

LIFE'S LIKE THAT By FRED NEHER



"Everybody out! The decorator is here!"

**Sight & Sound**

By Ernest Kreiling

**HOLLYWOOD** — People in the television industry are frequently referred to by critics as an accumulation of mental midgets, who purposely produce programs for the 12-year-old mind.

That there is a lot of tripe intentionally put on the air can't be disputed. But the recent Television Academy Awards, when analyzed, bring to light an interesting finding. When the people in all phases of the industry had a chance to vote on the major achievements of that industry, they didn't generally select the most popular program.

THROUGHOUT the winter and spring the programs consistently viewed by the most millions of people were Wagon Train, Bonanza, Ben Casey, Dr. Kildare, Hazel, Bob Hope Specials, Danny Thomas, Perry Mason, Red Skelton, Candid Camera, and Gunsmoke.

Except for Shirley Booth's victory as the best actress in a series, none of these public favorites received any major awards. Only a few were even nominated.

THIS DOESN'T prove that TV people are intellectual giants or that the viewing public is a composite idiot, but it might show that members of the TV Academy all over the nation — who alone vote in the Emmy elections — are willing to acknowledge commendable achievement and effort, even if they can't or won't work at a level high enough to bring them the same recognition.

I think, however, that it bodes well for an increasing maturity on the part of TV in the United States, especially in the increasing time and attention given to the presentation of serious and comprehensive documentaries on public affairs, and to the emphasis on worthwhile undertakings such as Victoria Regina and Van Gogh.

The fact that these and other superior programs received the professionals' accolades, but didn't rank high in ratings, might indicate a new spirit of leadership on the part of the industry to stay slightly ahead of public tastes, a characteristic many have been recommending to the TV executives for many years.

FOR MANY years New York TV critics, deploring the movement of TV production westward to Hollywood, have lamented the decline of the electronic art at the hands of Hollywood's film makers. To many such critics, the best TV was by very definition that originating in New York.

Unfortunately for Hollywood the East Coast originated programs won 20 out of 26 Emmy Awards, a fact that's likely to bring a flood of comment out of the East to the effect, "We've been telling you so!"

THE ISSUE will probably be built out of all reasonable proportion, because in total nominations the split between East and West was approximately equal. The line between the one winner and the four or five losers in each category struck me as being so fine no real significance can be read into the New York sweep.

Lee Marvin, who was nominated as best actor for his performance in People Need People, told me before the Awards ceremony, "I may not win, but I'd rather lose to the best than win over the worst."

PETER FALK's performance in The Price of Tomatoes was indeed one of the "best" performances in drama, as were the other nominations. Such a principle can be applied to the total picture as far as East and West Coast awards is concerned.

Although a distinct aura of disappointment pervaded the Hollywood Palladium at the end of the ceremonies, there's no valid reason New York should gloat or that Hollywood should develop a defensive inferiority. And if we remove the New York originated news and public affairs programs from the comparisons — because they alone among categories necessarily emanate from the East — the balance is largely restored.

Advice is like snow; the softer it falls the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind. — Samuel Taylor Coleridge



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