



Mr Frank Thomas, actor, author, and good friend to all.

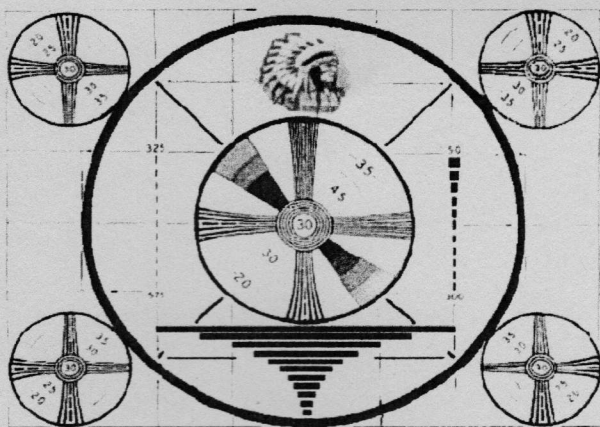
Spaceman's Luck Tom -

by Jan Merlin

We gathered at the grave site, a trim green lawn shaded by a large tree, at 3:00 pm...about 20 close friends and relatives, of which 14 were considered the actual invited. The elegant heavy wooden coffin was already in place over the open grave, blanketed with flowers. More flowers were hung on stands and in baskets to one side. His mother and father's graves were next to his. A white church with a clock on its steeple loomed in the background. The afternoon blazed with sunlight, and some folk sat on a row of chairs while the others stood behind them as a minister read his long bio of Frankie's career and life doings. When he had done with his summary and prayers, the guests were invited to speak any words they wished to say, and a few did. Mostly relating amusing happenings they experienced with Frankie. Few knew he'd already had another. His original space cadet uniform had been left at the mortuary for them to dress him in... and when the few family members had a short viewing period just before the burial time, it was discovered that the upper part of the uniform had been put on backwards, so that he was zippered up the front, and the insignia of the Space Cadets was on his back. Of course, that mistake was hastily remedied before the coffin was brought to the site. I had to chuckle, knowing that Frank would have found it as funny as I did.

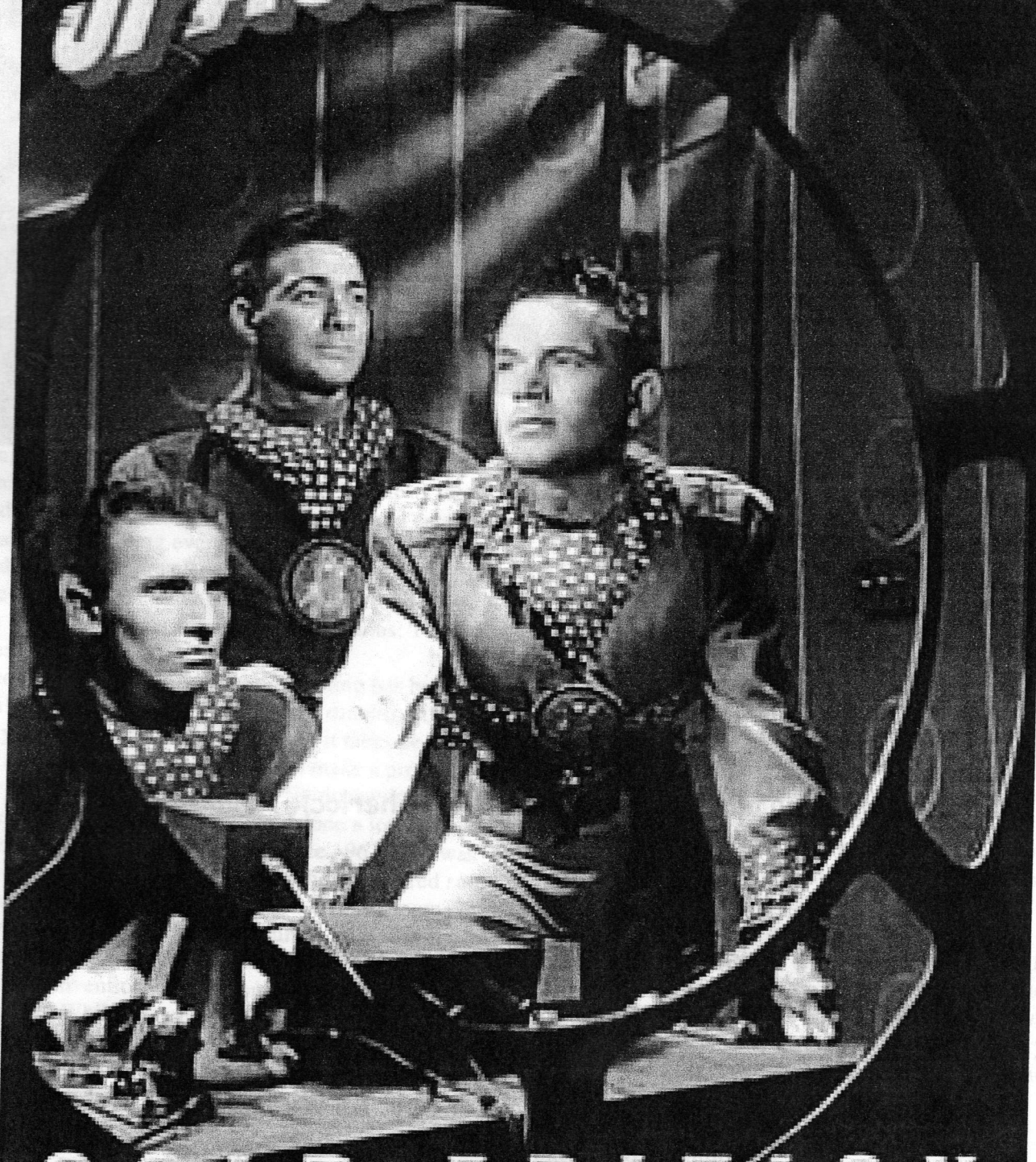
Julie stood to read the words to the Space Academy oath and the Space Cadet song... it was quite moving, for it personified all that Frankie believed and portrayed in his favorite role. She had everyone wish Frankie Spaceman's Luck together, and then the coffin lid was opened for the guests to place

his old golf balls and photographs of his family and friends and the folded American flag once displayed at his father's funeral. I sprinkled Frankie with a handful of tiny gold metallic stars and wished him farewell under my breath... and as the folk left the coffin, I took a few pictures before the lid was reclosed. The invited 14 departed for the Bistro Restaurant, one of Frankie's favorites, and had a fine dinner and drinks and more talk about the man they had lost. It wasn't the same without him there... I had no sense of him being with us at all. I think he stayed behind to be with his Mom and Dad.

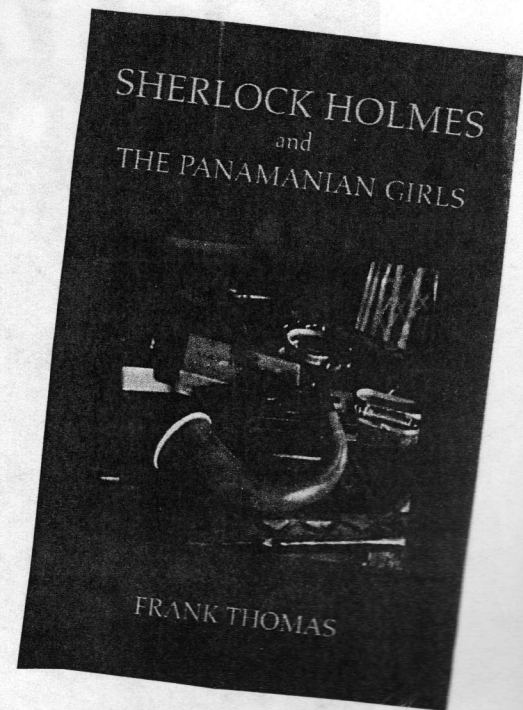
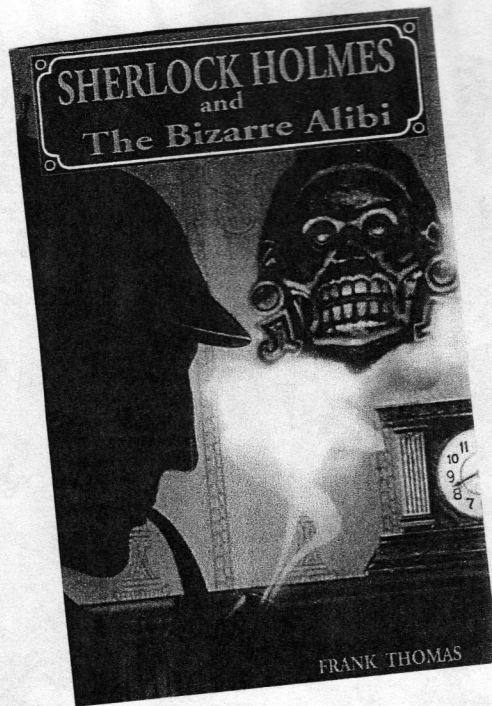
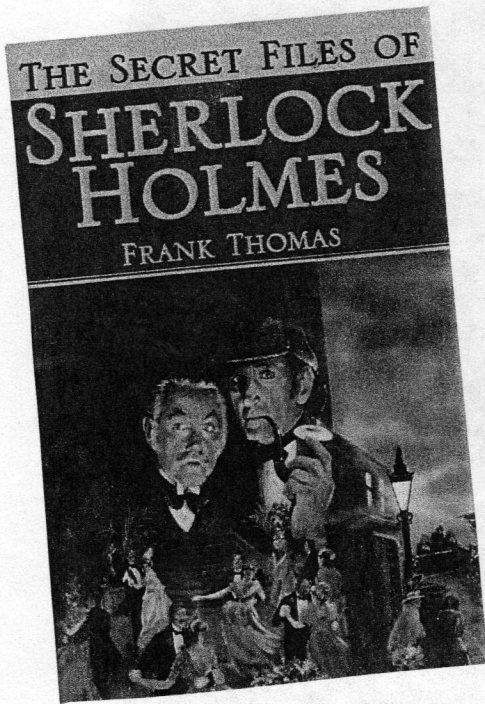


TOM CORBETT

SPACE CADET



GOLD EDITION



"Mr Frank Thomas has done more for Sherlock Holmes than Conan Doyle ever did!" The NOTRE News.

