

# NOSTALGIA DIGEST <sup>AND</sup> RADIO GUIDE



**J. SCOTT SMART**  
*The Fat Man*

# HERE'S THAT BAND AGAIN!

A collection of remote broadcast *excerpts* featuring big bands on the air coast-to-coast during the golden years of radio.

Compilation by Big Band Historian Karl Pearson.

Detailed broadcast information included with each tape album.

**HARRY JAMES** (10-2-53) Aragon Ballroom, Chicago.

**TOMMY DORSEY** (2-24-40) Meadowbrook, Cedar Grove, New Jersey.

**JAN GARBER** (1950) Melody Mill Ballroom, North Riverside, Illinois.

**ANDY KIRK** (2-6-37) Trianon Ballroom, Cleveland, Ohio.

**ARTIE SHAW** (1-18-39) Blue Room, Hotel Lincoln, New York City.

**TED WEEMS** (2-10-37) Trianon Ballroom, Chicago. Perry Como sings.

**BENNY GOODMAN** (1943) Hotel Astor, New York City.

**GLENN MILLER** (7-28-39) Glen Island Casino, New Rochelle, New York.

**LARRY CLINTON** (11-15-38) International Casino, New York City.

**DICK JURGENS** (1950) Aragon Ballroom, Chicago.

**ROY ELDRIDGE** (8-5-39) Arcadia Ballroom, New York City.

**WILL OSBORNE** (10-11-48) Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago.

**CHICK WEBB** (2-10-39) Coconut Grove, New York City.

**EDDY HOWARD** (12-5-45) Aragon Ballroom, Chicago.

**JAN SAVITT** (12-2-38) Arcadia Restaurant, Philadelphia.

**DUKE ELLINGTON** (7-26-39) Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Boston.

**GUS ARNHEIM** (1931) Coconut Grove, Los Angeles.

**BUNNY BERIGAN** (3-27-38) Paradise Restaurant, New York City.

**BOB CHESTER** (9-21-39) Hotel Van Cleeve, Dayton, Ohio.

**RAY MC KINLEY** (1946) Hotel Commodore, New York City.

**BOB CROSBY** (1-18-42) Trianon Ballroom, Southgate, California.

**STAN KENTON** (4-5-52) Blue Note, Chicago.

**DESI ARNAZ** (12-6-47) Palace Hotel San Francisco.

**GLEN GRAY** (1-18-37) Rainbow Room, New York City.

**JACK TEAGARDEN** (1-23-40) Southland Restaurant, Boston.

**ORRIN TUCKER** (4-19-48) Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago.

**BOBBY SHERWOOD** (12-5-42)

**HARRY JAMES** (11-3-39) College Inn, Hotel Sherman, Chicago.



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CHUCK SCHADEN'S

# NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND  
RADIO  
GUIDE

BOOK TWENTY-TWO

CHAPTER TWO

FEBRUARY -- MARCH 1996

## Hello, Out There in Radioland!

BY CHUCK SCHADEN

*Last year was not a very good year for show business. We lost many of our favorite entertainers and personalities during the 12 months of 1995. They're gone, but not forgotten:*

**GEORGE ABBOTT**, 107, legendary Broadway director, playwright and actor. Among his biggest hits: *Pal Joey*, *On The Town*, *Where's Charley?*, *Call Me Madame*, *Wonderful Town*, *Pajama Game*, *Fiorello*, *Damn Yankees*. *January 31.*

**L A U R I N D O ALMEIDA**, 77, one of Brazil's greatest guitarists, popularized the *Bossa Nova* in the 1960s. *July 26.*

**MAXENE ANDREWS**, 79, the "one on the left" in the famed Andrew Sisters singing trio. *October 21.*

**EDDIE BALLANTINE**, 88, musician, arranger and musical director on Don McNeill's *Breakfast Club* for 37 years. *November 14.*

**FRANK BARTON**, 85, network radio announcer for *One Man's Family*, *Screen Directors' Playhouse*, *A Date With Judy*. *January 11.*

**VIVIAN BLAINE**, 74, Broadway and Hollywood musical star who created the role of "Miss Adelaide" in *Guys and Dolls* on both stage and screen. *December 9.*

**FRANK BLAIR**, 79, NBC newsman, former *Today Show* anchorman. *March 14.*

**JEREMY BRITT**, 59, British actor, best known for his role as Sherlock Holmes on TV in U.S. and England. *September 12.*

**LYNN BURTON**, 80s, pioneer radio an-

**NECROLOGY OF 1995**

### We Remember Them Well

nouncer and disc jockey, TV pitchman for Polk Bros., Bert Weinman Ford, Joe Rizza Chevrolet. *October 17.*

**ROSALIND CASH**, 56, stage, screen, TV actress, appeared as "Mary Mac Ward" in TV soap *General Hospital*. *November 2.*

**ELISHA COOK, JR.**, 91, well-known supporting actor in films, played "Wilmer, the gunsel," Sidney Greenstreet's bodyguard in *The Maltese Falcon*. *May 18.*

**DOUGLAS "WRONGWAY" CORRIGAN**, 88, the aviator who became a folk hero when he "mistakenly" flew solo across the Atlantic after saying he would fly to California. *December 9.*

**HOWARD COSELL**, 77, colorful radio and TV sportscaster: on ABC-TV 1953-1992. *March 23.*

**GARY CROSBY**, 62, singer and actor. Bing's eldest son. Had the first double-sided gold record in history (with his father) for *Sam's Song* and "Play a Simple Melody." *August 24.*

**JOHN DOREMUS**, 63, melodious-voiced disc jockey, heard on many Chicago stations in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. *July 6.*

**LES ELGART**, 77, big band leader, trumpet player with brother Larry and Charlie Spivak. Woody Herman, Bunny Berigan. *July 29.*

**BILL EVANS**, 87, Chicago disc jockey heard frequently on WGN in the 1940s and 50s with program *Morning Reveille*. *June 18.*



FRANK BLAIR



GARY CROSBY

## NECROLOGY OF 1995

### We Remember Them Well

**ED FLANDERS**, 60, actor, starred as "Dr. Donald Westphal" on *Sr. Elsewhere* on TV, also appeared as Harry Truman in a one-man show. *February 22.*

**ART FLEMING**, 70, original host of TV's *Jeopardy*, actor in films and TV, host of syndicated old time radio series *When Radio Was*. *April 25.*

**FRIZ FRELENG**, 89, Oscar-winning animator of Warner Bros. cartoon characters Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, others. *May 26.*

**EVA GABOR**, 74, movie and TV actress, best known as co-star of *Green Acres*. *July 4.*

**GEORGE GILBERT**, 68, Chicago-based actor in films, TV and on dozens of radio shows including *Ma Perkins*, *Sky King*, *Jack Armstrong*. *February 26.*

**LANA TURNER** **ALEXANDER GODUNOV**, 45, ballet star, actor. *May 18.*

**GALE GORDON**, 89, top-rated supporting actor on radio and television: *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *My Favorite Husband*, etc. *June 30.*

**HARRY GUARDINO**, 69, movie-TV character actor in 1950s, 60s, 70s. *July 17.*

**PHIL HARRIS**, 91, bandleader, singer, comedian, very popular and likable on the *Jack Benny Program*, and on his own *Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show*. *August 11.*

**JOHN HOWARD**, 82, supporting actor in films: *Lost Horizon*, *Philadelphia Story*. On TV in *Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal*. *February 19.*

**BURL IVES**, 85, folk singer and actor, best remembered for song *Blue Tail Fly*, in films *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* and *East of Eden*, and as storyteller on TV cartoon *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. *April 14.*

**DICK JURGENS**, 85, popular Chicago-based bandleader and composer. *October 5.*

**NANCY KELLY**, 73, stage and screen actress, starred in Broadway and screen versions of *The Bad Seed*. *January 13.*

**GEORGE KIRBY**, 72, comedian, impersonator of celebrities. *September 30.*

**HOWARD KOCH**, 93, wrote radio script for Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds*; won Academy Award for screenplay of *Casablanca*; wrote screenplays for *Sgt. York*, *The Sea Hawk*, many others. *August 17.*

**PRISCILLA LANE**, 76, actress, singer in 1930s and 40s with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians; appeared in films *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Brother Rat*. *April 4.*

**JERRY LESTER**, 85, comedian, host of TV's *Broadway Open House*, 1950s forerunner of NBC's *Tonight Show*. *March 23.*

**VIVECA LINDFORS**, 74, Swedish stage and screen actress, in such films as *New Adventures of Don Juan*, *Four in a Jeep*, *King of Kings*, *The Way We Were*. *October 25.*

**IDA LUPINO**, 77, motion picture actress, director. Starred in *They Drive By Night*, *High Sierra*, *Sea Wolf*, *Roadhouse*, etc. Co-starred on TV with husband Howard Duff in *Mr. Adams and Eve*. *August 3.*

**LOUIS MALLE**, 63, major figure of French "new wave" cinema, directed *Atlantic City*, *My Dinner With Andre*. *November 23.*

**DEAN MARTIN**, 78, singer, actor, comedian, star of stage, screen, radio, TV; half of fabulously successful comedy team of Martin and (Jerry) Lewis. *December 25.*

**GRACE MATTHEWS**, 84, radio actress, played "the lovely Margot Lane" opposite Bret Morrison on *The Shadow* for over six years. *May 15.*

**DOUG MC CLURE**, 59, star of TV westerns, *The Virginian*, *The Men From Shiloh*. *February 5.*

**RAY MC KINLEY**, 84, big band drummer, bandleader, singer who worked with the Dorsey Brothers, Will Bradley, and Glenn Miller's Army Air Force Band; led the Miller "phantom" orchestra 1956-78. *May 7.*

**BUTTERFLY MC QUEEN**, 84, actress famed for her role as "Prissy" in *Gone With The Wind*. *December 22.*

**ELIZABETH MONTGOMERY**, 62, star of *Bewitched* on TV. *May 18.*



DICK JURGENS

**TOMPETT**, 64, longtime NBC reporter, only broadcaster on the scene when Jack Ruby killed JFK assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. *December 22.*

**DONALD PLEASANCE**, 75, British character actor on stage and in numerous screen roles: *The Great Escape*, *You Only Live Twice*, *Hal-LOWEEN*. *February 2.*

**CHARLIE RICH**, 62, country music singing star of the 1970s, known as the "Silver Fox." *July 25.*

**WILLIAM N. ROBSON**, 88, outstanding producer-director of radio drama, was called "the master of mystery and adventure" for his work on radio's *Suspense*, *Escape*, *Columbia Workshop*. *April 10.*

**ROXIE ROKER**, 66, stage and TV actress, portrayed the black neighbor who had a white husband on TV sitcom *The Jeffersons*. *December 2.*



GINGER ROGERS

**GINGER ROGERS**, 83, Academy Award winning actress (*Kitty Foyle*, 1940), most celebrated dancing partner of Fred Astaire in 1930s films: *Top Hat*, *Swing Time*, *Shall We Dance*, etc. *April 25.*

**MIKLOS ROZSA**, 88, Oscar-winning composer of film scores, including *Quo Vadis*, *Ben Hur*, *King of Kings*, *Double Indemnity*, *Asphalt Jungle*. *July 27.*

**JOHN SCALI**, 77, ABC news correspondent; was instrumental in negotiations between Kennedy administration and the Kremlin during the Cuban Missile Crisis. *October 10.*

**WOODY STRODE**, 80, football player turned actor with roles in *Spartacus*, *Sergeant Rutledge*, *Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. *December 31, 1994.*

**GRADY SUTTON**, 89, movie character actor, usually in "country cousin" roles; was "Og Oggleby" in *The Bank Dick* with W.C. Fields. *September 17.*

**JOHN CAMERON SWAYZE**, 89, pioneer TV journalist, host of *Camel News Caravan* on NBC beginning in 1949; known for his Timex commercials on TV: "It takes a licking and keeps on ticking." *August 15.*

**IRENE TEDROW**, 87, veteran radio actress

with many roles on *Meet Corliss Archer*, *Chandu the Magician*, *Suspense*, *Escape*; was "Congresswoman Geddes" on *Mary Tyler Moore Show* on TV. *March 10.*

**DALLAS TOWNSEND, JR.**, 76, writer and anchor of CBS Radio *World News Round-Up* for 25 years. *June 1.*

**LANA TURNER**, 75, movie glamor queen, Hollywood's first and best known "sweater girl" in such screen hits as *Love Finds Andy Hardy*, *Somewhere I'll Find You*, *Green Dolphin Street*, *Honky Tonk*, *Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Peyton Place*, *Imitation of Life*. *June 29.*

**ULMERTURNER**, 90, veteran Chicago newspaperman and radio-TV news reporter, analyst. *March 22.*

**BENAY VENUTA**, 84, singer, actress, comedienne on various comedy radio shows. *September 1.*

**WILLARD WATERMAN**, 80, radio star of *The Great Gildersleeve* and hundreds of other radio dramatic and comedy shows. He appeared as *Gildersleeve* in the TV version of the series, and in many roles on stage and screen. *February 2.*

**DAVID WAYNE**, 81, versatile stage and screen actor, played the leprechaun in *Finian's Rainbow* and a Japanese man in *Teahouse of the August Moon* on stage; films: *Adam's Rib*, *Tender Trap*, *Last Angry Man*, others. *February 9.*

**SLAPPY WHITE**, 74, dancer and comedian of the 1960s and 70s, often appearing on TV. *November 7.*

**MARY WICKES**, 85, comedic character actress "with a heart" appearing in hundreds of roles on stage, screen, TV. She was Lucy's ballet teacher on *I Love Lucy*; the general's housekeeper in *White Christmas*; a tough singing nun in *Sister Act*. *October 22.*

**WOLFMAN JACK**, rock and roll disc jockey whose voice first boomed across the U.S. from one of those "south of the border" radio stations. Played himself in the film *American Graffiti*. *July 1.*

**JOHN CAMERON SWAYZE**, 89, pioneer TV journalist, host of *Camel News Caravan* on NBC beginning in 1949; known for his Timex commercials on TV: "It takes a licking and keeps on ticking." *August 15.*

**IRENE TEDROW**, 87, veteran radio actress



JOHN CAMERON SWAYZE

We remember them well. ■

# J. Scott Smart a.k.a. The Fat Man

BY CHARLES LAUGHLIN

**I** imagine if you will a Friday evening way back in 1948. A young boy sits on the floor with barely concealed impatience in front of the family radio, waiting for his favorite serial to begin. The radio is one of those huge mahogany consoles that you associate with old time radio. It dwarfs the boy.

