

Reminiscing about B.C. TV — the Before Cosby years

By WINSTON LLOYD
Staff Writer

"I had to get up, get out from under 'cause life's too short. There's a new girl in town..."

The mere mention of old '70s television shows inspired a student to sing the "Alice" theme song. And junior Kristy McAlister from Chapel Hill knew all the words. People get nostalgic about their old favorites, which in many cases they realize were pretty bad. It's kind of like remembering all the words to some of the old disco stuff. Don't Donna Summer and K-Tel really bring back the memories?

The number one television show for a few years back then — somewhat of the Cosby Show of B.C. TV (Before Cos) — featured a brewery, the Big Ragu, and Lenny and Squiggy. "Laverne & Shirley" is remembered by all and now despised by most. As well it should be. Obviously I like TV, and in most cases, if there is one in the room, I think it should be on. But if "Laverne & Shirley" is all that's on, I'll seriously consider destroying the set. That show was at a time when hardly anything on television was a critical success.

Admittedly, there were some good shows Before Cosby. "All in the Family" was a critics' favorite, although the Meathead was hated more than the very conservative Archie. I suppose it was a harbinger of the Reagan years to come.

Then there was NBC. Before we all came home to the peacock network, for years we stayed away in droves. Fred Silverman, who had quit or been fired from all the other networks, was running NBC. He was responsible for "Supertrain." What was he thinking? In the culturally depraved '70s, a major form of transportation failed: the train system. Even the opulent Orient Express in Europe had shut down (it's running now though). "Supertrain" was "Hotel" on wheels. Trust me, it was beyond bad.

NBC also had "Baa Baa Black Sheep." Not a ratings success, it can be found on cable from time to time. Robert Conrad was Pappy Boyington, the leader of a squadron of misfits in the Pacific Theatre of World War II. The writing ranged from dramatic and interesting to silly and childish, when the network sent in nurses, with no acting ability, to boost the ratings. It didn't work. One senior remembered the show fondly, but McAlister said, "I didn't watch boy shows." Oh well, so much for demographics. The most notable thing about the show, later renamed "Black Sheep Squadron," is the people involved. It was written and created by Stephen J. Cannell and Donald P. Bellesario. Cannell is more prolific and diverse.

"Baretta," "The Rockford Files," "The A-Team" and "Wiseguy" have all since sprung from his mind. Bellesario was more successful. He gave us "Battlestar Galactica" in 1978 and then the biggie, "Magnum, P.I." in 1981. The pilots of the black sheep have been around, too. Rick Wright and Mac (Larry Manetti and Jeff McKay) from "Magnum," Ed Begley Jr. from "St. Elsewhere" and Dan Fielding (John Larroquette) of "Night Court" all flew against the Japanese in the Solomon Islands. Manetti and Begley also flew against the Cylons on "Galactica."

The Battlestar which led the cattle train of space, had the same problem as the black sheep. Some

politically-charged episodes had Captain Apollo sounding like former California Gov. Reagan, "Strength alone can support freedom," others featured clownish robots and people wearing "Lost in Space"-looking silver suits. The writing lacked any form of consistency. Dirk Benedict (you remember the womanizing Starbuck — whatta name, huh?), however, saw greater success on "The A-Team," the show that began NBC's rise from the basement. Remember Murdock calling out for "Traaaaash bags. I want some traaaaash baaags!" Brett Myers, a junior political science major from Asheville does. Think back on old shows, and you're bound to remember a line or situation from it.

McAlister cites "The Love Boat" episode where a stunned Julie greets a passenger, "Hello, I'm Julie McCruise, your Coy Director." Sure it's silly, but that's the way it was. Jay Wardlaw, a senior business major from Omaha, Neb., remembers the cute little captain's daughter, but "as she grew up, she got uglier, fatter." Likewise, junior Florence Beretich of Clinton recalls William Christopher (Father Mulcahy of "M*A*S*H") dressing as Hitler on "Hogan's Heroes" in order to fool Col. Klink. "I know nothing, nothing."

