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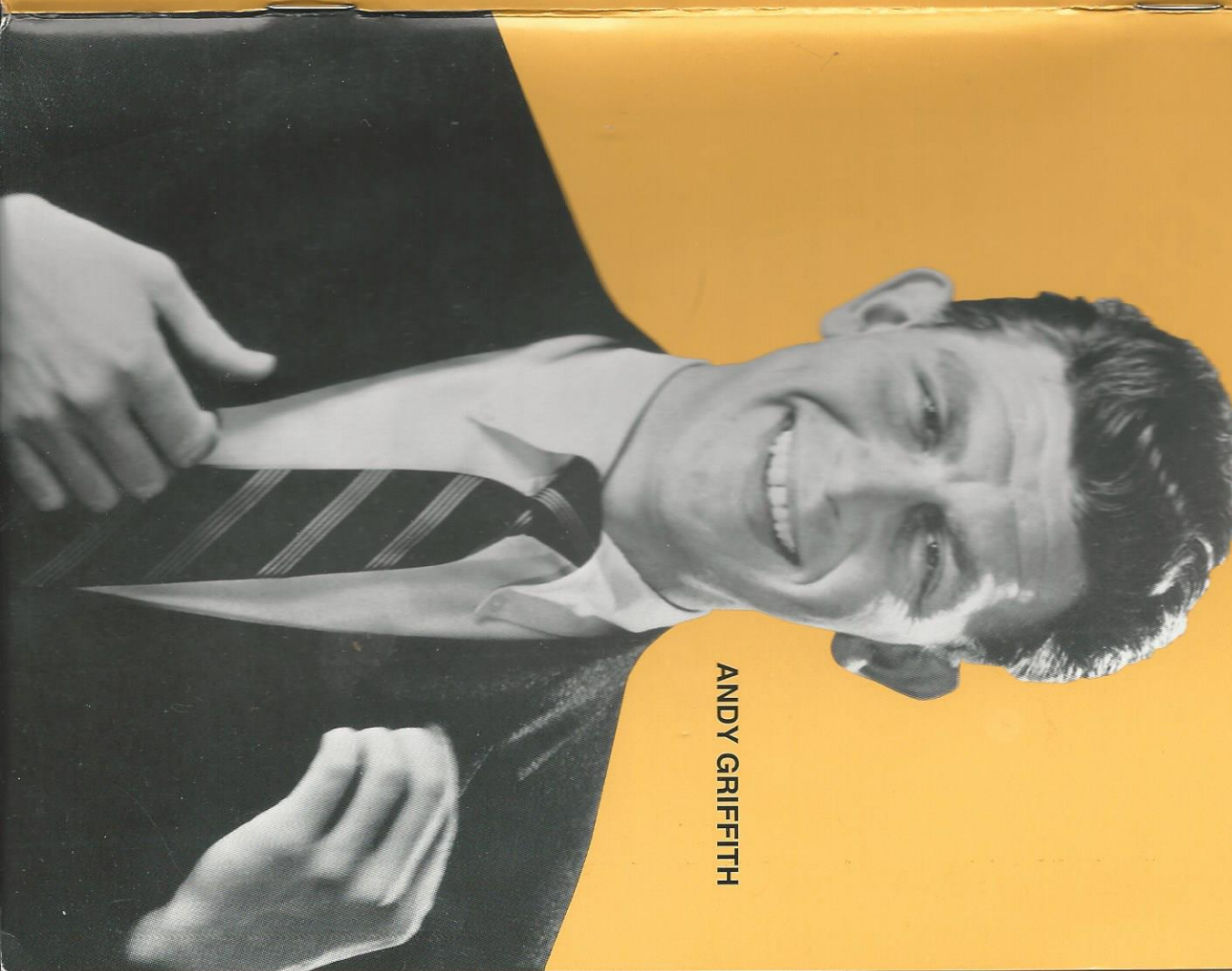
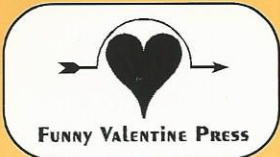
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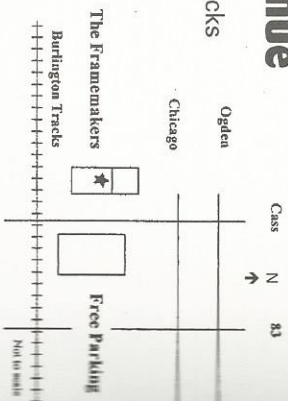
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BOOK 38, CHAPTER 3

SUMMER 2012

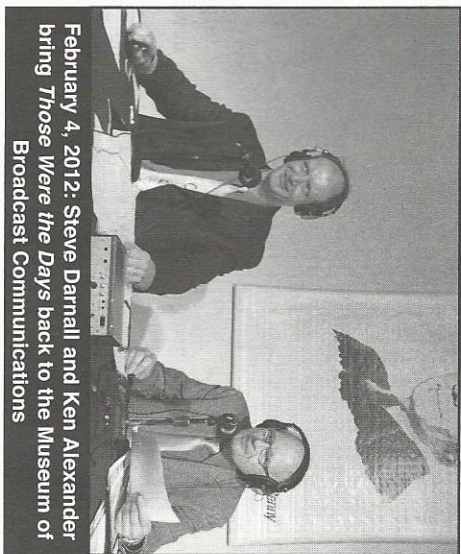
JULY-AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

Longtime listeners of *Those Were the Days* know that this show has had a lengthy association with the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Back in 1986 — when the MBC was still in the planning stages — *TWTD* creator and host Chuck Schaden took the remarkable step of donating his collection of some 40,000 vintage radio shows. When the Museum opened its doors at River City in Chicago in June of 1987, they celebrated with a live opening night broadcast over WBBM. The first voice heard over the air from the new Museum was Chuck's.

It wasn't long before *TWTD* quickly became a fixture at the new Museum, broadcasting live every Saturday afternoon over WNIB. When the Museum moved to larger facilities at the Chicago Cultural Center in 1992, *TWTD* moved along with it. Over the years, the Museum has hosted a number of radio-related events, ranging from "An Afternoon with the Great Gildersteeve" to a celebration of Jack Benny's 100th birthday... and, of course, the annual induction ceremonies for the Radio Hall of Fame. When the Museum wanted to construct replicas of Fibber McGee's Hall Closet and Jack Benny's Vault, *TWTD* listeners donated their money (and in some cases, their talents) to complete these exhibits.

The generosity of our audience has extended to the Museum's decade-long effort to build a home of its own. In February of this year, *TWTD* began its 34th annual "Jack Benny Month" with a live remote broadcast from the Museum's Radio Hall of Fame, attended by some 60 listeners who'd bought tickets for the event. We were joined on the air by Museum founder Bruce Dumont, *TWTD* founder Chuck Schaden, and (by telephone) Jack Benny's daughter Joan. Throughout the day, attendees were taken on a guided tour of the new building, where they could see the construction that had been completed and learn about what was still to be done. When the tour was over, the guests read about the many inductees in the Radio Hall of Fame — many of whom had deep ties to Chicago, including Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, Les Tremayne, *The National Barn Dance*, Paul Harvey, Studs Terkel, Harry Caray,



February 4, 2012: Steve Darnall and Ken Alexander bring *Those Were the Days* back to the Museum of Broadcast Communications

PHOTO BY DON POINTER

Wally Phillips, Terri Hemmert... and, of course, Chuck Schaden.

On June 12, 2012, a decade after Bruce Dumont began his quest to give the Museum a permanent home — and 25 years to the day after it first opened in River City — the MBC is scheduled to open once and for all at its new (and presumably final) location at 360 N. State Street in Chicago.

In a way, it's entirely appropriate that the Museum should re-open in 2012, as this year marks another big anniversary — the 175th anniversary of the founding of the city of Chicago. This summer, *Those Were the Days* plans to celebrate both of these anniversaries, and we're inviting you to join us!

On August 4, *TWTTD* starts a month-long salute to the Golden Age of Chicago radio with a live remote broadcast from the new, complete Museum of Broadcast Communications! Ken Alexander will be there and we hope to have some special guests joining us as we enjoy the Museum's remarkable new space and tune in to some legendary figures from the early decades of Chicago radio. (Our complete schedule for this live remote broadcast can be found on page 35 of this issue.) Tickets for this special event will go on sale on or around June 15 and all proceeds will go to the benefit of the Museum of Broadcast Communications. For tickets to this special event, call Marc Glick during business hours at 312-822-0522 or go online to www.museum.tv. We had a wonderful time meeting our listeners at the Museum in February and we look forward to your joining us this summer to celebrate a remarkable place...and a remarkable city.

In between now and our appearance at the Museum, we'll be making some public appearances to talk about the Golden Age of Radio, including a special talk about "Radio and the Great American Songbook" at the Wilmette Theater on June 6. This summer will also see us delivering one of our radio talks at the Mount Prospect Public Library (June 19), the Palos Park Public Library (July 17), Fisher Farm in Bensenville (July 27), the Robert Collins Building at Triton College in River Grove (August 17), and the Park Ridge Public Library (August 21). You can learn about all of our appearances through our Facebook group, our own website (www.nostalgia digest.com)...and of course, by listening to *Those Were the Days*.

We look forward to seeing you this summer. In the meantime — now and always — thanks for listening.

—Steve Darnall

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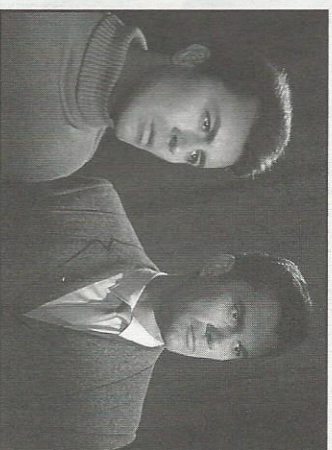
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A few moments with...

GLORIA JEAN

Precious few performers can claim to have performed alongside Bing Crosby, W.C. Fields and Groucho Marx, but the woman born Gloria Jean Schoonover managed to work with all three by the time she'd turned 21. When she spoke with us by telephone from her home in Hawaii, she recalled that her career began in radio — at a very young age:

I was in Scranton, and the radio [station] was WQAN. I was four years old and sang songs. Paul Whiteman was in the background playing the music, if you can imagine such a thing! It was a wonderful start, and I always loved singing, and hoped one day to be in opera — and that was my mother's dream. I never realized that I would be in motion pictures.

You were trained from a very young age to be a coloratura soprano, but having seen your work in movies and heard your recordings, [it appears] you were clearly at home in the idiom of pop music. Did you have a preference yourself as to which one you felt more comfortable with?

Yes, as I grew older, I lost a lot of the coloratura, and my voice lowered. And the pop music...I loved that. When I did personal appearance tours, I sang a lot of the standard-type songs.

I'd like to ask you a little bit about this radio work you did in Scranton, Pennsylvania — and something our listeners might not immediately remember



is that this was a time before every town became a "major city." I don't know what the population of Scranton was in the 1930s—

It was very small, I can tell you that! [Laughs] A lot of coal miners.

Do you have many memories of working in this "small-town" radio station?

I do. It had a "stand-up" microphone, and everybody had scripts, and we all stood around the mike. I have pictures of us, and they're really fabulous to see.

You worked with Paul Whiteman, the "King of Jazz." Did you have much direct interaction with him?

Not really. Just that he was a wonderful man and predicted that one day, I would be someone famous — which I appreciated.

He was right again! And later, of course, you worked with one of his "Rhythm Boys," Bing Crosby. That must have been an amazing experience, both personally and professionally.

It was. Bing was a wonderful person. He couldn't read music; neither could I. But if we heard a song once, we knew it! I really was very fond of Bing, and he helped me a lot, because he was in movies before I was...and I thought his voice was beautiful.

When you say he was a big help, was this in terms of the vocabulary of filmmaking?

It was, and [in terms of] family. You know, he said, "Always keep close to your family. The industry will try to take that away from you, but Gloria, always remember that your family comes first." And I had three sisters, my mother and Dad, and they appreciated the advice he gave me.

You signed with Universal Pictures at the age of 12, and this was the late 1930s. On one hand, the country's in the midst of a Depression, so any chance to "family has to bring in some money is welcome. On the other hand, you're a child! Did you ever have an opinion about that one way or the other? I've heard some child performers who [felt] "Oh, I had to go do this, and all of these things that most children experience were taken away from me," but I've talked to others who said "This was life. It was great."

You know, I always loved my past. I never had any time that I thought, "Oh, do I have to do this?" That's the one thing my mother wanted people to realize, that it wasn't her doing. I wanted to do it, and that makes the big difference.

I was discovered for my first movie when I gave the audition in New York, and they said, "Well, we'll let you know

in a couple of weeks." My mother said, "That's the usual story, and don't count on it." But what was strange is in exactly two weeks, they called and said, "You got the movie, we're bringing you out to California." And eventually, my whole family joined me there. It was like a fairy story.

I would like to ask you a little bit about that audition. You were 12, this was in New York...

Yes, and I had a very special music teacher. She was telling me what to do, and the minute the piano started, I said, "I can't do the audition. The piano's out of tune." The teacher could have wrung my neck! And they all looked at one another and this one man said, "This kid's got *spunk!* Let's tune the piano and bring her back."

Well, all the way home, my teacher said "How could you do that?" But you know, it was the right thing to do, because they called me back.

And they tuned the piano, and everything was perfect!

How did you feel after the audition with the tuned piano? I've heard from so many performers who auditioned for big things and they come away thinking, "Oh, I really blew it. That just wasn't going to work."

No, I felt very good about it, looking at the expressions on their faces. They looked at one another and said, "This is amazing." I felt like "I think I've got this down." I really felt good about it — but I didn't say anything. ■

To hear this conversation in its entirety — as Gloria Jean recalls starring in her first film, working alongside notorious child-hater W.C. Fields, and being crowned Queen of Anthracite — tune in to Those Were the Days on September 22.

The Man From MAYBEERRY

BY GARY PHAUP

Friday was assembly day at Rockford Street Grammar School in Mount Airy, North Carolina. Walking home to lunch, third-grader Andy Griffith convinced a classmate to sing a duet with him that afternoon. Or so he thought.

When their turn came, Andy stepped into the aisle, expecting his friend to join him. Instead, when Andy looked back, the friend not only remained in his seat, but the expression on his face told Andy that he had been duped.

"I don't know why I didn't sit back down," Andy recalled, "but I walked up there on that stage." Facing his audience, he proceeded to belt out "Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet." Twice. He remembered that he sang it through once slow and once fast. He remembers, too, the laughter of the children. They were a

Gary Phaup is a writer from High Point, North Carolina.

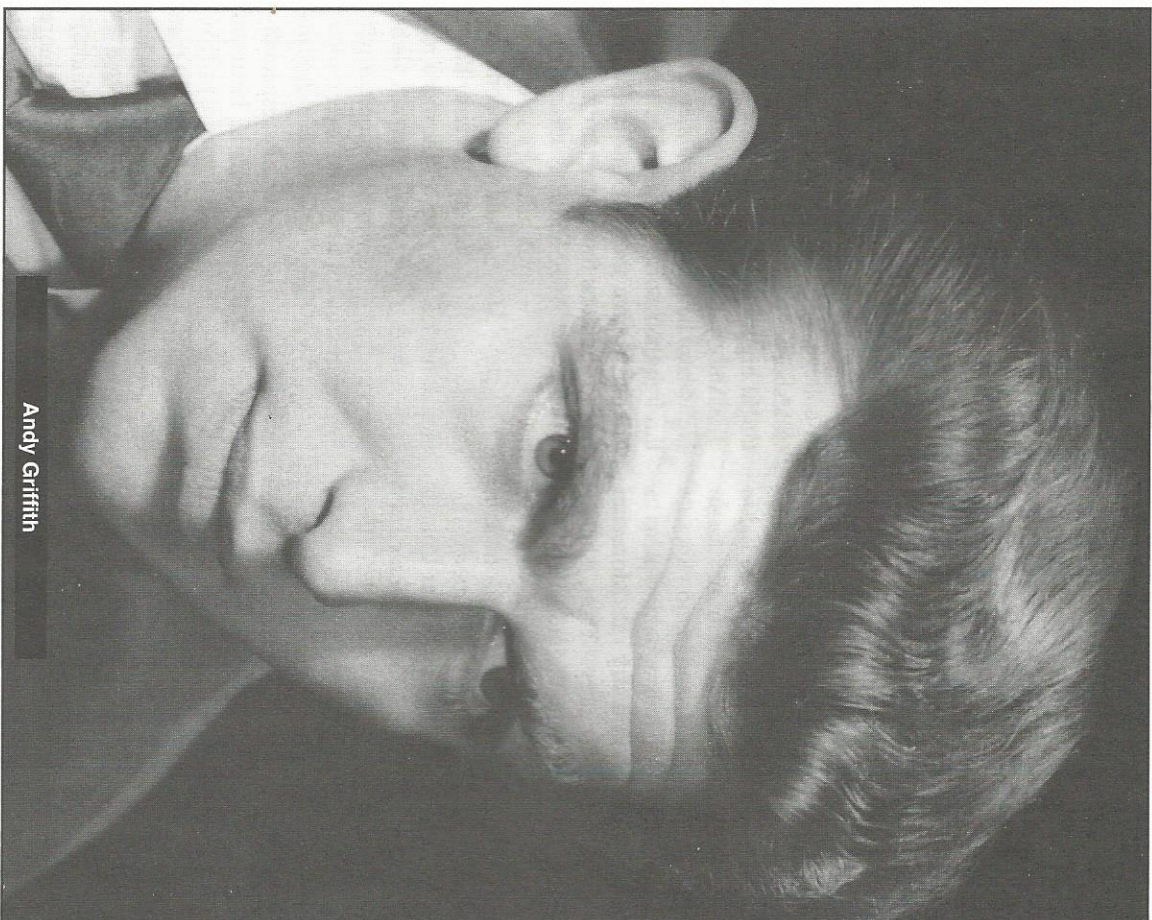
tough audience. That was Andy Griffith's first public performance, and it only hinted at the greatness to follow.

Andy Samuel Griffith (Andy, not Andrew) was born in the Blue Ridge foothills town of Mount Airy on June 1, 1926. He was the only child of Geneva Nunn and Carl Lee Griffith.

Andy's love of music came from his mother. Geneva played guitar and sang, often performing with her family. At home, Andy listened to country and swing music on their Majestic radio.

In late 1941, Andy went to see the film *Birth of the Blues* and was riveted by the performance of big band legend Jack Teagarden, who played the slide trombone. Andy had been looking at horns in the Spiegel catalog — now he knew which one he wanted. But the Griffiths were a relatively poor family, and money for the horn would have to come from Andy's pocket.

The National Youth Administration advertised a job sweeping out the local



Andy Griffith

high school. Andy wasn't old enough for the program, but he lied about his age and went to work for six dollars a month. He saved his money and ordered the trombone.

Even with the two instruction books included with the purchase, Andy quickly realized that he needed help learning to

play the instrument. But Mount Airy was a small town. Could anyone there teach Andy to play the slide trombone?

Help came from the Reverend Edward T. Mickey, newly arrived at Grace Moravian Church. Moravian congregations were often famous for their bands, and a family friend suggested that

Mac Hyman's best-selling novel *No Time For Sergeants*. When Andy returned to New York, he had finished the book and knew the part of Will Stockdale, a comical backwoods Georgia soldier, had been written for him.

