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JUNE - JULY, 1995



EVE ARDEN



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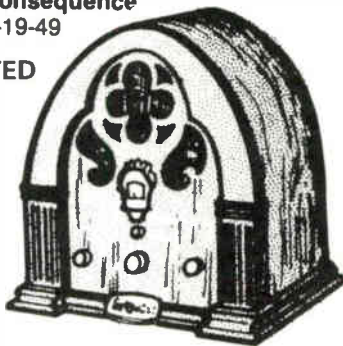
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Hello, Out There in Radioland!

We've been doing a lot of celebrating lately, observing the 25th Anniversary of our *Those Were The Days* program and, continuing our look at Radio and World War II, the end of the war in Europe.

(Incidentally, we'll have some photos of our *TWTD* Silver Anniversary event in the next issue of our *Nostalgia Digest*. We had a great time on April 23 when 500 fans of old time radio came to the Swissôtel in Chicago to see stars Shirley Bell Cole, Bill Idelson, Fred Foy, and the *Those Were The Days Radio Players* perform re-enactments of Little Orphan Annie, The Bickersons, Vic and Sade, Charlie McCarthy Show, and The Lone Ranger. Along with Ken Alexander and the Mighty Metro Art Players, they provided an afternoon of magnificent radio nostalgia and made our anniversary very special, indeed.)

We have more to celebrate in June and July as you'll discover when you check the *TWTD* listings in this issue.

On June 17 we tune in to the events surrounding the return to the United States of General Dwight D. Eisenhower after his victory in Europe.

On July 8 we observe the 40th Anniversary of radio station WNIB, where our *TWTD* program has been heard for almost half of the life of the station, since September of 1975.

In August we'll mark the 50th Anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific and, in September, the formal end of World War II.

In the meantime, we hope you will enjoy all the great radio sounds we've lined up for you during the next two months.

On WNIB, we'll have a string of One Man's Family episodes to share with you, a special salute to Major Glenn Miller, a delightful "ride" on a Showboat, and an opportunity for you to listen in as we chat with some fine radio actors --Jack Krushen, Peter Leeds, Tyler McVey and Les Tremayne-- as they reminisce about the great radio days.

On our WBBM *Old Time Radio Classics* program, listen for another five-part adventure with yours Truly, Johnny Dollar and a week-long string of Captain Midnight episodes.

So as Spring turns into Summer, we'll keep sending you some of the best audio sounds possible.

Stay close to your radio and don't touch that dial!

Thanks for listening,

--Chuck Schaden

All About Eve

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

In this age of comedy clubs and rapid-fire jokespewers it is important to remember that there is a difference between women who merely recite gags and the gifted handful of true comediennes blessed with the ability to evoke laughter with intonation, a line from a song, or just a look. It is not easy to recall a punch line spoken by Lucille Ball or Carol Burnett, yet they remain two of our favorite entertainers because of what they did that cannot be written into a script. We should never forget that Eve Arden also belongs in that select group of funny ladies.

The actress we know as Eve Arden was born Eunice Quedens in Mill Valley, California. For years she claimed that her birthdate was April 30, 1912, but after her death on November 12, 1990 a spokesman for her family gave her age as 83 which would suggest that she was born in 1907. Whatever the year of her birth one thing is certain: here was a person who was probably "acting up" during her diaper days. While her divorced mother was working, Eunice was engaged in make-believe games and was soon delighting neighborhood children by assuming all the parts in impromptu plays.

She remembered that her first real taste of show business came when she played a page in a pageant at a Dominican convent in San Rafael. In high school she performed in song-and-dance skits and was the

Clair Schulz of Stevens Point, Wisconsin is a regular contributor to Nostalgia Digest.

star of the senior play. One night some friends of her mother dropped her off in front of a San Francisco theatre and practically dared her to get an acting job. She left her name and address and within a few weeks she was given a walk-on role that didn't pay much, but at least it got her foot in the stage door. It was with that theatre troupe that she had a memory lapse which was almost as embarrassing as forgetting her lines. One evening after the curtain came down she removed her make-up and headed for a streetcar only to be called back by the stage manager who reminded her that she would probably want to stick around for the second act of the play.

Like many performers young Eunice suffered through some lean times in the early thirties, but she did find work with the Bandbox Repertory Company that toured the resort and hotel circuit. She was acting in *Lo and Behold* at the Pasadena Playhouse when Lee Shubert spotted her while scouting singers and dancers for the *Ziegfeld Follies*. She was told to be in New York on August 15, 1934 if she was interested in the salary of \$100 a week...and indeed she was.

What was even more appealing than the money was the chance to rub elbows with Fanny Brice, have her own musical number, and get her name up on the marquee. But she would have to make one change: Shubert said to her in so many words, "We want you, but Eunice Quedens will have to go." So she plucked her new identity from two objects close at hand: Eve from



EVE ARDEN

a novel she had been reading and Arden from some Elizabeth Arden cosmetics.

Eve was pleased with her work in *Follies* and particularly proud of Robert Benchley's praise of her in *The New Yorker*. (Benchley later became a friend and appeared in two movies with her.) When the musical revue closed after two years in New York, she appeared in a Theater Guild production called *Parade* that contained material written especially for her comedic talents.

Eve's first movie, *Oh Doctor!*, was a trifle, but it did get her a screen test at Universal. The director working on *Stage Door* saw the test and invited her for a reading. She wasn't awed by the company of stars like Ginger Rogers and Katharine Hepburn; when the others present seemed reluctant to read what Eve knew instinctively were the best lines, she grabbed them and delivered them like an old pro. But her presence in the movie is notable not for anything she said but for what she wore. She suggested to director Gregory La Cava that she could do some "business" with a cat

and that idea grew into her appearance in the film with a living furpiece around her neck.

During the next few years she was playing everything from a saloon owner to a trapeze artist at RKO, Paramount, and Universal with the likes of Clark Gable, Lana Turner, and Judy Garland. She teamed with Danny Kaye on stage in the hit Cole Porter musical *Let's Face It* and repeated her role in the movie version opposite Bob Hope. She also appeared with Gene Kelly and Rita Hayworth in what may be the quintessential 1940's film, *Cover Girl*.

Because Eve felt that doing so many pictures in succession put a strain on her already shaky marriage and because she wanted more freedom to do plays and radio programs, she signed a seven-year contract with Warner Brothers that limited her work to two or three movies a year. Her performance in one of those films, *Mildred Pierce*, earned her an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actress in 1945. In *One Touch of Venus* and *The Kid From Brooklyn* she was perfecting the kind of wisecracking characters she began playing in Lubitsch's *That Uncertain Feeling*. Arden, her own severest critic, said that one of the few pictures she made that she could actually watch and enjoy her work is the rather obscure *The Voice of the Turtle*, which starred Ronald Reagan.

It may have been a turn on the dance floor in Chicago with CBS kingpin William Paley in 1948 that elevated Eve from the "Who's she?" level to the "I know her!" plateau. Although she had done some work on *The Danny Kaye Show* and *The Village Store*, she was not well-known in that medium. Shortly after that night at the Ambassador East she was asked to read for the part of an English teacher named Constance Brooks. Eve didn't like the script she was shown and it wasn't until Al

ALL ABOUT EVE

Lewis, the man responsible for developing the characters and for putting those very funny lines in their mouths, did a rewrite that she agreed to take the part.

Our Miss Brooks was simply intended to be a summer replacement series starting July 19, 1948, but when it was topping the ratings at the end of its thirteen-week run a spot was made for it in the regular season schedule. Lewis was a writer who had an ear for amusing dialogue, but the success of the program was due to its perfect cast. Gale Gordon was superb as the cranky principal Osgood Conklin, Jeff Chandler portrayed the frugal and shy Mr. Boynton with skill that belied his virile appearance, Richard Crenna as Walter Denton was the best snickering and adenoïdal teenager north of *The Aldrich Family*, and Jane Morgan played the absent-minded landlady who was frequently in a surrealist world that Connie Brooks could only occasionally penetrate.

But it was Eve Arden who gave the show not only its driving force but also its heart. Her Miss Brooks was a woman who, just after losing a battle in her unrequited romance with Boynton or receiving an unrealistic demand from dictatorial Conklin, would turn a sympathetic ear to the problems brought to her by Denton, Conklin's daughter Harriet, or Stretch Snodgrass, the school dunce. It took a real actress to be convincing as both Mother Superior and Milton Berle, and it is difficult to think of anyone who could have brought it off as well as Eve Arden did.

With the exception of Chandler, who was replaced by Robert Rockwell, the entire cast moved to television on October 3, 1952. Arden described that a typical week on the program consisted of a first reading on Friday morning, rehearsal from ten to five on Monday followed by an in-house

dress rehearsal, and afternoon walk-through on Tuesday afternoon, and then filming with three cameras at about 7:30 that evening. That gave her four days to be with her family each week.

It may be surprising to learn that this woman who almost always appeared smartly dressed on television or in movies was very much at home in dungarees with her family on their farm in Hidden Valley. She had adopted two girls during the 1940's, but after her divorce she was beginning to think she wouldn't ever find a good husband and father for the girls until Barry Sullivan suggested touring in a stage production with "a guy named Brooks West." It wasn't love at first sight. In fact, when Brooks asked "Why don't we get married?" she responded not with a "Yes" or "No" but in typical Miss Brooks fashion: "Oh?" In 1951 the "Oh?" became a "Yes."

The newlyweds soon adopted another child and in 1953 there were two more additions to their household: an Emmy for Eve's work on *Our Miss Brooks* and a baby boy.

As Miss Brooks Eve was earning \$200,000 a year, receiving fan mail from teachers, and garnering honors from the National Education Association the PTA. With the fame came a hectic schedule during the 1952-53 season when she was doing the show on both TV and radio and trying to answer an avalanche of requests to teach or lecture. But she never regretted playing the role and remembered fondly the people who told her that Connie Brooks had helped them recover from life-threatening illnesses.

Our Miss Brooks rolled along smoothly for three seasons before the powers that were in control tinkered with a good thing. For the 1955-56 season Madison High School vanished and Connie was sent to teach at an elementary school; only Gale



GALE GORDON & EVE ARDEN

Gordon remained from the original supporting cast. On September 21, 1956 school was out for Miss Brooks.

The following season Eve starred in a program based upon the autobiography of Emily Kimbrough. She played novelist Liza Hammond who had to cope with the rigors of traveling on lecture tours and raising twin girls. *The Eve Arden Show* lasted just one year.

The break from television gave her a chance to work with husband Brooks in *Auntie Mame* on the west coast. In 1959 both of them appeared in support of James Stewart and George C. Scott in Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder*.

Eve's appearance in a Las Vegas revue in 1962 demonstrated that she was loaded with talent. She sang, she danced, she told stories, and during the course of the evening she impersonated everyone from Jackie Kennedy to Bette Davis. This successful run and her later work in *Hello Dolly* and *Applause* showed that, like Judy Holliday, she was very much at home in musical comedies.

After taking some time off to tour Europe with her family during 1963 and 1964, she returned to work in *Hello Dolly* and did guest shots on television programs like *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and *Run For Your Life* before being called by Desi Arnaz to be in a new series with Kaye Ballard. *The Mothers-in-Law* gave Eve and Kaye a chance to ham it up as distaff versions of Oscar and Felix who enjoyed meddling in the affairs of their children. Though the program only ran for two seasons it produced a number of memorable episodes.

Versatile performer that she was Eve Arden was rarely idle even in the twilight of her career. She would appear in *Cactus Flower* in Miami around Easter, do a summer stock version of *Butterflies Are Free* in New Jersey, and be in Australia for *Applause* in September. In the movie version of *Grease* she went back to school with a promotion to principal and four years later she reprised her role as Miss McGee in *Grease II*. It wasn't until the death of her husband in 1984 that she curtailed her performing schedule.

In 1985 she revealed that Brooks had been fighting alcoholism for most of the thirty-three years of their marriage. Whether this was caused by the insecurity of a career that was minor when compared to that of his wife's had not been ascertained, but it is patently clear that Eve supported Brooks by encouraging him to enter detox centers and by attending AA meetings with him. By raising four children, being a farm wife, and having a career Eve was truly a modern woman who had it all, including the heartaches.

Eve Arden was surprised to learn in 1983 that she was Woody Allen's favorite comedienne. She shouldn't have been, for she has always had fans who love her even more than they love Lucy. For many of us this Eve remains the apple of our eye. ■

RADIOVILLE, INDIANA: The Town That Never Was

By JOHN RUSSELL GHRIST

One would think that a trip to a town called Radioville would promise an electrical enthusiast the opportunity to shop for bargains at a giant wireless sale or visit the world's biggest antenna farm.

But Radioville, Indiana is just a point on a map, a place that almost never existed. It's story has been lost in the pages of time and hidden by a clandestine figure who attempted to cash in on the radio craze after the 1929 Depression.

During this time, anything called "radio" sparked interest. After all it was the newest form of family entertainment. Folks would gather around their sets and listen to the budding stars of the airways including Waukegan's Jack Benny, Peoria's Fibber Mc Gee and Molly, and the famous Morris B. Sach's Amateur hour from Chicago.

In 1933, the Radio Steel and Manufacturing Company promoted its popular Radio Flyer wagon at the World's Fair in Chicago. A local school bazaar designated each of its booths with made up radio station call letters. In 1935, cowboy actor Gene Autry, known better by this generation as the owner of the California Angels Baseball Team, released his new movie, "Radio Ranch." However, Radioville never caught on. It was a platted town that was never built.

John Russell Ghrist is a 'ham' radio operator, former disc jockey, and Shadow Traffic Reporter for WMAQ and WLS. "Radioville, The Town That Never Was," is a 50 page report available in local libraries. He has also written "Valley Voices" a history of Chicago area radio, soon to be published by Crossroads Communications of Carpentersville, Illinois.

The area is located in unincorporated Pulaski County in Northern Indiana, near the communities of Medaryville and Francesville. It is only found on maps distributed by the state, and is based solely on a plat that was filed in 1932 by a Chicago businessman. If you drive north to San Pierre, you've gone too far.

Like so many towns that once existed, it's easy to drive right through the area on U.S. 421 (the former Indiana 43) and not notice anything but Hoosier countryside. There's a few scattered homes, farms, and some trailers. Never was there a sign that read, "Welcome to Radioville." The town didn't die because the blacksmith shop closed or the railroad moved its tracks. The place was merely a business venture that seemed to go sour shortly after its conception.

Radioville was created by a developer who tried to sell rural life, modern conveniences, and fresh country air to frustrated city dwellers, who wanted a new start after the Depression.

Estella Tetzloff, a long time area resident, recalls the time when a Mr. Ullrich of Chicago used to bring people out to sell them lots in Radioville. Mrs. Tetzloff, now of North Jusdon, Indiana wrote the Alberding family History. Her relatives were among the first landowners and farmers in the area.

Nothing much has ever happened in the community. There was a train derailment around 1930, a bowling alley was built there in 1950, and a treasure hunt was begun by local residents in 1959. A prospector talked a farmer into digging up his land looking for silver bars, left behind by Indians, but nothing was ever found.



BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN RADIOVILLE -- a stretch of US Highway 421 bordered by a game preserve, a bowling alley, an antique dealer and some modular homes

Many years before the creation of Radioville, the place was called "Anthony's Siding," where marsh hay was harvested from the adjacent swamps and loaded into boxcars, then sent to packing companies.

The original plat of survey was filed in October of 1932, by Margaret and Paul Loughlin of Joplin, Missouri. Paul operated a battery station before losing his business during the Depression. The couple moved to Chicago where Margaret went on to a successful real estate career.

Shortly after purchasing the Indiana property, which was mostly swamps and woods, the Loughlin's appointed Margaret's father, Henry Ullrich, as their power of attorney. Ullrich then went about selling lots in the area he named Radioville. Some Indiana officials say that he even used radio advertising to promote his community. Henry was a realtor and lived in River Forest, Illinois.

The subdivision consisted of 354 lots of

various sizes. Most of the people who purchased them were from Chicago, and had no idea of what they were buying. The new settlers soon abandoned their land, defaulted on property taxes, or tried to get their money back from Ullrich.

In a recent study by the author, made available to local libraries, several possible explanations were given as to why the area was named Radioville. It was first thought that a large amateur radio station was there. This has never been substantiated, although a few "hams," a radio TV repair shop, and a state police transmitting site were located there. None however go back to 1932. In 1948 WLS-TV (then WBKB -TV) once had a booster station, north of the area.

In 1927 a farmer reported that by standing between some trees in his front yard he could hear radio stations. The phenomenon is known as a non-linear detector. In other words, the effects of a small crystal radio set utilizing the trees and some aban-

RADIOVILLE, INDIANA

done telephone company wires enabled the signals to be picked up. They were faint, according to newspaper reports of the time, and occurred about twelve miles east of Radioville.

Elgin dentist and collector of antique radio sets, Dr. Ralph W. Muchow, characterized this event as being similar to the principles in effect when people hear radio transmissions in their dental fillings or braces. "It's like the old fox hole radios that we used to make with a needle and a razor blade," he explained, "Different aged metals just a short distance away from each other will detect radio signals." Actress Lucille Ball reportedly had this capability. "Of course having miles of telephone wires coming to the farmer's home also made a great antenna," Muchow noted.

Other explanations have been offered, including one farmer Kenneth Alberding who knew Ullrich. Ullrich told him that he practiced diathermy, a medical treatment that used high frequency radio waves to heal people with arthritis. An FCC license was required to operate this equipment, since it caused radio interference. The procedure used microwaves to "cook" people inside out to relieve pain and discomfort in joints and muscles. Perhaps Ullrich planned to set up a clinic in Radioville once the town got started. It never did, and the granddaughters of the Loughlin Family have no knowledge of this portion of their grandfather's life, except to say that he was a "health food nut, and drank large quantities of carrot juice."

Others in the area think that the area was called Radioville when the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) constructed a fire observation tower in the local game preserve. A state police antenna may have been installed on the structure years ago. The tower was erected in 1933, at the Jas-

per-Pulaski County Fish and Wildlife Area, managed by Jim Bergens.

The only known broadcasting to have ever occurred from the area were some later amateur radio operators, a store front station in nearby North Judson, Indiana called EHJ, and a pre-FCC licensed facility WCMA, at Culver Military Academy.

EHJ, standing for "Enjoy Hearing Judson," used a public address system to "air" pretend local talent shows to passers-by. The programs ran in 1932, from a radio repair shop in the town. People sat in the street to listen.

Radio station WCMA operated with 500 watts at 1450 kc. from 1925-1935.

Former WBBM engineer, now broadcast consultant, Robert A. Jones was not surprised to learn that there was a place called Radioville. He knows of several locations around the country where old CAA towers once stood, and the street that passes by is still called Radio Road. He speculates that perhaps there once was a radio operation of some kind in the community years ago.

Another thought is that property owner Paul Loughlin, who was formally from Elgin, Illinois might have had some experience with radio from building car storage batteries. He owned a shop off U.S. 66 in Joplin, Missouri in 1930. In radio's early years, several radio stations were owned by battery manufacturing companies including WSBC in Chicago, with call letters that stand for World Storage Battery Company. However none of his daughters recall if he had any interest in radio.

At this point I am inclined to accept any one of these notions, as well as a few others, that we do not have space for here. Many of them sound convincing but more evidence is needed to prove them out. Information on Radioville is becoming scarce because people have moved, died, or have forgotten.



FARMER KENNETH ALBERDING says that Radioville was named after the medical practice used by the town's developer who used "radio waves" to heal aches and pains.

The name Radioville could have attracted investors who at the time were excited about anything that had to do with or was called radio something.

The idea of a community surrounded by a radio station had worked west of Chicago near Downers Grove. In the late 1920's Edward Nockels, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor sold lots in a large tract of land which included the towers of station WCFL. City residents were urged to take advantage of open spaces, reasonable prices, fresh air, and a modern community that would be built in the area. Fashionable homes and a large shopping center exist on this property today.

While the Downer's Grove project had the financial backing of the Chicago Federation of Labor and was only about twenty miles from downtown Chicago, Ullrich's

Radioville was over a hundred miles away. His resources were far short of those held by the powerful labor council. Radioville could have just been a "copycat" of a successful well-financed project. Ullrich and Nockels were definitely on two different wavelengths.

However, because a plat was once filed with Pulaski County, and a subdivision planned, and perhaps an amateur radio station was once located there, the town still occupies a spot on state maps.

If you come to visit, don't expect to see any towers, or signs that say, "Welcome to Radioville." Don't turn on your car radio, looking to hear a large local station broadcasting news, weather, area sports, or a fast-talking disc jockey "making with the platters and the chatter" playing the Top 40.

You'll find instead a friendly bowling alley/restaurant where good food is served, and family fun take place in the eight lane facility. There are a few mobile homes and some farms. Bud Schroeder runs the bowling alley.

One will notice that U.S. 421 has changed very little over the years. It is still a lonely dark stretch of roadway at night, bordered on the west by a game preserve. There are some nice residents who are remotely curious as to how their town or area got its name, but are not overly concerned about it.

Life continues on there, as it does in most places. The sun rises, then drops behind the thick forests of the wildlife area at sunset every night in this tiny unincorporated Hoosier community.

Maybe someday, someone will start a real radio operation there and capitalize on its namesake, but until then, Radioville is today as it has always been, a dream, an idea, a quiet rural area, a town that never was. ■

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆



YESTERDAY IN AMERICA

BY BILL ELWELL

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Thank you for "tuning-in" to our latest representation of life in the United States during the Second World War. We're delighted to show you more of the curious changes and unusual occurrences that happened in our nation at that time.

Chicago-Douglas Production Takes-Off - The Douglas aircraft plant in Chicago has completed its first C-54 Skymaster. The four-engine aircraft will be used to transport military personnel and supplies.

NBC Show - *The Life of Riley*, a new comedy program, is being aired over NBC stations.

Canning Guide - A new home canning guide tells how to preserve food grown in Victory Gardens. There are directions for pickling, canning, dehydrating, freezing, and storing in pits and boxes.

Paramount Release - Bob Hope's newest comedy, *Let's Face It*, is a musical in which he makes his debut as a hooper. It's likely you'll see the entire picture before it does. A frantic camera crew and director barely managed to shoot the final half-minute close-up before Bob left to entertain our troops overseas.

Sulfa Drug Available - Sulfa-thiazole is one of the famous Sulfa drugs that help prevent infection of war wounds. Now you can get bandages treated with Sulfa-thiazole for extra protection when caring for small cuts and blisters.

Turn In Fat - Save your used and waste fat. Strain it into a clean, smooth-edge can.

When you have at least a pound, your butcher will buy it. Fat helps our war industries produce the glycerine needed for gunpowder.

Feeding Fido - Meat rationing is also hard on the family dog. Make up for what he used to get by feeding him milk, eggs, and any unrationed meats available at your butcher's. And supplement his food with vitamin capsules. They're available at pet stores.

Aircraft Chart - Boys and girls can now get a new aircraft spotting chart. This colorful guide has pictures of the latest Allied and Axis fighters and bombers and can help identify friends and foes in a jiffy! Free copies of the chart are available at shoe dealers.

ABC Program - *The Land Of The Lost*, a new children's adventure show, can be heard on ABC stations.

Mild Substitute - If there's a milk shortage in your area, try soybeans instead. Make one quart of "milk" from one cup of dry soybeans and six cups of water. Soy milk does not look or taste like cow's milk and is not recommended as a beverage. However, it can be used in pea soup, meat patties, cupcakes, custards, and spice cookie.

Curious Advice - It's not generally known that singer Dinah Shore is behind Shirley Mitchell's success as Leila Ransom, the Southern belle on *The Great Gildersleeve* radio program. It seems that Dinah, who is from Tennessee, helped



BOB HOPE

Shirley learn to speak with a Southern drawl for her role as Leila. Curiously, when Miss Shore later tested for the movie role of a Southern damsel, the director told her she did not sound Southern enough. Then he suggested she try to sound more like Shirley Mitchell!

Meat On The Table - Despite rationing and chronic shortages of popular meats, the American housewife can still put meat on her family's table. Smart shoppers are looking for low-point and unrationed meats and trying new wartime recipes. You too can keep your family well-fed by serving such patriotic dishes as boiled fresh tongue and spinach, deviled lamb neck slices, casserole of heart with biscuit topping, crispy liver steaks, kidney stew with potato patties, and oxtails with horseradish.

Winnetka Work Auction - Residents of Winnetka, Illinois have staged a new kind of auction on behalf of the 4th War Loan Drive. For amounts ranging from four to six digits in bond pledges, 36 Winnetkans hired themselves out to neighbors as but-

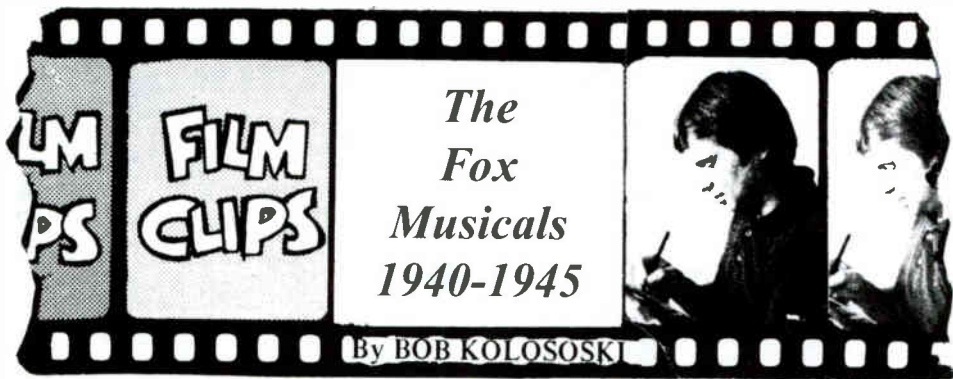


**WILLIAM BENDIX as Chester A. Riley
with JOHN BROWN as Digby O'Dell**

lers, car-washers, dishwashers, dog-washers, porch-moppers, and silver-polishers. Among the workers were the Chief of the Winnetka Police Department, Headmaster of the North Shore Country Day School, National Chairman of the League of Women Voters, President of Carson Pirie Scott & Company, and Principal of New Trier High School. Proceeds amounted to \$1,440,000 in bonds.

