

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND
RADIO
GUIDE



VERNA FELTON

BEA BENADARET

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Hello, Out There in Radioland!

Read any good books about radio lately?

You have to look hard to find a book on Old Time Radio, but if you do look hard, you can generally find one...or more.

We always keep an eye peeled for books on our favorite subject and thought we would take this page to remind you that there are several currently in print that may be of special interest:

THE MURROW BOYS: Pioneers on the Front Lines of Broadcast Journalism by Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson (Houghton Mifflin Co., \$27.95) is a new book all about Murrow and many of the CBS war correspondents from World War II and after.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF RADIO'S FIRST 75 YEARS by B. Eric Rhoads (Streamline Press, \$39.95) was published to coincide with the industry's 75th anniversary and presents a chronological commentary of broadcasting and a fascinating history-in-pictures --many rare and never before seen-- of all the decades of radio, beginning in the 1920s and ending in the '90s.

VALLEY VOICES by John Russell Grist (Crossroads Communications, \$25) covers the history of local and network radio stations in Northern Illinois (including Chicagoland and the Fox Valley), Southern Wisconsin and Northeastern Indiana.

RADIO SOUND EFFECTS by Robert L. Mott (McFarland, \$39.95) is the wonderful memoir of a radio sound effects man who worked on many of the big time broadcasts. There's lots of anecdotes and photos.

GREAT RADIO PERSONALITIES in Historic Photographs by Anthony Slide (Empire Publishing, \$11.95) features 239 stunning photos (with informative captions) that bring to life the golden era of radio broadcasting.

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL-- Radio Programming in American Life, 1920-1960 by J. Fred MacDonald (Nelson-Hall, \$23.95) has been in print since 1979 and shows radio's role in the popular culture of the United States. This book is the official text book for the audio-course *Please Stand By -- A History of Radio* currently being broadcast on *Those Were The Days*.

HEAVENLY DAYS by Charles Stumpf and Tom Price (World of Yesterday, \$14.95) is an informal chronological history of the Fibber McGee and Molly radio series, with a photo on every other page and much information about cast members.

ONE MAN'S FAMILY ALBUM (Seven Stones Press, \$8.95) is a treasure of memories for fans of the long-running radio series, with many photos and history of the show.

RADIO COMEDY by Arthur Frank Wertheim (Oxford University Press, \$13.95) is about the great radio comedians --from Sam 'n' Henry to Fred Allen-- and features excerpts from radio scripts and numerous photographs

SUNDAY NIGHTS AT SEVEN by Jack Benny and his daughter Joan (Warner Books, \$8.95) uses material from Jack's never-published, unfinished autobiography and nostalgia reminiscences of his daughter. This is a warm and wonderful look at the career and personality of an unforgettable entertainer.

These books about radio and the stars who made it great should be available at your Public Library or you can obtain them from Metro Golden Memories in Chicago.

Thanks for listening.

--Chuck Schaden

A Dynamic Pair On The Air!

Verna Felton and Bea Benadaret

BY BILL OATES

The golden days of radio were filled with voices that left an indelible image in the theater of the mind. Many programs became better known for the stars who owned the sounds that created the pictures than the sponsors' names with whom the audience was supposed to identify. For example, some were scheduled by the networks as *The Johnson's Wax Program*, *The Fleischmann Hour*, or *Camel Caravan*, but these programs were better known as (and changed to) *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Rudy Vallee*, and *Abbott and Costello*. As talented as these and other great radio stars were, all of them praised their supporting cast members as valuable to the success of their respective shows. Two of the greatest supporting female voices on radio (as well as in other entertainment) were Verna Felton and Bea Benadaret.

Following these two marvelous talents in tandem is an easy task, for not only did they work in the same media simultaneously, but they also found themselves supporting each other and literally passing in the hallways of the great radio networks and studios for over two decades. To add to the parallels in their great careers, both women grew up within 100 miles of each other in the state that provided them with the bulk of their employment in the entertainment industry through the 1960's.

Bill Oates, of Kouts, Indiana, a high school English teacher with a love of old time radio, is a regular contributor to these pages.

Born in Salinas, California, just south of San Jose in the northern Bay area in 1890, **Verna Felton** found her way to the radio industry after numerous local stage appearances. By the time NBC decided that its new state-of-the-art radio studio was to be opened in Los Angeles, Verna had honed her acting skills and was active in the first medium that would bring her distinctive voice to American listeners.

The first important radio program to provide a regular role for Verna Felton was a primarily West Coast NBC program entitled *Point Sublime*, which played on Mondays from 1940-42. Somewhere on a Pacific Coast highway was a fictitious small town whose idyllic setting held a store and motel operated by Ben Willet. Played by Cliff Arquette, the future "Charlie Weaver" who was also getting his early start in big time entertainment, Willet tended the business where a variety of locals came in to talk around the cracker barrel. Among the real actors playing these characters with the very gossipy Hattie Hirsch (Verna's role) were Jane Morgan, Mel Blanc, and Earle Ross. The program moved to Mutual before ending its first run in 1944. Resurrected on ABC in 1947, the original cast reassembled for the coast-to-coast debut in early 1948, but the new version lasted only one season.

Shortly after the aforementioned show began, changes in *The Rudy Vallee Show* were developing when the starring singer assumed more of his duties in the Coast Guard during World War II, and Joan Davis

was brought in gradually to host the newly named *The Sealtest Village Store*, running not only "the store," but also the program after Vallee left. The transition to a female starring in a network radio program was approached cautiously, so Jack Halcy was brought on board to share the duties. One important addition to this evolving format was the character of Blossom Blimp, a.k.a. Verna Felton. After establishing that a female could star on a radio show, Joan was finally given her own vehicle in 1945,

Joanie's Tea Room on CBS, and the familiar voice of her friend Verna Felton came along as well.

Also during the war years, another supporting role presented itself when Verna Felton played the talkative housekeeper, Mrs. McIntyre, on *Tommy Riggs and Betty Lou* during 1942-43. Tommy Riggs was an uncanny performer who could immediately change his

male voice to that of a little girl. Throughout the 1930's and into the early 1940's, he exercised this role on a variety of shows. It is interesting to note is that, like Joan Davis and many other radio stars, Riggs likewise got his big break on the *Rudy Vallee Show*.

Many opportunities on radio, like Miz Pierce, friend to the title character on *The Judy Canova Show*; Dennis Day's protective mother on *The Jack Benny Show*; a supporting player on *The Ray Bolger Show* during the summer of 1945; guest appear-

ances on *Guest Star*, *Mail Call*, *The Jimmy Durante Show*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Lux Radio Theater*, *Screen Guild Players* (an especially important part was as one of the sweet old aunts who murdered lonesome gentlemen in "Arsenic and Old Lace"); and Mother Barton on the *Cinnamon Bear* presented themselves for Verna Felton throughout the 1940's. However, she will be perhaps best remembered as Namma, the feisty grandmother who had to control Red Skelton's Mean Widdle Kid

o *The Red Skelton Show*.

Ozzie and Harriet Nelson had been important players with Skelton until they decided to start their own show in 1944, and coupled with the departure of orchestra leader David Rose, new casting for the post-War version of the Skelton program was needed. Along with Lurene Tuttle and Pat McGechan,



VERNA FELTON

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Verna Felton joined the cast of one of radio's best offerings. Her primary role was to discipline Red when he played the "I Dood It" little monster after one of his impish and usually destructive pranks. An obvious appealing character to play off his zany Junior. Verna Felton often broke up Skelton on mike (a fault detested by his critics, but beloved by his legions of followers) when she entered the script, and especially when she responded to Junior's suggestion that her past held some vile occupation, such as circus performer, boot-

VERNA and BEA

legger, gun moll or the like.

The last great part this wonderful character lady played on radio was that of Mrs. Odets on *My Little Margie* in the early 1950's, and although she did not recreate her role on television, the new medium soon came calling. The first major part materialized when her radio character as Dennis Day's mother on *The Jack Benny Show* debuted in 1952 on television's *The RCA Victor Show*, a program that alternated every other week with Ezio Pinza. She also appeared with Ray Milland in *Meet Mr. McNulty*, which ran from 1952-53. However, her greatest on camera role came two years later when she assumed the part of Hilda Crocker on *December Bride*.



PHOTOFEST

CAST OF TV'S DECEMBER BRIDE -- (clockwise from top left) Dean Miller as Matt Henshaw, Harry Morgan as Pete Porter, Verna Felton as Hilda Crocker, Spring Byington as Lily Ruskin, Frances Rafferty as Ruth Henshaw.

Spring Byington played the main character, Lily Ruskin, on the very popular program about a spry widow who was available for matrimony. She lived with her daughter and son-in-law in the most amicable of households. Her chief confidant and sidekick was Hilda, who often joined in unusual adventures, like the time the two ladies decided to give son-in-law Matt and daughter Ruth some time alone by going grunion hunting.

In her 60's, Verna Felton was quite adept at doing her own stunts on the show, such as the times when she had to rough house with wrestlers, skip rope with a boxer who would later become her sparring partner, and roll out of a window head first. Another character who often contributed to the seniors' escapades was neighbor Pete

Porter (Harry Morgan), whose key reason for cavorting with these ladies was to get away from his never seen, nagging wife Gladys.

So successful was Morgan's role that an early TV spin off, *Pete and Gladys*, was born as a kind of continuation after *December Bride* finished its run in 1961. Hilda defended the much maligned Mrs. Porter, and perhaps Gladys' likable on camera demeanor in the new series disappointed the viewers who expected a monster, for the show was cancelled after two seasons. At least one final appearance on television was Verna Felton's when she guested on the television special *Henry Fonda and the Family* in 1962.

To add to Verna Felton's entertainment credentials, she appeared in numerous feature films, such as Langdon Towne's

mother in *Northwest Passage*, *If I Had My Way*, *She Wrote the Book*, *The Fuller Brush Man*, *Belles on Their Toes*, *Don't Bother To Knock*, *The Gunfighter*, *Buccaneers' Girl*, *Little Egypt*, *New Mexico*, Mrs. Helen Potts in the highly acclaimed *Picnic*, *The Oklahoman*, *Taming Sutton's Gal*, *Guns of the Timberland*, and *The Man from Button Willow*. Her character parts were presented in movies from all of the major studios and are a credit to her durability, for the preceding list began in 1940 and finished in 1965.

Another a long time resident of California, **Bea Benadaret** was born in New York City in 1906 and moved to San Francisco at age four. Though she came to the West Coast at an early age, she must have retained the sounds of urban New York years later, for the characters she often voiced reflected the accents of the city's boroughs. By the time she was ready to act professionally, she discovered her home was central to many great radio shows and early stars.

After progressing through the St. Rose Academy and the Reginald School of Acting, Bea was ready to move into the very active Western hub of the National Broadcasting Company in San Francisco. Working in local productions, she caught the ear of numerous directors at Bay area stations. However, when Western network broadcasting moved to the Los Angeles area in the middle of the 1930's, she also headed south where her greatest fortunes were to be found.

By 1936, Bea Benadaret found herself in Hollywood, which was growing as quickly as its new radio studios could accommodate the shows transferring to the West coast. Like Verna Felton, Bea soon found her place on numerous radio programs, starting with the same early show on which Verna played, portraying Mrs.



BEA BENADARET

Riggs' nosy neighbor Mrs. Wingate on *Tommy Riggs and Betty Lou*. The two actresses' paths crossed many times during radio's golden 1940's; and in an ironic twist, even though Verna did not accompany Dennis Day to his own program after playing the very demanding and defensive mother to the tenor on Jack Benny's show, Bea came aboard to assume the on air role of Dennis' girlfriend's mother, Mrs. Anderson.

During the 1940's Bea Benadaret was extremely active in radio, and among the parts that she played were Judy's mother on *A Date with Judy*, one of radio's finest dozen on the 1945 summer show *Twelve Players*, the very nasal Gloria the maid and Mrs. Waddington on *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, with Jack Benny in the *Campbell's Playhouse* episode "June Moon," Mrs. Carstairs on *Fibber McGee and Molly*, Wanda Werewolf on *Glamour Manor*, Aunt Clara Longnecker on the *Mel Blanc Show*, and Eve Goodwin on *The Great Gilderleeve*. Her best remembered

VERNA and BEA

supporting part in radio was when she was paired with Sara Berner as Jack Benny's eavesdropping and potential date telephone operators on *The Jack Benny Show*.

"Old Blue Eyes' light is flashing" might begin the segment, and by the time the two critical switchboard operators were finished, every cheap joke at the expense of Benny and references to their own pathetic lives filled the segment. The mind pictures were outrageously funny, as the listener imagined the two gossiping operators hooked up to their headsets at the network, while the boss was trying to get a reasonable message sent. More bothered by his intrusion than actually doing their jobs, Mabel Flapsaddle or cohort Gertrude Gearshift (Bea as the very rough diamond) discussed dating the world's cheapest man. It was during this, the heyday of the program in the late 1940's, that Felton, Benadaret, and their male cohort in both radio and cartoons, Mel Blanc, were part of the supporting cast that kept the program on top of the ratings.

Unlike Verna Felton, Bea Benadaret flirted with stardom in her own radio series. As was often the case of many favorite radio shows of the 1940's, summer series were broadcast to see if they might make it as a regular program. Bea Benadaret and Gale Gordon were playing Iris and Rudolph Atterbury, sidekicks to Liz and George Cooper, on the Lucille Ball show, *My Favorite Husband*, from 1948 through 1951, and after the second season ended, the couple were renamed Martha and John Granby for its summer replacement.