Thinking he could incorporate material from the novel into his act, Griffith made appointments with Hyman and his agent. The agent told Andy the book was being made into a movie. Everyone knew that. But good fortune smiled on Andy when the agent mentioned that before the movie was made, *Sergeants* would be a television special. Apparently no one knew that yet — except Andy Griffith.

Andy scheduled an audition, but didn't come across well reading the scripted character. When he returned for a second interview, a woman in the waiting room asked Andy about his work. He tried to explain his act, but finally asked if he could show her.

As Andy Griffith did a monologue, the audience of one grew and grew until the room was full. People left and brought back their friends. Griffith got the role.

No Time For Sergeants debuted on *The United States Steel Hour* in 1955. Within months, Andy was playing Will Stockdale on Broadway. He stayed in the show for a year, garnering a Tony nomination in the process. Andy Griffith was a star on the rise.

After television and Broadway, Andy tried his hand at film, but debuted in Elia Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd*, with a role unlike anything he had ever played before. The film's lead character, Larry "Lonesome" Rhodes, was an Arkansas boy who played the guitar. That part made perfect sense for Griffith. But *A Face in the Crowd* was no comedy; rather, it was a corrosive look at the power of celebrity. On television,

Lonesome Rhodes was a beloved folksy personality; behind the scenes, his popularity transformed him in into a troublemaker who manipulated everyone. The cast included Patricia Neal, Walter Matthau, Lee Remick, and Tony Franciosa, but Andy more than held his own, giving an arresting, incendiary performance. Andy credited Elia Kazan with teaching him how to act as they made the film. As for the film itself, screenwriter Budd Schulberg's acerbic dissection of media manipulation remains as timely — and chilling — as ever.

After *A Face in the Crowd*, Andy appeared in the film version of *No Time For Sergeants*, again receiving excellent reviews. Soon, Andy was back on Broadway in the musical western *Destry Rides Again*; once more, he was nominated for a Tony.

Sheldon Leonard, a veteran actor who had become producer of *The Danny Thomas Show* (a.k.a. *Make Room for Daddy*), had attended a performance of *Destry* and met Andy afterward. Leonard had an idea for a folksy small-town sheriffing around a folksy small-town sheriff who told humorous stories. During a break from *Destry*, Andy turned up in an episode of *The Danny Thomas Show*, which was filmed as a backyard pilot and led to *The Andy Griffith Show*, which debuted on CBS in the fall of 1960.

Originally, Griffith's Andy Taylor was the sheriff, justice of the peace, and newspaper editor in the Southern town of Mayberry. The show's focus was going to center around the homespun stories Taylor told. However, that focus changed quickly, thanks to a phone call from an old friend.

One of the viewers of the show's pilot was actor Don Knotts, who had appeared with Andy in both the stage and

movie versions of *No Time For Sergeants*. Knotts told Andy he loved the show but thought the sheriff needed a deputy. Andy took his friend's advice: when the *Andy Griffith Show* premiered on October 3, Andy Taylor shared his office with Knotts' over-excitable Barney Fife.

In the early episodes, the character of Andy Taylor wasn't too far removed from the rustic characters Griffith had played on records and stage. However, he recognized almost immediately that the comic spotlight needed to shine on Barney Fife — the deputy who had ambitions of being a big-time law enforcement officer, albeit one who was forced to carry a single bullet in his pocket — with Andy Taylor as the straight man. And that's how television history was made.

Over the eight-year run of *The Andy Griffith Show*, Andy Taylor became the sage of Mayberry, dispensing wisdom and justice. When the funny stuff happened to Deputy Barney or someone else, Sheriff Andy made sure that the trouble wasn't a catastrophe, and the episode ended with a smile.

The success of *The Andy Griffith Show* was due in large part to a stellar cast, which included Ronny Howard, who played Sheriff Taylor's son, Opie. Veteran actress Frances Bavier (whose credits included *The Day the Earth Stood Still*) was Andy's Aunt Bee, who kept house and mothered both Andy and Opie. Howard McNear had an impressive resume beginning in radio — including nine years as Doc Adams on the radio version of *Gunslinger* — before landing the role of Floyd Lawson, the town's nervous barber.

Jim Nabors and George Lindsey played cousins Gomer and Gooper Pyle,



Griffith with Patricia Neal in Elia Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd*

WARREN BRIGGS/PHOTOFEST

who ran the local gas station. (Gomer eventually spun off onto a show of his own, *Gomer Pyle USMC*). Character actor Hal J. Smith memorably played Otis Campbell, the town drunk whose weekend binges were so predictable that he let himself into the jail cell.

On the romantic side, actress Betty Lynn played Barney's steadfast girlfriend Thelma Lou. Elinor Donohue (who had enjoyed success as Betty Anderson on *Father Knows Best*) played Andy's first flame, Ellie Walker, but it was schoolteacher Helen Crump (played by Aneta Corsauli) who had the Sheriff's heart for most of the show's run.

Griffith intended to end the series after the fifth season, but had a change of heart. The change came too late for Don Knotts who, thinking the show was ending, accepted a movie deal with Paramount. Griffith has repeatedly said that he thought the show was never as good after Knotts left; however, it continued for three more seasons, and finished its eighth season at number one in the ratings.

With no disrespect to its namesake, producer Sheldon Leonard once suggested that *The Andy Griffith Show* was misnamed and that it should have been called *Mayberry*, because the town itself was the star. The show's writers and actors created a fictional location which still holds a real place in many hearts. (According to Griffith writer Bill Idelson, Andy willingly admitted that the town's more eccentric characters and situations were inspired by the classic radio series



The Andy Griffith Show
Ron Howard, Andy Griffith, Don Knotts

CBS/PHOTOFEST

Vic and Sade — on which Idelson had started in the 1930s.)

In the 1986 television movie *Return to Mayberry*, Andy Taylor came back to town after working as a postal inspector in Cleveland. The show saw Barney and Thelma Lou finally tie the knot; at the wedding reception, Andy made a speech that summed up the feelings of the cast and its fans: "There's something about Mayberry and Mayberry folk that never leaves you. No matter where life takes you, you always carry in your heart the memories of old times and old friends."

When *The Andy Griffith Show* left the air in 1968, Griffith returned to the

big screen, switching from sheriff to pastor for the comedy *Angel in My Pocket*. The picture didn't do well at the box office, and six years passed before Andy returned to films.

That wasn't the only change in his life; after more than 20 years of marriage, Andy and Barbara divorced. Over the next decade, Andy Griffith appeared as a guest star on a host of TV shows and made several television movies. He tried series television again with 1970's *The Headmaster* and 1971's *The New Andy Griffith Show*, but both disappeared quickly.

In 1983, Andy married Cindi Knight. Only months after their marriage, the couple was back in California, where Andy was battling the flu and Cindi was recovering from the removal of her tonsils. After watching the Kentucky Derby on television, Andy stood, took a few steps and fell. He was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a peripheral nerve disorder. Nearly a year passed before Andy could walk again without extreme discomfort.

Trying to land new parts after a year out of circulation, Andy and Cindi began to visit his agent's office, parking themselves in the lobby where they could be seen. The tactic worked. Traffic was heavy at the William Morris Agency in Beverly Hills, and Andy ended up with multiple roles.

It was in a mini-series that lightning struck again, when Andy played an attorney in 1984's *Fatal Vision*. An NBC executive saw the show and imagined a new series with Andy playing a similar role. So it was that Andy made his debut as Atlanta attorney Ben Matlock in the fall of 1986. *Matlock* ran for nine seasons, lasting even longer than *The Andy Griffith Show*.

During the run of *Matlock*, shooting moved from California to North Carolina. When the series finished its run in 1995, Andy and Cindi continued to live there.

In 2007, Andy Griffith had a featured role in the movie *Waitress*, playing a regular customer at the diner where Jenna Hunterson (Keri Russell) worked. Two years later, he starred in the comedy *Play the Game*, as an 84-year-old widower in a retirement community who gets back into the dating game. Griffith's trademark timing and use of facial expressions testified that his acting skill had not diminished.

In recent years, Andy has undertaken a number of Christian-themed projects, reflecting his own faith. He has released albums of hymns and Gospel songs, one of which won a Grammy. In 2009, he reflected on his life and career with the publication of his autobiography, *I Appreciate It: My Life*.

Andy Griffith is not Andy Taylor. Yet when his name is mentioned, the first image many of us see is that of the uniformed Sheriff of Mayberry. Griffith imbued Andy Taylor with attributes which he admired, and which many of us still find admirable and wish we could imitate.

The legacy Andy Griffith one day will leave behind is that of an exceptionally gifted actor. Don Knotts had observed Andy through his long career, beginning with his earliest days on Broadway. In an interview before his own death in 2006, Knotts reflected on his friend's performance as Andy Taylor, but in fact he was actually summing up Griffith's career when paid his friend the ultimate actor's compliment: "People thought he wasn't acting. He was so good that he made it look natural." ■

My Tube is YouTube...

"The television will be revolutionized," one slogan read, and how true it was. YouTube started out with three friends who wanted to e-mail video clips to one another and went on to change the world's viewing habits. From piano-playing cats to political conspiracy theories, from home movies to performances and performers that we feared were lost to the ages...they're all here!

Here are some moments that we believe would interest readers of this magazine. They are listed under the names given to them as we found them — you can find them (along with some other items we've listed in past issues) at <http://www.youtube.com/user/Nostalgia Digest>.

1) **Ajax Commercial (1948)** — Ken Alexander's reference to the Ajax commercial jingle (on the January 7 *Those Were the Days*) inspired an outpouring from a number of readers and pointed us toward the actual commercial, from the early days of television. It's still catchy after all these years. We can't be sure, but it sure sounds as though the biggest and smallest of the three "elves" are voiced by radio legends Paul Frees and June Foray, the future Boris and Natasha.

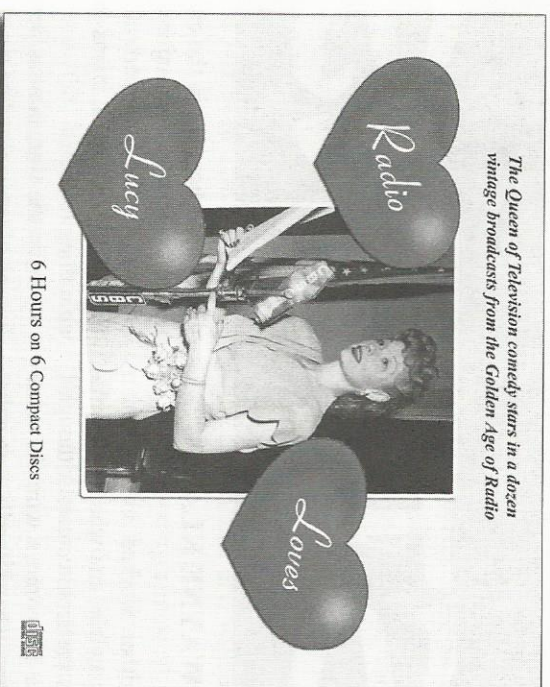
2) **Jack Webb and Harry Morgan with Jack Benny 1974 Joe Friday and Bill Gannon** — The recent passing of Harry Morgan brought us to this clip from Jack's final television special, in which Jack's monologue is interrupted by Joe Friday and Bill Gannon (although Morgan's mustache suggests he wandered in from the set of *Gunsmoke*). The writers and performers clearly enjoyed combining Jack's slow, drawn-out style of comedy with the terse, clipped dialogue (and infatuation with police terminology) associated with *Dragnet*.

3) **Strictly Gi (1943) - Bob Hope USO studio show video recording** — An absolute treasure, this two-reeler (produced for *Amy-Navy Screen Magazine*) includes 11 minutes or so of a *Command Performance* radio show (recorded at CBS' Hollywood studios, if the microphones are any indication). Hope is his usual playful self, but the real essence of *Command Performance* comes when Lana Turner answers a request by cooking a steak (brought to the stage by a military escort). Elsewhere, Judy Garland delivers a moving "Over the Rainbow" and Betty Hutton ("A vitamin pill with legs") tears up "He Says Murder, He Says" with the exuberance of a schoolkid at recess.

Now it's your turn! Have you spotted anything on YouTube that you think *Nostalgia Digest* readers ought to see? Let us know by sending the information and whatever explanation you wish to us — send a note to info@nostalgia Digest.com or via non-technical means to **Nostalgia Digest, Box 25734, Chicago, IL 60625**. The *Digest* takes no responsibility for any materials posted on YouTube that are in violation of copyright.

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A WALK AMONG THE STARS

BY WAYNE KLATT

My brother worked in downtown Chicago for awhile, and what he remembers most is the architecture. Although I worked at a Loop news wire for more than 40 years, what I fondly remember about downtown is bumping into famous people—once, literally.

The city was filled with celebrities during the first half of the 20th century. Charlie Chaplin made a short film on the North Side, and a number of vaudevillians (including the Marx Brothers) lived here, in large part because Chicago was the railroad center between the East and West coasts.

A number of radio greats also resided in the Windy City, as Chicago was a major broadcasting hub; among those who made names for themselves in Chicago were Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll (*Amos 'n' Andy*) and Jim and Marian Jordan (*Fibber McGee and Molly*). In addition, newspaper reporters frequently visited Union Station to inter-

Wayne Klatt is a freelance writer from Chicago.

view stars who were in the city between trains. In turn, those major actors and actresses often shopped at Marshall Field's. In those days, it was the fashionable thing to do.

After the war, famous people usually took planes instead of trains, and most broadcast talent stayed in New York or moved to Los Angeles. Reporters still dropped in on celebrities when they were on a promotional tour, although once it was vice versa. When Burt Lancaster was promoting his first movie, the 1946 crime drama *The Killers*, he and producer Mark Hellinger conspired to make an impression on *Chicago Times* columnist Irv Kupcinet. The story goes that the former circus acrobat climbed up the newspaper building at 211 West Wacker Drive. Reaching the fourth floor, Lancaster tapped on a window and told Kupcinet, "Now for the interview..."

As radio gave way to television and trains gave way to planes, one could still spot a celebrity or two downtown. I once saw a really cute movie star walking naked in full daylight. But that's a story for later. Right now, let me recount my first encounter of the Hollywood kind.

I was a teenager, strolling by the

Wabash Avenue side of the posh Palmer House hotel, when I realized that I had just stepped on someone's large and very polished black shoe. I looked up and found myself no more than an inch away from Spanish-Cuban bandleader Xavier Cugat. Although I wasn't a fan of Latin music, I felt privileged to see the husband of sexy dancer-singer Abbe Lane.

The beefy Mr. Cugat was far from handsome, with his large nose and a face like a rumpled rug, and the scowl resulting from my dirty shoe on his foot made him look demonic. I would have apologized if he had been a truck driver or window washer, but I was so surprised at being on the foot of someone famous that I just walked off and let my horrified expression do the work for me.

That was the first time I thought about how famous people could be seen in my city. I never knew who would show up next. For example, I was walking near the Merchandise Mart when I

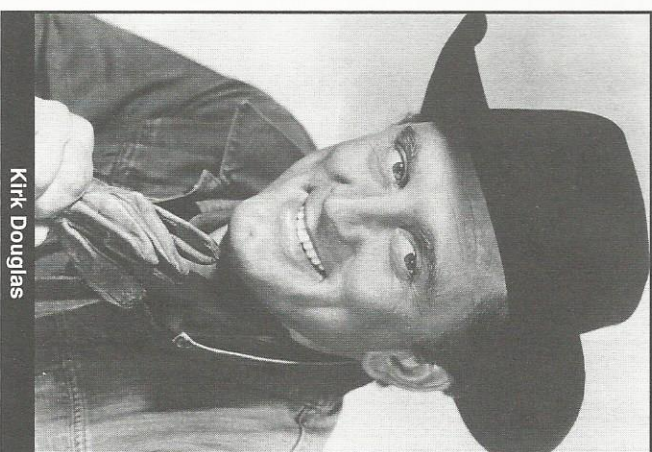
noticed Bob and Ray waiting with a group of pedestrians for a green light.

It would have been easy not to recognize Robert Elliott or Raymond Goulding if either one had been alone. Both men looked and sounded like Mr. Average Man, but together the conversational comedians were as unmistakable as Abbott and Costello. No doubt they were on their way to or from something to do with their ad-libbed radio program, which had taken them to NBC in 1951 after a few years in Boston. With their easy banter, Bob and Ray served American humor dry. We could use their likes again.

After seeing a musical in the South Loop in 1977, my wife and I spotted Kirk Douglas sitting on a folding chair outside an old hotel on Van Buren Street. The crew making a semi-circle around him was about to film a stunt for Brian DePalma's horror movie *The Fury*, the film we can thank for introducing us to



Xavier Cugat



Kirk Douglas

the visual delights of an exploding head.

A muscular young stunt man por-
traying the Douglas character leaped
from the elevated tracks and grabbed the
ledge of an opened window. We gasped
along with the scattering of other specta-
tors and wished he would do a retake, but
the shot was perfect. Mr. Douglas rose
and gave a smile that rivaled his chin
dimple, and the crew started wrapping
up. Having read the novel, I thought the
leap would be a crucial part of the end-
ing, but the stunt is hardly noticed on
screen — as if people jump from El
tracks onto window ledges every day.

One night as I was picking up news-
papers from a stand on Randolph Street
near the Sherman House hotel, I saw tall,
balding character actor Fred Clark, walk-
ing with his familiar air of authority and

a very pretty blonde on his arm. Clark,
who was always a little heavy and kept a
narrow mustache as his trade mark, had
started as a screen tough guy (playing a
detective in *Cry of the City*), but by the
1950s he was playing explosive bosses in
one comedy after another.

On this night, the middle-aged play-
er was as dapper as in his films, and the
young woman with him could easily
have been a starlet, although she might as
easily been his niece. Clark passed by
me, as if to say: “Yes, I’m him but don’t
bother me.” Who can blame him?

The easiest celebrities to spot were
Mickey Rooney (who waved as he hur-
ried through McCormick Place) and Alan
Alda, who was walking in a clump of
pedestrians outside the Tribune Tower.
Alda’s head rose above us all by what
seemed a foot. And, yes, he looked just
as he did in *M*A*S*H*, but his hair by
then was white.

Oh, were you wondering about the
cute naked star? It was a little dog on a
leash, being walked by a friendly fat
man. The mutt’s fluffy fur was a sort of
golden-brown, and he had black ears and
a snout to match. On this sunny day in
1974, two lovely women (who apparent-
ly lived nearby) were following the dog
and almost squealed as they petted him.
The former pound puppy clearly loved
people and was happy to show off.

As I walked slowly behind the capti-
vating mongrel, he drew two more attrac-
tive women, for a total of four. When the
man (Joe Camp) and his discovery
stopped for a red light on State Street, the
crowd waiting with them also fell in love
with the shaggy, gray bundle of charm.

Over the next year, most of America
fell in love with him as well. His real
name was Higgins, but in the movies he
was called “Benji.”







