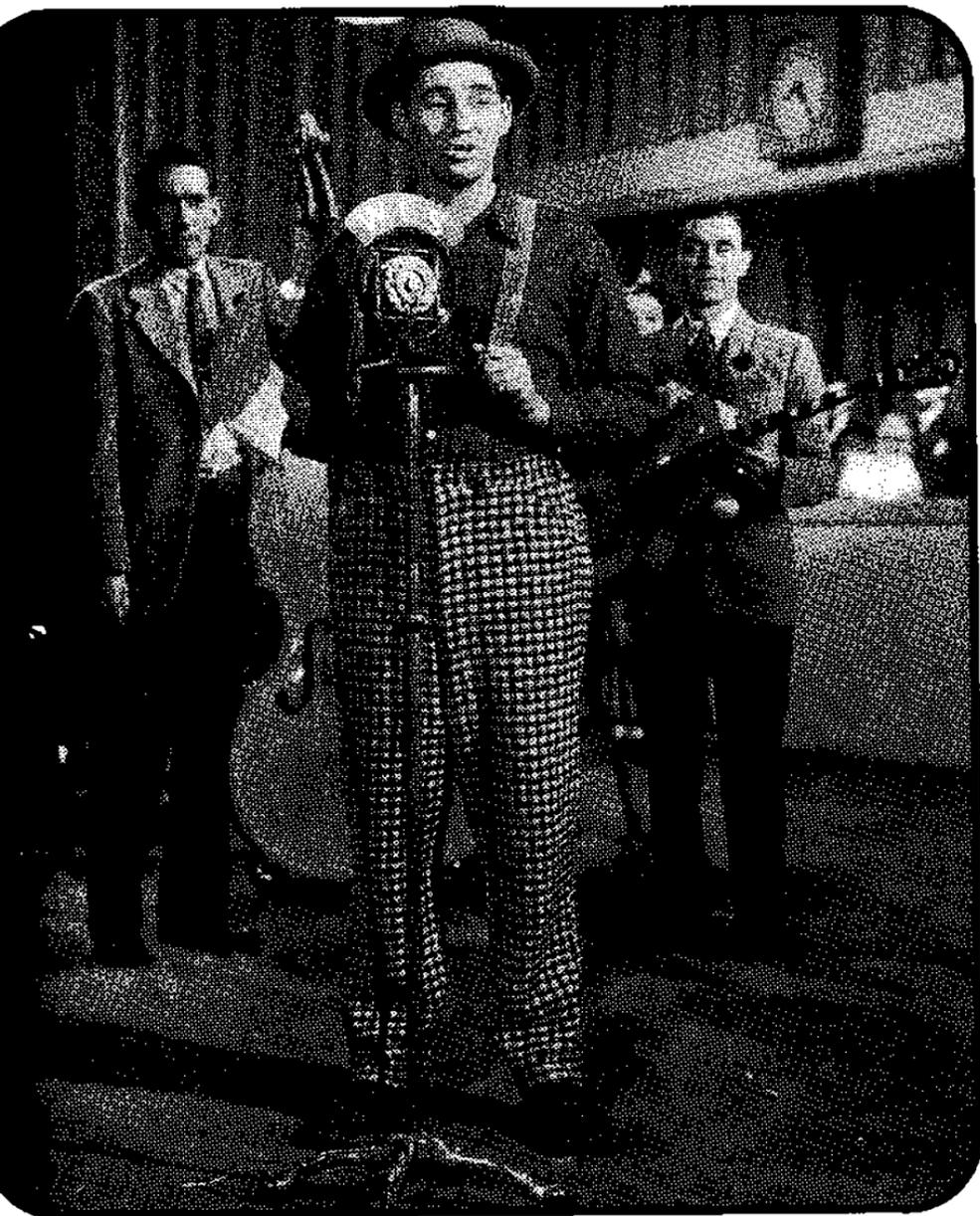


# HUCK SCHADEN'S NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND  
RADIO  
GUIDE

APRIL — MAY, 1994



PAT BUTTRAM AND  
NATIONAL BARN DANCE

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BOOK TWENTY

CHAPTER THREE

APRIL - MAY, 1994

## HELLO, OUT THERE IN Radioland!!

Where does the time go?

We're about to observe another broadcast anniversary.

On April 30th we'll complete twenty-four years of our *Those Were The Days* programs and we'll celebrate during our Saturday afternoon broadcast on WNIB.

A lot has happened during the past year.

It all got off to a good start when we staged a WLTD Reunion. That's the station in Evanston where our old time radio programs began in 1970. We had an on-the-air party in our studio at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in the Chicago Cultural Center. Many of our long-time friends from the WLTD days stopped by to reminisce about the "little station that could!"

In May we celebrated WBBM's 70th Anniversary milestone, including the station's first quarter-century as the all-news station.

In June we were honored to emcee a great party for Don McNeill on the 60th anniversary of the Breakfast Club.

November found us enjoying "An Afternoon with the Great Gildersleeve." Willard Waterman, who starred during the radio's Golden Age as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, came to Chicago along with MaryLee Robb (niece Marjorie) and Shirley Mitchell (Leila Ransom). They treated about 300 fans to a delightful recreation of a Gildersleeve radio broadcast.

In December we completed eight years on WBBM with our *Old Time Radio Classics* programs and in February more than 500 fans joined in to celebrate the 61st anniversary of Jack Benny's 39th



birthday in a wonderful party held in the Preston Bradley Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center.

Of course the absolute highlight of the past twelve months was, for us, our induction into the Radio Hall of Fame. What a great honor it was. To be recognized in such a way means everything to us. We still find it hard to believe.

But now it's time to do the 24th anniversary show and get started on the countdown to our really big milestone next year.

We hope you'll come along with us.  
Stay tuned, and don't touch that dial!  
Thanks for listening.

→ *Chuck Schader*

## NATIONAL BARN DANCE

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In absence, the show was broadcast from the Civic Theater in the Opera House.

In the long Eighth Street Theater run, nearly three million people paid admission. There were two shows each Saturday night, at 7:30 and 10:00 p.m.

A studio directly above the theater stage was used for other shows before the 7:30 start and from 9:30 to 10:00 p.m. when the theater changed audiences. The latter slot was filled in the 1950's by "Hymn Time" with various Barn Dance artists. During this audience change, John Dolce called a square dance on stage, often with Chicago Park District groups he had organized.

In 1930, Bradley Kincaid brought three Mount Vernon, Kentucky natives, Karl Davis, Harty Taylor, and Doc Hopkins, to Chicago to join the Barn Dance. The schoolmates then brought their former school teacher, John Lair, to WLS and they formed the Cumberland Ridge Runners. At various times the group included Red Foley, (who began his rise to fame on the Barn Dance), High Cross, and Fiddler Slim Miller. The Ridge Runners introduced Linda Parker, "The Sunbonnet Girl."

Lair became WLS music librarian, and eventually returned to his native Renfro Valley, Kentucky to found a country music radio and stage show, "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" which continues today.

Linda Parker had her career sadly shortened in 1935 at age 23 by her death from appendicitis, but she is still remembered by fellow artists, listeners, and record collectors.

Karl and Harty wrote landmark songs such as "Kentucky" and "I'm Here To Get My Baby Out Of Jail," both of which were revived by the Everly Brothers in the 1950's.

Gene Autry used the Barn Dance as a springboard to Hollywood during his



**GRACE WILSON**

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tenure in Chicago from 1931 to 1935. He still acknowledges his debt to the show and enjoys reminiscing about it. Smiley Burnette joined Gene for road shows and occasional Barn Dance guest appearances.

Mac and Bob, the well-loved blind harmony team joined the Barn Dance in 1931. In 1926 they had made recording history with their recording of "When The Roses Bloom Again," under their full names, Lester Mc Farland and Robert A. Gardner. Mac's mandolin and Bob's guitar accompaniment influenced many country artists. They are credited with establishing the mandolin as a country music staple with Mac's often imitated style.

Milly and Dolly Good, the Girls of the Golden West, were Barn Dance fixtures in the 30's with their singing and harmony yodelling. They received a fan letter from Patsy Montana, who already had radio and recording experience, and encouraged her to audition for the Barn Dance. This she did during the 1933 World's Fair, from which the Barn Dance and other shows had remote

broadcasts. Patsy met other favorites of hers, such as Mac and Bob, and was introduced to Mac's nephew, Paul Rose. He was Mac and Bob's manager and all around man. Patsy and Paul were married in 1934, and the marriage, like Patsy's career continues to flourish today!

Patsy joined the famous Kentucky string band, The Prairie Ramblers and made many landmark recordings with them. The Ramblers, consisting of Chuck Hurt, Jack Taylor, Salty Holmes, and Tex Atchinson, had elements of gospel, western swing, blues and bluegrass in their extensive work. Patsy's "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart" with Ramblers accompaniment was the first million seller for a country girl singer.

Red Blanchard is best loved and remembered as a comedian in the Barn Dance's post war years. Continuing into the 50's and finally on the Barn Dance revival on television in the 1960's, Red traditionally greeted the audience with his rural humor before the show went on

the air. He was a multi-talented man with Barn Dance roots dating to 1931, when he joined as part of Rube Tronson's Texas Cowboys. Red was the "The Texas Yodeler" (despite Pittsville, Wisconsin roots that all listeners later knew). Red sang, played a fiddle and did guitar instrumentals.

As a child in Chicago, George Gobel (then spelled Goebel) listened to the Barn Dance, sent for the show's song book and learned guitar. In 1932, at age 13, George joined the barn dance as "Little Georgie Goebel, the Boy Yodeler." A ukulele was substituted for his guitar so he wouldn't have to be paid union scale! Gobel grew up on the show, eventually being sworn into the army during World War II on the Eighth Street Theater stage. All his life Gobel's photographic memory recalled all the events of his Barn Dance years.

Lulu Belle and Scotty were North Carolina natives who grew up 20 miles apart and never met until they joined the Barn Dance as soloists. Lulu Belle (Myrtle Cooper) and Scotty Wiseman were married in 1934 and became one of the most beloved of all husband and wife duos. Scotty's composition "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" has been recorded by numerous artists, including Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley and Ringo Starr. Lulu Belle and Scotty retired to the Spruce Pine, North Carolina farm in 1958, but made occasional personal appearances until Scotty's death in 1981.

Henry Burr, "The Dean of Ballad Singers" was one of the most successful recording artists of the 1902 to 1930 period. In 1934, he asked George Biggar for a Barn Dance spot, correctly guessing the audience was the same kind who had bought his records. His World War I hit "A Baby's Prayer at Twilight" was a Barn Dance favorite. Burr continued until his death in 1941.



GENE AUTRY

## NATIONAL BARN DANCE

The Barn Dance went on the NBC network in 1933 with an hour portion sponsored by a new product it helped to establish, Alka Seltzer. This lasted until 1946, with Joe Kelly as M.C. before his Quiz Kids days. The Alka Seltzer portion, with orchestra conducted by Glenn Welty, had more pop music than the locally heard portion. Since most of the surviving broadcasts from the late 30's and early 40's are Alka Seltzer shows, it creates a picture of the Barn Dance as more of a popular music show than it was.

"Are You Ready, Hezzie?" was the famous signal that started a song by the novelty band, the Hoosier Hot Shots. Paul "Hezzie" Trietsch played an elaborate washboard mounted with bells and horns. Charles "Gabe" Ward played clarinet, Hezzie's brother, Ken, played guitar, and Frank Kettering played bass. The Hot Shots also served as accompanist to Uncle Ezra (Pat Barrett)



**BOB ATCHER**

as he recited old vaudeville pieces.

Pat Buttram joined the Barn Dance in 1934, billed as "The Winston County (Alabama) Flash." Pat often recited "A Sleepin at the Foot of the Bed." He remained until his move to Hollywood in the mid-1940's.

Christine, "The Little Swiss Miss" was on the Barn Dance in the 30's and 40's, specializing in Swiss yodel songs and country ballads. Her husband was long time Barn Dance announcer Jack Holden.

New Mexico natives Louise Massey, her brothers, Curt and Allen, and husband Milt Mabie made up Louise Massey and the Westerners. Louise was co-author of "In My Adobe Hacienda." Curt had a long successful solo career after Louise and Milt returned to their New Mexico ranch in 1944. In the 1960's, Curt was musical director of "The Beverly Hillbillies" and "Petticoat Junction."

The Three Little Maids, who joined the show in the early thirties, were Lucille, Eva, and Evelyn Overstays. Lucille changed her name to become soloist and song writer Jenny Lou Carson ("Jealous Heart" is her composition); Eva married Red Foley; Evelyn became a Barn Dance soloist in the late 40's.

The Barn Dance always had a full orchestra as well as the various string bands. Drummer Roy Knapp had a drum school and taught Gene Krupa. Cellist Ted Dumoulin and violinist-conductor Herman Felber divided their time between the Barn Dance and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra! In the post World War II years, violinist Dave Chausow conducted the orchestra, played fiddle with the WLS rangers, and was part of an octet on a album called "Courtly Music of Mendelsohn."