The successes of the play/movie *George Washington Slept Here* and the book/movie *The Egg and I* inspired CBS to develop Granby's *Green Acres*, a radio story about a city couple who attempt to make a life

on the farm, and instead become the butt of the rustic life. Gale Gordon played a banker (one he would reprise on television's *The Lucy Show* years later) to his addlebrained wife. If this all sounds familiar, Granby's was dropped from the title when it became *Green Acres* twenty years later on CBS-TV. In both media the displaced couple is assisted in their traumatic transition by farmhand Eb (Parley Baer on radio and Tom Lester on the tube). Another interesting connection to the TV version of the 1960's is that the setting was geographically connected to the fictitious Illinois crossroads of *Petticoat Junction*, the namesake for the only TV program which starred Bea Benadaret.

Just like Verna Felton, Bea Benadaret assumed numerous parts on radio from dramatic spots on the *Lux Radio Theatre* to comedy on *Maisie* or *The Penny Singleton Show*. And like Verna, there were many roles ahead on television, but before activities on the tube are examined, her film career also bears recalling. Bea Benadaret's cinema life was not as prestigious as Verna Felton's, for among her parts were minor movie roles in the likes of *The First Time*, *The Plunderers of Painted Flats*, *Tender is the Night*, as a file clerk in *Notorious* and a working girl in *On the Town*. Perhaps the best remembered motion picture roles of both ladies came when the Walt Disney Studio or Warner Brothers needed cartoon voices.

The part was small, the number of lines certainly did not match the size of the character, but Verna Felton debuted in a Disney Studio feature when she gave voice to a snooty elephant who was commenting on the bad parenting displayed by Dumbo's mother. Over the years her voice was heard in the following at this renowned studio: the crazed Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland: The Lady and the Tramp* where she dogged it with fellow radio stars



PHOTOFEST

TV's PETTICOAT JUNCTION-- Bea Benadaret as Kate Bradley with Frank Cady as Sam Drucker.

Bill Thompson, Alan Reed and Stan Freberg; the fairy godmother in *Cinderella*; as one of the three good fairies in *Sleeping Beauty*; and *The Jungle Book*. joining fellow Jack Benny radio star, Phil Harris.

Also during the 1940's through early 1960's, Bea Benadaret was active doing cartoon voices, primarily at Warner Brothers. When a gum chewing, brassy, Brooklynese teenager was needed to counter a character like Mel Blanc's Bugs Bunny, Bea assumed the role. When a number of female parts came up at the studio, where Blanc held a virtual monopoly over the male voices, only Bea Benadaret, June Foray and Jane Morgan came close in female voice time. One can only identify the female voices by ear, because for many years Mel Blanc had an agreement that his name alone was to be listed in the credits. Among the best parts Bea Benadaret played at Warners was Mama Bear to Stan Freberg's moronic Junior in *What's Brewin' Bruin?* (1948)

In Mel Blanc's autobiography, *That's Not All, Folks*, he expressed his long time relationship with this radio partner and frequent cartoon fellow: "I was probably closest to Bea [of the people who were part of his close circle of "voice" friends and whom he described as] ... warm, generous, and funny." After all of their years of radio, television, and cartoons, they were married in the guise of Barney and Betty Rubble on *The Flintstones*. Bea had to join other cast members (Jean "Wilma" Vander Pyl and Alan "Fred" Reed) of the first prime time cartoon in an unusual recording location, when they taped the early episodes around Mel's hospital bed in his home after he suffered a near fatal automobile accident in 1961.

Mel also recalled that Bea's first great visual performance was as Blanche Morton on the *Burns and Allen Show* (and its follow-up *The George Burns Show* from 1958-59). Gracie had a number of friends on the radio show, and Bea played in support on the program, but when a long time accomplice was needed for Gracie's half-baked schemes on video the assignment was given to Bea Benadaret. Her infectious laugh that usually came a beat and a half after Gracie proffered her seemingly serious plan of the night gave Blanche a steady part, and the only one to come close in longevity on the show was long suffering announcer Harry Von Zell, who came aboard when Bill Goodwin left after the first season. During the decade that the program ran, she outlasted four Harry Morton husbands: Hal March, John Brown, Fred Clark, and Larry Keating.

Regular parts on television continued for Bea Benadaret: the first major one was as the housekeeper Wilma on the short lived series *Peter Loves Mary*. Coincidentally, shortly after this show started, she was doing Betty Rubble's voice on *The Flintstones*, and for this situation comedy

VERNA and BEA

that starred real life husband and wife Peter Lind Hayes and Mary Healy, the actress was joined by Alan "Fred Flintstone" Reed, who played Happy Richman on *Peter Loves Mary*. Other television appearances include *Screen Directors' Playhouse*, *the Bob Cummings Show*, *Restless Gun*, "The Happiest Day" (a *Chevy Show*), *Dobie Gillis* and *The New Breed*. After *Peter Loves Mary* ended, a role was available in a new program that would lead to Bea Benadaret's only starring part on TV.

Cast as the back hills cousin to Jed Clampett, Bea Benadaret's character Pearl Bodine figured in many of the first season's episodes of *The Beverly Hillbillies*. However, in the fall of 1963, as part of a wave of similar nonsensical comedies that proliferated on the CBS schedule in the early 1960's, her role was de-hillified when she became Kate Bradley, operator of the Shady Rest Hotel in Hooterville on *Petticoat Junction*.

Running the only business of its kind in the community was only part of the hotel manager's chores, for she also had to look after her lethargic Uncle Joe (Edgar Buchanan), keep the Cannonball steam train commissioned, and look out for her three exceptionally beautiful daughters (who, during the run of the show, were played by six different actresses.) So successful was this program that another series was spun off two years later. *Green Acres* has already been previously mentioned, and it is important to note that the two shows were so closely related that characters often played roles in both comedies.

Petticoat Junction climbed as high as number four in the Nielsen ratings, but its spin off soon eclipsed it, and as cast changes were made annually, the program remained viable in the ratings only as long as Bea Benadaret stayed at the helm. Dur-

ing the 1967-68 season she grew increasingly ill with lung cancer, and although she could have sat out the last five episodes of the season after she took radiation treatment, Bea Benadaret insisted on completing her part. Her replacement, June Lockhart, could keep the show on the schedule only one more year.

On October 13, 1968, Bea Benadaret died, and of this final, more dramatic comedy role, she said. "(Kate Bradley) has to walk the fine line between being humorous and tender. The other women I've played were strictly for laughs." Thank goodness that this fine actress was able to make the transition, giving the listener and viewer opportunities to appreciate her talent from the zany to the serious.

Mel Blanc recalled his fondness for Bea and her husband, when he wrote. "To lose them both (her long time husband Eugene Twombly was sound effects man for the *Jack Benny Show*; they died only four days apart) was very sad and painful."

After entertaining most of her 76 years, Verna Felton died on December 15, 1966. Her last duties involved being the honorary mayor of the San Fernando Valley, and of the many long-winded speeches she had to endure in her "official capacity," she quipped, "I wish they'd come to the point and get it over with!" (As this author writes these words, he can hear that gloriously unmistakable voice that emanated from Verna Felton in a variety of entertainment media for over forty years.)

Remembering the hours of fun that both of these wonderful character actresses created is as simple as finding one of the many old time radio shows, television programs, or motion pictures that utilized the talents of Verna Felton and Bea Benadaret. The two never failed to compete with the best of the better known entertainers; and it is their contributions that made many of the shows successful from start to finish. ■

MEMORY LANE

By RUSS RENNAKER

I remember baseball before there was radio. Radio did for baseball what sound did for the movies. But what was it like before radio? Baseball fans in the Midwest where I lived had three choices. Cincinnati or one of the two Chicago teams. A three or four hour train ride would take you to one of these three. Not many fans made the trip. The baseball parks were filled mostly with the lucky people who lived in the area. The rest of the fans had to wait until the next day for their newspaper accounts.

But there was an exception. Fans in our community got a peek at a game the day it was played. All newspapers in those days had telegraph connections with the national wire services from which their sports writers could write the newspaper accounts for the next day's paper. Our local newspaper did one better.

On the wall of the brick building across the street from the newspaper office they hung a play-board some ten foot square. The face of the board contained a miniature baseball diamond. Behind the play-board was a platform containing a telegrapher and another person to run the board.

As the plays came in over the telegraph the telegrapher sang out the moves through a megaphone device that protruded through the board. The other person moved the

players around on the board and showed the position of the ball. How this was accomplished I never got a chance to discover. But the whole thing was a great idea.

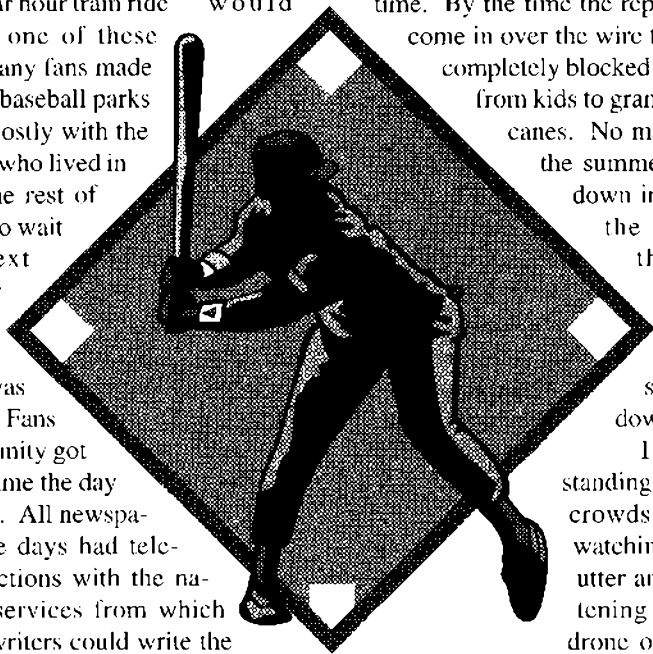
Crowds would begin to form in front of the newspaper office an hour before game time. By the time the reports began to come in over the wire the street was completely blocked off with fans, from kids to grandfathers with canes. No matter how hot the summer sun shined down into that street the fans stood there, eyes glued to that play-board, perspiration streaming down their backs.

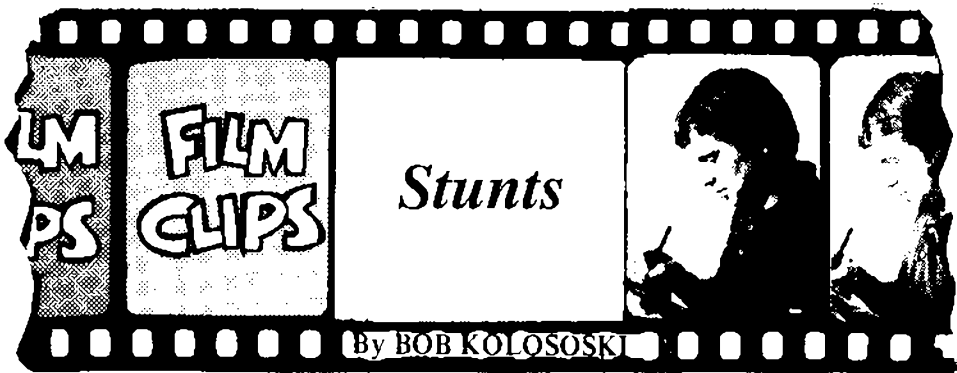
I remember standing there in those crowds many times watching the plays in utter amazement listening to the voice drone out the names

of the players and what they were doing. "Hornsby knocks out a single to right field." The little white dot flew from the home plate to a spot in right field, and a black dot representing Hornsby went to first base. It was exciting. The cheers or groans of the watchers brought a sense of realism to the whole thing.

My family always knew where to find me when they had finished their shopping and were ready to go home.

▶ That was baseball before radio brought it into every home. ■





By **BOB KOLOSOSKI**

Making movies is a risky business for all involved. The producers gamble huge sums of money and the stars put their careers on the line with each new film. Everyone associated with a film has something to lose and the team known as the Stunt Unit risks their lives and health every time they begin a new project.

Stunt men and women are paid to defy death, but sometimes they lose the gamble and the ranks become thinned with the death of a team member. Since the beginning of movie-making hundreds of stunt people have died while performing movie stunts. Most often the stunts are carefully planned, rehearsed and successfully completed. But the slightest oversight has the

potential for disaster.

Contemporary stunt men and women are highly trained professionals. This was not the case in the infancy of motion pictures.

The first men to do movie stunts were untrained, would-be actors putting their lives on the line for a set fee. Former circus performers, rodeo stars and vaudeville acrobats began to find work in the movies. At first, most of the stunts were simple "pratfalls" or staged fights.

