

**National Old-Time Radio Enthusiasts**

**N.O.T.R.E. News**

**Volume 20**

**Autumn '07**



**SPERDVAC IS BACK**

**Mr Frank Bresee, radio legend and SPERDVAC board member.**



# Mr Frank Bresee

*The "Living Legend" of Old Time Radio!*



**Bill holds Frank hostage at YUSA**



**Frank & his lovely wife Bobbie**

## **Mr. Frank Bresee "The Living Legend of Old Time Radio"**

For over half a century, Frank has been the host of **The Golden Days Of Radio!** The program was enjoyed for well over two decades by our US Troops overseas, via the United States Armed Forces Radio Network. It was beamed around world from the AFRN Studios in Washington DC, and it brought "a slice of America" to our brave soldiers who were serving their country on foreign soil. Virtually every big name in Hollywood, both on Network Radio and in the Motion Pictures industry, made a special appearance on one or more of Frank's weekly shows! This wonderful legacy continues daily here on Yesterday USA's Tape #13 and **LIVE** each Friday night at 10:30 PM Eastern Time.

**And why is Frank Bresee "The Living Legend of Old Time Radio"?** While most kid his age were playing Cowboys and Indians in their backyards after school, little Franklin Bresee was behind the microphone in the Hollywood studios of the Mutual Radio Network, acting out the part of "Little Beaver" on the popular old time radio show **Red Ryder!** Frank also appeared on many other old time radio shows, too numerous to mention here. **Frank Bresee IS old time radio!**

### **Frank Bresee is Heard Daily On YUSA!**

Listen to "*The Living Legend*" of Old Time Radio, Mr. Frank Bresee, everyday on Tape #13! **CLICK HERE** for info on how to receive a YUSA Program Schedule!

### **The Golden Days of Radio"**

Come celebrate the 53rd year! of Frank Bresee's world famous radio show "The Golden Days of Radio". This program is now heard exclusively on Yesterday USA. Click here to see a pictorial history of this historic program; which was on the United States Armed Forces Radio Network for over a quarter of a century!

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Jerry Williams, Barbara Williams, Glenn Mueller, Patti Mueller, Stuart Lubin, Walden Hughes, Bobb Lynes, Jim Harmon, Barbara Harmon, Don Aston, and Glenda Kelly: SPERDVAC finally seated duly elected board member Frank Bresee.

Because of this, SPERDVAC is finally having a Convention to HONOR the radio professionals again. Walden Hughes is heading the committee that is planning the 3 day event possibly at the Sportsman's Lodge in Studio City in May of 2008.

**SPERDVAC - ALIVE AGAIN AFTER 3 YEARS.  
COME BACK TO CALIFORNIA**





Solar Guard Reunion  
and Film Festival  
March 8th - 11th 2007

## WELCOME TO THE 2007 SOLAR GUARD REUNION

### Williamsburg Festival

The 2007 Solar Guard Academy reunion is set for March 8 - 11, 2007 in Williamsburg Virginia. Cadets will be able to meet and greet each other and enjoy some of the classic episodes of the 1950's Space shows while at the festival. Check the Williamsburg Film Festival for the latest information on the guests and hotel reservations.

### Introduction

### Activities/Videos

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure to contact the Academy if you plan to attend. This year the membership package will contain the first series of trading cards of the Space Heroes of the 1950s. To complete the first set you must attend and trade with fellow cadets to get a complete set. Only enough trading card sets will be made for the attendees, so be sure to contact Cadet Ed and reserve your card set today.

### Video Room:

The Solar Guard will have extended hours in the video room this year from 6 pm - ?? pm Thursday and Friday nights. This will allow cadets to meet together for an early supper and have a solid block of video viewing without interruption.

Space Patrol and Tom Corbett episodes will be featured as well as a number of Science Fiction Theater, Men into Space and Captain Midnight( don't forget to drink your Ovaltine!! ) along with a number of suggested 1950s SciFi movies. If you haven't contacted the Academy with movie suggestions, do so now so your favorite movie can be added. The video schedule will be posted on the Solar Guard website by March 1st, 2007.

Special thanks to Bruce David at Swapsale.com for his work in preserving and contributing many of the Tom Corbett and Space Patrol Shows seen at this year's reunion. Check out his website at Swapsale.com for some excellent buys. Tell him Cadet Ed sent you.

### Trading Cards:

Space Heroes of the 1950s Series 1. Created especially for the 2007 Solar Guard Reunion, six cards featuring the space heroes of early TV Science Fiction. The cards will be front and back with information about the actors who portrayed the SF



Don't miss out, contact the Academy today and let us know you will be attending the 2007 reunion in Williamsburg.

### Dealer's Room:

The Solar Guard Display will once again be in the dealer's room and will serve as a meeting place



and blast off point for cadets to travel in the FULL size Space Patrol X-RC Rocket Cockpit made by Cadet Mike Turco. Mike has added several interesting improvements to the cockpit for this years reunion. The cockpit was a hit with everyone last year and will be again this year.



FRANK BRESELES  
"GOLDEN  
DAYS OF  
RADIO"



Walden Hughes, SPERDVAC Convention Chairman





My wife, Alice, and I have always enjoyed going to garage sales, but in Los Angeles it's a special treat. L.A. is very much a company town and the company is Show Business. You might rummage through the leftovers of an aging actor, a script supervisor, a sound technician—and you never know what you'll find.

Recently we saw an enticing sign just around the corner from our house. It read "Fabulous Estate Sale," but the reality was far from that. Mostly broken-down appliances and leftover house paint. Then I spotted something on the ground: a radio transcription disk in its original brown-paper sleeve. I'd seen them before; they look like record albums except they're bigger (16 inches versus 12). These recordings of broadcasts were made in the years before magnetic tape; never intended for use outside radio stations, they could be played back only on special turntables.

#### *A bargain price for Lucille and Franchot*

There were three small metal cases full of the disks. I flipped through the stacks. The labels identified most of them as informational programs from World War II featuring Hollywood stars ("Price Controls" with Lucille Ball; "Rationing" with Franchot Tone). I asked how much the owner wanted and he said \$5 apiece. I thought he meant per record, but Alice understood him better—he meant \$5 per case. Trying not to look too eager, I handed over the money.

Once home, I knew exactly what to do: call SPERDVAC, the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy. Larry Gassman answered the phone as he always does (unless his brother, John, is closer by) and when I told him of my find he started asking questions. Were the disks glass-based or aluminum-based? (How could I tell? "If light shines through, they're glass," he explained.) Were the labels white or yellow? (Some of each—what's the difference? "Yellow labels indicate 'master copies.'") He told me I'd be hearing from Dick Mullins, a club member who'd pick up the disks and have them transferred to tape.

Dick stopped by a few days later. He is an accountant at ABC-TV in Hollywood, but he volunteers his time to SPERDVAC and helps rescue precious transcription disks. If improperly cared for, these records warp and the wax coating comes off its backing. Or they break; the glass ones are extremely fragile. He checked a few of mine with the eye of a jeweler, looking for flaws and (fortunately) finding none.

"I've talked to some of the old engineers and learned a lot of their secrets," Dick told me. "You can get almost a high-fidelity sound if you know what you're doing." He obviously does. Later, when he handed me a cassette tape of his first transfers, they sounded great. The shows were fascinating time capsules from the

early 1940s, using top actors, writers and musicians to help the public understand through skits and speeches the reasons for price controls and rationing.

I beamed for a month over my garage-sale treasure. It wasn't just a matter of getting a bargain; it was finding a little chunk of history that otherwise might have been discarded. Some of these disks are unique, the only remaining form of a long-ago broadcast. But my treasure would have been worthless if there hadn't been SPERDVAC to rescue and restore it.

The club is headquartered in Southern California, close to one of the centers of network radio (and many of its survivors), but it has members throughout the nation who assemble for an annual convention, contribute to a monthly newsletter and borrow tapes by mail from its collection, which numbers in the thousands (the catalog alone runs beyond 200 pages). Though it boasts many professional ties, this is a volunteer group of amateurs and enthusiasts who do what they do for the love of it.

Larry Gassman, 32, is the current president and his twin brother, John, is on the board of directors. They man the official phone line, answering questions and acting as a clearinghouse for information about old-time radio—not just for members but for the radio and TV industry as well. (Actor William Conrad once requested copies of an old show called *The Fat Man*. Researchers for an NBC-TV anniversary program asked for the whereabouts of several veteran radio artists.) Larry is usually host for the monthly meetings where old-time radio performers, writers, directors and musicians come to share their memories with an avid audience, while John tape records the proceed-



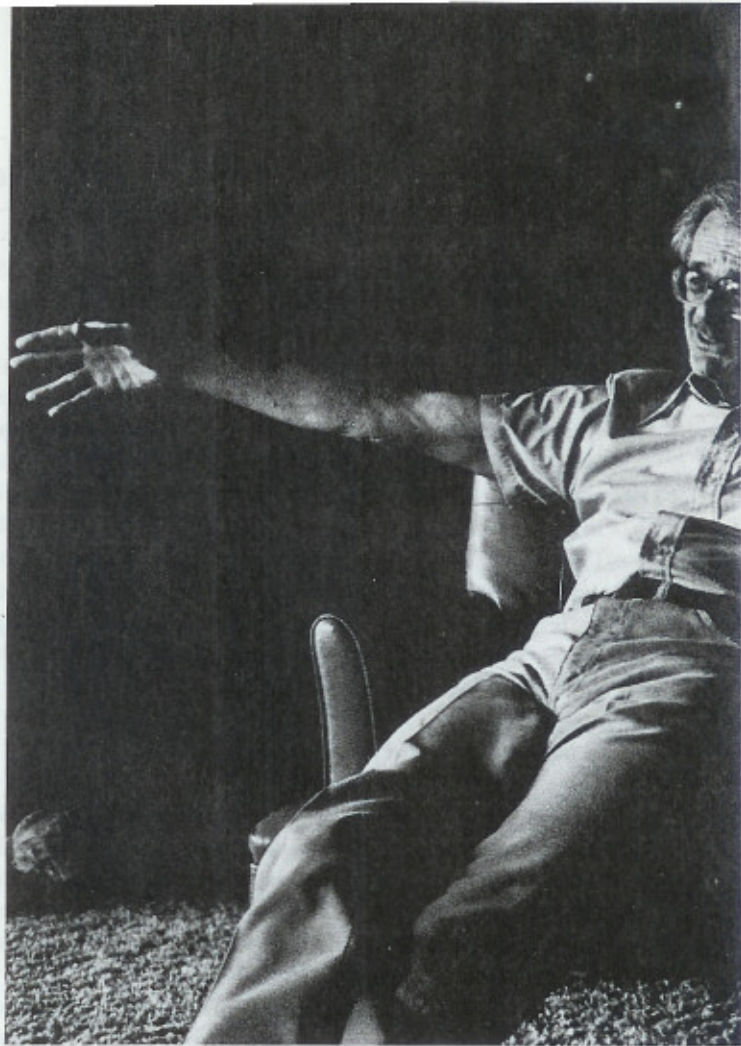
Jerry Haendiges, a SPERDVAC founder, holds glass-based transcription disk in club's vast collection.



ings for posterity. The twins' all-consuming interest is either appropriate or ironic, depending on your point of view: both are blind. But lack of sight is never an issue and doesn't seem to hinder their work. In fact, one of their most important responsibilities is the maintenance of the tape and disk archives (below) housed in a building close to their home in Whittier. SPERDVAC has one of the most important and best-maintained radio archives in the world, including about 9,000 original transcription disks—and the Gassmans know its contents almost by heart.

"I would say the first turning point in the collection was the donation we got from the Cecil B. de Mille estate," says Larry. "They donated 250 *Lux Radio Theatres*." Adds John, "Two hundred-forty." They correct (and kid) each other, especially about radio, where they both qualify as walking encyclopedias. "We try to be meticulous," says Larry. "Numbers and dates and things just kind of pop out." Says John, "We have to remember a lot of stuff, so we tend to use our memories a lot more." Not that they rely on memory alone: the catalog of their private collection comprises "16 or 17 notebooks full of Braille paper." For the club, they use a tape recorder as their talking file.

Like all of the younger members, John and Larry were introduced to old-time radio long after its demise. Yet the first time they heard episodes of *The Shadow* and *The Green Hornet* being rebroadcast in the early '70s, they were hooked. And they found that the young man doing the programming, Jerry Haen-



Accidentally or not, Norman Corwin's reach, as he talks at home in California, symbolizes the breadth of

diges, lived close by. Thus began both a friendship and a collection. Haendiges lent some of his tapes to the Gassmans and clued them in to other sources of old shows. He also told them about a club he was thinking of starting with collectors Jim Coontz and Kevin Stern. SPERDVAC's first meeting was in 1974, but the Gassmans couldn't get seriously involved until they finished college in '79 (each with a B.S. in communications).

