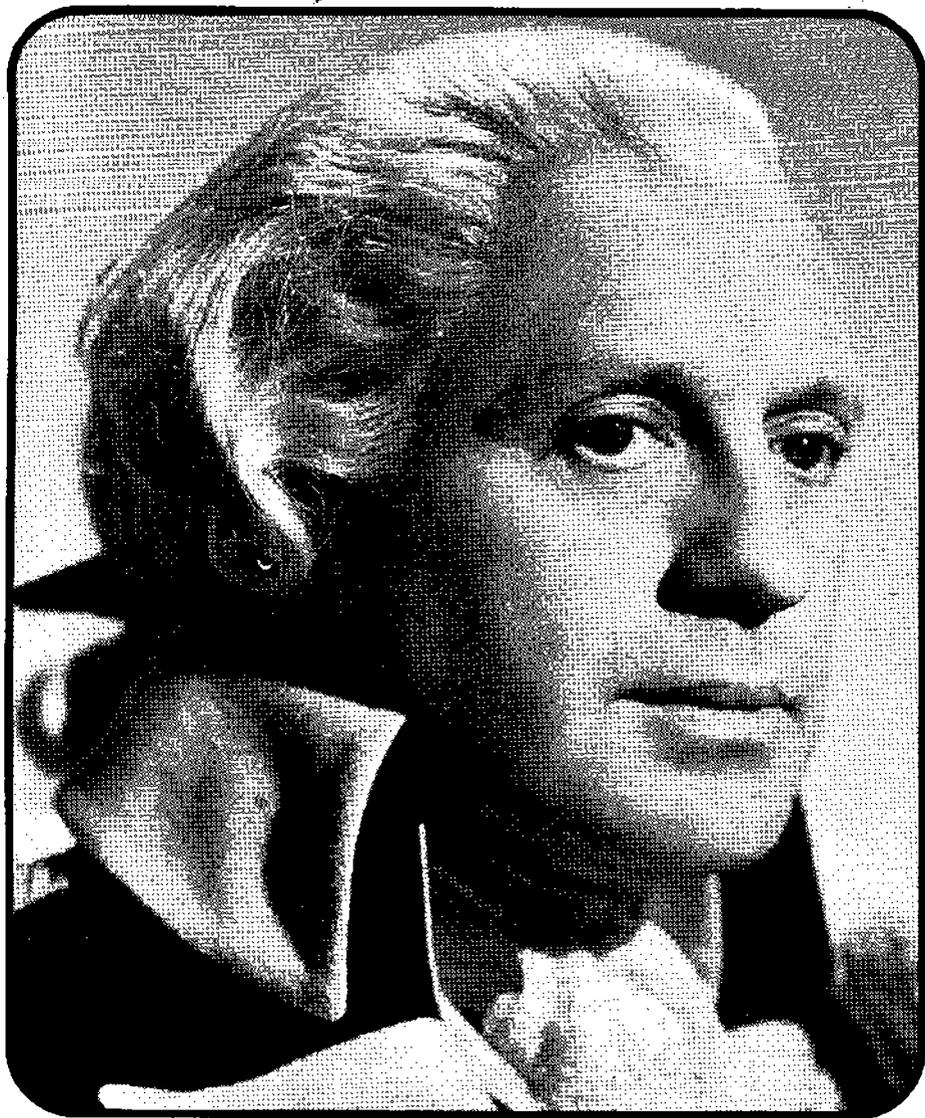


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RADIO
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FEBRUARY — MARCH, 1993



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BOOK NINETEEN

CHAPTER TWO

FEBRUARY - MARCH, 1993

HELLO, OUT THERE IN RADIOLAND!!

We have been celebrating February as Jack Benny Month on *Those Were The Days* since 1979 and we'll do it again in 1993. This year, we'll have a very large helping of Jack's 1942-43 season, his first for sponsor Grape Nuts. We started last fall with consecutive Benny shows, but we really get serious in February. This sequence also features several Benny programs while Jack was stricken with pneumonia in Chicago during his tour of Army camps. He was too ill to be moved from his Chicago hotel and was placed in an oxygen tent for a long time. But the show went on, with George Burns and Gracie Allen and Orson Welles, along with the Benny regulars, doing an admirable job while Jack fought his illness.

We continue our look at *Radio and World War II* with a generous array of entertainment and newsworthy programs from the second year of the United States' involvement in the war. Of special interest are the news broadcasts which, in retrospect, come off like play-by-play coverage of the war on both fronts. Particularly fascinating are speeches by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, and all the wartime references on the comedy shows.

In March on *TWTD*, we'll present the premiere of a new look at a rather old, old time radio show. The old show was called "Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel" and it was heard in 1932. The stars were Groucho and Chico Marx and the program was as close to their free-wheeling stage and screen style as you can imagine.

The "Flywheel" broadcasts have never been uncovered, but the scripts were found a few years ago in the Library of Congress, and were edited and published by Michael Barson. Then, in 1991, the British Broadcasting Corporation re-created the magic and mirth of the Marx Brothers by re-working six of those classic scripts into full-fledged radio productions which have been broadcast in England.

We now have those shows and will begin sharing them with you in March. The stories are set in the offices of a shady lawyer and his devious assistant and the scripts were originally written by Nat Perrin and Arthur Sheekman, who also worked on several of the Marx Brothers movies. The re-creations are excellent and you'll listen thinking that you are actually hearing Groucho and Chico! Don't miss it if you can.

Our *Radio Classics* schedule is filled with lots of good listening, too, during February and March. There's plenty of Long Ranger shows to keep your listening room filled with excitement, and lots of good comedy from Fibber McGee and Molly, Charlie McCarthy, and Lum and Abner to keep you laughing.

We hope all this meets with your approval.

Thanks for listening.



CHICAGO, NORTH SHORE AND MILWAUKEE

Jack Benny's Hometown RR

BY RICHARD R. KUNZ

Jack Benny had a great fondness for traveling by rail; virtually every cross-country trip he made in his 60 years in show business was by train at least in part. His affection for train travel became part of his comic persona; two or three times each season in the golden days of radio Jack and the gang would do a program based upon the actual trips back east he made each year.

Remember "Train leaving on Track 5 for Anaheim, Azusa and Cuc--a-monga?" And Frank Nelson as the ticket agent who seemingly enjoyed giving Jack a hard time? Or Sheldon Leonard, the tout, always trying to switch Jack to

another train? Even Rochester, Jack's long-time "valet," made his first appearance on the program on Easter Sunday in 1937 in a one-time role as a Pullman porter on the "Super Chief" Jack and crew were riding back to California.

When Jack left Waukegan in 1912 with pianist Cora Salisbury on his first vaudeville tour, it was by rail, changing in Chicago for another train to Gary and their first performance. Vaudeville in the 'teens and twenties involved a lot of train travel, from elegant limiteds to lowly milk-run locals; by all accounts Jack thrived on it.



AN EARLY POSTCARD of Waukegan looking northward on Genessee Street at Washington. Meyer Kubelsky's saloon occupied one of the storefronts at this corner. (Shore Line Society photo)

Though Jack was born to Emma Kubelsky in Chicago's Mercy Hospital on St. Valentine's Day in 1894, he always considered himself a citizen of Waukegan, popularly known as the Bluff City. His father Meyer had established himself there two years before, opening a genteel "working-man's" saloon at the corner of Genessee and Washington Streets — the city's principle downtown intersection.

Meyer Kubelsky, now a respectable and soild citizen of Bluff City, needed a wife to make his life complete, and in keeping with the custom of the times sought out a marriage broker in Chicago. In due course he was introduced to a beautiful young lady named Emma Sachs. She lived with her family in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago, and the romance blossomed with their first meeting.

As the family settled into their home on Clayton Street (Jack's sister Florence was born in 1900), Meyer Kubelsky no doubt was aware that the age of electricity was beginning in earnest, and that right outside his saloon an electric railway was being constructed that would grow and prosper for more than sixty years. Given its lower fares and more frequent service than the competing steam railroad, the Chicago & North Western, it seems quite logical that the frugal Kubelsky family would avail themselves of its services many times in the ensuing years.

What evolved into the interurban electric railway ultimately linking Chicago and Milwaukee by way of the lakefront towns was incorporated when Jack Benny (he was still Benjamin Kubelsky then) was but two years old. The Bluff City Electric Street Railway was incorporated on July 3, 1896 as a local street car line connecting Waukegan's north and south sides via North, Franklin, County, Clayton and Genessee Streets.

The tiny line prospered and expanded,



JACK BENNY, Age 4

reaching downtown Evanston in 1899 and Milwaukee in 1908. The Waukegan city system that formed the nucleus of the interurban was also enlarged, and a branch was built westward from Lake Bluff to Mundelein in 1905. In 1908 Chicago's 'L' system was extended northward to a direct connection with the interurban line in Evanston.

Business was good in these prewar years, and the wooden electric coaches that were basically overgrown streetcars of the early years began to give way to

JACK BENNY'S HOMETOWN RAILROAD

the first of the steel passenger cars (just as good, if not better, than what the North Western ran) in 1915.

Jack left Waukegan in 1912 (quite possibly on the North Shore Line) to see the world, though his family remained in the Bluff City for many years; his hometown electric line continued to serve its growing territory. The Great War was coming, and the interurban was fortunate in having both an Army camp (today's Fort Sheridan) and a navy base (Great Lakes) directly on line; sailors and soldiers accounted for a substantial portion of the line's revenues.

And, when Jack joined the Navy in 1917 (the family was living at 224 South Genessee Street by then, with the electric line right out front), he was stationed for a time at Great Lakes. No doubt he often took the opportunity to pay his family a visit by streetcar, liberty time permitting.

The electric railway had been re-

christened with the name it would bear for the rest of its life — Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee — and successfully negotiated for the right to run its trains from Evanston directly to the Loop via the tracks of the elevated line. The first downtown service began in 1919, and the North Shore Line took its place as a full partner in the bid to attract riders travelling between Chicago and Milwaukee.

