

Entertainment Outlook

Farley Mowat is back in the arctic

By Alex Barris
Thomson News Service
I'm a touch late getting to it, but I

couldn't let the passing of Drew Crossan go by without some comment. The veteran CBC producer died in mid-February after a long battle with emphysema.

Crossan was born in Montreal and served with the Canadian Army during the Second World War. He joined

the CBC in 1947, immediately upon graduating from the Lorne Greene Academy of Radio Arts. "I just walked across Jarvis Street into the CBC radio building," he once told me, "and I stayed."

He was a radio producer first, and I remember him. In the late 1940s, producing shows like Juke Box Jury. He trained for television and was ready when CBC television went on the air. Among the many shows he steered were Cross Canada Hit Parade, Pick The Stars, The Wayne and Shuster

Show, Front Page Challenge, Country Hoedown, The Billy O'Connor Show, Matinee Party and Jazz With (Col) Jackson.

During the summers, when his CBC duties were less onerous, he usually worked with the late Jack and Midge Arthur on the production of those extravaganzas they used to mount at the Canadian National Exhibition grandstand. I worked with him on one of them (in 1967) and, of course, on many television programs.

In 1965, Drew Crossan was sent to Ghana by the CBC to help put that nation's first television service on the air. He spent a year there and it was an experience he looked back on with justifiable pride.

During Canada's Centennial Year we worked together — he as producer, I as writer — on a special two-hour presentation that was never aired. It was a kind of visual history of Canadian television, prepared by CBC at the invitation of the American Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and shown to Academy members and American V.I.P.s in New York, Los Angeles, Washington and elsewhere.

In 1980, I worked with Crossan on a half-hour entertainment documentary about Bert Niosi, the veteran Canadian musician and band leader. Phyllis Marshall hosted that program and some of it was shot at the old Palais Royale, where Niosi once played for dancing.

Paul Saltzman, the guiding spirit behind Danger Bay, has a new project to engage his energies. It's a four-part miniseries called Kennedy Vs. Hoover: The Second Civil War. The program will explore the battle between John and Robert Kennedy on the one hand and J. Edgar Hoover, then head of the F.B.I., on the other.

It's interesting that an American company, Seznick-Glickman, produced a 1983 program titled Blood Feud, which dealt with the conflict between Bobby Kennedy and union leader Jimmy Hoffa.

That same company, Seznick-Glickman, will co-produce the Kennedy-Hoover miniseries in association with Saltzman's Sunrise Films Limited, a Canadian company.

As a further sideline, the Seznick in question is Daniel Seznick, son of the famous movie producer, David O. Seznick. And Paul Saltzman is the son of famed Canadian broadcaster, Percy Saltzman.

The Kennedy-Hoover project will begin filming in Toronto in May and has a projected air date of November.

For Mystery Fans: Vanishing Point, on CBC Radio, has an unusual item slated for Friday, March 6. It's called My Vacation in The Numbers Hackett and was written by Howard Engel, author of those enjoyable Benny Cooperman novels.

Engel has featured Benny Cooperman's mother in several of his stories (The Suicide Murders, The Ransom Game, Murder Secs The Light) but only in cameo roles. This one deals with both of Benny's parents and their adventures while on vacation in Florida.

The last part appeals to me.

Names, Names, Names: Farley Mowat will be the on-camera host of a two-hour documentary film called The New North, to be made this year in Northern Canada, Alaska, Norway, Greenland and other ultra-cool locations... Time Of Their Lives: The Dionne Tragedy, the book about the quintuplets by John Nihmey and

Barris Beat

Stuart Foxman, will be turned into a feature film with the authors writing the screenplay... Vancouver-based singer Leon Bibb is working on a documentary called Follow The Drinking Gourd. It deals with black Americans who settled in southwestern Ontario in the 19th century. Bibb is both producing and writing the screenplay, for Global TV... Brian Moore's historical novel, The Black Robe, about the culture clash between Jesuits and Indians in the 17th century, will be made into a feature film to be shown on CTV... Donnelly Rhodes and the others involved in Danger Bay can breathe a sigh of relief. The series has been renewed, both by CBC and the Disney Channel, for a fourth season... And although the season of Seeing Things that began this week is the last for that series, Louis del Grande, its star, already has done a pilot for a new series, a sort of comedy talk show.

Miniseries Department: Valerie Bertinelli, best remembered for her nine seasons on the sitcom One Day At A Time, stars in I'll Take Manhattan, based on the best-selling Judith Krantz book. This is a four-part, eight-hour miniseries due on the CTV Network March 1 through March 4.

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