

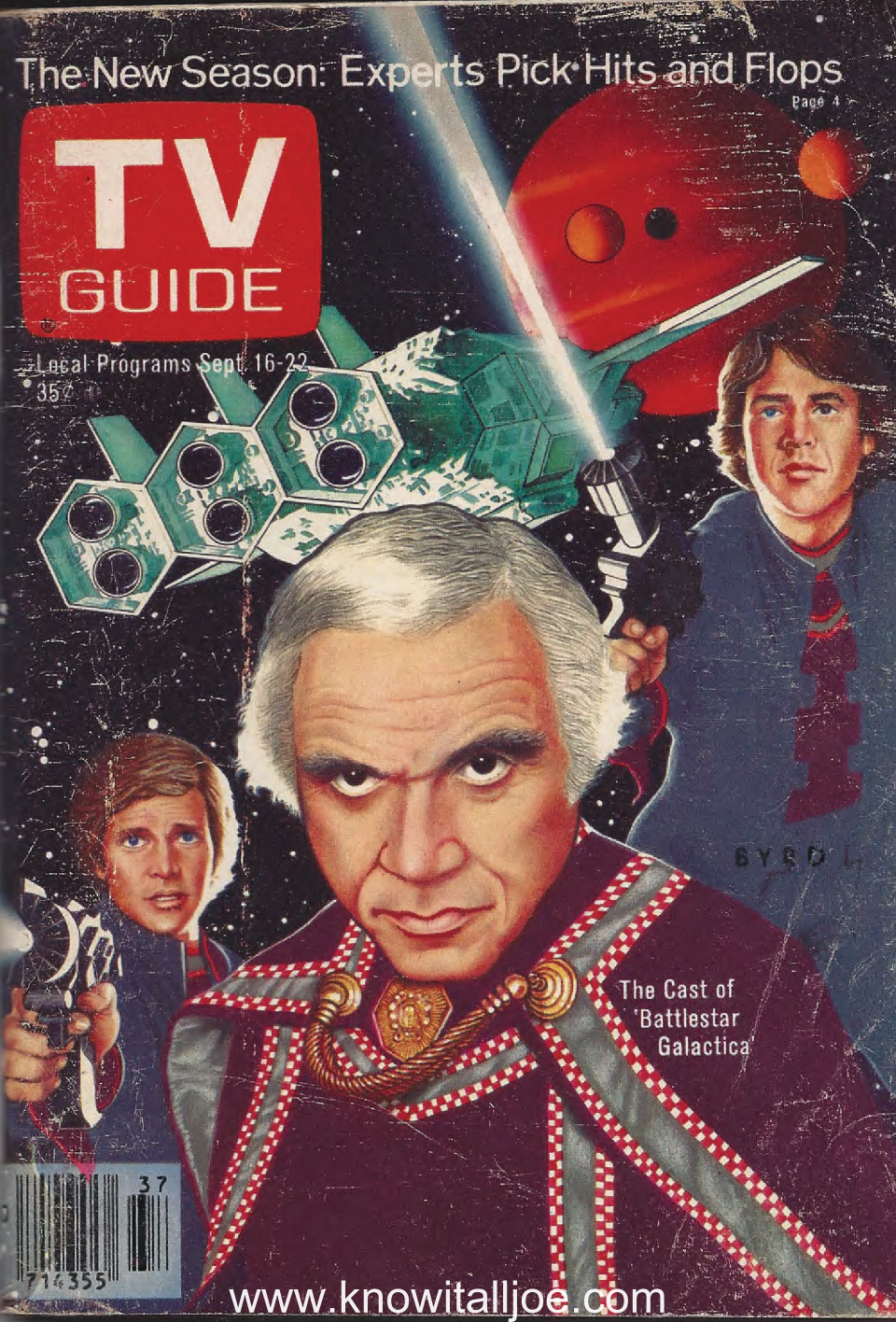
The New Season: Experts Pick Hits and Flops

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TV GUIDE

Local Programs Sept. 16-22

35



BYED L

The Cast of
'Battlestar
Galactica'

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Fighting hostile rays, evil aliens— and complex lawsuits...

'Battlestar Galactica' revs up for a turbulent blastoff

By Bill O'Hallaren

The mighty battlestar Galactica, her pods alone bigger than any aircraft carrier, sweeps majestically through space, laser cannon blazing, her fighters flashing to the attack—leading the last of the human race in a gallant, perilous dash for a homeland.

The unimaginably evil, human-hating Cylons, masters of space warfare, are in terrifying pursuit, determined to blast

the Galactica into subatomic splinters.

