

Mother To A Star

Through courtesy of Esquire, Inc., publishers of Coronet magazine, the Mail Tribune publishes today the second installment of "Mother To A Star," Sidney Carroll's personality sketch of Lela Rogers, mother of the glamorous film star, Ginger Rogers. Concluding chapter of the sketch, published in the July issue of Coronet, will appear Tuesday.

The article is of particular interest to Mail Tribune readers as the Rogers River ranch is located only a few miles from Medford.

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919 N. Michigan Ave.,
Chicago, Ill.
(Coronet, July 1944)

(Continued From Yesterday)

In 1930, by dint of brains, personality, talent, and Mama's know-how, Ginger Rogers was big-time. She was appearing in George Gershwin's Girl Crazy on Broadway and making a thousand dollars a week. It was then that the movie offers began to come in. The story of Ginger's first movie test is a good example of the sort of desperate ingenuity any stage mother must be ready to exercise whenever her child's career is threatened. Lela agreed to one movie test by a major studio. When the test was completed she asked to see it and decided it was terrible. She gave an anonymous little man 30 dollars to secure the test for her, sotto voce, and one dark night she threw it into the East River. Ginger's chances weren't going to be wrecked by any half-baked movie test.

A short time after that had started, Walter Wanger got interested in the then red-headed comedienne from Girl Crazy and gave her a test which did her credit. Then he signed her to a contract. Lela arranged things so that Ginger could go right on working in Girl Crazy and make movies in nearby Astoria at the same time. Ginger made five movies in Astoria before she ever saw Hollywood.

Ginger and Lela came to Hollywood in 1932. Ginger was not an overnight sensation. As a matter of fact, she was caught smack in the middle of one of



Lela Rogers

those studio reorganization battles that are the life blood of the industry. While conflicting forces wrestled back and forth with one another, Ginger and her mother sat in a hotel room, two rookies in the army of the unemployed, waiting for an agent to get a job—any sort of job—for Ginger.

After six months of watching and waiting and getting nowhere, Lela Rogers decided to look into the agent racket for herself. She went over to Warner Brothers, introduced herself to several of the presiding geniuses, and in a few minutes she had Ginger signed for a part in a super-musical called 42nd Street.

The role she managed to get for Ginger was a small one and it paid just two hundred dollars a week. Everybody in Hollywood knows Rule No. 1 in the mythical book: An actress who has once made a thousand dollars a week must never take less. But Lela Rogers was sick of the unwritten Hollywood rules by that time. "Ginger was getting hungry," she said. "We had to go to work."

Lela Rogers has what all great strategists have — she moves boldly and decisively, but she has an X-ray eye for details. She moved boldly when she got Ginger that job in 42nd Street.

The role in the picture was that of a chorus girl, and the picture was going to be filled with chorus girls. Lela asked for a copy of the script, took it home, read it carefully, and re-wrote the role of that particular chorus girl. She suggested that Ginger wear a monocle, sport a long cigarette holder, speak with a phony English accent and carry a Pekingese under one arm. She submitted these suggestions, gratuitously, to the studio heads. These gentlemen saw the possibilities in her ideas and they agreed to dress the role up for Ginger according to Mama's ideas.

Mama was no green hand with a movie script. Long before Ginger was ever on the scene, Lela Rogers was writing scripts in Hollywood for four-reelers. As 42nd Street was being filmed, Lela continued to write new gags and new dialogue for Ginger. The studio heads were so happy to receive such contributions free of charge that they accepted practically all of them. The result is history. 42nd Street was the smash success of the year and Ginger Rogers, playing a comparatively small part, was one of the hits of the show.

From that moment on, Ginger ascended the movie ladder and reached her next peak when Mama manipulated things so that daughter should meet Fred Astaire. That legend is also well known—how the two of them first appeared in a musical film called Flying Down to Rio and stole the film from the higher-priced stars. They made The Gay Divorcee after that and for several years their singing-dancing films were the big money-makers of the business. The direct result of the Astaire-Rogers films was that Ginger Rogers moved into the top bracket of movie stars and has stayed there ever since.

With Ginger's growing fame there came added financial burdens. Financial burdens are, to put it mildly, Lela Rogers' meat. Her handling of Ginger's contracts would make a good lesson in cost accounting in any business college. In the formative stages of Ginger's Hollywood career, right after 42nd Street, Lela was never banal enough to ask for an immediate raise in pay. She asked only for a five thousand dollar bonus with each

picture—and she got it. Then, at the end of every nine months, she would walk into the cashiers and demand, without further ado, that Ginger's salary be multiplied by two. It wasn't the orthodox Hollywood way of doing things, but it worked. Lela had a product the studios wanted and she made them pay for it her way.

