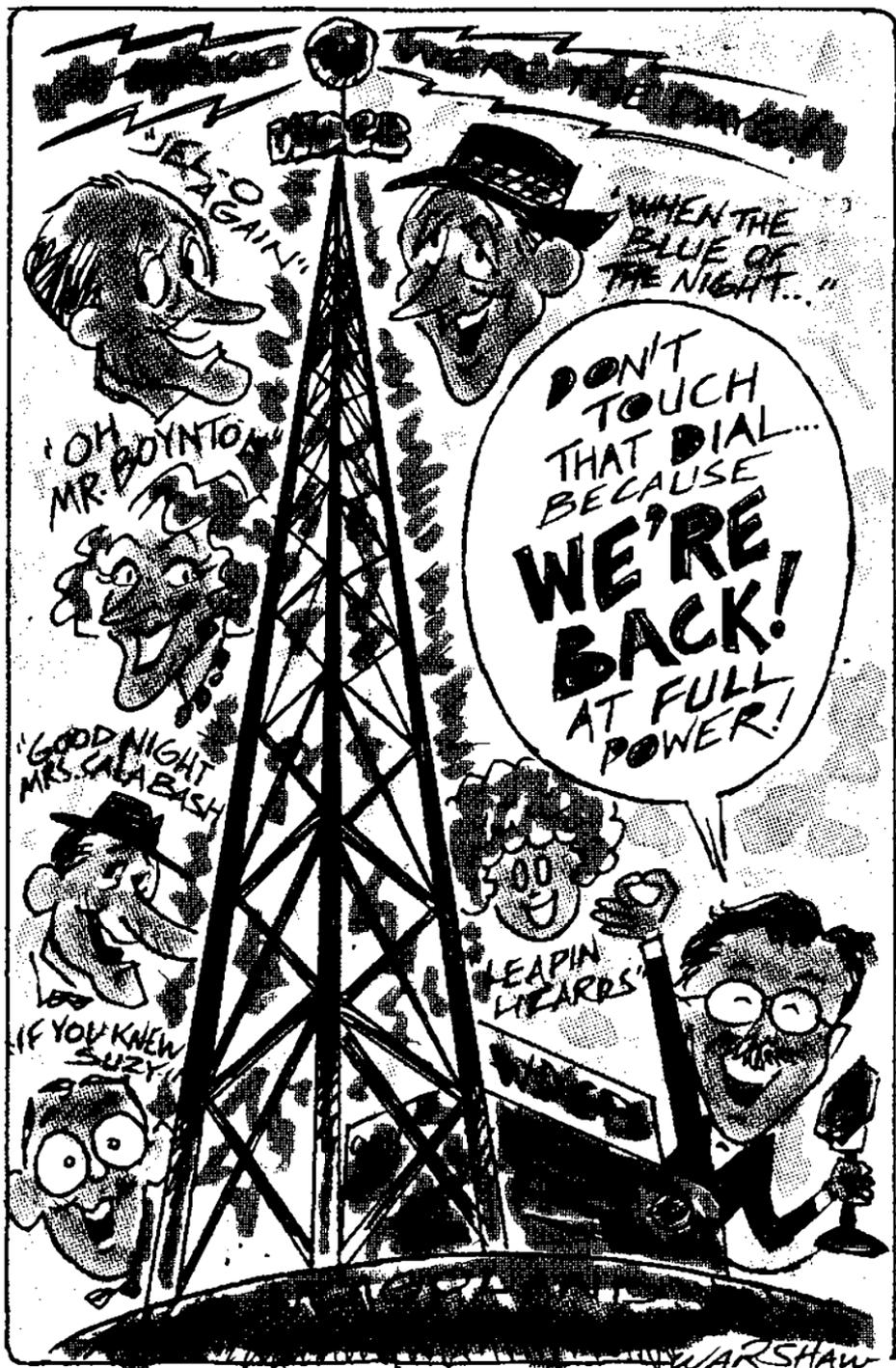


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OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2002



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As Heard on *Those Were The Days* Every Saturday

Not RAINmakers! **FRAMEMAKERS!**

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

Our long radio nightmare is over.

As you probably know by now, *Those Were The Days* and all other programming on WDCB, 90.9 FM has returned to full broadcast strength after seven long months in "radio limbo" following the collapse of the station's antenna tower last December.

The tower came down, in fact, right in the middle of our Christmas broadcast, shortly after 3 p.m., on Saturday, December 22. The station was off the air entirely for four days before resuming its regular schedule of programming, but at greatly reduced power.

From that point on, continuing until about 10 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, most WDCB listeners heard only silence or distant sounds from other radio stations transmitting near 90.9 FM and "sneaking" onto the WDCB frequency.

All of the station's programming continued but only listeners within a limited broadcast radius could actually hear the material being presented on the air.

WDCB quickly added streaming audio technology to the station's website and, since early January, all the station's programming --including *Those Were The Days*-- has been available via the Internet and the world wide web. So, we were heard around the world, but hardly at all in the Chicago area. Ironic, wasn't it?

But now we're back, broadcasting over the airwaves at full power. Many listeners have noted that our signal is better than ever, especially in some of the "fringe" areas.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to you for "hanging in there" during this tough time in our broadcast "life" and for being so patient. You are the greatest and we are humbled by your loyalty. We know that it has not been easy for you because it hasn't been easy for us, either.

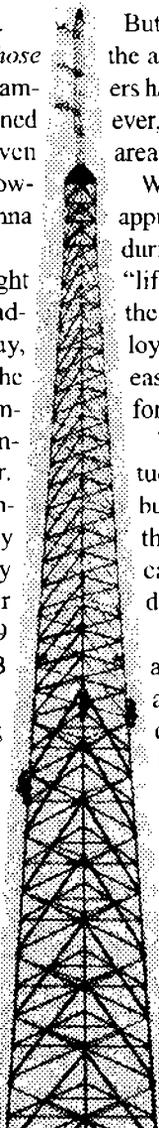
We would also like to offer our gratitude to our on-the-air supporters, the businesses who stayed with us through the "reduced audience" months. We cannot thank you enough for your dedication to our program.

And we want to salute WDCB management and staff who had to deal with all the administrative and technical considerations, delays and other problems that go with the preparation and installation of a new transmitter tower. We know it wasn't easy!

Now, as we've noted before in the *Nostalgia Digest*, and as we've said on the air, it is our plan to repeat, in the coming months, significant vintage broadcasts and features from *TWTD* during the seven-month "reduced power" period.

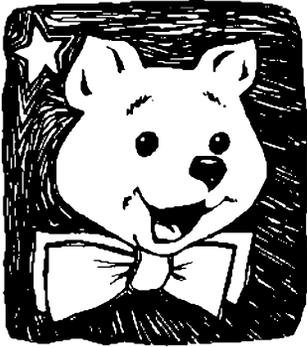
So that's just what we're going to do because WE'RE BACK and it sure feels GREAT!

--Chuck Schaden



The New
WDCB Tower

PHOTO BY RICHARD FORLISI



THE NEW ADVENTURES OF THE CINNAMON BEAR

-OR-

SO THAT'S WHAT *REALLY* HAPPENED TO THE WDCB TOWER

A Fable for Old Time Radio Fans

BY WAYNE KLATT

"Gee, whillikers," Jimmy said, "I sure hope the silver star is safe."

"Don't be silly," Judy told him, "that Crazy Quilt Dragon won't be able to get it way up on top of the WDCB tower."

"I don't know," said Jimmy, "it's getting pretty close to Christmas and all."

Said a high-tenor voice in the corner, "Such a worry wart, didn't I put it up meself?" It was Paddy O'Cinnamon, who was wrapping gifts.

But as they spoke, the Crazy Quilt Dragon climbed out of Lake Michigan, shook himself off, and was prowling around the suburbs for something that interested him. Just then the late December afternoon sun was reflecting off the silver star atop the radio antenna.

"Oh, pretty-pretty," said the dragon as he approached the three-hundred-foot tower and started to climb. He inched up toward the top and just when his paw-tips touched one of the silver points, there was a crraaaack!!

"Oh, my goodness," said Crazy Quilt. Instead of sliding down, he hung on tighter, and that's when the tower crashed to the ground, but all the extra-special stuffing in Crazy Quilt just made him go flat instead of hurting him. Never wanting to take responsibility for what he

did, Crazy Quilt ripped a little patch off his elbow and wrote with one of his claws: "I didn't do it, and I wasn't even here. Yours truly, Crazy Quilt, Esquire." Then he loped off without even trying to steal the star, which could never break again because Santa Claus had mended it with Crazy Quilt Glue.

Later, when Judy and Jimmy went to fetch the star, they saw the tower on the ground. "Oh, oh, will Mr. Schaden be mad," Jimmy said.

"Maybe Santa Claus will fix it," Judy said. "Paddy, would you make a sleigh for us?"

"Sure as my middle name isn't O," the Cinnamon Bear said, even though that made no sense at all.

The twins and Paddy went down to the harbor and made a sleigh out of old canoes and sail cloth, and they hauled the tower to the North Pole. When they reached Santa's workshop, they saw a sign reading: *Closed for Vacation. Gone Fishing.*

"Now what will we do?" Jimmy asked.

"I know. Let's put out a press release saying the tower will be fixed by late February."

But the twins had many more adventures, and Jack Benny month passed in silence for the thousands of fans who lived outside the little beep

beep beep that the station transmitted without its proud tower.

"Oh, now what ever do we do?" Judy asked.

Paddy piped up by saying: "Never think you're alone in the world." Then he put his fist in his little mouth and whistled a whistle that made the twins and two rabbits jump in alarm.

Soon everyone heard the singing of the cowboys, led by Mr. Slim Pickens. "Need a hand?" he asked. "Why didn't you say so?"

Pickens and the other cowboys galloped around the tower and lassoeed every part that stood out, then they hauled it across the mud land with the help of Indians.

Everyone set to work with hammers and solder guns, but the project was just too big for them.

"That's it," shouted Cinnamon Bear, "let's get Fee Fo the Giant!"

"I'm sorry, but we can't," Pickens said, pushing back his cowboy hat, "he's in retirement."

"Retirement/re-smirement, as long as he didn't shrink we can use him," Paddy said.

Then came another whistle. This time it was so loud the tough cowboy hid under a cactus. Then came the thump, thump, thump of the biggest man in Maybe Land.

"Please, Mr. Fee Fo..." Judy began.

"I see what you need," he said, his gentle voice quivering the ground. "Mr. Crazy Quilt, come here."

"M-m-m-mc?" cowardly Crazy Quilt asked.

"See that bent ridge? Breathe on it."

But C.Q. was so scared all he could do was INhale until his eyes seemed to pop. Impatient, the giant took him by the neck, shook him a few times, then held him upside down over the tower and

patted his rump. Suddenly a blast of flame came out, and the twisted piece of metal bent back into shape all by itself.

"What do you know," the dragon said, his words making a kind of alphabet-soup of smoke in the air, "I am good for something! Oh joy!"

Fee Fo put a fingertip on Judy's and Jimmy's shoulders and said, "See, we'll have this thing fixed in no time as long as we work together. Each of us has some skill the others don't. It's all a matter of finding out what it is."

After many adventures, they arrived at the tower base in July. Fee Fo the Giant and the cowboys hoisted the tower into place, and Crazy Quilt kept breathing fire onto the broken parts of metal until they fused together.

Since Fee Fo's voice could be heard for thirteen and a half miles, he said, "How's that, Mr. Schaden?"

Chuck, who was stationed outside the broadcast range, turned on his radio and could hear his own program for the first time since December. "Loud and clear," he called out, and Cinnamon Bear ran with the message back to the tower.

When Mr. Schaden reached them by motor-scooper, a sort of bicycle that operates on ice cream, he told all his friends, "I don't know how to thank you."

"There is one way," Cinnamon Bear said. "You can have another Jack Benny Month for those who missed it through no fault of their own."

Mr. Schaden scratched his head and said, "Maybe not a whole month, but maybe I can work in a few extra shows between now and next February."

"Yeayyyy" they all shouted.

THE END

Tune in TWTD October 12 for the Best of Jack Benny Month, 2002.

Pat Novak for Hire

He Walked By Night

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

Although Jack Webb's best-known series may have been *Dragnet*, more than a few devotees of old-time radio savor his appearance on another show even more. Before Webb walked the streets of Los Angeles as monotonic Joe Friday, he haunted the docks of San Francisco as colorful Pat Novak.

Pat Novak for Hire actually served as Webb's springboard to *Dragnet*. A West Coast version had aired in 1946-47, but *Pat Novak for Hire* did not reach a national audience until February 13, 1949 over ABC. On June 3, 1949, before *Pat Novak for Hire* had finished its run, Webb began asking for "just the facts" on NBC as LAPD's crime-fighting sergeant. After the June 25th broadcast, Pat Novak took the proverbial long walk off a short pier and should have sunk into oblivion.

Why *Pat Novak for Hire* keeps bobbing to the surface decades after its demise is not easy to explain to someone who has never heard any episodes. Part of the fascination with the show is that, remarkably, its flaws are its strengths. Saturated with hardboiled characters, hopelessly entangled story lines, ludicrous similes, and dialog that is often spewed rather than spoken, *Pat Novak for Hire* achieves that rarefied level of campiness: the program becomes its own parody.

