

Hollywood Exclusive: Drew Carey back to brisk pace after ravaging pneumonia; Gavin Macleod happy to b

by Marilyn_Beck_&_Stacy_Jenel_Smi

Drew Carey hasn't been letting a major case of pneumonia keep him away from working to spread the word about his new love — The Seattle Sounders soccer team.

Not only was the comic determined to be on hand in Seattle last week for the launch of the inaugural season of the team on which he's a minority owner, he's been beating the drum for the Sounders far and wide — while he's coped with the after effects of the illness that had him, as he puts it, "Really sick, man."

The host of "The Price is Right" reveals, "I ended up in the hospital on oxygen, on an IV for three days. I couldn't believe how sick I was. I was even coughing up blood."

Even now, several weeks since the illness first struck, he's feeling its effects. "It's getting better, but I'm still tired at the end of the day — I don't think I'm fully recuperated."

It was enthusiasm for his new sports undertaking that kept him in high gear. "I've talked it up so much," he tells us of the team. "Now I can hardly wait to see it in action — and I don't want anyone bothering me while they play. I'm thinking of having a poster pinned to my back that says 'Don't Talk to Me.' I just want to enjoy the action."

He tells us he's enjoying the action of "The Price Is Right" more and more as he heads toward his second year of hosting the game show. "We just got a new producer," he says, "And we've been boosting up prizes, improving showcases, thinking of cooler, more creative ways to present things. During my first season, it was as if everyone was looking at me through a microscope. Now that's passed."

As for the chance of any more prime-time "The Price is Right Million Dollar Spectaculars," Carey notes, "Because we can put together the show quickly, we're used when other shows fail. I don't want to hope for bad luck for anyone else, but ... It shouldn't be too long before we're back."

FROM DIVINITY TO WICKEDNESS: Bobby Cannavale says that as much as he was intrigued by the concept of playing "Cupid" — as in a man who believes he's the Roman god of love, and just might be — what really makes his March 31-debuting ABC series fun for him is costar Sarah Paulson, who plays his therapist.

"I've never had as much fun with an actress. She makes me laugh out loud," he says. When they finished

shooting ABC's seven-episode order, "We both had the feeling we're not done with each other."

And sure enough, along came "The Gingerbread House," at New York's Rattlestick Theater, opening April 7. "Just coincidentally, we were both offered the play," he tells us. "It's a contemporary, very dark piece about happiness and evil — about a couple who decides to sell their children," says Cannavale, who comments that play is such strong stuff, he wouldn't be surprised if people walked out of the theater. They'll be onstage at the same time, literally, as the escapist "Cupid" is on the air. "That thought wasn't lost on me, believe me," he says. "If people see the show and think, 'Oh, I like those two. They're fun. They're in a play. I'm going to go see them.' They're going to be very shocked."

AHOY: One-time "Love Boat" captain Gavin MacLeod says he "had a blast" being on TV shipboard again — in the Friday (3/27)-airing episode of the Disney Channel's "Suite Life on Deck." He's playing a curmudgeonly codger who finds the fun of life again when he gets together with Zack (Dylan Sprouse) and starts playing pranks on fellow passengers aboard the show's S.S. Tipton cruise ship. According to MacLeod, the 16-year-old Dylan and his twin, Cole, "are really wonderful young actors. Some people have it instinctively, and some have to go to school. You can't just put anyone in front of a camera and say, 'Go!' but these two, well, there's a reason for the success of that program. I felt more love on their soundstage than I have anywhere since "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."

MacLeod, who has been a mainstay of Christian TV along with his wife, Patti, for years, admits he's taken aback by much of the content of today's television. "Patti and I will be watching and say, 'I can't believe what we just saw.' The non-morality going on in our country is unbelievable. I think kids are seeing some of the wrong things — this is a right thing."

MacLeod, who just turned 78, recently completed the big-screen "Jonathan Sperry" with Robert Guillaume, for release this September. He's also very active as the honorary mayor of Pacific Palisades, Calif. And then there's the fact, as he proudly notes, "I have seven kids and nine grandkids." The MacLeod clan will be gathering to watch "Suite Life" on Friday.

TERPSICHOREAN TALK: Most of the "Dancing with the Stars" alums keep up with the show, but Harry Hamlin admits he's not that big of a fan. "I don't really keep up with that too much. Lisa does. She's very involved with it," says Hamlin of his wife Lisa Rinna, who has also been a contestant on the popular ABC show. "I did that show because she had done it and I had seen the benefits that she had gotten from doing it. Mainly my M.O. for doing that show was to see if I could walk out on that stage on night one and not vomit, and I achieved that," he notes. "I've never been a dancer. I have no ambitions to be a dancer. As far as the show goes, I'm not a big reality TV watcher."

With reports by Emily Feimster.

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