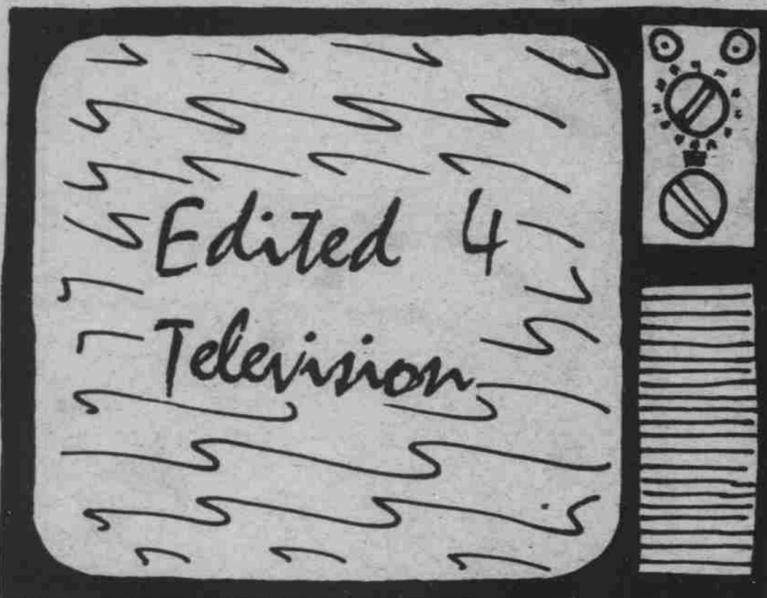


Calm down vidiots, the new season airs at last



By WINSTON LLOYD
Staff Writer

Slowly, the new TV season is coming upon us. The past couple of weeks we've seen, or in many cases, missed the premieres of "ALF," "The Cosby Show," "Simon and Simon," and that staple of modern social relevance, "The Hogan 'which-we-are-now-called-because-Valerie-couldn't-hammer-out-a-contract-with-the-big-boys-at-NBC' Family." There's a swarm of old stuff coming back, and in at least one show, it is old stuff coming back to haunt us.

■ **Incredible Sunday:** Why? What did we do to deserve this? The King of the blow dryer has returned to ruin our Sundays, or at least make sure that we watch

"60 Minutes." John Davidson and Cristina Ferrare are here with "Incredible stories. Incredibly true." I'd rather have bamboo shoots inserted under my fingernails. I hope their first story concerns the incredibly true tale of how ABC made such an incredibly stupid decision.

I included the preceding in this week's Edited 4 TV because it is a returning old show. I definitely don't see it as new.

■ **ALF:** The comedy on the cutting edge of science fiction is back. The ambassador from Melmac and his whining supporter, Willy, have yet another year to prove that we will believe any weird concept. Don't get me wrong, I like this show. Alf's naivete makes the

show hilarious. Watch this year to see if the show takes on any pretentious, sanctimonious or otherwise serious themes because of the influence of producer and "M*A*S*H" alumnus Thad Mumford.

■ **Designing Women:** The second best-written comedy on the tube today. Saved from cancellation by a write-in campaign, this program covers everything from racism to AIDS with as much humor as possible. And it is very realistic in its depiction of Southerners. Thank God there's a show where the Southern man isn't pumping gas and the Southern women don't EVER say "Li'l ol' me." If you don't believe it's realistic, find an apartment with four female students and listen to them. You'd swear they were the inspiration for this show. Also, any reason to put Lewis Grizzard on TV can't be bad. By the way, "M*A*S*H" alum Linda Bloodworth-Thomason produces and usually writes for the show.

■ **Cheers:** After six years of winning buckets of Emmy Awards, this may possibly be the last season (or so TV Guide very passingly suggested) for the best comedy on TV today. Look for Sam and Rebecca to hit it off finally this season, much to the dismay and surprise of Norm and Cliff and Woody... well, you get the picture. Let's hope that doesn't happen. We don't need a repeat of the five years of Diane "We'll-get-married-after-I-write-that-book" Chambers. Although "Cheers" was at its best then, we deserve more than a rehash from producers Les Charles and Glen Charles, and writers Ken Levine and David Isaacs — all Emmy winners and, you guessed it, all "M*A*S*H" alumni.

■ **Family Ties:** This is definitely the seventh and final season for this one. Michael J. Fox has outgrown the rest of them. Alex and Steven Keaton were the only really funny ones anyway. The rest, especially Mallory, have become caricatures of themselves, and the show often seems to be merely a takeoff of "Family Ties" as it once was. Don't worry, I'm sure they will have a reunion show sometime when Alex owns Manhattan, Los Angeles and Western Europe.

■ **Moonlighting:** What in the hell is going on here? It seems I remember something about a baby, a husband and an astronaut.

