

The Cowsills Talk about God

(Catholic Press Features)

Los Angeles — When teenagers pick up one or two of the many fan magazines on the newsstands, they expect such headlines as: "Mark Lester Whispers in Your Ear," "Bobby Sherman Gives Away Kisses—How to get Yours" and "David Cassidy's Special Secret."

Until The Cowsills come along.

"Cowsills and God" is the headline on a recent cover of Tiger Beat, standing out among such other come-ons.

In another teen magazine called Fave ("The Newest and the Truest"), right underneath a headline that says, "Why Jack Wild Turns You On," there's: "Barry Cowsill Talks about God."

The Cowsill family — Barbara Cowsill and her five children, ranging from 11 to 20 — has become one of the leading pop singing groups since they got their start singing at charity benefits for Catholic parishes in Canton, Ohio, and Newport, R. I.

In "Fave," 15-year-old Barry told teen readers — through an "as told to" writer — how he grew up in a family where "Mom took us all to Mass every

Sunday and most mornings, too," and how, as the group got famous, "I saw less and less of the inside of a church and soon I could count on one hand the number of times I went to Mass."

Then, in prose style typical of fan-magazine writing, Barry told his readers:

"But though I worked constantly and began to feel very confident in my musical ability, there was something missing. I became aware of a restlessness inside of me as if I was searching for something more! . . . I couldn't understand it at first and then one day it came to me!

"I was all alone in the house that night and the wind outside was blowing frantically! Mom and Dad had gone to a business meeting to discuss our contract with the recording company. Bob and Paul were out to dinner with their dates and Susan and John decided to take in a movie.

"The huge house echoed my footsteps as I paced from room to room. I could feel the restlessness awakening in me so I put on my jacket and stood alone outside in the howling wind studying the few stars that brightened the night! Suddenly I had the strangest feel-

ing — an overwhelming urge to pray!"

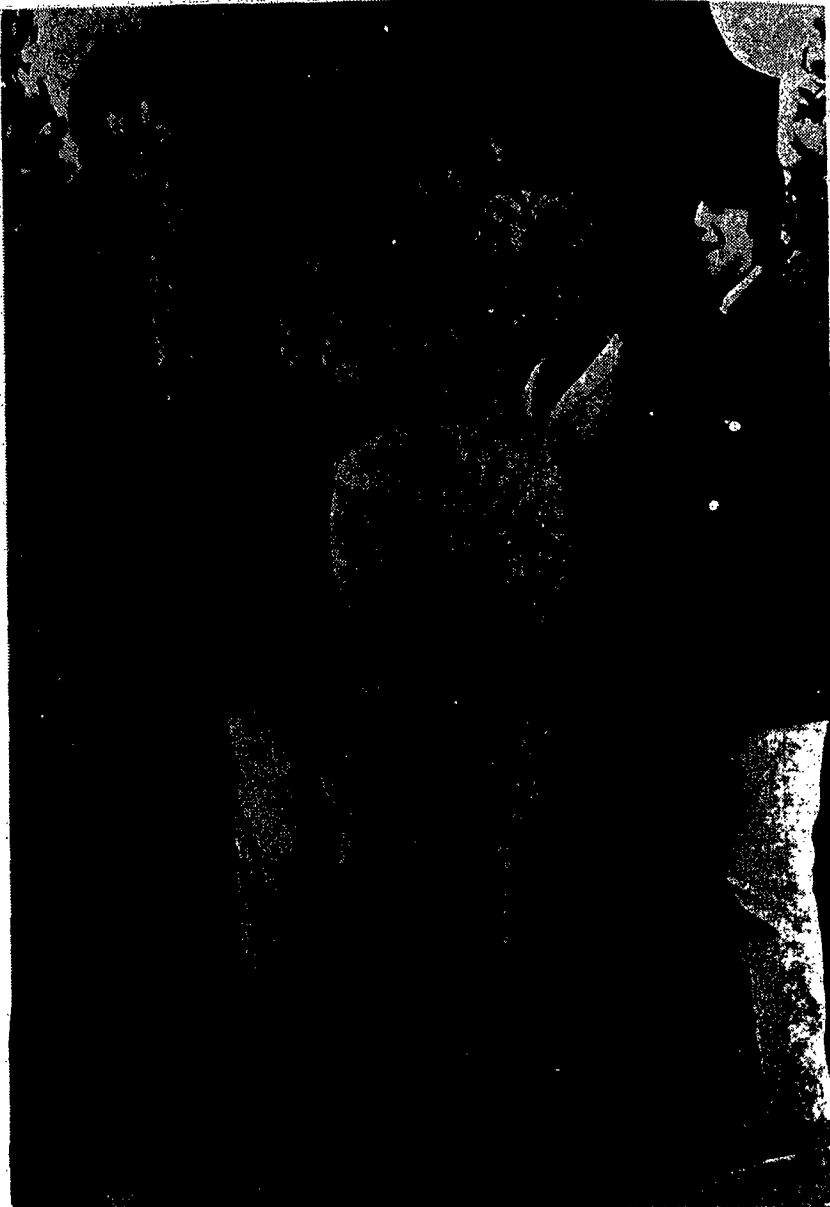
But "no matter how I tried, I couldn't find the words," and then, Barry Cowsill said he realized "what that emptiness was inside of me."

