

# TELE Pulse

by Steve K. Walz

Every week this column reviews the merits or demerits of a network series, miniseries, movie or special. More importantly though, we'd like you, the viewer, to get involved with the column by sending in your opinion about a certain show so we can register your tele-pulse. We'll pass on some of the more interesting comments to the network honchos in New York.

## MORK & MINDY

Shazbot! I'm usually not privy to writing negative comments about a TV show that merits a dressing down, but in the case of 'Mork & Mindy,' a big hit of a year ago, I'm making an exception. 'M&M' was a terrific show, but there is every indication that ABC and Paramount have made some huge mistakes with the series, some of which may spell disaster for the program.

Before I point out those glaring weaknesses that are beginning to hurt the show, let's examine 'M&M's' brief history. Originally conceived to be built around comedian Robin Williams, the first year of the program spotlighted his rapid-fire delivery and his overall zaniness. Co-star Pam Dawber was relegated to the proverbial "Oh Mork," while her father, Conrad Janis, and grandmother, Elizabeth Kerr, insulted each other.

The program garnered huge Nielson ratings because of the unique talents of Williams and the alien storyline that had the mad Orkan getting himself into wild predicaments.

During the early part of last summer, Kerr and Janis were jettisoned from the show in favor of transplanted New York D.J. Jay Thomas, comedienne Gina Hecht and Tom Poston, who had a recurring role as the nutso neighbor, Mr. Bickley. The reasoning for the cast change was, according to the 'web,' to broaden the program and establish secondary characters, thus taking the pressure off Robin. In addition, Pam Dawber was to be given more to do since the producers finally found out that she could really act.

ABC then boldly announced that it was moving 'M&M' to Sunday at 8:00, pitting it up against 'Archie's Place' on CBS. ABC was having problems on that particular day and it needed 'M&M' to anchor its comedy-oriented schedule.

ABC opened the prime-time season with a special one-hour \$1,000,000 episode of the show, which should have stolen some of 'Archie's' thunder. Although the program beat out, rather eeked out, a victory over 'Archie,' there was a distinct drop in the amount of viewers who tuned in to Robin and Co.

From the lofty top 10 position it held six months earlier, 'M and M' began a slow descent through the top 20 and then down into the top 25. It was also obvious from that first program that the writing was second rate, and Robin and Pam were literally being forced into saving their respective characters.

During the next four weeks 'M&M' waged a neck-and-neck battle with 'Archie.' Sometimes it won and sometimes it didn't. The programs also ran like a rollercoaster. One show would be good while the next would be pitiful, and those so-called secondary characters were relegated, again, to "Gee Mork!," "Wow Mork!" lines. At this point one wonders whether 'M&M' will ever be able to recapture some of its past glory.

After visiting the set in July, I got the feeling that Robin wasn't entirely happy with the scripting, after overhearing a conversation he had with one of the show's producers. Robin is also under enormous pressure to use all of his energies to flush out the sometimes weak writing.

Meanwhile, his agents have him avoiding the press in order to save him for his 'Popeye' flick, at a time when publicity could renew interest in the program. And, according to a very reliable source, there is talk of marrying off Mork and Mindy next year, which would spell the end of the series. Both Robin and Pam have agreed in the past that marriage between the alien and Earthling would be counterproductive.

So I ask ABC and Paramount, what's going on?



Commercial VHF television stations now in operation number 516 and UHF, 210, while educational VHF stations total 102 and educational UHF, 158, says the Federal Communications Commission.

**Remove hard callus skin without cutting, scraping!**

From feet, hands, elbows. Doctors find that hard, thick calluses often can be softened and removed medically. The same ingredient doctors find so effective is available in **DERMA+SOFT™ Medical Formula for Hard Callused Skin.**

**YOUR DOG NEEDS VITAMINS, TOO.**



**Sargeant's**  
the pet care people

©1979 Miller-Morton Company, a subsidiary of A.H. Robins Co., Richmond, Virginia 23230.



**Good Nutrition Can Win Trip To Dallas**

Students who enjoy learning how to stay healthy in home economics or health-related classes at the secondary or college level may be eligible for the Fleischmann's Yeast "Share the Health" Contest and win trips and scholarships.

The grand prize is a one week, expenses-paid trip to Dallas (site of the annual American Home Economics Association Convention) in June 1980, for the first place junior/senior high school class, its teacher and the top ranking college student.



Scholarships ranging from \$250 to \$2,000 will be awarded to the top three winners and runners-up on both secondary and college levels. Additional prizes include pizza bashes, dinners-for-two and other trips.

All participants benefit from active involvement in their local communities and from the knowledge of nutrition, menu planning and budget management gained.