At 8 o'clock the voice of Charles Irving is heard announcing that the Norwich Pharmaceutical Company, makers of Pepto Bismol and other fine products, is proud to sponsor Dashiell Hammett's most exciting character, "The Fat Man," live from New York.

And who can forget the opening format of that program? Someone steps up to the microphone and says:

*There he goes, into that drugstore. He's stepping on the scales. Weight? 237 pounds. Fortune? Danger. Whoooooo is it?*

And then J. Scott Smart's deep, sonorous tones are heard—the voice the boy has been waiting to hear all day—replying:

*THE FAT MAAAAAN!*

Although I never had the chance to meet him, I first got to know Jack Smart by way

*Charles Laughlin is professor of anthropology and religion at Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada. He is a writer, painter, gardener, golfer, and fan of old time radio. This article, used with permission, is from his book J. Scott Smart a.k.a. The Fat Man, an excellent look at the actor whose career spanned stage, screen and radio. The complete 68 page biography, complete with many photographs, is available in the United States for \$7.50 postpaid, from the publisher, Three Faces East Press, P.O. Box 257, York, ME 03909.*

of his wonderful voice when I was that boy glued to the radio listening to adventure stories. This was during the 1940s which proved to be the end of the "Golden Age" of radio. Before television became the center of my family's entertainment, we would gather around the radio after dinner to listen to such favorites as "The Lone Ranger," "Sam Spade," "Fibber McGee," Jack Benny, "Gunsmoke," and of course, my favorite, "The Fat Man."

"The Fat Man" premiered on ABC on Monday, January 21, 1946, at 8:30 p.m. as part of a block of four new programs which also included "I Deal in Crime," "Forever Tops," and "Jimmy Gleason's Diner." "The Fat Man" originated in the studios of WJZ in New York and began as a modestly priced sustainer vaguely based upon character ideas in Dashiell Hammett's writings and fleshed out by producer, E.J. ("Mannie") Rosenberg. The announcer was Charles Irving.

The directors for the program were Clark Andrews, creator of "Big Town," and Charles Powers. The main writer for the series was Richard Ellington, but it was also scripted by Robert Sloane, Lawrence Klee and others.

The veteran character actor Ed Begley was featured as Sgt. O'Hara. Regulars on the program included Betty Garde, Paul Stewart, Linda Watkins, Mary Patton as Lila North, and Vicki Vola, also the female lead in "Mr. District Attorney." Amzie Strickland played the ingenue, Cathy Evans, and Nell Harrison played Runyon's mother during the early episodes. The cast also included Dan Ocko, Rolly Bester (wife of Alfred Bester, the science fiction writer), and Robert Dryden.



J. SCOTT SMART also known as THE FAT MAN

An eleven-piece orchestra was on hand to provide live music, and was directed by Bernard Green, who also wrote that memorably stirring theme. The sound effects were by Ed Blaney, who actually did drop a coin in a change slot each week for the sound of the drug store scale.

"The Fat Man" did not remain a sustainer for long. The show increased from 8.1 % to 23.6% of the radio audience in its first year. This steady climb in popularity caught the attention of Norwich Pharmaceutical Company's advertising brass. They wanted a venue to advertise their Pepto Bismol, a product that had been introduced in 1935. But they had an earlier bad experience with radio advertising in England, and were reluctant to try it again. Despite this reluctance, an advertising package was worked out sometime in the fall of 1946 and Norwich sponsorship of "The Fat Man" began on February 14, 1947.

Promotion kits were given to Norwich

salesmen which included scenes from "The Fat Man" adventures and a personally autographed picture of Jack as Brad Runyon. The salesmen would use the autographed picture as evidence that they knew Runyon personally and that he was a great guy. The program was moved to a more favorable slot on Friday night at 8:00 among a block of higher-rated mystery programs. This move increased the ratings even more.

The sponsors pushed Pepto Bismol two out of every three weeks, while on the third week one of the other Norwich products (Unguentine, Swav, etc.) were advertised. Announcers Charles Irving or Gene Kirby would first step to the microphone, accompanied by a harp-

ist, and do his "You'll feel GOOD again!" bit, and he would be back in mid-program with another commercial and say, "Now, let's catch up with the Fat Man," thereby emphasizing Brad Runyon's speed and agility.

Brad Runyon, the "Fat Man," was a character completely opposite to "The Thin Man," who, as anyone into detective fiction knows, was another popular character actually based upon a Hammett novel. Where Nick Charles, the "Thin Man," was a tall, suave, married, aristocratic, martini-sipping amateur, Brad Runyon was a short, heavy, hard-fisted, charming and sensitive professional. He was closer in some respects to yet another successful Hammett character running on radio at the time, "Sam Spade"—a character based upon Hammett's detective in the Maltese Falcon.

According to William F. Nolan, Dashiell Hammett, faced with a writer's block, decided to cash in on the popularity of his

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"Thin Man" series which ran on radio from 1946 through 1951 on CBS, and created "The Fat Man." Just how much of the "creation" was Hammett's, and how much that of others who were commercially involved in radio seems to be an open question. Diane Johnson feels that Hammett was already involved with the producer, E.J. Rosenberg, who had also sold the "Sam Spade" series and who "helped develop another series, 'The Fat Man,' inspired by Gutman of The Maltese Falcon...." However, Nolan's view is that Brad Runyon was not a copy of Casper Gutman, but was more a mixture of the urbane Nick Charles with the hardboiled Continental Op., another of Hammett's better known characters. Besides, Gutman was a heavy, and not anything like the Brad Runyon character. John Dunning, another old-time radio authority, gives the creative credit to Hammett. Hammett made more money when the "Sam Spade" series aired from 1941-1950 starring Howard Duff.

Hammett refused to get immersed in writing or giving critiques of any of the radio shows based on his characters. How much money he received for his radio shows is uncertain. Julian Symons says that "The Fat Man" brought him \$1300 a week. Nolan says all the radio shows paid him upwards of \$6000 a month. Hammett's attitude toward all these programs was cynical. He is quoted by Johnson as saying, "My sole duty in regard to these programs, is to look in the mail for a check once a week. I don't even listen to them. If I did, I'd complain about how they were being handled, and then I'd fall into the trap of being asked to come down and help. I don't want to have anything to do with the radio. It's a dizzy world, makes the movies seem highly intellectual."

Hammett had nothing to do with select-

ing Jack Smart for the part of Brad Runyon. But it is not hard to understand how Jack landed it. He was a natural as Brad Runyon. Not that he was a detective buff. Quite the contrary. He never read detective stories or went to see detective movies. In fact, because he only read as a soporific, he found dusters more to his liking. No, he was a cinch for the part because, as he would often say, "it takes a fat man to sound like a fat man." And Jack was indeed a fat man. Where Brad Runyon weighed-in at a relatively svelte 237 pounds (or 239 pounds, or 241 pounds, depending on which episode you listened to), Jack himself tipped the scales at around 270 pounds, which, considering it was distributed over a 5 foot, 9-inch frame, meant that he measured up to the part with plenty to spare.

Jack was quite aware of, and more importantly, honestly upfront about the assets and limitations of being rotund. Indeed, he was quite concerned to transform our stereotypical views of fat people. And the role of "The Fat Man" gave him a heaven-sent opportunity to air his views.

In a guest column he wrote for Don Tranter in the *Buffalo Courier-Express* on July 25, 1947, Jack revealed some of his feelings about being fat (incidentally, photos of Jack show that he was not overweight as a boy—he put on weight after quitting football and taking up having a milkshake and peanut butter sandwich for lunch). With regard to his role as Brad Runyon, he wrote, "For here, at last, is a sympathetic approach to a fat man, and weighed down with all the mental hazards of a fat boy, naturally I am out to make our side appear more attractive.... For it's certainly true that, like the Brad Runyon I play every Friday night, I don't feel fat—I feel thin—until I look into a full-length mirror or step on the scales. The trick seems to be with fat people, that you have to balance more favorable characteristics with your bulk as it



**JACK SMART** broadcasting live and providing his own juicy sound effects in an episode of "The Fat Man."

is visible to the naked eye. Brad Runyon does this in the script by thinking fast, chivalrously helping ladies in distress, and compensating for his weight by a deft display of charm.... You know very well how easy it is to laugh at a fat man. He has been the target of jokes and ridicule for centuries. To appear less absurd fat men have developed the habit of 'playing along with the gag,' joining the fun, instead of taking offense. Of course, this is a form of defense; most of us are shy, deep down, and we try hard not to let people know it." He notes that like most fat people he actually eats very little, but he loves cooking all sorts of food. He even contributed recipes to several cookbooks.

Brad Runyon's quick wit was in fact Jack's own and is evident when one listens to the episodes. When jibed by a "baddy" on one program about his weight, the Fat Man snarls back, "the only difference between you and me, Rudolph, is that my fat is from the neck down."

Jack was active in assembling the final

script, revising the plot, cutting material he didn't like, and even helping select supporting cast. In fact he had it written into his contract that he would receive a copy of a script two weeks before it was to air so that he could blue-line and change lines before it was finalized. This was an important factor in the quality of the series, for there were several writers over the years and those were the days before there were "continuity" people whose job it was to make sure that scripts did not contradict one another. Jack performed this continuity function very well.

What a casual listener would not know, of course, was that Jack would often change the names of characters in the script to those of his friends. One of his friends who was a fisherman at the time tuned in to "The Fat man" one night only to find that he and his boat had been lost at sea. And another of his friends became a nightclub owner in the episode, "Murder Plays Hide and Seek."

He was also free to develop both the character of Brad Runyon, and the repetitive features of the program that made them so commanding as hallmarks. Take for example Jack's emphasis upon the word "murder-r-r." He only says it that way as a fluke at the end of the premiere episode of the series entitled "The 19th Pearl." But within weeks, all of Jack's friends had associated his role with saying the word "murder-r-r" in that distinctly sinister way. So within the first few episodes, the beginning of the program has the Fat Man giving a prologue that always ended with "murder-r-r," or "murder-err," said in just that way. Take for example the prologue from the episode entitled "Murder Is the Medium" which was broadcast on July 22, 1949:

*To most people a zoo is a collection of four-footed animals. But there's one menagerie I know of where the inmates walk*

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on two feet. In the first cage, for instance, you'll find a giant forger whose specialty is writing other peoples' names. And in another iron cell you can inspect the genius "pickpocket," known also as the "little dip," who can sometimes prove that the hand is quicker than the eye. But the prize exhibit is a hopped-up character with a nervous twitch in his forefinger. He prowls alone when he looks for prey, and he's know for his taste for . . . murder-r-r."

The ironic association of a pleasant place or activity—in this case a zoo—with an evil place or activity—here a prison—became a common element in both the monologues and epilogues of each episode. And so associated with the character of the Fat Man does the word "murder-r-r" become that Jack slipped it in for its tongue-in-cheek effect at the end of the movie version of the series.

By the time the Brad Runyon role came around, Jack was already a veteran stage, movie and radio actor, and he had the stage actor's contempt for radio. At times he could be downright cynical about how things were done in the broadcasting industry. For instance, he once suggested that it would have run true to form for ABC to hire a "scrawny stringbean with a thin, asthmatic voice to convey the impression of weight over the air." And [his widow] Mary-Leigh reports that he used to call himself a "high-priced whore" for having to do radio work to support himself. Yet he was utterly convincing at the roles he played because he was so accomplished in his craft.

Jack continued to do stage, movie and radio work for a time after starting "The Fat Man." He was both in summer stock in Long Beach and completed his part in the filming of *Kiss of Death* in New York during 1946. But by 1947 he had dropped out

of other commitments, presumably because he had begun to make some real money for a change. It was during 1947 that he moved his residence permanently to Ogunquit, Maine.

After moving to Ogunquit, Jack would commute by air from Boston to New York to work on "The Fat Man." Although he could have flown and returned on the same day, he was afraid of what the weather might do and that the plane might get into New York late, so he would fly the day before the broadcast, stay overnight at The Players, attend the rehearsal in the afternoon and the show at night, fly back to Boston that night and be back in Ogunquit by 1 a.m. At first he would drive to Boston from Ogunquit and leave his car at Logan Airport, but after he and Mary-Leigh were married, she would drop him off and pick him up.

"The Fat Man" lasted for six seasons.

The show never lost its popularity, and by the end of the series J. Scott Smart had become a household name. One can still find many people old enough to have listened to the program that can readily associate Jack's stage name with "The Fat Man."

What actually killed the program were politics pure and simple. In 1950 Dashiell Hammett, who was peripherally involved in leftist politics, ran afoul of the House Un-American Activities Committee when he refused to give names of other activists. He was tried and imprisoned for his failure to cooperate with the Committee and was blacklisted along with the many other fine artists and entertainers who fell victim to the anti-communist hysteria of the day. And, as William Nolan mentions, all of his radio shows were cancelled because they had become tainted. Norwich, being ever-mindful of its public image, was quick to withdraw its sponsorship of "The Fat Man," and the program became once again



**PORTRAIT OF J. SCOTT SMART**, one of a set of professional pictures he had taken in 1958 as he prepared to begin the search for his next role. Photo by John R. Kennedy.

a sustainer for its last season—with companies like Clorets partially paying the bills. Universal-International, in its efforts to distance itself from any stigma caused by the association of Hammett with the imagined Communist scourge, removed his name from the titles of *The Fat Man* movie. It seems likely that they only released the picture at all because it was already in the can by the time the full implications of Hammett's situation dawned on them.

