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BOOK NINETEEN

CHAPTER SIX

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER, 1993

## HELLO, OUT THERE IN Radioland!!

The Great Gildersleeve is coming to town! And he's bringing his niece and his girlfriend, too.

It's true! As part of a special weekend of activities surrounding the 1993 Induction Ceremonies for the Radio Hall of Fame, we're going to present "An Afternoon With The Great Gildersleeve" at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in the Chicago Cultural Center.

Appearing in person for this special event will be Willard Waterman who starred as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve from 1950 to 1958 on radio and from 1955-56 on television. Joining Mr. Waterman will be Mary Lee Robb who appeared on radio as Gildy's niece Marjorie Forrester and Shirley Mitchell who appeared on both radio and TV as Leila Ranson.

We'll be on hand to conduct a panel discussion focusing on the Gildersleeve program and other radio shows in which the talented performers appeared. There'll be time for questions from the audience before our distinguished visitors from California pick up their scripts and take to the microphones for a Great Gildersleeve re-creation. They'll be joined by members of our *Those Were The Days Radio Players* in an authentic reenactment of a favorite Gildersleeve broadcast from the past.

"An Afternoon with the Great Gildersleeve" will be held Saturday,

November 6 and will be a benefit for the Radio Hall of Fame. Complete details about the event and how you can attend will be sent to museum members and announced on our *Those Were The Days* and *Old Time Radio Classics* programs.

Don't miss it if you can!

\* \* \* \* \*

The 1993 Radio Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Gala will be held on Sunday evening, November 7 in the Chicago Cultural Center's Preston Bradley Hall. The event will be broadcast from coast-to-coast and will be heard in Chicago as part of our Sunday evening *Old Time Radio Classics* program on WBBM Newsradio 78, beginning at 8 p.m.

Norman Corwin, respected writer-producer/director from the great radio days will be among those inducted to the Radio Hall of Fame this year. Following the network program, we'll share some special Corwin broadcast material with you on *Radio Classics*.

Information regarding the Ceremony and Gala will be sent to Museum members.

Be sure to mark your calendar for these two special events, and to stay tuned to our broadcasts for lots of great radio entertainment.

Thanks for listening.

*Chuck Schaden*

# RADIO'S BELOVED GOLDBERGS

## *The Rise of Gertrude Berg*

BY CARY O'DELL

Though she looked nothing like the stereotypical show business executive, Gertrude Berg — with her doe-like eyes and plumpish figure — was, in every sense of the term, a media mogul. A prolific writer/producer, a smart, savvy, and sometimes very tough business woman, she was the creator of a multi-media entertainment empire, the Goldberg dynasty.

Gertrude Berg was one of television's first sitcom moms, and the star and creator of one of the medium's earliest hits. Writer Gilbert Seldes in 1956, in *Saturday Review*, remembered how it all began on the small screen, "The first time I saw Mrs. Gertrude Berg on television was with a group, none of the half-dozen people watching the show expected too much and none of us expected the sudden excitement when an excerpt from 'The Rise of the Goldbergs' came on — and everyone of us knew that this was *it!* This was television and nothing else."

But before Berg could make it big in TV, and on Broadway, she had made it big in radio, where the Molly Goldberg character, her make-believe family and opening show cry of "Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Bloom!" were already a national institution. And so was she.

Gertrude Edelstein was born on October 3, 1899, the only child of Jacob and Diana Edelstein in the then fashionable

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*Cary O'Dell is a member of the staff of the Museum of Broadcast Communications and is co-curator of the "Images of Women on Television" exhibition at the Museum continuing through December 17, 1993.*

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district of Harlem. She was raised surrounded by a large group of assorted family. "We didn't have Tennessee Williams problems," she once said, "It was more George Kaufman." Especially close to her was her Grandfather Mordecai who told her repeatedly as a little girl, "This is your America." Gertrude's father divided his career between theater owner and, in the summer, running hotels in the Catskill Mountains. She began her writing career as a teenager writing skits to amuse the hotel guests on rainy days and to keep the children of the guests busy. Some later scripts for "The Goldbergs" had their idea origins in these sketches.

Berg attended Wadleigh High School but never graduated and her only college education consisted of playwriting and acting courses at Columbia University. Around this time, 1918, she met and married Lewis Berg, then an engineering student at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Two weeks after his graduation he found work as a sugar technologist on a plantation in Reserve, Louisiana. While there Gertrude found little to do during the day but read. She also gave birth to two children. Cherney in 1922, and Harriet in 1926.

Life for the Bergs in the South, however, came to an end in 1929, after a fire destroyed the plantation and the family returned to New York City where the depression had left few opportunities for employment. In order to support her family, Gertrude, on the advice of a friend, decided to put her playwriting talents to work and sell scripts to local radio stations. Though the WMCA executive she auditioned for did not care for



**THE GOLDBERGS:** Jake (James Waters), Rosalie (Roslyn Silber), Molly (Gertrude Berg), and Sammy (Alfred Ryder).

her first script ("It has about as much entertainment value as the telephone book," he told her) he liked her voice well enough to pay her five dollars to translate a gasoline commercial in Yiddish. Thus, Gertrude Berg began her radio career. Afterward, she occasionally earned an extra five dollars by reading recipes in Yiddish. Since she did not speak the language herself, she read them with proper inflections from phonetic translations. Her first attempt at regular radio scriptwriting came when she created a show for CBS called "Effie and Laura," about two working class salesgirls. Berg played one of the two roles. Considered too advanced in their views on love and marriage, "Effie and Laura" lasted only one airing.

Not deterred, Berg drew on the inspiration of her Jewish grandmother and dialect comedian Milt Gross and drafted a gentle and warm family comedy. Titled "The Rise of the Goldbergs," it centered around daily life for a Jewish

family living in New York. Molly, the mother, was the center of the show, and she was joined by husband, Jake, (originally played by James R. Waters), children, Rosalie (Roslyn Siber) and Sammy (Alfred Ryder and later Everett Sloane) and live-in Uncle David (played by well-known Yiddish actor Menasha Skulnik). The show had a basic format. Mrs. Goldberg, though not really a busybody, did spend a lot of her time interfering in the lives of her family and friends and a lot of time learning out of her window *shmoosing* with her neighbors.

Gertrude persented the audition script for the show to NBC in an entirely illegible handwriting — knowing she would be forced to read aloud and therefore be able to add the tone and vocal inflection she though it needed. The radio executive was so impressed he offered her a job of writing the show — and playing the lead. "The Rise of the Goldbergs" premiered on the air on November 20, 1929. The station paid her \$75 a week to write and star in the show. Out of that sum she was

## THE RISE OF GERTRUDE BERG

also expected to pay the cast and crew. Program genres were less defined in those days, and Berg's daily serialized stories were considered soap opera (or, as they were also known, "washboard weepers"). Authors Madeline Edmondson and David Rounds believed that, despite humorous situations and character-led laughs, the show was a soap at heart: "Its subject matter was human relations, and its surface was resolutely realistic." Though the story was continuous and the show ran six times a week, it never dealt with such soap staples as amnesia, crime or "other women."

Whatever it was, it was popular. During its radio run, "The Goldbergs" picked up a sponsor, Pepsodent, and spawned several vaudeville skits and a comic strip. Once, when Gertrude had a sore throat and another actress filled in the role of Molly, the station received 30,000 letters of complaint. Fans were so loyal to the show that a group of nuns from Libertytown, Maryland, who had given the show up for lent, wrote Berg asking for the scripts of the shows they missed. A later letter came from a refugee: "Coming from Germany, I could not believe to hear such a program, but today I know that this country really means freedom."

Besides making Gertrude popular, the series also eventually made her rich. During "The Goldbergs" radio heydays, Gertrude was receiving a weekly salary of \$7,500 a week, making her the highest paid woman in the medium. Soap opera writer Irna Phillips came in a very close second. At this time, "The Goldbergs" ran on three different networks at once: NBC at 11:30 a.m., CBS in the afternoon and WOR-Mutual early the next morning. Part of Berg's salary also came from writing the daily radio serial "Kate Hopkins," the "exciting story of a visiting nurse."

After the demise of the first incarnation of "The Goldbergs" in 1934, to take the show on a national tour, Gertrude Berg returned to regular radio comedy in 1935, in a second, self-written, self-starring vehicle for the NBC network, "House of Glass." Set in a Catskill Mountain resort hotel — all drawn from memories of her childhood — Berg played Sophie the cook. The show never caught on and lasted less than a year.

"The Goldbergs," show and family, were revived for radio in 1937 when Berg was offered a contract worth one million dollars to come back to New York and pick up where she left off. "The Goldbergs" ran once again on both NBC and CBS until 1945. All told, "The Goldbergs" (in one form or another) ran on radio for seventeen years, more than 4,500 episodes, second only to "Amos and Andy" in terms of longevity.

To write so many scripts, Berg relied on working habits which were both rigid and legendary. She often rose at 6:00 a.m. to write scripts (usually three weeks in advance) in a longhand cursive which was only legible to her and her daughter, who usually typed the finished product. Gradually her scripts grew more detailed, but in the beginning they were often little more than outlines which Berg and cast improvised live on the air. Once, when a key actress failed to show up for the show, Berg devised a new script in eight minutes. At ten, her morning writing done, she would leave for the studio to rehearse the day's program.

By the end of her career, Gertrude had written more than 10,000 Goldberg scripts, more than fifteen million words. Her scripts, though funny, never leaned towards silly. Like many other modern day sitcoms, her stories often dealt with exaggerated circumstances — crash diets, problems with income tax. Still, the majority of their humor came straight out of



GERTRUDE BERG

character and, more often than not, out of Molly's mouth. Though Berg was American-born and spoke unaccented, perfect English, she gave Molly such a troubled tongue that her frequent misconstrued statements became known as "Mollyisms" or Goldbergisms". Some of the best remembered: "Enter, whoever!", "If it's nobody, I'll call back later," and "I'm putting on my bathrobe and condescending the stairs." Often, Molly also offered up some friendly, motherly advice (sometimes ad-libbed): "Better a crust of bread and enjoy it than a cake that gives you indigestion."

Gertrude Berg said, "Molly's humor comes out of life. Ours was never a show that made jokes about people. The humor came from the love and warmth of the characters. Molly was never a joke."

Once the script was written, Gertrude took to the task of putting the show on the air. She called the shots there too. She was devout stickler for details and accuracy, Berg allowed no "faked" sound effects on radio. For the sound of eggs breaking into a frying pan, she broke two eggs into a frying pan. When

the script required Molly to give daughter Rosalie a shampoo, Berg lathered up the hair of actress Roslyn Siber. And when son Sammy Goldberg (and the actor playing him) was drafted into the Army, Gertrude arranged for the family good-bye scene to be played in the middle of Grand Central Station.

Gertrude did the same for casting. Local elevator operators, grocery clerks and delivery boys were often recruited by Gertrude to play like-job character parts on her show. She also had a good eye — or ear — for talent. Performers like Eartha Kitt, Joseph Cotten, Van Heflin and Anne Bancroft all had early roles on radio's "Goldbergs."

In 1948, Berg moved the Goldbergs to a new venue: the Broadway stage. On February 26, her play "Me and Molly" opened at the Belasco Theater and received good to mixed reviews. The family's radio popularity allowed for a strong Broadway run of 156 performances.

It was while appearing in the play that Gertrude struck upon the idea of moving the family into the then new medium of television. Television, though still very new, was nevertheless all the rage; Gertrude decided "The Goldbergs" should be part of the newest trend. After setting her mind to it, she went about trying to sell the show to the networks. It took a little work. NBC-TV turned her down, not believing the show would translate well to the small screen. On her second attempt, this time at CBS, Berg, after meeting with opposition from lower executives, arranged a meeting with William Paley, head of CBS. He set up an audition for her and the show in front of a group of CBS executives and possible sponsors. The audition went so well that immediately afterward, Berg and crew received a Monday night, half-hour timeslot and General Foods as its first sponsor. (Sanka coffee took over the

## THE RISE OF GERTRUDE BERG

program in late 1949; Mrs. Goldberg's windowsill was thereafter graced with a flower growing out of an empty Sanka coffee can.)

"The Goldbergs" began on television on January 10, 1949. The show's cast consisted of Gertrude Berg as Molly, Philip Loeb as Jake, Larry Robinson as Sammy, Arlene McQuade as Rosalie, and Eli Mintz as Uncle David. From its earliest broadcast, the show was a hit. Over the course of its run, it attracted an average weekly TV audience of forty million. Usually, it ranked second in the ratings, between Milton Berle and Arthur Godfrey. Berg was soon being showered with awards from various groups including the U.S. Treasury Department, for helping the sales of Savings Bonds; the Girls Clubs of America, for "setting an outstanding example of motherhood"; and from the National Conference of Christian and Jews. In 1950, Berg received an Emmy Award for Best Actress in a continuing performance, the first ever winner of that award.

The love of the Molly Goldberg character, and "The Goldbergs," was easy for Gertrude to explain, "The answer always comes out that it's because we are the same. There are surface differences but these surface differences only serve to emphasize how much alike most people are." The show was praised by critics and religious leaders at the time for its portrayal of Jewish culture and gentle home life, and for being a tool for interracial understanding; it was said of Berg, "she speaks a universal language with a Yiddish accent." On television, conflicts in the Goldberg household (played out at the imaginary address of 1038 East Tremont Avenue, Apt. 3-B, the Bronx) were relatively minor and easily fixed by

mother Molly; off screen though things could not have been more different. In June 1950, *Red Channels*, a paperback book with lists of names of entertainment figures with alleged Communist ties, came out. One of the names on the Lists belonged to actor Philip Loeb, husband Jake to Berg's Molly.