Bobb Lynes remembers that first meeting, which was held in Reseda. He even remembers the date: November 9—SPERDVAC people tend to be like that. Lynes has worked for 24 years as a sign-layout artist, but old-time radio has been his avocation since the mid-'70s. Unlike the Gassmans, he grew up listening to radio in the '40s. His favorite was *Tom Mix* ("It had action, adventure—it was perfect for a kid's show. And *Tom Mix* had such great premium giveaways. I sent for most of 'em, even though the cereal you had to eat to get the box top was terrible").

Bobb never thought of collecting his old favorites until the nostalgia craze of the '70s brought forth mail-order companies that offered radio shows on cassettes.



John and Larry Gassman flank Jerry Haendiges in archives; at left, volume of brothers' Braille catalog.





his renowned radio scripts: from Satan's assault on Christmas to a nonfiction VJ-Day prizewinner (1945).

He also discovered several local programs that played vintage shows. When Kevin Stern asked for volunteers to help prepare his weekly *Don't Touch That Dial* broadcast on KCSN, Bobb answered the call—and eventually took over. He's been on the air ever since, on as many as four community- or college-affiliated stations every weekend, spreading the good word. He certainly helped get me hooked and I know I'm not the only one: many people at SPERDVAC gatherings have heard him talking about the club. His proselytizing has affected his private life as well. In 1979, a listener named Barbara Watkins went to a club open house where the guest speaker was noted radio writer Norman Corwin (above). She would have gone sooner, she says, but she was put off by Bobb's description of members as "old-time-radio preservationists." She confesses, "That sounded too serious for me, I was just a fan." But she became involved—with the club and with Bobb (right). They've been together since 1979 and, using the nom-de-radio "Barbara Sunday," she's been cohost on one of his broadcasts since 1980. Even after seven years, however, their collections re-

main separate and sacrosanct. Bobb has about 10,000 shows on tape; Barbara is up to almost 20,000.

Barbara Watkins is one of the most avid enthusiasts. "I used to be an attorney—until my hobby overtook my 'real' life," she explains. "For the past year I've spent all my time on my hobby. I no longer go to department stores, I don't have a new car—but life is short, you might as well enjoy it." As editor of the *Radiogram* newsletter that goes to SPERDVAC's 1,100 members, she puts in 150 hours a month; she's also chairman of the sound-upgrade committee, which tries to improve the quality of the club's lending library.

Just what is it about old-time radio that draws people to it and turns so many into compulsive collectors? Perhaps the best answers come from the ones who made it happen. Though many went on to even higher acclaim in other fields, they all share an abiding love for radio. "It was far and away the greatest medium of all," says Don Ameche (p. 77), who started in 1930 in Chicago and later became host of *The Chase & Sanborn Hour* with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. "And the reason behind that is very simple. The listener had to make a contribution, and his enjoyment depended totally upon the amount of contribution he made. If you had, as you always did, a leading lady and a leading man, and there were ten million listeners, then there were ten million *different* leading ladies and ten million *different* leading men. Each one of them had an idea of what the characters were like."

Bob Hope agrees. Not just a radio star, he was also a



Bobb Lynes, Barbara Watkins are on the air weekly to champion old programs—and to make new converts.



radio fan. "When I used to listen to *Amos 'n' Andy*, I had a picture in my mind of what the Fresh Air Taxi Company looked like and what the Kingfish looked like. I could see it all."

Arch Oboler, who wrote and hosted the memorable *Lights Out* series (strange tales that predated TV's *The Twilight Zone*), has always called radio the "theater of the mind" and that's exactly what it was. Because the audience had to draw on its own imagination, the images were heightened and in some ways more vivid than anything shown could be. One of his most potent episodes dealt with a quarreling couple who suddenly found a hideous monster sitting in their apartment. They are paralyzed with fear and unable to take their eyes off the creature. Forced to stop arguing, during a long night they finally start to talk and to understand the source of their mutual bitterness. As their voices and attitudes soften, the monster disappears; it was simply a personification of the hatred that had grown within them. Still gripping and effective today, if this drama were "literalized" on TV—if you could see the monster—it would lose all its power. It was designed to work in concert with the listener's imagination: a perfect radio play.

"It was a very intimate medium," Oboler explains. "I needed no special-effects department other than the imagery. I could with a word, a strain of music, a bit of sound, make the terror and horror pictures look as true as a Model-T Ford against a Ferrari."

So it is that even today, people who grew up listening to radio have indelible images in their minds: Jack Benny's sputtering Maxwell and dungeonlike money vault, Fibber McGee's calamitous closet, the filtered voice that could cloud men's minds in *The Shadow*. To a generation raised on television these names may mean nothing; in fact, the very idea of sitting and listening to programs instead of watching them probably sounds strange. But radio was just as powerful a medium as TV, and to many it was even better.

Radio reached its peak as a form of entertainment in the 1930s and '40s. Although the invention itself dates back to the turn of the century, it wasn't until the 1920s that the industry started to grow as home sets became affordable. Many people built their own from mail-order kits and ready-made parts; for them it was the novelty of being able to receive signals from far-off stations that made it so exciting. (Remember, even the telephone was relatively new and long-distance calls were rare in most households.) For others, it was the idea of bringing an effort-free "music box" into the home, which is how RCA's David Sarnoff pro-

*Film historian for TV's Entertainment Tonight, Leonard Maltin wrote on Charlie Chaplin in July 1986. He's working on a book of radio history.*



Fanny Brice, master of dialect comedy, kept impish "Baby Snooks" in network hot water from 1936 to '51.

motated his radio set in 1922. At \$75 it wasn't cheap, but the public responded to the tune of \$11 million in sales that year alone. Two years later the figure swelled to \$50 million.

Music was the mainstay of programming, but it was the novelty of "firsts" that helped establish the broadcasting industry: Pittsburgh's KDKA went on the air in 1920 with Presidential-election returns (Warren Harding won); Newark's WJZ followed a year later with the 1921 World Series between the Giants and the Yankees (the Yankees lost). The radio set soon became a fixture in American homes, providing free music, news and novelties for hours each day. It also became an important new advertising medium, which helped foot the bill. As the number of listeners grew, so did the number of stations and the challenge of filling air time in an interesting manner. It seemed only natural to broadcast plays, which soon evolved into the continuing stories written especially for radio.

*Amos 'n' Andy* has long been credited with helping to establish the idea of regular listenership. Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll (p. 76), both white, created their endearing Harlem characters, originally named Sam and Henry, in 1926 and made their network debut on NBC in 1929. It was said that one could walk down the street of an average town on a balmy evening and hear the entire broadcast as it spilled out





Radio's royalty: Charlie and Edgar, Gracie and George, Mary and Jack.

Debonair film star Ronald Colman shunned "crude" radio until the 1940s.



Freeman Gosden's Amos (left), Charles Correll's Andy; a hit.



of successive living-room windows. Movie-theater managers, tired of customers not turning up for early shows, piped the 7 o'clock program through their speaker systems so no one would miss an installment.

As radio took root, it blossomed into infinite variety. Daytimes were filled with conversational programs, live music, game shows and (most of all) soap operas with names like *The Romance of Helen Trent*, *Our Gal Sunday* and *Backstage Wife* ("The story of Mary Noble and what it means to be the wife of a famous Broadway star—matinee idol of a million other women"). Naive, perhaps, but they weren't terribly different from the soaps people follow on TV today.

Late afternoons and early evenings were largely given to children's programs—adventure ruled. *Superman*, *Tom Mix*, *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*, *Captain Midnight* and *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy* (a role model if there ever was one) took youngsters into a world of action and intrigue where they pictured themselves as part of the derring-do. Participation, not just listening, was enhanced with the advent of premiums. Kids were urged to send in box tops (and often "ten cents in coin") to obtain exclusive items. With *Captain Midnight's* decoder they shared the fun when their radio hero or his trusty announcer sent a secret message that could be deciphered only by using the alphabetical code printed on the toy. (As humorist Jean Shepherd recalled in his autobiographical movie *A Christmas Story*, a lot of furious scribbling would often produce an anticlimactic message like "Be sure to drink Ovaltine.") All sorts of ingenious badges, compartment rings, booklets and cut-out toys were offered by *Little Orphan Annie*, *Sky King*, *Dick Tracy* and *Jack Armstrong*, whose Hike-o-Meter (a simple pedometer) is said to have yielded six million requests.

In the evening there was the broadest possible range of entertainment, from the cornpone humor of *Lum 'n' Abner* (they got involved in small-town intrigues from their base at the Jot 'Em Down Store in Pine Ridge, Arkansas) to the NBC Symphony with Maestro Arturo Toscanini; from the glamour and prestige of *Lux Radio Theatre*, where the biggest movie stars in Hollywood appeared in adaptations of famous films, to the down-to-earth truisms of *One Man's Family*, the evening soap created and written by Carlton E. Morse, that ran from 1932 to 1959 and led many listeners to think of the Barbour clan as their second family. The prolific Morse also created another long-running hit, *I Love a Mystery*, a wildly fanciful yarn starring three adventurers—Jack, Doc and Reggie—whose globetrotting escapades might have left Indiana Jones dizzy.

There were variety and comedy shows with great stars like Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Bing Crosby, Kate Smith, Fanny Brice (p. 75) and Eddie Cantor; dramatic anthologies like *Suspense*, *First Nighter*, *Screen Guild Theatre*; and all the continuing series: *Gang Busters*, *Mr. District Attorney*, *Duffy's Tavern*, *Dr. Christian*.

Every broadcast, no matter how modest, required a large number of talented people to get it on the air, from writers and directors to sound engineers and musicians (most shows were accompanied by live music: a solo organ on daytime soaps and a full orchestra on evening programs, often with themes and between-scenes bridges written for that broadcast). The unsung heroes were the sound-effects men, those wizards who could produce any sound—from a teacup being placed in its saucer to a raging fire—"live" and on cue (in the early days, few effects were prerecorded). They experimented to make it just right. A horse's trot might be the clip-clop of hollowed coconut-shell halves on a flat surface (on bags of flour or cement if the horses were trotting through snow) or the pounding of fists against





Don Ameche (in 1930) calls radio "greatest medium of all."



Bette Davis heard her own screams in nightmare: Elliott Reid was killer.

Early fitness show (c. 1927): comic Gladys Harvey told how to shape up.

the soundman's chest. They gave a realistic underpinning so listeners would have no cause to doubt that everything being portrayed was truly happening.

For actors, radio was a godsend. It offered employment for those lucky enough to master radio technique (different from stage or screen skills, since the only tool available to the performer was a voice). What's more, it eliminated the stereotyping that plagued many acting careers. You didn't have to *look* like a leading man or leading lady—just *sound* like one. (And you didn't have to look your best unless you were in front of an audience. Veterans say that one of the nicest things was not having to dress up or even shave.)

Radio actors made a good living but there were inequities. On *Hollywood Hotel* in the mid-'30s, the late Frank Nelson made \$25 a week, while the big-name guest star got \$5,000. Unlike some of the daily shows, which went on with just a few brief run-throughs, the more prestigious evening programs demanded considerable rehearsal time for which the actors received no additional pay. One day Nelson went to his female counterpart on *Hollywood Hotel*, Lurene Tuttle, and announced his intention to get them both a raise—to \$35. The producer played tough but finally capitulated. (Is it any wonder that Nelson was one of the founders of AFRA, the radio artists' union?)