In any event, all of this was immensely frustrating to a fairly apolitical Jack Smart who was hoping both for a longer run of the radio show and a series of *Fat Man* movies to equal the success of William Powell and Myrna Loy in the *Thin Man* films. But this was not to be, and we only have the one film upon which to judge what a full series of them might have been like.

The 77-minute film, *The Fat Man* was completed by Universal-International on August 21, 1950, was previewed at the Ritz Theater, Los Angeles on March 26, 1951,

and released in May 1951.

The film was remarkable in many respects. Jack was superb, of course, as Brad Runyon. He should have been, considering that by this time he was 48-years old and a veteran actor with something like 25 years of entertainment industry experience under his very long belt. And, of course, there was that incredible voice that sounded like a well seasoned oboe. One visitor to the Universal studios during the filming of *The Fat Man* referred to his voice as "a male Mac West." And not only that, there was finally a face to go along with the voice for the fans. The movie put Jack's face together with the Fat Man role, and for the first time people recognized Jack on the street. People would come up to him wherever he was and ask, "Can I have your autograph Mr. Runyon?" Friends wondered if being asked for autographs bothered him and he would say, "No, the time to worry is when they don't ask you for autographs."

Most critics praised the movie as a whole, although a few were critical of the story line (or lack thereof) while praising the direction and the acting. The pacing of scenes was quite interesting, as were some of the photographic effects. At one point there was actually a flashback within a flashback, the first time I have ever encountered that in a movie. *The Hollywood Reporter* of March 30, 1951, notes, "J. Scott Smart is physically perfect for the colorful title role and performs with a naturalness which makes his portrayal convincing."

The radio series ended in 1951 and J. Scott Smart died on January 15, 1960. His contribution to the "Golden Age of Radio" was significant. He exhibited the flexibility of speech and range of psychological nuances that made it possible for him to fill the requirements of radio drama with ease.

He was the immortal Brad Runyon, "The Fat Man." ■



Ken Alexander  
Remembers . . .

**Bow Ties, Argyle Socks,  
2-Pants Suits**



After I finished high school and started to work full-time, it was quite a kick to be able to select and buy my own clothes. Up until then, it was my mother or my father — with some input from me — who picked out my clothes, either from Sears' catalog or from the Robert Hall store in our neighborhood.

Remember Robert Hall and their old radio jingle?

*Where the values go up, up, up  
And the prices go down, down, down.*

*Robert Hall this season*

*Will show you the reason:*

*Low overhead.*

*Low overhead.*

Robert Hall was a chain of no-frills clothing stores. Their advertising emphasized that their clothing was displayed on plain pipe racks in austere surroundings, and that this policy allowed the chain to charge less than did the more elegant stores.

A lot of people used to joke about Robert Hall, but I never did. Around 1947, my mother bought me a gray suit at Robert Hall which looked good, held a crease admirably, and wore well. It cost thirty-seven dollars.

I had no complaints about clothes from Robert Hall, or from Sears' catalog. But going downtown by myself and picking out my own clothes and paying for them with

money I had earned was a new and exciting experience. There was no going back to Sears' Big Book now.

There were many places downtown, including the department stores, where one could buy clothes and furnishings — just as there are today. I'd like to reminisce about a few which I remember from the '40s and '50s and which have passed from the downtown scene.

Bond's was a well-known clothier, which manufactured its clothes and sold them at retail, thus eliminating the middle-man. Bond's had a store at 65 W. Madison and another on State Street.

State Street was a mecca for shoppers for men's clothes — especially the block between Adams and Jackson. At 212 S. State was Leo Rose, which carried fine merchandise. At 230 S. State was one of the Benson & Rixon stores; their motto was "Our best ads aren't written — they're worn." Next door, at 234, was one of Bond's stores, and across the street, at 235, was Henry C. Lytton and Company, also known as "The Hub." Maurice L. Rothschild's store stood at the corner of State and Jackson.

In the next block north was a Richman Brothers store, at 114. Broadstreet's, in the Palmer House arcade, was an institution for many years.

A couple of blocks farther north, in the venerable Reliance Building, at 32 N. State, was Karoll's Red Hanger Shop, which went out of business just recently.

Jerrem's had two stores downtown; one at 7 S. LaSalle, the other at 324 S. Michigan.

I didn't patronize all of these stores. Some carried merchandise which I could afford; others handled clothing which I would have liked to own but whose prices were inconsistent with my budget. I would read their ads and window-shop at their stores but would not, as a rule, go inside.

One store in that category was Finchley's, on Jackson just east of State. Finchley's went out of business around 1960 and held a clearance sale, with drastic reductions. At that sale, I bought a brown tweed sport jacket, which I still own and still wear some

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**\$ 35**

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Second Floor

**THE HUB**

**Henry C. Lytton & Sons**

State and Jackson, CHICAGO • EVANSTON • OAK PARK • GARY

## KEN ALEXANDER REMEMBERS

thirty-five years later. A good tweed wears like iron.

On west Madison between Wells and Franklin was the Illinois Clothing Mart, whose proprietor was a gentleman named Ben Richman — not, I assume, related to the Richman Brothers. The clothing Ben sold did not carry the most prestigious labels. (Some carried no label at all, with the exception of PROFESSIONAL DRY CLEANING ONLY.) But I always found the quality of the material and the tailoring to be more than satisfactory. And Ben's prices were most reasonable.

Late one October afternoon in the 1970s, I stopped in at the Illinois Clothing Mart to say hello to Ben. That year we had one of those Octobers that we wish would never end — warm, golden days with sunny, hazy skies, and evenings with not a trace of a nip in the air. It was the most pleasant of autumn days.

Ben and I were the only persons in the store. Outside, commuters streamed by, coatless, enjoying the delicious weather as they made their way to the North Western Station. Ben motioned to me to sit down. "Terrible weather," he said.

We talked, and two or three times, when there was a pause in the conversation, Ben shook his head and repeated, "Terrible weather."

Looking around the store, I saw racks filled with overcoats, winter jackets, and heavy woolen suits. Mullers, sweaters, and flannel shirts were piled on tables. Then I understood: for anyone in the clothing business, it was, indeed, terrible weather.

On the second-floor concourse of the Daily News Building (now 2 N. Riverside Plaza), at Madison and the river, was a men's store called Burns & Grassie. As I worked in that building for nine years, I

was a frequent visitor there.

As for shoes, I remember a shop at 12 N. Wells owned by a man named Harry Gold. Mr. Gold bought up odd lots, discontinued styles, and stocks from stores that were going out of business, and he was able to sell these shoes for less than most stores charged. It was Harry Gold who sold me my first pair of cordovans.

Bond's would occasionally run an ad in the paper for officers' shoes (made on genuine U.S. Navy last) for \$6.95. These were plain-toe bluchers, the kind of shoes military men wear when in dress uniform. The uppers and soles were of leather, the heels rubber. I bought a pair of brown ones which I wore for years, alternating them with my other shoes. They were comfortable and good-looking and they took a dazzling shine.

My favorite shoe store was Lloyd & Haig, in the Mallers Building, 3 S. Wabash. The store opened in the mid-1950s and remained for twenty years or so. I was drawn to Lloyd & Haig by their tasteful, understated newspaper ads.

The ads and the store's name and the shoes themselves were suggestive of the British Isles. Each model of shoe had not a number but a name: the Margate, the Dorset, the Sussex, the Glasgow, the Kent, the Surrey, the Maywood. I still have the first pair of shoes I bought there; the Ardsley it was called. The uppers have developed a few wrinkles over the decades — but then, so have I.

To achieve a sporty look with penny loafers, argyles were the socks of choice. They might, for example, have a tan background with a pattern of large dark brown diamonds and a thin yellow stripe running through them, with a thin green stripe at right angles to that. "Sharp" was the word for argyles.

Speaking of socks, before the invention of stretch nylon, the well-dressed man wore

garters. It must have been a bother to put them on each morning, but without them, a man's socks would have fallen down around his ankles.

If you have any shirts of 100% cotton, you know that they feel cool in summer and warm in winter. You know also how easily they wrinkle. After a few hours' wear, a cotton shirt can look as though you had slept in it and tossed and turned all night.

In the old days, *all* shirts looked like that. Then, with the development of fabrics made of cotton blended with polyester fibers, the era of the wash-and-wear shirt began. The new material was resistant to wrinkling and required little or no ironing.

Today, even some all-cotton shirts are relatively wrinkle-free.

The singer Billy Eckstine inspired many young men to go out and buy a shirt with a "Mister B" collar — a full, widespread collar which was rounded rather than pointed. With one of those collars you could tie your tie in a double Windsor knot big enough to choke a horse.

Bow ties were common in the '40s and early '50s. While some men had worn them for many years, it seems that more men began wearing them now, possibly influenced by a young Frank Sinatra, who often wore a bow. Patterns were most often stripes or polka dots.

For ties, Besley's had two stores in the Loop — one on

Wabash and one on Franklin. Besley's sold ties and nothing but ties. They must have had thousands of ties. They had ties of all fabrics and in every conceivable pattern. They had gaudy ties and conservative ties. Besley's shops were wonderful places to buy a necktie or just to browse. Their prices were low.

Styles in men's clothing have changed

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SUNDAYS: 10 A. M. TO 5 P. M.

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Clothing Mart INC.  
219 W. MADISON ST.  
CHICAGO, ILL.





## KEN ALEXANDER REMEMBERS

several times since the 1940s. Some changes have been merely fads; others, long-lasting.

A fad of the early '40s was the zoot suit, which was worn by the hepcats - jazz or swing musicians or fans of that music. The zoot suit was characterized by a long jacket with wide, padded shoulders and wide lapels, and baggy pants with tight cuffs. The wearer often wore a pocket watch on a long chain and usually topped off the ensemble with a wide-brimmed porkpie hat.

We were, of course, involved in World War II at that time, and there was a shortage of material. Pants were being sold without cuffs, to save on cloth. Zoot suits required much more material than what was necessary for a suit, and, under the circumstances, owning one was not patriotic.

I remember seeing zoot suits in newspaper cartoons, but I recall seeing one actually being worn by a man only once. It looked weird indeed.

Many conventional suits were made with an extra pair of pants. These 2-pants suits, as they were called, were offered on the theory that, since the pants of a suit will normally wear out long before the jacket, an extra pair of pants would greatly extend the life of the suit.

In the mid- or late '50s, a narrowing trend set in. Jacket lapels narrowed to about an inch and a half; so did ties. The brims of hats also narrowed.

Speaking of hats: nearly all men wore fedoras in the '40s and '50s - usually gray. Then, when President Kennedy was inaugurated on a cold, windy January day in 1961, he went hatless. Many American men began doing the same.

When men began going without hats, America's hat makers were in trouble. I recall a series of radio commercials which

were designed to persuade men to wear hats. In one of them, we would hear the sounds of street traffic. Then an auto horn would honk. A car would slow to a stop and a man's voice would call, "Hey, Sally! Want a lift?"

Sally would reply, "Not today, thanks, Harry. I think I'll walk."

And the announcer: "Too bad, Harry. But you'd do better in a hat."

A short-lived fad in the early '60s was the Nehru jacket, styled after those worn by the Indian Prime Minister.

In the late '60s, the narrowing trend of a decade earlier reversed itself. Jacket lapels and ties widened, some to about five inches. This was the Edwardian look. Shirts, traditionally in pastels, were offered in deep, vivid shades. Garishness was "in."

And we shouldn't forget that fad of the 1970s, the double-knit leisure suit. Or perhaps we should.

As styles of clothing changed over the decades, the methods of merchandising also changed. There used to be men in every men's clothing store whose job it was to sell clothing. Some stores still employ a sales staff, but many are pretty much self-service: you hunt for what you want.

In the old days, after the salesman had helped you find the shirt you wanted, he very likely would ask, "How about a nice bow tie to go with this shirt?"

"No, I have a couple of ties that should go with it."

"Sport shirt? Some nice ones on sale."

"No, thanks."

"We're having a sale on underwear. Need any underwear?"

"No, I have plenty of underwear."

"Socks? Hankies? Belt? Suspenders?"

"Thanks, but I think this shirt ought to do it."

I always used to be annoyed by that practice. But you know something? Today, I really miss it. ■

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# NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

## Charlie Barnet

BY KARL PEARSON

During the summer of 1939 Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra was in the midst of an engagement at the Playland Casino in Rye, New York. Glenn Miller's Orchestra, playing at the nearby Glen Island Casino, was drawing most of the cash customers, and consequently the Barnet band had very few patrons. One night Charlie got up on the bandstand, turned to his group, and jokingly said, "Let's run Glenn Miller out of business!" As Charlie played the melody of Glenn's current hit, "Sunrise Serenade," the Barnet orchestra played their chart of Duke Ellington's "Azure," a moody ballad.

Charlie Barnet approached both his life and his music with both humor and integrity. The various groups which Charlie assembled during his forty-year musical career were always musically satisfying, quality outfits that contained a degree of wit and humor. Barnet, who was well-liked by his sidemen, always gave his men a chance to play their solos and express themselves in their own manner. Discipline in the Barnet band was minimal, and all, including the leader, had a good time both on and off the bandstand. Compared to Tommy Dorsey or Benny Goodman, who were well-known taskmasters, Barnet was willing to tolerate an occasional mistake or instance of misbehavior.

