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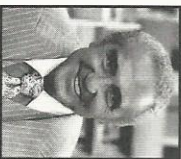
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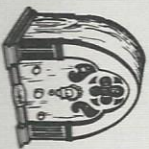


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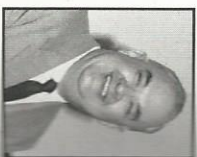
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Ray Bradbury: 1920-2012

Ask most people why they enjoy the shows produced during the "Golden Age" of radio and the word "imagination" will likely come up. The creative minds responsible for the dramas and comedies of the era realized that radio — as a "theater of the mind" — allowed audiences to envision what the medium itself would not let them see.

The imagination is a wonderful muscle. Once in a while, we see it exercised and shaped in a way that was heretofore unknown to us. I was reminded of that this last June when I learned about the passing of author Ray Bradbury.

As an adult, Bradbury recalled how his own imagination was inspired during his childhood in Waukegan by everything from movies (beginning with Lon Chaney Sr. in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) to radio (including *Chandu the Magician* and *Vic and Sade*) to the blossoming world of comic strips (most notably *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*) to L. Frank Baum's magical books about the world of Oz. As a teenager in Los Angeles, Bradbury haunted the movie studios (with autograph book in hand) and managed to talk his way into watching George Burns and Gracie Allen rehearse their radio show. (As Sam Weller notes in his excellent biography, *The Bradbury Chronicles*, George and Gracie even used one of Ray's jokes on the air.)

As an adult, Bradbury was impressed (as many of us were) by the radio productions of Norman Corwin and William Spier. The latter was the producer of *Suspense*, one of many radio shows that would purchase and adapt Bradbury's stories over the years, including "And So Died Riabouchinska," "Zero Hour," "Kaleidoscope" and "The Whole Town's Sleeping." Like his friends Corwin and Spier, Bradbury had a talent for evocative description that made his work perfect for radio. And like Spier and Corwin, Bradbury's greatness came from the fact that he seemed so interested in exploring the wonders of existence. He will always be known for his contributions to the science-fiction genre (one of a wave of authors who freed science-fiction from the juvenile trappings of its past), but even when he wrote the story of a spaceship exploding (as in "Kaleidoscope"), he took greater interest in the conversations of the surviving crew members as they drifted out into space.

To Ray Bradbury, there was something magical about the very act of creating stories, of diving in to what might appear mundane and unlocking the mysteries that dwelled within. That sense of wonder can be found at the heart of all of his work, including *The Martian Chronicles*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, his charming foreword to a collection of *Vic and Sade* scripts (*The Small House Halfway Up In the Next Block*)... or the book that served as my own introduction to the world of Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine*. I was probably 11 or 12 when I first read this passage (coincidentally, around the time I was introduced to the Golden

Age of Radio) and it still grabs me years later — and, as you can imagine, it has forever changed my perception of tennis shoes:

“Mr. Sanderson, now could you kind of rock back and forth a little, sponge around, bounce kind of, while I tell you the rest? It’s this: I give you my money, you give me the shoes, I owe you a dollar. But, Mr. Sanderson, but—soon as I get those shoes on, you know what happens?”

“What?”

“Bang! I deliver your packages, pick up packages, bring you coffee, burn your trash, run to the post office, telegraph office, library! You’ll see twelve of me in and out, in and out, every minute. Feel those shoes, Mr. Sanderson, feel how fast they’d take me? All those springs inside? Feel all the running inside? Feel how they kind of grab hold and can’t let you alone and don’t like you just standing there? Feel how quick I’d be doing the things you’d rather not bother with? You stay in the nice cool store while I’m jumping all around town! But it’s not me really, it’s the shoes. They’re going like mad down alleys, cutting corners, and back! There they go!”

Mr. Sanderson stood amazed with the rush of words. When the words got going the flow carried him, he began to sink deep in the shoes, to flex his toes, limber his arches, test his ankles. He rocked softly, secretly, back and forth in a small breeze from the open door. The tennis shoes silently hushed themselves deep in the carpet, sank as in a jungle grass, in loam and resilient clay. He gave one solemn bounce of his heels in the yeasty dough, in the yielding and welcoming earth. Emotions hurried over his face as if many colored lights had been switched on and off. His mouth hung slightly open. Slowly he gentled and rocked himself to a halt, and the boy’s voice faded and they stood there looking at each other in a tremendous and natural silence.

A few people drifted by on the sidewalk outside, in the hot sun.

Still the man and boy stood there, the boy glowing, the man with revelation in his face.

“Boy,” said the old man at last, “in five years, how would you like a job selling shoes in this emporium?”

“Gosh, thanks, Mr. Sanderson, but I don’t know what I’m going to be yet.”

“Anything you want to be, son,” said the old man, “you’ll be. No one will ever stop you.”

That’s the beauty of the imagination: When it’s engaged, no one will ever stop you.

Ray Bradbury knew that.

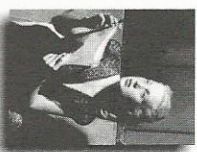
We will always be in debt to him for sharing his imagination with us.

—Steve Darnall

Turn in to Those Were the Days on October 6 to hear Dimension X present a story from Ray Bradbury’s The Martian Chronicles.

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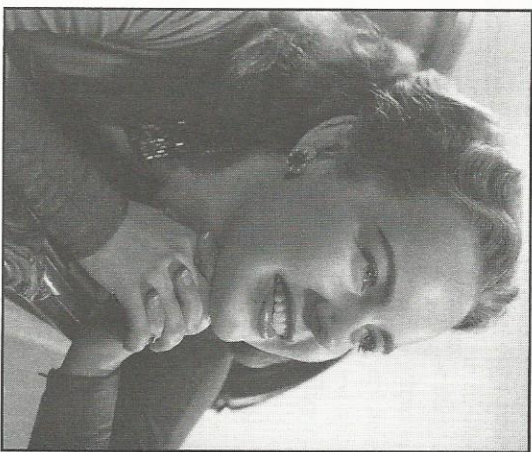
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A few moments with...

TERRY MOORE

If Terry Moore had done nothing but star in Mighty Joe Young (with its Oscar-winning special effects, courtesy of Willis O'Brien and a young Ray Harryhausen) and Beneath the 12-Mile Reef (one of the first films made in Cinemascope), her place in show-business history would be assured. In fact, during her eight-decade career, Moore has worked in movies, television, live theatre and radio, where she performed frequently during her childhood and adolescence — although, as she recalls, her reason for entering radio was rather unusual:



The reason I did radio was because I had my braces taken off before my first movie, and then [the filmmakers] said, “Do you mind having braces put on your teeth?” So they had to put them back on so I could finish getting my teeth straight, and I went into radio.

Just to sort of fill the time?

Yes, exactly.

What was your first radio role? Do you remember?

Well, I had five steady radio shows a week. I was on *Dr. Christian*, I was on *Mayor of the Town* with Lionel Barrymore; I played Butch’s girlfriend. I played Barbara Winsocket on *A Date With Judy*, I played on the *Frances Langford Show*... oh, and I did *The Smiths of Hollywood*; I played Bumps Smith. Bill Holden started out as my father and his wife Brenda Marshall as my mother. Later on, Harry von Zell took

over. And Arthur Treacher as my Uncle Cecil.

I even played with Tommy Cook. He played Little Beaver on *Red Ryder* and I played Little White Cloud, Little Beaver’s girlfriend.

At this point, when you’re 11 or 12 years old and you’re doing Dr. Christian or Red Ryder, you’re not yet “Terry Moore,” correct?

No, I wasn’t “Terry Moore” until I was 18. I started out with my real name, Helen Koford... then my agent changed it to “Judy Ford.” Then, when I went under contract to Eagle-Lion, they changed it — because of Judy Garland — to *Jan Ford*. There were no “Jan’s around at that time. Then, when I went to Columbia and got my first grown-up starring role opposite Glenn Ford — and my first kiss in a movie — Harry Cohn

said, “We can’t have two Fords in one movie”... he said, “We don’t like the name ‘Helen.’ There’s too many ‘Aunt Helen’s.’ It’s an old-fashioned name. What do you want to be called?” Well, the name of the character in the movie was a tomboy named Terry. There were no Terrys. None... so I said, “I’d like to be called ‘Terry,’ the name of the girl in the film.” So he said, “Fine. Now we need a last name.” He turned to my mother and said, “What’s your maiden name?” and she said, “Bitmore.”

He said, “It’s too long, but we’ll use ‘Moore.’” And I became Terry Moore, since I was 18.

So you walked out that door a star! Just like in the movies!

I know, I know.

You talked about some of the radio work you did as a young woman. Tell me if you can if you have any specific memories about working with Jean Hersholt [on Dr. Christian]. A lot of people don’t know Jean Hersholt except as the name of an award at the Oscars.

I just remember his being very kind and very helpful, and helping me get on my box — I had to get on a box to reach the mike — and he was just wonderful. As was Lionel Barrymore. I loved him. He was gruff, but he was sweet. They were always so nice to children, these people.

Were there any performers or people on the “creative side” of radio to whom you did look up or from whom you felt you could learn something?

No, I felt I learned from all of them. The only one who ever gave me a little bit of a hard time was Agnes Moorehead [laughs] on *Mayor of the Town*. It got back to mother that she thought I upstaged her or something. Well, how could I upstage her? I was standing on a

box — a kid! — but that was the only one, and was something that was just hearsay. But isn’t it funny? You never forget it.

You mentioned doing The Smiths of Hollywood, which is the longest-running single role that I know of for you.

That was 26 weeks. And it was really fun, because the man who produced it — his last name was White — he had Lucille Ball and Anne Sheridan and William Holden; he was their business manager, so they all guest-starred on it. And I got to do a show with Lucille Ball then. She wasn’t “*I Love Lucy*” yet, and I’ll never forget: We were in the ladies’ room and she looked at me and said, “You’re as young as June Allyson would like to be.” [laughter]

And you worked with the man that many people consider the quintessential radio announcer, Harry von Zell.

Yes, yes! It was wonderful working with him, too. He had so much energy. Very energetic guy. And they were so wonderful to me.

Thinking back, it was so funny, because when I did that show, I was actually 17 and playing 12 — but I looked like 12, and I wore no lipstick, and I would... go dressed in 12-year-old clothes, and they all thought I was 12. So Arthur Treacher would insist on putting circles around my lines... he was so afraid that I was going to lose my pages or get mixed up. He treated me like a 12-year-old [laughs], and I was so embarrassed, and it was really funny. ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on October 20 to hear this conversation in its entirety, as Terry Moore recalls working with Laurel and Hardy, dancing with Fred Astaire, and the challenge of making a movie in which her co-star wasn’t there!

Elementary, my dear Basil...

BY WALTER SCANNELL

Some actors seem born for a certain role, and surely Basil Rathbone was our generation's greatest Sherlock Holmes in movies and on the radio — even if he would have preferred playing Shakespeare. At 6'-1", with a cultured speech that he delivered in decisive, clipped tones, Rathbone came off as slightly aloof and cunning. A man with a past we are not being let in on. A man unconcerned with trifles. Look at the way he turned the routine role of Pontius Pilate (in the 1935 film *Last Days of Pompeii*) into a commanding performance. Yet by coming off as too intelligent and inflexible to win our sympathy, he could be neither a leading man nor a character actor.

There seems to be nothing in his background to account for his acting career. Philip St. John Basil Rathbone was the child of a British mining engineer and his wife, a violinist. He was born on June 13, 1892 in Johannesburg, South Africa — just as the Boer War was

Walter Scannell is a writer and nostalgia buff from Chicago.



Basil Rathbone

PHOTOFEST

brewing. When young Basil was three, Dutch farmers suspected his father of being a spy, forcing the family to flee to England.

Basil attended Repton School in Derbyshire, but he found the studies too easy and preferred sports (including fencing) and drama. His father wanted to turn him toward more serious pursuits and encouraged Basil to work at an insur-

ance company for one year. When the year was up, he quit — at the age of 19 — and joined a cousin's acting troupe in Stratford-on-Avon. His bearing would lend itself to *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*, but he preferred Shakespeare's comedies, especially the role of lovestruck Orlando in *As You Like It*.

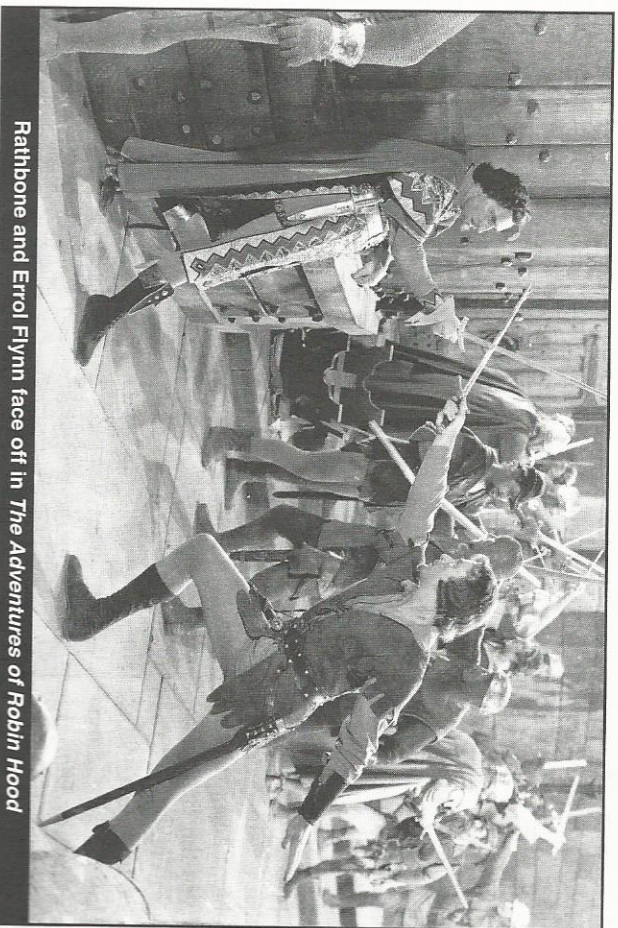
After serving as an intelligence officer in World War I, he drifted to the United States, attracted by America's busy theatrical and movie industries. He appeared in several forgettable silent films; however, his stock rose considerably with the development of sound recording. Movies gave him a chance to present a man of erudite background. His portrayal of amateur detective Philo Vance failed to catch on, but he lent humanity to the stern husband of Greta Garbo's *Anna Karenina*.

Yet his career was drifting toward a rut; he was so good at playing villains that it threatened to become a career. When Rathbone menaced Errol Flynn in

1935's *Captain Blood* (and later in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*), his stridency made Flynn a more believable hero. Producers knew Rathbone's worth and paid him more money than Flynn in both films.

When Rathbone did get to play Richard III, it was in 1939's eerie *Tower of London*, with Boris Karloff topping him as the clubfooted executioner Mord. Years later, movie historian Ephraim Katz referred to Rathbone as "America's finest screen villain" (not to mention the screen's finest swordsman), which many moviegoers of the 1930s already knew. He had received two Academy Award nomination (both in the Best Supporting Actor category) for his portrayals of Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* and Louis XI in *If I Were King*; still, he must have wondered if there couldn't be another leading part for him....

It turned out that there was. Darryl Zanuck, head of 20th Century Fox, had been thinking about doing a



Rathbone and Errol Flynn face off in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*

WARNER BROS./PHOTOFEST

film based on the character of Sherlock Holmes when a guest at a cocktail party mentioned Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's description of his most famous character: "Over six-feet...excessively lean...His eyes were sharp and piercing...His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark a man of determination." It was a description, someone noted, that matched Rathbone almost perfectly.

When Fox began production on their first Holmes film — *The Hound of the Baskervilles* — in early 1939, the studio offset the sharpness of Rathbone's characterization by casting Nigel Bruce as a bumbling, congenial Dr. Watson. Compared to Doyle's original creation — who was young, bright and fairly vigorous — Bruce's Watson was always at least three steps behind his friend.

Not much was lost by the deliberate miscasting of Bruce, and several things were gained. Without the risk of cerebral competition from Watson, Holmes exuded a certain warmth that made up for a lack of a love interest or obvious humor. And with the contrast, Rathbone's Holmes even more clearly represented what the English

called "a New Man," an individual who rose socially on his own rather than through family influence. Bruce's Watson reflected a dying upper middle class that was made to look obtuse and irrelevant. Even the British critics were won over.

In his first Holmes movie, Rathbone kept his interpretation tightly

controlled, without caricature or smugness (pay attention to the way he says "Murder, my dear Watson. Refined, cold-blooded murder") and the public was eager for more. Fox quickly obliged, bringing Rathbone and Bruce together again that year for *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, to stop Holmes' arch-enemy Professor Moriarty (played by George Zucco, another celebrated actor known for playing "upper class" villains) from stealing the crown jewels.

The new-found popularity of Rathbone and Bruce — and the timeless popularity of Holmes — made them a natural for radio. In the fall of 1939, the pair began a seven-year run on the air, first for NBC Blue and Bromo Quinine, and later for Mutual and Petri Wines. The show's writers (primarily Edith Meiser, Leslie Charteris, Denis Green and Anthony Boucher) took their inspiration from Conan Doyle's source material, which allowed them to adapt some stories outright and to use others as the springboard for new tales.

When England declared war on Germany in the fall of 1939, Rathbone

yearned to return to his native land and take part in the action. But he was 47, a little mature for wartime combat (and a little mature for screen combat as well). When the British war office turned him down, Rathbone returned to the U.S.

That wasn't the only bad news to greet him that year; Fox announced that after two films, they were dropping the Holmes film series.

Rathbone and his second wife, actress-writer Ouida Bergere, threw lavish parties that helped put them in debt. That meant playing underwritten villains again. During the filming of 1940's *Mark of Zorro*, Rathbone gave Tyrone Power some fencing tips, to keep the hero from embarrassing himself with a sword. Rathbone remarked later that he was always terrified when the two actors clashed because Power never learned to use a blade properly in defense.

And of course, fans were eager for more Holmes movies. Universal acquired the rights from the Doyle estate in 1942 and signed up not only Rathbone and Bruce but also Mary Gordon, who had appeared in the Fox films as Holmes' landlady, Mrs. Hudson. It was a boost to Rathbone's career, but one suspects it was a bittersweet development; as with his ability to bring villains to life, he had come to see his embodiment of Holmes as a curse. "When you become the character you portray," he said, "it's the end of your career as an actor."

