

APRIL-MAY, 1995

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND
RADIO
GUIDE

25 Years of Old Time Radio



Celebrating Radio's Golden Age

Since
MCMLXX

WHOSE
WERE *The*
DAYS

25 YEARS OF OLD TIME RADIO

CHUCK SCHADEN'S
NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND
RADIO GUIDE ©

BOOK TWENTY-ONE

CHAPTER THREE

APRIL-MAY 1995

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

When we did our very first *Those Were The Days* broadcast at radio station WNMP in Evanston on May 2, 1970, little did we dream that we would one day be celebrating the milestone that's almost here.

Twenty-five years on the air with old time radio!

It's hard to believe, but on April 29, 1995, when we do *TWTD* program number 1277 on WNIB, Chicago, we will have been on the air for a quarter-century.

What a great time we've had sharing the classic old time radio shows --and those radio *days*-- with you.

We're bursting with pride, excitement and emotion as we recall some of the events of the past twenty-five years. We hope you won't think we're boasting too much, but a lot of this expanded issue of our *Nostalgia Digest* is devoted to our broadcast years.

Actually, we're remembering all those who have helped us further the "cause" of old time radio during the past two and a half decades.

It's been an amazing experience and we know that we are extremely lucky to have been at the right places at the right times. We are lucky to have been able to turn our avocation into our vocation.

We have been very fortunate to have been at the receiving end of a great deal of support... from radio stations, from sponsors, from family and friends.

And, from the very beginning, our strongest supporters have been the listeners of old time radio. You have always been there for us. You tuned in as we added more programs to our schedule and you moved with us from one radio station to another whenever time was running out because of new management, new format or new ownership.

You helped us begin this *Nostalgia Digest*; you supported our store, Metro Golden Memories. You were there on opening day of the Museum of Broadcast Communications and you helped us build Fibber McGee's Closet and Jack Benny's Vault at the Museum.

In 1993 you paid us the highest honor by voting us into the Radio Hall of Fame.

We hope to be able to thank you personally at the celebration party the Museum of Broadcast Communications will hold in honor of the 25th Anniversary of *Those Were The Days*. Shirley Bell Cole, radio's Little Orphan Annie, Bill Idleson, who starred as "Rush" on Vic and Sade, and long-time Lone Ranger announcer Fred Foy, plus members of the *Those Were The Days Radio Players* are scheduled to join us for the occasion. It will be held Sunday, April 23 at the Swissôtel, 232 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago. You'll hear the details when you tune in *TWTD*.

It's been a wonderful twenty-five years. But what about the future?

Well, we begin our 26th year on May 6th and --- hmmm, let's check the calendar. Ah, ha! Our commemoration of WW II will be drawing to a close this summer... then it's the holiday season again... another Jack Benny Month next year... and then...

Oh, oh! Look at this: January 1, 2000 is a *Saturday!* Wow! Will we have a show for you!

Thanks for listening.

--Chuck Schaden

HONORING THE CLASSICS FOR 25 YEARS

Chuck Schaden's Radio Days

BY DENNIS POLKOW

It is Saturday afternoon, and Chuck Schaden is doing what he has done every Saturday afternoon for as long as he can remember: He's sitting back and listening to old-time radio programs.

Appearances to the contrary, Schaden claims that he grew up with radio being no more or less important to him than it was to anyone else growing up in the 1940s.

"The radio was the center of a house," he says, checking over some index cards while his "Those Were The Days" radio audience is listening to a BBC re-enactment of a 1932 episode of a Marx Brothers' Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel radio show. "It was where you turned to learn what was happening in the world, and it was where the family would gather after dinner to enjoy an evening's entertainment together. My family was really no different than any other in that respect."

So how did Chuck Schaden end up becoming the nostalgia guru of old-time radio?

"Quite by accident," he explains. "It was somewhere around the early 1960s and I suddenly found that I was really missing radio big time. Radio had changed so much and most of the old radio shows had made unsuccessful transitions to television and then just disappeared. Television began

Dennis Polkow is an award-winning Chicago area journalist and columnist for the Press Publications chain of newspapers, where this article originally appeared in January, 1995.

fulfilling the role that radio once had, but television was a different medium."

So Jack Benny was really that much better on radio than on television?

"Well, that's one of a handful who made the transition work," Schaden admits, "but even Benny was more vivid on the radio."

More vivid?

"You know, when they first showed Jack Benny's bank vault on television," Schaden recalls, "letters poured in saying, 'No, no, you've got it all wrong! The vault was much deeper, much larger, the walls were this way and that.' Each member of the listening audience had an elaborate mental image of what that vault looked like from having 'seen' it in their imagination over the years on the radio. With radio, listeners supplied their own set of pictures."

And it is that quality, among others, that keeps Schaden's rabidly loyal audience of listeners tuning in. "Thanks a lot," Schaden says to a telephone caller off the air, "I really appreciate that."

Larry Peters has been answering phone calls in the studio all afternoon, but often, much to the surprise and delight of callers, Schaden himself picks up the phone.

"That was a 27-year old who just subscribed to the Nostalgia Digest," Schaden explains, "and he made the very point we were just talking about: That he loves to 'watch' old time radio programs." Schaden says he hears the same thing over and over again from younger listeners.

"You had two things happening when television came in," he says. "First, even

though we all thought television would be this huge improvement in our lives, the images were always a disappointment. Remember, radio stars were chosen for their voices, not their looks, so you imagined characters looking a certain way when you heard them.

Most of the voices didn't physically look at all the way that they sounded, and so other actors and actresses were brought in that 'looked' the part.

"Add to that the fact that the original writers were seldom involved and that several sponsors were needed for a television program, and suddenly networks were in charge of programming. This meant moving shows around and worrying more about ratings. In the radio days, a sponsor would let a show develop and the night and time a given show was on became an institution. Nowadays, even if you find a good television show — and they are out there — a network will play games with you by changing nights and times, or by breaking up a plot sequence with a series of reruns. Suddenly, a character who was killed off in the last episode is back alive again. It's absurd."

So how did Schaden "rediscover" old time radio?

"I was in New York, and came across a guy who had reel to reel tapes of some shows," he says. "They were quite expensive, but I bought a couple."

Does Schaden remember what they were?



THOSE WERE THE DAYS HOST CHUCK SCHADEN HANGS OUT WITH HIS PORTRAIT, WHICH HANGS IN THE RADIO HALL OF FAME AT CHICAGO'S MUSEUM OF BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS.

"You bet," he says. "One was Orson Welles' 'War of the Worlds' broadcast, and the other was an episode of Fibber McGee and Molly."

"Then I would hear about other collectors who had other tapes, and you'd swap with them. One of the advantages of old-time radio as a collectable is that, unlike stamp collecting where you would have to actually give up a stamp to trade it in, I can make copies of a tape and keep a program as well as trade it."

From those humble beginnings, Schaden says that his current collection is some 50,000 shows, all housed in a special archive at the Museum of Broadcast Communications, which Schaden helped found in 1988 and which is also the site of his "Those Were The Days" studio.

"See that guy over there?" Schaden says quietly off the air. "He's here every Saturday afternoon. He just brings his paper and sits and listens while we do the show."

CHUCK SCHADEN'S RADIO DAYS

"Hi Chuck," says another passing visitor, "here's a list of the sound effects we're using for tomorrow." The gentleman is one of the radio lovers who will help re-enact a live radio script the next day. There are several groups that do this on a regular basis, all under Schaden's own guidance.

"As my collection of radio programs grew," Schaden continues, "so did my interest in sharing them. That's the real joy of a hobby, sharing it with others. My family and friends certainly enjoyed the shows, but there's only so many times you can invite the same people over on a Saturday night to listen to them.

"So in 1970, I had a chance to go on the air for a small station in Evanston and jumped at it, and stayed there until the station changed ownership in 1975."

It was at that point that Schaden took "Those Were The Days" to Classical radio station WNIB (97.1 FM) every Saturday



CHUCK OPENS FIBBER MC GEE'S CLOSET AT THE MUSEUM OF BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS

afternoon from 1-5pm, which has been the show's home for two decades since.

A year later, Schaden opened Metro Golden Memories, his "showbiz nostalgia" shop on the Northwest side which began in response to listeners constantly asking him where they could buy tapes of old radio programs.

"I always figured people who were collectors would just tape the shows," says Schaden, "but many people wanted copies made for them, so we opened the store as a place for them to go."

These days, Metro Golden Memories also carries still photos and movie posters, entertainment memorabilia, video cassettes of classic movies and television shows, and of course, audio cassettes of old-time radio programs.

Likewise, the *Nostalgia Digest and Radio Guide* began in response to listeners who wanted detailed information about the shows that he was playing.

"It began as simply a list of programs with brief descriptions," recalls Schaden, "but having been a journalism major in college, it quickly evolved into a real publication."

Then in 1985, WBBM Newsradio (78 AM) began broadcasting a nightly show of old-time radio hosted by Schaden, which is still on the air. The show is heard across 38 states and Schaden continues to hear approvingly from each of them.

"Two minutes," says Matt Sonnenberg, Schaden's engineer for the past six years. Sonnenberg met "Days" announcer Ken Alexander back when Sonnenberg was supporting himself as an Elmhurst College student working at a book shop in Elmhurst.

"Ken was a regular customer," recalls Sonnenberg, "and it wasn't long before he introduced me to Chuck." Soon Schaden offered Sonnenberg the job of engineer for "Those Were The Days," though



CHUCK VISITS JACK BENNY'S VAULT EXHIBIT AT MBC

Sonnenberg had no engineering experience whatsoever.

"Don't worry," said Schaden, "I'll teach you." Sonnenberg describes Schaden as "the nicest guy I ever met," and "a real father figure."

"You have to remember," says Schaden during a commercial break, "these radio programs were broadcast with no thought whatsoever given to their ever being heard again. They were done live, and that was it: Out over the airwaves, and gone.

"The only reason we have the shows that we do is because often a sponsor would ask for a copy of a show, and so an engineer would make a transcription disc. Remember, this is B.T. - 'Before Tape.'"

This is why Schaden is fond of pointing out that, even with his 50,000 shows, it's all still a drop in the bucket of what was actually broadcast.

"I would give my right arm for a 1947

Cubs broadcast," he says. "None of that stuff was saved. No one thought in those terms. There are some shows that were on every week for years and years, and we don't have a single broadcast. Other shows might have been on only a year, but if a sponsor wanted broadcast copies, we have every episode."

Most of the news broadcasts — especially those to do with World War II — were saved, and Schaden began an extraordinary, unprecedented 50th anniversary commemoration of the war in 1991, beginning with Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, continuing right through every week of the war through the anniversary of the war's end next August.

Among the recent highlights was minute by minute coverage of D-Day last June, and a Battle of the Bulge broadcast in December. "Radio was how we learned about all of these events," says Schaden, "and I wanted to provide a *sound* history of that time."

Judging from the response Schaden has received from history teachers, his commemoration is giving kids who weren't there an immediate and otherwise unobtainable sense of what it was like to be alive during the war.

Because he would rather draw attention to old-time radio rather than himself, Schaden is often surprised at the attention that he receives for what he does. This was particularly obvious when he became the favorite write-in choice to join the Radio Hall of Fame a couple of years ago, an honor which deeply moved him.

"I was overwhelmed," he says. "Here I am, a guy who's just trying to keep alive



CHUCK'S THOSE WERE THE DAYS PROGRAM IS BROADCAST LIVE EVERY SATURDAY FROM THE RADIO HALL OF FAME STUDIO AT THE MUSEUM, WHERE VISITORS CAN DROP BY AND LISTEN IN.

what everyone else has done, and I end up a Hall-of-Famer alongside all of the great old stars of radio. It was an incredible and very emotional experience."

Does Schaden ever worry that after 25 years of looking back at the past, that somehow the present is lost in the shuffle?

"Not at all," he says, "because we live in the present every day: It surrounds us on

the news and everywhere else. What we try to offer is a brief vacation spot from all that, a fun trip to the past.

"And yes," he adds, "it's a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there." ■

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CHUCK SEARCHES THE RADIO ARCHIVES FOR AN UPCOMING BROADCAST.

Chuck Schaden's Broadcast Chronology

1970 *Those Were The Days* premieres Saturday, **May 2** at 1:05 p.m. on 1,000 watt daytime radio station WNMP in Evanston. The three-hour broadcast is interrupted by sports at 1:30, news at 2, 2:30, 3, and 3:30, all five-minute features from the Mutual Broadcasting System. The first *TWTD* program features a 1934 broadcast of the Taustee Breadwinners, Billy Jones and Ernie Hare; plus an episode of Ma Perkins; The Pepsodent Show; and The Thin Man, all from the 1940s. On **August 1**, listeners could send in a boxtop --any boxtop-- to get a copy of the *TWTD Program Guide*, a



CHUCK AT STATION WLTD, EVANSTON



25 YEARS OF OLD TIME RADIO

free listing of the *TWTD* program schedule, forerunner of the *Nostalgia Digest*. On **November 2**, WNMP's call letters changed to WLTD and the first *TWTD* show on WLTD is **November 8**.

1971 *Those Were The Days* moves, beginning **September 19**, to Sunday afternoons during the football season, so that WLTD can carry Northwestern Wildcat games on Saturday afternoons.

1972 Additional old time radio programming is added to Schaden's schedule on WLTD. Besides the regular *TWTD* broadcasts, *The Hall Closet* begins **Sunday, April 9** from 1-4 p.m., switches **September 16** to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (while *TWTD* moves to Sunday afternoons for another season of Northwestern football), and finally settles on a Monday thru Friday morning "drive time" schedule from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. which begins **November 27**. An hour of *Radio For Kids* is broadcast on Saturday mornings at 10 a.m. starting **December 2**.

BROADCAST CHRONOLOGY

1973 Cummings Communications, owner of WLTD, names Chuck Schaden as General Manager and Program Director of the radio station. *Those Were The Days* takes an 11 week hiatus beginning **September 14** while Northwestern football games are broadcast again on WLTD. Schaden debuts a new OTR series, *When Radio Was Radio* on WBEZ, Chicago. The hour-long program is broadcast from 8-9 p.m. Thursday with a repeat on Saturday night.

1974 *Fibber McGee and the Good Old Days of Radio*, a seven-week series with Jim Jordan and Chuck Schaden premieres nationally on **April 28**, and is heard locally on WGN, Chicago. On **June 15**, Schaden resigns as WLTD General Manager and Program Director to devote more time to his broadcasts which continue on the station. On **September 14** *TWTD* begins an 11 week hiatus for Northwestern Football on WLTD. The *Nostalgia Newsletter*, containing *TWTD* program listings, makes its debut in **December**. Schaden's *Hall Closet Special* premieres **December 2** on station WTAQ, LaGrange. The weekly program is heard Monday evenings from 8-10:30 p.m.

1975 A series of five-minute OTR vignettes, called *When Radio Was Radio*, is heard at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on WAIT, Chicago beginning **March 3**. *Those Were The Days* marks its 5th Anniversary on WLTD **April 26**. *Old Time Radio & All That Jazz* premieres **June 1** on WWMM, Arlington Heights, Sundays, 7-9 p.m. Another series of *Hall Closet* programs premieres **June 2** on WXFM, Monday thru Friday, 3-5 p.m. Final broadcast of *Radio For Kids* is **July 26** on WLTD after 120 weekly programs. That same day the final *Those Were The*

Days broadcast on is heard on WLTD, closing after 251 weekly programs. On **July 31**, after 689 Monday thru Friday programs, the *Hall Closet* completes its morning series on WLTD. On **August 2**, *TWTD* takes a five week hiatus before moving to WNIB, Chicago. The WXFM *Hall Closet* series moves **September 1** from weekday afternoons to weekday mornings, 8-10 a.m. At the same time, Schaden opens the Nostalgia Broadcast Center, his own studio at 5901 N. Cicero, Chicago. *Hall Closet* and *TWTD* programs are now broadcast from this location. On **September 6** *Those Were The Days* premieres on WNIB, Chicago, Saturday, 1-5 p.m.

1976 *When Radio Was Radio* on WBEZ closes **January 29** after 122 programs; a series of repeat broadcasts begin on **February 5**. The WTAQ *Hall Closet Special* series ends **April 26** after 65 programs. **May 30** is the end of the *Old Time Radio & All That Jazz* series on WWMM, after 53 programs. On **September 1** the *Hall Closet* morning drive time series on WXFM moves from 8-10 a.m. to 7-9 a.m.

1977 North West Federal Savings, long-time sponsor of *TWTD* makes Chuck Schaden an offer he can't refuse: join the staff of the S&L on **February 1** as VP and Director of Public Relations. *Hall Closet* on WXFM becomes a pre-recorded series on that date. *When Radio Was Radio* re-runs conclude **February 26** on WBEZ, after 57 programs. The WXFM *Hall Closet* morning show ends **July 1** after 480 broadcasts. The final broadcast of the WAIT *When Radio Was Radio* series ends on **November 26** after 858 5-minute programs.

1979 *When Radio Was Radio*, the hour-long series, resumes sporadic re-runs **May 15** on WBEZ, Thursdays, 8-9 p.m.



FIBBER MC GEE AND THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF RADIO was heard nationally in 1974. Jim Jordan, center, recreated his role as Fibber.

1980 On **April 1**, Schaden's Nostalgia Broadcast Center moves to 9004 Waukegan Road, Morton Grove, where *Hall Closet* and *TWTD* programs are broadcast and open to the public. *Those Were The Days* 10th Anniversary broadcast is **April 26**.

1982 Schaden resigns as VP/Public Relations for North West Federal on **July 2** to devote full time to Old Time Radio and other related interests and activities.

1983 *Radio Theatre* premieres **September 12** on WCFL, Chicago, Monday thru Friday, 9-11 p.m. On **October 1**, the

Nostalgia Newsletter becomes the *Nostalgia Digest and Radio Guide*. On **October 4** the Museum of Broadcast Communications is formed; Schaden is a member of the founding Board of Directors. On **October 10**, the WCFL *Radio Theatre* adds another hour and expands to 8-11 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

1984 **May 18** is the final broadcast of the WCFL *Radio Theatre*, after 180 programs. On **June 30** Schaden produces and hosts *WGN Radio's 65th Anniversary Program*, 6:30-8:30 p.m. on WGN, Chicago. On **July 2** *Radio Theatre* premieres on WAIT, Monday thru Friday, 7-11 p.m.