Boss and friend, Gertrude Berg, refused to fire him and came to his defense, "Philip Loeb has stated categorically that he is not a Communist. I believe him." Nevertheless, she was later forced by the show's sponsor to fire him. Though he was no longer on the show, Gertrude kept Loeb on salary at a personal cost of \$85,000 for two years. Later, unable to find work or support himself, Loeb committed suicide by overdose on September 1, 1955. A new Jake, actor Harold Stone, was hired, but no sponsor could be found for the show and "The Goldbergs" was off the air from June 1951 to February 1952.

"The Goldbergs" came back to TV in 1952, and ran until October 1954. In 1955, they returned once more in an off-network syndicated form. For thirty-nine more episodes, Molly/Gertrude and her brood lived again, this time in suburban bliss. Gertrude said, "I felt the series needed a change, so I moved the family out of the city to the mythical Haverville. And from live television to film. Of course, the money from repeat showings was no small consideration."

In 1963, after a triumphant Broadway bow in the play "A Majority of One," Gertrude returned to weekly television in a series titled "Mrs. G. Goes to College" (also known as "The Gertrude Berg Show"). Though her character's last name was Green and a widow, she was still basically Molly Goldberg. Berg created the self-explanatory show herself which co-starred her former "Majority





**MOLLY AND JAKE ON TV: Gertrude Berg and Philip Loeb**

of One" stage companion Cedric Hardwicke. He played a visiting British professor. Though the majority of the writing was handled by others, there was little doubt about who was boss. As the *Los Angeles Examiner* reported "nothing leaves the set on film without her considered approval." The show failed, however, to gain an audience. It lasted only a year.

That same year, Gertrude wrote her bestselling autobiography, with her son Cherney. The book's title continued Berg's association with her world famous and much-loved alter ego by being titled *Molly and Me*.

Gertrude Berg worked until the very end of her life, in guest spots on television, in the dramatic anthologies of the period. She was preparing for a return to the Broadway stage in "The Play Girls," a play based on one of her ideas, when she died of heart failure in New York City on September 14, 1966. She was sixty-six. Berg was survived by her husband, her two children, and an assortment of grandchildren.

The appeal of Gertrude Berg (and therefore Molly Goldberg) has often been approached as a subject. William Leonard in a 1961 article for the *Chicago Tribune* saw her this way, "She can be herself and in being herself she pleases individuals who find comfort in seeing in her old fashioned common sense and serenity."

Gertrude also had the luck of totally looking her most famous part: five feet four inches tall and admittedly overweight (she often said she started a diet every Monday and quit every Tuesday). All together, Gertrude Berg looked just like everyone thought Molly sounded. Besides looking the part — she lived it. Fans addressed her only as "Molly" and finally so did friends and co-workers. Frequently her "autographs" were inscribed "Molly Goldberg."

Basically, though, Gertrude Berg was an actress. Gilbert Seldes in 1956 considered her one of the nation's finest, "She never plays to us and never to the camera. She is a great force in whatever she does and in this, the primary business of giving life to imagined people, she is incomparable."

And she was also incomparable in her creative drive. Few other individuals (male or female) in radio, and no one in television, ever took upon the task of writing, producing and starring in their own series. Gertrude did it, did it first, and did it very well. Before Diane English dreamed up "Murphy Brown" and before Linda Bloodworth-Thomason came up with those defining "Designing Women," one woman made success and control behind the camera and in front of it all look easy: Gertrude the Great. ■

(ED. NOTE — Two consecutive episodes of *The Goldbergs* will be presented on *Those Were The Days*, Saturday, October 23 on WNIB.

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# Those Golden Years of Radio

BY RUSS RENNAKER

It is impossible for anyone today to sit night after night and watch multi-million dollar television programs, via satellite from anywhere in the world, and realize how different it was with radio back in the 1920's.

Into the wee hours of the morning you would sit hunched over the dials, with the headphones clamped over your ears, adjusting and tuning, tuning and adjusting, just to catch a whisper of the announcer in Los Angeles saying "This is radio KFI . . .", or listening to WGN in Chicago interrupting their program every few minutes to direct a police car to the scene of some police action. That was before two-way radio and was a vast improvement over the street-corner call-boxes.

My favorite station was one in Havana, Cuba. I didn't realize at the time that Cuba was not all that far away. It was a foreign country so far as I was concerned. To hear the Spanish accented voice saying, "You are listening to PWX

in Habana, Kuba," was always a thrill. When they first came on the air each evening they transmitted the loud tick-tock of a clock for a few minutes. I guess this was their method of identifying the station. Night after night I would listen for the sound of that clock ticking. It had a kind of errie connotation to me.

The studios of my first station, WJAK, was on the eighth floor of a downtown hotel building and next to it was a very fine movie theatre. Talking pictures had just become the rage and "musicals" were the main bill of fare.

The projectionist at the theatre was a very good friend of mine and I would sit in the projection booth with him and watch the movies free. One day an idea came to me. Why not broadcast all that music that was on the films? I talked it over with my friend, and he said we could never get the theater owner to agree but so far as he was concerned we could just do it anyway. We ran a pair of wires from the hotel window next door into the projection booth and hooked it up to the sound amplifier on the projection machine.

It was an instant success — that is until the theater owner found out what we were doing! I don't know why we thought he wouldn't. I guess we figured he never listened to the station. It was great programming while it lasted.

I remember a funny event that took place in a little radio station where I worked in those early days. We had what we called a country music group which consisted of a piano, a guitar, a fiddle, and sometimes a drum. Oh, yes, we also had a "vocalist," a young girl, who occasionally would show up for a pro-

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*Russ Rennaker was born in rural Indiana in 1906. He obtained his amateur radio license at age 13 and commercial operators' license in 1926. In 1929 he built a 100 watt broadcast station in Marion, Indiana, and later worked for WFBM in Indianapolis. In 1934 he joined WBBM-CBS, Chicago as a broadcast engineer and was transferred to WJSV, Washington, D.C. in 1939. He was with the State Department during World War II and after the war joined ITT in Telecommunications. He retired in 1973 and still operates his amateur station, W9CRC. These memories of his radio days are from his soon to be published book, Those Golden Years of Radio.*

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gram a little "under the weather."

The song was the beautiful, and current at the time, *SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES*. This time when she came to that signature line she sang, "when it's pea-pickin' time in the Rockies." After we got her off the air she still insisted that was the way the song went. I guess if something like that happened these days the phones would ring for an hour. If it rang at all that time I have forgotten it. Maybe that was a criteria of our listening audience.

The first year after *KDKA* came on the air there were many stations added to the list. There was *WJR* in Detroit, *WEAF* in New York, *WGY* in Schenectady, N.Y., and not to be forgotten was *WOR* in Newark, N.J., I am sure there were others but those stick in my mind after all these years.

It was in the 1930s that radio became big time. This was the era of daytime "soap operas," and in case anyone has forgotten how they got called that you may remember it was the detergent companies that sponsored most of them.

In the early days most of the soap operas originated in the Chicago studios, both *NBC* and *CBS*. This came about due to the fact that most of the detergent companies and the advertising agencies that handled the accounts were located in the Midwest. I shall never forget when I first went to work for *CBS* in Chicago what a thrill it was to walk down the halls there in the *Wrigley Building* and see radio stars from a dozen different programs. I was familiar with some of them by name as I had been with a *CBS* affiliated station for five years prior to that, but to actually see them in flesh and blood, that was something else again. To run into *Don Ameche* or *Dale Evans* or *Fran Allison*, or *Gene Autry* was a real thrill. ■

## Empty Lots:

BY JACK B. SPATAFORA

The word *prairie* was brought over by the French to describe the broad grassy tracts of land settlers discovered on the frontiers of the Midwest. As children growing up in midwestern cities of the thirties and forties, we used that word to describe what adults simply labeled *empty lots*. But I'm here to say that neither the settlers nor the adults ever knew the magic that we found season after in those little untended *Camelots!*

In my case — raised on the west side of Chicago during the Depression — there was little of today's organized fun for children. Ah, but those prairies. To the untrained eye, nothing more than empty plots neither bank or owner could afford to develop. To us, however, living fantasylands which changed faces throughout the year.

Each January the cycle began in the same way. My friends and I would happily drag the discarded Christmas Tree to the prairie. Within days the pile grew to about twenty feet of browning boughs that had served their noble purpose. On the appointed night the local fire department would light this post-solstice pyre. To them it was solving a refuse problem. To those of us who knew better, it was the annual ritual by which the gloom that followed the holidays was mystically dispelled in the great fire's glow.

And the ritual continued, because within the next few days the firemen used their hoses to flood the cleared prairie. Suddenly an ice skating rink as grand and glorious as any Olympic Hall. Well, not to the firefighters who did it just to keep us out of trouble; but again, we knew better and savored those frosty days and nights together for weeks to come.

Winter's frozen grip on our young lives inevitably loosened about March

# The Camelots of our Lives

and then, as if according to some unwritten tribal calendar, the prairie took on a new role. Kiting. Local candy and drug stores featured the latest kites and we felt instinctively obligated to buy and boast the best our nickels and dimes could afford. Why on the prairie? Because where else could you find the proper take-off and fly-time space on March's windy days.

March quickly gave way to April when all over America the crack of bats proclaimed the new baseball season. At our age and skill level, 16-inch softball games were the next best thing and, yes, the prairie was the appointed place. With genetically encoded precision, we paced off the baselines, wedged in mounds and markers, then launched a schedule of after-school and Saturday games that continued through about June. This season of the prairie was mostly a boys' domain back in those more sexist times, although there were always girls to impress or be impressed along the grassy sidelines.

As June and July grew, so did the height of the prairie grass. Usually that meant baseball games gave way to those that thrive best in hidden terrain. And so the hot summer months on our prairies tended to feature cowboys-and-indians or war games. As I look back it still amazes me how unspoken tradition passed on the rules of these unpatented games. Somehow everyone just knew what they were.

All too quickly, the lazy hazy days of summer surrendered to the new school year. My friends and I unlocked yet another facet to this childhood fantasyland. Now, with the grass thinning and browning, it suddenly became a football field. And, oh, how we rushed

home from school to get in all four quarters of the contests before the shortening days left our wondrous gridiron in unplayable shadows.

Halloween was the next major transition point in the prairie's 12-month life cycle. On this most eerie of nights, boys and girls alike made it our disembarkation point. That meant hurrying through dinner, putting on the oldest oddest clothes we could call a costume, then dashing to the prairie where we would engage in the ancient custom of selecting neighborhood targets for our prankish imaginations.

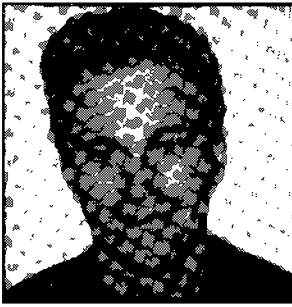
Halloween's end pretty much meant the end of the prairie for the next few months. With days too short and weather too unpredictable, there was a collective pause among our ranks as we looked ahead to the excitement of Thanksgiving and the wonder of Christmas. Once those seasonal passages had been completed, the prairie's barrenness once more gave way to its annual post-Christmas aura.

And so the cycle was ready to renew itself. And each of our young beating imaginations with it. It seems a bit sad that today's tougher youth has so little opportunity to discover such Camelots of its own. But look with your heart, because there are still a few neighborhood prairies left to be discovered. And what a contribution the unleashed imagination of the young can make to any community. ■

## COMING NEXT ISSUE

"We've Got A Job to Do"

The fascinating story of  
American Radio Propaganda  
during World War II



## *“Lost” in the Golden Age of Radio*

BY TODD NEBEL

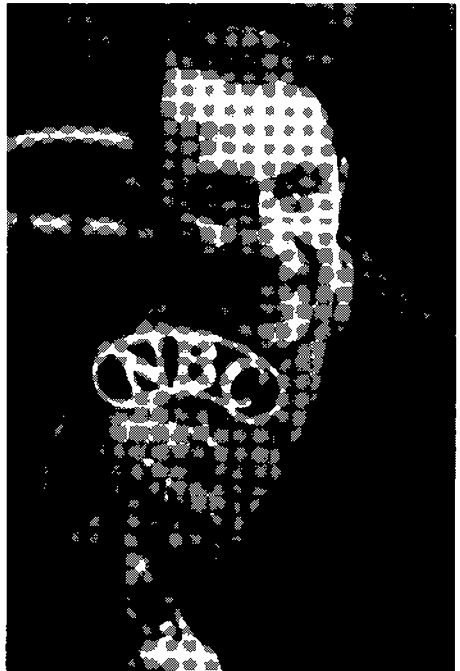
The period of time called “the golden age of radio” spanned from Amos and Andy’s peak in popularity in 1930 to television’s first dominance over radio in both audience numbers and advertising income in 1953. Since 1953, old time radio fans have acknowledged the passing of artists who not only contributed to radio, but also to television, film and the recording industry. And even if today’s media tend to overlook an actor’s work on radio, many radio veterans have come to appreciate the acknowledgments given to them by the fans of old time radio.

But what of the artists who contributed so much to the golden age of radio but never lived long enough to see the passing of radio itself? To these entertainers, the clock has frozen and radio is still king; television is still in its infancy and has yet to become the major informer and entertainer to America’s homes. There would be no reminiscing about the good old days of radio for these entertainers because the good old days were still around. Let’s acknowledge the entertainers who were “lost” in the golden age of radio, many of who were contributing right up till the end.

**Earle Graser**, the voice of the Lone Ranger on radio from 1933 to 1941, was a virtual unknown to the American radio audience at the time of his death. In April, 1941, Graser was killed just two blocks from his home in Farmington, Michigan, when he fell asleep at the wheel, crashing into the rear of a trailer truck. The forty-six year old actor had been kept under wraps for eight years by

the owner-producers of the Lone Ranger (King-Trendle, Inc.), so not to publicize the fact that Graser was the legendary masked man. Many fans of radio feel Graser’s portrayal of the Lone Ranger made the masked man seem like a “real” person, while Graser’s successor, Brace Beemer, made the Lone Ranger seem larger than life.