The towns along the lake through which Jack and members of his family had traveled on many occasions — Jack himself to Chicago for violin lessons on a regular basis — were growing with the postwar boom. Ridership on the North Shore continued to increase, and the railroad, now under the stewardship of utilities magnate Samuel Insull, sought a way to speed up its long-distance trains that ran all the way from Chicago to Milwaukee.

The answer was found in a right-of-



LIGHT TRAFFIC often called for the use of a single car, as here at Northfield on the Skokie Valley Route. (John T. Beuttas photo)



SKOKIE VALLEY ROUTE was a high-speed rail line that enabled the North Shore to lop precious minutes off its schedules — but the Edens Expressway overhead presages the end for this fine railway. (John T. Beuttas photo)

way several miles west of the lake in the Skokie Valley. The new line turned west at Howard Street, then north just west of Cicero Avenue (today's Skokie Highway), permitting a high-speed run through the prairies to what is now Illinois Highway 176 (Rockland Road). Trains turned back east along a part of the branch line from Mundelein to Lake Bluff and rejoined the older route at North Chicago Junction just south of 22nd Street.

Chicago 'L' service stopping at seven stations along the new route was opened to Dempster Street in 1925, and the full "Skokie Valley Route" (complete with stations in an "Insull Spanish" motif placed at spots likely to attract future residents) was ready for business a year later. The addition to the North Shore system of the new high-speed bypass route came not a moment too soon, for the Eucharistic Congress of the Roman Catholic Church's Chicago Diocese held near Mundelein in September required

every car the North Shore and 'L' could muster; well over 200,000 pilgrims were carried in a 20-hour period on the principal day of the event.

As Jack Benny settled into his routine of vaudeville and later radio and screen appearances, so did the North Shore Line, now armed with two steel arteries (the new Skokie Valley Route and the older Shore Line Route), get down to business hauling millions of commuters and long-distance riders each year. Many interurban electric railways went under during the Depression, but the North Shore soldiered on, bolstered by revenues from military personnel as well as civilians.

Though financially troubled by the hard economic times of the 1930s, the railway was able to proceed with plans to further modernize its fleet of cars through the purchase of two streamlined, articulated Electroliners in 1941. Each four-section train was 155 feet long, and seated 146; both had a tavern-

JACK BENNY'S HOMETOWN RAILROAD

lounge compartment where light meals and drinks were served. They went into service in February 1941 on a five-trips-each-way-each-day basis between Chicago and Milwaukee, taking just under two hours to complete a one-way run — and were an instantaneous success.

As Jack Benny and members of his entourage were entertaining military personnel all around the world, Waukegan's own electric line was coping with the needs of an inflated wartime economy. Military personnel had first priority, of course, when it came to passenger service, but many a civilian trip was also taken in an era when gasoline and tires were rationed, straining North Shore's resources almost to the breaking point.

When the war was over, it seemed as if every returning veteran's dream was an automobile and a house in the suburbs. The addition of suburban sprawl to the traditional American urban/rural mix came virtually overnight, and it was to wreak havoc on many passenger railways — North Shore was no exception. The freeway era was also beginning, and what better realization of the American dream than a daily drive from the suburbs in a shiny new car to that job in the city.

Passenger revenues began to plummet, and in 1955 the curtain was rung down on the old Shore Line — that busy route along the lake that once carried businessmen from the suburbs to their offices in the city, and their maids from their homes in the city to the suburbs. The Skokie Valley Route remained in service for a few more years — with the Electroliners zipping to and from on their daily runs between the Windy and Beer Cities — but the transformation of



Skokie Highway and U.S. 41 into a four-lane artery linking the same points eventually turned the trick.

Early in the morning of January 22, 1963 — one of the coldest days on record — the last North Shore train tied up at Roosevelt Road in Chicago and the rails were silent. It had been a good 67 years, by and large, and the railroad went out proud.

Although the North Shore Line has been gone for almost thirty years, there are many traces of the "Road of Service," as it liked to call itself. The Shore Line Route right of way is visible at many points along the North Western Railway to Waukegan, which it paralleled from Wilmette north; most portions are now a hiking/bicycling path. Ravinia Park, which the railway once owned (it was an amusement park then) is still in business, and the Skokie Valley Route's path can be traced by the high-tension towers now occupying the right-of-way along U.S. 41.

On April 20, 1964 the Chicago Transit Authority began "Skokie Swift" rail service along the line from Howard to Dempster, and there are active plans to extend the Swift both north to Lake-Cook Road, and southward from Oakton Street to a connection with the O'Hare rapid transit line near Montrose. Old North Shore cars are operating at several trolley museums around the country, and one of the Electroliners had been beautifully restored to its 1941 appearance for service on the trolley line of the Illinois Railway Museum in Union in McHenry County.

And what of Jack Benny? There is no real evidence that he ever rode the Electroliner, although he no doubt saw one or the other on his many trips to Waukegan over the years. He most certainly was a patron of the electric railway early on; at one time, bored with school, he and a cousin ran away to

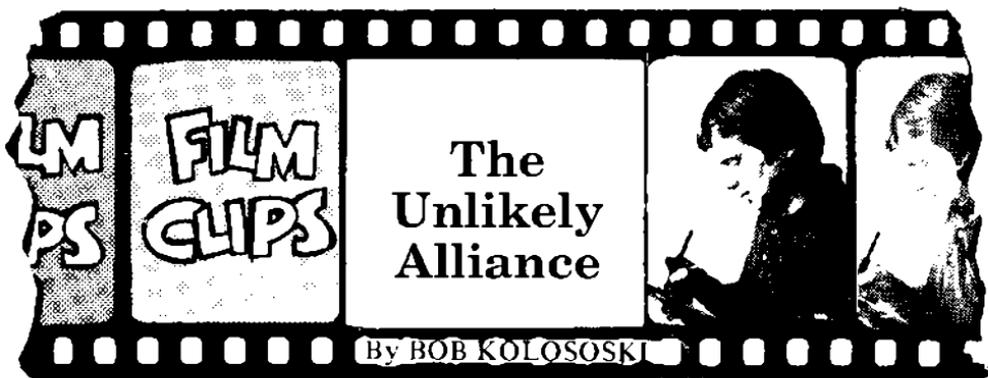
Milwaukee and had to wire home for train fare to return. I'd like to think Meyer Kubelsky sprung for the cheaper North Shore ticket.

Jack was going to Central High School (now gone) at the time. He never graduated, but was a voluminous reader later in life. Probably the proudest moment in his life was the dedication of Jack Benny Junior High School in Waukegan. Ironically, the school building abuts the North Shore right-of-way on Montesano Avenue. One can imagine even now a generation of schoolboys equally unconvinced of the merits of geometry looking out the window over the abandoned line and dreaming of what once was. ■

RICHARD R. KUNZ is editor of "First & Fastest," a historical journal about Chicagoland's electric railways published by the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society.



SNOW played an important role in the North Shore's fortunes every winter — but the trains almost always got through, as here along the Shore Line Route in Highland Park in February, 1949. (C.A. Brown/SLIHS Collection photo)



By **BOB KOLOSOSKI**

By 1952 the golden age of the cinema was too tarnished to recognize. Attendance at the movies was slipping in leaps and bounds and television (the one eyed monster) was the cause for all the acid build-up churning in the stomachs of movie moguls.

Milton Berle was signed to a very lucrative contract with NBC and Clark Gable was released by MGM. Every big city had or was starting television stations and movie theatres were closing at record rates. Movie executives decided

that they would give their audiences bigger and better films and blow away the competition. VistaVision, 3D movies and stereo sound systems found their way into movie palaces while people stayed home to watch the small screen. The movie big shots were digging-in for trench warfare. It was a fight to the finish and they were going to win or go down with their studios.

Of course, there were some traitors to the movie industry but they were the small studios and the fact that they were involved in TV production irritated many and surprised no one. Columbia started the Screen Gems production company in 1951 with seven CAVALCADE OF AMERICA films for TV. Within two years Screen Gems was producing the FORD THEATRE, THE ADVENTURES OF RIN TIN TIN, FATHER KNOWS BEST, CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT, and several others. The Hal Roach studio was producing AMOS AND ANDY, MY LITTLE MARGIE and others. Republic had wound down its movie output and was producing DRAGNET, G.E. THEATRE, FRONTIER DOCTOR and others for the small screen.

The big studios looked down their noses at the efforts made by the "little guys" for the little screen. That was until a cartoon-maker named Walt Disney decided that the world needed another amusement park and that the



FATHER KNOWS BEST: Robert Young, Jane Wyatt, Eleanor Donohue, Billy Gray, Lauren Chapin.



AMOS 'N' ANDY: Alvin Childress, Tim Moore, Spencer Williams.

funds to build his dream park could come from TV production revenue. The park was Disneyland and the TV show based on Walt's dream made other studios stand up and take another look at television production.

Disney put together 21 original shows for his TV series and with one of those shows he captured the attention of the nation. He took an old hero and had a catchy song written to get the youngsters' attention and, before you could say coonskin cap, Davy Crockett was a national happening. Disney was making more money on Davy Crockett hats, guns, shirts, rugs, and other Crockett stuff than the major studios made with a whole year of theatrical releases.

Most studios were losing money each year, but the icing on the Disney cake was that he was using his TV show to promote the feature films he was getting ready to release.

TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA was a big hit before

its national release because Disney had devoted an entire show to promote the film. His success and ingenious techniques of promotion became the envy of the big studios.