BROADCAST CHRONOLOGY

1985 *Those Were The Days* 15th anniversary is **April 27**. WALT *Radio Theatre* closes **December 13** after 380 week-night programs. *Old Time Radio Classics* premieres **December 16** on WBBM, Chicago, in the Monday thru Friday 8-9 p.m. time period.

1986 *Chuck Schaden's Nostalgia* premieres **June 1** on Cable TV systems in the Chicago area. Series consists of 12, 60-minute shows.

1987 Schaden donates his collection of over 48,000 vintage radio programs to the Museum of Broadcast Communications on **June 12**, the day the new Museum opens at the River City complex in Chicago. He hosts a *Radio Classics Special* on WBBM from 7-9 p.m., the first remote broadcast from the new Museum. The



BRUCE DU MONT, President of the Museum of Broadcast Communications, and Chuck with the placque honoring those who contributed to Fibber McGee's Hall Closet exhibit.

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Nostalgia Broadcast Center moves on **June 13** to the Pierre Andre Memorial Studio in the Museum at River City where *Those Were The Days* broadcasts will originate. On **June 14** *Old Time Radio Classics* expands on WBBM, adding Saturday and Sunday broadcasts, 8-10 p.m. On **September 26** Ken Alexander became "permanent guest host" of *TWTD*.

1989 *Nostalgia Digest* and *Radio Guide* observes 15th Anniversary **December 1** with a special issue. On **December 12** the Museum of Broadcast Communications Board of Directors elects Schaden Vice President and member of the Executive Committee.

1990 **January 6** is *Program Number 1,000* for *Those Were The Days* since May 2, 1970. On **January 13** *TWTD* broadcasts Program Number 750 on WNIB. On the 20th Anniversary of *TWTD*, **April 28**, a listener-built and supported exhibit honoring Fibber McGee and Molly is dedicated at the Museum of Broadcast Communications and a re-enactment of a McGee program is presented. Mayor Richard M. Daley proclaims **April 28** "Chuck Schaden Day in Chicago." On **November 26** *Old Time Radio Classics* on WBBM moves to Midnight from 8-9 p.m. weeknights. Saturday-Sunday shows remain at 8-10 p.m.

1992 With the movement of the Museum of Broadcast Communications from River City to the Chicago Cultural Center on Michigan avenue at Washington street, *Those Were The Days* begins broadcasting **May 10** from the new MBC location which opens to the public **June 13**. The "Jack Benny's Vault" exhibit, honoring the great radio comedian, is built with contributions from *TWTD* listeners who also provide a \$10,000 "Jack Benny Endowment Fund" for the Museum.



JACK BENNY'S VAULT GUARD, "ED" (Brian Johnson) comes out of the vault to greet Mr. Benny's daughter Joan, Chuck and long-time Benny writer George Balzer. *TWTD* listeners contributed to the Vault project and the "Jack Benny Endowment Fund" at the Museum.

1993 Chuck Schaden is inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame on **November 7**. Bruce DuMont, founder of the Museum, says: "Chuck has done more than anyone in broadcasting to save and share memories of radio's magic moments. He not only has shared his collection with listeners, but shared his love of radio as well." Schaden says: "To say that we are honored would be the understatement of a lifetime! Since our broadcast career began in 1970, we have tried to honor the performers and other talented people who gave us all so much entertainment during the great days of radio. We've done this simply by showcasing their broadcasts from the Golden Age. We're not sure that what we have done is worthy of induction into the Radio Hall of Fame, but we accept proudly, humbly

and with heartfelt appreciation. I've admired so many of the Radio Hall of Fame inductees since I would listen to them as a kid on the floor in front of the family's Zenith console radio. To be part of this distinguished group is a real honor."

1994 WBBM's Saturday and Sunday evening editions of *Old Time Radio Classics* moves **January 1** from 8-10 p.m. to midnight-1 a.m.

1995 *Those Were The Days* reaches a significant milestone in broadcasting. The program's 25th Anniversary is celebrated with a benefit sponsored by the Museum of Broadcast Communications on **April 23** and with a special on-the-air broadcast on **WNIB April 29**. *TWTD* begins its second quarter century (!) on May 6. ■

1993 RADIO HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



Chuck Schaden (Member's Choice); Wally Phillips (Regional/Local Personality); Rush Limbaugh (Contemporary Network/Syndicated Personality); Robert Siegel and Linda Wertheimer of "All Things Considered" (Program). Unable to attend the Induction Ceremony at the last minute was Norman Corwin who was the Pioneer inductee. The Emerson Award for achievement in production, management or technology went to the late Rick Sklar. The Radio Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies were broadcast over more than 90 radio stations from coast-to-coast on Sunday, November 7, 1993.



In 1970 Chuck first met and interviewed Shirley Bell Cole, radio's Little Orphan Annie.



In 1993 he was extremely honored when she presented him the Radio Hall of Fame Award.

Highlights and Mini-Milestones

We've had a great time during the past twenty-five years!

And it hasn't been only with our on-the-air broadcasts.

We've had many opportunities to meet listeners and involve them in our celebrations of the good old days.

Our first occasion to visit with listeners was in 1971 when we decided to show a couple hours of vintage silent and sound comedies starring Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chase, Charlie Chaplin and others at the home office of our first major sponsor, North West Federal Savings on west Irving Park Road. We invited listeners to attend the free program and we had a full house... about 100 turned out!



Celebrating Radio's Golden Age



25 YEARS OF OLD TIME RADIO

We scheduled a few other "Nostalgia Nights" at NWF and then, on May 6, 1972 we began the "Memory Club" which met every Saturday evening at the S&I. and featured vintage and classic movies. Admission of \$1 was used to defray the cost of film rentals. A version of the "Memory Club" continues to this day at the LaSalle Theatre at the same location --formerly North West Federal-- on Irving Park Road.

In 1974 we began a three year stint teaching a class on the history of radio and television programming for students at Columbia College in Chicago. We taught a similar course in 1979 for the Center for Special Programs at Elmhurst College and, in 1980, for the Elmwood Park Arts and Humanities Commission.

Dozens of Monopoly enthusiasts were brought together on March 9, 1975 for the first of several *Those Were The Days* Monopoly Tournaments.

We went to the University of Chicago on October 6, 1976 to host an evening of the Chicago Comedy Festival and moderated a panel on Vic and Sade.

HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

On November 4, 1976, to mark the 55th Anniversary of the Chicago Theatre, we appeared on the stage of that historic Loop theatre (where we had spent many an afternoon in our youth) with a presentation on vintage radio in a program sponsored by the Chicago Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts.

On May 7, 1977 we hosted and produced, along with amusement park historian Chuck Wlodarczyk, a "Riverview Night of Nostalgia" at Lane Tech High School.

Later that same summer, on August 10, we served as emcee at Ravinia Park for the "Nostalgic Sounds of the Summer of '42" with Tex Beneke, Helen O'Connell and Ray Eberly.

On February 17, 1985, as part of a *Those Were The Days* Jack Benny Month, we climbed aboard the 20th Century Railroad Club's "Jack Benny 39th Birthday Special" with Frank Nelson, Veola Vonn and 400 other fans and headed for Waukegan, Illi-

nois for an unforgettable day of fun at Jack Benny Junior High School.

For Jack Benny Month in 1988 a huge turnout of *TWTD* listeners auditioned for parts in a re-enactment of a "Jack Benny Program" for presentation on our February 27 broadcast. More than 350 fans jammed our broadcast studio at the Museum in River City for this event.

On April 30 and May 7, 1989 we were in the Kraft Television Theatre at the Museum of Broadcast Communications visiting with listeners and talking about the good old days of radio and what they meant to us as we grew up with them in the 1940s. (The presentations were recorded and have been released on a two-cassette tape set called, what else, *Those Were The Days*).

In 1990 *TWTD* listeners packed the Kraft Theatre at the Museum to visit with radio actor Les Tremayne on October 6; a Quiz Kids Reunion on November 3; and Shirley Bell Cole, radio's Original Orphan Annie on November 10. In 1991, visitors to our *TWTD* broadcasts in the Museum studio had a chance to meet Vivian Fridell



RADIO STAR FRANK NELSON ABOARD THE 20th CENTURY RAILROAD CLUB'S "JACK BENNY 39th BIRTHDAY SPECIAL" BOUND FOR WAUKEGAN, ILLINOIS, FEB. 17, 1985



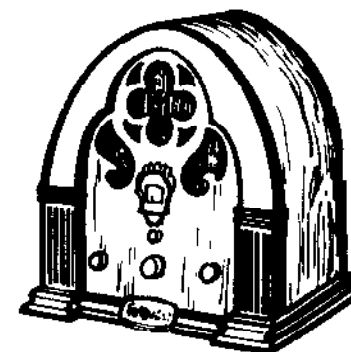
DIRECTOR HIMAN BROWN and his all-star cast during the first read-through of a CBS Radio Mystery Theatre script in 1992 at the Museum. Shown, from left, are Mr. Brown, Les Tremayne, Ken Nordine, Jim Dolan, Jack Bivans, Russ Reed, Sondra Gair, and Richard Thorne.

Solomon, who was "Mary Noble, Backstage Wife," and Bernice Martin Wallace, who appeared on "The Romance of Helen Trent."

Our *Those Were The Days Radio Players* was formed on January 18, 1992 when more than 100 fans of old time radio from throughout the Chicago area came to the Museum of Broadcast Communications on a cold wintry day to express their desire to read and perform old time radio scripts. Since that time we have developed more than a half dozen groups in the city and suburbs and they do indeed give performances of the classic old radio shows for various non-profit groups such as retirement and nursing homes, schools, libraries, civic and social clubs and organizations. Since the fall of 1992, after the Museum moved to spacious new quarters at the Chicago Cultural Center, one of these groups performs before a live audience in the Radio Hall of Fame Studio, usually on the second Sunday of each month.

On November 14, 1992 fans of old time radio got to see how a vintage show was actually brought to life when the Museum's Radio Hall of Fame sponsored an authentic radio re-creation of the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre. Producer-director Himan Brown came from New York, actor Les Tremayne came from Hollywood and, along with an all-star Chicago cast headed by Ken Nordine, presented an outstanding "live" version of a radio classic.

Chicago's Allerton Hotel was the scene



HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES



BREAKFAST CLUBBER DON MC NEILL WITH CHUCK AT THE MUSEUM OF BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS (AT RIVER CITY).



MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL CAST OF "THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE" -- Willard Waterman, Mary Lee Robb and Shirley Mitchell -- joined the *Those Were The Days* Radio Players to re-enact a Gildersleeve script in 1993.

of a 60th Anniversary Salute to Don McNeill and the Breakfast Club on June 23, 1993. Hundreds of fans came to have breakfast with the old Breakfast Clubber himself.

During the Hall of Fame weekend in 1993, OTR fans were treated to "An Afternoon with The Great Gildersleeve" at the Museum on November 6, starring Willard Waterman, Shirley Mitchell and Mary Lee Robb, all of whom came in from their homes in California for the event.

More than 500 good and true fans of Jack Benny came to the Museum on February 13, 1994 to mark the 61st anniversary of Jack's 39th Birthday in a big Benny Centennial celebration that featured an original radio production of a script by Ken Alexander based upon characters and situations created during the 23 year run of one of the most successful programs in the

history of radio. Jack's daughter Joan and his grandson Bobby Blumofe were in town for the fun and were joined by TV weatherman Harry Volkman, Benny sound-alike John Sebert and members of the *Those Were The Days* Radio Players.

We have a background in journalism and through all these years of broadcasting old time radio, we have had many opportunities to connect with listeners via our type-writer.

Most obvious, of course, is our *Nostalgia Digest* and *Radio Guide* which we've written, edited and published since December, 1974 (when it was called the *Nostalgia Newsletter*). The *Digest* marked its 20th Anniversary with the December 1994-January 1995 issue.

But we've been called on to do some other writing, too.

On July 31, 1976 the *Chicago Tribune* carried an article we wrote entitled "A Lament for Radio's Golden Age." The *Chicago Daily News*, on November 12, 1977, in a front page "obituary-feature" following the death of Bing Crosby carried our story, "Transcribed! Bing Put Recordings in Radio" about Crosby's pioneering of pre-recorded broadcasts.

We've reviewed a few books, too, including "Vic and Sade, the Best Radio Plays of Paul Rhymer" (*Sun-Times*, September 26, 1976); "Radio Comedy" by Arthur Frank Wertheim (*Sun-Times*, July 22, 1979); "That's Not All Folks" by Mel Blanc (*Tribune*, August 21, 1988); and "Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel" by Michael Barson (*Tribune*, November 6, 1988).

And we've written a couple of books: "The Cinnamon Bear Book" (1987) and "WBBM Radio Yesterday and Today" (1988).

It's been a wonderful time for us and, we hope, for listeners, readers and fans of the good old days of radio.

Stay tuned. The best is yet to come! ■

**THANKS
to our
STAFF
Behind
the
Scenes**



At the conclusion of most of our broadcasts, we usually take a moment to thank those who have helped us "behind the scenes."

These are dedicated friends who are very important to our programs; most of them are or have become fans of the golden age of radio.

They have served from time-to-time as engineers, technicians, production assistants, and volunteers.

Without their help, we really could not have had our broadcasts of vintage programs on the air for these 25 years.

We express our sincere thanks for a job well done to:

Bob Abella
Ken Alexander
Carl Amari
Neil Baskin
Mary Bolton
Dennis Bubacz
Scott Castillo
Mary Ellen Little Cooper
Rick Garofalo
Kathy Garofalo
John Holzer
Len Kunka
Todd Nobel
Mark Nelson
Todd Neumann
Mort Paradise
Karl Pearson
Larry Peters
Patty Schaden Randstrom
Susan Schaden
Gary Schroeder
Matt Sonnenberg
Mike Stosich
Matt Sonnenberg
Mark Vail
Ted Weber
Jeff Weigel
Jim Zarembski
and all the others.

"THOSE WERE THE DAYS"

A Theme Song For Old Time Radio

BY CURTIS L. KATZ

If you were Chuck Schaden in 1970, about to debut a radio program called *Those Were The Days*, what would you choose as your theme music? How about a song called "Those Were The Days," a Top 40 hit from 1968 that was still popular when Chuck first went on the air May 2, 1970?

Since Chuck's first broadcast 25 years ago, every *Those Were The Days* program has begun and concluded with the same recording (actually a mixed-down composite of two "easy-listening" recordings) of "Those Were The Days," a song made famous in 1968 by British vocalist Mary Hopkin. But the song actually predates the popular Hopkin hit.

"Those Were The Days" was written in 1962 by Gene Raskin who, as *Eugene Raskin*, was an architecture professor at New York's Columbia University, and an urban planning expert. During the 1950's, Raskin began moonlighting, writing some plays and songs. In 1961, he and his wife teamed up as "Gene & Francesca," an urbanely witty folk music act (they billed themselves as "de-authenticated folk singers") performing at trendy night spots and recording on the Elektra label.

They wrote songs for themselves and others; "Those Were The Days" was one of a few songs Gene Raskin wrote for the Limelitters, a folk trio that featured the lyric tenor voice of Glenn Yarbrough. Raskin's jaunty yet faintly melancholy melody, evocative of Eastern Europe, was in fact adapted from a Russian folk song,

Curtis L. Katz, a Chicago free-lance writer has become a regular contributor of trivialus nostalgias.

"Darogoi Dlimmoya" ("Dear For Me"), first recorded in the 1920's. Raskin's wistful lyrics sing of the bold dreams of youth which the passing years can never quite erase. Francesca supplied the song's simple but eloquent title.

"Those Were The Days" was first recorded by the Limelitters in 1962 on their fifth album, *Folk Matinee*. Through the mid-1960's, the song apparently found its way onto a few record albums by forgotten groups. Gene & Francesca themselves frequently performed the number in their act. It was at one such performance at London's Blue Angel Club that Paul McCartney of the Beatles first heard "Those Were The Days." He liked the tune so much that he tried to persuade the Beatles' touring mates, the Moody Blues, to record it. Paul would have reason to recall the tune when he was introduced to folk singer Mary Hopkin in 1968.

Mary Hopkin was an authentic show biz Cinderella. She was born in Wales in 1950, and worked her way through music school singing Welsh folk songs in pubs. At age 17 she appeared on the BBC-TV talent show *Opportunity Knocks*, where she was "discovered" by British fashion idol Twiggy, who brought her to the attention of Paul McCartney. Paul signed Mary to the Beatles' new Apple Records company and immediately began supervising her career, determined to make Mary Hopkin an international star.

Preparatory to her first album, Mary was to record a single, and Paul thought "Those

Were The Days" was well-suited to her sweet gentle voice. The resulting record-

ing was among the first four released by Apple, and it started the label off in fine style -- it was a smash hit. The record appeared in late August of 1968, and in the U.S. it climbed to #2 on the rock & roll charts, remaining there for three weeks in October against some tough competition: The Beatles' own "Hey Jude" was concurrently hogging first place for nine weeks. Hopkin's record finished 1968 as #32 on *Billboard's* "Top 50" for the year, and in 1969 it won a gold Record Award.

But the rock music charts don't tell the whole story of the song's popularity. "Those Were The Days," and Mary Hopkin's recording of it, appealed to a wide range of musical tastes. For many, "Those Were The Days" was a breath of fresh air in a year that saw a marked increase in popular songs about drugs and rebellion. The Hopkin record was heard not only on "Top 40" rock radio, but on "middle of the road" stations and on folk music programs. Numerous artists performed the song on TV, and many hastened to record it.

In 1968, Al Hirt and Johnny Mathis were among the first to wax "Those Were The Days" singles, while Bing Crosby was probably the first to include it on an album (*Hey Jude, Hey Bing!*: an album obviously intended to bring Bing into the Sixties). Subsequently, a wide and eclectic spectrum of artists recorded the song, ranging from Engelbert Humperdinck to Arthur Fiedler & The Boston Pops to *Sammys* Kaye and Davis, Jr. The New Society Band, a group formed by and in part comprised of alumnae from Spike Jones' City Slickers, recorded a predictably raucous parody. Gene & Francesca recorded the song on an album released on their own independent label in early 1969, while RCA quickly resurrected the Limelitters' original recording and included it in a repackaged album titled *Those Were The Days*.

