

NOSTALGIA DIGEST ^{AND} RADIO GUIDE



AL JOLSON

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CHUCK SCHADEN'S NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

BOOK TWENTY-THREE

CHAPTER FIVE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1997

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

Every year it's the 50th anniversary of something for someone.

Perhaps you're celebrating your 50th birthday this year. Or your 50th wedding anniversary. Maybe you graduated from grammar or high school 50 years ago.

Well, whatever you might be celebrating in 1997, let's take a quick look back at 1947 and what was going on at that time.

The United States had no vice president. Harry Truman had assumed the presidency upon the death of FDR in 1945 and, until he was elected on his own in 1948, the country had no VP. In 1947, an Act of Congress designated the Speaker of the House of Representatives to be next in succession to the presidency in the absence of a president or vice president. The Speaker of the House in 1947 was Sam Rayburn.

President Truman appointed General George Marshall as Secretary of State and Marshall announced his plan for the U.S. government to provide aid for the economic and military rehabilitation of Europe and China: The Marshall Plan.

President Truman signed a bill changing the name of Boulder Dam to Hoover Dam in honor of the 31st president Herbert Hoover.

And Mr. Truman's daughter Margaret made her professional singing debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

The Freedom Train, symbol of the 160th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, crossed America in a 33,000 mile tour of the country.

The average salary of a worker in the U.S. was \$2,589. A factory worker was paid \$2,793 (above average!), a teacher made \$2,261 (below average!). A lawyer earned \$7,437 and a physician made \$10,700.

A Bendix automatic washer sold for \$239.50. A GE vacuum cleaner cost \$27.95. A pound of bacon was 78 cents; a dozen eggs 70 cents; a half gallon of milk 39 cents. A one pound box of Fannie May Pixies cost \$1.35.

The best selling records of the year were "That's My Desire" by Frankie Laine; "Peg O' My Heart" by the Harmonicats; and "Near You" by Francis Craig and his orchestra.

The Academy Award winning movie of 1947 was *Gentleman's Agreement*. Ronald Colman won the best actor Oscar for *A Double Life*. Loretta Young won for *The Farmer's Daughter*.

Bob Hope and Fibber McGee were tied in the Hooper ratings for the number one shows on radio, followed closely by Charlie McCarthy, Jack Benny, and Red Skelton.

And television, in its infancy, was mostly Test Pattern Time, with a little wrestling, boxing, harness racing, and travelogues thrown in for good measure.

That's a bit of what was going on fifty years ago, in 1947.

--Chuck Schaden

COVER STORY

THE JOLSON STORY

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

After a memorable war of words between those perennial squabblers, W. C. Fields and Charlie McCarthy, Edgar Bergen tried to excuse his little chum's behavior by saying, "Charlie is his own worst enemy" to which Fields snarled, "Not while I'm around." Al Jolson probably would have delivered the same retort if someone had told him "I'm your greatest fan."

That Jolson had a high opinion of himself was obvious to those in show business who knew him. He let the meek inherit a part in the chorus while he stepped boldly into his natural place in the spotlight. His strutting carriage said it before he did: "Here I am, folks. Prepare to be entertained." Even the detractors who considered him an unctuous peacock had to acknowledge that he made good on his promise. No one dared approach the box office for a refund after one of his performances because the name Al Jolson out front guaranteed that everyone would get their money's worth.

That name was merely a slight alteration of Asa Yoelson, the one given him after his birth on May 26, 1886 in a small Russian village. Four years later Rabbi Moshe Yoelson, fearing the pogroms would soon claim his family, fled with them to America where he found a position in a Washing-

ton, D.C. synagogue. After Asa's mother died in 1895, the conflict that had been growing between his stringent father who wanted him to become a cantor and the boy's desire to use his voice to entertain was exacerbated when he belted out ballads on the street for coins or ran away from home to sing in saloons. If this sounds like the plot of *The Jazz Singer*, it is, for Jolson was actually living the part he would play some thirty years later.

After getting a taste of life on the stage as one of the *Children of the Ghetto*, he hit the vaudeville circuit with brother Hirsch in a new act with a new identity as Harry and Al Jolson. During Al's rise to fame he appeared often in burnt cork as end man in minstrel shows and also as a single. It was in those early days on his own when, billed as "The Blackface with the Grand Opera Voice," that he first rattled the rafters with songs and quieted an applauding throng with "You ain't heard nothin' yet."

Jolson eventually made noise along Tin Pan Alley by putting his mark on tunes such as "Hello, My Baby" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band." Starting in 1911 he rapped out three straight hits on Broadway: *La Belle Paree*, *Vera Violette*, and *The Whirl of Society*. Al, his chief supporter even back then, took out an ad in *Variety* that read "Everybody loves me. Those that don't are jealous."

Not even the envious could deny that he carried the shows and sometimes stopped them. During *The Honeymoon Express*

Clair Schulz is a free-lance writer from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to our magazine.



AL JOLSON -- "the world's greatest entertainer"

Jolson would interrupt the proceedings and ask, "Do you want the rest of the story — or do you want me?" and then unleash every song in his repertoire to the delight of an enthusiastic audience and the chagrin of the cast who had to spend the rest of those nights backstage. Jolie had a way of tapping into the emotions of those who heard him so that when he warbled a number like "You Made Me Love You" down on one knee with his arms outstretched he made it seem like a love letter addressed directly to them. Jolson didn't just sell a song; he also wrapped, embellished, and delivered it right into the laps of his listeners.

By 1914 he was earning \$70,000 a year and taking his act on the road in extended tours of his musical comedies which allowed people all across the country to see why he had become the toast of New York. In *Sinbad* he sang "My Mammy," "Swanee," and "Rockabye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody," three tunes that will probably be associated with his name forever.

As his reputation grew, Jolson had to live up to his legend by engaging in one-upmanship. On September 15, 1918 he followed a performance by Enrico Caruso by dashing onstage and stealing the celebrated tenor's thunder with his already famous assurance of "Folks, you ain't heard nothin' yet."

In *Bombo* he introduced over twenty new songs including "April Showers," "Toot, Toot Tootsie," and "California, Here I Come." *Big Boy*, a hit in 1925 and 1926, is best-remembered for the one that got away. Jolie regretted his decision to give a number he pulled from the show to Eddie Cantor every time he heard someone sing "If You Knew Susie."

But he made a wise career move in 1926 when he sang "Rockabye," "April Showers," and "When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin Along" in front of the cameras for a one-reeler. The following year Warner Brothers wanted George Jessel, star of *The Jazz Singer* on Broadway, to be in their talking version of

THE JOLSON STORY

that play, but when he asked for too much money they turned to Jolson whom they had already seen singing on screen.

The Jazz Singer is only partially a talkie, but the revolution had to start somewhere. Although the maudlin story may seem crude when viewed today, audiences who had never seen him in person got a taste of how he could wrap a song around the heart when Jolson, as Jack Robin, sang "Kol Nidre" to his dying father and "Mammy" to his mother.

The Jazz Singer proved to be a sound sensation from the night of its premiere on October 6, 1927 so Warner Brothers wasted no time in putting Jolson in another weepie, *The Singing Fool*, about a father's affection for his doomed son. The bouncy strains of "I'm Sitting on Top of the World" helped to lighten the gloom, but nothing could prevent the parade of hankies when Al sang "Sonny Boy" to sweet Davy Lee. The picture, which earned a whopping \$5.5 million, no doubt helped the sales of "Sonny Boy," the first song to sell a million copies.

Jolson's third film, *Say It With Songs*, said the same hokum with the same Davy

Lee. Both of his 1930 releases, *Mammy* with tunes by Irving Berlin and *Big Boy*, an adaptation of the Broadway smash, featured featherweight plots. Jolson himself must have felt audiences deserved more because at the premieres he would jump up on the stage after the movies ended and go into his act.

In 1933 he starred in *Hallelujah, I'm a Bum* which featured the novel use of dia-

logue delivered in rhyming couplets. In this singsongy tale the life of the hobo king of Central Park (Jolson) was juxtaposed with that of New York's mayor (Frank Morgan) to the accompaniment of a Rodgers and Hart score. The film failed miserably because it was too innovative or because the



plight of the poor struck too close to home during the depression or because moviegoers wanted escapism rather than strained whimsy. In any case, Jolson may have thought he was indeed a bum with producers at United Artists after the movie lost over a million dollars and plans for three more pictures with that studio were dropped.

Although screen magazines began asking the question "Is Jolson Through?" Warner Brothers still thought enough of

him to team him with his third wife, Ruby Keeler, in *Go Into Your Dance*. Al viewed the success of this picture with a jaundiced eye for he suspected that people wanted to see the dancing star of *42nd Street* instead of him. *The Singing Kid* gave him an opportunity to reprise his most popular numbers, yet he thought co-star Beverly Roberts stole some of his luster. Jolson didn't like to share the limelight even when off the set. One night at a party when George Burns tried to join him in a refrain of "Rockabye Your Baby" Al grabbed Ruby and left in a huff.

After his dyspeptic reaction to how *The Singing Kid* looked had hurt his chances for future projects with Warner Brothers, he accepted offers from Twentieth Century-Fox to appear in two musicals, *Rose of Washington Square* and *Swanee River*. The four numbers he sang in *Rose* resonated with his old verve and so outdistanced the efforts of Alice Faye and Tyrone Power that one reviewer claimed Jolson was "the only member of the starring trio whose performance has warmth and vitality." Similarly, he rose above the vapid cast of *Swanee River* when he presented his stirring rendition of "Old Folks at Home." Despite the fact that he had to settle for third-billing in both pictures, these handsomely-mounted productions have worn much better and showcase his talents in a brighter way than those early helpings of schmaltz in which he did the whole show.

To Jolson's credit he didn't let the vicissitudes of his career or his divorce from Ruby prevent him from giving his all for the troops during World War II. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he was among



RUBY KEELER and AL JOLSON

the first entertainers to offer his services. He also put his money where his heart was by purchasing war bonds in quantities few stars could match. When illness kept him from making any more trips overseas, he visited military hospitals here in the states to lift the spirits of the wounded with music and mirth.

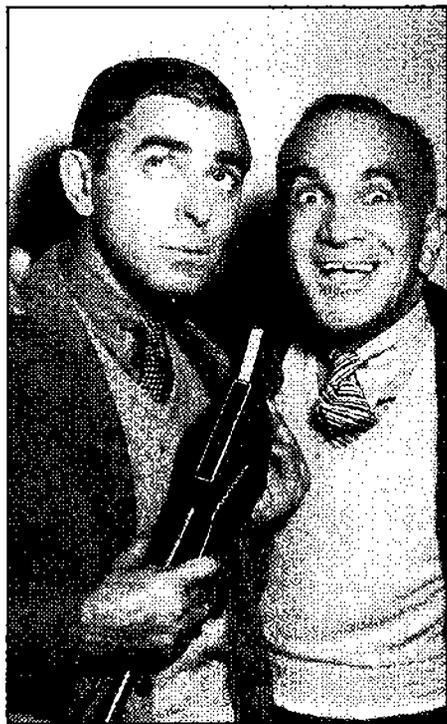
In 1945 after a bout with malaria cost him part of a lung and his first record in a decade flopped, it seemed like he was going down for the last time until Columbia Pictures threw him a lifesaver. When the concept of filming his life story was first pitched to him, Jolson naturally wanted to play himself, but eventually he resigned himself to just recording the songs and demonstrating that even with less than two lungs he could still be a powerhouse.

The Jolson Story followed the motto of most screen biographies: don't let the facts get in the way of telling a good story. Jolie's philandering, early troubled mar-

THE JOLSON STORY

riages, profligate gambling, and the wounds caused by his sharp-edge demeanor had no place in this exaltation of a man whose life was absorbed by show business. It didn't seem that important that Larry Parks lacked the dynamism of the man he was portraying. What mattered most was that while Parks was lip-synching the real Jolson emerged in all his show-stopping glory.

The newspapers that had been taking notes in preparation for printing obituaries and tributes were now filled with stories of how the popularity of the movie had rescued him from the ashcan. But any journalists expecting a new and improved Jolson would have been disillusioned had they seen his present to Stephen Longstreet, author of the *Jolson* screenplay, given "to show how much I appreciate what you did."



EDDIE CANTOR and AL JOLSON

The gift: a signed photograph of himself.

Jolson became a singing sensation all over again by going into the studio for Decca and releasing similar versions of the songs he had recorded for Brunswick and Columbia over twenty years before. The Jolson sound seemed to be coming out of every phonograph and emanating from every spot on the radio dial.

His track record on radio had been pretty spotty at best. *Presenting Al Jolson* and his first turn as host of the *Kraft Music Hall* fizzled as incompletes in the early thirties. His stay at the *Shell Chateau* lasted just thirty-nine weeks. *Cafe Trocadero* had a better run from 1936 to 1939, partially because Martha Raye and Harry "Parkyakarkus" Einstein provided some much-needed albeit corny humor. When he tried once more during the 1942-43 season on the *Al Jolson Show* for Colgate, neither the star nor the sponsor was pleased with the result.