The smaller studio decided to modernize the stories to save money. The change sometimes gave the plots a new urgency, because the scoundrels Holmes foiled now typified very real evils that had been unleashed upon the world.

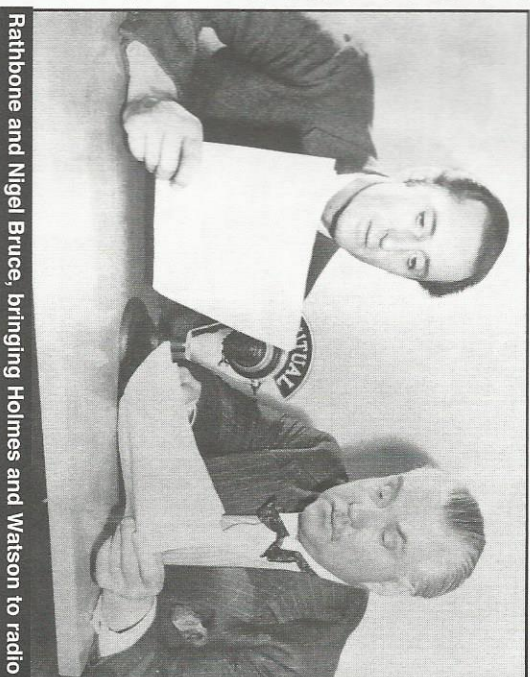
In the first film of the new series, 1942's *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, Rathbone played the consulting

detective for the first time with a touch of flamboyance to offset his boredom. But decades later, one can still get a sad thrill whenever when he delivers his closing speech outside a bombed-out church: "Good old Watson. The one fixed point in a changing age. But there's an East wind coming all the same... But it's God's own wind none the less. And a greener, better, stronger land will be in the sunshine when the storm is cleared."

In *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* (the first of three Holmes movies Universal cranked out in 1943), Rathbone and Bruce must stop Moriarty (now a Nazi) from stealing a newly invented bombsight, beginning a minor debasement of what Holmes fans know as "The Canon." Inspector Lestrade, the man created by Doyle as Holmes' liaison to Scotland Yard, is portrayed (by Dennis Hoey) as an ineffectual character. As for the film itself, it strains credibility with an ending more suitable for a Fu Manchu story. The film even gives the best time to Lionel Atwill's Moriarty: "Brilliant man, Sherlock Holmes — too bad he was honest."

Next, the great detective made his way across the Atlantic for *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*, as Holmes and Watson try to capture a microfilm containing secret plans. Once again, the detective is presented as an infallible (and two-dimensional) genius.

Thankfully, the third Holmes film of the year, *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death*, returned to the spirit of the original short novels and stories. Holmes no longer sprouts the bohemian hairdo he inexplicably wore in the first three Universal films, and the emphasis is once again on detection. As in *Baskervilles*, the villain uses supernatural trappings to cover up a fiendish plot. "Ghosts don't stab people



Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, bringing Holmes and Watson to radio

in the neck, do they?" Watson mumbles. "Not well-bred ghosts," Holmes replies.

The next film in the Universal series, *The Spider Woman*, was an amalgam of two Doyle stories, "The Dying Detective" and "The Sign of Four." Making the villain a woman may have increased female interest at a time when hundreds of thousands of men were in the service. The film tended toward the trivial, but Gale Sondergaard — a female Basil Rathbone — made one of the best protagonists in all the Fox and Universal Holmes films.

Anyone thinking the series was winding down might have been surprised by 1944's *The Scarlet Claw*, regarded by some experts as the best of all. Holmes and Watson find themselves in the fog-shrouded marshes of the Quebec countryside, while a master of disguise is using a phosphorus ball of flame to cover what Holmes calls an "orgy of crimes." In the end the miscreant is killed with his own weapon, a garden weeder — the "scarlet claw."

A poster for the next film, *The Pearl of Death*, advertised: "A girl risked everything for it! 20 men lost their lives for it! WHO was the CREEPER?" In fact, the Creeper seeking the hidden pearl was acromegalic actor Rondo Hatton. The series got back on track with *House of Fear* (filmed in 1944 but released the next year). A reworking of Doyle's "The Five Orange Pips," this outing has Holmes investigating ghostly deaths linked to a social club, only to find that the supposed victims are very much alive.

Moriarty (played by Henry Daniell, a soft-spoken English actor who was born to play the part) returned for *The Woman in Green*. Holmes and Watson investigate when a number of attractive

women are murdered and their right forefingers cut off in "the greatest crime wave since Jack the Ripper." The motive is absurd yet ingenious: to blackmail wealthy men by convincing them that they had killed the victims during mental blackouts induced by hypnosis. This scenario leads Holmes to fake a trance imposed by lovely, stately Hillary Brooke.

Such cleverness was lacking in *Pursuit to Algiers*, a disappointing entry taking place largely aboard a Mediterranean ocean liner as Holmes and Watson protect a prince from assassination. The entry relies more on comic relief than detection. By contrast, 1946's *Terror by Night* occurs mostly on a speeding train, with a tightly woven plot about a supposedly stolen diamond.

The last film in the series, 1946's *Dressed to Kill* starts with a murder and the theft of a music box made by prison inmates. For once, Watson solves the mystery when he suggests the musical notes might correspond to the alphabet. Holmes is lured into a trap by a *femme fatale* but escapes in time to recover stolen bank plates.

Universal was delighted with the series, but Rathbone was growing tired of films in general — and particularly weary of playing a role that had eclipsed him — and he declined to renew his film or radio contracts. Rathbone made occasional stabs at a weekly radio series — specifically, 1947's *Scotland Yard's Inspector Burke* and 1949's *Tales of Fatima* (in which he played himself, solving crimes with the help of a mysterious female voice), but both shows were gone within a year of their debuts.

Over the next decade, Rathbone worked on the legitimate stage in America and England (winning a Tony



I melt with you: Rathbone and Vincent Price in *Tales of Terror*

Award for his portrayal of Dr. Sloper in *The Heiress*) and appeared on a number of television shows (including the video version of *Suspense*, which allowed him to reprise the role of Sherlock Holmes). He brightened several films (including Danny Kaye's rollicking *The Court Jester*, Humphrey Bogart's offbeat comedy *We're No Angels*, and Roger Corman's *Tales of Terror*) by virtually spoofing the villainous characters of his past. For the latter film, producer Corman staged a publicity photo in which the movie's stars — Rathbone, Karloff, Vincent Price, and Peter Lorre — conversed with one another from coffins.

The aging British star offset the erosion of his stature as an actor by touring the U.S. in a one-man show, *An Evening with Basil Rathbone*. But he still had debts to pay and lent his name — certainly not his talent — to two low-budget science-fiction films, *Planet of Blood* and *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet*. And, like countless aging actors of the

time, Rathbone even entered the "beach party" genre, playing a sinister lawyer in *The Ghost in the Invisible Bikini*.

Rathbone succumbed to a heart attack in 1967, although many moviegoers might have been surprised to learn he had not died a long time before. He may have thought of himself as a failure in films because he was never given the types of roles he wanted; however, time and again Rathbone played the roles we wanted to watch him in. And even today, after countless revivals of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous character — some featuring excellent actors — no one has better captured the mysterious qualities of Sherlock Holmes. Watching him some seventy years later, one still gets a thrill when he makes that all-important declaration...

"The game's afoot."

■
To hear Basil Rathbone on radio, tune in to *Those Were the Days* on October 27 and to *Radio's Golden Age* on November 4.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: THE FIRST ALL-STAR COLLEGE GAME

BY STUART ALLARD

Throughout the 1920s and early '30s, the fledgling National Football League consistently played second fiddle to the college game. Even though the NFL had fewer teams and proven, higher-caliber talent, it was perceived by many as the place where college heroes went to stnd. For example, Hall of Fame quarterback "Slingin' Sammy" Baugh was a national celebrity at Texas Christian University long before he took a snap for the Washington Redskins.

At the height of the Great Depression, league founder and Chicago Bears owner George Halas permitted an occasional series of exhibitions pitting the proven pros against the cocky college kids. He agreed to such matchups partially for the publicity, but also to drum up money for the financially strapped NFL. These face-offs have been largely buried by the sands of time, as most of the

Stuart Allard is a writer and sports enthusiast from Downers Grove, Illinois.

games were merely local rivalries — and most were blowouts on the NFL's end. Enter Arch Ward. The longtime sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and

the driving force behind Major League Baseball's All-Star Game, Ward proposed an annual exhibition that took the pro-versus-amateurs concept one step further. Every August, the previous year's NFL champion would take on last season's top collegiate seniors, regardless of the fact that some of those players were newly minted pros. Also, like the baseball midsummer classic, the college roster would be determined by a national vote. After finagling a deal with several local charities — and despite Halas' insistence that the NFL take a share of the profits — the Chicago College All-Star Game was born.

The first game was set for August 31, 1934 at Soldier Field. The Chicago Bears, the previous year's NFL champions, took a bus down from Wrigley Field to play a collegiate Who's Who that included future Green Bay Packers great Joe Laws and legendary Michigan halfback Herman Everhardus. Another future Packers, halfback George Sauer, was the All-Star co-captain. Defense told the story, as the Bears and All-Stars played to a scoreless tie. As the Associated Press reported, "the Bears found themselves outmaneuvered in everything but forward passing."

After playing to a packed house in 1934, a second All-Star Game was inevitable. When the champion New York Giants turned the *Tribune* down, the runner-up Bears offered to play the College All-Stars again in 1935. The amateur team featured two players that would later become famous outside of sports. The starting quarterback was a standout from North Dakota named Irv Kupcinet. His center was a strapping lad from Michigan named Gerald Ford. Alas, the future president and newspaper man were no match for the pros, as the Bears

finally eked out a 5-0 victory against the college kids.

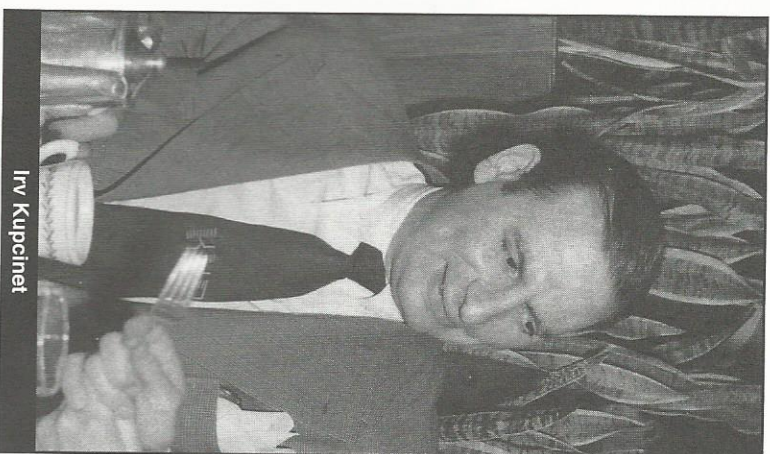
After playing the Detroit Lions to a 7-7 tie in 1936, the College All-Stars finally beat the pros in 1937. Sammy Baugh was the hero, passing the ball to LSU tight end Gaynell Tinsley for the sole touchdown of the game. The Green Bay Packers blew two easy scoring opportunities and lost 6-0.

If the first four games were largely defensive affairs, than the 1938 classic was a shootout. With "Slingin' Sammy" on the pro end of the ball, the college kids overwhelmed the Redskins, 28-16.

Even though the college vs. pros concept was clever and inventive for its time, it became increasingly clear that most of these games were pretty one-sided, normally in the pros' favor. To



George Halas



Irv Kupcinet

make matters worse, coaches and players were concerned about injuries, not to mention the futility of playing an extra game every year for little or no money. NFL superstars would sit out the classic, and college greats who were voted in gave the *Trib* a polite “thanks, but no thanks.” There were seven such exhibitions in 1939, although the Soldier Field game was considered to be the crown jewel. By the late 1960s, the Chicago College All-Star Game was the last man standing. Crowds were shrinking, its relevance dying.

If the amateurs vs. pros matchup was fading from the public consciousness during the 1960s and ‘70s, then the 1976 classic almost certainly killed the game. On paper and in hindsight, it seemed like an interesting matchup: the Super Bowl

champion Pittsburgh Steelers — led by quarterback Terry Bradshaw and the famed “Steel Curtain” defense — against a collection of soon-to-be NFL rookies, including Chuck Muncie, Lee Roy Selmon, Mike Pruitt, and Jackie Slater. Ironically enough, the starting quarterback of the college team was Mike Kruczek, the Steelers’ second-round draft pick that year.

Sadly, this assemblage of future Pro Bowlers were no match for the stars of “now.” The Steelers dominated on both sides of the ball, mounting a 24-0 lead with 1:22 left in the third quarter. Suddenly, a thunderstorm made play impossible and the field officials called for a delay. Looking to dry off and avoid further humiliation, players on both teams left the field. As they sprinted back to the locker rooms, a crowd of about 12,000 booted, charged the field and ripped out the goal posts. NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle, who was watching the game from New York City, decided the game would not be resumed. Facing a public relations disaster and diminishing returns, Chicago Tribune Charities cancelled the event a week later.

The pros won the all-time series with 31 wins, nine losses, and two ties.

Even though the Chicago Charity College All-Star Game is gone and all but forgotten, its impact can be felt today. *Tribune* Charities raised over \$4 million during the game’s four-decade run, and despite the disaster of ‘76 the organization stands strong today. The debate as to whether a college team could beat an NFL team lingers on in a new generation of fans, many of whom might be unaware that such exhibitions once existed — and that they would produce an obvious, decisive answer. ■

Remembering life...

Before and after school

BY JERRY MOE

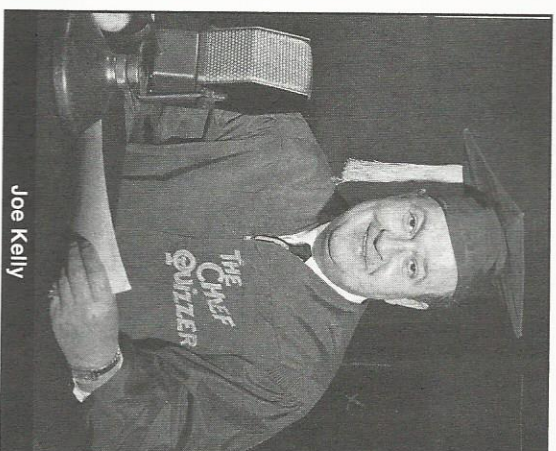
What was life like for a kid growing up in the Chicago area before and after school during the 1930s? Let me answer that question to some degree by sharing some personal memories of those years.

I was born in 1927 and lived for a time on Barry Avenue near Cicero Avenue. Next, we lived in Park Ridge, later on Wrightwood Avenue across from the Kelyvn Park Fieldhouse, and eventually in Edison Park, where we lived from about 1935 to 1944.

I attended Ebinger School on Pratt Avenue. Before school, I remember listening to Jolly Joe Kelly on WLS every weekday morning. He had a program just for kids. I’m not sure if I remember the exact words of his theme song, but it went something like this:

*The a little string around your finger,
so you'll remember me
Any little finger, make me linger in
your memory,
If you'll remember Jolly Joe,
Oh, how happy I will be.*

Jerry Moe is a Nostalgia Digest subscriber from Valparaiso, Indiana.



Joe Kelly

*So tie a little string around your finger
so you'll remember me!*

It was a catchy tune. Jolly Joe claimed to have a magic telescope. He said he could see into all our homes, and announced each morning that there would be a dressing race between the boys and girls. For a while, I really believed he could see us. He would say, “The boys have won by a shoelace,” or “The girls have won by a hairpin.” His programs were great fun.



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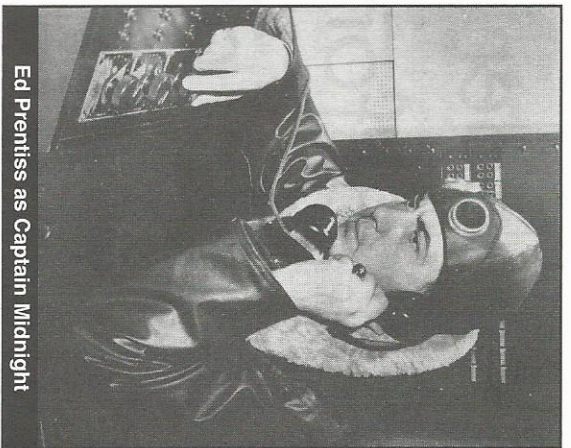
We only lived a block from school, so I would sometimes run down the alley to Pratt Avenue. The garbage wagons were pulled by horses in those days, and sometimes I had to be careful not to step in horse droppings in the alley.

School lasted from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, with an hour for lunch, and times for recess also. We thought the day was so long. What a different concept of time I had as a child.

We had a lot of fun after school. During softball season, we boys chose up sides and played with a 16-inch ball, the standard softball size for Chicago. We played either on the school grounds or in a local park. There were many variations on the game; if we couldn't get enough players to fill two teams, we'd sometimes play a version called "Peggy Move-up," with three batters and a player at every position. When a batter made an out, he'd move to right field, everyone else would move over a position, and another fielder would take a turn at bat, without anyone keeping track of the score or the number of outs. In the fall, we played touch football.

I loved the time from 4:45 to 6:00 pm, when we would listen to our favorite radio programs, including *Don Winslow of the Navy*, *Little Orphan Annie*, *Jack Armstrong*, *The All-American Boy*, *Captain Midnight*, and others. There was one program which I especially loved, called *Pretty Kitty Kelly*, about an Irish girl who comes to America and has many adventures.

I used to send in for the special offers, such as Orphan Annie's Decoder Pin and Ovaline Mug, Jack Armstrong's Whistling Ring (which was supposed to have come from the tomb of the Pharaohs, I think), and beautiful pictures of Naval ships courtesy of Don Winslow.



Ed Prentiss as Captain Midnight

You had to send in box tops or seals indicating the purchase of their sponsor's product, plus a coin (maybe a dime or quarter) to cover the cost of postage. How I would watch the mail to await the arrival of these treasures!

