

National Old-Time Radio Enthusiasts
N.O.T.R.E. News

Volume 16

Autumn '03



William Bendix who lived the Life of Riley.



1 radio monologue

Bob Hope made his radio debut in 1932, started with NBC in 1935 and began his best-known series of programs for Pepsodent toothpaste in 1938. A typical Hope radio monologue was a pastiche of lightning-fast quips, puns and ad-libs. Here are excerpts from his program May 5, 1941, at March Field, Calif., Hope's first show at a military base:

"How do you do, ladies and gentlemen. This is Bob 'Army Camp' Hope telling all soldiers they may have to shoot in the swamp or march in the brush, but if they use Pepsodent, no one will ever have to drill in their mush." Or "This is Bob 'March Field' Hope telling all aviators while we can't advise you on how to protect your chutes, there's nothing like Pepsodent to protect your toots.

"And I want to tell you that I'm thrilled being here . . . And what a wonderful welcome they gave me! As soon as I got in the camp I received a 10-gun salute . . . they told me on the operating table.

"I watched them putting gas in one of the big bombers, and boy, what a big tank. It's really remarkable. Just two pints short of W.C. Fields.

"But all these fellows were glad to see me today. One rookie came running up to me, very excited, and said, 'Are you really Bob Hope?' I said, 'Yes.' But they grabbed his rifle away just in time."



NBC

Slinging puns in '38: Breakneck ad-libs.



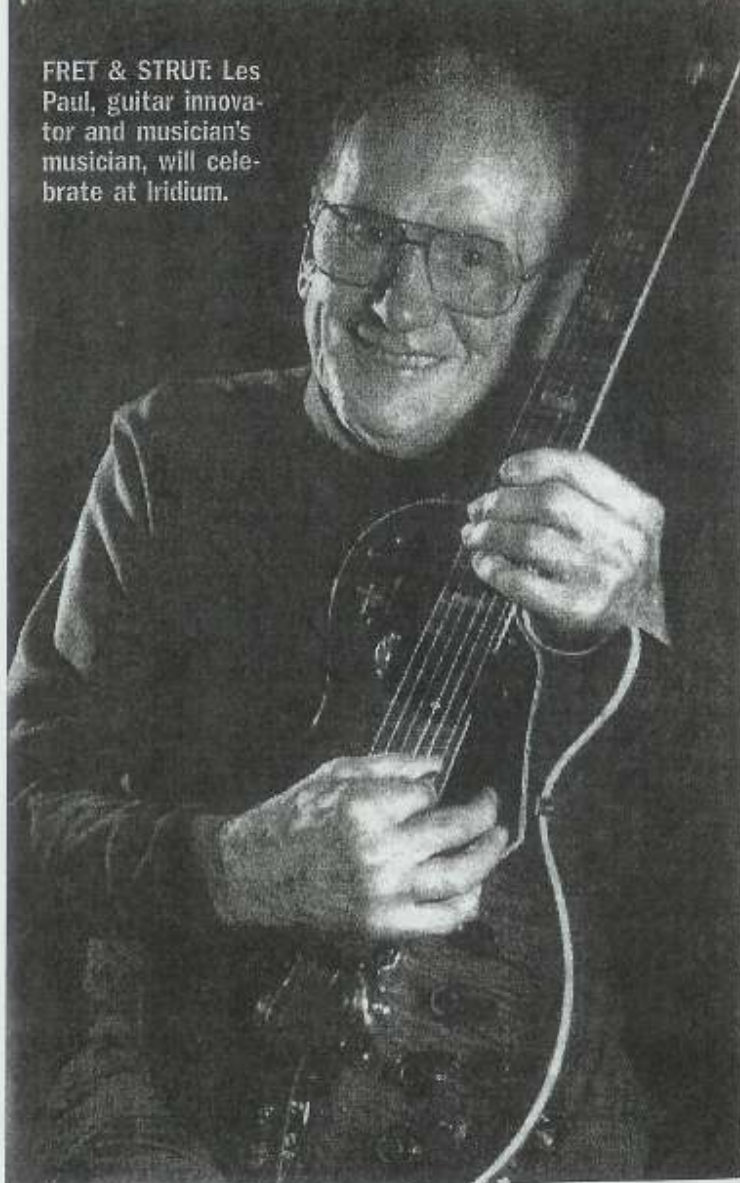
Bob Hope

In memorium

May 29, 1903 - July 27, 2003

In 1941, Hope made his first remote broadcast for troops at U.S. military bases, beginning a tradition that would continue through five wars - from World War II to Desert Storm. More than four decades later, President Clinton paid the entertainer his greatest tribute, signing a congressional bill that made Hope America's first and only honorary veteran.

FRET & STRUT: Les Paul, guitar innovator and musician's musician, will celebrate at Iridium.



Sweet Guitar-Playing from the Young Les Paul!

New Exclusive LES PAUL & HIS TRIO: California Melodies

Private Lester William Polsfuss (a.k.a. Les Paul) reporting for duty on the Armed Forces Radio Service! This is Les fresh out of the Army with the classic Trio of Cal Gooden, Clint Nordquist and Tommy Todd, performing with the Frank DeVol Orchestra on the *California Melodies* program that aired on the AFRS from June to October 1944 (plus some bonus tracks from the Elgin's *Watch Christmas Party Special* and two episodes of the *Andy Russell Show*). Les is not a superstar yet—the hits started coming about two years later—but one listen to his guitar-playing here and you know it won't be long. An hour of unreleased material in great sound with notes... a *Collectors' Choice Music* exclusive!

Includes *Begin the Beguine*; *Dark Eyes*; *All of Me*; *Andante Cantabile*; *Oh, Lady Be Good*; *Brazil*; *I Never Knew*; *For You*; *Limehouse Blues*; *Song of the Islands*; *Forty Days and Forty Nights*; *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans*; *Out of Nowhere*; *I've Been Working on the Railroad*; *It Had to Be You*; *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *Czardas*; *Danger*; *Men at Work*; *Blue Skies*, and (*Back Home Again in Indiana*).
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Les Paul, 88, comes out swinging

If you heard someone was playing the 88s at a cozy Manhattan nightspot, you'd probably think "piano."

With Les Paul on Monday, think "birthday cake."

Lester Polsfuss was born in Waukesha, Wis., on June 9, 1915. He will celebrate at the Iridium Jazz Club, where he and his trio still play every Monday night.

A few friends are expected to be on hand, including George Benson, and there's pretty sure to be a cake with enough candles to roast a live pig. But that's not the best part of this story.

As music business tales go, Les Paul's is not bad at all. Hits come and go. Celebrities come and go. For Les Paul, the music came and it stayed.

He's had fame, he's had hit records. He's gotten credit and cash for most of the things he has developed, like multitrack recording and an amplified guitar that enabled the people in the back to hear the music.

But I have a suspicion that's not the reason Paul McCartney and Keith Richards drop by and have their picture taken with him. I suspect they mostly want to hear him play.

He always heard music, he says. When he was a

ter and the passing railroad trains were music, music he worked to replicate on whatever primitive equipment he could find. When he couldn't get the sounds, he invented equipment.

But you hear him at Iridium and you realize this isn't about machines. It's about music.

What he and his trio play at Iridium is string jazz, mostly instrumental, a marvelous blend of lively and languid. Brazilian and Caribbean rhythms float in and out. So do echoes of the hillbilly tunes Les Paul played in 1930 when he was "Rhubarb Red."



DAVID HINCKLEY

He'll take one of his own signatures like "How High the Moon," and fool wit it in the most subtle ways. Les Paul isn't flashy — he leaves speed to one of his sidemen, the splendid Frank Vignola — but he knows exactly what he wants to do with every note, and it's invariably dead on.

