show improved educational aptitude, IQ, memory, discipline, behavior, and even reduced symptoms of ADHD. These are compelling claims that, if true, could lead to a direct improvement of your child's quality of life and prospects for future happiness.

Is it real? Are the claims true? And is it as effective as claimed?

To that question, the DLF is also funding independent research to study the effects and practical results of Transcendental Meditation. The foundation's literature cites 600 scientific studies at 250 universities and medical schools as the source of their claims about the positive benefits of TM.

The president of the David Lynch Foundation, and one of the leading advocates of TM, is Dr. John Hagelin, PH.D. He is a Harvard-trained quantum physicist. I am fairly certain that, in the dictionary, “quantum physicist” is defined as “smarter than you can ever be.” A few days after the concert, Hagelin hosted a webcast / PowerPoint presentation about the program with a look at what it is, how it works, and the benefit to those who do it, with a focus on the health and medical claims, and the science behind it. You can find a replay of this here. <link deleted>

However, Transcendental Meditation has its detractors who raise concerns of a cultish enthusiasm among proponents, a subliminal religious message, or some undefined covert agenda. For some, just the name (let alone the eccentric appearance) of the founder of the technique, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is enough to raise a red flag. Of course, anything is possible but the negatives don't seem to be here. At worst, if the claims prove untrue, an experience with meditation could turn out to be a dead end, an unfortunate waste of time, but nothing more. The biggest downside would be the cost which, at its top end, comes in at roughly \$1,500.

I don't know. The skeptic in me wonders if meditation is really as effective as claimed. And the cynic in me wonders if I would ever get past my perception of the silliness of it, and be able to get to a state of pure consciousness. And the artist in me dreams of the possibilities that await me if it really works.

Transcendental Meditation seems to have had enough of a spotlight on it for more than four decades to uncover the ingredients of the snake oil if it were there, but the studies and reports of groups like the American Medical Association seem to support this as a legitimate path toward a happier healthier life. And the positive practical experiences of thousands of school-age students infuses the efforts of David Lynch with a mandate for action and support for the effort to bring about change from within for millions of at-risk children.

BPA Danger: Better Safe Than Sorry

Originally published on HonestBaby.com in July 2008

With all the care and caution that goes into the selection and preparation of the food and drink that nourishes our children, relatively little or sometimes no attention is given to the hidden dangers that may lurk in the vessels which carry them. The safety of the bottles, cups, and dishes we use is just assumed. However, a rising tide of evidence is building that points towards potentially serious harmful effects of Bisphenol A, a chemical that is used in approximately ninety percent of all plastic baby bottles. It is also present in water bottles, plastic food containers, and can even be found in the lining of aluminum cans.

Bisphenol A, commonly known as BPA, is compound chemical component of polycarbonate plastics. When introduced into the human system, BPA mimics the presence and action of estrogen, and, based on this, causes dangerous interference with the normal activities of that natural hormone. In a 2004 study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ninety five percent of Americans analyzed had BPA present in their urine.

While the evidence against BPA is disputed by some, such as the plastic container manufacturers, or at the very least considered inconclusive, studies and analysis of research data point to a very strong connection between exposure to BPA and the development of breast and prostate cancer, uterine fibroids, and decreased sperm count. Most importantly, the highest risk is associated with the exposure of babies and young children to BPA, as they are still developing and most susceptible to the hormonal interference in the brain activity which can lead to the early onset of puberty in girls, learning disorders, diabetes and hyperactivity.

In 2008, the U.S. National Toxicology Program had reviewed available data and concluded that there was definite reason for concern over the effects of BPA on humans. Canada is considering designating BPA as a toxic chemical and several U.S. states, such as California, have tried unsuccessfully to ban the chemical. And a major class action lawsuit is already under way in California.

The key factor that releases BPA into the food is heat. Adding hot food or liquid to a BPA-based baby bottle or sippy cup, or heating these items up in the containers themselves, leads to a chemical reaction which releases small doses into the food, and is then ingested. Room temperature cold drinks and food do not appear to cause this reaction and, at this time, do not seem to pose a risk.

Avoiding baby bottles and food containers manufactured with Bisphenol A is the most obvious solution for avoiding this danger. Unfortunately, manufacturers are not required to label their products that contain BPA (although consumer activists

are seeking to change this), so it is impossible to determine which baby bottles are made with the chemical. It is much easier to identify those that are definitely made without it as those manufacturers will proudly advertise this fact on their packaging. A strong market for BPA free products is growing and strong sales will serve to increase this trend. Glass bottles do not contain BPA and remain a very safe and time-tested choice.

