

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

Volume 17

Autumn '04



**Founding NOTRE member Geoff "Kenny" Oates on the right
With his "Mum" Dame Edna Everage on state in Membourne, Australia**

An Impression of Will Jordan

A REALLY BIG SHOW Friends and colleagues gathered at Sardi's to celebrate the birthday of comedian, actor, and impressionist Will Jordan. After a dinner whose menu consisted of choices such as Sardi's crab cakes and sautéed chicken breast scaloppini served over salad, attendees sang the praises of Mr. Jordan, who grew up in Flushing. His mother was a hat designer, his father a pharmacist.

Mr. Jordan's many credits include playing himself in Woody Allen's "Broadway Danny Rose," and serving as the voice of Dracula on Reese's commercials. Mr. Jordan has also acted as a

which also featured Vaughn Meader; **Bernie Ilson**; **Jim Davison** of Radiotoons, and **Derek Tague**, who is now active in Friends of Old Time Radio.

Mickey Freeman, who portrayed Private Zimmerman on the "The Phil Silvers Show," told a joke about a woman in Florida who hears on the news that there's a car riding the wrong way on I-95. She calls her husband's cell phone: "Morris, watch out, there's a car driving the wrong way on I-95." Her husband replies, "What car? I see 500."

Other comedians present included **Dick Capri**, who co-starred in "Catskills on Broadway"; **Dick Lord**,

also present, including cousin **Albert Kahan**, a World War II hero; cousin **Fay Nadel**; **Judy and Jerome Kay**, the latter a retired state Supreme Court judge in Brooklyn; **Paul and Cindy Kay**, and Mr. Jordan's brother, **Harold Rauch**, a professor of genetics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Comedian and talk show host **Joe Franklin** offered a toast: "Here's to our wives and sweethearts. May they never meet."

Mr. Jordan rose and spoke to the crowd, saying the gathering gave him a feeling of the old days: "We don't just hang out together anymore."

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SUN STAFF

BIRTHDAY BASH Dick Lord, far left, Dick Capri, Mickey Freeman, Frank Gorshin, Soupy Sales, Will Jordan, and Jack Eagle at Sardi's at a celebration for Jordan.

motivational speaker at sales meetings, portraying General Patton. More recently, he appeared in "Down with Love" with **Renee Zellweger**, and just finished a pilot with **Mickey Rooney** and **Norm Crosby** called "The Garlic Roast."

Standing up to talk was **Frank Gorshin**, who portrays George Burns in the Broadway show "Say Goodnight Gracie" and is known to television audiences for playing the Riddler on "Batman." Mr. Gorshin — himself a noted impressionist — said Mr. Jordan's impression of Ed Sullivan was better than Ed Sullivan. "How great," Mr. Gorshin continued, "it would be to be that great at something. When everyone else does Ed Sullivan, they're doing Will Jordan doing Ed Sullivan."

In the audience was **Brad Bolke**, who was the voice of Chumley Walrus on the TV show "Tennessee Tuxedo and his Tales" and the voice of Nikita

who worked on "Bobby Darin's Amusement Company" on NBC; **Jack Eagle**, known for the "Xerox" commercials in which he played a monk who used a copier machine instead of pen and quill, and Yonkers-raised **Bobby Ram-sen**, who said the crowd that evening offered him a "chance to break in some old jokes."

Also on hand were **Allen Swift**, the voice of archenemy Simon Bar Sinister on the cartoon "Underdog"; and **Victoria Biggers**, daughter of Buck Biggers, who wrote scripts for "Underdog" as well as its theme song. Ms. Biggers is also related to Earl Derr Biggers, creator of "Charlie Chan." Others at the Sardi's gathering: **Tye Morrow**, who is active in the Sons of the Desert, a society devoted to the appreciation of Laurel and Hardy; **Samuel Sherman** of Independent-International Pictures Corp.; poet **James Yoham**, and **Dan Frazier**, who portrayed Telly Savalas'

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THERE'S STILL HOPE "Bob Hope never went for the cheap laugh," said **Freddie Roman**, president of the Friars Club, at a taping last week of "New Yawk, New Yawk," the weekly radio show co-hosted by **Aaron Braunstein**. Mr. Roman recalled Hope standing at the bar of the Friars, mentoring other younger comedians. Asked if Hope would become as big a legend in death as Frank Sinatra, Mr. Roman demurred, "Maybe not, because he wasn't a bad boy. Bad boys last longer."

Mr. Freeman recalled meeting Hope at Brown's, the Catskills resort in Loch Sheldrake. Hope was on his way to Moscow. On the comedian's return from the former Soviet Union, Mr. Freeman recalled Billy Eckstine asking Hope how Moscow was. Hope respond-

Mt. Carmel, Illinois Hometown of



BRACE BEEMER

Lone Ranger Radio Days, May 15, 2004

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Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear ...

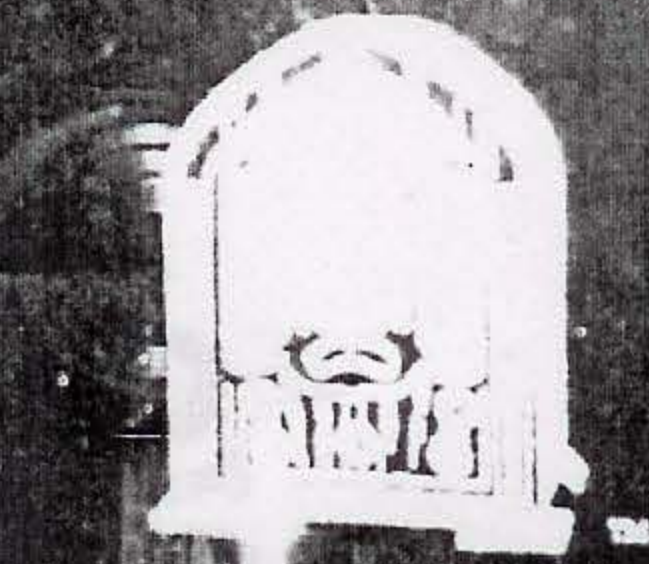
Mt. Carmel, Illinois, the hometown of Brace Beemer, who was known and loved by millions as WXYZ radio's Lone Ranger, is hosting Lone Ranger Radio Days on May 15, 2004. The celebration will include the dedication of a park and sheltered sign honoring Beemer. Among the invited guests is former announcer FRED FOY! Joe Southern from the Lone Ranger Fan Club will also be there along with other special guests.

Tentative Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
- Welcome Center opens
- Horse-drawn wagon rides
- Book sale/signings



PARLEY BAER AWARD



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In Recognition Of His
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In Supporting The Preservation
And Enjoyment Of Radio History

April 17, 2004

At the Cincinnati radio convention in April 2004
Noted videographer and raconteur Harold Zeigler was awarded the
prestigious PARLEY BAER for his continuing support of Old-Time Radio!

REFUGEES from Hollywood

A Journal of the Blacklist Years

JEAN ROUVEROL

University of New Mexico Press
Albuquerque

(212) 456-



Vincent Ralph Damiano
Photography

VINCE DAMIANO
Photographer

RIDGEWOOD, NY 11385

Rediscovering our Blue Ribbon past

Karen Haertel believes that if a large corporation had taken ownership of the former Pabst Brewing Co.'s abandoned corporate offices in Milwaukee, it may have simply gutted the buildings. After all, the offices were just as the company left them when the firm abruptly and illegally closed its Milwaukee brewery in 1996. The headquarters were littered with cigarette-filled ashtrays, empty beer cans, old appliances, boxes and trash.

A large development company likely would have ordered trash containers to the site in the 900 block of West Juneau Avenue and efficiently hauled the mess away, Haertel said. From a local historical preservation standpoint, that would have been a travesty.

When Brew City Redevelopment Group, the small company founded by Haertel's husband, Jim Haertel, acquired the former Pabst offices in 2002, they also took ownership of the contents – trash and all. The Haertels began sifting through the rubble, and what they found is an historic collection of memorabilia that documents the city's heritage as the former brewing capitol of the world.

The Haertels found a remarkable collection of old photographs taken in the 1940s. The subjects in many of the photographs are celebrities, who for one reason or another visited the Pabst brewery. Notable are photographs of actor and comedian Groucho Marx, who was hamming it up in poses, lifting steins of beer, milling through barrels of hops and propping his feet up while flirting with an unidentified female. In one of the photographs, Groucho is seen without his trademark fake eyebrows and mustache. "I didn't even know his mustache wasn't real," said Karen Haertel, who is chief financial officer of Brew City Redevelopment Group.

Actually, Groucho began his career on Vaudeville as a stand-in for an actor who had a dark mustache and eyebrows, according to Wayne Boenig, a resident of Walpole, Mass., and contributor to www.marx-brothers.org/listening/radio.htm, an Internet site devoted to the careers of the Marx Brothers. "So, he put on the makeup, and it was like shoe polish. Legend has it that Groucho took a liking to that makeup," Boenig said. "It had a slight intoxicating effect that enhanced, shall we say, his already comic behavior."



With the Groucho photos in hand, Haertel kept sifting through the rubble. She found other photographs that feature performers Danny Kaye, Jimmy Durante and Donald O'Connor during their visits to the Pabst brewery. Haertel also found photographs of former Pabst executives celebrating the company's centennial in 1944. The artifacts included a guest registry book that features people from all over the world, including most of the members of the 1953 Boston Red Sox team. "It just shows what a significant business Pabst was for the city," Haertel said.

In addition to the photographs, Haertel found old beer steins, beer signs, two wall safes, grandfather clocks, ornate tables, desks and chairs, original stock certificates, warranty deeds and an architectural sketch on parchment paper. She also found

some original 16-inch acetate recorded transcription discs, simply labeled "WISN (AM 1130) – Danny Kaye," and a canister containing an old movie reel.



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Haertel doesn't know what's on the recorded discs or the movie reel, but she hopes to find out someday. "I think Danny Kaye may have come to Milwaukee to tape his radio show, but I don't know. It's going to be a project for me. It's like detective work," Haertel said. The buildings, including the former Pabst Gift Shop and the Blue Ribbon Hall, feature chandeliers, lead stained glass windows, an antique bar, a fireplace, hand-milled woodwork and custom mural paintings on the walls and ceilings.