One evening during the early 1940's a Barnet bassist showed up on the bandstand in his band uniform, but had selected the wrong color band jacket for the evening.

(The Barnet band, like most orchestras of the day, had various band uniforms of different colors that were used for various engagements.) Charlie made a gag out of his bassist's mistake, introducing his bass player as a guest artist to the assembled crowd. The bassist spent the entire evening stationed out in front of the band and played several solos.

Charlie commanded a great deal of respect from musicians and was always able to get the best men in the business for his band.

The Barnet roster reads like a "Who's Who" of the Big Bands, and included musicians such as Eddie Sauter, Billy May, Neal Hefti, Doc Severinsen, and Buddy DeFranco. At various times the Barnet band featured vocalists such as Lena Horne, Frances Wayne and Kay Starr.

The Barnet orchestra was also one of the first integrated dance groups to play for paying customers, and Charlie's reason was simple. He merely believed in hiring the best musicians regardless of their race or color. Great black musicians such as Peanuts Holland, Trummy Young, Roy Eldridge, Willie Smith and Clark Terry worked with Charlie at various times. Charlie always stuck to his beliefs, even though such strong convictions probably prevented the Barnet band from playing certain top "lily-white" establishments at various times.

Charlie Barnet was born in New York City on October 26, 1913.



BANDLEADER CHARLIE BARNET

His parents divorced when Charlie was two years old, and he was raised by his mother and grandparents. His grandfather, who at one point was vice president of the New York Central Railroad, gave Charlie his first tenor saxophone when the boy was eight years old. Young Barnet loved music, and with time he began to master the instrument. Charlie also began to listen to records by jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, whom he found particularly inspiring.

In 1929, at the age of 16, he had formed a small group that played on the SS Republic, a steamship, bound for Germany. The group disbanded when the liner reached Europe. Charlie formed his first full-time orchestra in 1933, using the old Jan Garber orchestra library that he had bought for the magnificent sum of twenty dollars! Many of the Garber arrangements were unusable, as Spud Murphy, Garber's arranger and saxist, neglected to write out the fourth sax parts, preferring to memorize them!

Barnet was able to secure a 13-week engagement for his band at New York's Para-

mount Grill. The nightly appearances also included a number of broadcasts over the CBS radio network. The band was very nervous during its opening night broadcast. Charlie had chosen to open the program with "I've Got The World On A String," a popular tune of the day, but announcer Paul Douglas incorrectly introduced "Avalon." As Charlie kicked off the tempo half the band began playing "Avalon" while the other half played "I've Got The World On A String!" "Avalon" eventually won out, and Barnet good-naturedly laughed off the incident.

The band also made its first recordings during this period, and the results appeared on a number of "dime store" (low-budget) labels sold throughout the country. The records were less than spectacular as the record company had insisted that the band record its selections in a more commercial vein.

Barnet was forced to disband when the Paramount Grill engagement ended, but reorganized in early 1934 when he landed a gig at the Coconut Grove of New York's Park Central Hotel, an engagement that lasted nearly six months.

Charlie began to expand his band's style by purchasing jazz arrangements from black arrangers Benny Carter and Don Redman. During this period Carter and pianist Garnet Clark sat in frequently with Barnet on the Coconut Grove bandstand, one of the earliest examples of an integrated orchestra. In November of that year the Barnet band played its first engagement at Harlem's famed Apollo Theater, which catered to black audiences. Charlie's group became the first white orchestra to play the Apollo, and over the two decades the Barnet orchestra played many engagements at that theater.

Over the next few years the band continued to struggle along, even though it landed a much-coveted engagement dur-

## CHARLIE BARNET

ing the summer of 1936 to play at the Glen Island Casino in New Rochelle, New York. During this period Charlie began to buy arrangements from Horace Henderson, younger brother of Fletcher Henderson, who played a big part in the success of Benny Goodman. While many of the band's Glen Island broadcasts featured its Carter and Henderson arrangements, the band's recordings were still in a more commercial vein.

The Glen Island engagement had been less than successful, and Charlie was still struggling to find a musical identity for his band. Again he disbanded, and for a short time tried a career as a movie actor. Charlie found an acting career less than rewarding (he was usually typecast as a bandleader), and again decided to put together a band.

Encouraged by the success of Benny Goodman, Barnet was more determined than ever to use a more jazz-influenced approach. Barnet, a fervent admirer of Duke Ellington's band, began to emulate Ellington's tonal colors and approach in his own group. Expert advice and guidance were offered by two members of the Ellington organization, Juan Tizol and Barney Bigard, who showed up at many

Barnet rehearsals.

During the year 1938 Charlie also hired two arrangers who would ably assist him with his musical ideas. The first was Andy Gibson, an experienced musician who had played with various black orchestras for several years. The other arranger was Billy May, who was young and had fresh ideas. Both men helped to influence the style of the Barnet band during its rise to popularity.

Charlie's luck began to change during the early part of 1939 when his band landed an engagement at New York's Famous Door, a small but well-known jazz club. Although the Famous Door was only capable of holding sixty customers, almost nightly broadcasts from the Famous Door would present the Barnet band's sounds to a nationwide audience.

At the same time Charlie was able to negotiate a new record contract with RCA, and the band appeared on the 35-cent Bluebird label. This time, however, Charlie now took a more assertive role in his band's recordings. During the summer of 1939 the Barnet band recorded an arrangement of "Cherokee," a composition written by Ray Noble. The arrangement, which Billy May had put together on the way to the recording studio, was written on various scraps of paper. The RCA&R (Artists and Repertoire) man was unimpressed by the tune, but Charlie stuck to his guns. "Cherokee" would eventually become one of the top selling records of 1939.

"Cherokee" became the band's new success and eventually, its theme song.

An engagement at New York's Paramount Theater was followed by a stay at Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. Both were considered to be among the most sought-after engagements in the big band business!

Minor disaster struck the band during October of 1939, while it was appearing at

the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles. During an intermission the bandstand caught fire, and the entire building burned to the ground. Fortunately no one was injured, but Barnet and his band experienced a greater loss. The band lost all its instruments (except for a string bass) and its entire musical library. Fellow bandleaders Count Basie and Benny Carter, both good friends, sent copies of various arrangements to assist Barnet. A hasty rehearsal was called by Charlie after the fire to see what could be salvaged. It turned out that most of the men had committed a sizable part of the Barnet book to memory, and the band was able to carry on.

The year 1940 was an even more successful one for Charlie Barnet, as his band played throughout the country at theaters, ballrooms and other establishments. The band had two more hit records, "Redskin Rhumba" (a sequel to "Cherokee") and "Pompton Turnpike," a tribute to Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey.

During the same year Charlie hired a talented young singer named Lena Horne. Unfortunately, Lena did not remain with the band for long, as many difficulties arose with ballroom managers and theater owners who objected to a black singer appearing with a white band. After one particularly unpleasant incident at New York's Paramount Theater, Charlie and Lena discussed the situation. Both parties felt that these incidents were harming her career, and Barnet tore up Lena's contract. He and Lena parted on friendly terms, and within a few short years her career skyrocketed. Charlie was more determined than ever to stick to his convictions on race, and over the next few years the Barnet band added several black players to its roster.

Charlie's Bluebird recording contract ended in early 1942, and he quickly signed with Decca Records. Within a few months

the Barnet orchestra recorded its first big-seller for Decca, "That Old Black Magic," featuring vocalist Frances Wayne. The biggest hit of Charlie's Decca period was undoubtedly "Skyliner," proving that big band records were still selling well during 1944 and 1945.

Barnet continued to lead a successful band throughout the 1940's. In 1949 he formed a bebop-styled orchestra that employed many of the best bop musicians, but by the end of the year he disbanded the group, firmly convinced that the music was not suited for dancing. Within a few months he reassembled a more conventional-styled big band. Charlie continued to play on and off throughout the 1950's and into the mid-sixties, leading a variety of groups.

The last full-time Barnet orchestra was formed during 1966 and featured many of the best New York musicians. The band was widely praised by critics and big band fans alike. The Big Band Era had long since passed, and the large audiences needed to offset the band's expenses were no longer there. Within a year the band folded.

Charlie made a few recordings in the late sixties, and in 1973 played an engagement at the Canadian National Exposition in Toronto, fronting a Canadian big band. Charlie eventually settled into retirement, traveling around the world with his wife Betty and enjoying the good life. Barnet collaborated with Stanley Dance on his autobiography, "Those Swinging Years," and the book was published in 1984. Charlie's recollections of his long and interesting career were still vivid, and the book included a thoughtful insight of many of his fellow bandleaders. After publication of the book he continued to enjoy life with his wife, friends and fellow musicians.

He died in San Diego on September 4, 1991 at the age of 77. ■

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**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.



### February is Jack Benny Month!

Tune in to a sequence of related and mostly consecutive Benny programs dealing with the famous "I Can't Stand Jack Benny Because..." contest.

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-21-45) Jack is planning to go to the race track, but is having trouble selecting a horse. Jack dreams about the race, betting \$85,000. *This program features the first on-air appearance of Polly the Parrot (Mel Blanc) and the first appearance of Phil's "daughter," played by Jeanine Roos.* AFRS rebroadcast. (28:11)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-28-45) When Jack dreams that he bet \$85,000 on a horse that won and paid \$646,000, his Press Agent Steve Bradley (played by Dick Lane) has a great idea! All the regulars, plus Mel Blanc as Polly, Joe Kearns as the vault guard, and Eddie Marr as a hold-up man. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:12)

**HOTPOINT HOLIDAY HOUR** (12-25-49) "The Man Who Came to Dinner" starring Jack Benny with an all-star supporting cast: Charles Boyer, Gene Kelly, Dorothy McGuire, Gregory Peck, and Rosalind Russell. Henry Fonda narrates this updated, contemporary radio version of the George S. Kaufman Moss Hart Broadway hit and screen smash. A pompous, cantankerous, megalomaniac broadcaster is confined by a broken hip to a normal mid-western home which he turns into bedlam. The program is directed by Mel Ferrar. Hotpoint Products, CBS. (17:50; 17:00; 16:55)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-4-45) After being the victim of a robbery, Jack is sick in bed. The gang tries to comfort him. AFRS rebroadcast. (25:20)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-11-45) Jack is still trying to recover from the shock of being robbed. Rochester tries to get boxer Joe Louis to be Jack's bodyguard, but Joe wants to be a comedian! AFRS rebroadcast. (27:47)

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10th

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-25-45) Press agent Steve Bradley tells Jack that the robbery was a publicity stunt! Bradley has an idea how to use the "stolen" money. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:25)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-2-45) Steve Bradley gives an explanation of his "I Can't Stand Jack Benny because..." contest. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:30)

**PHILCO RADIO TIME** (3-3-48) Bing Crosby welcomes guests Jack Benny and restaurateur Tom Brenneman. Jack's girlfriend Gladys Zabisco (Sara Berner) warns Bing that Benny is looking for him. Rhythmairs, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Philco Radios, ABC. (30:30)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-9-45) The gang helps Jack read "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest letters. Guests Ronald and Benita Colman, *in their first appearance on the Benny program*, send a dinner invitation to Jack, but they're surprised when he arrives. AFRS rebroadcast. (29:15)

**SUSPENSE** (2-2-53) "Plan X" starring Jack Benny with Joe Kearns, William Conrad, Howard McNear, Jack Krushen. In the year 2053 Jack is a Martian chosen to carry out a plan to deal with an "invasion rocket" from Earth. Harlow Wilcox announces. AutoLite, CBS. (29:05)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-16-45) A parade of mail carriers deliver "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" letters to Benny's house. The gang reads some of the letters while Jack tries to tune in to Don Wilson on the radio. Instead he gets columnist Louella Parsons who comments on the Benny contest. Herb Vigran, Frank Nelson. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (27:51)

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17th

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-23-45) On the day before the end of the "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest, the gang reads some of the letters that are pouring in. Guests Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman are expected for a holiday dinner. Larry Stevens sings "Ave Maria" in this seasonal show and Ronald Colman "toasts the world" at the end of World War II. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (29:23)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-30-45) The "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest ended last week, but Jack and the gang are still sorting out the latest entries. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:47)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (12-16-46) "Killer Kates" starring Jack Benny who plays a would-be comedian who bombed out in night clubs but becomes the toast of Broadway in a serious role as a gangster, playing to packed houses. But nightmares re-occur and the gangster's character takes over. Cast features Gail Patrick, Alan Reed, Gale Gordon. William Keighley is host. AFRS rebroadcast. (14:22; 16:00; 17:48)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-6-46) On this first show of the new year, Mary tells how Jack went to the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day, but didn't see the game. Winner of the "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest will be announced in three weeks. *This show features the first appearance of Artie Auerbach as the Hot Dog Man (Mr. Kitzel).* Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:37)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-13-46) Jack and the gang appear in his version of the 20th Century Fox musical "State Fair." "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest winners to be announced in two weeks. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:18)

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24th

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-20-46) Since the last show, Jack was appointed Honorary Mayor of Anaheim, Azusa and Cucamonga! This week, the cast continues their version of "State Fair." A telegram from Fred Allen — the supreme judge of the "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest — says the winners will be announced next week. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:39)

**DENNIS DAY SHOW** (10-3-46) Special guests are Don Wilson and Jack Benny who give Dennis a send-off on the *first program* in his new show. This is a "preview" of the series

telling how the program (to be called "A Day in the Life of Dennis Day") came about. Jack dreams of the future — when Dennis is a star and he is an unknown! Colgate Dental Cream, NBC. (29:02)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (1-27-46) Jack must give away \$10,000 to the winners of the "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest. Fred Allen, in New York, announces the first prize winner and Jack names many other winners. Cast features Mel Blanc, Sara Berner, and Bea Benadaret. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (27:35)

