

# Yes, the haircut seems familiar

By Martin Heflin

HE wouldn't like anything that smacked of the "Alger Boy" saga, but his is such an experience whether he likes it or not. Not that his story is the "rags to riches" theme (he always was stealing my clothes until he outgrew me and the clothes, too), but the almost foolhardy confidence that Broadway could one day be crashed surely and certainly and . . . doing that very thing is the general idea behind the plot which started a curly headed high school youngster toward the glitter of the big-time professional stage and the movies in Act I.

Thus far the scenes have been packed with excitement for all of us. I rather imagine he has enjoyed the most part of the show, too. (*O'Neill Aside: You can't have all the fun, brother Van, just because you're the Hero!*)

The high school drama club out in Long Beach, California, where we went to school put on "The Goose Hangs High" in 1921, and someone told the director that Van wanted to be in the play but was bashful and needed coaxing. The lady director, also his English teacher, coaxed not, but commanded. And the career was begun. Several other plays followed and by the time he was ready to enrol at O.U. in 1926 the thing had got him.

He used to mumble lines over our breakfast mush, and he monopolized the bathroom, therein to spout heroic lines to some imaginary Juliet. My frequent (and at times frantic) suggestions that the bathroom wasn't exactly the proper atmosphere for love-making, theatrical or otherwise, only met with "Foul Knaves," and other (though less histrionic) epithets. I gave up. So did the boys over at the Phi Delt house. The guy had forsaken the bull-sessions, sorority house drawing rooms and other rah-rahiana for the Fine Arts gang.

And his pal, Ida Z. Kirk, watched over him as she has many another young devotee of the Masque and Sandal. She directed all his plays at O.U. She stage-mothered him. She gave him honest advice and criticism. And he still thinks that her sweet encouragement is what crystallized his determination to go on with the theatre.

At O.U. he did "The Admirable Crichton," "A Bill of Divorcement," "The Swan," "Berkley Square" and—oh yes, he tried burlesque comedy in the old yearly collegiate stand-by, "Soonerland Follies." (I cannot refrain from here mentioning with a touch of pride that I, too, trod the boards of Ye Old Fine Arts Auditorium in another edition of the Follies. But all I ever got was a bruised nose when I fell down and what I took to be a reprimand

## PUBLISHER MARTY HEFLIN TELLS ALL ABOUT BROTHER VAN'S SUCCESS AS ACTOR

for my clumsiness from certain scholastic authorities.

When he danced with, made love to and ran off from Katherine Hepburn (the cad!) in the current R.K.O. picture, "A Woman Rebels," many of his friends recognized him at once, in spite of the Victorian costume. Because, you see, he needed a haircut in the picture, too. The unruly hair, incidentally, used to irritate



Van Heflin and Katherine Hepburn

the Phi Delt brothers no end, but I dare say we would all be gladly irritated today for half the money Hollywood pays for it.

One summer while we were in high school I took my trumpet and got a job in a ship's orchestra and went to sea. Van, the copy-cat, got a mop and got a job with a ship's scrubbery and also went to sea in a different direction. We did that for several summers and still lie to each other of our experiences. He never had much respect for a horn-tooter—not even a good one which I, sadly, wasn't—nor I for a mopper. And now that the tables are turned—he being a good actor and I a publisher—I can appreciate his point of view. Now I know that someone has to do this world's scrubbing . . . and publishing.

In 1928, after he had had but two years at O.U. he took to the sea again. He went to South America this time as a Quartermaster (no scrubbing) and brought back a beautiful tan and five monkeys. He then shipped to Liverpool out of the port of San Pedro, left the ship in New York and several months later brought back to Ok-

lahoma and O.U. the experience of having played in Channing Pollock's Broadway show, "Mr. Moneypenny." In this show he played with such Broadway and Hollywood prominents as Donald Meek, Hale Hamilton, Catherine Dale Owen, Margaret Wicherley and a pair of the Nugents. Evelyn Knapp (now the screen celeb) was in the chorus.

Two more years at O.U. Back to Broadway during the worst depression (theatrical and otherwise) of our times. Slightly discouraged and then a real opportunity in form of a chance to work with Jasper Deeter at the Hedgerow Theater at Moylan, Pa. Those in the know recall that Ann Harding began at Hedgerow. Then an invitation to work with the late great George Pierce Baker at Yale. He was in Baker's last class—Baker, who had trained such men as Eugene O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson, Robert Sherwood and others of the writing and acting craft. Then Broadway again.

Broadway again, indeed. I was amused at an article in a recent issue of Liberty Magazine which said that Van had played in more Broadway flops than anyone else of his age and experience. "They were good shows," se told me, "but nobody seemed to like them." I asked him about the shows the other day in Chicago and he named some of them. "Bride of Torozko" playing opposite Jean Arthur, "The Night Remembers" in which he played the lead; "Midwest," and others. "Sailor Beware" was an imminently successful production, but he was only the understudy. "All that experience at sea with those mops gone to waste," he complained.

Between flops he "did" radio. In fact he did radio all over the ether, playing on every major station and network in New York. He played the "True Story Hour," "Way Down East," "Widows Sons," "The March of Time" and several especially blood-curdling, chain and bone rattling mystery thrillers.

But he wanted to get away from "mikes" and back to grease paint. And he accomplished that in the Theater Guild's "End of Summer" in which he played all of last year's season with Ina Claire and Osgood Perkins. That show closed last June for the Summer, going on the road in September, and he went with it.

Meanwhile he got his "big break" and made the picture, "A Woman Rebels" with Katherine Hepburn and Herbert Marshall in Hollywood. When "End of Summer" closed its tour in Newark, N.J., last month he returned to Hollywood to

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## SOONER TALENT

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dress by Dr. Oliver Benson, instructor in government, sent word that "We enjoyed Dr. Benson's talk very much. He was certainly informed on the subject and members of the club asked him questions until long after our usual closing time. He was complimented highly for his excellent delivery and his knowledge of the subject. Thanks very much for sending him."