The musky smells of wood and a bygone era linger in the brewery offices, as if time had suddenly stopped. The desk of former chairman of the board, Frederick Pabst Jr., who was the great-grandson of brewery founder Jacob Best and the son of Capt. Frederick Pabst, still sits in a corner office. The desk is next to a coat rack holding a dark blue blazer with an embroidered Pabst logo, as if the man had just wandered away from his office and is soon to return.

Haertel's findings comprise a "treasure trove" of reminders of the city's business history, according to John Gurda, Milwaukee historian and author of *The Making of Milwaukee*. "Pabst was the first Milwaukee brewery to become the nation's largest," Gurda said. "Like all the breweries, they were pretty much shuttered during the Prohibition, and then the war came along.



"There was a time when this was a Pabst town. That period in the late 1940s was a throwing off of the anxieties of the war, with all of the optimism toward the future," Gurda said. "It was the foundation of our image. You can bring old buildings to new life, and I hope for the same thing and more for Pabst."

"You really get a sense of what a central point Pabst was to this city. You can see through the photographs that this was an important part of the city's culture," said John Eastberg, historian at The Pabst Mansion in Milwaukee, after reviewing the photographs. "Thankfully, Pabst always kept a professional photographer on hand. Some of this stuff barely made it through, so how fortunate we are. That building has such incredible character. I think they (the Haertels) are doing a great job. Thankfully, it's fallen into good hands, because somebody else might have just gutted it.

"The photos show the national pull and prestige Pabst had. They were huge, national advertisers, where everybody recognized the name of the product," Eastberg said. Once Haertel figures out exactly what she's found, she plans to preserve and display the memorabilia in The Museum of Beer and Brewing, which will be built on the second floor of the Pabst complex.

"This is what keeps me interested in the project. The business side of it gives me headaches," Haertel said. She leaves those business dealings to her husband, who has a letter of intent from the Cincinnati Restaurant Group Inc. to build a Milwaukee version of the Hofbrauhaus, the famous beer homage in Munich, Germany, on the first floor of the Pabst City complex.

Jim Haertel also has a letter of intent from the Milwaukee Museum of Beer and Brewing to open the beer museum on the second floor of the building. In addition, he is taking applications from prospective operators of a "beer, bed and breakfast" to be developed on the building's third floor, which is now vacant office and meeting space.

The Haertels plan to name their portion of the Pabst City project "The Best Place at Pabst City," after the Best Brewing Co., which was the precursor to Pabst Brewing Co.

In the meantime, the Haertels are waiting for their larger development partners, Wispark LLC and The Ferchill Group, to secure the permits and tax credits needed for the project to proceed. They hope to begin construction later this year and open in 2006. "We're ready to go," Jim Haertel said.

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Broadcasting House, London, W. 1

TELEPHONE: WELBECK 4468 TELEGRAMS: BROADCASTS, LONDON

BROADCASTS, TELEX, LONDON

Memo from Alistair Cooke ^{LW.}
to Lindsay Wellington,
George Barnes,
Anthony Rendall:

Feb. 14th, 1946

Alistair Cooke's AMERICAN LETTER

The proposal is that I should begin soon to broadcast a regular weekly talk, thirteen minutes' long, to be heard in Britain on Sunday evenings indefinitely.

Many ingenious and fanciful titles have occurred to me but the best still seems to me my first suggestion, namely, -
American Letter.

Advice. LW.
As I understand it, it will be a weekly personal letter to a Briton by a fireside about American life and people and places in the American news. I shall try to give him a running commentary on topical aspects of American life, some of the intimate background to Washington policy, some pictorial excursions into regions and places, some profiles of important Americans who (because they work in the shadows of the limelight or are suddenly projected into it) are unknown to him as personalities. The stress will tend always to be on the springs of American life, whose bubbles are the headlines, rather than on the bright headlines themselves.

It will be essential, I think, to keep in close touch, through a responsible BBC official in the U.S., with the men doing American Commentary, and to see that the two features set each other off. The liaison here will be a virtuoso matter and is, I believe, better left to timely judgement than to any paper arrangement that might be set down here. The initiative in these regular discussions will normally come from me, since I shall expect to be two or three weeks ahead of the current Commentaries - (it is agreed that to save dollars, and perhaps also to increase the intimacy of friendly talk, ~~that~~ these talks should be recorded and flown to Britain as quickly as possible)

It is understood that if between the Thursday of American Commentary and the Sunday of American Letter there should be some important or startling news-break (the death of a great political figure, a New England hurricane, the total immobilization of New York, or the atomizing of Chicago) I should feel free to leap into the breach and devote a talk to the event, which might more normally be left to the Commentary.

I think this covers the main points, except to say that I take it this blueprint should not be ~~tak~~ firmly bind me to the limits here defined. Let us agree that if other valuable

services can be brought into the Letter, - occasional interviews, on the spot reports from distant places, and other novelties we haven't anticipated - they shall be accepted on the agreement of the Talks Director in London.

Alistair Cooke

Alistair Cooke began his weekly talk programme more than 50 years ago and it has been broadcast almost every week since.

Born in the back streets of Salford in 1908, he was christened plain Alfred and was brought up in a Blackpool boarding house.

Modest origins

But it wasn't long before he broke free from these modest origins.

He swept through Cambridge, gaining an honours degree in English, changed his first name to Alistair and joined the BBC in 1934 as a film critic.

He was the America correspondent for the Manchester Guardian and has been presenting the BBC's Letter from America since March 1946.

The programme is first aired on BBC Radio 4 on a Friday evening and then repeated on the World Service. It is heard by millions of listeners across the world.

Honorary knighthood

Alistair has also taken part in a wide range of television programmes but is perhaps best known for Alistair Cooke's America, a BBC-series which was aired around the world.

He also hosted Masterpiece Theatre in the United States for 22 years and has written many books.

In 1973, Alistair was awarded an honorary knighthood and in 1974 addressed the United States Congress on its 200th anniversary.

He has received an award from BAFTA for his contribution to Anglo American relations and a Sony Radio Award for his services to broadcasting.

He has also been the Broadcasting Press Guild's Radio Broadcaster of the Year and the Voice of the Listener and the Viewer has recognised his Outstanding Contribution to radio.

He lives in New York with his second wife. He has two children.

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/programmes/letter_from_america/3220943.stm

Published: 2003/11/13 12:38:43 GMT

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Alistair Cooke

"About Letter from America"

How it began 1946 - The head man said, "why don't you talk about the things you talk to me about? American children, the chemistry of the New England fall, out west, anything." I said, "well, it opens quite a field." He said, "well, we'll set you up for thirteen weeks, and if it's a wild success another thirteen weeks.

But we're bankrupt, the Treasury has banned all export of sterling - to a certain amount - so even if you're the biggest thing that ever happened at the end of 26 weeks . . . no more." It was called Letter from America, and of course what I coyly say now is "somehow they forgot," because it's now in its 52nd year.

A new style of broadcasting - This led, during that time, to my developing, I think, a personal style and making it a talking style. During the end of the war, the BBC in New York invited various famous exiles, Frenchmen mostly, to come and talk to the underground in France; famous, great literary men. And I had the privilege of sitting in the control room, and I thought that I will learn about broadcasting from listening to these men. These great . . . men.

What I learned is that they were dreadful broadcasters. They wrote essays, or lectures, or sermons and they read them aloud. And I suddenly realized there was a new profession ahead. Which is writing for talking. Putting it on the page in the syntactical break-up and normal confusion that is normal talk.

Doing battles with the BBC producers - All I can remember from those early years of broadcasting was the routine that the BBC talks producers had. You delivered your script the day before. You went over it in the afternoon, and they went over it like a pedantic headmaster or parson. Line by line. "do you mean blessed are the meek, or blessed ARE the meek?" And so on. This is extremely tedious, and then you performed. But they stayed with their slogan that was their prescription for how to broadcast. They said, "first you must say what you are going to talk about, secondly you must talk about it, and then you must say what you talked about.": A prescription for a non-broadcast if ever there was such a thing. Because I discovered very early on that broadcasting is the control of suspense. No matter what you're talking about - gardening, economics - you're telling a story. Every sentence should lead to the next sentence. If you say a dull sentence, people have a right to switch off.

A word of advice - I soon faced the producers and stopped delivering my script. I said, "don't you think if it's a talk, you should listen to it as a talk, the audience does not see a script." This was a totally new idea to them. I went along and apparently it worked. The only other thing I remember from those years . . . a wise old talks producer came to me and said, "Cooke, a word in your ear. Could I give you a bit of advice?" I said, "of course." He said "don't get too popular . . . or they'll drop you." Well, I've been working on that for 51 years!

