

It Takes Heap o' Fussin' to Make a Hall Into a Home For Major Political Parties' National Conventions

GOP and Democrats Work Harmoniously On Arrangements.

By AL JEDLICKA

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Amid buzz and bedlam, color and decoration, and teeming thousands with their tingling enthusiasm, America holds its great political conventions every four years.

As convention delegates fuss and fume through the lengthy, historic sessions, millions of Americans throughout the nation follow the proceedings with attention and even heat, since either the Republican or the Democratic party embodies the principles they hold most consistent with their social ideals.

During the period of the conventions, well might it be said that the heart of the nation is centered in the localities of the meetings, bounding with the people's delegates, with newspaper men, newsreel men and radio broadcasters milling to flash stories of the unfolding events to an anxious citizenry, and with visitors attracted by the great spectacles.

Normally, cities compete to have the conventions held in their localities, since the delegates' and visitors' expenditures for hotel accommodations, food and entertainment and shopping in the business districts amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. But with the country riding the crest of a profitable war boom this year, with housing facilities taxed and heavy demands made for limited stocks of merchandise, only Chicago actively bid for the conventions, offering each party \$75,000 for expenses. Ordinarily, it costs between \$100,000 and \$150,000 to run a national convention.

When both parties accepted Chicago's bids, financial problems thus were added to other special wartime difficulties confronting Republican Walter Hallanan of Charleston, W. Va., and Democrat Ambrose O'Connell of New York in making arrangements for the conventions. On these two men falls the responsibility of setting up the smooth functioning of the meetings assuring orderly activity on the floor of the conventions and establishing facilities for quick transmission of news to the waiting world outside.

Two Old-Timers.

Both O'Connell and Hallanan are old hands at conventions, O'Connell having attended his first as a member of Al Smith's entourage in 1928, and Hallanan his as a newspaper man in 1912. Although red hot partisans inclined to admit nothing, both men have worked together in making the principal arrangements, since the Republican convention of June 26 will be followed by the Democratic on July 19.

Because of the heavy wartime strain on the railroads, transportation posed one of the big problems of this year's conventions. But the problem promises to be solved by use of day coaches by those within 6 1/2 hours of traveling time of Chicago, and of provision of extra sleeping and dining cars for accredited representatives from farther distances. To assist delegates from Hawaii to attend, the navy will furnish plane service to the mainland.

Next to transportation, housing has presented another major difficulty. Although both parties were assured of approximately 5,000 rooms, the Republicans, for one, could use another 3,000. In quest of extra housing, Hallanan has even



scoured Chicago's outlying apartment districts for accommodations, and it was reported that some good Republicans offered to come to the aid by boarding convention attendants.

As if O'Connell and Hallanan were not having trouble enough, they have been pestered for accommodations by that type of individual who feels that no business is so important as that of finding a particular room for him, even though all hotel arrangements are to be made by the head of the state delegation.

Plenty of Problems.

Preparation of Chicago's huge, streamlined Stadium for this year's conventions has not been without its problems, either. Until the Citizens committee which bid to bring the conventions to Chicago arranged to furnish the Stadium for \$25,000 to each party, Hallanan estimated that the cost of readying the amphitheater alone would amount to \$48,000, not including rental.

The services of over 100 men working about three weeks are demanded for preparing the Stadium. Canopies outside the main entrances must be draped with bunting. One hundred and twenty flags must be hung from the rafters to sway impressively above the floor. Three emergency "hospitals" must be set up and equipped with medical goods, light and water. A huge platform holding 180 people must be constructed, with a special conference room underneath it. And, of course, seats enclosed within stanchions for the different state delegations must be put up.

Elaborate preparations must be made to accommodate the press, newsreel and radio, especially this year when the two conventions will attract international attention. Already, reservations have been asked by newspaper representatives from Britain, Russia, South America, China, Sweden and French Africa, and, in all, about 3,000 observers with their technicians will be on the job to describe the proceedings to the U. S. and world.

Not only will the press be seated in front of the main platform, but a special newsroom will be provided in the basement. At both places, telephone and telegraph facilities must be established to send out stories from the building. Darkrooms will be constructed for photographers to develop pictures.

Microphones Everywhere.

Important for transmitting the actual reality of the convention atmosphere to the world, all four of America's great radio networks will make elaborate arrangements for covering every detail of the conventions.

