



## ← BUD ABBOTT & LOU COSTELLO

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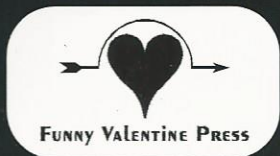
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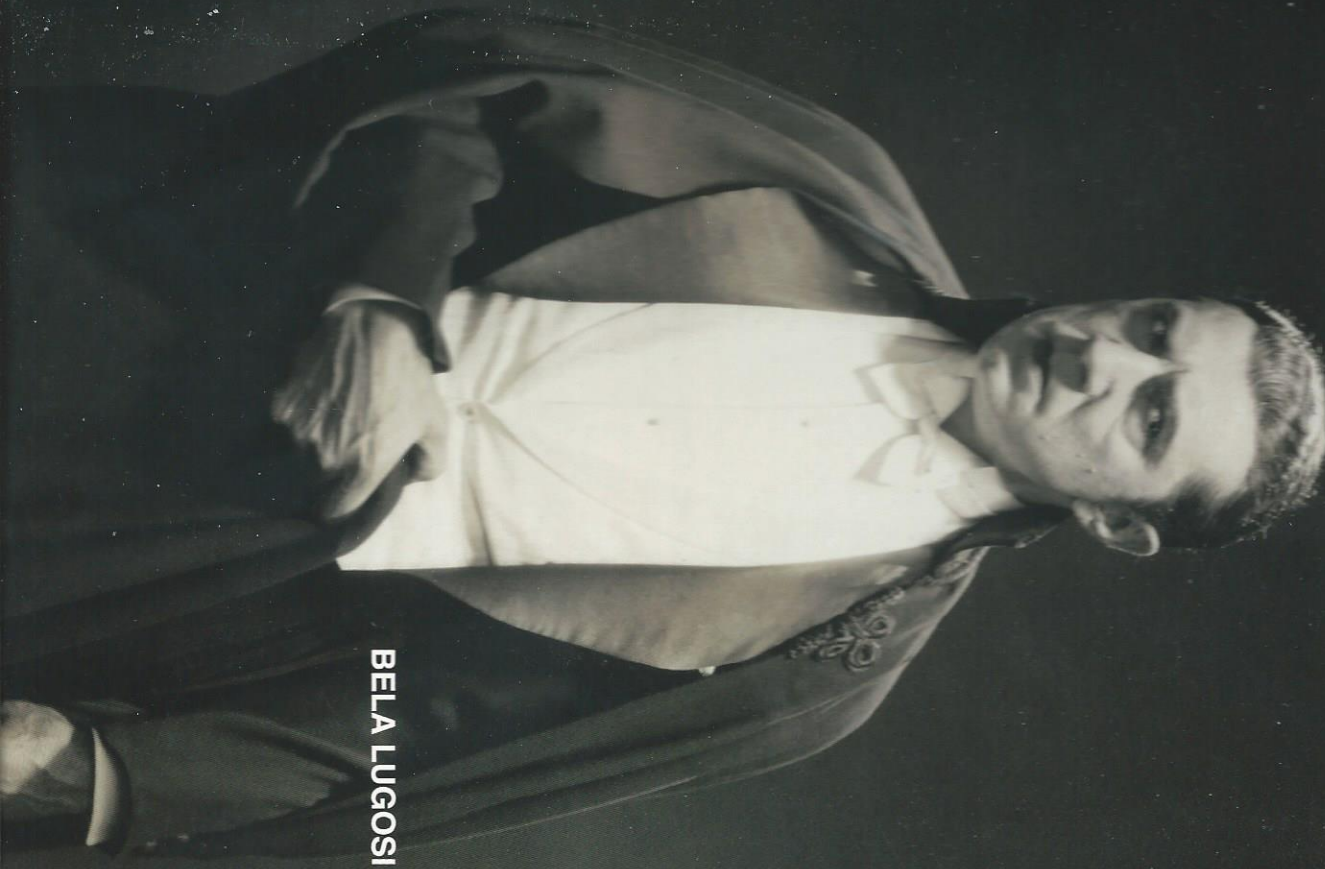
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Jack Benny and Chuck Schaden, 1970

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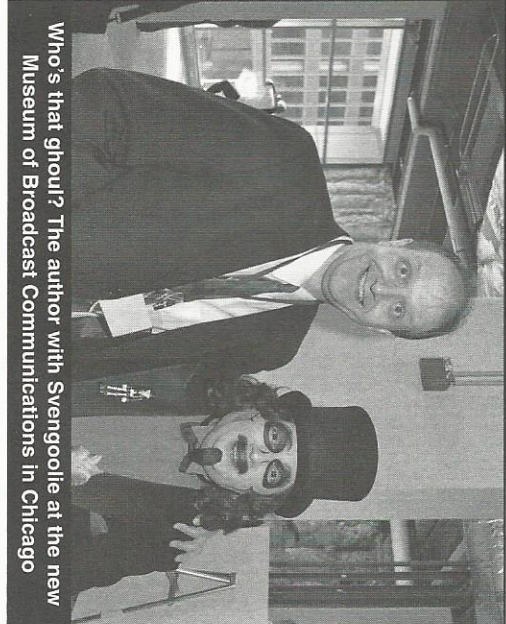
BOOK 37, CHAPTER 4

AUTUMN 2011 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

## Hello, Out There in Radioland!

This fall, in addition to our usual activities, we're pleased for the chance to report about some people and places with connections to this magazine — and to *Those Were the Days*.

In June, we found ourselves at 360 N. State Street in Chicago alongside some broadcasting and political dignitaries — including Illinois governor Pat Quinn, Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel,



Who's that ghoul? The author with Svengoolie at the new Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago

Harry Volkman, Roy Leonard, Orion Samuelson, Dick Biondi, and *TWTD* founder Chuck Schaden — for an "Open House" at the new Museum of Broadcast Communications. The Museum is in the process of building a new and permanent home and we were delighted for the chance to see both the progress made thus far and some of the exhibits that will be a permanent part of the Museum. In our case, it meant greeting guests (including Edgar Bergen's son Chris) as we gazed upon the original figures of Charlie McCarthy, Mortimer Snerd and Effie Klinker.

In the early days of the MBC, Chuck Schaden donated his collection of radio shows (some 40,000-plus programs) to the Museum, where they are now being digitized. Some of you might recall that for over a decade, *Those Were the Days* was broadcast on Saturdays from the MBC, where visitors could see Chuck Schaden and his crew produce the show live. (Chuck always joked that he'd become a "museum piece.") A lot has changed since then — including the host, station, and broadcast location of *TWTD* — but we hope that we might have a chance to see some of you at the Museum in the near future.

As it happens, yours truly also has a history with the MBC, going back a decade or so. As a freelance writer, I was pleased for the opportunity to help the Museum by

writing short biographies for many of the inductees in the Radio Hall of Fame, including such legends as Fred Allen, Orson Welles, Norman Corwin, Bob and Ray, *Inner Sanctum*, *Grand Ole Opry*... and Chuck Schaden. More recently, I've had the pleasure of sitting on the Steering Committee of the Radio Hall of Fame and being part of the RHO's live national broadcast as we inducted the great Studs Terkel.

This year's inductees into the National Radio Hall of Fame were selected with the help of the Steering Committee in an effort to reward some of the pioneers of radio who, for whatever reason, have been overlooked prior to now. They're performers and shows that should be familiar to those of you who read this publication and listen to our various old-time radio offerings. We're pleased to present this year's inductees beginning on page 6 of this issue — and we hope you'll tune in to *Those Were the Days* on October 8 to hear from each of this year's seven "Golden Age" inductees!

We encourage you to take a few moments to learn about the Museum of Broadcast Communications and the Radio Hall of Fame and their efforts to preserve the history of broadcasting — and find out how you can help. You can learn about the Museum at [www.museum.tv](http://www.museum.tv) and about the Radio Hall of Fame at [www.radiohof.org](http://www.radiohof.org).

Speaking of Chuck Schaden: Those of you who heard our July 23 *Those Were the Days* broadcast had the chance to hear Chuck return to the WDCB studios for the first time since his 2009 retirement. It was a pleasure to bring Chuck back to the microphone and to learn more about his newest project, [www.speakingofradio.com](http://www.speakingofradio.com), where he's in the process of posting his more than 200 conversations with men and women who participated in the Golden Age of Radio. Most of these folks are no longer with us so we're doubly grateful to Chuck for making sure their stories could be heard — then as now. In addition, Chuck plans to update the site each week by posting one of the more than 2,000 *TWTD* shows from his time as host — and those of you who remember when *TWTD* devoted four years to commemorating the 50th anniversary of World War II will want to fire up the computer come December 2011...

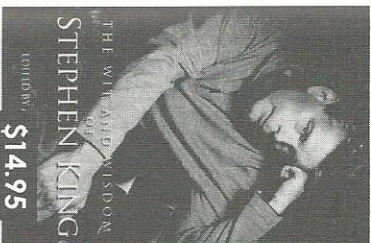
Long-time readers of this publication know Funny Valentine Press began publishing *Nostalgia Digest* in the Summer of 2005. During that time, we've seen increases in the cost of paper, printing, and postage. Due to those ongoing increases, it has become necessary to raise both the cover price and the subscription rates for *Nostalgia Digest* for the first time since 1993, beginning with this issue. At a time when many publications are scaling back on pages or production, we're still pleased to offer four 64-page issues (totaling more than 250 pages) per year — and even at \$17 for a one-year subscription and \$30 for a two-year subscription, the cost of the *Digest* still averages out to less than five cents a day. In addition, the *Digest* remains the only place where you'll find both the complete listings for all of our old-time radio activities and a full spate of articles about the Golden Age of entertainment! We feel we have something special with this publication and your support makes it all the more special.

Thanks for all of your support — and thanks for listening.

—Steve Darnall



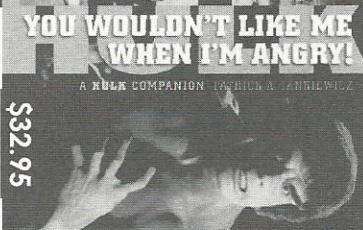
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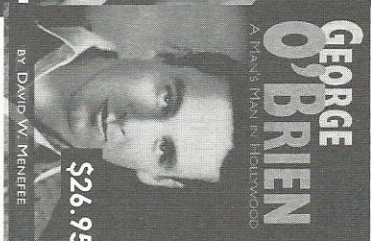
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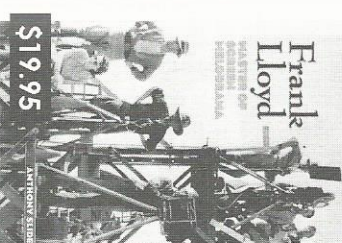
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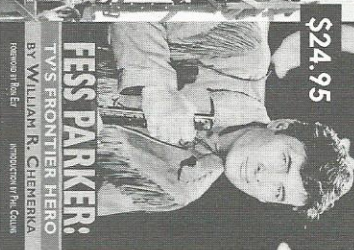
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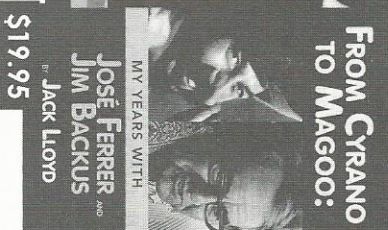
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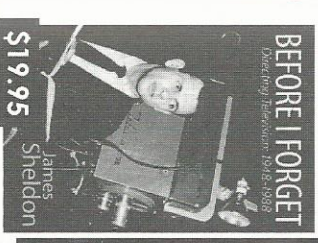
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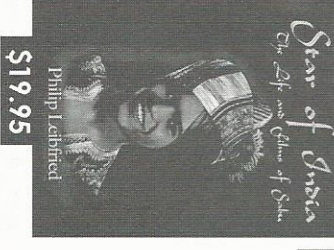
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A few moments with...

# JANE POWELL

*Jane Powell began her performing career as a child and was barely in her teens when she began singing on radio opposite Edgar Bergen and Frank Sinatra — and barely out of her teens when she starred in one of M-G-M's most celebrated film musicals, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. In a conversation recorded at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Chicago, we asked Ms. Powell when it occurred to the people involved in this Golden Age that they had created something timeless — or, indeed, if that had been on everyone's mind all along:*

No one ever knew what was going to happen. And it's happened many times — same thing with Broadway shows — you think "Oh, this is going to be a smash," and it falls right on its face; nothing happens. There is just no guarantee. It's the audience that tells you what is happening. You don't know what they want at that time. They may not like the casting, they may not like the subject matter, they may not like the story. There's no guarantee, unfortunately. [Laughs] I think people would do more things if they had that guarantee.

*But you must be aware that 50-60 years later, people are still taking about these films as representative of a "Golden" period.*

Well, and there are no musicals anymore. There are some on stage, but it's a completely different time. People think differently...but it's so wonderful that people are so interested in seeing the



older movies now. TCM has just brought so much joy to so many people. And it's amazing how many young people are interested in the older movies.

*You were starting in movies at a very young age, but before you were starring in movies, you were starring in radio.*

Yes, when I was two years old. I was tap-dancing and singing on a radio station in Portland, and then I had two radio shows when I was 12. Then, my parents and I went to Hollywood on a vacation and I appeared on Janet Gaynor's *Stars Over Hollywood*, which was an amateur show. I think it was at CBS, if I'm not mistaken. And I won the contest and the next day I was signed at M-G-M! [Laughs] It went very quickly.

*I suppose there are so many questions one could ask you about that, but I*

*have to ask what you remember of being the star of a radio show in Portland, Oregon at age 12. Were you at all daunted by the set-up or the atmosphere of the room?*

Well, I loved it, because they had a full orchestra. In fact, I had two shows: one was a 15-minute show, and on Sunday was a half-hour show. That's when radio stations had orchestras, and they had the main speaker, and maybe they would have a comedy sketch, and then I was the singer on it. And it was fun, it was wonderful.

I think I got \$25 a week for that — or maybe 15, I don't even remember! *Although that was probably a king's ransom at that time.*

Yes, it was. That's right.

*You came to Hollywood and did the show with Janet Gaynor and then, my goodness, to be signed to M-G-M the following day!*

Yes, it was...it was really kind of a shock.

*It must have been, because I'm assuming even at age 12, you were cognizant of what M-G-M meant.*

Oh, I loved the movies. I looked forward to going to the movies every Saturday. I couldn't wait. But I never thought that I would ever be doing that.

*And then it wasn't long after that, I believe, that you actually went to United Artists—*

Well, they loaned me out. I had never even had a screen test...and the producer, Charles Rogers, was looking for a young singer to do this movie. And M-G-M loaned me out, and it was wonderful, because I got a little experience. And I had never been in front of a camera. At all! And I was starring in the movie! Then I starred in the next movie, and then I got back to my "home lot."

Everything I did was always in Technicolor and I was always the star of it — which was amazing!

*Did you ever think "My gosh, I don't know why people say this is so tough. This came easy for me"?*

[Laughs] You know, living in New York and going to a restaurant, you talk to these young people who are waitressing or busboys or something, and they're there because they have a passion, because they want to study; they want to sing or they want to dance or they want to act. And I missed that I never really had the passion that they have.

I was just very fortunate. I fell into a tub of butter, as they say. Not only that, I went to the best studio, M-G-M. I think it's too bad that there isn't a studio system now for the young people, because it is a wonderful growing ground for everybody. And you're protected, and you have lessons, and they groom you. It's a schooling, really.

*How hands-on was the studio? I mean, you hear stories — particularly about young performers — that they would not only determine who you'd go out with, they'd determine the clothes you'd wear on a date, what you'd wear when you went to the radio stations.*

I don't think it was ever that...at least it never was for me. Sometimes they would arrange a date — but of course, I was kind of the girl next door. I wasn't supposed to date, so I didn't get too many of those. ■

*To hear this conversation in its entirety, tune in to Those Were the Days on November 12, as Ms. Powell recalls working on radio with Edgar Bergen and Frank Sinatra, working in movies with Elizabeth Taylor...and the time she visited Charlie McCarthy's room!*

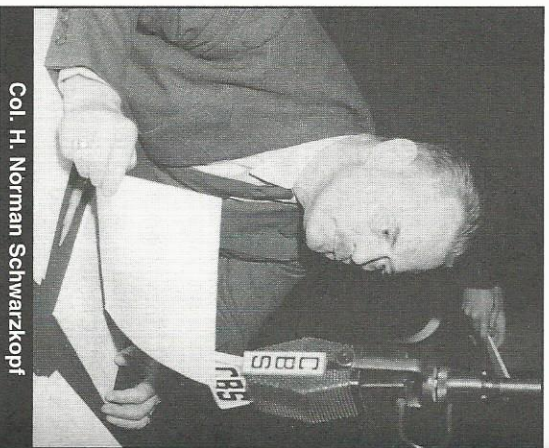
# RADIO HALL OF FAME

## CLASS OF 2011

### GANGBUSTERS

One of the first police shows on radio, *Gangbusters* was the creation of actor and producer Phillips H. Lord, who had envisioned a hard-hitting show which would counteract the gangsterism that had made inroads into America during the 1920s and early '30s. The show began as *G-Men* in 1935 until Lord renamed the series and focused on presenting true crime stories "in cooperation with police and federal law enforcement departments throughout the United States."

The show began with one of radio's most famous openings, one so loud and active that the term "coming on like gangbusters" was coined in response. Each show concluded by describing the capture of wanted criminals and a series

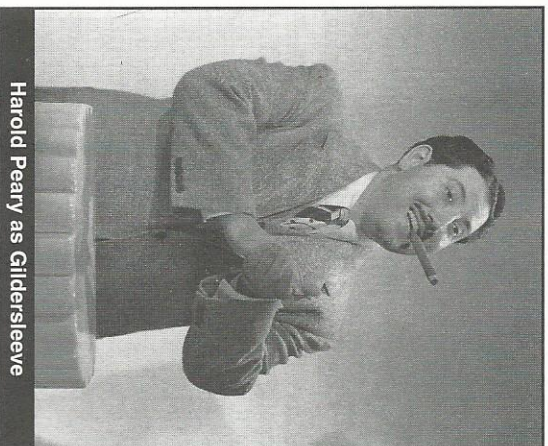


Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf

of "Gangbusters" clues," with information about those who were still at large. By the early 1940s, it was reported that nearly 300 such criminals had been

brought to justice thanks to *Gangbusters*. Lord was the show's first narrator but was later replaced by Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf (who had been superintendent of the New Jersey State Police during the investigation of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping) and New York City Police Commissioner Lewis J. Valentine. This influential show closed its last case on November 27, 1957.

### THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE



Harold Peary as Gildersleeve

One of radio's first family comedies (and the medium's first "spin-off" series), *The Great Gildersleeve* began when actor Harold Peary suggested that *Fibber McGee and Molly* writer Don Quinn create a pompous windbag who could do battle with the braggart McGee. In 1941, Peary took his portrayal of Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve from Wistful Vista to the small town of Summerfield.

In Summerfield, Gildersleeve

became city water commissioner, guardian to teenage niece Marjorie (played at various times by Lurene Tuttle, Louise Erickson, and Mary Lee Robb) and wiseacre nephew Leroy (played by Walter Tetley), and employer to housekeeper Birdie Lee Coggins (played by Lillian Randolph). Eventually, Gildersleeve developed friendships with Judge Horace Hooker (played by Earle Ross), barber Floyd Munson (played by Arthur Q. Bryan), and Mr. Peavey, Summerfield's pharmacist (played by Richard LeGrand), who could puncture any of Gildersleeve's arguments with a rueful "Well, now, I wouldn't say that."

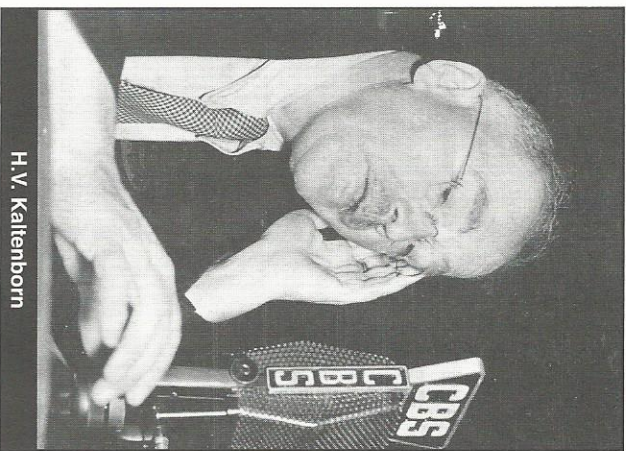
Gildersleeve enjoyed a number of romantic entanglements over the years, although the most enduring was his on-again, off-again engagement to southern belle Leila Ransom (played by Shirley Mitchell).