The nostalgic Old World sound of

"Those Were The Days" made it almost as popular at weddings and bar mitzvahs as "Sunrise, Sunset." In fact, the particular association of this song with Jewish family festivities was sufficiently strong that the makers of Rokeach gefilte fish used the song's melody for a commercial jingle on radio in the early 1970's.

When Mary Hopkin's first album, *Postcard*, came out in 1969, it included "Those Were The Days" -- but only in the album's U.S. version. Despite the fact that Hopkin's "Those Were The Days" was released only as a single in Europe, it was an even bigger hit abroad than it was here. It reached #1 on the British charts, and did at least as well in Europe, its success on the Continent aided in no small measure by the fact that Paul McCartney had Hopkin record the song in Italian, French, Spanish, and German. In Italy, Hopkin's Italian rendition actually out-sold a locally-recorded version of the song. "Those Were The Days" was a truly international hit!

Mary Hopkin had a second hit single, "Goodbye," which topped out at #13 on the U.S. charts in the spring of 1969, after which Ms. Hopkin faded from the American music scene. Several subsequent singles and her second album, *Earth Song - Ocean Song* (1971), failed to attract much attention here. However, she remained a celebrity for many years in Britain and Europe, scoring several more pop and rock hits, and continuing in the recording business even after her falling-out with Apple in 1972. In 1971 she married one of her producers, Tony Visconti, and began to raise a family. Her show business career came to be confined mainly to recording back-ups for other singers, and acting and singing in occasional stage shows on into the 1980's. In 1979 she even returned to her musical roots with *The Welsh World of Mary Hopkin*, an album of Welsh folk songs.

THEME FOR OLD TIME RADIO

Gene Raskin and his academic career in architecture both survived his international fame as a song writer. He followed his one hit tune with several books on architecture, including *Sequel To Cities: What Happens When Cities Are Extinct*, and with a 1971 best-selling novel, *Stranger In My Arms*, which was later made into a movie. Raskin retired from Columbia University in 1976.

"Those Were The Days" is today regarded as a pop standard, transcending the time in which it was written. The three Tenors (in their most recent video) are but the latest in a long and varied list of celebrated performers who have included this song in their repertoire. To this date there have been over 200 records on which various renditions of "Those Were The Days" have appeared; more than a dozen of those records are still available on CD and cassette. The original Limeliter's track is not among them, but the Mary Hopkin hit can still be had on her *Postcard* album, and on several Sixties rock anthologies.

Does it seem incongruous that a "Top 40" rock & roll hit from the 1960's should become the theme for a show about old-time radio? Remember that each week Chuck Schaden reminds us that his is a program "designed to bridge the sound gap between yesterday and today."

Given that premise, what could be more appropriate than a modern song with its musical roots in old tradition?...a song about past dreams that are still with us today?...a song whose title is..."Those Were The Days"?

(The author wishes to thank Wally Podrazik, co-author of All Together Now, The Beatles Again?, and The End of The Beatles, for much of the information about Mary Hopkin. --C.J.K.)



HERE ARE SOME LONG-RUNNING OLD TIME RADIO PROGRAMS

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Life of Riley
Life With Luigi
Lights Out
- 6 YEARS**
Abbott and Costello
- 8 YEARS**
Jimmy Durante
Phil Harris & Alice Faye
- 10 YEARS**
Ozzie and Harriet
- 11 YEARS**
Inner Sanctum
Red Skelton
- 13 YEARS**
Mr. District Attorney
- 16 YEARS**
Fred Allen
Eddie Cantor
Dr. Christian
Rudy Vallee
- 18 YEARS**
Bergen and McCarthy
Burns and Allen
Cavalcade of America
First Nighter
Great Gildersleeve
- 19 YEARS**
Bob Hope
- 20 YEARS**
Suspense
- 21 YEARS**
Lux Radio Theatre
- 22 YEARS**
Fibber McGee and Molly
- 23 YEARS**
Gangbusters
Jack Benny
- 25 YEARS**
Bing Crosby
Those Were The Days
- 27 YEARS**
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Death of a President

BY JIM WARRAS

I first learned of Franklin Roosevelt's death while sitting with my father in a doctor's office in Milwaukee. I don't remember why we were there (I was only eight at the time,) but, even if F.D.R. had been sitting beside us, I don't think it would have helped him much. His "massive cerebral hemorrhage" had been building for a long time.

If the average American was stunned by the President's death, the people closest to him were surprised he lived as long as he did. More than a year before, Admiral Ross McIntire, the President's personal physician, was concerned enough to add Navy Lt. Cmdr. Howard Bruenn to his staff. Bruenn's specialty was cardiology, but, if F.D.R. suspected something serious, he never asked either of his doctors direct questions about it. Possibly Roosevelt thought he could deal with heart and circulation problems the same way he dealt with the polio that crippled him in 1921. If you don't give in to an ailment, it will never lick you.

Back in that Milwaukee doctor's office, I remember how people stopped talking and looked up at the radio, mounted above their chairs.

The name of the interrupted program made no impression, but I did know the name "Roosevelt." After all, he had been

Jim Warras is a retired news writer, working for more than 30 years with the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System. He is a frequent contributor to these pages with a special interest in the World War II years.

President my entire (short) life. Reaching home that evening, I couldn't wait to give my mother the news. But she already knew. She had also been listening to the radio.

And so had we all, it seemed; ever since F.D.R. first reassured us that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." After that first inauguration speech in 1933, the President mixed formal appearances with informal-sounding "fireside chats"...on everything from depression welfare programs to the growing crisis in Europe.

What Roosevelt and the American people had could best be described as a "radio relationship." Had there been television to show us the President's crippled and, later, frail body, he might not have been nearly as persuasive. Instead, cooperative newsreel and still photographers helped play down the questionable appearance of F.D.R., while that booming voice seemed to go on forever. When his war warnings culminated in the Pearl Harbor attack, who better to define American rage over that "day of infamy." American radio during World War II years included plenty of Roosevelt speeches...mixed in with news reports detailing the Allies' slow, but steady march to victory.

By March, 1945, we had liberated much of Western Europe and the Philippines, beaten back a surprise German counter-attack in the "Bulge," were bombing Berlin and Tokyo at will, and were ready to hear F.D.R. report to congress on what he, Churchill and Stalin had accomplished at Yalta. Though Roosevelt chose to deliver his speech sitting down, his radio voice was strong as ever...and, after all, just traveling



PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

to and from the Russian Black Sea resort (in those pre-jetliner days) was no small achievement. Surely, rumors about his health had to be exaggerated.

As March turned to April, and victory followed victory in both Europe and the Pacific, listening to radio news must have been much more comforting for Americans. After all, all the "bad news" was behind us, wasn't it?

In the late afternoon of Thursday, April 12th, radio staffs in the east and Midwest were wrapping up their 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. news scripts. Lead stories: U.S. and Red armies near suburbs of Berlin...118 Japanese planes shot down on Okinawa...U.S. Third Army just 19 miles from Czechoslovakia. But, as anyone who has ever worked in a broadcast newsroom can tell you, there is nothing more nerve-wracking than finishing a script "too soon." Until the broadcast actually airs, you stare at the telephones, stare at the teletypes...just waiting for something unexpected to screw everything up. On April 12th, 1945, something did.

President Roosevelt started the day at the treatment center he set up in Warm Springs, Georgia, for fellow-polio victims. After 1933, part of the center became a "Little White House." Recuperating from the Yalta trip, and preparing to open the United Nations organizing conference in San Francisco later that month, F.D.R. woke up to a bacon-and-eggs breakfast and his usual, bedside exam by Dr. Bruenn. Blood pressure: 180 over 110. And the President had gained a little weight; a good sign to Admiral McIntire when Lt. Cmdr. Bruenn telephoned him late that morning at the White House.

The President began his afternoon by sitting for a portrait painter. "Life Magazine" reported two cousins were also in the room. It did not report a fourth occupant: Lucy Mercer Rutherford, the one-time social secretary of Eleanor Roosevelt. F.D.R. had had a three-year affair with Lucy three decades earlier. The romance ended in 1918 with an ultimatum from Eleanor: break it off or get a divorce. The affair did end, but not completely. Even while the world supposedly watched his every move as president, F.D.R. still found opportunities for short meetings with the woman he could never completely stop loving.

Now it was 1:15 p.m., April 12th. Taking a break from posing for the portrait, the President placed his cigarette holder in an ash tray and glanced at some papers. Then he raised his left hand to his forehead, muttered "I have a terrific headache," and fainted. The New York Times said he spoke those words to Dr. Bruenn. Actually, only Lucy was looking at the President at the time. The doctor was taking a break at a nearby swimming pool. He did arrive in time to help move F.D.R. to a bed, but he could do nothing to keep the President from dying, without regaining consciousness, two hours and twenty minutes later.

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

When we change from one living president to another, there are plenty of constitutional rules to follow. But when a president dies in office, we're essentially left with the wishes of his family...and common sense. Mrs. Roosevelt learned by telephone of her husband's collapse. Three wire-service reporters, covering the President at Warm Springs, were at a nearby barbecue. F.D.R. was supposed to show up there later that afternoon. Instead, the reporters were called back to the "Little White House." They knew something big was up, but speculated it might be some sort of war news. In Washington, it was almost 5 p.m. Most regular White House reporters had gone home, after press secretary Steve Early's office said no more releases were scheduled that day.

It was William Hassett, the President's traveling press secretary in Georgia, who made the first announcement to Merriman Smith of United Press, Harry Oliver of Associated Press and Robert Nixon of International News Service. According to Jim Bishop, author of "F.D.R.'s Last Year," Smith beat the other two to a phone but had trouble getting his bosses to believe him. Steve Early's first job was to tell Eleanor what she must have already guessed. Despite that first message, she had gone on to an afternoon speaking engagement...until she was summoned back to the White House. Now she had to give the news to the rest of the Roosevelt family, while Early set up a telephone conference with the Washington headquarters of AP, UP, and INS.

The first reaction was the same disbelief Merriman Smith had run into. It was 5:47 p.m., Eastern War time...4:47 in Warm Springs (and Chicago). On the nation's radios, an afternoon of soap operas was giving way to an hour or so of children's

adventure programs, before those early-evening newcasts that usually paved the way for prime-time programming. But not this night.

Newspaper and radio wire rooms around the world heard the same sound. "Four bells" on all the major teletypes...signaling FLASH...a designation reserved for rare stories of earthshaking importance. And this one was.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 32nd president of the United States, aged 63 years and 2 months, died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia. The first INS "flash" put it more simply: "WASHN-FDR DEAD." NBC's bulletin broke into one of the day's last "soaps," ironically called "Front Page Farrell." ABC interrupted "Captain Midnight;" Mutual did the same for "Tom Mix." CBS broke into "Wilderness Road," an adventure story from the Daniel Boone days of post-Revolutionary War America. Announcing for CBS was John Charles Daly, who, some three years and four months earlier, had also shocked Americans with first word that Japanese planes were bombing Hawaii.

Overseas, more radio shockwaves...from London's BBC to Berlin's "Reichsrundfunk." Nazi Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels actually congratulated his Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, over the news (two weeks before their own deaths, by suicide.) But the strangest foreign reaction came from radio Tokyo. Despite the war, it declared its "grief" over the President's passing.

Back in Washington, Harry Truman was sworn in at 7:09 p.m. as the nation's 33rd president. Shortly after that, Mrs. Roosevelt, Admiral McIntire and Steve Early boarded a military plane for Georgia, where extensive funeral preparations were already underway. Psychologists tell us funerals are as much for the living as the dead, helping survivors to accept the



CHURCHILL, ROOSEVELT AND STALIN AT YALTA IN FEBRUARY, 1945

loss of a loved one, but F.D.R. undoubtedly helped America's grieving process by dying *where* he did. Had he suffered his final attack in Washington, the body would have traveled only from there to its final resting place in Hyde Park. Instead, the eleven-car funeral train, pulled by two of the largest locomotives in existence, began its journey 23 hours south of Washington.

Though even the best radio commentators could do no more than paint word pictures, they also kept east coast residents informed of the exact route and exact arrival times in communities of all sizes. No matter what those times were, people lined the tracks. Mrs. Roosevelt said later that, until she saw those funeral crowds, she never truly realized how much Americans loved her husband. His body was in the last car in the train...the casket and honor guard clearly visible through a large, lighted window.

Two notes of irony here: 80 years ear-

lier, almost to the day, other Americans had shown their love for another fallen president...lining the tracks as another train took the body of Abraham Lincoln back to Springfield, Illinois. As for Eleanor's own love for Franklin, it received a final jolt during that 1945 trip. While keeping the former first lady company, Laura Delano, one of the cousins who was with F.D.R. at the end, let slip that Lucy Mercer Rutherford was his last visitor. Eleanor apparently kept her composure on the train, but "chewed out" daughter Anna later at the White House after Anna admitted helping to arrange secret meetings over the years between Lucy and her father.

But Franklin Roosevelt's love life seemed the last thing on anyone's mind as his funeral train pulled into Washington's Union Station on Saturday morning, April 14th. The casket was unloaded the same way it was taken aboard the train; by temporarily removing the large window in the

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

car that carried it. A military honor guard placed the casket on a caisson, so six white horses could pull it to the White House. Military marching units, bands and cars, filled with family and officials, created a procession two miles long.

More than a third of a million people lined the streets, while radio commentators positioned themselves in windows and on roofs. Probably the most eloquent description of that procession came from Arthur Godfrey on CBS. In later years, he would gain national fame as a personality and M.C. This day, though, he sounded on the verge of tears.

For a man who spent twelve years, one month and eight days living in the White House, F.D.R.'s last stop there was a brief one. The Episcopal funeral service in the East Room lasted only 23 minutes. Attendees included New York Governor Tom Dewey, who lost his own bid for White House residency less than six months before. Winston Churchill almost flew over from London, but changed his mind at the last minute. As the service started at 4 p.m., Eastern War Time, the entire nation (including radio stations) observed two minutes of silence, broken only by tolling bells in churches and fire houses.

That evening, the caisson and horses took the casket back to Union Station for an overnight journey to Hyde Park. There were two trains this time, to handle the overload of dignitaries. At this point, a legal hitch surfaced: the Roosevelt family never obtained a village permit for a burial on private property. But an emergency meeting of "Selectmen" apparently solved that problem, because, when the funeral trains arrived the next morning, no one interfered with the 1 and 3/4 mile trek to the Roosevelt estate's rose garden. This time the caisson was drawn by six brown horses.

The 10 a.m. service began with a twenty one gun salute and 600 West Point honor guards marching into the garden, before final prayers concluded the president's final trip.

Fifty years after his death, Franklin Roosevelt's political policies are still debated, so perhaps his "medical" policies should get equal scrutiny. Why did a man in his condition even consider running again for the highest office in the land? Maybe part of the answer lies not in what doctors know now, but in what they knew then. No question, the President of the United States always gets "state of the art" medical treatment. But in 1944 and 1945 we didn't know about cholesterol and no one preached the benefits of a low-fat diet. (F.D.R. enjoyed bacon-and-eggs breakfasts right up to the day he died); no one questioned the possible long-term harm in cigarette smoking (again, F.D.R. barely had time to set down his last cigarette before losing consciousness.) The pharmaceutical industry of the most powerful nation on earth couldn't even, in the early 1940's, come up with a drug able to control the President's blood pressure.

But the final contributing factor to Franklin Roosevelt dying when he did was a "condition" we will always have with us: wishful thinking. He didn't want to believe how sick he was...his party didn't want to believe how sick he was...and neither did the vast majority of American voters. In the end, wishful thinking gave way to reality, as it always does.

Perhaps the most hopeful side to all of this is that, if the "medical system" failed us in 1945, the political system did not. Though one president departs suddenly, another takes over just hours later.

Not a bad legacy for Franklin D. Roosevelt, a man who spent his political life proclaiming that American strength can always win out over American fears. ■



A long tradition in the movies has been the theme, "Good vs. Evil" or, simply stated, "good guys against the bad guys."

Bad guys, or villains, have come in many shapes and sizes and they were villains for a variety of reasons. For example, most movie monsters were the villains because they killed time killing people. Lionel Barrymore, on the other hand, was an excellent villain in "It's A Wonderful Life" by just being a greedy old man.

A good villain had to be or possess one or more of the following characteristics: sadistic, pathetic, psychotic, charming, relentless, fanatical, athletic, an evil genius, or an enemy of our country.

Screen actors who have been great villains include Peter Lorre, George Sanders, Akim Tamiroff, James Mason, Boris Karloff and dozens of others who, for one reason or another, were destined to be cast as one of the "bad guys."

But the villain that tops the list for all-around really bad guy was Basil Rathbone.

Rathbone's villainy spanned over two decades in dozens of films making him one of the most prolific nasties in film history. He didn't, of course, start out to be a screen villain, but due to a couple of early assignments as infamous characters he was on his way to a career in unmatched villainy.

After distinguished service during World War I he went back to England and the stage career he had left when he went to

war. He was trained as a classical actor and excelled at Shakespearean roles, but he began to do silent film work in England as a romantic lead.

In the late twenties he made his way to New York and Broadway where he found much stage work to keep him busy. He did appear in some silent films produced in the New York area while still doing live theatre. In 1932 Rathbone journeyed to Hollywood to become a free-lance movie actor. At first his parts were small and only a smattering of his screen villainy shown through.

As time went on, his classical stage training, enhanced by a mellow voice and perfect diction, opened the door to better roles. In 1935 his full fury as a villain was unleashed in "David Copperfield." As written by Charles Dickens --and played by Basil Rathbone-- Mr. Murdstone was one of the most vile, despicable characters in modern fiction. His delight in beating the young Copperfield was vividly captured in Rathbone's performance. The film's beating sequence had to be shot several times because Rathbone was so unnerved by what he was required to do. Fortunately for young Freddie Bartholomew, who portrayed the adolescent David, heavy pads were fastened to his bottom to absorb the whipping.

Basil Rathbone's screen time in "David Copperfield" was minimal, but the impact

VILLAINS

of his performance brought him to the attention of other studios. He was cast as Pontius Pilate in the RKO production of "The Last Days of Pompeii." His superb portrayal of the man who turned Jesus over to the mob was praised by critics as the ultimate interpretation of Pilate.