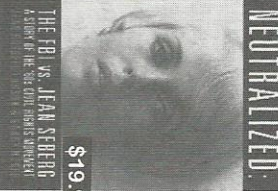
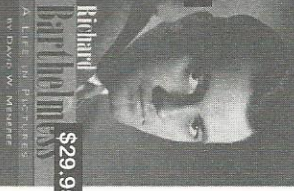

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BY PHILIP RAPP

Anybody over the age of twenty-five will recognize the sobriquet “Banjo Eyes” as the sole possession of Izzy Ishkowitz. Of course, everybody knows that early in life Izzy changed his name to Eddie Cantor. The descriptive nickname, which he bestowed upon himself, fitted him like the proverbial glove. He was as wiry and vibrant as the strings on the almost obsolete instrument, and taut as the skin of its sounding board. He needed no pick to duplicate the twang, his high-

pitched voice sufficed. Nobody ever strummed a banjo in slow tempo (as they do with the now popular guitar), the fingering and the business hand flew, at lightning speed. That was Eddie.

Onstage he was a dynamo — running up and down the stage, clapping his hands and bringing songs to life with a mediocre voice. I once asked him why he covered so much ground while singing and he told me that a moving target had less chance of being struck. This unique method of delivering a song evolved during his days as a youngster scrunching

A veteran radio writer, Philip Rapp (1907-1996) was the creator of The Bickersons and wrote for Eddie Cantor and Fanny Brice. This excerpt from Ben Ohmart's The Gripes of Rapp, The Auto/Biography of the Bickersons' Creator is © 2011 Ben Ohmart and appears with permission of the author and publisher.

for a dollar in amateur nights, later in saloons with the fabulous Jimmy Durante at the piano, in order to avoid the debris and beer bottles thrown by the entirely uninhibited audiences of the day. Nowadays, this vicious habit of savage viewers occurs only at ball games. While Eddie raced up and down, poor Jimmy was nailed to the piano, but he swears he was never the victim of attack.

His enormous, hypnotic eyes were the direct result of chronic hyperthyroidism. My *Dorland Medical Dictionary* defines this condition as due to excessive functional activity of the thyroid gland. Symptoms include exophthalmoses (bulging eyes), weight loss usually with increased appetite, overactive behavior, and other bizarre manifestations such as driving hard bargains and performing practical jokes that bordered on cruelty. The last two symptoms are not to be found in any medical book, but are brought to light as Rapp's Findings, thoroughly demonstrated by Cantor during our many years together. I will return to this matter but I feel that our stormy relationship should be recorded in some chronological form.

Eddie Cantor was a star long before I met him, therefore I can claim no credit for his rise to success. With all due modesty, and Eddie would have been the first to admit it; he frequently did so with full-page ads in weekly *Variety*. This, I feel, was partly responsible for his RE-rise to success via radio. The other party partly responsible (that almost sounds like double-talk) was the late great David Freedman, with whom I collaborated during the early years of grinding out the hour-long Sunday night *Chase and Sanborn* radio programs.

It was the year of the Denise of Vaudeville, to which I contributed with

my dancing partner and comic half of the act, Bobby Morris. We were good hoofers, most of our comedy routines were borrowed, we had our fair share of bookings, but the real culprits that deprived us of our livelihood were the “Talkies” and the advent of radio. Of secondary interest to me at the time was the economical holocaust labeled “The Wall Street Crash.”

It was the end of '29. I was already married (still am) to a young Chicago beauty who had to lie to the registrar about her age. For almost a year we lived in a room over an undertaker's establishment, nursing our last few dollars, and to this day I cannot stand the smell of formaldehyde. While still in vaudeville, Bobby Morris and I got a three-day stand at the Stratford Theater, a small-time movie and vaudeville house.

We had cut out nearly all the hoofing and had embarked on a comedy act that got plenty of laughs. I've forgotten whose act it was, but the original owners of it would never have played that joint in the first place. There was a band onstage and a young, brash M.C. who sang and introduced the acts. His name was Bob Hope, his jokes were exorable and he said, “Constantinople.” We were such a hit that Hope asked me if we had any surplus material that he might use. No money was mentioned, but he had a steady job, and larceny crept into my mind. “You need rapid fire, special material-stand-up topical stuff,” I said. “I'll write something for you.”

My partner stared at me in amazement. He was about to open his mouth but I impaled him on a stiletto look.

“Did you write your own act?” asked Hope.

“What do you think?” was my curt answer. At least I didn't lie.

"But, Phil—" Morris started to blurt. I cut him off.

"I know, Bobby — we still have a few dates to play in Chicago, and it'll take me no time at all." Turning to Hope I said, "I'll have some stuff ready for you next Friday. We'll talk about the fee after you read it."

When we reached our dressing room, there was silence as we removed our makeup, then Bobby turned to me.

"What's that about you writing stuff for that guy? You're not a writer."

"Who wrote our act?"

"We stole it!"

"Borrowed it. From Norwood and Hall. And they lifted it from Lloyd and Brill, who did it after Joe Penner."

"How does that make you a writer?"

"Didn't I put in the nectar gag?"

"Sure, but—"

"Then I'm a writer."

Bobby was unimpressed. "You couldn't even write home for money."

"That's unoriginal and also not true. I'm always writing home for money. Last week I wrote home for fifty dollars, the week before I wrote home for twenty dollars—"

"So what did you do with the money?"

"They never sent it."

That got a smile out of Bobby. Unless you live in a monastery you must have heard that joke a thousand times. I cherish the belief, possibly mistaken, that I made it up. We used it in the act and it always got a big laugh. I was convinced that I could write comedy. I never sent any material to Bob Hope, who apparently made it on his own.

But why do I keep getting away from Cantor?

To illustrate Eddie's idea of a practical joke I submit the following incidents.

I was now Cantor's only writer, having split with David some time earlier. It was the summer hiatus of his radio show and Eddie was making personal appearances all over the country. Since I was being paid 52 weeks a year I was forced to accompany him and make preparations for the new season to begin. At the same time Jack Crandall, a somewhat mysterious associate of Cantor's (I never did find out what his function was) was with us at every appearance.

Crandall seemed a pleasant enough person, but he had one trait that always seemed to drive Cantor up the wall. Jack could sleep anywhere, anytime, and at a moment's notice. Eddie suffered from grave insomnia. I always played a small bit in Eddie's act and when we returned to his dressing room, Crandall was invariably fast asleep on a lounge, snoring lustily. The noises he made were practically indescribable.

"That son of a bitch!" Eddie's exclamation dripped with venom. "Listen to him! He sounds like a Hotchkiss reciprocating force pump draining a peat bag in Clonakilly!" I don't know where he got the phrase but the comparison sounded accurate.

"Listen, Eddie," I ventured tentatively, "if he bothers you so much, why do you carry him along?"

"You mind your own business!" Eddie explained. Then he proceeded to apply makeup to Crandall's face — the stuff he used for his blackface number. Crandall never stirred. Having washed up and dressed into street clothes, Eddie covered the mirror with a towel.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Shake the bastard out of it," he commanded. "We're going out to get a bite."

I needn't go into the rest of it. The

only thing I must mention is the fact that really put the icing on the cake. Crandall, in blackface, ordered watermelon for dessert.

This particular scene took place in Detroit, and could easily have been the tinder that lit the fuse for the dreadful race riots that occurred many years later. But Cantor was not yet satisfied. That night we boarded the midnight train bound for New York. We entered the drawing room, bags were stowed, Crandall climbed into the upper berth and fell asleep while shedding his clothes. I was undressing, preparing to lie down on the sidewall berth and Cantor sat on the edge of the lower berth getting madder by the minute as Crandall began his night music. The train had not yet left the station. I could see Eddie's jaw muscles beginning to work and I sensed some sadistic plan was beginning to germinate in his head. The train began to move. As soon as it gathered speed, Eddie spoke up.

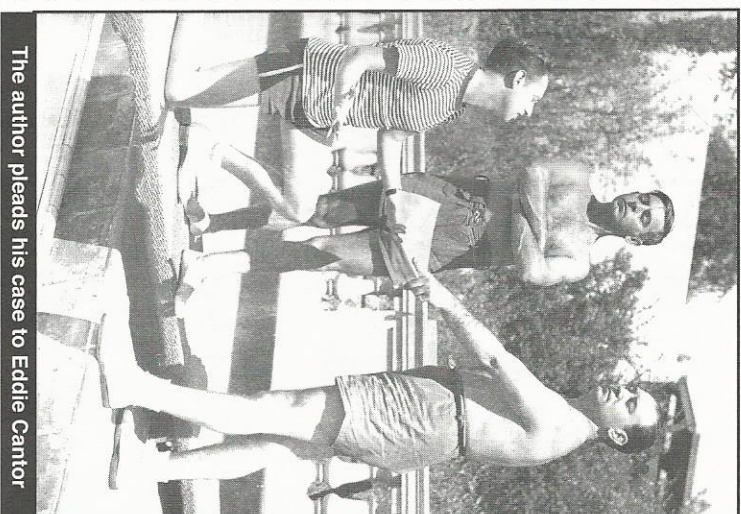
"Okay, Phil — put your clothes on."

By this time I had learned enough not to ask questions. I obeyed and watched as he lathered half his face in the small bathroom, still fully dressed except for his jacket. He then emerged and began to shake Crandall vigorously.

"Get up, you big idiot!" Cantor yelled in Jack's ear. "We'll be in Grand Central in 15 minutes!" Crandall sat up, half unconscious. "Get dressed and we'll meet you in the dining car." He wiped the lather off his face and donned his jacket.

"Jesus Christ," mumbled Crandall. "Feels like I only slept five minutes!" And he began to scramble into his clothes.

Eddie and I left the drawing room and went straight down the corridor to the main washroom. The Pullman porter



The author pleads his case to Eddie Cantor

was already busy shining shoes. At the sound of Crandall lumbering drunkenly down the corridor, the porter stuck his head thru the drawn drapes.

"Sir?"

"Which way to the dining car?" was Crandall's sleep-filled growl.

"Back the other way, sir. But it's closed now."

Cantor held back his laughter, almost choking with glee as Crandall retreated in the other direction. After a few moments Eddie and I made our way back to the drawing room. Do I have to tell you? There lay Crandall in the upper berth, fully clothed, snoring lustily. ■

Time in to Radio's Golden Age on July 8 and to Those Were the Days on September 8 to hear Eddie Cantor on radio.

HER NAME IS

RIO

The remarkable career of Dolores Del Rio, Hollywood's first Latina star

BY MARTIN MULCAHEY

Selma Hayek, Eva Mendes, and Penélope Cruz are among the biggest stars in modern cinema, but all of them have followed in the footsteps of trailblazing Dolores Del Rio.

Celebrated as “The Princess of Mexico,” Del Rio was a star whose allure captivated such legends as Orson Welles, Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley, and Frida Kahlo. Fast friend Marlene Dietrich labeled Del Rio “the most beautiful woman in Hollywood. She has better legs than Dietrich and better cheekbones than Garbo.” Del Rio’s was a beauty that spawned tales of an orchid petal diet, or the rumor that she slept 16 hours a day to maintain her loveliness. Sadly, Del Rio’s talent became a prisoner to her splendor.

Martin Mulcahey is a freelance writer and movie fan from Yoder, Colorado.

Dolores Del Rio’s life was not always glamorous. Born in Durango, Mexico, in 1905, she was the only daughter of Jesus Jacques and Antonia Lopez-Negrete. Her father was the prominent director of the Bank of Durango, but the family lost their wealth and influence during the Mexican revolution. A forced relocation to Mexico City re-established her parents’ fortunes and standing within the social hierarchy.

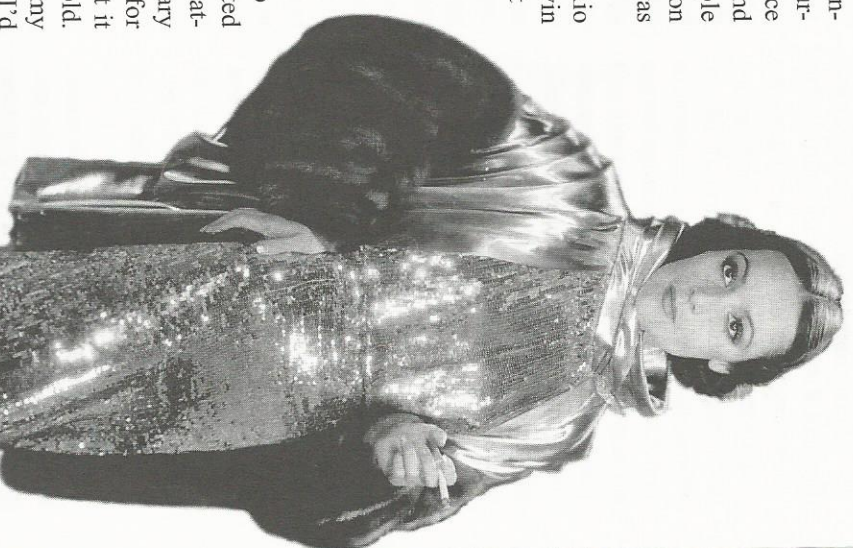
Little Dolores was fortunate to study at the prestigious Liceo Franco-Mexicano convent, where she gained a lifelong passion for literature, dance, and art.

In that era, a debutante’s life came at a price. For the 16-year-old Dolores, the price was an arranged, loveless marriage to lawyer Jaime Del Rio. Jaime was 18 years older; his family one of the oldest and most influential in Mexico. Their wealth allowed for a European honeymoon, where the newlyweds even dined

with the Spanish Royal family. The honeymoon morphed into a three-year excursion, with Dolores delighting in voice and dance lessons at stately Madrid and Paris schools. In 1924, the couple returned to Mexico City, Jaime intent on advancing his career while Dolores was to act the part of a socialite wife.

The “discovery” of Dolores Del Rio reads like a Hollywood movie. Edwin Carewe, an influential director at First National Films, fell under Dolores’ spell while watching her dance a tango at a dinner party. The infatuated Carewe cajoled Dolores and Jaime into moving to Hollywood and to rebuff familial objections that viewed acting as socially demeaning. Dolores saw it as an opportunity to strengthen her marriage. “Jaime wanted to escape an environment that did not satisfy him, hoping to develop his literary inclinations writing scripts for Hollywood.” She was also aware that it was a risky adventure for a 21-year-old. “I was mad to do it. My family and my friends would have ostracized me if I’d been a failure.”

The swiftness of Dolores and Jaime’s move to Hollywood was mirrored by Dolores’ ascent in movies. Edwin Carewe became her mentor, first casting Del Rio in a bit role as a sultry antagonist in 1925’s *Joanna*. By the time she made her second film, the Jazz Age drama *High Steppers*, Del Rio was already receiving second female billing, beneath the celebrated Mary Astor. For her third film, the



PHOTOFEST

1926 heist comedy *Pal's First*, the evolving Del Rio was given top billing. The discerning eye of a *Variety* magazine critic noted her performance as "lackluster"; regrettably, an appraisal of the review is impossible, since the movie is one of thousands lost to history by the erosion of nitrocellulose films. Only still photos, magazine reviews, and promotional material remain to extract details of performances. For all of Del Rio's successes, she had not mastered English yet, moving her lips phonetically for silent film audiences.

Stardom came with the aptly titled *What Price Glory?* Directed by the legendary Raoul Walsh, it became the second highest grossing movie of the year and was voted by *The New York Times* as one of the ten best films in 1927. Del Rio delivered a vivacious performance as Charnaine, the daughter of a French innkeeper who is torn between her love for two American soldiers.

In an interview with *Photoplay* magazine, Del Rio offered some insight into her personality. "I am not, by nature, melancholy, weepy, sorrowful, languishing, or sweet. I am the girl of *What Price Glory?* There, for a bit, I could show my real self. I am, by nature, tempestuous, fiery, stormy, eager."

Del Rio's marriage suffered from the strains of career success. An anonymous insider ruminated, "In Mexico City, she had been Jaime Del Rio's wife. In Hollywood, Jaime became Dolores Del Rio's husband. The situation was intolerable for both of them." After a short separation, Dolores filed for a divorce. Six months later came shocking news from Germany, where Jaime had died of blood poisoning.

A succession of movies were produced to exploit Del Rio's fame. Critics

called 1928's *Gateway of the Moon* "A badly-directed, sappy melodrama, obviously released only to cash in on the popularity of the star" and the subsequent *Red Dance* was referred to as "one of Dolores Del Rio's early movie mistakes." Among the dross was one piece of gold: 1927's *The Loves of Carmen*, with Del Rio's background in dance adding to an already convincing portrayal. Camera angles made the 5'4" Del Rio appear strikingly statuesque. In a year-end issue of *Photoplay*, Del Rio was singled out for "The versatility to combine a terrible Carmen with a beautiful Resurrection." Del Rio received 15,000 pieces of fan mail a month. She had become an international sensation, voted the number one female star in England. Twenty-six Mexican cities requested that Del Rio be guest of honor for their Independence Day celebrations.

From 1925 to 1929, Del Rio made 15 silent films. *Evangeline* (1929) was a critical success, but a box office disappointment, notable for being Del Rio's final partnership with Edwin Carewe. Del Rio's performance of the title track received extensive radio airplay, enjoying a longer life than the movie. Even so, *Photoplay* singled out Del Rio for her performance: "She now steps into a role that might have been reserved for a Lillian Gish. It's a tribute to her versatility."

United Artists studio agents convinced Del Rio to separate herself from Carewe, buying her contract and adding Del Rio to their roster for \$9,000 a week. The freedom it engendered was palpable in Del Rio. "For the first time in my life I am myself. I do what I want to do. I enjoy life and happiness which I never had as a young woman because I married too quickly, scarcely two weeks after

graduating from parochial school. I want to have a romance, laugh, and talk about nothing important. I am now regaining lost time."

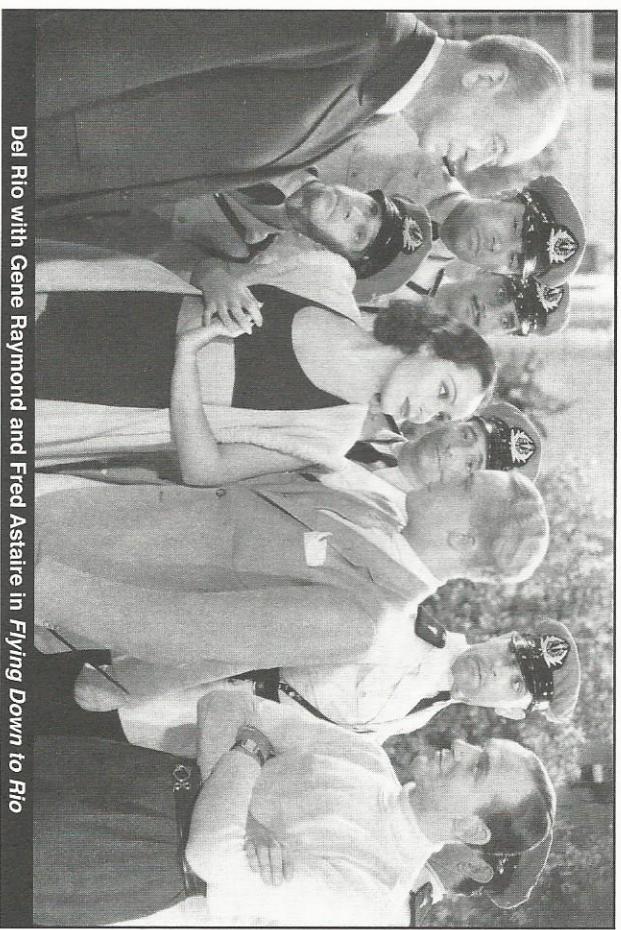
Del Rio's first "talkie" was 1930's *The Bad One*, but her Spanish accent was now noticeable and became a burden for the rest of Del Rio's American film career. Around the same time, she began a whirlwind romance with Cedric Gibbons (celebrated art director and designer of the Oscar statuette), culminating in a grandiose marriage ceremony at the Old Mission Santa Barbara Church. The high profile couple became a toast of high society, hosting lavish parties attended by Fay Wray, Greta Garbo, Gary Cooper, Marlene Dietrich, Errol Flynn, Clark Gable and many others. The marriage, combined with a kidney infection (some speculated about a nervous breakdown), kept Del Rio out of movies for an entire year, resulting in the dissolution of her United Artists contract.