"Oh Yes, the prince and I really enjoy our favorite author, Frank Thomas!" QEII @ BP.

Frank Thomas published 1³ mystery books featuring Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. All were so popular that they are out of print except at Xlibris.com who might let you download a copy for a fee. Check other used bookshops and libraries for extraordinary literature from radio's and TV's and our own original Tom Corbett, Space Cadet!

Two Decades in Cincinnati

Doug Hopkinson

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the Old Time Radio & Nostalgia Convention in the Queen City, also known as Cincinnati. Sadly, it is my duty to report that rumors are flying that this may well be the final anniversary. Because I don't like unconfirmed rumors, I decided to talk directly to the gentleman that has been making these conventions possible for the past 20 years, Mr. Bob Burchett. I have only recently attended the Cincinnati convention (for the past three years). I had only briefly spoken to and caught sight of him prior to this informal interview. As a relative newbie to OTR and to the Cincinnati convention, I was disinclined to go up and introduce myself. After all, he is "The Man" and he was always in the company of radio icons who in my eyes were unapproachable. I can now tell you all that my perceptions have been changed somewhat. Mr. Burchett is still "The Man" but what a genuinely nice man he is.

Bob took the time to speak with me at length (He even answers his own phone!). My primary objective was to get to the bottom of the rumor that this would be the last year for the Cincinnati convention. Bob confirmed this rumor and cited two main reasons.

First, time is not necessarily kind to us. People are getting tired and health is an issue. This is true for the organizers as well as the beloved celebrity guests that attend. Bob points out that the number of radio celebrities available is dwindling every year. The guests that are attending this year are all octogenarians or very close. Bob himself just turned 72 this month. It's hard to believe when you see and hear them at the recreations. They all still have it!

Second, the number of people attending has been steadily dwindling the past three years running. It takes money to put on an event like this and it takes people to bring the money in. Bob is not out to make a profit. He'd really be happy just to break even. He does what he does for the pure love of the hobby. He's done a lot for it.

A self-employed graphic artist since 1967, Bob was bitten by the OTR bug in 1978 when he discovered some old radio shows on an LP. Since then he has become quite involved collecting, trading, founding a club (the Cincinnati Old-Time Radio Club and Classic Video), attending conventions and of course, putting on a convention. While attending the FOTR (Friends of Old-Time Radio) Newark convention he decided he could do the same thing closer to home. The first convention Bob organized was very simplistic and consisted of a room of

dealers. Approximately 100 people attended. The next year he decided to add an old-time radio show recreation to his convention. One-hundred people attended again. Bob steadily made contacts at the Newark convention and in the fourth year he got Parley Baer to attend as a celebrity guest. Parley was a very popular, perennial guest until a couple years ago when he passed away. The 5th year Bob's Cincinnati convention really hit its stride and Ezra Stone joined the list of attending celebrities. At its peak the convention drew over 500 attendees. The last three years they have drawn just under 400.

Over the years many old time radio stars have attended. This year Bob has booked Fred Foy, Bob Hastings, Rosemary Rice, Ester Geddes, Hal Stone and Will Hutchins. I would be remiss not to mention that Bob has had many good people helping him every year including his ever-present, effervescent, right hand man Mr. Robert Neumann. (This mention could get me a door prize I hope.)

Bob Burchett also has two other old-time radio occupations. He is responsible for printing and distributing the quarterly hard copy editions of Old-Time Radio Digest which is derived from Charlie Summers' popular daily internet digest that many of us subscribe to. Bob's other occupation is running a small business from his home called Hello Again Radio. He is a vendor of OTR on cassette. He doesn't advertise this and prefers being "below the radar" as he says. There is no website. He doesn't do it for the profit. He only does it to support his own hobby. Interested parties can contact him. He is very accessible as I have attested.

The convention itself consists of the main room which is where all the action is. All the dealers set up booths and tables selling their wares. Products range from OTR on cassettes and reels and transcription discs to mail-away premiums like Little Orphan Annie rings. There are books, VHS tapes, cds, dvds, t-shirts, 8x10's, autographs. There are plenty of people to meet and stories to listen to, or tell (if you're Hal Stone). Many well known people from within our hobby can be found, like Martin Grams, Terry Salmonson, and Ted Davenport. All are friendly and happy to talk and provide information. (It doesn't hurt to drop a sawbuck at their tables either.) There are informational meetings and recreation productions. Attendees are encouraged to participate in try-outs for the recreations. There are raffles, door prizes and an auction. The convention culminates with a dinner and an award ceremony where several awards are given out each year.

This year's convention will be held April 21st and 22nd

WMKV 89.3 FM

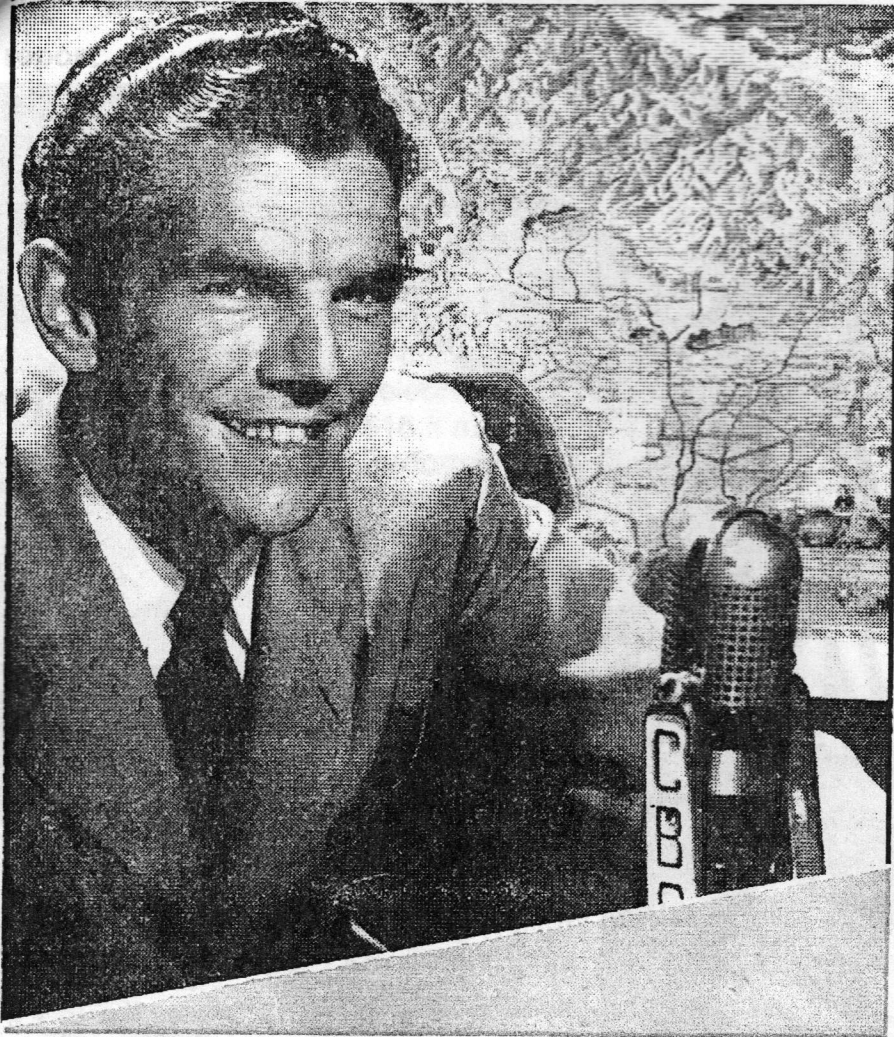
SCHEDULE LISTEN ONLINE CONTACT

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SCHEDULE

TIME	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12M	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	Link Pavey	In Concert	Jazz Alive	Miller at Midnight
1am	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music
2am	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	World Theater Pipe	Cliff Baker WMKV Music
3am - 5am	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music
5am	Everybody's Planning	Senior Health	Family Caregiver	Computer Talk	Grandparent Today	WMKV Music	WMKV Music
6am - 8am	Channel 19 News	Channel 19 News	Channel 19 News	Channel 19 News	Channel 19 News	WMKV Music	Spirit & Aging Heritage Hymns
8am	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music/TBA	WMKV Music/TBA
10am	Alice Hornbaker	Coffe with Wolf	George Bryant	Music in Emmert Manner	Morden Grant	Kaleidoscope/ Around Town	Kaleidoscope
11am	TOTM	TOTM	TOTM	TOTM	TOTM	In Concert	When Swing Was King
12N	Hollywood Radio	Hollywood Radio	Hollywood Radio	Hollywood Radio	Hollywood Radio	Song Shop	WMKV/ Pops
1pm	Family Caregiver	Computer Talk	Everybody's Planning	Grandparent Today	Senior Healthscope	Song Shop	M.E. Tanner
2pm	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	Best of Song Shop	Song Shop	That Was America
3pm	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	WMKV Music	Song Shop	John's Idea
4pm	Mike Martini	Trivia Tuesday	Mike Martini	Mike Martini	Mike Martini	Song Shop	The Story of Jazz
5pm	Chef's Table	Business Wise	Real Life Real Estate	Simply Money	Keep Antiquing!	Sandman Standards	Hit Parade
6pm	You Bet Your Garden	Prime Time Radio	Calling All Pets	Computer Talk	The Book Guys	Sandman Standards	Life is Meant to Be Good
7pm	Mystery Playhouse	Mystery Playhouse	Mystery Playhouse	Mystery Playhouse	Mystery Playhouse	Big Broadcast	London Rhythm
8pm	Link Pavey	Mary Ellen Tanner	Hit Parade	Sandman Standards	Two on the Aisle	Big Broadcast	WorldView/ August
9pm	Jazz Alive	The Other Bands	In Concert	Big Band Mem Song	London Rhythm	Big Broadcast	TBA
10pm	WMKV/ Pops	Stardust Serenade	Barbershop Harmony	Friction	Latin Batin/ Cliff Baker	Big Broadcast	TBA
11pm	WMKV Music	Barbershop Harmony	Music Til Midnight	TBA/WMKV Music	Stardust Serenade	World of Theatre Pipe Organ	Friction

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He's a gay vaquero, this One-Man-Theatre—Frank Graham

Wandering Vaquero Rides "Romance of Ranchos" to Fame

nostalgic, heart-warming story of Old California when hard-riding, romance-loving vaqueros blazed history here in the land of the "Romance of the Ranchos."

