

TV times



**TAKE OFF
EH?**

**ICONIC
CANADIAN
HOSERS GET
ANIMATED IN
BOB & DOUG**

Sundays - Global



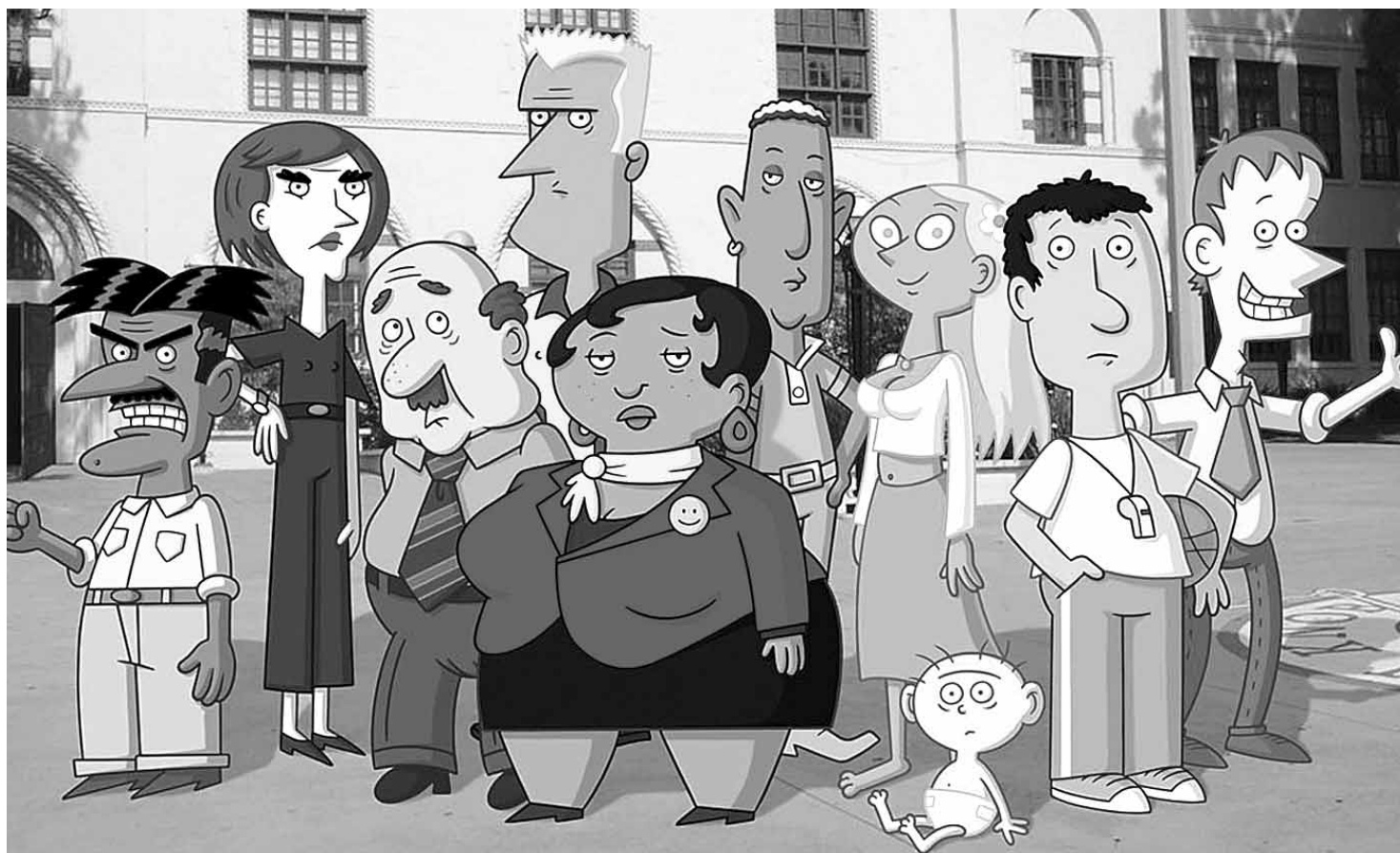
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FAMILIAR CAST OF NEW ANIMATED SERIES PUSHING BOUND- ARIES



Sit Down, Shut Up: edgy comedy

Teachers are like children. Kids at heart. Adolescent, whiny, immature, constantly quarrelling, always dreaming up ways to cut class. And the funny thing is, when they're in class, they never shut up.