**JACK BENNY FIDDLES WITH THE CLASSICS** (1978) An entertaining, humorous introduction to the world of classical music for young (and older) listeners, in which the noted comedian — and sometimes violinist — recalls his early, fun-filled adventures as a child "prodigy." Jack is ably assisted by Isaac Stern, Mary Livingstone and Mel Blanc. From an out-of-print Capitol Record album. (20:14; 17:18)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (2-3-46) Jack takes Mary to a concert starring guest Isaac Stern, one of the world's great violinists. They meet Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman at the Philharmonic Auditorium. Later, Ronald Colman reads the first prize letter in the "I Can't Stand Jack Benny" contest. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (28:40)

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# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

## MARCH 1996

### SATURDAY, MARCH 2nd

**THE FAT MAN** (1-21-46) J. Scott Smart stars as Dashiell Hammett's "hard-boiled criminologist who tips the scale at 247 pounds" in this first show of the series. The Fat Man (who is not called Brad Runyon in this episode) is asked to hide a woman who is being followed. Sustaining, ABC. (29:00)

**FRED ALLEN SHOW** (10-6-46) Fred's first show of the 1946-47 season is introduced and narrated by two famous news commentators: Lowell Thomas and H. V. Kaltenborn. This rare broadcast features Portland Hoffa, the DeMarco Sisters, and the folks who reside in Allen's Alley: Peter Donald as Ajax Cassidy; Parker Fennelly as Titus Moody; Minerva Pious as Mrs. Nussbaum; Kenny Delmar as Senator Claghorn. Tenderleaf Tea, Shefford's Cheese; NBC. (25:53)

**FORT LARAMIE** (5-6-56) Raymond Burr stars as Capt. Lee Quince of the U.S. Cavalry, with Vic Perrin as Sgt. Goerss. A prejudice trooper learns a valuable lesson about white men and Indians. Sustaining, CBS. (29:33)

**VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS** (3-14-45) Charlie Barnet and his orchestra broadcast from the U. S. Naval Receiving Station in Schumaker, California. Selections include "Rockin' in Rhythm," "Dream," "Skyliner," and "A Story of Two Cigarettes." Vocals by Ginny Powell and Phil Barton. Coca-Cola, BLUE NET-WORK. (23:18)

**NOTE: Be sure to read the article about Charlie Barnet beginning on page 16 of this issue.**

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (9-9-45) Ozzie and Harriet have an argument about reprimanding David when he gets into a fight with another kid. Cast includes Bea Benadaret, John Brown, Louise Erickson, Tommy Cook. International Silver Co., CBS. (29:42)

**THE FAT MAN** (7-8-46) "The Black Angel" stars J. Scott Smart as the heavy-set detective who investigates when a man thinks his wife is cheating on him. Ed Begley appears as Sgt. O'Hara. Sustaining, ABC. (29:30)

**NOTE: Be sure to read the article about J. Scott Smart, radio's "The Fat Man" beginning on page 4 of this issue.**

### SATURDAY, MARCH 9th SPOTLIGHT ON JOHN BROWN



**JOHN BROWN**  
"Digby O'Dell, the Friendly Undertaker"

**MY FRIEND IRMA** (1-6-52) Marie Wilson stars as Irma Peterson, with Cathy Lewis as Jane Stacy and **John Brown** as Irma's boyfriend Al. When Irma wants her memoirs published, Al tries to find a publisher. Hans Conried appears as Professor Kropotkin; Alan Reed as Mr. Clyde, Irma's boss. Ennds Chlorophyll Tablets, CBS. (29:00)

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (12-

5-48) Ozzie tells neighbor Thorny, played by **John Brown**, about the time Bing Crosby and his son Lindsay visited the Nelson household. Featured performers include Janet Waldo and Jack Kirkwood. International Silver Company, NBC. (29:10)

**DAMON RUNYON THEATRE** (1949) **John Brown** stars as the Runyon character "Broadway" who tells about "Madame La Gimp," the famous "Apple Annie" story about a street character who is passed off as a sophisticated woman for the benefit of her daughter's future husband and his father. Cast features Frank Lovejoy and Ted DeCorsia. Syndicated. (26:52)

**A DATE WITH JUDY** (10-22-46) starring Louise Erickson as Judy with **John Brown** as her harried father, Melvin Foster and Richard Crenna as Oogie Pringle. To get out of attending a lecture, Judy's father and the men at his Lodge tell their wives they are decorating the Lodge Hall. AFRS rebroadcast. (26:05)

**LIFE OF RILEY** (5-17-46) William Bendix, as Chester A. Riley, talks his son Junior into getting a job selling peanuts at the circus. Scotty Beckett is Junior, Paula Winslow is Riley's wife Peg; Dink Trout is Waldo Binney; and **John Brown** doubles as Riley's pal and co-worker Gillis and as Digby O'Dell, the friendly undertaker. Teel Liquid Dentifrice, NBC. (30:15)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 16th SIX CHEERS FOR THE IRISH!

**1 HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE** (10-28-48) "O'Halloran's Luck" starring Edmund O'Brien in the Steven Vincent Benet story. Tim O'Halloran comes to Boston to marry Kitty Malone, but her parents have other ideas. James Hilton is host. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (28:55)

**2 PHILCO RADIO TIME** (3-17-48) On St. Patrick's Day, Bing Crosby welcomes guest Margaret O'Brien. The eleven year old actress joins Bing in a "Cinderella" sketch. Bing sings "Dear Old Donegal." John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, announcer Ken Carpenter. Philco Radios, ABC. (30:00)

**3 SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS** (2-14-44) "Gentleman Jim" starring Errol Flynn, Alexis Smith, and Ward Bond in their original screen roles in a radio version of the 1942 Warner Bros. film about prize fighter Gentleman Jim

Corbett and his bout with John L. Sullivan. Cast features Grant Withers and Frank Nelson. Announcer is Truman Bradley. Lady Esther products, CBS. (28:20)

**4 DUFFY'S TAVERN** (1944) "...where the elite meet to eat!" Ed Gardner stars as Archie, the Manager of the tavern, who wants to put on a radio program with Hope and Crosby as guests. He seeks help from Bob Crosby and Dolores Hope. AFRS Rebroadcast. (23:00)

**5 HIS HONOR, THE BARBER** (11-27-45) Actor Barry Fitzgerald stars in this little-remembered series written, produced and directed by Carlton E. Morse (of "One Man's Family" and "I Love A Mystery"). Fitzgerald is Judge Bernard Fitz, who had been a barber before his election to the bench in the District Court of Vincent County. Cast includes Barbara Fuller as the judge's young niece. Ballantine Ale, NBC. (28:45)

**6 SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS** (3-3-47) "Kitty Foyle" starring Olivia deHavilland, Henry Fonda and William Lundigan in a radio version of the 1940 film about a white collar girl who has to decide between two suitors. Truman Bradley announces. Lady Esther products, CBS. (28:00)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 23rd THIS DAY — THAT YEAR

**RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE** (3-23-51, *exactly 45 years ago today*) Dick Powell stars as the detective who gets \$100 a day plus expenses. An actress hires Diamond to find out who attempted to kill her. Cast features Virginia Gregg as Diamond's girl friend Helen Asher; Ed Begley as Lt. Walt Levinson; Wilms Herbert as Sgt. Otis; Frances Robinson as actress Joyce Wallace. Sustaining, NBC. (28:23)

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** (3-23-44, *exactly 52 years ago today*) Robert L. Ripley with a collection of audio oddities developed from his syndicated newspaper cartoon. Pall Mall Cigarettes, MBS. (11:41)

**EDDIE CANTOR SHOW** (3-23-38, *exactly 58 years ago today*) This is Eddie's last broadcast for Texaco after two seasons with the sponsor. Cast includes singers Deanna Durbin and Bobby Breen, announcer Jimmy Wallington and comedy "stooges" Jack Rinard, Sid Fields and Burt Gordon, the Mad Russian. Cantor has spring fever and troubles with the Internal

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

## MARCH 1996

Revenue Service. Plus: a take-off on Ripley's "Believe It or Not." In this pre-WW II show, Eddie sings an anti-war song. "Let Them Keep It Over There." Texaco, CBS. (28:12)

**SUSPENSE** (3-23-58, *exactly 38 years ago today*) "Affair at Loveland Pass" starring Vanessa Brown and Jim Ameche, with Barney Phillips and Jim Nusser. While a pitchfork murderer is on the loose, a traveler stops to help a lady in distress. Written, produced and directed by William N. Robson. AFRS rebroadcast. (20:05)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (3-23-42, *exactly 54 years ago today*) "Strawberry Blonde" with Don Ameche, Rita Hayworth and Gail Patrick in a radio version of the 1941 Warners Bros. movie. A turn-of-the-century comedy about an ex-con dentist who becomes infatuated with a gold-digger. Rita Hayworth repeats her original screen role. Cast includes Luis Albeni, Jack Mather, Eddie Marr. Cecil B. DeMille is host. Lux Soap, CBS. (21:15; 22:35; 17:00)

**YOUR HIT PARADE** (3-23-46, *exactly 50 years ago today*) Joan Edwards, Johnny Mercer, Joe Dosh sing the top tunes of the week, with the Hit Paraders and Mark Warnow and the orchestra. Announcer is Kenny Delmar. AFRS rebroadcast. (29:25)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 30th REMEMBERING BURT LANCASTER

**SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE** (10-10-49) "Criss Cross" starring **Burt Lancaster** repeating his original screen role in this radio

version of the 1949 Universal-International film, directed by Robert Siodmak. A man returns to his hometown where he crosses the path of his ex-wife who has taken up with a gangster. Cast features Betty Lou Gerson, Jeff Corey, Norman Field, Ken Christy. Sustaining, NBC. (28:32)

**SUSPENSE** (9-9-48) "The Big Shot" starring **Burt Lancaster** in the Bret Halliday story about a tough, good-looking mining engineer (with yellow curly hair and a baby face) who goes to work in an illegal gold mine in Mexico. AutoLite, CBS. (28:50)

**YOUR TRAVELING REPORTER** (1948) Columnist Irv Kupcinet with a program of celebrity interviews. Kup is at the Ambassador East Hotel in Chicago talking with Major Lloyd George of England, son of the World War I Prime Minister; Chicago Bears football great Sid Luckman; and actor **Burt Lancaster**. Blatz Beer, UNITED BROADCASTING CO. (17:47)

**SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE** (4-28-50) "Rope of Sand" starring **Burt Lancaster** and Corrine Calvert in their original screen roles from the 1949 film directed by William Dieterle about a thief who tries to regain a treasure he hid away. RCA Victor, NBC. (28:30)

**SUSPENSE** (11-24-49) "The Long Wait" starring **Burt Lancaster** as an ex-con, just released from prison, who looks for the woman who caused his brother to kill himself. Betty Lou Gerson co-stars. AutoLite, CBS. (28:45)

**OUR SPECIAL GUEST** will be *Nostalgia Digest* columnist and movie historian **BOB KOLOSOSKI** whose article about **Burt Lancaster** begins on page 32 of this issue.

## ...and for more good listening...

**ART HELLYER SHOW**-- Music of the big bands and the big singers with lots of knowledgeable commentary and fun from one of radio's legendary personalities. *WJOL, 1340 AM, Saturday, 9 am-1 pm; Sunday, 2-4 pm.*

**DICK LAWRENCE REVUE**-- A treasure trove of rare and vintage recordings with spoken memories from the never to be forgotten past. *WNIB, 97.1 FM, Saturday, 8-9 pm.*

**REMEMBER WHEN**-- Host Don Corey calls this his "four-hour nostalgia fest" with the emphasis on old time radio musical and variety shows, plus show tunes and interviews. *WAIT, 850 AM, Sunday, noon-4 pm.*

**WHEN RADIO WAS**-- Carl Amari hosts a two-hour Sunday night edition of the series, featuring old time radio broadcasts and interviews. *WMAQ, 670 AM, Sunday, 10pm-midnight.*

## "When Radio Was" -- WMAQ-AM 670

Monday thru Friday 11 pm - Midnight Host Stan Freberg

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>February, 1996 Schedule</b>				
			<b>1</b> Green Hornet Burns & Allen Pt. 1	<b>2</b> Burns & Allen Pt. 2 Suspense
<b>5</b> Nero Wolfe Fibber Mc Gee Pt. 1	<b>6</b> Fibber McGee Pt. 2 The Shadow	<b>7</b> Jack Benny Abbott & Costello Pt. 1	<b>8</b> Abbott & Costello Pt. 2 Lights Out	<b>9</b> Dragnet Bob and Ray
<b>12</b> Lone Ranger Johnny Dollar Pt. 1	<b>13</b> Gangbusters Johnny Dollar Pt. 2	<b>14</b> Life of Riley Johnny Dollar Pt. 3	<b>15</b> Stan Freberg # 7 Johnny Dollar Pt. 4	<b>16</b> Sgt. Preston Johnny Dollar Pt. 5
<b>19</b> Suspense Martin & Lewis Pt. 1	<b>20</b> Martin & Lewis Pt. 2 Hermit's Cave	<b>21</b> Six Shooter Great Gildersleeve Pt. 1	<b>22</b> Great Gildersleeve Pt. 2 Box Thirteen	<b>23</b> Lone Ranger Gunsmoke
<b>26</b> X Minus One Charlie McCarthy Pt. 1	<b>27</b> Charlie McCarthy Pt. 2 The Shadow	<b>28</b> Boston Blackie Duffy's Tavern Pt. 1	<b>29</b> Duffy's Tavern Pt. 2 Directors' Playhouse	
<b>March, 1996 Schedule</b>				
				<b>1</b> The Saint Lum and Abner
<b>4</b> Suspense Burns & Allen Pt. 1	<b>5</b> Burns & Allen Pt. 2 Green Hornet	<b>6</b> This Is Your FBI Fibber McGee Pt. 1	<b>7</b> Fibber McGee Pt. 2 Lone Ranger	<b>8</b> Dragnet Bob and Ray
<b>11</b> Jack Benny Johnny Dollar Pt. 1	<b>12</b> Abbott & Costello Johnny Dollar Pt. 2	<b>13</b> The Shadow Johnny Dollar Pt. 3	<b>14</b> Life of Riley Johnny Dollar Pt. 4	<b>15</b> Great Gildersleeve Johnny Dollar Pt. 5
<b>18</b> Gangbusters Stan Freberg # 8 Pt. 1	<b>19</b> Stan Freberg # 8 Pt. 2 Lone Ranger	<b>20</b> Suspense Martin & Lewis Pt. 1	<b>21</b> Martin & Lewis Pt. 2 Mysterious Traveler	<b>22</b> Six Shooter Lum and Abner
<b>25</b> Box Thirteen Duffy's Tavern Pt. 1	<b>26</b> Duffy's Tavern Pt. 2 Dimension X	<b>27</b> The Shadow Charlie McCarthy Pt. 1	<b>28</b> Charlie McCarthy Pt. 2 Rogue's Gallery	<b>29</b> Gunsmoke Bill Stern



# PATSY MONTANA

## Everybody's Cowgirl Sweetheart

BY WAYNE W. DANIEL

In 1935, a young singer calling herself Patsy Montana wrote and recorded a song titled "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart." The record became the first by a female country music artist to sell a million copies, and this singer/songwriter became the sweetheart of millions of fans who had a radio to listen to, a phonograph on which to play her records, or the price of admission to see and hear her on stage. She became a star attraction of Chicago's WLS National Barn Dance, appeared in a movie with Gene Autry, recorded numerous other western songs, and toured the country in cowboy boots and ten-gallon hat. She became America's number one singing cowgirl, and over the years she has received many honors and awards for her achievements, including induction into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in 1988.