Another reason the show refuses to fade away is that *Pat Novak for Hire* is perhaps the best example of radio noir (or, given

Clair Schulz is a free-lance writer, movie historian and collector from Muskego, Wisconsin.

Novak's proclivity for receiving beatings, radio noir et bleu). A tone of pessimistic fatalism pervades the plots as cynical loners and losers jostle while grabbing for the brass ring which ultimately eludes them all. Foghorns, solitary footsteps, and forlorn theme music convey a mood befitting shallow, devious people moving in a world of shadows and intrigue.

Every week Pat Novak stepped out of those shadows to announce that he rented boats and did "anything else that's cash and carry." For some reason all sorts of nefarious types seemed drawn to Novak, who was no detective public or private, to act as an intermediary to pick up a package in a boat, deliver a geranium plant, follow a woman who was carrying a green bag, find a horse, etc. Invariably bodies started falling and Novak found himself the scapegoat. Week after week villains played Novak for a chump and, stubborn cuss that he was, Pat kept sticking his chin out for more. It's no wonder nearly everyone called him Patsy.

Once corpses, guns, and other incriminating evidence appeared in Novak's apartment it was only a matter of moments before Inspector Hellman, played by Raymond Burr, arrived on the scene dragging the hangman's noose he always carried about which, by no coincidence, fit perfectly around Pat's neck.

Hellman seemed determined to lay every murder from the shooting of Dan McGrew forward at Novak's doorstep. "You're a small-time waterfront punk," he would snarl. "I don't like you and I'm gonna hang you by your heels." He was so



Jack Webb

obsessed with capturing his quarry that he often leaped over legalities such as the time he wanted to take Novak down to headquarters shortly after finding a dead woman's body, prompting Pat to bark, "Get out of your haze, Hellman. You don't even know who's dead yet, but you're going to book somebody."

Hellman, a brutish sort who sometimes acted more with his fists than his brain, enjoyed goading Novak into sassy remarks such as "You couldn't find a moose in a bathtub," "You can't find your back pocket with radar," or "You couldn't track down a live bear in a phone booth," and then cuffed him around with impunity, knowing that his adversary could not return the blows without being arrested for striking a police officer.

The verbal sparring between Hellman and Novak became one of the highlights of every program as the two combatants circled each other relentlessly, looking for openings to launch vituperative assaults. The animosity present in the rapid-fire insults and accusations was so palpable one

suspects that Burr and Webb themselves might have been close to throwing some punches with their punch lines.

Novak and Hellman were more akin than different. When claiming that Hellman possessed a disposition like a ton of rhubarb and had a heart "big enough to hide behind a piece of birdseed," Novak could have been describing himself. He treated the living, the dead, and the dying with equal disdain. Seconds after hauling a wounded man into his boat, Pat told him to "pick another spot to die. Go back in the bay to die where you'll have company." Finding a body in his apartment, he muttered, "He wasn't a good enough guy to bleed in the liv-

ing room so I dragged him in the kitchen and left by the back door." Novak could not even exchange plesantries with a bank clerk; his response to "Isn't it a good morning?" was "If it's your choice, stay with it."

Novak's choice made him a fitting noir protagonist, for his every action seemed founded on one motive: self-preservation. As he walked through his purlicus of rancid alleys, raucous fight arenas and race-tracks, flea-bitten lunchrooms, seedy hotels that "in a good season couldn't draw transient mice," clammy morgues, and tawdry nightclubs lit up with enough neon to "light up a main intersection in heaven," his solitary goal seemed to be to brush up against death almost constantly without getting any of it on him.

When in his usual spot, aptly described by Hellman as "pecking from behind the eight ball," Novak sought help in one of the city's watering holes from "the only honest guy I know," Jocko Madigan, played by Tudor Owen. What Novak wanted from the ex-doctor, now a full-time souse, was a

legman to uncover leads that might extricate him from his predicament, but before he could spill his story, he was forced to listen to an assessment of his character like an errant son being lectured by a long-suffering father.

For someone in his perpetual stupor, Madigan was an acute judge of human nature. He pegged Novak perfectly in his diatribes: "You have no moral sense. All you have is a small bundle of regrets, something you drag out periodically as proof of your decency... You're hopeless, Patsy. You're like some overripe planet disemboweled from the skies. You don't know where you're going and where you've been... You move in the twilight zone between good and evil without any predisposition toward either one."

After enduring the scolding until Madigan ran out of breath or stopped to refill his glass, Novak explained his dilemma and asked Jocko to help him by sending him to find bits of evidence that might get him off the hook. Some of the missions took the form of simple requests to rifle through the dressers or suitcases of suspects for clues, but other errands assigned to Madigan were so vague (e.g. "Find out about Earl Hayes and see if there's a guy named Max anywhere," "Nose around about tomorrow's election," "Hit all the race rooms") that no sober person would have undertaken them. Given a business card and told, "His prints are on it. Check it out at headquarters. Find out if he's got a record," Jocko blithely started off on his assignment, leaving listeners to contemplate the sight of a tipsy philosopher staggering into a station house and being given free rein to search through police files.

But, because Novak took listeners im-



PHOTOGRAPH BY

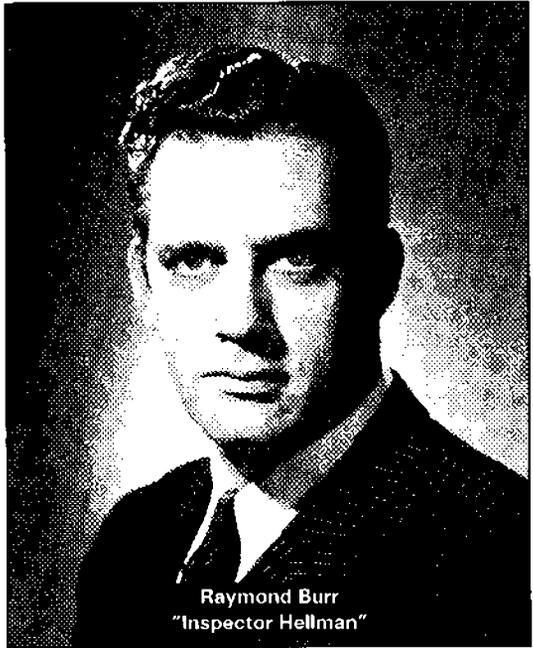
mediately back on the trail with him, there was little time to ponder such improbabilities or other questions like what payment Madigan received for breaking into homes and visiting newspaper morgues. Sooner or later Novak would encounter a femme fatale intent on seducing him into cooperating with some sultry purring. Although Novak often played the sucker for these smoldering women, he was not above using some arm-twisting when cornered. With Novak and his vamps, sweet nothings soon gave way to mean somethings such as a feminine promise to "throw you away like a wad of gum" and his threat to "dirty you up like a locker room towel."

Novak squirmed mightily when on the hot seat and he let everyone know about his discomfort, even when facing armed thugs whom he would confront with a coarse stream of venom such as "I've met better people in sewers. Now look, meathead, I'm only going to say this once so make a copy of it. You got the wrong guy. You think I got something? I haven't

got it. So you and your pals swing out of here on your tails. I never saw you until three minutes ago and I'm tired of the friendship already."

Scriptwriter Richard Breen, a friend of Webb's, occasionally would insert a humorous line in Novak's exchanges with ruffians that wouldn't have been out of place coming from Bob Hope's lips in one of his spy films. About to be escorted into a car for a ride by gunsels, Pat held back long enough to say, "You boys run on. I'll grab a cab" before being tossed into the back seat.

Breen's most notable contribution to the program, however, was the figurative language that was supposed to capture the flavor of a Raymond Chandler novel, but when the



Raymond Burr
"Inspector Hellman"

PHOTOEST

overblown similes and metaphors emerged from Novak's mouth they sounded as if they had come from the pens of humorists S. J. Perelman and James Thurber. A sampling: "It was like chasing a spider with a bowling ball." "He was as sad as a tapdancer in moccasins." "He was smiling like a vulture with a first option on a massacre." "It was like trying to put a smoke ring in your pocket." "It was so quiet you could hear a worm with whooping cough and there were enough shadows around to keep a ghost happy for years." "Her voice reminded you of a furnace filled with marshmallows." "It wasn't going to be easy. You might as well try to French-fry a kettle of bones." "It was like trying to weave a rug with a spinning wheel and a bucket of sand." "I might as well have been looking for a stick with one end." "It was like trying to dance the minuet on skis." "I began to get unhappy like a three-legged man at a ballet school." "It was like offering to buy aspirin for a two-headed boy."

No listener dared cackle long over these

hilarious non sequiturs because Novak had already moved on to his next set of lumps. Breen utilized those interludes when Novak took inventory after recovering consciousness to evoke a sense of sordid atmosphere with descriptive portraits such as "When I woke up, the rain hadn't helped the alley much. It was like washing your kid's face and finding out he was ugly to start with. The mud had washed up against the walls and there was a thick, sour smell and down the alley across the street there was part of a sign that said, 'Eats'."

Although Breen excelled at creating mood, at times he seemed so preoccupied with inventing hard-bitten dialogue and setting scenes that he forgot he was telling a story that should follow some rules of logic. On the program aired April 16, 1949 a gunman forced Pat and a chanteuse outside a nightclub, shot the woman three times, and then knocked Novak out, his thinking apparently being "Novak is the only eyewitness whose testimony can put me in the gas chamber, but I'll just sap him

because he has to be back for next week's show."

Breen must have believed that the best way to tie up any loose ends was to kill all the criminals (on only a couple shows did Hellman actually take someone into custody) no matter how bizarre their deaths appeared to be. Backing up proved to be particularly hazardous: one person stepped into the engine on a boat and another was trampled by a horse. A woman who watched her wounded accomplice go over an embankment decided to join him by taking a flying leap herself.

Those miscreants who lived long enough to deliver last words received no comfort from the dyspeptic Novak. To a former friend he growled, "You're a small-time bum, Sam, and you're better off dead." A woman's request to die in Pat's lap was denied with a terse "You get mercy, not love, baby," although he actually gave her neither. Sometimes he just listened to those crooks who went out in high noir style like Hilda Travers, who admitted that she had "No complaints. I've always gone first class. I wouldn't have it any other way. I could've used a little more time, but I'm not greedy. Still raining out, Patsy?"

Hilda didn't live long enough to hear the weather report, but listeners knew it was always overcast in Pat Novak's world. The program concluded as it had begun, with Novak walking and talking alone to the accompaniment of a foghorn. In these postmortems he reviewed the action in a series of short statements such as "He offered a cut to Craig for the heavy-duty work. Wendy was supposed to show up at 10:15. Craig would kill her and wait. When Stan showed up at 10:30, Craig was supposed to stage a fight and kill him. That way he'd be in the clear and so would Odom," but after a few sentences the listener became lost in a sea of names and double crosses. A minute or two later when

the convoluted plot was totally unraveled one wonders if Breen himself could have explained who did what to whom.

But it is the how that makes *Pat Novak for Hire* such a treat. The wags who insist that the show should have been called *Pat Novak for Ire* or *Pat Novak for Laughs* are not far off the mark, for no other program was so intentionally dark and so unintentionally light. Jack Webb and Raymond Burr went on to better parts, but the raw ferocity present in their performances as Novak and Hellman reminds us that there was a sharper edge to their acting before they settled into their roles as police detective and defense attorney. *Dragnet* and *Perry Mason* are shining jewels which remain in public view, whereas *Pat Novak for Hire* is like a tarnished keepsake, lying nearly forgotten in a musty cupboard. But it is still there, somewhere in the night, glowing faintly like the unpolished, rough-cut gem it is. ■

Tune in TWTD October 5 and November 2 to hear Pat Novak for Hire.



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CELEBBio

Gordon MacRae

All of his professional life, Gordon MacRae has been doing "what comes naturally," to him.

The son of the late "Wee Willie" MacRae, early day radio star, and a mother, still living, who was a well-known concert pianist, there was little chance that Gordon, their adored son, wouldn't have at least a try at the theatrical profession.

He started in grammar and high school in dramatic classes where he sang many roles, including his favorites, the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, moved on to amateur theatricals at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts and graduated to the professional stage on "Three to Make Ready," and then as a juvenile soloist in a Ray Bolger revue.

Always ready to sing at the drop of a suggestion, MacRae can be heard almost

This is the official Warner Bros. studio biography for Gordon MacRae issued in 1949. Gordon MacRae died January 24, 1986 at age 64.



any working day now, rehearsing his songs for Warner Bros. pictures or his radio program wherever he happens to be. He bursts into song at the most unexpected times

and in the least expected places and his surprised audiences are invariably pleased.

MacRae did this once in the lounge of the NBC studios in New York and got his first professional job as a radio singer as a result. He still feels the best way to learn to sing or to sing better is to sing on any and all occasions and to never miss a chance of exercising his vocal cords.

Having grown up with the idea that he was to

become an actor-singer-entertainer, MacRae didn't loiter on the way to success. He was determined to try all possible branches of the entertainment industry and so, after getting a very promising start on the New York stage and in radio, he moved to the Millpond Playhouse at Roslyn, Long Island, for stock experience.

There he met not only a considerable success as a singer and actor but also a girl named Sheila Margot Stephens who was

both the leading lady and the acting secretary of the summer stock company. She has been Mrs. MacRae for a number of years and is the mother of Gordon's three children: two girls, Meredith Lynn, Heather Allison and one son, born after the family reached Hollywood, William Gordon.