During the filming of D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916), an old American Indian named Eagle Eye volunteered to jump off a high tower during a battle scene, for three dollars. The director/producer agreed and Eagle Eye changed into his costume

while a horsedrawn cart full of hay was put into position. The scene was set and, during the action, Griffith signalled to Eagle Eye to jump. The Indian gave out a bloodcurdling yell and leaped over the wall, falling to the cart below. The horse became so startled by the noise and sudden jolt that it began to run wildly with Eagle Eye in the cart, hanging on for



THE KEYSTONE KOPS

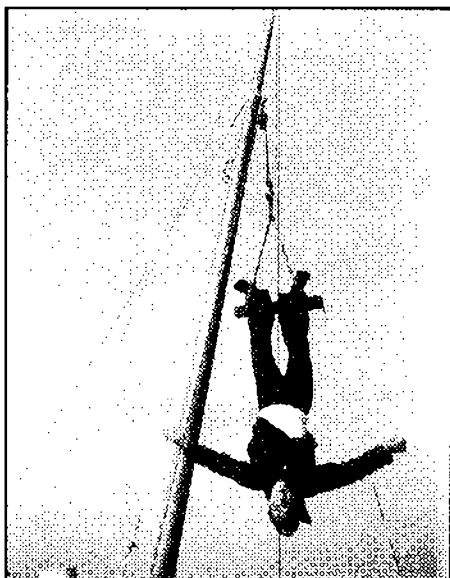
PHOTOFEST

dear life. Eagle Eye returned the next day asking for his pay. Unfortunately for him, Mr. Griffith was not satisfied with the previous jump and wanted to shoot the scene one more time.

Western were very popular in the pre-World War I era and dozens of cowboys immigrated to California to seek fame and fortune in the movies. Tom Mix was perhaps the most successful cowboy stunt man to graduate to full-fledged star. He began as a stunter in 1911 and by 1916, with a weekly salary of \$17,000, he was the top star at the Fox Studio. Mix did all his own stunts, against the wishes of the studio bosses. During his career he broke each leg four times and fractured several ribs, ankles and hands. In 1926 he broke both arms when a wagon overturned and pinned him underneath. Ironically, Mix survived all his death-defying stunts only to be killed in an automobile accident in 1940 at the age of 60.

The most daring of the early stunt men were the crazy crew known as the Keystone Kops. The boss of this wild group was Mack Sennett. His Keystone Studio was the testing ground for many dangerous comedy stunts and several of his actors honed their skills at the Sennett studio of frantic fun. With all his major stars defecting to other studios, and sound becoming the rage, Sennett eventually closed his studio.

Fatty Arbuckle was one of the actors who became a Keystone star, then left to form his own unit of comic lunacy. In 1917 Buster Keaton joined Arbuckle and the world was introduced to the best stunt-comic in the history of films. Keaton was a seasoned vaudeville acrobat, only age 21 when he entered films. Keaton's ability to fall hard and not get hurt was tested time and again while working for Arbuckle. His true genius for creating stunts was realized in 1920 when Keaton was able to take over



BUSTER KEATON

PHOTOPOST

Arbuckle's unit after Fatty moved to another studio. Keaton was allowed to let his imagination go wild, and in response he came up with some of the most daring stunts ever filmed.

Many times only Keaton's superb athletic ability prevented serious injury to him or his colleagues. He was hurt several times during his career, but his professionalism and love of filmmaking was never compromised.

The most specialized area of stunting in Hollywood was the aerial unit. Right after WW I, many veteran pilots began to barnstorm around the country and by the 1920s this fad had found its way into the movies.

Pilots were recruited by the studios to perform simulated crashes, parachute jumps, and daring acrobatics for the motion picture cameras.

One of the first pilots, and the most famous of the pioneers to begin aerial stunting, was Orner Lester Locklear. He was tall, handsome and a daredevil in the air. Locklear was a flight instructor during the war and left the service in 1919. He formed

STUNTS

a barnstorming unit and wound up in Los Angeles. To promote his flying unit he did some aerial tricks over a Los Angeles party, prompting Carl Laemmle, head of Universal Pictures, to offer the daring pilot a contract.

Locklear created new stunts in several thrill films. His bravado in the air became the stuff of legends. In 1920 William Fox offered him the chance to star in a big-budget film titled *The Skywayman*. Locklear created new, more dangerous stunts for the film and insisted on doing some night scenes. He and his partner, James "Skeets" Elliott, took off at 10 p.m. and did some stunts tracked by searchlights. On a spiral, he lost control of the plane and crashed. Locklear was burned beyond recognition and Elliott was badly hurt but alive. Pilot Ted McLaughlin was brought in to finish the flying scenes for the movie. The film was a runaway success and Fox gave twenty per cent of the profit to Locklear's widow.

As the decade sped along, the lack of safety measures in aerial films cost many pilots their lives. In 1927 director William A. Wellman, a veteran of the Flying Corps, began preparing for another flying film to be called *Wings*. He brought together the best pilots in the country and the top aerial cameraman, Harry Perry. Another World War I pilot, Dick Grace, was hired to do the most dangerous stunts, including the crash landing of a Spad aircraft. The Spad crash was a complete success, but a Fokker crash landing stunt went wrong and Grace broke his neck. He was told by his doctors that he would need a neck brace and bed rest for several months. Wellman felt guilty about Grace and, a week after the accident, went to a local bar to drown his sorrows. He was amazed to find Grace, without his brace, dancing with a young lady!



STUNT MAN YAKIMA CANUTT

Wellman knew his pilots were tough men, but even he was amazed at Grace's rapid recovery. There has never been a shortage of stunt pilots in Hollywood, but the romance of the barnstormers will never ride the wind again.

Enos Edward Canutt, better known as Yakima Canutt, went to Los Angeles in 1923 to apply his cowboy and rodeo skills to the movies. He played in westerns and became a sought-after ramrod (stunt coordinator) in the poverty row studios specializing in "B" westerns. Canutt landed a job at Republic Pictures in the mid-30s and became friends with a young cowboy star named John Wayne.

When director John Ford asked Wayne to star in *Stagecoach* (1939), the young actor agreed and suggested Yakima Canutt as the ramrod. Ford asked around about Canutt and liked what he heard. He hired the stunt man and asked him to dream up a couple of good stunts. Yak came up with several, but the most famous was the chase through Monument Valley in Arizona, as Indians are converging on the stagecoach.

Yak, dressed as an Indian and riding at full speed, leapt from his horse to the stagecoach lead horse. At this point he was "shot" and dropped between the two rows of galloping horses. He continued to hold on to the reins until the right moment and then he let go of them and watched the horses pass. Then the coach passed over him. All this was done with only inches between him and disaster. That stunt made him famous in Tinsel Town and he continued to do stunt work and second unit directing into the 1970s. One of Canutt's most famous jobs as a second unit director was for the 1959 film *Ben-Hur*. He helped coordinate and film the famous chariot race.

Stunting today is unionized, regulated, relatively well-paying, but still dangerous. Today's stunt men face new challenges as action movies seem to be among the most popular films.

The risky business of stunting continues. ■

YAKIMA KANUTT, stunting for John Wayne in "Stagecoach" jumps between horses at full gallop in one of the movies most spectacular stunts.

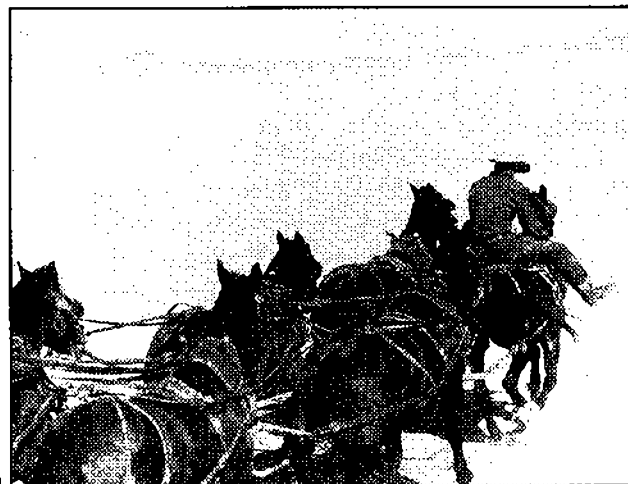
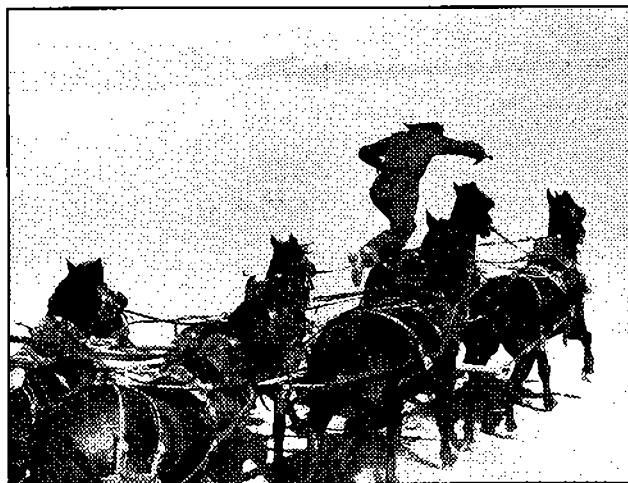


PHOTO BY ST



Date Night in the City

BY RUTH HOSEK

The rules were straightforward. No dating until you were sixteen, Friday and Saturday dates only, be home by twelve. Dad always made sure we had money for an emergency, including the admonition to take a cab home if...!

But the guys were responsible, reasonable and respectable. We all had part-time jobs and some of us access to a car. (I do remember, however, waiting at a bus stop in a snowstorm wearing high heels one late night in February.)

On a particularly adventurous evening we drove to Blackie's on Chicago's West Side. It was very Italian and the pizza was superb. Later I was told it was considered to be one of the best pizza places in town.

Movies and snacks were pretty much the things we did in high school. I remember the Pic Pan — hot deep-dish apple pie *ala mode*. And the Buffalo, of course; lime sodas, cherry Cokes, double chocolate malts — all the basic food groups of maturing teenagers.

Senior Prom Night. Remember the wrist corsage? It wouldn't get crushed while dancing the slow ones, making it perfect to dry and press.

Afterward, the hamburgers at the Edgewater Beach, gawking to see someone "important." No luck. That night it was filled with the prom crowd as were hotel dining rooms in all corners of the city.

It was an important night, a watershed

Ruth Hosek of Addison, Illinois is a substitute teacher, a member of the West Suburban Group of the Those Were The Days Players and a fun date!

event, a rite of passage. You could stay out until 3 a.m. Without much money, we walked to Rush Street, State Street, Michigan Avenue. Daffy, we must have looked, in ill-fitting tux jackets, overly bouffant tulle skirts badly in need of an iron, carrying frontless, backless, sideless sandals by their thin straps. But the late May nights were just warm enough and the city glowed and we glowed a bit, too, with occasional sips from flasks found in those lumpy jackets and bulgy slacks. No one bothered us. Lots of smiles from passersby, patrolmen, workers on early shifts. Their acknowledgment made our strolls special.

No fences or gates at Oak Street beach. The sand was cool. The little foamy waves curled around our toes. The breeze destroyed the last of the once-coiffed hair. It was Prom Night. It was magic.

College days brought greater freedom. I was fortunate to have known someone who knew the guy who tended the light atop the Palmolive Building. One warm evening we visited, walking around the open terrace floor below. The man went up the ladder, adjusting and cleaning the light so that it would keep turning and signaling over city and lake. What a view! The Drive glowed in lines of red and white, The Avenue gleamed in inviting colors and movement, The Lake, dark and quiet, anchored all this life and energy. High enough to be disengaged, low enough to hear and smell the city and lake; no panoramic view ever compares to that for me.

And that includes the view from the Tip Top Tap at the Allerton Hotel where we often began or ended an evening of Rum



and Cokes. No one ever asked us for an I.D. Were we so mature? Maybe they knew we were just average kids who had only enough money for one drink apiece, anyway.

We really did want to hear those greats at the Blue Note. It was hard to get enough money together for the cover, so we learned to walk up the street very slowly, holding hands but not talking, listening very hard to Johnny Hodges and Earl Bostic.

This was not a carefully soundproofed place so we could hear quite well leaning up close against the glass, the wall. We were discreet and moved off as the song ended, returning casually as the players began again. A few years later I went to the Blue Note as a paying customer. It was wonderful, a dream fulfilled. But I'll never forget cool glass on my arm, great blues in the air.

As the nights became early morning, a trip down the Outer Drive was the perfect ending to a date night in the city. In those soft summer hours we had all-night radio stations playing jazz, romantic ballads, the classics. In those days traffic was almost nonexistent in the wee small hours. We glided along quite effortlessly. A convertible was just right for this journey. The

music caught and pushed by the wind, street lights glinting off metal, the sound of water against beach or rocks.

No bucket seats, those inventions of a callous, unromantic age. We could sit very close and often did, even sharing shifting duties when necessary. It was fun learning to drive.

Under the "L" on Bryn Mawr (I think) was a little jazz joint where performers gathered after hours. We were shoved into a chairs-and-table-area resembling a closed corral. But we suffered gladly, shoulder to shoulder, thigh to thigh, and were transported on and in clouds of music and secondhand smoke, all for the price of one bar whiskey and water.

Or we found our way to the Dew Drop Inn: dark wood walls, a nude dryad in a fountain of water surrounded by greenery, booths with high backs and a classical music jukebox. We leaned back and listened to *L'Arlesienne Suite* or the *Moonlight Sonata* and we were so grown-up and so worldly-wise. We talked about... what? Who remembers?

But memories of those nights wrap themselves around me and make me smile in the remembering and a little sad, for being so young and taking it all for granted. ■

Gene Tierney

She Was More Than A Dream

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

On a wall in my nostalgia room there is a framed color photograph which was published as a supplement to *The Chicago Sun* on October 10, 1943. The glamour shot shows a brunette with shoulderlength curls, aquamarine eyes, and full red lips whose chin almost rests on a strap of the black-and-silver gown she is wearing. If the phrase "Hubba hubba" had not been coined before the *Sun* hit the newsstands that Sunday, this is the pose that would have done it.

