Frank McRae star of 'Used Cars' visits

By Ida Peters

Frank McRae who plays a shell - shocked Vietnam veteran turned car mechanic in Columbia Pictures' action comedy "Used Cars" was in town this week for a press luncheon and interviews.

Some players like Jimmy Orr and Jim Parker of the Baltimore Colts may have some fond memories of Frank McRae from when he played defensive tackle and defensive end under George Halas with the Chicago Bears and later with the Los Angeles Rams under George Allen.

In person, McRae, who starred at Tennessee State University and graduated with a degree in theatre arts, does not look like a football star and since completion of "Used Cars" has "lost a lot of weight". Frankly, when he's sitting, he looks just average but when he stands he's over 300 pounds and almost seven feet.

Asked McRae how he got started in acting. He said that after courses in college, mostly speech because black colleges don't have much depth, he started studying with Lee Strasberg in New York.

When he moved to California a friend, Larry Gordon, at AIP introduced him to screenwriter - director John Milius and his first part was in "Dillinger".

He then went on to star in "The Driver", "Marathon Man", "Norma Rae", "Paradise Alley", "Rocky II" . . . he was the huge man in the meat packing house . . . "F.I.S.T." and "1941".

McRae says that he has worked steadily in the movies because he has not been looking for instant stardom or overnight success. He has worked hard to create his roles and each time out it is a new challenge.

When he finishes this press tour he will star in John Milius' action - fantasy tale "Conan" set to film in Yugoslavia. He is working out daily, doing knife throwing and sword practice for his Prince of Darkness role in the movie. His opponent will be Arnold Schwarzenegger, the muscleman.

Columbia Pictures' publicity department has had a grand time promoting "Used Cars". In the mail last week we received in addition to radiator cap and oil stick, a used hub cap with the hint that maybe one was missing in my neighborhood. Could be. Somebody stole my next door neighbor's radiator last week.

"Used Cars" is full of used jokes if you can stand this kind of humor in hot weather. Plot has used car dealer Jack Warden knocking out his competition across the street, played by his brother, also portrayed by Jack Warden.

Operators Kurt Russell and partners Gerrit Graham and Frank McRae disguise the fact that the neighbor is dead and embark on a series of outrageous promotions including a nude commercial and the jamming of a presidential address to get one of the spots on nationwide television.

McRae says that more than 300 used cars are in this movie . . . the most in any film. And . . . during his press tour, he has not received any feedback from out - of - work auto people or people who own Detroit's lemons.

Frank McRae, star of "Used Cars" visited Baltimore this week on a press tour that has covered Washington, D.C., Chicago and New York.

'Trombones' powerful

By Sue Williams

The Arena Players production of James Weldon Johnson's "God Trombones" would have made the author happy.

It is said that it was a sermon Johnson heard delivered once in church that inspired him to start jotting notes down that would later become "The Creation," the opening sermon in "God Trombones." From that first inspiration came the entire work of sermon - poems, which deal with Biblical stories as well as at least one age - old occurrence all preachers must deal with — death.

The Arena production was unique in that director Sam Wilson chose to use licensed ministers in several performances, including Rev. James Bridgeford (who performed last week - end); of Bethel AME Church, Chestertown; Rev. Reginald Daniels (Madison Avenue Presbyterian); Rev. Vernon Dobson (Union Baptist); Rev. Donald Sterling (St. Cecelia's Roman Catholic) and the Rev. Bernard Keels (St. Mark's United Church).

The beauty of having the ministers perform was that they were given a chance to experience the sheer power of their words through a dramatic presentation. One might dare surmise that they themselves were just a little surprised at the poetic quality and power of what they do for a living.

The performance last Saturday evening was commendable. Performances by Robert Russell, who did "Noah Built The Ark" was especially outstanding. Russell had the intonations, the movements and the spirit that made it appear he had been preaching sermons all his life. And Calvin Parker who did "Go Down Death" had an almost uncanny ability to translate the imagery inherent in the poem to draw the pictures the words were meant to draw, and caress the soul, as every good preacher attempts to do. Parker was quite convincing, and left the audience stunned and quiet for just a moment after he had finished.

The Baltimore Fellowship Choir added everything that was necessary to make the experience seem like Sunday morning. The two young men and one young woman had a blend and harmony that is rarely heard.

"Trombones" was a delightful opportunity to see how alive poetry can be . . . and a chance, ultimately, for church and theater to become one for at least a short while.

