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But that's not the way television works. Only the strongest show in each time slot survives. If you don't have the biggest audience, even if you have a respectable rating, the network will cancel you and rush in another show in its never-ending efforts to be number one.

That's why either David or Sonny and Cher will be declared officially a loser at the end of this season. And, unless a new time slot is tried, one won't be on again next season.

The success of mustachioed Sonny and his Cherokee bride, Cher, is still a surprise along television row. And Sonny thanks *The Merv Griffin* talk show which the couple hosted one night for their success.

No one was more surprised about this turnabout in their career than Sonny who says, "It was scary; I had no idea that television was that powerful. After the Griffin show, we did a pilot and went on as a summer replacement."

They were a phenomenal hit. Pretty soon, the *Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour* was the show everyone wanted to be seen on.

Right about now, David should be feeling the affects from this dynamic couple's overwhelming popularity. There are predictions that David will become a TV casualty. Perhaps ABC knew they had a fight on their hands because this season, Keith Partridge is going to college. A new locale and new situation possibilities may help bolster the show's ratings against the onslaught of S&C's variety hour.

Although this kind of programming move has been tried before, Hollywood never ceases to be shocked by the callousness of network thinking. Sadly, there are more employment opportunities on a variety hour like Sonny and Cher's than *The Partridge Family* so there's no doubt that many are taking sides and rooting for the Bonos.

As for David, he can't help liking the handsome couple. Perhaps as a young teen, he was part of their adoring fan club. It's more than likely since they helped shape the music scene we are enjoying today.

And besides appreciating their music, David must admire how Sonny and Cher fought and won the battle with their career crisis.

David has expressed some worry that he is being accepted only as a personality, a teen idol, and not for himself. Here again, he can learn a lesson from the older, more experienced Sonny Bono.

Sonny recently explained, "If the public buys you at a personality level, then they're accepting you—not the song or the act ... And that's all we're out to do. If the public has accepted us at a personality level, which we hope they have, then I think that we can go on from that premise. You don't need to have a hit record to keep current."

At the moment, hit records seem to be sustaining David's career. But if he forgets about the fight for a minute and listens carefully to Sonny, then he can get some helpful hints to use in his own future in show business.

Sonny's been through a lot of ups and downs. He means to win the fight and it would appear that he is better equipped to win. His show is much more flexible than David's and appeals to a wider audience. But that doesn't mean David is going to throw up his hands. This is going to be a rough fight. It has to be. The winner stays on TV. The loser gets kicked off.

ANN-MARGRET (Continued from page 31)

her dancing career. But spokesmen for the entertainer promptly denied that her knee had been broken also in the fall. Her legs reportedly are fine. The amazing thing is that she wasn't instantly killed in the fall.

No matter what the final outcome, it was a shocking tragedy. The question haunts us—could it have been avoided?

Since making it really big almost two years ago as the sex goddess Bobbi in *Carnal Knowledge*, Ann-Margret has worked almost non-stop. There were films, television specials and guestings, nightclubs; she hardly ever seemed to rest.

People gossiped that she couldn't even take time off to have the baby that she wants so desperately. Guiding her through the endless days of acting and nights of club dates and other performances is her manager husband, Roger Smith.

Roger, who has given up his own career as an actor to further A-M's, seems to exert almost a hypnotic, Svengali-like influence on his wife. He decides what is best for her career and she obeys. To some she appears as obedient as a little puppy. Says Ann: "I've always been completely dependent on men, from my father on."

Roger seems to think now that Ann's becoming an in-demand performer that she has to work constantly to keep her career in high gear, the way it is now. No sooner does she finish one project than she embarks on another.

No wonder she seems tired. Is it any wonder that she has had a couple of serious accidents? It's a well-known fact that when you are tired, you are more susceptible to accidents. That tragic fall in Lake Tahoe was not the first time Ann had an accident.

The last time she was performing in Nevada, she ran into a bedpost, injuring her head badly. Perhaps she and Roger should have heeded the warning implicit in that accident: that Annie should take a rest and slow down. Now this horrible calamity has occurred which will force her to take a long, long rest.

Making all those public performances is even more of an ordeal for Ann than anyone knows because she is by nature a shy, introverted girl. Yes, despite the flamboyant hairdo and almost garishly sexy nightclub costumes, Ann would prefer a quiet life, perhaps one or two good acting roles a year, the rest of her time devoted to Roger and a family.

She hates big parties and is always reluctant when called to do nude scenes. Deep at heart, she's a very domestic-minded woman. "I'd love to retire and have a baby," says Ann, but somehow, she never does. She just keeps going, and one gets the feeling that it