

# RADIO VARIETIES

APRIL — 1941

TEN CENTS

## THE WLS RANGERS



# The Red-Headed Bluebird



DICK TODD

**DICK TODD** is one singer whose theme song might well be "South Of The Border". A native Canadian, he has gained well deserved fame as one of the best radio vocalists in the United States as well as one of its top recording artists.

He began singing August 5 of the same year. "Of course, I didn't get much melody" he qualifies, but I sure gave the neighborhood cats a whale of a contest".

He attended public school at MacDonald College where he engaged in football, hockey, basketball and boxing, continuing his education at McGill University where he interspersed sports with his flair for music. Just about this time he was bitten by the travel bug and left for a "short" cruise to the West Indies. After two years of traveling through the Indies and England, France, Italy, Switzerland, Todd returned to

Canada.

There he organized his own five-piece instrumental combination, with himself as the vocal "front", made records, radio and personal appearances throughout the Dominion. Canada sat up and took notice of the carrot-topped caroller with his new style of singing, and soon word seeped down to New York where RCA Victor officials decided to launch him on a record career.

In New York, he began to record for Bluebird, then handled the vocal assignments with Larry Clinton's band during the summer of 1938. In the fall of the same year, he made several appearances on the Artie Shaw program.

It is no secret that Todd's voice is very much like Bing Crosby's. And it is well known in the trade that Todd and Tommy Dorsey are good friends. Some time ago, Crosby brought his racing stable to Long Island. Tommy Dorsey, interested in buying a few horses for his New Jersey farm, called the Long Island residence where he knew Bing was staying. A familiar voice on the other end queried: "Who is this?" "Tommy Dorsey" was the reply, "Who is this?" "Dick Todd" snapped back Crosby. The three of them still chuckle every time they think of the Crosby comeback.

According to song pluggers, Dick Todd has picked slightly more than 450 songs to sing on his various recording and broadcasting ventures during the past three years. And out of that total number of tunes, the song salesman rate Todd as having picked at least 150 hit tunes and not one single flop. Every song negotiated by the baritone has been a better than average tune, the song pluggers declare.

The Todd formula for picking star tunes is something the singer can't put into words. It seems to be a combination of intuition and a personal taste that runs very close to what might be described as the norm of listening appreciation.

When he is getting ready to pick a new song for a future program, Dick can usually tell after ten or fifteen minutes whether a song is going to be popular or not. He looks over the notation, tries out an experimental phrasing or two — and that's all there is to that. Either he wants to sing it, or else he doesn't.

Among the smash hits Todd has picked during his singing career are "Deep Purple", of which he made the first recording; "Stairway To The Stars"; "Imagination"; "Singing Hills"; "Little Sir Echo", which broke record sales; "The Wind and The Rain In Your Hair"; "I Give You My Word" and many other outstanding song hits.

The boy from Toronto has traveled a long way. Tops as a radio star is enough for any young man, without mentioning the fact of breaking all records when it comes to records — which should be some kind of a record. It's something that happens just once in a lifetime — that a Red-headed Bluebird sings his way to the top. Todd is heard currently on Show Boat, Monday nights over the NBC red network.



Witty quips and costumes like this black number, with "Ilika" embroidered in gold on the pocket, add to the fun Saturdays at "Luncheon at the Waldor?", when Ilika Chase, actress, m.c., author and fashionable woman of the world entertains, and a national audience listens over the NBC-Blue Network.



Heartly congratulations are in order for pretty Louise King, the Lullaby Lady of the Carnation Contented program. The NBC Press Department has chosen her as the heart throb of February and sends forthwith this Valentine greeting to all radio editors. The Carnation program is broadcast Mondays on the Red Network.

# Patter Off the Platter

Decca's platter of Jimmy Dorsey's recording of "Yours" (3658) with Bob Eberly and Helen O'Connell sharing the vocal honors, is a standout. The flip-over is "When the Sun Comes Out" vocals by Helen O'Connell.

