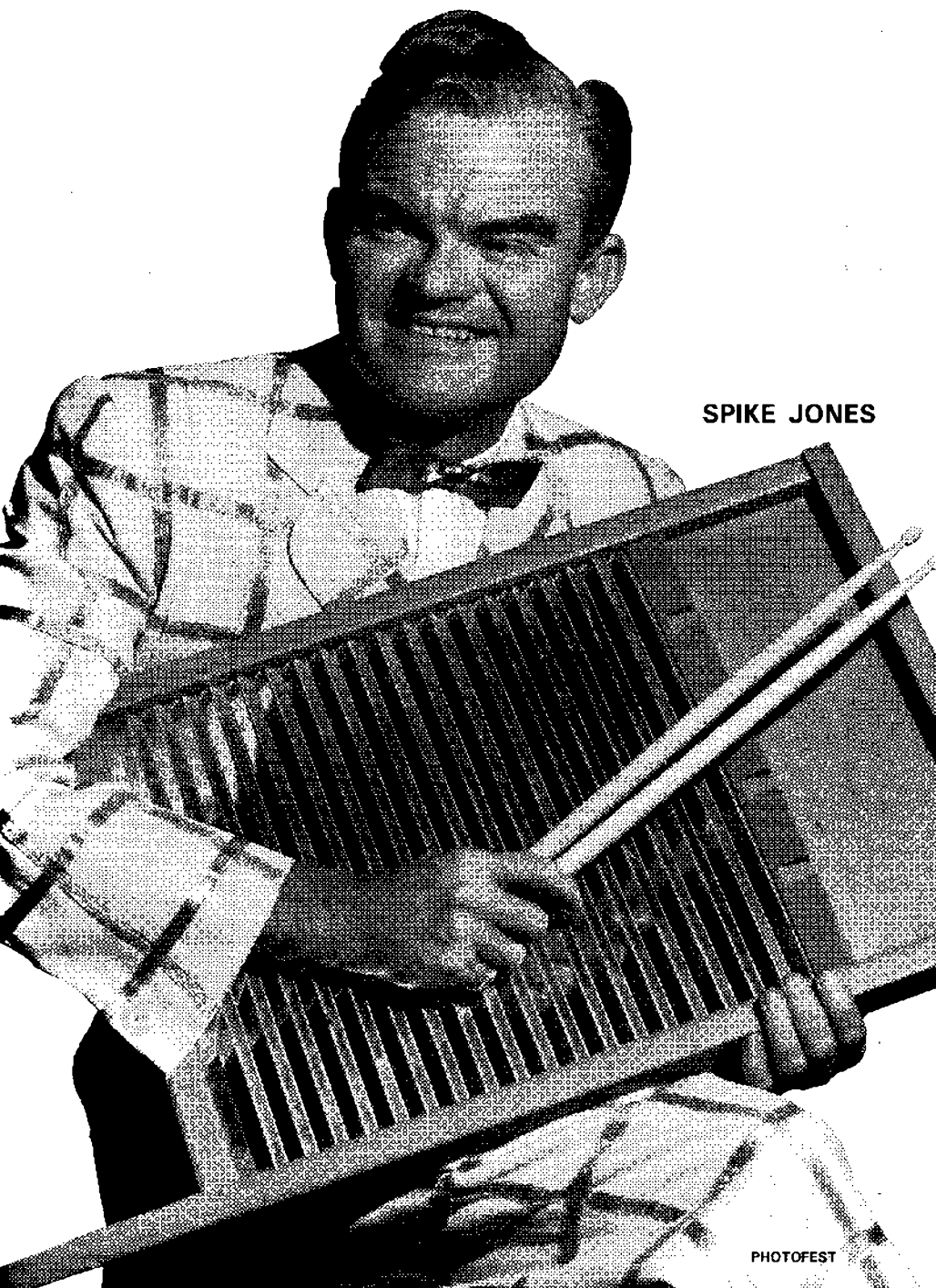


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APRIL/MAY 2001



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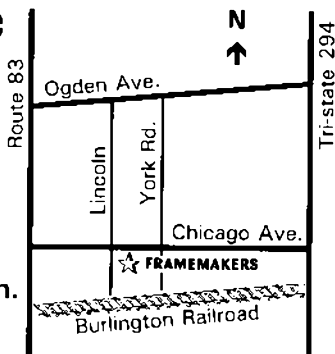
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CHUCK SCHADEN'S NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

BOOK TWENTY-SEVEN

CHAPTER THREE

APRIL/MAY 2001

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

It was a tense couple of months, from the time we learned of the sale of WNIB late last November until we were able to make the announcement in late January that we had found a new home for our *Those Were The Days* program.

Initially, we briefly considered the possibility of closing the show rather than go through what was sure to be a stressful process of finding a new home for our weekly broadcast.

But then *you* quickly entered the picture.

We were energized and overwhelmed by the calls and letters of support from listeners, not only *urging* us to find a new home for *TWTD*, but *expecting* us to find another venue, and *expressing confidence* that we most certainly *would* find another place to do our show. So we quickly decided not to close the show.

We did a lot of talking with, and thinking about, potential stations for *TWTD*.

What we wanted most was to keep our four-hour time slot, preferably on Saturday afternoon from 1 to 5 p.m.

We also wanted to continue broadcasting from the *Radio Hall of Fame* studio in the *Museum of Broadcast Communications*.

And while we knew we might not be able to perfectly duplicate the broadcast signal of WNIB/WNIZ, we wanted to be on a station that served the Chicago metropolitan area.

Most of all, we did not want to have to go through this kind of transition again.

Well, we found everything we wanted--and more-- on WDCB, at 90.9 FM, the non-commercial, educational radio station broadcasting with 5,000 watts to northeastern Illinois. WDCB is licensed to the College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, and is certified by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The station has been on the air since 1977 and broadcasts 24-hours a day.

We're pleased that we have found this new, permanent radio home.

Our new station has a Web site: www.wdcb.org At present, streaming audio on the Internet is presently unavailable. But it is expected that will change soon.

We started broadcasting *TWTD* on WDCB on February 3, 2001. We have not forgotten the role *you* have played in this transition and in our broadcast career.

We never will, and we are very appreciative.

Public Radio
90.9 fm
WDCB

 College of DuPage

--Chuck Schaden

"In Some Secluded Rendezvous" with Spike Jones and his City Slickers

BY BILL OATES

Some believe that his music was an insult to good taste, while others thought that his crazy antics in song brought a bit of fun into a world that needed an insane diversion. Despite the feelings from both

amps, no one can deny that Spike Jones became the most successful bandleader who had fun by creating unorthodox music. Comedy legends like Eric Kovacs, "PDQ Bach's" Professor Schickele, George Carlin, Dr. Demento (Barret Hansen), the Monte Python troupe, and Stan Freberg all recognized Spike and his City Slickers as their

mentor and/or inspiration for outlandish songs and crazy instruments included in their own performances.

Only child Lindley Armstrong Jones first appeared as a member of the Long Beach, California Jones family on December 14, 1911. His conservative and very religious parents seemed not to be the inspiration for the young drummer's success as a bizarre

Bill Oates, of Kouts, Indiana, is a high school English teacher and author.

musician. For awhile his mother was his grammar school principal. The couple moved about with father Jones' job on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Spike's nickname may have appeared after someone

attached it as a result of the young boy often following the railroad tracks home. Another story claims that the name came from a relative who thought that the child was skinnier than a railroad spike.

As soon as the youngster could exercise his inborn talents for making sounds by banging on objects, his mother and father

found the boy a pair of real drumsticks. By age 11, when the family lived in Calexico, California on the Mexican border, where his father was the station agent, his mother bought him a set of drums for Christmas. He returned to Long Beach to attend high school, where forming a band occupied his primary musical desire. Shortly thereafter, Spike Jones and his Five Tacks debuted in the Los Angeles area to a less than enthusiastic response.

After graduation from high school, Spike



Lindley Armstrong "Spike" Jones



The City Slickers

Dr. Horatio Q. Birdbath, Doodles Weaver, Spike Jones, Freddie Morgan, Dick Morgan

PHOTOEST

played the drums in nightclubs and eventually joined bands led by Everett Hoagland and Earl Burnett. Essentially, the young drummer kicked around Hollywood during the 1930s playing as a freelance musician; working as the house drummer at Victor, Columbia and Decca records; and then finally finding a seat in prestigious organizations like those directed by David Rubinoff, Victor Young, and John Scott Trotter.

Once Spike Jones began playing the drums with Trotter, he established friendships and connections that would propel his own band. Usually, when the drummer played with John Scott Trotter, he needed to remain subdued, for playing on the *Kraft Music Hall* represented being on one of radio's top-rated, primarily serious music programs. Spike probably relished some of the humorous numbers on the program, like those when the band accompanied resident hazzooka player Bob Burns.

With Bing Crosby as the star, Spike Jones learned how to make money in radio, while shaping the basis of his soon-to-be-formed novelty band. At the time, the musician's union disallowed their members to play more than two hours a week, unless a producer requested their talent. In order to circumvent this rule, Spike gathered a set of tuned cowbells, an abnormal percussion instrument for a drummer, and created a necessity for radio brass to hire him for more hours. By adding "washboards, tuned doorbells, tuned automobile horns, pistols, an anvil, and iron mallets," he increased his marketability in radio.

Still on the Crosby *Kraft* show, Spike Jones and a few other musicians began to create parodies like "Sloppy Lagoon" (the original, of course, was "Sleepy Lagoon"). They sometimes played their novelty numbers in the Los Angeles area but with little success. Eventually, they recorded some of these prototype City Slicker numbers

SPIKE JONES

and garnished a contract with RCA Victor records in 1941. Spike felt warranted in recording funny noises with his music after he watched Igor Stravinsky conduct his own "Firebird Suite" at the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium. As the maestro moved with the music, his shoes squeaked when he directed. Jones and others laughed at the performance, but some critics believed that the noise was a new percussive effect. Instead of respect for the new musical technique, Spike accepted it as inspiration and justification for his own style of funny sounds as part of a number. However, success still did not follow Spike Jones immediately.

Although The City Slickers eventually achieved the highest rung on the novelty song ladder, they were not the originator of the genre. Numbers like "Who Played Poker With Pokerhontas, When John Smith Went Away" and "The Song of the Prune" appeared soon after records appeared during the late 19th century. Before famous musician Ted Lewis created his top-hatted "Is Everybody Happy?" character, he dressed in a clown suit and played in a four-piece group called The Nut Band. Others dabbled in funny songs, but the greatest early band to play instruments with wild abandon had to be The Hoosier Hotshots. After a number of attempts to create a hill-billy band with several names in the 1920's, the Hotshots caught on the next decade and started their nearly twenty year

stint on the *WLS Barn Dance*.

If Spike Jones could thank anyone for helping to sell his first gold record song in 1942, the primary candidate might be Adolph Hitler. "Pass the Biscuits, Mirandy," recorded on April 7, 1942 and filmed as a movie short later that July, scored the first success for the young band. During that same summer month, Spike



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Jones and His City Slickers had even higher hopes for "I Wanna Go Back to West Virginia." To complete the 78 single, a second side, "Der Fuehrer's Face," made an appearance at the last minute. Englishman Oliver Wallace, who wrote the score for Walt Disney's *Dumbo*, penned the piece, which was then passed on to the Slickers to adapt. In-

troducing the razzberry maker, the bird, or the Bronx cheer as a band instrument, while offering a musical denunciation of the hated leader, struck a chord with the listening audience. *Down Beat* magazine said that it was "the first big war-tune ... It has an easy melody, which a bunch of guys can scream at the top of their lungs."

Cutting the song was one thing, but seeing it in the public's hands meant jumping a few hurdles first. In order to avoid censorship, playing the birdaphone - as Spike called the "razzer" - was lessened by releasing a first cut with a trombone giving "the bird" to the Axis leaders. (For the record, pun intended, the birdaphone was soon joined by the kalaedaphone, the anvilaphone, and the latinaphone. The latter was a toilet seat with strings.) In or-

der to ensure the song's inclusion on the record, Jones withdrew \$1,000 from his personal bank account so that he could travel to New York and lobby for the more offensive-sounding instrument in the alternate cut. After swaying RCA Victor's board of morals into believing that this more realistic noise would better insult the enemy, the company's hierarchy relented and the second version remained on the record. Victor probably believed that no one would listen to the song anyway, so the company only pressed 500 discs initially. However, as a result of WNEW's disc jockey Martin Block playing the song to Manhattan audiences over and over, circulation ballooned. The radioman promised to play an anti-Hitler

song every time a bond drive pledge reached a certain level and offered a free copy of the record to purchasers of a \$50 war bond. Eventually, he gave away 289 copies and raised over \$60,000 for the war effort.

So popular was "Der Fuehrer's Face" that Walt Disney negotiated to add it to his latest Donald Duck cartoon, "In Nutzy Land." Wisely, the animator changed the title of the cartoon to that of the popular song, and, as a result, received the Academy Award for best animated short of 1942, while Spike Jones and the City Slicker won tours to sold-out audiences.

The band's output during July of 1942, a time when many musicians enjoyed summer breaks, resulted in another early Jones hit, "Clink, Clink Another Drink," with

special guest "vocalist" Mel Blanc playing the hiccupping, inebriated barfly in the piece. One irony about the song, as trumpeter George Rock later noted, was that when he and a tuba player joined the band, drinking heavily represented a common pastime for the group. Rock cautioned that no one was ever drunk while performing, but he and the tuba player remained



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the only sober members of the Slickers at the time. Two years after Rock joined the band, Spike Jones dropped any use of alcohol completely. More importantly, regardless of what vice needed to be omitted from the band's repertoire, Spike's guiding principal became "Keep it clean," because children might be in the audience.

Mel Blanc was not the only non-Slicker comedian to have a part in the musical mayhem. Comedian Milton Berle, who knew the bandleader early on and remained friends until Spike's death, collaborated with Jones on "Leave the Dishes in the Sink, Ma," the flip side of "Cocktails for Two." Vocal contortionist Paul Frees likewise contributed his talents when a personality impression or other cartoon-like rendition was needed on a recording or in public appearances. Conversely, City Slicker Freddy Morgan shifted from his manic banjo-playing talents to the cartoon world when he voiced characters on *Matty's Funday Funnies!* *Beanie and Cecil* in the early 1960's. (For the record, banjo players Dick and Freddie Morgan were not related. Actually, their real names were Richard Issac and Philip

SPIKE JONES

Morgenstern, respectively.)

