



FRED ASTAIRE & GINGER ROGERS

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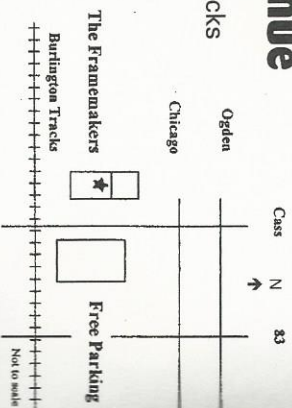
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NOSTALGIA DIGEST

BOOK 37, CHAPTER 3

SUMMER 2011

JULY-AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

Hello, Out There In Radioland!

With this issue, Funny Valentine Press begins its seventh year as publisher of *Nostalgia Digest*. Please believe me when I say that every single moment has been a complete and total delight.

When Chuck Schaden first asked me about taking over as publisher and editor of the magazine he started in the fall of 1974, I don't think either of us could have imagined the events that would be set in motion as a result. In the six years since my first issue, the *Digest* has signed up with two distributors to establish national distribution in over 300 stores. We've established our presence on Facebook and Twitter. We spoke with Bob Elliott for his first interview in over a decade and enjoyed conversations with some truly legendary figures from the "Golden Age" of radio, movies, music and television. We've heard from some wonderful writers — including the legendary Norman Corwin — about topics both famous and delightfully underserved. All of them have been most welcome.

And, as some of you know, in the summer of 2009, I found myself moving into the role of host and producer of *Those Were the Days* following the retirement of *TWTD* creator Chuck Schaden. This July, I begin my third year as your guide to the Golden Age of Radio.

With these additional responsibilities, I've also had the opportunity to meet interesting people, both on and off-mike. The last year has seen a number of public appearances, where we've had the chance to talk about our love for the Golden Age of Radio and meet both long-time listeners and total strangers (although hopefully fewer of them are strangers now). There are more such appearances scheduled for this Summer, including the Chicago Lawn Historical Society (June 9), Chicago's Conrad Sulzer Regional Library (June 14), the Lyons Public Library (June 22), the Bloomingdale Public Library (June 27), the Grayslake Public Library (July 19), Tingley Park Public Library (July 24), the Orland Park Public Library (July 26), the Glenview Public Library (August 9), the Fremont Public Library (August 31), and the Park Forest Library (September 11). If you're in the neighborhood(s), we hope you'll come indoors to cool off and share some classic sounds.

And of course, we hope you'll tune in to our Saturday and Sunday shows — *Those Were the Days* and *Radio's Golden Age* — where you can hear the classic sounds of the Golden Age of Radio year-round.

Thanks for listening.

—Steve Darnall

A few moments with...

JANET WALDO

By her own admission, Janet Waldo has actually had several careers: in radio, she worked on everything from Lux Radio Theater to Favorite Story (co-written by her husband, playwright Robert E. Lee), although she made her biggest mark as the teenaged title character of Meet Corliss Archer (while also appearing as the overly exuberant Emmy Lou on The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet). Her television fame was secured as a "jitterbugger" on an early I Love Lucy. In animation, she provided the voices of Judy Jetson, Penelope Plistop and the leader of Josie and the Pussycats. When we spoke with Ms. Waldo in the spring of 2010, she recalled that she was a teenager in Yakima, WA, when she was "discovered" by one of her home state's favorite sons:

I was discovered by Bing Crosby in Seattle. He was from Spokane and he was going to a homecoming at Gonzaga University, and his people at Paramount studios wanted to go on a talent hunt. They were having a contest, and I was very much into the theatre. I'd played the lead in all of the plays and everything in school — and some of it was professional, out of school — and I said, "I'm not going to join in a contest!" And my sister said, "Yes, you are!" Well, I did, and I won it. And actually, Bing brought my mother and me to California, and I remember the neighbor lady said "You're not going to take that child to that wicked city!" [laughter]



Bing brought us here and the first radio show I ever saw was his show [The Kraft Music Hall]. And I thought, "Oh, that's wonderful!" Because having done a lot of little theater and memorizing the lines and everything, I thought "Oh, I'd like to do that, where you hold the script and you don't have to learn the lines." [laughs] So I fell in love with radio.

Then I was put under a stock contract at Paramount and I did a few little things here and there, but I was scared to death. I was always terrified of pictures. I was signed to a stock contract with a lot of very gorgeous girls, and I was totally intimidated by their beauty. They were just flawless. I did several things with Bing, and bits and pieces, but I wasn't happy. Then, when I discovered radio, my career really soared.

The thrilling thing was that when I

got started in radio, Bing was in radio a lot. Some of the first jobs I ever had in my life were radio jobs in the same show with Bing Crosby.

I loved radio because I loved the live audience — and the fact that when you were performing, the audience could tell you what to do. I mean, they were just so responsive. In fact, I remember working with Clark Gable — and of course, I was having a ball doing radio with an audience and the scripts all written out for you and working with all of these big stars — and Clark Gable was on this show and his pant legs were just *trembling*, and I thought "He's scared! Rhett Butler is *scared!*" I couldn't believe it.

Then, one time — because I lived fifteen minutes or less from CBS — they called me and said, "We have a young lady from Norway and she doesn't want to do the show... Can you get here in fifteen minutes?" And I had just learned to drive. And I thought, "Yes! Yes! I'll be there." In fifteen minutes. Live. And I got in my car and I was going really too fast, and the police came after me. And he said, "Yes, young lady, what's your hurry?" and I said, "I'm doing a live radio show, you have to let me go! They're going on the air in ten minutes!" And he said, "Oh, I'll help you." He led me with his car and we parked; I got in there on time, he said he wanted to see the show, he came to the show, he sat down front.

Afterwards, I went out in the audience and said, "Did you like it? How did you like it?" and he said, "Oh, I loved it — and here's your ticket." [laughter]

And during the time you were playing Corliss Archer on radio, you were doubling as another teenager on the Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet. Emmy Lou, which was one of my

favorite parts in the whole world. She was a teenager. Ozzie loved those spots, and they were just little cameos in the middle of the show. They were written by Ozzie himself and Vic Schwartz — was that his name? — and Hal Kantor. Wonderful writers. I would come on and say, "Yoo-hoo, Mr. Nelson! Did you hear Bing Crosby's coming to town?" And I would get Ozzie all excited.

And I used to do — and I'm not going to do it for you now — a squeal. I discovered this squeal on *Ozzie and Harriet*. Ozzie would say, "Look, I'm growing a mustache. Do you want to feel it?" And I'd go "Ooooh!" So that became sort of part of that character. And then, when I got into cartoons, they used that squeal.

Of course! The Judy Jetson squeal!

And once I did a radio show with Bing Crosby and Dennis Day. I was playing Dennis Day's girlfriend, and Bing said that he wanted me to do squeals. And I said, "Ozzie, they want me to do squeals on the Bing Crosby Show." He said, "Oh, no, you can't do squeals — unless you say 'Courtesy of Ozzie Nelson.'" And I was so naive and gullible, I said, "Oh...okay." And I said to Bing, "Ozzie said I can't do the squeals unless you give him credit." And Bing says [exasperated tone] "I gotta give him credit." [laughs] Then on the show, he said, "Janet Waldo's squeals were courtesy of Ozzie Nelson..." ■

To hear this conversation in its entirety — as Ms. Waldo explains why she took to carrying a pocket dictionary with her and recalls working with Ozzie Nelson, Ronald Colman, and Lucille Ball — tune in to Those Were the Days on August 27 for an afternoon devoted to the career of Janet Waldo.

The show was considered career suicide. It changed television forever. And sixty years later...

The Love Lucy

BY WAYNE KLATT

It was 1950 and Lucille Ball was in discussions with network officials about a television version of her popular radio program, *My Favorite Husband*. The transfer seemed a natural, especially since the actor playing banker hubby George Cooper was blond, handsome Richard Denning.

But Lucy loved her charming, often fiery Cuban husband, Desi Arnaz, and would rather throw her career away than lose him. She said of her marriage that for her it hadn't been love at first sight, "It took about five minutes." She insisted that she would never enter television without him.

The idea seemed absurd. After all, the premise of *My Favorite Husband* was that the Coopers were typical people with rather typical problems in an idealized suburb. The lines were often funny, but the episodes were easily forgotten because the program lacked specificity.

Wayne Klatt is a freelance writer from Chicago.

One supposes that a TV version would last a season or two and be relegated to the incredibly crowded graveyard of early TV shows that had been based on little more than fading star power.

But Lucy was asking for a completely new concept — what's more, her writers didn't even know whether her husband could do comedy. All the network executives saw was a not-very-tall man who beat conga drums and yelled "Bahalu." Despite roles in several plays and films (including *Batman* and *Too Many Girls*), Desi had limited acting ability and his accent was bound to make viewers switch channels.

But Desi — the son of an ousted Cuban politician and a Latin beauty — was more intelligent than he seemed (especially when it came to management), and he could be amusing as a straight man once you got used to him.

With CBS executives adamant in their refusal, Lucy and Desi set out to prove them wrong. Their quest led to one of the greatest success stories of American entertainment.



Lucille Ball as the star of *My Favorite Husband* (1949)

In early 1950, the couple met with the creative team of *My Favorite Husband* (writers Madelyn Pugh and Bob Carroll Jr., and producer Jess Oppenheimer), to see if they could come up with a similar format that would include Desi and his music.

Despite their differences, Pugh and Carroll tended to think alike in comedy, bouncing ideas off one another as if their sessions were tennis matches. When Carroll was hospitalized with a hip injury, Pugh brought a typewriter into her partner's hospital room so they could

continue working.

Pugh (an attractive brunette) and Carroll (whose pointed red beard gave him a vaguely demonic appearance) were young enough to think more visually than entrenched radio writers. After kicking around ideas, the team suggested that Lucy could play the untalented wife of a minor band leader (Arnaz as Larry Lopez), a woman who would do anything to break into show business. Absolutely anything. That would be good for a few shows; for the others, they could recycle unused *My Favorite Husband* scripts.

CBS still said no.

A studio executive once said Lucille Ball had “a heart of steel encased in a velvet glove.” Ever the professional, she thought the only way to prove that audiences would love the untitled show would be to bring a sample to the public.

The idea was hardly new — years earlier, the Marx Brothers had tried out film skits before theater audiences — but for Lucy, the stakes were higher because her marriage might depend on the outcome. Between her movie and radio work and Desi’s musical career, the two were rarely home at the same time and sometimes weren’t even in the same town at the same time. What’s more, Desi, who was six years younger, always had an eye for women, and she was about to turn 40.

Lucy and Desi started their effort by forming Desilu Productions, and the writers put together a stage show using ideas from Pepito Perez, a Spanish clown Desi knew. Pepito taught the couple

some comic business in his hotel room and showed them a mock cello he had once used that concealed other musical instruments. Lucy then sought tips from two friends who were veterans from the days of silent comedies, director Edward Sedwick and Buster Keaton (who had been an MGM gag man when Lucy was making films there).

After recording twelve episodes of *My Favorite Husband* for later broadcast, Lucy and Desi headed for what remained of the vaudeville circuit. Their 20-minute skit premiered in Chicago in June 1950. After they returned to the curtains while the audience was still clapping, Lucy looked at Desi and said, “We’re on our way!” Well, not exactly.

As the Arnazes and their agent spoke to a number of people about fleshing out the show, Broadway lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II suggested playing down the music and emphasizing domestic comedy.

CBS balked at the cost of kinescop-

ing a TV tryout — not an actual pilot episode. Lucy and Desi offered \$5,000 of their own money, but the network ended up footing the entire bill. The sample episode was intended only to show sponsors how the ingredients might come together. Things were so rushed that Lucy’s pregnancy (with her daughter, Lucie) had to be concealed by oversized costumes.

Even in the first few minutes of this audition show, *I Love Lucy* is warmer and less generic than *My Favorite Husband*. The plot has Lucy trying to crash her husband’s audition as a band leader by playing a clown in a hobo fedora and baggy pants. She stretches a cello string to shoot him in the pants with a stick and plays a row of bull-horns while flopping around on her knees like a seal.

Some of the test show is funny (and would be recycled later), but a microphone makes a shadow, a wall shakes when an actor shuts the door, Desi stops to laugh when Lucy makes fun of his accent, and the lights go out for a moment. There also are no Fred and Ethel Mertz, since those roles had yet to be cast. In addition, Desi and his small orchestra slowed the pace with no fewer than five songs or song excerpts.

In New York, the network’s head of programming took one look at the kinescope and said, “This is the worst thing I have ever seen.” Pugh and Carroll were sure the series was doomed, and pinned their hopes on something they were whipping up for actor Hanley Stafford (who played Baby Snooks’ father on radio). The Arnazes gave the sole copy of the trial show to Pepito as a thank-you.

Although CBS chairman William Paley was sure the concept would not work, the West Coast programming director did not want to risk losing Lucy

to NBC.

Once CBS reluctantly bought the idea, the agent peddled the kinescope to various sponsors before Philip Morris Cigarettes signed on. A public relations man for the cigarette company mentioned at a party that “We just bought...a situation comedy with Lucille Ball and her husband — whatizhisname. I don’t know if it will amount to anything.”

While there are several versions of how the series finally got its name, Lucy claimed that Desi was describing her character as untalented but “earnest and pathetic,” and added, “Oh, I love that Lucy!”

The Arnazes imagined doing a show every other week, freeing Lucy for films and Desi for nightclub appearances. But the network wanted a weekly series, one that would be performed live in New York for the East Coast and Midwest. Since coaxial cables for sound transmission had not yet been laid that far, a kinescope of the live show would be sent to West Coast affiliates.

But kinescoping (a film of the picture from a TV set) resulted in a slightly blurry image and heightened black-and-white contrasts. Besides worrying about the quality of transmission, Lucy did not want to leave Los Angeles.

So the Arnazes had to decide whether they really wanted to give up movies and nightclub work for a show that might flop — and would incur extra costs if filmed in Hollywood. “Everyone warned Desi and me that we were committing career suicide,” Lucy said in later years. But these separate lives of theirs had been keeping them apart, and she thought more than ever that only a television series could save their marriage.

One night, Lucy dreamed that she had received a visit from another friend,



Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, flanked by the *I Love Lucy* writers: (from left) Bob Schiller, Bob Carroll Jr., Madeline Pugh, Bob Weiskopf

CBS/PHOTOEST

the late Carole Lombard, who told her, "Honey, go ahead. Take a chance. Give it a whirl."

She awoke more determined than ever. But Lucy knew from her experience with *My Favorite Husband* that she needed an audience to be funny. Oppenheimer told her to watch her friend Jack Benny at work. She found that she could use her expressions and body movements to play the audience and draw out the laughter.

To accommodate the filming, the producers had to remodel an independent studio built in the 1920s. When the network balked at the expense, Lucy and Desi followed the advice of their agent and took a \$1,000 cut in their \$5,000 combined weekly salary, provided that they owned the negatives — in other words, the couple owned the rerun rights before there was a rerun market.

Pugh and Carroll found their pay cut by \$25 per episode to meet the cost of filming, but they still worked exhausting hours, including performing all the stunts themselves so that Lucy would know everything in the script was do-able.

Filming before an audience presented numerous problems, and some actresses might have settled for an easy way out. But not Lucille Ball. The former model had always used acting to come out of her shyness, and now as virtual co-producer she was becoming a perfectionist.

For her cameraman, she sought out Karl Freund, an Academy Award winner who had filmed the great German silent epic *Metropolis*. The rotund Freund scoffed at the idea of coming out of retirement to work in television, but he was fascinated by the challenge of using four (eventually three) cameras in such a way that the action could move quickly from set to set (and thus prevent the audi-

ence — who sat on metal benches — from becoming restless). Freund devised an intricate overhead lighting system that kept the illumination uniform so the action would not have to stop for light changes.

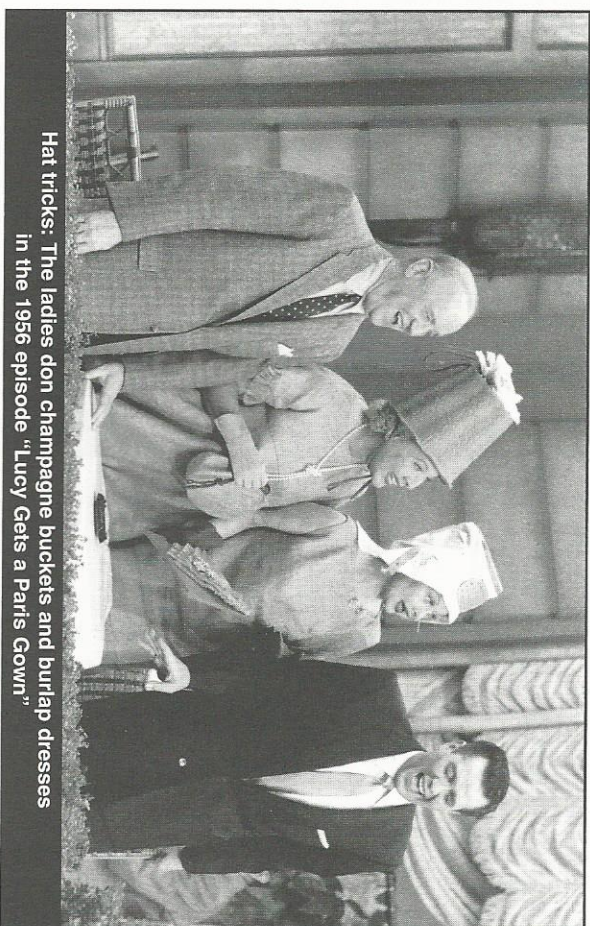
There were still worries about casting the Mertzes. Lucy encouraged the hiring of William Frawley as a favor to the aging vaudevillian, despite his cantankerous nature and history of drinking problems. Vivian Vance was chosen on the basis of her performance at a local theater. According to some reports, she was "contractually obligated" to stay twenty pounds overweight during the filming season.

The creative staff agreed that the name "Larry Lopez" had to go. According to Pugh, renaming Desi's character "Ricky Ricardo" was "a group effort." Pugh and Carroll had not really expected the show to roll, but now they



Vivian Vance and William Frawley

CBS/PHOTOFEST



Hat tricks: The ladies don champagne buckets and burlap dresses in the 1956 episode "Lucy Gets a Paris Gown."

CBS/PHOTOFEST

were not only on board, they were being asked to crank out 39 episodes in less than three months. One plot they lifted from a *My Favorite Husband* script has Lucy and Ricky pretending to be elderly, so as to discourage a pair of teenagers who have developed crushes on them.*

The initial show filmed was "Lucy Thinks Ricky is Trying to Murder Her." But production problems meant that when the show actually debuted on October 15, 1951, viewers saw "The Girls Want to Go to a Nightclub," a show in which Lucy and Ethel wind up as the blind dates of their husbands — who, after being taken aback by the sudden appearance of two floozies, get in on the joke.

After the airing met with lukewarm reviews, the president of Philip Morris asked the advertising agency, "What would it cost us to cancel the contract with Lucy?" The silly storyline had lifted

the show from sitcom to farce, and for the next eight years (including hour-long specials) the series would drift back and forth between styles.

Philip Morris stayed with the show — on which there was liberal smoking and occasional product placement — even though the costs kept going up. Every episode grabbed new viewers, and NBC's Monday night competition — a television version of the celebrated radio series *Lights Out* — tried to keep up by using celebrities.