Decca's new Album No. A-200 GEMS OF JAZZ include six records that represent the hottest jazz numbers in a decade. Bud Freeman and his Windy City Five, Gene Krupa, Mildred Bailey, Mead "Lux" Lewis, and Joe Marsalla all contribute to make Decca's album "Gems of Jazz" one of the most outstanding albums in Jazz.

Again Decca does it. "A Night In Rio" is their latest to crash the popular album field. Three 10" records sung by the colorful Carmen Miranda in her native tongue. This album No. A-210 is a must for the thousands of "Miranda" fans. Two more Decca's latest releases are the popular "Amapola" played by Nano Rodrigo (3172) and Ruby Newman's "Perfidia" (2846). For two terrific Congas taken from popular songs of the 1920's are Pancho's recording of Decca's (3620) Tiger Rag and Hindustan.

Add boogie-woogie to a bugle call and you've got something that only Jimmy Yancey would think of. He demonstrates in his "Yancey's Bule Call" which like the reverse, "35th and Dearborn," is an endless series of boogie-woogie variations on a theme. Yancey is the man who is credited with starting the walking left hand style which is now all the rage. (Victor 27238)

Abe Lyman backs one of the outstanding ballad contenders of the day "How Did He Look" with a 1941 version of the buck private's lament, "You're In The Army Now." The latter is furnished with eight choruses of brand new lyrics, brass band effects and drum and bugle introduction. Look for it in the coin machines. (Bluebird B-10971)

Bunny Berigan backs "Peg O' My Heart" with "Night Song" for a double of unusual melodic appeal. "Night Song" is the work of Juan Tizol, Duke Ellington's

famous valve trombonist, and the well-known arranger Jimmy Mundy, and includes some out of trumpet-range stuff which Bunny plays beautifully. (Victor 27258)

Huddie Leadbetter, Lead Belly to his intimates and public alike, has perhaps the largest and best repertoires of Southern prison and penitentiary songs in existence. He records them for posterity in "The Midnight Special and Other Prison Songs", singing these bitter and haunting refrains with the Golden Gate Quartet. In addition to "The Midnight Special", the numbers are "Ham an' Eggs", "Grey Goose", "Stewball", "Pick A Bale of Cotton", and "Alabama Bound", an unforgettable phase of Americana. Alan Lomax, one of the foremost authorities on folk music, edits the accompanying booklet. (Victor Album P-50)

Continuing its exploration of the unfamiliar and unusual in music, the Victor Black Label Classics list presents "Plymouth Ho!" a "nautical overture" by John Ansell. The rollicking performance of the Light Symphony Orchestra is under the direction of Mr. Ansell himself. (Victor 27252)

Popy's "Ballet Suite", played by

the Grand Concert Orchestra is gay and dancing music with which not one in a hundred is familiar. It is however the kind of music that people whistle on a sunny day, brilliantly played by the Grand Concert Orchestra. (Victor 27253)

You may call "The Lilac Domino" either light opera or musical comedy but it is still England's favorite collection of infectious melodious tunes. The London Palladium Orchestra, conducted by Jack Frere, offers selections including the Introduction, "All Line Up In A Queue", "Where Love Is Waiting", "Let The Music Play", "What Is Done You Never Can Undo", the Finale of Act I, "For Your Love I'm Waiting", "Carnival Night", and "Lilac Domino". (Victor 36382)

"Lady in the Dark" which is currently causing all the New York critics to scramble for more complimentary adjectives, owes many of its rave notices to the Ira Gershwin - Kurt Weill score. Mitchell Ayres shows us why, romanticizing the sweet tune, "This is New", and funnyboning the clever "Jenny" for a preview

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No. 4, VOLUME 3

APRIL, 1941.

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F. L. ROSENTHAL, *Publisher*

WILTON ROSENTHAL, *Editor*

Published at 1056 West Van Buren Street, Chicago, Illinois. F. L. Rosenthal, *Publisher*. New York Office: 485 Madison Avenue, Hollywood Office: 3532 Sunset Boulevard. Published Monthly. Single Copies, ten cents. Subscription rate \$1.00 per year in the United States and Possessions, \$1.50 in Canada. Entered as second class matter January 10, 1940, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Every effort will be made to return unused manuscripts, photographs, and drawings (if accompanied by sufficient first-class postage and name and address), but we will not be responsible for any losses for such matter contributed. The publishers assume no responsibility for statements made herein by contributors and correspondents, nor does publication indicate approval thereof.