Mrs. MacRae has abandoned her own career as an actress in favor of the roles of wife and mother which she likes better. She is often on the set with her husband, particularly at the start of a new picture. She has played one featured role in one of her husband's pictures, the one called *Backfire*.

Gordon MacRae was born in East Orange, New Jersey on March 12, 1921 and attended the Charles Andrews grammar school, the Nottingham high school and did college preparatory work at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. He went directly from these schools and the amateur theatricals they had provided for him, to the professional stage.

His first professional appearance was as Tommy Arbuckle in *Junior Miss*. Before that he appeared as a child actor on radio programs. William Orr, then talent scout for Warner Bros., spotted the handsome young singer and persuaded him to sign a contract with Warner Bros.

Somewhere in between all these early day activities, MacRae found time to visit France, England, Germany, Switzerland and Holland and to improve his golf game until he now has a handicap of three. He recently made a "hole in one" playing against Bing Crosby, a feat which he loves to remember and about which he thinks he'll still be talking when the Lakeside golf course is a college campus for his now infant son.

Athletic in high school, MacRae played LaCrosse, basketball and went out for track. Indoors he plays the piano, clarinet and saxophone. He is five feet eleven inches tall and weighs 175 pounds but ap-

pears slighter than these figures would indicate.

Radio listeners may remember him best for his long series of programs sponsored by the Texaco Company and for his more recent singing on the *Railroad Hour*:

Serious minded and ambitious, he hopes to complete his cycle of acting experiences by playing in comedies and heavy dramas for Warner Bros. as well as in the musical *Look for the Silver Lining*, and the deluxe Western *Return of the Frontiersman*, in which he rode a horse for the first time.

His ambition is "to be a success and to be happy." His favorite extravagances are clothes and automobiles. Of the latter he now owns two, a Cadillac and a Buick. As to "pet economics" and "suppressed desires" he claims to have none of either.

He hasn't saved much money, he says, but he has hopes and plans. His literary tastes are for Christopher Morley, Saroyan, Maugham and the letters from his wife. He believes an actor should stay out of political discussions and/or religious arguments. He gets up early every morning, has no hobbies except his family, no boat or beach house or mountain cabin.

And if you want to hear Gordon MacRae sing — just ask him. He'll oblige. ■

Tune in TWTD October 5 to hear Gordon MacRae sing on The Railroad Hour and other radio broadcasts.

THIS DIDN'T FIT

in the article about TV's Bishop Sheen on page 16.

SHEEN ON SHEEN:

Once when I was in Philadelphia trying to find the Coliseum where I was scheduled to give a speech, I stopped a kid on the street to ask him where the Coliseum was and how could I get there. When the kid asked me what I was going to do there, I replied, "I'm going to give a speech on how to get to heaven." The kid looked at me and said, "You can't even find the Coliseum..."

Read the rest of the story in this issue!

SOME LIKE IT WILDER

BY RANDALL G. MIELKE

Some directors excel when making movies filled with intense drama; others shine when directing films with a light comedic touch. But rarely does a director have superior command of both. Billy Wilder, who died March 27, 2002, was such a director.

Wilder made his directing debut with *The Major and the Minor* in 1942. The film comedy centers on a woman living in New York, played by Ginger Rogers, who is desperate to go home to Iowa, but does not have the necessary railway fare. She disguises herself as a child to ride for half fare and, en route, she meets Ray Milland, an Army major teaching at a military school. Wilder handled the clever comedy efficiently, but it wasn't until 1944 that he started to make his mark in filmmaking. That was the year he directed *Double Indemnity* with Fred MacMurray, Barbara Stanwyck, and Edward G. Robinson.

In one of the finest suspense films ever made, MacMurray plays an insurance salesman who, with the help of Stanwyck, concocts a scheme to murder her husband and collect the insurance benefits. Robinson plays MacMurray's suspicious boss.

Double Indemnity was a radical picture for its time. For the first time a sympathetic man, played by a "good guy" actor, portrayed a character who killed for lust and money. The film also was unique in that it revealed the killer in the opening scene, and

Randall G. Mielke of Aurora, Illinois is an author and free-lance writer.



Billy Wilder, 1987 winner of the Irving Thalberg Memorial Award

RANDALL G. MIELKE COLLECTION

then told the story in voiceover flashbacks.

Wilder continued to break new ground in 1945 with *The Lost Weekend* starring Ray Milland and Jane Wyman in a gripping study of alcoholism and its destructive effect on one man's life.

Although the novel of the same name had been a best seller, studios thought audiences did not want to see a heart-wrenching story about a drunk. Wilder thought differently, but had difficulty persuading



Lost Weekend (1945)
Ray Milland and Howard da Silva

PHOTO FEST

Milland to take part in the project.

Although Milland was not concerned about his image in portraying the alcoholic, Don Burnam, he was concerned about his own technical ability to play the role. In the end, studio heads ordered Milland to play the lead character. It proved to be a good move. Milland won an Oscar for his performance, and Wilder won his first Oscar for co-writer of *The Lost Weekend* and his second for director of it. The film was voted Best Picture of 1945.

With his confidence bolstered by Oscars, Wilder continued to break new ground in Hollywood. In 1950 he co-wrote and directed *Sunset Boulevard*, which starred William Holden and

Gloria Swanson. In one of the best films about Hollywood, Holden plays an out-of-work screenwriter who attaches himself to a faded screen star attempting a comeback. But Wilder had trouble casting the film. He had signed Montgomery Clift to play the unemployed screenwriter, Joe Gillis, but two weeks before shooting was scheduled to begin, Clift broke the contract and refused to play the part. Wilder approached Fred MacMurray, but MacMurray decided the role was too demean-



Sunset Boulevard (1950)
Gloria Swanson

PHOTO FEST

ing. Wilder then went to William Holden, but Holden wanted the part fattened up. Wilder refused, and the studio ordered Holden to play the part. The film not only made Holden a major actor, but also led to an interesting friendship with Wilder. *Sunset Boulevard* won Wilder another Oscar for co-writing the screenplay.

The Wilder-and-Holden working relationship worked well when Wilder directed *Stalag 17* (1953), which was based on a Broadway play of the same name. In addition to starring Holden as a opportunistic and cynical sergeant, Wilder successfully alternated between suspense and drama in this story of a World War II prison camp.

Originally, Wilder had Charlton Heston in mind for the role of Sgt. Sefton since Sefton was, essentially, a noble person. However, as Wilder began converting the Broadway play into a movie, Sefton became a sly, conniving, and somewhat wicked character, and Wilder had to discard the idea of casting Heston. Again, Wilder was faced with a casting dilemma, as no one really wanted to play Sefton. Wilder finally approached William Holden, who also was reluctant to take the part. However, Holden had become a big star owing, in part, to *Sunset Boulevard* and felt indebted to Wilder and agreed to play the role. Holden won a Best Actor Oscar for his performance.

Wilder's instinct for comedy was displayed well in *The Seven Year Itch* (1957). Starring Tom Ewell and Marilyn Monroe, the movie is a fantasy of an average American (Ewell) who has a sexy neighbor (Monroe) living upstairs. With his wife away, Ewell imagines his life with the blonde bombshell.

It has often been said that Monroe gave her best performances under Wilder's direction, and this film is evidence of that statement. The film features the famous scene in which Monroe stands over a sub-



Seven Year Itch (1957)
Billy Wilder and Marilyn Monroe

HANDAL C. MIFIK COLLECTION

way grate and lets the draft blow her white dress upwards.

Wilder continued to meet and conquer challenges in his filmmaking with *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957). In this film, James Stewart portrays Charles Lindbergh in his historic solo flight across the Atlantic. The problem for the writers (Wilder and Wendell Mayes) was that most of the film occurred in the narrow cockpit and only one man was in the camera's eye. Part of the problem was alleviated with suspense-

ful music and sound effects - revving engines, whirring propeller sounds, blustery cold winds - coupled with reaction shots of Stewart, all of which created a dramatic effect.

Still, the film had to have dialogue. Who would Lindbergh talk to during his 33 hours crossing the ocean? Flashbacks would be incorporated to fill in the background story, but something dramatic had to happen in the plane. Wendell Mayes suggested a little mouse be placed in the cockpit so Lindbergh could speak to it. Wilder was against that idea since he had used a mouse in

critical scenes in *The Lost Weekend*. Then they came up with the idea of a housefly. They justified the fly's existence by having Lindbergh take sandwiches on board and this had attracted the fly.

In 1959 Wilder was back to comedy with *Some Like It Hot*, starring Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis. *Some Like It Hot* is an outlandish story of two men (Lemmon and Curtis) who accidentally witness a gangland slaying and then pose as members of an all-girl band in order to avoid the gangsters.

Some Like It Hot had its origins in an old musical film written by Robert Thoeren. The film was set in the Great Depression and featured two unemployed musicians who put on a variety of costumes to get different jobs with different bands. They would black their faces to play in Negro bands, put rings in the ears and bandannas on their heads to work as gypsies, and dress up like girls to play in women's



Some Like It Hot (1959)
Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon

PHOTO: G. LSI

orchestras. While deciding on the direction the film should take, Wilder came upon the idea to set the film in 1929, during Prohibition, amidst the aura of Al Capone, Chicago, and the infamous St. Valentine's Day massacre.

Wilder told producers that his opening scene in the film would be the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. The characters that Curtis and Lemmon played would witness the massacre and then be compelled to leave town in women's clothes and join an all-girl band. The studio heads voiced some concerns that Wilder could bring off mixing machine guns, bullets, and dead bodies, and then gags, but Wilder pulled it off. The elements mixed beautifully and the film became one of the best movies of all time.

Wilder's sense of drama mixed with comedy probably came together best in *The Apartment* (1960) with Jack Lemmon, Shirley MaLaîne, and Fred MacMurray.

Rarely have comedy and drama been so satisfyingly blended into a cohesive whole.

With career advancements in mind, Lemmon permits his boss (MacMurray) to use his apartment for illicit love affairs. Lemmon then gets involved with the boss's emotionally distraught girlfriend (MacLaine).

Wilder and writer I.A.L. Diamond were known for tailoring their scripts to their stars. *The Apartment* was being written for Shirley MacLaine, Jack Lemmon, and Paul Douglas. Two weeks before they began to shoot the film, Douglas collapsed and died of a heart attack. Wilder cajoled Fred MacMurray into taking over the role of the corporation philanderer. He accepted, but the dialogue for the film had to be completely revised.

Always a stickler for detail, Wilder would do several takes of a scene in order to get the dialogue just right. In *The Apartment*, Shirley MacLaine had a tough scene in which she runs the elevator and greets people on and off as she rattles off numerous lines of dialogue. She got it in the fourth take but had missed one word and



PHOTOFFST

Wilder shot the scene again to make it perfect.

The result of such perfectionism is evidenced in the final cut of the film. Lemmon sparkles; MacLaine is irresistible; and MacMurray, playing a heel, is superb. Although not widely acclaimed when it was first released, *The Apartment* won Oscars for Wilder as co-writer and director and the film was named Best Picture of 1960.

Wilder's ability to successfully direct comedy as well as drama has made him a man for all people. In the films he directed there is literally something for everyone. ■

Tune in TWTD October 5 to hear a radio version of Billy Wilder's Lost Weekend and November 2 for Sunset Boulevard.

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presented by the *Those Were The Days Radio Players*
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50 Years Later: Life is Worth Living, Still

BY GARDNER KISSACK

If you were a high school senior in February, 1952 you were probably looking forward to graduation at the end of the semester, and you may have been looking at some television history as well, possibly without realizing it.

It was then, with the country a year and a half into the Korean War, when not even half the homes had a television set, and when shouts of "I like Ike" foretold Eisenhower's election nine months later, that a priest "took on" Milton Berle's popular Tuesday night TV show — which had become a near-ritual habit for millions of viewers — and changed what people watched in their leisure hours.

After more than two decades on radio as the voice of the *Catholic Hour*, 57-year-old Roman Catholic Bishop Fulton J. Sheen decided to try reaching a mass audience that could see him as well as hear his homilies, sermons, and lectures.

Television was, if not in its infancy anymore, still a child relying on formula programming (slapstick comic revues/routines, westerns, wrestling, news) but also willing to try new approaches (the combination of which may sound drearily current).

Even so, a priest in prime time?

Bishop Sheen's program on the DuMont Network was met, not unexpectedly and even understandably, by certain TV critics and an initially skeptical, albeit open-minded, public, who soon understood that

Gardner Kissack of Chicago Heights, Illinois is a volunteer tour guide for the Museum of Broadcast Communications and a collector of vintage radio and television receivers.

something special was happening on *Life is Worth Living*.

