

CHUCK SCHADEN'S  
**NOSTALGIA DIGEST** AND  
**RADIO GUIDE** ©

APRIL — MAY, 1993



BOB HOPE

# ALL NEWS ALL DAY ALL NIGHT

On May 6, WBBM Newsradio 78  
celebrates 25 years as Chicago's  
All News Station.

**WBBM 78**  
**Newsradio**

**All News. All Day. All Night.**

# NOSTALGIA DIGEST<sup>©</sup>

BOOK NINETEEN

CHAPTER THREE

APRIL - MAY, 1993

## HELLO, OUT THERE IN Radioland!!

Time flies when you're having fun . . . and it's hard to imagine that we're about to observe our *twenty-third* broadcast anniversary.

We first went on the air with *Those Were The Days* on Saturday afternoon, May 2, 1970. We were on station WNMP in Evanston from 1 to 4 p.m. A few months later, the call letters were changed to WLTD and we added another hour to our Saturday show.

We're going to have our 23rd Anniversary broadcast on WNIB, Saturday, April 24 and this year we're planning to celebrate by having a **WLTD RADIO REUNION!**

We've invited a number of our friends from the old WLTD days to join us in the studio and on the air to share some nostalgic memories of the little station that some said "couldn't" but, for a while, "did."

We'll be joined by **Bruce DuMont** who hosted "Montage"; **Bill Nigut** who hosted "Two-Way Street"; **Ted Weber** of "In Your Town"; **Mike Schwimmer and Don Lucki** of the "Yesterday Shop"; **Karl Pearson** of "Juke Box Saturday Night"; and others.

Also invited to participate are some of the folks who worked behind the scenes at WLTD in our "golden days" of the early-to-mid 1970s.

And you're invited, too. We hope you can tune in or, better still, if you were a part of our listening audience in those days, we hope you'll come down to participate in our broadcast from the Radio Hall of Fame at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in the Chicago Cultural Center.

\* \* \* \* \*

Radio station WBBM is also celebrating an anniversary this year, and it's a big

one! On May 6, WBBM will celebrate the station's 70th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of WBBM Newsradio 78.

We'll have a special anniversary broadcast on *Old Time Radio Classics* on Saturday, May 8 and we hope you can tune in.

\* \* \* \* \*

Comedian Bob Hope will celebrate a milestone birthday on May 29 when he marks his 90th birthday. Our *Those Were The Days* show on that date will observe the occasion.

\* \* \* \* \*

It's been five years since we've had to increase subscription rates to this *Nostalgia Digest and Radio Guide*.

But now it becomes necessary to review our rates. Editorial, production and mailing costs continue to climb. So, effective with this issue, a one-year subscription is \$15, a two-year subscription is \$25.

But we've also added a few pages and upgraded the cover of the magazine, so we hope you'll still feel that you're getting your money's worth.

We pledge to continue bringing you good reading and good information in every issue of the *Nostalgia Digest* and we appreciate your continued support.

We started this publication about eighteen years ago and we hope to continue for a long time to come.

With your help, we'll do it.

Thanks for listening.

*Chuck Schaden*

# BOB HOPE AND WWII

BY BILL OATES

*We've traveled far and wide together  
Did we travel too fast?  
Now I reminisce and wonder  
whether any good things ever last.  
But that, dear, is past.  
Thanks for the memory.*

Some years before that song became a hit, a brash young man from England first, then Cleveland, Ohio, attempted the long and arduous road toward theatrical stardom. And now, after seven decades of stage, radio, film, and television success, Leslie Towne "Bob" Hope enjoys instant recognition as an entertainer, while approaching his ninetieth birthday. For Bob "Performing Anywhere He's Needed" Hope, his road to the top of the entertainment world was paved with sacrifice and an unending challenge to make people laugh from the residents of the White House to the occupants of a fox hole.

Most people associate Bob Hope with the American flag and its placement at sometimes remote military camps and bases, so much so that it is hard to imagine his birth anywhere but in the United States. Even on his popular radio show in the 1940's he referred to his humble beginnings nearer Lake Erie than those of his birth in Eltham, Kent, England. In all fairness, only four years after he was born in 1903, the Hopes, with six children in tow, relocated to the States, so his connection to his British birth was early and brief.

Hope's early years were fraught with struggles. Boys in school began calling him "Hope-less," and so, the name Bob became more prevalent than did his christened Leslie. He obtained money

from a variety of sources, including Charlie Chaplin imitations, singing for his fare on streetcars, and ultimately boxing as "Packy East." More substantial financially were his stints as an instructor at Sojack's Dancing Academy and his proclivity at delivering monologs at Chandler Motor Company conventions and picnics. Eventually the stage beckoned him and with new partner George Byrne, the "Two Diamonds in the Rough" were off on the road to fame and fortune.

Hitting the boards on the Midwest vaudeville circuits was arduous and very competitive. Not only did the act dance and perform then popular blackface humor, but they also sang in a quartet, Hope played a saxophone, and both moved scenery. His fellow actors told him that he should shed the blackface and dancing shoes and concentrate on speaking. After Hope left his partner and their Siamese twin girl touring partners, a solo act was attempted. Hope quipped that he starved in a Chicago southside boarding house where "the maid came in once a day to change the rats." However, it was in the Windy City that the future star became a part of an increasingly successful company that included Edgar Bergen and his sapling partner Charlie McCarthy.

His first major stage role came in 1932 in *Ballyhoo*, and the next year he landed the part of an extremely suitable character, the fast talking Huckleberry Haines in Jerome Kerns' *Roberta*. Not only did he experience success on Broadway, but it was also during this time that he met and married singer Dolores Reade. Shortly thereafter, Bob Hope



was playing in the *Ziegfeld Follies* with Fanny Brice in 1935 and, a year later, with Ethel Merman and Jimmy Durante in *Red, Hot and Blue*.

Throughout the 1930's network radio talent scouts carefully observed stage performances for the purpose of borrowing personalities for the airways. At first Hope declined such offers, noting that he felt "radio would never amount to anything" and hence his entry into the medium was delayed. Bromo Seltzer's *The Intimate Review* and later *Atlantic Family* for Atlantic Oil were Hope's first important radio appearances in 1935, then Jergens-Woodbury allowed him to star in the *Rippling Rhythm Review* in 1936 as the dimwitted Southerner "Honeychile" Wilder. However, Hope's real break came when he went on the air in the fall of 1938 for

Pepsodent, a show he would host for that company for twelve years and continue to lead until television forced him to shift broadcasting gears in the early 1950's. (There were new radio shows until 1954 and repeats continued until 1958).

For all the radio appearances and an outstanding string of funny, money-making movies, that which endeared Bob Hope to countless Americans the most was his unwavering desire to entertain military personnel. The first Bob Hope Show to visit servicemen took place on March 6, 1941, when "Professor" Jerry Colonna (a trombonist who had worked for Arthur Godfrey), announcer Bill Goodwin, and singer Francis Langford disembarked at March Field in Riverside, California for the first of dozens of visits to military locations. Hope later remarked that this

## BOB HOPE AND WWII

"remote" began a personal challenge to continue to feed the sincere need of the fighting personnel who reacted to the show's simple entertainment as if it might be their last taste of home. From this start the cast moved on to more pre-war camps with the hope that there might not be a reason for America's finest to go to war. But all too soon, some seven months later, the call came, not only for the defenders of freedom, but also for those who keep their morale high, when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

The December 9, 1941 Pepsodent program was pre-empted when Franklin Roosevelt called on all Americans to get in the fight, and the following week shows like Hope's were challenging the listeners to take part in defeating the Axis. The monologues and even the toothpaste commercials changed tone to reflect the urgency of the hour, while the Treasury Department asked for even more help, the result being the first of many war bond drives. Personalities such as Bing Crosby, Groucho Marx, Pat O'Brien, Betty Grable, Olivia de Havilland, and Jimmy Cagney crossed America and raised a billion dollars for the war effort. After this first trip for Hope and the others ended at the White House with a command performance for Mrs. Roosevelt, the comedian returned to finish his radio season and then left for a perilous trip to Alaska with Colonna and Francis Lanford.

If Supersaver miles had been around in the 1940's, an entertainer like Hope could have taken a trip to Saturn. In his recent book, *Don't Shoot, It's Only Me*, Hope recalled his trip to Alaska and the violent weather the troupe encountered. He was scared to death but continued on such visits through the war (and future wars) to sacrifice his own comfort to bring something of home to faraway regions.

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When radio programs took a summer break, it usually provided the writers with a chance to catch up and create plots on returning in the fall or escapades encountered on vacation. Hope's tour of 1943 provided the comedian with some experiences he would rather forget. The newly formed USO (United Service Organization) sent Hope, Langford, Colonna, and ex-vaudeville performer Jack Pepper by Pan American Clipper to England, North Africa, and Italy. Bob's apprehensions about going were well-founded, for a few months earlier the same kind of plane hit drift material upon landing near Portugal and among those killed was Hope's fellow star in *Roberta*, Tamara, the character who sang the song "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." After reassuring Dolores that the trip would be safe, the plane headed northeast for a refueling in Newfoundland and a chance to entertain members of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Then it continued on to England's war-weary air bases, one of which was home to Clark Gable. It was there that Hope talked about non-Hollywood battle scenes with the movie actor, just before

the troupe departed from some close calls during air raids.

After meeting Winston Churchill, Hope took his party on the real road to Morocco, where entertaining the troops included diving into a sewer during an air raid. (Hope returned to a Moroccan air base in 1957 for another show.) Not to be outdone, after riding a B-17 to follow the soldiers that General Patton and General Montgomery sent to reclaim Italy, more bombs fell, as reported by famed correspondent Ernie Pyle: "The Bob Hope troupe . . . really found out about the war when they were over here . . . I was in two different cities with them during air raids and I will testify that they were horrifying raids . . . and the Hope troupe can now describe the ghastly sound . . ." Before the tour was over in Algiers, another bombing sent the entertainers scurrying, but the chapter describing this in Hope's recent book on his tours ends with an enthusiastic letter from a serviceman in Sicily who shared the feelings of the show with his parents and especially of how Francis Langford's songs sent him and his buddies home to their sweethearts for just a few minutes. So touched was she by her contact with service personnel that she wrote a newspaper column that told of her visiting military camps.

By the end of a three month tour of the Pacific theater in 1944, jungle sicknesses plagued Hope and Langford. One stop included entertaining 15,000 American marines before they left for the bloody battle at Peleliu, just before many of them were lost en route to the final Allied victory in the Pacific theater. The local USO director was legendary Chicago Bears coach George Halas, and it was his job to ask the uncomfortable and tired Hope to fly to an Australian encampment that had not yet been entertained. A tear moving down the cheek of Papa Bear changed the



**JERRY COLONNA and BOB HOPE**

minds of Hope and Langford, and the small group (including Colonna, army-enrolled Skinnay Ennis's replacement guitarist Tony Romano, and dancer Patti Thomas), instead of leaving for home on a transport plane, boarded eight small Piper Cubs, for the Aussie airstrip that was too small for large aircraft. It was also during this trip that the company was lost in Australia after a crash landing, and news reports portended the worst after two days of no contact with Hope's crew.

Making movies kept Bob Hope busy in the early 1940's, his weekly radio show was a challenge, and guesting for the war effort equally helped fill Bob Hope's calendar, but one more important venture was added in 1942 to stretch his creative juices, the Armed Forces Radio Service programs beamed to those "over there."

The *Command Performance* shows that lasted throughout the war years represented sacrifice from America's entertainment talent in unprecedented numbers (for example, Vick Knight gave up his \$1,000 a week directing job on *The Fred Allen Show* to work for no

## **BOB HOPE AND WWII**

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salary). Requests from GI's were sometimes wild, as was the one that had Lana Turner frying a large steak before the microphone in November of 1943. The ultimate show in this series came on February 15, 1945, when Hope, Crosby, Colonna, Cass Daley, Frank Morgan, Jimmy Durante, Judy Garland, and Frank Sinatra cavorted in "Dick Tracy in B Flat," a show typical of both the zany humor often broadcast and the incredible talent shared with the troops. Similar programs that helped with the war effort were *Mail Call*, *Jubilee*, and *G.I. Jill*, all programs directed to keep the men in touch with the United States when they were far away.

