

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

CHUCK SCHADEN'S

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

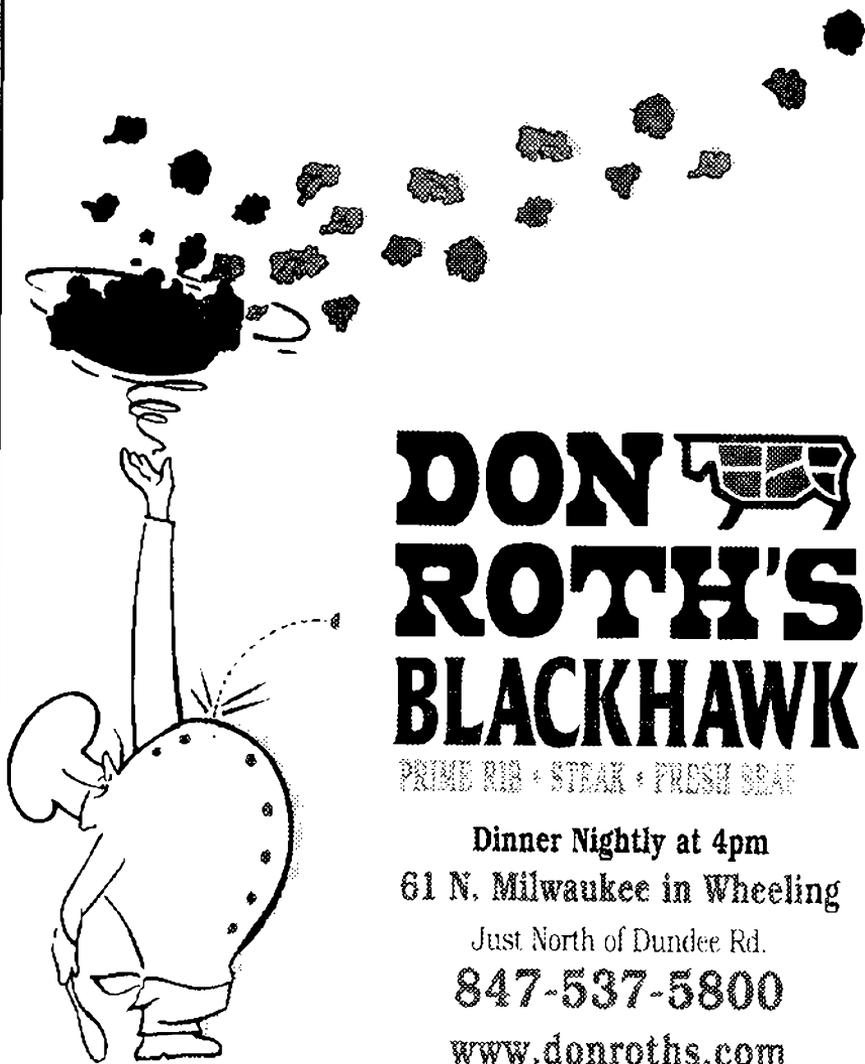
ON AIR



THANKS TO YOU OUT THERE IN RADIOLAND FOR MAKING IT ALL WORTHWHILE!

35 Years

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the seafood is fresh and
the salad bowl still spins.



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Hello, Out There in Radioland!

I was nervous, but confident, as I sat before the microphone in that tiny studio in a small building under the radio tower at the end of Lee Street in Evanston, Illinois, on Saturday, May 2, 1970. I felt sure that there would be someone "out there in Radioland" who would want to hear the vintage radio shows again. After all, it had been some time since the demise of radio's "Golden Age" and almost a decade since the last gasp of its programming had left the airwaves.

By the end of my first *Those Were The Days* broadcast, I was somewhat more relaxed as I signed off with "Thanks for listening." But I wasn't sure that anyone *was* listening. I hadn't had much feedback from listeners. In fact, I didn't have *any* feedback from listeners – if there really were listeners on that sunny, spring afternoon.

Feedback or not, I was committed to giving my all during the year ahead.

Before that year was over, however, thousands of listeners found *Those Were The Days* and they let me and the station know they were tuning in every week.

When *TWTD* observed its first anniversary in 1971 I marveled that it had been on the air for a *whole year*. And now, approaching the 35th anniversary, I'm amazed that I'm still around with the great vintage shows for radio's greatest listening audience.

It is the listeners, of course, who keep it going. It's *you* out there in Radioland, telling me and the radio station that you want us to "keep up the good work."

There are long-time listeners who have been with us since the very beginning in 1970, and there are brand new listeners who have found us only within the last few months and have expressed their intention to "listen forever."

Lately, for the past few years, I have been hearing from many who have said, "Chuck, we are worried that you are going to retire," saying our program "is a big part of our week" and "it's my escape from the stress of today."

Well, don't worry. **I'm not going to retire from *Those Were The Days*.** I will never forget that you have been there for me during the past 35 years, so I intend to continue to do the program for as long as I can. My Saturday afternoon partner, Ken Alexander, has said, on the same subject, "I feel sure that when I do finally quit, I will quit because I have to, not because I want to." That is my promise to you, too.

However, *semi-retirement* sounds like a good idea. So to keep *TWTD* alive and well and still have time to enjoy a more leisurely life with my wife, Ellen, and our family, my friend Steve Darnall will become Editor and Publisher of *Nostalgia Digest* beginning with the Summer, 2005 issue.

I met Steve when he was 13, a young old-time-radio fan who interviewed me for his school newspaper in 1977. He has since become a writer and an editor and has, in fact, contributed many articles to the *Digest*. You'll find his story about Norman Corwin on page 40 of this issue.

The *Nostalgia Digest Magazine* will continue to contribute very much to the success of *Those Were The Days* and will, of course, carry *TWTD* program listings in detail.

Thanks for listening.

–Chuck Schaden

35 Years of *Those Were The Days*

BY GARDNER KISSACK

What was life like in 1970?

For starters, *Life* was still a weekly magazine and people still compared it to *Look* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. *Time's* Man of the Year was West Germany's Willy Brandt, and the Berlin Wall was but nine years old.

The Baltimore Orioles beat the Cincinnati Reds 4-1 in the World Series and the Kansas City Chiefs defeated the Vikings 23-7 to win Super Bowl IV.

Patton was a box office smash and John Wayne received his only Oscar for his role in *True Grit*.

Popular songs included "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "Everything is Beautiful."

President Nixon and Henry Kissinger were trying to end the war in Vietnam. Prices were edging up; inflation was a growing problem; the oil crisis was bubbling.

Gardner Kissack of Chicago Heights, Illinois is a retired school teacher and a member of the Those Were The Days support staff.

The threat of polyester pants, pants-suits, and jackets was looming (so to speak), but we learned that they were too hot – or too

cold – because they didn't "breathe" or absorb like cotton or wool, they unraveled and they fuzzed-up.

A week's worth of television brought viewers *The FBI*, *Bonanza* and Ed Sullivan on Sunday; *Gunsmoke* and *Laugh-In* on Monday; *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Mod Squad*, *Beverly Hillbillies* and *Green Acres* on Tuesday; *Hawaii 5-0* on Wednesday; *The Odd Couple*, Flip Wilson, and *Ironsides* on Thursday; *The Brady Bunch* and *That Girl* on Friday and *Let's Make A Deal*, *Mannix*, Lawrence Welk, and *The Mary*

Tyler Moore Show on Saturday.

Radio in 1970 was an amalgam of music, news, sports and talk, most of it on AM radio. FM was in only a few homes and fewer automobiles. Radio's Golden Age of comedy, drama and variety had expired at least a decade earlier. "Prime time" radio had moved from the evening hours of



Chuck Schaden

the preceding 40-some years to "morning drive" time, which was filled with disc jockeys spinning the latest version of rock and pop hits.

But in the spring of 1970, someone came along to do something for those who longed for simpler times and the glories of radio's earlier era.

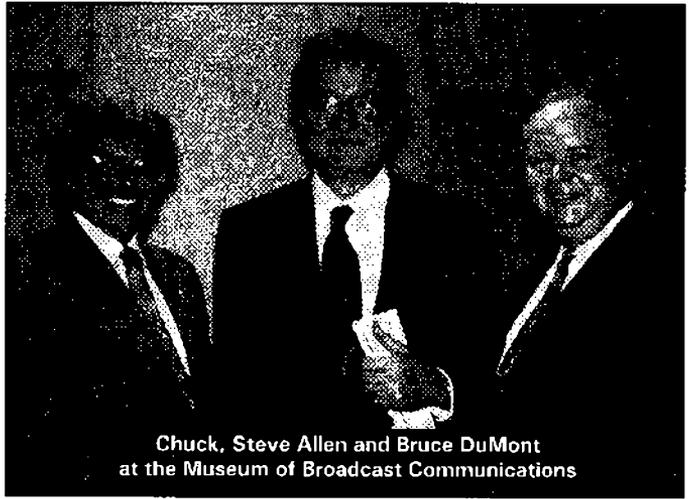
At 1:05 p.m. Saturday, May 2, at WNMP, a small daytime AM radio station in Evanston, Illinois, the first *Those Were The Days* program created, planned, promoted and hosted by Chicago journalist Chuck Schaden went on the air.

Radio's second Golden Age began with Schaden "bridging the sound gap between yesterday and today..." His first program featured 1940s re-broadcasts of *Ma Perkins*, *The Thin Man* and the *Pepsodent Show*, along with Billy Jones and Ernie Hare as the *Tasty Breadwinners* from 1934.

Fast-forward 35 years to 2005, through thousands of hours of the best from the Golden Age of Radio and only three different stations (WNMP, which became WLTD; WNIB and WDCB) and the same Saturday afternoon time slot. *Those Were the Days* has been on the air for three-and-a-half decades, longer than the original Golden Age of Radio, considered by many historians to be 1930-55.

"I hardly ever met a radio show I didn't like," says Chuck Schaden, whose observation seems to agree with his thousands of loyal listeners. "Oh, I've had some I liked less than others, but they too deserve to be played."

His collection of old radio shows began some 40 years ago when he jumped at the



Chuck, Steve Allen and Bruce DuMont
at the Museum of Broadcast Communications

opportunity to purchase some reel-to-reel tapes of "vintage" broadcasts from a collector on the East Coast. Among his earliest acquisitions were Orson Welles' "The War of the Worlds" and copies of *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *The Jack Benny Program* and *Suspense*.

Schaden began collecting with a passion. "Some might call it an obsession and that would be accurate, I guess. I couldn't believe that I could find these wonderful shows after having missed them so much since they went off the air a decade or so earlier. I decided I wanted to have as many of them as possible."

He found others with a similar passion. Each acquired programs from different sources and they began trading copies of their tapes. Soon the few reels of tape became many. "I may have had a thousand broadcasts by the late 1960s and some weeks I might have received a hundred reels of tape in the mail," explains Chuck.

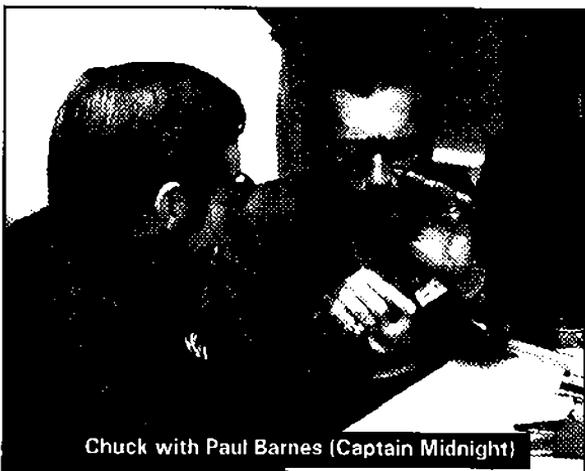
The collection kept growing and his thousands of shows were all documented, at first on neatly typed loose-leaf pages, then on index cards and finally on a computer data base. When the Museum of Broadcast Communications (MBC) opened in Chicago in 1987 (Schaden was

a founding member of the board), his collection became the Museum's core radio collection. "Chuck's donation of his 50,000 hours of radio programming was, without question, the most significant early contribution made to the Museum," recalls MBC founder/president Bruce DuMont.

One of the most satisfying results of his collection and broadcasts, Chuck believes, is that the shows have been embraced by people who either missed them the first time, or were too young to remember them, or who were not even born yet. Being able to share the Golden Age of Radio with so many others is one more part of an amazing legacy.

Not content with simply playing the old-time programs on the air each week, Schaden sought opportunities to speak with the people who worked in front of the microphones and behind the scenes during the great radio days.

Interviewing the stars of Radio's Golden



Chuck with Paul Barnes (Captain Midnight)

Age has played an important role on *Those Were The Days*, providing fans with many hours of enjoyment, insight and personal glimpses by those "voices" so well-known from radio.

During the first season of *TWTD*, indeed a mere six weeks into the show, Schaden was at Sages' East restaurant on North Michigan Avenue on June 16, 1970 where a collection of radio personalities had gathered to celebrate their participation in the "good old days of Chicago radio." At that

Thanks to the Behind the Scenes Staff

At the end of most of his broadcasts, Chuck usually takes a moment to thank those who have helped "behind the scenes."

These are dedicated friends who are very important to the programs; most of them are or have become fans of the golden age of radio.

They have served from time-to-time as engineers, technicians, production assistants, and volunteers.

Without their help, *TWTD* broadcasts could not have stayed on the air for these 35 years.

They are:

Bob Abella	Mary Ellen Little Cooper	Todd Neumann	Mike Stosich
Jon Adams	Rick Garofalo	Mort Paradise	Mark Vail
Carl Amari	Kathy Garofalo	Karl Pearson	Alex Wayne
Terry Baker	John Holzer	Larry Peters	Ted Weber
Neil Baskin	Gardner Kissack	Patty Schaden Randstrom	Jeff Weigel
Mary Bolton	Len Kunka	Susan Schaden Sturm	Larry Youngberg
Dennis Bubacz	George Littlefield	Gary Schroeder	Jim Zarembski
Scott Castillo	Todd Nebel	Koni Shaughnessy	and
Michael Cervone	Mark Nelson	Matt Sonnenberg	Ken Alexander



event, armed with a microphone and portable tape recorder, Schaden talked with, among others, Little Orphan Annie, Captain Midnight, Billy and Betty from the *Jack Armstrong* program, and the director of *Ma Perkins* – Shirley Bell Cole, Paul Barnes, John Gannon, Sarajane Wells and Phil Bowman, respectively. He was off and running!

A few weeks later, in September, Chuck sat across from Jack Benny, who was in the Chicago area appearing at the Mill Run Theatre in suburban Niles, and they talked about Mr. Benny's radio days. "Can you imagine – I met Jack Benny!" Chuck exclaims.

Before the second anniversary of *Those Were The Days* he had taped interviews with Hans Conried, Mel Blanc, Agnes Moorehead, Hal Peary, Don Ameche, Ralph Edwards, and Rudy Vallee.

Schaden's interviews, which he prefers to call "conversations" and which come across as two friends chatting, numbered at least 170 by 1989 and now total more than 200. Not only is he well-prepared for each guest (many have commented that he knows about their achievements better than they), but his enthusiasm for and knowledge of the material relaxes the subjects and have led to some amazingly insightful and personal revelations.

His interviews – conversations – gathered over all the years he has been on the air, form the basis for his book *Speaking of Radio*, published in 2003.

Chuck Schaden has been a creative and imaginative coordinator of special programming during the past 35 years of *Those Were the Days*. Each year he has offered special seasonal and topical shows.

He begins the end-of-year holiday season with his annual

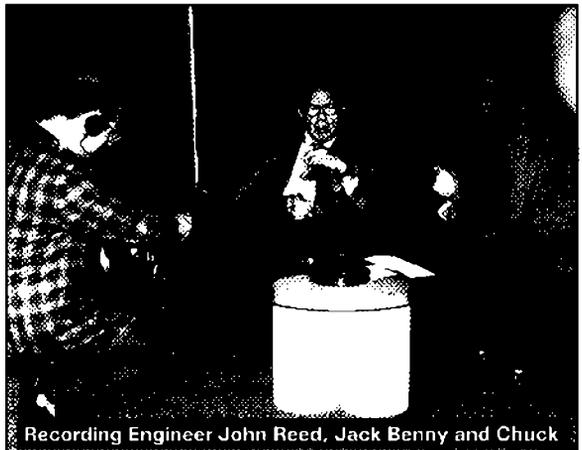
Hallowe'en broadcast on the last Saturday of October. This usually features a combination of scary and mysterious dramas combined with spooky comedy shows which he sends out to listeners via his "ghost-to-ghost network." This is followed a few weeks later by his annual November broadcast of appropriate Thanksgiving episodes.

The Christmas season is filled with vintage holiday broadcasts offering "Radio to Get Into the Holiday Spirit By... to Plan Your Christmas List By... to Address Christmas Cards By... to Wrap, Bake and Decorate By." Listeners call to report that they are keeping pace with his "schedule" or to tell him that they are "way behind, so slow down!"

Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Columbus Day have all received special *TWTD* treatment.

Schaden has featured scores of broadcasts devoted to the talents of specific radio or motion picture stars, and those programs almost always contained one of his interviews with the subject or an expert guest who talks about the star of the day.

He has devoted multi-week salutes to such personalities as Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Al Jolson, Bing Crosby and Humphrey Bogart, but there's only one per-



Recording Engineer John Reed, Jack Benny and Chuck



HERE ARE SOME LONG-RUNNING OLD TIME RADIO PROGRAMS

5 YEARS

Life of Riley

Life with Luigi

Lights Out

6 YEARS

Abbott and Costello

8 YEARS

Jimmy Durante

Phil Harris and Alice Faye

10 YEARS

Ozzie and Harriet

11 YEARS

Inner Sanctum

Red Skelton

13 YEARS

Mr. District Attorney

16 YEARS

Fred Allen

Eddie Cantor

Dr. Christian

Rudy Vallee

18 YEARS

Bergen and McCarthy

Burns and Allen

Cavalcade of America

First Nighter

Great Gildersleeve

19 YEARS

Bob Hope

20 YEARS

Suspense

21 YEARS

Lux Radio Theatre

22 YEARS

Fibber McGee and Molly

23 YEARS

Gangbusters

Jack Benny

25 YEARS

Bing Crosby

27 YEARS

One Man's Family

30 YEARS

Voice of Firestone

31 YEARS

Amos 'n' Andy

35 YEARS

Breakfast Club

Those Were The Days

former who has been given the superstar treatment: Jack Benny. For 26 years Benny has been the subject of "Jack Benny Month" on *TWTD*. "Listeners start reminding me in late summer that they can't wait for the next Jack Benny Month," says Chuck, who tells them with a smile, "I can't wait either!"

On November 7, 1993 he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame, joining Jack Benny, Fibber McGee and Molly, Norman Corwin and the scores of radio stars who have been honored for their work on the air. "I am very proud of that. And I'm the only *fan* in the Hall of Fame," he says.

Schaden's commemoration of World War II stands out as one of the most ambitious, interesting and historical special events ever presented on *Those Were The Days*. Beginning on Saturday, December 7, 1991, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, he set out on an interesting journey. "I decided we should follow the progress of the war as it was reported on radio and as the war effort insinuated itself into radio programming."

His four-year odyssey became an aural history of World War II, 50 years after the earth-shaking agony of the conflict. Programming was chronological: war news was broadcast as it unfolded in the 1940s, complete with up-to-the-minute emergency bulletins, speeches, news reports, on-the-air eyewitness accounts of battles or attacks, with network correspondents giving first-hand descriptions of what they saw and experienced in Europe, in north Africa or in the Pacific. President Roosevelt's Fireside Chats were an important part of the undertaking, which included news coverage of D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge, the death of F.D.R., the end of the war in Europe, the dropping of the atomic bomb, and the surrender of Japan.

In an age when there was no television

RADIO HALL OF FAME



Chuck Schaden, Wally Phillips, Rush Limbaugh, Robert Siegel and Linda Wertheimer (of 'All Things Considered'). Writer-producer Norman Corwin, unable to attend the ceremony, was also inducted.

coverage of the war, it was radio that provided the most personal, important and latest news of world events. Newspapers had, in many cases, more detailed coverage, but it took time to print and distribute the newspapers. Motion picture newsreels offered coverage of certain events of the war, but they often took several days to get to movie houses across the U.S. So it was left to radio to inform the public daily and immediately. Radio was a most trusted and reliable news source, and it captured the events of the war in a way not experienced before or since.