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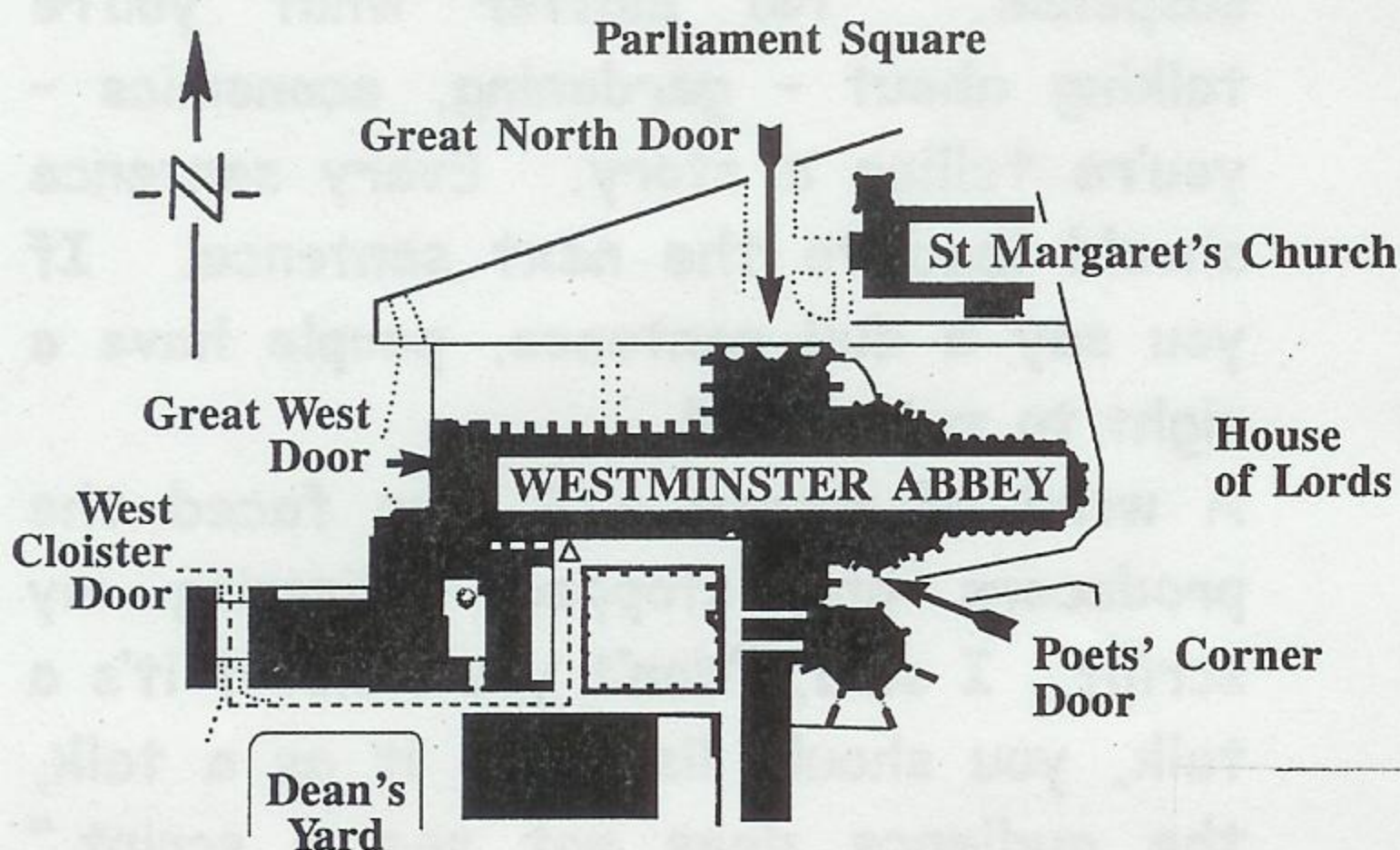
September 2004

Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Work of
Alistair Cooke KBE
Friday 15th October 2004 at Noon

SECURITY

For security reasons, please bring with
you some form of identification,
(passport, driving licence etc.)

No 17



NORTH TRANSEPT

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING
FOR THE LIFE AND WORK OF
ALISTAIR COOKE KBE

Friday, 15th October 2004, at Noon

ENTRANCE:
GREAT NORTH DOOR
from 11 a.m.

WESLEY CARR
Dean

Ticket holders are requested to be seated by 11.45 a.m.

THE USE OF PRIVATE CAMERAS, VIDEO OR SOUND RECORDING
EQUIPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE ABBEY.

PLEASE SEE OVER

Alistair Cooke, the British-born journalist and commentator who brought a refinement and elegance to American television as the popular host of "Masterpiece Theatre," has died. He was 95.

Cooke, who offered insightful radio commentaries for the British Broadcasting Corp. for 58 years, died at his home in New York City at midnight Monday, the network announced in London. The cause of death was not reported, but Cooke was known to have had heart disease. He retired from the BBC just weeks ago, citing health concerns.

As the host of "Masterpiece Theatre" from 1971 to 1992, Cooke supplied wry, informative introductions for adaptations of Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited," Jane Austen's "Emma" and Henry James' "The Golden Bowl" as well as the made-for-television series "Upstairs Downstairs." His urbane manner recalled a kindly professor.

"Cooke introduced more people to what one would call good literature than thousands of high school and college instructors might have done," said Howard Gottlieb, director of the Mugger Library at Boston University in a 1998 interview with Cooke's biographer, Nick Clarke. Cooke donated his personal library to the university.

Cooke joined the BBC in 1934 as a film critic, but European audiences knew him best for his "Letter From America" — weekly commentaries broadcast on BBC radio starting in 1946 and continuing until his final report aired Feb. 20. There were 2,869 talks in all, each a 13-minute, 30-second spot offering Cooke's observations on political and cultural life in the United States.

"Cooke had a mission to explain his adopted country to his native country," Clarke said. "He wanted to show that Americans have a depth you don't necessarily see in American films and television sitcoms."

His "letter" aired in 50 countries and gained a broad audience in England. "With equal verve and knowledge, Mr. Cooke comments on the activities of the churches, Hollywood, university presidents, baseball players, gangsters and scientists," the London Financial Times wrote some years ago. "People who want to know what really goes on in America cannot dispense with Mr. Cooke."

In London, Prime Minister Tony Blair led the mourning Tuesday for the popular commentator.

"I was a big fan," Blair told the BBC. "I thought they were extraordinary essays, and they brought an enormous amount of insight and understanding to the world."

"He was really one of the greatest broadcasters of all time, and we shall feel his loss very, very keenly indeed," Blair added.

The U.S. ambassador to Britain, William Farish, was another of Cooke's admirers. "His death is like that of a longtime friend or a wise and kindly uncle, and reminds us all of the impact a life well lived can have," he said.

Clarke told British reporters Tuesday that "Letter From America" "was the thing that mattered to him more than anything. He reckoned it was work in progress. He never thought the thing was over. . . . I think he thought retirement was a very bad idea and when he was forced to stop work three weeks ago, I thought, this won't be long now because here was a man living for this one task."

From the time that Cooke moved permanently to New York City in the late 1930s, he was appreciative of his adopted country but not blind to its flaws. In his final letter, he compared President Bush's decision to invade Iraq with the U.S. invasion of Iraq by the president's father in 1991 and suggested that this time, as last, it could cost Republicans at the polls.

"The new, invigorating party conviction is a belief that Democrats had not dreamed of so far," Cooke observed. "It is the belief that George Bush can be beaten in November." With typical wry humor, he added: "This thought apparently took hold of the primary voters long before it dawned on the Democratic Party as a whole."

By English standards, "Cooke was more American than the Americans. . . . Cooke loved America far more than he loved his home country," Clarke told The Times in 1998. Cooke be-

came a U.S. citizen in 1941.

A self-made man, Cooke explained his enthusiasm in one of his earliest letters from America.

"I never remember hearing anyone in America, no matter how snobbish, say that somebody didn't know his place," he said. "It is a deep, almost unconscious belief of Americans, that your place is what your talent and luck can make it."

Cooke first attracted a U.S. following as host of "Omnibus," a pioneering commercial television program about the arts and culture. The show aired from 1952 to 1961 — first on CBS and later on ABC. He proved to be a thoughtful observer with a rare appreciation for both British and American culture.

His next major television project, "Masterpiece Theatre," on PBS, made him a household name to U.S. viewers. The genteel host's British tweeds and perfect grammar made the informality of the opening commentaries, delivered from a large wingchair near shelves of leather-bound books, a winning surprise. "Gentle viewer," he sometimes addressed his audience, appealing to our better side. In the observations that followed, which he wrote himself, he prepared his audience for philanthropists, bullies or worse, but he refrained from passing judgment.

Cooke once compared his role as host to that of a head waiter whose job was "to explain to interested customers what's on the menu and how the dishes are composed."

He became so popular with American television audiences that he was parodied on programs as diverse as "Saturday Night Live" and "Sesame Street," where he was known as Alistair Cookie on "Masterpiece Theatre."

With a considerable following in place, Cooke was host to "America, A Personal History of the U.S.," in 1972 and 1973. In 11 episodes that aired on NBC, he traced the growth of the country from the colonial era to the early 1970s. His accompanying book "Alistair Cooke's America," spent through three printings in the first few months and held a place on bestseller lists for more than two years. The book, one of 16 that he wrote, sold 2 million copies, according to the BBC this week.

Cooke offered unconventional views of U.S. history. He compared the American colonists' guerrilla-style tactics with those of the Viet Cong in Vietnam. And he advised his viewers that "Americans are taught a very simple view of their revolution," adding that, "patriotism, a bad historian, writes the most beguiling history, since it always offers a flattering explanation of a complicated story and satisfies our insatiable hunger for good guys and bad guys."

He won an Emmy award for the series in 1973, followed by one for "Masterpiece Theatre" in 1975 and a special Emmy for general achievement in 1985. He won Peabody awards for broadcast excellence and, because he had become a U.S. citizen, he was given only an honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth.

Critics saw him as a lightweight among news journalists. "Cooke covers a story the way a short dress covers an attractive girl," Robert Kaiser wrote in the Washington Post in 1968.

His strength was not the in-depth coverage or pointed analysis of a hard news reporter. He did, however, cover 11 presidential election campaigns and witnessed a wide range of historical events, including the formation of the United Nations in 1945 and the work of the House Un-American Activities Committee. He was present at the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in June 1968; moments after Kennedy won the California primary in his quest for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Cooke described the scene for his radio audience: "For the first time in 30 years, I found myself by one casual chance in a thousand on hand in a small, narrow serving pantry of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, a place that I suppose will never be wiped out of my memory."

"Down on the greasy floor was a huddle of clothes and, staring out of it, the face of Bobby Kennedy, like the stone face of a child lying on a cathedral tomb."

Born in Salford, near Manchester, England, Cooke was the son of an ironworker and Methodist lay preacher who founded a mission in the Manchester slums. Cooke once considered becoming a clergyman and taught Sunday school for a time. But, as a scholarship student at Cambridge, he turned to acting and helped found the Cambridge University Mumpers in 1929.