Contact will be made with delegations through microphones on the floor; portable equipment will be used to interview dignitaries throughout the entire building; special booths will be erected to accommodate the radio commentators, and facilities will be installed to

pick up the rumbling, rolling peal of the huge Stadium organ.

Approximately \$6,000 will be spent by the parties to furnish newsreel men with enough lighting to take moving pictures of the proceedings. With 10,000-watt incandescent searchlight units set up, enough light to illuminate a medium-size town will be provided cameramen shooting from the high rafters. This lighting must be arranged to permit shooting without causing blind spots from too much light on any one point.

In making a success of a convention, the little things are as important as the big ones, and sometimes the little things cause as much bother as the big ones.

For instance, O'Connell and Hallanan have had their difficulties providing badges and tickets. Because of wartime, metals have been unavailable for badges, and it has been necessary to secure plastic material.

To convention-wise Ambrose O'Connell, there is more to badges than meets the eye. For instance, they must be so designed as to avoid catching onto clothing and ripping it, and all kinds of different types must be used to restrict the movements of the various attendants throughout the Stadium.

Tickets a Headache, Too.

Also because of wartime, there has been a scarcity of certain paper stocks, a condition of particular pique to bustling Walter Hallanan, since it is necessary to print tickets on material that cannot easily be counterfeited.

Incidentally, in the distribution of tickets to the conventions, each delegation is allotted a percentage, usually depending upon the approximate distance of its state from the meeting site. The idea, of course, being to provide more seats for those who might be able to come in by auto, etc., from neighboring regions. Civic committees which put up the finances to bring the convention to their cities also receive an allotment of duets.

Unique, in that this year's conventions will be the second in the history of this country held during wartime—the first being in 1864—the impending Republican and Democratic meetings are expected to lack some of the flourish and hoopla of bygone days. However, they are not expected to be bereft of all popular enthusiasm so easily stirred over a candidate, or over the expression of a party's outstanding principle stressing the hopes, the aspirations and the achievements of its partisans.

In their excitement over the swift stream of dramatic events often accompanying conventions, even the soberest politicians and statesmen sometimes forget their immediate environment and lapse into what afterwards must characterize as the comic.

For instance, during the 1932 Democratic convention in Chicago, O'Connell remembers the heated fight over the election of a permanent chairman, which would have demonstrated the strength of the contending factions.

As the fight developed, the Mississippi delegation caused, only to find venerable old Senator Pat Harrison absent. Without further ado, some members hurried off to his hotel and after pressing the urgency of the situation upon him, hustled him back to the convention hall in his pajamas, carpet slippers and bathrobe, there to cast his vote.

As Hallanan said, this year's conventions will be marked by the sober restraint of a nation at war. Once events have stirred up the attendants, the enthusiasm may carry over into the typical hysteria of these great national meetings.



IT LOOKS as though history is set to repeat itself and movies will again make America dance mad.

During World War I the Vernon Castles helped the country forget its woes and worries through the medium of grace and rhythm. Now it seems likely that another pair of dancers, Rita Hayworth and Gene Kelly, will accomplish the same thing and set a new vogue in dancing through their fine work

in "Cover Girl." During World War I the folks in the big cities went dance mad. Every gay blade out of a wheel chair and every

deb wanted to imitate Irene and Vernon Castle doing the Castle walk, the hesitation waltz, and what was considered the last word in darning—the tango.

Waltz King and Queen

Then the movies figured if the Castles could pack night spots and legitimate theaters with their dancing, chances were the public in the hinterlands, who had heard about Irene and Vernon, would pay money at the nickelodeons to see the shadows of the famous pair.

So the Castles appeared in "The Whirl of Life" in 1918. It was a great hit, and the dance craze spread through every cranny of the country.

More than two decades ago, in 1920, to be exact, Hollywood discovered its first really great dance star, Mae Murray—blonde, curvaceous, the original Nell Brinkley girl of the "Follies," and a dancer to boot.

When she first came to movies she did western films and was practically unnoticed until Bob Leonard and George Fitzmaurice gave her a chance to dance. In "On With the Dance" Mae was sensational.

