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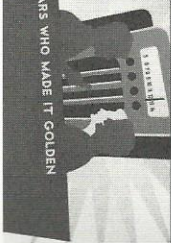
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BOOK 39, CHAPTER 2

SPRING 2013

APRIL-MAY-JUNE

Hello, Out There in Radioland!

The votes are in!

During the last weeks of 2012, we asked *Those Were the Days* listeners to vote for their favorite series from the Golden Age of Radio. Listeners were asked to select up to five favorite Golden Age radio series and list them in order of preference. Thanks to e-mail and the United States Postal Service, we received hundreds of responses, with votes for more than 160 different shows from a variety of genres. Here are the 20 shows that received the most votes.

2012 Listener Survey Results

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The Jack Benny Program | 11. Vic and Sade |
| 2. Suspense | 12. The Whistler |
| 3. Fibber McGee and Molly | 13. One Man's Family |
| 4. Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar | 14. The Lone Ranger |
| 5. The Great Gildersleeve | 15. The Six Shooter |
| 6. Our Miss Brooks | 16. Dragnet |
| 7. The Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show | 17. The Burns and Allen Show |
| 8. Gunsmoke | 18. Inner Sanctum |
| 9. Lux Radio Theatre | 19. The Fred Allen Show |
| 10. The Shadow | 20. Sherlock Holmes |

It's worth noting that 13 of these 20 shows have been inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame. You can read some of our listeners' comments about this survey in our "Mail Call" section, beginning on page 60 of this issue.

We'll recap the results of our listener survey and feature broadcasts from the top six vote-getters on the April 27 broadcast of *Those Were the Days*, as we celebrate that show's 43rd Anniversary. Many of the other shows on this list (and many of the other hundred-plus shows that received votes from listeners) will be featured on *TWTD* and *Radio's Golden Age* during the Spring — and beyond.

Speaking of Radio's Golden Age (now in its fourth year), the months of April and May will feature a radio adaptation of a classic story that's gotten a lot of attention lately. You can see the complete schedule for both of our shows beginning on page 32 of this issue.

Thanks for voting — and thanks for listening.

—Steve Darnall

A few moments with...

HUGH DOWNS

Hugh Downs has become famous for his work in television, having worked as a host and/or announcer for Jack Paar, Kukla, Fran and Ollie, The Today Show, 20/20 and the game show Concentration. However, like many mainstays of early television, Downs had roots in radio, including a lengthy stint in Chicago. In a 2012 conversation recorded at the opening of the new Museum of Broadcast Communications, Downs recalled that his career began in 1939.

Believe it or not, 73 years ago, I started making my living in radio. I was 18... when I started making a living at it. People find this hard to believe—I lecture at Arizona State University and students look at me like I'm nuts when I say it was 73 years ago. I tell them the story... that in those days—and they don't relate to this different dollar value—I was offered a job at the local radio station for \$12.50 a week. [laughs] A seven-day week, and I was a disc jockey. I didn't know I was a disc jockey, because that term wasn't coined until the '40s, and this was in the late '30s. This was 1939. So I spun records, and I read commercials.

You were at what we should probably call a "small town" radio station [in Lima, Ohio], in the days before small towns were suburbs and offshoots of large cities, like they are now. Were there other shows being produced there, beyond record programs?

No, as a matter of fact, while I was



there—and I was there only a year-and-a-half—[the station] went from 100 watts to 250 watts and joined NBC. So that was a step up, and then I left and went to another station in Detroit. There was no other station anywhere in the town [of Lima], so I had kind of a monopoly on it, but it wasn't a get-rich-quick scheme. [laughter]

I would like to ask you about the path that took you from Ohio to Chicago, which is where things kind of kicked into gear. I know you "stopped off" in Detroit, although that's not the right way to phrase it.

Well, in a way, I did. I was at WWJ in Detroit when Pearl Harbor was hit. After I came out of the army, I couldn't go back to Detroit. I connected with NBC's Central Division here in Chicago. I was paid \$75 a week and [wife] Ruth

and I got married then, and I went from \$75 a week to \$125 a week, and we felt kind of wealthy at that. But the curious thing was... the first television program I did was in 1945, in September. Balaban and Katz Theatre had an experimental station... and they were broadcasting continuously. I went over from being on staff for radio, to do a television program... I had not even seen one yet! What it was was a 15-minute radio newscast, but there was a camera on me.