In his student days, Cooke reinvented himself. "He had come from Northern England, a comparatively poor family, and turned himself into a new man at Cambridge," his biographer, Clarke, explained. "He entered a school of nearly all upper-class people, and he managed to blend in quite easily."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2004

He dropped his first name, Alfred, and used Alistair, which sounded to him more sophisticated. His skill as an actor, his single-mindedness in approaching any task and his habit of watching movies to learn accents helped him with the transition from his working-class beginnings to his image as a refined British gentleman, Clarke said.

After college, Cooke won a Commonwealth Fund Fellowship that took him to the U.S., where he studied at Yale and Harvard. He met his future wife, Ruth Emerson, an American modern dance student, at Harvard and drove across the country for the first time.

"That trip was an absolute eye-opener for me," he later recalled. "Even then, even in the Depression, there was a tremendous energy and vitality to America. The landscape and the people were far more gripping and dramatic than anything I had ever seen.

"It truly changed me. You see, from then on, my interest in the theater began to wane and I began to take up what I felt was the real drama going on — namely, America itself."

Cooke worked briefly at Charlie Chaplin's film studio, but the realities of moviemaking left him disenchanted.

He changed career goals to pursue journalism and intensified his study of the English language, which was a lifelong passion.

In 1937, Cooke and his new wife settled in New York City. He worked as a freelance reporter for the Times of London and the British Daily Herald, and contributed to BBC radio. In the early 1940s he added The Guardian newspaper to his list of regular employers.

He became known as a man about town who frequented the jazz clubs, played piano at parties and had a passion for movies, the arts and golf.

The Cookes had one child, John, before their brief marriage ended in divorce. He subsequently met and married Jane White, a painter, in 1946. Soon afterward, the couple had a daughter, Susan.

Over the years, Cooke's frequent trips across the country turned him into a great admirer

of the American West. He spent his second honeymoon in San Francisco and, by the time he finished his television series on America's history, he had joined a San Francisco golf club, intent on improving his game.

A new goal captured his imagination. At age 83, when he retired as host of "Masterpiece Theatre," he told reporters, alluding to a classic Robert Frost poem, "I don't have many miles to go but I do have promises to keep before I sleep and one or two ambitions — among them an insane desire to shave a stroke or two off my golf handicap."

Cooke's survivors include his wife; his son, John; his daughter, Susan; and two stepchildren.

Times staff writer John Daniszewski contributed to this report from London.

He was really one of the greatest broadcasters of all time, and we shall feel his loss very, very keenly indeed.'

Tony Blair, British prime minister

By **MARY ROURKE**
Times Staff Writer

Sam Edwards, an "everyman" character actor who appeared in a number of classic television series, including "Dragnet," "Gunsmoke" and "Mission: Impossible," as well as movies that ranged from a World War II drama, "Twelve O' Clock High," to a musical comedy, "Hello, Dolly!," has died. He was 89.

Edwards suffered a heart attack and was admitted to a hospital near his home in Durango, Colo., where he died Wednesday, according to his stepson, William Edwards.

Born into a show business family in Macon, Ga., Edwards made his acting debut as a baby, held in the arms of his actress mother, Edna Park, in a stage production of "Tess of the Storm Country."

Starting in the early 1930s, he worked in radio drama, several times in programs that involved other family members. One of them, "The Adventures of Sonny and Buddy," was a pioneer weekly broadcast series in which Edwards played a boy who ran away from home and joined a traveling medicine show.

In 1937 he and his brother, sister and parents played themselves in "The Edwards Family." The show ended abruptly when Sam was drafted into the Army in 1942.



Sam Edwards, 89; Actor Played 'Everyman' Roles

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1, 2004

For most of his three-year tour of duty he entertained U.S. troops in Africa, Italy and Asia. When he left the service he returned to radio and played one of his most memorable characters, Dexter Franklin, the bumbling teenage boy next door in "Meet Corliss Archer." He joined the long-running show in the late '40s and remained through the final season in 1955. Janet Waldo played Corliss.

By the early 1950s Edwards was working steadily in television, making guest appearances in many of the most successful shows. One of his regular roles was Mr. Anderson, the town banker, on "Little House on the Prairie" from 1978 until 1983.

He supplied voices in several children's productions — Thumper the rabbit in the ani-

SAM EDWARDS

The versatile actor appeared in such TV series as "Dragnet" and "Gunsmoke."

mated Disney film "Bambi" in 1942 and, more recently, Owl and Tigger on several "Winnie the Pooh" LP records.

Edwards is survived by his wife, Beverly; his brother, Jack; three stepchildren; and several step-grandchildren.

RADIO

100 years of broadcasting

BY DELIA M. RIOS
NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

The radio age reaches the century mark on Wednesday, inaugurated on Dec. 12, 1901, by Guglielmo Marconi's first wireless transmissions across the Atlantic. Five years later to the month, on Christmas Eve 1906, radio's essence took form, in the first broadcast of a human voice out of Brant Rock, Mass., which startled Morse code operators aboard nearby ships.

The voice reading from the Gospel of Luke belonged to Reginald Fessenden, the Canadian inventor who fine-tuned Marconi's work to create amplitude modulation — better known as AM — making voice radio signals possible. He performed a violin solo of "O Holy Night" and signed off by wishing his listeners a merry Christmas.

In that brief broadcast, the enduring immediacy, intimacy and humanity of radio already were evident.

It's easy to lose sight of that today, in the age of the Internet and in the dominating presence of television. But consider this live Sept. 11 broadcast out of New York's WOR-AM:

"Oh, my God, another plane has just hit the World Trade Center," gasped news director Joe Bartlett, who took to the air after the first tower was struck. He could see it all from the station's window. Gathering himself, he said, "Something very sinister has just happened."

Later, what came to him were the distraught words of broadcaster Herb Morrison, who in 1937 saw the airship Hindenburg burst into flames over Lakehurst: "Oh, the humanity..."

The human voice can conjure up vivid images born of imagination — a deeply personal experience, said Samuel Brylawski, head of the Library of Congress' recorded sound section, which includes more than a half-million radio broadcasts.

"Maybe you even listen harder," Brylawski said.

Radio brought us the world

Over much of the 20th century, radio was how Americans experienced their times and expressed themselves. The television news and entertainment formats so familiar to us developed on radio.

It was through radio that they thrilled to the 1923 World Series between the New York Yankees and the New York Giants, and that they listened horrified to reports of the 1932 Lindbergh baby kidnapping. They shuddered at the wailing of air raid sirens in Edward R. Murrow's reports from wartime London of the 1940s, and they fell in love to Frank Sinatra and danced to Glenn Miller.

Americans followed the adventures of Lassie in the 1950s and laughed at Bob Hope's Pepsodent radio series. They stood vigil for astronaut Alan Shepard's 1961 space flight, and soon afterward shrieked to the records of the Fab Four from Liverpool.

There is something of the poetic in radio, particularly in its most dramatic moments. Bartlett, the New York news director,

believes radio captures emotion in a way television can't, because of the speaker's inflection and delivery.

Murrow was a master at it. His broadcast from London's Trafalgar Square during an air raid contained this account: "One of those big red buses is coming around the corner — double-deckers they are. Just a few lights on the top deck. In this blackness, it looks very much like a ship passing in the night and you just see the portholes."

Radio's intimacy and power come from the illusion of a conversation. President Franklin D. Roosevelt understood this, deliberately slowing his speech to draw in listeners to his "fireside chats." When he spoke on Dec. 9, 1941, two days after Pearl Harbor, it was at a rate of only 88 words a minute. He was so effective that families set an empty chair by their radio for the president, said Lawrence Levine, co-author with his wife, Cornelia, of the upcoming book "The People and the President: America's Conversation With FDR."

If radio brought the world into our homes, it wasn't confined there for long. Car and transistor radios, to say nothing of boom boxes, made it portable and ubiquitous in daily life.

Nearly 219 million Americans — or 96 percent of those 12 and over — tune in to 13,012 stations for news, sports, weather, traffic and music, averaging 20 hours of listening a week, says Arbitron, the marketing research company. Public radio weekly listeners nearly doubled between 1989 and 2000, from 13.3 million to 22.2 million, according to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Unlike the practice in other countries, the government never has run American radio. Radio here is big business, and less independent than ever because of it, said Brylawski, the Library of Congress curator. It relies on appealing to large numbers of listeners, and programming often is dominated by central offices and market research.

But Internet broadcasting — rather than taking away radio's audience — may be providing a market for niche programming or "narrow-casting" that recalls radio's eclectic early days. Two satellite broadcasters also propose to change the way we listen to radio

100 channels that can be heard from coast to coast.

"We are not a society that is going to be satisfied by two or three kinds of programming," Brylawski observed.

Radio's beginnings

None of this was self-evident on that Christmas Eve in 1906.

Marconi had defied skeptics by sending a wireless signal 2,000 miles from Cornwall, England, to Newfoundland, Canada. The message: Morse code for the letter "S." Marconi envisioned a practical business use for wireless transmissions — by ships or newspapers, perhaps.

Fessenden's broadcast, complete with a concert, was something else entirely. The Morse code operators listening in were puzzled, to put it mildly.

"It was not like everybody stopped and applauded," said Donna Halper, a media historian at Emerson College in Boston.

Radio's vast possibilities took a while to unfold. But once Americans took to radio, they did so with abandon.

Radio's "firsts" are a matter of vigorous debate, with Pittsburgh's KDKA often credited as the first station to broadcast regularly. But Halper argues that it's hard to say who did what first — there was so much experimentation at virtually the same time. Early radio was very democratic, with broadcasts coming from everywhere from the corner grocery store to the local church or synagogue. A broadcast from WBBG in Cape Cod came from one man's living room.

Moreover, radio had a democratizing effect.

"Suddenly, anyone who had a radio had access," Halper said.

Even in segregated cities, black musicians were on the air as early as 1921. Women discovered new careers, becoming radio station owners, broadcasters and engineers, said Halper, author of "Invisible Stars: A Social History of Women in American Broadcasting." Class lines blurred. If you couldn't afford an opera ticket or the right clothes, you could hear it on the radio.

