

[toys are good food](#)

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Archive](#)

May 24

[Pow Pow Pow Pow Pow!](#)

Posted by Matty

I was watching Little House on the Prairie with Nanc a few weeks ago, and it sparked a technology memory that I have been suppressing for all these years.

Look inside for more on ... **TV Pow!**

Let me see if I can set the stage for TV Pow...

It's summer vacation, circa 1981. I am circa 7. My siblings and I have the house to ourselves (at least until mom comes home at six).

In the afternoons, it would be too hot to play outside so we'd all come inside and watch TV.

WYI-TV25 hauled out old reruns in the afternoon, including Little House on the Prairie. The fine folks at Channel 25 knew that they had a dud on their hands with little Laura Ingalls. They needed some spice and action to bring in that crucial seven year old boy demographic. They needed TV Pow!

As a tangent discussion, did anyone actually like Laura Ingalls? Nellie Olsen was my favorite. Tangent #2: Why "half pint"? Why not call your daughter "small glass of booze"? He could've also gone with "half-liter." The metric system was pretty big back then... But I digress...

TV Pow was a contest that would be hosted live during commercial breaks. I remember prizes from board games to trips to Cedar Point (an amusement park) on the deluxe Cedar Point Express bus! Woo!.

You might ask, how do you win these fabulous prizes? Just send in a postcard with your name, age, address and phone number. Heck, for a trip on the Cedar Point Express, they could've asked for my Social Security number, a pap smear and a blood sample.

Wait — I forgot the most important part. You send in the postcard, they call you on the phone, and you use the phone —your voice, man — to blow up alien spacecraft. A highly advanced shooting game, similar to Space Invaders is displayed live on TV, and you would shout into the phone, "POW" to activate your laser (the thin white block)and kill the aliens(the thick white blocks). If you kill enough aliens, you win.

Of course, that's not really how it played out. Kids would be taken aback by their sudden fame of being on TV live during little house, and would whisper "pow" too softly to activate the voice technology. Or, things would swing the other way, and you'd have thirty seconds of a kid shouting "POWPOWPOWPOW" at the top of his little lungs. This was frickin' genius in the post-pong/pre-atari world.

This wasn't just a Flint (my hometown) thing. This type of show, called TV Pow or Video Pow was syndicated on tons of other markets.

When I was in my early 20s, I was employed at the same named local TV station (WEYI-TV 25), and I worked with some folks that worked during the heyday of TV Pow and Cedar Point Express. The technology was as such: An Atari knockoff (Sinclair?) was broadcast. There wasn't any special interface to take audio waves and turn them into lasers. It was a dude who pushed a button every time a kid said POW. If a kid was soft-spoken, he didn't hear them. If a kid yelled POWPOWPOW, they just held the fire button down.

By the way, there isn't a Santa Claus, either.

Update: I always thought that this story would be better with a picture. Unfortunately the Internet only has what the Internet has. A couple of weeks ago I got a negative scanner, and was happily scanning in my college years. Then I ran across a sleeve labeled WEYI. I don't really recall how these came into my possession, but I proudly post the first pix of TV POWWWWW!

Date May 24th, 2004 Filed in [stupida](#)
[43 Comments »](#)

43 Responses to “Pow Pow Pow Pow Pow!”

1. *Eric* Says:

[June 9th, 2004 at 2:23 pm](#)

Growing up in Sacramento in the 70s... yep, we had TV Pow! Now I realize the genius of it, but I remember as a 7-year-old I thought it was an insult to everything and should be banned. If I had to hear one more stupid kid yell “POW!” over a telephone through our TV while low-res graphics did something not very well connected to the vocal timing... All I wanted was more Looney Toons and away with TV Pow forever. Still, I was realistic about my lack of power over the situation. What had I ever done for TV? And I had to admit I didn't have the guts to call in and be the “POW!” kid. Still, I couldn't believe some adult somewhere considered this reasonably entertaining.

2. *Eric* Says:

[June 9th, 2004 at 2:27 pm](#)

By the way, thanks for being the one true hit for the search phrase “TV Pow” out of about 10 pages on Google. All of the rest is about some electronic improv band who don't even have the decency to credit the source of their band name on their front page or bio page.

After a bit more thought, I honestly think I remember calling the TV station one day after a year or two of suffering occasional TV Pow, and telling them honestly “TV Pow has got to go!!”. But I can't be sure. Maybe that was just my fantasy.

3. *tv pow* Says:

[August 13th, 2004 at 2:36 pm](#)

growing up in Michigan we watched tv pow. it inspired us to start some electronic improv band.