Rex Allen began his rise to fame on the Barn Dance from 1945 to 1949, before moving to Hollywood. First he starred in westerns, later he did voice overs for



THE DINNING SISTERS

Walt Disney. Rex always asked himself, when choosing songs, if the WLS audience would like it.

Long time Barn Dance favorites in the 40's were Wisconsin natives, the DeZurick Sisters, Caroline and Mary Jane. Eventually Mary Jane was replaced by younger sister Lorraine.

Another post war addition to the Barn Dance was Dolph Hewitt, "The Boy From The Hills Of Pennsylvania." Dolph started as a member of the Sage Riders, with Din White, Red Blanchard, and Ray Klein. Soon his role as a soloist was increased. His recording of "I Wish I Knew" was a favorite. Hewitt, a champion fiddler like his father, often played "Listen To The Mockingbird."

In 1949, George Biggar imported Captain Stubby and The Buccaneers from WLW, Cincinnati. They sang a wide range of hymns, country songs, comedy songs, and old time popular songs. The group consisted of Tom "Stubby"

Fouts, Tiny Stokes, Sonny Fleming, Kerry Richards, and Tony Walberg. Tiny was replaced by Pete Kane after Tony's death in 1952. One of their many favorites was "Beyond The Sunset" with Tony's vocals and Stubby's recitation.

WLS had been willing to develop Rex Allen as a new star. However, as Rex prepared to leave for Hollywood in 1949, the station decided the best replacement would be an established radio and recording artist, Bob Atcher. Bob had introduced "Cool Water" and "You Are My Sunshine." He became an important fixture of the Barn Dance as singer and M.C. for the rest of its history. Bob also maintained at the same time a heavy schedule of weekday radio and television appearances.

The beloved comedy duo, Homer and Jethro, came to WLS in 1950. Homer (Henry Haynes) and Jethro (Kenneth Burns) had first performed together at age 12 in 1932. Their many song parodies, such as "Don't Let The Stars

## NATIONAL BARN DANCE

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Get In Your Eyeballs" were always done with permission of the copyright owners. Some writers, such as Frank Loesser, asked them to do parodies of their songs!

Versatile violinist Johnnie Frigo joined the show in 1951. Johnnie divided his time between the Barn Dance and club engagements where he played piano and bass. Today, Johnnie is known as a jazz violinist, but still does country fiddle tunes such as "Devilish Mary."

For many years, there were remote broadcasts from the Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin State Fairs.

The WLS Artists Bureau, headed by Earl Kurtze and George Ferguson, booked the station's talent at fairs, parks, and theaters through the United States and Canada.

In 1950 Mac and Bob ended their partnership as Bob went into religious work. Mac was teamed for three months with Karl and Harty as Karl, Harty, and Mac, before Karl and Harty left the station. Karl continued with WLS as a record turner well into the station's rock era.

As the 1950's progressed, the show continued to average 350,000 letters a year, and strongly resisted the increasing competition of television. However, the rural population was decreasing. The show had always drawn roughly half its audience from outside of Chicago. Eighth Street Theater audiences declined, but capacity crowds could still easily be drawn when the show went on the road.

ABC had wanted to buy WLS for many years, because of its strong clear channel signal. However, Burrige Butler's will forbade his trustees to sell the station within ten years of his death, which occurred in 1948. The management simply did not want to invest heavily in the Barn Dance and other programs as the decade drew to an end. The sale came in March of 1960, and the last WLS National Barn Dance program was

broadcast on Saturday night, April 30th, 1960.

Dolph Hewitt approached WGN about reviving the show, and it returned over WGN on March 11, 1961, as the WGN Barn Dance. ABC refused to release the full name of National Barn Dance. The show featured Arkie, Bob Atcher, Red Blanchard, The Johnson Sisters, (Ruth and Edith) and the Sage Riders. Maple City Four baritone Al Rice was producer, as he had been in the last WLS years. Hewitt's position as the head of the show is not known to many listeners as he left master of ceremonies duties to others. Ratings on the revival were high, but for some reason the number of sponsors did not match the ratings. Possibly clear channel signals were not understood by space salesmen and buyers. A TV version, added in 1963, was sold into syndication and was more profitable to WGN.

The radio show finally off the air in January, 1968 and the TV show closed in April 1969. The WGN era saw the occasional return of LuLu Belle and Scotty as guests and the 40th anniversary show on both radio and TV saw a reunion of Mac and Bob with thunderous applause and "not a dry eye in the house."

Much has been said about the importance of the Barn Dance program as a developer of talent such as Gene Autry and George Gobel. While this was certainly valuable to the show, its endurance was ultimately due more to those who remained for years. Lulu Belle and Scotty had many offers to go elsewhere, as did others. But they liked Chicago, the scene of early success. Scotty cited more practical reasons. They could finish the Barn Dance at midnight Saturday and be in a park in Pennsylvania or Maryland to perform on Sunday afternoon. ■

(ED. NOTE: The final WLS broadcast of the National Barn Dance, from April 30, 1960, will be presented on *Those Were The Days*, Saturday, April 16, 1994.)

*Ken Alexander  
Remembers . . .*

*The A&P  
The National  
The Royal Blue*



In an article in these pages some time ago, Dan McGuire recalled the grocery stores of the 1940's. Dan pointed out some of the differences between the ma-and-pa stores of that era and the supermarkets of today. I have a few years on Dan, and my memories go back to the 1930's. I'd like to share a few of them with you.

The stores were smaller then, and there were more of them. It seems that no matter where you lived in town, there was at least one grocery within a short walking distance. Most people didn't drive to the store; they walked. Or, in the case of a ma-and-pa store, one could phone in the order and have it delivered, probably by the proprietor's son, after school.

Jewel was in business, but there was no Jewel store in our immediate neighborhood. There was an A&P (The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company) and a National. There was also a Royal Blue (these were independently owned stores which belonged to a cooperative). There were also a couple of ma-and-pa stores near us.

Since there were so many stores, people didn't converge on them from several blocks away, as they do today. In fact, you might find that you were the only customer in the place; the proprietor might be the only other person. There was no background music, no bustling. It was quiet in the store.

Self service was not a feature of the old grocery stores. In fact, many of the items were kept on shelves behind the counter, where the customers never stepped. You would tell the grocer what you wanted and he would retrieve each item for you.

When my mother sent me to the store, she would give me a list she had written. When I got to the store, I would simply hand the list to the grocer, who would gather all the items for me.

After all the items had been selected and paid for and bagged, the grocer would look the customer in the eye, smile warmly, and say "Thank you, and please call again."

That was a nice touch, which has all but disappeared. Nowadays, the checker in the supermarket is more likely to hand you your cash register tape and absently say, "There ya go."

Many of the supermarkets of today incorporate drug stores, whose stock in trade may include radios, small television sets, small electrical appliances, socks, gloves, caps, underwear, garden supplies, snow shovels, hardware, light bulbs, motor oil, and many other items. In the old days, the grocery store's inventory was pretty much limited to groceries.

Some of the grocery stores didn't carry fresh meat — for that you went to the butcher shop; for fish, to the fish market; for fresh-baked goods, to the bakery. The grocer had some fresh produce, but

## ALEXANDER REMEMBERS

in the summer we could also buy produce from the peddler, who traversed the city's alleys in his horse-drawn wagon calling, "Freestone yellow peaches — four pounds for a quarter!"

The butcher shop's floor was covered with sawdust. On the sidewalk in front of the shop were wooden crates about a foot high and three feet square, filled with live chickens. The crates were made of slats about two inches wide, with an equal amount of space between them. Attached to the outside of each crate was a trough filled with feed. The chickens would poke their heads out through the space between the slats to eat from the trough.

I happened to be passing a butcher shop once as the butcher came out of the shop, pulled a chicken out of the crate, and carried it by the feet, squawking, with wings flapping, back inside, where he would do what he had to do. The sight bothered me for weeks.

Sanitation was not a high priority in the old grocery. I recall one ma-and-pa store that sold cookies in bulk. If you wanted a half-pound of vanilla wafers, the proprietor would dig into the barrel with his bare hand (a hand which spent much of the day in contact with money) and put the cookies into a bag.

And the flies! I seldom see a fly in a modern supermarket, but the grocery store was a favorite gathering place for the pesky creatures in those days. Some stores had strips of flypaper hanging from the ceiling fan, and a glance would show that the flypaper had been doing its job.

One store had a door with a grille laced with wire, which had enough voltage coursing through it to zap a fly. The door, too, had been doing its job — a fact which was evidenced by the pile of zapped flies on the floor in front of it.

During the Great Depression, it was common to see a sign on the wall behind the cash register reading:

**PLEASE DO NOT ASK  
FOR CREDIT**

I remember one sign which read:

**CREDIT MAKES ENEMIES  
PLEASE — LET'S BE FRIENDS**

Did those signs indicate a heartless attitude on the grocer's part? I don't suppose so. The grocer was a kindly man but he was not rich. He had a family to feed and rent to pay, the same as the rest of us. I suspect that he was allowing a few of his old customers to run up a tab until they could get back on their feet, but so many people were out of work and running out of money that he simply could not help them all.

It was around 1941 that I saw my first supermarket — an A&P on the north-west corner of Madison and Keeler. That store was quite a departure. Here, the customers had the run of the store, pushing a shopping cart up one aisle and down the other, reading labels, selecting whatever they wanted.

Of course, that 1940's supermarket was small time compared with the high-tech supermarkets of today: an acre or more of floor space; a parking lot of equal area; scanners that read the UPC code on a label and print out a description of the item and the price in half a second; talking cash registers that figure the sales tax, give you credit for your coupons, tell you how much change you have coming, and sometimes even print the name of your checker (Kimberly) and "HAVE A NICE DAY."

And the tech is getting higher. A new development is the video shopping cart, which has a computer screen attached to the handle. The screen will tell you what's on sale. It will tell you time and weather. If you don't know where to find the dog food, the screen will tell you which aisle to go to. If you've taken a number at the bakery counter, you may wander through the store; the screen will alert you when your number is about to be called.

The stores are also getting bigger. The supermarket may one day be superseded by the hypermarket. These stores sell not only groceries but just about everything else. They are two or three times as big as supermarkets; they have as many as 50 checkout lanes.

I've never been inside a hypermarket, but I'm sure I would enjoy a visit to one. I certainly like supermarkets. A visit to a supermarket reminds me that I live in a land of plenty and makes me grateful. Supermarkets are bright and cheerful, and there's always peppy background music playing softly. The stockpersons and the checkers and the baggers and the managers and assistant managers are always ready to go out of their way to help a customer. It's a pleasure to shop there.

Sometimes, though, as I'm standing in the checkout lane listening to the talking cash register, the clatter of the shopping carts, and the babble of the voices, I think of the old-time grocer in his quiet store, adding up the prices with a yellow pencil on a brown paper bag. "Put down the 6 and carry the 3."

I know very well that the old-time grocer has faded from the scene and he'll never be back. He was one of a vanishing breed, along with the iceman, the blacksmith, and the elevator operator. But I still remember him, and I think how nice it would be to see his warm smile once more, and to hear him say, "Thank you, and please call again." ■

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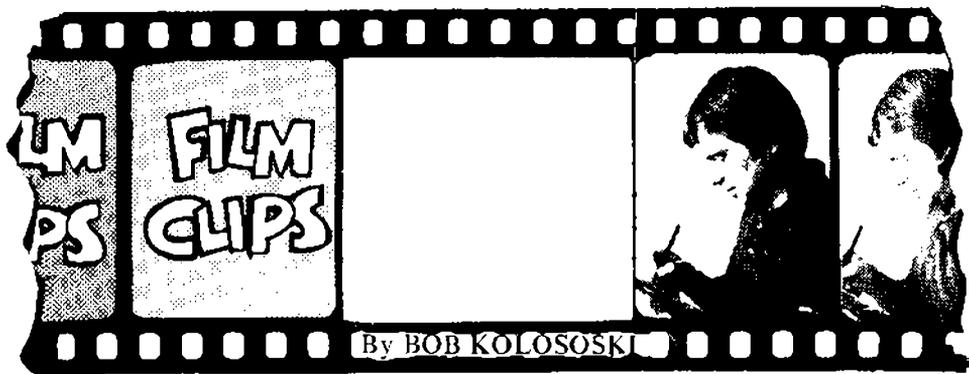
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In every century in every art there is a master who succeeds in excelling at a particular art form. Mozart was a master composer and musician in the 18th century. His brilliant compositions have been admired, copied and enjoyed to this very day. Michelangelo was a master artist of the 16th century who displayed genius in sculpture, painting, poetry and, toward the end of his life, devoted himself to architectural designs. Other examples of such men and women exist but in this century the world of cinema had one man who was referred to as "the master." His name was David Wark Griffith, and the vocabulary of the cinema was born in his fertile mind.

He was born in 1875 in La Grange, Kentucky and even though his father had been a civil war hero and respected physician, the Civil War Reconstruction drained the Griffith family of all their possessions.

Young David grew up in extreme poverty and spent his early adult years merely surviving at a variety of odd jobs. In 1897 he tried his hand at acting by joining the Louisville Meffert Stock Company.

