

ARE MOVIE STARS DOPES?

DO THEY KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS OR DON'T THEY?
ARE THEY REALLY INTELLIGENT? HERE'S HOW THEY RESPOND WHEN THEIR
MENTALITY IS PUT ON THE LINE ON TV'S POPULAR "20 QUESTIONS"

by Robert Perkins



"20 Questions" panelists: Fred Van Deventer, Florence Rinard, guest Ann Rutherford (back) Johnny McPhee, Herb Polesie.





Virginia Mayo and her husband, Mike O'Shea, engage in goonery at premiere. Are they always as crazy as this?



Jay Jackson, "20 Questions" M.C., checks score with Producer Gary Stevens. It's on the Du Mont network.



Swanson scored too.



Rathbone was smart.



Kim did very well.

Standout Stewart.



Mac really had it.

ARE MOVIE stars dopes? The answer is *no*. Even if it is fashionable to think of movie queens as beautiful but dumb—it's still *no*.

Or to whisper: "Clever actor, but not a brain in his head, poor fellow. You know how it is, my dear. The directors tell them *every* move. It's all they can do to collect those fat checks, and head for the swimming pools they call home. . . ."

Fashionable, but baloney, my dear—that is, if the fun and intellectual, radio-TV "20 Questions" program is any criterion (*which it is*).

The program is the modern version of the old parlor game, *Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral*, and it demands a panel of players with well-informed brains in high gear. The oldest, most popular panel show, it dotes on the movie stars who appear on it. Says its spokesman: "Movie-people stupidity is a colossal myth. We've learned that glamour and brains go together like ham and eggs. Not a single film star, who's worked with us as a guest panelist, has failed to answer at least one subject. Hollywood, we'll certify, has a high I. Q."

New York University's Professor Rudolph Flesch devoted a chapter in his book, "The Art Of Clear Thinking," to the deductive-reasoning aspects of "20 Questions." So they should know what they're talking about, yes?

Jimmy Stewart is a good example of an intelligent movie star—and one much beloved by "20." (CONTINUED ON PAGE 70)


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had just been secretly married. They became so incensed at other celeb patrons being so persistent in teasing them, they ankled out of the place in a huff—Cy first with Gloria trailing behind...

Clark Gable plunked down \$3,000 for a Schiaparelli - designed evening gown which Suzanne Dadolle Dabadie was modeling for the famous Parisian designer in her celebrated salon in Paris. Glamorous Susie got the gown, Clark got the kick out of surprising her with it. Schiaparelli, of course, got the loot...

Peggy Lee and her spouse, Brad Dexter, battle right out loud in Hollywood night clubs—but it's purely for laughs and busybodies who think otherwise are falling for the gag.

Eddie Cantor wishes his daughter Marilyn would settle down and get married and skip trying to break into show-business circles. Her new night club act with two male singers is getting her nowhere fast...

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz will soon hit the high income tax bracket that is enjoyed (?) by Mary Pickford, Norma Shearer and other rich movie personalities...

Nome, Alaska, will never be the same now that the small town, hard by the Bering Sea, has been invaded by Hollywood in the persons of actress Dorothy Arnold, singer Michael Rayhill, scribes Lynn Bowers and Sean O'Shea, photographer Peter Perri and this reporter. At

least that is the opinion of the Nome Visitors Association who sponsored a weeks' visit for the group to the gold-laden beach town in cooperation with Alaska Airlines. Wearing a flock of especially designed Lago gowns and bathing suits, it was the ex-Mrs. Joe Di Maggio who was able to show the Nome natives a thing or two—the kind of things that make Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell and Janet Leigh so popular with the movie-going public in Alaska.

With awe-struck eskimos serving as suitable background, it was Dorothy Arnold and Mike Rayhill emerging from the waters of the Bering Sea, that gave the Nomites their first taste of life as it is lived in Hollywood. Spurning any warmth-giving togs, the two young film personalities frolicked in and out of the surf while more than fifteen white (belogia) whales were sighted offshore. Proving there are movie fans scattered throughout the world, members of the visiting group were constantly being besieged with questions about Betty Grable, Alice Faye, Elizabeth Taylor, Tony Curtis, Tab Hunter and Farley Granger. When Rayhill, Charlie Morrison's newest singing discovery at the Mocambo, entertained the populace at Nome's Wallace Hotel in the Bering Sea Club, the requests for songs ranged from "Trail Of The Lonesome Pine" to "Ruby." Mark the Nome, Alaska, area as Hollywood's next big vacation playland—John Payne, Clark Gable, Barbara Stanwyck, Andrea King, Debbie Reynolds and Rock Hudson are but a few of the stars who will be trekking north to Nome come Spring in search of fish, game and gold... END

ARE MOVIE STARS DOPES?