But four years later as the hottest property in Hollywood he was popping up on all three networks to sing and joke with Amos 'n' Andy, Burns and Allen, Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Bing Crosby, Jimmy Durante, Bergen and McCarthy, and Bob Hope, who asked Jolson on his April 8, 1947 show why he didn't have his own radio program and was told, "What — and be on the air only once a week?"

Due to the positive response following his appearances with Bing Crosby on *Philco Radio Time* Kraft invited him back to be in charge of the *Music Hall* again. Because no one could play a Gershwin melody like Oscar Levant and no one could sing a Gershwin lyric like Jolson, the neurotic pianist joined the show to perform at the keyboard and to trade quips with the star, although the mating of two abrasive personalities with oversized egos made it seem that some of the barbs directed toward each other were delivered with more



BING CROSBY and AL JOLSON

relish than necessary. Jolie made certain everyone knew it was his show and undoubtedly caused some imprecations to be muttered in the control booth when he regularly deviated from the script or insisted on singing his favorite standards over and over. After two seasons Kraft, noting the cooling of the Jolson mania and the slipping ratings, closed the *Music Hall* for good on May 26, 1949.

Three months later *Jolson Sings Again* had people lining up at ticket booths to see the next segment of the Jolson saga. Parks assumed the role again as an older Jolson who struggled through the valley of loneliness caused by his stagnant period and the loss of his wife to the peak of his finding love again with a nurse and experiencing a revitalized career.

Al may have been too gray-haired and paunchy for audiences to accept him on the screen as himself, but radio presented

no such barrier so he did get his chance to play the man he most admired on the *Lux Radio Theatre*. On February 16, 1948 he starred in the *Lux* production of *The Jolson Story* and on May 22, 1950 he starred in the *Lux* version of *Jolson Sings Again*. (On June 2, 1947, celebrating the 20th anniversary of talking pictures, Jolson had starred on *Lux* in the radio adaptation of *The Jazz Singer*.)

Jolson listened seriously to offers trying to lure him into television, but he had his doubts whether people would want to see the same faces week after week. Instead he headed for Korea to pour his energies into performing for soldiers in camps and hospitals. Throughout the tour he battled a cold that was sapping his strength. When he returned home in September, 1950 after doing forty-two shows (which, in typical hyperbole, he inflated to 160 for reporters), his face and body showed all of his sixty-four years. A month later he died of a heart attack in a San Francisco hotel but not before reportedly telling the two doctors who came to his bedside to "Pull up some chairs. I've got some stories to tell."

That was Jolson being Jolson right up to the end, the master showman who knew how to work an audience regardless of whether he was flat on his back in a bedroom or on the tips of his toes in a nightclub. Jolson the man may have been little in more ways than one, but Jolson the performer was a giant who towered over his contemporaries. Only Jolson would have the gall to wear a badge bearing the initials *AJTWGE*. (Al Jolson, the World's Greatest Entertainer"); only Jolson had the talent to prove that claim every time he opened his mouth to sing. ■

(NOTE—*Lux Radio Theatre* productions of *The Jazz Singer*, *The Jolson Story* and *Jolson Sings Again* will be presented on *TWTD* during August and September. See listings on pages 20-24.)

*Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .*

Radio's Theme Songs



...the small house halfway up in the next block.

...a tale well calculated to keep you in...Suspense.

...dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation, and to their bewildering offspring.

A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty Hi-Yo Silver...

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?

Henry!... Henry Aldrich!

It... is... later... than... you... think.

Those phrases ring familiar to us fans of old-time radio; they served each week — each day in some cases — to introduce some of the most popular programs on the air.

The words were nearly always accompanied by music — the program's theme song — and some of those introductions were a bit on the lengthy side. But we listeners enjoyed them. We looked forward to hearing them.

A radio show's theme music had to fit the tenor of the show. A bouncy piece most likely would be used for a program of dance music. A mystery required an eerie theme. For a comedy show, a light, good-humored tune was indicated; for a Western, a cowboy ballad.

Themes for the lower-budget network

shows, such as soap operas, were usually played on an electric organ, as were themes for some of the local shows on the larger stations. (Most of the larger stations had an organ and a staff organist; the smaller stations, having no organ, would draw upon their record or transcription library.)

The big-budget network shows — the variety shows, the comedy programs, the dramatic presentations — most often employed a live orchestra. If the program's star was a singer, the show's theme would quite likely be sung by the star. Some examples: Bing Crosby's "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day," Kate Smith's "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain," and Rudy Vallee's "My Time is Your Time."

Radio's theme songs served the same purpose as the overture to a show in the theatre: they helped to put the audience into the right frame of mind for the show to follow. Radio entertainment, after all, had its roots in the theatre.

Today, several decades later, we fondly recall many of those old radio series. And while we may not remember any individual broadcast from a given series, we do recall the spoken words — and the music — that opened the show.

Some radio themes, such as the music for *The Lux Radio Theatre*, *Mr. District*

Attorney, The Great Gildersleeve, Dragnet, The Life of Riley, It Pays to Be Ignorant, and *Little Orphan Annie* were written especially for the shows they served to introduce.

Other theme songs were melodies which had been familiar to the public before they became radio themes. For some examples: the soap opera *Valiant Lady* used the Mexican song "Estrellita." *Myrt and Marge* had "Poor Butterfly." The Irish song "Rose of Tralee" introduced *Backstage Wife*. From Italy came the theme song of *Lorenzo Jones*: "Funiculi, Funicula." *Just Plain Bill* had "Polly Wolly Doodle" as its theme.

Sometimes a theme song would be one which, if its lyrics had been sung, would have been inappropriate for the program. But when a listener heard the song played, rather than sung, only the song's title and not its lyrics would come to mind, and it might be entirely fitting. Such was the case with *Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons*, whose theme was Noel Coward's romantic love song "Someday I'll Find You." The song's lyrics would have been out of place, but the title was made to order for the program.

Arthur Godfrey's theme song was appropriate for his radio style. Although his audience numbered in the millions, Godfrey spoke as if he were talking one-on-one with his listeners; he might have been sitting across the kitchen table from you, enjoying a cup of coffee. His theme, "Seems Like Old Times (Being Here with You)," was right on the mark.

Each comedy show had its theme song. Fred Allen used the 1931 song "Smile, Darn Ya, Smile." Jack Benny's program opened with the first four measures of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" followed by "Love In Bloom." Bob Hope's radio show came on with a song which Hope had introduced in the movie *Big Broadcast of 1938*: "Thanks for the Memory."

"The overture to Reznicek's comic opera 'Donna Diana' became identified with Sergeant Preston of the Yukon."

The Baby Snooks Show was introduced by the old English Lullaby "Rock-a-Bye Baby." "Thinking of You" told us that *Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge* was in session. "Manhattan Serenade" was the theme for *Easy Aces*.

A number of radio themes were drawn from the literature of classical music.

Mercury Theatre on the Air was introduced by the main theme of the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, a melody which was popularized by Freddy Martin's orchestra, and which, with lyrics added, became a pop song: "Tonight We Love."

The ominous theme heard at the beginning of *The Shadow* is from Saint-Saens' symphonic poem "Omphale's Spinning Wheel."

A brief phrase from Moussorgsky's "A Night on Bare Mountain" ushered in the radio series *Escape*.

The bee and hornet are closely related, and when the producers of *The Green Hornet* series weren't able to find any music dealing with hornets, they must have felt that the bee was close enough. They chose the interlude "The Flight of the Bumblebee," from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera "The Tale of Tsar Saltan," to serve as the program's theme.

Another Russian Opera, Prokofiev's "The Love for Three Oranges," provided the theme music for another crime series: *The FBI in Peace and War*, whose sponsor was Lava Soap. The program opened with the March from the opera while a deep-voiced announcer intoned, in cadence with

RADIO'S THEME SONGS

the music. L-A-V-A, L-A-V-A.

The overture to Reznick's comic opera "Donna Diana" became identified with *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*.

All of the shows sponsored by Philip Morris cigarettes opened with the main theme from the "On the Trail" section of Ferde Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite." With that music in the background, Johnny could be heard sounding his *Call for Philip Morris*.

The *Hallmark Playhouse* adopted as its theme "The Dream of Olwen," a portion of the score for the 1948 film "While I Live," by the English composer Charles Williams.

It was in 1912 that another English composer, Sydney Baynes, wrote the waltz "Destiny" to be danced to by the Palace Girls in a show at London's Palace Theatre. Carlton E. Morse eventually chose "Destiny" as the theme for *One Man's Family*, and it introduced the program for many years.

Another Carlton E. Morse series, *I Love a Mystery*, used a classical music theme: "Valse Triste," by Sibelius.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes had several incarnations on radio between 1930 and 1955, on several networks and with a number of different actors heading the cast. The version I remember best featured Basil Rathbone as Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson. The series opened with a quotation from the "Dance of the Camorristi," from Wolf-Ferrari's opera "The Jewels of the Madonna."

The strains of Toselli's "serenade" let us know that it was time for our daily visit with *The Goldbergs*.

Surely, one of the most recognizable of all the old-time radio themes was that of *The Lone Ranger*. This, of course, was the final section of the overture to Rossini's

opera "William Tell." The fact is, the music has nothing to do with the Wild West, or even with galloping horses; the opening trumpet call, in the opera, summons a contingent of Swiss soldiers, and the part that evokes the Masked Rider of the Plains astride his great white horse Silver is actually a quickstep march.

The Lone Ranger series used excerpts from the classics also as "bridges," that is, transitions from one scene to another. As the announcer, Fred Foy, would say, "Meanwhile, back at the ranch..." the background music might be a quotation from Wagner's "Rienzi" overture, Liszt's symphonic poem "Les Preludes," Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," or Mendelssohn's overture "Fingal's Cave."

Until recently, many of the television shows also used theme songs; for examples, *I Love Lucy*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Bonanza*, *The Jackie Gleason Show*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *The Love Boat*, *Hill Street Blues*, *I. A. Law*, "M*A*S*H," and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Folks who regularly watched these shows still fondly remember their theme songs.

The past couple of years, however, many of the TV shows have not had theme songs. It seems that today's typical viewer lacks either the patience or the attention span to sit through an introduction. And because the producers don't dare risk losing those viewers, they dispense with any introduction: As the program begins, we're plopped right down into the action.

Apparently, that's the way modern TV viewers want it. But ultimately, I think, they'll be the losers. Because some years from now, when they are middle-aged, they won't have the pleasure of being able to reminisce about old theme songs, as you and I have been doing today. ■

(NOTE— For more about radio's theme songs with Ken Alexander, tune in TWTD September 13.)

The SHADOW Knows

BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

"Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows"

—Lamont Cranston

Before Batman, Superman, the Lone Ranger, Spiderman, Captain Marvel, and all those other superheroes -- there was the Shadow!

He was the prototype of all those American super heroes who do not want the populace to know their real names. When he wasn't invisible, the Shadow usually appeared in public wearing a black hat and cape.

Like Batman, the Shadow did most of his crime fighting at night. And he was also a wealthy playboy.

Like Superman, the Shadow had special powers that made him invincible. He could become invisible in nothing flat. His lady friend was named Margo Lane. Superman dated Lois Lane.

Like the Lone Ranger, the Shadow had a close friend who knew his true identity. The Masked Rider had Tonto, and the Shadow had the lovely Margo Lane.

Richard W. O'Donnell of Port Richey, Florida is a free-lance writer and long-time radio buff.

It is safe to say the Shadow wrote the rules and regulations governing our modern super heroes.

Most of them arrived on the scene in the thirties. The Shadow showed up in the pulp magazines during the twenties, and, in short order, became a radio star.

The Shadow — a.k.a. Lamont Cranston

— and "his constant companion," Margo Lane, can still be heard on rebroadcasts of old-time radio shows. Most of them feature Bret

Morrison, who had an eerie Shadow-style laugh that sent shivers racing up and down your spine. That laugh, it should be noted, was the Shadow's trade mark. Villains trembled when they heard it. Even the good guys got a little nervous when the Shadow let loose with his trade mark.

The Shadow character's original real name, by the way, wasn't Lamont Cranston. It was Kent Allard. For some reason, Allard, in one of his early radio cases, needed a name in a hurry, so he borrowed the name of a close friend, Lamont Cranston, who



THE SHADOW KNOWS

was away on a trip around the world.

Evidently, the producer of the show liked the name, so the Shadow kept it. What became of the original Lamont was never revealed.

In case you've forgotten: "The Shadow, Lamont Cranston, a man of wealth, a student of science and a master of other people's minds, devotes his life to righting wrongs, protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty.

"Using advanced methods that may ultimately become available to all law enforcement agencies, Cranston is known to the underworld as The Shadow, — never seen, only heard, as haunting to superstitious minds as a ghost, as inevitable as a guilty conscience..."

Cranston acquired his "ability to cloud men's minds" so they can't see him, while in the Orient. Exactly how it works has never been revealed. Presumably, all those "law enforcement agencies" are still nibbling on their fingernails, waiting to learn how to do the trick.