Once the band took the popular music world by storm, other media beckoned. Spike made several solo appearances, sometimes billed and others not, in films like *Give Us Wings* (Universal 1940), *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (Warner Brothers 1943), *Meet the People* (MGM 1944), *Bring on the Girls* (Paramount 1945), *Breakfast in Hollywood* (United Artists 1946) and *Variety Girl* (Paramount 1947). However, as the band continued to make recordings, one particular number established them in feature films and underlined their staying power. Previous hits had been crazy songs intended for a laugh, but "Cocktails for Two" represented a change to serious songs that started safe but quickly deteriorated into pandemonium. Set up as a beautiful choral piece fitting for a couple in love and who are enjoying a quiet evening together, the lyrics are soon distorted by penetrating noises (hiccoughs, alarm bells, etc.) by the manic musicians. The 1944 hit appeared in the film *Ladies' Man* (Paramount 1947). Strangely enough, the band was on a USO tour when "Cocktails" became popular, and they had to wait until they returned home to record the song. Spike worried that it might not be popular by the time they got back, but he was not disappointed months later.

The next step for Spike Jones was to get his own radio show. The band regularly appeared on several series like *The Bob Burns Show*, but after the summer of 1945, when they filled in for the popular *The Chase and Sanborn Show*, more permanent positions loomed in the future. They even spent two seasons on the West Coast show *Furlough Fun* during the War. For a brief time in the spring of 1946, the group played non-comedic numbers in *Spike's at the*

Troc. However, comedy soon became the band's bread and butter, and when the director decided to tour his "Depreciation Revue," he wisely opted to record the remotes as his own network show. Intended as a two and a half hour concert intended for "Music Lovers," the visits to venues across the country exploded into wild receptions for the City Slickers.

In the fall of 1947, the first installment of Coca-Cola's *Spotlight Revue* debuted Friday nights on CBS. "Park Avenue Hill-billy" Dorothy Shay joined the group as its resident singer, and later comedians but not necessarily musicians like Winstead "Doodles" Weaver and Professor Gas (Earl Bennett) added to the insanity. Writer Eddie Brandt later recalled how much more of a challenge it was to create shtick every week for what was billed as "Spike Jones, the Craziest Show on Earth." In order to fill the lengthy live show that performed five to six times per week, the following augmented the cast at the live performances: jugglers, singers, and midgets (first, Frankie Little, and after him, the late Billy Barty.) In order to keep the growing group together, the ensemble traveled on a private train. This conveyance also allowed the writers to assemble quickly, so that they could begin writing the next show, a task that began shortly after the week's last performance finished.

As for the organization's well being, because of sold out crowds, the band members received top dollar for their efforts. George Rock later recalled that the comic instrumentalists had to command a wide background of many music genres. Strangely enough, because Spike's first love was classical music, many songs emanated from this very lofty platform. Rock himself not only mastered classical music, but he also displayed incredible lip and tongue contortions as he kissed, razzed, and triple-tongued many Slicker numbers.

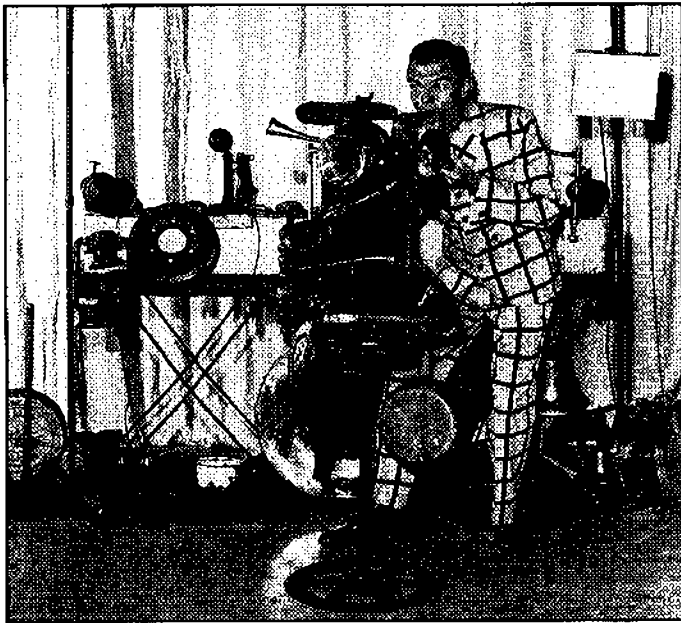


PHOTO FEST

Not only were his trumpet playing skills extraordinary, but also his falsetto and lisping little boy impression became a hit on the show. In 1947, just before a record ban, Rock created the next great hit for the City Slickers, "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth," a number that eventually sold over two million copies.

After a year and a half with Coca-Cola, the band embarked on a slightly new version of the program entitled *The Spike Jones Show*. The only major cast change occurred when Dorothy Shay departed the cast. Soon thereafter, a new female vocalist, Helen Grayco, joined the band and became Spike's second wife. Guests continued to appear on the program wherever the band performed from coast to coast. Regardless of the radio show title, generally, after a placid opening under the guise of the theme song, announcers like Myron Wallace (later CBS newsman Mike Wallace) recognized the host city, just before the band let loose with a raucous version of a Dixieland number like "Somebody Stole My Gal" or "Frivolous Sal."

From this point onward the show often included a somewhat serious song, a skit with the guest, and the eagerly awaited wild numbers for the "Music Lovers" in the crowd.

Even though the listening audience received the cream of the concert, many of the gags were lost because so many of the jokes relied on visuals. George Rock was funny playing an annoying child, but to see his

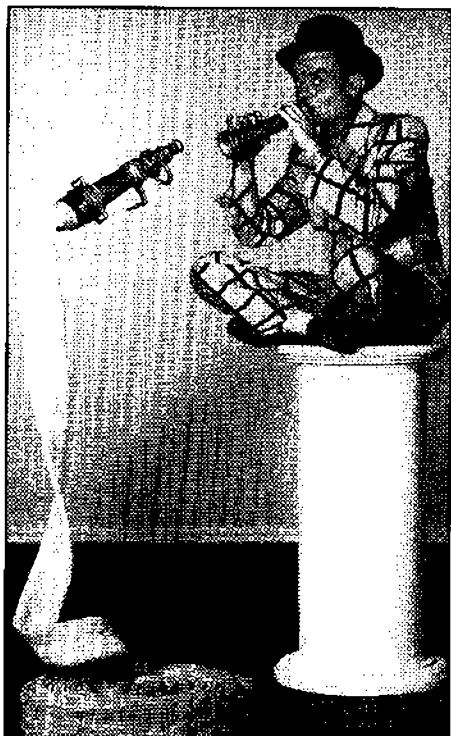
200 plus pound body in a little child's costume added much to the effect. Of course, the midgets, the looks of Doodles Weaver, Freddie Morgan, and Sir Frederick Gas, and the many other sight gags did not always translate to the radio audience. In the 1950s, the up and coming medium television compensated for radio's shortfalls, at least for those who wanted to see the City Slickers. First appearing on *The Colgate Comedy Hour* as an occasional guest, the group began its stint on the one-eyed medium.

Although Spike and the boys had appeared in front of "seeing audiences" for many years, their debut on TV met with a few catastrophes. Broadcast from Chicago on February 11, 1951, several prop problems resulted in unexpected laughs. For Spike, the ultimate perfectionist where a gag was concerned, the setback only meant that the next appearance needed to be better fine-tuned. Live television also limited the group to a time constraint unfamiliar to their style. However, the best-laid plans went further astray when a tragic

SPIKE JONES

incident happened on the same show on September 16, 1951. During a sketch where Freddie Morgan was being sent away from his unit during a French Legionnaire's sketch, the master electrician in the New York control room suffered a heart attack. The stage, which was supposed to revolve, did not until the stricken worker was freed from the board. In the advent of live television, weeping NBC technicians labored to move their fallen friend, so that the show could continue. Ironically, the Slickers were singing "Goodbye, Forever" and had to keep in character until the stage rotated.

Cast members recalled that if radio required new material, television ate up the bits even faster. On the other hand the medium created new "props," as the destruction of cameras, boom microphones,



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and scenery often became targets or weapons for the slapstick du jour. Despite the challenges, Spike Jones enjoyed the test of television and continued to adapt throughout the 1950's and with a variety of venues. Among his appearances were those on the aforementioned *Colgate Comedy Hour* (1950-51), *The Spike Jones Show* (1951, 1954, and 1961), the *Four Star Revue*, *All Star Revue*, *Club Oasis* (1957), and *Swinging Spiketaculars* (1960). He also made guest appearances "as himself" on *The Perry Como Show* (1948), *The Toast of the Town* (1948), *The Frank Sinatra Show* (1957), and *Burke's Law* (1963).

Even though television created new logistics horizons for Spike Jones, he met them head on. George Rock noted that his fearless leader thought that one real challenge was to make rock and roll songs sound more bizarre than they already did. Nonetheless, the ensemble offered even funnier versions of "Jail House Rock," "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," and finally George Rock doing his little Georgie voice for "I'm Walking."

During the 1950s, Spike Jones and his City Slickers enjoyed one last great appearance in motion pictures. In 1954, Universal Pictures discovered that it had a film without stars. *Fireman, Save My Child* was to have been an Abbott and Costello vehicle for the famous comedy team, but when Lou Costello fell ill, the studio had to scramble to see the project finished. A seeming unlikely duo, Hugh O'Brien (who the following year began his stint on television as Wyatt Earp) and up and coming comic Buddy Hackett, replaced the more famous comedy team. The City Slickers played firemen in an early 20th century San Francisco fire station. As the comedy leads changed, the band received a greater spotlight in the film with their key musical segments including the "Poet and Peasant



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Overture," "Dance of the Hours," and "In a Persian Market."

As tastes changed on television, so did the audience for Spike's music. Finding himself out of the medium's changing landscape, he returned to the type of songs that made him famous. Stereophonic recordings became the new gimmick in disc technology, and Spike found it to be a conduit for sending two separated channels of funny sounds to his audiences. However, years of being a "massive smoker," three and a half packs a day by George Rock's reckoning, took its toll on the bandleader before he could create another incarnation of the City Slickers. As Spike Jones continued to write new numbers, his emphysema grew worse, and on May 1, 1965, he died at age 53 in his Bel-Air home. His funeral at St. Victor's Roman Catholic Church in West Hollywood included those who often worked with Spike, like The Robert Wagner Chorale who sang a Gregorian requiem. The City Slickers formed an honor guard of pallbearers. In his tribute, Msgr. John Devlin called Spike Jones "a genius in the clothes of a musical satirist," a bandleader who "used [his imagination] to make people forget for a moment the nervous tension of our era." From "Der Fuehrer's Face" through the

tunes that remained popular during the Cold War, Spike Jones did exactly what his eulogizer suggested: he helped his audiences laugh, when such emotions remained difficult to otherwise exhibit.

Spike Jones' story did not end with his death in 1965. Thanks to "music lovers" who grew up with the mad-cap antics of the master of mayhem, interest in his style remains fresh. Because of

the Internet and compact discs, new generations of devotees emerge and discover outlets where they can find music unlike they had ever heard before. Punch "Spike Jones" into an Internet search engine and a fist full of videos options, as well as albums, pop up. Thanks to the British devotees of great comedy, companies like Harlequin continue to re-release albums like *Bluebird* and *Ones You Always Wanted* as recently as February 2001. From "serious" albums like Spike's *Let's Sing A Song of Christmas* album to his *V-Disc Recordings* and the *Music Depreciation Revue Anthology*, the music of the City Slickers continues to attract audiences wherever music lovers gather. ■

NOTE-- Tune in TWTD April 21 and May 19 to hear a pair of Spike Jones radio shows. For those who wish to read more about Spike Jones, Jordan R. Young's Spike Jones Off the Record is a good place to begin. Additionally, many of Spike's television appearances exist on videotape, and if the true "music lover" wishes to dig for it, The Spike Jones Story (1988) appeared on PBS stations as part of their pledge drives, just proving that Public Television escapes its sometimes unwarranted stuffy image from time to time.



Wonder Drugs

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

Recently while in the bathroom in search of relief for a headache I happened to read the small print on a plastic container. The only active ingredient was ibuprofen. The inactive ingredients? Microcrystalline cellulose, croscarmellose sodium, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, polyethylene glycol, povidone, red iron oxide, silicon dioxide, sodium starch glycolate, pregelatinized starch, stearic acid, titanium dioxide.

I began to wonder: When we reached into our medicine chests years ago, did the labels on the jars, bottles, and tins list several lines of contents, ninety per cent of which did nothing to make us feel better?

Swamp Root could probably match modern drugs in length of ingredients, but at least the extracts had a healthful ring to them: mandrake root, valerian root, peppermint herb, rhubarb root, scullcap, saffras, buchu leaves, cape aloes, oil of juniper and balsam, cinnamon, and alcohol.

Whenever I saw Swamp Root on a shelf, I pictured a rugose gypsy looking like Maria Ouspenskaya in *The Wolf Man*, bent over in a foggy marsh squeezing juices from roots, herbs, and pieces of bark into bottles which were corked by slavish elves.

Like many concoctions back then, Swamp Root tried to protect their formula and share of the market as well as add some authority to their product by placing a scripted name on the label and box and adding "None genuine without this signa-

ture." The cramped scrawlings of Dr. Kilmer and Lydia Pinkham gave comfort to everyone except perhaps penmanship teachers.

Doctor's names and faces were frequently featured prominently to instill confidence. Anyone seeing Dr. Caldwell's somber, bearded visage above his bold signature on the box knew that his senna laxatives could be trusted.

Some companies even went one better than using physicians by picturing famous historical figures. Blackstone Manufacturing of Newark sold Truth brand of cough syrup complete with an engraving of George Washington that seemed to say, "If I was alive, I'd buy this product."

Silent testimonials from notable dead people, however, did not seem to carry nearly as much weight as raves from anonymous current users who, printed inserts would assure us, had written to say, "I have been using your tonic for so long. Seems I can't do without it. Could you send me two bottles?" or "Am badly in need of your ointment. Hope you can supply me with a tube of it. It's the only remedy for me!" I sometimes wondered why no inventive copywriter had thought of a way of adding this recommendation by our first President: "If I had bought your product, I'd still be alive."