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45]

"We play '20 Questions,' along with the program, at home," Jimmy says. "My wife and I never miss the show—and our friends always run over for a cup of sugar just at game time—then they forget the sugar, stay to match wits with the panelists. It's a lot of fun," he added, wagging his lower jaw in a perfect Stewart imitation.

Jimmy performed nobly as a guest on the show's panel, not so long ago. Not only that, he and Mrs. S. hung around, played the game some more with the panel-regulars, for half-an-hour after the show was off the air. "They were like two enthusiastic kids," the report was.

"20" (also heard on Mutual radio) has won citations as the foremost educational show on the air. It's entirely unrehearsed, and fast—a stupid-oaf guest would wreck the show. No denizen of the film capital has ever thus brought dishonor to the fair name of Hollywood. Least of all, Gloria Swanson.

Miss Swanson—a few million people are in on the secret, so here goes—is a graduate of the silent-film era, complete with gilded bathtub, DeMille in puttees, Gloria in the tub. Those days, there was a

premium on looks—brains were a handicap which could be overlooked if you knew someone. Gloria was automatically rated as a looker and a clothes horse. It's true that the petite Swanson looks better in rags than most women do in Dior's latest, but this clothes horse also owns, and personally operates, a factory that makes commercial abrasives. You should hear her talking shop with the abrasive tycoons!

"On '20 Questions,'" I was told, "Gloria did herself proud—was a credit to the acting profession. She also broke the news that she had just started a large dress-making firm."

When Eleanor Steber, the opera singer, was rushed to a hospital for an emergency appendectomy just before she was due to be on "20," the show's producer simply phoned actor Sonny Tufts. Unflustered, Tufts did a spectacularly-good job. Sonny, by the way, is a Yale man. Jimmy Stewart went to Princeton. These are dopes?

The regular experts on the show, you'll be enchanted to learn, are: Jay Jackson, moderator; panelists: Fred Van Deventer, the news analyst who invented the game's

radio/TV form; Florence Rinard (Mrs. Van), a musician; Herb Polesie, radio & movie producer; and Dick Harrison, a 14-year-old student who just succeeded Johnny McPhee, now taking graduate work at Cambridge University. He originally replaced Bobby Van Deventer, who used grandmother McGuire's name so there wouldn't be too damn much family here. A guest star is chosen from movies, stage, television or public life.

From the films come such peachy guests as Pat Neal, who's not only peachy, but also witty, and quick on the trigger. Pat announced her marriage to Raoul Dahl, magazine writer, member of the RAF, and the one who coined the word *gremelin*. He had become addicted to the show by way of the Armed Forces Radio Service, insisted that Pat try to get on the show.

Wendy Barrie received an ultimatum from her dear old mother, in Ireland, a faithful listener via the BBC. "Th' back o' me hand to ye, darlin', if yer not on th' show someday," the sweet old lady said, and meant. Who could resist such charm? And so sweet, and so strong, her revered mother

"20" likes to say it's a "mental shower bath, whose refreshing waters are the questions on things animal, vegetable and mineral." Using the code A for animal, V for vegetable, and M for mineral, leave us—sorry—let us peek at some of the bruisers people have sent in to hornswoggle the experts. Could you have guessed:

- The Augusta National Golf Club (VM)?
- Rip Van Winkle's Beard (A)?
- An Income Tax Blank (VM)?
- Sherlock Holmes' Violin (AVM)?
- The Snakes That St. Patrick Drove Out Of Ireland (A)?

Funnily enough, these didn't bother the panelists in the least—movie visitors knocked off three of them. What did stump them, however, were two esoteric items—a clothespin, and a turnip!

Macdonald Carey is so enamored of "20," that he requests a recording to run off at home if he has to miss seeing, or hearing, a session. "Mac was on the panel for the seventh anniversary show," said a spokesman. "He turned in his customary bangup job, complete with subtle humor. At a party, afterwards, he was introduced to over 30 people. Four hours later, when they were leaving, Mac shook hands with all 30 and called each by name. That's a feat!"

The official "20" word on these quote Hollywood dopes unquote is that they do fully as well as any other particular type, "in fact, our best educators aren't a bit better."