Is it the astronaut's (Mark Harmon) baby, or is it Bruce "Die Hard" Willis' baby? Didn't he have one with Demi Moore? Does it really matter if Cybil Shepherd is a pain in the butt?

I don't know and I think they don't either; yes, and it's called Roomer or something stupid like that; and, yes again, because the creator, Glenn Gordon Caron, left because of it.

The season before last wasn't so bad. They had that witty repartee (say it with a French accent, you'll sound intelligent). Then the five-parter when "Luke Skywalker" (Harmon) asks Maddie to marry him, only to be dumped for Dave. Then, it got weird. Cybil really got pregnant, and wanted a break. Caron went to the big screen for "Clean and Sober" and proved the show is a mess without him, and that he is pretty good when moonlighting from "Moonlighting." If something great doesn't happen this year ABC can afford to drop what used to be one of its only hits.

■ **Miami Vice:** The triumph of style over substance comes to an end this season. Plot synopsis: Much to the dismay of Crockett (Don Johnson), an old friend, fellow officer or former girlfriend returns only to be connected with the drug kingpin he is currently pursuing. Crockett must engage in soul searching, rubbing his beard and losing his temper with friends to a background of Phil Collins tunes. Pure creativity, isn't it?

■ **Perfect Strangers:** Mark "I'm-a-geek" Linn-Baker and Bronson "I'm-a-geek, too" Pinchot return as two uncool roommate-relatives who are pitiful to watch. This show, by those who brought us that jewel "Laverne and Shirley," seems to have revived over the summer and, unfortunately, gets good ratings, too. Somebody must watch it. I only did because the Olympics got old. There are only so many times a person can hear about Louganis hitting his head on the board.

■ **It's Garry Shandling's Show:** This one is hard to find. (Yeah, if you have the IQ of broccoli.) It's called the Fox Network. That's Channel 22-WLFL for us in central N.C. At 9 p.m. on Sundays, when all the other networks are showing their made-for-TV movies (i.e. Disease/Crime/Triumph Against Terrible Odds o' the Week), Garry Shandling invites us into his living room.

Garry has broken down the "fourth" wall of the sitcom and actually addresses the audience and the camera. But he is the only one allowed to do this. The others know they're on television when at Garry's but they know they aren't allowed to look into the cameras. Smart thing. Prevents anarchy. Think of the way "Moonlighting" admits it's a TV show and compound that to where Shandling actually brings the script on

camera, or refers to running the theme song.

Find this show. Newer episodes can be found on Showtime.

■ **THE COSBY SHOW:** (No. 1 programs deserve capitals). Bill started last week with the first really good episode in quite a while. The last few years had the Huxtables patting themselves on the back, telling each other how perfect and happy they were, and performing choreographed dance numbers. All the time, showcasing how cute Rudy is. Sickening. Nearly gave me cavities.

But this year, Superdad has lost all control of his family. Denise (Lisa Bonet) dropped out of college, prompting Dad to ask Clair to tell him that their daughter "is not that way." Finally, the "Cos" has lost all control over an often irritating family.

■ **thirtysomething:** Who cares?

■ **Saturday Night Live:** Tom Hanks and Keith "I-wish-I-could-go-it-alone" Richards kicked off the 14th season Saturday, returning to political humor with Jon Lovitz's excellent Michael Dukakis, and Dana Carvey's excessive George Bush. Of course the anti-Republican bias was evident throughout, but "Weekend Update" was almost as good as in years past. It seems that Chilean Dictator Pinochet has a second in command called, Daniel deQuayle (Spanish accent, please) complete with pencil-thin, sleazy dictator mustache.

■ **The Equalizer:** Another really cool, kick-butt kind of guy.

■ **The Golden Girls, Amen, 227:** Stereotype Saturday Night. They are all back, breaking ground that's been broken before.

■ **Head of the Class:** Although its messages are often heavy handed, this bunch of prodigies is usually rather funny. Of course, the presence of Robin "now-that-I-think-of-it, this-Tyson-guy's-a-creep" Givens may hurt the show. And if Howard Hesseman goes back to helping the communists in El Salvador, the show may get killed like "WKRP" did.

■ **Growing Pains:** Look for a new kid.

■ And the shows that won't die despite poor ratings, year after year: **Simon and Simon** and **Mr. Belvedere**. The Simon brothers usually have a well-written show, sometimes provided by UNC alumnus Micheal Piller.

The relationship between Belvedere and Wesley is worth watching.

Well, there are plenty other returning shows. Just because they aren't listed here does not mean I hate them, simply that there is nothing to say. So, enjoy this year's veterans and in future weeks I will review the new stuff, from "Dear John" to "Dick Van Dyke." We will return after these messages.

CAROLINA
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John
Prine



&



Karla
Bonoff

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