It was no use. *I Love Lucy* had caught on because of its peculiar magic: the technical advances, Lucy's timing and marvelous way with props, the ability of Pugh and Carroll to write funny lines as well as funny situations, the contrast between the Ricardos and the Mertzes, and Desi's combination of sensibility and wide-eyed reactions.

Pugh and Carroll found that Lucy

* - ED. NOTE — One of those "teenagers" was actress Janet Waldo, who recalls her own radio and television career — including working with Lucy — on the August 27 broadcast of *Those Were The Days*. For more about Ms. Waldo, see page 2.

could do nearly anything, provided they gave her two weeks to work on it. And so fans howled as Lucy's leg became stuck on a barre at a ballet school, she found herself locked in a freezer with Ethel, and she was shoved across a room by an eight-foot loaf of home-baked bread.

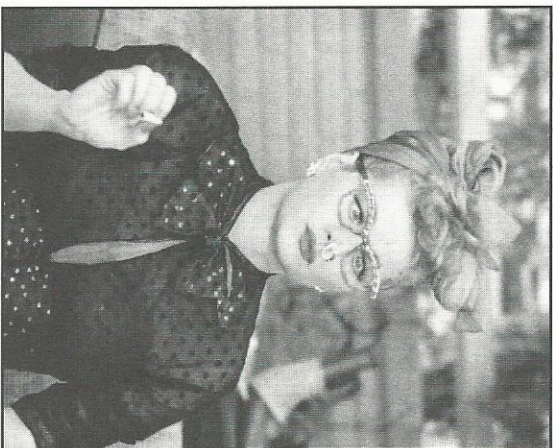
In Episode 30, Lucy did a television commercial for Vitameatavegimin — a name that Pugh and Carroll spent a day devising. She has to keep taking a sip of the product (actually, apple pecin from a health food store) unaware of its alcoholic content. In a moment of inspiration, a tipsy Lucy Ricardo turned and made unscripted eyes at the actor playing the stage manager, who then had the challenge of keeping a straight face in front of the live audience.

By the end of that first season, hundreds if not thousands of people bought TV sets to watch the show. Marshall Field's was forced to change its late hours from Monday to Thursday because, as its sign said, "We love Lucy too."

Nothing seemed capable of stopping the show, until Lucy announced her pregnancy to network bosses before the second season began filming. The first thought was for her to take a hiatus, but the producers decided they could write her condition into the show, using scripts approved by a Protestant minister, a Catholic priest, and a rabbi.

They didn't change a line, but TV censorship didn't allow performers to use the word "pregnant," so the episode title borrowed from the French to become "Lucy is Enceinte." When Lucy was rushed to the hospital — a story dramatized on January 19, 1953 — it was one of the most anticipated and remembered moments in a series filled with them.

Viewers had a number of treats



CBS/PHOTOFEST

ahead over the next decade — including shows that chronicled the Ricardos and the Mertzes heading to California (where Ricky had a screen test), traveling to Europe, moving to the suburbs of Connecticut, and — after six seasons and 179 episodes — embarking on a series of one-hour specials.

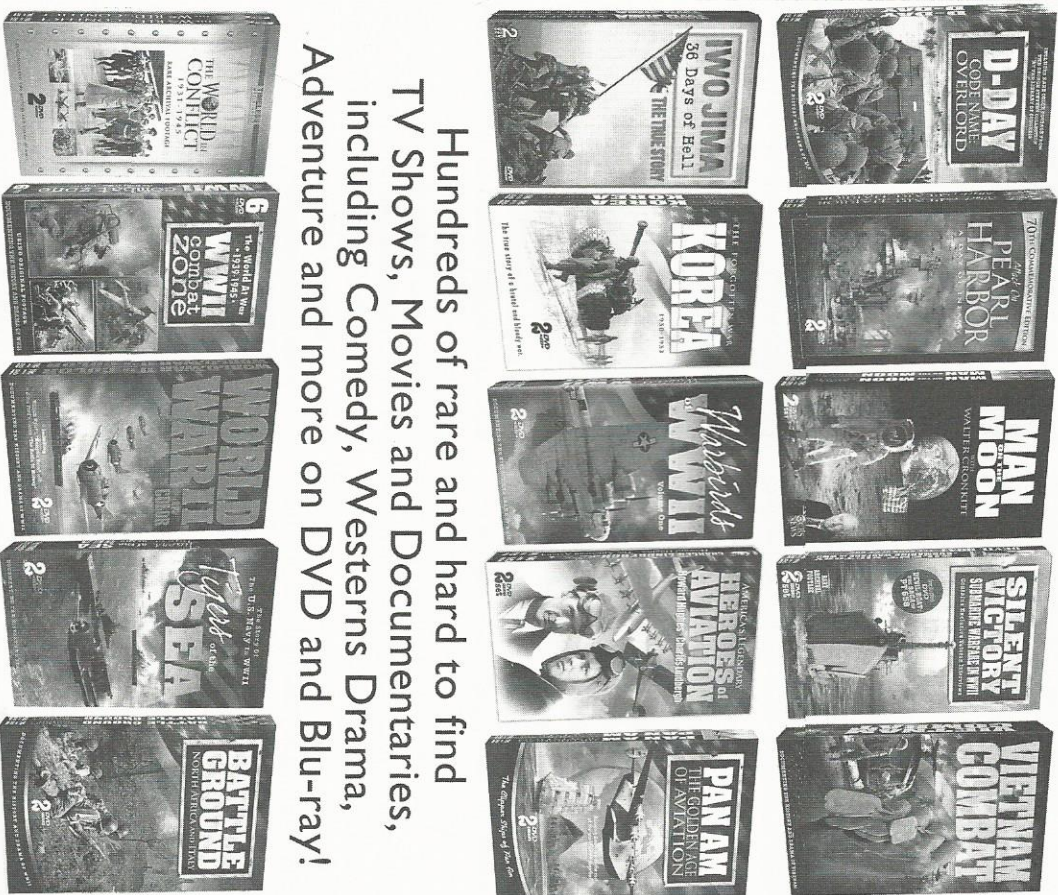
Viewers were unaware that success would lead to new marital problems for Lucy and Desi, who finally divorced in 1961. So let's leave Lucy as we want to remember her: trying to beat a candy factory conveyor belt, accidentally igniting a fake nose before an astonished William Holden, appearing as a mirror image of Harpo Marx, trying to trick John Wayne into stepping in wet cement, fighting with an Italian grape-stomper in a wine vat, and crushing eggs under her blouse as she tangos with Ricky.

Sixty years later, people around the world still love Lucy. ■

Tune in to Those Were The Days on August 6 as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Lucille Ball.

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The strange romance of THE BICKERSONS

BY BEN OHMART

For those few of you who have never

heard of *The Bickersons* or read their rather incredibly eclectic book, *The Bickersons' Guide to Marriage*, the following may come as a bit of a surprise to you: They were a couple in love. Deeply, and without deviation. Only the hardships of finances and sleep habits prevailed to make their peculiar pairing historic and bitingly infamous. Here is the story of one passionate man who loved a woman perhaps too much, and she, him.

They were a mixed marriage — man and woman — that tested the theories of environmental influence, and can too many cooks spoil the garbidge? Left to their own world, perhaps John and Blanche Bickerson could have remained the boringly unaverage ideal couple. As stocks fall and unemployment bites man's leg, so too, do monetary woes capsize the Bickersons' lovey-dovey experiment.

Luckily for us, there is a testament to this amazing man and wife, from A to zzzzz. Little was known of the origin of this unfortunate couple; how they met, their backgrounds, why they fell in love

Ben Ohmart is the "editor" of *The Bickersons' Love Letters*, published by Bear Manor Media. This excerpt is ©2010 Bear Manor Media and is reprinted by permission of the author.

in the first place. But, thanks to a fortunate bit of fate, we have nearly the whole story before us.

These passionate exchanges evolve through the entire time of their meeting, dating and marriage, finally passing into passion of a different nature, as you shall see. Always there is strength between these two. Like an alligator against a gorilla. Who wins? Who knows!

April 4, 1936

Dear Miss Peaches,

I know we just met and perhaps writing to you like this seems — presumptuous. But I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed our dance together. I'd like to see more of you. Would you please accompany me to the drugstore where it would be my heart's delight to buy you any sort of ice cream and nuts?

Your ardent admirer,

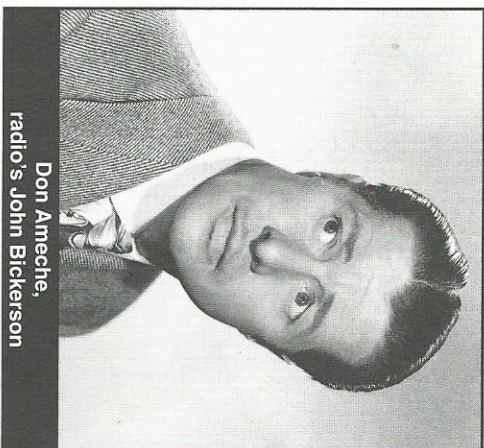
John Henry Bickerson

April 5, 1936

Dear Johnny,

What a lovely little letter! Please call me Blanche. I love the way it falls off your tongue because you don't have any kind of accent at all! I would be delicious and delighted to accompany you, as you so dashingly put it, to the drugstore for an amazing dessert! I can't wait! Please ring my bell at 6 this evening and please don't bring me flowers. Your sweet smile smells plenty.

Warmest regards,



Don Ameche,
radio's John Bickerson

Your Blanche

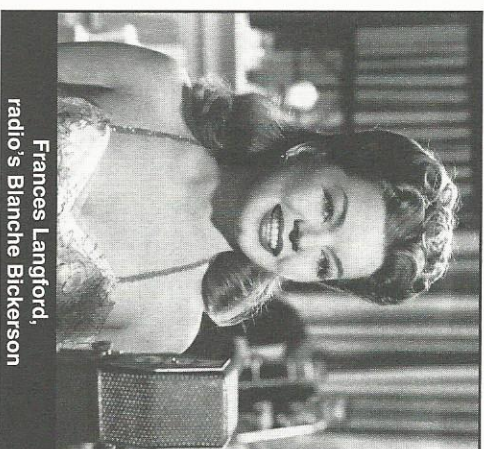
June 1st [1938]

Oh my darling. What a wonderful gift. I shall treasure it always!

Blanche

The above is probably a thank you card for the present for which John had long been saving: a pink duck for the bathbub that, when wet, also unfolded into a very smart shawl. The truth of the matter was far from the above written evidence. It seems that the reality of the situation came out during a public 4th of June picnic in Wherever They Are, a radio program celebrating the independence of America a month earlier due to Wherever freelance producers needing to sell the unsponsored show early: so, the program persuaded several small towns to have their fireworks a month ahead of time. Thor, New York, where the Bickersons lived, was one such conned town. According to documented, transcribed interviews with witnesses at the event, the realism went somewhat thusly in the tiny park that day:

JOHN: Beautiful day.



Frances Langford,
radio's Blanche Bickerson

BLANCHE: It's a little chilly, isn't it?

JOHN : My darling, just use your duck.

BLANCHE: What duck?

JOHN: The shawl I got for you. Here, let me pour some water on you and we'll get it into shawl shape in no time.

BLANCHE: Oh, I don't have that dreadful thing here, John.

JOHN: Dreadful?

BLANCHE: I mean, of course it's lovely, darling, but I wouldn't be caught dead in it. Then again, that might be fine.

JOHN : But — the "thanks" card.

BLANCHE: I was just being polite, you know that.

JOHN : I do?

BLANCHE: Of course! What woman would be caught dead wearing something like that?

JOHN: Well you just said you'd be caught!

BLANCHE: Now don't get upset, John. It's a perfectly nice thought. I was just expecting something more...marvelous. Saving up your dimes.

JOHN: I'm not even going to mention the nickels now.

BLANCHE: Oh, John! Another

present?

JOHN: It's past.

BLANCHE: What are you going to buy me, John?

JOHN: Where is the duck, Blanche?

BLANCHE: Oh, that? I gave that to the neighbor's dog. I think he's using it for his bed. But they have to keep it wet.

JOHN: A present bought with love!

BLANCHE: Oh come on, darling. It wasn't that wonderful. If you get me a diamond ring, I promise you I'd be crazy to give that away.

JOHN: If I get you a diamond ring, I promise you I'd be crazy!

BLANCHE: Don't you want to give me a diamond ring?

JOHN: Right now, I wouldn't give you the ring off a bathtub!

BLANCHE: How can you be so cruel?

JOHN: I think it's contagious!

BLANCHE: What's that supposed to mean?

JOHN: You're incapable of being satisfied! I try and I try and it's nothing doing! I give you the very stripes off my pajamas, and you're looking for polka dots. I gave you a good two-thirds of our last ice cream sundae and nothin'! No gratitude! Even the sprinkles! Didn't I get all creative and spend hours fixing you that grass sandwich in the park two weeks ago? Did you give me even the slightest wink of appreciation or "thank you"? No!

BLANCHE: I couldn't speak! I was howled over after I found all those lady-bugs in my teeth!

JOHN: No, everything has to be perfect for Princess Blanche? You even turned up your nose at that painted box of Kleenex I made for you!

BLANCHE: Well you're not supposed to paint each tissue! I had blue up



my nose!

JOHN: And now I scrimp and go without cream in my milk for months to buy you that stupid duck, and the dog gets more out of it than I do!

BLANCHE: Why don't you get me

a proper present for a change? I know you think you're "brilliant" giving me those embroidered rubber bands, but I don't know what to do with them!

JOHN: It's art, Blanche, it's not good for anything!

BLANCHE: Don't scream at me...

JOHN: I deny myself most things...I've been wearing my watch inside out so the sun doesn't wear it out. I paint my light bulbs yellow so I can buy lower watt ones. I eat my chili with a fork to make it last longer.

BLANCHE: And you buy your girlfriend cheap presents with the proceeds!

JOHN: You must be a realist about the shape of the global economy!

BLANCHE: I could walk up to any man on the street and get a diamond ring from any of them!

JOHN: What's the name of this

street?

BLANCHE: Oh, don't be so funny. You don't think enough of me to buy me a flea collar.

JOHN: I do too!

BLANCHE: Other girls are getting the good stuff. Look at Swahalia Shenbatt, the maid down the street. Just 21 and already she's got two glistening things on her.

JOHN: Her boyfriend did that. Found out she was cleaning for two houses, if you get me, and pow!

BLANCHE: I wouldn't get you if you had measles!

JOHN: Don't tempt me, Blanche! I'd go out right now and find a sick kid if I thought it'd do any good!

BLANCHE: Go! Get out of here!

You don't really love me anyway! Other men have given me things! Shiny and precious things that go around my neck!

JOHN: Well, that flea collar offer still stands.

BLANCHE: Oooooo, you think you're so smart! Barry Hockwater gave me the keys to his car once!

JOHN: Where did you park it?

BLANCHE: I suppose all the girls in the neighborhood just go crazy for that dry wit!

JOHN: As a matter of fact, they love the dry stuff!

BLANCHE: Well, most dogs prefer canned food!

JOHN: I remember one in particular! Her name was Parke Langer and what grand days we had on that red trampoline! So you watch yourself when you throw those names around, Blanche, because I'm all armed too!

BLANCHE: That's right, beat me! You've done everything else!

JOHN: Not everything.
BLANCHE: I've never been so

unhappy in my life!

JOHN: What about last Thursday?

BLANCHE: I can't stand it. I can't stand it! Who is this Parke Langer?

JOHN: Langer, Langer!

BLANCHE: You must've really loved her, you never mentioned her before.

JOHN: Now what kind of correlation is that? She was just this girl I knew. I was eight years old at the time. Okay? There. I'm all out of animation. I mean ammunition.

BLANCHE: Did you really love her?

JOHN: I was eight!

BLANCHE: You once said age doesn't matter in a relationship.

JOHN: I don't believe this!
BLANCHE: I'm sorry, John. I can't compete with a memory like that. I'm afraid—

JOHN: Like what? It was a red trampoline! One afternoon after school!

BLANCHE: I'm afraid I...have to break our steadyment. I'm sorry. I can't get over the way you've hurt me today. Here's most of your ring. The rest fell off a few weeks ago. Goodbye, John. My own...

[This public tirade was quite a remembered spectacle in wherever and soon claimed the attention of everyone in the park, including Sy Smit, a brilliant 79-year-old with a photographic memory, who soon after dictated the lively conversation to The Paper, the local paper. To most, it was the high point of the day, beating out the fireworks easily for spectacle and volume.—ed.]

Time in to Those Were the Days on September 24 to hear Don Ameche and Frances Langford as The Bickersons.

All the news that's fit to POST

BY GARDNER KISSACK

Remember *The Saturday Evening Post*? The magazine published and distributed for Saturday evening enjoyment?

Remember when it was a wondrous weekly magazine filled with short fiction, or a serialized novel, and interesting, timely, informative articles — not to mention fascinating features: enticing, exciting ads; and some of the funniest cartoons this side of *The New Yorker*? It seemed like there was something for everyone, and everybody was invited to the weekly party.

What a success story — America's most popular magazine for more than a generation, and one of the most influential ones for longer than that. In fact, although the first *Post* dates from 1821, the magazine claimed ties to the 18th century and Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

Prior to his passing in February 2010, Gardner Kissack was a retired schoolteacher and frequent Nostalgia Digest contributor from Chicago Heights. Nostalgia Digest has several of Mr. Kissack's unpublished articles and we plan to include them within our pages as space permits.

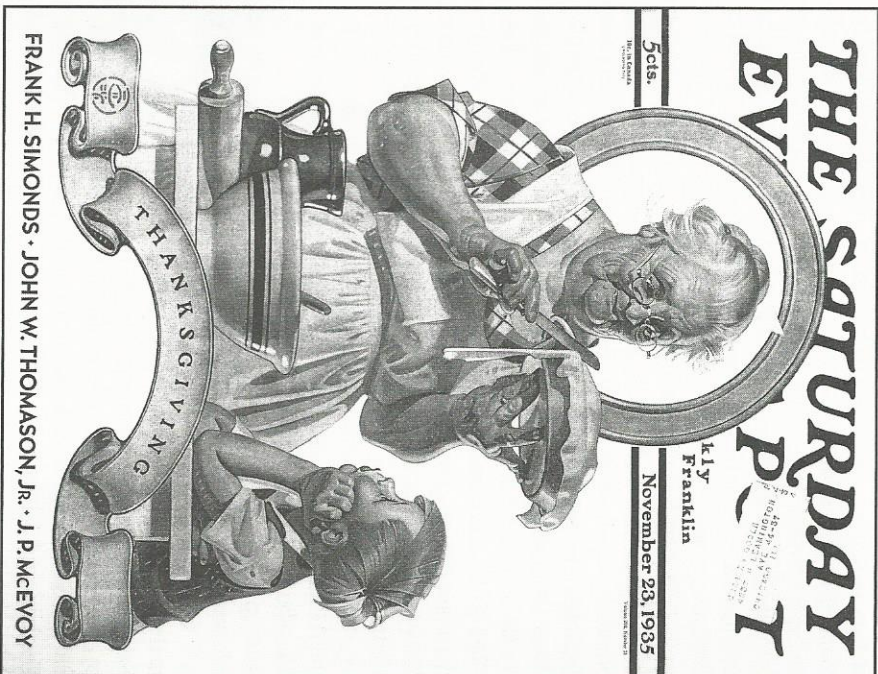
A typical issue from the 1930s or '40s might have included a stunning or touching cover (suitable for framing), created by a well-known illustrator; several short stories (or a chapter from a new novel), complete with elaborate illustrations; two or three long, detailed articles about government, medical advances, or U.S. forests; 20 to 30 quality cartoons by leading cartoonists; features such as "The Perfect Squelch," "Post Scripts," "You Be the Judge," and an informal map quiz game, "Where Do You Think You Are?"

