

# Mystery Announcer Wins Diamond Meritum Award

**A**NOTHER great national popularity contest has been decided by the readers of Radio Digest. The Diamond Award for the most popular individual or program of the air goes to the Mystery Announcer of WPEN, Pittsburgh.

Of course the Mystery Announcer does not claim, nor does Radio Digest infer, that he has the largest audience in America. But the results of the contest show that he had more friends who took the trouble to vote for him than did any other entertainer of the air.

We are not even informed as to his true name. But we do know something of his career and it is with extreme regret that the contest editor of Radio Digest does not have the space at his disposal to tell the dramatic history of this extraordinary favorite.

He has seen life—and he has been close to death—so close that he seemed to be in the very jaws of death in the course of his experiences as a ship wireless operator during the World War and various conflicts with German submarines. Once he was on a vessel loaded with high test gasoline consigned to American fliers in France when fired upon by a U boat. Again his ship was set on fire and escape seemed absolutely impossible—but escape he did.

The Mystery Announcer conducts the WPEN Musical Clock, which began in a very modest way in October, 1929, and now has become one of the strongest features of any individual station in the country. From the time it started to August 1, 1930 a check-up showed that 50,000 letters had been re-



Mystery Announcer,  
still incognito



Still in disguise, the Mystery Announcer smiles behind his mask on receiving news

ceived by M. A. from his ardent listeners.

The Mystery Announcer comes on the air each morning at 6:30 throughout the week. He sends the world off to its day of duty with appropriate suggestions to the "works, the clerks and the shirks" as the day advances. He is assisted through the various phases by his main standby, High Pressure Charlie, who also is "Charlie the Horse" greeting the audience with a "good morning" whinney. Others to be introduced are Officer Dan, Pete the Rooster, Polly Penn, the Parrot; Melody Mae of the tiny Tom Thumb piano; black Jackie Mack the comic, and Billy Penn the Police Dog. Other characters are introduced at various intervals. The program continues until 10:15.

Rudy Vallee, author of the opening article in this issue of Radio Digest, is the winner of the Gold Award for the East. Mr. Vallee's popularity has never waned. His career and that of his famous Connecticut Yankees have been discussed frequently in these pages.

There was a great deal of rivalry in the Mid West but Gene and Glenn of WTAM,

Cleveland, soared over Amos 'n' Andy and other great features from Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee and other powerful and popular stations in that area. You read all about Gene and Glenn in your October Radio Digest.

Shreveport brought home the bacon again to Mr. W. K. Henderson who has a habit of winning Radio Digest popularity awards in the South. Mr. Henderson's militant personality and fearless broadcasting has made him a rabid favorite with his KWKH audience. His position is secure. Adversaries who have opposed him have found him hard to budge. His enemies have made him friends.

Mr. Henderson has never been satisfied to be merely the owner of an important station. He has aimed to make it the clear sounding call of a people. He has taken the responsibility on himself to articulate that call. Because he has done this he has established a definite sympathetic accord with an audience that stands and votes for him in Radio Digest contests. The staunchness of such Radio characters becomes evident when leadership is questioned.

Swinging into the West a very close rivalry developed between Henry and Jerome of KGBZ, York, Nebraska and Dr. Brinkley, former Radio Digest contest winner, at KFKB, Milford, Kansas. It seemed that Henry and Jerome had some very strong partisans, so that leadership between them and Dr. Brinkley rested first with one and then with the other. Dr. Brinkley may have suffered somewhat from a campaign of unfavorable newspaper pub-



Rudy Vallee, Gold  
Medal Winner

licity, although complaints that he used his station for unethical purposes did not stand up after an investigation by the federal Radio commission. The final tabulation showed the York boys had won the contest and they will be presented with the Radio Digest Gold Meritum Award.