In the fall of 1955, Warner Brothers premiered **WARNER BROTHERS PRESENTS** on the ABC network (Tuesday, September 13). The host was Gig Young and the series had three revolving shows. **CHEYENNE**, **KINGS ROW**, and **CASABLANCA** were the initial series but only **CHEYENNE** would survive that first year and be back for another season. Nevertheless, the stage was set for more TV entries by the studio which set aside six minutes of every hour show to plug a Warner Brothers movie. The studio also began releasing to TV its backlog of movies made prior to 1950 and almost all its **LOONEY TUNES** cartoons.

CHEYENNE would become the base for a series of cowboy shows produced by the studio, including **SUGARFOOT**, **BRONCO**, and the megahit **MAVERICK**. However, Warner's really struck



SUGARFOOT: Will Hutchins

FILM CLIPS

gold with 77 SUNSET STRIP. This private detective series was pure L.A. fantasy that appealed to the small screen audience in a big way. Clones would follow and Warners developed a stable of TV stars that rivaled the movie studio system.

Not to be left out in the cold, 20th Century Fox took an entire movie lot and converted it to the production of TV films. The first series produced by Fox was MY FRIEND FLICKA which premiered on Sept. 30, 1955 on CBS. THE 20TH CENTURY-FOX SHOW followed. This one hour program was mainly small screen remakes of feature films originally produced by the studio for the big screen. In the first season Fox produced 20 shows including a remake of THE OX-BOW INCIDENT and THE LATE GEORGE APLY.

The ABC network went to MGM with an offer the studio couldn't refuse. They reserved the half-hour time slot after DISNEYLAND for the mighty movie studio to create a series of it's own. THE MGM PARADE began in September, 1955, with George Murphy as host. The show consisted of old shorts, cartoons and behind the scenes activities at the studio.

The main purpose of the show, however, was to promote upcoming MGM feature films. An entire program was devoted to promoting FORBIDDEN PLANET and the movie went on to be a blockbuster hit.

Paramount, on the other hand, approached the tube in an altogether different manner. Paramount execs decided that their movie stars were too valuable for the small screen, but allowed their starlets to appear on the COMEDY HOUR show. Also Paramount purchased a Los Angeles television station and a controlling interest in a pay-to-watch-TV subscription

system named Telemeter. They didn't want to destroy television, but rather own enough of the action for a peaceful and profitable co-existence.

The story over at RKO was a little more complicated. Howard Hughes had purchased controlling interest in the studio in 1948 and quickly ran the studio into the ground. In 1952 he tried to sell the entire studio to a group of investors from Chicago. When it was made public that most of the money was coming from mobsters or people believed to be connected with the mob, Hughes killed the deal. He then went back to the open market. By 1955 the studio was in a shambles and production was at a near standstill. In July, 1955, he finally sold off the studio for good. The purchaser was a subsidiary of General Tire and Rubber Company known as General Teleradio, Inc. Teleradio owned six major TV stations and an entire radio network including a majority of the Mutual Broadcasting System. The man who made the deal with Hughes and ran Teleradio was Tom O'Neil. O'Neil's interest in the studio was to gain control over the rich library of features and shorts stored in the vaults. He wanted the old films for television release.

In 1953 he had purchased 30 films from the Bank of America for 1.5 million dollars. The film's producers were bankrupt and the bank owned them. O'Neil put one on television each night for several weeks and called the series "The Million Dollar Movie." It was such a success that he rented the whole package to other stations and made a small fortune. With RKO's 750 films in his control O'Neil was sitting on a celluloid goldmine. He agreed to lease all the films to C & C Corporation for television distribution worldwide. He then tried to revive the studio by putting several features into production. But years of neglect and mismanagement had taken their toll and by 1957 the studio was in deep financial trouble.



THE NELSON FAMILY: David, Ozzie, Harriet, Rick

Television would save the studio one more time.

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz purchased the studio, where they had once been contract players, for the sum of \$6,150,000. They needed the facility for their television production company — Desilu. Television was now a formidable force and the studios could no longer hope to conquer their foe.

As early as 1952 Universal decided to take a chance by producing a feature film based on a TV show. **HERE COMES THE NELSONS** was based on the popular **OZZIE AND HARRIET** program. It fared poorly at the box office and it took a while before a studio would gamble again on TV stars.

The success of **I LOVE LUCY** was something the powers-to-be at MGM could not ignore and they put Lucy and Desi in the **LONG LONG TRAILER** in 1953. It was a big hit and in 1955 the studio tried again with **FOREVER DARLING**. This time the dynamic TV

duo scored a zero at the box office. Over at Warners **OUR MISS BROOKS** was given a big screen test and failed the grade. But Warners was building up an impressive list of TV stars and one in particular was making a name in all the fan magazines. James Garner was the star of **MAVERICK** and the success of that show earned him a shot at the big screen. **DARBY'S RANGERS** was a pretty good war film and Garner caught some very good reviews. Warners had crossed the line from TV star to movie star with their maverick. Soon they were putting their TV stars into feature films, hoping to score again.

Steve McQueen, Charles Bronson and others would follow Garner from weekly video series to movie productions. The war between movies and TV was never won but each was to obtain an honorable peace. TV revenue from old movies would help some studios and for others, TV was a killer.

The 50's was a decade of turmoil and learning for both medias. What they finally learned was that they could use each other to survive and, in some cases, grow stronger.

20th Century Fox now owns and operates a successful TV network and network TV is fighting for survival against cable networks. The struggle of the 50's is ancient history but it seems Ted Turner might have read the book on Tom O'Neil. Old movies are being repackaged, colorized and sold to a new generation of film lovers. The studio system that was just clinging to life 40 years ago is long gone but video cassette recorders are keeping alive the efforts of the master film-makers.

I grew up watching old black and white movies on TV and now I watch old black and white TV reruns on video cassettes. I don't know what's next but I can't wait to find out! ■



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

Ray Noble and his Orchestra

BY KARL PEARSON

Many fans of Old Time Radio would probably identify Ray Noble as the bandleader and foil on the Edgar Bergen/Charlie McCarthy program. But many of those same OTR fans are probably not aware that Ray led one of the best dance orchestras of the mid-1930's, several years before his association with Edgar and Charlie.

Noble, the son of a London neurologist, was born in Brighton, England in 1907. At the age of ten he began taking piano lessons and while still in his teens developed an interest in dance music. Continuing his musical studies at Cambridge, he began to show great talent as an arranger and composer. After graduation from Cambridge he won an arranging contest sponsored by Melody Maker, the British music magazine. His winning score was recorded by Bert Firman's band, one of Britain's top dance bands. Within a year of this initial success young Ray was hired by the Lawrence Wright publishing firm as staff arranger. During this same period he was also supplying scores for Jack Payne's BBC Dance Orchestra.

With such considerable musical talent it was just a matter of time before Ray Noble had his own orchestra. That time arrived in 1929 when he became "house leader" for HMV (His Master's Voice) Records, the English equivalent of American RCA Victor. Noble's primary duties at HMV were to turn out a regular series of popular dance records featuring many of the popular songs of

the day. Some of the tunes recorded were numbers which other HMV artists had passed up recording, while others were current American song hits. The Noble recordings for HMV were some of the best popular recordings of that year, featuring Noble's brilliant scores as played by England's best musicians and vocalists, utilizing the most advanced recording techniques of the day. Within a short time HMV recordings by Ray Noble and his Orchestra became big sellers in Europe as well as the United States.

Noble, in addition to being a gifted arranger, was also a composer of popular songs. A number of his best recordings featured several of his own compositions, including "Love Is The Sweetest Thing", "The Touch Of Your Lips", "By The Fireside", "Cherokee", "Goodnight, Sweetheart" and "The Very Thought Of You". Many of these same recordings featured a young South African vocalist named Al Bowlly, who played a big part in the Noble success story. Bowlly, one of the best vocalists of the 1930's, was known for his warm, emotional singing style and for his ability to interpret lyrics well.

By 1934 Ray, encouraged by his American record sales, decided to come to the United States and form a new band. Since the American musical's union forbade the use of foreign musicians, Ray was unable to bring his English band. When Ray sailed for America in the fall of 1934 he brought



RAY NOBLE

only two of his key men, Al Bowlly and drummer-manager Bill Harty.

Upon arrival in New York Ray proceeded to organize a band containing the best available American musicians. His first move was to hire a young man who had an established track record as a band organizer. A fine trombonist as well as a skilled arranger, thirty year-old Glenn Miller had organized orchestras for singer Smith Ballew and for Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey. Miller knew most New York musicians, having played alongside many of them in a number of different orchestras,

The band which Miller organized for Noble was an outstanding one. In addition to featuring several outstanding jazz stars (something Ray's English band had lacked), the band contained an outstanding array of musicians, six of whom later became bandleaders in their own right. The trumpet section consisted of Charlie Spivak (a brilliant lead trumpet player) and George "Pee Wee" Erwin (an outstanding jazz soloist). The two-man trombone team consisted of Miller and a young CBS

staff musician named Wilbur Switchenberg. When Wilbur decided to embark on a band leading career of his own he changed his name to Will Bradley. The reed section included brilliant jazz tenor saxist Bud Freeman and Johnny Mince, an equally brilliant clarinetist. The rhythm section included Claude Thornhill on piano and George Van Eps on guitar. Van Eps, whose three older brothers were also musicians, was also known as the son of Fred Van Eps, banjoist and guitarist, who was a pioneer recording artist.

The Noble band featured a variety of arranging styles. Ray's smooth, ensemble ballads were at the forefront, while the Glenn Miller's free-flowing semi-dixieland charts provided an effective contrast. Inventive and unusual charts were also supplied by Claude Thornhill and George Van Eps. One Thornhill composition, known to the Noble musicians simply as "Opus 8-G" (named for the NBC Studio from which the band frequently broadcast) was later retitled "A Fountain In Havana." When Thornhill later formed a band of his own "A Fountain In Havana" was renamed "Snowfall," the classic Thornhill theme song.