Often the name alone would do the selling. Hamlin's Wizard Oil Liniment just had to act like Merlin waving away our aches and pains. Thompson's Magic Pain Killer couldn't be anything less than a grand antidote for the distress of sprains, rheumatism, backache, neuralgia, and lameness. Moore's Emerald Oil in its cool

Clair Schulz is a free-lance writer, movie historian and collector from Trevor, Wisconsin.

green bottle was a natural for soothing skin irritations.

One name that wasn't so well-chosen was Skin-A-Fire which suggested to me that it contained vitriolic lava when the actual intent of the product was to ease discomfort. However, the makers made up for that deficiency with a list of claims that made Skin-A-Fire seem like a panacea in a bottle for it would relieve the distress of itchy scalp, insect bites, sunburn, chapped hands, athlete's foot, prickly heat, poison ivy, acne, dandruff, frostbite, eczema, chilblains, and ringworm. Unfortunately, when I needed it for purposes like healing razor nicks it lived up to its name.

One lotion even more versatile than Skin-A-Fire was Red-Sea Balsam which claimed to be safe for both internal and external use. Coughers could swallow ten drops of the balsam, then rub some on their chests and also on their arms or legs if they had aching muscles or bee stings. I never understood what the Red Sea had to do with that nostrum except that it probably sounded more exotic than Fall River where it was bottled.

The contents of the first bottle some mothers reached for and the last one all children wanted to see may have looked purer than their inky or yellow neighbors in that medicine chest, but it was clearly the worst to swallow. No amount of declarations on the label that the castor oil had been made tasteless by being super-refined or maternal assurances that we could wash it down with orange juice could disguise the fact that it still felt like someone had just emptied a pot of melted paraffin down our gullets.

I much preferred taking Lydia Pinkham's Pills or Dr. Mills' Little Pills or Dr. Edwards' Olive Tablets which were designed to accomplish the same purpose with what looked like BBs. In my mind I could see them darting through my diges-

tive system as if shot from my Red Ryder Daisy rifle while castor oil would still be hanging around the uvula, threatening at any moment to go in the wrong direction.

Just as tiny as those pills were Meloids, pastilles that looked like miniature black pillows. Made in England especially for singers and speakers, those potent licorice-and-menthol lozenges alleviated the discomfort of sore throats better than cough drops five times their size. The Meloids tin with its sliding top lived on long after the contents were gone, holding needles and pins in a drawer of my mother's Singer sewing machine or in my left front pocket guarding Indian head pennies.

Meloids also contained some capsicum which was a primary ingredient in that old anodyne for sore muscles, Sloan's Liment. Those tubes in the stores which currently are advertised as "modern medicine for arthritis pain" contain capsaicin, virtually the same peppery compound commonly used fifty years ago. When you're hot, you're hot.

No matter how strong the lure of nostalgia, it would be foolish not to take advantage of the remedies and improved products readily available in our pharmacies today. I certainly am glad that I don't have to use ammoniated tooth powder after meals or apply nasal jelly to relieve sinus congestion.

But I can't help remembering potent medicines of long ago like Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, Foley's Kidney Cure, Dr. LeGear's Antiseptic Healing Oil for Man or Beast, and Daly's Tablets with Passionflower for Men and Women. Somehow I still have more confidence in drugs derived from natural sources such as sassafras and extract of thyme leaves which sound like they belong in the pit of my stomach than the compounds polyethylene glycol and hydroxypropyl methylcellulose which sounds like they belong in the tank of my car. ■



Religious Radio

BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

Easter and Passover are ideal times to recall the great religious programs of radio's golden years. True, in the old days, they had a fair share of Sabbath sermons and prayers on the airwaves. They can still be heard if you flick on your radio on Sundays.

During radio's glory days there were special programs that bring back fond memories.

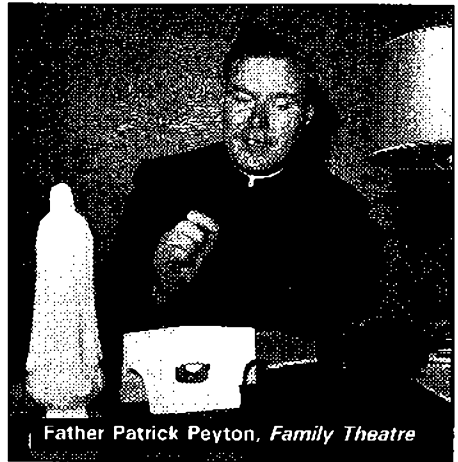
Family Theatre, produced by Father Patrick Peyton of the Holy Cross Fathers, was probably the best, and most popular of the dramatic programs with a spiritual theme. Produced in Hollywood, it came on the air in 1947 and lasted for ten years. Transcriptions of old shows were broadcast over the Mutual Network for many years after that.

Stars who appeared on *Family Theatre* included Hollywood legends Gary Cooper, Bing Crosby, Irene Dunne, Margaret Sullivan, Gregory Peck, Ethel Barrymore and Robert Young, to name only a few. The dramas were not religious in nature, except at Christmas and Easter. The thirty-minute prime time favorite—in its later years the transcriptions were played in time spots chosen by local stations—did have a commercial.

That commercial was the now-famous line: "The family that prays together stays together."

Mention should be made of the *Ave Maria* program produced by the Graymoor Friars of Garrison, New York. This long running Sunday favorite was launched back in the thirties and could still be heard

Richard W. O'Donnell is a free-lance writer from Port Richey, Florida.



Father Patrick Peyton, *Family Theatre*

PHOTOEST

in the mid-sixties. Practically every radio actor they had in New York appeared on the *Ave Maria* show during its 30-year run.

The Eternal Light, produced by the Jewish Theological Seminary, went on the air in 1945 and remained on NBC until 1956. Directed by Dr. Moshe Davis and written by Morton Wishengrad, dramatizations of the ancient Judaic past and Biblical stories were told. This was a high quality show, excellent in content and production, and was broadcast late Sunday nights during most of its years.

Actors who performed on *The Eternal Light* included Edward G. Robinson, Lee J. Cobb, and Paul Muni. It should be noted, however, that emphasis was not placed on the stars who appeared, but rather on the subject matter.

The Greatest Story Ever Told, based on the book by Fulton Oursler, was heard over ABC starting in 1946 and ending a decade later. This was another production that did not rely on star performers.

Simply stated, this program, with a full orchestra and a chorus, was a weekly ac-

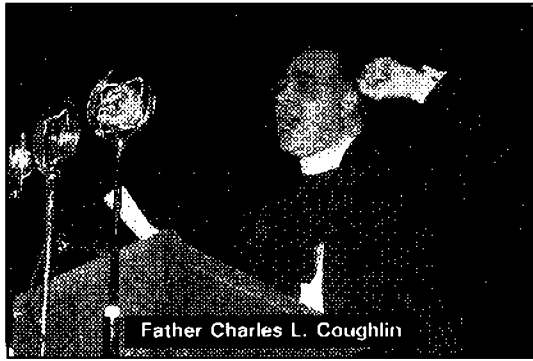
count of the life of Christ. Each episode was approved by an advisory board made up of religious scholars. Recordings of these fine dramas were a part of many Sunday school and church programs.

The Greatest Story Ever Told was broadcast on Sunday nights during all of its long run. And it did have a sponsor, Goodyear Tires, but commercialism was low key, just a tagline at the end of the program.

Who was the most controversial religious person ever to have a weekly show? Probably Father Coughlin, who started broadcasting back in 1927 and remained on the air until the second world war broke out.

Charles Edward Coughlin was a Canadian who was ordained a priest in 1916. In 1934 it was claimed he received "more than a million letters" weekly. Exactly who counted them is a moot point, but there can be no doubt the priest had an awesome impact.

A supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the first two years as president, Coughlin, who broadcast over CBS out of Detroit, turned against FDR in 1935. With



Father Charles L. Coughlin

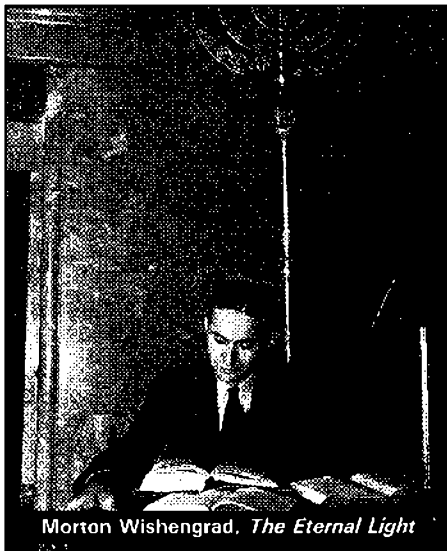
PHOTOFEST

consistent regularity, during his hour-long Sunday broadcasts, he opposed the president's policies. At times his attacks on Roosevelt were so "violent" he had to be calmed down. It was said, at one point, even the Pope rebuked him. Nevertheless, donations poured in from supporters and, when CBS dropped him, Coughlin was able to buy time on other stations, building his own network of independents. After Pearl Harbor, church leaders put pressure on him and he eventually ended his broadcasts.

Last, but not least, we come to *The Guiding Light*. True, this was a soap opera, but when it came to NBC in January, 1937, it was primarily about Rev. John Ruthledge, pastor of a church in a place called Five points. Religious values were emphasized and the usual soap opera sobbing was missing.

In time, CBS took over the show and, in 1952, turned *The Guiding Light* into a television daytime drama. As the years flew by, the show became a little less religious and a lot more soapish. On radio, it was on 15-minutes a day, five days a week. Now, on television, it's on for a full hour every weekday. In other words, the program has been on the air *religiously* for over sixty years. ■

NOTE-- Tune in TWTD April 14 to hear episodes of Family Theatre and The Eternal Light.



Morton Wishengrad. *The Eternal Light*

PHOTOFEST

Chicago Drummer Boy

BY MICHAEL HAGGERTY

The year was 1937. Ten-year-old Jake Jerger was growing up on Chicago's North Side and he was crazy about drumming. He got a hold of a pair of drumsticks and was banging away on his mother's pots and pans in a house already filled with music from his older brother's accordion.

Jake received a drum set for Christmas that year and soon he was taking lessons at \$1.50 from Jimmy Russell, who would recommend to Jerger's father that young Jerger deserved to have "the best teacher in town."

That instructor was to be Roy Knapp, well-known drummer on staff with radio station WLS. Jerger had to audition for the exacting Knapp, who numbered among his pupils Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich and Louis Bellson. After Knapp had put Jerger through some demanding paces, Knapp had this proviso for the youngster: "I'll take you on as a student, but if you don't practice, you're out."

The price-per-lesson was now up to four dollars and Jerger's father, who operated a garage across from Rosehill Cemetery, agreed to keep Knapp's car in good running order as an exchange. Young Jerger had no problem adhering to Knapp's requirements. "I ate it all up," the drummer remembers. "I was so impressed with the man."

Jerger diligently pursued his love of drumming and was making such progress that by the summer before his senior year

at Steinmetz High School, he was given a tryout with Georgie Auld, who was renowned for his hard-swinging tenor sax. Auld had been in the Bunny Berigan band before going with Artie Shaw, then Benny Goodman. Auld had also recorded with Count Basie and had built the sound of his own group along Basie lines.

The audition was set for the time when Auld's band was finished performing for the night — three o'clock in the morning at the College Inn of the Sherman Hotel. At the appointed hour Jerger, accompanied by his father, showed up at the celebrated room.

After the session Auld approached Jerger and said, "you're a heck of a player for a kid. How old are you?"

Jerger answered that he was going to be 17 soon.

"Well," Auld enthused, "I'd like you to come on the band, if you don't mind not finishing school."

Jerger was told that he didn't have to decide until the next day. All the way home in the car he bubbled to his dad about what a great opportunity this was, what fun this would be. His father was noncommittal. The next day the verdict came down: the teenager was not going out on the road with the band. Jake Jerger was going to finish out his senior year and graduate from Steinmetz.

But his dad did let Jake play at a variety of local venues, including the Club Alabam on Rush Street with such Chicago-area band leaders as Phil Levant and Lou Breeze.

After being awarded his diploma Jerger,

Michael Haggerty teaches psychology at Chicago's north suburban Oakton College.



Jake Jerger

still a Phil Knapp student, kept busy musically and by 1945, as World War II was winding down, he knew it was only a matter of time before he'd be called for the military draft.

He decided to join the United States Navy, the only branch of the service at that time that had a music school. For recruits who were good enough to make the cut at the Navy's school in Washington, D.C., there was a guarantee that playing music would be the only occupation specified for their entire tour of duty.

Jerger was more than good enough to qualify and he was quickly given a spot on a hand-picked, 38-piece band that would be shipping out to Europe. The group was to replace the band of Artie Shaw, who was in the process of being discharged.

To prepare for a tour of duty that was to take in 29 nations and include performances for the crowned heads of Europe, Jerger was assigned to Great Lakes, just

north of his hometown Chicago. He bunked in the band barracks there, where he met and spent much time with Maurice (Moc) Purtill, drummer for the Glenn Miller band. Jerger learned a lot from Purtill and the two drummers became close friends.

Jerger then headed for London, where he was to serve out the rest of his hitch. He finally came home in 1949 and studied at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. He continued playing around town and one day he got an emergency telephone call from NBC. The drummer for Wayne King had been taken ill and the network needed Jerger to substitute that evening for a national telecast.

King didn't even know Jerger's name but as the show went on it was obvious to all on the bandstand that King was taking a liking to the drummer's playing and exuberant style. "You're doing pretty well, Smiley," the Waltz King encouraged.

CHICAGO DRUMMER BOY

After the program Jerger was summoned to King's studio. "I like you because you looked like you were enjoying yourself, smiling and all," King pronounced, "and you're a darned good musician."

King hired Jerger and the first year of the contract, 1951, was to prove to be the start of many good things for Jake Jerger. He also went on staff for NBC and began teaching percussion and timpani for various school systems.

"Wayne King was a great showman," Jerger recalls. "He was also a very good musician who knew what he wanted, which was perfection from everybody all the time. The members of the band were excellent,

top-notch."

