

# R E C E P T I O N S T A F F



## Review



30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZ

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NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

NOVEMBER, 1935

## A Royal Interview

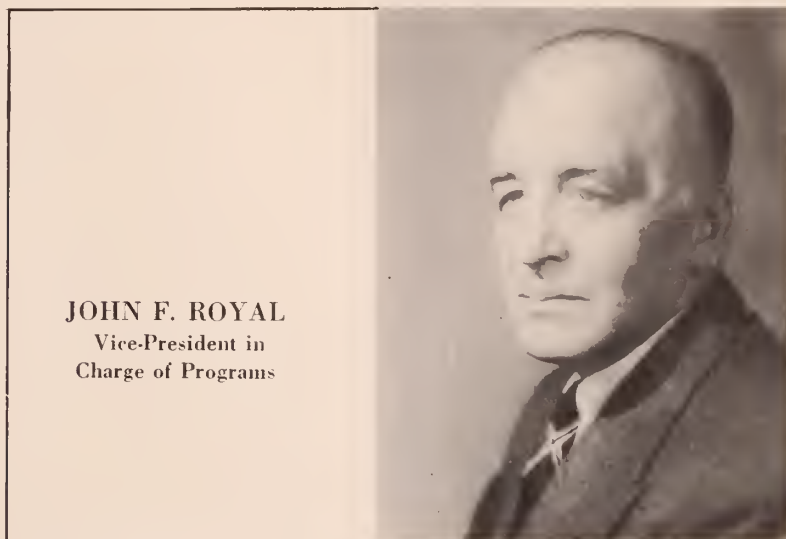
Mr. John Royal, whom we all know as Vice-President-in-Charge-of-Programs, spoke briefly but cogently. We learned from him, in fifteen very short minutes, smatterings on everything from a real-life Horatio Alger office-boy-to-executive epitome to pertinent data on the intricacies and composition of SHOWMANSHIP.

"As a boy, I made it a practice to read the newspapers almost from beginning to end. I kept a sort of mental assignment book which enabled me to talk and think intelligently on all current events. Many years ago I was an office-boy on the *Boston Post*; I made it a point to do everything possible to keep the boss conscious of my existence—to make him feel that I was an integral and vital part of the organization."

Along these lines, it came about that young Royal's ambition and ability were soon appreciated. When only eighteen years old, he became a reporter (and consequently bought his first pair of long trousers); later, when assistant city editor, he was hired by the Keith Circuit to begin active work on his life interest—SHOWMANSHIP. After nineteen years with the vaudeville chain, Mr. Royal accepted the position of director and general manager of WTAM; in 1931, he came to New York as director of NBC programs.

"A showman," said Mr. Royal, "is a man who can first arouse the emotions of his audience and then please them. For example, watch the visitors' reaction as the guides describe the stratosphere exhibit on the fourth floor; they may be amused, merely interested, or not even listening. It's all up to the speaker. Each guide has the same story to tell but **THE WAY HE TELLS IT** is what distinguishes the SHOWMAN from the "ordinary human."

**Keeping up with the news** is the first job of the radio showman. When the *Normandie* arrives, he must be prepared for it; when the President speaks at San Diego, everything has to be pre-arranged; when an important building is dedicated, when a ship burns, when the local mayor makes a speech, the showman must be on the job. Secondly, when things are quiet and there is no front-page news, it is up to the showman to **MAKE** some. He is not only called upon to produce ideas but also to be able to put them into practice. If he can't persuade his friends to make a stratosphere flight, he can do it himself. Anything, whether it be tragic, awe-inspiring, humorous, or merely un-



JOHN F. ROYAL  
Vice-President in  
Charge of Programs

usual, which hits at the emotions (in a favorable way) of the listening audience, is of concern to the radio showman."

Although Mr. Royal went on to tell us about the construction, personnel, and general business of the Program Department, we have neither the space nor the ability to do justice, at this time, to his pithy, if sketchy, account. However, he promised that some time soon he would come down and give an informal talk on his department to the Reception Staff.