Then, too, she has the strategist's long view of things. When Astaire and Rogers were the hottest team in the business and Ginger signed a colossal contract with RKO, Lela did a peculiar thing. She insisted that Ginger be allowed to make one straight dramatic picture between every Astaire-Rogers musical made. Her reason was a simple one: she did not want her versatile daughter to be typed. That sort of reasoning has paid off terrific dividends. The Astaire-Rogers films had a long career, but they ran their inevitable gamut. Ginger Rogers, however, is still on top as a dramatic star.

(Concluded Tuesday)



Olive Barber's

Observations

We say the world is a small place. Well it seemed much larger than I wished it were as I read a letter but recently received. For I wanted to take right off and have a visit with the writer. Yet how to trot across two states, get my visiting done and be back in time for an afternoon appointment I couldn't figure out. So although the world seems small sometimes, it's mighty big at others.

"In May, 1887, when I was a boy of twelve and a half, a Canadian paper my parents were taking reprinted a poem written by a newspaper man in India: one R. Kipling. The poem had first appeared in the Delhi Mail.

"Close by while I was reading it was a man watering a yoke of oxen at the well. This was in southern Kansas. The man was 'breaking' a tract of prairie. He wished it would rain, he said, but it was looking like a dry summer. My eyes fell to the poem: 'The well where the bullocks go, silent and blind and slow. By plains where the young corn dies in the glare of tropic skies.' I was just a boy, yet I saw Kipling might have been writing about the bearded Civil War veteran pumping water for his oxen.

"My father came up; said to the man, 'This day 23 years ago in '64, our spring wheat was in and waiting for a spring shower to start its sprouting.'

"The man looked up and said to my father, 'You remember that? Well here's what I remember: 23 years ago today I was lying with four rebel bullets in me on the Bloody Angle of Spottsylvania.' Then looking down at me he asked, 'What's the news, Tommy?' 'Not much,' I replied: 'Everybody in Canada is hanging out flags for Queen Victoria having been 50 years on the job.' 'Well, let her keep it; she might do worse,' he said and returned to his plowing.

"But the plowman settled the share more deep in the grudging clod, ran the poem and boy though I was, it came to me that Victoria's world might be far away yet in a part of her kingdom, India, life was following the same pattern it was right there in Kansas—oxen plowing, grain waiting for the rain. They were in the same boat, so to speak, though neither was 'eating from the Captain's table,' Kansas and India being what they were."

Other memories, had the writer, some of which I'll tell you another time. Still more I'd receive, and pass on to you, were the world smaller; small enough for me to trot across two states and get back before lunch.

THE GRANGE

Central Point Grange
H. E. club of Central Point Grange will meet with Mrs. Warren Patterson at 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 23 Mrs. Patterson will be assisted by Ethel Freeman and Mrs. Brenner. Mrs. John Bohnert will furnish a recreational number.

Private Jennings Cited



Pvt. Robert G. Jennings, selected the outstanding man of his recruit platoon at the San Diego Marine base, is shown here receiving the honor badge of efficiency award from his commanding officer, Col. John Groff. Mrs. Jennings and their two children, who last resided at 413 Arcadia street, are currently in Illinois visiting relatives.

Cars in Brazil Use Charcoal Gas, Bananas Cost But 25 cents Stalk; Perdue Writes Parents of Visit

Mark Perdue, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Perdue of 207 McAndrews Road, who is serving in the Merchant Marine recently wrote his parents an interesting letter telling of his experiences while at a Brazilian port, and his impressions of the country and its natives. Perdue returned to duty Aug. 15, after a short leave spent with his wife and small daughter in Guthrie, Okla. He is one of four sons of Mr. and Mrs. Perdue serving in the armed forces or merchant marine.

His letter follows in part: I've seen lots of beautiful countries and traveled about 13,000 miles in all. We stopped in Guanantama, Cuba and Trinidad, a British Island off the coast of Venezuela where they drive on the "wrong" side of the street. You get in a car and start down the street and you'll be ready to get out and walk after the first block because you just know someone is going to crash right into you.

In Brazil the automobiles burn charcoal. They have two large burners on the back bumpers that form some kind of gas, and they drive like drunk Indians. They had lots of fresh coconuts, bananas at 25c a stalk, and almost any kind of fruit or vegetable.

Wish you could have seen some of the souvenir shops and the people there. Many of the people speak English and some of them can't speak a word of it. The workers there who unload the ships wear high-heeled flat wooden shoes with nothing but a toe-strap to hold them on. They really make a chatter when they get in a hurry.

We are painting the ship in Santos, Brazil, and I had my shirt laying down on the raft we were painting off of. A bunch of Brazilians were around, watching us paint. One of them wanted to buy my shirt, which was a short-sleeved blue one. I asked him how much he would give me; he said five milrays, or 25 cents in American money, so I sold it to him. They really got a kick out of that.

Then he wanted to buy my belt for 5 milrays so I sold that to him also and he gave me his belt made out of snake skin. He had a ring on his finger which he said he would give me the next time I was there. They are real friendly people and would do almost anything for you.

