

Hollywood Exclusive: Ask Stacy

by Marilyn Beck & Stacy Jenel Smi

DEAR STACY: When "House" started, he had Chase and Cameron on his team. The new team is good, but I thought Chase and Cameron made it more interesting. Will they ever be back as his team? â€” Grace G., Shelton, Conn.

DEAR GRACE: It's not likely, since the show's executive producer David Shore has explained that the changes "made sense" for the characters as well as the series after three seasons. Actor Jesse Spencer, who plays Dr. Chase, has said he feels his scenes are more pertinent to the storylines now in his recurring status. And now-recurring cast member Jennifer Morrison, who plays Dr. Cameron, has said she likes having more one-on-one time with Dr. House (Hugh Laurie).

DEAR STACY: The actor who replaced the late James Whitmore on the Miracle-Gro commercials â€” could it be Peter Strauss of "Rich Man, Poor Man" fame? â€” Art L., Brooklyn, N.Y.

DEAR ART: Yes. Strauss has actually been doing spots for the product line since 2002. As a real-life farmer he's a logical choice to serve as pitchman. Strauss has a 40-acre farm where he grows citrus in Ojai, Calif. He's also on the advisory board of the Los Angeles Arboretum.

DEAR STACY: A box of donuts is riding on your answer. I say that a young Jennifer Love Hewitt played the daughter on a TV series about a family that moved to Hawaii from the East Coast. My co-workers doubt me, but I am sure I'm right. â€” Carol, Cleveland, Ohio

DEAR CAROL: You're thinking of the 1994 ABC "The Byrds of Paradise," which lasted less than four months despite its interesting cast and attempts at realistically portraying life in Hawaii, where the hour-long drama was shot. Timothy Busfield played the widowed dad and Seth Green was the brother. Bruce Weitz was a psychiatrist who seemed to spend all his time on the beach, and Arlo Guthrie was also a regular.

DEAR STACY: Whatever became of Arte Johnson, so hilarious on the old "Laugh-In" show? â€” Merle R., Springfield, Mass.

DEAR MERLE: The funnyman â€” who is remembered for characters and catchphrases including his WWII German soldier saying, "Verrrrrry interesting â€” but stupid!" â€” has a long list of post-"Laugh-In" credits. They range from guestings on episodic shows like "Night Court" and "The A-Team" to movies ("Cannonball Run II") to voice work in cartoons, to performing more than 80 audiobook readings including several Dave Barry collections. Now 80, he celebrated his 40th wedding anniversary with wife Gisela last year.

DEAR STACY: I say that Rib Hillis of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" used to be a daytime TV actor. My neighbor insists I am mistaken. Who's right? â€” Shari S., Franklin Sq., N.Y.

DEAR SHARI: You are. The Suffern, NY-born carpenter appeared on "Passions" for a spell in 2006. He was on "Port Charles" as Dr. Jake Marshak from 1997-1998. Prior to that, he was a model, having been discovered by a modeling agent while attending the University of Colorado. Among his memorable appearances during that phase of his career was a 2005 episode of "America's Next Top Model" as a male lingerie model.

DEAR STACY: Are there any more new episodes of "The Dead Zone" coming up? â€” Jonathan C., Van Nuys, Calif.

DEAR JONATHAN: No, that Anthony Michael Hall series was canceled after six seasons at the end of 2007.

DEAR STACY: Bill Kurtis of A&E's "American Justice" and "Cold Case Files" does a great job. Can you give some information about him? â€” Bruce W., New York

DEAR BRUCE: The former CBS anchor, 68, has been recognized with more than 20 Emmy Awards. He was born in Pensacola, Fla. and raised in Independence, Kan. He graduated from the University of Kansas with a B.S. in Journalism in 1962. In 1966, he received a law degree from Washburn University School of Law and passed the Kansas Bar that year. Kurtis wasn't sure whether he'd go into law or journalism until an emotional experience, reporting on a tornado for a small Kansas station â€” for 24 hours straight â€” proved a potent demonstration of TV's power for good and decided the issue for him. He subsequently went on to work in Chicago, and then moved up to network broadcasting, anchoring the CBS Morning News from New York for three and a half years. Since joining A&E, he has created a singular presence on television as one of America's most prolific documentarians. He is also an active conservationist who raises organic grass-fed beef on his 10,000 acre ranch in Kansas. The father of two was widowed in 1977. He has a long-term relationship with Donna La Pietra.

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