

● "The Moon Blob Song" is the name of the repeat episode of "This Week in Joe's Basement" (10 p.m. Monday, cable's Channel 19 in Chicago), the bright light of local cable access.

The show's thrust is a series of striking monologues. In "Angel Hair," Juan Luco explores his feelings of being a "spic, out of place in the suburbs."

In "Glitch Shift," Therese Sherman talks of self-esteem so diminished that she sees acting and prostitution as equally viable careers. "Widening Taps" has Ed Russell admitting to gay bashing and auto theft and, in "Love Gun," John Harriman recounts a male prostitute's night with an older woman.

There are also two songs in the show, paeans to the children's toy of the show's title; Hyde Parkers reading instructions for making the toy; and a Ghostbusters doll that speaks. But it's the monologues that will linger in memory.

In its three years on the air, "This Week in Joe's Basement" has achieved a solid slice of notoriety.

It has been featured on such mainstream TV shows as "Today" and has received ink in this paper and others. The show's host, Joe Winston, was even called upon to interview Mike Myers, the host of the fictional "Wayne's World," for the Tribune.

All of this attention is unlikely to land "This Week . . ." a slot on commercial television. In many ways it may work to diminish the show's substance, making it appear a novelty.

But if you watch this show with any regularity, you will realize that for all their occasional indulgence, Winston and his pals are trying to intellectually provoke and engage. That's a rare thing for television. An admirable thing.