During the next decade he struggled at acting and spent countless hours penning short stories, poems, and plays. *Leslie's Weekly* bought one of his poems in 1907, and he managed to sell his play *A FOOL AND A GIRL*. The play flopped and he decided to give up the stage and try his luck at the infant movie business. He

took his stories to the various studios prevalent in the New York city area. He met Edwin S. Porter, director of Edison's *THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY*, and was offered the leading role in Porter's latest film, *RESCUED FROM AN EAGLE'S NEST*.

With his foot firmly in the door of the movie business, the ambitious Griffith went to the Biograph studio with a trunk full of stories and was hired as a writer and actor. Within a year, Griffith had worked his way into the director's chair and released his first film, *THE ADVENTURES OF DOLLIE*, in 1908.

Soon he was directing all the Biograph productions and by 1913 had directed an extraordinary 448 films for the company. Most of these films were one-reelers, but a fair number were two-reelers and a handful went up to four reels (a reel was approximately ten minutes of screen time). This is still an amazing statistic considering that Griffith wrote nearly all the scenarios for these films.

It was not, however, the quantity of films that earned Griffith respect from his fellow filmmakers, but rather the quality of his productions. Films were pretty stagey and static affairs before Griffith began to display a boldness of style and an instinctive creativity that literally revolutionized the cinema business.

He collaborated with the equally great Billy Bitzer — a cameraman gifted with great technical know-how and an unend-



D. W. GRIFFITH

ing curiosity. Their twenty-five year collaboration was one of the most innovative in cinema history.

Griffith fully utilized and developed the technique of the close-up, parallel action, dramatic lighting, the full shot, intercutting and crosscutting. As often as these devices are used now we take them for granted and little realize that Griffith pioneered these components of the cinema and created his own syntax. He constantly experimented with new ideas such as having the camera move with the action. Movie patrons would seek out a Griffith production knowing that they would be treated to first class filmmaking.

Griffith's subject matter was as diverse as his production vocabulary. He directed Westerns, war dramas, comedies, romantic melodramas, and became a trendsetter by producing films that took a stand on social issues. His *THE MUSKETEERS OF PIG ALLEY* (1912) was a disturbing look at gangs and crime in our big cities.

By 1913 his films and techniques were so widely imitated that he was referred to as "the master" by critics and fellow filmmakers. He was, therefore, disturbed by his bosses at Biograph when they repeatedly turned down his request to produce a film epic of approximately twenty reels. His bosses believed that the American public would not sit still for more than two or three reels.

What convinced Griffith he was right was the film *QUO VADIS?*, produced in Italy and running a full six reels. Griffith persisted and was given permission to produce and direct *JUDITH OF BETHULIA*, a four-reel biblical epic. This film did not put out the fire in Griffith's enthusiasm to produce the greatest motion picture ever made. He knew that to achieve the maximum in his chosen art he had to make a change. He left Biograph and signed a contract with Reliance-Majestic as head of production. He took Billy Bitzer and a few other key technicians with him. The Biograph studio would close the doors a few years later.

While he was running the day-to-day operation of the studio, Griffith was secretly putting together a stupendous production. He had purchased the rights to the novel *THE CLANSMAN* by Rev. Thomas E. Dixon and was combining that story with another Dixon novel *THE LEOPARD'S SPOTS*. The name of the new production was to be *BIRTH OF A NATION*. The film's budget was to be an unheard of one hundred thousand dollars.

Griffith assembled a sterling cast including his favorite leading lady Lillian Gish, thousands of extras, and hundred of technicians. As he began shooting the cast and crew could tell this was going to be a very special film. As Griffith's funds dwindled, many of the production members worked for free for days and weeks at a time. Somehow, Griffith was able to gather investors and see his dream film

## FILM CLIPS

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through to the end. He had shot thousands of feet of film and had edited it down to twelve reels.

When **BIRTH OF A NATION** opened at the Liberty Theatre in New York on March 3, 1915, the price of admission was a staggering two dollars. Considering the average movie ticket was twenty five cents the film's backers were sure they had a turkey on their hands. But it was a huge success and caused a sensation that rocked the entire country. It was the first film ever screened at the White House, moving President Woodrow Wilson to write, "It is like writing history with lightning, and my one regret is that it is all so terribly true."

What the film portrayed was not only the horrors of the Civil War, but also the strangulation of the South during the Reconstruction and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. Griffith landed in the middle of a firestorm over the portrayal of the Klansmen as Southern heroes. Liberals criticized Griffith as being anti-Negro and pro-Klan. He had created the greatest film produced in his time, and the politicians were ready to crucify him for his creation. Griffith retreated to plan his next film.

**INTOLERANCE** (1917) was Griffith's next film and his personal comment on the publicized criticism of **BIRTH OF A NATION**. The film took two years to produce and cost an unbelievable two and one half million dollars. The film was divided into four separate, but interwoven, stories, all vividly stressing man's inhumanity to man. The scale of "The Babylonian Story" was awesome for its time, and still spectacular when viewed today. It overshadowed anything that had been done previously and was literally a model of extraordinary filmmaking, still studied in film schools.

Griffith had invested everything he owned into the production, including his

reputation as a filmmaker, and went financially bankrupt when the film failed at the box office. The structure was too complicated, and too downbeat for audiences. Griffith had not failed to make a great film — he had failed to make a film appreciated by the audience of the day.

He spent the next decade working at various studios turning out films over which he had little creative control. But, more importantly, in 1919 he formed United Artists with Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin. Douglas and Pickford had at times worked for Griffith, but had become "movie stars" and the first royal family of Hollywood. Chaplin was the court jester and something of a genius in his own right. All four wanted more control over their films and United Artist was to be their Declaration of Independence from the studio system. What they created was a studio that eventually evolved into the very animal they wanted to escape. By the end of the twenties, Griffith had sold his share of the studio and was facing the coming of sound.

His output during the Roaring Twenties was as disappointing as it was slim. He had longer and longer periods between pictures, and his personal fortune was further strained by the failure of his 1924 film, **ISN'T LIFE WONDERFUL**. He had a brief resurgence of popularity with his 1930 movie, **ABRAHAM LINCOLN** starring Walter Huston.

His optimism restored, Griffith pulled together enough money to produce a film in 1931 titled **THE STRUGGLE**. He saw this as a comeback, but the critics blasted it as clumsy and dated and the public stayed away. He was finally beaten.

D.W. Griffith officially retired from films that year, but was hired as the production producer for the 1939 Hal Roach film, **ONE MILLION B.C.**

Thirty years earlier he had been "the master" and as he roamed pre-war



D. W. GRIFFITH'S FILM CLASSIC, "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" (1915) shows star Lillian Gish and a Union soldier.

Hollywood he was bewildered by the scope of the industry. He had been an innovator and pioneer and his innovations were the order of the day in every film cranked out by the studio factories.

The industry that was reaping the rewards of Griffith's visions ignored him and labeled him as a "has-been".

He died in 1948, alone in a hotel room surrounded by the city he helped create; and no one cared.

To this day his genius is barely recognized. There is no "Griffith" award as there is a "Thalberg" award for achievement in filmmaking.

But he did not make films to win awards. He was driven, as all great masters are, to pursue his art to the fullest of his genius.

That is the undeniable legacy of David Wark Griffith. ■

# WE GET

**WHEATON, IL** — I've addressed you with your first name as I feel as if I have met you. I listen to your programs on both AM and FM and the only fault I can find is that, when your programs are running, I don't want to do anything else but listen, including staying awake for the evening broadcasts. — **VIRGINIA R. ANDREWS**

**CRETE, IL** — Enclosed is my check for my two year subscription to your great magazine. When the new issue comes out I always go to Metro Golden Memories to buy it. The store is great and has a super selection of old time radio shows and a great selection of great old movies. They have a great selection of silent movies that no video store has. Today's television stinks and even though I am 40 years old, reliving those old shows brings back a time that is long forgotten. — **MARCE JUAREZ**

**GREENDALE, WISCONSIN** — I always used to enjoy your radio program when I was a kid. I loved going to bed with the sounds of Jack Benny and others drifting in the air. For the past four years I've been attending Purdue University and have been unable to receive your program. I bought tapes and listened to them, but I've always tuned in when I go home for vacations. I'm going to be graduating in December and, luckily, I'll be able to get your program again. Hope you're on for many years to come. I'm 22 years old and have several friends my age who enjoy your show. It's a lot of fun to hear all those old shows even if we weren't around when they were first on. — **STEPHEN HILL**

**SWEETWATER, TENNESSEE** — I would like a subscription to your magazine. I would like to take a minute to let you know how much I enjoy your program on WBBM. A couple of friends and I work doing data entry in the evening and are avid fans of old time radio. We also listen to a nightly half hour broadcast on WQBB, a local Knoxville station. I just recently found your show on WBBM while scanning the AM dial on my way home from work. I couldn't believe all the variety and information included on your show. I especially love the way you play shows dealing with the holidays. I really enjoyed getting to hear the Cinnamon Bear for the first time. You can be sure that whenever possible, at 1 am (12 Central), my radio is tuned to 78 WBBM. — **BRIAN R. HICKS**

**MORGANTOWN, INDIANA** — Enclosed is a check for another year of your unique publication. Here in south/central Indiana, there are a few stations that broadcast the old programs: WFIU (103.7 FM) Bloomington, Sunday, 4 pm EST and WNTS (1590 AM) Indianapolis, M-F, 7:05 pm EST. Also, I've discovered that WCCR, Nashville, Tennessee, broadcasts a syndicated hour of old radio shows on their shortwave frequency, 7.435 Mhz, nightly at 8 pm EST. Thanks for the pleasure you bring to my family and myself. — **BRADLEY S. STONE**

**CHICAGO** — It's amazing how, without ever having met you, the magic of radio allows me to feel comfortable writing to you on a first name basis. I missed the "Golden

Age of Radio" by about 10-15 years, but you have given us all the opportunity to go back and capture it.

— **LA VERNE A. CURRIE, M. D.**

**RIVER GROVE, IL** — Just want to congratulate you on being named to the Radio Hall of Fame, an honor you greatly deserve. Like many of your fans, I have been with you since you started in Evanston and have followed you in your different time slots, attended your old time movies at North West Federal, won your "I Hate Jack Benny Because..." contest, etc. etc. It's been a great ride, and we're not getting off yet. In fact, I'm looking forward to many more years of twists and turns.

You have become an important part of my life. Your Saturday program continues to be the "must" event of my week. In fact when I'm not home I try to have someone tape my favorite shows. Thank you for helping us relive those "good old days," and for all the joy that you have brought into our lives. Thanks to your wife Ellen, too, for all the support she has given to you and for putting up with what at the beginning must have seemed a crazy hobby that was taking up too much of your time and too much space in the house.

Don't you wish you could see the look on the faces of some of the media people who years ago would ask you what you were doing to do when this "old time radio craze" blew over? Oh, but you can't... many of them aren't around anymore! — **DOLORES VALLES ANAYA**

**HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL** — I had the pleasure to be at the "Gildersleeve" event, and thoroughly enjoyed the entire afternoon. I regretted missing the regular *TWTD* program, but you can't be in two places at the same time. (I rarely miss one.) I can't think of a finer fellow to be elected to the Hall of Fame. When the ballots came you were the only person I felt was an obvious choice for the honor. I've only been listening to you for 20 years, but those years have been more special because of the fine old shows, meeting you many times, correspondence, the help you've given me, meeting legendary personalities, etc. I can't begin to tell you how special the old shows are to me, but as I've said before that, as an artist, I can work anywhere in the country because my work goes out to galleries. But, because of the *Those Were The Days* broadcasts, I don't want to leave this area. You've said many times, "thanks for listening." Thanks for broadcasting! — **EDWARD C. COOK**

**ST. CHARLES, IL** — I attended the "Afternoon with the Great Gildersleeve" with my 12 year old son. We sat stage right, near the front. My son is a great radio fan. He falls asleep every night listening to a tape we have purchased from Metro Golden Memories. Congratulations on your election to the Radio Hall of Fame.

— **DALE J. SEIDEL**

# LETTERS

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** — I attended the Great Gildersleeve production on November 6th and may I say that it was the best production I have ever attended. It was a thrill to see the Gildersleeve cast in person: Willard Waterman, Shirley Mitchell, MaryLee Robb, plus the Radio Players who did such a wonderful job re-creating Gildersleeve. I took snapshots during the program, which I will treasure.

— RICHARD B. KALIN

**OAK CREEK, WISCONSIN** — I had to thank you for the great time that my daughter and I had at the Museum of Broadcast Communications on Saturday, December 18. I recently became a member of the Museum, and this was my first visit. The exhibits in all areas were interesting and informative. The highlight of the afternoon, however, was sitting in on your broadcast of *Those Were The Days*. I have listened to your shows for years, but nothing beats being present for a live performance. It was the day that you had laryngitis, and things did not go exactly as planned. When the Mighty Metro Art Players were introduced, but the tape was not there, Ken Alexander came to the rescue with Bergen and McCarthy, which was hilarious! He was great! Later, when you came down to talk to Jenny and me, that really added to our enjoyment of the day. Thanks for helping to make my visit to Chicago a memorable one.