4. *Nathan* Says:

[December 1st, 2004 at 2:51 am](#)

TV POW! KTTV Channel 11, Los Angeles, between 3 and 5 pm. At each commercial break, watching the 60s Spiderman cartoons, ca. 1979-80. Ralph Harris was the host, wore plaid shirts, so me and my friends wore plaid shirts when we...hold on to your hats...made our own TV Pow super-8 movies! We were obsessed. We even called a kid at school and told him we were from KTTV and he was going to be on TV Pow; we were peeing with laughter listening to him yell “POW!” over the phone.

The thing about TV Pow that really got us was that Ralph Harris would point heavenward and talk about “Mr. Pow.” And when you won, you got fifty “Pow Bucks.” We had a new God and a new form of currency! (We learned later that Pow Bucks were gift certificates to Toys R Us.)

Sheriff John did a Sunday morning version. Later, there was a short-lived adult version in the evenings! But for my money (Pow Bucks, of course) the afternoon Pow with Ralph Harris, and the beneficent Mr. Pow, was what it was All About.

There may not be a Santa Clause, but you can be damn sure I still worship Mr. Pow.

5. *I Have A Special Camera* Says:

[January 29th, 2005 at 4:01 am](#)

11. *Marzell Holmes* Says:[May 26th, 2006 at 3:15 pm](#)

Growing up in Northern California, we had TV Pow on Channel 40, a local Sacramento station. It was part of the Cap'n Mitch show during the early 80s. The game I mainly remember was a very primitive Atari-esque bowling game, where the "ball" went back and forth across the bottom of the screen until the contestant said, "POW!" over the phone and sent the ball on its way. I always imagined some poor intern sitting there with one of those old Atari joysticks in his hand, pressing the red button when he heard that "POW!"

We got TV Pow in between showings of Speed Racer, Banana Splits, and Looney Tunes cartoons.

12. *Paul T* Says:[June 13th, 2006 at 3:14 pm](#)

Here in the New York City area Channel 11 WPIX Had a variation The kid would have to shout "PIX" . I had no idea everywhere else it was POW.

The spazzy kids 'd shout —Pix Pix Pix Pix Pix Pix Pix Pix Pix!!

13. *Jack Spencer Jr* Says:[June 15th, 2006 at 6:36 pm](#)

Ah, in Rochester, NY we also had TV Pow. I would imagine it was being franchised out all over the nation or something. However, we didn't get it until somewhere around 1980-1 when the new UHF channel 31 WPOW debuted. Before that, we had ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and that, dear friends, was IT! How weird to imagine only having four channels these days, eh?

TV Pow started with a more-or less generic host, just some guy in a suit who announced the cartoons and ran the video game thing. We later got Ranger Bob, a cowboy or something and a cast of characters and the whole smear. Eventually it became Ranger Bob's show, I forget what they called it since I had moved out of the area at that time.

The video game was not the Fairchild Channel F (which was the first programmable cartidge system, BTW, not the second) but the Mattel Intellivision. The games used were eventually packaged as Sharp Shot

http://www.intellivisionlives.com/bluesky/games/credits/action2.html#sharp_shot

It was pretty obvious that a guy was pressing the button as the kid said "Pow" over the phone. One time, they had kid actually come into the studio, and they didn't have to say "Pow" or nothin'.

14. *Nick P.* Says:[June 20th, 2006 at 4:16 am](#)

I do believe it was the second, Ralph Baer's Magnavox Odyssey being the first.

15. *Nick P.* Says:[June 20th, 2006 at 4:22 am](#)

Ah, I see you wrote first "programmable" cartidge system... I guess that would be correct then.

16. *Gabe* Says:[October 16th, 2006 at 3:12 am](#)

I remember TV POW!!! They had it here in Chicago during the Ray Rayner Show. I remember one caller could hardly be heard yelling "POW". It sounded more like "Pooooow" "Pooooow". There was one caller who yell powpowpowpowpowpowpowpowpowpow

I was on the floor!!!!

17. *mark* Says:[January 19th, 2007 at 11:42 am](#)

Fort Wayne Indiana had Pow! Had to be late 70's because we moved from the house I watched it in 1978. So far everyone I mention Pow! to thinks I flipped my lid.

18. *Ryan* Says:

[January 30th, 2007 at 9:13 pm](#)

I remember, I remember...I remember making a fort out of couch cushions and hiding my 3 year old brother inside of it. We would time it to have him explode out of the fort just as we all yell "TV Pow da da da". Seriously though, it was such a happy childhood memory of mine. I wished more than anything else in the world to participate in this. I know I would have kicked ass. I would play along and say to myself "I can't believe they only got one".