The potential dangers of BPA are continuing to come to light and issues with the lax safety standard of children's toys and other products made in China have also recently made headlines so, in addition to the careful thought that goes into planning your child's diet, also take note of the other products involved in the process, such as baby bottles and sippy cups, as they can play a major role in the safe and healthy development of your sons and daughters.

Beverly Hills Chihuahua

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Preceded by an infectious trailer that proved to be a crowd favorite, featuring a song and dance number with a cast of hundreds the likes of which has not been seen since the heyday of Busby Berkeley (that is if Berkeley had produced the closing ceremonies of the Westminster Dog Show), BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA arrives in a decidedly different package. The non-musical film itself retains the fun promised in that preview, but brings the surreal nature of hundreds of singing dogs dancing down the steps of an ancient South American temple down to a more realistic level (that is if talking dogs living the high life is realistic).

Part thriller, part road movie, and all action, Beverly Hills Chihuahua follows the trials of Chloe (Drew Barrymore), one of the most pampered pups in California, and Delgado (Andy Garcia), a cynical, disgraced, and disheartened ex-police dog, who both find themselves victim to a well organized back alley dog fighting ring. Thrown together into this dire predicament, the little lady and the tramp bond, at first out of desperation and duty, and then out of friendship and loyalty, as they escape and go on the run to save their lives.

Brought on vacation to Mexico by her dog sitter Rachel (Piper Perabo), the well meaning but fun loving niece of her wealthy owner, the spoiled Chloe is quickly kidnapped by the dog fighting ring while Rachel is out partying. Presented as the opening attraction at the fights, Chloe faces certain death when she is matched against an evil Doberman, Diablo, until Delgado reveals a glimmer of the hero he once was by rescuing her from the pit, and leading them both on a daring escape. With Diablo and his owners in hot pursuit, they make a desperate run for freedom with danger threatening them every step of the way.

Meanwhile, Rachel searches frantically for the missing Chloe, engaging the help of the local police, along with Sam, her aunt's landscaper, and his own Chihuahua, the scrappy and fearless Papi (George Lopez). Switching from the song and dance man featured in the trailer, Papi is tireless as he leads Rachel and Sam on the trail to rescue Chloe, who he fell in love with at first sight back in Beverly Hills.

And from there, the race is on and does not stop until the inevitable happy ending in which the good guys get what they want and the bad guys get what they deserve. Along the way, the film provides enough thrills and laughs for both children and adults to make the film an enjoyable piece of popcorn entertainment, although it falls short of earning its wings as a Disney family classic.

Drew Barrymore's is appropriately delicate and clueless as the pampered Chloe and George Lopez is appropriately sarcastic as the street smart Papi. Andy Garcia brings the true standout performance, providing an understated but noble characterization of a hero in despair, seeking redemption and a reason to be a hero again. Garcia's voice work brings a depth to this character not usually found in talking dog movies (if gravitas can ever be found in a talking dog movie). Piper Perabo and Manolo Cardona (in his first English language role as Sam the landscaper) are the likable, if unextraordinary, human leads that follow behind the action.

Heavily steeped in Mexican culture, Disney finds an admirable balance between avoiding stereotypes (the police are not corrupt) and featuring Latino villains (the dog fighting ring and border smugglers), while finding humor in and about the culture in a way that resonates with that community without insulting it. This sensitivity in such a broad piece of popular entertainment is undoubtedly due in no small part to the all-star supporting cast featuring Edward James Olmos, Paul Rodriguez, Luiz Guzman, and Cheech Marin who, along with the headliners Garcia and Lopez, create a unique ensemble of genuinely entertaining personalities.

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA is a light hearted, fun, family action movie that will provide enough entertainment to justify the 90 minute investment required. This film is in theaters now.

The Green Lunch Box

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It is easy to believe in a cause. Opinions are free for everyone to have and, for some, they don't even require any time or thought either. It is also easy to support a cause. Signing a petition or sending in a small donation always helps. Living up to the cause is the hard part especially when it requires effort, sacrifice, or change.

The environment is a cause that everyone can support so today we will look at ways to create a green lunch box and the benefit it will have on our planet.

THE LUNCH BOX

America goes through an estimated 100 billion plastic bags each year. That is 360 bags annually for each of us. Based on this, it looks like the green choice starts right away with the selection of the lunchbox itself.

Make a dent in this statistic by sending your kids (and spouse) off to school (and work) with a lunch box instead of a plastic bag. Pick a metal lunchbox and you now have a reusable, recyclable resource to take the place of the daily plastic bag that goes straight to the landfill. A plastic lunchbox will work as well but the less plastic we consume the better.

