

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND
RADIO
GUIDE



BING CROSBY

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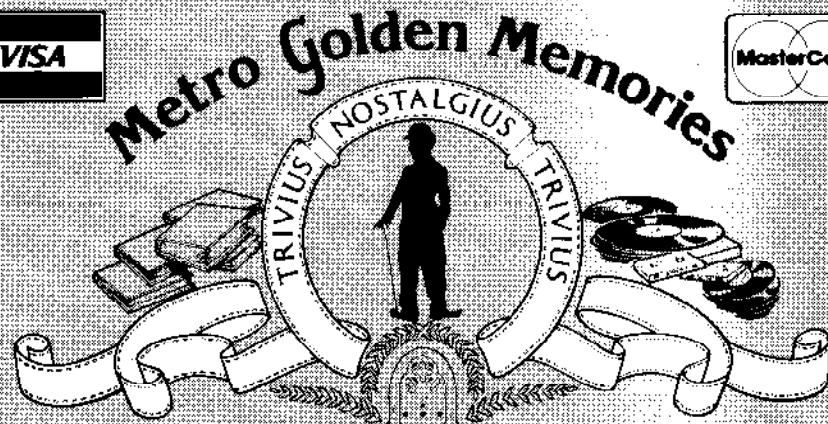
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NOSTALGIA DIGEST

BOOK NINETEEN

CHAPTER ONE

DECEMBER, 1992 - JANUARY, 1993

HELLO, OUT THERE IN Radioland!!

There are lots of things to talk about as this year draws to a close.

We're continuing our look at Radio and World War II, the four-year project we began on December 7, 1991, the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. We are now one full year into our commemoration of the United States entry into the war.

Response to this series has been very gratifying; we're glad to know how much you appreciate listening to the sounds of WW II at home.

If you check the December and January listings for *Those Were The Days*, you'll see how we've continued to build on this theme and you'll also find an assortment of seasonal programs on WNIB which we feel will add to your enjoyment of the holidays. Be sure you don't miss the original Christmas comedy by Ken Alexander and the *TWTD Radio Players* on Dec. 26th.

Old Time Radio Classics listeners will discover a great abundance of special programming as we begin our eighth year on WBBM. In December we've scheduled a five-part Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar series, the concluding episodes of The Cinnamon Bear, a long run of Fiber McGee holiday shows, and plenty of other seasonal broadcasts.

After the first of the year, be sure to stay tuned for our Lone Ranger Week, a week of Tarzan of the Apes, and lots of other great shows from radio's glory days.

We've often said how much we enjoy planning our broadcasts. It's still true; we get just as much pleasure from preparing our programs as we do actually broadcasting them.

Of course, none of it is important without your support and for that we are extremely grateful.

This issue of our *Nostalgia Digest* and *Radio Guide* marks the beginning of our 19th year of publication.

We observe the occasion by expressing our thanks and sincere appreciation to each and every subscriber on our list. Your support means a lot to us.

Thanks, too, to those talented friends who have contributed to the editorial pages of the *Digest* during the past year: Ken Alexander, Terry Baker, John Dunning, Bill Elwell, Brian Johnson, Bob Kolososki, Todd Nebel, Bill Oates, James Pace, Karl Pearson, Clair Schulz, Kevin Shanley, and Margaret Warren.

And we won't forget all the readers and listeners who have written through the year expressing their views on our magazine and our programming.

Now it's time to get ready for another great holiday season with the Golden Age of Radio.

Best wishes to you and your family for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year filled with good old memories.

Chuck Schaden

'FATHER' CROSBY'S CAREER...

BY DENNIS H. CREMIN

It is the Christmas season, and no one better brings a radio listener into the yuletide spirit as well as Bing Crosby.

His recording of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," released in 1942, remains the biggest individual hit of all time as well as a seasonal favorite. "White Christmas," as sung by Bing not only calls to mind the Christmas season, but it also brings back memories of the Second World War, for which the song served as an unofficial anthem. As we continue to commemorate the war and its radio programs, we can also remember Crosby whose career reached its zenith during World War II, leading the entertainment fields of records, radio, and movies.

Henry Lillis Crosby, better known as Bing, was born in Tacoma, Washington, on May 2, 1903, to Harry Lowe and Catherine Helen Crosby. The family was poor but when Bing was young they relocated to Spokane, Washington and the family's fortunes improved. In time, Crosby attended Gonzaga University

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... AND WORLD WAR II



BING CROSBY

field Cigarettes. In the late 1930's, he was managed by Jack Kapp, who expanded Bing's career beyond jazz, or rhythm music, toward music of all kinds. Under Kapp's guidance Crosby turned his attention to songs ranging from popular standards to religious songs and even to children's songs, all of which met with general public approval. The union with Kapp resulted in a huge number of recordings, and Bing became a musical "everyman," who seemed to believe that every song is a good song. What set Crosby apart, however, was his ability to give every tune, even the weakest material, a soulful, reputable treatment.

By the middle of the 1930's, Crosby's colleagues within the profession and the public at large regarded him as a fine musician despite the fact that he could not read music. Not much has been writ-

ten about him musicologically, resulting perhaps from what some have called his "natural" style and his lack of much formal study of music. Bing echoed this kind of statement when he suggested that the secret to his success was that:

Every man who sees one of my movies or who listens to my records or who hears me on the radio, believes firmly that he sings as well as I do, especially when he's in the bathroom shower. It's no trick for him to believe this, because I have none of the mannerisms of a trained singer and I have very little voice.

The "natural" style may have resulted from Crosby's artful use of the microphone. The "mike" resulted in an unaffected, natural singing style that is Bing's legacy to other singers. His singing style comes close to natural spoken speech rhythms and intonations, especially when compared to the highly trained voices of his era. Crosby's voice became better over his career as he became more conscious of dynamics and as he made more recordings and continued his broadcasting career.

During the swing era, Bing may well have been the most influential vocalist. "All the singers tried to be Crosbys, pointed out Englishman Sam Costa. 'You were either a high Crosby or a low Crosby, and we all had that quaver in the voice.'" Crosby was popular before swing, however, and after it as well. In addition, Bing worked with many of the biggest names in swing, including the Dorseys, Miller, Berigan, and Goodman as their own careers were rising.

'FATHER' CROSBY'S CAREER

The 1940's, when he received numerous awards such as "best male singer of popular songs" by various polls, belonged to Bing. One of his biggest hits from the period just before the United States' entry into the war was "You Are My Sunshine" of July 1941. The song's many fans even included Winston Churchill, who wrote a letter to Crosby complimenting him on the song's success. "You Are My Sunshine" is typical of Bing's work as it combines a certain amount of nostalgia with hope for the future. As the lyrics illustrate, the singer's love has gone off with another, but still he sings "You make me happy, when skies are gray. You'll never know dear how much I love you, please don't take my sunshine away."

In 1942, Bing Crosby recorded Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," which went on to sell over 30 million copies. In 1943 he had success with "Pistol Packin' Mama" which teamed him with the Andrews Sisters. Although this does not fit the optimistic profile of Crosby's usual repertoire, it does demonstrate the range of his material. It is simply a fun song, which takes advantage of the talents of Bing and the Andrews Sisters. In addition he had further success during the war with the optimistic "Swinging on a Star," which won the 1944 Oscar for best song from *Going My Way*. Another hit from that movie was "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ra."

Crosby performed a great number of songs during the war, but his biggest hits tended to have a nostalgic ring and were definitely songs that promoted a positive attitude. Songs that can be added here are "Accentuate the Positive" and "Blue Skies," both of which appear in the film *Here Come the Waves* in 1946. And no list would be complete without his theme song, "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day,"

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DIXIE LEE CROSBY

which is nostalgic and holds promise, as "someone waits for me."

Bing's records were undoubtedly popular with the armed forces. There are examples of Crosby being requested by the troops on broadcasts such as "G.I. Jive," hosted by G.I. Jill. It is also clear that one of the most popular and requested radio shows was his "Kraft Music Hall." One result of Crosby's record sales was that revenue from some records was set aside to help to pay for the "Clambake Follies," a vaudeville program in which he [Crosby] has frequently taken part, and which has been taken to Army, Navy and Marine camps throughout the Southwest."

Bing was also one of the best radio draws from 1931 to 1957. For eighteen of those years he was the number one radio star in America. Crosby came to "Kraft Music Hall" in December of 1935 and remained for ten years. The key to the show was his ability to



HARRY LILLIS CROSBY

balance the role of Master of Ceremonies, keeping the show rolling along at a good pace. One way he did this, which was a trademark of the show, was with un-scripted interjections or ad-libs. The informality and the "Crosby tone" were the program's main attractions. Even though the radio show was scripted, and the band played perfectly in tune and on cue, it seemed almost as though figures from all the fields of entertainment, from sports to the classical stage, were just stopping in to do a skit, sing a song, or simply visit with him.

Just as Jack Kapp, Crosby's manager, had taken an interest in promoting Bing's career, so Carroll Carroll, the writer of the "Kraft Music Hall," encouraged and was able to get the best out of him. Part of the secret was that Carroll wrote dialogue that was in the "Crosby style." Then he would send it over the Crosby for editing, thus giving

the performer a chance to put his personal mark on the piece, even adding a joke or two. In addition, during the run-through, if there was an extemporaneous ad lib that was funny, they would add that too, thus, getting the freshest, funniest, and most "Crosby sounding" product possible.

By sticking with Jack Kapp's formula of singing all kinds of songs, Bing kept things loose on the radio by performing not only "popular songs," but pieces from the classical field as well. As Crosby pointed out, "I imagine over the ten-year span, at one time or another we had every important opera or concert name on the show, some of them many times, like Rose Bampton, Rise Stevens, Lotte Lehmann, Piatigorsky, Grainger, and others," and Crosby often performed with them.