The original *Shadow* programs were on the air for 24 years, mostly on Sundays at five o'clock (EST). The half-hour show was first heard on August 10, 1930. Blue Coal was the prime sponsor for a number of years.

Since then, there have been *Shadow* books, comic books, movies, and even a serial. Victor Jory, a long time character actor played *The Shadow* in the serial, made in the forties. It was a low budget deal, and Jory emoted his way through all twelve chapters, wearing a black hat and cape. He looked more like Dracula than a good guy.

At the start, the Shadow was "the invisible narrator" of a series of crime stories. He lurked in the background, while the central characters acted out the story line.

Then, a young actor with a magnificent speaking voice took charge.

"Orson Welles was the first one to do the Shadow as an integral part of the story itself," said Bret Morrison, who played the part on radio for thirteen years and was interviewed shortly before his death in 1979.

"Before Welles, there were a lot of actors who played the part, when the Shadow was sort of a narrator. He was like Raymond on *Inner Sanctum*. He never appeared in the story. Welles changed all that. He made the invisible Shadow the key character on the show. Agnes Moorehead was the first Margo Lane."

Margo was always billed as Cranston's "friend and constant companion." This raised a few eyebrows. There were those who wondered what that meant. Indeed, she was an unmarried girl cavorting around the world with a wealthy bachelor. Still, the Shadow was a noble and pure crime fighter. So Margo, and Cranston too, were given the benefit of a doubt.

Veteran actress Grace Matthews played Margo longer than any other performer. Others who had the part included Marjorie Anderson and Gertrude Warner.

"The plots were so complicated I often had difficulty figuring them out," said Miss Matthews. "After the show, I'd go home and ask my husband, who was supposed to be listening, to explain what had happened. He was a baseball fan though, and kept switching between the game and *The Shadow*, so he seldom knew what was going on. He usually gave me an elaborate explanation of what had happened. I'm certain his explanations weren't accurate. He was more interested in baseball."

The Shadow, for the most part, featured ghosts, goblins, vampires, werewolves, and maniacs, plus a splendid assortment of mad scientists intent on destroying civilization. The mood was eerie, and most of

the action took place in the dark of night. Organ music was featured. A haunting old classic called "The Spinning Wheel" was the chilling theme.

Several fine actresses were featured on *The Shadow* shows over the years. Academy Award winner Mercedes McCambridge appeared on several shows. She was either "a sweet young thing or an evil character."

Veteran actress Ruth Gordon, a Broadway star during the thirties and forties, used to appear on the show, when a part was available. In those days, there were no Sunday performances and Gordon was able to earn a few extra dollars on her day off.

One Hollywood star, Kay Francis, appeared on the show as a lark. During the early thirties Francis was "the queen of the lot at Warner Brothers."

"I was earning \$500 a week," James Cagney once recalled, "and they were paying Kay Francis ten times my salary. She was the biggest star Warner's had at the time."

Actress Francis also loved the Sunday afternoon *Shadow* shows and was a regular listener. While in New York to promote one of her new movies, she went to a rehearsal of a *Shadow* show and was offered the part of an old crone who needed young blood to stay alive. Francis, strictly for the fun of it, accepted the part, but insisted she be listed as Frances Kaye, so that Warner Brothers would not find out what she had done. They say she had a marvelous time on the show.

Several excellent actors appeared on *The Shadow* programs. Keenan Wynn, Alan Reed and Mandel Kramer all played Shrevie, the friendly cabbie. The other regular character, Commissioner Weston, was played by a number of performers including Ted deCorsia, Santos Ortega, Kenny Delmar and Dwight Weist.

In addition to Orson Welles and Bret

Morrison, others to play the invisible Shadow were John Archer, Steve Courtleigh, Bill Johnstone, and Grayson Enlow, who passed away in 1980. John Barclay was the famous Blue Coal announcer on the show.

The shows were performed before a live audience in New York's Longacre Theatre. Towards the end, they were done in a studio when actress Matthews was "about to have a daughter." Later they were taped and, for the most part, the taped shows are the ones heard today.

"Do you know," said Morrison, "that there were people who actually believed there was a character known as *The Shadow*, and that he had the power to make himself invisible. I remember we used to get letters from people who wanted to know why the Shadow was doing radio shows when he could be over in Korea fighting the enemy. Those people really believed that the Shadow was for real."

The show lost its popularity, for a brief period, when television came along and drove most favorite radio programs — *The Shadow* among them — off the air.

"I first heard about it from a Chicago station," said Morrison. "They sent me a copy of one of their shows and asked me to identify the actors. This was to make certain the performers received their residual payments."

Morrison said he identified the performers on several of the old shows.

"In many cases, it was difficult," he explained. "The actors would double up in roles. They's use different voices to play different parts on the same show."

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? Obviously *The Shadow* does!

May he continue to track down mad scientists and other assorted villains in creaky castles, haunted mansions and remote islands in the middle of nowhere for many years to come. ■

Tales of Yesteryear: *The Band Concert*

BY RUSS RENNAKER

Wednesday night was band concert night, an event I remember well. We lived on a farm about four miles from Converse, Indiana, a little town of some three or four thousand persons. The main street was paved but the side streets where the people lived were just plain gravel, sometimes tarred to keep the dust down. A Cincinnati to Chicago railroad cut across one end of the main street down by the lumber yard and the depot stood off to one side.

Main Street was about a half mile long. The town itself sat on the borderline between Miami and Grant counties. Across the end of Main Street, opposite the railroad crossing end, ran the main road between the two County Seats.

In the summer months every Wednesday evening Main Street was cordoned off to through traffic. A platform was erected near the railroad end of the street. By seven o'clock musicians began to appear and climb the steps up to the platform. It was a semiprofessional band. They were all very good at their instruments. They played at the County Fair and Memorial Day and many other occasions. One young man, the drummer, moved on and became a member of a well-known dance band of the times.

Earlier in the evening automobiles began to converge on the little town. All entrances to Main Street from side streets were barricaded except the end where it met the main road between the two major cities. Automobiles came from all over the two counties. It was a farming community, of course, but on Wednesday evening chores were done early so the family could get a good position for the concert.

A town marshal and a couple of helpers

guided the incoming vehicles as they came into Main Street. First to arrive, of course, got the places near the band platform. The marshals packed the cars in four abreast until the street was filled. They left an aisle down the middle of the street wide enough for pedestrians, in case anyone wanted to stroll from their cars during the concert.

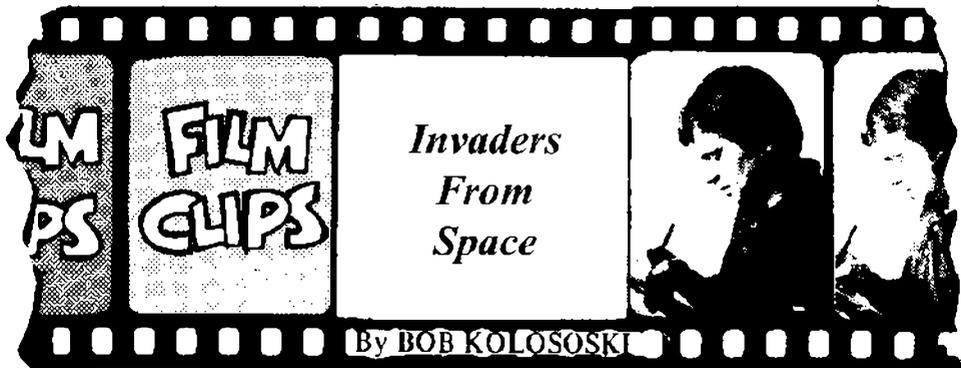
The band played for an hour and then exactly at nine o'clock it swung into the Star Spangled Banner, at the conclusion of which dozens of horns would honk up and down the packed street, and some of the more lusty occupants would shout "bravo!" and other cheers.

Now came the feature of the evening. In the center of the street, near the bandstand, stood a small platform that held a movie projection machine. A movie screen suspended from a wire overhead was swung out to the center of the street. The projector's arc light threw an eerie shaft of moving figures onto the screen. Of course, they were silent pictures. Talkies were at least a decade away.

Charlie Chaplin was the favorite, but there were others: Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and, once in a while, a wild and wooly western with Tim Holt or some other star of the time.

When the last scene flickered and the shaft of light went dark, the auto horns clattered again and motors began humming. The barricades to the side streets were taken down and cars poured out of Main Street and headed home. In a half hour, the street was empty and all that was left were the workmen taking down the band platform and the projector screen.

It would all be done over the following Wednesday night. ■



By BOB KOLOSOSKI

One of the most popular shows on television is *The X Files*. The rebel show has redefined television by discarding the usual "cops and robbers" plot lines and it has done it from the very beginning of the series.

One intriguing storyline that has consistently turned up is the possibility that earth has been visited by aliens from outer space. The government's efforts to hide the aliens has been the engine driving the show for about four seasons.

Invaders from space go back to the '30s when Orson Welles invaded earth's radiowaves with Martians in the famous "War of the Worlds" broadcast. In the movies, Flash Gordon successfully thwarted an invasion of earth by the evil Emperor Ming of the planet Mongo.

Invaders wisely stayed away from earth during World War II, but by the late '40s they were back.

A trend started with unconfirmed sightings of unidentified flying objects usually in sparsely populated areas, followed by sightings reported all over the country. There were investigations, allegations and headlines claiming cover-up and warnings that earth had been visited by beings from another planet.

With all the talk about UFOs, author J. W. Campbell wrote about a killer from space coming to earth. He titled his story "Who Goes There" and, in late 1949, di-

rector William Wellman purchased the story and produced the first invader feature film. He called his version *The Thing* and made money frightening audiences with an extraterrestrial monster. Soon many small studios were turning out invader films like *It Came from Outer Space* (1953), *Invaders from Mars* (1953), and *It Conquered the World* (1956).

A bigger budget was required for the 1953 production of *War of the Worlds*. The H. G. Wells story was first published in 1898 and Jesse Lasky purchased it from Wells in 1924. Although the film was close to the original story, the real draw was the special effects. The Martians and their machines of destruction were the stars of the film.

By the mid-fifties Hollywood had been invaded with dozens of stories about monsters from space.

Independent producer Walter Wanger had read a novel by Jack Finney and was ready to apply his talent as a producer to bring the novel to the screen. It was *The Body Snatchers* and it had been read and rejected by most major movie studios. The novel lacked monsters and death rays, but rather had earth invaded by space seeds that captured the minds and souls of earthlings. It was an intelligent story and just what Wanger was searching for.

Wanger's career in Hollywood had been a roller coaster and he was struggling to

INVADERS FROM SPACE

get to the top again. He felt *The Body Snatchers* would give him the boost he needed.

He had started his movie career near the top. From 1925 to 1932 he was a major executive with Famous Players Lasky (which evolved into Paramount Pictures in 1929) as the "general manager in charge of production." He answered only to Jesse Lasky Jr. or Adolf Zukor and, as the absolute rulers of the studio, they answered to no one. He left in 1932 to become a producer at MGM but after two years of bickering with L. B. Mayer, Wanger decided to become an independent producer. David O. Selznick had done the same and Wanger believed the time was right for independents to roam Hollywood.

In the thirties he produced twenty films including *You Only Live Once*, *Algiers*, *Trade Winds*, *Blockade*, and *Stagecoach*. He began the forties producing *Foreign Correspondent* and several other great films including *The Long Voyage Home* starring John Wayne, directed by John Ford. After World War II, several of his films flopped and a potentially lucrative deal with RKO fell through. By 1954 he was just beginning a comeback by signing a four film deal with Allied Artists.

Allied Artists was Monogram Pictures with a new head of production, Walter Mirisch, and a new policy for a handful of quality films each year to compliment the usual number of "B" pictures they produced. Wanger's background of producing through major studios made him a valuable asset to Allied's new strategy. Wanger's budget was \$300,000 which was high for Allied, but a modest amount for Wanger. He had just finished production on *Riot in Cell Block 11* for the same budget and decided the director of that film, Don Siegel, would be perfect for what

would be titled *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

He hired Siegel for a salary of \$21,000 and together they hired Daniel Mainwaring to develop the script. Mainwaring had written the script for *Out of the Past* several years before and was known for streamlining stories to fit the screenplay format.

Wanger decided to contact art director Ted Haworth who had worked with Alfred Hitchcock on *Strangers on a Train*. Haworth suggested the Los Angeles suburb of Sierra Madre for all the exterior location shots.