How about "Donny and Marie"? Admit it, you watched it. You were young and stupid, and had no idea what you were doing. Marie was a little bit country and Donny was a little bit rock'n'roll. Now, Marie is a lotta bit country and Donny has no career. But then Donny became Michael Jackson, as all the Osmonds became all the Jacksons. I don't know what the point is, but I understand Marie is in Playboy this month. Likewise, some say that James Coburn and Lee Marvin are the same person, just like William Shatner, Robert Conrad, and that guy that played Buck Rogers in the late '70s. "Buck Rogers in the Twenty-Fifth Century," where everyone wore skin-



Bill Cosby is in control of TV in the '80s.

tight clothes. "Beeda, Beeda, Beeda. Way to go, Buck."

"I got kind of tired of packing and unpacking, town to town, up and down the dial." The Big Guy, Dr. Fever and Venus Fly-Trap, made for a good show. But WKRP was gone after four seasons.

Many people don't remember too much. They mention cartoons or children's shows: "Captain Caveman," "Scooby Doo," "Zoom," or "The Electric Company." McAlister even remembered the "Sesame Street" song, and not just the chorus. Most recall these shows with smiles as they yell out, "Remember the time when Richie and Potsie got drunk at the bachelor party?" or "How you couldn't live past 30 on 'Logan's Run'?"

Ask your roommate what he/she used to watch. You might learn something about this person by what someone else recalls. And when you remember these things

you haven't thought of in years, other memories — events or feelings — may return, and you can experience that carefree feeling of childhood again. I found people talking about fifth grade or their Intellivision system. Then I remembered fourth grade when my mother grounded me from watching TV because I talked back to my teacher. But on Tuesday, my mother was at some meeting, and my Dad let me watch that episode of "Happy Days" when they were in California and the Fonzy had to water ski against this ski champ. Ah, memories.

So, in 10 or 20 years someone may say, "Hey, remember that 'Cheers' episode when Woody was hitting on that rich snob's girlfriend?" And the memories will come to you...

"Yeah, I had to go get a damn measles shot that week."

Skip Lenoir's crunch — do lunch at the Cabaret

By LESLEY BARTLETT
Staff Writer

The excellent opportunity for fine lunchtime dining in a comfortable yet classy atmosphere is escaping most UNC students. But a few have wised up; instead of fighting with 100 rabid students over a table in Lenoir, they grab a to-go lunch from the Pit Stop, Lenoir, or the Union Station and take it downstairs to the Union Cabaret. Because the Cabaret is funded by student activity fees, each picnicker has free admission to the beautifully-decorated and

remarkably clean Lunch Cabaret.

In addition, free entertainment is provided. Karen Moore, coordinator of the Lunch Cabaret, schedules the line-up of what she calls "mellow performers" — these are generally acoustic guitarists or pianists who also sing. Music types vary between folk, contemporary, classical, jazz, and blues — sometimes all in one performance.

The entertainers are students taken from a talent pool chosen during periodical auditions. Auditions were held Feb. 5, and the

next audition is projected to take place after Spring Break. However, Evening Cabaret director Billy Pizer encourages anyone who wishes to perform to come by room 200 in the Union. "If we had someone really talented, we wouldn't turn them away."

The Lunch Cabaret is on a four-week trial to monitor its popularity. It's currently open Monday through Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., but these hours could change. If participation and turn-out are low, the Lunch

Cabaret will decrease its hours or close altogether. But, as Pizer says, "If demand picks up, it could be opened up for longer. It just depends on the demand."

The Lunch Cabaret offers an opportunity to study, meet with friends, or simply relax during your lunch hour. Everyone is encouraged to escape from the tyranny of Lenoir and the the Pit's inclement weather to the Cabaret's warmth and space. It's the best place on campus to be "out to lunch."

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