It was supposed to be mid-winter down there but was about 80 and real nice. The weather varies from 70 to 95 degrees the year around.

Although they have plenty of silk stockings, Nylons and alarm clocks, they are really high, as they have learned the Americans don't have them at home any more. They are becoming more mo-

GOP INCUMBENT RETAINS OFFICE IN ONLY CONTEST

Portland, Aug. 21—Mrs. John Y. Richardson, Portland, was re-elected vice-chairman of the Oregon state republican central committee in the only contest of the biennial election Saturday, which also saw Niel R. Allen Grants Pass, re-elected chairman by quick, unanimous vote.

Kenneth Nielsen, Eugene, secretary, and Howard Wall, Portland, treasurer, were elected unanimously and without opposition in the election held at the Portland hotel, with all but one of Oregon's 36 counties represented in the balloting. Crook county was the one not represented.

Plans for organizing republican war veterans clubs over the state, announced by Carl Moser, executive secretary, in his report to the group, were given the approval of the committee by a vote to authorize the organization of such clubs.

Change Called For
The committee also went on record in favor of a change in the structure of the committee which will double its size if the plan is carried out. This plan calls for automatic inclusion of all county chairmen and vice-chairmen on the committee, and is advanced for the purpose of improving liaison between county and state groups. The action of the committee was a vote to recommend to the state legislature that this change be made.

The state organization goes into the campaign with a cash balance of \$12,109.41, and its all-time biggest financial job ahead of it, according to the report of Treasurer Wall.

Party Finances Eyed
Biggest stumbling block in the way of party finances, Wall said, is the provision of the income tax law which classifies campaign contributions as net income, rather than gross income. "When a man in the high income brackets makes a \$1000 contribution to the party," Wall said, "he is actually shelling out about \$1800."

Speaking at the week-end meeting of the committee Rep. Everett M. Dirksen, R. Ill., charged "New Dealism" with providing government by directive, and of daily assuming more jurisdiction from U. S. courts. Constitutional government may be lost if the trend toward executive domination is not arrested, he said.

Use Mail Tribune Want Ads.

Monday, August 21, 1944 MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE—THREE



Capt. R. C. Ashley, United Air Lines pilot, and that Samoyede dog he is holding have something in common. Both are accustomed to the Arctic—Capt. Ashley in his flights for the Air Transport Command over Alaskan territory and "Eslooto" is a descendant of a rare breed of dogs from northern Siberia. Capt. Ashley raises Samoyedes as a hobby in between his flights in the north. The Ashley kennels are in Seattle. Incidentally, "Eslooto" is Eskimo for brave.

Alaska Air Pilot Raises Samoyedes, Little-Known Dogs

When not flying over Alaskan territory for the Air Transport Command, Capt. R. C. Ashley of United Air Lines has a hobby that is the envy of his fellow fliers. The veteran pilot, who has more than 1400 aerial hours to his credit over the frozen Arctic, raises Samoyede dogs, a breed

almost never seen in the continental United States. The animals originally were from northern Siberia and are said never to have been seen by white men until they were discovered by members of one of the original Arctic expeditions. Two later were taken as an experiment to the famous Colby Kennels in England.

Named after the Samoyede tribe of northern Siberia, the dogs are described as having a disposition similar to those little-known people. The Samoyedes were poor and, seldom having enough to eat, always left a little of the food offered them so that the next person would not go entirely hungry. Captain Ashley claims Samoyede dogs to this day have the same trait, and no matter how ravenous, will never lick their food plates entirely clean.

WEATHER
Northern California — Clear today, tonight and Tuesday, except for fog locally along coast. Slightly cooler in interior today.

Peace of Paris marked the end of France's colonial empire in 1763.

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They're fishing in the sky

It's the last place on earth—or off it—to go fishing. Yet the Navy is sending out its blimps—to go fishing in the sky! Not for submarines! Not for tin-fish! For real fish!

The blimps—fishing in the sky—flash word to fishermen in boats where to drop their nets. They spot the schools, as fish swim below in the vast deep. The fishermen bring them in.

Use of Navy blimps to help the fishermen—super-lookouts in super-crow's-nests—is a war assignment. When these airships are taken off other war duties to fish, it means fishermen and their services are important.

By supplying salmon and barracuda, tuna and sardines, calories and vitamins—both to the armed forces and the civilian populations—western fishermen from San Diego to Alaska are making history.

Yet, for fishermen, history-making is old stuff. The Vikings roamed the seas because Norse fishermen learned to steer by sun and stars. The Bible story of the loaves and fishes eternally recalls how close they've always been to all peoples.

Somehow, it's hard to quit thinking of fishermen as romantic fellows with venture in their blood, and appreciate the war contribution they've made by hard work and scorn of danger. Yet there is a way.

Let's just think of the difference it would make if the starved children of captive Greece could get their cod-liver oil. Let's remember that—thanks to the fishermen—the children of America do get it. Thanks to the fishermen!

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