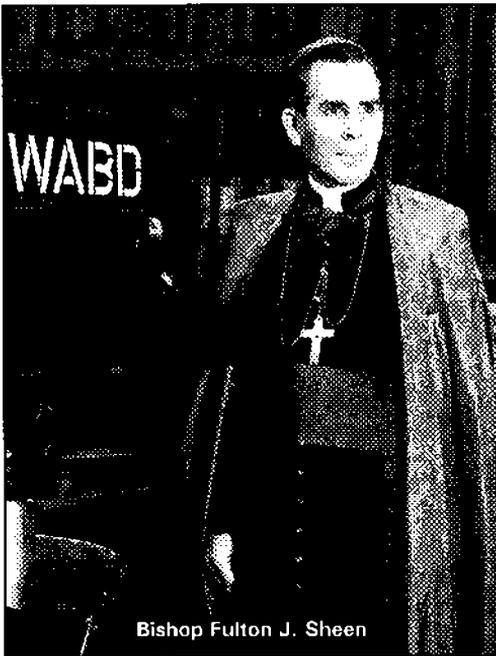
Professor Mary Ann Watson in "Defining Visions" wrote that Sheen "glided into midtown Manhattan's Adelphi Theatre stage to meet his studio audience as the live broadcast began, wearing a long cassock, gold cross and chain, and purple cape flowing from shoulders to floor." He made a very dramatic visual impact. He was good television.

And then the real show began. Bishop Sheen spoke for 28 minutes without notes (or Teleprompter) in front of a set that looked like a rectory study, occasionally writing or drawing a diagram on a blackboard to emphasize a key point — the way a university professor might. People listened. They understood him, perhaps because he understood them. They liked that he stood for something. He took on real issues. It was not just a "feel good" half hour. He once opened with, "I see you're back to have your faith lifted."

As an ethical, devout man of God he felt the need to aggressively fight Communism, scorn "couch psychiatry," and oppose strongly greed and laziness, yet he never lost his gentle and moving manners when speaking about children and motherhood.

His views, or expressions of those views, were sometimes (but rarely) controversial or confrontational and, therefore, not always what people wanted to hear. They were not merely a recitation of Roman Catholic theology but they were always strongly, stunningly, and entirely Christian views, expressed in a moral language that appealed to people of many faiths.

This was his strength, for a nation still feeling the lingering effects of World War



Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

PHOTOFEST

II and involved in Korea, indeed, fighting in Korea just five years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was a moral compass and a very real comfort to millions of viewers.

He spoke clearly, challenging people's minds and spirits, and he could be funny. He was a natural.

His first show was seen in only three cities. After 20 weeks, as word spread that "this guy is good" it was carried by 35 stations, with an audience estimated at five million in a country with approximately 155 million people. At the conclusion of his second year, 75 stations across the U.S. carried *Life is Worth Living* to more than 10 million viewers weekly; by 1954 Bishop Sheen was on 100 stations. His show was, to say the least, very popular and entertaining.

Sheen was dynamic, his delivery sharp, and there were few greys (moral relativism was not yet an issue although perhaps on the horizon), and his ability to explain and communicate his ideas and ideals made viewers want to listen. His appearance, his

amazing memory, his stage presence, and his sense of humor helped explain his growing popularity.

At one point NBC-TV offered him a different timeslot (not opposite Berle and with presumably a larger audience), but he declined and remained with DuMont.

Fan mail poured in, sometimes as many as 8,500 letters a week.

Admiral appliances, the happy sponsor, had a one minute spot at the show's opening and another minute at the close, and was rewarded with increased recognition, sales, and goodwill.

Time, Life and Look magazines featured the Bishop in flattering articles and on their covers. People across the United States were talking about Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

He had become a celebrity. He wrote several dozen books and countless articles for periodicals and magazines.

He died in 1979 at the age of 84, shortly before some of his dedicated followers initiated the arduous process of nominating him for Sainthood. The process continues currently.

Today one would be hard-pressed (and probably unsuccessful) to name a popular, prime-time prelate (priest) preaching weekly to a national TV audience.

Bishop Sheen's early broadcast success influenced others (apart from his vast lay audience) and opened the way for more television ministries, from the Reverend Billy Graham to Dr. Robert Schuller, and while these two (among others) have preached to larger national and even international audiences over a longer period of time, there has never been anyone quite like Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, nor is there likely to be again, for he helped the nation in the mid-1950s grow up a little and learn that life is worth living.

He was an original. ■

Chicago Musical Radio at its Best

BY WILLIAM J. RYAN

It must have been around 1944, and I was 14, when I discovered a most impressive NBC show out of Chicago that bolstered my desire to become a radio announcer.

My home town of Pocatello, Idaho was served by one radio station, KSEI. It was an NBC affiliate and dutifully carried all the programming it could, from both the Red and Blue networks.

Monday through Friday nights at 10 came *NBC News* out of New York. Don Pardo, who became famous as the *Saturday*

Night Live announcer, was breaking-in with NBC at that time, reading the news.

I don't recall what was on following the News on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights, but on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:05, our time, NBC switched to Chicago for a wonderful musical show called *Roy Shield and Company*.

LeRoy Shield had done Hollywood in

William J. Ryan is a retired journalist who spent 17 years with United Press International. He was also a college teacher and administrator.

the early days, serving as music director for the Hal Roach Studios. He composed much of the music we hear in *Our Gang* and *Laurel and Hardy* comedies.



LeRoy Shield

WILLIAM J. RYAN COLLECTION

Shield moved to Chicago in 1931 as music director for NBC. He did a great deal of composing and other behind-the-scenes work for the many live musical and dramatic shows originating in the Merchandise Mart studios.

Shield hired two other NBC conductors: Joe Gallicchio, who was heard on countless shows, and Whitey Berquist of *National Farm and Home Hour* fame.

Roy Shield and Company was sometimes called *Design for Living*. It was sustaining (without a sponsor), and featured Shield's arrangements of pop tunes of the day played by a studio audience of maybe twenty pieces.

Vocalists were Jean McKenna, who sounded like Dinah Shore, and tenor Richard Paige, who was a combination of Dennis Day and Tony Martin.

The regular jazz group was the young and fresh Art Van Damme Quintet, which went on to make dozens of hot-selling

records and LPs.

An added joy was the announcer, Dave Garroway. He had a way with words that was seldom topped — smooth, yet sensible. Producer-Director Parker Gibbs (himself no slouch in the music world) gave him his freedom and Garroway charmed the listener.

Gibbs was an alumnus of the Ted Weems orchestra and had worked with Perry Como in his early career. Gibbs knew music, too.

So there I had it, a fine 55-minutes of music every Tuesday and Thursday night from 10:05 until 11, Mountain Time.

It's been a long time, but I still hear Jean McKenna singing tender ballads of the day: "Along the Santa Fe Trail," "I'll Remember April" and others.

Art Van Damme's group made its mark with a sterling arrangement of "Meadowlands," a tribute to the Russian war effort, as described by Garroway.

I loved that show and never forgot it.

About ten years later, I had realized my dream of working as an announcer at that same KSEI. I had the opportunity to interview a Chicago musician who had cut many records for Mercury and whose group was performing in town that night.

It was violinist Herman Clebanoff, who told me he had played in Shield's orchestra. Naturally, I asked about the performers, especially about Jean McKenna. All he would say was that "it was a terrible thing that happened." At that moment we went on the air and I never found out what had happened to poor Jean.

It's a funny thing about memory. Maybe the show wasn't really that good. Maybe I loved it because it kept me from doing my high school homework.

But recalling the sublime words of the low-key Dave Garroway, and the work of all the people with him in that Chicago studio, I can't help but think that *Roy Shield and Company* was one of the finer shows of the radio age. ■

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★ INDICATES A WORLD WAR II BROADCAST OF SPECIAL INTEREST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL (1-11-59) "The Englishman" starring John Dehner as Paladin with Ben Wright as Hey Boy. Paladin accompanies an English nobleman to a ranch he has inherited in Montana. Sustaining, CBS. (23 min)

EDGAR BERGEN SHOW (1954) Charlie McCarthy stars with Mortimer Snerd and guest Gordon MacRae. Bergen tells Charlie the story of "St. George and the Dragon." Gordon and Charlie appear in a sketch, "McCarthy's Dirt Cheap Airline." AFRR broadcast. (26 min) *Read the Gordon MacRae biography on page 9.*

PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE (3-6-49) Jack Webb stars as the waterfront troubleshooter, with Tudor Owen as Jocko Madigan and Raymond Burr as Inspector Hellman. A jockey hires Novak to find a missing racehorse. *Read the article about this series on page 4.*

GORDON MAC RAE SHOW (1947) An early radio series for the singer who appears with

announcer Dan Seymour. Gordon sings "As Years Go By" and "Who Do You Love, I Hope?" Gulf Spray, Syndicated. (14 min)

RAILROAD HOUR (10-1-51) "State Fair" starring Gordon MacRae who presents guest Dorothy Kirsten in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical about a Midwestern family and their adventures at the Iowa State Fair. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (31 min)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (1-7-46) "Lost Weekend" starring Ray Milland, Jane Wyman and Frank Faylen in a radio version of Billy Wilder's 1945 Academy Award winning film about an alcoholic. Truman Bradley announces. Lady Esther products, CBS. (29 min) *Read the article about Billy Wilder on page 11.*

QUIET, PLEASE (8-9-48) "The Thing on the Fourble Board" starring Ernest Chappell. The story of oil-well drillers who discover that their platform is inhabited by an invisible creature from below the surface of the earth. Written by Wyllis Cooper. MBS. (23 min) *Read the article about this story on page 31.*

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 BEST OF BENNY MONTH 2002 SALUTING EDDIE ANDERSON

*Repeating selected broadcasts from
February, 2002:*

RADIO HALL OF FAME (11-3-01) *Excerpt.* Radio Hall of Famer Gordon Hinkley of WTMJ, Milwaukee, inducts Eddie "Rochester" Anderson into the Radio Hall of Fame. (6 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-28-37) Jack and the gang are on the train going to Hollywood after their stay in New York and Waukegan. The porter on the train is played by **Eddie Anderson**, making his first appearance on the Benny program. Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris and the orchestra, singer Kenny Baker, Andy Devine, Don Wilson, Jell-O, NBC (29 min)

★MAIL CALL #94 (6-2-44) Dinah Shore emcees a salute to the State of Georgia with Bob

Hope, Maria Montez, Carlos Ramirez, **Eddie "Rochester" Anderson**, Pied Pipers, Mel Blanc. AFRS. (30 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (6-6-37) Jack is upset because he lost the diamond wrist watch that he got from Phil for Christmas. **Eddie Anderson** makes his second appearance on the *Benny* program. Kenny Baker sings. Jell-O, NBC. (29 min)

★ **GI JOURNAL #87** (4-23-45) Jack Benny is Editor-in-Chief with Paulette Goddard, Arthur Treacher, **Eddie "Rochester" Anderson**, Mel Blanc, Ginny Simms. Treacher takes Rochester's place as Jack's butler. AFRS. (30 min)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (6-8-47) Guest is **Eddie "Rochester" Anderson** who wants to be Fred's summer replacement. Rochester joins Fred for a "One Long Pan" sketch, "I Stand Condemned." Portland Hoffa, Kenny Delmar, Parker Fennelly, Minerva Pious, Peter Donald, DeMarco Sisters. Shefford Cheese, Tenderleaf Tea, NBC. (29 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (6 20-37) The gang joins Jack on the set of the movie he's making at Paramount, "Artists and Models." Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Kenny Baker, Andy Devine, Don Wilson, and **Eddie Anderson**, referred to as "Rochester" for the first time on this program. Jell-O, NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 DIET, EXERCISE & NUTRITION

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-4-42) Harold Peary stars as Dr. Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve who has made a New Year's resolution to go on a diet — but it gets him into trouble. Kraft Foods, NBC. (28 min)

STORY OF DR. KILDARE (5-24-50) Starring Lew Ayers as Dr. James Kildare and Lionel Barrymore as Dr. Leonard Gillespie. At Blair General Hospital Dr. Carough, the administrator, charges Kildare and Gillespie with the responsibility of helping his overweight wife lose twenty pounds. Syndicated. (24 min)

MAGNIFICENT MONTAGUE (1951) Monty Woolley stars as Edwin Montague, a former Shakespearean actor now working on the radio as "Uncle Goodheart." Montague goes on a diet so he will look good in tights for a theatrical club presentation. Co-starring Anne Seymour

and Pert Kelton. Sustaining, NBC. (27 min)
OUR MISS BROOKS (4-10-49) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, English teacher at Madison High School, with Gale Gordon as Osgood Conklin, principal. Conklin's new spring wake-up plan is morning calisthenics for everyone at Madison High. AFRS rebroadcast. (25 min)
MEET THE MEEKS (10-4-47) Family comedy starring Fran Allison, Forrest Lewis, Beryl Vaughn and Cliff Soubier. Mother puts the entire family on a diet. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (11-24-42) Fibber decides it's time to do some exercises and pay attention to his diet. Wallace Wimple offers his wife as Fibber's trainer. Jim and Marian Jordan star with Gale Gordon, Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (28 min)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 ANNUAL HALLOWE'EN SHOW

THE WHISTLER (5-19-48) "Murder on Margin" with Willard Waterman and Betty Lou Gerson. A stockbroker plans to leave his wife to marry another woman. Signal Oil Co., CBS. (29 min)

LIGHTS OUT (7-27-43) Arch Oboler presents "Little People." A jealous husband shrinks his wife and her lover to doll-like size. Ironized Yeast, CBS. (28 min)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (10-28-35) For the 29th show of their first season on the air, Jim and Marian Jordan offer "a frantic fiesta of fun and frolic as Fibber and Molly give a Halloween party." McGee tells a ghost story. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29 min)

SUSPENSE (7-24-47) "Murder By an Expert" starring Lynn Bari with Joe Kearns, Hans Conried, Jack Webb. A woman commits the "perfect murder." Roma Wines, CBS. (29 min)

INNER SANCTUM (4-4-49) "Death Wears a Lonely Smile" featuring Bob Sloane and Mercedes McCambridge. A man waits at a cemetery to meet a woman who was buried a year ago. AFRS rebroadcast. (25 min)

Today's program will originate from an undisclosed location and will be broadcast on a special ghost-to-ghost network. Don't miss it if you can.

