



Over the span of crebbled years, any number of young bright kids have worked at the Gary Owens Building, usually writing sports and news while attending college or selling sterno-operated badminton racquets door to door. Albert Brooks was one, and Ken Levine is another who segues with ease from one form

of media to another. Ken, who is one of the top independent television producers, at 20th Century-Fox, also still likes to fling on radio intermittently as Beaver Cleaver at KHTZ. In Ken's embryonic radio years he was also known as Johnny Lizard, Erwin Rommel and Tokyo Rose, if my memory is correct.

Ken and David Isaacs were the producers of "M\*A\*S\*H" and wrote 19 episodes themselves during their stint with the top-rated CBS show. They felt they could not improve on what they had already contributed as story editors and producers, and decided to take on new challenges. At this moment they have two pilots that should have Fred Silverman audibly chortling.

The tall and skinny Cleaver, nee Lizard, and I were talking recently (occasionally to each other) and recalling the days when he would bring me sports scores to read on my KMPC show. Ken liked to do word plays even then, for instance: DUKE PUFFED RICE 97-92 IN AN OVERTIME TONIGHT. But he confessed that he had troubles with our News Director, who for some reason would not allow any news or sports writer to mention the word, "CLOBBER" on the air. Young Levine once gave me a score saying UCLA'S BRUINS MASS-MURDERED CALIFORNIA 112-78, which passed the former director's censorial O.K. But never say

**CLOBBERED.**

Now that Ken is successful and well-to-do, he often sits in the Wealthy Room of the Beverly Hills Hotel saying the word CLOBBERED to himself and smiling, thinking of the News Director's dictum!

Willard R. Espy tells us we may have the makings of an eponym. An eponym is a noun: 1) someone after whom a country or institution is named, or 2) someone whose name has become closely associated with some period, movement, or theory. R.J. Gatling created the Gatling Gun (also the term "Gat" is derived from R.J.). Same is true for James Bowie, the Bowie Knife; Henry Derringer for his pistol, the Henry, etc. According to Espy, when Judge Lynch began hanging miscreants out of hand, he became an eponym for punishment without due legal process.

There are people in our business who have already become part of our vocabulary. Who has not referred to a McLendon or a Storz format, because they indeed started Top 40 radio and spawned hundreds of imitators. I'm sure 50 years from now, about the time you'll be getting this column in the mail, there will be others added to the list. One radio executive has been actively trying for years to be synonymous with the business, but it's doubtful that the dictionaries and encyclopedias will be printing his name. "Dipatick" just doesn't have the right ring to it.



**CBS Back On Top After Close Race**

CBS resumed its recent winning ways in the Nielsen skirmishes for the week ending Dec. 9, edging ABC by half an average rating point after finishing second last week. CBS had a 19.8 average rating for the week, ABC earned a 19.3, and NBC, with just two programs (Nos. 18 and 19) in the top 20, finished third with 16.5. CBS had seven of the top ten and ten in the top 20 in fashioning its third win in four weeks.

Topping the list for the first time this season was the CBS comedy "Alice," followed by 2) "60 Minutes" (CBS) 3) "Three's Company" (ABC) 4) "One Day At A Time" (CBS) 5) "The Jeffersons" (CBS) 6) "Taxi" (ABC) 7) "Aunt Mary" (CBS TV movie) 8) "Mork & Mindy" (ABC) in a solid comeback 9) "Archie's Place" (CBS), and 10) "M\*A\*S\*H" (CBS).

ABC dominated the 11-20 sector with five shows to CBS's three and NBC's two. ABC's "Happy Days" tied with CBS's "Trapper John MD" for 11th, followed by 13) "John Denver Special" (ABC) 14) "WKRP In Cincinnati" (CBS) 15) "Soap" (ABC) 16) "Little Rascals" special (NBC) 17) "My Old Man" (CBS movie) tied with "Angie" (ABC) 19) "CHiPs" (NBC) tied with "Barney Miller" (ABC).

**MUSIC & RADIO ON TV:** "WKRP In Cincinnati" has been enjoying healthy ratings this season — maybe too healthy. As Howard "Dr. Johnny Fever" Hesseman remarked while hosting "Saturday Night Live" last weekend, CBS has decided to move "WKRP" to a different time slot. Of course, most successful shows must face this possibility, and often it doesn't hurt ("One Day At A Time"'s move from Wednesday to Sunday has resulted in improved ratings, for instance). But "WKRP" is moving out of its protected cushion at 9:30 Mondays (following "M\*A\*S\*H") to the more vulnerable 8pm Monday slot, where the Monday Night Football threat is no longer a factor, but NBC's "Little House On The Prairie" is. "WKRP" started off in that time period last season and was nearly cancelled after shaky ratings. It remains to be seen whether its subsequent rise to popularity will sustain high ratings this time around.

Elton John and Cher have been set as hosts for the seventh "American Music Awards," Jan. 18 on ABC.

**VIDEOSCOPE:**

**RCA EYES ANNUAL \$7.5 BILLION VIDEO DISC MARKET BY 1990:** RCA has announced its "SelectaVision" videodisc system will be available to U.S. consumers by the first quarter of 1981 with demonstration models to be shipped to dealers by the end of 1980 (R&R 10-26). The firm projects it will sell 200,000 units, priced at under \$500, during the first year of availability and that the combined sales of videodiscs and videodisc players will reach \$7.5 billion per year by 1990 . . . **KIRSHNER, ITC, DISNEY PRODUCT PACTED:** In a related development, RCA has entered into agreements with Walt Disney Prods., Don Kirshner Prods. and ITC Entertainment in efforts to expand its 300-title videodisc catalog. The Disney pact includes 16 feature films ("20 Thousand Leagues Under The Sea," "The Love Bug," and "The Shaggy Dog," among others) and eight one-hour TV programs, while the Kirshner contract calls for a series of musical discs to be produced from new and existing material prepared by Kirshner. The ITC agreement consists of a 72-minute film, "To Russia . . . With Elton," covering Elton John's recent concert tour of the U.S.S.R., which RCA will manufacture on videodisc . . . **LONG PLAYING TAPE:** A line of VHS and Beta format tape cassettes designed for use with the new longer-playing recorders is now available from Fuji. These slower speed tapes feature improved signal-to-noise ratios with less dropout so that tape and head life are increased when tapes are in contact with moving recorder heads for longer periods of time, such as during the slow-speed play or freeze frame operations . . .

**ERR WAVES**

**BY BOBBY OCEAN**



**5**

YEARS AGO TODAY

**Radio & Records**

- ★ JOHN LONG EXITS AS XEROK/EL PASO PD — Kent Burkhardt released as consultant as changes come down from in-house.
- ★ RINGO STARR FORMS RING-O LABEL — Capitol to distribute.
- ★ TONY MARTELL NAMED VP/EAST COAST AT ABC — Moves from presidency of Famous Music.
- ★ NUMBER ONE FIVE YEARS AGO: "Kung Fu Fighting" — Carl Douglas (20th)