

8D Mon., March 30, 1970 ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Rick DuBrow

TV Adjusting Itself To Modern Times

HOLLYWOOD, March 30 (UPI)

POLITICAL STATEMENTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE are more and more a part of show business productions. Movies like "Z" and stage shows like "Hair" lead the way, and sooner or later the mass medium of television was to follow — or risk losing the sought-after young audience.

Television is undoubtedly making adjustments, and one example is NBC-TV's announcement that Hal Holbrook next season will star in a series as "an idealistic politician who goes after issues, whether popular or unpopular, if he feels he is on the right side."

The series will be a new part of "The Bold Ones" trilogy of dramas that appears each week on the network.

Holbrook, of course, is the remarkable performer whose one-man stage show (and television special) as Mark Twain caused such a sensation.

A sample of the new role he will play for NBC-TV was given recently in one of the network's original two-hour movies-for-television, "A Clear and Present Danger." In that production, he portrayed an altruistic politician who got involved in the fight against pollution, though his aides warned him it might affect his career negatively.

NBC-TV's Saturday morning schedule next season, meanwhile, reflects the continuing movement for social change in reforming the violence-prone cartoon series that shamelessly exploit children in their favorite viewing period of the week.


The "Banana Splits" hour, which NBC-TV employed to help soften the approach to youngsters, will be gone, but "H. R. Pufnstuf," a pleasant comedy-fantasy show, will be back.

In addition, there will be "Hot Dog," a half-hour series that examines "the origins of common everyday items," and regularly features Woody Allen, Jo Anne Worley (of "Laugh-in") and Jonathan Winters. "Hot Dog" will have an hour-long preview on NBC-TV this Saturday morning.

Another new half-hour series will be "The Tomfoolery Show," with "stories, riddles, limericks, songs and jokes" based on such works of children's literature as Lewis Carroll's "The Jabberwocky" and Edward Lear's "The Complete Nonsense Book." Another children's opus by Carroll is "Hunting of the Snark." He also wrote "Alice in Wonderland."

Educators and children's experts agree that comedy and fantasy are two of the truest, and most legitimate, ways to a youngster's heart. Two other new Saturday morning series on NBC-TV will include "The Further Adventures of Dr. Doolittle," which fits this bill in concept, and "The Bugaloos," produced by the makers of "H.R. Pufnstuf" and concerning "a group of teen-agers in a fantasy world."

Educational television's superb children's entry, "Sesame Street," showed how gentle programming for youngsters can be hugely successful. There is no telling how many doors it will open.



FREE TRIAL VISIT
10 YEARS