It's all in a day's unemployment

"Cheech and Chong's Next Movie" has Chong and Michael Winslow hanging out in an unemployment office.

"Hey, man, I've been late for work five times already this week....and it's only Tuesday." — CHEECH

"Well, tell him you needed the van to take out his daughter, man. He'll be so worried about his daughter, he'll forget all about the van." — CHONG

For more than ten years, Cheech and Chong have been turning out a special, unique brand of humor for an army of loyal fans. These fans have made them a No.1 comedy recording team, buying 8 million of their albums, buying upwards of 15 million concert tickets to see them live, and paying more than $104 million world-wide, to see their first film, "Up In Smoke."

Now Cheech and Chong are back in "Cheech and Chong's Next Movie," a comedy that sends up the laid-back counter-culture in the persons of Cheech, a cool Chicano ladies' man trying to hold on to a delivery job at a movie studio, and his roommate Chong, a good-natured and dedicated unemployable into motorcycles and hard rock, who starts his day with a beer and a smoke.

"Cheech And Chong's Next Movie" takes them through a movie studio, a welfare office, a massage parlor, a police raid, the living room of a very rich family, a near-riot at the "Comedy House", and, finally, into space—all in the unique Cheech and Chong style that Rolling Stone called "a potpourri of dope jokes, wry ethnicity and life's funky realities."

'O Heavenly Dog'

Seductive Jane Seymour slips out of her lingerie — and into a bubble bath. Lying on his back nearby is Chevy Chase, whose gleaming eyes suggest he has died and gone to heaven.

He has.

Chevy growls and Jane reaches out with a delicate foamy hand to rub his chin. At last, he is alone with the most desirable woman he has ever met, and he can do nothing about it.

It's a dog's life.

Chevy Chase and Benji star with Jane Seymour, Omar Sharif (as Malcolm Barr) and guest star Robert Morley in "Oh Heavenly Dog." Alan Sues and Donnelly Rhodes also star in the screwball mystery about a murdered detective who's sent back to earth to literally hound his own killer.

For Benji, the romp in the dark is both a change and a challenge. It marks the first time the shaggy star has been unleashed in a picture with a PG rating or has played a "character" other than himself.

The mystery begins on a rainy day in London — which is admittedly redundant. Chase as Benjamin Browning, an American private eye plying his trade in Mayfair, is hired by a mysterious stranger to protect an equally mysterious and beautiful — interior decorator. When he arrives at her apartment, strewn with objet d'art, he discovers that the lady no longer needs protection (or much of anything else. She has been stabbed to death.

As he bends over the body, a gloved hand emerges from a closet. There is a rustling sound . . . a flash of metal . . . a sudden blaze of pain . . . then nothing.

A post - lethal second later, Chevy is meeting his celestial counselor, Higgins, who has both good and bad news for him. The bad news is he's dead. The good news is he's being sent back to earth to solve his own murder. The bad news . . . again . . . is that his body is in no shape for the trip.

He will return as a dog.

As a result, Chevy and Benji not only share the same role in "Oh Heavenly Dog," they sometimes share it simultaneously. And while the character's most nose and propeller tail belong to Benji, his fantasies, frustrations and animal desires are all Chevy's.

Weekend TV Watching

By Vanessa Jonnson

Friday

Hello Baltimore: A performance by the recording group The Softones and plant tips. 12:00-1:00 p.m.-Ch. 11.

Dinah & Friends: Co-host Paul Williams is joined by singer Dionne Warwick, Angela Bofill and Phyllis Hyman. 4:00-5:30 p.m.-Ch. 4.

John Davidson: Pat Harrington, co-host, is joined by actress Roxie Roker and singer Chaka Khan. 4:30-6:00 p.m.-Ch. 13.

America's Top 10: Performances by Rocky Robbins and others. 7:30-8:00 p.m.-Ch. 4.

Man Called Sloane: A murder at an observatory alerts Sloan to a plot to divert a huge comet toward North America. Starring Ji-Tu Cumbuka. 10:00-11:00 p.m.-Ch. 11.

Midnight Special: Hostess Olivia Newton-John is joined by The Manhattans and others. 1:00-2:30 a.m.-Ch. 11.

Saturday

Fat Albert: The gang learns that good friends are hard to find. Hosted by Bill Cosby. 11:30-12:00 p.m.-Ch. 2.

American Bandstand: Performance by Stanley Clarke who sings "Danger Street". 12:30-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 13.

