

Soap Operas in Full Cry Despite Efforts To Discourage Them

By HELEN BRUNSON
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

A noted New York psychiatrist, Dr. Louis I. Ergat, devoted the best years of his life to trying to eradicate soap operas. How depressed he must be now to find them blossoming on TV, besides still flourishing on radio.

Ten years ago when he waged his battle, Stella Dallas, Joyce Jordan, Dr. Malone and the Guiding Light were the top daytime serials and 20,000,000 women listened. Some of these stories are still running and no doubt the audience is larger now with TV added.

Dr. Ergat fought the good fight, devoting his own money and time to it. He felt it was his duty to save women from the consequences of listening. He said radio serials cause "headaches, nocturnal frights, vasomotor instability and a slight touch of tachycardia."

His was a mission-like conducting a crusade against contaminated water or the like.

HE ENLISTED the aid of educators, literary critics, women's clubs and doctors. He got the General Federation of Women's clubs so hot up that they mailed millions of postals to the networks, saying that they'd quit listening to radio if the soap operas weren't removed.

But the whole campaign flopped. The serials haven't changed and neither have the listeners.

The stories follow a simple pattern. First there must be a heroine who suffers. She is often undone by her excessive amount of sex appeal, falling in love with other women's husbands, and they in turn falling for her.

Many listeners would like to have that much sex appeal themselves. For by far the majority must settle for one husband—who comes in the door at night, grunts hello, wolfis his dinner, and buries himself behind the evening paper.

IF SHE SHOULD come upon him having an earnest talk with one of his men friends—would they be discussing "how has a right to Lorna's love" in the soap series? I should say not. Ten to one it would be how the Dodgers are doing, the trade-in on the new car or why the stock market flopped last week.

And the soap companies, knowing that women just love trouble, give them plenty of it. Characters are sick most of the time, with everything from mania to appendicitis to strep throat.

Many a scene takes place in a hospital or sanitarium. Top themes are the homeless, motherless child or the mental case, made even more pathetic by soft organ music and a tense-voiced announcer.

AND THOUGH stories are presented as true life, the listeners never seem to wonder why they themselves never have an outside love affair, the drive to suicide or why their John has no "Other Wife." Maybe they just want to be assured that a woman "can find romance after 35."

At any rate, the good Dr. Ergat had not guessed the fundamental reasons why millions of housewives listen. As a psychiatrist he should have known better. Women are alone with their work and it's boring work. They often have matter-of-fact husbands about as romantic as a last year's bird nest. And when they enjoy trouble. It's hard to see how Dr. Ergat missed the point.

For his arch-enemy, the soap operas, are still going strong. And if he's still around they're probably driving him crazy enough to go see a psychiatrist himself.

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'Automatic' Heat Control Needs Care

The term "automatic" furnace is one applied to various types of furnaces which are under mechanical "supervision," designed to maintain heat temperatures without a few degrees differential of the desired temperature.

Furnaces which use coal stokers, oil or gas for heating are in most cases the types that are supervised by this mechanical or electronic control.

Over a period of years, or because they are relatively new and have not been properly adjusted, there will sooner or later be a breakdown in the operation, and trouble will be experienced by the owner.

THIS TROUBLE may manifest itself either by a smoking furnace, a puff back or an explosion in the flue or it may operate at all. This is particularly true after summer months when the unit has not been used.

If the home owner experiences this type of trouble with the furnace, and is not familiar with the mechanical parts of the unit, help is needed from the gas company, service man or the stoker company. If this help is not available immediately and there seems to be danger, call the fire department or at least something under the prevailing temperature of the building.

IF THE THERMOSTAT is left set at a temperature which is too high, the defective furnace may react violently in an attempt to operate.

Therefore, if your furnace or heating unit does not function properly, "PLAY IT SAFE." Set the thermostat down immediately and leave it there until help or service can be obtained.

BIRMINGHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

BHHS Football Team Lacking In Experience

How to fill the shoes of 13 players lost to the Bloomfield Hills High school football team through graduation last June is the problem faced by Edwin Murray this year as he runs his players through opening drills for Friday's game with Ortonville.

According to Coach Murray experience is not the only thing lacking among prospects for this year's squad. "I'm also looking for weight," Murray explained. "The boys all seem too light."

One of the most pressing problems is in the backfield. "Of all the candidates out for the team, only seven can be thought of as prospects for the backfield. I haven't had a chance to figure out the best four boys as yet," Murray stated.

Schedule
Sept. 18 at Ortonville
Sept. 25 at A. E. Smith
Oct. 2 at Detroit Country Day
Oct. 9 Detroit University School
Oct. 16 Fraser
Oct. 23 at Harper Woods
Oct. 30 Huron Valley

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Birmingham Background

Local History in Story and Picture

Grandfather Clock Cherished by Son Of Original Owner

Wing Lake was named after Austin E. Wing, who accompanied General Lewis Cass on one of his explorations through Oakland County.