The Ray Noble Orchestra began its existence on rather solid ground. Ray had managed to secure a 26-week radio contract with Coty Cosmetics for a weekly half-hour broadcast over the NBC Network as well as a prestigious engagement at the swank Rainbow Room. Located on the 65th floor of New York's RCA Building, the band played a grueling seven-night-a-week schedule from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m.!

The Ray Noble musician's were perhaps the busiest men in New York. In addition to the long hours at the Rainbow Room, the band had its weekly Coty broadcast, periodic broadcasts from the Rainbow Room and recording sessions, for RCA Victor. There were

*Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .*

Garfield Park



If you grew up in Chicago, it's likely that your home was not far from a city park. You may have lived near Lincoln Park, or Douglas Park, or Jackson Park, or Gompers Park, or any one of dozens of parks that dot the city. I spent my childhood living near Garfield Park.

Garfield Park is one of Chicago's older parks. In the late 1860's, city planners decided to surround Chicago with a belt of green parks and boulevards. At that time, Crawford Avenue (4000

West; later renamed Pulaski Road) marked the city limits on the western edge. The landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted laid out a park just east of Crawford, extending, roughly, from Madison Street north to Fulton Street. It was named Central Park. I suspect that Central Park Avenue, which runs through the area, took its name from the park. The park's name was later changed to Garfield Park.

My family lived in the Garfield Park

RAY NOBLE

many lengthy rehearsal as well, for Noble and Miller were absolute musical perfectionists. Even with such a busy schedule as this there was very little griping within the band, for each Noble musician earned an average of \$250 a week, approximately three times the standard New York union scale.

The Noble band did reasonably good business during its first year of existence. The Coty broadcasts brought the band's music to a national audience. When the Coty series ended, Coca Cola sponsored the band on its "Pause That Refreshes" series. The string of recordings made for RCA Victor were selling well. As if this wasn't quite enough the Noble band also appeared in the film "The Big Broadcast of 1936."

By early 1937 the Noble band's

fortunes began to unravel. Business had not been quite as good as the band's management had initially expected. The musicians were asked to take a pay cut, and many, who were still putting in long hours, felt the request unreasonable. A mass exodus of the best musicians followed. Within a few months Noble disbanded and moved to California, where he established a new career as bandleader and foil on the Burns and Allen program.

A few years later he moved over to the Bergen/McCarthy program, where he shared similar duties and gained greater notoriety. Ray Noble enjoyed a long and successful career in Hollywood many years after his initial American Orchestra had faded from the public's memory. ■

area during the years of my childhood; for a while we lived in an apartment building that was less than a block from the park. When I was a toddler, my mother would take me to the park in my stroller when the weather was pleasant. One Sunday my dad took my mother, my baby sister and me for a ride in a rowboat on the lagoon. During the ride we spotted a red balloon floating on the water and, since its owner was nowhere in sight and had obviously abandoned it, my dad rowed the boat alongside the balloon and I plucked it out of the water.

I remember a structure with a kind of tower at each end. The towers were only about fifteen feet tall, and each could be reached by climbing a spiral concrete staircase. Once at the top, one could walk through a corridor from one tower to the other. I never knew the purpose of that structure, but it was an enchanting place for young kids to play. To us, it was a castle. I also remember a larger structure, a belvedere, which may have been used as a bandstand for summer concerts.

There was a handsome building crowned by a magnificent gold dome. I believe that this building housed administrative offices and some recreational facilities. I never did know the building's official name, but we kids called it the Gold Dome Building.

And, of course, there was the Garfield Park Conservatory, which was — and still is — said to be the largest conservatory in the world. A vast complex of greenhouses, the conservatory holds thousands of species of plants — palms, ferns, cacti, lichens, flowers — from all parts of the globe. A special attraction was the flower show at Easter time. The Garfield Park Conservatory: my family referred to it as the flower house.

Once my grammar school class visited the conservatory on a field trip. I recall particularly one plant so tall that it had grown through the roof; a couple of

panes of glass had been removed to allow the giant plant to grow through. *That* was a sight to tell my friends about.

Before he was married, one of my uncles moved in with us for a while. Like most houses and apartments in those days, ours was not air conditioned, and on a steamy summer night my uncle would sometimes walk over to the park, spread a blanket on the grass, and sleep there till morning.

What I remember most about the park is the green — the grass and the trees. Our apartment building had no front yard. It had a back yard but it was just dirt, no grass. The park, though, was green, it was nearby, and it belonged to us; it was *our* park. The Thirties were a drab decade, and having the park so near had a tonic effect on our spirits.

I haven't walked in Garfield Park for many, many years. But when I travel downtown on the North Western, the train runs past the park, and from the window I can see the conservatory. Sometimes I catch a glimpse of the gold dome. At these times I remember how much Garfield Park meant to me as a child. I think of the Sunday afternoon when my dad took his little family for a rowboat ride, and of the red balloon floating on the water. ■

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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FEBRUARY

Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78
MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.
SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Murder At Midnight Pepper Young's Family	2 Fibber McGee & Molly Hop Harrigan	3 Life With Luigi Lum and Abner	4 This Is Your FBI Tarzan	5 Lone Ranger Fibber McGee	6 Escape Lum and Abner This Is Your FBI Sealed Book
7 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	8 Burns and Allen Pepper Young's Family	9 Lone Ranger Captain Midnight	10 Mysterious Traveler Fibber McGee	11 Jack Benny Sgt. Preston	12 Richard Diamond Easy Aces	13 My Favorite Husband Lum and Abner Charlie McCarthy Fibber McGee & Molly
14 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night Happy Birthday Jack Benny</i>	15 Sealed Book Fibber McGee	16 Charlie McCarthy and W.C. Fields	17 Fibber McGee & Molly Behind The Story	18 Nick Carter Captain Midnight	19 Our Miss Brooks Fibber McGee	20 Burns and Allen Life of Riley Police Headquarters Lone Ranger
21 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	22 Star Playhouse Fibber McGee	23 Crime Does Not Pay Pepper Young's Family	24 Jack Benny Sgt. Preston	25 Cloak and Dagger Tarzan	26 Lone Ranger Unsolved Mysteries	27 Fibber McGee & Molly Sgt. Preston Lum and Abner Charlie McCarthy
28 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	<p>PLEASE NOTE: Due to WBBM's commitment to news and sports, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be pre-empted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance, or for unscheduled sports coverage. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>					

MARCH

Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78
MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.
SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Lone Ranger Police Headquarters	2 Escape Vic and Sade	3 Jack Benny Burns and Allen	4 Murder At Midnight Pepper Young's Family	5 Damon Runyon Theatre Behind The Story	6 Favorite Story Sgt. Preston X Minus One Fibber McGee & Molly
7 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	8 Philo Vance Sgt. Preston	9 Burns and Allen Fibber McGee	10 Fred Allen Sgt. Preston	11 Lone Ranger Magic Detective	12 Burns and Allen Behind The Story	13 Lone Ranger Jack Benny Damon Runyon Theatre Easy Aces
14 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	15 Burns and Allen Lum and Abner	16 Nick Carter Fibber McGee	17 Burns and Allen Unsolved Mysteries	18 Fibber McGee & Molly Behind The Story	19 Life of Riley Tarzan	20 Nick Carter Ozzie and Harriet Sgt. Preston Burns and Allen
21 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	22 Escape Police Headquarters	23 Duffy's Tavern Lum and Abner	24 Burns and Allen Fibber McGee	25 This Is Your FBI Magic Detective	26 Mysterious Traveler Vic and Sade	27 Jack Benny Boston Blackie Lum and Abner Phillip Marlowe
28 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i>	29 Life of Riley Tarzan	30 Burns and Allen Fibber McGee	31 Lone Ranger Pepper Young's Family	1 Apr. Boston Blackie Sgt. Preston	2 Apr. Mysterious Traveler Stranger Dr. Weird	3 Apr. Lone Ranger Duffy's Tavern Magic Detective Lights Out

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

FEBRUARY

February is Jack Benny Month!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6th

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (1-10-43) It's Jack and the gang from New York City with guest star Phil Baker, host of the "Take It Or Leave It" quiz program. Jack tries to win \$64. Benny Goodman is guest orchestra conductor. Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Don Wilson. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:50)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (2-7-43) John Daly and CBS correspondents around the world report the events of the day. Charles Colingwood, by short wave, tells the story of an American bomber pilot whose plane was hit and exploded in mid-air. Also, "the biggest news in England is that Prime Minister Churchill has returned after conferences in Casablanca with President Roosevelt . . ." Admiral Radio, CBS. (24:30)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-17-43) From New York, before an audience of servicemen, Jack talks about his forthcoming Carnegie Hall debut and welcomes guest Oscar Levant, who will accompany him at the piano. Abe Lyman is guest conductor. Joe Besser is a panelist in an "Information Please" sketch. Grape Nuts, NBC. (27:30)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (1-28-43) Bing Crosby with guests Ginny Simms and actor Frank McHugh. Regulars are Yuki Sherin, the Charioteers, Music Maids and Phil, Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:30)

★ **THE VICTORY HOUR** (2-2-43) Patriotic program aimed at the youth of America. This 14th show in the series features actor Ralph Bellamy in a short drama, "Mind by Choice" plus news analyst and commentator John W. Vandercook; Northwestern University a *capella* choir; and students from Nazi-occupied countries with eyewitness accounts of education in Europe under Hitler. U.S. Government, NBC Blue. (30:00)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-31-43) Broadcasting from the U.S. Marine Base in Quantico. Virginia, Jack, Don, Dennis, and Eddie "Rochester" Anderson welcome guests, actress Virginia Bruce and actor-director Gregory Ratoff, who is looking for a leading man for his new picture. Jack, of course, auditions for the part. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:05)

★ **FAHEY FLYNN AND THE NEWS** (2-9-43) Staff announcer Flynn reports on the events of the day. Marvel Cigarettes, WBBM, Chicago. (4:25)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13th