And the Cylons aren't alone. In Hollywood, dark-suited warriors from the sphere known as 20th Century-Fox would also like to pulverize the Galactica into astral rubbish and teach her rulers in the Universal tower not to venture into the celestial. →

John Dykstra with his battlestar Galactica.



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continued

The Universals, in turn, are confident that their beloved battlestar will forge on, triumphant over disintegrating rays, atomic hurricanes and multipronged lawsuits. (Fox is seeking to restrain network presentation on the grounds of copyright infringement and unfair competition and trade practices, but it appears that the case won't be heard until next spring.)

Battlestar Galactica is probably the most expensive show ever created for TV, with an estimated tab of \$7 million for the first seven hours. But science fiction is supposed to be the genre whose time has arrived, and that could make it a bargain at almost any price. Look at "Star Wars," which cost only \$9 million and had, by August of '78, made more than \$258 million.

And looking at "Star Wars," according to Fox, is just what Universal has been doing: looking and borrowing. To which Universal replies: our battlestars aren't like yours and neither are our good and bad guys and we don't even have a cute robot. A cute mechanical creature that looks like a dog, maybe, but no robot.

What Universal does have is John Dykstra and his staff, the crew responsible for the special effects in "Star Wars"—a dazzling display that won Dykstra an Oscar and enhanced his already hefty reputation as a cinema magician. Dykstra was hired by Universal producer Glen Larson shortly after "Star Wars" had been completed and he has been working on *Galactica* since the winter of '77 as special-effects coordinator and producer.

Dykstra, a bearded, jolly, 31-year-old giant, laughs at mention of the fussing between the two huge studios, but then he laughs at a great many things, as befits a fellow who has found people will pay him a lot of money just for playing with toys. In his case, the toys are the ships and guns and creatures that whoosh and zap and yowl through a universe of his own devis- →

ing, to his unending delight. Of *Galactica*, he says, "It is without doubt cashing in on the genre. OK. It has become a successful genre. When a police show is a success, there are more police shows. It's the nature of the business."

Dykstra's studio is in North Hollywood, and a visitor's first impression is that a bunch of kids are standing around giggling while the bosses are gone. But these young men, and some women, in jeans, shorts and granny dresses, are the bosses, busily creating and executing their visions of creatures and things that might exist in Dykstra's space world.

Dykstra, wearing a floppy shirt and cutoffs, is asked if anyone over 30 could function in his organization, and he grins and says, yes, there have been a couple, including himself. But basically his crew is so young because "most established film workers aren't familiar with our techniques. We're not a conventional film business." He has somehow attracted a stable of youngsters with the absolutely latest knowledge in "electronics, photography, lenses, optics, design and visual composition." Some are movie buffs from the USC and UCLA film schools, but one of his key model makers ran a hospital laboratory, and another was a social worker.

What they all have in common, Dykstra believes, "is a youthful approach and the technical ability to execute ideas. Anyone can come up with weird ideas for space, but only a few can actually realize them for the camera." As an illustration of how close the operation is to youthful fantasy, one room is stacked to the ceiling with model sets, the kind sold in hobby stores. Designers are constantly assembling toy trucks, planes, tanks, tractors, etc., and asking themselves how could this, slightly modified, or this plus that, be just what a Cylon would order.

The *Galactica* herself, looking larger on the screen than any moving object ever created by man, turns out to be exactly 72 inches long. But there is so much intricate detail, including hundreds of fragments from the model kits, that, when seen through a camera, the effect is that of an immense vehicle passing by.

Special effects, according to Dykstra, also owes much to breakthroughs in aerospace, medicine, the military and plastics. For example, there are some four-armed creatures in *Galactica*. Naturally. "But these won't look hokey because the actors will be wearing prosthetic devices created for amputees and you won't be able to tell a real arm from a prop."

Dykstra says all film craft unions are represented in his shop. "Say we want a special vehicle. The Carpenters build it. A Teamster drives it. When its laser canon fires, that's Special Effects. An actor inside has a jacket with a breakaway sleeve. That's Wardrobe. The sleeve is shot off and the arm glows. That's Props. When the actor gets out, he's wearing electric shoes. From →



Richard Hatch (l.), Dirk Benedict in a culinary moment.

continued

Wardrobe. When he turns them on, it's Special Effects." At Dykstra's, the wonders never cease, nor the put-ons.

Shooting special effects is painstakingly slow and precise "and there's no way you can hurry it." Universal set 27 days of filming for the initial three-hour show, but it took 50. "There was a lot of political hassle, a lot of money problems," Dykstra recalls, "but they never said stop. It's been first class all the way."

