

'Survivor' returns to competitive lineup

A new tropical locale beckons fans of "Survivor" (8 p.m., CBS). Fiji becomes home for 19 contestants on the 14th season of the reality competition.



Kevin McDonough

The greatest survivor on "Survivor" has to be the show itself. Few other entertainment franchises could withstand 14 seasons over seven years and not burn out. And while "Survivor" is not the dominant show it once was, it still attracts an enviable audience. Like many shows on CBS, "Survivor" remains popular without generating much buzz. Do you know who won the last round? Do you care?

When "Survivor" debuted, it seemed to be filling an entertainment void. Now, "Survivor" itself seems like a tired, if comfortably familiar, distraction from newer ("Ugly Betty") and clearly superior ("The Office") shows.

"Survivor" is not the first Thursday-night powerhouse to lose steam before vanishing from our screens. There was a time when "The Cosby Show" ruled the ratings roost with "Idol"-like numbers. TV Land offers viewers a Valentine of four consecutive romantic episodes on "Huxtable Love Songs: The Greatest Hits" (9 p.m., TV Land), featuring recording artists Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Lena Horne and the Count Basie Orchestra. This special repeats Feb. 14.

"Final 24" (10 p.m., Biography) looks at the series of mistakes and errors in judgment that resulted in the deaths of John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife and his sister-in-law in a small-plane crash on July 16, 1999.

The death of the late president's son also resulted in some strange moments for the media. Cable news held a 'round-the-clock vigil from the moment the plane was reported missing until its final discovery some days later.

A friend of mine who worked at a cable news outfit at the time confided with much chagrin, "We've got more hours of more footage of empty, open ocean than any other network." It wasn't so much a boast as a journalist's cry of pain.

On radio, Rush Limbaugh "entertained" his audience with a graphic and gruesome contemplation of the state of decomposition of the bodies on Kennedy's airplane.

And in the New York Post, TV critic-turned political columnist John Podhoretz speculated that Kennedy's death was a pre-ordained retribution for a deal his grandfather Joseph P. Kennedy had struck with Satan. This dreadfully timed and tasteless essay earned a rare rebuke from media baron Rupert Murdoch.

Like the accidental death of Princess Diana only two years

before, the Kennedy tragedy resulted in "news" at its very worst: hours to kill and little if nothing to report except speculative commentary about the obvious.

Tonight's other highlights

• As her trial approaches, Joy discovers a long-lost family member on "My Name is Earl" (8 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

• Making the best of a fashion-week catastrophe, Betty plays peacemaker on "Ugly Betty" (8 p.m., ABC, TV-PG). Tim Gunn ("Project Runway") returns as a guest star.

• Phyllis' wedding reminds Pam of her own dashed plans on "The Office" (8:30 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

• Grissom returns just in time to help solve a double homicide on "CSI" (9 p.m., CBS, TV-14.V).

• New challenges confront the interns on "Grey's Anatomy" (9 p.m., ABC, TV-14).

• Cupid and food poisoning on "30 Rock" (9:30 p.m., NBC, TV-14).

Cult choice

Genetically mutated snakeshead fish develop a taste for lakeside residents in "Frankenfish" (7 p.m., Sci Fi, TV-14).

Series notes

Jeff's bachelor party on "Til Death" (8 p.m., Fox, TV-PG, D, L) ... A stalker assaults Lana on "Smallville" (8 p.m., CW, TV-PG, D, L, V) ... George Segal and Jamie Farr guest star on "The War at Home" (8:30 p.m., Fox, TV-14).

Late night

Jack Hanna, Katherine Heigl and Patty Griffin appear on "Late Show With David Letterman" (11:35 p.m., CBS) ... Jay Leno hosts Mark Wahlberg and Mat Kearney on "The Tonight Show" (11:35 p.m., NBC) ... Gwen Stefani, Justin Chambers and Fall Out Boy appear on "Jimmy Kimmel Live" (12:05 a.m., ABC) ... Bob Costas and Josh Groban chat on "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" (12:35 a.m., NBC) ... Craig Ferguson hosts Thandie Newton and the Game on "The Late, Late Show" (12:37 a.m., CBS).

Kevin McDonough is a TV columnist for United Features Syndicate.