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (2-7-43) In New York, guest George Jessel opens the show because Jack is still on the train and hasn't arrived at the studio. Cast includes Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Abe Lyman and the orchestra. Grape Nuts, NBC. (27:15)

ACADEMY AWARDS (3-2-43) Outside Grauman's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, George Jessel "interviews" arrivals to the Oscar ceremonies and tells the background of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences. Sustaining, KFWB, Hollywood. (27:20)

ACADEMY AWARDS (3-2-43) Jack Benny hosts the sixteenth annual Academy Awards presentation from the stage of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Listeners hear the winners of awards for Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor and Actress, and the presentation of the Thalberg Memorial Award. Ken Carpenter announces. Sustaining, CBS/KFWB. (23:25)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (2-16-43) Patriotic McGee seeks workers with special skills to take jobs with Uncle Sam's home front war effort. Jim and Marion Jordan star as Fibber and Molly, with Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra, and Gale Gordon, home on leave from the U.S. Coast Guard. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:32)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (2-14-43) Broadcasting from Toronto, Canada. Jack celebrates his birthday north of the border with Mary, Don, Rochester, Dennis and guest conductor Allen McKiver. Grape Nuts, NBC. (29:03)

★ **PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT** (2-12-43) FDR and members of the press celebrate Lincoln Day at the 20th annual dinner of the White House Correspondent's Association. This is the president's first radio address since returning from his historic Casablanca conference with Prime Minister Winston Churchill and allied high commanders (Jan. 14-24, 1943). FDR says that victory in Tunisia is a prelude to an invasion of Europe and that the Japanese will be driven from China. CBS and all major networks. (32:00)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (2-21-43) Jack and the gang broadcast from the Armed Forces Training Center School in Chicago. Guest conductor is Bob Crosby. Jack wants Army technicians to fix his radio; Dennis wants to move from his Stock Yards hotel; Jack tells of his scheduled visits to Fort Sheridan and Great Lakes and recalls his days in the Navy in 1917; an old friend from Waukegan drops in; Rochester is sightseeing at the Field Museum and the Planetarium. Grape Nuts, NBC. (26:10)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (2-21-43) Reports from the leading news centers of the world. Doug Edwards takes over as anchorman for these broadcasts, replacing John Daly who is now a CBS correspondent in England. "The Navy has announced the loss of America's largest submarine . . . Allied bombers have blasted Japanese air-dromes and harbor installations in the Solomons and New Britain . . . There have been new Axis gains in Central Tunisia." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:35)

★ **HOP HARRIGAN** (2-19-43) An isolated episode from the series as America's Ace of the Airwaves and his sidekick are held at gunpoint by a Japanese agent who explains his plan to use an American plane to blow up a dam. Chester Stratton is Hop, Kenny Lynch is Tank Tinker. Sustaining, NBC Blue. (14:19)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (2-28-43) Another show before a military audience with Jack and the gang broadcasting from Fort Custer, Michigan where members of the Military Police receive their training. Mary, Don, Dennis, Rochester, and guest conductor Bob Crosby. Sketch about Kit Carson Benny, who served under General Custer in the Indian war. Grape Nuts, NBC. (25:55)

★ **PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT** (2-22-43) The president speaks to the nation and to a series of dinners being held throughout the country arranged by the Democratic National Committee to commemorate the birth of George Washington (211 years ago). FDR compares the American of Washington's day with those of today. CBS. (12:45)

★ **MAIL CALL #65** (1940s) Fred MacMurray is host for this entertainment show for military listening audiences. Stars include George Burns and Gracie Allen, Dorothy Lamour and Dennis Day. AFRS. (28:30)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (3-7-43) George Burns and Gracie Allen sub for Jack who has been confined to bed with a cold. (He was stricken with a severe case of pneumonia in Chicago.) In Jack's absence a substitute show was quickly assembled using members of the Benny Cast and the Burns and Allen cast: Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Bill Goodwin, Paul Whiteman and the orchestra. Grape Nuts, NBC. (26:50)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (3-14-43) Orson Welles arrives with a fanfare to sub for Jack who is still ill in Chicago. Cast includes Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Andy Devine, Mel Blanc, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Frank Nelson, Verna Felton and, after a three month absence in the Merchant Marines, Phil Harris. Welles invites the gang to his studio to see a picture being made. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:35)

★ **BEN BERNIE WAR WORKER'S PROGRAM** (1-12-43) The old maestro, the King's Jesters, Elyse Cooper and Caesar Petrillo's orchestra in a program dedicated to women war workers. Tunes include "That Soldier of Mine," "Tillie the Toiler," and "Zoot Suit with the Reet Pleat." Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (14:25)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (3-21-43) Jack is still unable to appear on the show because of his extended illness. Orson Welles again subs as the gang takes a taxi to Welles' movie studio where they find the star getting into a costume with the help of his valet, Rochester! Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:35)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (2-28-43) Doug Edwards and CBS correspondents. "Allied forces have repulsed a new Axis attack in Northern Tunisia and they've captured hundreds of enemy troops . . . The German's issue optimistic claims on the Russian fighting . . . RAF planes have rounded out a month of heavy assaults by bombing targets in Western Germany." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:30)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-28-43) Orson Welles continues subbing for Jack who is still recovering from his illness. The gang is at the drug store for a sandwich before the broadcast. They're joined by Orson who organizes a feature play, "Death at Midnight," a spine-tingling mystery with Welles as Inspector, Phil Harris as policeman, Dennis Day as Sgt. Day. Grape Nuts, NBC. (29:00)

★ **RED CROSS CAMPAIGN** (2-28-43) A special program opening the 1943 War Fund Campaign of the American Red Cross and the Canadian Red Cross Appeal. Included are messages from President Roosevelt, General Dwight D. Eisenhower in North Africa, and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz in the Pacific Theatre of War. CBS and all major networks. (14:55)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-11-43) Jack returns to the program after an extended illness! He "does the show from bed," still recuperating, but he doesn't want Orson Welles to do his show again. Cast features Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Frank Nelson, and Verna Felton. Orson Welles drops in during rehearsal, goes over material for sketch, "Jack Benny from Rags to Radio." Grape Nuts, NBC. (28:35)

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

MARCH

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for Those Were The Days represents timing information for each particular show. (9:45; 11:20; 8:50) means that we will broadcast the show in three segments: 9 minutes and 45 seconds; 11 minutes and 20 seconds; 8 minutes and 50 seconds. If you add the times of these segments together, you'll have the total length of the show (29:55 for our example). This is of help to those who are taping the broadcasts for their own collection. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6th

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-17-43) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Lurence Tuttle as Marjorie, and Shirley Mitchell as Lella Ranson. The Water Commissioner is excited about his first public appearance as a speaker at the Summerfield Women's Club. He also hires a new secretary. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:05)

★ **AN AMERICAN IN ENGLAND** (12-15-42) "An Anglo-American Angle" is the third in the limited series of four programs written and directed by Norman Corwin and produced by Edward R. Murrow. Joseph Julian, as the American, tells how the English people cope with war. Sustaining, CBS. (29:05)

DRAGNET (5-31-51) Jack Webb is Sgt. Joe Friday and Barton Yarborough is Ben Romero. A fine Los Angeles

hotel is found to be the center of a drug ring. Friday goes undercover to find the seller. Fatima Cigarettes, NBC. (25:00)

FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER AND FLYWHEEL (1991) First program in the British Broadcasting Corporation series based on scripts used by Groucho and Chico Marx on the Five Star Theatre in 1932. Michael Roberts is Groucho Marx as Waldorf T. Flywheel and Frank Lazarus is Chico Marx as Emmanuel Ravelli, with Lorelei King as Miss Dimple. Music by the David Firman Orchestra. BBC. (27:03)

STORY OF DR. KILDARE (9-14-50) Lew Ayers is Dr. James Kildare, Lionel Barrymore is Dr. Leonard Gillespie, with Virginia Gregg, Ted Osborn, Lurene Tuttle, Barbara Ruick, Jack Krushen. Dr. Kildare helps out a teen age girl who is an alcoholic. Syndicated. (23:10)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (3-7-43) with Doug Edwards and CBS correspondents around the world. "In North Africa, the British have beaten off two Axis assaults . . . In the Far East, American General Bissel reports the Japanese air challenges are dwindling in the India, Burma, China Theatre." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:45)

SATURDAY, MARCH 13th

MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY (1940s) "Case of One Slip Meant Death" starring Jay Jostyn as Mr. D.A., Len Doyle as Harrington, and Vicki Vola as Miss Miller. The District Attorney investigates a murder at the circus. Bristol Myers, NBC. (29:00)

★ **WORLD NEW TODAY** 3-14-43) News from home and abroad as reported by Doug Edwards and CBS correspondents. "In the Southwest Pacific, MacArthur's bombers are pressing their attack on another Japanese convoy. Flying Fortresses report direct hits on enemy cargo vessels. In North Africa, Rommel's artillery has increased its activity." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25:30)

FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER AND FLYWHEEL (1991) Second program in the series of reenactments from the 1932 Marx Brothers radio show starring Groucho and Chico. Cast includes Michael Roberts, Frank Lazarus and Lorelei King. BBC. (26:52)

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Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Fibber has been appointed to collect funds for the 1943 American Red Cross campaign. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:45)

★ **WINSTON CHURCHILL** (3-21-43) Recovering from an illness, the British Prime Minister speaks from London to listeners at home and overseas about the state of the war and some recent successes. He says he doesn't share the feeling of those who have "jumped to the conclusion that the war will soon be over" and urges everyone to "concentrate on the war effort and, if possible, not to take your eye off the ball, even for a moment." Nevertheless, he also discusses post-war and domestic issues. BBC/CBS. (29:20; 20:15)

★ **CBS WORLD NEWS** (3-21-43) Douglas Edwards reports to listeners immediately following the Churchill speech. "Prime Minister Churchill . . . said that he had just received a message from General Montgomery saying that the British Eighth Army in Southern Tunisia is on the move . . . The final all-out battle . . . has now started." Sustaining, CBS. (10:45)