Dykstra is quick to concede that special effects, no matter how flamboyant, don't make a show. "All that zooming around gets boring. It always gets back to the people. Even a robot has to have personality." As producer, he spends half his time on the Universal lot where the live action is, working with actors and trying to tighten scripts. "The worst thing in science fiction is when they explain. The space pilot says, 'I am now setting the alpha deterrent to give us maximum longitudinal protection against Class A to C rays.' It's like a guy getting in a car and telling his passenger, 'I am now setting the automatic transmission to D, which will enable the drive train to give us forward locomotion'."

Isn't the big attraction of the new space epics, all that shooting and blasting and bombing, a sort of laundered violence? "Absolutely. It's action adventure and it's fun but it isn't explicit gore. You've got to kill some bad guys and even some good guys. Remember,

the Cylons personify evil. They don't donate to the Community Chest, they don't give candy to kids, they don't do anything nice. They would subjugate the whole human race. They need to be zapped."

Dykstra is almost painfully aware of the high expectations for *Galactica*. "The actors are already talking spinoff and lining up spinoffs from the spinoffs because they think they'll get their wives in a spinoff and then she'll spinoff . . ."

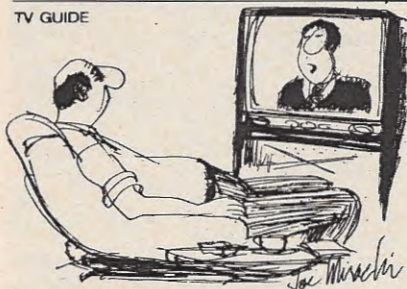
Executive producer Glen Larson, whose credits include *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *Switch*, *McCloud* and *Quincy*, believes "Our problem is to make Middle America comfortable with space. We're not going to let this become the Monster of the Week Show. There'll be lots of action but with a fantasy element that shouldn't cause any nightmares or disturb the PTA. And guest stars. Maybe one week we'll have Bette Davis on an asteroid . . ."

Lorne Greene, as Commander Adama, is charged with leading those surviving humans to safety but he isn't sure that commanding a battleship is as much fun as owning a ranch. "On *Bonanza* I gave orders and then went out to help implement them. Here I just give orders. I don't get to leave the ship."

Maren Jensen, as Athena, Commander Adama's daughter, has the leading female role, but women don't seem to have much more to do in space than they did on the *Ponderosa*. "It's an absolutely macho show," Dykstra admits. "It doesn't have as many women as it should. We tried to change this but it just doesn't come out the other end."

Most of the fun and romance of *Galactica* will center on Richard Hatch, as Captain Apollo, Adama's son and the gung-ho leader of the fighter squadron; and Dirk Benedict, who is Lieutenant Starbuck, the happy-go-lucky, gambling, woman-chasing fighter pilot.

TV GUIDE



'The following program may be hazardous to your sense of humor.'

Benedict, after a few years of not getting much of anything to do in Hollywood, simply dropped out and returned to a lakefront spread he owns near his home town of White Sulphur Springs, Mont. There he was working on a literary—and culinary—first, a vegetarian cowboy cookbook, when Larson, who had remembered him from some long-ago test, summoned him for battlestar duty.

Now Benedict, standing before the stove in his plush motor home on the Universal lot, stirred a pot of rice and beans and reflected on his luck. "One moment I was sitting under my apple tree and the next I'm in Hollywood doing love scenes with Britt Ekland." Actually, lots of Eklands because in this particular story Ekland has been cloned and Starbuck romances a succession of her.

He had what he calls "an Ernest Hemingway boyhood," in the open spaces of Montana and never saw TV until he was in junior high. "I grew up eating beef, venison and elk and drinking whiskey." In college he discovered drama and as a young actor in New York came under the influence of Gloria Swanson ("She's my second mother") and her husband William Dufty ("the most influential person in my life"). With their encouragement he has given up all refined foods, meat, eggs and dairy products, and his projected cookbook will teach cowboys and other sturdy Western types the beauties of lentils. It was the Duftys who also encouraged him to be independent and follow his muse and that's why, when jobs didn't appear, he cheerfully bade Hollywood goodbye.

"It could have been for good. No one missed me. It was just a coincidence that this one man remembered me." Some press people complained that Lieutenant Starbuck is a male chauvinist but Benedict doesn't think they understand him. "Starbuck genuinely loves women but women always get the best

of him. I understand that. In my life women are always one step ahead of me."

Benedict, a bachelor, makes clear that his austere life style doesn't exclude women, but complains 14-hour working days don't leave time to find them. "What chance have I got to meet a real girl when I'm here till 8 every night? I don't care for casual, high-speed relationships."

