

CHUCK SCHADEN'S

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND
RADIO
GUIDE

JUNE — JULY, 1991



FRED ALLEN

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NOSTALGIA DIGEST

BOOK SEVENTEEN

CHAPTER FOUR

JUNE-JULY, 1991

HELLO, OUT THERE IN Radioland!

Summertime and the listening is easy!

We have planned some very special radio activities for your warm-weather entertainment this year.

★ *On Those Were The Days* (WNIB) beginning Saturday, June 8th we'll start a six-week *Frank Capra Film Festival*, honoring the director whose name was above the title on so many great motion pictures. Our Capra Festival, of course, will be on radio with broadcast versions of "Lady for a Day" (1933); "It Happened One Night" (1934); "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" (1936); "Lost Horizon" (1937); "You Can't Take It With You" (1938); "Arsenic and Old Lace" (1944) and "It's A Wonderful Life" (1946). *Nostalgia Digest* columnist **Bob Koloski** is the historian for our Caprafest and you won't want to miss a moment of it.

★ By popular demand, we're going to revive another sequence of "One Man's Family" programs by Carlton E. Morse. We've had continuous episodes of the classic series for the past two summers and this year, beginning June 15th on *TWTD*, we'll have 30, 15-minute chapters, dealing with Henry Barbour's convalescence and Paul's adopted daughter Teddy.

★ In conjunction with the Museum of Broadcast Communication's "Summer of

Soaps" festival, (June 19 - September 15) honoring many of radio and television's daytime dramas, we'll have our own *TWTD Summer of Soaps*, with isolated episodes of such well-remembered programs as *Ma Perkins*, *When A Girl Marries*, *Lorenzo Jones*, *Stella Dallas*, *Our Gal Sunday*, the *Romance of Helen Trent*, and many others. The sudsy serials begin on June 22nd.

★ Just in case the thermometer climbs a tad high by mid-summer, we'll cool off our *Old Time Radio Classics* (WBBM) listeners with a week celebrating Christmas in July (beginning July 7th).

★ And if you enjoy a good detective-type adventure at midnight, you'll have some exciting fun with a five-part *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar* adventure starting Monday, July 22nd.

Details on all our special summertime events can be found in our listings section, beginning on page 16.

We've had some fun planning all these goodies and we hope they will add to your listening pleasure during the summer of '91.

Chuck Schader

Fred Allen's TREADMILL

BY BILL OATES

To many self-professed media conscious viewers/listeners of the last decade of the twentieth century, the name Fred Allen means little. To those who understand and moreover appreciate "old time radio" this nasal New Englander represents comedy of the highest order, he was, in Bob Hope's words, "the comedians' comedian."

Fred Allen's name is often discussed in the same light as other great American wits, such as Mark Twain, Will Rogers, Robert Benchley, Groucho Marx or George S. Kaufman, all great satirists of American society who are remembered today, more or less. They not only shared an uncanny ability to satirize the foibles of modern man and woman in writing, but their humor is also represented on film and radio, most of which is readily accessible today. It was Rogers who told Allen that "as long as anything happens, we can make a living." Allen mastered several of the century's media, but is, unfortunately, less prevalent.

Fred Allen was born John F. Sullivan in Cambridge, Massachusetts on May 31, 1894. His childhood was not one nurtured in a stable family. His mother died when the future radio star was three years old, and his father, a perennial alcoholic, deposited the youth and his brother to the already crowded household of their Aunt Lizzie. Aunt Lizzie was remembered fondly the rest of Fred's days, and it was she who kept the boy on the straight and narrow.



FRED ALLEN

Since funds had to be collected for room and board, young John worked at many jobs. His longtime stint at the Boston Public Library gave him an appreciation for reading, time to experiment with juggling, his new hobby, and, of course, needed funds. Although he worked as a piano mover and on other jobs, he

continued off and on at the library for several years, and was given his first opportunity to perform his juggling act, with some jokes thrown in for good measure, for a library workers evening out. Though Aunt Lizzie objected to this new source of income (\$1 for his first paid gig), he continued improving his talent.

With more juggling practice and a desire for audience approval, newly named Freddie St. James was about to discover the long, steep road up the vaudeville ladder to the New York Palace. Much was learned from an aspiring juggler named Harry LaToy: show business good and bad, with LaToy frequently using the teenage "St. James" for his own monetary gains. Starting in 1911 at Sam Cohen's Hub Theater performing at amateur nights, the climb resembled this scenario: "The World's Worst Juggler" (now Freddie James) played Boston houses, then moved to New York ("12 minutes in one"), toured Australia in 1915, did Pantages "time" from 1917 to 1922 (he was not taken in World War I—sole support), joined the Lew Fields revue "Passing Show of 1922", played in the Shubert revue "Vogues" and "The Greenwich Village Follies" in 1924, until he played the Palace with teammate Bert Yorke in 1926. *Billboard* magazine favorably reviewed "The Disappointments of 1927" and lauded bogus emcee Allen who gave the "unbilled girl" in the cast more opportunities for laughs than himself.

Fred's name was acquired while touring with Pantages in 1917. LaToy thought the "Saint" in St. James gave class to the young Bostonian, but as the years progressed, Fred altered his name as his act changed and his publicity photos ran out. The Allen name came about because of a mistake. When Edgar Allen's last name was incorrectly placed after Fred's by the Fox Booking Office, he merely accepted his fate and ordered a new batch of photos.

With the changes in his moniker came an appreciation of American, Canadian



FRED ALLEN hams it up
with some cheese.

and Australian vaudeville houses. Of particular note was his knowledge of Midwestern stages, especially in Illinois and Indiana. His attempt to revive this type of live theater in 1942 (the Orpheum circuit last ran in 1932) with fellow vaudevillian and Bostonian Jack Haley, reflected his love for this very challenging lifestyle. Many of the Allen's radio shows are likewise flavored with fondly remembered routines from this era of stage variety.

The move up the ladder to the pinnacle of vaudeville success was paved with many anecdotes. A good accounting will be found in Fred's autobiographical *Much Ado About Me* (the second of his life-story books) and the recently published *Fred Allen: His Life and Wit* by Robert Taylor. Among his stories include his two week substitute stint in "Artists and Models" in 1928, a shot at a big show, but his comedy couldn't compete (as he said) with the near nudes who were cavorting on stage.

FRED ALLEN'S TREADMILL

Other anecdotes include those of the starving comedian at Mrs. Montfort's boarding house in New York City and on the road in Australia during wartime preparations. He also mentioned small towns on the way out of Chicago (whose Palace was the second most prestigious place to play outside of New York), such as the split week he played in Terre Haute, including an eighteen hour show, before taking a midnight train to Evansville (a one hour ride with a four hour layover) to complete the other half week.

The friendships he established along the way were never forgotten. After becoming a star on radio, Fred Allen frequently dipped into his pocket to help less successful fellow vaudevillians (his generosity was fondly remembered after his death). He began a long-time friendship with Clifton Webb when he shared the stage in George S. Kaufman's comedy of manners skit "The Still Alarm" in the first "Little Show" in 1928.

Other struggling entertainers who were helped by the quietly generous Allen were Dave Garroway, Henry Morgan, Herb Shriner, Red Skelton (Fred wrote the famous Guzzler's Gin routine), and Steve Allen (Fred appeared on the young talk

show host's program to promote the opening of "The Benny Goodman Story" when he gave his last monologue.) It was at this time he met another long-time friend, and soon to be his wife, Portland (named for her birthplace in Oregon) Hoffa.

While Fred was on stage in the 1920's with the likes of Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, and W. C. Fields, radio was growing as an entertainment force in the world. After a number of big time stage successes, Fred was asked to star on *The Bath Club* for Linit in 1932 (it was soon renamed *Linit Revue*). The reviews were mixed (one reviewer in *Forum* called it a "hodge-podge of music and cracks by Allen"), but the public warmed up anyway. After a time on the air for Hellman's *Mayonnaise* in the *Salad Bowl Revue*, Sal Hepatica and Ipana toothpaste gave Fred a half hour each for their *Hour of Smiles* ("Ipana for the smile of beauty; Sal Hepatica for the smile of health.") Fred revealed later in his life that Bromo Seltzer had to stand in before the microphone for Sal Hepatica, because the latter's fizz was not loud enough. Eventually, Bristol Myers allowed their two sponsored halves to become sixty minutes of *Town Hall Tonight* in 1934. There would be a sponsor change to



THE FAMOUS BENNY-ALLEN FEUD CONTINUES with this scene between Jack and Fred from the 1940 film, "Love Thy Neighbor."

Texaco in 1940, when the show changed to a less taxing half hour, but the program returned to one full hour in 1941.

The year 1942 saw a return to the half hour format and to CBS, but more importantly, a new concept was introduced: Allen's Alley. Some of the characters in the "Town Hall" were removed to the Alley, and a comedy situation legend was born, as was the format that would take Fred to his last days on radio. So popular was Allen that, by 1941, his audience was estimated at over one in every three U.S. homes (20,000,000 total). Unfortunately, Fred was a workaholic and had to leave the air for months during the 1944-45 season because of high blood pressure.

The best remembered episodes of Fred's long career include the famous Benny-

Allen feud. Started in 1936, after Fred made a disparaging statement about Jack's violin abilities (in light of a youthful virtuoso being hailed on Fred's show), over a decade of radio slung barbs were launched. The climax came on March 14, 1937, when the "battle of the century" took place before a live audience in New York. The feud was not settled on that date, of course, and Benny continued to be the nemesis of Allen until the last days of *The Fred Allen Show*.

The comedian's gift of being able to observe and comment on man's shortcomings satirically was evidenced offstage as early as the 1920's when he contributed humor to *Variety* in his "Near Fun" column. New England characters on his radio shows, such as Titus Moody, became Fred's prize subjects for writing



PORTLAND HOFFA AND FRED ALLEN

FRED ALLEN'S TREADMILL

lines, a job assumed more by Fred than by other radio comedians. Photos of Fred show him "relaxing" by reading any daily paper he could (he had his favorite dailies mailed to him at 62 cents per copy), hence his ability to contribute to his own monologue with a thorough knowledge of all of the day's news and to other lines that he wrote for the program. When the hour-long shows were performed, Fred Allen seldom had time to enjoy the time between broadcasts, because the day after the show he was building material for the next.

