

### Catholic Theater Conference To Feature Workshops

Denver — (NC) — A "breakfast with the experts" and the use of workshops will be two major innovations featured by the ninth biennial convention of the Catholic Theater Conference, to be held here next June 9 to 13, according to Father Donald McMahon, Denver playwright and program chairman.

Dr. Earl C. Bach, head of the Drama Department of Loyola Heights College, site of the convention, is general chairman for the conference.

The program has been devised by Father McMahon and a committee of national Catholic theater figures, including Father Urban Nagle, O.P., New York Blackfriars' playwright; screen-writer



WALTER KERR

Ernest Lavory; Walter Kerr of New York; Leo Brady, of Washington, and Dr. Campbell Bell, of Denver University.

Workshops are planned in playwriting, directing, production college theater, high school theater, children's theater, scripts, directing, and producing. Plans also call for dramatic productions by a community theater group, by a high school group, and by a college group.

#### Buttons On Display

Buttons, the collection of William A. Yaeger, collector and antiquarian, are on display in the hobby case on the third floor of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences.

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## NEW AND NOW

By ROBERT SMETT

Last week in the "Commonweal," Walter Kerr, Emmet Lavery and several other theater authorities joined forces to rip the Legion of Decency into small pieces.

Setting the main issues aside, they did bring up some pertinent facts and provocative ideas for movie-goers.

**FIRST AND FOREMOST**, the Legion of Decency is not an aesthetic judge of movie art but a moral guide. The Church has never "ex cathedra," formally, made itself an historic judge.

A glance at a history book, however, will show one that through the centuries, the Church has been a patron of the arts and harbinger of the artist, but it has never confused art with morals.

We are at fault in misjudging the Legion of Decency. When a picture is listed as A-1, fit for family viewing, we take for granted this is a tremendous picture. It may be a flop as regards entertainment.

**THE MAIN PURPOSE** of art—movies, theatre—is to entertain. The Legion is not concerned with this. They have another problem to handle: the direction of morals.

We often hear people say that if the clergy did not make such a to-do over certain pictures, people might very well stay away from them of their own accord. That is not the point. The doctor is bound by his oath to save human life. Performing an operation may mean that his patient, a confirmed criminal let's say, will rise from his bed, go out into the streets and become a public menace. Yet it is the doctor's bounden duty to save the life.

**THE PRIEST** is a shepherd and his concern is for his sheep. He is a guide and a guard, one of his chief duties is care of souls.

It is his duty to warn, he cannot connive or contrive where obligation is concerned.

A Moral Code regarding movies did not come about through the auspices of the Catholic Church, but through the combined efforts of movie producers themselves in the early 30's.

The flavor of the cinema at that time was becoming such that even they could see the disastrous end coming in view. Perhaps the Legion of Decency is a feeble attempt, but at least it is an attempt in the right direction. We, the movie-goers, are the ones who make it feeble.

**AN A-1 PICTURE** will never be artistically A-1 until we figure out what is good and what is bad. Unless our taste in entertainment improves, we have no right to complain.

A teacher of drama once told me that one of his students went to New York for a holiday and on returning admitted that he

had seen five or six of the then most popular Broadway productions.

Two of these, one a musical, the other a play, were of a very questionable moral standard. In answering the question of what the student answered, "Oh, I can see why the musical is frowned upon, but the play was terrific. I can't see why anyone would find fault with it."

**THE PLAY IN QUESTION** was of the most insidious type—spreading its painless, packaged venom. There was probably little or no harm caused by seeing the musical in this case, but the play was another matter.

The power of the theatre, of the movies, is great. The Communists have used it for years now and to obvious advantage.

I have said that the main purpose of theatre, of art, is to entertain, but most authors become didactic, one way or another. It is usually this that causes the trouble. Sometimes this little cleric of teaching is only on the emotional level—but if it is wrong, everything is wrong.

Whether we use Aristotle's "good, beautiful and true" definition for art, or Aquinas' "things made according to right reasoning"—they both say that immorality and good art cannot exist together.

Contrarywise, bad art and good entertainment cannot exist simultaneously.

**WE HAVE TO BECOME** judges, not critics, but let's be fair about it, let's train ourselves. We should take our entertainment seriously, it is an important part of our lives, and as such deserves a little study and thought.

Let's not be prudish or puritans or long-haired aesthetes, but let's find out how to be entertained.

**RAY BOLGER'S** TV show last Sunday night made a well-beloved "hooter" a bright new television star in one hour's time. He did everything you wanted him to do, and kept you biting your nails until he finally sang "Amy" as his last number.

Rise Stevens did "Carmen" and proved herself a real trouper in a wonderful dance sequence with Bolger.

**"HELL, HOOK AND CANDY"**, recently done at Rochester's Auditorium, was rather a dull affair, and Joan Bennett didn't help matters. I wish I could have seen Lill Palmer do it, or Marjorie Main or somebody. I wish I had stayed home.

**Nativity Scenes**  
Jersey City, N. J. (RNS) — A Nativity Scene covering 18,000 square feet and believed to be the largest in the country is being constructed here by Jersey City's Department of Recreation under the sponsorship of Mayor John J. Kenny.