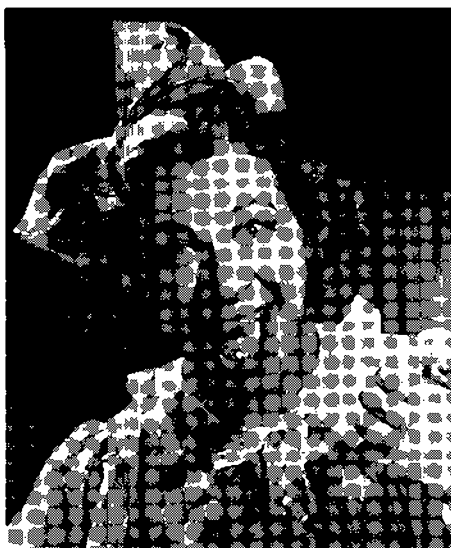
**Tom Mix** was a hero to millions of youngsters, a legendary movie star, and a former Texas Ranger for which the radio program “Tom Mix and His Ralston Straight Shooters” was named. Tom Mix was a real hero that young



GRAHAM MC NAMEE

listeners idolized — with the help of radio premiums, advertisements and mailings with “Tom’s likeness on them.” The fact that Tom himself did not appear on the program was decided early on since a skilled radio actor would be more willing to endure the grind of a five day a week show (and could also be paid alot less than the real Tom Mix was accustomed to). And despite the news that Tom Mix had died at the age of 69 in an automobile accident near Florence, Arizona, on October 12, 1940, the seven year old radio program continued on without missing a beat. In fact, even though children across America heard the news about the death of Tom Mix, the ratings did not drop at all; many explaining it away that they must be listening to Tom Mix Jr., and his replacement horse Tony Jr. Credit also had to be given to the actors who portrayed Tom over the years: Willard Waterman, Russell Thorson and Curley Bradley, who made Tom a “real” person and the greatest cowboy that ever lived.

**Graham McNamee** was one of the earliest and best known radio personality announcers, passing away on May 9, 1942 at the age of 53. Known as the first of the colorful personality announcers, he led the way for the likes of Harry Von Zell, Don Wilson and Ken Carpenters, among others. At the apex of McNamee’s career he was working on programs like The Cities Services Concerts, Elsa Maxwell’s Party Line, The Fire Chief, and The Rudy Vallee Show. He has known also for his exuberant, vivid style of broadcasting sports (Max Schmeling-Joe Lewis boxing matches) and other special events which made him a household name. By the 1940’s, McNamee had been relegated to NBC staff announcing work; covering special events and casual assignments before making his last microphone appearance April 24, 1942, when he developed a streptococcus infection which took his life.



**FANNY BRICE AS BABY SNOOKS**

Radio comedy suffered the loss of one of the greatest singing comedians in show business — **Fanny Brice**, on May 19, 1951 at the age of 59. Fanny Brice was the ultimate headliner in any form of entertainment (vaudeville, film and radio) that she undertook. At the time of her death she was still portraying her best known character, the lovable, mischievous child called **Baby Snooks**. The seven year old brat originally called **Babykins**, was created at a backstage party following a Ziegfeld Follies show many years earlier. With the aid of writer **David Freedman**, Brice built **Baby Snooks** into a national institution that became a favorite with radio audiences through the years. Fanny Brice had been preparing to continue her weekly program at NBC when she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage at her home in Hollywood and then died five days later. Her life story was later portrayed by **Barbara Streisand** in the 1968 motion picture “**Funny Girl**.”

The world of music lost the popular singer and avid flying enthusiast, **Buddy Clark** on October 1, 1949 when the plane he piloted crashed in Hollywood. The

## LOST IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

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thirty-eight year old Clark was known to fly on cross country trips more often than he appeared at the recording studio or on his weekly radio program. However, he was better known for his easy going singing style and such popular hits as "Peg O' My Heart," "Love Somebody" (with Doris Day) and "I'll Dance At Your Wedding." Buddy Clark got his first big break in the mid-1930's after leaving Northwestern Law School and joining Benny Goodman. From there, he went on to sing for Your Hit Parade, The Ben Bernie Show, Wayne King and the Raymond Paige Orchestras. Following his return from the army, he joined NBC's *Carnation Contented Hour* broadcast in 1946. After Buddy's death, the sponsor, *Carnation*, revealed that they had been so taken with Buddy's talent that they told Buddy that he could stay on the program "for the next 20 years" if he would like.

For thirty years, "the old maestro," **Ben Bernie** was one of the most colorful figures in show business when he passed away on October 10, 1943, at the age of 52. By a suggestion from Sophie Tucker in 1919, Ben built a band and a career based on the delivery of "sweet" music, suave and charm with a smattering of gags and patter throughout. Tight on money in the early 1930's, Ben and "all the lads" turned to radio where they found their first commercial sponsor — Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer. Soon, millions of radio listeners would come to know Ben's famous "Yowsah" greeting on other sponsored programs from American Can, Mennen Powder and Wrigley's Chewing Gum. In early 1943, following a pleurisy attack from which he only partially recovered, Ben and his band left Wrigley's Chicago headquarters for a tour of the west coast war factories and defense plants. There he continued to broadcast his daily quarter



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BUDDY CLARK

hour CBS radio program for Wrigley as well as entertaining in daily stage shows for the war workers. Not long after arriving though, Ben suffered a heart attack and was in and out of oxygen tents for months. Suffering from a constant loss of weight and overstrained heart, Ben Bernie died on October 10, 1942. On October 21st, the Ben Bernie Memorial Broadcast was heard over the entire Mutual network with an array of Ben's friends from Hollywood on hand.

The leader of one of the greatest "sweet" bands of all time was **Hal Kemp** whose orchestra was voted best sweet band twice by *Metronome* readers during the 1930's. The Kemp style (heard often on radio during the 1930's) was largely created by John Scott Trotter and Hal Mooney who produced a colorful, attractive array of music unlike any other band of that day. Kemp's relaxed style of music was even more evident in the band's popular vocalist, Skinnay Ennis (who later formed his own band and played on Bob Hope's show) who introduced the style of singing (or some say talking) through a song. Hal's recording of "Gotta Date With An Angel,"



“You’re The Top,” “Lamplight” and “The Touch of Your Lips” are just a few examples of the wonderful way he could play a song. It all came to an end on December 21, 1940, when the car Hal was driving between engagements from Los Angeles to San Francisco was involved in a head-on crash in Madera, California. Hal suffered eight broken ribs, one which pierced a lung, later creating pneumonia. He died two days later.

A formidable radio personality and the man billed as “the world’s greatest entertainer” was **Al Jolson**. A legend in his own time, Jolson tasted the fruits of a showman’s achievements by not only pioneering in many fields of show business but living to enjoy public acclaim for “The Jazz Singer,” the first talking movie. Al starred on a number of radio programs on his own. The Shell Chateau in 1935 and The Kraft Music Hall in 1947-49, were among his best. After a wane in his career in the early 1940’s, Jolson rebounded spectacularly in 1946 with the making of the picture, “The Jolson Story” (based on his life story) and its follow-up, “Jolson Sings Again” in 1949. After overseas trips entertaining troops in Korea, Jolson (who was a frequent guest on many radio programs) flew to San Francisco to tape his first guest appearance of the 1950-51 season for the Bing Crosby Show. It was there on October 23, 1950, that Al died while playing gin-rummy with some friends at his suite in the St. Francis Hotel. For the October 24th taping of the Bing Crosby Show, Bing was to have paid high tribute to Al for his recent Korean trip, and later was to have shared a medley of Jolson hits with Al (Crosby later paid tribute to Al’s memory on his program taped later that week). Several events and negotiations were underway at the time of Jolson’s death. Al had been voted a special distinguished service medal by the Amvet Association for his work entertaining the troops during



**BEN BERNIE**

World War II and in Korea. The award was presented posthumously. It was generally anticipated that Al would give Bill Paley and CBS-TV the nod in the coming months to work on television (he was the long major holdout in this arrangement despite a contract to do so). At practically the same moment that Al’s life was ending, Danny Thomas kidded Jolson on his television show that night that Al’s new insurance policy would have “Larry Parks buried in the event of Jolson’s death.” Negotiations were also underway for Al to star in the first three dimension film, “The Customer Is Always Right.” Producer Lester Cowan felt that the man who starred in the first talking movie should star in the Polaroid process which was hoped to be just as significant.

These were just some of the artists who contributed so much to the golden age of radio. Many others, such as **Glenn Miller**, **Tom Brenneman**, **Major Edward Bowes**, and **Vaughn DeLeath**, could also have their stories told. We will remember them well as long as the recordings of their broadcasts stay with us. ■

# Television Flashback

For a quick look at Television Yesteryear, take a peek at these two pages from Television Forecast Magazine, week of February 19, 1949. The two display ads give you an idea of the programming available to viewers in those early days, and the article by Chicago's Ernie Simon is a humorous preview of the TV challenges facing the radio stars as they move into video.



## "CAMEL NEWS CARAVAN"

Mon. thru Fri. 6:45-7:00 P.M.  
A New, Live Round-up of Late News

## "CHEVROLET ON BROADWAY"

7:30-8:00 P.M.  
Dramatisations of Well-Known Stories

## "COLGATE THEATER"

8:00-8:30 P.M.  
"Tough Kid"—A Stirring Drama

## "FIRESTONE AMERICANA"

8:30-9:00 P.M.  
A Quiz on American Lore

**WNBQ**  
CHICAGO  
CHANNEL 5

## Tops in Television from the Top of Chicago

# WENR-TV

American  
Broadcasting  
Company

### Highlights

#### THIS WEEK:

#### "SUPER CIRCUS"

Sunday, 4:00 p.m.

#### "IDENTIFY" with Bob Elson

Monday, 8:00 p.m.

#### "ABC BARN DANCE"

Monday, 7:30 p.m.

#### "WRESTLING"

Wednesday, 8:30 p.m.

#### "SECOND GUESSER"

Thursday, 8:00 p.m.

#### "BREAK THE BANK"

with Bert Parks, emcee  
Friday, 8:00 p.m.

WATCH US ON TV

## Who Hung the Overalls on Mrs. Murphy's Antenna?

by ERNIE SIMON

Television is to radio what the atom bomb is to the slingshot!

As this new and exciting medium comes of age and begins to pose a challenge to our way of life, it becomes apparent that we in radio must re-align our thought processes, our techniques, and in some cases our very physiognomy.

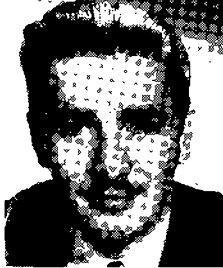
Translating that into my language, let us put it this way; many a radio star has been caught by the TV camera, up that proverbial creek without a paddle or even a pair of waterwings. They are just "TV"—too vulnerable to the hot glaring studio lights, and to the critical eye of *John V. (for "Video") Public*.

Just think of what some of my confreres of the kilocycle clique will have to contend with to become telegenic.

Will *Bing Crosby* ever again dare remove his hat during a program? By the same token, *Toscanini* will have to take haircuts now. To watch *Edgar Bergen*, you will find it necessary to wear sunglasses, to avoid contracting scalpsblindness (similar to snow-blindness).

Brother those studio lights are MURDER! They glare with such intensity, that my sponsors have found it necessary to include in my contract a clause supplying me with sun-tan lotion.

*Fred Allen* will have to have his eyes lifted, while *Phil Harris* will merely have to have his whitened. And on the *Jack Benny* program when *Ronald Colman* decides he would rather break his leg than keep a dinner date at *Jack's* house, he will really have to break his leg. For this, he will probably get an extra fee, and were the characterizations reversed, I am certain that *Benny* would gladly break a leg for a few extra bucks.



*Jolson* is through. If the public sees him in that wheelchair, they'll worry about *Larry Parks*.

Then, there are many comedians who have been fooling their listeners with passionate love scenes on the air. Think of how those gorgeous gals will rebel when they actually have to *kiss* some of those old men for the benefit of the listening and *viewing* public.

The way *Winchell* spouts a newscast, you will have to sit at your set with a towel. And you will find that *Garro-way's* neon teeth and translucent earlobes are far from telegenic.

I am not particularly worried, of course. Being dashedly handsome, I am convinced that I have nothing to fear from the prying eyes of the TV camera. Of course, I wouldn't recommend letting your kiddies watch me on the screen if they are afraid of dragons and monsters. Psychiatry has yet to discover an antidote for me.

Of course, there are the obvious changes that are coming with television. Schools for bartenders now require a full semester of TV repair and electronics toward graduation.

Enterprising housewives have installed turnstiles at their living room doors. But when more families get their own sets and competition becomes keener, turnstiles will probably be replaced by door prizes and free lunch.

So the public has us TV-folk on our best behavior. We are trapped by millions of eyes, and our conduct must be exemplary.

However, I have enormous faith in American inventive genius, and I know that some day we will have two-way television. While you view us, we will be staring right back at you. Then *everybody* will have to be on his best behavior, which means that we will no longer need a police force.

Even war may become obsolete.

As they say at the advertising agencies, "This television is becoming a monster." But then, that's what they say about me at WBKB.

## JOSEPH KEARNS:

# Looking Back on the 'Man in Black'

BY STEVEN DARNALL

If you listened — then or now — to *any* of those programs that dominated the golden age of radio, chances are you're familiar with the voice of Joseph Kearns.

