

Hollywood Seeks Biggest Mouth! Ha!

Mugging Fad Hits Cinema World As Martha Raye Hurls Challenge

By Linda Lane

WHAT strange piece of fiction can this be; Hollywood actress challenges others for the funniest face and biggest mouth!

In the land of beauty, glamour and never for a moment off guard before their beloved public, this is without doubt about the nuttiest challenge issued by a female star.

Martha Raye, who claims the funniest face and the biggest mouth in Hollywood, crashed the cinema capital in a big way. She stepped from a night club songbird role into a featured role in her first picture.

When Martha does something in a conventional manner, Hollywood will begin talking about her.

She insists that she was born to be laughed at and so she made up her mind to have a lot of fun laughing at herself. So she does what she pleases and Hollywood laughs, tells the latest story about Martha, and then forgets it.

Consequently, when she was told she should reduce Miss Raye asked what was the best way to go about it. Somebody, as a joke, suggested roller skating. She promptly got her a pair of

roller skates and took them to the studio. In between scenes she skated—or rather tried to skate.

It didn't make any difference to her that most women conceal the fact that they are reducing by going to massages and such things. She had to reduce. Skating was a good way to do it, she had been told, so that was that!

SHE still doesn't know whether she lost surplus weight through exercise or whether it was merely scraped off of her by the concrete pavement but she does know that she lost 25 pounds.

Martha came to the film capital from the night clubs, vaudeville circuits and Broadway. When she hit Hollywood, she promptly announced that it was time to start laughing as she had funniest face—and she refuses to admit that she is actually very good looking.

"This hurts me more than it does you," commiserated Bob Burns when Martha Raye took a tumble. "Perhaps," replied Miss Raye, "but not in the same place."

Mugging for mugging's sake. Miss Raye boasts she can make a homelier face than Joe E. Brown.

So Hollywood accepted her at her own word and hasn't quit laughing yet.

Miss Raye is 19 years old and has been on the stage 19 years. She was born in a dressing room in Butte, Mont. Her father and mother were well-known in vaudeville as Reid and Hooper, a comedy and singing team. She toured with her parents until she was 14 years old and then left them to work for Paul Ash, Chicago night club master of ceremonies.

Later she joined one of Benny Davis' shows and toured with it. In the show were Jackie Heller, Hal LeRoy, Vilma and Buddy Ebsen, and Sunny O'Dea, all of whom have now won fame. After that show closed, she was on Broadway for a time but came to Hollywood to try to crash pictures.

She started singing in a night club there at about the time that Paramount was casting "Rhythm On the Range." They were searching for a girl to play opposite Bob Burns, the Arkansas story-teller.

IT WAS the first time she had seen Bob since the time 12 years ago when they appeared in vaudeville on the same bill when she was seven years old. So, when they were given a bit of time off between scenes, they got a couple of pair of skates and went rollin' along. After inveigling him into the roller skating match, he took up his old habit of buying her ice cream cones again.

Mugging hits Hollywood—strange things are happening there these days. When actresses begin making faces as a game, it's something to talk about. Now, this game is known as mugging and it all comes out of Martha's challenge to Joe E. Brown to a mugging contest.

She paused in the midst of her work to issue the challenge to Brown. But no one around knew this word mugging whereupon she explained that it was known in Victorian days as making faces. From time to time, thereafter, actors, actresses, and even the technical crew were spotted making faces at themselves in mirrors. But Miss Raye, so far, is the only one who would allow photographs to be taken of herself. Just take a look and see if you blame the others.

Comedian Prizes Good Luck Charm

A PIECE of ordinary blue glass necklace—just about two inches of cheap blue beads—is Lynne Overman's most important possession. In fact he credits his entire career to the beads. And the story back of the odd lucky piece was disclosed for the first time by the raspy-voiced comedian.

"The stock market crash cleaned me almost completely," Overman groaned. "After picking up the losses, I bowed out and took what was left to a bank. Then the bank failed and I found myself with exactly \$4 to my name—and no job in sight."

"You can imagine how I felt when that same day I met a friend who had just returned from a round-the-world trip. He had been luckier than I. He showed a profit of \$200,000."

"During my visit in Cairo," he told me, "I lost all my money. With but one thin dime left I walked into a curio shop and spent that dime for a blue glass-head necklace. The shopkeeper told me he had taken it from the neck of an idol in an old temple, and added that 'it is lucky, sir. It will bring you much prosperity.'"

"Believe me or not, Lynne. But since I've had this necklace I've made money out of everything I touch. I can't go wrong!"