At least that's the disarming premise behind the new animated sitcom *Sit Down, Shut Up*, from the creator of *Arrested Development* and featuring several of that show's actors – including Toronto native **Will Arnett** – in its voice cast.

Sit Down, Shut Up bows Sunday, April 19 on Global TV and Fox, where it will air between *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*. Think of it as an evening of gentle, elevating, enlightening family entertainment, free of cynicism, irony and bitterness.

Oh, who are we kidding?

"It's very edgy," creator **Mitch Hurwitz** said. "It's the classic adults-are-idiots/kids-are-smart comedy."

When he says "classic," he means unforgettable, award-winning fare like *Married with Children* and *Beavis and Butt-Head*.

"*Sit Down, Shut Up* was an Australian show, a live-action comedy, about a bunch of unbelievably insensitive teachers," Hurwitz explained. "It was really about the teachers as kids, in a certain respect."

And so, naturally, he thought of redoing it as an animated series. The new *Sit Down, Shut Up* revolves around the dysfunctional faculty at a high school in a small fishing town in Florida. The teachers there work hard, too – work hard at doing anything other than teaching.



BY ALEX STRACHAN

ON SCREEN:
SIT DOWN, SHUT UP
SUNDAYS; FOX, GLOBAL

PHOTO: FOX

Sit Down, Shut Up is part entertainment, part satire. At its heart, it's a send-up of modern-day society as it exposes the flaws, foibles – and basic humanity – of children's first and most formative authority figures next to their parents.

Animation, Hurwitz said, allowed him to make the show in colour. Money is always an issue in TV. Edgy is hard to do. Colour helps.

"Why did we decide to do it as an animated show? Oh, money. Not that we're worried about the state of broadcast television per se – we're feeling pretty good about that, actually – but we saw the original show as being very daft, very broad. There was a character who grew breasts during the course of their pilot episode. And we just thought animation would make the perfect fit."

The Simpsons has proved that prime time animation can work on several levels and appeal to a broad age range of viewers, Hurwitz added. "It's something that kids can enjoy. It's something adults can enjoy.

It's something we're all familiar with. It just seemed like a natural (fit)."

Hurwitz tried to incorporate multimedia elements into *Arrested Development*, but soon found that live action presented insurmountable challenges.

"It's much more liberating and fun to do it in animation," Hurwitz said.

The voice cast features Arnett and *Arrested Development's* **Jason Bateman** and **Henry Winkler**, as well as **Kristin Chenoweth**, **Will Forte**, **Cheri Oteri** and **Kenan Thompson**.

Family Guy has proven there's not too much, taste-wise and content-wise, that TV animation can't do, even in the so-called family hour.

"We're kind of pushing the envelope into another envelope," Hurwitz said. "We're finding different ways to bust it open. We are going as far as we can. In terms of the show's look, we're trying to break away from what we've seen before in other TV shows, but stay within the world."

For his part, Bateman said doing voice-over work doesn't come naturally to him.

"It's not easy for me," he said. "I keep anticipating a pink slip every time I record one of these things."

"Well," Hurwitz replied, "in fairness, it's not easy for you because you're not very good at it."

"Right," Bateman said, without missing

a beat. "I'm happy to be here. I don't know how much longer I'll be here, but the 13 episodes I did were fun. But difficult. Very difficult. Old Velvet Pipes here [Arnett] does a really good job, and he makes it look easy. I just try to stay in his wake as much as possible."

"You barely do that," Arnett said. "Seriously, it's a different experience when you're recording. You're usually in a room by yourself; you're not working with the other actors. On the plus side, you can go back and immediately reinterpret a scene 30 seconds later, and give it a completely different meaning."

"Well, Jason can't do that," Hurwitz said.

"No," Arnett said, with Bateman standing right there. "No, he can't."

"You can do that, though," Hurwitz said.

"I am saying an actor could, you know," Arnett said.

Bateman sighed. "And there's no money in this, either," Bateman said. "I get all this abuse (for) nothing."

Hurwitz recently had the opportunity to see the pilot episode of the series on the big screen.

"Seeing it on the big screen made me realize the extra money was well spent," Hurwitz said, deadpan. "It really shows."