And the funny thing was: Before the days of the image orthicon... they had a thing called the Iconoscope, and the retina was so weak, it required tremendous lighting. The little room was air-conditioned when I went in—and this was September, so it was still kind of warm—and I had a light seersucker jacket on. When they turned those lights on, before the fifteen minutes were up, the room heated up so much that perspiration was dripping off my nose and my chin and onto the paper. And I remember, I sweat through that whole jacket, and I thought, "That's a good thing, because it kept it from catching fire." [laughter]

And you worked on a number of radio shows out of the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. One that comes to mind is an absolutely marvelous show called Destination Freedom.

Oh, yeah, I remember doing that. And a lot of Chicago actors worked on that show, including Shuts Terkel—

Right. Well, Chicago has always been kind of a center of innovation. Both coasts got a little ossified, and I don't put them down, but stuff came out of Chicago that they would then try to imitate—sometimes successfully, sometimes not!—but the ideas came from Chicago, originally.

And on the flip side of that coin, you

were the announcer on Uncle Ned's Squadron.

I remember that! What was that guy's name?

Ned Locke?

Ned Locke! That's right, yes. He had that and he was kind of a Horatio Alger situation... he may have been ahead of his time in a way, but he was very aggressive in terms of saying "Be ambitious!" [laughs] In classical Shakespeare, being ambitious was a bad thing, as Julius Caesar found out.

One other thing I wanted to tell you: how I met [my wife]. She was in the transcription/production department—they hired four-year-old girls in that day and age—and she produced a one-station network program that I had to do on a Saturday morning. Skelly Oil was the sponsor and it went to KOA/Denver; it wasn't even aired locally. But she was the producer of it and that's how I met her, and we fell in love and the rest was history.

Where did you live when you got married? Do you mind my asking?

We lived on Farwell Avenue in Rogers Park. That was a good neighborhood. We went back to it many years later, after the Dutch Elm blight had taken all the trees away. I said, "This can't be the place," because the trees were an important part of it. That was a big change that we noticed.

To hear this conversation in its entirety, tune in to Those Were the Days on April 13 for an afternoon with Hugh Downs, as he talks about his radio career in Chicago, his professional and personal association with the "cool" Dave Garraway... and what prompted him to make the move to television!

Red Skelton:

THE FUTURE COMEDIAN WAS BORN IN A CLOWN SUIT

BY BILL OATES

To his fans, Red Skelton was a lovable clown, one who wore crazy hats and costumes to create memorable characters. Famed comedian W.C. Fields told biographer Gene Fowler, "If anyone ever dares to play the part of my life, I want it to be Red Skelton."

Even though the bulbous-nosed comedian was paying the ultimate tribute to Skelton, the casting was probably askew. However, like Fields, Skelton paid no shortage of dues during his career, one that saw him ascend from extremely humble beginnings in Vincennes, Indiana to becoming a top banana on stage, screen, radio and television.

The future comedian was born Richard Bernard Skelton on July 18, 1913 on Lyndale Avenue in Vincennes, the last of four children. Red's parents figured in the eventual rise and attitude of the future star. His father, Joseph Elmer Skelton, had had some experience as a clown. Joe grew up in Washington,

Bill Oates of Kouts, Indiana, is a high school English teacher and author.

Indiana in a very dysfunctional and disreputable household — something that would inadvertently be passed along to his son.

The father's addiction to alcohol frittered away much of the family's meager funds and claimed his life at age 35, two months before Red's birth. His obituary listed his occupation not as "clown" but as "grocer." On several of his radio shows, Red paid homage to the parent he never knew. He may have recalled stories about his father entertaining at local fraternal organizations, but few facts have been unearthed to support much more. Devoid of life insurance and a source of income, Mother Skelton became a charwoman in a small-time vaudeville house to help feed her boys.

Observing his mother's long hours, hard work, and low pay, Red vowed to escape such poverty and began making a living at a very young age. To add to the young boy's woes, the family's financial troubles forced his mother to send Red to live with an uncle who owned a grocery store. One night an arsonist set fire to the building, and Red was pulled from his crib and saved at the last minute. For the



rest of his life, if anyone lit a match near him, he would frequently back off. When Richard was at home, another challenge presented itself, for his older brothers often beat up the baby of the family.

By age seven, Red had started working as a paperboy. He also washed dishes at a diner, ushered at a theater, and racked balls in a poolroom. However, it was his newspaper job that brought him one step closer to a career as an entertainer.