The kids on our block used to play all kinds of games in the streets or in the empty lots (there were still many empty lots in those days). We called them "prairies," which I'm sure goes back to the pioneer days. (After all, Illinois is the "Prairie State.") It was common for one of us to say "Let's go out in the prairie and play," and head over to the empty lot. We played "Kick the Can," "Red Rover, Red Rover," "Capture the Flag," and many others. We often played in the streets because there wasn't much traffic, but we still had to be careful.

I remember that when it started to get dark, a man would go up and down the street lighting the gas street lights. (Electric lights hadn't yet come to our street.)

We knew our neighbors well, and would often invite one another to birth-

day parties, Halloween parties and other occasions. These were the days of the Depression, and ordinarily you didn't go too far from home. Neighbors knew one another, and looked out for one another.

One place we kids loved to visit was the local Mom and Pop grocery store where there were cases of candy. A penny, nickel, or dime could go pretty far in those days. I remember the jaw breakers, snaps (filled with licorice), ribbons of candy dots, and gun packs with baseball cards inside.

We traveled on foot mainly, but we also had our bikes. And in nice weather we made scooters, taking a 2 x 4 and putting some old roller skate wheels underneath it (front and back). We'd put an orange crate on top, with two tin cans in front as headlights. Add a board to the crate for steering, and you could scoot all over the place.

In the winter we had our sleds. The next street over was quite hilly, so we used to belly flop down on snowy days. Also, when it snowed we could go into the prairie, make snow forts, and have

snowball fights. It was great fun!

Most of us had a bag of precious marbles. We would make a circle in the dirt, and then try to shoot the other kid's marbles out of the circle. Sometimes we played for keeps, sometimes not. We had special marbles — boulders, pee-wees, aggies, and so forth. There were even special marbles with comic book characters (like Orphan Annie, her dog Sandy, Moon Mullins, Kyo, Skeezix, and Betty Boop) pictured on them. Sometimes you would trade marbles with others.

Back home in the evenings, we often listened to the radio as a family, tuning in to the likes of Jack Benny, Bob Hope, *Amos & Andy*, *Easy Aces*, and *The Lone Ranger*. We also played a lot of board games, including Monopoly, Parcheesi, Caroms, Old Maid, and Chinese Checkers.

I'm glad I grew up in a time before TV and computers. Life was simpler in many ways, but still good. I have so many happy memories of those by-gone days. ■

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BAND ON THE RUN

*The strange, remarkable, wonderful story
of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm*

BY MEGAN MAYHEW
BERGMAN

Spring 1909, Rankin, Mississippi. Cedar and longleaf pine rise from the flat land; white tufts of cotton grow from the sandy soil. Reconstruction has not eased the prejudice that sears the average Mississippi mind.

Laurence Jones teaches a barefoot boy to read: Piney Woods School starts with two dollars, three students, and a

shack too poor for sheep. But with little money, a few acres of land, borrowed nails and books, Jones builds a school remarkable in spirit. Piney Woods draws the underserved: the handicapped, the blind, and, eventually, a charter from the governor. Still, the roar of the lynch mob is never dull; Jones can feel Jim Crow's hard gaze on the back of his neck as he sharpens pencils, erases names from secondhand books.

The music coming out of Piney

This article originally appeared in issue No. 75 of Oxford American magazine and appears here by permission of the author. Photos for this article provided by International Sweethearts of Rhythm Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.



The International Sweethearts of Rhythm

Woods is, to many, a hotbed of beauty and strangeness, the divine product of alchemy.

At first, audiences want plantation standards: "Swing Low," "Old Black Joe," "Keep Inching Along." The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi, a group composed of Piney Woods students, sings hard gospel, and, because it makes money, a little pop. Archie Brownlee takes the lead, scream-singing with abandon, jumping into the crowd with eyes that can't see a landing and a primal voice that finds God without trying.

Back in the schoolhouse, Miss Consuela Carter taps her toe and leans over the heads of teenage girls, teaching jazz standards and the art of a sliding trombone. They sweat in the old building and catch glimpses of undeveloped farmland outside the windows as they play.

We went from John Philip Sousa to

*Louis Armstrong.
She put a trumpet in my hand and
told me to BLOW.*

Headmaster Laurence Jones knows good music, and knows he needs money for the school. In 1937, a bus full of music-crazy girls from Piney Woods — The Swinging Rays of Rhythm — hits East Coast venues, sending much needed cash back to the school.

The Rays clock substantial time on the road, frequenting churches and black establishments in places like Virginia Beach, Des Moines, Charlotte, and Fredericksburg, once playing twelve engagements in sixteen days.

The Swinging Rays become The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, advertised as a band "in whose veins flow the blood of many races." The Sweethearts have one bus in which they sleep, and another in which they learn.

Eighteen bunks for eighteen virgins, most of whom have never left Mississippi.

While their friends sit obediently behind desks, listening to retired white PhDs who drive down from New York to teach for room and board, The Sweethearts travel, practice, perform, and travel some more, all the while sending money back home. One of the youngest is Helen Jones, the headmaster's adopted daughter. She's a trombonist with a mischievous aura and her father's work ethic.

Though promoted as "a package of music wrapped in cellophane loveliness," Christian conductor is still expected. There are no gowns, and little glamour. Band manager and chaperone Rae Lee Jones enforces strict rules that forbid extended contact with audience members. At first, The Rays stitch their own uniforms, avoiding the prohibited carnality of silk and satin.

"They had a big old matron," Paul Quinichette, a tenor sax from Count Basie's band, recalls in D. Antoinette Handy's definitive biography of The Sweethearts. "Like a warden — and she'd lock those girls up at night!"

Bussed to armories, nightclubs, theaters, and ballrooms, the girls fill the bandstand and churn out jazz standards dutifully. The quality of their play causes male musicians to raise eyebrows, newspapers to take note: *They play as well as men.*

Soon attendance records are breaking at Cincinnati's Cotton Club, Atlantic City's Rosedale Beach Club, and Los Angeles' Plantation Club. A record-label contract and movie offers seem imminent for The Sweethearts. There is, for the first time in the lives of these mostly orphaned, impoverished girls, a possi-

ity of success and comfort — and also of exploitation.

This much is clear to The Sweethearts: They need to earn a living, either by graduating with degrees and skills from Piney Woods, or by making more money from the band's constant stream of engagements. As it stands, each girl is given one dollar a day for food, and a one-dollar allowance per week; it's enough to get by, but it won't make a career or support a family. Furthermore, the Piney Woods administration announces some Rays will not graduate because of time spent on the road.

So one night, the girls pile into the bus and go on the lam. Dr. Jones reports the bus and instruments as stolen. Patrolmen all over the Eastern seaboard are tasked with capturing the runaways. But the girls elude arrest and abandon the bus in Alabama, sending it back with the original driver, a Piney Woods employee.

The Sweethearts scramble for bus fares to Washington, DC and, under Rae Lee Jones's hawkish supervision, break free from Piney Woods. Though the school and musicians will argue the finer points of the scandal over the following decades, two things are clear: 1) The girls are in demand and underpaid, and 2) it is hard to educate a celebrated jazz band on the road.

Imagine those girls, sitting on the floor of a sympathetic stranger's house, teenagers all, bold but terrified, knees pressed to their chests, and, after years of travel, the skein of conservative Mississippi lifting from their eyes. Their instruments are shined, their lips sore and buzzing from the euphoric jets of air that pass through night after night.

What do we do now?

This is what they have: patronage from a wealthy Virginian, a reputation, passion for music, and audition requests — girls from all over are desperate for a spot in the band. Venues are eager to book what laymen label a novelty act and other musicians recognize as The Real Thing. Latina girls, African-American girls, Asian girls, Indian girls, Hawaiian girls, Chinese girls, straight girls, lesbians.

There's Helen Jones on trombone, Pauline Braddy on drums, Willie Mae Wong, also known as "Rabbit" on sax, and thirteen others, none of them over twenty. They take a house in Arlington, Virginia, a place they call The Sweeheart House, where they refine their musical abilities. Invitations to perform across the nation pour in, and their bus, which they call Big Bertha, is readied.

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm becomes the first all-female, racially integrated swing band, a bevy of lipsticked radicals ready to blow the world wide open.

1941. There is a vacuum, and its name is war. The big bands are stripped of bandleaders, horn players, bass slappers. Together, the International Sweethearts have serious talent and undeniable allure. Leading female musicians defect from other bands to join their ranks.

Anna Mae Winburn's band, The Cotton Club Boys, is picked over by Uncle Sam, and she is asked instead to lead The International Sweethearts. What a bunch of cute little girls, she thinks, but I don't know whether I can get along with that many women or not.

Anna Mae, billed as the "Bronze



Venus,” is a woman cut for fashion: impossibly thin with high cheekbones, a petite waist, and a small but chic gap between her front teeth. During one of their oft-performed numbers, “Jump Children,” she stands in front of The Sweethearts, clad in a sleek black column dress, her hands a chironomic blur: shaping melodies with poise. She conducts, sings, and dances, sensual and in control as the music moves through her, for her.

Anna Mae parts the air with delicate hands and bends toward the audience, her smooth voice confident and coy. “Do you wanna jump, children?” Anna Mae asks the girls. “Yeah!” they shout.

Anna Mae slides past the sax section; the handsome and understated Vi Burnside rises for her solo. Pauline Braddy on drums grinning from the bandstand above her. Next, the trombonists and trumpeters bring it home: the stage is an elegant frenzy, the horn notes shrill and pure. Anna Mae turns to the audience to dance the song out, her thin arms keeping the girls on point until the last note.

The slew of one-nighters makes for grueling travel. Big Bertha goes from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, then Seattle. Piney Woods, though they have sent a new girl band on the road, still maintains it owns The Sweethearts’ orchestra and instruments. The once-symbiotic relationship between the school and girls has soured dramatically.

But the girls are hot. Jesse Stone, who has worked with Duke Ellington and will later be credited as a pioneer of rock & roll bass lines, arranges their

songs. Anna Mae continues to land some of the best talent behind the bandstand; in 1943, eighteen-year-old alto-sax player Roz Cron, a Jewish Yankee from Boston, becomes one of the first white Sweethearts. Crowds come out for saxist Vi Burnside, who left The Harlem Playgirls, and larger-than-life trumpeter Tiny Davis.

There is nothing tiny about Miss Davis, whose charismatic voice crackles with jazz, cigarettes, and *joie de vivre*. She opens her eyes wide when she blows her horn and hams it up in front of the bandstand during her solos.

Even if the Sweethearts are largely invisible to the white world, *DownBeat* magazine in 1944 calls them “America’s Number One All-Female Orchestra.” Sometimes there are comediennes and tap dancers out front, or big names like

Ella Fitzgerald, but The International Sweethearts can hold their own, get the crowd on their feet without any help.

Though the group originated in Mississippi, it isn’t easy to book gigs in the Deep South. Roz and some of the other white girls worry they are putting the band in danger. The Jim Crow laws forbid the mixing of black and white citizens, resulting in separate and rarely equal waiting rooms, bathrooms, dining cars.

When down South, eighteen-year-old Roz tries tight-perming her hair and resorts to wearing orange makeup on the stage. She knows she looks “freakish,” she says, but is determined to avoid a raid on the bandstand.

“The white girls had to put on dark makeup,” Anna Mae Winburn says later, “but, of course, we couldn’t paint their blue eyes.”

The Sweethearts are sneered at when they window-shop together and are turned away from the occasional small town.

One night, after a show in El Paso, Texas, some kids crowd around Roz, asking her questions about reeds. A black soldier offers to walk her to the café to join the rest of The Sweethearts, but they can’t find the café. Roz realizes two sheriffs are circling them in a car. In moments, they are arrested and taken to jail. The black soldier, about to offer his life for his country, is humiliated by the sheriffs. Get out of town as fast as you can, they tell him. Meanwhile, they take Roz’s wallet and toss her in a cell. After a few hours in the dark, one of The Sweethearts, claiming to be her cousin, springs her.

Though the schedule is punishing, they always go big. The Sweethearts frequently net greater applause than male

groups in battle-of-the-band competitions. Pauline and Vi wow with their drum and sax solos; Tiny’s theatrics bring the house down. Louis Armstrong wants Tiny for his own band, and isn’t afraid to say so. (The Sweetheart trumpeters mob him on occasion, asking, How do you hit all those high C’s? Practice, he says. They do.)

In 1945, a letter-writing campaign earns The Sweethearts a six-month tour of France and Germany at the close of the war. The band, some of the first black entertainers to travel for the USO, arrives clad in sophisticated uniforms.

“I played ‘Big Fat Momma’ in Nuremberg Opera House,” says Tiny. The girls are nervous, but honored. It’s a privilege to be there, even if the shows are, for the most part, segregated.

The quality of accommodations and company vary. The USO has not given them the clothes they need to weather a German winter. One day, the engine goes out on a ship they’re traveling on. Another day, a German asks the girls: Does the black wash off?

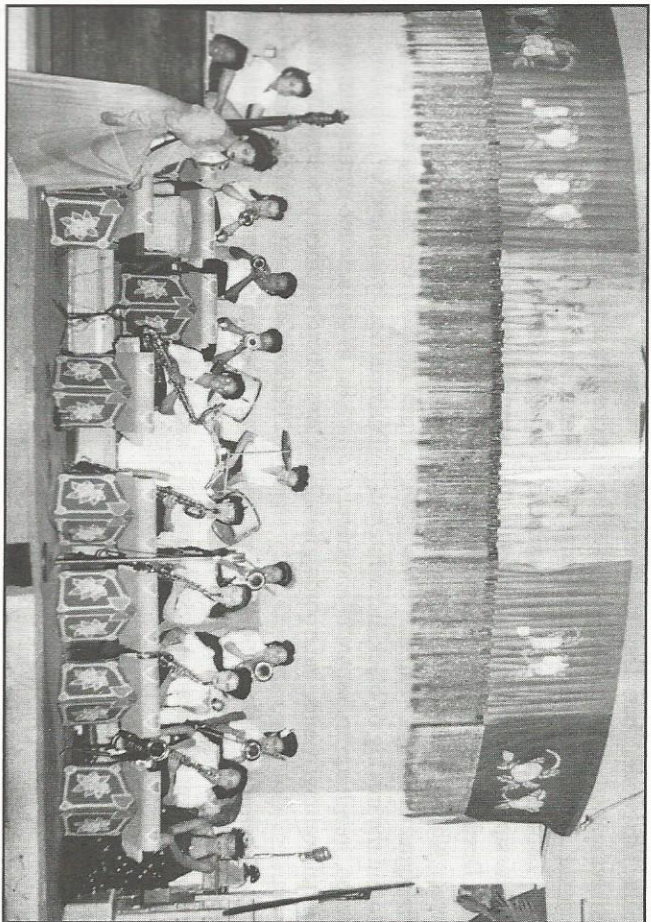
“They thought we were just dirty,” Sadye, a trumpeter, says.

Roz, en route to a show, sees from the window of a military vehicle the skeletal remains of Dresden, wiped out by sweeping, violent raids from the Allies. A Jew, she marvels at the complexity of her feelings. It seems hatred is everywhere.

1947. The boys are back from the war. Bands are getting smaller. The girls are tired of eating and sleeping on Big Bertha to avoid Jim Crow offenses; some of them want to get married and have babies. There are whispers about income being mismanaged; Rae Lee owes some of the girls money. Tiny and Vi decide



Young gal with a horn: Roz Cron (at left) integrates the Sweethearts



not to tour with the band, and each forms her own outfit. Tiny's is known as Tiny & Her Hell Divin' Women.

It has become easier to entertain without talent; sequins and recordings are the new smoke and mirror. Television audiences don't mind that some all-women bands aren't playing the instruments; they just want to see a little leg, anemic gals in fishnets with a high kick.

The remaining Sweethearts, with a lineup that changes almost by the week, limp along until 1949. The sound is big, but the heart of the band is smaller. The real show is over.

In the 1980s, Roz is asked why The International Sweethearts of Rhythm ended. "Fatigue after so many years on the road," she says in Handy's biography of the band. "And the realization that the girls were grossly underpaid and exploited."

Tiny Davis, calling herself "wild, loud, and fat," says in the documentary

International Sweethearts of Rhythm, "I was butch on the horn. I could sing it. I could swing it." In her late seventies, she wants to keep performing, saying, "I got what it takes, but nobody wants to take it."

There was never a recording contract, only the stage, a decade of glory that gave way to varied careers: studio musicians, nurses, mothers, teachers, switchboard operator. There is scant video footage of The Sweethearts, and though some of their radio appearances are available on a compilation called *Hot Licks (1944-1946)*, their only other releases were a few 78s for Guild Records and four songs recorded with Rosetta Records. How good were they? As good as anyone remembers. And, as the years pass, very few are left to remember.

As festivals begin to emerge that recognize female contributions to the genre, the jazz historian Leonard Feather

writes, "It's long overdue.... All these years people have been trying to eliminate racism in jazz, but nobody's done much to get rid of sexism."

In 1980, the Women's Jazz Festival honors The Sweethearts, bringing them together for the first time in thirty years. When asked what she thinks of the event, drummer Pauline Brady writes, "I thought it was the greatest thing that could have happened to us, even though we were old before they made us famous."

In 2011, The Sweethearts are honored by The Smithsonian. Tiny Davis, Vi Burnside, and Anna Mae Winburn have passed away, as have many of the girls. Historian Sally Placksin and Radio One founder Kathy Hughes (daughter of Helen Jones Woods, The Sweethearts' trombonist) moderate. Sweethearts Johnnie Mae Rice, Lillie Sims, Sadye Pankey Moore, Roz Cron, and Helen Jones Woods are seated between them. Johnnie Mae Rice, the longtime pianist, sits closest to Placksin, mute and expressionless. Willie Mae Wong, present for the opening ceremony, does not attend the panel.

"Did all that practice pay off?" Placksin asks Helen Jones Woods, who is hard of hearing, but wickedly lucid.

"I don't know if it paid off—I didn't get that much money," Helen Jones Woods says.

An hour into the program, Johnnie Mae Rice has yet to speak. She clasps her still-manicured hands in her lap. The feet that used to press the pedals of her piano are propped on the footrests of her wheelchair. When Sadye tells the crowd that Johnnie Mae was the pianist from start to finish for the band, applause rings out.

"That's for you, Aunt Johnnie," Sadye says.

Johnnie hardly blinks.

