



Soap stars feel ECONOMIC PINCH

Daytime veterans threaten to quit over salary cuts

NOT HAPPY: Erika Slezak feels the cuts are a slap in the face. Cameron Mathison is prepared to quit

Susan Lucci agreed to a big reduction

DAYTIME soap stars are in a lather – after being asked to take huge pay cuts due to plunging ad revenues, sources say.

ABC confirmed it was downsizing salaries for the cast of “All My Children” recently, and pay cuts will soon be hitting the network’s “One Life to Live,” an industry insider says.

Emmy-winning “AMC” diva Susan Lucci, who earns \$10,000 a week, agreed to a 40 percent pay cut – as did her cast mates Michael E. Knight, whose character is Tad Martin, and 80-year-old Ray MacDonnell, who plays Joe Martin.

BUT “AMC” STAR Cameron Mathison, who plays Ryan Lavery, said he’d give up his job before giving up his salary, a source divulged.

“Cameron flat-out refused to give up 40 percent of his salary, and stormed out of the studio after the show’s brass approached him with their proposal,” an industry insider revealed. “Unless he can negotiate a deal, Cameron could be written off the show. But after competing on ‘Dancing with the Stars,’ he’s confident that he has

earning power elsewhere.” Over at “One Life to Live,” actress Erika Slezak – who’s played Viki Lord Davidson since 1971 and has won seven Emmys – also feels the proposed salary cuts are a slap in the face, said the source.

“ERIKA HAS MADE IT clear to ‘One Life to Live’ execs that she’d retire before taking such a drastic pay cut,” said the industry insider.

With the recent economic downturn, advertising revenues have dropped dramatically, causing the daytime shows’ budgets to shrink, sources say.

Two weeks ago, The ENQUIRER reported that 61-year-old Deidre Hall – who created the role of Dr. Marlena Evans 32 years ago on NBC’s “Days of Our Lives” – was fired following a network directive to cut costs. And in a bid to keep “Days” on the air through 2010, NBC slashed the remaining cast members’ salaries, sources say.

Meanwhile, over at ABC’s “General Hospital,” pay cuts have yet to be discussed, said the insider, “but everyone there is waiting for the other shoe to drop.”

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SNEAK PEEK
ALL THE SOAPS FOR THE WEEK OF DEC. 29
BY LEN FELDMAN

ALL MY CHILDREN

Ryan proposes to Greenlee. Zach and Reese share a kiss. Bianca gets a surprise visitor. Opal peeks into Greenlee’s future. Aidan makes a startling discovery.

ONE LIFE TO LIVE

Asa’s lawyer has some disturbing news for the Buchanan clan. Marty pulls the rug out from under Todd. Dorian gets quite an earful from Alex Olanov.

GENERAL HOSPITAL

Luke wins Tracy over. Claudia scrambles to cover her tracks. Johnny finds himself on the wrong side of the law. Nikolas and Nadine make a surprising discovery.

GUIDING LIGHT

Alan pops the question to Beth. Ashlee catches Grady red-handed. Mallet takes Shayne in. Dinah suddenly finds herself in some very big trouble.

DAYS OF OUR LIVES

Chloe warns Brady to steer clear of Nicole. Kate urges Lucas to move up her wedding date. Max and Chelsea share a New Year’s kiss. EJ proposes to Nicole.

AS THE WORLD TURNS

Maddie tries to ease Henry’s growing concerns. Noah comes to Luke’s rescue. Josie helps to make Dusty’s dreams come true. Allison plants a kiss on Casey.

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Thorne admits his misdeeds to his family. Donna and Eric share a romantic New Year’s Eve. Owen and Donna’s fashion show gets an unexpected showstopper.

THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS

Jill has Kay arrested. Phyllis’ scheme continues as Brad and Sharon share a close moment on New Year’s Eve. Gloria plans to take advantage of Kay’s memory loss.