The combination of informality, songs, and humor, made the "Kraft Music Hall," or KMH, the leading radio show during the war. In fact, at the start of the war, the show received some of its highest ratings ever. It was voted the best variety program of 1941 in a poll of 600 U.S. and Canadian radio editors and columnists conducted by *Motion Picture Daily*. In addition, Crosby's show set the standard for singers and band leaders. This is evidenced in part by the fact that around 50,000 copies of sheet music were sold following a Crosby broadcast of any song. Thus, Crosby is seen as "the no. 1 song plug on the air." In fact, even an obscure song, such as "Little Sir Echo," which was recommended to Crosby by his son Gary, received a huge increase in sheet music sales after being performed on the show.

At the start of the war, the "Kraft Music Hall" had a cast that included Bing, Mary Martin, Victor Borge, Jerry Lester, the Music Maids, John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra and Ken Carpenter. In one of the on-going skits of 1942 Martin and Crosby would in-

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'FATHER' CROSBY'S CAREER

roduce a "memory song" with a dramatized skit. One such song was "Melancholy Baby." Other songs included on the show were "Humpty Dumpty Heart," "Chattanooga Choo Choo" and "Home on the Range," the last tune aired on the January 29, 1942 show. This show was important as it was one of the first shows relayed via short-wave to General MacArthur's troops. The shortwave broadcasts continued throughout the war and reached the troops wherever they were fighting. Although KMH was already broadcast throughout America, rebroadcasting made the show's potential audience larger than it already was. The program bolstered morale by providing the troops entertainment with a clear message of the values of hearth and home. In this way the "Kraft Music Hall" promoted a victory abroad which reflected half of the double "v" of victory, victory at home and abroad.

"Kraft Music Hall" also reflected the domestic part of the double "v," as in addition to the famous guests, the show included during the war members of the U.S. Armed Forces, whose interviews with Crosby provided wartime advice to the public such as when "Major John S. Winch of the United State Marine Corps offered valuable information on what to do in the event of bombing," or when "an anti-aircraft officer from the harbor defenses at Fort McArthur answered Bing's pertinent questions on air raid precautions." In this way, KMH provided information to the community about military operations that was practical for them but also gave them general information about what the enlisted men were experiencing. As the article in *Cheesekraft*, the in house publication of Kraft Corporation, put it:

*Like a letter from home,
the short wave broadcasts of*

the Kraft Music Hall are always cheerful and buoyant, never teary or over-sentimental. Each week, at the opening of the show, Bing sings one of the official songs of some branch of the service - sings it directly for and to the men, and for the millions at home marching in spirit beside them.

Thus, the radio show served as a link between the people at home and those enlisted.

Though entertainment was important, the reason for KMH's existence was to sell things, primarily Kraft products such as Parkay Margarine or Velveeta Cheese. During the war, however, the show was also "helping to build morale, devoting much time to the cause of selling United States savings stamps and bonds, the Red Cross, and to other important phases of the wartime program."

Crosby's personal life and commitment to the war effort took him away from the microphone for long periods of the war. Yet, the show continued with various people filling in as the Master of Ceremonies, such as Bing's brother Bob Crosby or later, in 1944, George Murphy. The frequent absence of Crosby from the microphone was to help bring about the controversy that disrupted the broadcast of the show towards the end of the war. Crosby wanted to be able to record, or "transcribe," his broadcasts, arguing that he could record several shows during a one week period and then be free to pursue other activities. Kraft objected to this concept. As Bing himself pointed out, nobody liked the idea of recording the radio shows, not "the networks, the sponsors of other shows, the advertising agencies. They thought it might hurt the network financially. They felt that if entertainers were allowed to record,



BING CROSBY with his sons, from left, Gary, Dennis, Phillip, and Lindsay

they could sell to individual stations instead of having to use the network." Yet, up to this point, almost all radio shows were live, unless there were extenuating circumstances. Kraft objected to recording the show, fearing that some of the punch and immediacy of the show would be lost.

Yet, there had already been the musicians' strike, during which Crosby was able to record ten or twelve shows during a two week period. Thus, a precedent for recording shows was already in place. The controversy finally ended with Bing fulfilling his contract with Kraft in 1945, then moving on to Philco Corporation, which allowed him to pre-record his shows with the stipulation that if the show should drop below a certain percentage of audience share, Crosby or Philco could drop the show,

or make the show into a live show format.

Alongside his recording and radio career, Bing Crosby's most long lasting images are from movies. It is perhaps in film where Bing's success is unparalleled. The crossover of singers to the screen has not always met with success. Yet Crosby, during and after the Second World War, was "the world's No. 1 box-office personality for five consecutive years — 1944 to 1949." In addition, "no less than twenty-nine of Crosby's films — from 1934 to 1964 — figured in the top grossing list of their respective years."

His contract with Paramount during the war was for a maximum of three films a year. It was during this time that he started filming the highly successful "road" pictures which also starred Bob

'FATHER' CROSBY'S CAREER

Hope and Dorothy Lamour. The "road" pictures bridge the period of his greatest appeal, from *The Road To Singapore* (1940) to *The Road to Hong Kong* (1961).

Though Crosby made numerous films his most important was *Going My Way* (1944) which also included Barry Fitzgerald, Frank McHugh, and Rise Stevens, and was directed and produced by Leo McCarey. The film was popular not only with audiences but also won Crosby the Oscar for best actor. In addition Oscars were won by Barry Fitzgerald for best supporting actor, and Leo McCarey for best director and best screen play. What is perhaps most memorable about the film is Bing's kindly face of Father O'Malley and his interest in keeping the parish children out of trouble by forming a children's choir.

The role of Father O'Malley is the one for which he will always be remembered. It is also from this time on that Crosby's role in public and private life will be defined as a father: priest, father to his family, and all-American father figure. He received quite a bit of critical mail from people who did not like the portrayal of a human, baseball loving priest. Pope Pius XII, however, who may have had his own print of the film, saw the picture several times and wrote a letter to Bing in which he described his enjoyment of the film and said he thought it good to have the priesthood so humanized.

It is interesting that this was the one role with which people had the most difficulty distinguishing between the character and Crosby the man. Bing told the story of being at Jack Morse's house where an Irish maid, seeing Crosby about to eat a cocktail weenie on a Friday reacted by saying:

"Holy Mother! Father Crosby!" she burst out, snatching it from my hot little hand, "you're not going to eat one of those!" Obviously she was sub-consciously thinking of me as the priest I'd played, and the fact that "Father O'Malley" would eat a meat canape on Friday upset her.

Crosby also told the story of when an aunt of Dixie Crosby came to visit.

She'd been with us for a week when she heard me say I was planning to play golf with Humphrey Bogart.

"Good heavens," she protested, "you wouldn't play golf with such a man!"

"Why not?" I asked.

"I saw his last picture and he's the worst man you've ever seen! The idea of a priest and a gangster getting together on a golf course!" she snorted.



BING as Father O'Malley in "Going My Way" and "The Bells of St. Marys."



"ROAD" PICTURE TEAMMATES Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour and Bing Crosby

The confusion was not unusual as Crosby received letters from all over the world asking him to visit them for a while and form little singing groups for children to keep them out of trouble the way he had done in *Going My Way*. Crosby continued to make films after *Going My Way*, but he is always remembered best for his role of Father O'Malley (which he also played in the 1946 sequel, *Bells of St. Mary's*).

Somewhat separated from his work, but of equal importance, is his role as a father in his private life. In 1945 Crosby was named by the national Father's Day Committee the number one Screen Father. Despite later reports of problems at home, especially in light of memoirs of his sons, Crosby

appeared to the public in the 1940's as the perfect father. He made time for his family, was successful, and even owned two ideal American ranch homes.

Bing Crosby's work in the 1940's is unparalleled. His dominance of the primary fields of entertainment may never again be rivaled. Undoubtedly, the role of father, of a kind, understanding, and encouraging, optimistic man, especially during World War II, played a role in his popularity. He consistently made Americans believe they were the best, and that things, however bad they might seem now, were sure to work out. He also promoted the values of home which were worth fighting for and preserving.

GERMAN RADIO

Der Fuehrer's Version Of 'Command Performance'

BY JIM WARRAS

December 24th, 1942. World War II was put on hold for a couple of hours so Americans and Germans could link homefronts and battlefronts, with the help of some special radio programs.

In the U.S., all four major networks carried a "Christmas Command Performance," originated by the Armed Forces Radio Service which, until then, had limited itself to troops-only broadcasting. The M.C. was Bob Hope, and his opening line set the tone for the star-filled comedy and variety show: "Although Johnny Doughboy found a rose in Ireland," (from a popular song of the day) "what he really wants is that stinkweed in Berlin."

And what was the "Stinkweed in Berlin" serving up to his listeners that Christmas eve? First, realize that Herr Hitler didn't have to "unite" his networks. He had only one . . . and he and his Nazi Party were the only "sponsors." This particular night they used holiday homesickness to show off the size of their empire. An announcer "called in" German fighting fronts from the Arctic to Russia to Africa, to even a U-Boat in the North Atlantic. Units weren't identified by number, so, as far as the folks back home were concerned, it could have been "our boy's" base being called (if he was stationed in that part of the world.) For all listeners, there was a not-so-subtle reminder of just how far away the "enemy" still was. (For obvious reasons, they did not re-do this show for Christmas, 1943 and 1944.) Last to report in was the German

Navy on the Black Sea. The voice that answered led earlier "broadcasters" in a German rendition of *Silent Night*. Even the most atheistic Nazi must have shed a tear or two.

Listeners didn't find out until after the war that not all the singers were where they were supposed to be. By Christmas, 1942, Stalingrad was so close to surrender that all radio contact had been lost. So the answer to the Stalingrad call came from a station just 20 miles from Berlin. Radio the rest of the year in war-time Germany consisted mostly of music . . . broken up by speeches, news reports, news "analysis" and other "special events" programming, either playing up or covering up as propaganda needs warranted. No one bothered to take ratings, but propaganda boss Joseph Goebbels did pay attention to his mail box. In the spring of 1941, for example, an avalanche of complaining letters persuaded him to lighten up on music restrictions and permit a little "Jazz" on German airwaves.