And they're not buttering up the stars—don't have to—anyone tapped for the program is tickled pink. After all, "20" has so-far received 15 million letters—which is quite an audience. Especially since they don't give fancy prizes, à la 20-room furnished home; limit themselves, instead, to two inexpensive ones available to those sending in quiz-subjects. If their subject is used, the prize is a dictionary. If the panel muffs it, an encyclopedia. To contestants accustomed to winning refrigerators, these would

seem extremely dull, but 15 million eager beavers disagree.

Movie star guests, same as the others, get very little briefing before the show begins. The animal, etc., classifications are defined, they're told they must guess the subject within 20 questions (*addressed to the moderator*) to win, and are cautioned against speaking except when addressed by the moderator. But if there is one thing "20" is touchy about, it's even the mere hint that the panel is ever tipped off, in advance, about the answers. Conclusions are reached solely via logic, deduction, memory and knowledge.

"We can document that!" they say grimly. Point to the fact that in seven-and-a-half years, only 33 shows have been perfect, i. e., all subjects guessed. "That's proof," they insist, and add: "any higher average would suggest that the show was fixed."

Barbara Britton was one of the smart guests—she's movies and TV. She was watching the show on television, one night, when one of the animal subject's description fitted her—in fact, she was the animal. It delighted her so, she called her agent and told him that she had to be on the show.

Blonde, lovely Virginia Mayo showed up as guest-guesser with actor-husband Mike O'Shea in tow. Mike sat in the audience to encourage his wife. Not really necessary, since many kind gentlemen in the audience devoted themselves to encouraging her

When "20" makes a mistake, it hears about it—the studio switchboard looks like an overdressed Christmas tree. One night the subject was octopus—Moderator Jackson said it was a fish. The switchboard was bursting with flashing lights—one represented the Director of the American Museum Of Natural History. "The octopus," he said, sternly, "is not a fish, it's a molusk." They never know who's waiting to pounce on an error.

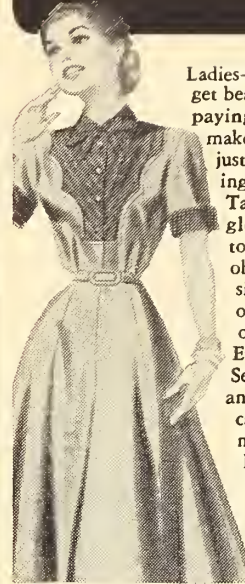
One of the most enthusiastic visitors was Basil Rathbone. He was dressed in evening clothes, had an engagement following "20". Basil was in sparkling good form playing the game, enjoyed himself hugely, hated to leave after the program was finished. Looking down at his formal, black clothes, he turned to Van Deventer, said: "I just realized that I look like a folded umbrella"

Director Alfred Hitchcock was his customary intelligent self on his 20-appearance—though he was restrained, in that he didn't try to shock anyone. This is the very same gent who announced, years ago, that actors were cattle.

Kim Hunter, pretty as a picture, and ten times as smart, was both decorative and helpful when she sat in. She was also able to announce that she had just won the Academy Award for her acting in "A Streetcar Named Desire."

Did someone say: "They probably stick in a lot of pushover subjects to make it easy for the movie crowd, don't you agree?" The answer is no. "The questions are lined up three weeks ahead," "20's" spokesman said, "and they stay just as they are. We barely know ahead of air time who our guest is going to be. And we don't cater to any group. A

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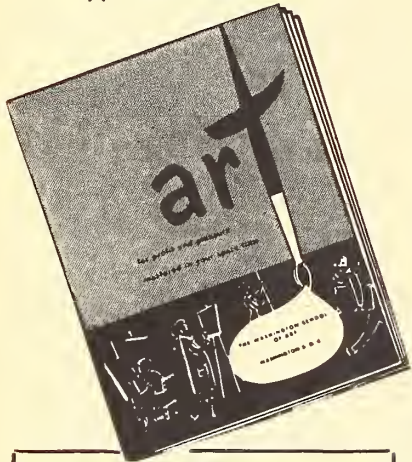
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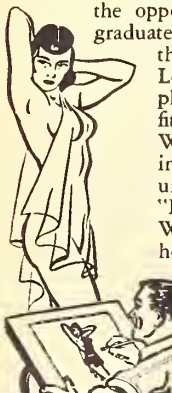


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political question, when a senator was on, would be a coincidence, that's all."