Whether it is an authentic vintage lunchbox featuring a classic TV show or a brand new streamlined box, they are in abundant supply and can be easily found online at sites like ebay.com, lunchboxes.com or locally in stores.

THE DRINK

The Container Recycling Institute estimates that over 134 billion beverage containers were used but not recycled in the U.S in 2005. These bottles and cans went straight to landfills or incinerators where they either piled up as non-biodegradable garbage or were burned up, emitting pollutants into the air.

Eliminate the daily production of bottle, can and juice box waste by using a thermos. Fill it, use it, wash it, and refill it- every day. After one week, you kept five bottles out of the landfill. After one year, that number is two hundred sixty.

The green (and healthy) choice continues with the selection of beverage to put in the thermos. These days, organic and pesticide free juices do not need to be hunted down in few and far between health food stores. They are right on the shelf in every supermarket along side the bread, milk and eggs.

Another environmentally friendly option is the use of powdered drinks. One large can of ice tea mix makes up to 20 or more quarts with the addition of tap water. The benefit here is obvious when stacked up against the equivalent amount of bottled drinks.

THE SANDWICH

The key strategy developing here is to find reusable resources for all the packaging that goes into producing a daily lunch box and this includes the sandwich or entrée. More than 40 percent of all plastic that is produced each year is used in packaging of some form or another, used once and discarded.

Instead of wrapping that PB&J in disposable plastic wrap or tin foil, invest in a sandwich shaped / sized container that can do the same job each day. Familiar companies such as Tupperware and Ziploc provide alternatives like this.

From hormone free deli meats to free range chicken to organic, pesticide free peanut butter, green choices for the lunch entrée are plentiful and easy to come by. Virtually all the perennial lunch box favorites are available on the green lunch box menu so just take a few extra minutes selecting the healthier ingredients and then proceed with business as usual. For the more adventurous, new recipes await exploration and invention!

THE FRUIT

It is hard to go wrong with fruit. All natural with its own wrapping, fresh fruit is pure, tasty and healthy with an enormous variety of flavors that are bound to satisfy everyone once the right ones are found. However, even fruit can have a drawback - hidden danger can live on the skin in the form of the pesticide used during the growing process.

Pesticides, by definition, are poison, and 99 percent of them effect species other than the ones they are designed to kill. And that includes humans. Anything that helps minimize exposure to pesticides is a positive and recommended course of action.

Chose produce that is grown pesticide free or, if that is not practical or possible, use an organic fruit and vegetable wash to thoroughly clean the exterior before consuming.

THE NAPKIN

The negative impact of excessive paper use is self-evident, whether it is the 200 billion pounds of paper America uses every year, or the paper towels and napkins that we go through each day as if they were grown on trees, so to speak. Well,

of course, paper is grown on trees and the world loses 32 million acres of forest each year through deforestation, so every effort to cut down on paper use helps.

For the green choice, invest in cloth napkins to take the place of the paper that gets tossed away with each meal. Recycled in the weekend laundry, these napkins can be put back to work again and again.

THE BOTTOM LINE

With a little extra time, thought and effort, it is easy to turn out an environmentally friendly green lunch box which will have long-term benefits for you, your children, and our planet.

2009 Family Film Preview

Originally published on HonestBaby.com in December 2008

The new year is about to arrive. And yes, there will be movies. Here is a preview of the family films that lay ahead.

HOTEL FOR DOGS – Jan. 16th

Faced with the prospect of losing their beloved dog because their new foster home doesn't allow pets, 16-year-old Andi and her younger brother scramble to find him a new home. The enterprising siblings secretly convert an abandoned hotel into a five star doghouse for their pooch and, in the process, end up rescuing every stray in the city with the angry dogcatcher hot on their heels. With a trailer featuring smart kids, even cuter dogs, a hotel full of Rube Goldberg inspired devices and enough action to keep everyone happy, DreamWorks Pictures and Nickelodeon Movies present what promises to be the year's first favorite film for families and dog-lovers alike. Emma Roberts, niece of Hollywood's "Pretty Woman" Julia, and a star in her own right (Nancy Drew, Aquamarine), leads the cast as Andi.