From the beginning, covers were essential to the magazine's success, and they served a greater purpose and surety as the years rolled by — not merely by featuring the issue's major writers' names or intriguing titles, but with elaborate illustrations. This combination set the standard for other publications and helped the *Post* become the most widely-read weekly magazine in America, a rank it held for many years during the first half

of the 20th Century.

No magazine more clearly portrayed the American scene, everyday life, special occasions, a serious moment in a young life, as well as idealized patriotic symbols. These were thoughtful and respected reflections of folks — rarely controversial, but usually comforting or familiar. *Post* covers presented the work of the country's finest illustrators week after week for decades. The two most prominent were J.C. Leyendecker, who provided 320 covers from 1899-1943, and Norman Rockwell, who produced 317 covers from 1916 into the 1960s.

Joseph Christian Leyendecker, born in Germany of Dutch parents in 1874, studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, and was at the top of his profession from the mid-1920s until the mid-1940s. He had a distinctive, recognizable style to his work that the public could easily identify. He became an iconic illustrator who influenced other, younger artists. The faces of his subjects are real, lit with idealism, haughty but not aloof, radiating confidence rather than arrogance. His bodies, like their poses, are realistic. His subject range was broad: grandmother making a pie, couples in love, a boy's first long trousers, scouts aiding pets,



GARDNER KISSACK COLLECTION

Washington kneeling at Valley Forge. His covers could not be confused with those of any other artist. Both the masses and the classes could recognize a Leyendecker.

The Rockwell covers were in a class by themselves. Drawn in his simple, realistic style, they became some of the most iconic images of the 20th century. Who can forget 1945's "Homecoming GI," in which a soldier returns home to his slightly rundown neighborhood of apartments, where he is greeted by welcoming family and friends, with a girl hiding shyly in the shadows?

In another famous Rockwell cover, a boy and his grandma are seated at a train

THE MIDWEST KID GOES EAST

BY JIM DOHREN

When I was a kid (back in the 1940s and '50s), my family traveled some. Most of the time we went to fishing resorts in Wisconsin — Dad loved to fish, we three kids got out of the city to enjoy the Great North Woods, and it was something Mom and Dad could afford because we stayed in “housekeeping” cabins. Every other year or so, the pattern varied and we made the long train trip to the West Coast to visit with Dad’s family, including my eight cousins.

In 1956, our family made the only deviation from the Wisconsin/West Coast pattern. This year, we took a family trip, although there were major differences. First of all, my Uncle Walt, Aunt Jane and cousins “KJ” (Ken), Mark and Peggy came to our house that summer. When we hit the road, only the Dads and older boys were on board; Aunt Jane, Peggy, my Mom, sister Patsy and little brother Dave stayed home. What’s more, we did not go north or west, but instead traveled to points east. And unlike previous years, when we would head for a single location and stay there, this would be

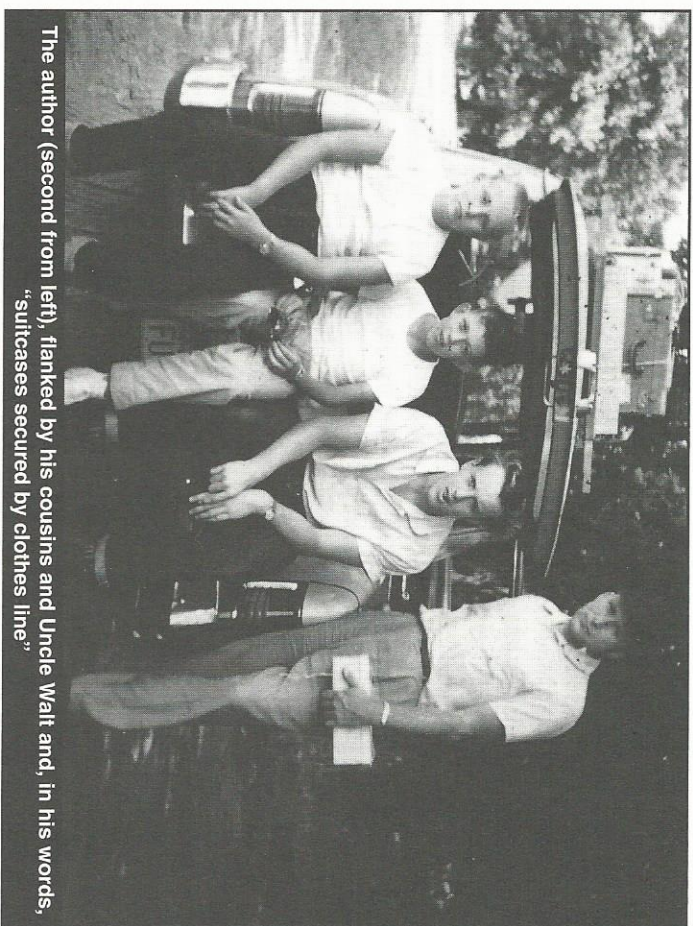
James Dohren is a retired teacher who avidly listens to Those Were The Days in Downers Grove, Illinois.

something of a Grand Tour.

Before the Grand Tour could begin, the Glendale Dohrens had to travel from their Southern California home to our new home on the West Side of Aurora. Aunt Jane and Peggy took the train to Chicago, while Uncle Walt, KJ and Mark drove east in some pretty nifty wheels. For our trip, Uncle Walt had purchased a very sharp, 1954 white Mercury V-8 station wagon, which sported that imitation wood trim that echoed an earlier era of elegance. Between Uncle Walt and KJ, (who was 15-1/2 and had a learner’s permit), it took a week’s worth of driving on Route 66 to make it to the midwest.

Back then, a road trip involved long, tedious hours in the car, due to the lack of interstates and the desire to actually see some scenery. The Mercury wagon was purchased specifically for the room. Uncle Walt and Dad were in the front, sharing the tasks of driving and map reading; KJ got to drive a few times, too. I was impressed by KJ’s maturity, but also a little jealous.

Most of the time, KJ was sitting in the section of the split middle seat that wasn’t folded down. Mark (at 12-1/2 years of age) and The Midwest Kid (who was then 13), sprawled in the luggage compartment surrounded by books, games and pillows. That freedom is seen



The author (second from left), flanked by his cousins and Uncle Walt and, in his words, “suitcases secured by clothes line.”

as dangerous and perhaps illegal these days, but back then no one gave it a second thought.

We shared the back with a few small bags and an ice chest for quick, economical lunches at wayside parks and quick breakfasts in motel rooms. The main luggage was in a top carrier. The miles passed with sightseeing, reading, game-playing, storytelling by the Dads, and joking and talking from everyone.

Our first major destination was the Motor City. In the mid-'50s, Detroit was still in its heyday, a city of prosperity, influence and fame — a worthy goal for the first day of our long road trip. We stayed in one of those one-story, linear buildings that was sort of cross between the separate cabins of the old motor courts and the multi-storied true motels that were coming into vogue. It was there that we were bombarded by the most violent thunderstorm I can ever remember.

Our sturdy brick building literally shook from the shock waves. It went on and on. I was terrified, but grateful that Dad and Uncle Walt were there and that we weren’t camping.

Of course, if you visited Detroit in those days, you toured an assembly plant. We chose the mother of them all — the monstrous Ford River Rouge complex. The noise, the darkness and heat, the vast spaces and the relentless movement — as thousands of mere parts were transformed into a shiny new vehicle driven off the final conveyor — were unforgettable. I also thought it looked like a tough, dangerous, boring job.

Another thing happened that at the time I thought was exciting. Our trip was in July so the 1956 models were at the end of their run. Our up-to-now friendly tour guide began showing us along by warning us that a 1957 model was coming down the line. We car guys agreed

that we could easily recognize its subtly different body shape. As the years have passed and I have learned how the '57 Fords were a complete redesign over the '56 models, I have often wondered if we weren't the naive victims of a public relations gimmick. Maybe every tour got a "sneak look" at a new model. Detroit wouldn't do that... would they?

We made a trip to Dearborn where I began a life-long affection for the Henry Ford Museum and the connected Greenfield Village. I was fascinated by what I saw in both, especially the highly decorated steam engines in the village powering factory machines and a hissing, wood-burning locomotive. We rode in the old cars and horse-drawn carriages and walked through all of Mr. Ford's interesting buildings. Inside the museum we pored over the endless variety of vehicles.

Using the long tunnel under the Detroit River, we left Detroit for Windsor, Ontario. In doing so, we young boys notched another first by entering

our first foreign country ever. I remember being a little disappointed because it didn't look all that different. One of the differences we did notice right away was that some Canadian cars were obviously American in origin, thinly disguised by slight modifications in trim and name. I recall for sure that Fords were Merceors, Mercurys Monarchs. I think Pontiacs may have been called Laurentians.

Our first day in Canada, near Chatham, we saw a motel with a name that made my doctor Uncle and Dad laugh so hard they decided we had to stay there. It was the Bella-Donna Motel. They explained to us kids that in the medical field Belladonna was known as a powerful sedative, one that was illegal in America without a prescription.

Dinner that night also proved to be memorable. Partway through the meal a large, flamboyantly dressed woman made a grand entrance into the dining room, strode to an upright piano, and proceeded to pound out and sing a repertoire of lively tunes. Evidently, the

natives were perfectly familiar with this form of entertainment, for most of them sang along. As for me, I was so taken aback — and for some reason, embarrassed — that I almost forgot to eat. That may have been my first experience with culture shock.

At the far end of Ontario, we came to Niagara Falls. All of us had seen photos of it, of course, but none of us had been there. Nothing I'd seen before could prepare me for the real thing. I can still recall the sound, the three-dimensional perspective (far beyond that of my Viewmaster reel), the mist, and the unfathomable power of the falling water. In an era when daredevils still went over the falls in a barrel, I remember having one other thought: "Now I know why no one ever goes over the American Falls in a barrel."

Then it was on to New York City. I think it was in this part of our journey that we had one of those totally unexpected occurrences whose triviality would seem to preclude its long-term memory: The incident of the cherry stone. I don't pretend to know how a stone from a cherry we'd bought at a roadside stand got stuck on the hood of the Merc hood, but there it was — and, to our continuing amazement and admiration, there it stayed. I guess it doesn't take much to draw and hold your attention after so many hours on the road.

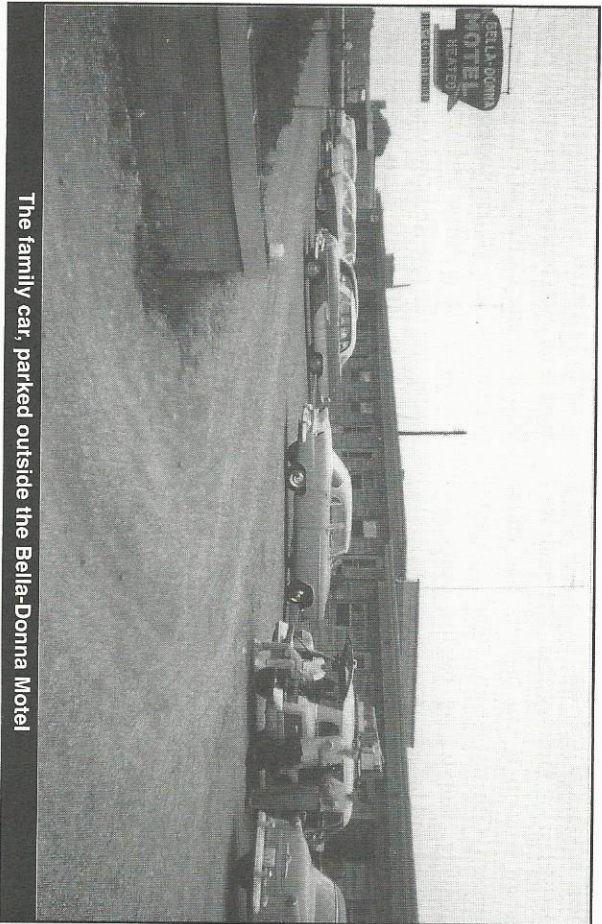
Because we were on a tight budget — and hotel prices in the Big Apple were high even fifty years ago — the Dads booked us into the downtown YMCA Hotel. We had two small rooms with barely space enough for beds, a small dresser, a wardrobe and one chair. The toilets and showers were down the hall. After some of the nice motels in which we'd stayed earlier, this place was kind

of a disappointment. The neighborhood seemed sort of seedy to me as well. I said nothing about my feelings, I think, because I trusted my Dad and Uncle's judgment and didn't want to hurt their feelings — and my misgivings were pretty much dissipated by being in such a storied place.

During our visit, we raced to the top of the Empire State Building in elevators that rose so fast our ears popped. Once we reached the top, we had incredible 360-degree views. Mostly for the amusement of the Dads, I think, we went to Radio City Music Hall and saw the Rockettes. Considering my opinion of girls at the time, I guess I was pretty impressed. My 13-year-old self was more impressed by the Horn and Hardart Automat. That was totally different and terrific. It was so neat to put your nickels and dimes in the slots, open the little door and pull out a sandwich or piece of pie. You could even hold the door open and see the workers in the back, busily refilling the compartments.

One night, we were warned to wear our best clothes and be ready to use our best manners because we were going to a fancy (read: expensive) restaurant for a special treat. I was therefore perplexed — and a little put out — when, after I was seated, the waiter tied a large bib around my neck. KJ and Mark looked as if they felt the same as I did. It was doubtfully confusing when the Dads were made victims of the same service. Mercifully, they quickly let us in on the protocol, explaining that it's what diners often wore when eating lobster because it's so hard to be neat when you do.

It was supposed to be fun, too. In those days we sometimes had lobster tails at home for special occasions so I had learned to like it. But all the cracking



The family car, parked outside the Bella-Donna Motel

and poking necessary to eat a whole lobster was so much more involved than just picking the meat out of the tail that I was glad to have the bib's protection after all. I never gave a second thought to the fact that the same lobster had been alive in a large tank before I picked it out and sealed its fate. (Later that year, the Dads' estimation in my mind went up when I saw "our" restaurant, "The Lobster" in a skit on Steve Allen's *Tonight Show*.)

We didn't get to Bedlow's Island for a close-up visit to the Statue of Liberty, but we saw her from the harbor when we took a round trip on the Staten Island Ferry (for a nickel each way, if memory serves). I think it was also on that voyage that we saw the ocean liner Stockholm being towed into port after the deadly collision that sank the Andrea Doria only a day or so before. In my mind's eye, I can still see the total destruction of the Stockholm's bow.

We even had what I suppose is a fairly typical New York City street encounter. One evening, when the five of us were walking back to the "Y", a small man came up to Mark and began to hassle him — I don't remember why (if indeed we ever knew). He was more or less babbling and I do remember being shocked. I also thought he was either drunk or crazy to pick on Mark when his big brother and even bigger Dad were right there. Uncle Walt and Dad knew what to do so the incident ended peacefully. It did give us something to talk about.

Atlantic City was next. We walked the Boardwalk and waded in the Atlantic, which I believe was a first for all of us. We saw the auditorium where the Miss America Pageant was held, ate salt water taffy, and found some of the Monopoly street names.

From Atlantic City we continued our great adventure in Washington, DC. I remember the Smithsonian Institution's red brick castle and all of the exhibits inside. We explored the Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson Memorials. Again, here we were seeing things familiar from books, magazines and school. The actual buildings, though, gave feelings of size and grandeur that pictures could not. I believe we cousins were old enough to understand the significance of these memorials and catch the reverence that all the adults seemed to display while inside.

I was very impressed when I read that Franklin Roosevelt (who had been the president when I was born) had not only ordered the Jefferson Memorial built, but had dedicated it on the very day I was born, April 13, 1943 — Thomas Jefferson's 200th birthday. I thought for a while I might also be destined for greatness until, at the age of 33, I realized that not only had I not written another Declaration of Independence, but I hadn't invented a single thing.

Obviously, Washington was a very different place 50 years ago, not only in terms of its memorials and other structures. It seems amazing to say it now, but we simply walked into the White House, Capitol, Archives and other buildings, without waiting and without noticeable security. Only in the House and Senate chambers was there any of that, and then it was because some Representatives had been shot by Puerto Rican radicals not so long before. Years later, as a middle school teacher, I took hundreds of students on trips to our nation's capital. Not only was security tight everywhere, but there were long, long lines and huge crowds. Hundreds of homeless people on the National Mall and city streets were

also something different.

The last stop on our tour was actually on the way home. We went to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where I wasn't as immediately impressed as maybe I should have been. We did go to the Cyclorama and I especially remember the huge monuments and displays of ordnance. However, I could not grasp the significance of all those open fields, hills and rock formations.

As I look back, I think Gettysburg had a significant, if latent, influence. My reading choices began to change, from Sci-Fi to Civil War. By the time I entered high school in tenth grade, I had read most of the Bruce Catton and McKinley Kantor books available at the time, as well as many others.

Our return route was pretty straight and swift. We drove on that pioneer toll-road, The Pennsylvania Turnpike, then on through Ohio and across the brand-new Indiana Toll Road. Along the way, KJ, Mark and I got an additional luxury. Instead of eating our lunches out of the ice chest at some wayside park on the two lanes, the Dads let us eat at the service plaza restaurants — either Fred Harvey or Howard Johnson's.

There's also a mystery involved in the return trip to Aurora. Recently, in conversation with my cousin Ken (the former KJ), he recalled our stopping at South Bend to tour the Studebaker assembly plant. That would make perfect sense as it was directly on our route and despite the Merc, Uncle Walt was a dedicated Studebaker man. The puzzling thing is that I have no memory or photos of that stop.

Our adventure came to an end, as so many do, back where it began. We rejoined those who had stayed behind and, depending on your perspective,

either regaled or bored them with our tales. Then it was time to part. The station wagon was sold, good-byes were said, some tears flowed and the California Dohrens flew home to resume their normal lives and leave us to ours.

The Dads, I'm sure, went to all the trouble and expense of the trip because they wanted us to see and experience things we'd never forget and have an equally unforgettable family vacation. I wonder if they also thought that the experiences we had would change us. If they did, as far as I'm concerned, they succeeded on all counts. A long, guys-only road trip, staying in motels, eating in restaurants, seeing America's great sights — what could have been better? I guess going with people you love and with whom you really have fun.

There is even more to it than that. I believe that when we first experience an event (or a series of them), we can rarely measure the true significance the impact those events will have on us. Certainly, the impact may transcend the slides and snapshots, souvenirs, warm recollections and shared stories. I know this trip did that for me. It helped permanently change the focus on what I considered interesting. I've already written about how it changed my reading habits. More importantly, it reinforced an early fascination with history, geography and government. Those became my best subjects in school, my major and minor in university and my life's work as a teacher.

