



# 2006 Pittsburgh Steelers Schedule

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## post-gazette.com Arts & Entertainment

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### TV

## Tuned In: Curious George makes mischief on new PBS animated series

Friday, September 01, 2006

By Rob Owen, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PASADENA, Calif. -- Maybe Frank Welker has an inferiority complex.

"My mother was the only woman to ever have been re-elected to three consecutive terms in the Colorado State Senate. My father was nominated for a Nobel Prize for his innovations in physics," said Welker, a well-known Hollywood voice actor. "I have two brothers. One was the youngest graduate of the Harvard Law School. The other was an all-conference wrestler, All-American football player. Both have IQs above 143 and both were Rhodes Scholars. Myself, I'd like to do a medley of dog sounds for you."

And then he did: A Beverly Hills watchdog, an old dog early in the morning, a dog with fleas, a dog choking on a flea ... and on he went, making cat sounds in addition to dog sounds over breakfast in late July at a PBS press conference.

Welker, who made up all that stuff about his family as a lead up to his "dog sounds" punch line, demonstrated his special talent as an introduction to his latest role, giving sound (not voice) to the title character in PBS's "Curious George" (8 a.m. Mondays through Fridays, WQED).

After hitting the big screen in an animated film earlier this year (produced by Universal, which is also responsible for this series), Curious George will get a regular perch in PBS's morning kids block. Half-hour episodes will include two 12-minute episodes each, like Monday's "Curious George Flies a Kite," in which the little guy goes flying through the air.

(There's also a neighbor boy who lives next door to The Man With the Yellow Hat's country home who is a little dim: He keeps calling George a "city kid.")

Jeff Bennett gives voice to The Man With the Yellow Hat, and actor William H. Macy narrates the series. George, of course, makes noise but



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William H. Macy narrates the series. George, of course, makes noise but does not speak.

"Legally, Margret Rey, [co-author] of 'Curious George,' [said in her will] she never wanted George to speak because she wanted him to remain a monkey," explained series executive producer Carol Greenwald. "We needed to convey everything he was thinking, everything he was feeling, as well as all of the educational content we're trying to communicate in math, science and engineering."

She said George's curiosity made him the perfect character to explore such subjects.

"In the books there are a lot of examples of George taking something apart, having to move a heavy object, having to figure out how to do it," Greenwald said. "So the adaptations of the original stories were quite simple."

George also gets into mischief in the books, but some of that has been left out of the TV show.

"George does get into a lot of trouble smoking cigarettes and going to jail, but we didn't do those stories," Greenwald said. "But we really want him to be his curious self, to continue to get into trouble, to continue to cause chaos. He does drive a bulldozer at a construction site. He does do things that you would be horrified to think your children would do."

For Macy, who's married to actress Felicity Huffman ("Desperate Housewives") and has daughters ages 4 and 6, "Curious George" offers a chance to work on a project he can share with his children, unlike, say, a violent, sexual movie like "The Cooler," which he starred in.

"It occurred to me when my oldest daughter was born that she'd be about 50 before I let her see some of the films I've made," Macy said. "When you have kids, it does make you look back at your filmography and think about it a little bit."

Macy said he and Huffman have been reading the "George" books to their daughters for years.

"Your kids can watch 'Curious George,' " Macy said. "You can leave the room, and you don't have to worry. I love the Pixar films, but one must admit that they are filled with double entendres. They're designed to please parents and keep them in the theaters and for the children. 'Curious George' is for kids, which is not to say that it's not funny, but it's for kids."

### All hail 'Chad Vader'

Forget about the new comedies coming to TV this fall -- the funniest show is already airing on [YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com).

Two 5-minute episodes of "Chad Vader: Day Shift Manager" are already posted (just do a search on the title), and a third is in the works. The series follows the adventures of "Star Wars" heavy Darth Vader's underachieving

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brother, Chad, as he works in a grocery store. Chad deals with shopper complaints and plotting co-workers who are prone to causing "a disturbance in the force" that could be as simple as the need for a cleanup in aisle five.

"Strike me down with your hate and claim your refund," Chad commands a customer who wants to return a purchase.

Created by Wisconsin-based Blame Society Film Productions ([sflu.net/main.htm](http://sflu.net/main.htm)), "Chad Vader" may not feature the most polished actors, but then again, neither do the shows on My Network TV. And "Chad Vader" is far more entertaining.

### **Labor Day telethon**

WPXI will air the 41st annual "Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon" beginning at 11:30 p.m. Sunday on PCNC and 12:35 a.m. Monday on WPXI, continuing through Monday afternoon.

Bill Cardille returns for his 36th year as host of local segments, which will originate, as always, from Monroeville Mall.

Darieth Chisolm and Gordon Loesch will assist in hosting Sunday night with Newlin Archinal, Vince Simms and Katrina Owens on deck Monday morning. Cardille joins David Johnson and Peggy Finnegan Monday afternoon.

### **Channel surfing**

ABC will develop an American version of hit British soap "Footballers Wives." ... FX's "Nip/Tuck" returns for its fourth season at 10 p.m. Tuesday. ... "Le Grille-Pain Trahi," a short film about a man and his toaster that was made by Chuck and Joe Girty of Lawrenceville, will air Monday on IFC's "Media Lab Uploaded" (8:35 p.m.). ... Nielsen Media Research issued a report yesterday that shows while Pittsburgh is ranked No. 22 nationally among all households, the city is No. 38 nationally among Asian households, No. 48 among African-American households and No. 113 among Hispanic households.

### **Tuned In Journal**

Today's Tuned In Journal ([www.post-gazette.com/tv/tunedin](http://www.post-gazette.com/tv/tunedin)) reviews Monday's NBC movie "Behind the Camera: Different Strokes." Next week, entries will include reviews of My Network TV's "Fashion House" and the new season of FX's "Nip/Tuck."

### **TV Q&A**

This week's TV Q&A responds to questions about "The Office," "Psych" and the new fall season. Read it online at [www.post-gazette.com/tv](http://www.post-gazette.com/tv).

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