INKHEART – opening Jan. 23rd

Based on the Inkworld book trilogy by Cornelia Funke, Brendan Fraser headlines this fantasy film that serves as the more serious cousin to Adam Sandler's recent *BEDTIME STORIES*. Fraser plays Mortimer Folchart, a loving father who, while reading *Inkheart* to his young daughter, discovers that he has the unique ability to bring the characters to life. Unfortunately, his strange talent releases the story's cruel and sinister villain, Capricorn, and traps his wife within its pages. A decade later, Folchart is still seeking a way to rescue his wife just as his daughter begins to realize that she now holds the same power as her father, and may be able to rescue both her parents before their history is written for good. *INKHEART* guarantees that "adventure lives on every page" and, based on the trailer that New Line Cinema has put together, it just may live up to the hype (or at the very least, serve up enough magic for audiences until *Harry Potter* is released later in the year).

CORALINE – opening on Feb. 6th

Henry Selick, director of the modern classic *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, returns to form with *CORALINE*, the first stop-motion animation film to be shot stereoscopically in 3-D. Based on the multiple award winning novella by Neil Gaiman, the film tells the tale of Coraline (voiced by Dakota Fanning), a young, inquisitive but bored and lonely girl who discovers a secret doorway to a parallel world that mirrors her own and is as much fun and exciting as it is creepy, complete with duplicates of her parents, identical in all respects except for the black button eyes which characterize everyone she meets. Neglected by her busy parents in the real world, Coraline enjoys the attention

she receives from her alternate universe parents... until the fantasy starts turning to nightmare. When her possessive 'Other Mother' decides to keep Coraline, she not only faces the prospect of never seeing her real parents again, she finds that she is next in line to have her eyes replaced with buttons. CORALINE's dark theme and tone might make it better for young adults instead of younger children, but if your kids are open to spookier fare, this film may give them a fun case of the creeps until Halloween.

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN – opening on March 13th

A sequel of sorts, thirty four years in the making, this reimagining of the 1975 Disney hit ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN pluses the action and adventure in the story of two extraterrestrial siblings racing back to their crashed spaceship in order to stop an alien invasion that will destroy Earth. Helping them escape from both the sinister corporation that seeks to steal their powers and the government forces that stand in their way, Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson is along for the ride to supply the muscle and to lighten up the mood between action set pieces. The trailer presents a sharp looking family friendly blast of science fiction. If it can live up to its coming attraction, RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN should be a crowd pleaser. Fans of the original should keep an eye out for Kim Richards and Ike Eisenmann, stars of the 1975 film, in cameo roles as a waitress and a sheriff.

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS – opening on March 27th

DreamWorks uses some artistic license to borrow from rival studios and mixes doses of MONSTERS INC and THE INCREDIBLES with a dash of MARS ATTACKS!, along with creatures from half a dozen other films, to come up with a dream team of oddball monsters to battle aliens that have just invaded the Earth. The smartest cockroach on Earth joins a 50 ft. woman, the Blob's friendlier brother, Mothra's cuddly cousin, and the son of the Creature from the Black Lagoon, in a fight to save mankind from extraterrestrial invaders. Despite these somewhat derivative elements, MONSTERS VS. ALIENS looks like a fresh and funny take on the battle to save the world genre. Along with CORALINE, this film presents another cinema premiere as the first computer animated film produced in 3-D. It also leads the pack with its impressive voice talent - Reese Witherspoon, Kiefer Sutherland, Stephen Colbert, Paul Rudd, Hugh Laurie, Seth Rogen, Rainn Wilson and Will Arnett.

HANNAH MONTANA: THE MOVIE – opening on April 10th

Miley Cyrus makes the jump to the big screen in the role that made her famous, Hannah Montana, in what is likely to be the vehicle that wraps up her wildly popular television series. Superstar Hannah heads home to Tennessee in a search for some perspective about what really matters as her show biz career increasingly overwhelms the rest of her life. Fans of the show are likely to be pleased by the movie and may even be surprised if the film succeeds in adding some gravitas to the character's emotional arc.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN – opening on May 22nd

Ben Stiller returns as the world's most harried museum guard, this time corralling the cast of characters that come to life in Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian Museum. While the trailer does not give an inkling of the actual plot this time around, it does serve up some compelling action and gags that promise more of the same for fans of the original. There was a lot to like about this new franchise the first time around, so if it can once again pair an interesting story with its surreal premise, this sequel will prove to be a must-see exhibit. And adding Amy Adams to the cast as Amelia Earhart is a great start toward making this a solid sequel. Joining returning cast members Robin Williams, Owen Wilson, Ricky Gervais, and Dick Van Dyke are Hank Azaria, Eugene Levy and Jonah Hill.