World War II was *radio's* war and radio was ready for it, not only with the news reports and speeches, but also with special programs and all types of entertainment shows that had something to say about the war, if only to remind listeners to "buy War Bonds" or "save used fats" or to observe rationing of food, rubber and other goods necessary to win the war. Jack Benny donated his Maxwell to the scrap drive and Fibber McGee was certain that his neighbor was a Nazi spy. Bob Hope entertained at military bases

and Eddie Cantor broadcast from the Hollywood Canteen for servicemen.

Schaden's four-year, 50th anniversary commemoration was so well-received that for the war's 60th anniversary, beginning in 2001, he added pre-Pearl Harbor coverage of the war in Europe and some other newly-acquired 1940s programs to the mix. "We'll continue until the war ends again, on the anniversary of V-J Day in

2005," he says.

How has *Those Were The Days* been able to survive all these years?

"The old shows were good," Chuck says simply. "If they weren't any good back in those radio days, they wouldn't be any good now. But they have staying-power. They were well-written and well-performed. They are not 'dated' by costumes or scenery or automobiles, all of which tend to 'date' movies or TV shows.

"The listener provides those things by using his imagination. The listener costumes the actors and decorates the set. He is a participant, not a spectator" and, Schaden adds, "the listener has been primarily responsible for our being here for 35 years. The stations, yes, of course. Our various sponsors and underwriters, for sure. But the listener, who has been with us while we take our weekly trip to radio's past has made it all possible, absolutely. I will always be grateful." ■

TUNE IN TWTD April 30 to hear Chuck Schaden's 35th Anniversary Broadcast.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG: The Man Who Captured Kong

BY MATTHEW C. HOFFMAN

"It wasn't the airplanes. It was beauty killed the beast."

As intrepid filmmaker and daring showman Carl Denham, Robert Armstrong will always be remembered for uttering one of the most famous lines in movie history. The line, spoken at the end of *King Kong* (1933), immortalized one of the most prolific character actors in

Hollywood's golden age. He appeared in over a hundred movies and later had a second life on television. Even today, on the late weekend movie, you can find Robert Armstrong turning up in one of the oft-played RKO films.

Armstrong was born on November 20, 1890 in Saginaw, Michigan. His father, William, owned boats on Lake Michigan but had a desire to go West and do some prospecting in Alaska. Bob spent his adolescence in central Michigan, but eventually the family did move to Seattle, where he attended the University of Washington. He was in the campus glee club and helped put together a dramatic club for students. While studying law he found time to write and direct a sketch called "A Campus Rehearsal," which later made the vaudeville



Robert Armstrong

M. HOFFMAN COLLECTION

circuit. He would later drop out of law school only months before graduation. It was during this time that he helped his famous uncle, the noted playwright Paul Armstrong, with a play the elder had written called *Woman Proposes*. Paul put him in charge of managing the production, but both men felt the lead actor was awful. Bob stepped in

and an acting career was born. He quickly appeared in another play, called *The Bank's Half Million*, but the First World War soon interrupted his stage career.

Robert Armstrong enlisted in the infantry and rose from private to first lieutenant. When the Great War was over he turned to Broadway in 1919 before doing stock in North Carolina. Then came his first big break. In 1926 Bob landed the part of boxer Eddie "Chick" Cowan in *Is Zat So?* Though the play had been rejected by George M. Cohan, it didn't stop writers James Gleason and Richard Taber from producing it themselves in Milwaukee. Gleason, who later became a wonderful character actor in his own right, also starred. The play became such a hit with over 600 performances on Broadway that it toured London in 1926. The next year it was made into a movie with George O'Brien in the Armstrong role.

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

Bob's performance did not go unnoticed. The sturdy-looking, 5'10" Armstrong had caught the eye of director Cecil B. DeMille, who starred him in *The Main Event* (1927). A year later he was cast in Howard Hawk's *A Girl in Every Port*, which also starred Victor McLaglen and Louise Brooks. Bob was often typecast as a prizefighter and appeared in many boxing movies such as *Dumbbells in Ermine* (1930), *Be Yourself* (1930) with Fanny Brice, and *The Tip-Off* (1931). Though in *Iron Man* (1931), directed by Tod Browning, he at least got to play a fight promoter. With his almond-shaped eyes and slicked-back hair, Bob was a handsome actor but not in a classical sense the way a Fredric March was, for example. To some in the business, Armstrong was a more refined version of a Wallace Beery, and the Beery-like roles he played early in his career reflected that refinement. But even when he was playing a pugilist, Bob brought vitality to these potentially superficial parts, and his scenes were often times the best moments of the movie.

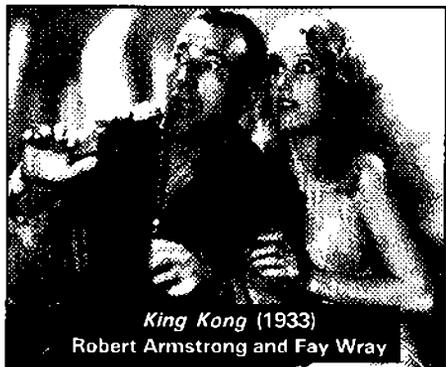


King Kong (1933)
Kong

The early '30s saw a string of enjoyable films in which Bob made a name for himself. Under contract at RKO, he appeared in such movies as *The Lost Squadron* (1932) and *The Penguin Pool Murder* (1932), the latter being a Hildegard Withers mystery in which he played the villain opposite his old pal, cigar-chompin' Jimmy Gleason. But both men had to take a backseat to the hilarious antics of that spinster of the silver screen, Edna May Oliver, who stole every scene.

Nineteen thirty-two would be an important year in Bob's career. He would work on two productions that would become classics in the adventure and fantasy genres respectively. And both would be made by the team of Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack.

The first of which would be *The Most Dangerous Game*, based on the short story



King Kong (1933)
Robert Armstrong and Fay Wray

M. HOFFMAN COLLECTION

by Richard Connell. As Fay Wray's drunken brother who finally gets to see Count Zaroff's human "trophy room," Bob's performance was not the best of his career. However, as this was being shot at night, he did scenes during the day for what would become *King Kong*, and the difference between his performances is literally night and day. Kong would offer him his greatest role. The character of Carl Denham was partially based on the larger-than-life exploits of Kong's creator, Merian C. Cooper. Armstrong would infuse the portrayal with integrity and an earnestness only an accomplished actor like him could bring.

With pipe and fedora, Denham is a nonsense movie producer who picks up helpless Ann Darrow (Fay Wray) off the streets of New York with the intent of starring her in a motion picture the public has never before seen. The story parallels the making of Kong itself. Ann Darrow's on-screen leading man would be the same as Fay Wray's: the giant gorilla Kong. Apart from the technical achievements, the characters would help shape this modern fairy tale into an instant classic for all time and the greatest of all monster movies.

A sequel called *The Son of Kong* was rushed into production and released later in 1933 to capitalize on the original's success. Though there is no comparison between the two films, *Son* is still an entertaining little adventure with a nostalgic charm. Carl Denham returns as the washed-up producer on the run from the authorities seeking to indict him on account of Kong's destruction in New York City. Denham gets out of town fast, and with his old crew flees to the South Seas – only to find himself back at Kong's home, Skull Island. The film is more about Denham than it is about little Kong, and that's what makes this sequel interesting – and even poignant. *Son of Kong* would bring closure to Armstrong's character. "For me, person-



Son of Kong (1933)
Helen Mack and Robert Armstrong

M. HOFFMAN COLLECTION

ally, the role was better than before," Bob had said. "It gave me a great deal more character, swell dialogue and love scenes. Denham was a character audiences could identify with; many actors work all their lives without getting that."

In the mid-1930s, Robert Armstrong appeared in such films as *Remember Last Night?* (1935). He played a very suspicious red herring in this zany, comedy/murder mystery directed with flair by James Whale. That same year over at Warner Bros., he trained James Cagney in *G-Men* and was a con artist in *Little Big Shot*. On January 1, 1939, Bob married Louise de Bois. (His prior two marriages were to Jeanne Kent and Peggy Allenby.) He and Louise became adopted parental figures to actor Jimmy Lydon, star of the *Henry Aldrich* series at Paramount. Bob would become the best man at Jimmy's wedding in 1952, and after Bob's death, Jimmy would become Louise's guardian until her death at the age of 97.

In the years to follow, Armstrong appeared in many A- and B-films as well as in movie serials such as 1942's *Gang Busters* and 1943's *Adventures of the Flying Cadets*. After a brief return to the stage in

1944, he was again on the big screen starring opposite Cagney in *Blood On the Sun* (1945) – playing Col. Hideki Tojo. (In Bob Hope's *My Favorite Spy* (1942) he had been a Nazi and in *Around the World* (1943), an American general, thus running the gamut of nationalities in wartime.)

In 1947 Bob made a notable contribution to John Ford's *The Fugitive*. He played the sergeant of police in this atmospheric adaptation of Graham Greene's *The Power & the Glory*. And years before the Michael Douglas/Karl Malden TV series, Robert Armstrong starred as a police lieutenant in Republic's *The Streets of San Francisco* (1949).

That same year he was reunited with friends Merian C. Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack for more monkey business. Sixteen years after the great Kong, Bob Armstrong reprised his Denham-like persona to a lesser effect in *Mighty Joe Young*. This time, he was promoter Max O'Hara, but it was hard for audiences to take this character seriously in this broad adventure yarn geared towards children.

In the 1950s, Bob turned up in television shows such as *Studio 57*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and *Perry Mason*. He appeared in 1958 on the *This Is Your Life* salute to James Gleason. But one of the all-time classic TV moments came when he had a guest spot on the Red Skelton show. During a sketch, Skelton turned to Armstrong and ad-libbed, "Say, did you ever get that monkey off that building?"

After a brief retirement in 1952 as a result of a coronary attack, Bob returned to the silver screen. His last film was 1964's *For Those Who Think Young* with James Darren and Nancy Sinatra.

On April 21, 1973, he died at the age of 82. Ironically, a few hours later, Merian C. Cooper, the inspiration for Armstrong's Carl Denham, died at age 78.

Robert Armstrong, the actor, was so



M. HOFFMAN COLLECTION

much a product of the era. The golden age of Hollywood was also the time of the Great Depression, of survival on the streets, and it was the era of the New Deal and optimism. All this was on the screen, and his roles reflected these hopes and fears. His characters were trying to survive, trying to make a buck... trying to find hope. When we think of the 1930s, actors like Armstrong come to mind, using that fast-talking vernacular of the times. Whether it be as a slick reporter or a single-minded cop or an over-the-top drunk, or a tenacious producer, Bob was the quintessential Hollywood player. He was one of the best in an era marked by great character actors.

In 2005, Peter Jackson's *King Kong* remake will premiere. It is a reinterpretation of the Kong story set in the 1930s. Actor Jack Black has been cast in the Carl Denham role, but as Captain Englehorn (Frank Reicher) said in the 1933 original, "And everybody says there's only one Carl Denham." ■

TUNE IN TWTD April 2 to hear Robert Armstrong in "Is Zat So?" on the Lux Radio Theatre.

JACK ARMSTRONG

THE ALL-AMERICAN MEDIA STAR

BY KATIE DISHMAN

*Wave the flag for Hudson High, boys!
Show them how we stand!
Ever shall our team be champions,
Known throughout the land!*

With that buoyant and spirited beginning, Jack Armstrong, the alllllll-American boy would begin his escapades.

First airing in 1933, this adventure series aimed at children and teenagers filled the radio airwaves, eventually appearing on all the major networks.

The fabled character and series has its roots in advertising. Many large companies in the United States sponsored, wholly or partially, radio programs. Wheaties, the well-known ready-to-eat cereal, was one product that utilized radio for its marketing.

The whole-wheat cereal was created in 1924 by the Washburn Crosby Company, the largest predecessor to General Mills, which was founded in 1928. Washburn Crosby took advantage of the Minneapolis radio station it had purchased in 1924 (naming it WCCO, the company's acronym), and began advertising Wheaties with what is believed to be the first singing commercial.

Airing on Christmas day, 1926, the Wheaties Quartet sang "Have you tried Wheaties?" Those commercial spots helped the brand grow locally at first, and then helped save the brand altogether after airing nationally at the end of the decade.

Katie Dishman of St. Paul, Minnesota, is a corporate archivist and an old-time-radio fan.



COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

Also helping the brand was the affiliation with the character "Skippy." The comic strip was drawn by Percy Crosby, and Wheaties offered premiums such as bowls with Skippy and his pal Sooky. In 1932, a radio show was created by the advertising firm Blackett-Sample-Hummert. From 1932-1933, Wheaties sponsored the *Skippy* show. It was about a couple of rascally kids in Shanty Town, with the title character standing up for himself when faced with adversity. Of course, this was a common theme during the Depression era.

However, by 1933, General Mills wanted a program geared toward a slightly older audience, aiming for children six to 14 years of age. Kids older than 10 typically

were not interested in the Shanty Town gang. Also, since the character of Skippy was owned by cartoonist Crosby, General Mills had to submit its scripts to him and abide by his requirements. Lastly, Crossley radio ratings for *Skippy* were declining. So Sam Gale, General Mills advertising executive, and his advertising colleagues were glad to be developing their own show. That way they could have creative control as well as hold onto older listeners.

Like many legends, there are two conflicting stories of how the Armstrong character was created. One is that Frank Hummert, a principal at the ad agency, assigned his chief writer, Robert Hardy Andrews, to develop a concept for a radio show. According to this account, Andrews went home and came up with the name after staring at a box of Arm-and-Hammer baking soda, and the strong arm trademark represented the type of hero he wanted.

Another version claims that General Mills' Sam Gale was a friend of a real-life person named Jack Armstrong (who later became an Air Force colonel). It was this Armstrong who represented the "all-American virtues" Gale wanted, and he passed that information onto the ad agency for the creation of the radio program.

NEW SOUTH AMERICAN SEQUENCE BRINGS NEW SALES POWER to America's Favorite Kid Program

Jack Armstrong

5 Days a Week Starting September 29



GENERAL MILLS, INC. MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

© 1933-1947. "Wheaties" and "Breakfast of Champions" are registered trademarks of General Mills, Inc.

COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

Regardless of the origins, what is certain is *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy* began running on CBS radio in July 1933. It was a 15-minute show airing weekdays at 5:30. Though it switched to NBC, then Mutual, then the Blue Network (prior to ABC) and lastly at ABC in 1947, it was a popular program even if it was hard for listeners to find.

The other major players in the program besides the title character were Billy and Betty Fairfield, friends of Jack, and the Fairfields' uncle Jim. The four of them had many adventures around the world, even though the youngsters attended Hudson High School, in the fictitious Hudson USA.

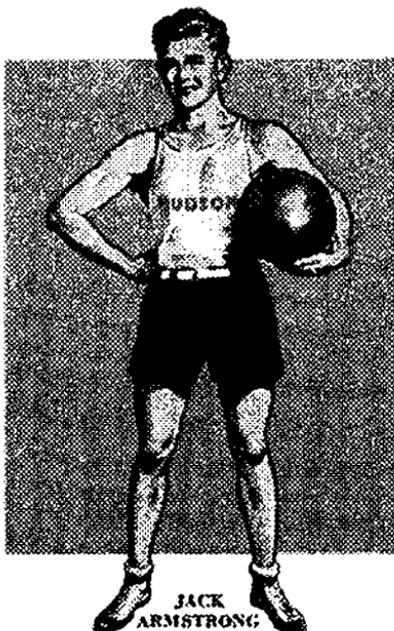
WHEATIES

**"EAT WHEATIES AND WATCH
YOUR MUSCLES GROW"**

Says Jack Armstrong

*All-American
Basketball Star*

"Because Wheaties are made from whole wheat and, as you know, wheat contains almost twice as much muscle building protein as either corn or rice. Thus, ONE bowl of Wheaties is equal to almost TWO bowls of corn or rice in providing the food that develops muscles!"



WHEATIES ALSO TAKE THE PLACE OF HOT CEREALS

Now! If you want to have "pep", energy, bigger, stronger muscles—then eat the breakfast of champions—Wheaties. For here is a breakfast food which Jack Armstrong, All-American Boy, Babe Ruth, Jimmy Fox, Lefty Grove, Howard Jones, coach of the world champion University of Southern California football team, and many others, all agree helps build muscle, because it is made from Whole Wheat, which supplies almost twice the MUSCLE building protein as such foods as corn or rice. In other words, in this respect, one bowl of Wheaties equals nearly two of corn or rice foods. So, naturally, you will want to eat Wheaties.

Another big point in favor of Wheaties is that these wonderful crisp toasted whole wheat flakes give you the same heat producing elements as a hot cereal. Which means that you can now enjoy delicious, crispy crunchy Wheaties every day all winter long. The fact that Wheaties have been accepted by The Committee on Foods of the American Medical Association is all the proof you want of the truth of the claims made for them.

Remember that Wheaties help keep you warm right through the winter. Eat Wheaties every day. You'll be amazed at what they do for you.

COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

Their exploits took them to Canada, the Arctic, China, Manila, and Zanzibar, among others. Since it was in a serial format, the story lines continued, in most cases, for many weeks. There typically were many thrills and crises. During World War II, Jack and his pals began dealing with secret Axis agents and other war-related en-

emies, including "Weissoul, Master Spy," a man of a thousand faces and voices. Often the conflicts were resolved with the use of devices that were offered to listeners for a dime and a boxtop, or a quarter and two boxtops.

Jack was depicted as a very athletic boy, and the Wheaties packages attest to that.

A HERO WITH FIVE MILLION FOLLOWERS...



Jack Armstrong, "All American Boy" of the N.B.C. Airwaves

who are learning some good lessons in healthful living

Late this afternoon, some four to five million boys and girls from 6 to 16 years of age will take 15 minutes from their work or play to tune in to the latest thrilling adventure of Jack Armstrong, radio's "All American Boy"—a program sponsored by General Mills, Inc., for Wheaties.

And the same thing will happen tomorrow, and next day—five days a week, straight through the season. A mighty potent force, it is not, to so continuously draw one of the largest juvenile audiences in America?

But how does this phenomenon interest you?

In this respect: that the Jack Armstrong broadcast, due to the nature of an important position of its daily message, is an instrument for child education which we believe merits your notice.

In the box at right are the three Jack Armstrong "Training Rules" which have been an integral part of the sponsor's message on this broadcast for more than three years. Look them over.

We believe they will strike you as a notably

example of truthful, beneficial advertising. The sort of message that, in addition to publicizing a product, performs a desirable social service.

In formulating this and similar advertising policies, we acknowledge a deep indebtedness to the invaluable counsel of your Association's Council on Foods. We, too, believe that sound educational propaganda is a valuable adjunct to truthful advertising.

Jack Armstrong's TRAINING RULES

1. *Get plenty of sleep, fresh air and exercise.*
2. *Make a drink of milk and water, because hot breads, fruits and cream can make people sickly and weak.*
3. *For sound development and best flavor, eat this "Breakfast of Champions" — a big helping of Wheaties, with plenty of milk or cream and some kind of fruit.*



Wheaties and advertising slogan are registered trademarks of the General Mills Company.

WHEATIES "Breakfast of Champions"
WITH MILK OR CREAM AND FRUIT

General Mills, Inc.
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

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His pictures appeared on many boxes, as a baseball, football, and basketball player. It was on these packages that General Mills offered many of the premiums affiliated with the character. There were the Jack

Armstrong torpedo flashlight, hike-o-meter (pedometer), various rings, airplanes, pencils, emergency signaling mirror, listening squad kit, explorer sundial watch, wrist compass, and crocodile whistle. The of-

COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

GET YOUR JACK ARMSTRONG

CAMP LANTERN

for only **1¢**

WITH PURCHASE 2 Pkgs. WHEATIES
AT YOUR ORDER!
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

READ THE FACTS ABOUT THE LANTERN OF MANY USES!