He made a number of films, despite his dislike of leaving the East coast and falling into a "cinematic" form of entertainment. A *Life* magazine article titled "Fred Allen Tells Why He Hates Hollywood" jokingly toys with the rigors of getting up early, being made up, and engaging in the tortures of film making, but it really

reflects Fred's distaste for the trouble of going West to participate in the Hollywood style and usually an only modestly successful film.

Among his movies are "Thanks A Million" (he's Raymond Walburn's political manager in this 1935 Dick Powell vehicle), "Sally, Irene, and Mary" (he's their agent in this 1939 film), "Love Thy Neighbor" (feuding with Benny and introducing Mary Martin in 1940), and "It's in the Bag" (Eugene Petrov's "The Twelve Chairs", probably the best of Allen's films with a great 1945 cast.)

Certainly the golden age of radio for Fred was the late 1940's. He had not only mastered the art (as had many in the medium), but he also built upon his finely crafted format in Allen's Alley. The first continuing character developed was Falstaff Openshaw, whose name came from the odd combination of a Shakespearean character and a shipyard

worker Fred knew in Maine. The cast members just prior to Fred's illness leave included Charlie Cantor (Socrates Mulligan), Minerva Pious (Mrs. Nussbaum), and John Brown (John Doe), who all assumed jobs playing on, respectively, *Duffy's Tavern*, various parts, and on *The Jack Benny Show* when Fred was off the air in 1944. After his return there was some difficulty retrieving all of them, but Alan Reed (Falstaff) stayed, Everett Sloan was invited to join the cast, and Jack Smart returned to Allen after some years absence. The character receiving the most complaints was Ajax Cassidy. Fred's personal favorite was Titus Moody.

Announcer Kenny Delmar achieved perhaps one of the fastest nationwide rises to fame in radio when he introduced Senator Claghorn to the Alley on October 7, 1945. Based on a character Delmar met in the South in the announcer's formative years, the nonstop mouth and braggadocio of Claghorn helped spread the phrases "That's joke son" (also the title of Delmar's starring movie) and "... that is" like boll weevils in a cotton patch. Warner Brothers soon capitalized onto the character when they introduced Mel Blanc's voice as Claghorn's cartoon character Foghorn Leghorn two year later. Some publications of the day thought the phenomenon of the Senator would last six months at best, but when on the air the Senator received thousands of gifts and letters from Southerners who appreciated the revered profuse references to Dixie.

Fred Allen's last days on the radio were not pretty, at least for him personally. The show continued as successfully as it had been, but Fred, after being cut off when his show ran too long, satirized network vice presidents and portrayed them as useless know-nothings. Others at NBC, including Bob Hope and Red Skelton, jumped on the bandwagon, but it was Allen who was tossed out in the street and far from his alley forever, culminating in a suspension of contract.

The final undoing came when relative



FRED ALLEN "charms" his CBS audience.

upstart ABC introduced a game show opposite Fred in 1948. *Stop the Music* was a program that stopped a song and called a home to see if those on the receiving end were listening, and hence, would receive the jackpot. Fred joked about this at first, then offered \$5,000 to those who were called, but were listening to Allen's Alley. His ratings dropped, and the wounded executives found a chance to cancel *The Fred Allen Show*, the last of his 273 broadcasts occurring June 26, 1949 (faithful friend Jack Benny was his last guest.)

Fred Allen didn't make it in television for several reasons. First, finding the appropriate format was a problem. He was even offered a game show (*Judge for Yourself* from August 18, 1953 to May 11, 1954), but it allowed little chance for one of the most gifted wits of the day to perform with contestant straight men (Groucho Marx, on the other hand, mastered the art with the game show *You Bet Your Life*). Secondly, and it was



KENNY DELMAR as Senator Beauregard Claghorn with Fred Allen.

FRED ALLEN'S TREADMILL

considered, Allen's Alley was a beautiful place in the mind's eye of radio, but it would have been as difficult to present on a television as, say, Fibber McGee's Closet or Jack Benny's vault, although the cast was reunited in 1956 for an NBC thirtieth anniversary telecast.

Finally, he found an accommodating program too late. The guessing show *What's My Line* gave panelists a chance to toy with guests, if only briefly. Fred was closest to his best television character, but he died on March 17, 1956, and never fully realized the potential of the show. Perhaps his best triumph in television was as narrator for the *Project 20* documentary of "The Jazz Age," which was broadcast nine months after his death.

Steve Allen, who said he was frequently and proudly mistaken to be Fred's son, filled in for the next show and paid the radio comedian a tribute in his book *The*

Funny Men mentioning that Fred Allen had been "unhonored by television."

The legacy of Fred Allen can best be sampled by listening to his genius on radio. The books by Allen and those about his era in entertainment attest to his abilities as a humorist of the top rung. In his own words, he felt as if he "was on a treadmill to oblivion," unable to "compete with the machine" (television).

Fred's comments on TV:

When you see Kukla, Fran, and Ollie come alive on the little screen, you realize you don't need great big things as we had in radio. They ought to get one of those African fellows over here to shrink all of the actors. We're all too big for this medium.

The trouble with television is it's too graphic (predictable). In radio, a moron could visualize things in his way, an intelligent man, his way.

Everything is for the eye these days . . . nothing is for the mind. The next generation will have eyeballs as big as cantaloupes and no brains at all.

Television is the triumph of equipment over people, and the minds that control it are so small that you could put them in the navel of a flea and still have enough room beside them for a network vice president's heart.

Other Great Allen Quotes:

They had a scarecrow who scared crows so badly "that they brought back the corn they had stolen two years before."

On the price of milk in New York: "Milk hasn't been so high since the cow jumped over the moon."

When asked where Fred had learned juggling, Allen replied, "I took a correspondence course in baggage handling."

Fred was credited in 1927 with saying the immortal line to a rude house orchestra conductor, "How much would you charge to haunt a house?"

Comparing the new movie palaces to vaudeville houses: "Motion picture theaters were cathedrals that made vaudeville houses look like privies."

Henry Morgan asked why Steve Allen was laughing and he related that Fred had just told him he'd been at "dinner sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews . . . do we really deserve top billing?"

Asked why he was leaving New York City, Fred said, "I'm going to Boston to see my doctor. He's a very sick man."

In discussing geometry: "Let X equal the signature of my father."




FRED ALLEN

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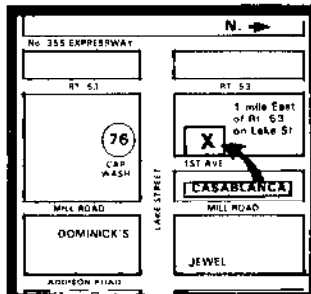
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NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

Singin', Swingin' Vocal Groups

By KARL PEARSON

Vocalists were an essential part of any big band. While the musician was needed to interpret the melody of a song, the vocalist was equally important in presenting the lyrics of the popular tunes of the day.

In addition to spotlighting individual vocalists with their orchestras, a number of leaders also featured vocal groups which provided yet another dimension to the big band. Remember Glenn Miller's "Chattanooga Choo Choo"? Or Tommy Dorsey's "I'll Never Smile Again"? Or Jimmy Lunceford's "My Blue Heaven"? How about Eddy Howard's "To Each His Own"? All of the recordings featured vocal groups (the Modernaires, the Pied Pipers, and the Lunceford and Howard trios, respectively). Several popular vocalists such as Jo Stafford and Bing Crosby gained much of their initial musical experience while members of such groups.

The first of the "big-name" vocal groups to be featured with an orchestra were the Rhythm Boys, who joined Paul Whiteman in 1927. Its members were Harry Barris, Al Rinker, and a young Bing Crosby. During their three years with Whiteman the Rhythm Boys became an integral part of the Whiteman Orchestra. They were featured on many of Whiteman's recordings including "From Monday On" and "Mississippi Mud" and also appeared with the band in the early color talking picture "The King Of Jazz." After leaving Whiteman in 1930, the group sang with Gus Arnheim for short period. The Rhythm Boys eventually dissolved when Bing Crosby left to start his highly successful career.

One of the best-known singing groups of the swing era were the Four Modernaires. The Modernaires, synonymous with the name of Glenn Miller, were one of the most musical of the singing groups and were well-known for their smooth blend of voices and advanced phrasing and technique. Formed as a trio in Buffalo, New York during 1933, the group consisted of Hal Dickenson, Bill Conway and Chuck Goldstein. Known as "The Three Weary Willies", the trio was featured on several local radio programs. In 1934 the trio moved to New York, where they secured a job with Ozzie Nelson and his Orchestra. They were featured with Nelson's band on the Joe Penner "Baker's Broadcast", where they were billed as "The Wizards of Ozzie"! After leaving Nelson's band the group sang for a short period with both Ted Fio Rito and Fred Waring.

In 1936 the group adopted "the Modernaires" as its name and became a quartet. During the summer of that year they were hired by Charlie Barnet. Known as the "Barnet Modernaires," the quartet made its first recordings on the Bluebird label: "Make Believe Ballroom" and "The Milkmen's Matinee." Both records were used as theme songs by popular New York area disc jockeys which provided "the Mods" with additional exposure. Long-time member Ralph Brewster joined the Modernaires in 1937, replacing Jack Lathrop (who would later play guitar for Glenn Miller). The Modernaires joined Paul Whiteman's organization in 1938 and remained there for two years.

A one-shot recording session with Glenn



THE MODERNAIRES in 1943 with Captain Glenn Miller and Paula Kelly.

Miller in late 1940 led to a full-time job with the Miller band a few months later. The Modernaires are best-remembered for their work with Miller thru such classic recordings as "Serenade In Blue" and "(I've Got A Gal In) Kalamazoo." Miller was so pleased with the quartet that he featured them extensively, and the group appeared on 51 of the band's 214 recordings! When Glenn Miller entered the armed forces in the fall of 1942, the Modernaires decided to pursue a solo career. Chuck Goldstein left the group to form a group of his own, known as "Four Chicks and a Chuck. Paula Kelly, who was in real life Hal Dickenson's wife (and who had also sung with Miller for a short time) joined the group at that point. The Modernaires, with several personnel

changes, continued their careers for many years and were featured with such stars as Bob Crosby and Jerry Gray. In later years the Modernaires were an integral part of the many of the Glenn Miller tributes held around the country.