To enter the contest, junior/senior high school classes and individual college students must select a particular segment of their community and analyze that group's nutritional needs. Practical, nutritious menus must be planned to meet those needs and the students must share what they have learned with their chosen group.

A free contest rules folder and entry blank is available by writing: Standard Brands Educational Service, Drawer "A," Madison Square Station, New York, N.Y. 10010.

Arthritis Sufferers!

**Now. Get relief for painful inflammation and protection for your stomach!**

For minor arthritis pain, **Arthritis Pain Formula** has 50% more medicine than ordinary headache tablets. Plus two antacids for double stomach protection. Try **Arthritis Pain Formula**, the arthritis specialist, from the makers of Anacin.

# through channels

by Joey Sasso

**CONFIDENTIAL REPORT:** It takes more than a pretty face to sell coffee, washing machines and dessert toppings to TV viewers. And only super talented actors who enjoy having fun need apply. For years **Margaret Hamilton** was best known for her role as the Wicked Witch in 'The Wizard of Oz.' Today, though, people on the street call her Cora, the Maxwell House lady. The reason, she revealed, is that the Maxwell House commercials are designed to be convincing. Margaret recalled the time one older character dropped by Cora's little store in the commercial. Viewers, she said, thought he was really her beau. **Marge Redmond**, Cool Whip's Sarah Tucker, pointed out that much more time and care go into commercials than with other TV programming. "To do a 30-second commercial, it takes at least one day and sometimes two or three," she told me. "And I'd rather do a good commercial than a quickie TV show." **Jess White**, known to millions as Old Lonely, the Maytag repairman, loves his work. "It's Maytag that's really made me a star and not the 60 movies and 17 Broadway plays I've done," White said. "People don't say there goes Jessie White, the actor. They say, there goes the Maytag man. But you know, I think he's a bit like me."

**CELEBRITIES IN CANDID:** **Larry Hagman**, the evil J.R. Ewing of CBS-TV's 'Dallas,' spends his spare time helping the mentally retarded. Hagman and his wife, **Maj**, spent five days of their vacation with patients at the Boulder, Montana, School and Hospital. "We stopped for lunch at a little hotel near Boulder," the 48-year-old Hagman said. "There we noticed that the busboys seemed very anxious to please. Later we discovered that the owner of the hotel had been the superintendent at the local mental institution for 18 years. And he hired his 'kids' to work for him. Well, I became really interested. So instead of just staying for lunch we stayed five days to tour the institute." ... Bad guys on CBS-TV's 'Hawaii Five-O' will really get a kick out of **Sharon Farrell**, this season's replacement for **James MacArthur**. The talented beauty happens to hold a black belt in karate. It's a classic case of a star who can really make criminals see stars. ... One romance is still growing strong: blond charmer **Chris Lemmon** of NBC's 'Brothers and Sisters' and beautiful **Dorian LePinto** of NBC's 'Doctors.' And one romance on the rocks: 'Hee Haw's' **Barbi Benton** has split from long-time boyfriend **Andrew Prine**.

**TV TICKER:** Television could be stealing your kids' affection away from you, according to a survey conducted in schools across America. Over 75 percent of the high school students questioned would trade their parents if they had the opportunity. **Jaclyn Smith** was the girls' first choice for Mom, followed by **Cheryl Ladd**, **Carol Burnett**, **Cheryl Tiegs** and **Farrah Fawcett**. The boys chose Cheryl Ladd first, then Cheryl Tiegs, Farrah Fawcett, Jaclyn Smith and—last but not least—**Raquel Welch**. **Burt Reynolds** took the lead for the preferred father for both the male and female students. The girls then wanted **Michael Landon**, **Robert Redford**, **Lee Majors** and **Clint Eastwood**. The boys wanted Lee Majors second, then Clint Eastwood and **Lou 'The Hulk' Ferrigno**. Their fifth most popular choice for father was **Jimmy Carter**. ... The home video industry has come of age. The public is gobbling up the newest in entertainment and communications appliances in growing numbers. The average home video unit now sells for somewhere around \$900. Add to that the cost of monitors and tapes, and the average investment can top \$1,400. "To keep up with the rapidly changing conditions in the video world, over one hundred thousand read *Video Magazine* every month," said publisher **Jay Rosenfield**.



## HEROES

'NBC Monday Night at the Movies' returns to the airwaves on **MONDAY, NOV. 5** with a network TV premiere showing of 'Heroes,' starring **Henry Winkler** and **Sally Field** (pictured) and **Harrison Ford**.

The movie is a wacky and heart-warming story of an emotionally disturbed Vietnam veteran (Winkler) and the girl he meets (Field) as he travels cross-country to start a farm in California.

Val Avery, Olivia Cole and Hector Elias co-star in this film.

CHECK LISTINGS FOR EXACT TIME.

TV COMPUTERS SERVICE, INC.