Authored by the facile, dreamy pen of John Dunkel, and produced under the direction of Ted Bliss, as astute a showman as West Coast drama circles boast, "Romance of the Ranchos" appears to have hit a happy medium as far as the average dialer is concerned.

Once considered pretty "stuffy" for the present day tourist, let alone the Southern Californian, the glories of the most romantic chapter of the state's history are at long last getting a "treatment" via this weekly dram-airing that is happily authentic and yet extremely easy on the ears.

Versatile Frank Graham has run a gamut of Early Californian emotions during his popular run as narrator and star thespian of the series. Vaquero Graham and his talented cast, on the debut program September 7 last, dramatized the story of Jose Maria Verdugo and his famous rancho which covered the sector now known as Glendale, Highland Park and Eagle Rock.

With Scriptor Dunkel weaving a new pattern of Old California romance-lore each week, Actor Graham has journeyed a lengthy trail.

This coming Wednesday, January 28, he rides his "ghost horse" into Rancho La Puente for dramatization of the friendship of two Southland pioneers, William Workman and John Rowland, who together developed a colorful and highly unique business partnership.

★ ★ KNX, 6 p.m. Wed.

Ghosts OF OLD CALIFORNIA

By Frederick White

THE spirit, authentic tempo and lifeline of a bygone era are rarely "brought to life" in a manner interesting enough to compel the attention and capture the listening loyalty of us moderns.

However . . . these Wednesday evenings via KNX at 6 p. m. a half-hour weekly dramatic show under the title—"Romance of the Ranchos"—is doing just that!

Drawing upon a fact-filled reservoir of historical material which has been unearthed by a group of smart radio showmen with the aid of California

historians, "Romance of the Ranchos" is winning more new friends and acquainting more dyed-in-the-wool native sons and daughters with their own backyard than any other dramatic program in the annals of local radio.

Moving spirit of the Title Insurance and Trust Company's popular historical feature is Columbia's amazing one-man-theatre, Frank Graham. Serious-browed, dark-haired Frank Graham portrays with zest and delightful abandon the role of the wandering vaquero who weaves a



Vaquero Graham, in costume

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Stuart Lubin as Joe Friday



(Faint, mostly illegible text from the newspaper page, including a byline for Stuart Lubin and a short article snippet.)

Vincennes puts on a happy face for Red Skelton

Star report

Clowns from all over will gather in Vincennes this weekend to pay homage to one of the most famous clowns of all -- Red Skelton.



© zoom

- Photo provided by Vincennes University

The Vincennes native and comic, who created indelible characters such as Freddie the Freeloader, is at the heart of a two-day event celebrating the opening of the \$16.8 million Red Skelton Performing Arts Center at Vincennes University.

It starts with a 10 a.m. Saturday parade featuring about 1,000 clowns, the Smothers Brothers (Dick and Tommy, longtime friends of Skelton) and grand marshal Lothian Skelton, the comic's widow.



Red Skelton Festival and Grand Opening Gala

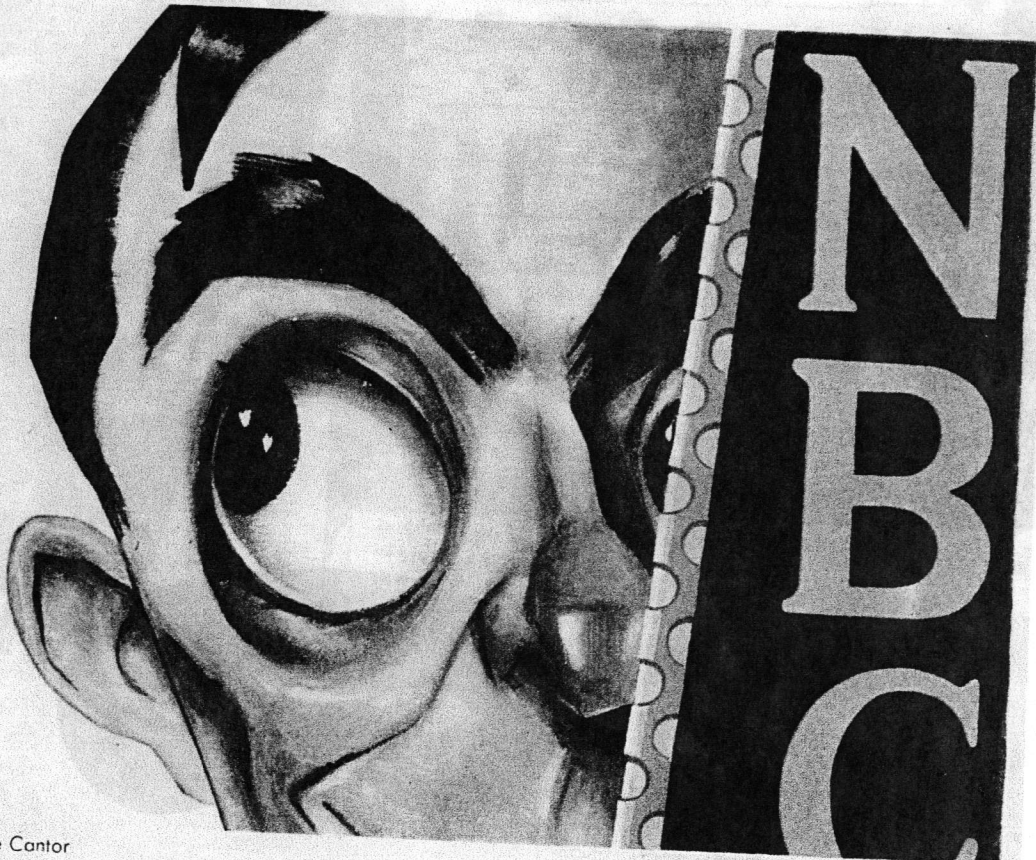
What: A grand opening celebration for the Red

Info: Call (812) 888-4850 or (800) 889-1396, or visit www.vinu.edu/redskelton.

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Eddie Cantor

More praise for the Resource Guide

The Siegels have produced a work of tremendous utility to both the serious researcher and the casual fan of radio's "Golden Age."

Though larger, better-known repositories like the Library of Congress, UCLA and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are certainly given their due, the real pleasure of this book lies in discovering the wealth of material scattered around the country in much smaller facilities.

Chuck Howell

*Curator, Library of American Broadcasting
University of Maryland, College Park, MD*

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Footnotes

The guitar pioneer **Les Paul**, 90, right, was in a hospital in Ridgewood, N.J., when he won two Grammy Awards on Feb. 8. But tonight he is to return to his regular Monday-night gig at the Iridium Jazz Club at Broadway and 51st Street. Sets are at 8 and 10. Information: (212) 582-2121.



Les Paul on the mend

GUITAR GREAT Les Paul wants his fans to know he's feeling better.

Paul was in good condition yesterday at Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, where he has been since Friday, said **Maureen Curran Kleinman**, a hospital spokeswoman.

"The worst is over," Paul said in a statement. "I am doing better. I am grateful to all of my friends for their thoughts and I will be back shortly making them laugh."



PAUL

Paul missed his all-star 90th birthday celebration concert in Los Angeles yesterday. (The longtime Mahwah resident actually marked the milestone birthday last June.) He is expected to be released in the next few days, his son, **Russ**, told the Los Angeles Times.

The newspaper reported the guitar legend was hospitalized after X-rays revealed fluid in his lungs. The hospital declined to confirm that information.

Paul, who invented scores of ingenious recording techniques and created the enormously popular solid body electric guitars that carry his name, is up for two Grammy Awards tonight.



1938 Green Hornet Radio Fan Club Photo



With his eyes on changing the world,
Les Paul co late 1940s.