On a par with the Modernaires were the Pied Pipers, who were featured for several years with Tommy Dorsey. Its members, Jo Stafford, Chuck Lowrey, Clark Yocum (who also played guitar in Dorsey's band) and John Huddleston (Stafford's husband at the time), provided a smooth blending of voices on both uptempo novelties and slow ballads. Originally formed as an octet, the Pied Pipers were featured on several radio programs in the late 1930's. A one-shot appearance on Tommy Dorsey's Raleigh Cigarette program led to

NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

a full-time job with Dorsey. But Tommy, who was in financial straits at the time, could only hire four! The group became a quartet and subsequently were featured on many of Dorsey's Victor records, including "Star Dust," "Let's Get Away From It All," and "Oh! Look At Me Now," often in combination with Dorsey vocalists Frank Sinatra and Connie Haines. Like the Modernaires, the Pied Pipers were known for their clean phrasing and good harmonies. After leaving Dorsey in late 1942, the group went out on its own and was featured on several radio shows with Bob Crosby, Johnny Mercer, Frank Sinatra and others. When Jo Stafford left the group for a solo career of her own in 1944 she was replaced by June Hutton, younger sister of bandleader Ina Ray Hutton. The Pied Pipers continued as an attraction for many years and also appeared in several big band revivals in later years.

Another of the top big band vocal groups were the King Sisters, who had a long and successful career, Alyce, Donna, Louise and Yvonne Driggs grew up in the Salt Lake City area, where they received their initial voice training from their father, William King Driggs, a professional voice teacher. When the girls decided to embark on a professional career they adopted their

father's middle name as their last. In 1935, with an additional sister and a friend, the group joined Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights, where they were billed "The Six King Sisters." Within a year the additional sister and friend had left and the group became a quartet. The King Sisters were featured on many of the Heidt band's recordings and on the Heidt radio program ("Horace Heidt for Alemite"). When Alvino Rey, Heidt's guitarist (and Louise King's husband) left to form a band of his own, the King Sisters joined the Rey orchestra. Their popularity grew to a point where the King Sisters received equal billing with the Rey orchestra! The King Sisters remained popular for many years, and their careers were revived in the mid-1960's with the start of their long-running television series.

In addition to separate vocal groups a number of bands featured orchestra members who doubled as vocalists. Some economic minded bandleaders preferred this method, with their musicians doubling in vocal trios and quartets. Kay Kyser, Freddy Martin, Jimmie Lunceford and Eddy Howard featured such groups. And who can forget the Guy Lombardo trio?

While some of these groups of musicians-doubling-as-vocalists sounded quite good, others were fairly awful, and in one case, one such group was a total disaster. After Charlie Barnet had lost the services of the Modernaires he decided to form a "new Barnet Modernaires" group consisting of himself and three additional band members. The new Barnet Modernaires made its debut on the job one evening. While stepping up to the microphone for their number Barnet looked over at fellow Modernaire Irving Goodman (Benny's trumpet-playing brother), who, according to Charlie, had a silly look on his face. When the number began, Barnet and Goodman began giggling. The giggling led into uncontrolled laughter as the group made a total shambles of the tune! That was the new



THE PIED PIPERS in 1939 with Tommy Dorsey. That's Jo Stafford in the center.

Barnet Modernaires' one and only appearance.

A number of bands featured vocal groups that were named after the bandleader or identified with the band's style. Jan Savitt's Top Hatter's featured a group known as the Three Toppers, while Sammy Kaye featured the ever-popular Three Kayedets. Even Benny Goodman eventually got into the act with a vocal group known as the Clarinaders!

In addition to popular vocal groups such as the Pied Pipers and the King Sisters, there were a number of very unusual and interesting vocal groups. Xavier Cugat featured a nine-piece group. Cugat used the group as a vehicle to back his other vocalists and also used their harmonies as an additional section of his orchestra. Pianist Griff Williams featured a good-

sounding octet consisting of members of his orchestra, a group which provided interesting glee club effects. Bandleader Ina Ray Hutton featured an Asian-American group known as the Kim Loo Sisters, who were very good.

A number of bandleaders hired vocal groups as the big band business began to boom in the early 1940's. Ted Fio Rito, Frankie Masters and others got into the act. Groups such as the Skylarks, the Three Smoothies, The Star Dusters, and The Town Criers were featured with Harry James, Hal Kemp, Charlie Spivak, and Les Brown respectively. Earl "Fatha" Hines even got into the act by hiring a female trio known as "The Blue Bonnets," who backed up his star singer Sarah Vaughn.

*Those singin', swingin' vocal groups added much to the big band era.

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The Death of A TV-holic

BY TODD NEBEL

When I was very young, watching television was as common to me as eating or sleeping each day — I did it constantly. I would sit there mesmerized, with my mouth open, passively staring at everything and anything that would come on the screen. Of course, there were other interests besides television, for example, palming around with my best friend Torie (now my brother-in-law) who lived across the street.

One of the things Torie and I liked best was camping out on Friday or Saturday nights. It was during one summer night in 1974, at thirteen years of age, an event happened that would change my life forever. This particular Friday night sleep-over started out the same as all the others. Torie came over with sleeping bag in hand and an evening of board game fun soon began.

First came Nerf football on my parent's basement floor with my brothers, Brian and Mark, as blockers. Then, a game called "Dirty Dozen" where one of us played Jim Brown and the other was the Nazi soldier as Jim had to throw hand grenades down chimney chutes before he was slaughtered by Nazi machine gun bullets. Then came games like Battling Tops, Table Tennis, Monopoly, and my favorite, a Tyco Race set. And finally, when we were tired enough, we set up our sleeping bags under the open stars in my parent's backyard.

On that fateful summer night we just happened to take a portable radio outside to place near our sleeping bags. It was late, and as Torie fell into sleep I turned the dial

on the radio until, suddenly, I came upon the sounds of eerie music and then the slow, deliberate voice of a man named E.G. Marshall. He was introducing the beginning of a new radio program (heard at 10:30 p.m. on WBBM in Chicago) called "The CBS Radio Mystery Theater."

For the next hour, I was mesmerized, captivated, and scared to death as my imagination began making my own backyard a veritable graveyard filled with slithering creatures from all walks of life. Never before had I listened to a radio so intently since all it had meant to me was music, news or talk. Immediately I was hooked! What a discovery it was to find my own imagination providing the pictures to the sounds of horrible creatures, villains, ghosts and murderers — everything a boy of thirteen lives for! "The CBS Radio Mystery Theatre" was a hundred times scarier than television shows like "Night Gallery," "Dark Shadows," or even staying up late to watch the beginning of "Creature Features" on Channel 9!

From this point on I couldn't get enough. I was obsessed with "The CBS Radio Mystery Theatre" and staying up until 11:30 p.m. to listen every night to a wonderful hour of horror! This infatuation did not last forever because it wasn't long before my parents discovered I was neglecting my homework and walking around like a zombie by the time school had ended. "Stealing" time with radio late at night then became "stealing" time with old time radio during high school. Instead

of staying up late, I was now waking up before 6:00 every morning to record old radio programs on WXFM with host Wayne Messmer.

What a discovery old time radio was after listening to "new" time radio and "The CBS Radio Mystery Theater." It was the only time I've experienced that both the technical and production quality of entertainment programs actually *improved* with age. Suddenly I was transported from the 1970's to the 1940's and radio was "live," not "canned." Attention to writing, actors and actresses, and production values were now all first class. And even though I was born in 1960 when the last few old time radio programs were making their exits, I could now relive the thirty years I had missed. Also horror and mystery shows, which I was understandably fond of, seemed as fresh and new as if they were being presented for the first time.

Then in 1980, after I thought I had found it all, I soon made by biggest discovery of all. After a visit to Northwest Federal Savings in Arlington Heights, my fiancee JoAnne, handed me a brochure and called my attention to its advertisement exclaiming, "Listen to Those Were The Days with Chuck Schaden from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays during May — National Radio Month and hear Old Time Radio from A to Z!" I knew I had engaged her for something, but now JoAnne had cinched it! My interest in history and the nostalgia of that period of time was now quenched with Chuck's masterful narrative and reminiscing.

I finally found my mornings and evenings were free, but I was now giving up football and softball with friends because I had to listen to old time radio from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays! Would this thing that had consumed me ever release me from its grip? Of course not! My desire to know about the period of time that old time radio took place had brought me to graduation day from Elmhurst College with one of my two bachelors degrees in



what else — History! Then, almost simultaneously, I was offered a full-time position in the greatest job I will ever know — as producer, engineer and sales rep for the guru of old time radio — Chuck Schaden. (I had written to him expressing my interest in old time radio and he responded with the job offer!)

Working with Chuck side by side for the "cause" of old time radio was one of the greatest experiences of my life. And working with him all of those late nights on WAIT-AM and Saturday afternoons on "Those Were The Days," I quickly discovered I was just one of a huge audience who also enjoyed the old time radio programs.

So that's how I discovered old time radio. You can see what kind of impact it has had on my life.

When and how did *you* discover old time radio? Was it while you were working under the hood of your Studebaker or Camaro? Was it while doing laundry using Rinso or Tide?

Let me know: I'd like to hear from you.

(ED. NOTE — Although Todd Nebel has since moved on to another career, his love of vintage radio continues, just as he continues to work occasionally behind the scenes for our broadcasts and write his column for the Nostalgia Digest.)