## PATTER OFF THE PLATTER

shot of the show. Mary Ann Mercer sells the lyrics in beautiful fashion. (Bluebird B-11035)

Rarely does Charlie Barnet get such admirable display pieces for his orchestra as his present coupling "Good For Nothin' Joe", and "Charleston Alley". "Good For" serves to introduce his new singer, Lena Horne who can carry a torch with the best of them. "Charleston Alley" is rolling, solid jazz with screaming brass and Charlie himself on soprano sax. (Bluebird B-11037)

One of the smoother Wayne King pairings comes up this week, "In Apple Blossom Time", and "When I Lost You", lovely melodies played in the Wayne King manner. The latter is early Irving Berlin performed in slow waltz tempo with the maestro himself taking care of the lyrics. (Victor 27336)

The personnel of the latest Sidney Bechet record is recommendation enough: Bechet, clarinet and soprano sax; Henry "Red" Allen, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, trombone; Wellman Braud, bass; James Toliver, piano; and James Heard, drums. The titles, "Egyptian Fantasy", and "Slippin' and Slidin'" aren't important except to identify two beautiful and solid examples of New Orleans jazz at its best. (Victor Swing Classic 27337)

Vaughn Monroe brings Tschai-kowsky into popular music again, playing "My One Romance" at a medium slow beat. Marilyn Duke romances while the Monroe saxes make soft accompaniment. A flash ending is achieved with full brass crescendo. The platter mate is a swing rhythm study, "Take It, Jackson", with good solo work from trumpet, tenor sax and piano. (Bluebird B-11045)

Glenn Miller presents a dance band version of "You Stepped Out of a Dream", then steps up the tempo a bit for "Ring, Telephone, Ring". The effortless singing of the Modernaires and Ray Eberle mark the first while Ray takes over alone for the second. Note the way the eight brass build a chord in single note punching fashion in "You Stepped". (Bluebird B-11042)

## STUDIO NOTES

HUGH STUDEBAKER, Dr. Bob Graham in Bachelor's Children, is mulling plans to branch out in his farming hobby by acquiring a New Mexico ranch. Studebaker already owns an 80-acre farm in Indiana . . . PAT BUTT-RAM, whose hill-billy twang is a feature of the Alka-Seltzer National Barn Dance, actually is one of the most voracious readers in radio. He reads all the best sellers and pursues half a dozen reading hobbies . . . JIM GROSS, Uncle Jim Fairfield in Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy, is a member of the famous printing press family but says he never got any closer to newspaper career than the corner stand . . . The name of KAY KYSER has been heard over the airplanes of the nation for several years but now the name of Kyser may be seen on the airplanes. One of the planes operating on the new Pittsburgh-to-Birmingham air route has been titled the "Kay Kyser" . . . ELIA KAZAN and ANN THOMAS, members of the Johnny Presents program cast, have been assigned roles in "Five Alarm Waltz," currently rehearsing for early Broadway opening . . . Schottische at Sunrise," new tune by DON MARCOTTE, NBC Central Division music supervisor, goes into the wax-works shortly. It will be recorded for Victor and Bluebird by JOE REICHMAN and MITCHELL AYERS . . . RIKEL KENT has been assigned to produce "The Mystery Man," new serial story which makes its bow Monday, March 24, on NBC . . . BARBARA ALLEN, Beth Holly of One Man's Family, has been handed the comedy lead in "Buy Me That Town" which is scheduled to go before the cameras this week . . . MICHAEL ROMANO has joined the Arnold Grimm's Daughter cast as Mr. Williams, a slicker . . . A rigid diet schedule has given BOB CROSBY a sylph-like figure. Crosby was a guest maestro on the Fitch Bandwagon on Sunday, March 23 . . .