Americans participated in national politics like never before — the first political convention was broadcast in 1924, and Calvin Coolidge's 1925 swearing-in was broadcast on radio. A national audience has heard every presidential inauguration since.

Radio's legacy is something we take for granted, although as Sept. 11 proved yet again, the medium is no less compelling.

"The important thing," said Ken Mueller, radio curator at the New York location of the Museum of Television and Radio, "is that Americans were able to hear things

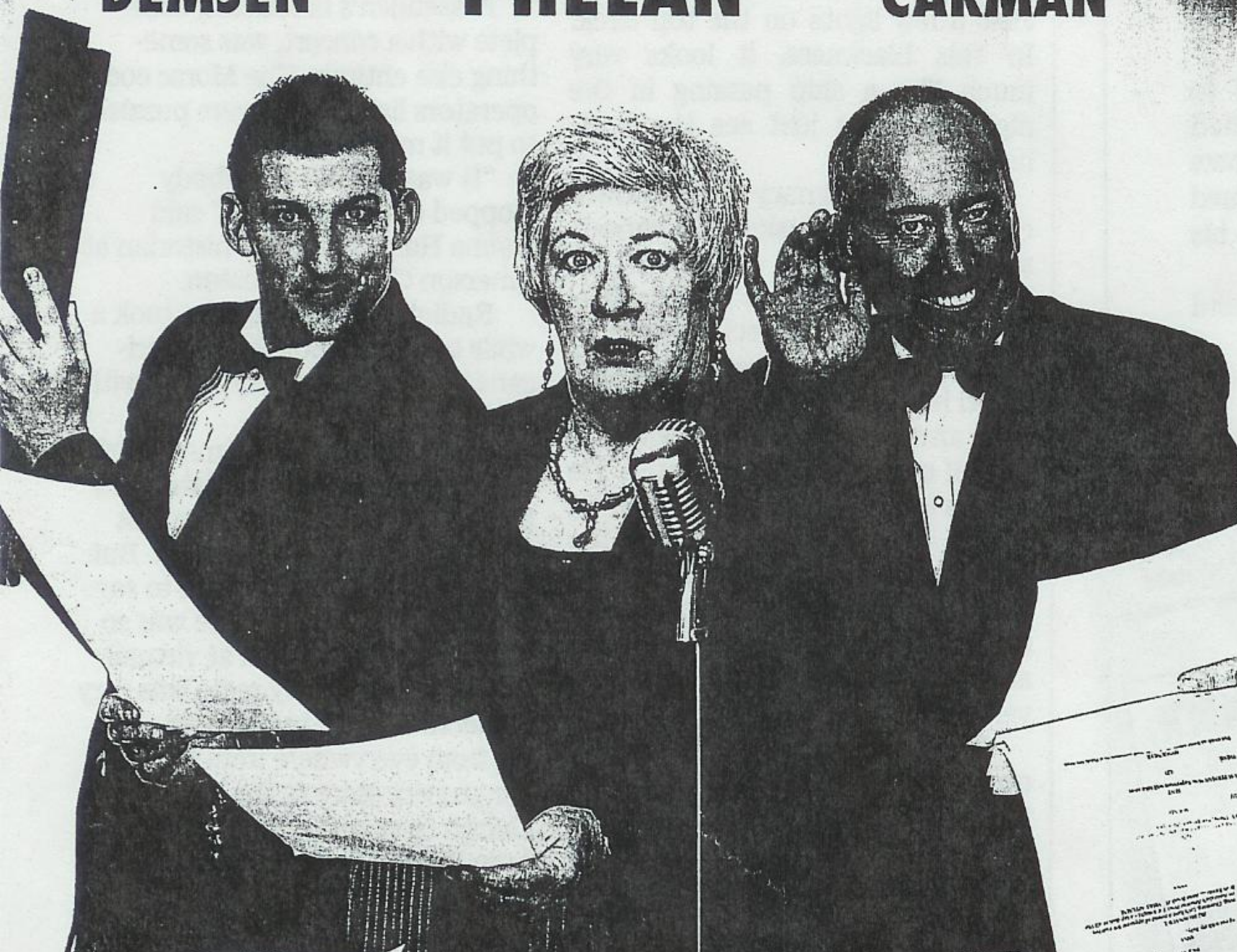


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 OF THE SONGS, COMMERCIALS, STORIES AND
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**HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE. BALLARAT
 WEDNESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 8PM**

Lester Pollfuss (b.1916), the "Wizard of Waukesha", Wisconsin, was quite simply one of the greatest creative talents in modern popular music. In the 40s he put his electronic wizardry to work in designing the first solid-body, amplified electric guitar, and developing the sound-on-sound and multi-track recording techniques that marked his many hits with wife Mary Ford (1924-1977), and which later became standard in the record industry. He has influenced every electric guitarist since.

How High The Moon was Les Paul's signature tune and one of three million sellers that dominated the popular charts for 1951 (along with Mockin' Bird Hill and The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise, all with Mary Ford singing). It is the appropriate title for Living Era's sensational 30-track compilation of his best work, culminating in that golden year. It is fascinating to hear Les singing and playing harmonica in 1937 as "Rhubarb Red", followed by four 1944/5 tracks with his trio (Blue Skies . . .) when his unique style was first heard. He also enjoyed two big hits at that time with Bing Crosby (It's Been A Long, Long Time) and The Andrews Sisters (Rumors Are Flying). Thereafter he would produce his phenomenal sounds from a home studio, amazing listeners with unbelievable multi-tracked virtuosity on such as Lover or Little Rock Getaway. The greatest commercial success came with the many remarkable recordings he made using Mary Ford as vocalist. Nine of these from 1950/2 are included here, five of them top six hits or better, including of course the million-sellers.

NATIONAL BARN DANCE

with

EDDIE PEABODY

Wizard of the Banjo

Red Foley—Uncle Ezra

Hoosier Hot Shots—Bobby Hastings—Henry Bu

**WFIL WBAL WMAL WRTD
 WTAR WJZ**

As a versatile radio actor in the 1940s, Jackson Beck played roles as varied as the erudite detective Philo Vance and "the Robin Hood of the Old West," the Cisco Kid.

But Beck, 92, who died Wednesday at his home in New York City of age-related causes, was also one of radio's top announcer-narrators on shows such as "Mark Trail," "Tom Corbett, Space Cadet," "The Man Behind the Gun" and, most memorably, "The Adventures of Superman."

The "Superman" introduction was one of radio's greatest opening signatures, a combination of voices and sound effects dominated by Beck's rich, deep tones:

Faster than a speeding bullet!

More powerful than a locomotive!

Able to leap tall buildings at a single bound!

Look! Up in the sky!

It's a bird!

It's a plane!

It's Superman!

"Yes," the narration continued, "it's Superman, strange visitor from the planet Krypton who came to Earth with amazing physical powers far beyond those of mortal men, and who, disguised as Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper, wages a never-ending battle for truth and justice...."

Beck, who was the announcer-narrator on "The Adventures of Superman" from 1943 through 1950, did the same for the "Superman" television cartoon show in the late 1960s.

"He had a hugely powerful voice," radio historian Anthony Tollin told *The Times* this week. "Along with Fred Foy, who was the classic announcer-narrator on 'The Lone Ranger,' Jackson was the greatest adventure narrator."

Indeed, Beck's voice remained a familiar one long after the demise of radio's golden age. In a career that spanned nearly 70 years, he worked constantly in front of the microphone.

From the voice of the menacing Bluto for the 1930s Popeye radio shows and later cartoons, to narrating Woody Allen's 1969 comedy "Take the Money and Run" and the "GI Joe" TV cartoons in the 1980s, Beck was one of the busiest voice performers in the business well into his 80s.

He was heard on hundreds of TV commercials, including those for Brawny paper towels ("The big, tough towel") and, recently, Frosted Flakes ("Brave adults are coming forward to admit they eat Kellogg's Frosted Flakes") — as well as such products as Little Caesar's pizza and Combat roach killer. He also did National Football League and boxing promotions for NBC, and he voiced faux commercials on "Saturday Night Live."

"Jackson had an incredible career and an uncanny ability to change with the times," said Jeff David, a voice-over narrator and longtime friend. "A lot of his fellow voice stars fell by the wayside, because they couldn't roll with the times."

In a 1990 interview with *Newsday*, Beck said: "I'm an advertising man, and I treat my voice as a business. People who treat it as art don't make any money."



SATURDAY, JULY 31, 2004 B17

JACKSON BECK

"The Adventures of Superman" radio show cast, from left, Jackie Kelk (Jimmy Olsen), Joan Alexander (Lois Lane), Beck (Beany Martin) and Clayton "Bud" Collyer (Superman/Clark Kent).

When Beck was in his 80s, Tollin said, it was estimated that he was making half a million dollars a year doing voice-overs.

"When you realize how youth-oriented this field is, Jackson was bigger and making more money than ever," Tollin said. "If you wanted a Jackson Beck-like voice, you had to get Jackson. There was no one else like him."

The New York City-born son of Broadway and silent film character actor Max Beck, Jackson entered radio in 1931 after a stab at stage acting and working as a runner for the New York Stock Exchange.

In 1937, he was a founding member of the American Federation of Radio Artists, which later became the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Over the years, he held numerous offices in the New York local, including president, as well as serving as first vice president of AFTRA national.

As a force in the union movement, David said, "he was one of the very big guns to be reckoned with."

During World War II, Beck impersonated Soviet dictator Josef Stalin and other figures on "The March of Time" radio show, in which actors portrayed world luminaries in re-enactments of the week's news from *Time* magazine. He also was one of the announcers on the "March of Time" newsreels.

In the 1940s, he co-starred on "Joe and Ethel Turp," a daytime comedy series based on the stories of Damon Runyon. And, among many other credits, Beck was the original Tank Tinker on "Hop Harrigan" and a regular on the Milton Berle radio show. He also had a recurring role as the manager of a fleabag hotel where Jack Benny "stayed" whenever he took his radio show to New York.