In an adjoining, matching motor home, Hatch, who has been a far busier actor than Benedict, including a continuing role on *The Streets of San Francisco*, admits that "Before this started I wasn't sure I would like Dirk. We'd been up for a thousand parts together and somehow you tend to put down the fellow who's competing with you. Now it turns out we get along fine. We're both into health foods. I wish he'd invite me over for whatever he's cooking." When told it was rice and beans, Hatch said that sounds great.

Hatch, also a bachelor, is confident *Galactica* will be a smash and fears it will do great damage to his love life. "When people see you on the screen they stop relating to you as a person." Even now, because of his experience on *Streets* and the soap *All My Children*, "Ladies don't really see me. They see an image of what they think I am or what they want me to be. It's all very superficial. After this [*Galactica*] I can't go anywhere. Too many will be pulling, wanting this, wanting that."

For Larson, who says he first thought of the show more than nine years ago, *Galactica* is "a giant toy. Fun and agony. I'm not 100 per cent pleased with it, but I'm quite pleased. In the past, science fiction cared too little about people and too much about science fiction concepts. Maybe we've changed that." If he's right, a huge section of Middle America may soon be cruising through space on Sunday nights, hissing the Cylons and meeting Bette Davis on an asteroid. (END)



The Last Battlestar Galactica
Leads A Rag Tag Fugitive Fleet
On A Lonely Quest For
A Shining Planet
Known As ... Earth.

SPECIAL ABC SPACE SPECTACULAR

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA



RICHARD HATCH DIRK BENEDICT LORNE GREENE MAREN JENSEN



HERB JEFFERSON JR. JANE SEYMOUR THE OVIONS THE CYLONS

8-11:00 PM

abc 10

Sunday

EVENING

cludes with "Dumbo," the 1941 cartoon about a flying baby circus elephant. One of Walt Disney's own favorites, the movie (first telecast in 1955) features an Oscar-winning score that includes "When I See an Elephant Fly" and "Pink Elephants." The show opens with excerpts from other cartoon classics such as "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," "Pinocchio" and "Fantasia." Ron Howard and Suzanne Somers are the hosts. (2 hrs.)

[Expands to two hours.]

NEXT WEEK IN TV GUIDE . . . read how the Mary Tyler Moore empire is making some changes to keep up with viewers' tastes, in the beginning of a two-part report.

9 ANIMAL WORLD

The misadventures of Blanco, a baby burro left to fend for himself in California's scorching Mojave Desert.

13 MARCUS WELBY, M.D.—Drama

An ebullient young woman is forced to cope with the fact that she has been stricken with leukemia. Maggie: Fionnuala Flanagan. (60 min.)

7:30 6 ROOKIES—Crime Drama

Police search for an arsonist who murders firemen. Terry: Georg Stanford Brown. Chris: Bruce Fairbairn.

9 RUFF HOUSE—Discussion

Scientist-inventor Roger Billings discusses the use of hydrogen to solve the world's energy crisis.

8:00 2 ITALIAN PANORAMA

6 HEE HAW

Guests: Bill Anderson & Mary Lou Turner, Lonzo & Oscar, and Jana Jae. Songs include "Where Are You Going, Billy Boy?" (Bill, Mary Lou). (60 min.)

8 2 EMMY AWARDS

Special: For details, see the Close-up on page A-47. (2 hrs., 30 min.)

[This program, taped from an earlier live telecast, pre-empts regular programming. "Mary" makes its debut next week at this time.]

10 7 BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Debut: Once upon a time, a race of sinister droids waged a thousand-year war against mankind. This space series opens with a last-ditch effort by the human forces to secure a peaceful end to the conflict. Lorne Greene plays Adama, commander of the bat-

tlestar Galactica, who has doubts about the peace mission. Apollo: Richard Hatch. Starbuck: Dirk Benedict. Boomer: Herb Jefferson Jr. Athena: Maren Jensen. Tigh: Terry Carter. Boxey: Noah Hathaway. Jolly: Tony Swartz. (3 hrs.)

Guest Cast

Uri Ray Milland
 Adar Lew Ayres
 Count Baltar John Colicos
 Anton Wilfrid Hyde-White
 Serina Jane Seymour
 Cassiopea Laurette Spang
 Dr. Paye John Fink
 [Expands to three hours, pre-empting regular programming.]

15 EVENING AT POPS

Dancer-mime Noel Parenti teams with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops for Morton Gould's "Concerto for Tap Dancer and Orchestra," and is featured with Karen Joy McCormick in a comic interpretation of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer." (60 min.)

5 WILD KINGDOM

A project to transport moose from the

Battlestar GALACTICA™



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