★ **AN AMERICAN IN ENGLAND** (12-22-42) "Clipper Home" is the final show in the series. Joseph Julian, as the American, traveling home to the states, encounters U.S. wartime travel restrictions. Written and directed by Norman Corwin, produced by Edward R. Murrow, music by Lyn Murray. Sustaining, CBS. (29:30)

THE COTY HOUR (4-17-35) Ray Noble and his orchestra offer music for listening and dancing, with vocals by Al Bowlly and the Freshman Trio. Nelson Case announces. Selections include "The Very Thought of You," "Soon," "Dese Dem Dose," "Solitude," "A Fountain in Havana, (a Claude Thornhill composition which later became "Snowfall")" and "Goodnight Sweetheart." Coty Cosmetics, NBC. (29:45)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (1-24-43) Hal Peary stars as Gildersleeve who, as Air Raid Warden, is concerned about sabotage at the Summerfield arms manufacturing plant. Judge Hooker (Earle Ross) is in charge of Civilian Defense. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:55)

SATURDAY, MARCH 20th

RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE (3-5-50) Dick Powell is the private eye who investigates a snake and a gun shot. Cast features Ed Begley, Joan Banks, Jack Krushen, Charles Seal. Sustaining, NBC. (28:20)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (1-31-43) Hal Peary as Gildy, Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lurene Tuttle as Marjorie. Gildersleeve is on the committee to help raise money for a new fire engine for Summerfield. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:30)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (3-21-43) with Doug Edwards in New York and CBS correspondents around the world. "Adolph Hitler has made his first speech since last November, admitting that Germany is a war zone under Allied bombings . . . There's been widespread American air action in the Southwest Pacific . . . Churchill will speak from London tonight." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (3-23-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees of Wistful Vista, with

SATURDAY, MARCH 27th REMEMBERING FRANK LOVEJOY

ESCAPE (12-20-49) "Figure A Dame" starring Frank Lovejoy with Joan Banks, Sarah Selby, Ben Wright, Paul Frees, Harry Bartels, Gary Merrill. "Escape to a train headed for Calcutta and an exciting tale of the most sought-after emerald in the world." Sustaining, CBS. (29:00)

★ **THIS IS YOUR FBI** (6-22-45) Expert car thieves are pursued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; car theft during wartime is a Federal offense. Frank Lovejoy narrates. Equitable Life Assurance Society, ABC. (29:10)

SUSPENSE (9-1-57) "Man From Tomorrow" starring Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lovejoy. A former U.S. jet pilot — from the Korean war — is offered a job that will "contribute to world betterment." AFRTS rebroadcast (26:12)

PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE (3-27-49) Jack Webb stars as Novak who gets a warning to stay away from prizefighter Rory Malone. Raymond Burr is Inspector Helman, Tudor Owen is Jocko Madigan, and Frank Lovejoy appears as Malone. AFRTS rebroadcast. (30:00)

NIGHTBEAT (7-13-51) "Anton's Return" stars Frank Lovejoy as Randy Stone, reporter for the Chicago Star, who tells a love story that "begins on a Chicago elevated train and ends in eternity." Cast includes Joyce McClusky, Vic Perrin, Jack Edwards, Larry Dobkin, Charles Seals. Sustaining, NBC. (30:35)

SUSPENSE (1-4-54) "On A Country Road" starring Frank Lovejoy with Joan Banks and Jeanette Nolan. A couple returning from a picnic run out of gas after hearing about an escaped lunatic armed with a meat cleaver. This is a "classic" Suspense drama. AutoLite, CBS. (29:30)

FRANK LOVEJOY:

Never a Groom . . . *. . . always a Best Man*

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

There is no denying the fact that in all walks of life some people are going to be underrated. Among the personalities of this century Nellie Fox, Calvin Coolidge, John Havlicek, Jerry Kramer, Bo Diddley, Aldous Huxley, Reginald Marsh, and Nikola Tesla have not been accorded the plaudits given to their more celebrated contemporaries. Actors and actresses like Lionel Atwill, Jeff Chandler, Judy Holliday, and Eve Arden will also very likely never be granted the recognition they deserve. Frank Lovejoy, too, has stood in the wings for many years and it is only fitting that he be called forth to take a long overdue curtain call.

Frank Lovejoy was never in the star class with a Gable or a Brando or a Bette Davis. He was a lesser light even when he was playing first or second lead in films, but he was more versatile than many of the luminaries who outshone him as he distinguished himself not only on the screen in thirty-two films but also on the stage, radio, and television. He was an actor who consistently produced realistic characterizations because he received his primary training not from studying actors but from observing events around him. The lessons of his youth remained with him all his life.

Lovejoy was born March 28, 1914 in New York, the son of a salesman for Pathe films. Frank was a runner on Wall Street during the Crash and it was from that experience that he learned "how people react, what shows on their faces and what doesn't." He began his acting

career with some stock companies and made his Broadway debut in Edgar Rice's *Judgment Day* in 1934. He got his first taste of radio acting in Cincinnati before returning to New York to embark upon the network career that would be his livelihood until the late forties.

Lovejoy's claim that he performed on 4,000 radio shows may seem like an inflated boast until one realizes that he was in the cast of *As the Twig is Bent*, *We Live and Learn*, *Bright Horizon*, *Stella Davis*, *This Day is Ours*, *Young Widder Brown*, *Valiant Lady*, and other soap operas. An actor who had continuing roles on some of these daily dramas could log several hundred programs a year. One veteran of the soaps who appeared with Frank any number of times over the years was Joan Banks, who also happened to be Mrs. Lovejoy.

But Frank's best work was not to be done for the sudsers. One of his earliest efforts was an adventure series that gave him a chance to pull out all the stops. *The Blue Beetle* had a brief run in the late thirties as a syndicated answer to *The Green Hornet*. Frank played Dan Garrett, a novice policeman who under a secret identity wore a mask and blue chain mail to thwart dope peddlers, saboteurs, and other assorted criminals. After triumphing over the scofflaws, the Beetle would cackle fiendishly and spray his vanquished foes with taunts like "Let that be a lesson to you." Lovejoy seemed to relish this hokum and played it to the hilt to please the juveniles who



FRANK LOVEJOY

were enthralled by his daring exploits.

If *The Blue Beetle* did nothing else, it should have shown Frank that he belonged where the action is. Through the forties and fifties he appeared on just about every crime and adventure series including *Gangbusters*, *Mr. and Mrs. North*, *This is Your FBI*, *The Amazing Mr. Malone*, *Calling All Detectives*, and *Mr. District Attorney*. Some of his most memorable radio work was done on the best adventure program, *Escape*, and *Suspense*, "radio's outstanding theater of thrills."

Of all the episodes aired in the twenty-year history of *Suspense* perhaps only the famous "Sorry, Wrong Number" had more emotional intensity than the thrice-broadcast "On a Country Road." On January 4, 1954 Frank and Joan played a couple who, while stranded on a deserted road during a storm, learn from their car radio that an insane female killer has escaped from a nearby institution. The tension that arose when a distraught woman appeared in the rain is a credit to the Lovejoy's ability to

make us believe they really were that terrified pair sitting in the front seat awaiting rescue or death.

Other roles on *Suspense* and *Escape* suited Frank's style even better than the melodramatic ones because he often had parts which required him to narrate the story or present it in a stream-of-consciousness manner that took the listeners into his confidence. Lovejoy, who sounded like an ordinary Joe, was an Everyman who was often caught in circumstances over which he had little control. In "Treasure, Inc.," "Danger at Matecumbe," and certain other episodes of *Escape* he played pliable men who were led by the charms or machinations of women into webs of deceit and murder that either endangered or ruined his life. Radio *noir* never had a more credible actor to roll with the punches of life than Frank Lovejoy.

Because Frank had demonstrated that he was adept at conveying the humanity of average people on programs like *Columbia Workshop* and *Lux Radio Theater* he was a natural choice for the role of Randy Stone on *Nightbeat*. *Nightbeat* only ran from 1950 to 1952, but it is the benchmark by which other human interest dramas should be measured. As a reporter for *The Chicago Star* Stone was touched by the lives of old ladies, frightened runaways, punchy ex-boxers, alcoholic losers, wheeler dealers, and all the other creatures of the night who walk the urban streets. A few of the episodes in this series contain some of the most moving moments ever produced on the air because the understated acting of Lovejoy and his supporting cast was so exemplary, so natural, that we believed in and cared for the people passing before our ears and eyes. *Nightbeat* was rather late radio, but it was truly great radio.

When radio gave way to television, Lovejoy stepped from one medium to the other in one graceful stride. Just as

FRANK LOVEJOY

he sounded like one of us on radio he had the face of the man on the street on the small screen. Frank was ruggedly handsome, but he certainly wouldn't make many women swoon. He looked like the iron-jawed, two-fisted type who was ready for action and there was plenty of that to be found on TV.

His first work on television was in some of the dramatic anthology programs like *Stage 7*, *Four Star Playhouse*, and *Lux Video Theatre*. One of his notable efforts on *Lux* was a version of "Double Indemnity" in which he played the hapless insurance salesman ensnared by femme fatale Lorraine Day. His performance as Lieutenant Maryk in "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial" on *Four Star Playhouse* was critically acclaimed. Another *Four Star* production, in which Lovejoy played a man named McGraw who protected Audrey Totter from her ruthless husband, became the pilot for *Meet McGraw*, a series that ran during the 1957-58 season on NBC and was rerun under the title *The Adventures of McGraw* the next season.

McGraw was not the typical private detective. In fact, he wasn't really a detective at all. Like radio's Pat Novak he became involved in cases either because people just showed up and asked him for help or else he started snooping around just to be snooping around. On his dangerous assignments McGraw was always willing to use his fists but not a gun. Neither this series nor *Man Against Crime* in which he did play a private detective of the hard-boiled school named Mike Barnett were any better than the rock 'em, sock 'em fare of the period, but at least they were no worse.