MEMBERS OF ANDRE KOSTELANTZ' orchestra aren't troubled with any petty legal matters. Emanuel Green, violinist in the CBS orchestra heard Sundays on "The Pause That Refreshes on The Air," received a law degree from St. John's University in Brooklyn and serves as legal advisor to his fellow musicians . . . Program producer on CBS's "Hedda Hopper's Hollywood" is Tom Sawyer, and one of Hedda Hopper's assistants is Jeff Davis . . . Dick Cromwell, one of the stars of Columbia network's "Those We Love," may turn into a gold miner this summer. John Estes, who once served as Cromwell's "stand in" in movies, has a gold mine near Downeyville, Cal., and has invited Dick for a bit of ore sifting . . . Russ Johnson, program director for CBS's Pacific network, is justly proud of his Doberman Pinscher. In a recent Los Angeles dog show his pooch was first in the Open class, first in the Winner's Dog class and first as Best of Winners . . . Carl Hoff and his orchestra, music makers for the CBS Al Pearce stanzas, will record an album of Vincent Youman tunes for Columbia Records . . . After visiting the "Court of Missing Heirs" in order to incorporate its backstage story in one of her CBS broadcasts, Mary Margaret McBride wondered if maybe she wasn't a missing heir herself. One of the program's authors, James Waters, informed her of an earlier broadcast telling the story of Ellen McBride who died in 1936 leaving an estate of \$60,000 which had been accumulated by herself and her family — two members of which were named Mary McBride and Margaret McBride . . . When Eloise Kummer, of CBS's "Right to Happiness," left Chicago for a trip to New York, her friends warned her with that old "don't take any wooden nickels" gag. Eloise scoffed, but now she thinks there's something to it — the first change she got in New York had a phoney fifty-cent piece in it.



Although it seems foregone that Gerard Darrow, eight-year-old nature expert on the NBC-Blue Network "Quiz Kids", will be an ornithologist, he hopes to be a lawyer too. He thinks that as a lawyer he can agitate for enactment of anti-bird-hunting laws. He's distressed by the extinct birds shown in museums.



Clutching his inseparable pipe in one hand and the microphone in the other, affable Eddy Howard runs over the songs he will offer during appearances with poet-philosopher Edgar A. Guest. Composer of a number of hits himself, Howard is featured singer of the Guest series, Wednesdays through Fridays, NBC-Blue Network.

## GUEST COLUMN

BY

JOHN J. ANTHONY

GOOD WILL DIRECTOR

Writing a radio column is like conducting my Original Good Will Hour. I honestly don't know what I'm going to say until I begin. I suppose one of the things I can write about is the problems I've encountered during my several years as conductor of the program.

Offhand, I'd say that most of the problems have been matrimonial in content. In listening to the troubles of the thousands of people who have appeared on the Good Will Hour, I have been struck by the important part that accepted prejudices play in hindering otherwise happy marriages.

For instance: ought married women to work? Often, the married woman's job saves a marriage by giving her an interest in life and easing financial pressure. Often, of course, a woman's working can be bad for happy marriage. But each case should be considered on its merits, I would tend to the idea that where the question arises, that fact alone shows that the necessity of the woman working is subconsciously recognized by husband and wife.

Unfortunately, the question of whether the woman should work is often less important than the question: where can the woman find a job? The economic task of mankind in modern civilization has never been easy. Every married couple and every individual must answer the question of whether women should work in light of the circumstances surrounding each case. When the husband is struggling on a low salary when there are no children, when the wife is adapted for some special job, the answer should be simple to find. When the wife is so attuned to commercial life that household tasks are dull for her, she is an irritant in the home, rather than a bringer of peace. I believe that is the case, today, with many women who have entered marriage after a career in the business world.

In any case, modern marriage entails a frank partnership between wife and husband. In any situation in which the husband's income is below a subsistence level for the family there is no real argument

against the wife shouldering part of the responsibility if she is fit to do so. When this becomes necessary, the wife shouldn't feel herself persecuted or cheated out of the prerequisites of married life. One third of all American wage-earning women over fifteen are married! Most of them though not all, are working because their husband's earnings alone are not sufficient to support the family decently. This becomes true very often when children enter the equation. Married women who work have a great deal to be proud of, and should disregard the "popular" prejudices against working wives. The situation becomes questionable when a wife works only to avoid household tasks and responsibilities, or because she wants to retain her independence so she can be "free" to have the same kind of contacts with men she had as a single woman.