Jerger was an extremely conscientious drummer who unfailingly gave his best to each performance. That's why he became troubled by a comment from a fellow King band member.

"The lead alto player had come up to me and told me that I was dragging a bit, especially on the slower tunes," Jerger remembers. "He said he just wanted to tell me, as if he were a spokesman for the band."

After that show an uneasy Jerger decided to have a personal, candid talk with Wayne King, who had not expressed any disapproval toward his drummer.

"Wayne King had been very successful for years before I went with him and I had

a lot of respect for him," Jerger says. "So I went to Wayne afterward and I wanted to know from him. Was I dragging? Was I pulling the tempo down?"

"Jake, you and the trumpet player and the piano player who doubles as band manager are making more money than all the other guys. You are being featured on the band and after every show there are people coming up to you for your autograph. They want your autograph, and they don't want one from the lead alto player," laughed King. "So, I don't want you to pay any attention to that criticism from him,

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And Jerger never did hear even one word of complaint from Wayne King.

Jerger remained with "the Man with the Golden Saxophone" through 1952 and '53, then decided to leave the band, which did a lot of traveling.

He had received many lucrative offers that would keep him in the Chicago area, which is what he wanted. He was still working with music departments for several school systems and making a comfortable living in the Windy City.

He went on to play for many of the luminaries of the show business world who performed in the Chicago area.

One was Jimmy Durante. "We were all in the hand room of the old Chez Paree and a waiter told me that Jimmy wanted to see me in his dressing room. I knocked on the door and there he was with that famous hat on. It was funny. He had a big cigar in his mouth and he was sitting there in swimming trunks, wearing his tuxedo shoes with black socks." The Schnozzola wanted Jerger to join him on the road.

Jerger declined the offer in favor of remaining in the Chicago area, where, eventually, his interest in teaching brought him to a distinguished 21-year career as a music teacher at Oakton College from 1974-1995.

In his musical performance days, he worked with such stars as Tony Bennett ("he was marvelous, no problems") and Margaret Whiting ("a musicians' singer. She had good intonations, stayed in pitch



and got along well with the guys in the band."). She, too, tried to get Jerger to join her in touring as her musical conductor.

Others he worked with were Rosemary Clooney ("very comfortable to be with, very easy-going; she can really sing"); Sammy Davis Jr. ("quite confident in his ability; not at all insecure"); Penny Youngman ("very funny, he'd joke with the band all the time"); Jan Murray ("a very nice guy") and Julie London ("a good singer and a sweetheart").

Jerger accompanied Rose Marie ("funny, very warm. She has a way of putting the band at ease. They way you see her in public is also the way she really is out of the public eye"); Red Skelton ("a beautiful man"); Jerry Van Dyke ("a very nice guy, no ego problems") and Red Buttons ("he was great").

The list goes on, as do the accomplishments of Jake Jerger, a man who never lost his love for playing drums in Chicago. ■

A Mystery for Old Time Radio Fans

BY JULIE A GOLTERMANN

"Two O'Clock Eastern Wartime" is a multi-layered book, encompassing all the elements of good mystery, suspense, romance, and historical fiction. Categorizing it as any one of these would minimize it, for it has an impact far greater than any one of its fictional elements.

John Dunning skillfully tells the story of Jack Dulaney and Holly Carnahan, the two very credible and sympathetic central characters, while also drawing the reader into the behind the scenes world of what has been called radio's golden age. There is mystery, to be sure, but the mystery on the surface is only one of several hidden within the pages of this book.

Dunning uses the original theater of the mind to recreate the fabled "Theater of the Mind" so subtly, so realistically, that radio broadcasts from that golden era will never be heard in the same way again.

The shows won't just be about the stars, the jokes, the songs, or even the stories. They will be about people; people whose faces stay the same while their voices change, creating a world of characters in just one program. People whose voices do not betray the color of their skin; whose voices blend on the air in ways their lives would never blend off the air. People who inspire and cajole to bring out the best the actors or the audience have to give. People who know how to use the technology to capture the perfection of the sound.

And the sounds, those heels clicking down a hallway, or the rain falling on a roof, the cattle lowing in Bangkok, or the crickets chirping on a stagnant late summer night, they will no longer be sounds at all, but the skill of a faceless, talented person, whose name has faded just as surely into the past as the sounds themselves.

After reading "Two O'Clock Eastern War-

Julie A. Goltermann is a free-lance reviewer and Nostalgia Digest subscriber.

BOOK REVIEW

Two O'Clock, Eastern War Time

By John Dunning

Scribner, 473 pages, \$26

time," one will find himself listening just as intently for the names of the writers, producers, and directors as he used to listen for the names of the stars.

On the larger scale, the writing career of protagonist Jack Dulaney/Jordan Ten Eyck, parallels the life of the station, WHAR, which in turn parallels the story of radio itself.

From small beginnings, and uncertain starts, from many locations around the country, Jack writes his stories and one novel. Then, provided with the resources of the sound stage and actors, his creative potential is uncorked and begins to flow in a steady stream beyond any of his previous expectations. His writing now has a purpose, and not just a personal one. The ability to tell stories of timeless truth, and to appeal to the thoughts and emotions of thousands of listeners is heady brew. When the reader realizes that this career will inevitably end, he is left with a devastating sense of lost potential. For a brief time, the brilliance of it was almost unbearable, its sudden disappearance leaving one wanting more, calling to mind another radio metaphor, the zenith. Thus the greatest mystery is left unanswered; hidden away in the depths of the book, the question asked by a central character.

Did radio's golden era come to an end or did it never begin?

The question can be applied more broadly to any medium of mass communication, and will give the reader something to ponder for some time to come. As the book closes, and Jack stares into the distance of time and space envisioning the world he once knew and what he would still like to accomplish in that sphere, Dunning gives us his own answer with certainty.

"Two O'Clock Eastern War Time" takes us back to WHAR on the Jersey coast in the opening days of World War II. There we witness the rare phenomenon of natural talent. Natural talent insists upon expression. What starts with an idea, a story to tell, a liberal sprinkling of life experience, a kernel of truth, will grow and gather momentum, until the culmination of it is greater than the sum of all the fragments that went into it. When the telling moment occurs, it will be a living thing all of its own.

Anyone who has ever admired or desired talent will recognize the natural gift; anyone who has experienced it will know no greater thrill. Dunning lets us witness it through his own well-crafted, easy flowing writing.

He lets us witness it, as WHAR's staff witnesses it, after the arrival of Jordan Ten Eyck and Holly O'Hara. Jack and Holly are ordinary persons who find out, through necessity, what extraordinary gifts they have. This revelation opens their eyes to the gifts and possibilities in others, and propels the sleepy little network affiliate WHAR, out of its malaise and to the brink of rebirth as an independent, offering creatively incisive drama in an era far less tolerant than today.

Dunning's storytelling is at its best when Jack becomes Jordan, and finds in his anonymity the voice he has been searching for in all his previous attempts at writing. The depth and breadth of radio offer him a limitless stage on which to bring to life the images and stories he has collected over the years. It is as exciting to watch his creativity grow and ignite that in the staff, as it is to watch him piece together the fragments of the mystery that brought him to WHAR.

That mystery is the disappearance of Carmahan, Holly's father, and Jack's friend. Though Carmahan has only a bit part in the book, his presence is strong, and his influence on both Jack and Holly far-reaching. It

is the strong strand in the cord that binds these two lovers together, and provides the tether for Jack to hang onto as he unravels the web of intrigue surrounding WHAR and its staff. This is the surface mystery of the book, its plot to keep the reader turning the pages, and that plot works extremely well. In their lives, as in radio, timing is everything, and Dunning uses that timing to keep the reader's interest to the very end.

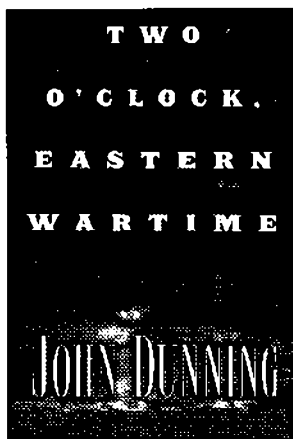
The story lines of Jordan's dramatic radio scripts parallel the story line of the book itself, giving an intimate glimpse into the mind

of the writer, and providing the context for Dunning to tell the reader so much more than a simple mystery involving two people in love. Dunning evokes the era and its uncertainty in a spare way, not overburdening the reader with trite references. He uses the minor characters masterfully to let the reader experience life in another time and place, when opinions and values were different from those in the present. But he uses Jordan's dramas to invite the

reader to consider the similarities of people, and how circumstances cause them to react. "Who is Jordan Ten Eyck?" The wryly rhetorical question leaps off the page midway through the book. Although it may seem obvious to the reader by this point, there may also be a more subtle answer to this tantalizing question.

There are other mysteries here, too, ones that will haunt the reader long after the book is put on the night table for the last time. Thanks to John Dunning's intimate knowledge of people, radio, and writing the reader's present is forever enriched by a world that was and that might have been.


NOTE—John Dunning's previous books include The Bookman's Wake, Booked to Die, and On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio. He is a winner of the Nero Wolfe Award, and an expert on the history of American radio.



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APRIL 2001 SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, APRIL 7

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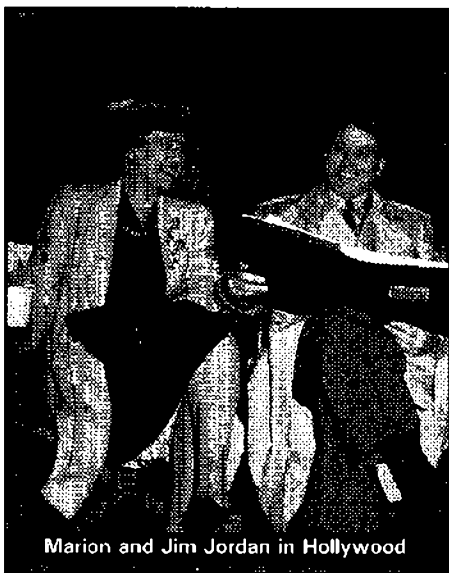
PHIL HARRIS—ALICE FAYE SHOW (2-26-50)
Phil is upset that 20th Century Fox has cut him out of their picture "Wabash Avenue," so he and Frankie Remley (Elliott Lewis) decide to make their own movie. Walter Tetley co-stars as Julius, with Robert North as Willy. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

SUSPENSE (6-12-47) "Stand-In" starring June Havoc. The stand-in for a famous actress plays a role in a plot to kill the star. Cast includes Elliott Lewis, Cathy Lewis and Wally Maher. Roma Wine, CBS. (26 min)

JUDY CANOVA SHOW (10-4-47) Judy is excited because she is going to have a screen test at Paragon Studios. Cast features Mel Blanc, Hans Conried, Joe Kearns, Ruby Dandridge, Sportsmen, Charles Dant and the orchestra. Colgate-Palmolive, NBC. (30 min)

FORD THEATRE (5-23-48) "A Star is Born" starring Elaine Rost and James Meighan in a radio version of the 1937 film. It's the classic Hollywood story of rising starlet Esther Blodgett who meets and marries declining star Norman Maine. Cast includes Mason Adams, Carl Eastman, Ed Jerome. Howard Lindsay hosts. Ford Motor Co., NBC. (19 min & 22 min & 20 min)

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (3-9-41) "The McGee's Movie Contract" starring Jim and Marian Jordan as Fibber McGee and Molly who are involved in a mistaken identity plot when they're in Hollywood to try to get into the movie business. Co-starring Edward Arnold, Joan Bennett, Gary Cooper, Frances Langford. Roger Prior hosts, Bud Heistand announces, with Oscar Bradley and the orchestra. Gulf Oil Co., CBS. (30 min)



Marion and Jim Jordan in Hollywood

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

COUNTERSPY (4-4-50) "The Case of the Magic Murder" starring Don MacLaughlin as David Harding, chief of U.S. Counterspies. When Harding's assistant Harry Peters (Mandel Kramer) is shot, Harding tries to locate a brain surgeon to save his life... and discover the would-be murderer. Pepsi Cola, ABC. (31 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-17-49) On Easter Sunday Jack gets ready for his stroll with Mary Livingstone down Wilshire Boulevard. Dennis sings "Easter Parade." Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (26 min) *The Phil Harris' show* on NBC on this same date follows.

