

& OUT THE OTHER

First, the Important News

FLEETWOOD MAC'S CHRISTINE MCVIE is keeping steady company with Beach Boy Dennis Wilson. Stephen Stills, poised to launch a new band with Bonnie Bramlett, is blissful in Bel Air with actress Susan Saint James. And Bill Spooner, leader of the Tubes, and wife Cindy, a Tube dancer, are expecting their first child any minute. All together now: a test Tube baby! The group's new album, *Remote Control*, produced by Todd Rundgren, is also expected any minute.

Talk About Culture Shock

THE FIRST FILMS requested by China—now that the arts of the western world are available to them—were those made by Charlie Chaplin. The first recent American film the Chinese people will see is . . . *Futureworld*. Because American International Pictures raced to Peking with a contract in hand, that's why.

Transitions

DRUMMER AYNSLEY DUNBAR has been hired by Jefferson Starship to replace John Barbata, who is still recuperating from injuries incurred in a serious auto accident last year. Dunbar is not temporary; the group is not even pretending to wait for Barbata's recovery.

J. D. SOUTHER was dropped by Elektra/Asylum after he spent some \$300,000 on his new album—and recorded only five songs. But E/A has gained Martin Mull; his first effort for the label (his third) is titled *Mull Becomes Elektra*. It cost about \$1.98 to record.

CAT STEVENS has reportedly abandoned all personal appearance plans in the foreseeable future; he's living in Rio de Janeiro where he recently joined the Moslem faith, changing his name to Yusef Islam. That's his third name so far; he started out in life as Steven Dimitri Giorgio.

Animal-Hippie-White House?

IN A QUICK MANEUVER to match the megabucks generated over at Universal by *National Lampoon's* Matty Simmons and *Animal House*, Paramount Pictures signed *Rolling Stone* editor and publisher Jann Wenner to a three-picture deal to "develop" youth-oriented movies. Obviously, no one at Paramount ever saw *The Rolling Stone Tenth Anniversary TV Special*. The first Wenner project—which Wenner will not produce, so his role in all this is vague at best—will be scribbled by *Stone's* Senior Editor Ben Fong-Torres, to whom we wish boodles of luck. Fong-Torres is not quite a movie virgin; he recently did a brief acting stint in *Americathon*, in which he plays a Chinese tourist stealing mementos from the White House. "Type casting," says Fong-Torres.

Americathon—which is not a Wenner project—sounds like a logical successor to *Animal House's* mindless humor. It takes place in 1998 when America is \$400 billion in debt, bankrupt, totally kaput. The Western White House is a condominium in Marina del Rey, all our oil is dry, we're a nation of bicyclers. A



California Rock Party

At a gala fete honoring publication of their new book, *California Rock, California Sound* (which was the source of *Ampersand's* October Joni Mitchell cover story) and also celebrating display of the book's photographs in the Mirage Gallery, author Anthony Fawcett and photographer Henry Diltz watched hungry press hordes devour insufficient quantities of enchiladas and margaritas. Jackson Browne, who is featured in the book, dropped by and apparently surprised Diltz (right).

bunch of crazy, nutty folks present a telethon to pull America out of the hole; Harvey Korman is the smarmy telethon emcee, Peter Riegert (Boon of *Animal House*) is a media consultant, Fred Willard is the dastardly Vice President, John Ritter is Prez. Elvis Costello appears briefly, exhorting the English to pledge money for America. This bit of fun was filmed at Mount St. Mary's College in downtown Los Angeles, masquerading as London's Hyde Park. Proving we don't have to wait until 1998 for a budget crisis.

Remakes, Spinoffs & Copies

AFTER MONTHS OF on-off bargaining, Neil Diamond has finally agreed to play Al Jolson in a remake of *The Jazz Singer*, for which he'll earn \$5 million—\$1 million in cash, \$4 million in soundtrack rights (to be forked over by Capitol, not Diamond's label, Columbia).

STAYING ALIVE, THE television series based on *Saturday Night Fever*, is now called *Makin' It*, about a family's survival or, as one spokesperson said, "Happy Days in the Seventies." The parents are played by Lou Antonio and Ellen Travolta, a name we've seen somewhere before.