For the many awards Bob Hope has won in his decades of entertaining, perhaps he would agree that the greatest came from the faces of those men and women who served in the armed services in World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, and all other places where the youth of his adopted country were gathered in the defense of freedom.

No statuette of gold nor medal from a President could supersede the smile from an appreciative member of the armed services far from home port.

When he sings "Thanks for the Memory," all those roads in the getting there have been paved with the lives of those who contributed to his memory, one of growth from simple beginnings to America's answer to where there's life, there's Hope. ■

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I REMEMBER IT WELL...

## KIDDIE PARK

BY DAN MC GUIRE

In the first half of this century, the term "theme park" was unknown. In Chicago, Riverview Park was the Six Flags or Great America of its day. Less populous areas often had smaller amusement parks, usually geared mostly to children.

Our incorporated semi-rural community was privileged to enjoy its very own mini amusement park. It was called, simply, Kiddie Park.

It occupied a square block on the eastern boundary of town, along State Route 42A (Harlem Avenue) near Irving Park Road. A small buffer of grass field separated the park's west side from our first residential street. Just beyond its northern extremity, the farms began.

Buses on the Harlem route brought a few visitors. There was token parking along the shoulder for families who came by car. Most of us, though, were from the local area. Families would walk over together. Kids came with friends, walking or on bikes.

There was no gate, no admission charge. Telephone pole stumps were planted along the streetside perimeter. They prevented cars from driving into the park proper and slowed the arrival of reckless bike riders. Over the main entry was an archway. Big block letters, in a halfmoon shape, spelled out: "KID-DIE PARK"

In our pre-teen years, Wayne, Bobby, Chuck and I visited Kiddie Park numerous times each summer. A typical scenario would find Wayne and me sitting in the shade with no immediate plan for

our afternoon's entertainment.

Wayne absently split a leaf down its center stem and asked, "You wanta go to Kiddie Park?"

"Ain't got enough money. I spent most of my allowance."

Wayne nodded. "Me too. Think you can beg some off your mom?"

I shrugged. "Dunno. But I'll try. How 'bout you?"

Wayne grinned and jumped up. "I'll take a whack."

We separated. As I entered our house, I paused to ascertain that my mother wasn't too deeply absorbed in something to be interrupted. Then I blurted out, "Mom, can I have fifty cents to go to Kiddie Park with Wayne?"

My mother appraised me with raised eyebrows. "Fifty cents?" she said. It was a hefty sum for a boy in short pants. "What happened to your allowance?"

"I spent most of it," I admitted with downcast eyes. "I've only got a quarter left and that's not enough for Kiddie Park." The confession weakened my case, but I'd avoided mention that Wayne shared my poverty. Parents hate to see their offspring deprived.

"Very well," Mom agreed. "I'll add a quarter to yours, but you'll have to earn it with some extra chore this week."

Neither my inept bargaining skills nor whining were likely to get me a better deal. I accepted the coin with a hasty

## I REMEMBER IT WELL

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"Thanks" and dashed out to meet Wayne. He triumphantly flashed a half dollar at me before snugging it down into his pants pocket.

We were years away from owning two-wheelers, but we had most of the afternoon at our disposal. The ten-block walk was no challenge to our enthusiasm.

The first thing you were likely to observe upon arriving at Kiddie Park was the train. It was the familiar miniature size steam engine, probably modeled on an early 1900s 10-wheeler. The engineer wore authentic garb but had barely enough room for his legs in the abridged "cab."

All the passenger cars were uncovered and had room for two medium size people in each seat. Seats were non-adjustable, unpadded wood, with a choice of facing forward or backward. The caboose had a roof and slightly less cramped seating. Parents usually sat here with children too young to ride alone.

There was a station platform, complete with benches, from which you boarded the train. A uniformed conductor collected tickets and called out the familiar "All aboard!" Then he climbed into the last seat of the caboose and signaled the engineer to proceed.

Circling the outer rim of the park twice, the train gave us a pretty good ride for the money. Just before reaching the station, we went through a long dark tunnel. Signs at the station and at the tunnel entrance cautioned riders to stay seated and keep hands and arms inside the cars. Entering the tunnel, the engineer would give a blast of the whistle to warn anyone who might be crossing the track up ahead. Where the train crossed the park's walkway, there were miniature crossing signals, complete with bells and flashing red lights.

Along the walkway was a booth

where we bought tickets for five cents each. Just beyond this, a circus style wagon served as the confection stand. Here you could buy popcorn, soft drinks, taffy apples, ice cream and a variety of candy bars. Except for the economy size popcorn, everything was a nickel.

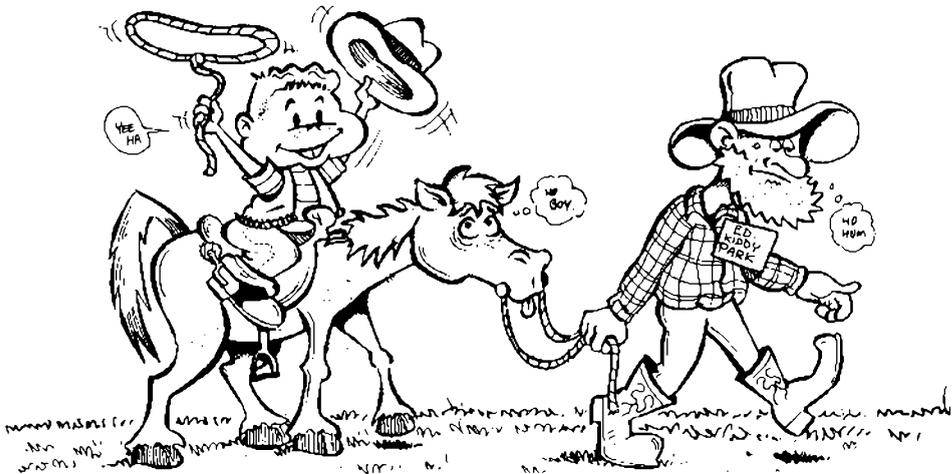
Legend had it that the taffy apples were made with crab apples. This apparently was a rumor passed down by one generation of kids to the next, and probably untrue. However, few pintsize customers were willing to risk five cents to find out.

Because it catered to small fry, Kiddie Park had a number of rides that were pretty tame. An assortment of miniature cars, trucks, and fire engines, for instance, accommodated one rider each. Spoke-like rods kept them spaced safely distant from one another as they moved sedately around on a smooth pavement. Similarly, a fleet of two-seater boats made scarcely a ripple as they floated in a shallow metal moat.

The airplane ride was a bit more exciting. Steel arms stretched out from a motorized axis with the planes suspended by chains. Centrifugal force caused the planes to swing outward in a gentle arc as they "flew" around. It was not a lump-in-the-throat sort of thrill; more akin to riding in a fast rising elevator.

The Kiddie Park ferris wheel was only about two stories high. Its seats were completely enclosed by wire mesh. Once the operator latched the door from outside, a kid could not fall out if he tried. Thus the ride lacked that sense of danger, even when your seat was stopped at the top, swinging in the wind.

Two rides were actually adult size. The merry-go-round and the Tilt-a-Whirl. The carousel had the usual high-backed benches in which adults often rode with babes in arms. Preschoolers could opt for the stationary horses,



camels and unicorns. Us big kids naturally preferred the ornately decorated horses that rose majestically (albeit slowly) up and down on poles that poked up through the carriage floor.

The Tilt-a-Whirl, long a staple at most carnivals, has been overshadowed by more awesome rides. But it continues to be an exciting ride even today. Each crescent-shaped car spins completely around on its own metal track. As the entire platform revolves with increasing speed, individual sections undulate, resulting in three separate and simultaneous motions. If several riders synchronize leaning their weight into the car's rotation, you get some real neck-straining spins.

Unfortunately, the Tilt-a-Whirl operated only on evenings and weekends. Riders had to be 12 years old unless accompanied by an adult. There weren't enough qualified riders on weekday afternoons.

That left the pony rides as the top choice for me and most of my buddies. Behind the main park stood a rickety stable and an elliptical bridle path. The latter was surrounded by a white railed fence and looked like a midget race track.

Real live ponies could be ridden around the track for the price of one ticket. The critters were rather sway-

backed and moved at a very leisurely pace. Teenagers or college boys home for the summer escorted each rider around. This was partly for the riders' safety. The grooms always warned kids to keep their hands away from the ponies' faces because they like to bite.

But a guide was also necessary because most ponies needed some leading. They tended to stop and gaze off across the field or nibble grass growing through the fence. On occasion, when no adults were nearby, we could persuade the groom that we had ridden these beasts "hundreds of times," and they'd let us start out unassisted. "But mind you," they'd warn, "don't gallop these colts."

Fat chance. Often as not the pony would take us about half-way around the track, then realize that we had no escort and turn around or just stop and refuse to budge. The groom would have to catch up with us and tug our reluctant mount around the rest of the circuit.

For all that, us would-be cowpokes loved those ponies. From the moment we put our left foot in the stirrup and swung up into the saddle, we became six feet tall and assumed the persona of Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy or whoever was our favorite Western star. If we were lucky enough to be

## I REMEMBER IT WELL

paired with a pony that demonstrated some spirit, we would reach into our pocket for another ticket at the end of the trail and say, "I'll ride again."

When our families visited Kiddie Park, we'd ride anything that our smaller siblings tried. Despite frequent reminders that "Money doesn't grow on trees," parents always bought long strings of tickets.

By ourselves, with only fifty cents apiece, we were more selective. We'd probably head straight for the ponies first. Then a ride on the train. Ten cents probably would go for ice cream and other edibles. The carousel and the airplane were worth one ticket each. Occasionally, when we were old enough to pass for 12, we'd go on a Saturday and take multiple rides on the Tilt-a-Whirl.

Weekdays, though, we'd usually spend the bulk of our loot on alternate pony and train rides. Sometimes we actually returned home with a nickle or a

dime still in our possession. But not often.

In the early 50s the land on which Kiddie Park was located became too valuable for such a modest enterprise. A shopping mall was going up a block south, near Irving Park Road. Farm land on the east side of Harlem had been cleared for a drive-in theatre. At the end of one summer, instead of just closing up, the park was dismantled. The following spring, new buildings started sprouting up. Kiddie Park was history.

Fortunately for kids growing up today, some such parks still exist around the country. In suburban Maywood, a slightly larger version has prospered for many years with a wider assortment of rides that appeal to all ages. Theme parks are great fun, but they usually entail a major trip (and major expense) for the family. The small local amusement parks that continue to thrive are a super treat for little people who haven't yet fallen prey to the Electronic Age.

At lunch with Chuck recently, the conversation inevitably turned to nostalgia.

"I had a terrific dream last night," Chuck said. "My mother was having some ladies over, so she gave me a dollar and told me I could spend the whole afternoon at Kiddie Park."

"That's great," I agreed. "Me, I had an awful dream. I was home alone and the doorbell rang. When I answered it, Marilyn Monroe and Ava Gardner charged in and both started trying to make mad passionate love to me."

"You call that awful," Chuck puzzled.

"Sure," I explained. "There were two of them and only one of me."

"Well, gee whiz," he protested. "I'm your best buddy. Why didn't you call me?"

"I did. But your mother answered and told me you were at Kiddie Park."

Ba Boom (i.e., The End) ■

### VISIT METRO GOLDEN MEMORIES for

- MALTESE FALCON REPLICA
- OSCAR LOOK-ALIKE
- LITTLE NIPPER, RCA DOG
- CELEBRITY STATUES
- ANTIQUE RADIOS
- VINTAGE MOVIES, TV SHOWS
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Museum of Broadcast Communications

## **museum pieces**

Reported by Margaret Warren

Now that the winter snows have melted and milder days are here, plan a visit to the Museum. Drop in during your noon break if you're working downtown. Or bring down the whole family on the weekend to check out the exhibits or view or listen to a vintage program. Remember the admission is FREE!