I also wanted to compliment you on the "Afternoon with the Great Gildersleeve" tape set. Although the reenactment itself was excellent, I think the high point of the program was the reminiscences, particularly the explanation of why Harold Peary left the show, and the insights into the incomparable Walter Tetley from people who knew him. That alone was worth the price of admission. I wish I could have been there to experience it in person.

— MARK E. HIGGINS

**FRANKLIN PARK, IL** — Been listening to your show (and taping) for about eight years. Everyone who knows me well, knows not to bother me on Saturday afternoon. Thanks so much for your show! Hope it goes on for many, many, more years.

— SHARON STEWART

**GRIFFITH, INDIANA** — Enclosed is a check for a two year subscription. I hope to get this to you in time to receive the Jack Benny Centennial Issue. I must be the only 14-year-old Jack Benny fan in northwest Indiana!

— NICK DEFFENBAUGH

**MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA** — I've been listening to *Old Time Radio Classics* for several years now. It does bring back many memories of my growing up years during the 30s, 40s and early 50s. It would be nice to listen to a little more news documentaries covering old major historical events, i.e. Edward R. Murrow, H. V. Kaltenborn, etc. The "Golden Age of Radio" is so much

preferable to me than 90 per cent of what is on TV these days (Channels 11 and 20 excepted)

— PAUL J. STROPKE

**CHICAGO** — I'm enjoying my second issue of *Nostalgia Digest*. Don't know why I didn't subscribe years ago. I've been enjoying *Those Were The Days* since the WLTD days. Keep "bridging the sound gap." Why is it that when movies told stories without sound, and radio told stories without pictures, there was more magic in entertainment?

— ROBERT A. NOVICKAS

**SKOKIE, IL** — Enclosed is our renewal to the *Nostalgia Digest*. It's the least we can do for the service you provide. Because of your programs, we went out and bought a cassette recorder with a timer. Now all the midnight shows will not be missed. Finally, my kids, as they get older, are really enjoying *Our Miss Brooks*. We would appreciate it if you can air more of this program.

— RON SPITZ

**BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA** — Please renew for another year. I devour every picture and word as soon as my magazine arrives. However, when I got as far as Katie Dishman's article, "We've Got a Job to Do," I was disturbed on the view she takes that radio was "propaganda." I would like to see an article on Joan Davis, also Mercedes McCambridge. The article on Vincent Price was timely.

— HELEN EAGAN

**KENOSHA, WISCONSIN** — I heard your great tribute to Don Ameche. My mother and his mother were friends, meeting each month at PTA meetings. At that time, there was no such thing as Social Security or Medicare. His mother had been in an auto accident and required extensive medical care for which Don paid entirely. Also, his brother James played the part of Jack Armstrong on radio during the late 30s. It is a joy to listen to you and your stories.

— MARGE LAMONT

**WHITING, INDIANA** — I just had to write and say thank you. In December, you broadcast the last episode of *The Cinnamon Bear*. At long last, Judy and Jimmy Barton recovered the silver star, and Paddy O'Cinnamon worked his charm on another Christmas. You then presented *Dragnet* and the story of the missing Nativity statue. For a few brief hours, I was ten years old again. As I listened, I pictured my brother and I sprawled out on the parlor rug in front of the Zenith console. Long before television, radio was our mainstay for entertainment and opened the window of imagination. You have provided us an opportunity to re-visit those days, and I would you to know how much your efforts are appreciated.

— AL KOCH

**CHICAGO** — I was reading through my *Cinnamon Bear Book* that I received for Christmas. Being a big *Cinnamon Bear* fan, I noticed a few errors I want to point out. In the Quiz, there were three mistakes. In question 1B the given answer is "tricycle" and in reality Judy decides she is too old for a *velocipede*; in question 2 the trunk is

## WE GET LETTERS

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not Uncle Jed's — he just put the star there; and in question 12, it says that Chief Cook and Bottle Washer is a Muddler and he is not. Also in the synopsis of Chapter Three, you said that when Cinnamon Bear said, "Boo," it is when the Crazy Quilt Dragon gets frightened, and in reality Jimmy is the one who says, "Boo!" Besides those mistakes, I thoroughly enjoyed the book and I enjoy the Cinnamon Bear and all the old time radio classics, especially the mystery shows.

— JESSICA WARDRUM

**VILLA PARK, IL** — I cracked up when I read about Fred Allen and the falcon in the December-January *Digest*. Of course I could remember the audience going wild as the bird soared overhead and made a deposit on the audience. My favorite Fred Allen shows were the Town Hall Tonights. Another guest with an unusual occupation was the Gas Sniffer. This man rode the subway in New York City and got off at each stop and sniffed for gas. Of course, old Fred really had the audience going on that one. When I hear shows like that, I regress from 65 to 15. Great work, Chuck.

— ARNOLD OLSON

**HINSDALE, IL** — Thank you for the years of wonderful memories. I happen to be almost your age and have wonderful memories of Sundays with Jack Benny, Phil Harris and Alice Faye, and Charlie McCarthy. We girls listened to soap operas as we helped our mother with the ironing. Even today I log many more hours with radio than with TV. Thanks for the World War II shows. I was a bit too young to remember them. — HELEN WAGNER

**CHICAGO** — Thank you for what is for me almost 20 years of wonderful Saturday afternoons. I wish it was Sunday, too. One question I was sure your February issue would address, a question that has bugged me for many years, is, what ever happened to Kenny Baker? I liked his voice and personality so much better than Dennis Day. What happened to him? — JOHN HASKELL

(ED. NOTE — As far as we know, he is alive and well and living in retirement in Solvang, California, a small community north of Santa Barbara.)

**SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA** — Congratulations on your election to the Radio Hall of Fame. Art Hellyer told me first and then I read about it in your *Nostalgia Digest*. Art mailed me a tape of the two of you at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. I really enjoyed your give and take. He also sent information about the show you did with Art and Lenny Kaye and I cherish it, too. He subscribed to the *Digest* for me and I keep every issue. Longtime fans and I are hoping to elect Art Hellyer to the Radio Hall of Fame in 1994. We were too late for 1993, but have been promised ballots for this year. He has done it all in radio and really deserves the honor for a long and successful career.

— RUTH MILLER

**WILLOW SPRINGS** — I am a devoted fan of both your  
-18- *Nostalgia Digest*

radio shows and I am very upset about the change WBBM has made to the weekend programs. It was bad enough when they moved the weeknight program to midnight! Now their "dedication to the news" is moving the weekend shows also and shrinking them to one hour! There is already far too much news as it is. We can get detailed news from around the world every moment of the day from countless sources — we are bombarded with the horror of it constantly. But were else can you find wholesome, wonderful, family oriented quality radio? If some news of great importance were to occur, WBBM could interrupt *Radio Classics*, but more of the same old stuff we've been hearing all day is certainly of less value than your program.

What are they thinking when they take someone who has so recently been inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame and insult him and his listeners by cutting his weekend programs in half and shoving them into the midnight time slot? I am sure most all of your devoted fans (and I'm sure there are many more of us than WBBM would imagine) are as upset about the time change.

I cannot tell you how much pleasure your programs have given me and my family. I am not quite old enough to remember the golden age of radio but I treasure having the opportunity to enjoy it now. With all the trash on TV, in the movies, and on radio today, having your programs is a real breath of fresh air. I hope you are planning to keep on with your work for many, many years to come.

— LINDA HUENECKE

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN** — I feel sad to know that you will no longer broadcast *Radio Classics* on Saturday and Sunday nights from 8 to 10 p.m. and instead broadcast seven nights a week from midnight to 1 a.m. At my age, I'm asleep at that time and I have no means of recording your program. Now WBBM will just be a fond memory.

— ELMER A. ALEX

**INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA** — I am disappointed to hear we are going to lose two hours a week of the program and that the weekend program is moving to midnight (that's 1 a.m. in the winter here). I set up a timer on my recorder when the weeknight program was moved to midnight so I will still hear all the programs a day late. As a result of finding your program on the air four years ago, I now listen to WBBM news very regularly. I find the station's world news more up to date than the local stations.

— LES ACTON

**NORWOOD, OHIO** — With all the trouble and unrest in the world today, it was a convenience to be able to sit down on a Saturday or Sunday night and listen to a few good hours of old time radio. I will admit the weekday program was a little bit late for me. You know how it is when the years start to catch up with us! I am sorry that the airwaves will be filled with more bad news and not the good, clean radio programs you so thoughtfully brought to us.

— DAVE BRADEN

**OAK LAWN, IL** — Can you please change the Saturday and Sunday old time radio shows back to 8 and 10 o'clock. I'm in fourth grade and I just got my friends interested, and I go to bed at 8 o'clock. I always look forward to old time radio shows. We even made an old time radio show at school and I went and saw one. Please?  
— **MEGAN SORICH**

**MIDDLEVILLE, MICHIGAN** — Well, so long 'ol pal, it was nice having you around. I'm an electrical engineer whose hobby is collecting and repairing old radios. One night I was scanning the dial on my 1940 Zenith floor model. I happened upon your *Old Time Radio Classics* broadcast (can you imagine my shock!) and have been with you ever since, every Saturday and Sunday night. But it will not be possible for me to stay awake until midnight (1 am Michigan time) to hear those fabulous stories anymore. I'm sure you realize you will not be adding to your listening audience by moving your weekend program time slot to 12 am. You may wish to inform the owner I never would have heard of WBBM if it were not for *Old Time Radio Classics*.  
— **LEE SHUMWAY**

**CHICAGO** — The change seems to me to be a setback. WBBM has a wide audience but, somehow, I think its management is somewhat antagonized by programming that was basically aimed at an audience whose tastes were diametrically opposed to what passed as entertainment today. Since I will retire to the west before long, I'd like to think you could change your address to Phoenix or Tucson.  
— **FRANK HORN**

**ROCKFORD, IL** — I am so sorry that you are changing the times of your old time radio. I am a baker and have to rise very early.  
— **BILL CARLSON**

**FREEPORT, IL** — I am a psychology teacher at Highland Community College in Freeport and have been listening to WBBM since the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre. Please consider not changing the time to midnight on Saturday and Sunday.  
— **JAMES E. PEACE**

**CHICAGO** — I enjoy your radio program every night at midnight. Sorry about the change of hours on the weekend. Please don't go off the air.  
— **ANNETTE CAPORUSSO**

**DURAND, IL** — We are not renewing our subscription to the *Nostalgia Digest* because your station has cancelled the early evening stories and only have them at midnight. We used to thoroughly enjoy listening on Saturday and Sunday at 8 pm.  
— **C. JAMES JACOBSON**

**WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN** — Although we realize this is not your doing but WBBM's, we feel we had to let you know how disappointed we are. It was so enjoyable to relive our memories of growing up listening to radio before TV. We know the show airs at midnight daily, but when you have to get up at 5 am, we aren't able to listen,

so we looked forward to Saturday and Sunday evenings. We hope that WBBM will sometime in the future bring it back.  
— **PAUL & PHYLLIS SCHOENECKER**

**OAKWOOD, IL** — We enjoy your program very much and do not like this change. We feel like there is enough news on the radio (most of it bad) and old time radio is a refreshing change.  
— **LORIN & KAREN KINNEY**

**ROUND LAKE PARK, IL** — Our family has enjoyed your programs on WBBM. We are disappointed that they are being moved to a midnight time slot. Unfortunately, we and our children usually aren't awake at that hour. We hope that sometime in the future, the show will be put in a more convenient time for families.  
— **ERNEST L. FORNADER**

**ELGIN, IL** — I am nine years old. I'm very fond of listening to old time radio at 8:00 at night on weekends. But I do not like to listen to it at 12:00.  
— **KERRIE ANN PLYPIW**

**GENEVA, IL** — I can't believe that one month you are inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame, and the next your fine show is booted to the post-midnight nether-regions. Until we can get WBBM to see the error of their ways, I will continue to listen to the program at midnights, including on the weekends. Actually, the time of night that *Old Time Radio Classics* should be irrelevant to me, as I am an Olympic-class insomniac. However, I planned my weekend nights around the show, television being the pathetic wasteland that it is. In the meantime, keep up the fine work, and don't lose faith. You are a class act.  
— **MICHELLE BABICZ**

(ED. NOTE — Thanks to you and to all who wrote or called us and/or WBBM about the weekend program time change. A great many listeners expressed their unhappiness with the switch. We're sorry to say that a return to the earlier time slot is not likely in the foreseeable future.)

**ELGIN, IL** — I am one of your long-time listeners. I seldom hear your late shows due to early rising hours and your Saturday and Sunday programs were the ones I really cherished. Additionally, your Saturday afternoon programs are always listened to since you started on WNIB. I am around your age, grew up with Archie Andrews, Tom Mix and all that. I just wanted you to know that your broadcasts are really appreciated by myself and many others I know. I have a Walkman, do a lot of walking, and somehow manage to be out doing my thing when you're on the air. You really make my day many times. Sometimes I chuckle to myself when Jack Benny says something. If people are looking, they may think, "What's the matter with this guy?"  
— **RICHARD APP**

**CLINTON, IOWA** — Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed your radio show on Saturday and Sunday night in the 8 to 10 time slot. Am very disappointed with the time change. As I work the night shift all the time, I can no longer listen to your program. Am forced to listen to WLS now instead. I really miss your program.  
— **LANNY C. KRUSE**



Museum of Broadcast Communications

## **museum pieces**

Reported by Margaret Warren

**JACK BENNY'S** Centennial birthday party, a benefit for the Radio Hall of Fame, was a huge success.

The photos on this page give you a peek at some of the activity surrounding the celebration of the 61st anniversary of Jack's 39th birthday, held on February 13 in the Chicago Cultural Center.