Germany's version of "Command Performance" went even further. Its music ranged from Mozart to popular love songs, mixed in with comedians and novelty acts. The format wasn't all that different from productions of the "Hollywood Victory Committee." The program's title was also similar: "Wunschkonzert," or "Request Concert for the Wehrmacht." And families back in Germany were encouraged to listen in all year long, not just on Christmas.



DER FUEHRER'S FACE

Even the German movie industry got into the act. A 1940 film, titled "Wunschkonzert," featured two separated lovers . . . reunited after one heard the other's request read by "Wunschkonzert's" permanent host, Heinz Goedecke. Incidentally, even in a neutral world, Herr Goedecke's ultra-formal style would never have been any threat to Bob Hope.

Trying to find more interesting programs in certain foreign countries could get you into big trouble in Nazi Germany. When the Nazis said, "Ah, ah, ah, ah . . . Don't touch that dial!", they backed it up with a prison term if you were caught listening to the B.B.C. Telling others what the B.B.C. said could lead to execution. Even stations in German allies, like Italy, were "verboten." So were neutral broadcasts from Sweden and Switzerland. Swiss programs must have been particularly tempting: since so many Swiss speak German, their radios did too. But no problem tuning in Paris or Amsterdam or Brussels . . . as long

as those cities were occupied by German troops. One surprising exception was Denmark. Though conquered by the Wehrmacht in 1940, she retained enough political independence so that her radio stations could report Allied as well as German versions of war news.

Enforcing all these regulations were Nazi "Radio Wardens." Assigned to your neighborhood, and even to your apartment building, their job was to make sure you tuned in every time Adolph had something to say. Unless you had a special permit from the Propaganda Ministry, they also made sure you did not give Winston "equal time."

One foreign broadcast both legal and popular in Nazi Germany came from a Wehrmacht station set up in Belgrade, shortly after the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941. The station's head D.J. began dedicating records to his former unit; an Army Reconnaissance Company then fighting in Africa, but able to pick up Belgrade at night. The Company's favorite song was introduced three years earlier in a German cabaret, to only a so-so reception. Now, though, listeners couldn't get enough of the ballad. Requests came in from as far away as Norway and Russia, as well as Germany itself (Belgrade apparently didn't know its own signal strength.) The station decided to play the record at a fixed time every night: 9:57 p.m. Soldiers knew to tune in, and so did wives and sweethearts back home. Each realizing the other was also listening apparently made the music that much more special. Even British troops in Africa joined the audience . . . until their generals found out and put German wave lengths off-limits. But it was too late. *Lili Marlene* had already assured her place in show business history.

As we all know, there was a "change in management" at the Belgrade station in 1944. Same story for German-controlled stations in much of the rest of Europe. But liberating Allied armies also knew the

GERMAN RADIO

benefits of broadcast propaganda. After September, 1944, for example, Radio Luxembourg aimed programs at Germany that started out with the usual Nazi line, but wound up ridiculing Hitler and all he stood for. (Sample: "We used to say to the Fuehrer: When you lead, look, we follow. Now we say to him: When you lead, look *what follows!*" (Okay . . . so it loses something in the translation.)

The broadcasts were prepared jointly by the U.S. Office of War Information and the B.B.C. . . . which pioneered so-called "Black Propaganda" years earlier with its "Soldatensender Calais." This purported to be a German military station in Calais, France. Actually it was a German-language transmission from London, strong enough to be heard even on low-powered "People's Radios." The Nazis designed these low-priced sets to pick up only nearby "official" signals. The British broadcasts were so well disguised, however, that even loyal party members weren't sure what they were listening to. Once Radio Luxembourg (one of the most powerful stations in Europe) signed on for the Allies, the "air war of words" was virtually over. By the time the rest of the war ended in May, 1945, Berlin was off the air. The broadcast announcing Hitler's death originated in Hamburg . . . eight days before the final German surrender.

As Allied occupation evolved into Cold War, German radio recovered in a most ironic way. In the East, of

course, Soviet and German Communists were in charge. But even in the West (with its governmental-run regional networks, similar to those in the rest of Europe,) the country that used to jail people just for *listening* to foreign broadcasts now allowed foreign *transmissions* from many of its cities. In Munich, there's an A.M. station of the "Voice of America" . . . as well as U.S.-financed "Radio Free Europe" and "Radio Liberty," beaming short-wave programs across what used to be the Iron Curtain. In northern Germany, Britain and Canada have special F.M. stations relaying programs from home to their forces in N.A.T.O. But most of the foreign broadcasting within Germany is still done by A.F.N.

The American Forces Network, Europe, rode in with Patton and never left . . . until now. Though A.F.N.'s flagship station in Frankfurt remains on the air; its affiliates are closing down, one by one, as the U.S. contribution to N.A.T.O. keeps shrinking. Sad news, perhaps, for generations of Germans who grew up on American Rock and Roll (after their parents and grandparents had such a tough time coaxing Jazz out of Dr. Goebbels.) No doubt a reunified Germany will soon control *all* its own wave lengths. With any luck, it won't be long before Armed Forces Radio (like armed force itself) will be relegated, at least in this one country, to memories and nostalgic audio tapes.

Say good night, Lili!

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A child sees Christmas from an entirely different perspective than an adult. Christmas for children is fun, presents, decorated trees and a good long vacation from school at the holidays.

An adult goes through the holiday season often dreading the last minute shopping, the crowds at the shopping malls, and the endless bills that show up in January and February.

So, during the hectic holidays its normal for adults to reflect on their childhood and remember Christmases of the past that hold sweet memories of persons, places, and things that take them back to a simpler time in their lives.

Some of the things that send me back to my childhood are Christmas films that I saw as a child. They always bring on a wave of nostalgia, flooding my memory with colored lights and large family parties.

However last Christmas something else triggered my memory bank and sent me into a frenzy to view every Christmas cartoon I could find. I taped a late-night film and after the film the station played an old Warner Bros. cartoon starring Sniffles the mouse. Sniffles starred in about six cartoons from 1939 to 1942. All were directed by Chuck Jones and were expertly animated. This particular cartoon had Sniffles trying to stay up on Christmas Eve to wait for Santa Claus.

The whole cartoon is cute and clever and something I had not seen in about thirty years. It made me wonder what happened to many of the cartoons that I had seen on TV back in the fifties.

That was a good time for a person who appreciates art to be growing up, because all of the vintage cartoons from the thirties and forties were on the tube regularly. Some of the best animation ever done was produced by the major studios between 1939 and 1955.

I had aspirations of becoming an artist when I was in grammar school and I was always impressed by the quality of animation originally released in the theatres. That Sniffles cartoon was a perfect example of the great animation produced in the forties. But more importantly, it was a *Christmas* cartoon and I remembered seeing it back in the late fifties.

During the next two weeks I made an effort to tape some vintage Christmas 'toons.

The Tom and Jerry series at MGM was another first class collection and were written and directed by Joe Barbera and Bill Hanna. They would later start their own studio and create Huckleberry Hound and Yogi Bear just to name two of their many creations.

The NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS has Jerry the mouse stirring around while Tom the cat is trying to get a good night's sleep. As was usual for the series

FILM CLIPS

the back-ground layouts are beautifully drawn and the compositions are nearly perfect. The plot is the basic cat versus mouse with the Christmas presents being abused and destroyed by both sides.

Super animation was employed in almost every MGM cartoon and that tradition of excellence went as far back as 1933 when MGM was buying their cartoons from Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising. This very talented team were contemporaries of Walt Disney and their studio's output rivaled Disney's in sheer quality. They created a pair of playful pups and did a great series with the doggy duo always finding mischief to get into.

THE PUPS' CHRISTMAS was released in 1936 but viewed today it retains the ability to impress with its attention to detail and non-stop pace. Again the presents become objects that are destroyed at will, but they also, in this case, become antagonists to the pups.

Harman and Ising would eventually be absorbed by MGM and have their own "units." In 1939 Harman directed a remarkable animated film he titled **PEACE ON EARTH**. It was a very strong anti-war statement told in the best tradition of animated films. It takes place around the 25th of December but there are no longer any men to celebrate the holidays. A Grandfather squirrel explains to his grandchildren that once there were uniformed monsters who constantly fought each other until they exterminated themselves. The animals that survived found a book in a bombed out church and began to use the laws in the book to create happy lives for themselves. This great feature has some of the greatest animation ever put on the screen and still carries a powerful message.

It would be difficult to think of Christmas cartoons and not think of



MR. MAGOO

Walt Disney. In the fifties and into the sixties his television series usually had a special Christmas show.

Disney had a backlog of cartoons that could fit any bill. The most often shown at Christmas were **SANTA'S WORKSHOP** and **THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS**. Both were produced in the thirties and are in black and white. They were always fun to watch and created great Christmas atmosphere but lacked the sophisticated animation that would become a Disney trademark later in the thirties.

SANTA'S WORKSHOP is particularly crude but was a must to watch for a grammar school kid who wanted to see what Santa did when he wasn't running around the world delivering presents to good little boys and girls.

Years later Disney would pit Chip and Dale against Donald Duck for possession of a Christmas tree. The toys all seemed to be military in nature and came in handy for the trench-like warfare declared by both parties. Naturally the chipmunks won and Donald learned that bigger isn't better.

With **PLUTO'S CHRISTMAS TREE** it was Mickey Mouse's dog Pluto that had trouble with the pair of oaktree rodents. Again the Christmas presents, as well as the tree, were layed to ruin by the bickering dog and chipmunks. All in all the output of Disney Christmas cartoons was pretty shabby when compared to the Warner Bros. or MGM products. That was true until **MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL** was released about four years ago. This retelling of the Scrooge story was well animated and the story a good variation on the Dickens classic.

Up to that film the best animated version of **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** was the Mr. Magoo interpretation with the squinty-eyed old Magoo as Scrooge. This cartoon was done for television and suffers from budget animation but the Magoo character was perfect for the part. As far as television animated productions go, there have been dozens but none can really match the theatrical products in terms of quality animation.