Tollin said the best actors during the golden age of radio often did 20 or 30 shows a week, running from studio to stu-

dio. And someone like Beck might play as many as three characters on a single show. "He had tremendous versatility," Tollin said.

On "Superman," for example, Beck not only narrated the show, but he might also play a thug or a crook, and he had a recurring role as Beany Martin, the teenage copy boy at the *Daily Planet*. Whenever "Superman" had segments featuring Batman, Beck often played Batman's butler, Alfred Pennyworth.

For the last two decades, Beck was a popular figure at the annual Friends of Old-Time Radio conventions in Newark, N.J., where Tollin directed Beck and other veteran radio actors in re-creations of at least two dozen classic radio shows.

Tollin said he grew up hearing Beck as the voices of King Leonardo and the villain Biggy Rat in the 1960 TV cartoon series "King Leonardo and His Short Subjects," as well as hearing Beck's voice for various characters on the "Tennessee Tuxedo" cartoon series.

But watching Beck and his colleagues in action at the radio conventions was a revelation, Tollin said.

"Radio has correctly been called the theater of the mind, or the theater of imagination," he said. "It was these actors, through their voices and through powerful vocal interpretations, who created the 'pictures' on radio."

Beck, he recalled, "once played [outlaw] Butch Cavendish in a 'Lone Ranger' re-creation, and as he 'got off the horse,' he had that little groan: You heard him getting off the horse in his voice. He just knew instinctively that that's part of creating the illusion."

Beck is survived by his stepson Leslie Winter and two grandchildren.

For a sampling of vintage Jackson Beck, visit the Friends of Old-Time Radio website at www.fotr.net.

Les Tremayne, 90;

Les Tremayne, one of the best-known actors on radio in the 1930s and '40s who starred in "The Thin Man" and "The Falcon" but is best remembered as the longtime leading man on "The First Nighter," has died. He was 90.

Tremayne, whose film credits included the science fiction classic "The War of the Worlds," died of heart failure Friday at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica.

In a six-decade career that began on radio in Chicago in 1930, Tremayne once estimated that he had worked on more than 30,000 broadcasts, with as many as 45 radio shows a week in the 1930s.

In various polls, he was voted the No. 1 dramatic actor in the highly popular commercial medium.

Tremayne was so familiar to radio audiences that in one poll in the early 1940s, he was cited as one of the three most famous voices in America. The other two were President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Bing Crosby.

"He had a silken, wonderful voice — it was in the Orson Welles timbre; it kind of was honeyed in the best sense," Norman Corwin, the renowned radio writer, director and producer of the 1930s and '40s, told The Times on Monday.

"Les Tremayne," Corwin added, "was always a name that had considerable luminescence in the profession."

Marty Halperin, vice president of Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters, the social-professional organization that Tremayne helped found in 1966, said the actor's voice "was very authoritative and cultural, but he could do all sorts of accents."

Calling Tremayne "one of the icons of radio," Halperin said Tremayne "was a very warm, friendly person — and funny. I have recordings of phone messages he left me in different dialects."

In the mid-1980s, Tremayne co-hosted and co-produced "Please Stand By: A History of Radio" for the Southern California Consortium.

Radio Hall of Fame in 1995. He was inducted into the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, a charter member of the Tremayne, who was a member of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

Born in Balham, England, Tremayne moved to Chicago with his family at age 4. He learned to hide his British accent after he was beaten up by bullies, said his wife, Joan, on Monday.

In 1927, after a year in high school, Tremayne's father forced him to quit and go to work. His mother encouraged him to become an actor, and he worked in community theater, danced in vaudeville and was an amusement park barker before landing his first radio job in 1930.

He went on to appear on numerous radio shows, including "Grand Hotel," often without benefit of rehearsal.

"It was the greatest training for actors that ever existed," Tremayne said of radio in an interview published earlier this year in Nostalgia Digest. "You'd arrive at the studio, they'd hand you a script, and it was air time. You just hoped you'd get the voices right and you had to figure out ways of getting from one [studio] to another as quickly as you could."

Tremayne received his big break in 1936: He replaced Don Ameche as the leading man on "The First Nighter," a weekly program of original half-hour radio dramas set in the fictional "Little Theater off Times Square."

The show, which was presented as if listeners were attending a Broadway opening of a new play each week, was broadcast in front of a live audience in Chicago.

To complement the glamour of an opening night, Tremayne was known to wear a top hat, white tie and tails and carry a cane, while his leading lady, Barbara Luddy, wore an evening gown.

Tremayne, who was the original leading man on "The Romance of Helen Trent" and also starred on "Betty and Bob," left Chicago in 1943 for Los Angeles and later New York.

In Los Angeles, he co-starred with Bob Crosby on the "Old Gold Show," and after the show moved to New York when Crosby left for military service, Tremayne co-starred with a relatively unknown comic named Jackie Gleason.

While in New York, he starred in "The Thin Man" and "The Falcon." He also teamed up with his second wife, actress Alice Reinhardt, on "The Tremaynes," a WOR breakfast talk show that aired six days a week. He also appeared for 18 months in "Detective Story" on Broadway.

Tremayne made numerous guest appearances on television. He also was a regular on "One Man's Family" (1950), played Inspector Richard Queen on the 1958-'59 NBC series "Ellery Queen" and played Mr. Mentor on the children's series "Shazam!" (1974). He later had a featured role on "General Hospital."

Among his movie roles, Tremayne played the auctioneer in Alfred Hitchcock's "North by Northwest" and had a substantial part as the no-nonsense Maj. Gen. Mann in "The War of the Worlds," co-starring Gene Barry and Ann Robinson.

On Monday, Robinson remembered being "absolutely thrilled" to work with Tremayne on the 1953 film.

She had grown up listening to "The First Nighter," she said, "and here was one of my favorite idols, Les Tremayne, and a voice you'll never forget as long as you live, a magnificent voice."

In addition to his wife of 23 years, he is survived by his brother, Charles Henning.

A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. Jan. 7 at Westwood Village Memorial Park, 1218 Glendon Ave., West Los Angeles.



LES TREMAYNE

He once estimated that he had worked on more than 30,000 broadcasts. He was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1995.



NBC

Tremayne, in 1937, starred with Barbara Luddy in "The First Nighter" radio show.

Harry Babbitt,

APRIL 22, 2004

Harry Babbitt, the Kay Kyser orchestra lead vocalist who sang on such Kyser hits as "Three Little Fishies," "On A Slow Boat to China" and "Who Wouldn't Love You," has died. He was 90.

Babbitt, a longtime Newport Beach resident, died April 9 of age-related causes in a nursing home in Aliso Viejo, said his son Michael.

Dubbed "Handsome Harry" by Kyser, Babbitt sang with the Kay Kyser band from 1938 to about 1949, with time out for service in the Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Known for his warm, high-baritone voice, Babbitt provided vocals on numerous Kyser band hits, including "The White Cliffs of Dover," "(Lights Out) Til Reveille," "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings," "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle," "The Umbrella Man" and "Can't Get Out of This Mood."

"He was a very unique personality singer," big band singer Connie Haines told The Times this week. "His was a definite style, but Harry could do a little bit of everything."

Indeed, Babbitt supplied a comic high voice in "Three Little Fishies," sung with Kyser female lead singer Ginny Simms, trumpet player-comedian Ish Kabibble and sax player-singer Sully Mason.

Babbitt's high voice — a little-girl voice dubbed "Little Audrey" — was featured on several other Kyser band songs, and he later used it on a solo recording of "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth," for which he included a lisp.

Babbitt even supplied the raucous laugh on "Woody Woodpecker," Kyser's 1948 hit novelty tune.

Kyser archivist Steve Beasley said that Babbitt sang as many serious songs as novelty tunes.

"He came on the scene with a fresh, good-natured, down-to-earth singing approach, which complemented the Kyser band's informal, folksy atmosphere," said Beasley, who runs a Kyser website. "He just kind of put a smile on the face of the

As part of the Kyser band, Babbitt also appeared in seven movies that starred Kyser. He also was featured on "Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge," a popular comedy-musical radio quiz show on NBC, on which Kyser wore a cap and gown and was dubbed the "Ol' Professor." His musicians wore beanies and lettered sweaters for the benefit of the studio audience.

Babbitt was a radio and nightclub performer in his native St. Louis when Kyser's band arrived on tour. Babbitt later recalled that a lighting man at the show told Kyser, "There's a kid in town that oughta be singing with you."

Babbitt auditioned and joined the Kyser band on tour in 1938, playing everywhere from the Waldorf-Astoria in New York to Chicago's Aragon Ballroom to the Hollywood Palladium. For many years, the Kyser band opened the summer season at the Casino on Catalina Island.

The band was based in Hollywood during World War II, and when not touring, it played nearly every weekend at the Hollywood Canteen, the USO club where stars and starlets volunteered to entertain servicemen.

"We'd really get up for those performances because we felt it was so important," Babbitt told The Times in 1991. "It was also really important to Kay; he really couldn't do enough for the GIs. . . . He even wore GI fatigue boots when we played."

The band also regularly went on tour to sell war bonds and performed frequently at GI camp shows. The Kyser orchestra disbanded in 1949.

By then, Babbitt was hosting "The Second Cup of Coffee Club," a popular 15-minute early morning radio show that ran for 10 years on CBS. A television pioneer, he hosted two long-running musical shows on KTLA-TV in Los Angeles: "Bandstand Review" and "Hollywood Opportunity." He also hosted a short-lived musical show on NBC called



Los Angeles Times

HARRY BABBITT

Besides singing with the band, he was known for the raucous laugh he supplied for the novelty tune "Woody Woodpecker."



SHE'S MORE THAN MADGE

JAN MINER

The stage actress portrayed Madge the Manicurist in Palmolive television commercials for 26 years

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2004 B1

Jan Miner, 86; Actress, Palmolive Ads' Madge

From Associated Press

Jan Miner, a New York stage actress who gained fame as Madge the Manicurist in Palmolive television ads, has died. She was 86.

Miner died Sunday at the Bethel Health Care Facility in Bethel, Conn., her agent, Michael Thomas, told the New York Times. She had been living in nearby Southbury, Conn.