The legendary entertainer we know as Patsy Montana was born Ruby Blevins on October 14, 1914, near Hot Springs, Arkansas. Her family later moved to Hope, a small town some 70 miles southwest of Hot Springs, where she grew up. Ruby was the seventh child and only girl in a family of eleven children born to Victoria and Augustus M. Blevins, a clerk in the Hope post office.

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*Wayne W. Daniel of Chamblee, Georgia, is a retired college professor and a country music historian. He has written more than 130 articles on the subject and is the author of Pickin' on Peachtree, A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia, published by the University of Illinois Press.*

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Music was a big part of the daily life of the Blevins household. "Both of my parents sang in church," Patsy recalls, "and my mother played the organ. My brothers and I would sit around her and sing. I always loved to sing." And then there was the family phonograph. "I used to have to stand on a box to wind up the Victrola," Patsy says. Among her favorite records were those by Jimmie Rodgers whose yodeling especially attracted her attention. During the summers she attended singing schools at a country church near her hometown.

"Except for three months of piano lessons, the violin was the only instrument I ever studied," Patsy says. "I say 'violin.' I never could fiddle. There's a difference." To provide accompaniment to her singing, Patsy later taught herself to play the guitar.

The first signs of the assertiveness that helped propel her to the top in the entertainment field are to be seen in the way Patsy handled her first job as a paid performer. "It was in Arkansas at a celebration of the opening of a big bridge," she explains. They wanted my brother and me to sing a song. I was 14. I think he was about 13. They gave us five dollars. My brother played guitar. I hired him because he played guitar, and I couldn't. We sang "Good Old Southern Home." My brother thought he should have three dollars because he played the guitar. And right then, I think, was the birth of women's lib. I held out for \$2.50 and got it. That was my first paid job."

Patsy began her career as a professional entertainer around 1930 in California. She had moved to Los Angeles with one of her brothers and his wife and was continuing her training as a classical violinist at the University of the West (now UCLA) when, as she puts it, she was bitten by the show biz bug. She entered and won first place in a talent contest in which she sang two Jimmie Rodgers songs, "Whisper Your Mother's Name" and "Yodeling Cowboy." Her plans for becoming a violinist evaporated as she became involved in the burgeoning West Coast country music scene. Billed as Rubye (she added the 'e' to the end of her name because she thought Rubye looked more glamorous than Ruby) Blevins, the Yodeling Cowgirl from San Antonio, Patsy went to work on Hollywood radio station KMTR.

Stuart Hamblen, who later became famous for such compositions as "It Is No Secret" and "This Old House," heard her and persuaded her to join his act that was heard on a rival station. Patsy, playing fiddle and singing harmony, became a member of a cowgirl trio called the Montana Cowgirls. "That's where my name changed," she explains. One of the girls in the trio was named Ruthy [DeMondrum]. Ruthy and Ruby caused confusion on the air, and Stuart suggested I change my name to Patsy — me being more Irish than anything else, I guess — Montana."

In addition to her work with Hamblen, Patsy performed as a duo with her brother Ken on radio station KFVD in Culver City,



PATSY MONTANA

Through a combination of talent and determination she carved out a successful career as a country/western artist in a field that was dominated by men. She helped pave the way for the female country music stars who came after her. (Chicago, 1945.)

California, and toured with Monty Montana, a popular cowboy and trick rider. Patsy's image as a singing cowgirl was beginning to take shape.

"When I was a little girl growing up," Patsy says, "I loved the cowboys. Then when I got into the business it was the Gene Autry era. He brought in the singing cowboy. It was just a natural for me. I had no trouble singing the cowboy songs. I always loved the cowboy songs. I think I was born in a wonderful era. I got to see the old original cowboys. They weren't

## PATSY MONTANA

rhinestone cowboys. You could smell them coming. Although I didn't live on a ranch, I had uncles who had ranches in Oklahoma. We'd go out during branding time. What I remember most is smelling that burning hair and those poor little calves yelling and the cows bawling. To me the old cowboys were mean. They were hurting the little calves. That was my first introduction to the real cowboys."

Patsy's big break came in 1933 while she was taking a vacation in her hometown. "At that time, and maybe still," she says, "[farmers] around Hope, Arkansas, raised the biggest watermelons in the world. So somebody got the idea that my brother and I should take a watermelon to the World's Fair in Chicago. I can still see our car going down State Street pulling a little trailer [with the watermelon on it]. We looked like the Beverly Hillbillies. Before we left home, my mother asked me to go by WLS — I had never heard of WLS — to say hello to her favorite announcer Hal O'Halloran. And I did, just for my mother. Well, I walked right into an audition and didn't go home. The Prairie Ramblers were looking for a girl singer."

The Prairie Ramblers, using the name Kentucky Ramblers, had been a featured act on the WLS Barn Dance since 1931. The group consisted of Floyd "Salty" Holms (guitar, harmonica), Shelby "Tex" Atchison (fiddle), Jack Taylor (bass), and Charles "Chick" Hurt (mandolin), all native Kentuckians. Soon after Patsy's arrival they changed their name to the Prairie Ramblers, and with their new female vocalist, became one of the most popular acts at WLS. The Prairie Ramblers and Patsy worked as a team on stage, on radio, and in the recording studio until 1949.

Sixty years later, Patsy speaks fondly of her time at WLS. She says that the



PATSY MONTANA'S first publicity photograph. (Circa 1930)

station's performers were like a big family. "My oldest daughter [Beverly] was born in New York, but my youngest [Judy] was born in Chicago. There'll always be a connection with Chicago. Then Chicago was like Nashville is now. It was the center — the home — of country music."

Shortly after going to work at WLS, Patsy met Paul Rose whom she married in 1934. Paul, originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, had gone to Chicago as manager of another WLS act composed of Lester McFarland and Robert A. Gardner, known to radio listeners as Mac and Bob. Mac was Paul's uncle.

During the 1930's WLS audiences registered their approval of Patsy and the Ramblers as, week after week, listener polls placed them high on the list of the station's most popular acts. In addition to appearing on the Saturday night Barn Dance, they could be heard on early morning programs such as the "Smile-A-While" show that aired every morning at 5:30.

*Standby*, a magazine published weekly by WLS for its listeners, frequently ran stories and pictures of Patsy and the Ramblers. Letters to the editor indicated that the reader-listeners were interested in every facet of the stars' lives, from the clothes they wore to the food they ate. Patsy's Barn Dance costume was described as consisting of "a black leather skirt, a light blouse, a little black leather jacket ... and high-topped riding shoes." While attending the Texas Centennial in Dallas in 1936 she purchased a white cowgirl's outfit. In response to listeners' questions, *Standby* readers were told that "Patsy Montana is just as sweet, calm, and sincere behind the scenes as on the air ... When [she] arrives home from the studio following her programs, she calls a greeting to her small daughters the minute she opens the front door and in turn is greeted by a particularly joyful squeal from the far end of the house."

In still another *Standby* article, readers got a glimpse of Patsy in the kitchen. "There was no doubt in Patsy's mind," penned the reporter, "but that an old-fashioned Southern supper held first place, a preference going back to her log cabin days in Arkansas (Yes, Patsy was born in a log cabin near Hot Springs). String beans cooked with pork fat and new potatoes and accompanied by corabread and milk were included in the menu." The article concluded with a recipe for one of Patsy's favorite desserts, orange chiffon pie.

In 1940, Patsy was advised by her doctor to move to a warmer climate. "I had to get out of Chicago," she says. "I had chronic bronchitis. I took a leave of absence [from WLS]." Heeding her physician's recommendation, Patsy set off for the Texas-Mexico border where she began performing on radio stations with transmitters south of the Rio Grande River that beamed their powerful signals north-



PATSY MONTANA AND THE PRAIRIE RAMBLERS  
From left: Jack Taylor, Chick Hurt, Patsy, Tex Atchison, Salty Holms.  
(Circa 1934)

## PATSY MONTANA

ward to blanket the United States and Canada. As a result Patsy gained thousands of new fans.

Patsy's radio sponsor, the makers of Kolor Bak hair dye and a cold remedy called Peruna, paired her with western singer Cowboy Slim Rinehart. "I had never heard of Slim Rinehart," she confesses. "We couldn't sing together worth a darn, but the people loved it. He was quite popular. They used to bring mail into the studio by the bushels, and each envelope would have some money and a box top." In return listeners received a picture of the entertainers or some other gift that had been advertised over the air.

Listeners to those border radio stations recall how Patsy and Slim closed their programs. As Slim said goodbye to the audience, implying that he was about to leave the studio, perhaps to ride off into the sunset, Patsy would call out, "Wait for me, Slim." "Okay, Patsy," came Slim's reply, and the two of them would then go off the air singing their closing theme, "Happy in the Saddle Again."

In 1948, Patsy and her family moved back to Arkansas. "We had a farm at Hot Springs. We spent a couple or three years there to get the kids out of the city." By this time Patsy and daughters Beverly and Judy were performing together as a trio. "We had a daily radio show on KTHS in Hot Springs," Patsy says. I had me a band. It was a lot of fun. Bob McNett, one member of my band, later became the guitar player for Hank Williams. We called him Bash-

ful Bob. At the time, Beverly, Judy, and I were the only mother and daughters trio on radio." On Saturday nights, while living in Arkansas, Patsy would go down to Shreveport, Louisiana, and sing on the Louisiana Hayride. Billed as "Patsy Montana, the Girl With the Million-Dollar Personality," she gained additional exposure on the Hayride which was broadcast over Shreveport's KWKH and carried nationally on the CBS network.

When Patsy's husband, Paul, who worked for a nut and bolt company, was transferred to California in 1952, Patsy returned to the state in which she had started her professional career. During the ensuing years, right up to the present, California has been her base of operation. They have been busy years, because Patsy, the



PATSY MONTANA AND FRIEND. (Circa 1945)



PATSY MONTANA on stage at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tennessee, 1990

indefatigable entertainer, has never been able to find time to retire from the business. There have been television appearances, recording sessions, and extensive touring in the United States and Europe where she is particularly popular.

Patsy's career has not been totally one of radio broadcasts and radio-generated personal appearances. Her career as a recording artist has been one of which any entertainer could be proud. She made her first records in 1932. While home from California on vacation she thought it would be nice if her family could hear her sing on the radio. Consequently, she talked her way into a week-long job at KWKH in Shreveport, a station that her family back in Hope, Arkansas, could pick up on their radio.

Jimmie Davis, at the time a Victor recording artist, also heard her. He was sufficiently impressed to invite her to travel with him to Camden, New Jersey, where she sang harmony, yodeled, and played fiddle on four of Davis' recordings. She also recorded four solos of her own under the name Patsy Montana. The next year she recorded four sides for Victor in Chicago with backup music provided by the Prairie Ramblers. These recordings were

released under the name Rubye Blevins.

Through the years, Patsy recorded many other songs, most with western themes, with the Prairie Ramblers, but none achieved the success of "I Want To Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart," which she recorded for the American Record Company in 1935. Of that song Patsy says, "It was recorded in New York. At that time girls weren't selling, and they hesitated about recording me as a girl singer, but Mr. Art Satherley, who is an angel to a lot of us, liked "Cowboy's Sweetheart." He took a gamble on me, and it paid off. I've never forgotten."

Patsy Montana has been a pioneer in the country-western music field, maintaining her lead as a popularizer of a musical image—the singing cowgirl. She has cleared the way for those who came after her and continues to be an inspiration to those who aspire to fulfill their dreams. In recent years she has been pleased to see "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart" recorded by such artists as Rattlesnake Annie and Suzy Bogguss.

It has been close to 70 years since Patsy Montana entered the entertainment field. She is one of the last survivors of the National Barn Dance who is still performing; perhaps the only one still performing whose career on the show goes back as far as hers. "I think part of the reason I've had such a long career is that I don't take things too seriously," she once told a newspaper reporter. I never expected it to turn out the way it did. I guess it was my calling. Some people preach. I sing." ■

*The Patsy Montana International Fan Club is still active in the promotion of "America's No. 1 Cowboy Sweetheart." Questions regarding membership may be addressed to Patsy Montana International Fan Club, 3728 Highway 411, Madisonville, TN 37354.*



In the winter of 1953 my parents took me to the Crown Theatre on Division street in Chicago to see "From Here to Eternity."