**Borst Promotion**—In December 1933, James Borst enlisted as a page at NBC. In January he became a guide and soon began work on the Guide Manual. A year later he and Wendell Gibbs were appointed Guide Trainers which, upon the resignation of Gibbs, elevated Jim to the post of Guide Captain, which he has filled capably since the early part of 1935. Jim has worked industriously and untiringly for the betterment of the Guide Staff; he has made many changes and has been instrumental in affecting many definite improvements in spite of many obstacles. There are few employees in the company whose general knowledge of the Studio Section surpasses that of Mr. Borst's. The "Commander" now represents the Guest Tours Division during evening hours alternating in this responsibility with Mr. Dwight W. Herrick.

To fill the position of Acting Guide Captain left vacant by this promotion, Mr. Tart has selected Gerard Wolke, Night Page Captain; the First and Second Lieutenants respectively under Mr. Wolke are Messrs. Peterson, Gormley, and Tormey.

## RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW



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VOL. I

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NO. 9

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**A Successful Venture**

A consensus of opinion indicates that the 1935 Brass Buttons Revue has surpassed the fondest expectations of even the most skeptical critics. Laudatory phrases such as the following indicate public sentiment: "An entertaining show, well conceived, well organized and well performed"—"Program terrific"—"What has Major Bowes got that you haven't?"—"If it was up to us, you would all get an extra week's pay"—"Everybody did a grand job"—"The twins swallowed Brass Buttons but loved it." Praise, praise and more praise should go to Evening Page Captain Ray Sullivan, author of the script and organizer of the show; to Mr. W. Le Roy Marshall for his fine work as musical director; to Mr. Thomas Tart, Reception Supervisor, for his liberal and untiring cooperation to make the show possible; to Mr. Albert Walker, for his diligent work in supervising the general organization of facilities; to Mr. Joseph S. Bell, NBC Production Department, for guiding the program through its final stages of preparation; and to Mr. H. E. Kenny, NBC Engineering Department, for his commendable work in monitoring the program.

**We Are Grateful**

On behalf of all who do derive some measure of enjoyment from reading the RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW, the editors wish to thank Messrs. R. C. Patterson, Jr., Edgar Kobak, David Rosenblum, and Quinton Adams for their official acceptance of our journal and for making it possible for our readers to receive future issues with greater regularity and in improved typographical dress. For all this we are extremely grateful.

The new and improved RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW will hereafter appear on the first of every month. Through the means of improved printing facilities the regular appearance of the paper has been assured.

**Another "First"**

RECEPTION SETS THE PACE—We're passing another milestone on the road toward closer employee relationship. Mr. John R. Carey has just approved the proposal submitted by Mr. Thomas Tart suggesting a DINNER DANCE to commemorate the close of another successful baseball season. This event is the first of its kind to be sponsored by NBC Reception. All employees of the National Broadcasting Company will be invited to attend. Plans are now being formulated. Watch our next issue for developments.

**Watch For It**

The December issue of the RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW will contain an announcement of great importance to all members of Reception.

## Chatter

GO AHEAD AND SUE ME BUT... Is there any truth to the rumor that one of the hostesses is studying engineering? ... And does Page Wightman know that an NBC tourist noted that he bears a close resemblance to Rudy Vallée ... Have you noticed that Uppan Adam Gayeck comes into the locker room every morning crooning a love song?

Don't you like those cute little mincing steps of Denny Dennison as he goes tripping through the halls? ... And we understand that Kirkland, popular entrepreneur, on his last excursion to Philadelphia, was caught pinching babies in a Sears-Roebuck store ... Gracie Stillman is certain that the University of Pittsburgh football team will be the national champs this year. You know the U. of Pitt is her alma mater.

In spite of the fact that all day long the fellows are running into "amateurs," Vinnie Ragusa is the only one on the Reception Staff to cop a prize on one of these programs ... Hallenback is an accomplished musician, playing the piano and cornet with equal ability ... Mrs. Price probably knows more radio artists than any one else in Reception ... Mickey McFadden is still walking around stoop-shouldered since lugging a pack transmitter all over the golf links during the Ryder Cup broadcasts.