Tripping to Fame

Rudolph Valentino made a number of pictures before Rex Ingram let him do the tango in "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," and that single dance with a partner long since forgotten skyrocketed him to fame.

Joan Crawford, then a young, attractive girl, was winning cups for her Charleston and "black bottom" at the Coconut Grove and other hot spots of Hollywood. When she did the same routine before the cameras in such epics as "The Taxi Dancer" and "Our Dancing Daughters" she became a star.

Double Harness

About this time a girl who had attracted no special attention and a dancer from the stage were teamed as second leads in a musical starring Dolores Del Rio and Gene Raymond. The picture was "Flying Down to Rio." After it was shown everyone talked only of the new dance stars—Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. Following this they were co-starred in "The Gay Divorcee," in Jerome Kern's "Roberta," and also "The Life of Irene and Vernon Castle," the saga of the two people who actually introduced tango to the movies.

The New Era

Toumanova, from the Russian ballet, has finished her first film, "Days of Glory," and Hollywood is repeating past mistakes by not letting her dance. Zorina and Baronova both appeared in pictures, and each appearance makes one want more of them.

Ann Miller, one of the newer dancers, is under contract to Columbia. Possibly the Kay Kyser picture in which she's appearing will put her on top.

Gene Kelly, of "Pal Joey" on Broadway, really comes into his own as a dancer in "Cover Girl." His work in the "alter ego" number, in which he dances as himself and his "double," is an amazing thing to watch. And, together with Rita Hayworth, they've got what we're all looking for—youth. Hollywood has made stars of many dancers, has tried to make dancers of many stars. But few have ever managed to gain anything of the luster of Rita and Gene in "Cover Girl."

If they don't start another dance craze in America a lot of people who have already seen the musical are going to be very much surprised.

Always a Showman

Mark Twain always was a showman. I remember him in the theater at a performance given by Julia Marlowe and E. H. Sothern. He was seated alone in a box. The air was chilly, he was dressed completely in white, and with that white shaggy head of his, took half the attention away from the stage. . . . Walt Disney's "Saludos Amigos" has been recorded in Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, in addition to Italian. Before the war, Disney made 10 language versions of his pictures.



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RKO Radio Pictures inaugurates a new daily coast-to-coast radio show on May 29, "Hollywood Star Time," featuring their film favorites of the year; it will originate in the studio dining room. Going out over 177 stations of the Blue network, it will be broadcast daily from Monday through Friday, at 12:15 to 12:30 Pacific Coast time, an hour later in each successive time zone. And Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, equally radio-minded, launches "M-G-M Screen Tests" on June 12, over the full basic Mutual Network, five days a week at 9:15 Eastern war time; it will consist of actual screen tests, the aspiring actor being required to play opposite a Metro star.

In "Going My Way" Bing Crosby proves that he doesn't have to sing; in fact, he sings comparatively little in the picture, yet has probably the best role of his screen career. He and that very talented actor, Barry



BING CROSBY

Fitzgerald, share honors in this sweet, human story—and anybody who can share acting honors with Fitzgerald has to be good. This is one of the pictures that people will remember.

Jane Withers, young Republic star, had two birthday cakes on her 16th birthday, one with a party of soldiers near her own age, the second with an 18-year-old elephant belonging to Ringling Brothers-Barum and Bailey circus. Both soldiers and elephant let Jane blow out her own candles and make a wish. The elephant also gulped the cake and then devoured Jane's birthday orchids.

Producer C. P. MacGregor, of the Hollywood Radio Theater, is directly responsible for the successful careers of many leading movie actors and actresses. When talking pictures came in, parts were awarded on the strength of voice transcriptions—made by him!

Frank Sinatra won about 1,500 new friends at a luncheon given in New York for the American Newspaper Publishers association; he sang a parody on "Sunday, Monday and Always," the refrain being that people are telling him to look out for Dick Haymes, Dick Todd and Perry Como are crowding him too comfortably for his own good. He wound up by gallantly concluding "There's just one Crosby."