They camped on the banks of the lake that now bears his name and where in 1818 Wing located the land which he entered under the \$2 act.

Wing afterward was elected a delegate from the territory to the 19th, 20th and 22nd Congresses.

Gilbert Lake got its name from the pioneer settler, Joseph Gilbert who purchased the track of land around the lake in 1824.

He kept good cattle and possessed extraordinary skill in the manufacture of cast-iron. He lies in the burial ground on the farm which he once owned.

Time passed and John Hunter gave the clock to Alonzo Snow, his son-in-law, who prized it highly. The old fashioned clock ticked off the minutes, hours and years in the Alonzo Snow home.

JAMES BALDWIN of Ovid, a son of Thomas and a brother of John Baldwin, the local blacksmith, yearned for the old family time piece and tried many times to buy it back.

Snow was very reluctant to part with the clock because of its reliability, its antiquity and because it was a gift from John Hunter.

When James Baldwin came to Birmingham in 1885 to visit his brother John, he tried once more to buy the clock from Mr. Snow.

FINALLY SNOW said, "See here, I will mark on a piece of paper what I will take for the clock. You write on another piece of paper what you are willing to pay. But in no case will I take a cent more or less than 1 mark. I just want to see how much you are willing to give."

Both made their figures and Mr. Snow's paper read \$25, Baldwin's \$50. So the old grandfather's clock returned to the family of the owner who had brought it safely from old England 47 years before.

Bloomfield Hills Camera Club Formed in 1949

The Bloomfield Hills Camera club had its beginning in 1947 when a group of men, active in Detroit clubs, began meeting in the home of Frederick G. Weed of Orchard Lakes, Mich.

In 1949 the group decided to formally establish a club of its own and were constituted as the Bloomfield Hills Camera Club. The club being one of the foremost backers of the local organization. He became the club's first president.

Meetings were held first at the Cranbrook Institute of Science and later were moved to the club school upon the invitation of the late Dr. Rudolph Linquist, then headmaster of the school.

The club's first exchange of prints was made with the Maple Bluff Camera club of Madison, Wis.

INTEREST IN the club fell off during World War II but the organization was held together through the leadership of Shirley Gaddis and William Schuchman, Jr. The club held an international color slide show in 1942.

Early in the 1945-46 season the meetings were returned to the Institute of Science and meetings now are held the first and third Thursdays of each month.

Present officers are Walter R. Barkly, president; Paul Taylor, vice-president; and Gregory J. Jaffe, Jr., secretary-treasurer.

Charter members of the club included E. C. Askew, E. W. Averill, Theodore Czerkowski, Bruce Dodds, Dr. R. D. Linquist, William K. Martin, William Schultz, Jr., Edmund J. Smith, Howard M. Smith, Arthur Underwood, Harlan Webster, Frederick G. Weed, Larson Webster, Rev. J. C. Widdfield, E. A. Hubbard and D. J. Morse.

165 Acres Taken By Railroad's New Right-of-Way

Some interesting statistics were given concerning the present Grand Trunk Royal Oak-Pontiac right-of-way when it was completed in 1931.

A total of 165 acres of land were included within the right-of-way.

When the first grade was turned for the project in the spring of 1928 until its completion, the undertaking necessitated 1,250,000 cubic yards of grading.

For the two tracks, 75,000 ties were laid and 3,500 tons of steel rails put down.

MORE THAN 100,000 tons of ballast were used.

Approximately 80,000 lineal feet of fencing was erected along the right-of-way.

There was 70,000 square yards of street paving done and 16,000 square feet of sidewalk due to the revision of street grades and grade separation work.

Approximately \$150,000 was spent in the revision of sewer systems, gas and water systems, underground cable systems, telephone and telegraph wires, fire and police signal systems and even one oil pipe from Oklahoma had to be re-located.

Extra Rates After 3 A. M.

Those who dance must pay the fiddler—especially if they dance after three o'clock in the morning.

The two Perkins brothers played for many dances in and around Birmingham but they served notice to all in 1932 that they did not intend to play all night for nothing.

They were willing to accommodate, they said, but they thought that when they played until 3 o'clock (in the morning, that is) for \$3, that was long enough.

IF THE MEN and ladies wanted to dance longer than that, the Perkins brothers said, then they would have to pay more or get some one else to play.

"We think it a fleshy crowd," declared the Perkins boys, "that can't pay more than \$3 for an all night's dance."

MANY OVERHEAD pole lines had to be moved.

Some 20 houses were picked up bodily and relocated adjacent to the right-of-way.

About 225 men were employed in the entire undertaking which cost approximately \$8,000,000.

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FRASER E. POMEROY, 1320 Dorchester, an agent for south-eastern Michigan for the New England Mutual Life Insurance company, has been re-elected to the Alumni Advisory Council of the Detroit Commercial College. PomeroY has also been appointed director of a student conference, "Insurance," one of a series of business conferences sponsored by the alumni to be held at the college this year.

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