Actors who made the most money were those with versatile voices who dashed from one show to another, doing as many as five a day. There was no conflict in having the same person play a juvenile on one, a crotchety grandfather on the next and a German soldier on another. Old-timers love to tell stories about finishing an NBC show at 11:59, racing for an elevator, zipping over to CBS and just making it for another show where they went on the air at 12:03. The top story no doubt belongs to Orson Welles, who once

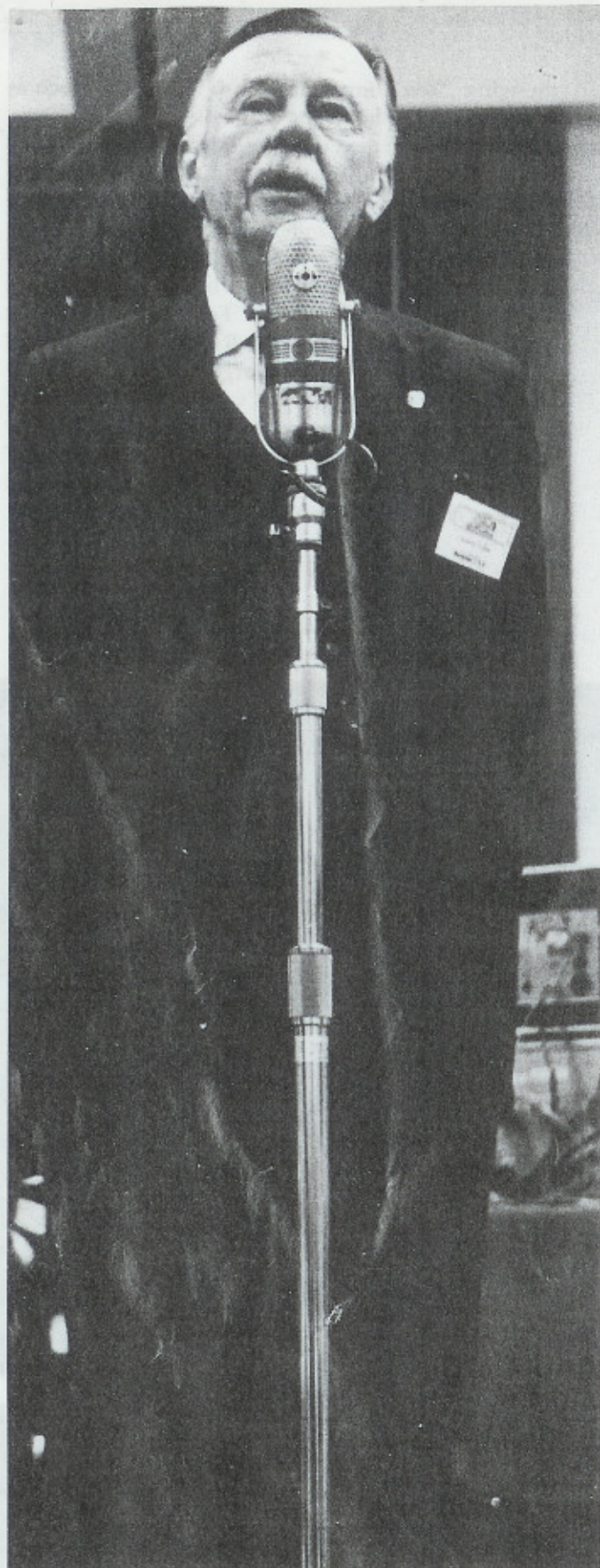
hired an ambulance to whisk him from one job to another without having to wait for red lights.

Welles paid his dues as a journeyman radio actor in New York before achieving fame on the stage and the right to produce and host his own dramatic series, *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, which adapted famous literary works. *The Mercury* broadcast on Sunday evenings was a forum for Welles and his repertory company, many of whom, like Joseph Cotten, Agnes Moorehead (p. 70), Everett Sloane and Ray Collins, went with him to Hollywood when he made *Citizen Kane*. On the night before Halloween in 1938, Welles and coproducer John Houseman presented a vivid adaptation of H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* which became the most famous radio show in history. The depiction of growing panic as Martians "invaded" New Jersey was so realistic that thousands of people started a real-life panic. Welles' so-called hoax illustrated the power of radio. Shortly before his death he recalled: "The reason that radio was often very good, and better than television is, is because there were many sustaining shows—shows without sponsors, paid for by the networks and given prime time. There is no such equivalent in television."

His *Mercury Theatre* was such a show, as were the innovative plays of Arch Oboler and Norman Corwin, who says: "Three out of four times, I figured were I sponsored, the sponsor would have said, 'Gee, are they going to *get* this in Topeka?' No commercial program would have given me the kind of freedom I had as a sustaining show on CBS."

Many of those old programs are still enormously stimulating and entertaining, and this is what brings new members into the SPERDVAC fold and new fans to the medium. My wife got us started because of her undying love for Ronald Colman (opposite). A friend





In a re-creation of *This Is Your FBI*, veteran player Jimmy Lydon uses classic 77-A mike at the convention.

asked if she'd ever heard some of the shows he'd done with Jack Benny and when she said no, he offered to make us copies. In the old days, families gathered around the Atwater Kent to listen in. Our favorite place is the car, with tapes—there is no pleasanter way to speed travel time along.

Portability is a boon. So is the continuing broadcast of vintage shows, for which much of the credit goes to Charles Michelson, who's been working to keep radio alive for nearly three decades. He acquired the syndication rights to such greats as *The Lone Ranger* and *The Green Hornet* years ago. His foresight has paid off because major stations are now carrying them and in many cases beating all competition in their time slots. For the recent SPERDVAC convention dinner he put Lone Ranger silver bullets at every place setting.

During that convention there were two authentic radio-show re-creations. In one, a young New Yorker named Anthony Tollin produced and directed *The Shadow* with John Archer in the role of Lamont Cranston, which he played in the '40s (other Cranstons included Orson Welles and Bret Morrison), Lesley Woods reprising Margo Lane, Dwight Weist in his old part as Commissioner Weston, Les Tremayne (better remembered as Mr. First Nighter) as villainous Dr. Nightmare, and André Baruch announcing, just as he did way back when. Music cues were provided on tape by organist Rosa Rio, who originally played live on the air, and sound effects were by CBS radio veteran Ray Erlenborn (opposite). Ron Streicher, who runs an audio-production company, volunteered as engineer, using a high-tech mixing board that would have looked like a science-fiction tool back in the '40s. Yet the microphones that dotted the stage were the same massive "44-Bs" and "77-As" that were standard equipment in radio's golden age. Most old-timers agree that nothing comes near them for reproducing the human voice.

#### *From sinister laugh to seventh heaven*

At the first notes of the creepy organ, Archer stepped to the mike and intoned the most famous phrase in radio drama, "Who knows . . . what evil . . . lurks . . . in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!" followed by the sinister laugh that was the show's trademark. For the next half-hour, nearly 200 people sat spellbound by the sheer joy of watching a precious art form brought back to life. The actors, none young, seemed to shed the years as they sank into their roles. When dogs were to bark in the distance, soundman Erlenborn imitated them himself. When a man was shot, he flung his body onto the sound-effects table. Some effects, like the noise of a car, were prerecorded; others were live, with props. Doorbells, telephones, the jingle



of keys—all came right on cue as did the Blue Coal commercial, read by one of radio's most famous voices, André Baruch. (The pitch was to encourage war veterans to work in the Blue Coal mines, "a good steady job at good pay, with \$75 vacation pay accrued in the first year.") By the time Archer closed the show with the Shadow's reminder that the "weed of crime bears bitter fruit," the audience was in seventh heaven.

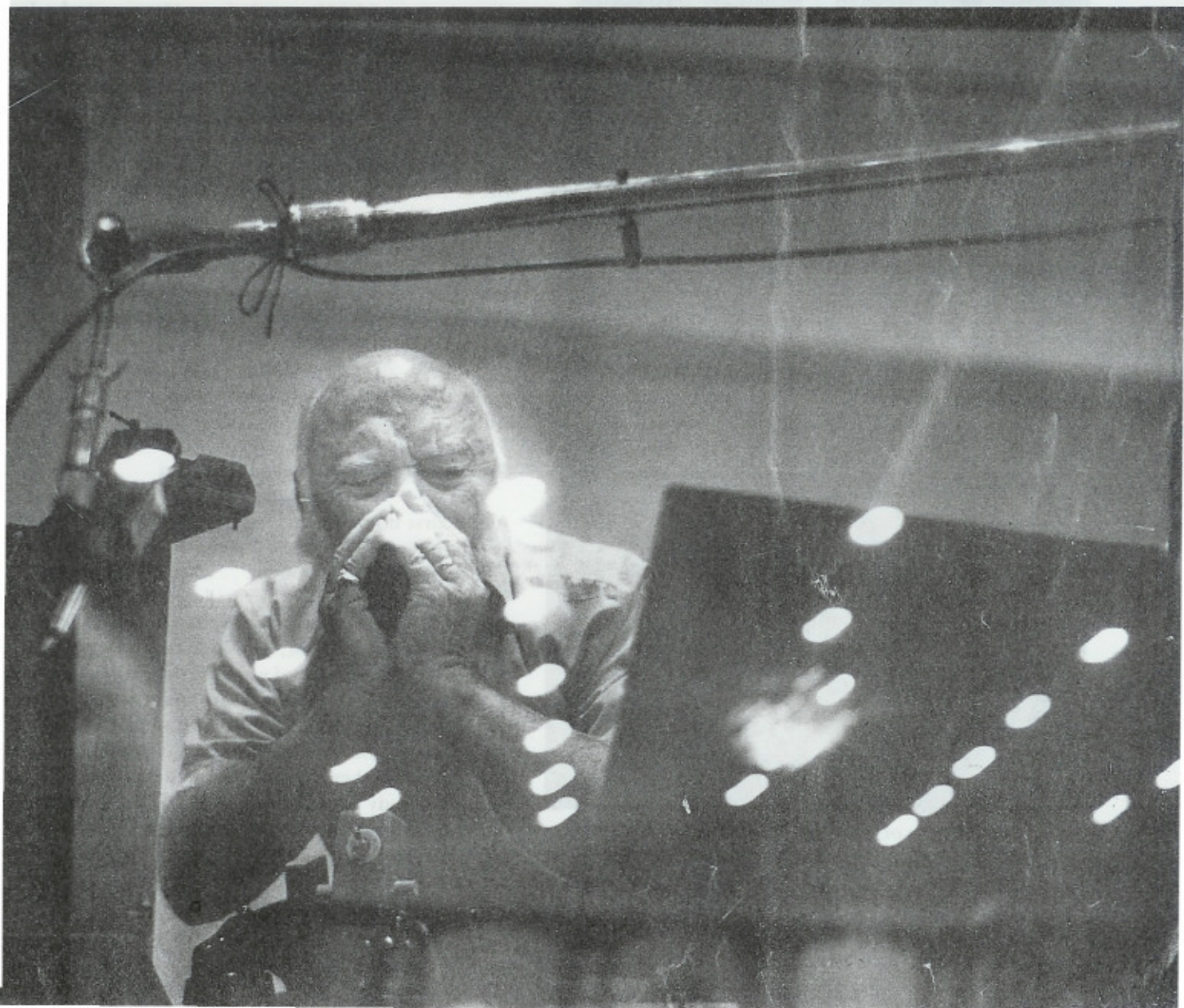
As I watched these remarkable performers at work, I felt a bit wistful, even sad, mourning the loss of a medium that brought with it such energy and excitement. That night, I sat with Dwight Weist at dinner. He's still active, both as announcer and actor and co-owner of a school for broadcasting in New York. But the kick of performing in *The Shadow* that day had been something out of the ordinary and it filled his

thoughts. "You know," he said to himself as much as to me, "we were damn good!"

At a panel the next day, Bobb Lynes introduced all the participants but one. Instead, someone flipped a switch and piped the *William Tell* Overture through the room. On cue, a man leaned toward a microphone and intoned the words, "A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty hi-ho *Silver!*" Without a script, announcer Fred Foy recited the fabled opening of *The Lone Ranger* just as he had done for so many years. A charge surged through the room, a direct line from Foy's voice to every pair of ears and every imagination, casting a spell as if to say *right now*, just for a moment, those "thrilling days of yesteryear" are still here with us. The music swelled and Foy cried, "The Lone Ranger rides again!"

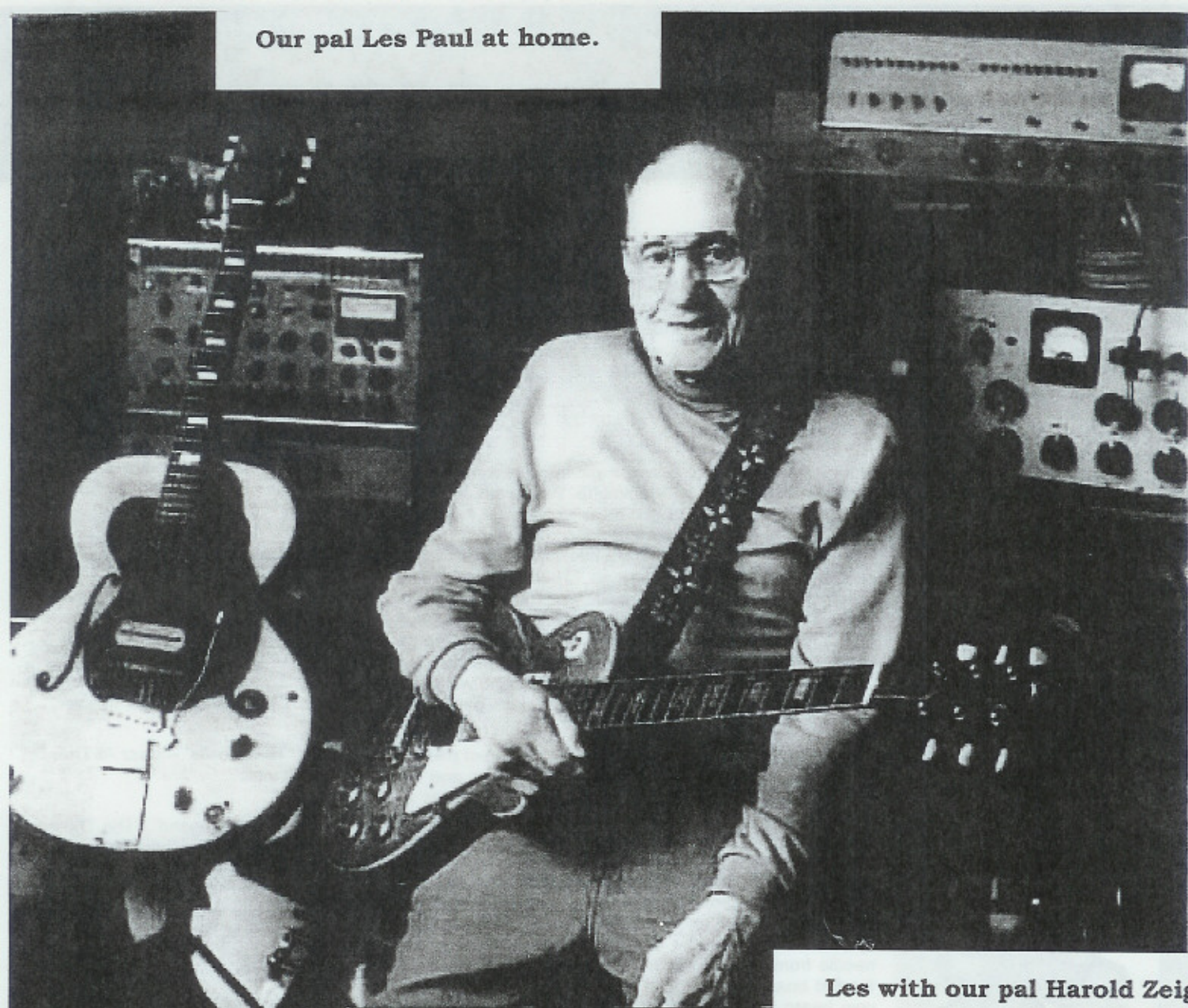
Sound-effects man Ray Erlenborn, who worked at CBS radio and TV for 40 years, supplies a cat yowl

during a reprise of *The Shadow* for SPERDVAC. In his repertoire: phones, keys, the thump of bodies.