Tony Brown's Journal: A profile of hurdler Renaldo Nehemiah, an Olympic hopeful. 5:00-5:30 p.m.-Ch. 11.

Come Love the Children: Art Linkletter and Carol Lawrence are the co-hosts of this salute to children around the world. Guests participants include Melba Moore, Ben Vereen, Andre Crouch. 7:00-12:00 a.m.-Ch.7.

Ray Charles joins the Boston Pops on PBS Sunday, July 27.

Greater Baltimore Baffle: Panelists include Oprah Winfrey, co-host of WJZ-TV's "People Are Talking". 7:00-7:30 p.m.-Ch. 13.

Sanford: Conclusion. Fred incurs the wrath of Evelyn after he gets cold feet at their engagement party. Starring Redd Foxx. 9:00-9:30 p.m.-Ch. 11.

Saturday Night Live: In a show from February, Kirk Douglas spoofs his role in "Spartacus", Garrett Morris plays Egypt's Anwar el-Sadat and guests singers Sam & Dave perform "Soul Man". 11:30-1:00 a.m.-Ch. 11.

Sunday

Tony Brown's Journal: An examination of the life styles of blacks under 40. 1:00-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 4.

Greatest Sports Legends: Hall of Famer Willie Mays, the childhood idol of series host Reggie Jackson, reviews films of his illustrious 22-year career in the major leagues, during which he accumulated 3283 hits. 1:00-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 7.

Tony Brown's Journal: An examination of public reaction to the National Conference for a Black Agenda for the Eighties. 3:00-3:30 p.m.-Ch. 11.

The Jeffersons: George is detained in a mental institution after he is mistaken for an inmate. Starring Sherman Hemsley. 9:30-10:00 p.m.-Ch.2.

"The Righteous Apples" premieres Sunday, July 27 on PBS.

'Righteous Apples' premieres

"The Righteous Apples" a new dramatic-comedy series, which looks at the problems faced by a group of racially mixed high school students, premieres Sunday morning July 27 at 9:30 on stations of the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting. The topics it deals with are tough, controversial, but presented through the humor people find in the face of adversity.

"The Righteous Apples" presents the reality of lower-middle-class kids in a newly multi-ethnicized neighborhood, dealing with the attitudes, the values and the pressures of today's society. The series seeks to provide positive solutions to racial conflicts and misunderstandings.

The series revolves around a recently formed music group, "The Righteous Apples," composed of live high school students who live in a newly integrated Boston neighborhood.

In the first episode, "The Righteous Apples" discover an aging blues guitarist vegetating in a shady nursing home and help him and his female friend "escape" to a new productive lifestyle.

Smokey Robisnon at Painters Mill tonight. Friday.

The lift your feet, clap your hands Fatback Band coming to Calvert Educational Center, Thursday, July 31 for two shows.

Jesse Walker's N.Y.

NAACP Executive Director Benjamin L. Hooks will address the opening day session of the American Federation of Television and Artists, holding its annual convention in Detroit, August 7-10.

"Broadway may never see my name in lights, but I'm a star in the ghetto," says singer Irene Reid. So the "Star" is returning to Harlem's Smalls Paradise for two nights. Friday and Saturday, July 25-26.

Have another costly Broadway venture: "Zoot Suit," the musical about prejudice toward Mexican-Americans in LA in the 1940's and which was a sellout hit there, lost $835,275 on Broadway where it lasted only 17 previews and 45 performances, in spite of a special promotion campaign in Hispanic and black communities.

Cancerarians who birthdayed in June and early July celebrated at the latest Zodiac birthday party held July 18 at Red Randolph's Quintessence on West 46th Street. Among the honorees: Bob Thomas, Dr. Bennie Chiles, Dr. Albert Thompson, Cathy Connors, Dr. Mabel Randolph, Jimmy Booker and Barbara Jacquet.

The Fifth Annual "Chink" Cunningham Memorial Gold Classic, sponsored by The Floggers Gold Club, will be held Monday, August 4 at the Riverdale Country Club in Riverdale, N.J. Floggers hope to garner prizes attending National Urban Leagure Conference, meeting in NYC August 3-6.

Dionne Warwick will host the musical series, "Solid Gold", that Operation Prime Time will launch the week of Sept. 12. In NYC, it'll be aired on WPIX-TV. The show will feature musical groups performing their big selling records in a contemporary hit parade-type format. In addition, there'll be a resident company of dancers and comedy players.

