

FAMILY FARE

LET'S TALK

Weekend specials
return to ABC

By Amy Schmidt

It all began when a young mouse named Ralph met up with a boy named Keith Gridley. Keith had a toy motorcycle just Ralph's size, and together the two hit the highways. That was, until Ralph almost got sucked up by the vacuum cleaner!

The Peabody Award-winning story is *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*, made famous by novelist Beverly Cleary. Ralph the mouse and friends returned for a TV trilogy Jan. 12 on the ABC Weekend Specials. Part I of *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* kicked off the 15th season of the ABC series. Part II broadcasts Saturday, Jan. 14.

In the second story of the trilogy, *Runaway Ralph*, things get even more precarious when Keith gets sick, the motorcycle is lost, and Ralph must find some other way to get Keith his medicine. It also airs in two parts, on Feb. 2 and 9. Then, an all-new third story titled *Ralph S.* movie telecasts in two parts Feb. 16 and 23.

All of the Beverly Cleary presentations are dimensional animated films in which live actors are paired with mini-robot animals. Starring as Keith in the trilogy is Philip Walter. Mimi Kennedy plays Mrs. Gridley, and Ray Walston plays the doorman. The show's producer is John Matthews, who directs the animation and also provides the mouse's voice.

ABC Weekend Specials are close-captioned for the hearing impaired.

Carole Lombard's short career
was nevertheless a success

By Polly Vonetes

Q: I have recently discovered Carole Lombard. Would it be possible to have a list of all of her movies? I would also like to know if any of them are available to rent or own. —Ilene Rich, Burley, Idaho

A: When you say "recently discovered Carole Lombard," I feel I must tell you something about this charming actress. She was one of Hollywood's most talented and glamorous stars of the '30s as well as a sophisticated comedienne. Happily married to Clark Gable, she unfortunately was killed in a plane crash, returning from a War Bond selling tour. She was 34 years old. She had appeared in over 50 films, but I will give you only the names of her films available on tape: *High Voltage*; *In Name Only*; *Made for Each Other*; *My Man Godfrey*; *Mr. and Mrs. North*; *Nothing Sacred*; *Power*; *Racketeer*; *Swing High, Swing Low*; *They Knew What They Wanted*; *To Be or Not to Be*; and *Twentieth Century*.

Q: I would really like to know where I can write to Oprah Winfrey and Jaclyn Smith. It is especially important to me to have these addresses. —Lisa Thomas, Lisbon, Ohio

A: If it is so important for you to have these addresses, I guess I will have to send them to you. Write to: Oprah Winfrey, 35 E. Wacker, Ste. 1782, Chicago, IL 60601; and to Jaclyn Smith, c/o 20th Century Fox, 10201 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035. (This address may or may not work for Jackie.)

Q: Please tell me where Nick Barkley, who played on *The Big Valley*, is. I've seen the others who played in the series on other shows, but not him. I have written to people like you but never got an answer. —Morelle J. Jackson, Gilmer, Texas

A: Morelle, let's agree on one thing right away. I am different from the others you have written to because I am answering your letter. Peter Breck starred as Nick Barkley in *The Big Valley*. Somehow he never became the handsome "big star" everyone thought he would be. Still living in California, he has reverted to occasional guest roles on series and made-for-television movies.

Q: I am an electronics enthusiast who is interested in new ways to re-create live music. Recently I saw an article on Ron Jones, composer for *Star Trek: The*



Carole Lombard

Next Generation, and read about some of his advances in music technology. How can I find out more on what he has done? —Greg Levy, West Hollywood, Calif.

A: The best I can do for you, Greg, is to send the address of his publicist. For information on Ron Jones, write to: Selfman & Others, Public Relations, 8489 W. Third St., Los Angeles, CA 90048.

Q: This is the first time I have written to you, and I wish you would help me. Can you tell me if Robert Mitchum is dead, and if not, where is he and what is he doing? Also, Kirk Douglas, is he dead? If not, where is he and what is he doing these days? —Bertha Cowan, Town, Texas

A: It was nice hearing from you Bertha, and it's even nicer to be able to tell you that both your stars are alive and well. Robert Mitchum starred in a short-lived series for NBC last season, *Family for Joe*. He is still active in the acting profession, accepting only the roles that really appeal to him. Kirk Douglas has published a very successful book about his father and his life with him. He has been making appearances in book stores and on all the talk shows publicizing it. He too has remained active but selective in the acting profession. Both men are married and proud grandfathers.

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.



Sarah Jessica Parker plays a hard-working assistant district attorney on ABC's *Equal Justice*, Wednesdays.