

Mike FEN's Listening Post

By SFC WALLY SMITH

TOKYO (FEN)— A gravel-voiced, down-on-her-luck dance hall hostess whose name is only Kitty

longs for a man called Matt Dillon, the moody U S marshal of radio's "Gunsmoke."

Kitty and Marshal Dillon inhabit the town of Dodge City, Kansas as it was in the 1870's. They're both lonely, bitter people to whom trouble usually naturally comes.

Georgia Ellis is the Hollywood actress who makes such a deep impression in her role as Kitty. Miss Ellis is 5 feet 4 inches tall slim, blonde-haired and lovely to look at. "Kitty," she says, "is based on the historical character who used to follow Wild Bill Hickok from town to town. She was a huge, gun-slinging woman. But our Kitty is softer, probably someone who has been through a lot of experiences and became embittered with life "

AS GEORGIA ELLIS talks of Kitty, so does William Conrad talk of his character, Marshal Matt Dillon, the lonely man of law whose Dodge City is always alive with the threat of sudden death by six-shooters. The main characters of "Gunsmoke" have been intact through almost 200 shows since 1952. Scripts are written by a lanky, 40-year old Colorado writer, John Meston, whose crowded workroom contains an authentic library of frontier Americana.

Producer Norman MacDonnell directs his players -quietly and firmly. Anne Gaffney, his secretary, says, "Interest on everyone's part is amazing. Sometimes I close my eyes and the Dodge City of Matt Dillon and his lonely Kitty come startlingly alive." (Gunsmoke is heard on FEN each Friday at 8 p.m.)

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