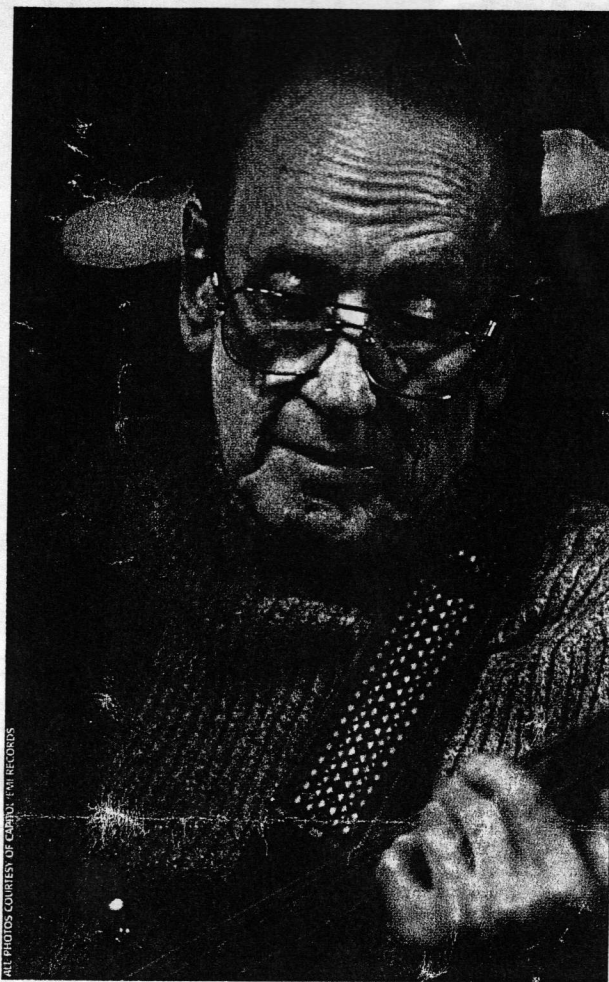
BY ROBERT BAIRD

Les Paul

N I N E T Y
Y E A R S A N D
C O U N T I N G

When you get only a few minutes with someone who's lived as long and played as much music as Les Paul has—ie a genuine living legend, you have to pare down your thousand questions to a crucial few. As I waited for Paul to finish a soundcheck, a blizzard of possibilities whirred through my head: the guitar that bears his name, the Les Paulverizer, playing a private gig for FDR, hanging with Django Reinhardt, and inventing Alvin and the Chipmunks. As I was soon to learn however, the gracious and genial Paul also counts interviewing among his many skills. Like his guitar playing which remains vital, this nonagenarian is still a nimble interviewee, determined to lead the conversation in whatever direction he likes. At this point, most journalists (me included) just feel lucky to be there. As his sidemen and sound man put it, "Hey, he's Les Paul."

Paul and I sat down recently in his closet of a dressing room at the Iridium Jazz Cub on 51st and Broadway (just north of the hell that is Times Square), ostensibly to talk about *Les Paul and Friends* (see sidebar), the new all-star duet record intended



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAPITOL ENTERTAINMENT

to celebrate his 90th birthday and featuring Paul paired with such guitar-player fans as Jeff Beck, Billy Gibbons, and Eric Clapton. Suddenly, I had a flashback about choosing college history courses: which "period" of Les Paul did I want to ask about? While there now may be a flutter in his voice, and arthritis has morphed his once blurry hands from palms with digits into something more akin to claws, Les Paul is alive and playing very well. Every Monday night at the Iridium he packs 'em in at \$37.50 a throw. Twice. At 8pm and 10pm.

BORN IN WISCONSIN IN THE SECOND YEAR OF WORLD WAR I, LESTER WILLIAM POLFUSS WAS A PRODIGY ALMOST FROM THE START.

After stabs at the piano and the banjo, he settled on guitar, learning from such local Wisconsin legends as Pie Plant Pete and Sunny Joe Wolverton. By 1932 he was playing professionally, and in 1936 cut his first records, for the Montgomery Ward label, as Rhubarb Red. Around that same time he backed a blues singer, Georgia White, on a number of sessions.

"Young guitar players try and pack everything they know into every record, every trick you've learned into every number. Playin' it like it's your last. Man, on those sessions with Georgia White I

was all over the place. That's great if you're a guitar player, but if you're trying to hear the singer well, it's not so good.

In the pantheon of guitar players who first popularized the electric version of the instrument, Paul is at or near the top. Being almost as good (some might say better) at tinkering and inventing as he is at playing guitar, Paul was by the late 1930s experimenting with guitar design and construction, a hobby that in the 1950s would bear extraordinary fruit in the form of the Les Paul guitar.

Blessed with a keen ear for rhythm and, especially, sound, Paul is also the father of multitrack recording, thanks to his pioneering experiments with what he called Sel-Sync: he added an extra recording head to a 1950s-era tape recorder so that he could perfect sound-on-sound recording. He's also responsible for many innovations in the electronic processing of sound—such as reverb, echo, delay, and phasing, all of them included in the racks of effects pedals that guitarists now use as a matter of course. He's also a member of the Inventors Hall of Fame.

LES PAUL WITH MARY FORD

The Best of the Capitol Masters: 90th Birthday Edition

Capitol 09463-11411-2-6 (CD). 2005. Wayne Watkins, Clark Duvall, exec. prods.; Rob Christie, supervising prod.; Bob Norberg, digital remastering. AAD? TT: 67:57. Performance ★★★★★¹/₂. Sonics ★★★★★

Back before rock'n'roll changed popular music forever, when the electric guitar was still only a gimmick, singers like Les Brown, Vaughn Monroe, Perry Como, and the Mills Brothers were frequent visitors to the upper reaches of the pop music charts.

It was under those conditions—"in those days," as he likes to say now—that Les Paul released his version of Rodgers and Hart's "Lover." Packed full of sped-up guitar sounds, echo, delay, and the then-unheard-of technique of multitracking, "Lover" sounded as if it had come from another planet—literally. It became a classic example of what Paul called his "New Sound": a high, tinkling, echoey, phased string sound akin to what most often comes from an electric keyboard today, and that was then absolutely unlike anything else.

Paul's widespread popularity among nonguitarists and casual music fans lay in his guitar-and-vocal duets with Ford on "Mockin' Bird Hill" and "Tennessee Waltz," which were huge hits for Capitol. But while these Ford-Paul hits evoke a certain era in pop music, time has not been kind to them. Like much of the pop music of that era, they now sound dated and quaint.

Capitol has repackaged this material a number of times in the past decade or so, most notably in the 1991 boxed set *Les Paul: The Legend and the Legacy*.

The previously unreleased tracks come mostly from Paul's popular early-1950s television show, co-hosted with Ford. A series of excerpts from the program are strung together to show how the Les Paulverizer, then more a bit of schtick created for the show than any box-with-knobs reality, actually worked. Ford or Paul would twist a knob on a prop box and the viewers would hear her multitracked voice and/or his guitar simultaneously playing different parts courtesy of electronics Paul had perfected in his New York City-area garage.

This was radical stuff in 1950, and the beginning of an electronics revolution that continues in the effects racks used today by nearly every guitar player of note. When Les Paul's inventive sound engineering side combines in this collection with his gifts as an instrumentalist, it's easy to hear again just what a force he was in the history of Anglo-American popular music. —Robert Baird



Sonic wonders: Is that admiration or amusement on the face of Mary Ford?

Summers, who took the stage name Mary Ford. Paul is reputed to have picked the name out of a phone book. In the early 1950s the pair, who'd married in 1949 (and divorced in 1964), ruled the upper reaches of the pop charts thanks to such hits as "Mockin' Bird Hill" and "How High the Moon."

"I knew from the first moment we began playing together that it was magic," Paul says. "Mary was a Les Paul freak. She thought no one could play like Les Paul. She followed me around to concerts for five years." When I offer that one of the advantages of being 90 is that he can pretty much say whatever he likes, he grins and winks.

"She'd sung country and gospel tunes up until that point, but I finally realized that she was a singer who could be taught to sing pop songs. When I went to Capitol and asked them to change the contract to read 'Les Paul

"When Ampex first built us the recorders, I remember being at [RCA] Victor, and there was an eight-track machine sitting in a hallway with a cover over it. A producer there said to me, 'See what you've done!' and pointed to the tape machine. 'Where are we going to find another Les Paul and Mary Ford?' They didn't get it. They thought they needed us to make it work. It really wasn't until Tommy Dowd and Atlantic Records that people understood multitracking and what I was trying to do."

Never easily pinned down stylistically, Paul appeared in the first Jazz at the Philharmonic concert in 1944, but is equally known for the time he spent backing popular singers—Nat Cole, Bing Crosby, the Andrew Sisters. These days at the Iridium he's nothing short of miraculous. Advancing arthritis has made the blistering runs up and down the guitar's neck a thing of the past—he now swings in a tasty, one-note style and leans heavily on his namesake instrument's legendary sustain. What Paul has lost in agility—the speed he displayed in the 1940s presaged every rock guitar hero who's since come along—he's gained in wisdom and inventiveness. As he works his way through standards like "September Song" and "Sweet Georgia Brown," it's clear that Paul has an uncanny innate knowledge of the sounds his guitar can make. Sipping a nonalcoholic beer, he also gives his band members good-natured but occasionally risqué hell, and tells corny jokes. The best I heard:

"A guy's laying in bed, has only a few hours to live, and he smells something cooking in the kitchen. He creeps down the stairs and looks in the oven and sees rolls baking. Just as he grabs a roll, his wife grabs his arm and says, 'You can't have that, it's for the funeral.'"

One odd thing about Les Paul is that while he's known as a guitar soloist of sorts—"When I was young," he says, "sure, I took on all comers—sliced 'em to pieces!"—his most lasting fame comes from his partnership with singer Iris Colleen



Hi-Tech hideaway: Les in his basement studio.



LES PAUL & FRIENDS

American Made, World Played

Capitol 09463-39142-4-7 (CD). 2005. Bob Cutarella, Fran Cathcart, prods.; Steve Zuckerman, associate prod.; Phil Quartararo, exec. prod.; Cathcart, Marc Urselli, Steve Genewick and others. engs. ADD?/ DDD? IT: 65:35

Performance ★★

Sonics ★★★

Let's see if I've got this straight: This tribute to Les Paul's 90 years on earth is based on the concept that a bunch of guitar players, mostly big dumb rock guys who all admire Paul, will play Les Paul guitars and cut whatever 1970s rock hit they feel like, poor Sam Cooke will be resurrected to sing on two cuts, Paul will add mostly inaudible accents on his namesake Gibson, and finally, the whole mess will be assembled, given an in-your-face, drums-forward, hard-rock mix, and marketed to whom, exactly? And people say the record business is out of good ideas.