From the 1940s to the '80s, Miner appeared on and off Broadway and in productions in St. Louis; New Haven, Conn.; and Stratford, Conn. She also was on radio programs, including "Boston Blackie," a series in the late 1940s. Miner appeared in repertory productions at the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford for six seasons, and in films, television plays and series.

She won her most widespread attention in Palmolive

RELATED STORY

Calendar: Miner relished her spot in TV pop-cultdom. E3

commercials as Madge, praising the gentleness of its detergent to a customer surprised to find her hands soaping in it. She played the character for 26 years. It allowed her the luxury of selecting theater roles. "I'd dip my hands in Palmolive the rest of my life," Miner once said.

She frequently shared the stage with her husband of 20 years, Richard Merrell, an actor and writer. He died in 1981.

Miner was born Oct. 19, 1917, in Boston. She studied at the Vesper George School of Art in Boston and trained for the stage with Lee Strasberg, among others.

She is survived by a brother, Donald Miner of Concord, N.H.

Penny Singleton, 95; Played Blondie on Radio

Penny Singleton, best remembered as Blondie, the scatterbrained yet often sensible character she played in 28 movies from 1938 to 1950, died Wednesday at Sherman Oaks Hospital. She was 95.

She had suffered a stroke two weeks ago, said longtime friend Dick Sheehan.

Singleton was known to later generations as the voice of Jane Jetson in the cartoon movies and TV shows about the futuristic family. But she was most identified with her role as the wife of bumbling Dagwood Bumstead in the movies based on the popular comic strip created by Chic Young.

The family life of the Bumsteads and their children, Alexander (Baby Dumpling) and Cookie, along with their dog Daisy, involved humorous and numerous misunderstandings and mishaps concerning everything from Blondie's efforts to get Dagwood's job back (he was always getting fired, it seemed) to Blondie's efforts to start a bakery business.

As Mrs. Bumstead, Singleton was constantly on call to her husband's high-pitched, plaintive cry of "Blondeeeeeee!"

Like the Andy Hardy and Charlie Chan movies of about the same era, the "Blondie" episodes brought audiences to movie houses two or more times a year.

"For a while there, Blondie was apt to turn up on the bottom half of the bill about every other time you went to the movies," John Springer and Jack Hamilton wrote in "They Had Faces Then."

Besides her movie role as Blondie, Singleton played the character on a popular radio program from 1939 to 1950. But by the time Blondie came to television for the first time in 1957, Singleton was almost 50, and the role went to the younger Pamela Britton.

Born Dorothy McNulty on Sept. 15, 1908, in Philadelphia, Singleton was the daughter of a newspaper typesetter. She began her career at the age of 7 singing songs at movie houses. She also performed in vaudeville as a child.

"I suppose it would be difficult for many people today to understand, but vaudeville was the most marvelous school for a child imaginable," she told the Cincinnati Post in 1997.

She also was a talented gymnast whose coach thought she should try out for the Olympics, but by then she had earned money professionally and was not considered an amateur.

By the time she was a teenager, she was getting chorus girl and other small roles on Broadway, including doing a number with Jack Benny in a revue called "The Great Temptations." By 1928, she had joined a road company of "Good News," starring opposite Jack Haley. Back on Broadway, she sang two numbers with Haley — "Button Up Your Overcoat" and "I Could Give Up Anything but You" — in "Follow Thru."

While in her 20s, she moved to Hollywood, appeared in a series of minor roles in better movies — or sometimes better roles in minor movies — and changed her name to Penny Singleton. She chose her first name because she had always saved pennies; Singleton was the name of her first husband, to whom she was married briefly.

Singleton had a role in the 1930 film version of "Good News" and in "After the Thin Man" (1936), one of the Nick and Nora Charles movies starring William Powell and Myrna Loy. In the latter, Singleton, playing saucy nightclub singer Polly Byrnes, delivers this line: "Hey, don't call me illiterate — my parents were married right here at City Hall!"

Singleton appeared in "Boy Meets Girl" (1938) and many other films.

By the time she was 30, she landed the role of Blondie. "I was thrilled but also surprised," she told the Cincinnati Post in 1997. "I had been a runet all my life."

She quickly bleached her hair and went on to star opposite Arthur Lake, who played Dagwood, for the next dozen years for Columbia Studios.

The remarkable run of movies began with "Blondie" which included "Blondie on a Budget" (1940), in which budget actress Rita Hayworth played a role; "Blondie for Vice" (1942), "Blondie Hits the

Jackpot" and the final film in the series, "Beware of Blondie" (1950). Only in 1944, a war year, was no "Blondie" movie released. None were shorter than 64 minutes nor longer than 75.

Besides Hayworth, many actors who later became well-known appeared with Singleton and Lake in supporting roles, including Robert Sterling, Bruce Bennett, William Frawley, Jimmy Durante, Zasu Pitts, Lloyd Bridges, Glenn Ford, Hans Conried and Anita Louise.

The regular characters besides the Bumsteads were Dagwood's boss, J.C. Dithers, played by Jonathan Hale; the beleaguered mailman, Mr. Crumb, played by Irving Bacon (later mailmen were Eddie Acuff and Dick Wessel); and Daisy the dog, played by a series of cute canines. The Bumstead children were played by Larry Simms and Marjorie Kent (also known as Marjorie Ann Mutchie).

Robert Sparks, who became Singleton's second husband and to whom she was married for 22 years until his death in 1963, produced some of the Blondie movies.

In his movie guide, critic Leonard Maltin said the first Blondies "were the best — fresh and original, with many clever touches belying the fact that they were low-budget films."

He said that by the mid-1940s, however, the movies had become formulaic.

After the Blondie franchise died out, Singleton went on the road with a nightclub act but became mostly inactive in Hollywood. She appeared in the film "The Best Man" in 1964 and, briefly in 1971, she replaced her old friend Ruby Keeler in "No, No Nanette" on Broadway. As children, Singleton and Keeler had gone to professional children's school together in New York.

Singleton was the voice of Jane Jetson in the TV series "The Jetsons," which began in

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specials and a 1990 movie featuring the futuristic family, as well as a few guest appearances on other TV programs.

After "Blondie," Singleton became active in labor unions, particularly the American Guild of Variety Artists, to which she was elected president in 1969.

In 1966, she was a leader in the strike to get better working conditions for Radio City Music Hall's Rockettes.

At the age of 88, Singleton said of her career, "I loved everything I did, big or small, it didn't matter as long as it was fun and was pleasing to people."

Singleton, who had lived in Sherman Oaks for many years, is survived by her daughters, Dorothy Henry of Sherman Oaks and Susan Sparks of Paris; two grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

Services will be Tuesday at St. Francis de Sales Church, 13370 Valleyheart Drive, Sherman Oaks. For information, call (818) 784-0105.



Columbia Pictures

PENNY
SINGLETON

She was the voice of
Jane Jetson in TV's "The
Jetsons."

Time capsule

Groucho came to Milwaukee to celebrate Pabst's 100th anniversary

By Steve Jagler, of SBT

The photographs of Groucho Marx and Danny Kaye recently discovered at the Pabst Brewery Co. headquarters in Milwaukee were taken during tours to the city to broadcast a weekly national radio show. The photographs were found amid the rubble inside the former brewery offices by Karen and Jim Haertel, who are redeveloping the historic Milwaukee site.

One of the photographs features former Pabst chairman of the board Frederic Pabst Jr. slicing a multi-layered cake, with icing that declares, "Pabst Centennial, 1844-1944." Marx hosted a live broadcast of the "Pabst Blue Ribbon Town" radio program on Feb. 5, 1944, according to J. David Goldin, an old-time radio archivist and the creator of the www.radiogoldindex.com research project. Goldin, a resident of Newtown, Conn., collects, catalogs and documents old radio programs. "Pabst Blue Ribbon Town was a regular radio series. It was a variety show. It was a very popular show," Goldin told *Small Business Times*.

The Feb. 5, 1944, episode, which aired for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) from the Milwaukee Auditorium, was devoted to Pabst's 100th anniversary, according to research by Wayne Boenig, founder of <http://www.marx-brothers.org/listening/radio.htm>, an Internet site devoted to the careers of the Marx Brothers. The 30-minute show featured Marx and a cast of guests, including Gene Tierney, Fay McKenzie, Leo Gorcey, Ken Niles, Robert Armbruster and his Blue Ribbon Blenders.

In his description of the episode, Goldin said, "The program originates from the Milwaukee Auditorium. The cast visits the Milwaukee of 100 years ago. G. Boone Marx is 'the roughest, toughest, hombre in town.' Groucho sings, 'Don't Forget There's A War Going On.'" Boenig's written account for the Milwaukee episode states, "Gene Tierney joins Groucho and company in the first of two celebrations of Pabst Blue Ribbon's 100th anniversary, showing us what life was like in Milwaukee in 1844." The second celebration for Pabst's 100th anniversary was actually broadcast one week later from Peoria, Ill., where Pabst had opened another brewery.

In describing the Marx Brothers' radio careers, Boenig wrote: "During the mid-1930's, radio began to displace movies as the most popular entertainment medium. After all, it was free, it didn't require going out, and a much broader array of show formats was available, most of which did not require the time commitment of the audience that movies required. This boom in popularity saw a scramble to secure available talent for radio shows, and big-name Hollywood movie personalities were a prime target."

The CBS broadcasts aired locally on WISN-AM, according to former Wisconsin Gov. Lee Dreyfus, whose father, Woods Dreyfus, worked at the station from 1927 to 1946 as a producer and station manager. Dreyfus recalls his father recounting his work with Groucho when the comedian came to Milwaukee. "By the way, Groucho Marx drove my father nuts. My father was of that breed of that era in radio, where everything had to be timed out exactly, to the second, and Groucho would ad lib," said Dreyfus, who grew up in Milwaukee and now resides in Waukesha.