Case Number 10 your choice of 3 finishes: color red, white or blue; 3 1/2" reflector and 1 1/2" lens in aluminum. Fifty gold-inked, stamped letters in brilliant phosphor. The top 1/4" slide opens to reveal wick in the position of lantern can be hung by handle or placed on base and still remain lighted. Metal handles and legs built breakable at hardware, repair or drop parts. Permanent lighting with 400 lbs. of battery—almost 500 miles. Top output electric lanterns get no sale except in Wheaties. It is available only in two packages: 1¢ with purchase of 2 packages of Wheaties. Get your Jack Armstrong Camp Lantern right away!



1. CAMPING



2. BICYCLING



3. AT HOME



4. BICYCLING

Boys and Girl Mother! Dad! You're in Luck! Think of it! Tomorrow you can get this entirely new and different electric Camp Lantern, complete with battery and bulb, all ready to use, for only 1¢ with the purchase of two packages of Wheaties!

Real Service! You'll get a good many hours of efficient service out of the Jack Armstrong Camp Lantern. It goes away with nothing and pops up in flashlight while you try to work. Simply lift the special handle-switch into "on" position where an automatic catch locks it. It then remains lighted whether you hang it up by the handle or stand it on its base.

Hard Fun! The Jack Armstrong Camp Lantern is the light of many many uses. Ideal as flashlight on bicycle or wagon. Just the thing for maneuvering through the dark of forest. Desirable to fit easily into the glove compartment of the car. It's the all-purpose, portable light for every member of the family! *What a Breakfast!* General Mills makes this

generous offer to induce you to discover all of the extra eating pleasure that's packed away in delicious, nourishing "Breakfast of Champions." You'll find this winning combination of Wheaties, milk and fruit is a real champion—packed with plenty of sweet flavor and lots of good, body-building carbohydrates!

You'll Have a Hoot! Look for the real, wiser, and hip Camp Lantern Display at your grocer's. His supply of Jack Armstrong Camp Lanterns is strictly limited, so you'll have to act fast! Just buy two packages of Wheaties and hand the grocer an extra penny for your Camp Lantern. But don't wait! Act right away before it's too late!

Send Secret Code Message! The Jack Armstrong Camp Lantern has been specially designed to help you send secret code messages at night. To do this, remove the cover at the top of the battery. Press the key down to light lantern. To break code, and dashes press and release key quickly.



Get the food that helped create America great!

Derived from whole wheat, our finest cereal grain. Eat Wheaties for breakfast, Wheaties, unique as a cereal, when cereal because there's nothing there you'll see vitamins B1 and other well known minerals. Contains more than twice protein and twice whole wheat. Eat Wheaties for those satisfying bowls. Get Wheaties for that perfect whole wheat satisfaction. Eat Wheaties with milk or cream and fruit and depend on this "Breakfast of Champions" to do a champion job for you.

WHEATIES "Breakfast of Champions"

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fers also appeared in print advertisements in newspapers and magazines. Many of the premiums were geared for adventure, and during World War II, other premium offers were related to the war, such as the

"Write-a-Fighter Corps Kit." "Write-a-Fighter" clubs were approved by the USO and the U.S. War Department, and they were featured on the *Jack Armstrong* radio show. The clubs were to make children

IT'S HERE!



WHEATIES 1939 SPRING SAMPLING

JACK ARMSTRONG "TORPEDO" FLASHLIGHT FREE WITH PURCHASE 2 PKGS. WHEATIES

It's Wheaties sampling in your store is full profit! Starts new customers buying Wheaties NOW—puts new buying pep in old customers! Keeps them all buying all summer long!

Timed for whirlwind action March 30 to April 5 with Jack Armstrong! Betty and Bibi! Betty Crocker! Yalton Lady! Bechhoff! Saturday Evening Post back cover, out April 5!

Feature the handy display unit of 12 flashlights packed in Wheaties cases. For extra sales, extra profits, display Wheaties, bananas, other fruits, sugar, milk and cream, together with the flashlights!

**ORDER FROM YOUR JOBBER TODAY
SUPPLIES LIMITED!**



General Mills, Inc., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

interested in writing to servicemen in the armed forces, and it was one of General Mills' contributions to the war effort.

Another form of public service was the Jack Armstrong "Clean Plate Club." Beginning in 1946, the radio show discussed the famine situation and what assistance the listeners could provide. The creed of the club was "Follow the rules of good nutrition; don't ask for more than you can eat; clean up every bite. NO WASTE."

Although the program could be educational and patriotic, its main function was for escapism and fun. While it was suspenseful for a youth-oriented show, General Mills adhered to high standards for the scripts for "juvenile entertainment."

A child psychiatrist, Dr. Martin Reymert, supervised the scripts beginning in 1937. Preliminary drafts were reviewed by Dr. Reymert at his Mooschert Laboratory for Child Research, by the advertising agency, and then by the Radio Department at General Mills. After the three entities approved the script, then it would go into production.

The doctor had established some criteria: the stories must be interesting but accurate in feasibility of plot; contain "wholesome excitement" and not have suspense based on the unknown; have no tortures or brutal murders; provide sufficient role models of different ages for the various listeners to identify with; and be educational so listeners could learn history or geography or science.

After the war, the ratings of the series waned, in part because the president of ABC radio was no fan of the 15-minute serial format in which some cliffhanger-type endings began to appear. The program was increased to a half-hour, so the suspense was not as potent as in the shorter shows.

To help revive the popularity of the program, Jack Armstrong became a comic strip in 1947. It was written by Bob Schoenke, a former cartoonist in the military. During World War II, he drew comics for the U.S. Air Force. After he was briefed in General Mills' policies concern-

IF YOU ACT QUICKLY

BOYS! GIRLS! LOOK!

Only 10¢ and 1 WHEATIES
Box-top for this Genuine
Jack Armstrong
WRIST COMPASS

SEND COUPON BELOW
QUICK TO BE FIRST
TO HAVE ONE

JACK ARMSTRONG SHIPWRECKED

IF YOU ARE A REAL ARMSTRONGER, SEND COMPANY WRIST COMPASS AND GET IT DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME!

ISN'T THIS WRIST COMPASS A DANDY? LOOK!

SEND THIS TO GET JACK'S WRIST COMPASS PERMALO PUSH!

SEND TO: GENERAL MILLS, DEPT. 100, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

ing the fictional youth, Schoenke was given artistic freedom to create the character for comics.

According to a General Mills' newsletter, "High standards of story value keep kids interested. Strict company policies on moral-building factors secure also the approval of parents and teachers." The article continued, "Schoenke's Armstrong emerges in the new strip a most engaging figure. He is no superman, but a thoroughly likable well-rounded personality, fortified by above-average mental alertness and physical strength. He is as quick to enjoy a joke as to sense danger. He is not excessively handsome but does have average good looks, with hair a little on the mussed side."

Later in 1947, the radio and comic strip character became a publication. The Jack Armstrong Adventure Magazine was created to "help satisfy the apparently endless demand for Jack Armstrong stories." It contained adventures strips, stories, and features. It was published by Parents' In-

stitute, Inc., and was backed by child psychologists and law enforcement officials.

A General Mills newsletter said the publishers "were fully aware of the psychological need of youth for excitement, and knew that namby-pamby comics would find only a namby-pamby audience. But they also knew it would be possible, under competent supervision, to present exciting comics filled with adventure and suspense but minus glorification of wrongdoing."

The magazine also included a monthly Jack Armstrong All-American Award given with the cooperation of the American Red Cross for "youthful heroism" as documented by Red Cross records. One recipient, in February 1948, was a Californian who saved his brother from electrocution by a high-voltage wire.

A movie version of *Jack Armstrong* also appeared in 1947 courtesy of Columbia Pictures. Lead actor John Hart, it was said, appeared too old to be a teenage boy, and the film was deemed mediocre.

Even though there were the other media

for making the Armstrong character popular – through the Wheaties packages, magazine, comic and premiums – it was the radio show that was of primary importance.

Jack was the 17-year-old high-schooler, originally voiced by Jim Ameche (actor Don's brother) from 1933-



COURTESY OF GENERAL MILLS ARCHIVES

1938. One newspaper said that more than 500 applicants auditioned for the lead role. Ameche was followed by Stanley Harris and Frank Behrens in short stints. Charles Flynn assumed the role from 1939-1951, with Rye Billsbury substituting 1943-1944 while Flynn was in the Army. Similarly, the other characters had various actors through the long run of the program. The show originally was broadcast from WBBM in Chicago and then moved to the CBS network, where it was aired nationwide.

By 1950, the young Jack had aged a few years. General Mills had found that listeners of the show were split between adults and kids, so it went after the older market, moving the program from 5:30 to 7:30. The main character began working at the Scientific Bureau of Investigation, and *Armstrong of the SBI* was born. At the age of 26, Jack still was friends with Betty Fairfield, but his friend Billy was dropped. The scripts focused on timely issues still, as they had done during the war years. For instance, our hero began tracking down Communist spies. According to a company newsletter, General Mills checked with J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, who did not object to the similarity between his organization and the fictional one on the radio.

By this time, television began taking over the American landscape. When the change was made to “update” the original program, General Mills began thinking about bringing the Armstrong character to television.

When *Armstrong of the SBI* went off radio in 1951, with low Nielsen ratings to blame, the transition to the newer medium was not made. Logistically, Knox Reeves Advertising (successor ad agency to Blackett-Sample-Hummert) and General Mills thought the adventure series would not be practical for TV; exotic studio backgrounds and many roving cameras would be too costly. The use of imagination for a radio format is much more financially sound.

There was no formal farewell, just an announcement to tune into the two new adventure programs General Mills would be sponsoring (*Mr. Mercury* and *Silver Eagle*).

Regardless, 18 years of the radio show brought *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy* into the national lexicon and gave youths countless hours of enjoyment – not only through radio listening but also with the numerous premiums offered through Wheaties. ■

TUNE IN TWTD April 16 to hear three Jack Armstrong adventures.

The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company C



BY WAYNE KLATT

PHOTOFEST

The 1943 film *Lady Takes a Chance* warns that the story takes place “so long ago” people drove over 60 miles an hour, skidded their tires, and ate gobs of butter – that is, in 1938. “And,” the message ends, “let’s hope these times come again.”

Blood was being shed on two far-away continents, but the ultimate battle was the one on the home front. Eighth-graders in Gary, Indiana, like schoolchildren across the country, collected phonograph records, distributed posters, sold war stamps, handed out anti-black market pledge cards, took courses as auxiliary fireman and policeman, collected half a million pounds of wastepaper, sponsored a Clean Plate campaign to save food,

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

joined clothing and tin drives, and gathered books for servicemen.

Most books were now being printed on thinner paper and with narrower margins to save paper, and specially printed paperbacks were designed to fit in uniform pockets.

Virtually everyone was put to work, including thousands of tramps who wanted to help the war effort, teenage boys earning money after school, and the handicapped. Employers learned that the blind could find tiny lost parts that other factory workers missed. In Chicago at least, dense fog was becoming more common because of condensation around soot pouring from the smokestacks of factories operated around the clock for the first time.

Movie screens were filled with villainous spies, and the danger was not all that unlikely. Four German saboteurs were

seized by the Coast Guard on Long Island, New York, and four others were picked up in Florida. A team of German spies arrived in the Midwest but were too interested in having fun to cause any damage before their arrest. The FBI reported that of the 19,649 cases of suspected internal sabotage the agency investigated during the war, not one was known to have been directed by the enemy.

A one-of-a-kind culture evolved from the necessities of wartime production, and the clash of innocence against the cynicism of trying to hold a globe together. In California, servicemen had a chance of dancing with starlets at the Hollywood Canteen and male stars such as John Garfield served at tables. Inside the Stage Door Canteen in New York's theater district, Jack Benny served beer to soldiers and sailors.

The civilian-run United Service Organization had several canteens in Chicago for bachelor servicemen, such as the Elks Hall on Washington Street downtown and a former fresh-air sanitarium near Fullerton Avenue and Lake Shore Drive. There also were informal meeting and relaxation places in church basements and school auditoriums in the city and across the coun-



World War II Jitterbugs

PHOTOFEST

try. The point was to make even reluctant draftees feel they were appreciated, and to remind them of what back home might be like after the war. But no hanky-panky was permitted. A young woman wanting to dance with servicemen at a USO needed a letter of recommendation from a pastor or employer.

When the government took over two major lakefront hotels, the Congress and the Stevens (now the Hilton and Towers), it crammed 15,000 soldiers into 4,000 rooms, then built 12 bowling lanes on the stage of the revered Auditorium Theater for "the boys." Despite the uncertain times, gambling action was never hotter than in the first three years of the war, whether at the track, hidden casinos, or floating dice games. Servicemen themselves were known to



Hollywood Canteen (1944)

Jack Carson, Jane Wyman, John Garfield, Bette Davis

PHOTOFEST

roll the ivory from time to time between their bunks and in alleys.

Who could blame them, with the chance of death or crippling injury very real. Pilot Edward "Butch" O'Hare – whose father was president of Sportsman's Park in Cicero – shot down five Japanese planes in a single engagement in defense of an aircraft carrier in February 1942, only to die in action on a voluntary mission the following year. The heroism of this Medal of Honor winner is remembered in the name of O'Hare International Airport.

At home, shortages changed week to week, with the government periodically issuing lengthy lists of current ration points for each type of food. Butcher shops displayed the points needed as well as the price, such as pork chops going for 37 cents and seven ration points in March 1943. Since households lived by the ration book yet had more disposable income than in the Depression, many people went out to eat. But because of rationing, many of the smaller restaurants imposed "meatless Tuesdays" as they had in World War I, and some also observed meatless Fridays.

Everyone, it seemed, was planting a victory garden, with the goal of raising as many vegetables as possible the household would consume over the year. Even lawns in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood were dug up for carrots and potatoes. Since racetracks were closed as the war dragged on, Arlington Park became a giant vegetable garden, and Cook County Jail inmates were asked to develop green thumbs on the jail grounds. To make the citywide effort more cheerful, a Victory Garden Fair complete with dancing was held in Soldier Field (but jail inmate gardeners had to stay home).

War restrictions were relaxing in 1943 and early 1944, hemlines started back down, and clothing sported more colors



Frances Langford and Jon Hall
In their Hollywood Victory Garden

PHOTOFEST

now that additional material for dyes had become available. The most popular music was swing, or jive, described as "full of volcanic energy, speed, optimism, self-mocking humor and romance that is both playful and full of wartime ruefulness." Some of the best dancers were servicemen, and sailors called Chicago a great "liberty town."

But in those hepped-up times, music for those reaching draft age had to be frenetic. Teenagers rolled back the worn rugs of their apartments so they and their friends could dance to records or band music over the radio. From jive came boogie woogie, music accompanying jitterbug dancing that had entered the scene in the late 1930s.

Jitterbug may have been likened to a mating ritual, but it essentially comprised show-off variations of the lindy hop. Its two main functions were to work off nervous energy and confound parents. In southern California, jitterbugging became almost a way of life, especially when dancing Mexican-American zoot-suiters clashed with sailors.

Apart from mayhem on the dance floor,



Cab Calloway in his Zoot Suit

PHOTOFEST

the war years at home were possibly the most romantic time America may ever know. Young adults were experiencing emotions they never thought they would have. Love deepened with immediacy, with sometimes just 24 hours before a "hello" and a tearful farewell that could last forever. Songs, no longer generated by Broadway, became dreamy ballads. So many men had been killed, or were missing, or were slogging through places whose names were blocked out by censors – and so many ways of life had changed – that the heart of America was aching.

Yet the war years were the high point for dinner clubs, those vast dining rooms with orchestras, singing acts, and waltzing. These moments gave the affluent a way of losing themselves in dreams of leisurely elegance. The women wore gowns, and the men often sported white suit coats, since tuxedo manufacturing had been suspended "for the duration."

As part of a war bond drive, James Cagney personally opened the world premiere of Errol Flynn's war-thriller *Desperate Journey* at the Liberty Theater in suburban

Libertyville. To get in, you had to buy at least one \$25 war bond. The event raised \$40,000. Cagney earlier in the day led a Hampshire boar to a local auction market. Within three hours, the amount of war bonds sold equaled a fifth of the monthly quota for the area.

The home fires were burning, but they couldn't keep the rooms warm. Because of shortages of oil and coal, landlords and homeowners were asked to keep their heat down to no more than 65 degrees even in midwinter. This was just part of the struggle of trying to keep life normal in a time of daily change.

The GIs kept pin-up calendars, and painted sexy ladies on the nose of bombers, but back home leggy cheesecake ads declined as women comprised a larger share of the buying public. Hollywood cranked out forgettable romances and romantic comedies as double features to replace A-budget films. Songs sung by a glamorous beauty and showcase dancing often found their way into detective stories. Leading men were becoming less macho and more like Wisconsin's Dennis Morgan and wooden but likable Joel McCrea.

The war was breaking up families everywhere, especially with the end of the fathers' exemption in mid-1943. Any male between 18 and 36 could now expect to be called up. This meant that ever more young mothers were moving in with their parents. With grandparents or aunts and uncles tending to the children, working mothers looked for a little excitement on their one day off a week. Sometimes they went on harmless dates with servicemen, and sometimes it led to things they didn't write to their husbands about.

A few lasting romances developed when servicemen stationed far from their families were invited to a home for dinner, and there might be piano playing and singing.

Some bobby-soxers - adolescent girls named for their white cloth socks - were called "khaki wacky" V-girls for stationing themselves near military posts in the hope of getting a date. Some war widows encouraged a quick marriage with a soldier or sailor to keep the military pay coming and provide a father for their children. A few attractive women kept a steady income from bigamous marriages with several soldiers and sailors.

Sad to say, a number of horses made their sacrifice to the war effort, but their meat was government inspected and not rationed. Housewives were finding ways to make up for other shortages by preparing soy with just about everything and using such portions as beef tongue instead of rump roast. Replacing sugar were concoctions of raisins, condensed milk and marshmallows. And since so many kitchen supplies were donated to scrap drives, "home-front warriors" learned to make everything in a single pot.

War production raised the esteem of thousands of black men and women in northern factories as they realized how essential they were to America, and the 1940s

would be called "the forgotten years of the Civil Rights Revolution." Chicago had such a severe housing shortage in Bronzeville that two or more unrelated families would share apartments. Newly arrived "colored people" might pay their first month's rent by charging admission to dance parties in their cramped third-floor walkups.

The times saw a rebirth of faith on the home front as well as in foxholes. The Youth for Christ organization was founded in Wheaton, and its first paid employee was the Reverend Billy Graham.

Some industrialists at the time were balking at government regulations, which included co-operating with unions. When Montgomery Ward's chairman Sewell Avery refused to co-operate, two husky GIs hauled him grim-faced out of the building still in his chair.

By early 1945, the average city block in the city had seven people serving in the military, for a total of about 400,000 Chicagoans during the war. But not all men were eager to join the services. Four sons of DuPage County farmer Charles Gabriel spent 47 months hiding from the

draft in a concealed room despite two years of FBI searches.

Hundreds of college professors and professionals in Chicago and elsewhere joined the Office of Strategic Services, which turned mature men and women with special skills such as languages or knowledge of physics into spies working with resistance groups behind enemy lines. In



Allen Jenkins and Ethel Merman at the Stage Door Canteen

PHOTOFEST

addition, Loyola University's 17-story Lewis Towers near the Chicago Water Tower served as an anti-spy school. The 200 plain-clothed G.I.s trained there were credited with capturing hundreds of Japanese and German spies all over the world. But everyone was sworn to secrecy for 20 years to avoid reprisals.

Americans had become impatient for the big push in Europe after two years of incursions at the fringes of the Fascist-dominated world. The increasing Allied advances meant that gasoline rationing was down to just two gallons a week for a brief period in 1944, and government snoops reported anyone taking a pleasure trip. The feeling was that D-Day could come any day now.

News of the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944, was met by two minutes of silent prayer among the usually raucous traders at the Chicago Board of Trade. But just when German troops seemed contained, they broke out that December in the desperate Battle of the Bulge.