We are advised by Dr. George R. Miller that Jerome's full name is Jerome DeBord. He is 31 and has been singing in Radio for nine years—which is a pretty long time considering the history of Radio broadcasting. He is well known throughout the West as the original "Whispering Tenor". For the past two years he has been teaming with Henry Peters at KGBZ. Henry is 25 years old and has been a Radio entertainer for the past four years. They are known on the air as "Doc's Yodeling Twins".

Flitting over the mountains and scanning the sunny slopes of the federal Radio district known as the Far, Far West we find the interest of Radio Digest readers focused on Long Beach, California, where Hal Nichols and his station, KFOX, rolled up the second largest vote in the country for their Buttercream School program.

The keenest rivalry in the Far, Far West was right in the KFOX camp itself, for the voters were divided on the proposition of casting in favor of the entire program staff or the Buttercream program in particular. The entire staff could hardly have been considered as a contesting unit according to the intents and purposes of the contest which was seeking the artist or program with the greatest following.

Just what the



Henry and Jerome, the gold medal winners from KGBZ, York, Neb.

Buttercream School program is, and why it is so popular on the Pacific coast has not been revealed to the contest editor as these lines are written. We know that Mr. Nichols is particularly enterprising and appreciates a good contest. If KFOX goes in to win you may depend on a real showing at the finish of a race. The station is always alert and quick to act. It is always entertaining and has no time at all for mediocre talent, which probably accounts for a surprisingly large vote for the "KFOX Staff".

The Diamond Meritum Award contest aroused great enthusiasm throughout the country. The closing days were particularly exciting. Packages of ballots came in by the bagful with every mail. Then as the final hour approached they came by special delivery, registered mail. Some even came from California by airmail.

Girls were put to work counting the ballots and making their careful tabulations so that every vote was counted. At midnight on September 20th the ballot was declared closed except for those ballots that should come in with postmarks registered before that hour.

The jewelers are putting the inscriptions on the medals as this report is written and before you received this book it is expected every medal will have reached its successful contestant. The Diamond Award, according to the plans in hand, will have been presented to the Mystery Announcer at the Radio Show in Chicago.

He won his contest as the Mystery Announcer and a mystery he must continue to be, in all probability wearing a mask (Continued on page 122)

### Winners in Diamond Meritum Contest

DIAMOND AWARD					
Mystery Announcer	WPEN	Philadelphia, Pa.	35,039 Votes		
GOLD MEDAL DISTRICT AWARDS					
Winner	Station	City	Votes	District	
Buttercream School Program	KFOX	Long Beach, Cal.	30,405	Far West	
Gene and Glenn	WTAM	Cleveland, Ohio	27,786	Mid West	
Rudy Vallee	WEAF	New York, N. Y.	11,022	East	
W. K. Henderson	KWKH	Shreveport, La.	6,433	South	
Henry and Jerome	KGBZ	York, Neb.	4,585	West	
HONORABLE MENTION					
Eastern District			Midwestern District		
Station	City	Votes	Station	City	Votes
Cheerio	WEAF New York	7,728	National Barn Dance	WLS Chicago, Ill.	13,536
Floyd Gibbons	WJZ New York	5,669	Smith Family Weener	WENR Chicago, Ill.	6,891
Landt Trio and White	WJZ New York	5,432	Minstrels	WENR Chicago, Ill.	6,176
Guy Lombardo	WABC New York	3,714	Station Staff	WENR Chicago, Ill.	5,654
Seth Parker	WEAF New York	3,685	Frank McBride	WMAQ Chicago, Ill.	3,965
The Wanderers	WIP Phila., Pa.	2,447	Everett Mitchell	WENR Chicago, Ill.	2,772
Vincent Lopez	WEAF New York	2,329	Western District		
Something for Everybody	WABC New York	2,243	Dr. Brinckley	KFKB Milford, Kan.	4,028
			Far-Western District		
			Vagabonds of the Air	KSL Salt Lake City, Utah	4,237



Gene and Glenn receiving message from Radio Digest with good news about Gold Medal Award