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NOVEMBER 2002

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

QUEEN FOR A DAY (2-13-50) Jack Bailey hosts "the Cinderella Show" as he offers "honors and treasures" to one of five women who is selected "Queen for a Day" as a result of her appearance on this program. Candidates include a woman who wants a new suit of clothes for her husband... another who wants a new rug... a woman trying to locate her missing brother... one who needs a new stove for her church kitchen... and a woman who wants to lose some weight. Alka Seltzer, MBS. (29 min)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (9-17-51) "Sunset Boulevard" starring William Holden as Joe Gillis and Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond in a radio version of Billy Wilder's 1950 film. A silent movie actress, trying to make a comeback, attracts a down-on-his-luck writer to work for her. William Keighley hosts. Cast includes Nancy Gates, William Conrad, John Wengraf, Bill Johnstone. Lux Soap, CBS. (53 min) *Read the article about Billy Wilder on page 11.*

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-25-51) *Excerpt.* Jack and the gang appear in a "Sunset Boulevard" sketch. Jack plays Joe Gillis, Mary Livingstone's sister Babe appears as Norma Desmond, with Dennis Day as Max the butler. CBS. (13 min)

PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE (3-27-49) Jack Webb stars as Novak who gets a warning to stay away from Rory Malone, a prize fighter. Raymond Burr as Inspector Hellman, Tudor Owen as Jocko Madigan, Frank Lovejoy as Malone. AFRS rebroadcast. (30 min) *Read the article about Pat Novak for Hire on page 4.*

BOB HOPE SHOW (4-15-53) Broadcasting from Bakersfield, California, Bob welcomes guest Ida Lupino who plays the owner of a motion picture studio. In a sketch, Bob wants to have his life story made into a movie. Margaret Whiting sings, Les Brown and his orchestra. AFRS rebroadcast. (23 min)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (12-9-48) "Woman with a Sword" starring Ida Lupino. Anna Ella Carol offers President Abraham Lincoln her "Tennessee Plan" to help end the Civil War and reunite the States. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 RADIO AND WORLD WAR II LATE 1942

★ **TEXACO STAR THEATRE** (10-4-42) Fred Allen stars with guest Charles Laughton in the first show of the 1942-43 season. On hand are Portland Hoffa, Andrews Sisters, Arthur Godfrey, Alan Reed, Minerva Pious, John Brown, Al Goodman and the orchestra. Fred has placed an ad in the New York Times looking for radio talent and Laughton arrives to audition and appear in a daytime radio serial, "Poor Old Charlie." Texaco Oil, CBS. (29 min)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (10-27-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star. The Old Timer (Bill Thompson) seeks refuge at 79 Wistful Vista as he fears police, the FBI and others are after him for being "a Benedict Arnold and unpatriotic." Also in cast: Gale Gordon, Isabel Randolph, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra, Harlow Wilcox. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

★ **PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT** (11-7-42) The nation's Chief Executive speaks (in French) to the people of France on the date of the North African invasion. Short Wave from Washington, D.C. (3 min)

★ **VOICE OF FIRESTONE** (11-16-42) Tenor Richard Crooks and the Firestone Symphony Orchestra directed by Alfred Wallenstein present a program from Chicago. Crooks sings "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal," "My Lindy Lou" and "The Maple Leaf Forever." The orchestra offers "Washington Post March," "Anitra's Dance" from Peer Gynt Suite,

"Viennese Beauties Waltz." Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., NBC. (31 min)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-6-42) Phil Harris and his band have joined the Merchant Marines and this is Phil's last appearance on the program before entering the service. Jack plans a trip to New York to entertain servicemen. Jack and the gang present a play, "Liberty Ship," as a tribute to Harris and the boys. Dennis Day portrays a Japanese naval captain. Grape Nuts, NBC. (29 min)

★ **COUNTERSPY** (12-14-42) "German Spies at Work." Don McLaughlin stars as David Harding, chief of U.S. Counterspies, undercover agents "working against enemy spies within our borders." Harding investigates suspicious activity at a manufacturing company. Sustaining, BLUE. (31 min)

★ **CBS WORLD NEWS** (12-20-42) *Excerpt.* Captain Eddie Rickenbacker tells the dramatic story of his rescue after the U. S. flying ace and his crew of seven were forced down in the South Pacific when their army bomber ran out of fuel on October 21, 1942. CBS. (15 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

THE WHISTLER (9-8-46) "Brief Pause for Murder" starring Fahey Flynn in a Chicago-produced episode of the series. Flynn is a radio announcer who plots to kill his wife in such a way that he will have a perfect alibi. Cast includes Beverly Younger and Ken Griffin. Everett Clarke is "The Whistler." Meister Brau Beer, WBBM. (28 min) *A West Coast version of this same story will be heard later today.*

★ **NATIONAL BARN DANCE** (1942) Joe Kelly and the gang in a WW II patriotic broadcast from the Wisconsin State Fairgrounds in Milwaukee "on the shores of Lake Michigan." Guest is Billy Murray, "famous pioneer of American songs and phonograph records." Also: Hoosier Hot Shots, Pat Buttram, Lulu Belle and Scotty, Eddie Peabody, the Banjo King, Dinning Sisters. Announcer is Jack Holden. Alka Seltzer, NBC. (29 min)

GUNSMOKE (7-9-55) "Uncle Harry" starring William Conrad as U.S. Marshal Matt Dillon. An aging plainsman and his dim-witted nephew arrive in Dodge City with the idea that the nephew should become marshal. Cast: Georgia Ellis as Kitty; Howard McNear as Doc Adams; Parley Baer as Chester. L&M Cigarettes, CBS. (27 min)

QUIET, PLEASE (9-13-48) "Where Do You

Get Your Ideas?" starring Ernest Chappell. A radio fan meets a radio writer in a bar. Sustaining, ABC. (26 min)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (2-20-49) More problems for the Nelson family as Ozzie discovers he has forgotten the name of a friend who invited him to dinner. International Silver Co., NBC. (29 min)

THE WHISTLER (9-11-49) "Brief Pause for Murder" starring Frank Nelson in a West Coast-produced episode of the series. Nelson is a radio announcer who plots to kill his wife in such a way that he will have a perfect alibi. Cast includes Mary Lansing and William Conrad. Bill Forman is "The Whistler." Signal Oil Co., CBS. (29 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

LIFE OF RILEY (11-29-48) William Bendix stars as Chester A. Riley with Paula Winslowe as Peg, John Brown as Gillis and Digby O'Dell, the friendly undertaker. Riley invites the Gillis family — and their turkey — for Thanksgiving dinner. AFRS rebroadcast. (24 min)

MARK TRAIL (11-22-50) Matt Crowley is the forest ranger in this radio version of the comic strip. Just before Thanksgiving, turkey ranch owner Jim Pilgrim discovers that his flock has been poisoned. Cast includes Joyce Gordon



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Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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NOVEMBER 2002

and Jackson Beck. Kellogg's Corn Flakes, MBS. (30 min)

MILTON BERLE SHOW (11-25-47) "Salute to Thanksgiving" with Berle (before TV). Milton and his wife get a live turkey for Thanksgiving, but don't have the heart to kill him. Philip Morris Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

BING CROSBY SHOW (11-25-54) In a quarter-hour series, Bing recalls some Thanksgiving memories and traditions and sings "Count Your Blessings." Sustaining, CBS. (14 min)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (11-25-48) "The Free Land" starring Martha Scott in a story of pioneer life in the Northwest Territory. A young couple marry on Thanksgiving Day and then face hardships as they travel to homestead in the Dakotas. James Hilton hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29 min)

ALDRICH FAMILY (11-25-48) Ezra Stone stars as Henry Aldrich with Jackie Kelk as Homer Brown. While Central High students are planning activities for the annual Thanksgiving dance, Henry suggests a "turkey run." Jell-O, NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30 RADIO TO GET INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY

RED SKELTON SHOW (12-19-51) "The Little Christmas Tree" starring Red as Junior, the Mean Little Kid; as Deadeye; as Clem Kadiddlehopper. Cast includes Lurene Tuttle, Pat McGeehan, Rod O'Connor, David Rose and the orchestra. Norge Appliances, CBS. (30 min)

VISIT TO A DOLL FACTORY (12-9-38) With

only "14 shopping days to Christmas" reporters Al Guisepppe and Dave Driscoll offer a sound picture of the Ideal Novelty and Toy Factory to give listeners a look at how dolls are made. Sustaining, MBS. (14 min)

BOSTON BLACKIE (1940s) Richard Kollmar stars as Blackie who finds Santa Claus to be an unwilling accomplice to a Christmas Eve robbery. Champagne Velvet Beer, MBS. (29 min)

CHRISTMAS SEAL CAMPAIGN SHOW (1948) In an excerpt from an *Eddie Cantor Show* to promote the sale of Christmas Seals, Eddie takes his grandchildren to see Santa Claus, only to find that Santa has quit. So they go to the North Pole. Public Service Program. (14 min)

ROBERT TROUT AND THE NEWS (12-12-48) News of Korea and a report that the Electoral College will elect Harry S Truman as president of the United States. Pillsbury, NBC. (5 min)

LIVING, 1948 (12-12-48) "The Greatest Christmas Present." Ben Grauer narrates the story of an immigrant family that comes to America for the birth of their child. An NBC University of the Air presentation. Sustaining, NBC. (24 min)

VIC AND SADE (11-26-43) Art Van Harvey as Vic, Bernardine Flynn as Sade, David Whitehouse as Russell. Vic has to decide what kind of Christmas present he should get for his boss. NBC. (9 min)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (12-11-53) "Jessica, You're Draggin' Your Net." When Phil and Elliott (Elliott Lewis) go Christmas shopping, Phil decides to buy Alice a talking crow. Cast features Walter Tetley, Mel Blanc, Herb Butterfield. RCA Victor, NBC. (31 min)

...and for more good listening...

SATURDAY SWING SHIFT-- Bruce Oscar is host for this two-hour show featuring swing music on record performed by the big bands, pop singers and small groups. *WDCB, 90.9 FM, Saturday, 11 am-1 pm.*

MIDWEST BALLROOM-- John Russell hosts a big band program featuring Chicago area orchestras and dance bands. *WDCB, 90.9 FM, Saturday, 5-6 pm.*

"When Radio Was" -- WBBM-AM 780

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

October, 2002 Schedule

TUE/10-1 Fred Allen 5-16-43 Pt 2 Frank Sinatra; **Dimension X** 7-21-50 *Beyond Infinity*
 WED/10-2 **Gangbusters** 1940s *Alcatraz Prison Riot*; **Life with Luigi** 5 2 50 Pt 1 *Luigi's Cough*
 THU/10-3 **Life with Luigi** Pt 2; **Murder By Experts** 7-25-49 *The Big Money*
 FRI/10-4 **Suspense** 6-1-53 *A Vision of Death*; **Blackstone, Magic Detective** 1-9-49 *Frozen Lady*

MON/10-7 Philip Marlowe 3-12-49 *Grim Hunters*; **Burns & Allen** 1-22-45 Pt 1 *Uplift Society*
 TUE/10-8 **Burns & Allen** Pt 2; **Boston Blackie** 8-13-41 *Evelyn Jones Murder Case*
 WED/10-9 **Lone Ranger** 7-26-54 *Notorious El Diablo*; **Duffy's Tavern** 5-4-49 Pt 1 Charles Colburn
 THU/10-10 **Duffy's Tavern** Pt 2; **Nick Carter** 10-4-43 *Flying Duck Murders* Lon Clark
 FRI/10-11 **The Shadow** 12-3-39 *Death Shows the Way*; **Vic & Sade** 10-27-42 *Suggestion Box*

MON/10-14 **Dragnet** 2-1-53 *The Big Strip*; **Stan Freberg Show #10** 9-15-57 Pt 1
 TUE/10-15 **Stan Freberg** Pt 2; **Green Hornet** 6-13-44 *Circumstances Alter the Case*
 WED/10-16 **This is Your FBI** 10-5-51 *The Hostage*; **Jack Benny** 5-19-46 Pt 1 Guest Fred Allen
 THU/10-17 **Jack Benny** Pt 2; **Pete Kelly's Blues** 9-5-51 *Kelly is kidnapped* Jack Webb
 FRI/10-18 **Suspense** 2-6-47 *End of the Road* Glenn Ford; **Couple Next Door** 9-22-58 *Decorating*

MON/10-21 **The Whistler** 3-13-49 *Search for Maxine*; **Fibber McGee** 10-17-39 Pt 1 *Best Lawn*
 TUE/10-22 **Fibber McGee** Pt 2; **The Clock** 3-30-48 *Past or Present* Cathy & Elliott Lewis
 WED/10-23 **Mystery Theatre** 2-7-47 *Bride Wore Black*; **My Friend Irma** 9-7-48 Pt 1 *Coney Island*
 THU/10-24 **My Friend Irma** Pt 2; **Escape** 9-12-48 *Evening Primrose* William Conrad
 FRI/10-25 **Inner Sanctum** 2-5-46 *Skeleton Bay*; **Strange Dr. Weird** 2-6-45 *Dark Wings of Death*

