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NECROLOGY OF 2003

We Remember Them Well

Last year was not a very good year for show business. We lost many more of our favorite entertainers and personalities during 2003.

They're gone, but not forgotten.

**ALAN BATES**, 69, British-born stage and screen star known to American audiences for his work in the films *Zorba the Greek*, *The Entertainer* and *Georgy Girl*. December 27.

**TRUE BOARDMAN**, 94, radio actor and writer who wrote for such programs as *Family Theatre*, *Silver Theatre*, *Skippy Playhouse*, *Gunsmoke*, others. August 4.

**MARY BRIAN**, 96, actress in silent and early sound films who played opposite Gary Cooper in *The Virginian* in 1929. December 30, 2002.

**DAVID BRINKLEY**, 82, television anchorman who, with Chet Huntley, made long-running TV history with their *Huntley-Brinkley Report* on NBC and continued with commentary and analysis on ABC to round out a half-century career. June 11.

**CHARLES BRONSON**, 81, tough-guy movie star for 50 years in such pictures as *Magnificent Seven*, *Great Escape*, *Dirty Dozen* and a series of *Death Wish* vengeance films. August 30.

**RAND BROOKS**, 84, actor who played Charles Hamilton, Scarlett O'Hara's shy first husband in the 1939 film classic *Gone With the Wind* and later appeared in the TV series *Adventures of Rin Tin Tin* (1954-59). September 1.

**HORST BUCHHOLZ**, 69, German actor



David Brinkley



Charles Bronson

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who appeared in several Hollywood films including *One, Two Three* and *Magnificent Seven*. March 3.

**JOHN C. BURNS**, 84, host of *Something About the Irish* and *Golden Moments in Music* on Chicago's WBBM and other Midwest stations. He was also the model for the face under the Quaker hat that appeared on Quaker Oats cereal packages. July 24.

**ART CARNEY**, 85, TV sidekick as Ed Norton to Jackie Gleason's Ralph Kramden on *The Honeymooners*. He worked extensively in radio in the 1930s and '40s, appearing on *Land of the Lost*, *March of Time*, *Gangbusters*, *Magnificent Montague*. Also in many feature films. November 9.

**BENNY CARTER**, 95, versatile band leader-composer-arranger during eight decades of melodic jazz invention. July 12.

**NELL CARTER**, 54, Tony-award winning actress for her role in *Ain't Misbehavin'* on Broadway who also played the sassy housekeeper on the TV situation comedy *Gimme a Break!* January 23.

**JOHNNY CASH**, 71, immensely popular



Art Carney

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Jeanne Crain



Richard Crenna



Buddy Hackett

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country singer known as "the Man in Black," who scored big with songs such as "I Walk the Line," "Folsom Prison Blues" and "A Boy Named Sue." September 12.

**JUNE CARTER CASH**, 73, Grammy-winning country music singer with the Carter Family and wife of Johnny Cash. May 15.

**JOE CONNELLY**, 85, writer-producer for radio and TV, wrote (often with partner Bob Moshier) *Amos 'n' Andy*, *Charlie McCarthy Show*, *Leave It to Beaver*. February 13.

**NADINE CONNER**, 96, Metropolitan Opera soprano for two decades who also appeared on popular radio programs such as *Maxwell House Show Boat* and *Railroad Hour*. March 1.

**JEANNE CRAIN**, 78, movie leading lady in 1940s and '50s films as *Home in Indiana*, *State Fair*, *Margie* and *Pinky*, for which she earned an Academy Award. December 14.

*Read We Get Mail*, page 63.

**RICHARD CRENNNA**, 75, radio actor who made an easy transition to TV and feature films. On radio he played Walter Denton on *Our Miss Brooks*, Oogie Pringle on *A Date with Judy* and Bronco Thompson on *Great Gildersleeve*. On TV he continued his *Our Miss Brooks* role, co-starred with Walter Brennan on *Real McCoys* and starred in *Slattery's People*. Also in many film roles. January 17.

**HUME CRONYN**, 91, one of the foremost character actors on stage, screen and television, appearing in theatrical version of *A Delicate Balance* and *The Fourposter* with wife Jessica Tandy and in such motion pictures as *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Brute Force*

and *Cocoon*. June 15.

**HENRY CUESTA**, 71, clarinetist who was featured with the Lawrence Welk orchestra on TV and in concerts from 1972-82 and in numerous tribute performances on television and at the Welk Resorts in Branson, Missouri, and San Diego, California. December 17.

**DOLLY DAWN**, 86, big band vocalist and recording star of the 1930s and '40s. Performing as Dolly Dawn and Her Dawn Patrol, she was a featured vocalist with the George Hale orchestra on CBS from New York. December 11, 2002.

**DADDY-O DAYLIE**, 82, Chicago's legendary African-American broadcaster, known as "the musical host who loves you most" who combined rhythm and blues and jazz records with his "jive talkin'" rhythms on WAIT, WMAQ, WAAF and WSBC. February 6.

**BRAD DEXTER**, 85, "tough-guy" actor in such films as *Magnificent Seven*, *Run Silent, Run Deep: None But the Brave* and in TV series *Mission Impossible*, *Wagon Train*, *Kojak*. December 12, 2002.

**RUSTY DRAPER**, 80, popular recording star in the 1950s and '60s with such hits as "Gambler's Guitar" and "The Shifting, Whispering Sands." March 29.

**ROBERT DRYDEN**, 86, actor whose radio career spanned four decades, appearing in such programs as *The Big Story*, *The Shadow*, *Johnny Dollar*, *The Falcon*, *The Fat Man*, *Crime Photographer*, *Studio One* and the *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre*. December 16.

**BUDDY EBSEN**, 95, veteran dancer-turned-actor who appeared in film musicals in the 1930s and '40s and on TV in *Davy Crockett*,



Katharine Hepburn

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Bob Hope



Gordon Jump

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Larry Lesueur

*Beverly Hillbillies* and *Barnaby Jones*. July 6.  
**Read the article on page 16.**

**ANTHONY EISLEY**, 78, actor who co-starred with Robert Conrad in the 1959-63 TV series *Hawaiian Eye*. January 29.

**JACK ELAM**, 84, veteran character actor and movie villain in a string of western and B-movies in the 1940s and '50s. October 20.

**STANLEY FAFARA**, 54, actor who portrayed Whitey on TV's *Leave It to Beaver* from 1957-63. September 20.

**JINX FALKENBERG**, 84, World War II cover girl and fashion model who went on to star with her husband, Tex McCrary, to pioneer in a pair of radio talk shows in the 1950s. August 27.

**IRVING FOY**, 94, the youngest and last of the "Seven Little Foyes" vaudeville act who, with their father Eddie Foy Sr. entertained audiences in the first quarter of the 20th Century. April 20.

**DON GIBSON**, 75, Country Music Hall of Famer recognized for writing and singing such hits as "I Can't Stop Loving You" and "Lonesome Mc." November 17.

**JERRY GOLDEN**, 79, veteran announcer whose 35-year career was centered in Chicago on stations WLS, WBBM, WGN. He was one of the first announcers to report the shots fired at President Kennedy's motorcade in Dallas in 1963. January 8.

**BUDDY HACKETT**, 78, comedian and stand-up comic whose career began in the Catskill Resort area and continued in nightclubs, in personal appearances, on television and in such films as *Music Man* and *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. June 30.

**DAVID HEMMINGS**, 62, British actor known to American audiences for his 1966 film *Blowup*. December 3.

**KATHARINE HEPBURN**, 96, one of the greatest Academy Award-winning actresses of the 20th Century, starring in such films as *Philadelphia Story*, *African Queen* and a string of movie comedies co-starring Spencer Tracy. June 29.

**Read the article on page 28**

**GEORGE ROY HILL**, 81, Oscar-winning motion picture director of *The Sting*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *Slap Shot*. December 27. [2002](#)

**WENDY HILLER**, 90, British actress who starred on stage and screen in a 50-year career. She was George Bernard Shaw's choice to play Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* in the 1950s and won an Oscar for the film *Separate Tables* in 1958. May 14.

**GREGORY HINES**, 57, Tony-winning tap dancing star on Broadway in the 1980s and '90s who went on to acting roles in films and television. August 9.

**EARL HINDMAN**, 61, actor known to fans of the *Home Improvement* TV comedy series as the barely-seen next-door neighbor Wilson, who always peered over the back-yard fence. December 29.

**BOB HOPE**, 100, America's beloved comedian and entertainer of troops whose 20-year radio career (1935-55) was the foundation for his superstardom in all phases of show business. He was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1990. July 27.

**LARRY HOVIS**, 67, actor best known for his role as Sgt. Carter in the 1960s TV series



Cliff Norton

PHOTOFEST



Donald O'Connor



Gregory Peck



Robert Rockwell

PHOTOFEST

*Hogan's Heroes*. September 9.

**PEANUTS HUCKO**, 85, jazz clarinetist who played with Glenn Miller during World War II and also with Louis Armstrong, Lawrence Welk, Bob Chester, Ray McKinley and Charlie Spivak. June 19.

**CHUBBY JACKSON**, 84, bass player who gained fame with Woody Herman's First Herd and who also played with Louis Armstrong, Charlie Barnet, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie. In 1960 he had a kids' TV show in Chicago and later in New York. October 1.

**GRAHAM JARVIS**, 72, character actor best known for playing Charlie Huggers in the *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* TV series in the 1970s. April 16.

**MICHAEL JEETER**, 50, character actor who appeared on the series *Evening Star* and was known on *Sesame Street* as The Other Mr. Noodle. March 30.

**GORDON JUMP**, 71, actor best known as the befuddled radio station manager on TV's *WKRP in Cincinnati* and later as the lonely Maytag repairman in a popular series of television commercials. September 27.

**ELIA KAZAN**, 94, Broadway and motion picture director of such hits as *Death of a Salesman*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *On the Waterfront*. September 28.

**IRV KUPCINET**, 91, Chicago Sun-Times columnist (Kup's Column) and TV personality for over 60 years. He was a color analyst for Chicago Bears football games on radio for more than 20 years. November 10.

**STACY KEACH SR**, 88, character actor, producer and director known for his role as

Professor Carlson in the TV series *Get Smart*. February 13.

**HOPE LANGE**, 70, movie and TV actress who appeared on the big screen in *Peyton Place*, *Bus Stop*, *Young Lions*, *Pocketful of Miracles* and in *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* TV series (1968-70). December 19.

**LARRY LE SUEUR**, 93, long-time CBS News correspondent who was one of Ed Murrow's "boys" during WW II. He was the first U. S. newsman to broadcast from the American Normandy beachhead in France. February 5.

**VINCE LLOYD**, 86, long-time broadcaster for WGN and the Chicago Cubs, working with Jack Brickhouse and Lou Boudreau in a career that spanned 38 years. July 3.

**DOROTHY LOUDEN**, 70, Tony-award-winning Broadway star who played Miss Hannigan in the hit show *Annie* and appeared in many stage and TV shows. November 15.

**DON LUCKI**, 70, Chicago area musician, band leader and radio announcer who performed with many polka bands and was a disc jockey on many stations including WIND, WLTD, WAIT, WTAQ and the Satellite Music Network. December 21.

**GISELE MacKENZIE**, 76, Canadian-born singer who appeared on *Club Fifteen* and the *Mario Lanza Show* on radio and on TV in *Your Hit Parade*, *Sid Caesar Show* and her own series. In the early 1950s she toured with Jack Benny, singing and performing violin duets. September 5.

**TEX McCRARY**, 92, New York publicist who, along with his wife Jinx Falkenberg,



Panny Singleton



Robert Stack

PHOTOFEST



Les Tremayne



Lesley Woods

helped popularize the radio talk show format in the 1950s with a pair of daily broadcasts. July 29.

**TYLER McVEY**, 91, veteran radio announcer and actor who played Elwood Giddings on *One Man's Family* and appeared on such programs as *Gene Autry's Melody Ranch*, *Lux Radio Theatre*, *Hermit's Cave* plus many movie and TV roles. July 4.

**HERBIE MANN**, 73, versatile jazz flutist who influenced a generation of musicians in his search for new sounds from around the world. July 1.

**MARTIN 'RED' MOTTLOW**, 76, sports reporter and anchor on Chicago radio for almost 30 years beginning in the 1950s. May 12.

**CLIFF NORTON**, 84, veteran comedian and character actor who appeared on early TV with Dave Garroway and other Chicago-originated shows, and on many TV dramas and sitcoms. January 25.

**BILL O'CONNOR**, 79, long-time Chicago radio and TV broadcaster and advertising spokesman for such clients as Admiral Television, Tavern Pale Beer, Libby Furniture Co., and Polk Bros. January 18.

**DONALD O'CONNOR**, 78, song-and-dance comedian whose "Make 'em Laugh" routine in *Singin' in the Rain* had audiences cheering for half a century. Also a success in a series of Francis the Talking Mule films, and in many TV, stage and nightclub appearances. September 27.

**GREGORY PECK**, 87, one of the great film stars of the 20th Century, appearing in such hits as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Man in the Grey*

*Flannel Suit*, *MacArthur* and *Roman Holiday*. June 12.

**LLOYD PETTIT**, 76, long-time Chicago sports broadcaster, known as the voice of the Blackhawks on WGN radio for 14 years. He also did Cubs games on TV with Jack Brickhouse for many years. November 11.

**VERA IIRUBA RALSTON**, 79, Czech-born ice skating star who had a B-movie career at Republic Pictures in the 1940s and '50s, appearing in such films as *The Lady and the Monster*, *Lake Placid Serenade*, *Dakota*, *The Fighting Kentuckian* and *Fair Wind to Java*. February 9.

**JOHN RITTER**, 54, Emmy-winning TV actor who starred as Jack Tripper on *Three's Company* from 1977-84, on *Eight Simple Rules* 2002-03 and as guest star in a great many shows and series and in dozens of made-for-TV films. September 11.

**ROBERT ROCKWELL**, 82, actor who played shy biology teacher Philip Boynton on the TV version of *Our Miss Brooks* and who appeared in hundreds of radio and television programs during a 50-year career. January 25.

**FRED ROGERS**, 74, TV's much-loved *Mister Rogers* who, for 32 years gently invited millions of children to spend a beautiful day in his neighborhood, beginning in 1968. February 27.

**WALTER SCHARF**, 92, musical director for radio's *Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show* who also composed, arranged or conducted the music for 250 movies and TV programs, including *White Christmas*, *Hans Christian Andersen*,

*Funny Girl*, *Mission Impossible* and *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* February 24.

**MARTHA SCOTT**, 90, motion picture actress in such films as *Our Town*, *Cheers for Miss Bishop*, *Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur*. She won an Oscar for her role in *Our Town*. May 2.

**RICHARD SIMMONS**, 89, actor who portrayed *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* on the syndicated TV series in 1955. January 11.

**PENNY SINGLETON**, 95, actress best-known for her portrayal of *Blondie* in films from 1938-50 and on radio from 1939-49. She had her own *Penny Singleton Show* on radio in 1950 and was the voice of Jane Jetson on *The Jetsons* animated cartoon series on TV 1962-75. November 12.

**FLORENCE STANLEY**, 79, actress known as Mrs. Fish on TV's *Barney Miller* and *Fish* series. October 3.

**DON STANLEY**, 85, NBC radio-television staff announcer for 46 years who worked on dozens of radio shows, including *Nero Wolfe*, *The Saint*, *Bergen and McCarthy* and *A Day in the Life of Dennis Day*. January 20.

**ROBERT ST. JOHN**, 100, journalist who broadcast WW II news from Europe for NBC, reporting on the London blitzkrieg, the Normandy landing and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. He stayed on the air 72 hours when the Japanese surrendered. February 6.

**ROBERT STACK**, 84, actor in more than 70 films and countless TV shows, best known for his role as Eliot Ness on *The Untouchables* (1959-63) and *Unsolved Mysteries* (1987-2002). May 14.

**LYNN THIGPEN**, 54, film, stage and TV actress who co-starred on TV's *The District*, on *All My Children* and was the chief in the PBS series *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego*. March 12.

**LES TREMAYNE**, 90, popular radio actor who starred on *First Nighter*, *The Thin Man*, *Betty and Bob*, *The Falcon* and appeared in countless other broadcasts during radio's golden age, at one point being heard on 45 radio shows a week with one of the most rec-

ognizable voices in America. He appeared in such feature films as *War of the Worlds* and *North By Northwest* and on many TV shows. He was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1995. December 19.

**GLORIA VAN**, 82, big band vocalist who sang with Johnny "Scat" Davis, Hal McIntyre and Gene Krupa. She was a Chicago and Midwest favorite who appeared on TV's *Wayne King Show* and the *Tonight Show* with Jack Paar. December 24, 2002.

**JOHN WEIGEL**, 89, Chicago broadcaster who founded WCIU, Channel 26, and who had worked in radio and TV as announcer, newscaster and weatherman. Father of the late news and sportscaster Tim Weigel. December 12, 2002.

**SAM WEINSTEIN**, 88, Chicagoland's premiere bowling enthusiast who hosted *Ten Pin Tattler*, first on WCFL and then on WGN radio from 1935-95. June 4.

**JERRY WILLIAMS**, 79, pioneer talk show host who broadcast on WBBM, Chicago in the 1960s and on many other stations in a career that spanned more than three decades. He was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1996. April 29.

**LESLIE WOODS**, 90, radio actress who played the role of the lovely Margo Lane on *The Shadow* in 1945-46 and appeared on *Boston Blackie*, *Crime Photographer*, *Inner Sanctum* and numerous daytime dramas. August 2.

**SHEB WOOLEY**, 82, veteran actor-singer who had a big hit with his 1958 recording "The Purple People Eater" and appeared on TV in *Rawhide* and in such films as *High Noon* and *Giant*. September 16.

**VERA ZORINA**, 86, dancer and actress in ballet, film and stage productions in the 1930s and '40s. April 9.

This Necrology also appears on our website: [www.nostalgia Digest.com](http://www.nostalgia Digest.com)

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# First Lady Of Hollywood

# Louella Parsons

BY MATTHEW C. HOFFMAN

Louella Parsons had the distinction of being Hollywood's leading gossip columnist from the glorious 1930s until the mid-1960s.

Her name is forever wedded to Tinseltown's storied past, synonymous with those halcyon days of studio filmmaking and movie magazines. Conjure up images of premieres, art deco nightclubs, dinners at the Brown Derby, and Beverly Hills parties and you would undoubtedly find "Lolly" Parsons in the middle of it.

She was a powerful female whose voice carried clout, whether her words were read in her syndicated column or heard over the radio.

Sixty years later we see what an Oprah Winfrey can do for an author in her "Book Club," instantly turning an obscure novel into a must-read. So, too, was it with Louella in the motion picture community, whose sought-after "plug" could help turn an unknown actor, like a Ronald Reagan, into a major star. Louella, though not quite

*Matthew C. Hoffman of Niles, Illinois is a film historian and free-lance writer.*

as self-inflated as her modern-day media counterpart, was just as influential in her time, but reaching a far broader audience than just housewives.

A discontented housewife she herself had once been. She could never quite fit into small-town life in Iowa, but Louella's story begins much earlier.

A native Illinoisan, she was born Louella Rose Oettinger in Freeport on August 6, 1880, although some accounts list her year of birth as 1881, 1884, and even 1893. She grew up in Dixon, Illinois, and while attending

high school she worked as dramatic editor and assistant to the city editor on the *Morning Star*, the town's local newspaper.

In 1904 she married real estate businessman John Parsons and the two moved to Burlington, Iowa. Here she would have her only child, daughter Harriet, who was born in 1906. After a divorce, Louella married riverboat captain Jack McCaffrey, but this union fared no better. When he left her, she took Harriet with her to Chicago, where Louella started work at the *Tribune*. It was during this time as a reporter that she forged



Louella Parsons

her first link with Hollywood.

In 1912 she sold a script called *Chains* to the Essanay Company, which was soon turned into a one-reeler starring Francis X. Bushman. This would be her first experience as a scenario writer.

In 1914, Louella began a movie column – the country's

first – for the *Chicago Record-Herald* while authoring a book, *How to Write For the 'Movies.'* Four years later she would be out of a job when the paper was taken over by publisher William Randolph Hearst.