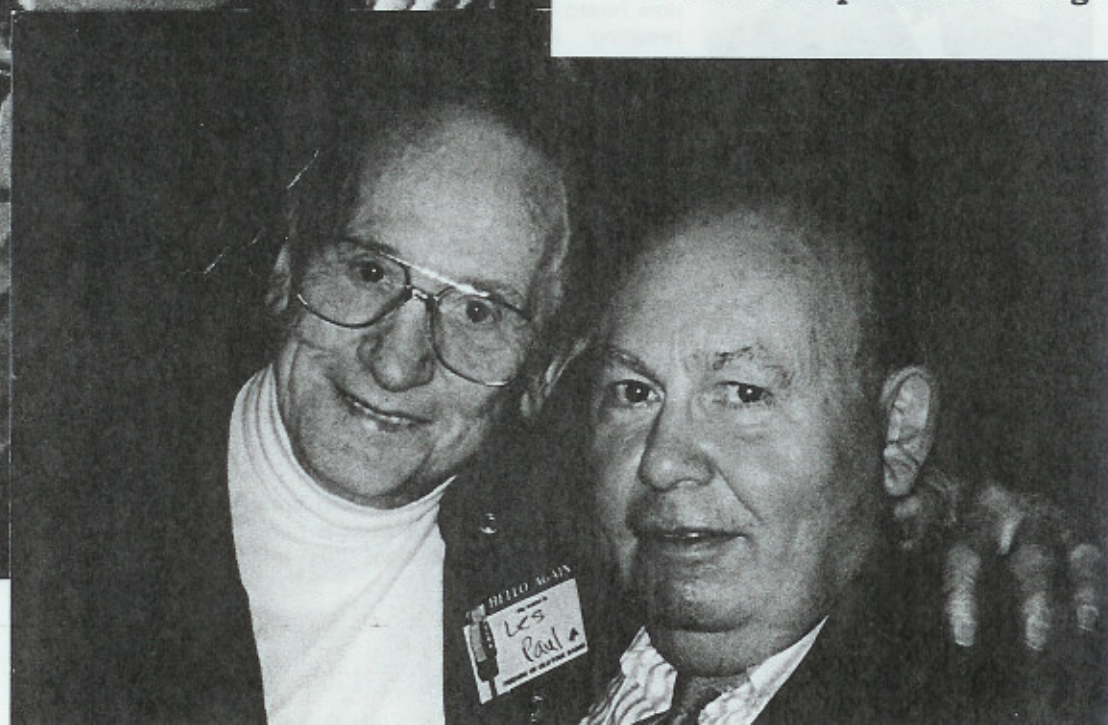




Our pal Les Paul at home.



Les with our pal Harold Zeigler





## Les Paul



Les Paul, Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, five-time Grammy Award winner, pioneer of the electric guitar and inventor of numerous recording techniques, such as reverb and multi-track recording was

born June 9, 1915 in Waukesha Wisconsin. As The Gibson Les Paul line of guitars is universally hailed as the best and is played by legendary musicians. Iridium has been the host to countless musicians and celebrities who pay homage to "The Father Of The Electric Guitar". Musicians such as, Paul McCartney, Keith Richards, Tony Bennett, Paul Schaeffer, Steve Miller, Brian Setzer, Joe Beck, Al Dimeola, George Benson and many others have "jammed" with Les on Monday nights at Iridium. You never know who will show up at Iridium to jam and joke with Les and the band!

Les says his greatest God-given gifts are perfect pitch, a love for music with the ability to learn it quickly, and the curiosity and persistence of an inventor who wants to know "how things tick". His first professional job, as "Red Hot Red", was as a guitarist and harmonica player when he was just thirteen. One fateful night while performing in front of an outdoor crowd, Les became frustrated that people farther back couldn't hear him. Les Paul created an electric guitar and amplification system out a radio, the earpiece of a telephone and a needle from a family record player that he jammed into the fret board as a "pickup"! Les' guitar and voice were now heard by all. However, the resulting vibration and resulting feedback had to be contained. Les experimented by stuffing clothes and plaster of paris in the guitar; he even went so far as attaching a string to a hinge placed at the end of a railroad track. The sound was perfect. When Les showed his mother his accomplishment she replied, "You'll never see Gene carrying that thing around". So he settled on using a 4x4 block of wood attached to an Epiphone neck. When the audience paid no attention to his playing because the instrument was too strange, he attaches two non-functional "wings" to the 4x4 so it looked like a normal guitar. The fans loved the sound and the solid body electric guitar was born! In 1950, Les started his design of the Les Paul model for The Gibson Guitar Company, which has become the world's best selling line of electric guitars.

Les' life long interest and ground breaking work in the recording studio resulted from a need to develop his own unique style. One night, Les' mother commented

You Never Know who will show up on Les Paul Mondays at Iridium. To see this week's special guests, click here

Chris Lentz

Tickets:

\$40.00 - First set

\$40.00 - Second set

(\$15 minimum)

Selected Dates in Les Paul's Life

June 9, 1915 : Born Lester William to parents George and Evelyn Polsfuss later his mother changed the name to Polfuss

1928 : "Red Hot Red" - Waukesha, Wisconsin

1930 : "Rhubarb Red" - named by "Sunny" Joe Wolverton

1933 : Les Paul - Chicago, Illinois

1944 : "Paul Leslie" - "Jazz At The Philharmonic"

Present : "The Legend", "The Thomas Edison of the Music Industry", "The Wizard of Waukesha", "The Godfather", "The Guitar", or just say as Paul Wolfe wrote in the Coors Beer TV commercial "Guitar Player", - "It's on your guitar!"

1927 : First guitar (Sears)

1928 : First Gibson (L-5)

1929 : Constructs his first recording machine (platter)

1934 : Started sound-on-sound experiments (platter)

1936 : Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians-The Les Paul Trio: Jimmy Atkins, rhythm guitar, Ernie Newton, bass

1939 : White House concert for President Roosevelt

1941 : Constructs his solid-body electric-guitar "The Log"



guitar string to a hinge placed at the end of a railroad track. The sound was perfect. When Les showed his mother his accomplishment she replied, "You'll never see Gene Autry (the most popular singing cowboy at the time), carrying that thing around". So he settled on using a 4x4 block of wood attached to an Epiphone neck. When the audience paid no attention to his playing because the instrument was too strange, he realized that "people hear with their eyes." To compensate for this Les attached two non-functional "wings" to the 4x4 so it

looked like a normal guitar. The fans loved the sound! Les has donated his first practical solid-body electric guitar (1941), to The Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee where it is on permanent display. Les' solid-body electric guitar concept, however, was not appreciated by guitar makers until one was successfully marketed by a California neighbor, Leo Fender who was into electronics. Then the Gibson Guitar Company contacted Les who was called "the guy with the pickups on the broom handle."

Les applied for his first patent, "Combined Bridge and Tailpiece for Stringed Instruments", on July 9, 1952, a one pickup design which was granted on March 13, 1956, #2,737,842. A patent filed by Gibson president, the late Theodore M. McCarty, on Jan. 21, 1953, "Stringed Musical Instrument of the Guitar Type And Combined Bridge And Tailpiece Therefore", was granted on Aug. 2, 1955, #2,714,326. This two pick-up design appears to be the basis of the Les Paul model guitars in which Les says he had much input.

Back in 1946, Les' mother commented that she heard him on the radio on a particular night. Les explained that it wasn't him as he was on stage playing back-up guitar with the Andrew Sisters. Apparently someone was copying his style. Les was so dejected that someone could copy him good enough to fool his mother that he quit the Andrew Sisters and devoted the next two years in secret experiments toward developing his unique sound. Hundreds of multiple-disc recording experiments, some with delay, reverb, echo and other electronic techniques, were made. Then at a party one night he quietly slipped in his new recording of "Lover" (1948). History again was made, and a contract with Capitol Records quickly followed. Capitol asked Les what this new sound should be called. Les keeping it simple, said "The New Sound", and that's how his records were marketed! After World War II, a Newark, New Jersey electronics engineer, Colonel Richard Ranger, showed Les a tape recorder which he located in a German military electronics laboratory. Les then informed Bing Crosby of the machine since Bing wanted to record away from the studio and have more time to play golf. When Les assured Crosby that the device would work, Bing said he wanted 50. The Rangertone Electronics Company could not mass-produce the recorders fast enough so the idea was submitted to the Ampex Corporation. Bing Crosby put up the capital and gave one recorder to Les. On the road to Chicago with Mary Ford (nee Colleen Summers) and the new recorder, Les thought that if he could put in one additional recording head he could do sound-on-sound recordings anywhere. So Les called Ampex and said he burned out the recording head and could they send another. The additional head was installed by a machinist named Mr. Goodspeed and it worked on first try. No more was a studio needed for him and Mary.

1953-1960 : "The Les Paul and Mary Ford at Home Show" (television)

1955 : Carnegie Hall concert with Mary Ford

1955 : A. E. S. guest speaker. "Use light for recording sound"

1956 : Awarded first patent. No. 2,737,842

1956 : White House concert for President Eisenhower

Apr 9, 1958 : Birth date of Mary Colleen (adopted)

Dec 7, 1959 : Birth date of third son, Robert (Bobbie)

1960 : Met luthier Tommy Doyle Les' sound engineer

1961 : End of first "Les Paul" guitar run. Next series in 1965

1962 : Awarded second patent. No. 3,018,680

1963 : Met guitarist Lou Pallo, "The Man of a Million Inversions"

1964 : Retires from performing, but not electronics

1971 : Carnegie Hall concert

1973 : Awarded third patent. No. 3,725,561

1974-1975 : Comes out of retirement - Carnegie Hall concert

1977 : Kean College of N. J. (now Kean University) concert. The basis for "The Wizard of Waukesha" (video)

1980 : Quintuple by-pass heart surgery

1984-1995 : Les Paul Trio- at Fat Tuesdays (last show May) Wayne Wright / Lou Pallo, & Gary Mazzaroppi

1988 : "Les Paul & Friends-He Changed the Music" (video)

1988 : Induction - Rock & Roll Hall of Fame



that she heard him on the radio. Apparently she had heard someone else who was copying his style! Les became determined over the next two years to develop his own unique sound. The result of hundreds of multiple-disc recording experiments, some with delay, reverb, echo and other electronic techniques, revolutionized the recording industry and immediately led to a contract with Capitol Records. A string of top ten hits followed with his wife Mary Ford, the most famous one being "How High The Moon".

Soon Les Paul and Mary Ford were the stars of their own television show, The Les Paul and Mary Ford at home show, which was a top rated hit and ran from 1953 to 1960 and they became international stars!

Les Paul's pioneering work with tape recording led to some of his most important contributions to recorded music. This again grew out of necessity. Les Paul had been talking to his friend, Bing Crosby about the need to develop a tape recorder that would give musicians the freedom of recording anywhere. Les found such a product and then began tinkering with it. One result of his experimentation was the development of sound on sound recording. This was accomplished with an additional recording head. No more was a studio needed for him and Mary- they could record anywhere! To solve the problem of recording with other musicians who were not present, Les conceived the idea of recording on eight separate tracks then blending them together. This is but a small sampling of the diverse and legendary career Les has enjoyed and his role as one of the most important figures in twentieth century music!