Quite a few however, have made up for budget constraints with good Christmas stories. Near the top of the list is **THE GRINCH WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS**. This telling of the Dr. Seuss story is greatly aided by being narrated by the late Boris Karloff. It has become a classic.

This holiday season there will be some new and some good old standby Christmas cartoons on the tube. If you have small children, big children or are just a bit of a child at heart, you may want to try to find a classic Christmas cartoon to view with your family. I'm sure they would be impressed by some of the animated features produced in the thirties or forties, and will enjoy Donald Duck chasing Chip and Dale.

One thing certain is that during this very special season young children can build memories they will cherish for life and adults can relive moments created at a special time in their lives.

Merry Christmas and Happy viewing. ■



THOSE WERE THE DAYS RADIO PLAYERS perform on the second Sunday of each month at the Hall of Fame Radio Studio in the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Shown during a recent re-creation of "It Pays to be Ignorant" are, from left, Mike Prindville (Park Ridge); Wally Cwik (Park Ridge); Tom Nehls (Palatine); Jañet Hoshaw (Glenview); and Dick Starkey (Park Ridge).

DECEMBER			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
29 Nov. Cinnamon Bear and <i>Old Time Radio</i> <i>Nostalgia Night</i>	30 Nov. Lone Ranger Tarzan	1 Red Skelton Third Man	2 Richard Diamond Sgt. Preston	3 Jack Benny Guess What?	4 Archie Andrews Captain Midnight	5 Cinnamon Bear Fibber McGee & Molly Escape
6 Cinnamon Bear and <i>Old Time Radio</i> <i>Nostalgia Night</i>	7 Mel Blanc Show Johnny Dollar - Pt.1	8 Milton Berle Johnny Dollar - Pt.2	9 Great Gildersleeve Johnny Dollar - Pt.3	10 Radio City Playhouse Johnny Dollar - Pt.4	11 Life of Riley Johnny Dollar - Pt.5	12 Cinnamon Bear Charlie McCarthy Johnny Dollar Fred Allen
13 Cinnamon Bear and <i>Old Time Radio</i> <i>Nostalgia Night</i>	14 Life of Riley Coronet Storyteller	15 Directors' Playhouse Fibber McGee	16 Red Skelton Fibber McGee	17 The Fat Man Fibber McGee	18 The Lone Wolf Fibber McGee	19 Cinnamon Bear Favorite Story Burns & Allen Life of Riley
20 <i>Old Time Radio</i> <i>Nostalgia Night</i>	21 Roy Rogers Fibber McGee	22 Great Gildersleeve Fibber McGee	23 The Shadow Fibber McGee	24 Six Shooter Fibber McGee	25 Our Miss Brooks Fibber McGee	26 Damon Runyon Theatre The Shadow Sgt. Preston Third Man
27 <i>Old Time Radio</i> <i>Nostalgia Night</i>	28 Great Gildersleeve Fibber McGee	29 Life of Riley Fibber McGee	30 Fred Allen Fibber McGee	31 Red Skelton Fibber McGee	1 Jan. The Shadow Fibber McGee	2 Jan. To Be Announced

JANUARY			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
3 To Be Announced	4 Lone Ranger Hop Harrigan	5 Lone Ranger Easy Aces	6 Lone Ranger Lum and Abner	7 Lone Ranger Pepper Young's Family	8 Lone Ranger Hop Harrigan	9 To Be Announced
10 To Be Announced	11 Hopalong Cassidy Tarzan	12 Boston Blackie Tarzan	13 Dangerous Assignment Tarzan	14 Directors' Playhouse Tarzan	15 Lights Out Tarzan	16 Tarzan of the Apes Nightbeat Nick Carter Fibber McGee
17 To Be Announced	18 Charlie McCarthy Easy Aces	19 Sherlock Holmes Lum and Abner	20 Sealed Book Fibber McGee	21 Burns & Allen Easy Aces	22 Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston	23 This Is Your FBI Fibber McGee & Molly Crime Club Easy Aces
24 <i>Old Time Radio</i> <i>Nostalgia Night</i>	25 Lights Out Easy Aces	26 Jack Benny Tarzan	27 Sealed Book Fibber McGee	28 Aldrich Family Hop Harrigan	29 Fibber McGee Charlie McCarthy	30 Hopalong Cassidy Milton Berle Mysterious Traveler Lum and Abner
31 To Be Announced	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.					

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

DECEMBER

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. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5th REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR — ONE YEAR LATER

★ **FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY** (12-1-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star as wartime mileage rationing comes to Wistful Vista. Cast includes Gale Gordon, Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, Harlow Wilcox, the King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. This is the last show for Gale Gordon (Mayor La Trivia) before entering the U.S. Coast Guard. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (10:20; 9:00; 11:05)

★ **MILEAGE RATIONING SPECIAL** (1942) In behalf of the War Department, Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Dinah Shore, Bill Goodwin, and Paul Whiteman and the orchestra encourage listeners to conserve fuel and observe gas rationing. Public Service Program. (13:50)

★ **FREDDY MARTIN AND HIS ORCHESTRA** (12-5-42) Excerpt from a remote broadcast from the Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California. World War II selections include "Rosie the Riveter," "Rose Ann of Charing Cross," and "A Cranky Old Yank in a Clanky Old Tank." Sustaining, NBC Blue. (19:00)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (12-6-42) John Daly and CBS correspondents Charles Colingwood, Bob Trout, Webley Edwards and others review the first year of war. "A year ago today at exactly this time, World News Today began with these words: 'The White House has just announced that Jap planes have attacked Pearl Harbor. This means war!'" Admiral Radio, CBS. (14:00; 11:00)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-6-42) Jack prepares for a trip to New York to entertain servicemen. This is Phil Harris' last appearance on the show; he and his band have joined the Merchant Marines. As a tribute to Phil and the boys, the gang presents a "Liberty Ship" sketch. Dennis plays a Japanese Naval Captain. With Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson. Grape Nuts, NBC. (10:45; 8:30; 9:20)

★ **TROMAN HARPER, RUMOR DETECTIVE** (12-20-42) A program offering "the truth about rumors. If you believe rumors you're a sucker; if you repeat

rumors, you're one of Hitler's soldiers!" Bromo Quinine Cold Tablets, MBS. (14:45)

★ **NATIONAL BARN DANCE** (12-5-42) One year after Pearl Harbor, emcee Joe Kelly talks about our fighting men, tells that this show will be heard by them. Performers include the Hoosier Hot Shots, Lulu Belle and Scotty, Dining Sisters, Arkie, the Arkansas Woodchopper, Eddie Peabody, and guests Tom, Dick and Harry. Alka Seltzer, WLS/NBC. (9:45; 9:18; 9:35)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12th RADIO TO ADDRESS CHRISTMAS CARDS BY

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (12-20-42) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve who has been so busy with the Water Department Annual Report that Leila Ransom feels neglected. Meanwhile, the family exchanges Christmas gifts. Cast features Shirley Mitchell, Walter Tetley, Earle Ross, Verna Felton. Kraft Foods, NBC. (16:14; 13:57)

GUNSMOKE (12-23-56) William Conrad stars as Marshall Matt Dillon, with Parley Baer as Chester Proudfoot, Georgia Ellis as Kitty Russell, Howard McNear as Doc Adams. Christmas Eve in Dodge City finds a couple staying — uninvited — in a ranch owner's barn. L&M Cigarettes, CBS. (9:40; 12:45)

VIC AND SADE (8-6-42) Sade and Rush browse over their Christmas cards (in August) trying to decide which should be sent to whom. Bernardine Flynn, Billy Idleson. Crisco, NBC. (14:15)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (12-25-46) Bing Crosby presents his annual Christmas show. Music includes "Adeste Fideles," "The Christmas Song," "Jingle Bells," and "White Christmas." The dramatic sketch, "The Small One" is part of this traditional program. Philco, ABC. (13:05; 16:00)

★ **SOLDIERS OF THE PRESS** (1940s) United Press war correspondents Henry Goral tells a "front line" Christmas story. United Press. Syndicated. (11:50)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (12-8-42) With so many men in the service, Fibber is dismayed at all the women taking over civilian jobs. Jim and Marian Jor-



NEWSMAN BOB TROUT reports regularly from London on CBS' **WORLD NEWS TODAY** programs during WW II.

dan, Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Shirley Mitchell, Verna Felton. The King's Men sing a "rationing" song, "No More Coffee in the Pot." Johnson's Wax, NBC. (10:10; 11:45; 8:25)

★ **BEN BERNIE WAR WORKERS' PROGRAM** (12-14-42) Music and variety for war workers with Jack Fulton, King's Jesters, and Fran Allison as Sister Emmy, talking of her Christmas plans. Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (14:30)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19th RADIO TO WRAP, BAKE AND DECORATE BY

★ **CAVALCADE OF AMERICA** (12-21-42) "A Child Is Born" starring Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in an original Nativity play by Stephen Vincent Benet. DuPont, NBC. (14:25; 14:20)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (12-15-42) Fibber tries to remember where he hid the money for Molly's Christmas present. Jim and Marian Jordan, Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, Billy Mills and the orchestra. The King's Men sing "White Christmas." Johnson's Wax, NBC. (11:00; 10:35; 8:35)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (12-20-42) John Daly in New York and CBS correspondents from around the world. "Hitler frantically tries to hold on to prepare the defenses against an Allied invasion of South Europe." "The Russian report that they have taken thousands

of German prisoners." Admiral Radio, CBS. (14:00; 10:30)

★ **BEN BERNIE WAR WORKERS' PROGRAM** (12-21-42) The Old Maestro with Jack Fulton, Fran Allison and the King's Jesters who sing "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (13:55)

★ **COMMAND PERFORMANCE** (12-24-42) An all-star program sending Christmas greetings to our fighting men around the world. Bob Hope, Andrew Sisters, Red Skelton, Spike Jones and the City Slickers, Ginny Simms, Bing Crosby, Ethel Waters, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Charles Laughton, Kay Kyser, Dinah Shore, Jack Benny and Fred Allen. This program is also being broadcast stateside to the audience on the home front. AFRS. (16:20; 15:20; 13:20; 14:49)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26th SEASON'S GREETINGS