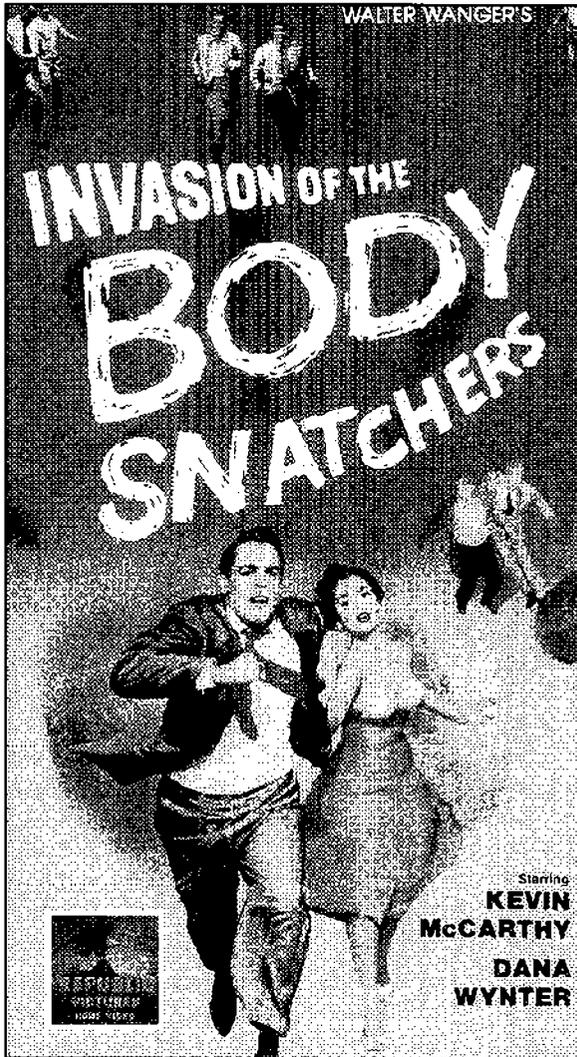
Next Wanger began to select his cast and decided rather quickly that he wanted someone new to the silver screen. He struck a deal with Kevin McCarthy, who had considerable stage experience, to star as the hero of the story.

Others selected were Carolyn Jones, known for her TV work, King Donovan, an Allied Artists contract player, and Dana Wynter, who had just signed a contract with 20th Century Fox.

The special effects budget for the film was \$3,000 and that barely covered the cost of the ten rubber pods needed. When the pods were opening, ordinary soap bubbles were used to simulate foaming due to chemical reactions.

Interior sets were kept to a minimum to help with the budget and Siegel was able to finish principal photography in 23 days. Rough cuts were viewed by studio executives about 30 days later and everyone involved felt they had a winner.

But just as Carmen Dragon finished composing the ominous score, everything ground to a halt. Now the studio executives felt that a prologue and epilogue were needed. Wanger and Siegel fought the idea but eventually lost. Other bright ideas on how to enhance the film cost time and money as release dates came and went.



Wanger had other projects to concentrate on and began to lose control to the studio.

As the final release date approached, Wanger implored the studio publicity department to promote the film as a serious commentary on life during the cold war and not as a cheap sci-fi movie shown in drive-in theatres. Again he lost the argument and the film was mass-booked in second run theatres.

Wanger tried to have noted reviewers screen the film, but failed to have anyone

take it seriously.

It slowly recouped its negative costs, but it was not the success Wanger had hoped it would be. It began running on television a couple of years later and slowly gained a loyal following with viewers.

The storyline concentrates on seeds from space growing into pods that generates human forms. These forms replace real people with emotionless reproductions and this concept has been analyzed extensively. A metaphor for communist domination of the West and cold war syndromes are popular theories. But, basically, it's a film about invaders from space landing on earth and, in a subtle, nonviolent invasion, taking over the entire planet — one person, one family, one town at a time.

Recently films about space invaders have appeared in theatres. *Independence Day* was the blockbuster hit last year. Robin Cook's *The Invasion* was a special "television event" this spring.

The special effects programmed into these new films have driven budgets into the stratosphere. One minute of screen time for *Independence Day* cost more than the entire budget for *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

If you've never seen this film, or if it's been a long time since you've watched it, try to catch it on local TV or cable next time it comes around. Or rent a copy soon. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* will show you what can be done with a low budget, a high quality story, good production values, and a fine cast. ■

John McCormack

The Tenor Who Loved Chicago

BY FR. KEVIN SHANLEY, O.CARM.

He was born on the banks of the River Shannon in Ireland but tenor John McCormack fell in love with this adopted home of Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan. During his long public singing career, McCormack travelled time and again to the Chicago that returned his appreciation.

Sharing his delight of the city was McCormack's friend, the legendary Italian tenor Enrico Caruso. The story is told of a chance encounter one morning between the two great tenors.

"Good morning, Enrico," quipped McCormack in fluent Italian. "How is the world's greatest tenor this morning?"

Caruso countered, "Giovanni, since when have you become a basso?"

On September 16, 1945, more than fifty years ago, death silenced forever the voice that had thrilled audiences on both sides of the Atlantic for decades. In his lifetime, McCormack had received many honors but insisted that the greatest of these came from the response of ordinary people who flocked to his concerts of classical and folk music.

After winning several music prizes in Ireland, McCormack made his first trip to America at the age of 19. He sang with a choir group that performed at the Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri in 1904. It was the beginning at that time of a career that would last four decades.

But according to McCormack himself, the real turning point of his career came later when he listened to Enrico Caruso singing opera at London's Covent Garden.

"It was the best lesson up to that mo-

ment I had ever received, and a stimulus which cannot be described," he remembered years later. "The sound of Caruso's voice that night lingered in my years for months."

Sometime later McCormack decided that Italy would be the place to study for an opera career. His teacher was the noted Vincenzo Sabatini of Milan who is credited with bringing the tenor to virtual greatness in only six months.

A small problem arose from McCormack's distinctively Irish name before his operatic debut in "L'amico Fritz" by Mascagni. The audience of Savona knew little of Irish opera singers, so McCormack translated his first name to the Italian "Giovanni" and used "Foli" for a surname, borrowed from his fiancée's family name of Foley. But it was McCormack's great voice, not his name change, that won the audience that evening.

The following year, on October 15, 1907, at the age of 23, McCormack made his debut in "Cavalleria Rusticana" in the British royal Opera at London's Covent Garden as their leading tenor. He was the youngest tenor to appear there, and followed his initial success with stellar performances in "Rigoletto" and "Don Giovanni."

But McCormack still longed for success on the American side of the Atlantic. When he applied to sing in New York, Oscar Hammerstein, father of Broadway lyricist and director of the Manhattan Opera House, initially refused.

"An Irish tenor in opera? I don't think so," was his comment.

Fortunately for McCormack and Ameri-



can opera audiences, Hammerstein changed his mind and booked the tenor in "La Traviata" for his 1909 New York debut. His immediate success fostered McCormack's American career. He not only became a U.S. citizen in 1919, but sang for Liberty Bonds to aid in World War I.

After 1923, McCormack began to focus greatly on concert recitals due to a serious throat infection the previous year. He sang opera arias, ballads and German lieder, in addition to his native songs, for appreciative audiences.

He gave as many as four recitals in a week at Boston's Symphony Hall. Other places he filled to capacity were New York's Carnegie Hall and the Hippodrome where concerts were sold out months in advance.

It was in Chicago, however, that McCormack found some of his most appreciative audiences. He gave at least four concerts at the Auditorium Theatre each year where he marvelled at the acoustical perfection which added greatly to his voice. He felt at home in Chicago where people

of all social classes gave him a hearty Midwestern welcome.

McCormack endeared himself to many people by his great work for various charities. In 1921, his charity work included a concert for Irish Famine Relief which raised \$78,000. He also sang Chicago concerts for St. Vincent's Infant Hospital and the Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park.

Chicago critics also sang his praises. Following a 1933 recital at Orchestra Hall, Chicago Tribune critic Edward Moore wrote, "Someday in the future, when the present century has become a matter of history, John McCormack will without doubt be cited as an Irish legend."

By the end of the 1920s, McCormack was considered the highest-paid entertainer in the U.S. with an estimated income of \$100,000 annually.

In 1929, McCormack switched to the new "talkie" films to star in *Song o' My Heart* which brought him back to Chicago via the new movie houses.

In 1931, he returned to Chicago for a recital at the Civic Opera House. Following the recital, critic Edward Moore summed up not only McCormack's performance but his life. "He is a great artist in the aristocratic, sustained phrases of ancient music, a great artist also in modern mood painting, in the humor and pathos of the songs of Ireland.... He is always not only a singer of extraordinary ability and charm, but the great storyteller of the world."

McCormack officially retired in 1938 but showed his great gratitude to America during World War II by returning to the concert stage where he raised nearly \$1 million for the American Red Cross, the Knights of Columbus, and other charities.

Shortly after World War II, he returned to his native birthplace but left part of his heart and memory in Chicago. ■

Chuck Schaden's
THOSE WERE THE DAYS
WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

AUGUST 1997

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for *Those Were The Days* represents the length of time for each particular show: (28:50) means the program will run 28 minutes and 50 seconds. This may be of help to those who tape the programs for their own collection.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2nd
AUGUST DOG DAYS

or

RADIO GOES TO THE DOGS

GRAND MARQUEE (7-9-46) "Half a Dog is Better than None" starring Jim Ameche and Beryl Vaughn in a comedy about a rich old woman who leaves an interesting clause in her Last Will and Testament. Premiere show in the series. Cast includes Hope Summers, Herb Butterfield, Charles Eggleston. Sustaining, NBC. (29:21)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (11-30-43) The McGees search everywhere in Wistful Vista for Teeny's little dog Eddie. Jim and Marian Jordan star, with Harlow Wilcox, Arthur Q. Brian, Shirley Mitchell, Ransom Sherman, the King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:09)

CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON (12-27-47) "The

Shepherd Dog" stars Paul Sutton as Sgt. Preston who, with the help of Yukon King, his Wonder Dog, finds an old Shepherd dog caught in an animal trap. Fred Foy announces. Sustaining, ABC. (29:24)

STORY OF DR. KILDARE (3-9-51) "Hysteria or Hydrophobia" stars Lew Ayers as Dr. Kildare and Lionel Barrymore as Dr. Gillespie, with Virginia Gregg as Nurse Parker. A boy is brought into Blair General Hospital after being bitten by a dog. Syndicated. (25:05)

PHIL HARRIS--ALICE FAYE SHOW (1-8-50) Phil agrees to babysit his sponsor's dog. Elliott Lewis is Frankie Remley, Gale Gordon is Mr. Scott, Walter Tetley is Julius; Stan Freberg as the dog. Rexall, NBC. (28:04)

DRAGNET (11-16-54) Jack Webb stars with Ben Alexander. An elderly man with a shotgun threatens his neighborhood after his dog has been poisoned. AFRS rebroadcast. (24:19)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9th

EASY ACES #54 (1940s) Goodman and Jane Ace, playing "themselves," star in the *first of sixteen consecutive and related episodes* of their long-running comedy series. Their friend Marge is played by Mary Hunter. In this sequence, the Ace's new neighbor is a motion picture director, and Jane wants to get a part in his forthcoming picture. NBC. (11:53)

EASY ACES #55 (1940s) Jane, confident that she is going to win the newspaper contest for a part in Arthur Laurentz' picture, is selecting a movie name for herself. NBC. (11:19)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (6-2-47) "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson with Gail Patrick, Ludwig Donath and Tamara Shayne in a radio version of Samuel Raphaelson's 1925 play which became the first talking picture in 1927. Jolson, the star who brought voice to the screen in the Warner Bros. classic, recreates his original film role as the son of a cantor who goes into show business rather than fol-

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EASY ACES
Goodman and Jane Ace

low in his father's footsteps. William Keighley is host. Lux Soap, CBS. (19:42; 18:28; 21:27)

LIFE WITH LUIGI (1-9-49) J. Carroll Naish stars as Luigi Basco with Alan Reed as Pasquale. On a bet with Pasquale, Luigi has a blind date with a telephone operator, his first with an American girl. Sustaining, CBS. (29:22)

EASY ACES #56 (1940s) Jane's brother Neil explains the plot of the picture and the details of the contest. NBC. (11:25)

SUSPENSE (2-6-47) "End of the Road" starring Glenn Ford as an automobile salesman who falls in love with the wife of a customer. Cast includes Joseph Kearns, Cathy Lewis, Hans Conried. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:45)

EASY ACES #57 (1940s) Ace coaches Jane in the art of film acting; Director Laurentz reveals to Neil his choice for the role in the picture. NBC. (11:38)

The next four episodes of Easy Aces will be presented on August 23.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16th RADIO'S COUNTRY COUSINS

LUM AND ABNER (11-7-48) Chester Lauck and Norris Goff star as Lum Edwards and Abner Peabody of Pine Ridge, Arkansas. Lum brags about his experience as a cowhand and winds up entering a rodeo bulldogging contest. Cast includes Clarence Hartzell, Isabel Randolph, and Cliff Arquette. Wendell Niles announces.

