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TV Highlights

Hats Off! For Kids



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(Editor's Note: Mr. Pearson is in Hollywood this week on the annual ABC-TV tour to interview stars and preview new fall TV shows.)

HOLLYWOOD — Don't keep this under your fedora, but there's a announced live-action children's series due on television this fall and it's all about hats.

"That's right, those things you wear on your head.

The new series is called Lidsville, after hats, naturally. It has been created by Syd and Marty Krofft, who also produced H. R. Pufnstuf and the Bagelcos.

Lidsville concerns the adventures of a teenage boy in something like a Alice In Wonderland and Wizard of Oz setting. The boy falls into a great big hat and there his adventures begin.

The sets contain unbelievable shapes and sizes of hats. They are fashioned in such a way that midgets or dwarfs (who, incidentally, like to be called little people) wear them as costumes. In other words, the hats cover the little people almost to their ankles.

One especially interesting western hat has an expression about like the former President Johnson. There are hats that look like fire hydrants, top hats, rah rah hats, which is like a football helmet, and similar lids.

The hats are made of a special material which is so flexible the hats change expression. There are even hats that live in hats.

The names of the sites in which the hats live also near the names of hats or something connected with them, like Bad Mountain, Hat Hills, Hair Forest, Shampoo River, or Tissue Paper Jungle. In all, there are 82 sets and hundreds of hats.

To find out how such a story began, one must understand that it was devised by Syd Krofft, who said he was at the beach one day and saw all the hats on the beach walk. "I cleared the sand and sketched a few of the hats that I could recall and knew that I had enough for a television series."

But how does this fit in with demands and parents for educational television shows? we asked.

"Well, we have an educational feature," he responded. "We have good always triumphing over bad, so we point out a moral, and anyway, after spending all week in school, kids need entertainment. Education has to be treated lightly on television. Don't take fantasy away from the children. Don't demand education all the time. Parents just aren't giving their children enough love."

Charles Nelson Reilly, who was remembered for the Ghost and Mrs. Muir and many talk shows, is the villain in the series. This is one of five in which he will be appearing in this season. He also will have continuing roles on Arnie, Dean Martin and two other shows. Butch Patrick, formerly of the Munsters, is now a tall 18-year-old, and he has a part in the series.

Taking A Loss

Lidsville represents a breakthrough of some type for the Kroffts. Marty and Syd lost \$60,000 on Pufnstuf, \$30,000 on the Bagelcos. But they believe they will lose only \$100,000 on Lidsville. "Maybe we will break even with our next series, which will be Mishmash." This series, which they are already working on, is about a person who had polluted our world and is trying to pollute the world under the sea.

The Kroffts also are working on M13, which is about a super villain who tries to add a 13th month and a 13th sign of the Zodiac.

Syd explained the reason they take the losses on their shows on television is because the television exposure gives them advertising for their marionettes and puppets which are playing in amusement parks all over the country.



Comic character in "Lidsville" TV series