"Somehow, I had been accepting what I had received in life without giving thanks. I had begun to take God for granted! I had forgotten who had given me these beautiful things."

In Tiger Beat, Mrs. Cowsill authored a piece titled, "How We Keep Faith in the Family," in which she too confessed that although the family had attended Mass regularly — even daily years ago, "Now with all the traveling we do we only get to Mass maybe twice a year and I wondered if perhaps the family had forgotten God just a little bit or if they were missing out on something."

But in her article, as in her son Barry's, the "solution" is to realize that playing music and singing — entertaining people — add to traditional worship.

"God gave my family a great gift," Barbara Cowsill told Tiger Beat readers, "that of song and the chance to make people happy through our music. 'You know, Mom,' Barry once told me, 'when I play my guitar it's just like as if I were praying.'"



The Cowsills: Susan in front, and, left to right, Paul, Barry, Bob, Mrs. Barbara Cowsill and John. (CPF)



Dorothy (Mary Ellen Campbell) is comforted by Scarecrow (Mary Sue Scarciotta) while the Tin Woodsman (Mark Gould) and the Cowardly Lion (Dave Vassallo) discuss the best route to take to the Wizard of Oz.

Storytellers Sets Wizard of Oz

Another familiar fairy tale will come to life on the stage of the Storytellers Summer Playhouse at St. Agnes High, 300 East River Rd., Rochester this Thursday and Friday as the children's theater presents its final offering of the season, the musical version of "The Wizard of Oz."

The cast of more than 80

boys and girls is headed by Mary Ellen Campbell as Dorothy, David Vassallo as the Cowardly Lion, Mark Gould as the Tin Woodsman, and Mary Sue Scarciotta as the Scarecrow.

Performances will be at 10 a.m. and 8:15 p.m. on July 23, and at 8:15 p.m. on July 24. Tickets are obtainable at the box office.

As I See It

Surprise Treat On CBS News

By Pat Costa



It is not often that we watch the Sunday night CBS evening news, at least not in the warm summer months.

But on a recent weekend we came upon it by accident in the middle of the report and stayed to enjoy a couple of the best features one is likely to find in a news program.

I was in another room when I heard my husband yell to come quickly and "see the scenery."

It was worth running for. A portion of the show was devoted to the competition's Chet Huntley, who retires soon from NBC to open a resort area in his native Montana. There were the mountains, the forest, the fields and the streams. A close up of the nodding head of a columbine and a spotted fawn reinforced this viewer's position that it should be allowed to remain as it is.

Huntley was given time to

tell why he felt it should be changed. Then on to Pamplona, Spain, for the running of the bulls as described by Ernest Hemingway in his first novel, "The Sun Also Rises."

Correspondent Robert Trout read excerpts as the camera caught the same exact details that Hemingway had written in the thirties.

The news show, if short on news, was a better travelogue than any we have seen recently among the selected shorts at the movies.

