



**Mark
Slade:**

**“WHAT
I’D SAY
IF I
WROTE
TO YOU”**

Mark would love to write to all his fans...each one. So come along with us now as he confides his special secrets, hopes and thoughts. They’re just for you.

Mark Slade

CONTINUED

MARK SLADE groped along the refrigerator shelf until his hand found a bottle of beer. He applied the opener and in one quick motion the top popped off, and Mark deftly sent it sailing across the room into the trash container. Then he casually ambled into the dining room and sprawled into a chair at the table. It was late in the afternoon and he had a couple of hours to kill before his new bride, Melinda, returned from work.

It was a lazy time for the star because his NBC-TV series, *High Chaparral* was between shootings, so he was taking the time to answer a few of the fan letters piling up on the desk he keeps in his lovely Sherman Oaks home.

Each week letter after letter addressed to Mark Slade arrives at the studio, most of them written by his throng of young fans across the country.

Some write to him because Blue, the boy Mark portrays on *Chaparral*, experiences growing pains similar to their own; others write because, as a TV star, Mark represents everything successful in the world to them; and some just like what they see of Mark Slade as a person.

Then there's the case of the one teenage girl who wrote Mark a twenty-six-foot-long letter sometime ago, and maintains a running correspondence with him even now.

Regardless of the reasoning behind each letter, Mark makes it a policy to answer as many as he possibly can. No longer a member of the teenage population himself, he still achieves a special rapport with young people.

Because he left home at a very early age, Mark has felt those pangs of growing up that plague the young, but has had to overcome them on his own.

And, because of his very recent marriage to pretty Melinda Riccilli, he knows that in the not-too-distant future he will face the task of bringing a son of his own through that difficult period. Understanding the problems of the young and learning to cope with them are therefore very important to him.



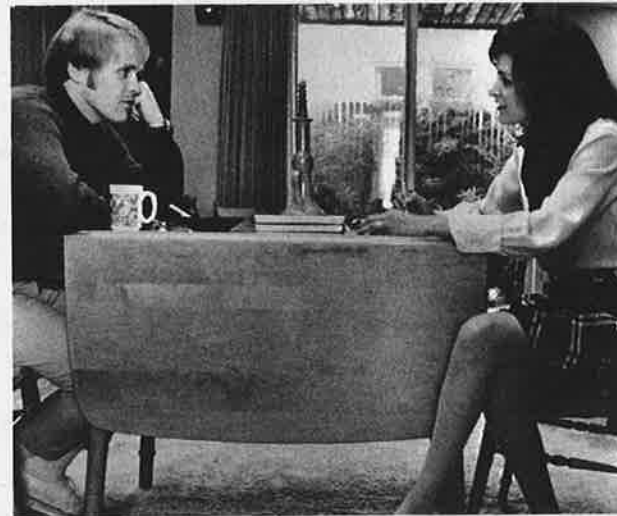
In the kitchen of their Sherman Oaks home, Melinda washes the dishes while Mark finishes his breakfast.



Left: Melinda takes a keen interest in Mark's career and often reads scripts with him. And when work has been discussed, the young couple enjoy quietly relaxing and talking together.



The young newlyweds are very proud of their lovely new home. This is the dining room.



Right, 'Romeo & Juliet' Slade on the inside balcony of their two-story house.



Now it's time for work and Mark kisses Melinda goodbye—till later. Aren't they a lovely pair?



In quiet moments, Mark loves to take out his guitar and play. And Melinda loves to listen.

"Anyone for a swim?" asks Mark. But Melinda doesn't look too keen!



"You know," he said quietly, "I've often thought about the type of letter I'd like to write to all young people. They really concern me." And, sitting at the desk of the unique, wood-paneled living-room, Mark became enthused about reaching all his fans through one letter.

Discussing the idea of writing to you, expressing all the thoughts that concern him, suddenly made Mark want to write that letter! And quietly, Mark picked up a pen and started expressing himself on paper—the words are for you:

Dear Friend,

If I want to express my concern for some of the teens who write me, saying they are searching for a sense of direction, I guess I would have to start by describing myself.

I think it's a fine world for the young, if the world is approached right, that is. But there are problems, I know. Some are personal and difficult, but, one that strikes me as being a major problem is the tremendous amount of leisure time available to teens today. Gaining experience through working during spare time seems to be a great way to add to your life—and your wallet.

My own family was pretty comfortable, financially but I always worked anyway, and worked hard. That's what I mean.

I really remember one job, a summer job I held down in a lumber yard, pretty well. I was just a part-time employee, the full-time men were union members.

When they decided to go on strike, my boss told me to keep out of the middle of the mess, to stay in the back yard. He put me to work painting a fence. Well, the union boss came around anyway, and found me working away. He told me to pay my dues and join up, or get off the property.

So I paid my dues and joined the union so I could keep on working there. I needed that \$50 I paid for membership, needed it for school. But it was a decision of working or not, and I learned (Please turn to page 64)

TEEN LIFE CLUB NEWS



Dear Miss De Shannon,
Congratulations! Your TEEN LIFE CLUB is just fab! I just received my membership card, press card and pin and I was overjoyed! Right now, I'm working on forming my own Chapter.

But, I'd love to ask you some questions involving the Press Card.

I'm interested in reporting and I'd love to send in interviews in 'Teens Take Over' but I have only one problem. If I want to interview a star, how do I get in touch with his management to make arrangements? Do I need an identification card?

