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Americans Suffering from Entertainment Burnout Desperately Seek Original Voices

LOS ANGELES -- Everything in society is rushing at a breakneck speed; work, play, education, technology. Because of that, people are seeking entertainment that can remove them from that pace. Most entertainment, however, is paced the same way -- too fast. Since the business of entertainment and information were taken over by business graduates rather than creative people, this fast pace is being fed to us by Corporate America. From television to movies, from books to newspaper articles, "MTV editing" is more the norm than the exception. Even talk shows like Oprah and Ellen have a guest on for a few minutes, then they're whisked away for another guest so the audience won't get bored or go away.

"It's because almost everything is created either in Los Angeles or New York and people there are afraid if they slow down they'll die. Like sharks who have to keep moving even when they're sleeping," says writer Steve Mancini, who, ironically, lives in Los Angeles and swims while he sleeps.

When given a chance, though, audiences do find slower paced gems. A few years ago My Big Fat Greek Wedding surprised all the smart entertainment executives by making a lot of money. This year, it's March of the Penguins. "I wouldn't be surprised if some studio exec tried to add a terrorist subplot to that movie," writer Geoff Hoff says. "You know, some sea lion sneaks into the group with explosives strapped to his flab and our hero has to decide whether to save his baby penguin or throw himself on the bad guy."

The solution, then, seems to be the independent voice, artists that don't come prepackaged. Both the Internet and radio, which are part of the problem, are also a large part of that solution. They are where unusual, original and even strange artists are finding an audience. Voices like David Sedaras could only have found their audience on the radio. "Maybe the American public is smarter than we give them credit for," Hoff says. "Of course, by 'we' he means the American public," Mancini adds. "Or an Irish elf."

Geoff Hoff and Steve Mancini, a gay/straight writing team, are the authors of the recently published book "Weeping Willow: Welcome to River Bend", which is volume one in a series of satirical novels. The book started as an on-line satirical serial that had fans worldwide. It is paced very deliberately, the first three chapters take place from one evening through the next afternoon. Deliberate does not mean dull, it's still a page-turner and is unexpectedly hilarious. John DeChancie of Writer's Digest says the book is a quirky, class-by-itself novel. The authors bantering with each other within the text of the novel, arguing about the direction it should take, deciding what words to use and discussing Spinoza is just one of the ways they break the rules. The book is available in both paperback (ISBN: 1420800477, \$14.95) and hard cover (ISBN: 1420800485, \$26.45) and can be found on Amazon.com. Their web site is <http://www.JosephCoaler.com>.

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