Throughout the panel, the women make benign, sweeping statements; maybe they are kindly revisionist in their remembering of life on the road. They toy with the summary of memory, grasping at its final threads for the crowd's sake, our sake, even if we've been a little quiet and a little late with the praise for these trailblazers.

A great friendship, a great partnership, moderator Kathy Hughes says of The Sweethearts, gesturing to the last vestiges of a big band, the polite elderly ladies in stockings and tennis shoes who smile, the same ladies who once rocked seedy, smoke-filled jazz establishments in Harlem and Jersey to standing-room-only crowds.

Perhaps the panel has taken the girls back to one of those nights, the Midwest whizzing by as they lie on bunks in Big Bertha. Supper in a brown bag. Doing hair and makeup in the hot parking lot of a jip joint, customers already lining the block, eager to score a seat. Wild applause and dancing in the aisles as the girls tumble into "Jump Children." Blue smoke wafts onto the stage. Tiny is on her feet, waving her horn. Lips burn in the bandstand. Count Basie smiles in the wings as Vi rises for a solo. Anna Mae's smooth contralto melts in the air: the sound of a low note, the space where memory sings.

In the end, though The Sweethearts' determination was beautiful and their actions feminist, one gets the impression that the courage was not for show; it was for the music.

"I'm a musician first," Juilliard-trained bassist Carline Ray says in Jezebel Productions' documentary. "I just happen to be female." ■

SPELLING "CHICKEN" IS EASY... PLUCKING ONE IS NOT!

BY FRED PERRI

It took place in the year 1941. I was a 13-year-old boy, working afternoons after school in a store where fresh chickens were killed in front of the customers who bought them. They were then weighed, paid for and plucked of the feathers. My job was simple: deliver them to mostly six-story walkups in a six-block area. My pay was ten cents per hour, plus whatever tips I received. The tips were mostly a nickel, except when the customer looked and saw that the plucker did a poor job. Since they couldn't yell at the plucker from their apartments, they took it out on yours truly, and stiffed me. At closing time, I was handed an extra dime for sweeping the feathers from the chicken booth.

The counter in this large store was 30 feet long. The first ten feet housed two large cages with noisy chickens. I didn't mind the noise, considering that the chickens knew their fate was imminent. There were over a dozen to choose from. Most customers picked one in ten seconds, but not one afternoon passed with-

Fred Perri is a writer from Brooklyn, New York.

out some woman studying them like a beauty judge. I always wondered if she was giving them the evil eye or looking for juicy breasts.

Now the show began as the workers formed an assembly line. Worker number one stood on a small ladder, grabbed the chicken the customer picked out by the neck and passed it to worker number two. He, with a hatchet in his hand, cut the head off in one quick swoop and passed it to the right. Worker number three weighed it and put it in a bag with the customer's name on it. The routine was as flawless as the passing of the baton in an Olympic relay race. The number four man was the owner or manager, who called out the customer's name like a drill sergeant calling a private. After taking the cash, he took one large step to the right and slipped the bag into a small opening of the chicken booth.

At this point, some of you may be asking: *What is a chicken booth?*

Picture a telephone booth without a pay phone. It is made out of wood on all four sides, with a small working counter and two 12-inch slits for receiving and returning the chicken to the customer. The plucker inside has one simple duty: remove the feathers from the chickens, thoroughly and quickly. After his first

hour, the plucker looks like a combination of a scarecrow and an aged lion. Imagine a two-year-old having a terrible tantrum while trying to dismantle a stuffed animal.

I was familiar with this scenario because on slow days I had a chance to peek in and observe the plucker. Almost every customer was in a hurry, forcing the plucker to work at a furious pace. It was choreography at its best. Most customers dropped a nickel in a dirty coffee mug for this worker, but many took a peek and saw more feathers than they wanted. When this took place they admonished the unseen plucker in their native tongues with words that seasoned sailors had not heard. Although it took place a long time ago, I can still picture a small Russian woman yelling loudly into the slit of the booth, as a feather flew into her open mouth.

And so it came to pass, on a rainy Thursday afternoon, the plucker became sick and had to go home, and I, the 13-year-old delivery boy, became an emergency plucker.

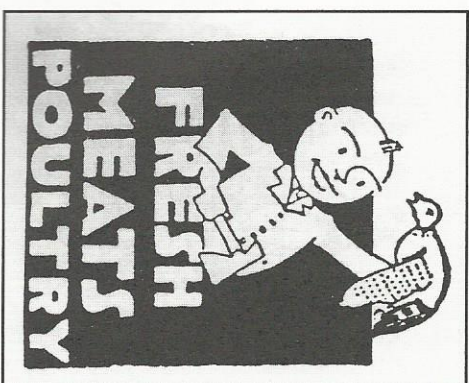
"Hey kid," the owner barked, "No more deliveries this afternoon. You'll have to pluck until Irving comes back!"

"...But I don't know how... I've never..."

"I know, I know. Just do the best you can. I saw you peeking in the other day, so you know what it's all about!"

Of course, I knew. We were young and small but always curious, and what I saw cannot be described by the best of poets. I tried not to think of holding a headless warm chicken in one hand, and "undressing" it with the other. Actually, I had no choice: I owed one of the older kids sixty cents, and I had to pay up by Friday.

I worked as fast my hands would



allow, while my boss roared like a lion: "Hurry up, kid, the customers are waiting!"

Many customers looked into the bag and were not happy with the results. As they were unaware that a skinny kid was in the booth, each one left with a negative vocal outburst. The following are a few that I can never forget:

"May you choke on the feathers you plucked."

"When I cook this chicken, I'd like to put you in the same pot!"

"You should fall into a sewer and drown."

"May a bolt of lightning hit you on the way home. No, may it happen right after I leave."

"When you go home, cross a one-way street and look the wrong way."

"You should sneeze all day long, and run out of tissues five minutes from now."

"May your wife do to you what that butcher did to my chicken."

That night I stopped eating chicken. Ten years later, I was married. It took my wife another ten years to get me to eat chicken again — and to this day I keep looking for feathers. ■

From Sonnets to Soapspots

The career of Frank Baxter, television's first academic superstar

BY ERIC NIDEROST

The year 1953 was crowded with newsworthy events: Dwight D. Eisenhower became President, Communist dictator Joseph Stalin died, and the Korean War finally ended after a bloody stalemate of three years. That September, Dr. Frank C. Baxter, a bald and bespectacled Professor of English Literature at the University of Southern California, became the host of a television show devoted to William Shakespeare. In a development that must have surprised almost everyone involved, the show was an instant hit with the public.

Production values were modest, even spartan, consisting primarily of Baxter, a lecturer, and a few props. But the professor's personality was charismatic, and his obvious love of his subject made his viewers care as well. His *Shakespeare on TV* series can be considered the direct ancestor of much of

Eric Niderost is a writer from Union City, California.

today's PBS programming and college distance learning.

He was an unlikely celebrity, but for nearly twenty years — from 1953 to 1970 — Dr. Baxter was a familiar figure not only as an educator, but as the host of countless television dramas and documentaries. In addition, he turned up on variety programs, and even guested on sitcoms of the era. He was a household name, a distinction few academics could claim (with the possible exception of Albert Einstein).

Later, Dr. Baxter started in a series of television shows dedicated to popular science and sponsored by Bell Telephone. After their initial airings, these programs enjoyed new life as 16 mm films, distributed to schoolrooms throughout the United States.

If the television programs made Baxter famous, the 16 mm films made him nearly immortal, leaving an indelible memory and making him an icon to millions of students who grew during the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, such titles as *Our Mr. Sun* and *Hemo the Magnificent* were shown well into the 1980s, winning new fans for "Dr. Frank."

Francis Condie Baxter was born in Newbold, New Jersey in May 1896, the son of a salesman. He went to work at eight years of age, which was common enough at the turn of the century. But his small child's income was probably needed, since his parents were divorced. He had a domineering mother, who ruled his life with an "iron hand" until he was well into his thirties.

Baxter was working as an accountant, while still in his teens; when World War I broke out in 1917, he joined the U.S. Army Medical Corps. Baxter was stationed in Nantes, France but didn't experience combat. He emerged from the war unscathed, suffering no wounds except when a case of salmon fell on his foot — as he said later, "It gives me a picturesque limp on rainy days."

Baxter decided to become a teacher, which he later said was "the most exciting thing in the world." He enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania, earning his BA degree in 1923 and an MA in 1925. By a curious arrangement, he began to teach as well as study. The young scholar became an assistant and protégé of Dr. Harold Colton, a zoologist and archaeologist. He followed his mentor to Arizona, where they dug Indian ruins and studied the desert terrain.

In 1927, Baxter's life changed in two significant ways: First, he married Lydia Morris; and second, the couple (accompanied by Baxter's ever-present mother) went to England, so that he could obtain his PhD in English Literature. By 1930, he was a professor at the University of Southern California, where he would remain for the rest of his career.

Within a few short years, Dr. Baxter was literally the most popular professor on campus. A student poll voted him the



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLECTION

man "who should teach all the classes" at USC, and the *Trojan*, the campus newspaper, opined that "if you haven't taken Dr. Baxter, you haven't been to college."

But this was just a precursor to the national fame that was just around the corner. In 1953, CBS affiliate KNXT decided to put a Shakespeare class on Saturday mornings at 11:00 am — hardy prime time then or now. Baxter was skeptical, and with typical humor said he'd probably be talking to an "audience of three — two retired librarians and a bedridden man."

Shakespeare on TV (a.k.a. English 356A) could be taken for credit if desired. Some 350 people paid \$12 to take the class on credit, 900 audited it, and an astounding 400,000 viewed the shows. Baxter was flabbergasted, and grew even more so as other stations across the country began airing the show. What makes the show's popularity even more impressive is that live television

programs of the time could only be recorded via kinescope (that is, the show was recorded by pointing a camera at a television monitor).

In retrospect, Baxter had been training to become a media celebrity for years, though he didn't realize it. In 1926, Baxter wrote his mentor Dr. Colton of a new part-time job he had acquired: a weekly radio spot at Philadelphia station WOO. With tongue firmly in cheek, he wrote his radio topics would be "split infinitives and the simple life," followed by "mispronunciation and yodeling."

In reality, Baxter did everything on radio: He read recipes, forecast the weather, and even gave advice to the lovelorn. While he hoped it "paid something," he said, "I don't know how it will work out; I have never broadcasted before—and I flatter myself I have NOT a radio voice." Yet as a student he loved acting and performed in many stage plays—and after all, a good teacher, like a good actor, is relating to an audience.

Now, so many years later, he was a television star. In December of 1953, *Shakespeare on TV* won two local Los Angeles Emmys.

More programs—and awards—followed. One of his favorites was *Harvest*, a series which allowed him to talk about the many things that interested him. The list included, he once wrote, "Hadrian's Wall, Old English Inns to Spring Poems, A Castle is Besieged, Gettysburg..." A total of 84 episodes were produced.

Baxter was much in demand on commercial programs as well. The professor could be very picky at times. He turned down a guest spot on the megahit *I Love Lucy*, explaining the rejection with a bad pun: "I love lucidity!" On the other

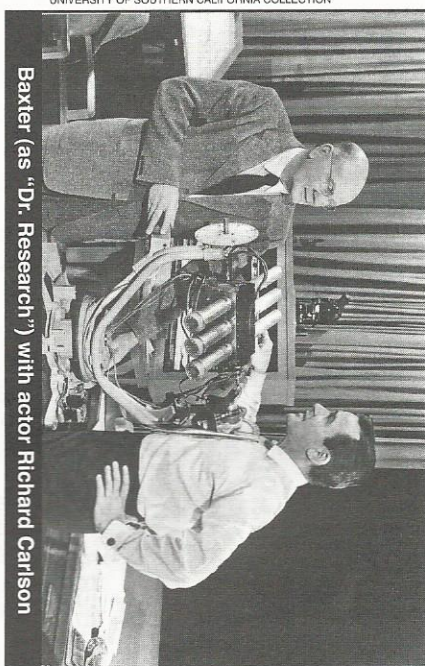
hand, he appeared as himself on *The George Burns and Graice Allen Show*, in an episode appropriately entitled "The Shakespeare Paper."

Perhaps Dr. Baxter's most unusual guest appearance occurred on the June 13, 1957 *Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*. In a funny skit, Baxter appears with a pair of bongo drums under his arm, and tells the singer he wants to go into "real show business." Tennessee Ernie dissuades him in a series of humorous vignettes.

The doctor's most notorious job was his introduction to the 1956 film *The Mole People*, a "so bad it's good" science-fiction production from Universal Studios that starred John Agar and Hugh Beaumont. Baxter, purposely deadpan and very serious, begins the proceedings by explaining the various theories of "hollow earth." Film commentaries today pillory Baxter, ridiculing his arm-swinging manner as "the gesture professor." Those were some of his real mannerisms, but they miss the point—it's obvious that Baxter was treating the whole thing as an in-joke, one that he enjoyed as much as anyone.

It was around that time that director Frank Capra was hired to produce a series of science shows that would be shown on national television. Capra had seen Baxter on TV and knew he was the right person to convey complicated facts in a simple, entertaining manner. In these films Baxter would be "Dr. Research," an obviously generic scientist.

The first entry in the series, *Our Mr. Sun*, was a kind of template for the first few shows, an entertaining blend of live action (with actor Eddie Albert appearing as a "fiction writer"), graphics, and cartoons from animator Shamus Culhane and UPA (the studio famous for bringing Mr. Magoo to life).



Baxter (as "Dr. Research") with actor Richard Carlson

When it first aired in 1956, *Sun* was an enormous hit, attracting 24 million viewers. Though it's sometimes been dismissed as a "kid's show," it was broadcast at 10:00 pm, which shows it was intended for an adult audience as well.

Other programs followed, each with Baxter playing scientists of one kind or another. In 1958, Warner Brothers began to produce similar titles for Bell Telephone. Besides *Our Mr. Sun*, there was *Hemo the Magnificent* (1957, the first of three shows to feature actor Richard Carlson in place of Albert), *The Strange Case of the Cosmic Rays* (1957), *Meteora: Unchained Goddess* (1958), *Gateways to the Mind* (1958), *The Alphabet Conspiracy* (1959), *The Thread of Life* (1960), and *About Time* (1962).

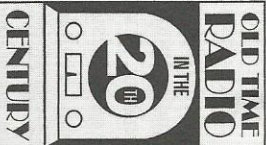
It should be remembered that in the 1950s, when Baxter appeared on the national scene, professors were considered a breed apart—almost a species as "eggheads," scholars were supposed to be remote, huddled in some ivory tower thinking deep thoughts and only occasionally descending from Mount Olympus to teach the multitudes in class. Baxter, on the other hand, was more like a beloved uncle, salting his teaching

with charm and a large dose of self-deprecating humor. Anyone who was lucky enough to be his student, or see his shows on television or on film, realized what a treasure he was. He had an encyclopedic memory, was well-read, and carried a store of fascinating facts at his instant command.

The professor once wrote, "I never use a script, but ad-lib the programs. Indeed, I have never used a script for any of the hundreds of broadcasts I have made since 1953." While it's obvious Baxter had to use scripts for Bell films like *Cosmic Rays*, it's also clear that he could rattle off scientific jargon with utter conviction.

This is not to say he wasn't human like the rest of us. Like Walt Disney, our other 1950s "uncle," he had faults that weren't apparent on camera. His daughter, Lydia Morris Baxter, recalls her father as a man who was sometimes moody. He was a loner, preferred reading, and had no real friends—and although he was popular among students, he also had a reputation as an extremely hard grader.

Yet when all is said and done, Frank Baxter remains a beloved memory for millions, and rightly so. He retired in 1961, but continued to appear at public lectures and on various television and film projects well into the decade. And of course, his Bell Laboratories films were still being shown in schools everywhere. Dr. Frank Baxter was 85 when he died of a heart attack on January 18, 1982. His is a rich legacy. ■



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OCTOBER 2012

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

LUX RADIO THEATRE (6-2-47) "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson, Gail Patrick, Ludwig Donath, Tamara Shayne. The famous story about a cantor's son who goes into show business rather than following in his father's footsteps. William Keighley hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (20 min & 19 min & 21 min) *October 6, 2012 marks the 85th anniversary of the opening of The Jazz Singer, the first "talking picture."*

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE & HARRIET (9-16-45) Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard star, with Tommy Bernard, Henry Blair, Neola Vonn, the King Sisters. In order to pass his lodge initiation, Ozzie must be totally agreeable for 24 hours. International Silver, CBS. (30 min)

DIMENSION X (9-29-50) "And the Moon Be Still As Bright," adapted from Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*. A ship from Earth lands on Mars, only to find the planet's civilization has died out. Cast includes Wendell Holmes. (28 min) *Read the article about Ray Bradbury on page 1.*

HENRY MORGAN SHOW (2-5-47) It's "Radio's Bad Boy," with Arnold Stang, Florence Halop, the Elm City Four, announcer Charlie Irving, Bernie Green and his orchestra. Morgan discusses how jokes are made and appears as "The Question Man." Eversharp, ABC. (29 min)

BOLD VENTURE (1951) Humphrey Bogart

and Lauren Bacall star as Slate Shannon and Sailor Duval, with Jester Hairston as King Moses. An old friend wants to honor a pact by offering Slate half of his oil strike. Syndicated. (25 min)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

BLONDIE (1949) Ann Rutherford and Arthur Lake star as Blondie and Dagwood Burnstead, with Hanley Stafford as Mr. Dithers, Frank Nelson as Herb Woodley, Jeffrey Silver as Alexander, Elvia Allman as Mrs. Buf-Wharfington. Dagwood wants to spend more time with Alexander and proposes a camping trip in the mountains. AFRRS rebroadcast. (24 min) *Read the article about Blondie on page 42.*

ESCAPE (11-26-47) "The Country of the Blind," H.G. Wells' classic story about a mountain guide who discovers a hidden valley where the inhabitants have no eyes. Cast includes Paul Frees, William Conrad, Harry Bartell, Peggy Webber. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (10-29-47) With Candy Candido, Arthur Treacher, Elvira Allman, the Sportsmen Quartet, Tommy Harmon, Roy Barry and the orchestra, and guest Lucille Ball. Jimmy wants to star in Lucy's next picture and invites her to dinner to discuss terms. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

FBI IN PEACE AND WAR (5-25-55) "The Schemers" stars Jackson Beck, with Elspeth

Eric, Grant Richards. The FBI investigates the death of a man accused of embezzlement. Sustaining, CBS. (20 min)

IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT (10-5-45) Tom Howard hosts this comedy quiz show, with Harry McNaughton, Lulu McConnell, George Shelton, announcer Ken Roberts, Nat Novick and the orchestra. Questions include "What railroad is mentioned in the song 'The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe'?" AFRRS rebroadcast. (29 min)

GREEN HORNET (10-31-39) Al Hodge stars as Britt Reid, the Green Hornet, with Raymond Toyo as Kato. The Hornet takes on a crime boss who is extorting money from parking lot owners. Fielding Farrington announces. Syndicated, MBS. (28 min)

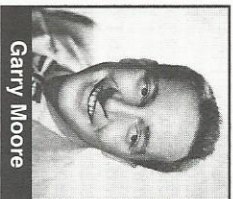
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20 MOORE, MOORE, MOORE!