I was six years old at the time and fell asleep before one of the most famous scenes in film history came on the screen. Deborah Kerr and Burt Lancaster making love (1953 censored-style) in the Hawaiian surf was a heart-pounding vision that brought in crowds of curious movie fans. That scene was pretty tame by today's standards, but the film and Lancaster's performance—have stood the test of time.

Burt Lancaster was never the typical Hollywood star, but rather a complex man who relished the challenge of surviving in Hollywood as an actor, producer and director. That may not seem unusual when you think of Clint Eastwood and Robert Redford, but Lancaster did that during the heart of the studio system when one false move would be one's last.

Lancaster, who died in 1994 at the age of 80, was by nature a risk taker and was never afraid to fail or let failure keep him down. He started his professional career as a circus acrobat and survived some nasty falls while performing. When he felt he had gone as far as he could, he quit to pursue greener pastures. A series of odd jobs (including selling women's apparel at Chicago's Marshall Field's) was mercifully interrupted by a three year hitch in the army. He had been assigned to the Special

Services branch of the Fifth Army and wound up an entertainer.

He returned from the war, was discovered in an elevator by an agent and appeared in a Broadway play that folded in three weeks. Movie producer Hal Wallis saw the play and signed Lancaster to a two-picture deal that led to his first part in the film "The Killers" in 1946. Lancaster was made for the part of the boxer "Swede" with his muscular physique and acrobatic



BURT LANCASTER

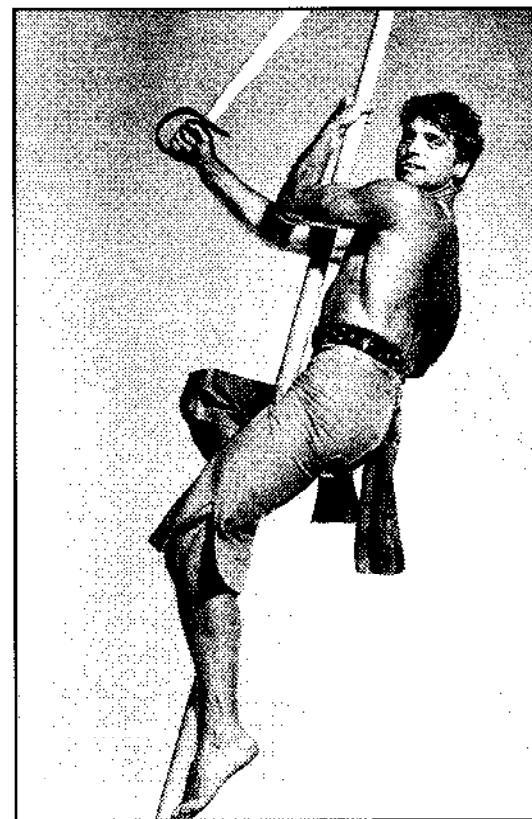
reflexes. The movie was a hit and Burt's reviews were good, but he had to prove to himself that he wasn't just a one-hit wonder.

He was in ten films in the next four years and was fortunate enough to play opposite Edward G. Robinson in "All My Sons" and Barbara Stanwyck in "Sorry, Wrong Number." He and his agent Harold Hecht began their own production company and Lancaster's reputation as a hard actor to get along with was overlooked by the success of his films. Lancaster never apologized for his black temper and fits of rage when a scene wasn't going right, because that was his nature period!

His circle of friends was small and varied. Nick Cravat grew up in the same East Harlem neighborhood as Burt and they became friends because of their mutual love of acrobatics. They formed an act and literally ran away to join the circus. They toured for nearly ten years and split when Burt felt he was getting nowhere.

After his success in Hollywood he brought Nick out to California and put him into small roles in several of his pictures. They redid their acrobatic act and a bit more in "The Flame and the Arrow" and "The Crimson Pirate." They went on personal appearance tours doing acrobatic stunts to promote the films. Nick's acting ability was limited but Burt managed to find work for his childhood pal.

Kirk Douglas didn't need any help finding work, but in Burt he found a friend with whom he enjoyed working. They were both under contract to Hal Wallace in 1947 and were assigned to Wallis' production of "I Walk Alone." Lancaster had stated that he and Douglas were from humble beginnings. But they were brash and cocky and nobody liked either one of them. That



BURT LANCASTER

mutual arrogance was the basis for a long-lasting friendship. Together they co-starred in six films.

The one friend that Burt trusted and counted on the most was his agent Harold Hecht. Hecht was just starting his own business when he met Lancaster. He impressed the actor by stating that since he had few clients he would work hard to find work for him because they both needed the money. After Lancaster's success in a few films, they were ready to tackle the producing side of movie-making. In 1948 they formed Hecht-Lancaster Productions and independently produced "Kiss The Blood Off My Hands." Through the 1950s they managed to produce several films that Lancaster was not in, including the 1955 Academy Award winning picture,

## BURT LANCASTER

"Marty." They had to dissolve the company in the early 1960s because of financial problems; they had hoped to do quality films and produce a "small profit." While they fulfilled their commitment several times, the "small profit" wasn't enough to continue. They went their separate ways, but continued their friendship.

It was during the '50s that Lancaster developed a pattern of film-making. He would do a film to honor a contract commitment and then he would do a film he felt had some "bite to it." In 1951 he starred in "Mister 880" with Edmund Gwenn as part of his Wallace contract, and then did "Jim Thorpe — All American" because he felt the film had merit. If he felt a film had something to say he would back it one hundred per cent and often worked at reduced fees to show his support for a project. In 1978 he invested a quarter of a million dollars and worked for free in the anti-war film "Go Tell The Spartans."

In 1955 Lancaster met writer Richard Brooks who asked if he had ever read the Sinclair Lewis novel "Elmer Gantry." Burt had not. Brooks had acquired the film rights to the story and asked if Lancaster would be interested in appearing in the title role. Burt said yes but he didn't hear from Brooks again for two years when he received a copy of the outline for the film. He read it, liked it and said he was still interested in the project. Another year went by before Lancaster received a copy of the final script. The film finally went into production in 1959 and was released in 1960. Lancaster was perfect as the supersalesman turned self-proclaimed evangelist preaching fire and brimstone in the 1920s midwest. The film won rave reviews and Burt won the Academy Award as Best Actor.

The next three years were very produc-

tive and satisfying. He starred in "The Unforgiven," directed by John Huston; "Judgement At Nuremberg;" "The Young Savages" and the highly acclaimed "Birdman Of Alcatraz."

Lancaster stayed active in the 1960s and had a couple of highly successful hits with "Seven Days In May" and "The Professionals." Those films were surrounded by some good films that failed at the box office: "The Train," "Castle Keep," and "The Gypsy Moths." These pictures slowed his schedule down a bit as the offers began to decline. He continued to work and in 1977 appeared in five films. In 1980 he played a coward for this first time in his career and suddenly he was "box office" again. The film was "Atlantic City" and his co-star was a very young Susan Sarandon. Lancaster, Sarandon and director Louis Malle were all nominated for Academy Awards.

In 1986 he again teamed with his pal Kirk Douglas for the entertaining "Tough Guys." Moviegoers were impressed at how great Burt and Kirk looked in this film in spite of the fact that they were both in their seventies. Lancaster had quadruple bypass surgery in 1983 and cancelled two projects. It was the beginning of several health setbacks that would curtail his workload and plague him until the end of his life.

When Burt Lancaster started making movies in 1946, Hollywood was changing and he helped expedite that change. The post-war films had an edge to them and he was one of the actors who sharpened that edge.

His independence was at first envied by his fellow actors and then copied, making it possible for today's stars to reap millions with their own production companies. All his life he gambled, confident that no matter the outcome he would survive.

His gambles resulted in dozens of great films. ■



## OUR READERS WRITE WE GET LETTERS

**CHICAGO**— Thanks for providing excellent old time radio. My wife and I really enjoy One Man's Family. We missed the first few years and are looking forward to the beginning of the series. I would also be interested in a cassette tape compilation of World News Today broadcasts from the WWII years. It was fascinating. —**JOSEPH OLSZEWSKI**

**ELGIN, IL**— I enjoy your old time radio presentations so very much! My 11 year old son has learned about radio's golden age through your programs (the cowboy shows are among his favorites). Thanks for sharing your hobby with us! —**SHEILA BRENNAN**

**ALGONQUIN, IL**— I've been a fan of yours since the early 1980s, and I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed the hours of old-time radio you've presented over the years. When you began your coverage of WWII in December of '91 on *Those Were The Days*, I admit that I was one of the people who groaned with dismay at the thought of nearly four years of wartime coverage. By mid-1992, though, I was completely hooked. Hearing these shows in "almost-real-time" gave me a perspective on the war that no filmed documentary or history class could have possibly provided. It was fascinating. I know that some of your listeners have said the programs brought back some painful memories, but for those of us who were born later (I'm in my 30s), these shows painted very vivid pictures of a country (and world) at war and a period in world history that should never be forgotten. Thanks again for the 25-plus years of excellent work! —**JOE LYNN**

**ROSELLE, IL**— Love your —our— magazine. It's a total joy, especially "Ken Alexander Remembers." —**RALPH DELANEY**

**ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN**— Thanks again for the quality programs you bring to us. What you did with WWII was outstanding. You have a new subscriber in our pastor, Phil Quardokus. I gave him my Fisher FM tuner so he can pick up WNIB. We have

been to your *TWTD* broadcasts, including the 40th anniversary celebration of WNIB when we presented the station with peanut butter flavored dog biscuits! —**KARL AND CORENA WOLFANGER**

**LINCOLN, NEBRASKA**— You have been a big part of our lives for over ten years. Unfortunately my wife and I have moved from the Chicago area and I can no longer get your Saturday show. I used to tape your show on VHS tape on my video recorder. I would like to know, if it's alright with you, and if someone would do it, to tape your show on VHS and send it to me. If so, please print my name and address. I have listened for a long time and taped about 99 per cent of it. What I will miss is, first, you play things that are unavailable anywhere else and, second, I will miss the knowledge and the enthusiasm you have for old time radio. You are a friend. My wife and I never say, "What's on *Those Were The Days*?" — it's always, "What's on Chuck?" or "What is Chuck playing today?" Well, as our friend Roy Rogers says, "Goodbye, good luck, and may the the good Lord take likin' to ya'." —**DONALD R. KNUTH, 4401 S. 27th St., Apt E-16, Lincoln, Nebraska 68512**

**VILLA PARK, IL**— In the last year or so I have played my home-made and store-bought tapes every day. As the quality of TV goes down, the old-time radio sounds better and better. Almost every old radio show has better quality than the present TV shows. The most remarkable thing about the old radio shows is that the humor is not dated and is just as funny as it was originally. Since you're a little younger than I am, I'm sure of having good entertainment for many years to come. —**ARNOLD M. OLSON**

**BELOIT, WISCONSIN**— I am sorry to learn that you are ending your series on WBBM. In the years that *Radio Classics* has been on WBBM I have rarely missed a broadcast. It is my favorite radio entertainment. I can readily understand your desire to take a





## MORE LETTERS

break. I often marveled at your dedication and stamina. Being on the air every day without fail must be a terrific grind. I want you to know I truly appreciate all you have done to revive the pleasures of radio's finest days. I hope to meet you someday. Thanks for the memories. —**R. J. BACHMAN**

**MONTGOMERY, IL**— The Robert Feder article from the *Chicago Sun-Times* still sits on my desk as I stare at it in utter disbelief— say it ain't so, Chuck! Ten years... has it been that long since I started tuning you in on WBBM? I checked to see if that was the year that I began my *Nostalgia Digest* subscription just to see if 1985 was the correct year! I suspect that the 8-10 pm slot was fun, but these past few years at midnight for seven days a week was what did it. I can only envision the dedication such an effort required. Am I getting warm? I want to thank you for everything these past ten years. I am glad that you will still be around on WNIB. I look forward to your continued efforts with the *Digest*. —**ED PIENKOS**

**CHICAGO**— I felt bad when WBBM took you off the two hours from 10-midnight on weekends, and I was sorry to read in the *Sun-Times* that you will be giving up the seven days a week program. It is good to know that old time radio will live on WMAQ. I could have retired early in 1992 and one reason I didn't was that I'd miss the OTR here in Chicago. I wouldn't say that leaving OTR behind was *the* reason for not retiring, but it was part of the overall reason for not going out in 1992. —**FRANK HORN**

**LOMBARD, IL**— I have been working as a police officer in the suburbs of Chicago since '87. During that time whenever I was working at the right time and "circumstances" permitted, I was tuned to your old time radio program while on patrol. I am 34 years old, so I missed the days of radio (unless you count the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre, which I listened to on the sly after going to bed), so I can't really account for my fondness for it. All I can say is that I

enjoy it immensely, and that I will miss your show very much. You have helped me to pass more than a few slow nights. Thank you for all the pleasure you have given me (and many others) by continuing to broadcast these shows. That was entertainment. Please pass along these thanks to any of your associates who have anything to do with producing your program. I will miss you. —**DAVID GRAHAM**

**CHICAGO**— I was very sorry to read about your decision to give up *Old Time Radio Classics*. I couldn't listen to it after the move to midnight, but was a devoted listener prior to that. You did a wonderful job for a long time, and I wish you well while you enjoy some well-deserved leisure! I checked the schedule in the new *Nostalgia Digest*, and am delighted to see that Stan Freberg's program will fill in some of the gaps left behind by *Old Time Radio Classics* — "Suspense" jumped out at me! Finally, I want to make sure Ken Alexander gets his due. He not only did his usual excellent job filling in for you while you were unavailable in late October/early November, but I heard him substituting for other WNIB announcers during those weeks. What a talented (and, I'm sure, modest) man! All that knowledge about classical music *and* classic radio, too! Thanks for the memories. —**DIANE L. SCHIRF**

**ROMERVILLE, IL**— So sorry to see you leave WBBM; it was comforting to look forward to the midnight hour. Please thank WMAQ for filling in some of the loss. Old time radio is priceless. Thanks for staying on the Saturday show. —**PAT MC DONALD**

**VILLA PARK, IL**— It was quite a shock to find you no longer on WBBM. Over the years you have brought so many memories of the past golden age before TV. I recently retired and so looked forward to hearing the oldies to take up my time. Twenty-five years go by so quickly. Best wishes for you. —**BILL ZIMMERMAN**

**WHEATON, IL**— I have enjoyed listening to your shows for many years, ever since that first broadcast at the small radio station in Evanston. I am sorry that you are giving up the midnight broadcasts, especially now when I have finally arranged a set-up that records the shows perfectly so that I can

listen to them in the car on my way to and from work. I am happy that the Saturday shows are still in your plans and I will be tuning in regularly. If you ever decide to stop that show too, I'll have very little use for radios. I know that there are several other old-time radio shows around. But they don't have you as their host and that, for me at least, detracts from the enjoyment of the programs. One of them even makes it seem like it's a "duty" to listen, just to keep the old shows alive. I don't listen because of some duty to keep shows alive. I listen because your shows and commentary are entertaining. The selections show thoughtful consideration of which shows blend well with others. You know your radio and pass on pieces of interesting information in such a way that we are learning as we listen. You seem to enjoy your work and you pass on your enthusiasm and joy right over the airwaves to us, your listeners.