Not that there's any chance of *Sit Down, Shut Up* being made into a feature film soon, as may happen with *Arrested Development*.

"We are having trouble getting the cast on board," Hurwitz said. "That, I will say, is the big issue."

"It's the classic adults-are-idiots/kids-are-smart comedy."

– Hurwitz

Yankee Stadium II – showplace or baseball heresy?

For many baseball fans – especially those in New York – the notion of Yankee Stadium being torn down is akin to razing the Roman Colosseum.

It's unimaginable and unthinkable. Yet it's really happening. Of course, for Boston Red Sox fans, it's about 80 years too late.

But while **Babe Ruth**, **Lou Gehrig**, **Joe DiMaggio** and **Mickey Mantle** brought memories and titles to the facility that opened in 1923, Yankee fans hope the new, state-of-the-art Yankee Stadium – which gets its first national exposure Sunday, April 19, on TBS, when the Yankees host the Cleveland Indians – will soon see championship banners hoisted off the exploits of **Mark Teixeira**, **Alex Rodriguez** and **CC Sabathia**.

By all accounts, the new stadium is truly a showplace. Designed by HOK Sport, the architectural firm responsible for 14 of the last 19 new major league parks starting in 1992 with Baltimore's Camden Yards, Yankee Stadium II hearkens back to its predecessor's original configuration before it was renovated in the mid-1970s. It boasts a limestone exterior reminiscent of the 1923 park, a "great hall" that evokes past Yankee greats, and the feature probably most evident on camera, the signature copper facade that rims the top of the inside wall of the park, just as in the original.

Of course, no modern baseball stadium would be complete without modern amenities, so a Hard Rock Cafe and a steakhouse will be located beyond right field, and a sports bar will overlook centre.

Ticket prices are also pretty spectacular – the best seat in the house costs \$2,625. If you're looking to slum it, a \$14 bleacher seat is as cheap as it gets.

All this is well and good, but to the old-timers and the people who used to work and play there, the new building is just not Yankee Stadium. Purists (and Yankee officials), however, will point out that the new stadium is more like the original than the renovated park was.

"I don't know, man," says former Yankee left-hander **David Wells**, who now works as an analyst for TBS. "It's not going to be



Sport shrine

Teixeira in new stadium: new era

BY GEORGE DICKIE

ON SCREEN:

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
VARIOUS DAYS;
VARIOUS NETWORKS
(CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS)

the same, obviously. But you know what? It's a new millennium, it's a new era, so I think you've got to start over. They're trying to make accommodations for the people. I think when you have little icons like that, it's like... Tiger Stadium – I felt the same way. They should have just renovated it or something like that and kept it as is, but the neighbourhood's not that great. But people still went. It was still Tiger Stadium – people flocked to that. It's still Yankee Stadium.

"Just think about all the people who never had a chance to go," he says, "and now they want to go, and now they're not going to be able to."

For some, the history at the ballpark in the Bronx was impossible to ignore. Yankee shortstop **Derek Jeter** used to talk about the "ghosts" that came out late in games and helped the Yankees to victory. Opposing players disliked playing there for the same reason – the strange late-inning occurrences that usually worked to New York's advantage. Of course, looking around the place

and knowing that it was the stomping ground of Babe Ruth was enough to intimidate more than a few opposing players.

For **Joe Torre**, who managed the Yankees to four titles from 1996 to 2007, the history was evident in the little things.

"I thought of that quite often, walking down from the clubhouse to the dugout," says Torre, now in his second year as manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers. "You know, even though it was renovated back in the '70s, it certainly (felt as though) you were walking in footsteps that are sitting there in Cooperstown, and that's pretty magical."

"Of course, **Thurman Munson**, his locker is still there, and I'm sure it's going to be over in the new ballpark. But it was always funny talking to the old-timers who have been around the stadium for a while, because some of the guys, of course, they're disappearing, the guys that were able to see DiMaggio play and maybe Gehrig for a time. But it was pretty magical."

To Wells, much of Yankee lore stems from Ruth. Growing up a Yankee and Padre fan in San Diego, he read all the books, watched all the old clips and even wrote his school reports on the Bambino. And then, of course, there's the infamous Ruth hat that Wells bought from a memorabilia collector for \$35,000 and wore in a 1997 game (and

was subsequently fined by Torre for it, a decision with which Wells still takes issue).