Les Paul, multiple Grammy Winner, Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, and idol and legend to millions, plays every Monday night at Iridium! Set times are at 8:00 and 10:00, and Les gladly signs autographs and chats after every show! [www.njinvent.njit.edu](http://www.njinvent.njit.edu)

### Les Paul "The Wizard of Waukesha"

Lester William was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin on June 9, 1915 to parents George and Evelyn (Stutz) Polsfuss. Les' mother was related to the Stutz Bearcat automobile and Blatz beer people. Les says his greatest God-given gifts are perfect pitch, a love for music with the ability to learn it quickly, and the curiosity and persistence of an inventor who wants to know "how things tick". His first professional job, as "Red Hot Red," was as a guitarist and harmonica player when he was just thirteen. One fateful night, while playing to an outdoor crowd, a listener in the back complained that Les' voice could not be heard. To accommodate those farthest away, Les attached his mother's radio to the family's telephone mouthpiece creating a public address system. Again a critic voiced that his guitar could not be heard. So Les "borrowed" his father's radio, the other end of the telephone, and the needle from the family record player. Jamming the needle into the guitar bridge and joining the other components, Les' guitar and voice were now heard by all. Les actually created a stereo system, however with some feedback and acoustic vibrations. Les experimented by stuffing clothes and plaster of paris in the guitar to dampen the unwanted acoustic vibrations. The plaster worked but the guitar was too heavy! His final experiment was attaching a

Jun. 16, 1941: Birth date of Les Paul Jr. (Rus) Les' Video Engineer

Aug. 20, 1944 : Birth date of second son, Gene

1945 : Met crooner, Bing Crosby

1945 : Gene Autry introduces Colleen Summers (Mary Ford) to Les

1945 : Met Col. Richard Ranger, inventor of the facsimile machine, who showed Les a confiscated German tape recorder

1946-49 : Les shows Bing the recorder. Bing had Ampex make 50 and gave one to Les. Les adds an additional recording head

1948 : Perfects "sound on sound" (platter), "Lover" released

1948 : Near-fatal car accident, Route 66 Chandler, Oklahoma

1948-49 : Designs a synthesizer - drawings witnessed and dated

1949 : Invents "The Les Paulverizer" suggested by Bea Manners

1949 : Names Colleen, "Mary Ford" Marries her on Dec. 29th

1949-1950 : "The Les Paul Show" (radio)

1950 : Les, Mary, Carol Summers and Wally Kamin - "The Team"

1950 : CMI president M.H. Berlin (Gibson Guitar Corp.) orders, "Get the guy with the pickups on the broomstick"

1950 : Starts design of "Les Paul model" guitar with Gibson

1952 : First commercial Gibson "Les Paul model" solid-body guitar

1952 : Invents "sound-on-sound" using an Ampex tape recorder

1952 : Home in Mahwah, New Jersey and "Listerine"

1952-1957 : Designs an eight-track tape recorder through Ampex Corp



Then to solve the problem of recording with other musicians who were not present, Les conceived the idea of recording on eight separate tracks then blending them together. He consulted Ampex again (1952) and they agreed to build him one at his cost. Les did not seek a patent on this concept or the "Sel-Sync" idea (1956-60), which made the now-famous multi-track possible. On Jan. 30, 1962 Les was granted patent # 3,018,680, "Electrical Musical Instrument", and on Apr. 3, 1973, # 3,725,561 "Method of Electrically Reproducing Music and Improved Electrical Pickup for Practicing the Same". Both were for improved pickups. He is presently working on ten electronic pickup modifications, in as many guitars, chasing after his quest of "the perfect sound." Not bad for a "finkerer" wouldn't you say? Les was inducted into the New Jersey Inventor's Hall of Fame in 1996. On February 20th 2001, Les received his 5th Grammy, for his technical achievements, from the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences.

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1989 : Chet Atkins & Les Paul- "Masters of the Guitar, Together"  
1990 "The Legend and The Legacy" (box set 4 tapes / CD's)

1992-1993 : "Les Paul-The Living Legend of the Electric Guitar"

1994 : Met Charlie Dzuba. (June 12) editor/producer "Les Paul at Iridium Fan Club" newsletter

1996 : Induction - New Jersey Inventor's Hall of Fame

1996 : Les Paul Trio - at Iridium (April 8)  
Lou Pallo, guitar/vocalist & Paul Nowinski, bass

1996 : First "Les Paul at Iridium Fan Club" newsletter (Nov)

1996 : Les is presented with The John Smithson Bicentennial Medal (Smithsonian Institution Washington, DC)

1997 : Coors "Original" Beer commercial... "Guitar Player"

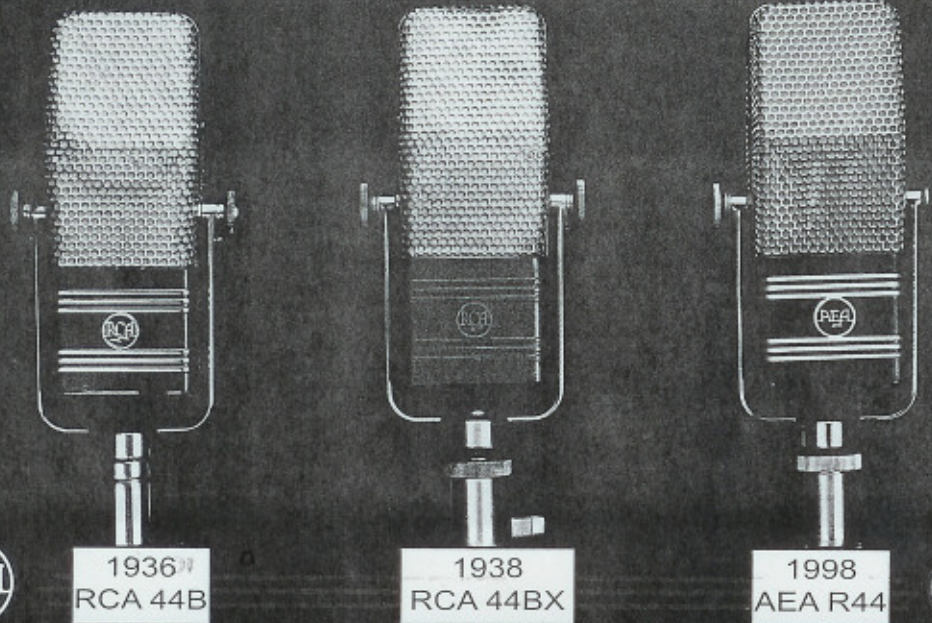
1997 : Les Paul-"The Complete Decca Trios-Plus"(1936-47) (CD)

2000 : The Les Paul Trio: Feb. 14th (Pallo, Vignola & Nowinski)

2000 : With Les Paul: Frank Vignola Mar.6th, Nicki Parrott June 26th

2001 : Awarded a Technical Grammy, February 20th by the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences

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...to record a great sound.*





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**ON:** PBS/*American Masters*  
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# DEED OF LAND

This indenture made this 4th day of January, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty-five.

BETWEEN:

**KLONDIKE BIG INCH LAND CO. INC.,**

DAWSON

a body corporate duly registered for the purposes of carrying on business in the Yukon Territory, having its head office for the said Territory in the City of Whitehorse, hereinafter called the "Grantor,"

OF THE FIRST PART

AND:

*John S. Eglinton*  
(fill in your name)

hereinafter called the "Grantee,"

OF THE SECOND PART.

WITNESSETH THAT the Grantor for good and valuable consideration now paid by the Grantee to the Grantor (the receipt whereof is hereby by it acknowledged) doth grant, bargain, sell, alien, enteeff, release, remise, convey and confirm unto the Grantee, his heirs and assigns forever an estate in fee simple;

⊙ WHITEHORSE

ALL AND SINGULAR that certain parcel or tract of land and premises situate, lying and being in the Yukon Territory more particularly known and described as follows: TRACT NUMBERED

G 495577

comprising by admeasurement one square inch more or less as more particularly described in that certain subdivision plan, prepared and acknowledged by the Grantor under date the 15th day of December, A.D. 1954 and deposited at the registered office of the Grantor in the Yukon Territory, of the whole of Lot Two hundred forty-three (243) in Group Two (2) in Yukon Territory, as said lot is shown on a plan of survey of record in the Legal Surveys and Aeronautical Charts Division of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys at Ottawa under number 6718, containing by admeasurement Nineteen and eleven hundredths (19.11) acres more or less; together with all and singular the easements, hereditaments and appurtenances to the same belonging or in any way appertaining with reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof and all the estate, right, title, interest, claim, property and demand both at law and in equity of the said Grantor of, in, to or out of the same or any part thereof;

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said lands and premises with the appurtenances and every part thereof unto the said Grantee, his heirs and assigns to his and their sole use, benefit and behoof forever; subject nevertheless to the reservations, limitations, provisos and conditions expressed in the original grant thereof from the Crown;

SEE OTHER SIDE

# DEED OF LAND

CONTINUED

AND the Grantor for itself, its successors and assigns doth hereby covenant, promise and agree to and with the Grantee, his heirs and assigns in manner following that is to say that it shall be lawful for the Grantee, his heirs and assigns from time to time and at all times hereafter peaceably and quietly to enter into the said lands and premises and to have, hold, occupy, possess and enjoy the same without the lawful suit, hindrance, eviction, denial or disturbance of, from or by the Grantor, and also that the Grantor has a good, sure and perfect estate in fee simple in the said land and premises and good right, full power and lawful authority to sell and convey the same in manner and form as they are hereby sold and conveyed and mentioned or intended so to be and the same are free from encumbrances, subject however to the provisions herein contained;

AND this conveyance and everything herein contained shall be wholly subject to a perpetual easement for ingress and egress, to, from, over and upon the tract herein conveyed for the use of the owner or owners of all other tracts of the land and premises herein described and further described and set forth in said subdivision plan hereinabove mentioned and without restricting the generality of the foregoing clause the same shall not in anywise be construed as a derogation from the grant hereby effected to the Grantee herein, and the Grantor hereby grants unto the Grantee a perpetual easement for ingress and egress, to, from, over and upon any or all of the tracts of land as described in the subdivision plan aforesaid as may from time to time remain vested in the Grantor;

AND the Grantor covenants with the Grantee that it has done no act to encumber the said lands;

AND the Grantor releases to the Grantee all its claims upon the said lands;



The provisions of the Land Titles Act being Ch. 162 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1952 and amendments thereto shall not apply to this Deed of Conveyance and in addition but not so as to limit the generality of the foregoing the Grantor shall not be obliged to do any acts or execute any instruments as may be necessary to better secure the title of the Grantee or to provide a transfer to the within described lands and premises registerable under the aforesaid Act nor to deliver or have registered a subdivision plan of the aforementioned Lot 243 or any portion thereof;

tion thereof;

Wherever the singular or masculine are used throughout this Indenture the same shall be construed as meaning the plural or the feminine or body corporate or politic where the context or the parties hereto so require;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the corporate seal of the Grantor has been hereunto affixed in the presence of its proper officers duly authorized in that behalf;

The Corporate seal of **KLONDIKE BIG INCH LAND CO. INC.**

was hereunto affixed in the presence of:



*John E. Baker Jr.*  
PRESIDENT

*Joseph E. Eastman*  
SECRETARY-TREASURER



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Now Don Cherry, "the singing golfer," reveals all the backstage and clubhouse hijinx you will want to read about... from tales of Bing Crosby to Willie Nelson. Cherry will "open the vault" as you will read about:

- The hilarious thing that happened at Sinatra's house one night during dinner.
- What it was like working in Vegas with Dino.
- What he did after winning the Walker Cup that got him a rousing ovation, and brought him to tears.
- The truth about the parties and the ladies.
- The advertising jingle he made famous.
- The day he lost his son on 9/11.

Don Cherry still performs and plays in golf tournaments regularly. His book, *CHERRY'S JUBILEE: Singin' and Swingin' Through Life with Dino and Frank, Arnie and Jack*, chronicles his rags-to-riches rise to stardom in the worlds of golf and entertainment. He recently celebrated his 13th anniversary to his wife, Francine.



Don & Jack Nicklaus



George Bush & Don



Don & Joe Pesci



He had the performing style of a lazy old cat – a shock of red hair, that infectious chuckle and a trademark greeting to welcome the folks: "Howa'ya, howa'ya, howa'ya." For more than 50 years, "The Ol' Redhead" had Allen used to call "the man with the redfoot voice" ruled both radio and TV as a broadcast legend. No one else in history has ever starred on two of the top three prime-time television series simultaneously. Not "the man you can trust" (as he called himself) did – while concurrently also hosting a daytime TV program and a long-running radio series. At his peak, this media marvel was personally generating 12% of CBS-TV's entire revenue – a total of \$150 million by 1959. It's no wonder that, in the 1950s – after the war – Arthur Godfrey was considered the most-loved man in America.