If you've been telling the kids what television was like in the good old days, bring them down and prove it. View a KRAFT TELEVISION THEATRE from the 50s or a KUKLA, FRAN & OLLIE program. The Museum archives is loaded with titles of favorite programs and favorite performers. In a recent spot check we found a 1968 STEVE ALLEN program with DICK CLARK. There is a 1954 FATHER KNOWS BEST and an episode of IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT from 1951. There are DRAGNET programs, KRAFT MUSIC HALL programs with PERRY COMO and ANDY WILLIAMS shows from the mid-sixties. And moving to 1993, if you were out of town the day of the Clinton Inaugural, tape coverage of that is available too.

If you're a radio fan, you'll want to see the excellent slide program scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 18 in the Radio Hall of Fame Studio. The program, "A History of Radio Broadcasting in Northern Illinois and North-west Indiana from 1910-1992," will be

presented by John Russell Ghrist, author of "Valley Voices."

If you're at the Museum on Saturday afternoons, be sure to catch Chuck Schaden's demonstration of radio sound effects. Chuck begins this informal presentation at 12:50 p.m., just before his Those Were The Days broadcast from the Radio Hall of Fame studio.

Country music has always had a big following, but in recent years it has broken through the Mason-Dixon Line and become a staple in most towns and cities throughout the nation.

This summer and into fall, the Museum of Broadcast Communications will salute the toe-tappers and the downhome folks in a special exhibition beginning on June 12 and running through September 12. It's too soon to announce the stars and the events, but make a note and watch for details.

Later in the year, we'll have an exhibition focusing on the role of the women have played in television. The title is, FROM MY LITTLE MARGIE TO MURPHY BROWN: IMAGES OF WOMEN ON TELEVISION. Anyone who remembers GALE STORM in her Margie creation and these days watches CANDICE BERGEN as Murphy can attest to the fact that times have, indeed, changed! Make a note to join us as those contrasts play out during this September 17 - December 17 exhibition. Stay tuned for details.

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

Chicago, 60602

Phone (312) 629-6000



APRIL, 1943

# NETWORK RADIO 50 YEARS AGO

BY TODD NEBEL

On these pages you will find the complete prime time schedule for a week in April, 1943.

Radio programming changed constantly in those golden days, and schedules such as these offer a reflection of

the choices and offerings during a given week of radio listening.

The schedule shown is a compilation of the first two weeks of April, 1943, a peak time in radio listenership during the months of a network radio season.

The information provided in the schedule was pieced together from four sources: John Dunning's *Tune in Yesterday*, Harrison B. Summers' *A History of Broadcasting (1926-1956)*, and more importantly the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* daily radio schedules.

In the schedule, "Prime Time" is shown as 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and Sunday, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Central Standard time.

The letters at the top of each schedule stand for the network: BLUE, CBS, MBS (Mutual), NBC. If you had been listening in Chicago in April, 1943, your dial for the BLUE network would have been WENR or WLS. The network affiliate for CBS was WBBM. WGN was the affiliate for MBS (Mutual) and WMAQ was NBC's affiliate.

Program ratings appear when a program was heard nationally and was sponsored. We have included the ratings so you may be able to notice how the program rated against others in its own time slot. A "(-)" signifies that the radio program may have been heard nationally or locally but for some unknown reason, a rating is not available for that particular program.

You will notice that this 1943 schedule reflects an obvious war time flavor.

## RADIO'S TOP TEN PROGRAMS

*APRIL, 1943*

<i>Program</i>	<i>Rating</i>
1 BOB HOPE	40.9
2 RED SKELTON	40.7
3 FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY	37.7
4 CHARLIE MC CARTHY	34.8
5 JACK BENNY	33.9
6 ALDRICH FAMILY	31.5
7 MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY	28.3
8 LUX RADIO THEATRE	28.0
9 KAY KYSER'S KOLLEGE	26.2
10 RUDY VALLEE	23.8

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:00	Drew Pearson News (5.9)	Chips Davis, Commando (-)	Symphonic Strings (-)	Jack Benny Program (33.9)
6:15	Edwin G. Tomlinson News (-)			
6:30	The Quiz Kids (7.6)	We The People (9.9)	Your Key To Happiness (-)	Fitch Bandwagon (22.5)
6:45				
7:00	Roy Porter Comment (6.2)	Meet Corliss Archer (-)	American Forum of the Air: Theodore Granik (-)	Charlie McCarthy Program (34.8)
7:15	Treasury Star Parade (-)			
7:30	Inner Sanctum Mysteries (13.3)	Crime Doctor (11.3)		One Man's Family (16.7)
7:45				
8:00	Walter Winchell (16.6)	Radio Readers Digest (12.0)	Stars of Tomorrow (Amateur)	Manhattan Merry-Go-Round (8.7)
8:15	Chamber Music Society (-)			
8:30	Jimmy Fidler (8.5)	Fred Allen (21.6)	Eddie Howard Orchestra (-)	Album of Familiar Music (11.6)
8:45	Dorothy Thompson Comment (-)			
9:00	Goodwill Hour: John J. Anthony (9.4)	Take It or Leave It (15.1)	John B. Hughes (5.1)	Hour of Charm (10.8)
9:15			H. Sanders and G. Savage (-)	
9:30		Man Behind The Gun (-)	True Detective Mysteries (-)	What's My Name? (7.8)
9:45				

# SUNDAY

# MONDAY

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:30	The Lone Ranger (8.8)	Chicago's Brain Battle (-)	John Holbrook News (-)	Music - Stand By America (-)
6:45			Your Key to Happiness (-)	H.V. Kaltenborn - News (17.5)
7:00	Earl Goodwin Comment (6.2)	Vox Pop (15.0)	Cal Tinney: Sizing Up The News (6.0)	Calvalcade of America (13.0)
7:15	Lum & Abner (5.4)		Comedy Capers (-)	
7:30	True or False (8.4)	Gay Nineties Revue (16.6)	Bulldog Drummond (-)	Voice of Firestone (11.6)
7:45				
8:00	Counterspy (8.1)	Lux Radio Theatre (27.0)	Gabriel Heatter News (10.0)	The Telephone Hour (10.8)
8:15			John Holbrook News (-)	
8:30	Spotlight Bands (3.9)		Alexanders Mediation Board (4.1)	Dr. I.Q. (13.7)
8:45				
9:00	Raymond Graham Swing (6.0)	Screen Guild Players (20.9)	R. Clapper News (3.9)	Contented Program (10.1)
9:15	Gracie Fields Show (4.2)		H. Sanders and G. Savage (-)	
9:30	Alec Templeton Time Piano (-)	Blondie (17.0)	Music That Endures WGN Symphony (-)	Information Please (13.9)
9:45	News Reports (-)			

# ≡≡≡ TUESDAY ≡≡≡

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:30	Reminising (Music) (-)	American Melody Hour (7.8)	J. Holbrook (News) (-)	Musical: Mystery (-)
6:45	Treasury Star Parade (-)		Lions Roar (Hollywood News) (-)	H.V. Kaltenborn - News (17.5)
7:00	Earl Goodwin Comment (6.2)	Lights Out (12.8)	Singing Sam (3.8)	Ginny Simms Show (18.4)
7:15	Lum & Abner (5.4)		Clifton Utley News (-)	
7:30	Duffy's Tavern (13.6)	At Jolson Program (14.2)	Hollywood Spotlight (-)	Turns Treasure Chest - H. Heidt (11.7)
7:45			Griff Williams Orchestra (-)	
8:00	Famous Jury Trials (9.5)	Burns & Allen (19.3)	G. Heatter News (10.0)	Battle of the Sexes (10.0)
8:15			J. Holbrook News (-)	
8:30	Spotlight Bands (3.9)	Suspense (-)	Freddy Nagel's Orchestra (-)	Fibber McGee & Molly (37.7)
8:45			Eddy Howard's Orchestra (-)	
9:00	Raymond Graham Swing (6.0)	Testament of Freedom (-)	John B. Hughes: News (5.1)	Bob Hope (40.9)
9:15	Gracie Fields Show (4.2)		H. Sanders and G. Savage (-)	
9:30	This Nation At War (-)	Congress Speaks (-)	Confidentially Yours (6.7)	Red Skelton (40.7)
9:45		Frazier Hunt (News) (5.5)	Petroleum Protection (-)	

# ≡ WEDNESDAY ≡

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:30	Lone Ranger (8.8)	Easy Aces (6.4)	J. Holbrook News (-)	Music - Stand By America (-)
6:45		Mr. Keen (6.9)	Harold Sherman: Your Key to Happiness (-)	H.V. Kaitenbom - News (17.5)
7:00	Earl Goodwin Comment (6.2)	Sammy Kayes Orchestra (-)	Cal Tinney: Sizing Up the News (6.0)	Mr. & Mrs. North (16.6)
7:15	Lum & Abner (5.4)		The Comedy Capers (-)	
7:30	Manhattan At Midnight (7.1)	Dr. Christian (15.3)	Service Mens Show with Jack Holden M.C. (-)	Tommy Dorsey Show (10.0)
7:45				
8:00	John Freedom: Drama (-)	Mayor of the Town: Lionel Barrymore (11.6)	G. Heatter News (10.0)	Eddie Cantor Show (21.4)
8:15			J. Holbrook News (-)	
8:30	Spotlight Bands (3.9)	Milton Berle's Varieties (-)	Soldiers with Wings (Music-Comedy) (-)	Mr. District Attorney (28.3)
8:45				
9:00	Raymond Graham Swing (8.0)	Great Moments in Music (4.0)	H. Sanders and G. Savage (-)	K. Kyeers Kollege of Musical Knowledge (26.2)
9:15	Gracie Fields Show (4.2)			
9:30	Alec Templeton Time (-)	The Carnival (Music) (-)	Northerners: Concert (-)	
9:45	News Reports (-)			

# ≡ THURSDAY ≡

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:30	Treasury Star Parade (-)	Easy Aces (6.4)	J. Holbrook News (-)	Musical: Mystery (-)
6:45	Prarie Farmer - Discussion (-)	Mr. Keen (6.9)	Lions Roar (Hollywood News) (-)	H.V. Kaltenborn - News (17.5)
7:00	Earl Goodwin Comment (6.2)	Gapevine Rancho - Ransom Sherman (-)	Singin Sam (3.8)	Frank Morgan - Fanny Brice Program
7:15	Lum & Abner (5.4)		Hollywood Spotlight (-)	
7:30	Americas Town Meeting of the Air - George Denny (-)	Death Valley Days (5.9)	Ahoy America (Variety) (-)	Aldrich Family (31.5)
7:45				
8:00		Major Bowes Original Amateur Hour (16.2)	G. Heatter News (10.0)	Kraft Music Hall - B. Crosby (23.1)
8:15			J. Holbrook News (-)	
8:30	Spotlight Bands (3.9)	Stage Door Canteen (10.5)	Treasure Hour of Song (2.4)	Rudy Vallee Program (23.8)
8:45				
9:00	Raymond Graham Swing (6.0)	The First Line (Navy Show) (9.3)	Ray Clapper News (3.9)	G. Moore J. Durante (13.8)
9:15	Gracie Fields Show (4.2)		H. Sanders and G. Savage (-)	
9:30	Wings to Victory (-)	Public Affairs (-)	Confidentially Yours (6.7)	March of Time (19.6)
9:45		Frazier Hunt: News (5.5)	Nightcap Yarns (-)	

# FRIDAY

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:30	Lone Ranger (8.8)	Easy Aces (6.4)	J. Holbrook News (-)	Music - Stand By America (-)
6:45		Mr. Keen (6.9)	Harold Sherman: Your Key to Happiness (-)	H.V. Kaltenborn - News (17.5)
7:00	Earl Goodwin Comment (6.2)	Kate Smith Program (17.5)	Cal Tinney: Sizing Up the News (6.0)	Cities Service Concert (7.0)
7:15	Dinah Shore (8.6)		The Comedy Capers (-)	
7:30	Meet Your Navy (-)	The Thin Man (18.5)	Shoot The Works (-)	All Time Hit Parade (17.1)
7:45				
8:00	Gangbusters (12.6)	Authors Playhouse (11.6)	G. Heatter News (10.0)	Waltz Time: Abe Lyman (11.1)
8:15			J. Holbrook News (-)	
8:30	Spotlight Bands (3.9)	That Brewster Boy (13.9)	Double or Nothing (7.8)	People Are Funny (15.6)
8:45				
9:00	John Gunther News (-)	Camel Comedy Caravan (11.6)	Freddy Nagel's Orchestra (-)	Tommy Riggs - Betty Lou (14.2)
9:15	Gracie Fields Show (4.2)		Jimmy Joy's Orchestra (-)	
9:30	Alec Templeton Time (-)		Fddie Howard's Orchestra (-)	
9:45	Elmer Davis News (-)	Elmer Davis News (-)		Elmer Davis News (-)