I never advise a woman to work unless it is financially needed. I think the woman is happiest who can give all of her energies to the exciting job of making home the most stimulating and beautiful spot in the world of her husband and herself.

To the husbands of working wives, I would like to give this message: if you are honestly doing all you can to discharge your own responsibility don't be ashamed because your wife, also, puts her shoulder to the wheel. Honor her, and give her the satisfaction of knowing that she is appreciated.

I do think, however, that those husbands who allow their wives to support them pay dearly for the privilege of doing nothing. They are ashamed to face their fellow-men, ashamed to face themselves and their wives. Of course, under present-day conditions, situations are bound to arise where the husband who doesn't even look for work, but is content to live on his wife's salary. The world, alas for these husbands, looks more kindly on an idle wife living on a husband's salary than it does on the idle husband.

The economic situation between husband and wife should be settled calmly to the best interests of the married couple, and once settled should be taken for granted so that it doesn't form the basis of continual bickerings.



Lovely Dinah Shore, NBC's Songbird of the South, takes time off between Red Network "Time to Smile" programs to bask in California's warm sunshine. Of course it's always warm and sunny where Dinah is, but we think she's very beautiful in a bathing suit, and that smile!



The Doring Sisters, vocal trio on NBC's Plantation Party, always take this position around the mike. Helps the director remember that their voices vary inversely with their heights. Ruth, left, tallest, sings lowest; Grace, right, shortest, sings highest. Marion, center, in-between height, sings in medium ranges.

# KSTP Sunset Valley Barn Dance

The old philosophy of "nothing ventured, nothing gained" has found living proof — in the success story which KSTP and its president, Stanley E. Hubbard, has written in the KSTP Sunset Valley Barn Dance.

**K**STP, one of the pioneers in northwest radio, had for years shunned the idea of barn dances and rustic music; and even the other outlets had made no consistent effort to build an authentic, regular rural appeal show.

With a new 50,000-watt transmitter giving KSTP a potentially greater audience than any other outlet in the area, Mr. Hubbard, late in 1940 began to work on a plan to bring into his listening fold the farmers and rural folk of Minnesota's tremendous grain-filled bread-basket. And his first thoughts turned to an authentic, flavorful barn dance program.

The results have been astounding, for, inaugurated late in October, the Sunset Valley Barn Dance has played to more than 50,000 persons in those few short months, with almost every Saturday night a complete sell-out.

To handle the Sunset Valley Show, Mr. Hubbard cast about for exactly the right man for the job — someone who knew rural people, knew their entertainment likes and dislikes, who knew showmanship, production and barn dance techniques.

His search led him to David Stone, then co-producer of WSM's "Grand Ol' Opry," doubtless one of the most successful shows of its type on the air.

David was employed by KSTP and given full rein in the selection of his talent and the production of his show.

Deciding that what he wanted was not the "professional" hill-billy, but the authentic type, he felt that certainly in the northwest region of Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas there was plenty of authentic talent if he could only "dig it out."

Over KSTP's wave-length went a series of announcements, setting a date for auditions and calling for old-time fiddlers, harmonica players, comedians, singers, in-



The "man behind the gun" in KSTP's Sunset Valley Barn Dance at the St. Paul, Minnesota Auditorium each Saturday night is popular David Stone, employed by KSTP to found, produce, direct and m-c the show. He was former co-producer of WSM's Grand Ol' Opry.

terpreters of folk, mountain and cowboy music.

And the first audition proved that Mr. Stone's original assumption was right — for into KSTP's studios that night poured nearly 200 aspirants for jobs on the new show!

Within two weeks Stone was ready, and in the meantime, Mr. Hubbard had gone a step farther in his plan to implant KSTP and

the Sunset Valley Barn Dance on the minds of his listeners.

He had completed arrangements with the St. Paul Municipal Auditorium for use of its 2800-seat theater every Saturday night, and had decided that the entire program would be staged there, with a 30-cent admission charge.