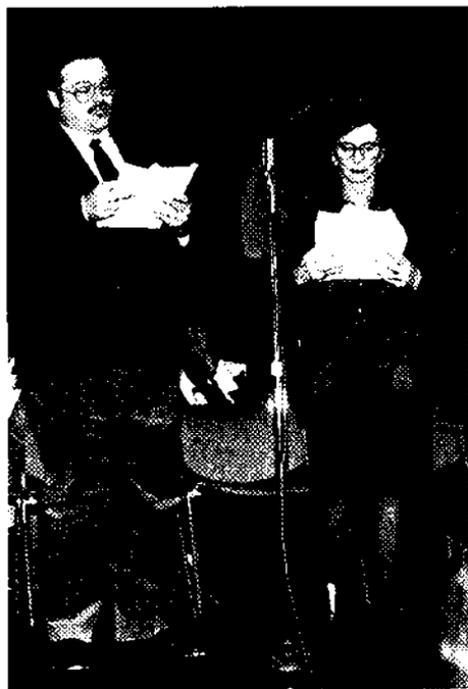
His daughter Joan and grandson Bobby came in for the event and were pleased at all the attention showered on them and Jack.

We'll have a few more pictures and the "official" cast photo of our *Those Were The Days Radio Players* in the next issue of the *Nostalgia Digest*.

**IT'LL BE A** down-home, toe-tapping time this summer as the Museum of Broadcast Communications turns its attention to country music. From June 25 through September 30 we'll look at country music's history and the legendary country broadcasts from the "Grand Ole Opry" to "Hee Haw" to the Nashville Network. Panels of country performers and others will trace the music's roots from the hills of Appalachia to the stations in Chicago and throughout the nation.

Panels are scheduled for Saturday, July 7; Thursday, July 28; Thursday, August 18; Thursday, September 8 and Thursday, September 29.

Stay tuned for further news as plans go forward for this summer's exhibition, "Country Music: On the Air."



**JOHN SEBERT** and **JOAN BENNY** as Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone.



**PAUL WITBROD**, **HARRY VOLKMAN** and **JED SKILLMAN** as Don Wilson, Dennis Day and Phil Harris.



**SHOWING OFF JACK BENNY'S 39TH BIRTHDAY CAKE** are Chuck Schaden, Joan Benny and Bobby Blumofe. Jack's daughter came in from Beverly Hills, California and her son, Jack's grandson, came in from Cambridge, Massachusetts to help celebrate the big event.

The country music exhibition is one more reason to join the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Each of those events will be free of charge to Museum members. Non-members will be charged \$25 for each session while a one-year Museum membership is only \$30.

**STILL ANOTHER** important reason for Museum membership is the Radio Hall of Fame. This is the nationally-focused project of the Museum that honors outstanding radio broadcasters, both those in contemporary broadcasting as well as from radio's Golden Age.

Museum membership includes membership in the Radio Hall of Fame. And that means your opportunity to vote for the 1994 inductees who will be honored

at our next annual gala, November 13. On that night, radios all over the nation will be tuned in as this year's emcee — Radio Hall of Fame inductee and CBS personality, Charles Ogood — takes to the stage in the Chicago Cultural Center to host an all-star event introducing this year's big winners. Your vote, as a Museum/Radio Hall of Fame member will contribute to that night's excitement. So big will that evening be and so popular that three (count 'em 3!) Chicago radio stations will carry the broadcast — WGN, WLS and WBBM! As a Radio Hall of Fame member, you'll receive an early announcement of this huge benefit — a sure sellout. Call Katy at the Museum to answer your questions and to begin your membership (312) 629-6014.

Museum of Broadcast Communications  
Chicago Cultural Center  
Michigan Avenue at Washington Street  
Chicago, 60602  
Phone (312) 629-6000



<b>APRIL</b>			<b>Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78 SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.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>					<p><b>1</b> Michael Shayne Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>2</b> Under Arrest Easy Aces</p>
<p><b>3</b> The Shadow Charlie McCarthy</p>	<p><b>4</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>5</b> Nightbeat Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>6</b> Red Ryder Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>7</b> X Minus One Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>8</b> Six Shooter Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>9</b> Scarlet Queen Superman</p>
<p><b>10</b> Tales of Texas Rangers Horatio Hornblower</p>	<p><b>11</b> Box Thirteen Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>12</b> Hopalong Cassidy Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>13</b> Six Shooter Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>14</b> The Falcon Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>15</b> Scarlet Queen Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>16</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Superman</p>
<p><b>17</b> Burns &amp; Allen Third Man</p>	<p><b>18</b> Gangbusters Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>19</b> Six Shooter Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>20</b> Green Hornet Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>21</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>22</b> The Clock Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>23</b> Scarlet Queen Superman</p>
<p><b>24</b> Jack Benny Dragnet</p>	<p><b>25</b> Six Shooter Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>26</b> Hidden Truth Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>27</b> Scarlet Queen Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>28</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>29</b> Hopalong Cassidy Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>30</b> Cisco Kid Superman</p>

<b>MAY</b>			<b>Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78 SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.</b>			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>1</b> The Falcon Charlie McCarthy</p>	<p><b>2</b> X Minus One Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>3</b> Dragnet Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>4</b> Gangbusters Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>5</b> Cisco Kid Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>6</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly Jack Armstrong</p>	<p><b>7</b> Hallmark Playhouse Superman</p>
<p><b>8</b> Life of Riley Burns &amp; Allen</p>	<p><b>9</b> Lone Ranger Easy Aces</p>	<p><b>10</b> Escape Bob and Ray</p>	<p><b>11</b> Mystery in the Air Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>12</b> Dimension X Chandu the Magician</p>	<p><b>13</b> Our Miss Brooks Ma Perkins</p>	<p><b>14</b> Red Ryder Superman</p>
<p><b>15</b> Scarlet Queen Third Man</p>	<p><b>16</b> The Shadow Bob and Ray</p>	<p><b>17</b> Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston</p>	<p><b>18</b> I Deal in Crime Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>19</b> Johnny Dollar Adventures in Research</p>	<p><b>20</b> Fred Allen Theatre Five</p>	<p><b>21</b> Scarlet Queen Superman</p>
<p><b>22</b> Jack Benny Horatio Hornblower</p>	<p><b>23</b> Boston Blackie Bickersons</p>	<p><b>24</b> Great Gildersleeve Backstage Wife</p>	<p><b>25</b> Life of Riley Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>26</b> Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston</p>	<p><b>27</b> Boston Blackie This is Nora Drake</p>	<p><b>28</b> Famous Jury Trials Superman</p>
<p><b>29</b> Tales of Texas Rangers Third Man</p>	<p><b>30</b> Obsession Theatre Five</p>	<p><b>31</b> Lone Ranger Bob and Ray</p>	<p><b>June 1</b> Roy Rogers Adventures in Research</p>	<p><b>June 2</b> Rogue's Gallery Bickersons</p>	<p><b>June 3</b> Mr. District Attorney Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>June 4</b> The Clock Superman</p>

# 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 2nd

#### EASTER GREETINGS — NO FOOLIN'

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (4-25-43) It's the Easter weekend and a crate of rabbits is delivered to the Gildersleeve household. Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with Lurene Tuttle as Marjorie, Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, and Shirley Mitchell as Leila Ransom. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:00)

**MEL BLANC SHOW** (4-1-47) Mel makes an April Fool phone call to Mr. Colby, telling him he will inherit a fortune. Cast includes Mary Jane Croft, Joe Kearns, Hans Conreid, Jim Backus, the Sportsmen, Victor Miller and the orchestra. Colgate, CBS. (24:15)

**HOLLYWOOD STAR TIME** (4-21-46) "Song of Bernadette" starring Vincent Price, Lee J. Cobb and Vanessa Brown in a radio version of the 1943 film, the story of the miraculous apparition of the Blessed Virgin to a poor village girl. Frigidare/General Motors, CBS. (28:45)

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★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (4-2-44) Douglas Edwards and CBS correspondents from around the globe report the events of the week. "American bombers in the Mediterranean area have made their fourth attack on German industries in Austria . . . Moscow dispatchers say the hour of liberation is near for the Black Sea naval base at Odessa." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:30)

**LIFE WITH LUIGI** (4-1-52) J. Carroll Naish stars as Luigi Basco with Alan Reed as Pasquale and Hans Conreid as Schultz. Pasquale plans an April Fool joke to scare Luigi into marrying Rosa. Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (31:50)

**HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE** (4-14-49) "One Foot in Heaven" starring George Brent in the Hartzel Spence story of a Methodist preacher with "one foot in Heaven and one foot on God's green earth" as he sets up a parsonage in a small Iowa town. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29:10)

### SATURDAY, APRIL 9th

#### WE REMEMBER OLAN SOULÉ

**FIRST NIGHTER** (2-5-48) "Drink for the Damned" starring Olan Soulé and Barbara Luddy with Marvin Miller, Parley Baer, Willard Waterman, Arthur Q. Brian. Announcer is Larry Keating. Frank Worth conducts the "famous" First Nighter orchestra. Campana Products, CBS. (29:00).

**SPEAKING OF RADIO** (2-17-75) Olan Soulé and Barbara Luddy talk with Chuck Schaden about their radio days in a conversation recorded in Mr. Soulé's home in Woodland Hills, California. (44:00)

**WAYSIDE THEATRE** (1-22-39) "Food for Thought" starring Olan Soulé and Patricia Dunlop. A newlywed wife, used to preparing huge meals for her husband, invites his health-conscious boss to dinner. Cast includes Ethel Owen, Bill Bouchey, Herb Butterfield. Announcer is Verne Smith. Chicago Motor Club, WBBM. (28:55)

**SPEAKING OF RADIO** (10-11-89) Olan Soulé, visiting the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago, chats about his broadcast career in a conversation with Chuck Schaden. (23:08)

**GRAND MARQUEE** (7-10-47) "Here We Go Again," starring Olan Soulé and Muriel Bremner in "a merry tale

of love and confusion" at a wacky wedding. NBC Chicago orchestra conducted by Joe Gallicio; announcer is George Stone. Rayve Creme Shampoo, NBC. (30:00)

**SATURDAY, APRIL 16th  
NATIONAL BARN DANCE  
A 70th ANNIVERSARY SALUTE**

**NATIONAL BARN DANCE (4-30-60)** "The oldest, longest continuously broadcast program of any kind anywhere in the world — the one and only National Barn Dance!" Master of Ceremonies Bob Atcher and the gang in the Old Hayloft present the final broadcast on WLS after 36 years on the air. Entertainment on this last show is provided by the "Queen of the Barn Dance" Grace Wilson plus Dolf Hewitt, Tiny Murphy, Lee Morgan, Bob and Maggie Atcher, Sage Riders, Midwesterners, Johnny Frigo, Sy Burton, Davy Pitts, Uncle Newt Klatt and the Klattenjammers. The cast of the Barn Dance did not learn until a few hours before the broadcast that this would be the final show; the station was changing to a contemporary music format. D-Con, 3-S Tonic, WLS, Chicago. (24:30; 23:15; 24:00; 24:30; 31:30)

**OUR SPECIAL GUESTS** will be **Lee Morgan, Captain Stubby, Johnny Frigo** and other members of the WLS National Barn Dance who will join us in our studio in the Radio Hall of Fame at the Museum of Broadcast Communications to reminisce about a great radio show.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 23rd**

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL (4-20-44)** Bing Crosby welcomes guest Dave Shelly who joins regulars Marilyn Maxwell, Yuki Sherin, Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. "Time Marches Back" to 1932 with Bing as a music publisher, Dave as a composer. Kraft Foods, NBC. (28:30)

**INNER SANCTUM (1-12-48)** "Tempo in Blood" with Mason Adams and Everett Sloan. A piano player commits the perfect crime and doesn't know it. AFRS rebroadcast. (24:28) (Rescheduled from an earlier date.)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (4-18-44)** Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees. As the program starts its tenth year on the air, Fibber is certain that his neighbor across the street is a Nazi spy. Shirley Mitchell as Alice Darling; Ransom Sherman as Mr. Wellington; Marlin Hurt as Beulah; Arthur Q. Brian as Doc Gamble; Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:00)

★ **WORDS AT WAR (4-23-44)** "The Story of Lend Lease," dramatizing "President Roosevelt's messages to Congress telling what Lend Lease has accomplished to date, explaining its cost and showing how it is helping win the war." Presented in co-operation with the Council on Books in Wartime. Narrated by Earnest Chapel. Directed by Anton M. Leader. Sustaining, NBC. (28:30)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-23-44)** Remote broadcast from Vancouver, British Columbia to promote Canada's Fifth Victory Loan. This is Dennis Day's last show before entering the Navy. Don Wilson, Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Grape Nuts Flakes, NBC. (30:00)

**SUSPENSE (6-14-55)** "The Whole Town's Sleeping" starring Jeanette Nolan with Paula Winslow and Eve McVey in the Ray Bradbury story "The Lonely One," narrated by William Conrad. Sustaining, CBS. (23:45)

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30th  
24th ANNIVERSARY BROADCAST  
"THANKS FOR LISTENING"**

As we complete 24 years of *Those Were The Days* programs we'll mark the occasion by presenting a broadcast of the party to celebrate "The 61st Anniversary of Jack Benny's 39th Birthday," held by the Radio Hall of Fame at the Museum of Broadcast Communications on Sunday, February 13, 1994.