When Peary quit the show in 1950, Willard Waterman took over the title role of *The Great Gildersleeve* until the show ended in 1957.

### H.V. KALTENBORN

Known as "The Dean of American Commentators," Hans von Kaltenborn was born July 9, 1878 and was a veteran columnist for The Brooklyn Eagle when he began his radio career at WEAF/New York in 1923.

One of the first newscasters to offer commentary rather than simply relaying the day's events, Kaltenborn joined the fledgling CBS Network in 1927 and quickly proved his ability not only to talk extemporaneously but, in the words of CBS president William Paley, to "comment on and analyze what he had just said."



H.V. Kaltenborn

Kaltenborn's ability to speak thoughtfully at a moment's notice put him at the center of some of the biggest news stories of the 1930s and '40s. In 1936, he gave CBS listeners the first running account of war by broadcasting from a haystack in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. A few months later, Kaltenborn was in England for the first live broadcast of a king's coronation; in 1938, he stayed at CBS for 18 straight days to report on the Munich Crisis and the fate of Czechoslovakia.

Kaltenborn moved to NBC in 1940, where he offered news and commentary until 1951. He retired from NBC and radio in 1955.

H.V. Kaltenborn died on June 14, 1965.

## GRAHAM McNAMEE

A pioneer in the world of sports broadcasting, Graham McNamee was



Graham McNamee

born on July 10, 1888 in Washington, DC, and had aspirations to become an opera singer before joining the staff of WEAJ/New York in 1923. In an era when most sports broadcasts were helmed by newspaper writers, McNamee quickly made a name for himself through his vivid descriptions of the activity taking place. McNamee worked mikeside for a dozen World Series broadcasts and was asked by NBC to perform play-by-play duties for the 1927 Rose Bowl game, the network's first coast-to-coast presentation. In terms of sports, McNamee covered everything from the Indianapolis 500 to the famous 1927 boxing match between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney.

McNamee's ability to work spontaneously landed him several other high-profile assignments, including the 1925 inauguration of president Calvin Coolidge and Col. Charles Lindbergh's return to New York following his transat-

lantic flight.

During the 1930s, McNamee worked as an announcer on variety and comedy shows that starred Ed Wynn and Rudy Vallee. In the early 1940s, he hosted *Behind the Mike*, a series that answered listeners' questions about the inner workings of the radio industry.

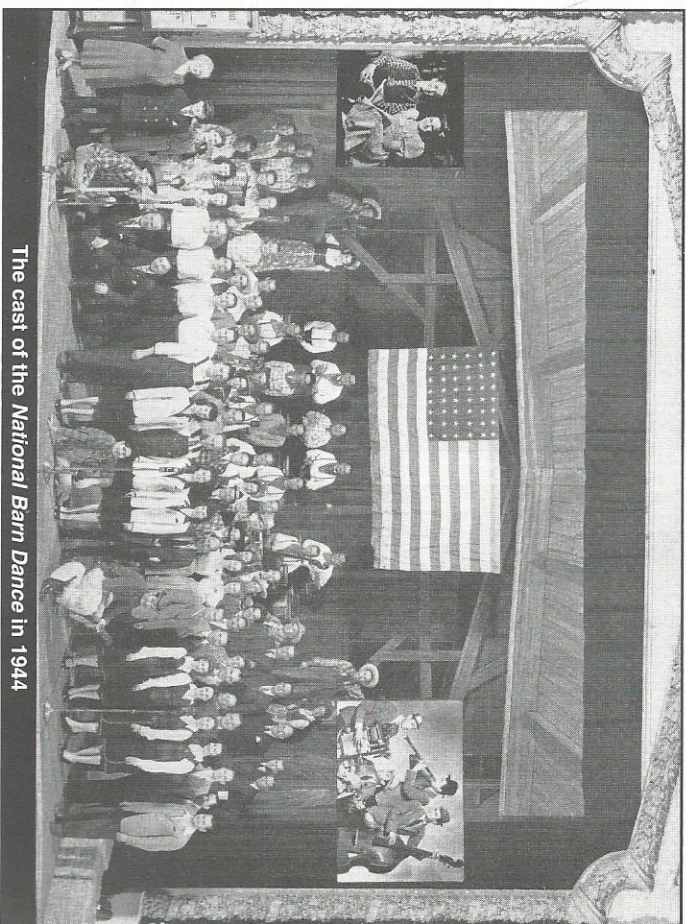
Graham McNamee died on May 9, 1942.

## NATIONAL BARN DANCE

One of the first country music programs on radio and a direct inspiration for the *Grand Ole Opry*, the *National Barn Dance* debuted over WLS/Chicago on April 19, 1924. The Saturday night show blended folk and country music with rural humor and was an instant hit among farm families seeking to relax on

a Saturday night, and among city listeners who had emigrated from rural communities. By 1931, the show had moved to Chicago's 1,200-seat Eighth Street Theater, where it remained until 1957.

From 1933-1950, the show was heard nationally over the NBC Blue Network (later ABC), with genial Joe Kelly as master of ceremonies. Among the performers who rose to prominence on the *National Barn Dance* were musical legends Gene Autry, Lulu Belle and Scotty (who actually met at NBC in Chicago and eventually married), Patsy Montana, Henry Burr, The Hoosier Hot Shots, and a young George Gobel. Comedy was provided by the likes of Pat Buttram and Pat "Uncle Ezra" Barrett. Square dancing was also a fixture of each show, with calls from Luther Osstebrink, a.k.a. Arkie, the Arkansas Woodchopper. *The National Barn Dance* continued on WLS until 1960 before moving to



The cast of the National Barn Dance in 1944

WGN/Chicago, where it lasted until 1970.

## RONALD REAGAN

Ronald Reagan was often referred to as "The Great Communicator." It was an ability that served him well in radio, in movies, and as the 40th President of the United States.

Born in Tampico, Illinois on February 6, 1911, Ronald Reagan was bitten by the acting bug as a young man. Reagan admired the "Fireside Chats" delivered on radio by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, offering what Reagan termed "an eloquence that ... reassured us that we could lick any problem." Such eloquence would have a huge impact on Reagan.

Reagan began his own radio career at WOC/Davenport in 1932, covering the University of Iowa's homecoming game against Minnesota. In 1933, he worked

for WHO/Des Moines, where his responsibilities included re-creating baseball games by using ticker tape reports.

In 1937, Reagan went to California to cover the Cubs' spring training and stayed to begin a 28-year movie career. During this time, he appeared as a guest on countless radio shows, including *Lux Radio Theater* and *Suspense*.

Reagan was elected President of the United States in 1980; during his two terms in office, Reagan followed the example set by President Roosevelt and delivered a weekly radio address to the nation.

Ronald Reagan died on June 5, 2004.

## SUSPENSE

Known as "Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills," *Suspense* debuted over CBS on June 17, 1942. During its two-decade run, the show utilized classic

literature, stage and screen plays, and innovative original works, all designed "to present you with a precarious situation and then withhold the solution until the last possible moment." The Peabody Award-winning *Suspense* drew some of Hollywood's biggest names, including Cary Grant, Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, Rosalind Russell, James Stewart, Peter Lorre, and Bela Lugosi.

*Suspense* producer-director William Spier was one of many creative helmsmen who encouraged innovation at all levels (including music and sound effects). Spier kept rehearsal time to a minimum, believing it would make everyone more alert during the live broadcast. The show's penchant for casting against type also allowed for dramatic turns from comedians and singers, including Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Lucille Ball, Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne and Jim and Marian Jordan (a.k.a. Fibber McGee and Molly).

Perhaps the show's most famous production was "Sorry, Wrong Number," Lucille Fletcher's tale about an invalid woman (played by Agnes Moorehead) who overhears a telephone conversation between two men planning a murder and tries desperately (and unsuccessfully) to stop it.

*Suspense* was the last surviving "Golden Age" network radio drama when it ended its run on September 30, 1962. ■

The Radio Hall of Fame induction ceremonies will be broadcast live on November 5. Tickets for this broadcast are available at [www.radiohof.org](http://www.radiohof.org). Tune in to Those Were the Days on October 8 for an afternoon devoted to the Radio Hall of Fame Class of 2011.

Uh, uh, uh, don't touch that dial! Stay tuned for great reads about OTR from Back When Books!

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Interviews with the stars of radio's "Golden Age" \$19.95

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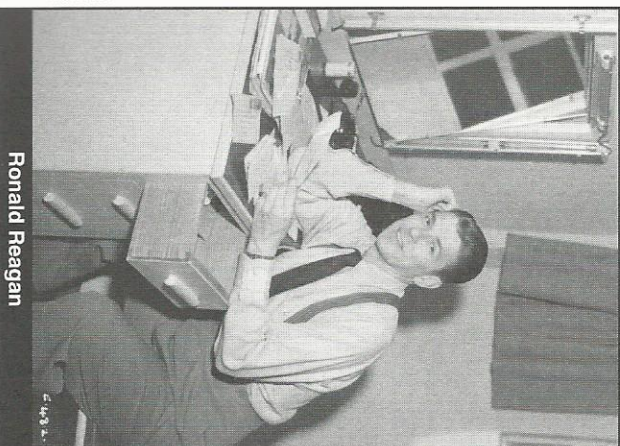
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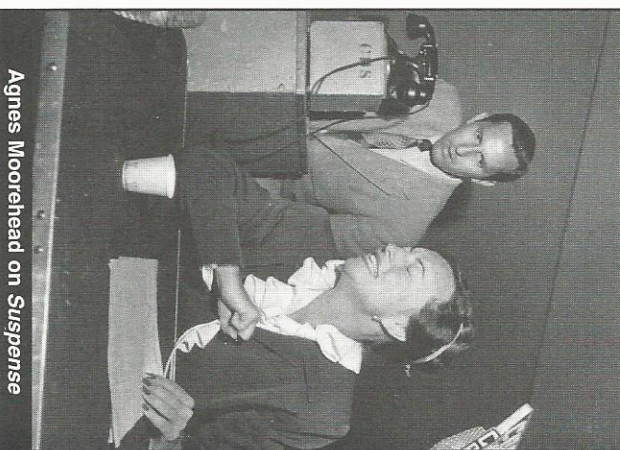
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PHOTOFEST



Ronald Reagan



Agnes Moorehead on Suspense

# COMEDY GOES

# TWO WAR!

## AN APPRECIATION OF ABBOTT AND COSTELLO'S *BUCK PRIVATES*

BY GARRY BERMAN

This year marks the 70th anniversary of one of the classic film comedies of all time, Bud Abbott and Lou Costello's *Buck Privates*. It deserves to be remembered, even praised, for a number of reasons.

Filming began in late 1940 (mid-December), taking advantage of the nation's preoccupation with the newly instituted draft. Hitler's armies were trampling across Europe at the time, and were already at war with Britain and France. In early 1941, it appeared inevitable that America would enter the conflict, and *Buck Privates* served as the first (and arguably the best) of Hollywood's many pep rally-style musical extravaganzas.

Abbott and Costello had become a favorite act in burlesque (even though they never used racy material), which led to their big break on radio, as frequent

*Garry Berman is a freelance writer and comedy aficionado from Westampton, New Jersey.*

guests on *The Kate Smith Show*.

Their first film appearance (in Universal Studios' 1940 release *One Night in the Tropics*) was designed to provide comic support. Although stars Bob Cummings and Allan Jones actually did a fine job of keeping the romantic comedy light amid a convoluted plot, the film does pick up considerably whenever Bud and Lou appear to perform one of their popular routines—including a truncated version of "Who's On First?"

*One Night in the Tropics* failed commercially, but Universal was happy enough with Abbott and Costello to sign them to a multi-picture contract. Remarkably, the team released four films in 1941 alone, beginning with *Buck Privates*.

Filmed in just under a month, *Buck Privates* was the first of the era's hyper-patriotic musical comedies, happily bringing out the stars, stripes, uniforms, and precision marching of eager draftees. It also set the bar exceptionally high for subsequent films of the genre. After all, here was America's hottest comedy team reaching the peak of their stardom, with the immensely popular Andrews Sisters

on hand to sing four classic songs.

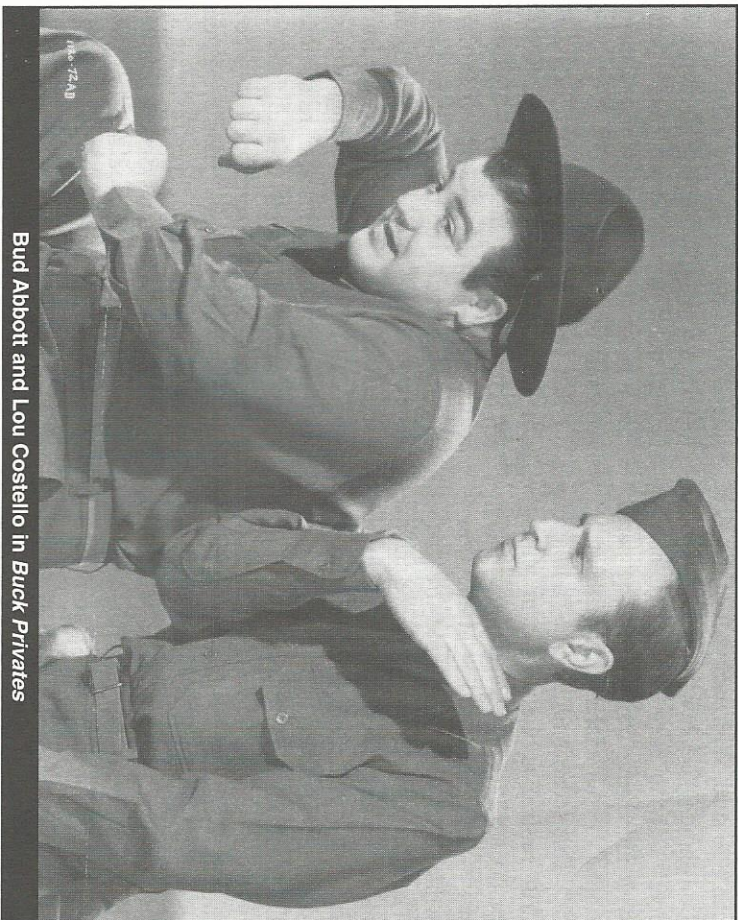
Even the film's subplot goes down easily enough. A romantic triangle between two competing recruits—one a spoiled rich kid (Lee Bowman), the other his ex-valet (Alan Curtis)—and the girl they're both after (Jane Frazee, looking adorable) is a cut above the usual filler between comedy scenes and musical interludes. Frazee even gets to sing a song, too.

But it is Abbott and Costello's film, and they make the most of their first starring vehicle. They brought in their trusted writer, John Grant, to incorporate their strongest stage routines into the plot. This was also the first of five A and C films directed by Arthur Lubin.

As the film opens, we see the team hawking neckties on the sidewalk outside an army recruiting office. Bud, as Slicker

Smith, plows through his fast-talking sales pitch while Lou, as Herbie Brown, shills. An angry cop (Nat Pendleton) chases them into the recruiting station, and, before they know it, the boys have unwittingly signed up for the service.

*Buck Privates* treats us to pure Abbott and Costello from the first reel to the last. One early scene, a dice game on the train headed for basic training camp, is one of the funniest comedy scenes the duo ever filmed. As Bud cleans out his friends in a dice game, Lou wanders in, wanting to learn how to play. Sensing an easy mark, Bud explains the rules and lets Lou roll the dice. But Lou has beginner's luck on his side, or so it seems, until he begins bandying about slang expressions for the craps game that a true novice wouldn't know. An exasperated Bud suspects he's being hoodwinked, but



Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in *Buck Privates*

GARRY BERMAN COLLECTION



can't be sure. With each roll of the dice, Lou shouts, "Let her ride" and "A Little Joe!" only to have Bud rough him up with increasing frustration. The perfect timing of their exchange is brilliant.

This scene is followed by a hilarious drill routine at the camp, in which a befuddled Lou fails miserably at marching — and even standing at attention — while Bud barks his rapid-fire orders. The film includes several more such set pieces between the two as it rolls along, such as a variation of an old burlesque sketch, "Go Ahead And Sing." In this, Lou decides to play his radio quite loudly in the barracks late one night, prompting his sergeant (Pendleton again) to burst in and angrily order the radio switched off. As soon as he leaves, Bud provokes Lou to turn it on again, which he does. Of course, the sarge returns to give Lou a good pummeling as Bud quietly sits by. It's only after the sarge

leaves when Bud again convinces his pal to turn the radio back on. This happens several times in succession, leaving poor Lou a mess at the hands of his irritated sergeant.

Throughout *Buck Privates*, Bud and Lou work smoothly and with great energy, confident that their tried and true material would work just as well on film as it had on radio and the stage — if not better. And, it should be said, students of comedy would do well to appreciate Bud Abbott's brilliance as a straight man, even as they enjoy Lou's more obvious skills as the put-upon comic. Indeed, when fans enjoy a scene of fast-paced patter between the two, they are often laughing at Bud without even realizing it.

As for the Andrews Sisters' contributions, their songs served the film perfectly, and some have remained popular tunes to this day. "You're A Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith" sets the stage in the

first few minutes, as draftees march and sing through a train terminal on their way to boot camp. "Apple Blossom Time" and, of course "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" are the two stand-out numbers, while the rousing "Bounce Me Brother with a Solid Four" ignites some swinging Lindy Hop dancing at the camp's canteen. None of Abbott and Costello's subsequent films boasted such an impressive and enjoyable roster of songs.

The reviews were enthusiastic upon the film's release on January 31, 1941. *The New York Times* declared that "any foolish notions that training for war is basically a grim business have been largely dispelled. If the real thing is at all like this preview of Army life — with Messrs. A and C dropping gags once a minute and the Andrews Sisters crooning patriotic boogie-woogie airs — well, it's going to be a merry war, folks. For *Buck Privates* is an hour and a half of uproarious monkeyshines."

The film was an instant hit at the box office, too. It was made for about \$180,000, and by mid-summer it had taken in more than \$1 million in ticket sales.

In retrospect, it's surprising how much of a head start *Buck Privates* had on the other wartime musical comedies that followed. America would not officially enter the war for nearly another year, in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. But by then, Bud and Lou had already made and released their military follow-ups to *Buck Privates*. In *The Navy* (with its rousing musical refrain "We're in the Navy, watchdogs of liberty") and *Keep 'Em Flying* were filmed and released in quick order. In fact, the second picture the team actually filmed in '41, *Hold That Ghost*, had its release date delayed, allowing *In The*

*Navy* to serve as a more suitable follow-up to *Buck Privates*. And, in a bit of irony, the ceremony in which Bud and Lou placed their hand and footprints in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre took place on December 8, the day after the Pearl Harbor attack.

Hollywood didn't begin cranking out most of its major patriotic-themed productions until mid-1942, when *Private Buckaroo*, featuring a cast of comic actors (plus the Andrews Sisters and Harry James), was released at the end of May. In June of 1943, Hollywood released *Stage Door Canteen*, crammed with cameos by dozens of stars. That same year saw the release of *This Is The Army* (based on the Broadway show from the previous year, with Kate Smith's iconic rendition of "God Bless America"), Ann Miller's *Reveille with Beverly*, and a pair of Kay Kyser vehicles (*Thousands Cheer*, and *Around the World*) that offered fictionalized exploits of Kyser's band during a tour for the troops.

But *Buck Privates* started the trend — and in a way, the 1947 sequel *Buck Privates Come Home* completed it. Of course, many more musical comedies set during or after the war were to follow. But as the horrors of war raged on two fronts, half a world away from each other, Abbott and Costello proved to be the perfect clowns to help Americans cheer, laugh, and even dance their way — if only for ninety minutes at a time — through what has been called our last "noble" war. ■

*Time in to Those Were The Days on October 15 to hear the Lux Radio Theatre production of Buck Privates — and for more memories about Abbott and Costello, turn the page...*



Boogie woogie bugle gals: The Andrews Sisters in *Buck Privates*

UNIVERSAL PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

# DAD'S ON FIRST

**Lou Costello's daughter recalls life as the child of a comedy legend — and her efforts to preserve the work of one of America's greatest comedy teams (with some help from Jerry Seinfeld)**

BY NATHANIEL CERF

In the spring of 2010 — more than fifty years after the conclusion of their professional partnership — the legendary comedy team of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello returned to the entertainment news with the release of *The Abbott and Costello Show: The Complete Series*, a nine-DVD set containing all 52 original episodes.

