

should be funny hit

By FRED ROTHENBERG
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — One sounds like a foghorn, the other can kill you with saccharine. Bea Arthur and Betty White are part of an odd foursome of sprightly old women who could make Saturday night television worth watching again.

A female version of "Cocoon," minus aliens, NBC's "Golden Girls" is about four women over 50 who share a house in Miami Beach. Rue McClanahan, Estelle Getty and the others may be graying, but they're young at heart. The result is the funniest new comedy of the season.

Recent comedies have catered to the youth market with beautiful people for parents and precocious kid actors for offspring. But "Golden Girls" has no one in the cast under the drinking age.

"Let's face it," Arthur said in a recent press conference. "We're not gonna play Charlie's Angels."

NBC officials say "Golden Girls" will appeal to all ages in the same way that "Cocoon" and "On Golden Pond" had universal appeal.

The cast was asked if any grandchildren or other kids would be on the show.

"Kids?" Arthur shot back, looking

down her nose the way she did when her character, Maude, locked horns with Archie Bunker a decade ago. "I think you can spray for them, can't you?"

Susan Harris ("Soap," "Hail to the Chief") wrote the pilot script and will serve as producer, but more important than the clever writing is the delivery, timing and personalities of these four brassy actresses that raises "Golden Girls" well above standard sitcom.

"We're all fairly bawdy ladies, particularly Betty White," Arthur said. White, who played the catty, man-chasing Sue Ann on the "Mary Tyler Moore Show," can give as well as she can receive.

When Arthur had trouble locating a questioner at the news conference, White directed her co-star to look to her left. "That's the one with the watch on," White said in her deadpan way.

Since "Mary Tyler Moore" and "Maude," White and Arthur have starred in sitcom flops. White's vehicle was "The Betty White Show," in which she played a fading actress in a TV series. Arthur was proprietor of a hotel in a ripoff of the British farce "Fawlty Towers."

"The only thing it had to do with 'Fawlty Towers' was that I got to beat up the little servant," she said. □



Tina Turner as Auntie Entity in 'Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome'

MAX IS BACK

Max is still mad in "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome," but the years are starting to mellow him out. In "Mad Max," the first part of this high-adventure saga, our hero starts off as a squeaky clean cop. But after his wife and kid get run down by a gang of low-life outlaws, he begins his quest to exterminate the filth of this decadent society. Then comes "The Road Warrior," a film in which Mel Gibson again portrays a quasi-"good guy" in a nuclear war-torn society hell-bent on self-destruction. In this lawless land, Mad Max must fight or die. The current installment of the tale is set about 15 years later. During that time, he cooled off and led a peaceful, nomadic life. But Mad Max gets catapulted into a world ruled by ruthless people and remnants of technology. He battles these forces, not to gain power over them, but only to save his life. Despite the open ending, a sequel probably isn't in the works. Max just isn't as upset as he used to be.

WALTER SMITH

TV viewers to end film

By FRED ROTHENBERG
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Come up with the right stuff for an ending for this Sunday's Showtime's unfinished film, "Murder in Space," and the pay-cable network will give you \$25,000 and a trip anywhere on Earth.

Unfortunately, the contest is better than the complex movie, which is assembled amateurishly. Although imaginative, it's too far-fetched for credibility — a prime requisite for mystery buffs.

"Murder in Space" could easily be titled "Lust in Space." While aloft, an internationally sexy crew from the United States, the Soviet Union, France, Italy, Canada and West Germany conducts more experiments than mission control scheduled.

John Glenn probably would cringe at the heterosexual and homosexual extraterrestrial encounters that occur in TV's first space-shuttle soap opera, which is played out in something resembling a condominium more than a spacecraft.

At least one killer is knocking off the crew members one by one. But the suspense doesn't build; we never see suspects lurking or plot-

ting and only learn of the deaths after the fact, as does Earth-bound mission coordinator Dr. Andrew McCallister (Wilford Brimley of "Cocoon").

At the "end" of the inconclusive broadcast, and just before the shuttle's forced landing, McCallister says he thinks he has the answers. But, with so-few clues dropped along the way, any solution would be more guess work than police work.

Questions will be posed to viewers immediately after the movie, which will be shown six times through August 9. Showtime subscribers can mail in their answers about the method, motives and killer or killers. Total prizes are worth \$50,000.

Showtime says that none of the actors, or even the director, knows the outcome. The only ones are the screenwriter, executive producers Richard Link and William Levinson, one Showtime executive and a representative of an independent judging firm.

The script has been locked in a vault and only after the yet-unannounced contest deadline has passed will the cast and crew assemble to shoot the finale. The entire film then will be broadcast on Sept. 14. □

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Movies are listed alphabetically. The Grove movies will be shown on listed date only. The rating and theater code name are in parenthesis. The theater codes are:

GR — The Grove	845-1515
ME — Manor East	823-8300
P3 — Plitt Cinema III	846-6714
PO — Plitt Post Oak	764-0616
S6 — Schulman Six	775-2463

Back to the Future (PG,P3)
A new Spielberg film about a kid who gets transported back to the 50s and sees his parents as high school sweethearts. Great film.

The Black Cauldron (PG,ME)
New Disney film.

Blue Hawaii (Sat.,NR,GR)
The King is back.

Cocoon (PG-13,P3)
Ron Howard directs this science-fantasy adventure.

The Emerald Forest (R,ME)
A father spends years in the Amazon searching for his kidnapped son.

E.T. (PG,S6)
This summer favorite is back.

Fletch (PG,S6)
Chevy Chase stars as a reporter with many disguises.

The Goonies (PG,P0)
Seven kids follow a map to a treasure. Playing first four shows only.

The Heavenly Kid (PG-13,S6)
A guy dies and comes back as a young kid's guardian angel.

The Legend of Billie Jean (PG-13,PO)
A punk Billie Jean fights for justice and becomes a cult figure. Late show.

Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome (PG-13,S6)
Mel Gibson and Tina Turner star in this Road Warrior sequel.

The Man With One Red Shoe (PG,S6)
A Tom Hanks film that looks promising. Remake of the french film "The Tall Blond Man With One Black Shoe."

The Muppet Movie (Sun.,G,GR)
Kermit, Miss Piggy and the rest of the gang in a movie for all ages.

National Lampoon's European Vacation (PG-13,PO)
A second movie in Chevy Chase's adventures. I hope it's better than the first.

Pale Rider (R,S6)
Clint Eastwood is back in the saddle after a nine-year absence.

Rambo (R,P3)
Sylvester Stallone in First Blood II.

St. Elmo's Fire (R,PO)
Sort of a Big Chill for the college crowd. Mixed reviews.

Silverado (PG,ME)
A great new western.

Stir Crazy (Wed.,R,GR)
Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor star in this comedy.