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (12-2-48) "Old Man Minnick" starring Victor Moore in a radio adaptation of the story by Edna Ferber, about an aging widower who must move in with his children. James Hilton hosts. Cast includes Verna Felton, Parley Baer, Howard McNear, Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29 min)

BEAT THE BAND (6-16-40) "Presenting that new, novel radio game" with Ted Weems and the orchestra, whistler Elmo Tanner, vocalists Perry Como and Marvel (Marilyn) Maxwell, and host Garry Moore, who tries to stump the band with the help of questions sent in by listeners. Broadcast from the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. Kix Cereal, NBC. (28 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (9-26-11) Steve Darnall's conversation with actress Terry Moore, as she looks back on her radio and movie career. Recorded at Ms. Moore's home in Santa Monica, California. (32 min) *Read an excerpt from this conversation on page 4.*

SMITHS OF HOLLYWOOD (2-4-47) Harry von Zell stars as Bill Smith, with Brenda Marshall as wife Nancy, Arthur Treacher as Uncle Cecil, and Jan Ford (who later became Terry Moore) as daughter Bumps. Bumps wants a baby brother for her birthday, but Bill's plans to give her a dog instead lead to confusion. Syndicated. (30 min)



Garry Moore

LUX RADIO THEATRE (10-5-53) "Our Very Own" starring Terry Moore, Robert Wagner and Joan Evans in a radio version of the 1950 film. A young girl's life is turned upside down when she learns she was adopted. Irving Cummings hosts. AFRRS rebroadcast. (21 min & 21 min & 13 min)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27 ANNUAL HALLOWEEN SHOW

MURDER AT MIDNIGHT (8-10-46) "The Dead Come Back" starring Joseph Julian. The police allow a murderer to escape and return to the scene of his crime to prove that he is not really insane. Directed by Anton M. Leader. Syndicated. (26 min)

SHERLOCK HOLMES (9-3-45) "The Limping Ghost" stars Basil Rathbone as Holmes, Nigel Bruce as Watson. A young man claims that a ghost is walking in his family's ancestral castle. Holmes and Watson investigate. Harry Bartell announces. Petr Vines, MBS. (30 min) *Read the article about Basil Rathbone on page 6.*

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (11-2-41) With Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, and guest Basil Rathbone. In a flashback to Halloween night, Jack and the gang go out trick-or-treating. Jack is wearing a devil costume; Don is dressed as a kangaroo! Jell-O, NBC. (29 min)

INNER SANCTUM (10-23-45) "Corridor of Doom" starring Boris Karloff. A man has a recurring dream of walking down the "corridor of death"... and finding a door with his name on it. AFRRS rebroadcast. (22 min)

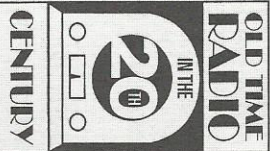
MY FRIEND IRMA (6-16-53) Marie Wilson stars as Irma, with Cathy Lewis as Jane Stacy. The girls see a ghost in the hall of their apartment building. Cast includes Gloria Gordon, Hy Averbach. AFRRS rebroadcast. (24 min)

LIGHTS OUT (5-25-43) "Little Old Lady" starring Cathy Lewis and Shirley Mitchell, in a story written and directed by Arch Oboler. A young woman and her girlfriend visit a distant relative and encounter strange creatures on the premises. Ionized Yeast, CBS. (29 min) *Read the article about Lights Out on page 48.*

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NOVEMBER 2012

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3 THOSE WERE THE DAYS ELECTION SPECIAL

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (2-28-40) Gracie announces her plans to run for President (on the Surprise Party ticket) and she's already started selecting her cabinet! With Ray Noble and the orchestra. Frank Parker, announcer Truman Bradley, Mel Blanc, Elliott Lewis, Mary Kelly, Hinds Lotjon, CBS. (31 min)

VOTER REGISTRATION SPECIAL (9-13-44) A special program presented by the film and radio industry and the Los Angeles Committee to Get Out the Vote, with George Courlouris, Jimmy Durante, Olivia DeHavilland, and Gene Kelly. Durante examines the history of voting; Kelly talks about the importance of voting in wartime. CBS. (29 min)

CLAUDIA (11-2-48) It's Election Day and Claudia's husband David is getting ready to cast his vote. Kathryn Bard stars as Claudia, with Paul Crabtree as David and Cameron

Andrews as Jared Tucker. Joe King announces. Coca-Cola, Syndicated. (15 min)

HAROLD PEARY SHOW (11-1-50) It's Election Day and the early returns have convinced "Honest" Harold that he's going to become the town's next mayor. With Gloria Holliday, Joseph Kearns, Jane Morgan, Frank Nelson, Sheldon Leonard, Ken Peters, Leo Cleary, Jack Moyles. Sustaining. CBS. (30 min)

SIX SHOOTER (6-10-54) James Stewart stars as Britt Ponset, who arrives in Virtue City just as the town is about to elect a sheriff. Cast: Carlleton Young, Junius Matthews, Dal McKennon, Paul Richards, Frank Gerstle. Sustaining. NBC. (30 min)



James Stewart

MR. PRESIDENT (5-16-48) Edward Arnold stars as a president who decides to seek re-election as a third party candidate. The name of the president is not revealed until the end

of the story. Cast includes Betty Lou Gerson, Frank Nelson, William Conrad. Sustaining. ABC. (30 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

CINNAMON BEAR PREVIEW (1937) A promotional recording intended to persuade stations and sponsors to support the proposed Christmas season radio series for young audiences. Announcer John Hiesland introduces producer Lindsay MacHarrie, who tells how the series was developed. (16 min) *This year, 2012, marks the 75th anniversary of the debut of this beloved radio series.*

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 1. Judy and Jimmy Barton discover that the silver star for the top of the Christmas tree is missing. While searching for the ornament in their attic, they meet Paddy O'Cinnamon. (13 min)

RED SKELTON SHOW (4-15-47) With Rod O'Connor, singer Anita Ellis, David Forrester and the orchestra. In "Boysfriends and Piggy Banks," Junior, the Mean Little Kid, panhandles his Aunt's boyfriend for change. Raleigh Cigarettes. NBC. (27 min)

THE SHADOW (3-19-39) "Can the Dead Talk?" stars William Johnstone as Lamont Cranston, with Agnes Moorhead as the lovely Margot Lane. Lamont and Margot attend a performance by a "mentalists" who slurs the audience by announcing that he knows the true identity of the Shadow! Ken Roberts announces. Blue Coal, MBS. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 2. Jimmy and Judy de-grow and take a glass airplane to Maybe Land in pursuit of the silver star. (13 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 3. The airplane lands in the Looking Glass Valley. (13 min)

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (2-12-48) Al Jolson stars, with Oscar Levant, announcer Ken Carpenter, Lou Bring and the orchestra and guest Charles Laughton. Al sings "For Me and My Gal," "Pretty Baby" and "Memories"; Laughton compares his acting style with Jolson's. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min)

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (4-17-49) "The Best Years of Our Lives" starring Dana Andrews with Janet Waldo in a radio version of the award-winning 1946 film, about a group of men returning home from World War II and trying to readjust to civilian life.

Sustaining. NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17 ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

ROMA WINES SHOW (11-18-43) A variety show starring Mary Astor, Charlie Ruggles, and Mischka Auer, with the Pied Pipers, Lud Gluskin and the orchestra, Frank Nelson, Bea Benaderet. Charlie writes a play for Thanksgiving, while Mischka recalls his pursuit of exotic animals. Roma Wines, CBS. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 4. Captured by the Inkaboozi! (13 min)

CAVALCADE OF AMERICA (11-24-47) "US Pilgrims" starring George Tobias in a light-hearted story of "an immigrant's idea of a first Thanksgiving." Cast includes Mercedes McCambridge, Ralph Bell, Dupont. NBC. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 5. The Crazy Quilt Dragon to the rescue! (13 min)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (11-21-51) Willard Waterman stars as Gildy, with Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Walter Teley as Leroy, Mary Lee Robb as Marjorie, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker, Dick LeGrand as Mr. Peavy, Gale Gordon as Mr. Bullard. Birdie is cooking a 24-pound turkey for Thanksgiving and Gildy is hoping to round up some guests to share the feast. Kraft, NBC. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 6. Our heroes meet Wesley the Wailing Whale and Samuel the Seal. (13 min)

WE THE PEOPLE (11-23-48) Dale Carnegie hosts this Thanksgiving week broadcast, with actress Lili Palmer, Betty Macdonald, singer Burl Ives, Oscar Bradley and the orchestra. Announcers are Dwight Weist and Dan Seymour. Gulf Oil, CBS. (28 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24 RADIO TO GET INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY (12-19-39) Jim and Marian Jordan star, with Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, Harold Peary, announcer Harlow Wilcox, singer Jimmy Shields. The McGees receive a package from Fibber's Uncle Sycamore. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 7. Mr. Presto, the magician. (13 min) ➔

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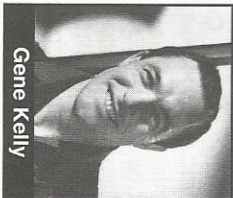
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CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 8. Riding with Captain Taffy and the Candy Pirates. (13 min)

CRESTA BLANCA PLAYERS (12-25-46) "All Through the House" a new radio play by Russell Hughes, starring Joseph Cotten, John Garfield, Gene Kelly, Gregory Peck, and guest Janet Leigh. Three brothers resent the fact that they are forced to entertain their



Gene Kelly

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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2012

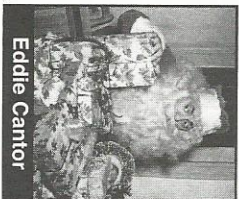
young niece for the holidays. Cresta Blanca Wines, CBS. (28 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (12-23-56) "The Missing Mouse Matter" stars Bob Bailey as the man with the action-packed expense account. At Christmas time, Johnny changes his holiday plans to investigate the disappearance of a performing mouse. Cast includes Mary Jane Croft, Howard McNear, Parley Baer, Lawrence Dobkin, Richard Beals. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 9. The Roly Poly Policeman. (13 min)
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 10. Professor Whiz the Owl and Fraidy Cat the kitten. (13 min)
RAILROAD HOUR (12-15-52) "Holiday Inn" starring Gordon MacRae and guest Dorothy Wenzelski in a radio adaptation of the 1942 film, with music by Irving Berlin. Songs include "White Christmas," "Happy Holidays," and "Be Careful, It's My Heart." Cast includes Olan Soule, Bill Johnstone. Marvin Miller announces. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 RADIO TO PLAN YOUR LIST BY

IT'S TIME TO SMILE (12-23-42) Eddie Cantor stars, with Harry von Zell, Dinah Shore, Bert Gordon, Cookie Fairchild and the orchestra, and guests Ida Lupino and Hanley Stafford. Eddie jokes about Christmas in Hollywood and recalls taking elocution lessons from Stafford in preparation for Ida's visit. Bristol-Myers, NBC. (30 min)



Eddie Cantor

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 11. Fee Fo, the Friendly Giant. (13 min)
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 12. Paddy O'Cinnamon meets the Rhyming Rabbit and gets stung by a bumblebee! (13 min)

CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON (12-18-45) "Christmas Present" stars Paul Sutton as Sgt. Preston. At Christmas time, a fur trapper and his family lose their house in a fire and receive help from an unlikely source. Syndicated, WXYZ. (14 min)

LIMIT BATH CLUB REVUE (12-25-32) Fred Allen stars, with Portland Hoffa, Roy Atwell, announcer Ken Roberts. A visit to the Mammoth Department Store at Christmas time. Limit Products, CBS. (29 min)

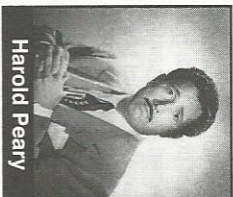
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 13. Judy, Jimmy, Paddy O'Cinnamon and the Crazy Quilt Dragon go through the picture frame and encounter the Wintergreen Witch. (13 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 14. An audience with Queen Melissa of Maype Land. (13 min)

VOYAGE OF THE SCARLET QUEEN (12-24-47) "The Fifteenth Lama and The Wise Guy From The East" stars Elliott Lewis as Capt. Philip Carney, with Ed Max as Gallagher. The crew's Christmas celebration is interrupted by the presence of a mother and her highly sought-after child. Cast includes William Conrad, Junius Matthews. AFRTS rebroadcast. (28 min)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 RADIO TO ADDRESS CARDS BY

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-10-47) Harold Peary stars as Gildy, with Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Louise Erickson, Richard LeGrand, Earle Ross. Gildy heads to the department store to do his Christmas shopping "early." Kraft Foods, NBC. (31 min)
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 15. While trying to read a special message, our heroes encounter Snapper Snick, the Crocodile. (13 min)
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 16. Oliver the Ostrich. (13 min)



Harold Peary

THE SAINT (12-24-50) Vincent Price stars as Simon Templar, who must change his Christmas Eve plans when a beautiful woman carrying a gun shows up at his apartment. With Lawrence Dobkin, Mary Ship, Hy Averbach, Betty Lou Gerson, Ted Osborne, Stanley Ferrar. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

CHRISTMAS SEALS CAMPAIGN (1948) Jack Carson and Eve Arden star, as Jack tries to convince Eve that there really is a Santa Claus! Edmund Gwenn appears as Santa. Syndicated. (15 min)

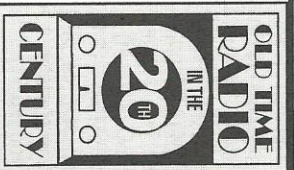
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 17. The mud-slinging Muddlers. (13 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 18. Slim Pickens and the Cockerbur Cowboys. (13 min)

GUNSMOKE (12-20-52) William Conrad stars as Marshal Matt Dillon, with Parley Baer as Chester, Georgia Ellis as Kitty, Howard McNear as Doc. On his way back home, Matt tells a stranger about the Christmas celebrations in Dodge City. With Lawrence Dobkin, John Dehner, Ralph Moody. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15 RADIO TO WRAP, BAKE, AND DECORATE BY

CRICKET ON THE HEARTH (12-24-45) Charles Dickens' *other* Christmas story, narrated by Everett Clarke, with Joseph Gallicchio and the NBC Chicago Orchestra. It looks like a dismal Christmas for poor toy-maker Caleb Plummer and his blind daughter Mary when Caleb's stern employer denies him an advance on his salary. Sustaining, NBC. (25 min)
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 19. Our heroes go to the Golden Grove and the Wintergreen Witch returns! (13 min)
JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-19-48) Jack goes Christmas shopping and decides to buy a wallet for Don Wilson. With Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rocheester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Frank Nelson, Elliott Lewis, Arie Auerbach, the Sportsmen, and — of course — Mel Blanc as the sales clerk.
CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 20. Queen Melissa's Grand Wunky takes the Wintergreen Witch into exile in Looking Glass Valley. (13 min)



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CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 21. In the Land of Ice and Snow! (13 min)

FAMILY THEATRE (12-15-48) "A Daddy For Christmas" starring Pat O'Brien, Bobby Driscoll, and Linda Johnson. A boy whose father didn't come back from the War asks a department store Santa Claus for a bicycle... and a Daddy. Shirley Temple hosts. Sustaining, MBS. (24 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 22. Meeting Jack Frost. (13 min)

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES (12-20-47) Ralph Edwards hosts this holiday edition of the popular game show. In the second half of the show, a hospitalized World War II veteran is taken on a "magic carpet ride" to his home-

town in Tennessee. Duz, NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 MERRY CHRISTMAS!