Behind this release are Costello's daughters Paddy and Chris.

"My dad's estate owns the shows," Chris Costello says, explaining the show's slow road back into the public spotlight after leaving the air in 1953. "It lay dormant for twenty-some years. Then, in the '70s, my sister decided she wants to get this thing going again. ... We were amazed by the people rediscovering the television show."

When the show first went on the air in 1951, television was a brand new medium for entertainment. Abbott and Costello were veteran stars of stage,

*Nathaniel Cerf is a writer and photographer from Glendale Heights, Illinois.*

radio and film; for television, the duo decided to revive many of their burlesque routines from the beginning of their careers.

"They did the two seasons, and it was a bomb," Costello says. "It just wasn't its time. I think it needed another 20 or 30 years."

In many respects, the comedy duo was way ahead of its time. The situation comedy hadn't been invented as we know it today, but *The Abbott and Costello Show* ultimately went on to have a profound influence on modern television comedy and its stars — including Jerry Seinfeld.

"He knew more about Abbott and Costello than I did," Chris says, remembering the time she met Seinfeld on the press junket for the 1994 television special *Abbott and Costello Meet Jerry Seinfeld*. "In fact, it was he who first said that *The Abbott and Costello Show* was the template for the *Seinfeld* show."

"I credit Jerry Seinfeld with keeping Abbott and Costello out there," she continues. "[He] said if it wasn't for Abbott and Costello, so many of these burlesque routines would have been lost forever, but through their films and their TV



Bud Abbott and Lou Costello

show, [these routines] were immortalized."

Even Chris — who was only a child when the show left the air — confesses that she doesn't remember the live routines. "You know, when you're a kid I really don't think you take that much interest in your dad's career," she says. "People always ask me about the burlesque, too, but keep in mind that I was only 11 when he died [in 1959]. Even though I have great memories of him, I don't think I would have been too interested in the burlesque years when I was six or seven. Oh, but God, I'd love him back today so I could sit him down because I'm a lot older and more mature and can appreciate what I couldn't appreciate back then."

Although she might not remember

much about her father at work, Chris says she has many wonderful memories about her parents and Lou's work partner Bud Abbott.

"Bud Abbott was one of the most gentle human beings on the face of the planet," Costello says. "He was a very mellow person. I had the pleasure of really being with him when I was 16 and drove out to see him and his wife Betty. I remember sitting with him, and an Abbott and Costello film came on, and I could just see him with this expression that I can't put into words."

"He missed my dad very much," she recalls. "They were like brothers. They had their arguments, but at the end of the day they had a deep love and respect for each other. I know what people say about the fights and this and that, but anybody who has been together for 25 years... The families have always remained very close."

Chris remains one of Bud's biggest supporters. "This man was one of the best straight men in the industry," she explains. "And I think you'd have to be a damn good straight man, pardon my French, to work with my dad because my dad could bring him right back. I always felt sad that Bud seems to get overlooked because he was such an integral part of that team."

Abbott and Costello are best known for their routine "Who's on First?" and there is a great deal of family lore surrounding its creation and performance.

“Who’s on First?” was written by Dad, Bud Abbott and their head comedy writer John Grant,” Costello says. “John Grant followed them to Hollywood, and remained their comedy writer through their film career. There are so many stories as how it was developed into a baseball routine. Some say it was because Joe DiMaggio and my dad were really good friends and it was for a Joe DiMaggio tribute.

“All I know is that my dad’s first cousin Lou... said that my dad had asked him to come over to his parents house because they were doing a new routine and he just wanted him to see it. So he said, ‘I went over there, went down into the basement and Dad and Bud start doing this baseball thing.’ After they did the routine, Dad said ‘What do you think?’ And [Cousin] Lou said, ‘I don’t think it’s going to fly. I don’t even know

why you’re going to do it.’ [Years later, Cousin Lou] said, ‘Thank God they didn’t listen to me.’”

“They never did it the same way twice,” Chris continues. “I think the longest running of that routine in the history of that routine was 14 minutes, and that’s because they got lost. They were in Vegas, and the whole audience was in hysterics. My sister said the whole family was ringside, but they knew something was wrong. There were beads of perspiration breaking out on Bud Abbott’s brow. I guess my dad had decided, ‘I’m just gonna throw in an extra line and trip him.’ Well, it tripped him so bad, he couldn’t find that departure point. And it went on for like 14 minutes, but they did it and the audience was absolutely hysterical.”

She also remembers the film her father most hated making: *Abbott and*

#### *Costello Meet Frankenstein.*

“I gotta tell ya, the film he hated is the film that Abbott and Costello are known by,” she says. “He thought Universal was selling them out, that they no longer had faith in Abbott and Costello so they rolled out all of the Universal monsters. He had a real hard time with that one — and I got that from the producer and director. He just felt Universal had really lost faith in them.”

Still too young to really recognize family friends as being anything other than regular guests, Chris said she was never starstruck and doesn’t remember too many people as “famous” people.

She does recall an encounter with William Bendix, who appeared with Bud and Lou in 1942’s *Who Done It?* before becoming the star of radio’s *Life of Riley*.

“I wrecked his car,” she admits. “My dad got me a little two-seater electric car, like a Thunderbird. And Bill Bendix came over to the house to show my dad his new car, and I toolled around the corner, said ‘Hi, Uncle Bill!’ and smack, crash. I ruined the back end of the car.”

She pauses a minute as a fresh memory returns. “I remember maybe Halloween, dressing up as a witch, walking into the den and seeing Jerry Lewis and scaring him off the couch.”

She laughs. “And then he went into his routine of being Jerry Lewis.”

Then again, perhaps holidays and trouble were synonymous with the Costello girls.

“I remember a story that my sister [Paddy] told me about Carole — my sister who passed away in ’87, the middle girl I think it was Thanksgiving or something, and Clark Gable came to the house with Veronica Lake. My sister went to the turkey and was trying to peel off the skin to eat it, and [Lake] smacked her



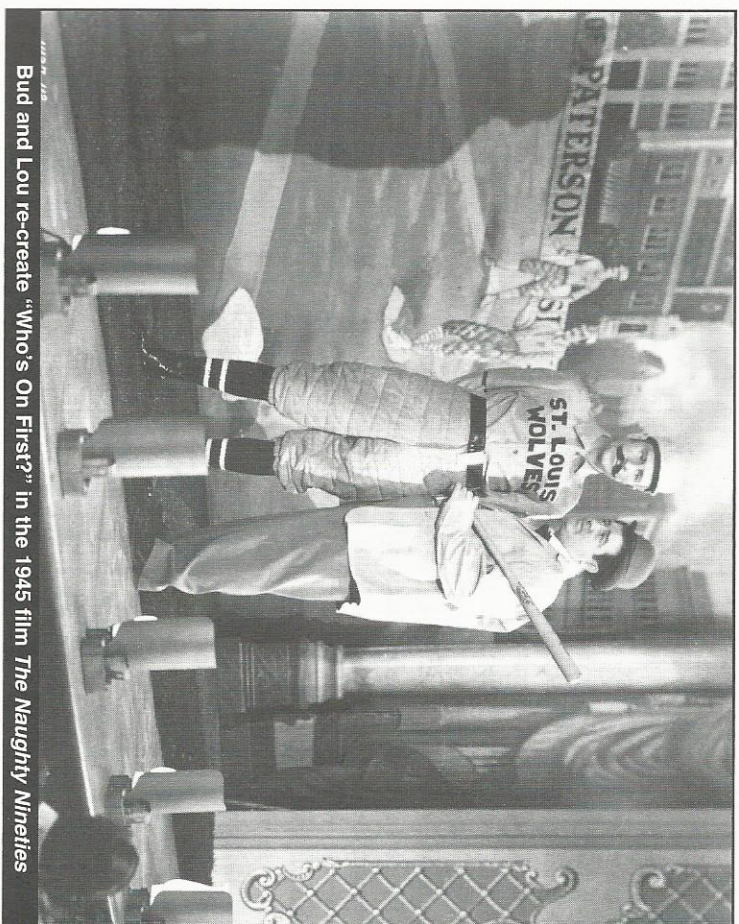
hand and told her not to do that.

“My sister kicked her in the shins,” Costello continues, “and went tearing up the stairs thinking ‘That’s it, I’m in trouble now.’ She was up in her room expecting mom or dad to punish her, and all of a sudden, Clark Gable pokes his head in and he looked at her and winked and said, ‘Good going, kid.’”

As a testament to the timelessness of Abbott and Costello’s humor, fans still gather at screenings and even cruises to laugh and connect with the legacy of the comic duo. In October 2011, Chris is scheduled to take part in a Royal Caribbean Cruise dedicated to Lou and Bud. She knows they would be honored by the attention.

“I think they’d be pretty happy that their fans would be gathering,” she says. “My dad would be grateful.”

*Time in to Radio’s Golden Age on October 2 to hear an Abbott and Costello Show.*



Bud and Lou re-create “Who’s On First?” in the 1945 film *The Naughty Nineties*

# I...am... THE WHISTLER!

BY DAN VAN NESTE

The date is May 16, 1942. It's early evening on the U.S. west coast and a weary Mr. and Mrs. America and their children are huddled around their radios hoping for a respite from their worries, if only for a few moments. An announcer interrupts the silence. "Wait a minute, have you heard the Whistler?"

They don't know it yet, but these lucky listeners are about to become transfixed on terror, about to witness the debut broadcast of one of the most successful programs in all radio history, one which would not only tingle their spines but challenge their brains.

Suddenly a hauntingly discordant 13-note whistle is heard, a sound which becomes progressively louder as a suspenseful music score is played. Out of the blue, a sinister voice proclaims, "I am the Whistler!" followed by a brief, terrifying preview of the program, and a formal announcement, "Tonight, CBS presents a

*Dan Van Neste is the author of The Whistler: Stepping Into the Shadows, published by Bear Manor Media. This excerpt is © 2011 and is reprinted with permission of the author.*

new mystery series, *The Whistler*." Then the macabre voice takes the microphone again to identify himself and state his mission: "I am the Whistler and I know many things for I walk by night. I know many strange tales, many secrets hidden in the hearts of men and women who have stepped into the shadows. Yes, I know the nameless terrors of which they dare not speak! And so I tell you tonight the strange mystery of 'Retribution'..."

The story involves convicted killer John Hendricks, sentenced to life for hacking up his wife and stepson in order to lay claim to her money. After 10 years of incarceration, he escapes from prison and returns home on a stormy, windswept night to retrieve a large sum hidden in the fireplace.

All does not go as planned. As he attempts to leave the old abandoned house with the cash, he is confronted and killed by what he believes to be the spirits of his wife and stepson returned from their graves to avenge their gruesome deaths. In reality the vengeful spirits are merely murderous mortals hired by John's greedy cellmate, who intends to claim the money for himself.

Although it's impossible to say just how many shudders cascaded down the backs of the radio audience that night as

they listened to the horrific tale of ax murders and vengeance, we do know the unique 30-minute program created quite a stir, guaranteeing there would be many more to follow. In fact, "Retribution" would be the first of 692 West Coast *Whistler* episodes in a series which would be heard each week for the next 13 years, until September 22, 1955.

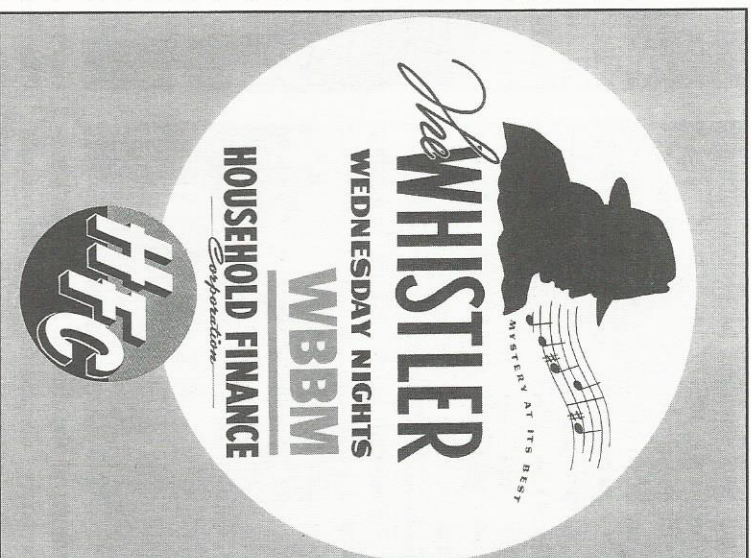
Broadcast on CBS, sponsored by the Signal Oil Company (later by Lever Brothers), the program was the brainchild of writer, actor, producer, and pioneer broadcast executive J. (John) Donald Wilson, who penned the initial episodes and produced and directed the series for two years. In 1944, Wilson turned over the directorial and production duties to George W. Allen so he could oversee Columbia's *Whistler* films and other projects.

The amazing success of *The Whistler* on radio is often attributed to a combination of traditional and non-traditional elements. An anthology series with different characters and storylines each week, *Whistler* episodes nonetheless followed a familiar formula. Like "Retribution," each program began with the spooky 13-note theme, the *Whistler*'s trademark recitation, immediately followed by a brief introduction. Throughout each half-hour episode, the *Whistler* character often interrupted proceedings to make comments or voice the thoughts of characters. He concluded each broadcast with an explanation of

events which were ordinarily not as they seemed.

Wilbur Hatch not only composed the music but also wrote the haunting *Whistler* theme: an unusual two-octave whistle impeccably delivered each week by Dorothy Roberts.\*

*The Whistler* radio programs frequently contained supernatural elements, but the tales spun by the omniscient *Whistler* were primarily crime stories chronicling the experiences of ordinary individuals who wander outside the boundaries of law, propriety, and morality to achieve an unsavory objective. The program's tragic protagonists were oftentimes driven to their crimes by a confluence of unfortunate circumstances and by the corruption of others, but theirs is a



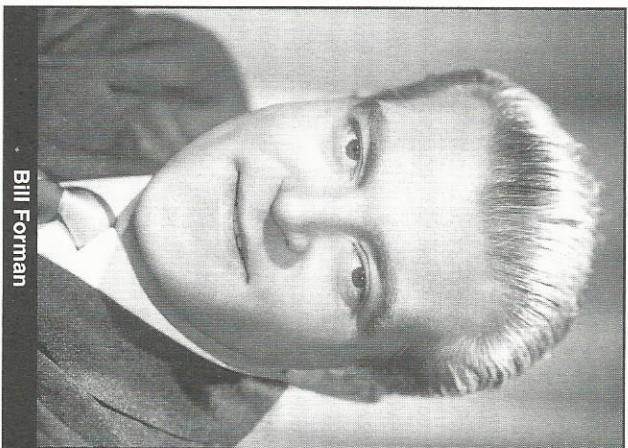
\* - ED. NOTE: And in the days before shows were pre-recorded, this meant that Roberts performed that whistle live every week!

conscious decision to violate, one for which they must a pay a price. Greed, selfishness, desperation, and madness were often motivating factors. Most perpetrators make a valiant attempt to avoid detection and punishment. Many seem to have succeeded when fate inevitably intervenes. In the end most are undone by their own avarice, carelessness, stupidity, and the hand of destiny, guided by the all-knowing Whistler.

Narrated in the highly distinctive second person, present tense (from the perpetrator's viewpoint), the liberal use of irony and innumerable plot twists and turns lent the "crime does not pay" morality tales a unique aura of disquietude which kept listeners interested and entertained. Unlike traditional whodunits, and most suspense programs, the criminal's and/or killer's identity was known at the outset. Mystery and suspense was derived from how they would be caught. The series' surprise endings (*à la O. Henry*) were also a major source of popular appeal and a challenge to its creators. Trying to guess the outcome of each thriller became a favorite pastime, one which kept dedicated fans glued to their radios and series' writers and directors on their toes. In a 1948 *Radio World* interview, George Allen discussed this professional challenge. "We know that many of the listeners play the game along with us and we love to have them do it... We don't pull our twists out of left field. We try to make them surprising but logical. Two-thirds of the scripts submitted don't have a *Whistler* ending. We have to dream those up ourselves."

Of *The Whistler's* many distinct elements none was more important to its phenomenal success than its secret weapon: its sinister, silk-voiced star/host, exceptionally portrayed by Bill Forman,

whose name was not revealed until 1951. Dripping with macabre irony, Forman's spooky, expressive tenor voice added an amazing air of suspense to the productions. The character was played at various times by Gale Gordon, Joseph Kearns, Marvin Miller, Bill Johnstone, and Everett Clarke. Supporting casts included many regulars who made so many appearances on the program they became known as "Whistler's children." Rotating assignments according to the needs of the script were Cathy and Elliott Lewis, Betty Lou Gerson, Wally Maher, Joseph Kearns, Joan Banks, John Brown, Hans Comried, Gerald Mohr, Lurene Tuttle, Gloria Blondell, John McIntire, and Jeannette Nolan, among others. During its many years on the air, *The Whistler* series also featured several actors who would enjoy notable film careers. Among them were Jeff Chandler, Frank Lovejoy, Howard Duff, Donald Woods, and Mercedes McCambridge.



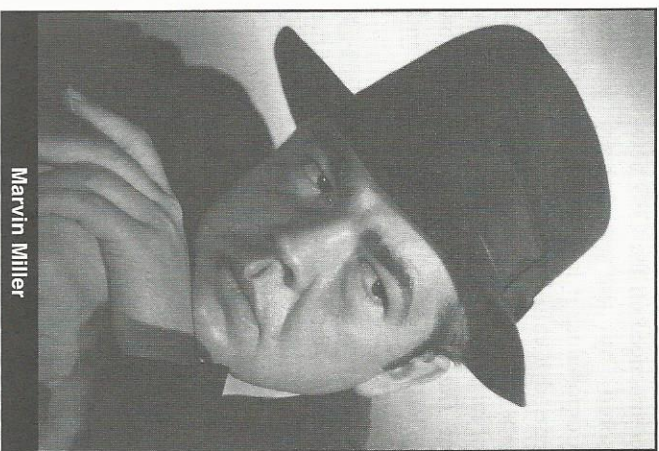
Bill Forman

PHOTOGRAPHER



Joseph Kearns

Similar to his soul brother, *Inner Sanctum's* fendish Raymond, the character was literally the glue which held the productions together. Like a Greek chorus he introduced the tale, interacted with his characters, commented on their activities, and wrapped up the story with a chillingly cryptic summation. Resembling the Shadow, Wilson's Whistler was a supernatural being with exceptional powers to read minds and see the future, entering and exiting situations without being seen. Also like the original Walter Gibson Shadow, the Whistler had a mean, vengeful streak. He delighted in the misery of his protagonists, laughed at their predicaments, and expressed a snide satisfaction in their punishment and/or deaths. Most believe the Whistler represented destiny, judgment. There is ample evidence to support this thesis, but it is a fate tinged with cruelty, a judgment untimpered by mercy, meted out in a retaliatory manner befitting a lynch mob



Marvin Miller

— not the steady, even-handed restraint we have come to associate with jurisprudence.

In an effort to heighten the suspense and improve the broadcasts, the innovative Mr. Allen continually altered the program to keep it fresh. He eventually discontinued the Whistler's dialogue with characters, and began relying on his cast to deliver each story's denouement. In a *Radio Life* magazine interview, Allen described the uniqueness of his program, and paid tribute to his writers and actors. "Listeners are always commenting on the fact that there is no real horror portrayed on the show — killings, screams, and attendant horrific elements are never played on mike. It is the actors themselves who deliver the impact of these dramatic elements through their own convincing interpretations."

The popularity of *The Whistler* eventually spread beyond the West Coast. On August 21, 1946 an East Coast broadcast

commenced on the CBS network, sponsored by the Household Finance Corporation. It lasted two years and 77 episodes until September 1948, when it was discontinued. In 1946, at the height of its popularity, a local Chicago version of *The Whistler* was also produced on WBBM, featuring local actors and Everett Clarke as the Whistler.