Frigidare, CBS. (28:55)

NATIONAL BARN DANCE (9-22-45) Fun from the old hayloft featuring Lulu Belle and Scotty, Arkie the Arkansas Woodchopper, the Hoosier Hot Shots, Pat Buttram, and guest Phil Regan. Jack Holden emcees. AFRS rebroadcast. (29:40)

BOB BURNS SHOW (5-30-46) Burns, known as the Arkansas Traveler who invented the musical instrument known as the bazooka, has a dinner party at his ranch to celebrate the birthday of singer Shirley Ross' pet duck. Cast includes Leo Gorcey, Clarence Nash, The Suitcase Six, Gordon Jenkins and the orchestra. Lifebuoy Soap, NBC. (28:09)

HERB SHRINER SHOW (1950) The harmonica playing Hoosier humorist offers comments on his home state. Herb's Harmonica Orchestra plays "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" and "Back Home Again in Indiana." Milton DeLugg and the orchestra. CBS. (31:18)

GRAND OLE OPRY (10-13-51) Red Foley stars with Minnie Pearl, Carl Smith, Rod Brassfield, Claude Sharpe and the Old Hickory Singers, Stringbean, Prince Albert Tobacco, NBC. (26:58)

JUDY CANOVA SHOW (10-19-43) Judy wants to rent out a room in her house. Cast features Mel Blanc, Ruby Dandridge, singer Eddie Dean, and Judy's new band leader, Charles Dant and the orchestra. Colgate Products, CBS. (24:25)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23rd

SUSPENSE (2-13-47) "The Thirteenth Sound" starring Agnes Moorehead as a woman who kills her husband during a visit to an old house. Cast includes Joseph Kearns, William Johnstone. Script by Cathy and Elliott Lewis. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:57)

EASY ACES #58 (1940s) Goodman and Jane Ace star. Ace rehearses with Jane for the movie contest; Laurentz takes Marge to dinner. NBC. (12:07)

EASY ACES #59 (1940s) It's Jane's big day at the newspaper screen test, but the director is upset. NBC. (11:10)

BOB HOPE SHOW (1950) Guest Robert Ryan joins Bob and regulars Margaret Whiting, Bill Goodwin, Les Brown and his orchestra. Hope asks Ryan to star in his new picture, a western. AFRS rebroadcast. (24:42)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (2-16-48) "The Jolson Story" starring Al Jolson. Larry Parks played Jolson in the movie, but Al took the starring role in this radio version of the 1946 Colum-

Chuck Schaden's
THOSE WERE THE DAYS
 WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.
AUGUST -- SEPTEMBER 1997

bia screen biography of the "world's greatest entertainer." Recreating their original screen roles are Evelyn Keyes (Julie Benson), William Demarest (Steve Martin), and Ludwig Donath (Cantor Yoelson). William Keighley is host. Lux Soap. CBS. (19:27; 16:47; 24:00)

EASY ACES #60 (1940s) Jane tells the story of her screen test; Laurentz explains things to Neil, who gets upset. NBC. (12:01)

EASY ACES #61 (1940s) Everyone in the cast is angry at everyone else and Laurentz appeals to the Aces for assistance. NBC. (12:18)

The next four episodes of Easy Aces will be presented September 6th.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30th
BIG BANDS OF YESTERYEAR

GLENN MILLER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (3-31-39) Remote broadcast from the Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey with vocals by Marion Hutton and Ray Eberle. Selections include "Blue Skies," "Deep Purple," "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," and "Runnin' Wild." Sustaining, NBC. (29:25)

JAN GARBER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (10-22-50) Remote broadcast from the "beautiful air-conditioned Trianon Ballroom, located at 62nd and Cottage Grove on Chicago's South Side." Vocals by Roy Cordell, Kitty Thomas, Bill Cleve, Nicky Brill and the Trio. Selections include "Ocarina," "Avalon," "Look for the Sil-

ver Lining," "Nevertheless." Hal Stark announces. Sustaining, WBBM, Chicago. (29:45)

GREATER NEW YORK (RELIEF) FUND (4-1-40) *Excerpt.* Benefit program from New York's Madison Square Garden, featuring the *combined* orchestras of Will Bradley, Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller. Fred Waring emcees. Sustaining, CBS. (12:10)

See the article by Karl Pearson on page 33.
ORRIN TUCKER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (4-19-48) Remote broadcast from the Marine Dining Room of the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Vocals by Scottee Marsh, Orrin Tucker and the Bodyguards. Selections include "I'm Sitting on Top of the World," "Laroo, Laroo, Lilli Bolero," "That's My Weakness Now," and "Little Girl." Greg Donovan announces. Sustaining, NBC. (24:30)

ARTIE SHAW AND HIS ORCHESTRA (10-25-39) Remote broadcast from the Cafe Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. Vocals by Helen Forrest and Tony Pastor. Selections include "I'm Yours," "At Sundown," "A Table in the Corner," and "Moon Ray." Bill Spargo announces. Sustaining, NBC. (29:20)
OUR SPECIAL GUEST is *Nostalgia Digest* columnist and big band historian **KARL PEARSON** who will talk about the music and the musicians of a great era.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th

EASY ACES #62 (1940s) Goodman and Jane Ace star. Neil asks Jane to apologize to Marge for him; Marge wants to break things off with Neil. NBC. (11:51)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (7-22-48) "The Citadel" highlights the struggles of a young doctor in a coal mining town. James Hilton hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30:15)

EASY ACES #63 (1940s) Screen star Betty LaMarr comes to town, looking for Arthur Laurentz. NBC. (11:10)

OUR MISS BROOKS (9-11-49) Eve Arden stars as English teacher Connie Brooks who plans a picnic before school starts in the fall. Cast includes Dick Crenna as Walter Denton, Gale Gordon as Mr. Conklin, and Frank Nelson

as the school superintendent. Colgate, Lustre Creme, Palmolive. CBS. (27:58)

EASY ACES #64 (1940s) Betty LaMarr plans to kill Marge, but when Neil calls to warn her, Marge refuses to speak to him. NBC. (11:17)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (9-30-45) Ozzie plans to cure Harriet of her exaggeration problems. Cast includes Bea Benadaret and John Brown, the King Sisters, announcer Verne Smith. International Silver Co., CBS. (29:34)

EASY ACES #65 (1940s) Betty LaMarr confronts the Aces with her accusations and threatens Marge with a gun. NBC. (11:33)

The final four episodes in this sequence of Easy Aces programs will be presented on September 27th.

SUSPENSE (2-20-47) "Always Room at the Top" starring Anne Baxter as a woman who is turned down when she applies for a job. Roma Wines. CBS. (29:58)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th
RADIO'S THEME SONGS

Today we tune in to the signature music of radio: the theme songs which introduced so many of our favorite programs during the Golden Age.

Co-host for this tiptoe through the tunes will be our own KEN ALEXANDER whose article on this subject can be found on page 8 of this issue.

On today's broadcast, we'll not only hear a great many of the familiar theme songs, — from such programs as The Lone Ranger, The Goldbergs, Escape, The Shadow, Mercury Theatre, I Love A Mystery, Sgt. Preston of the Yukon, and others — but we'll listen to the original music from whence they came.

In addition to many sound clips and excerpts from vintage shows, we'll hear complete broadcasts of:

THE GREEN HORNET (10-31-39) A gang of thugs terrorizes parking lots and sell "protection" to lot owners. Al Hodge stars as Britt Reid, the Green Hornet. *The Green Hornet theme is from "The Flight of the Bumblebee" by Rimsky-Korsakov.* Sustaining, MBS. (29:00)
PHILIP MORRIS PLAYHOUSE (5-6-49) "Murder Needs an Artist" starring Vincent Price. A writer discovers who he believes is a famous artist, thought to have burned to death years ago. Cast includes William Conrad, Joseph Kearns. *Philip Morris used the "On The Trail" section of Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite" as a*

theme for its various programs. Philip Morris Cigarettes, CBS. (28:45)

FBI IN PEACE AND WAR (6-10-53) "The Traveling Man" featuring Rosemary Rice and Bob Readick. A runner, delivering hot cars to a fence in Florida, decides to go into business for himself. *Prokofiev's "The Love For Three Oranges" was the music for this show's famous theme.* Lava Soap, Bryll Creme, Nescafe, CBS. (30:12)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th
TIME MARXES ON

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #137 (9-9-44) *Excerpt* featuring Groucho Marx in a radio quiz show spoof, "Doctor People Are Double and Take It Truth or Ignorance It Pays to Be Information." Groucho sings "Lydia, the Tattooed lady." AFRS. (10:06)

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (5-9-46) George and Gracie with Bill Goodwin, Mel Blanc (the Happy Postman), Meredith Willson and the orchestra and guest Harpo Marx. Newspaper columnist Gracie specializes in Hollywood Gossip, but she needs a "snooping reporter" to get her items for the column and asks Harpo to do the job. Voiceless Harpo meets the challenge of radio and the studio audience loves it! Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (29:35)

FITCH BANDWAGON (1943) *Excerpt.* Chico Marx plays "Beer Barrel Polka." (4:00)

MONITOR (10-5-63) NBC's weekend news and information service offers a salute to Groucho Marx on his 68th birthday. Groucho reflects upon his career and hears birthday greetings from Bob Hope, Steve Allen, Jack Benny, Zeppo, Gummo and Harpo Marx, Margaret Dumont, Allan Jones, John Guedel, George Fenneman, Groucho's wife Eden Marx and his daughter Melenda. NBC. (9:56; 31:23)

SATURDAY AT THE SHAMROCK (2-18-50) *Excerpt.* From the Shamrock Hotel in Houston, Texas, Chico and Harpo Marx along with singer Alice Lee give a sample of their nightclub act. ABC. (5:00)

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

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #125 (6-17-44) *Excerpt* with Ken Carpenter, Jack Benny, Bing



ORRIN TUCKER

Chuck Schaden's
THOSE WERE THE DAYS
WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

SEPTEMBER 1997

Crosby, Gary Cooper, and Harpo Marx who plays "My Blue Heaven" while Bing sings. AFRS. (7:00)

YOU BET YOUR LIFE (1947) Groucho Marx records the *audition show* for his long-running comedy quiz program. CBS. (30:00)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is Marx Brothers' fan and historian **Ira Dolnick** who will talk about the careers of Groucho, Chico, Harpo, Zeppo and Gummo Marx. *Read Ira Dolnick's article about Harpo Marx on page 26.*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th

RED SKELTON SHOW (1-15-46) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire offers a few chapters on Department Stores, with J. Newton Numb-skull, Clem Kadiddlehopper, and Junior, the mean little kid. Cast includes Verna Felton, Pat McGeehan, Anita Ellis, Rod O'Connor, David Forester and the orchestra. Raleigh Cigarettes, NBC. (26:57)

EASY ACES #66 (1940s) Goodman and Jane Ace star. After the shooting, Jane spills the beans to the opposition paper, but no one wants the publicity. NBC. (11:34)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (5-22-50) "Jolson Sings Again" starring Al Jolson in the radio

version of the 1949 Columbia film *sequel* to "The Jolson Story." Once again Larry Parks, who played Jolson on the screen, is passed over for the radio version, with Al himself taking the title role for the broadcast as his biography continues. Cast includes Barbara Hale, William Demarest and Ludwig Donath, all repeating their screen roles, plus Willard Waterman, Bill Johnstone, Herb Butterfield. William Keighley hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (15:18; 25:39; 19:07)

EASY ACES #67 (1940s) The result of Jane's story-telling is that Neil is fired from his newspaper job. NBC. (11:50)

SUSPENSE (2-27-47) "Three Faces for Midnight" starring William Bendix with Sandra Gould and Jack Webb. A man and woman take a job which involves a bribe and the governor of the state. Roma Wines, CBS. (30:19)

EASY ACES #68 (1940s) Jane tells her story to detectives investigating the shooting at the Ace home. NBC. (12:09)

EASY ACES #69 (1940s) Neil's plan apparently works and the movie director prepares to leave. NBC. (12:07)

This concludes this sequence of sixteen consecutive and related episodes... until next we meet the Easy Aces.

...and for more good listening...