### New Play Season Includes Fry Work

A new season for Rochester's Arena Theatre on Hoeltzer St., running from Jan. 27 to May 30, will include plays by Shakespeare, Christopher Fry, Shaw and Arthur Miller if present plans are realized.

This will be the first time that the group has attempted a Fry play. Last season saw the English playwright's "Sleep of Prisons" done at the Auditorium, while in the past, "The Ladies Not for Burning," "A Phoenix Too Frequent" and "Venus Observed" were presented on Broadway.

**TWO OF FRY'S** best plays, "The Firstborn" and "Thor With Angels" have yet to be professionally done in this country.

Mel Dinelli's mystery play, "The Man," will begin a three-week run on Jan. 6 at Arena. This will be the last presentation of the current season.

Leading roles will be done by Sarah Scott and James Harwood. Miss Scott has given memorable performances in the past in "Kind Lady," "Black Chiffon" and many other Arena successes.

**JAMES HARWOOD**, who will play opposite Miss Scott in "The Man," was seen recently in "The Cocktail Party" and received much worthy praise for his portrayal of Sir Henry.

A hit-to-date unproduced play is also on the agenda for Arena's new season, rounding out a schedule that promises to suit every taste.

### Christian In Action Series Lists Father Lord

Washington — (NC) — Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J., will be the January speaker on the Christian In Action radio program, carried each Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to noon, EST, by the American Broadcasting Company, it has been announced here by the National Council of Catholic men, producer of the program.

Father Lord is a veteran of 35 years in the education field and has written more than 200 pocket-size pamphlets on various religious and educational subjects, of which a total of more than 20,000,000 copies have been printed.

He currently programs a daily 15-minute radio program and writes a weekly column for Catholic papers. He is the organizer-director of the Summer School of Catholic Action, which annually tours large sections of the country.

In addition, Father Lord is a national director of the Sodality of Our Lady and national director of the Eucharistic Crusade of Knights and Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament. He makes his headquarters in St. Louis, but his many regular duties, in addition to speaking engagements, keep him constantly on the move.

Father Lord also has written and produced pageants in connection with anniversary celebrations both in this country and foreign lands. He also has found time to write a number of books. Inaugurating the 1952 Christian In Action program, Father Lord will speak on "Opening Our World To God," which will emphasize the necessity of the secularist-threatened world returning to God. The topics of his individual talks will be: "Refilling the World With God," January 4; "The Tale of a Godless City," January 11; "Gateway to Grace," January 18, and "The Answer To The Godless World," January 25.

The choir of the Theological College of the Catholic Universities of America, directed by Paul Arbogast, will furnish the music for the broadcasts.



FATHER LORD

### Family Radio Rosary Leaders

The night Rosary is broadcast every night at 7 p.m. over Station W5AY, Rochester.

Leaders for the coming week include:

Saturday, Dec. 27—William E. Weidman, Holy Apostles;  
Sunday, Dec. 28—Charles Gardner, St. Theodore;  
Monday, Dec. 29—Joseph Snyder, Holy Family, accompanied by the Marianites of Holy Family;  
Tuesday, Dec. 30—Anthony J. Calkin, Our Lady of Victory;  
Wednesday, Dec. 31—Louis P. Schuster, St. Margaret Mary;  
Thursday, Jan. 1—His Excellency, Bishop James E. Keane, accompanied by children of St. Francis of Assisi Parish;  
Friday, Jan. 2—Vincent Milano, St. Anthony.

### Christmas Story In 15 Languages

Washington — (NC) — The Christmas story from the Gospel of St. Luke was recited in 15 languages at a party for foreign students in Mullen Memorial Library at the Catholic University of America here.

Christmas carols were sung in their native languages by Polish, French, Philippine and Spanish-speaking groups.

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**Legion of Decency Listings**  
**CLASS A-1 — Unobjectionable for General Audience**  
Amazing Menace; Fables of Aesop; Atomic City; Battles of Chief Pontias; Bambi; The Band Wagon; Breaking Through the Sound Barrier; Callie Town; California Conquest; Christmas; Dead Man's Trail; Fairlane Parade.  
**CLASS A-2 — Unobjectionable for Adults**  
Above and Beyond; All the King's Men; Bambi; The Band Wagon; Big Boy; The Boy Who Cried Wolf; Cairo Road; Captain Blackfoot; On the Border; Country Devil; Take Three; Diplomate Courier; Dreamboat; Eight Feet Man; Fighter; The Fox; Four Power; Gals and Gals.  
**CLASS B — Unobjectionable in Part**  
Affair in Trinidad; Andros and The Lion; April Fools; The Bad and the Beautiful; The Blackboard; The Brass Combs; Back Little Shes; Desperate Search; The Don't Forget to Knock; Face to Face; The Foxes; The Girl; The Girl Who Came to Supper; The Girl Who Came to Supper; The Girl Who Came to Supper; The Girl Who Came to Supper.  
**CLASS C — Condemned**  
The Girl Who Came to Supper; The Girl Who Came to Supper; The Girl Who Came to Supper; The Girl Who Came to Supper.

**Movie Guide**  
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