For those unfamiliar with the on-air *Whistler*, the following is a sample of the program's opening and ending narration from an early, George W. Allen-directed episode entitled, "The Last of the Devereaux," a tale of murder and revenge in the American South. Broadcast on July 23, 1944 (before Allen discontinued the *Whistler*'s epilogue), it chronicled the evil machinations of a *nouveau riche* man who achieved his most cherished wish by ruthlessly obtaining a plantation from an aristocratic family — only to be undone by an unlikely foe who is as cunning as he. It is included here to give readers a rough sense of the mood and atmospherics of each *Whistler* story.

The program begins with the standard whistle, "I am the Whistler" recitation, then an introduction to the story:

*In the bayou country of the deep South, a land inhabited by the descendants of early French settlers stands an ancient mansion called the Cypressess. Owned for generations by the aristocratic Devereaux family, the plantation boasts acre upon acre of sugar cane bending to the warm river breezes. Life goes on much as it has in the past. Beauty is everywhere, but danger too; like the treacherous morasses which lie beneath innocent flowers. Paul Viertel, who is definitely not aristocratic, has long wanted the Cypressess for his own — hopelessly it seems. Ah, but times have changed.*

*Paul is now rich and today as the heavy door of the Devereaux mansion opens, he believes his ambitions are about to be realized.*

A short scene follows in which Viertel hastens the death of aged, sickly Mr. Devereaux, who places a curse on him. The *Whistler* returns to the microphone:

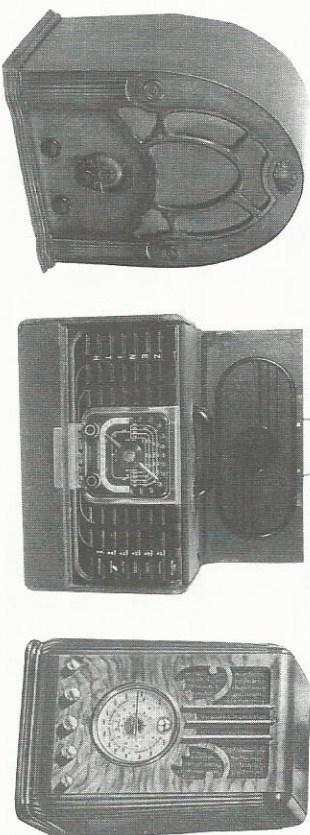
*Poor old Mr. Devereaux... but how very fortunate for Paul Viertel, now the master of the Cypressess. Paul is quite pleased with the way things are going. By nightfall Doctor Carson has already signed a death certificate. An inquest would have been such an annoyance! Then, too, there is this Miss Anne, young, fascinating Miss Anne — who at the dinner table identifies herself as Anne Martin, the Devereaux's housekeeper with a strong love for the Cypressess, its gloomy old house, and its swamps.*

As it turns out, the lovely, innocent Anne is really Devereaux's daughter, out to avenge her father's death and keep the estate in the Devereaux family. She succeeds but her victory is pyrrhic:

*And so Anne Devereaux got the Cypressess back in the family, [snide laughter] Yesss, she tricked Paul Viertel using every means at her command to break him in body and mind. She had an ally in the malaria of course, but Anne helped that along by giving Paul capsules of plain flour instead of quinine. Unfortunately for her, people cannot store up as much hatred as Anne without hurting themselves. And that's why when they found her after the storm, she was still laughing, quite insane.* ■

To hear *The Whistler* on radio, tune in to Radio's Golden Age on October 16 and to *Those Were the Days* on November 26.

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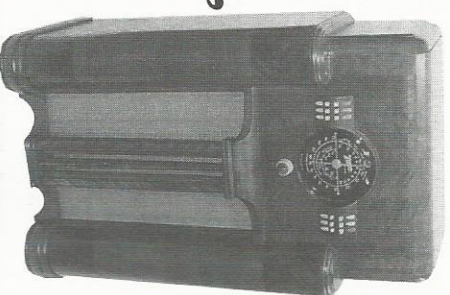
I have more than 50 years of repair experience and can help you get your antique radio or hi-fi system **working again!**

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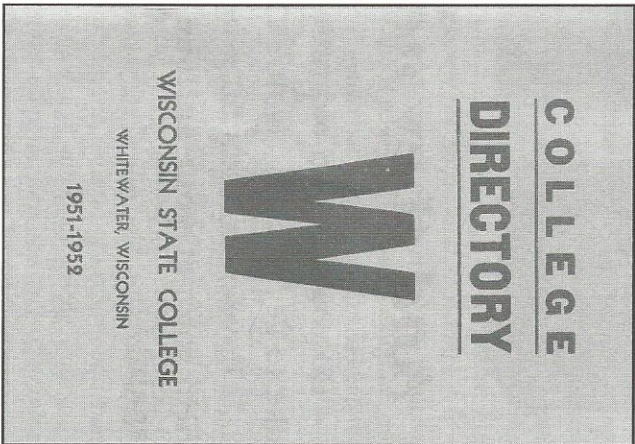
# SCHOOL DAYS

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

While going through the effects of my oldest brother Ronald after his 2010 passing, I discovered that he had saved a box of items from the early 1950s when he was attending Wisconsin State College at Whitewater. As I examined the contents of the box in greater detail, I felt like I was stepping back in time and walking in spirit on that campus.

Like a program at a theater, the 36-page *College Directory for 1951-1952* that I found near the top of the box introduced me to the cast of characters. How informal and friendly the listings were in those pre-stalking days, with home addresses and phone numbers provided for every student and member of the faculty. (Dial telephones were not installed until the spring of 1954, so — as on *Vic and Sade* and other radio shows — callers politely told an operator “894J, please” and politely waited to be connected to pal or prof.) The box ads that ran along the bottom of the pages told

*Clair Schulz is a writer and radio fan from Muskego, Wisconsin.*



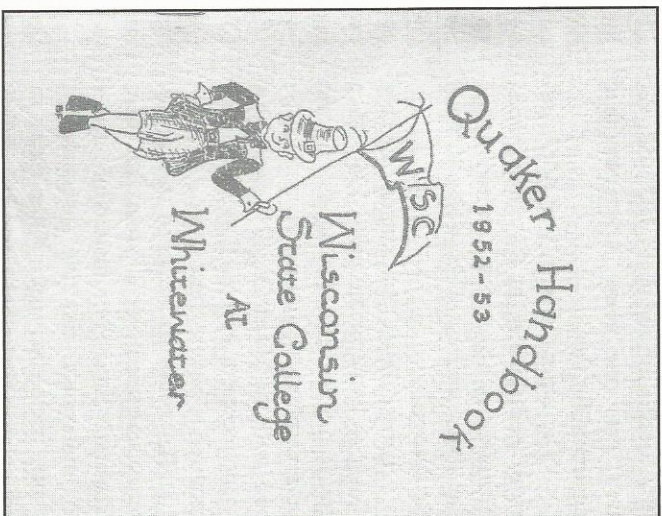
readers to “patronize our good friends, the advertisers,” who often did double duty: Hickey’s (furniture and funeral service), Treutel’s (hardware and gifts), Kettwig’s (appliances and records), and Mayer’s Lubratorium, offering gasoline, oils, used tires, batteries, accessories, Christmas trees “and a lot of other stuff.” Contrary to the current practice of auto

merchants who employ euphemisms like “pre-owned” to describe their inventory, Ketterhagen Motor Sales candidly and cordially promoted “Good and Bad Used Cars.”

Students who disregarded the rules and regulations printed in the *1952-1953 Quaker Handbook* did so at their own peril. Just neglecting to pay fines accrued at the College Library by the end of the month resulted in being barred from attending classes until debts had been cleared with the librarian. The edict against alcoholic beverages in rooms even extended to homeowners, who could lose their approved status if they turned a blind eye to illegal carousing over their heads or under their noses. No punishment was cited for those who disregarded the commandment “Single men and women students are not permitted to live in the same house,” although the threat of having to wear a scarlet letter on a sweater or jacket may have been implied.

Men had no posted hours, yet curfew tolled for coeds at 10:30 pm from Sunday through Thursday, and at 12:30 am on Friday and Saturday. Girls “should not smoke on the campus or along the streets” and “never wear slacks, jeans, or clothes of similar nature on the campus.” The double standard undoubtedly irked some women then, yet the guidelines of “Simplicity with neatness is the style” and “Common sense is the rule” suggest that mindful individuality, not mindless conformity, was in fashion.

Regarding classroom and personal conduct, the counsel given to both sexes in those pages could not be more explicit: Do your own work. Be responsible for your behavior. Retain your self-respect and the respect of others.



Upon withdrawing the stockpile of nearly every issue of the student newspaper, *The Royal Purple*, published during Ron’s freshman, junior, and senior years, I uncovered the real buried treasure in the box. Turning over those browning but not-yet-crumbling pages is the next best thing to boarding a magic carpet to ride back to the Whitewater of six decades ago.

Just as the major urban newspapers of the day carried accounts of the conflict in Korea, so the front pages of *The Royal Purple* featured articles focusing on draft postponements, notices of assemblies on Selective Service Exams, the possibility of women being drafted, and even the effect on athletics (“Four Lettermen Lost to Uncle Sam”). The war reached out and touched the faculty as well: the March 13, 1951 paper reported that biology professor Joseph Chopp was being recalled to service in the Air Force Reserve. “College or Korea?”, the question asked

in a headline in the April 28, 1953 edition, was one many Americans had answered for them.

(The other "K word" of 1953 surfaced occasionally in the inner pages. Thirty years before Sue Grafton started her alphabet series of mysteries, K stood for *Kinsey*.)

Tuberculosis, an enemy lurking closer to home in the early 1950s than any Red Scare real or imagined, figured in a number of informative articles — and, with the March 20, 1951 issue, in a pronouncement in that all students were required to have a chest x-ray.

The editorials on page two sometimes addressed global issues, but more frequently focused on matters of interest to undergrads, like the insecurity of youth, inadequate parking, the fixing of collegiate basketball games, safety reminders to lead-footed drivers, amending the policy regarding cutting classes, the need for more foreign students, and the lack of weekend recreational facilities. Activists who seethed with anger or angst during the campus upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s may scoff at the white-bread blandness of the McCarthy Era.

Even so, they might be speechless if asked to recall how many editorials they have read in a newspaper published by students at a public university in which citizens are encouraged to give thanks and pray during the Thanksgiving break, as occurred in a 1952 RP issue. These papers are not boiling over with impassioned appeals to take over administrative buildings, but they do recall a time (in 1953) when a college band could boldly march on an athletic field, line up in the shape of a cross during a halftime show, and unabashedly play "I Believe" without fear of stepping on anyone's toes.

Sports did not tower over other campus activities as is common today. The team played just six games (quaintly listed as "Here" and "There" in schedules, not "Home" and "Away") with seasons concluding no later than the first Saturday in November. Grantland Rice (who was still alive during those years) probably would have approved of the eye-grabbing headlines that were still in vogue then, like the one that topped the back page of the October 28, 1952 issue: "Fighting Quaker Eleven Downs Eau Claire State Gridlers." (The name Quakers has since been replaced by Warhawks, a nickname more appropriate for athletes engaged in forearm-to-sternum combat.)

When the front page of the December 19, 1950 *Royal Purple* trumpeted the headline "John Hagen is First to Sign Contract" the news was not about a pro prospect inking a three-year pact for seven figures. Instead, readers learned of John's agreement to teach at Darien High School, replacing a man recently inducted into the Army.

The undisclosed salary Hagen received for his duties — teaching typing, physical education, bookkeeping, and business math, while also coaching softball, basketball, and football — certainly amounted to less than \$3,500 per annum. People living in the twenty-first century who are accustomed to news and financial reports that begin with "Numbers were down" should attend to the way-down figures in Whitewater six decades ago. Young married couples renting apartments at \$23. Tuition for the fall 1951 semester set at \$33. Taxi rates of two bits to go anyplace in town (or ten cents each for five or more students willing to rub shoulders). Blouses at the Smart Shop priced from \$2.95 to \$4.95.

A Franklin half dollar paid for the plate lunch at the Goal Post. Men's gabardine suits at Lettingwell's (with an extra pair of pants) sold for \$29.50. But even in times of low prices and meager wages, there was a way to make big bucks quickly. In the fall of 1950, a prominent ad for Ray Herro's Popcorn Stand presented this intrepid challenge: "We will pay \$1,000 to anyone who can prove we season our popcorn with anything but pure creamery butter." (The villain in the dairy state was contraband oleomargarine, not artery-clogging fatty oils.)

There was no better place to gobble popcorn than at The Strand, where moviegoers were treated to multiple appearances by Bud and Lou, Dean and Jerry, Ma and Pa Kettle, the Bowery Boys, Roy and Trigger, Bob and Bing, the mule named Francis and the Donald surnamed O'Connor. *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, *High Noon*, *From Here to Eternity*, *The Bad and the Beautiful*, *Shane*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Calamity Jane*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and just about other every notable film of those years stopped in town for at least two days. No paper currency was needed to gain admission to the theater, just four dimes for adults, six nickels for students, and twelve pennies for children.

Occasionally, the same stars recently seen on big or small screen came to WSC to give presentations scheduled for morning convocations, where attendance was required. Undoubtedly few students regretted swapping the droning of professors for the witty stories and stirring readings delivered by Charles Laughton, Albert Dekker, and Bennett Cerf. Few collegians who had heard of the legendary exploits of Red Grange missed the opportunity to see the Galloping

Ghost when he spoke at the Armory in April 1951.

The Armory, along with the Auditorium in Old Main and the Hamilton Gym, played host to some enchanted evenings: operettas, dancing to live bands on Saturdays, Stunt Nights, Hobby Shows, Sophomore Carnivals, Junior Proms, and Homecoming Galas. It was a time when females professed in print to feeling privileged when named to courts or chosen to bear titles like Miss Independent, and when pledges of either sex did not consider it degrading to shine shoes or wash cars for a week in order to join a select organization. These roles were part of the social life that relieved some of the pressures and tedium of academic routine.

That lighter side of campus life is



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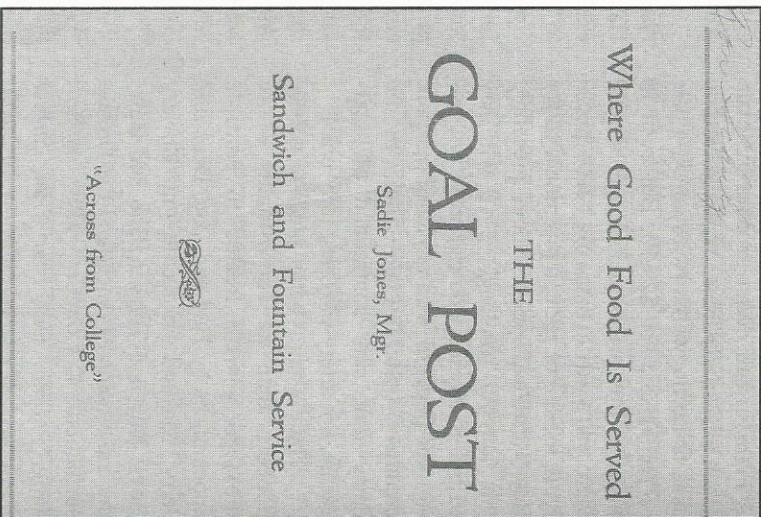
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present in those fading pages even on the editorial pages where serious issues such as the shortage of teachers were balanced by doggerel, parodies of Shakespearean soliloquies and famous poems like “If,” cartoons about deciding not to cut a class because “I need all the sleep I can get” or writing home to dad for money when other efforts to raise cash fail, and a column of jokes called “Laff Gaff.” Alhassions to the new records about “the fellow who doesn’t believe in Santa Claus” and a lead to a story about weird doings in India headed “Strange Things Are Happening” indicate that the medium was the message even then. The humor of Stan Freberg and Red Buttons had scored a bull’s eye with their target audience.

College students have always thought of themselves as being more “with it” than the older generation, although cynics of today viewing the Whitewater scene of sixty years ago might consider those young adults as hopelessly “out of it” with regard to matters like equality for women in sports and the virtual absence of minorities on campus. But what is undeniably present in those pages is the promotion of mutual respect. This respect is evident in the frequent use of the honorifics “Mr.” and “Miss,” a conscious sincerity with regard to the promotion of Brotherhood Week — along with admonitions to learn from the lessons of the feature film *Storm Warning* and the documentary *The Quiet One*. There was a spirit of universal cooperation that made it possible for a small faculty and a student body numbering less than 700 to move 50,000 books from the old library to a new one on a frigid February day in 1953, and an



uncompromising manifesto which held that the achievement of making the grade as a person of integrity superseded that of making the honor roll as a scholar.

In the June 1, 1954 issue of *The Royal Purple*, the last one published before Ron’s graduation, my brother shared some fond memories of his four years on that campus, concluding with a wish that the undergraduates “will recognize now how valuable Whitewater will be in shaping your future.” By preserving these publications, my brother made it possible for me — and anyone who studies their pages — to draw a vivid picture of that period in our past. ■

*Time in to Those Were the Days on October 1 for an afternoon of old-school radio.*

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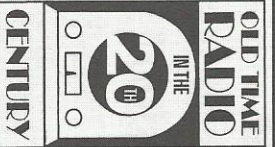


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OCTOBER 2011

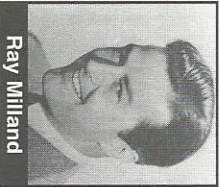
## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1 BACK TO SCHOOL WITH RADIO

**HALLS OF IVY** (4-9-52) Ronald and Benita Colman star as Ivy College president William Tothunter Hall and his wife Victoria. Two teachers at Ivy College admit to being married in violation of faculty rules. Cast includes Herb Butterfield as Clarence Wellman. Voice of America rebroadcast. (27 min)

**FABULOUS DR. TWEEDY** (1-8-47) Frank Morgan stars as Professor Tweedy, Dean of Men at Potts College, with Harry von Zell, Gale Gordon, Bill Johnstone. The college has a new basketball recruit in time for the big game. AFRS rebroadcast. (28 min)

**ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL** (6-12-48) "Tap Day" stars Lawson Zerbe as Frank, Hal Studer as Bart, Elaine Rost as Inza. Frank's admission into Yale's "Skill and Bones" society is jeopardized when he is accused of doping a race horse. Sustaining. NBC. (29 min)

**MEET MR. MCNUTTLEY** (5-27-54) Ray Milland stars as Professor McNuttley of Lynnhaven College, with Phyllis Avery as Peggy, Vera Felton as Dean Bradley. The faculty decides to buy a mink coat for Dean Bradley to commemorate her tenth anniversary with the school. Cast includes



Ray Milland

Elvia Allman, Herb Vigran. AFRS rebroadcast. (24 min)

**CBS RADIO WORKSHOP** (9-22-57) "Young Man Axelbrood" stars Karl Swenson in a radio version of the story by Sinclair Lewis. A retired Norwegian farmer decides to go to Yale. Narrated by John Hoyt, with John Dehner, Dick Crenna, Jackie Kelik, Ben Wright. Sustaining. CBS. (24 min)

**OUR MISS BROOKS** (9-11-49) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, English teacher at Madison High School, with Gale Gordon as Principal Conklin, Jeff Chandler as Mr. Boynton, Dick Crenna as Walter Denton. Connie's plans for a picnic prior to the start of the school year are jeopardized when Mr. Conklin asks students and faculty to come to Madison High for a visit from the school superintendent (Frank Nelson). Colgate-Palmolive, CBS. (28 min)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 THE RADIO HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2011

Read about the Radio Hall of Fame Class of 2011 on page 6.

