

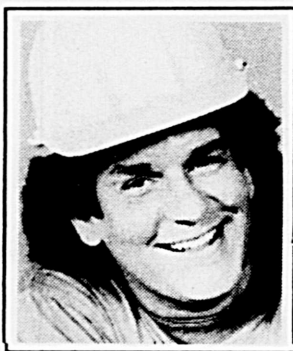
FAME

By ANDREW BeDELL

'Lenny' 's blue-collar world nothing new to TV

Pop is an overworked, opinionated cuss always struggling to make ends meet, who comes home from work each evening and plops himself down in "his" chair and zones out to the weather channel on TV. Mom is always in the kitchen sitting at the table and stoically commenting about Pop and the foibles of life. Sibling No. 1 has a family of his own and ambitions to do better. Sibling No. 2 is a ne'er-do-well that everybody loves just the same. A not-so-thin thread runs through the lives, loves and struggles of this family — lots of yelling. Enter the world of blue-collar sitcom, as envisioned by the creators of the upcoming CBS comedy, "Lenny," airing Wednesdays.

Comedian Lenny Clarke stars as the title character, a blue-collar guy



Lenny Clarke

with a wife and three kids who has a comment for every situation. His loving, supportive and understanding wife, Shelly (Lee Garlington), spends the entire show trying to calm Lenny down. Pop is played by Eugene Roche, Mom by Alice Drummond, and Eddie, the good-for-nothing brother, by Peter Dobson.

Working-class family comedies are nothing new to TV. It all started with Jackie Gleason's "The Honeymooners" (1955-56). Gleason was the loudmouth bully with a heart of gold, Ralph Kramden, and Art Carney was his best buddy, Ed Norton.

Another landmark show about the "average" blue-collar family changed TV comedy forever. "All in the Family" (1971-83) brought reality, laughs, and oftentimes a valua-

ble lesson into viewer's homes. Archie Bunker (Carroll O'Connor) was the typical working-class Joe. He was outspoken and prejudiced. Edith (Jean Stapleton) was his slow-witted, loving and honest wife. Living with Archie and Edith was their daughter Gloria (Sally Struthers) and her husband, Mike Stivic (Rob Reiner).

In addition to minority groups, Mike, a liberal, was a constant source of agitation to Archie, who referred to him as "the Polack" or "the Meathead."

Remembering classics like "The Honeymooners" and "All in the Family," one has to admit that "Lenny" has some big shoes to fill. One thing is for sure, "Lenny" has the yelling part down fine.

Working on 'Dear John' suits Jane Carr just fine

Jane Carr thinks her job is pretty darned perfect. Carr, who plays Louise Mercer, the leader of One-Two-One Club on "Dear John" (normally airing Thursdays on NBC, but pre-empted this week), brings her baby, Dashel James, to work every day.

"We have a day care center at the studio so it's just ideal," says Carr. "A lot of time is spent hanging around the set and waiting, so I get to spend that time with my baby ... but I guess he's not a baby really, he's a toddler."

Carr gained a lot of attention in the first season of "Dear John" for her line, "Are there any sex-u-al problems," after a group member spilled his or her guts about what was usually a romantic perplexity. And the line, though used less fre-

quently going into the third season of show, still gets a lot of laughs.

Working on "Dear John" has been nothing but a joy for the English-born Carr. She enjoys the other cast members thoroughly. "They're a lovely bunch of people." They include Judd Hirsch, Jere Burns, Isabella Hoffman, Harry Groener, Billie Bird and Susan Walters. And she credits the relationship of the ensemble with the success of the show. "After three years we really have come to know each other," she says. "And I have to give the writers a lot of credit. Everybody's problem has to be incorporated into the group somehow. Doing that every week takes some doing. And I think the best shows we have done involve everyone."



Jane Carr

Carr also says that the cast doesn't even know what is going to happen from one week to the next. When they wrap up shooting on one episode, they are then given the script for the next one. "It's fun not knowing, in a way, but sometimes you want to know. I guess you can't have it both ways."

So what is new for this season? "Who knows?" hoots Carr. "Oh, we never know. Maybe we'll get a new chap into the group, but they never tell us what is going to happen until it happens."

But back to the baby, er, toddler. "I'm having a ball, and Dashel is a constant joy, although he is into everything. One minute he's there, the next minute he's gone like a flash," Carr laughs. "It's hard to keep up with him."

ASK TONI

By TONI REINHOLD

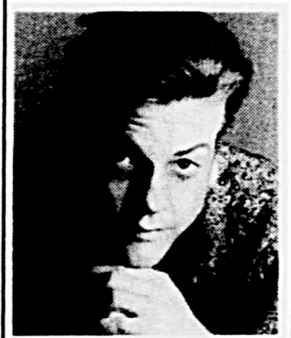
Sutherland working on a very prolific career

Can you give me some background on actor Kiefer Sutherland? What movies has he been in lately? — K.J., Denton, Texas

Kiefer is one of three children of actor Donald Sutherland. He has a sister, Rachel Sutherland, and a brother, Roger Racette Sutherland. Kiefer, 23, has appeared in 17 films in five years. His most recent efforts include "Chicago Joe and the Showgirl," "Young Guns II" and "Flatliners," which stars Julia Roberts, whom Kiefer has been seeing following his breakup with his wife, Camelia Kath.

Is actor Richard Thomas the father of twins? — B.M., Vero Beach, Fla.

No, Thomas, 39, and his wife, Alma Gonzales, have four children, a son and triplet daughters. The ac-



Keifer Sutherland

tor recently starred in an off-Broadway play called "Square One."

What happened to Ron Perlman after "Beauty and the Beast" went off the air? — R.D., Greensboro, N.C.

Perlman, who made a very romantic "Beast," found other avenues for his talent. He is currently starring in the Broadway production of "A Few Good Men."

Who played Ruth Price and Pop Cooper on "Guiding Light"? — E.H., Bastrop, La.

Price was portrayed by Beatrice Wind and Cooper was played by Vince O'Brien. Both left the show earlier this year.

How old is Michael Jackson? I saw recent pictures of him and he

still looks like a youngster. — B.R., Stockton, Calif.

Jackson is 31 years old.

What's coming up with Bill Murray? And where did he get his start? — A.P., Providence, R.I.

Murray, who will be 40 years old in September, worked with the Second City comedy troupe and in National Lampoon productions Off Broadway and on radio. He went on to be a regular on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" from 1977-80. In 1977 he won an Emmy for Best Writing for a comedy series. He branched out into films after he left the show in 1980, with "Stripes" (1981) and the mega-hit "Ghostbusters" (1984). Murray is currently starring in the comedy "Quick Change" with Randy Quaid and Geena Davis.