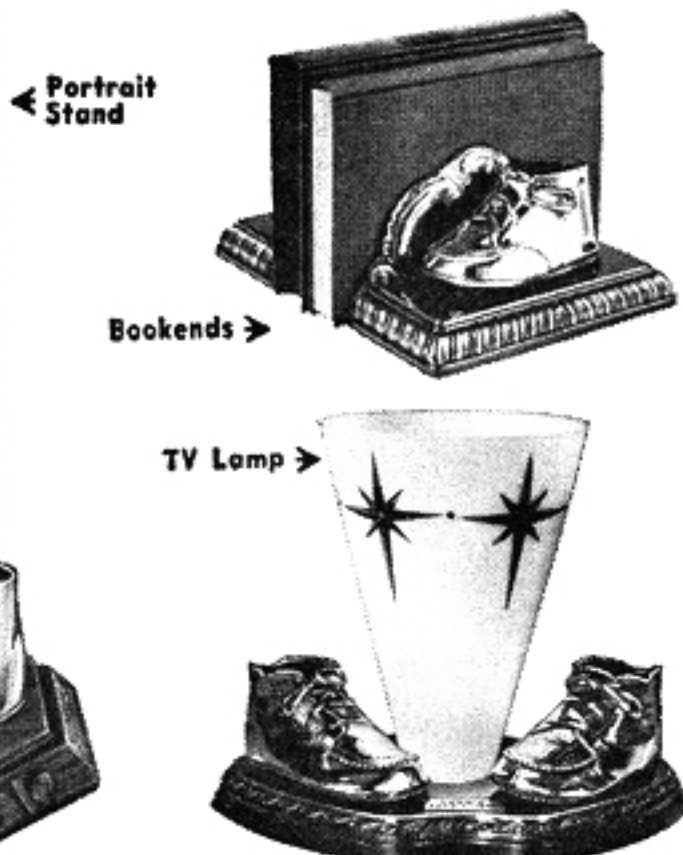


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BRIDGET & BERNIE



(Continued from page 49)

forming. She first appeared professionally in 1970 in the TV series "The Interns." From there she quickly moved to other television roles, commercials and a starring role in the horror picture "Ben."

Her mom says, "Meredith's as beautiful on the inside as she is on the outside. She's really a glorious human being. She has tremendous talent." Mom would like to work with Meredith, and they have something planned for the future.

On the rumors of David Birney as a beau, Whitney Blake comments, "People like Meredith and David. He's so very sweet, a hardworking actor, who cares about what he does."

It was slightly more than a year ago that Meredith was called to play a young hippie in a "Partridge Family" episode and met David Cassidy. The work she was assigned to do was unpleasant, since she was required to swim in a mountain lake on a very cold day. "I nearly froze," Meredith remembered later. But meeting David Cassidy was pleasant indeed.

Though some of his friends thought that he and a divorcee with two children were an ill-assorted couple, Meredith and David discovered that they had quite a lot in common. They were approximately the same age. They both played the guitar.

Meredith found young Cassidy boyish, sensitive and appealing; while he found her beautiful, womanly and intelligent. So the two of them dated for a while and might have become quite seriously involved had Meredith not been called to do the pilot for "Bridget Loves Bernie."

Once again she almost froze to death as she worked, because the premiere episode of the show was shot in New York during midwinter—the exteriors in such cold rain it just missed being sleet. Meredith and her co-star were drenched and chilled working outdoors in such cold weather. However, once again, something pleasant happened—she met David Birney. "Wow!" she thought. "He's an attractive boy." He was nice; he was good looking, intelligent and sensitive just as David Cassidy was but, in addition to that, he seemed more mature.

And that explains how David Birney took Meredith Baxter away from David Cassidy (even though he won't admit that he did). He accomplished it simply by being himself.

David Birney has been, like Meredith, married and divorced, though he won't discuss his past romantic relationships any more than he'll discuss his present ones. Unlike Meredith, he has

no children to be concerned about. Like her, he's shy, or so he says. However, he's less inhibited than Meredith is.

"I'm very shy," he insists. "Most actors are. Most actors are in some way crippled or hurt. That's the great paradox. People believe that actors have enormous self-confidence, when actually the reverse is usually true."

Ask David in what way he is crippled or how he was hurt, and he hastily explains, "When I say 'crippled,' I'm not thinking in terms of some great, traumatic thing. I don't want to sound too dramatic."

However, as he talks about his own life, he permits the listener glimpses of scar tissue covering old wounds.

An Irish-Methodist-Congregationalist, David inherited from Irish forebearers not only a love of words, but a gift for feeling—the capacity to respond emotionally to persons and situations. So he must have felt his growing pains even more keenly than most adolescents.

His official biography prepared by Screen Gems reads: "A native of Washington, D.C., the 5' 9", 155 lb. son of a former F.B.I. agent grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, where he lettered in football, baseball and track ('I was one of the world's slowest milers') at West High School."

It all came so easily to David, or so one would gather from Screen Gems. He remembers things differently, though, or in more detail. For example, he remembers how he suffered from an

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