

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

I had lunch with Jo Stafford the other day and the experience reminded me of a story my grandmother told me years ago about a young man who married a girl with a lovely singing voice. On the morning after the wedding he looked at the face on the pillow next to his and for the first time saw his wife without her make-up. Horrified he cried:

"For God's sake, Mary, wake up and sing!"

Off-stage Miss Stafford is an exceedingly plain-looking person without much personality. She's a big girl and wears glasses. Her conversation was almost totally without animation. She plays bridge and likes the New York Yankees and I kept wondering if this was the girl whose voice used to excite me when she sang with Tommy Dorsey's band back before the war when the world was young.

MISS STAFFORD was in town to publicize her six television "specials" which were made in England in 1961 but will be seen in the U.S. this season.

The shows will feature Miss Stafford with such guest stars as Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald, Claire Bloom, Rosemary Clooney, Peter Sellers, Mel Torme, Robert Morley, Edd (Kookie) Byrnes, and Stanley Holloway, plus a special musical show staged on location at Warwick Castle with Peter Lawford.

The name Jo Stafford has stayed high in the list of stars even though she hasn't performed extensively in recent years — a compliment to her solid professionalism. For her fans of the Dorsey days as well as those who recall with affection her tuneful radio series beamed to the American Armed Forces on the Continent, she can do no wrong.

ABOUT THE ONLY program on the dial that makes me laugh out loud in my own living room is "McHale's Navy" and I've been trying to figure out why.

The plots are wildly absurd; but so are those of "The Beverly Hillbillies" which I don't find laughable at all.

The under-dog always wins out over the preposterously stuffy senior officer; but that happens in "Sgt. Bilko" as well as the new Phil Silvers Show and half a dozen others.

It can't be the Navy. Although I was in it for four years I didn't find anything to laugh about.

I have finally hit upon the things that make "McHale's Navy" unique: the actors know how to play comedy and even when the lines aren't uproariously funny their delivery makes them seem so. There is

an innocence about the characters even when they are engaged in the most devilish activities — the same sort of sweet childishness that characterized the old Charlie Chaplin comedies which put many an audience in an amiable mood for a dreadful dramatic pot-boiler, which often followed on the bill.

THE SERIES is mercifully free from social significance, perhaps because the war days are as remote as one can probably get from the reality of 1964. In those far off times men were brothers because they wanted to be, not because they were forced to be.

McHale, the empire-builder of the South Pacific, and his commanding officer who sees through him, but never in time, as well as the bumbling Ensign Parker, all are absurd, but they are never silly.

Ernest Borgnine, Joe Flynn, and Tim Conway play them with a zest that seems to cling into the second season. Their positions are as secure as the figures on a chess board. They may fall down for a time, but they're always replaced in the proper places in time for the final commercial.

Also, I suppose there's another reason why the program is always welcome: I don't watch it every week.

Area Hospital Staff Member Presents Work

Harbor General Hospital staff member, Dr. Chi Kong Lui, presented a paper on his research studies at the Los Angeles County Heart Association's eighth annual midwinter symposium early this month.

Dr. Lui's investigations involve techniques helpful in evaluation of patients with valvular heart disease, hypertension, congestive heart failure and lung diseases.

Residing at 28807 Grayslake Road, Palms Verdes, Dr. Lui is also an associate professor of medicine at UCLA Medical School.

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Del Monte Spinach 17¢
Add variety to a winter meal with your favorite, zucchini! tall 303 can
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Apple Sauce 33¢
Gifford Medium. To give plain foods a touch of elegance! tall can
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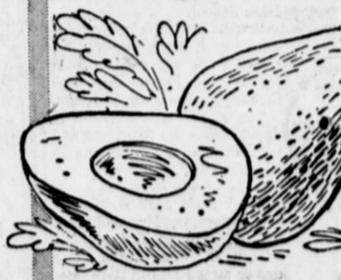
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