Sometimes, if we're lucky, we have occasions to take some significant time and carefully recall events in our lives from a long ago time. Perhaps the more we do, the more we discover about how we have become what we are. That's certainly true for the former Midwest Kid in writing this story. ■

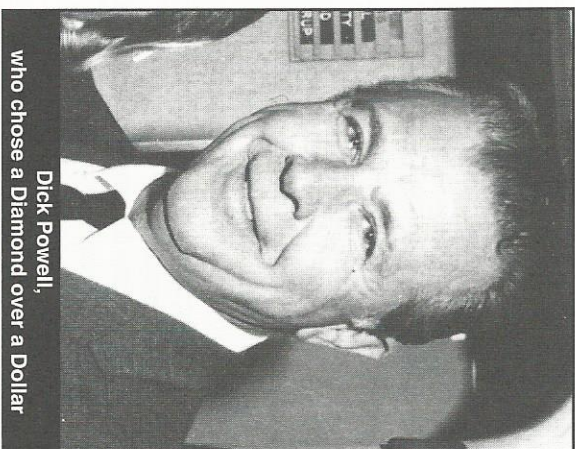
YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR(\$)

BY JORDAN ELLIOTT

To the untrained ear, it might suggest a joke. “America’s fabulous freelance insurance investigator”? A man with “the action-packed expense account”? This sounds less like your typical two-fisted action hero and more like some Monty Python-esque parody. The hero works in the *insurance* business, for goodness sake! To add insult to injury, he’s based not in Hollywood or the mean streets of New York, but in Hartford, Connecticut — hardly a den of iniquity.

In fact, when *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* debuted on radio in 1949, there was no reason to assume that it had to be taken seriously — indeed, there was no reason to assume the public would take it at all. Yet the show not only survived (right up until the end of the Golden Age of Radio) but also evolved, which is key to survival in any civilization...even radio.

While there’s no specific evidence that writers Gil Doud and Paul Dudley Jordan Elliott is a freelance writer from Chicago.



Dick Powell,
who chose a Diamond over a Dollar

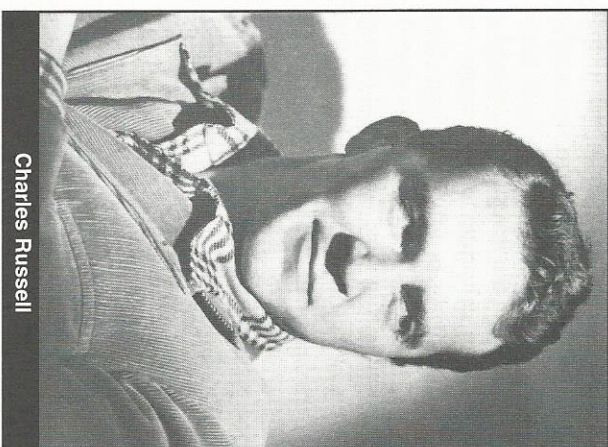
(veteran scribes of Sam Spade’s radio adventures) were looking to mock the detective genre that was taking over movies and radio, it’s telling that the show was first conceived as *Yours Truly, Lloyd London* — an obvious nod to Lloyd’s of London, a well-established insurance firm. Eventually, Lloyd London became Johnny Dollar and an audition recording was made in December of 1948, with Dick Powell in

the title role.

Powell was already familiar with spoofing the detective genre: while his performance as Philip Marlowe in the 1945 movie *Murder My Sweet* freed him from the “boy singer” image he had cultivated in his youth, he promptly turned around and starred in *Rogue’s Gallery*, a radio show that veered between hard-boiled drama and outrageous fantasy (most notably when detective Richard Rogue would converse with Eugor, his “subconscious”). While Powell didn’t accept the lead in a *Johnny Dollar* series, his audition record displays the sly humor typical of his radio work. At the outset, Dollar announces, “I can pad my expense account with the best of them,” suggesting a cynical lead character who sees helping clients as something of a lark. The audition recording also suggests a fellow who is more tough guy than actual investigator: in this case, Dollar is hired to guard a suicidal young man who carries a big life insurance policy. It all flows well enough, but it’s easy to see why Powell ended up at NBC with *Richard Diamond, Private Detective*.

When *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* finally debuted on CBS in February of 1949, actor Charles Russell had assumed the role of Johnny Dollar. Russell wasn’t a star *per se* but he had acquired a few film credits (including *The Late George Apley* and a movie based on the *Inner Sanctum* series of radio shows and books). What’s more, it offered proof that the character didn’t require a big name actor to survive — a trait that would prove the show’s salvation more than once.

Even so, hearing Russell in the early episodes of *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*, one might think the show was intended to satirize the hard-boiled detective genre.



Charles Russell

The show began with a winking introduction: “As an insurance investigator, he’s merely an expert. When it comes to making out his expense account, he’s an absolute genius!” Clearly, the tongues of Dudley and Doud were planted firmly in cheeks. (This flip sense of humor extended to the titles of those early adventures; Dollar introduced one story as “The Case of the \$100,000 Legs, or, ‘Who put your company out on a limb?’”)

The absurdity is evident within the first few minutes of the first episode, as Dollar gives dollar tips to a cab driver and a hotel clerk, accompanied by the sort of dialogue that you expect to lead into the big opening number of a Broadway show. This early Johnny Dollar came off as a little hapless: while Dollar’s insurance company clients might send him anywhere in the world, odds are he would be in trouble the minute he got out of the cab or off of the plane. One thing that was in place from the outset was the tabulation of Dollar’s

certain members of the opposite sex. During Bailey's run as Johnny Dollar, the character felt less like a composite of clichés and more like a flesh-and-blood human being.

It helped, of course, that the five-times-a-week format gave the stories some room to breathe. In the half-hour format, Dollar might find himself traversing the globe but sometimes it was hard to pick up anything that would distinguish one city from another. Now, our hero could not only *meet* people, but sometimes even get to *know* them as well.

Bailey had ample support from a coterie of veteran radio talents (including Virginia Gregg, Lawrence Dobkin, John Dehner, Harry Bartell, Howard McNear, and a host of others) and appropriate guidance from producer/director/writer Jack Johnstone (who had worked on *The Adventures of Superman* a decade earlier) and fellow scribes Les Crutchfield and E. Jack Newman (the latter using the pen name "John Dawson"). The budgets may have been small (live orchestration was sacrificed in favor of recordings from the CBS library) but the cast and crew overcame the obstacles — and in the process, *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* went from being interesting to being compelling. (Ironically, as radio drama lost more ground to television, some CBS affiliates never even bothered to carry this 15-minute version — as a result, many radio fans first discovered it through "Golden Age" revival programs like *Those Were the Days*.)

Sadly, the daily version of the show was an experiment that didn't last. As radio budgets continued to shrink, the show returned to the weekly half-hour format in November of 1956. That was not a fatal blow, although the challenge of condensing stories into the weekly for-

mat was exacerbated when CBS' emphasis on regular newscasts reduced the length of network dramas from 30 minutes (sometimes with no commercials) to 25 (usually with commercials). If the 15-minute *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* had allowed for emphasis on both plot and characterization, the 25-minute weekly format almost forced writers to choose between one and the other. The fact that the stories were still compelling even in this truncated format is a testament to the talent involved.

At the end of 1960, CBS moved production of *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* to New York. After five years, Bailey and Johnstone were out, beginning in January of 1961, actor Bob Readick and producer/director Bruno Zirato Jr. were in. Sadly, *Johnny Dollar* was Bailey's last hurrah; although he appeared briefly in *Birdman of Alcatraz* (ironically, in a scene that featured Edmond O'Brien), his last two decades before his 1983 passing are shrouded in mystery, with few (if any) performing credits.

In fairness to Bob Readick, Bob Bailey's Dollar was a tough act to follow — a fact alluded to in "The Who's Who Matter" (scripted by Johnstone), in which Readick is told over the phone that "You don't sound a bit like Johnny Dollar!" For whatever reasons, Readick was gone after six months and Mandel Kramer became the sixth (not counting the audition performances of Powell and Mohr) and final Johnny Dollar.

Kramer had extensive experience in New York radio, playing supporting characters on *Gangbusters*, *Adventures of Superman*, and *The Shadow*. Perhaps his longest-running radio role was that of Peters, David Harding's right-hand man on the long-running *Counterespionage* series. (On television, he spent 20 years as Bill

Marceau on the popular soap opera *The Edge of Night*.) If Kramer's Dollar lacked the exuberance of Bob Bailey's portrayal, he gave the role a dose of low-key humor and charm that made him something more than a mere counterfeiter.

By the end of 1961, CBS radio's dramatic output was reduced to *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* and *Suspense*, which aired back-to-back on Sunday afternoons. It was a far cry from the dominance radio drama had enjoyed when *Johnny Dollar* began in 1949 — and it was clearly just a matter of time until the networks closed the door on radio drama once and for all.

That day came on September 30, 1962, when *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* concluded its 13-year run on the air.

(*Suspense* was cancelled the same day.) There were no speeches, no fanfares, just a fabulous freelance insurance investigator looking for the money from an old bank heist...and wrapping up his expense account with a now-familiar signature: "Yours truly... Johnny Dollar."

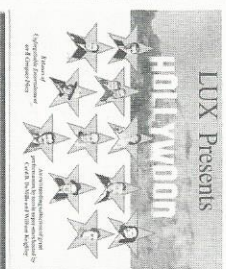
It's hard to think of any other character in radio who lasted so long by going through so many different lives — with each one different from the one before and each one offering something of value.

■ Talk about stretching a Dollar!

Time in to Those Were the Days on August 20 for an afternoon of Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.

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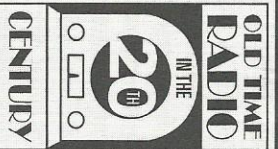
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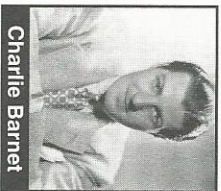


THOSE WERE THE DAYS

with host **STEVE DARNALL**
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JULY 2011

SATURDAY, JULY 2 BIG BANDS ON ARMED FORCES RADIO



Charlie Barnet

ONE NIGHT STAND #375 (6-23-44) Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra are heard in this remote broadcast from the Casa Mañana in Culver City, California, with vocals by Kay Starr and Peanuts Holland. Selections include "Keep The Home Fires Burning," "I'll Walk Alone," "Skyliner," and "Swingin' On A Star." AFRS. (30 min)
HARRY JAMES FILL #14 (6-15-43) A rebroadcast of *Chesterfield Time* from New York City featuring Harry and the Music Makers, with vocalists Helen Forrest and Buddy Moreno. The Music Makers play "Rockaway," "Sleepy Lagoon," and "The Right Kind of Love." AFRS. (15 min)
VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS #204 (11-12-43) Hal McIntyre and his Orchestra are heard playing for the servicemen at the Marine Corps Aviation School, Cherry Point, North Carolina. Tunes heard include "Star Eyes," "Stormy Weather," and "Sheep In The Meadow." Vocals are by Gloria Van and Al Nobel. Announcer is Michael Roy. AFRS. (15 min)
GUY LOMBARDO #86 (9-25-45) A rebroadcast of Guy's *Musical Autographs* program

with vocalists Rosemarie Lombardo, Cliff Grass, Don Rodney and the Lombardo Trio. The Royal Canadians play "June Is Bustin' Out All Over," "If I Loved You," "Gotta Be This Or That," and several other selections. Dan Seymour announces. AFRS. (30 min)
JUBILEE #89 (7-27-44) Host Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman welcomes Lena Horne, The King Cole Trio, Butterfly McQueen, pianist Joe Sullivan and Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra. Lena sings "I'll Walk Alone," the King Cole Trio performs "Straighten Up And Fly Right," the Lunceford band plays "Pistol Packing Mama." AFRS. (30 min)
YANK BANDSTAND #30 (2-5-45) A program featuring "Service bands of the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard." Today's guest band is Major Glenn Miller's American Band of the Continent. Tunes heard on this broadcast include "It Must Be Jelly," "Only Have Eyes For You" (featuring Sgt. Johnny Desmond), and "At The Rainbow Corner." AFRS. (15 min)
DOWNBEAT #174 (1946) Skinnay Ennis and his Orchestra are the guest band. Skinnay sings "Night and Day" and "Got A Date With An Angel." The band plays "Knockin' One Out For Sam" and a swing version of Ravel's "Bolero." AFRS. (15 min)
OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian **KARL PEARSON**, who will talk about the relationship between the big bands and the Armed Forces Radio Service.

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Visit www.nostalgiadigest.com and click on *Those Were The Days*

SATURDAY, JULY 9

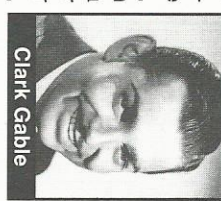
HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (4-7-49) "Morning Glory" stars Elizabeth Taylor as Eva Lovelace, an aspiring actress who becomes infatuated with an influential theatre personality. Cast includes Gerald Mohr, Tony Barrett, James Hilton hosts, Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30 min)
EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (6-8-48) It's Eddie's first show on Tuesday nights, with guests Michael Redgrave and Al Jolson. Eddie decides to sell his house to Michael. Al sings "The Anniversary Song." With Harry von Zell, Billie Burke, Sara Berner, Cookie Fairchild and the Orchestra. Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, NBC. (29 min)
LUKE SLAUGHTER OF TOMBSTONE (3-9-58) Sam Buffington stars as cattle rancher Luke Slaughter, who takes action when an army buddy is accused of slaughtering cattle. Cast includes Junius Matthews, Lou Merrill, Howard McNear, Sam Edwards, Barney Phillips, Norm Alden. Sustaining, CBS. (24 min)
PACKARD HOUR (1-26-37) Fred Astaire stars, with Charles Butterworth, Trudy Wood, Franca White, Conrad Thibault, announcer Ken Carpenter, Johnny Green and the orchestra. Fred sings "Plenty of Money and You," and "One, Two, Button Your Shoe," and dances to "Christopher Columbus." Charlie plays an electrician in a sketch and the gang visits a haunted house. Packard Automobiles, NBC. (26 min and 29 min) Read the article about *Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers* on page 42.

SEALED BOOK (5-27-45) "I'll Die Laughing" is the story of three people who ventured into a cavern that carries an ancient curse. Philip Clarke is host. Syndicated, MBS. (28 min)

SATURDAY, JULY 16 GINGER ROGERS ON THE AIR

COMMAND PERFORMANCE (recorded 8-5-44) Ginger Rogers is mistress of ceremonies, with guests Jimmy Durante, Virginia O'Brien, George Murphy, the Golden Gate Quartet. Jimmy does the "Strutaway" and the cast present a week's worth of radio shows in a few minutes! AFRS. (31 min) Read the article about *Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire* on page 42.
LUX RADIO THEATRE (11-1-37) "A Free

Soul" starring Ginger Rogers, Don Ameche, Charles Winninger, Jack Arnold in a radio adaptation of the 1931 film. A free-spirited young woman raises the ire of her attorney father when she falls in love with a notorious gambler. Cast includes Claire Whitney, Myra Marsh, Eddie Marr, Lou Merrill, James Eagles, Justina Wayne, Sally Creighton, Frank Nelson. Lux Soap, CBS. (22 min & 18 min & 17 min)
SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (10-1-39) "Imperfect Lady" starring Clark Gable, Ginger Rogers, Spencer Char-tans and Margaret Lindsay. A comedy about the motion picture business, as a production team tries to rebound from a flop and put together another movie. Roger Prior hosts. Gulf Oil, CBS. (30 min)
SUSPENSE (1-11-51) "Vamp 'Til Dead" stars Ginger Rogers as a secretary who goes to work for a writer acquitted of murdering his wife. Cast includes John Hoyt, Ed Max, Jeanette Nolan. Harlow Wilcox announces. Auto-Lite, CBS. (31 min)
OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be film historian **BOB KOLOSOSKI**, who will talk about the life and movie career of Ginger Rogers, who was born on July 16, 1911.

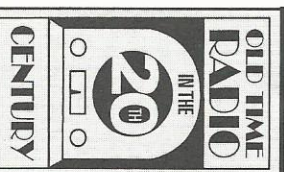


Clark Gable

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-25-42) Harold Peary stars as Gildersleeve, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker. Giddy, thinking that Judge Hooker would be happier as a married man, decides to play matchmaker. Cast includes Paula Winslowe. Kraft, NBC. (30 min)
PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (9-25-49) It's the start of a new season and the sponsor has given Phil an office in the Rexall Building. With Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Jeanine Roos, Gale Gordon. Rexall, NBC. (30 min)
ON STAGE (8-20-53) "Canary Yellow" starring Cathy and Elliott Lewis. A celebrated comedian recalls making his childhood performing debut. Cast includes Gigi Pearson, Lou Merrill, Larry Merrill. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, JULY 23

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (1-25-42) Harold Peary stars as Gildersleeve, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker. Giddy, thinking that Judge Hooker would be happier as a married man, decides to play matchmaker. Cast includes Paula Winslowe. Kraft, NBC. (30 min)
PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (9-25-49) It's the start of a new season and the sponsor has given Phil an office in the Rexall Building. With Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Jeanine Roos, Gale Gordon. Rexall, NBC. (30 min)
ON STAGE (8-20-53) "Canary Yellow" starring Cathy and Elliott Lewis. A celebrated comedian recalls making his childhood performing debut. Cast includes Gigi Pearson, Lou Merrill, Larry Merrill. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)



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JULY - AUGUST 2011

VOICE OF FIRESTONE (5-24-48) A program of concert and light classical music, with Eleanor Steber, Howard Barlow and the Orchestra. Steber sings "You and the Night and the Music," "Dearly Beloved," and "For You Alone." Firestone Tires and Rubber, NBC. (28 min)

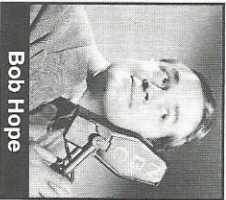
GREEN HORNET (4-24-40) Al Hodge is Britt Reid, the Green Hornet, with Raymond Toyo as Kato, Lenore Allman as Lenore Case, Jim Irwin as Mike Axford. The Green Hornet and Kato take on an unscrupulous publishing racket. Sustaining, NBC BLUE. (28 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be **CHUCK SCHADEN**, founder and longtime host of *Those Were the Days*, who will talk about his new website, speakingofradio.com, and share some excerpts from his many conversations with the stars of the Golden Age of Radio.

SATURDAY, JULY 30 CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Presenting shows that had been scheduled for Those Were the Days in December of 2010 but were not heard on radio in their entirety due to technical difficulties:

BOB HOPE SHOW (12-28-48) Presented "by transcription," it's Bob's Christmas Day Show from Berlin, as presented to the troops of the Berlin airlift. Guests include General Jimmy Doolittle, Irving Berlin, and Jinx Falkenberg. With Bill Farrell, Jane Harvey, Irene Ryan. Swan Soap, NBC. (30 min)



Bob Hope

DINNER BELL PROGRAM (12-25-58) A Christmas Day program of music "from our house to your house," with host Harold Stafford, Lee Morgan and the Midwesters, Dolph Hewitt and the Sage Riders, the WLS Orchestra. Songs include "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy," "C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S," and "Silver Bells." Sustaining, WLS. (30 min)

LET GEORGE DO IT (12-25-50) "Santa Claus in Glass" stars Bob Bailey as George Valentine and Virginia Gregg as Claire Brooks. George and Brooks's plans for a quiet Christmas dinner are interrupted when a messenger arrives with a package for a neighbor. With Irene Tedrow, Bob Griffith, Lawrence Dobkin, Barney Phillips, Bob Bruce. Standard Oil of California, MBS. (29 min)

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (12-23-36) George Burns and Gracie Allen from early in their radio careers, with Tony Martin, Henry King and his orchestra, announcer Ken Niles. Gracie presents her radio-oriented version of "A Christmas Carol." Campbell Soups, CBS. (28 min)

CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE (12-24-39) "A Christmas Carol" starring Lionel Barrymore in his fourth performance as Ebenezer Scrooge in the classic story by Charles Dickens. Directed and narrated by Orson Welles, with Everett Sloane, Frank Readick, Erskine Sanford, George Coulouris, Ray Collins, Georgia Backes, Bea Bendaret. Campbell Soups, CBS. (32 min and 28 min)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6 100 YEARS OF LUCY!

