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Page 13

FAMILY FARE

'Planeteers' defeat unfounded fears

By Chris Carpenter

Clearing the globe of environmental evil might be their full-time jobs, but the eco-warriors of *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* work overtime in a new episode airing in syndication on Saturday, Nov. 21, and the following day on the Planeteers' base station, TBS.

"A Formula for Hate," wherein the Planeteers purge polluted minds in lieu of the usual lakes and streams, is the first cartoon to deal squarely with the issue of AIDS.

The show features the voice work of Elizabeth Taylor as Donna, a mother who learns her popular, athletic child is HIV-positive and the object of a citywide hate campaign.

Taylor's own family has been directly touched by the disease, and even through a Southern drawl obviously thickened for effect, heartfelt pain and indignation are effectively emoted. Other guest voices include Neil Patrick Harris (*Doogie Howser, M.D.*), as Donna's afflicted high-school son Todd, and Danica McKellar (*Winnie, The Wonder Years*), as his unwavering girlfriend. Surprisingly few stones remain unturned in this episode's path to

better understanding, especially considering its animation. But as loyal Planeteers and their parents can attest, this is what *Captain Planet* creator Ted Turner envisioned, a cartoon with a conscience.

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STAR NOTES

Statlers' longevity perpetuated on TV

By Dan Rice

Legend has it they took their name from a brand of facial tissue, but The Statler Brothers (Harold and Don Reid, Phil Balsley and Jimmy Fortune) have built a career in country music that is as solid as it comes. *The Statler Bros. Show*, which became the highest-rated prime-time series on basic cable in its premiere season, launches its second season on The Nashville Network on Saturday, Nov. 21.

Lead singer Don Reid, who with his baritone brother, Harold, writes the shows, says their format owes a lot to programs like *The Ed Sullivan Show*. "We loved that era in the '50s and the '60s when there were variety shows. There just seemed to be a lighter-hearted television then."

The Statlers' show is very much reminiscent of those times with its mix of song, comedy and specialty acts including ventriloquists, magicians



Holly Robinson and Jason Weaver star in *The Jacksons: An American Dream*, ending Wednesday on ABC.

and jugglers. There are even two lovely ladies in skimpy costumes who change the title cards.

The most award-winning act in the history of country music, The Statler Brothers have had only one personnel change since they were discovered by Johnny Cash in 1964—an ailing Lew DeWitt left in 1982 to be replaced by tenor Jimmy Fortune. From their first big hit in 1965 with "Flowers on the Wall" to their signature "Class of '57," they have produced an amazing catalog of over 40 albums.

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