What he plays at Iridium isn't music of an era. It's not what's left of a once-great artist. It's just splendid music.

As Les Paul left the stage Monday to a prolonged ovation, he cracked, "If I were 66, you wouldn't even stand up."

He got that wrong. But that's okay. The man's entitled to one mistake per evening.

For more, dhinckley@iridiummusic.com

NY DAILY NEWS MAR 06/04/2003

Blondie

JUST in case you haven't noticed, there is among you a race of wacks apart—distinguished by an affinity for rollicking, madcap crackpotting! They spend every Monday night of their lives glued to CBS-tuned radios. They break your Sabbath snooze with free-for-all scrambles and screams for Chic Young's comic strip. They're the devils who tie up traffic the night "Blondie" hits your theater marquee. Motivating force for their antics is the Dagwood family; Blondie, Dagwood, Baby Dumpling and purp Daisy! If you think Blondie and Dagwood have a helluva time for themselves and everybody else at curtain time you oughta see them with their hair really let down! Nope, they're not hitched in private life, but they lead parallel truth-is-stranger-than-fiction existences. Both claim their program is just an imitation of life! Blondie, who was born Dorothy McNulty, started out sanely and academically in Philadelphia McClure's School, Penn. and Columbia Universities, where she spent her spare time innocently scribbling touching little verses. She'd done extra-curricular Thesping since the age of 9, and followed her college career guffaw-collecting on Broadway. But her heart wasn't in it and she retired to write poetry and fiction in Hollywood, where she became Dr. Lawrence Scrogg Singleton's missus. Partly because she played so hard to get and partly because she

was such a virtual gem for comedy, movie moguls started packing her letterbox with luring film offers. The more vehemently she refused, the more fabulous became the bait. Kind of a shrewd little lass, she couldn't refuse the four-figured opportunity, finally gave in to the fattest-ciphered offer. (Incidentally, she's dubbed Penny 'cause of her life-long habit of hoarding pennies!) Domestic bliss with Dr. S. came to an end in 1940 when she divorced him and started making Bob Sparks see the funny side of life! But to the world in general, she always has been, always will be Dagwood Bumpstead's (Arthur Lake) screwball wife and Baby Dumpling's (Larry Simms) irresponsible, irrepressible mom! Crazier than a loon right along with her, Arthur Lake makes an ideal mate! Taking a gander at his real-life rambunctious existence with spouse Patricia Van Cleve in their Hollywood nest, you'd swear he's the identical Dagwood you hear over the air! He's been in show business ever since he first batted a lash in a backstage trunk in Corbin, Ky., from whence he was toted from one end of the country to the other with his parents' circus. As soon as he began to show signs of locomotion, his acrobat-pop wangled a part for him in Fox Kiddie Film, "Jack and Beanstalk." Arthur, cast as a little old man, was so tickled with his long beard, he lost his equilibrium on a high fence and was laid up for repairs till the picture's end! Undaunted, he started in all over again and this time, hit the jackpot in movies, on the stage and, ultimately, in the script-scribbling game! Six feet tall, he weighs 165 pounds, has gorgeous blond hair and blue eyes, keeps fit riding, surfboarding, swimming and golfing (all of which are Blondie's favorites, too)! Both he and Penny are a source of amazement to their chums, who gasp at their naturalness and capacity for topsyturviness! Arthur explains, "How could I be otherwise? Was born in a circus where you've got to have a sense of the ridiculous and universal humility to survive!" Penny hasn't got any explanation—she just hails straight from hellzapoppin heaven!





Penny Singleton's happily wed to Bob Sparks



SOAP OPERA



THE ALDRICH FAMILY

"HE-NRY! Henry Aldr.ch!" It's the go-sign for Ezra Stone to take over from where Tom Sawyer left off. Ezra Stone is Henry Aldrich and vice versa, and he doesn't have much trouble switching parts. In his early twenties, freckled, with unruly red hair and always too busy with too much—that's Ezra. Mad about his second-hand wreck of a jalopy, he carts himself around in it from one night spot to another and then home to his family in Brooklyn and his ship's-cabin room, gangplank, portholes, swinging lanterns complete. The other Stones, Mr. & Mrs. and the kid sister, see to it that Ezra doesn't get too Henryish. Whatever he earns goes into the family jack-pot, and Ezra, like Henry, gets his weekly allowance. Once the Stones lived up in New Bedford, Mass., where Pop worked for the navy. Ezra never asked two dates to the same hop, but he had his share of hot water. Twice he ran away from home to get to Broadway. The third time he

was installed in the American School of Dramatic Art, but he couldn't be bothered finishing. He got a part in a play that never opened. Finally a role in "Ah, Wilderness" rescued him from the down-to-the-last-nickel group. The real sport came when he got spanked through three acts of "Brother Rat." One day after a run in "Three Men on a Horse," Henry ('scuse please,—Ezra) hid himself over to try out for "What a Life." The part was Henry Aldrich, but this meant little to anyone other than producer Geo. Abbott who saw a flop on his hands. No one might have ever heard of Henry if four years ago Rudy Vallee hadn't asked the "What a Life" cast to appear for three minutes on his program. Quick came a sponsor's bid for a weekly program. Arthur Clif Goldsmith tore his proverbial hair, was darned if he knew where the material would come from once his second-rate play was exhausted, but got to work. He remembered his own not so



Twentyish, freckled, kinky-haired Ezra Stone is a jalopy-driving Henry Aldrich in real life. He gets along on an allowance of \$50.

goody-good youth, he knew what reports meant in his own family, and he wasn't deaf to early morning, bathroom squawking. So, Topsy-like, Henry Aldrich grew. Centerville can't be found on most maps but it's conspicuous in every state in the country. It might be called Westown, Pa., where the Goldsmiths get their cokes and where the mail comes in from Philly once a day. The gang—Homer, the Huck Finn of the skit, Willie and Toby—just had to be. Since the beginning, Jack Kelk, Norman Tokar and Norman Williams have acted these parts. Understanding Mrs. Aldrich is played by Chattanooga-born Katherine Raht, veteran radio and stage star. With her is House Jameson, the exasperated, must-do-the-right-thing Mr. Aldrich, who's been on the stage ever since Columbia gave him his B.A. That's the Aldrich family, the all-American family, your folks, the people next door, and every family to whom "Coming Mother" sounds like home.



Understanding Ma Aldrich is Katherine Raht, Chattanooga-born schoolmarm introduced to radio by Dramatist Thornton Wilder.



Mrs. Berg and her "family" around the salad bowl. L. to r. James R. Waters, Roslyn Silber, and Alfred Ryder. The Goldbergs never fake sound effects like dishwashing.