"Anything that had Babe Ruth on it," Wells says, "I read it or watched it, and it was just something that was just kind of weird. You see a little kid embracing Ruth – the guy's been gone 60, 70 years. But you just can't help but idolize a guy like that because of... what he did for the game of baseball. All the heads he turned, all the hearts he touched, and it's just something people want from the present-day guys. I idolized a dead guy."

And this summer, fans visiting the new park will get the dubious privilege of seeing the old one in its death throes, as demolition of the original Yankee Stadium has just gotten under way.

"I can't imagine the people who have been going there for 50, 60, 70 years," Wells says, "and now all of a sudden they're not going to be going to that establishment anymore; they're going to be going across the street. Granted, it's a beautiful stadium; I've been over there, and they've really outdone themselves."

"But it's not Yankee Stadium," Wells says. "It's the new Yankee Stadium. And that's tough to swallow right there, because of the fact that the place called the 'House That Ruth Built', that's no longer there. You can't say it about the new stadium. You can't. It's impossible."

THIS WEEK'S top tv tips

Fox and Leary: extended family

SATURDAY

Law & Order Marathon

For those fans who just can't get enough of this long-running crime procedural, the specialty channel is running a two-day marathon of viewers' favourite episodes from the *Criminal Intent* spinoff (today) and *Special Victims Unit* (tomorrow). Seven episodes will be shown each day, starting in the morning and repeating in the late afternoon/evening.

Mystery

SUNDAY

Hallmark Hall of Fame Presentation

Irena Sendler (played by **Anna Paquin**) was a young Polish Catholic social worker who was credited with saving the lives of some 2,500 Jewish children during the Second World War, rescuing them from certain death at the hands of the Nazis. Working for the Warsaw Health Department, and under the guise of preventing typhus, a band of nurses led by Sendler pirated children out of the ghetto



Rebecca Windheim and Paquin: escape

inside boxes, suitcases and coffins. An amazing tale of courage for which Sendler was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. **Goran Visnjic** and **Marcia Gay Harden** co-star.

CBS

Rescue Me

Tommy Gavin (**Denis Leary**) and the rest of the 62 Truck firefighters are back for a sizzling fifth season that finds Tommy waiting to hear the outcome of a hearing that will determine his future as a firefighter and struggling to get over the death of his father. Canada's **Michael J. Fox** will be guest-starring in a four-episode story arc, beginning to-night, as Leary's ex-wife Janet's (**Andrea Roth**) boyfriend.

Showcase

Carlawood

Several years ago, standup comedian **Carla Collins** was the title character in a fairly short-lived Canadian series entitled *Chez Carla*. She has now taken her quest for fame and fortune to Hollywood where she, and new husband **Tyrone Power Jr.**, are trying to develop a stage show. The eight-episode, half-hour comedy series follows Carla's life in Malibu as she gets ready for the show.

TVtropolis

Miss USA 2009 Pageant

Yes, even in this day and age – not to mention tough economic times – there is still a beauty pageant. Nowadays, though, the winner travels the country as an advocate for breast and ovarian cancer education and research. **Billy Bush** and *My Name is Earl*'s **Nadine Velazquez** co-host.

NBC

MONDAY

Coronation Street

Just a heads-up for the British sitcom's many fans on this side of the pond: due to the hockey playoffs *Corrie* will air earlier in the day on weekdays from now until the middle of June. Fans can still catch the Monday-to-Friday episodes on Sunday mornings, if you're up early enough, or tape them.

CBC

The Best Years

Back for its sophomore year, the series about Sam Best's (**Charity Shea**) life at Charles University promises to get a little wild and a little sexy this year. Sam will renew old acquaintances, make a few new ones and have two new men in her life: a one-night stand she met in Panama who turns up at Charles U, and an edgy bad boy who brings out Sam's wild side.

E!



Deckhand Scott Hillstrand: big crustacean

TUESDAY

Deadliest Catch

The 2008 King Crab season opens but The Wizard's skipper **Keith Colburn** and Cornelia Marie's skipper **Phil Harris** are both facing health problems – and awaiting medical test results that will determine whether or not they can continue to fish. Once at sea, low crab numbers, vicious storms, dwindling bait supplies, engine problems, grudges and in-fighting are all part of the daily routine.