New Stoves Available - There's good news for the home front. Uncle Sam has authorized production of a limited number of stoves for essential civilian needs. To get one, apply to your local ration board for a purchase certificate. However, please do not apply if your present stove can be repaired.

V-Mail Photographs - The *Chicago Tribune* has solved the problem posed by the large number of photographs being sent to servicemen. In order to save space, the paper is reproducing photos of mothers and infants on V-Mail forms, so fathers can see children born since they left home. ■



When World War II ended in August, 1945 it marked the end of the most violent period in human history. The “long night of darkness” that had engulfed the world had been lifted, and a new era of peace was at hand. Amidst all the darkness, however, a bright light had managed to penetrate and dissolve the shadows in a flurry of Technicolor. That light captured the imagination of a generation surrounded by a world mired in war.

The movie musicals made at 20th Century Fox were ninety minute vacations from the war, enjoyed by what was left of the free world. It was the worst of times, but in the darkness of a theatre it could temporarily be the best time the dream factories had to offer. Thirty-one Fox musicals were released between 1940 and 1945, and although some of the plots were interchangeable, the music was always fresh and the best the studio could buy.

The people who wrote, produced, directed, and starred in these films were a mixed bag of Fox veterans and a batch of talented newcomers to the studio. Interestingly, the man who ran the studio, and was directly responsible for the push toward musicals in the forties, was the man who started the musical craze in the thirties. Darryl F. Zanuck was the head of production at Warner Bros. in 1933, and was the man who convinced Jack Warner to produce *42nd Street*. The film was a boffo

success, and musicals were king until 1938 when the musical engine ran out of steam.

In 1939 Hitler’s troops invaded Poland and proceeded to conquer Europe by mid-1940. This created a dilemma in Southern California because a good portion of the movie revenue came from Europe. The loss of that market had to be replaced by another source and the studios turned to South America as the replacement player.



ALICE FAYE

They began to promote good-will tours south of the border, with one eye focused on diplomatic good and the other firmly focused on potential profits. Zanuck wasn't a diplomat, but he put two and two together and came up with the film *Down Argentina Way*. It scored big, as did stars Don Ameche, Betty Grable, and a little Latin bombshell by the name of Carmen Miranda. Suddenly Latin music was hot; Latin dances were hot; and Latin costumes, shown off in brilliant Technicolor, were the latest rage.

Zanuck and his studio were no strangers to musicals (Shirley Temple had kept the studio in the black for seven years with her sprite musical efforts), but this was a new decade and Zanuck was going to repackage the musical to fit the newly prosperous movie-going public. He had shed off Shirley Temple in 1940; Alice Faye was regarded as the new queen of the lot, but an illness prevented her from starring in *Down Argentina Way*. Betty Grable, who had just been signed to a contract, was rushed in to replace Faye in the picture. Songwriter Harry Warren was hired to write one song for Temple's last film (*Young People*) and was teamed with lyricist Mack Gordon for that project. They worked so well together that they were assigned to write four songs for *Down Argentina Way* and they were on their way to a five year partnership at Fox. Director Irving Cummings had specialized in light films and Shirley Temple musicals, so his selection as director was a good solid decision by Zanuck. Cummings would direct seven more musicals before the end of the war.

As a matter of fact, the cast of characters used in the musicals remained fairly consistent throughout that five year period.

Alice Faye had been with Fox since 1935, and by 1940 had overtaken Shirley Temple as the box office champ of the studio. She, in turn, would be replaced by



BETTY GRABLE

Betty Grable during the war years and retire from films in 1945. Faye's last major musical was *The Gang's All Here* produced in 1943

Betty Grable had appeared in films since 1930, but she spent most of the decade in minor roles or "B" movies. She went to Broadway in 1939 to be in *DuBarry Was A Lady* and became an "overnight success." She signed with Fox in 1940 and by 1944 was one of the top ten moneymakers in films.

Carmen Miranda had her own Brazilian band and had scored a hit in the Broadway musical *Streets Of Paris*. She signed with

THE FOX MUSICALS 1940-1945

Fox in 1940 and became a musical and comical addition to many films - she was a little fireball.

Don Ameche was an unlikely musical star since his singing and dancing abilities were minimal, but he was a “jack of all trades” and was a welcome addition to any film.

John Payne had been in Hollywood since 1935 and had a pleasant singing voice, but was not a great dancer. He did have a great physique and managed to take off his shirt in almost every film he did.

Cesar Romero (a true Latin from Manhattan) was a musical stage star who began making films in 1933. He slowly worked his way up from bit player to the lead in a series of “Cisco Kid” features produced at Fox. His dark, handsome, Latin looks were a natural for the musicals at Fox, and he often played the foil to Carmen Miranda.

Directors Irving Cummings, Walter Lang, Allan Dwan, H. Bruce Humberstone, and Archie Mayo were the directors most often used for the Fox musicals. Zanuck was lucky enough to obtain the services of Busby Berkeley for one film, and in 1943 Berkeley pulled out all the stops in making *The Gang's All Here*. In many ways it is the ultimate wartime musical.

The Gang's All Here starred Alice Faye, and the backup cast was the best in the business. Carmen Miranda goes to town in the musical number banned in Boston “The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat.” The sight of dozens of young ladies dancing with giant bananas was considered a bit vulgar by some critics. Benny Goodman and his orchestra belted out a pair of tunes composed by Harry Warren and Leo Robin, and Charlotte Greenwood did a poolside dance that defies description.

Brilliant Technicolor was used to good



CARMEN MIRANDA

effect in showing off the designer outfits worn by the ladies and gentlemen of the cast. The plot was sillier than most, but it was secondary to the stars, the songs, and the colorful sets. The intent wasn't to produce great story-telling, but rather to produce stylized visual entertainment.

Orchestra Wives was released in 1942, was shot in black and white, and starred George (I can't sing or dance) Montgomery and Ann Rutherford with the fabulous Glenn Miller and his band providing the musical spark. The film actually had a dramatic story that wasn't classic literature, but sturdy enough to hold the viewers interest between beautiful band numbers by Mr. Miller.

Several well known bands made appearances in a few of the Fox musicals. Sammy Kaye and his orchestra were in *Iceland*, Benny Goodman and his band in *The Gang's All Here*, Woody Herman and his Gang in *Wintertime*, Jimmy Dorsey and his boys in *Four Jills In A Jeep*, and Charlie Spivak's orchestra in *Pin-Up Girl*.

Ice Skating star Sonja Henie appeared

in three musicals during the war, and of the three - *Sun Valley Serenade*, *Iceman*, and *Wintertime* - *Sun Valley Serenade* holds up the best. Once again Glenn Miller and his band are a valuable asset to the film, but Henie's skating was the real attraction. Her range of acting ability spanned from looking cute with a pout to looking cute with a smile, but put her in an ice rink and she dominated the screen.

The most unusual and perhaps daring musical film of the war years was *Stormy Weather*. It starred Bill Robinson and Lena Horne with Cab Calloway and his cats providing some swinging backup. The cast was all black and it paid tribute to the contribution of African-Americans to the musical culture of our country. Fats Waller, Dooley Wilson, the Nicholas Brothers, and the Katherine Dunham dance troupe were all given the chance to display their talents in this first-class film.

As the war drew to a close in 1945 the musical that took the joyous mood of the country and translated it to the screen was *State Fair*. Filled with the beautiful songs



DON AMECHE

of Rodgers and Hammerstein, *State Fair* celebrated the simple life of rural America. The cast, which included Jeanne Crain, Dick Haymes, Dana Andrews and Charles Winninger, was perfect in this musical version of classic Americana. America was still a country of small towns. Most of those towns had sent their young men to war. On many of the remote battlefields a movie from the states was a link to home: a welcome break from the horror in which they were engaged.

The Fox musicals were often nothing more than Technicolor fluff, but to many servicemen overseas they were the best moral boosters the folks back home could send. Betty Grable never won the Academy Award, but her pin-up picture was everywhere there was an American unit. The stars and the films were tailor made for a time in American history when watching Carmen Miranda doing the "Chica, Chica, Boom Chic" would cause a young man to smile, and send a young woman out to look for a tutti-fruitti hat. ■



CESAR ROMERO

*Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .*

More on the Home Front



In these pages some time ago, I recalled some of my memories of World War II. I was a pre-teen and a young teen living on Chicago's West Side in those years.

Since that first article appeared, I've recalled a few more memories of the era, and I'd like to share them with you. If you were on the home front in those days, my recollections may trigger some of your own. If you're too young to remember the war, this will give you an idea of the flavor of the times.

The war had lasting effects on many of us. For others of us, there were subtle changes in our daily routines — changes which we may have forgotten decades ago and not recalled since. Every one of us felt the effects of the war in one way or another.

Young children were affected, even those whose fathers and brothers did not go off to war. Boys playing outdoors were no longer policemen chasing robbers, or cowboys battling Indians; they were fighter pilots downing enemy planes, or infantrymen marching into enemy territory.

Schoolchildren were taught to distinguish between American and enemy aircraft by studying drawings of silhouettes of the planes.

At the grammar school I attended, an electric horn attached to the outside of the

building announced to the pupils the beginning of class and the end of recess. During the war, the principal felt that the sound of the horn might be mistaken by people in the neighborhood for an air raid siren, and the use of the horn was discontinued. Instead, an 8th-grade boy would walk through the schoolyard at the appropriate times ringing a handbell.

I recall another change at school. Each morning, at the beginning of class, the teacher and the pupils would stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The right hand was placed over the heart as the pledge began: "I pledge allegiance..." On the words "to the flag," the right arm would be extended, with palm facing up and fingers together, in the direction of the flag hanging in the front of the classroom. This pose would be maintained till the end of the recitation.

Because the extended arm was reminiscent of the Nazi salute (in the Nazi salute, the palm faced down; apart from that, the two positions were identical) we were instructed to keep our right hands over our hearts for the entire pledge.

To an investor today, "CD" stands for "certificate of deposit." Mention "CD" to a record collector and he or she will think of a compact disc. During World War II, "CD" stood for "Civil Defense," and its

presence was all around us.

During the first months after the United States' entry into the war, we thought it was possible that cities on the east coast or the west coast, even cities in the center of the country, such as Chicago, would be bombed by enemy aircraft. The government organized the Office of Civilian Defense to prepare the civilian population to deal with these possible air attacks.

In many neighborhoods, each city block had a block captain, who was elected by the residents. It was his or her responsibility to instruct the residents in procedures to be followed in the event of an attack.

Air raid wardens had a similar duty, but they usually had charge of an area larger than a block.

There were other Civil Defense workers, whose duties were specialized. Some were nurses' aides. Others were to provide food and shelter for citizens who were made homeless by an air raid. Still others would remove unexploded bombs, or repair roads and bridges damaged by enemy bombs, or fight fires, or shut off broken gas mains. Many served on a voluntary basis.

In countries subject to attack by enemy bombing planes, the people were required to "black out" the cities at night: the only way the plane's crew could tell when they were over a city was by seeing the city lights below. Here in the United States, an important responsibility of block captains and air raid wardens was to instruct the people in their areas how to achieve a blackout.

The Office of Civilian Defense once arranged a practice blackout for the entire city of Chicago. We were given plenty of advance notice, during which time the newspapers and the radio, as well as the Civil Defense workers, instructed us in methods of covering all windows with heavy drapery or other opaque material which would not allow any light to be seen from the out-

side. The blackout would last (as I recall) for two hours.

At the appointed hour on the evening of the blackout, the city went dark. In every house and every apartment, in every store, office, factory, filling station, either the windows were covered or the lights were doused. All the street lights went out. Even the theater marquees in the downtown entertainment district were dark.

There was one exception. The electric sign in the window of an exterminating company was left on. When the manager had closed up shop for the night, he had forgotten about the blackout. The next day, the newspapers carried a picture taken from the air during the blackout. One tiny point of light was visible.

One day a few weeks later, the banner on the front page of one of the newspapers read: **BLACKOUT COMING WITHOUT WARNING.**

It never happened. Our political and military leaders had come to realize that the Axis was not going to bomb any American cities.

Still, there was plenty of work for the Civil Defense personnel. They organized scrap metal drives, scrap rubber drives, paper drives, blood drives, and war bond drives. All Americans wished to contribute to the war effort; the Office of Civilian Defense told us how.

One scrap metal drive I recall was held one evening at Madison and Pulaski. Music created a festive air for the occasion. On the sidewalk, a bin about six feet square and six feet high with an open top had been built from lumber and chicken wire for the collection of the donations. Battered pots and pans and kettles, old tools, tin cans of all sizes, old plumbing fixtures, toys, metal objects of all kinds were brought by neighbors and tossed into the bin.

Scrap rubber, too, was much in demand. To these drives we would contribute old

MORE ON THE HOME FRONT

auto tires, bicycle tires, innertubes, galoshes, rubber heels, rubber balls, and rubber garden hose.

Certain Fridays at school were designated as paper-drive days: each pupil was asked to bring ten old newspapers.

There was a heavy demand on the resources of the nation's railroads: great numbers of trains were needed each day for the movement of military equipment, supplies, and personnel, and civilians were asked to forgo any travel that was not essential. "IS THIS TRIP NECESSARY?" appeared on posters and in newspapers and magazines so often that it became a catch phrase.

If you were out walking with a friend and happened to stumble on an uneven sidewalk, your friend would very likely quip, "Was that trip necessary?"

While many commodities were rationed, many others were not. Auto parts, white shirts, and chewing gum, for example, were not rationed; you could buy all you wanted of those items — *if* you could find them. In the store, you might ask for an item and be told that it was out of stock. Somewhat irritated, you might complain that it had been out of stock last week, and the week before.

The clerk would very likely respond to your gripe by saying — sometimes teasingly, sometimes not so teasingly — "Don't you know there's a war going on?" That was a sentence often heard on the home front.

One of the rationed commodities was gasoline. The typical motorist had an "A" sticker on the windshield of his car. This meant that he was entitled to no more than four gallons of gas a week.

People whose occupations required them to do a lot of driving were allotted more

gas. Included among this group were physicians, who, in those days — incredible as it may seem today — routinely made house calls.

In the early days of the war, a family from Austria — Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz and their grown son — immigrated to the United States and settled in Chicago. They moved into the apartment upstairs of the one where my family lived, and we became friendly with them.

One day early in 1943, Mrs. Schwartz knocked on our door and, when my mother let her in, said, excitedly, "Mrs. Alexander, I have been at the supermarket. They have coffee!"

Mrs. Schwartz's point was not that the store had a certain brand of coffee in stock, nor that the coffee was on sale at an especially attractive price. The news was that there was any coffee at all on the shelves — something to shout about.

My mother, with ration book in hand, hurried to the supermarket to buy some coffee before it was all gone — it might be a long time before the store received another shipment.

"For the duration" was an elliptical phrase uttered countless times every day. For the duration of *what*? The duration of the summer? The duration of one's employment? The duration of the month? "For the duration" meant the duration of the war. No one needed to be told that, for the war was on everyone's mind.

People continued to fall in love and marry. Babies continued to be born. Children went to school. Men and women went to work, and to church. The buses and streetcars ran as usual. The newspapers rolled off the presses each day. Baseball games and football games were played, boxing matches were held, and horseraces were run.

Hollywood continued to make movies.

Broadway continued to give us plays and musicals. Songs continued to flow from Tin Pan Alley. Life went on. But nearly everything we saw, or read, or heard, or said was colored by the war and its ramifications. Always — *always* — the war was on our minds.

Radio played an important part in American life during the war. Indeed, the war years coincided with the peak of Radio's Golden Age. Radio brought us a variety of entertainment in those troubled years. It was also our most immediate source of news, and news of the war was vital to all of us.

The networks broadcast news programs featuring live reports from correspondents around the world, Edward R. Murrow being the most noted of these correspondents.

There were also several programs of news and commentary in which one man would speak for the entire fifteen-minute broadcast. The commentator would give only important news — mostly war news — and he would report the stories in depth, analyzing them. There was no fluff, no "happy" news here.

Some of the best known of these commentators were H.V. Kaltenborn, Raymond Gram Swing, Elmer Davis, and Gabriel Heatter, who, on the evening of a day when the war had gone well for the Allies, would sometimes open his broadcast with the words, "Good evening, Everyone. Ah, there's good news tonight."

Many people had their favorite news commentator, and they would listen to him just as regularly as they would listen to their favorite comedy show, or soap opera, or dance band.

On Saturday, April 6, 1946 — Army Day — I witnessed a grand parade on State Street. Thousands of spectators lining the street applauded and cheered the troops and the bands. The war had been over for sev-

eral months, life was returning to normal, and it was spring. The mood was one of jubilation.

We were justly proud of our armed forces, and of ourselves as a nation. When Pearl Harbor had been attacked four years before, the United States had been ill-prepared for war, but we, and our allies, through hard work, sacrifice, and determination, had won that war.

The high point of the parade came when an open car slowly passed, carrying, side-by-side in the back seat, President Truman and General Eisenhower, both men smiling and waving at the crowd.

General Eisenhower, who had been Supreme Commander of Allied Armies in the European Theater of Operations during the war, was at the time probably the most popular man in America; his bald head and his broad grin were familiar to all.

Mr. Truman had been President for just a year. Before that, as a senator from Missouri, his name had not often been in the headlines; as Vice President — like most Vice Presidents — he had continued to have a low profile. General Eisenhower, then, was more famous than the President of the United States sitting beside him.

As the car passed, spectators called from the sidewalk, "Hi, Ike!"

No one knew it at the time, of course, but in seven years, the General would succeed Mr. Truman in the White House.

World War II was a time of great anguish, but it was also a glorious time. Think of it: a hundred and thirty-two million Americans — soldiers and civilians; men and women; children, teen-agers, and adults of all ages; the rich and the poor — working as a team, all pulling in the same direction. It was a wondrous thing to see. We haven't seen anything like it since. ■

JUNE 1995**Old Time Radio Classics -- WBBM-AM 78
SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK
MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
PLEASE NOTE: Due to WBBM's commitment to news, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be preempted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i> . However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.						
				1 Christopher London Johnny Dollar Part 4 of 5	2 Mollé Mystery Theatre Johnny Dollar Part 5 of 5	3 Sam Spade Superman
4 Red Ryder Charlie McCarthy	5 Horatio Hornblower Portia Faces Life	6 Hopalong Cassidy Jack Armstrong	7 Jack Benny Green Hornet	8 Gangbusters Our Gal Sunday	9 Third Man Fibber McGee & Molly	10 Mysterious Traveler Superman
11 Famous Jury Trials Fred Allen	12 Black Museum Terry & the Pirates	13 Box Thirteen Charlie McCarthy	14 Cisco Kid The Goldbergs	15 The Clock Charlie McCarthy	16 The Falcon Don Winslow of Navy	17 Damon Runyon Theatre Superman
18 Tales of Texas Rangers Tennessee Jed	19 You Bet Your Life Third Man	20 Sherlock Holmes Woman in White	21 Six Shooter Tom Mix	22 Fibber McGee & Molly Burns and Allen	23 Dragnet Backstage Wife	24 Halls of Ivy Superman
25 Jack Benny The Clock	26 Sealed Book Young Widder Brown	27 Red Ryder Little Orphan Annie	28 Box Thirteen Evelyn Winters	29 Charlie McCarthy Black Museum	30 Famous Jury Trials Buck Rogers	1 July Life of Riley Superman

JULY 1995

Old Time Radio Classics -- WBBM-AM 78 SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Hopalong Cassidy Abbott & Costello	3 Dragnet Charlie McCarthy	4 Hidden Truth Sky King	5 Charlie McCarthy Fibber McGee & Molly	6 Gangbusters Pepper Young's Family	7 Black Museum Charlie McCarthy	8 Dark Fantasy Superman
9 Dimension X Jimmy Allen	10 Let's Pretend Johnny Dollar Part 1 of 5	11 Nightbeat Johnny Dollar Part 2 of 5	12 Hopalong Cassidy Johnny Dollar Part 3 of 5	13 The Line-Up Johnny Dollar Part 4 of 5	14 The Shadow Johnny Dollar Part 5 of 5	15 Our Miss Brooks Superman
16 The Shadow Easy Aces	17 The Green Lama Moon Over Africa	18 Burns and Allen Third Man	19 Hopalong Cassidy Easy Aces	20 Charlie McCarthy Sherlock Holmes	21 Duffy's Tavern Jimmy Allen	22 Fibber McGee & Molly Superman
23 Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston	24 My Favorite Husband Captain Midnight	25 X Minus One Captain Midnight	26 The Judge Captain Midnight	27 Academy Award Captain Midnight	28 X Minus One Captain Midnight	29 The Shadow Superman
30 Suspense Big Sister	31 The Saint Moon Over Africa	1 Aug. Counterspy Pt. 1 of 2 Lum and Abner	2 Aug. Counterspy Pt 2 of 2 Bill Stern	3 Aug. Chandu the Magician Easy Aces	4 Aug. Dimension X Moon Over Africa	5 Aug. Can You Top This? Superman

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

JUNE 1995

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. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3rd

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (5-15-45) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGee's who attend an auction. Fibber buys a hunk of junk trunk. Cast includes Arthur Q. Brian, Shirley Mitchell, Bea Benadaret, Marlin Hurt, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:25)

★ **HARRY S. TRUMAN (6-1-45)** The President's message to congress on the necessity of winning the war with Japan. "There can be no peace in the world until the military power of Japan is destroyed with the same completeness as was the power of the European dictators." Recording by Office of War Information. (15:55)

★ **CHESTERFIELD SUPPER CLUB (6-5-45)** Perry Como stars with Marian Hutton, Tex Beneke and Paula Kelly and the Modernaires (who are appearing with Perry in the Glenn Miller Tribute today at New York's Paramount Theatre). AFRS rebroadcast. (14:30)

★ **MAJOR GLENN MILLER DAY (6-5-45)** An all-star

tribute to the "missing-in-action" bandleader as broadcast from the stage of the Paramount Theatre in New York City as part of the Seventh War Loan Drive. Martin Block covers the proceedings for the listening audience from his perch 195 feet above the Paramount stage "through a very powerful pair of field glasses." Appearing in the *first half* of this four-hour program are Charlie Spivak and his orchestra, Chief Petty Officer Tex Beneke, dancers Tip, Tap and Toe, Jo Stafford, Shep Fields, comedian Dean Murphy, Gene Krupa, Louis Prima and his orchestra, the Modernaires, comedian and pantomimic Gil Lamb, Perry Como, Harmonica Rascals, Count Basie and his orchestra, Sammy Kaye, Cab Calloway, Pearl Bailey, and Xavier Cugat. (*Second half of this broadcast will be presented on TWTD next week.*) WNEW, New York. (33:10; 27:45; 32:15; 23:45)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be *Nostalgia Digest* columnist, big band historian and Glenn Miller authority **KARL PEARSON** who will talk about the career of Glenn Miller and offer comments about this unusual broadcast.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10th

★ **MAJOR GLENN MILLER DAY (6-5-45)** An all-star tribute to the bandleader, as broadcast from the stage of the Paramount Theatre in New York. The *second half* of this four-hour program on behalf of the Seventh War Loan Drive begins with a 30-minute segment heard from coast-to-coast by the National Broadcasting Company. Benny Goodman and his orchestra open the network portion with Milton Berle as comedian-emcee. Also appearing are Joe Besser, Johnny Johnston and Red Norvo. As the broadcast continues, we hear Ed Sullivan, Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, Guy Lombardo, Lloyd Nolan, Eddie Cantor, Diana Lynn, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and Kate Smith. WNEW, New York. (33:10; 23:50; 24:10; 25:30)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian **KARL PEARSON** who returns with additional commentary on Glenn Miller and this unusual broadcast.

★ **LET YOURSELF GO (6-6-45)** Milton Berle stars with guest Al Jolson and regulars Joe Besser, Connie Russell, announcer Ken Niles and Ray Bloch and the orchestra. Jolson tells his "secret ambition" to see the world as tolerant and free as the theatre. Al and Milton recall Jolson's life story. Great audience re-



GLENN MILLER

sponse for the popular Jolson. Eversharp, CBS. (28:50)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY** (5-22-45) Fibber is director of the big Band Concert and Bond Rally for the Seventh War Loan Drive at Wistful Vista's Civic Auditorium. Jim and Marian Jordan star with Bea Benadaret as Mrs. Carstairs, Shirley Mitchell as Alice Darling, Marlin Hurt as Beulah, and Arthur Q. Brian as Doc Gamble. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:02)

SATURDAY, JUNE 17th HAIL THE CONQUERING HERO: GENERAL IKE COMES HOME!