**GANGBUSTERS** (11-1-40) "Case of the Ape Bandit" is the story about a college athlete turned killer. Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf narrates by proxy. Sloan's Liniment, NBC. (29 min)

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (5-26-46) Harold Peary is Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with

Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Louise Erickson as Marjorie, Shirley Mitchell as Lelia Ransom, Earle Ross, Dick Legrand. In a flashback program, Gilly recalls his first meeting with the widow Ransom. Kraft, NBC. (30 min)

**KALTENBORN EDITS THE NEWS** (10-6-39) Veteran news commentator H.V. Kaltenborn reports on the war in Europe. "This has been another memorable day in the history of the Second World War. Adolf Hitler has made another pronouncement and the whole world is weighing that pronouncement." CBS. (11 min)

**BEHIND THE MIKE** (3-23-41) **Graham McNamee** hosts this series that tells "the stories behind your favorite programs, favorite personalities, and the radio people you never heard of." Guests include Walter Compton and radio pioneer Lee De Forest. Sustaining. NBC. (30 min)

**NATIONAL BARN DANCE** (10-2-43) Joe Kelly is master of ceremonies for this special program celebrating the Barn Dance's tenth anniversary on network radio. With Pat Buttram, the Hoosier Hot Shots, Arkie the Arkansas Woodchopper, Lulu Belle and Scotty, The Dining Sisters, Grace Wilson, Alka Seltzer, NBC BLUE. (30 min)

**SUSPENSE** (3-23-50) "One and One's a Lonesome" starring **Ronald Reagan**, with Joseph Kearns, Cathy Lewis, announcer Harlow Wilcox. The owner of a lumber yard runs into trouble when one of his employees transforms the place into an illegal gambling joint. Auto-Lite, CBS. (30 min)

The National Radio Hall of Fame Class of 2011 will be inducted during a live national broadcast on November 5, 2011, from the new Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago. Information about and tickets for this event can be found at the Radio Hall of Fame website: [www.radiohof.org](http://www.radiohof.org).

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

**DUFFY'S TAVERN** (10-26-43) Ed Gardner stars as Archie the Manager, with Eddie Green, Charlie Cantor, Florence Halop, singer Johnny Johnson, announcer Harry von Zell, and guest Ida Lupino. In the wake of the publication of *Duffy's First Reader*, Archie wants to see the book brought to the screen and he wants Ida to star in the movie version. AFRS rebroadcast. (28 min)

**BOSTON BLACKIE** (7-9-46) Richard Kollmar stars as Blackie, who investigates when a girl wearing an expensive diamond ring is found murdered outside a skating rink. With Jan Miner as Mary and Maurice Tarplin as Inspector Faraday. Syndicated. (27 min)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (10-13-41) "Buck Privates" starring Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in a radio version of their 1941 screen smash, in which two reluctant draftees find themselves serving in the Army alongside a spoiled rich kid. Cecil B. DeMille hosts, with Benny Rubin, Lynne Carver, Fred MacKaye, Wally Maher, Gene O'Donnell. Lux soap, CBS. (20 min & 21 min & 19 min) Read the article about Buck Privates on page 12.

**THEATRE FIVE** (6-15-65) "Bad Day's Work" stars Alan Alda and Frederick O'Neal. Racial tensions are triggered when a policeman shoots the son of an African-American minister. With Natalie Priest, Bob Hastings, announcer Fred Foy. Sustaining. ABC. (21 min)

**MR. AND MRS. BLANDINGS** (6-10-51) Cary Grant and Betsy Drake star as Jim and Muriel Blandings, in this series based on Grant's 1948 movie. Jim is conned into taking part in a local production of a play. Cast includes Jim Backus. AFRS rebroadcast. (24 min)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

**DAMON RUNYON THEATER** (1949) John Brown stars as Broadway, narrating the story of "Madame La Gimp," who must pass as a sophisticated lady to impress her daughter's future in-laws. Cast includes Frank Lovejoy, Ted DeCortisa. Syndicated. (26 min)

**BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW** (5-9-46)



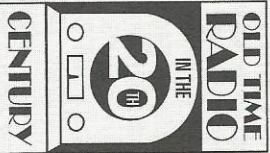
Gracie Allen

George Burns and Gracie Allen star, with Bill Goodwin, Mel Blanc, Meredith Willson and his orchestra, and guest Harpo Marx. Gracie becomes a gossip columnist and hires Harpo as a reporter. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (30 min)

**COUNTERSPY** (5-2-50) "Case of the Soaring Saucer" stars Don McLaughlin as David Harding and Mandel Kramer as Peters, counterparts who are on the trail of dope smugglers with an unusual method of operation. Pepsi-Cola, NBC. (30 min)

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## OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2011

### BREAKFAST WITH THE JOHNSONS (6-

20-52) Cliff and Luella Johnson and their daughters on the air from Oak Park, Illinois. Daughter Pam tells her father about a Father's Day play she and her friend are planning for next year. Broadcast Comed Beef Hash, CBS. (15 min)

### SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (11-23-42)

"Bachelor Mother" starring Ann Southern, Fred MacMurray, and Charles Coburn in a radio adaptation of the 1939 film, in which a department store clerk unwittingly becomes the guardian of a baby. Lady Esther, CBS. (30 min)

### FRONTIER GENTLEMAN (5-11-58) "The

Cannibal" stars John Dehner as J.B. Kendall, foreign correspondent for the *London Times*. A stage traveling through Wyoming territory is caught in a storm, forcing Kendall and his fellow travelers to spend the night at a stage-coach station. Cast: Joseph Kearns, Stacy Harris, Vivi Janiss, Lawrence Dobkin, William Lally. Sustaining, CBS. (25 min)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

#### ANNUAL HALLOWE'EEN SHOW

**SUSPENSE (2-2-43)** "The Doctor Prescribed Death" stars Bela Lugosi as a doctor eager to test his theory that a person contemplating suicide can be persuaded to commit murder instead. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min) *Read the cover story about Bela Lugosi on page 42.*

### TEXACO STAR THEATER (4-25-43) Fred

Allen stars, with Portland Hoffa, Alan Reed, John Brown, Minerva Pious, Charlie Cantor, and guest Bela Lugosi, who is preparing to tour with a stage production of *Dracula*. AFRS, rebroadcast. (30 min)

### ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN (10-29-49)

"The Mystery of the Walking Dead" stars Clayton Collyer as Superman/Clark Kent,

with Joan Alexander as Lois Lane. A criminal on Death Row swears vengeance on Lois Lane from beyond the grave. Jackson Beck announces. Sustaining, ABC. (30 min)

### FATHER KNOWS BEST (10-26-50) Robert

Young stars as Jim Anderson, with June Whitley, Rhoda Williams, Ted Donaldson, Norma Jean Nilsson. On their way home from a weekend trip, the Andersons' car runs out of gas by a cemetery. Bill Forman announces. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (30 min)

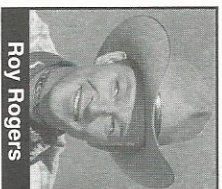
### ESCAPE (2-22-48) "How Love Came To

Professor Guildea" starring Parley Baer, Luis Van Rooten, Paul Frees, Harry Bartell. A curmudgeonly English scientist is convinced that an unseen creature has taken residence in his house. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min) *Our show will be heard on our ghost-to-ghost network and over the internet in screaming audio. Don't miss it!*

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

#### ROY ROGERS SHOW

(9-26-48) Roy investigates a recent run on the bank. With Dale Evans, Gabby Hayes, Foy Willing and the Riders of the Purple Sage, and announcer Art Ballinger. Quaker Oats, MBS. (29 min) *Roy Rogers was born on November 5, 1911.*



Roy Rogers

### COMMAND PERFORMANCE #33 (9-29-42)

Bob Burns is master of ceremonies, with singer Dinah Shore; the orchestras of Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, and Lionel Hampton; and Spike Jones and His City Slickers, who play "Der Fuehrer's Face." AFRS. (29 min) **DRAGNET** (10-11-51) Jack Webb stars as Sgt. Joe Friday, with Barton Yarborough as

Sgt. Ben Romero. A Los Angeles shopping district is plagued by a wave of shoplifting. Fatima Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

**CAN YOU TOP THIS?** (5-18-48) Veteran joke-tellers Ward Wilson, Harry Hirschfeld, and Joe Laurie Jr. compete against listeners' jokes performed by Peter Donald. Dennis James is master of ceremonies. Colgate-Palmolive, NBC. (29 min)

**COLUMBIA WORKSHOP** (5-15-39) "The Law Beaters" stars James Van Dyke and John Griggs in a story directed by Norman Corwin. Two criminals reminisce about the crimes they've committed. Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)

**KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (3-17-49) Al Jolson stars, with Oscar Levant, Lou Brink and the Orchestra, announcer Ken Carpenter, and guests Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. Roy and Dale sing "San Antonio" and Roy suggests that Al become a singing cowboy. Kraft, NBC. (30 min)

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

**DIMENSION X** (5-27-50) "To the Future" is the story of a husband and wife from the year 2155 who "escape" to the year 1950. Cast includes John Larkin, Jan Wimer. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

### RAILROAD HOUR (10-24-49) "Music in the

Air" starring Gordon MacRae and Jane Powell in a radio adaptation of the musical play by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. A young Bavarian girl and her father travel to Munich, accompanied by the schoolmaster who loves her. Marvin Miller announces. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (29 min)

### SPEAKING OF RADIO (3-24-11) Steve

Darnall's conversation with singer and actress Jane Powell, as Ms. Powell looks back on her career in movies and radio. Recorded at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Chicago. (18 min) *Read an excerpt from this conversation on page 4.*

### SONGS BY SINATRA (1-8-47) With Axel

Stordahl and the orchestra, the Pied Pipers, and Jane Powell. Frank sings "The Other End of a Kiss," "The Old Lampighter" and "Where or When" and duets with Jane on "I Love, Come Back to Me." Old Gold Cigarettes, CBS. (28 min)

### MYSTERY IS MY HOBBY (12-17-47) "Death

Has Blue Eyes" stars Glenn Langan as

Barton Drake, with Ken Christy as Inspector Danton. A woman is accused of killing her stepfather, but she doesn't know whether or not she did it. Syndicated. (26 min)

**BLONDIE** (3-11-45) Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake star as Blondie and Dagwood Burnstead, with John Brown as Herb Woodley, announcer Don Wilson. Dagwood claims to be suffering from amnesia. AFRS rebroadcast. (31 min)

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19

#### ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

**MR. PRESIDENT** (1949) Edward Arnold stars as the president of the United States, who is asked by his staff to declare a day of national Thanksgiving. Sustaining, ABC. (30 min)

### MEL BLANC SHOW (11-26-46) It's

Thanksgiving at Mel's Fix-It Shop and Mel has given his Thanksgiving turkey to the local orphanage! With Mary Jane Croft, Joseph Kearns, Hans Conried, Earle Ross, Jerry Hausner, the Sportsmen. Colgate Tooth Powder, CBS. (24 min)

### ARTHUR GODFREY TIME (11-27-47) A

Thanksgiving Day broadcast with Arthur at his home in Virginia and his cast in New York. With Jeanette Davis, The Mariners, Tony Marvin, Archie Bleyer and the Orchestra. Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS. (29 min)

### CASEY, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER (11-27-

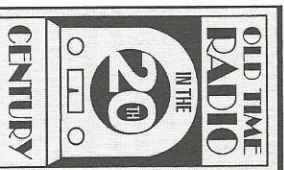
47) "After Turkey, The Bill" stars Staats Cotsworth as Casey, with Jan Wimer as Anne Williams and John Gibson as Ethelbert. On Thanksgiving, Casey and Anne investigate when an ex-con is accused of holding up a gas station. Tony Marvin announces. Anchor-Hocking Glassware, CBS. (30 min)

### CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW (11-18-45)

With Anita Gordon, Pat Patrick as Errol Twing, announcer Ken Carpenter, Ray Noble and the Orchestra. Guest is Margaret O'Brien, who joins Charlie for his version of "The Courtship of Miles Standish." AFRS rebroadcast. (29 min)

### HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (11-24-49) "The

Courtship of Miles Standish" stars David Niven in the famous story by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, about romance in the early days of the Plymouth Colony. James Hilton hosts, with Ted Osborne as John Alden, Frances Robinson as Priscilla, Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29 min)



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**NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2011**

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26 RADIO TO GET INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY

**HENRY MORGAN SHOW** (12-25-46) For Christmas Day, Morgan tells a story about three children who go to Washington in hopes of passing a law that will make every day Christmas. With Arnold Stang, Michael Roy, Bernie Green and the Orchestra. Eversharp, ABC. (24 min)  
**VISIT TO A DOLL FACTORY** (12-9-38) Announcers Al Giuseppe and Dave Driscoll visit the Ideal Novelty and Toy Factory at

Christmas time for a look at how dolls are made. MBS. (14 min)

**LAWRENCE WELK AND HIS ORCHES-TRA** (December 1959) The King of "champagne music" presents a holiday program from the Aragon Ballroom on the pier at Ocean Park, California, with Alice Lon, Rocky Rockwell, Peter Fountain, Myron Floren, Dick Dale. Songs include "Frosty The Snowman," "Silver Bells," and "Angel on the Christmas Tree." Syndicated. (30 min)

**HOPALONG CASSIDY** (1950) "The Santa Claus Rustlers" stars William Boyd as Hoppy, with Andy Clyde as California Carlson. On their way home for the holidays, Hoppy and California are detained near Phoenix and investigate a ranch where the cattle have been disappearing. Syndicated. (28 min)

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (12-19-48) The Nelsons decide to be sensible and not buy extravagant Christmas gifts for one another. With John Brown as Thorny, Janet Waldo as Emmy Lou. International Silver, NBC. (30 min)

**THE WHISTLER** (12-23-46) "Next Year Is Mine" starring Frank Lovejoy and Charles Seel. At Christmas time, a convict tries to get a better deal for his cellmate. Bill Forman is the Whistler. Signal Oil, CBS. (30 min) *Read the article about The Whistler on page 20.*

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 RADIO TO PLAN YOUR LIST BY

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-14-41) It's one week after America's entry into World War II, and Jack and Mary Livingstone are Christmas shopping. With Eddie "Rocheester" Anderson, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Frank Nelson, Elliott Lewis. Jell-O, NBC. (27 min)  
**GUEST STAR** (12-16-51) Macdonald Carey

stars in "Stand-In For Santa," with host John Conte, Rod O'Connor, Harry Sosnick and the orchestra. On Christmas Eve, a reporter is sent on an assignment to the temperance district. Cast includes Gerald Mohr, Frank Nelson. Syndicated. (15 min)

twist, Edmund Gwenn plays both Ebenezer Scrooge and Charles Dickens! With Gigi Pearson, Parley Baer, Bill Johnstone, Vic Perrin, Eric Snowden. Art Ballinger announcers. Carnation, CBS. (29 min)

**SPEAKING OF RADIO** (10-23-10) Steve Darnall's conversation with actor Cliff Carpenter, recorded at the Friends of Old Time Radio Convention in Newark, New Jersey. (32 min)

**LIFE OF RILEY** (12-20-47) William Bendix stars as Chester Riley, with Paula Winslowe as wife Peg, John Brown as Digger O'Dell. At Christmas time, Riley recalls the first Christmas he and Peg spent together as husband and wife. Prell, NBC. (28 min)

**TERRY AND THE PIRATES** (12-24-41) The first of two consecutive episodes, with Cliff Carpenter as Terry. It's the day before Christmas and Terry and Pat Ryan are in Minchow, which has been devastated by a tank of Dr. Moi-Ben's gas. Libby's Pineapple Juice. Syndicated. (15 min)

**VIC AND SADE** (8-6-42) Bernadine Flynn is Sade and Bill Idelson is Rush, who are examining Christmas card catalogs and discussing which cards to send. Crisco, NBC. (14 min)

**TERRY AND THE PIRATES** (12-25-41) On Christmas Day, Dr. Moi-Ben has been found and Terry, Pat and Connie are preparing for a Christmas celebration. Libby's Pineapple Juice. Syndicated. (15 min)

**N-K MUSICAL SHOWCASE** (12-19-45) The Andrews Sisters star, with Curt Massey, Vic Schoen and the Orchestra, announcer Harlow Wilcox, and guest Ray Noble, who plays "The Very Thought of You" and "Goodnight, Sweetheart." The Andrews Sisters sing "Jingle Bells" and "Let It Snow." Nash-Kelvinator, CBS. (30 min)

**STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD** (12-19-53) "A Christmas Carol" is Charles Dickens' famous tale of a cold-hearted man who learns the meaning of Christmas — and, in an unusual

meaning of Christmas — and, in an unusual

## HOW TO REACH THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

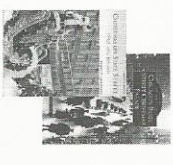
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## DECEMBER 2011

**THE SHADOW** (12-22-40) "Joey's Christmas Story" stars Bill Johnstone as Lamont Cranston (a.k.a. The Shadow), Marjorie Anderson as Margo Lane. The Shadow makes a call on "Santa Claus" to help a family at Christmas time. Blue Coal, MBS. (28 min)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (12-10-51) "The Lemon Drop Kid," starring Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell in a radio version of the film based on a story by Damon Runyon, about a small-time race-track tout who must repay his debt to the mob by Christmas. Bob and Marilyn sing "Silver Bells." William Keighley hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (18 min & 21 min & 20 min)

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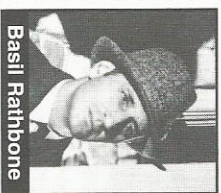
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the cynical owner of a tourist camp who is visited by an expectant couple in need of a room. James Hilton hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29 min)

**PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW** (12-18-49) At Christmas time, Phil and Alice go to the mayor to protest when they learn there is no community Christmas tree. With Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Jeanine Roos, Anne Whitfield, Hans Conried. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**SHERLOCK HOLMES** (12-24-45) "The Night Before Christmas" stars Basil Rathbone as Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson. On Christmas Eve, Holmes is asked to guard the valuable presents at a Christmas party, while Dr. Watson is asked to play Santa for a group of children. Cast includes Herb Vigran, Harry Bartell announces. Petri Wines, MBS. (30 min)



Basil Rathbone

**OUR MISS BROOKS** (12-24-50) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, English teacher at Madison High School, who is planning on a quiet Christmas Eve at home. With Gale Gordon, Jeff Chandler, Richard Crenna, Jane Morgan, Gloria McMillan. Colgate-Palmolive, CBS. (30 min)

**SIX SHOOTER** (12-20-53) James Stewart stars as Texas plainsman Britt Ponset, who encounters a young runaway boy at Christmas time and tells him a Western-style version of *A Christmas Carol*. With Dick Beals, Howard McNear, Will Wright, Harry Bartell, Sam Edwards. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

**FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** (12-24-46) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Arthur Q. Bryan, Bea Benaderet, announcer Harlow Wilcox, Billy Mills and the Orchestra, the King's Men. McGee is fixing broken toys for needy children. Teeny and the King's Men sing "I Was the Night Before Christmas." Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING** (12-24-61) Bing Crosby hosts his seventh annual holiday

special, with Ken Carpenter, Paul Weston, Jo Stafford, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, and Bing's wife Katherine. Insurance Companies of North America, CBS. (28 min and 22 min)

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**ALDRICH FAMILY** (12-31-48) It's the afternoon of the last day of the year...and the best-laid plans are changing. Ezra Stone stars as Henry, with Jackie Keik as Homer Brown, House Jameson and Katherine Raht as Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich. Syndicated rebroadcast. (24 min)

**SUSPENSE** (12-31-61) "The Old Man" stars Leon Janney in a New Year's tale involving an old employee who is being forced to retire. With Lawson Zerbe, Larry Haines, Ralph Camargo, Rita Lloyd, Reginald Osborne. Sustaining, CBS. (24 min)

**JIMMY DURANTE SHOW** (12-31-47) Garry Moore and Red Skelton pinch-hit for Jimmy, who is in the hospital for "repairs." In a sketch, Junior the Mean Little Kid is dressed as Baby New Year. With Peggy Lee, Candy Candido, Howard Petrie, Tommy Harmon, Roy Barry and His Orchestra. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

**JOHNSON'S WAX PROGRAM** (12-31-46) A New Year's Eve celebration featuring Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians in the time slot normally held by *Fibber McGee and Molly*. Fred proposes visiting Times Square to find out why we sing "Auld Lang Syne." Bill Bivens announces. Johnson's



Fred Waring

Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**QUIET PLEASE** (12-29-47) "Rain on New Year's Eve" starring Ernest Chappell, with Muriel Kirkland, Pat O'Walley. A screenwriter must fend off a temperamental director and create a new monster for a film that is scheduled to finish shooting on New Year's Eve. Sustaining, MBS. (24 min)

**GREAT GLUDERSLEEVE** (12-31-52) Willard Waterman stars as Giddy, who plans to take Grace Tuttle out for New Year's Eve. With Walter Tetley, Mary Shippo, Lillian Randolph, Dick LeGrand, Shirley Mitchell. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min)



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## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2

**LET GEORGE DO IT** (4-5-48) Robert Bailey stars as George Valentine, with Frances Robinson as Brooksie. A woman asks George to solve a mystery involving her institutionalized husband. Standard Oil of California, MBS. **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO SHOW** (3-9-44) While conducting a scrap drive, Bud and Lou end up at the home of Blondie (Penny Singleton) and Dagwood (Arthur Lake)! Camel Cigarettes, NBC. *Read the articles about Abbott and Costello beginning on page 12.*

**CRIME CLUB** (5-1-47) "Epitaph for Lydia" featuring Sydney Smith, Jack McBride, Ted Osborne and Brad Barker. A woman at a cocktail party has a strange reaction to a picture of sand dunes. Sustaining, MBS.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

**LIFE WITH LUIGI** (11-29-49) J. Carroll Naish is Luigi Basco, who is trying to raise money for a neighborhood recreation center. With Alan Reed as Pasquale and guest Mario Lanza. Wrigley's Gum, CBS.