While performing on radio and television Frank had a simultaneous career in motion pictures. His first film, *Black Bart* (1948), was a western and so was



FRANK LOVEJOY

his last one, *Cole Younger, Gunfighter* (1958). He played military officers eight times, most notably as the understanding Sergeant Mingo in *Home of the Brave* and as a tough colonel in *Retreat, Hell!* who drove his men relentlessly, but who still showed affection and concern for them. His performance in the lead of *I Was a Communist for the FBI* was lauded by a *New York Times* critic as "a model of light and efficient resolution, ingenuity, and spunk." His acting in a handful of these spy and crime dramas was so authentic and done with such apparent ease that another *Times* reviewer, after viewing his work in *Finger Man*, stated that "if Mr. Lovejoy can walk through a part like this in his sleep, he still does a good job." And

he did a good job when called upon to be a heel in *The Americano*, a detective playing cat-and-mouse with Humphrey Bogart in *In a Lonely Place*, an acerbic songwriter in *I'll See You in My Dreams*, and a peppy Rogers Hornsby playing on *The Winning Team* with the actor who would one day win his way into the White House, Ronald Reagan.

Cinema historians might note that Lovejoy was in two of the early 3-D motion pictures, *The House of Wax* and *The Charge at Feather River*. In the latter film when Lovejoy's character, Sergeant Baker, unleashed a stream of tobacco juice toward the camera at a rattlesnake, members of the audience either ducked or raised their arms to protect themselves. Now that was real acting!

In 1953 Frank was in a Virginia Mayo vehicle entitled *She's Back on Broadway*. In 1960 he was back on Broadway and it was in one of the triumphs of his career. Lovejoy's portrayal of unethical candidate Joseph Cantwell in Gore Vidal's *The Best Man* was one of that season's most distinguished performances. Brooks Atkinson, by no means the easiest critic to please, wrote that "Frank Lovejoy gives an extraordinary portrait of a bigot and charlatan who believes his own propaganda." It seemed that this would be a natural role for Lovejoy to assume when the play was adapted to the screen, but it was just not to be. Cliff Robertson was given the part in the 1964 film, but by then the best man was no longer around.

In the fall of 1962 the Lovejoys were appearing in a road version of the Vidal play in New Jersey. On October 2, Joan found Frank dead in bed in their room at the Warwick Hotel in New York. She called in a physician who pronounced the cause of death to be a heart attack. Frank had gone full circle: Gotham to Gotham, stage to stage, big city, bright

lights. It was a full life, but one that was far too short.

The footlights were turned out early on other actors such as Alan Ladd and Montgomery Clift, but they had entered self-destructive tunnels from which they could not escape. Their best work was clearly behind them. For Frank Lovejoy life might truly have begun at fifty because he was right at the top of his form at the end.

No amount of praise or wishful thinking will alter the virtual certainty that Lovejoy would never have become a star of the first magnitude. It must be with some mortals that their destiny is to barely touch the brass ring and never to hold it in their hands. For every Paul Newman there is a Forrest Tucker, for every Henry Fonda a Robert Ryan, for every Gary Cooper a Dennis O'Keefe. Frank Lovejoy never had his day in the sun and he will probably always remain in the shadow, but that isn't such a bad place to be. After all, the shadow knows and so do we. ■

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The Fighting Sullivans

BY FR. KEVIN SHANLEY, O. CARM.

The day was Nov. 13, 1942. America had been engaged for almost a year in a desperate struggle in the South Pacific during World War II. Defeat after defeat for the American forces made the Imperial Japanese Navy and Army seem unstoppable.

And now ships of the Japanese Navy challenged those of the U.S. Navy for control of the Pacific east of the Solomon Islands. Ashore, on Guadalcanal, U.S. Marines fought desperately to retake the island, and its all-important Henderson Field.

The U.S. Navy sent the aircraft carriers "Hornet" and "Enterprise," along with the light cruiser "Juneau" to support the Marines and prevent the Japanese from re-enforcing their troops on Guadalcanal.

The naval battle lasted only 24 minutes but produced the greatest personal tragedy in U.S. Navy History; the death of the five Sullivan Brothers — George, Francis, Albert, Joseph and Madison.

The brothers, who had enlisted less than a month after Pearl Harbor, trained at the Great Lakes Naval Training School and resolved to serve together.

George Sullivan, the eldest, explained it to his mother, "If worse comes to worse, why, we'll all have gone down together."

It was a Japanese submarine which made those prophetic words come true. A torpedo hit the forward engine room of the newly-commissioned "U.S.S. Juneau" and stopped her dead in the water. Before help could arrive, a second torpedo hit the ship's ammunition

magazine. In a violent explosion that lifted the ship out of the water, the "Juneau" sank in 42 seconds. Of the 711 seamen, only 10 survived.

The sinking of the "Juneau" with almost all hands lost cast a pall of gloom over the U.S., and when it was learned that the five Sullivan Brothers had all gone down, it became a shock almost too great to bear.

The Waterloo, IA. "Courier," the Sullivans' hometown paper, summed up people's feelings: "In the history of the Navy, no other mother has received a blow as severe as that which has come to this mother."

The tragedy would have been more difficult to bear, except for the indomitable courage of the Sullivan Family. Mrs. Alleta Sullivan overcame her own terrible grief by comforting others who had become "Gold Star" Mothers through the loss of a son. Her courage comforted and inspired others. In addition, along with her husband, Tom, the Sullivans visited more than 200 war plants and shipyards throughout the U.S. to urge workers to "carry on" with greater zeal.

"Helping others who are in sorrow kills your own sorrow," explained Mrs. Sullivan.

Tom Sullivan, the father, continued to work as a conductor for freight trains on the Illinois Central Railroad throughout the war. "If they are gone," he said, "it will be some comfort to know they went together — as they wanted — and gave their lives for their country and victory."

Condolences poured in from all over



THE FIGHTING SULLIVANS were depicted on the motion picture screen in a 1944 Twentieth Century-Fox film. The movie was the true story of the five brothers who were killed in action when their ship was sunk in the South Pacific during World War II.

the U.S., from President Franklin D. Roosevelt down to ordinary citizens. The Sullivan Brothers and their sacrifice became a rallying cry for the nation at bond drives, war rallies, and on recruiting posters.

Hollywood, through 20th Century Fox, immortalized the Sullivan Brothers with a feature-length film in 1944 which depicted the five brothers growing up in a rural Iowa town as best friends whose family was held together by rich and ever deep familial ties and their Faith.

And as a fitting tribute to the heroic brothers, the Bethlehem Steel and Shipbuilding Company near San Francisco built the 376-foot Fletcher-class destroyer "The Sullivans" which was christened by Mrs. Alleta Sullivan on Apr. 4, 1943. During the rest of World War II, the ship did escort duty for the

battle groups of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and bombarded Japanese shore installations in 1945. She also saw duty during the Korean War, and President Kennedy's blockade of Cuba in 1962. After "The Sullivans" was de-commissioned in 1965, she went to the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Serviceman's Park in New York State where she still sports her green shamrock flag from the mainmast. Even more fittingly, a brass plaque on her quarterdeck recalls the vows the heroic Sullivan Brothers made 50 years ago: "We Stick Together." ■

(ED. NOTE — The movie, "The Fighting Sullivans" (which was originally released as "The Sullivans" is rarely seen on commercial or cable television and Twentieth Century Fox has never released the story on video tape.)



Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

You should have been there. That's all we can say if you missed the re-creation of the CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATRE for the Radio Hall of Fame at the Museum on Saturday, November 14.

Chuck Schaden put the day together bringing in from New York the program's producer/director Himan Brown and from Hollywood, legendary radio actor Les Tremayne to star. Les was joined by a cast of superb Chicago-based actors: Ken Nordine, Jack Bivans,

Jim Dolan, Sondra Gair, Russ Reed and Dick Thorne. NBC veteran Curt Mitchell provided the sound effects. Technical assistance came from Rick Garofalo and Jim Zarembski.

The audience was invited to sit-in on the initial cast read-through, the rehearsal, the performance plus a time for questions and answers, photos and autographs.

Stay tuned for more such events. And take a look at a few scenes we shot during that terrific day.



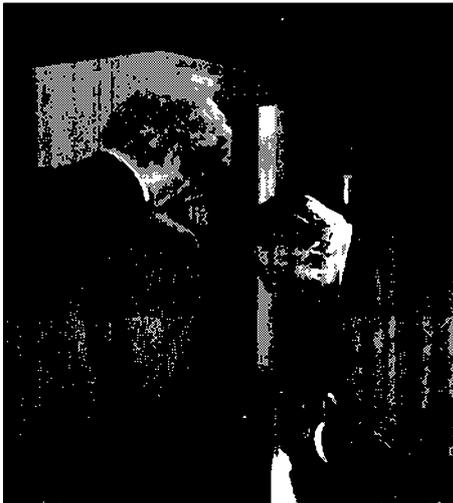
DIRECTOR HIMAN BROWN and his all-star cast during the first read-through of the Mystery Theatre script for "The Suicide Club." Shown, from left, are Mr. Brown, Les Tremayne, Ken Nordine, Jim Dolan, Jack Bivans, Russ Reed, Sondra Gair, and Richard Thorne.



ON THE AIR! A jam-packed audience sat enthralled in the Chicago Cultural Center theatre for the re-creation of The CBS Radio Mystery Theatre. The presentation was taped and will be broadcast at a date to be announced.



RADIO PEOPLE AT WORK: Actors Les Tremayne (center) and Russ Reed (far right) in a scene from "The Suicide Club" while director Himan Brown and narrator Ken Nordine (both far left) watch for the next cue. Other actors follow the script, waiting for their next scene.