Have you seen Joe "Guide" Cook's Italo-Ethiopian war maps? He has everything figured out and is momentarily expecting a call from the "Lion of Judah" ... Johnny Wagenman is once more a family man now that he is on the Day Force ... Ernie Clark's left hand man, Mocarski, wishes that NBC had a basketball team ... Why doesn't Monte Miller either pull up his shoes or pull down his trousers? He must get a terrific draught around his ankles ... I'll sign off now with this bit of advice: "Keep your chins up, fellows, or you're liable to cut it on the razor-like edge of those night collars."

Fall out!







## Shines On:

**FREDERIC M. KIRKLAND**, our No. 1 exhibit. We know him for his untiring work on the RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW, for his superior abilities as a writer, and for his shrewdness in ascertaining the essential value of a situation.

**MARY L. IRVINE**, our one-time radiant, cheery fellow Main Haller, who moves up. Her precise work came to the attention of the Treasurer's Dept. and soon she was afforded a trial in that department. We all knew what the result would be—Miss Irvine has been permanently transferred from out of our midst into the sanctum sanctorum.

**DORIAN ST. GEORGE**, former guide, who found the radio knowledge acquired at NBC helpful in aiding him to qualify for a position offered by Station WLVA, Lynchburg, Virginia. Besides announcing, "Saint" is receiving technical training and experience under the tutelage of the studio engineers.

**ROBERT COTTINGHAM**, Reception office man, who is another promotion to the Press Dept. An unlimited capacity for accurate work coupled with an excellence in typewriter manipulation has rewarded him at last.

**MANDEVILLE WEBB**, who after only a short stay in Reception as page and office relief man, was promoted to Press. We have no doubt "Mandy" will make his way as well in his new capacity as he did when he was one of us.

### Acknowledgment

The time and place is proper for mention of our appreciation to Messrs. Willan C. Roux, in charge of Advertising, NBC Sales Promotion Dept., for supervising and executing our new RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW; Frank C. Chizzini, Sales Promotion, for his helpful and beneficial editorial advice; and Harrison W. Bullard, Sales Promotion Production Manager, for suggestions relating to the physical improvement of the paper.

To Mr. Wayne L. Randall, Manager, NBC Press Dept.; Mr. A. A. Schecter, News Editor; Miss Betty Goodwin, Fashion Editor; and Emil Corwin, Editor NBC News Service, for their continued interest, advice, and guidance in perpetuating the future of the RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW.

## Past, Present and Future

BY GEORGE M. NELSON  
Manager, NBC Mail Room

### Editor's Note:

*Mr. George M. Nelson was born in Melrose Castle, Fauquier County, Virginia. He attended private schools until bad health sent him to Texas, New Mexico and California. He then came to New York and attended Columbia University for two years; later he joined the 47-Workshop Class of Professor Baker at Harvard. In 1917 Nelson joined the U. S. Army, serving for nearly three years—eighteen months of which were spent in France.*

*Mr. Nelson has been a member of the Author's League of America for twenty years, and is also a member of the American Dramatist Society. He has had five plays produced. One of them, STRINGS, was presented in both England and America.*

In the spring of 1929, the last year that it pleases us to remember as the era of prosperity, I received a mystery telephone call. The cheery voice announced that Ruth Keeler desired a more intimate knowledge of my place of "room and board." I had met Miss Keeler only twice and her lively interest in my present lodgings was not without a quiver of curiosity. She assured me that a "love-letter" would be forthcoming and upon arrival at my hotel that evening I was confronted with one of those "special-messenger" documents for which the NBC is justly famed. I had anticipated an invitation to a dance and the disclosure that it was an invitation to be a fixture at 711 Fifth Avenue was not without interest and an element of flattery.