While it's dedicated to him (and presumably his guitar, though outside the title that's never explicitly mentioned), and he's clearly on the record, it's strange that I constantly found myself asking, "Where's Les?" His speaking voice

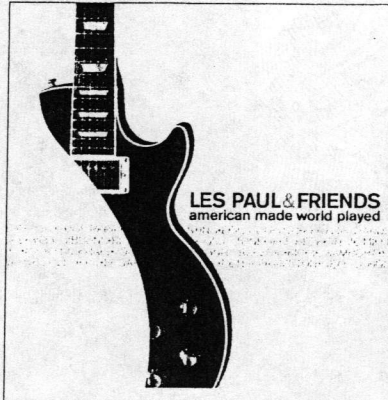
appears in a short intro track and throughout Alsou's cover of the Les Paul-Mary Ford hit "How High the Moon," via sampled bits of audio from their 1950s TV show. His guitar playing appears in a new recording of "Caravan," the jazz standard he first recorded in the late '40s. Best of all, in the intro of a new recording of "Fly Like an Eagle" (?), there's Paul's voice telling a five year old Steve Miller, "Steve, you're really going to go places" after the child has crooned a carefree "Tra-la-la." Less successful is Paul's guitar being drowned somewhere in a loud, funky new recording, "69 Freedom Special," which sounds like Sly Stone and the Saturday Night Live Band duking it out. And what are hired gun guitarists like Steve Lukather and Hiram Bullock doing on this set? Adding more static for Les to have to cut through?

Then there's Sam Cooke. Yes, I'm talking about the same Sam Cooke who died 41 years ago but who, via computer juju, reappears here in two duets: with Eric Clapton on "(Somebody) Ease My Troubled Mind," and with Jeff Beck on "Good News." While these pairings work well enough—Clapton (who hasn't regularly played a Les Paul since his days with John Mayall), is uncommonly tasteful, and the Beck cut is perhaps this disc's standout track—what the hell does any of this have to do with guitarist Les Paul?

By track four, on which Peter Dinklage for some reason sings and plays a rendition of the long-gone Atlanta Rhythm Section's "So Into You," it's clear that this project has spun off into some perverse Les Paul (the guitar) jam in which rock guitar gods and assorted little fishies do whatever they feel like. The more I listened, the less I understood. The rave-up by Keith Richards, Buddy Guy, and Rick Derringer on "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" is fun, but just as with Billy Gibbons' cover of Robert Palmer's hit "Bad Case of Loving You," I wondered again about any connection, outside the guitars, to the birthday boy. Why didn't someone—anyone other than the relatively unknown Alsou—stretch out and cover one of Paul's own classic hits?

Anyone who loves loud rock radio or is obsessed by one of the "names" appearing here will think I'm being too harsh. And given the low threshold of innovation that's expected from a rock covers album, you can say that this one "works." But as a collaboration with and tribute to Les Paul—the man—*American Made, World Played* is a puzzling near-insult. The guy's 90 years old—why saddle his birthday with a loud rock concept that damn near dishonors his own musical legacy? In the end, an awful lot of musical talent, some of which I suspect honestly wanted to honor Les Paul, has here gone to waste.

—Robert Baird



and Mary Ford,' they said it was fine if I had Mary as a person, but—and I'll never forgive the comment—'She was a simple Wisconsin dairy maid.' Little did they know that this simple Wisconsin dairy maid was going to be such a bit hit."

For a time, Paul and Ford raced other pop stars. Patti Page recorded many of the same songs they'd made hits—she beat them to No. 1 with her version of "Tennessee Waltz," but lost out to their version of "Mockin' Bird Hill." The duo had a hit TV show, *The Les Paul Show*, for several years in the 1950s. The recently released *Best of the Capitol Masters: 90th Birthday Edition* (see sidebar) contains several audio tracks taken from the show, including a bit in which Paul accuses Mary of stealing his Les Paulverizer. The Paulverizer was what he called the effect he achieved by multitracking a single guitarist or voice to sound like a whole choir of them.

Speaking of guitars, Paul relieved me of asking the most obvious interview question by mentioning that the guitar that still bears his name is much better known than its inventor. "People say to me all the time, 'You're Les Paul? Do you know there's a guitar with the same name?'"

The classic Les Paul guitar design began with something slightly less graceful that Paul himself dubbed "The Log." Built by Paul in 1941 out of parts from an Epiphone guitar nailed to a 4x4, it's the guitar he played on some of his first late-'40s Capitol recordings, such as his memorable runthrough of Rodgers and Hart's "Lover" (1947). Further experiments with making the guitar louder brought him face to face with the problem of feedback, which in turn led to his design for a solid-body guitar. Gibson Guitars, known for their hollow-body arch-top models, at first rebuffed him, but by 1952, prodded in no small way by Leo Fender's experiments, they'd come around.

"Guitarists thought of it as an ironing board with a couple of pickups. It didn't ring right with a lot of players, especially those who wanted to play jazz and blues. But [my design] took an apologetic instrument and turned it into a vicious instrument. It can be a bartender, a mistress, and a psychologist. No one's gonna beat ya. You can just turn up the volume and blow anyone away."

It's those qualities that have made the Gibson Les Paul a favorite tool of rock'n'roll guitar players—whose music nearly put the guitar's creator out of business. When I ask what he thought when rock'n'roll, much of it played on his guitar, swept the land, the 90-year-old quartet leader ran his misshapen but magical hands across his forehead and shook his head.

"Oh, man...I have a new piano player I have to train."

Interview over. ■

The Museum of Television & Radio

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Broadcast Facilities at The Museum of Television & Radio in New York

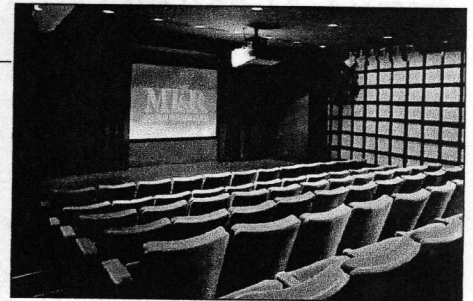
The Ralph Guild Radio Studio

Located on the fifth floor, the Ralph Guild Radio Studio is the heart of the Museum's broadcast operations. Located in the rear of the Ralph Guild Radio Listening Room, the studio measures approximately 12' x 17' and includes a U-shaped broadcast console as well as a 42" round table with three microphones (additional microphones are possible). Just outside the door to the studio, the radio listening room can seat either twenty in a very casual setup, which is ideal for mingling guests, or up to thirty-five with rows of seating. Receptions may also be held in the listening room.



The Mark Goodson Theater

Located on the second floor, the Goodson Theater seats eighty-four and has a stage that measures approximately 7' x 22'. The control room is located at the back of the theater and includes a remote video camera system, which allows for videotaping broadcasts. Food and drink are not allowed in the theater, so receptions must be held down the hall in the Annenberg Screening Room, which can display broadcasts via closed circuit.



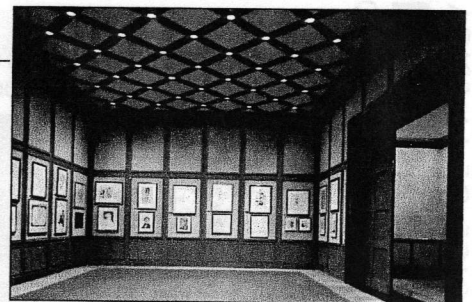
The MT&R Theater

Located on the concourse level, the MT&R Theater seats two hundred and has a stage measuring approximately 9' x 29'. The control room for this theater, located in the basement, also has the capability of videotaping events. Food and drink are not allowed in the theater, so receptions must be held in the Steven Spielberg Gallery, located on the first floor of the Museum, which can display broadcasts via closed circuit.



The Steven Spielberg Gallery

Located on the first floor, the Spielberg Gallery measures 24' x 41' with a 16' ceiling. The entrance to the gallery has two sliding wooden doors, which allow the room to be completely closed off for private functions. The control room is located in the basement, which also has the capability of videotaping events.



The building which once housed the loudest voice in the world, raised the ire of Adolph Hitler who raged "those Cincinnati liars!" and was considered the Intel and Microsoft of its time, is now in desperate need of repair.

After more than 50 years in operation, The Voice of America Bethany Station was decommissioned and presented to West Chester Township for historic monument purposes.

The years have taken their toll on the 1944 art deco structure. Patching and painting of the exterior, and HVAC system and electrical repairs are needed to save the historic structure. Once these steps are taken to save the structure, the building will become a Museum recognizing the technological and historical significance at the site and the innovative engineers who made it all happen.

