

**MY LIFE AS A COUCH POTATO**  
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Recent knee surgery has required a level of inactivity I have never enjoyed before – and I use the term “enjoy” loosely. It was a relatively minor surgery, but anything they do inside the knee means you’re off your feet for a while. In addition, the discomfort is sufficient to keep you faithful to those happy pills, which helps you not care about all the stuff you’re not getting done. I have spent time in the chaise on the deck, weather permitting, but mostly I have been in the place so many people desire to be - on the couch. Meet Bob DePriest, Couch Potato.

Before you get all envious on me.... First, I am not a gamer. No offense, but I can’t see the point of spending countless hours, controller in hand, conquering level after level, only to find .... another level. The last game I enjoyed was head to head MarioKart with my young ‘uns, but my last kid left home 5 years ago and took the console with him. I miss him, but not Mario. Video/computer games are addictive, time consuming, pointless, develop no discernable skill set, and actually stunt social growth. I hope this comment ignites a firestorm of protest and debate – The Times prints letters, you know – but the protesters are too busy gaming.

Second, there is only so much TV you can stand. That’s right. With 69,471 options, it is still difficult to find something entertaining. All the sitcoms are carbon copies with the same four gags pulled by different people. Late night standup? Mostly just infomercials for the next soon-to-be-released movie. All these American Idol spinoffs? Most AME churches have better singers and musicians. Enough already with the over dramatized, over produced Survivor/Big Brother/Bachelor/Apprentice unreality garbage. Please, somebody get a life.

For drama you have the technically interesting CSI/NCIS and the like, if you can stand the violence and filth. And how do you explain our fascination with vampires? “We live through your death.” Can you think of a more evil, depressing storyline? Since my lovely wife and I have a strong faith ethic, we have difficulty with these and other pseudo spiritual scenarios such as Ghost Whisperer, Medium, and the like. For people who have actually suffered loss – which is most of us – such programs encourage us to seek comfort in areas where there is none. This is made more poignant by the knowledge that there actually is a source of real comfort. You won’t find Him on Prime Time - He couldn’t get a sponsor.

I have found a few gems in the mix. One reality show that is worth the trouble is “Undercover Boss” where hidden good and not-so-good people are discovered and rewarded accordingly. The writers of “In Plain Sight” keep violence manageable while revealing exceptionally poetic insights from the most unexpected sources. And the one I always come back to – “America’s Funniest Videos”, because nothing is funnier, more endearing, or more entertaining than, well, us.

As the resident Mr. Couch Potato Head, I am re-discovering an old avenue of entertainment - reading. Like in actual books. As my old childhood friends, books were my comrades in arms, my mentors in sleuthing, and my confidants in romance. Through them I drove race cars in national championships, flew fighter jets in the Korean War, survived depth charge attacks in the Pacific Ocean, and caught turncoat spies in the Cold War. I rode every hill and valley of the old west, and fought – and won – many a gun battle on dusty streets. I traveled to distant galaxies and tamed wild planets for colonization by earthlings. (I met the original John Carter!) When I couldn’t buy a date in high school, there were endless scores of hot babes at my disposal – although back in the day we didn’t call them hot babes. I really don’t remember what we called them, but we had a good time. I solved countless mysteries, formed lifelong friendships with various wild animals, and toured England - as a horse. Simultaneously, I was assimilating information about politics, geography, different cultures, science, and the future, while increasing my vocabulary and improving my assimilative skills. Why would a caring parent spend hundreds on a video game when for less money you can buy a Kindle or similar electronic book? Almost

any book in the world is available for instant download. Of course, if you cave in to the old “Well, Johnny’s mom bought him one,” you just revealed who the adult is at your house.

Then there’s talking. The beautiful and talented Better Half has many passions. She loves her students (she teaches government in high school), loves the Constitution, loves eating healthy, loves Gospel music, loves her kids, and more. I love hearing her wax eloquent. When she runs down, I can catch up with my Facebook friends, call my chatty sister, send off Emails to annoy my Congressman, or blog.

They say my knee will be better soon. I’ve got plenty waiting on me to do outside, but meanwhile my dearest is coming up the steps, so excuse me while I slip back into my favorite role, Mr. Couch Sweet Potato. Ciao.