UP – opening on May 29th

Pixar returns to theaters this summer with the story of crabby Carl Frederickson, a 78 year old balloon salesman facing a move to a retirement home, who decides it's finally time to follow his dream of adventure before his chance is gone forever. With thousands of balloons hoisting his house aloft, Carl heads up, up and away on his escape to the jungles of South America. As no adventure is complete without a young stowaway, Carl quickly discovers he has one too, hanging on to his porch for dear life, in the form of Russell, an 8-year-old Wilderness Explorer. The teaser trailer reveals little more than the premise but, in the capable hands of MONSTERS INC. director Pete Docter and the Pixar team, it is no gamble to bet that UP will be one of the year's best family films. Continuing 2009's trend toward 3-D, this will be the first Pixar film presented in Disney Digital 3-D.

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS – opening on July 3rd

All he wants is a nut to nibble on but, underneath the frozen surface of the Ice Age, Scrat discovers a hidden, tropical oasis that serves as home for the dinosaurs that survived extinction. Manny, Sid, Diego and Ellie return for a third entry in this franchise which sets them on a collision course with their own Jurassic extinction when they happen to steal some T-Rex eggs. And, of course, making a dinosaur mad is never a good idea. ICE AGE 3 also joins the ever growing group of animated film being presented in 3-D this year.

HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE – opening on July 17th

Hogwarts' hero Harry Potter continues toward his inevitable confrontation with He Who Must Not Be Named in this sixth, and second to last, entry in J.K. Rowling's mega-franchise. Much darker than the prior episodes, evil takes center stage to dominate and wreak havoc upon our young heroes. Fans who have read the book already know the story but, for those not yet in the know, this is one film for which spoilers should be strongly avoided. The HALF-BLOOD PRINCE is the one sure thing at the box office this year and should prove to be a well-deserved hit. All of Hogwarts still-living alumni return for another semester of magic, mystery and mayhem.

G-FORCE –opening on July 24th

In this live action Disney film, guinea pigs take center stage as members of G-FORCE, an elite group of secret agents. Once again, just in case you missed it, we said an elite group of FBI guinea pigs. Note to self: File review under “Now we’ve seen everything”. Of course, G-FORCE will be shown in 3-D. The film looks like it will be reasonable fun for undemanding juvenile audiences, however, beware of a marked increase in requests for a pet guinea pig after seeing this movie.

THEY CAME FROM UPSTAIRS –opening in July 31st

ET’s are back in suburbia and this time they are hiding upstairs. Ashley Tisdale leads the cast of kids who need to defend their Maine vacation home from an advance invasion force from the planet Zirkonia. With mind control technology that easily neutralizes adults, world domination is only a matter of time for the Zirkonians. However, luckily for this family, these aliens are pint-sized gremlins who would be more at home in a Three Zirkonian Stooges short. With determination, ingenuity, and an ally on the inside, in the form of a cuddly alien who would rather play than fight, victory for the Earthlings is almost certain. Originally scheduled for release in February, THEY CAME FROM UPSTAIRS, was pushed back to a mid-summer opening. Hopefully, 20th Century Fox is using the extra time to tweak the special effects as, in the trailer that was prematurely released a few months ago, the CGI aliens had a noticeably fake appearance in their live action surroundings.

9 – opening Sep. 9th

Produced by Tim Burton and reminiscent of his haunting style, 9 is a dark nightmare set in a post-apocalyptic future world, parallel to our own, inhabited by sentient rag dolls. These patchwork heroes face their own extinction at the hands of sinister foes intent on their destruction, but their survival is linked to the last hope for mankind. They must protect their future and ours at all cost. Based on an Oscar nominated short film of the same name from 2005, 9 is an audacious and mature art house entry in the animated field this year. While the film is not yet rated, the trailer is approved for all audiences so the filmmakers may be marketing this as a children’s film, however the coming attraction presents an intense, serious, and disturbing vision of a dangerous world. These rag dolls would definitely not be at home in the family friendly world of TOY STORY. 9, by design, is scheduled to be released on 9-9-09.

ASTRO BOY – opening in October

Built by Metro City's resident genius Tenma, in the image of his dead son, Astro Boy is a super robot that is faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. The one thing the powerful mechanical boy cannot do is replace the son for whom Tenma still grieves. Saddened by this failure to be accepted by his “father”, Astro Boy sets out on a journey to learn what it means to be human. After learning that Metro

City is in danger, Astro Boy returns home to defend the family he loves, using all the power he has to become the hero that he was always meant to be. This sci-fi update of Pinocchio originated in Japan as a manga comic book in 1952, and was followed by a popular television show in 1963. The trailer is nothing more than a short teaser showing Astro Boy in action, but it looks great and bodes well for this action packed Americanized attempt at anime. Of course, the filmmakers got the memo too, so this film will be shown in 3-D.