Unemployed, Louella and Harriet were on the move again, this time to New York. She continued her movie writing for the *New York Morning Telegraph*. After praising actress Marion Davies in one of her write-ups, Hearst, who was Davies' benefactor, took notice and made a shrewd deal to get Louella into his stable. A three-year contract was struck to syndicate her writ-



Hollywood Hotel  
Clark Gable, Louella Parsons, Stuart Erwin

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ing under the Hearst Universal Service banner, which included 600 daily newspapers.

Forevermore, she would be linked to the Hearst name. Some in Hollywood believed she was given a *lifetime* contract as a reward for keeping her mouth shut about the mysterious death (or murder) of pioneer director Thomas Ince aboard Hearst's private yacht. Rumor had it she was there on that November night in 1924 and witnessed the events that remain unclear to this day.

By 1925, Louella was facing her own mortality when she was diagnosed with tuberculosis and was given the old "six

months to live" line.

At Hearst's behest she spent those months on the West Coast and continued her column in Hollywood. Her health rebounded, and by 1929 her paychecks hit \$500 a week. A year earlier, in 1928, she had made her radio debut. The program, sponsored by Sunkist, had her interviewing movie stars. This program was short-lived, how-



Hollywood Hotel  
Humphrey Bogart, Louella Parsons, Bette Davis

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*Hollywood Hotel*  
Dick Powell, Myrna Loy, William Powell, Louella Parsons, Ted Fio Rita

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ever, but served as a trial run for her next big radio break. Before this, though, she got married for a third time, this time to Dr. Harry Martin. "Docky-wocky," as she called him, worked as a technical medical

advisor in motion pictures.

Finally, in 1934, as her name continued to appear bylined throughout the country, her break came when she hosted the *Hollywood Hotel* radio program.

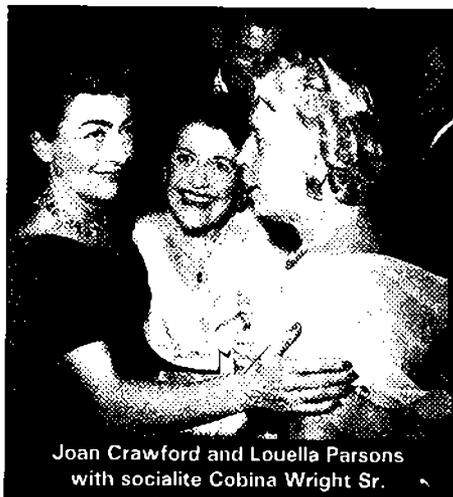
Sponsored by Campbell's Soup, the show had her interviewing movie stars whose films were showcased. Louella did the selecting and those films that were dramatized on air did well at the box office. For this reason she was courted by the high and mighty of Hollywood.

The radio program jumped from 39th to 10th in the ratings, but the stars, for their efforts, received only free soup. So successful was *Hollywood Hotel* that by 1937 it



*Hollywood Hotel*  
Louella Parsons, Mae West

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Joan Crawford and Louella Parsons  
with socialite Cobina Wright Sr.

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was turned into a Busby Berkeley film extravaganza starring Dick Powell. Louella also turned up in the cast, playing herself. However, by the summer of 1938 the Radio Guild had to close down all "free talent" broadcasts. With Louella's main attraction now gone, she left the program and returned to writing.

In the years to come she would make other appearances before the cameras in films such as *Without Reservations* (1946) and *Starlift* (1951), but never again would she be as popular over the airwaves as she was during *Hollywood Hotel's* success.

Known for her "crow-like" voice and an unsophisticated manner, "Lolly" Parsons was not the most literate of writers, but her impact cannot be underestimated. In her prime she was a one-woman "Access Hollywood" – promoting in her column and on her weekly quarter-hour gossip radio program what was new while revealing secrets akin to those found in the present day tabloids such as *The National Enquirer*. Her sensationalistic prose covered who was going to marry whom, who was "going out" with whom – in short, all the titillation readers and listeners at that time wanted. Her scoops turned up in countries as close as Canada



*Hollywood Hotel*  
Louella Parsons, Ruby Keeler,  
Al Jolson, Dick Powell

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and as far as Egypt and India.

Louella was never the most accurate, to be sure, once referring in print to William Wellman's *The President Vanishes* first as *The Vanishing American* and then as *The President Disappears*. *Time* magazine said of Louella, "Her friends always stand by her. When she prematurely published a claim that an actress was pregnant, the



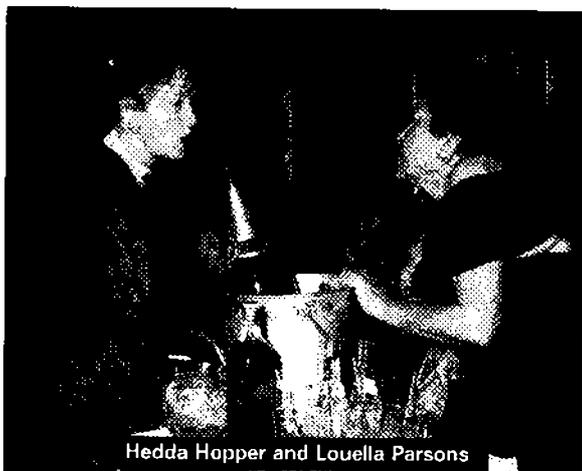
*Hollywood Hotel*  
Charles Winninger, Deanna Durbin, Louella Parsons,  
Dick Powell, Binnie Barnes, Frances Langford

PHOTOFEST

actress's husband hastened to prove her correct." She had secretaries who helped her with all this. Her material always went by teletype from Tinseltown to the *Los Angeles Examiner*, where it then went on to New York City for distribution. A 1940 profile described her as always being in a hurry, "being about 20 minutes late mentally from the time she rises until the time she reaches her bed again."

In 1937, after antagonizing MGM studio head Louis B. Mayer with her power, Louella received fierce competition from Hedda Hopper, whose career was boosted by Mayer. Hopper, a washed-up character actress, would be Louella's chief nemesis, and for the next 25 years, the two would spew venom at each other. No shot was too low. Hedda was known to make fun of Louella's "bald spot."

This bitter rivalry, covered in George Eells' 1973 book *Hedda and Louella*,



Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons

PHOTOFLSI

would go on until Hedda's death in 1966. Today, one can't help but think of the one when the other is mentioned.

A tool of William Hearst, Louella did her best to attack *Citizen Kane* (1941) and discredit director Orson Welles, who based the film on the life of her boss. But this would be a losing battle for Louella. The power of the motion picture medium out-trumped anything Louella could type, and over time *Citizen Kane* would be recognized as a masterpiece while her name would fall out of fashion.

She would write two books in the years to come: the best-seller *The Gay Illiterate* (1944) and the autobiographical *Tell It to Louella* (1962).

In 1965 she ended her column, and on December 9, 1972, she died in a Santa Monica nursing home, perhaps a sad end for a woman who had experienced so many highs in her lifetime – but poetic justice for those hurt by her malicious gossip.

For forty years Louella Parsons served the daily dish while making and breaking careers in the process. Dubbed the First Lady of Hollywood, she was also the most feared woman in town. ■



Louella Parsons, Janet Gaynor, Marion Davies, Dolores Del Rio

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*Tune in TWTD June 19 to hear Louella Parsons on Hollywood Hotel.*

# Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry: A One-Man Army

BY RANDALL G. MIELKE

During one of the best-remembered and oft-repeated speeches of modern cinema, Clint Eastwood, as Inspector Harry Callahan, tracks down a criminal and points a gun at his head.

"I know what you're thinking," says Callahan, matter-of-factly. "Did he fire six shots or only five? Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement, I've kinda lost track myself. But being as this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and would blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky today?' Well, do ya, punk?"

In the *Dirty Harry* films of the 1970s and 1980s, Eastwood portrayed Callahan as a cop who was often hindered from catching his man by the bureaucratic system. He was a bit of an anti-hero, but he was trying to do everything possible to clean up the streets.

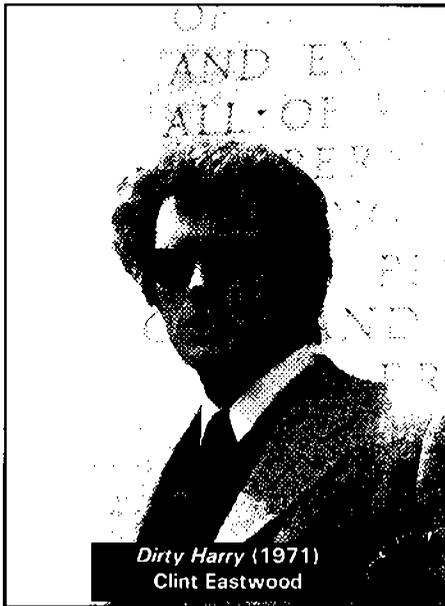
By the time the *Dirty Harry* films began in 1971, Eastwood had already established himself in motion pictures as the Man With No Name in several Italian westerns, including *For a Few Dollars More*. Inspector Harry Callahan was the Man With No Name, but in a neatly cut suit, clean shave, shirt and tie – and an imposing .44 Magnum gun.

*Dirty Harry* (1971) was the original screen adventure of Eastwood's maverick San Francisco detective. In the film, "Dirty Harry" Callahan is outfoxed by a mania-

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*Dirty Harry* (1971)  
Clint Eastwood

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cal killer (Andy Robinson) and finally decides to deal out justice in his own distinctive fashion.

The story, originally called "Dead Right," was written by Harry Julian Fink and his wife, Rita M. Fink. The script was making the rounds in Hollywood and various screenplays had been written to fit various stars. At one stage, Frank Sinatra was going to do it, but he was reportedly unhappy with the multiple script drafts, and had to pull out of the project because of a badly injured hand.

"Originally, the part was written for an older man than I was when I first played it," said Eastwood in an interview. "He was a guy who had been on the force a long time, a mature guy who was fed up with what he saw happening to people. The laws

are crazy, he was saying. A lot of people felt that way. That's one of the reasons the films are so popular."

When Warner Bros. offered the part to Eastwood, he insisted that Don Siegel be brought in to direct. (Siegel had directed Eastwood in *Coogan's Bluff* (1968), *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970), and *The Beguiled* (1971).) Dean Riesner was put on the script to polish up the Eastwood character to an even greater superhuman level of action.

Others in the cast of *Dirty Harry* included Harry Guardino as a police supervisor; Reni Santoni as Callahan's picked-upon partner, Chico; John Vernon as the mayor, and John Mitchum as the overweight cop DiGiorgio, who trailed behind Callahan and provided comic relief.

*Dirty Harry* was followed by *Magnum Force* (1973), but it is not quite as good as the original film. If audience members expected an answer as to how and why the detective had rejoined the force after chucking away his badge in *Dirty Harry*, they were disappointed. No explanation was ever given. If any moviegoers remem-

bered the sad, bitter Callahan who dominated the first film, they were surprised by the new character in the second installment. In *Dirty Harry*, Callahan was alone in life, grieving the loss of his wife. In *Magnum Force*, Callahan became sexier and more appealing.

Part of the appeal for Eastwood was that writer John Milius wrapped the plot around a group of rogue police officers within the San Francisco police department who were bent on the systematic extermination of criminals. As far as Eastwood was concerned, this translated to one thing: there are worse cops than Dirty Harry.

In the film, mysterious murders of criminals who have escaped prosecution are being committed all over San Francisco. The suspicion is falling on the biggest crime bosses in the city, but Callahan does not buy it. He suspects that the killings are being committed by cops – traffic cops. In the film, Hal Holbrook plays Callahan's establishment antagonist and young actors David Soul, Tim Matheson, Robert Urich, and Kip Niven portray the "death squad" policemen. One of the famous lines from the movie that Callahan repeats several times in the film is "A man's got to know his limitations."

Perhaps Eastwood took Callahan's advice when he returned with *The Enforcer* in 1976 as the series seemed to get back on track. Part of the interest this time around was due to his supporting cast, as Callahan is grudgingly teamed with Detective Kate Moore (Tyne Daly) in the film.

The story centers on a group of self-proclaimed revolutionaries who are threatening San Francisco. The city wants to pin the threat on black militants, but Callahan isn't buying it, and he is suspended for insubordination. So, when the terrorists kidnap the mayor, Callahan uses every tactic at his disposal to hunt them down and confront them in a final showdown at Alcatraz Island,



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Magnum Force (1973)  
Clint Eastwood

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where the mayor is being held hostage.

*The Enforcer* is more like the original *Dirty Harry* with Callahan seemingly reverting back to his first incarnation when he says: "What kind of department are we running when we're more concerned with the rights of the criminals than of the people we're supposed to be protecting?"

Surprisingly, by 1983, a full 12 years after the first *Dirty Harry* film, Eastwood made *Sudden Impact*, which proved to be the most successful film of the series.

In addition to playing Harry Callahan, Eastwood also directed the film. In the story, a killer (Sondra Locke) is methodically extracting bloody revenge on the gang of thugs who raped her and a younger sister. It becomes Callahan's job to track her down, but not until he has done away with a number of villains.

The story began life as a small film that Eastwood had considered producing, but not starring in. After beginning work on the screenplay, writer Joseph Stinson came up with the idea of turning it into a *Dirty Harry* film. Eastwood liked it, and Callahan's return was set. In *Sudden Impact* Dirty Harry is meaner, nastier, and --

surprisingly -- funnier than ever before with such immortal lines as: "Go ahead, make my day."

It might have seemed that by 1988 the series would have run its course. But *The Dead Pool*, Eastwood's fifth *Dirty Harry* adventure, is a surprisingly strong entry. The story revolves around disgusting rock stars, satanic music videos, and obsessed know-it-all fans as Callahan tracks down a weirdo who is murdering celebrities on a list that also carries Callahan's name. Action and humor are in abundance in the film, and *The Dead Pool*, although not as financially successful as *Sudden Impact*, was another money maker.

The *Dirty Harry* films were popular, in part, because both men and women were attracted to Eastwood's character of Harry Callahan. Callahan was the kind of man that men would like to be and the type that most women fantasize about having a relationship with. His way of fighting the system while still fighting for justice was a refreshing change from what many people saw happening around them.

In short, Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* made many people's day. ■

# Buddy Ebsen: Illinois Hillbilly

BY WALTER SCANNELL

He could dance, but not as well as Ray Bolger or Bill “Bojangles” Robinson. He could recite lines, but he would never be mistaken for a real actor. All Christian “Buddy” Ebsen could offer was a slow-moving likability. Yet someone did a little math on television shows and came up with the astounding fact that more people tuned in to a Buddy Ebsen program than any other performer in the history of the medium. Buddy was as bewildered about his success as anyone else. Especially considering his bad luck in films.

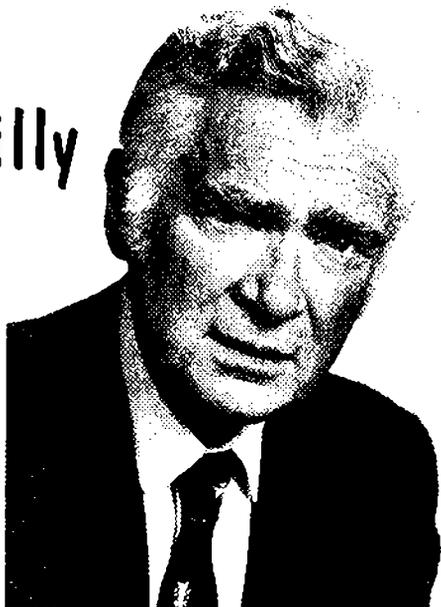
Ebsen was born on April 2, 1908, in the southern Illinois city of Belleville. His Latvian mother was in declining health, and his Danish father was a physical culture instructor at a German athletic and social club. Perhaps having four sisters kept the boy genial, and an aunt started calling him Buddy. “We were as poor as you could get,” Ebsen reminisced, “but we were never loved or underfed.”

When he was 12 his family moved to Palm Beach and then Orlando during the Florida land boom, in hopes that his mother would regain her health. Buddy’s father ran Orlando’s first dance school and managed the Mayfield Hotel in Daytona Beach. Feeling helpless seeing one of his four sisters suffer an epileptic seizure, Buddy wanted to become a doctor. The young man took up pre-med at the University of Florida but gave that up and studied acting at Rollins College until dropping out at age 20.

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*Walter Scannell is a history buff and nostalgia fan from Chicago.*

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Buddy and his sister Vilma settled in New York, where they danced in talent shows and what was called “the lower end of the vaudeville circuit” – any hick town with a train running through it. When Buddy made it to Broadway, it was on S50 he had borrowed from another sister so he could join the chorus line in Eddie Cantor’s *Whoopie*. Then it was back to hoofing with Vilma.

By the mid-1930s they were good enough to catch the eye of an MGM producer. Both signed two-year contracts, and after dancing with Eleanor Powell in *Broadway Melody of 1936* Buddy’s salary rose to \$2,000 a week. But when Vilma’s contract ran out, she was let go.

Buddy wasn’t fast and snappy like a lot of hoofers. He danced as if by nature, making a charming partner for Shirley Temple in *Captain January*. He moved with grace and presence, and a sort of American decency came through.

With fewer musicals being made, Buddy was given small roles in “straight” films such as *Yellow Jack*, about the U.S. Army’s

experiment with volunteers to find the cause of yellow fever. But before TV, Ebsen was best known for the role he *didn't* play.

Everything was set for him as the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, a part he seemed made for because of his ease with young actors and his scarecrow-like

build of being a lean 6 feet 3. But Ray Bolger, originally cast as the Tin Woodman, impressed studio heads with his loose-limbed impression of the straw character, and Buddy was talked into accepting the Tin Woodman role. He said it didn't matter, but it must have.

The sets were ready, the lighting was worked out, and Judy Garland was nervously eager to prove herself, but Buddy became seriously ill. Doctors determined



*Captain January* (1936)  
Shirley Temple and Buddy Ebsen

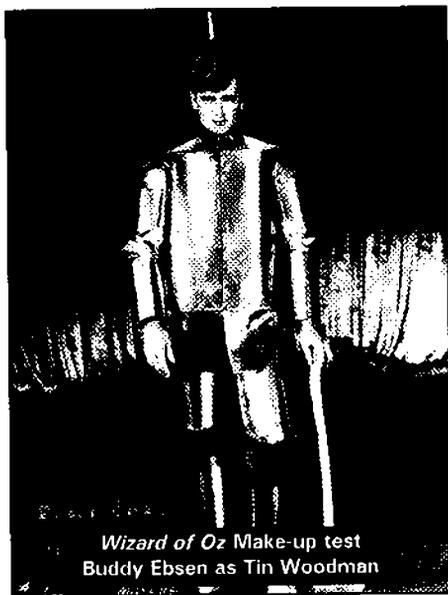
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that the aluminum-based makeup powder that covered him had coated his lungs like paint and could kill him if he continued any longer. In the tenth day of shooting, it was clear he had to be replaced. An aluminum paste was developed, and the role went to Jack Haley, who did little with it.

Although easygoing, Buddy had an independent streak. MGM offered him a seven-year contract that would give the front office absolute control over his career. When he refused to accept it, he was blackballed and the floor dropped out on his career.

Ignoring his agent's advice to retire, he toured in the gentle comedy *The Male Animal* and played for more than a year in Chicago in the farce *Good Night Ladies*. While in Chicago, he signed up in the Coast Guard and served in the Pacific during World War II. After he returned, he took small roles in B-movie Westerns at Republic, glad to be making only \$135 a week in 1947, not much more than a truck mechanic.

After accepting any part that came along, he saw an opportunity as Fess Parker's sidekick, Georgie Russell, in Disney's *Adventures of Davy Crockett* for ABC in 1956. Afterward he played a parallel role with



*Wizard of Oz* Make-up test  
Buddy Ebsen as Tin Woodman

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Keith Larsen in the NBC series *Northwest Passage*, about Indian fighting before the Revolution. The show was massacred in the ratings. But, as Buddy said, "No one counts you out but yourself."