★ **GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER** (6-18-45) Ike arrives in the United States for the first time since victory in Europe. The Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe speaks before a joint session of Congress, expressing thanks to the courageous American soldiers, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He tells how America and its allies played their parts in Victory. ALL NETWORKS/MBS. (30:54)

★ **NEWS** (6-19-45) *10 a.m. EWT.* Henry Gladstone with the latest news from the Pacific front and around the world. Serutan, WOR/MBS. (28:55)

★ **EISENHOWER PARADE** (6-19-45) *11 a.m. EWT.* From 57th Street and Fifth Avenue in New York City, newsman Hugh Sanders describes the parade in honor of Gen. Eisenhower. WOR. (4:45)

★ **GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER** (6-19-45) *12 Noon, EWT.* Mutual reporters on the spot at New York's City Hall describe the scene and the arrival of Ike as Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia makes the General an Honorary Citizen of New York. The celebration includes musical selections by Igor Gorin, Marian Anderson, James Melton, the Police Glee Club, the New York City Band and comments by Ike himself. WOR. (51:20)

★ **EISENHOWER PARADE** (6-19-45) *1:20 p.m. EWT.* From the marquee of the Hotel Astor comes this report on Ike's arrival in Times Square following his reception at City Hall. Ike waves to the screaming crowd! WOR. (3:00)

★ **GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER** (6-22-45) A hometown salute to the victorious leader of the Allied Forces in Europe. Ike come home to Abilene, Kansas where he talks about his boyhood, his family and his hometown. MBS. (29:15)

—PLUS—

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (5-29-45) Fibber borrows Mrs. Carstairs lawnmower. Cast includes Jim and Marian Jordan, Bea Benadaret, Arthur Q. Brian, Shirley Mitchell, Marlin Hurt, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:40)

SATURDAY, JUNE 24th

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (3-22-51) We begin a summer-long series of programs by the great Carlton E. Morse.

A few episodes from Book 84 are missing, but the story will be easy to follow in the twenty chapters that survive. The drama picks up, generally, where we left off last summer. In Chapter 4 of Book 84, Hazel is concerned because it has been a long time since she has heard from her son Pinky in Oregon. Meanwhile, Margaret is working on a history of the Barbour Family. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (3-26-51) Book 84, Chapter 6. Paul is in Oregon, checking on Pinky. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

★ **PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN** (6-26-45) Chet Huntly reports on the closing session of the United Nations Conference for International Organization from the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco. President Truman addresses the delegates, speaking about the great work done in developing a charter for the U.N. and what it means to the world. CBS. (31:00)

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (6-5-45) Molly wants the hall closet cleaned out in anticipation of the arrival of Mrs. Carstairs who is coming for tea. Bea Benadaret appears as Mrs. Carstairs. Marian Jordan, as Molly, sings "The Fireman's Bride" with the King's Men." Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:36)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (12-15-52) "African Queen" starring Humphrey Bogart and Greer Garson in a radio version of the 1951 film. Bogart repeats his Academy Award winning role in this story of a souce and a spinster who travel up the Congo during the first world war. Host is Irving Cummings. Lux Soap, CBS. (16:30; 18:25; 21:05)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (3-27-51) Book 84, Chapter 7. "Pinky Murray, Seaman Recruit." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:35)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (3-28—51) Book 84, Chapter 8. "Jack is worried about Nicolette." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

JULY 1995

SATURDAY, JULY 1st HERE COMES THE SHOWBOAT!

LUX RADIO THEATRE (6-24-40) "Show Boat" starring Irene Dunne, Allan Jones and Charles Winninger, recreating their original screen roles in this radio adaptation of the 1936 screen hit. Cecil B. DeMille hosts this version of the Jerome Kern - Oscar Hammerstein II musical about life on a Mississippi Show Boat. Cast includes Verna Felton. Lux Soap. (23:40; 16:25; 17:50)

AMERICANA (10-26-49) "The Show Boat and Other Pastimes" is the subject as Northwestern University School of Speech professor Martin Maloney narrates while announcer Bill Griskey reads passages from Captain Billy Bryant's 1936 autobiography "Children of Old Man River" subtitled "The Life and Times of a Show Boat Trooper." Excerpt, WMAQ, Chicago. (17:00)

THIS IS YOUR LIFE (10-26-49) Host Ralph Edwards surprises tonight's subject, Captain Billy Bryant whose career as a Show Boat captain is told in this broadcast. Helping Captain Billy recall those pleasant days are his wife Josephine and his daughter Betty. Also presented is a Show Boat performance in capsule form, "Ten Nights in a Barroom" featuring Betty's daughter in the role her mother originally played on the Show Boat. Phillip Morris Cigarettes, NBC. (27:30)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be **BETTY BRYANT** whose family-owned show boat plied the inland waterways of the Ohio River from before the First World War until 1942.



BILL GERSHON

WNIB's first classical music announcer

SATURDAY, JULY 8th HAPPY 40th ANNIVERSARY TO WNIB, CLASSICAL 97

NOTE: Radio station WNIB first signed on the air July 9, 1955 and is this year celebrating 40 years of continuous broadcasting under the same call letters and same ownership, Northern Illinois Broadcasters (NIB). We'll observe the occasion with an afternoon of recollections and entertainment as we talk about the early days of WNIB with **BILL GERSHON**, the station's first classic music announcer, and other distinguished alumni including **DICK BUCKLEY** and **MARTY ROBINSON**. Also joining us for a look at the WNIB scene will be program director **RON RAY** and program hosts **CARL GRAPENTINE** and **KEN ALEXANDER**. Plus, we'll have some old time radio sounds appropriate for the occasion:

RAILROAD HOUR (7-13-53) On the occasion of the program's 250th broadcast, Gordon MacRae and Dorothy Warrenskjold star in "The Friml Story" by Lawrence and Lee, a musical salute to the great operetta composer. Rudolf Friml himself speaks and performs from San Francisco. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (30:15)

VOICE OF FIRESTONE (12-5-38) A Tenth Anniversary broadcast of the popular series featuring the Firestone Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Alfred Wallenstein. Richard Crooks, tenor, sings "Ave Maria" and "My Wild Irish Rose." Orchestra presents the "Triumphal March" from Aida and "Tales from the Vienna Woods." Announcer is Gene Hamilton. Anniversary comments from Vaughn deLeath, Lowell Thomas, Lawrence Tibbett, NBC President Lenox Lohr, and Harvey Firestone. Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., NBC. (29:15)

TELEPHONE HOUR (6-14-44) Donald Voorhees and the orchestra plus special guest star Nelson Eddy. Eddy sings "Let's Make Tomorrow Today" from "Knickerbocker Holiday," "Water Boy," "Tally Ho," and, in Russian, "Do Not Weep My Child." AFRS rebroadcast. (29:30)

SATURDAY, JULY 15th

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (6-12-45) Jim and Marian Jordan star. Fibber practices his magic act for the Elk's Club smoker. King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:36)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY (7-8-45)** Robert Trout and CBS correspondents around the world report the news. "Japanese radio says that mustang fighter planes - 150 of them - have attacked air fields in the Tokyo area... Navy headquarters at Guam

announces that five Japanese suicide planes hit three of Britain's first line aircraft carriers... In Germany, the Russians are still in complete control of Berlin following the arrival of American, British and French troops." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:45)

OUR MISS BROOKS (10-24-48) Eve Arden stars as the Madison High School English teacher as everyone conspires to "keep Miss Brooks from buying an alligator bag so we can give it to her for her birthday." Gale Gordon is Mr. Conklin, Jeff Chandler is Mr. Bynton and Richard Crenna is Walter Denton. Palmolive Soap, Lustre Creme Shampoo, Colgate Tooth Powder, CBS. (29:14)

JURGEN'S JOURNAL (7-15-45) "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. North America and all the ships at sea." Columnist Walter Winchell offers news and commentary on the war, the political situation and domestic issues. Jurgen's Lotion, ABC. (14:35)

WAR BOND MATINEE (5-7-45) George Olson and his orchestra with music from Chicago to promote the sale of war bonds. Vocals by Judith Blair and Don Harmon. Announcer is Harry Creighton. U.S. Treasury Department, WGN/MBS. (14:50)

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (6-19-45) Fibber has a secretive big deal brewing with Mr. Carstairs and he won't tell anyone what it's about — not even Molly! Jim and Marian Jordan. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:39)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (3-29-51) Book 84, Chapter 9. "Fanny comes to Clifford's rescue." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:45)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (3-30-51) Book 84, Chapter 10. "A pilgrimage to San Diego." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:35)

SATURDAY, JULY 22nd

LUX RADIO THEATRE (3-11-46) "Presenting Lily Mars" starring June Allyson and Van Heflin in a radio version of the 1943 film. A young amateur actress wants to break into the big time when a flop producer brings his recent Broadway disaster to her small town. Host is producer William Keighly. AFRS rebroadcast. (11:50; 16:00; 13:20)

WORLD NEWS TODAY (7-22-45) Robert Trout and CBS correspondents with up to the minute news. "A small force of B-29s crossed over Japan's Inland Sea today and dropped high explosive bombs on the synthetic oil plant at Ube, a town on the southwest tip of Hangchow Island. Between 75 and 100 Superfortresses took part in the raid, their first blow at Japan since last Friday.... The Japanese may be overcome within six months." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:24)

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (6-26-45) Mrs. Carstairs (Bea Benadaret) allows Fibber and Molly (Jim and Marian Jordan) to use her houseboat on the north shore of Lake Dugan for the summer. This is the last McGee program of the season and concludes our 60th Anniversary tribute to the series during which we've presented the entire 1944-45 season of broadcasts. Special guest is comedian Victor Borge who takes over the McGee time period for the summer.

Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:30)

VICTOR BORGE SHOW (7-3-45) The Danish comedian/musician is the summer replacement for Fibber McGee and Molly and in this first show he offers a musical portrait of his cast; tells his favorite American story about "Pocahontas;" and offers his impression of the first baseball game he saw in America after coming to this country from Denmark. Cast includes singer Pat Friday, Henry Russell Sextet, Billy Mills and the orchestra, and announcer Harlow Wilcox. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:55)

NEWS OF THE WORLD (7-26-45) John W. Vandercook with news from around the globe. "Winston Churchill and the conservative government of which he was the chief spokesman have not only been defeated but resoundingly defeated... It is the most clear cut victory ever won in any British election against the party of conservatism. Winston Churchill has straight-way resigned. Clement Atlee will be named by the King as the new Prime Minister." Charles Lyon announces for Alka Seltzer, NBC. (14:40)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-2-51) Book 84, Chapter 11. "The pilgrim's return." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-3-51) Book 84, Chapter 12. "Nicolette divulges her plans." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:40)

SATURDAY, JULY 29th

WORLD NEWS TODAY (7-29-45) Bob Trout and CBS correspondents at home and abroad report. "Within the hour Columbia's chief of European correspondents Edward R. Murrow reported from London his belief that one of the principle negotiators at Potsdam has stated that his country will go to war with Japan —and soon." [Stalin; Russia] Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:55)

SPEAKING OF RADIO ACTORS' ROUNDTABLE (5-28-94) Radio actors Jack Krushen, Peter Leeds, Tyler McVey and Les Tremayne reminisce about their careers and the great days of acting in radio during a conversation moderated by Chuck Schaden and recorded at the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters' clubhouse at Sunset and Vine in Hollywood, California. Lots of stories about radio, performers, producers and directors. Part 1 of 3. (28:01)

SUSPENSE (6-24-62) "With Murder in Mind" starring Jack Krushen as a mentalist who performs a night club mind-reading routine with uncanny accuracy. Sustaining, CBS. (23:45)

SPEAKING OF RADIO ACTORS' ROUNDTABLE (5-28-94) More memories and stories from the quartet of outstanding radio actors. Part 2 of 3. (30:45)

SUSPENSE (1-13-55) "Final Payment" starring Harry Bartell and Peter Leeds. The story of "a perfect fraud that succeeded only too well." Sustaining, CBS. (24:30)

SPEAKING OF RADIO ACTORS' ROUNDTABLE (5-28-94) The conversation continues as the radio actors reminisce about the glory days of broadcasting. Part 3 of 3. (31:55)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (4-5-51) Book 84, Chapter 14. "I love romance." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:45)

HEIGH-HO, HEIGH-HO IT'S OFF TO WAR WE GO!

(The Mouse Factory as War Industry in WWII)

BY CURTIS L. KATZ

The call to serve our nation in World War II came swiftly to Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and their employer, Walt Disney. Within hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, a large part of the Disney studio was commandeered by the U.S. Army. Had the Army seen the tremendous possibilities of motion picture animation and its leading practitioner in instructing and indoctrinating our troops for war? Of course not. With typical Army logic, the Disney studio was regarded as the ideal place to store millions of rounds of ammunition and other equipment needed to defend southern California against possible Japanese attack.

Fortunately, someone *did* realize the potential of animation as an educational medium in time of war — the Navy. On the evening of December 8, 1941, Walt Disney received a call from the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics in Washington requesting twenty films, each 1,000 feet in length, on aircraft identification, the first to be delivered within ninety days, and the rest within six months. With one phone call, the Walt Disney Studio, which was accustomed to spending two to three years creating a 6,000-foot animated feature film, had just been committed to producing 20,000 feet of animation in a mere six months.

Within 36 hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Walt Disney Studio was at war, and like many other industries across the

nation, Disney's mouse factory retooled for war production. In the first year of America's involvement in the war, Disney's annual output of film footage jumped nearly 1,000%; the world's most famous producer of cartoon merriment became the biggest civilian contractor for military film production, and a proving ground for motion picture animation as a medium of education, military training, and propaganda.

The first generation of young men to grow up watching Walt Disney Mickey Mouse films were now watching Disney films with titles like *Approaches and Landings*, *Air Masses And Fronts*, *Protection Against Chemical Warfare*, and *Fundamentals of Artillery Weapons*.

These films would help prepare these men to do battle against an enemy whose leader had singled out Disney's Mickey Mouse as evidence of America's "decadence." Adolf Hitler's propagandists declared Mickey Mouse to be "...the most miserable ideal ever revealed...mice are dirty." It is perhaps appropriate then that the Walt Disney Studio played an influential role in Hitler's defeat.

The advent of war is never opportune, but the onset of World War II could hardly have been less opportune for Walt Disney. His studio was one million dollars in debt to the Bank of America. The studio's first fling with profitability following the stunning success of its first feature, *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* (1937), evaporated with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, and the resultant loss of Disney's lucrative

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foreign audience. A long and acrimonious strike in the spring and summer of 1941 added to the studio's woes. In November 1941, Disney laid off nearly half his work force to cut expenses.

But the Disney Studio was not entirely unprepared for war work. In the spring of 1941, as war clouds loomed ever closer to home, Disney took it upon himself to produce *Four Methods of Flush Riveting*, a short animated training film for the workers at the nearby Lockheed aircraft factory. Intended to demonstrate the powerful potential of animation as a wartime educational medium, *Flush Riveting* impressed the National Film Board of Canada, which

enlisted Disney to produce an anti-tank training film, and four theatrical trailers featuring the Seven Dwarfs and other familiar characters to promote the sale of Canadian War Bonds. (As part of the British Commonwealth, Canada had entered the war along side England in 1939.) As a result of his Canadian work, Disney was discussing film projects with various U.S. government agencies, including the Navy, when the Zeros descended on Pearl Harbor.

The transition from peacetime entertainment film-making to wartime government film production was quick and difficult. Animator Ward Kimball claimed "We'd

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work on the training films in between other things,” but there virtually were no “other things” — about 95% of Disney’s wartime film footage was produced for the government. While production of Disney’s popular short entertainment cartoons was maintained near pre-war levels, his ambitious program of one animated feature per year was abandoned following the completion of *Bambi* in early 1942, and a half-dozen features in various stages of development were shelved indefinitely. One of these, *The Sword In The Stone*, would not see the light of a projection lamp for over twenty years. While the most visible of Disney’s government films were informational cartoons made for theater audiences on behalf of such public agencies as the Treasury Department, the Department of Agriculture, and the Office of War Information, the overwhelming majority of Disney’s wartime pictures were training and indoctrinational films for the armed forces, to be seen only by GI’s.

Disney was not alone in producing animation for the armed services; most cartoon studios contributed to the war effort, and the Air Forces’ own First Motion Picture Unit produced more training film animation than all the civilian studios combined.

The normally hectic atmosphere of the Walt Disney Studio became absolutely frantic “for the duration.” The burden of a rapidly expanding work load on a work force lately reduced by layoffs was exacerbated when the draft took one third of Disney’s remaining employees. When pleas to the local draft board availed nothing, Disney invited board members to visit the studio. Astonished to be greeted by security checks and military personnel instead of cartoonists doodling Mickey Mouse, the draft board quickly halted the

conscripted of Disney employees, and many who were already inducted were returned, in uniform, to their drawing boards. At the start of war production, the studio staff worked six-day weeks plus overtime, but when the strain of this pace began to impede the progress of work, Walt restricted his employees to a maximum of “merely” 54 hours per week. The studio operated around the clock. The animation camera department was kept running six days a week, twenty hours a day, the remaining four hours of each day being reserved for repairs and maintenance. Sound recording had to be conducted between 10 p.m. and dawn; the sound-proofing of the sound stage was not sufficient to keep out the incessant roar of new P-38’s leaving the nearby Lockheed plant during the day.

Long hours and noisy neighbors were irksome, but what personally rankled Disney was sharing his studio with outsiders. The military had the run of the place! When the Army first arrived with their munitions depot, sentries were posted around the studio, and all employees were fingerprinted and issued ID badges — including Walt. The munitions depot departed after eight months, but successive waves of military invasion continued throughout the war. The Navy isolated parts of the studio complex for security reasons.

The studio hosted many other “visitors” in the course of the war. When his neighbor, the Lockheed plant, ran out of office space, Disney was compelled to accommodate Lockheed personnel, and lodge anti-aircraft troops protecting the airplane factory from possible attack. Overworked animators had to double up in their cubicles elbow-to-elbow as allotment of studio space became critical.

The Disney studio finances, a traditional problem, became necessarily more complicated with the government involved. Walt



WALT DISNEY

Disney wanted to sell his services to the government strictly at cost, but the government bookkeepers could not comprehend, and their accounting procedures could not permit, such patriotic generosity. They insisted Disney must show a profit. Even with a small profit added, the military films often went over budget. Sometimes Disney could persuade the Navy to rewrite a contract, but if not, the studio had to swallow the loss. Often films were made before appropriations were issued. Two years after the war, Disney was *still* unraveling his financial entanglements with Uncle Sam.

But despite the chaos that war work brought upon Disney's studio and its art, employees, and ledgers, the Disney staff accepted the challenge with aplomb and good humor that impressed all visitors — however long they stayed — and Walt made repeated trips to Washington to solicit more contracts.

Walt Disney would not permit his cast of famous cartoon characters to appear in

military training films, but on the home front they were allowed to “do their bit” for the war effort in Disney's *other* government films — those made for *civilian* agencies. Donald Duck who, by World War II, had surpassed Mickey Mouse in popularity, exhorted Americans to promptly pay their “taxes to beat the Axis” in *The New Spirit* (1942), and *The Spirit of '43* (1943). Minnie Mouse is the Typical American Housewife who learns the importance of saving cooking grease in *Out Of The Frying Pan Into The Firing Line* (1942), and it's the Seven Dwarfs who demonstrate methods for eliminating mosquitoes in *The Winged Scourge* (1943).

These films were popular with the public, if not always so with the scrooges in government. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, for whose department *The New Spirit* was made, thought Donald Duck inappropriate in the role of “Mr. Taxpayer.” His personal secretary may have echoed her boss's real thoughts when she bluntly told Disney, “I don't like Donald Duck.” Congressional Republicans singled out the federal expenditure for a Donald Duck cartoon as a prime example of wartime Democratic boondoggling.

But ultimately it was Disney and his artists who were least pleased with their famous characters as government spokesmen — for aesthetic reasons. Disney chafed at having to reuse footage from *The New Spirit* to make *The Spirit of '43*. His animators were disappointed that the Seven Dwarfs in *The Winged Scourge* could not be imbued with the seven distinct personalities they had labored years to create in *Snow White*. In short, the constraints of the wartime emergency did not permit the luxury of full character animation any more than they did the luxuries of butter and white sidewall tires, and after mid-1943, Disney no longer cast his regular stable of “actors” in any government films.

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Throughout the war, Disney managed to maintain a full production schedule of his regular cartoon shorts. Somewhat less than half of these had war-related themes. Some were virtually indistinguishable from propaganda. *Education For Death, Reason and Emotion*, and *Chicken Little* (all 1943) warn of the insidiousness of Nazi ideology.

Disney's most famous wartime cartoon short grew out of a script rejected for *The New Spirit*. Originally to have been entitled *Donald Duck In Nutzi Land*, it featured Donald Duck as a frustrated worker in a Nazi munitions plant. (It turns out, of course, to be only a dream.) While the cartoon was still in production, Disney tunesmith Oliver Wallace leaked the song he had written for the film to a neighbor who was associated with Spike Jones and His City Slickers. Disney was initially displeased, but was considerably mollified when the Jones recording sold over 1.5 million copies, and *Der Fuehrer's Face* became America's wartime anthem, much as Disney's *Who's Afraid of The Big Bad Wolf* had been a rallying song for Americans during the Depression. When the Donald Duck cartoon was completed, it was renamed for its featured song, and won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Subject of 1942.

Though Disney's regular program of feature film production was suspended for the duration of the war, production of a few special wartime features was undertaken.

Disney's two Latin American pictures, *Saludos Amigos* (1943) and *The Three Caballeros* (1945) were, in a sense, government projects, having resulted from a "good will tour," sponsored in part by the State Department, that Walt and some of his artists make to South America in the fall (*spring*, south of the equator) of 1941, shortly before Pearl Harbor. Nelson

Rockefeller's Commission on Inter-American Affairs requested the tour to promote the Roosevelt administration's "Good Neighbor Policy," a policy intended to shore up relations with our neighbors "south of the border" in order to counteract Nazi attempts at establishing ideological or military beachheads on this hemisphere.

The two films inspired by Disney's trip are essentially compilations of short subjects that use animation, live action, and music to give brisk colorful salute to Latin American and some of its cultures. *Saludos Amigos* includes segments featuring Goofy and Donald Duck; Donald helps introduce a new character, the Brazilian parrot Jose' Carioca. Donald returns as the *star* of *The Three Caballeros*; he is reunited with Jose', and they are joined by Panchito, a Mexican rooster.

While the obvious intention of these films is entertainment and perhaps a bit of education, propaganda is never far from the surface. One can hardly miss the message of hemispheric unity when, during the title song of *The Three Caballeros*, Donald the Anglo-American, Jose' the Portuguese-American, and Panchito the Spanish-American, stand shoulder-to-shoulder and sing, "In fair or stormy weather/ We stand close together/ Like books on a shelf."

Saludos Amigos and *The Three Caballeros* were each released first in Latin America, where they were received enthusiastically, and subsequently in the United States, to a merely warm reception. These two films have been seldom seen in theaters since the war. Today *Saludos Amigos* is best remembered for introducing the song "Aquerela do Brasil" to the movies. The chief legacy of *The Three Caballeros* was its pioneering use of the color traveling matte process. This fundamental technology for combining live and cartoon action in *color* laid the basis for milestone

advancements of this type of special effect in Disney's *Song of The South* (1946), *Mary Poppins* (1964), and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988).

Walt Disney made the feature film *Victory Through Air Power* (1943) — based on the 1942 book of the same name by Alexander de Seversky — because he personally believed in Seversky's controversial theories on aerial warfare. Strange as it may seem today, as late as World War II, American military leaders still resisted the contention, made by Seversky and others, that modern war would be fought from the air and won with fleets of long-range bombers.

In making *Victory Through Air Power*, Disney side-stepped the military, and brought Seversky's case straight to the public. Seversky himself appeared in the film to pitch his ideas, bracketed by animated graphics, a humorous cartoon history of aviation, and a serious animated dramatization of a bomber assault on Japan, culminating in one of the most powerful visual metaphors ever animated: an American eagle attacking the Japanese octopus to release its strangle hold on the Pacific. The film received mixed notices from critics, some of whom saw it was hard-sell propaganda. It was largely avoided by movie audiences who, according to one poll, were tiring of war-related movies, and it lost a half-million dollars.

But there would yet be victory for *Victory*. The picture received wide notice in England. During the first Quebec Conference, in August 1943, at which Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and other Allied leaders formulated plans for D-Day, some controversy arose over air support for the invasion. Churchill asked Roosevelt if he had seen *Victory Through Air Power*, and was surprised to learn he had not. A print was rushed by fighter plane from New York for the President to see in Quebec. It is

generally believed that his screening of *Victory Through Air Power* was instrumental in obtaining the heavy air coverage that attended the Normandy invasion of 1944. It is perhaps not coincidental that the Allied High Command password on D-Day was "Mickey Mouse."

Largely forgotten today is Walt Disney's highly-publicized intention to produce another aviation feature, and animated pictures about gremlins, the mythical aerial imps to whose mischief wartime aviators attributed all unexplainable malfunctions in aircraft. (See the Dec. '94-Jan. '95 issue of *Nostalgia Digest*.)

