

Students produce Cabbage Patch mystery

By Marilyn Hancock
ENTERPRISE CORRESPONDENT

RANDOLPH — The victim: a male English teacher at the local high school.

The crime: kidnapping the teacher's beloved Cabbage Patch Kid.

The suspect: a klutzy, cackling maniac obsessed with stealing every Cabbage Patch doll in this community.

In the face of this terrible crisis, should all the town's children take immediate steps to protect their Cabbage Patch Kids from this unscrupulous villain?

Will the police chief assign his best detectives to catch the thief? Can two young private investigators track down the scoundrel and solve the heinous crime?

For the answers to these and other important questions, tune in Wednesday night to Randolph's cable television Channel 3 for another episode of "The Cabbage Patch Mystery."

The program is a three-part comedy-mystery developed by a group of Randolph High School seniors and filmed entirely "on location" throughout town.

"We wanted to put on a program that was not talk show or like what is already shown on Randolph's community station," said Stu Schoenfeld of Althea Road. Schoenfeld, who hopes to go into the movie-making business, produced, directed, filmed and edited the program.

Brian Howard of Frederickson Drive, who wrote the script and plays one of the detectives, said the show was originally planned as a five-minute segment for channel 3's Evan Korey variety and magic show.

But as it was filmed, the show's length grew and the students, along with Randolph Cablesystems program director Roger Connor, decided to broadcast it in 15 minute chapters following the Korey show on Wednesday nights.

Howard, who plans a career in radio or TV production, said he suggested a Cabbage Patch Kid storyline after observing how popular the dolls are among his younger neighbors. Also, he added, the students felt the title would attract more viewers.

Connor said, "They submitted the script to me and I gave them the approval to go ahead ... This is the first time we have used a program like this, an original piece of work shot on location with portable equipment. Overall, I was incredibly impressed with the job they did. From a technical standpoint, it is extremely well done."

Howard and Schoenfeld are no strangers to local cable television. They both take the communications course at Randolph High, which includes TV production lessons, and work on the volunteer production crews broadcasting school committee meetings, high school basketball games and the Evan Korey show.

Schoenfeld said filming scenes inside the detectives' moving car was the most difficult part of the show's technical work.



AL CODISH

From left, Bruce Cameron, Ed McGill and Brian Howard film an upcoming scene in "The Cabbage Patch Mystery," a show being produced by high school students for the town's cable TV station. The show's first episode will be re-run Wednesday night.

Randolph

NANCY ABRAMSON — 961-1421

"It was a bumpy ride. You have to keep the camera really steady or you would get a headache watching it on TV. But shooting inside a car is something new for cable TV," he said.

Scenes were shot at the Getty gas station on North Main Street, outside Town Hall and on Himoor Circle, where the camera also zooms in on a campaign sign for School Committeeman Mike Bower.

Howard and Ed McGill of Highland Glen Drive play the detectives. Using their own nicknames of "Bundhi" and "Clyde," the two TV detectives set out on the trail of the Cabbage Patch thief, who is played to his villainous — and comical — best by Bruce Cameron of Fowler Street.

Howard described Cameron as a "simply marvelous" actor.

"When I created the role, I had Bruce in mind, because of the impressions he can do," Howard said.

Cameron, as the kidnapper, disguises himself with sunglasses and a black kerchief over his face. He says his lines with a Peter Lorre accent, imitating the famous horror movie actor's menacing giggles.

His character is a rather clumsy robber, as evidenced by his fall from a ladder and his noisy en-

trance through the window of a home where, in the first episode, he kidnaps another Cabbage Patch Kid.

"He's supposed to basically be a goofball," Howard explained. "That will be shown more on the second show. He's supposed to be a little bit of a weird person."

Cameron declined to be interviewed and only reluctantly agreed to having his name published as playing the thief on the show. His name is not revealed on the program's credits.

"He's a very shy kidnapper," said Howard.

High school English teacher Ronald Pirrera plays one of the victims, who is shattered by the loss of his Cabbage Patch Kid and hysterically pleads with detective Bundhi to find it.

Pirrera, who seems to ease on camera and is obviously enjoying the role, may have missed his true calling.

Schoenfeld said Pirrera was asked to appear on the program because "he's a fun teacher."

Howard added, "He's been a teacher of mine for two years now. He's a casual teacher. I knew he'd be a good actor. And he did a good job, I think."

Other well-known townspeople may also be asked to appear in future episodes, Howard said.

Pirrera's son, Tom, and their dog, Sherlock (what else?), along with a young neighbor, David Duffy, also appear in one scene.

The crew is currently filming the second episode, in which an "informant" will be introduced,

but they have not yet decided how to solve the crime.

"We know we're going to catch him, but we don't know exactly how we're going to do it yet. We have several different ideas on how to go with it," Howard said.

Connor said "The Cabbage Patch Mystery" is aimed at an audience of junior high and high school students, and was cablecast at 8:30 p.m. to discourage younger viewers from watching it.

"I was concerned that little kids would have a problem with it. A kid might be watching and become distressed especially if they have a strong attachment to their Cabbage Patch doll," said Connor.

Howard added, "Considering the way it's handled and seen on TV, I'm sure most people know it's a joke or I hope they do. I hope they don't take it seriously."

The first episode was well received, according to Howard.

"I've been getting a lot of comments at school about it," he said. "They found it very entertaining. They liked the idea of seeing Randolph. They liked seeing the whole town."

When the Cabbage Patch caper is wrapped up, the crew would like to make more mysteries featuring the crime-fighting team of Bundhi and Clyde.

Meanwhile, for viewers who missed the first episode, it will be rebroadcast Wednesday night at 8:30 p.m. on Randolph Cablesystems Channel 3.