A capacity crowd packed the Preston Bradley Hall in the Chicago Cultural Center to honor the great comedian (1894-1994) on his Centennial birthday.



Ken Alexander wrote an original radio script, based upon characters and situations created during the twenty-three year run of one of the most successful programs in the history of radio.

Our *Those Were The Days Radio Players* brought Ken's script to life, with characteriza-

tions of Phil Harris, Rochester, Don Wilson, Frank Nelson, the Train Announcer, the Tout, Sy, Mr. Kitzel, Gertrude and Mable, Ed, the Quartet and others.

John Sebert, winner of our Jack Benny Sound-Alike contest, played Jack. Special guest Joan Benny, Jack's daughter, portrayed Mary Livingstone in the re-enactment. Channel 2 weatherman Harry Volkman appeared as Dennis Day and Ken Alexander was Professor LeBlanc. A special scene was written into the script for Bobby Blumofe, Jack's grandson who surprised us by flying in for the occasion.

We'll broadcast the entire re-enactment, plus other elements of the Centennial Salute to Jack Benny, including family memories of Jack by his daughter and grandson.

And we'll have a few surprises, too. Don't miss it if you can!

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

## MAY

SATURDAY, MAY 7th

**LIFE OF RILEY** (5-8-48) William Bendix stars as Chester A. Riley who fixes breakfast in bed for his wife Peg on Mother's Day. Peg gives Riley a Mother's Day gift. Cast includes Paula Winslowe, John Brown, Alan Reed. Prell Shampoo, NBC. (28:20)

★ **WINGS TO VICTORY** (4-15-43) Drama of American heroism based on combat reports from the fighting front. A light-hearted, but propaganda filled, story about the 819th Air Fighter Squadron in North Africa features Howard Duff as a sensitive pilot in a war zone. U.S. Government. (26:35)

★ **SKELLY NEWS** (5-13-44) From Chicago, Louis Roen subs for Alex Drier with "The first network news commentary of the day" (7 to 7:15 a.m.). "On the Russian Front, the Red Army has opened a new, major offensive ... overcoming strong German defenses, the Russians broke through on a 20-mile wide front, scoring advances up to 10 miles in depth and capturing 30 towns and villages." Skelly Oil Co., NBC. (14:50)

**SPEAKING OF RADIO** (5-7-94) **The Jack Benny Program** Part 5 in the 12-part audio documentary culled from Chuck Schaden's conversations with performers, writers and others associated with Jack Benny's radio shows and laced with clips from Jack's radio broadcasts. In this segment, writers George Balzer and Milt Josefsberg talk about the running gag ("Jack's echo") and King Solomon's Mines. Plus: Mr. Kitzel (33:04)

**MYSTERY IN THE AIR** (8-28-47) "Beyond Good and Evil" starring Peter Lorre with Peggy Weber, John Brown, Howard Culver, and Russell Thorson. An escaped convict masquerades as a clergyman after terrorizing a real cleric. Narrator/Announcer is Henry (Harry) Morgan. Camel Cigarettes, NBC (28:10)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-14-44) Douglas Edwards and CBS world-wide correspondents. "The Allied advance in Italy continues to be a slow and tough operation, with the Germans putting up a stiff fight. Observers on the English Channel coast report that two waves of Allied planes have flown out over the direction of Northern France." Charles Colingwood, in London, speaks about Americans in France broadcasting in French. Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:20)

★ **WORDS AT WAR** (5-16-44) "Lifeline," a story of the United States Merchant Marines, presented in co-  
-26- *Nostalgia Digest*

operation with the Council on Books in Wartime. An interesting attempt to improve the image of the Merchant Marines. Cast features Joseph Julian. Sustaining, NBC (28:30)

SATURDAY, MAY 14th  
WE REMEMBER WILLIAM CONRAD

**GUNSMOKE** (9-12-53) "Prairie Happy" starring William Conrad as Marshall Matt Dillon, with Parley Baer as Chester, Howard McNair as Doc, and Georgia Ellis as Kitty. The Pawnees are going to attack Dodge City. Sustaining, CBS. (28:00)

**ESCAPE** (11-15-49) "Three Skeleton Key" starring William Conrad in the chilling story about rats against the occupants of a lighthouse. Sustaining, CBS. (29:30)

**SUSPENSE** (7-18-56) "The Man Who Threw Acid" starring William Conrad and Tony Barrett. "The story of a man who wanted to become important and the crime he committed to accomplish it." Sustaining, CBS. (22:10)

**GUNSMOKE** (10-10-52) "Hinka Doo" starring William Conrad as Marshall Matt Dillon of Dodge City. Sustaining, CBS. (30:00)



WILLIAM CONRAD & GEORGIA ELLIS

**ESCAPE** (3-22-53) "Pressure" starring **William Conrad** with Larry Thor, Bob Sweeney, Hy Averbach. The story of the U. S. S. Amberfish, a submarine out of Pearl Harbor in 1944 on its fourth war patrol. Sustaining, CBS. (27:48)

**SUSPENSE** (8-25-57) "Leiningen Vs. the Ants" starring **William Conrad** in "a classic story of nature's imbalance." Participating sponsors, CBS. (28:55)

### SATURDAY, MAY 21st

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (5-21-44) After returning from a five-week trip to service camps, the gang gathers at Jack's place for rehearsal. Don and Mary tell him that he might have a split personality, but he is doubtful. . . until he goes to buy a cigar. Phil Harris, Don Wilson, Frank Nelson, Butterfly McQueen, Mel Blanc, John Brown. Grape Nuts, NBC. (27:30)

★ **WORDS AT WAR** (5-30-44) "The Navy Hunts the CGR 3070" presented in co-operation with the Council on Books in Wartime. The story of the incredible adventures of the Coast Guard Reserve Boat 3070 of "Hooligan's Navy," an actual event which took place in December, 1942. Sustaining, NBC. (27:40)

**FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER AND FLYWHEEL** (1992) Program number eight in the series of re-enactments of the 1932 Marx Brothers radio show. Cast features Michael Roberts as Groucho Marx as Waldorf T. Flywheel and Frank Lazarus as Chico Marx as Emmanuel Ravelli. Loreli King is Miss Dimple. David Firman and the orchestra. BBC. (26:52)

**THE WHISTLER** (5-12-48) "Chain Reaction" stars Frank Lovejoy and Joan Banks. A pilot, offered \$5,000 to salvage gold in the Carribean, is part of a murder plot. Marvin Miller. Signal Oil, CBS. (29:03)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-21-44) Doug Edwards and CBS newsmen around the world. "Today in Italy Allied troops of the Fifth Army . . . are battling their way forward toward the Anzio beachhead while the Eighth Army attacks the main defenses of the Hitler line. In the Far East, the North Burma campaign is approaching a climax. General Stillwell reports that American Liberators have attacked a Japanese island within 300 miles of the Philippines." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:35)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (5-28-44) Warner Bros. wants to make a movie about Jack's life. When Jack and Mary go to the studio they meet Danny Kaye (who sings "Stanislavsky"). Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Frank Nelson, John Brown. Grape Nuts, NBC. (27:15)

### SATURDAY, MAY 28th

#### FRED ALLEN CENTENNIAL 1894-1994

Comedian Fred Allen was born one hundred years ago, on May 31, 1894. We'll observe his Centennial with an afternoon of fascinating Fred Allen radio material:

**FRED ALLEN SHOW** (4-11-48) Excerpt featuring Basil

Rathbone, looking for a script for his new radio program. Fred comes up with "One Long Pan" story. (13:58)

**LINIT BATH CLUB REVIEW** (1-22-33) A broadcast from Fred's very first radio series (which began on Oct. 23, 1932) features popular sketches from previous shows. You'll hear the very beginnings of Allen's later formats Linit Bath Oil, CBS. (25:39)

**FRED ALLEN SHOW** (5-2-48) Excerpt. Fred didn't finish writing the show for this broadcast. Guest Henry Morgan. (11:53)

**OMNIBUS** (1955) Excerpt from audio portion of the award-winning television series featuring a monolog by Fred Allen discussing his book "Treadmill to Oblivion" using clips from Allen broadcasts. (12:58)

**FRED ALLEN SHOW** (4-18-48) Excerpt. Fred and wife Portland Hoffa take a walk down Allen's Alley. The question: "What did you like about the circus?" Answers from Senator Claghorn (Kenny Delmar), Titus Moody (Parker Fennelly), Mrs. Nussbaum (Minerva Pious) and Ajax Cassidy (Peter Donald). (12:44)

**INFORMATION PLEASE** (2-15-43) Emcee Clifton Fadiman and regular panelists John Kirenan, Oscar Levant and Franklin P. Adams welcome guest panelist Fred Allen, who assumes the role of emcee for part of the program. Announcer is Ben Grauer. A.J. Heinz Co., NBC. (28:05)

**FRED ALLEN SHOW** (5-26-46) Excerpt featuring Jack Benny who sneaks into a studio tour. Fred tells Jack about Allen's new quiz give-away program, "King for a Day!" (14:27)

**FRED ALLEN SHOW** (10-26-47) Excerpt. Fred wants Hollywood to make his life story. Guest is Jack Haley. (13:05)



FRED ALLEN

## RADIO AND WORLD WAR II

# *Propaganda on the Home Front*

BY KATIE DISHMAN

During World War II, radio was not only a source of information and entertainment, but it provided motivational impetus for Americans to support the war effort in the form of propaganda. Mandated in part by the government and usually with the utmost cooperation from the sponsors, the war-related messages came strongly and often. War themes and government notices especially were prevalent in comedy and variety series in the form of songs as well as in the dialogue.

Songs, like commercial announcements, were used during the comedy/variety shows to instill patriotism and urge people to do their part for the war effort.

War-themed songs came out quickly and in full force. For example, the *Fibber McGee and Molly* show from December 23, 1941 had Martha Tilton singing "He's I-A in the Army, and He's A-1 in my Heart." This song exhibited pride not only in the country but in those who were willing to fight for it.

*From coast to coast, in this great nation, each night I've got a classification. Pray tell me, pray tell me, what's yours. I've got a guy who's really somethin'. This man of mine, he ain't missin' nothin'. No wonder I'm happy to say, He's I-A in the army and he's A-1 in my heart. He's gone to help the country*

*Katie Dishman is an archivist and research specialist with the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. She has a Masters' Degree in Public History from Loyola University and is extremely interested in popular culture and the radio days. This is the second of two articles on the subject of Radio and World War II.*

*that helped him to get a start. I love him so because I know he wants to do his part. . . And just in case you're quizzical, I'm gonna tell you now he's passed the toughest physical. . . For I know why he ranks so high on Uncle Sammy's charts 'cause he's I-A in the army and he's A-1 in my heart.*

This song could certainly inspire many young men to fight for their country as well as for their women, who would be extremely proud of their fighting fellas.

Another inspirational song was played on Rudy Vallee's show from May 16, 1942 entitled "A Toast to Victory."

*We're behind you, to break the chains that bind you.*

*We've come to set you free.*

*Till your wrongs are righted, we are all united.*

*In the cause of liberty.*

*Beware you tyrants of Tokyo, you foul dictators of Germany, creators of misery.*

*We're marching to let you know you can't deprive us of liberty.*

*We'll fight the total war.*

And Jack Benny's March 12, 1942 show aired George M. Cohan's latest. Some lyrics included, *Tell the world that the Yankee's are at bat, for the flag, for the home, for the family. . . for the future of all mankind.*

These type of songs reinforced what Americans were fighting for, in case they were not aware from the other propaganda in the program. And most of these war songs referred to "our" boys and "our" fight. This attitude helped make the war a relevant and personal concern to Americans; because it affected them



**RUDY VALLEE**

directly, they would be more likely to work fervently to win.

In order to encourage people to enlist in the fight, songs like "Join the Navy" were played:

*Join the navy, free the world.*

*You can fight for the right.*

*If you're tired of the traffic on the highway,*

*Join the navy and free the world.*

*Wherever they go they'll never know defeat.*

That is because "It's Great to be in Uniform" made by "your Uncle Sam;" wearing it will make "your pride" swell.

Bing Crosby, whose popularity continued to grow throughout the war, introduced many songs on his show, the *Kraft Music Hall*. Some concerned various activities people could perform for the homefront cause. One urged Americans to save and recycle their scrap for the war effort.

*Junk ain't junk no more.*

*Collect today for the U.S.A.*

*Junk ain't junk no more.*

*'Cause junk can win the war.*

Other songs performed on the comedy/variety shows also contained war messages. On the June 18, 1942 episode of the *Sealtest Program Starring Rudy Vallee*, the Sealtest Sportsmen sang about controlling "loose talk."

