

## LET'S TALK

## FAMILY FAIRIE

## Tim Matheson has long track record

By Taylor Michaels

**Q:** Could you please give me some information on Tim Matheson? How old is he, is he married or single, what is the name of his latest movie and how did he get started? —Bertha Favreau, Chilcopee, Mass.

**A:** The actor was born in Glendale, Calif., on Dec. 31, 1947. He got his career start during high school with the meeting of a producer, who was the father of a friend. By 1961, he had landed his first role, in the Robert Young series *Window on Main Street*. He continued to work steadily, appearing in episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, *My Three Sons*, *The Farmer's Daughter* and *Leave It to Beaver*. He also provided the voices for many Hanna-Barbera cartoon characters, including Jonny Quest. In 1964, the actor made his film debut in *Divorce, American Style*, then, in 1969, after six months in Marine Corps Reserves, Matheson accepted a four-year contract with Universal Studios. During that time, he helped found the improvisational troupe *The Groundlings*. In 1978, his career really took off when he appeared in the mega-hit film *Animal House* as frat leader Eric "Otter" Stratton. After much TV and stage work, he produced his first feature film, *Blind Fury*, in 1988. His latest television endeavor is the Fox series *Charlie Hoover*. He lives in Bel Air, Calif., with his wife, Megan, and their two daughters, Molly and Emma.

**Q:** Would you tell me where to write to Janet Jackson? —Orn Grant, Nashville, Tenn.

**A:** Write to the singer in care of Virgin Records, 9247 Alden Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif., 90210.

**Q:** I heard Jean-Claude Van Damme has a twin brother. Is this true? —Nick Lundquist, Hager City, Wis.

**A:** I think you're just confusing his movies with his real life. Van Damme has a sister but no brothers. He played twins Alex and Chad in his latest movie, *Double Impact*.

**Q:** Could you give me the ages of the four Golden Girls? Are they married? Do they have children? —Marie Feese, Creston, Iowa.

**A:** Bea Arthur was born May 13, 1924. She has two sons. Estelle Getty was born July 25, 1923. As far as I know, she has never been married or



Tim Matheson

had any children. Rue McClanahan was born Feb. 21, 1934, and Betty White's birthday was Jan. 17, 1922, and there are no records of either of them having any children. Arthur and McClanahan are divorced, and White is widowed.

**Q:** I've never written to any magazine about a show: I think you made a big mistake when you replaced Frank Falsone with Cleavon Little as Ron Freeman on *True Colors*. There was a chemistry that is now missing. Even though I continue to watch, I feel there is something missing. —D. Reid, Portland, Ore.

**A:** Well, I'm glad you picked me to write to. But, as I've said before, I have no control over the content of television. The reasoning behind the casting change was that Fox felt because there were no "big" names on the show, it wasn't getting the ratings it should. They felt if they put a better known actor on the show, the ratings would improve. (Cleavon Little is well-known from his role in *Blazing Saddles*.) Perhaps it would also do better in a different time slot. Many people tune in just for *Married... With Children* and miss *True Colors*. As I've said before, Fox is better than the other networks in that it lets shows stay on while they are developing a following rather than yank it off the first time it gets a low rating. And I think the network is more apt to listen to viewers. So, I would say write to Fox Broadcasting Company, P.O. Box 909, Beverly Hills, Calif., 90213.

## Weeds choke 'A Child's Garden'

By Chris Carpenter

Once upon a time, when surprisingly few youthful diversions were powered by AAA batteries, even a book of children's poetry stood the chance of a good read.

Eager to package traditional poetry for consumption in the video age, HBO presents *A Child's Garden of Verses*, a story loosely based on a collection of poems by Robert Louis Stevenson. As part of HBO's *Storybook Musicals* series, the special premieres on Friday, April 3, and airs throughout the month.

Stevenson's childhood bout with tuberculosis serves as the story line's flimsy framework. Depending on an active imagination for escape, young Robbie whiles the days away by turning ordinary experiences into the extraordinary in his mind.

Unfortunately, the animation has little to do with the poems, which all too often are warbled in grating, paraphrased singsongs. When Robbie's condition becomes a non-factor and the difference between story, song, and poetry has been thoroughly muddled, the only thing left to wonder is how many minutes are left.

Only when a cartoon Stevenson appears late to deliver an epilogue will most viewers be reminded that *A Child's Garden of Verses* was first a book, a fertile field where imagination may yet blossom.



Laurence Olivier won the Oscar as Best Actor in 1948 for his portrayal of Hamlet, Wednesday on Bravo.