JUNE		Old Time Radio Classics – WBBM-AM 78 MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M. SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>PLEASE NOTE: Due to WBBM's commitment to news and sports, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be pre-empted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance, or for unscheduled sports coverage. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>						<p>1 Scarlet Queen Dragnet Cisco Kid Charlie Chan</p>
<p>2 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>3 Jack Benny Dragnet</p>	<p>4 Nightbeat Dick Tracy</p>	<p>5 Duffy's Tavern Truth or Consequences</p>	<p>6 Burns & Allen Green Hornet</p>	<p>7 Cisco Kid Vic and Sade</p>	<p>8 Charlie McCarthy Six Shooter Burns & Allen Dragnet</p>
<p>9 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>10 Jack Benny Fibber McGee</p>	<p>11 Green Hornet Fibber McGee</p>	<p>12 Cisco Kid Fibber McGee</p>	<p>13 Dragnet Fibber McGee</p>	<p>14 Scarlet Queen Fibber McGee</p>	<p>15 Green Hornet Burns & Allen Directors Playhouse Jack Armstrong</p>
<p>16 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>17 Jack Benny Six Shooter</p>	<p>18 Charlie McCarthy Scarlet Queen</p>	<p>19 Escape Pepper Young's Family</p>	<p>20 Burns & Allen Cisco Kid</p>	<p>21 Green Hornet Easy Aces</p>	<p>22 Six Shooter Charlie McCarthy Dragnet Scarlet Queen</p>
<p>23 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>24 Vic and Sade Cisco Kid</p>	<p>25 Dragnet Charlie McCarthy</p>	<p>26 Burns & Allen Six Shooter</p>	<p>27 Charlie McCarthy Scarlet Queen</p>	<p>28 The Bickersons Richard Diamond</p>	<p>29 Lux Radio Theatre: "Phantom of the Opera" Jack Benny Tom Mix</p>

JULY		Old Time Radio Classics – WBBM-AM 78 MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M. SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>JUNE 30 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>1 The Shadow Dick Tracy</p>	<p>2 Vic and Sade Cisco Kid</p>	<p>3 Jack Benny: "Dreer Paasen" Wild Bill Hickok</p>	<p>4 Calling All Cars Dick Tracy</p>	<p>5 Lum and Abner Burns & Allen</p>	<p>6 Scarlet Queen Dragnet Charlie McCarthy Green Hornet</p>
<p>7 <i>Christmas in July: Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>8 <i>Christmas in July:</i> Duffy's Tavern Fibber McGee</p>	<p>9 <i>Christmas in July:</i> Archie Andrews Fibber McGee</p>	<p>10 <i>Christmas in July:</i> The Shadow Fibber McGee</p>	<p>11 <i>Christmas in July:</i> Red Skelton Fibber McGee</p>	<p>12 <i>Christmas in July:</i> Mel Blanc Show Fibber McGee</p>	<p>13 <i>Christmas in July:</i> Our Miss Brooks Fibber McGee - Escape Great Gildersleeve</p>
<p>14 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>15 Jack Benny Nightbeat</p>	<p>16 Jack Benny The Fat Man</p>	<p>17 Aldrich Family The Unexpected</p>	<p>18 Scarlet Queen Easy Aces</p>	<p>19 Hop Harrigan The Shadow</p>	<p>20 Green Hornet Six Shooter Burns & Allen Cisco Kid</p>
<p>21 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>22 Johnny Doilar Cisco Kid</p>	<p>23 Johnny Dollar Scarlet Queen</p>	<p>24 Johnny Dollar Six Shooter</p>	<p>25 Johnny Dollar Dragnet</p>	<p>26 Johnny Dollar Green Hornet</p>	<p>27 Directors Playhouse Six Shooter Jack Benny Scarlet Queen</p>
<p>28 <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p>29 The Bickersons Crime Club</p>	<p>30 Great Gildersleeve The Unexpected</p>	<p>31 Terry & the Pirates Jack Benny</p>	<p>PLEASE NOTE: All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>		

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

JUNE

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for Those Were The Days represents timing information for each particular show. (9:45; 11:20; 8:50) means that we will broadcast the show in three segments: 9 minutes and 45 seconds; 11 minutes and 20 seconds; 8 minutes and 50 seconds. If you add the times of these segments together, you'll have the total length of the show (29:55 for our example). This is of help to those who are taping the broadcasts for their own collection.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1st SPOTLIGHT ON DINAH SHORE

PHILCO RADIO TIME (10-15-47) Bing Crosby welcomes guest **Dinah Shore** for some fun and music as the twosome offer a spoof on radio's Hit Parade called "Your Flop Parade." Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, the Rhythmaires, Philco, ABC. (7:00; 13:45; 9:25)

SHOWTIME (1940s) **Dinah Shore** presents a nostalgic look at Tin Pan Alley over the years with the music of songwriter Jimmy McHugh, who also appears. Dinah sings all the songs, with Capt. Walt Schumann and the Armed Forces Radio Service orchestra. AFRS. (10:35; 9:10; 10:00)

SUSPENSE (5-5-52) "Frankie and Johnny" starring **Dinah Shore** in the "re-creation in song and story of an American legend." Lamont Johnson co-stars as Johnny. Harlow Wilcox announces. AutoLite, CBS. (13:40; 15:50)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (1-18-51) "Birth of the Blues" starring Bing Crosby, **Dinah Shore** and Phil Harris in a radio version of the 1941 Paramount film

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as Bing tries to organize a Dixieland band in New Orleans during the early 1900s. Bing appears in his original screen role; Red Nichols and his coronet are featured. Buick, ABC. (30:10; 27:20)

DINAH SHORE'S OPEN HOUSE (1-24-46) **Dinah** introduces guest Frank Sinatra who wonders what life will be like in 50 years! The two do a husband-wife sketch set in 1996. Frank Nelson, Harry Von Zell add to the fun. AFRS rebroadcast. (14:37; 15:28)

SATURDAY, JUNE 8th

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-24-49) Jack is thinking about buying a new car! Featured are Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, the Sportsmen Quartet, Joe Kearns, Jim Backus, and Mel Blanc as Polly the Parrot and as Jack's Maxwell. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (14:05; 13:02)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is *Nostalgia Digest* columnist and film historian **BOB KOLOSOSKI** who talks about the director and introduces the first program in our six-part **FRANK CAPRA FILM FESTIVAL**:

LUX RADIO THEATRE (5-1-39) "Lady for a Day" starring Mae Robeson, Warren William, Jean Parker and Guy Kibbee in a radio version of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1933 Columbia screen hit. It's Damon Runyon's famous "Apple Annie" story (which Capra remade in 1961 as "Pocketful of Miracles"). Leslie Howard is guest producer. Lux Soap, CBS. (18:25; 17:10; 23:50)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (4-18-48) Fred's guest is political figure James A. Farley. The Allen's Alley question is about the circus. Ford Dealers of America, NBC. (11:14; 5:41; 12:51)

VIC AND SADE (11-20-45) The Corkells come to visit. Art Van Harvey as Vic, Bernadine Flynn as Sade. Billy Idelson as Rush, with Norman Gottschalk and Johnny Coons. Oxydol, NBC. (15:00)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (6-12-49) Frankie Remley has a foster son, a French orphan who speaks only French, and so the boys try to teach him English. Elliott Lewis as Frankie, with Walter Tetley as Julius. Rexall, NBC. (14:50; 13:15)

SATURDAY, JUNE 15th

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (8-28-50) Chapter 11, Book 77, "The Book of Henry." Henry Barbour convalesces at home after knee surgery, but he refuses to use crutches. This episode marks the series' return to a Monday-thru-Friday format and is the first episode of a 30-part sequence which will be presented over 13 weeks on *Those Were The Days*. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:15)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (8-29-50) Chapter 12, Book 77. Henry refuses to exercise his knee. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:00)

FRANK CAPRA FILM FESTIVAL — Guest **Bob Kolososki** introduces:

LUX RADIO THEATRE (3-20-39) "It Happened One Night" starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert with Walter Connolly and Roscoe Karns in a radio version of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1934 film about a runaway society girl and the newspaper reporter who helps her run. Cast features Lou Merrill, Frank Nelson, Walter Tetley. Lux Soap, CBS. (20:10; 21:18; 21:33)

VIC AND SADE (1940) Uncle Fletcher shows his washrag collection to Rush. Clarence Hartzell, Billy Idelson. (10:00)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (6-19-49) On Father's Day, Frankie wants to adopt his foster son, but can't unless he (Frankie) is married. Elliott Lewis is Remley, with Walter Tetley, Robert North. Rexall, NBC. (11:48; 6:08; 9:04)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (8-30-50) Chapter 13, Book 77. Henry is feeling sorry about his "trial by surgery." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:15)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (8-31-50) Chapter 14, Book 77. Gardner Arnie Ganz forgets to tell Hazel something. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:20)

SATURDAY, JUNE 22nd

MA PERKINS (1940s) An isolated episode in the long-running (1933-1960) series begins our *Those Were The Days* "Summer of Soaps" festival. Virginia Payne stars as "America's Mother of the Air" with Murray Forbes as Willy and Kay Campbell as Evy. Announcer is Charlie Warren. Oxydol, CBS. (14:30)

WHEN A GIRL MARRIES (1940s) Mary Jane Higby appears as Joan Davis in an isolated episode of "the tender, human story of young married life, dedicated to everyone who has ever been in love." Announcer is Charles Stark. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (16:05)

FRANK CAPRA FILM FESTIVAL — Guest **Bob Kolososki** introduces:

LUX RADIO THEATRE (2-1-37) "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" starring Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur and Lionel Stander, recreating their screen roles in the radio version of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1936 Columbia picture. Cooper is Longfellow Deeds who inherits 20 million dollars and wants to spend it on others during the

Depression. Cecil B. DeMille is producer-host. Lux Soap, CBS. (22:40; 11:40; 23:45)

AUNT JENNY'S TRUE LIFE STORIES (5-3-46) Isolated episode finds Aunt Jenny telling a story and offering a recipe. Announcer is Dan Seymour. Spry, CBS. (14:55)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (10-17-48) Ozzie gets tangled in a web of promises. Cast features Ozzie and Harriet Nelson as themselves, Tommy Bernard and Henry Blair as David and Ricky, John Brown as Thorny, and Janet Waldo as Emmy Lou. International Silver Co., NBC. (14:30; 15:15)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-1-50) Chapter 15, Book 77. Father Barbour intends to show his operation movie again, in the last chapter in the "Book of Henry." Miles Labs, NBC. (14:10)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-4-50) Chapter 1, Book 78. "The Book of Teddy." Dentist Elwood Giddings has arrived at the Barbour household. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:00)