In the 1940s Gene Tierney wasn't just getting double takes as a pinup; her breathtaking beauty was holding the attention of audiences in theatres across the country. Gradually people came to appreciate the actress behind that gorgeous face. It took even longer for the public to discover that under that pulchritude and talent was a mind deeply troubled by family problems.

Yet if Gene had not been born into the family she was on November 20, 1920 she might never have become a movie star. Her father was a prosperous New York insurance broker who provided her with a first-class education in Connecticut and Switzerland that gave her culture and poise. From her mother she inherited those "stop 'em in their tracks" good looks and in her mother she found the advisor she needed when she was a babe in Babylon.

Had it not been for her father's name that

got her into the studios for a personalized tour in 1938 Gene almost certainly would never have met director Anatole Litvak who dusted off the cliché "You ought to be in pictures" for her. Within a few weeks she had a screen test. Warner Brothers had offered her a contract, and before she knew it... she was back in Connecticut.

Her father, who insisted that she finish school and have her coming out, hoped that she would marry a wealthy college boy and forget about a career. But when it became clear that Gene wanted an opening night before the footlights more than a debut into society he gave in and agreed to help her make the rounds of agents and producers in New York. She landed a part in *Mrs. O'Brien Entertains* directed by the renowned George Abbott and, although the play lasted only a month on Broadway, she was a hit with the critics. The most glorious words to Gene's ears from that experience came not from reviewers but from Abbott himself who told her during rehearsals "Today you are an actress." And an actress she would be from then on.

Her next play, *The Male Animal*, was a success and the critics were still in her corner. Soon her face was in *Life* and *Vogue* and before long Darryl Zanuck of Twentieth Century-Fox was knocking on her door with a contract. From the start Gene made it clear that Hollywood would have to take her as she was: her imperfect teeth, the color of her hair, and her name (she had been named for her uncle) were not to be altered.

Clair Schulz, a Nostalgia Digest subscriber from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, is a regular contributor to our magazine.

The advantages of signing with a major studio like Fox rather than a secondary one such as Republic soon became apparent to Gene. Her first movie, *The Return of Jesse James*, was directed by Fritz Lang and starred Henry Fonda. Because she was frequently in the company of top-notch directors and leading men she was learning from the best which in turn brought out the best in her. Even character actors like Nigel Bruce, who appeared with her in *Hudson's Bay*, were willing to take her aside and give some fatherly advice.

Some of the lessons she was learning were more painful than others. In order to play the slatternly Ellie May in *Tobacco Road* she had to endure itchy skin as she was literally covered with layers of dirt. During the filming of *Belle Starr* she developed an allergy to makeup completely so what audiences saw on the screen was truly natural beauty.

While her career was taking off in 1941 relations with her parents took a nose-dive when she eloped with fashion designer Oleg Cassini. The decision to get married was so spontaneous that one of Gene's car-rings served as the wedding ring.

That theirs was a rocky marriage was apparent as soon as 1942 when a writer for *Screen Album* could casually comment that "Mr. and Mrs. Cassini have had their

share of spats... even a couple of down-right fights!" Their arguments, separations, and reconciliations were spicy grist for the gossip mill throughout the rest of the decade.

The rift between Gene and her father grew deeper when she felt he betrayed all the Tierneys by being unfaithful and securing a divorce. His infidelity coupled with the discovery that he had been secretly using her money from the family corporation created when she signed her first contract was a wound that never healed.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor Oleg enlisted and Gene also did her part by participating in bond rallies, entertaining the troops, and by joining her husband to live at Fort Riley. Unfortunately, during all this mingling with the public she contacted German measles at a time that coincided with her first pregnancy. Gene came to regard her daughter named Daria, who was born deaf and retarded, as her war effort.

In her only film of 1943, *Heaven Can Wait*, she demonstrated that she could handle a lighter role as the true love of a womanizer played by Don Ameche. During the filming she found the Lubitsch touch a bit heavy-handed and she asked the famous director not to keep shouting at her. When he told her that he was being



GENE TIERNEY

paid to shout at her she replied, "Yes, and I'm being paid to take it — but not enough." Her response amused Lubitsch and for the rest of the production he directed her with more tact and less thunder.

Gene also starred in just one motion picture in 1944 and if it had been the only film she ever made her contribution to the history of cinema would have been assured. Over fifty years after its release *Laura* remains one of the best mysteries Hollywood ever produced. Otto Preminger deftly directed Dana Andrews, Vincent Price, and Clifton Webb as a perfectly cast trio of men in love with the "late" Laura Hunt who turns up very much alive. The enchanting melody by David Raskin which lingers long after the case is solved contributed no small part to the mood of the film. *Laura* is the how-to-do-it of whodunits.

Gene actually got her best-known role by default because Jennifer Jones turned it down. Perhaps Jones rejected the part because she had to play second fiddle to a portrait. In essence Gene had to sit in the wings during the first act of the movie while the men rhapsodized about Laura. It was to be expected that some people were disappointed when she finally did appear. Venus coming down from her pedestal would lose some of her charm, too.

Laura was indicative of the pattern her career had taken. Gene Tierney was the leading lady in every film she had been in, yet she had made little lasting impression. Her function on the screen seemed to be to look pretty and fall in love with Ameche, Tyrone Power, George Montgomery, and other handsome stars. What she needed was a role that she could sink her teeth into like those meaty parts offered to Bette Davis and Barbara Stanwyck.

In 1945 Zanuck finally gave her a chance to shine.

In *Leave Her to Heaven* Gene played a jealous neurotic whose ultimate destination was assuredly in the other direction. As Ellen Berent she is so possessive of her husband (Cornell Wilde) that she allows his crippled brother to drown and risks personal injury to cause a miscarriage so she can have his affections all to herself. When these measures drive him into the arms of her sister Ruth, Ellen plans her own suicide so it will look like Ruth murdered her.

Few actresses ever portrayed a monomaniac better than Gene did in that film. For her performance, which one film historian called "frighteningly credible," she was nominated for best actress and at another time she might have won the Oscar, but not in the same year Joan Crawford got her best part as Mildred Pierce.

In two of her next pictures she was back with Tyrone Power playing the role she did as well as anyone, that of the spoiled or self-centered socialite. Gene's characterization of worldly Isabel Bradley in *The Razor's Edge* contrasts nicely with Tyrone's performance as a man who searches for a deeper meaning in life beyond money and fame.

That Wonderful Urge is a romantic comedy in which a newspaperman with the ponderous name of Thomas Jefferson Tyler ridicules rich Sara Farley in print and lives to regret it when she arranges to have him fired, but everyone in the theatre knew it wouldn't be long before Tyler and Sara would give in to that wonderful urge called love.

Tyrone Power never had an actress who complemented him better than Gene Tierney. They looked good by themselves, but they were great together. There was something about certain pairings that made for cinema magic: Lake and Ladd, Powell and Loy, Astaire and Rogers, Bogart and Bacall, Hepburn and Tracy. More than one

critic noted what a congenial team Tierney and Power made. Even the cynics who sometimes complained about her lack of range as an actress could not deny that Gene Tierney added something special to a film just by being in it.

After the war only rarely as in the romantic fantasy *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* and *Close to My Heart*, the story of a woman adopting a baby, was Gene given a role to match that of Ellen Berent. She appeared in a variety of films during this time: crime melodramas (*Night and the City*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*); comedies (*The Mating Season*, *On the Riviera*); a western (*The Secret of Convict Lake*); and historical epics (*Plymouth Adventure*, *The Egyptian*).

By the time she finished *The Left Hand of God* opposite Humphrey Bogart in 1955 it was clear that her days as a star were over. She appeared noticeably older in her role as a nurse. During the filming she had trouble remembering her lines and was visibly upset. Bogart recognized that she was not well and told executives at Fox about it, but by then she was beyond the point where anyone in the industry could help her.

The disputes with her father, her divorce from Cassini, guilt over Daria's retardation, the breakup of her romance with Aly Kahn, stress from work, the fading of the bloom of youth from her cheeks, depression over a career in decline: any or all of these reasons may have caused her nervous breakdown. In the sanitariums to which she was committed she underwent electroshock therapy and coldpack treatments that failed to do anything except drive her deeper into a shell. Only when she found an understanding female psychologist at the Menninger Clinic was she able to start climbing out of the abyss into which she had fallen.

What also helped her on the road back

was a stabilizing force in the form of a Texas oilman named W. Howard Lee who supplied the patience and understanding she needed. They became engaged while she was still at Menninger's and were married in 1960.

In 1962 Gene returned to the screen with a small role in *Advise and Consent*. She enjoyed renewing acquaintances with Preminger, Fonda, Walter Pidgeon, Charles Laughton, and other veterans from the old studio days. But two years later when she was cast in virtually a bit part in *The Pleasure Seekers* starring Ann-Margaret, Carol Lynley, and Pamela Tiffin, it was obvious to her that there was little future for her among the new generation of moviemakers and moviegoers.

Except for a couple television appearances in 1969 and 1980 Gene Tierney retired from acting and was content to be a socially prominent Houstonian. She was active in charitable work (especially with retarded children) right up to the time of her death in 1991.

Invariably whenever I walk past her photograph on the wall I am drawn to it just as detective Mark McPherson was hypnotized by her portrait in *Laura*. I cannot pass it without hearing the words Johnny Mercer wrote for the movie's theme song. I try to look behind those lips that protected the most sensual overbite in Hollywood, through those familiar yet distant eyes that would one day see all the horrors of the snake pit; under those exquisite cheekbones that made her the fairest of the fair, but there is no clue there.

Laura/Gene Tierney is still a mystery. I guess she will always be the face in the misty light, footsteps that you hear down the hall... ■

(Note: Tune in to Gene Tierney on Duffy's Tavern, and in a radio version of "Laura" on Lux Radio Theatre on TWTD in September. See listings on pages 20 and 21.)

Chuck Schaden's
THOSE WERE THE DAYS
WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

AUGUST 1996

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for *Those Were The Days* represents the length of time for each particular show: (28:50) means the program will run 28 minutes and 50 seconds. This may be of help to those who tape the programs for their own collection.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3rd

JUDY CANOVA SHOW (8-24-43) Judy goes shopping for a new dress. Cast features Mel Blanc, Ruby Dandridge, singer Eddie Dean, announcer Ken Niles. Colgate Tooth Paste, CBS. (24:30)

GEORGE WATSON SHOW (3-23-57) WBBM's resident comedian with a comic disc jockey show using his own and other comic voices. Klinger Motors, WBBM, Chicago. (15:38)

LIGHTS OUT (4-13-43) A girl about to be killed by thugs is rescued by a ghost with a bow and arrow in "The Archer." Arch Oboler hosts. Ironized Yeast, CBS. (30:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-10-51) Book 85, Chapter 14. "Is it MISS Toots Schultz or MRS.?" Miles Labs, NBC. (14:53)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-11-51) Book 85, Chapter 15. "A marriage is dissolved." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:50)

DUFFY'S TAVERN (9-22-44) Ed Gardner stars as Archie, the Manager of the Tavern. Guest star is actress Gene Tierney and Archie wants

to take her to the Stork Club. Cast includes Eddie Green, Charlie Cantor, Florence Halop, John Brown. AFRS rebroadcast. (27:48) *See the article about Gene Tierney on page 16.*

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-14-51) Book 85, Chapter 16. "The path of love is not smooth." Miles Labs, NBC. (12:50)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 9: **New and Improved** discusses the measures taken to regulate broadcast advertising, "payola" and "plugola," as well as the setback broadcasting suffered when cigarette advertising was outlawed. This program also reviews the advent of television, its impact on radio, and the countermeasures radio station managers initiated. (30:00)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th
REMEMBERING VERNA FELTON

MAIL CALL #177 (1940s) Excerpt featuring Red Skelton as Junior, the Mean Little Kid and **Verna Felton** as Junior's grandmother in a "Sleepy Time" sketch. AFRS. (8:52)

FIRST NIGHTER (6-17-48) "Old Lady Shakespeare" starring Olan Soule and **Verna Felton** in a romantic drama about an aging actress who wants to stop her nephew from marrying a young woman. Cast includes Herb Butterfield and Parley Baer. Campana Products, CBS. (29:38)

RADIO HALL OF FAME (3-12-44) Excerpt featuring Groucho Marx as Dr. Hackenbush and **Verna Felton** as his head nurse in a zany hospital sketch. Also in cast: Mel Blanc, Lou Merrill, Ken Niles. Sustaining, NBC BLUE. (11:00)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (10-7-45) The Nelsons receive a most unusual gift from an Arabian Prince. Featured in the cast are Bea Benadaret as Gloria, the maid, and **Verna Felton** as Mrs. Broadstreet, the neighbor. Also: John Brown, Veola Vonn, King Sisters, and announcer Vern Smith. International

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Silver Company, CBS. (29:56)

GUEST STAR (1951) "The Night Is Dark" with Lurene Tuttle, **Verna Felton**, Herbert Rawlinson, Gerald Mohr. John Conte is host, with Harry Sosnick and the orchestra. U.S. Treasury Department. (14:30)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (5-5-49) "Mother" by Kathleen Norris, starring Linda Darnell with **Verna Felton** in a warmhearted story of the relationship of a mother and her daughter. James Hilton is host. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30:00)

SALUTE TO KMGM (5-27-48) Excerpt from a broadcast on the opening of the new radio broadcast studios of station KMGM. Grandma, played by **Verna Felton**, takes Junior, played by Red Skelton, on a tour of the new radio studios. KMGM, Los Angeles. (8:00)

JOAN DAVIS SHOW (1-21-46) "America's Queen of Comedy" with singer Andy Russell, **Verna Felton** as Rosella Hipperton, and Shirley Mitchell as Barbara Weatherby. Joan borrows an idea from a romance magazine to try to win Andy's affections. Paul Weston and the orchestra. AFRS rebroadcast. (21:00)

RED SKELTON SHOW (5-13-49) Red finds a lost dog and tries to find his owner. Cast features **Verna Felton** as Junior's Grandma and as Red's neighbor Mrs. Fussy. Also: Lurene Tuttle, Pat McGeehan, Four Knights, David Rose and the orchestra. Tide, NBC. (28:55)
See the article about Verna Felton on page 2.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17th

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-15-51) Book 85, Chapter 17. "Good night, Mary Lou, good night." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-16-51) Book 85, Chapter 18. "Ah, these women!" Miles Labs, NBC. (14:45)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (2-5-45) "Laura" starring Dana Andrews, Gene Tierney, Vincent Price and Otto Kruger in a radio version of the 1944 film. A detective, investigating the murder of a glamorous artist, finds himself falling in love with her. Lionel Barrymore is guest host. Lux Soap, CBS. (19:30; 14:36; 25:34)
See the article about Gene Tierney on page 16.