Joe Garagiola's show before the All Star Baseball game with "star benchwarmer" Chico Ruiz of the California Angels was one of the funniest routines to hit television this year.

Not only was Chico's timing near perfect but his style and delivery as he showed how he whiles the time away was inimitable.

Would be interesting to find out how much of the punch must be credited to clever editing and just how much of the fun was directly attributable to Chico. Could be there's a show business career awaiting him after he finishes his benchwarming stint.

The Glenn Campbell summer replacement show, "Comedy Tonight," scored in one of its first shows with the spoof of talk shows, their egotistical hosts and their even more conceited guests.

Loved the take off on Aliza Kashi who always greets Merv Griffin audiences with "Hello, people" and the pointing up of the fact that the same bores take turns frequenting the panels.

Greatest fun of this summer replacement, however, is spotting all the faces you watched all winter in commercials.

NCOMP: No Leniency in Rating 'Black' Films

Catholic Press Features

New York — The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures has denied a show business publication's charge that NCOMP is extra lenient in rating films with black subject matter.

At the same time, the Catholic film office strongly attacked a new James Stewart-Henry Fonda Western because "it has adult material masquerading as family movie entertainment."

The charge of discrimination in applying moral classifications was made in a front-page story in Variety that was headlined: "Catholic Office Not So Tough on Black-Angled Pix."

"Despite beaucoup nudity and bawdy dialog," the Variety report began, "the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures seems to be easier on some of the increasing number of cur-

rent films which deal primarily with the Negro situation.

"Hence, Columbia's The Watermelon Man and United Artists' Cotton Comes to Harlem and The Landlord are all tagged A-IV, which is 'morally unobjectionable for adults, with reservations' . . . On the other hand, the much tamer The Cheyenne Social Club, released by National General Pictures, gets a B-rating, 'morally objectionable in part for all'."

Richard H. Hirsch, NCOMP's assistant director and executive editor of NCOMP publications, rejected Variety's allegation.

"We don't look at movies the way they think we look at them," Hirsch said in an interview. "We don't compare films, so it's unfair to try to compare our ratings."

He particularly ridiculed attempts to compare NCOMP's

rating on The Watermelon Man — an attempt to satirize black-white relations — and on The Cheyenne Social Club, which Hirsch said is "pitched to a mass audience" despite the fact that "the film is about a brothel."

"Watermelon Man comes across right at the beginning as a film with a very serious theme, but The Cheyenne Social Club comes across as a light, harmless Western," Hirsch said in explaining why NCOMP would let pass some scenes of nudity in Watermelon Man, yet give a B rating to The Cheyenne Social Club.

Hirsch referred to a review of the latter film in NCOMP's Catholic Film Newsletter, which said in part:

"Social Club has all the beloved cliches of the old-time general audience Western:

Henry Fonda, drunks, fights, crowded Main Streets, mooring cows, wide-open prairies, the climactic shootout.

"And it has more. It has leering double entendre. It has tried and true Henry Fonda jumping in and out of the ladies' beds. It has lovable Jimmy Stewart in perhaps the silliest seduction scene — complete with girl in transparent blouse — ever condemned to film. It has adult material masquerading as family movie entertainment. The only things The Cheyenne Social Club lacks are wit, taste and honesty."

Hirsch pointed out in addition, that NCOMP's review of Watermelon Man was "not favorable," despite Variety's charge of discrimination in favor of black films.

"When a boorish, mindlessly bigoted white — Godfrey Cam-

bridge — one night inexplicably turns black, he undergoes the indignities and injustices of the Negro in White America," NCOMP's review of Watermelon Man began, but:

"This fantasy situation might have made a great satire but Watermelon Man's ironies are too obvious, its treatment heavy-handed and sluggish. Dealing with all-too-familiar racial stereotypes — sexual, musical, commercial — it is crude, embarrassing and at times consciously offensive."

NCOMP described Cotton Comes to Harlem — starring Godfrey Cambridge and Raymond St. Jacques as a team of slam-bang Harlem detectives — as "an enjoyable, intelligently humorous film" that is made "by and about blacks" and "contains many incisive insights into the exploitation of the masses."

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