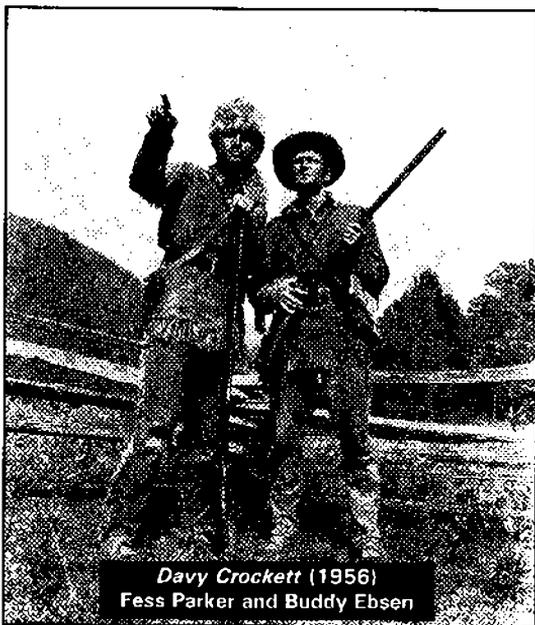
Writer-director Blake Edwards featured him in a small but crucial role as the deserted husband in the 1961 smash film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and his "hillbilly" image stuck to him. Figuratively and literally, he was about to strike oil.

As the story goes, TV comedy writer Paul Henning knew a worldly wise Ozark "hillbilly" as a child and wondered what would happen if such a man suddenly became rich. (He neglected to mention he was ripping off *The Real McCoys*.) The premise of *The Beverly Hillbillies* was that Jed Clampett and his family move to Beverly Hills after finding oil on their property, and in many episodes they confound banker Drysdale and outwit anyone trying to take advantage of them.

Ebsen said that in outlining the show to him, Henning "was falling down laughing at all the fun that was going to be in it." When Buddy realized his character was essentially a straight man, he said he would do it — provided Jed kept control of the money. That way, "he would never get lost in the story."

Irene Ryan, just three years older than Ebsen, was made up as Granny; blonde and tight-jeaned Donna Douglas was his daughter, Elly May, and her muscular cousin Jethro Bodine was Max Baer Jr., son of the former heavyweight boxing champ. The first episode aired on September 26, 1962, and television historians said its popularity was "simply indescrivable."

In its first full season, 50 million viewers watched the show every week. The show eventually reached 60 million, and



*Davy Crockett* (1956)  
Fess Parker and Buddy Ebsen

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the theme song was a top selling record. Faking a homespun background, Buddy would sign autographs with his best-known phrase, "Welllll, doggies!"

Although it was denounced as an example of the decline of television, the show in time drew serious examination. The *Saturday Review* praised the series for its "social comment," and David Marc and Robert Thompson in a book about TV called Jed "a Jeffersonian yeoman imbued with a dose of instinctual moral wisdom." So there.

Whether hokum or art, the show kept CBS happy for eight years, but a demographics study noted that many viewers were older and rural at a time sponsors wanted to catch baby boomers. So *The Beverly Hillbillies* was canceled in 1971 while still in the Top 10.

The fact that Buddy was of the age to retire made him a good choice for his next series, *Barnaby Jones*, about an analytical private detective who comes out of retirement to solve the murder of his son. He thought the show would flop. But what

made it a success from its premier on January 28, 1973, was Jones' folksy rapport with his daughter-in-law, played by Lee Merriweather. Besides, no matter what role he played, Buddy came across as a decent, hard working man from a rural background yet intelligent and even canny - someone you would have liked to know.

*Barnaby Jones* was a reflection of its times in showing how older people can be useful to society. For years after it was canceled in 1980, 30 New York business executives from 55 to 70 years old would meet for lunch every Wednesday at a restaurant in Rockefeller Center and view reruns together.

Buddy was now a multimillionaire, but definitely not the Beverly Hills type. When not on his ranch near Santa Monica he might be sailing his 35-foot catamaran, sometimes winning major races. He also founded a company that built catamarans, wrote several songs and a few stage and television plays, and, at 93, self-published a love story, "Kelly's Quest." In between



*Barnaby Jones* (1973-80)  
Buddy Ebsen

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these activities, he found time to be the father of a son and six daughters from two marriages.

A Nielsen Research study determined that from his 17 years in *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Barnaby Jones*, more people watched a show starring Buddy Ebsen than any other performer in TV history, including Lucille Ball of *I Love Lucy*. Not content with that, he made guest appearances in *Matt Huston* as a former intelligence agent whose nephew, played by Lee Horsley, is a wealthy investigator.

Ebsen said he enjoyed "getting up at dawn and going to the studio to be with my pals on the set." One of his best friends was still Fess Parker. When changing television programming found no place for him, Buddy settled down on his ranch and painted. He entered his third marriage in 1985, still vigorous and looking good at 77.

Buddy died of respiratory failure on July 6, 2003 at the age of 95. For someone with only modest talent, he did remarkably well.

As he once said during the run of *Barnaby Jones*, "I'm the luckiest star alive." ■



*Beverly Hillbillies* (1962-71)  
Buddy Ebsen and Irene Ryan

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# LORENZO JONES

*We all know couples like lovable, impractical Lorenzo Jones and his devoted wife, Belle. Lorenzo's inventions have made him a character to the town – but not to Belle, who loves him. Their struggle for security is anybody's story. But somehow with Lorenzo it has . . .*

**... MORE SMILES THAN TEARS.**

BY JIM COX

For millions of homemakers during the late afternoons between the 1930s and mid-1950s, a funny thing happened on the way to preparing supper. Tuning their radios, they caught a diversion from the traditional matinee fare: a pursuit in trivia known as *Lorenzo Jones*. The show was a radical departure from almost anything they were accustomed to.

The gurus of daytime drama, Frank and Anne Hummert, dreamed up this little farce as an interruption in the usual melee of mayhem and social excess. Ostensibly a comedy serial, *Jones* arrived to a bouncing organ rendition of Denza's "Funiculi Funicula." The show favorably compared with radio's other attempts at serialized humor, most notably *Easy Aces*, *The Goldbergs* and *Vic and Sade*.

Promising "more smiles than tears," this dishpan drama centered on Jones, an irrepressible auto mechanic at Jim Barker's



Lorenzo Jones  
Karl Swenson and Lucille Wall

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garage. Jones' idealistic schemes for producing all sorts of gadgets went well beyond the normal range of an obsessed fanatic. Frequently, in fact, his ideas bordered on sheer lunacy, like the time he developed a three-spouted teapot – including spouts for weak, medium and strong tea. He produced hair restorers that didn't work and bedwarmers that worked so well they ignited the beds! His sulfurwater pep tonic, contrived to get people moving again, accomplished that goal all right: one swallow and consumers were heaving frantically while hoping to keep anything down!

Poor Lorenzo: though he prided himself on being a law-abiding citizen, he nearly went to prison for dispensing such rem-

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*Jim Cox is the author of "Frank and Anne Hummert's Radio Factory: The Programs and Personalities of Broadcasting's Most Prolific Producers." This article is from "The Great Radio Soap Operas," copyright 1999 by Jim Cox and reprinted by permission of McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640. To order either book, call 800/253-2187. Or visit [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com)*

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edies without a license. Staying out of jail, in fact, became his most elusive goal, the result of frequent displays of imbecilic stupidity.

Despite this, some of his harebrained schemes actually worked. He created a ground-level wheel for walking canines in circles. He concocted a perpetual foot warmer that became a universal hit, then

misplaced the proceeds from it. He had put his earnings in a piece of pottery on the living room mantel but discarded the container. He also invented an item that is in widespread use today, though he was nearly laughed out of town for it at the time: an outdoor vacuum cleaner. The trouble with Lorenzo's contraption was that it ate nearly everything it came in contact with: topsoil, garden hoses, grass, etc.

Jones, the man, was a daytime version of the popular nighttime eccentric Fibber McGee, who aspired to invent numerous items that nobody wanted. (Aside from his myriad of misunderstood creations that neither impressed the folks of his town nor worked, McGee frequently attempted other ridiculous creations. He once wrote what he theorized would be an award-winning movie based on "The Typewriter.") Neither McGee nor Jones had much in the way of practical abilities for reasoning things out. Nevertheless, both were determined to pursue their idiotic concepts no matter what the cost and no matter that they became local laughingstocks.

Before the lilting "Funiculi Funicula" ushered the serial onto the air each afternoon, listeners were greeted with this



Lorenzo Jones  
Lucille Wall, Elliott Reid, Karl Swenson

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promising epigraph: "Now, smile awhile with Lorenzo Jones and his wife, Belle!"

An understanding Belle was as important to this series as Molly was to Fibber McGee. Belle Jones was the typical self-effacing spouse of that era who put her own hopes and dreams aside to support her mate in his preposterous quests. Even when Lorenzo's notions were too outlandish to share with anyone, Belle seldom argued against them. Instead, she preferred to murmur "Lorenzo, Lorenzo, I just don't know about that" in her own restrained fashion. But she never tolerated others who questioned her spouse's rationality. Belle was quick to defend her beloved Lorenzo when critics impugned his integrity or sanity.

Her favorite time of the day arrived when the couple reviewed the day's dilemmas while lying awake in their twin beds shortly before drifting off to sleep. Sometimes they quoted poetry to one another. In those quarter-hour glimpses into their lives, fans observed that there was more to Lorenzo than the often fanatical, hardheaded exterior he exhibited in public. Belle may have been perplexed by Lorenzo's incessant need to contrive the ridiculous, but she ended each

day with thanksgiving for this man who cherished her above all else.

Lorenzo, who often fancied himself a detective as well as an inventor, got into some ticklish situations as a result. When the aged Mrs. Carmichael asked him to move an ancestral portrait from above the mantelpiece of her colonial home, the amateur gumshoe uncovered a secret passageway. Legend had it that a treasure had been buried near the house; Lorenzo and Mrs. Carmichael were sure that the tunnel led to it.

A short time earlier Lorenzo had become friends with a smooth-talking Frenchman, Pierre Olivet, who purchased a neighborhood home for himself and an attractive female ward. Meanwhile, Belle was arranging for Lorenzo, Pierre and the sheriff to protect a million dollars in gems to be displayed during a charity-sponsored event. The cunning Frenchman successfully carried out his own agenda, however, stealing the diamonds and hiding them in a secret passageway from his home. *His* tunnel, listeners were not surprised to learn, connected with the one leading to the Carmichael estate.

Following the passageway, Lorenzo and Mrs. Carmichael naturally came upon the jewels and believed them to be the legend's hidden treasure. But when Pierre, brandishing a gun, confronted them, it looked like curtains for the amateur sleuths. Fortunately, Pierre had been followed by the police, and the sequence came to a happy end.

Lorenzo once had a not-so-pleasant encounter with a Parisian lass, the mysterious Fifi, who collaborated with him to build a "youth machine." Only after he borrowed enough to finance Fifi's return voyage to France did Lorenzo realize that she was a total phony. His trust in the common man (er, lass) was often misplaced.

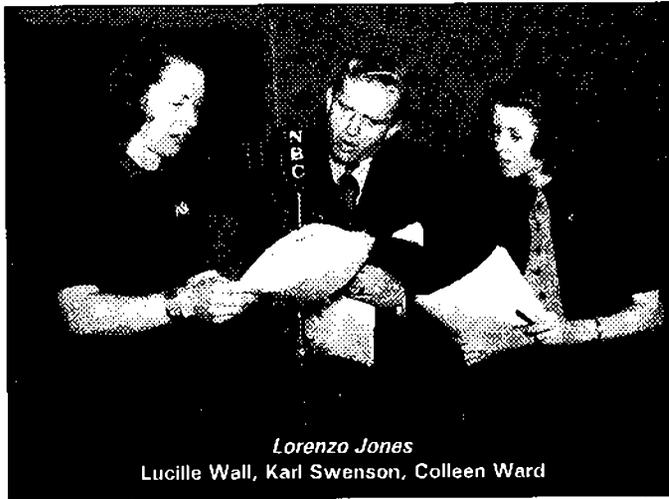
When Jim Barker, Lorenzo's employer,

could take no more of his off-the-wall day-dreaming, Jim fired the mechanic. Belle then took a job as a hairdresser at Madame Cunard's Beauty Salon, run by a French woman. (Has it occurred to anyone that this serial seemed preoccupied with the French?)

Lorenzo was soon hired as a foreman for Trapp and Sweeney, a building contractor – a field in which he had little experience. What he didn't know – but soon learned – was that Trapp and Sweeney were a couple of gangsters who used the business as a front for shady activities. They planned to draw Lorenzo into a tangled web. Gullible Lorenzo was their patsy until he exposed them after he lucked into learning their real intentions.

By the end of the 1940s Lorenzo idolized Marty Crandall, an old high school chum who returned to town touting success stories of his personal inventions. Belle too was impressed by Marty's tales of good fortune, and Lorenzo leased his workshop to his friend. Marty was working on a mysterious secret project, which he said he couldn't discuss even with Lorenzo. Poor Lorenzo didn't know whether to be jealous or suspicious of this man. Subsidized by a syndicate interested in his inventing skills, Marty's secret mission was finally revealed when Lorenzo pieced together a fantastic theory: Marty Crandall was actually constructing a counterfeiting machine in Lorenzo's workroom! When U.S. Treasury agents nabbed the racketeer, Lorenzo reveled in the local limelight as the town hero. (At one point he even had the idea of turning his life story into a motion picture, *Lorenzo Jones, the Man!* Doesn't that sound like McGee?)

Like many of his peers in the more serious washboard weepers, Lorenzo was suspected of murder at least a half-dozen times. Given such circumstances, one might suppose that a guy's friends would



Lorenzo Jones  
Lucille Wall, Karl Swenson, Colleen Ward

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avoid him. Not so in Lorenzo's case; his relatives, friends, neighbors, customers and acquaintances still beat a path to his door. Never once were their consciences bothered by the fact that Lorenzo, often suspected as a killer, continued to walk the streets as a free man. A man was truly innocent until proven guilty in their community!

Despite Lorenzo's many brushes with the law, for 15 years the serial remained light-hearted. Yet when the ratings cascaded to their lowest ebb, the Hummerts promptly took steps to correct the situation. The pair decided to inject a surprising twist into the story line, rivaling some of the turmoil in their other soap operas. (A historiographer suggested that since *Lorenzo Jones* immediately followed *Stella Dallas* on the air for most of its existence it was bound to acquire some of the melodrama so characteristic of *Dallas*, seeping across the 4:30 station break that separated the two serials.)

The plot revisions began to occur in mid-1952. Lorenzo was kidnapped and wounded by the accomplices of some gem thieves whom he had helped put away. Waking up in a clinic in New York City, he suddenly acquired a severe case of soap

opera's classic malady, amnesia. But whereas everybody else's amnesia in daytime radio departed after only a few days, weeks or months, Lorenzo's remained. He was saddled with the affliction for nearly three years, in fact. He took odd jobs for a livelihood while his disorder left him wandering from place to place. Experiencing

a total change in personality, ultimately he turned into a determined scientist, replete with romantic problems galore.

Listeners must have had some difficulty relating what they were then hearing to the show they had tuned in to during its earlier years. Had fate not intervened, in fact – in the form of the NBC brass, who canceled him – Lorenzo would most likely have become soap opera's first bigamist. In the waning days of the serial's life he marched toward the altar with the brilliant though predatory Gail Maddox. (Fortunately, that trip down the aisle was interrupted at an opportune moment.)

The number of soap operas on the air was materially reduced by the networks in the 1950s. The programmers soon concluded that a comedy serial no longer held commanding interest for mass audiences. Thus, NBC decided to abruptly curtail Lorenzo's misery. It would also give the network's new behemoth magazine *Week-day*, then aired four-and-a-half-hours daily five days a week, an extra quarter-hour to do its thing.

So, just in time to bid good-bye to his faithful listeners, Lorenzo was jerked back to reality. Though never recalling his marriage to Belle until then, he found his

helpmate patiently awaiting the moment he would regain his memory. And listeners must have pondered many times how a series rooted in a formula of "more smiles than tears" could have arrived at such an awkward conclusion.

Not only was this serial set apart from most other daytime fare due to its humorous content, but *Lorenzo Jones* was just as unique from an acting standpoint. Only three people played its two leading roles over 18 years. Karl Swenson was Lorenzo while first Betty Garde and then Lucille Wall took on the duties as Belle. Even more unusual is that all three went on to prominent roles in TV soap operas after their radio careers ended.

The multit talented Karl Swenson was born in Brooklyn, New York, on July 23, 1908. The medical student-turned-actor ventured onto the stage in 1930 in summer stock with the Berkshire Players. He appeared on Broadway in musical revues by Leonard Sillman and in *The Man Who Had All the Luck*, Arthur Miller's initial stage play. By 1935 Swenson debuted on radio's *The March of Time*. In this medium the full range of his versatile talents flourished, making him indispensable on many shows. In addition to Lorenzo Jones he was the male lead in *Our Gal Sunday*, sounding veddy veddy British as Sunday's husband, Lord Henry Brinthrope. He was "the man of many disguises," *Mr. Chameleon*, in that crime series' evening run. In that role, which some suggested the Hummerts created especially for him, Swenson readily assumed the dialect called for by his weekly disguise - Irish, Norwegian, German, Mexican, Yankee, Southerner, etc. His speaking abilities apparently knew no limit.

The busy actor found parts to his liking in these series, often playing title roles or masculine leads: *Father Brown*, *Joe Palooka*, *Lawyer Q*, *Linda's First Love*, *Mrs. Miniver*, *Rich Man's Darling*, *The*



*Whisper Men*, *Cavalcade of America*, *World's Great Novels*, *Portia Faces Life*, *This Is Your FBI*, *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*, *Spy Secrets*, *Grand Central Station*, *There Was a Woman*, *The Mighty Show*, *Aunt Jenny's Real Life Stories*, *The Court of Missing Heirs* and *The Ford Theatre*.

Moving to the small screen, he co-starred with actress Fran Carlon as her husband, Walter Manning, on the televised version of *Portia Faces Life* (1954-55), a radio serial in which he had been cast several years earlier. He was a regular on *Little House on the Prairie* in the part of Mr. Hansen and turned up in supporting roles on several other TV series. Swenson appeared on the big screen in *The Birds* and *The Hanging Tree*. The actor was married to the actress Joan Tompkins, heroine of *This Is Nora Drake* and *Lora Lawton*. He died at Torrington, Connecticut, on October 8, 1978.

Betty Garde, who played Belle Jones during *Lorenzo Jones*' first three years, was equally adaptable. Born on September 19, 1905, at Philadelphia, she burst onto the stage as Aunt Eller in Rodgers and Hammerstein's original Broadway version of *Oklahoma!* in the 1940s. Earlier, she had



PHOTOFEST

been in several lesser-known theatrical productions. Garde played in numerous movies and is perhaps best remembered for *Call Northside 777*, a 1948 film.

Her radio credits, meanwhile, are legion: *The American School of the Air*, *The Big Story*, *Criminal Casebook*, *Front Page Farrell*, *Maudie's Diary*, *McGarry and His Mouse*, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, *My Son and I*, *The Phil Silvers Show*, *Policewoman*, *Tish*, *We the Abbotts*, *Quaker Party with Tommy Riggs*, *The Aldrich Family*, *Theatre Guild on the Air*, *Cavalcade of America*, *America's Hour*, *The Henry Morgan Show*, *Jane Arden*, *Joe and Mabel*, *Mickey of the Circus*, *Perry Mason*, *Under Arrest*, *The Fat Man*, *Al Pearce and His Gang*, *The Columbia Workshop*, *Studio One*, *Gang Busters*, *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*, *World's Great Novels*, *Mr. and Mrs. North* and *The Thin Man*.

On television Garde appeared in 1954 as Mrs. Sweeney in *The World of Mr. Sweeney*. Two years later she turned up as Mattie Grimsley in TV's debuting thirty-minute soap opera *The Edge of Night*. She died on December 25, 1989, in Sherman Oaks, California.