**DIMENSION X** (9-8-51) "First Contact" starring Wendell Holmes and Bob Hastings. A spaceship from earth encounters an alien craft. Sustaining, NBC.

**INFORMATION PLEASE** (1-10-39) It's "time to stump the experts" with writer Alexander Woolcott joining moderator Clifton Fadiman and regulars John Kieran, Oscar Levant and Franklin P. Adams. Canada Dry, NBC.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

**SIX SHOOTER** (3-21-54) James Stewart stars as Britt Ponset, who is credited for bringing in a desperado. Sustaining, NBC.

**CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW** (10-19-47) From Occidental College in Los Angeles, with guest Jane Wyman. Edgar tells Charlie the story of Aladdin. Chase and Sanborn, Royal

Pudding, NBC. **THE WHISTLER** (8-28-49) "Eager Pigeon" starring Jack Webb and Kay Brinker. A shady character agrees to help out a well-to-do woman. Signal Oil, CBS. *Read the article about The Whistler on page 20.*

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23

**MUTUAL-DON LEE DEDICATORY PROGRAM** (12-30-36) Conrad Nagel hosts this special inaugural program celebrating the new affiliation between these two radio networks, with remotes from San Francisco and Honolulu, and appearances by Hugh Herbert, Mae Clarke, Harry Warren, Al Dubin and Edward Arnold, who performs a scene from his upcoming film, *John Meade's Wife*. MBS. *Read the article about Don Lee on page 52.*

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30

**MERCURY THEATER ON THE AIR** (7-11-38) "Dracula" is the first program in this new series, directed by Orson Welles, who stars as both Count Dracula and Dr. Seward, with Martin Gabel, George Coulouris, Ray Collins, Karl Swenson, Agnes Moorehead. Sustaining, CBS.

**BING CROSBY SHOW** (10-26-49) Bing welcomes Lum and Abner (Chester Lauck and Norris Goff), who are planning a Halloween party back home in Pine Ridge, Arkansas. Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) It's the beloved holiday story, as Judy and Jimmy Barton search for the Silver Star to put atop their Christmas tree and encounter Paddy O'Cinnamon, the Cinnamon Bear. In these first six episodes, Judy and Jimmy "de-grow," take a glass airplane to the Looking Glass Valley, and begin their adventures in Maybe Land. Syndicated.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapters 7-12 of the beloved adventure serial. As Judy, Jimmy, and Paddy O'Cinnamon search for the Silver Star, they meet Mr. Presto, The Magician; Captain Tuffy and the Candy Pirates; The Roly Poly Policeman; Professor Whiz; the Owl; Frady Cat; Fee Foo the Giant; and the Rhyming Rabbit. Syndicated.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapters 13-18 of the beloved adventure serial, as Judy, Jimmy, Paddy O'Cinnamon and the Crazy Quilt Dragon continue their search for the Silver Star. Along the way, they encounter the Wintergreen Witch, Queen Melissa of Maybe Land, Snapper Snick the Crocodile, Oliver the Ostrich, the mud-slinging Muddlers, and Slim Pickens and the Cocklebur Cowboys.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27

**FOUNTAIN OF FUN** (12-19-49) Toby Tuttle stars, with Frazier Thomas and songs by Norman Ravel and Mary Jean and Betty. The gang talk about Christmas gifts. Mars Candy, WLW.

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapter 19. The Wintergreen Witch returns!

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapter 20. The exile of the Wintergreen Witch.

**SUSPENSE** (12-22-52) "Arctic Rescue" stars Joseph Cotten in a dramatic re-creation of a rescue effort that took place at Christmas time in 1852. Auto-Lite, CBS.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

**YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR** (12-24-49) Charles Russell stars as Dollar, who investigates a department store where a swindler has been taking customers' money. Sustaining, CBS.

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapter 21. In the land of ice and snow!

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapter 22. Meeting Jack Frost.

**BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW** (12-18-44) George and Gracie decide not to buy each other gifts for Christmas. With Bill Goodwin, Mel Blanc, Frank Nelson, singer Jimmy Cash. AFRS rebroadcast.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

**MY FAVORITE HUSBAND** (12-16-49) Lucille Ball and Richard Denning star as Liz and George Cooper. Liz is hoping to surprise George by knitting him a sweater for Christmas. Jell-O, CBS.

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

**CINNAMON BEAR** (1937) Chapter 24. The Christmas Tree Parade.

**21st PRECINCT** (12-22-54) Everett Sloane stars, with Ken Lynch, Harold Stone. The station house prepares to hold their annual Christmas party for the neighborhood children. AFRS rebroadcast.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

**THE LONE RANGER** (12-26-49) "Three Christmas Trees" stars Brace Beemer as the Ranger and John Todd as Tomto, who intervene to show the Christmas spirit to a hard-hearted businessman. Syndicated, ABC.

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

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

**GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (12-14-49) Harold Peary stars as Gildy, who encounters a group of children in a hospital ward at Christmas time and tells the story of "Why The Chimnes Rang." Kraft, NBC.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

### MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**THEATRE GUILD ON THE AIR** (12-23-45) "Little Women" starring Katharine Hepburn in a radio version of the classic story by Louisa May Alcott. With Oscar Homolka, John Lodge, Frances Reid, Judith Parrish, Susan Douglas, Elliott Reid. Norman Brokenshire announces. U.S. Steel, ABC.

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (12-26-43) Turning the clock back, it's Christmas night at Jack's house and the whole gang show up for a party, with Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rocheester" Anderson, Butterfly McQueen, Andy Devine. Grape-Nuts Flakes, NBC.

## THE UNBEARABLE DARKNESS OF

## BELLA

BY JORDAN ELLIOTT

*"To die — to be really dead — that must be glorious!"*

Bela Lugosi in *Dracula*

It's hard to think of any other actors who have impressed themselves on our collective consciousness as firmly as Bela Lugosi. During and after his life, he was the subject of both tribute and parody. He made some great, memorable films and more than his share of awful ones. Ironically, the closest he came to an Oscar was the one Martin Landau received for his portrayal of Lugosi in the 1994 film *Ed Wood*.

And yet, for all of the peaks and valleys Lugosi may have experienced in his life and career, he remains at all times utterly compelling and watchable. One can empathize with the demons that Lugosi's characters carry with them, or

*Jordan Elliott is a freelance writer from Chicago.*

one can marvel at the demons that drive those characters past the point of humanity. Lugosi's characters are not played with the sly wink of Vincent Price or the gusto of Peter Lorre. Even in his most famous, most diabolical role — that of Count Dracula — one can find a moment to sympathize with a man who carries a strange and terrible burden: In this case, he is literally unable to die.

Certainly Lugosi had his share of unhappiness, as all of us do. He appeared to have lived in fear of dying in poverty (which would explain some of those career choices) and he was no stranger to addiction — or, for that matter, to the altar (he married five times). However, it appears that the monsters he played were extrapolations of his life rather than autobiographical glimpses; as Lugosi himself once said, "Circumstances made me the theatrical personality I am, which many people believe is also a part of my personal life."

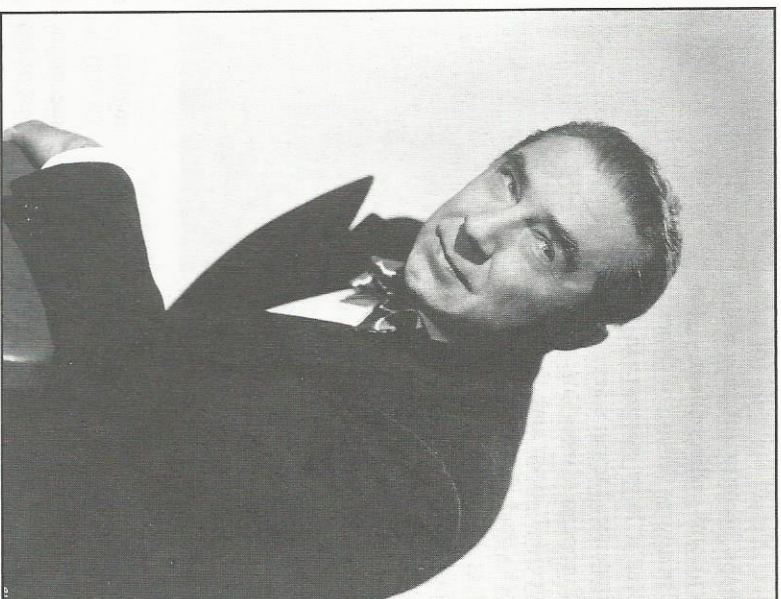
Still, if Lugosi's life was not a

tragedy, it certainly had its share of hardships. Born Bela Blasko in Lugos, Hungary (now part of Romania) on October 20, 1882, he dropped out of school at the age of 12 (around the time of his father's death) to seek his fortune as an actor.

By the turn of the century, Bela had performed in everything from operettas to Shakespeare. Eventually, he moved to Budapest and spent several years performing with the National Theater of Hungary. During World War I, he enlisted with the Hungarian Army and was wounded three times.

Bela was discharged and returned to acting until he fell afoul of the ruling party after the Hungarian Revolution of 1919. The changing political landscape forced the young actor — who had taken an active role on behalf of the actors' union — to flee his homeland and go to Germany. It was here that he adopted the name "Lugosi" (based on his hometown) and began acting in movies, usually as a heavy. Eventually, he took a job as a crewman on a merchant ship bound for New Orleans and made his way to New York. (In 1931, he became a naturalized U.S. citizen.)

If Lugosi had become something of an outsider in Europe, he was an even lesser-known quantity in America, with his mysterious accent, his vaguely aristocratic bearing and the mannerisms (such as accompanying words with gestures) that he learned from working on stage in



Europe. According to his son, when Bela scored his first Broadway role (in 1922's *The Red Poppy*), the actor had to learn his lines phonetically.

Then, in 1927, came the break that would change everything, for better or for worse: the Broadway production of *Dracula*, a play (based on Bram Stoker's famous novel) that had done big business in London. Producer Horace Liveright had hoped to bring the show's star to Broadway as well, but actor Raymond Huntley's salary demands apparently made that impossible. (One wonders if Mr. Huntley ever looked back on turning down that opportunity.) Instead, Liveright cast the relatively unknown Lugosi in the role — and once again, Lugosi started in on the formidable task of learning his script phonetically.

Yet in spite of (or perhaps because of) this weird cultural disconnect, the Broadway version of *Dracula* was a huge success. In this instance, Lugosi's accent and European mannerisms were a decided asset and the actor who had fled his homeland less than a decade earlier was fast becoming a matinee idol. "Ah, what letters women wrote me!" he recalled later in life. "Asking me if I cared only for maiden's blood."

The play ran for 33 weeks in New York and toured the West Coast. By this time, there was talk about bringing *Dracula* to the big screen — a prospect that Lugosi found enormously appealing.

Despite Lugosi's stage success, Universal wasn't high on the idea of casting him in their movie version. The studio's "wish list" apparently included the great Lon Chaney (who was then under contract to M-G-M). Universal went so far as to hire Chaney's friend Tod Browning (who achieved a different sort of cinematic notoriety with 1932's *Freaks*) to direct. When Chaney's losing battle with cancer made his participation impossible, the studio considered Conrad Veidt and Ian Keith (the latter having played another famous villain — John Wilkes Booth — in D.W. Griffith's *Abraham Lincoln*).

Lugosi's lobbying for the part became so overt that Universal finally offered him the role at a paltry \$500 a week — less money than actor David Manners received for the supporting role of Jonathan Harker. Lugosi's eagerness to accept an amount below his actual



market value (in this case, a total of \$3,500 for seven weeks of work) set a precedent that would plague him for the rest of his career.

Still, if Bela didn't reap the appropriate financial rewards for his work in *Dracula*, he achieved an immortality that his character could only dream about. According to his son, Lugosi did his own makeup for the movie version, giving himself a deathly pallor and blood red lips. This creature was handsome, immaculately groomed, and capable of turning on the charm — as unlikely a movie monster as you could get. Browning's direction might be described as hot-and-cold (there are some shots that suggest this film was made in a hurry), but the scenes in *Dracula*'s castle had an undeniable atmosphere, as did the Count himself (thanks in part to Browning's close-up shots of Lugosi's penetrating stare). As Lugosi said years later, "An evil expression in the eyes, a sinister arch to the brow or a leer on my lips... are suf-

ficient to hypnotize an audience into seeing what I want them to see." This may have applied to Lugosi's personal life as well; Bela's son recalled that his father "would just look at me and it would scare me into behaving."

The world of horror had its first major star. (In an ironic twist, the success of the *Dracula* movie led to a spate of sequels and spin-offs; in 1943's *Son of Dracula*, the title role was played by... Lon Chaney Jr.)

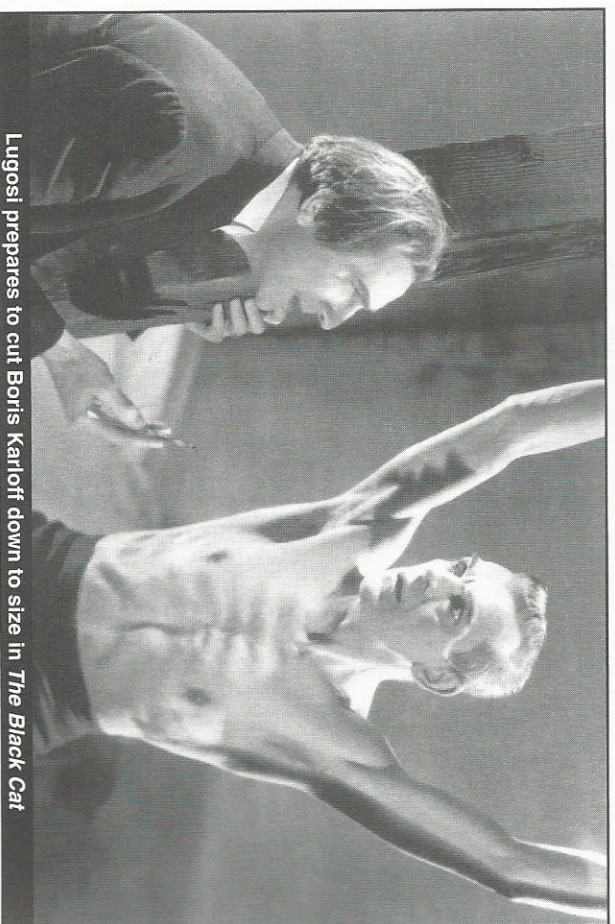
Universal, keen to cash in on their new find, asked Bela to star as the monster in another movie based on a famous book: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Lugosi may have seen the heavy makeup and paucity of dialogue as a liability; in any case, when he declined the offer, the role went to Boris Karloff, giving the English-born actor a cinematic immortality equal to that of Lugosi.

Although he yearned to prove his versatility, Lugosi quickly fell prey to an evil force greater than *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* combined: typecasting. He

acquitted himself reasonably well in the 1932 comedy *International House* but the fact was that every studio that wanted Lugosi really wanted to re-create the menacing magic of *Dracula*.

And there was no denying he was great in a lot of those roles, whether playing a demented scientist in *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, a master of voodoo in *The White Zombie*, or as the mutated Sayer of the Law in *Island of Lost Souls*. Finally, Universal honchos — realizing that they had access to two of the biggest names in horror — brought Karloff and Lugosi together for 1934's *The Black Cat*.

Much has been made of the supposed rivalry between these two mainstays of mystery. It has been suggested that Lugosi openly resented Karloff's success (particularly from a role that Lugosi turned down); according to Karloff, however, the two men worked together amicably once he overcame Lugosi's concerns about being upstaged. It didn't hurt that *The Black Cat*



Lugosi prepares to cut Boris Karloff down to size in *The Black Cat*



gave Lugosi one of the better roles of his career, as a prisoner of war who returns to his homeland, learns of his family's fate at the hands of the sinister Hjalmar Poelzig (Karloff), and exacts a terrible revenge. The two traded off the roles of villain and victim for *The Raven*, in which Lugosi is a plastic surgeon who uses an escaped convict (Karloff) as an instrument of revenge.

Both films were vivid and horrifying in their way, but by the time of their third collaboration (1936's *The Invisible Ray*), it was clear that the tide of Hollywood was turning. Musicals and screwball comedies were fast becoming the order of the day, and when Great Britain announced plans to ban horror films, Universal took the hint and dropped such films from their production schedule. (The studio's next big stars were Deanna Durbin and Abbott and Costello, as far removed from Lugosi and Karloff as you're likely to get.)

Lugosi divided the next couple of

years between stage work and low-budget films from independent producers.

"I'll be truthful," he said once. "The weekly paycheck is the most important thing to me." He had one more chance to grab the brass ring in 1939, with quality roles in two quality pictures: as the stern Russian Commissar Razanin in the Ernst Lubitsch comedy *Ninotchka* and — in a performance demonstrating both wit and intensity — as the hunchbacked Ygor in *Son of Frankenstein*.

It could have been the start of a wave; however, it soon became clear that the wave had crested. Now nearing 60 with a new son at home (and struggling with drug addiction that began when he received morphine for wounds suffered in World War I), he found himself taking anything and everything: as he put it, "Whenever a film company is in the red, they come to me." There were a few memorable movies during the early 1940s (including *The Wolfman* and a small part opposite Karloff in *The Body*

*Satcher*), but Lugosi spend far more time in cringeworthy Poverty Row fare like *The Devil Bat* and the Bowery Boys vehicle *Spooks Run Wild*. He once lamented that he would like to do more comedy, but "now I am the boogey man."

During this time, Lugosi returned to the stage for a revival of *Dracula* and even managed to do a little radio, appearing on shows both in his oeuvre (*Suspense*, *Inner Sanctum*, even an episode of *Crime Does Not Pay*) and outside of it (for instance, opposite Fred Allen on the *Texaco Star Theater*). He also took on the role he had turned down a decade earlier, playing Dr. Frankenstein's monster in Universal's *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*.

There was one last shot at glory in 1948, when Bela re-created his most famous role for *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. Apparently Lou Costello saw this film as a sign that Universal had given up on the comedy team; instead, it made them bigger than ever and set the standard for their last decade.

Would that the same could be said for Lugosi; although Bela Jr. recalls that his father was treated with great deference by the cast and crew — and his performance was a reminder of why audiences fell in love with him all those years ago — this film marked his last role for a major studio.