Delaware State will host South Carolina State in a Sept. 13 football game that will be shown Friday, Sept. 19, as the opener of a Black Entertainment Television (375-market national cable network) weekly series showcasing black colleges.

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—If you ask me

(Continued from Page 8)

program, she was a willing volunteer.

Seems only yesterday, walking up the steps in the old Western Police Station on Pennsylvania Ave., and getting her help in locating a missing child whose mother had appealed to our newspaper desk.

Vivid in my memory, is the cold Christmas Eve night when she gave us help in finding the destitute family in need of clothing and food. They had been burned out of their home and had forgotten to leave a forwarding address. The AFRO's Ms. Santa found them, thanks to the help of Violet Hill Whyte.

Our memory book shows we gave her flowers while she could enjoy them. It happened at a testimonial banquet on a cold December day in 1967, at the Blue Crest North. There some 22 of us spoke of her dedication to duty, her friendship shared with many and we called her a "gentle lady and concerned social worker," when we presented this newspaper's citation.

Marse Callaway

Cuff Note: It wasn't easy 30 years ago to get on the Baltimore police force. We recall how hard the late GOP leader, Marse S. Callaway and his GOP League campaigned for black, (then colored), policemen and women.

With the cooperation of the NAACP, the AFRO and the churches, men and women attended classes at Marse Callaway's Madison Avenue office, in preparation for the day when the jobs then traditionally white jobs, would open up. Remember? Remember also how black Baltimoreans marched to Annapolis to call on then Governor O'Conor to urge appointment of black (colored) policemen?

Wedding note

In the mail this week an invitation from the wardens and vestry of St. Philips Episcopal Church in Annapolis.

They are inviting friends to witness the marriage of their rector, the Rev. Robert M. Powell and Anita Marie Meadows.

The nuptial mass is Saturday, August 2, at noon, with a reception following in the church hall.

Many may remember Father Powell when he pastored Episcopal churches in Baltimore.

New Vance Baby

Dr. and Mrs. Paul Vance (Sandy), of Gaithersburg, Md. recently welcomed a baby girl. Announcement in the mail this week advises that Lauren Sandra weighed 8 lbs., 1 ½ ounces, when she was born May 19.

Baby is welcome company for son, Paul Jr., now 2. Dad is an assistant superintendent of public schools in Montgomery County, Md. He held a similar post here in Baltimore.

Family reunions

Dr. and Mrs. Simon Carter (Kay), hosted family last Friday to say bon voyage to their son, S.4 Mark Carter, who has arrived safely in Korea.

Later in the week, Dr. Carter had the family out for dinner at a Harbor restaurant, to mark Kay's birthday. It was the 22nd.

Hampton wedding

Joel Mays of Detroit and Cynthia Burroughs, N.Y. who were classmates at Hampton Institute, Va. returned to their Alma Mater Saturday, to marry.

Rites were in the campus chapel. Bus loads of fellow grads and friends came from their hometowns. Baltimoreans there...his roommate, John E. Stokes Jr.; his parents John and Merita Stokes; Marilyn Harris, Errol Taylor, Lynn Barney, Norma Hall and Sharon Johnson.

The newlyweds are at home in D.C. where he owns a vending machine firm. She is a nurse.

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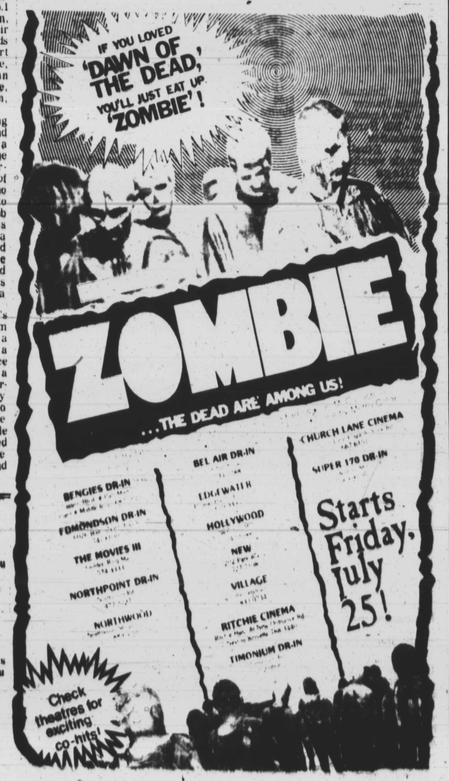

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