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In Elvis' Defense

'New Side Of The Boy': Steve Allen

Editor's Note — Our TV columnist wrote a letter last week to Steve Allen in which he had the temerity to suggest that Elvis Presley, idol of the rock 'n' roll set, didn't belong on the Allen show. Allen has written back, suggesting in a nice way that our man doesn't know what he's talking about.

By STEVE ALLEN
NEW YORK (AP)—An open letter to Charlie Mercer:

"Dear Charlie: "I read your column about Elvis Presley with great interest and am happy to have the opportunity to answer your questions. Your basic question, of course, boils down to 'Why on earth is Allen booking Presley after the Berle incident?'"

"To start at the beginning I DIDN'T book Elvis after the Berle incident. He was set for my new Sunday evening program several weeks before he appeared on Milton's show and I had therefore a legal commitment to employ him on Sunday, July 1."

"ILLOGICAL" "Secondly, the anti-Presley arguments I've been hearing seem a bit illogical. You see, he has made many TV appearances before the Berle show, all without arousing any hue or cry, so there can be no firm basis for keeping him off TV altogether. The heart of the matter is that he thoughtlessly indulged in certain dance movements on his last TV appearance which a number of people thought objectionable.

"So the thing to do, it seems to me, is to allow him to appear on television any time he wants, but to make certain that he conducts himself in a gentlemanly manner, and that, respectively, we are going to present Elvis in what you might call his first comeback. We are going to present the new 'Elvis Presley.'"

"There is another line of argument, of course, about Elvis and I note that you included it in your open letter. It is, to put it

bluntly, that Elvis has, as you phrase it, "No talent." Well, sir, if ever started keeping people out of work because they had little or no talent TV would probably have to fold up within two weeks. Also, who is to say that Elvis has no talent? You say it, and a few million other people might be found to support you, but I am sure that additional millions will rise to his defense and say that he has oodles of talent.

HOW ABOUT GODFREY?

"What is talent, anyway? I've heard people say that Arthur Godfrey has no talent. . . . He just sits there and talks. . . . (but) his acts reveals an outstanding personal magnetism and whether you call it talent, charm, personality or 'it,' it's commercial. I think Godfrey is probably the best thing that ever happened to radio or TV. . . . And don't think I'm getting off the subject. I've just seen the screen test Elvis has made for Hal Wallis and I predict that he has a big future in pictures. If Wallis will cast him wisely."

"One's pronouncements about talent add up, after all, to matters of taste. When I was a teenager all the adults I knew told me Frank Sinatra had no talent. Later I've heard it said that Vaughn Monroe had no talent. That Liberace has no talent. I'm sure the point is obvious. . . ."

NO OFFENSE

"Your suggestion about going to Africa is a good one since rhythm and blues or rock-and-roll is derived from early Negro forms of musical expression. In closing let me assure audiences again that they will not be offended by Elvis on any program over which I have control. We'll show you the new side of the boy. He knows he made a mistake with the Milton Berle business and I think he's smart enough not to do it again. We all make mistakes, don't we? And we all like to be forgiven. "Steve Allen"

Right For Young Folk: Burl Ives

By BOB THOMAS

HOLLYWOOD — The much-maligned rock and roll music finds another booster from an unexpected source—balladeer turned actor Burl Ives.

"The guy even likes Elvis Presley."

"Big Burl is no small potatoes as a musical observer. More than anyone else, he brought the American ballad back to immense popularity, and his knowledge of our country's music goes back hundreds of years. That's one of the reasons he likes R & R."

NOTHING NEW

"There's nothing new about it," he explained as he reclined in his garden of Allah villa. "Why, it's the same kind of music I was dancing to when I was in college in 1927. In later years, the stuff was put out under the title of 'race records.'"

"I've got about 50 of the new rock and roll records and I play them all the time. A lot of people are knocking this Elvis Presley guy. Why, I think he's all right. Of course, I just know him from his records; I've never seen the bumps and grinds he does."

"I've got a theory about why rock and roll is so popular with the young kids. For years the top vocalists have been making records with musical backgrounds that have gotten more and more refined. You listen to a Dinah Shore or a Bing Crosby and you hear an accompaniment that is darn near perfect."

NOT HUMAN

"The human quality had gone out of the records, and therefore the young people lost identification with them. When rock and roll came along, it appealed to them because it wasn't perfect. The music was more and less and often off-key, especially with the saxophones."