SOUND EFFECTS MAN Curt Mitchell adjusts the lock on the "creaking door" as Chuck Schaden looks on.



HIMAN BROWN signs an autograph for an enthusiastic fan as others wait for their chance to meet the man who created the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre.



AUDIO TECHNICIANS Rick Garofalo and Jim Zaremski were responsible for providing musical bridges, certain special effects and recording the show for broadcast and the Radio Hall of Fame archives. (All photos by Margaret Warren)

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

Chicago, 60602

Phone (312) 629-6000



WE GET LETTERS

TAYLOR, MICHIGAN — I'm 24 years old and a recent graduate of college with a degree in communications. I love old time radio! I've been an avid listener and collector since I was twelve. My first experience with old time radio was in 1977 or 1978, during a trip to my grandparents' house. It was late at night when my dad turned on the car radio and I heard an episode of the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre. It was the most fun I ever had on the long drive to my grandparents' house; the shortest also, because my imagination was sparked, which made the time go faster.

My next introduction came as a Christmas gift in 1980. That year my parents gave me a cassette recorder and a tape of the Long Ranger. With the help of allowance money, I was able to purchase many shows and begin a collection. Moving ahead in time, a friend who knew of my hobby, informed me of a new program that was playing the old shows, although he thought it was coming from another state. This was October, 1984, and the program was "Chuck Schaden's Radio Theatre."

It was great. I began listening, ordering *Nostalgia Digest*, which I will say is one of the most entertaining and informative magazines I've ever read, and became hooked all over again to old radio. Your show was so good because of the variety of programming. I heard some shows for the first time that I had only read about in such books as John Dunning's *Tune In Yesterday*. The only bad part about the show was that it ended much too soon, on WCFL that is. Being out of state I couldn't follow you to WAIT, and now that you're on WBBM, I still have problems because I live too close to a radio station here that carries over on to your frequency.

I've been to Chicago a few times, first to see Metro Golden Memories and to tape a Saturday afternoon show, and lately I've come to see both your shop and the Museum of Broadcast Communications. I was there once on a Saturday and finally had the opportunity of meeting you. I want to say you're doing a great job. We need more entertainment like this.

— MARK POWELL

HOMEWOOD, IL — Ken Alexander's article about his father's tools brought a tear to my eye. I have a red tool chest that my sister gave me. In it are a hammer, electric drill and a Craftsman screwdriver my dad gave me. He has been in God's hands since 30 October 1978. I also have a pair of scissors that Dad gave me on the day I started at Sherwin-Williams, 28 October 1968! I'm still there and will celebrate my 25th anniversary in '93. I was an eight year old lad when my Dad celebrated his 25th anniversary at his workplace in 1953. He received a Zenith H 500 Trans-Oceanic radio. Today I have his radio totally restored and working. What a great remembrance of my Dad! You might like

to know a source for antique tubes and radio parts. For a catalog, send to Antique Electronic Supply, 6221 S. Maple Ave., Tempe, AZ 85283. I know the owners personally. Mr. George Fathauer, Sr. and his son, George, Jr. are really good people. — JOHN L. FRIGO

HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL — How quickly time flies. Here it is renewal time again. I subscribe to many things, but only a few give me the return for my investment that the *Nostalgia Digest* does. Fond are my memories of sitting in front of our old Philco after hurrying home from school to catch all of those programs that used to appeal so much to us kids. Still a kid at heart, they still have their appeal for me. I'm very fortunate that as an artist, I can do what I want, when I want. I love my work and as I sit in my studio. Those old shows still brighten my day. Thanks for the memories! — ED COOK

BURKBURNETT, TEXAS — I've been searching for a radio station in Texas that plays old time radio. I haven't found a local station, but I found a radio that will pick up your WBBM show on weeknights at midnight. I'm so excited to be able to once again enjoy the great entertainment I get from your program. Thanks again for airing these shows which I'm hearing for the first time. I'm 33 years old and got into radio programs with the CBS Mystery Theatre which I miss very much. Do you know when it will be released?

— MARY BILLQUIST

(ED. NOTE — Himan Brown, creator of the Mystery Theatre tells us he is presently seeking to have the series re-entered into syndication but, he says, it's easier said than done. We'll keep you posted.)

GREENDALE, WISCONSIN — We always enjoy every article in your *Nostalgia Digest*. Also, have sent copies to friends who have expressed interest in specific articles in past issues, including Cynthia Collyer, daughter of Bud Collyer who spoke recently at our Old Time Radio Club meeting in Milwaukee. It is amazing to see the pictures of the old time news reporters and radio personalities who we know only by their voices. We'll be tuned to *TWTD* and weekend *Radio Classics* when we can. I am a world-wide stamp and postal history collector and I almost always listen to a tape while working on my collection. I also listen to WNIB weekly at work because they play MY kind of music. — DENNIS CHASSER

WOODRUFF, WISCONSIN — We have moved to Northern Wisconsin and want to inform you of our new address. We have been receiving the *Nostalgia Digest* for more than eighteen years and we would hate to miss even one issue! We have been to Metro Golden

WE GET LETTERS

Memories and over the years have acquired a pretty nice collection of voices and audio tapes. We have also taped your programs. I would like to tell you of a little incident that happened the day after we moved up here. Some of our family members were kind enough to help us move. Two of them had to return to Illinois the next day. Well, I became a little blue. I came back into the house to continue unpacking. I decided to play a few Christmas tapes — Jack Benny, Phil Harris and Alice Faye, Burns and Allen. Before I knew it, I was smiling again. That is the memory I have of listening to the radio when I was a little girl. The shows could transport a person out of their own little world to funny, sad, scary. We're going to miss your great programs, Chuck. Thank you for the pleasure you have given for these many years. When we get back to Illinois to visit our family, the MGM Shop will be on our "must stop" list.

— NANCY SULLIVAN

(ED. NOTE — We'll miss you, too, Nancy. And when you do get back to town, please try to visit our *TWTD* broadcast on a Saturday afternoon at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Then we can say "thanks for listening" to you, personally.)

BATESVILLE, INDIANA — I still wish you were on earlier during the week. I listen on Saturday and Sunday, but 1 a.m. in Batesville is too late for me to start a radio program. I really enjoy the *Digest*. It reminds me of my childhood and all the great programs I enjoyed then.

— FAITH WESTERFIELD

NORTHRIDGE, CALIFORNIA — Many thanks for using my article (about radio in WW II Germany) in the December-January *Digest*. I only wish I had sent you a more up-to-date picture. I don't wear that hat any more. I smile more now, and I've shaved off the moustache! Despite that, it's a real honor to be included among so many worthwhile articles. A tip for the listener trying to pick up your shows in Arkansas: as someone who's heard WBBM in Dallas and in the Black Hills of South Dakota, I think a big help is using one of the newer radios, with a digital tuner. — JIM WARRAS

SIBLEY, IL — I don't know if this will help Luanne Swanson of Gepp, Arkansas, but I have a little information on AM radio reception. I listen to Milt Rosenberg before you come on and last February or earlier he had a guest on his program who said that in May there was supposed to be a new radio available that would give us better reception on AM stations. He called it "AMX." However, I have been trying to find out when and where I could purchase one and haven't had any luck. Maybe someone else could help us with more information. I live 160 miles south of Chicago and at times our radio reception fades. I sure would like some more information if anyone has any. — MRS. BETTY MEYER

(ED. NOTE — We'll be glad to pass along any information we get.)

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STREAMWOOD, IL — I'm a member of the *Those Were The Days Radio Players-West*. I played Peg Riley in the Life of Riley episode performed at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in November. I want to thank you for the opportunity of putting on our shows. It was a blast! Looking forward to continuing the fun. I've been an old time radio fan for years and have converted my husband. We donated the stuffed pheasant for McGee's Closet and were tickled to see it there! We love your show and my husband has particularly liked the World War II broadcasts.

— CAROL SKOWRONNEK

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA — Enclosed is my two year renewal to the *Nostalgia Digest*. I suppose it's kind of masochistic to have the *Radio Guide* sent to me to see what programs I'm missing, especially during Jack Benny Month!

— FRANK A. MCGURN, JR.

STEGER, IL — After listening to nostalgia radio for at least eight years and seeing your involvement in it, I felt a letter was due. Without a doubt, you've got to be one of the most important things to have happened to old time radio since the interest in it was revived. I'm sure that this also applies to your closest partner, your wife. They say that behind every man there's a woman and I'm sure that she must be one wonderful person. Some of the things that I've found to be especially heartening are:

1. The *Those Were The Day* decision to spend YEARS commemorating WW II by starting with the anniversary of Pearl Harbor and going to the end of the war. I was a stunning idea. I especially like the news reports and presidential announcements.

2. The *Nostalgia Digest*. This is one of the few things that I read cover to cover. Your writers really do a fine job.

3. Metro Golden Memories. A treasure house (Did you locate it that close to the pastry shop on purpose?) All of the people I've dealt with are super. I met you there once and can't imagine a more approachable person.

4. Your interviews with all of those radio people. Those insights make what was good even better.

5. "The Scarlet Queen." When you say that something was good, I've learned to listen. I had never heard of the program before you mentioned it. I tried it and you were right. I feel like I need a windbreaker when I listen to it.

6. "The Home Front." Once again you were right on the money! Even though I had heard the tapes several times, I made it a point to listen again when you aired them.

7. Theme songs. All good, but "Thanks for the Memories" is the best. It typifies an era.

8. *Those Were The Days Radio Players*. Is this the beginning of the future of radio? Years ago I would never have hoped for anything like this.

— DAVE EVANSECK

(ED. NOTE — We appreciate your kind and thoughtful words more than we can say. And you're absolutely right about my wife! Thanks very much for listening.)

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FRANK LOVEJOY

"Never a Groom, always a Best Man" according to Clair Schulz in a fascinating article about the dependable radio and movie actor.

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