Although Groucho often strayed from the script, he still nearly always managed to end skits at precisely the right time, Dreyfus said. "My father thought he was absolutely the quickest, brightest talent he ever met," Dreyfus said. The fact that such famous performers came to the Pabst offices was a testament to the company's national presence, according to John Eastberg, historian at The Pabst Mansion in Milwaukee. "It shows the national pull and prestige Pabst had. They were huge, national advertisers, where everybody recognized the name of the product," Eastberg said.

Kaye was the host of The Danny Kaye Show, which was sponsored by Pabst, in 1945-46. "It was a variety format. It was comedy. Danny Kaye would sing two songs and then do a skit with the guest star," Goldin said. "It was not unusual for celebrities to travel to do promotions for their sponsors," said John Gurda, a Milwaukee historian and author of "The Making of Milwaukee." At the former Pabst brewery, the Haertels also found a photograph of entertainer Donald O'Connor, most

famous for co-starring in "Singing in the Rain." In the photo, O'Connor is standing at the entrance of the ladies room in the Pabst headquarters, with his reflection being repeated through a series of mirrors.

Another photo depicts performer Jimmy Durante bellying up to the bar at the Pabst complex with, as per usual, a very animated look on his face. The Haertels aren't certain of the contexts of the O'Connor or Durante photos. Marx, Kaye, O'Connor and Durante all have passed away. Pabst eventually moved its radio sponsorships out of the variety show format and became the title sponsor of the "Pabst Blue Ribbon Bouts" in 1950. "Pabst was mostly comedy shows until they switched to boxing. I guess the demographics were more appealing to them, because the people who followed boxing were men," Goldin said.

Sixty years later, the dialogue is eerie

The Feb. 5, 1944, episode of "Pabst Blue Ribbon Town," a radio show sponsored by the former Pabst Brewing Co., was broadcast live from the Milwaukee Auditorium.

The episode, which aired for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and was broadcast locally on WISN-AM, was devoted to Pabst's 100th anniversary, according to research by Wayne Boenig, contributor to www.marx-brothers.org/listening/radio.htm, an Internet site devoted to the careers of the Marx Brothers.

The 30-minute show featured Marx and a cast of guests, including Gene Tierney, Fay McKenzie, Leo Gorcey, Ken Niles, Robert Armbruster and his Blue Ribbon Blenders.

In a recording of the broadcast given to Small Business Times by Boenig, a loud and raucous Milwaukee crowd welcomes Groucho's introduction at the beginning of the show. The dialogue is classic Groucho schtick.

Co-star Fay McKenzie says to the host, "Oh Groucho, look, there's Lake Michigan! My, it's choppy today. See all the whitecaps?"

In his trademark sarcastic tone, Groucho replies, "Yes, isn't it wonderful? You get near the place where they make Pabst beer, and even the lake has a head on it." The crowd erupts in laughter and applause.

Announcer Durward Kirby then interrupts the skit to promote Pabst and its 100-year anniversary, in a pitch that seems eerily ironic today, given the brewer's demise a half-century later.

"We don't want to get too serious at our 100th anniversary celebration here at Milwaukee. It'll be a long, long time before our next 100-year party. But there's one thing we do think we ought to say. For a full century, our company has grown and prospered because we've always brewed and sold quality beers. Beers that were honestly made. Beers that were honestly sold. Premium beers that have made fast and loyal friends all over the world," Kirby tells the audience. "Today you enjoy beer that all our 100 years of brewing skills can produce. Pabst Blue Ribbon, a delicious blend 33 fine brews with a smooth, satisfying flavor that only full-flavor blending can achieve. And now, as we enter our second hundred years, we want to reaffirm our pledge and our promise, that whenever you buy Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, wherever you buy it, it will continue to be the finest beer we know how to make. Rich and smooth and mellow. A master blend of fine ingredients and a century of skill. A beer to order with confidence and served with pride. That is Pabst Blue Ribbon."

March 19, 2004 Small Business Times, Milwaukee

To hear the WTMJ-AM 620 report on the Small Business Times news story about the discoveries at the former Pabst Brewing Co. site, visit <http://www.620wtmj.com/620programs/wmn/>. WTMJ is a business news broadcast partner of Small Business Times.

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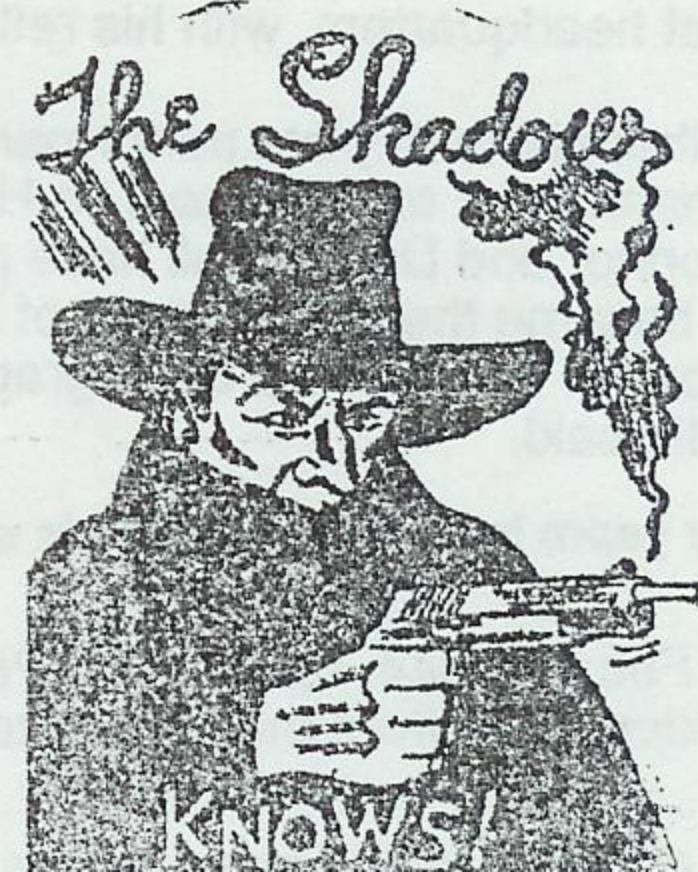
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Radio waves again

THEATRE

Tina Giannoukos

IT TAKES humour and some nostalgia to revive a genre that has long since been overshadowed by television.

Don Mackay, the man behind the revival of the Lux Radio Theatre, is the first to admit old-fashioned fun and a walk down memory lane have been driving forces behind his endeavours.

But that's to sell Mackay's Lux Radio Theatre short.

Mackay, through his Lux Radio Theatre series for the Arts Centre's *Morning Melodies* series, is directing the Australian classic *Picnic at Hanging Rock*.

The original Australian version of the Lux Radio Theatre was adapted from the US program broadcast from Hollywood and produced by Cecil B. De Mille and others to promote new movies.

Mackay, 69, revived Lux Radio Theatre in 2000. He grew up



Lux a fortune: (left to right) Simon Mallory, Beverley Dunn and Don Mackay recreate the radio-play days. Picture: DARRYL GREGORY

listening to radio plays and later worked in them.

He and veteran actor Beverley Dunn, 70, who plays the headmistress in the play, were at the front line of theatre radio in the 1950s.

"With Lux Radio Theatre, I had the idea of recreating the days when people did radio plays live in

front of an audience on Sunday nights," he says. "It was a very theatrical thing to do.

"I thought wouldn't it be fun just to try out recreating that?"

"It's a really unusual way of telling a story to have actors assuming they're on the radio being broadcast live.

Simon Mallory, 27, from TV's *The Secret Life of Us*, is too young to have heard a Lux radio broadcast, but that hasn't stopped him being excited about the concept.

He says he "could imagine my folks sitting around the wireless listening to these plays".

Dunn, 70, has been in showbiz for 50 years, appearing in *Shine* and spending five years in *Bellbird*, and more recently appearing in the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of *The Visit*.

"I always wanted to be an actor and I've been very fortunate to have been able to be one," Dunn says.

LUX RADIO THEATRE

What: Picnic at Hanging Rock
Where: Arts Centre
When: Monday, 11am and 1.30pm
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Ethel & Albert - NBC Radio Monitor: w/Peg Lynch and Alan Bunce (CD)



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These sparkling 3 to 4 minutes vignettes are complete mini-episodes created especially for NBC Radio's Monitor programming and broadcast 1963 to 1965. These unique programs are being made available for the first time... exclusively by Peg Lynch Recordings.

Peg Lynch is a radio pioneer - some call her the Lady Who Invented Sitcom. Her warm, fast and funny creation, Ethel & Albert -- the everyday life of an average middle-class couple living in small-town America -- became one of the country's most popular husband-and-wife comedies from the day it was first heard in 1938. Starting as a

three-minute filler between the Women's Hour and the weather, it zoomed from a small radio station in Minnesota Minnesota (KATE in Peg's hometown of Albert Lea) to ABC in New York, where it was expanded to 15 minutes and later to a half hour. It's popularity increased even more when it moved to live television in 1950 -- first on the Kate Smith Show and then to its own half-hour weekly slot in 1953. The series returned to radio on CBS in 1957 as The Couple Next Door. From 1963 to 1965, it reprised its original three-minute format on NBC Radio Monitor. It was revived as a syndicated radio feature in the mid-70s as The Little Things in Life.

Peg Lynch's comedy is timeless and ever believable. She writes about the little things in life--losing the car keys, the jar that won't open, looking for that other shoe, the guests who leave things and

then need them mailed, the driver's license that expires--the things that strike a responsive chord in us all. Devoted fans of the show included hundreds of well-known names of the day, such as James Thurber, George S. Kaufman, Jack Benny, Phil Silvers, Eleanor Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Charles Laughton, Trevor Howard, Basil Rathbone, and novelist John Cheever, who expressed an interest in writing for the show (Ms. Lynch politely declined).

During her six-decade career, Peg Lynch has written more than 10,000 scripts for radio and television, alone and unaided, and she still performs her comedy material across the country.

This CD, Volume 1, starring Peg Lynch and Alan Bunce is from the NBC Radio Monitor series 1963-65 (*approx. 3 to 4 min. per episode*).

[Click here to send a message to Peg Lynch](#)

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