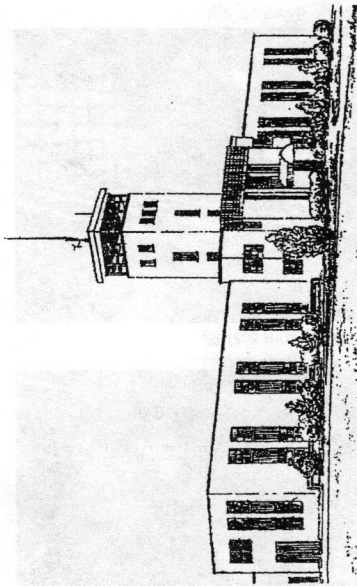
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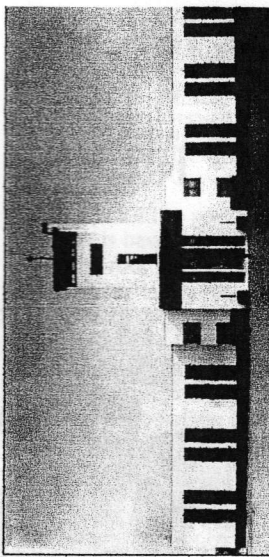
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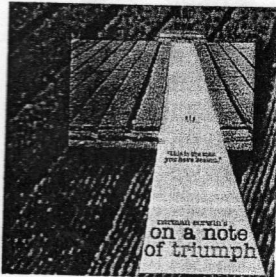
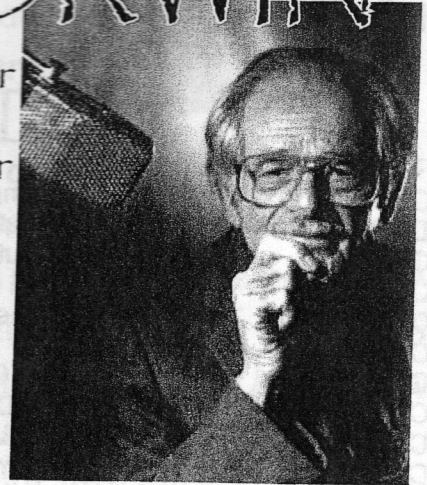
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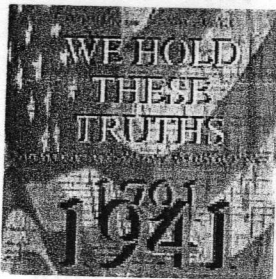
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NORMAN CORWIN

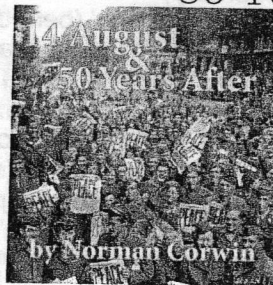
The Grand-Master
of
American Radio Theater



On A Note Of Triumph
Corwin's Masterwork! Conceived in the waning days of the war in Europe, this program asked the tough questions about the war, and the peace to follow. This program has been called the greatest radio program in the history of the medium.



We Hold These Truths
A celebration of the Bill of Rights, commissioned by FDR, and aired shortly after Pearl Harbor. This thoughtful, star-filled gala became a rallying cry for the values for which the country was fighting.

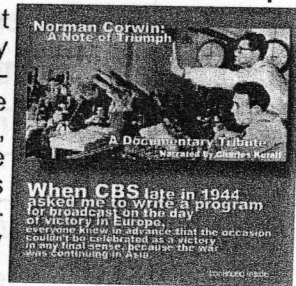


14 August &
50 Years After 14 August

Two programs, separated by 50 years. The first celebrated Victory in Japan, and the end of World War II -- the second, produced for NPR, looked back on those momentous days, and the distance travelled since. Orson Welles narrates the first; Charles Kuralt narrates the second.

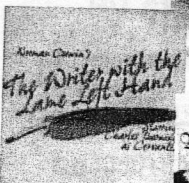
Norman Corwin: A Note of Triumph

A magnificent documentary, by Mary Beth Kirchner, about the life of Norman Corwin, and the remarkable audio programs that defined his career. Narrated by Charles Kuralt.



Public Radio Programs

In the 90s, Corwin wrote and directed a series of programs for Public Radio, showing once again his mastery of the medium. **The Secretariat** is an examination of the personal power and cultural diversity of prayer. **The Curse of 589** is a lighthearted meeting of the worlds of magic and science. **The Writer with the Left Hand** tells the story of the life of Cervantes. **No Love Lost** is a conversation between American forefathers Hamilton, Jefferson, and Burr. Additional programs, **Memos to a New Millennium**, and **Our Lady of the Freedoms** are available in script form only.



Thirteen by Corwin

Thirteen of Corwin's original programs from the "golden age" of Radio, selected by Corwin himself as his favorites. All programs were written and produced by Corwin himself, usually on incredible deadlines. From powerful dramas to light-hearted comedies, this collection shows the range and power of Corwin's career.



www.normancorwin.com

See other side for ordering information.



The Lodestone Audio Theatre Catalog

www.lodestonecatalog.com

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Questions in a Poetic Voice -

by Martin Miller, LA Times 7/26/06

*So they've given up; they're finally
done in and the rat is dead in an ally
back of the Wilhelmstrasse.*

Take a bow G.I.

Take a bow little guy.

*The superman of tomorrow lies at the
feet of you common men of this
afternoon.*

*This is it kids. This is the day all the
way from Vladivostok*

*You had what it took and you gave it
And each of you has a hunk of rainbow
around your helmet.*

*Seems like free men have done it
again.*

- Opening to Norman Corwin's "On a Note of Triumph" broadcast on V-E Day

It's often said that journalism is history on the run, a rough draft. But when looking back more than six decades at Norman Corwin's radio broadcast marking the Nazi surrender, it's clear his stalwart voice and tough, but elegant prose supplied posterity with a more lasting account.

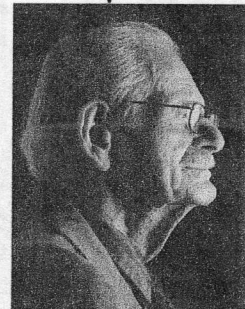
By standards of the modern media, the hour long program in May 1945 drew an almost unfathomable audience. In a nation of 140 million people, some 60 million listeners tuned in, triggering an

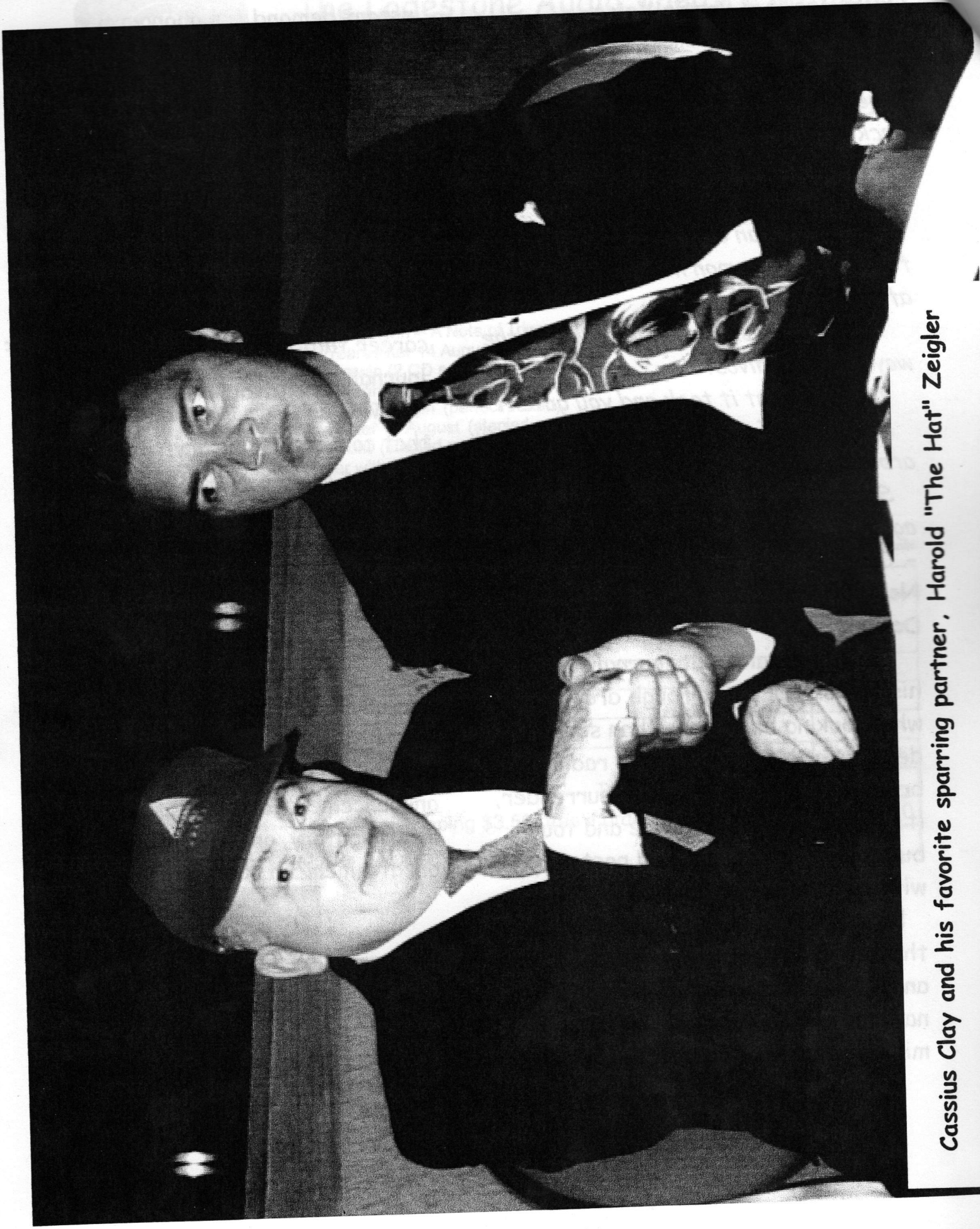
instant demand for phonograph records and transcripts of the show which were hastily pressed and printed.

It was arguably the pinnacle of the medium whose magical hold over its audience would soon be eroded by television. For Corwin, who at 96 still teaches journalism at USC, the work stands out as the brightest star in a career that influenced a generation of journalists, writers, and dramatists.

"I wouldn't say I'm proud because that connotes vainglory. But I would say that it is an effective program."

At the time of the original broadcast, praise for Corwin who had celebrated his 35th birthday days earlier, was immediate. Billboard magazine described it as "the single greatest - and we use "greatest," in its full meaning - radio program we ever heard." Meanwhile, poet Carl Sandburg called it "a vast announcement, a terrific interrogatory, one of the all-time great American poems."





Cassius Clay and his favorite sparring partner, Harold "The Hat" Zeigler

He's a time traveler from the Jazz Age

Vince Giordano pays tribute to the greats

By **JIM BECKERMAN**
STAFF WRITER

The market for an 11-piece, 1920s-style dance band that can play an absolutely authentic rendition of "When I Take My Sugar to Tea" may not be a large one. But Vince Giordano and His Nighthawks have it cornered.