THURSDAY EVENING

FEBRUARY 8, 2007

Table with 11 columns (Time slots: 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and multiple rows of TV show listings across various channels like WTTV, WRV, WISH, WTHR, WFYI, WNDY, WTIU, WHMB, WCLJ, WXIN, WIPX, WDTI, A&E, AMC, AP, BET, BRAVO, CNBC, CMT, CNN, COM, DISC, EI, ESPN, ESPN2, FAM, FNC, FOOD, FOXMV, FOXSM, FX, HALL, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, MSNBC, MTV, NICK, OXY, SCIFI, SPIKE, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, TOON, TVL, USA, VH1, WE, WGN, DISN, ENC, HBO, SHOW, MAX, TMC, STARZ.

ACCENT ON PEOPLE

The Associated Press

Garcia's widow would be grateful for unseen tapes

The widow of the Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia is suing to gain access to unpublished tapes of her late husband's musical performances.



GARCIA

Deborah Koons Garcia filed a civil suit Jan. 31 in Marin County Superior Court against a limited liability corporation, composed of the rocker's beneficiaries including Koons Garcia, that oversees business involving his estate.

According to the lawsuit, Koons Garcia wants to professionally restore the so-called "Garcia Tapes," but others in the limited liability corporation have stalled the process. The suit asks a judge to clarify the terms of the agreement that led to the formation of the business entity.

Koons Garcia claims the corporation had been scheduled to dissolve by Dec. 31, 2005, but continues to exist.

The lawsuit is just the latest in a prolonged legal battle among Jerry Garcia's beneficiaries.

No marriage or divorce plans for Jim Carrey

Jim Carrey says he and his lady love, Jenny McCarthy, aren't planning to get married. "No, we're never getting married, but we're never getting divorced, which is fantastic," the 45-year-old actor says on "Access Hollywood."

Will he get her a ring at last? "I bought her a Chloe purse," he jokes. "Isn't that good enough?" Carrey and McCarthy, 34, went public with their romance last year.

"She's just a wonderful lady and much deeper than she's ever received credit for, and I'm very excited about her future," he says of the former Playboy playmate, who got her big break in the mid-1990s as a co-host on MTV's "Singled Out."

Carrey, who was previously married to actress Lauren Holly, has a 19-year-old daughter, Jane, with his first wife, Melissa Womer. McCarthy and film director John Asher filed for divorce in August 2005, after six years of marriage. They have a 4-year-old son, Evan.

Willie Nelson, others to play at fund-raiser

The concert calls for mixing Willie Nelson with the Fort Worth Symphony, then adding Jessica Simpson, the Dallas Black Dance Theater and a touch of Kinky Friedman. "And Cirque du Soleil," Friedman deadpanned.



NELSON

"Some call it garlic soup. I like garlic soup; garlic soup is intriguing to me," said David Anderson, Nelson's longtime tour manager and an organizer of Saturday night's "An Arctectic Evening" at Nokia Theatre in suburban Grand Prairie, which raises college scholarship money for area students.

Nelson is no stranger to seemingly odd musical pairings. Last month, he teamed with jazz great Wynton Marsalis at Lincoln Center in New York.

Actor's son blames his dad for woman's injuries

Actor Ryan O'Neal was responsible for injuries his son's pregnant girlfriend suffered during a confrontation with the actor at his Malibu home last weekend, a lawyer for Griffin O'Neal told reporters Wednesday.



R. O'NEAL

Joanna Berry, who is expecting a baby at the end of March, suffered facial lacerations that took eight stitches to close, as well as head trauma and a corneal abrasion during the confrontation, said attorney Gloria Allred. O'Neal, who was arrested for investigation of assault with a deadly weapon and negligent discharge of a firearm, has said he fired a "warning shot" to scare his 42-year-old son, Griffin, away after he came at him with a fire-place poker.

Ryan O'Neal said his son struck Berry, 22, with the poker during the fight.

ARTCRAFT Theatre advertisement for Casablanca, February 9th & 10th at 7:30pm. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

SHOWPLACE 16 advertisement for movies like 'The Departed' and 'The Queen' with showtimes and prices.

AMC advertisement for movies like 'The Departed' and 'The Queen' with showtimes and prices.

Canary Creek Cinemas 8 advertisement for movies like 'The Departed' and 'The Queen' with showtimes and prices.

B. Expressive Salon & Day Spa advertisement for Teen Extravaganza event on February 11, 2007.

REUSE-A-SHOE advertisement for shoe recycling event from February 1st to 9th.