And with little fanfare heralding the opening of the Sunset Valley Barn Dance on October 26, 1940,



The name of Arthur (Shorty) Brier is well-known to midwest listeners; now it's well-known in the northwest, for Shorty is the musical director of KSTP's mammoth Sunset Valley Barn Dance. He is one of a group of four trained men around whom David Stone has built his successful show.

the curtain went up — on a packed house, and a turnaway of between 1,200 and 1,500 persons!

The same story has been written week after week, as the Barn Dance progressed through the winter, with crowds ranging between 2,000 and a complete sell-out.

As a basis for his Sunset Valley Barn Dance, Stone decided that he needed two or three men of well-rounded experience in the field to knit his group solidly together, and the first of these he selected was Arthur (Shorty) Brier, banjo ace, who had done work in the same field for WHO, Des Moines; KSO-KRNT, Des Moines; KVOO, Tulsa; and WXYZ, Detroit. Shorty was chosen as musical director and arranger for

the Sunset Valley Barn Dance. The two other groups chosen for past experience were Al and Hank, the Dakota Ramblers, previously with WDAY, and Herb Wilson, known as Cactus Slim, who had been with CKLW in Windsor.

But aside from the basic group of Stone, Brier, Wilson, and the Dakota Ramblers, the others used on Sunset Valley Barn Dance were amateurs — more than two score of them.

Typical of these people are Alverna Julien and Lenore Carlson, two Forest Lake, Minnesota farm girls, who sing cowboy songs; Marilyn Mercord, a 16-year-old Prescott, Wisconsin high school girl whose only previous singing experience was in the church

choir but who has captivated Sunset Valley audiences; Clyde Cook, and old-time fiddler who goes under the name of Uncle Zeke, who organized his Mountaineers and added a new note to the Sunset Valley Barn Dance; the Alfalfa Neers, a Clayton, Wisconsin farmer and his daughter whose only previous experience had been amusing neighbors; and June and Gwen Vroman, two St. Paul business girls.

The new idea which Uncle Zeke added to the Sunset Valley Barn Dance was the square-dance. Remembering some of the better ones for whom he had played, he brought about the organization of a square dance troupe, which performs as a highlight of the show each Saturday night.



Charm — that's what does it! And 18-year-old Katherine Kohls has it. On her first appearance on KSTP's Sunset Valley Barn Dance in the St. Paul auditorium she proved that her infectious grin and handling of the accordion made her big-time material. Now she's a regular performer.

Has the Sunset Valley Barn Dance proved Mr. Hubbard's original contention: that it would increase his roster of listeners? The answer is yes.

Two periods are broadcast from the Auditorium over KSTP, one at 9:30 P.M. Saturdays; the other at 10:15 P.M., and a recent coincidental survey on the 9:30 period showed that KSTP, with five other Twin City stations competing against KSTP for audience, had more than 46 per cent of the total!

# From the Old Hayloft

News, notes and gossip, of the stars of WLS, Chicago, and the WLS National Barn Dance.

**T**HE END of March, Ramblin' Red Foley took a two-week leave of absence from his friends in the Old Hayloft to make a motion picture in Hollywood. It will be a spring release by Monogram, with Tex Ritter, the Western star.

\* \* \*

When Jimmy James looked out from his hotel window a short time ago, he saw smoke billowing from a car far below him on the street. "Someone's going to be surprised when he comes out," Jimmy mused. Then it dawned on him — it was his own car. He rushed down to the street in record time, pulled the fire alarm box on the corner, and returned to his burning car. Then he thought of a fire extinguisher, and dashed into the lobby to borrow one. So when the fire trucks — dozens of them — came screeching to a halt, he just smiled and said



The photographer has been doing tricks with his camera, just as Ted Morse does tricks with his voice. For Ted Morse is famed on the WLS National Barn Dance as Otto and also as Little Genevieve. And here he is, both in one picture, with darling Little Genevieve whispering in Otto's ear — probably something about not practicing her piano lessons.

they could go home now. He'd put the fire out himself.