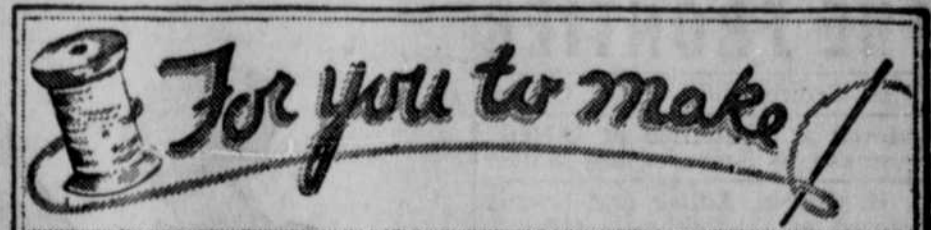
A new puppy belonging to Ronnie, son of George Burns and Gracie Allen, chewed a hole in an expensive rug at the Burns' home. Gracie was upset, but Ronnie saved the day. "Maybe if I train him," said he, "I can get him so he'll lie over the hole most of the time."

Around CBS a pleasant glow is still noticeable, due to the fact that six of their network and regional programs were cited as winners in the 1943 George Foster Peabody Awards, gaining CBS top honors in five of the seven classifications.

Bettejane Greer (Mrs. Rudy Vallee) whose first national prominence came when she was chosen two years ago as official model for the first WAC uniform, will be groomed for top starring roles by RKO. For the past year she's been under contract to Howard Hughes, doing intensive work with dramatic coaches. As soon as her release from that contract was negotiated she signed with RKO.

Yakima Canutt, seven times world champion cowboy and famous movie stunt man, now directs scenes for Republic pictures demanding hair-raising stunts. His latest thriller is the finale of a lightning-like chase in Allan Lane's "Marshal of Monterey."

ODDS AND ENDS—Remember Wesley Barry, one-time boy star? An RKO assistant when he enlisted, he's in the front lines with a photographic unit in the Burma campaign. . . . Phil Baker says the days of ordering a meal in a restaurant are gone—nowadays it's an entree. . . . A new rose, resembling an American Beauty, has been named for Dinah Shore. . . . Recognizing the advantage of a closer link between the church and radio, the National Broadcasting company and the Congregational-Christian churches will award five fellowships each year to ministers in the active pastorate, at one of NBC's summer institutes.



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Smart geranium apron. Pattern 7027 contains a transfer pattern of embroidery, necessary pattern pieces, directions.

Poet, Novelist Differ in Choice of Beautiful Words

A well-known British novelist and a representative American poet have recorded their choices of the ten most beautiful words in the English language. The British selection was: Carnation, Azure, Peril, Moon, Forlorn, Heart, Silence, Shadow, April, and Apricot. The American chose: Dawn, Hush, Lullaby, Murmur, Tranquil, Mist, Luminous, Chimes, Golden and Melody.

Due to an unusually large demand and current war conditions, slightly more time is required in filling orders for a few of the most popular pattern numbers.

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SNAPPY FACTS ABOUT RUBBER

Milk, or latex, flows from the rubber tree best in early morning. Therefore, rubber tappers start their day's work long before dawn.

An overload which might reduce the life of a crude rubber tire only 25 per cent or even be carried through until the tread was worn smooth, may reduce the life of a synthetic rubber tire 50 per cent or more and result in a blowout while there is still wear in the tread.

Rubber belting, which now plays such an important part in mining and industrial operations, was first manufactured in this country in 1836.



Dozens of workmen are preparing the huge Chicago Stadium for the conventions. Upper left is pictured Walter Hallanan, chairman of the Republican committee on arrangements, and lower right, Ambrose O'Connell, Democratic chairman.

Army Press and Radio Must Maintain Political Neutrality

The war department, in instructions sent to all commanders both in the United States and overseas, has prescribed a policy of strict impartiality in the dissemination of political information. Title V of the new federal voting law, which is an amendment to the Hatch act, prohibits use of federal funds or sponsorship to influence the armed forces in voting in federal elections. Instructions to commanders in ob-

servance of this law state: "The burden is on the army to see that the information and entertainment which it furnishes to the soldiers is either (1) nonpolitical or (2) if political, is justified by presentation in strict accordance with the allowed exceptions. "It is not the purpose of Title V to shut off information and entertainment from the armed forces. Its purpose is to see to it that no in-

formation or entertainment which is federally financed or sponsored and which might have the political character, will be disseminated to soldiers except in conformity with the statutory provisions designed to prevent unfairness or partiality in any such dissemination." The law permits rebroadcasts of political speeches over government controlled stations provided equal time is given each party.