MY FAVORITE HUSBAND (6-1-0-49) Lucille Ball and Richard Denning star as Liz and George Cooper, with Gale Gordon, Bea Bendaret, Vera Felton. When Liz goes to the beauty parlor, the beautician accidentally

dyes her red hair black. AFSS rebroadcast. (24 min)

MAIL CALL #66 (11-24-43) Lucille Ball is mistress of ceremonies, with Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, Edgar Kennedy, Patsy Moran, Kay Thompson and the Williams Brothers, Harry Richman, the Delta Rhythm Boys, announcer Don Wilson. AFRR. (30 min)

SUSPENSE (1-13-44) "Dime a Dance" starring Lucille Ball as a dancer at an amusement park where the dance hall girls are being targeted by a killer. Cast includes Hans Conried, Pat McGeehan, Jeanette Nolan. Roma Wines, CBS. (29 min)

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO SHOW (11-11-43) It's Bud and Lou with guest Lucille Ball, Mel Blanc, Billy Grey, Connie Haines, Freddie Rich and the Orchestra. While searching for a hard-to-find pair of nylons for Connie, the boys run into Lucille, who has a pair and won't give them up! Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (21 min)

LEAVE IT TO THE GIRLS (7-6-46) A panel discussion program for women, moderated by Paula Stone, with Robin Chandler, Eloise McElhone, Joan Murphy, and guest Lucille Ball. Radio commentator Ted Malone provides a male viewpoint. Sustaining, MBS. (29 min)

I LOVE LUCY (2-27-52) A radio version of the popular television show, with Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz as Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, William Frawley and Vivian Vance as Fred and Ethel Mertz. Phillip Morris Cigarettes, CBS. (26 min) *Read the cover story about I Love Lucy on page 4.*

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (5-5-51) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover, with Charles Calvert as Sgt. Tartaglia and Jack Kruschen as Sgt. Muggewin. The police investigate the death of a man who was stabbed in the park. Cast includes Cathy Lewis, Lamont Johnson, Johnny McGovern, Virginia Gregg, Herb Vigran, Lou Krugman. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

CONNIE BOSWELL SHOW (7-12-44) With Buddy Lester, announcer Jack McCarthy, Lloyd Schaefer and the Orchestra, Connie sings "Pretty Kitty Blue Eyes" and "I Don't Want to Love You." Buddy Lester talks about his engagement party and the cast presents

a sketch, "The Life and Loves of Connie Boswell." Sustaining, NBC BLUE. (30 min)

JOE LOUIS-JACK SHARKEY FIGHT (8-18-36) Ted Husling and Charles Francis Cole offer a blow-by-blow description of the three-round boxing match between Louis and Sharkey. Additional reporting by John Reed King and Paul Douglas. Scripps-Howard Newspapers, CBS. (30 min) *Read the article about Ted Husling on page 50.*

MAGNIFICENT MONTAGUE (1-5-51) Monte Woolley stars as actor Edwin Montague, who is preparing to celebrate his Silver Anniversary in the theater. Cast: Anne Seymour, Pert Kelton, John Gibson, Art Carney, John Giggis, Gavin Gordon. Don Pardo is announcer. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

MOVIE TOWN RADIO THEATER (1940s) "The Sound of Her Voice" stars Robert Hutton in a fantasy about a man who purchases a strange bottle and finds a genie inside! With Gracia Leopold, Edward Clark, Wilms Herbert, Vivi Janiss. Les Mitchell hosts. Syndicated. (28 min)

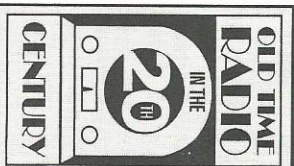
FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (6-4-46) Jim and Marian Jordan star, with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Arthur Q. Bryan, Bea Bendaret, announcer Harlow Wilcox, the King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. The McGees decide to go to the Aviation Show at the Wistful Vista airport. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20 ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER JOHNNY DOLLAR

Read the article about Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar on page 26.

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (4-15-49) "The Case of the \$100,000 Legs" stars Charles Russell as insurance investigator Johnny Dollar. When an actress' legs are insured as a publicity stunt, Dollar is sent to California to act as bodyguard. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-15-50) "The Arrowcraft Matter" stars Edmond O'Brien as Johnny Dollar. A series of yacht sinkings have resulted in eleven deaths. Cast includes Jeanne Bates, Hy Averbach, Howard McNear, Harry Bartell, Jeanette Nolan, John McIntire. Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (30 min) ➔



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AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2011

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (1-26-54) "The Beauregard Matter" stars John Lund as Dollar, who travels to Illinois to meet with a thief who claims to have information about a stolen necklace. AFES rebroadcast. (28 min)
YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (6-11-56 through 6-15-56) "The Laughing Matter" stars Bob Bailey as Dollar, who travels to Mexico to investigate a death threat against a popular television comedian. Cast includes Virginia Gregg, Lucille Meredith, Don Diamond, John Dehner, Harry Bartell. Sustaining. CBS. (five

chapters at approximately 14:00 each)
YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (10-8-61) "The Medium Rare Matter" stars Mandel Kramer as Johnny, who heads to Texas after a fake spiritualist persuades several of the townspeople to cash in their insurance policies and give the money to the "Temple of the Living Truth." Cast includes Maurice Tarplin, Dan Ocko, Evie Juster, Bill Lipton, Toni Darnay. Sustaining. CBS. (24 min)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27 SPOTLIGHT ON JANET WALDO

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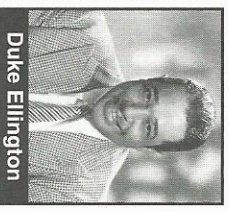
Call for matters pertaining to the station itself, its broadcast signal, or to pledge support.
Web site: www.wdcb.org

SPEAKING OF RADIO (5-5-10) Part three of Steve Darnall's conversation with actress Janet Waldo. (18 min)
MEET CORLISS ARCHER (4-6-47) Janet Waldo is Corliss Archer, with Sam Edwards as Dexter Franklin. Corliss wants to enter a department store's "Sweetheart of the Year" contest but her parents won't allow it. With Fried Shields, Irene Tedrow, Campbell Soups. CBS. (29 min)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 BIG BANDS IN THE 1950S

TOMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA FEATURING JIMMY DORSEY (3-7-56) Remote broadcast from the Café Rouge of the Hotel Statler in New York City, with vocals by Dolly Houston and Tommy Mercer. "The Fabulous Dorseys" play "Opus No. 1," "Marie Elena," "I'm Glad There Is You," and other tunes. Ed Herlihy announces. Sustaining. NBC. (24 min)

JAN GARBER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (10-22-50) "The Idol of the Airwaves" is heard from the "Beautiful air-conditioned Trianon Ballroom, located on Chicago's South Side at 62nd and Cottage Grove." Vocals by Roy Cordell, Nicky Brill and "Kitty Thomas" (Janis Garber, Jan's daughter). Announcer is Hal Stark. Sustaining. Except, WBMM. (16 min)
DUKE ELLINGTON'S SILVER JUBILEE (11-20-52) *Excerpt.* A special 25th anniversary broadcast from Birdland in New York City. The Ellington band plays "Lullaby Of Birdland," "Perfidia," "Monologue" and other selections. Skitch Henderson, Steve Allen, Al "Jazzbo" Collins and others offer the Duke their best wishes. William B. Williams announces. Sustaining. NBC. (25 min)



Duke Ellington

ORRIN TUCKER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1951) "The danciest band in the land" in a remote broadcast from the Boulevard Room of the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, with vocals by Orrin Tucker and Scooter Marsh. Selections include "Side By Side," "Too Young," "I Double Dare You," and "Hot Canary." Sustaining. ABC. (26 min)
LES BROWN AND HIS BAND OF RENOWN (8-14-55) Live recording made at the Blue

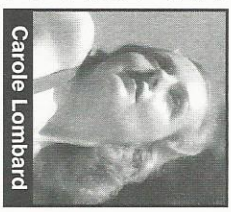
Note located in downtown Chicago. The recording begins just before the band's scheduled NBC *Monitor* broadcast, as Les introduces announcer Tom Mercen, who does the pre-broadcast warmup. The recording continues with the broadcast and concludes at the end of the band's set. Turns include "Midnight Sun," "From This Moment On," and "Sentimental Journey." Vocals by JoAnn Greer, Stumpy Brown and Butch Stone. (31 min)
RAY MCKINLEY AND THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA (1-4-57) Opening night broadcast from the Café Rouge of the Hotel Statler in New York City, with vocals by Mary Lou Norris, Ronnie Craig and Ray McKinley. The band plays "A String Of Pearls," "My Prayer," and "Perfidia," along with other selections. Sustaining. CBS. (30 min)
OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian **KARL PEARSON**, who will talk about the big bands of the 1950s.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 LOVE AND MARRIAGE

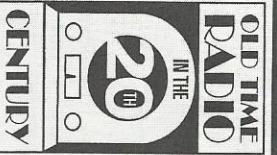
YOUNG LOVE (8-1-49) Janet Waldo and Jimmy Lydon star as Janet and Jimmy, with John Heisland, John Brown, Verna Felton, Jerry Hausner, Hans Conried. The pressure for Janet and Jimmy to reveal their marriage increases when Jimmy's father and Janet's mother visit them at the same time. Sustaining. CBS. (30 min)

ROMANCE (7-30-51) "The Token" starring Harry Bartell and Shirley Mitchell. A young man returns home from the sea to get married and join his father's business. With Lynn Allen, Ted Von EIs, Lamont Johnson, Barney Phillips, Wrigley's Spearmint Gum, CBS. (28 min)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (6-9-41) "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" starring Bob Hope, Carole Lombard, Bill Goodwin, and Jack Arnold in a radio version of the Alfred Hitchcock movie. On their wedding anniversary, a couple discover that they are not legally married. Cecil B. DeWille is host. Cast includes Verna Felton, Bea Bendoret, Lou Merrill. Lux Soap, CBS. (21 min & 20 min & 18 min) ➔



Carole Lombard



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SEPTEMBER 2011

HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL (1-4-59) "Helen Of Abajinria" stars John Dehner as Paladin with Ben Wright as Hey Boy. When a young Armenian girl runs away from home in pursuit of a young cowboy, Paladin is hired to bring the couple back home to be married. Cast includes Lawrence Dobkin, Lillian Buyeff, Dick Crema, Virginia Christine, Lynn Allen. Participating sponsors, CBS. (25 min)

GREAT GILDERSLLEEVE (5-27-53) Willard Waterman stars as Gildy, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Earle Ross, Dick LeGrand, Arthur Q. Bryan, Tommy Cook, Anne Whitfield. Gildy agrees to act as witness for a wedding ceremony between a young Marine and his fiancée. Kraft, NBC.

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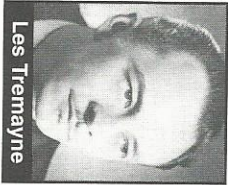
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(30 min)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

THIN MAN (7-13-48) "The Haunted Hams" stars Les Tremayne and Claudia Morgan as Nick and Nora Charles, with Parker Fennelley as Eb Williams. The famous couple are embroiled in intrigue when a theatrical company's barn burns down. Pabst Blue Ribbon, NBC. (30 min)

RED SKELTON SHOW (3-25-47) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire focuses on "Careless Driving" with Red as Willy Lump-Lump. Later, Junior the Mean Little Kid tangles with a skunk! With Rod O'Connor, Verma Felton, Pat McGeehan, Gigi Pearson, Wonderful Smith, Anita Ellis, David Forrester and the orchestra. Raleigh Cigarettes, NBC. (29 min)



Les Tremayne

SHERLOCK HOLMES (5-21-45) "The Paradol Chamber" stars Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. Dr. and Mrs. Watson encounter a scientist who claims to have invented a "teleportation device" by using a remarkable new alloy. Petr Wines, MBS. (25 min)

OLDSMOBILE PROGRAM (2-20-34) Ruth Etting sings, with Johnny Green and his orchestra and announcer Ted Husing. Ruth sings "Everything I Have Is Yours" and "After Sundown"; the orchestra plays "Roll Out of Bed With a Smile" and "Templation." Oldsmobile, CBS. (15 min) Read the article about Ted Husing on page 50.

HENRY MORGAN SHOW (4-4-50) It's "Radio's Bad Boy" with Arnold Stang, Art Carney, Pert Kelton, Jack Albertson, Morgan

looks at magazine ads and presents "Great Books That Everyone Has and Nobody Reads." Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

CRIME CLASSICS (6-29-53) "The Checkered Life and Sudden Death of Col. James Fiske Jr.," with Lou Merrill as narrator Thomas H/land, recounting the events that led to Colonel Fiske's death. Cast includes William Johnstone, Mary Jane Croft, Martha Wentworth, Steve Roberts, Harry Bartel, Paula Winslowe, Charles Calvert. Sustaining, CBS. (27 min)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER (9-8-46) "The Symphony of Death" features Maurice Tarplin as the Mysterious Traveler. A composer purchases three tombstones for his sisters. Cast includes Eric Dressler, Inge Adams, Hester Sondergaard, Ann Teaman, Martin Wolfson. Sustaining, MBS. (29 min)

DRENE TIME (3-30-47) Don Ameche, Frances Langford and Danny Thomas star in the 16th program of the series. Frances sings "This Can't Be Love" and "Night and Day"; Don and Danny get into an argument about literature. In a Bickersons sketch, Blanche (Langford) insists to John (Ameche) that she's on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Drene Shampoo, NBC. (30 min) Read the article about *The Bickersons* on page 12.

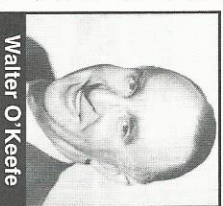
NIGHTBEAT (9-11-50) "The Hunter Becomes

the Hunted" stars Frank Lovejoy as Randy Stone, night beat reporter for the Chicago Star. Stone is accosted by an escaped convict who seeks revenge on the Assistant District Attorney. Cast includes Jeff Corey, Jeanne Bates, Frances Cheney, Eddie Fields, Hal Girard, John Stephenson. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

MY FRIEND IRMA (1-13-52) Marie Wilson stars as Irma, with Cathy Lewis as Jane, Hans Conried as Professor Kropotkin, John Brown as Al, Gloria Gordon as Mrs. O'Reilly, Alan Reed as Mr. Clyde. Irma takes a Cub Scout pack to a museum and delivers a talk about Benjamin Franklin. Ennds Mints, CBS. (29 min)

CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON (9-25-47) "The Proof" stars Paul Sutton as Sgt. Preston, who gets caught in an avalanche and finds himself on the trail of two thieves. Sustaining, ABC. (29 min)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (4-20-49) Bing Crosby welcomes guests Rudy Vallee and Walter O'Keefe, with Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and his orchestra, the Rhythmatics. Bing sings "Crusin' Down the River" while Walter discusses plans to bring Rudy back to radio. Philco, ABC. (31 min)



Walter O'Keefe

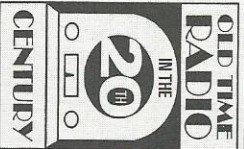
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SUNDAY, JULY 3

CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE (5-26-39) "American Cavalcade: The Things We Have" is an original drama written by and starring Orson Welles, with Cornelia Otis Skinner. A couple who adopt a war orphan must explain the history and government of his new country. Campbell Soups, CBS.

OUR MISS BROOKS (7-3-49) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, who has plans for a holiday weekend at Eagle Springs. Colgate-Palmolive, CBS.

SUNDAY, JULY 10

ADVENTURES OF PHILIP MARLOWE (1-22-49) "The Orange Dog" stars Gerald Mohr as Marlowe, who is hired to get a woman's sister out of a "nasty jam." Sustaining, CBS.

JUDY CANOVA SHOW (10-4-47) Judy has a screen test at Paragon studios. With Mel Blanc, Ruby Dandridge, Joe Kearns, Hans Conried, The Sportsmen, Colgate-Palmolive, NBC.

INNER SANCTUM (7-19-48) "Death Demon" stars Everett Sloane and Anne Seymour in the story of a man who threatens to summon his father from the grave to avenge his death. Bromo Seltzer, CBS.

SUNDAY, JULY 17

PHILCO RADIO TIME (1-8-47) Bing Crosby stars, with Peggy Lee, the Charlottees, and guest Mickey Rooney, who wants to be a songwriter. Philco, ABC.

GREAT SCENES FROM GREAT PLAYS (12-3-48) "The Devil and Daniel Webster" stars Raymond Massey in an adaptation of the famous story by Stephen Vincent Benet. Walter Hampden hosts. National Council of Protestant Episcopal Churches, Syndicated.

OLD GOLD COMEDY THEATER (4-8-45) "A Slight Case of Murder" starring Edward G. Robinson in a radio version of his 1938 movie.

A soft-hearted bootlegger goes legit after prohibition ends. Old Gold Cigarettes, NBC.

SUNDAY, JULY 24

LUX RADIO THEATER (11-18-46) "O.S.S." stars Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake in a radio version of Ladd's 1946 movie about the men and women who risked their lives during World War II as part of the Office of Strategic Services. Lux Soap, CBS.

MATINEE WITH BOB AND RAY (9-14-48) Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding from early in their careers, with organist Ken Wilson and pianist Bill Green. Participating sponsors, WHDH Boston.

SUNDAY, JULY 31

ENCORE THEATER (6-18-46) "Yellowjack" starring Ronald Colman in the story of how Dr. Walter Reed discovered yellow fever. Schenley Laboratories, CBS.

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (10-18-45) When Gracie hears that Meredith Willson is planning to get married, she decides to counsel him about how to handle women. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC.

NIGHTBEAT (7-31-50) "The City at Your Fingertips" starring Frank Lovejoy as Randy Stone, who misdials a phone number and encounters a woman in danger. Sustaining, NBC.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7

MY SON JEEP (6-14-53) Donald Houston stars as Jeep, with Donald Cook as Doc. Jeep gets into a fight with a neighbor boy. Sustaining, NBC.

THE SHADOW (5-22-38) "Message From the Hills" stars Orson Welles as the Shadow. A gang of criminals plot to rob a diamond mine. Goodrich Silvertown Theatres, Syndicated.

SONGS BY SINATRA (10-10-45) Frank Wel-

comes guests Frances Langford and Ginny Simms, who take part in a parody of "Frankie and Johnny." Old Gold Cigarettes, CBS.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (5-19-49) "The Enchanted Cottage" stars Richard Widmark in the story of a plain woman and a disgraced war veteran who are transformed by their romance. With Lucrece Tuttle, Gerald Mohr. Hallmark Cards, CBS.