# ≡≡≡ SATURDAY ≡≡≡

	BLUE	CBS	MBS	NBC
6:30	Message of Israel (-)	Thanks to Yanks (10.1)	J. Holbrook News (-)	Ellery Queen (12.6)
6:45			Lions Roar (Hollywood News) (-)	
7:00	Roy Porter Comment (-)	Crumit & Sanderson Quiz (8.8)	Capital Comments by Arthur Evans (-)	Abies Irish Rose (16.2)
7:15	Boston Symphony Orchestra (-)		Hollywood Spotlight (-)	
7:30		Hobby Lobby (9.4)	Upton Close: News (4.9)	Truth or Consequences (15.9)
7:45		Griff Williams Orchestra (-)		
8:00		Your Hit Parade (17.1)	Chicago Theatre of the Air (-)	National Barn Dance (12.6)
8:15	Ed Tomlinson News (-)			
8:30	Spotlight Bands (3.9)			Can You Top This? (12.3)
8:45		Saturday Night Serenade (9.8)		
9:00	John W. Vadercook News (9.8)		J.B. Hughes: News (5.1)	Bill Sterns Sports (8.4)
9:15	Danny Thomas Show (-)	Groucho Marx Show (11.4)	H. Sanders and G. Savage (-)	Salute To The WAAC (-)
9:30			Confidentially Yours (6.7)	Grand Ole Opry (9.7)
9:45	J. Gunther News (-)	Frazier Hunt News (5.5)	Chicago Sunday Tribune (-)	

<h1>APRIL</h1>			<b>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.</b>			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> 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>				<b>1</b> Boston Blackie Sgt. Preston	<b>2</b> Mysterious Traveler Strange Dr. Weird	<b>3</b> Lone Ranger Duffy's Tavern Magic Detective Lights Out
<b>4</b> Dragnet Jack Benny Cisco Kid	<b>5</b> Hidden Truth Police Headquarters	<b>6</b> Fibber McGee & Molly Sgt. Preston	<b>7</b> Dimension X Pepper Young's Family	<b>8</b> Damon Runyon Theatre Captain Midnight	<b>9</b> Horatio Hornblower Burns and Allen	<b>10</b> The Shadow My Friend Irma Theatre Five Scarlet Queen
<b>11</b> Box Thirteen Life of Riley Six Shooter	<b>12</b> Weird Circle Johnny Dollar-Pt. 1	<b>13</b> Lights Out Johnny Dollar-Pt.2	<b>14</b> Hermit's Cave Johnny Dollar-Pt.3	<b>15</b> Murder By Experts Johnny Dollar-Pt.4	<b>16</b> Escape Johnny Dollar-Pt.5	<b>17</b> Fibber McGee & Molly Tales of Texas Rangers Favorite Story Unsolved Mysteries
<b>18</b> Green Hornet Burns and Allen The Clock	<b>19</b> Lone Ranger Lum and Abner	<b>20</b> Boston Blackie Lum and Abner	<b>21</b> Man Called X Sgt. Preston	<b>22</b> Lights Out Fibber McGee	<b>23</b> Nick Carter, Detective Easy Aces	<b>24</b> Jack Benny Lone Ranger Dimension X Strange Dr. Weird
<b>25</b> X Minus One Red Ryder The Falcon	<b>26</b> Gangbusters Dick Tracy	<b>27</b> Lone Ranger Fibber McGee	<b>28</b> Aldrich Family Lum and Abner	<b>29</b> Academy Award: <i>A Star is Born</i> Charlie McCarthy	<b>30</b> Directors Playhouse: <i>Rope of Sand</i> Fibber McGee	<b>May 1</b> Escape Duffy's Tavern Academy Theatre Bill Stern

<h1>MAY</h1>			<b>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.</b>			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>2</b> Scarlet Queen W.C. Fields Nightbeat	<b>3</b> This Is Your FBI Dick Tracy	<b>4</b> Lone Ranger Fibber McGee	<b>5</b> Escape Tarzan	<b>6</b> Third Man Charlie McCarthy	<b>7</b> Duffy's Tavern This Is Nora Drake	<b>8</b> <i>Celebrating WBBM Radio's 70th Anniversary</i>
<b>9</b> Life of Riley Hallmark Playhouse Dragnet	<b>10</b> Lone Ranger Pepper Young's Family	<b>11</b> Sherlock Holmes Sgt. Preston	<b>12</b> Macabre Theatre Five	<b>13</b> This Is Your FBI Nick Harris, Detective	<b>14</b> Our Miss Brooks Life Can Be Beautiful	<b>15</b> Famous Jury Trials Directors Playhouse Fibber McGee True Detective Mysteries
<b>16</b> Fibber McGee & Molly Jack Benny Burns and Allen Charlie McCarthy	<b>17</b> Escape Mr. Keen-Pt. 1	<b>18</b> Lights Out Mr. Keen-Pt.2	<b>19</b> Witch's Tale Mr. Keen-Pt.3	<b>20</b> Lights Out Mr. Keen-Pt.4	<b>21</b> Hopalong Cassidy Lum and Abner	<b>22</b> Scarlet Queen Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston Philco Vance
<b>23</b> Six Shooter Aldrich Family Gangbusters	<b>24</b> Tales of Texas Rangers You Can Be An Actor	<b>25</b> Escape Captain Midnight	<b>26</b> Lone Ranger Lum and Abner	<b>27</b> Nick Carter, Detective Pepper Young's Family	<b>28</b> Gangbusters Strange Dr. Weird	<b>29</b> Damon Runyon Theatre Bickersons Tales of Texas Rangers Dragnet
<b>30</b> Dimension X Fred Allen Boston Blackie	<b>31</b> Box Thirteen Fibber McGee	<b>June 1</b> Lone Ranger Bill Stern	<b>June 2</b> Nightbeat Dr. Tim, Detective	<b>June 3</b> Bulldog Drummond Lum and Abner	<b>June 4</b> Black Museum Vic and Sade	<b>June 5</b> The Clock Duffy's Tavern Sgt. Preston Hidden Truth

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

## APRIL

**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, APRIL 3rd REMEMBERING NELSON EDDY

★ **NELSON EDDY SHOW** (11-29-44) Nelson welcomes twelve year old Lois Butler for a program of musical favorites including "Something About a Soldier," "Danny Boy," "Russian Nightingale" and "Will You Remember." Robert Armbruster and the orchestra. AFRS rebroadcast. (28:55)

★ **MAIL CALL # 136** (1940s) Nelson Eddy is emcee for this variety program aimed at military audiences. Featured are comedian Jerry Lester, Andrews Sisters, Cass Daley and others. In a sketch, Eddy is a Mountie and Lester is the "Madman of the North." Nelson sings "Song of the Open Road." AFRS. (28:55)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (9-4-44) "Maytime" starring Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald in a radio version of the 1937 film classic. An opera star falls in love with a penniless singer in Paris, but her husband inter-

feres. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (19:01; 18:33; 20:33)

**NELSON EDDY SHOW** (6-2-46) Bob Nolan and the Sons of the Pioneers join Nelson for a program with a western theme. Eddy sings "The Ranger Song," and "We'll Gather Lilacs;" the Sons of the Pioneers sing "Cool Water;" and "Tumbling Tumbleweed." Robert Armbruster and the orchestra. AFRS rebroadcast (30:00)

**OUR SPECIAL GUESTS** will be **GAIL LULAY**, author of *Nelson Eddy, America's Favorite Baritone*, and *Nostalgia Digest* columnist **BOB KOLOSOSKI** who will talk about the career of Nelson Eddy.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 10th EASTER GREETINGS

**PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW** (4-17-49) Alice has invited the girls' school principal to dinner on Easter Sunday. Cast features Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Jeanine Roos and Anne Whitfield. Rexall, NBC. (27:50)

★ **WORLD NEWS PARADE** (3-28-43) Historian-commentator Upton Close from Hollywood and John Vandercook from New York. "Allied air banners fly victorious from the Solomon Islands to Berlin ... Mussolini's balcony exhibitionists duck for cellars as RAF planes roar overhead, withholding their fire because a near miss on Il Duce might mean a direct hit on the Vatican where the Pope convalesces from influenza." Shaeffer Pens and Inks, NBC (14:20)

**YOUR HIT PARADE** (4-10-43) Frank Sinatra, Joan Edwards and Mark Warnow and the orchestra present the top tunes of the week. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (24:32; 11:24)

**MEL BLANC SHOW** (4-8-47) The Chamber of Commerce organizes an Easter Egg Hunt with local businesses supplying prize eggs for the contest. Mel stars with Mary Jane Croft, Hans Conried, Joe Kearns, Alan Reed, Jim Backus. Sportsmen Quartet, Victor Miller and the orchestra. Colgate-Palmolive, CBS. (23:30)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (3-28-43) Doug Edwards



NELSON EDDY

and CBS correspondents around the world. "The big Allied offensive on the Tunisian front is rolling . . . RAF bombers have given Berlin its heaviest pounding of the war . . . American planes have battered Jap bases throughout the Southwest Pacific and enemy bombers have retaliated with raids on our installations in the Solomons. Meat rationing begins tomorrow." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:45)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (4-17-49) Jack prepares for his Easter stroll down Wilshire boulevard. This is the first of the Benny "Easter Parade" shows. Mary Livingston, Phil Harris, Don Wilson, Artie Auerback, Frank Nelson, Mel Blanc. Dennis Day sings "Easter Parade." Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS.

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 17th

★ **FIBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** (3-30-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star with Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. The McGee washing machine is on the blink. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:45)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (4-11-43) Douglas Edwards with Charles Collingwood, John Daly, Lee White and Major George Fielding Elliott. "There's more good news from North Africa . . . American bombers have again raided Naples . . . RAF planes were over Southwest Germany last night . . . and Berlin says the Red Air Force has joined the Allied offensive against the German Homeland." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:55)

**BROADWAY IS MY BEAT** (1949) Larry Thor stars as New York Police Detective Danny Clover in the "Val Dane Murder Case." A novelist is found dead of starvation, surrounded by food! Sustaining, CBS. (27:35)

★ **GABRIEL HEATTER** (4-18-43) Broadcasting on Easter Sunday, the news commentator discusses Hitler, Rommel and unconfirmed enemy claims. "My wire is open for any late word Washington may have on the latest Nazi claims." Barbasol Shaving Creme, NBC. (10:15)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (2-7-43) Hal Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, whose plans to set a wedding date with Leila are foiled by the arrival of her sister and nephew. Shirley Mitchell, Walter Tetley, Lurene Tuttle, Lillian Randolph. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:30)

★ **HITLER'S MOCK BIRTHDAY PARTY** (4-20-43) At Times Square in New York City, Walter O'Keefe is master of ceremonies for a "monster celebration of Hitler's birthday!" Featured are John Garfield, Jerry Lester, Martha O'Driscoll, and Dick Stabile and the orchestra. U.S. Treasury Department, WOR/MBS. (14:45)

**ESCAPE** (1-31-50) "Present Tense" starring Vincent Price with Charles McGraw, Joan Banks, Harry Bartell, Ben Wright. A man, convicted of the ax-murder of his wife, dreams that he has escaped the train taking him to prison and execution. Sustaining, CBS. (28:53)



SATURDAY, APRIL 24th  
23rd ANNIVERSARY SHOW  
"THANKS FOR LISTENING"

As we complete twenty-three years of *Those Were The Days* broadcasts, we fondly remember how it all began on that 1000 watt daytime station in Evanston.