LOUELLA PARSONS (9-26-48) Hollywood's Number One gossip columnist is on the air with news about Robert Mitchum, Hedy Lamarr, George Stevens, Milton Berle, Jane Wyman and Ronald Reagan. Guests are George Raft and Mona Freeman. Marvin Miller announces. Woodbury Facial Soap, ABC. (13:35)

DIMENSION X (5-27-50) "To the Future" with

John Larkin and Jan Miner. A couple from the year 2155 have escaped in time back to the year 1950. Story by Ray Bradbury. Sustaining, NBC. (28:45)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-17-51) Book 85, Chapter 19. "Toots takes a night off." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:47)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio. (1986) Lesson 10: **Make 'em Laugh** analyzes the minstrel show, burlesque, and vaudeville and traces the growth of radio comedy beginning with the song-and-patter teams and stand-up comedians. Also discussed are ethnic comedy series and characterizations, their success, and the reaction to them by radio listeners. (30:00)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24th REMEMBERING BEA BENADARET

MY FAVORITE HUSBAND (1949) Lucille Ball and Richard Denning star as Liz and Gorge Cooper with **Bea Benadaret** and Gale Gordon as Iris and Rudolph Atterbury, with Frank Nelson. While cleaning out the desk, Liz finds some love letters. AFRS rebroadcast. (23:55)

TWELVE PLAYERS (10-6-45) "A dozen of Hollywood's outstanding radio artists to bring you... the unusual in radio entertainment." Appearing are Jack Moyses, Lurene Tuttle, Edmund McDonald, Cathy Lewis, Jay Novello, **Bea Benadaret**, Mary Jane Croft, Hal March, John Lake, John Brown, Herbert Rawlinson. "Checkerboard" is a series of events taking place on a block in a residential neighborhood. Script by Cathy and Elliott Lewis. Sustaining, CBS. (29:14)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (11-7-54) Excerpt with Jack, Rochester and Mary Livingstone on the way to the doctor's office. **Bea Benadaret** is the nurse, Frank Nelson is the doctor, Mel Blanc is Bugs Bunny. CBS. (9:30)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (9-23-45) Word gets to Ozzie that the syndicate is planning to build an apartment building on the property next door. **Bea Benadaret** appears as Gloria, the Nelson's maid and as Mrs. Appleby, the owner of the vacant lot. John Brown is Thorny. International Silver Company, CBS. (29:25)

THE WHISTLER (8-21-46) "The Broken Chain" starring Elliott Lewis and **Bea Benadaret**. A long-suffering husband finally decides to murder his wife. Sustaining, CBS. (28:21)

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DENNIS DAY (10-16-48) Two con men promise Dennis a commission if he can sell 100 acres of worthless Texas

Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1996

oil land to his girl friend's mother, Mrs. Anderson. Barbara Eiler is Mildred Anderson, **Bea Benadaret** is her mother. Also: Frank Nelson, Herb Vigran, Dink Trout, announcer Vern Smith. Colgate-Palmolive, NBC. (28:16)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-5-54) Excerpt from Jack's final Christmas Shopping show features Mel Blanc as the harried sales clerk and **Bea Benadaret** as his wife. Jack is shopping for some water colors for Don Wilson. (13:40) *See the article about Bea Benadaret on Page 2.*

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31st

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES (10-25-47)

Ralph Edwards matches contestants with zany stunts: reading and eating crackers; going over Niagra Falls in a barrel; a "horse and buggy" doctor meets three "babies" he delivered. Miss Hush contest continues. Duz, NBC. (29:09)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (9-14-52) Back from a summertime trip to England, Jack prepares his first show of the new season with Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Mel Blanc. Jack tries to get Bob Crosby to sign his contract to replace Phil Harris. This is Bob's first show with Jack, and his daughter Kathy also appears. AFRS rebroadcast. (24:10)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-18-51) Book 85, Chapter 20. "Claudia's mounting concern." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:50)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-21-51) Book 85, Chapter 21. "Meet James Beech." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:47)

RAILROAD HOUR (7-20-53) "Starlight" with Gordon MacRae and Dorothy Warrenskjold. "A memory of the days of good old vaudeville" is almost a cavalcade of show business from vaudeville to video! Association of American Railroads, NBC. (28:55)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-22-51) Book 85, Chapter 22. "Mother and daughter talk it out." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:45)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-23-51) Book 85, Chapter 23. "Clifford's promotion." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 11: **In A Family Way**, discusses the family comedy series from five different approaches: 1) husband-and-wife, 2) home-spun, 3) problems of the family as a unit, 4) teenagers' problems, and 5) the cartoon format. (30:00)

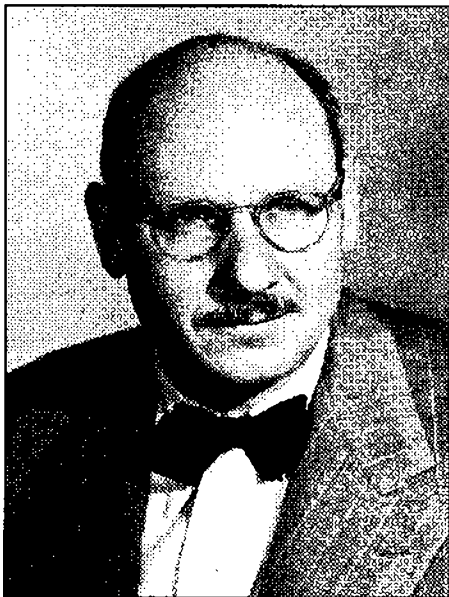
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th

A FINALE FOR "ONE MAN'S FAMILY"

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-24-51) Book 85, Chapter 24. "Young attorney at home." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:55)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-25-51) Book 85, Chapter 25. "Joan and Jim Beech." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:45)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-28-51) Book 86, Chapter 1. "Henry and family at the Sky Ranch." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:50)



CARLTON E. MORSE
Creator of "One Man's Family"

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-29-51) Book 86, Chapter 2. "Clifford gets in deeper." Miles Labs, NBC. (13:37)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (5-30-51) Book 86, Chapter 3. "Pinky and battleship." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:55) *Note: Chapters 4 and 5 are missing from our collection.*

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (6-4-51) Book 86, Chapter 6. (14:12) *This is the final chapter in our collection of mostly consecutive One Man's Family broadcasts from 1951.*

Now we jump ahead almost eight years to listen to the final five episodes of the series that began in 1932:

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-20-59) Book 134, Chapter 16. "Big news from Scotland." NBC. (9:35)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-21-59) Book 134, Chapter 17. "The homecoming." NBC. (9:43)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-22-59) Book 134, Chapter 18. "Betty lowers the boom." NBC. (10:20)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-23-59) Book 134, Chapter 19. "The silent partner makes a move." NBC. (9:40)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-24-59) Book 134, Chapter 19. "Confessions of a bridegroom." NBC. (10:32)

On April 24, 1959, after 27 years, One Man's Family was removed from the broadcast schedule without ceremony. Today we say good-bye to all those wonderful Carlton E. Morse characters with what, in our view, might have been the final show of the series if Mr. Morse and his cast had been given such an opportunity:

ONE MAN'S FAMILY FINALE (9-7-96) Ken Alexander has written an original script based on the characters in this long-running series. Members of our *Those Were The Days Radio Players* will bring it to life on the air as we hear Ken's version of what might have been the final chapter in the last book of One Man's Family: *It's a lovely afternoon in the middle of June. It's a Saturday, and all is quiet at 264 Sea Cliff Drive. Paul is writing letters in his studio at the top of the house. Mother Barbour is doing some mending in the sewing room, while Father Barbour lovingly tends his rosebushes in the garden. Meanwhile, next door, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Barbour, here too all is quiet. All six daughters are out of the house, and we find Jack and Betty relaxing in the kitchen where, on the table between them, stand a carton of milk, two glasses, and a cookie jar filled with golden-brown cookies.* (30:00)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14th

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (5-13-44) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Richard LeGrand as Peavy, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker, and Bea Benadaret as Eve Goodwin. Gildy and the judge have opposing views on the subject of juvenile delinquency. AFRS rebroadcast. (25:53)

BULLDOG DRUMMOND (1-17-47) "Case of the Atomic Murders" stars Ned Wever as Drummond, Luis Van Rooten as Denny, with Mercedes McCambridge as Rita Miller. Sustaining, MBS. (28:50)

BILLIE BURKE SHOW (8-3-46) Billie wants to raise money for a children's playground. Cast includes Lillian Randolph and Earle Ross. Marvin Miller announces. Listerene toothpaste, CBS. (29:50)

FIRST NIGHTER (3-11-48) "There's Something in the Air" starring Olan Soule and Barbara Luddy in a romantic comedy farce about some very special talents. Cast includes Parley Baer, Verna Felton, Luis Van Rooten. Campana Productions, CBS. (29:45)

MURDER AT MIDNIGHT (1946) "The Creeper," a classic story of murder and suspense. A madman murders women, then scrawls notes on his victim's walls, "Catch me before I kill again." Syndicated. (25:05)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 12: *The Gang's All Here* reviews another form of radio comedy which might be compared to the legitimate theatre's stock company, in which a leading character is surrounded by the same group of actors and actresses from week to week in different situations. (30:00)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st THIS DAY — THAT YEAR

SUSPENSE (9-21-50, *exactly 46 years ago today*) "The Crowd" starring Dana Andrews as a police lieutenant after a murderer whose victims are surrounded by crowds of people. AutoLite, CBS. (28:39)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (9-21-52, *exactly 44 years ago today*) Jack recalls his trip to the British Isles and shopping in Scotland. Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Bob Crosby, Don Wilson, Mel Blanc, Joe Kearns, Benny Rubin. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (23:48)

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (4-21-40, *exactly 56 years ago today*) "Ninotchka" starring

Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

SEPTEMBER 1996

Rosalind Russell and Spencer Tracy in a radio version of the 1939 film about a cold, female Russian agent who comes to Paris and finds romance. Roger Pryor hosts the final program in the series. Gulf Oil, CBS. (30:06)

H. V. KALTENBORN (9-21-39, *exactly 57 years ago today*) The distinguished news analyst reviews the European situation as Germany threatens Rumania; discusses the address of FDR in which the U.S. president repeated his pledge to keep the country out of war. Sustaining, CBS. (14:12)

LIFE WITH LUIGI (9-21-48, *exactly 48 years ago today*) J. Carroll Naish stars as Luigi Basco in the first show in the series, set in Chicago's "Little Italy." Alan Reed is Pasquale, with Gale Gordon and Bea Benadaret. Sustaining, CBS. (30:44)

LORENZO JONES (9-21-48, *exactly 48 years ago today*) An isolated episode in the long-running daytime series. Lorenzo has turned his attention to the "world of tomorrow." Karl Swenson as Lorenzo, Lucille Wall as his wife Belle. Bayer Aspirin, NBC. (14:55)

YOUR HIT PARADE (9-21-46, *exactly 50 years ago today*) Andy Russell and Peggy Mann, along with the Hit Paraders and Mark Warnow and the orchestra present the top tunes of the day. AFRS rebroadcast. (29:48)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th

ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADE (12-15-50) "The 25/1235679 Caper" or "The Russian's Number is Up!" starring Steven Dunn as Sam with Lurene Tuttle as Effie. Sustaining, NBC. (28:00)

CAN YOU TOP THIS? (5-18-48) Emcee Dennis James hosts a panel of joke-telling humorists: Ward Wilson, Harry Hirschfield, Joe Laurie, Jr., Peter Donald. Jokes about Hats, Rivals, Gossip, and Lectures. Colgate-Palmolive, NBC. (29:17)

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (1-21-51) "Spellbound" starring Joseph Cotten and Mercedes McCambridge in a radio version of Alfred Hitchcock's 1945 film classic. A psychiatrist shields a doctor accused of murder

and tries prove his innocence. Anacin, RCA Victor, NBC. (26:22; 28:45)

MY FRIEND IRMA (2-3-52) Marie Wilson stars as Irma Peterson and Cathy Lewis as Jane Stacy, with John Brown as Al, Alan Reed as Mr. Clyde, and Hans Conried as Professor Kropotkin. Irma writes a gossip column. Ennds Chlorophyll Tablets, CBS. (28:40)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 13: **Reviewing the Situation** takes a look at situation comedy which fell into several different categories: 1) the family in the home, 2) a group of unrelated characters involved in a business or profession, and 3) a central character without roots. (30:00)

