

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

By FRED NEHER



"But I did ask you at breakfast... you said all we needed was to have to make payments on a fur!"

TV CANDIDS
by
Terrence O'Flaherty

One of the most empty and honorless jobs in the world of television is that of host-actor—the video chaperon who says a few words before the drama and afterward and occasionally acts in one himself.

Every star in the Hollywood firmament has been offered such a series and usually the money is good for such a modest amount of effort. The sponsor is buying the name—often as in the case of Fred Astaire, one that has taken decades to establish. The sponsor and producer are getting a bargain.

Going back down the road a piece, there were other "front" men like Gene Raymond on "Fireside Theater"; Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Ronald Reagan on "G. E. Theater" (and now Jack Webb, the big letter man on "G. E. True"); and don't forget the ladies—Jane Wyman, Barbara Stanwyck, June Allyson, and Loretta Young.

Some of these worked harder than others. In the case of the late Dick Powell—whose career bridged the awesome gulf between boy crooner and big-time executive—he was a host-actor who also was his own producer and occasionally director.

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The Lloyd Bridges Show is a different angle on the one-man act. He is the star of every episode and the most versatile. His new series for Henry Kaiser has involved him in a complicated device whereby he portrays writer Adam Shepherd who becomes dramatically involved in the stories he is covering.

Bridges has roamed through an astonishing range of roles. Recently he dropped the confusing introductory writer role to devote more time to the telling of the story. He will continue to be both host and star, however.

The first episode in the new format had him playing a prizefighter who defends his championship title against his own son, confusion of a different kind.

And while we're on the subject of father-and-son rivalry, the Linkletters—Art and son Jack—are now competing on radio. Young Linkletter has begun a new interview show on ABC radio from 11:10 to 11:30 a.m., while his old man still goes through ladies' pocketbooks on CBS radio from 11 to 11:30 a.m. daily. If you should get them confused, just remember that Jack is the handsome one and Art is the rich one.

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The most recent volume in Ben Casey's History of Medicine dealt with a dramatic two-hour treatment of drug addiction—which is slightly outside the sphere of surgery, I would guess, and probably as illogical as anything since the late Marilyn Monroe was asked for her opinion of the situation in Laos.

I have a feeling that the program starring Vince Edwards is not as authentic as it might be and that the producer is walking on very thin ice, indeed, in such a show. I am well aware that authenticity often gets in the way of the story telling (if Kim Stanley had been treated in a narcotics hospital, there would have been no television drama) yet I feel very uneasy where medicine is practiced in a haphazard manner before an audience of millions.

Garden Checklist

1. All rose pruning should be completed at the earliest possible time.
2. Fuchsias may be pruned sometime in February. Figure on cutting them back at least a third of their size to promote plenty of new bloom wood.
3. Hydrangeas should be cut back to about half their size. Unpruned hydrangeas become too leggy.
4. House plants should be dunked, pot and all into a tub of water on occasion to insure complete soaking of all the root ball.
5. Most fruit trees need pruning now. Ask your nurseryman about procedure if you're in doubt.



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