Even if you don't recognize Kearns' name, you're probably familiar with some of the characters he played. He was the first actor to portray *The Whistler* (he even wrote an episode of the series, "The Man From Out of the East"), and long before Johnny Cash made the scene, Joseph Kearns was "The Man In Black," the mysterious host of *Suspense*. Before, during, and after those roles, he was heard on scads of other shows, ranging from *Lights Out* to *The Great Gildersleeve*. For all we know about Joseph Kearns' resume, however, in other respects he is very much like The Man In Black; a shadowy figure, lurking in the background, observing the actions of others.

Given Kearns' ubiquity during radio's golden age, one could joke that he'd been working since birth. Such jokes wouldn't be far from the truth: Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, Kearns began his career on the vaudeville circuit as part of a child act called "The Rising Generation." He divided his early adult years between Utah and California, working as a stock actor and a theatre organist. In the late 1920s, the movies dealt organists everywhere a cruel blow by making talkies. With that career headed towards obsolescence, Kearns made the move to radio, becoming a staff announcer for Salt Lake City station KSL.

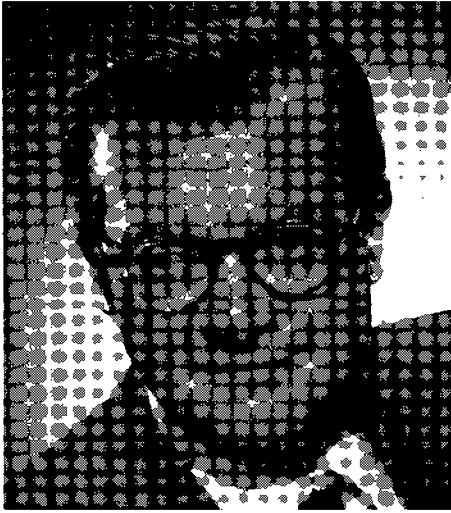
He spent six years at KSL, eventually moving up the ladder to become program director. He was off to Hollywood for good in 1936, a part of the great radio migration to California (even as an actor, however, he stayed close to his roots as

an organist. In the 1950s, in fact, he bought one of only three specially-made Wurlitzer pipe organs in existence, and proceeded to design — and build — a house around it. The organ was later used on an album by Johnny Duffy, *An Excursion in Hi-Fi*).

In 1937, Kearns won a place in children's hearts with his charming portrayal of The Crazy Quilt Dragon on the celebrated *Cinnamon Bear* serial. The show's cast was packed with veteran radio actors (including Frank Nelson, Verna Felton, Elliott Lewis, Hanley Stafford, Eliva Allman and Howard MacNear), but Kearns was featured more prominently than any of them. It was the Dragon who befriended Judy and Jimmy Barton (and their friend, Paddy O'Cinnamon) even as he fought the urge to steal their shiny silver star (an urge he succumbed to more than once — shiny objects, he explained, were a weakness of his), and Kearns' portrayal made the character a comical — and touching — mixture of villain and victim.

It would not be the last time Kearns found himself on both sides of the coin, especially when it came to *Suspense*. Kearns got the role of The Man In Black in 1943, after his brief stint as The Whistler, but his duties on *Suspense* went much farther than merely hosting — or even narrating — the evening's story. Kearns spent the better part of a dozen years as a supporting player on "Radio's outstanding theatre of thrills," in roles that ranged from one or two lines to those which made him practically a co-star.

Kearns' sharp, distinctive voice made him a believable heavy on *Suspense* — in "Straight Into Darkness" his character fakes his own death as part of an insurance scam, while in "Rave Notice" he



JOSEPH KEARNS

was a vicious director whose cruel taunts drove Milton Berle's character to murder — but his talents as an actor allowed him to play the innocent as well as the guilty. In "Short Order," one of his only starring roles on *Suspense*, he played a beleaguered restaurant owner who finds himself hounded by a series of events revolving around a new — and particularly ugly — customer. Kearns was even more prominent on *The Theatre of Famous Radio Players*, a syndicated series starring a company of radio veterans (like Lurene Tuttle, Cathy Lewis and John McIntire) that aired on Mutual in 1945.

Of course, Kearns was hardly limited to straight dramatic roles, turning up on comedy programs as well. He performed as a "semi-regular" with the likes of Judy Canova (he played Count Benchley Botsford), Harold Peary (he appeared as Doc Yak-Yak on the short-lived *Honest Harold*) and Mel Blanc (when Blanc had his own show, Kearns turned up as Mr. Colby, the irascible father of Mel's girlfriend Betty, but none of his comedy roles, large or small, could outlive his ten-year portrayal of Ed, the grizzled guard of Jack Benny's vault who had lost touch with the outside world long, long ago

(When Benny brought Ed a Christmas gift, he added, "And next week it'll be 1955." Ed astonished response was "Nineteen?!?")

When Jack finally brought Ed up from the vault in 1955, the shock of the new proved to be too much for him — he mistook a bus for a dragon, and panicked when he saw it "eating" passengers — and he returned to the underground vault. Kearns' performance has received a very special sort of tribute: when you visit "Jack Benny's Vault" at The Museum of Broadcast Communications, you'll see a uniformed mannequin named Ed, vigilantly guarding the entrance.

Like most of his radio compatriots, Kearns made the move to television when the time came (although he did turn up on late-period radio shows like *Frontier Gentleman* and *The CBS Radio Workshop*). On television, he was seen not only on Jack Benny's show, but on *Our Miss Brooks* as Superintendent Stone, and when *Dennis the Menace* came to television in 1953, Kearns turned up as the perpetually perturbed Mr. Wilson, a role he held until his death at the age of 55 in 1962 (at that point, the role was given to another radio veteran, professional curmudgeon Gale Gordon).

Joseph Kearns did not live long enough to enjoy being "discovered" by later generations of radio fans. He did, however, leave an indelible stamp on the medium by being one of its hardest working members. "[Radio acting] isn't a soft job; it's nerve wracking," he said in a rare interview. "We often work week after week without a day off. But we also love it." Knowing all he contributed to radio, one can hardly dispute that Joseph Kearns *must* have loved it. ■

(ED. NOTE — Hear Joseph Kearns on *WNIB's* *Those Were The Days* during *October and November*. Tune in to *Suspense* on October 2, 9 ("Rave Notice" with Milton Berle) and 30; and to *Phil Harris-Alice Faye* November 27. Check listings on pages 22-25.)

<b>OCTOBER</b>			<b>Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78 MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M. SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.</b>			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> Due to WBBM's commitment to news and sports, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be pre-empted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance, or for unscheduled sports coverage. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>					<p><b>1</b> Green Hornet Dizzy Dean</p>	<p><b>2</b> Tales of Texas Rangers X Minus One Gangbusters</p>
<p><b>3</b> Broadway's My Beat Our Miss Brooks Voyage of Scarlet Queen</p>	<p><b>4</b> Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston</p>	<p><b>5</b> Hidden Truth W.C. Fields</p>	<p><b>6</b> Roy Rogers Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>7</b> Famous Jury Trials Vic and Sade</p>	<p><b>8</b> Charlie McCarthy Bickersons</p>	<p><b>9</b> Directors Playhouse Damon Runyon Theatre Proudly We Hail</p>
<p><b>10</b> <i>Celebrating WBBM Radio's 70th Anniversary</i></p>	<p><b>11</b> Box Thirteen I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>12</b> X-Minus One I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>13</b> Jack Benny I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>14</b> Voyage of Scarlet Queen I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>15</b> Red Ryder I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>16</b> Third Man Lone Ranger Gangbusters</p>
<p><b>17</b> Charlie McCarthy Dragnet Fibber McGee &amp; Molly</p>	<p><b>18</b> Six Shooter I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>19</b> Nightbeat I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>20</b> Cisco Kid I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>21</b> The Clock I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>22</b> Horatio Hornblower I Can Hear It Now</p>	<p><b>23</b> Tales of Texas Rangers Red Ryder Six Shooter</p>
<p><b>24</b> The Falcon Jack Benny Voyage of Scarlet Queen</p>	<p><b>25</b> Ozzie and Harriet Strange Dr. Wierd</p>	<p><b>26</b> Midnight Mr. Keen — Part 1</p>	<p><b>27</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Mr. Keen — Part 2</p>	<p><b>28</b> Crime Club Mr. Keen — Part 3</p>	<p><b>29</b> Life of Riley Mr. Keen — Part 4</p>	<p><b>30</b> Mercury Theatre: <i>Dracula</i> Baby Snooks</p>

<b>NOVEMBER</b>			<b>Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78 MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M. SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.</b>			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Oct. 31</b> Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre <i>War of the Worlds</i> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly</p>	<p><b>1</b> Escape Flash Gordon</p>	<p><b>2</b> <i>To Be Announced</i></p>	<p><b>3</b> Casebook of Gregory Hood Easy Aces</p>	<p><b>4</b> Lone Ranger Adventures in Research</p>	<p><b>5</b> Life of Riley Sgt. Preston</p>	<p><b>6</b> The Shadow X Minus One Mysterious Traveler</p>
<p><b>7</b> <i>Special Broadcast Saluting the Radio Hall of Fame</i></p>	<p><b>8</b> Cisco Kid Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>9</b> Voyage of Scarlet Queen Bob and Ray</p>	<p><b>10</b> Nightbeat Easy Aces</p>	<p><b>11</b> Six Shooter Bickersons</p>	<p><b>12</b> Mr. &amp; Mrs. Blandings Cinnamon Bear #1</p>	<p><b>13</b> Mercury Theatre: <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> Lum and Abner Jack Benny</p>
<p><b>14</b> This Is Your FBI Burns and Allen Hidden Truth</p>	<p><b>15</b> Lone Ranger Cinnamon Bear #2</p>	<p><b>16</b> Famous Jury Trials Cinnamon Bear #3</p>	<p><b>17</b> Tales of Texas Rangers Cinnamon Bear #4</p>	<p><b>18</b> Red Ryder Cinnamon Bear #5</p>	<p><b>19</b> Gangbusters Cinnamon Bear #6</p>	<p><b>20</b> Cinnamon Bear #1-2-3 Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Green Hornet</p>
<p><b>21</b> Cinnamon Bear #4-5-6 Jack Benny Great Gildersleeve</p>	<p><b>22</b> The Falcon Cinnamon Bear #7</p>	<p><b>23</b> Cavalcade of America Cinnamon Bear #8</p>	<p><b>24</b> Our Miss Brooks Cinnamon Bear #9</p>	<p><b>25</b> Great Gildersleeve Cinnamon Bear #10</p>	<p><b>26</b> Archie Andrews Cinnamon Bear #11</p>	<p><b>27</b> Cinnamon Bear #7-8-9 Hopalong Cassidy This Is Your FBI</p>
<p><b>28</b> Cinnamon Bear #10-11-12 Directors Playhouse: <i>Miracle on 34th Street</i></p>	<p><b>29</b> The Clock Cinnamon Bear #12</p>	<p><b>30</b> X Minus One Cinnamon Bear #13</p>	<p><b>Dec. 1</b> Red Ryder Cinnamon Bear #14</p>	<p><b>Dec. 2</b> Escape Cinnamon Bear #15</p>	<p><b>Dec. 3</b> Life of Riley Cinnamon Bear #16</p>	<p><b>Dec. 4</b> Cinnamon Bear #13-14-15 The Falcon Damon Runyon Theatre</p>

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

## WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

# OCTOBER

**PLEASE NOTE:** The numerals following each program listing for Those Were The Days represents timing information for each particular show. (9:45; 11:20; 8:50) means that we will broadcast the show in three segments: 9 minutes and 45 seconds; 11 minutes and 20 seconds; 8 minutes and 50 seconds. If you add the times of these segments together, you'll have the total length of the show (29:55 for our example). This is of help to those who are taping the broadcasts for their own collection. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2nd

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (10-4-50) Gildy has been appointed Chairman of the Summerfield Community Chest fund drive and nephew Leroy is going to be the quarterback in the benefit football game. Willard Waterman stars as Gildersleeve with Walter Tetley as Leroy. Cast features Mary Lee Robb, Lillian Randolph, Arthur Q. Brian, Barbara Whiting, Richard LeGrand. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:00)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (9-30-43) Bing Crosby with guest Phil Silvers plus Trudy Irwin, the Charioteers, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, Ken Carpenter. Time Marches Back to 1936. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:30)

★ **SUSPENSE** (11-23-43) "Strange Death of Charles Umberstein" starring Vincent Price in his first performance on radio's outstanding theatre of thrills. A story of espionage set in WWII Berlin. Hans Conried co-stars and Joe Kearns narrates as The Man in Black. Sustaining, CBS. (30:30)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (10-3-43) Douglas Edwards and CBS correspondents from around the world. "Allied Fifth Army troops on the Italian mainland have captured Bienvenuto, northeast of Naples, while the British Eighth Army, striking swiftly up on the Adriatic side, has locked off a wide area. . . . The Royal Air Force bombed Munich again last night." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (10-5-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees who are cleaning out the spare bedroom because they are about to take in a war worker. Cast includes Arthur Q. Brian, Ransom Sherman (in his first appearance as Uncle Dennis) and Shirley Mitchell. Gale Gordon, on leave from the US Coast Guard, makes a guest appearance as Mayor LaTrivia. The King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:00)

**NATIONAL BARN DANCE** (10-2-43) It's the 10th anniversary show for the gang at the old hayloft and on hand for the celebration are emcee Joe Kelly, Pat Buttram, the Hoosier Hotshots, Arkie, the Arkansas Woodchopper, Lulu Belle and Scotty, Grace Wilson and the Dinning Sisters. Alka Seltzer, WLS/NBC. (30:00)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9th

**SUSPENSE** (6-1-58) "Rave Notice" starring Vincent Price as an actor who is fired by his director. Cast features Lou Merrill, Peter Leeds, Jack Krushen, Larry Thor. Sustaining, CBS. (20:55)