*...and for more
good listening...*

ART HELLYER SHOW-- Music of the big bands and the big singers with lots of knowledgeable commentary and fun from one of radio's legendary personalities, **now in his 50th year on the air!** *WJOL, 1340 AM, Saturday, 9 am-1 pm; Sunday, 2-6 pm.*

DICK LAWRENCE REVUE-- A treasure trove of rare and vintage recordings with spoken memories from the never to be forgotten past. *WNIB, 97.1 FM, Saturday, 8-9 pm.*

JAZZ FORUM-- Chicago's foremost jazz authority, Dick Buckley, presents an entertaining and enlightening program of great music by noted jazz musicians. *WBEZ, 91.5 FM, Monday thru Thursday, 8:30-9:30 pm; Sunday 1-4 pm.*

REMEMBER WHEN-- Host Don Corey calls this his "four-hour nostalgia fest" with the emphasis on old time radio musical and variety shows, plus show tunes and interviews. *WAIT, 850 AM, Sunday, noon-4 pm.*

WHEN RADIO WAS-- Carl Amari hosts weekend editions of the popular series which features old time radio broadcasts and interviews. *WMAQ, 670 AM, Saturday and Sunday, 10pm-midnight.*

"When Radio Was" -- WMAQ-AM 670

Monday thru Friday Midnight - 1 am Host Stan Freberg

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
August, 1996 Schedule				
			1 Our Miss Brooks Pt 2 Dragnet	2 Cavalcade of America Unsolved Mysteries
5 Green Hornet A Date With Judy Pt 1	6 A Date With Judy Pt 2 Suspense	7 Broadway is My Beat Abbott & Costello Pt 1	8 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Gangbusters	9 Lone Ranger Vic and Sade
12 The Whistler Burns and Allen Pt 1	13 Burns and Allen Pt 2 Screen Guild Theatre	14 Frontier Gentleman Life of Riley Pt 1	15 Life of Riley Pt 2 The Shadow	16 Jack Benny Strange Dr. Weird
19 Six Shooter Stan Freberg # 13 Pt 1	20 Stan Freberg # 13 Pt 2 Sain Spade	21 Gunsmoke Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	22 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Box Thirteen	23 Suspense Lum and Abner
26 Lone Ranger Fibber McGee Pt 1	27 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Sgt Preston of the Yukon	28 Mr Keen, Tracer Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	29 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 Tales of Texas Rangers	30 The Shadow The Bickersons
September, 1996 Schedule				
2 Green Hornet Abbott & Costello Pt 1	3 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Boston Blackie	4 Crime Photographer Burns and Allen Pt 1	5 Burns and Allen Pt 2 Mysterious Traveler	6 Suspense Unsolved Mysteries
9 Lone Ranger Johnny Dollar Pt 1/5	10 Jack Benny Johnny Dollar Pt 2/5	11 The Shadow Johnny Dollar Pt 3/5	12 Six Shooter Johnny Dollar Pt 4/5	13 Dragnet Johnny Dollar Pt 5/5
16 Gangbusters Fibber McGee Pt 1	17 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Box Thirteen	18 Tales of Texas Rangers Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	19 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 Stan Freberg # 14	20 The Whistler Vic and Sade
23 Lone Ranger Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	24 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Screen Guild Players	25 The Shadow Life of Riley Pt 1	26 Life of Riley Pt 2 Sgt Preston of the Yukon	27 Suspense Lum and Abner
30 Philip Marlowe Duffy's Tavern Pt 1				

ALL FOR TEN CENTS AND A BOX TOP

BY ED KNAPP

The quiet of the front room parlor was broken by the crackle of a radio speaker. Like any red-blooded ten year old, I rushed home from school to turn on the set. A time to open my ears and mind to a parade of exciting fifteen minute adventure programs. Among my favorites: *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*; *Radio's Orphan Annie*; *Tom Mix*; *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*; *Dick Tracy* and *Chandu the Magician*.

Radio's exhilarating tales offered youth the ideal opportunity to exercise keen imaginations. This in large part played in the consummate success of the perennial on-going episodes. The "sound" stirring action shows held high favor with depression era children. I had developed a close comradeship with my daily airwaves friends. They were as familiar as the kid down the block who I played marbles with every spring. Tuning-in I enjoyed putting faces on the programs' characters, faces I felt went with the voices I heard. This mind game permitted me to customize the adventure "pictures" as I wanted them, right down to the very last detail.

There was yet another reason I was a devoted radio adventurer listener. The attraction to the different serials' enchanting giveaways offered on occasion by the show sponsors. Radio show sponsors, looking to spur sales, found the airwaves route most advantageous. Their action show products were a "natural" for kids: chocolate flavored drinks, chewing gum,

Edwin S. Knapp of Three Rivers, Michigan is a retired professional photographer who spends his free time writing and collecting.

malted milk tablets, and cereal, cereal, cereal.

Also, the dispensing of direct mailed radio premiums gave the sponsor a handle on the number of children listening in. These youth-designed radio treasures included handsome gold decoder pins, pocket telescopes and compasses, rocket pistols, gold rings (one size fits all) with a secret compartment, signal whistles, and drinking mugs, most for a mere ten cents and a box top.

These attractive offers were hawked by a most influential sounding radio announcer towards his audience of attentive charges. "Well, boys and girls, do I have some exciting news for you tonight. Have a pencil and paper ready. You won't want to miss out. I'll tell you the news at the end of tonight's exciting adventure. But now..."

I awaited the big announcement with anticipation, but had an inkling of the surprise. A hint of the surprise had been tactfully worked into the body of the program a good week before. My radio friends had ventured into glowing descriptions of the item, had used it, and even spoke aloud, "I'll bet every boy and girl would like to own one of these." The handwriting almost appeared on the lighted radio dial!

Anyway, on the big night the offer became a reality. At the end of the story's daily cliffhanger, the velvet-toned announcer stepped before the microphone. "Now, boys and girls, it's time for the surprise announcement I promised." In glowing, honey-filled remarks he described the merit and beauty of the new giveaway. An oratory worthy of promoting the Hope Diamond.

The variety of comely premiums in-



JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY offered this HIKE-O-METER in 1935. It was Jack's most popular premium. Today, in mint condition, it is valued at about \$35.

cluded a red Straight-Shooter's bandana, mysterious rings that glowed in the dark, pictures of the radio cast, a genuine shark's tooth, code book, a shiny gold detective's badge. Whatever the treasure was, like listening to the radio show daily, it became an integral part of me. Some of the enthusiasm came from the very fact that the giveaway had actually been a part of the adventure. Sending in ten cents and a box top would soon put the treasure in my grasp. This helped to fortify the belief in my mind that the adventure was real; as real as the item which soon would be in my hand.

Often the giveaway opened the door to being a member of a club or secret society, making me feel that I was "in." At the time it seemed like the most important thing in my life... to belong. There was a certain esteem connected with being "in." Much as the announcer expressed it, "Be the envy of your neighborhood and friends by be-

ing the first kid on your block to own one of these beauties." The announcer's sales pitch was ecstatic with a barrage of descriptive adjectives related to its beauty, performance and the necessity of owning it. Fact is, in looking back, I can't recall such an impassioned sales talk in all my life. And that includes the times I bought a boat, a car, a house, or a twenty-acre farm.

Beside the radio premium offers for decoders, rings, secret society manuals, club pins, and all manner of gadgets, on occasion the sponsor would give a large, fold-out, full color map. The beautiful detailed art piece accurately showed the locales where our afternoon radio friends traveled in their thundering adventures, at home or around the world. I was able to use the map effectively, tracing the whereabouts of my heroes journeys through swamps, remote islands, dense jungles, to hidden cities or a South Seas treasure hunt. The beautiful scaled document added further

TEN CENTS AND A BOX TOP

credibility to the realism of those quarter-hour broadcasts.

My order went forth promptly, in response to the radio announcer's advice: "Don't delay in sending in your order. If you don't have our sponsor's product at home, ask your mother to get some at the grocer's tomorrow. Send in your box top and ten cents to this post office address.... Once these premiums are gone, there will be no more. You will want to be a member to be on the inside of the secret codes, club handshakes, and secret signs. Do it today." I did.

A few days after I sent for the radio treasure, my passion for its arrival became an obsession. As I recall, the response took a good month. However, every day I awaited the postman's steps at our door. Impatiently I waited with growing anticipation as the days and weeks slipped away. With

the delay and the compelling words of the radio announcer for the premium echoing in my ear, the size and importance of the highly acclaimed article grew ever bigger in my youthful mind.

By the time the mailman did arrive with the parcel, a tiny letter-size envelope, I felt temporarily let down. I got to expecting a large parcel to be delivered by a truck that took two husky men to unload it at my door. Overdue anticipation has a way of distorting reality with children as in adults, but even more so. Once I got over the initial disappointment at its smallness, I became as happy as a boy with a new puppy.

Through my close, faithful affiliation with the afternoon radio adventure programs, I became a Straight Shooter, Secret Society regular, Squadron of Peace member, and a member of the Lone Wolf Tribe, the Solar Scouts, and the Secret Squadron.

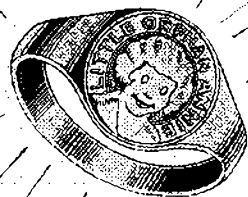
Those were some of the most exciting days of youth for any that are sixty years

RADIO ORPHAN ANNIE'S RING

Shines Like Gold!

FITS YOU AUTOMATICALLY!

Hurry! Limited Supply Only—Mail Coupon Now!



BOYS, GIRLS—be sure you own and wear an Orphan Annie ring just like all her special friends do! It's like the ring Annie wears on her best-love radio adventures! It's a beautiful, Mack-of-gold gold-colored metal! It's Annie's picture and name raised

up on the inside! A big ring—just like a regular high school class ring, so nobody can miss you! Best of all, it's an *automatic-fits* ring—fits your finger right as soon as you get it! Simply Fill In This Coupon Below. Attach all of the thin round aluminum seal

from underneath the lid of a can of Ovaltine and mail it in, together with six 1¢ postage stamps to: The Whorley Company, Dept. 417, 180 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. *Hurry! Limited Supply Only! Mail Coupon Now!*

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE's very first ring offer was this 1934 "one-size-fits-all" ring, available for "the thin round aluminum seal from underneath the lid of a can of Ovaltine and four cents in stamps." Today the ring, in mint condition, is valued at more than \$65.00.

HOW TELEVISION FOUND ME

BY ROBERT G. KEMPER

I was thirteen in 1948, living in the Los Angeles area, when television first discovered me.

One Friday night a bunch of boy friends -- powerful peers all -- had gone to the Fox Theatre in Redondo Beach for a movie. It could have been a Humphrey Bogart, an Alan Ladd or a John Wayne; they were all well-established in the Kemper Academy Award Book. I do not remember which one it might have been. What I do remember is that my parents were supposed to pick us up at 9 p.m. and it was only 8:30 when we got out. Thirteen-year-olds do not stand and wait. We started down the street towards a sporting goods store we knew and frequented. But we never arrived there.

On the way, we stopped to look in the window of another store and we saw magic.

It was television.

The store owner had rigged up an on-the-street speaker and tuned a television set to Channel 5, KTLA. It was, of course, black and white and sort of flickering at that. For me and television, it was love at first sight.

I cannot be sure what was being broadcast on that particular night, but I think it was wrestling from the Olympic Auditorium. Wrestling was representative of television programming in 1948. (The big star of the early wrestling craze in Los Angeles television was an aging Adonis known as "Gorgeous George." He was preceded into the ring not by a second with a towel over his sweaty T-shirt, but by a butler in a

luxedo who went into the ring to spray perfume before his master's entry.)

That was my first, but not the only, early encounter with television.

As a teen-in-need of spending money I offered my services as a baby-sitter. I was best as a sitter when the children were in bed and I was there in case one would wake up during the early evening hours. It was easy money. But there was one home where I would have donated my services without charge. They had a television set *in their home!* I spent the evening *watching* instead of *just listening* to the Los Angeles Angels toiling in the Triple A Pacific Coast League of that day. It blew my mind. I could sit in the dark on a sofa, munching chips and Tootsie Rolls watching the baseball pros. (I fully expected to become one of them as soon as a scout discovered me.)

Another early remembrance of television was visiting a friend who had a set in his home. The screen on this RCA model was only three inches in diameter while the furniture that surrounded the screen was measured in feet. Not to worry about that small screen. My friend's family had also purchased a glass-filled bubble which they placed in front of the little screen and we watched a picture through the magnifier about twelve inches in diameter. This innovative family later adapted this same TV set for color. They purchased a slab of see-through plastic; at the top was red, the middle was clear and the bottom was green as grass -- perpetually. I also was quick to catch on that this new technological wonder -- television -- had many technological experiments and developments to go.

What an unforgettable impression this made on me! My life would never be the

Bob Kemper, Senior Minister of the First Congregational Church, Western Springs, Illinois is a fan of both radio and TV.



same. I had no idea then that television would eventually kill my first entertainment love, radio.

In the late '40s we moved back to the Midwest, to Princeton, Illinois. I was still a hapless teenager, but I had a leg up on most of my peers. I had actually seen television. There was a bar in town that offered television coverage of the 1949 World Series and they did a good business, but I was still one of the few teens in all of Princeton who had actually seen television.