RKO Pictures facilitated Del Rio's comeback, but the pairing suffered an

ignominious unveiling with 1932's *Girl of the Rio*. The film was a parade of debauched Mexican stereotypes, showcasing Del Rio as a feisty cabaret dancer. The Mexican government condemned the movie (a censored version was shown in Mexico) and a headline in the influential Los Angeles Latino newspaper *La Opinion* lamented "We Have Lost Del Rio!"

A quick study, Del Rio refused to become a pawn in Hollywood's image machine and subsequently turned down roles (most famously *Viva Villa!*) that she thought slandered her heritage. RKO's follow-up *Bird of Paradise* was well-received, creating a minor scandal for a scene in which Del Rio swam nude under scarcely concealing water. Del Rio held little sentiment for those films, "I tried to interest my producers in stories about Mexico. I was forced to play glamorous characters, which I hated."

The global success of 1933's *Flying Down to Rio* swept away all concerns and controversy. Cinema history notes it



Del Rio with Gene Raymond and Fred Astaire in *Flying Down to Rio*

RKO RADIO PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

as the first pairing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, although Dolores Del Rio and Gene Raymond received top billing. It might also be the first appearance of the two-piece bathing suit, worn by the always fashion-conscious Del Rio in an intricate dance number opposite Fred Astaire.

Failing to anticipate the movie's success, RKO — then in the midst of financial crisis — inadvisably terminated Del Rio's contract. *Flying Down to Rio* was Del Rio's last American hit, though she continued receiving roles that cast her for her beauty instead of her talent. Those Hollywood prejudices had little effect on Del Rio. "I must not regret anything I have ever done. Only the things I have been afraid to do. If there is a little hurt, bah! It makes you appreciate the better people."

MGM studios picked up Del Rio's contract, their press release touting how she would "bloom into another Greta

Garbo." This grandiose plan was sabotaged by average material, such as *Wonder Bar* (1934), *Madame Du Barry* (1934), and *Caliente* (1935), which completed Del Rio's contract with no particular career upswing.

In later years, *Wonder Bar* regained prominence for its extravagant sets, controversial scenes, and provocative plot. In a pivotal scene, an enticing Del Rio dances a sensuous tango opposite whip-wielding Ricardo Cortez. The *Hollywood Reporter* called Del Rio "uncomfortably real" as a scheming wife in *The Devil's Playground* (1937). Despite positive reviews, her roles diminished as box office numbers dropped. In later years, Del Rio worked on movies for Columbia and 20th Century Fox, but was more visible in advertisements (for Lucky Strike cigarettes, Max Factor makeup, clothing lines and perfumes) than she was in films.

Del Rio's marriage to Cedric

Gibbons ended in 1941, as did the first part of her American film career. It was a horrible year for Del Rio, as she lost both her father and one-time benefactor Edwin Carewe to heart attacks.

Unable to control her image in America, the 37-year-old Del Rio returned to Mexico. Her return coincided with a renaissance in Mexican film that led to a Golden Age. Del Rio was eager to participate: "I didn't want to be a star anymore. I wanted to be an actress. By 1940, I knew I couldn't build a satisfying career on glamour, so I came home."

If some resented the Hollywood star who had previously turned down roles in Mexican films, Del Rio won them over, winning international acclaim playing distinctly Mexican roles and characters. Behind the scenes, the actress made intelligent contract demands, negotiating a percentage of her movies' profits instead of lump sum payments alone.

Motives for Del Rio's homecoming were easily discernible. "I want to choose my own stories, my own director," she explained. "I think I can get all this in Mexico." Success was immediate. Paired with celebrated Mexican director Emilio "El Indio" Fernandez in 1943's *Flor Silvestre* (*Wild Flower*), Del Rio won the first of four Silver Ariel Awards (the Mexican equivalent of the Academy Award) for her performance as a peasant girl who falls in love with a landowner's son as the Mexican revolution unfolds.

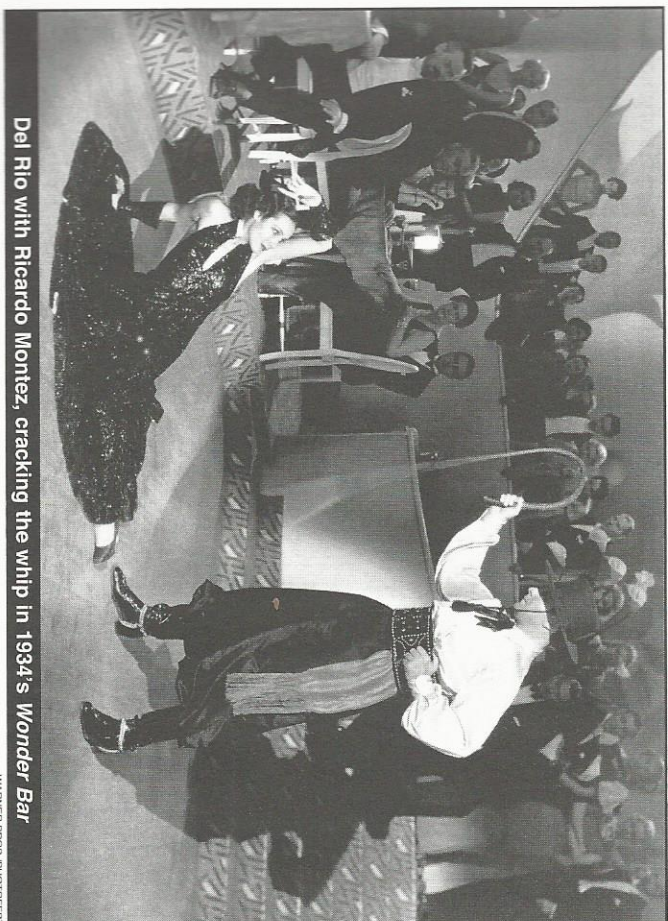
The next year's *Maria Candelaria* (*Portrait of Maria*) was even more popular, winning the first post-World War II Cannes Film Festival prize for Best Picture. Del Rio is spellbinding as an outcast killed by pious villagers who mistakenly believe she posed for a nude painting. It can be argued that neither film, despite their obvious merits, would have

garnered international attention without the presence and talent of Del Rio.

Del Rio's masterpiece performance came in 1946's *La Onda* (*The Oher One*), a noir tale of twin sisters — a dual role she plays with obvious zest. Del Rio is striking as a disheathered manicurist, jealously plotting to kill a rich sibling and take over her life. The presentation of the characters is impeccable, alternating between aloof and unsophisticated, often in the same scene. It has been suggested that the very different *Dona Perfecta* (1951) is the quintessential Del Rio role. She is intensely dramatic as the devout Dona, who is outraged by her newly arrived nephew Pepe's refusal to observe religious traditions. Del Rio plots to prevent Pepe's impending marriage, ultimately casting a shadow on her own faith. In these roles, Del Rio was left to act, and came to life on the screen as never before.

Despite the success of Del Rio's Mexican pictures, she was not welcomed back to America, because of entanglements in the infamous McCarthy hearings. Claims of Del Rio "aiding anti-Franco refugees from the Spanish Civil War" were interpreted as Communist leanings. As a result, she was denied a visa to return to America and star opposite Spencer Tracy in *Broken Lance*. (Del Rio's role went to Katy Jurado, who earned an Oscar nomination for her portrayal.)

As Mexican cinema abated, quality roles became difficult to find. Consequently, Del Rio accepted smaller roles in Hollywood films after her return in the late 1950s. Del Rio's reputation still drew offers for roles in the outstanding western *Cheyenne Autumn* and *Flaming Star*, where she played a mother to Elvis Presley. In 1967, she was cast as



Del Rio with Ricardo Montez, cracking the whip in 1934's *Wonder Bar*

WARREN BRUCE/PHOTOEST

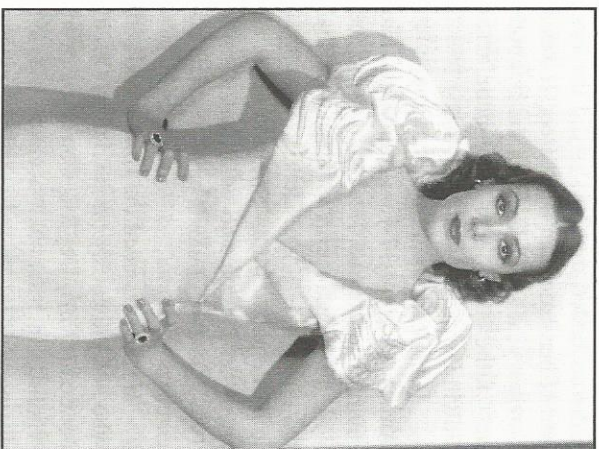
the mother of another rising star, Omar Sharif, in an Italian production of *C'era Una Volta (More Than a Miracle)*.

Provoked by inferior movie roles, Del Rio took to the stage in Mexican theater productions. As usual, when her movie career took a dip, Del Rio's personal life took center stage. Stage producer Lewis Riley, who encouraged her theatrical exploits, became Del Rio's third husband, sharing a happy 23-year marriage that lasted until Dolores' death.

In retirement, Del Rio devoted herself to charities, marshaling support from governmental agencies and the Mexican Actors Society for day-care centers. Del Rio's understanding of child psychology was ahead of her time: "A baby's first six years are the most important. We play Brahms and Bach to them. Teach them English, Folklorico dancing, and all the arts." She founded the Society for the Protection of the Artistic Treasures of Mexico, working with philanthropist Felipe Garcia Beraza to protect buildings, paintings and other cultural works in Mexico.

Del Rio's creativity was lost on April 11, 1983, when she was taken by liver disease at age 78. Her remains are interred at the prestigious Rotunda of Illustrious Persons at Pantón Civil de Dolores Cemetery, in Mexico City. The Del Rio legacy lives on; the Mexican Society of Film Critics bestows a Dióscalo de Plata award for the best dramatic female performance in Del Rio's honor.

Vestiges of Del Rio remain in America as well. At the Los Angeles intersection of Hollywood and La Brea Boulevards is a statue honoring ethnic leading ladies of cinema: Del Rio, Mae West, Dorothy Dandridge, and Anna May Wong. In addition, a star dedicated to Del Rio can be found on the iconic



WARNER BROS./PHOTOFEST

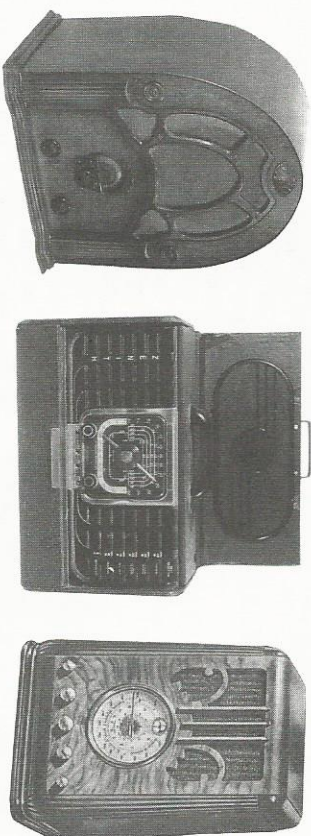
Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In one of her last interviews, Del Rio revealed how a French book she read at age 17 — Henry Bordeaux's *La peur de vivre (The Fear of Living)* — imbued her with the courage to take chances. "I am constantly giving my advice to young friends: 'Leave home, find a job, make your own way, live fully, you will succeed.'" Del Rio understood how compromises affect life. "Living for me is made of three things: Love, travel, and good books or music. Success — it never made me happy. Fame — when I had it most, I was miserable. Money — love costs nothing."

Time caught up to the ageless beauty that Del Rio — who was not a vain person — never worried about. As she herself said, "So long as a woman has wrinkles in her eyes, no man notices whether she has wrinkles under them." ■

An unabridged edition of this article has been published at the website of Film International (www.filmint.nj).

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JULY 2012

SATURDAY, JULY 7 VOCALISTS OF THE BIG BAND ERA

FITCH BANDWAGON (4-5-42) Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra are heard in this Easter Sunday broadcast emanating from the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, New Jersey, with vocalists Helen O'Connell and Bob Eberly, who sing "Tangerine" and "Not Mine." The Dorsey band plays "Blue Skies" and "Jersey Bounce." Host is Tobe Reed, who chats with Jimmy, Bob and Helen. Cliff Engel announces. Fitch Shampoo, NBC. (29 min)



Helen O'Connell

TED WEEMS AND HIS ORCHESTRA (October 1937) "Ted Weems and his brilliant band" broadcasting from the Trianon Ballroom, located at 62nd and Cottage Grove Avenue in Chicago. The Weems band plays "Josephine"; whistler Elmo Tanner is heard on "When Day Is Done"; vocalist Perry Como sings "Roses in December" and "Don't You Know Or Don't You Care?" Sustaining, MBS. (14 min)

JIMMIE LUNCEFORD AND HIS ORCHESTRA (June 1940) Composite broadcast. "Doctor Jimmie Lunceford and his School of Jazznocracy" are heard from the Fiesta Danceateria, "the world's first self-service

nightclub, located at Broadway and 42nd Street" in New York City. The band plays "Swingin' On C," "Le Jazz Hot" and "For Dancers Only"; the Lunceford trio is heard on "My Blue Heaven"; vocalist Dan Grissom sings "Let's Try Again" and "Please Say The Word"; and the Glee Club does "Ti-Pi-Tin." Sustaining, MBS. (20 min)

TOMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (7-20-40) "That Sentimental Gentleman of Swing" is heard in this hour-long Saturday afternoon broadcast from the Roof Garden of the Hotel Astor located in Times Square in New York City, with vocalists Frank Sinatra, Connie Haines and the Pied Pipers. Selections include Connie singing "I Lights Out! Hold Me Tight!"; the Pied Pipers with "Funny Little Pedro"; and Frank with "The Nearness Of You" and "East Of The Sun." The Dorsey band also plays "Lonesome Road" and "I Got Rhythm." Lyle Van announces. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min & 29 min)

ARTIE SHAW AND HIS ORCHESTRA (11-3-39) "The King of the Clarinet" and his band in a broadcast from the brand-new Café Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City, with vocalists Helen Forrest and Tony Pastor. Selections include "I'm Yours," "El Rancho Grande," "What's New?" and "Any Old Time." Announcer is Bill Spargrove. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian **KARL PEARSON**, who will talk about the singers and orchestras that were part of

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SATURDAY, JULY 14 RADIO WITH A FRENCH TWIST

CBS RADIO WORKSHOP (7-6-56) "Portrait of Paris," a word-picture of the French capital, written and narrated by CBS Foreign Correspondent David Schoenbrun. Includes interviews with citizens of Paris and performances from Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. Sustaining, CBS. (28 min)

BING CROSBY SHOW (5-24-53) A show produced and transcribed in Paris, France, with announcer Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the Orchestra. Bing's son Lindsay, violinist Joe Venuti. Bing sings "Madenoiselle de Parée" and "Hello Young Lovers"; Lindsay sings "My Truly Fair" in French! General Electric, CBS. (30 min)

DAMON RUNYON THEATER (11-13-49) "A Light in France" with John Brown as Broadway. A story of three Americans who wind up in France on the eve of the Nazi invasion. Cast includes Barney Phillips. Syndicated. (28 min)

FATHER KNOWS BEST (12-7-50) Robert Young stars as Jim Anderson, with June Whitley, Rhoda Williams, Ted Donaldson, Norma Jean Nilsson, Sam Edwards, Gerald Mohr. The family learns that Betty is infatuated with her French teacher. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (30 min)

PRESENTING CHARLES BOYER (7-4-50) "Adventure of a Slide-Rule Blonde" stars Charles Boyer as Michel, with Hanley Stafford as Bart Conway. Michel recalls an evening in Monte Carlo with a woman who has unusual success at the roulette table. Cast includes Mary Jane Croft, Jack Edwards, Herb Butterfield, Fritz Feld. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)



Charles Boyer

PARIS STAR TIME (1950s) A show devoted to "the singing stars of Paris," hosted by Humbert Smith, with Roger Roger and the orchestra and guests Yves Marie, Les Trois Ministrels, and Lene Moreau. The orchestra plays "Happy Isle" and "Paris By Night." Syndicated. French Broadcasting System. (29 min)

SATURDAY, JULY 21

STAGE DOOR CANTEEN (8-12-43) It's "Curtain Up for Victory" in this series produced by the American Theater Wing, with an emphasis on the new musical *Oklahoma!* Bert Lyell hosts, with Mary Martin, Una Merkel, Jack Smith, Raymond Paige and the Canteen Orchestra, and Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, the composers of *Oklahoma!* Corn Products, CBS. (29 min) *Read the article about Oklahoma! on page 50.*

BULLDOG DRUMMOND (1940s) "Death Uses Disappearing Ink" stars Ned Weaver as Bulldog Drummond, with Luis Van Rooten as Denny. A lady on a train tells Drummond that she fears her life is in danger. Syndicated, MBS. (27 min)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (3-16-47) In the first of two consecutive broadcasts, Fred welcomes English musical star Beatrice Lillie for "Piccadilly," an English version of *Oklahoma!* The Allen's Alley question is "Should a housewife receive a weekly paycheck?" With Portland Hoffa, Kenny Delmar, Parker Fennelley, Minerva Pious, Peter Donald, singer Bobby White, Blue Bonnet Margarine, Sheffords Cheese, NBC. (28 min)

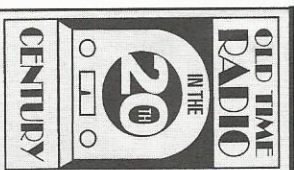
THE WHISTLER (1-28-48) "Night Final" starring Betty Lou Gerson and Joan Banks, with Bill Forman as the Whistler. A newspaper reporter divorces her husband to be with another man, but she receives an unpleasant surprise when the divorce is finalized. Cast includes Willard Waterman and Gerald Mohr. Marvin Miller announces. Signal Oil, CBS. (30 min)



Betty Lou Gerson

CLAUDIA (11-28-47) Kathryn Bard is Claudia and Paul Crabtree is David in this isolated episode in the series. An evening walk is interrupted when Claudia gets a cinder in her eye. Coca-Cola, Syndicated. (15 min)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (3-23-47) It's one week after Fred's production of "Piccadilly" and *Oklahoma!* composers Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II take Fred to court for stealing their show. The Allen's Alley question is "What invention could you do without?" Blue Bonnet Margarine, Sheffords Cheese, NBC. (28 min)



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JULY - AUGUST 2012

SATURDAY, JULY 28

REMEMBERING BETTY GRABLE

BOB HOPE SHOW (4-11-39) A show from Bob's first season on the air for Peppodent, with Bill Goodwin, Jerry Colonna, Patsy Kelly, Eivla Allman, Skinnay Ennis and the Orchestra, and guests Betty Grable and Jackie Coogan, who join Bob to sing "The Lady in Love With You." The cast talks about their trip to Mexico. Peppodent, NBC. (29 min)

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #12

Betty Grable hosts this program for the Armed Forces, with Judy Canova, Robert Benchley, Harry James and His Orchestra, Mary Martin, and the cast of *The Jack Benny Program*. Judy sings "One of These Days"; Benchley delivers a monologue about nurses; Phil Harris wants to quit the Benny show. (29 min)



Betty Grable

U.S. War Department. (26 min)

SUSPENSE (4-21-49) "The Copper Tea Strainer" starring Betty Grable, with Raymond Burr and William Conrad. A policeman interrogates a young model about her invalid mother. Harlow Wilcox announces. Auto-Lite, CBS. (30 min)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (1-5-49) Bing Crosby stars, with the Rhythmaires, John Scott Trotter and the Orchestra, announcer Ken Carpenter, and guests Betty Grable and Harry James. Bing sings "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm" and tries to sell one of his horses to Betty and Harry; Betty sings "What Did I Do?" Philco, ABC. (31 min)

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (5-5-50) "When My Baby Smiles at Me" stars Betty Grable in a radio version of her 1948 film, a musical romance about a vaudeville team who part ways. With Hy Auerback, Barton Yarborough, Herb Vigran, announcer Jimmy Wallington, RCA Victor, NBC. (30 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be film historian **BOB KOLOSOSKI**, who will talk about the movie career of Betty Grable.