There was no use glossing over the realities of the war when so many families by now had someone killed or wounded, and the films took on a grimmer tone, as in *Objective, Burma!* People on the home front were showing their own "war nerves" and welcomed any relief. Groceries saw long lines whenever another shipment of cigarettes arrived, and more women than ever were turning up with alcohol problems. The nonsensical "Mairzy Doats," inspired by the chatter of the songwriter's four-year-old daughter, was on the top of



the charts for five straight weeks.

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No one spoke about victory any more, those on the home front just wanted to get back to the way things were or at least have the freedom to start fresh. And so it was that no one born after 1943 can ever imagine the joy that struck Chicago on May 7, 1945, when Germany released its unconditional surrender.

I was four years old at the time, and it was among my first memories. The day was warm, the sky was blue, and I was riding my tricycle on the Northwest Side. I didn't understand what was happening, but I could tell that suddenly everyone was happy. I saw a young woman running in tears from one house across the street to another so that she might share the news, and to join the happiness I kept ringing my little bell. On that day, bells were ringing around the world.

But only part of the war was over. People who had made V-E Day possible were emotionally exhausted, and they listened intently to the radio for when V-J Day might arrive. Instead came the incomprehensible news of an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 and on Nagasaki on August 9. Many people started celebrating the end of war on August 12, when radio stations briefly



PHOTOFEST

carried a false report from the United Press International wire.

President Harry S. Truman went on the radio at 6:01 p.m. Chicago time on August 14, 1945, to announce Japan's

unconditional surrender.

Fifteen minutes later, the city's air raid sirens wailed to launch what has been called a "carnival of joy." Thousands of people surged into the Loop to laugh, yell, sing, and dance. As one of them remembered, "It was like the 4th of July and Christmas wrapped into one." Car horns honked the length and breadth of city, factory workers put down their tools and hugged one another, people danced in the streets, and men hoisted girlfriends on their shoulders.

There was no photographer around to capture the moment — unlike in New York's Times Square — but an army corporal grabbed a WAC officer and said, "I'm about to realize life's ambition. I'm gonna kiss a captain!" Thousands of celebrants cheered him on.

The war was over. Gasoline rationing ended the next day, the servicemen came home, and the baby boom would soon be underway. ■

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NECROLOGY OF 2004

We Remember Them Well

It was not a very good year for show business. We lost many more of our favorite entertainers and personalities during 2004.

They're gone, but not forgotten.

DAYTON ALLEN, 85, actor who appeared as one of Steve Allen's cast on TV ("Why not?"), was the voice of the cartoon character Deputy Dawg and of the puppet Phineas T. Bluster on the *Howdy Doody* TV show. November 11.

HARRY BABBITT, 90, singer with the Kay Kyser orchestra in the 1930s and '40s, on such popular recordings as "Three Little Fishes" and "Slow Boat to China." He was featured on Kyser's *Kollege of Musical Knowledge* radio program and was the laugh on the Kyser novelty recording of "The Woody Woodpecker Song." April 9.

HARRY BARTELL, 88, actor-announcer during radio's best years in such programs as *Escape*, *Gunsmoke*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Six Shooter*; *Fort Laramie*, *Nero Wolfe*. February 26

GEORGE BAUER, 83, staff-announcer for WGN Chicago from 1945-83 who presented various newscasts and introduced Col. Robert R. McCormick on the weekly *Chicago Theatre of the Air* in the 1940s. June 16.

JACKSON BECK, 92, one of radio's most recognizable voices. He was the announcer on the *Adventures of Superman*; *Tom Corbett*, *Space Cadet*; *Mark Trail*. He portrayed detective *Philo Vance* and "the Robin Hood of the Old West," *The Cisco Kid*. He also did voice-over work on hundreds of TV commercials for Kellogg's cereals, Brawny paper towels, and Little Caesar's pizza. July 28.

ELMER BERNSTEIN, 82, film composer who scored countless motion pictures for seven decades, including *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, *Some Came Running*, *The Ten Commandments*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Ghostbusters* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, for which he won an Academy Award. August 18.

JIM BOUTET, 73, Chicago radio newsman



Harry Bartell



Jackson Beck

PHOTOFEEST

who worked at WIND for 20 years and then on WGN and also as a free-lance actor and announcer. May 16.

MARLON BRANDO, 80, the screen's best-known "method" actor who became one of the most popular movie stars, appearing in such memorable films as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Wild One*, *On the Waterfront*, *The Godfather*. July 1.

JOE BUSHKIN, 87, pianist, popular in the swing era, who performed and recorded with Frank Sinatra, Fats Waller, Eddie Condon and Billie Holiday. He wrote "Oh, Look at Me Now" while a member of the Tommy Dorsey orchestra. November 3.

RAY CHARLES, 73, soul/country music superstar for decades, acclaimed for his renditions of "America the Beautiful" and "Georgia on My Mind." June 10.

JULIA CHILD, 91, TV's beloved French Chef and author who entertained and taught public television viewers the fine art of French cooking. August 13.

CY COLEMAN, 75, Broadway composer of musicals "Sweet Charity," "Wildcat," "Little Me," "Will Rogers Follies," "City of Angels" and such popular songs as "Witchcraft" and "The Best is Yet to Come." November 18.

ALISTAIR COOKE, 95, British broadcaster whose *Letter from America* program was on the BBC for 58 years. He also hosted the series *Masterpiece Theatre* for U.S. public television. March 30.

DON CORNELL, 84, big band singer with the

Sammy Kaye orchestra who also had a string of recording hits on his own, including "It Isn't Fair," "I'm Yours," "I'll Walk Alone," and "Hold My Hand." February 23.

PHILIP CROSBY, 69, one of Bing Crosby's twin sons,

the last survivor of the four sons from Bing's marriage to Dixie Lee, all of whom occasionally appeared on radio and recordings with their father. January 13.

RODNEY DANGERFIELD, 82, the "I-don't-get-no-respect" comedian whose self-deprecating one-liners brought him popularity and stardom on TV, in movies and in comedy clubs. "When I was born, I was so ugly that the doctor slapped my mother." October 5.

PEGGY DE CASTRO, 82, eldest of the singing DeCastro Sisters, best known for their recording of "Teach Me Tonight," selling more than five million copies after it was released in 1954. March 6.

ANN DE MARCO, age not reported, one of the surviving DeMarco Sisters, recording artists and vocalists on *The Fred Allen Show* in the mid- to late-1940s. July 27.

FRANCES DEE, 94, Chicago-born actress who appeared in many movies in the 1930s and '40s, co-starring with Gary Cooper in *Souls at Sea*; Ronald Colman in *If I Were King*, and her husband Joel McCrea in *Silver Cord*, *Wells Fargo* and *Four Faces West*. March 6.

DORIS DOWLING, 81, motion picture actress who made her film debut in *The Lost Weekend* and appeared in such films as *Blue Dahlia*, *Bitter Rice* and Orson Welles' *Othello*. June 18.

LON DYSON, 65, disc jockey on popular and gospel music stations in Chicago for almost 50 years where he worked at WGCI, WBEE, WAAF, WJCP and WLS. June 19.

SAM EDWARDS, 89, versatile actor who played Dexter Franklin on radio's *Meet Corliss Archer* and appeared on such shows as *Life of Riley*, *Escape*, *Dragnet*, *Suspense* and *Lux Radio Theatre*. On TV he was seen in *Dragnet*, *Andy Griffith Show*, *Happy Days*, *Perry Mason*



Don Cornell



Philip Crosby



Doris Dowling

PHOTOFEST

and countless others. He was the voice of the adult "Thumper" in Walt Disney's film *Bambi*. July 28.

MIKE FLEISHER, 67, host and producer of *Treasures from the Isles* program of Celtic music for 14 years on College of DuPage radio station WDCB. May 16.

TOM FOUTS, 85, veteran broadcaster and humorist known as Captain Stubby who performed with his Buccaneers musical group on the *National Barn Dance* on WLS radio and on WGN television. May 24.

DONALD Y. GARDNER, 91, songwriter best known for the hit seasonal novelty tune "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth," a giant hit when recorded by Spike Jones and his City Slickers and later by Nat King Cole, the Chipmunks, the Platters and the Boston Pops Orchestra. September 15.

GENEVIEVE, 83, French singer and comedienne who frequently appeared on Jack Paar's *Tonight Show* on TV in the late '50s and '60s. March 14.

VIRGINIA GREY, 87, actress featured in many films during a 43-year career. Movies include *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1927), *Great Ziegfeld* (1936), *Gold Diggers of 1935*, *The Big Store* (1941) *Restless Years* (1958) *Airport*, 1970. July 3.

UTA HAGEN, 84, drama teacher and actress who starred on Broadway in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Country Girl* and *The Seagull*. January 14.

HALELOKE KAHUAOLAPUA, 82, Hawaiian singer-dancer who was featured on Arthur Godfrey's radio and TV shows during the 1950s. December 16.

ALFRED HUDGINS, 75, disc jockey known as "Mr. A," host of *Blues in the Night* heard



Sam Edwards



Howard Keel



Janet Leigh



M. McCambridge

overnights for many years on radio station WNIB, Chicago. October 27.

JEAN RUTH HAY, 87, host of Armed Forces Radio's morning show *Reveille with Beverly*, whose upbeat style entertained servicemen around the world between 1941-1944. September 18.

ART JAMES, 74, popular announcer and host of TV game shows such as *Concentration*, *Family Feud*, *Challenge*, *Face the Music* and *Blank Check*. March 28.

E. RODNEY JONES, 75, Chicago disc jockey known as one of the "Good Guys" on station WVON, playing blues, jazz and rock and roll. January 3.

FLOYD KALBER, 79, Emmy-winning TV news anchor at Chicago's Channel 5 in the 1960s, Channel 7 in the 1980s and on the NBC *Today Show* in the 1970s. May 13.

HOWARD KEEL, 85, Hollywood's romantic baritone who co-starred with Betty Hutton in *Annie Get Your Gun*; Esther Williams in *Texas Carnival* and *Jupiter's Darling*; Ann Blythe in *Rose Marie* and *Kismet*; Katherine Grayson in *Show Boat*; Doris Day in *Calamity Jane*, and Jane Powell in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. He had a TV career as a star of *Dallas* in the 1980s. November 7.

BOB KEESHAN, 76, TV's beloved *Captain Kangaroo* who entertained generations of youngsters for 30 years, 1955-85. January 23.

ED KEMMER, 84, actor who portrayed Commander Buzz Corey on both the radio and TV versions of *Space Patrol* in the 1950s. November 9.

ALAN KING, 76, comedian known for poking fun at suburbia and life in general. May 9.

LESTER LANIN, 97, famed society bandleader who performed from the White House to

Buckingham Palace to ballrooms throughout the United States. October 27.

JEROME LAWRENCE, 88, co-writer, with partner Robert E. Lee, of such plays as *Inherit the Wind* and *Mame* and who wrote adaptations of operettas and musical for radio's *Railroad Hour*. February 29.

ANNA LEE, 91, actress whose 70-year career included film roles in *How Green Was My Valley* (1941) and *Sound of Music* (1965) and a 20-year stint as Lila Quartermaine in the ABC-TV daytime drama *General Hospital*. May 14.

JANET LEIGH, 77, actress who was nominated for her performance in Alfred Hitchcock's chiller *Psycho*, with her shower scene becoming one of the most famous in motion picture history. She also appeared in *Manchurian Candidate*, *Naked Spur*, *Houdini*, *Touch of Evil* and many other films. October 3.

IRENE MANNING, 91, lyric soprano best known for her roles in film musicals *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *Desert Song* and *Shine On, Harvest Moon*. May 28.

BILLY MAY, 87, Grammy-winning composer and conductor who worked with Stan Kenton, Frank Sinatra and Stan Freberg on his comedy recordings and 1957 radio series. January 22.

MERCEDES MC CAMBRIDGE, 87, Academy Award-winning actress (for *All the King's Men* in 1949) who appeared in thousands of radio broadcasts during the Golden Age, including *Inner Sanctum*, *I Love A Mystery*, *Big Sister*, *Guiding Light*, *The Whistler*, *Lights Out*, and, later, *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre*. March 2.

VAUGHN MEADER, 63, comic whose 1962 record album "The First Family" – a satire of President John F. Kennedy, his family and administration – was a huge success only to become a "one hit wonder" following the assassi-



Jan Miner

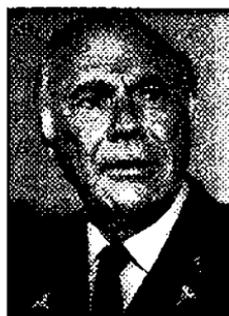
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Jack Paar



Tony Randall



John Randolph

PHOTOFEST

nation of JFK a year later. October 29.

ROBERT MERRILL, 85, acclaimed Metropolitan Opera baritone who often appeared on radio, beginning when he won the *Major Bowes Amateur Hour*. He had his own show in the mid-1940s and was a regular on *Chicago Theatre of the Air* and *Music America Loves Best*. October 23.

ANN MILLER, 81, the dazzling "tops-in-taps" dancer who appeared in dozens of movie musical during Hollywood's golden era and later toured with Mickey Rooney in the hit revue *Sugar Babies*. January 22.

SIDNEY MILLER, 87, actor, director, song writer who often appeared with Donald O'Connor on TV and directed many episodes of *The Mickey Mouse Club*. January 12.

JAN MINER, 86, actress in such radio programs as *Boston Blackie*, *Crime Photographer*, *Lora Lawton*, *Perry Mason*, *Second Mrs. Burton*. She also had many roles on the stage, but was best known as Madge, the manicurist on Palmolive TV commercials for 27 years. February 15.

JERRY ORBACH, 69, Broadway musical comedy star of *The Fantasticks*; *Carnival*; *Promises, Promises*; *Chicago* and *42nd Street*. He was one of the stars of the long-running TV series *Law and Order* in which he portrayed Detective Lennie Briscoe for 12 seasons. December 28.

ROBERT PASTORELLI, 49, actor known for his TV role as Eldon Bernecky, the ever-present house painter on *Murphy Brown*. March 8.

JACK PAAR, 85, TV personality who pioneered the late-night talk show format as host on the *Tonight Show* from 1957-1962. He was Jack Benny's summer replacement on radio in 1947. January 27.

FRANCES RAFFERTY, 81, actress who

portrayed the daughter of Spring Byington on the TV series *December Bride* in the 1950s and was a glamor girl in many B-movies in the 1940s. April 18.

TONY RANDALL, 84, film, stage and TV actor whose career began in radio on such programs as *Mr. District Attorney*, *I Love A Mystery* and numerous soap operas. On TV he co-starred with Jack Klugman in *The Odd Couple* and also appeared in many movies with Rock Hudson and Doris Day. May 17.

JOHN RANDOLPH, 88, popular character actor on TV, films and on the stage in such productions as *Sound of Music*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Come Back Little Sheba*. He was Jack Nicholson's father in *Prizzi's Honor* and Tom Hank's grandfather in *You've Got Mail*. February 24.

RAY RAYNER, 84, Chicago TV legend who entertained young and old alike on *Ray Rayner and His Friends*, *The Dick Tracy Show* and as Oliver O. Oliver on *Bozo's Circus*. January 21.

RONALD REAGAN, 93, radio sports announcer, actor on radio, TV and films who entered politics and became the 40th President of the United States. June 5.

CHRISTOPHER REEVE, 52, star of the *Superman* movies who suffered a broken neck in a near-fatal horseback riding accident in 1995. Other screen appearances included *Somewhere in Time* and *Deathtrap*. After his injury he appeared in a TV remake of *Rear Window* and became an effective advocate for spinal cord research. October 10.

ALVINO REY, 95, swing era bandleader whose trademark was the steel guitar. He was on TV with the King Sisters for many years. February 24.

EUGENE ROCHE, 75, character actor on TV in *All in the Family*, *Magnum P.I.*, *Webster*, *Per-*



Ronald Reagan



Alvino Rey



Eugene Roche



Fay Wray

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fect Strangers. He was also the kitchen-cleaning Ajax man in numerous television commercials. July 26.

NORMAN ROSE, 87, actor-narrator on hundreds on radio and TV programs during a 65-year career. On radio he narrated *Dimension X* and *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and appeared in roles on *Words at War*, *X Minus One*, *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre* and many more. He was the voice of Juan Valdez for more than a decade on Columbia coffee commercials. November 12.

PEGGY RYAN, 80, high-energy dancer who teamed with Donald O'Connor in lower-budget film musicals in the 1940s, including *The Merry Monahans* and *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*. October 30.

SIG SAKOWICZ, 80, local radio-TV personality who interviewed show business celebrities in Chicago and Las Vegas on many stations, including WGN, WAII, WTAQ and WVVX. February 7.

ISABEL SANFORD, 86, Emmy-winning TV actress best known for her role in *The Jeffersons*, 1975-85. July 9.

JERRY SCOGGINS, 93, country-western singer who sang "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" to introduce the 1962-71 TV series, *The Beverly Hillbillies*. He was also one of the Cass County Boys who sang on Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch* radio show in 1946. December 7.

ARTIE SHAW, 94, clarinetist and band leader whose 1938 recording of "Begin the Beguine" was a huge hit and set the tone for an outstanding career, making him one of the stars of the Big Band era. December 30.

JAN STERLING, 82, actress who appeared in many film noir movies of the 1940s and '50s and also had featured roles in *The Carnival*, *The High and the Mighty* and *Johnny Belinda*.

March 26.

JUNE TAYLOR, 86, Emmy-winning choreographer who worked on TV on Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town* and on Jackie Gleason's variety shows, forming the June Taylor Dancers doing Busby Berkley-type routines working with an overhead camera. May 17.

RENATA TEBALDI, 82, Italian soprano who starred at New York's Metropolitan Opera and Italy's La Scala from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. December 19.

PETER USTINOV, 82, actor, playwright, novelist and director known for performances in such films as *Spartacus*, *Quo Vadis*, *Billy Budd* and *Topkapi*. On stage in *Romanoff and Juliet* and *The Love of Four Colonels*. March 28.

BARBARA WHITING, 73, actress who appeared on radio in *Junior Miss* and *Meet Corliss Archer* and on TV in *Those Whiting Girls* with her sister, singer Margaret Whiting. June 9.

PAUL WINFIELD, stage, screen and TV actor who was Oscar-nominated for his performance in *Souder* in 1972. He was on the TV sitcom *Julia* in 1968 and in the 1979 mini-series *Roots, the Next Generation*. March 7.

FAY WRAY, 96, actress who gained fame as the damsel held atop the Empire State Building in the 1933 film classic *King Kong*. She also appeared in *Four Feathers*, *One Sunday Afternoon*, *The Mystery of the Wax Museum*, all during a 20-year-plus film career that began in the silent era. August 8.