We hope to recall all the fun times we had during those early days with a live, on-the-air WLTD REUNION.

Joining us at the Radio Hall of Fame studio in the Museum of Broadcast Communications at the Chicago Cultural Center will be WLTD alumni BRUCE DUMONT, BILL NIGUT, TED WEBER, MIKE SCHWIMMER, KARL PEARSON, DON LUCKI and others.

We'll present sound clips from many of our broadcasts in those days and, naturally, we'll reminisce about the time we spent together at RadioActive WLTD, 1590, Evanston.

Don't miss it if you can!



# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

# MAY

SATURDAY, MAY 1st

**FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER AND FLYWHEEL** (1991) Third 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. (27:05)

**SOUND OFF #25** (1943) Songwriter-singer Johnny Mercer presents a record request show for servicemen, playing recordings by Tommy Dorsey, Bob Crosby, Harry James and . . . Johnny Mercer! Special Services Division of the War Department. (15:00)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (4-18-43) Still recuperating from his illness. Jack takes in the sun at poolside. Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson. Grape Nuts. NBC. (27:05)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (4-18-43) Douglas Edwards and CBS correspondents report the news. "Allied planes are hurling death and destruction on the Axis

over a wide area of the Mediterranean . . . our own flyers have again bombed Jap targets in the North and South Pacific." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25:35)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (3-14-43) Hal Peary, as Gildy, struggles with his income tax and conscience. Walter Tetley as LeRoy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Lurene Tuttle as Marjorie, with Ben Alexander as Marjorie's boyfriend and Frank Nelson as Gildy's conscience. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:20)

★ **MADAME CHAING KAI-SHEK** (4-4-43) From the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, California, the "much-publicized final address on her American tour of China's first lady Madame Chaing Kai-Shek" who presents a dramatic narrative of the WWII fight between China and Japan. MBS. (23:00; 14:35)

SATURDAY, MAY 8th

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (11-14-48) When neighbor Thorny invites David and Ricky to spend a night in a log cabin, Ozzie and Harriet look forward to a quiet night at home. John Brown as Thorny, Tommy Bernard and Henry Blair as David and Ricky. International Silver Company, NBC. (29:57)

**A LIFE IN YOUR HANDS** (7-24-52) "Eddie Phillips Escapes Prison" starring Carlton Kadel as Jonathan Kegg. An "earwitness" helps solve a murder. George Stone announces this Chicago-originated program. Sustaining, NBC. (30:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-6-43) Molly thinks it's Spring Fever, but Fibber's feeling ill and wants to call Doc Gamble. Jim and Marian Jordan as the McGees, with Arthur Q. Brian as Doc Gamble. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:45)

**THIS IS OUR ENEMY** (1940s) A "program of truth . . . about our enemy. This U.S. propaganda effort tells "the story of a 'great slip-up,' a big mistake our enemy made because of something he doesn't understand: the valor of the human spirit." Narrated by Frank Gallop. Sustaining, MBS. (29:15)

**ART HELLYER SHOW** (11-14-55) Excerpts from veteran Chicago broadcaster Art Hellyer's morning program of records, zany voices, sounds, etc. Includes a news segment by Howie Roberts. Among participating sponsors are Robert Hall, Crosstown Motors, Pepsi Cola, Steinway-Ford Hopkins Drugs, Miller HiLife Beer. WCFL, Chicago (26:25)

**OUR SPECIAL GUEST** is **ART HELLYER**, who will reminisce about his long radio and television career

SATURDAY, MAY 15th

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-16-43) Doug Edwards, Charles Collingwood, Eric Sevareid, John Daly with news reports from around the world. "Swarms of Allied planes are roaring across the (English) Channel today to strike new destructive blows at German-held Europe . . . In the Pacific, the Japs have made heavy air raids against Allied New Guinea." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25:00)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (3-28-43) It's springtime in Summerfield, and Water Commissioner Gildersleeve has Spring Fever. Hal Peary, Shirley Mitchell, Arthur Q. Brian, Earle Ross, Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Lurene Tuttle. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:45)

★ **VICE PRESIDENT HENRY A. WALLACE** (5-15-43) On "I Am An American Day," Roosevelt's vice president makes his first public address since his return from South America. He speaks from Central Park in New York City to honor all the new citizens of the United States. Wallace is introduced by N.Y. Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia. CBS. (17:35)

★ **GI JIVE #882** (1940s) GI Jill spins the tunes for military listeners around the world. Recordings by Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman Quintet, Pied Pipers, Duke Ellington. AFRS. (13:55)

**FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER AND FLYWHEEL** (1991) Fourth program in the series of reenactments from the 1932 Marx Brothers radio show which starred Groucho and Chico. Cast features Michael Roberts, Frank Lazarus and Lorelei King. BBC. (26:59)

★ **WINSTON CHURCHILL** (5-19-43) The British Prime Minister speaks before a joint session of the United States Congress (for the second time since Pearl Harbor) offering a detailed report on the war. He is introduced by Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. CBS and ALL NETWORKS. (31:15; 28:35)

SATURDAY, MAY 22nd

**THE BIG SHOW** (4-8-51) Tallulah Bankhead is Mistress of Ceremonies for the last big variety series on radio. From New York, Tallulah welcomes guests Fred Allen, Portland Hoffa, Jimmy Durante, William Marshall, Vivian Blaine, Jane Morgan, and Rudy Vallee. There's lots of entertainment packed into this 90 minute program. Durante gets English lessons; Jane Morgan sings; Fred and Portland discuss orchids; Vivian Blaine, star of "Guys and Dolls" on Broadway, sings; Rudy sings "Whiffenpoof Song"; and lots more. Sustaining, NBC. (28:15; 29:55; 26:30)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-23-43) Doug Edwards, Bob Trout, Bill Downs, Walter Kerr, Larry Lesueur, Webley Edwards report the news. "Japanese bombers have made an unsuccessful attack on American warships off Attu in the Aleutians . . . In the Mediterranean, Allied planes have continued their non-

stop bombing of Axis airfields in Sicily and Italy." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-13-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star in the first program of their ninth year on the air! Fibber's Uncle Sycamore is going to be on the radio and the McGees are waiting for the program to begin. Frank Nelson appears as the radio announcer. Cast includes Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:45)

**SUSPENSE** (1-13-49) "Too Perfect Alibi" starring Danny Kaye as a murderer who has 35 people say he could not have been at the scene of the crime. AutoLite, CBS. (30:00)

SATURDAY, MAY 29th  
BOB HOPE'S 90th BIRTHDAY!

★ **COMMAND PERFORMANCE #123** (1940s) Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra break into a "Women Only" edition of Command Performance, disrupting the efforts of Connie Haines, Lena Horne and Shirley Ross. AFRS. (29:15)

**BOB HOPE 60th BIRTHDAY SPECIAL** (6-29-63) Hugh Downs presents a special broadcast on the occasion of the comedian's 60th birthday, his 25th year with NBC. Offered are clips from past Hope radio appearances and comments from friends and fans of Ol' Ski Nose: Jimmy Durante, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Fibber McGee, Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny, Jerry Colonna. Bob and his wife Dolores sing "Silver Bells." Wynne's Friction-Proofing, NBC. (30:30)

**SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE** (4-3-49) "The Ghost Breakers" starring Bob Hope with Shirley Mitchell and Sheldon Leonard. Radio version of Hope's 1940 film comedy, directed by George Marshall. A radio reporter travels to Black Island, inhabited by zombies and ghosts. Sustaining, NBC. (30:00)

★ **MAIL CALL #140** (1940s) Judy Garland is emcee for this letter to the troops. Bob Hope heads the guest list which includes Carmen Cavallaro, Merry Macs, Paula Winslowe, Frank Nelson. AFRS. (28:55)

★ **GI JOURNAL #111** (1940s) Bob Hope is Editor-in-Chief for this edition of the Journal. Hope's "assistant" Fred MacMurray joins Mel Blanc, Olga San Juan and Linda Darnell. AFRS. (25:50)

**OUR SPECIAL GUEST** will be movie historian **BOB KOLOSOSKI** who will join *TWTD* Guest Host **KEN ALEXANDER** for this on-the-air celebration of BOB HOPE'S 90th birthday.

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One Man's Family  
Breakfast Club 60th Anniversary

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**ART HELLYER**

## Radio's Hard-Working Nice Guy

BY JOHN RUSSELL CHRIST

Older radio listeners often ask, "Where have all the good songs gone?" The answer is, find Art Hellyer on the radio dial, and you'll find not only some good music, but the same friendly voice that has been entertaining Chicagoans for over forty years.

Art Hellyer sincerely has been blessed, having been a part of Chicago's most interesting radio era, the 50's and 60's. But then again, he has also felt the industry's sometime cruel turnovers and tragedies. One such incident rendered Art a debilitating injury at the hands of a New Year's Eve reveler in 1967. He's also been fired several times.

Hellyer's den is a wall to wall panorama of Chicago Radio History which stars Art himself in a variety of ads, pictures, and news clippings. He has pitched more cereal, gasoline, beer, and other sundry products than our population could use in a lifetime.

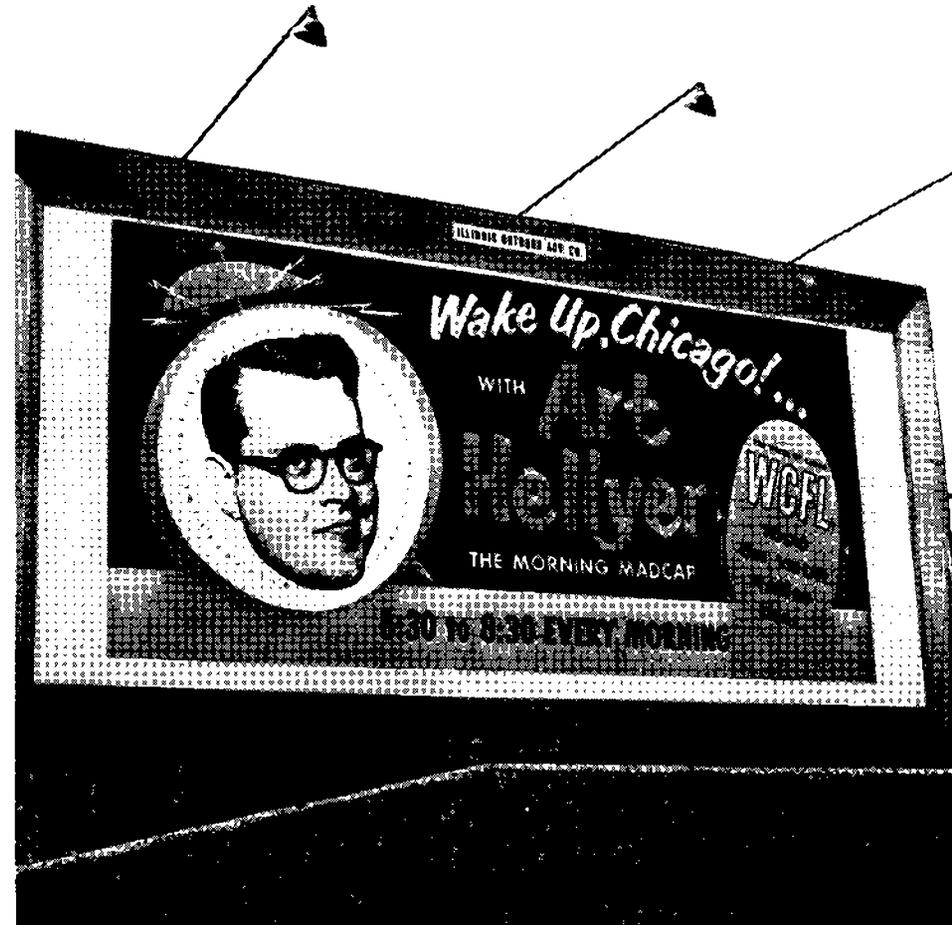
Hellyer's history marks a time, when most everything was either live or on transcription, mechanical or make believe. Union musicians, not disc jockeys actually spun the records. Back then there were no tapes, but there were rules and Art managed to bend most of them.

