

## LET'S TALK

### Howard Hesseman pursuing variety of acting roles

By Polly Vonetes

**Q: I am interested in knowing what happened to Howard Hesseman of Head of the Class. What is he doing now? Is he married and does he have any upcoming series or specials? —M.K., Thunder Bay, Ontario**

**A:** It was Howard Hesseman's choice to leave the *Head of the Class* series. He felt it was time to move on to other roles. He recently starred with Patty Duke in the ABC movie *Call Me Anna*. I am sure we will be seeing more of him. He is not married but has a longtime (10 years) live-in love, French actress Caroline Ducrocq.

**Q: Do you know whatever happened to Gail Davis who played Annie Oakley in the Annie Oakley series back in the 1950s? I want to see her in person when she came to Charleston, S.C. with Gene Autry. I would like to write and tell her how much I enjoyed watching her series. It has never been rerun. Is her series on video tape? —Cheryl Durbin, Devils Lake, N.D.**

**A:** Gail Davis in real life was a skilled rider and a crack shot. She did most of her own stunt work on the series. She was a leading lady in many of the western films including *Yukon Manhunt*, *On Top of Old Smoky*, *Winning of the West* and more. When she retired from the screen, she became a manager of other celebrities. I am sorry, I do not have her address for you. To inquire for a video tape write: Yesterday Video, Box C, Sandy Hook, CT 06482, or Marshall Discount Video, Box 328, Trenton, MI 48183.

**Q: I remember the old-time movie actor Charles Farrell with much nostalgia. I remember he owned the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. When did he die and how old was he? —Ruth O'Brien, Herbshter, Wis.**

**A:** Charles Farrell died on May 6, 1990, at his home in Palm Springs, Calif. He was 82 years old.

**Q: Whatever happened to George Burns' son Ronnie? He used to appear with George and Gracie as a youngster**



Howard Hesseman

and even as a teenager, but I haven't seen any information on him or even heard George mention him in years. —S.S., Thunder Bay, Ontario.

**A:** Ronnie Burns, the adopted son of George and Gracie Burns, is now 54. He is a business consultant. His adopted sister Sandra, 55, is a school counselor. Gracie devoted most of her life to the children. George's philosophy, as stated in his book, *How To Live to Be 100 Or More*, says, "Trying to run your children's lives is bad enough, but it's even worse when you get older and they try to run yours." His children are a private matter, and he seldom discusses them.

**Q: I recently saw the movie Pretty Woman and loved it! Could you please give me information on Julia Roberts and Richard Gere? I think they are fantastic. —Rachel Kruse, Wagon Wheel, N.M.**

**A:** Twenty-two-year-old Julia Roberts is a beautiful southern belle, born in Smyrna, Ga., where her parents ran a writers-and-actors workshop in the '60s. But, it was her older brother Eric, whom she closely resembles, who inspired her to try acting. Julia skipped college and went straight into acting. She has a steady, unidentified boyfriend, "I love him, I don't name him," she says. Richard Gere, 41, born in

Philadelphia, Pa., grew up in Syracuse, N.Y., with three sisters and a brother. He attended the University of Massachusetts for two years before he opted to pursue his acting career full time. Known as a one-woman-at-a-time man, his love interest for the last three years is model Cindy Crawford.

Send your questions about the world of entertainment to: Polly Vonetes, Let's Talk, P.O. Box 17748, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-0748. Because of the volume of mail, only questions of general interest can be answered.

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## FAMILY FARE

### Family Channel begins holiday season with acclaimed 'Madeline'

By Christy Bergslien

A whirling dervish of a little girl enlivens the holidays in a Family Channel animated Christmas special. *Madeline's Christmas* premiered Nov. 22, kicking off the network's holiday season, and will repeat Dec. 10 and 13.

The *Madeline* children's books are the creation of noted author and illustrator Ludwig Bemelmans. Bemelmans' efforts won him a Caldecott medal for *Madeline's Rescue* in 1953 and a New York Times Choice for Best Illustrated Children's Books that same year.

The stories are brought to life via animation and are narrated by Emmy- and Tony-winner Christopher Plummer. Marsha Moreau provides the voice of *Madeline*. She recently co-starred in *The Last Winter*, a feature film produced by CBS. Audiences will probably best remember her as Erin in the series *My Secret Identity*.

In *Madeline's Christmas*, everyone except *Madeline* is sick in bed at the boardinghouse where *Madeline* lives. So it's up to her to spread the holiday cheer with the help of a Yuletide visitor.

The *Madeline* series will continue on the Family Channel in 1991. Four new stories will be produced: *Madeline and the Bad Hat*, *Madeline's Rescue*, *Madeline and the Gypsies* and *Madeline in London*.

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