As Red told the story, it was 1923 when a nattily dressed gentleman exited the best hotel in Vincennes, purchased a paper from Red, and asked what one might do in town for entertainment. The boy gestured across the street toward the marquee in front of the Pantheon theatre that bore the headliner's name, Ed Wynn. The man thanked him and gave the child a dollar for the remaining one-penny papers. To Red's astonishment, the gentleman asked the boy to meet him in front

of the theatre, where he would find a ticket to the show, a rare treat for a poor child.

Upon arriving, Red was given a front row seat. As he stared at the ticket, his benefactor disappeared, only to return on stage as the featured comedian. After the show, Red came backstage to talk with Wynn. The star asked the boy how he liked his act, to which the youngster not only reviewed the comedian favorably, but also expressed his own desire to find employment in the same field. Wynn wished him well and urged him to stick to comedy.

Whether or not this legendary meeting occurred is the subject of speculation. Red often embellished stories, in some cases creating a world more palatable than the one in which he lived. When one reads celebrity autobiographies or hears about encounters from decades earlier, it should be remembered that the teller has the opportunity to select the information

that gets told. Perhaps this and other Skelton tales actually did happen in one form or another. In any case, they make a good story.

When Doc Lewis' Patent Medicine Show rolled into Vincennes in 1925, the 12-year-old saw a chance to make his performing debut, but his song and dance audition did not impress the proprietor. However, the "doctor" let the boy sell bottles of the medicine show's snake oil. When the "medicine" sold out quickly, Red returned to the stage and promptly fell off.

The audience loved the unintended pratfall, so Lewis hired the boy to repeat the act. Eventually, Red's shtick included being Doc's patsy, acting in blackface and filling bottles. Because the contents of the one-dollar vessel included ingredients like Epsom salts, water and brown sugar, Red could not return a second time to towns he and the Doctor had homswoggled. On a positive note, Red was now on the road to eventual stardom.

Serious schooling eluded the future comedian and at age 14, he quit the fifth grade. Perhaps this is a memory rekindled later in Clem Kaddidlehopper, Red's moronic character, who seldom advanced in grammar school. (Interestingly, Skelton later received three doctorates for his contributions to comedy.) He did spend one week as a "serious actor" in a stock company, but the audience laughed him out of work.

Starving, he latched onto a job on The Cotton Blossom showboat for three seasons. Again he did blackface, while perfecting his falls and adding skits, monologues and more pantomime. Unfortunately, Red was fired and dumped in Natchez, Mississippi after he was caught in an embrace with the captain's daughter. It was in Natchez that the

manager of a "Tom Show" (that is, a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with white people in blackface) offered the penniless boy a job at \$15 per week. He played all of the roles except Little Eva.

In one key scene, it was necessary for hounds to chase the slaves fleeing to freedom across an ice floe in the Ohio River. To save the show, Red placed liver in his pockets. The play worked so well that the canines took bites out of the actor's legs, leaving scars that Skelton bore the rest of his life. When the Tom Show and the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus crossed paths, Red left to become a "walk around clown."

Now realizing his childhood dream, Red played the clown until the chance to practice lion taming with Clyde Beatty came along. This career path ended when a tiger severely mauled Beatty, and Skelton looked elsewhere for work.

During the 1920s, many small time venues (especially circuses and showboats) were shutting down, and Red sought employment in a Kansas City burlesque house. Replacing an ailing third banana, the young comedian received his baptism of fire at the hands of surly patrons. While he was placating the crowds at \$75 per week, he took notice of and pursued Edna Marie Stillwell, a high school girl who was trying to make ends meet by working at this venue. She was sufficiently impressed to marry Red, but before they legally took the plunge, he took to the road.

The comedian toured the burlesque circuits for a year with mixed results. On the plus side, he ascended to the role of top banana at \$125 per week. Unfortunately, as burlesque moved from naughty to nearly nude strippers, his key venue (The Gaiety in Kansas City) closed in the face of mounting fines.

His next foray into comedy came during a grueling entertainment form, the marathon dance. As chronicled in the 1969 film *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, the main objective of these contests was to keep "dancing" until only one couple remained upright—a process that could take days. Red was hired primarily to take the stage when a couple collapsed and left the contest. One contestant who was out to win the \$500 prize for lasting the longest on the floor was Edna Stillwell. She wore out five partners; when she wasn't dancing, Red continued wooing her.

Two-and-a-half months after she started, Edna outlasted the competition to win the prize. First, she got to kiss the featured comedian in an official photo. Then she headed for her dressing room for a well-deserved rest. While she was dozing, nefarious characters stole her winnings. (She was lucky to get the money at all; some promoters were known to leave town with the money just before the end of the competition.) To impress her and bolster her spirits, Red took Edna out to a 75-cent steak dinner. Soon after, he proposed, she accepted, and four days after her 16th birthday in June 1931, they were married.

