

BITTS AND PIECES

Sitcom afterlife; birthing new channels

It's anything but over. Lifetime Television has acquired the critically acclaimed comedy series *Anything But Love* for exclusive broadcast beginning next fall. The 56 episodes of the series, which originally aired on ABC, star Jamie Lee Curtis and Richard Lewis.

Mo' channels, mo' channels, mo' channels. Two of the new channels soon to appear on cable promise specialized entertainment and interactive capabilities. The Sci-Fi Channel, now owned and operated by the USA Network, has announced a Sept. 24 launch date. The 24-hour channel will offer science fiction and fantasy programming, with interactive games to come in the future.

The Family Channel, in a co-venture with Game Technologies, Inc., plans to kick off The Game Channel on the first day of 1993. Besides airing game shows such as *Crosswords* and *Face Off*, the new channel will feature interactive games utilizing 900 telephone numbers.

She knows the part inside out. Cynthia Sapp, the reigning Miss America, will play herself in NBC's *Miss America Behind the Crown*, scheduled to air in September. The fact-based movie dramatizes Sapp's relationship with her abusive lover.



Jamie Lee Curtis

You could call it *twenty-to-sixty-something*, but the producers are using the working title *Middle Ages* for a new ensemble series set to join CBS' schedule sometime this summer. The one-hour program, which has begun production in Chicago and Los Angeles, mixes comedy and drama in the stories of people of various ages "trying to make sense out of the '90s." The cast includes Peter Riegert, William Russ, James Gammon, Ashley Crow, Kyle Secor, Amy Brenneman and Ruby Dee in a recurring role as a spiritual advisor and housekeeper.

FAMILY FAIR

Lewis, Lamb Chop discuss TV-news woes

By Suzanne Gill

Like opening the door to a stranger, television can let unexpected terrors into our homes. Our window on the world brings beauty, information and, too often, violence and death into the midst of family life.

In response to the recent wave of civil unrest in the aftermath of the controversial verdict in the Rodney King case, the Public Broadcasting Service has made six public service announcements available to its affiliates. The PSAs are aimed at preschoolers, who often see more and understand less than parents suppose. They feature Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop in brief conversations about worrisome "bad stuff" on television and how hard it is even for grownups to work out their differences. Lewis encourages young viewers to "find a grownup you trust" and talk about their feelings.

For youngsters who've witnessed riots in their own communities, two of the PSAs deal with questions of behavior. Rather than move away, Lewis assures Lamb Chop they will stay and help rebuild their neighborhood. She also reminds the worried puppet that she's done the right thing by following instructions to stay home from school and off the street.

The spots are encouraging, reassuring and humorous. And they ought to remind adults how lucky they are to be the trusted grownup in any child's life.



Connie Ray stars as eccentric mom Millicent in *The Torkelsons*, an NBC Saturday comedy series.



Christopher Walken stars as a tormented psychic in *The Dead Zone*, airing Wednesday on HBO.



Friday on CBS, the *Guiding Light* 40th Anniversary features cast regular Maureen Garrett (Holly).