

FAME

by WENDY WALLACE

Austin feels 'Knots' reflects ordinary lives

In a season that was supposed to bring the demise of the nighttime soaps, "Knots Landing," which airs Thursdays on CBS, disproves the rumor. In this, its eighth year, the show places in the mid-20s in the ratings, despite stiff competition from "L.A. Law," "Dynasty" and "Dallas" may be more flamboyant nighttime soaps — but "Knots" is more consistent.

For Teri Austin, who plays lawyer

Jill Bennett, consistency is a good sign.

"Our ratings have stayed the same for years," she says. "Why? Because 'Knots Landing' reflects more of an ordinary life than the other nighttime soaps, and the problems we present are those that everyone faces. People can identify with us, because they've truly been through what we deal with."

When Austin first appeared on the show in 1985, Jill Bennett was a short-term love interest for Mack MacKenzie (Kevin Dobson). But when a back ailment sidelined Dobson for several episodes, the story line was altered and Austin became a regular. And although Jill has had amorous adventures with Gary Ewing (Ted Shackelford) and been involved in the Val/Gary/Jill love triangle, Austin has made her likable.

"She's reaching the point where she is contemplating settling



Teri Austin

down," Austin says. "But she still has to deal with the trials and tribulations of her relationship with Gary."

I feel that Jill had been good for Gary — she's been a stabilizing force for him, and she's trying to do what's best for him."

Austin was born and raised in Toronto, and made her acting debut at age 7, playing an angel in a church play. As a teen, she was chosen from almost 1000 applicants to attend a theater training program offered by Canada's York University. After graduation in 1981, Austin started working right away, appearing on "SCTV" and as co-host of Canada's most popular talk show, "Thrill of a Lifetime." It wasn't long before she moved to Hollywood and joined "Knots Landing."

"'Knots Landing' is still popular because we have a good cast," she says. "Everyone cares. If you can get viewers to change the channel from something else, that's a very powerful thing."

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ASK TONI

by TONI REINHOLD

Mancuso is really a native of Italy

What else has Nick Mancuso appeared in besides "Stingray"? Please tell me a few things about him. — K.M., Dawson Creek, British Columbia

Mancuso, the star of the 1986 NBC series, was born in Italy, and began acting while in high school in Toronto. While performing at the Stratford (Conn.) Shakespeare Festival in 1979, Mancuso was "discovered" by an ABC executive. He signed a contract with the network and filmed a pilot called "Dr. Scorpion." His TV movie credits include "Scruples" (1980) and "The Legend of Walks Far Woman" (1982). In 1982, he won a Genie Award (Canada's Oscar) for his performance in the film "Ticket to Heaven." Among his other films are "Heartbreakers," "Night Magic" and the French-language film "Paroles Et

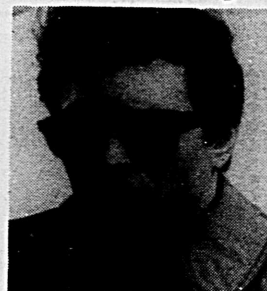
Musique," which also starred Catherine Deneuve. He now lives in Los Angeles.

Is there a place where I can get complete lists of the movies my favorite stars have appeared in? — E.C., Fife Lake, Mich.

Check your local library. Leslie Halliwell's "Filmgoer's Companion" (Scribners, 1983) is a good reference book, especially for older films and stars.

What can you tell me about Armando Assante? Where can I write to him? — K.S., Detroit, Mich.

Assante, 38, was born in New York City and now lives on a farm in Orange County, N.Y. He is married and has a 3-year-old daughter, Anya. He has described himself as "obsessive about everything." He recently starred opposite Jacqueline Bisset in the ABC miniseries



Nick Mancuso

"Napoleon and Josephine: A Love Story." Send mail to him in care of David Wolper Productions, Warner Brothers, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505.



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