The third member of the Jones trio, Lucille Wall, carried the part of Belle for most of the time, 1940-55. She also became the heroine of another radio soap opera, *Portia Faces Life*. Born on January 18, 1899, in Chicago, Wall broke into radio in 1927 at WJZ. She played the "Collier Love Story" girl under an assumed name of Polly Preston opposite actor Frederic March on the *Collier's Hour* broadcasts. Later she signed for many roles under her own name, including the female lead in *Your Family and Mine* and parts in *Pretty Kitty Kelly*, *Island Boat Club*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *True Confessions*, *The First Nighter* and *A Tale of Today*.

Although she wasn't selected for the title role in the brief stint on *Portia Faces Life* on TV, she later acquired a much more durable part – nurse Lucille March on TV's *General Hospital*. For about 14 years (1963-76 and again in 1982), longer than any of her radio characterizations, she played nurse March. Wall died on July 11, 1986, in Reno, Nevada.

The small-town radio audiences of the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s, who prided themselves on conformity, were comforted when Lorenzo Jones took his lumps over his failed ambitions. He was, after all, the ultimate nonconformist. And though these listeners may not have audibly expressed their feelings, millions must have chuckled to themselves inwardly, "smiled awhile" – as Lorenzo was soundly put in his place. Though his narrative was nonsensical, it must have had a certain ring of truth about it. As a result, the "character to the town" would surely have been recognized as such whether he lived in a fictional locale or among his most ardent fans. ■

*Tune in TWTD June 19 to hear Chuck Schaden's 1975 conversation with Karl Swenson and Joan Banks plus a Lorenzo Jones episode.*

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# Frank Munn, the 'Golden Voice of Radio'

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BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

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Who was Frank Munn?

A fair question indeed. Today, most people have forgotten about the singer who, for twenty joyous years, was the golden voice of radio.

Before Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra, there was Frank Munn. Frank Munn? And women everywhere fell in love with him.

He was featured from 1931 to 1945 on the *American Album of Familiar Music*. From 1930 to 1941, he was also the star performer on *Waltz Time*, which ran from 1933 to 1948. Both shows were on NBC.

When Munn sang, females closed their eyes, leaned close to their radios and dreamed only beautiful dreams. He was their Prince Charming.

Frank was what can best be described as being a rich tenor. He didn't reach for the high notes, Three Tenor-style. His voice had a rich, throaty quality that seemed to caress each word.

When Frank Munn crooned "I Love You Truly," millions of women bit their lower lips in a futile effort to hold back their tears. Such was the impact of this marvelous singer.

I don't recall too much about *Waltz Time*, which was on Friday nights. I was permitted to go to the movies on that night when I was a lad.

I do have fond memories of Sunday nights, though. *The American Album of Familiar Music* came on at 9:30 Eastern Time, right after the *Manhattan Merry-Go-Round*.

For some reason, the phone was off the

hook between 9:30 and 10 p.m. My mother and Aunt Mabel, who lived with us, took charge of the radio. My father was usually in bed because he went to work early on Mondays.

"You can listen if you are quiet," my mother would warn. Since I thought Munn was a splendid singer who sang popular songs as well as the old favorites, I obeyed orders.

All would be quiet. There were other singers on the show, but I have forgotten their names. I cannot recall the name of the orchestra leader or the announcer.

But there was Frank Munn! And he was great! Who could ask for anything more? When he cut loose with "Long Ago and Far Away," "Night and Day" or some other hit, females sighed. They loved the guy.

Now, here's the rub! Women loved him, that's a fact. But pictures of him were few and far between. Simply stated, his female fans had no idea of what he looked like. They could pass by him on the street and never realize he was there.

My mother had conjured up an image of Errol Flynn. She was convinced Munn had to look like the Old Swashbuckler. As for Aunt Mabel, she personally favored another actor. She thought Munn was a Tyrone Power.

Mrs. McDougal, who lived up the street, said she heard from someone who once saw him, that Frank Munn strongly resembled Ronald Colman. There was also a rumor that he was Clark Gable's twin.

You must remember, in those days all you heard was the voice on the radio. No television. You conjured up your own images.

Now, as time went by, I might have com-

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

---

pletely forgotten about Frank Munn. But something happened. Somewhere, and I don't recall where, my brother came across a newspaper photo of the singer.

Knowing my mother and aunt swooned every time the guy sang a song, he brought the clipping home so they could get a peek at their Dream Man.

Without a doubt, Frank Munn did not resemble Errol Flynn. Or Tyrone Power. Or Ronald Colman. Or Clark Gable. He didn't even come close to resembling those handsome actors.

Judging from that newspaper photo, Frank Munn looked like an ordinary guy. He wasn't handsome. He wasn't ugly, either. He was average. Nothing spectacular.

Once they saw that photo, my mother and aunt were jolted. Galahad was gone.

They remained loyal to the singer. They still listened regularly on Sunday nights. But the phone was on the hook.

Be that as it may, Frank Munn – forgotten now – was one of radio's greatest singers. ■

(ED. NOTE— In his book, "The Mighty Music Box," (Amber Crest Books, 1980) Thomas A. DeLong says that Frank Munn was a "top star during the glory-years of radio who quietly and without fanfare bowed out at the height of his career with no regrets, only gratifying memories." The singer, called by DeLong "the dean of ballad singers," apparently didn't have show business in his blood. "He contended that singing was merely a pleasant, effortless way to make a living; a lucrative job," said DeLong. Munn retired at the age of 51 in the summer of 1945, never again to appear on radio. He died October 1, 1953 at age 58.

*Tune in TWTD June 19 to hear Frank Munn sing and turn to page 39 to see a photo of the singer.*

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# REMEMBERING MISS HEPBURN

BY EVANNE MARIE CHRISTIAN

I do not remember a time when I did not believe that not only was Katharine Hepburn the greatest actress, but that she was also an extraordinary woman and an exceptional human being. By the time I went to college, my generation had become cynical, and chose to claim anti-heroes (and heroines) as their role models, but I found one new friend who held fast to being as old-fashioned as the characters in "Little Women."

Valerie and I met on a college choir retreat, and while everybody else was off indulging in more adult activities, we drank hot chocolate and marveled at all the things we had in common. Our favorite book? "Anne of Green Gables." (This, or course, meant that we were indeed "kindred spirits"). Our favorite music? Christmas carols. Our favorite country beyond our own America? Any place Celtic. Our favorite movie star? Well, this one had two answers, since undoubtedly Shirley Temple was the greatest child star. However, when it came to naming an

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*Evanne Marie Christian of Chicago, Illinois is a Nostalgia Digest subscriber and life-long fan of Katharine Hepburn.*

---

adult actress, it was, of course, Katharine Hepburn.

My college years were during an era before videos, so in order to see old movies, you either had to go to a cinema that showed art films, or stay up very late to watch the Late Show on television.

To our great joy, there was soon scheduled to be a Katharine Hepburn movie marathon on a local television station, so Valerie and I planned to stay awake from 1 a.m.



Katharine Hepburn

PHOTOFEST

Saturday morning until 1 a.m. Sunday morning to see 12 movies, most of which we had not seen before. I do not remember if Valerie ever slept, but I confess that I dozed through most of *Spitfire* (costarring Robert *very* Young).

Afterwards, we agreed that although the combination of "Kathy & Spence" was the best, it was *Holiday*, in which Katharine Hepburn co-starred with Cary Grant, that was our favorite movie. (Had our classmates only known, the Hepburn and Grant characters in that film were the anti-heroes of our parents' generation).

Often Valerie and I wished that somehow, some way we could meet Miss Hepburn, just to tell her how much she meant



*Holiday* (1938)  
Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn

PHOTOFEST

to us. The chance came in a very ordinary way when Katharine Hepburn began touring nationally in a play called *A Matter of Gravity*.

Late that autumn, my friend and I approached the Los Angeles Music Center as if it were a temple to the Muses, and sat in silent awe watching Miss Hepburn – *live!* – on the stage before us. Amazingly, although the actress had injured her lower leg and ankle recently, she insisted on continuing to perform, using a crutch!

After the show, Valerie and I raced around the Ahmanson Theatre to the “Stage Door.” (“The calla lilies are in bloom again...”), and joined a group of fans, waiting to catch a personal and up-close glimpse of our beloved Miss Hepburn. The door opened, and out she came, as natural as a friend coming to visit and as elegant as a queen permitting a private audience.

After applauding her on a bravura performance, most of the comments and questions expressed concern for her injuries. “Oh, well, I simply slipped on the wet grass one morning and fell. Clumsy, clumsy. And I’ve absolutely no patience at all for this thing,” said Miss Hepburn as she brandished her walking cane in the air. I wish I

remembered verbatim all that she said during the precious minutes she graciously spent chatting with us, but all I know is that afterwards, Valerie and I were determined to see the play again.

Unfortunately, we soon learned that the rest of the run in Los Angeles was sold out. However, in the midst of our deep disappointment, we had a

simultaneous flash of inspiration. Miss Hepburn had mentioned hoping to be back on both of her feet again when she played in San Francisco.

In those days, there was a small Californian airline company that made \$49 round trips from Los Angeles to San Francisco several times a day, seven days a week. Why not save up our pennies and go to San Francisco to fulfill our desire for an encore engagement with our film idol? So, we carefully planned an economical jaunt up north. In addition to the cheap flight, we reserved a room in a small European-style hotel (no television, no air conditioning, no amenities – and bathrooms down the hall). We decided that we would eat picnics down at Fisherman’s Wharf and take-out from Chinatown to save the dine-in costs on meals.

We had a wonderful day in the city seeing all the charming sights that could be seen free, and looking forward to going to the theater. It was not until we were nearly done dressing for the evening that we realized that we had made no arrangements for tickets to the play. We dashed to the theater and, not surprisingly, found to our dismay that the show was sold out for the re-

mainder of the San Francisco run.

With tears in our eyes, we left the box office, and looked at each other, desperately hoping for another brilliant inspiration. It was then that I glanced down an alley next to the theater and saw the magic words, "Stage Door." In hopes that we could at least hear the play through the partially open door, we went down the alley and put our ears against the part of the doorway that was not quite closed. Suddenly, there was a crash of thunder followed by the skies sending down a flood of rain. Within a minute, Valerie and I, wearing our nicest dresses (but no coats), were soaked to the skin, and a few minutes later we were shivering as the night became extremely cold. Laughing and crying and dripping with rain, we looked at each other and wondered, "What next?"

We were too young to know that one should not tempt fate as there is always something that happens "next." In this case, it was an extremely imposing man in a dark uniform walking purposefully down the alley toward us. It had to be a policeman, come to arrest us for being sneaks at the stage door! "Young ladies," said the man, a striking, but stern looking, African-American, "just what do you think you are doing?"

Almost hysterical, stumbling over our words and with chattering teeth, we both tried to explain to him that we had come all the way from Los Angeles to see Miss Hepburn, and had spent our savings, and then had forgotten to get tickets. Clearly, he was suspicious of such a ridiculous story, for when we paused for breath, he said, authoritatively, "Come with me. Now!"

So, two sopping wet girls in spoilt Sunday best shoes, and the one man in tall black boots approached a long silvery white limousine parked in front of the Geary Theatre. (Valerie remembers that he had an umbrella which he held over us, but

I don't remember it).

Opening the door to the back of the limo, our formally uniformed escort said firmly, "Get in, please." We practically crawled in, all too aware that we were bringing the mess of the storm in with us. We sat on the edge of the back seat, and the man got into the front seat. Through the shock of our trepidation, we began to notice that this uniformed man was not a policeman, but a chauffeur!

"Young ladies," he said as he turned to look at us, "my name is L. C. Fisher. Not 'Elsie.' 'L' period, 'C' period. I am Miss Hepburn's chauffeur. Now, tell me your story, slowly, and start at the beginning." We told him, he chuckled from time to time, and soon we were all laughing together. It really was so ridiculous.

"Well," said Mr. L. C. Fisher, "there's no reason why you young ladies should catch pneumonia. You just sit here until the play is over, and when Miss Hepburn comes out, I'll introduce her to you." And that is exactly what happened.

The rain was just stopping, becoming merely a mist, as Miss Katharine Hepburn was exiting the theater. Mr. Fisher went once again down the alley to escort her from the stage door to her car. (This is when I remember there being an umbrella).

He must have told her something because she seemed not at all surprised when Valerie and I tumbled out so that she could get in. All we could think of to say to her was that we were sorry that we had gotten the back seat so wet. Laughing the famous Hepburn laugh, she said, "Don't be silly. The seat has come to no harm, but you girls might have caught colds. Get back in, and Mr. Fisher will drive you wherever you need to go to get thoroughly dry and warm."

Then Miss Hepburn gently pushed us back into the limo, and as we had told Mr. Fisher about our charming hotel, he drove us directly there. All three of us - Valerie,



*A Matter of Gravity* (1976)  
Katharine Hepburn

PHOTOFEST

Miss Hepburn and me. And we heard the true story of what had happened to cause her to be on crutches. She had been playing tennis with her niece, Katharine Houghton, and had tried to jump over the net at the end of the game. This was not something she felt obligated to share with the press, as "being clumsy was one thing, but being idiotic was quite another."

As we approached the entrance to our small hotel, Miss Hepburn strongly suggested that Valerie and I somehow manage to take steam baths or showers, drink some hot tea with lemon, and get into our warm beds for a good long sleep.

"When do you leave San Francisco?" she asked as we reached the hotel. "We have a midnight flight tomorrow," we said sadly. "Excellent," said Miss Hepburn, rather mysteriously. And before we had a chance

to do anything but mumble our humble thanks to Miss Hepburn for, well, just for being the great lady we always knew that she was, Mr. L.C. Fisher had opened the car's back door, helped us out, and escorted us to the door of the hotel. It seemed right, somehow, to give him a big hug filled with gratitude, and both Valerie and I did so. "Now, you take care of yourselves, Miss Christian and Miss Kolarik, just as Miss Hepburn told you." "Yes, sir, Mr. L. C. Fisher. And thank you, thank you, thank you!" we said, followed by Valerie sneezing as I coughed.

Still, despite the cold night air, we stood there in the misty moonlight watching until the long silvery white limo had driven away and out of sight.

#### THE END

*No, wait. Not yet.*

Late the next morning, we awoke to the ringing of the telephone (the ancient hotel's one acknowledgment of modern times). I answered it. A woman identifying herself as Miss Hepburn's secretary was on the line. She told me that two tickets would be left for us at the Geary Theatre. House seats. Under Miss Hepburn's name. "Thank you very much," I said automatically, and hung up the phone. I was stunned.

"Well, who was it?" asked Valerie impatiently. I told her. She did not believe me.

All day long, in a friendly manner she teased me that when we got to the theater, the jig would be up and my little joke would be on me. The joke, however, was on Valerie. There were tickets reserved for us at the box office, and we sat in the best seats in the house, along with a few other distinguished residents of the Bay Area, including members of the Bing Crosby family.

Best of all, after giving a curtain speech on behalf of a worthy theatre charity, when Miss Hepburn took her final bow, she smiled her legendary beautiful smile, and winked, first at Valerie, and then at me. ■



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**APRIL 2004**

***Fibber McGee and Molly and the Movies***

**SATURDAY, APRIL 3 – Part 1**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 10 – Part 2**

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (4-26-37)** Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, who are packing their new auto trailer for a trip to Hollywood, where they will be making the movie *This Way Please* at Paramount Pictures. Fibber hires an acting coach to help him out. Hugh Studebaker, Harlow Wilcox, Ted Weems and the orchestra, whistler Elmo Tanner and singer Perry Como. Chicago-originated broadcast. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (28 min)

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (7-5-37)** The McGees have completed their work on the film *This Way Please* and Fibber is trying to get out of their long-term lease so he and Molly can return to Wistful Vista. Harlow Wilcox, Bill Thompson, Jimmie Grier and the orchestra with vocalist Tommy Harris. Hollywood-originated broadcast. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE (4-8-40)** "Mama Loves Papa" starring Fibber McGee (Jim Jordan) and Molly (Marian Jordan). The McGees (Jordans) appear as Wilbur and Jessie Todd, who live in the town of Glenville. Wilbur is a mild-mannered office worker who loses his job and is later mistaken for the town's park commissioner only to be appointed to the actual position. Cast includes Lou Merrill, Celeste Rush, Arthur Q. Bryan, Emory Parnell, Warren Ashe, Rolfe Sedan, Eddie Marr, Barbara Jean Wong. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Melville Ruick announces. Lou Silvers and the orchestra. Lux Soap, CBS. (24 min & 21 min & 15 min)

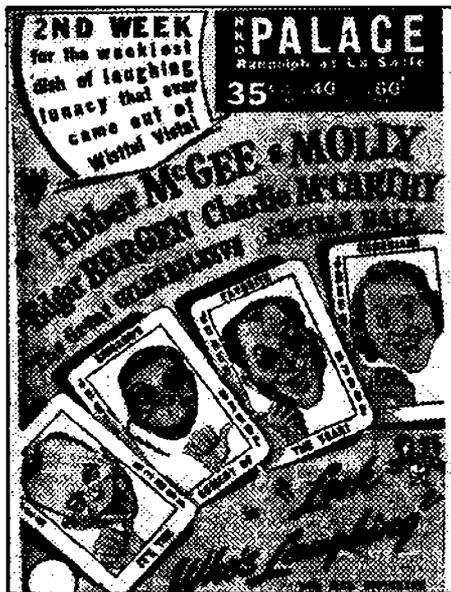
**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (4-9-40)** There's a big crowd waiting at the railroad station when the McGees return to Wistful Vista after appearing the previous evening on the *Lux Radio Theatre*. The Jordans star with Harold Peary, Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE (2-24-41)** "The Whole Town's Talking" starring Fibber McGee (Jim Jordan) and Molly (Marian Jordan). Fibber (Jim) appears as Wilbur Jones, a mild-mannered office worker mistaken for Killer Manion, "Public Enemy No. 1," an escaped bank robber. Molly (Marian) appears as Jessie, Wilbur's long-time girlfriend. Cast includes Paul Guifoyle as Manion, Arthur Q. Bryan as the District Attorney. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Melville Ruick announces. Music by Lou Silvers and the orchestra. Lux Soap, CBS. (26 min & 18 min & 15 min)

**SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (3-9-41)** "The McGees' Movie Contract" stars Jim and Marian Jordan as Fibber McGee and Molly, who are involved in a mistaken-identity plot while they are in Hollywood to try to get into the movie business. Cast includes Edward Arnold, Joan Bennett, Gary Cooper, Frances Langford, Roger Prior hosts. Bud Hiestand announces. Oscar Bradley and the orchestra. Gulf Oil, CBS. (30 min)

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (6-17-41)** Jim and Marian Jordan with a program dedicated to maestro Billy Mills on the occasion of his 10,000th radio broadcast. Fibber and Molly take Teeny to the amusement park, where a stranger introduces himself as a representative of RKO Radio Pictures. He wants to sign the McGees to a contract to appear in a movie called *Look Who's Laughing* with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Isabel Randolph, Harold Peary, Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Harlow Wilcox. The King's Men sing Billy Mills' new song, "The Sound Effects Man." Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (6-24-41)** The McGees are packing for their train trip to Hollywood, where they will appear in the film *Look Who's Laughing*. A doctor shows up to give



Fibber a physical for an insurance policy. Next-door neighbor Gildersleeve wants some of his visiting relatives to act as caretakers of the house at 79 Wistful Vista while the McGees are gone for the summer. Isabel Randolph, Harold Peary, Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

### SATURDAY, APRIL 17 – Part 3

**CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW (11-2-41) Excerpt.** Edgar Bergen, Charlie and Fibber McGee and Molly talk about their new RKO picture, *Look Who's Laughing*. They try to persuade a movie exhibitor to show their movie at his theater. Ray Noble and the orchestra. Chase and Sanborn, NBC. (7 min)

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (11-4-41)** Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, who are getting ready for next week's premiere of their new movie, *Look Who's Laughing*, to be held in Wistful Vista. Their co-stars, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, will be staying with the McGees. Molly wants some new furniture in the house, so she and Fibber go to the Bon Ton Department Store to buy a new davenport. Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, Gale Gordon, Harlow Wilcox, Martha Tilton, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

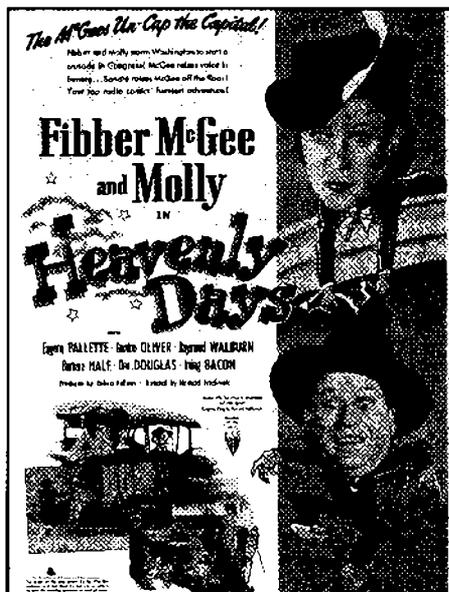
**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (11-11-41)** The McGees go to the Wistful Vista airport to meet

Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, who are coming to town for the premiere of their new picture, *Look Who's Laughing*. At the McGee residence, Charlie makes a pass at Teeny and, later, they all attend the premiere at the Bijou Theatre. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (2-17-42)** After appearing in the film *Look Who's Laughing*, Fibber still wants to be a movie comedian. He rents a movie camera and has a reluctant Molly take home movies of him for his demonstration film. Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Isabel Randolph, Virginia Gordon, Frank Nelson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

★ **FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (9-28-43)** The McGees decide to go to the movies, but Fibber can't find a nickel for some candy and disrupts the entire theater. Arthur Q. Bryan as Doc Gamble; Gale Gordon (still in the Coast Guard) as Mayor LaTrivida; Shirley Mitchell as the ticket seller; Ransom Sherman as Mr. Wellington, the theater owner. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (2-10-47)** "Heavenly Days" starring Jim and Marian Jordan as Fibber McGee and Molly in a radio version of their 1944 RKO film. Fibber goes to Washington, D.C., to speak for the Average Man. They get a pass to the U.S. Senate and Fibber takes the floor. Cast includes John Brown as Senator Bigby. Truman Bradley announces. Lady Esther Products, CBS. (25 min)





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**APRIL - MAY 2004**

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As we celebrate our 34th broadcast anniversary today, we'll share excerpts from many of the *Speaking of Radio* conversations we've had with a number of radio personalities and listen to clips from their programs.