*Keep you eyes open and your mouth shut.*

*Keep your shoulder to the wheel.*

*Don't repeat things fantastic or real.*

*Help us beat that healing heal.*

Many of the songs on the various comedy/variety shows stressed that the ultimate goal could be reached if everyone would do their part. However, the patriotism and unity inspired in Americans during World War II was different in later wars because the United States has not been personally attacked; Pearl Harbor was a rallying cry and a unifying force. Perhaps this is one reason adults could not understand the attitudes of the younger generation during the Vietnam War; there was no united front like "their" war had.

War messages to inspire and incense were spread not only through song lyrics, but a lot of regular dialogue in these comedy/variety programs had anti-Axis sentiments and mentions of war-related sacrifices and activities. Possibly one of the first anti-Japanese comments came only two days after Pearl Harbor.

Although the program had already been written and rehearsed, the quip was added to reveal America's hatred for the enemy. In the December 9, 1941 broadcast of *Fibber McGee and Molly*, Mayor La Trivia, played by Gale Gordon, was discussing Christmas presents with the McGees. La Trivia asked, "By the way, do you know where I can buy a large globe for my office? . . . Things are happening so fast these days I like to keep informed." Molly inquired, "Do you want a globe with Japan on it, Mr. Mayor?" "Why, certainly," he responded. "Well, then you better get one quick," Molly replied, which was followed by a thunderous ovation. The audience, as

## RADIO AND WWII

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well as most of America, had been drawn together in their loathing of Japan. The original script of the program had this segment typed in with no special designation. However, the script was a second draft, and it can be assumed the first copy had no such comment.

From the *Fibber McGee* show aired the following week, on December 16, 1941, another anti-Japanese comment was heard. One character, Mr. Old-Timer, wanted Fibber and Molly to play outside. Old-Timer said, "Some of us kids are building a snow fort . . . Having a peck of fun." Molly said she and her husband could not join him because they had too much work to do. Disappointed, Mr. Old-Timer replied, "we wanted to choose up sides and play Yanks and Japs, only nobody wants to be a Jap." He followed that with another anti-Axis joke: "Why does Hitler make all his speeches from a beer garden? . . . That's so when he starts foaming at the mouth nobody will notice it."

Similarly, in a *Kraft Music Hall* broadcast from April 16 1942, one of the show's regulars, Mary Martin, exchanged the following dialogue with guest star Ronald Reagan:

Martin: *I think they should give every man in the army a commission.*

Reagan: *Oh, they couldn't do that.*

Martin: *Oh, maybe 30 cents a Jap.*

Reagan: *"There's too many fellas willing to do that for free.*

The war justified expressing hatred for the Axis powers; it was considered "therapeutic," and it was believed to strengthen national unity. On the February 2, 1943 *Fibber McGee and Molly*, the character Wallace Wimple drops to recite his new poem, "Flower Arrangements," to the McGees.

*The Japanese are very nasty fighters.*

*But good at arranging flowers, the sillies*

*So let's give them a lot of practice, the blighters,*

*With lillies."*

The audience laughed heartily; the prospect of killing Japanese was what most Americans wanted. Likewise, at the end of the February 16, 1943 show, after a program dedicated to recruiting war production workers, Molly says to the audience, "Don't forget, it's your sons of toil that'll help put those Nazis under tons of soil." Death of all the Axis powers was the ultimate goal.

Historian John Dower, who has written about racial/ethnic hatred during World War II, says that the propaganda about the enemy, whether on radio or film or in print, was "overt, calculated and carefully edited, explicitly designed for public consumption." And the producers and receivers of the propaganda generally took the statement seriously. "Because World War Two is the context, the consequences of such seemingly abstract concerns emerge with special harshness. To people at war, after all, the major purpose in knowing one's enemies is to be better able to control or kill them."

However, on the comedy/variety programs, the enemies were not elaborated upon, merely referred to in derogative terms. Most Americans saw the "Japs" as the instigators of war, without consideration of the Japanese perspective. Learning how to "toss a Jap over your shoulder," as the Great Gildersleeve's nephew wanted to do, was sufficient; it not only reminded people who the enemy was but also produced a laugh from the audience.

Not only did cracks about the enemy help with American morale, personal appearances of radio program casts at various military camps around the world built the spirit of the many people so far from home. Of course the jokes and storylines in these remote broadcasts revolved around the war. On Jack



FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY

Benny's program, broadcast from the U.S. Naval Hospital in Corona, California on November 19, 1944, the star engaged in this dialogue with a "soldier," played by Mel Blanc.

*Benny: Do you know anything about naval expressions?*

*Soldier: Yes, sir.*

*Benny: Tell me, what is the most famous saying in the Navy?*

*Soldier: Ask her if she's got a friend for me.*

Other war references were a little more serious. On the *Grape Nuts Flakes Program* from October 11, 1942 broadcast from the Army Air Base in Santa Ana, California, star Jack Benny took two military cadets to meet Barbara Stanwyck. Jack told them he would like to be a pilot. This comment was followed by rousing applause. But Barbara Stanwyck

interjected, "Now wait a minute, Jack . . . The bombardier and the navigator are just as important as the pilot; their jobs are equally as interesting and require just as much training." This, too, was received with a big ovation. Not only did this bolster the morale of those soldiers in the audience, but all listeners again could be proud of their various jobs which were important in helping with the war.

But the program dialogue also emphasized other activities, beside enlistment in the military, which listeners could do to help. On the October 1, 1942 episode of Rudy Valle's show, Joan Davis questioned Rudy about a "V" sticker pasted on a window of a home she passed. He answered, "That was a V home, Joan. That V certificate is a service stripe of our civilian army. It means that the family living there is doing all in its power for victory." Vallee and the announcer

## RADIO AND WWII

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proceeded to list the five requirements a family must meet to receive a V sticker: "Preparedness for air raid emergencies and knowledge of first aid," "Conservation of food, clothing transportation, goods, and health," "Salvage of essential materials to be converted to immediate use," "Squelching rumors," and "Regular purchase of war bonds and stamps." Joan responded, "Gee, that's easy. We should have a lot of V homes." Rudy followed this by imploring, "We must have a lot of V homes, Joan, if we're going to win this war. It will take more than armed force; we need the full help of a great civilian army at home to back up our boys at the front. So make your home a V home. Do your part to fight the toughest enemy who has ever threatened our lives and liberties." These war messages, concisely interwoven into the dialogue, made the listeners not only easy to aid with the homefront effort but imperative to save the United States from the enemy.



WALTER TETLEY

The *Great Gildersleeve* episode which aired February 1, 1942 had a nice dialogue between the uncle and nephew which gave a long list of activities which everyone could do to help win the war. Thirteen-year-old Leroy ran away and he ended up in jail. Gildersleeve asked him if he was unhappy at home.

*Leroy: No, it's just that I can't stand around doing nothing while our country's at war. I want to do my share.*

*Gildy: Well, that's a wonderful spirit, my boy. It makes me proud of you. But Uncle Sam can't use boys your age in the navy.*

*Leroy: But I can work hard. I just want to be in there. You just don't understand.*

*Gildy: I do understand, my boy. You think it's easy for me to watch younger men go off and fight our battles while I have to stay behind? Here we are: you're too young and I'm too old. But we each have a job to do, every one of us, from the President to the boy in the school, Leroy.*

*Leroy: But, gee, Uncle Mort, right now school seems awfully trivial.*

*Gildy: Leroy, it's the millions of trivial things well done that's going to win this war for us. Like the farmer who grows more food, and the factory hand who produces more equipment, and the housewife who makes everything go a little farther. Even the children who gathered up waste paper and scarp iron. And all of us who buy bonds and contribute our time and money and prayers and inspiration. We're all in the army, Leroy. The army that stands back of our soldiers and our sailors and our flyers. The better we do our job, the sooner they're gonna finish theirs.*

This impassioned speech certainly made it clear that all Americans had a job to do: everyone played a part in winning the war.



BING CROSBY AND BOB HOPE

In fact, Kraft Cheese Company took pride in its popular new program and what it was doing for the war, as stated in a Kraft newsletter:

*On his show, Gildersleeve plants a Victory garden,; buys War Stamps for scores of school children; Niece Margie works for the Red Cross, writes to soldiers, officiates at the launching of a warship (for which Gildersleeve had prepared and rehearsed a speech he never got to deliver, poor fellow!). The listening audience gets entertainment — fresh, lively, morale-building entertainment — and a powerful stimulus to follow the Gildersleeve example.*

Another Kraft program also was pushing serious war messages. From a 1944 episode of the Kraft Music Hall, guest star Bob Hope exchanged the following dialogue with host Bing Crosby. The message was clear:

Hope: *Look, slag bag, did you tell the boys at the front I'll be over next year?*

Crosby: *I did, Bob, and it was fine for morale.*

Hope: *No kidding?*

Crosby: *Yeah they all said in that case we'd all better finish it this year. [This comment was followed by enthusiastic applause]*

Anncr: *Say, Bing, do you really think there's a chance of finishing it this year?*

Crosby: *Oh, who am I to make predictions, George. I don't know anything about it. But it certainly looks from here on in to Germany it's gonna be tougher and tougher. With the men lying and fighting in the mud, they read and they hear about people thinking the war is practically over. It makes 'em pretty bitter. Take a GI pinned down by a Kraut*

## RADIO AND WWII

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*crossfire. He thinks plenty of ammunition is still more important than post-war planning. Really their constant concern over there is that overconfidence is going to eventually result in diminishing support here at home.*

There was concern in 1944 that Americans were becoming lax in their duties, believing the war was nearly over. The OWI wanted to make sure people realized the importance of continued production.

Another popular topic of humor in these comedy programs was the rubber shortage which greatly limited the amount of driving possible because of the lack of tires. Shortages were in effect even before American entry into the war. In the November 16, 1941 Gildersleeve show, "Unk," as he was called, warned his nephew to stop blowing his bubblegum. "Young man, if you keep playing with your gum that way, some day you're going to have a blowout, and remember you haven't got a spare face." On the February 1, 1942 show, the household was concerned that Leroy may have ran away. Searching for him by driving down poorly maintained roads, a peeved Gildersleeve exclaimed, "A blowout! My last good tire, too. Will I remember Pearl Harbor!" Trying to locate such a scarce commodity, he remarked, "[Tires) are worth their weight in sugar these days."

Similarly, on the *Sealtest Program* starring Rudy Vallee from February 19, 1942, co-star John Barrymore, who was always in debt, made a comment that he needed his checkbook retreaded. Vallee retorted that the government will take his checkbook because "they're calling in all rubber." Later on the show, guest star Humphrey Bogart said he wanted to marry co-star Joan Davis. "Wait'll you see what I got to slip on your finger — I risked my life to get it." She questioned,

"A diamond? Sapphire? Ruby?" "Better than that — it's a tire off a kiddie car," Bogart responded. Since the shortage affected everyone, and there was little that could be done about it, these comedy/variety shows believed they could shed humor on the situation.

In addition, on another Rudy Vallee show the star was chatting with Joan Davis, who constantly was the recipient, from others as well as herself, of disparaging remarks about her appearance. On the June 18, 1942 episode she said, "I don't understand this drive to salvage rubber. You're supposed to get a cent a pound for it. But I got \$20 for my overshoes." Vallee responded, "You see, Joan, a cent a pound is for scrap rubber. For invasion barges the government pays more." Of course, this was followed by Rudy Vallee imploring listeners to action: "Seriously, this drive for rubber scrap is a vital part of our war effort. Search your garage, attic, cellar, closets and turn in your scrap at the nearest garage or filling station. Old tires, tubes, bathing caps, rubber gloves, and tennis shoes are urgently needed. Keep them rolling to victory." These war messages "suggested" by the Office of War Information which, in part, regulated radio broadcasts, worked well in comedies since the actors were able to inform the listeners about government programs while working the messages into jokes.

Not only were jokes and references sprinkled in the dialogue, frequently whole programs revolved around a war theme. Even before the war started, programs discussed war-related activities, especially since the Selective Service Act, which drafted men for military duty, had been in effect since July, 1940. In fact, three weeks before Pearl Harbor, *The Great Gildersleeve* program entitled "Servicemen for Thanksgiving" was all about families in town inviting soldiers for Thanksgiving dinner. Leroy, the nephew of Gildersleeve, said there were going to be a thousand soldiers in the



THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE

town of Summerfield over Thanksgiving, and the USO was urging the citizens to invite servicemen to dinner. Gildersleeve decided to make a public service announcement on the radio urging all the town people to invite a soldier over. However, at the camp there were no young men available; they had already left for various homes in town. "Gildy" and Leroy searched the area for people to invite. They even ran into Judge Hooker who, too, was trying to find a soldier; he had been moved by the "stirring and inspirational" speaker on the radio, Gildersleeve, who "told every citizen to do his duty by our new army." In the end, the only person to come to Thanksgiving was, much to Gildersleeve's chagrin, a boy scout.

The straightforward message in this pre-war show clearly was the need for Americans to be patriotic and to be of service to the military. Although America was not officially in the foray, it seems most knew that intervention was not far away. And, ironically, it was what was heard on the radio which influenced Judge Hooker, a radio

character, to contribute to the war effort.