This Necrology also appears on our website: www.nostalgia Digest.com

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APRIL 2005

★ INDICATES A WORLD WAR II BROADCAST OF SPECIAL INTEREST

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

DRAGNET (8-18-49) Jack Webb stars as Sgt. Joe Friday with Barton Yarborough as Ben Romero. A sudden wave of jewel thefts is sweeping the city. In 16 days 16 burglaries have been committed – one each night. 11th program in the series. Sustaining. NBC. (30 min)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (5-9-43) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve. Summerfield's water commissioner has plans for a busy day at the office, but Leila Ransom – the future Mrs. Gildersleeve – has other plans. Cast: Shirley Mitchell, Lillian Randolph, Walter Tetley, Earle Ross, Ben Alexander. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min) *Read the article on page 51.*

MR. PRESIDENT (9-11-49) Edward Arnold stars as the nation's chief executive in a dramatization of a little-known event in the life of a U. S. President. The name of the president is not revealed until the last moment of the story. Joseph Kearns announces. Sustaining. ABC. (29 min)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (9-7-36) "Is Zat So?" starring James Cagney, Robert Armstrong and Boots Mallory in a radio version of the Broadway play about a boxing manager who tries to keep his dim-witted skirt-chasing fighter's mind on the upcoming bout. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Cast includes Frank Nelson, Kenneth Thompson, Lionel Pape, Lou Merrill. Lux Soap, CBS. (19 min & 19 min & 20 min) *Read the article about Robert Armstrong on page 8.*

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-18-50) Harold Peary as Gildersleeve, who looks for an excuse to

get his girlfriend, Kathryn Milford, over for dinner. Cast: Cathy Lewis, Walter Tetley, Mary Lee Robb, Lillian Randolph, Earle Ross, Dick LeGrand. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min)

SATURDAY, APRIL 9 RADIO COVERS THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

★ **NEWS** (4-12-45) Early coverage of the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Comments by Raymond Gram Swing, David Wills, Baukhage. ABC. (14 min)

★ **SPECIAL REPORT** (4-12-45) Robert Trout speaks about the presidency of FDR and his Fireside Chats. "...Franklin Roosevelt created much broadcasting history. He was the first world statesman to use the radio as a vital instrument of social power. He used it in a personalized fashion." CBS. (12 min)

★ **TRIBUTE TO FDR** (4-13-45) *Excerpt.* NBC president Niles Trammel speaks about the death of FDR and tells how the National Broadcasting Company will observe this tragic time. NBC has re-arranged its program schedule and some clients have relinquished their time. All have eliminated their commercial messages. NBC. (7 min)

★ **FDR FUNERAL PROCESSION** (4-14-45) *Excerpt.* Arthur Godfrey describes the funeral procession of President Roosevelt in Washington, D.C. He says, "God give me strength to do this" as the president's coffin approaches. CBS. (28 min)

★ **FDR CHICAGO MEMORIAL** (4-14-45) *Excerpt.* Russ Davis, at the Chicago Temple in

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the Loop, describes the Chicago portion of network coverage of FDR memorial services throughout the country. CBS. (5 min)

★ **TRIBUTE TO FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT** (4-15-45) In the hour of national sorrow, "from



Hollywood come the famous personalities of radio and motion pictures, uniting to pay tribute to Franklin Delano Roosevelt." This two-hour special features Ronald Colman, John Charles Thomas, Fibber McGee and Molly, Kay Kyser, Ed Gardner,

Ginny Simms, Dick Powell, Josef Szigeti, James Cagney, Eddie Cantor, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, Shirley Ross, Bette Davis, Robert Young, Jack Benny, Hal Peary, Edgar Bergen, Charles Laughton, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Ingrid Bergman. Maj. Meredith Willson and the orchestra. Announcers are Harry Von Zell, Harlow Wilcox, Ken Carpenter, Don Wilson. Tribute written by John Kraft, Carlton E. Morse, Glenn Wheaton. NBC. (31 min & 29 min & 29 min & 36 min)

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY (7-22-46) *Isolated episode of "Jack Armstrong and the Diamond Kid."* Charles Flynn as Jack. Wheaties, ABC. (16 min)

DUFFY'S TAVERN (10-26-45) Ed Gardner stars as Archie, the manager of the tavern. He gets a letter saying his nephew is coming for a visit. Cast includes Eddie Green (Eddie the waiter), Charlie Cantor (Finnegan), Sandra Gould (Miss Duffy) and Dix Davis (Archie's nephew). AFRS rebroadcast. (27 min)

SUSPENSE (3-23-53) "The Signal Man" starring Agnes Moorehead in Charles Dickens' terrifying story. A magazine writer is mysteriously drawn to a railroad crossing where she used to spend time as a child. AutoLite, CBS. (28 min)

JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY (9-4-46) *Isolated episode of "The Trial of the Silencer,"* a man of mystery. Charles Flynn as Jack, Dick York as Billy, Patricia Dunlop as Betty, Jim Goss as Uncle Jim. Announcer is Franklyn Ferguson. Wheaties, ABC. (15 min)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (11-27-53) "The Traffic Problem in Los Angeles" or "Dante's Inferno." Phil's daughters are late

coming home because there's no traffic light on a crosswalk by their school. *The program is preceded by a studio audience warm-up with announcer Bill Forman and Phil, who introduces the cast.* RCA Victor, NBC. (42 min)

JACK ARMSTRONG (4-20-48) "House of Darkness," a complete half-hour adventure. Jack now works with Vic Hardy at the S.B.I. - the Scientific Bureau of Investigation. Wheaties, ABC. (29 min)
Read the article about General Mills, makers of Wheaties, on page 12.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-4-56) Part 1 of the 5-part "Indestructible Mike Matter," starring Bob Bailey as America's fabulous free-lance insurance investigator - the man with the action-packed expense account. A \$50,000 life insurance policy has been sold to a penniless, worthless bum and the agent fears that the policy holder will be murdered. Cast includes Howard McNear, Lawrence Dobkin, Harry Bartell, Herb Vigran, Alan Reed, Roy Glenn. Sustaining, CBS. (15 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-5-56) Part 2 of "The Indestructible Mike Matter." Sustaining, CBS. (15 min)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (1-20-49) "Fuller Brush Man" starring Red Skelton and Janet Blair. Red is involved in a murder while trying to succeed as a door-to-door salesman. Cast: Frank Nelson, Willard Waterman, Earle Ross, Paula Winslowe. Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (28 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-6-56) Part 3 of "The Indestructible Mike Matter." Sustaining, CBS. (15 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (6-16-40) Last show of Jack's 1939-40 season. Jack is concerned about his summer replacement, Henry Aldrich. Ezra Stone, as Henry, stops by to see Jack and the gang: Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Don Wilson, Elliott Lewis, Verna Felton. Jell-O, NBC. (30 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-7-56) Part 4 of "The Indestructible Mike Matter." Sustaining, CBS. (15 min)

BURNS AND ALLEN (3-21-44) George and Gracie keep guest Rita Hayworth company while her husband, Orson Welles, is away. Announcer Bill Goodwin, singer Jimmy Cash, Felix Mills and the orchestra. Swan Soap, CBS. (28 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-8-56) Part 5 - the conclusion - of "The Indestructible Mike Matter." Sustaining, CBS. (15 min)



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APRIL 2005

SATURDAY, APRIL 30
35th ANNIVERSARY BROADCAST
"Thanks for Listening"

As we celebrate our 35th broadcast anniversary today we present a special program from the stage of the LaSalle Bank Cinema auditorium in Chicago.

Joining us "live" on stage for this milestone event will be:

KEN ALEXANDER, veteran radio announcer and man-about-town, who will bring a newspaper from his basement to share with listeners.

STEVE COOPER ORCHESTRA, presenting a re-creation of a "Your Hit Parade" program from 1944 as well as a "Tribute to the Big Bands" with a simulated coast-to-coast broadcast highlighting the nation's great bands, bandleaders and remote announcers.

MIKE BEZIN'S WEST END JAZZ BAND, offering a "Salute to the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks" with a reasonable facsimile of a 1929 broadcast from Chicago's Blackhawk Restaurant.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS RADIO PLAYERS presenting re-enactments of favorite old-time-radio scenes.

SPECIAL GUESTS, among others, will be big band historian **Karl Pearson** and movie historian **Bob Kolososki**. Plus an actual old-time-radio show:

FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (5-28-46) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees of Wistful Vista. Fibber doesn't remember it is their wedding anniversary, even though Molly gets her hair done, buys a new dress, and tries hard to "remind" him of their special day. Cast includes Bea Benaderet, Bill Thompson,

Celebrating Radio's Golden Age



Arthur Q. Bryan, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

-NOTE-

Tickets for this 35th Anniversary *Those Were The Days* broadcast, a benefit for public radio station WDCB, are SOLD OUT. (We thank LaSalle Bank for their generosity in permitting us to use their auditorium.)

If you don't have a ticket, be sure to tune in live on the air (WDCB 90.9 FM) or on the Internet (www.wdcb.org) or beginning Tuesday, May 3, for streaming audio on demand at www.nostalgiadigest.com

Don't miss it if you can!

SATURDAY, MAY 7 RADIO AND WORLD WAR II IN THE SPRING OF 1945 – Part 1

★ **SPECIAL BROADCAST** (4-27-45) President Harry Truman announces the meeting of Anglo-American and Soviet forces in the heart of Nazi Germany, cutting the country in two. NBC. (9 min)

★ **NEWS BROADCASTS** (4-30-45) *Excerpts.* Scanning the radio dial on the night of Hitler's death with great speculation about the surrender of Germany. "One thing is clear, it's now over in Europe." Short clips from various stations. (12 min)

★ **DEATH OF ADOLPH HITLER** (4-30-45) *Excerpt.* Cincinnati news commentators with speculation following the death of Hitler. "Will the Allies now deal with Heinrich Himmler? Will President Truman go on the air tonight with an announcement of V-E Day?" Plus: a profile of Hitler's early life. WCPO, Cincinnati. (12 min)

★ **DEATH OF ADOLPH HITLER** (4-30-45) Mutual correspondents John Thompson, Seymour Korman and Paul Manning with reactions from Allied Headquarters on the reports of the death of Adolph Hitler. MBS. (13 min)

★ **FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** (5-1-45) Jim and Marian Jordan star. Fibber plans to catch a criminal and turn him in for the \$6,000 reward. Cast: Arthur Q. Bryan, Shirley Mitchell, Bea Benadaret, Marlin Hurt, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min) *Program is preceded by a news bulletin officially announcing the death of Adolph Hitler.*

★ **VAN DEVENTER AND THE NEWS** (5-7-45) Newscaster Fred Van Deventer with news of the events surrounding Germany's surrender. "In many respects, this has been a lamentable day despite the fact it's been celebrated throughout much of the world as V-E Day. There seems to be no doubt but what the Germans have surrendered unconditionally. The Germans admit it and it's not denied by any official sources... but (the news) was not supposed to have been made public in any way." Hoffman Beer, MBS. (14 min)

★ **HARRY S TRUMAN** (5-8-45) The President of the United States announces the uncondi-

tional surrender of Germany, the end of the war in Europe. "This is a solemn but glorious hour... I only wish that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day." ALL NETWORKS. (6 min)

★ **V-E DAY IN LONDON** (5-8-45) Edward R. Murrow and Douglas Edwards report on V-E Day and the victory celebration in London. CBS. (5 min)

★ **V-E DAY SPECIAL** (5-8-45) The nation's "official" acknowledgment of the end of the war in Europe, broadcast on all networks and on short wave around the world. From Washington, Paris, Guam, the Philippines. Among the speakers are Gen. George C. Marshall, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Gen. H. H. Arnold, Gen. Douglas A. McArthur. "In our nation's capital today an atmosphere of calm permeates the city." ALL NETWORKS via NBC. (29 min & 30 min)

★ **THIS IS V-E DAY** (5-8-45) An "audio news-reel" dealing with the major events of WW II in Europe. "There is still a long way to go before the final victory throughout the world." WMPS, Memphis. (31 min)

SATURDAY, MAY 14 RADIO AND WORLD WAR II IN THE SPRING OF 1945 – Part 2

★ **HOLLYWOOD V-E DAY SPECIAL** (5-8-45) From Columbia's Radio Playhouse at Hollywood and Vine, this all-star program celebrates victory in Europe. Featured are Charles Boyer, Nelson Eddy, Pat O'Brien, Frank Sinatra, Shirley Ross, Mills Brothers, Leith Stevens and the orchestra, Axel Stordahl and the orchestra, Howard Ambrose and the orchestra. CBS. (24 min & 26 min)

★ **ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH** (5-8-45) Norman Corwin wrote, produced and directed this victory exclamation on the defeat of Hitler and the end of the war in Europe. Narrated by Martin Gabel. Music by Bernard Hermann. *This is one of the greatest, most honored radio programs of all time.* CBS. (30 min & 30 min) *Read the article on Page 40.*

★ **FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** (5-8-45) Jim and Marian Jordan as the McGees. Fibber agrees to conduct a housing shortage survey for the Wistful Vista City Council. But time is



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MAY - JUNE 2005

★ INDICATES A WORLD WAR II BROADCAST OF SPECIAL INTEREST

SATURDAY, MAY 21

of the essence. Program opens and closes with special V-E Day messages. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

★ **HOWARD K. SMITH** (5-9-45) War correspondent Smith, via shortwave, reports on the bombed city of Berlin as it appears following the Nazi surrender. "It's the most massive work of concentrated destruction in history." COMBINED NETWORKS. (10 min)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-13-45) Robert Trout and correspondents Douglas Edwards and Edward R. Murrow. "This is the Day of Prayer, a national day of thanksgiving in the United States and Great Britain." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25 min)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (5-13-45) It's Mother's Day and a few days after V-E Day. Jack recalls his wartime prowess as he prepares for a trip to San Francisco. Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Larry Stevens, Phil Harris. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (26 min)

BUSTER BROWN GANG (1-15-49) Smilin' Ed McConnell entertains the kids with Little Kulah (the Persian Prince) and the Genie in the Jug and the story of "The Enchanted King." Also on hand: Squeaky the Mouse, Midnight the Cat, Froggie the Gremlin and Alkali Pete the Cowboy. Buster Brown Shoes, NBC. (27 min)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (11-20-39) "Good-bye Mr. Chips" starring Lawrence Olivier and Edna Best in a radio version of the 1939 film. A shy schoolmaster devotes his life to his students, coming out of his shell only when he meets a woman whom he considers "much too good" for him. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Announcer is Melville Ruick. Cast features Alan Napier, Clifford Severn, Ronald Sinclair. Lux Soap, CBS. (22 min & 14 min & 21 min)

THE BIG STORY (6-4-47) "The Thirteenth Key." Reporter James E. Fusco of the Columbia Citizen tells how he helped to apprehend a murderer in this "big story" based on a 1929 murder case. Berry Kroeger narrates. John Gibson as Fusco. *This rare home recording of the broadcast is introduced by the real James Fusco.* Pall Mall Cigarettes, NBC. WLW Cincinnati aircheck. (25 min)

DINAH SHORE SHOW (5-10-45) Dinah welcomes guest Frank Sinatra, who joins announcer Harry Von Zell. Elvia Allman and Robert Emmet Dolan and the orchestra. Dinah has an idea to fatten up Frankie and slim down Harry. Birds Eye Frozen Foods, NBC. (30 min)

BILL STERN'S SPORTS NEWSREEL (11-26-48) Broadcasting from Dallas, Texas, it's the sportscaster's 474th edition of his "newsreel." Guest, in New York, is orchestra leader and pianist Frankie Carle, who tells how he wanted to be a prize-fighter. Other stories are about golfers and songs written in 1910 that had a background in sports. Colgate Shave Creme, NBC. (14 min)

SATURDAY, MAY 28
70th ANNIVERSARY OF
BOB CROSBY'S BIG BAND

BOB CROSBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (12-27-35) Broadcasting from Cincinnati, Bob and his band play "Roll Along, Prairie Moon," "I'm Shooting High," and "Dinner for One, Please, James." "Daydreams of Stars" sketch features Alice Frost and Paul Stewart. Announcer is Alan Kent. Roger and Gallett Soaps, NBC BLUE. (14 min)

FORD V-8 REVUE (1936) Featuring Bob Crosby and his "famous swing band with the Freshmen Trio." Bob sings "There'll Be Some Changes Made," the Trio sings "I'll Never Say 'Never Again' Again." The band plays "Tin Roof Blues." Ford Motor Co., SYNDICATED. (15 min)

BOB CROSBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (3-2-37) Remote broadcast from the Congress Casino of the Congress Hotel in downtown Chicago on Michigan Boulevard. Pierre Andre announces. Tunes include "Sugar Foot Strut," "One, Two, Button Your Shoe," "She's Funny That Way," "It's De-lovely" and "Basin Street Blues." Vocals by Bob Crosby and Kay Weber. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

DIXIELAND MUSIC SHOP (9-26-39) Bob Crosby and his orchestra, "the best Dixieland band in the land," featuring the Bobcats, Johnny Mercer and Helen Ward. Announcer is George Bryan. Selections include "Heat Wave," "El Rancho Grande," "Washington and Lee Swing," and "Panama." A Mercer-written song, "Newsy Bluesy," contains lyrics about current topics in the news. Camel Cigarettes, CBS. (27 min)

BOB CROSBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (4-29-40) *Excerpt.* Remote broadcast from the Blackhawk Restaurant, located at Wabash and Randolph in Chicago. Music includes "Fools Rush In," "Cecilia," "Jazz Me Blues." Vocals by Bob and Marion Mann. Sustaining, MBS. (15 min)

CAMEL CARAVAN (11-28-40) Bob Crosby and his orchestra, with Bonnie King and the Bob-O-Links. Tunes include "Sweet Georgia Brown," "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square," "Exactly Like You," and "Royal Garden Blues." Broadcast from San Francisco. An-



Bob Crosby

nouncer is Bill Goodwin. Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

FITCH BANDWAGON (5-24-42) *Excerpt.* Bob Crosby and his orchestra with host Tobe Reed and announcer Dresser Dahlstead. Selections include "Jersey Bounce," "Brass Boogie" and "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." Fitch Shampoo, NBC. (20 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is big band historian **KARL PEARSON**, who will talk about the music career of Bob Crosby.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4
AN AFTERNOON WITH
ANDRÉ BARUCH and BEA WAIN

SPEAKING OF RADIO (6-17-88) Veteran radio announcer **André Baruch** talks about his broadcast career with Chuck Schaden in a conversation recorded in Mr. Baruch's home in Beverly Hills, California. (Part 1: 27 min)

YOUR HIT PARADE (9-21-46) The top tunes of the week presented by singers Andy Russell and Peggy Mann with the Hit Paraders and Mark Warnow and the orchestra. **André Baruch** announces. AFRS rebroadcast. (30 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (6-17-88) Singer **Bea Wain** joins her husband, **André Baruch**, to talk about her career as a vocalist with the big bands. (Part 2: 27 min)

YOUR HIT PARADE (6-17-44) Frank Sinatra, **Bea Wain**, the Hit Paraders and Mark Warnow and the orchestra present the top tunes of the week. Kenny Delmar announces. AFRS rebroadcast. (28 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (6-17-88) **André Baruch** and **Bea Wain** talk about their show business careers and their life together in this conversation recorded about a month after they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Part 3: 27 min)

THE SHADOW (2-15-48) "Terror at Wolf's Head Knoll" starring Bret Morrison as Lamont Cranston with Grace Matthews as the lovely Margo Lane. Margo and Cranston seek shelter in a mysterious mansion after a minor accident where a strange "doctor" treats Margo for a sprained ankle. Announcer is **André Baruch**. Blue Coal, MBS. (29 min)



Bea and André

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JUNE 2005

SATURDAY, JUNE 11
EDWARD G. ROBINSON ON RADIO

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (11-2-41) "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse" starring **Edward G. Robinson** with Claire Trevor and Lloyd Nolan in the radio version of the 1938 film. Dr. Clitterhouse studies crime from the medical viewpoint by becoming a criminal and observing the physical effects on his body. Gulf Oil, CBS. (28 min)

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (3-18-48) Al Jolson welcomes guest **Edward G. Robinson**, who appears as Jolie's conscience and advises him to become a tough guy. Oscar Levant, Lou Bring and the orchestra, Ken Carpenter. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

COMEDY THEATRE (4-8-45) "A Slight Case of Murder" starring **Edward G. Robinson** with

Allen Jenkins in a radio version of their 1938 film. Damon Runyon story of a soft-hearted former bootlegger who has gone legit after Prohibition ends. Host is actor Harold Lloyd. Old Gold Cigarettes, NBC. (29 min)

VICTOR BORGE SHOW (10-7-46) The great Danish comedian is proud of a painting of his grandfather when guest **Edward G. Robinson** discovers more valuable paintings under the portrait. Program features Benny Goodman and his orchestra, the Goodman Sextet, and singer Art Lund. Don Wilson announces. AFRS rebroadcast. (29 min)

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (2-3-50) "The Sea Wolf" starring **Edward G. Robinson** in his original screen role in this radio version of the 1941 film. The story of Wolf Larson, a brutal but educated sea captain who matches wits with a passenger rescued at sea. Cast includes Paul Frees, Lurene Tuttle, Lou Merrill. RCA Victor, NBC. (29 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is movie historian **BOB KOLOSOSKI**, who will talk about the film career of **Edward G. Robinson**.