In "Anna Karenina" Rathbone saw Anna's husband not as a villain but as a proud man forced to endure his wife's infidelity. But MGM's screenwriters needed a contemptible character to win the audience's sympathy for Anna and her lover. No one in Hollywood at the time would have been better in the role than Rathbone, so he was cast and again etched out a performance of cool villainy.

He ended 1935 cast as the evil French Private Levasseur opposite a young Errol Flynn as the heroic "Captain Blood." In this film Rathbone displayed a talent that few of his Hollywood peers knew he possessed: he was an expert swordsman. He had

dabbled at fencing in his youth and applied this skill to a few of the Shakespear productions in which he had appeared on the London stage. In Hollywood he hired master fencing instructor Fred Cavens to polish his skills. In turn, Rathbone rehearsed and instructed Flynn for the seashore dueling scene in "Captain Blood." Rathbone's athletic ability and skill with a sword was a match for anyone in Hollywood, and many times he had to hold back to make his opponent look good.

After such a glorious year of villainy, it was only natural that the studios would offer him more of the same. His Marquis d' Evremonde in "A Tale of Two Cities" was such a reptilian that his murder, while he slept, seemed too light a punishment for his crimes.

In "Romeo and Juliet" Rathbone as the evil Tybalt kills Mercutio (John Barrymore) and later is dispatched by Romeo (Leslie Howard). Again and again Rathbone filled the characters he played with a spirit of villainy that made the "bad

guy" almost as interesting as the hero of the film. He reached his zenith with two films opposite two of the most handsome, dashing stars ever to swashbuckle across the movie screen: Errol Flynn in "The Adventures of Robin Hood" and Tyrone Power in "The Mark of Zorro."

In "Robin Hood" he had to share the villainy with Claude Rains, a pretty darn good villain when he had to be, as the slimy Prince John. But it was no contest as to the master villain of the film. Rathbone, as Sir Guy of Gisbourne, was a power hungry bully who preferred to let someone else do his dirty work while he spent his time plotting with Prince John and lusting after Maid Marian (Olivia deHavilland). This all leads to the final confrontation between the bold Robin and the cowardly Sir Guy.

The sword fight between the two, directed by Michael Curtiz, is as good as it gets in the cinematic swordspay. It ends with Sir Guy being run through by Robin and Marian being freed; but the pleasure of the film is derived not only from Flynn's heroics but from the bravado villainy of Rathbone, who was at the pinnacle of his career as a screen villain.

He came close to matching Sir Guy's treachery as Captain Estaban Pasquale in "The Mark of Zorro." Here, again, he is a great asset to the film. He just dripped with malevolence as the military strongman holding old Los Angeles in his grimy grip. Tyrone Power is perfectly cast as Diego (Zorro), with his arrogance and self-confidence being evenly matched by the evil Pasquale. Once again the climatic duel is a well-choreographed fight to the finish, nearly won by the haughty Pasquale. Director Rouben Mamoulian, cinematographer Arthur Miller and musical director Alfred Newman blended their talents to the utmost to produce some of the most exciting film ever shot. Fred Cavens doubled for Power in some of the long shots and



BASIL RATHBONE TOOK A VACATION FROM VILLAINY TO BECOME THE GREAT SHERLOCK HOLMES, CO-STARRING WITH NIGEL BRUCE AS DR. WATSON IN A STRING OF EXTREMELY POPULAR FILMS.

the swordspay between Cavens and Rathbone was beyond awesome. Rathbone, the villain, had to lose in the end, but the audience won because of his biting performance.

Rathbone would eventually take a vacation from villainy to become the great hero Sherlock Holmes, on screen and on radio. As good as he was, it's a sad note that he probably had to pass up some juicier parts to be the master detective over a seven year period. We can only speculate on what roguish roles he might have created if Holmes had not entered his life.

Basil Rathbone was a man of culture and sensitivity whose talent was so great that he played one of literature's greatest heroes after portraying some of it's deadliest villains. The movie going public loved him and accepted him as a hero or villain because he was so good at what he did. ■



BASIL RATHBONE AND ERROL FLYNN IN "ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD"

Chicago's Chaplain Courageous

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

Padre Colgan is one of many men from Chicago who made the supreme sacrifice during World War II. His final resting place at Mt. Olivet Cemetery on the city's South Side seems too plain and simple for his heroic life. The marker reads simply: The Rev. Aquinas Colgan - Order of Mount Carmel - Died May 6, 1945.

The marker tells almost nothing of this great chaplain who spent his life for others, and finished his life on earth by giving his own to rescue a wounded corpsman cut down by enemy fire in the closing days of World War II. The place, on Mindanao Island in the Philippines, is still called "Colgan Woods."

This final heroic act took place on May 6, 1945, as the 31st ("Dixie") Division of the U.S. Army was attempting to dislodge the Japanese from the Philippine Islands at the end of World War II. It also won for Padre Colgan, posthumously, the Distinguished Service Cross for valor. He is only one of seven chaplains so honored in that war. In addition, he had already won the Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf cluster for heroism and two previous wounds.

In his life before the War, the thin, sandy-haired lad grew up on the South Side of Chicago, one of four sons and a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Colgan. His life-long devotion to people and Chicago stayed with him no matter what work he did. In addition to teaching Spanish, after he was ordained a priest in 1936, at Chicago's Mt. Carmel High School, he became chaplain at Lewis Aeronautical School (now Lewis University) in Romeoville, Illinois. And as pastor of Mt. Carmel Mexican Chapel in nearby Joliet, he was a friend and champion of the Mexican migrant workers in the area. His in-

terests included young and old, as evidenced with his work in the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) of Will County. He was also chaplain of the Chicago Streetcar-men's Union.

"Every man is a thought of God, and has his particular destiny to fulfill," Padre Colgan once confided to a fellow priest.

With the coming of World War II, Padre Colgan immediately volunteered for chaplain duty. After training at the Harvard University Chaplain School, he was assigned to the Dixie Division, and landed with the group in Buna, New Guinea, in 1942.

During both basic training and afterwards, he was known as the chaplain who did anything his men had to do. This included long jungle hikes, amphibious landings, and front line duty. If the men were there, Padre Colgan was, too.

To help with morale, he drove from campsite to campsite and often visited ships offshore to attend to the spiritual needs of the combat troops. His jeep was easily distinguished with the lettering "Chicago Street Fighter" painted in bold letters beneath the windshield.

Padre Colgan also formed the "Chicago Street Fighters" club and issued engraved memberships cards to all whom he deemed worthy of the honor. The card entitled the holder to a "daylight stopover in Chicago." But a slogan on the bottom warned: "Don't Let the Sun Set Upon You." In Chicago, that is. The card also contained the names of Chicago city officials, including the director of the House of Corrections, and also Padre Colgan as "Supreme Brawler."

His ability to poke fun at life, regardless of whatever circumstances he was in, proved to be an ability that endeared him



PADRE COLGAN, "Chicago's Chaplain Courageous" of World War II is depicted in this painting commissioned and paid for by the men of the Dixie Division. It will be dedicated this Spring at the Division's Memorial in Florida.

to all with whom he came in contact. In many ways, Padre Colgan symbolized the ideals of chaplains of all denominations who went into battle with nothing other than their Faith and a desire to serve to guide them in their ministry. He was especially noted for the fact that he ministered to men of all denominations in their last moments on earth.

When news of his death came, men of the Dixie Division, most of whom were Baptists, wept openly for the loss of their beloved chaplain. He had touched the lives of all he met.

When Padre Colgan landed in the Philippines, he had been on front line duty for almost 12 months in the Pacific Theatre. In a rain forest in the center of Mindanao Island, the Dixie Division was held up by heavy fire in a thickly-wooded area and had suffered great casualties. Although

advised not to go into the woods because of sniper fire, Padre Colgan ignored the warning and was almost immediately wounded. He kept on going to reach a wounded corpsman. A quick burst of enemy fire killed the chaplain instantly.

Six days later, when the area was finally cleared, men of the Dixie Division found their chaplain with his arms wrapped around the feet of the medic he was trying to draw out of the line of fire.

In honor of their beloved chaplain, the troops dubbed the shell-shredded grove of trees as "Colgan Woods." It remains so to this day as a sacred place for them.

In the spring of 1995, on the 50th anniversary of the battle, Padre Colgan will be honored as part of the memorial to the deceased troops of the Dixie Division.

He was, indeed, Chicago's Chaplain Courageous! ■

APRIL 1995

Old Time Radio Classics -- WBBM-AM 78 SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>PLEASE NOTE: Due to WBBM's commitment to news, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be preempted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p> | | | | | | 1 Lights Out Superman |
| 2 Suspense Lum and Abner | 3 Chandu the Magician Little Orphan Annie | 4 The Shadow Speed Gibson | 5 Dennis Day Show The Goldbergs | 6 Sam Spade Jerry of the Circus | 7 Dark Fantasy Captain Midnight | 8 My Favorite Husband Superman |
| 9 Damon Runyon Theatre Captain Midnight | 10 Tarzan, Lord of Jungle Pretty Kitty Kelly | 11 Straight Arrow Speed Gibson | 12 Suspense Police Headquarters | 13 Dennis Day Show Jerry of the Circus | 14 Lone Ranger Lum and Abner | 15 The Shadow Superman |
| 16 Life of Riley Vic and Sade | 17 Boston Blackie Can You Imagine That? | 18 The Shadow Speed Gibson | 19 Mysterious Traveler Easy Aces | 20 Aldrich Family Jerry of the Circus | 21 Our Miss Brooks Challenge of the Yukon | 22 Humphrey Bogart Superman |
| 23 Lone Ranger Challenge of the Yukon | 24 Hopalong Cassidy Lum and Abner | 25 You Bet Your Life Speed Gibson | 26 Johnny Dollar Myrt and Marge | 27 Mysterious Traveler Jerry of the Circus | 28 Halls of Ivy Police Headquarters | 29 The Saint Superman |

MAY 1995

Old Time Radio Classics -- WBBM-AM 78 SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| 30 April X Minus One Captain Midnight | 1 Hopalong Cassidy Bachelor's Children | 2 The Shadow Speed Gibson | 3 Jack Benny Burns and Allen | 4 Fibber McGee & Molly Jerry of the Circus | 5 Sam Spade Lum and Abner | 6 Boston Blackie Superman |
| 7 The Shadow Valiant Lady | 8 Damon Runyon Theatre Big Sister | 9 Duffy's Tavern Speed Gibson | 10 Lone Ranger Challenge of the Yukon | 11 Adv. of Frank Race Jerry of the Circus | 12 Burns and Allen Jack Benny | 13 Hallmark Playhouse Superman |
| 14 Life of Riley Vic and Sade | 15 Escape Easy Aces | 16 Adv. of Scarlet Cloak Speed Gibson | 17 Jack Benny Burns and Allen | 18 Dimension X Jerry of the Circus | 19 Dark Fantasy Jack Armstrong | 20 The Shadow Superman |
| 21 My Favorite Husband Easy Aces | 22 Lights Out Johnny Dollar Part 1 of 5 | 23 Mysterious Traveler Johnny Dollar Part 2 of 5 | 24 Murder By Experts Johnny Dollar Part 3 of 5 | 25 Suspense - Pt 1 of 2 Johnny Dollar Part 4 of 5 | 26 Suspense - Pt 2 of 2 Johnny Dollar Part 5 of 5 | 27 Hopalong Cassidy Superman |
| 28 Lone Ranger Challenge of the Yukon | 29 Great Gildersleeve Johnny Dollar Part 1 of 5 | 30 Action Eighty Johnny Dollar Part 2 of 5 | 31 Rocky Fortune Johnny Dollar Part 3 of 5 | 1 June Christopher London Johnny Dollar Part 4 of 5 | 2 June Mollé Mystery Theatre Johnny Dollar Part 5 of 5 | 3 June Sam Spade Superman |

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

APRIL 1995

SATURDAY, APRIL 1st

Today we present an afternoon of April foolishness with four hours of fun and surprises drawing on sounds from the world of old time radio and recordings. **Ken Alexander** will be our co-host as we tune to entertainment provided by Henry Morgan, Bob and Ray, Hector Q. Peabody, Spike Jones and his City Slickers, Allan Sherman, Wally Cox, Andy Griffith, Jack Kirkwood, Stan Freberg, Mike Nichols and Elaine May, the Bickersons, the Mighty Metro Art Players and others, plus a complete broadcast of...

FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY (4-3-45) Jim and Marian Jordan star as Fibber enters a limerick contest. Cast includes Arthur Q. Brian as Doc Gamble, Shirley Mitchell as Alice Darling, Marlin Hurt as Beulah, with the King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra, Harlow Wilcox. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:37)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8th DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT -- Part I

★ WORLD NEWS TODAY (4-8-45) Bob Trout and CBS newsmen around the world bring us up to date on the war situation: "British troops of the Second Army are now within seven miles of two important German cities, Bremen and Hanover. ...The Germans are fighting fiercely in the streets of Vienna, but the Russian troops are steadily closing in. ...In the Pacific, the B-29s have returned to Japan with an air attack by substantial forces on the southern tip of the enemy homeland." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:55)

★ FDR DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT (4-12-45) John Daly interrupts regular programming to announce the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. (24 seconds)

★ NEWS (4-12-45) Early coverage of the death of FDR featuring comments by Raymond Graham Swing, reports by David Wills, commentary by Baukhage. ABC/BLUE. (13:45)

★ SPECIAL REPORT (4-12-45) Correspondent Don Fisher reports from Warm Springs, Georgia with reaction from the area that served as FDR's "Little White House." Speaking about the late president are representatives of America's wire services: Merriman Smith of United Press, Harry Oliver of Associated Press, and Robert Nixon of International News Service. CBS. (8:55)

★ SPECIAL REPORT (4-12-45) Robert Trout speaks of the presidency of FDR and his Fireside Chats. "...Franklin Roosevelt created much broadcasting his way. He was the first world statesman to use the radio as a vital instrument of social power. He used it in a personalized fashion..." CBS. (12:28)

★ SPECIAL REPORT (4-12-45) From Washington, D.C., newsmen Bill Henry talks about changes which

occur in the official governmental life of the nation upon the death of a president and speaks of Harry Truman, "who today became the 32nd president of the United States. CBS. (11:40)

★ SPECIAL REPORT (4-12-45) Alistair Cooke, BBC Special Correspondent in the U.S., with news of the death of FDR as it was first heard in Britain from America. CBS. (4:55)

★ CBS WORLD NEWS (4-12-45) John Daly with news summary, Robert Trout with analysis: "Sudden death of President Roosevelt shocks world... Allied leaders pay tribute to President... Vice President Truman sworn in as President... 9th Army crosses Alba River and moves ahead on road to Berlin... Japanese flyers make suicide attacks on Okinawa." CBS. (15:00)

★ NEWS (4-13-45) Don Goddard reports: "President Truman has decided to hold the San Francisco Conference on April 25 as scheduled... The Russians have captured Vienna..." NBC. (5:55)

★ DORA BATEMAN (4-13-45) Via short wave from London, BBC commentator Dora Bateman speaks of the death of FDR, telling of English reaction to the news. BBC to WLS, Chicago. (5:30)

★ DEATH OF FDR (4-14-45) Description of the arrival from Warm Springs, Georgia of the Funeral train at Union Station in Washington. D.C. NBC. (14:05)

★ FDR MEMORIAL SERVICES (4-14-45) Coverage of memorial services for President Roosevelt. Russ Davis describes the scene in Chicago; Gene Dennis in Kansas City; Dick Bush in Dallas. CBS. (15:25)

★ ARTHUR GODFREY (4-30-72) Excerpt. At the close of his radio broadcasting career Arthur Godfrey remembers his coverage of FDR's funeral procession in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1945. CBS. (4:00)

★ WHITE HOUSE FUNERAL SERVICE (4-14-45) Carlton Smith and Dwight Emery cover the White House funeral service for President Roosevelt. (22:35)

SATURDAY, APRIL 15th DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT -- Part II

★ REPORT TO THE NATION (4-14-45) A memorial to President Roosevelt featuring John Daly, Lily Pons, Andre Kostelanetz, CBS War Correspondent Charles Colingwood (from Paris), actor Frederic March. "This is a solemn hour in American history..." Daly recalls his work as a White House correspondent with FDR. Servicemen tell their feelings on learning of the death of their commander in-chief. Continental Can Co., CBS. (29:30)

★ CBS NEWS (4-15-45) Cris Coffin reports on the FDR funeral at Hyde Park, New York, and on various memorial services being held in Washington. Comments about President Truman and news from the war fronts. CBS. (14:00)

★ WORLD NEWS TODAY (4-25-45) Bob Trout and CBS correspondents. "The president was buried today..." Eric Sevareid returns from his job as war correspondent to cover the United Nations Conference in San Francisco. Speculation on Truman's cabinet choices. Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:55)

★ TRIBUTE TO FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (4-15-45) "In the hour of national sorrow, from Hollywood come the famous personalities of radio and motion pictures, uniting to pay tribute to Franklin Delano Roosevelt." This two-hour program features Ronald Colman, John Charles Thomas, Fibber McGee and Molly (and Teeney), Kay Kyser, Major Meredith Willson and the Armed Forces Radio Service Orchestra, Ed "Archie" Gardner, Ginny Simms, Dick Powell, violinist Josef Segetti, James Cagney, Charioteers, Eddie Cantor, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, Will H. Hays, Shirley Ross, Bette Davis, Robert Young, Jack Benny, Hal Peary, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Ingrid Bergman. Announcers are Harry Von Zell, Harlow Wilcox, Ken Carpenter and Don Wilson. This tribute to FDR was written by John Kraft, Carlton E. Morse and Glenn Wheaton. NBC. (31:04; 29:10; 29:10; 35:30)

SATURDAY, APRIL 22nd HELLO to HARRY TRUMAN GOOD BYE to ERNIE PYLE GOOD RIDDANCE to ADOLPH HITLER

★ HARRY S. TRUMAN (4-16-45) Before a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn introduces Harry S. Truman, the 32nd President of the United States in his first speech to Congress. ALL NETWORKS/CBS. (25:40)

★ HARRY S. TRUMAN (4-17-45) The new president speaks to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, his first message to the troops as their new Commander-in-Chief. AFRS. (4:40)