BING CROSBY SHOW (12-20-50) For this Christmas show, Bing is joined by his wife Dixie Lee Crosby and their four sons: Gary, Lindsay, Philip and Dennis. Bing sings "Adeste Fideles" and decides to dress as Santa for the boys. Ken Carpenter announces. Chesterfield, CBS. (28 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 23. Paddy O'Cinnamon gets stuck in a pile of Christmas stickers. (13 min)

READERS' DIGEST RADIO EDITION (12-18-47) "Song From Heaven," starring Raymond Massey. The story of how "Silent Night" was written and spread throughout the world. Tom Shirley hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 24. Judy, Jimmy and Paddy O'Cinnamon attend the Christmas Tree Parade. (13 min)

DUFFY'S TAVERN (12-22-48) Ed Gardner stars as Archie the Manager, with Eddie Green, Florence Halop as Miss Duffy, Charlie Cantor as Clifton Finnegan. Archie is upset about not getting a Christmas gift from Duffy when a stranger (Jeff Chandler) comes by the tavern. Bristol Myers, NBC. (30 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 25. Captain Tin Top has returned the Silver Star, only for the Crazy Quilt dragon to steal it! (13 min)

CINNAMON BEAR (1937) Chapter 26. The final chapter of the adventure. Will Judy and Jimmy finally get the Silver Star back for their Christmas tree? (13 min)

SUSPENSE (12-21-53) "Twas the Night Before Christmas" starring Greer Garson, with Anne Whitfield, Howard McNear, Herb

Butterfield, Joseph Kearns, Sidney Miller, Irene Tedrow, Harry Bartell. A young girl waits for her parents to return home on Christmas Eve, but the plane carrying them is missing! Harlow Wilcox announces. Auto-Lite, CBS. (28 min)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

LIFE OF RILEY (12-28-46) William Bendix stars as Chester Riley, with Paula Winslowe as Peg, Barbara Eiler as Babs, Tommy Cook as Junior, John Brown as Digby O'Dell. After Riley interferes with Babs' plans for New Year's Eve, he decides to make up for it by getting her a date. Cast includes Sam Edwards, Herb Vigran. Teel, NBC. (31 min)

ADVENTURES OF PHILIP MARLOWE (12-26-48) "The Old Acquaintance" stars Gerald Mohr as Marlowe, who is hired on New Year's Eve to find a woman who has disappeared on her wedding day. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

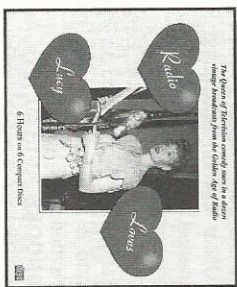
SWING AROUND THE CLOCK (12-31-44) Don Wilson hosts this New Year's Eve dance

party, featuring performances from Jimmy Dorsey, Ella Mae Morse, Louis Jordan and his Tympani Five, Harry James, Kay Kyser, Lena Horne, Benny Goodman, Bing Crosby, Ginny Simms, Woody Herman, Tommy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, Johnny Mercer and the Pied Pipers. Vaughn Monroe, Gil Jull (Martha Wilkinson), Maj. Meredith Willson and the AFRS Orchestra, Spike Jones, and Count Basie, AFRS. (14 min & 15 min & 15 min & 16 min)

GUEST STAR (1940s) "Time Is Sacred" starring Joan Leslie and Barton Yarborough. A man and woman are stuck in an elevator on New Year's Eve. Jess Barker hosts. U.S. Treasury Department, Syndicated. (14 min)

FATHER KNOWS BEST (12-31-53) Robert Young stars as Jim Anderson, with Jean Vanderpyl as Margaret, Rhoda Williams, Bud Donaldson, Helen Storme, Gill Stratton Jr. The Andersons are all making plans to go out on New Year's Eve, but things start to go awry when Cathy's plans are cancelled. Bill Foran announces. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

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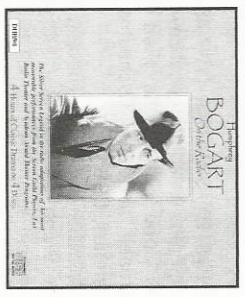
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (11-6-49) Phil and Alice's sponsor suggest putting the pair on television. With Gale Gordon, Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley. Rexall, NBC.

CASEY, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER (10-23-47) "Lady in Distress" stars Staats Cotsworth, with Jan Miner and John Gibson. A visiting cowboy comes to Casey about a woman's disappearance. Anchor-Hocking Glass, CBS.

LIFE WITH LUIGI (3-4-52) J. Carroll Naish stars as Luigi Basco, with Alan Reed as Pasquale, who wants Luigi to marry his daughter Rosa. Whigley's Gum, CBS.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14

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.

DUFFY'S TAVERN (3-16-49) Ed Gardner stars as Archie, the Manager, who goes into training to fight a bully. Ipana, Trustai, NBC.

ADVENTURES OF PHILIP MARLOWE (4-4-50) "The Man on the Roof" stars Gerald Mohr as Marlowe, who investigates a series of hijackings. Sustaining, CBS.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21

SONGS BY SINATRA (11-7-45) From New York, Frank welcomes guest Lawrence Tibbett. With June Hutton, the Pied Pipers, Axel Stordahl and the Orchestra. Old Gold Cigarettes, CBS.

DRAGNET (9-28-50) "The Big Death" stars Jack Webb as Sgt. Joe Friday. A socially prominent man plans to kill his wife. Fatima Cigarettes, NBC.

CURTAIN TIME

(3-22-47) "A Bridge For Martha," starring Harry Elders and Nanette Saragant. A woman's life is turned upside down when a surveyor plans to build a road

through her family's house. Mars Candy, NBC.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

SEALED BOOK (4-29-45) "The Accusing Corpse" is the story of a man who would stop at nothing to achieve his ends. Syndicated.

LIFE OF RILEY (10-29-44) William Bendix stars as Chester Riley, trying to prove to his son Junior (Conrad Bryton) that ghosts don't exist. American Meat Institute, NBC BLUE.

MYSTERY IN THE AIR (9-18-47) "The Black Cat" stars Peter Lorre in the famous story about a man whose life changes with the arrival of a cat. Camel Cigarettes, ABC.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4

INFORMATION PLEASE (9-27-38) It's "time to stump the experts" with moderator Clifton Fadiman, panelists John Kieran, Franklin P. Adams, and Oscar Levant, and guest Basil Rathbone. Canada Dry, NBC. *Read the article about Basil Rathbone on page 6.*

LONE RANGER (7-27-42) Brace Beemer stars as the Ranger, with John Todd as Tonto. A rancher's land is threatened by two claim jumpers. Syndicated, MBS.

OUR MISS BROOKS (3-13-49) Eve Arden stars as Miss Brooks, English teacher at Madison High School, who is asked to investigate problems in the school cafeteria. Colgate-Palmolive, CBS.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11 VETERANS DAY

THE AFRS STORY (1950) Bill Woodson narrates the story of the Armed Forces Radio Service, with tributes from Dinah Shore, Claire Trevor, Knox Manning, Forrest Tucker. AFRS.

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #1 (3-1-42) Eddie Cantor hosts the first show of this wartime series, with Danny Kaye, Bea Wain,

Merle Oberon, Dinah Shore, and Bert Gordon, The Mad Russian. AFRS.

TWO THOUSAND PLUS (7-5-50) "A Veteran Comes Home," starring Bill Griffiths in a story of the future. A soldier returns home to Earth after fighting on Mars for five years. Sustaining, MBS. (28 min)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18

GOOD NEWS OF 1940 (11-23-39) Edward Arnold hosts this Thanksgiving show, with Fanny Brice and Hanley Stafford, Connie Boswell, and guests Walter Huston and Raymond Walburn. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC.

FAMILY THEATRE (11-27-47) "Home for Thanksgiving" starring Paul Henreid and Joan Leslie. In late November, an Austrian and his American wife travel to his family home. Sustaining, MBS.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

BLONDIE (12-25-39) Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake star as the Bumsteeds. Blondie reads *A Christmas Carol* to Baby Dumpling. Camel Cigarettes, CBS. *Read the article about Blondie on page 42.*

JEFF REGAN, INVESTIGATOR (12-21-49) "Some Enchanted Carhop" stars Frank Graham as Regan. A mysterious stranger sends a series of gifts to a young woman. Sustaining, CBS.

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (12-23-49) "Miracle on 34th Street" starring Edmund Gwenn in a radio version of the 1947 film, about a department store Santa who is put on trial. Sustaining, NBC.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

THE MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER (12-25-51) "Christmas Story" starring Leon Janney and Ann Shepherd. A man driving cross-country sees an opportunity when the stranger riding with him dies suddenly. Sustaining, MBS.

IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT (12-22-45) A Christmas-time broadcast of the comedy quiz show, with Tom Howard, Lulu McConnell, Harry McNaughton, and George Shelton. AFRS rebroadcast.

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (12-24-49) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover. An ex-con arrives to play Santa at the Police Athletic League's Christmas party. Sustaining, CBS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9

BOB HOPE SHOW (1953) Bob goes downtown to do some Christmas shopping. With Margaret Whiting, Les Brown and His Band of Renown. AFRS rebroadcast.

CALLING ALL CARS (12-25-34) "The Human Side of a Cop" tells the story of how policemen can come to the aid of citizens in need. Rio Grande Oil Co., CBS.

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY (12-21-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, who are shopping for a Christmas tree. Johnson's Wax, NBC.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

RADIO CITY PLAYHOUSE (12-25-49) "Twas the Night Before Christmas" starring Bernard Grant and Lyle Suddrow. On Christmas Eve, two reporters are assigned to find an unusual gift for the publisher's wife. Sustaining, NBC.

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (12-23-48) Al Jolson stars, with Oscar Levant and, from Chicago, the Kraft Choral Club. Kraft, NBC.

RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE (12-19-51) Dick Powell stars as Diamond, who shares his favorite holiday story, *A Christmas Carol*, with the help of the show's cast. Camel Cigarettes, ABC.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

THE BIG SHOW (12-24-50) Tallulah Bankhead hosts this all-star extravaganza, with Jimmy Durante, Bert Lahr, Robert Merrill, Margaret O'Brien, Edith Piaf, Fran Warren, Ed Wynn. Margaret reads "Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus." Participating sponsors, NBC.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (12-27-44) With Harry von Zell, Bert Gordon, singer Nora Martin. Eddie discusses plans for a New Year's Eve show at the Hollywood Canteen. Bristol Myers, NBC.

SHERLOCK HOLMES (12-28-47) "New Year's Eve Off the Sicily Isles" stars John Stanley as Holmes, who rings in the new year aboard an ocean liner. Clipper Craft Clothes, MBS.

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-30-45) The gang comes by to wish Jack a happy new year and read the last entries in the "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC.

“BLONDIE”

BY ANNETTE BOCHENEK

In 1930, comic artist Chic Young sat down to work, his mind ablaze with the colorful chaos that can only accompany a good idea. Known for his lighthearted comics about fickle flappers, he sought to sketch out a new plotline about yet another carefree creature.

Panel after panel, Young gradually penned one of the most memorable characters in comic, television, and film history. She is best introduced through one loud, exasperating cry: “BLONNNNDIE!”

On September 8, 1930, anyone who cracked open the funnies was introduced to Blondie Boopadoop, a gorgeous flapper named after a catchphrase in the Helen Kane song, “I Wanna Be Loved By You.” Frequently found in the dance halls, the slender, golden-haired heroine was pursued by a long line of suitors — one of them being a wealthy (albeit bumbling) playboy, Dagwood Bumstead.

Bumstead, son of a railroad tycoon and heir to the Bumstead Locomotive

Annette Bochenek is a graduate student at Loyola University and a fan of classic radio and movie comedy from Mount Prospect, Illinois.

fortune, faced frequent opposition from his upper-class parents regarding his pursuit of the impulsive woman. His parents would instead nudge him towards other more eligible women who would match him in social class, while also strategically contributing a hefty sum to the Bumstead fortune. Nevertheless, an enamored Dagwood continued to pursue Blondie for three years.

But with the despair of the Great Depression becoming more evident each day, audiences no longer felt as much enjoyment from a breezy flapper and the consequences of her beau’s millions. To avoid any more papers from dropping the strip, Young decided to revamp his tale through one ever-powerful, familiar, and sunny force: love.

Dagwood and Blondie fell deeply in love, and embarked on a bumpy engagement. The Bumsteads were not amused and did just about everything they could to prevent the couple from continuing their relationship. But Dagwood persevered — to the point of surviving a 28-day, seven-hour, eight-minute, 22-second hunger strike — and Blondie and Dagwood were married on February 17, 1933.

As a result, Dagwood was disinherited for marrying against his parents’ wishes, and found himself unable to pay

for a honeymoon due to a bounced check. The newlywed Bumsteads instead settle down in the suburbs of Joplin, Missouri to a more humble lifestyle — one much more relatable to the audiences of the day. Blondie and Dagwood began to face more realistic situations, such as maintaining a budget and raising a family.

It was at this moment that the scatterbrained Blondie became the more practical half of the couple, while Dagwood’s actions and mannerisms created much of the humor in the strip. Rather than enjoying the extravagance of his former lifestyle, Dagwood’s beloved pursuits in life included spending time with his wife and children, stomaching gigantic sandwiches, watching a gripping game of football, and taking the occasional lengthy nap on the family couch.

Forced to pave his way in the world on his own, Dagwood takes a job at the J. C. Dithers Construction Company, headed by the dominating Julius Caesar Dithers. Although Dagwood aims to be an ideal employee, his knack for bad luck often impedes his wish to stay out of

trouble. Running gags in the strip include Dagwood fumbling a task, sleeping on the job, and insisting on a raise. However, the most frequent and familiar joke involves Dagwood running — quite literally, sprinting — late to work, not ceasing his mad dash for anyone or anything in his path... not even the mailman.

The Bumstead family grew with the 1934 birth of a son named Alexander, also known as “Baby Dumpling,” followed in 1941 by a daughter named Cookie. The Bumsteads also share their home with their loyal dog, Daisy, and her litter of five pups.

Young’s comic strip grew increas-



ingly more lovable and popular over the years, and eventually leapt from the newspaper page to the big screen. Young and his family moved to Hollywood, where Columbia Pictures was slated to shoot a succession of B-movies based on the *Blondie* comic strip.

The first *Blondie* film, released in 1938, starred comedic actor Arthur Lake and singer/dancer Penny Singleton—the perfect personifications of Dagwood and Blondie Bunnstead.

Lake's career was declining at the time, and he freelanced at a variety of studios before signing on with Columbia to play the part of Dagwood. Actress Shirley Deane was originally chosen to play the role of Blondie, but backed out of the project due to illness. The struggling Singleton — whose career appeared to have peaked — jumped at the chance to play a leading lady. The actress bleached her dark tresses blond and hurriedly joined the production.

Columbia Pictures would release a total of 28 *Blondie* films over the next 12

years, with the delightful Lake and Singleton reprising their roles for the duration of the series, along with child actor Larry Simms as their son Alexander and character actor Jonathan Hale as Mr. Dithers. Singleton's husband, Robert Sparks, produced a dozen of the *Blondie* films.

The creators of the film franchise wanted the *Blondie* movies to remain as true to the comic strip as possible. One of the best ways to achieve this goal was to retain the iconic gags from the strip. Almost every film begins with Dagwood running late to work and crashing into the ill-fated mailman, leaving behind a prostrate postal worker and a scatter of letters all about the lawn. Similarly, Dagwood's hefty sandwiches also appear onscreen, although he seldom has the opportunity to take a bite.

The *Blondie* movies also boast a long list of guest stars. Others who appeared in these films include an up-and-coming Rita Hayworth as Dagwood's old girlfriend in *Blondie on a*

Budget (1940), Glenn Ford in *Blondie Plays Cupid* (1940), Lloyd Bridges in *Blondie Goes to College* (1942), character actors Hans Conried and Mary Wickes in *Blondie's Blessed Event* (1942), Shemp Howard in *Blondie Knows Best* (1946), Anita Louise in *Blondie's Big Moment* (1947), Hugh Herbert in *Blondie in the Dough* (1947), and William Frawley (later to secure his place in history as Fred Mertz on *I Love Lucy*) in *Blondie in Society* (1941) and *Blondie's Anniversary* (1947).

Not long after the release of the first *Blondie* film, the series also began a long stint on the radio. Initially slated as a 1939 summer replacement for the *Eddie Cantor Show*, Lake and Singleton continued to portray the comical Bunnsteads on both radio and film. Cantor's series did not return in the fall, and CBS continued to broadcast *Blondie* into the next year — and indeed, for the majority of the show's run.

The show had help from an outstanding cast of radio veterans, including Hanley Stafford as Mr. Dithers, Elvia Allman as Cora Dithers, the boss' wife, Frank Nelson as neighbor Herb Woodley, and Leone Ledoux (an actress who specialized in the voices of infants) playing the baby versions of Cookie and Alexander Bunnstead. Several actresses besides Singleton had a chance to play *Blondie* during the run of the radio series,

including Ann Rutherford, Florence Lake (Arthur's sister), Patricia Van Cleeve (Lake's real-life wife), and Alice White. Both the *Blondie* films and radio series ended in 1950.

The *Blondie* series was also adapted into a television show twice, but neither attempt fared well. For the first television series, which aired on NBC in 1957, Lake reprised his role as Dagwood and Pamela Britton played *Blondie*. The series lasted for a total of eight months and 26 episodes.

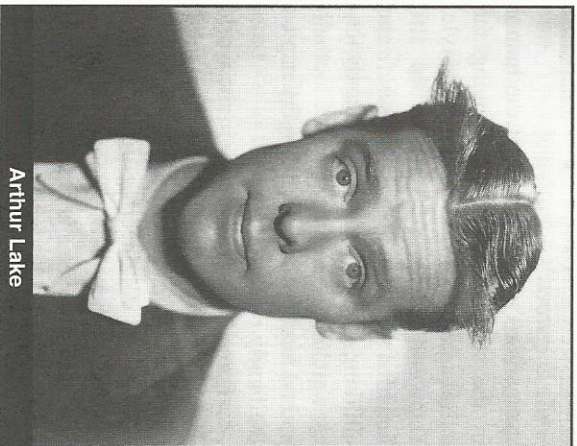
A decade later, CBS attempted to bring *Blondie* back to television with a 1968 series. Will Hutchins and Patricia Harty played the lead roles, with Jim



The *Blondie* radio cast circa 1949: Arthur Lake, Ann Rutherford as Blondie, Joan Rae as Cookie



Penny Singleton



Arthur Lake



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Backus in the role of Mr. Dithers. This series lasted a mere four months. Neither pairing seemed to have the initial magic, timing, and chemistry that Lake and Singleton projected so easily. They simply were *Blondie* and Dagwood.

Although the adventures of *Blondie* and Dagwood have been portrayed on film, radio, and television, one method of storytelling has remained constant and popular throughout the years — the comic strip.

Chic Young's son, Dean Young, has been head writer of the comic strip since his father's death in 1973. Following the formulas that his father put into place, Dean Young has been depicting the Bumsteads' love, joy, and humor for almost four decades.

The strip has, however, modernized over the years (particularly in terms of dress and technology) to stay all the more relatable to today's audiences. *Blondie* often wears slacks and is no longer only a housewife, having launched a catering business with her neighbor. The Dithers Construction Company now boasts computers with flat panel monitors. Some characters are seen referring to Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, and text mes-

saging.

But the story is still the same at heart. Dagwood is still late to work, still makes a mean sandwich, and still thinks the world of *Blondie*. Eighty-two years after Chic Young's stroke of inspiration, *Blondie* and Dagwood continue their story in over 2,300 newspapers, circulated all over the world. Their adventures have been translated into 35 languages and published in 55 countries, read by an estimated 280 million loyal readers each day.

In the end, *Blondie* and Dagwood are truly ageless in their appeal to an audience that already spans several generations. Their animated antics fascinate children, their unique ways of coping with daily situations lure in adults, and their constant demonstrations of love and humor, as well as the laughter they inevitably provide, charm just about any soul. Their ability to face each situation with a smile, hold only love in their hearts, and deliver mirth and merriment to millions makes them truly timeless. ■

To hear Blondie on radio, tune in to Those Were the Days on October 13 and to Radio's Golden Age on November 25.