PHIL HARRIS—ALICE FAYE SHOW (4-17-49) On Easter Sunday, Alice has invited her daughters' school principal to dinner. Regulars include Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Jeanine Roos, Anne Whitfield. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

THE ETHERAL LIGHT (11-23-52) "Lizzie and the Whiskers." In 1877, on the East Side of New York, a young girl avoids being with other children her age because she is ashamed of her physical handicap. Mel Ferrer stars with Norma Jean Nilsson. Narrated by Paul Frees. Jewish Theological Seminary, NBC. (29 min)

FAMILY THEATRE (11-8-50) "Hans Brinker" starring Dean Stockwell with Norma Jean Nilsson, Ted Osborne, Bill Johnstone, Tommy Cook, Jeanine Roos. In 19th Century Holland, a father's loss of memory keeps his children from getting ice skates. Holy Cross Fathers, MBS. (29 min) *Read the article about Religious Radio on page 12.*

INNER SANCTUM (6-29-52) "Terror By Night" starring Agnes Moorehead as a woman who finds herself alone in a car with a man she thinks is a killer. AFRS rebroadcast. (23 min)

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

MOLLÉ MYSTERY THEATRE (1940s) "The Creeper" starring Charlotte Manson. As a killer stalks red-headed women in New York, the wife of a detective fears she is the next victim. Host is Geoffrey Barnes (Bernard Lenrow). Mollé Shave Cream, Double Danderine, NBC. (29 min) *Another program's treatment of this same story is scheduled later this afternoon.*

SPOTLIGHT REVUE (11-14-47) Spike Jones and his City Slickers co-star with Dorothy Shay, "the Park Avenue Hillbilly" with guest Francis Craig, pianist-orchestra leader, writer of "Near You." Doodles Weaver, as Prof. Feedlebaum presents "The Man on the Flying

Trapeze." Mike Wallace announces. Coca Cola, CBS. (28 min) *Read the cover story about Spike Jones on page 2.*

WILD BILL HICKOK (1950s) "Cave-in at Careful Smith's Mine" Guy Madison stars as Wild Bill with Andy Devine as Jingles, both coming upon trouble in Silver City. Cast includes Al Girard, Jess Kirkpatrick, Tyler McVey, Barney Phillips. AFRS rebroadcast. (22 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (5-17-91) Pat Buttram talks about his radio career in a brief conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded at a meeting of the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters in Studio City, California. Pat Buttram died in 1994 at age 78. (10 min)

MELODY RANCH (1950s) Gene Autry stars with Pat Buttram, Johnny Bonds, Cass County Boys, The Pinafors, and Carl Gotner. In this week's western adventure: "The Mystery of the Concertina." CBS. (24 min) *Read the article about Cowboy Sidekicks on page 33.*

RED SKELTON SHOW (6-11-52) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire: "I Bought a Fighter." Red appears as Cauliflower McPugg, Clem Kadmiddlehopper, and Junior, the mean little kid. Cast includes Lurene Tuttle, Pat McGeehan, Dick Ryan, Smith Twins, Rod O'Connor. Blue Star Blades, CBS. (28 min) *Read the article about Red Skelton on page 26.*

MURDER AT MIDNIGHT (1946) "The Creeper" starring Ann Shephard. A madman murders women in their apartments, then scrawls notes on the victim's walls: "Catch me before I kill again." "A policeman's wife fears for her safety. Syndicated. (25 min)



Pat Buttram

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APRIL - MAY 2001

SATURDAY, APRIL 28 31st ANNIVERSARY BROADCAST "Thanks For Listening"

Celebrating Radio's Golden Age



As we celebrate our thirty-first broadcast anniversary today, we present an afternoon with *The Great Gildersleeve*, one of radio's best-loved programs:

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (8-31-41) *First show in the series.* Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, owner of the Gildersleeve Girdle Works in Wistful Vista, who goes to Summerfield to visit his nephew and niece and become administrator of his brother's estate. He gets off on the wrong foot with Judge Hooker, who rules that Gildy must stay in Summerfield. Lurene Tuttle as Marjorie, Walter Tetley as Leroy, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (6-14-50) *Harold Peary's last appearance as Gildersleeve.* The mayor of Summerfield asks the Water Commissioner take his vacation right away. Gildy rounds up the family for a cruise on a houseboat. Mary Lee Robb as Marjorie, Walter Tetley as Leroy, Cathy Lewis as Catherine Milford, Dick LeGrande as Peavy. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (9-6-50) *Willard Waterman's first appearance as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve.* After a long vacation, Gildy returns to find Marjorie's husband Broncho (Richard Crenna) sporting a black eye. Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Mary Lee Robb as Marjorie, Walter Tetley as Leroy, Arthur Q. Brian as Floyd Munson, the barber. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (11-6-93) Willard Waterman, Shirley Mitchell and Mary Lee Robb, former stars of the *Great Gildersleeve* series, talk about the program and its cast in a conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded before a live studio audience at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in the Chicago Cultural Center. Willard Waterman died in 1995 at age 80.

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (11-6-93) A re-enactment of a *Gildersleeve* program originally broadcast on March 28, 1943: "Gildy has Spring Fever" starring Willard Waterman, Shirley Mitchell, Mary Lee Robb and members of our *Those Were The Days* Radio Players, directed by Jed Skillman.



Willard Waterman as THROCKMORTON P. GILDERSLEEVE



Shirley Mitchell as MARY LEE ROBB



Mary Lee Robb as MARJORIE

ART BY JERRY WARSHAW

SATURDAY, MAY 5 REMEMBERING BASIL RATHBONE

SKIPPY HOLLYWOOD THEATRE (1949) "The Man from Jamestown" starring **Basil Rathbone** in an historical romantic drama set in the early days of the Twentieth Century. Lee Mitchell is director and host. Skippy Peanut Butter, Syndicated. (31 min)

TALES OF FATIMA (5-28-49) "Time to Kill" starring **Basil Rathbone** as himself, who hears a news announcement that "Basil Rathbone, noted actor, has been found brutally murdered." Fatima Cigarettes, CBS. (27 min)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (4-24-49) Guest **Basil Rathbone** joins Fred and the regulars, Portland Hoffa, Minerva Pious (Mrs. Nussbaum), Peter Donald (Ajax Cassidy), Parker Fennelly (Titus Moody), Kenny Delmar (Senator Claghorn), DeMarco Sisters, Al Goodman and the orchestra. Rathbone joins Allen in a "One Long Pan" detective sketch, "The Mad Doctor of Downey Street" or "Death Wore Rubber Gloves." Ford Motor Co., NBC. (29 min)

CAVALCADE OF AMERICA (3-22-48) "The President and the Doctor" starring **Basil Rathbone** as George Washington and Thomas Mitchell as Dr. Samuel Baird in "a little-known story about a double crisis in the life of our nation's first president." DuPont, NBC. (28 min)

NEW ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (10-10-45) "A Scandal in Bohemia" starring **Basil Rathbone** as Sherlock Holmes with Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson, who tells a story about Holmes, a king, and "the woman." Harry Bartell announces. Petri Wines, MBS. (30 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is movie historian **Bob Kolosowski** who will talk about the film career of **Basil Rathbone**, who died in 1967 at age 75.

SATURDAY, MAY 12

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (2-6-49) The Nelsons as themselves, with Tommy Bernard and Henry Blair as David and Ricky, John Brown as Thorny Thornberry. Harriet is upset that her house is never as neat as her neighbors, and it's all because of her three kids — the two boys and Ozzie. International Silver Co., NBC. (29 min)

HALLMARK HALL OF FAME (5-10-53) "George Washington's Mother" hosted by Lionel Barrymore, who presents the true story of Mary Washington, the mother of the man who became the first president of the United States. Hallmark Cards, AFRTS. (22 min)

RED SKELTON SHOW (3-11-52) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire focuses on barber shops as Willy Lump-Lump is a barber and *Junior* goes for a haircut. Norge, CBS. (28 min) *Read the article about Red Skelton on page 26.*

LET GEORGE DO IT (4-5-48) Bob Bailey stars as George Valentine, free-lance detective, with Frances Robinson as his secretary, Brooksie. Valentine's old army buddy has been hospitalized as a mental case. Standard Oil of California, MBS. (30 min)

FORT LARAMIE (4-29-56) "Capture" stars Raymond Burr as Lee Quince, Captain of Cavalry at Ft. Laramie. A dying Indian chief asks Quince to make sure his son doesn't stray to the wrong side of the law. Vic Perrin as Sgt. Gorce, Harry Bartell as Lt. Seiberts. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

LIFE OF RILEY (5-8-48) William Bendix stars as Chester A. Riley, with Paula Winslowe as Peg, John Brown as Digby O'Dell. Riley fixes breakfast in bed for Peg on Mother's Day. Prell Shampoo, NBC. (30 min)

SATURDAY, MAY 19

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (5-2-50) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees who are at Dugan's Lake on the opening day of the fishing season trying to catch some big mouth bass. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29 min)

CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE (3-17-39) "Beau Geste" starring Orson Wells as Beau, Lawrence Olivier as John Geste, and Noah Beery as Sgt. Le Grande in the classic story of honor among brothers in the French Foreign Legion and their battle with a tyrannical officer and rampaging desert hordes. Campbell Soups, CBS. (25 min & 32 min)

SPOTLIGHT REVUE (2-20-48) Spike Jones and his City Slickers co-star with Dorothy Shay, the Park Avenue Hillbilly. Guest Buddy Clark joins Doodles Weaver, George Rock and the Slickers. Coca Cola, CBS. (28 min) *Read the cover story about Spike Jones on page 2.*

SUSPENSE (6-19-47) "Dead of Night" starring Elliott Reid with Cathy Lewis and Wally Maher. A brother comes to the aid of his sister who has killed her abusive husband. Roma Wines, CBS. (30 min)

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #126 (6-24-44) An "All-Western" show starring Bob Hope, Andrews Sisters, Cottonseed Clark, Roy Rogers, the Riders of the Purple Sage, Carole Landis and Frank Sinatra. Comedy sketch: "The Road to Texas" or "Jerkalong Cassidy." AFRTS. (29 min)

**OLD TIME
RADIO**

IN THE
20th
CENTURY

CENTURY

Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WDCB • 90.9 FM • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM

MAY 2001

SATURDAY, MAY 26

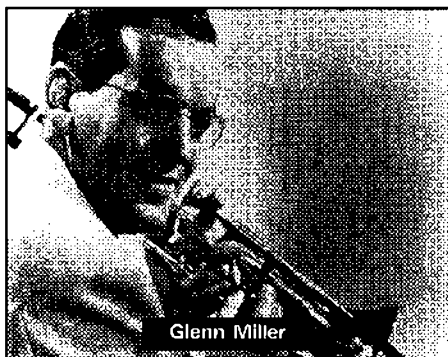
THE BIG BAND BANDSTAND

BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA (10-23-37) Remote broadcast from the Madhattan Room of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. Selections include "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree" and "Am I Blue." Vocalist Martha Tilton sings "You're My Desire" and "Yours and Mine." The Goodman Trio offers "Where or When" and the Goodman Quartet presents a wild version of "Nagasaki." Melvin Allen announces. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

BENNY MEROFF AND HIS ORCHESTRA (9-4-37) Remote broadcast from the Summer Terrace of the Hotel New Yorker in New York City. Bert Parks announces. Vocals by "Miss Sonia" and Clyde Rogers. This little-known but solid middle-of-the-road orchestra presents "They All Laughed," "Lady Be Good," Sweet Leilani, "Peanut Vendor," and "He Ain't Got Rhythm." Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

RUSS MORGAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA (7-8-51) Remote broadcast from the Marine Dining Room of the Edgewater Beach Hotel "along the shores of Lake Michigan" in Chicago. "Music in the Morgan Manner" selections include "How High the Moon," "Bye Bye Blues," "Stars Fell on Alabama," and "You Belong to My Heart." Bill Griskey announces. Sustaining, NBC. (25 min)

GLENN MILLER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (8-4-39) Remote broadcast from the Glen Island



Glenn Miller

Casino on Long Island Sound in New Rochelle, New York. Tunes include "Slip Horn Jive," "My Isle of Golden Dreams," and "King Porter Stomp." Ray Eberle sings "The Lamp is Low." Sustaining, NBC BLUE. (14 min)

AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1958) Chapter One of "The Glenn Miller Story," an 18-part series hosted by Andy Mansfield. This series features interviews with music personalities who played a role in the history of the Miller Band, plus clips from broadcasts and recordings. Ben Pollack, who hired Glenn Miller for his band in the 1920s, is interviewed in this first program of the series. AFRTS. (30 min) *Subsequent episodes will be presented throughout the summer on TWTD.*

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is big band historian **KARL PEARSON** who will talk about the music and the musicians of the Big Band Era.

...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 54th year on the air!** *WJOL, 1340 AM, Saturday, 9 am-1 pm.*

SATURDAY SWING SHIFT-- Bruce Oscar is host for this two-hour show featuring swing music on record performed by the big bands, pop singers and small groups. *WDCB, 90.9 FM, Saturday, 11 am-1 pm.*

MIDWEST BALLROOM-- John Russell Ghrist hosts a big band program featuring Chicago area orchestras and dance bands. *WDCB, 90.9 FM, Saturday, 5-6 pm.*

"When Radio Was" -- WBBM-AM 780

Monday thru Friday Midnight to 1 a.m. Host Stan Freberg

April, 2001 Schedule

MON/4-2 Dimension X (4-15-50) *With Folded Hands*; My Friend Irma (1-5-48) *Great Irma* Pt 1
 TUES/4-3 My Friend Irma Pt 2; Tales of Texas Rangers (2-4-51) *Logger's Larceny* Joel McCrea
 WED/4-4 Nick Carter (7-5-43) *Echo of Death*; Life of Riley (5-7-44) *Dog Catcher* Pt 1
 THU/4-5 Life of Riley Pt 2; Rocky Jordan (8-13-50) *City of Baksheesh* Jack Moyles
 FRI/4-6 The Shadow (1-29-30) *Prelude to Terror*; The Unexpected (5-16-48) *Find the Man*

MON/4-9 Philip Marlowe (10-17-48) *Where There's a Will*; Great Gildersleeve (3-26-47) Pt 1
 TUES/4-10 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2; Escape (8-11-47) *The Ring of Thoth* Jack Webb
 WED/4-11 Green Hornet (11-25-39) *Smuggler Signs His Name*; Red Skelton (1-15-46) Pt 1
 THU/4-12 Red Skelton Pt 2; Richard Diamond (5-22-49) *Stolen Purse* Dick Powell
 FRI/4-13 Suspense (9-16-43) *Cross-Eyed Bear*; Couple Next Door (12-31-57) *The Kendalls*

MON/4-16 Lone Ranger (1-12-49) *Mary Robert's Legacy*; Fibber McGee (2-10-42) *Valentine* Pt 1
 TUES/4-17 Fibber McGee Pt 2; Box Thirteen (4-17-49) *Sealed Instructions* Alan Ladd
 WED/4-18 Jeff Regan, Investigator (11-16-49) *Two Little Sisters*; Burns & Allen (1-26-43) Pt 1
 THU/4-19 Burns & Allen Pt 2; Dragnet (9-28-50) *Big Death* Jack Webb
 FRI/4-20 The Shadow (3-12-39) *Appointment with Death*; Strange Dr. Weird (11-14-44) *Chandor*

MON/4-23 Ellery Queen (11-6-43) *Vanishing Magician* Hugh Marlowe; Jack Benny (6-20-48) Pt 1
 TUE/4-24 Jack Benny Pt 2; Broadway is My Beat (8-18-49) *Silks* Bergen Larry Thor
 WED/4-25 Gunsmoke (8-23-52) *Shakespeare*; Abbott & Costello (12-30-43) Bert Gordon Pt 1
 THU/4-26 Abbott & Costello Pt 2; Philo Vance, Detective (7-13-48) *Eagle Murder Case*
 FRI/4-27 Suspense (11-9-43) *Cabin B-13* Margo; Vic & Sade (1940s) *Letter to Walter*

MON/4-30 Gangbusters (1940s) *Case of John K. Giles*; My Favorite Husband (10-16-48) Pt 1