ART HELLYER SHOW-- Music of the big bands and the big singers with lots of knowledgeable commentary and fun from one of radio's legendary personalities, now in his 51th year on the air! *WJOL, 1340 AM, Saturday, 9 am-1 pm; Sunday, 2-6 pm.*

DICK LAWRENCE REVUE-- A treasure trove of rare and vintage recordings with spoken memories from the never to be forgotten past. *WNIB, 97.1 FM, Saturday, 8-9 pm.*

JAZZ FORUM-- Chicago's foremost jazz authority, Dick Buckley, presents an entertaining and enlightening program of great music by noted jazz musicians. *WBEZ, 91.5 FM, Monday thru Thursday, 8:30-9:30 pm; Sunday 1-4 pm.*

REMEMBER WHEN-- Host Don Corey's "nostalgia fest" with the emphasis on old time radio musical and variety shows, plus show tunes and interviews. *WAIT, 850 AM, Sunday, 1-4 pm.*

WHEN RADIO WAS-- Carl Amari hosts a weekend edition of the popular series featuring old time radio broadcasts and interviews. *WMAO, 670 AM, Saturday and Sunday, 10pm-midnight.*

IMAGINATION THEATRE-- This series is heard occasionally on *Those Were The Days* in Chicago, but is broadcast weekly in many other cities across the country. For the station in your area, call Tim McDonald at TransMedia Productions at 1-800-229-7234. For a list of stations carrying the program and an **episode guide**, the Internet address is: tmedia@aimnet.com

"When Radio Was" -- WMAQ-AM 670

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
August, 1997 Schedule				
<p style="text-align: center;">OUT OF TOWN LISTENERS PLEASE NOTE: <i>"When Radio Was" is a syndicated series heard throughout the country. If you're unable to tune in WMAQ, call (847) 524-0200, Ext. 223 and ask which station in or near your town carries the program.</i></p>				1 The Shadow Lum and Abner
4 Michael Shayne Life of Riley Pt 1	5 Life of Riley Pt 2 Green Hornet	6 The Defense Rests Fibber McGee Pt 1	7 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Arch Oboler's Plays	8 Sherlock Holmes Bob and Ray
11 Dragnet Burns & Allen Pt 1	12 Burns & Allen Pt 2 Suspense	13 Texas Rangers Abbott & Costello Pt 1	14 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Box Thirteen	15 Gunsmoke Police Headquarters
18 Six Shooter Jack Benny Pt 1	19 Jack Benny Pt 2 <i>To be announced</i>	20 Frontier Gentleman Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	21 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Escape	22 Boston Blackie Lum and Abner
25 CBS Radio Workshop Favorite Husband Pt 1	26 Favorite Husband Pt 2 Crime Photographer	27 Lone Ranger Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	28 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 The Whistler	29 Suspense Baby Snooks
September, 1997 Schedule				
1 The Shadow Fibber McGee Pt 1	2 Fibber McGee Pt 2 <i>To be announced</i>	3 Green Hornet Life of Riley Pt 1	4 Life of Riley Pt 2 Casebook Gregory Hood	5 Dragnet Lum and Abner
8 Burns & Allen Johnny Dollar Pt 1/5	9 Texas Rangers Johnny Dollar Pt 2/5	10 Jack Benny Johnny Dollar Pt 3/5	11 Box Thirteen Johnny Dollar Pt 4/5	12 Six Shooter Johnny Dollar Pt 5/5
15 Gangbusters Abbott & Costello Pt 1	16 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Lone Ranger	17 Suspense Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	18 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 Boston Blackie	19 Escape Police Headquarters
22 Have Gun, Will Travel Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	23 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 The Whistler	24 Ellery Queen Duffy's Tavern Pt 1	25 Duffy's Tavern Pt 2 Gunsmoke	26 CBS Radio Workshop Lum and Abner
29 This is Your FBI Favorite Husband Pt 1	30 Favorite Husband Pt 2 Dimension X			

THE VOCAL CAREER OF HARPO MARX

BY IRA J. DOLNICK

Harpo was the harp-playing, girl-chasing, horn-honking Marx who let his brothers Groucho and Chico, and even Gummo and Zeppo, do most of the talking during his 56-year career.

He was born in New York City in 1888, the second of the five surviving sons born to Sam and Minnie Marx.

It is still common today for people to think that the "silent" Harpo Marx could not talk. He could, of course, speak, but he rarely did so in public. There have been many explanations for his silence, but the simple reason is that his brothers were better than he at verbal comedy.

Harpo (Adolph) started in show business with his brothers Groucho (Julius) and Gummo (Milton), along with a friend, Lou Levy, as members of a singing troupe called "The Four Nightingales."

It wasn't until September, 1914, in a vaudeville act called "Home Again" written by their uncle Al Shean of the comedy team Gallagher and Shean — that so few lines of dialog were written for Harpo that he took to improvising pantomime.

Ira J. Dolnick of Deerfield, Illinois is a dentist with a sweet tooth for the Marx Brothers.



From then on he let his horn and his harp and his brothers do the talking.

Groucho facetiously told "Why Harpo Doesn't Talk" in a 1948 article:

The Marx Brothers were playing a small town theatre when Groucho was caught smoking in the theatre and was fined by the manager. This didn't sit well with him or his brothers, so they did all they could to get the manager to rescind the fine. They even delayed their performance until, finally, the manager gave in. But the manager got his revenge by delaying payment

to the brothers until a few minutes before their train was set to leave the station, and then he paid the boys in pennies. They had barely enough time to drag the bags to the depot and certainly not enough to count all the pennies. As they boarded their train, Harpo yelled that he hoped the theatre would burn to the ground. The next day they read that, in fact, the theatre building had been destroyed by fire. The brothers felt that, in the future, it would be safer to keep Harpo silent.

Harpo and his three brothers, Groucho, Chico and Zeppo (Herbert) starred on Broadway in three very successful shows: *I'll Say She Is* (1924), *The Coconuts* (1925) and *Animal Crackers* (1928).

Harpo remained silent while appearing on the great white way, but he somehow managed to become the first Marx brother to appear in a motion picture. *Too Many Kisses* (1925) starred Richard Dix, Frances Howard and a young William Powell. Harpo had a supporting role and even spoke, but this was the era of silent films and his dialog was printed on title cards to be read by the audience.

The Marx Brothers team waited for talkies and, for their debut for Paramount in 1929 they filmed their Broadway hit, *The Coconuts*. This was followed by the screen version of *Animal Crackers* in 1930. The Marx Brothers starred in a total of thirteen films and Harpo never spoke a word in any of them.

Or so it seemed.

It is possible that Harpo can be heard singing in the opening scene in their picture, *Monkey Business* released in 1931. When the Four Marx Brothers

are singing "Sweet Adeline," there are clearly four voices singing. But the brothers are hiding in barrels and cannot be seen.

In their 1939 movie *At The Circus* Harpo says "achoo." Not exactly a great line, but it was spoken — not sneezed.

The closest Harpo ever came to a real line of dialog in a sound film was in 1946 when the producers of the movie *A Night in Casablanca* wanted Harpo to say the word "murder" at the beginning of the film. They even offered a \$55,000 bonus for this one word of dialog, but Harpo turned them down.

It was virtually impossible for a silent movie actor — even one in talking pictures — to have a career in radio. Harpo never starred in a radio series as Groucho and Chico did at various times. Thus it is ironic that Harpo was the first of the Brothers to speak over the airwaves.



THE FOUR MARX BROTHERS AT PARAMOUNT IN 1931
Groucho, Chico, Harpo, Zeppo

VOCAL CAREER OF HARPO MARX

The occasion was a 1926 broadcast featuring Broadway celebrities talking via short wave to Admiral Richard Byrd, who had just arrived at the North Pole. That historic occasion apparently not been preserved.

Harpo made several other guest appearances on radio. He appeared on Groucho's *Blue Ribbon Town* in 1944 and the *Burns and Allen Show* in 1946.

During World War II, Harpo appeared twice on the Armed Forces Radio Network's *Command Performance*, both times in 1944. Guests on the show appeared by request of servicemen, many of whom probably thought that an appearance by Harpo would result in his speaking. If that was indeed the reason they requested him, they were disappointed. He honked, whistled, and played the harp, but said nothing.



THE FOUR MARX BROTHERS in "Duck Soup" -- Groucho, Zeppo, Chico, Harpo

On *Information Please!* he used pantomime to communicate. This was a treat for the lucky studio audience, but perhaps not quite as much fun for listeners at home.

Harpo also appeared on promotional broadcasts for Marx Brothers movies. In a 1937 *Leo is On the Air* promo for *A Day at the Races* listeners were promised an interview with Harpo. He replied to questions with an obvious "honk."

Harpo did have at least one speaking role in his career after vaudeville. In the 1940s he appeared in a summer stock production of the George S. Kaufman - Moss Hart play *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Harpo played the part of "Banjo," a character who was, in fact, modeled after him.

When the Brothers did a theatre tour to work out scenes for their upcoming film *Go West*, Harpo occasionally broke out of character and recited a speech full of long, complicated words prepared for him by his friend Alexander Woolcott. During the

same tour, according to Chico's daughter Maxine, Harpo and Chico decided to change roles for one performance just to see if she would notice. It was a matinee and she had seen the show numerous times, so she decided to get her hair done instead, thus missing her father's rare speaking performance. We can only wonder what Harpo's Italian accent in the Chico role —sounded like. They never repeated the switch.

In the 1950s and '60s, Harpo made many appearances on television. This medium was obviously better suited for Harpo than radio but, again, he never spoke.

He appeared on *The Red Skelton Show*, *Candid Camera*, and, to promote his autobiography, *You Bet Your Life* with Groucho. He turned up on many variety shows but his most famous television appearance came in 1955 when he played himself on *Love Lucy*.

In 1960, he took a dramatic role in the *June Allyson* anthology series appearing in a story called "Silent Panic" as a deaf mute who witnesses a murder.

Harpo's music can be found on three records made in the 1950s. He can also be found on a few other recordings, one of which is of very special interest. Harpo can be heard speaking on a limited edition record album of private recordings made by various celebrities. "Personalities on Parade — Volume 1" contains a brief recording of Harpo, Alexander Woolcott and opera singer Reinald Werrenrath wishing a happy birthday to the painter Neysa McMein in October of 1930. Harpo's dialog lasts less than three seconds.

A brief clip of Harpo speaking was shown on TV's *Entertainment Tonight*. It had been sitting in the UCLA film archives since 1936 and was from a newsreel of the premiere of *The Great Ziegfeld* which co-starred Harpo's wife. In this clip he says "You better do the talking" and then



"honk, honk."

In his last public performance, Harpo played the Pasadena Civic Center with his friend and neighbor Allan Sherman in 1963. For a final curtain call, he spoke to the audience: "Now, as I was about to say in 1908..."

Harpo Marx died on September 28, 1964 during heart surgery.

His autobiography, from 1961, is called "Harpo Speaks!"
(NOTE— Ira Dolnick joins Chuck Schaden for a salute to the Marx Brothers on TWTD September 20.)

PETER QUILL: The Case of the Lost Detective

BY WILLIAM J. KIDDLE

Due in large measure to improved scientific methods, artifacts from once forgotten ancient civilizations are now coming to light and are being recorded on the pages of world history.

Unfortunately, due to the absence of a written language or a wealth of artifacts, many ancient cultures stand mute in museums of the world.

For many years the exploits of the famous radio detective-scientist Peter Quill were relegated to the list of "unspoken ones" because, it appears, no transcriptions of this radio program have survived.

Patrons of vintage radio can only imagine how actor Marvin Miller may have sounded in the title role over half a century ago. *Peter Quill* was broadcast in New York City for eleven short months from April 14, 1940 to March 30, 1941 over the Mutual network. On the East Coast, the program, sponsored by Beich candy, was often preempted by Brooklyn Dodger baseball or New York Giant football games during its short tenure on the air.

Radio listeners in the Chicago metropolitan area were far more fortunate. Radio station WGN, the major Mutual outlet in the Midwest, carried the adventures of *Peter Quill* in the 3 to 3:30 p.m. time slot on Sunday afternoon from October 6, 1940 to March 30, 1941. In addition, the *Chicago Tribune*, owner of WGN, promoted

Bill Kiddle is a retired high school teacher whose interest in radio dates to his undergraduate days at Lake Forest College.

their offerings with program notes and short articles that appeared in "Today's radio" column found in the Metropolitan Section, Part Three, of the *Sunday Tribune*.

Based upon these program notes and articles, we are able to identify some interesting facts about *Peter Quill*, the first clues in solving the "mystery of the lost detective."

Peter Quill was developed by writer and producer Blair Walliser, a well-known Chicago radio personality. The series, recorded for syndication, was produced in Chicago. The hero was described as "a strange scientific wizard," devoted to the defense of America, who would pit his genius against "foreign agents, spies, international criminals, and saboteurs."

Often Peter Quill battled against the Red Circle, a mythical sabotage ring. In the first episode, entitled "The Thing That Couldn't Happen" (10-6-40), Quill invents a "stethometer," a device used in detecting and detonating "infernal machines planted by the Red Circle." Walliser was politically correct in 1940 terms. Because the term "fifth columnist" was being abused in the media, he banned its use in describing the unsavory and villainous characters in the drama.

Quill (aka "The Crimson Wizard"), like many great adventure hero types, did not stand alone in his defense of America in those dark and uncertain days before our nation's entry into World War II. He was ably assisted by Capt. Roger Dorn, a U.S. Government anti-sabotage troubleshooter; the beautiful and talented Gail Carson, an American counter-espionage agent; and



MARVIN MILLER

Chief Tyler, the operations officer. The Dorn-Carson combination, incidentally, always had a strong romantic ring to it.

Marvin Miller, a well-known Chicago radio announcer and actor of the early 1940s was cast in the title role. This may have been Mr. Miller's last dramatic role before he left Chicago for an acting career in Southern California during World War II. Alice Hill and Ken Griffin were heard as Gail Carson and Capt. Dorn. The supporting cast included Olan Soule, Irene Lorraine and Leslie Spear. In an episode entitled "Death After Dark" (1-26-41), John Walsh and Ann Kuper had leading roles as a scientist and his ever-faithful housekeeper.