★ **YOUR HIT PARADE** (12-26-42) Joan Edwards, Barry Wood, and Mark Warnow and the orchestra present the top tunes of the week. Martin Block emcees. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (11:36; 14:24; 13:20)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (12-27-42) On the last Sunday of 1942, "... all three Axis partners are plainly showing their uneasiness about the future." John Daly, Bob Trout, Charles Colingwood, Webley Edwards. News of new rationing programs and the probability of drafting three million men in 1943. Admiral Radio, CBS. (8:00; 16:35)

OLD TIME RADIO CHRISTMAS PARTY (12-26-92) An original holiday comedy written and directed by Ken Alexander. Our radio favorites gather at the home of Fibber McGee and Molly for some holiday cheer. Joining in the fun are Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, Jack Benny, Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Sgt. Joe Friday, Ma Perkins, Fred Allen, Portland Hafia, Lum and Abner, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Barbour, Hazel Barbour Murray. All roles are played by members of our *Those Were The Days Radio Players*. This program was recorded earlier this month at the Hall of Fame radio studio in the Museum of Broadcast Communications. (Approx. 30 minutes)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-27-42) Leroy wants to play with the new chemistry set he got for Christmas. Harold Peary stars with Walter Tetley, Verna Felton. Kraft Foods, NBC. (14:41; 15:07)

★ **BEN BERNIE WAR WORKERS' PROGRAM** (12-22-42) Music and fun for war workers with Ben, Cesar Petrillo and the orchestra, Elyse Cooper and the King's Jesters. Bernie sings "The Thing-A-Me-Bob." Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (13:50)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (12-22-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star in this milestone McGee broadcast that presents Teeney and the "kids" singing " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas" for the very first time on the air. Marian Jordan is Teeney. King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (11:55; 18:00)

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

JANUARY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2nd
HAPPY NEW YEAR WITH GOOD OLD RADIO

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-27-42) Jack and the gang entertain an audience of servicemen on leave at the Vanderbilt Theatre in New York. Cast includes Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, and guest conductor Benny Goodman and the orchestra. With Phil Harris now in the service, Jack gets a substitute actor — Fred Allen — to portray Uncle Sam in the show's annual New Year's fantasy. Grape Nuts Flakes, NBC. (28:20)

★ **CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT** (12-30-42) "Destruction of Nazi Submarine Base." An isolated wartime episode of the popular kids' adventure show finds the leader of the Secret Squadron smack dab in the middle of World War II. Ed Prentiss stars as Captain Midnight; Pierre Andre announces. Ovaltine, ABC. (15:00)

★ **YOUR HIT PARADE** (1-2-43) Host Martin Block presents the top tunes of the week as performed by Joan Edwards, Barry Wood, Ethel Smith, the Hit Paraders, and Mark Warnow and the orchestra. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (12:15; 14:30; 13:55)

EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (1-2-46) Eddie turns back the

clock to New Year's Eve. Bert Gordon, Kenny Delmar, Leonard Seuss, Thelma Carpenter. Ipana, Trushay, NBC. (29:50)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (1-3-43) John Daly and correspondents around the world report the news. "In these first days of 1943, we of the united nations have set our feet firmly on the long road to victory. It may be a long, hard pull, but we can face the future with confidence." Admiral Radio, CBS. (24:35)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-1-47) Gildy forgets to ask Eve to the New Year's Costume Ball, so he must spend New Year's Eve alone. Harold Peary stars with Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Louise Erickson, Earle Ross, Dick Legrand. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9th

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (1-11-43) Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore star in highlights from the 1942 film musical "Holiday Inn" with music by Irving Berlin. Truman Bradley announces. Lady Esther Cosmetics, CBS. (29:15)

★ **MAN BEHIND THE GUN** (1-6-43) Jackson Beck narrates "A Salute to the RAF" in a drama about the British Royal Air Force. Sustaining, CBS. (29:35)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-10-43) Harold Peary, as Gildersleeve, welcomes Jim and Marian Jordan, as Fibber McGee and Molly, to his home. Gildy tries to keep a secret from Fibber. Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:00)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (1-10-43) John Daly and CBS correspondents Webley Edwards, Robert Trout, Chester Morrison, Charles Griffin, Lee White. "The Japanese have not even started to retreat in the Pacific ... they're preparing to strike again." Broadcast features a report from an airborne B-25 bomber. Admiral Radio, CBS. (24:55)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (1-12-43) Jim and Marian Jordan as the McGees who visit Billy Mills in the hospital. Cast includes Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, Elvia Allman, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:15)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (1-13-43) Bing Crosby welcomes guests George Murphy and Jane Frazee. Regulars include the Charioteers, Music Maids and Lee. John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, Ken Carpenter. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16th

INNER SANCTUM (4-24-45) "Song of the Slasher" starring Arnold Moss. Because of the strange tune he whistles, a musician is suspected of being the "Slasher." Lipton Tea and Soup, CBS. (29:55)

★ **NATIONAL BARN DANCE** (12-12-42) Joe Kelly, Lulu Belle and Scotty, the Hoosier Hot Shots and all the Barn Dance gang at a winter skating party. Alka Seltzer, WLS/NBC. (28:29)

★ **AN AMERICAN IN ENGLAND** (12-1-42) "Cromer" is a town on the east coast of England, "facing the North Sea and facing Germany." This is the first of four programs written and directed by Norman Corwin, an extension of the transatlantic series of the same title originally short-waved from London. Joseph Julian narrates. Sustaining, CBS. (28:55)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (1-19-43) When Mrs. Uppington announces that she's going to join the WAACS, Fibber is concerned that Molly will sign up, too. Jim and Marian Jordan with Isabell Randolph. The King's Men sing "Would You Rather be a Colonel with and Eagle on your Shoulder than a Private with a Chicken on your Knee?" Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:07)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (1-17-43) "A strong force of heavy British bombers dropped a great weight of bombs on Berlin and large fires were seen from the air. One bomber is missing from the strong force." John Daly, Charles Collingwood, Bob Trout and other CBS correspondents report. Admiral Radio, CBS. (24:55)

ACADEMY AWARD (12-18-46) "Lost Angel" stars Margaret O'Brien and Jeff Chandler in the radio version of the 1943 film about a lost child, taken in by a reporter. Juvenile star Margaret repeats her screen role. Last show in the series. House of Squibb, CBS. (27:45)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23rd

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (1-21-43) Bing Crosby with John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, the Music Maids and Hal, the Charioteers, Yuki Sherin, Ken Carpenter and guests Andy Devine and Private Mickey Rankin. Musical sketch looks back at the year 1922. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:35)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (1-24-43) "In the Pacific, the vicious air and ground fighting continues." "American planes have carried out seven bombing attacks in the Solomons in the last two days." John Daly, Bob Trout, Winston Burdette, George Fielding Elliott. Bill Slocome Jr. reports from Chicago and the former Hotel Stevens which has been transformed into an Army Air Force training center. Admiral Radio, CBS. (25:12)

SUSPENSE (8-9-45) "Murder for Myra" stars Lloyd Nolan. Myra's lover agrees to kill her husband. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:56)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (1-26-43) Novelist Fibber is writing a love story using the pen name Earl

Stanley McGee. Jim and Marian Jordan Star. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:05)

★ **CAVALCADE OF AMERICA** (1-25-43) "The Flying Tigers" starring Ralph Bellamy in the story of the "brave band of American aviators who fought in China against the Japanese." DuPont, NBC. (28:50)

QUIZ KIDS (1-24-43) Joe Kelly is Chief Quizmaster as the youngsters on the panel answer his questions. Guest is nurse Sister Kenny. Alka Seltzer, NBC BLUE. (29:25)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30th

★ **AN AMERICAN IN ENGLAND** (12-8-42) "Home is Where You Hang Your Helmet" is the second in the limited series of four programs written and directed by Norman Corwin. Joseph Julian narrates this story about soldiers in England during World War II. Sustaining, CBS. (29:40)

NOTE: To celebrate the upcoming 100th anniversary of the birth of JIMMY DURANTE, born on February 10, 1893, we present a special salute to the beloved entertainer:

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (11-5-47) Guest Bing Crosby joins the Schnozz for some music and comedy. Featured are Candy Candido, Arthur Treacher, Howard Petrie, Rexall, NBC. (28:15)

JIMMY DURANTE INTERVIEW (11-8-61) Barry Farber talks with the great Durante in a conversation recorded at Mama Leone's Restaurant in New York City. Voice of America broadcast. (27:40)

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (3-31-48) Joining Jimmy are singer Peggy Lee, Roy Bargy and the orchestra and guests Victor Moore and comedienne Rose Marie. Rexall, NBC. (29:15)

★ **AMERICA SALUTES THE PRESIDENT** (1-30-43) "A nation at war pays tribute to its Commander-in-Chief" on the 61st birthday of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Clifton Fadiman, at the President's Birthday Ball in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, hosts this coast-to-coast tribute to FDR. Featured are Sammy Kaye and the orchestra, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Frank Sinatra, Sgt. Gene Autry, Fibber McGee and Molly, Artie Shaw, Bing Crosby, and Dick Powell. Also, a dramatic vignette, "The Four Freedoms" by Norman Corwin. March of Dimes, ALL MAJOR NETWORKS (30:00; 30:45)

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"Do Wah Ditty" I
"Si," "Sy" I
Doctor's Office I
Railroad Station I
Violin Lesson I
Sportsmen LS/MFT
"Do Wah Ditty" II
Beverly Hills Beavers

TAPE 2
Cimmaron Rolls I
Dennis and the Doc
"Si," "Sy" II
Railroad Station II
Violin Lesson II
At The Races
Cimmaron Rolls II
Ronald Colman's Dream
Chief Radio Engineer
Doctor's Office II
Railroad Station III
Benny's Birthday

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Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .

My Father's Tools



My dad was about as handy with tools as I am, and I'm not the least bit handy with tools. But even though he was not very adept at handling them, my dad respected tools: he knew, for example, that a wrench wasn't made for pounding, and a file shouldn't be used for prying. He acquired a modest number of tools during his lifetime — some before he was married; more after he married my mother and set up housekeeping in an apartment on the West Side; and still more when, at the age of fifty, he became a homeowner.

Dad died a few years ago, and in the aftermath, one of my tasks was going through his tools. Sorting through a departed family member's clothes and other belongings is always a sad experience. In the case of my father's tools, through, it was a job that I enjoyed. It was linged with sadness, of course, but it was a job that I didn't mind doing. In fact, I saved going through the tools till last because it was the duty that, I felt, would be the least unpleasant.

Most of the tools were old, many having been made before World War II. Nearly all were American-made. Stamped into the steel were names such as Kraeuter and Co., Newark, N.J.; North Bros. Mfg. Co., Philadelphia; Oswego Tool Co., Oswego, N.Y.; Mechanic's Tool & Forge, Sabina,

Ohio; Red Devil, Union, N.J.; and Greenlee, Rockford, Ill. Some were stamped, simply, U.S.A.

Some saw blades and a pair of pliers had GERMANY stamped into the steel — not West Germany; just plain Germany. Those were obviously pre-war.

There was hardly any plastic in the lot. There were several screwdrivers with handles of wood; the blades ran all the way up through the handles to the very top — well-made screw-drivers. The hammers — a claw hammer and a ball-peen — and the hatchet had handles of hickory.

None of the tools was electric; even the soldering iron was the old fashioned kind, which was heated by holding it in a flame. The tip was of solid copper, about the size of a small plum and pointed at the end. It was attached to a steel shank three-eighths of an inch in diameter and seven inches long. On the other end of the shank was a wooden handle.

A couple of Stillson wrenches, a hacksaw, a keyhole saw, a crosscut saw, a Yankee push drill, a pair of tin snips, a wooden spirit level, a putty knife, a wood chisel, a couple of files — those and the things I've already mentioned plus a few miscellaneous items made up the contents of my dad's tool chest.

But the chest held more than a bunch

KEN ALEXANDER

of tools; there was also a collection of memories. Seeing the crosscut saw brought to mind a Christmas tree which my father had had to shorten because it was too tall for the ceiling. When there was a picture to be hung, my dad had used the claw hammer to drive a nail into the wall. I remember seeing him use the Yankee push drill and one of the wooden-handled screwdrivers for various household repair jobs. The pliers — the jaws are contoured differently from any others I've seen — were kept in a drawer of my mother's Singer (non-electric) sewing machine. Seeing those pliers again recalled my childhood. Nearly every tool evoked a memory.

Some of the iron tools were rusty, but I was able to remove most of the rust with naval jelly and steel wool. Then, to prevent future rusting caused by the basement's damp air, I applied a light coating of machine oil to the metal. I rubbed mineral oil into the wooden handles. When the job was done, I combined my dad's collection of tools with my own.

Later I remarked to a friend that I had had some difficulty removing rust from a saw blade. My friend recommended a method that had worked for him, but then he said, "Those tools are obsolete, anyway. Get yourself an electric saw, an electric drill, a cordless screwdriver."

I declined his suggestion, well-intentioned though it was. I'm aware that cordless, battery-operated screwdrivers are available. They must be a boon to professional mechanics and carpenters, who work with screws and bolts all day long. But for the rare mechanical or carpentry job that I do around the house, I don't mind turning the screwdriver by hand.

If these old-fashioned tools were good enough for my dad, I think they ought to be good enough for me. Some of them may be considered obsolete, but I use them with pride.

These tools belonged to my father. ■

The Christmas Miracle of 1914

BY REV. KEVIN SHANLEY,
O.C.A.R.M.

Over 75 years ago, in the summer of 1914, Europe was a political tinderbox. And the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, Austria-Hungary, on June 28 proved to be a fateful spark.

Shortly afterward, the infamous "guns of August" boomed, and the mighty armies of France, Britain, Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary began a war that would claim millions of lives.

But in spite of the shelling, gunfire, smoke, blood, mud, and death, a little-known miracle took place on Christmas Day, 1914. It was a miracle of human kindness, and of love.

In November of that year, Pope Benedict XV called for a cessation of hostilities on Christ's birthday. "Impossible!" was the reply from both sides.

Kaiser Wilhelm II and the German High Command admonished their troops "to let their hearts beat to God during the coming season, and to keep their fists on the enemy." Meanwhile, at home, folks wondered, "How will the troops in the trenches fare?" French officers shrugged their shoulders and predicted that the sniper and gunner would be active as normal.

"Judging by present portents," the Times of London added, "it is probable that the plum pudding will be eaten under fire, perhaps in the intervals of fierce action."

When the German artillery on Christmas Eve mounted one of the most violent bombardments of the British lines, the stern predictions seemed likely to prove correct. But what seems impossible to those in high places is possible for ordinary soldiers, who often long only for peace and for home. The thousands of soldiers facing each other in the mud-filled trenches that stretched from the Swiss border to the North Atlantic decided to call off the war themselves.

At sundown on Thursday, a cold and frosty Christmas Eve, the firing died slowly until every gun was silent. The silence was almost eerie. What was happening?

According to reports, it was a young British soldier who first sensed that a miracle had occurred. Standing guard at midnight in an isolated outpost in Flanders, Peter Goudge suddenly heard the German troops singing *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht* (Silent Night, Holy Night). Goudge started singing too. Before long, English and Irish troops of the British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) began singing *O Come, All Ye Faithful* to the cheers of the Saxon infantry. The singing continued until, all along the Western Front, former enemies were singing Christmas carols with joy and peace in their hearts.

English and Irish troops then noticed hundreds of colored lights strung up by the German Soldiers along the barbed wire in front of their trenches. And at intervals along the trenches, brightly colored Christmas trees brought the solemnity of the season to the war-ravaged battleground. Private Goudge was even more startled to see a lone German soldier picking his way across the desert of barbed wire and shell holes while holding aloft a tiny Christmas tree bright with flickering candles. Leaning over the barbed wire of the British

trenches, he shouted in English, "Merry Christmas!"

"Merry Christmas to you!" roared back the soldiers. Soon the air was filled with shouts of "Merry Christmas" and "Froeliche Weihnachten."

The Germans then shouted, "Come out — we will not shoot for Christmas." Timidly at first, troops of the BEF climbed out of their trenches and advanced unarmed to greet yesterday's enemies.

When they met at a line drawn halfway between opposing trenches, the soldiers regarded each other with curiosity. Officers saluted stiffly, then shook hands. The Germans clicked their heels, and they bowed. Some laughed, others were near tears as they embraced.

The Christmas spirit caught on quickly along the hundreds of miles of trenches. French troops shouted, "Joyeux Noel!" and a French regimental band serenaded the German troops with classical music. Belgian and German troops exchanged gifts of cigars and cheese, presents from their loved ones at home.

Christmas Day dawned on the strange sight of formerly hostile soldiers exchanging gifts, good wishes, and songs on the once bitterly contested battlefields. Despite the language and other barriers, the spirit of Christmas overcame all. Soccer matches took place between teams from opposing armies, and the Germans beat the British, 3-2. Minor officers and ordinary soldiers had photos taken with the opposition. It was difficult to tell that a war had raged between these armies for five months.

Toasts with beer and wine, or tea and coffee, were offered for home and family and friends. The most popular toast, though, was to peace.

Soldiers on both sides agreed not to take advantage of the lull in the fighting to repair barbed wire on the trenches, and if a shot were fired accidentally it

WE GET

LETTERS

GLEN ELLYN, IL — I've been listening since 1978 when I was in the seventh grade. I quickly became a BIG Jack Benny fan. I credit the old radio programs and especially Jack Benny for me meeting and marrying my wife. The imagination and the sense of humor I developed seemed to win her over, and I developed these traits from listening to the shows. Now I'm trying to explain the shows to her and getting her to like them also. She loses patience because there isn't any picture, but I think I will win her over. The Jack Benny Vault is a great idea. — **ROBERT HEMMELGARN**

ORLAND PARK, IL — Love your show on WBBM. Getting my three year old son into old time radio. He loves it! — **ERIK ROBERT KUNZ**

GEPP, ARKANSAS — I would appreciate an article or suggestions from readers on improving long-distance reception of WBBM. Arkansas is great, but the radio here isn't. I sure miss Chicago radio. The best improvement we've made in our reception was to buy a \$6 (AM only) car radio in a junk store. The reception is 100 percent better than any other radio we've tried. Because it's 12 volt, we need to hook it up to a battery and

charge it occasionally. My husband says 12 volt adapters are available for wall outlets. Also, the way I understand it, these old car radios were specifically designed for AM reception and it surely has made a big difference in clarity and filtering out all the buzzes, hums and static. With our radio, battery and timer, we are able to tape your midnight shows and listen whenever we want. It's great! I'd still like to hear any other technical ideas for better reception, including ideas about antennas. I still miss Saturday afternoons with you and all my radio favorites!

— **LUANNE SWANSON**

(ED. NOTE — Are there any long-distance listeners who can help? Drop us a line. And thanks for listening.)

TROY GROVE, IL — Enclosed is my check for renewing *Nostalgia Digest*. The articles are always interesting

with a new round of cheering and cap waving.

But as evening fell, soldiers began to trickle back to their trenches to reluctantly resume the bitter business at hand. Tears and embraces marked the parting of thousands of soldiers who at last had found "peace on earth, good will toward men" — if only for a day. The next flares shed light on an eerily deserted No Man's Land; the barbed wire looked sinister and menacing again. Death was about to replace peace.

A young British soldier later wrote home, "They (the Germans) were really magnificent, and jolly good fellows." But he ended the letter, saying, "Both sides have started the firing and arc enemies again. Strange it all seems, doesn't it?"

The Christmas "miracle" of 1914 had ended.