In his last years, he underwent treatment for his addiction (a brave move in the years before *The Man With the Golden Arm*), married for the fifth (and final) time, and struck up an unlikely friendship with a struggling film-maker Edward D. Wood Jr., whose passion for movies regrettably outstripped his ability to make them. (A 2007 collection of Wood movies was released under the

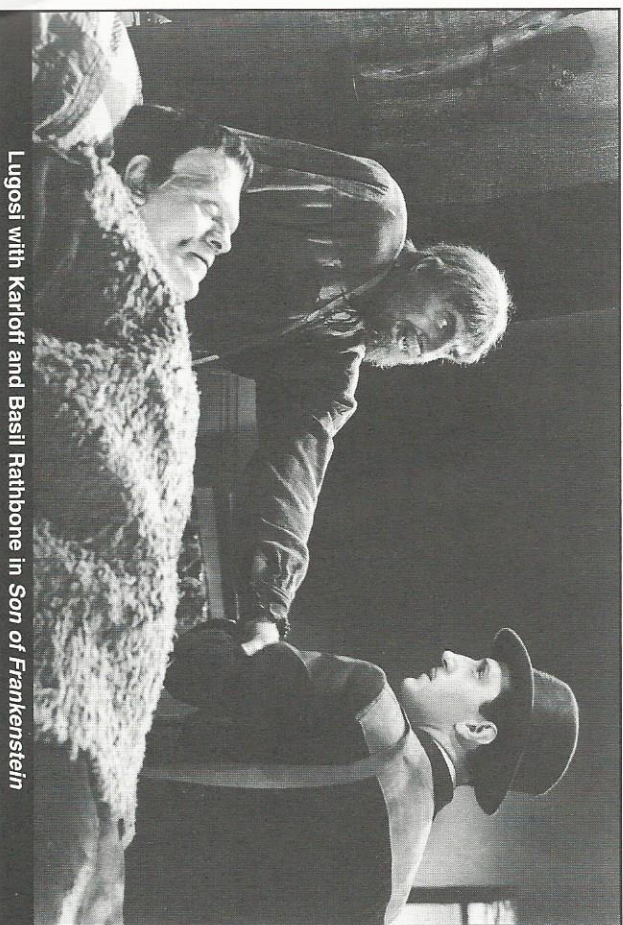
title *A Salute to Incompetence*.) Still, while it's easy to laugh at the low-budget camp of *Glen or Glenda?* or *Bride of the Monster* (and the many close-ups of Bela in the latter film clearly do him no favors), the fact was that Wood gave Lugosi a chance to appear before the camera when few others would. And it is entirely possible that Lugosi — self-educated, chased from his homeland, neglected by the community that made him a star, purportedly living in near-poverty — could draw upon some powerful emotions when he delivered a line like "Home? I have no home. Hunted, despised, living like an animal!"

Wood had shot some footage of the 73-year-old Lugosi for a new film when the actor died in his sleep on August 16, 1956. (Wood managed to cobble the footage together for the remarkably bizarre *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, a sort of *magnum nopus*.) The actor was buried in one of his Dracula capes, creating such a vivid image that Peter Lorre — attended the funeral with Vincent Price — purportedly whispered, "Do you think we should drive a stake through his heart, just in case?"

If Bela Lugosi appeared in projects that were beneath him, if he made unfortunate career decisions... well, unlike his most famous character, he was only human. He wasn't even a real boogey man; as Bela Jr. recalls, Lugosi was fond of good wine and dancing to gypsy music — and "however clichéd the phrase might be, he was a man with charisma." And at his best, Bela Lugosi could use that charisma in a way that no other actor could.

He was right. It was glorious. ■

*Tune in to Those Were the Days on October 30 to hear Bela Lugosi on radio.*



Lugosi with Karloff and Basil Rathbone in *Son of Frankenstein*

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PHOTO FEST

# THE NIGHT THE SIRENS WENT OFF

**The year the Chicago White Sox won the pennant—  
and unknowingly caused a citywide panic**

BY CHUCK BILLINGTON

In September 1959, the South Side of Chicago was gripped by a fever that caused strange behavior among citizens and statesmen alike. In this case, the cause of the fever was the Chicago White Sox winning their first pennant in 40 years. What followed was an insanity unlike anything in the city's history.

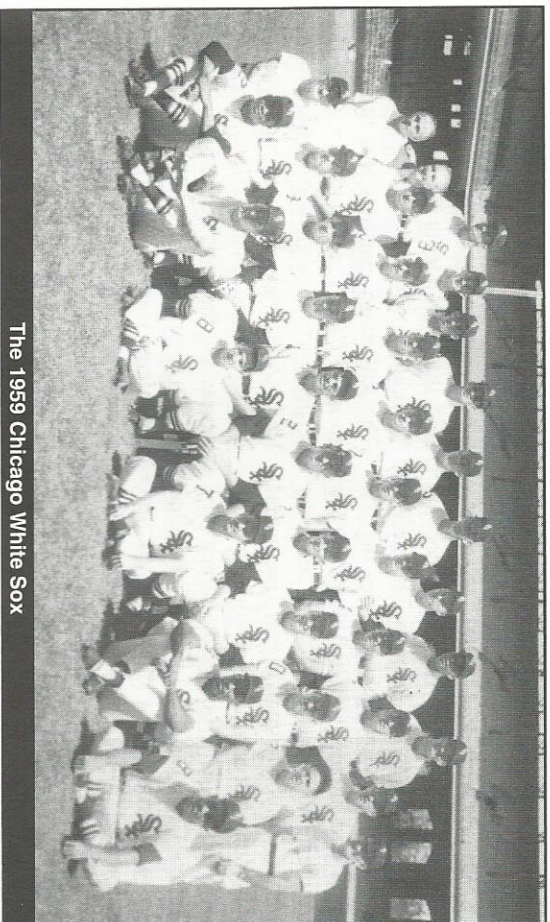
As with any disease, the city displayed numerous telltale symptoms before the madness fully broke out. As White Sox fever began building, Clarence Lyle, proprietor of an Oklahoma (now Exxon) gasoline station, broke with company policy, taking down the multi-colored flags and replacing them with white stockings. Lyle also replaced a sign bearing the corporate slogan, "Put a Tiger in your Tank" with one that read, "Not a Tiger but APARTICIO... GO! GO! GO! — a tribute to White

*Chuck Billington is a writer from Chicago and the author of Wrigley Field's Last World Series: The Chicago Cubs and the Pennant of 1945, published by Lake Claremont Press.*

Sox shortstop Luis Aparicio. Not to be outdone, the Chicago City Council passed a resolution changing the name of 35th Street between Wentworth and Halsted to White Sox Pennant Parkway. Seizing the opportunity to needle the city's North Side ball club, 37th Ward Alderman Paul Corcoran proposed an amendment changing the name of Addison Street near the Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field to 7th Place. The amendment was quietly rejected.

All of these acts were signs that something big was brewing. On Tuesday, September 22, the brew boiled over as White Sox pitcher Gerry Staley silenced the huge crowd in Cleveland's Municipal Stadium. When Vic Power hit into a game-ending double play, the Sox clinched their first pennant since the infamous 1919 season.

Four hundred miles away in Chicago, bedlam broke out. It seemed as though everyone in the city that night was following the White Sox. The American Research Bureau later indicated that nearly 89% of all television sets in the Chicago area were tuned to the game on WGN. It was rare in



The 1959 Chicago White Sox

OLD-TIMERS BASEBALL ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO

the 1950s for WGN to televise nighttime road games, but there were White Sox broadcasters Jack Brickhouse and Vince Lloyd, behind the microphones in Cleveland. As game's end, a jubilant crowd of 25,000 Chicagoans made their way to the city's Midway Airport to await the return of the new American League champions. Since the plane did not land until 2:30 am, the fans had to wait for several hours.

Although most fans were well-behaved, a few could not resist the opportunity for mischief. During the interim, a small group of fans was arrested for breaking into an American Airlines hangar and looting cargo. Meanwhile, in the Loop, six rowdies were arrested for destroying the State Street Council's exhibit at the corner of State and Madison. Other than those two incidents, however, the masses displayed admirable restraint. White Sox owner Bill Veeck, his wife Mary Frances, Mayor Richard J. Daley, and his wife Eleanor were together in the crowd. With all the pushing, shoving and merry-mak-

ing, Mary Frances lost her shoe; miraculously, the Mayor's wife found it. All the while, though, blaring over the wild proceedings was a sound so ominous, it gave many Chicagoans the scare of their lifetimes. Fire Commissioner Robert J. Quinn had taken it upon himself to commemorate the success of his heroes by activating the area's 110 air raid sirens.

Quinn was an old Back of the Yards friend of Richard J. Daley's and had risen from the ranks in the Chicago Fire Department to become Assistant Fire Commissioner just four days after Daley took the mayoral oath in 1956. In short order he was promoted to the top job. When the White Sox clinched the AL flag on this Tuesday night in September, Quinn was nine months into the worst year of his life. Weary from defending his decisions and the actions of the Chicago Fire Department during the city's most traumatic event of the decade, the horrific Our Lady of Angels fire (in which 92 elementary students and three nuns died), Quinn was looking for something to celebrate. He found some badly

needed relief in the team's dramatic pen-  
nant victory.

Reporters asked Daley about the  
blaring sirens while he waited for his  
heroes at Midway Airport. The mayor  
had little time for such inquiries on that  
night and brazenly replied that the City  
Council had authorized it. The reporters  
were not quick enough to call him on that  
statement, but another individual was.

Robert M. Woodward, Director of  
Illinois Civil Defense, afterwards called  
the alert completely unauthorized and  
announced a federal investigation. He  
sympathized with the dismayed and  
frightened public, and two days later  
filed a formal protest with the North  
American Air Defense Command in  
Colorado Springs. Woodward was par-  
ticularly irked because civil defense offi-  
cials had spent years alerting the public  
that a siren heard at any time other than  
10:30 am on Tuesdays signaled a crisis,  
and now someone would have to explain  
the disturbing exception. A red-faced  
Quinn promised in writing that he would  
never again use the sirens for anything  
other than their intended purposes.

Quinn also braced himself for severe  
criticism after hearing the public's  
response to the sirens. Complaints came  
in from all quarters. The Bell Telephone  
Company reported that its switchboards  
had been flooded with the largest volume  
of calls since President Franklin  
Roosevelt's death. Hospital supervisors  
called to see if they should evacuate  
patients and suspend surgical procedures.  
One woman called the *Chicago Tribune*  
from her basement, where she huddled  
with her three children. Elsewhere, a man  
called the *Tribune*, reporting that he had  
locked himself in a closet with several  
bottles of beer for companionship. Still  
another called from a pay phone, saying

he was *en route* to Wisconsin to avoid the  
atomic bombing of Chicago. The *Tribune*  
later conducted a survey in which fully  
half the respondents reported they had  
thought the city was under Soviet attack.  
The follow-up question was more omni-  
nous: 90% of respondents said that  
regardless of what they thought the sirens  
had meant, they were extremely angry  
over the sirens' misuse. Many threatened  
reprisals at the polls in the next election.

In spite of the blooming controversy,  
the Veecks and general manager/part  
owner Hank Greenberg painted the town  
until the wee hours Wednesday morning,  
stopping at Fritzel's on State and The  
Singapore on Rush Street. Commissioner  
Quinn's historic gaffe was soon crowded  
out of everyone's memory by the excite-  
ment of a South Side World Series, as the  
city quickly planned a parade for  
Thursday, September 24. The parade  
route took the team south on State Street  
from Wacker to Adams, west to LaSalle,  
and back north, through the heart of the  
financial district on LaSalle, amidst a  
shower of ticker tape. Daley, Veeck, and  
Chuck Comiskey led the parade, fol-  
lowed by a large truck, six bands, and a  
fleet of 15 convertibles, each carrying  
two members of the team. That evening  
Veeck and Comiskey again overlooked  
their differences, hosting a huge party at  
the Conrad Hilton Hotel. Among the 500  
attendees was Mr. Conrad Hilton him-  
self.

With all the excitement and eupho-  
ria, the city was at a fever pitch on  
Thursday, October 1 as 48,013 fans  
crammed into Comiskey Park for the  
World Series opener. In a gesture of  
appreciation for the team's female fans,  
turnstile attendants handed red roses to  
the first 20,000 women to enter the park.  
The park itself was not adorned with tra-

ditional World Series bunting because  
Bill Veeck wanted the nation to see the  
grand old park the way it normally  
appeared. At field level in the owner's  
box sat Chuck Comiskey, Veeck, his  
wife Mary Frances, and son Mike (the  
only Veeck child deemed old enough to  
attend) sat in the upper deck. Jump  
Jackson's band provided the crowd with  
musical entertainment, and Tony Martin  
sang "The Star Spangled Banner."

A bit of unexpected drama occurred  
when the American flag got stuck half-  
way up the pole, but Ms. Roni Wear, an  
attractive 29-year-old mother of a three-  
year-old daughter and one of the few  
female steepjacks in the country, shin-  
ied up the 60-foot flagpole and fixed the  
pulley.

Back on the ground, food vendors  
were having a field day. Nicholas J.  
LaPapa, president of Vendors Local 236,  
later reported that the lowest-paid vendor  
made \$75 in commissions and another  
made \$15 in tips that day, more than triple the  
take on an average day. Fans buy more  
when their team does well, and the Sox,

behind the hitting of Ted Kluszewski and  
the pitching of Early Wynn, dominated  
the Dodgers on this glorious autumn  
afternoon.

One of the vendors was a  
Northwestern Law School student named  
Eddie Einhorn, who would own the team  
some two decades later.

Although they scored 11 runs in  
their first game, the White Sox scored  
only 12 more in the remaining five as the  
Dodgers won the Series, four games to  
two, thanks in large part to the efforts of  
a little-known pitcher named Larry  
Sherry. In spite of the World Series dis-  
appointment, many White Sox fans  
believed a bright future awaited the team  
in the 1960s. However, a series of unfor-  
tunate trades by Bill Veeck, another con-  
fidential sale of the team, and severe  
financial problems hampered the fran-  
chise for the next 20 years. White Sox  
loyalists would have to wait 46 years  
before the Chicago's South Side would  
again be the cynosure of the baseball  
world, but in 2005 their heroes made the  
wait worthwhile. ■

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How the dawn of the automobile brought radio to Hollywood

# DON LEE AND THE DAWN OF WEST COAST RADIO

BY JIM DOHREN

Every once in a while, a show on *Those Were the Days* ends with the tag line “This is The Don Lee/Mutual Network.” Grateful as we are to have these old shows preserved, we might wonder who this fellow Don Lee was and what he had to do with radio.

From the purchase of his first radio station in 1926, there was no greater force in the development of West Coast radio broadcasting than Donald Musgrave Lee. His extraordinary vision, his driving ambition, his willingness to risk great investments of capital, and his unflagging insistence on quality advanced West Coast radio from its infancy to the pinnacle of its success.

By 1908 — at the tender age of 28 — Lee had established himself as the head of one of the largest custom auto

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

body and chassis shops in the nation, the Don Lee Coach and Body Works in Los Angeles. Perhaps because of the prestige and connections growing from his fine work, perhaps because of his proven managerial skills — or perhaps just because of his flamboyant, confident, persuasive personality — by 1909, General Motors had named Lee its official (and exclusive) Cadillac dealer for the entire state of California. He immediately began to use his monopoly to build a business empire, establishing Cadillac dealerships in San Francisco, Oakland, Fresno, Sacramento, Bakersfield and Pasadena. He turned his body shop almost exclusively to fitting custom bodies to Cadillac chassis for the rich and famous. In addition, he used his new financial leverage to buy out The Earl Automobile Works, one his chief Los Angeles rivals.

Lee always showed an ability to recognize talent when he saw it and to use that talent to his advantage. After purchasing Earl, he not only retained the

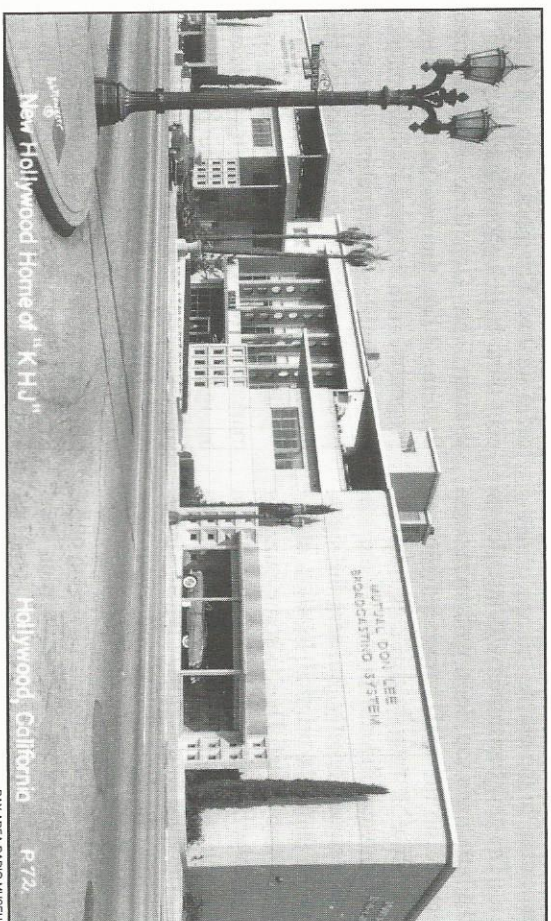
business' former owner J.W. Earl as shop foreman, he also made J.W.'s son Harley the head of design. Eventually, Harley was hired by Larry Fisher to head General Motors' design division, Fisher Body. (Ironically, Harley Earl's first designs for General Motors were four models of the Cadillac division's new car, the LaSalle, which joined the inventory sold in Lee's showrooms.

Lee also used his wealth to begin a career as a yachtman, purchasing a 126-foot luxury racing schooner with a significant name: Invader. In 1926, with a high-priced racing crew on board, Invader established a speed record during a voyage from Hawaii to San Francisco. Lee was a member of several yacht clubs and encouraged his son Tommy's enthusiasm for racing, first with a custom built R-boat named Pirate, and later with a string of custom-built race cars.

Ever the entrepreneur, Lee sensed the potential of the relatively new medium of radio for promoting his Cadillacs and LaSalle. In 1926, he purchased the fledgling San Francisco station KFRC

from the City of Paris department store. The station had already gone through two owners since its founding in 1924. Lee evidently admired the additional advertising opportunity created by City of Paris when they installed the studio behind a large window on the ground floor of its store, for he immediately announced plans to build greater and grander facilities inside his magnificent four-story Van Ness Ave. dealership building. (Today, the building survives as a national historic landmark.)

Typical of his style, Lee's new studios were state-of-the-art. He spared no expense in purchasing the finest equipment including a spanking new 1,000 watt transmitter, the most powerful Westinghouse made at the time. The studios were located on the mezzanine floor of the building at the end of a large and grandiose staircase leading up from the showroom floor. The two large studios were elaborately decorated in a Spanish motif and were said to be so acoustically perfect that a full orchestra could be on the air in one while a second group



rehearsed in the other.

The new transmitter was installed on the building's top floor, with an antenna erected on the roof, suspended between two ships' masts. Interestingly enough, this antenna did not broadcast the station's signal directly, but sent the signal to the station's original location at the Whitcomb Hotel. Due to some puzzling anomaly, beaming the KFRRC signal from that location made it a virtual superpower, enabling it to regularly reach Alaska, Hawaii, the East Coast and even New Zealand. Westinghouse's best engineers could not figure out the reason beyond a vague explanation that the location must be some sort of "perfect electrical ground."

Still enthralled by his first acquisition, Lee purchased KHJ in Los Angeles in 1927. As with his San Francisco station, Lee had the studios moved, this time to his dealership at Seventh and Bixel. Again, superbly equipped, entirely new studios were quickly built and a transmitter and an antenna with two tall towers was installed on the roof. Lee also emulated his pattern at KFRRC by signing on the best talent available, as evidenced by this excerpt from a 1929 edition of *Broadcast News*:

"Both KHJ and KFRRC have large, complete staffs of artists, singers and entertainers, with each station having its own Don Lee Symphony Orchestra, dance band, organ, plus all of the musical instruments that can be used successfully in broadcasting. It is no idle boast that either KHJ or KFRRC could operate continuously without going outside their own staff for talent and yet give a variety with an appeal to every type of audience."

As the owner of two of the West Coast's most powerful and prestigious

radio stations, Lee quickly moved to connect them by telephone line, thus establishing The Don Lee Broadcasting System. While the two stations shared programs, each retained its full complement of staff — a refreshing idea compared to the present era of buy-outs and downsizing.

Because it reached the East Coast market, KFRRC's programming could not be ignored. This may have been why CBS president William S. Paley came to court Lee when he needed West Coast outlets to help him overcome the crippling competition from the larger NBC Red and Blue Networks.

Paley was a busy man, one used to the rough and tumble style of eastern business dealings, and he hoped to begin negotiations immediately. Lee, by contrast, despite his rapid establishment of a radio network, had a more typical California-casual, time-consuming business style that relied more than a bit on charm.

Paley was persuaded to conduct the negotiations aboard *Invader*. The story goes that Paley expected a day voyage, during which he and Lee would hammer out an agreement. Instead, he got was a week-long leisure cruise during which Lee did not once bring up a business deal. (One can only imagine the small talk over billiards, cocktails and meals.) Clearly, it worked, when Paley presented a affiliate agreement on July 16, 1929, Lee signed it without further negotiation.