Arthur was working at WFBR in Baltimore when "Red Godfrey, The Warbling Banjoist" when a 1931 auto crash put the 28-year-old in the hospital for a long, long time. As he recovered, Godfrey listened to the pompous, overblown announcing style common on

radio, "I'm going to treat the microphone like a person – talk one-on-one TO it, not AT it." Godfrey grinned. "I became a hit just like that."

In 1945, Arthur began a 27-year run as the host of his own CBS radio morning show. A blend of chitchat and live entertainment, the program sparked a Monday evening series, *Talent Scouts*, in 1946. The latter was a showcase for fast rising hopefuls – Pat Boone, Shari Lewis, Vic Damone, Johnny Nash and many more. *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* moved to TV in 1948 and lasted for ten seasons. So did *Arthur Godfrey & His Friends*, which first lit up television screens one year later. By 1954 82 million people were watching Godfrey – as well as mailing in 60,000 letters a week and gifts ranging from a rattlesnake to a Cadillac. As escape from the pressure, Arthur took flying lessons – eventually qualifying to pilot his own jet. He also scored a dozen hits as a singer, commencing with a million-seller: *The Too Fat Polka*.

Godfrey smoked his sponsor's cigarettes – until doctors diagnosed lung cancer in 1958. Unwilling to let viewers watch him waste away on camera, Arthur tearfully gave up his television empire as the decade drew to a close. However, surgery to remove one lung

gals turn up here, including Tennessee's Janette Davis (who lasted eight seasons) and *Talent Scouts* winner-turned-regular LuAnn Simms. Shy, pretty Haleloke Kahaouloupa was discovered by Arthur on a 1950 trip to Hawaii; she lasted until Irish songbird Carmel Quinn arrived in 1954. Oddly, while none of Godfrey's own albums ever climbed the LP hit parade, the album *Arthur Godfrey Presents Carmel Quinn* did – reaching #4 in 1954.

This CD contains the complete contents of two classic LPs: *Arthur Godfrey's TV Calendar Show* (1953) and *A Visit To New York* (1955). Both concepts originated as highly acclaimed musical TV episodes of *Arthur Godfrey & His Friends*. Despite being

repeated live on the air (remember this was before the advent of videotape), fans still clamored for copies of those two programs. As home video/DVD technology had yet to be invented, the Godfrey gang trooped over to Columbia's New York recording studios and re-created the audio portion of those episodes exactly as you hear them here. Listen for Arthur's longtime announcer Tony Marvin at the very start of this CD.

Gary Theroux  
Pop historian Gary Theroux just concluded a 20 year run as the Music & Entertainment Editor of *Reader's Digest*. The more than 300 album releases he's produced and annotated so far have sold more than 29 million copies.

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### ARTHUR GODFREY'S FRIENDS

Julius LaRosa was a sailor when Arthur discovered him singing in a Navy show. Two years into his Godfrey run, shortly after his *Eh! Cumpari* sold a million, Julius was fired on the

LaRosa went on to star on four short-lived series of his own but finally, after 13 hits, settled down as a New York disc jockey. Shortly after Julius' dismissal, musical director Archie Bleyer – who owned Cadence, the label LaRosa recorded for – was also asked to leave. He did – along with The Chordettes – one of whom he married. The Chordettes (Janet Ertel, Carol Bushman, Jinny Osborne and Dorothy Schwartz) were a certified rarity – female barbershop harmonizers – who went on to score 14 hits (*Mr. Sandman*, etc.) on the Cadence label. Archie himself, who Godfrey replaced with Will Roland, racked up four Cadence hits (*Hernando's Hideaway*, etc.) Replacing The Chordettes were The McGuire Sisters (Christine, Dorothy and Phyllis), who racked up 35 hits through 1961 (*Sincerely*, etc.). A third Godfrey group, The Mariners, was a racially mixed quartet of former Coast Guardsmen: James Lewis, Martin Karl, Tom Lockhard and Nat Dickerson. They scored but three hits but stuck with Godfrey for a decade. Frank Parker, former boy singer on *The Jack Benny Program* in the '30s, was 23 years older than Marion Marlowe – but that didn't stop Arthur from endlessly pairing Frank and Marion in romantic duets. Four other Godfrey

# ARTHUR GODFREY

#### TV CALENDAR SHOW

Music and Lyrics by Joan Edwards and Lyn Duddy.  
A VISIT TO NEW YORK

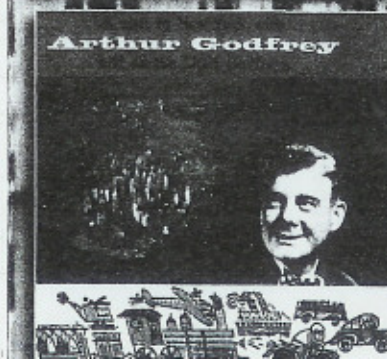
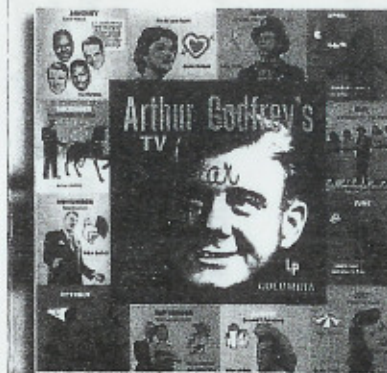
- 14. Betty Comden & Aldolph Green (Lyrics), Leonard Bernstein (Music)
- 15. Val Burton & Will Jason
- 16. Al Dublin (Lyrics), Harry Warren (Music)
- 17. John Redmond & Robert Leonard
- 18. Abner Silver & Alex Gerber
- 19. George Tibbles & Ramez Idriss
- 20. Vernon Duke
- 21. Hal Borne, Ray Golden & Sid Kuller
- 22. Lorenz Hart (Lyrics), Richard Rodgers (Music)
- 23. Harold Rome
- 24. Ralph Rainger & Leo Robin
- 25. James Blake & Charles Lewler

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# Sagging Radio Plays Digital Card

Randy Dotigna

High-definition radio -- touted as the most exciting thing to happen to the AM and FM dials since they were invented -- is finally gaining some traction in the United States.

While hardly anyone can yet receive their gussied-up signals, more than 370 radio stations are now broadcasting in high definition, a digital format that boosts audio quality and limits static. A handful have begun experimenting with digital "multicasting," which allows broadcasters to spawn inexpensive sister stations and could give traditional radio a fighting chance against the pumped-up variety of satellite and internet competitors.

Meanwhile, manufacturers are gearing up to offer new and cheaper HD radio products over the next few months, goosing the sparse number of available models.

Radio is facing fierce competition from MP3s and the internet, which together make it possible for listeners to take their entire music collections with them everywhere they go. Users can record their favorite talk shows online and play them back during the commute, or whenever else it's convenient. In order to stay relevant, observers say, radio needs to evolve into a more flexible medium, especially considering that AM/FM radio has slipped into noticeable decline over the last few years.

"Radio knows that it needs to make that jump to the digital universe," said Tom Taylor, editor of the daily newsletter *Inside Radio*, which is published by a division of Clear Channel Communications. "Radio sees it as a journey it has to make to reach continued growth and viability, and a chance to have additional stations, serve listeners and make more money."

But there are a number of reasons to be skeptical of radio's new push. The new generation of HD radios are pricey, starting at \$249 for a tabletop model. Automobile manufacturers, one of the biggest potential boosters, have already embraced rival satellite radio and may not be willing to adopt a competing technology. And then there's the matter of h

Along with 8-track tapes and vinyl records, the American audio graveyard includes "AM stereo," a much-heralded '80s technology that turned out to be a giant bust. Still, some observers think HD might turn into another FM -- a supposed flash-in-the-pan technology that ended up surviving and dominating the radio world.

As it turns out, HD radio does have a few things going for it.

In a world where local morning hosts make seven-figure salaries and radio stations sell for tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, converting to digital is a fairly minor cost. The technology runs somewhere between \$30,000 and \$200,000, according to Robert Struble, CEO of iBiquity Digital, the only company that offers HD technology to American radio stations. Licensing fees will cost another \$5,000, he said.

Once a station makes the switch, HD radios will pick up clearer transmissions by snatching compressed digital signals along with the old-fashioned analog signals. "FM is going to sound like CDs, and AM will sound like today's FM," Struble said. "You'll eliminate the static and hiss and pops, which will become a thing of the past because of digital processing."



# The Short Reign of Fred Allen

Jack Benny's comic rival starred in programs that prefigured "Weekend Update," "News of the Weird," and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart

Dennis Drabelle

Sixty years ago, Fred Allen, a 52-year-old comic known for wry jokes, bow ties, and baggy eyes, made the cover of *Time* magazine. The accompanying article lauded Allen's radio work for its "angry big-city clank, a splashy neon idiom, and sort of 16-cylinder poetry." Intellectuals loved Allen, as did his peers in comedy. Radio rival Edgar Bergen acknowledged him as "the greatest living comedian." Some people would have given the nod to Jack Benny, and Allen might have agreed: the two had been friends for years and were professionally linked by a fake feud they waged on their respective radio shows. But for Allen even to have been in the running with the great Benny shows his high standing at the time.

Two years after his *Time* cover, however, Allen's show was off the air and his attempts to transfer his topical badinage to television were floundering. That failure—along with the eclipse of radio narratives and sketches, the forms in which he excelled—has left Allen's reputation in near eclipse. Undeservedly so, for he was one of the nation's cleverest entertainers for the better part of three decades.

**His blood pressure was kept high by the prissiness of the admen and network executives who combed his scripts for objectionable lines. Double-entendres and even such mild expletives as "hell" were verboten.**

Fred Allen (the stage name of Boston native John Florence Sullivan) was a product of radio's feeder medium, vaudeville, which had been diverse and flexible enough to accommodate international stars, including Sarah Bernhardt, alongside rank amateurs such as the one Allen described as "a middle-aged woman [who] used to hobble on the stage, leaning on crutches, and sing 'Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage.'" He was little more

than an amateur himself when he made his professional debut, at the age of 18 in 1912, in Boston. He followed a team of Chinese acrobats on the bill. Over the next decade, Allen played the North American circuits and roamed as far as Australia, establishing himself as a comic juggler and ventriloquist with a routine

that involved the gradual dismemberment of his dummy, Jake. He was admired among vaudevillians for writing his own lines rather than patronizing joke dealers or swiping other comics' stuff.

Allen devotes many pages of his posthumous 1956 autobiography, *Much Ado About Me*, to his vaudeville days and especially to the Dickensian characters with whom he trod the boards. Among them was Orville Stamm, the "Strongest Boy in the World," who played the fiddle with an enormous English bulldog dan-



gling from his arm. "The bulldog," as Allen described it, "made graceful arcs in the air as Orville pizzicatoed and manipulated his bow." Vaudeville, Allen deadpanned, "asked only that you own an animal or an instrument, or have a minimum of talent or a maximum of nerve. With these dubious assets, vaudeville offered fame and riches. It was up to you."

Regularly broadcast radio shows first went on the air in 1920, and by 1927, 30 million Americans were tuned in. To fill the hours of the broadcasting day, networks and stations relied on material already known to be audience-pleasing, such as live or recorded music and routines performed by performers from Broadway and especially vaudeville. Allen was one of those. As Hollywood began grinding out talkies, advertising-supported radio—free once you'd made the initial investment in the appliance itself—was becoming habitual to mass audiences with shows like *Amos 'n' Andy*, the first radio sitcom. Movies and radio, the cut-rate and increasingly polished rivals of live stage performances, doomed vaudeville, which quickly descended into burlesque. Allen, meanwhile, had graduated to the revue, an upscale blend of song and dance. When the Depression hit Broadway and his latest revue closed, he considered trying to make a living strictly as a literary humorist. But he was married now, to a former chorus girl named Portland Hoffa; she often took part in his act, playing a ditsy young woman with a quavering voice, and, being very much in love, he wanted to keep on performing with her.

On October 23, 1932, he went on the air with *The Linit Bath Club Revue*, half an hour sponsored by a beauty potion. His pleasantly nasal tone proved ideal for radio: after hearing it in a recorded audition, the president of Linit said, "Get me that man with the flat voice!" No sooner had the first program ended, however, than Allen knew he was in Dutch. He phoned a friend, the caricaturist Al Hirschfeld, to moan: "What am I going to do? I've used up my whole life." His point was that a routine that seemed novel to each audience on the vaudeville circuit was a spent force once it aired on radio. George Burns complained that 17 minutes worth of material that

had gotten him through 17 years in vaudeville lasted him 17 minutes on radio.

Allen coped by trying to do it all. Not literally—he employed a small staff of writers, including the future novelist Herman Wouk. But Allen rewrote their drafts to his liking, incorporating ideas he jotted down on sheets of paper folded into quarters and squirreled away in his suit pockets according to a system known only to him. "I looked as though I was a walking wastebasket," he quipped.