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A Salute to Chicago Radio!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4
WINDY CITY RADIO - 1

Today's *Those Were the Days* will be a live remote broadcast from the Museum of Broadcast Communications. For more information about this special remote broadcast — and how you can attend — read the article on page 1.

FIRST NIGHTER

(5-24-44) "Speak Ever So Gently" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule. A movie star and his publicist travel to a small town in Ohio to dedicate a children's hospital. Campana Products, MBS. (30 min)

PAUL HARVEY NEWS (1-28-51) The newscaster reports on news from Korea and atomic testing in Nevada. Announcer is Lee Walters. Burton-Dixie, ABC. (14 min)

TERKEL TIME (6-27-50) Studs Terkel hosts a weekly variety show, with Connie Russell, Jack Haskell, the Art Van Damme Quintet, announcer John Conrad. Sustaining, WMAQ/NBC. (14 min)

DESTINATION FREEDOM (8-29-48) "The Story of 1875" is the story of Charles Caldwell, the former slave who became a Mississippi state senator during the days of Reconstruction. With William Nix as Caldwell. Cast includes Ernie Andrews, Oscar Brown Jr., Don Gallagher, Ken Griffin, Jonathan Hole, Janice Kingslow, Charles Martin, Cliff Soubier. Announcer is Hugh Downs. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

ART HELLNER SHOW (11-14-55) *Excerpt.* The celebrated disc jockey, with records and zany voices. News report read by Howie Roberts. Participating sponsors, WCFL. (22 min)

SKY KING (7-31-47) An isolated episode from the series, with Earl Nightingale as Sky King, Cliff Vaughn as Uncle Jim Bell, Beryl Vaughn as Penny. Sky questions Benny Miller about a stolen pearl necklace. Mike Wallace announces. Sustaining, ABC. (14 min)

NATIONAL BARN DANCE (10-3-42) From the "WLS Hayloft" in Chicago, the show celebrates its ninth anniversary on network radio, with host Joe Kelly, The Hoosier Hot Shots, the Dinning Sisters, Pat Buttram, Lulu Belle

and Scotty, Eddie Peabody. The Hoosier Hot Shots play "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Aika-Seltzer, NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11
WINDY CITY RADIO - 2

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY REVIEW-

ING STAND (March 1964) Moderator James H. McBurney from the Northwestern School of Speech hosts a two-part panel discussion about the good old days of radio, with guests Willard Waterman, Franklyn MacCormack, and *Lone Ranger* producer James Jewell. Sustaining, WGN/MBS. (24 min and 23 min)

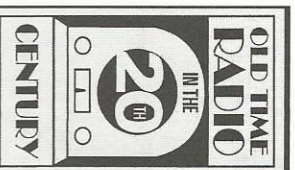
JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY (4-21-42) An isolated episode of the "Land of the Sky" adventure finds Jack, Billy, Betty and Uncle Jim in the Andes Mountains to rescue an agent who has fallen into enemy hands. With Charles Flynn as Jack, John Gannon as Billy, Sarajane Wells as Betty, Jim Goss as Uncle Jim. Franklyn MacCormack announces. Wheaties, MBS. (15 min)

EDDIE HUBBARD SHOW (4-1-50) The celebrated local personality offers a show of "song and patter," as he dedicates the program to dogs and plays songs for the audience on his ukulele! WIND. (18 min)

SAVOY BOXING MATCHES (9-3-46) Fahy Flynn and John McCormick are ringside at the Savoy Ballroom to describe the bouts between fighters from the Catholic Youth Organization and the Savoy. South Center Department Store, WBBM. (31 min)

JOHN DOREMUS SHOW (4-26-66) *Excerpt.* The famous Chicago radio voice presents news headlines and plays music by Percy Faith, Julie Andrews, Ray Conniff, and others. Participating sponsors, WAIT. (29 min)

FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (1-24-39) Jim Jordan stars as Fibber, who has lost his collar button. It's the show's last broadcast from Chicago, with announcer Harlow Wilcox, Bill Thompson, Harold Peary, Hugh Studebaker, Isabel Randolph, Ken Christy, singer Donald Novis, Billy Mills and the Orchestra. (NOTE: *Marian Jordan was absent from the show during this period due to illness.*) Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29 min)



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AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2012

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18 WINDY CITY RADIO - 3

BACHELOR'S CHILDREN (1-24-39) An isolated episode of the popular soap opera, with Olan Soule as Sam Ryder, Patricia Dunlap as Janet Dexter, Hugh Studebaker and Marjorie Hannan as Dr. and Mrs. Graham. It's Sam and Janet's wedding day! Old Dutch Cleanser, CBS/WGN. (15 min)
WALLY PHILLIPS SHOW (12-28-64) *Excerpt:* Chicago's popular morning man with music, calls for listeners, stock reports and a question about bridal parties. Participating

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sponsors, WGN. (30 min)
QUIZ KIDS (9-26-48) From Chicago, chief quizzer Joe Kelly asks questions of Joel Kupperman (age 12), David Prohaska (age 11), Patric Owen Conlon (age 11), Melvin Miles (age 5), and Lonny Lunde (age 12). Alka Seltzer. NBC. (30 min)

JIM HURLBUT, REPORTER AT LARGE (9-27-49) A late evening report on the local and national scene, with stories about Tokyo Rose, Olivia DeHaviland, and an around-the-world-expedition. Dick Noble is announcer. Richman Brothers Clothes, WMAQ. (15 min)

CHICAGO THEATER OF THE AIR (1-15-49) "H.M.S. Pinafore," a radio adaptation of the famous operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan, about a sailor who falls in love with the Captain's daughter. Sung by Adele Norman, John Stanford, Ruth Slater, Bruce Foote, John Barkley, with speaking roles by Muriel Brenner, Everett Clarke, Sydney Elstrom, Norman Gottschalk, Hope Summers, hostess Marion Claire. Music conducted by Bob Trendler. Show features an address by Col. Robert R. McCormack. Sustaining, MBS. (27 min & 10 min & 22 min)

HALL OF FANTASY (3-23-53) "The Night The Fog Came" is the story of a "living fog" — a new form of water life that kills on contact. Sustaining, WGN/MBS. (23 min)

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25
WINDY CITY RADIO - 4**

VIC AND SADE (8-14-40) Bernadine Flynn is Sade and Bill Ideison is Rush, who talks about Rooster Davis' plans to open a restaurant that sells nothing but bacon sandwiches. Mel Allen announces. Cisco, NBC. (13 min)

EMPIRE BUILDERS (1-5-31) One of network radio's first dramatic series, with Harvey Hayes as The Old-Timer. A lumber mill owner

finds himself taking care of an abandoned baby. With Harvey Hayes, Bob White, Betty White, Lucille Husting, Bernadine Flynn, announcer Ted Pearson. Great Northern Railway, NBC/KYW. (29 min)

PAUL GIBSON (1-29-55) An excerpt from the Chicago personality's afternoon show, as he discusses chivalry and the knights of old. WBBM. (14 min)

PREDICT-A-HIT (4-14-49) Students from Senn High School predict the next big hit songs, with announcer Chuck Mountain, vocalist Bob Morris, the Art Van Damme Quintet. Perk Dog Food, WMAQ. (15 min)

MUSIC 'TIL DAWN (10-25-60) An excerpt from Jay Andres' popular all-night program of music. Jay plays "I Will Wait For You" from *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. American Airlines, WBBM. (31 min)

BREAKFAST CLUB (6-23-53) The 20th anniversary show, from the Terrace Casino, Morrison Hotel, Chicago, with host Don McNeill, Fran Allison as Aunt Fanny, Sam Cowling, Peggy Taylor, Johnny Desmond, Eddie Ballantine and the Orchestra. Don introduces twenty audience members who were all born on June 23, 1933. Participating sponsors, WLS/ABC. (31 min and 30 min)

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
MORE VOCALISTS
OF THE BIG BAND ERA**

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA (6-30-37) The Basie band and vocalists Billie Holiday and Jimmy Rushing are heard in this early-morning broadcast from the Savoy Ballroom, "The home of happy feet, located in uptown New York City." Selections include "Shout and Feel It" and "They Can't Take That Away From Me." Sustaining, MBS. (30 min)

JAN SAVITT AND HIS TOP HATTERS (10-11-38) *Excerpt:* A broadcast from the studios of KYW/Philadelphia featuring Jan, the Top Hatters, and vocalists Carlotta Dale, Bon Bon and the Three Toppers. Selections include "What Goes On Here in My Heart?" "Monday Morning," and "Change Partners." Sustaining, NBC. (14 min)

CHESTERFIELD TIME (12-2-43) Harry James and his Orchestra and vocalists Helen Forrest and Buddy Moreno are heard in this broadcast emanating from Hollywood. Tunes include "How Sweet You Are," Helen's last

selection with the James band before embarking on a career as a single. Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS. (13 min)

GLENN MILLER'S SUNSET SERENADE (11-29-41) A Saturday afternoon "USO Matinee" broadcast from Café Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City, with vocalists Marion Hutton, Ray Eberle, Tex Beneke and the Modernaires. Bill Abernathy announces. Sustaining, NBC Blue. (19 min & 30 min)

VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS (4-25-45) Les Brown and his Band of Renown are heard in this program playing for servicemen in an undisclosed location, with vocalists Doris Day and Butch Stone. Songs include "Blue Skies," "Robin Hood" and "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time." AFPS rebroadcast. (15 min)

KAY KYSER'S KOLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE #22 (4-7-43) The Old Professor and the gang are heard in this broadcast for the servicemen stationed at the Ordinance Department in Pomona, California, with vocalists Sully Mason, Julie Conway, Diane Pendleton, Jack Martin, Max Williams and Harry Babbitt. Ish Kabibble reads a poem titled "Sausage." AFPS rebroadcast. (30 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian **KARL PEARSON**, who will talk about the singers who were part of the big band era.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
FORECAST** (7-22-40) "The Lodger" stars Herbert Marshall and Edmund Gwenn in the audition program for a new series, to be called *Suspense*. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

SUSPENSE (6-17-42) "The Burning Court" stars Charles Fuggles in the first episode of "a new series...frankly dedicated to your hor- rification and enjoyment." A party is interrupted when a mystery writer accuses one of the guests of murder. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

Read the article about Suspense on page 42.
LIFE OF RILEY (9-27-47) William Bendix stars as Riley, with Paula Winslowe as Peg, Tommy Cook as Junior, Barbara Eiler as Babs, John Brown as Jim Gillis and Digger O'Dell. Riley is eager to prove his artistic sensibilities when the family wants a bust for the piano. Prell Shampoo, NBC. (29 min)



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with host STEVE DARNALL

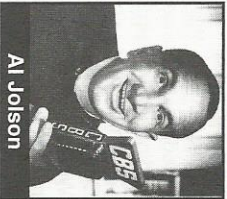
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SEPTEMBER 2012

LUKE SLAUGHTER OF TOMBSTONE (5-18-58) Sam Burffington stars as Luke Slaughter, cavalryman turned Arizona cattle-man, with Junius Matthews as Wichita. Luke must drive his cattle across 40 miles of dangerous terrain to sell them to the U.S. Cavalry. Sustaining, CBS. (25 min)

TEXACO TOWN (1-3-37) Eddie Cantor, the mayor of Texaco Town, welcomes guest Al Jolson and "trades" songs with him! With Deanna Durbin, Harry Einstein as Parkya-karkus, Sidney Fields.



Al Jolson

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Jacques Renard and the Orchestra, announcer Jimmy Wallington. Texaco, CBS. (30 min) *Read the article about Eddie Cantor on page 20.*

SUSPENSE (9-2-42) "The Hitch-Hiker" starring Orson Welles in a story by Lucille Fletcher. A young man takes a cross-country drive, but he is troubled when the same man appears repeatedly along the side of the road. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

SUSPENSE (8-21-43) "Sorry, Wrong Number" starring Agnes Moorehead in the second performance of Lucille Fletcher's classic "study in terror." A woman accidentally overhears a conversation of death. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

BABY SNOOKS SHOW (10-17-47) Fanny Brice stars as Snooks, with Hanley Stafford as Daddy. Snooks mistakenly "donates" two of Daddy's new suits to a charity auction, forcing the family to go to the auction to get them back. Cast includes Frank Nelson, Spic 'n' Span, CBS. (28 min)



Fanny Brice

BOSTON BLACKIE (10-22-46) Dick Kollmar is Boston Blackie, with Lesley Woods as Mary and Maurice Tarplin as Inspector Faraday. The inspector has been shot and Blackie announces plans to find the gang that did it. Syndicated. (27 min)

INFORMATION PLEASE (7-11-39) It's "time to stump the experts" with moderator Clifton Fadiman, regulars Franklin P. Adams, John Kieran, Oscar Levant, and guest expert Elliott Roosevelt, the president's son. Milton Cross

announces. Canada Dry, NBC. (29 min)

DANNY KAYE SHOW (3-3-45) With Eve Arden, Lionel Stander, Bob Jellison, Harry James and His Orchestra, announcer Ken Niles. It's opening night at Danny's new playhouse and he's nervous. In a skit, Danny plays a movie mogul, "Dannivich Kayoff." Pabst, CBS. (30 min)

SUSPENSE (8-8-46) "Dead Ernest," a Peabody Award-winning production narrated by Wally Maher. After a man is struck by a car, he falls into a cataleptic coma and is believed to be dead. With his identification gone, he is taken to the embalmer's table. Roma Wines, CBS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

SUSPENSE (11-16-50) "On a Country Road" starring Cary Grant, with Cathy Lewis, Jeanette Nolan, Joseph Kearns, Larry Thor. The classic story of a husband and wife who run out of gas after hearing radio reports about an escaped lunatic armed with a meat cleaver. Auto-Lite, CBS. (30 min)



Cary Grant

PHIL HARRIS - ALICE FAYE SHOW (4-24-49) When Alice gets an offer from 20th Century Fox to star in a new movie, the studio decides to offer a small part in the film to Phil as well. Rexall, NBC. (30 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (2-8-11) Steve Darnall's conversation with Gloria Jean, speaking by telephone from her home in Hawaii, as she talks about her career in radio and movies. (30 min) *Read an excerpt from this conversation on page 4.*

LUX RADIO THEATRE (4-15-40) "The Under-Pup" starring Gloria Jean, Robert Cummings, Nan Grey, C. Aubrey Smith, Beulah Bondi. A young city girl from a poor family is invited to spend the summer at a camp for girls from wealthy families. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (23 min & 17 min & 19 min)

SUSPENSE (4-5-55) "Zero Hour" by Ray Bradbury, narrated by John Dehner, with Isa Ashdowne, Paula Winslowe, Parley Baer, Beverly Hanley. The chilling story about a children's game called "Invasion." Larry Thor announces. Sustaining, CBS. (24 min)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO: THE LONG GOODBYE

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-22-55) The final show of Jack's 23-year career on radio, with Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Mel Blanc, Artie Auerbach, Bea Bendaret, Shirley Mitchell. Jack gets into an argument with the sound effects man. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (26 min)

STAN FRIEBERG SHOW (10-20-57) The fifteenth and final show of the series, with Daws Butler, Peter Leeds, Peggy Taylor, Billy May and the Orchestra. Stan and his cast present highlights from the show's first 14 weeks, including "Elderly Man River," and "Bang Gunleigh, U.S. Marshal Fields." Sustaining, CBS. (28 min)

X MINUS ONE (1-9-58) "Grey Flannel Armor" stars William Redfield and Guy Repp in the final show of the series. A lonely young man receives a free trial offer from a company that promises romance. Participating sponsors, NBC. (22 min)

MA PERKINS (11-25-60) The final show of the series stars Virginia Payne as Ma. In a flashback to the day before, Ma welcomes the family for Thanksgiving. Participating sponsors, CBS. (12 min)

GUNSMOKE (6-18-61) "Letter of the Law" is the last show of the series, with William Conrad as Marshal Matt Dillon, Parley Baer as Chester, Georgia Ellis as Kitty, and Howard McNear as Doc. A man faces eviction from his land after failing to claim for it. Participating sponsors, CBS. (21 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (9-30-62) "The Tip-Off Matter" stars Mandel Kramer as Johnny, the man with the action-packed expense account. A dying convict gives Johnny a tip concerning the missing money from a recent safecracking job. With Jackson Beck, Joseph Julian, Jack Gimes, Peter Fernandez, Robert Maxwell. The last show of the series. Sinclair Gasoline, CBS. (24 min)

SUSPENSE (9-30-62) "Devilstone" starring Christopher Carey and Neal Fitzgerald in the final show of this series, the last network drama from the Golden Age of Radio. A wealthy Dubliner receives an inheritance from a long-forgotten uncle, but discovers something strange about the property. Parliament Cigarettes, CBS. (23 min)



RADIO'S GOLDEN AGE

with host **STEVE DARNALL**

SUNDAYS 12-2 PM

exclusively at www.yesterdayusa.com

SUNDAY, JULY 1

COUNTERSPY (11-12-50) "The Case of the Stolen Secret" stars Don McLaughlin as David Harding. An important formula is stolen from a scientist. Sustaining, NBC.

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (2-12-48) Guest Kay Kyser is looking for a sitter for his daughter. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC.

ESCAPE (12-20-49) "Figure a Dame" starring Frank Lovejoy in a story of a train headed for Calcutta and the most sought-after emerald in the world. Sustaining, CBS.

SUNDAY, JULY 8

OUR MISS BROOKS (11-21-46) Eve Arden is Connie Brooks, who is the subject of a magazine feature about "The Ideal American Teacher." Colgate-Palmolive, CBS.

FRONTIER GENTLEMAN (4-13-58) John Dehner stars as J.B. Kendall, a reporter for the *London Times* who finds himself representing an accused murderer. Sustaining, CBS.

EDDIE CANTOR'S SHOW BUSINESS (1950s) Eddie plays disc jockey and features records from some of his favorite comedians. AFRS rebroadcast. *Read the article about Eddie Cantor on page 20.*

SUNDAY, JULY 15

ACADEMY AWARD (7-24-46) "Foreign Correspondent" stars Joseph Cotten in a radio version of Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 film. Squibb, CBS.

