

BITS AND PIECES

Teen's contest entry will air 'Afterschool'



Bich-Nga Nguyen

can be that discourse on "the birds and the bees." The Children's Television Workshop comes to the rescue with the 3-2-1 Contact Extra titled *What Kids Want to Know About Sex and Growing Up*, to air on most PBS stations Wednesday, May 13. CTW has made available a parent's guide on the subject, recommended as a primer to the program. To order the 24-page pamphlet (in English or Spanish), send \$2.25, check or money order, to: Parent's Guide, Box 40, Vernon, N.J., 07462, or call 1-900-407-2000.

STAIR NOTES

Arthur at home with 'Strangers'

By Dan Rice

Flight attendant Mary Anne, the quirky girlfriend of Balki (Bronson Pinchot) on ABC's Saturday comedy series *Perfect Strangers*, is no dumb blonde. And neither is Rebecca Arthur, the actress who plays her.

"I prefer to call her a naive blonde," Arthur says. "There's a lot more to her than actually gets on the air. We only have 22 minutes to do a show, so a lot of things that show Mary Anne is not an idiot have to be cut out."

The Cumberland, Md., native, trained in dance, has had an unusual job history. After a disastrous stint as a bank teller and turning down the chance to be a Playboy bunny ("the hours were wrong"), Arthur hired on as a private investigator. Often she would pose as a high school student to track down runaways or to bust drug rings. "I really lacked street smarts, so I had to acquire them in a hurry," she says.

During this time the aspiring actress landed recurring roles on *Search for Tomorrow* and *The Guiding Light*. She moved to Los Angeles in 1984, and made her feature film debut in *About Last Night...* A guest shot on *Perfect Strangers* won her widespread recognition and a regular role on the series.

Arthur enjoys the feedback she gets from the studio audience.

"I am a prisoner of instant gratification. I want my reviews and I want them now."

A fresh voice delivers a timely message. A Vietnamese-born high school senior from New York City is the author of the winning story outline for an episode of *ABC Afterschool Specials* to be produced by Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Productions in the spring of 1993.

Seventeen-year-old Bich-Nga Nguyen, who lives with her family in Floral Park, Queens, competed in a writing contest sponsored by ABC in conjunction with *Seventeen* magazine. Her winning teleplay, which concerns racial prejudice and the proposition that every person can work to change it, was inspired by recent violence in Brooklyn, N.Y. Nguyen feels strongly about the subject matter.

"I felt it was something that needed to be dealt with, especially by teenagers," she says.

The final conflict between good and evil will be waged on ABC. Robert A. Iger, president of ABC Entertainment, announced that the network will air a miniseries adaptation of Stephen King's sprawling novel *The Stand*, most likely during the 1992-93 season. The story describes the near-future in which a deadly virus has decimated the world's population, leaving the few survivors in opposing camps of purity and corruption.

"It's time we had a little talk." One of the most difficult duties of parenting

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Chris Rock (left) and Chris Farley add to the fun of *Saturday Night Live*, Saturdays on NBC.



John Candy stars as a lovable ne'er-do-well in John Hughes' *Uncle Buck*, airing Friday on CBS.