THE GOLDBERGS

YOO HOO, MRS. BLOO—M! Twelve years ago, that clarion call first boomed over the air waves, and the NBC program director who had taken a 15-minute-a-week chance in launching *The Goldbergs* sat back and hoped he was right. . . . He was. Today, Molly Goldberg and her family—Jake, Sammy and Rosie—are deeply entrenched in the hearts of millions of listeners. 23 CBS, 31 NBC stations and Mutual's WOR in New York carry the story of the Goldbergs' struggles and heartaches, defeats and triumphs in a five-a-week program that tops all air shows. . . . The saga of *The Goldbergs* is the saga of radio's most amazing woman, Gertrude Berg, who writes, directs and plays the role of Molly. Mrs. Berg is frankly forty-two, happily tips the scales at 147. Merry-eyed, forthright, she lives by the same heartwarming, homespun philosophy with which she endows Molly. Like Molly, she's wrapped up in her family—Lewis, her husband, 19-year-old Chernay and 15-year-old Harriet. And like Molly, she knows first-hand the urge to "get ahead in the world." As Gertrude Edelstein, she grew up in a modest four-room apartment in upper Manhattan. An only child, she lived in a make-believe world, peopled by characters of her own imagining. Summers in the Catskills where her father owned a small hotel gave her her first taste of playwriting. Guests liked amateur theatricals, liked the clever sketches Gertrude wrote for them. . . . Lewis Berg, a Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute student, spent a vacation at the Edelstein hostelry when Gertrude was sixteen, returned three years later, and they were married that autumn. . . . Came 1929. The sugar refinery, where Lewis was employed as engineer, burned down, and his job went up in the smoke. Mrs. Berg, who hitherto had been concerned only with home-making, remembered the sketches she'd written, took them off the shelf, pondered the possibility of getting a skit about two salesgirls on the radio. A program director agreed

to air it for four weeks, and Gertrude was in seventh heaven. She still doesn't know why the first broadcast was the last. . . . But the heady elixir of success, though fleeting, was sweet, and she promised herself one month to prove her mettle. Result: A sketch of a Jewish father and mother in an East Side tenement who wanted to get ahead. A father who said he wanted his son, Sammy, to "have everything money can buy." A mother who said she wanted him to "have everything money can't buy." You know Jake and Molly. . . . Well, in 1931, a sponsor took over the program, scheduled it for five days a week. Mrs. Berg didn't think she could write that much, said she'd try. She tried—and hasn't stopped since. The paycheck's grown from \$75 to a reputed \$5,000 per week, and \$1,000 for a new show she calls *Kate Hopkins*. So the Bergs have gotten ahead very nicely. . . . Mr. Berg designs bridgework for a dental firm; Chernay's at college in Michigan; Harriet, in High School, wants to write—like Mama. Mama's written more than 2,000 scripts in these twelve years. They fill four closets in the duplex apartment overlooking Central Park. More than 3,000,000 words, four times the complete works of Shakespeare. . . . Her day begins at 6 A. M., when Mrs. Berg tiptoes to the kitchen, brews a cup of tea, carries it back to her study and writes the script that will go on the air three weeks later. After breakfast, she hurries to the NBC studios where, at 10 sharp, she rehearses the 11:30 broadcast. After lunch, she dashes home to knock out the *Kate Hopkins* sketch. At 4 P. M., she's at CBS, rehearsing the 5:15 show, a recording of which is broadcast the next morning over WOR. At 5:30, the author-director-actress is free to go home to her family. . . . "Jake," says Molly Goldberg to her husband, "the world would be a better place to live in if people only had the courage to act as good as they really are." There you have Gertrude Berg—voicing the all-embracing faith of her generous heart.



"Mama" writes the Goldberg scripts—has knocked out 2,000 in 12 years!



"Molly" also writes "Kate Hopkins," takes home \$6,000 every week.

Parley Baer, 88; 64-Year Career Spanned Radio, TV, Movies

by MYRNA OLIVER
Times Staff Writer

Parley Baer, a durable character actor whose six-decade career encompassed more than 60 motion pictures, 1,600 television shows and an amazing 15,000 radio programs including the original version of "Gunsmoke," has died. He was 88.

The actor, who worked steadily from the early 1930s to the mid-1990s, died Friday at the Motion Picture and Television Hospital in Woodland Hills of complications from a stroke suffered Nov. 11. A resident of Tarzana, Baer had had a major stroke in 1997 that affected his speech and ended his acting career.

Baer's name never became a household word, but his face and voice were familiar to millions of listeners and viewers over several generations. A burly, balding man of substance, he played authority figures such as judges, awmen and mayors — he was Mayor Stoner of Mayberry on "The Andy Griffith Show."

But he was also the voice of the Keebler cookie elf in television commercials and from 1955 to 1961 appeared as Ozzie Nelson's neighbor Darby in "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet."

Although Baer appeared in the 1995 film "Last of the Dogmen" starring Tom Berenger, his last memorable big-screen role was as the Senate majority leader in the 1993 film "Dave," starring Kevin Kline as a presidential look-alike.

That same year, Baer began a long-running role as senior citizen Miles Dugan on the daytime soap "The Young and the Restless." Baer and other veterans were brought in when producers realized their afternoon audiences included increasing numbers of elderly viewers.

"I admire them for doing this," Baer, then 78, told The Times in 1993, "and I hope it will bring to light the fact that people who have reached the zenith of 65 or more are not through."

On television, Baer most recently had a role in a segment of "Star Trek: Voyager" shown in 1996. But he was also on the small screen in the early days in such series as "Dragnet," "Lassie," "Father Knows Best," "I Love Lucy," "You Are There" and "Perry Mason."



PARLEY BAER

From 1955 to 1961, Baer appeared as Ozzie Nelson's neighbor Darby in "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet." But he called radio "the most nearly perfect medium for an actor."

But for Baer, radio came even before films and television. He first went on the air in 1933.

"Radio is the most nearly perfect medium for an actor," Baer told The Times in 1994 when he was playing Tweedledum opposite William Windom's Tweedledee in a production of "Alice in Wonderland" by the California Artists Radio Theatre. "It's kind of a hackneyed phrase, 'Theater of the mind,' but it really is: If you have an audience of 5 million people listening to you, you're giving 5 million performances."

From 1952 to 1961, Baer was the voice of Chester Proudfoot, deputy to William Conrad's Marshal Matt Dillon on radio's "Gunsmoke." (When the western sauntered to television in 1955, Dennis Weaver played the deputy to James Arness' Dillon.)

Baer was the manservant Rene to Carleton Young's Edmond Dantes on late-1940s radio's "The Count of Monte Cristo," and among his other credits were such radio standards as "Lux Radio Theater," "Screen Directors' Playhouse," "Cisco Kid," "Red Ryder," "My Friend Irma" and "My Favorite Husband," starring Lucille Ball.

Born in Salt Lake City, Baer studied drama at the University of Utah and began working as an actor, director and producer for local radio station KSL.

As a sideline, he served as publicist and ringmaster for circuses, traveling with Circus Vargas and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

In 1946, he met and married aerialist and bareback rider Ernestine Clarke. She died two years ago.

Baer, who served in the Army Air Force during World War II, moved to Los Angeles in 1947 and the next year was a founding actor in Peggy Webber's anthology show for KFI-TV.

The actor kept in touch with circus folk and with animals as a participant in the Paul Eagles' Circus Luncheon Club, which raised money to entertain patients at Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center in Downey. Baer also trained and worked with lions and tigers for a time at the now-defunct Jungland compound in Thousand Oaks, served on the board of the community L.A. Circus, and was a docent at the Los Angeles Zoo.

He is survived by two daughters, Kim Baer and Dale Sloan; and three grandchildren.

L.A. TIMES - NOVEMBER 24, 2002





LUM and ABNER

"Lum" and "Abner" are the exceptions that prove the rule in radio. Working in a medium that churns along on high-powered efficiency, split-second timing, sponsor interference and elaborate production set-ups, Chester Lauck and Norris Goff breeze through their four-times-weekly broadcast, giving the folks a maximum of entertainment with a minimum of preparation. . . . About an hour before they go on the air, the boys meet at their little office tucked away behind a door marked "Jot 'Em Down Store." Chet, who's "Lum," mans the typewriter. Norris (Abner) scrunches up in the corner back of Chet, strokes the whiskers he's growing for their next picture, and watches his contributions to the plot and dialogue pop into print. Fifteen minutes before air-time, the script for the day is ready. No one, not even the NBC network, has to O.K. it. Very few radio shows have such freedom. . . . The boys take all the parts themselves, switching from one voice to another with nothing more than a deep breath in between. Chet handles the

sound effects. . . . Both are handsome, both are happily married, each has two children. Chet is 38; Norris, known also as "Tuffy," is four years younger. . . . Next to breeding thoroughbred horses, duck hunting claims most of their time. Pals since grade school, brother Sigma Chi at the University of Arkansas, they went separate ways after snagging their sheepskins. A couple of years later, both returned to Mena, Arkansas—Chet to manage an automobile finance company; Norris to help his father run his wholesale grocery business. A black-face act they'd whipped together for a Lion's Club entertainment had to be scrapped at the last minute when the boys found the program crowded with burnt-cork-and-Southern-dialect combinations. Quick like forty bunnies, they switched to a comedy routine based on a couple of Ozark characters they'd met in their travels. The skit clicked, and from that day—April 26, 1931—to this, they've been "Lum" and "Abner." And they've never (doff your cap at this point) been without a sponsor!