As if the film production didn't keep Walt Disney busy enough, his studio engaged in off-screen war work as well. Hundreds of posters featuring Disney characters were produced to communicate wartime messages for various civilian and military agencies. Some of the popular Disney character storybooks told war-themed stories. A rubber company in Ohio even made samples of a Mickey Mouse gas mask — a real gas mask designed for children. It is perhaps just as well that the rubber shortage, and the absence of any real threat of a domestic gas attack, prevented this item from being mass-produced.

A virtual side industry became the creation of cartoon insignia for military units. The first Disney-designed military emblem was done for a naval air squadron in 1939. During the war, the demand for cartoon insignia became so great that Disney had to set up a five-man department to satisfy all the requests. One of the artists on this crew was Roy Williams, later famous as Roy, the "Big Mooseketeer" on *The Mickey Mouse Club*.

The Disney Studio created emblems for units of all U.S. military services, and for military units of some of our allies as well. They were tremendous morale-boosters, and were used as letterhead, jacket patches,

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and aircraft nose art. To satisfy *public* interest in these insignia, they were reproduced on matchbook covers and collectible poster stamps.

While a multitude of cartoon characters were created especially for these emblems, Disney's regular characters were often requested. Perhaps because of his feisty personality, Donald Duck was by far the most popular, appearing on over 200 insignia, but all Disney's characters, even the gremlins (used in over two dozen emblems) had the opportunity to represent our fighting forces. Though they cost the studio an estimated \$25 each, Disney provided the insignia free of charge. "I had to do it," said Disney. "Those kids grew up on Mickey Mouse. I owed it to 'em." By war's end, well over 1,000 Disney insignia had joined the fight; hundreds more would be created on through the Viet Nam War.

World War II ended at the Walt Disney Studio almost as suddenly as it began. Within days after the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, Hollywood studios received a general order to cease military film production. At animation studios, military officials arrived and removed artwork for uncompleted films from animators' desks, and right from under the cameras. Presumably it was all destroyed; today few animated films made for the military in World War II, and virtually none of the artwork used to make them, are known to exist.

Some of the Disney training films have been preserved at New York's Museum of Modern Art and in the Disney Studio's own archives, and a few such films from other cartoon studios have somehow survived — notably the Army's "Private Snafu" series produced by Warner Bros., which is actually available on several video collections. But for the most part, there exists little hard

evidence of a vast body of work important in the history of film animation.

In the heat of wartime, the animated cartoon had proved itself an efficacious educational tool, but this was small consolation to Walt Disney. By war's end, the studio's prewar million-dollar debt had been run up to over *four* million dollars. Walt's brother and business manager Roy Disney later observed, "After the war was over, we were like a bear coming out of hibernation. We were skinny and gaunt and we had no fat on our bones. Those were lost years for us." Indeed, the studio's first postwar "traditional" animated feature (*Cinderella*) would not appear until 1950, consistent profitability would not be attained until the 1960's, and the one-cartoon-feature-per-year production schedule would not be approximated until the 1990's.

Seeking postwar direction for his studio, Disney briefly considered focusing mainly on peacetime educational film production. In a 1944 speech, Disney called animated film "...the most flexible, versatile, and stimulating of all teaching facilities." The war had taught Disney much about educational film-making, but one of the hardest things he learned is reflected in that four million dollar debt. After the war, Disney only occasionally and reluctantly produced an educational picture.

This seems an unfortunate loss to those of us whose brightest classroom memories include screenings of such Disney films as *Donald in Mathmagic Land*, the "Man in Space" series, *Our Friend the Atom*, and the "I'm No Fool" safety series. These films, and the postwar world in which we saw them, were made possible in part by the considerable contributions of the Walt Disney Studio in World War II. ■



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

A Father's Gift

BY KARL PEARSON

This year Father's Day falls on June 18, and for me it will be a time for reflection. Some *Those Were The Days* listeners may be aware that my father, George Ivar Pearson, passed away late last year after a long illness. Dad's birthday June 18, makes this year's Father's Day even more significant.

Over the past few months I have found myself frequently reminiscing about my father's life. Dad gave much to his friends and family, always offering a helping hand, encouragement, or support. In the process I feel that he touched many lives, although he may have never realized this fact.

There are three people who are primarily responsible for encouraging my interest in the music of the Big Band Era: my mother, father, and Chuck Schaden. Over the years these three individuals have encouraged me in both the collecting and broadcasting end of the hobby, and of the three I can proudly say that my father was the one most responsible for developing and nurturing my interests.

George Ivar Pearson, born in 1926, was a true product of the big band era. His parents, who had emigrated to America from their native Sweden before Dad was born, maintained an affection for the music of their homeland. As my father grew up he developed a love for American popular music, particularly for the big bands. Like many youngsters of the 1930's and 1940's, he later recalled staying up way past his bedtime, listening to the late-night band



GEORGE
IVAR
PEARSON

remotes (unbeknownst to his parents) that emanated from such magical places as the Cafe Rouge in New York City, the Trianon in Chicago, and the Palladium in Hollywood.

By the time Dad graduated from Lane Tech in 1944, his musical tastes included a number of the nationally-known bands such as those led by Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller, as well as midwestern favorites such as Dick Jurgens, Orrin Tucker and Tiny Hill. After graduation he enlisted in the United States Navy, spending most of his two-year stint on a ship in the Pacific. During his Navy service my father discovered that dancing to the music was just as much fun as listening to it. When Dad was able to get leave he would often head for a local dance hall or ballroom, where he would often try to get up the nerve to ask one of the dance hostesses to teach him the latest various steps. By the end of his naval stint he became a fairly good dancer.

After discharge Dad went to college on the G.I. Bill, as did many veterans. His interests in music and dancing continued, and often he would go dancing at various Chicago area ballrooms. After a trip to Swe-

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den with his father in 1947 Dad became interested in his Swedish heritage. He joined a Chicago Swedish folkdance group, where he met Barbro Olson, a young woman whose parents had also emigrated during Sweden in the 1920's. Barbro and George were married in 1953, and as Dad's life now included a new wife, a career, family responsibilities, and (in a few years) a family of his own, the musical interests as well as the records were put away on the shelf.

As life became increasingly busy, my father had little time to enjoy the music he grew up with. I do recall one Saturday evening when my parents went out with a group of their friends to a dance held at the Chevy Chase Country Club in Wheeling, where Frankie Masters and his Orchestra were playing. At the end of the evening Dad came home with a real prize: a brand-new Frankie Masters LP (in Stereo), which Frankie had autographed for him!

My first encounter with big band music occurred around 1966, and my father was responsible for it. I had received a portable Westinghouse phonograph as a Christmas gift and, like all portable phonographs of the period, it had four playing speeds: 16, 33-1/3, 45 and 78 RPM. The tonearm also had a switch that flipped the needle over to accommodate 78 RPM records. At that point in time my record collection was a modest one at best which consisted of no more than ten 45 RPM records (my wife Glenna may find this fact hard to believe) by groups like Paul Revere and the Raiders, the Beach Boys and the Beatles. After searching the house for other records I found several old albums of 78 RPM discs which belonged to my parents. After getting their permission to play them I began to listen Glenn Miller's "Pennsylvania Six-Five Thousand" and

several others. Although I found the records both different and interesting, I was not yet hooked on the big band sound.

My father introduced me to something both new and old in early 1970. He had recently discovered "Radio Yesteryear," a program of old-time radio rebroadcasts hosted by Buddy Black over radio station WNMP-AM in Evanston. (It wasn't until later that I found out Buddy Black was merely hosting the program on an temporary basis until Chuck Schaden, the actual program host and originator, obtained sponsor approval.) On that cold March afternoon we listened to a "Fibber McGee and Molly" broadcast and a Milton Berle Program that featured Al Jolson as guest. From the vantage point of a thirteen year-old who had never experienced radio as a major form of entertainment, the programs were fascinating. Almost immediately I became a big fan of old time radio. I began asking my parents endless questions about specific programs as well as recording shows off the air. I also recall that my father and I were both listening in on May 2, 1970, when Chuck Schaden broadcast his first *Those Were The Days* program. About a year later my father gave me a real surprise, when we visited Chuck one Saturday afternoon at the WNMP studios, which was a real treat.

For quite some time I still had only a passing interest in big band music, but that began to change. My father was very proud of his children and equally proud of their interests and accomplishments. Dad often told many of his friends about my unusual interest and a several of them loaned me various LP and 78 RPM records. One of his acquaintances loaned me two Glenn Miller 5-volume LP sets which contained a generous selection of material culled from various Glenn Miller radio broadcasts. These two sets marked a turning point in my interests, and I began to try to listen to

as much big band music as I possibly could.

Once again Dad encouraged me. The support from my mother and sister was equally great, although I suppose the family became a little weary of “Moonlight Serenade” or “In The Mood” after their 500th playing. I often blasted my stereo, as many teenagers are prone to do, although I strongly suspect that I was the only kid my age for miles around who was blasting songs like Benny Goodman’s “Roll ‘Em”! Even with such minor occurrences the family was very supportive of my big band and old time radio interests, although my sister still claims an aversion to “The William Tell Overture” after one particular week when I copied 40 “Lone Ranger” broadcasts to tape!

Over the next two decades my father and I would often sit and discuss different big band records. As my collection grew I began to return the favor by playing various recordings for him, and it was gratifying to find an item that he had never heard before and watch his reaction. In the early days of collecting my listening preferences were towards the more hard-driving uptempo numbers played by Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw and others. (Being somewhat shy and naive in the romance department I had not yet discovered ballads and other slow-tempo numbers.)

My father’s musical tastes differed greatly from mine, and they often reflected his midwestern upbringing. Dad enjoyed a number of “sweet” dance bands that played in a style he often referred to as “ricky-tick”. He also enjoyed the swinging sounds, but usually preferred a lighter style that was easily danceable. Within a few years it became obvious to me that there was more to the big bands that just the “fast stuff”.

The search for big band records and trivia continued, and I began to share what I could

with Chuck Schaden and other members of the WLTD staff (the station had undergone a name change). In August of 1973 Chuck invited me to co-host a Glenn Miller program with him one evening, and my father told many of his friends and co-workers about his son’s radio debut. Just a few short months later I was offered a program of my own on Saturday afternoons (I guess the idea of a 16-year old high school student playing big band music was rather novel), and as a show of support my father helped me with the script for the first program and offered words of encouragement. He also bought me several big band LP’s to help fill out my still modest collection.

Over the years I always felt that my father and I had a special link through the music of the big bands, and as the years passed my love for big band music grew, as did the love for my father. In the last few years of his life Dad’s health began to deteriorate, and he began experiencing various health problems. Just last summer, as I began to assemble a special November *Those Were The Days* tribute to Glenn Miller, Dad’s health began to worsen. My father was unable to tune in to that particular broadcast, as he had undergone emergency surgery the previous day. Ten days later, on November 22, he passed away.

In the days since Dad’s passing I have found there are times when a certain song will bring a flood of memories. Whenever I think of Tommy Dorsey’s “On The Sunny Side Of The Street,” I often think of my father during his Navy days, looking for a place to learn to do the Lindy. Other songs bring back memories of a specific time, place or incident. Over the past few months I have come to realize what a truly wonderful gift my father had shared with me-- his love of music.

Thanks, Dad. ■

LETTERS...WE GET LETTERS

FORT WORTH, TEXAS— I grew up with the old time radio programs. I was very pleasantly surprised when I was scanning the dial and caught your program. I look forward to each of your broadcasts. TV just doesn't have any special appeal to me anymore. The values of our country have changed so drastically, it's as if I'm living in a foreign nation. —**TERRY PARNELL**

SHOREWOOD, IL— Started my first subscription in 1977. The *Digest* just gets better and better over time... just like a good wine. I look forward to each issue. Thanks for many years of pure enjoyment off radio. —**JAMES W. STUKEL**

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK— I accidentally found your delightful program Saturday night and caught the last part of "Pete Kelly's Blues," bringing back memories of Jack Webb. How we miss him. The jazz in that show was so great. —**MRS. D. E. SIMMONS**

WEST CHICAGO, IL— I've been a steady listener since back around 1972. In checking my *Nostalgia Digest*, my first issue is dated December, 1975 so I've a lot of memories wrapped up in those issues. I've done a lot of taping since then. I enjoy your broadcasts on Saturdays and at midnight. —**EARL R. NEUMANN**

SCHAUMBURG, IL— Listening to radio treasures of the past on WNIB on Saturday afternoons and on WBBM, when I awaken sometimes at midnight, is a delight. Many programs bring back grand memories from my early childhood and beyond. When I was growing up in northeastern North Dakota, the station on which my family and I often heard various programs was WDAY in Fargo, an NBC affiliate at that time. Little did I realize as a child that I would later work at that station in the news department while I was in college. Thank you for honoring the cherished past of radio. —**DR. LOWELL G. ALMEN**

LANSING, IL— I love your show and I would never get through the holiday season without "radio to wrap, bake and decorate

by." Thank you for the many entertaining hours! I'm 28 years old. —**DONNA KRUMM**

HOBART, INDIANA— After reading Bob Kolososki's Film Clips column about Basil Rathbone in the April-May issue, I couldn't help but write with an anecdote. "My Favorite Villain" was an article that brought back one memory in particular. When my children were in grade school, we would watch Channel 9 after we came home from church on Sunday. They would show the Sherlock Holmes series, then a Family Classics movie with Frasier Thomas. One particular Sunday, after the Sherlock Holmes film, the Family Classics movie was "The Adventures of Robin Hood." When Basil Rathbone appeared as the villain, my son walked out of the room. I didn't think of it at the time, but later I realized that Basil Rathbone had been his hero for months (as Sherlock Holmes) and suddenly he was the bad guy (as Sir Guy of Gisbourne). He couldn't accept the change! —**CAROLYN MOORE**

OGLESBY, IL— I enjoy listening to *Old Time Radio Classics* on WBBM every night. When my wife and I go to Chicago and Westmont area, it gives me a chance to stop at Metro Golden Memories and purchase some cassette tapes of radio shows. My son is seven years old and enjoys the tapes of The Shadow that I purchased. —**DREW JESSEN**

NILES, MICHIGAN— I wasn't going to renew my subscription when your program was taken off from the early time period on WBBM. I had difficulty with reception in the middle of the night. I have purchased an additional aerial and along with the longer running tapes, I am able to record you every night. I am truly an old radio fan and I hope you stay on forever. —**DIXIE L. CRIPPS**

CHICAGO— I was having my morning "java" at a nearby McDonald's one morning and a chap I often exchange pleasantries with asked me, out of the blue, "Do you ever listen to Chuck Schaden on the radio?" I was pleased to advise that, yes, I've been a listener for, lo, these many years. He

confessed he discovered your Saturday broadcast while "drying out" in a V.A. hospital and is a confirmed fan. He is a great Al Jolson admirer and loves it when you feature "Jolie." So you see, Chuck, you bring a lot of joy to the world and it's not even Christmas. —**ROBERT ROSTERMAN**

COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE— The April-May edition of *Nostalgia Digest* has just arrived along with a reminder that my subscription expires with this issue. Well, I don't want that to happen so I'm renewing. The issue commemorating your twenty-five years on the air with old time radio is outstanding. I congratulate you not only for the longevity, but also for bringing back wholesome family entertainment of an era gone bye. Old time radio had it all and through your efforts it lives. You're bringing much happiness into many lives. —**WALTER COLLINS**

CHICAGO— Congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of your program. I've been a faithful fan since you began on WLTD. I fondly remember sitting on the floor of the basement of North West Federal Savings watching wonderful movies with the likes of George Murphy, Olsen & Johnson and George Raft. Thanks to Metro Golden Memories, my two year old son is able to sing along with Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor. Over the years you have generously shared with us your collection from a wonderful era of entertainment. When people ask me what I like most about living in Chicago, I tell them, without hesitation, "Michael Jordan and Chuck Schaden." —**SHERWIN ESTERMAN**

EVANSTON, IL— Congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of *Those Were The Days*. And thank you for the many hours of listening pleasure which you have given me over those years. It has been said that "Nostalgia ain't what it used to be!" but you have kept my memories bright — often happy, occasionally sad, and forever memorable. I recall when I first stumbled across your program and the delight I gained from it. I heard the commercials featuring our friendly neighborhood shoe dealer Paul Meyer, who had his store on Central street within a few blocks of our house. Paul was a credit to the world of commerce: reliable, knowledgeable, trustworthy and interesting as a person. We thought

so well of him that when summer vacation ended we would send the children, alone, to his store to get outfitted for the school year. We were never disappointed in his "prescription" and the children were, of course, proud that they had been allowed to do their shopping without parental attendance. May you and your nostalgic endeavors continue to thrive for many, many years ahead. —**HOWARD F. COOK**

ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA— Congratulations on your silver anniversary! When we lived in Chicago (and when the wind was off Lake Michigan), we listened to you on WLTD. In more recent years, we've been able to pick you up on WBBM when the weather conditions are right. A couple of weeks ago, I finally had a chance to visit the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Congratulations again to you and all responsible! It's a fascinating place and extremely well done. —**CRAIG E. PETERSON**

GEPP, ARKANSAS— Your last issue of *Nostalgia Digest* made me very nostalgic for *Those Were The Days*. I had no idea you were celebrating 25 years on the air! Congratulations! I guess I started listening to *TWTD* about the first year you were on WNIB. I was a faithful listener until 1989 when we moved to Arkansas. We missed many things from Chicago when we moved here, but you and your show is the only thing I still regret leaving behind. Reading your history made me miss it all again. Those were really the days for me. You provided companionship, fun and entertainment while I worked around the house. I truly thank you for all you have done for all of us who love the old shows. I'm 42 years old and would never have had the opportunity to hear those shows without your efforts! —**LUANNE SWANSON**

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO— You've worked so hard and with such dedication and creativity, you deserve all the accolades we can give you. —**RAY RAYNER**

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN— Congratulations on your 25th Anniversary. You have given me a lot of pleasure. We know that the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet were related, but what about the Shadow's girl friend, Margot Lane and Superman's girl

WE GET LETTERS

friend, Lois Lane? Margot seems to be quite sophisticated while Lois is a working girl. At any rate, the Lane girls seem to prefer their men to be unusual heroes. —MERLIN W. BROSE

RIVER GROVE, IL— I remember what I was doing when Kennedy died, when the first man walked on the moon, and the first time I heard your radio program. It was a Saturday afternoon in June or July of 1970. I was trying to tune in to WLTD because I enjoyed the music they played, but instead I heard the Lone Ranger. At first I thought it was a commercial. Then you came on the air and I realized that there was somebody out there playing the programs I grew up hearing. I listened to the rest of the program; that was all it took. I was hooked! That was 25 years ago and I have been a loyal fan ever since! I've enjoyed every mile of the wonderful trip we have taken during the past 25 years. And it was great reading the current issue of the *Nostalgia Digest* and reliving all those wonderful times you have orchestrated and shared with us: radio programs, old time movies, radio re-enactments, interviews, guest appearance of our favorite stars, MGM Shop, Museum of Broadcast Communications...WOW! I can hardly wait to see what you have in store for us in the next 25 years! —DOLORES VALLES ANAYA

WARRENVILLE, IL— Congratulations on celebrating 25 years of providing your audience with the fabulous sounds of radio. I have been with you from the start. You have done more to bring the golden days of radio to the populace than anyone I know. I hope we're both around for another 25 years of listening. —CHUCK HUCK

LANSING, IL— Just got my *Nostalgia Digest* and was looking at all the things that you did over the years. You should grow the beard back, it looks better on you. In 1974 Jim Jordan looked kind of frail. Did you ever see the cartoon movie "The Rescuers?" The voice of the sea gull is Jim Jordan. A TV show that you should check out is called "Brooklyn Bridge." It's on the Bravo cable channel. Is your wife into old time radio or does she just go to the mall and shop like Les Tremayne's wife did when you interviewed him a couple of years ago? How

old are you? You don't look like you grew up with radio. You looked older in 1970 than you do now. If you say 39 I know you're lying. Keep up the good work. Tell Ken Alexander he's doing a great job with the impersonations of all the famous stars. I keep on thinking of new things to say so I'd better stop now. I'm 15 years old and wonder sometimes if the censor falls asleep on some of the TV shows that are on the air. Don't have to worry about that when I listen to your shows. —DOUG MC GAGHIE

SKOKIE, IL— Congratulations on your Silver Anniversary from a charter listener who also graduated from high school in 1952 and remembers your first show on WLTD. —ROBERT J. FIELD

ALSIP, IL— Congratulations for 25 successful years and thanks for keeping old time radio nostalgia alive so that eight- or nine-year-olds of today have the opportunity to experience the greatest entertainment the industry has ever provided. I admit that I can't always hear all four hours of your show on Saturday afternoons, but I can honestly tell you it's on for generous portions of the afternoon, whether I'm at home or in the car. And what's more, I'd miss it if it weren't. —GLENN J. PNIEWSKI

DARIEN, IL— What a delight to receive the 25th anniversary copy of *Nostalgia Digest*. It is so filled with interesting articles and information. It also helps me to realize how much effort you have put into the whole concept of Old Time Radio. You are to be truly congratulated for your great and good efforts which have brought so much joy to so many people. You have not only touched their hearts and minds, but more importantly, their memories. I am also more than grateful for your excellent program on the death of President Franklin Roosevelt. I was near to tears listening to this great event in our history, and remembering how deeply it affected me as a grade schooler. Your entire series on World War II has been a great help not only in re-living the memories of those long-ago days, but also in allowing us to understand the great events we experienced as children growing up on a world at war. —FR. KEVIN SHANLEY

CHICAGO— Your coverage of WW II is absolutely great. The news coverage of the

events as they unfolded week by week, month by month, and year by year is wonderful. I'm grateful that you are around to do this radio history of the war, because if you didn't do it, it would not be done. As the war (50 years ago) comes to a conclusion, I'm certain many of us know more about it than before. —**NICK NARDELLA**

HOMETOWN, IL— I've been a listener of yours since you began on WNIB. Lately I've enjoyed the wartime news reports from around the world. I remember some of them from my youth. —**BILL O'BRIEN**

FOREST PARK, IL— Just a quick note of appreciation for last Saturday's program on the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was a very emotional four hours. Thanks, too, for your weekly radio show, but more so for your dedication to preserving our radio history. —**DON FOX**

WILLOWBROOK, IL— Thanks for your shows and the World News Today broadcasts. I was inducted on March 5, 1941 along with 12,000 others from the Illinois National Guard. I became a Signal Corps officer with the 9th Air Force. We landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day Plus 2. Your news stories bring back a few tears and many memories. I married my wife in England and we were on Leave for V-J Day in London. The city went wild!! —**JAMES MELKA, SR.**

GRAND MARSH, WISCONSIN— Thanks for the quality broadcasting and *Digest*. Those of us who were alive during the great radio days find the articles true to the mark. —**LOU VALENTINO**

GRIMSBY, ONTARIO, CANADA— Have been fortunate in getting "good enough" reception (not too much static or stray reception) of your one hour of old time radio programming, from 1-2 a.m. our time. —**ROGER G. BRABANT**

CALUMET CITY, IL— I listen mostly at midnight, a good time for me. Shall I say I go to bed with your show? Want to thank one of the guides at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. A few months ago he led a group of Seniors from Calumet City Memorial Park District Drop-In Center through the Museum. His name was Jerry Warshaw and he was just wonderful. What

an interesting visit it was! —**MARY MC DERMOTT**

WHEATON, IL— Never would I have expected to be offended by anything you put on the air, but I was. The Mike Nichols-Elaine May working sketch, broadcast April 1, about a son deciding what he would be "when he grew up" really shocked me. I hope none of the men who have chosen nursing as a profession were tuned in. I would be proud of a son who elected to be a registered nurse and certainly would not find it a cause for snide laughter. I have little patience with the current political correctness, but that sketch certainly made me think less of Nichols and May and their sense of humor. —**ELIZABETH ROBERTSON**

LA PORTE, INDIANA— Well, I have to admit you got me. Normally, I record *TWTD* on a video recorder so I can get all four hours on one tape. If I am not going to be home, as I was not for your April 1st broadcast, I set up the timer on the recorder. However, when I came back Saturday evening, rewound the tape and listened to the first few minutes, I realized I must have set the timer wrong, since the program appeared to be at its end. Just to be sure, I even listened to the switch over back to the WNIB announcer. At that point, disgusted at my stupidity, I turned off the equipment, and sat down to read a book. About 20 minutes into my reading, my subconscious suddenly said HOLD ON! Just how devious is that Chuck Schaden anyway? I turned the tape back on and listened a little further, and found out! Good job! It takes a sophisticated ruse nowadays to fool most people, and you carried it off beautifully. The show was also very entertaining. I have also particularly enjoyed listening to the entire season of Fibber McGee. I should point out that while I am 47, my 17 year old son Mark also enjoys *TWTD*, and attended the Gildersleeve recreation with me a couple of years back. Keep up your excellent work. —**JOE ALINSKY**

CHICAGO— Congratulations!!! You really had me going this afternoon. When the show began, I thought no one was at the controls at WNIB, and that some heads would roll. Your "April Fool" was the best yet, but then again, you 'n your show are the best yet!!! —**KENNETH A. LESAK**



Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

SUMMER IS HERE and that means vacation time and visitors from out-of-town. Plan a stop at the Museum archives. Select a favorite program to watch or listen to, relax and enjoy. There are thousands of programs from early sitcoms to the O.J. trial tapes.

