

Michael Landon works — both sides of camera

'I cooperate completely with myself'

By MIKE GOODKIND
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Michael Landon, star of NBC's "Little House on the Prairie" does just exactly what the director orders, at least every other week.

Landon, you see, works both sides of the camera — as actor and director.

Under the hot sun in the Simi Valley, about 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles, Landon the director sets up a camera angle.

Then he rushes out, becomes character Charles Ingalls, and starts nailing the side of a house as part of a scene.

Landon is the star, producer, sometimes the writer and one of two directors of the series, now filming for its fourth season.

"I like making films," says Landon, who is somewhere in his 40s.

"There's advantages and there's disadvantages" to directing a show in which you're also starring, he says. "The disadvantage being of course, you just can't sit back and see what you did until you see the dailies (the raw film shot each day).

"Aside from that you just have to count on your instincts. The big advantage of course is that I cooperate completely with myself."

Landon, on lunch break on location, leans back in the folding chair under the mess tent and laughs.

"When the director says

move, I move, wherever he wants me to go, I go there. So that way I can get a lot of work done without a lot of hassles."

Landon directed "The Music Box," the episode scheduled for 7:00 p.m. Monday. It's a repeat, first seen March 14. Middle daughter Laura, played by 13-year-old Melissa Gilbert, feels guilty because she's stolen a small toy.

"I've always liked directing more than anything else," says Landon, who directs every other "Little House" episode, alternating with William F. Claxton.

"Someday I'm sure I will (direct full time), but in the meantime my checks are larger for acting than they are for directing." Again he laughs.

Landon doesn't exactly like to talk about how long he thinks the show, currently NBC's most popular, will continue.

"I have no idea. If everybody is having fun making the show, that's great," he says, as if television shows are kept alive if the people making them enjoy their work.

But, he adds, "If we had the same competition every year, I could tell you how many years we'd be on. If you're eating up the competition and they're not going to change it, then you're going to be on quite a while. But they change the competition every year."

Landon made it 14 years

on his first regular series, "Bonanza," where he played Little Joe starting in the late '50s. That's where he started writing, he says.

If the series goes for a fifth year, says Landon, older daughter Mary will go blind and the family will sell its farm and move into town where Charles will run a boarding house.

Besides being true to the Laura Ingalls Wilder novels on which the show is based, the move will "give us more storylines," says Landon.

The character on the screen is a familiar one to the actor. Landon says he's pretty much the same guy at home with his wife, the former Lynn Noe, and the couple's seven kids, aged 4 to 26, including three by previous marriages.

The Landon's school age children aren't permitted to watch television on school nights with two exceptions: certain specials recommended by the school and "Little House on the Prairie," which Landon contends shows dad pretty close to real life.

"I'm really not that much different on the show than I am in the house. I'm strict, we have a very affectionate family, there's no disrespect in my house. Everybody makes mistakes, including dad, which he admits to, so everybody knows they're not perfect and everybody does their share."



Michael Landon at the helm

Actor, director, producer Michael Landon checks a camera angle during filming of his series, "Little House on the Prairie," as he works

both sides of the camera, starring in the series, directing every other week, and sometimes writing scripts.



American Beauty College

Gulfport's first and foremost school of cosmetology is continuously striving to have the finest training available on the Gulf Coast. Because of our high standards and self-motivation, we are the first cosmetology school to become nationally accredited in the state of Miss. We accept students under the V.A., State Rehabilitation, Guaranteed Student Loan, and Basic Education Opportunity Grant Programs.

To better serve your needs we proudly announce new appointments made in our staff

DIRECTOR

Joseph Ellis

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Berinda Logan

SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR

Yvonne Ellis Rice

SENIOR INSTRUCTORS

Shirley Sessum

Jean Teegarden

STUDENT INSTRUCTORS

Cathy Childress

Lavell Mooney

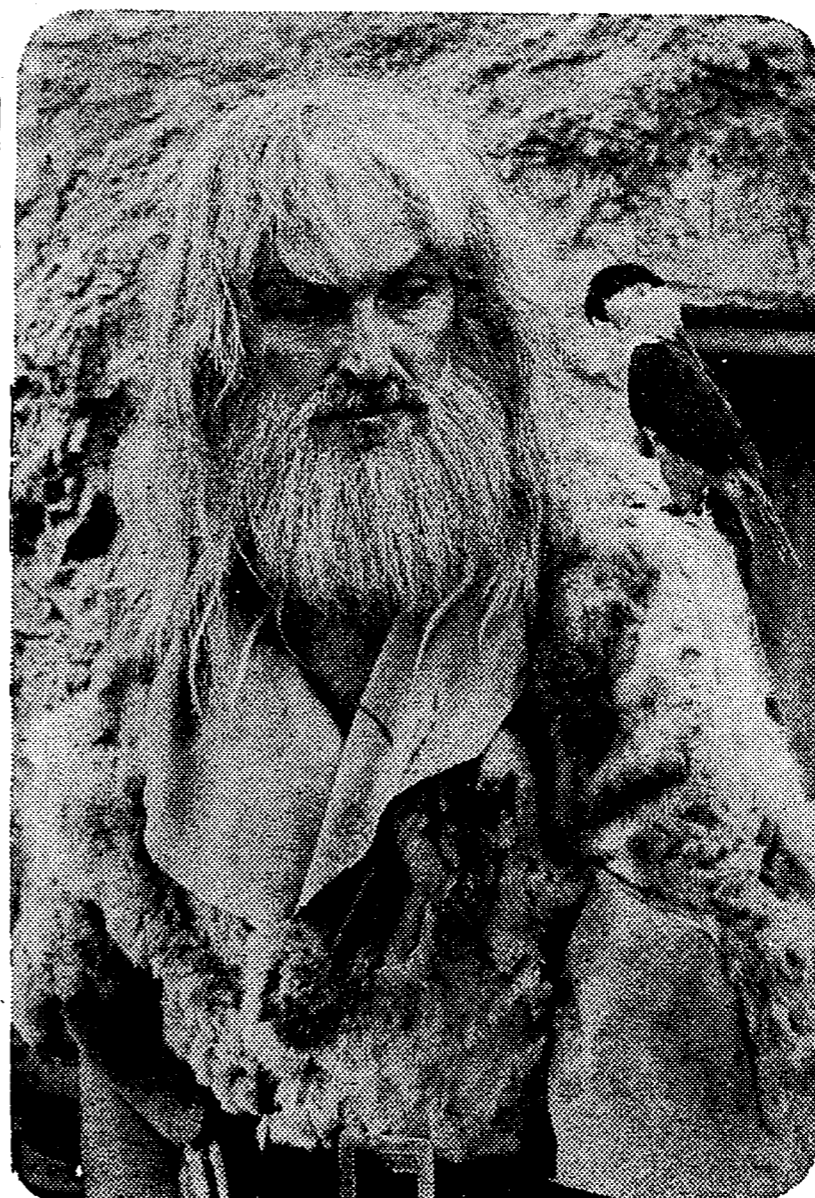
Next Class Starting September 6, 1977

For information call 864-3866

or

Come in at your convenience

2200 25th Ave. Gulfport, Miss.



Shipwrecked

A tropical bird sits on the shoulder of a pensive Stanley Baker, who portrays the lonely but determined shipwrecked hero in "Robinson Crusoe," the classic story by Daniel Defoe, which will be repeated on "NBC Thursday Night at the Movies" (8-10:00 p.m.).