Wistful Vista was everyone's neighbor

This week's look back at Peoria's colorful past includes a town only known on radio in 1942, the beginning of Peoria's first distillery in 1851, hungry eagles in 1872, an early radio program in 1926, and the death of a fireman fighting a fire in 1983.

1942: Jan. 22

■ It is a small town you won't find on any map. It goes by the innocuous name of

Wistful Vista, and it was selected as the setting for the movie "Look Who's Laughing," in which two of



Bill Adams

the stars happen to be Fibber McGee and Molly — and their own Wistful Vista.

So Wistful Vista, the town that isn't on any map, is now in pictures, and that is the only place it has ever been, except in the minds of its creators, Fibber McGee and Molly, and in the minds of every fan of their top network radio program.

"You see, we had to have a setting for Fibber McGee and Molly," say Jim and Marian Jordan, the creators of these famous characters,

so we took the safest course and invented a town.

"We didn't want to use New York or Chicago, or even our own hometown of Peoria, Illinois. We didn't want too big a town nor yet too small a town, so we just invented a town and then didn't say anything more about it other than to call it by name."

It's a town that none of its millions of avid listeners live in, but are friendly to, because they have conceived it as a neighboring community.

"And that, of course," say the Jordans, "is just what we want Wistful Vista to be, and Fibber McGee and Molly are everybody's neighbors."

In the movie "Look Who's Laughing," opening a week's run today at the Madison, the McGees co-star with Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and Lucille Ball. Wistful Vista, with all its prominent citizens like the McGees, Mrs. Uppington, Gildersleeve, Sis, the Old Timer and the rest, takes on a more solid reality.

The town, however, can still retain its claim to being America's No. 1 Mystery Town. Everybody knows it, but nobody knows where it is.

And more McGees . . .

■ Peoria natives Jim and Marian Jordan have sent the following telegram to Leonard C. Worley, Great States Theater's city manager, for the opening of their new film today at the Madison Theater. It reads:

"Two children of Peoria who never have forgotten the old home town want to thank you for showing 'Look Who's Laughing,' a picture in which we both appear at the Madison Theater on January 22. We know the Madison is a fine theater, and we feel that 'Look Who's Laughing' is really a fine picture. Our kindest wishes for a splendid opening, and our genuine regrets that we cannot be present in person."

(I remember this picture well. I was a 16-year-old usher who worked Aisle Three that week at the Madison. And they really did know the Madison was a fine theater. They appeared on its stage, in person, as a man-and-wife vaudeville team back in the 1920s, before they became famous radio personalities.)

Journal Star
Peoria, Ill.

Granite City Illinois' OTR broadcaster and Videographer Harold Roy Ziegler with his friend Beverly Garland



Radio Pioneer Clings to Imagination

By Joseph Berger
New York Times

Published: October 7, 2003

Radio drama died about 50 years ago, and wistful obituaries consigned the art form to the thrilling days of yesteryear. Himan Brown, though, refused to go to the funeral.

Mr. Brown created and produced such popular radio programs of the 1930's and 1940's as "The Adventures of the Thin Man," "Dick Tracy," "Grand Central Station" and, most famously, "Inner Sanctum Mysteries," whose creaking door invited listeners in for a sepulchral half hour that ended with a narrator's droll but slightly menacing farewell: "Pleasant dreams!"

Mr. Brown has never stopped believing that the form has legs, as sturdy as the ones that, at 93 years old, carry him out to the City University of New York's Midtown Graduate Center to produce dramas about influential Americans that are broadcast on Brooklyn College's tiny radio station, WBCR-AM (1090).

"I am firmly convinced that nothing visual can touch audio," Mr. Brown insists. "I don't need 200 orchestra players doing the 'Ride of the Valkyries.' I don't need car chases. I don't need mayhem. All I need to do is creak the door open, and visually your head begins to go. The magic word is imagination."

Call him a dinosaur, and he snaps back, "I was a dinosaur at 70," adding playfully, "You don't come into my apartment and find a coffin."

If Mr. Brown cannot quite let go of his hour upon the stage, it is because he was a patriarch of radio drama, one of a handful of people who gave the medium its shape, vocabulary and business routines. Actors who took direction from him included Orson Welles, Helen Hayes, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Frank Sinatra and Gregory Peck.

When TV came along and the toothpaste and laxative companies began to forsake radio drama, Mr. Brown clung to the sinking ship and in the 1970's pestered CBS to let him produce a revival of "Inner Sanctum" called "CBS Radio Mystery Theater." It lasted from 1974 to 1982, and into his 70's Mr. Brown was producing seven nights a week.

Mr. Brown, who figures he has produced 30,000 shows, is a man whose wavy, silken hair has aged to a handsome golden white, whose dark eyes hold your attention, like, well, a creaking door. He shuffles around a 10-room Central Park West apartment where paintings by Renoir, Degas, Picasso and Chagall conceal walls that could use a paint job. But living alone at his age, he cannot take care of everything. However profitable radio is today in its drive-time blend of music, news, sports and talk,

Mr. Brown prefers to recall the days when young people were curled under the covers for the pleasure of having their Bakelite sets fill them with dread.

"There is no such thing as radio anymore," he grouched. "Radio is nothing more than 24 one-minute commercials an hour with a minute and a half between commercials."

Just as he cannot let go of work, he also cannot let go of old rivalries, expressing scorn for "The Shadow," the mystery series remembered for its opening: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!" His resentments also include the program pirates who, he said, "have stolen me blind."

"They download me," he said. "They're peddling my shows."

The actor Tony Roberts, who has used his voice in a hundred Brown productions, said Mr. Brown's talent was that of a storyteller. "He knows exactly how to set a mood, how to give a listener a sense of place and intrigue," he said.

But as Mr. Brown tells his life story, his talent also seems to include an entrepreneur's hard-charging persistence.

The son of a tailor from a shtetl near the Ukrainian seaport of Odessa, Mr. Brown actually got into the business as a result of an enthusiasm for the next new thing. He was like one of those teenagers in the early 1990's attracted to the Internet's wild frontier who

saw dot-com notions turn into overnight, if fleeting, fortunes. Radio was so starved for programs in the 1920's it would buy them from a hustling teenager.

"I was in knee pants, and a shop teacher at Boys High School said, 'There's a new thing now, radio,' " Mr. Brown recalled. "You bring in a Quaker Oats box and wrap copper wire around it and you heard WLW in Cincinnati. What a revelation that was right here in Brooklyn."

Not yet 18, he persuaded a radio station that he could read a newspaper column in a Yiddish dialect. It turned out to be the young NBC station WEAJ, and one of his listeners was Gertrude Berg, who had an idea for a show about a Jewish family in the Bronx. He trooped up to her apartment on Mount Eden Avenue, and there she proposed that he play Jake, husband to her Molly Goldberg. It took him a year of nagging, but NBC agreed to pay him and Mrs. Berg \$75 to put on a live 15-minute drama. "The Rise of the Goldbergs" was born, enduring under various names, in television as well as radio, for 30 years. But after six months, Mrs. Berg, he remembered, "told me to get lost."

