

SCREEN SCENE

TV channel encourages kids to use their 'Noggin'

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The next time someone tells you to use your "noggin" turn on the computer, and type www.noggin.com.

You'll be connected to a place where kids can really use their "noggins" to learn new and interesting things.

Noggin, described as "the new thinking channel for kids from Nickelodeon and the Children's Television Workshop," began airing July 15 on Comcast Cable's Channel 44 in Garden City. Comcast was the first cable company in Michigan to offer the program.

"From time to time we like to beef up our channel line-up," said Fred Eaton, area manager for public affairs for Comcast Cable. "It's family friendly, very high quality programs. They don't duplicate PBS, but the programming is of the same sort. We think that it's important for young people to have a channel they can watch to learn something and be entertained

with something besides violence and shoot-'em-up."

The commercial-free station airs 24-hours a day and is targeted to children ages 2-12. Programs for preschoolers air 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. In the afternoon, Noggin offers programming for kids ages 6-12. Adults can tune in to watch the late night lineup of classic educational programs with nostalgic appeal.

Featured programs include the best from the libraries of Nickelodeon and the Children's Television Workshop — "Blues Clues," "Allegra's Window," "Sesame Street," and "The Electric Company."

Noggin's mission, explains general manager Tom Ascheim, is to "serve kids' natural urge to learn — on television and online — where learning is driven by them. Our slogan, 'What Sparks You?' celebrates kids' natural excitement for learning by asking kids themselves to help shape the network's agenda and steer its content."

Nicole de Troy was logged in to

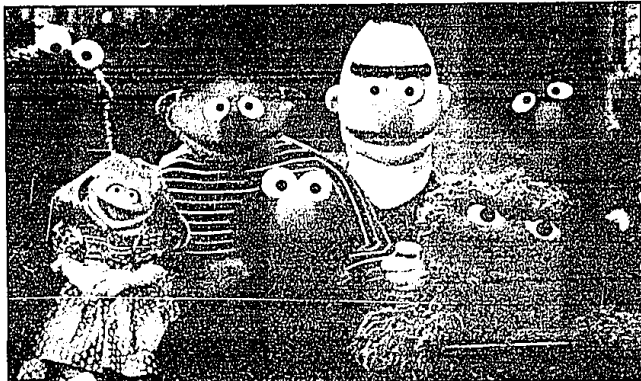
Noggin on Friday morning. She was playing "Nog 11" a game where children can help create a whole new language called "Nogginese." Words visitors create are incorporated into a quiz for the future.

Kids who visit Noggin on the Web can play games, ask questions, contribute stories, poems, ideas and suggestions.

"The Internet is a fast way to reach a lot of people," said Ascheim. "You get ridiculously rapid response. We want kids to feel like they're in charge of their own learning. We are listening to them to work for them."

Shortly after its February launch, Noggin.com recorded 21,000 visits to the site. By the end of June the number had grown to 830,000.

Noggin is expanding its TV viewing audience as well. "We'd like to be a broadly distributed network," said Ascheim. "Comcast is the first analog (basic) cable company to broadcast the channel. You're breaking new ground for us."



Tune In: "Sesame Street" is just one of the many popular programs that airs on Noggin.

Jewish Ensemble Theatre announces season line-up

Season tickets are now available for Jewish Ensemble Theatre's millennium season. JET performs in the Aaron DeRo Theatre, lower level of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 West Maple Rd. (corner of Maple & Drake) in West Bloomfield. Season tickets range from \$50 for matinee previews to \$88 for Saturday night performances in the regular run.

Individual tickets are \$16-\$25, based on the performance. Discounts are available for seniors, students and groups. Ample free parking is also available. The theater is handicap accessible. For information, visit the Web site at <http://com-net.org/jet>.

To purchase tickets, call (248) 788-2900.

"The Immigrant," by Mark Harolik, will be performed Oct. 6 through Nov. 7. It is a true story about two Eastern European Jews who immigrate to a small Texas town, in 1909. Inspired by his grandmother's photo album, Harolik tells the story of two out of the thousands of Jewish immigrants who ended up in the American Southwest through an immigrant resettlement program.

"The Prisoner of Second Avenue," by Neil Simon, will be presented Dec. 22 through Jan. 23. The play was written in the 1970s, but it is surprisingly and

hysterically timeless. Neil Simon's comedy touches on serious subjects such as urban angst and mental breakdown, yet is full of snappy two-liners and determined to send you out feeling good. Simon captures the hell of modern city life, while maintaining his signature tickle of the funny bone.

Arthur Miller's "Broken Glass" is being performed March 24 through April 19. A woman is stricken with a mysterious illness that prevents her from walking soon after reading about Kristallnacht in the newspaper. It's 1938 and her husband is the only Jew in an otherwise exclusively WASP real

estate firm. Her doctor is an eminent scientist, but even with ample resources and the best medical care nothing seems to work. "Broken Glass" is a powerful work by Miller dealing with relationships, hope and what it means to be a Jew.

The final show of the season will be "The Day We Met" by Kitty Dubin, May 24 through June 26. "The Day We Met" is a new comedy work that had a very successful premier at JET's Festival in 1998. This play consists of a series of vignettes dealing with modern

relationships seen with the playwright's special insight and humor, tied together through the theme of first meetings. Characters young and old, male and female, give a clear and funny off-beat view of the human condition.

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Science Museum, an exhibit produced by the Science Source Center.

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