19. *Bret Arnold* Says:

[March 24th, 2007 at 5:20 pm](#)

Yes, I too remember like all of you. POW. I was 12 or 13 years old and I was living in a garage that was converted into a bedroom. This where I would go right after school to watch TV POW. i thought it was called just POW, but as I read some of the comments above the memories began to appear. It was during the old Spiderman cartoons and I would remember kids calling in yelling "THE WORD". Thanks for the great memories. Things were so simple back then.

20. *Bret Arnold* Says:

[March 24th, 2007 at 5:20 pm](#)

Yes, I too remember like all of you. POW. I was 12 or 13 years old and I was living in a garage that was converted into a bedroom. This where I would go right after school to watch TV POW. i thought it was called just POW, but as I read some of the comments above the memories began to appear. It was during the old Spiderman cartoons and I would remember kids calling in yelling "THE WORD". Thanks for the great memories. Things were so simple back then.

21. *Jon* Says:

[May 9th, 2007 at 8:13 pm](#)

Oh my God I didn't imagine this. It did happen. For me in Rochester NY in the early 80's. Was that channel 30 or 36? WUHF I think. POW! Absolutely the cheesiest show/segment/whatever ever. POW!

22. *lori ann* Says:

[September 7th, 2007 at 9:28 pm](#)

I remember it as "TV Kid Pow." I was in Houston and it would come on. Ah, how I coveted the contestant. Still do.

Reason why I googled it is because I was thinking about the Japanese language and how the words are very "crisp" or "brusque".. In other words, no drawling in Japanese. And I thought, wow, that would come in handy for playing TV Kid Pow.

23. *Jeff* Says:

[October 8th, 2007 at 12:19 pm](#)

I certainly remember "TV Pow!" mainly because I was an actual phone contestant. It was around 1979, when I was 12, and it was being hosted by Pat McCormick on KTVU Ch 2 in the SF Bay Area. When the producer had called me earlier in the day to let me know I'd been selected (we sent in postcards to be contestants), I was so nervous that when he asked me what school I went to, I gave him the name of the elementary school I had gone to instead of the jr high school I was attending at the time. Haha! They were using the Mattel Intellivision system and I played the football game where my "pow" would cause the QB to pass the ball to the endzone where a receiver was running a crossing pattern. It was easy to go 4-for-4 for TD's, though I did have to turn the old heavy TV sideways so that I could see it from the phone. My prize for playing was 5 tickets to the old Frontier Village amusement park.

24. *Moar POWr 2 yuh* Says:

[October 13th, 2007 at 11:37 am](#)

I was a winner on TV POW in the '70's and was one of those annoying kids who yelled POWPOWPOWPOWPOWPOW... into the phone. You did have to enunciate the full POW and it couldn't be totally constant, but there didn't have to be much of a delay. I actually won 2 prizes, one was

a DIY radio that you had to put together (crap) and a Hot Wheels Criss-Cross-Crash set which provided eons of entertainment. If I annoyed anyone, I am sorry, but to my credit I was like 6 or 7 and this was the first time I ever won anything thanks to my sugar rush. 😊

To the kid that I whaled on an publicly annihilated... Did you even fire more than twice??

25. *David Aubuchon* Says:

[January 31st, 2008 at 8:01 pm](#)

LOL! I'm laughing so hard that I'm literally crying!

First of all, thank God for the internet! We have truly come a long way since Atari & Space Invaders!

For months now, I have been reflecting upon certain themes of my childhood. And among the memories of early 80's TV shows dwells the recollection of a TV show where kids on the phone would repeat over and over and over and over the words "Pow Pow Pow" in order to demolish something or other that I couldn't rightly remember.

So, finally, after all this time being haunted by the Pow's, I have finally been granted the missing pieces of that nagging, albeit strangely comforting memory of childhood.

Thanks for helping me to fulfill my quest!

David Aubuchon
Norwalk, CA

26. *Ike* Says:

[March 22nd, 2008 at 12:10 pm](#)

I still remember this as well. Around the year 2000, I met a guy who knew EVERYTHING about pop culture (he was 8 years younger than I was but still knew as much as I did, if not more—I was 35 and he was 27). I asked him if he ever heard of this thing where a kid says, "pow pow" and wins fifty pow bucks. Well, I finally stumped him on this one. I often wondered if I was the only one out there who remembered this. I always wished they would call me because I would have been one of those little !\$#!\$ saying, "pow pow pow pow pow". Alas, I never got off my little lazy @\$ to mail in the postcard.