COMMAND PERFORMANCE (9-22-42) Don Ameche hosts, with Vivian Blaine, Fanny Brice and Hanley Stafford, Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy, Nelson Eddy, Tommy Dorsey, AFRS.

LET GEORGE DO IT (6-14-48) Bob Bailey stars as George Valentine. A trapeze artist has received a threatening letter. Standard Oil of California, MBS.

SUNDAY, JULY 22

MEREDITH WILLSON SHOW (6-13-46) A musical variety program featuring Willson discussing and performing American music. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC.

GUNSMOKE (8-9-52) "The Kentucky Tolmans" stars William Conrad as Matt Dillon, with Parley Baer as Chester. A girl asks Matt to arrest her father. Sustaining, CBS.

LIFE OF RILEY (6-7-47) William Bendix is Chester Riley, who recalls how he met his wife Peg (Paula Winslowe). Dretf, NBC.

SUNDAY, JULY 29

THE FALCON (11-12-50) "The Case of the Widow's Gorilla" stars Lee Damon. A businessman has killed off his competition. Kraft Foods, NBC.

HAROLD PEARY SHOW (6-6-51) Changes at the radio station lead Harold to think that he should be named station manager. Sustaining, CBS.

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (10-30-44) "Anna Karenina" starring Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck in a radio version of the M-G-M movie inspired by Leo Tolstoy's famous story. Lady Esther Products, CBS.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

RED SKELTON SHOW (2-26-46) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire focuses on "Telephones." Raleigh Cigarettes, NBC.

ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL (11-13-48) "The Front Page Story" stars Lawson Zerbe as Frank, Hal Studer as Bart. A newspaper reporter thinks that Yale's new football star is a ringer. Sustaining, NBC.

RAILROAD HOUR (8-15-49) Gordon MacRae and Lucille Norman salute the songwriting team of Mack Gordon and Joseph Myron. Association of American Railroads, NBC.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

NIGHTBEAT (6-1-51) "The Will of Mrs. Orloff" stars Frank Lovejoy as Randy Stone, reporter for the Chicago Star, who is looking for the son of a cleaning woman. Sustaining, NBC.

BING CROSBY SHOW (4-5-50) From the Civic Opera House in Chicago, Bing welcomes guests Perry Como and Arthur Godfrey. Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS.

GREEN HORNET (10-4-45) "The Stuffed Panda" stars Bob Hall as the Hornet. A little girl's stuffed panda helps the Hornet get the goods on a bad guy. Syndicated, ABC.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19

MAGIC KEY (2-9-36) A program of musical and dramatic variety, featuring Joan Bennett, Fred MacMurray, music by Richard Himber, Guy Lombardo, Ray Noble and Frank Black and the NBC Orchestra. Sustaining, NBC.

X MINUS ONE (2-8-56) "The C-Chute" by Isaac Asimov. A starship returning home to Earth is captured by a chlorine-breathing enemy. Sustaining, NBC.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

BIRDS EYE OPEN HOUSE (9-20-45) Dinah Shore stars, with announcer Harry Von Zell and guests Joseph Cotten and Bill Goodwin. Birds Eye Frozen Foods, NBC.

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (11-17-50) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover. A young woman in evening wear is found dead in Central Park Lake. Sustaining, CBS.

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-6-49) Jack and Mary Livingstone go to the race track, where they meet Ronald and Benita Colman. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

FORT LARAMIE (3-11-56) Raymond Burr stars as Capt. Lee Quince, with Vic Perrin as Sgt. Gorce, who find themselves at the mercy of a shotgun-toting woman. Sustaining, CBS.

GREAT GILDERSLIEVE (12-10-52) Willard Waterman stars as Gilly, with Water Tetley as Leroy, who takes a part-time job at Mr. Peasey's drug store. Kraft Foods, NBC.

PHILO VANCE (9-21-48) "The Backstage Murder Case" stars Jackson Beck as Vance, with Joan Alexander as Ellen Deering. An actor receives a threatening letter. Syndicated.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (9-29-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, who return home from summer vacation to discover their camera is missing! Johnson's Wax, NBC.

THE SHADOW (9-21-47) "The Face" stars Bret Morrison as the Shadow. An actor awaits the results of his plastic surgery. Blue Coal, MBS.

ADVENTURES OF MAISIE (1-19-50) Ann Sothern stars as Maisie Revere, who takes a job as a fashion model and finds herself wooed by royalty. Syndicated.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

CRIME CLASSICS (7-13-63) "The Terrible Deed of John White Webster." A Boston surgeon kills one of his fellow doctors. With Lou Merrill as Thomas Hyland. Sustaining, CBS.

COMEDY CARAVAN (4-21-44) Jimmy Durante and Garry Moore star in a detective sketch, "Bulldog Drummond Lays an Egg." AFRS rebroadcast.

RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE (1-19-51) Dick Powell stars as Diamond, who is hired to rescue a young man from a blackmail scheme. Camel Cigarettes, ABC.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

HENRY MORGAN SHOW (8-10-49) "Radio's Bad Boy" offers a French radio version of "Jack and the Beanstalk." Bristol Myers, NBC.

MR. KEEN, TRACER OF LOST PERSONS (4-10-52) "The Mother's Plea Murder Case" starring Philip Clark. A millionaire's wife is suspected of murder. Participating sponsors, NBC.

OLD GOLD COMEDY THEATRE (3-18-45) "A Lady Takes a Chance" starring Gene Tierney and Randolph Scott in a radio version of the 1936 film. Old Gold Cigarettes, NBC.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (2-18-49) "The Parloff Policy" stars Charles Russell in the first episode of the series. Johnny arrives in Ohio to investigate a murder. Sustaining, CBS.

SUSPENSE (1-3-48) "The Black Curtain" stars Robert Montgomery in the show's first hour-long production. A man wakes up from amnesia and tries to remember the last three years of his life. Sustaining, CBS. *Read the article about Suspense on page 42.*

From Poe to Bradbury to Shakespeare...
20 years' worth of tales...
well-calculated to keep you in

SUSPENSE!

BY JORDAN ELLIOTT

Imagine a radio show that dramatized classic works of literature, stories of mystery and intrigue written by the likes of Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, even William Shakespeare. Now imagine a show that utilized tales from contemporary writers like James Thurber, Agatha Christie, Ben Hecht, and a young hopeful named Ray Bradbury. Now imagine yet another show, one that took inspiration from newspaper headlines and tales of true crime, past and present. Finally, imagine a show devoted to original works of mystery, some of which would become celebrated as among the finest shows radio has ever produced.

Now, put all of those shows together, add some of the finest actors that Hollywood and New York can provide... and you have *Suspense*.

"*Suspense* was not a horror show, although it sometimes told horrifying tales," author Sara Paretsky explained in 2011 when inducting the show into the National Radio Hall of Fame. "It was not

Jordan Elliott is a freelance writer from Chicago.

a detective show, although plenty of crimes were solved. It was not a fantasy show, although it sometimes took us into the realms of the inexplicable. In fact, *Suspense* was a mystery show that took its drama from ordinary people thrust into extraordinary situations and seeing how they prevailed — or rather, if they prevailed."

That one quality — relying on the traits of people to generate drama — made *Suspense* unique among radio mystery shows. While there were no shortage of radio dramas devoted to murder and mayhem, *Suspense* was that rare show which demonstrated that committing the murder was less dramatic than trying to get away with it. Precious few of the protagonists did.

And for all the stories involving perfect crimes that were anything but, there were tales that fit Sara Paretsky's description to a "T." These included "Dead Ernest," the story of a man in a cataleptic coma on his way to the embalmer's table, and "To None a Deadly Drug," in which a pharmacist must track down a vacationing family before the mother unknowingly administers a fatal prescription to her child. Such

bold stories earned the show numerous awards and the sobriquet "Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills." They also gave *Suspense* the reputation as a place where actors and technicians were given the chance to flex their creative muscles in the name of drama. No wonder Cary Grant proclaimed, "If I ever do any more radio work, I want to do it on *Suspense*, where I get a good chance to act."

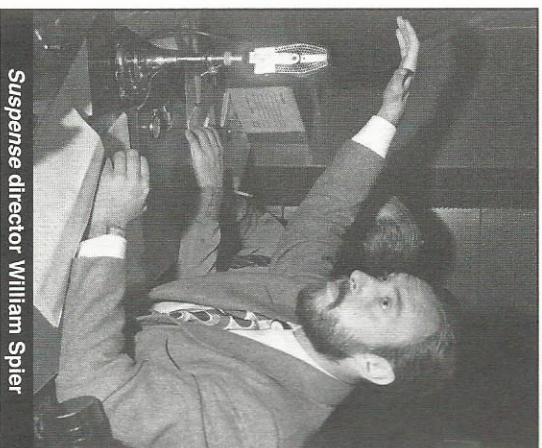
Suspense debuted over CBS on June 17, 1942, introducing itself as a "new series of outstanding classics and chills from world famous authors." The show opened with an ominous theme by Bernard Herrmann, which carried such an indelible sense of menace that it was used throughout the show's run.

For the show's first offering, an adaptation of John Dickson Carr's "The Burning Court," producer-director Charles Vanda introduced a non-literary twist by casting screen comedian Charlie Ruggles as the story's principal narrator, a mystery writer who interrupts a party to announce that one of the guests is a murderer. (As we will see, Ruggles was not

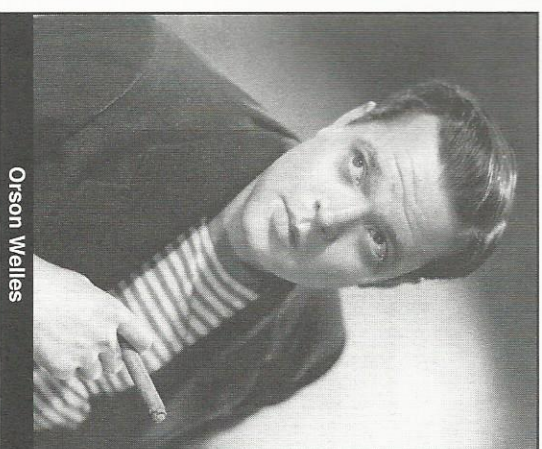
the last comedian to appear on *Suspense*.)

The show took a major step forward a few weeks later, when former *March of Time* director William Spier became the show's producer (and eventually director). In one of the show's first big coups, Spier lured Orson Welles to re-create Lucille Fletcher's "The Hitch-Hiker." The story of a young man driving cross-country only to encounter the same mysterious figure at the side of the road, "Hitch-Hiker" had premiered a year earlier on Welles' *Mercury Theater* series but is rightly hailed as one of the best shows in the 20-year run of *Suspense*. (Years later, Rod Serling adapted the story for an equally memorable episode of *The Twilight Zone*.)

Spier managed to get a few other big names on the show in those early months (including Peter Lorre and *Lost Horizon* star Margo), but the star power got considerably brighter when the show moved to Hollywood in 1943. The move gave Spier access to some of the biggest names associated with drama and horror, including Lorre, Welles (who made nine appearances during the show's first two



Suspense director William Spier



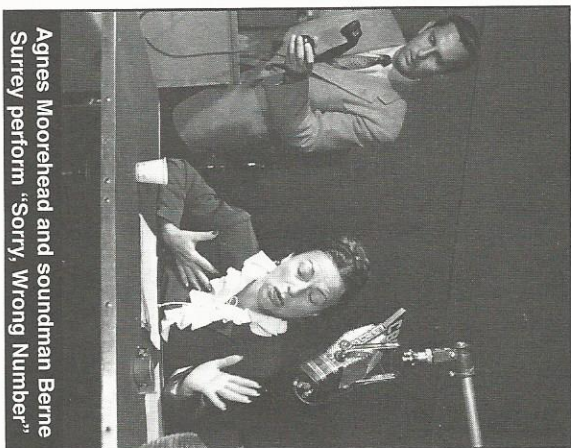
Orson Welles

years, culminating in a brilliant two-part adaptation of Curt Siodmak's "Donovan's Brain"; Bela Lugosi, Sydney Greenstreet, George Zucco, Mary Astor, Charles Laughton, Fredric March, and Agnes Moorehead, whose record 32 appearances earned her the title "First Lady of *Suspense*."

Moorehead's most memorable *Suspense* appearance came about in part with the help of *another* First Lady of *Suspense* — Spier's then-wife, Kay Thompson. A successful singer and vocal arranger, Thompson was working at M-G-M studios when Spier showed her Lucille Fletcher's script for "She Overheard Death Speaking," the story of a bedridden woman who overhears a phone conversation between two men planning to commit a murder. The woman's efforts to involve the police are fruitless and her shock is compounded when she realizes that she is the intended victim.

According to Thompson biographer Sam Irvin, Fletcher's original script ended with the police arriving just in time to save the woman from her fate. Thompson "jokingly suggested a more grisly denouement" — specifically, that the murderer would complete his assignment as the woman was in the process of calling the police for protection. The idea violated Spier's rule about bringing all evidoers to justice, but he couldn't deny the brilliance of his wife's suggestion. The ending was rewritten and the title was changed to reflect the killer's last line: "Sorry, Wrong Number."

Moorehead took the role of the panicked invalid and made it her own, even working with soundman Berne Surrey so that her dying scream would occur at the same pitch as the whistle of the train that passes by her house during her murder.



Agnes Moorehead and soundman Berne Surrey perform "Sorry, Wrong Number"

Even an actor's jumped cue during the original presentation couldn't diminish the impact of "Sorry, Wrong Number," which Welles — no stranger to hyperbole — proclaimed the greatest radio script ever. (The story was presented a record eight times, with Moorehead in the same role).

Another breakthrough for *Suspense* took place in November of 1943, when Spier — reportedly at Thompson's urging — cast M-G-M dancing star Gene Kelly as a killer in "Thieves Fall Out." If "Sorry" had firmly established the show's potential for dramatic actors, Kelly's performance opened up the possibility of including performers better known for comedy and musicals, many of whom were eager to prove their versatility. Many of the comedy and musical stars who appeared on Spier's *Suspense* — including Lucille Ball, Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, George Murphy, Ed (Duffy's Tavern) Gardner, Phil Silvers and Ozzie and Harriet Nelson — acquitted themselves admirably. Indeed, Ball's

performance in "Dime a Dance" and Sinatra's portrayal of a psychotic handyman in "To Find Help" are still considered high points of the show's run.

The casting of folks like Sinatra and Ball in dramatic roles were part of a larger effort to cast performers against type.

When Roma Wines became the show's first sponsor and the budget for big names (and for new and original stories for those big names) grew exponentially, the stars lined up for the chance to try something different. So it was that Mynna Loy shed her stylish Nora Charles persona to assume the role of a prim librarian, Boris Karloff put his ghoulish reputation aside to play a police detective, and suave Cary Grant became a man on the run from the law.

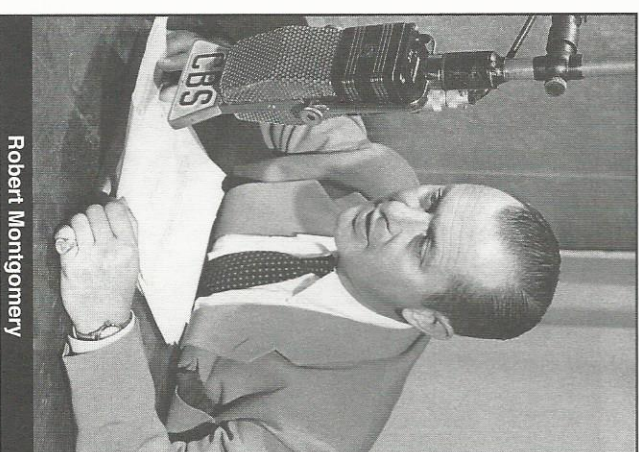
Conversely, Spier knew when to tailor a script to a star's interests. Magic enthusiast Welles leapt at the chance to play a professional magician in Ben Hecht's "The Magnificent Barastro." Edward G. Robinson took part in one of the show's wittiest concerts, as a Casper Milquetoast who wants to kill his overbearing wife and turns for advice to the quintessential Hollywood tough-guy... Edward G. Robinson.

During his time at *Suspense*, Spier did his best to make things interesting for everyone, whether it was keeping rehearsal time to a minimum (in the hopes that everyone involved would be especially alert on the air) or rewriting scripts at the last minute (or sometimes while the show was on the air) to include new dialogue or sound effects. His crew of technicians, musicians and actors kept up with him at all times — no small feat in the days when radio was live! The show was sympathetic to new talent as well, as indicated when Thompson urged Spier to purchase "And So Died

Riabouchinska," a story by a young writer named Ray Bradbury. This combination of talent, nerve, and adventurous spirit won *Suspense* a Peabody Award for excellence and won Spier comparisons to Alfred Hitchcock.

So highly esteemed was *Suspense* that not even losing its sponsor at the end of 1947 could kill it — instead, CBS responded in January of 1948 by expanding the show to an hour, with actor Robert Montgomery as host/producer. The one-hour experiment lasted into May and was a mixed bag, but it did produce some unique gems, including a radio adaptation of the RKO film *Crossfire* and "The Kandy Tooth," in which Howard Duff — who was working with Spier on *The Adventures of Sam Spade* — turned up in an unofficial sequel to "The Maltese Falcon." By the summer, *Suspense* was back to 30 minutes and a new sponsor (Auto-Lite) was on board.

That wasn't the only thing that changed in the summer of 1948. Spier —



Robert Montgomery

who had done so much to establish the parameters of *Suspense* — married actress June Havoc and left the show to pursue other interests; in his place came Anton M. Leader, a veteran New York radio director whose credits ranged from the religious drama *The Eternal Light* to the quintessential radio mystery *Murder at Midnight*. Leader (and his successor, future *Gunsmoke* producer Norman Macdonell) stayed firmly in the present day and brought some new stars into the mix, including Burt Lancaster, Bob Hope, Betty Grable, Danny Kaye, Ethel Barrymore, Margaret O'Brien, Joan Crawford, Ann Southern, Ralph (*Truth or Consequences*) Edwards, and even Jim and Marian Jordan, who stepped out of their regular roles of Fibber McGee and Molly for the hair-raising drama of

“Backseat Driver.”

Still, while there was little need to break the mold that William Spier and his colleagues had formed during the show’s first heyday, there was no denying that the world of mystery — and the

world of radio — had changed since *Suspense* began in 1942. The gothic melodramas and “locked room” mysteries that had dominated popular fiction during the first part of the century were taking a back seat to film noir and gritty (at least for the time) realism. At the same time, the supremacy of radio was slowly ebbing away as performers and sponsors turned to television. (*Suspense* even moved to the small screen for a five-year run beginning in 1949.) These were the challenges that Elliott Lewis faced when he became the show’s director and producer in the fall of 1950.

Lewis was a veteran radio actor who had starred in the well-received but short-lived nautical drama *The Voyage of The Scarlet Queen* and as the ne'er-do-well musician Frank Remley on the *Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show*. During Spier’s time on *Suspense*, Lewis had appeared in a number of supporting roles and had written (and even stepped in to direct) a few stories. By the 1950s, Lewis had become one of the major players at CBS

radio, directing *Broadway Is My Beat*, *Crime Classics*, and *On Stage*, an anthology series in which he co-starred with his wife (and fellow *Suspense* veteran) Cathy Lewis.