**NOTE:** *This story was originally broadcast on Suspense on Oct. 12, 1950 with comedian Milton Berle in the Vincent Price role. We'll have the Berle version of "Rave Notice" later this afternoon.*

★ **TREASURY STAR PARADE** (9-30-43) The Motion Picture Industry salutes the Third War Loan with an all-star cast: Dick Powell, Ginny Simms, Thomas Mitchell, Olivia deHavilland, Brian Ahearn, Grace McDonald, Kay Kyser and the band, Victor Young and the orchestra. US Treasury Department. (13:50)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-10-43) First show of the 1943-44 season, from New York. It's also a milestone broadcast as this is the first show with Jack's four new writers (Milt Josefsberg, George Balzer, John Tackaberry, Cy Howard). Jack is back from a three-month overseas camp tour. Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Phil Harris, Don Wilson, Minerva Pious, John Brown. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:30)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (10-10-43) Doug Edwards reports the news with the aid of CBS worldwide correspondents. "The mighty Allied bombing attack against German-held Europe has raged on today non-stop with American planes following up yesterday's record raid with another pounding of Western Germany." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:10)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (10-11-50) If Summerfield gets a new mayor, will Gildy lose his job as Water Commissioner? Willard Waterman stars with Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Mary Lee Robb, Richard Crenna and Gale Gordon. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:40)

★ **I SUSTAIN THE WINGS** (10-16-43) Captain Glenn Miller conducts the band from the Army Air Force School at Yale University. PFC Johnny Desmond make his debut with the band singing "How Sweet You Are." Program includes a sketch about the Air Service Command at Patterson Field, Dayton, Ohio. US Air Force, NBC. (29:30)

**SUSPENSE** (10-12-50) "Rave Notice" starring Milton Berle as an actor fired by the director. Joe Kearns co-stars. AutoLite, CBS. (28:20)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16th

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-17-43) While being interviewed by a reporter about his overseas tour for the troops, Jack tells of his adventures in "Casablanca." Jack is Ricky Bogart; Rochester is Sam singing "As Time Goes By." Also: Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Mary Livingstone, Don Wilson. Broadcast from New York. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:45)

★ **TREASURY STAR PARADE** (10-1-43) "Bonus for Berlin" starring Judith Evelyn. US Treasury Department. (14:15)

**SUSPENSE** (6-1-44) "Fugue in C Minor" starring Vincent Price and Ida Lupino in "a story of brooding anxiety and sharpening suspicions" set in the late Victorian era. Radio drama by Lucille Fletcher. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:55)

★ **WORLDS NEWS TODAY** (10-17-43) Douglas Edwards and CBS correspondents in the United States and around the world. "The Allied Fifth Army is forcing the Germans back from nearly all their positions on the Volturno River in Italy today, while the British Eighth continues to advance along its front . . . In the Pacific, General MacArthur's troops on New Guinea have advanced to within 40 miles of the Jap base at Madang." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:30)

★ **TROMAN HARPER, RUMOR DETECTIVE** (10-24-43) A wartime program offering "the truth about rumors." "How safe are our destroyer escort ships? Do parachutes fail to open?" Groves Labs, MBS. (14:15)

**SUSPENSE** (10-19-58) "Three Skeleton Key" starring Vincent Price in " . . . that story about the rats." Produced and directed by William N. Robson, cast includes Ben Wright and Lawrence Dobkin. A classic. Sustaining, CBS. (18:45)

★ **DIMES FOR INVASION** (10-2-43) A National Newspaperboy Day salute to America's newspaper boys who sell war stamps to their customers. Morton Downey, Associated Press War Correspondent George Tucker, and the Paulist Boys Choir. US Treasury Department. (14:15)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (10-18-50) Willard Waterman stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve who buys himself a spiffy, new suit. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:45)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23rd

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (10-12-43) Jim and Marian Jordan with Arthur Q. Brian, Ransom Sherman, Shirley Mitchell, Virginia Gordon, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. McGee's old pal Fred Nitney wants a reference for his daughter who wants a commission in the Women's Army Corps. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:55)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (10-25-50) Willard Waterman as Gildy who is hopeful that he will be named to the "Sons of Summerfield" Lodge. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:30)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (10-24-43) Doug Edwards

and CBS newsmen around the globe. "A large fleet of British-based bombers struck across the Channel into France today to hammer German airdromes and communications. . . Allied planes from Italy have attacked Southeastern Austria." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:30)

**SUSPENSE** (11-10-57) "The Pit and the Pendulum" by Edgar Allan Poe starring Vincent Price in the classic story of Punishment by terror. Cast includes Ellen Morgan, Jay Novello, Ben Wright. AFRS rebroadcast. (25:25)

**THE GOLDBERGS** (12-10-40) First of two connected but isolated episodes of the classic daytime drama starring Gertrude Berg as Molly Goldberg, with James R. Waters as Jake, Roslyn Siber as Rosalie, Alfred Ryder as Sammy. Oxydol, CBS. (14:30)

**THE GOLDBERGS** (12-11-40) Second of two connected episodes from the long-running daytime radio series which has been called "a Jewish One Man's Family." Oxydol, CBS. (14:20)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-24-43) Jack and the gang are on the train en route to California. While being interviewed by a newspaper reporter, Jack tells of his visit to "Algiers," setting the scene for a spoof of the movie of the same name. Jack plays "Pepe LeMoko Boyer," Phil is Three-Finger Harris, Dennis is Dennis the Deriliot, Mary is Inez, Rochester is Pierre, and Minerva Pious is Hedy. Don is Inspector Wilson. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:40)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30th ANNUAL HALLOWEEN SHOW

**INNER SANCTUM** (6-23-47) "Over My Dead Body" is the story of a man who feigns death to determine which of his heirs is worthy of his fortune. AFRS rebroadcast. (23:06)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-31-43) On Halloween night, the sponsor pays a visit to Jack. Arthur Q. Brian is Mr. Mortimer, the sponsor. Butterfly McQueen appears as Rochester's niece. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:45)

**SUSPENSE** (4-11-46) "The Name of the Beast" starring Vincent Price with Elliott Lewis, Joe Kearns, Cathy Lewis. An artist paints a portrait of a blood-soaked axe murderer. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:30)

**INNER SANCTUM** (1-24-49) "Deadly Dummy" featuring Mason Adams and Elspeth Eric. A man kills a ventriloquist, takes over his act and is haunted by his dummy. AFRS rebroadcast. (23:00)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (10-31-43) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve who has girl trouble at his Halloween party. Walter Tetley, Bea Benadaret, Shirley Mitchell, Earle Ross. Kraft Foods, NBC. (27:50)

**SUSPENSE** (3-3-57) "Present Tense" starring Vincent Price as a Walter Mitty-type murderer. Cast includes Daws Butler, Jack Kruschen and Joe DiSantis. Sustaining, CBS. (29:20)



# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

## WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

# NOVEMBER

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6th

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-7-43) Jack and the gang — Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Phil Harris, Don Wilson — broadcasting from the Marine Corps Air Station in the Mojave Desert on the 168th Anniversary of the founding of the Marine Corps. While Jack performs before an all-Marine audience, airplanes "buzz" him throughout the show! Mel Blanc as a Marine reporter. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:10)

★ **VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS** (7-26-43) Ozzie Nelson and his orchestra with vocalist Harriet Hilliard playing for war workers at the B.F. Goodrich Company plant in Akron, Ohio. Michael Roy announces. Ozzie and Harriet sing "Why Don't You Fall in Love with Me?" and Harriet sings "Johnny Zero" and "In My Arms." Coca Cola, NBC BLUE. (19:20)

★ **TREASURY STAR PARADE** (10-20-43) "No Greater Sacrifice" starring Ned Weaver in a story about the "brave Chinese who sheltered the Americans after the raid on Tokyo." US Treasury Department. (14:15)

**YOUR HIT PARADE** (11-6-43) Frank Sinatra, Bea Wain

and the Hit Paraders present the top songs of the week. AFRS rebroadcast. (28:15)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-14-43) Jack and the gang are on the road again, this time broadcasting before an audience of servicemen at Turney General Hospital in Palm Springs for the Air Transport Command. Jack tells a reporter (John Brown) a story of the Gold Rush. Arthur Q. Brian is a waiter in a restaurant and Frank Nelson is a pilot. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:07)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (10-7-43) Bing Crosby welcomes guest Lucille Ball with Trudy Irwin, Music Maids and Hal, Charioteers, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Ken Carpenter. Time Marches Back sketch and a Lady Bank Teller skit. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:50)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (11-9-43) The World War II food shortage prompts Fibber to make his own chili sauce. Jim and Marian Jordan star with Arthur Q. Brian, Ransom Sherman, Shirley Mitchell, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:00)

(NOTE: KEN ALEXANDER will be guest host for today's Those Were The Days broadcast.)



PACIFIC PIONEER BROADCASTERS ROUNDTABLE: Chuck Schaden with (from left) Janet Waldo, Alice Backes, Peggy Webber, and Jeanette Nolan.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13th  
PACIFIC PIONEER BROADCASTERS  
REMEMBER THE RADIO DAYS

**ACTRESS' ROUND TABLE** (7-8-93) Radio actresses Alice Backes, Jeanette Nolan, Janet Waldo and Peggy Webber join Chuck Schaden for an informal recollection of their days on radio in a roundtable conversation recorded at the Pacific Pioneer Broadcaster's Clubroom in Hollywood, California. Part 1. (27:00)

**SUSPENSE** (2-14-48) "The Lodger" starring Robert Montgomery (as the Lodger), Jeanette Nolan (as Ellen Bunting) and Peggy Webber (as Daisy) in an eerie tale of London, 1888 and the series of murders of young, attractive women. This is the classic "Jack the Ripper" story. Robert Montgomery also serves as host of this hour-long broadcast. Sustaining, CBS. (27:10; 30:50)

**ACTRESS' ROUND TABLE** (7-8-93) The conversation continues. Part 2. (29:00)

**MEET CORLISS ARCHER** (9-16-56) Janet Waldo stars as Corliss with Sam Edwards as Dexter Franklin and Fred Shields and Mary Jane Croft as Mr. and Mrs. Archer. Based on characters created by F. Hugh Herbert in the Broadway play "Kiss and Tell." Sustaining, CBS. (24:55)

**ACTRESS' ROUND TABLE** (7-8-93) More conversation from the quartet of radio actresses who are joined by actor Les Tremayne who helped bring them together for this conversation. Part 3. (31:50)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20th  
ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

**HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE** (11-25-48) "The Free Land" starring Martha Scott. Pioneer life in the Northwest Territory is the basis for this Thanksgiving theme broadcast. A young couple Homestead in the Dakotas and face the hardship of the prairie. James Hilton hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (28:50)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-21-43) Jack and Mary go shopping in preparation for Thanksgiving dinner at his home. Later, Jack has a "turkey" dream. Grape Nuts, NBC. (30:00)

★ **SOLDIERS IN GREASEPAINT** (11-25-43) An all-star Thanksgiving Morning broadcast saluting the show business performers who entertain our World War II men and women with USO shows. Hosts Bob Hope and Jack Benny present Al Jolson, Frederic March, Jascha Heifetz, Martha Raye, Kay Francis, Carole Landis, Judith Anderson, Jackie Heller, Merle Oberon, Jerry Colonna, Andy Devine, Jimmy Burke, Jinx Falkenberg, Fay MacKenzie, Anna Lee, John Garfield, Francis Langford. Sustaining, NBC. (14:55; 10:39; 19:21)

**GOOD NEWS OF 1940** (11-23-39) In this Thanksgiving Day broadcast host Edward Arnold introduces guests Raymond Walburn and Walter Huston plus regulars Fanny Brice and Hanley Stafford as Baby Snooks and Daddy, Connie Boswell, Meredith Willson and the orchestra. Huston reads the Gettysburg Address. Comedy sketch: Here Come the Pilgrims. Maxwell House Coffee, CBS. (29:25)

**DURANTE-MOORE SHOW** (11-22-46) It's "the Nose and the Haircut," Jimmy Durante and Garry Moore. The boys present a Thanksgiving opera with Jimmy as Miles Standish, Garry as John Alden, and singer Susan Eilers as Priscilla. Announcer is Howard Petrie, Roy Bary and the orchestra. Rexall Drugs, CBS. (29:25)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27th  
RADIO TO GET INTO  
THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (12-19-48) The Nelsons decide to be sensible this Christmas. They'll not buy extravagant gifts for each other. International Silver Co., NBC. (29:30)

**CALIFORNIA CARAVAN** (12-21-47) "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar" is based on a true incident that took place on Christmas Eve, 1882 in a small prospecting town in the west. California Physicians Service Insurance, ABC. (27:25)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-28-43) Jack and Dennis Day argue about salary. Jack explains why Dennis earns only \$35 a week and shouldn't get a raise. Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, John Brown, Minerva Pious, Butterfly McQueen and guest Barbara Stanwyck who substitutes for Mary Livingstone who is ill with laryngitis. Grape Nuts, NBC. (29:50)

**THIS IS YOUR FBI** (12-24-48) "The Return of St. Nick." A man who plays Santa for kids in a settlement house disappears. The FBI investigates. Equitable Life Assurance Society, ABC. (30:15)

**PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW** (12-11-49) Phil and Remley shop for Alice's Christmas present: a blue mink. Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley, Walter Tetley as Julius, Joe Kearns as the mink salesman. Rexall, NBC. (27:30)

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## VINCENT PRICE

# *The Prince of Players*

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

Right now somewhere on Cloud Nine one harpist may be saying to his companion in life, "I can't understand it. We gave him everything. Culture. Trips aboard. An Ivy League education. We encouraged him with his legitimate stage career. We applauded his reputation as a gourmet and an art critic. And what is his claim to fame? Scaring people!"