In addition, we'll have these complete broadcasts:

**PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW** (10-2-53) Phil and Elliott Lewis (formerly known as Frankie Remley) become partners when they purchase a racehorse - sight unseen. Cast includes Walter Tetley as Julius Abbruzio, John Hubbard as Willy, Jeanine Roos and Anne Whitfield as daughters Phyllis and Alice. Announcer is Bill Forman. Walter Scharf and his orchestra. RCA Victor, NBC. (33 min)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (10-11-50) Willard Waterman stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, who may lose his job as water commissioner if Summerfield gets a new mayor. Cast: Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Mary Lee Robb, Richard Crenna, Gale Gordon, Dick LeGrand, Earle Ross. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-2-49) Jack's first program on CBS. On his way to the radio studio in the Maxwell with Mary and Rochester, Jack is nervous about his first program on his new network. Cast includes Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Frank Nelson, Mel Blanc, Artie Auerbach, Herb Vigran, Sportsmen Quartet, Don Wilson. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (29 min)



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**SATURDAY, MAY 1**  
**RADIO IN 1944 - Part 1**

★ **THE WHISTLER** (10-23-44) "Death Carries a Lunch Kit" is the Whistler's WW II story. A saboteur plants a bomb in a war plant but soon gets a case of the jitters. Bill Forman as the Whistler. Signal Oil Co., CBS. (29 min)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (5-4-44) Bing Crosby stars with Marilyn Maxwell, the Music Maids and Men, Uki Sherin, Charioteers, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, Ken Carpenter and guest Gene Kelly. Bing and Gene try to get themselves a vaudeville-type booking. Time Marches Back to 1877. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

★ **WORDS AT WAR** (6-27-44) "Fair Stood

the Wind for France," the tale of five American flyers shot down over France and the young French woman who helped them escape to safety. Jack Costello announces. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

★ **I SUSTAIN THE WINGS** (3-4-44) Captain Glenn Miller and the Band of the Army Air Forces Training Command present a program for the civilian listening audience. Sgt. Johnny Desmond and the Crew Chiefs provide the vocals and Lt. Don Briggs and Sgt. Broderick Crawford appear in a sketch about the importance of V-Mail. Selections include "In the Mood" and "I'll Be Around." Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

★ **HOP HARRIGAN** (3-7-44) *Isolated episode* of the kids' adventure show. America's Ace of the Airwaves and his pal Tank Tinker crash land in the North Sea. They're about to contact the Allies when they meet up with a German Luftwaffe officer - with a gun. Chester Stratton as Hop, Ken Lynch as Hank. Sustaining, BLUE Network. (14 min)

**THE SHADOW** (3-12-44) "Death to The Shadow" starring Bret Morrison as Lamont Cranston with Marjorie Anderson as the lovely Margo Lane. Ken Roberts announces. A newly invented television device which can tune in to any place in the city reveals the combination to a bank safe where negotiable bonds are kept. The same TV device can see The Shadow while others minds are clouded so he cannot be seen. Blue Coal, MBS. (29 min)

## SATURDAY, MAY 8 RADIO IN 1944 - Part 2

★ **BURNS AND ALLEN** (8-22-44) George and Gracie welcome guest Van Johnson. Gracie is scheduled to perform her "Concerto for Index Finger" at the Hollywood Canteen when Van develops a crush on her. Elvia Allman as Tootsie Sagwell. Bill Goodwin announces. Felix Mills and the orchestra. AFRS rebroadcast. (27 min)

**SUSPENSE** (6-1-44) "Fugue in C Minor" starring Vincent Price and Ida Lupino in a story of "brooding anxiety and sharpening suspicions" set in the late Victorian era. Roma Wine, CBS. (30 min)

**KENNY BAKER SHOW** (7-1-44) Singer Kenny Baker presents Robert Armbruster and the orchestra and guests Borah Minnevitich and the Harmonica Rascals in a program saluting George Gershwin. Selections include "Love Walked In," "Liza," "Embraceable You," and

a medley of tunes from "Gershwin's Broadway." AFRS rebroadcast. (30 min)

★ **PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT** (9-23-44) Speaking to the Teamsters Union in Washington, D.C., during his campaign for a fourth term, the President, in good spirits, gives his now-famous "Fala" speech. NBC. (13 min)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (6-8-44) Just two days after the D-Day invasion, Bing Crosby offers a very patriotic program featuring Marilyn Maxwell, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra and guest Cecil B. DeMille, who gives Bing tips on how to be a successful film producer. Time Marches Back to 1936. The start of the program is delayed for an NBC News special on up-to-date proceedings of the Allied invasion in France by Robert St. John. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

**VIC AND SADE** (1-24-44) After dinner, Vic falls asleep on the couch. Vic: Art Van Harvey. Sade: Bernardine Flynn. Russell: David Whitehead. Uncle Fletcher: Clarence Hartzell. Written by Paul Rhymer. Crisco, NBC. (13 min)

**MYSTERY HOUSE** (1944) "The Thirsty Death" starring Bela Lugosi and John Carradine. The "Thirsty Death" refers to a disease which drives animals wild in darkest Africa, changing domestic dogs to wild demons. Cast features Lurene Tuttle. Ken Carpenter announces. Syndicated. (29 min)



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IN THE

20

CENTURY

Chuck Schaden's

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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MAY - JUNE 2004

★ INDICATES A WORLD WAR II BROADCAST OF SPECIAL INTEREST

## SATURDAY, MAY 15 RADIO IN 1944 - Part 3

**MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER** (7-2-44) "Queen of the Cats," a story of a "frightened man" who married a mysterious woman who knew everything about him. Cast: Staats Cotsworth, Sarah Burton, Sandra Gould. Maurice Tarplin as the Mysterious Traveler. Sustaining, MBS. (29 min)

★ **IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT** (10-13-44) Moderator Tom Howard proves the point with panelists Harry McNaughton, Lulu McConnell and George Shelton. Guest is actor Adolphe Menjou. Questions: What precious metal is used in making the silver dollar? Name the famous lovers in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Menjou changes places with Howard to show him how to properly treat the panelists. AFRS rebroadcast. (29 min)

★ **WORDS AT WAR** (7-4-44) "War Criminals and Punishment." On the Fourth of July, an "Open Letter to Adolph Hitler" is read which outlines how Nazi war criminals will be dealt with when they are captured. Cast features Ned Wever. Carl Van Doren hosts. Presented in cooperation with the Council of Books in Wartime. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**SPEAKING OF RADIO** (4-26-71) Comedian **Danny Thomas** talks about his career - including his radio days - in a conversation with Chuck Schaden conducted backstage at the Mill Run Theatre in Niles, Illinois. (14 min)

**FANNY BRICE SHOW** (12-3-44) Miss Brice stars as Baby Snooks with Hanley Stafford as Daddy and **Danny Thomas** as Jerry Dingle, the postman. Daddy tries to cure Snooks of telling fibs. Danny sings "I'm the Smartest Man in the World." Frank Nelson as Dr. Clump. AFRS rebroadcast. (29 min)

★ **STRANGE DR. WEIRD** (11-14-44) "The House Where Death Lived." Dr. Weird (Maurice Tarplin) tells a story about a "fortune that

can be had for the taking - all you have to do is get it!" Adam Hats, WOR/MBS. (15 min)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (1-16-44) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, who is having enough problems working on the new Income Tax forms when Leila Ransom asks for help with hers. Walter Tetley, Lurene Tuttle, Lillian Randolph, Shirley Mitchell, Dick LeGrand, Earle Ross. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

## SATURDAY, MAY 22 RADIO IN 1944 - Part 4

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** (6-13-44) Jim and Marian Jordan star with Ransom Sherman, Shirley Mitchell, Arthur Q. Bryan, Marlin Hurt, Harlow Wilcox. Fibber installs the old porch swing on the front porch of 79 Wistful Vista. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29 min)

**SUSPENSE** (2-24-44) "Sorry, Wrong Number." Agnes Moorehead in her dramatic *tour de force* in Lucille Fletcher's study in terror about an invalid woman who accidentally overhears a telephone conversation about a murder, discovering too late that she is to be the victim. This is Miss Moorehead's third performance of the drama. Roma Wines, CBS. (29 min)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (6-15-44) Bing Crosby welcomes guest Bob Hope, who is on hand to plug his new book, "I Never Left Home," before going on a military tour. He and Bing also plug their new "Road" picture, *Road to Utopia*, and sing "Put It There, Pal." Time Marches Back to 1928. Marilyn Maxwell, Music Maids and Men, Ukie Sherin, Charitoers, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, Ken Carpenter. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

★ **DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE PROGRAM** (11-6-44) An all-star Election Eve broadcast promoting FDR's bid for a fourth term. An incredible broadcast, written, produced and directed by Norman Corwin.

Among the celebrities urging listeners to vote for FDR are Judy Garland, Humphrey Bogart, James Cagney, Groucho Marx, Danny Kaye, Tallulah Bankhead, Irving Berlin, John Garfield, Rita Hayworth, Walter Huston, Gene Kelly, Paul Muni, Edward G. Robinson, Lana Turner, Gertrude Berg, Milton Berle, Frank Sinatra. President Franklin D. Roosevelt speaks at the end of the program. All U.S. Networks. (30 min & 24 min)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (2-27-44) Broadcasting from the Hollywood Canteen, Jack and the gang entertain servicemen returning from or going to overseas assignments. Cast: Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Butterfly McQueen, plus guest appearances by Eddie Cantor and harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler. Grape Nuts, NBC. (28 min)

## SATURDAY, MAY 29 BIG BANDS IN 1944

(FITCH) **BANDWAGON** (2-20-44) Jan Savitt and his orchestra with pianist Alec Templeton present "It Had To Be You," "Mairzy Doats," "Holiday for Strings." AFRS rebroadcast. (15 min)

**TEDDY POWELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA** (4-22-44) remote broadcast from the Panther Room of the College Inn of the Hotel Sherman in Chicago. Selections include "A Journey to a Star," "Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me," "Body and Soul." Vocals by Peggy Mann and Skip Nelson. Sustaining, BLUE Network. (13 min)

**LES BROWN AND HIS BAND OF RENOWN** (7-7-44) Remote broadcast from the Cafe Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. Music featured includes "Long Ago and Far Away," "Straighten Up and Fly Right," and "Going My Way." Vocals by Doris Day, Butch Stone and Gordon Drake. Announcer is Bill Cullen. Sustaining, CBS. (14 min)

**THE OLD GOLD SHOW** (8-2-44) Allan Jones and Woody Herman and his orchestra (the famous "First Herd") present "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" "I'll Get By," "Flyin' Home," "Swingin' On a Star," "Woodchoppers Ball," and "I'll Be Seeing You." Red Barber announces. *This is a dress rehearsal recording.* Old Gold Cigarettes, CBS. (28 min)

**ONE NIGHT STAND** (8-12-44) Freddy Martin and his orchestra broadcast from the Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Selections include "I'll Walk Alone," "It

Could Happen to you," "Apple Blossoms in the Rain," "Just Close Your Eyes," and "Early in the Morning When We Say Good Night." Vocals by Artie Wayne, Gene Conklin, Glenn Hughes and the Martin Men. Jack Fina on piano. AFRS. (30 min)

**JUBILEE #98** (9-25-44) Host Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman presents Count Basie and his orchestra with vocalists Jimmy Rushing and Thelma Carpenter, comedienne Butterfly McQueen, Artie Shaw, and drummer Buddy Rich. Tunes include "Rhythm Man," "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," "Lady Be Good," "Embraceable You," and "Kansas City Stride." AFRS. (30 min)

(FITCH) **BANDWAGON** (10-8-44) Host Dick Powell introduces Mel Torme and the Meltones and Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra. Selections include "Chicago," "I'll Walk Alone," "You Always Hurt the One You Love," and "Boogie Woogie." Vocals by Freddy Stewart, Bonnie Lou Williams, Dick Powell, Mel Torme, the Sentimentalists. AFRS rebroadcast. (15 min)

**OUR SPECIAL GUEST** is big band historian **KARL PEARSON** who will talk about the 1944 music scene.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 5 60th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

★ **D-DAY NEWS SPECIAL** (6-6-44) **6 am EWT** Bob Trout brings listeners up to date on invasion news. Major George Fielding Elliott describes the tone of the invasion and mood of the troops. Trout tells of New York's reaction to invasion news: churches open for special D-Day services; war plants have prayer services. "At last the liberation of the continent of Europe has started." Charles Shaw, in London, has a dramatic account of the events surrounding the invasion. CBS. (24 min)

★ **LIGHT OF THE WORLD** (6-6-44) **10:15 am EWT** Usually the "day-to-day story of the Bible" told in soap opera terms, this invasion day episode puts aside the regular continuing story to present stories of "man's faith in God." General Mills, CBS. (13 min)

★ **AUNT JENNY'S REAL LIFE STORIES** (6-6-44) **11:45 am EWT** Announcer Dan Seymour says, "The long-awaited D-Day is here." Aunt Jenny, just returned from church, offers a prayer for the safety and success of our men and boys in the invasion. Her regular story continues, but at the close of the broadcast Aunt Jenny has a World War II message for wives and mothers. Spry, CBS. (13 min) → →



**Chuck Schaden's**

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

**WDCB • 90.9 FM • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM**

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## JUNE 2004

★ INDICATES A WORLD WAR II BROADCAST OF SPECIAL INTEREST

★ **KATE SMITH SPEAKS** (6-6-44) **12 Noon EWT** "Invasion Day has come and gone," Kate says to her listeners and tells of the reaction of the people in the United States. Ted Collins has latest news reports. Kate recites "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Sanka Coffee, CBS. (13 min)

★ **PASSING PARADE** (6-6-44) **7:15 pm EWT** Storyteller John Nesbitt looks 100 years into the future, to June 6, 2044: a school teacher in the 21st Century tells his students about the invasion of Europe during World War II. CBS (14:00)

★ **D-DAY NEWS SPECIAL** (6-6-44) **9 pm EWT** Ben Grauer offers a recap of the nation's reaction to the D-Day invasion, switching to NBC affiliate stations across the country, including WTIC Hartford, WSYR Syracuse, WTAR Norfolk, WSPD Toledo, WLW Cincinnati, WMC Memphis, KSTP St. Paul, WKY Oklahoma City. NBC. (29 min)

★ **FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** (6-6-44) **9:30 pm EWT** Jim and Marian Jordan with the King's Men and Billy Mills and the orchestra in a special D-Day broadcast. Fibber and Molly and their sponsor "are mighty proud to be associated with the radio industry, which at this moment is fulfilling its promise of instant communications in time of world crisis." Instead of their regular comedy format, the McGees host a program of "songs of the services dedicated to our fighting forces on all fronts." NBC. (30 min)

★ **PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT** (6-6-44) **10 pm EWT** President Franklin D. Roosevelt addresses the nation on the evening of the D-Day invasion and asks the nation to join him in prayer. His address is followed by a special presentation from Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians, who offer "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." NBC. (15 min)

★ **BOB HOPE SHOW** (6-6-44) **10:15 pm EWT**

"Nobody feels like being funny tonight," says Hope in this special abbreviated broadcast from the Van Nuys Aerodome in California. "God bless those kids across the English Channel." Frances Langford sings "Ave Maria" and Stan Kenton and the orchestra present a medley of service tunes. This is Hope's last show of the 1943-44 season. NBC. (14 min)

## SATURDAY, JUNE 12

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (3-20-49) Ozzie must present a discussion on the ancient Greeks before the PTA. With John Brown as Thorny and David and Ricky Nelson as themselves. International Silver Co., NBC. (29 min)

**PUCK, THE COMIC WEEKLY** (7-8-51) In this series, syndicated to stations picking up newspaper sponsors, the Comic Weekly Man reads the Sunday Funnies, with help from little "Miss Honey." Syndicated. (28 min)

**YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR** (10-29-56 thru 11-2-56) "The Silent Queen Matter" starring Bob Bailey as "America's fabulous free-lance insurance investigator" in this complete five-part story. The "man with the action-packed expense account" is called on to investigate the murder of a penny arcade owner who was a movie fan of the silent era. Posters of a silent film star - who also happened to be the beneficiary of the fan's insurance policy - were found defaced at the murder site. Cast includes Paula Winslowe, Virginia Gregg, Victor Perrin, John Dehner, Lawrence Dobkin, Chet Stratton. Sustaining, CBS. (5, 15-min episodes)

**SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE** (2-17-50) "It's In the Bag" starring Fred Allen in a radio version of his 1945 film. Allen is Fred Flugle, a flea trainer who is deep into debt, but expects an inheritance from his murdered uncle, who has hidden a lot of money. An all-star supporting cast: John Brown, Sheldon

Leonard, Frank Nelson, Hans Conried, Alan Reed, Gil Stratton, Jr. Jimmy Wallington announces. RCA Victor, NBC. (28 min)

**BOB ELSON ON BOARD THE CENTURY** (12-11-46) Broadcasting from Chicago's LaSalle Street Station, Elson interviews passengers from the high-speed luxury train. Krank's Shave Cream, MBS. (13 min)

## SATURDAY, JUNE 19

**NIGHT BEAT** (10-1-51) Frank Lovejoy stars as Randy Stone, reporter who covers the night beat for the Chicago Star. A woman who needs money wants to sell Stone a story about a murder - for \$500. Cast: Betty Moran, Peggy Webber, Larry Dobkin, Lou Krugman, Jack Kruschen, Stan Waxman. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min) *Read the article about Frank Lovejoy on page 48.*

**AMERICAN ALBUM OF FAMILIAR MUSIC** (1944) A program of traditional music presented in a straight-forward manner by singers Frank Munn, Jean Dickerson, Evelyn MacGregor, Margaret Down, and Gustave Haenschen and the orchestra. Munn sings "If There is Someone Lovelier Than You," "I've Told Every Little Star," "We Shall Meet Again," "When My Dreamboat Comes Home." AFRS broadcast. (29 min) *Read the article about Frank Munn on page 26.*