As an example, one afternoon I took a look at program cassette Number 4306. That's a 1975 Tom Snyder program from his first time around on late-night television when his ties were wider and his hair not as fray. This cassette has two programs. The first originated in May from the Century Plaza in Los Angeles. You'll see Rona Barrett (5 years before her famous feud with Tom) criticizing the Emmy and Academy Award process and plugging a new program she was about to debut.

Then, fast-forward to a real gem. Here is Tom on October 19, 1975 in New York City at the famous NBC hangout known as Hurley's on the night before it was to close to make way for a new restaurant. Captured on this tape are 60 wonderful minutes of recollections of NBC, of Hurley's, the "Today Show" and so much more by Steve Allen, Dave Garroway, Frank Blair, Jack Lescoulie, Bill Wendell, Don Pardo, Bob & Ray, Ben Grauer, Lanny Ross and Kenny Delmar. It doesn't get any better than this.

And that's just one example of the Tom Snyder programs waiting on the archives shelves for your attention as well as hundreds of other titles and series. And remember, there is no charge for viewing by Museum members.

By the way, Tom Snyder is not only back on late-night television for CBS, but he'll be one of our hosts at the spectacular Radio Hall of Fame gala induction here in Chicago on October 29th. Call the Museum for ticket information.

ANOTHER GLANCE at the archives finds the recent PBS "Frontline" profile of Rush Limbaugh. From the early 60s, watch from a selection of the "Armstrong Circle Theatre" dramas, lots of Walt Disney and segments from your favorite TV soaps.

RADIO, TOO. Get your nostalgic baseball fix by listening to Mel Allen call the 1938 World Series between the Yankees and the Cubs! Also, baseball fans, there's every play and every thrill of the 1939 All-Star Game, too. How about a re-listen to Jack Eigen in 1971. And there are Eddie Condon Jazz concerts from the mid 40s. Lots of classic listening too — Jack Benny, Fibber and Molly, "The Great Gildersleeve," "Duffy's Tavern," "The Fat Man," "A Day in the Life of Dennis Day" and on and on.

Stop in, bring guests, enjoy!

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← RADIOVILLE, INDIANA

The Radioville subdivision was platted in October, 1932 and consists of 354 lots of various sizes along with designated streets. Read John Russell Ghrist's account of the Town That Never Was. Page 6.

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|--|--|---|
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CHUCK SCHADEN'S
NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND
RADIO GUIDE

DECEMBER, 1996 - JANUARY, 1997



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FIRST NIGHTER -- December 22, 1945

Little Town of Bethlehem

Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule star in the ninth annual presentation of the Christmas Story. Cast includes Sidney Ellstrom, Hugh Studebaker, Herbert Butterfield, Willard Waterman, Philip Lord. Sponsored by Campana Products on CBS.

READER'S DIGEST RADIO EDITION -- December 19, 1946

Room for a Stranger

Frank Sinatra stars as a Navy flyer hoping to see his girl at home on Christmas Eve. He receives a telegram from his commanding officer cancelling his leave. Sponsored by Hallmark Cards on CBS.

DUFFY'S TAVERN -- December 24, 1948

A Christmas Visitor

Ed Gardner stars as Archie, manager of Duffy's Tavern, "where the elite meet to eat." In a warm-hearted departure from the usual comedy situation, Archie is unhappy that he's not getting a Christmas bonus. A stranger (played by Jeff Chandler) takes him for a walk and shows Archie the real meaning of Christmas. Sponsored by Bristol Myers on NBC.

GRAND CENTRAL STATION -- December 19, 1951

Miracle for Christmas

This is the sixth annual presentation of the classic Christmas drama. A cynical ambulance driver and a mysterious doctor make their rounds of mercy on Christmas Eve. Sponsored by Pillsbury Cake Flour on CBS.

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BOOK TWENTY-THREE

CHAPTER ONE

DECEMBER, 1996 -- JANUARY, 1997

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

I grew up in Norridge, a northwest suburb of Chicago.

When we moved there in 1939 from an apartment in the city, it was an unincorporated area of Norwood Park Township. We lived on Ottawa Avenue, across from the man who was the Chief of the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department.

The fire truck was parked in his garage and there was a big siren on the roof of his house. When the siren would sound, our neighbor would run to his garage and drive the fire engine to the scene of the fire. And the volunteers would race out of their homes, jump into their cars and head for the fire scene.

I remember with fondness the role the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department played in our Christmastime activities.

In early December the fire engine, fully staffed with volunteers, would make its way up and down the streets of Norridge. Its siren would ring and its gong would clang and everyone in the neighborhood would run to the street to see what was going on.

This was Norridge's version of the Santa Claus Parade, for perched in the back of the red truck was none other than Santa Claus himself, waving to everyone while the firemen tossed wrapped Christmas candy to the eager kids who were by now running after the slowly moving vehicle.

A week or so before Christmas every classroom in the James Giles Elementary School in Norridge had a live Christmas tree, decorated by the boys and girls with hand-made ornaments. A fireman usually visited each classroom to inspect each tree to be sure that there was plenty of water in the stand and talk to the students about Christmas Tree Fire Safety.

Every year, probably on the first Sunday of the new year, the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department urged everyone to bring their used Christmas trees to a giant open space --farmland, actually-- at the end of our block, just north of Montrose Avenue.

This was a Fire Department project to rid the community of all those trees at one time and promote fire prevention by getting all those dry evergreens out of the homes, thus eliminating a real fire hazzard.

The volunteer firemen would pile the trees high and then set a giant bonfire.

Everyone in Norridge --*everyone*-- would drag their untrimmed, formerly fresh, now bone-dry, Christmas trees to the bonfire. Meanwhile, the Ladies' Auxilliary of the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department prepared hot chocolate and cookies, to serve as we watched the trees --and the holiday season-- end in a spectacular, fire department-controlled blaze of glory.

These are some of my happy holiday memories. I hope you have some to remember this Christmas season.

--Chuck Schaden

Golden Phoenix*'It's a Wonderful Life'*

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

The first time I saw *It's A Wonderful Life* was in 1979, when it was played uninterrupted on local public television. I was just a 12-year old kid sprawled out in front of the living room TV, mesmerized—Christmas tree glistening off to the right and powderflake snow wafting down outside the front window as George Bailey stood grinning like a gingerbread man while his friends and family sang a heartwarming Auld Lang Syne. Over fifteen years later, I can easily say I've seen the movie over 30 times. The film has so touched my life that I even proposed to my fiancée during a Christmastime viewing two years ago! (She accepted: after watching George and Mary fall in love in one of the silver screen's classic romances, how could she say no?)

In this, the film's 50th anniversary year, *It's A Wonderful Life* is as rich and golden a viewer's experience as it's ever been. For all its would-be "sentimental hogwash, the movie has captured a world audience unlike any other film to date. It's ever-increasing charisma is undeniable, its acting and production standards impeccable, and its reflection of wholesome, simple human values is timeless. Yet, amazingly, this unanimous cinematic classic experienced a rocky history, failing to enchant its audi-

ence upon its inception in 1946 and reaping miserable profits. Considering its dismal initial impact in the post-war 1940s, it is amazing to consider the incredible shared cultural phenomenon it has become today. *It's A Wonderful Life* is truly the definitive film phoenix risen from the ashes.

What if Abraham Lincoln had never been born? Philip Van Doren Stern, an established author of the post WWI literary world, was shaving the morning of Lincoln's birthday, 1938, when that sudden thought struck him. He developed the concept, imagining what the world would be like for an ordinary man if he wished he'd never been born. Stern dismissed the idea for a while, but went back five years later, developing it into a story entitled, "The Greatest Gift," which he sent out to over 200 people as Christmas card substitutes in 1943.

The author's agent received a copy and was so impressed that he convinced Cary Grant's agent to purchase the story for \$10,000. The property changed hands with over 10 different people (including Howard Hughes) until it finally came into the possession of Frank Capra—director extraordinaire of the '30s with already four Academy Awards to his name. Capra was so charmed by the story that he immediately decided to turn it into a full-length motion picture, under his production and direction. It would, in fact, be the first project attempted by his newly created company, Liberty Films, formed in col-

Erik J. Martin of Oak Lawn, Illinois is a longtime fan of the classic Frank Capra film which, he says, is partially responsible for his own happy life!



THE CLASSIC FINAL SCENE in Frank Capra's 1946 film masterpiece "It's A Wonderful Life."

laboration with William Wyler, George Stevens and Samuel Briskin—three other celebrated directors of their time.

The ultra-perfectionist Capra, however, was not satisfied with the troublesome script for his movie, which was renamed *It's A Wonderful Life* (referred to as *LIFE*, henceforth), so he assigned famous husband and wife screenwriters Albert Hackett and Francis Goodrich the job of entirely reworking the script—even penning a bit of it himself. Capra re-envisioned his story not as a Christmas yarn, but as a story intended for any time of year. He wasn't intimidated by the tale's dark implications of suicide and despair. He saw the potential for transcendence and inspiration, and the depiction of abundant human emotion. Capra was already well-skilled in this art by virtue of his previous sentimental works like *Meet John Doe*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

From the start, there was only one actor who could fill the "smalltown-everyman" shoes of George Bailey for Capra, and that was Jimmy Stewart. A proven winner for the director in the thirties, Stewart was more than eager to work with Capra on the first commercial post-war film for each of them. Tedious scrutiny went into the selection of the rest of the cast. Capra wanted, above all, colorful characters and recognizable personalities, so he picked a rich stock of excellent character actors. He wasn't afraid to cast actors against type, or to sign personable black actors, either.

Capra's work ethic was rigorous and grueling. He engrossed himself entirely in *LIFE* only four months after returning from active duty in World War II as a filmmaker, compiling a top-notch crew and affixing a 90 day shooting schedule on a budget of over \$2 million.

From the beginning, Capra conceived

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LIFE as his masterwork. "I thought it was the greatest film I ever made. Better yet, I thought it was the greatest film anybody ever made," Capra states in his autobiography. "It wasn't made for the oh-so bored critics or the oh-so jaded literati. It was my kind of film for my kind of people."

As an immigrant child, Capra was impressed by common, everyday people whose lives he so grew to appreciate that his ambition was to someday project them onto the screen. His greatest talent rested in his power to represent the ordinary man's strength to face apparently insurmountable evil, thereby benefitting his fellow man. Capra realized this power early in his career, when he decided to create films that would exhilarate the depressed spirits of the American public, inspired personally by his dramatic recovery from a serious illness.

"Improving the individual and bringing a more hopeful outlook on life to him is the only way you can improve the nation and ultimately the world," thought Capra. It was 1946, and both he and his fellow Americans were numb to the events of the war. *LIFE* seemed like the perfect cinematic salve.

The shooting went smoothly for the most part, except for going over budget an extra \$1.5 million (mostly due to Capra's insistence that the film be shot in sequence). The director felt confident, however, that *LIFE* would be the biggest box-office smash of 1947, as well as a complete critical success. The general release was set for January 30, 1947.

Suddenly, a serious problem arose. RKO, Liberty's official distributor, couldn't process Technicolor prints of their swashbuckler movie "Sinbad the Sailor" quickly enough for its scheduled Christmas release. Capra was informed that his film would

have to be moved up for a Christmas Eve opening in 50 nationwide theaters to fill the gap. Labs worked round the clock to process prints of *LIFE*, barely finishing in time. But there were possible advantages to this move: it qualified *LIFE* for the 1946 Oscar races, as opposed to 1947; and it, being a Christmas movie at heart, would appeal to audiences as a seasonably-festive film.

However, several prominent factors surfaced that inhibited the movie's success. First, the film was marketed not as a Christmas picture, but rather as a romantic comedy, very similar to Capra's goofball comedies of the thirties. The lobby posters showcased Jimmy Stewart lifting up Donna Reed next to the captions, "It's a powerful love story," and "James Stewart...America's favorite feller." There was no mention of the "man overcoming the odds" theme that the movie propagated, nor any serious or somber aspects whatsoever. Then there was the presence of a terrible snowstorm that chilled the eastern United States, plummeting ticket sales. The reviews of the film were mixed, although on the average posi-

It's A Wonderful Life

THE CAST

George Bailey.....	James Stewart
Mary Bailey.....	Donna Reed
Clarence, the Angel.....	Henry Travers
Uncle Billy.....	Thomas Mitchell
Mr. Potter.....	Lionel Barrymore
Violet.....	Gloria Graham
Bert the Cop.....	Ward Bond
Ernie the Cabbie.....	Frank Faylen
Mrs. Bailey.....	Beulah Bondi
Pop Bailey.....	Samuel S. Hinds
Mrs. Hatch.....	Sara Edwards
Annie.....	Lillian Randolph
Sam Wainwright.....	Frank Albertson
Young George.....	Bobbie Anderson
Mr. Gower.....	H. B. Warner



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE -- George Bailey romances Mary Hatch

tive, giving indications that most people liked the movie, some loved it, and others despised it. The latter critics struck *LIFE* a crippling blow, disheartening Capra's optimism.

Finally, and most importantly, the post-war audience of 1946 was simply not receptive to its implicit content. Americans, enjoying their holiday season in the first full year of peace, could have been disenchanted by the bleak, film noir-ish elements of *LIFE*. They simply were not ready for its theme depicting salvation preceded by a "dark night of the soul." America wanted escape pictures: westerns, intense realistic dramas, light comedies. Stewart recounts, "It took a while for the country to sort of quiet down. Then we could start to think about family and community and responsibility."

Capra's vision of the world had changed upon his return from the war to a more

pessimistic, painful sensibility. He wanted to project some of these feelings onto the screen, and yet overcome these bleak themes with expressive optimism, humor and sentimentality—investing unlimited faith in the human spirit. The public, however, didn't seem to empathize with this struggle of the common man and his way of life. These were depression-era ideologies of reassurance to a beleaguered, individually-oriented public. But it was now post WWII, where group unity seemed to be the order of society and the economy was back on its feet. Depression-era consciousness where the individual questioned his own significance (as George Bailey does) was a thing of the past—better forgotten.

On the other hand, having been through an atrocious war, the public and critics alike craved a degree of credibility in Hollywood pictures—to put a name on it, realism.

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Probably for this reason was *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *LIFE*'s fiercest competitor, so overwhelmingly embraced by moviegoers and critics. True, it was in the same bleak vein as *LIFE* with its darker elements, but it was a film that didn't attempt to "rescue" the viewer from its pessimism with what might have been perceived as prudish optimism, or sappy sentimentality.

Not surprisingly, *Best Years* was one of 47's biggest box-office winners, and a shoe-in for the Academy Awards. It stole away every nominated category from *LIFE*, plunging Capra into the furthest pits of frustration over his much-toiled project. Indeed, *Best Years* seemed to swipe virtually everything away—it even beat *LIFE*'s release by one month. Being a very controversial and thus talked-about movie, it commanded nearly all the attention (even gossip) that *LIFE* might have received. Ironically, it was a William Wyler film—Capra's partner at Liberty and one of his dearest friends (although it wasn't a Liberty film).

The final dagger came at the close of 1947 as the gross receipts were tallied: after a \$2.7 million investment, *LIFE* lost more than \$525,000. Liberty Films was liquidated as a result some two years later. Capra, formerly the proud papa of what he considered a landmark motion picture achievement, abandoned all admiration, conversation and loyalty he had previously invested in his brainchild. As far as he was concerned, he had shelved *LIFE* forever.

The initial failure of *LIFE* can reasonably be summed up by the master himself: "To stay in business...you have to make pictures with universal appeal," Capra said. "Unless a picture has tremendous initial impact upon the public, it quickly passes from the first run to lesser homes and exhausts its money potential. If it starts out

slowly, its run is taken off at the end of the week...that's one of the big troubles. Pictures aren't given a chance to find their audience."

But not everything was gloom and doom, and *LIFE* was far from an all-out loser. Capra was awarded the Hollywood Foreign Correspondent Association's "Golden Globe" award for best director of 1947 and *LIFE* was voted one of the ten best films of the year by the National Board of Review. It was nominated for five prestigious Oscars, and it had received critical acclaim by the majority of its reviewers (In December of 1946, *Time* and *Life* magazines covered the movie extensively in pictures and positive words, and *Newsweek* even put the film on its cover).

Furthermore, by 1954, RKO (Liberty's repossessor) announced an accumulated profit of over \$3 million for *LIFE*. It was finally making some money, as it would continue to do when marketed for commercial television in the fifties and sixties by its numerous future owners (RKO sold *LIFE* to Paramount, who later dished it off to M & A Alexander Productions). The film even enjoyed a short-lived popular recovery around Christmas seasons in the fifties and sixties, thanks to annual viewings on television (it was, assumedly, probably shown only once on a single network each time of the year, thereby garnering only limited exposure).

Finally, in 1974, all passion for the film had fizzled out, and the economic market of TV could no longer be tapped. Republic Pictures didn't bother to renew its copyright on its critical 28th birthday (the year in which a work must be renewed, under the old 1909 law). *LIFE* entered the world of public domain, very unsure of itself and its future. Little did anyone know the incredible success this celluloid Lazarus would begin to enjoy after thirty years of relative public disregard.



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE -- Uncle Billy watches as Mary gives George their honeymoon money to distribute to depositors of the Bailey Brothers Building and Loan.

After three decades of, for the most part, audience indifference and lack of recognition, *LIFE* came back into the public consciousness with a vengeance. Capra became slowly aware of this throughout the fifties and sixties, when more and more grateful letters from fans began pouring in. Soon thousands of people were writing him on a variety of subjects—some inquiring about inconsistencies in the film (like Potter not being punished at the end for keeping the \$8,000), some interpreting what the film meant to them, and even more expressing extreme heartfelt appreciation for so inspirational and transcendent a movie. He tried to respond personally to all their letters at first, but eventually found it impossible due to the overwhelming amount of messages he would receive, whereby Capra decided to simply store away his *LIFE* letters in a huge file.

However, as aforementioned, by 1974 the

mild renewed success of *LIFE* had bottomed out, and it appeared that the movie was headed for occasional late-late show runs among other “B” fare forgotten pictures, thanks to its new public domain status. But becoming a non-property—although it spelled the end of TV royalties for Capra (almost) forever—did not detract in any way from its identity. Instead, it freed *LIFE* from the confines of economic exploitation by its previous owners and made possible another more positive kind of economic utilization—free use by television stations—which led to mass public exposure.

Now *LIFE* was earning its deserved audience via free (and soon cable) TV. The nationwide marketing of the film by commercial stations had its greedy financial motivations, of course, but the picture was quickly garnering cultural identification with its newfound audience, who were beginning to grow accustomed to it as an

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annual holiday offering. Indeed, *LIFE* was making everybody happy: the TV stations were making money off its ratings, Frank Capra—though robbed of any profit capacity—was starting to feel proud all over again, and the public had found itself a favorite—one good enough to be ranked among other perennial American classics like *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Sound of Music*.

The resurgence was underway, and what had begun as a cult-following in the mid-seventies escalated into a widespread cultural phenomenon by 1980. Millions of Americans were cherishing *LIFE* and countless others were discovering it for the first time. It had become by far the best-loved Christmas movie, topping all other major holiday standards like *White Christmas*, *Miracle on 34th Street* and any of the five adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* in ratings and popularity polls (although the former two, along with *LIFE*, are the three Christmas films most often aired on TV, according to a survey of national TV logs taken in the '80s).

The rejuvenation of Capra's movie inspired an ABC TV remake in 1977 called *It Happened One Christmas*, starring Orson Welles and Marlo Thomas, surprisingly, in the George Bailey role. This color recreation with a feminist tone was a weak attempt, trying to evoke the emotional impact of the original amidst a contemporary setting, but never living up to the spirit of its predecessor. Nevertheless, the TV clone generated further interest in the original, and seemed to bestow a subtle reverence and respect onto *LIFE*—paying it a sort of broadcast “homage” in an updated form.

These were the obvious factors involved in *LIFE*'s ascendancy—logical reasons accounting for its attainment as a seasonal, cultural institution. On the surface, it would

appear that the film's newfound charisma and irrefutable power had simple economic explanations—television could show it forever without paying a penny, public familiarity, and fondness in turn, grew due to its broadcasted repetition. A more thorough analysis into ideological speculations reveals so much more, however. People had to identify with the film's explicit and implicit content and incorporate its meaning into their lives somehow, to accept the picture as readily as they did. The phenomenon is arguably more a product of the seventies viewer than the movie itself.

Consider: Unlike the post-war conditions of the forties when the economy boomed and an exhausted public sought to escape from their negative memory of the war by looking for entertainment that would make them laugh, the seventies were a time of distress and isolation. Society, in the midst of whopping inflation, political dishonesty and ever-changing lifestyles and artistic and cultural expressions, was constantly searching for meaning. With the country suffering from a recession and society becoming desensitized to basic human values through exposure to violence and dishonesty in the media and in television, the individual began to question his own self-worth. People needed to hold onto something, and with friction existing within the traditional family system, there seemed very little salvation out there.

A film like *LIFE* came along just at the right time, helping to inspire a great number of Americans, and challenging them to reevaluate their own self-worth. The film's message, after all, propagates this: George Bailey reconsiders his existence and recognizes its priceless personal value, for all its failures and simplicities. A meaning-starved public could incorporate this then and apply it to their everyday lives, reinvigorating an optimistic consciousness.

This is not to say that *LIFE*



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE -- George Bailey refuses Mr. Potter's attractive offer.

singlehandedly changed the lackadaisical spirit of recession-ridden, Vietnam-embittered America. But it did offer its viewer a refreshing, alternative and novel philosophy in such value-deflated times.

The story's moral was taken to heart not because it was an escapist alternative but because it was both a realistic and applicable human truth. *LIFE* teaches us that dreams don't always come true, but these unfulfilled dreams are better than the kind that turn into haunting nightmares. George never leaves Bedford Falls or travels to Europe, but he recognizes the important role he has played in other people's lives and thus comes appreciate his self-meaning. Perhaps its '70s audience could collectively acknowledge this message—at least better than the audience of the '40s.

"It's a movie about a small town guy who thinks he is a failure and wishes he had never been born," said Capra. "He's sup-

posed to learn that he was not a failure, that he fitted into the scheme of life...I think that a lot of people everywhere will be able to associate themselves with the character and will perhaps feel a lot better for having known him. People are seeking spiritual guidance and moral reassurance..and if the movies can't supply this, they will be serving no worthwhile purpose."

And then there is the element of wistfulness imbued in the film. Maybe what draws contemporary audiences most to *LIFE* is its power to invoke hometown nostalgia, its sense of close-knit community and simple human values—all of which are becoming ignored concepts today in our ultra-urbanized societies (ask yourself: could a Bedford Falls ever exist again on earth?).

Or possibly it's the element of quality in the film's production. It is, after all, a superbly crafted film in its method of acting, direction and technical innovation. Perhaps

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it is Stewart himself who commands the picture, with his unique behavioral acting style. His charming mannerisms, tripping speech patterns, articulated facial expressions and innocent, lanky-frame create an unforgettable image of an irreplaceable George Bailey. The romantic tension he builds while "falling in love" with Donna Reed's character is spellbinding, and I think it remains an eternal source of wonder for new and old audiences alike.

There is also, one could argue, a correlation between some of *LIFE*'s thematic values to popular movies in the late '70s. *LIFE* in itself is a basic parable, pitting a force for good (George) against a force for evil (Potter)—the classic confrontation. George loses in the end, yet wins a personal victory. This was a dominant ideology of movies at this time: *Rocky* (1976), *Coming Home* (1978), and *Breaking Away* (1979) reflect personal triumphs in the midst of failures, while blockbusters like *Star Wars* (1977), and *Superman* (1978) intimated themes of good versus evil. These programmed values in '70s films could have very well made *LIFE* more digestible to the public, helping advance its success.

And what about today? What sustains the film's longevity in fact, I believe, is the established ritualistic tradition it has become. You must either be a cave dweller or movie hater to have not heard of the film by now. For the rest of us who tune faithfully every Yuletide season, it has become sheer necessity: we need to feel those goosebumps all over again when Capra brings the house down with his pass-the-Kleenex climax. Stewart and Capra, who in 1946 knew it was the best picture they'd done or probably ever would do, couldn't be happier. "It's part of the annual ritual now," said Stewart, a few years back. "That

means a great deal to me, and I know it means an awful lot to Capra, because he says it's his favorite, too."

Yet, the film's amazing rejuvenation over the past 20 years may have been its own undoing. In 1986, *LIFE* fell victim to the colorization process, via Hal Roach Studios, a move that has drawn the ire of critics, purists and filmlovers everywhere. As a further exploitation of the movie, composers have been trying to turn *LIFE* into a musical for decades. Finally, old-fashioned greed has put the clamps on Capra's classic, perhaps for good. Republic Pictures was able to reassert exclusive rights to *LIFE* in 1994, and made a long-term deal with NBC, which now has exclusive broadcast reigns on the film.

In the end, the film has come full circle. Republic was able to reacquire its once-slighted masterpiece, and not without a collective sigh of relief from the many among us who worried that the overplayed film was wearing out its welcome like so much week-after-Christmas turkey hash.

Now, *It's A Wonderful Life* can begin to enjoy an anticipated single holiday viewing and become, like *The Wizard of Oz* (shown once a year on CBS) and *The Campbell Playhouse's* radio version of "A Christmas Carol" before it, a treasured and appreciated annual Christmas present.

