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Mr. Smart Will Appear In This Space Every Week



## "Miss Bess" And Her Girls

Continued on Page 3)

front room of her home, and it stayed there. The big white McLeod house in the center of town became, and remains, the focal point of all the telephone wires in town. And a good thing, too: some years ago the old office, across the street, burned down, and has never been rebuilt.

When World War 2 came along, with its increasing demands on all telephones, another switchboard was added, and there they both are today, with Miss Bess right on the job, or within ear-shot in her adjoining apartment. A new switchboard, however, didn't mean that anything really new had been added, for the telephone company performed a minor miracle in finding another old board just like the other one, in a midwestern telephone office, and brought it halfway across the continent to double the service, and also double its perplexities. "Hello Girls"

Besides Miss Whitlock, Miss Bess now has other help—two personable young ladies who "spell" each other during the day, and both declare they like telephone work better than anything else. They are Clarine Glisson and Mary Ellen Frye, both of Carthage. Mary Ellen worked for a time in the long distance office at Southern Pines, but except for that both of them have received their training exclusively at Miss Bess' hands, and are following in her footsteps in friendliness, courtesy and real old-fashioned service.

There are more than 300 phones in Carthage now—a big jump from the old days. More are being added all the time, and the operators' telephone books are lined and interlined with new numbers added since the books were printed last winter.

### Numbers Mean Little

Though the operators are almost the only ones who use books. With most folks it's, "Ring Bill Sabiston's office, please," or "Get me Dave Ginsburg on the line," or "Will you see if Mrs. McCallum is at home?" Telephone numbers don't mean a thing, in Carthage.

Three long distance line run out of the Carthage switchboards—to Robbins, with a special dial for the Robbins mill; to Cameron, and to the district office at Southern Pines, through which all other long distance calls are routed.

Since the war brought increased use of the telephones, with far greater use of long distance than ever before, the operators' work has multiplied greatly, and they have noticed no diminishment since the war ended. A whole new telephone-minded generation has come into being.

### They Stay Busy

Two inside phones have been placed in the office, and one outside, on Miss Bess' porch, to help take care of the needs. Whether it's Miss Bess or Miss Clara, Clarine or Mary Ellen on duty, by ones or by twos, they stay mighty busy.

With all the rush it's kind of exasperating all round when the metal "drops" which are supposed to fall with a click when a caller signals, or when a conversation ends, fail to do so. Connection and disconnection both suffer delays.

However, nobody fusses at the operator, and the ladies at the switchboard keep that smile in their voice.

It's just a question of time till dial phones come in. That's progress.

But when they do, Carthage folks will miss something money can't pay for—the friendly personal touch that is all too rare these days, given them now by "Miss Bess" and her girls.

## THEATRES Carolina

Hailed as one of the most memorable screen contributions of the year to date is "Great Expectations," which followed "The Egg And I" at the Radio City Music Hall with outstanding success, and which is coming to the Carolina Theatre Southern Pines, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, July 20-21-22 at 8:15 p. m. with a Tuesday matinee at 3:00. First of a promised block production based on the works of Charles Dickens, "Great Expectations" is an outstanding triumph for all concerned in its making.

Not the least of the achievements of the producers is that film goes will come away from this one feeling that Dickens himself might have written the script. They have taken the dozen story threads of the original (and one of which is exciting enough to make a film) and have woven

them into a grand, spectacular, heart-warming whole.

It has, indeed, every ingredient of a great motion picture, namely, quick, urgent action, delicate sentimentality, and blood-stirring suspense, all due not only to the integrity and sincerity of the script and tactfully imaginative direction, but also to the invariable proficiency of the long list of players, notably John Mills as Pip; Valerie Hobson, his girl friend; Francis Sullivan, as the attorney.

Metro - Goldwyn-Mayer brings back the popular Dr. Gillespie in the person of Lionel Barrymore, in a dramatic absorbing story, "Dark Delusion" at the Carolina theatre Wednesday and Thursday with a Thursday matinee.

This time, James Craig is the young doctor, with beautiful Lucille Bremer capably carrying the feminine lead, and Keye Luke on hand to provide laughs in his familiar role as the Chinese physician at Blair General Hospital.

"Living In A Big Way", at the Carolina theatre next Friday and Saturday, July 25-26, with a Saturday matinee, serves to reintroduce Gene Kelly after his absence in the Navy. The story serves as a peg on which Kelly can hang his inspired dance routines, demonstrate his affable acting and generally enjoy a tour de force such as is seldom given an actor. He gets nice support from Marie McDonald, Charles Winninger, Spring Byington, Phyllis Thaxter and Clinton Sunberg, who almost steals the comedy as the butler.

Navy service apparently kept Kelly in good trim, and he has never danced better. He does three outstanding numbers, best of which is one he terps with a live dog as partner, to an original song, "Fido and Me."

Another number is a nifty bit of ballroomology in which Miss McDonald keeps up with Kelly's stepping all the way.

## Sunrise

Magnificently photographed and beautifully enacted by a cast which includes Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Robert Walker and Melvyn Douglas, M-G-M's "The Sea of Grass" comes to the Sunrise Theatre, for two days, Sunday and Monday, as one of the year's most distinguished dramatic hits.

Based on Conrad Richter's widely read novel of the great land rush into New Mexico at the turn of the century, the story centers on Col. Jim Brewton, pioneer cattle baron who has given his life's blood to open up the cattle country and who is determined to keep out the onsurging homesteaders who will destroy his beloved "sea of grass." His implacable enemy is Brice Chamberlain, altruistic lawyer who represents the claims of the home seekers.

Spencer Tracy in his first screen appearance in almost two years, makes a welcome return as Brewton. It is a role eminently suited to this great star and he gives it everything. Katharine Hepburn is appealing as the wife who finds the "sea of grass" her most dangerous rival. The stars are given fine support by a large cast which includes Phyllis Thaxter, Edgar Buchanan, Harry Carey, Ruth Nelson, William "Bill" Phillips and Robert Armstrong.

Elia Kazan, who directed the memorable "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" can chalk up another success with "The Sea of Grass". It is outstanding screen entertainment.

Sunday has always been the worst driving day since the very beginning of automobile history. However, an insurance company has reported that there were more accidents on Saturdays in 1946.

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