The military high commands of both sides took severe measures to insure that warring troops would not repeat such an event in the future. There were no more Christmas miracles. But to those soldiers who took part in it, the day the war stopped for Christ's birthday remains a cherished memory of peace on earth. ■

and informative. After reading "Ken Alexander Remembers . . . Our Song," may I suggest a possible topic for an article? Would it be possible to write about the early disc jockeys broadcasting from Chicago? I can remember Eddie Hubbard, Howard Miller, and later Dick Biondi and Clark Weber.

— **ROBERTA SKINNER**

(ED. NOTE — Not a bad idea. We'll look into it.)

CHICAGO — Remember Don McNeill's Breakfast Club? I was called up from the audience when I was about four years old (I'll be 51 in January). My mother had schooled me as to the correct spelling of the Breakfast Club sponsor, P-H-I-L-C-O. McNeill was talking with me and I told him I could spell Philco, which he asked me to do, after which he rolled on the floor with the mike! I remember the audience laughing at this. It was a BIG audience! We really had to get up early and ride the "L" from Evanston!

— **FRANK HORN**

HIGHLAND PARK, IL — Received my Oct.-Nov. '92 *Nostalgia Digest* and was most interested in the article about Edgar Bergen by Bill Elwell. My later father, John G. Cumberland, was flying out at Palwaukee Airport at the time Edgar Bergen had his ship out there. My dad told me he would talk to Edgar from time to time. My dad was flying at Palwaukee about ten years before Edgar Bergen started flying from there with his Stinson. My father owned an OX-5 Swallow Bi-Plane which he kept at Palwaukee from 1931-1934. During the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933-34, he gave Miss Sally Rand an airplane ride in his Swallow. We met her during the Century of Progress reunion you put on back in 1978. My dad enjoyed that Sunday afternoon program very much. He worked for Palwaukee Airport during the Fair flying Sikorsky S-38 Flying Boats for sightseeing rides along the lake front. Also, during the 1930s, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll (Amos 'n' Andy) and Wayne King were flying at Palwaukee. He knew them, too. — **GORDON K. CUMBERLAND**

WESTVILLE, INDIANA — Mercy please! I couldn't have phrased it better than Phillip K. Sprague in the Oct.-Nov. issue of *Nostalgia Digest*. Easy Aces is the worst program ever edited. Pepper Young's Family and the others mentioned I do tune OUT. Drivel! However, thanks for the superb programs that you do air.

— **RUSSELL W. BREWER**

CHICAGO — I have been a subscriber of your *Guide* since 1976. I have all of the issues except three, having started in either October or November, 1976. In addition, I do collect a few radios and my finest piece is a Zenith floor radio, 3 bands, 12 tubes, in brand new

condition. It has the large shutter block dial with tuning eye. This radio has all of its original tubes, grille cloth and cabinet, original, never refinished. As it stands, it looks like a juke box, very Art Deco looking. To re-create the early forties (oh, those were the days) I sometimes put one of your broadcasts through an AM transmitter and tune it in on this Zenith 125/267 radio. The era of the forties is created and I slip away to my childhood. At times it is disappointing to then realize when the program is over, we are in today's world where things will never be like they used to be. Thanks for broadcasting. — **EDWARD C. BEYER, JR.**

VALPARAISO, INDIANA — Thanks for so many wonderful years of great old time radio on both Saturdays and weeknights. I especially enjoy the Lux Radio Theatre and Suspense. They, as well as many more shows, bring back such wonderful memories. We'll be moving to Colorado in a few years and wish I can take your lovely program with us. If not, I'll continue with your magazine. — **MARY S. WILSON**

MADISON, WISCONSIN — I enjoy your program so much. I try to be certain to take my pooch for his run between 12-1:00 a.m. so I can listen on my Walkman. I'd really enjoy hearing more Great Gildersteeve programs mixed in to your rotation. To me they've stood the test of time as well as Jack Benny or Bergen and McCarthy. The situations Gildy gets himself into are always funny and occasionally even touching. Just think, today we'd call it the story of a single parent trying to raise a non-traditional family while pursuing a career and a personal life. He was decades ahead of his time! I'm just a little too young to remember those programs from their first time around, but I like them so much now. They're like a little window into the world of my parents and their contemporaries when they were young adults getting their start in the world.

— **TIM NEWPORT**

MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA — My favorite article in the Aug.-Sept. *Nostalgia Digest* is "The Home Front" by Ken Alexander. As he would say, "Why, thank you, Chuck." I was born in February, 1939, but I still remember a lot about radio in the war years. My big brother, Jim, joined up with the Army in 1943 and my mother and father would listen to the radio all the time, looking for any news from the front. I got in the habit of listening with them and have never lost that habit. I remember very well the sad day in March, 1945 that the telegram arrived from the War Department informing us of my brother's death in Germany in the 101 Airborne Division. Yes, there are some sad memories along with many happy ones. Keep up the good work. You truly found your own ministry.

— **FR. RONALD RAY GOBEL,**
Archdeacon of the Diocese of St. Augustine
Nostalgia Digest -27-

CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

would not be regarded as a hostile act.

The only serious business on this day involved burying the dead. Both sides dug graves for those who had fallen, and the British supplied some wooden crosses. Then a party of Germans moved toward the British lines, heads bare, carrying the body of a British officer who had fallen behind their lines.

As the early Friday darkness of a cold Christmas night fell on Flanders Fields, the strange mix of former enemies gathered for a sing-along. British and German forces entertained each other by singing in turn. German contributions ranged from *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* to *Home Sweet Home*.

A fine German baritone overcame the difference of nationality with Schumann's *Two Grenadiers*, which was familiar to all. And a German coronet player warmed the soldiers' hearts with popular sentimental airs.

The troops applauded each other. At times a flare would illuminate the Christmas night sky and was greeted



Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

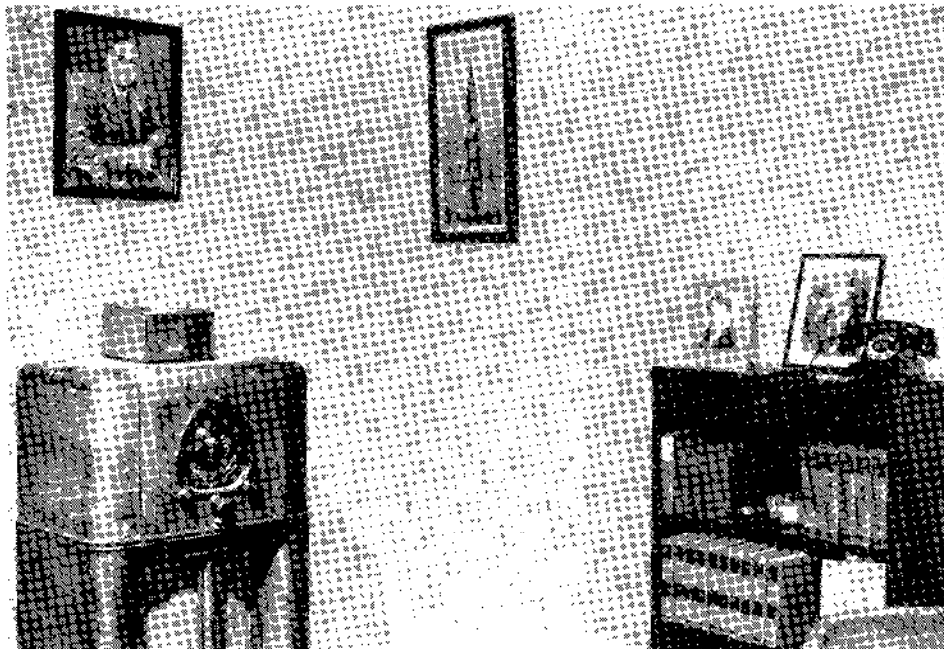
Reported by Margaret Warren

As we go into the final countdown for 1992, we look back at a year of significant progress in the history of the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Our move to Chicago's landmark Cultural Center at Michigan Avenue and Washington led the way. More exhibits, more going on, easier to get to and the admission is free!

Sometimes there's so much going on it's hard to choose. For instance, one Sunday back in September, the action was like a "three-ring circus." Your reporter spent the entire afternoon running between a fascinating seminar on Disney animation in the magnificent Preston Bradley Hall on the third level and a close-to-authentic re-creation by

Chuck Schaden's Those Were the Days Radio Players of scripts for "The Great Gildersleeve," "The Bickersons" and "It Pays To Be Ignorant" in the Radio Hall of Fame studio on the first floor. A visit to the Museum can turn into a fitness exercise as well as an exercise in selecting from an array of wonderful program events.

The Radio Hall of Fame gala induction ceremony on November 15 is another significant advance in our history. A nationwide broadcast marks the official beginning of the Radio Hall of Fame as a major part of the Museum of Broadcast Communications. We join the nation in welcoming actor, Don Ameche; top-40 network jock, Casey



CHECK OUT THIS COZY CORNER in the Museum's Radio Hall of Fame exhibition area. It's guaranteed to take you back to those warm years of radio's golden age.



BE SURE TO VISIT Commercial Break, the Museum's store to find some radio-TV related merchandise.

Kasem; local Detroit personality, J.P. McCarthy; ABC Radio pioneer, Leonard Goldenson and the long-running "The Grand Ole Opry" to the ranks of the Radio Hall of Fame which was established in 1988 and has now found its permanent home at the Museum.

Plan a visit to the Museum during December. All around there will be holiday cheer in the form of playbacks of your favorite holiday programs in the Television Exhibition Gallery. Stop in Commercial Break, our Museum shop, for plenty of gifts for the broadcasting buffs on your list. Choose from terrific stuff like tee shirts celebrating

everything from "I Love Lucy" to "Wayne's World" and "Bullwinkle" to "Murphy Brown." There are books about the Quiz Kids, Fred Allen, Jack Benny and more. There are Disney character dolls and you'll find nifty mugs, pins and pencils that are perfect as stocking stuffers.

And don't forget a Museum membership gift. Treat someone on your list (or yourself) to a full years membership for only \$30. Phone the Museum for details.

Watch this space and phone the Member Hotline for news of the exciting events that you'll want to be part of in the coming year. The 24-hour Hotline number is (312) 629-6020.