Edward G. Robinson

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

RAILROAD HOUR (10-4-48) "Good News" is the first show in the long-running series. Gordon MacRae stars with Dinah Shore and Jane Powell in the DeSylva, Brown and Henderson 1920s collegiate musical set on the campus of Tait College. Selections include "Varsity Drag," "Lucky in Love." "The Best Things in Life are Free," and "Good News." Cast features Jim Backus, Mary Lee Robb, Lou Merrill, Rye Billsbury. Marvin Miller announces. Norman Luboff Choir, Carmen Dragon and the orchestra. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (44 min)

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (1-7-46) "The Lost Weekend" starring Ray Milland, Jane Wyman and Frank Faylen in the radio version of the 1945 Academy Award-winning film, an unrelenting drama of alcoholism. Milland won the Oscar for Best Actor. Lady Esther Products, CBS. (29 min)

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT! (7-4-48) Garry Moore is the quizmaster on this popular program that permitted contestants to win up to \$64 - or more! Categories include "animal names in sports," "plays with famous stars," "household double talk" and "presidential nicknames." Cookie Fairchild and the orchestra, announcer Ken Niles. Eversharp, NBC. (31 min)

MYSTERY IN THE AIR (8-28-47) "Beyond Good and Evil" stars Peter Lorre, Henry (Harry) Morgan, Peggy Webber, John Brown, Howard Culver, Russell Thorson. An escaped convict masquerades as a clergyman after terrorizing a real pastor. Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (28 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (2-24-46) Jack and the gang broadcast from Palm Springs, California. To show up a magazine writer who has been critical of the Benny program, Jack presents "a nice, sweet program" with his cast entirely out of character. Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Artie Auerbach, Larry Stevens. Larry sings a new song written by one of Jack's writers (John Tackaberry), "Pickle in the Middle." Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28 min)

SATURDAY, JUNE 25
ALL-STAR DOUBLE FEATURE

LUX RADIO THEATRE (2-21-44) "Wake Up and Live" starring Frank Sinatra, Bob Crosby, James Gleason, Marilyn Maxwell and James Dunne. In this radio version of the 1937 film, a timid singer accidentally becomes a radio sensation. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Cast includes Verna Felton, Bea Benadaret, Cathy Lewis, Arthur Q. Bryan. Lux Soap, CBS. (20 min & 14 min & 25 min)

THE BIG SHOW (4-8-51) Tallulah Bankhead is mistress of ceremonies for this 90-minute program, part of NBC's last-ditch effort to survive the loss of Jack Benny and other stars to CBS and increasing competition from television. This time the variety show features Fred Allen, Portland Hoffa, Jimmy Durante, Vivian Blaine, William Marshall, Jane Morgan, Rudy Vallee, Meredith Willson and the orchestra and announcer Ed Herlihy. Sustaining, NBC. (28 min & 29 min & 27 min)

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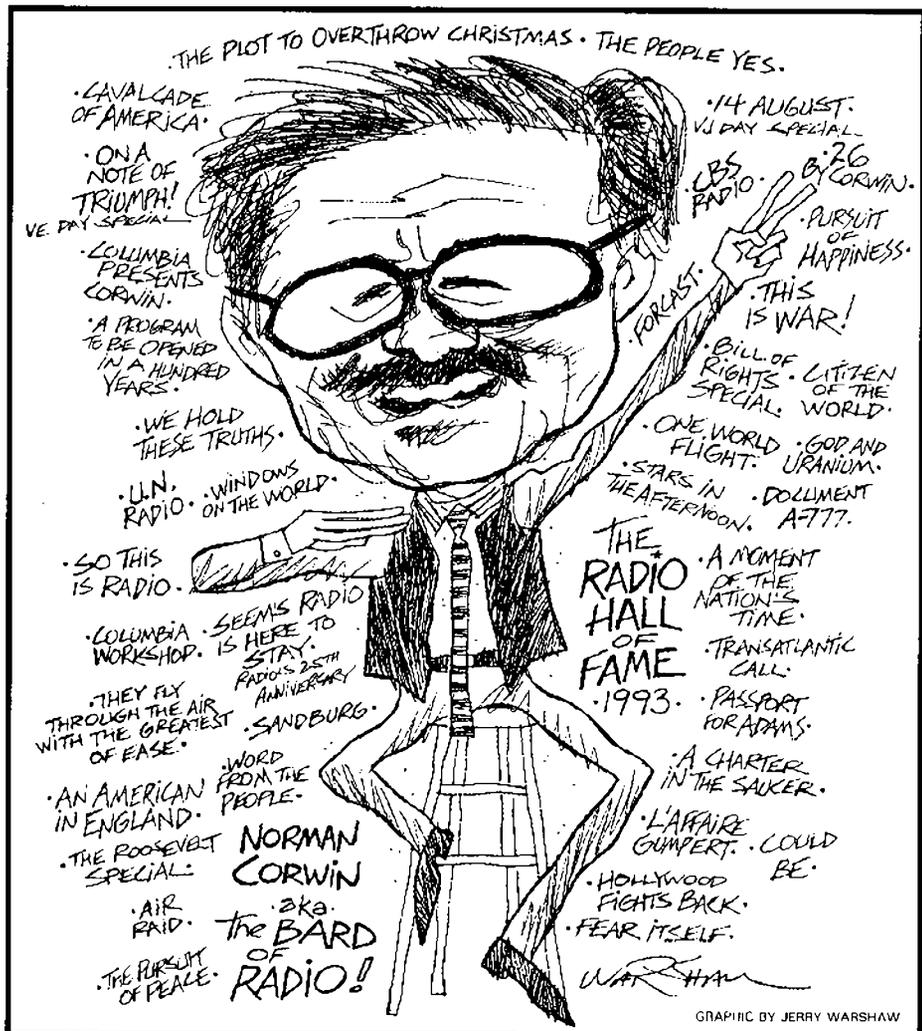
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GRAPHIC BY JERRY WARSHAW

TEN BY CORWIN

BY STEVE DARNALL

A casual glance at the Golden Age of Radio will reveal volumes of great singers, actors and comedians. It is regrettable that the names of writers and directors do not flow from the tongue quite as easily,

although this had more to do with the fact that such "behind the scenes" talent rarely received on-air credit. It was pure chance that Norman Corwin always got on-air credit, but there was no arguing that he

Steve Darnall of Chicago, a free-lance writer and editor, will become Editor and Publisher of Nostalgia Digest beginning with the Summer, 2005 issue.

always deserved it.

Today, some 95 years after Corwin's birth and seven decades after his radio debut, his body of work still serves as a reminder that radio can be so much more than a place for advertising and shrill rantings disguised as discourse. In Norman Corwin's hands, radio could be art. Better still, radio could be smart. Even Arch Oboler – a pretty celebrated radio author and director in his own right – said that “I was a melodramatist; he was a poet.”

In an era before satellite communications, Corwin worked on a global scale, using short-wave radio and coordinating bi-coastal relays that would take listeners – quite literally – far beyond a studio at CBS. In an era when not everything in our world (or on our airwaves) was for sale, Corwin had the advantage of possessing a front-row seat while the medium and the network were flexing muscles that no mass medium had ever possessed. Radio routinely asked listeners to use their imaginations – Corwin also insisted that his listeners use their intelligence. The result was some of radio's most important programs.

Norman Corwin was born on May 3, 1910 in Boston. Now, as the bard of radio turns 95, we present what is admittedly a hit-and-run history; a more-or-less chronological look at some of Corwin's most celebrated (or most underrated) works. It is designed to touch upon important moments in his career and demonstrate the depth and breadth of his talent, a talent that earned him the sobriquet of “radio's poet laureate.”

And so, below, via radio...

1. “The Plot To Overthrow Christmas,” *Norman Corwin's Words Without Music* (12-25-38).

Corwin's first script for radio was one of his most enduring, and how it came

to be is as much a story as the plot of “The Plot.”

In the 1930s, Corwin had worked as a journalist and a publicity flack for 20th Century Fox before making his radio debut on New York station WQXR with a show called *Poetic License*. At the time, poetry on the air usually consisted of drippy verse accompanied by equally soggy organ music. By contrast, Corwin's *Poetic License* treated the poetry like little plays, using actors and music to animate the work of Carl Sandburg, Walt Whitman, Edgar Lee Masters (who was moved to tears by Corwin's adaptation of his “Spoon River Anthology”) and (using a variety of pseudonyms) even the director himself. The show impressed CBS Vice-President Bill Lewis, who invited Corwin to join the network as a director-for-hire.

Corwin got his feet wet directing several episodes of *Americans at Work* and the network's experimental forum, *Columbia Workshop*. Finally, in the fall of 1938, Corwin approached Lewis about a program of poetry on the network, one similar to *Poetic License*.

Lewis liked the idea but suggested that the average man might shy away from a show with “poetry” in the title. Corwin innocently suggested the title *Words Without Music* and was brought up short when Lewis amended it to *Norman Corwin's Words Without Music*. As Corwin told Chuck Schaden in 1975, Lewis “had accomplished for me what the highest-powered agent in the business could never have accomplished.”

The show had been on the air for several weeks when the CBS publicity department asked Corwin if he had anything special planned for his Christmas Day broadcast. Corwin blurted out a title, “The Plot to Overthrow Christmas,” before realizing he'd have to create a story to go with the

title. The result was a wonderful, whimsical tale, told entirely in verse, in which the demons of hell band together in an effort to conquer humanity by destroying Christmas.

Lucrezia Borgia recommends bumping off Santa Claus ("Just think how it would tickle us to liquidate St. Nicholas") and Nero is dispatched to the North Pole to do the dastardly deed. Thankfully, all is saved when Santa reveals to the unsuspecting Nero "what a lot a little Christmas spirit does" and caps the deal with a most appropriate Christmas gift.

Corwin updated the play in 1993 for a National Public Radio production that starred Stan Freberg and Samantha Eggar. Corwin made another foray into the world of rhyming verse with 1945's delightful *The Undecided Molecule*, a story of free will in the most unlikely of places that starred Groucho Marx, Robert Benchley, Keenan Wynn, Vincent Price, and Sylvia Sidney.

2. "They Fly Through The Air With The Greatest of Ease," *Norman Corwin's Words Without Music* (2-19-39).

If "Plot" demonstrated Corwin's gift for language, "They Fly Through the Air" was his first radio play to demonstrate his passion for justice. During a time of isolationism at home – before Americans knew the full extent of fascism's horrors – Corwin was angered by a recent report of Italian bombers that targeted civilians in the town of Guernica, Spain. "They Fly" was a bold, angry statement that brought kudos to Corwin and his network and typified the social awareness that would dominate his future output.

While the pilots in "They Fly" methodically destroy civilians and their homes, they are not mentioned by name. Indeed, they don't really need to be; the bombers' matter-of-fact attitudes and the deceptively



NORMAN CORWIN COLLECTION

calm narration (by actor House Jameson) paint an indelible portrait of how fascism dehumanizes both its perpetrators and its victims.

CBS was highly impressed and asked Corwin to direct *Pursuit of Happiness*, a new series designed to "bring us reminders that today, with thankfulness and humility, we Americans still enjoy our constitutional rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It was here that singer Paul Robeson stunned listeners nationwide with the moving epic "Ballad for Americans."

Although *Pursuit* lasted only one season, it produced some long-standing friendships. One such friendship, with actor Charles Laughton, led Corwin to Hollywood to write a screenplay for the British actor.

3. "Descent of the Gods," *Columbia Workshop* (8-3-41)

In the spring of 1941, CBS – eager to hold onto one of its brightest talents – offered Corwin creative control of *The Columbia Workshop* for a 26-week run that would be called *26 By Corwin*. Corwin, whose time in Hollywood had led him to appreciate the freedom that radio had,



NORMAN CORWIN COLLECTION

agreed.

In today's cutthroat broadcasting environment, it's staggering to remember that ratings were never an issue for *The Columbia Workshop*. The show usually aired on Tuesdays opposite Bob Hope with whom precious little could compete – because CBS had determined each show would attract its own individual loyal audience. In that environment, Corwin was free to cut loose on any subject, using any narrative style, while drawing from his ever-growing list of talented actors.

Corwin responded with his widest variety of work to date. In May, there was an opera based on the writings of Carl Sandburg ("The People, Yes"). In June, there was the touching "Odyssey of Runyon Jones," which took the boy-and-his-dog scenario to a new level – the after-life. August brought an impressive trilogy of stories drawn from the Old Testament, starring Charles Laughton and Martin Gabel.

A week before his biblical trilogy aired, Corwin showcased his deftly satirical touch with "Descent of the Gods." Up-and-coming radio humorist Henry Morgan starred as Nick, the Greek God of Trivia ("which

is just as exciting as being 16th vice-president in a gimlet factory"). Using his trademark cynical delivery, Morgan narrated Corwin's story of "familiar gods in unfamiliar circumstances," in which Venus comes to Earth (specifically to Boston, which she had heard was "the center of the Universe"). Venus' appearance interrupts a radio broadcast (by the singing group the Four Horsemen) and is subsequently grilled by a "Committee of Experts" who threaten to jail her for flying without a license. When she verifies her identity, she's immediately offered her own radio show (to be called, naturally, "26 By Venus"). Mars, on the other hand, finds himself startled and unnerved by the weaponry of modern man and makes matters worse with a disastrous appearance on *Information, Please*. Finally, Apollo praises mankind's artistic and scientific contributions, yet regrets that if you "give this man a problem – such as how to keep from killing several million other men just like himself...he is baffled and distraught."

While Apollo mourns that modern man "hails the Golden Rule as golden, then puts it on a shelf to be forgotten," he also acknowledges that "man has the seeds of his own betterment, and one day they shall sprout. When that day comes, a vine shall reach to heaven, and the gods climb down."

"Descent" proved to be so popular that when Corwin took ill in October, CBS reprised the show as "23A" of Corwin's 26. **4. "Between Americans," *Columbia Workshop* (7-6-41)**

For the 10th show of *26 By Corwin*, Corwin constructed what he called "an informal program for informal people." Narrator Ray Collins opened the show by suggesting "We hope you like it, but you don't have to; at any rate, nobody's going to make you stick around and listen to it."

Corwin may have billed it as "informal," but in fact, it was a natural extension of

his work on *Pursuit of Happiness*, a 30-minute rumination about what America means to its citizens.

At a time when the newspapers and airwaves were filled with news of the war in Europe – leading to speculation as to whether America would become involved – Corwin asked listeners “Is it an accident that makes just being a citizen in this comparatively young country so attractive to so many people?...Is it an accident that a thousand million people all around the world would give everything they owned to be in your shoes?”

It’s important to note that Corwin never sugar-coated his patriotism with “love it or leave it” jingoism. The demons of bigotry and intolerance are acknowledged, but so is the observation that most Americans “are trying to live by the rules – the best rules we’ve seen in a long time.” Eloquent without being pretentious, patriotic without being simple-minded, “Between Americans” offered proof that Corwin (like his friend Carl Sandburg) could write intimately about subjects whose scale might prove overwhelming to some writers.

Orson Welles was so impressed by the play that he reprised it later in the year on *Screen Guild Theater*. Ironically, Welles’ performance was scheduled for December 7, 1941 – a date when Corwin’s proclamations demonstrated an even greater resonance. By then, of course, Corwin – like the U.S. – had far bigger issues to resolve.

5. We Hold These Truths (12-15-41)

In the fall of 1941, the government made plans to sponsor a special sesquicentennial celebration of the Bill of Rights program on all four major networks (Columbia, Mutual, and NBC Red and Blue). William B. Lewis, Corwin’s old ally at CBS, had moved to the radio division of the Office of Facts and Figures in Washington and

asked his friend to helm the show.

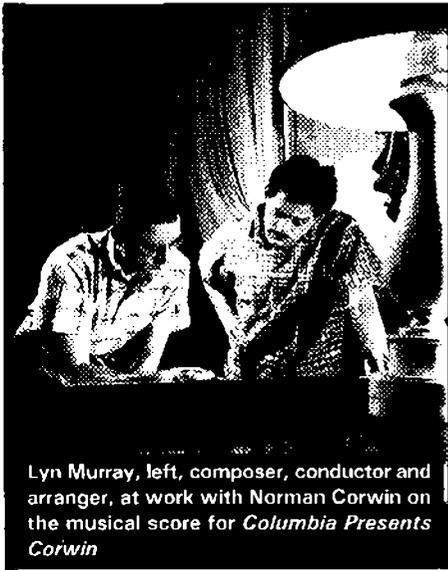
Corwin struggled with the script for two weeks until the bombing of Pearl Harbor changed the project’s focus completely. With the nation’s very survival a subject of debate, celebrating the Bill of Rights was deemed more vital than ever.

Bernard Herrmann (an invaluable contributor to many Corwin productions) composed the music and an all-star cast lined up to participate. From Los Angeles, Corwin directed Corporal James Stewart (on leave from the Air Force) as the narrator, with additional contributions from Edward Arnold, Lionel Barrymore, Walter Brennan, Bob Burns, Walter Huston, Marjorie Main, Edward G. Robinson, Rudy Vallee, Orson Welles, and President Roosevelt. President Roosevelt was heard from Washington D.C. and Leopold Stokowski concluded the show in New York by conducting “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Corwin wove a narrative recalling the long, slow birthing process of democracy in America and demonstrated how that evolution led to a document unlike any other in the world. In the process, he demonstrated that the Constitution was crafted in response to the people’s needs and concerns – making it the first document of its kind.

“One hundred fifty years from this beginning, how much of what is said and of what is sung and what is written down shall still be good?” Stewart asked. “This parchment of the Bill of Rights, with the word ‘Resolved’ so plainly written on it, how long will it endure? Is it a passport to a greater day? Will future generations read it, sanction it, and pass on it? Will children’s children live by it, work by it, and profit by it?”

Then as now, the answer would depend on the people. In a time of terrifying un-



Lyn Murray, left, composer, conductor and arranger, at work with Norman Corwin on the musical score for *Columbia Presents Corwin*

certainly, *We Hold These Truths* served as both an emollient and an inspiration for the days to come. The country's most respected radio writer had fired one of the first salvos of this war. He was far from finished.

6. "Cromer," *An American in England* (12-1-42)

With America's entry into World War II, Corwin found himself more in demand than ever, contributing to the 1942 series *This Is War* and 1943's *Transatlantic Call*. He also created *Passport for Adams*, a weekly drama starring Robert Young as a small-town newspaper editor who is assigned to visit and report on various Allied nations.

Corwin's most celebrated wartime effort from this period was *An American in England*, an ambitious 10-episode series, produced jointly by CBS and the BBC and originally broadcast from England via short wave. *An American in England* was a gesture of solidarity, designed to inform Americans of the personal struggles their British counterparts endured every day.

Perhaps the most successful show of the group was "Cromer," a look at a small En-

glish village that faced the North Sea, and was thus a potential target of enemy invasion. By focusing on the small, personal details of the town and its people, Corwin humanized a place that to many Americans was still very abstract. In the process, he painted a larger picture of a nation trying to maintain peace of mind while surrounded by war.

7. "Untitled," *Columbia Presents Corwin* (4-30-44)

While Corwin had gotten a chance to cut loose as a guest on Fred Allen's show, it wasn't until the spring of 1944 that he had a chance to return to the broader artistic palette of his early work. This new series, *Columbia Presents Corwin*, included a tribute to the people of Czechoslovakia ("The Long Name None Could Spell"), a whimsical look at the transformative effects of daydreams ("You Can Dream, Inc."), and a love story involving a cross-country train trip, which starred Corwin's future wife, Katherine Locke.

Even so, the war was never far from anyone's mind. Corwin had devoted plenty of time to the fight against fascism; with "Untitled," Corwin reminded listeners of the human cost of that battle. Frederic March narrated the story, beginning with one of radio's most famous, most blunt introductions:

"With reference to Hank Peters, he is dead. That much is certain."

From there, Corwin examined the life of this typical soldier by hearing from the people who affected him (both positively and negatively) and pondering the circumstances that led Hank Peters to have to fight in the first place. As the story reached its conclusion, it was revealed that Hank Peters is the narrator, speaking words of caution from beyond the grave.