I organized a campaign to badger my folks into buying us a TV set. It would be one of the first in Princeton, and I was sure to surge in popularity with my peers — boys *and* girls— if my house had a personal TV set. The campaign did not meet with much resistance; my folks wanted a TV, too. The big obstacle was cost. Princeton was 100 miles from Chicago TV stations and 80 miles from TV stations in

the Quad Cities. For reasons of geography, then, the cost of television reception in Princeton, Illinois was not just the cost of the set but an antenna installation up on the roof as well. I mean an antenna that would withstand lightning bolts, sporadic winds and other natural phenomena of the prairies. Also, the antenna itself needed to turn east to Chicago and west to the Quad Cities. And, it had to be fairly high in the air.

Foresighted technicians saw a big future in Princeton. In no time a thriving business developed. Its primary purpose was to install TV antennas and soon a whole new architectural feature —horizontal and vertical rods— emerged alongside chimneys on houses all over town. But we were the first!

The cost of the twelve inch Admiral television set and its installation with a rotor antenna was \$300. My dad, bless him, took out a loan from the bank. We began monthly payments, premiums for being pioneers in the television audience. This purchase was in the magnitude of a used car!

A word about the rotor needed for distant signal reception for areas like Princeton. Because tuning in a station was a complicated process, many set owners out in the fringes purchased *TV Guide*. We would look up a time, not necessarily a program, in the guide and see what shows were available at a given time. If the program was a network show, the magazine might identify it as Channel 5 in Davenport and Channel 5 in Chicago. Both were NBC affiliates. However, in the early days that was only true for a very small part of the day. If you turned to Channel 2 you would get an unclear picture. The word "ghost" was used to cover many different problems. The most common cause of a poor picture was that two different stations were using the same channel and sort of

HOW TELEVISION FOUND ME

"fighting" each other for supremacy. The cure for this was to turn the rotor setting. That caused the antenna up on the roof to move toward the position you selected inside. Usually the picture improved immediately. Sometimes, especially late at night, there would be freak transmission. We often received a Milwaukee or a Green Bay station. Once in a while we would see call letters from Detroit or Cleveland. My world was enlarging!

Gradually, as television spread, we spoke less of *television* but more of TV. It became a word, pronounced *tee-vee*. Local newspapers published complete program listings for all the stations and it may come as a surprise to our younger generations that TV programming did not last 24 hours a day. It did not even continue much past ten o'clock at night.

There comes a point where interest in technology shifts and fades to interest in programming. In talking about the early days of television programming, I feel now like I felt as a small child hearing my father and uncles talking about the past wonders of the Model T automobile. That is, it seems strange that we could have been so enchanted by the content of early TV programming. But we were!

Marshall McLuhan, the media philosopher, stated that the content of a new medium is the content of an old medium. That was never more clearly illustrated than in early television.

Television was words and pictures. The source of early programming was words from radio and pictures from the movies. Add sports to this mix and you have about 90 per cent of the original programming on TV.

The *Arthur Godfrey Program* is an example of the transition from radio to television. The old redhead had an enormously

popular network radio show. For TV Godfrey continued to do his radio show as he always had, but he allowed cameras to transmit the pictures that accompanied the sound of his radio program. This simulcast period did not last forever, and Godfrey became a much larger personality by hosting *Talent Scouts* and *Arthur Godfrey and his Friends*.

Hopalong Cassidy movies and other old films became standard television fare in the early days, but eventually some authentic *television* programming emerged.

The decade of the fifties was a golden age of experimentation and innovation. I remember such non-radio, non-movie programs such as *Howdy Doody Time* for children, *What's My Line?* for game players, and late-night variety shows like *Broadway Open House* (with Jerry Lester and Dagmar). A new genre of visual entertainment was being forged in those golden days.

Some performers like Ernie Kovacs really seemed to grasp the nature of the new medium. Others, such as Milton Berle, rode a crest of popularity essentially because they were there. Sid Caesar and Jackie Gleason created really novel programming. Old vaudevillians like Phil Silvers and Ed Wynn found a new lease on their performing lives, finding formats to recycle some of their best routines.

My generation may be the most fortunate. We are essentially tri-media people. We can hear a story on radio; we can see a story in the movies; we can see and hear stories on television.

Television began as a technical wonder, became entertainment, and has yet to realize its full potential as a teacher. But it is not over. Television keeps chasing me. It is not just that I have become a slower runner, though I am. It is that I have grown accustomed to its face.

I like it. ■

Ken Alexander Remembers . . .

Those Old Records



The sight of a 78-r.p.m. record spinning on a turntable can be somewhat startling today to one who is accustomed to seeing LPs lazily revolving at only 33 1/3 revolutions per minute. By comparison, the old 78s whirled at what seemed a dizzying speed; you might wonder how the needle managed to stay in the groove.

But in those days before the advent of television, VCRs, and personal computers, radio and records were the principal means of home entertainment. In hundreds of radio stations, thousands of jukeboxes, and millions of homes, records spun at 78 r.p.m. And the needle stayed in the groove.

It seems that almost every household had a record player of some kind. People used records to listen to and dance to. Those old records played a large role in American life; several figures of speech were inspired by the 78-r.p.m. disc: When young people meant to convey the thought that a thing was pleasing, exciting, or deeply satisfying, they would use the slang expression "in the groove"; sometimes they would simply say "groovy."

The term "disc jockey" was coined to describe a radio personality who played records on the air.

If a person kept repeating the same thought over and over, we might say that he sounded "like a broken record."

Of a particularly garrulous person, we might suggest that he had been "vaccinated with a phonograph needle."

The first records I ever saw were a few ten-inch 78s that my father had. They were popular songs of the day, the time being the early 1930s. There were two songs from the Jerome Kern musical *The Cat and the Fiddle*: "She Didn't Say Yes" and "The Night Was Made For Love." There were two from the show *Flying Colors*: "A Shine On Your Shoes" and "Louisiana Hayride." From the movie musical *Forty-Second Street* came the song "Shuffle Off To Buffalo." Other songs in my dad's collection were "River, Stay 'Way From My Door" and "Down Beside a Dutch Canal."

I always found it exciting when my dad would open the top of our RCA radio-phonograph combination to put on a record, although I never was allowed to handle the discs: the records were made of shellac and were fragile.

There were several ways one of those records might break when dropped. It might shatter into several pieces, in which case it would be a total loss.

The record might develop a crack, a straight line running from the edge almost to the center hole. These records could still be played, but a click would be heard at each revolution. Or, sometimes the needle

THOSE OLD RECORDS

would stick in the groove and play the same phrase over and over, giving rise to the "broken record" expression.

In some cases, a record would hit the floor in such a way that a chip would break off the edge. Such a record looked as though someone had taken a bite out of it. It could be played, except for the first few seconds.

Then there were records that would break right in half.

Generally, "pop" songs were recorded on ten-inch discs. Twelve-inch records usually held classical or semi-classical music.

Most of the records had music recorded on both sides. A few, though, were single-face records; one side was perfectly smooth, with no label and no grooves.

RCA Victor and Columbia were big names, along with Okeh, Brunswick, Bluebird, and Decca. Capitol came along in the '40s.

Often, on the label just below the song title, a word would appear in parentheses describing the rhythm of the song: Waltz, March, One-Step, or Fox Trot.

The most common type of phonograph needle was the plain steel needle. These had to be changed after several plays.

Osmium-tipped needles were harder than the steel; their tips would remain smooth considerably longer.

Next came the sapphire tip, harder than osmium. They were good for about 40 hours.

The longest-lasting needle was the diamond. These were also the most expensive, but they would give a few hundred hours of play.

The diamond and sapphire needles were called "permanent," but, as one record manufacture warned, "There is no such thing as a permanent needle."

As long as the tip remained rounded and smooth, it would wear the record only minimally; when it developed flat spots and sharp edges, it would begin to gouge the record.

In the late '40s, after I had acquired my own phonograph and had begun buying records, I became converted to a brand of needles called Kakti. These were actually cactus needles, and their main advantage was that, being softer than the material the records were made of, the needle would wear out before the record.

Kakti needles had to be changed after every few record sides, but I found them to be kinder to my records than were the metal or jewel tips. Another advantage was that, being much softer than conventional needles, they produced less surface noise.

The company that produced Kakti needles made a sharpener for use with them. With one of these gadgets, it was not necessary to discard a needle when its point became dull; you would sharpen it. You would insert the needle into a tiny chuck and rotate it against an abrasive disc at the proper angle to create a sharp tip of the correct radius.

I bought one of these sharpeners and made good use of it. Indeed, frugal soul that I am, I used to sharpen my needles at both ends.

You've often seen the RCA Victor logo of Nipper the dog recognizing "His Master's Voice" as it emanated from the horn of an ancient phonograph. Although I don't go back quite that far, I do remember record players not too far removed from those.

These machines used no electricity; they reproduced the sound on the record by acoustical means like the one on the RCA logo, although the horn was concealed inside the cabinet. There was, of course, no volume control.

The motor in these machines was spring-

wound, and, while a winding would last quite a while, it would not last forever. Sometimes, while a record was playing, the motor would begin to run down and the music would get slower and slower while the pitch got lower and lower. You could wind up the machine as it played, and the music would get back up to speed.

"There were always listening booths where customers could audition a record before deciding whether to buy it."

My grandparents had some records that had been made in the '20s and 'teens. These had been recorded acoustically; that is, instead of using microphones and amplifiers, the singers and musicians had stood in front of a large recording horn and sung and played into it.

I can recall a few of those old recordings: "Three O'clock in the Morning" by the Paul Whiteman orchestra was one. "Hot Lips" by the Ted Lewis band was another. Billy Murray sang a couple of novelty songs on one of the records: "Profiteering Blues" and "When You Drop Off at Cairo, Illinois."

One of the records must have been made soon after World War One: It was a song called "Don't Let Us Sing Anymore About War (Just Let Us Sing of Love)" and it was sung by Harry Lauder.

There was also a twelve-inch Black Label RCA Victor record of "Poet and Peasant Overture" by the Sousa Band.

RCA used to call their phonograph the "Victrola"; it was a registered trademark. But just as many people call a bandage a Band-Aid whether or not it is a product of Johnson & Johnson, or call any adhesive cellophane tape Scotch tape whether or not 3M Company made it, many people in

those days referred to any phonograph as a Victrola.

It was in the mid-1940s, when I was in high school, that I began buying records. My taste ran to Bing Crosby then, but I soon became hooked on classics.

My first phonograph was a table model Majestic with an automatic record changer, and it gave me untold pleasure.

The maximum playing time on a twelve-inch record side was a little more than four minutes. Thus, if you were listening to an overture, for example, the orchestra would suddenly stop playing. You would have to rise, walk over to the record player, and turn the record over to hear the conclusion.

While listening to a symphony, you might have to jump up and turn over—or change—the record a dozen times or more.

While the automatic record changer obviated the need for jumping up, it did not eliminate the interruptions of the music. At the end of each record side—about every four minutes—the music would abruptly stop, often in the middle of a movement.

SKRRRITCH, the needle would track into the leadout groove.... CLACK, the tone arm would trip the changer mechanism.... PLOP, the next record would fall on top of the one just finished, and.... SHHHHHH, the needle would settle into the lead-in groove. Then the music would resume—for another four minutes.

Surely this was not what Beethoven intended.

Record makers used to issue their multiple-record sets, or albums, in two formats: manual sequence and automatic sequence. Take, for instance, a four-record set. For people who had to change the records manually, the sides were arranged this way: The first record had Sides 1 and 2; the second, Sides 3 & 4; the third, Sides 5 & 6; and the fourth, Sides 7 & 8.

People who owned record changers would buy the album in automatic se-

THOSE OLD RECORDS

quence: One record had Sides 1 & 8; one had Sides 2 & 7; one had 3 & 6; and one had 4 & 5. Thus, Sides 1 through 4 would play in order. Then you would simply turn over the stack of records and reload the changer, and Sides 5 through 8 would play in sequence.

Record stores were not the mammoth emporiums that exist today. There were fewer labels and there was much less product available in those days. And even though 78s occupied more space for a given amount of music than later types of recordings, the stores didn't need to be enormous.

Albums were often displayed around the store, the album covers being adorned with art work that might attract a buyer.

The single records had no art work; they were enclosed in sleeves of brown paper with the manufacturer's name printed on them. On both sides of the sleeve was a large round hole exposing the record label. Single records were kept, filed by label and catalog number, on shelves behind the counter.

There were always listening booths — the larger the store, the more booths — where customers could audition a record before deciding whether to buy it.

I had my favorite record shops, of course. In my neighborhood there was Emergency Radio Service, at 4439 W. Madison Street. This was a shop that sold and repaired radios and phonographs, but it had an excellent record department with wonderful people behind the counter. A few blocks east on Madison, near Karlov, was Garrick's Music Shop.

Downtown there was a Hudson-Ross store on Madison near LaSalle. Lishon's was over on Washington. Lyon & Healy, on Wabash, sold records — and everything musical, for that matter.

At 214 S. Wabash was a large record store called Rol's, which later became Rose records and retained that name until last year, when Rose was acquired by Tower Records.

There was a shop downtown which handled only classical records. It was, as I recall, on Michigan Avenue just south of Orchestra Hall, and the name of the shop was Adam Schaaf. A dignified elderly gentleman could be found behind the counter; I always felt that he must be Mr. Schaaf.

In the late '40s, some of the manufacturers began pressing records of vinyl ("vinylite" it was called in those days) as well as shellac. A twelve-inch vinyl pressing sold for two dollars, as opposed to a dollar for a shellac pressing. Being made of softer material, the vinyl discs produced less surface noise. They also reproduced high frequencies better than their shellac counterparts. Another important advantage was they were "unbreakable."