LUM AND ABNER (10-17-48) Chester Lauck and Norris Goff star as Lum and Abner, with Clarence Hartzell as Ben Withers. Lum takes a broken leg to avoid seeing Mrs. Abernathy. Frigidaire, CBS.

BOSTON BLACKIE (7-9-47) Richard Kollmar stars as Blackie, who investigates when a har-monica player is shot. Maurice Tarplin is Inspector Faraday. Syndicated.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-24-55) Jack gets a call from 20th Century Fox, who want to rent Jack's Maxwellll Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS.

THE WHISTLER (4-21-47) "Backlash" starring Howard Duff, with Bill Forman as The Whistler. A man plans to kill his wife's aunt, with the help of his brother's escapee from prison. Signal Oil, CBS.

RAILROAD HOUR (11-6-50) Gordon MacRae and Eileen Wilson star in "Frene," the story of a millionaire who falls in love with a shop girl. Association of American Railroads, NBC.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28

SUSPENSE (2-21-48) "Beyond Reason" starring Robert Ryan and Ruth Warrick. When a businessman is killed by a hit-and-run driver, his family is surprised when the man's "business partner" pays a visit. Sustaining, CBS.

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (4-2-50) As Phil and his family prepare to leave Palm Springs, Frankie claims to have seen flying saucers. Rexall, NBC.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

DRAGNET (12-7-50) Jack Webb stars as Sgt. Joe Friday, with Barton Yarborough as Sgt. Ben Romero, who investigate a pornography racket involving a pair of fake talent scouts.

Fatima Cigarettes, NBC.

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (11-18-48) Al Jolson stars, with Oscar Levant, Lou Brink and the orchestra, and guest Groucho Marx, who talks about his new career as a quizmaster. Kraft, NBC.

X MINUS ONE (10-24-56) "Pictures Don't Lie" starring Joe DeSantis, John Gibson. When a reporter interviews a scientist who decodes radio messages for the government, they discover radio signals coming from an unexpected source. Sustaining, NBC.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

THE BIG SHOW (2-4-51) Mistress of ceremonies Tallulah Bankhead welcomes guests Fred Allen, Robert Cummings, Laraine Day, Jimmy Durante, Leo Durocher, Portland Hoffa, Judy Holiday, Frankie Laine, Jane Pickens, Meredith Willson and the orchestra. Participating sponsors, NBC.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

THE FALCON (11-5-50) "The Case of the Rich Racketeer" stars Les Damon as Michael Waring. A racketeer double-crosses his lawyer and hires the Falcon for protection. Kraft Foods, NBC.

FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY (5-19-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Isabel Randolph, Harlow Wilcox. After complaining about a stack of unpaid bills, McGee announces that he's going to be rich! Johnson's Wax, NBC.

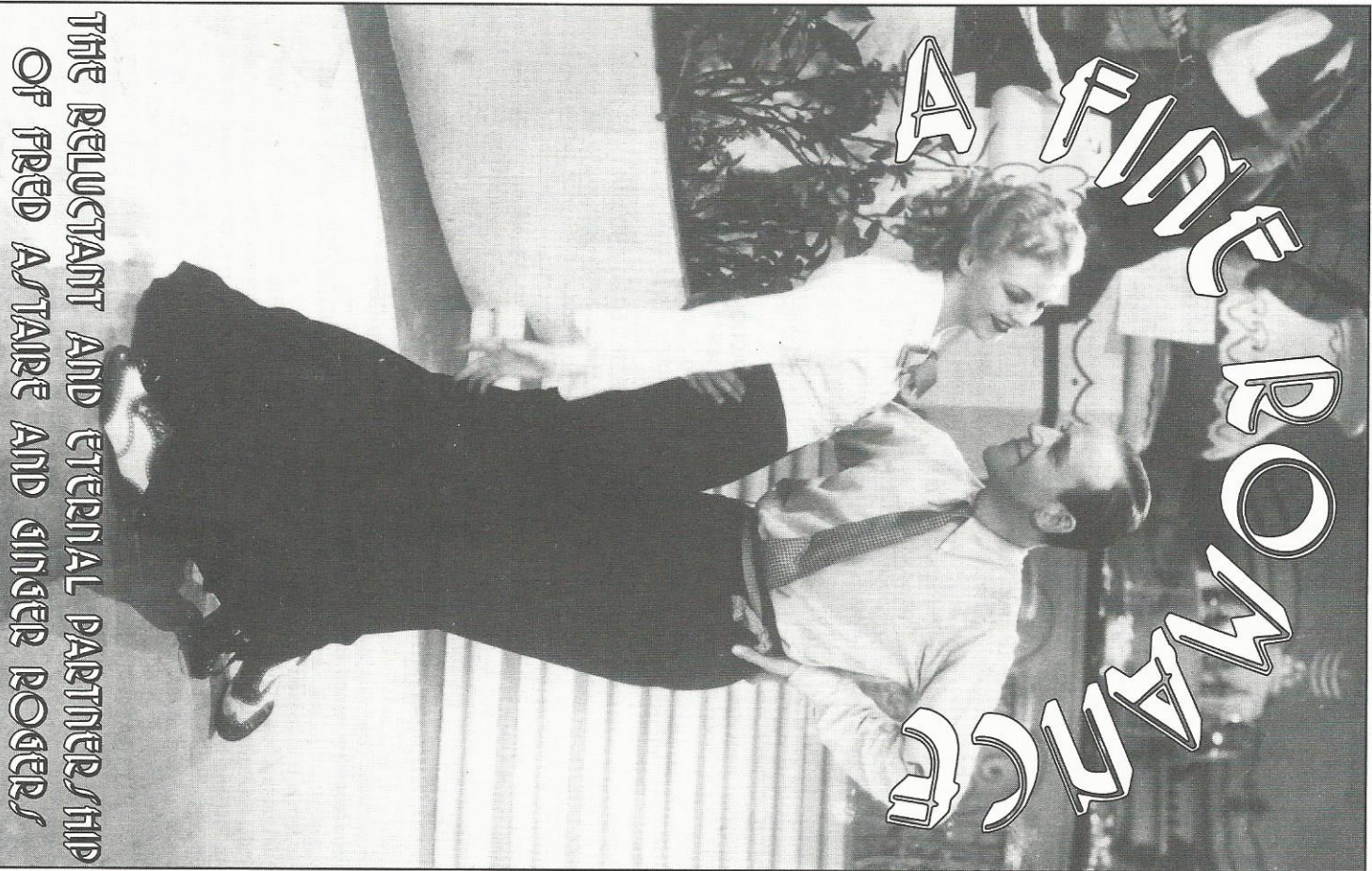
ESCAPE (7-21-47) "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" starring Jack Edwards Jr., Denny Merrill and Linda Mason. The story about the home life of the richest family in the world. Sustaining, CBS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (4-7-48) With Peggy Lee, Howard Petrie, and guest Dorothy Lamour, who Jimmy thinks should run for president. Rexall, NBC.

CISCO KID (4-7-53) "Secret Mission" stars Jack Mather as Cisco, with Harry Lang as Pancho. A marshal asks Cisco to infiltrate the ruthless Malloy Gang. Syndicated, MBS.

LIFE OF RILEY (6-28-47) William Bendix is Riley, with John Brown as Jim Gillis, who decide to leave town together to go on a fishing trip. Dreft, NBC.



THE RELUCTANT AND ETERNAL PARTNERSHIP OF FRED ASTAIRE AND GINGER ROGERS

BY WALTER SCANNELL

He was born Frederic Austerlitz Jr. She was born Virginia McMath. In 1933, they were reborn as “Fred and Ginger.”

The names Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers weren’t exactly new when they worked on screen together for the first time; both Frederic and Virginia had changed them earlier in their entertainment careers. Born in 1911, Ginger had been performing since her teens (which weren’t that far behind her in 1933). During that time, she had appeared in a handful of movies in support of bigger names (including Busby Berkeley’s gangbuster musicals *42nd Street* and *Gold Diggers of 1933*) and even starred in a few herself (including the romantic thriller *A Shriek in The Night* and the Hollywood satire *Professional Sweetheart*). For her to be fourth-billed in an RKO musical called *Flying Down To Rio* was not automatically considered a step up — indeed, she was a replacement for dramatic actress Dorothy Jordan — and she was less interested in musicals at this point than in the chance to flex her dramatic muscle. On the other hand, it was the midst of the Depression and work was work.

As for Astaire, he had made his real mark on the stage as a dancer alongside sister Adele, and was into his thirties when she left the act to get married. Eventually, Astaire settled in Hollywood and supported Clark Gable and Joan Crawford in MGM’s *Dancing Lady*.

However, stardom was far from guaranteed — particularly after a screen

Walter Scannell is a freelance writer and nostalgia buff from Chicago.

test that received the now-famous evaluation: “Can’t act. Can’t sing. Balding. Can dance a little.” (In his autobiography, Fred recalls seeing himself on screen for the first time and remarking “I look like a knife!”) When he became part of the cast of *Rio*, he was billed even lower than Rogers and there was no reason to assume that would change.

Like most studios, RKO was looking to capture an audience who were in the grip of economic depression. They had pulled off a most impressive dramatic spectacle with *King Kong*; now it was time for a musical spectacle, one that would include a chorus line dancing on the wing of an airplane in flight. (By a remarkable coincidence, executive producer Meriam C. Cooper owned stock in Pan-American Airlines.)

Ginger and Fred had known each other in New York: he had helped her with a dance problem and they had even enjoyed a few casual dates, but neither of them could have imagined the impact of their dancing forehead-to-forehead to “The Carioca.” (When Astaire’s Fred Ayers suggests that the couples dance with their foreheads together as a sign of “mental telepathy,” Ginger’s character retorts, “I can tell what they’re thinking about from here.”) Choreographer Hermes Pan spent hours developing a new kind of screen dancing for them, one involving more sweep. The two men even gave each other creative ideas while Rogers was filming other movies.

A partnership was the farthest thing from anyone’s mind but it was obvious that Fred and Ginger had a unique chemistry, one that transcended the weaker moments of *Rio*. In the words of Katharine Hepburn — another veteran of RKO studios — “He gives her class and she gives him sex.” The *New York Times*

remarked that Astaire and Rogers “have that gift of mutual timing in absolute union, so that they’re always clicking together, when dancing or trifling with the plot.”

Always the perfectionist, Fred was dissatisfied and wished the budget had allowed more retakes. As he said goodbye to people in the various RKO departments, he said, “I don’t think I’ll be coming back.”

In fact, Fred and the petite Ginger were such a smash that the studio rushed the two back into production together for *The Gay Divorcee*, based on a show Astaire had starred in on Broadway.

According to one account, Fred did not want to be part of a team again, after his many years with Adele. Another account suggested that he would have preferred Jessie Matthews, a moderately cute dancer and light comedienne who was the darling of London. But Ginger

was already under contract, the two had proven themselves together, and RKO had no interest in hiring a foreigner. In fairness, Matthews was a more natural dancer but Rogers was a more subtle actress.

For their second pairing, Fred and Ginger play the leads for the first time, and the romantic hints that bounce back and forth are a delight—even though the more pointed ones were censored. The songs include Cole Porter’s “Night and Day” and that year’s Oscar winner, “The Continental.”

In fact, *The Gay Divorcee* served as the template for the duo’s next six films: He likes her, she doesn’t like him, there is an embarrassing misunderstanding, they dance, and she realizes that she likes him after all. Throw in a dash of Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore and/or Helen Broderick (substituting when necessary) and all of the ingredients are in place.

After *Divorcee*, the team dressed up the rather sorry *Roberta*, in which Randolph Scott is asked to be funny, but Fred and Ginger dance to “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” and “I Won’t Dance.” Fred would say in later years that “Ginger faked a lot” in those early collaborations. “She couldn’t tap and she couldn’t this and that... but Ginger had style and improved a lot.”

Tap dancing in films of this period was even more strenuous than it looked, because the microphones could not pick up the clicks adequately. This meant that after a scene was shot, the dancer had to re-record the routine—step-by-step—in a small sound area while wearing a headset to hear the feedback. For *Roberta*, Astaire had a special maple floor laid so that his and Ginger’s dancing would not need dubbing.

Hepburn’s remark notwithstanding, Fred certainly gave Ginger grace and she lent him glamour, but sometimes that came at a price. For their next film, *Top Hat*, Ginger planned to wear an ostrich feather dress for “Check to Check.” The light blue dress took nearly an hour to get into, and as the cameras rolled the feathers kept flying into Fred’s face, keeping him sneezing for an hour until he uncharacteristically exploded that he could not take it any longer. (As Astaire joked, it looked as though a chicken had been attacked by a coyote, although Rogers later suggested that the fallout wasn’t that severe.)

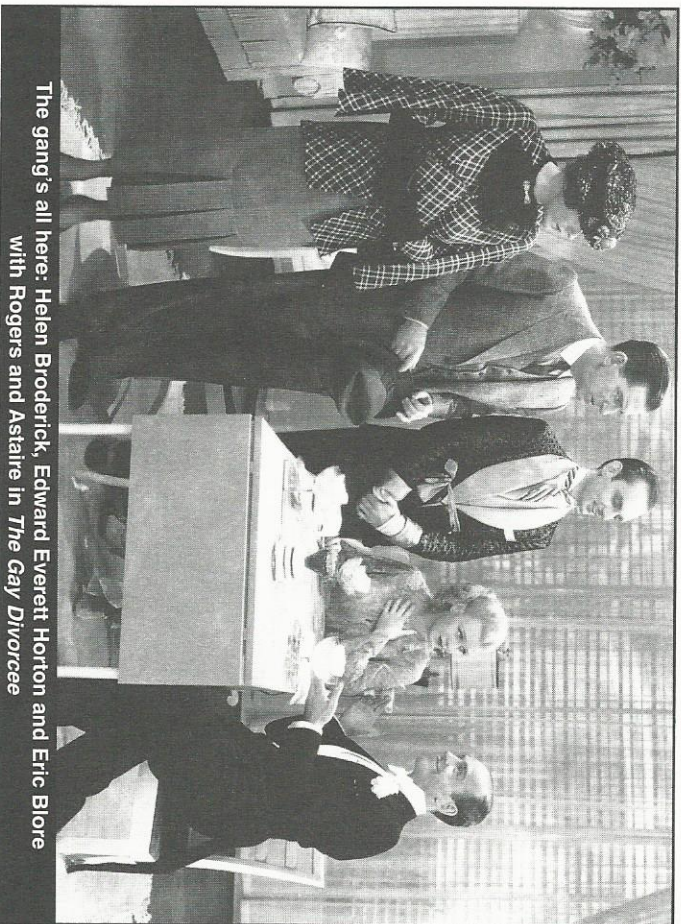
Astaire and director Mark Sandrich were so adamant about the dress that



When the feathers flew: Astaire and Rogers in *Top Hat*

Rogers stormed off the set and refused to return until Sandrich let her rehearse in the blue dress. Eventually, Ginger’s mother Lela Rogers rushed in to help and the wardrobe woman shook the dress until the looser feathers could fall out and be swept away. For the take used in the picture, some of the wayward feathers are hidden by the glossy white floor. Despite the production troubles, many people consider *Top Hat* the most sparkling film of the series.

By now Fred had complete authority over how his dances were staged and filmed, bringing a new freedom to the art. What’s more, he was doing more tap dancing than he ever did on the stage. He learned the broken rhythm style from Hermes Pan, who had picked it up during his youth in Tennessee.



The gang’s all here: Helen Broderick, Edward Everett Horton and Eric Blore with Rogers and Astaire in *The Gay Divorcee*

PHOTO: RKO RADIO PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

The reluctant team was as lively as ever but the productions were looking a little tired, starting with *Follow the Fleet*, an attempt to force the formula into an inconsequential plot about two couples — although it did include the beautiful “Let’s Face the Music and Dance.”

Fleet led to another wardrobe brouhaha, this time over a swirling beaded gown that Rogers estimated as weighing 25 pounds. When she whirled, the beads slapped against her and almost threw her off balance, and in the first take her bell sleeves smacked Astaire in the jaw and eye. As he recalled, “I kept on dancing, though somewhat maimed.” In retakes, he had to keep “ducking and dodging,” and no amount of re-staging seemed to help. In the end, the injurious first take was used.

After *Follow the Fleet*, Fred and Ginger movies fell into a formula — a successful formula, but the scent of familiarity got stronger each time. “My presence in a story makes it tough on a writer,” Astaire said, “because everybody expects me to hop into a dance.”

Astaire’s pleas to improve the scripts went nowhere. But a few of his suggestions were adopted, such as working music cues more smoothly into the dialogue and dropping final production numbers. He and Ginger generally rehearsed their dances eight hours a day for six weeks before major shooting began.

The results were stellar but the path wasn’t always smooth. In 1936’s *Swing Time*, the team needed to dance elegantly from a nightclub floor, up a staircase, and onto the second level for the

rest of the extended number. When Ginger removed her shoes during a break she saw blood and realized that she had danced her feet raw. Hermes Pan wanted to stop the filming, but Ginger asked to complete the scene. In all, more than 48 takes were filmed and the pair worked until 4:00 am. One take was spoiled when Astaire swooped down to catch her spin and lost his toupee.

Swing Time was Ginger’s favorite of the series, largely because director George Stevens treated her more as an actress than as a “clothes hanger.” Its lovely song, “The Way You Look Tonight,” won an Academy Award.

In *Shall We Dance?* they portray hoofers who learn to make music together on an ocean voyage, but not before Fred performs an “improptu” routine using equipment in the ship’s engine room. Fred was loath to stand in place

and sing a love song: as a result, the duo wear roller skates as they sing Irving Berlin’s “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off.”

Given Fred and Ginger’s enormous success in pictures, it wasn’t surprising that radio would come calling. It was more surprising that radio came calling for *Fred*. In the fall of 1936, Astaire became the star of *The Packard Hour*, dancing on a small wooden floor with a microphone close by, singing a couple of songs, and bantering with comedian Charlie Butterworth and bandleader Johnny Green. As in the movies, his delivery made up for his limited range: Jerome Kern said he would rather hear Astaire with one of his songs than any-else, and Berlin called him one of the best.

By this time, both Fred and Ginger were eager to prove that they could survive without the other; Rogers in particular came to resent the public’s implication that she was merely a Trilly to Astaire’s Svengali. She took a major step toward independence in 1937, when she co-started opposite Hepburn and Adolphe Menjou in the ensemble piece *Stage Door*. Conversely, Fred foundered alongside non-dancer Joan Fontaine in *A Damsel in Distress*, despite a Gerstwin score and support by George Burns and Gracie Allen. RKO had to assure fans the team of Fred and Ginger would be back, which led to 1938’s *Carefree*.

In some ways *Carefree* is the most smartly written film of the series, with a spoof of psychoanalysis and the couple’s first kiss, which Fred had suggested as the ending of a slow motion dream. Since the shot was in “slo-mo,” the kiss that Ginger called a “peck” seemed to last much longer. Mrs. Astaire joked that her husband was trying for an Academy

Award.

