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TV LISTINGS



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WHAT'S ON

► Easter Parade



Caroline Rhea and D.L. Hughley join Minnie Mouse and her friends when they co-host the 15th annual "Walt Disney World Happy Easter Parade," airing Sunday on ABC.

► Caroline in the City



Monday on NBC's "Caroline in the City," Richard (Malcolm Gets) is waylaid by a robbery while on his way to respond to an ultimatum from Caroline.

► Welcome to Earth...



While on a couples retreat, Dick and Mary (John Lithgow, Jane Curtin) are counseled by a New Age guru in "3rd Rock From the Sun," airing Tuesday on NBC.

COVER STORY

Second season finds Gzowski more comfortable with TV

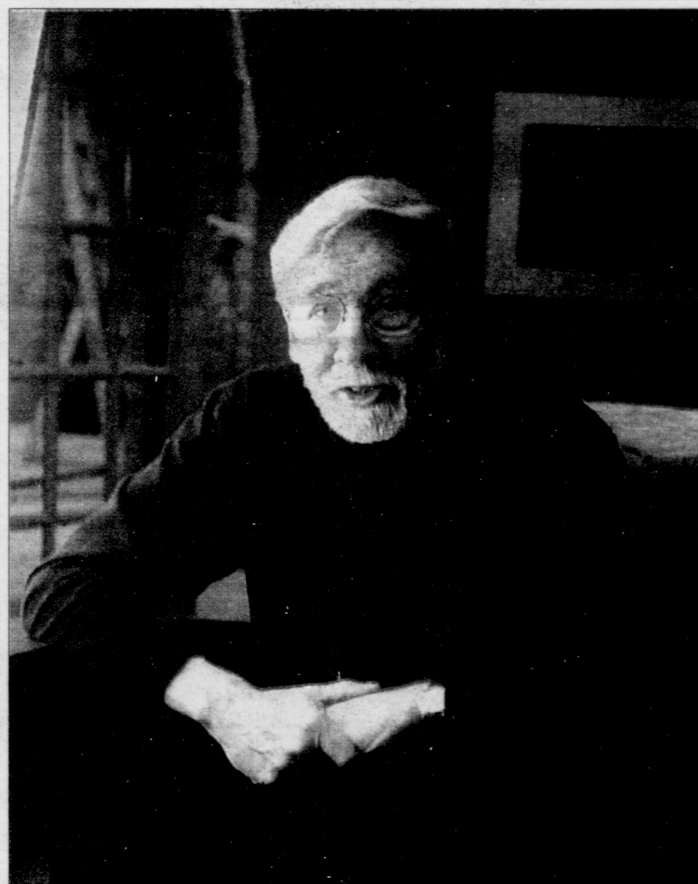
There are few talk show hosts who would challenge The Great One when he says he's 6 feet tall, but Peter Gzowski, whom many Canadians think of as the Wayne Gretzky of interviewing, doesn't flinch when the occasion arises.

"What, you've grown an inch since you played for Edmonton?" Gzowski says during an engaging, hourlong chat with Gretzky, which kicks off the second season of "Gzowski in Conversation" Sunday, April 4, on CBC Television.

Gretzky, who's playing host to Gzowski and his camera crew in a lounge above his Toronto restaurant, responds with good humor, admitting that he's not only on the short side for the modern hockey era, but also not very strong.

"I'm mentally strong," he tells Gzowski, but adds, "My wife can beat me at arm wrestling."

Gzowski, the CBC Radio personality who made "Morningside" a Canadian institution, feels comfortable joshing with the New York Rangers star because he's known Gretzky since he was a youngster.



Veteran interviewer Peter Gzowski starts another season of "Gzowski in Conversation" Sunday on CBC Television. His guest for the season premiere is hockey great Wayne Gretzky.

Viewers find spiritual themes on TV a blessing

Television always has been criticized for being the relax-and-forget-about-it medium, for encouraging passivity in viewers. But that knock fails to account for millions of viewers who hope they'll find not just information but meaning in the TV they watch. Their attention isn't focused on swimsuited bodies, car chases or cleverly worded put-downs. They're more concerned about a child who lies or a neighbor in need, and a lot of them wouldn't mind hearing more about God on the tube. "I noticed," Los Angeles TV anchor Hugh Hewitt says, "over a number of years ... that whenever we featured a guest who discussed religion or God, the response was

quite high, and the ratings went up." That observation led Hewitt to produce the PBS series "Searching for God in America," which premiered in the summer of 1996. "I think there is a tremendous hunger to talk about big things," he said at the time. "The astonishing thing since I've done this show is, folks are just unfolding in front of me; they want to talk about God." Della Reese, one of the stars of "Touched by an Angel," adds, "I think we've now come to a place where we've tried everything else. We've tried greed, we've tried drugs, we've tried medication, we've tried sex. We've tried a lot of stuff, and it doesn't work. So I think we are now all listening to

our inner selves and moving toward the [spiritual]." Yet network executives continue to be surprised at the success of programs with moral or spiritual themes. Among dramas, such hits as "The Waltons," "Highway to Heaven" and "Touched by an Angel" have been considered anomalies. But they are backed by such second-tier successes as "Christy," "The Torkelsons" and "I'll Fly Away," suggesting a permanent core of interest. Gene Reynolds, who produced "Lou Grant" and "M*A*S*H" and has directed episodes of "Christy" and "Touched by an Angel," is convinced of it.