The Linit show reached the end of its limited run, though not before being renamed *Fred Allen's Bath Club Revue*. Allen was back on the air in the fall of 1933 with *The Salad Bowl Revue*, sponsored by Hellmann's mayonnaise, which lent itself to goofy plugs delivered by its star. Responding to a trumped-up complaint about dinner guests who licked the mayo off their salads and then quit eating, Allen advised that "to force your guests to eat all of your salads, simply serve the salads with the mayonnaise underneath and the guests will gladly scamper through the fresh greens to reach this delicious dressing." In quick succession for Allen came the *Sal Hepatica Revue* followed by an expansion to the hour-long *Town Hall Tonight*.

Allen's wit was the funnel through which all manner of nonsense passed. He specialized in satirical takeoffs on the news, though not so much the headline stories as the human-interest fillers, mined from the nine newspapers he read daily and served up as "The March of Trivia." To enact his riffs, he invented a parade of eccentrics played by a stock company. His lust for the highs and lows of the English language was another constant. While the long-standing feud with Jack Benny raged, Benny countered Allen's charge that he couldn't hack a violin piece called "The Bee" by playing it (wretchedly) on the air. Allen was ready with a critique on his next show: "Of all the foul collections of discord foisted on a radio-loving public under the guise of music, that herd of catcalls took the cake." Sometimes he struck a note of homespun poetry, as when one of his characters described his own inamorata as "prettier than a peacock backin' into a sunset."



By the mid-1930s, Allen had built up a weekly audience of 20 million listeners. His program, pruned back to half an hour and restyled *The Fred Allen Show*, had settled into its classic form by 1945. One episode starts with introductory barbs by the boss, many of them aimed at Benny. Enter Portland, piping "Mr. All-en, Mr. All-en" with girlish enthusiasm. (In one show, her tremolo was so tremulous that Allen wondered, "Why don't you put a weight on your tonsils and keep your voice in one place?") The boss plays straight man as she fires off puns and non sequiturs. Next comes a segment in which Fred and Portland stroll down the imaginary Allen's Alley, knocking on doors.

Alley denizens included Senator Beauregard Claghorn, a pompous Southern politician (played by Kenny Dehmar); Mrs. Pansy Nussbaum, a Jewish Mrs. Malaprop (Minerva Pious); Titus Moody, a dour New England rustic (Parker Fennelly); and Ajax Cassidy, a dyspeptic Irishman (Peter Donald). They formed a marvelous set of hams who triumphed over what now seems too much reliance on ethnic stereotyping. In that 1945 episode, the chauvinistic Claghorn boasts of having lent Mason and Dixon "the chalk when they drew the line"; on other occasions, he ruled out drinking from any vessel except a Dixie cup, refused to set foot in Yankee Stadium, but returned again and again to the Cotton Club, though the only train he would ride was the Chattanooga Choo Choo. He was prone to repeating himself ("Ah own 500 acres—500 acres, that is") and belaboring the obvious. His "It's a joke, son" became a catch phrase, and the byproducts of his routine included a novelty compass pointing south only and the cartoon character Foghorn J. Leghorn.

Each show had to be put on twice, once for listeners in the eastern zones and again for those out west with the second go-round

wrapping at 1:00 in the morning. Allen typically worked an 80-hour week. He took summers off, but even so his one-man-band approach was debilitating. Hypertension forced him off the air for part of 1944. "I've been on a salt-free diet so long," he joked, "I can run my tongue over the Bible and tell which page Lot's wife is on."



*Jack Benny and Fred Allen, 1936*

His blood pressure was kept high by the prissiness of the admen and network executives who combed his scripts for objectionable lines. Double-entendres and even such mild expletives as "hell" were verboten. Allen was told to lay off prune jokes after California prune packers took offense, and he was denied use of a ham gag because the Hormel Meat Company bankrolled another show on the same network. He bridled at the frequent, obligatory pauses for station identification: "If they did that in the theaters, people would



burn up. Imagine a man coming out every half-hour during *Hamlet* and saying to the audience, "This is the St. James Theatre on 44th Street. You are listening to Maurice Evans and Kathryn Locke. We return you now to the Gloomy Dane."

Allen took his mind off the exhaustion and indignities by nurturing a hope: that he might contribute, in some small way, to literature. He told a friend, "If I get chased off the air I will start writing and perhaps have peace of mind for the first time in 10 years." All the same, he took pride in his radio writing, preserving his scripts—more than 700 in all—and excerpting them in his first book, a memoir of his radio career called *Treadmill to Oblivion*. He had nearly finished his autobiography when he died in 1956. His collected letters came out in 1965, and "*All the Sincerity in Hollywood . . .*": *Selections from the Writings of Radio's Legendary Comedian Fred Allen* appeared in 2001. Four volumes of coruscating prose—that ought to suffice for a modest literary legacy.

Just as silent movies flickered out after having reached new heights of artistry, so the last years of radio are thought to have been the best. Allen may not have been the most unbiased commentator on the death of radio narrative and comedy, but his lament is still poignant:

The radio listener saw nothing; he had to use his imagination. It was possible for each individual to enjoy the same program according to his . . . mental capacity. . . . With the high cost of living and the many problems facing him in the modern world, all the poor man had left was his imagination. Television has taken that away from him.

In truth, however, *The Fred Allen Show* was in trouble even before television caught on. By 1948 the show's format had gone stale. Allen replaced Senator Claghorn and Ajax Cassidy with a couple of other characters, notably Sergei Stroganoff, music critic for *Pravda*, but they failed to resonate with listeners. New competition came from another network: *Stop the Music*, a quiz show in which host Bert Parks

dialled a phone number at random while the orchestra played a pop tune. When someone answered the phone, Parks screamed, "Stop the music!" Correct identification of the aborted song could lead to as much as \$30,000 in prize money. Listeners fell for the gimmick, and Allen's audience began to drop off. He parodied the nuisance as "Cease the Melody" and promised to indemnify anyone who lost out because they'd been listening to him when a quiz-show emcee called, but the decline continued. Allen's show went off the air for good on June 26, 1949.

By then television was well on its way from novelty (172,000 sets in use in 1948) to necessity (17 million sets in 1952). Not just radio networks but movie theaters, nightclubs, and restaurants were losing business to the upstart. In 1950, trying to recoup, NBC Radio launched *The Big Show*, a weekly 90-minute extravaganza emceed by Talullah Bankhead, with Allen as second banana. The two stars assaulted television head-on. "I've been dabbling in something," Allen admitted, "which for want of a better name we shall call tee vee." "Please, dahling," Bankhead snarled, "people are eating!"

"Dabbling" was an understatement. Allen was all over the tube. He tried to import "Allen's Alley," first with live actors, then with puppets. Neither way clicked. He briefly joined the rotating hosts of *The Colgate Comedy Hour* and a variety show called *Sound-Off Time*. He made multiple guest appearances, always on the lookout for a match between television and his proven talents.

One problem, as Allen knew well, was that he was not photogenic. "I had a face for radio," he acknowledged, mindful of his sharp nose and eyes that narrowed at the sides and bagged underneath. One of his most-quoted lines had been inspired by a bassist of woeful countenance who played in the house band: "What would you charge to haunt a house?" As TV viewers could see for themselves, that crack could be returned to sender.

Then, too, Allen was a sick man. In the fall of 1952, he was slated to host a TV game show called *Two for the Money*, a gig that might have showcased his quick wit, much as *You Bet Your*



*Life* was doing for his friend Groucho Marx. But Allen suffered a heart attack and had to cancel. He recovered to be a panelist on *What's My Line?*, a charming game show whose value Allen recognized. "I am on *What's My Line?* to keep alive artistically," he told a friend, "and to enable me to have the entire week to write." On the night of March 17, 1956, after working on his autobiography, he went out for a walk, collapsed on a sidewalk across the street from Carnegie Hall, and died.

Allen's aspirations conflicted with the limited imagination of early network television honchos. While they were still figuring out how to package real news programs, lampooning the news was not in their repertoire. The American public had to wait 15 years for the TV debut of news-based satire, a short-lived 1964 borrowing from British television called *That Was the Week That Was*. Another decade went by before the "Weekend Update" segment of *Saturday Night Live* finally scored. And neither of these formats was quite what Allen had in mind: fooling around with the reported antics of eccentric Americans. (Chuck Shepherd's "News of the Weird" column, found in many urban weeklies, comes closer to the mark, as do segments of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.) He was too far ahead of his time, as well as too ill, to mount a strong assault on the conventions of broadcast television.

The radio era was surprisingly short-lived: only two decades elapsed between the network debut of *Amos 'n' Andy* in August 1929 and Allen's last sign-off. And the medium has been ill served by modern repackaging. Classic comic strips are being reissued in book form and episodes of TV series are available on DVD, but vintage radio shows are hard to find. It takes determination—or good eBay nerves—to track down Fred Allen.

His fall into obscurity probably wouldn't surprise him. He aimed his satire at everything the censors would allow, including radio itself, which he may have sensed would let him down in the end. Early on, his curmudgeonly New Englander Titus Moody had dismissed the whole idea of the medium with a tart one-liner: "I don't hold with furniture that talks." ❖





# Ethel and Albert by Peg Lynch

**Ethel and Albert** (aka *The Private Lives of Ethel and Albert*) was a radio and television comedy series about a married couple, Ethel and Albert Arbuckle, living in the small town of Sandy Harbor. Created by Peg Lynch (b. 1918), who scripted and portrayed Ethel, the series first aired on local Minnesota radio in the early 1940s, followed by a run on ABC from May 29, 1944 to August 28, 1950.

Radio historian Gerald Nachman (in *Raised on Radio*) called the show "insightful and realistic... a real leap forward in domestic comedy--a lighthearted, clever, well-observed, daily 15-minute show about the amiable travails of a recognizable suburban couple" which combined "the domestic comedy of a vaudeville-based era with a keen modern sensibility. Lynch made her comic points without stooping to female stereotypes, insults, running gags, funny voices or goofy plots."

The show began as three-minute filler between a pair of Minnesota KATE station programs, then expanded to 15 minutes and finally became a half-hour show in the last couple of years on radio. Like *Easy Aces*, the humor on *Ethel and Albert* was low-key; like *Vic and Sade*, it was constructed around such simple, often mundane household situations as efforts to open a pickle jar. Often Ethel or Albert would attempt to prove the other wrong over some inconsequential matter. For example, one entire script centered around Ethel disputing Albert's claim that he could see her using only his peripheral vision. "I realised that I didn't have to sit down and knock myself out every minute to try to think of something funny," Lynch told critic Leonard Maltin many years later. "All I had to do was look around me."

Two film stars had a presence in the show: Richard Widmark, who portrayed Albert in 1944, left after six months and was replaced by Alan Bunce (1902-1965); and Margaret Hamilton (famed as *The Wizard of Oz's* Wicked Witch of the West) played Aunt Eva. Ethel and Albert's daughter Suzy (Madeleine Pierce), born in 1946, was the only other voice heard on the original series.

**Peg Lynch returns to FOTR in '07**  
Writer, Leading Lady, Star, Peg Lynch will bring two of her famous scripts to life as "Ethel" to Arthur Anderson's "Albert" in her famous radio and television show *Ethel and Albert*.

**Peg Lynch is shown at right with Cincinnati Old-Time Radio impresario Bob Burchett.**





Peg Lynch brought her series to television in the early 1950s as a continuing 15-minute segment on *The Kate Smith Hour* during the 1952-53 season. Lynch admitted many years later that she wasn't happy with the move. "[*Ethel and Albert*] was a quiet show," she told Nachman, "and I was not a stage person who was accustomed to performing in front of an audience, as comedians are. And I always felt it spoiled my timing. I would have to hold up for the laugh."

The radio program about peripheral vision was only one of the radio scripts that Lynch rewrote for television. An *Ethel and Albert* television series was launched on NBC (April 25, 1953-December 25, 1954). It moved to CBS (June 20, 1955-September 26, 1955) as a summer replacement for *December Bride* and ended its television life on ABC (October 14, 1955-July 6, 1956).



☐ Alan Bunch & Peg Lynch



Olan Soule



**The Couple Next Door** was a similar Peg Lynch series which began in 1953-57 on Chicago's WGN, moving to the Mutual Broadcasting System in the summer of 1957. The married couple was played by Olan Soule and Elinor Harriot. It was revived on CBS Radio (December 30, 1957-November 25, 1960) with Peg Lynch and Alan Bunce as the unnamed married couple. Essentially, it reprised *Ethel and Albert*, but the new name was necessitated because Lynch had long since lost the rights to the original title.

That still wasn't the end of the show. Lynch and Bunce brought the show to NBC's legendary weekend programming block Monitor in 1963, performing three- to four-minute vignettes not unlike the original 15-minute shows. Their presence continued a Monitor tradition of offering new material from classic radio favorites (including James and Marian Jordan of *Fibber McGee and Molly* fame, until Marian Jordan's death). Lynch returned yet again in the 1970s with a syndicated radio feature known as *The Little Things in Life*.