Keep up the good work!

**Yours truly,
 Phyllis Apostole
 Garrison, N.Y.**

Your letter was music to our ears! Welcome to the Club, Phyllis, and I certainly hope you do well in organizing your Chapter, because it seems sure that you'll be a fine example for other members.

Now, for advice as to how to make contacts . . . When you hear that a group that you'd like to interview is coming to your area, notify the manager of the theatre or concert hall in which they are booked. Request that you be given the name of the group's manager, or the itinerary of the tour. (You can also find out a group's bookings for tours from their fan clubs.) Write to the group in advance, asking permission formally for an interview and state that you are a TEEN LIFE Reporter. Give your name, address and phone.

This should see you through. You shouldn't need any other identification other than your TLC press card. Always show that when asked, of course
And, have fun!



**Jackie De Shannon
 International
 President, TLC.**

and everybody was so happy at the reception afterward. The folks kept begging us to go out of town. Dad said, "Leave the baby with me. Go on a vacation for seven or eight years." Huh. That's one offer I won't take him up on. He's liable to run away with her. You know how crazy he was to have a girl in the family. He's already begun to spoil her terribly. We flew down to L.A. for the baptism and got to my folks' house at 1 p.m. An hour later, here comes Dad driving up with the car packed with toys. He loaded her room with what looks like a thousand things, including a huge six-foot stuffed bear. He even bought her a television set—so she can watch his show, I guess.

And my brothers are just as nuts about the baby as Dad and Mom are. Even brother Scotty, who called me right after she was born and asked when we were

coming down. "I gotta see my little niece," he said. That I never expected from him 'cause he's 12 now and I thought was getting a little too sophisticated to let himself say beautifully simple things like that. And when he said, "I really love that little baby, even though I've never seen her," it like to have knocked me out. Of course, there's almost always been a baby in our family so my brothers don't resent the folks spending so much time with mine now.

So if my number comes up and I ship out, I'll have plenty of good memories to take along. And if it happens, it happens—and I'll go just like everybody else and do what's expected of me.

Whew! I guess I got carried away with writing! That's OK. I'm always like this. But now it's time to close, so goodnight.

MARK SLADE

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something from making that decision. I hope all of you will understand how different, sometimes very difficult circumstances shape you.

Oh, and then there was another job that was quite an experience. As a hatcher for the "21 Club" in New York City. We were supposed to turn in all our tips. Well . . . I got caught with twenty-five cents in my mouth! I had to put it back. Pretty embarrassing, believe me! As a kid, I worked because I wanted to, not because I had to. It gave me a sense of accomplishment, made me feel I was doing something worthwhile. Don't you think that I knew plenty of kids who didn't do worthwhile things, and instead found other, less healthy things to occupy themselves with?

And I can't tell you how important it is to get a good education. I know you've heard that! But consider, there are three times as many things to learn now as there were when I was a kid.

That's why I can't agree with the criticism that you—anyone who is young for that matter—are growing up too fast. You pretty well have to grow up fast to keep up, but you still should be as well prepared mentally as you can.

I know my own kids are going to start school as soon as possible. The minute they show the ability to learn, they're going to school! I didn't go on to college, but that doesn't mean I don't think it's an important asset as an experience for most people. Besides the academic education you can get, it gives you a few years to think—think about who you are, what you want and what direction you're going to take.

College or not, though, I think that once you know the direction you want, you should pursue it immediately. That was the way I thought myself when I was headed for an Eastern prep school that my family had chosen for me. So I took a detour to New York City. There I followed my own direction and joined a drama school.

It's this business of "direction" that I feel is responsible for many young people floundering today. And I'm really convinced that neither parents or their offspring are helping each other with this difficulty.

A child should feel welcome to sit down with his folks and talk about the

things he wants to do. Parents should encourage this, and kids shouldn't be afraid of it.

One thing I think that scares teens away from talking about their future with their folks is that their parents are inclined to "poo poo" the things that seem most important to them.

If a teenager has a particular inclination for something—art, music, science—and really wants it, then I feel that the family should work together to help him build toward that field—give him a chance to prove himself.

And I applaud young people who are insisting on having a voice today. They aren't taking no for an answer!

It's good to remember that it's a bright world for the young, and it should be taken advantage of. There's such a new freedom and then you have the opportunity of pursuing more vital problems without having to cope with the Victorian taboos that my era had to face.

I congratulate you for this freedom. But you should draw a fine line between "taking advantage" of the opportunities, and taking them for granted. I get letters from teens who are from extremely poor areas. You wouldn't believe how bad some of these kids really have it. Sometimes my heart aches to read of their hardships when the majority of the kids here in this country have everything going for them and don't realize it—or don't want it.

You make your life . . . that's still true. And I wish I could personally visit every teen who is worried, unsure of their future or who is combating poverty around them, so I could tell them how much I think of them and their world. That's not enough I know, but it is how I feel.

So, for now I'll close . . . until soon I hope. . .

Love, Mark
 Suddenly the front door burst open as Melinda returned from work, brimming with news of the day and projects of the evening. The letter was finished just in time!

Personally, however, Mark won't stop thinking about the problems young people face, the dilemmas that confront them. It won't be too very long, he realizes, until he, Mark Slade, will take on the responsibility of raising a son of his own in that youthful world he so openly champions.

BY PENNY PENCE

You can write to Mark Slade at: NBC-TV, Sunset and Vine, Hollywood, California 90028