As the director of *Suspense*, Lewis and his writers drew equal inspiration from the current headlines and the old masters. “As a rule, we don’t go for supernatural stories,” Lewis explained to an interviewer, confirming a policy that had been more or less in place at *Suspense* since its inception. Instead, Lewis and his team dramatized more “true crime” stories, touching upon drug abuse in “The Truth About Jerry Baxter” and gambling rackets in “The McKay College Basketball Scandal.” The show also relied more on historical dramas, such as the harrowing “Ordeal in Donner Pass” and tales inspired by the final days of gangsters Dutch Schultz and John Dillinger. Even sound effects man Ross Murray got into the act, writing a World War II drama, “Flight of the Bumblebee.”

Lewis also expanded upon Spier’s propensity to draw upon the classics for source material, producing stories based on Wilkie Collins’ “The Moonstone,” Charles Dickens’ unfinished “Mystery of Edwin Drood” (some 30 years before Rupert Holmes brought the story to Broadway), and even William Shakespeare’s “Othello,” presented in two parts with Richard Widmark as the scheming lingo. Lewis and his team even went to the well of folklore, producing dramas based on the famous folk songs “Frankie and Johnny,” “Tom Dooley,” and “Barbara Allen,” which starred Dinah Shore, Joseph Cotten and Anne Baxter respectively.

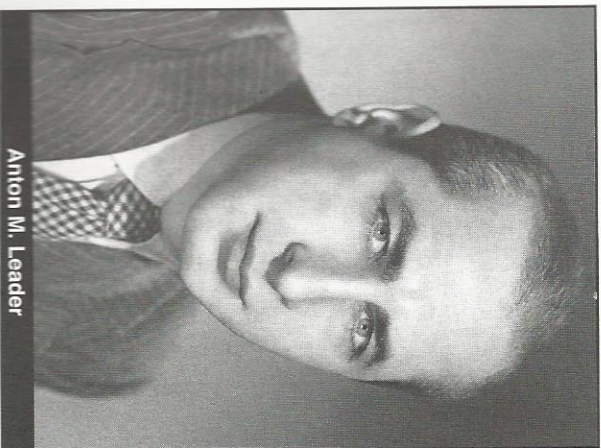
And of course, there were still compelling original plays, including “On a



Richard Widmark, who helped bring Shakespeare to *Suspense*

Country Road” (the classic tale of stranded motorists on the watch for an escaped lunatic) and “Rave Notice,” in which Milton Berle made his *Suspense* debut, playing a frustrated actor who must feign insanity to avoid a charge of murder. Other stars who made it to *Suspense* for the first time during Lewis’ tenure included Tyrone Power, Charles Boyer, Fred MacMurray, William Holden, Greer Garson, Ethel Merman, Ezio Pinza, Richard Basehart, Rosemary Clooney and Jack Benny, who played an embezzler in “A Good and Faithful Servant” and (in a rare nod to fantasy) a neobisby Martian in the tongue-in-cheek “Plan X.”

When Lewis and Auto-Lite moved on in 1954, the big stars moved on as well, replaced by veteran actors from “Radio Row,” many of whom had worked on the show in supporting roles. Losing a sponsor might have been a fatal shot; luckily, the show didn’t have the sense to fall down. Instead, *Suspense* took its shrinking budget and forged ahead under the direction of English



Anton M. Leader

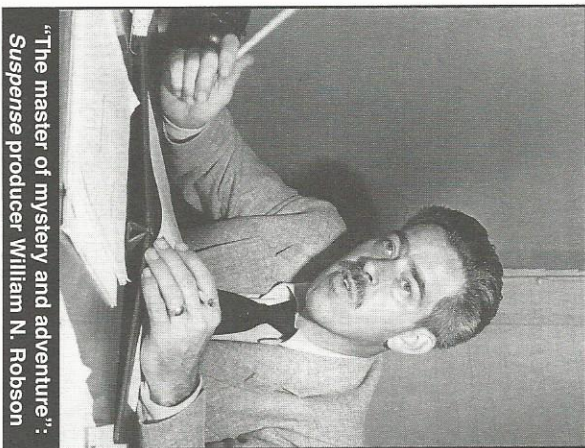


Elliott and Cathy Lewis

writer Antony Ellis. During his two-year run, Ellis bought some new scripts and dusted off some that he'd written for another CBS anthology, *Escape* — including the Christmas fantasy “The Cave” and the surreal “I Saw Myself Running.”

Ellis also produced a number of stories from Ray Bradbury (who had become a world-famous writer since “Riabouchinska”), including “The Whole Town’s Sleeping” (the tale of a strangler who preys on single women), “Kaleidoscope” (the remarkable story of an exploding spacecraft and the crew’s final communications with one another) and the terrifying “Zero Hour,” in which the parents of Earth discover their children are actually the vanguard of a Martian invasion.

As the Golden Age of Radio headed toward twilight, *Suspense* underwent another evolution in the fall of 1956, when William N. Robson became the show’s producer-director. Robson had been in radio for more than 20 years, producing *Calling All Cars* (one of radio’s first “true crime” dramas) and moving on to anthology series like *Escape* and *The Columbia Workshop*. Billed as “The Master of Mystery and Adventure,” Robson would offer a few words of introduction before each story. The show got some “participating sponsors” to kick in a little money during this tenure, but there was no denying that the budgets for radio were shrinking; by 1957, the show was forced to forego live orchestration in favor of stock recordings from the CBS library. One suspects that the return of veteran *Suspense* stars like Moorehead, Cotten, Herbert Marshall, Frank Lovejoy, Vincent Price, Marsha Hunt and Jeff Chandler had more to do with their love of radio than any promise of



“The master of mystery and adventure”: *Suspense* producer William N. Robson

financial reward.

These limitations didn’t stop Robson and his crew from producing some fine shows. There were stories Robson had directed years earlier for *Escape* (among them “Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” and the classic “Three Skeleton Key”) and original works like “Return to Dust,” which starred radio veteran Richard Beal as a scientist whose attempt to decrease the size of cancer cells backfires when he finds himself shrinking instead. Like his predecessors, Robson also got some new blood before the *Suspense* microphone, including Lloyd Bridges, Frances Farmer, Stan Freberg, musician Ray Noble, and singer Margaret Whiting.

Still, it was obvious that the battle to keep network radio drama alive was a losing one. By the fall of 1959, CBS was the only radio network offering any continuous dramatic programming and it consisted primarily of daytime soap operas and a handful of Sunday afternoon dramas. By the end of August, Robson was gone — as was the show’s

last vestige of star power — and *Suspense* was back in New York, under the direction of Paul Roberts, Bruno Zirato Jr. and Fred Hendrickson. By this time, the show was feeling the effects of television — particularly the new wave of fantasy and science-fiction anthologies. Finding good, affordable stories was more of a challenge than ever (“I was scrounging for scripts,” Zirato admitted later) and the show that had long resisted embracing science-fiction and the fantastic was now diving in with both feet, spinning tales of ghosts, aliens, and scientists, mad or otherwise.

The actors were fine, of course, and Robson came back to contribute a few excellent scripts (including “Breakthrough,” the story of a family trying to flee East Germany just as the Berlin Wall is being completed), but one can’t escape the sense that the network was biding its time before giving up on radio drama once and for all.

The final curtain came down on September 30, 1962, when CBS — with no fanfare — cancelled its final two network dramas: *Yours Truly*, *Johnny*

Dollar and *Suspense*. In a way, it’s appropriate that “Devilstone,” the last show from network radio’s last dramatic series, was a ghost story; by this time, there was little left from the Golden Age of Radio but the ghosts of a wonderful, dramatic, exciting past.

During its 20 years on radio, *Suspense* was a rare and remarkable show, one that could allow for all manner of stories and all kinds of storytelling sensibilities, one that sought technical and artistic challenges and, more often than not, met them.

Even today, when you hear the church bells that introduce Bernard Herrmann’s ominous opening theme, you know that the tale that follows — whether it’s torn from the headlines of the time or taken from tales of decades or centuries past — is well-calculated to keep you in SUSPENSE! ■

To hear nine classic tales of *Suspense*, tune in to *Those Were the Days* on July 28 and during the month of September, and to Radio’s Golden Age on September 30.

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And you're looking fine,

OKLAHOMA!

BY MICHAEL BARRETT

“Oh, what a beautiful morning...”

With those words, Broadway history was made when *Oklahoma!* opened on the last day of March 1943. As America worked through the dog days of a grueling war, *Oklahoma!*'s success was instant and spectacular. It finally closed after an astounding run of more than 2,200 performances, setting a new record that remained unbroken for 20 years.

And it all started with a flop!

The story of *Oklahoma!* is very simple: A cowhand named Curtly loves Laurey. Aside from the usual romantic tomfoolery, the only thing that gets in the way of their courtship is Jud, a bitter and violent man who also wants Laurey. He's associated with fire, the sexual and literal kind, and his threat to local harmony ends with his death.

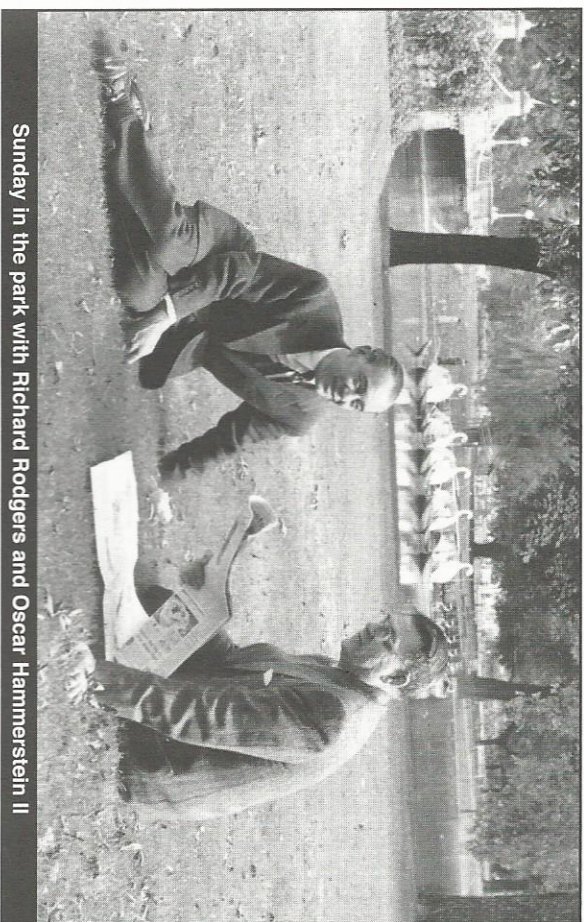
That was a serious subject in the shiny, happy world of Broadway musicals. *Michael Barrett is a freelance writer from San Antonio, whose credits include The San Antonio Express-News and Video Watchdog.*

calls. Possibly the only musical villain who'd fallen on his knife before was in *Porgy and Bess*... and that was *opera*, man.

The show was created by writer Oscar Hammerstein II and composer Richard Rodgers, and they wanted the American musical to grow up. That's why they insisted on calling the show a “musical play.” They had taken a straight play — Lynn Riggs' *Green Grow the Lilacs* — and added songs to Riggs' serious story. After *Oklahoma!*, the musical play was here to stay. It's a milestone that leads us to think of musical history in terms of before and after *Oklahoma!*

The simple way to put it (and you hear it all the time) is that musicals used to be trivial affairs, derived from old-style revues of skits and songs, shows that just dropped interchangeable songs in anywhere, whether they were appropriate or not. It wasn't supposed to make any sense. It was just entertainment, just a little song and dance and comedy. After Rodgers and Hammerstein, the songs had to be tied to a strong story with believable characters. Even bad musicals had to follow the example of *Oklahoma!*

Like most simple versions, it's not



Sunday in the park with Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II

100% true, but more like 90%. The part about the impact and aftermath is true, but in fact there had always been musicals with strong stories and character-based songs. That was the operetta tradition, ranging from the works of Gilbert and Sullivan to a string of 1920s hits, written, not coincidentally, by Oscar Hammerstein II. These included *The Desert Song* and *Rose Marie*, the show whose record for performances was broken by *Oklahoma!*

Collaborating with composer Jerome Kern, Hammerstein transformed the operetta format into *Showboat* (1927), a milestone that can be considered the first musical play as we know it today. Based on a novel by Edna Ferber, Hammerstein and Kern's *Showboat* was a nostalgic, multi-generational saga with romantic tragedies and the taboo element of interracial marriage. It created a sensation.

Despite its tremendous success, *Showboat* didn't spawn a boatload of imitations. Maybe it was too grand, too soon. Still, Hammerstein had pointed the

direction in which he intended to go, although he had to wait out another 15 years of grab-bag musicals before finally hooking up with Rodgers, the collaborator who could flesh out the vision Hammerstein sketched out in *Showboat*.

Ironically, Rodgers dominated happy-go-lucky 1930s Broadway with his partner Lorenz Hart. Their shows were snappy, sassy and modern, even when adapting an old standard like Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. With 1940's *Pal Joey*, they arrived in their own way at the kind of adult material Hammerstein had in mind, and Rodgers felt ready to move on. Hart showed no interest when Rodgers wanted to make a musical of *Green Grow the Lilacs*. The play had flopped in 1931, but the Theatre Guild thought it would be better with music, and a Connecticut revival (using folk songs) did well.

Rodgers saw a great potential. Hart didn't like it, probably didn't feel comfortable in sentimental Americana, and was becoming erratic to work with due to

personal issues. Rodgers reached out to Hammerstein, and the rest is Broadway history.

With Hart, Rodgers wrote the music first before his partner added lyrics. With Hammerstein, it was the other way around, and Rodgers was obliged to take a simple yet ungainly phrase like “Oh, what a beautiful morning” and come up with music that was not only lyrical, but glorious. He rose to the challenge time and again.

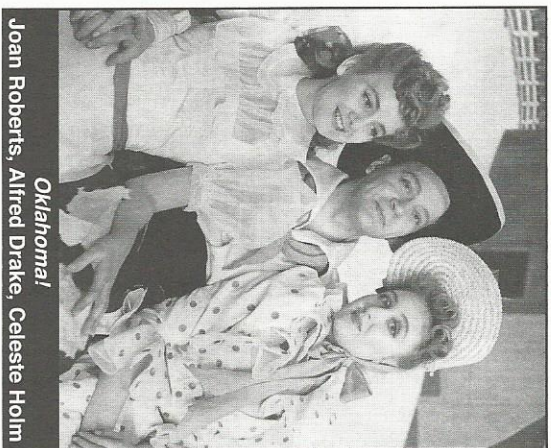
Which was most fortunate, because whatever its innovations in terms of story and tone and dance, the whole notion of the “musical play” could have been a flop and *Oklahoma!* only a theatrical footnote — if not for those powerful songs. Whatever else it does, a musical must have music, and this show’s dramatic organization delivered that music with an impact that really did change the American musical.

Consider the songs:

“*Oh, What a Beautiful Morning*” — The opening number begins offstage and ambles forward as a high, rousing hymn as big as all outdoors. This song harks back to the romantic operetta (in fact, it’s a waltz), and drops that tradition squarely into the middle of rugged frontier America in a way that signals a new thing arriving. It begins in the giddy joy of the present and promises a vision of the future in which “everything’s going my way.”

“*The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*” — As Curly describes a fantasy in a vehicle that doesn’t exist, we hear the clapping, loping rhythms and see it all clearly in the mind’s eye. This is Hammerstein’s power.

Here’s a key to Hammerstein. Most of his songs are about what ain’t: the past, the future, dreams, fantasies, wish-



Joan Roberts, Alfred Drake, Celeste Holm
Oklahoma!

PHOTOEST 1

ings and supposings — anything except the present, anything except admitting the reality of *right now*. Only one or two songs per show actually live in the moment, and these are the most transcendent.

Yet all of his shows build to a moment when the characters must finally face an unpleasant truth that’s been avoided. They must transform that truth through the power of their own will, a will forged in the dreams and visions of the previous songs.

“*Kansas City*” — The far-off Kansas City is another vision of the future (where “they’ve gone about as far as they can go”) and catalyzes the farmhands into trying out the new dances, with the two-step replacing the waltz.

“*I Can’t Say No*” — Ado Annie’s dilemma is pretty darn close to a liberated hymn about the pleasures of not being a good girl. “How can I be what I ain’t?” is a cry that has resonated. True to Hammerstein, she sings in terms of what ain’t, not what is. The whole song is a

negation that somehow feels like affirmation.

“*It’s a Scandal! It’s a Ourage!*” — The cry of Ali Hakim, the allegedly Persian peddler whose whole life is a fantastic invention, as he contemplates his shotgun marriage to Annie. Reality is too much for him.

“*Many a New Day*” — This lovely female chorus and dance is another song that’s a plain lie. Laurey describes what she’ll never do — pine for a man — but she means the opposite, and that perfectly describes...

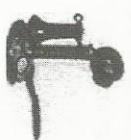
“*People Will Say We’re in Love*” — Curly and Laurey sing a love duet based on the pretense that they’re not in love. This is the same idea as “Only Make Believe,” the romantic duet in *Showboat* and it’s typical of Hammerstein’s style:

You can only allude to the present reality by pretending it’s something else or its opposite, not by naming it directly.

“*Pore Jud Is Daid*” — A comic funeral march, again a vision of fantasy. Curly describes the town mourning Jud. Ironically, this will become both true and false. He’ll die but no one will mourn.

“*Lonely Room*” — The darkest song in the show, musically and thematically, as Jud describes his life of dreams and unfulfillable fantasies. It makes him a real character with real emotions, more three-dimensional than Curly or Laurey. Jud is truly a disturbing, ambiguous character in musical theatre, which is why Laurey is so confused about him.

“*Out of My Dreams*” — Will nobody ever stop dreaming and wake up? Laurey’s lyrical outburst leads to the



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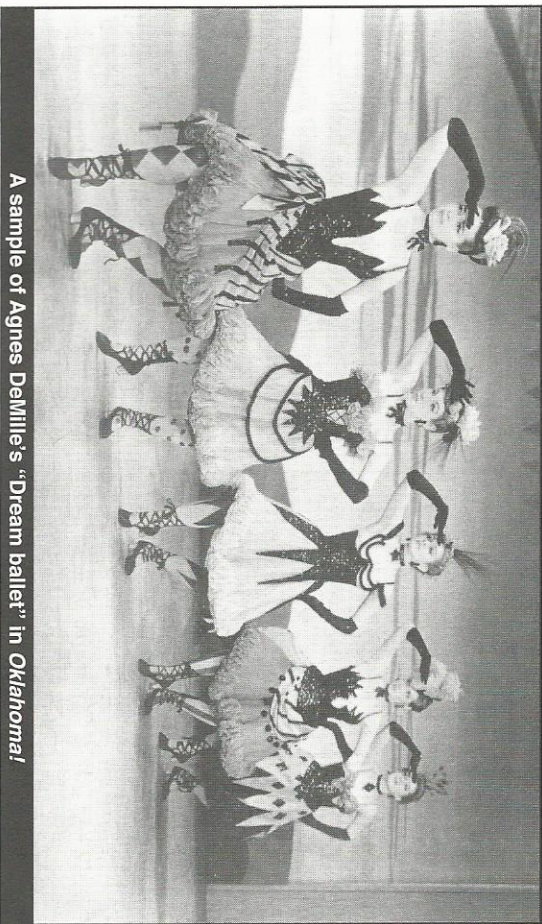
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A sample of Agnes DeMille's "Dream ballet" in *Oklahoma!*



PHOTOFEST

famous dream ballet that closes the first half. Agnes DeMille's groundbreaking approach to choreography was an extension of her recent ballet triumph with Aaron Copland, "Rodeo," another exercise in western Americana.