When Overman mentioned his unfortunate condition and sort of suggested that he could use a little of the fellow's luck, the man took out his knife, cut the string and handed part of it to Lynne.

"I POCKETED the beads," said Overman. "The gambler's instinct had me again, and just to tempt luck, as it were, I took a chance. I walked into the broker's office and bought more stock. On margin and on credit, of course. Two hours later I walked out of there with \$1,000."

"Call it luck if you will. That's all right with me. But since then I've never experienced a day's loss at the races. I've had profit on all my investments. I've never been without one day's salary."

"It's okay with me if you think it's silly to cherish a piece of blue glass. But believe me, nobody's going to talk me out of it."

"So, you see, that's just a sample of what those Egyptian beads did for me, and you know now why I am so fond of them. It just shows you what can be done."

The one difficulty of reducing via the roller skating method is in removing the pounds from the spots where loss of weight is most needed. This exercise turned out all wrong.



Spring Is Here, Romances Bloom In Movie Land

By Dave Crown

WHEN it's springtime in Hollywood, love-time makes its appearance, too, and the Vine Street Brown Derby seems to be the mecca for the hand-holding artists. Lee Tracy and Isabel Jewel have patched up their prolonged differences, while Philip Holmes and the Countess Edwige (whataname) Ablamowicz find favor within the band of this eating palace. The spell also seems to have been cast upon Janet Gaynor and Al Scott, William Wyler and June Travis, Luis Rainer and Clifford (writer) Odets; and Janet McLeod, a society lass, continues to pursue Nelson Eddy.

Little Crown Jewels from the lots: Universal was all set to cast Margaret Sullivan and Henry Fonda together in "Reno in the Fall," but with Miss Sullivan claiming a broken arm and Fonda on vacation they're now testing other players for the top spots. . . . Paul Robeson, the Negro singer, is asking \$100,000 to appear in a flicker with Bobby Breen . . . although scheduled to do "Pony Boy" as his next offering, Eddie Cantor's ambition is to film the story of his own life. . . . Milt Kibbe, brother of Guy, will play in a boss opera at Warners . . . Leo Carrillo may toss his sombrero in the ring and campaign for a seat in Congress . . . RKO is already preparing a football story and signed a quartet of Stanford's pigskin plungers. . . . On finishing "Big Broadcast of 1937," Jane Frolman will head the cast of a musical in the role of an orchestra leader. . . . Film comedians and leading men combat on the baseball diamond soon. Bing Crosby will be the world's first crooning umpire . . . Ann Sothern is as "busy as a bee"—she has the hives. . . .

IN THE picture game, competition is the "strife of life" as witness the information that Gaumont-British pictures plans to produce "Camille." This comes on the heels of MGM's previous announcement that they would present the classic with Garbo and Robert Taylor. The overseas organization is also attempting to land an American director for their version. But this is not an isolated situation. England's producers have at least fifty representatives in Hollywood flagging our film favorites with lucrative offers, with the promise of exemption from taxation. . . .

Obviously the most ambitious year in the history of filmdom, Hollywood is combing every available source of experienced talent. Having milked the stage of its biggest personalities, movie "scouts" eye the more fertile field of radio. RKO has negotiations under way for the services of Beatrice Lillie, while Paramount is testing Dorothy Lamour, NBC singer, for a term contract. The only radioites the film moguls leave unapproached are the good ladies who cast recipes into the ether. . . .



When she is not practicing the art of making faces, Miss Raye is anything but annoying to gaze upon. Here she appears in one of her comelier poses.

The Gab Bag: Una Merkle and Betty Furness taking singing lessons . . . Joan Crawford partial to blue for her summer attire . . . George Brent teaching Patric Knowles to fly . . . Betty Grable very slick in new slacks on her return from vaudeville tour with Jackie Coogan . . . Warren Hull shipping his piano to the mountain cabin he and his tutor will occupy while vacationing . . . Wally Beery will star in pictures based on the veterans' bonus payments; he's received 150 stories from would-be writers in last

two weeks . . . Winchell confessing he buys chewing gum by the carton . . . Ric Cortez causing confusion at party by dialing "1198" on telephone, hanging up receiver and letting phone ring, then telling guest he is wanted. After a few blatant "hellos" and getting no reply from other end, guest realizes it's all a trick . . . Guy Bates Post, the veteran stage troupier, signed for serial at Universal. Post recently completed important role in "Fatal Lady," which stars Mary Ellis.