**SPEAKING OF RADIO** (8-27-75) **Karl Swenson** and Joan Tompkins talk about their careers in a conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded in Hollywood, California. (26 min & 20 min)

**LORENZO JONES** (9-21-48) *Isolated episode* of the long-running daytime series. **Karl Swenson** stars as Lorenzo, with Lucille Wall as his wife, Belle. Lorenzo has turned his attention to the "World of Tomorrow." Bayer Aspirin, NBC. (15 min) *Read the article on page 20.*

**HOLLYWOOD HOTEL** (12-18-36) Columnist Louella Parsons stars with Dick Powell, Frances Langford and Raymond Paige and the orchestra in a celebrity-studded program featuring James Stewart, Loretta Young, Arthur Treacher, Igor Gorin, Tony Martin, Darryl F. Zanuck. The broadcast is from the 20th Century-Fox Studios in Hollywood, previewing the film *One in a Million*, which marks the screen debut of ice skating star Sonja Henie. Plus a visit to the "set" for scenes from the movie with Sonja, the Ritz Brothers, Adolphe Menjou, and others. Campbell Soup, CBS. (15 min & 18 min & 25 min) *Read the cover story about Louella Parsons on page 8.*



Frank Munn  
*American Album of Familiar Music*

PHOTOFEST

## SATURDAY, JUNE 26

**TWENTY-FIRST PRECINCT** (6-9-54) A probationary officer's first job at the precinct is to guard a hospitalized prisoner who was wounded by a policeman during a robbery. Everett Sloane as Captain Frank Kennelly, Ken Lynch as Lt. Matt King, Harold Stone as Sgt. Waters. AFRS rebroadcast. (28 min)

**RAILROAD HOUR** (7-20-53) "Starlight" starring Gordon MacRae and Dorothy Warrenskjold in a musical "memory of the days of good old vaudeville." It's almost a cavalcade of show biz from vaude to video! Association of American Railroads, NBC. (29 min)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (6-28-37) "The Front Page" by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur stars Walter Winchell, Josephine Hutchinson and James Gleason. It's the classic Chicago-based newspaper story about a reporter who stumbles on the story of his life just before he is scheduled to leave on his honeymoon: a killer escapes from jail. Cast includes John Butler, Frank Sheridan, Georgia Kane, Victor Rodman, Lou Merrill, Rolfe Sedan, Frank Nelson. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Melville Ruick announces. Louis Silver and the orchestra. Lux Soap, CBS. (19 min & 18 min & 22 min)

**THIRD MAN** (8-10-51) "See Naples and Live" starring Orson Welles as Harry Lime. In Italy, Lime is after a valuable emerald locket worn by a rich American traveler. Syndicated. (26 min)

**BLONDIE** (1949) Ann Rutherford and Arthur Lake star as Blondie and Dagwood Bumstead with Jeffery Silver as Alexander and Norma Jean Nilsson as Cookie. Dagwood buys sleeping bags so he and Alexander can take a camping trip. Cast includes Hanley Stafford as Mr. Dithers, Frank Nelson as Herb Woodley. AFRS rebroadcast. (24 min)

# VAUDEVILLE

## PROVING GROUND FOR RADIO



Adele Smith and Ed Wynn

PHOTOFEST

### BY BILL OATES

Professional baseball has its minor leagues, trades have their apprenticeship programs, and old-time radio had vaudeville. For three or four generations this variegated form of family stage entertainment enthralled Americans from coast to coast. Then it ended abruptly never more

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*Bill Oates, of Kouts, Indiana, is a high school English teacher and author.*

---

to regain its prominence as a proving ground for young talent. However, those who enjoyed the rigors of the vaudeville stage forever cherished the opportunity afforded them, the camaraderie of the genre, and the daily grind of two-a-days.

When vaudeville began its popular run in a young United States, it had already experienced centuries of preceding incarnations. Ancient Greece probably enjoyed

the first solo performers, as mimes and clowns figured in the culture of the several centuries B.C. From this time onward, wandering minstrels, jugglers, magicians, etc. criss-crossed the European countryside.

The actual name for the art form probably originates with the French; however, the exact connection to the word is somewhat foggy. Perhaps vaudeville began with well-known drinking songs, *chansons du Vau* or *du Val de Vire*. Likewise, it may have a connection through *voix de ville* or songs of the city streets. Another source may be the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris in 1792, where dangerously political ballads mocked the times surrounding the French Revolution.

(The venue often found itself in trouble with its topical allusions, and, in a time when the guillotine often stood as the severest critic of this form of satire, the performers eventually converted to semi-historical pieces.)

Another starting point may be when short comic dialogues developed as intermezzi between acts of serious operas or *pièces en vaudeville* or *comédies avec vaudeville*. Regardless of the word's origin, entertainment that moved from town to town offering many different acts on one stage found a permanent place in the 14th century.

As America grew after its Revolution and started pushing westward, European vaudeville and music hall acts soon followed. Single acts, many visiting English performers, began to appear with increasing frequency. Simultaneously, burlesque or "leg shows" emerged, and early vaudeville borrowed liberally from these and other variety entertainments, as well as minstrel shows (blackface variety), circuses, dime museums (assorted acts and curios), and honkey-tonks (rowdy drinking establishments.) This format of pro-



P. T. Barnum and Commodore Nutt

PHOTOFLST

viding a docket containing many different acts provided the basis for what would become the standards for vaudeville in America during the last half of the 19th and first third of the 20th century.

American vaudeville first formally appeared when William Valentine opened a house built for solo acts in New York City in the 1840s. The real start of what was to become the standard of American vaudeville houses and bills occurred in 1865 when Tony Pastor's Opera House cleaned up the then often crude bills and established a policy of entertainment fit for ladies and children.

By 1871, vaudeville troupes headed out to play in dime museums like those owned by P.T. Barnum. In the next two decades, B.F. Keith with his first partner, William Austin, managed a house in Boston, where an early bill listed Baby Alice the Midget Wonder, The Tattooed Man, and the Dog-faced Boy. These early days often included an outer hall with freaks and curios, a half-hour to 50-minute show, a piano player, a



Jack Benny

stock company in larger houses, and a barker who cried "This way out" when the show ended. If a particular audience balked at leaving, the management often resorted to a "chaser" or repeating the last act several times to clean out stragglers. Pastor's standards flourished as the norm, and by 1910, two thousand small-time theaters graced the American landscape.

Shortly before the turn into the 20th century, one of the greatest vaudeville ownership teams formed: B. F. Keith merged with E. F. Albee to run two Boston theaters. Like Tony Pastor, Keith was so family oriented that when he opened his first major theater in 1893, he promised only the "cleanest" entertainment. After its premiere, the owner ushered patrons on a tour that included a whitewashed coal bin in the cellar. (Keith's squeaky clean reputation allowed him to borrow money from Boston's Catholic Church to open this particular venue.)

Keith quickly moved on to expand his holdings. He built quality theaters in Brooklyn (the Albee), Cleveland (the Pal-

ace), and Boston (the Memorial). Later he bought out Oscar Hammerstein's prestigious New York Victoria theatre.

By 1923, his partner, the tyrannical Albee, managed The Keith Circuit (Keith died in 1914) and controlled 350 houses. Through his United Booking Office he also held the contracts of tens of thousands of performers, most of whom disliked him. Groucho Marx called him the "Ole Massa." Albee felt that "all his life actors gyped him" and "now I'm going to gyp them." Just as his name grew synonymous with heavy-handedness in vaudeville, Keith's name adorned their flagship stages, frequently called The Palace. (His name even became the center initial in RKO pictures.)

While the Keith-Albee circuit virtually controlled vaudeville in the East, several forces began to offer alternatives to his distasteful tactics.

The famed agent William Morris took Albee to task in 1912 to the point the famed trust buster Theodore Roosevelt threatened to bring in the Attorney General if Albee didn't loosen his control on contracts and ante up more money for his performers. Albee was so furious at the threat that he forbade his actors from reading *Variety*, the entertainers' daily paper, because its editor, Sime Silverman, sympathized with the better treatment of actors.

A second theater chain that began on the West Coast threatened Albee's stranglehold on vaudeville. Martin Beck opened his first Orpheum theatre in San Francisco, and by 1905, had 16 more houses from the California to Chicago. His major contributions included competition for Albee and a chain of consecutive bookings for performers.

The heyday of American vaudeville, as well as an important springboard to the early days of radio, came on March 24, 1913 when Albee opened the New York Palace. The early radio star Ed Wynn appeared on the first bill, but at \$2 a scat, the



Will Rogers

experiment did not take off immediately, and critics decried it as an overpriced disaster. Later that season, when the aging actress Sarah Bernhardt played the Palace at \$500 per night (which ultimately increased to \$7,000 per week), audiences began to show greater interest in the ornate vaudeville house. Her top fee stood for many years, until Eddic Cantor appeared for \$7,500 a week on a 1931 bill with George Jessel and George Burns and Gracie Allen. Unfortunately, because of the Great Depression, the last straight vaudeville program at the Palace ended a year later in July 1932.

Numerous stars who became important radio personalities were among the greats who played the Palace. Studying the chronology of 20th century public entertainment, as the Palace gained recognition as the pinnacle of the art, radio grew as a medium needing the talent that the live stage could offer.

Jack Benny got his first break at the big time when he appeared on the Palace stage as part of the team of Benny and Woods in 1917; he later headlined there in 1929. Kate Smith set an all-time two-a-day record

of eleven weeks in 1931.

An all-star list of radio favorites who played the Palace would include Will Rogers, W.C. Fields, Fanny Brice, Edgar Bergen, the Marx Brothers, and Fred Allen and Portland Hoffa.

(By the way, "headlining" indicated the most prestigious position on a vaudeville bill. The first and last acts were not the most preferred, because people were either getting into their seats or preparing to leave. These opening and closing acts were often pantomime or animal acts, ones that would be less interrupted by commotion. Needless to say, following an animal act like Fink's Mules or Swain's Cats and Rats might not be a very enviable or fragrant position. Just before intermission or close to closing were favored, because, if the other performers did their job and elevated the audience's attention, an eager house awaited the headliner.)

Some radio, film and even television veterans also played the Palace but did not necessarily achieve sustained fame there. Comedians Joe Penner of "Wanna buy a duck?" fame, Jack Pearl (Baron



Eddie Cantor

PHOTO-EST

Munchausen), and raspy Lulu McConnell of *It Pays to be Ignorant* all enjoyed at least one turn at the famed house. Child performers Pert Kelton, Ben Bernie (as a boy violinist), and Baby Marie (Rose Marie) likewise got their big breaks there.

Among those who trod the boards at the Palace and achieved lasting fame in at least one medium were the Mills Brothers, Bert Lahr, Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, "The Street Singer" Arthur Tracy, Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, Fred and Adele Astaire, Charles Winninger, Rubinoff the violinist, the Three Keatons, and the renowned magician Harry Houdini.

For a small contingency of successful radio performers, conjuring up vaudeville memories on their programs became a regular occurrence, a reverent appreciation for the vehicle that brought them to millions of radio listeners each week. Two prominent comedians who often recalled fond memories of their vaudeville days on their radio shows were George Burns and Fred Allen.

George and wife Gracie's radio and television shows often included tried and true routines that had been finely tuned decades earlier on stage. After all, it was because of vaudeville that they met and became one of the most popular husband-and-wife comedy teams in 20th century entertainment. Frequently, vaudeville was used as part of the plot of their radio show, as was the case of the two-part saga about George becoming a movie star. As his character's ego grew larger during the programs, Gracie and guest star George Jessel reeled Burns back to reality by fabricating a new vaudeville team of Jessel and Allen. The ploy was to appeal to the old trouper's instinct, and, of course, it worked.

As vaudeville faded as an American institution, George and Gracie often used it on their television show. Frequently, and with tongue-in-cheek, they noted that their



PHOTOFEST

old routines might not be funny anymore. However, the delighted audience proved that good material stood the test of time.

Fred Allen's recollections seemed even more profound to the point that he not only promoted old vaudeville friends on his radio show, but he also assisted in the post-World War II revival of vaudeville. Allen's first autobiographical work, *Treadmill to Oblivion*, fondly recalled numerous episodes in his lengthy career in two-a-days at the Palace.

Sadly, television became the villain that kept people out of the theaters and a thorn in Allen's side when it threatened his other love, radio. When Allen died, many down-on-their-luck vaudevillians missed him dearly, for the great comedian usually passed a five- or ten-dollar bill their way, when they tapped him for it.

Making vaudeville a career created for many a sort of fraternity that became ingrained in their emotional make-up. When one looks back on pastimes, the observer often recalls them more romantically than they really were. Having nefarious book-

ing agents or managers and often escaping landladies in the middle of the night seemed to take a back seat to the thrills afforded the performers by an appreciative audience.

The reputations of actors not paying their bills often stemmed from their not receiving compensation for performing. Other less-than-desirable times probably included the countless hours spent on trains or waiting to make a connection for the next engagement. When railroads prevailed as the key mode of travel in America, a good vaudevillian memorized the schedules and knew how to make close connections. Nonetheless, years later the negatives of the two-a-day grind were more fondly recalled, and a special admiration society evolved.

As the Great Depression deepened, by 1934, the mix of live stage performers and motion pictures gave way to movies only. Even some "legitimate" theaters turned off their stage lights, as economics dictated that cheaper motion pictures better helped to pay the bills. However, for a brief while starting in 1949, vaudeville commingled with first-run films at the Palace.

Two years later, Judy Garland appeared for a four-week engagement and revived two-a-days. She was so successful that she stayed for 19 weeks, breathing life into vaudeville for another seven years. Harry Belafonte closed the theater again in March of 1960.

In the mid 1960s, the newly restored Palace emerged and enjoyed another brief life as the Mecca of live stage presentations. However, cost factors and television eventually put the final damper on vaudeville. Unlike so many of its contemporaries, the Palace still functions as a live theater house at 1554 Broadway and hosts shows such as the recent incarnation of *Aida*.

Simultaneous to the demise of vaudeville, early television gave opportunities to



PHOTOEST

old vaudevillians on the many variety shows that appeared on the dial. The new generation of comedians such as Sid Caesar and Jackie Gleason, who saw vaudeville as children or started their careers in its successor "burlesque," frequently invited the old-timers to guest or support the stars on their programs.

Likewise, many vaudeville acts from animals to greats such as Smith and Dale, the original "Sunshine Boys," are recorded on 1950s kinescopes for later generations to appreciate. Early variety television impresario Ed Sullivan deplored the term "vaudeo," sometimes intended by critics as a derogatory reference to rejuvenating the old acts on television in a vaudeville format, as he and others of the medium's first decade included these aging entertainers on their shows. In tribute to Sullivan, audiences at home must have liked his program, for it became one of the longest running television variety shows of all time. For many performers, visits to black-and-white television screens would be their last before an audience.

Ultimately, in the 1960s, the American Broadcasting Company debuted its tribute

to the vaudeville format with its *Hollywood Palace*. This show from the ABC Palace Theatre (the old El Capitan) included a mix of the old-time greats from Groucho Marx, Jimmy Durante, and Ed Wynn to the jugglers and animal acts that rounded out a typical vaudeville bill. Unfortunately, just as their old way of life faded into theatrical nostalgia, the format of the show included them less and less as it neared the final year of its six-year run in 1970.

Vaudeville in America fell into a category of tradition right alongside baseball and Fourth of July fireworks. As the 21st century pushes ahead, the lights dim even further on a truly unique entertainment phenomenon. Old Time Radio became the first broadcast beneficiary of its talent, allowing its performers another turn before admiring audiences. Motion pictures did include some vaudevillians, but appearing before only a handful of camera and sound crew members did not offer the same thrills of waiting in the wings and feeling the initial reaction when the actor appeared in front of a paying audience.

And only a scant few appeared before the movie camera. Just as the sooty coal-burning trains that transported these entertainers from coast to coast ended up in junk yards or on rare occasions in a museum, the old acts that were tried out in Altoona, adjusted in Wilkes-Barre, and – it was hoped – ended in New York at the Palace, likewise faded from the commonplace. Perhaps if the Old Time Radio fan pops in the right cassette, CD, or video, he might



George Burns and Gracie Allen

PHOTOFEST

once again appreciate the acts that might have started like this:

Music: *(George does a brief sand dance, before he is interrupted by Gracie.)*

Gracie: *George, my brother the window washer lost his job.*

George: *Lost his job?*

Gracie: *That's right. He was working on the 20th floor, and when he got through, he stepped back to admire his work ...*

George: *And that's how he lost his job.*

Music.

Gracie: *George, my father fell down the stairs with three quarts of liquor.*

George: *Did he spill it?*

Gracie: *No, silly, he kept his mouth closed.*

Music.

Gracie: *George, my sister just had a baby.*

George: *Boy or girl?*

Gracie: *I don't know, but I can't wait to find out if I'm an aunt or uncle.*

Music and curtain. ■

*Tune in TWTD June 26 for a Railroad Hour program devoted to "the memory of the days of good old vaudeville."*

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# FRANK LOVEJOY

## A Consummate Actor

BY JIM WIDNER

It starts with two deep thumps on a bass drum followed by six rhythmic poundings, the announcer gives us a two-word intro – NIGHT...BEAT! – then a trumpet blast and drum beat building to a crescendo followed by a cool jazz lick on a clarinet.

The listener is enticed into the evening world of a city's gritty underbelly. Despite this ear-catching opening, it is the equally gritty voice of the leading character that guides us through this seamy world of crime, misery and, sometimes, joy.

The series was *Night Beat* and the actor was the great character actor Frank Lovejoy. As reporter Randy Stone, Lovejoy always began the show with "stories start in many different ways..." The same could be said for the actor himself; his story began in another gritty town: New York City.

Born in the Bronx on March 28, 1914, the son of Frank Lovejoy Sr, a salesman for Pathé films, Junior began his working career at the age of 15 as a runner for one of the Wall Street firms in the significant year of 1929 – the year of the collapse of the stock market. Finding himself suddenly out of work and with little experience, he turned to the acting field. He began working for the Theatre Mart in Brooklyn learning the acting trade and other elements of

---

*Jim Widner is the co-author of "Science Fiction on Radio: A Revised Look at 1950-1975" and webmaster of Radio Days (<http://www.otr.com>) which has been on the World Wide Web since 1994. He has also written other articles on various Old Time Radio Subjects. His e-mail address is [jwidner@otr.com](mailto:jwidner@otr.com)*

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Frank Lovejoy

PHOTOFEST

theatre. Upon graduation from high school, he attended New York University, where he honed his stage acting skills.

By 1934, he had gained acting experience that provided his first major role at the Belasco Theatre on 44th Street in Elmer Rice's play about the burning of the Reichstag and the Nazi accusations against Communists – *Judgment Day*. It was a role that would typecast him for the gritty, serious, strong character parts he continued to play throughout his career. Ironically, during the 1950s, the Belasco was used for a while by NBC as its radio playhouse until it was restored again to legitimate theatre. But while the play was significant, the role was not the break that Lovejoy was hoping for. That break was described by the actor in an interview, years later: "My first



major break came when Brock Pemberton selected me for one of the leads in his Broadway production of *Chalked Out*," Lovejoy said.

That was in 1937, when the play opened at the Morosco Theatre on 45th street. Major roles were not readily forthcoming and so by 1938 he found himself in Virginia acting in another play when he was offered the opportunity to tour in the Alan Child/Isabelle Loudon production of their play *Pursuit of Happiness*. The tour would provide him with an opportunity to expand his acting horizons. In his interview Lovejoy explained that he was "...touring the country later with *Pursuit of Happiness*, which luckily closed in Cincinnati. So I applied for a job at radio station WLW in that city, and I became part of [the] staff."