And, thanks to videotape copies, an annual big screen showing at The Music Box Theater in Chicago, and even a *Lux Radio Theatre* radio version of the movie on cassette, *It's A Wonderful Life* fans will always be free as an angel to relish their favorite movie whenever they want.

Thanks for the wings, George! ■

NOTE-- Tune in to Those Were The Days Saturday, December 14 for the Lux Radio Theatre version of "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Victor Moore.

*Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .*

*The Songs We Sang
In Grammar School*



Now that I think back on it some 55 years after the event, I received a pretty good basic academic education at George W. Tilton Elementary School, on the West Side.

First of all, we learned to read and write and spell. Then we learned to add, subtract, multiply, and divide.

In History, we learned about the explorations of Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan, Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake, Lewis and Clark, Pere Marquette and Joliet, and all the rest.

We learned about the Crusades, the Magna Carta, the American War of Independence, the Civil War, and World War One. (We studied World War Two not in History Class but in Current Events.)

Our geography teacher familiarized us with the continents and the oceans. She taught us much about the geography of our own country and its great rivers: the Missouri and the Mississippi, the Colorado, the Allegheny and the Monongahela, the Ohio. We studied the Great Lakes and the Mountain ranges: the Appalachians and the Rockies.

We pored over relief maps, their colors ranging from dark green for the lowest of the lowlands, through lighter shades of green and tan for the higher elevations, and dark brown for the tallest mountains.

The teacher taught us the principal in-

dustries in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and St. Louis, Missouri, as well as Chicago and many other cities. She told us in what parts of the country the various crops were grown, and where coal and iron and copper were mined.

We learned the capitals of all 48 states.

In English, we were taught to identify nouns and verbs and adjectives and adverbs and pronouns and prepositions and conjunctions and interjections, and we learned how to diagram a sentence.

Our science teacher taught us about some of the North American birds: the robin, the Baltimore oriole, the cardinal, the indigo bunting and a lot more. She also showed us how to identify a number of trees that grow in Illinois. In autumn, we would gather fallen leaves, dip them in melted paraffin, and mount them on 9x12 sheets of construction paper, labelling each page: Poplar, Maple, Oak, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), Elm, Catalpa, etc. We would punch holes in the left-hand edges of these sheets and bind them into a book.

We kids had to work at acquiring all that knowledge, not only in the classroom but also on our homework assignments. Notwithstanding all the work involved, however, given a teacher who was congenial—and most of the were—learning was fun.

The most enjoyable class for me was Music; it was by far the easiest—all we

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had to do was sing—but there was more to it than that. The other subjects were taught for the purpose of developing our minds, but I think that the songs we learned in Music—yes, even those simple songs—enriched our souls.

You may call me a moonstruck sentimentalist, but even though I've forgotten many of the *facts* I learned in grammar school, I remember, and remember most fondly, the *songs* we sang in music class.

The music teachers were a special breed. A few of the teachers of arithmetic and history could sometimes be a bit on the dour side, but the music teachers were always good-humored; all of them were pleasant, and nice to be around. I never met a music teacher I didn't like.

I don't know what songs kids are being taught in grammar school these days, but I can recall some that we learned at Tilton in the early '40s.

Some of the songs were English madrigals a couple of centuries old. I remember one in particular:

*Now is the month of Maying,
When merrie lads are playing.
Fa la la la la etc.*

Another old English song was "John Peel," which told of a hunter who woke the countryside with his noise every morning.

*Do ye ken John Peel at the break of day?
Do ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?
Do ye ken John Peel when he's far, far
away*

*With his hounds and his horn in the
morning?*

We learned songs in praise of our city, our state, and our country. "Chicago" began:

*Behold, she stands beside her inland sea,
With outstretched hands to welcome you
and me...*

and it ended:

*Chicago. Chicago. Chicago is my home.
My heart is in Chicago, wherever I may
roam.*

For our home state we had this song:
*By the thy rivers gently flowing,
Illinois. Illinois.
By thy valleys verdant growing,
Illinois. Illinois.*

Of patriotic songs there were several. In addition to "The Star-Spangled Banner," we sang "America" ("My Country, 'Tis of Thee"), "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and "America the Beautiful."

*Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain...*

At Christmastime we sang a number of the traditional carols: "Silent Night," "The First Noel," "Adeste Fidelis," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and "Shepherds' Carol." We sang all our songs without instrumental accompaniment, and to this day I prefer to hear Christmas carols performed that way—by a mixed choir, *a cappella*. That is the way I remember hearing them sung as a child, and that is the way I like to hear them sung now.

After all, if any carols were sung at the first Christmas, there was no piano, no organ, no symphony orchestra. There was only a group of shepherds. Their voices were their only instruments.

For Thanksgiving we learned two songs that I recall. One was the "Prayer of Thanksgiving."

*We gather together to ask the Lord's
blessing.*

*He chastens and hastens His will to make
known.*

"Grandmother's Thanksgiving" began:
*Over the river and through the wood
To Grandmother's house we go.
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh*

Through the white and drifted snow...
and it ended:

*Over the river and through the wood,
Now Grandmother's cap I spy.
Hurrah! for the fun.
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah! for the pumpkin pie.*

Some of the songs we learned to sing were mere nonsense songs, but they were fun to sing. One such was "Turkey in the Straw."

"Polly Wolly Doodle" was another nonsense song:

*There's a chicken in the cart and the cart
won't go.*

Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day...

And there was Stephen Foster's "Oh, Susanna!"

It rained all night the day I left,

The weather it was dry.

The sun so hot I froze to death.

Susanna, don't you cry.

Oh, Susanna, don't you cry for me.

*I come from Alabama with a banjo on
my knee.*

Most of Stephen Foster's songs were not of that type; many were very touching, and we learned several of these, including "Old Folks at Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Black Joe," and

Beautiful Dreamer, wake unto me.

*Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for
thee.*

The neighborhood, the area around Madison and Pulaski, was home to a large number of Americans of Irish descent, and many of the teachers at Tilton had Irish names. (Mrs. Fay, Miss Kelly, Mrs. O'Mally and Miss Kelleher come to mind. The principal was Miss Flanagan, and her secretary was Mrs. Walsh.) This may or may not have had a bearing on the fact that we were taught "A Little Bit of Heaven" and "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen."

"The Mill" was sung to the tune of "Ach! Du Lieber Augustine," and it described an

old grain mill. One of the verses went like this:

*There the dusty miller stands
Ready with watchful eye,
Knowing that the grain will be
Bread by and by.*

I recall a kind of song which was not sung but spoken, in the manner of a Greek chorus. The lines were assigned to various sections of the class, with the word "almost" spoken by the boys with deep voices so that it sounded like the croak of a frog. A silly bit of doggerel it was, but I'll never forget it. It was entitled "The Frog."

What a wonderful bird the frog are.

When he stand.

He sit—

Almost.

When he hop,

He fly —

Almost.

Ain't got no sense hardly.

Ain't got no tail hardly, neither.

When he sit,

He sit on what he ain't got —

Almost.

We learned some songs of the Old West: "Cowboy's Lament," "Dusk on the Prairie," and "The Chisholm Trail." The most famous of the western songs was "Home on the Range."

Oh, give me a home

Where the buffalo roam,

Where the deer and the antelope play,

Where seldom is heard

A discouraging word

And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Home, home on the range, etc.

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat" was in the form of a round. The class was divided into four sections. The first section would sing the first line of the song. When it began the second line, the second section would begin at the beginning, etc. And so it went until the teacher signalled that this would be the last time around. Now when

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each section reached the end of the song, it would stop singing. At last, there was only one section singing the last line of the song which petered out, I thought, rather pitifully.

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily.
Life is but a dream.*

Another song about rowing a boat came from the Deep South; it told of a man who had wooed his love while rowing in his gum tree canoe:

*On Tombigbee River so bright I was born,
In a hut made of husks from the tall yellow corn.
It was there that I first met my Julia so true,
And I gave her a ride in my gum tree canoe.*

Still another song about boats and the water was the lovely "Santa Lucia."

*Now 'neath the silver moon,
Ocean is glowing.
O'er the calm billows
Soft winds are blowing.
Here balmy breezes blow,
Pure joys invite us,
And as we gently row,
All things delight us.
Home of fair poesy,
Realm of pure harmony,
Santa Lucia,
Santa Lucia.*

We sang a song called "Good Morning," whose tune, as I later learned, was the main theme of the last movement of Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony.

*Daily we're meeting
Before our work or play,
And always in greeting
We sing a glad Good Morning.
Sometimes it's raining*

*Or cloudy is the day,
But we're not complaining,
We still can sing Good Morning.*

There were also songs for the other end of the day; one was the "Evening Prayer" from *Hansel and Gretel*.

*When at night I go to sleep,
Fourteen angels watch do keep....
The Welsh lullaby "All Through the Night" was a tenderly beautiful song.
Sleep, my child, and peace attend thee
All through the night.
Guardian angels God will send thee
All through the night.
Soft the lonely hours are creeping,
Hill and dale in slumber sleeping,
I my loving vigil keeping
All through the night.*

The late Buddy Black, who gave me my first job in radio, was fond of saying, "If you want to bring back memories, nothing will do it like a song."

I think Buddy was right. Hearing a song that you haven't heard for years can evoke memories of a certain period in your life; memories of a job you once had; memories of your childhood, your high school days, your college days, your hitch in the service; memories of a person you once knew; memories of a day, or a night, or an hour long past. A song can stir up memories as nothing else can.

Buddy was referring to the kind of songs that disc jockeys play on the radio, but his saying applies to songs of any kind.

Try an experiment. Retrieve from your memory one of the songs you sang in grammar school. Sing it softly to yourself. I'll guarantee that if there's the least bit of sentiment in your soul, you'll find yourself transported back to the fifth grade, with your teacher standing in the front of the room beating time, and your little classmates sitting all around you. And if you listen carefully, you'll hear them singing. ■



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

Larry Clinton: A Study in Swing

BY KARL PEARSON

The big band era has been gone for quite a number of years, but the music lives on.

Big name leaders such as Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington and Artie Shaw are remembered by many, while members of the younger generation may be casually aware of more familiar names such as Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman. Other bands, such as those led by Jan Savitt, Bunny Berigan, Claude Thornhill and Hal Kemp, are gradually fading from the public's memory. Many of these such groups were favorites in their day but are gradually fading into popular music's forgotten past.

Bandleader, arranger and composer Larry Clinton also falls into this "forgotten" category. Today Clinton is best-remembered as the composer of "The Dipsy Doodle," a popular novelty song of the late 1930s. Larry's musical career is often overlooked or unknown to many, yet his talents helped enhance the success of a number of orchestras of the period, including his own.

The late 1930s are often considered the peak period of the big band era. Nationally known leaders such as Artie Shaw and Tommy Dorsey saw their fortunes rise as audiences turned out in record numbers to hear these bands in person. Many of these same orchestras experienced a surge in record sales as the country's fortunes improved. Larry Clinton was one of those who experienced this good fortune, and his band became one of the top favorites of the late 1930s.

Clinton, who was born in Brooklyn in 1909, began playing trumpet while still a child. At the age of 14 he began his professional career as a musician, playing in a number of groups heard locally in various speakeasies and Chinese restaurants. Years later Larry recalled that during this period (at the height of Prohibition), he once played in a club owned by the



LARRY CLINTON

LARRY CLINTON: STUDY IN SWING

notorious gangster Dutch Schultz. Clinton later recalled this brief association, noting "there was a row of bullet holes just above the bandstand."

As Clinton gained more musical experience his employment opportunities improved, and in 1932, at the age of 23, he landed a spot in composer-arranger Ferdé Grofé's orchestra. Grofé, composer of "The Grand Canyon Suite" and several other pieces, had originally been chief arranger for Paul Whiteman's large orchestra. (One of Whiteman's best-known recordings was the Grofé arrangement of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue.") Grofé encouraged young Clinton to try his hand at arranging, and when Larry sold his first arrangement to noted bandleader Isham Jones, he decided that arranging was more lucrative than playing trumpet.

During the summer of 1935 Larry landed an arranging spot with Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey's recently formed orchestra, which was beginning to gain some attention. Larry's initial association with Tommy would only last two short weeks, as Tommy left the band after a dispute with his brother. Larry remained with Jimmy for several months, and the band recorded several Clinton originals, including "Tap Dancer's Nightmare" and "Dusk In Upper Sandusky."

Clinton left the Dorsey organization in early 1936 for greener musical pastures, becoming chief arranger for the Casa Loma orchestra. The Casa Loma band, led by saxophonist Glen Gray, was a cooperative unit owned by its members. The Casa Loma group was at the height of its popularity in 1936, playing many of the better-known locations in the country, and heard weekly on a network radio program for Camel Cigarettes. Larry remained with the Casa Loma band for about a year, and in

that short time wrote a number of original tunes, including "Whoa, Babe" and "A Study In Brown." Both of the above-named Clinton compositions were among the many that became record hits with the American public.

In 1937 Clinton began his second association with Tommy Dorsey, and the Dorsey band, riding on its recent success of "Marie" and "Song Of India," was among the most popular in the nation. Larry joined the Dorsey arranging staff (which also included Axel Stordahl and Paul Weston) and began writing a number of new compositions for Dorsey's organization. One of those compositions, which began its history on a dinner menu, would eventually launch Larry's own bandleading career.

One night, while waiting in a restaurant for a group of friends to arrive, Larry began jotting down several musical ideas on a menu. The tune, in Clinton's own description, had a humorous sound to it, and Larry felt that this wacky-sounding tune deserved an equally silly title. He eventually titled the piece "The Dipsy Doodle," named after a similarly titled baseball pitch used by his friend, New York Giants pitcher Carl Hubbell. Lyrics were added to the song, and the Dorsey recording, as sung by vocalist Edythe Wright, became one of the big hits of 1937.

The resulting success of the "Dipsy Doodle" led Clinton to a bandleading career of his own. Eli Oberstein, a prominent RCA Victor records executive, encouraged Clinton to form a band of his own for recording purposes. (Additional support and assistance came from Tommy Dorsey.) Clinton's orchestra began making a string of recordings for Victor records, and the band was given additional exposure on the RCA Victor radio program, heard weekly over the NBC network. The heavy promotion and steady stream of recordings



BEA WAIN

helped launch Larry's bandleading career, and the Clinton orchestra became one of RCA Victor's top-selling bands.

Most of the record-buying public in the country was unaware that Clinton's orchestra was composed of top New York musicians and did not exist outside of the studios. As requests for personal appearances by the Clinton orchestra began to pour in, Larry was encouraged to form a full-time organization of his own. This full-time group, cashing in on the success of the initial studio group, proved to be even more successful.

During the summer of 1938 the Clinton band landed an engagement at the Glen Island Casino located in New Rochelle, New York, one of the best-known location jobs in the country.

The Glen Island Casino catered to the area college crowd, and had gained a repu-

tation as a launching spot for many bands. A number of groups had benefited from the word of mouth spread by the enthusiastic college crowd as well as the almost-nightly network broadcasts from the Glen Island bandstand.

When asked about the reason for his bands' success many years later, Clinton gave much of the credit to others. "I learned from the best of them," he later recalled. "My college was the Casa Loma band and my guru was Tommy Dorsey. He was the one who convinced me that a dance band leader's most important function was to keep the dancers on the floor."

The Clinton band's recordings were indeed danceable, and their style featured everything from smooth ballads to swinging instrumentals. Singer Bea Wain was featured on slow numbers such as "You Go To My Head" and "Deep Purple," while trombonist Ford Leary sang novelties like "Shadrach" and "Jeepers Creepers." Clinton instrumental originals often featured humorous titles like "The Big Dipper," "Midnight In The Madhouse" and "Shades Of Hades." Larry also wrote a number of "Study" pieces, swing instrumentals with various titles such as "A Study In Brown," "A Study In Green," and "A Study In Surrealism."

The Clinton band's repertoire also included a number of dance band arrangements of various classical and operatic selections. (Undoubtedly Tommy Dorsey's success with "Song Of India" was in the back of Larry's mind.) Clinton adapted a number of such items for his own band, including "Martha" from von Flotow's opera "Martha"; "I Dreamt I Dwelt In Marble Halls" from Balfe's "Bohemian Girl"; and "My Heart At The Sweet Voice" from Saent-Saens' "Samson and Delilah."

The best-known of these adaptations, and Larry's personal favorite, was based on a portion Debussy's "Reverie."

LARRY CLINTON: STUDY IN SWING

Clinton's adaptation and recording of "My Reverie," as sung by Bea Wain, became one of the best-selling records 1938.

Feeling uneasy in the role of a baton-wielding leader, Larry began playing trumpet once again (he also played trombone and clarinet with his group). Clinton was not an outstanding soloist, and like fellow leader Glenn Miller, preferred to play section parts with his orchestra. He played sparingly, claiming that he had a "10:30 lip" that tired early in the evening.

The success of "My Reverie" brought Clinton's orchestra even greater success. The band was signed to appear on not one but two commercial radio programs: Robert Benchley's Old Gold "Melody and Madness" program and the Tommy Riggs "Quaker Party" show. Eventually Clinton found that two weekly shows and a full performing schedule were a bit too much, and the band left the Benchley program.

During the early part of 1939 the Clinton orchestra scored another success with its recording of "Deep Purple," featuring Bea Wain's sensitive vocal. Miss Wain left the band shortly after the record was released to begin a solo career of her own, and to spend more time with her husband, radio announcer Andre Baruch. The band experienced several other changes in key personnel during the next year. Ford Leary left the orchestra, and his vocal duties were handled for a short time by trumpeter Jack Palmer. Larry eventually hired saxist Butch Stone to sing the novelties. (Stone later joined Les Brown's Band of Renown, where he served in a similar capacity, singing tunes like "A Good Man Is Hard To Find." At last word Stone is still playing with Brown, who is still leading a band of his own.) Baritone Terry Allen, who had previously sung with Red Norvo's big band, joined Clinton for a time. He was

featured on a number of recordings, and was heard on a memorable version of "How High The Moon."

Larry Clinton broke up his band during the fall of 1941 to accept a commission in the United States Army Air Corps. American involvement in the war was inevitable, and hundreds of musicians were either being drafted or enlisting in the armed services. Clinton resumed his bandleading career after the war, signing with a new firm, Cosmo records. However the musical scene had changed during the intervening years. The big bands were no longer the big favorites, having been replaced in popularity by many of the singers that were once featured with the same bands. Larry's prewar success eluded him, and within a few short years he disbanded the group and ran a music publishing firm.

Larry continued working on the administrative side of the music business and was affiliated for several years with Kapp Records, where he served in an executive capacity. From time to time he assembled bands of his own for various recordings, recreating many of his earlier hits. When he finally decided that he had saved enough money, Larry quit the music business and settled in Florida. Both Larry and his wife enjoyed their retirement, supported in part by Larry's continuing composing royalties. While many of his contemporaries such as Count Basie and Harry James preferred to remain on the road, Larry enjoyed his free time. He also began a new writing career, as the author of a number of humorous science fiction articles. Many years later the Clintons moved to Arizona, where Larry died in May of 1985, at the age of 75. ■

NOTE-- Karl Pearson has compiled an audio anthology of "Big Bands From Chicago" and will talk about it on Those Were The Days on December 7.



Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren



WBBM NEWSRADIO'S John Madigan (right) recalled political conventions past for Museum visitors during Convention Week last summer. Jim Conway (center) led the conversation and Radio Hall of Famer Jack Brickhouse chimed in with his own recollections.

When the Democrats came to town last August, the Museum got into the act with three terrific special —nonpartisan— events.

It all started out when former U.S. Congressman Marty Russo introduced political satirist Mark Russell. Russell lit up the Preston Bradley Hall taking jabs at the presidential contenders and pounding out tunes on the grand piano.

Later in the week, veteran news correspondent and Radio Hall of Famer Robert Trout recalled the many political conventions he covered for CBS and ABC dating back to the 1930s.

Then on came WBBM's John Madigan with his recollections of the conventions he has covered for print and broadcast over the last 50 years. All three events are well worth a look. They are on video tape and on the Archives shelves. Stop in and take a look.

AND MAKE A NEW YEAR's resolution visit the Museum frequently in 1997. If you work in the Loop, come on over for lunch. Simply stop by the Corner Bakery counter in the Randolph Street lobby of the Chicago Cultural Center for a sandwich or pastry and beverage, and then see all our Museum has to offer.

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

Chicago, 60602

Phone (312) 629-6000



Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

DECEMBER 1996

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7th RADIO TO PLAN YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST BY

TOWN HALL TONIGHT (12-22-37) Fred Allen stars with Portland Hoffa and guest Jack Benny in a Christmastime broadcast with Minerva Pious, Walter Tetley, Alan Reed. Jack tries to sell his Maxwell to Fred. The Mighty Allen Art Players present a Christmas fable, "Santa Claus on Strike." Peter Van Steeden and the orchestra. Ipana, Sal Hepatica, NBC. (15:30; 17:00; 26:00)

DORIS DAY SHOW (12-23-53) Guest Jack Kirkwood ("Put something in the pot, boy!") joins Doris for this holiday program. Someone has stolen announcer Don Wilson's Santa Claus suit. Doris sings "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Silver Bells." Syndicated. (25:50)

FRED WARING SHOW (12-22-48) Fred and the Pennsylvanians present three English Christmas carols, a lengthy version of "Jingle Bells," an "Uncle Lumpy" story and "The Song of Christmas Eve." Announcer Bill Bivans, Durwood Kirby. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:18)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-8-48) Gildy has done some early Christmas shopping, but the gifts he brought home have disappeared. Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with Walter Tetley, Lillian

Randolph, Marylee Robb. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:40)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian and *Nostalgia Digest* columnist **KARL PEARSON** who will talk about "Big Bands from Chicago."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14th RADIO TO ADDRESS CHRISTMAS CARDS BY

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-15-48) Gildy tries to economize with his Christmas shopping this year. Harold Peary stars as Gildersleeve, with Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Walter Tetley as Leroy, and Una Merkle as Adeline Fairchild. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:00)

CHRISTMAS DAY IN AMERICA (12-25-46) An hour of entertainment and inspiration for Christmas day. The meaning, joy and hope of Christmas is expressed during four consecutive daytime dramas against the retelling of the story of the Nativity. We hear *Life Can Be Beautiful*; *Ma Perkins*; *Pepper Young's Family*; and *The Right to Happiness*. Narration by Ron Rossen, written by Carl Bixby. Proctor and Gamble, NBC. (12:30; 15:30; 16:30; 14:00)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (3-10-47) "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart and Donna Reed who recreate their screen roles as George and Mary Bailey in the radio version of Frank Capra's classic 1946 film. Victor Moore co-stars as Clarence, with Bill Johnstone as Mr. Bailey, John McIntire as Joseph, Leo Cleary as Uncle Billy, and Edwin Maxwell as Mr. Potter. A small town man thinks he's a failure, but his Guardian Angel proves otherwise. William Keighley is host. Lux Soap, CBS. (21:00; 16:32; 21:02)

See article about the 50th Anniversary of It's A Wonderful Life, Page 2.

CHRISTMAS SEAL CAMPAIGN SHOW (1948) Jack Carson stars with Eve Arden and guest Edmund Gwenn. Jack tries to convince Eve there is a Santa Claus. Christmas Seals. (14:30)

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21st
RADIO TO WRAP, BAKE
AND DECORATE BY

PHIL HARRIS—ALICE FAYE SHOW (12-18-48) Phil promises his daughters that they will see Santa this Christmas Eve, so he hires a guy to play Santa for them. The "guy" turns out to be guest Jack Benny. Elliott Lewis is Frankie Remley, Walter Tetley is Julius Abbruzio. Phil sings "Jingle Bells," Alice sings "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." Rexall, NBC. (27:58)

READER'S DIGEST RADIO EDITION (12-19-46) "Room For a Stranger" starring Frank Sinatra as a Navy flyer hoping to see his girl at home on Christmas Eve. He receives a telegram from his commanding officer cancelling his leave. Host is Richard Kollmar. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29:25)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-22-48) Gildy wants a simple family Christmas this year. Harold Peary is Gildy, Marylee Robb is Marjorie, Arthur Q. Brian is Floyd the Barber, Dick LeGrand is Peavy, Earle Ross is Judge Hooker. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:20)

SUSPENSE (12-20-59) "Korean Christmas Carol" with Bill Lipton, Lawson Zerbe, Lyle Sudrow. A soldier recalls an incident that took place in 1951, during the Korean war. Multiple sponsors, CBS. (22:46)

A CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING (12-24-61) Bing Crosby stars with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Katherine Crosby and Jo Stafford, with Paul Weston and the orchestra, the Norman Luboff Choir, and Ken Carpenter. Program features Christmas carols, songs and humor. Jo sings "Winter Wonderland" and "The Christmas Song." Bing sings "White Christmas" and "Silent Night." Insurance Company of North America, CBS. (13:15; 14:52; 21:35)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28th
SEASON'S GREETINGS

PAUL WHITEMAN'S ABC CHRISTMAS PARTY (12-24-46) An all-star radio extravaganza starring the "King of Jazz" himself, Paul Whiteman and his orchestra and a host of ABC radio stars including Walter Winchell, J. Scott Smart ("The Fat Man"), Bing Crosby, Henry Morgan, Basil Rathbone, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Kenny Baker, Don McNeill, Tom Brennaman, Don Wilson, Lum and Abner, Patrice Munsel, Arnold Stang. A big, beautiful ninety minute holiday gift from



PAUL WHITMAN

the American Broadcasting Company. Smart tells the story of "Bug Eye and the Christmas Caper"; Morgan and Stang audition a new show; Rathbone and Fitzgerald in a scene from "A Child is Born"; Brennaman in Encino, California, and McNeill in Winnetka, Illinois, exchange greetings; Baker is at Glamour Manor; Lum and Abner read "The Night Before Christmas"; Crosby reads the story of the Nativity. Sustaining, ABC. (30:29; 27:36; 31:38)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (12-26-48) Ozzie remembers when he and his brother believed their father when dad said it would snow. The Nelsons star with John Brown, Janet Waldo, Joe Kearns, Tommy Bernard, Henry Blair. International Silver Company, NBC. (28:55)

SUSPENSE (12-31-61) "The Old Man" starring Leon Janney with Lawson Zerbe, Larry Haines, Ralph Camargo, Rita Lloyd. An old man is being forced to retire. Sustaining, CBS. (24:32)

RED SKELTON SHOW (1-1-46) Red stars with Verna Felton, Rod O'Connor, Anita Ellis, David Forrester and the orchestra. The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire spotlights Deadeye and Junior in "Bells and Resolutions" for the new year. Raleigh Cigarettes, NBC. (28:05)

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

JANUARY 1997

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, JANUARY 4th
ADVENTURES BY MORSE
"THE COBRA KING STRIKES BACK"
Chapters 1 thru 5

Today we begin an exciting series by the great Carlton E. Morse, creator of *I Love a Mystery* and *One Man's Family*.