I remember seeing this on TV, when I lived in Sunland (CA) and that was from 1976-1980. Any chance this thing ran earlier than 1981? I seem to recall seeing it around 1978 or 1979.

27. *Dalmo* Says:

[March 31st, 2008 at 2:47 pm](#)

Tv Pow was success in brazil at 80

28. *extagen* Says:

[April 2nd, 2008 at 1:03 am](#)

<http://www.extagen-tablets.com> <http://www.extagen-tablets.com> <http://www.extagen-tablets.com>

29. *Burnie Burns* Says:

[April 23rd, 2008 at 4:58 pm](#)

I moved from Rochester, NY to Houston, TX during 1980 and I recall TV Pow from both markets. Like lori ann, I also remembered the show's name as "TV Kid Pow", I suppose that was the name the Houston affiliate used. I still have trouble believing how few people my age remember this ridiculous phenomenon. Whenever one of those rapid-fire "powpowpowpowpowpow" kids got on the show, my brother and I would stand up and start screaming at the TV. Like many of you, the "pows" haunt me to this day.

What great memories. Thanks for everyone who contributed to this thread.

30. *FlushingMI* Says:

[May 31st, 2008 at 4:03 pm](#)

Thanks for the great memories from after school time in the early 80s for me! I was too nervous then to call in, but loved to laugh at the annoying kids who repeated “Pow” over and over. Does anyone remember some kind of sock puppet host from WEYI afternoons for kids who was a tiger??

31. *Tom Parker* Says:

[July 22nd, 2008 at 1:32 am](#)

POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW FUCKYOU!

...and I believe that was the end of TV Pow on KTVU in the SF Bay Area.

The kid was an instant legend.

32. *Dee* Says:

[January 4th, 2009 at 8:40 pm](#)

We had a TV Poww in the late 70's/ early 80's, here in Florida. My friend actually won the the yearly championship once. His prize was a “Clash of the Titans: Cracken” toy. This is some long-forgotten phenomenon, it being global & such. I totally remember the kids screaming, “POW,POW,POW,POW,POW!”, frantically over the call-in line.

33. *wooden trunk* Says:

[January 7th, 2009 at 8:43 am](#)

great

34. *Tent* Says:

[January 21st, 2009 at 9:01 am](#)

The Clash of the Titans was a great movie. Great Stop motion.

35. *Dave* Says:

[February 10th, 2009 at 7:31 pm](#)

I was an unpaid (High School co-op credits) production assistant for the Honolulu version of TV Pow! with the host Professor Fun... I was on TV everyday for one semester, wheeling out the price cart, and the bin of postcards that Prof. Fun picked out the next days contestants from. I never knew until now that this show/ game was duplicated all over. Funny memories from that time.

36. *Rich Dargie* Says:

[April 2nd, 2009 at 5:39 pm](#)

I was a contestant on this show. I remember they called the house before the show started. I remember having to choose a prize, not getting a gift certificate. It was a record player that I chose. This was my first experience of receiving something in the mail. It took forever to get, waiting for the mail man everyday. I think that explains why I am such a big eBay fan today. I just like getting packages in the mail.

37. *Corey Sanders* Says:

[May 30th, 2009 at 12:15 am](#)

I was a contestant on TV POW in the very late 70's or very early 80's. I was around 9 or 10. This was in Fairfield, California. The host was Pat McCormick. They had several contestants on during the show and prizes were awarded according to your score. I was ahead until the last contestant who was at least 18. I don't remember the first place prize that I lost, but I got a package in the mail with a few small things inside. The only one I remember was a white frisbee that whistled loudly when you threw it. Oh, at one point I accidentally said “damn” on the air.

38. *nathan* Says:

[August 25th, 2009 at 2:40 pm](#)

In nyc it was PIX(TV STATION WAS WPIX)omg i would have ever thought i'd find more adults remembering these shows...the best part about it is that the host wouldn't even get to say GO and the kid was already saying ,
 “pix”.LOOL

39. *Victoria* Says:

[January 18th, 2010 at 3:20 pm](#)

I remember TV POWWW! from the point of view of a young adult, aged 19. WEYI-TV in Flint broadcast the thing back in 1981 when I was a broadcasting major at Central Michigan University. Sometimes when I was in the campus TV station studios the other students put it on and made of the little kids who called in and yelled Pow, Pow Pow! The other student broadcasters loved to make fun of these kids, who were playing against a game that looked like a cross between Space Invaders and Asteroids. It did seem like one of the stupidest ideas for a syndicated TV show ever, especially to a 19-year-old like me.