Art is the type of person that one could sit down and listen to all day. Today he is more comfortable when he stands, as he delivers an endless monologue of radio yarns for anyone who loves radio as much as he does. Many of the antics and experiences that Art has pulled on the air, have become standard operating procedure today. He was one of the first major Chicago disc

jockeys and capitalized on it. Who would think of giving time during the morning rush hour, one hour ahead all morning as an April Fool's Day prank? . . . or advertising a non-existent product — (SLURPS) that is guaranteed to remove rust from someone's iron-rich bloodstream?

Hellyer started in radio in 1946, and would later work at Chicago's WBBM, known as the "Showmanship station" in the 1940's. While being groomed for this prestigious plateau in his dedicated career, he had to first do what most aspiring announcers do, start out in some small remote area far from the glimmer and glamour of large big city audiences. CBS announcer Bob Cunningham helped him get started.

A star outfielder for the 1945 National Championship Air Force Baseball Team, Hellyer gave up a possible athletic career to go into broadcasting. It was a decision he, his wife Elaine, and their five children never regretted. Besides baseball, broadcasting has always been in his blood. Art's father, a successful lawyer and DuPage County Treasurer in the 1930's, gave young Art a small public address system. With it, Art amused his neighbors with his pretend programs and characterizations. This interest led to a job while in the service at KOB, Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1946, and later with WKNA in Charleston, West Virginia. Hellyer recalls signing on the new station with a morning newscast read from newspapers. The janitor had turned off the teletype machine the night



before thinking that he was saving the station some electricity.

Early programs at WKNA featured a well-watered musical group that Art performed with called, "Slim Dry and the Carolina Hillbillies." Salaries ranged from 35 cents to 45 cents an hour there and at WMRO in Aurora, Illinois. Hellyer became one of four announcers to work for owners Martin O'Brien and Vince Coffey, who would later become household names. The others were organist Ken Griffin, Los Angeles Lakers sportscaster Chick Hearn, and Chicago TV newsman John Drury.

At WMRO, Hellyer received an on-the-air audition requiring him to read

the noon news. "If I like you, you're hired," intimidated O'Brien. After reading the newscast, Art spent the rest of the day and the next year there, often serving as Ken Griffin's announcer, doing remotes, and reading bowling scores. Midway in the afternoon during a split schedule, he fished for carp in the nearby Fox River, then threw them back, just to pass the time, until his late afternoon hours began.

By 1948 Hellyer had moved on to WOWO in Fort Wayne, Indiana and WMAN, WISN, and WMIL in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The talented Hellyer, with his friendly resonant voice, landed another job doing midnights at WCFL

## ART HELLYER

in Chicago. His new late night program was called, "The Outer Drive."

Listeners spinning the radio dial during the 1950's and 1960's could easily find Art. He did programs for most of the Chicago radio and TV stations. It was easy for the city's dial twisters to find him, but it took much more commitment to fulfill all the air time purchased for him by his agency. Most programs were recorded on transcription discs and had to be hand-delivered to the stations. A cue sheet and play list were included with each program. Janitors, elevator operators and cab drivers were slipped regular gratuities to make sure Art made all his daily connections. On one occasion Art leaped over a five foot span of the partially stuck open State Street Bridge just to make one of his broadcasts on time.

If he wasn't busy beating other crosstown personalities in the annual celebrity go-cart race at O'Hare Stadium, he was busy racing around town to his next assignment. It was probably to his "Downtown Nash" program on WMAQ, or to do some commercials or booth announcements for CBS or WGN-TV. (Hugh Downs of ABC-TV's 20/20 was his announcer at WMAQ).

These air stints led to his top ranked "Morning Madcap" program on WCFL which was number one in listenership from 1950-1957. Hellyer was joined by his long time record turner friend Lenny Kaye, who was the "unspoken star of the show." The pair often used out of context "voice drop-ins" by celebrities for comical affects on the program. Quoting the late Mayor Daley, Hellyer recalls thanking him for stopping by today which was followed by an audio cut, perceived to be the mayor saying, "There's no light in the men's room!" Hellyer had a good rap-

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**DOWNTOWN**  
With  
**HELLYER**

**SATURDAYS  
1:00 P.M.**

**SUNDAYS  
11:00 A.M.**

CALL 670 ON YOUR

port with the late mayor from doing the "Marriage License Show," on WGN.

Sometime's Art's work was not as funny, especially during live TV commercials that were flubbed. One particular spot advertised a 144 piece set of exquisite china. When one of the pieces accidentally fell and broke on camera, Hellyer remarked, "Oops, it's now a 143 piece set." Another live spot featured a scale model window and screen combination. As the features of the product were being explained by Hellyer, the window refused to operate properly, prompting Art to stick his hand in the picture to unjam the window. People thinking the window was full sized in the commercial wrote in wanting to know just how big Hellyer's hand really was.

From 1953-1955, Art relived his enjoyment of baseball serving as Bob Elson's color man and pre-game show host. These broadcasts featured colorful interviews with some greats of the game including Bob Feller, the sometimes "articulate" Yogi Berra, and

ageless Yankee manager Casey Stengel. Berra known for his one-line double-talk blunders, was once introduced after a car commercial. Without thinking, Yogi announced on the air, "I don't drive 'em, (the advertiser) them's junks, I drive Cadillacs." Stengels' contribution was a bit more philosophical stating, "Being hired is the first day on the road to being fired."

Hellyer already knew what that was like. Legitimate and sometimes pretentious pranks got him into trouble. At one station he announced the private phone number of the station owner, urging listeners to call and "cheer the old man up." Another station owner disliked Art's name and wanted it changed. So Art signed off identifying with two well-known city landmarks, "This is Ambassador Drake with the news." At WBBM, he was once fired for disobey-

ing the station's dress code, wearing an expensive turtleneck sweater to protect his throat instead of the required suit and tie, one winter night.

But Art always found another job, and after his successful stint with WCFL, he soon returned to freelancing appearing on so many stations each week, that the IRS, couldn't keep track of him. They requested a detailed account of how Art could be on so many stations at once and keep up with such a definitive schedule. What they got was a minute by minute report of Art's exhausting daily routine, appearing live, or delivering discs, as laid out by his agency. It included all parking tickets and what he had for lunch on each day.

As busy as Art was, he still had time to emcee "It's In The Name," a popular word game show on WGN-TV in 1958



ART HELLYER with his longtime friend and record turner LENNY KAYE in a gag photo to promote Hellyer's zany morning show on WAIT.

## ART HELLYER

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with Carmelita Pope. Finally, after being torn from his family by his 200 weekly appearances on radio and TV, Art left for an unplanned vacation just to get away for a while. It was soon afterwards that his busy schedule resumed, rushing from his Skokie home to do the midnight news on WBKB-TV, channel 7 (1959), The "Supper Club," on WBBM (1961), and "Memory Lane," on WOPA-FM (1966).

Art continued to be live on one station, and on tape across town somewhere else. This rigorous schedule was to continue for several more years. His secret of longevity is probably good clean living (he has never used expletives on the air), an understanding wife, and lots of luck.

But luck was to run out in 1967. His coverage of the annual New Year's Eve countdown in front of the Chicago Theatre was marred by an insidious character who attacked Art on network TV.

Just before midnight, recalls Hellyer, some unknown person (even to this day), came out of the crowd viciously assaulting him from behind. The perpetrator, a young well-dressed man, punched and kicked Hellyer rendering him helpless on top of a nearby parked Corvette.

"Get Art," someone yelled, as even the program's producer was being whisked away by the wild crowd. Hellyer's assailant quickly evaporated into the crowd and was never seen again. "The guy succeeded in what he intended to do," remorsees Hellyer, "to get on National TV by assaulting someone."

Before the broadcast Art was warned that he would be out there with "animals." Future similar remote broadcasts now always isolate spectators from the announcers because of the incident. That night, Art Hellyer traded



his \$17.50 fee for a nightmare of lifetime injuries. He attempted to keep up his exhausting schedule until one afternoon, he found himself clinging in pain to the side of the Lincoln Tower Building. Several discs in his back were unrepairable, requiring surgery and regular traction. During his recovery, he taught broadcasting from a wheelchair at several schools.

Many students were inspired and so was Hellyer himself, who again entered broadcasting doing anonymous commercials, including hot dog taste tests, later taking a regular spot at WLS-FM in 1969. In a short time Art was number one along with colleagues Mike Rapchak, Ernie Simon, Steve Hodges, and Bob Larsen from his old WKNA days. Chicago Blackhawk PA man Harvey Wittenberg was the program director who pulled all the MOR music, but it was the seasoned jocks themselves who made the station what it was.

About a year later the station's New York headquarters had opted for a new "rock" format (Doctor Love) and presented figures that boasted higher ratings than Hellyer's widely followed



ART HELLYER and his wife, "the lovely" ELAINE in a morning show from their Skokie home on stations WEAW, Evanston; WRMN, Elgin; and WTAQ, LaGrange.

morning program. "I've got a following," Hellyer bitterly remarked to *Sun Times* columnist Ron Powers. "I didn't even get a good-bye from the new station boss." It was inevitable that Hellyer and others were to get the axe by station management who were busy swinging the gigantic FM door open to young adult audiences. Only Hellyer hastened station action, by expressing his displeasure over the air a week before his expected termination. He disagreed with the management's audience figures stating, "I resent that piece of material put out by the people upstairs." Station management didn't seem swayed even after program director Harvey Wittenberg had pointed out that Hellyer had went from fifth to first in ARB ratings in a year and a half.

In his swan's song the embattled announcer commented several times

during his last two hours on the air criticizing the station's move. But in the end ABC cleaned house, sweeping out Hellyer and others who had "lost to love."

Yet Hellyer refused to give up. The success of his time at WLS-FM led to a reunion with another long time Chicago favorite Eddie Hubbard at WJJD in 1982. Considered unprofessional by WLS management, WJJD had no problem acquiring Hellyer and encouraging him to again return to the days of old, only this time, it was slightly toned down. This reunion spawned memories that Hubbard and Hellyer share in their earlier radio years; they played the same music, wore the same clothes, but both had become inevitably older. It was another stop along memory lane for Hellyer who remarked in a 1982 *Chicago Tribune* article: "Each time I became

## ART HELLYER

number one in this town. I really had the feeling that I was indispensable to that station, and that the advertisers would pull out if I were fired. When I did get fired, the next day someone was working in my place and business went on as usual." The industry continued to march on leaving behind its earlier voices, including one "Tired American."

The "folksy nostalgia" that Hubbard and Hellyer brought to WJJD lasted about two years. A plan to collect all the old time Chicago radio personalities to buy and program the station failed. Hubbard went to the Satellite Music Network. Hellyer, later came to dislike the city, its traffic and problems, coming back only to visit his old record turning pal Lenny Kaye (Doctor K) for an appearance on Chuck Schaden's WBBM program on June 12, 1988. Kaye worked with Art at WBBM, WCFL, WAIT, WLS-FM, and WOPA-FM.

In 1985, Hellyer's talent's reached skyward projecting over several time zones as the voice on Satellite Music Network's "Stardust" format, from their former Mokena, Illinois studios.

Hellyer then followed SMN manager Ralph Sherman to WJOL in Joliet where he continues to conduct his successful Saturday program as in his old Chicago radio days. The show features the humor and music that Art's many listeners have continued to enjoy over the years, touching on special holiday presentations and poetry.

Why does Art travel out to this small station each week? He merely replies, "I love radio. Here I can do the kind of show that I want to do, free of formats, and restrictions." If he wants to play two Nat King Cole or Frank Sinatra records back to back, he can in Joliet, but probably not in Chicago. His show often features vintage music, comments and interviews.

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**ART HELLYER** proudly displays the award presented to him by faithful listeners to his current show on WJOL, Joliet.