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

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I Scream for Ice Cream!

BY GINO LUCCHETTI

When I was a kid there were Ice Cream Parlors. Yes, ice cream "Parlors" — places that served ice cream in all its delicious and glorious permutations exclusively. They weren't adjuncts to drug stores, department stores or restaurants. They didn't pretend to be anything else but places where you could get cooling, refreshing, wholesome ice cream and soft drinks. They could be readily identified by their decor and ambience.

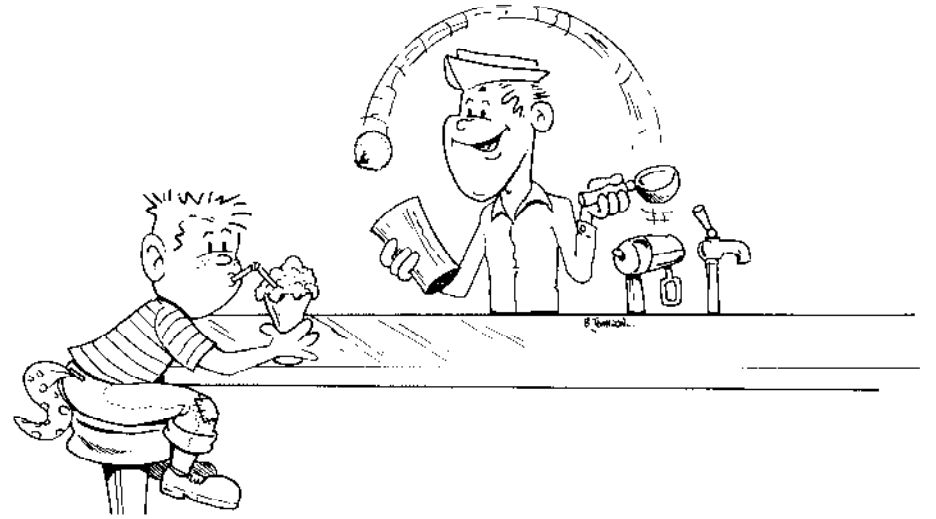
A typical ice cream parlor was a small street-level shop, light, bright and airy. Because they were most popular in warm weather, naturally, and because it was before air conditioning (Remember, there was a time places simply weren't air conditioned!) their doors were always wide open so whatever refreshing breeze there was was simply allowed to waft through the premises through the screen door, which also sifted out flies anxious to join the customers.

In really hot weather there would be fans humming to keep the air moving. Lazily oscillating fans on counters or shelves endlessly, monotonously swiveling back and forth, back and forth, offered a puff of air every few seconds, or large floor fans creating a stiff breeze, with blades so big there may have been the possibility the place could take off. In those days ceiling fans weren't merely for atmosphere or affectation, trendy "Casablanca" fans hadn't been popularized yet. However, since we hadn't become accustomed to air conditioning, fans served to cool adequately even on the hottest days, and their constant low droning was a languidly relaxing background sound, to be supplanted later by less soothing juke boxes.

The appointments also identified those long-gone pleasure palaces for the palate. The soda fountain, where you placed your order, invariably had a marble top about shoulder height for an adult, but about tip-toe elevation for a kid. Behind the counter was a marvelous array of spigots. Each had a white porcelain plunger which, when pushed or pumped by the "soda jerk," spewed the various flavors of toppings for your ice cream "creation" from a small square porcelain container. And "creation" was always the word used to describe the available selections. "Ice cream creations" was the omnipresent cliché for what was served in ice cream emporiums. Every place advertised ice cream "creations."

Behind the soda fountain there was usually a large mirror rimmed with light bulbs and tiers of shelves with the various glasses the "creations" were served in. Glasses were glass, real glass, ornate, carved heavy glasses for the sundacs, sodas and malted milks, with more delicate tumblers for phosphates and soft drinks. "Coke" in those days was the new kid on the block, Green River was the big seller, with ever-popular root beer, much of it actually home-brewed, in the running as well. Pepsi was still in its infancy, and you could order a plain seltzer, which today would be a club soda. Soft drinks, freshly made to order on the spot from a concentrate and fizzy soda water from a fountain tap, were served in those more delicate 12-ounce glasses with the bulbous tops often with some brand name etched in the glass.

You enjoyed your "creation" at marble-topped tables, seated on wire-backed chairs, the plain round-seated wooden



kind, because without padding or solid backs, they kept one as cool as possible by letting the air circulate around you. The floors were invariably tiled, often in plain black and white squares or small mosaic tiles, or linoleum, plain, but utilitarian. The dominant color decor was milk-white, maybe contrasted starkly with black or tempered by a pastel trim. Lighting was supplied by hanging fixtures, often using the old fashioned soft-light wire filament bulbs, the same as the ones around the mirror behind the fountain. Modern frosted bulbs have, naturally, replaced those not quite so starkly bright, friendly old-fashioned ones.

Because most of the places were rather modest and refrigeration was comparatively extravagant for individually or family owned mom-and-pop stores, salted ice blocks or "dry ice" kept the ice cream cold and solid in small "wells" behind the counter, waist high, much like today but under thickly insulated, heavy covers, not in today's refrigerated open showcases. Each serving meant the "soda jerk" had to lift the heavy cover and scoop out the solidly packed home-made ice cream many, many times on a hot, busy night. Being a soda jerk was a good job for a husky highschooler, as one might imagine,

and highly prized for making a bit of spending money, but a "soda jerk" really worked for his pittance and all the ice cream he could stand. The "jerk" part of the title didn't have the pejorative implication it has today.

But the real glory of those much-missed ice cream oases was the ambience and stimulating odor as you walked in. They smelled good! Rich ice cream aromas, redolent smells: chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, butter pecan and their various toppings dominated and made your mouth water. The mind-boggling selection of flavors hadn't been concocted yet, but they made up in flavor what they lacked in selection.

You could observe as the fountain "artiste" created your selection, possibly a *double*, chocolate malted: Two or three generous scoops of chocolate ice cream plopped in a tall metal mixing tumbler, generously doused with chocolate sauce and a dose of malt, and whipped to a rich, thick puree in one of those machines with the fluted whipper on a long stem reaching down to the bottom of the container. Just putting the container in place automatically started the mixer. In a minute it was done. Your malted was then poured in a glass and a dollop of real, true, genuine, unadul-

I SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!

terated crown of whipped cream was added. You got both the glass and the metal container. it was always more than a glass-full, and a couple of vanilla wafers or butter cookies besides. A good malted had to be *thick*. It passed muster if it was so thick that the straw collapsed if you sucked real hard. The straws were waxed paper tubes, not plastic, and you got two, so that when one went soggy you still had another. Anyway, one straw made it last longer. You could also scoop a bit of the whipped cream at first with your cookies, if you liked.

Sodas were also joys to behold. One or two scoops of your choice with flavored sauce in a soda glass — that was an inverted cone-shaped glass, usually, with flared rim in a floral design — into which the fountain man shot a thin, stream of soda water under high pressure causing the ice cream and flavor to fizz briskly and bubble up to fill the glass to near overflow. A Boston soda also had a shot of whipped cream added after an initial shot of fizz-water and then topped off with

more fizz.

A phosphate was simply a soda without ice cream. A shot or two of sauce with a stream of fizz water shot into it. That generally was served in one of the rounded top glasses used for soft drinks. They were delicious to the last slurp as you noisily vacuumed the bottom of the glass with your straw, which you always did because it sounded good and annoyed your folks, but amused your pals.

Sundaes are, and always have been, sundaes, pretty much unchanged to this day. Ice cream in a dish or glass, lathered with any number of flavored sauces, a helping of whipped cream, chopped nuts and a brilliant red maraschino cherry to top it off.

There's a big difference between the "parlors" and the ice cream or frozen yogurt places of today. Today the ice cream is good, there's a grand selection of flavors with "specials" and exotic new flavors waiting to be tried, but you don't have the same feeling of hominess that the mom and pop places had. You're expected to wait in line, maybe with a number, receive your order and take it out. It's not the same as when you took your order to your table, or were served, and you could sit and take the time to savor your "creation" while you chatted with those at your table or an adjoining one. You knew the person who owned the place, if not intimately, at least on a friendly basis. The young person behind the counter may have been right from the neighborhood, or the same school.

An ice cream parlor was a place you'd take a date, or go to after a show, or stop in at when you went out for a walk or a drive on a Sunday or a holiday. It often wasn't something you'd do besides something else, it was the reason for going out. It was entertainment as well.

Ice cream parlors may be gone, but they're not forgotten by those who grew up when they were neighborhood centers of convivial association, delicious treats, and entertainment. ■

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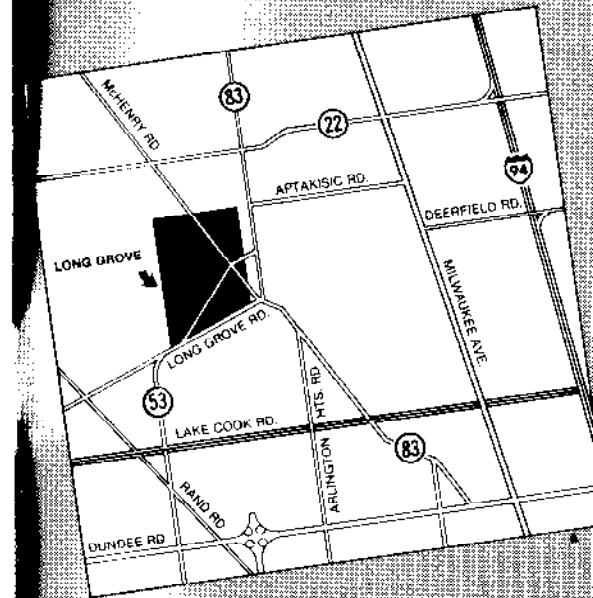
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BRACE BEEMER

portrays the masked rider of the plains during a "Lone Ranger Rides Again" week on Old Time Radio Classics, January 4-8.

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