May, 2001 Schedule

TUE/5-1 My Favorite Husband Pt 2; X Minus One (10-24-57) *Man's Best Friend*
 WED/5-2 This is Your FBI (11-10-50) *Backstage Showdown*; Fred Allen (3-3-46) O. Welles Pt 1
 THU/5-3 Fred Allen Pt 2; The Whistler (9-10-44) *Local Storm*
 FRI/5-4 The Shadow (3-19-39) *Can the Dead Talk?*; Bill Stern's Sports Newsreel (10-24-42)

MON/5-7 Tales of Texas Rangers (9-30-50) *Clean-Up*; Jack Benny (6-27-48) Fred Allen Pt 1
 TUE/5-8 Jack Benny Pt 2; Nick Carter (7-12-43) *Death Across the Tracks* Lon Clark
 WED/5-9 Lights Out! (12-22-42) *Meteor Man*; Archie Andrews (5-7-46) *Day at Camp*
 THU/5-10 Archie Andrews Pt 2; Escape (8-18-47) *The Fourth Man* Paul Frees, Ira Grossel
 FRI/5-11 Suspense (12-30-43) *Finishing School* Elsa Lanchester; Beulah (1-28-54) *Lunchroom*

MON/5-14 Lone Ranger (1-14-49) *Boss of Cedar Bend* Brace Beemer; Burns & Allen (4-20-43) Pt 1
 TUE/5-15 Burns & Allen Pt 2; Gunsmoke (8-30-52) *Juniper Tree* William Conrad
 WED/5-16 Boston Blackie (6-11-46) *Disappearing Plane*; Fibber McGee (2-17-42) *Home Movies* Pt 1
 THU/5-17 Fibber McGee Pt 2; Rocky Jordan (2-13-49) *Red Stands for Blood* Jack Moyles
 FRI/5-18 The Shadow (11-5-39) *Mansion of Madness*; Sgt. Preston (9-3-43) *Ring on His Finger*

MON/5-21 Dragnet (10-5-50) *The Big .38* Jack Webb; Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show (12-5-48) Pt 1
 TUE/5-22 Phil Harris-Alice Faye Pt 2; Green Hornet (11-10-46) *Quiz Program Clue*
 WED/5-23 Philip Marlowe (10-24-48) *Heart of Gold*; Aldrich Family (2-10-49) *Geometry* Pt 1
 THU/5-24 Aldrich Family Pt 2; Nightbeat (5-1-50) *Mentallo, the Mental Marvel* Frank Lovejoy
 FRI/5-25 Suspense (1-27-44) *Locked Room* Virginia Bruce; Unexpected (5-23-48) *Revenge*

MON/5-28 Director's Playhouse (12-30-49) *One Way Passage*; Our Miss Brooks (7-17-49) Pt 1
 TUE/5-29 Our Miss Brooks Pt 2; Frontier Gentleman (8-10-58) *Cat Man* John Dehner
 WED/5-30 Dimension X (4-22-50) *Report on the Barnhouse Effect*; Life of Riley (5-14-44) Pt 1
 THU/5-31 Life of Riley Pt 2; Richard Diamond (5-29-49) *Moran Murder Case*



RED SKELTON

The Saddest Clown

BY WAYNE KLATT

Sometimes it's best not to know famous people, because then we might catch a glimpse of the unhappiness that drives them to excel. Such as Red Skelton, who so often on television would put on a humble grin and warmly say, "Good night, and God bless."

Richard Skelton was no overnight sensation. The red-haired Indiana boy, who was ashamed of his family's poverty, wanted to become a comedian ever since he saw vaudevillian Ed Wynn perform in Vincennes. Wynn would make his voice into a flutter, his face into rubber, and would fidget with his hands. He managed to be a clown without much physical movement.

Even then, Red was hiding a secret that his mother had to be a charwoman because her husband, an occasional circus clown, died of drink two months after the boy was

born in 1903. Red had to sleep in an attic amid the scurrying of rats.

While still a boy, he was a singer with a medicine show and learned to love laughter when his chair fell off the wagon platform. He stopped going to school in the fifth grade and performed wherever he could, even on a steam boat, and he sometimes did a "mammy" number in blackface. But after adolescence left him without much of a singing voice, he worked as a comedian in vaudeville during the 1920s.

He sometimes did character humor on radio station WMAQ while playing in such long-gone Chicago theatres as the Little Jim, Rialto, Haymarket, and Stratford. Milton Berle, who was performing at the Palace Theatre downtown, went out of his way to catch Red's act in the armory just outside the World's Fair grounds. The people were laughing heartily at his bumbling, sly characters.

In Hollywood, Red was test-marketed as a Catskills camp operator in the 1938 Ginger Rogers film *Having a Wonderful Time*,

Wayne Klatt is the night editor at New City News Service, Chicago and a free-lance writer.

and over the next few years he became a contract player at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Memorable moments including a spy getting through a Civil War battle in *A Southern Yankee* (1948) by wearing a Union uniform on one side and a Confederate uniform on the other, and the next year singing the Academy Award-winning "Baby It's Cold Outside" as he tried to escape the clutches of Betty Garrett in *Neptune's Daughter*.

But his potential was still not being realized. He had a special talent for losing himself in characters he had created. His radio program gave him a chance to be both funny and sometimes poignant, such as his Father Time episodes at the end of each year. Although touching scenes were lost in his move to television in 1953, Red was able to flesh out his characters of country bumpkin Clem Kadiddlehopper, sagging-holstered Deadeye, washed-up fighter Cauliflower McPugg, raspy San Fernando Red, and the beloved hobo Freddie the Free-loader.

His most often repeated skit on live television was "Topsy Turvey," in which George Appleby's wife decides to cure him



of drinking by nailing the furniture on the walls and ceiling to give the illusion of hallucination. George comes home so drunk he thinks it's normal and tries to make himself at home on the walls. But television would not allow his famous radio and movie skit advertising "Guzzler's Gin, it goes down smoooooth."

In public, Red was always "on." He personally warmed up his audience with antics, and kept them howling even after the program. When he had to fly somewhere, he would sit at the gate and do an entire program for whoever would gather around.

All his many friends in the business had his and her own favorite joke Red had pulled. But the darker side was taking over. He was curt in his treatment of his writers, he refused to speak on the telephone throughout his life, he was afraid of fire, and he was once seen throwing out his career-long joke cards one by one.

Red's moroseness became worse when his only son, Richard, died of leukemia at



RED SKELTON

the age of nine in 1958. Red "retired" the character of the "Mean Widdle Kid" in memory of the boy. But audiences never knew his grief. Making people laugh held him together, and you can hear the underlying sadness in his record run of 20 years on television, ending in the spring of 1970.

Through it all, he was the White House guest of seven presidents from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Gerald Ford and had private audiences with three Popes, and in 1994, although he was too ill to appear, he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in the Chicago Cultural Center.

Red had a wonderful peculiarity: he needed the one-on-one feedback he received from his movie and television crews but not from personal appearances. So he would invite news people to a little gathering a day before he put on a show. I was working for City News Bureau, which did not do celebrity pieces, so I took a lunch break in the lobby of the Chicago Theatre in February, 1987.

About five of us were on one side of a small table when the white-haired comedy great sat down across from us and began forty-five minutes of warm hilarity, using his rubbery face, changes in inflection, and his limber arms and hands.

When he stood up and wished us well, a woman reporter or editor who had not done her homework stopped to ask Red as he was signing autographs for us, "Excuse me, what did your father do?" I lingered in the lobby to hear how Red might talk about drunken Joseph Skelton, who failed as father and as clown and drank himself to death.

But Red didn't say anything like that. Instead, with a quiet tone, almost a whisper, he replied, "Oh, he was a doctor."

Only then did I realize how much this



clown, who could consider nearly everybody on every street in America his friend, was still hurting from his childhood.

I thought we news people had seen a preview of Red's act, but not one joke was used in his amazing two-hour performance the next night. Even in his final appearance in the city, at the Chicago Theatre in 1991, virtually every joke and most of his pantomime scenes were new. When he retired shortly afterward, it was only because his legs were at last giving him trouble after 70 years of pratfalls.

Red Skelton died in September of 1997. No, he didn't die, his tired body was just laid to rest. He still lives in his clown paintings, his movies, and tapes of his radio and television shows. He once said mourners should buy plastic tears to put on their face to look as if they were crying. For his friends, his death only reminded us of our gratitude for the saddest and warmest clown of all. ■

NOTE-- Tune in TWTD April 21 and May 12 to hear a pair of Red Skelton radio shows.

Remembering the Chicago World's Fair

BY GEORGE LITTLEFIELD, SR.
as told to
GEORGE LITTLEFIELD, JR.

NOTE—My father was lucky enough to work as a teen-ager at the Chicago World's Fair and Exhibition of 1933-34. He passed away in 1999, but in 1978 I asked Dad to sit down and recall for me the excitement and joy of those days. The following represents some of his memories, captured on tape. —George Littlefield, Jr.



I remember it like it was yesterday. In 1931, at the age of 16, I was lucky enough to be hired by Carl Stockholm, a noted six-day bike racer and owner of a chain of Chicago-area cleaner/laundromats. I went to work at his plant in the Paradise Theatre Building, Maypole and Crawford avenues, just west of Garfield Park.

In the winter of 1933, Mr. Stockholm called us into his office with some wonderful news: his business was to have an exclusive contract for cleaning and laundering at the wonderful new Chicago

George Littlefield, Jr. of Glen Ellyn, Illinois is a retired editor of such magazines as Piano Trades and The School Musician, who now writes what he wants to, as opposed to what he has to.

World's Fair that would begin that summer!

Boy, were we happy! Everyone at Stockholm's stood to make some good money for at least six months — and this was the heart of the Depression!

Mr. Stockholm told us that there would be a Stockholm Laundry & Cleaners on site at the Fair itself; and that it would also function as an exhibit, open to the public. All cleaning and laundering equipment was to be supplied free of charge by the manufacturers.

Before we knew it, it was time for the Fair to begin. I was lucky enough to have a job at the Fair itself, delivering and picking up laundry and cleaning from every area of the Fair.

To get there I would take the Madison streetcar (we all had special free passes)

CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR

east to the special exit at the Fair itself. The Fair had a special Pass Gate at the North Main Entrance, which I could enter at no price.

There were so many wonderful and interesting things to see and do that, although I worked both the 1933 and 1934 seasons, I still to this day feel that I didn't see and experience everything that there was to see and do!

The Carl Stockholm Cleaning Exhibit was located on the Avenue of Flags (that headed west to the brand-new Adler Planetarium), in the huge General Exhibits Building. There, we were next door to the Ipana Toothpaste Exhibit; there was also a huge diamond on exhibit nearby, as well as a real Egyptian mummy.

At the Fair my workday lasted from morning 'til night, nine hours a day, with a half-hour break for lunch. My primary job was picking up and delivering laundry and dry-cleaning to all of the exhibits, as well as the rickshaw pullers and wheeled-chair pullers.

Bear in mind that we couldn't deliver or pick up these clothes by truck — they weren't allowed on the main Fair Grounds during regular hours — clothes were picked up and delivered in wicker baskets

with wheels on them, pushed right down the main right-of-way between the visitors.

Like almost everyone else at the Fair, I wore a special uniform and I was proud of it. I had to pay for them out of my own wages — one dollar a week for eighteen weeks — but believe me, at that time, I considered it a really great deal!

If I wanted to get something to eat, I tried to get a hot-dog with everything, an order of fries, and a cup of coffee for 15 cents at Pookie's Hot Dogs, just outside the Fairgrounds. Once you got into the Fair, a similar meal would cost you at least 30 cents — and it wouldn't be as good!

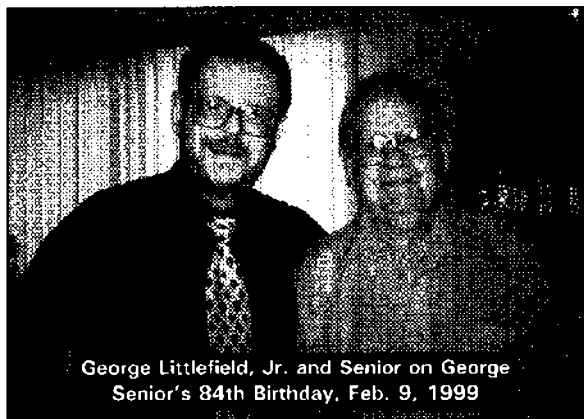
I think that everybody felt that there were really two segments to the Fair — the General Exhibits (something like you might have seen at the Museum of Science and Industry, only much better) during the day and then the night life on the Midway, which had been open all day but never really got in gear 'til nighttime.

This was a time for what they today call "swingers." All the entertainment places started "sparkling" at night: the Streets of Paris, the Pabst Blue Ribbon Lounge, and many others.

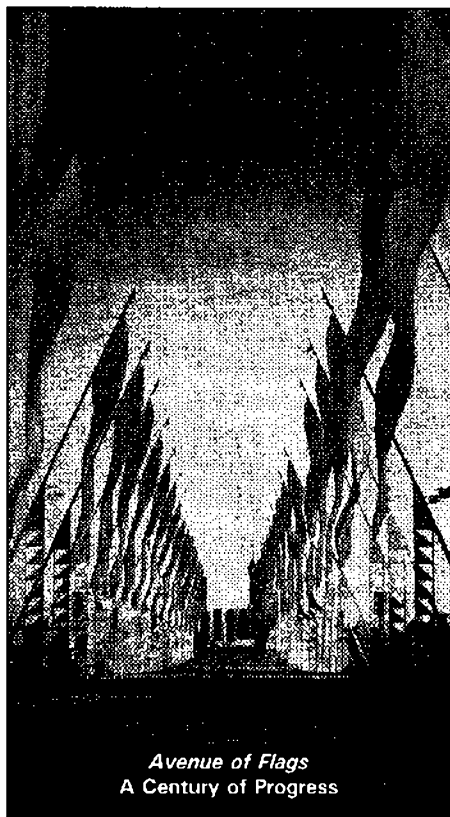
Ben Bernie and his orchestra were an act that impressed me quite a bit. Charles "Buddy" Rogers was there with his band, too. Hollywood people like Arthur Lake

and many other entertainers like Sally Rand would come into the Fair, entertain for a few weeks, and then go back home, after seeing what they could do for the Fair for themselves.