"The Cobra King Strikes Back" (syndicated in 1944) is another adventure with San Francisco detective Captain Bart Friday and his sidekick Skip Turner who roam the world solving mysteries and seeking out danger.

There are ten 25-minute episodes in this thrill-packed adventure and we'll broadcast the first five chapters today. The remaining chapters will be presented on January 11.

Chapter 1 — Friday and Turner are on a steamship, taking a prisoner to Saigon. Aboard ship, they meet Dr. Carter and his party who are on their way to Cambodia, in the heart of French Indo-China. Friday's troubles begin when his prisoner escapes.

Chapter 2 — "Something About the Hooded Snake"

Chapter 3 — "The Mad King of Ankar"

Chapter 4 — "The Temple of Gorillas"

Chapter 5 — "The Living Image of Cambodia"

—**PLUS: PLEASE STAND BY** — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 18: Case Closed focuses on the popularity of the detective program on the air, grouping the radio detectives according to personality and philosophy and discusses common criteria shared by the crime fighters of all groups and examines the differences in their approaches. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11th
ADVENTURES BY MORSE
"THE COBRA KING STRIKES BACK"
Chapters 6 thru 10

Chapter 6 — "Terrors of the Hollow Mountain"

Chapter 7 — "The Face of A Beast"

Chapter 8 — "It Was Not Cannibalism"

Chapter 9 — "The Fangs and Teeth of the Enemy"

Chapter 10 — "The Amazing End of an Expedition"

—**PLUS: PLEASE STAND BY** — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 19: Tall in the Studio discusses the Westerns, which recalled an early period of American history when the country struggled for existence, and traces the history of three types of Western series: the juvenile Western, the adult Western, and series that were considered Western in their approach, each with heroes who were defenders of justice and champions of the unfortunate. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18th

THE WHISTLER (6-2-48) "Stranger in the House" is the story of a woman who wants to find out if her foster brother, who has been missing for seven years, is still alive. Cast includes Virginia Gregg and Gerald Mohr. Marvin Miller announces. Signal Oil Co., CBS. (29:04)
PHIL HARRIS—ALICE FAYE SHOW (10-17-48) Phil's five year old daughter has a boyfriend. Co-starring with Phil and Alice are Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley, Robert North as Willy, Walter Tetley as Julius, and Jeanine Roose and Anne Whitfield as the Harris' daughters. Rexall, NBC. (29:04)

IMAGINATION THEATRE (4-7-96) "A double feature movie for your mind." 1. "But the Flesh is Weak" — the laws of time do not exist at a strange monastery. (24:05) 2. "Belamy Bridge" — A shell-shocked war veteran can't tell which world he is living in. (21:40) Syndicated.

ADVENTURES OF MAISIE (1949) Ann Sothern stars as Maisie Revere, with Frank Nelson, Hans Conried, Lurene Tuttle, Sheldon Leonard, Earl Lee, Sidney Miller. Maisie suggests to her boss that he hire an efficiency expert. Syndicated. (27:50)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 20: *Child's Play* concerns the listening habits of a generation of preteens and teenagers who grew up listening to programs based on comic strips, airmen, spacemen, practitioners of magic and the occult, and the all-American. Also discussed are the premiums and giveaways which were offered by the sponsors of many kids' programs. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25th

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER (7-27-47) "The Man the Insects Hated" lives in a mansion near the swamps by the Bayou. He is obsessed with inventing a formula for a "perfect insect killer." Cast includes Maurice Tarplin, Eric Dressler, Helen Shields, Robert Dryden. Sustaining, MBS. (29:29)

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (10-22-47) The great Schnozzola with Arthur Treacher, Jo Stafford, Candy Candido. Jimmy and guest Victor Moore are pirates in search for the Lady from Twenty-Nine Palms (Veola Vonn). Sports report from Tommy Harmon. Rexall, NBC. (29:20)

TENNESSEE JED (5-26-47) Isolated episode of the kids' adventure show starring Don McLaughlin as Jed, a southern marksman who,

after the Civil War, becomes an agent of the White House, working for President Grant. Tip-Top Bakers, ABC. (14:38)

LARRY CLINTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1938) Remote broadcasts from the Streets of Paris section of the International Casino in New York City. Vocals by Bea Wain and Ford Leary. Selections include "Heart and Soul," "My Reverie," "Shadrach," and "It Took a Million Years." Sustaining, NBC. (16:30; 13:00)

SUSPENSE (1-2-47) "Tree of Life" starring Mark Stevens as a man who plans to do away with his bossy wife after they move into a new home. Cast includes Cathy and Elliott Lewis. Joe Kearns is the Man in Black. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:11)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 21: *Winning Ways* takes a look at several types of audience participation shows including "fun time" programs, give-away shows with the participation of studio audiences, and giveaways involving audiences at home. (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 a weekend edition 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 to 1 a.m. Host Stan Freberg

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<i>December, 1996 Schedule</i>				
2 Gunsmoke Cinnamon Bear #4	3 Charlie McCarthy Cinnamon Bear # 5	4 Suspense Cinnamon Bear # 6	5 Fibber McGee & Molly Cinnamon Bear # 7	6 Cinnamon Bear # 8, #9, #10
9 Our Miss Brooks Cinnamon Bear # 11	10 Family Theatre Cinnamon Bear # 12	11 Phil Harris-Alice Faye Cinnamon Bear # 13	12 Six Shooter Cinnamon Bear # 14	13 Cinnamon Bear # 15, #16, #17
16 Lone Ranger Cinnamon Bear # 18	17 Life of Riley Cinnamon Bear # 19	18 Johnny Dollar Cinnamon Bear # 20	19 Great Gildersleeve Cinnamon Bear # 21	20 Cinnamon Bear #22, #23, #24
23 Duffy's Tavern Cinnamon Bear # 25	24 Jack Benny Cinnamon Bear # 26	25 Miracle on 34th St. Fibber McGee & Molly	26 Lux Radio Theatre Pt 1 'Maisie Was A Lady'	27 Lux Radio Theatre Pt 2 Frontier Gentleman
30 Ozzie & Harriet Abbott & Costello Pt 1	31 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Burns and Allen			
<i>January, 1997 Schedule</i>				
		1 Suspense Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	2 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Philip Marlowe	3 The Shadow Vic and Sade
6 The Whistler Fibber McGee Pt 1	7 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Green Hornet	8 Lone Ranger Abbott & Costello Pt 1	9 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Gangbusters	10 Dragnet Lum and Abner
13 Texas Rangers Jack Benny Pt 1	14 Jack Benny Pt 2 Box Thirteen	15 Six Shooter Burns & Allen Pt 1	16 Burns & Allen Pt 2 Have Gun, Will Travel	17 Johnny Dollar Bob and Ray
20 Gunsmoke Life of Riley Pt 1	21 Life of Riley Pt 2 Suspense	22 Lone Ranger Harris-Faye Show Pt 1	23 Harris-Faye Show Pt 2 Directors' Playhouse	24 Superman Unsolved Mysteries
27 The Saint Stan Freberg #15 Pt 1	28 Stan Freberg #15 Pt 2 Hermit's Cave	29 The Shadow Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	30 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 Dimension X	31 Rocky Fortune Lum and Abner

Sponsors Put Their Gold Into Radio's Golden Age

BY BILL ELWELL

Stories about radio during its golden age usually focus upon the stars and shows of the medium between 1926 and 1956. This article takes a look at radio during that era from a new perspective: *the companies and products* which paid for many of the celebrities and programs on major networks from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties.

The first company known to have sponsored a broadcast was the Hamilton Music Store in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania. The broadcast was aired from the same town by experimental radio station 8XK.

The station was established by Dr. Frank Conrad, an engineer with the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company in nearby Pittsburgh. Conrad operated 8XK from his home in Wilkinsburg and by 1920 had transmitted regular talks and recorded music.

When Conrad had played all of his own records on the air, Hamilton's offered him a continuous supply of new ones if he would give the store credit during his programs. Conrad agreed and broadcast what

may have been the first radio commercial.

There was, however, only limited advertising on the radio during the early 1920s, and this caused financial hardships for stations without adequate backing from other sources. The stations which did advertise regularly were often owned by establishments which manufactured radio sets and used the airwaves to stimulate the sale of their products.

Nevertheless, there were important developments made

in the radio industry during those years which led to the widespread use of commercials on the air. In 1922, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company worked on new techniques for advertising and, on August 28 of that year, broadcast one of the first sponsored programs over WEAF, its station in New York. Then, on December 4, 1923, WEAF aired the first fully sponsored program, a variety show called *The Eveready Hour*, which was paid for by the National Carbon Company, makers of Eveready Batteries.

These broadcasts marked a turning point in radio for, subsequently, many in the fledgling industry realized that sponsored programs were the key not only to survival but also to success. And, as a result, plans were developed to make advertising an in-



Bill Elwell is a regular contributor who fills his retirement years by gardening, hiking, writing and listening to old time radio shows.

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tegral part of broadcasting.

These plans took note of the growing popularity of radio and the general prosperity of the early twenties. Americans wanted to hear the new stars and programming becoming available on the airwaves and at times ordered so many radios that manufacturers were hard-pressed to meet the demand.

As various businesses became aware of the growing radio audience, they began seeking alliances with the new industry. And, by 1925, broadcasters had formed many mutually beneficial arrangements with companies interested in boosting sales of their wares by advertising in the new medium.

These arrangements began to produce significant results in 1926, the year in which the National Broadcasting Company, America's first permanent nationwide network, came into existence. During the 1926-27 season, there were nearly 25 major network programs, each sponsored by a specific company or product. Some of the sponsors were Atlantic and Pacific Tea, Bristol-Myers (Ipana Toothpaste), Continental Baking (Wonder Bread), General Foods (Maxwell House Coffee), and Radio Corporation of America.

It is interesting to note that, in the early days of network radio, the titles of many programs contained either the names of the sponsors or the sponsors' products and were, in effect, commercials themselves. The companies mentioned above, for instance, sponsored programs of music called the *A and P Gypsies*, *Ipana Troubadours*, *Jolly Wonder Bakers*, *Maxwell House Hour*, and *RCA Radiotrons*, respectively.

While many of the sponsored programs on network radio at that time consisted of music, there were exceptions. One of them was a daytime talk for homemakers. The

show was paid for by General Mills and was called *Betty Crocker* after its fictitious hostess, who gave expert advice about food preparation to listening housewives.

The second half of the twenties saw significant growth in the number of sponsored programs on network radio. The increase was stimulated, in part, by the appearance of a new network, the Columbia Broadcasting System, near the close of the decade.

Several companies (Atlantic and Pacific Tea, Bristol-Myers, General Foods, General Mills, and RCA) each sponsored at least one program in every one of network radio's first four seasons. During the same period, General Mills sponsored the most programs (3) in a single season (1929-30).

By 1929-30 there were nearly 95 major programs each sponsored by a single company or product. This represented almost a fourfold increase since the first season of network broadcasting.

Most sponsored broadcasts at the end of the twenties were presentations of music and variety and were often financed by major corporations. Among those sponsors were Cities Service Gasoline and Standard Brands (Chase and Sanborn Coffee, Fleischmann's Yeast).

The Cities Service Concert was one of the first great programs of concert music. During the 1929-30 season, it featured a talented and attractive young singer named Jessica Dragonette, who brought a superbly trained voice and extensive musical repertoire to the airwaves.

Although Miss Dragonette sang her way to stardom in solos and duets for Cities Service, in time she became disenchanted with the show's format. She wanted to perform in operettas, too, but the sponsor refused to make the change. As a result, Miss Dragonette moved to a musical-variety program, *The Palmolive Beauty Box Theatre*, in 1937. There the sponsor,

UNCLE EZRA

BROADCASTING
from Station E-Z-R-A

EVERY MON.-WED.-FRI.

NBC — Coast-to-Coast

You'll enjoy the philosophy and quaint humor of this old man with young ideas. One of the best loved characters in radio, in a program that's DIFFERENT. Never a dull minute. The Hoosier Hot Shots supply the music. 'Nuff said.

WTMJ WMAQ WIBA WIRE
5:15 P.M., CST - 6:15 P.M., CDT

Sponsored by ALKA-SELTZER



Colgate (Palmolive Soap), gave her the latitude in performing she had sought.

The *Chase and Sanborn* program began in 1929-30 as a musical-variety. Popular French entertainer Maurice Chevalier was hired for the then unheard-of salary of \$5000 a week to be the featured attraction. Later, after Chevalier departed, rising radio personality Eddie Cantor became the star of the show and used the experience as a springboard to his own program.

The Rudy Vallee Show, sponsored by Fleischmann's Yeast, also came on the scene as a musical-variety at the end of the decade. The popularity of Vallee's program was based upon good writing, careful attention to production detail, and quality performers. And Vallee gave many talented newcomers, including Eddie Cantor, their first big breaks in the new medium.

The 1929-30 season also saw the network premiere of *Amos 'n' Andy*, which became one of radio's most popular shows.

It was first sponsored by Lever Brothers (Pepsodent Toothpaste).

The same season witnessed another event which, at first, was relatively unrelated to radio. It was the crash of the stock market and the beginning of the Great Depression in the fall of 1929.

The Depression, which impacted virtually all of the following decade, caused widespread business failure and general unemployment throughout the nation. As a result, many people could no longer afford to seek amusement in night clubs, theatres, and movie houses. And this, predictably, led to joblessness in the entertainment industry.

During the 1930s, Americans tended to stay home and turn to the only affordable source of entertainment left to many of them: radio. And, concurrently, many unemployed entertainers found new work in that same medium.

Thus, the radio audience, which at first

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increased for general economic reasons, was further enlarged when listeners began finding their favorite performers on the air. And, as businesses became aware of the expanding radio audience, they began pouring more money into advertising in the medium.

As a result, the Depression, contrary to its devastating effects on many business and individuals, led to unprecedented growth and prosperity in the radio industry. And this gave rise to more new programs.

With few exceptions, the number of sponsored major network programs grew steadily throughout the Depression years. By the 1939-40 season, they totaled approximately 190, a doubling of the number in 1929-30. A portion of the increase was attributable to the appearance of a third network, the Mutual Broadcasting System, during the mid-thirties.

There were about a dozen companies which each sponsored at least one network program every broadcasting season of the Depression. Among them were Cities Service Gasoline, Campana Balm, Colgate, General Foods, General Mills, Lever Brothers, Pacific Coast Borax, and Standard Brands.

During the same decade, Proctor and Gamble sponsored the most programs (24) in a single season (1939-40). Its Camay Soap, Chipso, Crisco, Dreft, Drene, Ivory Soap, Oxydol, Teel, and White Naptha paid for broadcasts. Predictably, most of the programs were "soap operas," and five of them were "repeats" on different networks at different times.

The growing number of businesses advertising on radio sponsored a host of memorable programs during the thirties. In the early years of the decade they first brought listeners an interesting assortment

of dramas including *Death Valley Days* (Pacific Coast Borax), *First Nighter* (Campana Balm) *The Shadow* (Hatchmacher), and *Sherlock Holmes* (G. Washington Coffee).

Sherlock Holmes, first sponsored on network radio in the 1930-31 season, at one time featured commercials which were partly incorporated into the story. In them, Dr. Watson, Holmes' confident and assistant, and Joseph Bell, the program's announcer, met in Watson's study during a break in the action to enjoy steaming cups of G. Washington Coffee and express their appreciation for the coffee's comforting warmth and pleasant flavor. This personalized endorsement of the sponsor's product by one of the show's stars in a relaxed setting undoubtedly had a positive influence on sales.

The early 1930s also witnessed the premieres of many new variety shows. Among them were a musical-variety, *The Bing Crosby Show* (Chesterfield Cigarettes), and several comedy-varieties, *Burns and Allen* (Robert Burns Cigars), *The Eddie Cantor Show* (Chase and Sanborn Coffee), *The Fred Allen Show*, (Linit), and *The Jack Benny Program* (Canada Dry).

Bing Crosby's program, which soon became one of the more popular musical shows, changed sponsorship to Kraft Foods in the 1935-36 season. Crosby was still with Kraft in the mid-1940s when he decided to transcribe (pre-record) his shows. When Kraft refused to make this change, Crosby found a new sponsor, Philco Radios.

Philco, however, inserted a clause into its contract with Crosby which required him to resume live broadcasts if his ratings dropped below 12 for four consecutive weeks. They stayed above that number, and Crosby continued to transcribe.

A few years after its premiere, *The Jack Benny Program* also acquired a new spon-

sor, General Foods (Jell-O). Benny often gave extra "plugs" for this sponsor by introducing his shows for General Foods with the phrase, "Jell-O again, this is Jack Benny."

Benny's program was one of the first to incorporate commercials fully into broadcasts. This was done by giving announcer Don Wilson an additional role as member of the cast. Wilson then presented commercials in pleasant and often humorous ways which blended smoothly with the rest of the storyline.

There was also a new genre for youngsters on network airwaves in the early thirties, the adventure serial. The first and probably best-known example of this kind of program was *Little Orphan Annie*, which premiered in 1931-32 sponsored by the Wander Company, makers of Ovaltine. The stories and premium offers, which characterized this show, were so popular with listeners that *Annie* became an example copied by many subsequent programs for kids.

The premiums offered on *Annie* (badges, bracelets, buttons, decoders, rings, and shake-up mugs) were priced appropriately in view of the times. They were available for only one thin dime plus the seal from a container of Ovaltine. And they played a large part in keeping young listeners loyal to the program and to the sponsor's product.

The mid-1930s introduced radio audi-



For Long Play and Standard Records

PHILCO 1405. Table radio-phonograph with "Console Tone" Acoustical System with Balanced Fidelity Reproducer for 45 minute records and automatic changer for standard records. Powerful radio. **\$129.25***

Wednesday is Bingsday

Hear Bing Crosby on Philco Radio Time every Wednesday, 10 PM in the East, 9 PM elsewhere. ABC Network and many additional stations.



ences to another group of assorted dramas. Among them were the exciting *Gangbusters* (Colgate - Palmolive Soap), the humorous *Lum and Abner* (Horlick's Malted Milk), the prestigious *Lux Radio Theatre* (Lever Brothers - Lux Soap), and the homey *One Man's Family* (Kentucky Winner Tobacco).

The *Lux Radio Theatre*, first sponsored by Lever Brothers in 1934-35, was broadcast initially on Sunday afternoons from New York and featured adaptations of Broadway shows using Broadway actors. Near the end of its first year, the program began to run out of adaptable material and

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experienced falling ratings. As a result, the sponsor moved it to Hollywood in order to have access to movie scripts and stars. This change, plus the stars' endorsements of Lux Soap on the air, and the show's new time on Monday evenings, succeeded in making the *Lux Radio Theatre* one of the medium's more popular programs.

Several new variety shows were also added to the airwaves during the middle thirties. They included two comedy-variety, *The Bob Hope Show* (Emerson Drug - Bromo Seltzer), and *Fibber McGee and Molly* (S. C. Johnson - Johnson's Wax), an amateur talent contest, *Major Bowes and His Original Amateur Hour* (Chase and Sanborn Coffee), and a musical-variety, *Your Hit Parade* (American Tobacco - Lucky Strike Cigarettes).

Bob Hope developed an approach similar to the one used by Jack Benny when introducing his show. After Pepsodent Toothpaste (Lever Brothers) took over his sponsorship in the late thirties, Hope provided extra plugs at the beginning of his broadcasts with the phrase, "This is Bob 'Pepsodent' Hope saying..."

Fibber McGee and Molly, which premiered on network radio in the spring of 1935, was another of the first programs to incorporate commercials fully into the show. And its announcer, Harlow Wilcox, like Don Wilson of the *Jack Benny Program*, was also a member of the cast. Thus, the genial Wilcox was also able to present commercials in ways which almost made them seem part of the stories.

Your Hit Parade played the top tunes of the week as determined by surveys of sheet music and record sales and juke box selections. The program also played several "Lucky Strike Extras," popular songs not among a week's top tunes. This amounted to extra commercials for the sponsor and

extra entertainment for the listeners.

A relatively new genre, the daytime serial drama for women or "soap opera," began to grow substantially on radio around the middle of the decade. Examples of popular "soaps" premiering during that time include *Aunt Jenny* (Spry), *Backstage Wife* (Dr. Lyons Tooth Powder), *David Harum* (Bab-O), *Ma Perkins* (Oxydol), and *Vic and Sade* (Crisco).

The middle years of the Depression also saw the rise of more adventure programs for kids. The 1933-34 season, for example, witnessed the network premieres of *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy* (General Mills - Wheaties) and *Tom Mix* (Ralston).

Jack Armstrong followed the pattern established by *Little Orphan Annie* with respect to premiums and offered such treasures as luminous jewelry, pedometers, toy bombsights, and whistling rings. The use of these items by the main characters of the program during their radio adventures and the enthusiasm with which announcer Franklin MacCormack described them during breaks in the action created an enormous demand for the premiums and for the sponsor's product, Wheaties.

The concluding years of the 1930s brought more new dramas. Among them were several thrillers, such as *Big Town* (Rinso), *I Love A Mystery* (Fleischmann's Yeast), *Mr. District Attorney* (Pepsodent), and the light-dramas *Dr. Christian* (Vaseline) and *Grand Central Station* (Listerine). And there was a new comedy-variety, *The Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy Show*, which also premiered during those years for Chase and Sanborn Coffee.

The number of sponsored soap operas was at a peak in the late '30s. Among the newcomers then were *Life Can Be Beautiful* (Ivory Soap), *Lorenzo Jones* (Phillips Milk of Magnesia), *Our Gal Sunday* (Anacin) and *Stella Dallas* (also for

Phillips Milk of Magnesia).

And, finally, a popular quiz show, *Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge* (Lucky Strike Cigarettes), and another memorable adventure serial for kids, *Terry and the Pirates* (Dari-Rich) also came on the scene at the end of the decade.

The 1940s witnessed two significant trends in radio sponsorship. The first, which occurred in the first half of the decade, was an almost constant increase in the number of major programs sponsored on the networks by a single company or product.

This growth resulted in an industry peak of 270 programs during 1945-46. And the peak figure was more than 40 per cent greater than the comparable number in 1939-40.

The second trend in radio during the forties was a steady decrease in sponsored shows throughout the latter years of the decade. By the 1949-50 season, they slipped to around 220.

During the 1930s, about a dozen companies had each sponsored at least one program during every broadcast season of that decade. During the 1940s, about four times that number of companies accomplished a similar feat.

Most of these long-term sponsors of the

'30s continued throughout the '40s. Among the new long-termers in the latter decade were such companies as Bell Telephone, Campbell, Carnation, Coca-Cola, Cudahy, Eversharp, Miles Laboratories,

Pet Milk, Pure Oil, Sealtest, Sun Oil, and Texaco.

During the 1940s, Proctor and Gamble once again sponsored the most programs (27) in a single season (1940-41). The products involved were the same as in its previous peak (1939-40) plus Duz and Lava Soap. Most of the shows sponsored were still soaps, and six of them were repeats.

Memorable dramas continued to premiere on the airwaves in the early forties. They included *Ellery*

Queen (Bromo-Seltzer), *Inner Sanctum* (Carter's Pills), and *Mr. and Mrs. North* (Jergens Lotion).

One of the commercials aired on *Ellery Queen* was noteworthy because of the unique manner in which it was presented. It was delivered by a voice which resembled the sound of a steam train engine, and the voice repeated the name of the sponsor's product, Bromo-Seltzer, several times in a rhythm reminiscent of a moving train. Regardless of whether this unusual advertisement boosted sales, it did leave a lasting impression on many listeners.