"I shall wait and I shall wait in a long suspense for the password that the Peace is setting solidly," March said. "On that

day – will you please let my mother know why it had to happen to her boy?”

If *We Hold These Truths* was Corwin’s warmup for the war to end all wars, “Untitled” was a demanding examination of what lessons would have to be learned when victory was finally declared. That day was more than a year away, but Corwin would be there too.

8. Election Eve Special (11-6-44)

“This is Humphrey Bogart. I’m a registered voter in the 16th Congressional District of California, and one of a number of people from a great many walks of life who come here tonight of their own free will, because we have a deep and common interest in the outcome tomorrow of the most important election in the history of our country.”

So began one of the most unusual and controversial broadcasts in radio history. President Roosevelt was locked in his toughest battle yet for the White House against New York Governor Thomas Dewey, and health concerns and the demands of war made campaigning difficult. Instead, at the request of the Democratic National Committee, Corwin assembled a 60-minute extravaganza designed to turn out the vote for the President.

During this hour, war veterans, small-business owners, secretaries, housewives, farmers, and even Republicans came forward to praise Roosevelt; his efforts on behalf of workers and unions, his work in launching the Tennessee Valley Authority, his leadership during wartime and his goal for an organization of United Nations. A 94-year-old man who had voted in 17 elections introduced an 18-year-old who was voting in her first one; she in turn, introduced the President, who wrapped up the hour with a stirring, low-key address that spoke more about the democratic process than about his own accomplishments.

Corwin brought star power to the mike as well. Among those testifying on Roosevelt’s behalf were Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Irving Berlin, Danny Kaye, Gene Kelly, Edward G. Robinson, the Ink Spots, authors Edna Ferber and Dorothy Parker, editor Bennett Cerf, and James Cagney, who sang a witheringly satirical medley alongside fellow crooners Groucho Marx and Keenan Wynn.

Even Jimmy Durante’s last-minute defection (at the insistence of his sponsor) was a blessing in disguise: while Corwin later admitted he could have found a substitute for Durante, he also knew that the Republicans had planned to follow his show with a rebuttal program. By ending his show three minutes early, Corwin forced the network to fill the time they way they always did – with organ music. Countless listeners took this dreary sound as a cue to switch off their radios and go to bed.

“Even then,” Corwin said with a smile 60 years later, “there were dirty tricks.”

9. On a Note of Triumph (5-8-45)

Corwin had been working on *Columbia Presents Corwin* in the summer of 1944 when CBS suggested he focus his energies on a show to commemorate victory in Europe. When victory finally arrived on May 8, 1945, Corwin was ready with a piece that many consider the apex of his career.

Following Bernard Herrmann’s exuberant yet measured fanfare, narrator Martin Gabel proclaimed “The rat is dead in an alley in back of the Wilhelmstrasse... the Superman of tomorrow lies dead at the feet of you common men of this afternoon.”

What followed was not so much a declaration of victory – after all, the war wasn’t really over – as a haunting poem of introspection, narrated (with full respect for the piece’s many moods) by Martin Gabel. There were moments of celebra-



Norman Corwin, second from left, directing *One World Flight*

NORMAN CORWIN COLLECTION

tion, to be sure (“Is victory a sweet dish or isn’t it? And how do you think those lights look in Europe after five years of blackout, going on six?”), but Corwin was unsparing in his angry descriptions of the brutal, fallen enemy and their “cruelties to make skin creep on the sweating scalp.” There was also a sorrow for the cost of war on both sides, culminating in the unflinching question, “What have we learned from this war?”

At the end, Corwin offers a small prayer to “Lord God of test tube and blueprint” asking Him to “Post proofs that brotherhood is not so wild a dream as those who profit by postponing it pretend...and press into the final seal a sign that peace will come for longer than posterities can see ahead, that man unto his fellow man shall be a friend forever.”

The response to *Triumph* was so enormous that CBS asked Corwin to rebroadcast the show a week later. (In the years before recording tape, this meant that Corwin and cast had to re-create the emotional experience live.) More than 4,000 telegrams of congratulations arrived the night of the broadcast, while Corwin’s friend Carl Sandburg called it nothing less than

“one of the all-time great American poems,” and Simon and Schuster was impressed enough to publish Corwin’s script in book form.

For Japan’s surrender three months later, Corwin followed *Triumph* with *Fourteen August*, a brief monologue for V-J Day delivered by Orson Welles. If *Fourteen August* falls short of *Triumph* by compari-

son, it is less an indictment of the former than a testament to the eloquent, epic sweep of the latter.

Over the next two years, Corwin’s vision of the world continued to expand outward. In 1946, with the world at peace, he received the first One World Award from the Wendell Willkie Memorial. That year, armed with a wire recorder, he traveled the world, visiting 37 countries, interviewing their leaders and citizens, and investigating life in a postwar world. Those interviews and stories were at the center of *One World Flight*, a 13-week series that offered a mere glimpse of what Corwin saw on his travels.

As Corwin’s vision was expanding, however, America’s was in danger of retreating. In Washington, the Red Scare was roaring to life and Hollywood was in its sights. Corwin’s 1947 radio response, *Hollywood Fights Back*, was a noble effort that brought more than two dozen actors, singers, and Senators before the microphone to denounce what they called a “Trial of Terror” that threatened to suppress democratic principles. Unfortunately, no single radio show could stem the tide of hysteria that would force a lot of innocent

people (including Corwin himself) to defend themselves against baseless charges.

10. *Could Be* (9-11-49)

Corwin had other professional concerns in the late 1940s. During a chance encounter with William S. Paley, the CBS President admitted that radio was becoming increasingly competitive and suggested that Corwin consider tailoring his work to reach a broader audience – in other words, be more commercial. For Corwin, who had enjoyed a decade of editorial freedom, it was a sobering reminder that “Galahads don’t last very long in corporate America.” By 1949, Corwin had left CBS to become a free-lance writer and director, taking a part-time job with the newly emerging United Nations Radio.

Corwin’s first UN Radio project, *Could Be*, aired in the late summer of 1949. In true Corwin fashion, *Could Be* was neither straight entertainment nor straight documentary. Instead, it drew on the goals of the United Nations to create a tale of a Utopian future, a celebration of “the undated, unscheduled, but entirely possible creation of an era of world progress that could be...if the nations of the world got together and attacked common problems with the same vigor, determination, and resources with which, from time to time, they have attacked each other.” Martin Gabel, announcer Ben Grauer and newscaster Robert Trout brought their voices to this *faux* news report of a “series of attacks on historically depressed areas of the earth” by United Nations Task Forces, “the first in history to invade a country with instruments of life, not weapons of death.”

It’s worth noting that the elements of *Could Be* that sounded fantastic eventually became reality, including atomic-powered watercraft, solar-powered heating



units and UN efforts to combat famine and disease. Even so, the “Year X” Corwin presents in *Could Be* remains a time “whose distance from now need only be as long as we make it.”

Corwin continued to write and direct programs for United Nations Radio into the 1950s – including *Document A/777*, a breathtaking celebration of the Declaration of Human Rights – but the Golden Age of Radio was coming to a painfully premature end. After producing *The Charter in the Saucer*, a fantasy starring Laurence Olivier, Corwin had to bid farewell to radio – at least for the moment.

In the late 1950s, Corwin devoted more time to writing movies and earned an Oscar nomination for *Lust for Life*, the biography of artist Vincent Van Gogh. Over the next two decades, Corwin also kept active in the theater, with projects ranging from a nonmusical look at Don Quixote (Cervantes) to an evening devoted to the poetry of his good friend Carl Sandburg; a touring production starred Bette Davis and husband Gary Merrill.

In 1970, Corwin came full circle with a television anthology series called *Norman Corwin Presents*. As the decade progressed, Corwin's gift for the written word and his love for America were recognized once again; Corwin even found himself working with one-time Tuesday night rival Bob Hope for a 1976 album, *America...There's Still Hope!* A year later, Corwin provided a poem for the 50th anniversary celebration of CBS; his "Network at 50" was read on the air by Walter Cronkite.

While all of this was going on, radio drama was making a comeback and Corwin took advantage of it, writing scripts for *Sears Radio Theater* and Yuri Rasovsky's *Chicago Radio Theater*, as well as a series of holiday-themed plays for National Public Radio.

Over the last two decades, Corwin has kept active in radio with a vigor that would shame countless members of younger generations. Fifty years after *We Hold These Truths*, Corwin wrote *Bill of Rights: 200*, the first in a series of projects for National Public Radio. As the century drew to a close, NPR rebroadcast some of Corwin's classic plays and aired a new series of six shows – called, appropriately, *More By Corwin*. If there was any bone of contention concerning Corwin's 1993 induction

into the Radio Hall of Fame, it's that it took so long.

Writer Norman Cousins once referred to Corwin as "an educator," and Corwin has lived up to that title; currently, he's in his 24th year as a "visiting professor" at the University of Southern California School of Journalism, where he teaches courses in arts criticism and column writing. His 95th birthday might sound like a daunting milestone, although he points out that his father lived to be 110. During a brief conversation in the spring of 2004 – a few weeks after his 94th birthday – he offered this writer a draft of his own obituary:

"Norman Corwin, 126, was killed in a duel with a jealous lover.

"His gun jammed."

To that, let us add: before Norman Corwin came to radio, precious few creators took advantage of the full possibilities that were available through radio's theater of the mind. Precious few, we admit ruefully, have tried to do it since. In the right place, at the right time, he was the very right man.

Happy birthday, Mr. Corwin. Here's to the stories that are still to be told. ■

TUNE IN TWTD May 14 to hear Norman Corwin's "On A Note of Triumph."

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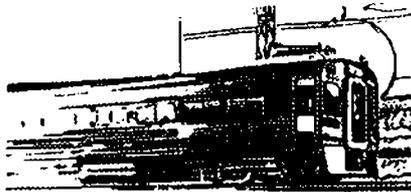


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Gildy's Love Life

BY CHARLES STUMPF and BEN OHMART

When Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve first settled in Summerfield the big house next door had been vacant.

In the spring of 1942 new neighbors moved in. There was a dotty 17-year-old daughter named Dottie who constantly asked to borrow scarce items, such as sugar. Her aptly named brother, "Tuffy," was a bully who menaced Leroy. Their father, Mr. Dobson, was an un-

couth part-time wrestler known as "Philadelphia Phil." To make matters worse, they had a bothersome dog that had been trained to borrow the neighbor's newspaper. When the Dobsons moved away after a few months, no one was really sorry to see them leave. The big house remained vacant for a while.

Then, in September, fate took a hand and a major change came into Gildy's life when a winsome widow by the name of Leila Ransom moved in. Leila is an Arabic name meaning "dark beauty." The widow was fair and blonde and was a beautiful belle from Savannah who doused herself with

expensive Shalomar perfume. She spoke with a drawl that smacked of magnolias and moonlight and used expressions such as "you-all," "poor little ole me," "mercy me," and "gracious!" When she walked

her slim hips moved like the front porch swing.

The syrupy siren was outrageously flirtatious as she cooed endearments like "Do be a lamb," and "Thank you, lambie pie." Gilder-

sleeve was gleefully gullible to her goo. When she sighed, "Oh, Throck-mor-ton, you are so ro-man-tic and man-ly," her seductive drawl came close to scorching the microphone. Listeners could almost envision her tantalizing tonsils, fluttering in time to her eyelashes, heavily laden with mascara. Peavey once described Leila as "a very well-preserved southern Lady."

The introduction of Leila's character into the story line brought with it plenty of opportunities for Gildersleeve to raise his voice in songs of romance. The widow Ransom played the piano and coyly confided to her admiring neighbor that her favorite song in the whole world was "Speak to Me of Love," and she frequently induced Throckmorton to sing it for her. The courtship of the coquettish widow by her portly paramour became a game. He crooned and she swooned.

Leila often spoke of the family and friends she had left back home. She had

♥ **GILDERSLEEVE...** ♥
Harold Peary (1941-1950)
Willard Waterman (1950-1957)
...AND HIS GIRLFRIENDS
Leila Ransom.....Shirley Mitchell
Eve Goodwin.....Bea Benaderet
Adeline Fairchild.....Una Merkel
Kathryn Milford.....Cathy Lewis

Charles Stumpf and Ben Ohmart are the authors of the book The Great Gildersleeve, published by Bear Manor Media. These excerpts are printed with permission of the publisher. The 150-page soft-cover book is available for \$18.95 plus S&H from www.bearmanormedia.com



Harold Peary
Gilderleeve



Shirley Mitchell
Leila Ransom



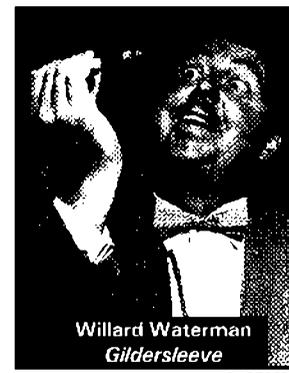
Bea Benaderet
Eve Goodwin



Una Merkel
Adeline Fairchild



Cathy Lewis
Kathryn Milford



Willard Waterman
Gilderleeve

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an adoring brother named Marvin and a sister, Winifred, whom everyone fondly called "Winnie." The southern sisters had many beaux who smiled when they called them "the Heavenly Twins." Winnie and Leila were belles who never told. Eventually Winnie married a Yankee engineer from up North. They had an overly polite son named Michael.

Leila also told fascinating tales about her hometown girlfriend named Lou-Lee Jean. To round out the conversation, she made frequent mentions of her old beaux, such as "Lightfoot Duprez," who was in the cotton business, as well as her late husband, Beauregard Ransom, a true southern gentleman.

The helpless Gildy fell hopelessly in love with her and it was inevitable that they would become betrothed. When plans to marry were announced, Marjorie planned

a wedding shower for them. The date was set as June 6, 1943 and Judge Hooker was asked to serve as best man.

For reasons unknown, the addle-pated southern belle had seemed to forget that Beauregard might still be alive. He was, and just as the minister was about to pronounce Gildy and Leila "man and wife," Beauregard appeared in the church and the wedding was called off. Leila headed back down south with Beauregard. Gildy was left in the lurch, alone in the church. He tearfully slipped the unused wedding ring into the vest pocket of his tuxedo, and went home to nurse his broken heart.

♥ ♥ ♥

Someone new came into Gildy's life. Eve Goodwin, the principal of Leroy's school, came to the house to discuss the boy's poor grades. Gildy was intrigued by her concern and was instantly attracted to

her. Miss Goodwin was quite unlike most of the other lovely ladies who had caught his eye. She was not glamour-conscious, or giddy. Instead, she was articulate, soft-spoken and sophisticated. Although she enjoyed his flattery, she was not coy or coquettish and never deliberately led him on. Things were getting on fine when suddenly Leila came back to town. One look at Miss Goodwin and she was instantly jealous and resumed her vampish ways. Poor Gildy was torn in two directions at the same time.

After many years of being unused, a performance of a touring opera company was scheduled for the Summerfield Opera House. A gala formal event was planned. Although opera was not their favorite kind of entertainment, the town's residents donned their Sunday best and filled the hall. Leila was out of town at the time, so Gildy invited Eve Goodwin to accompany him. He dug his old tuxedo out of moth balls and had Birdie air it and press it for him. Eve looked radiant in an elegant gown and Judge Hooker wore his long evening cape. When they met in the lobby the judge tipped his high hat and made a sweeping bow. Floyd and his wife, Lovey, came dressed in their best bowling outfits. The performance was nearly three hours long and very loud, but Floyd fell asleep and his loud snoring annoyed the diva during one of her arias.

After the performance, as the audience

passed through the lobby, there were a number of disparaging remarks. Gildy, being a lover of fine music, gallantly defended the majesty of the opera. Later, when he took Eve home, she told him she was very proud of the way he had spoken up for the opera. She also confided that she thought he had a very fine singing voice. It was sweet music to his ears.

When he was a candidate for Mayor of Summerfield, Gildy mistook a casual remark Eve made when she jokingly told him she would marry him - *if* he won the election. For a time he thought she was serious. But then her difficult mother came for a visit. Although Gildy tried his best to please her, she turned a deaf ear to his constant compliments and placed many obstacles in his path to romance. He planned to host a dinner party in her honor. Birdie's expert cooking skills were challenged by the many dietary limitations and dislikes and allergies of the guest of honor. After much careful deliberation the cook decided to serve bouillon and poached eggs on toast. But that plan was abandoned when Gildy remembered that fussy Mrs. Goodwin was allergic to eggs.

Somehow they got through the dinner. A few days later Eve received a telegram from her brother Fred informing her that he had joined the Scabees and their mother would have to spend the duration of the war in Summerfield. Gildy and Eve had a

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serious talk and both decided they didn't really want to get married, but remained very good friends.

♥ ♥ ♥

In February 1948 a new love interest entered Gildy's life. Leila Ransom had returned to the South and her cousin, Miss Adeline Deveraux Fairchild, moved in next door. She was a dainty and demure matron with a charming southern accent. Adeline was less added than her capricious and coquettish relative. When Gildy first met her, he immediately began using his flattering ways. She flirted in return by saying, "Mercy, imagine little ole lonesome me, living all alone in that big ole house, all by my little ole self." Gildy then complimented her on her dress and she coyly replied, "Why, thank you, sir. It's just a little ole organdy gown I've had hanging in the closet for years."

Next, he sang a romantic serenade while he accompanied himself on his ukulele, and she played the piano. "You, sir, are a gorgeous singer. You sound just like Lawrence Tibbett." Love had bloomed once again. Adeline confided that she had come to Summerfield "to flee the memory of a romance that flowered – and died." Back in Savannah she had been engaged for 15 years to a cad called Cecil.

When one of his cronics mentioned that Miss Fairchild resembled actress Ingrid

Bergman, Gildy slyly replied, "She looks more like Una Merkel to me." The role of Adeline was played by Una Merkel.

♥ ♥ ♥

A full romance never developed between Gildy and Adeline, but they remained the best of friends. The fashionable southern belle tried her dainty hand at operating a hat shoppe. The business failed and she returned to Savannah.

Gildy turned his romantic gaze elsewhere and took notice of pretty brunette nurse Kathryn Milford, who worked mostly night duty at the Summerfield hospital. He always admired a girl in uniform, and her sparkling white uniform highlighted her dark hair. He signed up for samba lessons and invited Kathryn to a "Latin Night Dance" at the country club. Miss Milford was dedicated to her profession and rarely had any free time for dating. The saddened swain soon realized she was unattainable.

Nurse Milford was not Gildy's last heart throb. There had been many others before her and more still to come. Included on Gildy's long list of lovely ladies were such names as the exotic Dolores Del Rey, Mae Kelly, Paula Winthrop, Grace Tuttle, pretty Mary Easton and June Stedman. ■

TUNE INTWTD April 2 to hear Gildy with Leila Ransom and Kathryn Milford.

THE ROBE – In CinemaScope

Why and How Wide-screen Movies Came to our Neighborhood Theaters

BY GEORGE LITTLEFIELD

I remember well the day in 1953 – I believe it was a summer day – when as a boy of eleven, I read in a Chicago newspaper that one of our local West Side movie palaces the Marbro – was going to be closed for two weeks, while they installed something called a "CinemaScope screen."

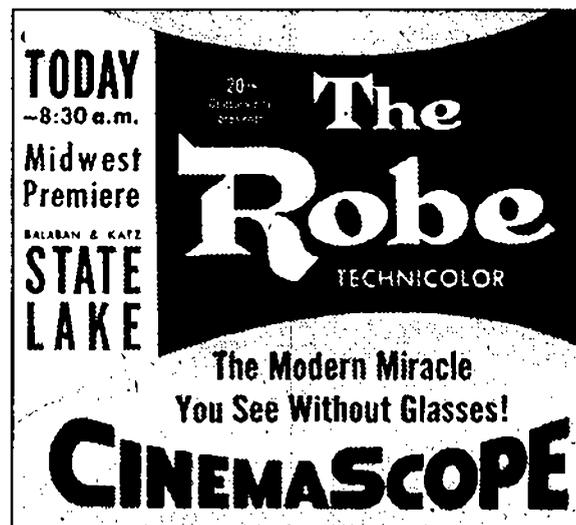
What a CinemaScope screen was, the story didn't say. But it did say that the first film to be shown at the Marbro after the new screen was installed would be the very first film to be shot in the CinemaScope process – a film called *The Robe*.