One more thing. I've read that some listeners were not too thrilled with your four year salute to World War II. As for me, I think that it was inspired. You and I both lived through those days and bringing them back through radio was not only enjoyable but educational as well. The only things that were missing from the shows were the hopes and fears that we all had in those days every time some news program broke into a regular show. Your closing of that series with Kate Smith singing "God Bless America" actually made my eyes misty. I can still remember that marvelous voice from those past days. It seemed to embody all of our hopes of a better and safer world when this damn war would finally end. I think that you deserve awards for that series of shows, not complaints.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you not only for the World War II series, but for the past quarter century of entertainment that you have provided myself and my family. —**MICHAEL CAMPO**

**ELGIN, IL**— Sorry to hear that you're going off the air on late nights. This is just a note to say I have enjoyed these programs for a long time and will certainly miss you at this time slot. Can't blame you for *trying* to slow down. Don't ever stop working at something! —**RICHARD A. APP**

**CHICAGO**— We are so sad that you're leaving WBBM. I just can't get used to Stan

Freberg as yet, although I hope to soon. Your personality was as important to the show as the great programming you chose. —**JOANNA BEN**

**GRIFFITH, INDIANA**— On the 14th of October you saluted Gale Gordon on *Those Were The Days*. It was a wonderful four hours. Also on that broadcast you announced the closing of *Old Time Radio Classics* on WBBM. I have mixed feelings about this. I am happy that it was your decision, and I am saddened that after the first of December I won't get to visit you every day. Over the past few years you have become a great part of my life. I admire you very much and you have become a great teacher and, more-so, a friend. On vacations and weekends, I put away my timer and take great delight in staying up to hear you. You add magic to the holidays. I will always remember the feeling you gave me on Christmas Eve, 1994. It was a Saturday, and my father and I stayed home and listened to *Those Were The Days* with hot chocolate in hand and the tree lit up. I stayed up that night and listened with my 22 year old brother when you played "A Christmas Sing With Bing Crosby" Oh! What magic you add to that already magical time of the year!

One final note about your leaving the seven-nights-a-week OTR scene. I've listened to "When Radio Was" for a couple of weeks now. Because it is a nationally syndicated show, it lacks something. Your shows are always very personal. It's as if you are directly sharing the OTR shows and your memories with the listeners one-on-one. It's like you are addressing me whenever I listen. Thank you, Chuck. You enrich our lives and, perhaps without realizing, help us through hard times. —**NICK DEFFENBOUGH**

**CHICAGO**— I can't begin to tell you how much you and the old time shows mean to me and to all of us who listen to you. No one can replace you, that's for sure. You have the perfect personality for the job: warmth, knowledge, total ease... all this and a good sense of humor. You are a man of the times you are representing and that's a real compliment to you. —**DOLORES LONG**

**BARTLETT, IL**— Here's my two year renewal for the *Nostalgia Digest*. It's the





## STILL MORE LETTERS

best enjoyment I get from reading. I'm sorry about the late show going off the air. I will miss that show since I'm up at that time of night. We still hear the other AM channel, but it's not as good as yours. Good luck to you and your crew on the Saturday show. —SCOTT RANALLO

**WHEATON, IL**— I've enjoyed your show over the years (my discovery was about January, 1975 with "On A Country Road" — wonderfully terrifying!). Please continue our Saturday afternoon *tete-a-tetes* (seems so personal to me) for years to come. —CAROLYN WEISSMILLER

**LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA**— Will miss your *Old Time Radio Classics* on WBBM. Have been a listener since autumn of 1983. You broadcast over a different radio station from Chicago. Reception has varied. Back in December, 1983, you drew my name as a contest winner and sent a copy of "Tune In Yesterday." Thank you again. I've enjoyed that book ever since then! —KEN H. CAMPBELL

**GLENVIEW, IL**— I know you are sorry to end *Old Time Radio Classics* and we are sorry to lose it but we certainly appreciate your desire to have more time for family and relaxation. Thank you for your program and for all that you do to entertain and inform us. The twenty (so far) years of *Those Were The Days* which you have brought to my family has given us so much pleasure and so much to look forward to that all we can do is extend you heartfelt thanks — and keep listening! Good luck with all of your plans for work or play. —BARBARA DENEMARK LONG

**LINCOLN, NEBRASKA**— What a thrill to see you on the Dan Rather CBS-TV news at 5:30 this evening! I had just dropped a fresh blank video into my VCR and was able to get a good recording of that four-minute segment about the 75th anniversary of radio celebration. You look great! On the other hand, dropping that bombshell at midnight last night was terrible news. How can I go to bed at 10 p.m. and not have your

wonderful old time radio program to look forward to at midnight? I was very upset all day. You have done so much in the Midwest to preserve old time radio. —SHIRLEY JOHNSON

**RIVERSIDE, IL**— I really enjoyed the WWII series. It let me live a bit of what my parents lived through. We'll never see a time like that again— both good and bad. Will miss your late night show, but will still listen on Saturdays. —DIANE PALKA

**HIGHLAND PARK, IL**— I'm very disappointed that you're ending the late night WBBM series. Stan Freberg can't hold a candle to you. I suppose we'll have no choice but to limit ourselves to your Saturday afternoon shows. I'm a 25 year loyal listener. —BOB BERGER

**BROOKFIELD, IL**— I am going to miss you and your *Old Time Radio Classics* so much! I am happy for you and wish you a long, happy and healthy semi-retirement. You have brought joy to so many fans for so long — you certainly are deserving of time for yourself and family. But, I must admit, you will be sorely missed by the thousands of loyal fans who look forward to your midnight broadcasts. I am a high school home ec teacher, so I tape it and listen on my way to and from work. I began listening to your show about six years ago. Your Saturday show helped me through researching, writing, editing my "masters project" from N. L. University. I look forward to writing Christmas cards, wrapping presents on December's Saturday shows. So happily, I'll still have that option. Thank you, with all my heart, for learning the joy and serenity of old time radio— a simpler, less violent alternative to a lot of today's "entertainment." I am 50, so it's a first time discovery for me! Much happiness. —SHARON MANUEL

**CHICAGO**— Sorry to hear that your program is coming to an end. WMAQ is taking up where you are leaving off. Their time is a little earlier. Remember, *you* are the original! —DAISY STARKS

**DES PLAINES, IL**— Just received my December-January *Nostalgia Digest* and learned of the ending of *Old Time Radio Classics*. I can't tell you how much my

family has enjoyed this series. We will sorely miss it. But then to learn that Stan Freberg will be hosting "When Radio Was" on WMAQ — what a pleasant surprise! This is a time slot just right to calm folks down at bedtime. What class to recommend this new series by a fellow old-time radio host. Then to carry the schedule for "When Radio Was" in your magazine... how unselfish of you. What a true friend of all of us listeners! We hope you continue your other radio activity *forever* and really enjoy a little more rest. —BOB RACZKA

**MT. PROSPECT, IL**— Even though I could listen to you on WBBM only on weekends due to the late hour, I will miss your voice. Yes, I will switch over to the new radio station and continue your Saturday program. Please keep your Saturday program, I really enjoy it. Also, you should be commended for your four years of remembering World War II. I don't think anyone did as much as you did to show the suffering, hardship and sacrifices people had to endure. It was very interesting. —WARREN KOSTELNY

**GRANDVIEW, IOWA**— Thanks for the memories. Very disappointed to hear there will be no more old radio programs. Tapes are great, but without the lightning crashes, propagation fading, and all the radio noise, it just won't be the same anymore. Suffice to say, we'll no longer be listening to WBBM and can't pull in FM from this distance. Sorry to see you leave the air. —DAVE HATHAWAY, JR.

**ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA**— Thank you for the past few years of entertainment on WBBM. I stumbled upon your program about seven years ago and have enjoyed it since as reception has permitted. I hope I'll be able to tune in WMAQ; in any event, I will miss the background and enthusiasm you provided. I hope you enjoy your deserved semi-retirement. —DAVID HANSEN

**BARABOO, WISCONSIN**— I'm saddened by your leaving the air. Your voice and show have been a friend thru my college years in Chicago in the early '70s and again when I returned to live in the Midwest in '91. Here I am in Baraboo surrounded by the Baraboo Bluffs and it is hard to pick up FM stations, so I'll miss your other show. —JIM FRANCIK

**PALATINE, IL**— Thank you so much for your ten years of wonderful evening radio. I shed a tear last night saying goodbye to "Superman" — which I never heard (I was busy with 52 Fifth Graders who would listen "religiously" during the original show. Your evening radio is a companion to several of our older sisters. We will miss you, dear Chuck, but you deserve a rest! Keeping you and your family in prayer. —SISTER M. CLARITA

**FORREST, IL**— I was very sorry to read of your decision to reduce your time broadcasting in order to have more free time for yourself. As I approach 40 years of teaching, I can clearly understand your need. Your *Those Were The Days* program does not reach Forrest, so we will not be able to listen to your longer broadcast schedule. Even though I was a novice listening to your program on WBBM (four years), I sincerely appreciate your efforts to preserve and prolong the fine radio shows of old. They did not have to resort to gutter language or sexual innuendo the way modern radio and television programs do in order to get an audience. Your contributions will not be forgotten, and your listeners deeply appreciate your efforts. Thank you for publishing the broadcast schedule for WMAQ, and even though it is reduced to five nights, it does begin an hour earlier. Even though you will not be hosting that show, you will be remembered every time an old radio program is broadcast. Thanks for hours and hours of memorable listening. —DONALD W. WILLS

### NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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Museum of Broadcast Communications

# museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

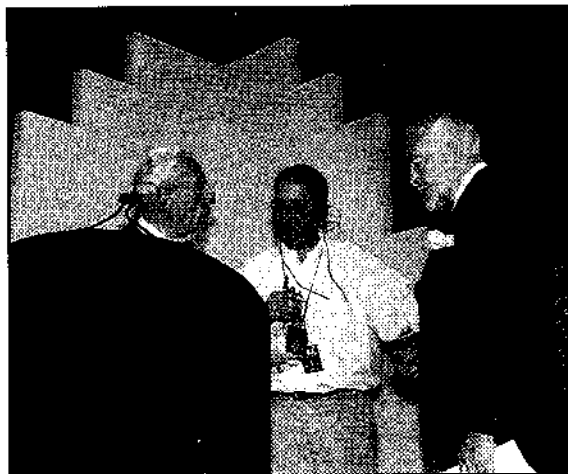
Eve Arden's daughter and grandson were to my left, Les and Joan Tremayne to my right, and Millie Morse, Carlton E. Morse's widow, was across the table.

How could a fan of the Golden Age of Radio improve on that!

That's what I thought as I enjoyed a spectacular evening last October 29 in the Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Chicago. It was the elegant 1995 Radio Hall of Fame induction ceremony gala.

Eve Arden, Les Tremayne and "One Man's Family" were among those inducted that evening and what fun we had at our table.

Two hours of the event were broadcast on a special Radio Hall of Fame network and was heard from coast to coast. To make all that programming come out on time, speakers were asked to limit their remarks to 90 seconds. Les Tremayne, who had obeyed the rules and kept it short, ran a stopwatch on the other speakers. As the Hall of Famers each took their turns, Les would engage the timer and give us progress reports as the seconds ticked away. When Stan Freberg went way over the mark, Les nearly ran up on stage with a hook! But what a



PRODUCER Steve Ryan gives direction to producer/director Himan Brown (left) and actor Les Tremayne at rehearsal of the 1995 Radio Hall of Fame gala.

wonderful, exciting evening it was.

If you were there, I know you had a terrific time. If you weren't, a video tape of the entire event can be seen in the Museum of Broadcast Communications archives, and a video tape may be purchased at the Museum gift shop, Commercial Break, for only \$19.95.

Mark your calendar for October 27, 1996. That's when the Radio Hall of Fame gala is scheduled for this year—with more stars and more fun. You should consider attending.

Stay tuned for details.

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carved out a successful career as "everybody's cowgirl sweetheart."  
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