Blair Walliser's plots in the *Peter Quill* series were often bizarre and fantastic, but on the borderline of reality — "a possible glimpse into the future."

In the "Case of the Child Giants" (10-20-40), Peter Quill and his friends meet a half-mad scientist, Prince Hirogi and his army of child giants — mentally incapable of reason, blindly loyal to their masters.

In one way this tale was a condemnation of the fascist youth groups; in another, a recognition that glandular injections used by doctors to aid handicapped people could be used for insidious purposes.

Many radio mystery dramas focused on ghosts and other apparitions. On Navy Day (10-27-40), the *Peter Quill* episode entitled "Phantom of the Navy," took place on a submarine which was sabotaged and sunk with all hands aboard. The men are bolstered by the appearance of John Paul Jones and the crew of the *Bon Homme Richards*. The drama reaches its climax as Peter Quill tries to save the trapped men with a delayed detonation bomb.

In an episode entitled "The Red Devil of Catamount Ridge" (11-24-40), hypnotic suggestion is used by a fiendish criminal, an expert in the use of nitroglycerin, to get a leading lady to confess to a murder that no one else believes she could have committed. A mysterious "truth gas" is also a plot element brewed by Walliser in a "witch's cauldron of intrigue."

On at least one occasion Peter Quill had to come to the aid of his friends. In a drama entitled "Sigma Ray" (12-1-40), the famous scientist had to photograph the bottom of a river bed with his new "sigma ray" film to find some missing government papers to prove that Capt. Roger Dorn innocent of treason charged, framed against him by Red Circle agents. The story line mixed scientific method and criminology as Quill, aided by Gail Carson, takes a new special camera to the waterfront to literally X-ray the entire river bottom, eventually discovering the missing briefcase and clearing Dorn.

In "The Frozen Terror" (12-15-40), Quill and his friends are called to a town in which the temperature inexplicably drops to 80 degrees below zero, disrupting communications, finally cutting the limited area off from the rest of the world. As a prelimi-

nary measure, Quill scatters coal dust on the frozen ground. It absorbs warmth from the sun and relieves the intense cold. This is not an isolated meteorological phenomenon, but an evil plot engineered by the inventor of a mysterious freezing device called an "isotheric devitalizer." Only in the action-packed climax is the frozen terror and its inventor brought under control.

During the eleventh week in the series, Peter Quill is confronted with a "River of Flame" (12-22-40). Two inventions are mixed up in this strange story. Quill invents a tablet which, when placed in water, will form gasoline. A member of the Red Circle spy ring nabs a shopping bag full of the tablets but, while escaping, stumbles over a loose board on the wharf and dumps the chemicals into the river. The river turns to gasoline and a careless cigarette transforms the quiet stream into a river of flame. At this point the resourceful Peter Quill saves the day with a mysterious "dixerol powder."

In the first broadcast for the new year, Quill experienced a "Night of Terror," (1-5-41): "...not even a mysterious drug that seems to make the sun disappear into everlasting night can stop Peter Quill, wizard of the scientific laboratories." Gail Carson and Capt. Roger Dorn, "hot on the trail of skullduggery," fall under the influence of the evil Magos Makasthai and his compound chlophine, a drug which affects the metabolic rate through the brain cortex. Unaware that they have been drugged, they live a life where the sun seems gone forever and only everlasting blackness surrounds them.

A thrilling murder mystery, "Death After Dark," confronted listeners to *Peter Quill* on another winter Sunday afternoon (1-26-41). Dr. Markham, physician-scientist, inventor of a new truth serum, is found

murdered. When Chief Tyler of the secret bureau finds that Markham was about to turn his discoveries over to the U.S. government, the mystery taken on an international aspect. Suspicion rests on a spy ring that is interested in the secret for their country. While Markham's housekeeper tells Quill her story of the murder, an iron ring crashes through the window and falls to the floor. A green, bloated face appears at the window, then disappears. The iron ring furnishes Quill with the vital clue needed to solve the mystery.

On Sunday, February 2, 1941 the *Chicago Tribune* printed its last program note concerning the *Peter Quill* series. This tale about a giant cat that kills may have been influenced by stories heard on *The Shadow*, another Mutual mystery program heard in Chicago on Sunday afternoons. In this *Peter Quill* thriller a noted artist is mysteriously killed. His body bears marks indicating that he was mauled by a giant cat. Further investigation shows that the artist had recently completed a realistic painting of a cat. Peter Quill is called into the case when a girl, horribly scratched, swears that she was attacked by a man who changed into a cat. Again Gail Carson, Capt. Dorn and Quill are trapped by the evil Magos Makasthai, who reveals to them that he has the power to transform himself into a cat. This was an unusual venture into the field where werewolves and the undead ruled over the night.

For reasons yet unknown, the *Chicago Tribune* ceased its coverage of the events to be aired in the *Peter Quill* series. Between February 9 and March 30, 1941, eight more episodes were aired. We have no knowledge as to the script content at this time and although we may never hear the opening cry of PEEEEETTTEER QUIIIIIIIII resound through the air again, we know at least that the series did not pass from the radio scene totally unnoticed. ■



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

It Happened at Madison Square Garden!

BY KARL PEARSON

Could you ever imagine in your wildest dreams that drummer Buddy Rich sat in with the Glenn Miller band and played "In The Mood"? Or that a young Frank Sinatra sang with the Will Bradley-Ray McKinley band? Or that Tex Bencke, Glenn Miller's star sax player, played with the Tommy Dorsey orchestra? While each of these instances may seem somewhat farfetched and hard to believe, each actually occurred, and all in the same evening.

The scene is New York City, April 1, 1940. On that Monday evening a gala fundraiser was being held at Madison Square Garden by a local charity organization, the Greater New York Fund. A number of local dignitaries and celebrities were on hand for the occasion, along with nationally

known bandleader Fred Waring, who acted as master of ceremonies.

The highlight of the evening was the joint appearance of three of the top dance orchestras in the country, who pooled their musical resources to raise money for a worthy cause. Each of the three bands was led by a trombone-playing musician, the three being Tommy Dorsey, Will Bradley and Glenn Miller.

Tommy Dorsey, having formed his first band in 1935, qualified as the "veteran" leader of the three. Born in 1905 in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, Tommy had arrived on the New York scene in the late 1920's. Dorsey played in many of the top radio and recording orchestras of the period, and frequently backed many of the better-known singers of the era. (His older brother Jimmy often played in many of these same groups.) The Dorsey brothers formed a group of their own in 1934, but the group lasted less than a year when Tommy set out on his own after a disagreement with his brother. Tommy's national rise to fame began in 1937 when his recordings of "Marie" and "Song of India" became big sellers with the record-buying public.

During the fall of 1939 Tommy began to make changes in both the sound and style of his band, injecting new blood into the Dorsey organization. By the spring of 1940 the Dorsey band now included Buddy Rich on drums, Johnny Mince on clarinet, and arrangers Axel Stordahl, Sy Oliver and Paul Weston. The Dorsey orchestra also in-



TOMMY DORSEY

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

cluded several key members from Artie Shaw's recently disbanded orchestra, including trombonist Les Jenkins and bassist Sid Weiss. Trumpeter Bunny Berigan, who had played a big part in Tommy's 1937 success, recently rejoined the band. Vocalists Edythe Wright and Jack Leonard, long-time Dorsey mainstays, had been replaced by Connie Haines, Jo Stafford, Frank Sinatra and the Pied Pipers.

Glenn Miller, the second of our three leaders, qualified as the senior member of the group in terms of age. Miller, who was born in Clarinda, Iowa in 1904, had also arrived on the New York musical scene in the late 1920's and frequently sat beside Dorsey in many of the same radio and recording groups. Miller also helped organize bands for Smith Ballew, Ray Noble, and the Dorsey brothers. Miller was also a skilled arranger. In 1937 he formed a band of his own, which lasted less than a year. He formed his second orchestra during the Spring of 1938. The second band continued to scuffle for work over the next few months but suddenly saw its musical stock rise during the Spring and Summer of 1939. By the Spring of 1940 Miller band included Clyde Hurley on trumpet (whose solo on Miller's recording of "In The Mood" is still played note for note by many orchestras); Hal McIntyre on alto sax; Eric Caceres on clarinet and saxophone; and Tex Beneke and Al Klink on tenor saxes. Miller's two primary arrangers were Bill Finegan and Jerry Gray.

Will Bradley was the youngest of the three leaders, both in terms of age and in leadership. Bradley, originally known as Wilbur Schwichtenberg, was born in Newton, New Jersey in 1912. Wilbur arrived on the New York scene in the early 1930's, playing alongside both Dorsey and Miller in many of the same radio and recording

groups! Schwichtenberg formed a band of his own in 1939, after much encouragement from Willard Alexander, one of the nation's top band bookers. Wilbur changed his name to "Will Bradley" at Alexander's suggestion, as it was felt that "Schwichtenberg" would be too hard to spell (let alone fit) on theater marquees. Bradley's musical partner was drummer Ray McKinley, who had recently left Jimmy Dorsey's organization. The Bradley-McKinley orchestra contained a number of talented musicians, including Steve Lipkins, trumpet (who had previously worked for Tommy Dorsey); Peanuts Hucko, tenor sax; Freddy Slack, piano and arranger; and Steve Jordan, guitar.

The appearance of the three bands at the Greater New York Fund benefit was somewhat unusual. Over the years two, three, or perhaps several bands had often shared a stage, often alternating with one another. Sometimes these groups would also compete with one another in a so-called "battle of the bands." The Bradley/Dorsey/Miller appearance was quite different from either of these occurrences in that all three bands played together with one another at the very same time.

This unusual appearance might have become but a forgotten footnote in history if not for the efforts of a radio network, a recording company, and one of the leaders. First, a portion of the evening's program was broadcast live from Madison Square Garden over the CBS network, who carried the program nationwide through its affiliates. Secondly, the broadcast was recorded by one of the local New York recording studios onto acetate discs. The third part of this equation was the individual who requested the recordings to be made: Tommy Dorsey, who retained the discs in his files for many years. Several years ago tape transfers made from these discs began to circulate among collectors,



GLENN MILLER

bringing to life once again a long-forgotten evening.

On that April night in 1940, all three of the bands were situated in the New York area and were currently playing at New York venues. The Bradley-McKinley orchestra was in the middle of engagement at the Famous Door, a small nightclub located on 52nd Street. (Glenn Miller had been one of the original Famous Door business partners). The Glenn Miller band had recently started a new radio series for Chesterfield cigarettes and was completing an engagement at the recently-opened Cafe Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania. (The Dorsey band had played on the hotel's Pennsylvania Roof in the Fall of 1939, shortly before the Roof was closed and was replaced by the Cafe Rouge.) Tommy Dorsey's organization, which had recently completed an engagement at Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in New Jersey, was currently playing at New York's Paramount Theater. (Just a month earlier Tommy had stood on the Paramount stage leading the Miller band, filling in for an ailing Glenn Miller.)

It's interesting to note a number of coincidences in the lives and careers of the 43 musicians and three leaders which occurred either before or after the Madison Square Garden benefit. While most of them may not be in a Ripley's "Believe It Or Not"

category, a number of them are very interesting. All three leaders, as mentioned before, had worked alongside one another in the early 1930's, and on more than one occasion consisted of the entire trombone section in an orchestra! Both Will Bradley as well as Dorsey clarinetist Johnny Mince had been recruited by Glenn Miller for Ray Noble's 1935 American orchestra. Michael "Peanuts" Hucko, saxist with the Will Bradley band, was dismissed from the Bradley-McKinley group due to his inability to master the clarinet. Within a few years Peanuts had mastered the instrument and joined Glenn Miller's Army Air Forces orchestra, where he became the group's chief clarinet soloist. Hucko also played in a Miller AEF band sub-unit led by Ray McKinley. Shortly after World War II ended Hucko joined a brand new band, led by civilian Ray McKinley!

The most unusual coincidence of all could have never been predicted in 1940. No one would have guessed that four of the men on the stage that evening would at one time or another lead a band bearing the name of one man: Glenn Miller. The original leader was, of course, Glenn Miller. After Glenn's disappearance at the end of World War II the Miller group was fronted by Tex Beneke from 1946 to 1950. The release of the movie "The Glenn Miller Story," as well as a renewed interest in the original recordings led to the Miller band being formed once again. This time Ray McKinley, Glenn's longtime friend, led the band from 1956 to 1966. (McKinley also shared co-leadership duties of Miller's AAF band with Jerry Gray after Glenn's disappearance in 1944.) And finally Peanuts Hucko, who originally had experienced so much trouble with the clarinet in 1940, led the Miller band in 1974. ■
(NOTE - Hear a portion of the Madison Square Garden performance on TWTG August 31.)

'What Was It Like, Grampa?'

BY GINO LUCCHETTI

My granddaughter in Georgia recently called, telling me she had an assignment to write about life in the days of economic hardship.