Very few of the original *Ethel and Albert* radio shows are known to have survived, but a considerable number of *The Couple Next Door* shows have. And, a few years ago, Lynch authorized the compact disc release of 12 *Ethel and Albert* vignettes from the Monitor years. References

- Gerald Nachman, *Raised on Radio* (New York: Pantheon, 1998)
- Arthur Frank Wertheim, *Radio Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970)



lead of NBC-TV's program about a couple named *Ethel and Albert* (Sat., 7:30 p.m. EST), discovered that her fans have dubbed hers a "nudge program." "You know, when Albert does something silly, wives viewing the show nudge their husbands and say, 'Remember when you did that?'" According to the show's fan mail, the realism of Peg Lynch's handling of relations between man and wife even extend to the Sunbeam commercials. "The odd thing is," says Peg, "that I started writing the show when I was single. Now I'm married to a man who's nothing like Albert, and it makes my marriage seem very unreal."



**Family Portrait:** Peg Lynch and Alan Bunce portray NBC-TV's *Ethel and Albert*, the most true-to-life married couple on video. Peg Lynch also writes the show, with a nicely-restrained comedy touch (see "Entertainment").





# Turn up your radio

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in the art deco movement. Many more converts should be recruited this week, during the staging of the 9th World Congress of Art Deco in Melbourne. Events, including lectures and guided tours, will be held until Friday. For details, see [www.artdeco.org.au](http://www.artdeco.org.au).

Australia plays a significant part in art deco history. Some of the most beautiful radios from this style were manufactured in Sydney by the AWA (Amalgamated Wireless Australasia) company. As testament to the enormous popularity of the radio in the pre-TV period, the AWA building was then the tallest in Sydney, topped by an antenna inspired by the Eiffel Tower. It's still there but these days dwarfed by brutal office towers.

AWA radios from the early to mid-1930s are the most collectable, both here and, increasingly, overseas. These are known as the Radiolette series. Their rarity is enhanced by the fact that most Australians preferred large floor-standing radios, constructed of polished wood. The comparatively small bakelite units were designed for the mantel or

tabletop and represented a small percentage of radio sales.

The bright colours of the sets evolved because these radios were usually placed in the kitchen or bedroom rather than the living room, where sombre colours were preferred.

AWA Radiolettes dominated this niche from 1932 (the C87 followed by 110 variant) through to 1935, when the Empire State Fisk models were introduced. Another classic design, known as the Fret and Foot, was launched in 1936. The latter two designs came in a wild variety of colours, of which jade green is perhaps the most appealing to modern tastes. They also came in marbelised (speckled) colours; these are keenly sought after these days.

As it turns out, AWA's Empire State is a bit of a steal. It is clearly inspired by a popular 1933 American design, the Air King. They borrowed from the best. The Air King was designed by Raymond Loewy, also responsible for the classic Coca-Cola "buddy" bottle.

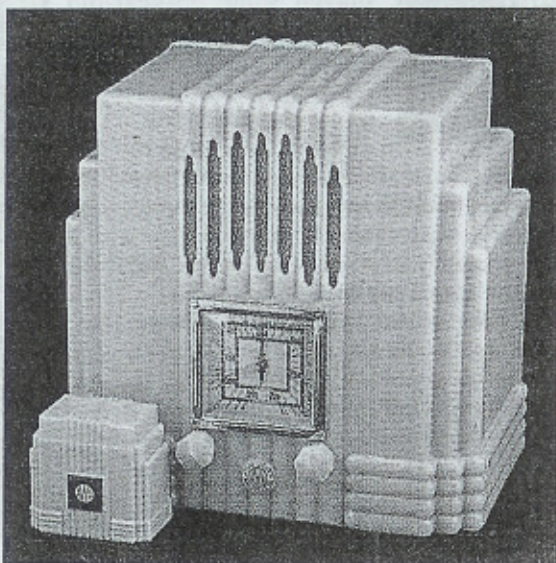
The Fret and Foot is perhaps the more original of the series (its designer is unknown) and a marketing innovation. It targeted an emerging

group of consumers, those living in the country who wanted a lightweight radio so that they could listen to "live" broadcasts of Bradman playing cricket.

This series included some rare examples of contrasting colours. The black cabinet with green fretwork and feet is the most striking but the green cabinet with white features is the rarest colour combination.

In 1936 AWA started to manufacture cigarette boxes in the same design as Empire State Radiolettes. These are a tenth of the size of the radio and were produced in matching bakelite colours. At a time when just about every adult smoked, it was a very clever promotion. These novelties items are now as collectable as the full scale item. There are 15 known colour variations and a full set of cigarette boxes is many a radio collector's ultimate fantasy.

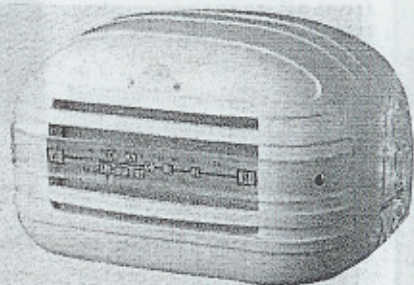
A warning: replicas of the cigarette cases have occasionally appeared,



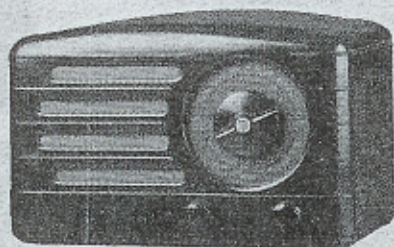
usually advertised as original and priced accordingly. Their source remains a mystery but they are very good copies ("fakelites" according to the jargon) and only an expert can tell the difference.

\$1000

Astor also made attractive radios in the art deco style. Astor Mickeys (named after Mickey Mouse) and Astor Footballs were aimed at the kids' market. This white Football is now a very desirable piece.



\$10,000



The AWA 500 is a nice bakelite unit without the pizzazz of an Empire State or Fret and Foot. There are plenty of this style around and most collectors want at least one.



By Rowena Stuart  
Clearwater, Florida

WHEN my family lived in New York City in the late '30s, my sister and I enjoyed a radio program called *The Horn and Hardart Children's Hour*.

The program featured children singing, and one singer in particular caught my attention. His name was Olivio Santoro.

From the moment I first heard him strum his guitar and yodel, he was my idol. At age 8, I was convinced that he lived inside our big floor-model Zenith radio.

Through the years, I discovered and enjoyed other fine yodelers—Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers, Jimmie Rodgers, Elton Britt and Rosalie Allen. But Olivio Santoro started it all for me, and as the years passed, I wondered what had ever become of him.

My search began in *Reminisce* magazine—my request for information appeared in the Nov/Dec 1995 "Can You Give Me a Hand?" section.

I was deluged with mail from all over the country. Everyone who wrote had also been a fan of the Boy Yodeler and, like me, wondered whatever became of him. No one seemed to know for sure, but Olivio's sudden disappearance from the airwaves in 1942 had generated some wild rumors.

#### Yodeling in Code?

One fan recalled the radio announcer saying Olivio had been drafted and was in the Army. Another heard that Olivio had been picked up by the FBI because he was yodeling in code and relaying messages to Axis sympathizers!

Ironically, that rumor led me to the truth...and to the whereabouts of my favorite yodeler.

I placed a request about Olivio in my local newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Times*. One of the published responses repeated the rumor about coded yodeling.

That rumor evoked a heated reply from Olivio's sister! Madeline Maiorino set the record straight by informing



## My Search for Olivio Santoro

Could she discover what had happened to the Boy Yodeler who'd thrilled so many back in the '30s and '40s?



the readers that her brother was a patriotic citizen who served in the Navy during World War II.

She also provided a little bit of history, noting that her brother had taught himself to play guitar and yodel. His talent won him an audition for the Horn and Hardart show.

Olivio later had a radio show of his own. In fact, Madeline recalled that President Roosevelt's famous announcement about the bombing of Pearl Harbor interrupted Olivio's show!

After the war, Olivio had a television show, then he worked as a landscape gardener, which was his father's trade. But the best news Madeline provided was that Olivio was alive and well, retired on Long Island, New York.

#### Met Neighbor

I wrote to Madeline, and when she telephoned me, I learned that she lived practically in my backyard!

Madeline invited me to her house, where we reminisced about her brother and played some 55-year-old records of Olivio singing and yodeling various songs, including his rendition of the Thrivo dog food song.

Even with those old and scratchy records, we both got a little teary-eyed listening to that bell-like soprano. Olivio's voice took me back to a time when I'd fallen in love with a yodeling cowboy who sang only for me and lived somewhere inside my living room radio.

After all that, I had to contact Olivio himself, so I wrote him a fan letter. I got a very nice reply—although I think he was somewhat startled to hear from anyone who remembered him on the radio from 60 years ago. "You're probably my No. 1 fan," he joked.

Well, I think I am, and you can be sure that if I ever get back up to New York I'll drop in to visit my childhood idol, Olivio Santoro, the Boy Yodeler.

**YODEL-OLIVIO.** The long search for "Boy Yodeler" Olivio Santoro (left) was a success for his biggest fan, who never forgot his great voice.



**CROSLEY**  
*Authentic*  
HOGGAT

**WLW**

**THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL BROADCASTING STATION**

Startling! Revolutionary! These

**The CROSLEY Pup**  
Miniature Automobile, Reproduction of the original model.

**\$975**

**CROSLEY**

*Scratch it on with RADIO*

**CROSLEY**



# The History of Crosley Radio

In 1920, Powel Crosley founded the company that pioneered radio broadcasting and mass market manufacturing around the world. Dismayed with the \$130 price tag for the radio receiver he promised to buy for his son's birthday, Crosley decided to make his own. Upon successfully building a working set for only \$35, Crosley was quick to spot the mass market potential.

It was a simple idea - design a fully functioning radio, meticulously craft each unit with obsessive detail and precise accuracy, and of course add a measure of consideration for the wallet.

This simple idea led Crosley Radio to become the world's largest radio manufacturer while Powel Crosley became known as "The Henry Ford of Radio."

His relentless fascination with mechanical devices, coupled with his intense desire to become a millionaire, sent Crosley's career soaring.

He's most well-know for the production of mass market radios, and the creation of WLW - 'The Nation's Station' and the 500,000 watt tower he constructed that transmitted FDR's Fireside Chats - incidentally, whose signals were reported to have been heard as far away as Australia!

A true industrialist, Crosley also became known for a multitude of ventures. He was famous for The Crosley (a miniature-sized automobile) which promised 50 gallons to the tank and sold for just \$325. Having dubbed himself the man of '50 jobs in 50 years,' he continued to amaze the masses with such creations as The Shelvador (a refrigeration unit introducing the concept of door shelving units), The Moonbeam (Crosley's self-designed airplane), The Roamio (the first car radio), and The Readio (a facsimile system that transmitted words and pictures via radio waves) just to name a few.

However, Crosley's entrepreneurial spirit didn't stop there. As a Cincinnati native, he decided to step in when the Cincinnati Reds declared bankruptcy. Crosley acquired the team ensuring they would remain an integral part of Cincinnati's culture. In 1930 he went on the build Crosley Field which triumphed until 1970 as the famous Cincinnati Reds' playing field. Crosley was credited with producing the first night baseball game, transforming Crosley Field from night to day with the flick of a switch powering 615 lamps. He went on in subsequent years to broadcast the first live baseball game on WLW-TV - the Crosley television broadcasting division.

Today the Crosley name lives on with superbly detailed replicas that truly transcend time. Reintroductions of original vintage radios and turntables feature the newest technologies graced

by unforgettable Crosley stylings. The Crosley Collection includes AM/FM radios, multi-functional audio cassette/compact disc players, portable suitcase-styled record players and record changers, jukeboxes, music boxes, telephones and more. Rich lines, reinventions and authentic craftsmanship have made Crosley today's premier vintage electronics manufacturer.

True to the Crosley tradition, these replicas are as fabulous as they are functional, providing a delightful dose of nostalgia.

DOCTOR... LAWYER... MORMON... "CHIEF"



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## CROSLEY V.I.P. CLOCK RADIO

**CROSLEY V.I.P. CLOCK RADIO**

...with features such as: • Alarm clock • AM/FM radio • Auto-tuning • Sleep timer • 12-hour timer • 100-hour battery • 100-hour battery • 100-hour battery

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Replace your out-dated single or dual speed changer in your present radio-phonograph. Your music dealer, radio-appliance shop or department store carries the Crosley Diskchanger—the only changer that has these features • Plays 4 3 speeds, all 3 sizes • Balance tone arm for longer record life • Famed foolproof, jam-free mechanism by Crosley Radio • Velocity-trip record change. As low as

**\$47**





Chuck McCann at FOTR '07





Peg Lynch & Arthur Anderson [Ethel & Albert]



Eddie Carroll & Jeff David



Don Buka & Peg Lynch



Chuck McCann & Peg Lynch





Lucie Arnaz



Molly Bee



Frank Bresee and his wife with Jerry Williams



Peg Lynch with Jerry Williams