I remember that at night the buildings of the General Exhibits would be "painted" by colored lights for nighttime beauty — that was all they could afford in the Depression. I'll never forget the giant boy riding a giant Radio Flyer



George Littlefield, Jr. and Senior on George Senior's 84th Birthday, Feb. 9, 1999



Avenue of Flags
A Century of Progress

wagon in the Children's Park, and the beautiful European architecture of the Belgian, French and Dutch Villages on the Midway.

The most beautiful of all was the wonderful Belgian Village, which was actually built to last out of solid brick, stone and wood; the streets were paved with authentic cobblestones. On the other hand, if you took a good look at the other European Villages and the Midget Village, they were just false fronts made out of plaster. When people went to the Streets of Paris at Night, they didn't go to admire the architecture—they went to get "cooked"!

As I remember it, the best "civilian" job you could get at the Fair was as a talker (barker), who stood outside each show on the Midway. Like a star pitcher is to the Chicago Cubs — that's how the talker was to his ballyhoo. The talkers lured the

people in; the talkers were the ones who really sold the tickets and made their show successful.

The show that paid the highest price got the best talker. Nate Eagle was one of the very best; he started out at the Motor Drome, where motorcycles roared round and round. Then he moved on to the Midget Village, the Italian Village and the Belgium Village: wherever he went, he brought in the people — and he would work for the highest bidder for his services.

The best entertainer job at the Fair was held by the great (fan dancer) Sally Rand, who received the most money of anyone for her services. There would be a full house for every show she put on; she played wherever she could make the most money.

I used to pick up her fans for cleaning. She would hand them to me without a stitch on — and tip me a silver dollar, besides! I found Sally to be a well-educated young girl who never forgot a name. Thirty years later, in northern Minnesota, my wife and I went to a night club where she was appearing; I said Hello — and she remembered me!

Now, Ripley's "Believe It or Not" Odditorium: there was a place like no other, before or since. It didn't need the services of a talker; it always did great business because it was simply unbelievable what they had in there.

There were nurses stationed throughout the place to tend to those who fainted at what they saw. And the nurses were not just a publicity stunt — people really did faint!

For instance, the "Original Popeye" was there (he later appeared and was filmed at Riverview's Palace of Wonders). He had the strange ability to literally "pop" his eyes out of their sockets, one by one. Some who watched him do it thought it was some kind of illusion, but no — he really could do it!

CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR

When he did it, people would fall like logs, and the nurses would get busy!

Then there was another fellow there who would attach two hooks through his eyelids and then swing his baby sister in a swing attached to the hooks which were supported only by his eyelids which would stretch down three or four inches. And, bear in mind, he would do this 30 or 40 times a day!

There was another fellow there who could somehow pull his stomach up under his rib cage; the space where his stomach used to be would go back flat and expose his backbone in front, where his stomach used to be!

I remember Ripley used to feature an entire "ossified" family who were all, slowly but surely, turning to calcified stone. They were almost motionless; they couldn't talk, couldn't see, couldn't hear. I don't know what kept them alive, but at least, in spite of their handicap, they were making good money at the Fair.

There was also a family of Ubangis there from somewhere in Africa. They had lips as large as tea saucers and it was very hard to understand what they were trying to say.

And then there was the Japanese fellow who would write the entire Lord's Prayer on a grain of rice. This he could see fine, but he was blind when it came to normal vision and he had to be led everywhere.

I'll never forget the high-diving team that worked from a large raft in Lake Michigan, just east of the Fair, with a high diving board mounted on the raft. They used to put on a real show! There were speed-boaters constantly putting on a show, too. There was always something for you to see!

One day the Italian aviators, led by Italo Balbo, landed their seaplanes in Lake Michigan by the Fair. They were treated like heroes, which they were. They even

had a special "day" all their own at the Fair. Today, Balbo Street in Grant Park still honors their presence at the Fair.

But if I had to pick one thing about the Fair that impressed me the most, it would be the Sky-Ride! The Sky-Ride was stretched between two very high towers—one at the edge of the lake front, the other on Northerly Island (which is now known as Meigs Field). Originally, the bullet-shaped cars that rode the wires from one tower to the other were designed to move very fast, but, as things turned out, they wound up traveling very slowly, for safety's sake. You see, sometimes the Sky-Ride had to shut down due to high winds. The aluminum cars, which held only 12 riders per car, would shake and sway in the breeze, and they would have to shut down the entire ride. The wind would flip the cars up and down as much as 8 to 12 feet!

Only 12 people, including a guide, could ride the Sky-Ride at one time, going one way. The cost was 50 cents for a two-way ride, although, once again, I had a free pass and rode it every day.

Cable cars actually did fall from the wires but, thankfully, it was before they started carrying actual riders. As it turned out at least half of the 1933 season was over before the Sky-Ride was at last rated safe for passengers. To be honest with you, although it was a great ride, the Sky-Ride turned out to be a financial flop—and this in the middle of the Depression!

As to what's left—not much. There was a Pueblo Indian Village and a Pioneer's Log Fort from the Fair that were part of the Railroad Fair in the 1940s and lasted until the original McCormick Place was built, but that's about it.

However, in my mind, the Fair is still on, Sally Rand is still dancing, and Carl Stockholm's boys are still picking up the cleaning, every day. ■

Television Cowboy Sidekicks

BY RANDALL G. MIELKE

Not everyone remembers their names, but they often remember their faces, especially when standing along side their most famous partners on their TV series.

Pat Buttram, Pat Brady, Leo Carillo, and Andy Devine may not be household names, but all four were supporting players who came into America's living rooms via the TV westerns they appeared in during the 1950s. In most cases these sidekicks were comic relief, placed in the series to relieve the tension and/or drama in which the main characters were involved.

Gene Autry was one of the first western movie stars to begin filming a series especially for television. They made 104 half-hour episodes of *The Gene Autry Show*, which ran from 1950 to 1956.

Autry played himself in the TV series and was not a lawman, but often assisted the men with the badges in bringing outlaws to justice. Pat Buttram started as a sidekick to Gene Autry on Autry's radio program. They teamed for 15 years on radio, 17 movies at Columbia and six years

Randall G. Mielke of Aurora, Illinois is an author and free-lance writer.

on the TV show.

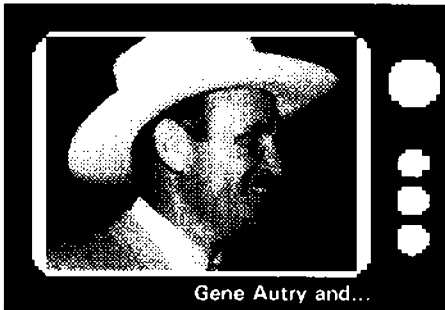
Buttram displayed a down-home, almost simpleton type of humor. Buttram was comfortable with the physical comedy, but he had a sharper edge to his verbal banter than most of the cowboy sidekicks in films and television. He knew how to read a line to get the maximum comic effect — perhaps more than just about any other cowboy sidekick. Later Buttram would be known as the sly and somewhat deceitful Mr. Hancy on the TV series *Green Acres*.

As for Buttram's physical comedy, he took advice from one of motion picture's premiere physical comedians, Buster Keaton.

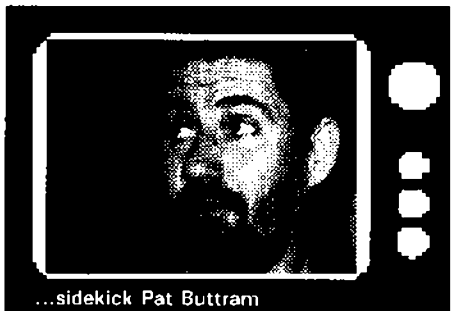
"I talked with him and he showed me how to do some falls," said Buttram. "He said, 'If it's possible to do a stunt in comedy yourself, do it — in a water trough, a cactus, or wherever you're to fall.' He said, 'It's not the fall that gets

the laugh; it's your reaction as you hit the ground or whatever, and the getting up. If they have to cut to a double and then cut back to you for your reaction, it's not as effective as if it's one big take.'"

Pat Buttram was one of the first sidekicks to use his own name in films and TV. Apparently Gene Autry had trouble remembering names, and they would have a



Gene Autry and...



...sidekick Pat Buttram

TELEVISION COWBOY SIDEKICKS

different name for Buttram in almost every picture. When they were making the TV shows they were doing two or three a week.

"Finally," Buttram relates, "Gene just said, 'Call him Pat Buttram.' Roy Rogers and Dale Evans had the same thing. They had a sidekick, Pat Brady, in their TV show, and they called him Pat Brady."

Like Buttram to Autry, Pat Brady started as Roy Rogers' sidekick in the movies.

The Roy Rogers Show was one of the most popular of TV's early westerns. This half-hour show, set in the present, starred Rogers and his wife Dale Evans, as themselves. Brady was featured as Rogers' Jeep-driving sidekick, and the Sons of the

Pioneers, the singing group with which Rogers broke into show business, were also on hand.

It was in the film *The Golden Stallion* that Rogers and Brady made together in 1949 that the concept of the Jeep Nellybelle, the Jeep with a mind of its own — was introduced as Brady's means of transportation. Rogers liked the idea so much that he revived it for his television series two years later.

"Right after the war, Jeeps became very popular," said Rogers. "I also thought it would give Pat something different, rather than to just get on a horse like all the other sidekicks, if he used a Jeep."

The Roy Rogers Show ran from 1951 to 1957. For 101 half-hour television episodes in the 1950s, Brady and Nellybelle



Roy Rogers with Trigger, Bullet and sidekick Pat Brady

PHOTOFFST

provided the comedy on the program, usually with Nellybelle running off on her own and Brady scampering after her.

Where Buttram used down-home humor for laughs and Brady used Nellybelle, Leo Carillo simply mangled the English language for effect.

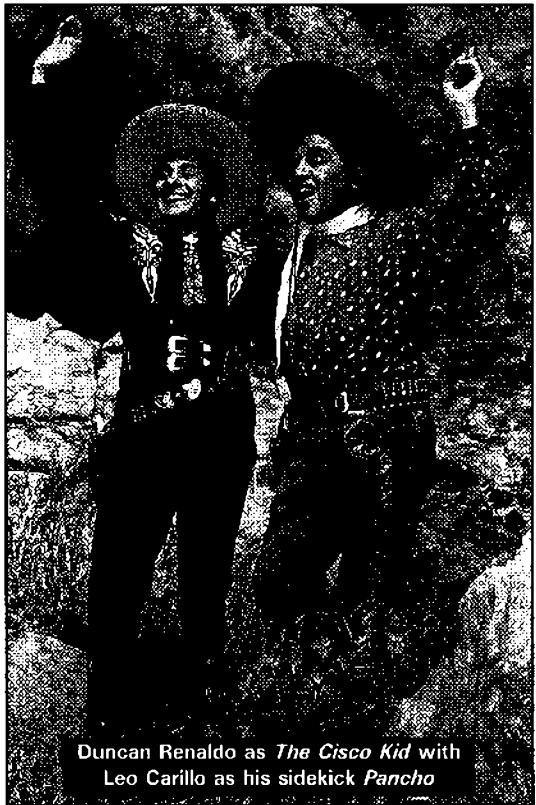
Several people played *The Cisco Kid* in the movies, but it was Duncan Renaldo who played the character in the last eight films of the series. Renaldo then went on to make the TV version. All the movie Cisco kids had sidekicks and just as Duncan Renaldo finally became the best-known Cisco, Leo Carillo became the definitive sidekick of the Cisco Kid, the English-fracturing Pancho.

Carillo's humor as Pancho was based on his misapplication of words, as in his famous battle cry, "Let's went!" The syndicated TV series began in 1950 and ran for 176 original half-hours and countless reruns.

According to Duncan Renaldo, Leo was reluctant to play Pancho at first because he thought the character would be a buffoon. "But I convinced him that it wasn't so, and he took it on and started a new career," said Renaldo. "Leo used to say that we were nothing but baby-sitters for the whole country, but the films had a lot of action and gimmicks and people liked them."

During the filming of *The Cisco Kid*, Carillo had a ranch and he had a caretaker who watched over the place while he was away. Reportedly, Carillo developed his Pancho accent from this elderly man who worked for him.

In reality, Carillo spoke English as well as anyone, but he listened to the old Mexican talk, and he picked up the Mexican



Duncan Renaldo as *The Cisco Kid* with
Leo Carillo as his sidekick *Pancho*

PHOTO/LS1

accent from this caretaker on the ranch.

In the eyes of the law, Cisco and Pancho were desperadoes, wanted for unspecified crimes. In the eyes of the poor and the downtrodden, they two were do-gooders who often acted where inept and unscrupulous lawmen would not.

Catch phrases seemed to be a popular commodity in the TV westerns of the 50s. In addition to Carillo's "Let's went!" there was also the inimitable "Oh, Pancho" "Oh, Cisco" from that series.

Still another catch phrase from that era came from Andy Devine as "Jingles" B. Jones, sidekick to Guy Madison's U. S. Marshal James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickok. Devine's gravelly voice yelling, "Hey, Wild Bill, wait for me!" announced the opening of the *Wild Bill Hickok* show each week.

➔ ➔ ➔

TELEVISION COWBOY SIDEKICKS



Andy Devine as Jingles with Guy Madison as Wild Bill Hickok

PHOTO: LSI

In 1951, Devine was approached with a proposal to co-star with Guy Madison in a half-hour western television series entitled *Wild Bill Hickok*. The producer, William Broidy, acknowledged to Devine that the pay was not very good, only \$250 per show, but he was willing to offer a 10 per cent piece of the show if Devine signed a contract. Devine agreed and the show made him a wealthy man. The series ran from 1951 to 1958 and a total of 112 episodes were filmed.

Unlike some of the other sidekicks, Devine already had an impressive list of film credits before joining forces with Madison and the Hickok series. Devine's films included roles in John Ford's *Stagecoach* in 1939 and later in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) with John Wayne and James Stewart.

With a scratchy, high-pitched voice (the

result of a childhood accident with a stick), and his rotund, bullfrog-like physique, Devine's voice and appearance immediately brought a smile to the faces of his audience. Devine could play comedy, but he could also bring tears to the eyes with a slight modulation of his voice and a change in his physical demeanor. But unlike some of his earlier film roles, his character of "Jingle" Jones in *Wild Bill Hickok* was mostly played for laughs.