SATURDAY, JUNE 29th

RIGHT TO HAPPINESS (11-25-60) The final broadcast in the long-running (1939-1960) series features Claudia Morgan and Les Damon as Carolyn and Lee McDonald who discover "... we are all born with the right to happiness." Sustaining, CBS. (13:40)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (10-14-47) Jim and Marian Jordan star with Gale Gordon as weatherman Foggy Williams; Arthur Q. Brian as Doc Gamble; Bill Thompson as The Old Timer and Wallace Wimple; Harlow Wilcox, the King's Men; Billy Mills and the orchestra. Teeney's cat gets away from her and hides under Fibber's porch. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (10:45; 12:10; 8:10)

STRANGE ROMANCE OF EVELYN WINTERS (2-28-45) An isolated episode in "the story of Gary Bennett, playwright, who suddenly and unexpectedly finds himself the guardian of lovely Evelyn Winters." Toni Darnay as Evelyn, Karl Weber as Gary. Announcer is Larry Elliott. Sweetheart Soap, CBS. (15:00)

FRANK CAPRA FILM FESTIVAL — Guest **Bob Kolososki** introduces:

LUX RADIO THEATRE (9-15-41) "Lost Horizon" starring Ronald Colman in a radio version of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1937 film success. It's James Hilton's story of escapism when five people are kidnapped and taken to Shangri-La, a strange Tibetan monastery where all are immortal. Cast features Donald Crisp, Lynne Carver. Cecil B. DeMille is host-producer. Lux Soap, CBS. (18:54; 20:57; 19:09)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-5-50) Chapter 2, Book 78. Teddy and Elwood's secret is out. Miles Labs, NBC. (13:55)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-8-50) Chapter 3, Book 78. Henry is upset that Fanny has revealed a secret. Miles Labs, NBC. (13:50)

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

JULY

SATURDAY, JULY 6th

FRANK CAPRA FILM FESTIVAL — Guest **Bob Kolososki**, *Nostalgia Digest* columnist and movie historian, talks about the legendary director and introduces:

LUX RADIO THEATRE (10-2-39) "You Can't Take It With You" starring Edward Arnold, Fay Wray, Robert Cummings and Walter Connolly in the radio version of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1938 screen comedy about an eccentric family unable to conform to normal life. Cast features Lee Patrick, Lou Merrill, Jane Morgan, Earl Ross. Cecil B. DeMille is producer-host. Lux Soap, CBS. (28:05; 16:07; 18:10)

STELLA DALLAS (2-22-49) Anne Elstner appears as Stella in "a continuation on the air of the true-to-life story of mother love and sacrifice." Isolated episode features announcer Frank Gallup. Phillips Milk of Magnesia. NBC. (12:55)

DAVID HARUM (1-19-45) Announcer Ford Bond introduces an isolated episode of "the story of every one of us . . . of our search for love, for happiness and the good way of life." Cameron Prud'homme as David. Bab-O, NBC. (14:25)

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OUR MISS BROOKS (3-13-49) Eve Arden stars as the English teacher at Madison High School with Gale Gordon as Osgood Conklin, Jane Morgan as Mrs. Davis, Dick Crenna as Walter Denton, and Jeff Chandler as Mr. Boynton. Conklin asks Miss Brooks to investigate problems in the school cafeteria. Palmolive Soap, Lustre Creme Shampoo, CBS. (13:06; 14:50)

OUR GAL SUNDAY (11-26-46) Vivian Smolen is Sunday and Karl Swenson is Henry Brinthrop in an isolated episode of "the story that asks the question, Can a girl from a mining town in the West find happiness as the wife of a wealthy and titled Englishman?" Anacin. CBS. (14:15)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-7-50) Chapter 4, Book 78. Still more people know Henry Barbour's secret. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:05)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-8-50) Chapter 5, Book 78. Father Barbour's special interest in Elwood Giddings disturbs Clifford. Miles Labs, NBC. (13:50)

SATURDAY, JULY 13th

THE GOLDBERGS (9-6-42) An isolated episode in the long-running (1929-1945) beloved daytime series starring Gertrude Berg as Molly Goldberg with James R. Waters as her husband Jake and Menasha Skulnik as Uncle David. Announcer is Clayton Collier. Duz, CBS. (14:50)

FRANK CAPRA FILM FESTIVAL — Guest **Bob Kolososki** brings our festival to a close as he introduces:

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (11-18-46) "Arsenic and Old Lace" starring Boris Karloff and Eddie Albert in a radio version of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1944 film about an off-beat, respected Brooklyn family of lunatics, murderers and dramatic critics! Cast features Jane Morgan, Verna Felton, Joe Kearns, Herb Vigran. Announcer is Truman Bradley. Lady Esther Cosmetics, CBS. (16:00; 10:35)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (3-10-47) "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Victor Moore in a radio adaptation of **FRANK CAPRA's** 1946 screen classic. Once again, George Bailey learns that no man is alone if he has friends. Lux Soap, CBS. (20:30; 16:25; 20:45)

JUST PLAIN BILL (2-22-49) Arthur Hughes appears as Bill Davidson, barber of Hartville in an isolated episode of "a tender, real-life story of people who might be your

next door neighbor." Announcer is Fielden Farrington. Black Flag, Anacin, NBC. (12:55)

PORTIA FACES LIFE (11-2-48) Lucille Wall stars as Portia in an isolated episode of the "story taken from the heart of every woman who has ever dared to love completely." Announcer is George Putnam. Instant Postum, Post Bran Flakes, NBC. (13:50)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-11-50) Chapter 6, Book 78. Henry Barbour is upset when Teddy and Elwood's engagement is announced in the newspaper. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-12-50) Chapter 7, Book 78. The secret is out and Teddy and Elwood have a serious talk. Miles Labs, NBC. (13:52)

SATURDAY, JULY 20th

FRED ALLEN SHOW (10-11-39) Fred provides an hour filled with laughs as guest Bert Lahr joins Minerva Pious, Portland Hoffa, singer Wynn Murray, Peter Van Steeden and the orchestra, the Merry Macs, and the Mighty Allen Art Players in "Dr. Scallop's Quandry," a satire of big business. Bristol Myers, NBC. (14:09; 14:15; 15:05; 15:35)

LORENZO JONES (6-7-48) Lorenzo is in a sentimental mood in this isolated episode featuring Karl Swenson as Lorenzo, whose "inventions have made him a character to the town, but not to Belle, who loves him." Belle is played by Betty Garde. George Putnam announces. Bayer Aspirin, NBC. (15:00)

BACKSTAGE WIFE (1935) Vivian Fridell stars in "the true-to-life story of Mary Noble, a sweet young girl from Iowa, who marries Broadway's most handsome actor, Larry Noble, dream sweetheart of a million other women." An isolated episode from the long-running (1935-1959) series. Dr. Lyon's Tooth Powder, NBC. (14:35)

A DATE WITH JUDY (4-9-46) Louise Elickson is Judy Foster, Scott Elliott is Oogie Pringle, with John Brown and Myra Marsh as Mr. and Mrs. Foster. Oogie's orchestra has been evicted from his father's garage! Tums, NBC. (15:00; 12:50)

JOYCE JORDAN, M.D. (1940s) Isolated episode in the drama about "an attractive young woman in her thirties, and the intriguing story of her revealing experiences as a doctor and as a woman." Ed Hertlhy announces. Crisco, CBS. (14:10)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-13-50) Chapter 8, Book 78. Henry Barbour talks to Paul about Teddy's engagement. Miles Labs, NBC. (13:55)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-14-50) Chapter 9, Book 78. Clifford has a chat with Elwood. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:15)

SATURDAY, JULY 27th

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-21-54) Jack listens to "The Mean Old Man" on the radio while he worries about his next television show. Cast features Don

Wilson, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Elvia Allman, Joe Kearns, Bea Benadaret, Shirley Mitchell, Hy Averback. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (9:30; 16:35)

WENDY WARREN AND THE NEWS (1950) In a unique format for a daytime serial, Wendy, played by Florence Freeman, works for a radio station and presents features on the newscast. Douglas Edwards opens the program with real news, Wendy has some real women's news, then signs off, and the fictional story begins! Isolated episode from the series. Maxwell House Coffee, CBS. (13:55)

ROMANCE OF HELEN TRENT (1940s) Julie Stevens stars in "the real life drama of Helen Trent who, when life mocks her, breaks her hopes, dashes her against the rocks of despair, fights back bravely, successfully, to prove what so many women long to prove in their own lives, that because a woman is 35 or more, romance in life need not be over . . . that romance can begin at 35." Isolated episode from the long-running (1933-1960) series. CBS. (13:20)

BOB HOPE SHOW (4-8-47) One of the very few, complete, Pepsodent shows. Bob is joined by Jerry Colonna, Vera Vague, announcer Wendell Niles, and special guest Al Jolson. Jolie recalls Hope's early days, trying to break into show business. Pepsodent, NBC. (5:22; 12:18; 11:25)

YOUNG WIDDER BROWN (1955) Isolated episode in "the story of the age-old conflict between a mother's duty and a woman's heart." Wendy Drew is Ellen Brown, Ned Weaver is Anthony Loring. Announcer is George Ansbro. Sustaining, NBC. (13:20)

ROAD OF LIFE (1-5-45) There's a problem in the operating room: "Dr. Brent . . . call surgery." Ken Griffin stars as Dr. Jim Brent in this isolated episode. Clayton Collier announces. Duz, NBC. (14:30)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (8-18-75) Writer **Carlton E. Morse**, creator of One Man's Family, talks about his illustrious career in a conversation with Chuck Schaden, recorded in the Morse home in San Mateo County, California. (39:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-15-50) Chapter 10, Book 78. Elwood plans a special "date" with Teddy. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (9-18-50) Chapter 11, Book 78. Father Barbour appears to be more excited about the wedding than the bride-to-be. Miles Labs, NBC. (14:00)

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VIC AND SADE

That Small House Halfway Up in the Next Block

BY GINO LUCCHETTI

Once upon a time there resided in the mind of a prolific radio author a family which lived in a small house half way up in the next block of a mythical small midwest town during the somnolent decade of the 30s. The family consisted of a simple, tolerant breadwinner with a gentle, wry sense of humor, a housewife and mother who complemented his easy-going temperament while accepting his foibles, and an adopted early-teenage son, with all the quirks characteristic of a boy that age.



PAUL RHYMER, creator of
"Vic and Sade."