Father knows best: Vincent Price, that handsome sophisticate who for years looked like he belonged in the den or library with a glass of claret in his hand as he gazed knowingly at a painting above the fireplace, is the same man who has been frightening two generations of moviegoers. Away from the cameras there are few actors more urbane; on the screen in his genre roles he has delivered more shivers than the iceman.

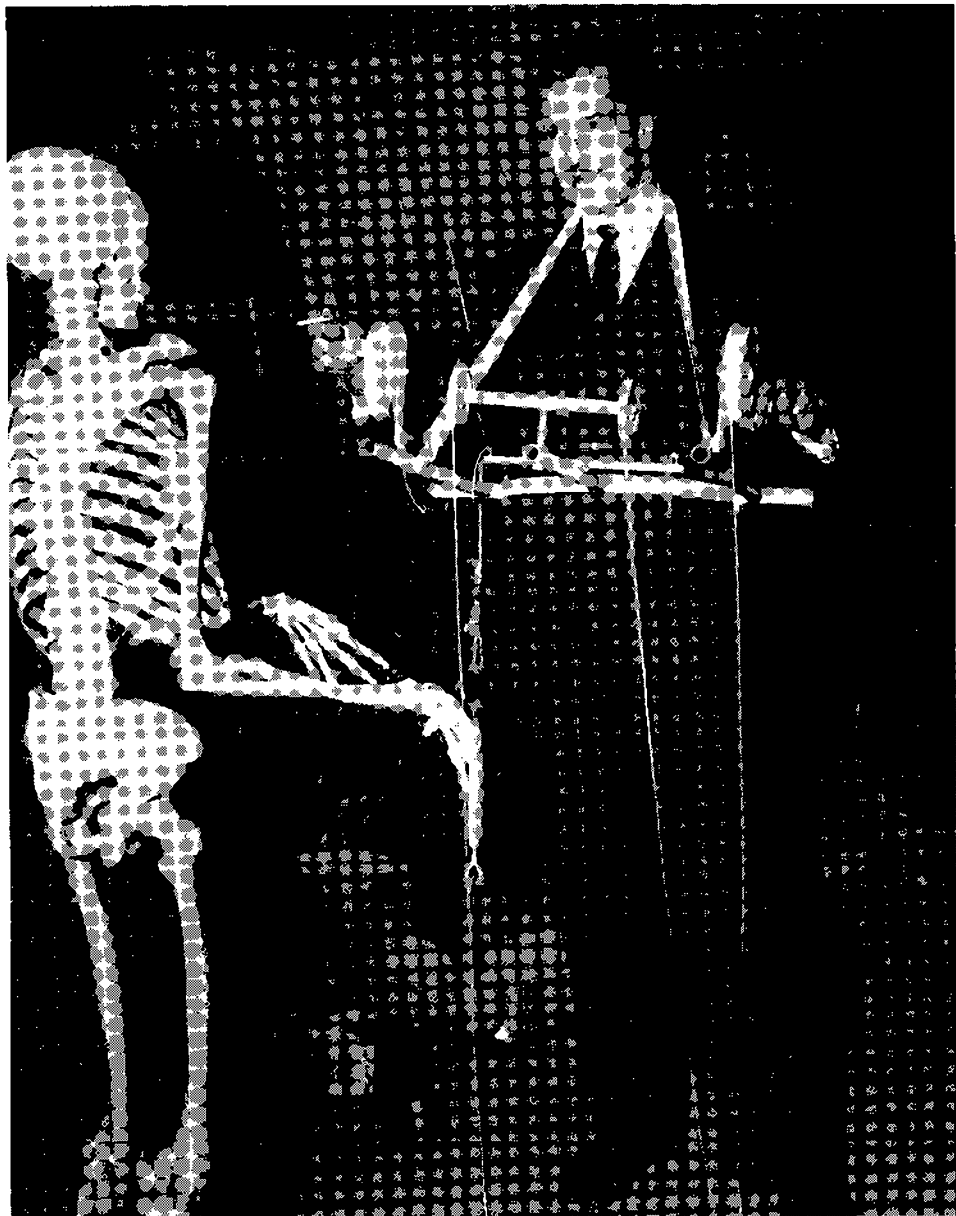
The making of Vincent Price the gentleman is an easy path to trace. He was born May 27, 1911 into an affluent St. Louis family. While still a teenager he cultivated his interest in art by traveling abroad. He graduated from Yale in 1933 and earned a M.A. from the University of London in 1935. While in England he began acting in operettas and plays almost as a lark and he found the diversion much to his liking. Even at the beginning there was undoubtedly a touch of the ham in him which he has had to control throughout his career, but in that respect he is in good company with John Barrymore, Orson Welles, and other actors who sometimes tried to out-Herod Herod.

After performing in *Victoria Regina* opposite Helen Hayes both in London and New York, Price had leading parts in a few more productions before turning

his attention to films. His first role of consequence was as Sir Walter Raleigh in support of Bette Davis and Errol Flynn in *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*. He had parts in other historical films such as *Brigham Young* and *Hudson's Bay* before he took the lead in this first real horror film, *The Invisible Man Returns* (1940). Even though Claude Rains played the invisible man in the original it is Price who is associated with the role and it is his voice and not that of Rains which provides the final lines in *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* that cause the comedy duo to abandon ship.

Throughout the 1940s his work gave little indication of the direction it would take later. His two best movies of the decade paired him with Gene Tierney: the mystery *Laura* with its haunting plot and theme song and *Dragonwyck*, a costume drama in which he was moderately nasty. He had a better chance to hone his villainous skills in *Shock* (1946) when he portrayed a doctor trying to do the "make her think she's crazy" routine a la *Gaslight*.

Even the years following the end of World War II found him engaged in a variety of parts that were anything but terrifying. He was downright hilarious as the neurotic sponsor of a quiz program in *Champagne for Caesar* (1950), sagacious as Omar Khayyam in *Son of Sinbad* (1955), and sleazy as a newspaper magnate in Fritz Lang's *While the City Sleeps* (1956). His lone entry into the horror genre during this period was significant one. As Henry Jarrod, the disfigured sculptor who opens a *House*



of *Wax*, Price was a menacing force. When the heroine cracked his false front and revealed his scarred face in 3-D, there were gasps heard in theaters across the country.

It was in 1958 with the release of *The Fly* that Vincent's career swerved in the direction of the Grand Guignol for

keeps. Although Price was not the title creature in either this movie or in the sequel, *The Return of the Fly*, his identification with those films is so complete that he has been approached by any number of fans over the years who swear that he played the giant insect both times.

At this time Price appeared in two pic-  
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## VINCENT PRICE

tures directed by William Castle, *House on Haunted Hill* and *The Tingler*. Castle, king of the gimmicks, used just about every trick he could to get people into theaters: insurance policies for those dying of fright, skeletons dangling over the heads of the audience, mild electric shocks in the seats, and such specious film processes as Emergo and Percepto. Somehow Vincent managed to keep a straight face through the hokey business and if both films seem a bit silly now it is not because he was unconvincing but rather because Castle failed to heed the advice Gertrude gave to Polonius: "More matter, with less art."

Going from movies packaged by William Castle to those directed by Roger Corman might have seemed to be a step sideways or backwards in 1960, but neither Price nor American International Pictures regretted that decision. Corman's credo can best be summarized in a few words: quickly make films that make money. His was not the Lubitsch touch but the Midas touch. What Corman and Price did in six years was to reinterpret Edgar Allan Poe to a new generation. *The Fall of the House of Usher* was the first and it was followed by *The Pit and the Pendulum*, *Tales of Terror*, *The Raven*, *The Haunted Palace*, *The Masque of the Red Death*, and *The Tomb of Ligeia*.

Most of these AIP films were built around this scenario: put Price in a castle or mansion, surround him with atmosphere and a few actors, and then have him either get mad or go mad. It was during this series that Vincent perfected that glint in his eyes that told us "He's going off the deep end again." To see Price and scream queen Barbara Steele playing cat-and-mouse in *The Pit and the Pendulum* or to follow him on his scenery-chewing march through the multi-colored chambers in the climax of *The Masque of the Red Death* is just as

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much fun as watching Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, and Price stealing scenes from each other in *The Raven* and *The Comedy of Terrors*.

Price made four pictures for American-International in England at the end of the decade, the best being the first, *The Conquering Worm*. Then he returned to America to portray his most famous villain, *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, who disposed of those associated with his wife's death in a ritualistic manner that mirrored the plagues of Egypt. In this film and the follow-up, *Dr. Phibes Rises Again*, Price had to let his eyes do the acting because his "face" was a mask for the hideous skull it covered.

*Theatre of Blood* (1930) was a United Artists release that provided a slight twist on the original *Phibes*. Vincent played a much-panned thespian who used the works of Shakespeare to find nine ways of eliminating his critics. This was Price's last chance to reign uncontested. In *Madhouse* (1974) he took on an autobiographical part much like Karloff did in one of his efforts (*Targets*), that of an aging horror actor who is more the hunted than the hunter.

The fact that Price has appeared in few motion pictures since the mid-seventies is simply a matter of time. Vincent looks his age and acts it. Tales of terror demand leads who have the vivacity to enact their nefarious schemes. It would seem just as ludicrous to see octogenarian Price throttling starlets as it would have been to watch wizened Maria Ouspenskaya wrestling Lon Chaney Jr. to a draw in *The Wolf Man*. The clock has also run out on subtlety in horror films. *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, *Alien*, and their sequels and clones with their emphasis on slashings, gore, and special effects have rendered superfluous actors who can express malevolence with just a lifted eyebrow.

Though his appearances in films have been infrequent in recent years Price has



not been inactive. He has returned to his first love, the stage, and scored a singular triumph as Oscar Wilde in a one-man play from 1977 to 1982. He hosted the PBS *Mystery* series from 1978 to 1987 and has turned up on a number of game shows. And he could be heard as the voice of the dastardly Professor Rattigan in Disney's *The Great Mouse Detective* in 1986.

Fans of Vincent Price who witnessed his brief appearance in *Edward Scissorhands* were probably more disappointed with what they heard than with what they saw. That unique voice that was quite capable of being mellifluous one moment and malefic the next was almost absent; only a shadow remained. The diminished quality of that gifted tongue seems a special loss to those who remember him as having one of radio's best voices.

Price had just one show of his own, *The Saint*, and it only ran for two years, but his portrayal of Simon Templar was a model of suave efficiency who made Richard Diamond and Sam Spade sound like greenhorns. What made Templar different from other detectives was that he wasn't really a gumshoe out for a

buck; he just encountered people and trouble and helped them as the "Robin Hood of modern crime."

Templar was not above exchanging banter with suspects:

Templar: One of us is in a bad way. Either you're dead or I'm crazy.

Carter: I assure you I'm not dead.

Templar: I'll see a psychiatrist in the morning.

Dick Powell and Howard Duff were no slouches when it came to delivering hardboiled punchlines and one can easily imagine them saying the same words, but they wouldn't have had the same panache that Price could put in his dialogue. And there was no way any other radio investigator would ask a question like "Whom have they in mind for Carter's murder?" or quote Hamlet's "king of infinite space" speech to a cabdriver. What separated Templar from his crime-stopping contemporaries was simply Vincent Price's wit and style.

Most of Price's other notable work on radio was done for *Escape* and *Suspense*. One of the most memorable episodes on the series designed to "help us get away from it all" was "Blood Bath" which aired on June 30, 1950. In this version of "thieves fall out" Vincent's character narrated the story of how greed and the steaming South American jungle claimed the lives of members of an expedition until he alone survived.

Another tale of *Escape* from that year, "Three Skeleton Key," combined the elements of exotic locale and tension so well that it was not only appropriate for that series but also for *Suspense* in 1956 and 1958. Price was present on all three occasions to retell the terrifying tale of rats that cover a lighthouse and hold its inhabitants captive. Vincent is totally convincing as the lighthouse keeper who tries to retain his sanity and at the same time describe the claustrophobic environment above the incessant chattering of the ravenous rodents. Any list of the

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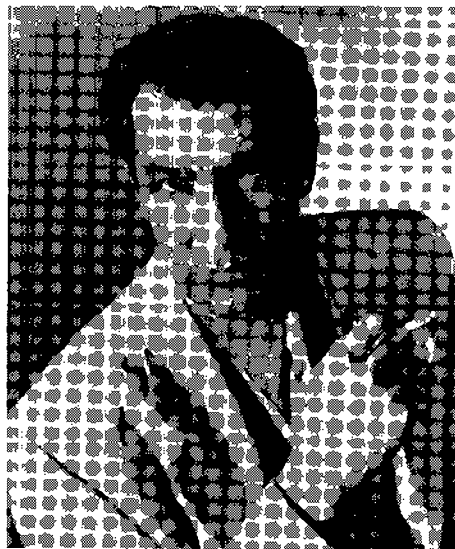
## VINCENT PRICE

most frightening shows in the history of radio would be incomplete without "Three Skeleton Key."

Of Price's twelve other appearances on *Suspense* none was more chilling than "Fugue in C Minor" broadcast on June 1, 1944. That evening Vincent was Theodore Evans, a widower so obsessed with organ music that he built the pipes of an organ into the walls of his house. When he brings home a woman he is courting, his two children confess to her their fear that their father murdered their mother and that her spirit still lives in the pipes. It turns out that the children are right about Evans and before the program is over Price gets a chance to pull out all the stops in more ways than one. This show was doubly significant. No other single program of radio drama had a more perfect marriage of story and music. More importantly, this "phantom of the opera" plot complete with the unveiling of his genteel facade was a precursor of the type of role for which he would become famous later.