★ THIS IS MY BEST (4-17-45) "I Will Not Go Back" by Milton Geiger is presented after the death of President Roosevelt. The series stars Orson Welles who also produces and directs. CBS. (26:50)

★ WORDS AT WAR (11-2-43) "Here Is Your War" by Ernie Pyle. Santos Ortega stars as the war correspondent who tells the story of the American Doughboy in North Africa. Sustaining, NBC. (28:00)

★ SPECIAL REPORT (4-18-45) From Guam correspondent Robert McCormick reports on the death of Ernie Pyle. NBC. (4:00)

★ SPECIAL REPORT (4-18-45) A report from the island of Okinawa on the death of columnist/correspondent Ernie Pyle. NBC. (3:05)

★ DEATH OF ERNIE PYLE (4-18-45) Via short wave from Guam, Robert McCormick with another special report on the death of America's most famous war correspondent, killed at the age of 44 on Ie Jima. NBC. (4:45)

★ CHASE AND SANBORN PROGRAM (7-29-45) Excerpt. Frances Langford, Ken Carpenter and Tony Romano talk about the film, "Story of GI Joe," based on Ernie Pyle's life as a war correspondent, and dra-

matize a scene from the film. NBC. (5:30)

★ SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY (4-18-53) Excerpt. On the eighth anniversary of Ernie Pyle's death, George Ramsby recalls meeting Pyle and presents "a musical tribute to a great American." WBBM/CBS. (9:25)

★ SPECIAL BROADCAST (4-27-45) President Truman announces the meeting of Anglo, American and Soviet Forces in the heart of Nazi Germany, cutting the country in two! Short wave reports from Europe. NBC. (9:25)

★ JURGENS JOURNAL (4-29-45) Walter Winchell with news that "Japanese suicide planes have heavily damaged an American hospital ship..." and "Unconfirmed dispatches say that Hitler died at noon today in his underground Berlin headquarters..." Jurgens Lotion, ABC. (12:00)

★ NEWS BROADCASTS (4-30-45) A montage of radio sounds, scanning the dial on the night of Hitler's death, with great speculation about the surrender of Germany. "One thing is clear, it's now over in Europe." News of the battle of Berlin; what to expect from Japan; Churchill's comments; MacArthur announces the capture of the summer capital of Manila; an American high official tells that Germany has surrendered. VARIOUS STATIONS. (11:55)

★ DEATH OF ADOLPH HITLER (4-30-45) Local news commentators with speculation following the death of Adolph Hitler. Will the Allies now deal with Heinrich Himmler? Will President Truman go on the air later tonight with an announcement of V-E Day? Plus a profile of Hitler's early life. WCPO, Cincinnati. (11:45)

★ DEATH OF ADOLPH HITLER (4-30-45) Reactions from Allied headquarters from Mutual correspondents John Thompson, Seymour Korman and Paul Manning on reports of Hitler's death. MBS. (13:00)

SATURDAY, APRIL 29th Chuck Schaden's 25th Anniversary Show "Thanks for listening"

As we complete twenty-five years of *Those Were The Days* broadcasts we'll express our appreciation with what we hope will be a very special program.

We'll be broadcasting "live" -- as always on Saturday afternoons -- from the Radio Hall of Fame studio in the Museum of Broadcast Communications at the Chicago Cultural Center on Michigan Avenue at Washington Street. You're invited to stop in and say "hello." There's no admission charge to the Museum or the broadcast. And you don't even need a reservation! Hope you can come.

We'll share some memories of our quarter-century (our first quarter-century) on the air and, of course, we'll include clips from our broadcasts and interviews.

In addition, we'll have highlights from the Museum's celebration in honor of our anniversary... the benefit event held on Sunday, April 23, 1995 at *Swissôtel*, the Swiss Grand Hotel in Chicago. (See "Hello, Out There..." on page 1 of this *Digest*.)

Please tune in... and don't touch that dial!

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

MAY 1995

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for *Those Were The Days* represents the length of time for each particular show; (28:50) means the program will run 28 minutes and 50 seconds. This may be of help to those who tape the programs for their own collection. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

SATURDAY, MAY 6th V-E DAY -- Part I

★ **VAN DEVENTER AND THE NEWS** (5-7-45) Newscaster VanDeventer brings news of the events surrounding the surrender of Germany. "In many respects, this has been a lamentable day despite the fact it's been celebrated throughout much of the world as V-E Day. There seems to be no doubt but what the Germans have surrendered unconditionally. The Germans admit it and it's not denied by any official sources... but (the news) was not supposed to have been made public in any way." Hoffman Beer, WOR/MBS. (14:21)

★ **PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN** (5-8-45) At 9 a.m. Eastern War Time the President announces the unconditional surrender of Germany, the end of the war in Europe. "This is a solemn but glorious hour... I only wish that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day." Mr. Truman reads his formal proclamation, appoints Sunday, May 13, 1945 a Day of Prayer. ALL NETWORKS/CBS. (6:10)

V-E DAY, LONDON (5-8-45) Edward R. Murrow and Douglas Edwards report via short wave on the Day

of Victory celebration in London. "This is London..." Murrow begins. CBS. (5:25)

★ **THIS IS V-E DAY** (5-8-45) An "audio newsreel" dealing with the major events of WWII in Europe, produced locally, noting that "there is still a long way to go before the final victory throughout the world." WMP5, Memphis. (30:35)

★ **TOM MIX RALSTON STRAIGHT-SHOOTERS** (5-8-45) Curley Bradley stars as Tom Mix in this isolated episode of the long-running kids' adventure show. "The war in Europe ended today," says Tom. Shredded Ralston, MBS. (14:29)

★ **HOLLYWOOD V-E DAY SPECIAL** (5-8-45) From Columbia's Radio Playhouse at Hollywood and Vine, comes this special victory day broadcast featuring Charles Boyer, Nelson Eddy, Pat O'Brien, Frank Sinatra, Shirley Ross, Mills Brothers, and others. CBS. (23:40; 25:35)

★ **GABRIEL HEATTER** (5-8-45) The news commentator tells of the unconditional surrender of Germany and the fall of the Third Reich. Forhand's Tooth Paste, MBS. (13:25)

★ **ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH** (5-8-45) Norman Corwin's victory exclamation on the defeat of Hitler and the end of the war in Europe. Narrated by Martin Gable with music by Bernard Hermann, this special broadcast, now a radio classic, was written, directed and produced by Corwin. CBS. (29:55; 29:55)

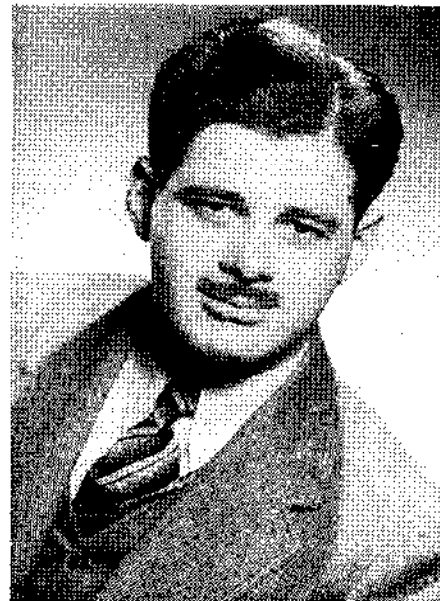
SATURDAY, MAY 13th V-E DAY -- Part II

★ **ROY ROGERS SHOW** (5-8-45) The King of the Cowboys with the Sons of the Pioneers, Pat Friday, announcer Verne Smith and guest Porter Hall, screen villain. Roy tells the story of Pecos Bill. AFRS re broadcast. (28:34)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (5-8-45) Fibber attends a City Council meeting and agrees to finish a Housing Shortage Survey. This broadcast contains some special V-E Day messages and commercials are eliminated. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:33)

★ **DANNY KAYE SHOW** (5-11-45) As chairman of the Seventh War Loan, Danny is busy selling bonds in his neighborhood. Cast includes Eve Arden, Bob Jellison, Benny Rubin, Shirley Mitchell, announcer Ken Niles and Harry James and his Music Makers. Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, CBS. (28:36)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-13-45) Robert Trout and CBS correspondents around the world report. "This



NORMAN CORWIN RECEIVED HIGH ACCLAIM FOR HIS "ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH" V-E DAY BROADCAST. (TWTD MAY 6th.)

is the Day of Prayer, a National Day of Thanksgiving in the United States and Great Britain. President Truman attended services in Washington and in London the King and Queen drove to St. Paul's Cathedral in the first Royal Procession since the war began... In the Philippines, two American divisions are fighting up narrow river valleys to join a third division and cut the island of Mindanao in two, but the Japanese are resisting fiercely and the American progress is very slow." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:45)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (5-13-45) Jack prepares to leave for San Francisco. Cast includes Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Larry Stevens, Phil Harris, plus John Brown, Joe Kearns, Frank Nelson, Mel Blanc. Jack has a Mother's Day/V-E Day message. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (26:17)

★ **THE WHISTLER** (5-28-45) A Nazi officer, wanted as a war criminal, assumes the identity of a dead American prisoner of war, but runs into problems in America. Signal Oil, CBS. (30:00)

SATURDAY, MAY 20th

★ **GI JIVE** (1940s) Gi Jill plays tunes for servicemen around the world during WW II. This time the AEF Juke box spins tunes by Bunny Berigan, Lionel Hampton, Tommy Dorsey and Harry James. AFRS. (14:08)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-20-45) Robert Trout and correspondents around the globe. "Japanese broadcasts are saying that some 80 Super Fortresses have made an attack today on the Tokyo district while

other American bombers raided the island of Formosa, the peninsula of Korea and the Chinese city of Nanking, capital of the puppet government... The fighting on Okinawa is still intensely bitter... In Europe, it's been officially announced... that the city of Berlin will never again be the administrative and military capital of Germany. Germany is to be decentralized, though not dismembered." Admiral Radios, CBS. (25:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-10-45) The McGees go to the office of the *Wistful Vista* newspaper to complain about delivery problems. Jim and Marian Jordan star. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:00)

★ **LUX RADIO THEATRE** (4-18-49) "Treasure of Sierra Madre" starring Humphrey Bogart, Frank Lovejoy and Walter Huston in the radio version of the 1948 film, a tale of gold, greed and human nature at its worst, with Bogie in his original screen role. William Keighley hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (16:10; 20:00; 11:45)

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (5-3-45) Bing Crosby with guests the Nat "King" Cole Trio, plus regulars Eugenie Baird, Charloeters, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Kraft Foods, NBC. (28:48)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-17-45) Fibber's in a rush to call the Third National about his bank statement, but Alice Darling is on the phone with her boyfriend. Jim and Marian Jordan with Shirley Mitchell, Arthur Q. Brian, Bea Benadaret, Marlin Hurt. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (28:30)

SATURDAY, MAY 27th

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-24-45) Molly convinces Fibber to go to the EIK's Club so he'll be out of her way while she cleans house. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:35)

★ **LUX RADIO THEATRE** (10-4-43) "Pride of the Yankees" starring Gary Cooper, repeating his original 1942 screen role, in this biography of baseball great Lou Gehrig. Cast includes Virginia Bruce and Edgar Buchanan. Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (20:15; 18:05; 20:48)

★ **BERLIN CALLING** (1994) Documentary telling the true story of Americans who served the Nazi propaganda effort through world-wide short wave radio broadcasts, offering commentary, news and entertainment with a Nazi slant from Germany to America before and during World War II. Written, produced and narrated by David Bryant. NPR. (29:50; 25:55)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (5-1-45) Fibber plans to capture a wanted criminal for the reward money. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:36)

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THE RESTORATION OF FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY

BY KARL PEARSON

On Monday, April 16, 1935, entertainers Jim and Marian Jordan stepped before microphones in NBC's New York studios and performed their first "Fibber McGee and Molly" broadcast over NBC's Blue Network.

In a few short years the program, sponsored by Johnson's Wax for 15 years, would become one of the top programs on the air. Even today the program is one of the all-time favorites of fans of old time radio. "Fibber McGee and Molly" generated a whole series of memorable catch phrases such as "I ain't Funny, McGee" and "Heavenly Days" that became a part of the American language.

The program featured a number of memorable characters such as The Old Timer, Doc Gamble, Mrs. Uppington and



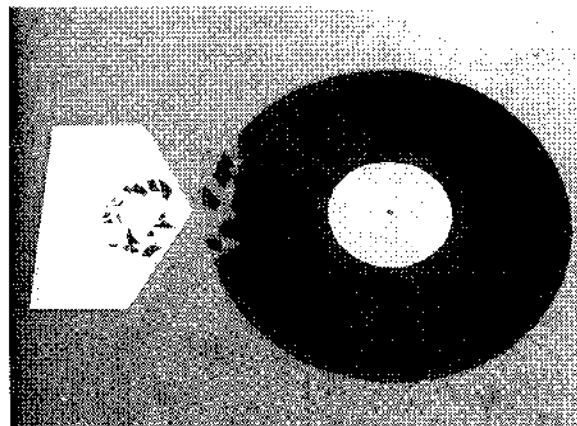
"FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY"
Marian and Jim Jordan

Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, played by seasoned radio actors including Arthur Q. Bryan, Bill Thompson, Shirley Mitchell, Hugh Studebaker, Bernardine Flynn, Isabel Randolph, Gale Gordon and others. Characters who were often referred to but never heard such as Molly's Uncle Dennis, Fred Nitney of Starved Rock, Illinois, and Myrt, the Wistful Vista telephone operator were equally enjoyed by listeners.

As the sixtieth anniversary of that first broadcast in April 1935 approaches, the process of preserving over 500 "Fibber McGee and Molly" broadcasts for future generations is under way at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago.

During the 1930's and 1940's it was a common practice for sponsors and advertising agencies to have reference recordings made of their various broadcasts. Reference recordings were often made to evaluate a broadcast for performance quality or program content and were usually retained for legal purposes. If questions ever arose about a particular broadcast the recordings of the program could be pulled from the files and auditioned.

S.C. Johnson and Son, sponsor of "Fibber McGee and Molly," frequently had airchecks made of the various programs that they sponsored. The recordings, transcribed directly onto disc (magnetic tape didn't come onto the scene until the late 1940's), were requested from private recording services by Needham, Louis and Brorby, the Johnson advertising agency. The recordings were usually made off a broadcast line located in Chicago and were shipped to the Johnson office in



Racine, Wisconsin for storage.

These recordings were filed away in large metal filing cabinets, and as radio gave way to television they gathered dust in a corner of the Johnson facility. In the late 1960's an old-time radio fan obtained permission from the company to make tape recordings for his own use from these transcription discs. Eventually the collector traded copies of these tapes with other Old Time Radio (OTR) collectors and a number of "Fibber and Molly" shows made their way into general circulation. The discs, however, remained in the possession of the Johnson company until 1989, when the Museum of Broadcast Communications acquired the entire S.C. Johnson and Son library of recordings. This collection covers a twenty-year period beginning in 1933 and includes a number of different shows, with the most exciting portion of the collection being the group of over 500 "Fibber McGee and Molly" programs.

Two members of Chuck Schaden's disc restoration team were asked to donate their services to the Museum project. Mike Stosich has been involved in the restoration and preservation of broadcast recordings for over twenty years and owns Iso-teric Sound, a company that produces audio equipment and related items for collectors and archivists in the same field.

MC GEE TRANSCRIPTION DISC WITH HEAVY DAMAGE

This writer, the other member of the team, has also been involved in the area of disc restoration and preservation for nearly twenty years.

The actual project began a year after the arrival of the discs at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. The first task was to inspect the discs and determine their physical condition and stability. Most of the

half-hour programs, stored in large file cabinets, were recorded onto 16-inch 33-1/3 R.P.M. acetate-coated aluminum-base transcription discs, in fifteen-minute segments across two discs. After a thorough inspection it was determined that over ninety percent of the Fibber and Molly programs sponsored by S.C. Johnson and Son were a part of the present collection!

Instead of starting at the beginning of the series and recording the shows in sequence we decided it was wiser to transfer the programs to tape on a "priority basis" based on disc condition.

Materials shortages during World War II



ANOTHER BROKEN 16 INCH DISC

MC GEE DISC RESTORATION

caused a shortage of aluminum during that time and programs from the period of November, 1941 to June, 1944 were recorded on thin, fragile glass-based discs. Many of these wartime recordings were broken and/or in need of additional repair. It was believed that further deterioration could occur in the immediate future and for that reason the glass based-discs were copied first.

In most cases the recording agency made a second recording of the program on the back of another set of discs. The December 1, 1942 show, for example, appears on one set of discs, while another copy of the same program was recorded onto the back of the December 8, 1942 program discs!

The first step in restoring discs to tape involves the cleaning and restoration of the transcription discs. With time and improper storage discs often become a home

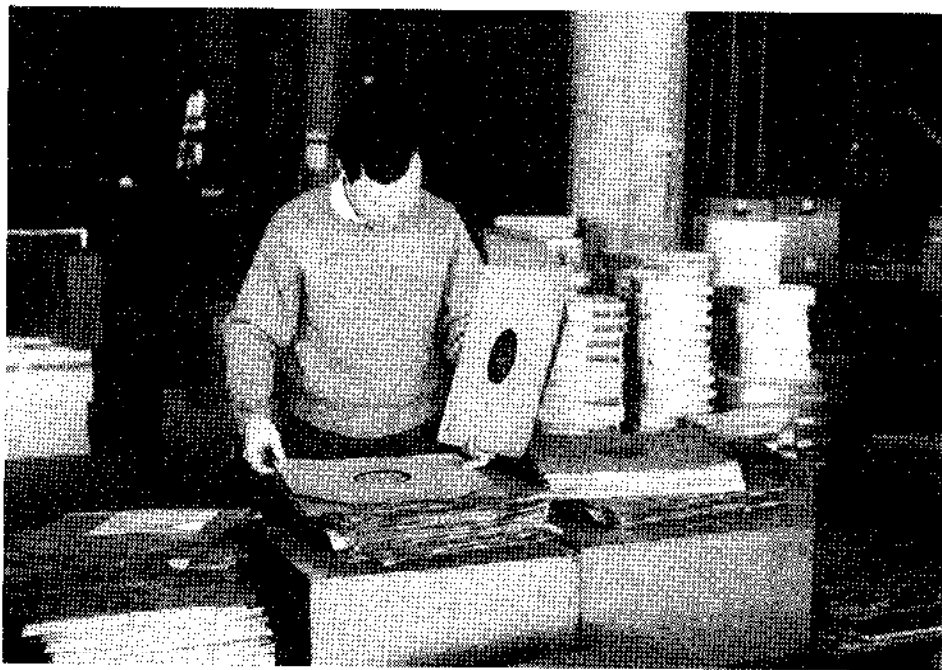
for dirt and other foreign elements, which in turn affect the overall fidelity and playback of a recording. Dust and dirt are easily removed while other elements such as mildew, which usually creates a white residue, are a little trickier to remove from surfaces.