Although the Gook family, consisting of Vic, his wife Sade, and son Rush, was the brilliant figment of writer Paul Rhymer's imagination, for the loyal listeners to the daily fifteen minute radio program they were as real as some branch of their own family who may have lived in rural downstate Illinois.

From the first episode in 1932, until its demise after World War II, "Vic and Sade" in daily fifteen minute segments recounted the daily happenings in the lives of that ordinary small-town family and its friends and neighbors. Each episode was complete in itself; there was no on-going story. There was never an unresolved dilemma requiring listening the following day — no "cliff-hangers." And every episode took place right in the Gook household. Your look at their world was through their eyes and their fittingly distinct voices. Whether by happenstance or a diligent search, their voices fit the roles to a tee and reflected their personalities perfectly. Until the appearance of dotty Uncle Fletcher, with his hayseed speech and midwest twang no other voice was ever heard.

"Vic and Sade" was completely untypical of the soap operas that crowded the radio dial in those days; that in itself made the programs unique and refreshing. There was no intrigue, no mystery, no murder, no mayhem, no spicy scandals, no overheated clashes of personalities and, as incredible as it may seem to today's TV soaps viewers, no lurid sex. There were no vapid one-liners, no put-downs, no



RADIO'S HOMEFOLKS: Art Van Harvey as Victor Gook, Billy Idleson as Rush, Bernadine Flynn as Sade.

double entendres, no barnyard or bathroom humor, no preaching, and no lapses of good-taste. What there was was a non-ostentatious loving relationship between husband and wife and familial love for their son, generously laced with much humor.

So, how could such a program attract an immense and loyal audience for so long? The answer is that each day listeners were assured of fifteen minutes of good-natured, relaxing humor involving the most trivial events: Sade's vague guilt at her extravagance for buying an extra dish cloth or two at the town's department store. Or the discussion she and the others of her Thimble Club who met at the Tiny Petit Fancy Feather Tearoom had about Mrs. Applerot (She's the one who had those fancy nose-glasses that come in and out of her chest on a chain) who wanted to get their signatures on a petition to demolish the Bright Kentucky Hotel. It seems the

building was so rickety that every time a train roared by it shook so much that it walked Mr. Gumpox — he's the garbage man — and his bed right out of his room and down the hall.

Among Vic's quirks, one which invariably brought Sade's unfavorable attention, was his unrequited desire to own a wide-brimmed fedora or a "cowboy hat" to Sade. "They make ya look like a peeled onion," Sade twitted him. One of his many schemes to acquire one involved the pretense that in thanks for prompt payment of his account at Kleeberger's, they gave him one free. His fabrication fell apart when Sade wormed out of him the admission of how ridiculous it was — his entire account was a mere two dollars, but the hat was priced at eight dollars.

Vic's other passion was being an Exalted Big Dipper in the Sacred Stars of the Milky Way secret lodge home-based in Chicago, a quite zany organization with members

VIC AND SADE

having names like Hank Gutstop and Ike Kneesuffer. (Names alone stamped Rhymer as creatively puckish.) All communications from that enigmatic lodge were in Latin, which he would try to read aloud: *In hoc sputem dumb cluck agricola non disputendem skittle bop* . . . until Sade in desperation would squelch him with, "Oh, ish, Vic!"

Among the substantial number of eccentric fellow members with outlandish names were the brothers Robert and Slobert Hink, who had written Vic that they would be pleased to break up the rigorous hardship of their long motor journey from Hoopston to Peoria by staying overnight with them for the weekend. In answer to bewildered Sade's question as to where they'd sleep, Vic pointed out they always carried their own folding double-decker bed. Since Vic had no good explanation why two healthy men would require a two night respite from a "horrible long journey of twenty-five miles," he mentioned that they were also interested in practicing parading in full regalia all around their home and, to Sade's further dismay, on their lawn. The plan did not enchant her. Vic reluctantly conceded defeat and sulked as Rush and Sade continued the game of rummy, a game Sade never really understands, which he had interrupted with his exciting news, and the episode ended.

Rush had an assortment of friends with names like Blue-Tooth Johnson, Smelly Clark and Rooster Davis who had a brother named Rotten. Between them they concocted many hare-brained schemes. Smelly planned to change his age from 16 to 21 to enable him to do many wonderful things such as apply for a barber's license, and be called "Mister." Rush, in one episode, found himself in a pickle when he contracted to do three chores all at once. Dreams of wealth drove him on — a total of \$1.25 to be exact. He took on one job after the other because each paid a little



SADE assists with Vic's grooming in this 1932 publicity photo for "Vic and Sade."

more. Looking out the window Vic called Sade to see how Rush had resolved his dilemma. He wound up wheeling Grandpa Snyder in his wheel chair with baby Gerald in grandpa's lap and Mrs. Cranc's dog in Gerald's lap!

Rush could often be found on the living room floor reading an adventure story from a series involving the hero, Third Lieutenant Clinton Stanley. They were parodies of kids' swashbuckling adventure stories. 3rd Lt. Stanley was invariably after gangs of counterfeiterers of one sort or another. The object of Lt. Stanley's affection was Lady Margaret, whose smile revealed "twin rows of perfect teeth the color of old ivory" and who always carried a dainty pink parasol, had mother-of-pearl buttons on her fashionable French spats and blushed furiously when gallant Clinton romantically pleaded, "Give me one more kiss an' one more hug before I kick the bucket," a fate appearing imminent as he prepared to do battle once more with those dastardly counterfeiterers.

Uncle Fletcher came on the scene late in the series. He was a compendium of all idiosyncrasies and eccentricities of an old codger. Hard of hearing, he was

unstoppable when he began a story about an old friend he recalled from some place like Dismal Seepage, Ohio ("Oh-hi-yah," to Uncle Fletcher) or Sweet Esther, Wisconsin. If he asked whoever was trapped listening if they'd heard it before and they answered they had, he would simply say, "Fine, Sadie, honey," or a long drawn out, "Yeeess, Vic honey, old boy" and continue blithely on. He might spin yarns about someone who'd been in the Wisconsin State Home for the Obstinate, or the Ohio State Home for the Agreeable, the one who ran for one minor elected office after another and got beat, whose ambition it was to finally run for high office and get beat. All his stories ended with, ". . . later died," adding a definite sense of finality. Dotty as they come, but loveable, and an unforgettable character.

Virtually from the very first episodes in 1932, Proctor and Gamble, seeking a family radio show, sponsored "Vic and Sade" up to its demise in 1945. It was estimated the show had an audience of over seven million listeners a week. One can readily appreciate the genius of Rhymer realizing that he wrote over 3500 episodes, all of them little gems — a prodigious output for someone writing every episode by himself. Often his scripts would be ready only minutes before the program was to be aired.

There was an attempt to bring the programs to television in half-hour segments, but they never took root with the viewing public, even when other characters were added. "Vic and Sade" was the quintessential radio program. Each of the seven million viewers knew in their minds what Vic, Sade, Rush and Uncle Fletcher looked like, and trying to depict them in an acceptable way to that many viewers was obviously impossible, and unsatisfactory. The times had changed, people demanded action and spectacle, not warm, gentle, good-humored wit, which only produced smiles, not guffaws spurred by a laugh-track.

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Last summer I was spending an enjoyable afternoon at the Kane County flea market when something happened that changed my life.

I was looking at a stack of old magazines when I came across a lobby card for *Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation* starring Jimmy Stewart. I was preparing my article on Jimmy Stewart at the time and this fascinated me. I asked the lady in charge how much she wanted for the lobby card and she replied, "How does fifty cents sound?" Well that was more than reasonable and to my surprise she handed me a large stack of lobby cards and I spent a half hour sorting through the pile. I was lucky enough to find two more *Mr. Hobbs* cards and three from *Operation Petticoat* with Cary Grant. But the find that made my day was a mint lobby card from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* with Mr. Stewart and John Wayne. I left her booth light-headed and with visions of combing the other ten acres of the flea market to add to my new collection of lobby cards.

Well, I didn't find any that day or any other of the four times I've gone back to the flea market. In fact, I have not been able to buy any other cards or movie posters since that glorious Sunday afternoon. The main reason I have avoided any purchases is price. The lobby cards I bought were a bargain compared to the top-dollar most collectors are asking for movie posters and lobby cards. Serious collectors call their collectibles movie

paper and the paper is neatly categorized by size.

A ONE SHEET is 27 inches by 41 inches and is typically called a movie poster. A HALF SHEET is 22 inches by 28 inches or approximately half the size of a full size poster. An INSERT is 14 inches by 36 inches and given its long narrow configuration, the art work is usually not as elaborate as on the one sheets. WINDOW CARDS were printed on heavier paper stock than the posters and they came in three sizes. The mini-window card measured 8 inches by 14 inches, the regular window card measured 14 inches by 22 inches and the over-size window card measured 22 inches by 28 inches. The window cards were generally set in the windows of stores near the theatre to help advertise the current features.

LOBBY CARDS came in sets of eight and measured 11 inches by 14 inches. I have learned from Warren's Movie Poster Price Guide — premier edition, by Jon Warren that there are "A" lobby cards and "B" lobby cards. The "A" cards have photos of at least one of the movie's stars while the "B" card is very generic and is usually dull. The lobby cards I purchased all have close-ups of Jimmy Stewart, Cary Grant, and John Wayne. At least I did that right but that instinct to see the star is exactly what determines the price of a poster or lobby card.

Before I muddy the waters with pricing information I would like to briefly outline



WIZARD OF OZ LOBBY CARD

the history of the movie poster and its related paper. At the turn of the century movies were flickers and there were no movie stars just images on a screen or in the wooden boxed nickelodeon machines. As the century moved on so did the movie industry and around 1910 audiences began to ask for more of the "The Biograph Girl" or "The Vitagraph Girl."

Soon actors and actresses began to be identified by their real names — Mary Pickford or Douglas Fairbanks. The movie star was born and the movie moguls began advertising campaigns to promote the stars and their movies. The poster started out modestly with an illustration of a movie scene and a small banner pronouncing the movie and/or star.

After World War I the country experienced tremendous economic growth and the movies responded with epic films and

epic advertising budgets to insure healthy attendance at the movies. Posters became more elaborate and no expense was spared for original art work.

