Of delayed premieres and brand new ‘Wonder Years’

BY WINSTON LLOYD

Staff writer

A few months ago in this space I believe I said that the last two comedies are "Cheers" (NBC) and "Designing Women" (CBS). But that was before I really noticed one of last year's mid-season replacements. Or at least I supposed six episodes of a series in which it may not have full confidence, and instead of giving a 13-episode order and placing the show on its fall schedule, the network will play it in January after the demise of one of its favorites. This seems to have worked best in recent years for ABC.

The summer of 1984 gave us six episodes based on a successful made-for-TV movie, "Moonlighting," ABC's desire to offer new material in the television summer doldrums led to a Top 10 hit, and placed "Bruce Willis, "Dipsto" and specially, the "thunderer," "another rerun," into everyone's vocabulary.

Last season, programming chief Brandon Stoddard took more chances, "China Beach" is a Vietnam war drama about the women working at a hospital/R&R resort, and "The Wonder Years" is a new-fangled sitcom about a family. You can find them both now starting at 9 p.m. on Wednesdays. The premieres were last night.

"The Wonder Years" is a sitcom without that annoying laugh track. Ever since "MA\$H" got away with no canned laughter during the shrill, sappy scenes, the networks have experimented with it. From "Police Squad!" to "Hopperman." But in "The Wonder Years" it works well.

Fred Savage ("Vice Versa") stars in this "dramady" that seems to have been inspired by "Stand By Me." Like the movie, "The Wonder Years" is about a child, here in seventh grade, and is narrated by the full grown protagonist. Kevin looks back on his childhood with all the benefits of hindsight and a mature, yet nostalgic, view of the past. He describes it by what he remembers as the most intimate form of communication known to man. Then from time to time he will refer to the rest of his life, which years away from the viewer.

In one episode, he is distressed that one girl has turned him down for the big dance, and is going with an eighth-grade (gasp!) instead. She explains, "But Kevin, I think of you as..." and the frame freezes on her face. The narrator. "And she said, 'Well I know you're not handsome, but you're smart and kind and loyal.'"

"The Wonder Years" is rich with this sort of characterization, and the stories, at least in those first six, were constantly fresh and well acted. Of everything as well as the obligatory Vietnam death of the brother of a friend after which everything was different," but that occurred in the first episode, and was very well handled. Kevin, instead of dwelling on the death, turned his attention to the hurting friend. Winnie, and received his first kiss. She is the thing that doesn't get a heavy handed analysis of death from Kevin, but confusion in his happiness about the kiss, and worry about what she thinks about it now. All this at the funeral and Winnie's house later. When serious, the show still remembers it is a sitcom, and that it is about a 12-year-old. By the way, Winnie was able to suppress those feelings and the kiss becomes forgotten. But not by Kevin.

Paul: Josh Saviano is his fiancé who is too socially inept to be in the "in" crowd at school, but finds himself being courted by Kevin, who won't abandon him. Not to say that Kevin is the height of popularity, he's too nice to do some of the things you have to do to be on top. He, does get their attention by waving an apple into the cafeteria after being caught carrying food out. What a fellow, power hungry assistant principal.

Keep in mind that I wrote this without the benefit of having seen last night's premiere. My deadline was Monday. I do hope, that even though the show concerned Kevin portraying Robert Kennedy in a civil rights play, it didn't start preaching. Oh, well. I know now.

I know that this show is up against some tough competition, and incredibly, it is competition which I don't want to see cancelled. "Night Court" (NBC) and "The Equalizer" (CBS) are great, but give ABC a try with the cutting edge of the sitcom genre. "The Wonder Years."

Next week, look for the following premieres:

- Saturday, 8 p.m. "Murphy's Law" (ABC) and "George Segal, P.I."
- Monday, 10 p.m. "Almost Gone!" (CBS) and "The Wonder Years."
- Tuesday, 8 p.m. "TV 101" (CBS) and "Head of the Class" meets the RTVM department. 9 p.m. "Moonlighting."
- Tuesday, 8 p.m. "TV 101" (CBS) and "Head of the Class" meets the RTVM department. 9 p.m. "Moonlighting."
- Wednesday, 8 p.m. "TV 101" (CBS) and "Head of the Class" meets the RTVM department. 9 p.m. "Moonlighting."
- Thursday, 8 p.m. "TV 101" (CBS) and "Head of the Class" meets the RTVM department. 9 p.m. "Moonlighting."
- Friday, 8 p.m. "TV 101" (CBS) and "Head of the Class" meets the RTVM department. 9 p.m. "Moonlighting."

Crafts Fest does good for shoppers and the Y

BY LESLEY BARTLETT

Staff writer

What's better than a margarita in the middle of the Gulf Desert? The '88 Crafts Fest! Why, you might ask? Because you don't have to travel far and there's no threat of a hangover. Crafts Fest, a 2-year tradition, will assemble artists from Virginia, Tennessee and the Carolinas who display and sell their works.

Starting tomorrow Crafts Fest will feature pottery, jewelry, basket weaving, hand blown glass, leatherworks, stained glass, sweaters, woodworks, and paper cut-outs, as well as an assortment of other crafts. While the crafts are on exhibit in the Great Hall of the Student Union, Coffee Shop will be selling refreshments in the Union's second floor lounge. The food has been donated by many local restaurants, including Baskin Robbins, Ben & Jerry's, Bruegger's Bagel Bakery, Carolina Coffee Shop, The Carolina Inn, Haus, The Faulkner, Roman's Wings, Sadiak's, Skylight Exchange, Spanky's, Subway and Time Out.

Simultaneously, and solely for your listening pleasure, various groups and individuals, such as the Loreleis, the Clef Hangers, the BSM Choir and Nikki Meets the Hi, are scheduled to perform. The list of entertainers is extensive, so you're bound to discover something you like no matter what time you drop by the Crafts Fest.

All proceeds from Crafts Fest and Coffee Shop go to the Campus Y — it's the group's main fundraising project.

If you look for good crafts, good food, good entertainment, good cause besides a trip to the Bahamas, what more could you ask for? Crafts Fest will be open Dec. 2 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Dec. 4 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Remember, only 24 shopping days left...

Compiled by Anne-Renee Rice