Radio station WLW by 1938 was the most powerful broadcasting station in the United States and was one of the premier stations not located in New York City. Owned by Powell Crosley Jr., it was broadcasting at 500,000 watts – the only station allowed to experiment with this kind of power. This was why Crosley dubbed WLW "The Nation's Station." The experiment was making Crosley a wealthy man because of sales of a radio which he also

produced. Many creative people were passing or had passed through, including Norman Corwin, Erik Barnouw, Eddie Albert, Rikel Kent and Fats Waller. *Ma Perkins*, *The Life of Mary Sothorn* and several other serial dramas got their start at WLW. To work for the station during this time offered many opportunities for its staff.

It was in this environment that the young Lovejoy found himself. It was a good place to learn the radio craft. Actor Eddie Albert, who was hired by the station as a singer, spoke jokingly of the way one learned the craft at the station, though it could apply to many radio actors. Albert said, "I came [to WLW] as a singer and twenty minutes later they said 'hey, read this' ...and you did! Everybody was pitching in... it was nothing but heaven."

The acting staff was expected to play virtually any part that was needed – so one had to learn fast. Given the type of roles we think of today that Frank Lovejoy portrayed throughout his career – gritty, serious, hard – at WLW he was heard as the young nephew of Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. About his experience at the station, Lovejoy said in a later interview "I learned a lot." His work at WLW provided a platform to launch his radio and, later, his film career.

By 1939, Lovejoy was back in New York City making radio appearances in a wide variety of roles including "The Cliff," "The Visit From Hades," and "I Do" for *Arch Oboler's Plays* in 1939. He was also in Pepsodent's *Mr. District Attorney* and the serial dramas *This Day Is Ours*, *I Love*



Night Beat (1950-52)  
Frank Lovejoy

PHOTOFEST

Linda Dale, and *Valiant Lady* and romantic dramas such as *Manhattan At Midnight* and *Grand Central Station*. Later he appeared in crime dramas such as *This Is Your F.B.I.*, *Gang Busters*, *Philo Vance*, and *Boston Blackie*.

He was also able to resume his Broadway stage career, though now with increased prestige. He

appeared in *The Snark Was A Boojum*. The play was a flop, but it was in this show that he met his future wife, Joan Banks, who also worked in radio.

Joan Banks was born in West Virginia in 1918. Her interest in the theatre brought her to New York. When she appeared with Lovejoy in *Snark* they began dating and married within a few

months in 1940. Eventually, their marriage produced two children, Judith and Stephen. In radio, the theatre and later film, Joan and Frank often appeared together in the same productions.

In 1940 both Frank and Joan appeared in the radio series *Blue Beetle*. This juvenile series about a police officer who takes on a super hero aura to fight crime lasted only 13 episodes, with Lovejoy as the police officer.

Throughout the '40s, Lovejoy continued to play various character roles in some of the most popular radio programs, including appearances on *Suspense*, *Escape*, and *Box 13*. He also maintained his theatrical footprint starring in 1946 as Tony Flynn in Bella and Sam Spewack's play *Woman Bites Dog*. It was while in this play that a young Stanley Kramer saw him perform. Kramer signed the actor to be a part of Kramer's Story Productions. The arrangement brought the Lovejoys to California, where eventually Frank starred in the film *Home of the Brave* launching his career as a major screen presence. Though he had a small role in an earlier film, *Black Bart*, it was the Kramer production that thrust him into the film limelight. *Home of the Brave*



In A Lonely Place (1950)  
Humphrey Bogart, Gloria Graham, Frank Lovejoy

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Joan Banks and Frank Lovejoy

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was one of the kind of productions for which Lovejoy is most noted – those with a moral center. *Home of the Brave* deals with racism in the military.

While pursuing the film career, Lovejoy continued to appear in radio. By early 1950 he finally starred in his own radio drama and one of the better radio programs: the Warren Lewis production *Night Beat*. The series featured a newspaper reporter who covered the night beat for the Chicago Star. Produced in Hollywood, it was noted for its strong characterizations as well as its plots. Writers for the series included Larry Marcus, Russell Hughes, Irwin Ashkenazy and E. Jack Neumann. The writing often bordered on the poetic, especially when read by Lovejoy, as in this example from a November 1950 episode:

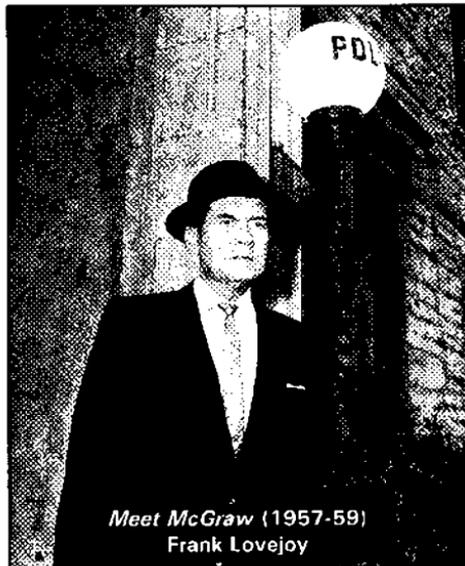
*You ever notice how when the sun goes down the chemistry of the whole earth starts a new reaction? The flowers close with the shop doors; sunshine leaves town with the buses and the birds settle down like the dust covers on the department store counters.*

*At night perfume replaces the flowers, neon takes up the task of the sun, and the birds that take flight of the hearts of people looking for love and the good tomorrow.*

*Someone said that the night is a mantle that covers the weary and the cave of excitement for the adventuresome. They forgot to add that the night is also a mask for the evil.*

It was a perfect role for the veteran Lovejoy. His radio career had come a long way from his early years at WLW in Cincinnati. The series also featured strong acting from the Hollywood cadre of actors including Joan Banks Lovejoy, Ted de Corsia, Larry Dobkin, Wilms Herbert, Lurene Tuttle and numerous others.

During the 1950 season Lovejoy starred in several films with some strong Hollywood actors including Humphrey Bogart in *In A Lonely Place* and Eleanor Parker in *Three Secrets*. But it was a tough time for Hollywood in the '50s and one of the films that the actor is most identified with is one in which he starred in 1951: *I Was A Communist for the FBI*. As Matt Cvetic, he was an undercover agent for the FBI in a ring of communists in the United States. During the '50s, the actor



Meet McGraw (1957-59)

Frank Lovejoy

PHOTOFEST

continued to appear in films.

It was during this time that Frank Lovejoy would finally conquer the last of the visual media. Television was coming of age and he was not to be left behind. He made guest appearances in *Zane Grey Theatre*, *Lux Video Theatre* (where he won an Emmy for his role as the insurance salesman in "Double Indemnity") and *Four Star Playhouse*. By 1956 he was a regular in *Man Against Crime* playing Mike Barnett and then starred in his own TV series, *Meet McGraw*.

The Lovejoys were both very busy in Hollywood. But again he was not to be deterred from appearing on the New York stage. In 1960 he was in Gore Vidal's *The Best Man*, which was later made into a film starring Henry Fonda. While in New York

in October 1962 he suffered a heart attack and died. He was only 50 at the time. (His wife, Joan Banks, died many years after her husband, on January 18, 1998.)

Having conquered the stage, radio, film, and television, this wonderful character actor achieved something unique that most actors never achieve. But for radio fans, he will always be known as Randy Stone, the sympathetic reporter from the *Night Beat* series, where at the end of one episode Stone preaches "Life is but a dream, but dream or real, we only go through here once. Too bad we don't make more of it."

Frank Lovejoy did, indeed, make very much of his short life. ■

*Tune in TWTD June 19 to hear Frank Lovejoy in an episode of Night Beat.*

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# SALLY AND HER FANS

BY WAYNE KLATT

It's always good to have something to fall back on, and with Sally Rand it wasn't just her prettiness.

The natural blonde with the vivacious figure was born Helen Gould Beck in Hickory County, Missouri, in 1903. Her father was a mailman, and with everyone telling her how cute she was, she ran away from home at age 13 to make something of herself.

She hooked up with a traveling carnival, but her first steady job was as a cigarette girl at a Kansas City nightclub. You know, someone wearing slightly revealing clothing and carrying a wide tray on long straps from her shoulders, moving slowly through tables saying "Cigars? Cigarettes?" Essentially window dressing for the place

---

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

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Sally Rand at Chicago's Century of Progress (1933)

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and living on tips.

Helen worked her way west to Hollywood and appeared in 21 silent films, some by Mack Sennett of "Keystone Kops" and "Bathing Beauties" fame. Considering what she later became known for, it's odd that she also had a part in Cecil B. DeMille's 1927 Biblical epic *King of*

*Kings*. According to one story, DeMille gave Helen the stage name of Sally Rand. According to another, she took it from a Rand McNally atlas lying on her dressing room table.

When the advent of sound required more than just a pretty face, Sally with her Missouri drawl found herself without hope of becoming a star. In 1932 she took a train to Chicago to be a chorus girl at a nightclub in preparation for the World's Fair the next year, but when it opened in April she was out of work. She realized that to be noticed, she had to offer the audience something no one else thought of.

She bravely—or brazenly—appeared unexpectedly on the fairgrounds astride a white horse, costumed in her golden tresses and apparently not much else, portraying Lady Godiva, evidently for those interested in the history of English tax revolts. That got her noticed but not a job. So she applied for an opening as a creative dancer and gained immediate publicity by announcing that she would wear no clothes because they would interfere in her act.

From all reports she was a very nice young woman; otherwise there would be no point in reading about her. She also seems to have been fairly bright. Her idea



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was to dance nude or nearly nude with just large ostrich feathers, called fans. The trick would be to slowly reveal while simultaneously slowly concealing.

Although apparently untrained as a dancer, she worked hard on a routine that was genuinely graceful. For the artistically inclined, she said her dance was inspired by childhood memories of "white herons flying in the moonlight." If

you will, ballet with a wink. But she had so little money she had to buy the fans on credit.

The dance may look smooth, judging from a film of her act, but it must have been hard work. Those fans were about four feet long and weighed seven pounds each. Try manipulating fourteen pounds with only your wrists for about ten minutes while moving the rest of you in several directions and being careful to keep the audience interested but within the bounds of decency.

By appealing to the lowbrows and to the highbrows, she raised eyebrows. After all, the fair was called "A Century of Progress." What might have got by in New York was regarded as obscene here, and that is how Sally entered the annals of Chicago Police lore. The man destined to arrest her was former mounted policeman Frank

O'Sullivan. Until meeting Sally, the high point of his nine-year career was chasing two jewelry store robbers and lassoing at least one of them.

Along miles of art deco buildings near where McCormick Place now stands was the "midway," where Sally performed to increasing crowds in a "Streets of Paris" review. Her barker was Claude Kirschner, who would become the ringmaster of

ABC-TV's *Super Circus* show. Among the excited adolescents who sneaked into her performance was the future dignified actor Sam Wanamaker. He was 14.

It was said that Sally drew 75,000 customers a month at the fair alone. Knowing her worth, she had her salary boosted from \$175 a week at the start of the fair to \$3,000 by the end. Not publicized was that she gave a performance at the Regal Theatre in the South Side Bronzeville neighborhood because blacks were not allowed to attend shows at many of the lakefront fair pavilions.

Sally was not a stripper, and her act was not naughty in itself. It was just a dance for women who like dances and titillation for men who until then had not. But Mayor Edward Kelly must have felt she and the scantily clad women in the Oriental (Turk-



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ish) Village were lowering Chicago's standing (at a time when Prohibition gangs were still shooting it out). The Turkish girls put on more clothing, and Sally, after losing a 35-minute quarrel with her manager, reluctantly agreed to wear translucent gauze. At least at the fair.

In the daytime Sally performed the same act on the stage of the Chicago Theatre, but minus the gauze, as part of the live entertainment between

showings of the film *Another Language* with Helen Hayes and Robert Montgomery. The world's first fan dancer was billed as "THE SENSATION OF THE WORLD'S FAIR." In all, she was performing six shows a day at the theater and the fair.

The 250-pound Officer Frank O'Sullivan, then in plain clothes and on Police Commissioner James Allman's staff, was given the assignment to watch Sally perform at the Chicago Theatre and, if anything appeared unfit for Sunday school children to see, take appropriate action.

On the hot afternoon of August 4, 1933, O'Sullivan arrested her, apparently backstage after her act, she was released on bond, and he arrested her again, and she was released on bond again. In fact, she was arrested four times in one day alone.



Sally Rand in Chicago (1978)



we have a right to cater to them.”

But some of her fans were gentlemen. The late senior federal judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz recalled with honor that as a young man he put on a tuxedo and escorted Sally to the gala opening of the Empire Room in the Palmer House during the fair. The featured act at the supper club was the ballroom dance team of Veloz and Yolanda. Sally was also one of the celebrities invited to sign Marshall Field's guest book.

Among the souvenirs sold at the fair was a clock made in Sally's honor, but a better idea of her popularity was that a photo of Sally being arrested was carried in a German publication. Adolf Hitler kept a copy in his vault, as was discovered at the end of World War II.

“A Century of Progress” closed after two years. Before 1934 was out, she got to do her dance in front of the movie cameras in George Raft's *Bolero*, but she was not really a dancer at heart. That was why she never tried to vary her act.

Still captivating in her middle 30s, she would go from town to town and have some local play the dreamy “Clair de Lune” on the piano. One time it was a 15-year-old

The newspapers were wowed, showing tough O'Sullivan and demure Rand, who managed to be dressed in a white outfit suitable for a revival meeting.

In fact, she knew the way to the nearest police station so well by then that she walked there while O'Sullivan went by paddy wagon.

The question was whether her act was obscene or not. That is, did she reveal all or pretty much all, or was nudity in the eye of the beholder? O'Sullivan, fully clothed and no beauty, decided to show the judge just what it was that she did. Police afterward said he did “a commendable imitation” of the act. The judge declared the dance indecent and fined her \$25.

A more broad-minded judge, Joseph B. David refused to issue an injunction against her. “Lots of people would like to put pants on horses,” he said. But he had no respect for her audience. “If you ask me, they are just a lot of boobs (idiots) come to see a woman wiggle with a fan or without fig leaves. But we have the boobs (idiots) and

boy who had shoe-blacked his hair to look older. Occasionally she would perform in a play, including once with a young Vincent Price. As his daughter remarked, "For a boy who was bred on burlesque, this was almost as exciting as working with Helen Hayes."

When not performing, Sally preferred a private life. Few knew that she was raising an adopted son. In the 1940s, when she was more legend than performer, she took her act to such established places as Mangam's Chateau in Lyons. Wags said she put on her costume "with a powder puff." By the 1960s she still had her looks but her performances seemed pretty tame at a time when Las Vegas showgirls were showing more than she ever did.

With little education, her act was all she knew and she was afraid to give it up. She could boast that she was never out of work from the time she took her clothes off. So she accepted bookings at the better strip clubs, such as the Sugar Shack in Wisconsin, four miles north of Lake Geneva. In her 60s, Sally showed up with her own trunks and didn't need a rehearsal. Rather than the usual young clientele, she filled the place with "old geezers" reliving fond memories.

Of all the cities Sally visited, she was fondest of Chicago, where she got her start. She offered to donate her fans to the Chicago Historical Society in the 1960s but they were rejected. The society at the time wanted only certain aspects of Chicago history to be remembered.

At the age of 74, Sally Rand made two special appearances in Chicago on November 11-12, 1978. Two full-house audiences at North West Federal Savings' Community Center Auditorium were packed with people who had attended the fair and had seen her in 1933 and 1934.

She greeted those fans warmly and reminisced about her days at the fair: "I was



Sally Rand with one of her fans:  
Grant Schmalgameier (Chicago, 1978)

deeply grateful to be eating. I had been truly gut-hungry without enough to eat – not only today, but tomorrow. I had no idea of the impact I was having," she said. Between the multiple shows at the fair, at the Chicago Theatre and at various other venues around town, "I didn't have time to savor it."

It was to be her final appearance in the city where she gained her most prominence.

She died less than a year later, on August 31, 1979. Newspaper obituaries noted that she had been making personal appearances long after her contemporaries had retired, leaving her home in Glendora, California, to go on the road for many weeks a year.

She said she liked to see the older men turn out "for the nostalgia" and their sons "who heard about me from their parents," but "the most flattering audiences," she said, "are the real young ones, the ones who never knew Sally Rand was a no-no."

By the way, the Chicago Historical Society finally said yes-yes and accepted the original Sally Rand fans at its Donors' Ball in 1988. They are now an artifact of our culture. ■

# RADIO STAR BIRTH DATES

COMPILED BY RON SAYLES

## APRIL

- 1 Jack Grimes, 1926 *Let's Pretend*
- 2 Gertrude Warner, 1917 (d. 1-26-86) *The Shadow*  
Jack Webb, 1920 (d. 12-23-82) *Dragnet*
- 4 John Brown, 1904 (d. 5-16-57) *Life of Riley*; *Date with Judy*  
Bea Benaderet, 1906 (d. 10-13-68) *Jack Benny Program*, *My Favorite Husband*  
Frances Langford, 1914, *Bob Hope Show*, *Bickersons*
- 7 Walter Winchell, 1897 (d. 2-20-72) *Jergens Journal*
- 8 ulu McConnell, 1882 (d. 10-9-62) *It Pays to be Ignorant*  
Bert "Mad Russian" Gordon, 1900 (d. 11-30-74) *Eddie Cantor Show*
- 15 Hans Conried, 1915 (d. 1-5-82) *My Friend Irma*, *Life with Luigi*
- 16 Milton Cross, 1897 (d. 1-3-75) *Voice of the Metropolitan Opera*  
Marian Jordan, 1898 (d. 4-7-61) *Fibber McGee and Molly*  
Les Tremayne, 1913 (d. 12-19-03) *First Nighter*; *Thin Man*  
John Hodiak, 1914 (d. 10-19-55) *Lil Abner*, *Suspense*
- 17 Arthur Lake, 1905 (d. 1-10-87) *Blondie*
- 18 Al Hodge, 1913 (d. 3-19-79) *Green Hornet*  
Bob Hastings, 1925, *Archie Andrews*
- 19 Betty Winkler, 1914, *Joyce Jordan, M.D.*, *Abie's Irish Rose*
- 20 Betty Lou Gerson, 1914 (d. 1-12-99) *Story of Mary Murlin*, *Guiding Light*
- 22 Hal March, 1920 (d. 1-19-70) *Sweeney and March*, *December Bride*
- 25 Edward R. Murrow, 1908 (d. 4-27-65) *News broadcaster, commentator*  
Albert Aley, 1919 (d. 1-1-86) *Let's Pretend*, *Hop Harrigan*  
Robert Q. Lewis, 1921 (d. 12-11-91) *Arthur Godfrey Show*
- 27 Ned Weber, 1902 (d. 5-6-84) *Dick Tracy*, *Young Widder Brown*
- 28 Lionel Barrymore, 1878 (d. 11-15-54) *Dr. Kildare*, *A Christmas Carol*
- 29 Harry McNaughton, 1896 (d. 2-26-67) *It Pays to be Ignorant*  
Frank Parker, 1906, *Jack Benny Show*, *Arthur Godfrey Show*
- 30 Eve Arden, 1912 (d. 11-12-90) *Our Miss Brooks*, *Danny Kaye Show*



JACK  
WEBB

FRANCES  
LANGFORD



HANS  
CONRIED



LIONEL  
BARRYMORE



BING  
CROSBY



## MAY

- 1 Kate Smith, 1907 (d. 6-17-86) *Kate Smith Show*, *Kate Smith Speaks*
- 3 Bing Crosby, 1903 (d. 10-14-77) *Kraft Music Hall*, *Philco Radio Time*  
Norman Corwin, 1910, *Columbia Presents Corwin, Twenty-Six by Corwin*
- 5 Freeman Gosden, 1899 (d. 12-10-82) *Sam 'n' Henry*, *Amos 'n' Andy*  
Bret Morrison, 1912 (d. 9-25-78) *The Shadow*  
Alice Faye, 1915 (d. 5-9-98) *Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show*
- 6 Parkyakarkus (Harry Einstein), 1908 (d. 11-24-58) *Eddie Cantor Show*  
Frank Nelson, 1911 (d. 9-12-86) *Jack Benny Show*  
Orson Welles, 1915 (d. 10-10-85) *The Shadow*, *Mercury Theatre*
- 8 Arthur Q. Bryan, 1899 (d. 11-30-59) *Fibber McGee & Molly*  
Katherine Raht, 1901 (d. 12-2-83) *Aldrich Family*, *Against the Storm*  
Ricky Nelson, 1940 (d. 12-31-85) *Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*
- 15 Clifton Fadiman, 1904 (d. 6-20-99) *Information, Please*
- 17 Artie "Mr. Kitzel" Auerbach, 1903 (d. 10-3-57) *Jack Benny Show*
- 18 Meredith Willson, 1902 (d. 6-15-84) *Burns and Allen Show*
- 20 James Stewart, 1908 (d. 7-2-97) *Six Shooter*