The depression slowed the movie industry down but posters were then seen as an inexpensive way of promoting a film. In the late thirties and early forties, studios began to publish campaign books illustrating to the theatre owners ways of combining movie posters and cardboard figures to turn the front of a movie theatre into a mini-set depicting the theme of the film.

The opening of *Gone With the Wind* in Atlanta, Georgia is a good example of the "spare no expense" mentality that dominated that era of movie making. The theatre was decorated to resemble a southern plantation and huge figures of Clark Gable and Vivian Leigh were

FILM CLIPS

everywhere. It was grand Hollywood hoopla and that type of hype is rarely seen today.

The forties saw the perfection of posters as forms of advertising. The studio system began to crumble in the fifties and movies relied on gimmicks to attract an audience. Posters began to praise Vista Vision and not Bing Crosby or the novelty of 3-D and not the atmosphere of the wax museum. Gimmicks and posters couldn't save the studios but even the lowest budget movie of the fifties or sixties had some kind of poster to accompany it.

Today studios still produce posters and cardboard figures to enhance their releases, but the quality and quantity is a far cry from the golden age of the movies.

With all that said you may think that there is an abundant supply of posters and related paper out there waiting to be bought. Well to a point that's true but the cost of an original poster varies and there is a limited supply of most posters held by hardcore collectors. The most sought after posters are, of course, the movie classics. *Casablanca*, *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Citizen Kane* are hard to find and expensive when they become available. It boils down to supply and demand. I would love an original *Maltese Falcon* poster or lobby card but of the thousands printed in 1941 only a fraction still remain and the demand for Bogart posters is great so a good Falcon poster will run into thousands of dollars and way out of my budget.

I believe that the current craze for movie posters began about thirty years ago when college students discovered Bogart, the loner. His anti-hero persona fit in perfectly with the turbulence of the sixties. There were no VCR's then and people wanted a piece of Bogart and his films to hang on to. Posters were the most

accessible items available and at that time relatively cheap. Other stars from the thirties and forties emerged as cult heroes and poster sales took off.

The most expensive posters feature Cagney, Gable, Jean Harlow, Bogart, Errol Flynn, Bette Davis, Marilyn Monroe and Laurel and Hardy to name just a few. Posters don't have to be old to be expensive and on the other side of the coin posters that are old are not always expensive. I have been looking for a *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* with Cary Grant and Myrna Loy and I estimate the current price to be about \$35 for a one sheet poster.

Some collectors only go after certain movie stars while others collect certain genres. Horror movie posters seem to be very popular and movie serial posters are creating a renewed interest in the chapter play cliff-hangers of the thirties and forties. A whole segment of collectors look for posters of films that were re-issued ten or fifteen years after the initial release. For example the re-issue poster of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* with Errol Flynn should be less than the original poster and the graphics should be adequate compared to the original. Buying and collecting movie posters is a big business and a novice should do some research before going out to build a collection and spend hundreds or thousands of dollars. I have a 1973 *Liberty* magazine that has an advertisement for old movie posters priced at \$1.50 each. Even in 1973 that was a good price for an original poster (*The Sea Hawk* was one of the posters offered). Nowhere in the ad does it say that they are originals or copies. I must assume they were copies at that price. Buyer beware of bargains and bogus posters.

I still go to flea markets and hope against hope that I will come across an original poster for a flea market price. The odds are against me, but that's the stuff that dreams are made of.

WE GET LETTERS

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA — I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed your four hours of *Those Were The Days* on Saturday afternoon, February 16. I am from New Orleans and on my visits to Chicago, I listen to you at midnight on WBBM. This is the first time that I have been in Chicago on a Saturday afternoon. I enjoyed the episodes of Jack Benny and the Halls of Ivy, but especially the interview with the late Don Wilson. My hobby is old time radio and have a small collection of programs on records and tape. I am always interested in hearing radio shows and conversations concerning those most interesting radio shows from the past.
— HARRY S. KAUFMAN, III

LOCKPORT, IL — I want to say how much I enjoyed Dan McGuire's "I Remember It Well" article, "Exploring Aisles of Memories (*Nostalgia Digest*, February-March, 1991 issue)." For the past 20 years, whenever I would go shopping with my wife (which isn't too often) and we would come to the cereal aisle it would bring back memories of my childhood and growing up in Aurora, Illinois and of all the old radio shows that had cereal sponsors. There was one show that really stands out in my memory and it was one that Mr. McGuire did not mention. That was the Tom Mix show, sponsored by the Ralston Purina Co., out of St. Louis, MO. I also recall sending for a title to one square inch of land in the Yukon from the Sgt. Preston show sponsored by the Quaker Oats Company. We have been regular listeners to your shows since 1980. We try to come up to your store once a year around Christmas time. We missed the CTA calendar this time, they hadn't come in yet. We did get over to see your show at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Thanks for all the good entertainment.
— BOB THOMPSON

WAUKEGAN, IL — Greetings from Waukegan, the town that brought us Jack Benny and also tore down his family residence last year! (Two houses fell to the wrecking ball and the city fathers weren't certain which of the two was the original Kubelsky residence.) I just want to let you know that many folks appreciate the hard work and continuing effort you put forth to keep great broadcasts of classic radio programming on the air. Enclosed is \$22 for a two-year renewal of the issue which had the "Vintage Radio and the News" article. It was great to see a picture of Boake Carter! My wife and I talked to you some years ago at the Museum, of which we are members. I asked about Boake Carter and you were kind enough to follow up with some information including the name of a book. As I mentioned at the time, my curiosity had been raised

when we purchased an older home (1927 vintage) in Waukegan and found a board game called "Boake Carter's Star Reporter" in the attic. By the way, we lost your note about the book which discusses Boake Carter. If you run across the information some day, I would appreciate knowing the name of it. My wife carried the note in her purse on trips to many libraries, but was never able to locate the book.

— WAYNE MUNN

(ED. NOTE— The book is called "Those Radio Commentators!" by Irving E. Fang, published by Iowa State University Press, Ames, IA 50010.)

MADISON, WISCONSIN — This letter is in response to your two adventures by (Carlton E.) Morse (played on WBBM). I especially enjoyed the first of the two, "The Thing That Cries in the Night." Something that worked really to increase my enjoyment — over and above the fine production values of the series — was the shock of recognition. For "Thing" was patently based on — and in fact followed very closely — several of the Philo Vance detective novels by Willard Wright, who wrote under the pen name of S. S. Van Dine. The bulk of the plot itself came from "The Green Murder Case." The local coloring — the Mother Goose nursery rhyme figures, under the wallpaper in Charity's room — comes from a plot device in "The Bishop Murder Case." I highly recommend these two books to you! There is a third Philo Vance novel, "The Gracie Murder Case," named after Gracie Allen. I have not read this case, but I wonder if there was any connection between this case, Gracie Allen, and the "Gracie" character on "The Girl on Shipwreck Island?"

— PAUL DEVINE

PORT ST. LUCIE, FLORIDA — I became a fan of your programs in Chicago where I lived all my life until 1985. My son first introduced me to your wonderful shows because he knew how much I enjoyed old time radio. He had recorded a chapter of Fibber McGee and Molly and when I heard it I sat and alternately laughed and cried. I was hooked. We retired in 1985 and moved to Florida. AM radio here is terrible! I thought I would write for a catalog of your tapes of old radio shows. Please, please, if a catalog exists, send it to me before I go crazy trying to find entertaining radio here!

— MARGE OTTO

(ED. NOTE — Our tape catalog is on the way. Thanks for sending a long, self-addressed stamped envelope.)

WE GET LETTERS

THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO, CANADA — It was panic time as I tuned into your program at the usual time which in our area is 9 p.m. and was disappointed that your program had been replaced. My first thought was that you had been permanently replaced as so many worthwhile programs have been the past several years. I tried several days at different hours and finally one evening at 1 a.m., which is 12 midnight your time, I was once again able to listen to your program. Your program brings back fond memories of radio as it used to be. I remember as a young person during the depression it was regular procedure every evening for the whole family to gather around the radio and listen to the various artists and their marvelous talent. In Canada, at the moment, there is a tragic reduction in our television industry due to the recession. Several television stations have been closed permanently. Our national television system is the CBC, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The reason that I mention this is that we also have a national radio broadcasting corporation. Just recently in our city the CBC radio finished building a new radio station worth several millions. It is an outstanding building but there were fears that it wouldn't be finished before the recession began. The greatest fear, however, was that the station would be closed. But we have been informed that such is not the case and it will remain open. I am amazed at the quality of reception of your station (WBBM). Some evenings — or should I say mornings — your reception is superior to the reception of our stations. I am a faithful listener for several years and hope that the powers that be at your station realize how many fans you broadcast to and I hope this letter convinces them of this fact. — **JOHN FORS**

CREVE COEUR, MISSOURI — I just wanted to drop you a note to tell you how much I enjoy your weekly *Old Time Radio Classics* program. I listened to your Saturday afternoon Hall Closet on WNIB when I lived in Palatine in the '70s and, of course, I have many cassette tapes from those "good ol' days." I really missed it when we moved back to St. Louis, Missouri, since WNIB's signals didn't quite make it all the way down here. Imagine my delight when I discovered you on WBBM a few years ago, at a time of day (8-9 p.m.) when I could receive you only on winter evenings. Now, however, I can listen to you every night at midnight! Most nights your signal is loud and clear, but often I enlist the aid of my *Select-A-Tenna* inductively coupled turntable antenna I got from Edmund Scientific many years ago. Thanks for the memories on WBBM. Hope you stay there (or move to St. Louis) for many years to come. — **TOM MALLIEN**

WICHITA, KANSAS — I'm not in the habit of writing fan letters, but I did want to drop you a note to tell you how much I appreciate your old time radio broadcasts. I discovered your program by accident last December, when I was flipping through the radio dial one night

shortly after midnight. I've been a faithful listener ever since. I hope you keep broadcasting at midnight, because at that time of the night WBBM's signal is virtually crystal clear all the way down here in Wichita. I especially like your program for several reasons. The obvious one, of course, is that the programs bring back fond memories of the golden days of radio. It's amazing how much of a role your imagination plays in listening to these programs. I also like your mix of programs — drama, mystery, comedy . . . a bit of a treat of everything. I also appreciate the background information that you provide with each program. Thanks for providing me an hour of enjoyment each day. — **MICHAEL BRYSON**