Necessary repairs are usually made to the disc after it is cleaned. Cracks in the acetate surface can be patched or filled on a damaged disc while broken glass discs actually can, in most cases, be salvaged and successfully transferred to tape! In one rare instance we were able to save a recording that had broken into fifteen separate pieces!

Once the discs are cleaned and repaired the recording process begins. Various sized styli (phonograph needles) are used to compensate for recording differences and groove wear. Discs that were recorded off-speed on faulty equipment can be repitched to a correct playback speed. Various forms of re-equalization are used to compensate



MIKE STOSICH METICULOUSLY PIECES TOGETHER ELEMENTS OF A BROKEN DISC.



KARL PEARSON LOOKS CAREFULLY THRU A STACK OF MC GEE TRANSCRIPTION DISCS IN A WAREHOUSE AT THE MUSEUM OF BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS.

for older audio characteristics, often adding a fresher sound to an old recording. Additional filters are used to minimize pops and clicks, annoying hums or whistles, and surface noise (scratch). The final product is then transferred to audio tape.

The taping process allows the engineer to edit together the various segments and to produce a final, seamless product similar to the original broadcast. Many of the more difficult projects are handled by Mike Stosich on a Digital-based audio recording system which allows for greater flexibility in editing the final output. In most cases a single half-hour program may require as much as two to three hours of time to restore to tape!

After the glass-based discs had been safely transferred to tape Mike and I decided to begin work on the earlier shows from the 1935-1939 period. These shows have never been transferred to tape and in

most cases are not known to exist in any other collection. Most of these early shows require a little more care in transfer as many of the discs are worn, or in some cases, damaged.

As of this writing approximately half the collection has been preserved. Programs from the 1935-1937 and 1940-1945 period have been transferred to both reel-to-reel and digital audio tape. Visitors to The Museum of Broadcast Communications will eventually be able to listen to these tapes as the masters are copied and placed in the Museum archives.

One of the best parts of being a part of the discs restoration process is hearing the actual program. A number of "Fibber and Molly" programs have not turned up in circulation before and the collection contains a number of unheard gems. It's interesting to hear various well-known characters, such as Gildersleeve and the Old Timer, develop over a period of time.

MC GEE DISC RESTORATION

Several of the early shows feature Jim and Marian Jordan playing additional parts such as Jim's "Mort Toops" character and Marian's portrayal of "Old Lady Wheedledeck" and "Mrs. Wearybottom." A number of the early shows from the Chicago period (1935-1939) feature a young vocalist named Perry Como, who sang with Ted Weems and his Orchestra on the program (and who occasionally speaks a few lines of dialogue).

Later programs from the World War II era give today's listeners an idea of what the home front was like coping with as various subjects such as gas rationing, home canning and rumors were worked into story lines.

In 1990, thru the efforts of Chuck Schaden, Gretchen Stewart Jordan, widow of Jim Jordan, donated her husband's collection of bound "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "Smackout" scripts to The Museum of Broadcast Communications. The 500-plus "Fibber McGee and Molly" programs will compliment the script collection nicely.

Fans of Fibber and Molly are fortunate that the Johnson Company saw fit to record

and preserve these programs, and that the Museum was able to acquire an outstanding collection of classic broadcasts. ■

(ED. NOTE-- And the Museum is fortunate to have such dedicated volunteer audio restoration technicians as Karl Pearson and Mike Stosich.)



KARL PEARSON, ABOVE, GENTLY WASHES ANOTHER OF THE HUNDREDS OF TRANSCRIPTION DISCS WHILE MIKE STOSICH, LEFT, COLLECTS A COUPLE OF HUNDRED POUNDS OF WISTFUL VISTA MEMORIES.

The Lonely Soldier's Voice - Ernie Pyle

BY BILL OATES

Someone has to be the last to die in a war; that fact is an unwritten law. A bullet, sword, or explosive, it does not matter for the results are the same: off to war, the hell of battle, and a hope that keeps soldiers, sailors or marines thinking that he or she can outbid the statistician for the honor of being last in line. From the earliest years in grammar school being "last in line" or the final one picked had a negative stigma: as part of this tradition, the one to receive the honor of being the closing statistic in war is man's ultimate insult to his fellow man.

There was a twentieth century war to end all the rest. Instead bodies lie unidentified in Arlington Cemetery as a reminder that the first World War cost so much, yet would not deliver its promise of peace for the remainder of the century. Another war came and went (and then some), and more statistics filled the pages of the newspapers back home.

One man seemed to become the voice of all of those mother's sons who went off to the next major foreign conflict. Both in his life and, more poignantly, through his death, Ernie Pyle assumed the voice of the GI's who went off to Europe and the Pacific and Africa and everywhere else the Allies defended free thought.

Born in west central Indiana, Ernest Taylor Pyle came into the world on August 3, 1900. He grew up on a farm just outside Dana, a small town a few miles from the Wabash River and a few miles from the Illinois line.

Farming was not to become part of

Bill Oates is a high school English teacher from Indiana who is a regular contributor to these pages.



Ernie Pyle's future; he was not sure what he would do for a living, just what he would not. The first World War provided a chance to get away from home, but just as Pyle was about to enlist, the Armistice was signed. In 1919 he sojourned to Bloomington, Indiana where he studied journalism at Indiana University.

By his junior year, Ernie became editor of the university newspaper, *The Student*. The Associated Press wire service was available for his reading, and after absorbing himself in the writings of the A.P.'s Kirke Simpson, especially the description of the burial of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, Pyle experienced the first great force to influence his career decision.

The college years allowed Ernie Pyle chances to visit places he had only dreamed about as a poor farmer's son in central Indiana. While in the naval reserve in the

ERNIE PYLE

summer of 1921, he boarded the training ship *Wilmette* in Chicago and ventured as far north as Duluth. When IU played away games, he also got the chance to travel, but the greatest adventure came when he accompanied the Hoosier baseball team to Japan in 1922. The travel bug bit him hard, and he was forever answering calls to report from an exotic and sometimes dangerous distant port.

Returning to Indiana University for his senior year, Ernie Pyle settled down to his classes, but a golden opportunity prevented his graduation: the chance to become a writer on the *Washington Daily News*. And they offered another two and a half dollars for Pyle's services. It was not the price that drew him East, but rather the employment chance to work as a journalist in the nation's capital.

The next decade and a half witnessed the tecthing of Ernie Pyle in the newspaper trade. He worked in the nation's capitol for a few years, before marrying Geraldine Elizabeth Siebolds (Jerry), a Civil Service employee from Minnesota. Tired of their respective rat races, they took a sabbatical in 1926 and drove around the rim of the forty-eight states. After ten weeks they concluded their adventure in New Jersey and sought work, with Ernie starting at the *New York Evening World* and then later moving on to that city's *Post*, from which James Thurber had just left. The following year Pyle was back at the *Washington Daily News*, where he inaugurated what might have been the nation's first aviation column.

The years between Lindbergh's transatlantic crossing in 1927 and the 1932 Hoover-Roosevelt election pulsated with daredevil and sometimes tragic accounts of the advances in aviation. Amelia Earhardt was among the young writer's ac-

quaintances, and when he moved on to assume the position of managing editor of the paper, she presented, on behalf of the appreciative aviation community, a fine watch. He wore that time piece for the next thirteen years and had it on when he was fatally shot in the Pacific theater.

From 1935-1940 he and Jerry travelled months at a time, reporting on the length and breadth of America, as well as Alaska, Mexico and Canada, predating "On the Road" reporter Charles Kuralt of CBS by three decades. Ernie and his wife lived a very simple life, camping and rolling his cigarettes as he went. He continued to write his family in Dana weekly. When the couple arrived in Los Angeles, Pyle began a series on the Disney studio, but this early positive assignment in Hollywood left him with a distaste for all the "rigamarole you have to go through, the stalling and waiting..." to get the next story. He said it "all gives me a pain" and left, heading back for Dana.

While Ernie was travelling, the premiere American newspaper columnist O.O. McIntyre died, allowing him a chance at the most prestigious position in writing. While in Indiana, Pyle suffered exhaustion from the pressure of writing "a thousand words a day" and faced a prescription of one month's bed rest. Unfortunately, his home town, normally a sleepy little farm community, was mobbed by those who wished to meet the now famed writer. The Pyles headed West where he had more space to unwind, and on the way back to Washington, DC he stopped again in Indiana, this time to write. He was able to relax in Brown County, where he wrote a dozen or so columns, and, at his newspaper's request, went to find the Hoosier presidential candidate Wendell Willkie.

After several satisfying visits to the area, Ernie and Jerry Pyle decided to locate in the Southwest. They planned to build a



house in Santa Fe, but instead settled in Albuquerque. Before he could move in, Ernie Pyle accepted an assignment to travel to London, this time without Jerry. He admitted his fear, not so much of the trip on the Pan American Clipper, but rather the "multitudinous danger" of a visit in a war zone. He also knew that Jerry was upset about the trip, and that she was beginning to show signs of psychological problems. She busied herself by readying the new house, while he embarked on the reporting job that would capture his desire to be a war correspondent for life.

After writing Ed Shaffer of the Scripps-Howard chain what to do with personal effects and how to deal with Jerry should he not return, Ernie Pyle arrived in London during "The Blitz." He wrote of the "old, old city" during the Christmas holiday and of how its peace deteriorated when it was "ringed and stabbed with fire...(and how) a vast inner excitement came over all of us - an excitement that had neither fear nor horror in it because it was too full of awe." As he leaned over his Savoy Hotel balcony, he listened to the horrific and

amazing sounds of war and wanted to repeat the sights in vivid prose for the readers at home. His wife wrote a friend, "...Ernie's column about the burning of London is the most terrible and beautiful I've ever read," as she responded to the first example of his best work, a simple yet honest chronicle for the American readers of how the English were keeping a stiff upper lip in the worst of times.

Two personal calamities greeted Ernie Pyle when he returned home: his mother became gravely ill and his wife's bouts with mental illness and alcoholism intensified. After a stop to visit his family in Indiana, Pyle had to make a career decision: to leave his wife under strict care or to quit his job of seventeen years to care for her. He took a three month leave of absence to help her, and then divorced her. The couple attempted reconciliation almost immediately, but America's involvement in the war called on his writing abilities, so he departed for Shannon, Ireland to begin his stint as a war correspondent.

He thought he would look silly in a military uniform, but all correspondents dressed that way. Soon after his arrival on the Emerald Isle he found that he and the American soldiers were very much in harmony and he adjusted to "their" uniform, saying "...they seem to feel that I'm just another old broken down guy from home and a sight for sore eyes."

His travels began immediately, as he struck out from the Irish nether regions in search of stories. Close to his forty-second birthday Ernie Pyle headed for England, where he decided that he was going to chronicle the story of the GI as long as the war continued. He started by familiarizing himself with 1942 England, its air bases, countryside, towns, people, the whole thing. While there, the first of a number of his friends, Byron Darnton of the *New York Times*, became a casualty of

ERNIE PYLE

the war.

The next stop was Africa, where he disembarked like the soldiers, weighted down with all the gear, except for the fact that his weapon was a typewriter.

While suffering from influenza during Thanksgiving and Christmas, Ernie Pyle wrote of the French Foreign Legion and of pro-Nazi Frenchmen in Algiers. He faced little military censorship, much to the surprise of the Scripps-Howard home office. If his audience had grown to an impressive size before 1943, that year began the writing that endeared him to readers for all time. From Biskra in the Sahara he began to report from the ground level what war really was, literally and succinctly, as had never been done before.

Pyle began writing of Flying Fortress raids over Tripoli and how he and his enlisted comrades learned to appreciate digging slit trenches. From a tough won jeep (motorized transportation was scarce), he represented to the sand blasted troops a link from home, a symbol that they were not forgotten. He wrote of their discomfort and of what the chaplain most often found in the dead soldier's pockets: toilet paper. Rather than getting the story from the top officers, Ernie Pyle elected to observe the war with the lesser officers and the enlisted men.

On Valentine's Day in 1943, Ernie decided to take a little R & R in Morocco, but famed German tank commander General Erwin Rommel changed the itinerary. The Desert Fox struck with lightning speed, and, while many of the journalists headed for distant safety, Pyle stayed on to write about one of the few retreats by the American army. He later wrote of witnessing a direct hit on a jeep with its structure and occupants blown to bits. He moved toward the site, not out of some

morbid curiosity, but rather to collect bits of paper and effects that could be reconstructed into a journalistic tribute to the men. After the attack two things happened: the GI's respect for Ernie Pyle swelled, as they rushed to tell him their own personal accounts of the battle; and the devastating loss forced a command decision to replace the ineffective leaders with better ones, the flamboyant General George S. Patton and the less flashy but no less effective Omar Bradley.

While the opportunities to bathe at the front diminished, Ernie's desire to write Jerry of his exploits and to reconcile their marriage intensified. From one rare bath he caught a cold, and while recuperating he received a message from the United Press Office in New York: "...you married your wife by proxy" it confirmed.

Reporting from Accra, Ghana, Ernie came across radio correspondent Quentin Reynolds and singer-comedienne Martha Raye, who were entertaining the troops. Reynolds suggested to Ernie that the popular column could demand twice the pay and there was surely a million dollar book deal, but Pyle felt that he did not have the time to write a book and his general feeling toward his employer was "they've been so wonderful to me, and somehow it seems wrong anyhow to try to make more money when so many people have had to give up their salaries." (But he did ultimately write several books.) When asked by the entertainers to join them on stage, Ernie complied. The loud ovation of "We want Ernie" struck the correspondent dumb, and he exited full of stage fright.

Ernie was ready to go home to New Mexico, and he felt that if he left that he might not be able to return. Jerry's frail condition might be exacerbated by another departure. On the way home he called on General Eisenhower who suggested that the writer "go and discover Bradley." On



the way he and two other correspondents had to move past dead GI's clutching their guns in their foxholes.

Catching up with Bradley was a chore, for the general was moving quickly with the allied forces to rid Africa of the German army. Pyle did catch up, but would not go home until after another adventure called him. Bradley's predecessor, Patton, was preparing the invasion of Sicily and bringing the war to the enemy's doorstep. Pyle hitched a ride on the ship *Biscayne*, upon which he experienced some lost amenities of civilization, before moving on shore with the army at Palermo.

The first focus of the column was to chronicle the army engineers, but Pyle broke away to get to know Omar Bradley better. A mutual admiration society formed and the young Lieutenant General, who was little known at home, received instant fame through Pyle's columns as the writer enumerated the officer's leadership skills. The two remained in contact throughout the war.

Back to Algiers, then Rabat, and finally,

a Clipper home. He was in New York September 5, 1943, tired and war weary; yet the correspondent was good press and his fellow reporters hounded him for a story. After reaching Jerry by phone and assuring her that he would be home before too long, Ernie Pyle made obligatory trips to his work base in Washington, DC and to visit family in Dana. After making these stops, he felt that he could settle down in New Mexico and relax.

Before he headed West, he fulfilled an unusual request to be on a radio show. Even his stage fright could not keep him from appearing with Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, because selling War Bonds for his buddies over seas superseded his fears before a mike. This special *We, the People* show originated from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home on September 12, 1943. Other radio offers poured in, but Ernie Pyle refused, choosing instead to communicate with his typewriter.

Ringling constantly, the telephone became his new enemy. One of the few offers he accepted was the chance to pose for a Chesterfield cigarette ad for \$1000, the photos to be taken in his hotel room. Lester Cowan negotiated a film based on his book *Here is Your War*, which became the Columbia picture *The Story of G.I. Joe* with Burgess Meredith as the star. Meredith and Pyle struck up a friendship and when the writer visited the Hollywood set some months later, he helped his celluloid counterpart convince director Bill Wellman of the thrust of the picture. Wellman saw the light, exclaiming, "It's a love story. Ernie falls in love with the infantry, and leaves it, and find he has to go back to it."

Although Jerry's health was not good, Ernie left for Indiana where his father was hospitalized. From there the newsman departed for Europe again. Before leav-

ERNIE PYLE

ing the states, he ran into Al Jolson, who had just returned from entertaining the troops in Africa, and the singer said of the writer, "he doesn't sing or dance...but they [the soldiers in Africa] acted like he was Mr. God." It was from the next tour of the war zone that Ernest Taylor Pyle received the Pulitzer Prize for his correspondence.

At Anzio the army felt the force of the Nazi beast backed against a wall. Military personnel jokingly chastised Ernie earlier for not wearing his helmet, but when he did strap it on during an enemy shelling in this battle he was glad he heeded earlier advice. Awakened early one morning, Pyle got out of bed when the pounding began; fortune was on his side this time, for when he returned his bed was piled under debris. During one blast his helmet was blown off, a fortunate occurrence, because had his chin strap been fastened a heavy concussion might have broken his neck.

From a vantage point on Omaha Beach, Ernie Pyle witnessed the massive D-Day battle. In his description of the armada landing off the coast of France, he marvelled at the immensity of the operation and of the men and material expended in getting ashore. He said the sacrifice had to be so, for right behind the first sacrificial waves came the next who finished the job. As one column echoed the jubilation of a battle victory, the next was an inventory of "socks and shoe polish, sewing kits, diaries, Bibles, and hand grenades. Here are the last letters home... toothbrushes... broken-handled shovels..." and on and on. The reader could see the entire picture of D-Day more clearly, a tremendous victory framed by the minute remnants of the person attached to the price tag of that triumphal campaign.

An advancing tank battalion brought a number of drivers who jumped out to get

the autograph of their favorite writer, Ernie Pyle. He obliged and took down their names, remembering how proud they were when they told him how they had knocked out two German pill boxes and how sad he was when he found out that two of them were killed a few weeks later.