RCA's vinyl records were translucent and cherry red; Columbia's were opaque and black.

Then came Columbia's long-playing record (the LP) and RCA's seven-inch 45-r.p.m. disc with the large center hole and the ensuing "War of the Speeds" and the era of the 3-speed changer. The 78-r.p.m. record was the loser, of course, in the "War of the Speeds" and the LP and 45 were the victors.

As the decades passed, and technology advanced, other formats came and went. Music became available on reel-to-reel tape — first monaural, then stereophonic. Then stereo records appeared on the market. Then came four-track stereo tapes, quadraphonic records, and eight-track tapes, and cassette tapes. Then the digital compact disc was developed.

Today you can place a CD in the machine, push a couple of buttons, and hear

up to an hour and a quarter — uninterrupted — of your favorite music. The quality of reproduction is amazing. You can hear the selections on the disc in the order of your choice. You'll hear no ticks, pops, clicks, scratches, or tape hiss; the only sounds to come off the disc are the sounds the recording microphones heard.

There is no needle to change because there is no needle — the groove is traced by a laser beam. Therefore, CDs never wear out. Compact discs are not fragile, and they take up little space.

And you don't have to wind up the motor.

The digital compact disc certainly is a far cry from the 78-r.p.m. records of the early part of the century.

In retrospect, it may seem that the playing of those old records was fraught with annoyances and inconveniences. But please bear in mind that in those days the records, and the machines on which we played them, were what today we would call state-of-the-art; there was no better way known to record and reproduce sound.

If there were inconveniences involved, we ignored them. There was great music in the grooves of those old 78s, and the music made it all worthwhile.

There must have been billions of 78s produced, and there are still some around. Every so often, someone will discover a box of them in the attic or basement of a home of a relative who has died. He will try either to sell them or to give them away. It's quite a trove: Caruso, Louis Armstrong, Toscanini, Glenn Miller, Feuermann, Al Jolson, Woody Guthrie, Stokowski. But no one shows much interest and the records are finally put out with the trash. It's true that hardly anyone has the equipment to play 78s these days; still, as with any relic of a bygone era, it is sad to see those old records destroyed. In their day, they were treasures. ■



Our Readers Write

WE GET LETTERS

OMAHA, NEBRASKA— It doesn't seem possible that it is time to renew my two-year subscription to *Nostalgia Digest*. Being born in 1925, there isn't any article in your magazine that I don't remember. It is great reminiscing about the old days of radio, big bands, movies, streetcars, and other early 20th Century ways. I am a little disappointed that you are not hosting your *Old Time Radio Classics* that was heard on WBBM. Stan Freberg is OK on WMAQ, but I don't get WMAQ as well as WBBM here in Omaha. One favor I would like to ask: could you publish the Saturday and Sunday lineup on WMAQ from 10 pm to Midnight? — **ROBERT W. NORDAHL**

(ED. NOTE)— Thanks for renewing your subscription. At the present time, the advance lineup for Carl Amari's weekend editions of "When Radio Was" is not available. We will be delighted to add that program material to our listings if and when it does become available.)

CICERO, IL— Thank you so much for bringing old time radio into my life. For over 20 years now you've been a good friend, even though we've only spoken on the phone for a few minutes. I really enjoy Saturday afternoons. Everything is planned around *Those Were The Days*. My husband and I miss you Monday thru Friday and when he works on Saturday I have to tape the show for him. — **NANCY LADA**

OMAHA, NEBRASKA— The *Nostalgia Digest* is an outstanding publication, especially for those of us who missed out on the Golden Age of Radio. Keep up the good work. — **MICHAEL GIORGIO**

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN— I just received your June-July issue. I found it most interesting. What impressed me most were the articles about 1936, especially "It Was A Very Good Year" by Bob Kolososki. He was posing the theory of what might have happened if, for some cosmic reason, 1935 went right into 1937, completely bypassing 1936. He wondered what the effect might



MORE LETTERS

have been on 1996. For me, personally, it would have had a dramatic effect. If 1936 had not existed I would not be writing this letter. I was born October 12, 1936. Very interesting to think about, but then had 1936 not existed I would not be here to think about anything. I am happy that 1936 did happen and that I am here to listen to old time radio and read the *Nostalgia Digest*. I am a charter member of the Milwaukee Area Radio Enthusiasts. We are in our 21st year. We have taken a couple of trips to visit the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago and we enjoyed ourselves. —**RON SAYLES**

CHICAGO— Thank you so much for the 1949 newscast (4-20-49, with John Holtman, WMAQ, Chicago, sponsored by Shell Oil Co.) that included an interview with my dad, Sam "Shell" Bell. Dad has been gone 28 years now, so it was an incredible experience to hear his voice again. In 1949, the gas station was at 47th & Lake Park. In urban renewal of Hyde Park in 1965, the station was moved to 52nd & Lake Park. The family still owns the property, but the station is leased out. I ran it for about two years after my dad died in 1968, but he was considered the "Mayor" of Hyde Park in his day. My sister and I want to thank you for bringing back such wonderful memories. —**DENNIS A. BELL**

INGLESIDE, IL— I enjoyed the article by William Kiddle in the June-July issue ("Chicago Radio in the Spring of 1936"). I tried to make up a weekly schedule of programs and their times, but there are many blank spots. I remember the TV schedule you published some time ago and was wondering if you would include a radio programming guide also. It could be a real one from a Chicago paper or a composite. My radio memories are from the early forties to the mid-fifties. I always try to schedule my Saturdays around your programs. —**ALLAN MEYER**

CHICAGO— Congratulations —twice— for your 26th year on the airwaves and 20

years of the grand and glorious Metro Golden Memories Shop. Two marvelous accomplishments that have delighted and enriched fans of radio and films for two decades and more. Long may you reign supreme! —**ROBERT ROSTERMAN**

HOMEWOOD, IL— As a longtime listener, thanks for all the enjoyable Saturday afternoons you have provided. Your comment about subscribing actually being an opportunity to "sponsor" a program convinced me to call and sign up. I really enjoyed your 50 years ago remembrance of World War II as did my teenage children. Thanks for the memories. —**JOE DARGUZAS**

BERWYN, IL— Thanks very much for giving us "good" entertainment. I've listened to your show through my "terrible teens" and now am approaching the second anniversary of my 39th birthday. Unfortunately, I only started taping about 15 years ago, but in the mean time have amassed a nice collection of shows (many of which go on vacation to the North Woods with us -- it's nice NOT to have TV for a week. —**JOAN PIOTROWSKI**

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL— Little did I realize when I sent a gift subscription for *Nostalgia Digest* to Ed Knapp of Three Rivers, Michigan, that I'd soon see a couple of his articles in your publication. I only knew what an old time radio enthusiast he is and that he hadn't heard about your magazine. We were high school classmates, and at our 50th reunion year in 1983 he played excerpts from several popular radio shows of "our era." He also played for us a portion of a WLS Barn Dance program featuring another of our classmates, Hal Brooks, now deceased. I believe Hal appeared on the Barn Dance on more than one occasion. While I don't remember how old he was at the time, I do recall how proud the people of Three Rivers were of this little boy with the big voice.

Your coverage of World War II was fantastic. Having lived through that period, it brought back many memories and a few years. It was good to reflect on that part of our lives and be thankful for the outcome of that war. Enclosed is my check for renewal of the *Digest*. I don't want to miss a single issue. I plan my Saturday afternoons so I

can tune in to all those great memories!

Thanks. — REVA RENNIE

(ED. NOTE— Hope you'll enjoy another of Ed Knapp's articles on page 26.)

CRYSTAL LAKE, IL— Radio has been a very special part of my life. My earliest recollection of radio goes back to the early '30s. What I remember most vividly is the commercial for Nelson Brothers' Furniture Store. Ken Alexander is just a kid compared to me. I was born about five weeks before the Great Depression. I do remember the things Ken does.

He mentioned Mars Candy Company. The factory was (and is) located on Oak Park Avenue, a few blocks north of North Avenue. My mother and some of her friends got together a group and we toured the Mars factory. After the tour we were given a large box of each kind of candy Mars made. That was a big deal for a six year old. In the late '40s the brother of a friend worked for Mars and got us tickets for "Curtain Time." Five couples went to the NBC studios in the Merchandise Mart. It was a great evening.

Ken remembered retail stores. One he didn't mention was Bear Brothers and Prody at the southeast corner of Pulaski (Crawford) and Madison. After the war Goldblatt Brothers built a store at that location. Bear Brothers was where all of us Catholic school kids had to buy our uniforms and, especially, our white First Communion suits with knickers.

There were gangs in the '40s, but they were unofficial. The high school kids hung out at places like the Esquire Ice Cream Parlor at Austin and Madison, or Central and Madison.

In Oak Park we had places for teens to hang out. On Friday night Oak Park High opened up the girls' gym for the "Gym Jam." A playground fieldhouse on Oak Park's South Side had "Huddle Dances" on the weekends. During the summer the Unity Church opened the "Anchor Inn" every night. Another church had "Coke Dances" after Oak Park's Saturday football games.

On Friday nights all of us Catholics would head for something to eat, after midnight, because we could not eat meat on Friday in those days. Of course everybody, Catholic or not, wanted to eat a late night snack. One of the favorite spots was Russell's Bar-B-Que on Thatcher Avenue, just north of

North Avenue (it's still there!). The place was always crowded around midnight on weekends.

My teen years were very busy. My parents hardly saw me between Friday morning and Sunday evening. My friends and I were always doing something and were never in trouble. No dope, no booze, no beer. We were into Coke... and Pepsi, too!

Do you realize how much radio I missed in my life? In the '30s I was in bed early, but heard afternoon adventure shows. In the '40s, no radio until homework was finished. In the late '40s I found out about girls and the effect music had on them. Listened to the big band remotes. Used to go to O'Henry's Ballroom and the Melody Mill dancing. Took my special date — now my wife — to the Blackhawk, the Beach Walk, the Empre Room and the Boulevard Room. You could get by for very few dollars in those days. We even danced to Freddy Martin's music in St. Louis at the Chase Hotel Roof.

Little time for radio in those days. Then came television. Now, collecting radio shows keeps me off the streets and is fun. I'm hearing a lot of the shows for the first time. Swapping radio programs with other collectors makes my collection grow and is a way to make new friends. There are other nuts in this world besides me. I am running out of space for my tapes.

Each October my wife and I head for Fort Myers, Florida for five or six months. We drive between here and there. My cassettes of radio make the miles fly by. Radio is bad in Florida. —FRANK A. MC GURN, JR.

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

The real lawyers and the people who play them on television got together for a lively discussion at the Museum one evening last Spring. The event was a joint effort between the Museum and the American Bar Association.

Media critic and author Gary Deeb led the conversation between the real lawyers: Kim Askew, a Dallas attorney; David Ray Papke, author and professor at Indiana University; and Charles R. Rosenberg, practicing attorney and technical advisor on television law dramas: "The Paper Chase" and "L.A. Law."

The fictional side was represented by actress Diana Muldar, who portrayed the hard-nosed attorney Rosalind Shays on "L.A. Law" and appeared on many early television law dramas such as "Owen Marshall," "The Bold Ones," and "Ironside." In addition, TV producer Barney Rosenzweig talked about his popular series "Cagney and Lacey" and "The Trials of Rosie O'Neill," both starring his wife, actress Sharon Gless.

They talked a lot about the public's perception of the courtroom as depicted on television vs. reality. The real lawyers often have their hands full in the real courtroom in dealing with the public's TV-influenced expectations. Most of us have gleaned our images of the law from watch-

ing courtroom dramas over the years — everything from "Perry Mason" to "L.A. Law" to "Murder One," not to mention the O. J. trial. The panel gave us a very good look at how art imitates life or life imitates art. Take your choice.

If you weren't part of the audience for this event, you can stop by the Museum Archives and take a look at the tape.

SPEAKING OF THE ARCHIVES, director Cary O'Dell is bragging about some newly arrived TV shows for you to enjoy. Among them are some TV "firsts," like the first "This Old House" with Bob Villa from 1979.

From 1953, it's the first time Jerry Lewis appeared for Muscular Distrophy. It's an hour-long special with his partner Dean Martin, Eddie Cantor, Anna Maria Albergheggi and Jane Wyman.

Another first features Dan Rowan and Dick Martin in the special that launched their wacky "Laugh-In" series.

RADIO HALL OF FAME UPDATE: The ballots are in, the tabulation is underway and the 1996 Inductees will be announced by mid-August.

The winners will be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame during an all-star gala hosted by broadcaster Casey Casem on Sunday, October 27. For ticket information, call 1-800/860-9559.

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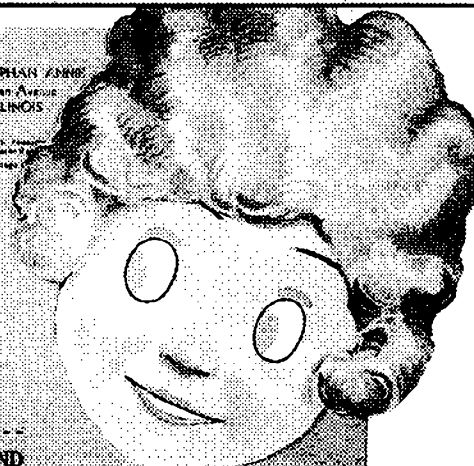
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was a popular radio premium in 1933. Read "All For Ten Cents and a Box Top" by Ed Knapp. Page 26.

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