WARRENVILLE, IL — Just received the *Digest* and noticed a letter from a Mike Druck. He finds Fred Allen and Jack Benny very funny and listens to these shows only. I agree that Allen and Benny are probably among the very top radio comedy shows, but Mr. Druck is missing a lot by "tuning out" shows like Fibber McGee and Molly, *Suspense*, *Lights Out*, *Bergen and McCarthy*, et al. Mr. Druck also notes that he finds it "very boring when you talk about the shows or interview the stars." I believe that it is a virtual necessity to interview the surviving people who were responsible for all those fine radio comedy, mystery and adventure shows, be they stars, character actors, announcers, technicians or whatever. This is where we learn the techniques and any other data in putting on radio shows. These insights, in the form of interviews, are part of what old time radio is all about. By knowing more about how the shows were put together and something about the lives of the people involved, we are all better able to appreciate and enjoy the shows as we hear them today via the magic of grooved vinyl and magnetic tape. Anyone interested in old time radio should be heavily promoting the interviewing of radio people on tape for posterity and study. — **CHUCK HUCK**

CHICAGO — I must take exception to the comment made by a listener in the April/May 1991 issue. Mr. Druck finds it "very boring when you talk about the shows or interview the stars." I love hearing the old timers. (Olan Soule was a real highlight.) Please continue with the interviews and continue with your insightful remarks about the various programs. After all, you've been going about this for a long time and "if it ain't broke, don't fix it!" — **TOM DE FRIES**

ISLAND LAKE, IL — You topped yourself with Jack Benny Month. It was great since I also love Ronald Colman. I would enjoy him reading the phone book. What a voice! Needless to say, I recorded the whole month. I disagree with the listener whose letter was printed in the April/May *Digest* who said he dislikes the interviews. I love them since they give us a closer look at the behind the scenes. Also I like how you call them "conversations with . . ." That's so much more friendly and relaxed. — **MARGARET ANN GAGE**

CHICAGO —



— **RUPI POLLARD**

NORTHBROOK, IL — It was a treat to hear your show again last night (Sunday) after all the interruptions from hockey and war news. I'm looking forward to when you have your full two hours restored. Thanks for the happy times you bring to us listeners. Your personal touch via commentary and reminiscences is always welcome. too. — **ANN CALLAWAY**

ZION, IL — Thanks again for all the good work and programming. If it isn't hockey it's a war cutting into your programs. Too bad you're losing listeners due to the late weeknight times. I work till 11 p.m. so it doesn't affect me. — **AL TEEPLE**

SPRINGFIELD, IL — Like the Sootsayer in "Julius Caesar," this date is a sad one to report that I will not be renewing my subscription to *Nostalgia Digest*. The change of schedule to a post midnight time is one that has taken me out of the nostalgia mood. I sure hope you can keep the radio show going in all its enjoyable state until WBBM wakes up, if they ever do. Maybe then I will be ready to Re-up with *Nostalgia Digest*. If not, a million thanks for all the fun and splendid evenings of pleasure and entertainment. It was sincerely appreciated. — **ART BECKER**

MEDINAH, IL — In your *Nostalgia Digest* renewal notice it says, "We appreciate your support." Well, I

cannot support you any longer, unless you change your midnight hours. Keep my name on file for when you do. Then send me a renewal. I'll try to catch your show every so often. But I am a regular on Saturdays!

— **VERNON THOMAS**

CRESTWOOD, IL — I am pleased to renew my subscription. I look forward to the arrival of each copy. I am extremely disappointed that your evening programs were moved to Midnight. What is wrong with WBBM to make such a foolish decision? But at least I can still look forward to Saturday afternoons on WNIB. I just received my Best of Benny tape set and really am pleased, especially the Si-Sy routines.

— **RICHARD BENZ**

BATESVILLE, INDIANA — I am sending in my renewal for two years of the *Digest*. I really enjoy the articles on old time radio. I really was upset when you changed your time of broadcasts to such a late hour. I now can only hear the shows on Saturdays or Sunday (when you have them on).

— **FAITH WESTERFIELD**

GEPP, ARKANSAS — I was really flattered to have my letter printed in last month's issue. Please note, AR is Arkansas, not Arizona . . . a common mistake. We have been taping your midnight show. It's really no problem and allows us total freedom of listening time. You might

Nostalgia Digest -31-

WE GET LETTERS

put an article about easy to use tapes and timers for those who give up too easily! I guess no matter what your time slot or station you will never please everyone, but I'm just pleased you're on the radio at all. Too many people are not lucky enough to be able to listen. I'm a real fan. I was also thrilled to get a letter from you. I'll save it in case you're ever really famous!

— LUANNE SWANSON

CHICAGO — I see by the letters you get many people seem to be stressed out because your *Old Time Radio Classics* on WBBM weekdays is on at midnight now. An easy solution is to get a timer for taping the shows. It's really not difficult, not at all like a VCR. All anyone interested in getting one has to do is go to Highland, Fretters, Brand Central, Electric Avenue, Polk Bros., Service Merchandise or any store of this type. The salespeople are more than happy to guide anyone to the product and show them how it operates. It's no big deal and doesn't cost a lot once again to hear your show at a time convenient to them or just build a library. You should mention this on your Saturday show, so those who have abandoned the weekday program can come back.

— DON KRBEK

HIGHLAND PARK, IL — Just a note to tell you of my way of listening to your program at midnight. I'm sure you have many listeners doing the same thing. I use an electronic timer to set off my tape recorder at midnight and then play it in my car on the way to work. I've been doing this method for many years and it has worked out beautifully. I don't save the tapes. I just tape over used tapes until they wear out. Originally, I found it difficult to find 120 minute tapes, but Radio Shack has them. I get two evenings on one tape. Thanks for making my commuting life more bearable.

— HOWARD M. LEHMAN

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS — We are still loyal listeners here in Arkansas. I wrote to you about a year ago telling you how my whole family including my daughters enjoyed your broadcasts. My girls are 20 and 9 and I'm glad they have grown up with Fibber McGee and Molly, Jack Benny, Amos 'n' Andy and all the wonderful old broadcasts. Besides being clean entertainment for a Christian family, I think these shows have instilled in all of us some of the great qualities of the America my wife and I grew up in. Thankfully, Jack Benny and the other comics could make us laugh about everyday things and not need the low humor prevalent in our country today. Anyway, we have moved to midnight with you. I agree with you, many of the shows sound better at that time, especially *The Shadow*. We enjoy your stories as much as the shows, so keep up the commentary. Good luck in your time slot. We hope you pick up many new listeners around the country and believe me, there are many of us out here who really appreciate what you are doing.

— LEE, PEGGY, HEATHER & RACHEL

NILES, IL — I am a devoted fan, but I have a criticism and hopefully you will consider it in a constructive light. Your recently concluded series of Jack Benny shows during February was outstanding and the sequence of programs about Ronald Colman were most enjoyable. You say the Hall Closet presentations are "designed to bridge the sound gap between yesterday and today" and, if you present them in their entirety, you certainly accomplish your objective. However, if you make cuts in the commercials, you are defeating that purpose in an unfortunate and pontificating manner. Those great programs (including the commercials) were, indeed, part of a great bygone American age and I feel that you are attempting to adjust the thinking of today by trying to change "yesterday" with your editing procedures. As stated, I am a long-time fan and I will continue to enjoy your presentations. However, when you "adjust" history, I just shake my head . . . and I'll bet that I'm not alone.

— KEN HANSEN

(ED. NOTE — A WBBM programming decision provides that no vintage commercials be played on that station. We almost always play the original commercials on our WNIB broadcast. The only exception is for cigarette commercials, which are no longer permitted to be broadcast on radio or television, regardless of whether they are new or old. We would not dream of "adjusting" history. It's simply a fact of broadcast life that the present governs how we showcase the past.)

FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN — One of my favorites from the golden age of radio was the Lum and Abner series. I know they made a number of movies for RKO. Are any of them being shown on TV? By the way, the Jan Garber Band — the Idol of the Airlines — continues to entertain throughout the country. I have an agreement with Jan's widow, Dorothy, who resides in Shreveport, LA, and am proud to be fronting Jan's band which continues to be so warmly received wherever we play.

— RON HARVEY

Director of the Jan Garber Orchestra

HINES, IL — I go to bed early and wake up at midnight to listen to your *Old Time Radio Classics*. I never miss your radio show. Keep up the nostalgic mood. We need it.

— SUE DONOHUE

ROCKFORD, IL — Last night I'm listening to Lights Out "Poltergeist" when my radio tape deck shuts itself off. At first I thought the tape was bad, but the radio would still have been playing. I returned to the kitchen and found the radio had been unplugged. I have cats, but all of them were sleeping on my bed. I know that spirits come and go from my home. Been here 13 years and got used to it. Evidently the good spirits here didn't like the violence of rock throwing and death on Poltergeist. I plugged it back in and got most of the show. Not much sleep, though. Next time I'll listen with my lights on!

— ROBERT WOOD

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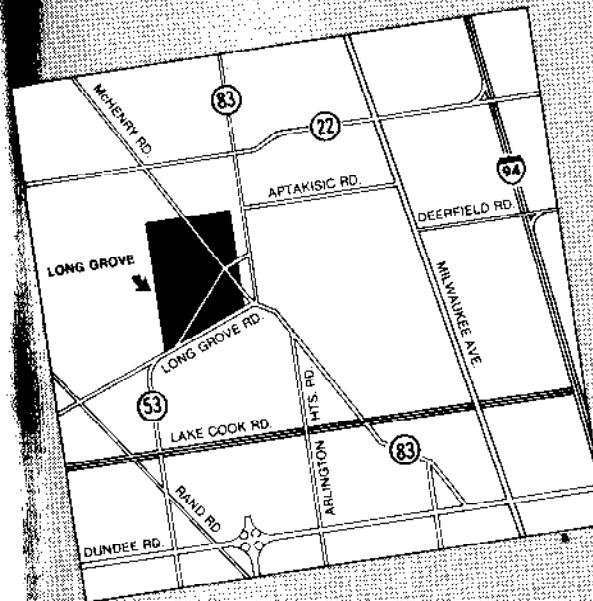
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