Appearances over the years on WIND, WMAQ, WOPA, WLS-TV, WGN, WBBM, WAIT, WLS-FM, WAAF, and WJJD are pleasant memories now for a man who has devoted his entire life to the industry. Glimpses of the past have earned a decisive spot on the walls of honor in his Naperville home, symbolisms of the times when life was simpler and radio was closer in tune with personalities than music formats. ■

*Ed. Note: This article is reprinted from Valley Voices, A History of Radio Broadcasting in Northern Illinois and Northwest Indiana, 1910-1922 by permission of the author. The book is available for \$33.50 postpaid from JRG Communications, P.O. Box 1073, Dundee, IL 60118. Art Hellyer can be heard Saturdays from 9 am to 2 pm on WJOL, 1340 AM, Joliet, Illinois.*

*Ken Alexander  
Remembers . . .*

## *The Radio*



Just for fun, take a mental inventory of all the radios in your household — all the radios. Clock-radio(s) in the bedroom(s)? Check. Any Walkman-types? Count them in. A small portable with telescoping antenna? Include it too. Any young people with boom-boxes? Talley 'em. Have a cable TV hookup that feeds FM into your home? That counts. Or a fancy stereo system that incorporates a tuner? Don't forget the basement and the kitchen. And what about the car or cars? If you have any sets that aren't in working order but could be fixed, include them in your count — they're still radios.

I don't know how many radios the average American household has, but I thought it might be interesting for you to know how many are in your household.

During radio's Golden Age — at least during the 1930s — the number of radios in our household and, I suppose, in a large portion of American households, was one. Of course, there were no transistors then. There were portable radios, but they employed vacuum tubes, which made the sets bulky; they could hardly be carried in one's pocket. Some autos were equipped with radios, but a much smaller percentage of people owned cars than do today. So, many households had just one radio, and it was referred to, simply, as "the radio."

Many families had cathedral-style radios, whose place was atop a table or a desk. Other families owned console models. These stood on the floor and often were the focal point of the room. Such a radio was the home entertainment center. It may have been made by Philco or Zenith or Scott or Kellogg or Atwater-Kent or any one of a number of radio manufacturers. Besides being the provider of marvelous entertainment and useful news and information for the family, it was also a beautiful piece of furniture. A family may have owned only one radio, but *what* a radio.

Our radio was a console model made by RCA circa 1927, the year of my parents' marriage. I imagine that my parents must have bought it soon after their wedding, because there was no way they could have afforded to buy so expensive an item once the Great Depression began.

The console stood about four feet high, was about two feet wide, and had a depth of about eighteen inches. There were two doors on the front; when opened, they revealed the tuning dial, four control knobs, and, below, the speaker grille. The top of the cabinet was hinged at the back. When it was raised, a record-changer was revealed, for our set was a radio-phonograph combination.

The changer played only 78-r.p.m.

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## THE RADIO

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records, of course; they were the only kind available. The tone arm was heavy, partly because the pickup cartridge contained a horseshoe magnet that alone must have weighed a couple of ounces. (Some modern cartridges track at less than a gram.) The needle — we didn't call it a stylus then — was made of steel and was inserted in an opening in the pickup and secured by a thumbscrew. It needed to be replaced after playing several record sides.

The cabinet was a fine piece of work. First of all, it was made of hardwood. There was no Masonite or Beaverboard or Formica or plywood or veneer — just solid hardwood. What kind of tree it came from I never knew, but it was dense and heavy and it had a satin-smooth surface, which would gleam after my mother went over it with a dustrag sprinkled with O-Cedar furniture polish. The panels were so well matched as to pattern that, when viewed from the front, the left half and the right half of the cabinet looked like mirror images of each other. There was ornamental carving typical of the style of the period. Even the control knobs, which also were of wood, were carved with a rosette design on the face of each.

Compared with today's home sound systems, our radio would have received a low mark for fidelity of reproduction. It didn't have the quality we call presence. The overtones of a violin weren't audible. The oboe lacked its characteristic bite. A cymbal crash had no sheen. But musical programs were truly satisfying; we could understand every word spoken on the dramatic and comedy shows; and all the wonderfully evocative sound effects were realistic enough to produce the intended chuckles or chills. Our radio was state-of-the-art for its time.

All during the 1930s and '40s, my family listened to that radio. Our dad

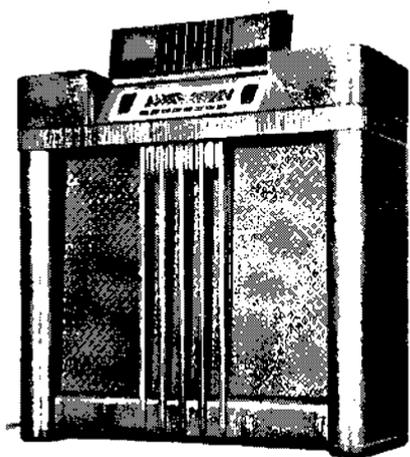
would be sent off to work in the morning to the music of Norman Ross's "400 Hour." An hour and a-half later, I'd leave for school when Hallowe'en Martin, on "The Musical Clock," told me it was time to go. In midmorning my mother would take a break from her housework to hear the day's episode of "Painted Dreams." In midafternoon, another break for "Stella Dallas."

After school and before supper I would sit on the floor in front of the console, following the adventures of Smilin' Jack, Dick Tracy, Captain Midnight, Superman, Orphan Annie, and all the rest.

But it was the period after supper, from seven till ten, that was prime time. There were certain programs that our whole family would listen to — you know the ones — as we sat in chairs around the living room.

There were some evening shows — detective series, westerns, and crime shows — that only my dad and I listened to; my mother and my sister didn't care for them. For "The Lone Ranger," on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, my dad and I would lie on the living-room floor — why, I don't know. And although neither my dad nor I took an interest in sports, we always listened to the heavyweight championship boxing matches. Joe Louis was the Champ





in those days. I can still hear the rough voice of the blow-by-blow announcer, Clem McCarthy: "They're sparring in the center of the ring. Louis leads with a powerful right to the jaw. Galento is down . . ."

On Saturday mornings my sister and I would spend a half-hour in the fantasy world of "Let's Pretend." In the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas we followed Judy and Jimmy and Paddy O'Cinnamon in their quest for the silver star.

On Sunday evenings during the depression, we would listen to the reassuring words of President Roosevelt as he delivered his fireside chats. Then, on a December afternoon in 1941, our programs were interrupted by news bulletins: American ships and planes had been attacked at Pearl Harbor. For the next few years there would be bulletins.

During the war, we listened as Edward R. Murrows, from a rooftop in London, let us hear the air-raid sirens as the enemy planes made their nightly bombing runs. The wartime commentaries of Gabriel Heatter were a must weekday evenings.

Year after year, the voices, the sounds, the music issued from that hard-

wood box standing in our living room. Through wartime, depression, peacetime and prosperity, the radio was there to warn us, to comfort us, to inform us and to entertain us; to make us laugh and to make us cry.

In time, the radio gave out. My dad didn't think it would be worthwhile to have it repaired; besides, it did look pretty old-fashioned. My dad told me I could have the radio to do with as I wished. Meanwhile, we had acquired a Zenith Super Symphony — an AM-FM receiver in a dark brown plastic cabinet — which, being a table model, didn't take up any floor space in our small apartment.

The war had ended. I was out of high school and working and had developed an interest in hi fi. I removed the innards — the radio chassis and the record-changer mechanism — from the old console and threw them away and converted the cabinet to a speaker enclosure. Eventually I bought a larger speaker enclosure and threw out the old RCA radio cabinet.

When I think of that old radio now, and of the role it played in the life of my family during my childhood and adolescence, I wish I could see it and touch it and hear it again. I loved that radio. I was only in my early twenties when I gutted and threw out that beautiful cabinet; still, I should have known better. It was a thoughtless thing to do, and I could kick myself for having done it.

Now, how many radios did you say you have? Let's suppose that one of them — any one, even your favorite one — were to go on the blink tomorrow. And suppose that you were to throw it out. Do you think that forty years hence you would feel bad about having done so?

▲ No? Well, that's because radio has changed. And radios have changed. And perhaps we, too, have changed. ■

4M  
PS

FILM  
CLIPS

## The Unlikely Alliance



By BOB KOLOSOSKI

The list of errors made by Adolf Hitler during the years he spent as dictator of Germany is long and varied. The invasion of Russia, code-named Barbarossa, was perhaps his biggest blunder but his persecution of Jews throughout Europe proved to be a curse for the Fuhrer's plans for world conquest.

Hitler's scientists were aware that an atomic bomb was feasible but could not develop the technology needed to create the ultimate weapon. They lacked facilities, funding and certain key people needed to solve the complicated atomic riddle. The key people were, for the most part, Jewish and safely working in the U.S.A. on the Manhattan Project. The project started when Albert Einstein (an emigre who fled Hitler's Europe) wrote a letter to President Roosevelt describing the possibilities of the U.S. developing an atomic bomb. That was in 1940 and by 1943 120,000 people were actively working on the project that would solve the atomic puzzle and create the first atomic bomb. A few of those scientists and scholars were refugees from Hitler's domain.

The fact is thousands of Europeans fled their homes in the 30's and 40's and sought and found a haven in America. They spoke many languages, were of many religions, and labored at many professions, but all had one goal — the American dream. A few found that dream in the land of dreams —

Hollywood. Hollywood agents had roamed Europe for years looking for talented actors and directors, but Hitler's conquests and persecutions drove dozens out of Europe and over to the golden shores of southern California.

Perhaps the best known emigre was the screenwriter and director **Billy Wilder**. He was born in Vienna in 1906 and after his graduation from the University of Vienna he went to Berlin to work on the city's largest newspaper. He was fascinated by the film industry and in 1929 he co-scripted Robert Sidomak's film **PEOPLE ON SUNDAY**. He stayed with films working as a scriptwriter until 1933 when the rise of Adolf Hitler to the chancellorship of Germany caused Wilder to make a tough decision. He felt that Hitler's rise to power would spell disaster for German Jews.

He left for France, after unsuccessfully trying to persuade his parents and other family members to leave with him, and settled in Paris. There he was able to co-direct a film and earn enough money to get him to Mexico. After a few months south of the border he made his way to Los Angeles. He could not write or read English and for three years lived a very penurious existence. Actor Peter Lorre, another Jewish refugee, allowed Wilder to stay with him for nearly two years.

In 1938 Wilder's fortunes turned for the better when he began a successful and long collaboration with screenwriter Charles Brackett. Brackett was a refined and cultivated man who was educated to be an attorney. Wilder was often cynical and vulgar and together they were pure dynamite. They co-scripted several films including MIDNIGHT and NINOTCHKA (1939), HOLD BACK THE DAWN (1941) and BALL OF FIRE (1942). In 1943 they began a new phase to their careers. They would co-script a screenplay and Brackett would act as producer and Wilder would be director. This formula produced several fine films including DOUBLE INDEMNITY (1945), THE LOST WEEKEND (1946) and SUNSET BOULEVARD (1950).

In 1950 they ended their partnership and Wilder was on his way to over a decade of great movie-making. He co-scripted and directed STALAG 17, LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON, WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION and SOME LIKE IT HOT. In 1960 he won the Academy Award for best director for the comedy-drama THE APARTMENT. He continued to make films into the late 70's as did another famous director who came to the U.S.A. to escape the wrath of Hitler and his gang.

**Otto Preminger** was born in Vienna in 1906 and was the son of the attorney general of the Austrian Empire. He studied law at the university. He also studied acting with Max Reinhardt and decided that the theatre was his calling, not the courtroom.

He went to Germany and in 1931 directed the film DIE GROSSE LIEBE. He found film assignments difficult to obtain after Hitler's rise to power in 1932. Preminger was Jewish and found Germany a dangerous place for Jews. He went back to Vienna and directed the

play LIBEL. It's success, and the spread of fascism in Austria, prompted him to take an offer to produce the play on Broadway. After the play's run he decided not to return to Vienna but to head west to Hollywood.

He directed a couple of "B" films at 20th Century Fox and was fired after an argument with Darryl Zanuck.

The U.S. was now at war with Germany and Zanuck was off in Europe on military duty. Someone at Fox decided to hire Preminger to direct and act in the film version of MARGIN OF ERROR. The bald-headed Preminger became the man the audience loved to hate. He stayed at Fox and was acting producer to the film LAURA when Lieutenant Colonel Zanuck came back to his studio. The rushes completed by director Rouben Mamoulin were very disappointing and Preminger convinced Zanuck to let him take over the direction of the film. The film became a mega-hit and Preminger stayed at Fox another six years.