If a movie director — Woody Allen, say, or Martin Scorsese — has a period scene set in a speakeasy, you can bet that you'll be hearing Vince Giordano on the soundtrack.

If a corporation hosts a "Roaring Twenties"-themed party, you can bet that Giordano and his boys will be over in the corner, jazzing up a storm.

If Garrison Keillor wants to double the dose of retro charm on "The Prairie Home Companion," you can bet that Giordano will be showing up in Lake Wobegon.

"You do what you can, and I'm so happy to be doing this," says Giordano, who can be seen at Iridium in New York on Wednesday.

Bassist, singer and musical archivist as well as bandleader, Giordano comes equipped with some 2,000 arrangements in his portfolio: everything from "Stardust" and "Happy Feet" to a medley of "Little

Rascals" tunes. He also comes equipped with props (including a 1930s Kellogg microphone) and costumes.

Put him in a dinner jacket, slick a little brilliantine in his hair, and he's the spitting image of a 1920s bandleader.

Which is probably why Scorsese had him appear onscreen, as well as on the soundtrack, in precisely that role in "The Aviator" — grinningly leading his boys on the bandstand while Howard Hughes (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his cohorts whoop it up.

Well, actually, not *his* boys.

"That was not my band onscreen," Giordano says. "We prerecorded the stuff here in New York, but all the scenes were shot in Canada. I was the only U.S. guy up there; the rest of the guys were Canadian musicians. They had the scores in front of them, and they had to finger the trumpets and saxophones to look like they were really playing."

For all his lauded contributions to movies like "Ghost World," "Bloodhounds on Broadway" and "Finding Forrester," Giordano's brand of music has always been a little controversial in jazz circles.

True, he does play authentic arrangements used by such bona fide jazz masters



Vince Giordano: "There's a million notes out there, and certain people can put them together and make magic. That's a thing I like to salute."

as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Bix Beiderbecke. Many are the fruits of exhaustive labor by Giordano and his team of musicologists, who listened to the old 78 recordings over and over again to tease

out their secrets.

"We keep going back to those recordings, trying to analyze what they did," says Giordano, a Brooklyn native. "What notes they chose — which were so special, just like the notes that Mozart chose. There's a million notes out there, and certain people can put them together and make magic. That's a thing I like to salute."

But Giordano also plays charts from a number of pop and dance bands, once famous, whose stock has fallen considerably: Paul Whiteman, Ben Pollack, Jean Goldkette and so on.

Not really jazz at all, purists snort — still smarting, perhaps, from the fact that a white man named Whiteman had the temerity to call himself "the king of jazz."

It's been Giordano's mission, since he first started fronting bands in the mid-1970s, to give some of these much-maligned 1920s and '30s pop bands a second look.

"I don't think everything that was played and recorded back then was golden," he says. "But there have been things that really have been kind of swept under the carpet because they're not 100 percent jazz from the git-go. But there's a lot of jazz elements in them, some good players and some great playing."

Vince Giordano, 52, has long been the premier authority on performing 1920s and '30s jazz and popular music. Woody Allen, Madonna, Terry Zweigoff, Garrison Keillor and the New York Philharmonic have all used Giordano and his eleven-piece big band, the Nighthawks.

While Giordano has done many soundtracks and four CDs of his own, you should see the Nighthawks live as they rip through vintage stompers like "Powerhouse" and "Radio Rhythm." To feel the frenetic pulse of a big band in full swing from just a few feet away—it makes the old music come alive with a shout, and changes forever how you think of the old records.



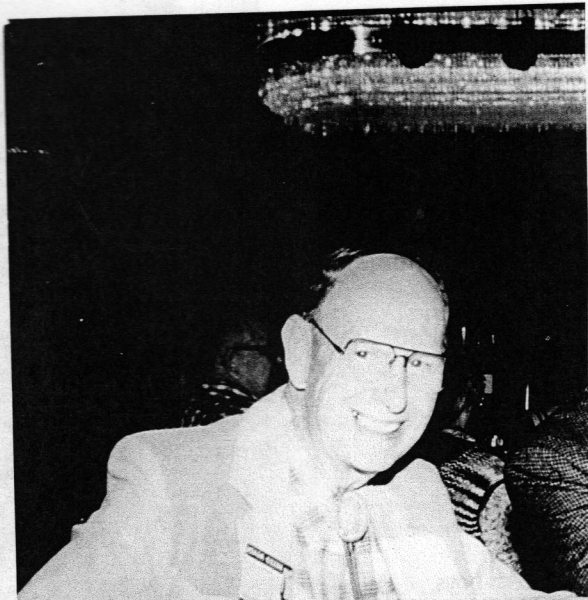
WHO: Vince Giordano and His Nighthawks.

WHAT: 1920s and 1930s jazz.

WHEN: 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Wednesday.

WHERE: Iridium Jazz Club, 1650 Broadway, at 51st Street, Manhattan; 212-582-2121 or iridiumjazzclub.com.

HOW MUCH: \$25, with \$10 minimum.



Longtime SPERDVAC member Ted Theodore passed away 6 Sept '06 in San Diego. He graced our OTR conventions for the past 30 years. Goodbye friend.

May 5, 1965

Spike Jones, Top Musical Satirist, Dies in L.A. at 53

Spike Jones, 53, veteran band-leader who gave a new meaning to musical comedy with his instrumental horseplay, died May 1 at his home in Bel-Air, near Los Angeles, from emphysema, a respiratory disease. Jones, whose square name was Lindley Armstrong Jones, had been ill with asthma and complications for some time. He had been released from the Santa Monica Hospital three weeks ago.

Jones, a drummer who played on radio staff orchs during the 1930s, organized a band in the early 1940s with several other staff musicians. This orch had the offbeat aim of parodying the tunes which the band members had to play seriously on radio. They recorded several numbers and RCA Victor signed the band in 1942.

While the first few disks failed to click, Jones and The City Slickers, as the band was tagged,

1942 with "Der Fuehrer's Face," a madcap musical shaft at Adolf Hitler, then riding high as the conqueror of Europe.

"Der Fuehrer's Face" sold 1,500,000 copies within a very short time and acted as a wartime morale booster in giving a ludicrous musical portrait of Hitler and capping it with Bronx cheers, made with rubber razzers available for a few cents in any candy store. He made an alternate version of the song with trombone instead of razzers.

Jones feared that Victor execs would choose the more conservative trombone version and came to New York to argue for the rubber razzers version, which became the hit. The song was originally written for a Donald Duck cartoon, "In Nutsy Land." After the disk was released, Walt Disney changed the title to "Der Fuehrer's Face." G. Oliver Wallace was the songwriter.

Jones went on from there to commit mayhem on popular songs with an instrumental conglomeration of cowbells, washboards, car horns, barking and gunshots. One of his big followup hits were Jones' burlesque of "Cocktails For Two," with a hiccup obbligato to the lyric. He also needled such standards as "You Always Hurt The One You Love" and "Chloe"

Jones formed a two-hour "Musical Depreciation Revue" in 1947 and toured it for several years. For this tour, he added a harpist who spent most of the show knitting a serape. During her one number, "Holiday For Strings," she smoked a big black cigar.

Jones came up with a big Christmas song during the early 1950s with "All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth." During

the last half-decade, his disks fell out of vogue, but last year he recorded a couple of straight swing and Dixie albums for Liberty Records.

Jones was originally married to Patricia Ann Middleton, a singer, by whom he had a daughter. He later married Helen (Greco) Grayco, his band vocalist. Two sons and a daughter survive Jones from this marriage.

OBITUARIES

SPIKE JONES

Spike Jones, 53, veteran band-leader who specialized in musical lampoons of standard songs, died May 1 in his home at Bel-Air, near Los Angeles, of a respiratory disease.

Details in Music.

NORMAN E. BROKENSHERE

Norman Ernest Brokenshere, one of radio's pioneering announcer-personalities and the first to identify himself by name on the air, died May 4, apparently of heart failure, at his home at Lake Ronkonkoma, Long Island, N.Y. He would have been 67 years old next June 10.

Contemporary with Graham McNamee, Milton Cross, Ted Husing and Ben Grauer, and others in the radio heyday, Brokenshere's identity for millions of listeners included his folksy trademark, "How do you do, ladies and gentlemen, how do you do?" It helped vault him into announcing's big league, and, at one stretch of his career, a yearly salary of \$100,000.

His career lapsed several times, once for a span of six years, because of alcohol addiction. Eventually it took him into Alcoholics Anonymous. At his death he was freelancing with two Long Island radio outlets, WPAC at Patchogue, and WBIC at Bay Shore. Until a year ago he also held ownership in a newspaper at Port Jefferson on the island.

Brokenshere, the son of a minister, broke into radio with WJZ, New York, in 1924, responding to a newspaper ad for men with a savvy in music terminology. Over the years he was active, he bounced from New York to Philadelphia to Chicago and back, and worked at various times for CBS, NBC, WCAU in Philadelphia, WOR in New York, and as a freelance.

His first major network assignment was in 1932 with the "Chesterfield Hour." Later he worked shows starring Major Bowes, Eddie Cantor and others. He also worked for a time in the radio dept. of Kastor & Sons ad agency.

As one who got into radio early, it figured he would be part of a number of "firsts," among which were his coverage of the 1924 Democratic National convention, and President Coolidge's inauguration in March of the following year.

Born June 10, 1898 at Murcheson, Ont., Brokenshere served abroad in the U.S. infantry in 1918. Subsequently, along with formal schooling, he worked as a bellhop, truckdriver and inspector in a shoe factory.

He is survived by his wife, Eunice. He also had four brothers and a sister, but not how many survive.