"The singers were also unpolished and they often stood back from the microphone and shouted, instead of murmuring into it."

"And there was another thing about the records—usually they had a beat, and a good, solid one."

Matthews Youngsters To Have Full Summer

MATTHEWS — When the clock strikes 8:30 a.m. Monday, it will be the signal for the beginning of two fun-filled months for local youngsters.

For them there will be horse shoe games, croquet, archery, softball, volleyball, tally ball, basketball, and classes in handicraft and folk dancing.

Miss Betty Sue Williams, a Bain School teacher, for the second

year will be supervisor for the Matthews Foundation's recreation program. Her assistant will be Joe Haley, a high school student.

Since its first season in 1954, sponsored by the Lions Club, the recreation program has grown until today it has a 13-member Board of Trustees and the backing of the United Community Services, Mecklenburg County, the Woman's Club, American Legion Auxiliary and Woodmen of the World.

CONTRIBUTORS

United Community Services and County Commissioners each appropriated \$175 to the \$600 program which is carried out on the Matthews School grounds.

The Matthews Foundation is non-profit and youngsters use the facilities without charge. Hours for the playground are 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 2 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Night use of the picnic tables is possible through reservations.

In addition to the equipment for older children, there are wading pools and sand boxes for the younger children.

According to Mrs. Frazier Haigler, secretary-treasurer of the Foundation and chairman of the playground committee, the program last year served about 23 children a day, or 775 for the two-month period.

Tax Rate Jumps In Rutherford

FOREST CITY — In a night session which lasted until nearly 10 p.m. Tuesday the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners tentatively set the 1956-57 tax rate at \$1.95, an increase of 20 cents over last year's rate.

They adopted the tax rate and agreed to keep expenditures for appropriations within the figure, although the budget was not tentatively adopted.

The board agreed to set aside \$20,000 for an equalization program, increased school current fund \$22,826, and will appropriate \$38,500 for school capital outlay funds. Repairs to school buildings was increased from \$48,000 to \$55,000 and for furniture and equipment from \$18,000 to \$24,000.

Business Girls Shop The Handy Charge-Plate Way . . .

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Interest Low In Polio Shots

GASTONIA — Only about one-third of the people under 20 years of age in Gaston County have received polio immunization.

With an abundant supply on hand, the Salk anti-polio vaccine is practically gone here.

Fact is, the Gaston County Medical Society says that the number of persons receiving the vaccine is dwindling each week.

Dr. Charles Lahaor, speaking for the medical society, declares that the polio season peak is fast approaching, and the need for protection of children is urgent.

The local pediatrician pointed out that at the last American Medical Association meeting it was emphasized that vaccine given in July and August will prevent paralytic cases of polio and possibly deaths in August and September.

He continued by saying that there is still time to protect many children from developing polio during the latter part of the summer and the early fall.

Vaccine received by children now will develop some evident immunity within seven to 14 days after the first shot.

The Gaston County Medical Society declares that polio vaccine is now in abundant supply in the county and is readily available in all physicians' offices and at the regular clinics of the Gaston County Health Department.

Dorseys Offer 5-Act Program

A five-act program will be presented by Tommy and Jimmy Dorseys at the Charlotte Coliseum at 8:30 o'clock tonight.

Appearing with the musicians' orchestra leaders who conducted the Stage Show TV program each Saturday night, will be Comedian Bobby Clark, the Be Bopbe Brothers, dancers; Tommy Mercer, a singer; and Artie Dann, imitator.

All are well known TV performers. Clark, in addition, has been a top-flight comedian for years and has headlined many stage shows and has appeared in motion pictures.

The performers for the show were expected here about noon today. They will return to New York in time for rehearsals for the Stage Show program Saturday night.

Tickets for the show will be available at the Coliseum tonight.

Two Girls Hurt By Runaway Car

GASTONIA — A runaway car struck two little girls at play in Cherryville about 10:15 Wednesday morning and sent both of them to Gaston Memorial Hospital, one with serious injuries.

According to reports, Cherry Workman, 8, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Workman of Paris, Tenn., was playing with Lauren Boggs, 9, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Russ Boggs when a parked car began to roll and ran into the yard, striking both.

Cherry may have chest injuries and she is known to have a broken leg. Lauren was skinned and bruised and "scared bad."

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