And it was laughs that these sidekicks provided most, in addition to hours of entertainment for kids growing up in the 1950s. ■

NOTE-- Tune in TWTD April 21 to hear radio versions of Melody Ranch with Gene Autry and Pat Buttram and Wild Bill Hickok with Guy Madison and Andy Devine; plus a 1991 interview with Pat Buttram.

THE RADIO OF MY YOUTH

BY FRANK ZEMAITIS

I guess I was like most kids in the thirties. When school let out we hurried home to catch radio programs like *Orphan Annie* and *Jack Armstrong*. One of my favorites was the *Tom Mix Show*. The programs were always positive in nature and the good guys always came out on top. Tom Mix ended each show reminding us, "Straight shooters always win."

As a family, we also listened to *Fiber McGee and Molly*, *Jack Benny*, *Fred Allen* and *Joe Penner*. There was, of course, the mysteries and suspense programs like *Lights Out* and *The Shadow* but I don't recall listening to anything serious in those days. That changed in 1936 and in an unusual way.

Radio was rapidly increasing in popularity when I attended Davis Elementary School in Chicago. About 1935 the principal felt the school should have a radio receiver and announced a fund raising drive. The students were encouraged to bring extra wire clothes hangers from home and these were sold to the dry cleaning industry. The drive must have been a success. Before long a large radio in a handsome tall wood cabinet was placed at one end of the stage in the assembly hall where it sat in silence for months.

I don't recall it being turned on for any reason until King George V of England died and the heir to the throne, Prince Edward became King. The big news story of the day was King Edward's intention to marry Wallace Warfield Simpson, an American divorced woman. Parliament refused to allow the marriage and King

Frank Zemaitis of Porter, Indiana, is a free-lance writer.

Edward abdicated the throne in a speech that was broadcast around the world. The new radio at our school finally came to life.

Many seventh and eighth graders felt something important was happening but I'm sure that most of the students that marched into the assembly hall to hear the abdication speech did not understand, nor did they care. That was my first taste of history by radio.

The second memorable broadcast came not on a standard radio, but on my newly assembled crystal radio — complete with headphones. I was fascinated with the device and spent many hours placing the tiny spring probe tip onto different portions of the crystal and getting a number of local radio stations.

One evening I was captivated by a scary story called *War of the Worlds* by the then very young actor, Orson Welles who wrote and directed this now-famous program and played one of the key characters.

I didn't realize until the following day how realistic was the story. Many listeners had tuned in late to the program and took it as an actual news report. In some cases it created a bit of panic and hysteria. Since I had tuned in at the beginning I knew the story was fictional but to those who didn't, it was easy to believe space aliens had invaded the country.

The third broadcast came in 1938. Though my early childhood was spent in Chicago White Sox territory, I was always a Cubs fan. I never missed an opportunity to listen to sportscaster Pat Flanagan do play-by-play radio broadcasts of the Cubs games. The Cubs in those days were always in the hunt for the pennant.

I had stopped for a hot dog at a place

that had the Cubs-Pirate game on the radio. Pittsburgh was a half a game ahead of the Cubs. It was the ninth inning, the score was 5 to 5 and daylight was fading. Mace Brown, the Pirates ace reliever, was on the mound. The umpires announced the game would be called at the end of the ninth and would have to be replayed in its entirety. The first two men were out and Gabby Hartnett, the Cubs popular catcher, took two quick strikes. Darkness was falling fast. On the next pitch Gabby swung at where he thought the ball would be and the ball cleared the left field fence. To this day, Gabby's four bagger is still called, "The homer in the gloaming." The Cubs won the pennant but lost to the Yankees in the World Series.

The fourth broadcast left little doubt as to its nature. In our late teens, a number of us gathered on Sundays for our weekly touch football game in the playground of Hitch Elementary school. I had just purchased a Silvertone portable radio at Sears. Not like the lightweight super hightech boomboxes of today, this one weighed about 25 pounds - mostly from the heavy batteries.

The radio was placed against the side of the school building and we could keep tabs on the progress of the Bears - Cardinals football game. In those days there were two NFL teams in Chicago. (The southside Cardinals eventually moved to St. Louis). The Bears won that game 34 to 24. And yes, Virginia, the Bears also were a winning team in those days.

We suddenly halted our touch football game and listened to a special news bulletin. The report was of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and our military bases in the Philippines. Before we resumed our game it was agreed unanimously that it would take only a few weeks to teach the Japanese a lesson.

Within a year each of us was in uniform. ■



WE GET MAIL

CHICAGO-- Congratulations! When I saw the big announcement in Robert Feder's column I was so happy to see that *Those Were The Days* had found a new home on WDCB-FM (90.9). When I had first heard the news about the sale of WNIB, the thought of losing you and *TWTD* on Saturday afternoons made me feel very sad. I'm so glad that you have found a station that fits *Those Were The Days*. I already listen to Bruce Oscar's "Swing Shift" on that station and now I have another reason to tune in to WDCB. --JENNIFER PIGONI

CLARENDON HILLS, IL-- You made my day with your announcement Saturday (Jan. 27). May you, Ken and *TWTD* have a long and happy run on WDCB. I have listened to many of WDCB's programs for several years and it is a good station. --JOHN COOPER

CHICAGO-- I am overjoyed! Reading my Sun-Times last night, I came across Robert Feder's column with its "banner headline" and your smiling face. I was so excited. As a longtime fan of your show, I was saddened by the sale of WNIB and the possibility that your show might cease to be, but this is great news! Not only will *TWTD* continue, but it will be for the same four hours format, on the same day, and at the same time. You couldn't have asked for more than that. It's a miracle! I am one of the listeners who was in on the surprise that your daughters planned for your 30th broadcast anniversary last year. Congratulations on finding a new home for your terrific show. --BARBARA MURTHA

OLYMPIA FIELDS, IL-- Yahoo! Yipeee! You did it, Chuck! Thanks for your hard work and your tenacity. Here's to another 50 years! --PAT MENEES

GURNEE, IL-- Hooray! Yippee! Whew! Congratulations Chuck and staff! This is great news. We just tried WDCB and it comes in just fine here in Gurnee, Illinois. I heard jazz music when I tuned them in, which I enjoy listening to. I already put 90.9 on our music system and will put it on both

car radios when I go out. This may become a "new love affair." When I find if WDCB has a website, I will e-mail a thank you to them, also. They might want to hear from their new listeners.

--TRISH AND RON WENDT

ED. NOTE-- The WDCB website is www.wdcb.org

GLENVIEW, IL-- YEEEEEE Haaaaa! What great news, Chuck. Just heard it on today's *TWTD* program. MAN, am I glad. 90.9 is now on my dial, every radio. GOOD WORK.
--GARY EDMONDS

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL-- I was so pleased to hear that you found a new home for *TWTD*. And on WDCB, no less, one of my favorite stations! I was really beginning to worry about what I was going to do with my Saturday afternoons. I've purchased a bunch of tapes from Metro Golden Memories over the years, so I was going to listen to them, but I wouldn't have Chuck and Ken Alexander adding their much enjoyed commentary. I'm not old enough to remember these shows as a kid, but somewhere, somehow, I heard your show on the air back in the late '70s, and I've been listening ever since. Thanks for introducing me to this wonderful entertainment! Whyyyyyy, thank you, Chuck!
--JIM GREENE

FOREST PARK, IL-- I'm so happy to hear about your new home. Long live old time radio. I was born about 20 years late!
--ELIZABETH JOYCE

BATAVIA, IL-- I have been listening to *TWTD* since I was a kid in the '70s when my Dad would have it on in the background. Our kids are now used to hearing old radio in our home on Saturday afternoons. It is an important part of our American history (especially the war era broadcasts) and it is refreshing in this day of not-so-innocent entertainment. I will also admit that I am a huge Jazz fan and 'DCB has been a regular part of my listening. I am ashamed that I have never contributed to the station. I will do so now. --DAN VAN LOON

MT. PROSPECT, IL-- I am elated that you found a new home. A Saturday afternoon without *TWTD* would be pretty empty. Thanks for the hard work it took to find a

new home. I can breathe a lot easier now!!
--TOM DATTILO

PARKSIDE, WISCONSIN-- I am so happy you have found a new station for your show. You have certainly become an active part of my Saturday schedule and it truly depressed me when you announced the "death" of WNIB. I have been a loyal listener and a BIG fan since the early '80s. But there is one crisis yet to resolve! What about us folks in Southern Wisconsin who pick you up on WNIZ? I fear we will not be in the "audio circle." --DAVID HOLMS

MUNSTER, INDIANA-- I'm about to lose a good friend. Saturday afternoon with *TWTD*. I'm in Munster and we don't get your new station 90.9. The signal is very weak and fuzzy at best. --BILL CARTER

E-MAIL-- As a listener for the last 13 years I'm glad you were able to find a new home. The only problem is that we who live in far Northern Lake County and Southeast Wisconsin won't be able to pick up your signal very well. With your new station at 5000 Watts, its signal is fading and being lost with the signal from Wisconsin Public radio 90.7 FM. If you are ever up this way, you can listen to their version of old time radio on Sunday from 8 to 11 p.m.
--PATSY KOLNER

OAK LAWN, IL-- Congratulations on finding a new home for *TWTD*, our favorite radio program! For me, however, it was one of those "Good News/Bad News" things. The Good News is obvious. The Bad News is that I cannot receive WDCB too well where I live in Oak Lawn. I suppose I'm too far away and WDCB's signal is not as strong as WNIB's. Since the end of November, you've been scrambling for a new radio station to broadcast *TWTD*, and your work is done. Now it's my turn to scramble-- to find a new antenna for my radio. I need to be ready. I imagine I won't be the only listener that has this problem. --RANDY MICAL

CROWN POINT, INDIANA-- Congratulations upon finding a new home for *TWTD* on WDCB. It would have been easy for you to pull the plug and take a well-deserved break from 30 years of broadcasting on Saturday afternoons. The majority of your dedicated listeners will now continue to be rewarded



MORE MAIL

each week with OTR and Chuck Schaden. Regretably, those of us in Northern Indiana will no longer be able to enjoy your broadcast as the WDCB 90.9 signal is not strong enough to be received in this area. I have been a dedicated listener and have regularly recorded your broadcasts for more than 25 years. The absence of *TWTD* will leave a vacancy in my life much like losing a close friend. I wish you well and hope you will continue broadcasting for as long as you desire. I will continue to subscribe to *Nostalgia Digest* and to monitor your progress in the hope that other listening options may become available in the future. Until then, thank you for bringing OTR into my life and sharing your love of vintage radio broadcasts with all of us.

--MIKE DAUMER

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA-- Good news! Actually, GREAT news!!! I purchased the High-gain directional FM-antenna from Radio Shack (catalog # 15-2163 -- \$19.95) and put it in my attic. Now I receive WDCB in Northwest Indiana like Gangbusters (pun intended)! Yes, now I can listen to *TWTD* again. I'm just thrilled. So, if anyone should contact you about not being able to receive WDCB, maybe you can pass on this information. No, I can't receive the station on my little portable that I could carry around the house, but I can still listen on my stereo and still be able to make cassettes as needed. I am 36 years old and missed the original run of OTR. However, through your knowledge, hard work and dedication, I can relive the days of Old Time Radio. Well...thanks Chuck!!

--MARTIN J. DZIK

E-MAIL-- I was absolutely delighted to hear *TWTD* will continue, same time, same day, and I'm quite familiar with 90.9 as I listen to their jazz. Also very happy to know Ken Alexander will continue with you. He is one of my favorite people on WNIB. --SHIRLEY

DARIEN, IL-- Congratulations on your new home. We already had WDCB programmed on the car radios since my husband likes their jazz. We are also glad that Ken

Alexander is still going to be around. "Why, thank you, Chuck!" has become a household phrase around here.

--NELLIE MAE DAYMONT

LAKE IN THE HILLS, IL-- I want you to know that I unhesitatingly cried out in a loud voice my instant enthusiasm in having heard you declaring the continued status of your future broadcasting of *TWTD*. --MALCOLM FISHER

CHICAGO-- I don't know if you can possibly understand what you do means to some people. I was born in 1967. My earliest memories are of sitting in my grandparent's house and listening to your show in the early '70s. I would listen as my grandfather would tell me who the people were on the shows and quote many of their most famous lines. I was probably the only four-year-old who knew who Amos 'n' Andy were. We listened to your show thru most of the '70s, then in the '80s with being a teen-ager, I kind of fell off the radio wagon. It wasn't until 1986 when Grandpa died that I started to remember how much fun it was listening to those great old shows. But I never imagined that your show would still be on. Then one day in 1990 I was flipping thru the stations on my car radio and I heard this voice that sounded so familiar. Then you said, "...and we have been doing this since 1970" and suddenly it all clicked. Well, I am proud to say that I have been a loyal listener since then. You are a member of the family who comes to visit every Saturday. --MIKE FITZPATRICK

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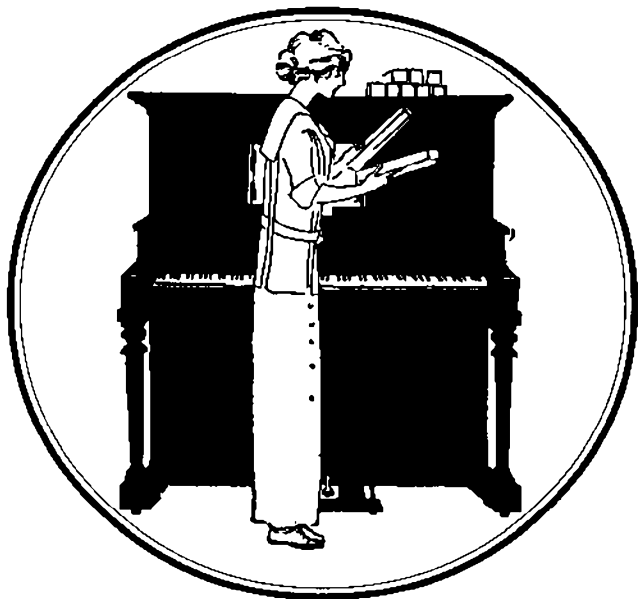
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← **RED SKELTON**

entertained millions during his career, but was he the Saddest Clown? Read Wayne Klatt's article on page 26.

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