On each film a choreographer worked with the partners to straighten out the details, although most of the creative ideas came from Fred — often as he lay sleepless at four in the morning. A delightful number in *Carefree* has him dancing while smoothly hitting golf balls off a tee, an idea of his to show off his favorite pastime. Meanwhile, the tension on the set between Ginger and director Mark Sandrich continued. He not only favored Fred with his camera set-ups, he unfairly accused Ginger of needing singing, dancing, and acting lessons.

Carefree was a box office disappointment in the states, although foreign profits remained high. By now Fred was bombarding the studio with letters asking for the chance to become a serious actor, while Ginger was eager to stretch the dramatic abilities she had demonstrated in *Stage Door*. (She would show those skills even more demonstrably in 1940, when she won an Academy Award for her work in *Kitty Foyle*.)

It seemed time to end the partnership, and they concluded their run with the bittersweet *Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*, the couple who had popularized ballroom dancing before World War I. The script was bland, the dancing and songs were rehashes, and the widowed Mrs. Castle interfered with filming. Fans expecting another frothy delight instead saw Astaire’s character die in a plane crash.

At decade’s end, Fred and Ginger went their own ways and enjoyed no small amount of success. Fred performed opposite Eleanor Parker (*Broadway Melody of 1940*), Rita Hayworth (*You Were Never Lovelier*), Judy Garland (*Easter Parade*) and Bing Crosby (*Holiday Inn* and *Blue Skies*), while



Rogers and Astaire in *Swing Time* (1936)

Ginger followed up her Oscar-winning role in *Kitty Foyle* with the title role in 1942's *Roxie Hart* (the inspiration for the musical *Chicago*), Billy Wilder's *The Major and the Minor*, and the screen version of Moss Hart and Kurt Weill's musical *Lady in the Dark*.

Still, both of them may have longed for the old days when they brought out something special in each other. Then, serendipity—in the form of Judy Garland's breakdown in the third week of shooting *The Barkleys of Broadway*—forced MGM to find a replacement who could hit the ground dancing. Their answer was Ginger Rogers, who was actually perfect for the story about a married dance team who hit a rough patch when wife Dinah chafes under her husband's control and accepts a chance to perform drama. Songs that required a strong voice like Judy's were replaced, and the script was hastily rewritten while Ginger went into rehearsals.

The story behind the story might have made a better movie—at one point, Garland visited the set and stormed out when she saw Ginger wearing a costume that had been designed for Judy—but some of the magic of the Fred and Ginger partnership was still there after nearly a decade apart. Fans must have been grateful to see them together for one last time. In 1950, Ginger handed Fred a special Oscar, concealing that she had always felt overshadowed by her former partner. Once, she was asked why Fred got top billing even though she was the better-known name when they first met. "It was a man's world," she sighed in response. In her autobiography, she cited a cartoon about an Astaire-Rogers film



In 1939's *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*

festival, in which one character says, "Don't forget that she did everything he did—backward and in high heels."

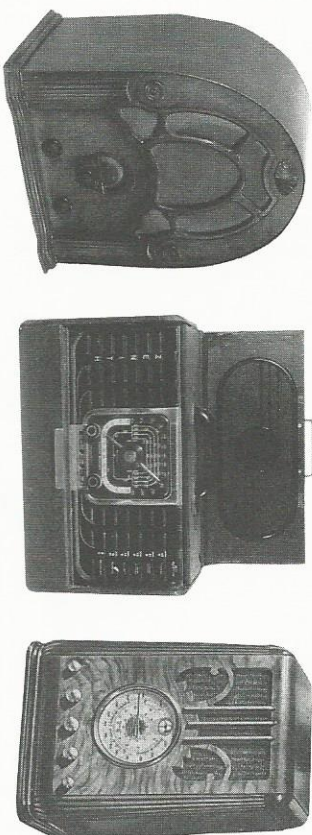
The popularity of their pairings continued for decades as their bubbly films were regularly shown on television, especially on New Year's Eve. In 1986, Italian director Federico Fellini released a romantic comedy-drama, *Ginger and Fred*, about the TV reunion of two small-timers who had once traveled across Italy by imitating Fred and Ginger.

Proof that inspiration takes many forms—and then as now, the films of Fred and Ginger were always an inspiration. ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on July 9 to hear Fred Astaire on radio, and on July 16 for an afternoon in honor of the 100th anniversary of Ginger Rogers' birth.

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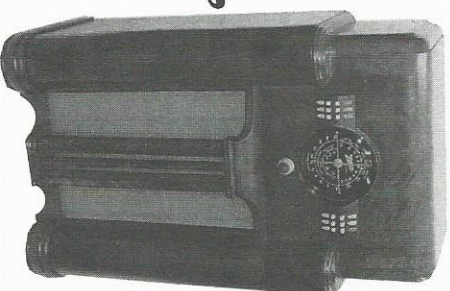
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THE KING OF SPORTS...

AND THE KING OF JAZZ

BY JOHN LEWIS

No motives. No jive, just straight talk. Few in radio demonstrated pure honesty like Ted Husing. He could never be charged with phoniness, compelled to tell the truth, on and off the air. That included whom he called a friend. But there was guilt by association. Hanging out with the right crowd helped the all-important public image — anything to get his name out among consumers. Then there was fame. No one walked the streets of the 1920s in America more famous than Paul Whiteman. If McNamee set the bar for radio announcers, Whiteman stood tall and wide, in a league by himself.

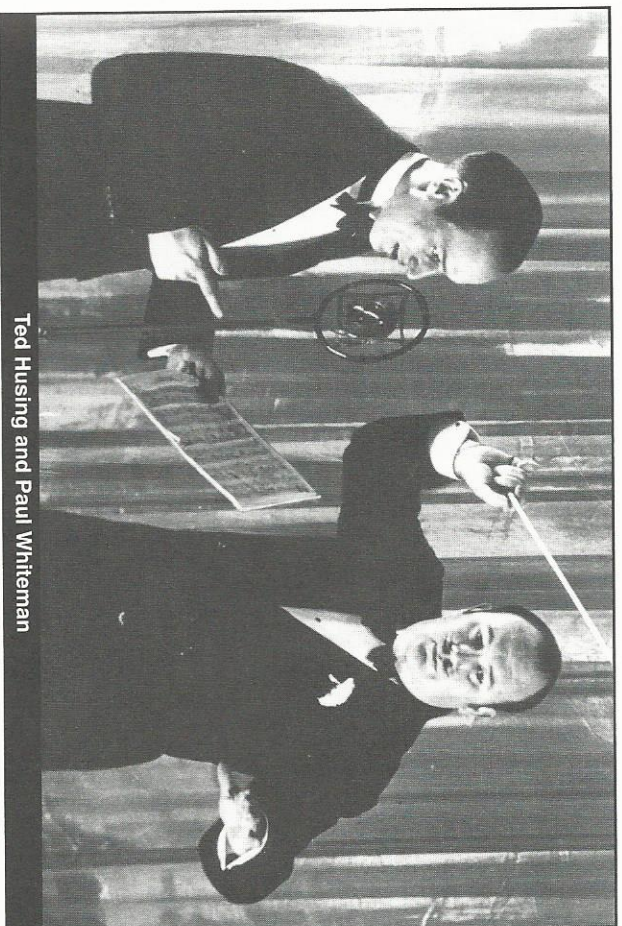
Raised among the mountains of Colorado, Whiteman was always more showman than musician. Marrying four times and weighing nearly 300 pounds, he was a man of excess. His animated features, round and jolly, three patches of thinning black hair about his head, double chin, and a pencil-thin moustache under a wide nose helped draw an odd stare if nothing else. But the Whiteman talent did not lay in obesity. A violinist, *John Lewis is the author of Radio Master: The Life and Time of Sports Broadcasting Great Ted Husing, published by Langdon Street Press. This excerpt is ©2010 John Lewis and is reprinted by permission of the author.*

trained in the classics, Whiteman heard his love of music as entertainment, not eccentric artistry. Short stints in the Denver and San Francisco Symphonies left him unsatisfied. Passion and excitement came from rhythms he heard along the Bay Area's roughneck Barbary Coast bar scene. Jazz, jazz, and more jazz.

Before Whiteman came along, jazz was still dangerous, untamed, unsophisticated, and perhaps too black for most of America. Progressive thought needed a human bridge to enlightenment. By infusing a structure and discipline into the music's improvisational roots, Whiteman unknowingly gave jazz the legitimacy it so desperately craved.

The bandleader scoured the country in search of the best and brightest. Bix Beiderbecke, Tommy Dorsey, Red Nichols, and Eddie Lang — some of the most respected and revered names in jazz history — all, at one time or another, played under the stick of Paul Whiteman. Adding a personal, attention-grabbing twist, Whiteman conducted with an irrelevant sense of humor. "Looking like a Dutch miller, he flicked a small baton, twitched an elbow, or crooked an eyebrow. Virtually his only consistent movement was to wag his head to the band's rhythms."

By the early '20s, they were in high demand, earning up to four digits a night. Still, upper-crust socialites by and large dismissed musicians with pitiful con-



Ted Husing and Paul Whiteman

tempt. Whiteman and his pearty standards changed all that with one defiant act. Hired by millionaire Caroline Schermerhorn Astor to entertain at her 5th Avenue mansion, Paul and his players showed up at the front door. Astor's butler tried to gently swish them around to more appropriate doors, the servant's entrance. Whiteman refused to budge.

High society gasped. "Either we go through the front door or we don't go in at all," he insisted. The orchestra played into the early morning hours, happy and significantly richer. "Without realizing it, Whiteman had demolished another barrier of society," said radio critic Ben Gross. "Thereafter the kings of jazz could consort as equals with the kings of automobiles, steel, or smoked hams."

Paul Whiteman and his orchestra epitomized the youthful glitz of the roaring '20s. Coonskin coats, high wire acts, nylon stockings, and the hip flask were underscored by hits like "Whispering," "Japanese Sandman," "Mississippi Mud," "Felix the Cat," "Ramona,"

"Three o'Clock in the Morning" and the ageless classic written by George Gershwin "Rhapsody in Blue." He billed himself "The King of Jazz." Extensive travel filled concert halls around the world. Recording contracts with (RCA) Victor Talking Machine Company sold untold stacks of vinyl.

Every man, woman, and pageboy in network radio tried lassoing Whiteman down to a weekly show commitment. William Paley's pitch was certainly not the first. Whiteman had heard it all before from countless execs and advertising agents. Fearing over-exposure, he kept his appearances to the medium few and far between. By early 1929, endless touring and burnout put Whiteman in a more receptive mood. Paley tracked him down during an engagement at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. "How I persuaded him I no longer remember," wrote Paley years later. "It was late that night or near dawn of the next day when he said, 'By God, you've sold me. I'll try it.'" Then again, Paley's stamina and charm meant

nothing without the promise of money, and lots of it.

Before chasing Whiteman, New York advertising agency Lennon & Mitchell promised Paley to back up their formidable trucks of cash to the band-leader's name, but only if he made the deal first. L & M had many clients, none more recognized than cigarette giant Old Gold. Their campaign slogan splashed across billboards and newspaper ads, aimed at countless smokers traveling America packed into cars and crowded trains, spoke to healthier benefits of inhaling tar and nicotine — “Not a Cough in a Carload.” The company jumped at the chance to sponsor the show, agreeing to pay Whiteman a weekly salary of \$5,000.

One additional thing that may have swayed Paul Whiteman to radio — the presence of the show's announcer. For sixty minutes, each Tuesday evening, the band was encouraged to play as many tunes as possible. A familiar voice, in between numbers, cracked jokes with Whiteman and read commercial spots at breakneck speed. The voice belonged to Ted Husing. The two had met before, hanging in the same social circles and drinking at the same speakasies like Billy La Hiffs. A sports enthusiast himself, Whiteman had become familiar with Ted's work behind the mike calling football, regattas, and other athletic events. Ted was gaining a reputation as the magician in front of a microphone.

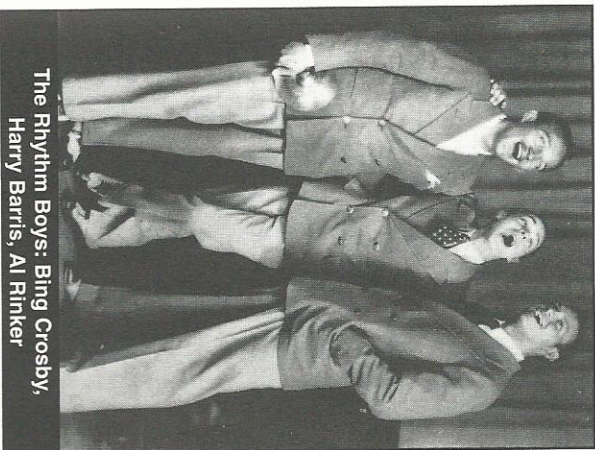
Smooth, elegant, commanding, he already won plenty of experience guiding musicians during a live broadcast. The famous bandleader was also well aware of what Ted had done to boost the career of Duke Ellington. Ted's broadcasts from the Cotton Club in 1928 put Ellington and his music in homes across America,

not to mention more money in his pocket and pretty women rapping on his door. Whiteman, like the Duke, enjoyed the pleasures of stardom. So did Ted Husing. Calling Paul Whiteman a friend was something people of the press took notice of.

The Old Gold Hour debuted on February 5 over the entire CBS chain of stations. The show became an instant hit, adding to the Whiteman phenomenon. More records were sold. More club dates were booked. For the first few broadcasts, the orchestra played “Nola,” by then a Whiteman standard. Ted loved the song for obvious reasons. He thought of wife Helen, wondering if she was listening to the radio and sharing the same notion.

Ted saw a new burst of energy join Whiteman's radio show in mid-March. Rejoined was more the case. Harry Barris, Al Rinker, and a wild man from Tacoma, Washington, named Bing Crosby trained into New York fresh off a six-month Vaudeville tour. They were known as The Rhythm Boys. The Party Boys might have fit better. On stage, they sang, danced, and mugged. Off stage, they drank, played golf, and fraternized with the opposite sex, all to excess. Gifted performers indeed, Whiteman felt The Boys were getting lazy and exiled them in August of 1928 to get their groove back.

Husing and Crosby hit it off immediately, a new drinking buddy and nightclub chaperon. Two years older than Bing, Ted took on the role of big brother. Ted recognized the unique singing talent in Crosby instantly. During smoke breaks, down hallway stretches, Ted talked up his new friend, planting the seeds in the ear of Whiteman to expand the kid's horizons. “Bing's got a great set



The Rhythm Boys: Bing Crosby, Harry Barris, Al Rinker

of pipes,” Ted assured. “Let him solo this week, Paul. The audience'll love it, especially the flappers itching to buy a few more records..Come on!” Whiteman finally agreed after weeks of badgering. Old Gold, however, nixed the grand idea, reminding the bandleader that they had a signed agreement with Johnny Fulton, another Whiteman vocalist. Whiteman never forgot why he liked Husing so much. “I think what first attracted me to Ted in those early days was that habit he never lost of going to bat for his friends.”

Crosby would have to wait for solos. The Rhythm Boys, in the meantime, were becoming a force in their own right. The trio's popular song “Mississippi Mud” often made the Old Gold play list on Tuesday nights. Bing's tomfoolery and distinctive baritone were prominently showcased. “Mud's” derivative lyrics changed over time, but in 1929, they were simply heard as a catchy little ditty:

When the sun goes down and the tide goes out,

*The Darkies gather 'round and they
all begin to shout!
Hey, hey Uncle Dud,
It's a treat to beat your feet on the
Mississippi mud!*

As the Rhythm Boys sang, Paul Whiteman and company played on. Off to the side, hands behind his back and beaming with fatherly pride, stood Husing. Greenbacks and notoriously flourishing, *The Old Gold Hour* helped put a permanent grin on everyone's face. “Those were great days,” Whiteman said years later. “Ted helped make them great.”

By late spring, stock in the Whiteman experience grew even more lucrative. Universal Studios wanted to shoot Paul and the boys in a musical film fittingly titled *The King of Jazz* using the medium's latest know-how — Technicolor. Whiteman negotiated a bonanza, \$50,000 up front, \$8,000 a week plus \$4,500 to cover the band, use of bungalows, swimming pools, the works. Together, Universal and Old Gold owners P. Lorillard Tobacco Company decided to milk the band for every roll of processed tobacco they could. America loved to smoke and America loved Paul Whiteman. A private ten-car revelry train was commissioned to carry “The King” and his entourage through the heartland en route to California. The PR machine called it The Old Gold Special.

Before reaching the West Coast, seventeen stops were scheduled to play concerts and live radio remotes. Every Tuesday at 9:00 pm, the show would continue as scheduled from a CBS affiliate station along the way. Whiteman had not forgotten Ted's stellar work and efforts to promote the band. The producers offered Ted a sparkling role in the

picture — announcer. Ted didn't care about typecasting. Prancing like a peacock, Ted felt a charmed life, a budding radio broadcaster one day, movie star the next. The President of the United States himself didn't get the same hype. The Old Gold Special triumphantly pushed off from Pennsylvania Station on May 24, 1929. First stop — Philadelphia.

Chugging across Pennsylvania, they next visited Pittsburgh, zigzagging over to Cleveland, up through Detroit, down to Ft. Wayne, then on to Illinois. Seven cities in five days. On Memorial Day, Whiteman's crew backtracked to play a special concert for 40,000 fans at the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway. Summer arrived in Indiana early, as it usually did on race day. The mercury burned into the upper nineties. The Old Gold Special arrived late, fighting to get through the massive crowds. Hustled to the spacious infield, Ted introduced the band for their first set. Grazing up toward the press box, Ted noticed something that made him think he had suffered a heart stroke. Dangling over the railing flapped a banner with the letters NBC stenciled on it. From a wooden booth sat none other than Graham McNamee and broadcast partner William Lynch calling the race.

The band drowned out the agitated announcer's vulgar reaction. What did McNamee have on him now? He, not Mac, was Hollywood-bound to co-star in a motion picture. While McNamee sat in a boiling broadcast booth trying to make sense of screeching engines and dust-filled tires, Husing, week after week, shared a stage with America's favorite music maker. Still, before leaving Indianapolis the next morning, Ted made a mental note to put the 500 on his May schedule for next season.

The Special moved beyond Mississippi during the first week of June. Stops, concerts, and radio shows in St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, and Salt Lake City along the way. On Thursday, June 6, 1929, Whiteman, Ted, and the boys pulled into Santa Fe Railway Station. Los Angeles, finally! Soon, musicians, bandleaders, singers, and radio announcers would become actors. But, as they were to find out, not every Hollywood movie glitters with gold. From the beginning, troubles cursed the picture. No one could write an appropriate screenplay. Whiteman was given creative control, turning down several scripts, unhappy with the way he and the band were portrayed. Studio head Carl Laemmle Jr. ordered his team back to work. Until then, there was nothing to do but wait. Universal held Whiteman and the boys hostage, with pay of course. Their only commitment: *The Old Gold Hour*. The boys hit the golf course and California highways in brand-new automobiles fronted by Whiteman.

As much as Ted enjoyed swinging five irons and shifting gears, he preferred to stay busy. Boredom was not the only reason Ted battled uneasy feelings. Director Paul Fejos had promised the role of the announcer to John Bolles, Broadway leading man and rising silent film star. When Ted found out about the change, his mood soured. The studio offered another role, something less significant. Ted balked, still miffed. "If they want to hire some other slug it's fine with me. I came out here to blow some dough and make a picture," he reminded Whiteman. "But, if it's all the same to you, I'd rather get back to New York where I'm wanted."

