*Wok & Roll by Peter Kwong*

**From education to emotion, YouTube has it all**

I’m so glad I found YouTube on my computer. There are all kinds of programs and movies that are free (yes, music to my ears).

My wife loves watching movies, so we subscribe to Netflix. Not only do they have movie channels but they also have different movies on DVDs to send you every week, so you can actually glue yourself to the sofa for days and weeks.

But Oscars night is Colleen’s true favorite. Unless we were expecting another grandchild, all activities would be canceled or postponed. I remember that when we were in Milwaukee, her buddies actually threw a party for the evening.

Yes, a party with balloons, glitter, different kinds of homemade hors d’oeuvres and champagne flowing! The ladies even made blank forms with names of the nominees for different categories.

While the ladies would be screaming whenever the announcement of the winner came out, we husbands would be in another room calmly drinking our brews while discussing what the Packers should do to win another Super Bowl.

I can watch some movies with her. But she has very different tastes. While I enjoy my James Bond series, she loves movies that make you ponder and put your brain in deep-freeze mode.

I would go to bed wide awake, still thinking about the plot with all these different characters that popped in and out. Somehow, she would try to explain to me their relationships, which only confused me further.

Lordy, James Bond is the good guy. Though a womanizer, his mission is to save the world from the villains who would hire bad guys to do the dirty work. I knew who the bad guys were and after a couple of hours of car chasing, explosions, skydiving and drinking vodka martinis (shaken, not stirred), I could go to bed and have sweet dreams all night.

Yes, my wife is spoiled. As my brownie points are adding up, I do need to cash them in sometime. But I’ll just keep adding more points for the time being, what the heck! So now, if I make her a big bowl of freshly popped popcorn (with real butter, of course) she will let me be, to watch my own movies while she does her own thing.

That’s the time when I hit YouTube. I don’t know how they do it, but they have shows and movies in Chinese (both Cantonese and Mandarin). Though Cantonese is my mother tongue, I do speak Mandarin a little bit as well. It is the official Chinese language these days, especially after Hong Kong went back to China.

Most of these shows are made in China and the characters all speak Mandarin. Good for me, as it is like taking a language lesson for free (more music to my ears). Best yet, they have Chinese captions at the bottom.

Talk about heaven, I am getting entertained and educated at the same time. Also, they have cooking lessons. A lot of famous chefs would get on TV and review their recipes and cooking techniques. It is most wonderful indeed, it is like having a private chef in your kitchen. I have definitely improved my cooking skills with different methods.

When I scrolled around for different programs, I came across a few that really touched my heart. I have to say that I am very, very stubborn, even though deep down inside, I know I am not.

I have had to put up a strong front all these years to show the world that I am a tough guy. I never cried. Well, I did when my kids were born. Holding them in my arms, I couldn’t help it.

But somehow, when something hit my heartstrings, I would sob uncontrollably, for no reason. When we were dating, Colleen took me to a Peter, Paul and Mary concert.

They have been my heroes since I learned to play guitar. I know all of their songs and I saved up my lunch money to purchase all their records. When they were singing “Puff, the Magic Dragon,” (one of my favorites) for no reason at all, I started sobbing.

I don’t know why and couldn’t care, even though I never cried in public before; when I was growing up I was told that it was shameful to show tears. Colleen held my hand tight; and later, she told me that it was at that moment that she decided to marry me. A guy that cried at “Puff” can’t be all bad, she said.

Then, a couple of ads that I watched really hit a chord:

» A young boy was caught stealing (a can of Coke and some snacks) from a grocery store. Before he was reprimanded, the owner of a noodle shop close by came out and gave the owner of the grocery store some money to let the boy go. Then he instructed his daughter to give the boy some noodles to take home.

Many years later, the owner of the noodle shop had a stroke. The hospital bill was atrocious, the daughter was devastated, trying to sell the store so as to pay for the bill. Then a new bill arrived, stating that all bills had been settled years ago. The doctor in charge was the boy who received the precious gifts from the owner.

» Grandma was shopping for a birthday cake for Grandpa with her grandkids, then decided that it was way over their budget. When they were putting the birthday cake back on the shelf, a young man close by heard the story and decided to buy the cake for the family. The family asked him for his name and address so they could pay him back later; he smiled and wrote it down.

The family showed Grandpa the birthday cake, and he was ecstatic. Then when he opened the piece of paper, it says, “A gift of kindness is like a ripple,” a message that he wrote to a family a long while back.

Many years ago, Grandpa was in a bakery and heard that a mom couldn’t afford to buy a birthday cake for her young boy. So he paid for it, and when asked for his name and address so they could repay him later, he wrote that message instead of his name and address. What do you know, after all these years, the same message came back.

Yes, I was crying, but nobody saw me. Does it count?