He recovered and was able to sell the Goodman's matzo company on a pre-Passover show about a matchmaker called "Bronx Marriage Bureau," and another sponsor, Blue Coal, on "Little Italy," an Italian version

of the Goldbergs in which Mr. Brown played the father.

"I was acting," he said. "I was selling. I was hiring other actors. I was getting the script repaired."

He was also attending Brooklyn College with an eye toward a career in law, but his lessons were being used in radio's rough-and-tumble world. He learned to go straight to advertising agencies and sell them shows like the soap opera "Marie, the Little French Princess."

Another program, "Hilda Hope, M.D.," led to the long-running "Grand Central Station," an anthology show whose signature was the chugging, whistling sounds of a furious steam engine pulling into Grand Central. Its portentous opening also exalted the terminal as "the crossroads of a million private lives, a gigantic stage on which are played a thousand dramas daily."

He recalled: "Every week I'd get an idiot's letter: 'That's not Grand Central Station! The trains don't come in that way.' I'd say, 'You have your own Grand Central Station.' "

By then a lawyer, Mr. Brown also discovered that he could buy the rights to characters from the comics or novels, like "Dick Tracy" and "Bulldog Drummond." "The Thin Man," whose rights he bought from Dashiell Hammett's agent, breathed new life into the long-married but still flirtatious couple who in bed hash out the

solution to a murder then bid each other a suggestive good night with a pull on a lamp chain. "It was as sexy as I could get," Mr. Brown said.

One day, an executive from Carter's Little Liver Pills called to ask for ideas, and Mr. Brown proposed a show called "The Creaking Door."

The executive, he remembered, disliked the title. "Well I wasn't going to lose a customer," Mr. Brown said. So he bought the name "Inner Sanctum Mysteries," the title of a Simon & Schuster series, agreeing to plug the books periodically. For over a decade until 1952, the show was often among the Top 10.

When television came along and an organ's ominous flourish could be heard for radio, Mr. Brown kept at it, convincing executives to do a one-hour series called "Morning Matinee." He turned "Inner Sanctum" into a syndicated TV show, but viewers found its now visible characters as creaky as the door, and only 26 episodes were produced.

"I said to myself: 'You're going to be out of business, Himan. All these guys making TV, they have to have a set. The only way you're going to exist' — I talk to myself — 'is to own the means of production.' "

He bought studios in Chelsea that for 35 years were used as sets for TV series like "The Phil Silvers Show." Mr. Brown also turned his energy to life with his second wife, Shirley

Goodman, the driving force behind the Fashion Institute of Technology before her death in 1991, to his two granddaughters and four great-grandchildren, and to charity.

But he has never stopped working, not only preparing to record the next of his "They Were Giants" dramas for Brooklyn College on Oct. 16, but also planning a dramatization next year of the Brown v. Board of Education legal battle, for the 50th anniversary of the landmark school desegregation ruling.

"The minute I stop working," he said, "I'm gone."



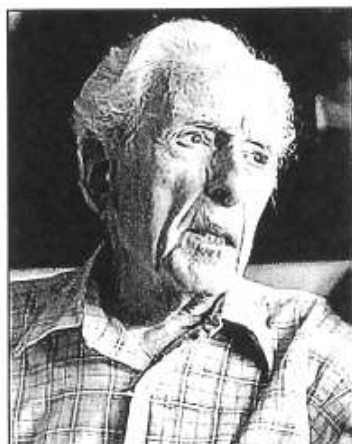
Himan when radio was Golden

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Beverly Garland, one of Himan's best supporters. Continues to act in radio productions both at her hotel and in the studio.

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Sam Meinhold Himan Brown, a creator and producer of radio programs like "Inner Sanctum Mysteries," in the 1940's.

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Astro-Physicist

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Mitchell Weisberg snapped this photo of Jan Merlin, Frank Thomas and Ed Kemmer at the Williamsburg Film Festival in March



News from Peoria by Harold Ziegler

Heavenly days! This my first attempt to write an article on which is one of my favorite subjects, OLD TIME RADIO.

We, I mean, my favorite wife Kathleen, Marie Noeth (I can't say my favorite step-daughter as I have another step-daughter Pat Krugman so I guess I'll have to say my half favorite step-daughter), and myself were sent a card from Leo Jordan (nephew of Jim Jordan, radio's "Fibber McGee") telling about what he and the Peoria Historical Society have planned for Sunday, August 24, 2003. I had met Leo at Bob Burchett's old time radio convention at Cincinnati last April and I hope we became friends!

The plan was an exhibit of "Fibber McGee and Molly" collection from Leo Jordan and others which also included "Fibber's closet"! It is still on display at the Flanagan House Museum (Another Irishman?) 942 N.E. Glen Oak Ave. Peoria, IL 61603 Telephone:(309) 674-0322.

The display runs thru December, 2003. See the "Hometown Tribute" to Jim and Marian Jordan at the museum, as it is something to remember.

The next treat was going to the "Peoria Remembers--Fibber McGee and Molly" a vaudeville and radio show of which were in five acts. It was originally scheduled for 7:00 P.M. that Sunday evening but the demand for tickets was so great it had to be rescheduled to put on two programs! The first at 2:00 P.M. and the next at 5:00 P.M. The 2:00 P.M. show was sold out (500 seats) and the 5:00 P.M. program (which we attended) was short of about ten seats of being sold out! The proceeds went to the Peoria Historical Society "To Preserve and Celebrate Peoria's Story!"

I originally had two reserved tickets for the 2:00

program but when Marie read the article about the show in the paper about who the actors were going to be (as she had seen them in other shows in Peoria) she wanted to go with us so we got lucky and got three tickets for the 5:00 program. So as it was too early for our 5:00 show Marie took us to the "Fibber McGee and Molly" exhibit at the Flanagan House Museum that we all enjoyed. When we got to the ICC Performing Arts Center, where the programs were being held, we noticed about twenty patrons who already had seen the 2:00 show were out in the lobby after the 2:00 show was over with tickets to go back inside for the second show! That alone says how well the show was received that day!

Marie not knowing much about old time radio shows enjoyed both the exhibit and the radio recreations.

The program started with an introduction by Bill Adams from the Peoria Journal Star. Next was Lee Wenger as "Fibber" and Lee's wife Denise as "Molly" who recreated songs done by the Jordan's in their vaudeville and early radio days. My favorites were the many different versions of "Oh, How I Wish I Was in Peoria." Really fun music!

The "On the Air" Announcer was Paul Carnegie. More about Paul later.

"The Folks from Peoria"-- "Fibber McGee and Molly" was next with Mike Dentino as "Fibber," Mary Jo England as "Molly," Paul Carnegie as "Gildersleeve," and Frank (sorry but not the Frank "Tom Corbett, Space Cadet" Thomas) Thomas, but this Frank was really great as the "Old Timer."

Then we had a twenty-minute intermission.

After the intermission the second half started with "Allen's Alley" from Fred Allen's radio show "Town Hall

Tonight" with Frank Thomas as Fred Allen, Rebekah Bourland as Fred's wife Portland ("Miiister Ailllen!!") Hoffa, and Pierre's wife Pansy ("maybe you were expecting Turaloura Bankhead?") Nussbaum, Bruce White as the south winded Senator Beauégard ("I'm from the deep south, sur") Claghorn, and Paul Carnegie as "Titus ("Howdy, Bub!") Moody. Wonderful!

Then a George Burns and Gracie Allen skit played by Pat White as Gracie Allen and Bruce White as George Burns. They were also great!

