

DAVID'S THRILLING "AUDITION"

During the summer, between the tenth and eleventh grades at Hamilton High, David was 17 years old, and it was then that he made up that iron-willed mind of his *for sure* that he was going to be an actor and a singer.

As usual, the summer found us back in West Orange, and this particular summer found David and me going to New York City so that he could meet Jim Gregory, my voice coach. Since he was nine years old, I had known that David definitely was going to be an actor or a singer—and *now* I realized the time had come for him to learn some of the basic disciplines of his chosen art. That was why I took him to New York to meet Jim Gregory. We sat and talked with Jim for awhile about getting some material together that would be suitable for David to use at an audition—if and when such an opportunity came his way. Jim shooed me out of his studio, saying, "Come back in an hour."

An hour later, I found myself back at Jim's studio. I sat down, ready to view David's "first audition". David did a tune called *The Game* from the Broadway musical *Damn Yankees*—and it was utterly amazing. Here he was singing this song as though he had sung it all his life! It was incredible that he could get himself so "together" in such a brief time. It was at this "audition" that I saw how much David had *absorbed* from everything around him. He was so aware and so quick—he picked up everything twice as fast as anyone else and was able to kind of get it organized and present it in a way that was—well, just plain *professional!* I was very proud of David that afternoon.

After that, David went to see Jim a couple of times a week, and two months later Jim called me and said, "Evelyn"—(by the way, my first name is pronounced with a long E, as in *Ee-velyn*, which is the British way of pronouncing it)—"I think you'd better come here and see David work now. And I think you're in for quite a surprise."

Indeed I was. As I sat watching David—being as objective as I possibly could be—I was again amazed and thrilled at the way he carried himself, the way he presented his song and how totally professional he was. And, aside from that, his performances were impeccable—they were beautiful! Now I realized that David was ready, *really* ready, for any kind of audition that might come his way.

GIRLS, HORSES & BIKES

Don't get the idea that David's young and mid-teen years

were spent between school and preparation for his future career as an actor and a singer. David found plenty of time for other activities too. Girls were nearly always number one on his list—as they are today! (David had his first *real* date—with a girl named Reba—when he was 14 years old and went off on an all-night prom-type party at Emerson Junior High). He was also fascinated by movement—as in *speed!* When he was 12, David was simply wild to get a go-cart—and finally his dad got him one. There was a sort of "go-cart track" at Jack's house and David used to go there and drive around and around and around—his go-cart sometimes hitting a fast 15 miles per hour!

David, as all youngsters are, was "passionate" about horses. Since I loved riding, I started taking David with me to a ranch every Saturday morning at 5 o'clock—and that was hard for David, because his biggest *hate* is getting up early in the morning! But he loved horses so much that he managed to get up—and once a week we would go out in the San Fernando Valley and ride all day. David became quite good at it. He learned to ride jumpers and to ride bare-back too.

One day David came home excited about a palomino horse named "Danny Boy" a girl he knew wanted to sell. He asked me if we could buy it. I told him that I would think about it, but he hardly gave me a moment to *think*—he just kept asking and asking and asking. Finally, I saw how very important having a horse was to David, so I made a decision.

"All right, David," I said, "'Danny Boy' is yours—but he's your birthday *and* Christmas present for this year. Now, don't forget that!"

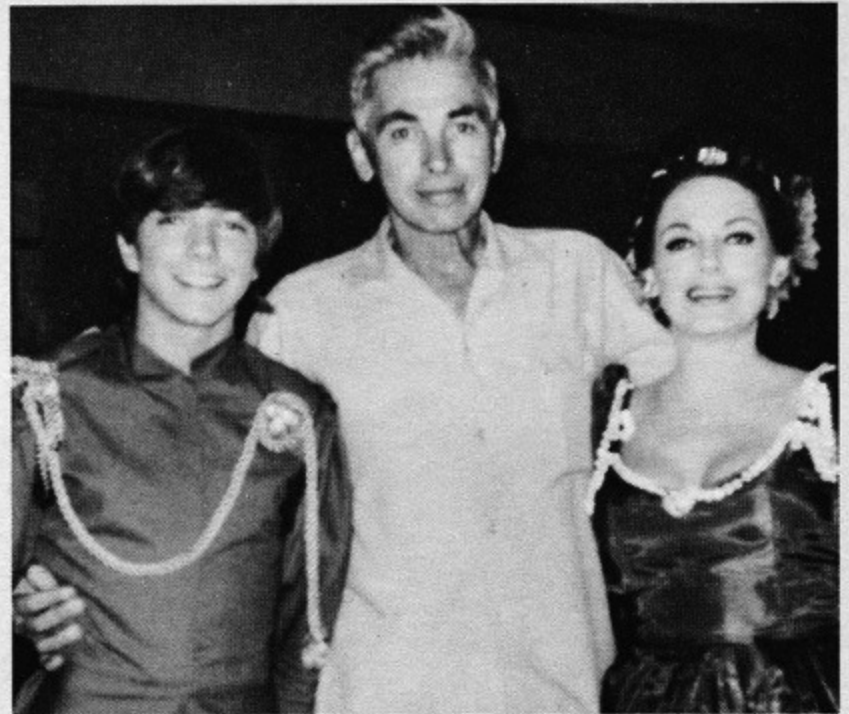
(About three years ago, David sold "Danny Boy"—because he simply didn't have time to ride or even visit his horse.)

When David was about 14 and a half years old, he started riding mini motorbikes. This was a particularly tense period for me, because I couldn't stand the thought of him speeding around the Hollywood Hills on such a dangerous machine. I repressed my motherly concern and ultimately David gave up his bike on his own. Well, not exactly on his own. One day a speeding car passed him and, as it did, the driver intentionally (or so it seemed) sideswiped David! His ankle bone was chipped and he had to go into traction and then wear a cast for several weeks. That cured David of biking (for awhile, anyway) and he sold his mini motor-bike.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48



At 14, David had his first real "date". The girl's name is Reba and she and David went into an all-night Junior High prom, ending up with breakfast at the Pancake House in Hollywood.



David (at 18), director Nelson Barcliff and David's mom Evelyn taking curtain calls after their "smash hit" appearances in the pre-Broadway musical *And So To Bed*.