40. *Leisa* Says:

[April 5th, 2010 at 7:26 am](#)

I watched TV POWWW! and grew up in Millington, MI, a tiny little town about 20 minutes north of Flint. The dark-haired woman hosting the program in the picture was my friend Gary's mom. We rode the same bus together and all of the kids would scream pow at him when he got the bus and made way to his seat. I just wanted to clear up the question about the Brownie troop noted on the papers in the lower pic. I remember my and other Brownie troops going on field trips to the set of TV POWWW! The host would announce the troop briefly and we would all smile and wave at the camera. This show was a goofy riot and I am so glad that so many people have fond memories of it like I do.

41. *Keith* Says:

[January 18th, 2011 at 12:18 pm](#)

I participated in T.v. Kid pow around 1980?? After sending my postcard, Channel 39 in Houston called. It was awesome. This happened on a day when all my cousins were visiting. They watched on the den TV as I POW'd my way to fortune and fame from my parents bedroom. I think I hit three??? I won a toy car. It was the only prize that was fit for a boy. It was snuggled between different dolls and cheap tea sets as the camera panned for my view. That damn car broke 2 days after it arrived. I loved that car. (sniff – sniff)

Awesome.

42. *Frank Traum* Says:

[November 28th, 2012 at 1:29 pm](#)

I was a Master Control Switcher at WEYI from April to November 1980. The host for TV Pow (At least when I was there and the same person in these flickr photos) was a woman named Sandy. Once she let me pick the contestants from a pile of postcards/letters.

43. *Matty* Says:

[November 30th, 2012 at 9:45 am](#)

Thanks for adding some more information to this story. I worked on the studio side of the hall, but I had many great friends who worked in Master Control.

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

6 × five =

Recent Posts

- [Treecam is back](#)
- [Oh... and we had a baby](#)
- [Testing, testing... 123](#)
- [Dino World with the Cousins \(3D\)](#)
- [Cookie Science!](#)
- [Stop by and mess with our Christmas Tree](#)
- [To Knob Noster and Back Again](#)
- [Car Hack- Evie Distraction Device](#)
- [3D pictures from vacation and MakerFaire](#)
- [Evie](#)

Categories

- [bento](#)
- [blog](#)
- [camping](#)
- [charity](#)
- [cheerio](#)
- [crafts](#)
- [fish](#)
- [gadgets](#)
- [garden](#)
- [home](#)
- [honduras](#)
- [kaylee sue](#)
- [knitting](#)
- [pez](#)
- [recipes](#)
- [sewing](#)
- [smurfs](#)
- [stupida](#)
- [toys](#)
- [Uncategorized](#)

Archives

- [December 2012](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)

- [April 2011](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [December 2010](#)
- [September 2010](#)
- [August 2010](#)
- [April 2010](#)
- [March 2010](#)
- [December 2009](#)
- [November 2009](#)
- [October 2009](#)
- [September 2009](#)
- [August 2009](#)
- [July 2009](#)
- [June 2009](#)
- [May 2009](#)
- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)
- [May 2006](#)
- [April 2006](#)
- [March 2006](#)
- [February 2006](#)
- [January 2006](#)
- [December 2005](#)
- [November 2005](#)
- [October 2005](#)
- [September 2005](#)
- [August 2005](#)
- [July 2005](#)

- [June 2005](#)
- [May 2005](#)
- [April 2005](#)
- [March 2005](#)
- [February 2005](#)
- [January 2005](#)
- [December 2004](#)
- [November 2004](#)
- [October 2004](#)
- [September 2004](#)
- [August 2004](#)
- [July 2004](#)
- [June 2004](#)
- [May 2004](#)
- [April 2004](#)
- [March 2004](#)
- [February 2004](#)
- [January 2004](#)
- [December 2003](#)
- [November 2003](#)
- [October 2003](#)
- [September 2003](#)
- [August 2003](#)
- [July 2003](#)
- [June 2003](#)
- [May 2003](#)
- [April 2003](#)
- [March 2003](#)
- [February 2003](#)

Blogroll

- [Bot-Gurl Knits](#)
- [just another blog](#)
- [not a. peach](#)
- [purling ps](#)
- [purse-ho](#)
- [skittermagoo!](#)
- [we like dogs](#)
- [www.apluswebmail.com](#)
- [www.serverpoint.com](#)

Search

-

Meta:

- [RSS](#)
- [Comments RSS](#)
- [Valid XHTML](#)

//

toys are good food is proudly powered by [WordPress](#)
[Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#).

☺