And finally another great "Fibber McGee and Molly" recreation, and if you closed your wet eyes (wet from laughing so hard) you were back to the 1940s and at 79 Wistful Vista visiting the "McGees". Mike Dentino was "Fibber", Mary Jo England was "Molly", Bruce White was "Ollie", Paul Carnegie was "an IRS Man" and "Mayor LaTrivia", Lee Wenger was "Doc Gamble", Frank Thomas was "The Old Timer", and Pat White was "The Secretary". It drained your tear ducts from laughing so hard!

Then the "Wrap Up" by Bill Adams and the "Closing Comments" by Leo Jordan.

It was one of the best old time radio recreations I have attended in my almost twenty years of going to old radio conventions and they were conducted by mostly people who in the original radio programs from the thirties and forties.

The "icing on the cake" was when Leo invited us to his home after the last performance for the actor's party. We got to meet the players and talk to them about their performances.

But, the highlight of the evening was when I was told that one of the cast members had worked with Brace "THE LONE RANGER" Beemer

and THE Fred ("THE ANNOUNCER") Foy at one of radio's best known networks, WXYZ in Detroit, as the "Ranger's" nephew "Dan Reid" and as a sound effects artist there from 1950 to 1953 and with my late friend Ernie Winstanley who also was the first "Dan Reid" and also a sound effects artist.

This man is Paul Carnegie, whom I haven't met yet as he wasn't at the party, but I've spoken to him several times on the phone and have talked him into appearing at the "Friend's of Old Time Radio" convention at Newark, N.J. this October 23rd thru the 26th this year.

Paul will again appear with Fred Foy (who he hasn't seen since 1953), be on a WXYZ panel, and work on a radio recreation of "The Lone Ranger" show.

I was also told of another person who lived in Peoria but has since passed on also worked at WXYZ as a sound effects artist, but before Paul was there. Which is rare as people who have worked at the early WXYZ network are a rare find today and I consider myself lucky to find Paul and bring him to the old time radio convention to share with others his old radio talents! I'm looking forward to the Newark convention this year, as it will be a "WXYZ Event!"

The only sad note to the days great event was no audio or video recordings were made or even photos of the cast during their performance or after the program.

That, I think, was a great loss in preserving "Fibber McGee and Molly" and Peoria's history and I hope Leo Jordan and the Peoria Historical Society will do other old radio recreations in the future.

If you are interested in attending the F.O.T.R convention call:

Jay Hickerson at (203)248-2887 Or write him at:

Jay Hickerson
P.O.Box 4321

Hamden, Ct. 06514. Or e-mail him at:

jayhick@aol.com

Tell him that Harold sent you.

I'm going to try and get Paul and the other's in the cast to come to Bob Burchett's old radio convention at Cincinnati, Ohio next spring.

Contact Bob at:

Bob Burchett
RMS & Associates
10280 Gunpowder Road
Florence, Ky. 41042.

Or phone him at:
(859)282-0333

Or e-mail him at:
haradio@hotmail.com

And tell him Harold sent you, also.

Oh, how I wish I were in Peoria again!!

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Harold at the Laurel & Hardy stairs from "The Music Box" in the Silver Lake District of Los Angeles.



Harold at the Cincinnati OTR Convention.

Harold after the Cincinnati Convention ----->



Radio pioneer Norman Corwin to receive Ray Bradbury Award

Famed radio writer, director and producer Norman Corwin will receive Woodbury University's Ray Bradbury Award on Sunday, November 4.

The award presentation and a discussion by Corwin will begin at 7 p.m. A cocktail and buffet reception will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

The Boston native has been involved in all almost all forms of media during his distinguished career. He has won 22 major awards in media and the humanities, including the One World Award, two Peabody Medals, an Oscar nomination, an Emmy and a Golden Globe. Corwin also was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame.

Starting his career as a newspaperman, Corwin moved to CBS radio during its heyday. His memorable series included "26 by Corwin" and "Columbia Presents Corwin."

Corwin has written and directed stage plays, television dramas, motion pictures, three cantatas and the libretto of an award-winning, one-act opera produced by the Metropolitan. He wrote the screenplay for "Lust for Life," which won Anthony Quinn an Oscar for his performance, and he hosted the PBS series "Academy Leaders."

Corwin is also the author of 17 books, five produced stage plays and numerous movie and TV works, including the Westinghouse Group W series "Norman Corwin Presents." His professional and academic credits include visiting lectureships at five major universities.

At age 91, Corwin remains active by speaking, writing and teaching.

Corwin joins a distinguished list of recipients of the Ray Bradbury Creativity Award. Previous award winners include Alexander Girard, Jack Lenor Larsen, Howard Hirsh, Jon A.

Jerde, FAIA, Gerald L. Allison, FAIA, Ray Bradbury, Charles Champlin, Barbara Lazaroff, NASA Jet Propulsion Lab-Mars Pathfinder Team, Peggy Webber, Helen Gurley Brown, David Brown and Stan Freberg.

The award is named for Ray Bradbury, the acclaimed author of 27 books including "Fahrenheit 451" and "The Martian Chronicles."

Cost for the lecture and reception is \$50 per person. Tickets for the discussion, along with coffee and dessert afterward, are available for \$25. Special discounted tickets are available for students and children.

For tickets, please call Woodbury at 818.767.0888, ext. 230. Tickets also will be available at the door. Proceeds from the event benefit Woodbury's Library Associates, a volunteer organization dedicated to improving library services. ■



Norman Corwin (l) and Ray Bradbury (r), recipient of the Ray Bradbury Award.

Read more about Norman Corwin and radio drama in World War II and the postwar broadcasting industry blacklist in Howard Blue's *Words at War* from Scarecrow Press. (www.scarecrowpress.com)

Ray Erlenborn Silent Kid to Sound Man

Laura Waskin

It's often the behind the scenes world that can offer the most insight into the inner workings of the entertainment industry, and the reminiscences of former silent child actor Ray Erlenborn are no exception. Ray, who had a hand in a couple of the best known films of the silent era, and who later became a well known sound effects man for radio and television, is still sharp and vibrant at the age of 88.

Interestingly enough, Ray's career has come full circle, for he's once again working in silents. This time, however, Ray has combined two of his professions (the other being vaudeville and theatre) by providing a wide range of live sound effects for the monthly silent film showings at the High Desert Playhouse near Palm Springs in Joshua Tree, California.

I sat with this very congenial man and listened as he spun tales of the industry as it was during its Golden Age. Through Ray, I too, was transported to the set of *City Lights*, as he waited not hours, but days to be called by Chaplin for use in a scene. I also felt a teenager's pent up excitement when Ray learned his hand was a match

for Harold Lloyd's and had been selected for use in some of the key scenes of one of the comedian's thrill pictures. It was only when Meredith, Ray's wife of 30 years, politely interrupted us to ask Ray how to program the VCR - that I realized this captivating gentleman with the neatly trimmed snow white beard was still the wide eyed child who had been fascinated with the gadgetry of his first hand-cranked motion picture projector, and who now took the slightly more complicated workings of a VCR in his stride. (My own accomplishments of remembering black and white television and dial telephones pales in comparison!) But Ray was happy to sit back and share his first-hand experiences about an era, most of who's major stars have already taken their final bow. So let us pull back the curtain as Ray reveals his own special memories.

"I was born on January 21, 1915 in Denver, Colorado, and my folks brought me out to Los Angeles when I was six months old because my mother wanted me to be a movie star. My father was an auto mechanic, but mom was a stage mother, so I started real early.

My mother had sung in a quartet before she was married and she loved the business. In

fact, her quartet had been hired by William Jennings Bryan around the turn of the century to travel around the country with him and sing wherever he was trying to get into office. I don't think he ever made it though. But later on, and because I was an only child, my mother spent her time promoting my career. She really had me singing from the time I opened my mouth. I know at three years of age, Mom stood me up on the table at Boos Brother's Cafeteria at Third and Broadway in Los Angeles to have me sing "Pretty Baby." And I have to say that once I was out therein front of an audience and got my first laughs and applause - even at that early age - I was hooked.