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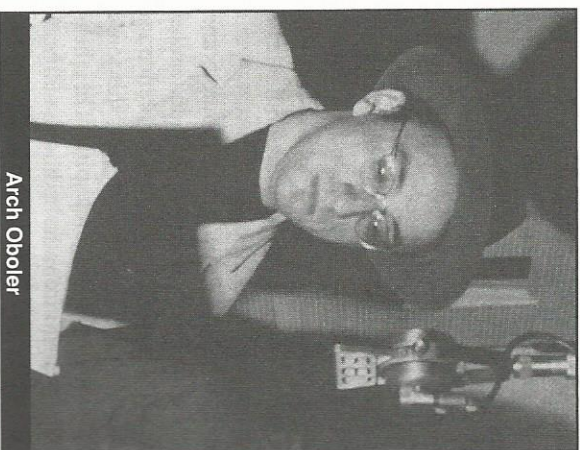
BY RICHARD J. HAND

Lights Out premiered on WENR in Chicago on January 1, 1934, and broadcast 15-minute plays on a weekly basis until April 1934, when the plays were extended to what is the quintessential horror radio format: the 30-minute drama. The program went national in April 1935 when it was broadcast by NBC, billed as “the ultimate in horror.” The *Syracuse Herald* took matters further, declaring that the program “achieves the ultimate in horror, not only in radio, but in any form of dramatic representation.”

The program had been nurtured to this privileged position by Wyllis

Cooper, who, after a year of producing *Lights Out* on NBC, used the success of the program as his ticket to Hollywood. His successor, Arch Oboler, felt that Cooper left *Lights Out* for other reasons: “He wore out quickly because you have to be slightly insane to write the kind of plays that Bill Cooper felt was good radio.”

Arch Oboler was 26 when he took over *Lights Out* in May 1936, and, far from diminishing, *Lights Out* enjoyed an increasing popularity that would soon make it synonymous with the name of Arch Oboler. Nevertheless, Cooper’s founding influence on *Lights Out* would always remain; as Erik Barnouw states, it was Wyllis Cooper alone who “taught



Arch Oboler

Arch Oboler how to write *Lights Out*” and “made him aware of undreamed facets of the medium.”

In the large body of work that is *Lights Out*, the plays encompass a broad range of themes and types of horror. The *Lights Out* repertoire includes plays that range from conventional tales of horror to science-gone-wrong scenarios. For example, “The Thirteenth Corpse,” “Bon Voyage,” and “Scoop” are formulaic tales of vengeance from beyond the grave; while “Chicken Heart” and “Revolt of the Worms” are classic science-fiction fodder about scientific experiments gone awry—although “science-fiction” was a term that Oboler always hated simply because, to quote him, “the day after tomorrow it always becomes reality.” The world is yet to be consumed by a giant chicken heart, so it is safe to say that these examples are fantastical. In contrast, some of Oboler’s finest horror plays are couched in a recognizable reality: horror tales of the possible that play on the listener’s paranoia.

Oboler claimed that if he had to put a crest on his notepaper, it would be “a dinosaur rampant on a field of spiral nebulae,” as this would encapsulate his fascination with both past and future. This twin fascination is certainly evident in Oboler’s world of horror, many examples of which function through the impact of temporal juxtaposition. For instance, “Sub-Basement” is set in the vast transportation tunnels (for many listeners a futuristic concept) beneath a city’s department stores, which prove to contain a living dinosaur. In “Neanderthal,” a group of explorers stumble across a cave man.

In “Gevangenpoort,” we are presented with Marion and Jim Elson, two American tourists enjoying a vacation in Holland. Their guidebook has led them to visit the Gevangenpoort in the Hague, “Holland’s famous and infamous prison.” It seems to be closed but they manage to gain entry, let in by a strange curator who then locks them into a pitch dark, echoing room. They move from fear to amusement, believing it to be a sensational set-up and part of the tourist package. The joke soon wears thin when they are dragged out by men dressed like members of the Spanish Inquisition who treat them as spies—they regard Jim as an “English man”—and subject Marion to a very audible torture with thumb-screws. Jim is ultimately condemned to be hanged, after which Jim and Marion are back in the lightless room where they started. They assume it was all a dream and stumble out into the city’s busy streets, at which point Marion screams in horror when she sees Jim’s neck bearing the rope burn of the noose.

“Gevangenpoort” is a successful horror play because of the conviction of its scenario, the shock of its climax, and

From Terror on the Air!: Horror Radio in America, 1931–1952 © 2012 [2006] Richard J. Hand by permission of McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. www.mcfarlandpub.com.

the depth of its characterization. On this latter point, the rather edgy but realistic relationship of Marion and Jim works both as a portrayal of a married couple and as a portrayal of rather jaded tourists, and stands in stark contrast to the stereotypical portrayal of the menacing and heavily accented Spanish Inquisition.

Oboler did not always send his unfortunate American victims across the Atlantic to secure their demise; some times it is enough for Oboler to send his protagonists into an alienating American wilderness, like James Dickey would many years later in *Deliverance*.

"Poltergeist" opens with a group of three young women on vacation traveling across a snowy landscape singing "Jingle Bells." A number of Oboler's plays open with characters singing familiar or popular songs, a classic Oboler technique to lure the listener into a tale of terror; the use of a popular song hooks the listeners' attention and also mischievously disarms and even comforts them prior to a terrifying descent into horror.

In "Poltergeist," the singing student and her two roommates are traveling on a cart, but the snow is so deep they are obliged to walk. The three female characters are drawn so as to create an interesting dramatic interplay. Kay is flamboyant, and after the Christmas carol sings the blues, much to the disapproval of the rather pious Edna. Kay replies, "Well, what's wrong with a hot song to keep us warm? If you think 'The St. Louis Blues' is gonna dirty up the snow, you oughta hear 'Frankie and Johnny' the way I sing it!" The third character, Florence, is the peacemaker with a calming influence over her friends.

For a listener of our own time, the idea of three young friends not entirely at ease in a wilderness brings to mind *The*

Blair Witch Project. Inadvertently, Kay the extrovert dances on a grave in a cemetery obscured by the drifting snow. The superstitious Edna is horrified and reprimands Kay, who replies, "You superstitious little fool, if you don't stop talking that way I'm gonna slap ya face!" Edna becomes hysterical and anticipates the arrival of a poltergeist. At this moment, a rock strikes Edna on the head and she is knocked unconscious.

In safety, Edna is put into bed, and the three women are forced to cancel their journey home. Kay and Florence are now terrified that dancing on the tomb has awoken a vengeful spirit. They hear Edna scream from the bedroom, and both collapse when they behold what we are only told about in the next scene: Edna lies in bed with her "head crushed flat" by a tombstone. Kay and Florence go through swings of guilt, attempts at prayer and a desire to flee. Waking up alone, Florence realizes that Kay has gone out into the snow, and she follows. In one of the finest examples of the disembodied voice in horror radio, Florence hears the voices of Kay and Edna on the wind of the blizzard as they chant an eerie mantra: "Here we are Florence ... This way Florence ... " Florence follows, and the scene culminates in her scream as she "discovers" her friends.

If the first 20 minutes of the play is like a forerunner to *The Blair Witch Project*, the final section of the play commences like a version of Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, with two men heading out into the wilderness to find the missing women. They find a shoe and some footprints that lead them to the graveyard. "Glory be! They're alive!" cries one of the men as they see the women "dancing on the graves" in the distance. The intermittent moonlight

throws the men into sporadic darkness. As the clouds drift by again, the men find the corpses of Florence and Kay, frozen stiff, with their heads crushed flat under tombstones.

Lights Out plays such as "Poltergeist" are like short ghost stories or urban legends where happy endings are not guaranteed. In the concluding narrative frame, Oboler attempts to resist the possible interpretation of the story as belonging to a traditional legacy of fiction when he argues that there have been recorded cases of poltergeists (in London in April 1872) — which is rather like the authenticating proviso given to urban legends with the phrase "this happened to a friend of a friend."

Oboler managed to devote a percentage of these plays to themes of current

significance. This suggests the pattern of much of Oboler's career. While capitalizing on his skill in melodrama, he fought for the privilege of expressing himself, through plays, on world problems. One example of an anti-fascist play on *Lights Out* is "Nobody Died." The story is set in an unspecified nation in continental Europe, in which Dr. Miller, a female doctor researching cancer, discovers a treatment that has a rejuvenating effect on her patients. The first half of "Nobody Died" lies in the territory of the over-reaching scientist, as Dr. Miller dares, after extensive vivisection on mice, to experiment on a human subject. The patient is on the brink of death and pleading for life. Miller yields to temptation and injects her with a serum that, within minutes, not only saves the old woman,

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but makes her younger. As we approach the second half of the play, we see Oboler's political concerns. Hearing of the "miracle," his "Excellency" Joseph Brown, member of the Department of Propaganda, arrives in Dr. Miller's laboratory. At this moment it becomes clear that Oboler is alluding to Nazi Germany.

Brown is a caricature of the Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, and the character claims it was "my brains, my catchwords, my slogans" that made them look upon their leader (a thinly veiled Hitler) as "Invincible." But using Miller's discovery, Brown intends to usurp the Leader. Brown obtains Miller's formula and scientific notes — "a gift to the State from Heaven" — and has her summarily executed. Brown intends to use the formula to create a vast army of eternally young soldiers. In the play's denouement, we hear Brown amassing his army and injecting himself with the elixir. Brown belongs to the tradition of the science fiction megalomaniac, as in H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*,

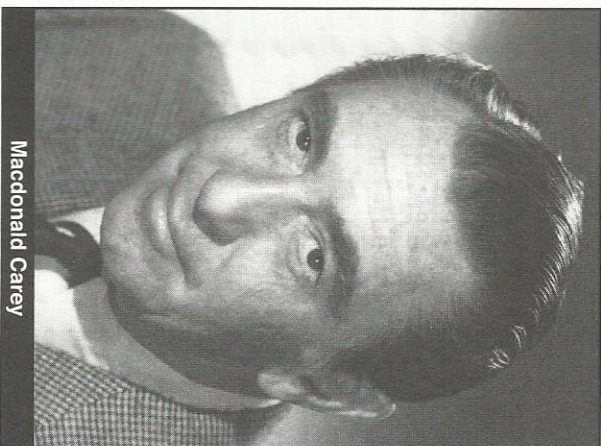
in which scientific discovery is exploited for evil.

There is, of course, a catch. It becomes clear that the brains of those who have used the elixir continue to grow ever more youthful. In an extraordinary three-minute monologue, we hear Brown denying that the injection will have a detrimental effect: "I'm alright, I must be alright!" he insists. Almost imperceptibly, we hear his voice becoming younger and younger, and his words retarding into a child-like singsong. In the last seconds of the play, his mind degenerates into the pre-language phase and we hear him sobbing with the voice of a baby.

Oboler never denied that he was first and foremost a melodramatist whereby style triumphs over content. The extant recordings of Oboler's plays confirm the accomplishment of his technical skills. Oboler also took pains to establish an appropriate atmosphere that would facilitate the horror of *Lights Out*. In fact, he made a deliberately theatrical *mise-en-scene* of the radio studio.

The actor Macdonald Carey described Oboler's arrangement of the studio for a recording of *Lights Out*: "The stage was the biggest stage at NBC. The director would put the microphone in the center of the floor and there'd be a floor lamp there and a light by the piano. Here's this big, big studio and this open little floor lamp with actors huddled around it in the dark reading their lines. There was real feeling of mystery about the whole thing. The sound man was in this umbrella of light way off in the corner. They were very, very spooky shows." ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on October 27 to hear a Lights Out program.



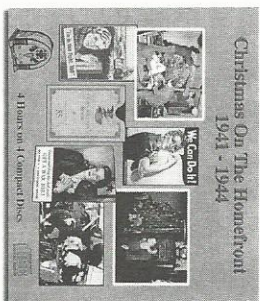
Macdonald Carey

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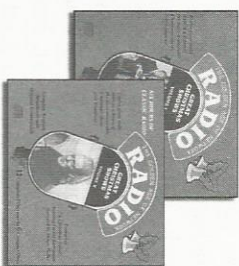
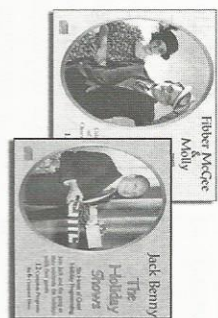
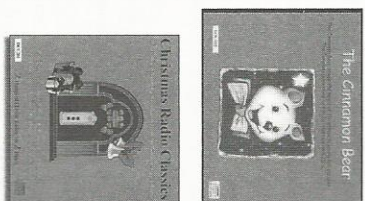
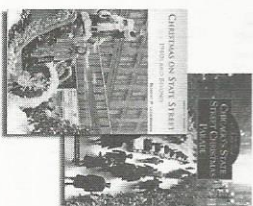
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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING

SOUPPY

The story of one man... and 20,000 pies

BY PHILIP MARSH

Any list of performers who could be described as “zany” would have to start with the name of Soupy Sales. He could deliver absurdist humor with a straight face, leading you down a nonsensical path until you realized, too late, that you were being taken in by a man who loved pulling your leg. Nobody had a better time delivering such a varied formula of slapstick, improvisation, word play and goofy nonsense than Sales himself, and that became part of the reason he was so popular. You never knew what direction the joke was coming in, but you were certain it was going to land. Whatever made people laugh went on the air.

Phil Marsh is a writer and Soupy Sales fan from Santa Ana, California. He has an autographed picture of Soupy but Black Fang won't let him sell it.

Soupy's approach was to have fun, and that never went out of style.

Sales was born Milton Supman on January 8, 1926, in Franklinton, North Carolina—as he put it, “because I wanted to be near my mother.” His older brothers Leo and Jack were already called “Hambone” and “Chickenbone,” they figured the only name left to call their younger brother was “Soupbone.” Soupy later admitted that his nickname was a lot better than “Milkbone.”

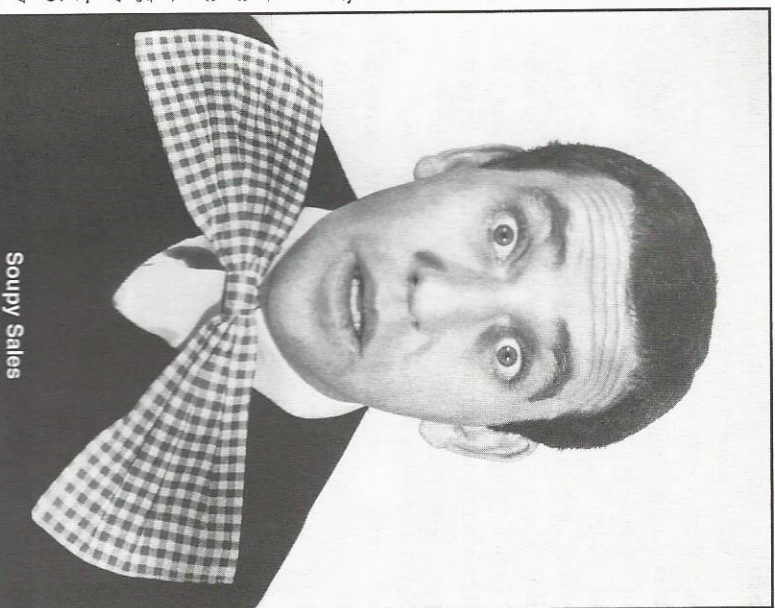
At 17, Soupy graduated from Huntington High, then went straight into the Navy. He started out in the South Pacific on board the USS Randall. Sales was a traveling encyclopedia of jokes, and had one in his pocket for every occasion. He'd tell jokes over the intercom and create characters. He had always been a fan of Jack London, and ever since he was young had the idea of creating an aggressive and entertaining dog called the White Fang.

On one occasion, Soupy was asked to put together a show to entertain the men on the boat. But when it came time to start the show, all the other entertainers had disappeared. Knowing that the show had to go on, Sales put did it by himself, winging it for an hour and a half. “I loved it,” Sales would recall years later in his autobiography. “Very early on I was addicted to the drug of applause.”

Sales left the service in 1945 and divided his time between Marshall College (known today as Marshall University) and performing in nightclubs so raunchy they played “The Star Spangled Banner” every 15 minutes just so they knew which of their patrons could still stand up. Reflecting back on his years working the club circuit revealed the importance of being face-to-face with an audience. “Every once in a while,” explained Sales, “I'd really win the crowd over and... it was as if I were suddenly able to fly.”

In 1949, Soupy started in radio, using the name of Suppy Supman. That changed when he moved to WHTN/Cincinnati and became Soupy Hines.

In 1950, Soupy moved into television as host of the first Teen Dance program, *Soupy's Soda Shop*. He also hosted a late night variety program, *Club Nothing!* A year later, he was in Cleveland, hosting *Soupy's On*. It was during a parody sketch called “Son Of Broken Arrow” that the constantly mug-



Soupy Sales

APR/HO/FOREST

ging Sales was hit with the first of some 20,000 pies that would crush his mush over the next 50 years. When questioned about why he left the Ohio stations, he laughed, citing “health problems. They were sick of me.”

Moving to WXYZ/Detroit in 1953, he starred in *12 O'Clock Comics*, later retitled *Lunch With Soupy*, then—when the show was moved to 8:00 am—*Breakfast With Soupy*. He was almost off and running, but there was one more important change to be made—the name “Hines” had to go, as it was too similar to a certain soup and ketchup manufacturer and costing the station advertising dollars from other food companies. WXYZ station manager John Pival suggested adapting the name of vaudeville comic Chick Sale. Soupy

Sales, at last, was born.

When Sales moved the show out to the West Coast and ABC in 1955, he ended up getting more fan mail than all of the network's other shows put together. Sales hit and connected with the young and hip like a right hook from Rocky Marciano. Sales would explain, "People watched every day... because they never knew what was going to happen." The fact of the matter was even Sales and his cast didn't always know what they were going to do either, and that was part of the immediacy that allowed Sales' humor to thrive.

He became a one-man *Laugh-In* years before Rowan and Martin, with a machine gun rapid-fire pattern of jokes, in-gags, guest stars and of course, shaving cream pies. (Soupy preferred to use shaving cream over egg whites or whipped cream, and the more crust the better, because it would break up into

more pieces.)