It is ironic that Vincent Price has never had a chance to play Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde for few actors could play both gentleman and madman so credibly. In fact, even his maniacs have an air of refinement about them. That is an element that Price has never been able to completely submerge regardless of whether he was portraying a baron of Arizona, a Dutch patroon, an Egyptian architect, or Dr. Goldfoot; breeding willed its way out. With just a tilt of his head and a roll of syllables across his velvet throat he could make a derelict sound positively patrician.

Somehow Price has managed to maintain this aura of dignity through half a century of making motion pictures. The girl bombs and cinematic bombs which he survived with aplomb pale beside his accomplishments, not the least being that he was the featured player in some of the



most memorable if not the best horror films of three decades. The success of these movies is chiefly attributable not to Corman's exploitative powers or the magic of 3-D or Richard Matheson's considerable skills as a screenwriter but rather to the presence of a star who knows how to carry a picture.

The entrance of Vincent Price on a stage or a television program or just his photograph on a product conjures up in us images of dark passages, stormy nights, bubbling laboratories, torture chambers, and foggy graveyards. If that signifies that he is best known for scaring people, so be it. Even art connoisseurs and gourmands are fairly common, but classy frightmeisters are rare indeed and worth their weight in gold. When it comes to delivering and thrills in eerie movies and on suspenseful radio shows, aficionados of the macabre do not count the cost; they just look for the Price. ■

*(ED. NOTE — October is Vincent Price Month on Those Were The Days on WNIB. Hear him star in seven outstanding Suspense programs, including "Fugue in C Minor" and "Three Skeleton Key." Check listings on pages 22-23.)*

*Ken Alexander  
Remembers . . .*

## *Going Downtown With Grandpa*



My maternal grandfather worked for the same company for 50 years and then retired. Before long the company persuaded him to come back to work. He worked a while longer before he retired for good.

Having been born in 1877, Grandpa was in many respects a gentleman of the old school. It wasn't until the early 1940's that he began to wear shirts with attached collars; before then all his shirts had detachable collars. All his dress shirts were either white or blue. He also had a couple of blue chambray work shirts which he wore while putting in his flower garden in the back yard.

Though he was by no means wealthy, my grandfather always dressed well when he went to work or when he went downtown. He always brushed his hat before he went downtown. But then, people in those days generally dressed so as to make a favorable impression on anyone who might happen to see them. This was true even during the Great Depression.

Take a look at an old news photo of a street scene or a crowd scene from the 1930s or '40s. You'll see that nearly all the men are wearing suits and ties and hats (the hats were mostly fedoras in cold weather; in summer, men wore flat-topped straws which were called sailors or boaters). Women, when they went downtown, wore suits — jacket, skirt

and blouse — or dresses. Many wore hats and gloves.

My grandfather worked Monday through Friday. On Saturday morning he would go downtown to do some errands, and one of my most pleasant childhood recollections is the memory of the Saturday, in 1941, when he took me along on his trip downtown. I was 12 years old then, and my grandfather was just about the same age as I am now.

Around ten o'clock my grandfather called for me at my family's apartment and we walked to Madison Street, where we boarded a Loop-bound streetcar.

The Loop was a bustling area on Saturdays. It was a shoppers' mecca. Anyone who wanted to visit Field's or Carsons, for example, had no choice but to go downtown. There were other department stores as well. Within a couple of blocks of State and Randolph were more than a half-dozen movie palaces. These, plus the stores, drew many thousands of people to the Loop every Saturday.

Our first stop was the First National Bank of Chicago, where Grandpa had to put some papers into a safe deposit box in connection with his job. I was greatly impressed with what I later described to my classmates as "the big round doors" through which we had to pass to enter the vault. The doors were of shiny metal,

## GOING DOWNTOWN WITH GRANDPA

perhaps stainless steel, and about a foot thick. They were circular except for a flat side on the bottom.

A guard escorted us into the vault and stood by while my grandfather placed his papers in the safe deposit box. Then Grandpa drew from one of his pockets a cigar, which he gave to the guard.

Next stop: the Federal Building. That grand old edifice occupied the block bounded by Dearborn, Jackson, Clark and Adams. It was only eight stories tall, but what it lacked in height it made up for in character. Atop the building was a huge, ornate dome.

There was a post office on the ground floor, and my grandfather bought some stamps. As we stood in the center of the rotunda, Grandpa told me to look straight up. Doing so, I saw the inside of the dome.

In the center of the dome was what appeared to be a round pane of glass, through which the sky and a few white clouds were visible. (I later learned that what I had seen was not the sky but a painting.)

Some celebrated trials were held in the courtrooms of the old Federal Building; in one of those courtrooms Al Capone was sentenced to prison for income-tax evasion.

During the Great Depression, men who had been ruined financially had leaped to their deaths from the balconies surrounding the rotunda.

The tallest of the skyscrapers in Chicago was the Board of Trade Building, at LaSalle and Jackson. Its observatory — on the 45th floor, 445 feet above the street — was touted as the highest point in Chicago. Grandpa took me up to the observatory, and the time we spent there was the high point of my day.

What a thrill it was to look down at the city from that height! The observatory was not glassed in; there was a wall about four and a half feet high, and we could lean over backward and look up the slanted roof, at the center of which stood a statue of Ceres, the ancient Romans' goddess of agriculture.

Adjoining the observatory was a room whose walls held racks of pamphlets describing point of interest in Chicago. There were pamphlets on the John G. Shedd Aquarium, the Adler Planetarium, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Garfield Park Conservatory, the Merchandise Mart and many other institutions. I collected a couple of dozen of these and spent many subsequent evenings poring over them.

Our last stop was the Woolworth's store on State near Washington. (Woolworth's used to be called a "five & ten-cent store" or a "five and dime," because most items sold there cost less than a dollar.) We went directly to the candy counter.

Whenever I visited my grandparents' house, there would be a bowl or two of candy on the buffet in the dining room. Now I knew where that candy came from: Grandpa bought it downtown at Woolworth's on Saturdays. On this day he bought some malted milk balls, some gumdrops and some nonpareils, a half-pound of each. The clerk weighed the candy and poured it into white paper bags. Then Grandpa and I left the store and boarded a Madison streetcar for the ride home.

That was my Saturday downtown with Grandpa. And what a wonderful day it was!

Some 2600 Saturday have passed since then — half a century. Dozens of downtown buildings have been torn down and dozens more built to replace them. The physiognomy of the Loop has been radically altered.

The grand old Federal Building was wrecked in 1965. On its site now stands the Kluczynski Federal Building. A steel sculpture entitled *Flamingo* dominates the plaza in front of the building; it reminds me of McDonald's golden arches, except that it is not golden but scarlet.

The Board of Trade Building's observatory has been closed for decades, a building a mere 45 stories tall no longer being a tourist attraction. We now have buildings in the Loop two or three times as tall. You can go to the Skydeck in Sears Tower and gaze at the statue of Ceres atop the Board of Trade Building *900 feet below*, (Ceres, who once stood alone, now shares her perch with an array of electronic communications apparatus.)

The First National Bank is still in business, but the building which housed it in 1941 has been replaced by a shining, towering, gently tapering structure. The tri-level plaza in front of the building is surely one of the most pleasant outdoor spaces in the Loop, with its fountain and its vast mosaic, *The Four Seasons*, by Marc Chagall.

Stop by First National Plaza around noon on a nice day and you'll find hundreds of people, mostly office workers on their lunch hour, sitting, strolling, eating brown-bag lunches, sunning themselves.

The people's mode of dress has changed. While many businesspeople still dress the part, most of the folk who go downtown for shopping or for pleasure present a much more casual appearance than did those of 50 years ago. The suits and ties and fedoras and highly polished shoes have given way to T-shirts, sweatshirts, blue jeans, baseball caps and gym shoes.

You'll find only a few people in the Loop on a Saturday nowadays, compared with the throngs of the 1940s. One reason is the proliferation of suburban shopping centers: it's no longer necessary to go downtown to shop at Field's or Carson's. Another reason is that today there are no movie theaters in the Loop.

There also are no streetcars.

State Street has been converted to a mall.

Streets that were two-way are now one-way.

So many changes have taken place that anyone who had been away for a few decades would scarcely recognize the Loop.

My grandfather has been gone for nearly 40 years. If he could see the Loop today, I wonder what he'd say about it. I wonder what he'd say about a lot of things. ■

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Museum of Broadcast Communications

# museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

**IT WAS A SELLOUT.** More than 150 fans answered the call to breakfast as Chief Breakfast Clubber Don McNeill and bandleader Eddie Ballantine marked — to the day — the 60th anniversary of the “Breakfast Club.” It was June 23, 1993 and we were gathered in the Clouds Room of the Allerton Hotel where the popular ABC radio program originated during its last six years on the air.

It was a terrific reunion of fans, cast members, music, memories, fun and food. Don McNeill and Eddie Ballantine shared their early memories of the program in a conversation with Chuck Schaden. Bridging the years between then and now was done by WGN Radio’s wake up guy, Bob Collins as he set the scene. The get together benefitted the Radio Hall of Fame at the Museum.

**“FROM MY LITTLE MARGIE** to Murphy Brown: Images of Women on Television.” That’s the long-winded title we’ve given the enormously successful special exhibition on the role of women in television — now playing — at the Museum.

In our last column, we promised you stars and that we’ve had and there are more to come as the exhibition continues. Betty Anderson (or make that Elinor Donahue) of “Father Knows Best” will be in town on Thursday, Oct. 7 to head a panel looking at teenagers and how they were/are portrayed on television. And Kellie Martin from “Life Goes On” joins Elinor on that panel for a contemporary view of teens on TV.

Move to Oct. 21 for another evening panel, this time — super heroines. Here



**MEMORY TIME** around the breakfast table once again with Eddie Ballantine, Don McNeill and Chuck Schaden.



**A STANDING OVATION** greeted Chief Breakfast Clubber **DON MC NEILL** as the Radio Hall of Fame celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the popular series at the Allerton Hotel in Chicago.

the guest stars are “Cat Woman,” Julie Newmar from the “Batman” series and the “Batgirl” herself, Yvonne Craig along with “Mission Impossible’s” Barbara Bain.

On Nov. 20 an afternoon panel brings to town more stars for a look at TV career women. Diana Muldaur of “L.A. Law” and Blair Brown of “The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd” head that panel.

African-American women are featured on the evening of Dec. 16 when Regina Taylor of “I’ll Fly Away”; Lynne Moody, “Knots Landing” and Esther Rolle of “Good Times” give their perspectives and tell of their experiences in series television.

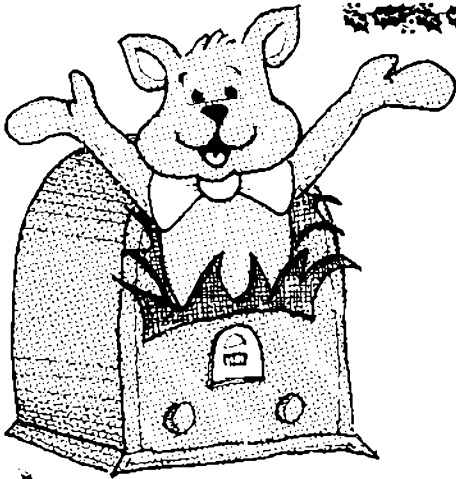
All panels will feature journalists, uni-

versity professors and others, in addition to the stars, to add an extra dimension to the discussions.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** and call the Museum for reservations. What better opportunity to hear, meet, photograph and collect autographs from this outstanding line up of television stars. All sessions are free to Museum members, \$25 for non-members, \$10 for seniors and students. If you are not already a member of the Museum of Broadcast Communications, this is the time to join! A \$30 membership brings you events like those outlined above free of additional charge. Call Katy at (312) 629-6015 for details.

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# WE GET

# LETTERS

**CALUMET CITY, IL** — I read in the *Nostalgia Digest* that some people were having problems listening to the programs because of their varied schedules. Since I really enjoy old time radio, I purchased a Pioneer Multi-Cassette Changer, Ct-M66R which holds six, 90-minute tapes. With a timer I record all week, and on Saturday I just change the time and station. I listen to tapes when I'm driving and when there is a traffic jam I just laugh with George, Gracie, Jack, Fibber, Molly and all my old time friends. Sorry to say I am presently about three weeks behind in my listening. I hope this information will help others to program their laughs, too!

— EDWARD J. DE BLAKE

**BRENTWOOD, TENNESSEE** — I am a native of Kenosha, Wisconsin and heard The Cinnamon Bear years ago as a child. I remember it being on sometime between 4:30 and 6 p.m., for I would hurry in from playing outside, trying to get the woolen snowpants and boots off as quickly as possible to not miss anything. I remember sitting on the floor with my ear pressed to the radio speaker trying to hear the story in spite of all the static on the airwaves. We did not have good reception from Chicago that time of day.

— MRS. ROBERT C. FREAS

**LAKE IN THE HILLS, IL** — I'm writing this letter to tell you how much my husband and I enjoy listening to your radio programs. Much of our courtship, and now marriage, is centered around the radio. I am 27 years old and my husband Tom is 33. Before meeting one another we were old time radio fans, each staying up late to hear various programs. We each longed to meet another, similar in age, who had the same desire and passion for this type of entertainment. We met while working for the same airline. Only then did we realize we lived less than a mile apart, each partaking in this enjoyable pastime. Now, we listen together every evening, timing our bedtime to the sound of that ever popular "Ah, ah, ah, don't touch that dial!" We're such fans of yours, and especially Jack Benny. Our first child, Eric, was even born on February 14, 1993. You can rest assured he'll grow up knowing the pleasures and imagination that radio conjures up. Thanks for the memories!

— DEBRA HEISERMAN

(ED. NOTE — Eric will be a very lucky young man! Thanks very much for listening.)

