

The Daily Movie Magazine

THE MOVIE FAN'S LETTERBOX

By HENRY M. NEELY

A Happy Young Man!



No wonder Walter Hiers registers such extreme nonchalance and complete satisfaction in this pose. There are two reasons. He's going to be married soon, and he's a star, having signed on the dotted line for five years.

Redhead writes: "So sorry I gave you so much extra labor in my last letter, but when I start to write all I can think of are questions; and then we fans know that that is the only way of drawing out your own delightful viewpoints. Do you object if I continue?"

"First of all, I would like to vote Mae Murray the most affected actress on the screen after seeing 'Broadway Rose,' Thomas Meighan the most reliable, Gloria Swanson most unreal, May McAvoy the cutest, Norma Talmadge the finest, and, after reading Penrhyn Standaw's declaration of the worst flaps he could find in twenty of my past stars, I am at a loss to choose the prettiest. A doggone dirty trick, I call it."

"I think the stars are hearing a crisis where only the fittest will survive the test. Every year we lose old favorites through their lost box office appeal, and new faces arise. Then occasionally the dropped star or starlet reappears in a minor role as the sister, good friend or adventuress. Don't you think of those forgotten players of the screen who return to their first love?"

"H. M. N., a heated discussion almost arose in school today, resulting from ancient history as to whether the balcony or the orchestra is the more desirable for viewing movies from the physical eye standpoint. Of course, the professor always sat in the balcony. He got the neighbors' wives, and, well, I just wish you had been there to enjoy the fun."

"With jealous feelings for the 'Lady Who Goes to the Movies' with you, and saddest appeals to bring the Valentino controversy to an end, I close."

All right. You all know by this time that Valentino will be here Friday afternoon and evening so he may end the controversy himself. On the other hand, he may start it all over again. I wonder which it will be. Scientifically, your professor is right. The middle of the balcony is the best place and gives the least distortion. But, for near-sighted old fogies like me, who have to go about peering impatiently through thick lenses, the balcony is too far away and we have to tolerate distortion in order to see details.

T. C. writes: "I surely was glad to see what you said about Wally. He has always been a favorite of mine from way back in the days when he had wavy hair and acted in 'Westerns' with sweet little Dot Davenport, long before his son appeared on the scene."

"It is too bad he let himself go. I really think that this breakdown will save him, by making him realize what he was doing to himself. I wonder if any one realizes how hard he has been working these last three years. Just consider the number of pictures he has made in that time—and, although I have read of various stars 'resting before starting a new picture,' I don't recall his name being among them."

"What's the difference whether he was a good actor or not—I think he was—and you think he was sometimes. He was lovable and clean and he stood up for 'American' values. When he made love to a girl he did it like a gentleman and not like another popular young man who fairly radiates amoralism."

"You may not suspect it, but I am not much for movies. I think Jack Donaghy is the funniest man in the world, and Will Rogers is the best actor."

C. S. writes: "For quite some time I have been some of the fans of 'Wally's' films. A friend of mine, a splendid young man, who is also a close friend of Reid's, was expecting a visit from him at about the time he was first reported ill. This man would immediately to Mrs. Reid, who has written him twice, telling the true facts of the case. I had been hoping against hope that these facts would be made public, but perhaps after all, it is just as well that it has come out, for it may give him a better chance to fight."

"The very fact that 'Wally' has voluntarily given up this very late hour show, and for that alone, regardless of anything else, he deserves our love and admiration."

"I was very glad that on the day he was reported to be near death, at least in the later editions of the EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER, there were not the starting headlines and sensational tones that appeared in some of the other newspapers. This I believe to be largely, if not entirely, due to you, whom I admire mostly for your fairness and understanding of human nature."

"If 'Wally' is going to win this fight—and I believe he will—he does need the help of all of us, whether we have liked him in the past or not. He has given to me personally and to thousands of others real pleasure many times after a hard day's work, when such recreation was needed. We could always send our kiddies to see his pictures without the slightest hesitation because of the type of pictures and the clean acting. I will not allow any one to say one word to me about him that is in the least way slurring or nasty."

"I should like to take this opportunity to tell you how much good your column has done me. I see pictures from a truer perspective than I did before reading your page. Unfortunately everybody does not read the EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER, and for that reason I wish that every newspaper in the country had just such a space conducted by just such a conscientious and scrupulous man as you are, who would strive to create his readers and help them to get the very best out of the pictures shown."

"The trouble with most people is that they forget all about the kiddies who make up the vast audience of the local picture houses. These children, who are to be the future generation, get many of their impressions, and in many cases character traits, are formed at these picture houses, and if they are shown to show up good, strong men and women they must only see the best."

"I do not have children. In fact am not married, but am intensely interested in the forming of the children's characters, and because of that interest I wish to give you my vote of thanks for the stand you take."

The Old Boy writes: "The best plays, in my mind, are those where the character is so uniformly worth while that nobody cares too far and away about anybody, and the punishment is not the end, but the capable

class of its followers, who might invite me to dry up and blow away. "One never fully realizes the limitations and liberations of the screen drama till he sees the picture-play version of a long-remembered stage success of earlier days, such, for instance, as 'The Old Homestead.' The screen's recent barbaric destruction of that sweet, melodious old play, that delighted hundreds of thousands during a record run of four years in New York, was an outrageous massacre that ought not to be perpetrated perpetration. Them's my sentiments."

"And I do miss the comedies of Mr. and Mrs. Drew. They were so dependably humorous and so seldom exceeding the limit of possibility. Much of the lamerick stuff that is handed us now is such a bore that frequently an entire audience endures throughout the dull sufficiency in general silence. The performing dumb brutes are often far more remarkable than the human clowns."

"But pardon a garrulous and perhaps crotchety Old Boy for this infliction. He hopes his brags have hurt nobody's ears. And more power to your elbow, H. M. N. You're doin' noble."

(Gee! You've got a worse grouch than I usually wear. But I'm forced to admit there's a large measure of justice in your viewpoint. You're right—absolutely—about the Drew comedies. The passing of Sidney Drew left a vacant place in pictures that has never been filled. Several have attempted to carry on after his husband's death were unsuccessful. He was the guiding spirit. But I do not mean by this to discount her part in their work. She must have been responsible to a great extent, for the delightful domestic atmosphere in all of their pictures. And don't forget! There was a real idea back of every picture they did.)

ALWAYS MAKE A HIT There are two comic features "The Terrible" and "The Banquet" and "The Town of the Trolleys," both from the talented hand of Fortunate Fox, that always arrest the attention they appear on the comic page of the Evening Public Ledger. "Stain It A Habit."

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