He turned independent producer in the mid-fifties and directed many films including THE MOON IS BLUE, THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM, and ANATOMY OF A MURDER. The long term successes of Wilder and Preminger was not matched by another premier Austrian Director.

**Fritz Lang** was born in Vienna in 1890 and started his university education in architecture. He was not happy with that career decision and at the age of twenty he left school to travel through Asia and North Africa. He landed in Paris in 1913 and painted watercolors to earn his living. He returned to Vienna at the outbreak of WW I.

He joined the Austrian army and was wounded in action. It took a year for him to convalesce. He wrote short stories and outlines for screenplays during that year. He eventually made his way to Berlin and began working in the

## FILM CLIPS

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German film industry. He became famous "overnight" by directing **THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI** in 1920.

He was a driving force in the German expressionism cinema that dominated that country's film industry in the 1920's. He directed the first of several films featuring the antihero Dr. Mabuse in 1921. In 1927 he wrote and directed the classic **METROPOLIS**. And in 1931 he selected Peter Lorre to star in **M** as the child murderer sought by the police and the underworld of Berlin.

Lang's fame was international and his future as the most popular film director in Germany seemed secure. In 1933 Lang filmed **THE TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE**. The film carried some anti-Nazi themes and Lang was summoned to the office of Dr. Joseph Goebbels, the minister of propaganda. Lang was politely warned that he could no longer independently produce films and would have to work for the Nazi-run film production company. That evening Lang left Germany for France, leaving behind his wife who was pro-Nazi and who would eventually work for the Nazi film company.

He left for Hollywood in 1934 having signed a contract with MGM. It took the studio nearly two years to find a picture for Lang to direct and it was one he wrote himself. **FURY** was released in 1936 and was a critical and financial success, but Lang and the brass at MGM couldn't see eye to eye on his future projects and he was released.

He went to 20th Century Fox where he directed several films including **THE RETURN OF FRANK JAMES** and **MAN HUNT**. During the war years he managed to turn out a few independent productions. The best of the lot was **MINISTRY OF FEAR** released in 1944. He went through some lean years

creatively but bounced back in 1952 with **RANCHO NOTORIOUS** and followed that with **THE BIG HEAT**, **WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS** and **BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT**.

He left America in 1956 to work on a film project in India that was never completed. He went back to Germany hoping to regain some of his earlier fame. He directed his last film **THE 1000 EYES OF DR. MABUSE** in 1960 and then retired from film.

Hollywood benefitted in many ways by the exodus of talented people from Europe to the U.S.

**Peter Lorre** was a Hungarian actor who achieved instant success after starring in Lang's film **M**. He was very popular in German films until it was let out that he was Jewish. He exiled himself to France and then England and became very outspoken on the dangers of Hitler and the Third Reich. He was put on a special death list reserved for the most dangerous enemies of the Reich. Lorre decided that even England was not safe for him and he left for America in 1935. He, of course, became one of the great character actors in Hollywood and will always be remembered as Joel Cairo in **THE MALTESE FALCON**.

Actors **Paul Heinreid**, **Helmut Dantine**, **Victor Francen**, all left their European homes and careers to find work in America.

**Otto Heller** and **Eugene Schufftan** were brilliant cinematographers who left successful careers in Germany and adapted well to behind the cameras careers in Hollywood.

Directors **William Dieterle**, **Walter Reisch**, and **Reinhold Schunzel** all forsook the evils of Hitler's film industry and came to America to live their lives without fear.

In countless ways these refugees enriched the art of movie making and Europe's loss was our gain. ■

# WE GET LETTERS

**CHICAGO** — I just had to write to tell you how much I enjoy your program, especially when you had the Fred Allen Show with Ted Lewis. That brought back fond memories of Ted Lewis. I was a very young girl then, but I remember him. I wish that you would play that tape more often. I also like the mystery shows a lot. I'm a mystery buff and I enjoy them. I don't care for Lone Ranger and other cowboy shows, but I listen to them anyhow. It's better listening to them than all the news that comes on.  
— MRS. LENORE PERRY

**LA PORTE, INDIANA** — Thanks for memories of the past. I know you have fun and we appreciate your sharing this fun with us. While I certainly enjoy the Lone Ranger, I also especially enjoy Fibber McGee and Molly, Great Gildersleeve and Jack Benny. I appreciate when you play the complete broadcast without interruption as it does make taping easy. Since there are a good number of old time radio buffs in your listening audience, is there some way that we could get names and addresses of those in our community? I believe we have something in common and this may be a good opportunity to meet new friends and share some common enjoyment.  
— DAVE WOLFE

(ED. NOTE — We've had many people express the same thought and so we're in the very early stages of developing an Old Time Radio Club for the Chicago area. We'll keep you posted.)

**BROWN DEER, WISCONSIN** — Enjoy *Old Time Radio Classics* and your *Nostalgia Digest* very much. I do wish the Mystery Theatre would be released again. Is there any place where I can trade old time radio tapes?  
— GEORGE VENUS

(ED. NOTE — SPERDVAC, The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy, is an organization of old time radio fans with a tape library open to members and a monthly publication which puts members in touch with one another. Membership is \$25 for the first year, \$15 for renewals. For more information, write to SPERDVAC, Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712.)

**PERU, IL** — I tape your program almost nightly as 12 Midnight is too late for an old timer like myself to stay awake.  
— SAM FOX

**CHICAGO** — I had a wonderful time at your presentation of the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre's "Suicide Club" at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. My husband and I enjoyed the performances of the actors and were able to talk to several of them after the show. I have told a lot of people about your show and your store.

When I work the midnight shift. I listen to your evening show every night and tell the other employees to tune in. I am trying to get my sons, six and four years, involved in listening to more radio shows. They love the Cincinnati Bear and Lone Ranger. I know that many parents would appreciate some good, clean entertainment for their children.  
— MARIE GAWNE

**HINSDALE, IL** — Love your shows. I'm passing the word along. Kevin Shanley's a doll, as are the other *Digest* writers.  
— PAT HURLEY

**BRADLEY, IL** — Although I am unable to listen to your 12-1am spot, I have set up a recording station to automatically record your show each night. I then transfer them to 30 minute cassettes. Every night my wife and I go to sleep with your show! Would it be possible to have more Amos 'n' Andy, Our Miss Brooks and Six Shooter programs?  
— JAMES LANDRY

(ED. NOTE — We'll do our best to schedule more Six Shooter and Miss Brooks shows, but we're not able to play any of the vintage, classic Amos 'n' Andy shows.)

**NORTHBROOK, IL** — Enjoyed your reminiscing about selling greeting cards. I couldn't get my mother to lend me money to start in business with "White Clover Brand Salves" as advertised in comic books!  
— ANN CALLAWAY

**NORTH CHICAGO, IL** — I was pleased with the article on Frank Lovejoy, one of my favorites from radio, movies and TV. I may have missed it, but I was wondering if you would consider playing One Man's Family and I Love A Mystery. The casts in those shows were great. When I visited in San Francisco in the mid '50s, my relatives took me on a drive by the house that the author had chosen for the Barbour residence. The house had been taken off a tourist bus tour as the owners did not appreciate all the traffic in front of their home! It seemed so real to peek thru the gate and see the rose garden. From the time I was four, in 1934, I was a soap opera fan and later when I was in school, I would come home to Mother for a review of the happenings of the day.  
— S.M. STURGESS

**MORRIS, IL** — Thanks for playing the great old radio shows again. There are no bad shows, some are just better than others!  
— JEFF MATTHEWS

**VILLA PARK, IL** — On Saturday, Jan. 30, 1993, as soon as FDR's birthday party ended (on *TWTD*) and you signed off, I switched back to my other favorite station, WJJD. The disc jockey was just announcing that this was the 60th

## WE GET LETTERS

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anniversary of the first Lone Ranger show. If this is true, I am crushed to think that you got scooped by WJJD!

I'm just a couple months short of 65 and our house was into radio way before I was born. My dad told me when I was older that his first radio was a crystal set in the early 1920s, followed by an Earla Kit job that sported two tubes, one detector and one amplifier. The first one I can remember was our Atwater Kent. The "B" batteries were dry cells and so was the small "C" battery. The "A" battery was a regular 6 volt car battery. I remember in the worst part of the Depression our 6 volt radio battery just wore out and wouldn't take a charge. Did we miss any radio? No! Each night for about two weeks my dad would take the car battery out and play the radio till long after I was in bed. In the morning it went back in the car and if the radio was on too long, he'd have to crank it. That radio was more a part of our family than a TV ever was. When I first heard your program from Evanston, you'll never know what a thrill it was to hear shows I never dreamed of ever hearing again. — **ARNOLD M. OLSON**

(ED. NOTE — Thanks for the memories. And, incidentally, we DID mention the 60th anniversary of the Lone Ranger, on our WBBM program.)

**ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI** — I subscribed to *Nostalgia Digest* several years ago, but I never attempted to "pick up" any of your broadcasts. Sunday night, as I was sweeping the dial, there you were, clear as a bell, on WBBM. I'll be tuning you in as often as I can. I imagine reception will drop off during the summer.

— **CHARLIE BENGE**

**AVON LAKE, OHIO** — I live in a suburb west of Cleveland and always had trouble receiving your signal. Since I am very interested in vintage radio I started asking questions on how to improve the signal. One of my friends said I should check out a radio made by General Electric called the SuperRadio Model 7-2887 and, for around \$40, it boosted the A.M. signal so well I can listen to your station like it was next door. You may want to pass that along to your listeners. — **DONALD C. FOX**

**BARRINGTON, IL** — That was a mighty clever ploy by Richard R. Kunz (or some PR rep) at "First & Fastest" historical journal. . . . to insert a very few lines about Jack Benny into the article on electric railways, which completely dominated six of the 32 pages in the February-March *Nostalgia Digest*. For a future issue, why not prevail upon some editor of "Aviation Week" to provide a story about airlines? Jack might have tried traveling by air and we can be almost certain that he at least once SAW an airplane. Final score: (pictures of) Jack - 2, RR cars - 4.

— **DON SURPRENANT**

(ED. NOTE — Actually, we thought Mr. Kunz came up with a clever idea (rather than a ploy) since so much of

Jack Benny's comedy revolved around a railroad station and trains. And we know that lots of our readers enjoy railroading, so we thought the article was appropriate. In fact, if someone wants to write an article about Anaheim, Azusa and Cucamonga in the 1940s, we'd probably want to print that, too! But thanks for your comment. By the way, you forgot to count the photo of Jack on the COVER of the *Digest*. . . . and the 18 Jack Benny programs we scheduled during February and March!)

**SKOKIE, IL** — I'm 12 and I love *Radio Classics* and old TV shows, proving that not only old people like old things!

— **STACEY BREITBERG**

**CHICAGO** — I am, at this moment, listening to *Those Were The Days* as I have done for the vast majority of Saturdays over the past twenty years. Several years ago I wrote to tell you of how, on a Saturday just before Christmas in 1972, I happened to find you, on an old radio without a dial and how I raced to a radio with a dial to find out what station I was listening to because, as I related, the Sun was setting and you were fading fast. WLTD. Here we are twenty years older, you are still broadcasting, I am still listening. Almost EVERY Saturday afternoon for the past twenty years I have "returned with you to those thrilling days of yesteryear" for a relaxing trip down memory lane. I have listened to you on Saturday mornings: *Radio For Kids*. I have listened to you on Saturday afternoons: *Those Were The Days*. I have listened to you on Sundays, in the late afternoon, in the evening, and at midnight. I have heard some programs many times and I still enjoy them. And I still enjoy listening to YOUR program. Here's to the next twenty years.

— **FRANK A. BONELLI**

(faithful companion listener)

(ED. NOTE — It's because of you and those other loyal fans of old time radio that we have been able to stay on the air with the great shows for so long. Words cannot properly express how we feel about the relationship we have with our listeners. But if you'll stay out there in Radioland, we'll keep it up. Thanks for listening!)

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