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On his "Bag O' Money" program on WLS, Jack Holden gives kids money for doing simple stunts or answering easy questions. Sometimes he offers a quarter, sometimes as much as a

drain on the Bag O' Money, but rather than verify the count himself, Holden paid.

Those two dancing dummies at the WLS National Barn Dance have new names, conferred on



The Hayloft Gang crowd around to wish Red Foley farewell and good luck as he finished the last WLS National Barn Dance before he left for Hollywood. He took a two-week leave of absence to appear in a Monogram motion picture starring Tex Ritter. Shown are Harry Sims, Jimmy James, one of the square dancers, Foley, Jack Taylor, Harold Safford, Salty Holmes, Lester (Mac) MacFarland, Ozzie Westley, Mary Ann and Bob Gardner.

dollar, but on a recent broadcast, he offered more than he realized.

A little girl came to the microphone. Jack said he'd give her 10c apiece for her freckles, if she could get someone in the audience to count them. She had her brother with her, and the pair went off in a corner to count. Fifteen minutes later they came up with their total: 80 freckles at 10c — \$8.00 please! It was a terrific

them by WLS listeners in a recent contest. The winners received \$50 each for naming one dummy Freida Staire and the other Sara Nade. Salty Holmes and Otto use them for partners in their comic dances each Saturday night.

\* \* \*

Jim Poole, best known market broadcaster and analyst, is back

on the air after a period of illness. He's heard on WLS at 11:45 a.m. Sundays . . . Mel Gallart, new announcer at WLS, is also a competent baritone soloist . . . The whole trio of Verne, Lee and Mary were once arrested in a Wisconsin town for jaywalking . . .



Pat Buttram, comic of the WLS National Barn Dance, tries out a new gag backstage before springing it on the air and to the audience in the Eighth Street Theater. Judging from Grace Willson's expression, she found it very funny!



When Pat Buttram invites the WLS audience to the National Barn Dance, he always quotes the prices for the big ones and for the little ones. And here are the biggest one and the littlest one of the Hayloft Gang — Andy Williams of the Williams Brothers quartet and Norman Ross, m.c.

George Menard used to bring the horses up for water back at his farm home, then stand on a nearby platform and deliver long lectures to them — on any subject under the sun, for he just wanted to

learn public speaking, and the horses made a good audience. Charles Kerner of the Maple City Four also sings under the name of Charles Willard — the latter his middle name.

## Singing Cowgirl



Patsy Montana, singing cowgirl at WLS, Chicago, is a real cowgirl, veteran rider of a dozen rodeos. She made one of her first broadcasts on horseback. Patsy receives more requests to sing "I Want to Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" than any of the several hundred other songs in her repertory. She wrote it herself when she first got in radio, and has written dozens of others since, including her recent "My Poncho Pony."

Patsy dresses the part of a cowgirl in all her stage appearances, with leather skirt and vest and riding boots. She still blushes when she thinks of her first stage appearance. She entered a California amateur contest and sang her cowgirl songs dressed fit to kill — in a black evening gown. Anyhow, she won, and it was the first step in a career that has taken her to the top as a radio and motion picture star.

Augie Klein, accordionist with the WLS Rangers, studied accordion under Lou Klatt, of the WLS Concert orchestra. Augie has a brother who is also an accordionist and another brother in the United States Navy . . . Reggie Cross, harmonica expert with the Hoosier Sodbusters, also plays Hawaiian guitar and drums . . . Cy Harrice invents lots of gadgets just for his own amusement, and recently was awarded a patent on a tooth brush.

Adele Brandt's grandmother was a cousin to Franz Schubert . . . Salty Holmes' hobby is collecting small jugs — miniatures of the style he makes music with on the Barn Dance. Salty is a member of the 123rd Cavalry Band, on leave of absence. At camp, the band used to have to get up early and practice. Their marching rehearsal consisted of marching back and forth past the stables, serenading the horses . . .

The FARR brothers, HUGH and KARL, two of the Sons of the Pioneers, singing team heard on the UNCLE EZRA program, are one-eighth Cherokee. It's one of those touchy subjects in the Farr home—their mother's great great grandfather was killed fightin injuns!