MON/10-28 **Mystery Playhouse** 5-15-45 *Lady in a Morgue*; **Life of Riley** 10-19-46 Pt 1 *Riley sues*
 TUE/10-29 **Life of Riley** Pt 2; **Mysterious Traveler** 7-18-50 *Killer Come Home*
 WED/10-30 **Lights Out** 2-9-43 *He Dug It Up*; **Great Gildersleeve** 11-26-44 Pt 1 *Gildy's jealousy*
 THU/10-31 **Great Gildersleeve** Pt 2; **Suspense** 12-2-43 *Black Curtain* Cary Grant

November, 2002 Schedule

FRI/11-1 **The Shadow** 3-10-46 *Death Without a Face*; **Johnny Dollar** 11-28-55 Pt 1 of 5

MON/11-4 **FBI in Peace & War** 6-10-53 *Traveling Man*; **Charlie McCarthy** 1-19-47 Pt 1 *10th Anniv.*
 TUE/11-5 **Charlie McCarthy** Pt 2; **Academy Award** 9-11-46 *Shadow of a Doubt* Joseph Cotten
 WED/11-6 **Have Gun, Will Travel** 2-1-59 *Matter of Ethics*; **Burns & Allen** 10-4-45 *Dating advice*
 THU/11-7 **Burns & Allen** Pt 2; **The Whistler** 3-20-49 *Death of Mr. Penny*
 FRI/11-8 **Suspense** 11-17-49 *Red-Headed Woman*; **Johnny Dollar** 11-29-55 *Henderson Mtr.* Pt 2

MON/11-11 **Pat Novak for Hire** 3-6-49 *Fleet Lady*; **Red Skelton** 10-15-50 Pt 1
 TUE/11-12 **Red Skelton** Pt 2; **Third Man** 1952 *Art Collection* Orson Welles
 WED/11-13 **Escape** 12-31-47 *Confession*; **Jack Benny** 10-13-46 Pt 1 Bergen & McCarthy
 THU/11-14 **Jack Benny** Pt 2; **Box Thirteen** 7-12-48 *Sad Night* Alan Ladd
 FRI/11-15 **The Shadow** 1-21-40 *Precipice Called Death*; **Johnny Dollar** 11-30-55 *Henderson* Pt 3/5

MON/11-18 **Nick Carter** 6--2-9-47 *Sunken Dollar*; **Abbott & Costello** 5-4-44 Pt 1 John Garfield
 TUE/11-19 **Abbott & Costello** Pt 2; **Tales of Texas Rangers** 11-26-50 *Hanging by a Thread*
 WED/11-20 **Lights Out** 2-16-43 *Oxychloride X*; **Great Gildersleeve** 11-25-45 Pt 1 *Football game*
 THU/11-21 **Great Gildersleeve** Pt 2; **Murder by Experts** 8-8-49 *Dark Island*
 FRI/11-22 **Suspense** 10-19-43 *Lazarus Walks* Boris Karloff; **Johnny Dollar** 12-1-55 Pt 4 of 5

MON/11-25 **Lone Ranger** 7-28-54 *Flood Waters*; **My Favorite Husband** 11 20 48 *Teenage dance*
 TUE/11-26 **My Favorite Husband** Pt 2; **Gunsmoke** 6-17-56 *Cheap Labor* William Conrad
 WED/11-27 **Mr. District Attorney** 1950s *Lovers Lane Killing*; **Stan Freberg #11** 9-22-57 Pt 1
 THU/11-28 **Stan Freberg** Pt 2; **Sherlock Holmes** 4-7-47 *Adventure of the Tolling Bell*
 FRI/11-29 **Crime Photographer** 12-19-46 *Christmas Shopping*; **Johnny Dollar** 1-2-55 Pt 5 of 5



**COMPANY "B"
66TH SIGNAL
BATTALION**

REUNION

BY PFC EDWIN S. KNAPP, 36860630

*Nights are long
Since you went away.
I think about you
All through the day.
My Buddy, My Buddy,
No Buddy quite so true.*

That song and sentimental lyric was composed in 1922 by Gus Kahn and Walter Donaldson. The words mirror the deep emotions felt by military comrades retired from the service when, on occasion in later years, they assemble for a reunion of their former outfit.

Gathering at such an occasion with your former comrades-in-arms carries with it a feeling that deeply touches the very heart and soul of each participant. These were the young men and boys with whom you served for years. You trained together, showered together, did K.P. together, and shared guard duty. They were beside you during forced marches, and together you slept, worked, paraded, ate, shared life's trials, and fought under times of stress and sacrifice.

Attending a reunion with your old buddies is almost like going home again. Perhaps that sounds strange. When you think back to the wartime years you were in uniform, locked in "for the duration," the fondest wish for most GIs, "going home," meant

World War II veteran Edwin S. Knapp of Three Rivers, Michigan is a retired professional photographer who spends his free time writing and collecting.



COMPOSITE PHOTO BY EDWIN KNAPP

returning to your hometown, your family, friends, and your youthful past. It also meant leaving behind the rigors, trials, and strict Army discipline, if only for a short 12-day furlough or an even shorter 3-day pass. A welcome respite.

As just one of our outfit, I qualified for all the aforementioned World War II experiences of the Army's 66th Signal Battalion, Company B, from 1943 to 1946.

Last year, in 2001, I attended, with my 17 remaining 66th Signal comrades, our outfit's 26th annual reunion in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Like many other young men, I was drafted the first week of July 1943, only a few weeks after high school graduation.

We found ourselves on an overcrowded bus, still in our "civvies," headed for an Army induction center. To taunting shouts of "You'll be sorry" from recruits who had arrived but a day earlier, our group soon boarded a waiting troop train headed for an unknown destination which, as it turned out, was the Army's largest Signal Corps training camp, Camp Crowder, Missouri.

Housed in a part of the camp known as "Shanty Town," our new home was in single level, tar paper constructed barracks with small stove heating.

The greater share of our outfit was made up of boys from Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, and Indiana. At Crowder during three intensive months we were effectively prepared as a "battle-ready" Army communications outfit. The 66th Signal's wartime drilling took place both in the field and at camp locales in



CAMP CROWDER, MISSOURI: Basic Training, Summer 1943
"Four-week-old" army recruits from Co. B, 66th Signal Bn.

PFC EDWIN KNAPP PHOTO

Tennessee, Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri.

At first, we were total strangers. But after three months of grueling basic training and five months of outdoor Tennessee field maneuvers, we became as one family in thought and action. We soon learned our buddies' names, about their families back home, their girl friends, hometowns, and backgrounds. It wasn't long before we got to know each other's likes and dislikes, tempers, what brand they smoked, interests, and character traits. By the end of our early training, most everyone was identified by a nickname: Tinker, Gil, Coke, Tut, Flip, Corny, Flattop, Woody, Clip, Zim.

Over time, you came to immediately recognize your barracks companions from the familiar sound of their voices, the gait and swagger of their walk, patterns of laughter. You came to know each other forward and backward, running at obstacle courses, across parade grounds, or



CAMP CROWDER: Housing for 66th Signal Battalion was called "Old Shanty Town" because of its tar paper barracks, heated in winter by small cast iron stoves.

PFC EDWIN KNAPP PHOTO



66th SIGNAL BN CO B: The "Chow Line" on the outskirts of Lebanon, Tennessee during field maneuvers. Outdoor living in two-man "pup tents" made for hearty appetites.

PI-C LDWIN KNAPP PHOTO

fully geared-up in layers of Army regulation gear.

We of the 66th Signal Battalion served our nearly three-year hitch in the states and overseas, providing valuable communications links between military units with telephone, radio, teletype, telegraph, and line-gangs to string information-carrying wire. Our section of the Battalion numbered 276 recruits, eight commissioned officers and two warrant officers. This was Company B, known as the "wire" platoon.

After V-E Day and then V-J Day, plans were made to send U.S. troops, who had been serving "for the duration," back to the States.

Our outfit, after so many years in the service, was to be considered among the first in line to return home. We had been in Europe since early 1945, had shipped out

on a troop ship to the Pacific Ocean and the Philippines by mid-summer and, finally, after V-J Day, participated in LST ships landing on the shores of Japan where we performed communications duties under the Army of Occupation.

By early 1946 my buddies from the 66th and I were heading home on a fully-loaded troop ship. After weeks at sea we finally disembarked

on American soil and soon were saying sad but fond farewells to the friends with whom we had been so close and shared so much during the war. After a warm good-bye and a firm handshake, we promised we would look up one-another later on.

After returning to civilian life each of us immediately started to earn a living. After that, there was little free time to communicate with our soldier buddies as we were busy dating, getting married, raising a fam-



66th SIGNAL BN CO B: Soldiers at Fort Riley, Kansas, Summer of 1944, part of the "Wire Platoon": Fox, Phipps, Walker, Mulvany, Clipper, Burke, Zimmerman, Thompson (kneeling).

PI-C LDWIN KNAPP PHOTO



66th SIGNAL BN CO B in Duren, Germany, March 1945:
Sgt. Gleamer Smith, Sgt. George Yauch, Sgt. Kenneth Waack.

PFC EDWIN KNAPP PHOTO

ily, and fulfilling heavy financial obligations. Contacts usually came once a year, perhaps with a Christmas card with a few words of "Hello, how are you?" It seemed that was all there was time for in our ever busier life-styles.

The years sped by rapidly and memories of the Army years spent together faded into the background.

In 1976 (30 years after the 66th soldiers had received their discharges), a small group arranged to get together with their old men-in-arms for a reunion. Fifteen original Crowder barracks buddies (and their spouses) from the unit's radio platoon gathered for a time of remembrance. These veterans of WW II were in their fifties and sixties at the time. They had such fun that they hatched the brilliant idea of holding a 66th Signal reunion every year.

Since then, an increasing number of 66th Signal comrades attend the annual reunion. The peak years of the total of 26 reunions held so far proved to be in 1983 and 1984 when as many as 50 of the former 66th Signal soldiers were on hand to celebrate their association from 1943 to 1946. The yearly gatherings were held in many different states. Whoever agreed to host the annual event had it in his home state. Reunions

have been held in Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Iowa and elsewhere.

Many times, at these simulated reenlistment fall-outs, you would reunite with an old company companion for the first time since the war years, as much as 35 or 45 years earlier. Strangely, even with

the changes in appearance of a close wartime buddy, he was recognized the moment he stood before you, despite physical changes over the years. And in less than a minute standing before one another, exchanging an embrace, a smile, a firm hand-



PFC EDWIN KNAPP, 66th Signal BN Co B.
on V-E Day (May 1945) in the city of Aachen, Germany. Knapp never smoked or drank, so the photo is deceptive.

PFC EDWIN KNAPP PHOTO

shake and a sparkle in the eyes, the years dissolved like the snows of Winter with the coming of Spring.

There was always a large "hospitality" room furnished by the hotel. Everyone ended up there: husbands, wives, and other family members including children, grandchildren and their spouses, too. We stood or sat shoulder-

to-shoulder amid nostalgic conversation, laughter, and the hum of unbroken, cascading cross-talk rising with a roaring sound, like thunder.

Stories of long-ago military experiences were exchanged and recalled by the enthusiastic old recruits who were, for this short time, once more as young as they were in the mid-1940s. In the reunion setting, the human adrenaline flows freely from one to the other. Its renescent charm and fascination of days both past and present cannot be described.

At these almost hallowed gatherings, an extra "plus" comes with the opportunity and pleasure of meeting and conversing with our Army chums' lovely wives. You learn much beyond what you had known about their families, their life's work, achievements, wedding anniversaries, children, grandchildren, and all else that followed your buddies' days after you were discharged from the service.

In 2001 the remaining old able-bodied soldiers of the 66th Signal Battalion, Company B, fell out once again for roll call in Minnesota. Now the once young 18-, 19-, and 20-year old recruits are 70 years of age or older. The reunion once more rekindled those early Army comradeships that began



66th SIGNAL BN CO B: Veterans of the "Wire Platoon" at their 40th Reunion in 1983. During World War II the platoon operated telephone switchboards in the field and at permanent installations.

FORMER PFC EDWIN KNAPP PHOTO

at Camp Crowder in 1943. The rewards of getting together to remember the good and bad times are full of love, heart, soul, and brotherhood.

These gatherings are a bittersweet experience that are just not to be missed. Bittersweet because many of our companions, some years ago, stood their final Retreat, with Taps sounding their departure. Bitter because we lost a 66th buddy at roll call, but sweet because we were afforded the opportunity of being with him again for a short while before his departure. We were able to talk with him about shared memories, to witness his beaming smile, to shake his hand and see the bright light that shone in his eyes as we conversed. After all, we had done it all together in the Army.

Those of us attending the reunion in 2001 were fewer in number, but the fervor and spirit among us was no less joyful or meaningful than it ever was at any of the 66th Signal Corps reunions.

We consider ourselves fortunate for the blessed opportunities we've shared with these brotherhood kinships ever since 1976. Together our comrades participated in the troubles, sacrifices, and uncertainties of the future in the World War II years as we stood up bravely for our country. ■

Every once in a while a radio show came along that was a true gem but, somehow, along the way, it got lost in the shuffle and was soon forgotten.