I was naturally a bit perturbed by the offer. I was quite content in my present association and this had to be a quick, a momentous decision for me. After a friendly half-hour interview with Mr. Mark Woods, whom I immediately liked and a conference with a famed astrologist, who unhesitatingly declared that it was imperative that I make the change, I began my career with the National Broadcasting Company on May 20th, 1929.

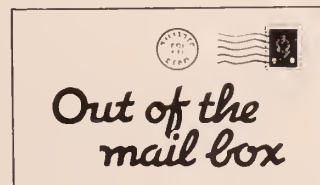
Without the formality of a personal introduction, or the knowledge of a single name of any one of the group of young men whose destiny I was to pilot, I took command with an animated sympathy for the late and lamented Daniel as he faced the lions.

A hectic six months ensued. Telephone calls came in with stream-like proportions. Complaints were registered and questions were asked as to whose face adorned a five-cent stamp and when would a letter be delivered in South Africa. I do not exaggerate when I say that I worked nine months during those first six. It was all very mystifying. I was not at all sure that I had not hitched my wagon to an ill-fated star. After six months of apprenticeship came the dawn. My traditional fighting blood was up. It was do or die—and I did! I stayed.

And here I am, after nearly seven years with only one of my original staff at the helm. A great many young men have come and gone since then. Quite a few of them are now carving a niche of permanency for themselves in various other departments in the company.

The Mail Room's functions are many-sided. We have not only acted as escorts for children, but also for cats. We have picked up and passed around engagement rings, we have been called upon to kill and pick a duck!

And now, in a mood of retrospect, I can truthfully say that I am more than glad that I answered Miss Keeler's call. I am proud and happy to have been an associate worker for and with this enterprise whose achievements are world history, whose end will never be in sight, and whose scores of talented, splendid men and women are a constant source of inspiration. And to those who have granted to me the rare privilege of their friendship, I have many cherished memories—and their names, like their faces, are indelibly inscribed in my heart.



On March 13, 1934, Gerard Wolke was employed as an NBC page. Within a few months Mr. Wolke, through his superior work and cooperation, started his rise to success within the company.

His first promotion was to Second Lieutenant on the Evening Page Staff, and on February 14th, 1935, he became the Evening Page Captain. In this capacity he displayed excellent judgment in the performance of the many duties and responsibilities that a position of this type entails.

In his contacts with the Evening Page Staff he has shown a spirit of leadership that has

won the complete cooperation of the boys. He has proven himself to be tolerant, tactful, willing, and ambitious.

His work has always been of the highest standard, and for this reason the members of his staff have received excellent training and advice. The majority of the guides are graduates of the Evening Page Staff.

I do not feel that there is another man on the Page or Guide Staffs more deserving of the guide captaincy than Gerard Wolke, in view of his many qualifications already displayed.

THOMAS TART,  
Reception Supervisor

*Let's get acquainted with*



JIM COSTELLO

You ought to know Jim Costello of the Bronx, New York.

—because he has grown, during twenty-three of the world's worst years to be a handsome six-foot specimen of masculine humanity.

—because his tennis is not so good that you cannot beat him after a little application. (Ask Burke Boyce about the time he lost two decks of cigarettes on a bet that Jim would beat Jack Tracy.)

—because his interest in dramatics and writing has always been deep enough to keep him active in both of these fields. In this respect, he wrote for his college paper during his two and a half years' attendance at Manhattan. He has worked with amateur and stock companies as writer, actor and director.

—because his interest has never been one-sidedly academic. At college he participated in varsity sports on the track, cross-country and football teams.

—because he has studied architecture and designing, both of which still remain as his chief avocations.

—because it took him just a year to secure his advancement from guide to continuity writer, in which capacity he does the opening announcements for all foreign broadcasts and featured speakers, writes ten sustaining shows and checks sustaining program scripts.

—because this promotion has not gone to his head. He never addresses a page as "Hey, you," or "Here, boy."

—because the warmth and color of his writing takes a little of the starch out of the usual formal continuity.

Therefore, we give you a "stout fella," Jim Costello.

## WE WONDER—

When the apathy of our readers will cease and contributions to our pages will start coming in?