Discovery Channel

WEDNESDAY

Earth Day specials

There will be lots of emphasis on the state of the environment this week, on scientific series as well as on news program. Tonight, Geo is offering back-to-back programs which include a look at some extraordinary efforts to protect almost extinct species in *Animals at the Edge*, the comprehensive documentary *Six Degrees Could Change the World*, *Earth Report: State of the Planet*.

National Geographic Channel

THURSDAY

Hell's Kitchen

It's the taste test time – the episode where Chef **Gordon Ramsay** cooks a delicious meal, invites the remaining contestants to enjoy it and then challenges them to re-create exactly the same dish from scratch. Needless to say, he doesn't make things easy by revealing the ingredients, so you can bet it won't be all that straightforward.

Fox, Citytv

Orlando Jones

Just a 'Rules' guy

As played by Patrick Warburton, long-married Jeff Bingham of CBS' Monday comedy *Rules of Engagement* is just a regular guy, a guy who loves his wife, Audrey (**Megyn Price**), beer and softball – although not necessarily in that order.

As of this season, though, Jeff has a new pal, Brad, played by recurring star **Orlando Jones**. In some ways, Brad is like other pals Jeff has had, and in another way, he's not.

"What trouble is Brad causing?" Jones says. "Trouble of the Brad variety. I think he's probably causing more trouble for Jeff than anything else, since Jeff is exploring a new relationship. I don't think he's ever had a friend who was outside of his bailiwick in the way that I am.

"Brad is gay, so I think Jeff's trying to figure out where the common ground is."

As to what Jeff and Brad do together, Jones says, "Oddly, we do couples stuff, because I have my partner, who has bonded with

BY KATE O'HARE

ON SCREEN:

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
MONDAY: CBS

PHOTO: NETWORK

Audrey. We're two guys, and our approach to things is very much like two guys.

"We both lie to our spouses when we want to go out and hang with the boys and watch sports. I'm into sports; he's into sports. So, it's really the same relationship you would have with any other guy.

"Occasionally he goes off the deep end and starts talking to me about breast augmentation or whatever, and I'm, 'Sorry, wrong crowd. You've got the wrong guy for that.' "

Jones – a vegan who learned to cook from his grandmother – likes to bust stereotypes in real life as well.

"I'm a weird vegan," he says, "because I don't mind cooking meat for my friends.

I don't subscribe to the theory that meat is going to kill you. I'm in the 'anything in moderation' camp."

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHPLACE: April 10, Mobile, Ala.

SCHOOL CRED: Graduated from the College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C., in 1990.

TV WRITING CRED: *A Different World*, *Roc*, *The Sinbad Show*, *MADtv*, *The Orlando Jones Show*, *The Adventures of Chico and Guapo*.

TV ACTING CRED: *A Different World*, *MADtv*, *Girlfriends*, *The Bernie Mac Show*, *The Evidence*, *Men in Trees*, *Everybody Hates Chris*.

MOVIE CRED: *Office Space* (1999), *Liberty Heights* (1999), *Magnolia* (1999), *The Replacements* (2000), *Bedazzled* (2000), *Double Take* (2001), *Evolution* (2001), *The Time Machine* (2002), *Drumline* (2002), *Biker Boyz* (2003), *House of D* (2004).



Jones: slightly different pal

Let's play ball!

Major League Baseball returns to network television

Baseball's new Yankee Stadium gets its first nationally televised showcase as the Cleveland Indians travel there to face the New York team Sunday, April 19, on TBS. Fans of the ball game can test their sport knowledge with our quiz:

- 1) Which short-lived 1983 series about a minor-league club included **Dennis Franz** and **Sharon Stone** in its cast?
- 2) In which state did **Kevin Costner's** character build his *Field of Dreams* in the 1989 movie?
- 3) Name the former ballplayer who wrote the book on which the 1976 series *Ball Four* was based.
- 4) **Gary Cooper** portrayed **Lou Gehrig** in the 1942 film classic *The Pride of the Yankees*, but which other Yankee legend played a major role in the movie, appearing as himself?