Macdonald Carey has been a guest on "20" on four shows, and they're counting on more of him. Ann Rutherford, momentarily retired from the flickers, has guested here several times.

And speaking of the dreamy Rutherford, let her record represent the movie

bunch. On one show, Ann guessed three subjects—the all-time high for any visiting guest—any category. Since there are only about eight subjects (plus a few quickies) on any show, this meant that Ann had, alone, answered almost half the show's questions!

Are movie stars dopes?

What do you think . . .

END

MAGGI'S PRIVATE WIRE

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47]

Xavier Cugat will be approached to illustrate the tome, and all the famous stage, screen and TV stars who'll contribute their favorite culinary suggestions will be caricatured sporting pigs' snouts.

Marie Wilson had to be talked out of having a poodle cut to match her new pet, a miniature white French poodle. She was on her way to her Beverly Hills Hotel hairdresser for the new coiffure when she ran into socialite-columnist Cobina Wright, Sr., who talked her out of the idea—it was a close call, or as Irma said, "I almost had a close shave, didn't I?" . . .

Herb Shriner and his "Two For The Money" telecast were auditioned before several thousand servicemen to get the proper reaction before the program's sponsor signed on the dotted line. Now the comedian insists a group of G.I.'s be invited to attend every rehearsal of the show. After each performance they then are his guests for refreshments prior to showtime . . .

Zamah Cunningham, Jackie Gleason's "Mother"—Mrs. Reggie Van Gleason—on "Mr. Saturday Night's" telecast, is being sought to team up with Patsy Kelly for a comedy program tailored along the lines of the old Marie Dressler-Polly Moran comedy films of yesteryear . . .

For her "White Collar Girl" telefilm series, Laraine Day (*Mrs. Leo Durocher*) wore \$300.00 dresses which will be copied and sold in national department stores next Spring at \$19.95 each . . .

If Joan Crawford has her way (and who's to say she won't?) the credits for her "The World And I" teleseries will credit not only her gowns, furs and jewels, but her bra and foundation garments, manufactured by a concern paying her a royalty annually as fashion consultant . . .

For the Peter Lind Hayes and Mary Healy telefilm series, "It Seems Like Yesterday," one of the behind-the-scenes consultants is Grace Hayes, one-time vaudeville-cafe headliner, and mother of Peter Lind. A top-ranking star in her day, her son and daughter-in-law accept suggestions she makes particularly for atmospheric music because, "music sets the mood for every emotion—comedy and tragedy—and nothing could be finer than 'Dinah' played softly in the background

for any situation comedy about showbusiness folk," opines the inimitable Grace Hayes . . .

Randy Merriman of "The Big Payoff" thinks his co-star, Bess Myerson, would be fine in a modernized version of "Lysistrata," the Aristophanes classic, on TV. They devote most of their spare time delving through the many former stage versions of the great comedy hoping to come up with a treatment suitable for a 30-minute telecast . . .

It's hard to believe that Warner Anderson, "The Doctor," didn't make his TV debut until two seasons ago when he appeared on Kraft Television Theatre. He's one of the most popular and talented actors we have today. Even more startling is the fact he made his Broadway debut in 1917 in the cast of "Maytime." He's a big bobby-soxer favorite despite his grey-streaked hair . . .

Art Carney who plays, among other characters, Reggie Van Gleason's confused father on the Jackie Gleason show, is actually two years younger than "Mr. Saturday Night." Approached about starring in a TV show of his own, comedian Carney wasn't too enthusiastic. Watching Jackie Gleason work and worry through each of his programs, must be the reason Carney's settling for his featured position in the TV Hall of Fame . . .

I wonder if sometimes Ruthie Gilbert wouldn't like to let loose on the Milton Berle show with a dramatic interpretation of "Uncle Miltie's" bird-like secretary. Acclaimed now for her scatter-brained *Marine*, the actress won Broadway raves when she created the role of the shoplifter in "Detective Story," a sizzling, crackling drama. When she isn't rehearsing for the Berle program, she studies dramatic technique and just in case her fans won't believe it, she's memorizing "Victoria Regina," "Twelfth Night" and "Mary Of Scotland" plays which once starred Helen Hayes on Broadway—determination is one of *Marine's* greater assets. It's Ruthie Gilbert's, too! . . .

Johnny Johnston's plan to enter the TV private eye field has a novel twist—he'll be a romantic troubadour-type (complete with mandolin, guitar and uke) and track down the criminal-at-large by plucking strings and singing a song instead of totting a gun and smoking a pipe . . .