Another *Gildersleeve* program was dedicated to the war. The show from June 26, 1942 was part of a special series of broadcasts called the "Victory Parade." The Office of War Information, had chosen ten top-ranking shows to air over the summer dealing with the war in some way, and one of the series selected was *The Great Gildersleeve*. In the "Victory Parade" episode the Gildersleeve Girdle Works, the plant "Gildy" ran, was patriotically converted for war production and began making parachutes.

In addition, the *Grape Nuts Flakes Program* starring Jack Benny from November 15, 1942, was broadcast from the Naval Station at Terminal Island, California which, in addition to building morale, had the main skit revolve around conservation and buying war stamps. Jack's character, Oglethorpe, went shopping with his wife, Clarabelle. He said he needed new shoes. Clarabelle said he should buy war stamps instead. "Stamps? For my feet?" he asked. For everything Oglethorpe requested, his wife responded he should buy war stamps. After she departed for a few minutes leaving him with her purse, he was tempted to spend her money, which she made working at the ship production factory. But his conscience appeared and told him that if everybody spent all the money they were making, there would be inflation. In the end, he bought a war bond for \$18.75. The message was perfectly clear to the listening audience: all extra income should be used for the war effort, not only to help the military but also to keep inflation down.

Another blatant government appeal was heard on the March 18, 1943 *Sealtest Program*. Blossom Blimp, the resident rich lady, entered the Village Store, excited about starting her victory garden. Shirley Ann Mitchell followed her, lamenting, "I have cutworms in my rutabagas," although the rest of her

## RADIO AND WWII

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garden was doing well. Guest star George Tobias was pleased that they were doing this. He said, "I just saw a bulletin that says we need 200 million gardens this year." Rudy Vallee agreed, "Our government is appealing to everyone with a plot of ground to plant a V garden. One-fourth of all our food production this year will be needed for our armed forces and our allies. So if 20 million families will grow a large part of their own food, you can easily see what a tremendous help it will be to the war effort, and it doesn't affect ration allowance." The victory garden theme ran throughout the entire program.

One of the most joyous programs which dealt entirely with a war theme was the August 16, 1945 broadcast of the *Sealtest Village Store*. Jack Haley, who was the proprietor of the store, spoke with announcer John Laing about the end of the war.

*Haley: John, isn't it wonderful about Japan surrendering? When I heard the news I got so excited I ran out and kissed every WAC, WAVE and Spar in the street. In fact, I kissed every one in uniform who was wearing a skirt.*

*Laing: Tonight, in tribute to our armed forces who fought so magnificently, to our workers who forged irresistible weapons, to our farmers who produced record-breaking supplies of vital foods, to everyone who contributed to America's glorious victory, Eddie Paul conducts the Sealtest Orchestra and chorus in a medley of the nation's popular martial songs.*

*This same show closed with the following message, read by Laing:*

*For the first time in nearly four years, America's battle guns are stilled. Once again, and pray God, for the last time, this nation has demonstrated to the world that free men contending for liberty are superior to any regimented*



JACK HALEY

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people on earth. Now it is for us to demonstrate to ourselves that this victory shall be no hollow triumph to be followed in a generation by another in a more fearful war. It is for us, the living, to prosecute the cause of world peace just as relentlessly as we waged global war. That is the ideal for which our boys died. It is the ideal for which we must live.

Although the Sealtest programs, in their various manifestations, did well for the homefront effort, and fittingly paid tribute at the war's end, it is ironic and sad that this well-written, noble hope would not be fulfilled.

But during the conflict, the ubiquitous homefront messages kept the war immediate and relevant to the audience. Most listeners were unable to forget that a battle was being waged at home and abroad. Actors on the radio were doing their part for the effort; therefore all Americans should be working just as hard for victory.

Historian John Morton Blum summed it up stating, "Facts, in another special

sense, became figures, for according to the Hollywood prescription, Myrna Loy could 'spend her afternoon at a Red Cross class' just as easily as she could 'spend it playing bridge,' and the audience would be just as happy. Bob Hope, the prescription continued, could 'do a routine' about the rubber shortage just as easily as he could 'fall into a swimming pool,' and the audience presumably would laugh just as hard." Americans were enjoying the propaganda, often without realizing what it really was. The fact that most listeners already were involved with war-related activities made the actions and dialogue of the characters seem true to life.

These war-related themes are not only interesting because they capture the flavor of the time, but they also show how pervasive the war propaganda was; it helped keep the various war efforts on the homefront in the minds of Americans. It also shows that both good and bad can come from it: propaganda made people aware that they could be influential in helping win the war, yet it often instilled a dislike of certain ethnic groups, particularly the Japanese, and provided little room for any nonconformity. The war messages, in the guise of dialogue, songs or commercials, worked similar to advertising. The messages often instilled fear into the radio listeners, claiming America's freedom was at stake. However, the radio propaganda effort, managed in part by the Office of War Information, helped motivate the public and promoted the sale of millions of war bonds.

Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt invoked great spirit and patriotism with his "Day of Infamy" speech. "No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory . . . Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territories



**PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT**

and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God." Most Americans responded favorably to the pervasive homefront war effort. And radio certainly did its part as well, playing programming that educated, informed, and motivated everyone to stay angry, afraid, and busy. It was believed, and rightly so, that broadcasting was too important to not do its part for the war effort.

Radio writer and producer Norman Corwin summed up the influence of radio when he said, "I believe radio has a higher destiny than merely to sell soup and soap. I think it's an art apart; a social force which can figure vitally in the keeping of the peace and the making of a clean and orderly world."

Indeed, during the war, radio certainly had an important job to do, and it did it with great success. ■



# NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

## *Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey*

BY KARL PEARSON

Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey were undoubtedly two of the most popular band-leaders of the Swing Era. Both possessed great musical talent and were greatly admired by their fellow musicians. Many trombonists attempted to capture the silken tone of Tommy's trombone, while dozens of reed players marveled at Jimmy's tone, technique and facility on both the alto saxophone and clarinet.

The Dorsey Brothers grew up in a musical household. Jimmy, the eldest, was born on Leap Year Day of 1904, while Tommy was born on November 19, 1905. The Dorsey family lived in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, where the brothers learned their lessons from their music-teacher father, a former Pennsylvania coal miner. The brothers each began on brass instruments, and eventually learned woodwinds as well. As lessons progressed Jimmy settled on alto sax and clarinet, while Tommy played trombone. Tommy would occasionally pick up trumpet for his own enjoyment, a habit that would continue for many years. The younger Dorsey continued to play trumpet on occasion even after he became known as one of the nation's top trombonists.

As Jimmy and Tommy became more proficient, they began playing in musical outfits organized by their father. Eventually they landed jobs with a regional dance orchestra known as the Scranton Sirens, where Jimmy and Tommy met a young trombonist named Russ Morgan. After several years of playing with other regional outfits the Brothers joined Jean

Goldkette's Detroit-based Orchestra. The Goldkette Orchestra was poised for national recognition, having landed a recording contract with the Victor Talking Machine Company. Another member of the Goldkette Orchestra was young cornetist named Bix Beiderbecke. They remained with Goldkette for several months when Jimmy left the band, followed shortly thereafter by Tommy.

Tommy and Jimmy realized that the real recognition and money lay in New York. The New York musical scene had much more to offer than any area, since most of the better-known orchestras were based there, along with the major recording and broadcasting facilities. The Dorseys settled in New York, and over the next few years were employed by Vincent Lopez, The California Ramblers, Paul Whiteman, B.A. Rolfe and others.

Tommy and Jimmy were fiercely competitive brothers. Jimmy, the soft-spoken one who had a sly sense of humor, referred to his younger brother as "Mac." Tommy, boisterous and outgoing, called Jimmy "Lad." To fellow musicians they referred to one another as "The Brother." Jimmy and Tommy were well-known in New York musical circles for their ongoing brawls. But even with the constant fighting, the two brothers had a genuine respect for one another.

In 1928 the Dorsey Brothers had their first opportunity to make recordings with a band of their own. Tommy and Jimmy



**TOMMY AND JIMMY DORSEY**

were approached by Bob Stephens, head of Artists and Repertoire for OKeh records. Stephens, who had worked with the brothers as a member of the Scranton Sirens, arranged a series of sides under the Dorsey's name and leadership. Over the next two years Tommy and Jimmy made a number of sides using the top New York talent of the time, including Bing Crosby, Adrian Rollini, Glenn Miller, Jack Teagarden, Frank Teschmaker, Irving Kaufman and Seger Ellis.

In 1930 the two brothers went their separate ways for a short period. Jimmy spent time in the radio and recording orchestras of Red Nichols, Freddie Rich, Nat Shilkret, Victor Young, Rudy Vallee, Andre Kostalanetz and others, and toured England with a band led by Ted Lewis. Tommy was equally busy during this period, earning good money in the bands by Vincent Lopez, Roger Wolfe Kahn, Rudy Vallee, Andre Kostalanetz, Victor Young and others. Tommy and Glenn Miller were the two-man trombone section in Lennie Hayton's Orchestra, the house band featured on Fred Allen's "Town Hall Tonight" program.

In 1932 Bob Stephens, now associated with Brunswick Records, approached the brothers with another recording opportunity. Stephens suggested that Tommy and Jimmy form a small house band that would accompany various Brunswick artists. The small group that the Dorseys organized featured many of the best New York studio musicians, including a young trumpet player named Bunny Berigan. Tommy and Jimmy's band backed Mildred Bailey, Bing Crosby, The Boswell Sisters and Ethel Waters on a number of Brunswick sides.

By 1934 the dance band market was changing. With the repeal of prohibition a whole new entertainment scene began to emerge. Nightclubs and dance halls that featured live orchestras sprang up across the country. Jimmy and Tommy decided that the time was right for them to start a full-time orchestra of their own. With the assistance of booker Cork O'Keefe the brothers began to form their own band during the Spring of 1934.

One of their first choices was their old friend Glenn Miller. Miller was a fine arranger and a capable trombonist who was well-known for his organizational skill, having recently organized an orchestra for singer Smith Ballew. When Glenn left the Ballew band he brought several of its members with him to form the nucleus of the Dorsey band.

The new Dorsey Brothers Orchestra had a very distinctive sound. While most orchestras had two or three trumpets and one trombone, Tommy and Jimmy's band featured two trumpets and three trombones. Most sax sections consisted two alto saxists and one tenor. The Dorsey band featured Jimmy's alto and two tenors. The overall effect was a much deeper, richer sound. Jimmy and alto saxist Jack Stacey could also double on trumpet, swelling the brass section to a total of seven men. Drummer Ray McKinley provided a swinging, original beat, while vocal duties were handled by Kay Weber, Bob Crosby and a trio from within the band.

## **TOMMY AND JIMMY DORSEY**

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The new band was fortunate enough to land a recording contract with the brand-new Decca label, which retailed for the low price of 35 cents. (The other major labels retailed at either 50 or 75 cents.) The Dorsey Brothers Orchestra recorded over one hundred various sides for Decca in its first year! Good location jobs followed, including runs at the Sands Point Casino, Ben Mardin's Riviera and The Palais Royale on Broadway. Remote broadcasts from these locations also brought Tommy and Jimmy's sound into homes across the nation.

The leadership of the band had been arranged when it was first organized, with Tommy standing out in front and Jimmy sitting in the sax section. Tommy, easily the more outgoing of the two, was also more diplomatic with customers. This arrangement eventually caused much tension between the Dorseys. Jimmy grew resentful of Tommy's greater visibility, while Tommy felt greater pressure placed on him as front man. Several fights erupted, with Glenn Miller usually acting as the intermediary. Miller left the band at the end of 1934 after one particularly unpleasant incident. It was just a matter of time before there was a big blowup between Jimmy and Tommy.

The big confrontation occurred at the Glen Island Casino in New Rochelle, New York.

The date was May 30, 1935, Decoration Day, or "Separation Day," as the brothers later referred to it. Tommy kicked off the start of the tune "I'll Never Say 'Never Again' Again." Jimmy was unhappy with the tempo that Tommy had set and spoke up. "Isn't that a little too fast, Mac?" Tommy, who had received months of cracks and looks from Jimmy in the sax section, picked up

his trombone, walked off the stand — and out the door!

Cork O'Keefe tried to work a reconciliation between Jimmy and Tommy, but Tommy would have no part of it, even though the band had a good shot at a spot on Bing Crosby's new "Kraft Music Hall" program scheduled to start in December. The two Brothers Dorsey went their separate ways for the next 18 years. The two would have remarkable separate careers in the meantime.

Tommy and Jimmy were reunited once again on the bandstand of the Cafe Rouge of New York's Hotel Statler in 1953. Billed as "Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra featuring Jimmy Dorsey," the band enjoyed renewed popularity. With the help of good friend Jackie Gleason the Dorseys landed their own television show that lasted two seasons. Winter residencies at the Cafe Rouge provided a stable base for several months.

Renewed interest in the Dorseys continued for three more years until the fateful night in November, 1956 when Tommy choked to death in his sleep. Jimmy, who was devastated by the news of Tommy's death, predicted that he would be gone within six months. Jimmy's premonition was true. He was diagnosed with lung cancer a few weeks later and died in July, 1957. ■

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