"Look Paul, I appreciate the ride out here," he said. "I'll find you somebody to

fill in for the duration. A real pro, don't you worry about a thing." But remember," he said with a resentful tone, "whomever I find, no matter how A.B.L.E. or D.E.F.T. he might be, he won't be Ted Husing!"

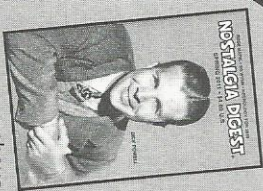
Husing and Whiteman worked the phones, hot to find a replacement. Columbia affiliates on the coast, *Variety* ads, even word around the lots helped fill the roster of possible candidates. More than 200 auditioned. Early in the process, Ted liked a round-bodied, slick-haired man named Harry von Zell. Originally from Indianapolis, von Zell migrated out to Los Angeles in search of work as a singer and silent film actor. But, he quickly learned that talking was where the money got made. Local radio station KYYW kept him busy with a variety of announcing assignments.

When word leaked that Ted was leaving *The Old Gold Hour*, he decided to take a stab at the network. Von Zell found himself waiting patiently in line as a 23-year-old unknown hoping to replace one of the biggest voices in radio on one of the hottest network shows. There was an energy about the young man that Ted liked right away. "The eleventh inexperienced kid I tried out had what it took," remembered Ted. "His name was Harry von Zell." Ted was still angry about getting the shaft from Hollywood and was anxious to get away but, von Zell remembered, "I've never forgotten this — despite his hurry to leave for New York, he stayed over long enough to coach me on how to work with Paul Whiteman, how to keep the people from the advertising agency happy, and a hundred other little tips he didn't have to bother giving a rookie. He was really a prince." Von Zell's virgin broadcast aired without a hitch on June 25, the first *Old Gold Hour*

without its original announcer.

Ted already felt like a forgotten man, yet he knew his destiny lay not from hanging around sound stages or introducing musical numbers. It would be calling the brutality of sports. His plans were to be back in New York by late June for the annual Poughkeepsie Regatta race and U.S. Open golf tournament at Long Island's Winged Foot course. Besides, it would be tough to kick the radionian around in his own element, on his own turf. "I'd like to hear John Bolles call a football game," he said before leaving California. "Goodbye Hollywood. Give my regards to Broadway." ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on August 13 and on September 17 to hear Ted Husing on radio.



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It was a beautiful summer evening. Everyone was home. Remarkably, we had a free night — no soccer, no baseball, no obligations at all. What should we do? We settled on seeing a movie. Next, there were family decisions to be made: Which movie should we see? Where should we see it? The kids picked out the movie: a computer-animated flick that everyone was talking about. We needed to pick the venue. The Pickwick Theater? A 3-D Imax? That new “luxury theater” with table service? It was a balmy 75 degrees that evening, the sky was clear and the stars would be out in full force. Who wanted to be indoors? For me, there was only one choice —

David Plier is an advertising agency executive and vice president of the Board of Directors for The Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago.

“Let’s all go to the Drive-In!”

We piled into the car and headed to the Cascade Drive-In located in West Chicago. We were only a few blocks away when we noticed the line. It was long, but moving quickly. The kids’ excitement began to build (to be honest, I was pretty stoked myself) as we drove through the admissions stand and onto the theater lot. We found a great spot, parked the car and attached the classic speaker to the car window. As dusk arrived and the previews began, we set our blankets and chairs outside the car.

Of course, a movie’s not a movie without snacks. So, we headed to the concession stand (a retro-cool blast from the past) to stock up on our favorite munchies: Sno-cones, popcorn, Twizzlers and a couple of hot dogs. The evening took on the feeling of a classic tailgating party as kids played and people ate, drank and began chatting with near-

by families. Classic Drive-In videos and refreshment ads filled the screen until the movie began. It was an enjoyable, nostalgic experience...back in the summer of 2009.

It’s probably obvious I have a soft spot in my heart for Drive-In movies.

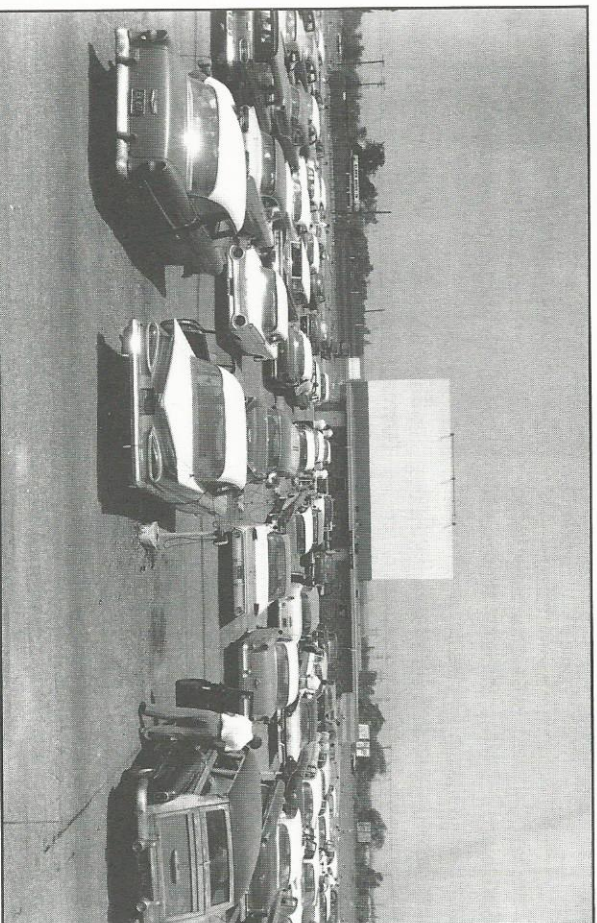
Flashback to August 1976. I was the kid and the venue was the old Twin Drive in Wheeling, Illinois. I can vividly recall the anticipation building as my Dad pulled our Ford Gran Torino station wagon into the lot. Once parked, our attention turned to food. Built in 1966, the theater had a classic snack shop that served standard movie fare; everything we needed to supplement the candy we’d brought from home — hot buttered popcorn, ice cream and ice-cold Coca-Cola. My Dad packed the water rafts we used at our cottage in Twin Lakes, Wisconsin so we could use them as air mattresses. We’d pop open the trunk to watch the movie as our folks sat on chairs outside. Looking back, it really seems like a much simpler time.

I returned to the Twin Drive many times in the early ‘80s when I was in high school. True confession — I may have stowed away a time or two in the trunk of a buddy’s car. Didn’t everybody? At least once?

The last film I saw at the Twin Drive (before rediscovering it nearly two decades later) was *The Breakfast Club*, John Hughes’ 1985 coming-of-age comedy and the top bill of a double feature. That night, it was paired with a classic 1974 horror flick, *Horror Express*.

While I loved the Drive-In when I was a kid, I appreciate it even more now. Although my personal experiences at drive-in theaters initially piqued my interest, the history of these entertainment venues fascinates me even more.

Nationwide, there are nearly 400 drive-in theaters currently operating in America. There are twelve drive-in theaters in Illinois. Three are in the Chicagoland area: in West Chicago, McHenry, and just south of Kenosha in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin.



Moviegoers have been watching films outside almost since the dawn of the motion picture era. Around 1915, "Air Dome Theaters" offered the public an outdoor viewing experience billed as "Movies under the Stars" and a new way to experience the still-novel motion picture. Features were projected on a large screen or wall painted white and patrons sat in folding chairs to watch the likes of Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford.

Chemical company magnate Richard M. Hollingshead Jr. opened the "Camden Drive-In" — the first official drive-in theater — in June of 1933. He tested the concept in his driveway using an old projector. That year, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued patent number 1,909,537 to Hollingshead's drive-in concept. That same year, Park-In Theaters was established as a company, paving the way for an exciting new medium. The Camden Drive-In lot held 500 cars — more than enough for the locals to enjoy the show. It cost \$30,000 to build and admission was 25 cents.

The first movie shown at the Camden Drive-In was the forgettable British comedy *Wife Beware*. While certainly not a cinematic classic, it nevertheless earned a place in history as the first movie shown at a Drive-In theater.

Early Drive-In theaters ranged from the very simple (e.g., a large screen on vacant farmland) to elaborate, boasting beautiful art deco architecture and ornate screens. Venue names were often both original and fun. Many played off the open-air aspect — monikers like Star-Lite, Moonlite, SkyVu (or Sky View) were quite common. Others were more descriptive of the experience — such as The Twin (for the double screen), Car-

Vu, or Motor-Vu — while others were simply named after the owner or the town. The flashy theater marquee truly told the story.

Sound is a major part of the movie-going experience, and it took nearly 14 years to perfect the delivery of sound for Drive-In theater attendees. Originally, sound came from a system developed by the RCA Victor Company, with three central speakers mounted near the screen and other "directional speakers" located throughout the lot.

The Sun-Val Drive-In in California was the first Drive-In theater to place speakers, controlled by row, in front of every car. The Riverside Auto Theater in Ohio tried to address the sound issue by placing individual speakers on a stand, next to the driver's side of the car. Unfortunately, the sound carried forward, making it difficult for those on the passenger side to hear what was going on.

Sound delivery was a challenge every theater owner wanted to overcome. A Texas theater owner even developed a system called "Sound of the Ground," whereby cars would pull over a metal grate and the sound would project up through the bottom of the vehicle. Close, but no cigar!

Finally, in 1946, RCA developed the Drive-In theater speakers that most people recognize, with speakers designed to be placed on the window of the car. This system offered premium sound and elevated the Drive-In movie-going experience.

In the last decade, owners of current Drive-In have started to offer stereo sound for your car or portable radio, in addition to the traditional window speakers. An FM transmitter on the property broadcasts the movie in full stereo, usu-

ally around 89-90 FM. However, for purists, nothing beats having the movie speaker in your car window.

Local theater owners also developed other ways to entertain patrons before, during, and after the movies. Many offered additional amenities, such as miniature golf courses, a playground for the kids, picnic and grilling areas, merry-go-rounds and more. In 1948, the "Brown's Drive-In and Fly-In" offered a truly unique experience — you could drive in or fly in! Small planes flew into an adjacent airfield and parked to enjoy the movie.

Many Drive-Ins were open year-round — an easy choice for venues located in warmer climates. Most of the year-round Drive-Ins located in cooler climates had portable heaters attached to the speaker stand for patrons to place in their cars. They were not the safest

devices — as warnings posted on-screen and on the units attested.

As movies grew in popularity, so did Drive-In theaters. Drive-In theater popularity peaked in the late '50s and early '60s, when there were well over 5,000 Drive-Ins nationwide. The local Drive-In was the place for great dates or simple family excursions. The popularity of the pastime inspired board games and even a home replica of the experience, "Remco's Movieland Drive-In Theater" which came with little film strips featuring Mighty Mouse, Captain Kangaroo, Heckle & Jeckle, and *Have Gun, Will Travel*.

During their heyday, Drive-Ins were one of the most popular entertainment destinations. Thus, "Let's all go to the Drive-In" was not only the tag line for a catchy commercial, it perfectly captured the golden era of Drive-In theaters.

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"It's Intermission Time Folks" was one of the many lead-in phrases flashed onscreen to advertise the refreshment and concession stands during movies. While snacks in regular movie theaters tend to be all about candy and popcorn, food tended to be a bigger deal at a Drive-In theater. Corn dogs, cheeseburgers, french fries, pizza, pizza puffs, and ice cream treats were typical movie fare — and often counted as one of the main features of the evening. Most theaters served their food cafeteria style, as do many of today's remaining drive-ins. If you're lucky, you might still find a photo booth, where you and your family can climb in to commemorate your retro Drive-In experience!

Of course, during the summer, it could get a little buggy. No worries — the ever-entrepreneurial theater owners had you covered! Just head to the concession stand where you would find the very popular Pic Bug Repellent, guaranteed to get rid of pesky mosquitoes. Pic is still in business today.

Unlike movies today, which show ads for national brands and local businesses, Drive-In advertising was, and is, all about the concession stand — and urging you to come back the following weekend for more fun.

In fact, the advertising that aired before and during intermission and after the movie is among the most popular nostalgic elements of Drive-In theaters. Most Drive-Ins today screen spots that were popular during the genre's peak, such as "Treat Yourself Now" or the "The movie will begin in 10 minutes" countdown clock. There were a variety of such announcements: "Shut off Your Lights," "Read Your Newspaper for Coming Attractions," "Time Out for a Snack in our Sparkling Refreshment

Building," and of course, "Guess What would taste Good to Everyone in the Car... Cigarettes, Here They Are!" My personal favorite is the classic animated hot dog, jumping into the bun.

In the late 1970s, the popularity of Drive-In theaters began to wane and the quality of movies deteriorated. Horror films and exploitation films — some made specifically for Drive-In audiences — replaced family fare and changed the Drive-In theater forever. Although a percentage of Drive-In theater owners kept the tradition going with popular (and even Oscar-winning) films, others cheapened the experience with less expensive product.

Drive-In theaters made a brief but respectable comeback with a new generation in the mid-1980s. However, the industry never again duplicated the popularity of its golden age. The advent of VCRs and cable television offered movie fans more affordable and convenient ways to watch movies than ever before. Theater owners saw value in their real estate and sold off the land to developers.

Drive-Ins and the early 20th Century "Air Dome Theater" concepts are currently enjoying a resurgence that started around the turn of the 21st century. The Air Dome concept is often used with great success at city parks and vacant lots in urban areas to show the latest films, as well as American classics. It's a great way for communities to come together and for neighbors and friends to gather.

Although something of a novelty these days, Drive-In theaters still draw hundreds of thousands of film fans every year. Family fun, great movies, a little popcorn, a pizza puff, and some Junior Mints, all with a friendly splash of nostalgia.

Life couldn't be any sweeter. ■

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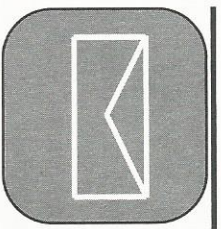
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E-MAIL—I'm 12 years old and love hearing about the old days. I've been listening for two years now and really enjoy it. Keep up the amazing work. —**WINONA ASHER**

E-MAIL—I just noticed this afternoon that your voice is beginning to sound like Chuck Schaden's. Maybe it is the program that makes the host, not the other way. *TWTD* has been a part of my Saturday afternoons since 1975. I am very happy that Chuck left it in your capable hands. When he mentioned he was retiring one afternoon, I hadn't heard that the program was going to continue, and was wondering what I was going to do from 1 to 5 on Saturdays.

Most people my age grew up on TV, but my family didn't get one until late 1960, so I grew up on the last days of network radio. Once in a while I have been made to feel old by hearing a program (*X Minus One* and Jack Benny) on *TWTD* that I remember from the first time around. (Actually Jack Benny was in reruns when I heard the show.) I remember a *Great Gildersleeve* program from the late '50s where he wished for all the money in the world. He then had a nightmare that all his friends were begging in the street, because he had all their money. I don't remember ever hearing that particular episode on *TWTD*. As a small child, I turned the radio off when Gildersleeve gave that laugh at the start of the show. It sounded spooky to me.

While I am waxing nostalgic, I thought I would ask if any Arthur Godfrey programs are

available. His program was on until my sophomore year in college.

Another of my memories of Chicago radio is Paul Gibson. Chuck did a program on him (I don't want to know how many) years ago, and I bought a cassette of several programs. I always thought of him as the most amazingly sophisticated man I could imagine. Civilized and literary conversation is in very short supply these days. Thanks again for keeping *TWTD* going. —**LARRY BUNCE**

E-MAIL—Just wanted to say "Hi." I've enjoyed your program for many years. I'm 54 and thanks to my Dad I'm a huge Old Time Radio fan. Also, I'm a cousin of Jack Benny. His father and my great-grandfather were brothers. We were far enough removed that there wasn't contact between our families but those who know our family always refer to our "Jack Benny humor." —**GARY BELL**

HUDSON, FLORIDA—I've been enjoying today's tribute to William Powell and Myrna Loy through the internet [*TWTD*, January 8]. As your show was ending, you unknowingly prompted my memory when it was mentioned that Myrna Loy performed in *Barfoot in the Park* in the 1960s. My new husband (at that time) and I enjoyed Ms. Loy's performance in that very popular play when it was shown in downtown Chicago. Thanks for a fun Saturday afternoon. —**BARBARA VAN WEELDEN**

And if you're on Facebook....

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

ELMHURST, IL—I must confess.... I am the person who called in to correct you on the pronunciation of "Cantigny," but I also think Ken Alexander did it even better, as I was not certain on which syllable the accent should be put.

Also, I thoroughly enjoyed listening to your interview of Peggy Webber [*TWTD*, January 22]. What a gracious lady! And, in mentioning the list of actors and stars with whom she worked, she mentioned my wonderful acquaintance, Parley Baer...and brought back to me a bunch of memories.

Parley—in addition to his many roles, including those on *Guns Smoke* and *The Andy Griffith Show*—was, for over 25 years, the voice of "Ernie Keebler" in commercials made for Keebler Company, for whom I worked for over 20 years. When Ernie "celebrated" his 25th birthday in 1993 (the anniversary of his creation by our ad agency, Leo Burnett), Mr. Baer came to Chicago to appear when the Corporate Headquarters threw its birthday party (such parties took place at all our facilities nationwide over the entire year). I was working for our Public Relations Directors at the time and had the privilege of assisting him from his limo to his place on stage and then back again after the event. We had a lovely conversation and his last words to me, as we parted, were, "if you're ever in Tarzana, California, please feel free to come and visit. The door is always open, and the coffee pot is always on." What a kindly gentleman he was! In fact, he even looked like Ernie, with snow-white hair and sparkling blue eyes...or perhaps it should be the other way around. Unfortunately, I never made it out there.

From this former "Keebler Elf," keep up the good work! —**MARY ANNE BOEHM**

EVANSTON, IL—I'm not listening on the internet, here in Evanston, but I'm able to pick up WDCB. Your Don McNeill broadcast [*TWTD*, January 29] brought back lots of

memories. I grew up in Sheridan, Wyoming listening to the *Breakfast Club* every morning on the local radio station, KWYO. I moved to Evanston right out of college, going to graduate school at Northwestern University. When my parents came to visit me in the summer of 1965, they asked if I could get tickets to the *Breakfast Club*, broadcasting at that time from the Clouds Room atop the Allerton Hotel. My parents and my sister did attend the broadcast, and my dad was even interviewed on the air!

The Clouds Room and the Tip Top Tap are long gone from the Allerton, but the neon sign remains up there. Ah, those were the days!

My thanks to Chuck Schaden and you for continuing these broadcasts. I've been listening since the beginning, even on that low power station in Evanston where Chuck started. —**DON GWINN**

HONOLULU, HAWAII—I wanted you to know that I listened to *Our Miss Brooks* just now (Sunday, January 30, 2011, at approximately 8:30 am local time) on *Radio's Golden Age*.

And the best part is, I was listening on my i-Phone! Pretty amazing...space-age technology (I'm told these phones have more "computing power" than was aboard Apollo 11... I don't know if that's actually true, but it makes for an interesting story) being used to go back in time and listen to entertainment originally aired decades and decades ago... Cool, yeah? —**MIKE FERGUSON**

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