I worked in all the theatres on Broadway here with the Meglin Kiddies, or with acts my mother had built of three, four or five kids. We had The Preppy Trio, The Hollywood Buds and The Hollywood Starlets and we'd play all the theatres. The "Los Angeles" was a beautiful theatre and I also played at the "Million Dollar" on Vermont Avenue, too, and out towards the south end of town there was a theatre every five or six blocks. We also played in San Fernando, Bakersfield, Visalia, Tulare, San Pedro, San Diego and many

other towns. We kept busy all the time because for an act of kids, we'd get \$12.50 for the weekend. I still have those contracts in my scrapbooks.

There are literally hundreds of theatres in Southern California, and with the Meglin Kiddies, we kept building new songs and dances all the time for the vaudeville circuits. When we opened the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood with 200 kids on the stage, I was the master of ceremonies and the interlocutor for the minstrel show. I also sang a couple of solos during the show, although in those days, we didn't have sound reinforcement, so you just had to go out there and belt a song out so they could hear it in the last row. I guess I must have projected my voice pretty well, because they kept me on. None of us used a megaphone either because those were really for the crooners like Al Jolson. In fact, I used to imitate him as a kid in the acts."

Ray was also in Gus Edward's "Baby Follies" at MGM where, "we sang and danced and did everything. In one show three friends and myself even played singing waiters."

Ray also began getting work in the new form of entertainment on film, with commercials. As he describes, "There used to be

what's called an 'olio' in theatres, which is the curtain that had all the advertising from all the local merchants on it. From that they said, why not put commercials for the local merchants on the screen, too? So the local theatres began making commercials for the plumbers and other businesses in the neighborhood and would show them on screen. I did some stuff for the local plumber. I was the little boy who brought a stool over to the faulty sink, which I climbed on top of and began brushing my teeth. The titles then told about their equipment and everything."

Film work also sparked Ray's interest on another level, and it literally carried over into his own backyard. "When we lived in Hollywood, Horsley Studios on Beachwood Drive was right in back of us, and I used to go over the fence and pick up old pieces of film that they would throw out. I soon had quite a collection. Then from the Sunday supplement in the paper, I bought a 35mm projector that had an oil lamp and a hand crank. I also got a picture screen for the house and soon had lots of fun proudly watching the snippets from my collection."

It was about this time that Ray began to get his own work

on the screen in between vaudeville engagements. "I'd often play a copy, elevator or newspaper boy, or sometimes a bellhop." One of the first films he appeared in was *Safety Last* (1923) playing, typically, a newsboy. Ray also recalls an interesting sequence he was in that didn't make the final cut: "There were three or four of us kids flying kites, and Harold Lloyd was supposed to get tangled up in the kite. But that part never did end up in the movie." He also appeared in *Ben-Hur* (1925). "I still remember having to stand really quietly as they painted me brown all over. The reason they used us kids for the adult crowd scene was to create the illusion of distance. They'd only have grownups for maybe the first 100 feet in the crowd. Beyond that, they'd use kids. Then going up the mountain -- which they'd build out of papier mache - they had dolls, each holding a spear. We'd get cues to raise our spears, and we'd all have to raise them. All except the dolls, that is, but they were too far back for anyone to really notice anyway."

Two years later, Ray appeared in another epic, Cecil B. DeMille's *King of Kings*. He recalls, "I was just an extra and got to wear those white robes, but they used my hand for the

close-up of the little blind girl's hand. I'm not sure if they decided to cut it out in the end or not."

In the mid-1920s, Ray appeared as an extra in several *Our Gang* comedies before landing a starring role as one of the Winnie Winkle Kids in a rival series. The series was taken from the Winnie Winkle comic strip and consisted of The Rink Dink Gang: Spud, Spike, Chink, and Periwinkle. Says Ray, "I played Spike, a mischievous prankster, and was outfitted in a striped sweater with a vest over it. I also wore a cap pulled down over my ears like Jackie Coogan. We made two, two-reelers a week for a year for the Stern Brothers at their rental studio on Sunset Boulevard, right where KCET is now. We also did a lot of filming on location. I actually have two 16mm prints of the series that I've had transferred to videos as a keepsake, although I haven't been able to find any others."

After the series ended, Ray went back to bit parts and extra work. His next appearance was in the Lon Chaney film *Tell it to the Marines* (1927). Ray says his strongest recollection is of his fear of having to ride a horse: "It was a big, feisty animal, and I was really frightened, even

though I had ridden before when we made a kid western called *The Rivals* up in the Hollywood Hills. All of my friends were in that film, too, and it was actually produced by a midget, who also appeared in the film. I remember they put me on his horse that I didn't know from Adam, and it took me off the set and all the way down to the Pickwick Stables on Riverside Drive. It was hard to control him and I had to get somebody to help me get that horse back up the hill again!"

Ray has stronger memories of the following year. *The Wedding March*, and the film's star, director Erich von Stroheim: "I played an altar boy and they curled my hair for that one, so I had little curls all over my head. You never know what they're going to do for you. He [von Stroheim] could point out a soldier 100 feet away that didn't have his topcoat buttoned and shout, 'Button that coat! Get that man off the set until he buttons that coat!' I was also there when he threw half a watermelon that he'd just been eating at some poor girl down front because she'd apparently done something he didn't like. He was like that. Cecil B. DeMille had a similar temper."

On the set, Ray also had to fit in some schoolwork. It

wasn't too difficult though because, "The studio would always have a teacher everywhere when you weren't in a scene, you'd go and report to the teacher on the set and do some work. Then you'd go back and do some more scenes. It was just like that. All of us kids went to school with the others who were working in the same movie. It wasn't too hard going back and forth, because when you're young, you can memorize things pretty easily."

As a teenager, Ray continued in Vaudeville in addition to his film work, and also began working in the fledgling radio industry: "I was master of ceremonies for the Marco Juvenile Review for 5 years from ages 12 to 17. We did it from the theatre in the Hollywood Women's Club, which was located two blocks down from the Chinese Theatre on the other side of the street. I also did that show on radio and we started off the KFWB for Franco Bread Rolls."

[To be continued in the next Issue]



Ray Erlenborn as Spike

The Golden Age of Radio Alive on Stage

Crumbs on the Radio, is the latest production from one of Sydney's newest theatre companies. This dynamic production brings to life the golden era of radio. The audience are invited to become a member of the studio audience at a live recording of the old-time radio show. Crumbs on the Radio follows the misadventures of Phil Harris, a bumbling bandleader, and his wife Alice Faye, one of the shining lights of the

Bread Crumbs is a Sydney-based theatre company with members all over the world. It was founded by Emma Cordero in June 2001. Fresh from working in London and Chicago, Emma was eager to form a company dedicated to creating fresh, vibrant theatre. Its previous production, *Mud in your Eye: The Dorothy Parker Story* had two sell-out seasons in Sydney. As Artistic Director, writer and performer, Emma Cordero's



over screen. There are songs from the 40s and classic commercials throughout the production. Crumbs on the Radio will open on Thursday 6 March with performances from Thursday to Sunday throughout March at the beautiful Hughenden Boutique Hotel in Queen Street Woollahra.

passion for theatre is the driving force behind this fantastic production. "I want to give the audience a taste of what life was like back in the 40's. It's the attention to detail that makes this production unique, right down to the microphones, hair, costumes and the ways in which sound effects were created. There's something timeless and universal about Crumbs on the Radio and I'm sure it will appeal to a wide range of people."