The problem may have been a poor time slot, up against a competitor with a vast audience. Or it may have been a lack of network promotion and the show just didn't get the publicity it deserved.

Or, the critics may have been at fault. They may have known the product was exceptional, but they were too busy with other matters to sit down and write the reviews the show deserved. And needed.

Quiet, Please was one of those programs. It was a half-hour thriller, beamed out over the airwaves by the Mutual network, starting in July 1947. *Quiet, Please* was in a class with the *Suspense* series. If you missed it, and you are a true radio buff, you missed a marvelous program.

Suspense had a load of Hollywood big names to lure an audience to its programs and that kept the series on for years. *Quiet, Please* lacked that magic.

But it did have Wyllis Cooper, one of radio's finest writers, to produce the scripts. He also directed the program and, in general, was in charge of all production matters. Needless to say, Cooper had an awesome imagination and the ability to express it in dramatic style. Cooper is largely forgotten now, and that is a shame. He was a brilliant radio talent and rated much more glory than he ever received.

Radio veteran Ernest Chappell was both the star and the host of the program. He was a radio performer with a distinctive style; sharp, calm, cultured. Whatever madness was going on during a given show,

Richard W. O'Donnell is a free-lance writer from Port Richey, Florida.

Quiet, Please

BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

Chappell was always on hand providing a sense of reality and sanity to an unbelievable experience.

A factor that may have also been a reason *Quiet, Please* never was able to build up an audience was that Mutual kept moving it to different nights during its first year on the air. That, in itself, could kill a show.

Too bad. *Quiet, Please* rated better treatment than that. Over the years, many of the original broadcasts have been lost, but one show in particular has survived. It is "The Thing on the Fourble Board," and it has to be one of the greatest radio thrillers of all time.

High up on an oil well there is a platform. Something has come out of the earth below and has taken control of things up there. The creature, whatever it is, has to be removed. Our hero, one of the oil drillers, does just that and sets the stage for the remarkable and unexpected climax that gives "Fourble Board" its memorable conclusion. From start to finish, this is a fingernail nibbler that leaves you shivering. Without a doubt it is one of the greatest radio dramas of all time.

It is doubtful if films or television could ever come close to matching this radio drama.

During its second season, *Quiet, Please* switched over to ABC and there was given a Sunday afternoon spot. The programs were as good as ever, but the audience never tuned in. The program lasted less than a season on ABC and towards the end of 1948 *Quiet, Please* was gone forever.

Too bad. As a suspense thriller, it was as good as it gets. ■

LISTEN to Quiet, Please on TWTD October 5 for "The Thing on the Fourble Board" and November 16 for "Where Do You Get Your Ideas?"

DRIVE-IN SATURDAY NIGHT

BY WAYNE KLATT

You didn't even need a big screen and a parking lot. In 1947, I saw a "drive-in" created for the families of ex-servicemen in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, by stretching a bed sheet on the side of a building and turning up a speaker as perhaps a hundred men, women, and children watched *It Happened One Night* in and on top of cars. Crude as this was, it was a sign of the times.

Although television has been blamed for the demise of the studio system, the cause was largely a postwar exodus of families looking for work and cheap homes. At the start of the decline, movie theatre admissions dropped ten per cent in 1947. By 1951, 64 movie theatres had shut their doors in Chicago alone, as well as 51 in New York and 134 in southern California. But drive-ins were springing up throughout the suburbs and rural America.

The people who attached speakers to their cars were not the sort who enjoyed the well-told films of director William Wyler, who sometimes put actors through 25 takes or more for a single shot. The new audiences were high schoolers worried about a Soviet attack, acne, their next exam, the draft, and the generation gap.

Perhaps *The Thing* started it all. The horror genre had died out with the war, but this 1951 hit combined science fiction with an update of the

Wayne Klatt is an editor at the City News Service of the Chicago Tribune and a free-lance writer.

WARNING!
THIS ARTICLE MAY BRING BACK
MEMORIES OF FILMS YOU
DON'T WANT TO ADMIT YOU
ACTUALLY WATCHED

Frankenstein story. What made the film so fresh was that the improbable

story — a seven-foot alien (James Arness) amok in an arctic outpost — was balanced by realistic, clever dialogue that was the trademark of its producer, Howard Hawks.

Suddenly, gothic was out. No more enraged townspeople with torches and large shadows. The new enemy was based on reported sightings of flying saucers and the discovery that some plants had been changed by atomic radiation. This spawned a subculture within Hollywood of men and women who knew how to make films on the cheap by changing the nature



The Thing (1951)

PHOTOFEST

of the villains instead of the stories.

Only a few of the "exploitation" films had any redeeming value, such as *Them!*, which had an intelligent script and some entertaining performances (except by the huge ants). The best of the others, including *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), featured stop-motion photography with models prepared

by Ray Harryhausen, who could have Jason battle seven skeletons at once. But these painstaking productions could not be hurried.

The first successful independent producers for the new audience were portly Iowa lawyer Samuel Z. Arkov, who had been supplying filmed programs to television, and former West Coast theatre manager James H. Nicholson. In 1954 they borrowed \$3,000, hired a staff of four, and started what became American International Pictures. They were looking for energetic young people who could make teen films by the seat of their pants. Their smartest decision was hiring tall, slender Roger Corman, who, at 28, used his training as a civil engineer to make quickies.

Their first feature was a racing/crime drama with John Ireland (whose career was on the way down) and Dorothy Malone (whose career was on the way up). Using Ireland as the director for part of the movie, Corman shot *The Fast and the Furious* in just nine days with a \$50,000 budget (even then ridiculously small). But there are only so many cheap films you can make by splicing in footage of real races. Corman's answer was to set up a production line of



PHOTOFL51

movies about monsters. Of course the writing, acting, and un-special effects were laughable. That was Corman's specialty; it was as if he were telling his young audience, "We KNOW we're ridiculous."

In 1956 producer John Nicholson had a stroke of marketing genius, packaging double features of science fiction and monster movies, starting with a pairing of *The Day the World Ended* and *Phantom from 10,000 Leagues*. Amazingly, exhibitors agreed to give American International the same rental as they were paying the major studios. The reason was that the audience for teen films bought more popcorn and candy than for the weepers Twentieth Century Fox was lavishing funds on.

Nicholson's main job in the partnership was to come up with titles that might make an eye-catching poster, and if that drew interest, telling someone to come up with a plot that might or might not live up to the title. (The stories never lived up to their posters.) Titles such as — I kid you not — *Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy* were so lurid you could almost hear mothers and fathers saying to their teenage child, "You're not going to see THAT, are you?" →



The Blob (1958)

PHOTOFFST

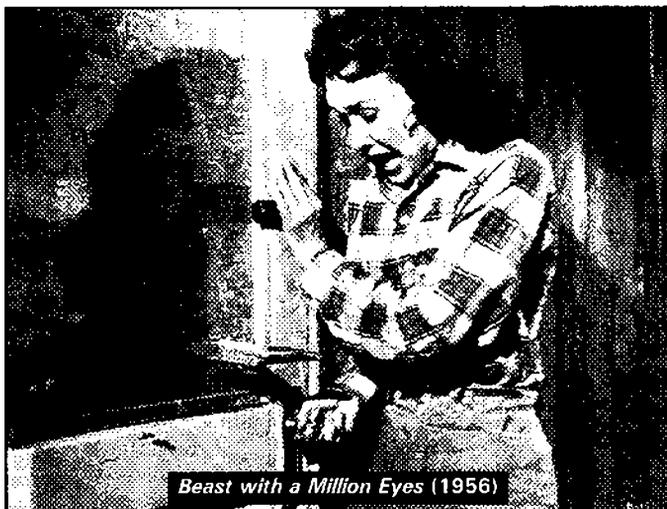
Let's take a look at the making of schlock for teenagers who flocked to neighborhood theatres and suburban drive-ins on their Saturday night dates. The monsters were usually made of paper mache (including the huge insect-head in the original *The Fly*) and the arms, if any, were moved by actors inside or with piano wire, which does not show up on the screen if filmed right.

The big teen hit of 1958 was *The Blob*, made on a budget of \$127,000 and shot in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The film introduced Steve McQueen and a title song by Burt Bacharach. The dark-reddish alien, which sort of crawled and oozed as the town panicked, was nothing more than a mass of cranberry sauce. We wreak our revenge on it every Thanksgiving.

Audiences gasped at Corman's first try, which amazed him. Everybody on his

balls for the pupils, and claws out of pipe cleaners. Finally, Dickerson covered him "with black oilcloth to make him slimy." In other words, something you could do at home for Halloween.

To save money, the alien in *Beast with a Million Eyes* (1956) didn't even have one eye, as the audience discovered, since the beast was invisible throughout the picture. It didn't matter that moviegoers were tricked, the posters and titles were what sold the films (and some cleavage helped).



Beast with a Million Eyes (1956)

PHOTO: LST

In his haste, Corman turned writers Dennis Miller, Tobert Towne (a future Academy Award winner) and Jack Nicholson into actors, and tough-guy actor Leo Gordon into a writer. But with the teaming of Vincent Price and Edgar Allen Poe, Corman made such an impression in the late 1950s that Hammer Films in England switched from science fiction to horror, often with Christopher Lee as Dracula and Peter Cushing as an evil Dr. Frankenstein.

Riding the crest of the American horror craze was William Castle, a large man with aspirations of being an actor and the heart of P. T. Barnum. Instead of marketing entire films for teenagers, he sold them on gimmicks, unfortunately most of them lost on video and television. He started by taking out an insurance policy with Lloyds of London should anyone die of fright while seeing *Macabre* (1958). Actually, it was just a crime story in which the supposed corpse of a kidnapped child turns out to be a fake. (Sorry to spoil the ending.)

Needing something tangible next year for *The Tingler*, physical evil that crawls out of someone and looks like a spine, Castle had some seats in the theatres wired to deliver mild electric shocks. His best effect came in his most entertaining film, the original *House on Haunted Hill* (1958) with Vincent Price. The story involves the question of who-is-trying-to-kill-whom and a skeleton slowly rises. Theatres had wires rigged up so that a glow-in-the-dark skeleton could pass over the heads of the

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PHOTO 1251

screaming audience in a process he called "Emergo."

For *13 Ghosts* (1960), a sort of domestic drama-comedy about 12 ghosts, at the start, the audience was given something like 3-D glasses to see the otherwise invisible ghosts in a process Castle called "Illusion-O." In *Mr. Sardonicus*, a wry 1961 film about someone who terrorizes others, Castle stopped the story to ask the audience whether to vote thumbs up, letting Sardonicus live, or thumbs down, giving him his just deserts. But only one ending was ever filmed. Guess which one.

By the time Castle became respectable by producing *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), audiences were too sophisticated for pa-



13 Ghosts (1960)

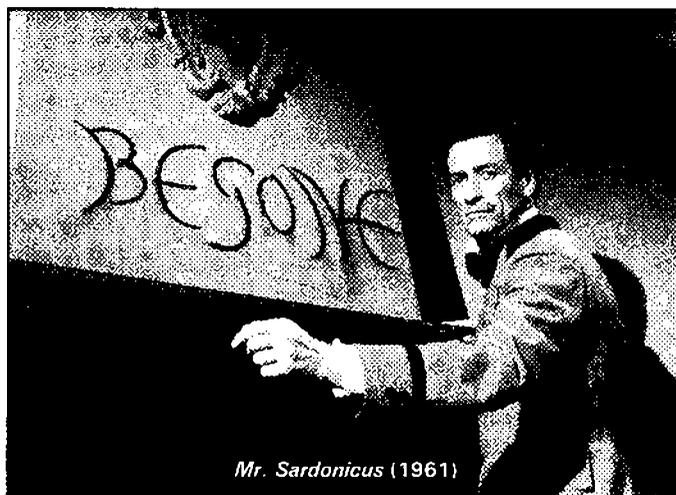
PHOTOFEST

per mache monsters and promotional gimmicks. But by training a new generation of craftspeople, these independent moviemakers had managed to bridge the gap between the studio system and the way pictures are made today.

Corman's conveyor belt of science fiction, women-in-prison, mobster, beach-party, and biker films started the careers of

actors Charles Bronson, Robert Vaughn, Bruce Dern, Nancy Sinatra, Dennis Hopper, Peter Fonda, Robert deNiro, Mike Connors, Nick Nolte, Sylvester Stallone, and Tommy Lee Jones, as well as directors Brian dePalma (who later made *Carrie*), James Cameron (*Terminator* and *Titanic*), Jonathan Demme (*Silence of the Lambs*), Martin Scorsese (*Raging Bull*), and Francis Ford Coppola (*The Godfather*).

Those quickies of the '50s widened the audience for imaginative filmmaking so that they now advance cinema technology to meet the needs of their stories. But as the body counts rise, we may wish we had our innocence back. ■



Mr. Sardonicus (1961)

PHOTOFEST



OUR READERS/LISTENERS WRITE

WE GET MAIL

WILMETTE, IL-- I always enjoy the articles by Richard O'Donnell, the *Dr. I.Q.* article in the August/September issue especially. We used to listen to *Dr. I.Q.* and I'll never forget the box of 24 Snickers that arrived at our house in Indiana one day because my mother had sent in a biography of a person whose biography was used that same week. Hmmm, maybe that consolation prize was the beginning of my sweet tooth?