From Chicago twice a day is heard the voice of NBC actress Fern Persons on "Bud Barton" and "Thunder Over Paradise."



*Her "Story"  
Continues*

Following the episode in which Bess Johnson was dismissed as matron of the "Hilltop House" orphanage, the series' sponsor now presents her in "The Story of Bess Johnson," over CBS Monday through Fridays at 3:30 P.M. C.S.T. Bess Johnson, who has played the stellar role in "Hilltop House" under her own name for more than three years, continues as the central figure in a story of feminine courage and wisdom.



## *Up To Standard*

The young radio actresses heard from Chicago on Columbia network's daytime serial dramas have long had a reputation for unusual beauty, and the latest addition to the string seems to meet all the requirements. She's 17-year-old Peggy Knudsen, of Duluth, Minn., who currently portrays Betty Adams in "Woman in White." Heard Mondays through Fridays, 12:15 P.M. C.S.T.

# The Maple City Four



Here are those zanies of the WLS National Barn Dance — the Maple City Four. They're Scotch Highlanders — they think. This is the first picture taken of them in these costumes since Charles Kerner joined the act several months ago. Left to right are Pat Petterson, Al Rice, Kerner and Fritz Meissner.



And there bloomed in Illinois a girl-child, called fair Marilyn Thorne, with voice sweet as piping woodwinds in the spring. And a bandsman, called Ted Weems, hearing the voice, did say, verily, this must be heard by all the land. Now Marilyn sings on Beat the Band, Sunday evenings over the NBC Network, called Red.



All work and no play would make even Fred Waring's Inimitable Three Squires dull boys. Here, assisted by lovely Donna Dae, they demonstrate a new dart game they've perfected with a St. Valentine's Day touch. Left to right they are: Marvin Long, Donna, Fred Ohms and "Lumpy" Brannum. "Lumpy" hit bull's eye.

## TUGBOAT GILL and DEMLING

**"THE NUTS** Who Launched a Thousand Squirrels" or "What Happens to a Radio Gag Writer When He Gets Tired of Hearing Other People Speak His Lines" are alternate slogans for this opus.

It concerns a couple of fellows named Gill and Demling, and it proves that where there's smoke there's a cigarette sponsor, and also that if you don't want your routines swiped don't let a couple of budding comedians have Annie Oakleys to a Detroit theater.

Gill and Demling, otherwise known as Frank and Bill, or Fish and Baldy, currently are featured as the slap-wacky skippers of the "Show Boat" on the NBC-Red Network Mondays. But today is long after the day they first collided as students at Wayne University, Detroit. Bill Demling had a side job as usher at a local theater, and through him Annie Oakleys were available. Thus, sitting in free seats, the two managed, so they say, to skim off the best gags heard in the house, later to convert their illicit wit into routines that got them their first air jobs at a local station in 1931.

By the time they landed at NBC Chicago, the following year, according to their own statement, they had run out of the gags manufactured by other people and were embarked on a hazardous career of writing their own. And it was in the writing field that they gained Hollywood fame later, dashing in and out of movie assignments to whack out verbal lulus for such assorted radio memorabilia as Burns and Allen, Eddie Cantor, Bob Burns, Ben Bernie, the Marx Brothers, Al Jolson, Ed Wynn, Fanny Brice, Bea Lillie, Charles Butterworth and John Barrymore.

In regard to their families, Frank Gill says his daughter Kathreen, age 1, is an accomplished lutist and his other daughter, Pamela, age 3, the youngest strip-teaseuse extant. Demling says his 1940 son also is well advanced — he already has learned how to deliver a Bronx cheer.

Amazingly enough, instead of being the kind of bon vivants a pair of comedians might be, they are retiring souls, preferring to stay out of town at all possible hours. They hate trying to be funny at parties, a fact which has made them the despair of many an eager hostess. And it's an odd fact, but very true, that Gill is taking a couple of university courses in the romance languages and Greek classics. Oddest fan gift they ever received was an old gray horse—which they are alleged to have eaten during a layoff.



**Rita Ascot WLS Star**