ORSON  
WELLES



ARTIE  
AUERBACH



- George Gobel, 1920 (d. 2-24-91) *National Barn Dance, Tom Mix*
- 21 Horace Heidt, 1901 (d. 12-1-86) *Pot o' Gold, Youth Opportunity Program*  
 Dennis Day, 1917 (d. 6-22-88) *Jack Benny Show, Dennis Day Show*  
 Raymond Burr, 1917 (d. 9-12-93) *Fort Laramie*
- 23 Herbert Marshall, 1890 (d. 1-22-66) *Man Called X*
- 25 Barbara Luddy, 1907 (d. 4-1-79) *First Nighter*  
 Ginny Simms, 1916 (d. 4-4-94) *Kay Kyser's Kollege, Ginny Simms Show*
- 26 Al Jolson, 1886 (d. 10-23-50) *Shell Chateau, Kraft Music Hall*
- 27 Marlin Hurt, 1904 (d. 3-21-46) *Fibber McGee and Molly, Beulah*
- 29 Bob Hope, 1903 (d. 7-27-2003) *Bob Hope Show*  
 Mary Jane Hligby, 1909 (d. 2-1-86) *When a Girl Murries, This is Nora Drake*  
 Iris Adrian, 1913 (d. 9-21-94) *Abbot and Costello Show, Jack Benny Show*
- 30 Norris Goff, 1906 (d. 6-7-78) *Lum and Abner*  
 Mel Blanc, 1908 (d. 7-10-89) *Jack Benny Show, Mel Blanc Show*  
 Peter Leeds, 1917 (d. 11-12-96) *Rogue's Gallery, Bob Hope Show*  
 Fred Allen, 1894 (d. 3-17-56) *Town Hall Tonight, Fred Allen Show*  
 Joe Kelly, 1901 (d. 5-26-59) *National Barn Dance, Quiz Kids*  
 Don Ameche, 1908 (d. 12-6-93) *First Nighter, Bickersons*



GEORGE GOBEL



GINNY SIMMS



HATTIE McDANIEL



TOM HOWARD



KAY KYSER



JOAN DAVIS

**JUNE**

- 1 Frank Morgan, 1890 (d. 9-18-49) *Fabulous Dr. Tweedy*
- 2 Ben Grauer, 1908 (d. 5-31-77) *Jurgens Journal, Information, Please*  
 Walter Tetley, 1915 (d. 9-4-75) *Great Gildersleeve, Phil Harris-Alice Faye*
- 4 Carlton F. Morse, 1901 (d. 5-24-93) *One Man's Family, I Love A Mystery*  
 Charles Colingwood, 1917 (d. 10-3-85) *Newscaster, reporter*
- 5 William Boyd, 1898 (d. 9-12-72) *Hopalong Cassidy*
- 6 Peter Donald, 1918 (d. 4-30-79) *Fred Allen Show, Can You Top This?*
- 10 Hattie McDaniel, 1895 (d. 10-26-52) *Beulah, Show Boat*  
 Ernest Chappell, 1903 (d. 7-4-83) *Quiet Please, Big Story*  
 Judy Garland, 1922 (d. 6-22-69) *Good News of 1938, Bob Hope Show*  
 Harlan Stone, 1931, *Archie Andrews, Let's Pretend*
- 11 Gerald Mohr, 1914 (d. 11-10-68) *Philip Marlowe*
- 12 Archie Bleyer, 1909 (d. 3-20-89) *Arthur Godfrey Time*
- 13 Basil Rathbone, 1892 (d. 7-21-67) *Sherlock Holmes*  
 Bob Bailey, 1913 (d. 8-13-83) *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*  
 Ralph Edwards, 1913, *Truth or Consequences, This is Your Life*
- 14 Major Edward Bowes, 1874 (d. 6-13-46) *Original Amateur Hour*  
 John Scott Trotter, 1908 (d. 10-29-75) *Kraft Music Hall, Philco Radio Time*
- 16 Tom Howard, 1885 (d. 2-27-55) *It Pays to be Ignorant*
- 17 Red Foley, 1910 (d. 9-19-68) *National Barn Dance, Grand Ole Opry*
- 18 Kay Kyser, 1906 (d. 7-23-85) *Kay Kyser's Kollege*  
 Clayton "Bud" Collyer, 1908 (d. 9-8-69) *Adventures of Superman*
- 19 Virginia Payne, 1910 (d. 2-10-77) *Ma Perkins*  
 Pat Buttram, 1915 (d. 1-8-94) *National Barn Dance, Gene Autry Show*
- 20 Matt Crowley, 1904 (d. 3-10-83) *Mark Trail, Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*
- 23 John Milton Kennedy, 1912, *Lux Radio Theatre*
- 24 Phil Harris, 1904 (d. 8-11-95) *Jack Benny Show, Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show*
- 29 Ed Gardner, 1901 (d. 8-17-63) *Duffy's Tavern*  
 Joan Davis, 1907 (d. 5-22-61) *Village Store, Joan Davis Show*  
 Bernard Hermann, 1911 (d. 12-24-75) *Conductor, composer*
- 30 Santos Ortega, 1899 (d. 4-10-76) *Nero Wolfe, Ellery Queen*

*A much more complete listing of birth dates (and death dates) of show business personalities may be found on Ron Sayles' web page:  
<http://mywebpage.netscape.com/bogusotr/instant/taz.html>*



## OUR READERS/LISTENERS WRITE

# WE GET MAIL

**NORRIDGE, IL**— Having been born in 1953, I remember the end of the golden days of radio. Some of the shows you play and memories you talk about, I remember fondly, but the older shows and the memories of WW II are fascinating. You and Ken Alexander do a great job and are a great team. —**BOB BRUN**

**PLAINFIELD, INDIANA**— I have enjoyed your program since about 1985. The really thrilling discovery was finding out I could listen to *Those Were The Days* with my computer. I am sure WDCB's audience has been expanded due to your program. I have subscribed to *Nostalgia Digest* since 1989 and have every copy from that date. Keep up the good work. —**LESLIE D. ACTON**

**CHICAGO**— Enclosed is my two-year subscription to your excellent publication. Love the new format. I started listening to your program over 25 years ago when your station had a limited signal. I couldn't get the station until I reached the Cicero and Foster area on my way to work in Lincolnshire. Most of the programs that you play are those I listened to as a youngster. I miss those days and the many friends I had met at Chapin Hall and Budlong Grammar School on Foster Avenue. But I have great memories of those days, especially when I tune in to your outstanding show each Saturday. —**RAYMOND SKIPPER MITCHELL**

**E-MAIL**— I just last week joined the *Digest*. Now I wish I had made it a two-year subscription. It gives so much information. I love getting the program info for each Saturday. I live in "sunny" California so I listen to you on the Internet. Also I love the conversation between you two on the program. Don't ever stop. —**SANDY**

**BARRINGTON, IL**— For Christmas last year I gave my wife a wireless notebook computer to help her with her daily chores. Little did she know what evil lurked in the heart of her husband. After she unwrapped the computer, I told her I had to "charge the battery." While I was out of sight, I secretly

programmed WDCB <[www.wdcb.org](http://www.wdcb.org)> into the favorites and on our way to visit our children in another city, I surprised her by having *TWTD* come in loud and clear in Indianapolis. You look on the net just as you look on the radio! —**PAUL CARLSON**

**RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA**— I record your show off the Internet on my hard drive and on cassette tape. I play the programs while driving around town. Not much on the local stations to listen to. I pick the shows at random and not in chronological order. I recently heard one when you and Ken Alexander were talking about Robert Hall clothes and started singing the Robert Hall jingle. I couldn't help joining in. Other drivers who may have been watching must have thought I was a little "off." Thanks for the memory moment. By the way, I remember the small FM station on Harlem Avenue where you worked. We moved to the area in 1954 and I used to go shopping with my parents at the High-Low (?) food store around the corner. I remember the studio being in sort of a garage at the back of the lot. I recall seeing the door open and someone inside once. Maybe it was you! —**MIKE TRYKOSKI**

**ADDISON, IL**— I have listened to you for many years. I can't think of a better place to be on Saturday afternoon than in front of my radio. Thanks for so many years of enjoyment. Thank goodness that WDCB picked you up. I was already a listener of WDCB and their great jazz and couldn't believe my ears when they said *TWTD* was going to be on their station. —**SHARON STEWART**

**NAPERVILLE, IL**— I can't tell you how much an honor and a pleasure it was to meet you and Ken Alexander at the Framemakers (not Rainmakers). As I told you, Chuck, you have been a Saturday companion of mine since I was a little boy (11 years old). Now that I have my own little boys (13, 11, 9 and 6), I am so happy they have a place to turn their attentions and imaginations every Saturday, especially considering the options

available on TV. I was telling Ken how heartbroken I was when WNIB signed off a few years ago. I could not have been happier when we learned you were moving to WDCB, which was also a favorite station. We hope you have a good home there for many years to come. You do us a tremendous service and I can't thank you enough. —**JOHN (and Jamie) PARKER (and Darren, Adam, Lucas and Jeremy Parker, the next generation)**

**MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA**— Is that the voice of Miller Peters of the late WNIB who announces the opening of *TWTD* with the phrase "The time is one o'clock and we present Those Were The Days" with Chuck Schaden"? As a longtime listener of both *TWTD* and WNIB, I'm sure I've heard that voice before. —**KATHY MITCHELL**  
(**ED. NOTE**— It is, indeed, Miller Peters who introduces our program each week. It's a way of honoring the station that provided a home for *TWTD* from 1975-2001.)

**GLENVIEW, IL**— I have listened to your program for many years and I feel I know you. I was very touched by your tribute to Les Tremayne on your December 20 program after he passed away. —**SYBIL BOLOTIN**

**CICERO, IL**— Thank you for taking some time [January 24] on *Those Were The Days* to remember Ray Rayner. The first audio clip you played when you appeared on his morning TV show brought back a lot of good memories. It was great to hear the

closing theme from "Top of the Morning," then hearing Bob Bell's voice announcing the time and "Stay tuned for Ray Rayner." Hearing Ray and you talking about old time radio was the best. It's only too bad you're not on TV so we could have seen the decoder and other premiums you were showing Ray on that show. It was also good hearing that clip from your *TWTD* show when Ray sang those songs from the Sunday comics. I never got a chance to listen to your show on WLTD because that was too far north for me to pick up. Thanks for helping me remember a great part of my boyhood in Chicago. —**RICH BILEK**

**BRUNSWICK, MAINE**— I lived in the Windy City from 1972 until 1996. I must tell you that I miss your nostalgia radio broadcasts very much. I spent many a Saturday afternoon in the dead of winter in front of my fireplace in West Rogers Park listening to the wonderful shows that you broadcast. When I first moved here, I bought quite a few items from Metro Golden Memories to "feed my habit." (I understand that, unfortunately, the MGM Shop has closed.) Your efforts to preserve the Golden Age of Radio are very much appreciated by this former Chicagoan. Because of your commitment, I have spent many, many hours of enjoyment listening to the great broadcast stars. I am a Baby Boomer who has always appreciated both the Golden Age of Radio and the Golden Age of Television and regret so much that others will never really appreciate how great these media ages were to our culture. —**ALLEN MOSS**

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## MORE MAIL

**HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL**— I missed 97.1 when it left the air because, apart from the old time radio shows, I listen to classical music. I much preferred the WNIB format and announcing over that of "Brand X" at 98.7. Now I must add the MGM Shop to the list of passing good stuff that used to be available. I like the new quarterly format of the *Nostalgia Digest*. It's well worth the price. —**EDWARD C. COOK**

**CHICAGO**— Gregory Peck [*Nostalgia Digest*, Autumn 2003] had a Chicago connection. An elderly gentleman told me he worked at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933-34. My friend, Tom, said Gregory pushed people around the Fair in a chair called a "rickshaw." Tom and Gregory sat and had coffee numerous times and then the Fair was over. I would say that Gregory would have been about 18 years old. Years later, Tom went to see the movie *Gentleman's Agreement* and recognized him as his friend

from the World's Fair. —**EDITH WAGNER**

**LOMBARD, IL**— I'll bet I'm not the first one to tell you that you've got a misprint on page 15 of the Winter issue of the *Digest*. Betty Grable appeared in *Coney Island* with George Montgomery, not Robert Montgomery. As far as I can remember, Betty never made a movie with Bob M. Nonetheless, the official Fox Betty Grable biography was enjoyable as is every issue as well as the Saturday afternoon doings. —**DICK GOEDEKE** (ED. NOTE— Well, you actually were the first to point out our mistake — which you kindly called a "misprint." We're officially blaming it on a senior moment.)

**FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**— From Walter Scannell's article ["So You Were Expecting a Mrs. Goldberg," Winter 2004 issue: "...As the youngest member of an extended family, Tillie would ask the Passover questions each September..."] Not likely. Passover occurs in the Spring — March or April, depending on the Hebrew calendar. —**ALAN CHAPMAN** (ED. NOTE— Of course, you're correct. This time it was Mr. Scannell's turn to have a senior moment.)

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**CHICAGO**— For a number of years I've been interested in the actor Frederic March, but I had not been able to find anything substantial on him until I read Matthew C. Hoffman's article in the Winter 2004 issue.

—LEONARD WASH

**SKOKIE, IL**— Nice website! I appreciate the design since I can view it with Netscape 4.7 and also with Netscape 3.0. Far too many sites use fancy graphics that eliminate them from older browsers. I do have newer browsers (Netscape 7.0 & I. E. 5.0), but they aren't as "user friendly" as the above two.

—JIM S. NASBY

**LOMBARD, IL**— I paid my first visit to your website <www.nostalgiadigest.com> today and I enjoyed it. I took the liberty of copying some pages for my sister who is retired and does not have a computer. I also passed on the website address to a friend and former Chicagoan who is retired and now living in Richmond, Virginia. I would like to see more articles from the past in your archives section if that is possible. I do have, and have for several years, a subscription to *Nostalgia Digest* but would like to see articles of the past. Your contribution to keeping OTR alive and well in the memories of seniors as well as showing the younger generations what it was like to use one's imagination is greatly appreciated.

—CHUCK ROHDE

**BENSENVILLE, IL**— Actress Jeanne Crain died December 14 at the still young age of 78. She will be included with many others in your annual necrology, but I take special note of this lady's passing. Jeanne Crain was the first screen star to steal my heart during that period when I was just coming to realize that girls could be more than just last-ditch playmates. When I saw her in *State Fair*, I was smitten. I vaguely understood that she was lip-synching her songs, but who cared? I was so enamored that I actually paused to ponder the sad state of a willow in a wind storm, or a nightingale without a song to sing – or a kid head over heels in love with a Hollywood star he had no chance of ever meeting. As I outgrew short pants, I had later crushes on other screen lovelies. Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth and (mmm!) Yvonne DeCarlo come to mind. But they were in another category – more mature and "sexy." Once



Jeanne Crain

PHOTOFEST

they'd sown their wild oats, most young fellers yearned for a gal like Jeanne Crain to wed. She was the epitome of the sweet, clean girl next door.

—DAN MCGUIRE

**GLEN ELLYN, IL**— I just finished reading "Speaking of Radio" this morning and I just had to write to you and tell you how much I appreciated this wonderful volume! You are the only person in America (or the world, for that matter) who could put a book like this together, and I'm so very glad that you did. Chuck, I learned so very much from your book! Since time-wise it stretches all the way back to the 1920s, I learned a great deal about the beginnings of commercial radio that I never knew before, because it all happened before I was born. I also gained a new appreciation for the importance of Chicago and the Chicago area in the history of radio. I never dreamed that so many radio stars started here or had their greatest years here, or that so many programs originated from here!

I came away from your book with a genuine feeling that radio performers as a whole were "nice" people – humble, personable, and always willing to give credit to other people when they felt it was due. Even Rudy Vallee – whom I had always previously felt was a conceited man, too full of himself – came off as a gracious, humble man who was willing to give credit to other people. The only person I was disappointed

with was Tony Randall, who seemed to feel that his contributions to the Golden Age of Radio were somehow beneath him.

I was really impressed by your astute lines of questioning. Obviously, you were very well prepared for every interview. I also appreciated the fact that, in almost every case, you thanked the performers on behalf of your radio listeners for their great radio performances. In this way, I felt that I had a small part in each interview. It was also very good that, when a personality's memory failed him or her, you would put an asterisk on the copy and run the correct information at the foot of the page.

On a personal note, I was extremely interested to find out that Edgar Bergen played his first vaudeville gig "out on the West Side" of Chicago, at what he calls the "New Marbro" Theatre. Well, Chuck, there was only one Marbro Theatre on the West Side, the one on Madison Street a couple of blocks west of Crawford (Pulaski) Avenue, and given the time when he appeared, everyone was probably still calling it the "New" Marbro Theatre, 'cause it had just recently been built. I attended the Marbro Theatre many, many times myself, but what struck me in reading this interview is that my parents, still adolescents at the time and both living in that neighborhood, may well have been in that Marbro audience to see Edgar and Charlie make their stage debut!

Kudos should also go to the indefatigable Ken Alexander for his brilliant job of copy editing. What a task that must have been!

I heard many, if not most of these interviews on your show over the years, but it is one thing to hear them one at a time over a long period of time, and quite another to have them all in permanent form, to read and reread and refer to whenever I need or want to. I want to stress again what a joy it was to read this book!

I have a library of over 800 books of all kinds and covering a multitude of subjects, including quite a few on show business, and a number on various aspects of radio. But there is nothing in my entire collection that even faintly resembles your book! It is a unique and extremely valuable insight into the great personalities and general history of the Golden Age of Radio, and I sincerely thank you for this fascinating glimpse into radio's past. "Speaking of Radio" now takes its place as my very favorite volume concerning Old Time Radio, and one of my

very favorites concerning entertainment in general.

Your readers will all benefit tremendously because you took the time and effort to put this volume together!—**GEORGE LITTLEFIELD**

**PARK RIDGE, IL**— Well, you did it again. You came up with a book as rich and rewarding as all your other amazing efforts to keep alive the glory days of yesteryear. The more this old world sours on us — from government to business to the entertainment world — the nicer it is to remember a gentler time. For nostalgics like me, it is a shot of emotional energy. For youngsters, it is a challenge to re-think their myopic assumption that this-is-the-way-it's-supposed-to-be. —**JACK SPATAFORA**

**ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN**— I just finished reading "Speaking of Radio" and want to let you know how much I enjoyed it and to thank you for publishing it. Your work captures an important time in America and radio as a significant entertainment and information medium better than most books on the radio industry that I have read. The "First Person" speaks most eloquently, doesn't it? How wonderful that you were able to do the interviews and more so that you kept them and were able to transcribe them in book form. Many thanks.

—**ED LOYER**

(**ED. NOTE**— Wow! Thanks for the great reviews! Your thoughtful comments are sincerely appreciated.)

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## NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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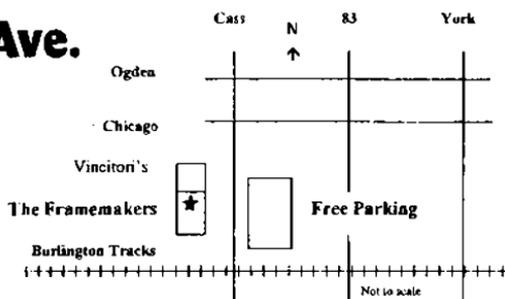
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← **FRANK LOVEJOY**

was a star on radio – in *Night Beat* – and also appeared on stage, screen and television. Jim Widner writes about the consummate actor. Page 48.

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