But why CinemaScope, and why *The Robe*? To answer that, we have to go back to the glory days of the American film industry, just after World War II.

In those days, there were millions of men, women and children with quite a bit of extra money in their pockets, and a big yen to spend it on the movies. At that time, it wasn't unusual for an entire family to go to the movies together two or even three times a week.

The film companies had it made then, because not only did they own and rent the movies that people were coming to see – they also owned chains of movie houses where their product would be

George Littlefield is a retired writer and editor of trade magazines who has loved movies in all formats since he was a boy.



shown exclusively.

Thus, MGM had a ready-made, nationwide chain of theaters that would show whatever films MGM might turn out, be they good, bad or indifferent. Most other big studios had this same "sweetheart" film-theatre deal, as well.

For a while there, in the middle '40s, it seemed as if the studios would continue to make more and more movies, and more and more money, with virtually no end in sight.

But then two significant things happened, and they changed that rosy picture forever.

The first was the rise of television.

Starting at about 1948, television began to exert an almost hypnotic hold on the nation's growing horde of TV viewers – especially, the children. Kids could now stay home and watch Milton Berle, Jerry Lester, Kukla, Fran & Ollie, Sid Caesar,

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Mama, and Howdy Doody - and it was all free.

You could watch them all in the comfort of your living room, while eating a bag of Quinlan's All-Butter Pretzels and drinking a bottle of Kay-O chocolate pop. It was great.

But it was *not* great for the movie industry. Movie attendance began to drop off ever more sharply. The more TV sets were bought, the fewer

people were going to the movies.

The film industry didn't know what to do about television. First, they tried ignoring it. Then, they made fun of TV in films such as *The Twonky* and *Champagne for Caesar*. But nothing Hollywood could do would halt or even slow the ever-growing popularity of television.

Precisely at this same time, the American film industry was hit with another very severe blow. The Supreme Court of the United States decided that for a film company to own and rent films while at the same time owning the movie houses where those same films were shown, constituted an illegal business monopoly.

The film companies were ordered to divest themselves of either their films or their theaters. The companies chose to divest themselves of the theaters. Now, if MGM released a sub-par film, no movie house had to rent and show it if it didn't want to.

Because of this divestiture, film company profits took another severe beating.

Clearly, something had to be done, and done quickly, to reverse the plunge in the film industry's profits, and to lure people away from their TV sets and back into theaters once again.

But what exactly was the film industry supposed to do to raise profits and attendance?

One film executive had a bright idea:

"Let's give the people something they can't get at home from their tiny-screened TVs—then they'll have to come back to the theaters to see it!"

In 1952, there were two very bright and daring answers to this challenge.

The first was Cinerama; the second, NaturalVision 3-D.

Cinerama was a process requiring a movie screen so wide and so immense that only a relatively few theaters in the U.S. were large enough to book and show Cinerama films. The huge, extra-wide and high screen was filled at first by the images of three projectors running at once and in as perfect sync as possible - left, center and right. Multi-channel stereophonic sound was also included as something you couldn't yet hear at home.

The first Cinerama film, entitled simply *This is Cinerama*, could be shown at only one specially-equipped movie theater in Chicago. But no one who went there will ever forget the introduction by Lowell Thomas, speaking from a regular-sized screen. As he intoned the words "This is Cinerama!" the picture then opened out to a spectacularly wide screen. Viewers were then treated to a first-person ride on the "Cyclone" roller-coaster at Coney Island. Truly, it was a memorable experience for anyone who saw it.

But there were problems with the early Cinerama films. The three images on the giant screen constantly jiggled, and you





The Robe (1953) in CinemaScope
Jean Simmons, Richard Burton

PHOTOFEST

could see lines where one image touched another. This was rather unsettling to many viewers.

Another problem was that only one or two Cinerama films were made a year, leaving the possibility that the few Cinerama theaters that there were might have to remain idle for months at a time.

And finally, the cost of making and showing Cinerama films demanded high "roadshow" ticket prices that many patrons were reluctant to pay.

Although Cinerama did go through some encouraging technical refinements, it was discontinued for good in 1962. And Hollywood still needed a way to bring people and their money back to the theaters.

NaturalVision 3-D, which debuted in the same year as Cinerama, was Hollywood's next try at luring back viewers. It was a process by which stereoscopic, true 3-D movies in color or black and white, could be viewed on a normal-sized screen.

Twin cameras mounted next to each other shot two rolls of film, one for the left eye, and one for the right. The two films were then edited and projected simulta-

nously onto the screen by two projectors working exactly in sync.

In order to see the NaturalVision image in true 3-D, the viewer had to wear polarized 3-D glasses while watching the film. The effect was exactly like staring into a giant ViewMaster!

Not a child I knew minded wearing the polarized glasses required to see the wonderful 3-D images. But many adults found the glasses to be cumbersome and annoying.

Unfortunately, most 3-D films made were "B" pictures, Westerns, horror and science fiction titles, and various comedy shorts. The one that every kid from that era remembers best is *House of Wax*, starring Vincent Price. Most adult viewers, however, were turned off by such juvenile subject matter.

The picture quality of NaturalVision 3-D films tended to be somewhat murky, especially when shot in color. And if one projector got out of sync with the other, eyestrain and loss of the 3-D image could be the result.

Again, none of this bothered young

viewers of *It Came from Outer Space* or the Three Stooges' 3-D comedy shorts, but adults by and large couldn't or wouldn't put up with it.

The only really "serious" NaturalVision 3-D film ever made was *Dial "M" for Murder*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock and released in both 3-D and "flat" versions. After completing this film, Hitchcock vowed he would never again work in the 3-D process.

There were some technical advances made in the projection of NaturalVision 3-D movies that did come about, such as the use of a single projector, rather than two; but sadly, 3-D movies as such were over with for all intents and purposes by the end of the 1950s. Today, they are still missed by hordes of former children who loved them.

So once again, Hollywood had struck out trying to come up with something successful that TV viewers could not see at home. The studios were on the right track, but everything tried up till then had been too expensive, too complicated, or too narrow in viewer appeal.

At about that same point in time, 20th Century Fox Studios became interested in a new wide-screen process called "CinemaScope," which required only one projector and one lens to project the picture. The lenses, called anamorphic lenses, were very special, each made and polished by hand by the prestigious firm of Bausch and Lomb, known for its high-quality binoculars and other optical products.

The CinemaScope process could be shown on a screen approximately 3 1/2 times

wider than a normal screen, but this wide screen could be affordably installed in almost any movie theater that was medium-sized or larger. Plus, CinemaScope did not

require multiple cameras or projectors, or special glasses to view its wide-screen image. The more 20th Century Fox thought about CinemaScope, the better the idea sounded.

But what film should be chosen to

be the very first CinemaScope presentation? Surely, it would have to be something very, very special.

Well, as fate would have it, a few years earlier, author Lloyd C. Douglas had written a fascinating religious novel called *The Robe*. It was the story of the robe that Christ had worn to his Crucifixion. What happened to that robe, and to the people that came to possess it, formed the crux of the novel.

The Robe became an international bestseller, read by millions all over the world, and 20th Century Fox eagerly bought the film rights to the novel.

From the beginning, *The Robe* was considered to be an "A" movie, with highest production and casting values. The renowned film composer Alfred Newman, who had done memorable scores for films such as *Gunga Din*, was hired to write and conduct the film's music.

No expense was spared in assembling the multi-national, top-quality cast. For the lead role of Tribune Marcellus Gallio, the noted young British Shakespearean actor Richard Burton was selected. The winsome and attractive Jean Simmons was to play his love interest, the Lady Diana.





The Robe (1953) in CinemaScope
Victor Mature

PHOTOFEST

Michael Rennie, unforgettable in his role of Klaatu in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, won the part of Simon Peter, the Big Fisherman. Richard Boone, soon to become a nationally-known TV star in *Have Gun, Will Travel*, was chosen for the part of Pontius Pilate.

Victor Mature, famous for his portrayal of Samson in Cecil B. DeMille's *Samson and Delilah*, became the rebellious slave, Demetrius. And for the elderly emperor Tiberias, what better choice than Earnest Thesiger, so well-remembered for his work as Dr. Praetorius in *The Bride of Frankenstein*?

The villain of the piece, the mad emperor Caligula, was to be played by a newcomer named Jay Robinson. Robinson would make a lasting name for himself with his delightfully sinister interpretation of Caligula.

The cast was chosen, the script was written, everything was in place. Then, one last important and significant decision was made: *The Robe* would be the first movie filmed in the brand-new process of

CinemaScope.

And so now we are back to me as a child of 11, counting down the hours until the Marbro would reopen with its first showing of *The Robe*, in CinemaScope, whatever that was.

The big Opening Day finally arrived, and my Mom and Dad and I dutifully trekked from Gladys Avenue up to Madison Street and the Marbro Theatre. There were lines waiting to get in, but we really didn't mind the wait. We were too excited to care.

Finally, we were admitted inside, and ushers showed us to our seats. I had never seen the Marbro so full of people in my young life. It looked packed, and it could hold close to 5,000 people.

At last the music started, the curtains opened wider and wider, and the audience gasped at the size of the revealed screen. There was a huge image that said, "20th Century Fox Presents a CinemaScope Picture." Then: *The Robe*.

What a fantastic and moving film it was, full of the sights and sounds of ancient Rome, Jerusalem and Joppa. The screen



The Robe (1953) in CinemaScope
Victor Mature, Jean Simmons, Richard Burton

PHOTOFEST

image was so wide that it took up almost my entire field of vision, and Alfred Newman's beautiful score, booming out in stereo sound, gave me goosebumps.

When the film was over, I realized that I had never seen or heard anything quite like it before. And I had seen and heard it right there at the Marbro, in my own neighborhood – and at regular prices, too.

The Robe, of course, was a huge success, drawing millions back into theaters to the inspiring story told in such a stunning manner.

The film was nominated for three Academy Awards, including a nod to Jay Robinson for his over-the-top portrayal of the mad Caligula.

The Robe, not surprisingly, was soon followed by a sequel, *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, which reunited Victor Mature, Jay Robinson, and Alfred Newman. But it just wasn't as good a film as its predecessor. There could be only one *The Robe*.

Today, *The Robe* can be seen on DVD, ironically on your home TV, in its original CinemaScope format – but only at a hundredth of its original size. The film's inspiring score by Alfred Newman is still available on CD.

The Robe was just the first of what was to soon become a flood of wide-screen films from all studios, none of which could be seen in that format on home TVs at the time. In a very short time, virtually every movie theater in our neighborhood was fitted out with a wide screen. By the end of the '50s, the old "normal"-sized screen format that we had known and loved since early childhood was dead.

Although movie attendance records were never again to equal the halcyon days of the 1940s, many more people did start going back to theaters once again to see the new wide-screen movies of the '50s, the first and perhaps the best of which was *The Robe*. ■

'Robe' Complement to New Gimmicks

BY CHUCK SCHADEN

This review was originally published October 5, 1953 in the Pier Illini, student newspaper of the University of Illinois at Chicago (Navy Pier).

Perhaps one of the most powerful stories of the fight for Christianity ever to come out of Hollywood is the one now showing at the Balaban and Katz State-Lake Theatre. *The Robe*, presented in CinemaScope, depicts the crucifixion of Christ and one man's struggle within himself because of it.

Richard Burton, as the tribune who crucified Christ and who later turned to Christianity himself, was a magnificent counterpart of the Roman soldier who was not only struggling with the powers of the land, but also with himself. Jean Simmons was much more than competent as the "girl" in Burton's life. Victor Mature, in his somewhat minor but nevertheless outstanding role as Demetrius the slave, played his part with all the emotion and feeling in his power.

The Robe is the story that is connected with the garment which was wrapped around Christ on his long walk towards the place of his crucifixion. It tells how one Roman soldier who, because of his physical contact with that robe, becomes mentally ill. It treats, with great skill, the way in which this Roman converts himself to

one of Christ's followers — a Christian. Moreover, it depicts, with forcefulness, the soldier's brave denouncement of the throne in favor of Christianity. The soldier, naturally, is condemned to die, but not without his sweetheart, who has also turned Christian.

CinemaScope, the new wide-screen process which expands the screen across the entire stage of the State Lake, is certainly a step forward for the mo-

tion picture industry. And, even though we had the misfortune to sit towards the front, way to the left, the



CinemaScope process did not lose any of its forceful effect. We did note, however, that there were far too many times when the entire screen blurred, putting a distinct strain on the eyes. But, after all, CinemaScope is new and there are bound to be slight defects. No doubt they'll be corrected by the time the next feature is presented.

Twentieth Century-Fox Stereophonic sound is tremendous. Voices from the direction of the actor on the screen and the resounding music bellows out from all parts of the theater.

The Robe, which deals with the touchy subject of religion, is presented in a manner acceptable to movie-goers of all kinds. The handling of the story and its presentation were done in very fine taste. No one should miss *The Robe*.

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OUR READERS/LISTENERS WRITE

WE GET MAIL

JOLIET, ILLINOIS— About 15 years ago I purchased my first vintage radio at a garage sale for \$7. I bought it because it looked interesting and I thought it might go well on the coffee table in my old bungalow, but not much else. After a few weeks, I decided to clean it up and see if I could get it working. This took several hours and before it I knew the clock was almost at midnight. I plugged it in, the tubes glowed and beneath the crackling I could hear voices and after a few minutes of warming up, I realized I was listening to an old radio program. I couldn't believe my luck and I just assumed that the stars were aligned that night and that I was meant to hear that program. I was 29 years old at the time and I hadn't paid much attention to anything old, let alone a scratchy AM radio (set on WBBM, Chicago). Thus began my fascination with everything old radio. I began to collect a number of vintage radios, radio premiums, radio programs and other related items. I discovered your program shortly thereafter and I have been a fan ever since.

My wife could tell you that I was driving her nuts when the old WDCB radio tower fell. (I was going through radio withdrawal.) I look forward to hearing you and Ken Alexander every Saturday as well as all of the great radio programs you play. I'm glad that you both are so dedicated to the program and the era and I just want to say thanks for keeping me and the listening audience entertained all of these years. Keep up the good work! **—TOM CHUDY**

CHICAGO— Just want you to know that I'm very excited that the show is now available on-line. I am able to listen at my desk at work during the week, as I'm rarely near a radio on Saturday afternoons, although whenever I am, I try to tune in! Now that I've discovered this, I'll hopefully listen ever week, although on "web delay."

—LARA GOETSCH

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA— I've been listening to your Saturday afternoon show for about 10 years now, since before you started running your program through the

College of DuPage. I grew up in Chicago and recently moved to Philadelphia, so I listen over the web. At 24, I'm likely among your youngest listeners, so I'm not exactly going through any nostalgic moments when I listen, but I love the shows and hearing the memories. As a grad student, I'm always in front of my computer, but on Saturday afternoons, the time flies by. Thank you! **—KRISTEN**

E-MAIL— As a twenty-something, it was really nice to read Karen Hughes' article [about Jack Benny] in the Winter, 2005 issue. I am glad to know there are other fans in my age bracket. **—NICHOLAS THOMAS**

E-MAIL— Really like your website. It is nice to be able to listen weeks when Saturday is just too busy to sit back and stare at my computer with your programming streaming in. **—HENRY SCHAPER**

GAHANNA, OHIO— I am listening to your show via the Internet. I used to live in Geneva, Illinois, and listened to you in the early '80s. After being away for almost 20 years, it is a joy indeed to be listening again! **—BETH HALL**

E-MAIL— I've been a faithful listener since I heard "On A Country Road" with Cary Grant back in 1978. Being able to listen to the complete Saturday program during the week [at www.nostalgiaadigest.com] is just great. When I was doing wedding photography for the past 20-plus years, I'd miss part or all of a program. Well, let me tell you that with the ability to listen to the entire program on any day during the week, I can now set aside four whole hours to do just that. Thanks for putting the programs on the Internet so they can be heard at any time now, day or night.

—ISAIAH (BENNIE) BRADFORD, JR.

COMMERCE, GEORGIA— Just want to express my continued appreciation of the Internet features you provide. I especially appreciate the ability to have another



MORE MAIL

opportunity to get the programs that sometimes get interrupted by Internet clogging on Saturday afternoons. Your book, "Speaking of Radio," has been a great delight! Thanks so much for taking the trouble to transcribe all those interviews. The banter and camaraderie between you and Ken Alexander is a delight! Keep those old newspapers coming! I have had the pleasure of introducing my (younger) wife to the joys of Old Time Radio. She was too young to remember it at the time and grew up in the early days of TV. So when we go for a long drive or on a trip, I play a CD with some of the great old shows or one of your *Those Were The Days* broadcasts for us both to enjoy. Finally, I make sure I send an annual donation to WDCB to express my appreciation of them carrying *TWTD* and to encourage its presence on Saturday afternoons for many years to come.

—LINDSAY CLEVELAND

E-MAIL— Your "Speaking of Radio" book should be a must read for students in communications to understand the impact power of the voice. These interviews are true guidance. In the past, I have trained telemarketers the power of the voice and telephone character development by listening to rebroadcasts of radio shows on your program. They now listen to you on the Internet. They have an addiction to quality! —ALLEN FLEMING

E-MAIL— I hope it's OK to call you Chuck, as I feel as if you are an old friend. Well, really you are. I have been listening to you since about 1973. Just so you know, I am 43 and have spent terrific times with you on Saturdays. I especially love the Hallowe'en shows. I always record them and then listen to them for about a month before Hallowe'en whenever I am in my car.

Yesterday, my mother and I and my Golden Retriever, Becky (she's eight years old), went Christmas shopping in LaGrange. Well, here we are, driving along and you played that song "Jingle Bells" with the barking dogs. Becky was in the back seat and started looking all over the place for the

barking dogs. It was a scream to see! Keep up the good work; people appreciate it. —ANNE JIMENEZ

WILLOW SPRINGS, IL— You and Ken have a wonderful rapport. Your show is great. It was nice meeting you both at The Framemakers on December 16. I was the one who came in just before you were about to leave and had pictures taken with the two of you. —JEROME NEADLY

E-MAIL— A big thank you Mr. Schaden and Mr. Alexander for the important work that you do. My husband and I were not able to hear you well until the new WDCB antenna went up. We were both born in 1947 and enjoy every bit of your program. It is so enjoyable, informative and almost familiar, even though much happened before we were born. I feel you do such an important service for all ages, but especially in these times, for the people of your own generation. The stress level is ever increasing, and I consider your program to be the very best stress-buster for the greatest generation.

—KAREN SPAIN

HOMEWOOD, IL— Here's my renewal for another year of your wonderful *Nostalgia Digest*. I hope you know how much enjoyment this publication and your *TWTD* program bring to so many people, including myself. Please don't ever retire! What would we do without you?

—SHERELE TENCLAY

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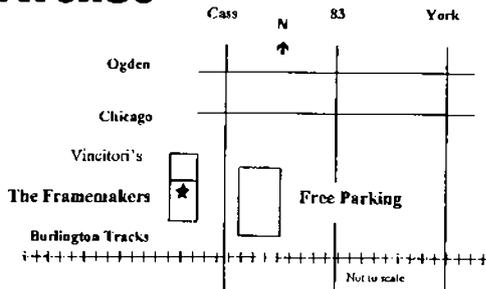
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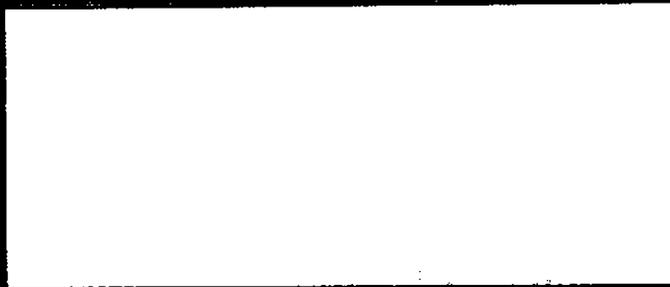
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