"The Farmer and the Cowman" and "All Er Nothin'" are also projections into the future, and both are about negotiating the terms of marriage into a unified state, whether referring to people or to the territory. They're not songs about how things are, but about how they should be.

Finally, there's that rolling finale, "Oklahoma," a boisterous counterpart to the opening song. After a show full of dreams, lies, and wishes that finally come true, we once again plug into the joy of being alive in the here and now.

Each line is a rousing, patriotic shout with actual whoops and yodels: "You know we belong to the land! And the land we belong to is grand!" "You're looking fine, Oklahoma! Oklahoma, okay!"

What has happened here? A naive but rugged people have looked to the future and asked how they will handle

the legacies of violence and rivalry that have defined them. The answer: They will overcome. They will become friends. They will replace darkness with justice. They will become better by the sheer blessed vision and the will.

This is the promise of America, and the corn may be as high as an elephant's eye, but damnit, that's what people wanted to be fighting for in those darkly shadowed days. It wasn't just to defeat evil, it was to become good. It was to keep the promise of the past for tomorrow.

Oklahoma! wasn't a nostalgic show full of rustic tunes and old-time sentiments. It pulsed with the urgency of 1943, using the past as a lens to show the audience who we were and what we were still striving for. That promise never goes out of style.

Neither has the show that made it. ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on July 21 to hear Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II — and the music of Oklahoma! — on radio.

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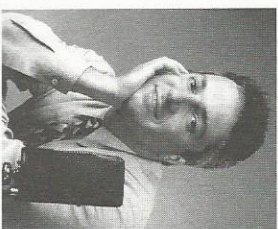
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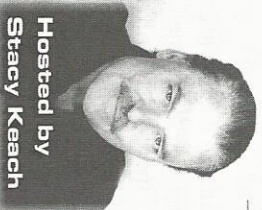


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A SPORTING LIFE

The entertaining — and influential —
JOHN TUNIS

BY JOHN DINAN

John Tunis was the dean of young adult sports fiction, the leading writer of such books during the 1930s, '40s and '50s. He turned out novels that were eagerly read by hundreds of thousands of boys and girls of the day, he covered major sports events of the day for NBC (including the first broadcast from Wimbledon), and he wrote for all of the major magazines of the day, from *College Humor* to *The Nation* to *Atlantic Monthly*. A 1949 survey of some 50,000 boys revealed that John Tunis was their favorite author. *The New York Times* noted that Tunis' books had "prose which has the good hard smack of ash against leather."

John Tunis was born in 1889, growing up in circumstances that could easily be called privileged. He graduated from Harvard and worked briefly in a cotton

John Dinan is a writer from Topsfield, Massachusetts.

mill in Newburyport, MA. After a stint in World War I, he married and settled down in Rowayton, CT.

He had a life-long romance with the game of tennis and covered the sport for NBC. He participated in the first transatlantic sports broadcast in 1932, when he reported on the Davis Cup match between Jean Borotra and Wilmer Allison.

Tunis was among the first to criticize the creeping influence of commercialism in professional sports. As far back as 1931, he was asking "Who Owns Football?" in the pages of *Sport Story Magazine*. His 1928 book *Sport's: Heroics and Hysterics*, lamented how football had become "almost a national religion."

In 1938, he wrote his first sports book, *Iron Duke*. Based on a 1924 piece in *Sport Story Magazine*, it was voted the best juvenile book of the year. At the age of 49, Tunis was officially a novelist.

Between 1940 and 1946, John Tunis wrote a series of books about baseball player Roy Tucker and the Brooklyn

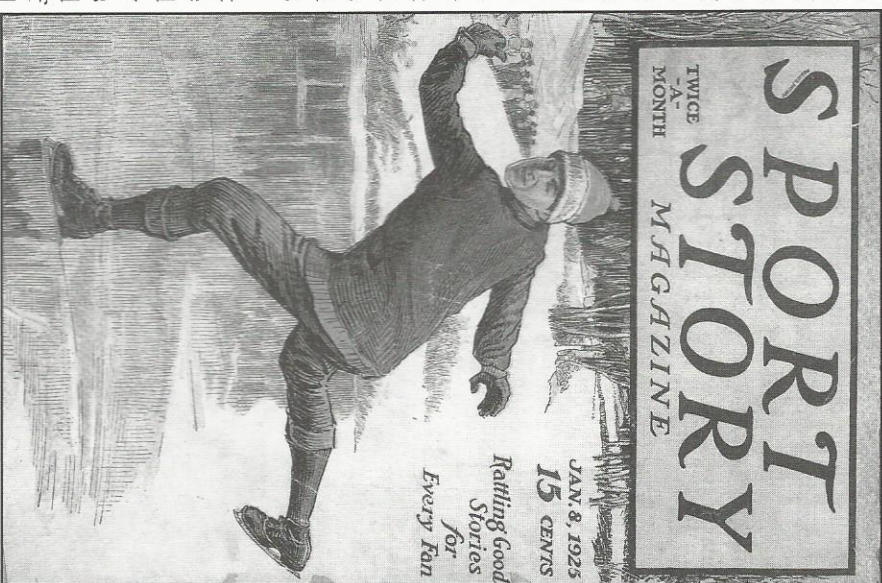
Dodgers. Tucker starts his baseball career with the Brooklyn Dodgers (*The Kid From Tomkinsville*), plays against the Cleveland Indians for the championship (*World Series*), and makes a comeback — nearing the age of 40 — after suffering serious injuries in World War II (*The Kid Comes Back*).

The first book in this trilogy, *The Kid From Tomkinsville*, follows phenom Roy Tucker from a Connecticut farm to Dodger Stadium in Brooklyn — where he starts his career as a pitcher — and chronicles his adventures throughout the season.

Over the course of his first year, Tucker encounters the expected rookie problems and an unexpected one: An injury to his pitching arm that forces him to move to an outfield position. Over the course of the story, Tucker is counseled by an older member of the staff, Dave Leonard, who offers some advice as he recalls his own rookie season:

"I thought I was hot stuff, but they soon showed me I didn't have an idea what it was all about. Just when I got convinced I was a flop and waiting for that pink slip in the mail box, this old fella took me aside in the lobby of the hotel one night. Old George Connors, I never forgot. So I pass it along to you and don't you forget it either. 'Courage,' says this old-timer, 'courage is all life. Courage is all baseball. And baseball is all life; that's why it gets under your skin.'"

Later, when the Kid injures his



pitching arm, Leonard talks him through, telling him "Only the game fish swim upstream." Veteran sportswriter Pete Hamill called *The Kid* one of the ten best sports novels of all time, saying "Virtually every sportswriter I know remembers reading it as a boy."

The second book in the series, 1941's *World Series*, takes the Dodgers and the Kid through a championship series against the Cleveland Indians. Five years later, Tunis wrote the third and final book of this series, *The Kid Comes Back*, which follows the Kid to the end of his career, as he steps into Dave Leonard's role of a mentor and the voice of experience.

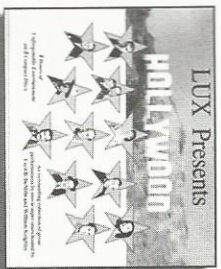
When Tunis wrote these books, he informed the reader that the characters he wrote about were “drawn from real life.” As a result, a lot of kids grew up wondering about the identities of these fictional players — who were Gabby Gus, Red Evans, Razzle Dazzle Nugent? It was speculated that “The Kid” himself was outfielder Pete Reiser. The secret identity of these characters can be found in a box of materials at Boston University’s Mugar Library, where Tunis’ papers and manuscripts are housed. This collection includes a sheet of paper that lists how Tunis’ Brooklyn Dodgers compared with the real ones. It turns out that Leo “The Lip” Durocher was the inspiration for Tunis’ “Gabby Gus” and pitcher Van Lingle Mungo the impetus for Razzle Dazzle Nugent. As for the Kid himself...he is listed only as

No. 36.

Tunis died in 1975, having conquered the worlds of fiction and non-fiction. He was hailed by *The New York Times* as a man who “helped educate a whole generation of Americans.”

In an era where the majority of books aimed at young readers tie in to existing properties, it’s charming to remember that Tunis wrote with one goal in mind: quality. “A book written for my audience doesn’t have to be merely as good as a book for adults,” he explained. “It must be — or should be — better. Not only does youth deserve the best, but... they read it for one reason alone — they want to.”

And some 70 years after John Tunis began his career as a novelist, they still want to. ■



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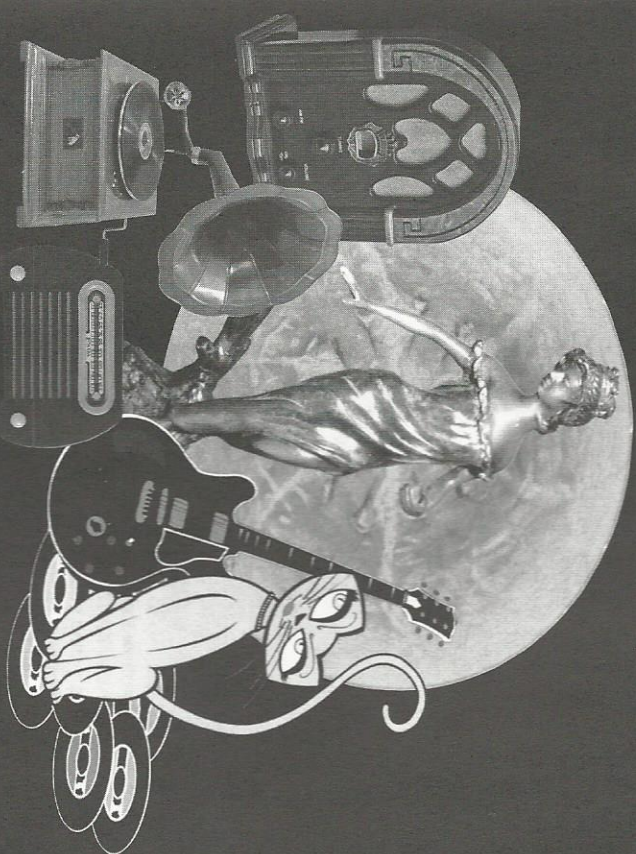
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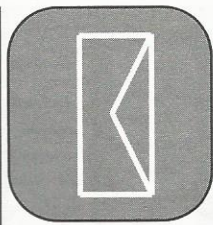
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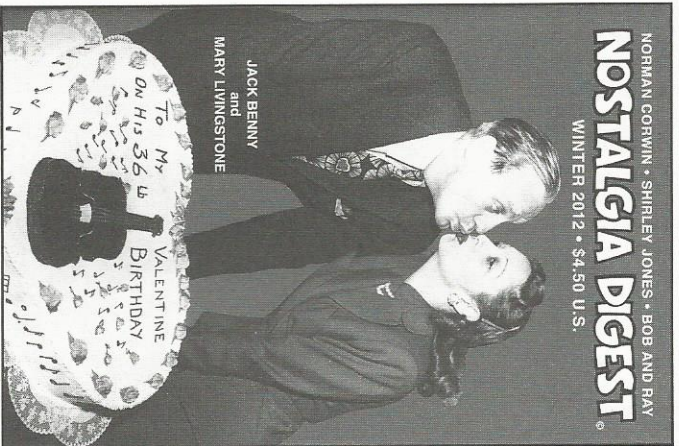
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HOMEWOOD, IL — I'm renewing my subscription gladly! So grateful for all you do, Ken and Steve — Saturday's dynamic duo!
— **SHER TENCLAY**

BRICK, NEW JERSEY — Enjoyed the Winter 2012 cover story about Jack Benny. One of the most humorous movies made by Jack in the 1940s, *To Be or Not to Be*, is on Turner Classic Movies from time to time. Don't miss it! Keep up the good work! — **VIN MALONEY (ED. NOTE)** — We second Mr. Maloney's motion concerning *To Be or Not to Be*, which was downplayed at the time as being Carole Lombard's last film but which is generally considered to be Jack Benny's best.)

E-MAIL — I am a lo-n-g-time listener of TWTD and have had the pleasure of meeting you a number of times at various venues. I listen to your show each week, during the Winter, on line in Bradenton, Florida. While I e-mail very rarely, I just had to tell you how much I enjoyed your show today featuring the work of Norman Corwin [TWTD, January 14]. Very moving and interesting show. Thank you for including the interview of Norman Corwin. I heard that interview the first time it was aired by Chuck and it was a pleasure to hear it again.

Also, thank you for airing the *Democratic National Committee Program* from November 6, 1944. It was not only historic and quite spectacular but amazing in its relevance to the current political positions of the



Democratic and Republican parties today.
— **RON MARUSCAK**

E-MAIL — Just a note to say "thanks" for a good show [TWTD, January 14]. I haven't listened in a while and it was great to be drawn into the word-pictures Mr. Corwin created. NPR has also recognized his skill and hon-

And if you're on Facebook...

Please take a moment and join our *Nostalgia Digest* group! It's a chance to meet some like-minded listeners and get up-to-date news and information about *Those Were the Days* and *Nostalgia Digest*.

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S.M. BERRY
Bob Ford*

We're always pleased to receive notes about the past, but Bob Ford of Chicago went one better and sent a note from the past — specifically, from a sheet of "Telegram-Railroad Wire" paper that once belonged to the Pullman Company. The note reads: "Thanking you again for another great year of Saturday radio and Digest magazines — STOP. Keep up the good work — STOP. If you could possibly find an episode of *Hall of Fantasy* (a Chicago-based radio show circa 1951-2-3) and put it on the Saturday radio show, it would be greatly appreciated — will be watching for it in magazine — STOP." Thanks, Mr. Ford — and we hope you'll be happy to learn that there's a *Hall of Fantasy* show scheduled for the August 18 edition of TWTD.

ored him. The actual shows may suffer from the changes in performing style and the nation's flaws. Still, the scripts are truly the way folks felt at that time. By the way, the mention of a show where gods come back to earth had been used earlier by Thorne Smith in his 1930s book *Night Life of the Gods* and also as a cartoon by (I think) the Fleischer Brothers studio. Thanks again for a grand show. — **RON H.**

E-MAIL — I discovered your *Those Were the Days* program last weekend while listening to WDCB, when you aired Part One of the two-part tribute to Norman Corwin. I had not heard of him before, but I became very interested in his work, as presented, so I listened to the entire broadcast. I also listened to Part Two earlier this afternoon. I just want to thank you for this presentation. I thought it was excellent, particularly *On a Note of Triumph*. Mr. Corwin was, indeed, the "poet laureate" of radio, and I am glad that I was introduced to him and his work, by listening to your show. I

plan to listen to future programs on your show. — **DEBRA WALKER**

E-MAIL — I have been listening to *Those Were the Days* almost since it started. I currently live in Cadiz, Kentucky and look forward to the show every Saturday, EXCEPT the last two weeks [January 14 and 21], when I heard no old-time radio shows but some tribute to Norman Corwin who I have never heard of nor have any interest in learning about.
Please consider your audience when you schedule special broadcasts which I am sure most of your audience has no interest in hearing. Please play the good old-time radio shows, not a tribute to someone of which there is no interest. — **NED MARSHALL (ED. NOTE)** — Uh...no interest?

All kidding aside, our two-week tribute to the radio work of Norman Corwin — the man considered to be one of the finest writers and directors the medium ever produced — received the largest immediate response of

any *TWTD* show in the last three years. We're grateful to all of you who took the time to share your thoughts through your calls, letters, e-mails and Facebook posts. Thanks for listening!

MCHENRY, IL — I'm playing catch-up in listening to my recordings of your shows for this month, so this e-mail is late in coming, but I wanted to share this little revelation I had, to see if anyone else caught it as well:

In her interview with you on the first weekend of Jack Benny Month [TWTD, February 4], Joan Benny made a fleeting reference to someone that filled a gap in my knowledge a week later, when you played an episode of Chuck Schaden's "Speaking of Radio." It featured an excerpt with Frank Nelson, playing a dentist who gives Jack an examination:

BENNY: "Doctor! Doctor! Why are you spinning my pivot tooth?"

NELSON: "I used to be a disk jockey!"

BENNY: "A disk jockey?"

NELSON: "...and now I'd like to pull this next tooth for Sam, George, Mill, Tack, and all the boys at Hickey's Bar...and Happy Birthday to Jeanette!"

We all know that Sam [Perrin], George [Balzer], Mill [Josefsberg] and Tack [John Tackaberry] were Jack's writers... but it wasn't until Joan Benny made a passing reference — by name — during your interview that I realized that "Jeanette" was the script girl! I wonder what her last name was, or whether we're going to lose her to history.

Now all I need to do is find Hickey's Bar... — **ANDREW C. GREEN**

(ED. NOTE — The "Jeanette" in question is Jeanette Eymann, who worked with Jack and his writers for a number of years and even turned up occasionally on his radio and television shows. As for "Hickey's Bar," it's our guess that Jack's writers were referring to Hilliard "Hickey" Marks, Mary Livingstone's younger brother and the long-time producer of the Benny show.)

E-MAIL — Today's show [TWTD, March 3] was awesome! The *Murder at Midnight* story was very gothic and had traces of Radcliffe and Shelley. Chilling! Thanks so much for great radio.

— **JESSICA DEMETRA SELLOUNTOS**

E-MAIL — Thanks for playing Rudy Vallee's version of "Little Old Lady" this afternoon

[TWTD, March 17]. When I was very young, my aunt would play it on the piano and I would sing it for my grandmother. It brought back some wonderful memories! You see, I am the grandma now! — **HELEN BILLS**

MUNSTER, INDIANA — Regards to all, as you keep the good old days fresh in my mind. — **JAMES GRINDLE**

E-MAIL — I remember as a child listening to Chuck Schaden on Saturday afternoons with my grandparents. Now I'm all grown up and living in Montana. Thankfully, your show is streamed over the internet. I thoroughly enjoy all the comedy shows. It's also nice to hear you and Mr. Alexander talk about the Chicago area. It's like I never left.

Thank you for continuing the tradition after Mr. Schaden retired. It is an absolute pleasure to listen to your program every week. — **JOANNE GRILLS**

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA — Keep up the great work! — **LYNN WAGAR**

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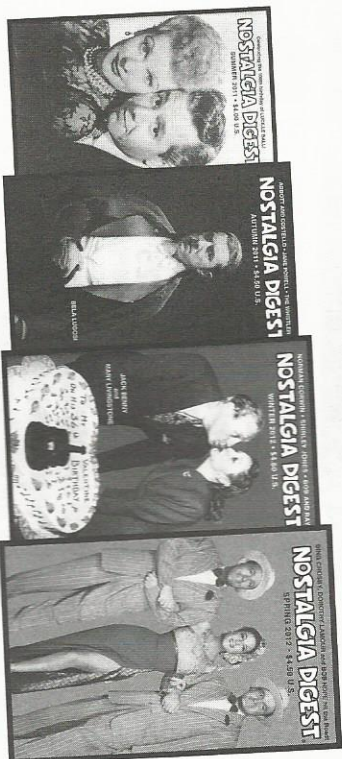
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