Sales was a walking, talking version of *Mad* magazine, living in a surreal world of jive-talking lions, gigantic babbling dogs, a constant stream of unseen people that walked the streets of Soupyville (all of whom had a loaded pie tin in each hand), and a variety of celebrities just as good as any talk show. It was farce on a grand scale, held in place with an imagination larger than the oversized polka-dot bow tie he wore around his ever-present black sweater.

As Soupy's popularity increased, so did his ring of friends in the entertainment business. Nancy Sinatra approached Soupy and told him her father was a big fan of the show. A few phone calls later, Sinatra appeared with Soupy on camera and the celebrity floodgates opened. The Supremes vied for a spot on the show (a fact that didn't endear Soupy to Ed Sullivan, who believed he had an exclusive deal with the group), as did Judy Garland, Jack Jones, Henry Youngman, Sammy Davis Jr., Alice Cooper, Tony Curtis, and a future U.S. Senator whose initials were JFK. A die-hard jazz lover, Soupy brought Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, and Louis Armstrong onto the show as well.

Soupy was the social glue that held together this unbelievable collection of stars, many of whom were begging to be on the receiving end of an expertly tossed pie. Performers just felt relaxed around Soupy, who had a natural ability to put them at ease.

As America entered the turbulent 1960s, Soupy was ahead of his time with an anarchic, everything-but-the-kitchen-sink



PHOTO/FEST



Come pie with me (from left to right): Soupy, Ted Brown, Frank Sinatra, Frank Nastasi, Sammy Davis Jr., Trini Lopez

ARCH/PHOTOFEST

style of comedy. Some of the jokes were old when Rome burned, and cornier than an Iowa field, but they followed the time-tested and proven law of comedy — pull out all the stops to make 'em laugh and you just might succeed. To Sales, there was no such thing as going too far. If a joke made people laugh, it would be in the show.

Here's one of the cornbag jokes that Sales pulled out for the show:

"My wife thinks she's a broken phonograph."

"Why don't you take her to a psychiatrist?"

"Hey, that oughta change her tune!"

He was aided by long time friend Clyde Adler, who moved west from Detroit when Sales did. Adler gave life to the cloth sleeve puppets of White Fang and Black Tooth (who sometimes turned brown when the show aired in color),

then dashed around the back of the solitary set to do the same for Pookie, the frozen-face jive-talking lion who constantly called Sales "Boobie." (Pookie's silent cohort Hippo was modeled after pantomime expert Harpo Marx.)

Fang's unique style of wooing came about when the Electronic Transmission man misplaced a sound effects record of a wolf howling. Since television was live in those days, Clyde grabbed the mike and ad-libbed, making kid's show history in the process. Pretty soon Clyde played everybody on the show who wasn't the host. He was the man at the door whose arm was seen instead of his face.

Once, Clyde appeared as the man behind the door and said, in a Viennese accent, "Hey, buddy! Is it possible for a man to be in love with an elephant?" Soupy: "No, it is not possible for a man to be in love with an elephant." Clyde, holding a hula hoop, says, "In that case, do you wanna buy an engagement ring?"

Watching Sales on television, you notice that he's always moving: opening a door, dancing, sliding, and changing position with the camera. Ernie Salvatore, a friend of Soupy's from college, once commented that Sales was a man in perpetual motion, even when he might be standing perfectly still.

Typical of Soupy's humor was making the illogical seem logical. An exchange between Sales and White Fang might go like this:

SALES: "Now, the biggest and meanest dog in the United States, old Walter himself!"

WHITE FANG: "Araah-reeh-rra-ral!"

Sales must have studied Dogma, as he was always the only one who understood White Fang and Black Tooth.

Whenever you watch a clip of Sales on television, listen closely and you might hear the sounds of the sound crew laughing on many of the shows. That was the only audience Sales played to. If you can make the crew laugh, even after they've seen the same format time after time, you've got a hot show. Therein was part of the charm; as actor Frank Nastasi said, "It looked like a rehearsal. It didn't look like a show. We had punch lines. That's all we had."

It was carefully plotted anarchy on a daily scale, a children's show that was watched by parents, a show where guest stars would show up and ask, "Where's the script?" only to be told, "We don't have one." It got to the point that Sales could ad-lib something that hadn't been agreed on in the morning production meeting, Nastasi could sense where Sales was going with it, and react accordingly. Of course, for the show to look as

chaotic as it did, the team had to be very disciplined. Beneath it all was a loosely crafted program that was used as a road map, with Soupy as the driver. Sometimes you weren't sure how you were going to get to the comic destination, but you decided to stick around. One fact was sure; this was one of the few shows where you went along for the ride and didn't worry about if you got there or not; half the pleasure was getting there.

Sales' outrageous show produced two particularly outrageous rumors. It was claimed that Soupy used to sneak in highly suggestive (for the time) jokes. This one was false, as anyone with a computer and a modem can find out. Soupy even had an ongoing bet of \$10,000 of his own money to someone who could find such material.

As for the other famous story that stuck to Sales: Yes, he did ask his viewers to send in money. It happened in 1965, when Soupy was forced to do a live show on New Year's Day. He got his revenge by asking his little charges to get out Dad's wallet and take out the "little green pieces of paper with pictures of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Lincoln and Jefferson on them." If you sent them to Soupy, he promised, he'd send you a postcard from Puerto Rico! "send you a postcard from Puerto Rico!"

Let's get real: you're talking to children, some of whom have no real concept of what money is... and besides, where would the children send the money? Sales never gave an address for that request, so anyone who thought it was a serious request had got to be kidding. Or wrong. Or both.

Sales did get a couple of bucks in the mail, but the play dollars and Monopoly money far outweighed the miniscule real dollars he received. One thing he did get:

a week's suspension. The salesmen running the station would have been a lot better off if they hadn't touched him. After news got out, literally thousands of young people descended on the station, tossing paint, tomatoes and eggs on the building. The story meant more publicity for Sales, which in turn brought in more viewers, looking to see more of his brand of off-the-wall comedy. If anything, the whole incident made him more popular than ever and created a legend that lasts to this day.

They say a comedian is the best type of show business person there is, because he can work all venues. By 1966, Soupy had made 5,370 appearances on live television, more than anyone in the medium's history. His credits include a staggering 1,500 appearances on the game show *What's My Line*. He appeared in movies, including such titles as *Birds Do It* and *Critic's Choice* and even enjoyed success in music, including a stint on the Motown label. His novelty song "The

Mouse" (describing a dance in which Sales would place both hands up to his face like whiskers and bare his front teeth) sold a quarter-million copies in New York in its first two weeks of release. Subsequent records included "Pookie, King of the Jungle," "My Baby's Got a Crush on Frankenstein," and the raucous "Santa Claus Is Surfing to Town."

It's ironic that for all the work Soupy did on television, there was one particular project he turned down because he didn't care for the script: the title role on a situation comedy called *Gilligan's Island*.

In the years before his passing in 2009, Soupy stayed in the public eye, appearing at autograph conventions across the country. By all accounts, he was still the gregarious individual with the big smile who loved to greet the fans.

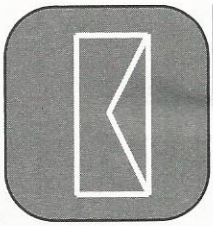
When you watched Soupy Sales, you didn't feel as if you were being talked down to by some person who fed you cartoons and the latest merchandise the sponsors wanted you to buy. When you got in from school and turned on the box, the old Soupster was there for you, and that's the difference between Soupy and the rest of the kid show hosts: he made viewers feel like we were part of a family. Every day was a party on the air. Sales was never off-color, never mean or offensive to anyone. Every day with Soupy was like seeing an old friend one more time, for our daily dosage of manic humor, pie tossing, and anarchy on the air waves.

Interestingly, that's how Soupy himself saw it as well. "I'm recognizable, but also because people think of me as a friend," he once said. "That's just the way I see myself. As a friend." ■



Soupy in the 1980s, dancing "The Mouse"

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MAIL CALL!

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E-MAIL—Just had to drop Steve a note saying how I enjoyed hearing from your *Radio's Golden Age* "Producer" Lulu on the March 25th show. Good to hear from your "behind the scenes" crew! How about a picture of her on the RGA schedule page of the *Digest*? (Bet she's a cutie!) Cats and old-time radio; two of the best things in life! Keep 'em coming. Steve! —CHRIS HEDIN

(ED. NOTE)—We are happy to oblige with a photo of Lulu, one of the "Executive Producers" of our *Radio's Golden Age*. The Autumn schedule for our internet show begins on page 42 of this issue.)

SEMINOLE, FLORIDA—I enjoyed Wayne Klatt's "Ford Tough" (Winter 2012 issue). I first saw Glenn Ford in *Gilda* in 1946, as a seventh-grader attending a first-run showing at the post-Rialto Theatre in Joliet. Klatt mentioned Ford's first wife, dancing star Eleanor Powell. He remarried much later (in 1966) to Kay Gottlieb, who was a high school classmate of mine in Joliet. Ms. Gottlieb carved out a nifty acting career of her own — better known as Kathryn Hays, long-time star of *As*

the World Turns. When the great actors of the 20th century come to mind, Ford is a viable consideration. Kudos! —ART BAILEY

HEMET, CALIFORNIA—I was a little disappointed that in the article "Grand Central Stations" (Winter 2012 issue), there was no mention of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor coming and leaving Chicago by train. They came into Union Station which was packed with people and they transferred to the Northwestern station. One of my buddies and I were there and they walked past us. The only reason we were able to get so close to the Duke and Duchess was the gate keeper at the Northwestern Station liked us. We had to stand perfectly still, no jiggling around while they passed.

I enjoy reading *Nostalgia Digest* and the "Grand Central Stations" article was no exception. —FRANK GRECO

NAPERVILLE, IL—We all just listened to those radio shows in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, not knowing what went into bringing them to the airwaves. With "Have Radio, Will Travel" (Spring 2012 issue), for the first time I understood how actors, producers, directors,

sponsors/advertisers, and radio executives interfaced in putting radio programs on the air. The article convinced me that, as Lillian Buyeff said, "the people in radio were very special." The people themselves were just warm and kind and good and we all liked each other a lot! —JIM CHRISTEN

OAK FOREST, IL—It was nice to read "Resorting in Wisconsin" in the Spring 2012 issue, with all the time I spent there when I was younger. A lot of the lanes and resorts have not changed much. The

only thing that has changed is time and the interstates but the resorts have not. I love seeing readers and listeners e-mailing and writing in from all over the world. —RICHARD PENN

LANCASTER, SOUTH CAROLINA—Steve, I just received my returning subscription "first issue" of the Spring 2012 *Nostalgia Digest* only a scant few days after I sent in my money order. I want to tell you emphatically that this kind of record-breaking service is a very good advertisement for *TWTD*, so thanks so much for that. I have devoured it with much pleasure and excitement the first time through and find that you have succeeded in making it even better than it was when I stopped subscribing.

At that time, I had tired of recording favorite programs during all those years — which was my real enjoyment and reason for listening to *TWTD*, besides the "nostalgia" part. I am proud to say I recorded programs from *TWTD* on 66 60-minute cassette tapes, concentrating on Jack Benny, Fibber McGee, the Big Band programs, theater presentations, the specials, interviews, etc., right on through late 2010.

However, early this year, I discovered a new hobby, that of taking all my recorded tapes from years of *TWTD* and transferring them to CD using a conversion tool called the TsrTech Tape to CD Converter, using my computer. So, in a roundabout way, I once again became interested and enthused in listening to *TWTD* on-line, and I am once again taping *TWTD* programs, with the eventual intention of converting these to CDs. It is time consuming but very enjoyable.

I would be remiss if I didn't call to your attention what, is in my opinion, a clear improvement in the type of articles in *Nostalgia Digest*, if the Spring 2012 issue is any example; the Necrology for 2011 sur-

prised me for the many deaths I had missed. This feature is welcome and valuable to any radio buff, so thanks for that. Looking ahead, I see the quality of future programming is the same high level as always.

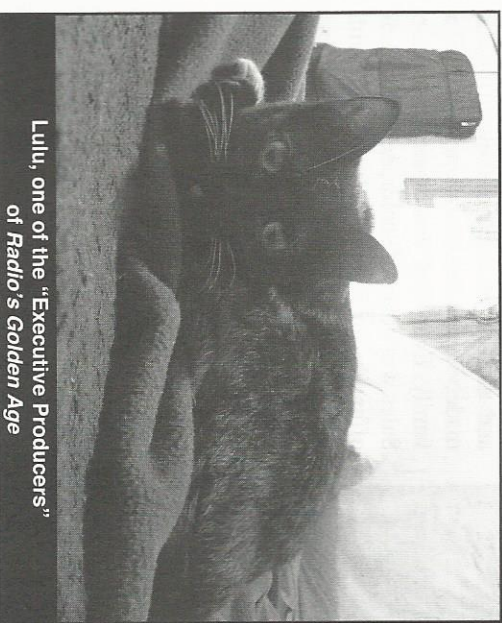
I cannot end my e-mail without telling you what you already know but it's very much in my heart and therefore needs to be said: With the violence, crime, sexual excess, alcohol ads, lawyer ads, erectile dysfunction ads, or entertainment on TV or in current written media. We need to go back to the wonderful entertainment that we all know is the subject of *TWTD* and *Nostalgia Digest*. Certainly, I have missed this in these few intervening years without them.

You most certainly must be aware of the pull of this type of entertainment since it is part and parcel of your very job and interest in life that shows in every episode of *TWTD* and *Nostalgia Digest*. So, in a word, Steve, thanks! I think you can safely say I'm back in the fold! —CHARLIE SENG

(ED. NOTE)—Welcome back! It's a pleasure to have you with us again.)

HOMETOWN, IL—I worked at ABC Radio (BLUE network — WENR) from 1945 to 1948 and had a great time! Mail room, guest relations, music library... Now, those were the days!

I'm reading the Summer 2012 issue now and was so happy to read about Gloria Jean. I remember her in movies and enjoyed her singing so much. (I believe she was before Deanna Durbin.) There was a young boy singer, Bobby Breen, about that same time. Can you find out whatever happened to him? I'm so glad Gloria Jean is alive and, I hope, very well! I'm nearing 85 (this September) and I think she's near my age. Wayne Klatt's article, "A Walk Among the



Lulu, one of the "Executive Producers" of *Radio's Golden Age*

And if you're on Facebook....

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Stars," brought back two memories for me: I was at LaSalle Street Station, in line to buy my monthly train ticket, when I recognized the voice ahead of me. Of course, I stepped out of line to get Edward G. Robinson's autograph, which he very graciously gave me. I knew the voice without seeing his face!

Again, in the 1940's — near Christmas — I was in Marshall Field's and saw Barbara Hale and her husband (Bill Williams, I think) going up the escalator. I figured they were getting gifts to take to their family in Joliet, Ill. I never knew what happened to Dolores Del Rio, but now I know after reading the *Digest!* Thank you for the good job.
—**BETH M. SULLIVAN**

(ED. NOTE)— Bobby Breen was born in Toronto, and his singing career took off in 1936 when he joined the cast of Eddie Cantor's *Texaco Town* radio show. He later appeared in a number of films, including *Rainbow on the River*, *Make a Wish* — in which he co-starred with *Digest* cover star Basil Rathbone — and *Johnny Doughboy*, before retiring from pictures to concentrate on nightclubs and live performances. As of 2002, Mr. Breen was living in Florida.)

E-MAIL— I enjoyed listening to your interview with Dick Van Patten last Saturday (TWTD, April 21). I didn't know he was a radio actor. Also, it was interesting hearing New York actors Van Patten and the Lockhart Family with their New York accents playing farmers from Iowa in "State Fair." (At least Gene Lockhart tried to sound like a midwestern farmer.)

On the *Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* that you played on April 14, John Brown wasn't in the cast (as listed in the *Digest*). Marvin Miller played neighbor Joe Randolph, who first gave Ozzie advice about deductions. John Brown had such a unique voice as neighbor Thorny that I noticed right away that he wasn't on the show. Regardless of the supporting cast, I always enjoy listening to Ozzie and Harriet. And congratulations on TWTD's 42nd anniversary!
—**MARY COOPER**

E-MAIL— We listened to your Barbara Fuller interview today [TWTD, May 19] and really appreciate what you do, thank you very much for keeping such a great time alive. Please keep doing what you do. —**JOHN LANDMAN**

E-MAIL— Thank you so much for coming out to speak at Oak Lawn Library last night [May 22]. I really enjoyed what you had to say. I wish I would have gone up to meet you but you had so many people waiting. I won't tell you how old I am but I was born in the late '50s.

I did have a question: There is a program you play every Halloween, about a woman that detectives find turned inside out. What show was that from?
—**LORRI LAMBERGER**

(ED. NOTE)— The famous recording about people being turned inside out is Arch Oboler's "The Dark." Heard originally on *Lights Out*, it was also part of an album Mr. Oboler recorded for Capitol Records in the 1960s called *Drop Dead!* — and there's a very good chance we'll be featuring it on the October 27 broadcast of TWTD...)

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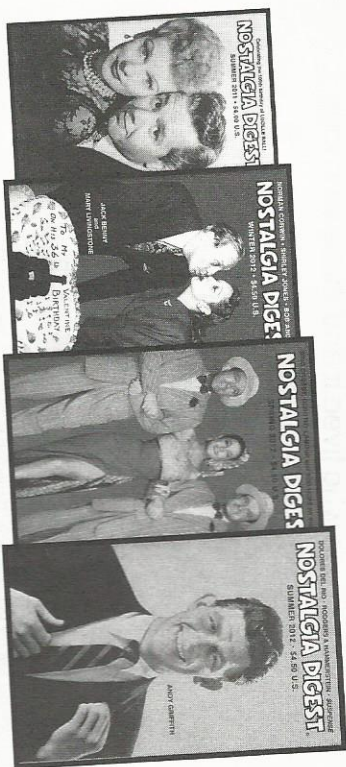
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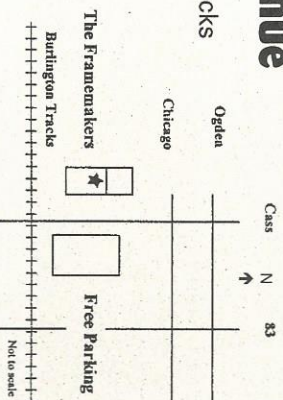
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