BARNEY MILLER, ONE of *Ampersand's* favorite television series, may have one less detective in the squalid squad room: Maxwell Gail, who plays Wojchowicz, will have his own series if an hour-long spinoff segment sells; half of the show will be Wojo at work, the other half Wojo at home . . . with a reformed hooker, no less.

GEORGE HARRISON'S NEW album, so far called *George Harrison*, actually has a song called "Here Comes the Moon."

Do These Plots Sound Familiar?

TAKE DOWN, a new film from Disney starring Lorenzo Lamas (son of Fernando), recounts the hapless adventures of a losing high school wrestling team which is sparked to greatness by the prowess of Lamas, who finds self confidence and respect through superior grappling.

THE RAMONES AND their music are featured in *Rock and Roll High School*, a wild, silly battle of "wits" between the "good" rowdy students of Vince Lombardi High and the "bad" principal, all leading to an explosive conclusion: the high school blows up.

Flick Fax

STEVE MARTIN'S FIRST film, *Money to Burn*, will be directed by Carl Reiner . . . Peter Frampton will star in two films for Orion Pictures, the first described as a "comedy drama concerning a rock star . . . but not a musical." Thanks for small favors . . . Mac Davis makes his acting debut in *North Dallas Forty*, starring Nick Nolte . . . Playwright Sam Shepard, who made his acting debut in *Days of Heaven*, will co-star opposite Ellen Burstyn in *Resurrection*, about a female christ . . . *Monty Python's Life of Brian* is finally finished, and Graham Chapman (the tall one) is now in Los Angeles collaborating on a new film script and planning his first U.S. college lecture tour . . . Ralph Bakshi's next feature-length animated film will be *American Pop*, with 17 musical numbers illustrating the history of American music as witnessed by a ten-year-old boy who arrives in this country in 1910 and bops along to 1980 . . . Bill Murray of *Saturday Night Live* may play gonzo

journalist Hunter S. Thompson in *Where the Buffalo Roam*, also starring Peter Boyle.

Ample Angst

MICHAELANGLO ANTONIONI'S NEXT project is called *Suffer or Die*, appropriate for this angst-laden Italian director; it stars Giancarlo Giannini (in a role turned down by Jack Nicholson, Richard Gere, and Ryan O'Neal) as an architect caught up in the eerie history of a monastery he is hired to convert into a mansion for rich owner Mick Jagger. The screenplay by Anthony Burgess, an angst-laden Britisher, is being rewritten by Buck Henry, who has no angst to grind at all.

You Mean We'll Actually Have To Read Books?

CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED, "great literature in comic book format," a staple with students since the Forties, is out of business. Collectors, take note: an original *Classics Illustrated Three Musketeers* is worth a fast \$75.

Our Heroes

BUDDING HISTORIANS, SOCIOLOGY students and anyone with an abiding interest in rock and roll would be well advised to park themselves in front of a TV set on Friday night, February 9, when ABC will broadcast *Heroes of Rock and Roll*, a two-hour prime-time documentary (9 P.M. nationwide) that is light years ahead of the standards normally associated with TV rock.

Narrated by Jeff Bridges, *Heroes* is a chronological history of 25 years of rock and roll presented in a snappy, fast-paced montage that's highly entertaining, often hilarious and enormously informative. It's the first time the "Big Four"—Presley, Beatles, Stones and Dylan—have been featured on the same show and the action is spiced with rare footage of Hank Williams, Buddy Holly and never-before-seen clips of the Beatles performing at the Cavern in Liverpool in 1962.

The program is particularly strong in detailing the early years of rock, emphasizing its roots in black music and illustrating the social climate of the era from which it sprang. With rock and roll such an integral part of the current cultural landscape, it's both amusing and eye-opening to witness the fear and loathing with which it was originally viewed by the guardians of public morality and decency.

The least interesting part of the show—and the one containing the most glaring omissions in terms of artistic selection—is the section dealing with the Seventies (which may reflect more on the quality of this decade's performers than anything else). Still, *Heroes of Rock and Roll* is easily the most knowledgeable and thorough look at the subject ever presented on television. Don't miss it.

Don Snowden