BY JAY BOBBIN

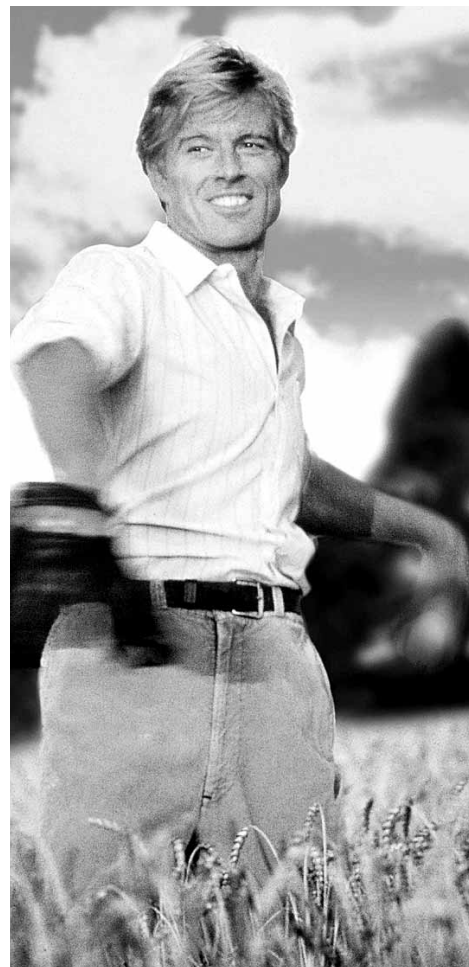
ON SCREEN:
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
 VARIOUS DAYS:
 VARIOUS NETWORKS
 (CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS)

- 5) In which 1984 movie does **Robert Redford** play a supposedly past-his-prime slugger named Roy Hobbs?
- 6) Who played the coach of the title youth baseball team in the original 1976 *Bad News Bears* movie?
- 7) Who had the same role referenced in the previous question in the 1979-80 *Bad News Bears* television series?
- 8) Which acclaimed documentary maker recounted the history of the game in his "nine-inning" 1994 miniseries *Baseball*?

- 9) It wasn't exclusively about baseball, but in a critically acclaimed 1998-2000 sitcom, **Peter Krause** and **Josh Charles** played the anchors of a weeknight cable sports magazine. Name it.
- 10) Name the 1988 movie that dramatized the 1919 Chicago "Black Sox" scandal.

ANSWERS

- 1) *Bay City Blues*
- 2) Iowa
- 3) **Jim Bouton**, who also starred in the show
- 4) **Babe Ruth**
- 5) *The Natural*
- 6) **Walter Matthau**
- 7) **Jack Warden**
- 8) **Ken Burns**
- 9) *Sports Night*
- 10) *Eight Men Out*



Redford as Hobbs: comeback guy



McKidd: regular on British TV

Please tell me about the actors who played Pullo and Vorenius in the series *Rome*?

Mary Devereaux, Toronto, Ont.

Kevin McKidd, who played Lucius Vorenius, is a 35-year-old native of Elgin, Scotland. He made his big-screen debut in Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* in 1996. Since then, he has worked regularly on British TV and appeared in such movies as *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Hannibal Rising*. This year, he can be seen in three films: action drama *Bunraku*, thriller *Catwalk* and *Dylan*, about Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. He is married with two children.

Ray Stevenson, 44, played Titus Pullo. He was born in Northern Ireland and raised in Newcastle, England. He studied acting at

the famous Old Vic acting school in London and made his screen debut in a 1993 British TV movie called *A Woman's Guide to Adultery*. Before *Rome*, he was almost unknown on this side of the Atlantic, although he had British TV movies and series to his credit. He is divorced from actress Ruth Gemmill. He appears this year in the horror thriller *Cirque du Freak* and next year in the sci-fi drama *The Book of Eli*.

Why did Amy Jo Johnson leave *Flashpoint*, and will she be back?

Richard Perkins, Bethany, Okla.

She took a maternity leave from the police drama; she and her fiance welcomed a daughter in December. Should the show continue, it's likely Johnson will be back, should she opt to return.

Why would a show get canceled after only a few episodes?

Larry Nicholas, Cobourg, Ont.

Usually it's a combination of terrible ratings, a critical drubbing and nervous network executives. TV networks survive on audience numbers. The larger the audience, the more advertisers are willing to pay.