The Don Lee stations became the mainstay of CBS' West Coast operation on January 1, 1930, when the new chain (known as The Don Lee/Columbia Network) began operations. Lee immediately purchased two more stations (KGB/San Diego and KDB/Santa Barbara) and rapidly added

KOIN/Portland, KOL/Seattle, KVI/Tacoma and KFPY/Spokane.

Prior to his affiliation with CBS, Lee had been feeding programming to the McClatchy Newspapers' chain station in Fresno. This station quickly joined Don Lee/Columbia and was followed by the other McClatchy stations, KFBN/Sacramento, KWG/Stockton and KERN/Bakersfield.

The Don Lee/Columbia agreement meant that Columbia programming reached the West Coast market through the early dinner hours. Don Lee programs began after 8:00 pm, when the eastern feed ceased. KFRRC and KHJ sent programs to the network on alternate nights. In return, some of the Lee stations' best programs were picked up and broadcast nationally by CBS.

Probably the best example of a West Coast show that went national was KFRRC's *Happy-Go-Lucky Hour*, a very early vaudeville variety-style show featuring music and comedy skits. Two of the more popular performers were brothers Al and Cal Pearce, full-time real estate agents who'd formed an amateur musical act. By chance, a KFRRC executive had seen them at a real estate convention in the city and immediately signed them to a contract. Cal soon left the act to return to his real estate business (which may not have been such a wise idea in 1929). Al, whose own business was already foundering, stayed.

On the program, Al not only sang and played, but also performed comedy sketches. By far his best known character was the reticent door-to-door salesman, Elmer Blurt, whose knock on the door was always preceded with the wish that "There's nobody home today, I hope, I hope, I hope." Elmer's wish became a catchphrase. Not long after its debut, the

program earned nationwide CBS exposure. In 1933, *Al Pearce and His Gang* moved to NBC, where it remained a network regular until 1947.

KHJ also made a significant contribution to radio programming in general even if the program itself never went national. From 1932 to 1935, KHJ broadcast what is accepted as the very first radio private detective series, *Detectives Black and Blue*. Hardly sophisticated, it featured two friends from Duluth who take a private detective course and set themselves up in business to make their lives more exciting. The duo bumbled their way through a series of cases that mixed suspense with comedy. Though not well-remembered today, it did launch one of radio and television's most important genres.

One of the more curious KFRRC shows on the Lee network was too logistically challenging — and perhaps too odd — to make it on a national level. *Lady in the Clouds* featured Yvonne Peterson singing and playing from the passenger seat of an airplane as it flew



Al Pearce

over the “city by the bay.” A short-wave transmission fed the signal to the ground station where it was in turn relayed to the transmitter for broadcast. One trusts Ms. Peterson played the ukulele and not the piano.

The Don Lee organization provided CBS with not only quality programming but a steady stream of talented performers. KFRC was virtually a school for announcers; Don Wilson began as a member of the “Piggy-Wiggy Trio” until KFRC general manager Harrison Holliday (a major force behind the station’s success), noticed Wilson’s voice and encouraged him to try his hand at announcing.

Other announcers for the Lee Network were Ralph Edwards, Art Van Horn and Mark Goodson. Bea Benaderet began as a KFRC announcer, a rare woman in a man’s realm. Art Linkletter and Mel Venter came along in later years. Harold Peary and Morey Amsterdam also began their careers with Lee, as did staff singers Juanita Tennyson and Merv Griffin. Meanwhile, over at KHJ, a young singer by the name of Bing Crosby began his radio career.

Lee hired a very young music director at KFRC, a musical prodigy who had already played with the John Philip Sousa Band and the New York Philharmonic. Still, Meredith Willson’s talents were too vast to keep him at his duties in San Francisco very long. He was soon on his way to national radio and eventually Broadway success.

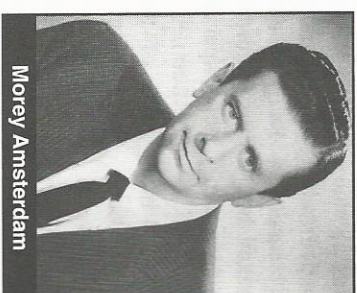
It was surely apparent by this time that Don Lee was a hands-on boss of the best kind: recognizing talented people, paying them well, nurturing their careers and letting them go on to bigger and better things.

It would have been uncharacteristic of this dynamic man to rest on his laurels once his network had achieved success. It should come as no surprise that while Lee allowed his attention to drift a bit regarding his radio enterprise, he was looking forward to the next best thing—television. In 1931, he applied for and received the first license for an experimental television station on the West Coast.

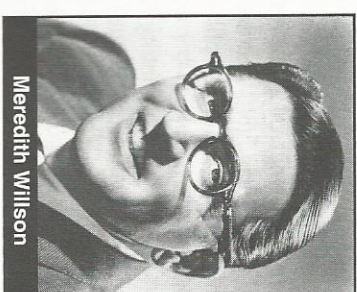
Television also gave Lee the chance to go one up on his friend and rival, Earl C. Anthony. Anthony had a franchise for



Ralph Edwards



Morey Amsterdam



Meredith Willson

Packards; their stylish, sleek Los Angeles showrooms were literally across the street from Lee’s. When Lee purchased KHI, Anthony bought the powerful KFI. The rivalry reached a depth (or height) of zany when Anthony became irritated by the ostentatious antenna array on the roof of Lee’s Cadillac building. He ordered a similar antenna built on the roof of his Packard dealership complete with the giant letters K-F-I. Of course, the building had neither a station nor a transmitter in the building. The antenna was only a prop—a colossal fake work of Hollywood—but it did give Don Lee something to look at.

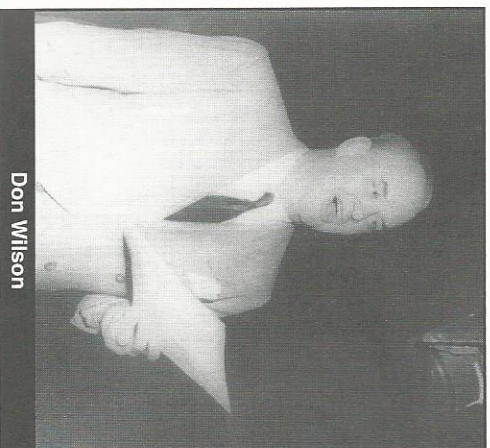
Whatever his original intent, Lee’s interest in and commitment to television went far beyond impressing (and staying ahead of) Anthony. Lee hired Harry Lubke, a former associate of Philo Farnsworth, who was considered the inventor of television. Lubke set up a studio on the top floor of Lee’s Los Angeles dealership building and began experimental transmitting on W6XAO/Channel 1.

The tiny station had to broadcast a dependable signal, but also had to do something about the fact that almost no one in California had a TV receiver at the time. Lubke’s solution to the second problem was to design a receiver that a

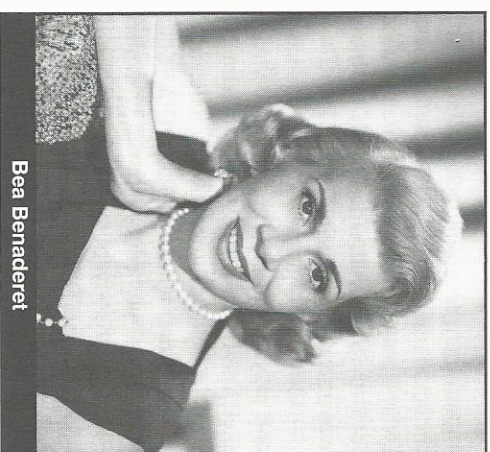
talented person could build at home—and make the plans available for free. By the time a hundred or so had been built, Lubke had figured out the basic techniques of reliable broadcasting: on December 23, 1931, W6XAO began daily programming—one hour per day, six days per week. These broadcasts continued, expanded and improved as Lubke and his staff, supported by Lee’s money, developed a string of innovations which helped advance the birth of television.

Excited as he may have been by the daunting challenges of his latest venture, Lee himself did not live long enough to oversee a great deal of the new medium’s progress, for he died suddenly of a heart attack (one source has said that Lee choked to death) on August 30, 1934, while dining with his new wife and son in his suite at the Ambassador Hotel. He was 53. As his only son and heir, Thomas (Tommy) Lee assumed control of the entire Don Lee empire: radio network, television, car dealerships and all other business ventures.

Don Lee’s unexpected passing was a tremendous shock to his business associates, his many friends and, of course, his family. No one could have been more stunned than Tommy, who fully expected that the elder Lee would go on directing his ventures for years, if not for



Don Wilson



Bea Benaderet

decades. Although Tommy was 28 (the same age at which his father had already become owner of a powerful business), it's understandable that he lacked both the experience and the philosophy to run the company.

There is no doubting he shared his father's love for challenge, competition, and high-quality custom-built boats and cars; however, Tommy was more interested in collecting and racing fast cars than he was in building or selling them. Only the nascent television station intrigued him and he took over its management willingly. The rest he gladly turned over to a group of trustees.

In retrospect, Don Lee's death — and his son's apathy toward most of his father's business interests — seems prophetic. In some ways, that period can be seen as the peak of success for all the Don Lee enterprises. At the time of Lee's death, his erstwhile sailing companion and business partner William S. Paley was rapidly becoming disenchanted with the CBS/Don Lee Network agreement. Paley may have felt that he'd been seduced into a soft deal during the 1929 negotiations. He would certainly have sensed that Don Lee's absence at the head of the network was a weakness that he could exploit.

So it was that on March 19, 1936, Paley announced — without consulting the management of Don Lee Broadcasting — that he had arranged to purchase KNX (the powerful cross-town rival of Lee's KHJ) for the then-record sum of \$1.25 million. Paley further announced that he was building a brand new West Coast headquarters, Columbia Square in Hollywood — and KNX would be his network's Los Angeles affiliate.

Paley was not done with his bomb-

shells. Because KNX had been sharing programming with KFS/San Francisco, Paley leased that station with an option to buy. Shortly afterward, the McClatchy newspaper chain's stations defected from the Lee network and joined CBS, as did some of the stations in Oregon and Washington. Paley must have savored the sensation.

Obviously, Paley's dramatic unilateral actions abrogated the Don Lee/Columbia affiliation. The drastic situation caused Don Lee Broadcasting to lose not only the invaluable Columbia programming but also a national feed for its own programs.

Still, all was not lost. There's a show business expression, "Timing Is Everything." Certainly it pertained in this situation, for another suitor waited in the wings.

Formed within a month of Don Lee's death, the new Mutual Broadcasting System was seeking new "partners" — a very different concept from the highly controlled affiliation that NBC and CBS had demanded. Mutual began as an alliance between four of the most powerful independent stations in the nation: WGN/Chicago, WOR/New York City, WLW/Cincinnati and WXYZ/Detroit.

If one judged by the number of stations, Mutual became the largest radio network in the nation; in reality, Mutual ran fourth — behind the Big Three: CBS, NBC Red and NBC Blue (which later became ABC) — in terms of ratings, programming resources and political influence. Mutual started late in the race and was always the weak sister in the radio network family. Nonetheless, Mutual was still anxiously looking to expand in 1936, particularly west of the Rockies, where it had no coverage.

One could see it as a step up for Mutual and a step down for the Don Lee system, but there was no alternative for Don Lee Broadcasting if it wanted to regain a national feed. A quick decision was made to purchase a 25% share in Mutual and on December 30, 1936, almost six years exactly since the beginning of the Don Lee/Columbia network, the Don Lee/Mutual network went on the air.

Certainly the association was beneficial to both parties: Mutual got twenty-one badly needed West Coast outlets, while the Don Lee Network got not only the national exposure it sought, but maintained autonomy as well — while getting some outstanding programming from Mutual (including *The Shadow*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and *The Mysterious Traveler*) plus some wonderful kids' shows (including *The Lone Ranger*, *Challenge of the Yukon* and *The Adventures of Superman*). The private eye shows had progressed all the way from KHJ's bumbling *Detectives Black and Blue* to Mutual's *Nick Carter*, *Master Detective*.

The Don Lee/Mutual arrangement fared well enough through the rest of the 1930s and well into the 1940s. However, with the inevitable transition from radio to television (advanced in part by Lee's own W6XAO), Mutual's Achilles Heel began to show. With its myriad local stations (most of whom had limited broadcast range and small budgets), Mutual simply could not compete with NBC, CBS and ABC as they developed their own television networks. Nevertheless, in 1950, Thomas S. Lee Enterprises (a.k.a. The Don Lee Broadcasting System) acquired the licenses and ownership stake in New York's WOR-AM/FM and WOR-TV from the R.H. Macy

Company. With the newly merged company General Teleradio, the prestigious and powerful name of Don Lee was gone from the radio industry.

The denouement was soon to follow. In 1948, Tommy died; he was, tragically, even younger than his father at the time of his death. For a time, the executors of his estate tried to make the new company a success, but they lacked vision, strong leadership, and deep pockets.

It was a lost case, and in 1952, the entire radio network and nearly all of its stations were sold to General Tire and Rubber Co. (Noticeably exempt from the sale was the television entity.) What was left of Mutual subsequently became part of 3M, then Amway and finally Westwood One, which would make the old Don Lee stations part of CBS once again. It could be seen as Paley's ultimate victory, although it was so far removed from the original vigor of Don Lee Broadcasting that claiming "victory" would be pyrrhic.

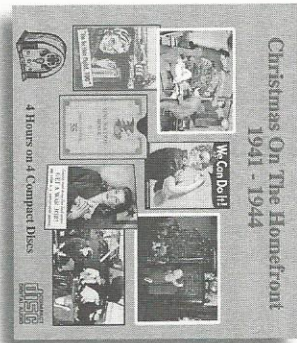
Among the most ephemeral of human creations are the relationships we form with each other. Reduced to its essence, The Don Lee Broadcasting System was just a series of business deals; that's how it was born and how it died. The great majority of such deals go unmentioned by the general public when they end, and their passing has little effect on people's lives. The demise of Don Lee's radio networks is a rare exception. With their passing, the country lost a source of uncompromised quality programming. Changing public tastes notwithstanding, the loss was great. ■

*Time in to Radio's Golden Age on October 23 to hear the 1936 dedication program for the Don Lee Radio Network.*



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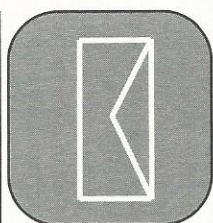


In the middle of the 1945-46 season, Jack Benny and his gang presented twelve programs dealing with the presumption that since 30 million people tune into the Benny Show, and since there are 130 million people in the country, there must be 100 million who don't like the program or Jack!

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**ED. NOTE**—Reader Dino Argyopolous of Chicago sent a very nice note concerning Walter Scannell's "terrific article" (Dino's words) about Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the Summer 2011 *Nostalgia Digest*. That same note pointed out that in the picture on page 44, actor Erik Rhodes is mistakenly identified as Eric Blore. We regret the error.

**MUNSTER, INDIANA**—Steve, I am listening to your radio program as I make out this check to renew my subscription. Best wishes to all and keep up the wonderful work.  
—**JAMES GRINDLE**

**E-MAIL**—Steve, I don't know if you remember me, but we worked together at WLTJ. I also listened to Chuck Schaden as a kid, and tried to tune in whenever I could after he moved to WDCB. Now I make excuses on Saturday afternoons to drive around and listen to your show. My teenagers won't let me listen at home, and my wife accuses me of being 80 years old when I have your show on. So believe it or not, you are about my only "guilty pleasure."  
Keep up the good work. It's great to know that the show is in your good hands.  
—**TONY HOPP**

**(ED. NOTE)**—I don't know what surprises me more: to hear from someone who was at WLTJ at the same time that I was, or to hear that he's got teenagers!

**CINCINNATI, OHIO**—Just wanted to let you

know that I listened to your program this afternoon featuring Jack Benny and some of his old radio programs. This was the first time I have listened to your program on the radio. I thoroughly enjoyed your program and plan on listening to it more in the future. I always liked Jack Benny. I used to watch his TV shows quite often as a youngster, but I never listened to him much on the radio. My friend and co-worker, Larry Youngberg, told me about the program and how I could hear it on the Internet. Larry has talked to me a lot about the program and all you folks there, and what he does there "behind the scenes." Look forward to listening to your program more.  
—**SHIRLEY COE**

**(ED. NOTE)**—Thanks, Shirley — and our thanks to Larry Youngberg for all of his efforts on behalf of *Those Were the Days*!

**E-MAIL**—Your segment honoring those who left us in 2010 was wonderful to hear [W/T/D, January 15]. So many people took those incredible voices for granted, as though we'd always hear them. Thank you for your recognition of these incredible talents.  
—**KITTY**

**E-MAIL**—Your 'Necrology' for 2010 [Spring 2011 *Nostalgia Digest*] lists Dorothy Warenskold, operatic soprano. Five years ago I downloaded nine programs of a series called *Candy Matson, Private Detective*, one of which, "Devil in the Deep Freeze," featured Miss Warenskold playing herself, with a bit of opera. The series was strictly a west coast

## 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*.



program, so not well known to those of us living here and on the east coast in the '40s and '50s. Good shows, played with humor. You might consider scheduling one or more of them in the future.

Talking about radio shows with studio audiences reminded me of Navy Day (which I think was Oct. 27, 1945) when I was part of a scout troop visiting NYC to see all the big ships — USS Enterprise (CVA), USS Missouri (BB) and others. We also were part of the audience for that day's *Let's Pretend*, possibly "Rumpelstiltskin," though I'm not sure it was that one — I've heard too many *Let's Pretend* shows to be sure which one I heard when! I was struck by the fact that the actors dropped the pages of their scripts on the floor as they finished them. My uncle, who wrote a ham radio column for a Newark newspaper, explained that this was the quietest way to get rid of the finished pages — any shuffling or turning would rustle enough to be picked up by the mikes. I've sometimes wondered whether the AFTRASAG players continue that tradition when they do re-enactments at the Cultural Center, though today's mikes are less likely to pick up extraneous noises.

Anyway, thanks for continuing *TWTD*. I've listened quite a bit going back at least 20 years, to the WINB days. Since my first 30 years in Chicago were in Hyde Park, I never heard the earliest years of *TWTD*.

—**BILL ERBACHER**  
**(ED. NOTE —** We'll see if we can bring *Candy Matsun* to our *TWTD* microphones in 2012.)

**E-MAIL —** Just finished listening to the *Lights Out* story "Murder Castle" on *TWTD* [February 26]. I'm unsure if you know the show was based on Henry H. Holmes and his place of the same name on the South Side during the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, described in Erik Larson's book, *The Devil in the White City*.

—**NORM SCHICKEDANZ**  
**(ED. NOTE —** Thanks for the confirmation, Norm, as we thought there was something about "Murder Castle" that sounded rather familiar. Very likely Arch Oboler picked up a lot of inspiration of this sort when *Lights Out* was broadcasting from Chicago in the 1930s.)

**E-MAIL —** Today I started reading the Spring issue of the *Digest* and I just had to write about one of the "behind the scenes" people who loved, loved, loved radio — especially *Those Were The Days*.  
 He started out as one of the South Side

*TWTD* players and worked his way into being an engineer of the show in 1995. Saturdays meant so much to him. He always had a smile on his face and enjoyed every minute of his day at "the show." He and Chuck had a great time during breaks talking about everything from radio to daughters! In 2006, he had to give up his hobby of Saturdays at the station because of health reasons. He still listened and when tapes were played of old shows we could still hear him laughing in the background.

Thank you for bringing the behind the scenes people out in the limelight. They work and love the show as much as everyone else.  
 —**SARAH KUNKA**

**(ED. NOTE —** The "behind the scenes" person to whom Sarah refers is her husband, the late, great Len Kunka. Len was a most valuable contributor to *TWTD* over the years and we thank him — and everyone else who, over the last 41-plus years, has made it possible for us to do our part to bring listeners the sounds of the Golden Age of Radio.)

**NOSTALGIA DIGEST**

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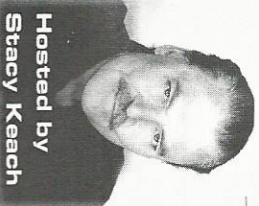
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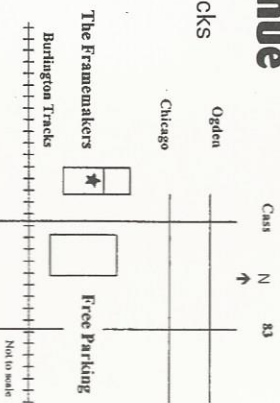
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