The European war was winding down in 1944, but was not without resistance and incident. A breathless soldier hailed Pyle and his long time friend Captain Arthur McCollum to help extricate a pilot from his wreckage. Without rank or celebrity, the group worked feverishly to save the British flier who had been stranded for five days. Dangling upside down in his plane with a broken leg pinned under a rudder bar and burned by gasoline spillage, the man waited calmly as the Yanks tore the metal away by hand, disregarding the sharp edges that might slow their work. The flier not only made it out of the wreckage, but also received a visit in the hospital from the famed war correspondent.

Liberation came to Paris, and Ernie Pyle headed from home, stopping in to visit his friend Omar Bradley, who told him to stay home because eventually he might get hurt. The only other delay in getting back to New Mexico was to pose for a bust by famed artist Jo Davison. While sitting for the sculpture, Helen Keller visited the war correspondent, because she wanted to touch his war worn face.

There was a brief stop in Dana before Ernie arrived home to find Jerry in fairly good spirits. Although catching up on long needed rest was of paramount importance, Ernie was unable to do so, because he was besieged by requests for appearances, writing contracts, product endorsements, and honors. He accepted two accolades in the form of honorary doctorates given by the University of New Mexico and Indiana University.

Ernie never lost hope for his wife's re-



ERNIE PYLE, right, with Gen. Omar Bradley and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower

covery, corresponding with her or telephoning almost daily wherever he went. However, her condition did not stabilize; rather it often manifested itself in horrible bouts of violence, sometimes including self-inflicted wounds. He attempted to help her, but when there was little hope that his presence improved his wife's condition, he decided to report on the war from the Pacific theater.

Once at sea, censorship reared its ugly head when Ernie attempted to include in his column the names of the sailors on his ship. Because of this episode of naval infringement into his writing and his desire to be home, he longed to turn around and go home sooner than he normally experienced. He also missed the closeness of the troops in Europe, for at sea he was only able to wait on the carrier to hear the news from returning pilots, rather than watch the struggle first hand.

As the Marines moved to Okinawa and beyond, Ernie began making friends. Resistance was frequently light and progress toward Tokyo continued. One stop was Ie Shima, a more stubborn conquest than other islands, but on April 17, 1945, the

correspondents went ashore. The next day Pyle and several others took their places in a jeep that was part of a long convoy inland. From a seemingly safe position, the party jumped for cover when a lone Japanese Nambu machine gun opened fire on them. Flat on the ground the men were safe, but when Ernie looked up to check on Major George Pratt, the gunner sent another blast, this time hitting Ernie Pyle in the left temple. His last words were to Pratt: "Are you all right?"

He was buried with his helmet on just a few hundred yards from the China Sea (later he was moved to the National Memorial Cemetery at the Punch Bowl in Hawaii). Although he was not the last casualty of World War II, Ernie Pyle became a symbol of the finality of the conflict that would last only four more months. The men scrounged up some scarce wood to fashion a coffin for him, and interred him next to dozens of other service personnel, where a simple yet poignant marker indicated the site with the words "At this spot the 77th Infantry Division lost a buddy, Ernie Pyle, 18 April 1945." A monument replaced the crude marker, but with the same words. He was not a celebrity to those in uniform; he was another "buddy" who paid the ultimate price.

Here are his own words on the loss of life during a campaign:

That is our war, and we will carry it with us as we go on from one battleground to another until it is all over, leaving some of us behind on every beach, in every field...I don't know whether it is good fortune or their misfortune to get out of it so early in the game. I guess it doesn't make any difference, once a man has gone. Medals and speeches and victories are nothing to them any more...When we leave here for the next shore, there is nothing we can do for the ones beneath the wooden crosses, except to murmur, 'Thanks, pal'. ■

Gloria Grahame:

HOLLYWOOD'S GOOD BAD GIRL

BY RICHARD KUNZ

It is Hollywood's habit, to its occasional discredit, to seize upon a successful performance and turn it into a series, forever typecasting an often reluctant actor. Similarly, a performer with a flair for a certain character type will seemingly be locked into the role for life. Some Hollywood stalwarts were content to ride with the tide as "character actors," enjoying a good living but never achieving stardom. Others used stereotyping as a means of growing in their profession by stretching their abilities until they were real "stars" in all but name.

Such an actress was Gloria Grahame, possessed of great talent and a sultry attractiveness that early on found her favored for "bad girl" parts. Gloria played a variety of tarts throughout her career, always fleshing out what could have been a cardboard caricature into a three-dimensional character. Her particular trademark role was that of the "other woman" who turns out in the end not to have been so bad after all. In fact, she was pleased to be referred to as the "tart with a heart," considering it an acknowledgment of just how well she had carved out her particular niche in film-making.

She was born Gloria Grahame Hallward, on November 28, 1925, in Los Angeles. Her father, Michael Hallward, was an industrial designer. Her mother, Jean MacDougall, was of Scottish birth, moving to England in her teens and later study-

Richard Kunz is a free-lance writer, editor of New Electric Railway Journal, and, of course, a Gloria Grahame fan.

ing at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. After her marriage, she gave up the theatre and the Hallwards emigrated to Canada, where Gloria's elder sister Joy was born. The family eventually moved to Pasadena, and some time after Gloria's birth the Hallwards divorced. Gloria's mother started teaching acting in her home to keep the family going, and her younger daughter soon became her star pupil.

Gloria took to the boards early, beginning her performing career at the age of nine with the Pasadena Community Playhouse. She was active in dramatics at Hollywood High School, played in stock and made her Broadway debut as Gloria Hallward in 1943. Having been spotted by MGM boss Louis B. Mayer in the play, "The World's Full of Girls," in 1944 Gloria was signed to her first film contract. She made her debut in "Blonde Fever," following up in small roles in "Without Love," and the Frank Sinatra-Jimmy Durante-Kathryn Grayson musical "It Happened in Brooklyn."

Gloria Grahame first attracted the notice of critics and moviegoers alike in the classic "It's A Wonderful Life," in the first of her trademark roles, this time as Violet, Bedford Falls' "fallen woman," who decides to remain in town after all, giving her travel money to help George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) at the film's tear-jerking climax.

In one memorable scene, Gloria seductively flirts with George, who impulsively asks her to spend the rest of the evening with him—hiking up Mount Bedford to



GLORIA GRAHAME

walk barefoot in the grass, and watch the sunrise against the peaks. ("...we'll stay up there the whole night, and everybody'll be talking and there'll be a terrific scandal...")

This not being exactly what Violet had in mind ("George, have you gone crazy? Walk in the grass in my bare feet? Why, it's ten miles up to Mount Bedford!"), some heated discussion ensues, culminating in a crowd forming and George sputter, "...Okay, just forget about the whole thing!" and stomping off into the night.

Bigger roles in "Merton of the Movies" and "Song of the Thin Man" (one of the Myrna Loy-William Powell series) were to follow, then Gloria's first Oscar nomination, for 1947's "Crossfire." This was a landmark film—the first to tackle anti-Semitism head on—and Gloria was superb as a lady of the night.

Growing in her craft, Gloria proved her versatility in the western "Roughshod" and "A Woman's Secret," then teamed with Humphrey Bogart for the unusual "In A Lonely Place," now a co-star in name as well as fact. Then, her best role to date, as

Kirk Douglas' neglected wife in the about-Hollywood story, "The Bad and the Beautiful," for which she won her only Oscar, for Best Supporting Actress.

Her star rising (and her mastery of the art of acting growing), Gloria played in a series of films that continued to expand upon the character she had played in almost all of her movies, "Macai", "Sudden Fear," "The Glass Wall," "Man on a Tightrope" (set in a Czech circus), "Prisoners of the Casbah" (a forgettable Turkish "turkey"); all followed in rapid succession, capped by the Cecil B. de Mille extravaganza "The Greatest Show on Earth." In this over-long, star-studded and ultimately unsatisfying spectacle, Gloria won praise as the acid-tongued elephant trainer—still the "other woman," but happily redeemed at the end.

"Naked Alibi" came next, a dark thriller with the intense Sterling Hayden in the starring role, set on the Mexican border. Then the film that most moviegoers remember her for—"The Big Heat."

A surprisingly violent movie for its time (1953), "The Big Heat" is the story of an honest cop (Glenn Ford at his agonized best) whose corruption-busting activities result in the bombing death of his wife. Virtually all of the performances in this riveting film are first-rate, but Gloria Grahame in particular is unforgettable, petulant pout and all, as the moll of Lee Marvin, whose gradual conversion to the good side nets her a pot of scalding coffee in the face. Truly one of the more memorable cinema moments, and perhaps Gloria's quintessential bad/good girl role.

Gloria had indeed matured in her roles, and "The Big Heat" was a tough act to follow. Gloria was nearing thirty, and Hollywood's conception of the bad girl with the heart of gold had no room for an actress approaching her fourth decade. There would be some good parts to come, but the mid-fifties were perhaps the begin-

GLORIA GRAHAME

ning of Hollywood's own decline limiting the parts available to women in general, let alone accomplished actresses in demanding roles.

Nonetheless, Gloria remained a busy actress as the Fifties waned, working on both sides of the Atlantic, and two performances stand out. Both were plum roles, with twists on the character she had so effectively developed over the years. In 1955 she journeyed to England for the wartime thriller "The Man Who Never Was," a true tale of one of many Allied plans to deceive Germany as to where the D-Day landings would take place.

Her role was that of girl friend and confidante of Josephine Griffin, a civilian worker in the Royal Navy office where the deception was planned. Gloria's best moment came when she was asked to draft a fictional love letter to be planted on the body that figured in the complex intelligence plot. Her own boy friend had just been ordered into battle, and the resulting scene in which she verbalizes her own feelings into the words of another remains a highlight of the film.

Then, a year later, came "Oklahoma!," the Gordon MacRac-Shirley Jones screen translation of the Rodgers and Hammerstein 1943 Broadway musical. Gloria had not wanted to play Ado Annie, though the producers had her in mind from the beginning, and, according to screen legend had a difficult time getting along with other members of the cast and production company. In spite of these problems, her performance was excellent and her singing ability more than adequate for the role.

Gloria made several more films in the remainder of the decade, "The Good Die Young," a heist movie shot in England;

"Human Desire," a rather dull Fritz Lang thriller; "Not As A Stranger," with Robert Mitchum; "The Cobweb," an unusual movie set in a mental hospital that included Lillian Gish and Oscar Levant in the cast; "Ride Out for Revenge," a dull western; and the critically acclaimed "Odds Against Tomorrow," her last film for some seven years.

Not surprisingly, given her Scottish-English heritage, Gloria divided her time between the U.S. and the U.K., working on the stage and in films in both countries. The later entries in her filmography include a jumble of theatrical and made-for-television films (including "Rich Man, Poor Man" and "Seventh Avenue" in the latter category), with "Melvin and Howard" and "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" to close out her long cinema career.

Gloria Grahame was a very private person who eschewed the trappings of stardom, disliking the foolish and repetitive questions of interviewers and the glare of the spotlight that her work often subjected her to. Not untypically of a Hollywood glamor queen (she preferred to wear old shirts and jeans), four marriages came and went. One union deserves a footnote in the history books: after divorcing director Nicholas Ray, she subsequently married his son by a previous marriage, Tony, thus becoming her own stepmother.

Gloria was taken ill in September 1981 while performing on stage in Lancaster, England. Disdainful of doctors and hospitals, she spent a week attempting to recuperate at the home of friends in Liverpool. Independent to the last, she finally allowed a doctor to examine her, and later consented to be flown to New York for treatment. It was all in vain, however, for a few hours after being admitted to St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan, Gloria Grahame died of cancer.

Exit a class act. ■

Ken Alexander Remembers . . .

Number, please



I recently had an intimidating encounter with a telephone that had 43 buttons. In addition to the standard keypad of 12 buttons like the keypad on every touch-tone phone, there was a button for selecting each of seven lines. That's 19. Besides these, there were 24 more buttons, and though each was labeled, I hadn't a clue as to what those cryptic labels meant.

Had I known the functions of all those buttons, I could have performed all manner of telephonic tricks. But all I wanted to do was make a simple, local phone call, and doing so was a real challenge.

Why, I wondered, does a modern telephone have to be so complicated? Why does modern *life* have to be so complicated?

The phone we had when I was a kid wasn't complicated. Most telephones in those days were of the candlestick type -- upright, with the mouthpiece at the top. The earpiece, or receiver, was separate, and it hung, when not in use, on a switchhook on the side of the instrument. If you're a fan of 30's movies, you've often seen these old phones.

Unless you were seated at a desk or a table, two hands were needed to use one of these phones: You'd hold the main part in one hand with the mouthpiece on front of your lips, while your other hand would

press the receiver to your ear.

Some homes had the newer, cradle telephones. These phones were like the phones of today in that both the mouthpiece and the earpiece were on the handset, which rested in a cradle when not in use. Their styling, however, lacked the modern look of today's phones. And they were heavier than the telephones of today.

Neither the candlestick phones nor the early cradle phones contained a bell; the bell -- and it was an actual bell -- was on a black box which was mounted on the wall near the phone.

Subscribers didn't own their telephones; the phones were the property of the phone company. Like the early models of Henry Ford's automobiles, telephones in those days were available in any color you desired, just so long as it was black.

In contrast to the modern phones with as many as 43 buttons, these old telephones had *no* buttons. The early phones didn't even have a dial; they didn't need one, because an operator would connect you to your party.

When you picked up your phone to make a call, you wouldn't hear a dial tone -- you'd hear the friendly voice of a "live" operator. "Number, please?" she would say. You would tell the operator the number you were calling, and she would make

NUMBER, PLEASE

the connection.

If your party's line was busy, you wouldn't hear a busy signal; the operator would tell you, "The line is busy," and you would try again later.

Not all subscribers had private lines; many of us had party lines. This meant that somewhere in your telephone exchange -- perhaps in the apartment upstairs, maybe a block away -- was a subscriber who shared your phone line. It was just as though your neighbor had an extension of your telephone -- or vice versa.

The monthly charge for a two-party line was less than that for a private line, but the inconvenience may not have been worth the money saved. Sometimes, when you would pick up the phone to make a call, the line would be in use; you would hear your neighbor conversing with someone. There was no way that you could make a call until your neighbor terminated his call and hung up.

Some inconsiderate people would gab endlessly, knowing full well that the party who shared their line was waiting to make a call -- possibly an emergency call. This situation was the cause of many disputes.

The party line also afforded people to eavesdrop on one another's calls.

Less expensive than the two-party line was the *four*-party line, which you shared with *three* neighbors.

If you had a party line, when you placed a call, after you gave the operator the number you were calling, the operator would say, "*Your* number, please?" She had no other way of knowing whether you, or one of your neighbors who shared the line, was placing the call. She needed to know your number so that you, and not your neighbor, would be billed for the call.

In Chicago, even back in the 30's and 40's, there were dozens of local telephone

exchanges, and each exchange had a number of operators on duty 24 hours a day. This was in addition to the long-distance operators, of whom there were several hundred. Thus, there were thousands of telephone operators in the city. One of the most common occupations for young



The party line also afforded people to eavesdrop on one another's calls.

women when they finished high school was that of operator for Illinois Bell Telephone Company.

One reason that many of these young women went to work for the phone company was that they received employee benefits there. Illinois Bell was a leader in that area at a time when few companies offered benefits to their employees.

Over a period of years, neighborhood by neighborhood, the telephone exchanges were converted to the dial system, and operators were no longer needed. By 1967, the entire Illinois Bell territory had been converted to dial.

There were pay telephones in public places in the old days, as there are today; they were enclosed in phone booths. These booths were about six and a half feet tall, with a floor area about two feet square. There was a small seat attached to one wall, a small shelf underneath the phone, and a folding door with glass panels.

A phone booth had room for one person, although I've seen two teenagers crowd into a booth and carry on a phone conversation with another teen. With the door shut, the booth afforded some privacy; it also made conversing easier in a noisy location such as a restaurant, a department store, a train station, or a street corner.

One doesn't often see a telephone booth

these days; most public phones are pretty much out in the open. I've wondered what Clark Kent would do today if he needed to make a quick change into his Superman costume.

The charge for a local call from a pay telephone was a nickel, and some smart alecks would customarily answer the phone by saying, "It's your nickel -- start talking."

Virtually all the voices you'd hear over the telephone were "live" voices; you would seldom, if ever, hear a recorded voice.

By calling CATHedral 8000, you could get the correct time. An operator would say, "The time, at the tone, will be six-forty-one and ten seconds...(BEEP)...The time, at the tone, will be six-forty-one and twenty seconds...(BEEP)."

Before the advent of magnetic recording, this operator was "live." Every ten seconds she would announce the time. The operators worked that job in two-hour



"It's your nickel -- start talking."

shifts; a shift any longer would have made them punchy.

In the 1939 movie biography of Alexander Graham Bell, Don Ameche played the role of the inventor, and people soon began referring to the telephone as the Ameche: "I'll give you a jingle on the Ameche next week."

Placing a long-distance call was not always easy. Often, the circuits would be busy and the operator would call you back in 20 minutes or so when she was able to put your call through. When the connection finally was made, the voice on the other end was often soft and indistinct. People would routinely shout when talk-

ing on long distance.

In the mid-50's, the Bell System began dividing the country into geographical areas, each with its own three-digit area code. Now it was possible, with a dial phone, to make a long-distance call without the aid of an operator: One had only to dial the area code plus the phone number. In 1961, direct-dial long distance came to Chicago.

The various telephone exchanges used to be denoted not by a three-digit prefix, as they are today, but by names.

Some exchanges were named for American presidents or statesmen: Lincoln, Van Buren, Franklin, Harrison, Monroe, Randolph.

Others had a fashionable sound: Boulevard, Estebrook, Plaza.

The names of some exchanges were appropriate to the neighborhoods that they served. The Austin Exchange served the West Side Austin district, for example. The Hyde Park and Rogers Park exchanges served the neighborhoods for which they were named. There was the Yards exchange in the area of the Union Stockyards.

There were exchange names which had an aristocratic sound -- names such as Buckingham, Mansfield, and Dorchester. You may not have lived in the ritziest part of the city, but your phone exchange, at least, carried a certain cachet.

An exchange name certainly was easier to remember than a series of three numbers, and it also made one feel more like an individual.