Sam Schwieger, '31as, now managing editor of the Perry Daily Journal, wrote a letter which sums up the value of the Lecture and Entertainment Bureau.

"Programs which have been offered in Perry through this service have been received in Perry with more enthusiasm than any we have presented," he wrote. "Because of the fact that it is often necessary in a city like ours to prepare programs for civic club meetings and other gatherings in short notice, the University service is of special value to us.

"It is also a means of direct contact between students and talent in the University with the citizens of a community that never are able to visit the campus or become acquainted with its students and instructors. It has served to create a favorable impression of the University among the leading business men and women of our city.

"A program given here recently at a Lions club zone meeting by the Sooner Ladies Quartet and Stewart Harral as speaker was one of the most popular ever given at such a meeting. Others have been equally valuable."

The presentation of campus talent often forms a real inspiration. "The program (by fine arts students) was not only entertaining, but we feel that the contact our students made with you and your University students will be a lasting benefit to them and perhaps will inspire some of them to reach greater heights in education," wrote L. E. Paine, '21as, superintendent at Jones.

"Decidedly pleasing and well presented—we think that your organization is doing an excellent thing for the University and the schools of the state in providing such talent," wrote Paul C. Norvell, Bartlesville principal.

P. Kay Scruggs, Pawhuska principal, reported "The recent visit of the University of Oklahoma glee club to Pawhuska High school produced more favorable comment from students and townspeople than any other entertainment of the year."

Other warm letters of appreciation for University talent presented over the state have been received recently from Helen Hanson, '28as, at Yukon; E. J. Story at Elk City; G. W. Johnson, music director at Shattuck High school; S. J. Bryant, '21 as, '29ms, Pawnee superintendent, Mrs.

John M. Mideke, Oklahoma City, and many others.

The bureau issues a bulletin giving details of faculty and student talent available, including about 125 lectures from the faculty and about that many from the student body, as well as a great variety of musical talent.

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## Joe Bird Is Personnel Director, Babson Institute

DR. JOSEPH W. BIRD, '27 M. A., former University Y. M. C. A. secretary assumed the position of director of the personnel division of Babson Institute, Babson Park, Mass., at the beginning of the present school year.

The personnel division was recently organized by the institute to supplant the personal efficiency division which had been existent since the establishment of the institute in 1919.

The *Babson Institute Alumni Bulletin* explains that in recent years business and industry have given much attention to the problems of obtaining better qualified personnel, and the reorganization was effected to make the institute's work in this field conform to present-day needs.

Dr. Bird is a native of Oklahoma. He received an A.B. degree from Phillips university, Enid, in 1923, and received his M.A. degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1927.

He continued his graduate studies at Columbia and New York universities, majoring in college and personnel administration, culminating in his Ph.D.

Since 1933 he has been with the College of the City of New York and New York university. In 1933 he was selected by the New York City police academy to organize courses on personnel problems. His summer work for seven years was done for the Standard Chautauqua system.

Dr. Bird has published a monograph on job analysis and now has a manuscript on "Problems on Juvenile Delinquency for Teachers" ready for publication. His dissertation for his Ph.D. degree was on the subject "Functions of Faculties in Determining Policies in State Universities in the United States."

The Babson alumni bulletin, in announcing Dr. Bird's appointment, included this paragraph:

"Dr. Bird has a fine personality and a great amount of energy. He has the record of being a good organizer. Those who have been privileged to work with him speak and write in terms of the highest commendation of his leadership ability, and the quiet and effective way he gets things done . . . Babson Institute is most fortunate in obtaining the services of Dr. Bird."

The bulletin explains that personnel work has attained a position of great importance in recent years, both in business and industry and also in leading colleges and universities.

"In business and industry the term 'personnel' as usually understood refers primarily to the selection, supervision and welfare of those on the payroll and particularly those engaged in the production or distribution of goods," the bulletin states.

"In educational institutions the term has a somewhat broader meaning and is primarily concerned with those training processes and means by which the faculty and the institution seek to bring out all the latent potentialities in the student so that he may become a more efficient worker in whatever occupation he may be engaged.

"The personnel division as set up will be responsible for four major functions; namely, formal instruction, guidance and counseling, record keeping, and research. The instruction offered under the direction of the division consists of Human Relations in Business, Economic and Social Trends, Personal Hygiene and Public Health, Public Speaking, and Work and Study Methods.

"Individual conferences will be arranged on problems of personality adjustment for those students who may need special guidance of this nature. A forum on personal conduct optional to all students, will be conducted throughout the year.

"The guidance and counseling function will be directed towards assisting student analysis of his occupational interests, aptitudes and abilities, and the choice of a vocation best fitted to the student's qualification. The division will be concerned with social, recreational, health, moral and spiritual activities as well as with placement for graduates and alumni."

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## YES, THE HAIRCUT SEEMS FAMILIAR

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accept the R.K.O. contract he won for his performance opposite La Hepburn.

I honestly didn't know with whom all he had been associating during the past few years behind footlights, so I asked. To mention a few, which include some already mentioned are: Eva Le Gallienne, Dennis King, Sam Jaffee, Ina Claire, Os-good Perkins, Lucille LeVerne, Joseph Callea, Herbert Marshall, Katherine Hepburn, Donald Meeck, Gladys George and so on. He has, as the saying goes, "been among 'em," and is still making his way.

This, I suppose, is the story. I know I'm much too close to the forest to see the trees. But maybe he'll forgive me if he's charitable. If he isn't, he'll swing on me from the ground with his eyes closed. He always swings with his eyes closed.