**GURNEE, IL** — Thank you for introducing me to the Golden Age of Radio a few years ago. Since first tuning in to your show, I have enjoyed listening to every show I get a chance to hear. I've also begun collecting old time radio shows for my own library. My favorite is Suspense and I have well over 75 shows of my own. Thanks for

sharing your wonderful past with a 33 year old member of the TV generation. You've enriched my life!

— CHRISTIAN HALLEN

**CHICAGO** — Enclosed you will find a check for a two year renewal of the *Nostalgia Digest*. We don't want to miss even one issue. Sharing your love of old time radio with everyone is such a special gift, and brings us much joy and laughter. Continued success.

— HARRY & NANCY SCHAFFNER

**TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA** — Thanks for the most recent issue of your *Nostalgia Digest*. I enjoyed reading it, especially the article on Bob and Ray who are long-standing favorites of mine. I enclose a postal money order in U.S. funds for a subscription and for back issues of the *Digest*. Please note that our postal code is M5R 1X5, not M5R 1K5 as you had it on our address label. I hate to pick nits, but our post office has a great deal of trouble coping with actual addresses in real cities.

— GORDON CAMERON

**VENICE, CALIFORNIA** — I just want to add my two cents to Michael Duncan's article on Superman in the June/July edition of the *Nostalgia Digest*. I'm a lifelong fan of the superhero — we're both the same age having been born in 1938. DC Comics, when are you gonna learn? If it ain't broke, don't fix it! There are some traditions and legends one just doesn't tinker with. A prime example is the recent feature film of the Lone Ranger, starring Klinton (Quinton? Brendan? Klaxton?) Spillsbury (Where is he now?). We all know the uproar that debacle caused — from the violent demeanor of TLR to the infamous "mask dispute," where Clayton Moore, our Lone Ranger, was reduced to wearing sunglasses! What's next, DC? Superman as an American Gladiator clad in puce tights, sporting a pink tutu with bilious green polka dots, and accessorized with a gold lame cape? Lordy, lordy, I hope not!

— CHUCK BAILEY

**TINLEY PARK, IL** — Time to renew my subscription and add to my collection. I have saved all the issues and always enjoy reading them again and again. Thanks to all those who contribute the very great articles

— AUDREY SUTENBACH

**RIVER FOREST, IL** — Hearing *Radio Classics* each night is like hearing my childhood friends' voices again. I remember my Mom and Dad and all listening to Easy Aces, Lum and Aber, Jack Benny, the Lone Ranger. A simple, very wonderful time. It's sad more of those old shows weren't saved. The stuff from today is probably cast in bronze — more's the pity!

— NANCY MEISTERLING

## WE GET LETTERS

**GLENCOE, IL** — What happened to the mystery shows? Enough with music and WWII.

— JUDITH LEVIN

**SCHAUMBURG, IL** — I enjoy your show a lot. I just wish it was on longer and earlier, maybe at 10:30 pm. Please play more scary stuff — lot's more! Like the Sealed Book, Hermit's Cave, Hall of Fantasy (my favorite), Suspense, Lights Out, X Minus One, and the CBS anthology that was on around 1976. I'm really sick of Boston Blackie and Harry Lime and Milton Berle (yuk!) and especially Fibber McGee. Boy, I really dislike that show. But I'm in pig heaven when you're heavy on the weird stuff. That's mostly what I listened to as a kid. Yet it seems that you rarely play those. I do like Jack Benny, but who doesn't?

— PATRICIA FRIEMARK

**SOUTH BEND, INDIANA** — Thank you for all the hours of entertainment! I have been a faithful listener for about five years and plan to make old time radio a part of my life indefinitely! I love Jack Benny and Vic and Sade, two programs we could use more of, by the way. But Chuck, stop telling us the origin of the Green Hornet!!! If I had a nickle for every time you've told that story, I'd be up to my you-know-what in nickles!! Beyond that, you do an outstanding job of entertaining us! I'm a big fan.

— ELLEN RATHBURN

**CHICAGO** — Loved your show about WBBM's 70th Anniversary. I have listened to Jay Andres since high school, 1955. I lived at 29th and State (Dearborn Homes). On a beautiful spring night I would lay in bed with the radio at its lowest volume and listen to Jay.

— DONALD K. GILMORE

**CHICAGO** — That clip of Paul Gibson (on the WBBM 70th Anniversary show) just absolutely made my weekend! You just could never get someone to tell it like it is about the women on the New Age! At the time Gibson was spouting his misogyny, the present miasma was in its infancy. I really liked Gibson and I'm glad you put him on. You did not say whether he is still living, but I rather doubt it.

— FRANK HORN

**(ED. NOTE** — Paul Gibson was in his early 50s when he died on October 2, 1965. And we'll have another Paul Gibson segment on WBBM on October 10th.)

**WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA** — Glad I subscribed to the *Nostalgia Digest* in time to catch the Breakfast Club article in the June/July issue. I was a bedridden twelve year old when I found Don McNeill on the radio next to my bed one morning. I was blue. I missed the activity a normal healthy boy of my age enjoyed. Those marches around the breakfast table raised my spirits. I marched with Don and the gang vicariously. I was no longer alone, tied to a bed. I was among friends and on my feet marching and my spirits soared. Then one day I was well enough to get back on my feet. The cheer that Don McNeill radioed my way

helped me recover sooner than expected. Don McNeill and the Breakfast Club was good medicine.

To change the subject, I thought my WBBM listening days were over with the coming of spring and summer, the signal was very poor on my old GPX. Many nights I could not hear our old radio programs at all! Then I switched to the GE Super Radio mentioned in your magazine. WBBM reception improved greatly! Oh, there are some fades and static. Sometimes, there are good and bad reception nights. You don't come in like a local station. It is not perfect, but the point is I am now able to hear your show well enough to enjoy. Super Radio is super! Radio reception is always better during winter. I will not be at all surprised when WBBM comes crashing through my GE Super Radio like a local station during the winter months. I will bet on it.

— ART MIDDLESTADT

**CLEVELAND, OHIO** — Since we first heard of your program of *Radio Classics* in November 1992, Ginnie and I have become faithful listeners, seven days a week. I can't tell you how much we have enjoyed hearing the old programs again after all these years, and how grateful we are to you for bringing them to us. Reception here is sometimes a problem, but much of the time it is quite good. Because we have been shortwave radio listeners for many years we are used to less than optimal signals. We find that we would much prefer listening to your program, even with the fading, and we recall that in the good old days reception problems were a common feature of radio listening.

We have tried to receive your program with many radios. So far we have gotten the best reception with a Panasonic RX-FT560 "boom box," which also makes a good recording. This does a far better job pulling in your signal than my Kenwood R-1000 shortwave receiver with a 30 foot antenna. Thanks for bringing us these great old programs!

— JOHN R. FISHER, M.D.

**CHICAGO** — I enjoy all your shows very much and I especially love the theme song at the end of your weekend programs. Can you please give me the name. Also, can it be bought in cassette form? — M. OWENS

**PALOS PARK, IL** — Could you give me some information on your Saturday and Sunday sign-off theme song. The song is beautiful and we would sure like a copy.

—LESTER G. ARNDT

**(ED. NOTE** — The sign-off theme we use on the Saturday and Sunday evening editions of *Old Time Radio Classics* is "On The Radio." It was the theme used by Vincent Lopez and his orchestra on his various radio broadcasts. Our Monday thru Friday theme on WBBM is "Thanks for the Memory," the long-time theme song used by Bob Hope. Both songs are from a now out-of-print Columbia long-playing recording (CL-1613) called *Radio's Great Old Themes* performed by Frank DeVol and his Rainbow Strings. We will play both themes — from the DeVol album — at the beginning of our 8 p.m. program on Saturday, October 16, 1993. Stand by with your tape recorder and don't touch that dial!)



**PAUL GIBSON**

**LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS** — I really enjoy your old radio shows. I'm in the United States Prison System here at Leavenworth and have no television. It really helps to have the radio shows to listen to. I am 36, and as a child I can remember my grandparents talking about the radio shows. When I was around 12, my father got my mother an album collection of old radio shows and old radio news broadcasts as a Christmas gift. She loved it. But I think my younger brother and I loved it even more! She still has it. I was fascinated by four shows which I can remember clearly. One was *The Shadow* and was about a guy who was to be executed for a murder. *The Shadow* visited him in his cell, trying to get information about an accomplice. I'd love to hear it again.

— NAME WITHHELD

**ST. CHARLES, IL** — I have been listening to your program since 1980. I have enjoyed every minute. I am 52 years old. I teach 6th grade at Haines Jr. High School in St. Charles. I play tapes of the old shows for my students on a regular basis. They are good for listening skills as well as improving imagination. Most of the students like the shows which has been a pleasant surprise for me. A number of students have become regular listeners to your program. Anyhow, the real reason I decided to write to you is I want to thank you for playing *One Man's Family* during the summer months. I wish you would play this radio program year around. I now know how or why my wife has become hooked on TV soaps. I missed a few of the *One Man's Family* shows while we were on vacation. When we got back, I wasn't quite sure why certain events had happened. I used to listen to Ma Perkins and Helen Trent when I was home sick from school in the old days.

— HERB PASTEUR

**MUNDELEIN, IL** — It is with sadness that we will not be renewing Uncle Herman's subscription this year. At 81 years young he passed away this past February. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you how very much he enjoyed your radio program. He looked forward to Saturdays and "The Good Old Days" as he called them. He remembered all the shows and the times that he and his family gathered around the old radio to listen to the different broadcasts and programs. He also enjoyed all the war commentary and reporting as he also served in the Armed Forces during World War II, and remembered so much of what he heard on your show. He was so excited about the first *Digest* when it arrived and called to tell us that he didn't know anything like it existed. He read every word from cover to cover and we would visit and laugh and recall all the wonderful days gone by. We enjoyed many conversations about your show and the news in the *Digest*. Please know, Chuck, you were a big part of his life, as he was alone. The happiness and pleasure he derived from listening to you and reading your little *Digest* could never be measured. You made an old gentleman very happy and helped pass many lonely hours with laughter. We shall continue to listen to your program and we, too, shall remember the "Good Old Days" of radio. Somehow, we think our dear Uncle will be listening, too. We will always remember his laughter.

— GAIL AND JIM MANZ

**ED. NOTE** — Please accept our condolences on the loss of your dear Uncle. And thank you for your letter, which means a great deal to us.)

**ATCO, NEW JERSEY** — My brother Fred and I grew up during radio's greatest days in the 1930s and 40s. A while back my brother told me he was lying awake in his bed about 1 a.m. (EST) and wishing for the old days of radio. When he tuned through the band he was amazed to discover your station at 780 KC. You didn't just make our day, you made our year. Thank you. Since your signal will fade at times, Fred set up a loop and tuning gang and tuned it to 780 KC and boy, do you come in like gangbusters, except on a stormy night with lightning, which brings along static. Just rain seems to enhance your signal on the East Coast.

— JOSEPH BUTTERFIELD

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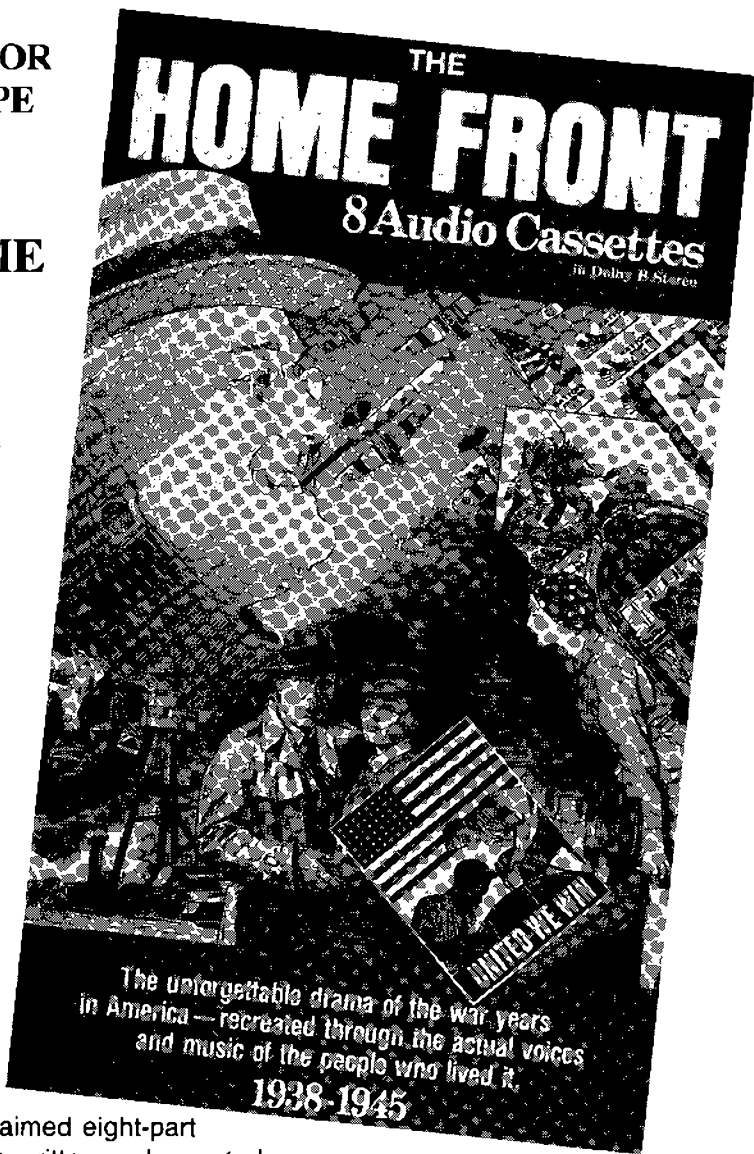
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