In the post-World War II years, as the economy picked up, more and more families acquired telephones, and more phones were put into service commercially. In fact, in 1952, Illinois Bell was installing new telephones at the rate, on an average, of one per minute.

With the proliferation of telephones, the need arose for more phone numbers. Since any one exchange had a limit of 10,000

NUMBER, PLEASE

numbers, more exchanges were needed. One way of filling the need was to add a digit to the exchange name; this was done in the late 1940's.

For example, numbers in the State exchange now had the prefix of either STate 1 or STate 2.

Gradually, beginning in 1960, the exchange names were phased out and replaced by prefixes consisting of three digits. Thus, STate 2 became 782, ANDover 3 became 263, and so forth. By 1967, all the exchange names in Illinois had been eliminated.

The new system made about a million more numbers available in each area code. While under the old system, the letters had to spell the first part of an exchange name, the numbers didn't have to spell anything; any combination of three digits could be used.

As the population grew and the number of telephones continued to increase, the

Chicago metropolitan area was split into two area codes. Effective November 1989, the Chicago suburbs that had been in the 312 area received a new area code, 708. Chicago proper retained the 312 area code.

In January 1995 the Chicago area received yet another area code; the code 630 was assigned to customers with cellular phones and pagers in the 312 and 708 areas.

Over the years, telecommunications technology has given us a number of ancillary services we never dreamed of in the early days. Back then there was no call waiting, no call forwarding, no caller I.D. We had no touch-tone dialing, no speed dialing, no automatic callback. Telephones didn't have memories. There were no cordless phones, no cellular phones or pagers.

We had no hold buttons, mute buttons, or FAX machines; no credit card calling, no direct-dial long distance. No one had an answering machine, and there was no such thing as voice mail. Vanity numbers, 800 numbers, and 900 numbers did not exist.

Also undreamed of were such options as three-way calling, call screening, distinctive ringing, and call trace. What we had was basic, no frills telephone service.

If you're a young person, you may well wonder how we got along.

You must understand that life -- like the telephone -- was much less complicated in those days; we lived more slowly than we do today. For instance, we didn't mind if it took ten or twelve seconds to dial a phone number.

We were happy to have access to such a marvelous invention as the telephone, an instrument which enabled us to talk with someone across town, across the country, or across the ocean. What more could we have wanted from a telephone?

The fact is, we got along very well. ■

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LETTERS...WE GET LETTERS

WHITING, INDIANA-- Let me express my appreciation for another great year of old time radio. Those of us raised on radio still derive considerable enjoyment from those programs of yesteryear. Not only did radio provide total workout for one's imagination, it enabled avid followers of a particular hero to buy premiums with boxtops and a few coins. For a kid who grew up in the forties and fifties -- those were terrific times. Your radio classics take me back to times that have become treasurer of the heart. I wish you continued success, and extend to you my gratitude and heartfelt thanks. --**AL KOCH**

STUMPTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA-- Please give me a two year subscription to the *Nostalgia Digest*. I obtained a copy during a recent visit to the Museum of Broadcast Communications and was very impressed with the content. I was shocked to learn that Bing Crosby has not been inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame. Please relay this to MBC. --**MICHAEL J. BOWE**

NORTHBROOK, IL-- Thank you for taking a few minutes on Saturday to say "Hi" to my son Chris and my daughter Jacqueline. I wish we had more time to talk. The kids have been listening to you for years. The chance to see you "on the air" was the highlight of our Christmas trip to the city. --**PAUL CHAPMAN**

SAINT JOHN, INDIANA-- Just a short message to let you know how much we enjoyed meeting you in December at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Your friendliness in person reinforced that same feeling which comes across the air. We were impressed with the Museum. It is certainly an improvement over the Museum as it was in River City. You are to be commended for preserving radio and television history. Recently I had the opportunity to attend a performance by the South Side group of *Those Were The Days Radio Players*. They presented "The Shadow" and "My Favorite Husband." It truly was a very enjoyable evening. Thanks for providing us with many hours of wonderful radio entertainment, and remem-

ber we won't touch that dial! --**JERRY & MARVELLEN STEFFE**

BROOKFIELD, IL-- Thank you for all your wonderful programs. We visited the Museum of Broadcast Communications in December and it really brought back the good old times. My son and his teen age children now understand the really good programs that Grandma listened to. --**MARIE P. MEIER**

CHICAGO-- I really enjoy old time radio. When I listen to Red Skelton as the "mean little kid" I reminisce about being in bed as a child, with my mother, laughing at the outrageous acts, yet knowing without a word from her that I would never try such antics! --**BERNICE BRACY**

SCHAUMBURG, IL-- Last year you played "Frontier Man" with Jeff Chandler. I missed it and wondered if you could put it on sometime in the future. We love your program and the *Nostalgia Digest*. --**S. GOSSEN**
(**ED. NOTE--** Perhaps you mean *Frontier Town* which starred Jeff as *Tex* Chandler (not to be confused with *Frontier Gentleman* which starred John Dehner). In any event, we'll try to schedule at least one of each of those shows sometime in the near future.)

PALOS HEIGHTS, IL-- I'm a regular listener to your WNIB Saturday show. I recently purchased your custom tape of your tribute to Meredith Willson. My youngest daughter, Pam DeBoer, is using the resource materials for her March '95 production of "The Music Man" with the students she teaches at Reed-Custer High School in Braidwood, Illinois. Have you ever considered doing a tribute to Fred Waring? As a retired high school choral teacher myself and having been to a Penn State Elder Hostel on Waring last summer, I know there is lots of material available. --**BOB GUENZLER**

(**ED. NOTE--** Good idea. We'll comb our archives and see if we can come up with a *Those Were The Days* salute sometime in the not too distant future.)

ITASCA, IL-- Since I moved from Austin,

Texas back to the suburbs near Chicago, I have made my readjustment to my old memories of my childhood in Chicago, listening to your Saturday programs. Since Saturday is very special to me as far as listening to the radio, please put on more of what you air on your midnight program on your Saturday agenda, since it's impossible to stay awake and enjoy all those wonderful radio shows. I know how hard it is to come up with a variety of shows every week. Thank you for caring. --**LAURA CARDELL-HENNIG**

FORREST, IL-- Enclosed is my renewal check for another year of the *Digest*. We can only receive WBBM, but we do enjoy your program even though it is so late. You answered this question in an earlier issue of your magazine. It is too bad that the old CBS Radio Mystery Theatre isn't available. It was an excellent series. We are looking forward to reading future issues of your magazine and listening to your programming. --**DON & JAN WILLS**

AURORA, ONTARIO, CANADA-- I have enjoyed your programs, especially when they were broadcast on Saturday and Sunday evenings from 8 to 10 p.m. your time. However, midnight programs, at 1 a.m. our time, are not as easy for me. Please do not renew my subscription. --**JAMES C. ALLISON**

GADSDEN, ALABAMA-- I want you to know how much I enjoy listening to your 12 midnight show. Keep them coming and I will keep listening. --**JOHN W. HELD**

OWATONNA, MINNESOTA-- I would like to subscribe to your magazine. Being a faithful listener to the radio show on WBBM at 12 midnight every day, I feel it a must to read it. Having relatives in the Chicago area permits me to stop in to Metro Golden Memories and purchase some wonderful items. If the *Nostalgia Digest* is anything like the radio show and the store, I'm sure it will be great. --**TONY PYATT**

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA-- One of the reasons I ordered the *Nostalgia Digest* was to find out which radio station carried four hours of old time radio. Well, it turns out the radio station is on FM. I live in Philadelphia. What good is that to me? I am

subscribing for two years, but the way WBBM is going, will Old Time Radio be on that long? --**HARVEY DOUGLAS**

KENOSHA, WISCONSIN-- I am one of your most loyal listeners. Every evening we are home we use your midnight show as a sort of night cap. More often than not we are extremely satisfied. However, I was born in 1925 and my wife in 1932 and we never heard of the Cinnamon Bear. The only thing it does for us is that we turn you off for one half hour during that time. I know that you cannot satisfy everyone all the time, but 90 per cent of the time is not bad. Those that fall in the unsatisfactory 10 per cent for us are *Voyage of the Scarlet Queen*, *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon*, *Life of Riley*, and *Horatio Hornblower*. How about more *Suspense*, *Lights Out*, *First Nighter*, *Hermit's Cave*. But when all is said and done, we still love ya' Chuck. --**CARL & ROSEMARY BUTERA**

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY-- I renew my subscription because I find the articles in *Nostalgia Digest* to be interesting. Due to WBBM's switch of your weekend hours, I no longer regularly listen (I am usually fast asleep by then) and I do not have the means to record off the air your program for convenient listening. I do suggest that your magazine include the schedule of WHO's old radio program. WHO, Des Moines, Iowa, broadcasts those programs 10 to 11 p.m. (Eastern) Monday thru Friday and from 9 to 11 p.m. (Eastern) on Sunday.. The last hour is "Rejection Slip Theatre," original dramas produced there! Because it is clear channel with half wavelength antenna like WBBM, WHO coverage matches, for the most part, WBBM's. --**TIMOTHY KURYLA**

WEST ALLIS, WISCONSIN-- I've noticed in your "We Get Letters" pages that many people are not able to stay up for your midnight broadcasts. I solved that problem by getting a digitally tuned, double cassette radio. Every other day I listen to a couple of hours of your wonderful shows and re-record them at a more convenient time. Keep up your wonderful program! --**ALVIN J. KONRATH**

WORTH, IL-- Thank you for many hours of joyous listening to old time radio. I'm glad you started your collection when you were a

WE GET LETTERS

youngster, so we can all "recall those thrilling days of yesteryear." --**SHIRLEY PASERPSKY**
(ED. NOTE-- We wish we *had* started our collection as a youngster, but all we did in those days was *listen* to the shows. We started collecting the broadcasts some time after they went off the air, in the middle 1960s.)

JEFFERSON, WISCONSIN-- I was born and raised in Chicago and retired from the Chicago Fire Department. The *Nostalgia Digest* is a real memory jogger, especially Ken Alexander's contributions. --**HAROLD BRATTSET**

SCOTCH GROVE, IOWA-- My check is enclosed for a year's renewal to the *Digest*. You really have a sleeper in Ken Alexander's columns. This is some of the most enjoyable reading I get. As others have pointed out, Ken writes on some of the more mundane aspects of life. Yet when I start reading his commentaries, I can not put them down. The rest of your stories are also interesting, even to someone 42 years old. Let me join the chorus of those who can no longer listen to your programs at midnight. News on WBBM is fine, but we can live without it for a couple hours Saturday and Sunday nights. --**STEVEN J. BAHNSEN**

CHICAGO-- I'm 15 years old and unfortunately I missed the golden age of radio the first time around. I love your Saturday program, although I can't stay up for your midnight program on WBBM. I record it on a timer and I listen to it while I get ready for school. What a way to start the day! I live about five blocks from Metro Golden Memories and since I pass by it on the way home from school, I sometimes "come in and browse." It is certainly the high point of a hard day at school! Please tell Ken Alexander how much I enjoy the commercials (especially of Jack Benny Christmas shopping) he does for your store. --**JENNIFER PIGONI**

CHICAGO-- I certainly enjoy my *Nostalgia Digest* and listen regularly to your Saturday afternoon show on WNIB. I accidentally stumbled across your early programs in 1971 and have been listening ever since.

I've followed you from station to station and loved your early morning broadcasts on WXFM. --**LEE WAYNE**

DES PLAINES, IL-- Many thanks to Chuck and crew for making Saturday the best day of the week for so many years and for many years to come. Great *Digest*, too. --**ARLENE MEYER**

WEST CHICAGO, IL-- Just finished reading the "Big Band Era" in the *Digest*. Brought back so many memories. I remember so many of those ballrooms, clubs and hotels. I told a couple of friends about all the very interesting info in the *Digest*, one in Texas (who is subscribing) another in Illinois. Even if they can't get the shows, the information is well worth the subscription cost. Carolyn and I listen on Saturday when we can. Our son Don is going to pick up a timer for us so we can tape and play back later and enjoy some of your late night shows. We miss your weekend shows on WBBM. People are still asking questions about the "Salute to the WLS Barn Dance" program you did on WNIB. We are amazed how many people still remember. Even my own relatives said they learned things they never knew before. --**CAROLYN & RUSTY GILL**
(ED. NOTE-- The Gills are veteran performers from the great old WLS National Barn Dance.)

CHICAGO-- I'd like to express my enjoyment of Edward Michals' story on radio music in Chicago. Ordinarily I wouldn't nit-pick a great article, except for the fact that one of my favorite bands of all time, one that I listened to at midnight, with the radio under the covers so that my parents wouldn't know that I wasn't sleeping, was mis-identified as Andy Kirk's. I don't know if Andy Kirk's orchestra, a big band, ever played in Chicago. But I do know for sure that "the politely swinging" group that played at the Pump Room was John Kirby and his band -- just four very talented musicians. They also played on Duffy's Tavern -- "where the elite meet to eat" -- and were an elite group indeed. --**W. R. SEBASTIAN**

CHICAGO-- Can you give us more GI Jill before the war is over? What a sweetheart she is! --**WILLIAM KNACK**
(ED. NOTE-- Check *TWTD* for May 20.)

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA-- What are you going to do when the war ends? The programming has been terrific. What will be the encore? If there was a specific "golden days" of radio, it had to be the war years. --**RICH JONAS**

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL-- I really enjoy the *Nostalgia Digest*. I also enjoy your *Those Were The Days* broadcasts and the nightly midnight broadcasts on WBBM. I was not around to experience those "good old days" first hand, but you have helped me to "hear" what I missed. Old time radio is a big part of my life and so are you. --**TIMOTHY F. POREMBA**

LA GRANGE, IL-- I have long intended to write to thank you for the many happy hours spent listening to your *Those Were The Days* program. From 1974 through 1993 I owned and operated a home decorating shop here in LaGrange and our radio (tuned permanently to WNIB) entertained customers with your show every Saturday. A great many people who were unaware of your excellent program became fans after visiting my store. I read the letter in the February-March issue from reader William Kostellic referring to Sam Campbell. I didn't know Campbell was on the radio in the 1930s (a little before my time), but he was giving lectures on nature in the late 1940s. He made several visits to my grammar school (Parkside School at 69th and East End Avenue in Chicago's South Shore). He and his wife Giny (*sic*) lived in northern Wisconsin in a place called "The Sanctuary," where he had numerous wild animals. I can't recall now whether he showed slides or whether they were movies, but they were very enjoyable. He told humorous anecdotes about his experiences with animals and, at the end of each lecture, offered autographed copies of his books for sale. I still have one of the autographed books, given to me by my grandmother, which was written in 1946. I also have another of his books, written in 1957, which lists nine more books authored by Sam Campbell. He was an interesting and entertaining speaker, and I and my schoolmates looked forward with eagerness to his visits. Hope this helps. --**CAROLINE CORYELL**

CHICAGO-- Just a note to go along with my

two year renewal. It's a pleasure for me to support, in this way, one of the last vestiges of exercise for the mind's eye and imagination -- radio. As a student of yours at Columbia College in the early 1970s, I could not have had a more enjoyable "homework" assignment than to listen to Jack Benny, Fred Allen, The Shadow, Walter Winchell, et al. Best wishes for a glorious twenty-fifth anniversary and deep thanks for bringing us something worth your signature "thanks for listening." --**TOM QUAID**

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA-- I collect old time radio programs and recently have seen references about you on the "Old Time Radio Digest" forum on the Internet. Several of the members of this forum have suggested I write to you for a catalog of tapes available. The "OTR Digest" on the Internet provides valuable info on the hobby, including vendors, clubs, museums and libraries, all dedicated to preserving OTR. The discussions among the members are also very informative. To get "Online": if you use CompuServe, The Internet, America, Prodigy, GENie, etc...

E-Mail To: otr-request@airwaves.chi.il.us
Subject: Subscribe
Type it just this way, don't type anything in the body of the message (it is ignored, anyway). Be sure to type the To: line in lower case, and capitalize the S in Subscribe. --**VIRGIL A. STEWART**
(ED. NOTE-- Sorry, Virgil, we're not on the Internet. We haven't even figured out how to use the *Intercom*. And we don't even *think* about using a fax machine, a car phone or voice mail.)

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

THE BALLOTS are going out. The voting has begun. We're about to select this year's Radio Hall of Fame inductees. The Radio Hall of Fame is a national project of the Museum based in Chicago to honor the great radio performers of yesterday and today.

You are already a voting member of the Radio Hall of Fame if you are a member of the Museum of Broadcast Communications. You're among the lucky people who will help select this year's nominees.

The winners will be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame at this year's annual stellar gala in Chicago on October 29. It's not too late to get in on the action. Call Katy at the Museum (312) 629-6014 for full details on Museum membership for as little as \$30 for an individual, \$60 for a family. That membership not only makes you a player in the Radio Hall of Fame choices, but it makes you part of the Museum of Broadcast Communications.

You'll hear firsthand and have *free* admission to special events at the Museum. In the recent past such notables as Steve Allen, Tom Snyder, Charles Osgood and Clark Weber stopped by to talk about their careers and visit with fans.

SPEAKING of those visits with local and national radio and television stars, be sure to circle Wednesday, June 7 for

"An Evening With Jim Conway." Remember, if you're a Museum member, that evening is admission free.

Perhaps you remember Jim Conway on Chicago radio as far back as the 1940s when you heard him on WBBM hosting a bunch of light and easy shows like "Shopping With The Missus" and he presided over early morning hours in the days before they started calling it "drive time."



JIM CONWAY

Jim played music on WMAQ in the mid-60s and later went on to create and develop the television talk show format on WGN-TV. Next he moved to Channel 7 and began the morning talk show that, over the years, has evolved into today's "Oprah" program.

Jim Conway will have a lot to tell us as he takes us back a few years and gives us some terrific memories of radio's local golden years. Your reporter has known and worked with Jim Conway on and off for some thirty years. Take it from me, he is one of the good guys!

Plan to join us for "An Evening With Jim Conway." Phone the Museum at (312) 629-6000 to make your reservation.

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

Chicago, 60602

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← **THIS 60-YEAR OLD TRANSCRIPTION DISC**

is one of 500 being preserved for the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago. Read "The Restoration of Fibber McGee and Molly" by Karl Pearson. Page 38.

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