Whether the executives responsible for the improved issue of our paper realize our appreciation and incidentally how much intra-company good-will they have created?

Who the first executive will be that will volunteer his services for the departmental lectures to the staff now that the winter season has started?

Why the fellows don't start a "Vigilante Committee" to deal with the few spoilers who delight in messing up the locker room by throwing lunch bags and newspapers all over the floor and thus making it more messy for the rest of us?

If the idea of a big 8H Christmas Party for all NBC couldn't be sponsored by some enterprising executive?

If a sustaining spot on the air couldn't be given our NBC Glee Club at regular intervals.

If everyone knows that the RECEPTION STAFF REVIEW now has an office. It is Room 297 located off the corridor which leads to the stage elevator on the second floor, studios section. Please address all future queries to the REVIEW care of this address.

If too many of us don't stop to realize that the General Library is one place where quiet must be maintained at all times. Loud conversation is disturbing to those whose work of necessity requires deep concentration. The library should be that one spot which we can always count on as being free from disturbance.

## News in Brief

● Jimmy Gibney, NBC Page, heard The Honeymooners (Grace and Eddie Albert) sing Jimmy's first attempt at lyric writing, "What Could Be More Lovely Than Love?," on their Saturday morning program on WJZ at 11 A.M., October 19, 1935. Paul Ames, composer of the tune, and Jimmy Gibney, lyricist of the team, have never met in person. This song was created by mail order and it is probably one of the few times that a number has had the music fitted around the words. The piece is smooth and beautiful—this on the authority of all who have heard it. This includes such NBC featured artists as Dorothy Lamour, Ward and Muzey, The Honeymooners, and Ozzie Nelson. Three more songs are now in the process of being written by this song-writing duo.

● Jack Brennan, the Locker Room's versatile buffoon, and Don Gardiner, Guide Hill Billy, represented Reception at RCA's banquet to its New York and New Jersey dealers in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, on Wednesday evening, October 9, 1935. The guests of honor included General J. G. Harbord, Chairman of the Board of the RCA, Mr. David Sarnoff, president of the RCA, Colonel Richard C. Patterson, Jr., executive vice-president of the NBC, and Mr. E. T. Cunningham, president of the RCA Manufacturing Company. The entertainment for the occasion was supplied by Paul Whiteman and Company, The Four Inkspots, Lucille Manners, Senator Fishface, Abe Lyman and His Hollywood Club Revue, Jack Brennan, Don Gardiner with Graham McNamee as master of ceremonies. Jack Brennan gave his impersona-

tions of Fred Allen, Maurice Chevalier, Ed Wynn, and Tizzy Lish as only Jack can do, while Don Gardiner offered as his contribution to the cause a self-written, self-directed, and self-acted one-act Hill Billy play.

● Miss Kathryn Lillis, NBC Hostess, was married to Mr. Edward Hall, Tuesday, October 29, 1935 at the Church of St. Aloysius, Jersey City, N. J., at 10 A.M. The newlyweds will be at home on East 73rd Street after November 4th. Mr. Hall is associated with the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company.

● In the month of September there were over 14,131 pieces of mail "By Hand Delivery" made without a single loss; 22,500 calls for pages were answered; 56,897 guests attended 688 broadcasts; 62,006 people were conducted on tours through the studios; the hostesses on the second floor, studio section, answered approximately 3,200 questions, and the office man in Room 284 received over 11,000 phone calls.

● Miss Helen Slater, until recently secretary to Mr. John R. Carey, has been promoted to assist Mr. A. A. Schechter, News Editor, Press Department.

### Minute Interviews:

● Edgar Kobak: "I believe that the little folder gotten out by the Reception Staff has the makings of a real publication." (Excerpt from a memo to Mr. R. C. Patterson, Jr., Sept. 9, 1935.)

● Thomas Tart: "Every vacancy which occurs in NBC nearly always calls for a knowledge of shorthand and typing." (Excerpt from an interview, Oct. 5, 1935.)