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An abundance of humor was also added to radio then with the appearance of a new situation comedy, *The Great Gildersleeve* (Kraft), and several new comedy-varieties including *Duffy's Tavern* (Shick Razors), *The Jimmy Durante Show* (Camel Cigarettes), and *The Red Skelton Show* (Avalon Cigarettes).

Other notable newcomers at that time were a panel quiz, *The Quiz Kids* (Alka Seltzer), an audience participation comedy *Truth or Consequences* (Proctor and Gamble - Ivory Soap), and another adventure serial for youngsters, *Captain Midnight* (Ovaltine).

Captain Midnight was first aired regionally for the Skelly Oil Company and, during those early broadcasts, some listeners may have wondered why a program for kids was sponsored by products for grown-ups. In any case, this curious arrangement ended in 1940-41 when Ovaltine moved from *Little Orphan Annie* to the *Captain*.

The mid-'40s produced several popular dramas including *Nick Carter* (Acme Paint), *Sam Spade* (Wildroot Cream Oil) and *Suspense* (Roma Wines).

There were also new situation comedies which first appeared at mid-decade: *The Dennis Day Show* (Colgate - Palmolive Soap), *The Life of Riley* (American Meat Institute), and *Ozzie and Harriet* (International Silver).

Ozzie and Harriet used an interesting means of plugging the sponsor's product. The couple's home address in the show was "1847 Rogers Road." And it was no coincidence that the sponsor sold "1847 Rogers Brothers Silver."

The same years also brought listeners two new comedy-varieties: *The Judy Canova Show* (Colgate) and *The Phil Harris - Alice Faye Show* (Fitch Shampoo).

The Phil Harris - Alice Faye Show in-

troduced a unique way to promote a sponsor's product. The *Jack Benny* and *Fibber McGee and Molly* programs had given the dual roles of announcer and cast member to Don Wilson and Harlow Wilcox, respectively, and thereby had facilitated incorporation of commercials into their broadcasts. *Phil Harris - Alice Faye*, however, went one step further after changing sponsorship to Rexall Drugs in 1948-49. It created the character of Mr. Scott, a high-ranking officer in the sponsor's company, and gave the part to Gale Gordon. Gordon, in his role as Scott, played the part of a harried executive who was often the object of Harris' schemes in the stories. Rexall received a curious kind of publicity in this situation, but, overall, emerged in a positive light.

Despite the decreases in sponsorship during the concluding years of the forties, new shows continued to premiere on the networks during that time. Among them were the dramas *Dragnet* (Fatima Cigarettes), *Escape* (Ford Motors), and *The Whistler* (Household Finance). Also premiering then were situation comedies *Life With Luigi* (Wrigley Gum), *My Friend Irma* (Swan Soap), and *Our Miss Brooks* (Colgate).

A showcase for aspiring entertainers, *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*, and a popular human interest program, *This Is Your Life*, also went on the air in the late forties. The former was sponsored by Lipton Tea and the latter by Philip Morris Cigarettes.

Godfrey had been on other shows for many years by the late '40s and had acquired a reputation for kidding his sponsors on the air. And, while much of the kidding was lighthearted and humorous, it tended to make sponsoring companies nervous until they learned that listeners liked Godfrey's approach and often bought the products he pushed.

By the 1950s, the thirty-year golden age of radio was drawing to a close. From 1949-50 to 1955-56, the number of major programs sponsored by a single company or product decreased from approximately 220 to 75.

The more than 60 per cent drop in sponsored programs was understandable. Television had come upon the scene, and many of radio's listeners were tuning-in to the new medium. And much of the talent and advertising that had been on radio was there for them to see as well as hear.

However, despite the movement of sponsors into television, about 20 of them still paid for at least one radio program every broadcasting season from 1950 through 1956. And Proctor and Gamble, which also retained the lead in sponsored programs during those years, financed as many as 19 shows in 1950-51.

In the early fifties, there were still businesses willing to sponsor new shows on the radio. And, during that time, a popular comedy, *The Bob and Ray Show*, premiered on the network for Colgate as did three adventure serials for youngsters: *Mark Trail* (Kellogg), *Silver Eagle*, *Mountie General Mills*, and *Tom Corbett: Space Cadet* (Kellogg).

Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding, the stars of the *Bob and Ray Show*, created and delivered subtle and humorous parodies and satires of many well-known radio serials.

And they also used their talents to produce riotously funny commercials for at least one of their sponsors.

Although the golden days of radio were ending by the mid-1950s, there were still rewards on the air for faithful listeners. Some of them were programs which had premiered in the early fifties and had been sustained by the network until mid-decade when they found sponsors. Two examples of this were the dramas *Gunsmoke* (Liggett and

Myers - L&M Cigarettes) and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* (Wrigley). Both shows compared favorably with the best ever broadcast.

It was a long and fabulous thirty years for network radio. During its first broadcast season, 1926-27, there were only eight different kinds of programming and about 35 major programs on the air. Approximately 25 (71 percent) of them were each sponsored by a single company or product.

At the industry's peak in 1945-46, there were 43 program categories and about 390

**NOW YOU CAN GET
AMERICA'S LEADING HAIR
TONIC IN NEW 25¢ SIZE!**

IF YOU'VE NEVER used Wildroot Cream-Oil, don't put it off any longer. As little as a quarter buys you days and weeks of smart good grooming that can't be beat. Then you'll know why it's—again and again the choice of men who put good grooming first!



**NON-ALCOHOLIC
Contains LANOLIN**

SMART WOMEN use it for grooming, relieving dryness, training children's hair. Now available in new 25¢ size (also larger economy sizes) at drug counters.

TUNE IN "The Adventures of Sam Spade" Sun. evgs., CBS Network.

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major programs. And 270 (69 per cent) of them each had a sponsor.

There were significant changes in these figures by 1955-56, the final season of the era. Although there were still 42 program categories and around 330 major programs on the air, only about 75 (23 per cent) of them were each financed by one sponsor. More than half of the 330 programs were sustained by the networks. And the rest were either paid for by multiple or local sponsors.

There were four companies which stood out as sponsors of network radio programs from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties. Three of them, Cities Service, General Foods and General Mills, each financed shows for 29 seasons during the medium's thirty-year golden era. The fourth, Proctor and Gamble, sponsored the most programs (27) during a single broadcasting season.

Many of the sponsors we've mentioned were relatively large, well-known companies. There were, however, a great number of other businesses which also sponsored programs on network radio from 1926 to 1956.

In all, more than 700 companies and products paid for the marvelous entertainment which sped through the air and into the homes of millions of Americans during those years.

And, because of the commercials which were part of those broadcasts, listeners became aware of some pretty good products.

We should stir a generous helping of rich, chocolatey Ovaltine into a tall, cold glass of milk and drink a toast to all of those sponsors who made life better ...who paid for the stars and shows that were on the airwaves ...who put their gold into radio's golden age. ■



I'm at the age where I should be entitled to sit back in my favorite easy chair, if I had an easy chair, tamp a pinch o' t'baccy into the bowl of a mellowed meerschaum pipe, if I had a pipe and if I smoked, pensively stroke my silvery-white beard, which I've never had, and proceed to recount what Christmas was in the "olden days," as the kids term anything farther back in time than their last birthday.

One thing I'd tell anyone who'd listen was that Chicago had some streets that at "yuletide," would turn into enchanted vistas. It was the time when I'd pile a load of my kids and one or two of the neighbors' into the family wagon, usually the Sunday before Christmas, or thereabouts, and take a leisurely tour of the seasonal sights. This, of course, was when driving an automobile anywhere for pleasure was still feasible, and a Sunday drive in the family crate was an anticipated treat.

Our "Cook's tour" would begin at dusk, the better to view the beautifully illuminated seasonal decorations, and as we headed downtown there was the usual urgent plea, "Are we gonna go 'under the world,' dad? Don't forget that, dad." "Under the world" meant plunging into the Wacker Drive underground and making a circuit of that cavernous, slightly mysterious, and, in those days, scarcely used street system originally intended for the conve-

nience of commercial vehicles. The thing that made it so fascinating and gave it an eerie and unearthly and amusement park, haunted-house-atmosphere was the green florescent illumination distinctive to that subterranean maze. I know of no other place where green lights were used for street lighting. It never failed to awe and start the trek on a note of excitement.

We'd wend our way to Michigan Boulevard, the city's showplace avenue, dubbed "The Magnificent Mile" lately. From Chicago Avenue south the trees lining both sides of the street twinkled merrily with sparkling tree lights. Wreaths, bells, Santa Clauses, and other Christmas symbol festooned the lamp posts and the shops, whose windows were smartly and stylishly decorated with the finest selection of gift suggestions. "Boul Mich" was in full holiday bloom.

Cruising leisurely south on Michigan Avenue, taking in the sights without a posse of cars behind tooting horns, blinking lights, rudely urging us to get a move-on, as would be the case today when there isn't a time, day or night, when there isn't traffic overload, we'd circle Chicago's spectacular yearly showpiece Christmas tree just off Michigan at Jackson Boulevard. If we wanted to take a second or even a third look to enjoy some part of it again, we'd just make another orbit. No problem. Remember this is the "olden days" of unjammed streets we're talking about.

But the culmination of our tour was the slow-paced drive down State Street, that truly "Great Street," to inspect each and every window of some of the long-gone, but fondly remembered department stores.

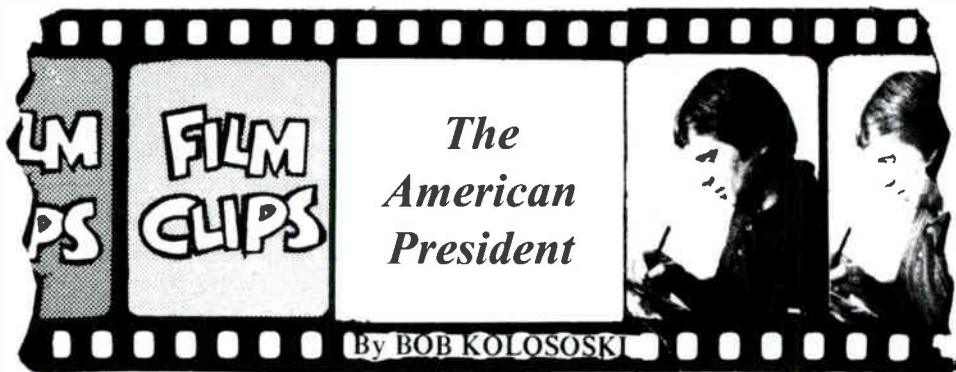
State Street at Christmas in that regretably bygone era was as close as one could get to a "Window Wonderland." Both sides of the street were lined with the awesomely decorated department store windows in full holiday pagentry: Marshall Fields at the

north end, followed by Carson Pirie Scott and Mandel Brothers, which later became Goldblatts. On the west side there was the fondly remembered The Fair Store and a Chicago landmark, The Boston Store, at State and Madison, the numerical center of town, a favorite meeting place where, it was said, sooner or later every Chicago citizen would eventually pass by at some time. The Woolworths' chain of "Five and Ten Cent Stores" had its flagship store proudly planted there, too, with its less expensive "stocking filler" gift selections.

Every window was a tasteful tableau of the toys and games presented for the wide-eyed gapers, young and old alike. Each had its own theme. Some had activated and moving figures. Usually there was a Santa's workshop; maybe a family-around-the-Christmas-tree theme; possibly a carolling scene, complete with the familiar noels and carols piped out to the viewers on the street. Virtually all the windows reflected the spiritual aspect of that special season and the reason it was called Christmas, an aspect almost completely overlooked or even avoided nowadays.

A brief stop at each window was a must so that the excited, ooh-ing and aah-ing gang could scramble out and make a closer inspection of the fabulous array of virtually endless displays of desirable things. Yes, it was possible on busy State Street to stop one's car for a few moments for a closer look. It was a time when little pleasures were tolerated because of the special season and trivial traffic infractions overlooked without rancorous urgings or nudgings to "Move along, move along."

It was easy to become imbued with the joyous seasonal spirit in those golden "olden days" which live so vividly and longingly in one's memory, and recall to mind a time when Chicago really did have a "Winter Wonderland" nestled in its open and happy heart. ■



Between the presidential election and the inauguration, we're reminded that the public loves the hoopla of politics and movie makers have loved making movies about the men who have held the highest office of the land.

There have been only a few screen biographies of presidents, mainly because—in spite of our fascination with politics—the public has stayed away from that type of film.

The most elaborate biography of a president was the 1944 production *Wilson*. Produced at 20th Century Fox and under the supervision of Darryl F. Zanuck, it was beautifully filmed in Technicolor and boring as a foggy day in May. Alexander Knox was chosen to portray President Woodrow Wilson and he was excellent as the college professor turned statesman and crusader for world peace. But *Wilson's* life was less than exciting and the impressive sets couldn't make up for the weak story line. It died at the box office and cautioned filmmakers that the lives of our presidents weren't the stuff that profits are made of.

In 1948 Raymond Massey grew a beard and became *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Based on the Robert E. Sherwood play, it gave a moving account of our 16th president's troubled life before he took the office of president. Massey looked the part and gave his best performance. The movie was a mild hit, but not enough to encourage many

screen biographies of actual presidents.

However, two notable films—one earlier, one later—dealt with the lives of two of our most beloved leaders.

In 1939 Darryl Zanuck inspired his staff to create a biography of Abraham Lincoln, not about his tenure as president, but rather about his young adulthood. Lamar Trotti wrote a detailed screenplay and John Ford was selected to direct *Young Mr. Lincoln*. The key to the film was Henry Fonda in the title role. His gaunt bony frame and facial features were so close to Lincoln's that with a minimal amount of makeup he became the young Abe. John Ford's direction was, as usual, impeccable and although the story was not very factual, it gave an excellent representation of life in the middle 1800s.

A middle-aged Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the subject of the 1960 film *Sunrise At Campobello*. Based on a very successful stage play, the film's inspiring screenplay was by Dore Shary and benefited by the performances of Ralph Bellamy as the future president and Greer Garson as his wife Eleanor. Garson was nominated for an Academy Award as best supporting actress, but Bellamy carried the film as FDR. The picture dealt with the period in Roosevelt's life when he was first stricken with polio and Bellamy, who starred in the Broadway play, had FDR's mannerisms perfected. What really came



"WILSON" (1944) starring Alexander Knox was Hollywood's most elaborate film biography.

through was the courage of the man who would vigorously lead America through its worst depression and then the most devastating war in history. The film moves slowly when compared to today's fast-paced features, but it is definitely worth viewing.

Other movies have dealt with the presidency by giving us *fictional* presidents.

A movie that should be played over and over again during each election year is *The Best Man*. Based on Gore Vidal's popular play, the 1964 film achieves a very realistic perspective of the American political process. Cliff Robertson and Henry Fonda are excellent as presidential candidates fighting each other as they wheel and deal toward their party's nomination for president. Robertson's character was compared to John F. Kennedy, the man he would portray in the 1963 movie *PT 109*. But the surprise knockout performance in the film was by Lee Tracy as a dying ex-president.

Tracy, a talented but generally forgotten actor of the 1930s, was rewarded with a best supporting actor nomination for his tour de force work in this movie. The mood of the film is as black and white as the stark colorless photography etching a vivid picture of the American political arena.

Another powerful film that deals with a political campaign, although not presidential, is the 1972 movie *The Candidate*. A young Robert Redford turns in one of his finest performances as a liberal lawyer running for senator in California. Jeremy Lerner won the Academy Award for best original screenplay that used something of a Six O'clock News approach towards the fictitious campaign. Melvin Douglas and Don Porter, two veteran actors, captured the mood of elder statesmen.

The fate of all humanity was the decision Henry Fonda had to make as a President of the United States in the 1964 film *Fail-Safe*. The film's premise was topical

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

for the cold war period and is still nightmarish. A group of Strategic Air Command bombers are erroneously sent to drop atomic bombs on Moscow and no one, not even president Henry Fonda, can call them back. Fonda tries desperately to recall them while informing his Russian counterpart of the situation. The film is a gripping exercise in sustained suspense that left its audiences white-knuckled at the frightening conclusion.

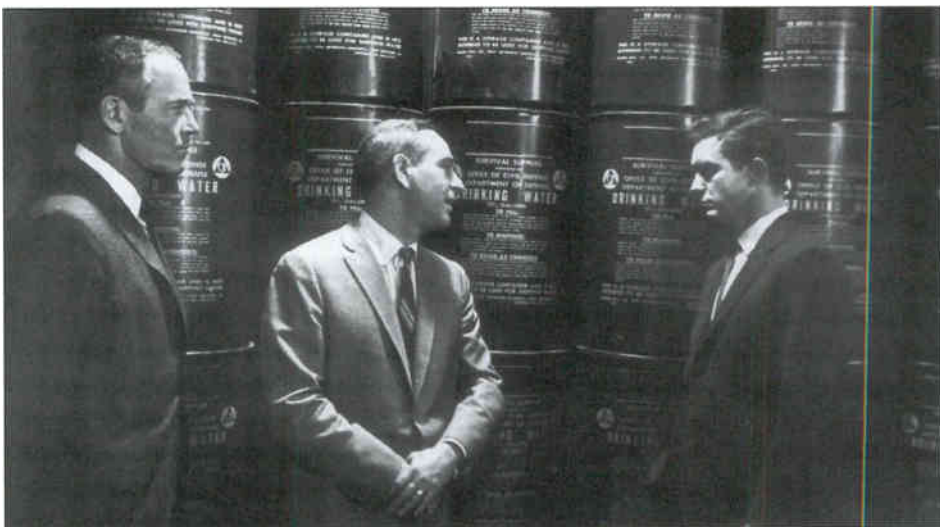
That same year Peter Sellers had three different roles in the black comedy *Dr. Strangelove: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. He played an inept and bumbling U.S. president who must deal with a situation similar to the one on *Fail-Safe*, but with biting humor softening the suspense. George C. Scott and Sterling Hayden head a top notch cast with Slim Pickens as the best of the lot portraying a cowboy bomber pilot who rides an A-bomb rodeo style down to its target.

1964 was the year of the political thriller and perhaps the best of that year's offer-

ings was *Seven Days in May*. The exceptional cast includes Kirk Douglas, Ava Gardner, Burt Lancaster, Edmond O'Brien and John Houseman, with Fredric March outstanding as the president. March's chief executive must deal with a plot to overthrow the government without letting that plot be revealed to the public for fear of general panic. Rod Serling wrote a literate and suspenseful screenplay that moved as fast as an assassin's bullet. This film set the standard for political thrillers.

The Wind and the Lion, a 1975 film, is based on a real life incident that happened in 1904. President Theodore Roosevelt sent the Marines to Morocco to rescue an American widow and her children who had been kidnapped by a sheik. The film embellishes the details a bit, but it is great fun with Sean Connery as the sheik and Candice Bergen as the widow.

The presidency is still a popular subject with contemporary fictional versions of the chief executive showing up recently in *The American President* with Michael Douglas in the title role, and with Bill Pullman as a feisty president battling space invaders in *Independence Day*. ■



"THE BEST MAN" (1964) with Henry Fonda, Shelley Berman and Cliff Robertson.



OUR READERS WRITE

WE GET LETTERS

MARCO ISLAND, FLORIDA— When I read your article about the Chicago Theatre (Oct-Nov issue) it brought back a memory from the past when my brother Ken got what had to be one of the biggest laughs in Chicago Theatre history. We used to go to the Chicago almost weekly with our parents. On one occasion after the completion of the live stage performance and the movie, the curtains closed and the lights began to come up. At that moment my brother, who was about eight years old at the time, stood up in his balcony seat and loudly proclaimed, "What no Mickey Mouse?" Well, the audience in the theatre broke out in a roar. I think my folks may have been embarrassed, but I think every other youngster in the audience would have seconded my brother's concern. —**ANTHONY J. KLEIN, JR.**

EVANSTON, IL — Your magazine gets better all the time. I was interested in your bit on the Chicago Theatre. I worked in public relations and publicity for Balaban and Katz under Eddie Seguin. What great old characters were working there at the time, still dressed as they did in the twenties. I remember taking lunch high up in the balcony at the Chicago Theatre. It was totally empty and I would lie down and go to sleep with Carroll Baker in a scene from "The Carpetbaggers." To have that wonderful high balcony all to myself before that giant screen was *wonderful!* Ecstasy, paradise, fantasy. Words can't describe it. It was like a cathedral. It was as if I was appearing in "The Carpetbaggers" myself, with everybody playing to me. Very restful. Away from the world in all that darkness. —**NEIL ELLIOTT**

EVANSTON, IL— Ken Alexander's article (Oct-Nov issue) on Loop restaurants brought back fond memories of the mid-fifties when I was attending DePaul downtown as an undergraduate. I missed any mention of my all-time favorite eating place which is, alas, no more: Minck's Delicatessen on south Wabash, between Adams and Jackson. Their kreplach soup brought tears of ecstasy to my eyes, and their cheese blintzes were

absolutely out of this world. I fondly remember the motherly waitress who used to slip me an extra dollop of sour cream when the proprietor wasn't looking, in a hopeless attempt to fatten up my then-skinny frame. Those indeed were the days!
—**DONALD DRAGANSKI**

RIVER FOREST, IL— To Ken Alexander and all the people who were part of the final episode of "One Man's Family" (on *TWTD* Sept. 7): We've enjoyed listening to "One Man's Family" on Summer Saturdays and wish it could go on; but we felt the finale was just perfect. Thank you so much for tying up the loose ends and letting the Barbour family live happily ever after!
—**KRISTIN AND SETH FLANDERS**

CHICAGO— Please initiate my subscription to *Nostalgia Digest* — it sounds like it will be a lot of fun. Your Saturday afternoon broadcast certainly is; makes weekend work at the office much more enjoyable.
—**SEAN CARR**

ORLAND PARK, IL— My family and I love to listen to "Suspense" and other nail-biting shows. Saturdays are Old Time Radio Days! —**ERIK R. KUNZ**

DARIEN, IL— I greatly enjoy listening to your shows. Lately I have been taping them and playing them back in my car during the week. I am always amazed at the quality of these shows. Listening forces me to use my imagination and it is not passive as is watching TV. —**JOHN AGUZINO**

WILMETTE, IL— To say that I enjoy your Saturday show is simply not strong enough. It is a "must hear/tape" portion of my week. I particularly enjoy your shows that carry a theme. The "Remembering Verna Felton" and the "Remembering Bea Benadaret" shows were ones that I looked forward to most excitedly from when you first announced them. When you are able to incorporate interviews with the party involved in the actual show (the Jack Benny 10-parter comes to mind quickly) I think



MORE LETTERS

your show reaches a level totally beyond anything being done... certainly here in Chicago. —**FRED BONDY**

CHICAGO— I want to say how much pleasure I've had over the years listening to your programs since 1979. The Christmas shows are always the jewel of the season. The "Please Stand By" series is informative and quietly entertaining. I absolutely get side-aches from Jack Benny, too! Your programs most importantly reflect the values and concerns of the past decades for the younger generations, and provide an essential link to our heritage as Americans and our traditions as decent human beings. We need more of this. —**TIMOTHY BRADBURY**

CHICAGO— When you broadcast certain programs I can flash back to a scene in my parents' home when my Mom made comments regarding the programs. Oh, so often she would yell out the back door, "Eddie, Fibber McGee (or The Shadow) is on!" I would come a-running to hear the program. The ability to slip away to that moment relieves me of the problems of today. When the theme song of the Edgar Bergen program plays I can smell the aroma of waffles. That's what we had in those days. Even today, when I smell waffles, I think of Charlie McCarthy... and I must say I don't like waffles! —**ED BEYER**

COLUMBUS, OHIO— We moved to the Chicago area in 1970 and were lucky to pick up your Saturday afternoon show on what I think was WLTD. So I am a Schaden fan from way back. We moved from Chicago in 1977, but whenever we visit Chicago we visit the Metro Golden Memories store and pick up tapes, books, etc. On our recent trip we visited the Museum of Broadcast Communications and I picked up a number of tapes as well as a Museum T-shirt. I teach a course on "When Radio Was Radio" at elderhostels. The name of the course is also the name of a column I write for the "Senior Times" in Columbus. —**EARL YAILLEN**

RIVER FOREST, IL-- Your Chicago Fire program was so excellent! It was great to hear the local news from way back and it is always great to hear the WW II shows. --**STEVE TAYLOR**

TINLEY PARK, IL-- I am 38 years old and have been a great admirer of yours for many years. I listen to your shows when time permits. It's a great relief valve from the hectic world we live in today. I even have my wife and children listening. They are especially fond of the Cinnamon Bear and Jack Benny. --**TERRY HOLT**

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA— A few years ago you had an advertiser called the End of the Line Caboose Motel. I had not heard of this Lake Geneva place for quite a while. About two weeks ago a fellow teacher told me that he was thinking of buying a condo in Lake Geneva which had been a caboose. It was the same place. The owner had decided to retire and put the caboose units into a condo ownership arrangement and sell them. I immediately called the Realtor handling the matter, sent earnest money, went up there the next weekend and now own a Milwaukee Road caboose. As you know, they are extremely nice inside and out. Thanks to you and old time radio my family and I have a very unique getaway. If it wasn't for you and *Those Were The Days*, I never would have had the interest in looking into a caboose. The original owner says that you and your program were responsible for about 80 per cent of his business the first few years. He says "Hi" and I say "Thanks, Chuck." —**RICH JONAS**

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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