"Grampa, tell me about the depression. How was it for you when you were a kid back then? Did you have money; were you poor? Did you ever go hungry? Tell me about those days."

I thought about those questions. Were we poor? No, I never had the feeling we were poor. We were like a lot of people in those days — not poor, we just didn't have much money. It's just that nobody had much money. Aside from that, we were well off. I'd say, over all, from a standpoint of well-being and relative contentment and family life, we were better off than many people are today who have more money, more gadgets, marvelous electronics gear, and countless more creature comforts.

What "poor" really meant in those days was actual deprivation to the point of malnutrition or not having a roof over one's head, or even enough clothing — and no job or income, period! And, of course, there were some in that condition, just as there always have been even in boom times. Today "poor" means falling below a government established income, even if you have what people who recall the depression would consider extravagances: cars, televisions, good clothes, medical services, even some cash on hand. "Poor," like many other updated words has quite a different meaning from what it meant a few decades back.

Let me explain why that was, at least in my family's case: My parents, born before the turn of the century, and my siblings, were immigrants from Italy, who,

judging by today's standards, came from an almost primitive society, as far as technology is concerned. No cars, no phones, no radios, no airplanes, no public transportation as we know it, and very little modern sanitation, indoor or outdoor, and any running water would all be cold.

There was nothing like central heating, even in well-to-do homes. And, for shock value and my granddaughter's amazement, sadistically I added that there wasn't a single mall in the whole country! ("Oh no, Grampa!")

I always had clothes, even if some of it was mended, or not of the most fashionable cut, but then people generally were glad to have enough clothes to go to work in or, for kids, to play in, and one would save one neat and clean outfit for Sunday go-to-Mass clothes or dress-up occasions.

Some of your wardrobe might be hand-made or hand-knitted, or altered hand-me-downs from other family members or friends, and most things got patched or mended when possible, including shoes repaired with replacement soles that could be bought at Woolworth's and glued over the worn soles — they might hold for a couple of weeks. For example, collars and cuffs on shirts were "turned" when frayed and socks were "darned" (no, not cussed at), an archaic word and concept, not thrown away as casually as today.

Women, and certainly most housewives, had "darning eggs" (that term took some explaining to my granddaughter) for that purpose. ("Clothes were sometimes actually homemade, or patched by hand, Grampa?") It was almost a universal custom that entire wardrobes went down the line from the first born kids as they outgrew them to the younger ones, until it was

pretty clear no more kids would be coming along, in which case the whole shebang was passed on to somebody starting a family.

As far as having enough food, I don't ever recall missing a meal because of an empty larder, and our family never "ate poor," probably because my parents knew how to get by with very little and make what little there was count — they knew how to make do from scratch, especially in the kitchen. They also knew how to extend the value of what money there was from living an extremely simple, small-town life in the "old country."

Shopping meant purchasing staples in bulk: sugar, flour, rice, salt, etc. by the sack, or in quantities, like potatoes by the peck ("What's a peck, Grampa?"), and meat by an entire section to be cut into chops or steaks or ground for patties, fillings, or making sausage. "Leaf lard," which was slabs of pork fat bought very cheap, was rendered into pure lard for cooking and baking right there in the home.

Our weekly grocery shopping was usually done at the market that used to be in the area around Taylor and Halsted streets. Italian was the language shoppers could bargain in, which they did vigorously.

But the most fascinating part of shopping was buying chickens or other fowl freshly butchered, sometimes as you waited at the butcher shop. You could, if you wanted, see and hear the entire process as the bird, raucously cackling and struggling, had its throat wrung or head lopped off and tossed into a barrel, still frantically and quite noisily thrashing and beating its wings, until it died. ("Oh, no Grampa! You heard and saw the whole thing?") There weren't any immaculate refrigerated show cases with attractive, neatly trimmed meat cuts, and wrapped sanitary packages like one buys in the meat sections of stores nowadays.

All our pasta was rolled out tight on the kitchen table. A mound of flour was placed on the table, with a scooped out center where the eggs and seasonings were added and then mixed by hand, right on the table. Water or additional flour was added as required while it was kneaded and worked to bring it to the proper texture. When it was just right, which an experienced pasta-maker recognized, it was rolled out with about a three-foot rolling pin until it was a sheet that often covered the whole table, then cut or shaped into whatever was needed.

Little was store-bought ready, or near ready to be finished cooking, or actually edible on opening the package. Fish was bought fresh and whole and brought home, where the head was cut off — for the cat, if you or the neighbors had one — and scaled and gutted by hand.

My father — whose motto was, "There's always room for one more at the table" — was the family cook. Maybe "chef" would be a better description, since he prided himself on his culinary skill, which was considerable. He could turn things like egg plant, zucchini, artichokes and even squid and octopus into dishes I yet long for, and recalling his baked specialties and desserts, sometimes flavored with his own home-concocted liqueur, still make my mouth water.

I've often corrected people who asked if I missed my ma's cooking by telling them it was pa's cuisine I missed. You see, rather than a traditional housewife and cook, my mother was a highly skilled and sought-after craftswoman in the fur business who did her share to keep the family afloat financially. She was in demand almost her entire life for her particular needle-and-thread skill.

But that's a story about life in the "olden days" for another time and another call from my granddaughter. ■



OUR READERS WRITE

WE GET LETTERS

SPRINGFIELD, LOUISIANA — I became a fan of old radio from a very young age and, at 23, know more than probably all my peers put together, and I find that unfortunate. It is such an amazing and enchanting medium and I wish there were more people my age out there who enjoyed it or were exposed to it. Anyway, I have you to thank for much of my "development" as far as old radio goes. I only wish that I could enjoy *Those Were The Days* every week. (I moved to New Orleans last summer.) It was a real thrill seeing you broadcast live last summer at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. I really admire what you do. —**CHRIS BEVARD**

PHOENIX, ARIZONA — The *Digest* is like a letter from home — lost in the mail 40, 50 or even 60 years! All those memories brought to life by Ken Alexander and the other writers. Keep up the good work. —**FRANK BRAUN**

FAIRFIELD BAY, ARKANSAS — It has been a great ride these past 27 years. How you and your program have enhanced my life during that time. But even though I've moved to Arkansas it isn't the end of the line; just a modification. I am continuing my subscription to the *Nostalgia Digest* (in fact I'm paid until the end of the year 2000). My husband promises to continue the Christmas tradition of Metro Golden Memories gift certificates, and I'll be ordering custom tapes of many of your Saturday programs. I'll also be putting Metro Golden Memories' 800 number to good use with my phone orders. Thanks again for the joy you bring to my life. —**DOLORES ANAYA**

EVANSTON, IL — I think the *Nostalgia Digest* keeps improving all the time... writing, art, layout all seem better and sharper, especially over the past year or so. As for the programs themselves, they always were top-notch! —**BOB PERLONGO**

DOWNERS GROVE, IL — Thanks for Paul Gibson! I remember him less as misogynist

than raconteur. He had his own plane (so much for pleading poverty) and I heard him in junior high (I think) sometime between 10 and 11 pm weeknights on WBBM. Hearing him now he sounds like 50 per cent Churchill and 50 per cent Arthur Godfrey, and all ego. —**RON HARDING**

CHICAGO — I disagree with Carl Butera of Kenosha, Wisconsin [April-May, 1997]. I hope you and all the other old time radio people NEVER stop playing the Cinnamon Bear, Jack Armstrong, Little Orphan Annie, Terry and the Pirates, and all the other programs. I was fortunate to hear these programs when they were played for the first time. I caught the magic of radio and never lost it. What a glorious time that was! Too bad it takes adulthood to make us appreciate what we had in those days. Please keep these great shows coming FOREVER. —**MARVEETA MADARY**

DAYTON, OHIO — Renew me for another year of great nostalgic articles. I sorely miss your midnight WBBM broadcasts as I would tape them and listen to them while driving to work or on trips. It is very disappointing as I cannot get WMAQ midnight broadcasts as I guess the WMAQ signal is not as strong. Keep up the great work on the publication and hats off to you for keeping the spirit of OTR alive. —**DAVE MILLER**

EVANSTON, IL — I have enjoyed your *TWTD* programs ever since you were on WNMP, Evanston. Your programs during the last couple of months have had an extra special interest for us. In the April "This Day — That Year" program, the Senn High School part had special meaning for my wife Ina, a Senn High alumna, and the MacArthur speech was very interesting to me. In 1951 I felt that President Truman's actions were correct. He was bound by serious diplomatic considerations. If any of MacArthur's subordinates had acted to Mac as Mac did to his Commander-in-Chief, they would have been court martialled. However, in hindsight, 40 plus years later, with newer information about the condition of

the Chinese army and listening to MacArthur's speech, it would seem that Mac was correct in the way he wanted to pursue the war, but not in the way he acted to the President. Finally, the Hindenburg segment of your May 3 program was of special interest to me because I heard the "live" rebroadcast on WLS in 1937 while we were visiting at a relative's house. The background information on your program along with the article in the *Nostalgia Digest* [April-May, 1997] fully rounded out the event. —LLOYD IDELMAN

CHICAGO — Your reediting of the Hindenburg crash was superb. Pitch adjustment, cleaning random noise, splicing the many sections into a unified, urgent unity. Great. —JOHN T. CONNELLY

NORRIDGE, IL — I enjoy your Saturday show very much. I was born in 1953, so much of the golden days of radio is not easily remembered. Your show is a major source of introducing me to many different shows. Please give Ken Alexander a big thank you and a big pat on the back. He does a great job when he takes over for you. I really enjoy his memories of growing up in Chicago. —BOB BRUN

CHICAGO — I've been enjoying *TWTD* since the *WLTD* days. As a former English teacher and word maven, I enjoyed the radio slang article by Richard O'Donnell [April-May, 1997]. But I'd like to fill in a little additional info on "local galli-curcia." The term had its origin in the name of Italian-American opera star Amelita Galli-Curci who was the reigning coloratura soprano in grand opera from her debut in 1909 until her retirement in 1930. Thus, an amateur performer who today might be called a Madonna-wannabe or a would-be Pavarotti in the old days was called by the term *local galli-curcia*. —BOB NOVICKAS

OAK PARK, IL — Thought the cover article on Buck Rogers in the April-May *Digest* was out of this world! Pun intended. My first roller skates were Buck Rogers roller skates. These skates were something I absolutely could not live without. My first pair of roller skates simply *had* to be these. Each skate looked like a rocket ship; at the rear, or heel, was a reflector the size of a quarter. How authentic could one get? Talk about

"peachy keen"! I got them for Christmas. My excitement knew no bounds. Immediately I strapped them to my feet. I tried to lift my rocket ship encased feet and place one foot in front of the other to skate. I found my rocket ships so heavy that I could scarcely get a foot off the ground, let alone move my legs to glide gracefully or even clumsily on the sidewalk pavement or street. Those rocket ships covering my feet were more like Frankenstein's Monster's boots than skates and they "did me in." I still think those rocket ship skates were a dynamite item, but not for skating. I wish I still had them. They would make good and heavy bookends. —LYNN ABBIE

ORO VALLEY, ARIZONA — As a Canadian I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed Richard Kunz' article "Radio Stars from Canada" [June-July, 1997]. It is a source of much pride to me that there are so many talented Canadians who have made it here, where the market is so much bigger. Largely for bragging purposes I keep my own personal list --which I have been able to update as a result of the article-- but Richard missed a few key names. He overlooked Jim Carey (who dropped out of my high school many years after I attended it!), Ivan Reitman (who got his start directing movies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario when I was there), Lorne Michaels (original and continuing force behind "Saturday Night Live"), and the wonderful talent and human being, John Candy. I have lots more if you want to continue the list! -- VIRGINIA KACPRZAK

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Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

THE CROWD stretched all the way up McClurg Court and around the corner onto Erie Street one night last spring as fans waited to get into the WBBM-TV studios to listen to and meet Tyne Daly and Sharon Gless.

It was a Museum event held in the same historic CBS studio where the first Kennedy/Nixon Debate took place during the presidential campaign back in 1960.

Sharon and Tyne treated more than 300 fans to behind-the-scenes stories of their popular and long-running television series, "Cagney and Lacey."

Barney Rosenzweig, the show's executive producer, joined the women and offered his own insights into this program and television production in general. Channel 2's Linda McLennan led the discussion.

If you missed out and weren't with us that evening, make plans to stop by the

Museum Archives and enjoy the video tape.

THE BALLOTS are streaming in to select the 1997 Radio Hall of Fame inductees. This year Eddie Cantor, William Conrad, Bing Crosby and Kate Smith are "competing" in the Pioneer Network or Syndicated category. It'll be a tough call.

Stay tuned. The election results will be



TYNE DALY and **SHARON GLESS**, TV's "Cagney and Lacey", chatted with fans and signed autographs at an MBC event held at CBS.

out by mid-August. Winners will be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in October with CBS' Charles Osgood hosting the gala event.

For more details, call the Museum special line at (312) 629-6023.

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← **HARPO MARX, THE SILENT MARX BROTHER.**

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