ALAN BUNCE

Alan Bunce, 62, stage, radio and tv actor whose career spanned more than 40 years, died April 27 in New York. He appeared in some 35 Broadway plays but perhaps was known best for his portrayal of Albert in the radio-tv show, "Ethel and Albert." He costarred with Peg Lynch in the program.

A native of Westfield, N. J., chance meeting in 1921 with playwright Sidney Howard who did the adaptation for a play tagged "S. S. Tenacity." He offered Bunce a role in the show with a \$40 weekly salary. That appeared substantial to Bunce who was struggling along with \$12 pay as an office boy. From then on he was an actor.

During the early '20s Bunce had parts in such plays as "Home Fires," "The First Man" and "Roger Bloomer." His later legit credits included "Valley Forge," "Run Sheep Run," "Tommy," "Kind Lady," "Dream Child," "A Perfect Alibi" and "De Luxe," among others.

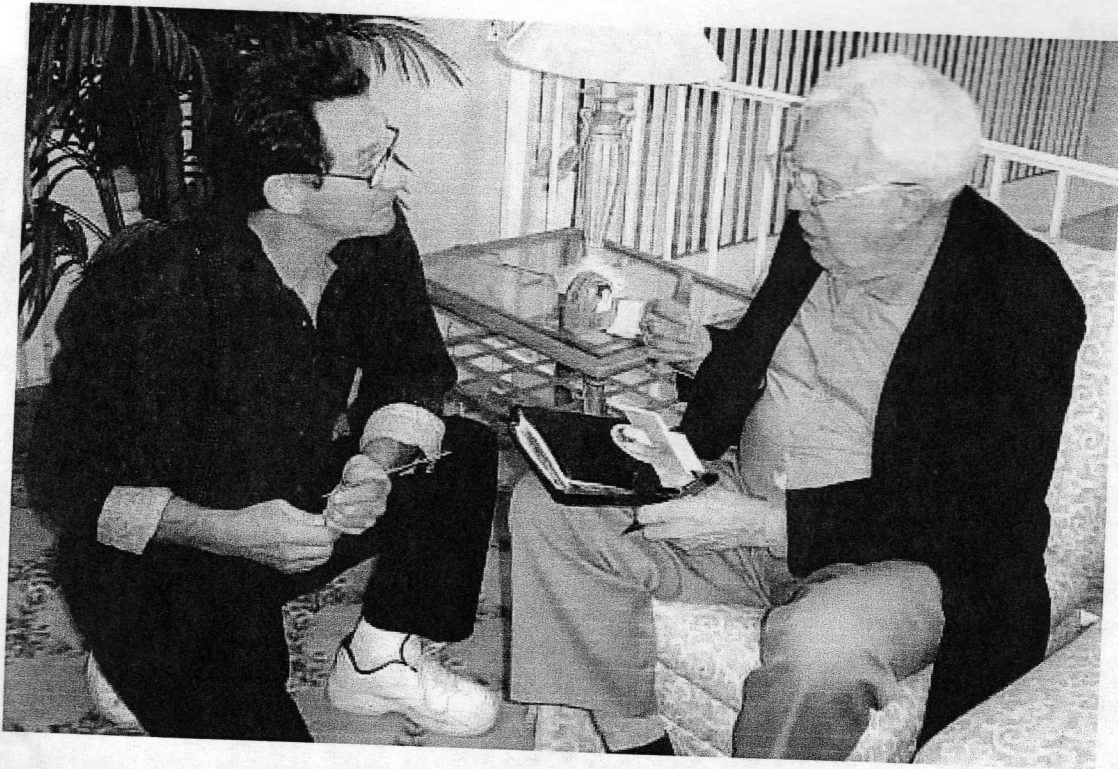
Bunce, who received his radio baptism around 1924 when he picked up a \$10 fee for reading a juvenile part, returned to the field as a regular in 1935. He trouped with Miss Lynch for six years on radio in her "Ethel and Albert" script and was seen on tv for as many years in the video version. He also was the original "Young Doctor Malone."

Long participant in theatrical unionism, Bunce was national proxy of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists for 2 terms and also headed its New York local for two terms. He was a director of the Equity Library Theatre and served five years on the Actors Equity Council.

Surviving are his actress-wife, the former Ruth Nugent, daughter of actor J. C. Nugent; two sons, a daughter, sister and brother.

MICHAEL BOHNEN

Michael Bohnen; 77, noted opera singer who was known as "German-Chaliapin," died of a heart ailment April 26 in Berlin. A basso-baritone, he sang at the world's



Barney Beck [right] teaching Jerry Williams about the magical world of Sound Patterns. Thank you Barney, we all miss you!

In Memory Of **Ted Theodore**

The NLAS offers condolences to the family and friends of **Ted Theodore**, who passed away recently. Mr. Theodore was a longtime member of both the NLAS and SPERDVAC (and possibly other OTR organizations). He attended his first NLAS Convention around 15 years ago, and before long began bringing along his guitar, relieving "Uncle Donnie" with a much better accompaniment for the performance of the traditional closing song, "They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree." A talented instrumentalist, Mr. Theodore played professionally in his home state of California, and with a group of musicians known as the East County Entertainers, released recordings of various polkas, marches, waltzes, two-steps, tangos and mazurkas.

In 1995, Mr. Theodore added the classic "feud" song, "The Martins and the Coys" (based on the actual feuding families, the Hatfields and the McCoys), to the proceedings, much to the delight of the NLAS audience. He also assisted in registering the attendees, signing up new members and renewing others. He

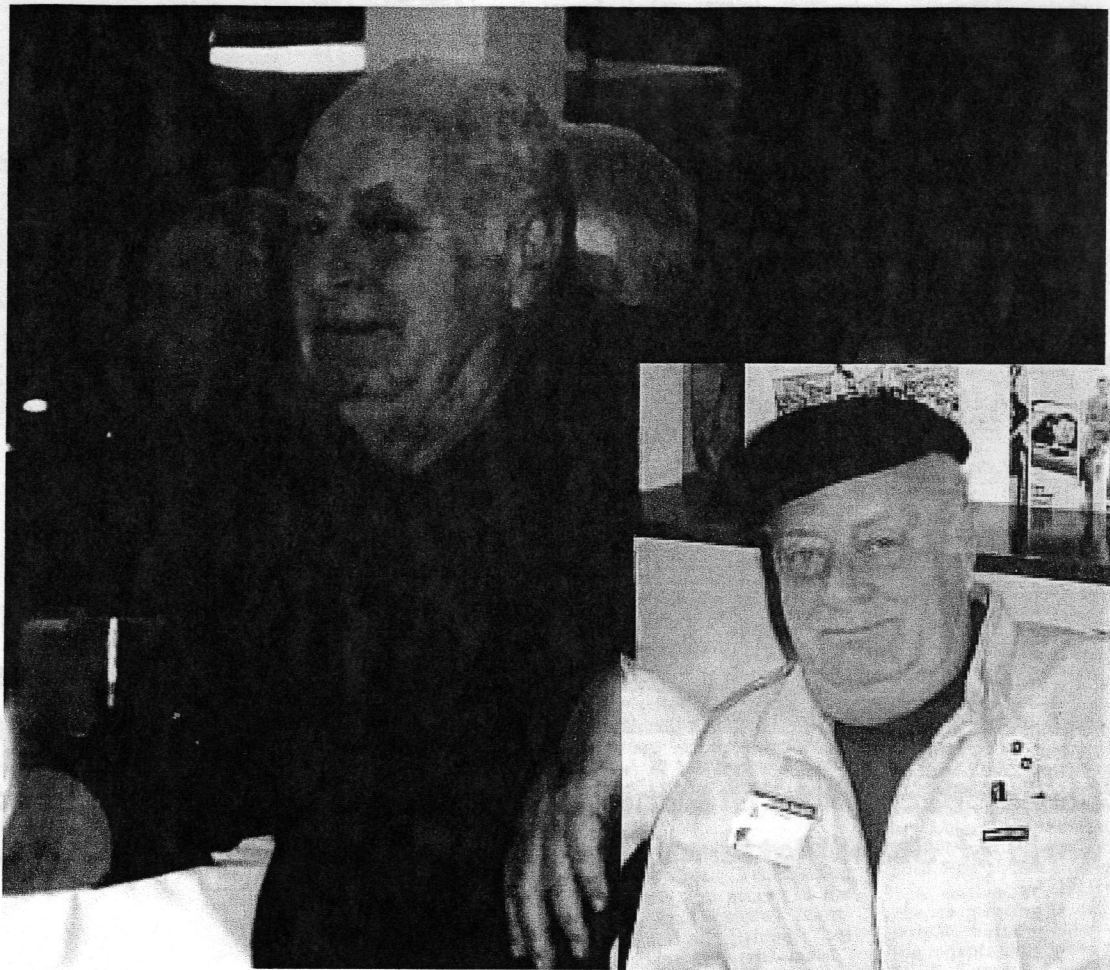


repeated "The Martins and the Coys," plus performed other classics, when the NLAS offered a "Lum and Abner Stage Show" in 1998 at the historic Lyric Theater in Mena. After the show concluded, Mr. Theodore could be seen "jamming" with various local musicians.

Ted Theodore's last appearance at an NLAS Convention was in 2003. Sadly, he had experienced health problems prior to this visit, and the trip was a tremendous strain on him, but he forged ahead, and with his dear friend Opal McCracken, performed "They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree" and an additional song before announcing that it would be their final attendance.

The NLAS officers and members are thankful for the contributions of Ted Theodore and will fondly remember him. Thankfully, we have a number of appearances on videotape to remind us of his talent.

- Uncle Donnie Pitchford



May 5, 1965

**Goodbye Sweet Prince. We
will never forget you, Mr. Hal
Stone, actor, director, artist,
friend.**