Also starring in Crumbs on the Radio is Victor Kline. One of Victor's most notable roles was in *And Valentino takes Hollywood*, which received critical acclaim in both Australia and New York. Victor started his working life as Sydney's youngest barrister and has emerged as one of the cities most versatile and exciting actors. John Calligaros is a veteran of children's entertainment and the founding member of Spot the Magic Dragon which is well known for its sharp, contemporary humour. Rounding up the cast is Zoe Norton-Lodge. A new comer to the industry Crumbs on the Radio is Zoe's first production. She is thrilled to be a part of this fantastic production.

Bread Crumbs in association with the Hughenden Boutique Hotel present Crumbs on the Radio, Starring Emma Cordero, Victor Kline, John Calligaros and Zoe Norton-Lodge.

Gala Opening Thursday 6 March 2003
Ticket Price: \$22.00 Adult - \$19 Concession - \$15 Child. Tickets on sale at The Hughenden Boutique Hotel, 14 Queen St Woollahra or by calling 02-9363-4863 or www.hughendenhotel.com.au



Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, but when they lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it, too.

Princess Elettra Marconi tours the historic site where her late father, Guglielmo Marconi's first wireless transmissions across the Atlantic took place 100 years ago Saturday in Wellfleet, Mass.

Radio milestone recalled

Guglielmo Marconi sent the first wireless message in 1903.

By Associated Press

EASTHAM, Mass. — A century after Guglielmo Marconi ushered in the era of wireless communications, his daughter marked the centennial Saturday by greeting astronauts from space to the same spot where her father sent a historic radio transmission across the Atlantic.

"In this same spirit of his achievement, and also from Pope John Paul II, I send this wireless greeting to you in space. Coral greetings, and good

wishes," Princess Elettra Marconi told Kenneth Bowersox, commander of the International Space Station.

"It is amazing how far society and radio communications has come in the last 100 years. It is wonderful to hear your voice across the radio waves," Bowersox told the princess, who spoke from an auditorium filled with about 200 people.

The site is about five miles from the coastal bluff where Marconi sent the first wireless trans-Atlantic message: a Morse code greeting from President Theodore Roosevelt to King Edward VII of England on Jan. 18, 1903.

The radio transmission was

sent from the eastern end of the cape to Nova Scotia to Cornwall, England. In his message, Roosevelt called the achievement a "wonderful triumph of scientific research and ingenuity."

Marconi, who won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1909, had previously delivered messages over shorter distances, and transmitted the letter 'S' in Morse code across the Atlantic, but the 1903 transmission solidified the legitimacy of radio.

The message from the princess, who is in her early 70s and gained her title by marrying an Italian nobleman, was part of a week of centennial events.



The Max Bygraves Story

Max Bygraves was born in London on October 16th 1922, so close to the Bow Bells, his mother says she had to cup her hands over his ears as a baby to stop his being deafened by the chimes.

Born in the 'Depression Twenties', his parents found the going very tough. A two-roomed council flat was home for the six strapping children - two boys and four girls, they produced. Work was scarce in the nearby docks for father, an ex-professional fighter, so Max and brother Harry worked to help the family budget; Max with a paper delivery round and Harry as assistant to the milkman. "We had butter on Sundays and a chicken at Christmas", says Max, "the rest of the time we had a diet of bread, margarine and jam - I had so much margarine as a child - if ever I had to go to hospital

they would never think of giving a blood transfusion - they did an oil change."

It was as a 12 year old soprano that Max first appeared on stage in a talent concert at London's New Cross Empire. All the contestants were dressed in their Sunday best so Max got an old pair of trousers with seat and knees out and a ragged shirt. He rubbed dirt on his face, borrowed a friend's dog and walked on stage minus socks and shoes. He won hands down with his rendering of "My Mother's Birthday Today," Max is quoted as saying, "The applause was thunderous. I couldn't get it out of my head, I suppose that's when the show business bug first bit me."

At fourteen he finished school and began an apprenticeship with a building firm as a carpenter. In 1939, he left the job and volunteered for the Royal Air Force. This was the first time in

his life he can remember not having to share a bed with twenty-seven other people. The RAF shaped his later life. He had a pleasant singing voice and was always in demand for troop concerts, the more he performed the more he liked it, he compeered, he acted in sketches, he painted scenery, he learned more about stagecraft than he ever learned about aeroplanes. As a result of his near perfect Max Miller impression, former Private Walter Bygraves, became firmly christened Max, by his fellow airmen. In the five years he served in the RAF, he performed in well over one thousand troop shows.

Demobbed in 1945, he returned to carpentry. Now with a pretty ex-RAF Blossom as his wife, who he married in 1942, he found himself with £6 a week as salary; there was rent to pay, food to buy and a baby daughter, Christine, to

keep. To supplement this, he worked at the pubs and workingmen's clubs in and around London. One afternoon because of rain, he was laid off for the rest of the day; he decided to go and see a matinee at the famous Palladium in London. As he paid his admission money to sit up in the gallery, he bumped into his old commanding officer. He informed him that the BBC were devising a new show made entirely of ex-service personnel. Max auditioned and was immediately booked. He made friends with another young man who was the most nervous person he had ever met - his name was Frankie Howard. They were of course, both successful. That one broadcast was to alter Max's whole life. The immediate result was that he landed a job in a touring revue. 'For The Fun Of It', which ran for 61 weeks. He gave up his carpentry for good, to become a full-time entertainer going on to

achieve great success on stage and in films. After starring in his first Royal Command Performance, the BBC invited Max to appear in a new series they were starting with a wooden dummy called 'Educating Archie'. Despite the seemingly bizarre idea of having a ventriloquist, the essence of whose act is in visual illusion, on radio the show was extremely successful, ran for 11 years and helped to put names such as Julie Andrews, Tony Hancock, Eric Sykes and Peter Brough, the brains and voice behind Archie, on the road to fame.

One day the leading comedian at the London Palladium was indisposed, Jock (Max's agent) talked Val Parnell into letting Max deputize. He did - and was a big success. Contracts followed for all the 'big time' dates - gone were the small provincial music halls. In 1950-52 Max and family, Blossom, daughter

Christine, son Anthony and Maxine, a babe in arms toured the U.S.A with Judy Garland. Max returned to England to play the great London Palladium where he has continually played in summer seasons and Pantomime since. In the early days television was very studio bound and Max had the novel idea of doing an outdoor show. The resulting series, called Roamin' Holiday, was set in Alassio in Italy and was an enormous success. The show brought so much publicity that the town made Max an honorary mayor. Max's shows have, of course, been a regular and welcome feature on television ever since. In 1972 the show was called simply Max and as Max himself describes, it happened right from the first moment. This was followed, the next year, by a show entitled 'Max at the Royalty'. Again with the big band of Geoff Love who had so endeared

himself to the viewers. These shows were amongst the top-rated television shows and were enjoyed by 25 million viewers weekly.

His movies have earned him wonderful notices too - 'Cry from the Streets', (1960) was one of the few films to be chosen for the Edinburgh Festival. Max also starred in 'Charley Moon' (1954) and starred with Shirley Jones in the 20th Century Fox film of 'Bobbikins' (1957). 'Spare the Rod', a hard-edged drama where Max played a serious role as a schoolteacher, followed in 1963.

Along the way Max has collected many awards and accolades, in 1959 he was presented the Ivor Novello award for 'Best Songwriter of the Year'. His ever popular Singalonga Max records have achieved more than 27 Gold and Platinum discs. He has appeared in 19 Royal Command Performances.

Voted Personality of the Year by the Variety Club of Great Briton, Max has been honored by them on three occasions, as recently as May 2000. Amongst his proudest achievements, Max has also been presented an O.B.E. by Her Majesty the Queen.

Max is in constant demand abroad and spends most winters now in Australia, Hong Kong, South Africa and the U.S.A. After almost sixty years in show business, what are his ambitions? "To carry on what I am doing - just as long as I can and make people happy".





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