--NANCY FAVORITE

PHOENIX, ARIZONA-- The Richard W. O'Donnell article on *Dr. I.Q.* revived memories of my own appearance with the "good doctor," not on the main show but on a spin-off, *Dr. I.Q. Junior*. It happened on a Saturday afternoon in August 1948 at the WTMJ studios in Milwaukee. As the name indicates, *Dr. I.Q. Junior* featured younger contestants... who really were selected at random. A "roving" announcer (with a mike on a long cord) waved me out of my seat and into the nearest aisle, where we waited as the broadcast progressed. Finally, someone cued my announcer for the final, and toughest, part of the show: "the quotation question." It paid 50 silver dollars if you got it right, but, when I realized what was coming, I instinctively reacted "uh-uh" into the by-now-OPEN microphone. (The next day's Milwaukee Journal referred to me as a "gulping seventh grader.") Anyway, the "quotation" was "These are the times that try men's souls." I guessed "Daniel Webster." The correct answer (as any American history buff knows) was "Thomas Payne." I'll remember that quote for the rest of my life. However, as Mr. O'Donnell indicated, the consolation-prize Mars Bars tasted great. --JIM WARRAS

ELMHURST, IL--I was so excited to read "I was a Teen-Age Radio Actor" by George Littlefield in the June/July issue. I, too, was part of the Radio Workshop at WBEZ in the 1950s. George's article brought back a flood of memories, both of my time at Radio Workshop and at Austin High School, which George also attended. This is the first time I have heard from someone else who

participated in the Workshop.

Also, I have to tell you how elated I am that the WDCB radio tower is once more in full operation and I can again spend Saturday afternoons with my Old Time Radlo. I have been a listener for many, many years, and subscribed to *Nostalgia Digest* back when it was more of a flyer than a magazine. --DONNA SANDERS

DALLAS, TEXAS-- Although I'm not of African-American ancestry, I did enjoy the article by Bill Oates which appeared in the August/September issue. This is not a criticism by any means, but I was disappointed there was no mention of the Mills Brothers. I can remember hearing them on radio as far back as 1932, if not before. --GENE RANDOLPH

LA GRANGE PARK, IL-- Thank you for Wayne Klatt's story about *Your Show of Shows* in the February/March issue. Even though I was born after *Caesar's Hour* went off the air, I discovered Sid Caesar and Company in "Ten from 'Your Show of Shows'" and other old kinescopes on video. I have also read a couple of books about Sid and the show and have seen him perform some of the old sketches in person. Being familiar with the show, I want to make a few comments. The Admiral Corporation withdrew its sponsorship from the *Admiral Broadway Revue* because the show was so popular they couldn't keep up with orders. I think Mel Brooks was the most important writer and not Lucille Kallen because he was with Sid the longest and it led to his performing and movie career. But Lucille Kallen (along with comedy writer Selma Diamond) was the inspiration for the character of Sally Rogers on the *Dick Van Dyke Show*. Also, if *Your Show of Shows* became "inflexible and eventually irrelevant," I would blame the NBC censor, who was very powerful. That's why political humor was not done on the show. Even though the sketches on video "appear technologically crude to today's audiences," they're funnier than most of what passes for comedy today. --MARY COOPER



MORE MAIL

CHICAGO-- I was in the Loop recently, going to a film at the Siskel Film Center, now located on State Street across from the Chicago Theatre. I stopped by the old Walgreens at State and Randolph to get a candy bar for some quick energy before the show and was recalling your telling about your youthful escapades. After going to see the stage show and movie at the Chicago Theatre you and your buddies would scoot over to Walgreens for a snack and Coke downstairs. Was it called the Oak Room? That cafeteria is long gone now, replaced by a basement department of "goods." I hear that Walgreens will soon be razed. The whole block is destined to be demolished. Another era has passed... a civilization gone with the wind... --**ROBERT ROSTERMAN**

ORGAN, NEW MEXICO-- I grew up in Chicago, but haven't lived there since graduating from high school in 1965. Your magazine gives me lots of pleasure from the radio and Chicago memories.
--**NATALIE MC NAMEE**

ELGIN, IL-- It was good to hear "It's a Lovely Day Tomorrow" again (on *Treasury Star Parade # 15, TWTD*, July 20). To me, two voices symbolize England during the dark days of early WW II: Winston Churchill and Vera Lynn. Ms. Lynn's best known song was "We'll Meet Again," but two others best personify the Britain of 1939-'41: ("There'll be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover" and "It's a Lovely Day Tomorrow," which is my favorite.
--**ED KEHM**

(ED. NOTE-- We'll try to present some Vera Lynn material on our *TWTD* program on November 9th.

LOMBARD, IL-- I heard you talking about the Charlie McCarthy picture that was framed at The Framemakers. I am the listener that brought it in to get framed. I purchased the picture off E-Bay. It was very fragile, from a newspaper clearly dated 1/3/43, so I decided to take it to The Framemakers. I have heard you talk about them and had never been there. They are the nicest folks

and knew exactly what to do and what I wanted. By the end of the week I had taken about eight other things over there that I wanted reframed and protected with conservation glass.

They even took me on a tour of their place, introduced me to all their workers and showed me the different stages of framing they go through. It was quite an experience. I told them I was a regular listener to *TWTD* and they were very happy I came in. I thought you would like some feedback on The Framemakers. They are not only a good supporter of your program, Chuck, but they REALLY enjoy your show. It's on their radio every Saturday in their shop.

--**JIM HAAS SR.**

(ED. NOTE-- Thanks much for the unsolicited testimonial. We've heard from many satisfied customers of the Rainmakers ..err.. Framemakers.)

CIGERO, IL-- Although I've listened to and enjoyed *TWTD* for years, I've never called or written to let you know how much I look forward to your show every Saturday. Being a fan of real country music since the days when a guy named Harry lived in the White House, I just had to let you know how much I enjoyed your *Grand Ole Opry* broadcast on August 3. It was such a pleasure to hear Roy Acuff again instead of the junk that's being passed off as country music today. I hope you'll consider playing other *Grand Ole Opry* shows in the future.

On another note, if anything good came from the demise of station WNIB, it's the larger participation of Ken Alexander on *TWTD*, especially when he reads the old newspapers from his basement archives. He awakens clear memories of things I haven't thought of in years.

One last thing. I want to thank you for introducing me to Jim Jelinek at the Player Piano Clinic in Berwyn. Where else could I buy needles for my Victrola?

--**DON BUCHNER**

FRANKFORT, IL-- What a relief it was to hear Ken and your voice again Saturday. My wife and I had just about given up hearing your program again and then on Saturday, July 20 at one o'clock all seemed right with the world. We especially enjoyed Ken Alexander's opening comment, "Can you hear me now?" My wife and I say hello and welcome back to two people who have

been our friends for more years than we wish to count. We were beginning to think that we had lost the only meaningful, thoughtful and gentle entertainment in the media today. --**JOHN & PHYLLIS WITT**

CHICAGO-- What a treat to have you, Ken and *TWTD* back on Saturday afternoon! I have just enjoyed the first Saturday afternoon program since you involuntarily went off the air right in the middle of Bing Crosby's story of "The Small One" last December. In the intervening months, I have made do with my many tapes of old time radio programs, but they could only partially fill the void left by your absence. Although I never called in to check on when you would be returning, I would occasionally turn on the radio to 90.9 FM, hoping to hear something, even faintly. Alas, there was no such luck. Robert Feder, in his Sun-Times column, did a good job of including updates now and then to inform his readers of the progress of the tower. I was thrilled to read in his column July 19 that WDCB had gone back on the air and I was eager to tune in to your great show once again. Welcome back into my home, Chuck. You have been very much missed. --**BARBARA MURTHA**

BURR RIDGE, IL-- Apparently the upgraded changes in the tower have worked beautifully. The sound is deeper and doesn't cut out on my kitchen radio the way it used to. I love being able to have you on all my radios as I cruise from room to room. Congratulations! You boys sound just great!
--**GLORIA MONTGOMERY**

GOODYEAR, ARIZONA-- Great show today (July 27)!! You and Ken have outdone yourselves. No one, but no one does hokey and corny better than you two, and I'm glad!! I loved it!! You two are so good together. --**NANCY SHERMAN**

PALOS HILLS, IL-- Some dreams do come true. Sometime during the night of July 19th, I had a dream. It was about the tower project being completed and full power being restored to the station. The show came in loud and clear, in fact better than ever. I told my wife about the dream and then patiently waited for 1 p.m. to come. It finally did and WOW! My dream did come true. The station is so powerful that I am now able to listen to the show in

my basement without any static.

Chuck, keep up the great job in bringing *TWTD* to all of us, your fans. To us listening out in Radioland it does not sound like a regular job as you and Ken seem to be having too much fun. No matter if it feels like a job or not, we all know that it is a lot of hard work putting the show together for our enjoyment.

The notice in the August/September *Digest* about moving to the studio at WDCB was a surprise. Are fans still allowed to come and watch the show? --**DON WHITE**

CICERO, IL-- Glad WDCB is back up and running full again. I turned on my stereo yesterday afternoon (July 19) to hear the station loud and clear. It's nice to be able to listen to the station again on the radio and not have to rely on the Internet. I did want to ask you if you are planning on moving the program back to the Museum again now that things are up and running at WDCB? It was nice to go into the city on a Saturday and stop by the Museum to see you broadcast the show live. --**RICH BILEK (ED. NOTE--** We hope to be able to return to the Museum from time to time to do special programs. And, sorry, but there's no room for a studio audience at WDCB.)

CHICAGO-- I live a long foul-ball from Wrigley Field and have been a faithful listener of *TWTD* since your very first Evanston days. For the past seven long, long, looong and vacuous months, I have been greeted with a "symphony of static" on both my auto and home radios between 1 and 5 pm each Saturday. Thus, I was deleriously ecstatic ("ex-static"???) to tune you in once again yesterday and hear you loud and clear! You have no idea how happy I was. The "prodigal" had come home! More important, I was glad to hear that there were many of us willing to wait patiently for your return. It goes without saying that it was well worth the wait. Welcome back to Wrigleyville, Chuck! Keep the good old times rollin'.
--**STEVE SCHWALGE**

MT. PROSPECT, IL-- Just wanted to be one of the many to let you know I appreciate being able to listen to your program once again! I listen every Saturday while I deliver my mail route and it sure is great to be able to do that again. Your show is an entertain-



STILL MORE MAIL

ing way to spend a Saturday afternoon, especially if you have to work. I've always kept a pre-set on my car radio to 90.9 and was pleasantly surprised when I was able to tune in again. --**STEVE VICTOR**

OLYMPIA FIELDS, IL-- Sooo glad to hear you and Ken once again. Been waiting not too patiently. Now I'm looking forward to a wonderful rest of the summer, the fall and winter. I didn't need to take advantage of your "musical interlude" as I have already told everyone I know that you are back in our area and better than ever. I'm enjoying "Christmas in July" on one of the hottest and most humid days of the year! Here's listening to you, kid! --**PAT MENEES**

BERWYN, IL-- I am back to my wonderful Saturday ritual of taping your show from beginning to end. Welcome back!
--**CAROL MYSICKA**

ST. CHARLES, IL-- I have been procrastinating as usual. I meant to tell you how I received WDCB while the tower was down. I am an amateur radio operator, and I have antennas on a 40 foot tower. I have a 2-meter beam at 45 feet. I hooked up my radio to the 2-meter beam and turned it toward the College of DuPage. Luckily, I have been able to receive your signal without any trouble. I only missed two of your programs since the tower went down. On a few days when there were sun spot bursts, the reception was messed up. Otherwise, I have had great luck picking up your program.

I have been listening to your program for over 21 years and I have played recorded radio shows to my children. Also, I am a sixth grade teacher and have played many of the old time radio shows to my classes. I think I have interested many of the children who were never lucky enough to listen to old time radio on the air. Your new signal is great! I can receive the show without any outside antennas. --**HERB PASTEUR**

DYER, INDIANA-- I am hearing you 5x5 here in Dyer. I am glad the tower is up, because

although I downstreamed the program when I could, it sure is great to get *TWTD* over the radio waves. Now I can hear you all over the house. --**PHIL VAN ECK**

WILMETTE, IL-- From the time your show was disrupted until this past Saturday, I truly missed your show. My Saturdays were not the same. I didn't even care about washing my car, which was fun 'cause I got to hear your show in my garage. I'm so happy you're back and making my Saturdays fun again. My *Digest* renewal should be coming in January, 2003 and I will renew once again. --**RICO VAZQUEAZ**

TINLEY PARK, IL-- I thought I should share a recent experience with you. on July 27th, I received a belated Christmas present. It was something I lost last December, and began to think I'd never find again. You see, it was very special and from an old friend. Not only did it provide me with wonderful entertainment, but it also transported me back in time. I'm sure you know what I lost and I want to thank you so very much for helping me find it. It's very precious to those of us who have it. All the best to you and WDCB. --**DONALD R. MARTIN**

SCHAUMBURG, IL-- Just a short note to tell you how good it is to hear you again. I admire your professionalism in putting up with a very difficult situation but, based on my 30-plus years of listening to you, I knew you would handle it with style.
--**FRANK FREDRIKSEN**

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of the 66th Signal Battalion in World War II is recalled by PFC Edwin S. Knapp (retired) in an article about military friendship on page 26.

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