The very young, very broke couple embarked on matrimonial bliss during the early years of The Great Depression. One Atlantic City job presented itself, but Edna's mother was forced to extract the gold fillings from her teeth so the newlyweds could pay for the trip. To ensure the duo's solvency, Edna became the financial (and later creative) partner. She insisted on collecting Red's salary up front, so that no one could avoid paying and Red could not fitter away the money. In the meantime, he continued to perfect his act.



Richard Skelton as a child

A variety of performances helped fight starvation, but a big break came in Atlanta, where Red had returned to working the marathons to stave off poverty. One special evening, Red emceed a parody of the then-popular play *As Thousands Cheer*. "Uncle" Jim Harkins, a vaudeville comedian (later a secretary to Fred Allen), saw the act and told Red to look him up when the young man was next in New York City.

Uncle Jim referred Red to New York agent Tom Kennedy in 1934. Edna questioned Kennedy's 25% fee, but acquiesced for the promise of vaudeville and movie jobs. Red made screen tests at RKO and Paramount as a leading man, but, ironically, the executives only laughed at him. Later he visited Vitaphone, where filmmakers were looking for a two-reel star (an unknown, hence cheap). Many shorts of this ilk were filmed but received little distribution and, at best, ended up in a vault.

Kennedy sent Red to a vaudeville house in Paterson, New Jersey, but the engagement lasted only one night. Edna helped her new husband refine his act, but the audience did not like the show.

When Red received a chance to play two weeks at the Lido Club in Montreal at \$150 per week, the comedian turned an important corner in his career. Hecklers nearly forced him out and the bookers gave Red two nights to get control of his act or else. Their advice to take on the antagonists and throw it back at them worked: Red's gig lasted for a week, then two, and finally three. When the comedian said he had to move on, the club offered him \$200 per week for an additional three weeks and gave him the coveted role of emcee. After six weeks, the manager let the comedian go, claiming he did not want the audience to tire of

him. Instead, Red moved to a Canadian competitor at weekly salary of \$350.

One routine in particular increased Skelton's profile — in more ways than one. After watching a man dunk donuts, Red devised a vignette on different styles of dipping. However, this act required the comedian to eat up to 36 sinkers a day! Eventually, Skelton put on 35 pounds and was forced to initiate an exercise plan as he watched his salary burgeon. By now his weekly income was \$750, but with 25% out for his agent and 15% for his bookers, little was left.

After Red achieved fame north of the American border, he left for Washington, DC's Capital Theater (as "The Canadian Comic"), where his success continued.

It was around this time that RKO producer Pandro S. Berman purchased the rights to *Having Wonderful Time*, a stage comedy about Jewish couples vacationing in the Berkshires. The focus of the film was changed from Jewish patrons to Gentiles and Skelton was hired as the social director. Although the less Semitic version did not translate well, Skelton won kudos for his performance and especially for the re-creation of his donut routine.

Edna and Red made a major leap in 1938, when they wrote, directed and produced *Paris in Swing*, a musical revue starring John Boles, Zasu Pitts and the Gay Foster Girls dancers. The show did well with audiences; unfortunately, it lost money because of its exorbitant production costs. Red had to return to vaudeville to recoup his \$5,000 debt. While on the road, an ad executive saw the comedian in Chicago and called Red to audition for a radio show.

On August 12, 1937, Red made his first national radio appearance on Rudy

Vallee's popular variety program, *The Royal Gelatin Hour*. What started as a one-time visit stretched into two months and led to an ongoing on-air "feud" with fellow Hoosier comedian Joe Cook. Shortly thereafter, Red cut a test record at NBC and was offered a chance to appear on a show starring popular western singing star Red Foley. Fortunately, Skelton was able to adapt his comedy for a listening audience, and soon thereafter the two Reds began working together for Avalon cigarettes.

Avalon Time debuted over NBC's Red network on January 7, 1939. It was broadcast originally from Cincinnati powerhouse WLW ("The Nation's Station"), but heard mostly on Midwestern and Southern affiliates. Additional stations picked up the show when it moved to Chicago later that year.

Announcer Del King started the program, which included songs, skits and monologues. Edna was in the cast, as was Marlin Hurt, a white actor who later became famous as the voice of Beulah, the black maid on *Fibber McGee and Molly*.

As the shows progressed, Skelton gained more prominence and started to develop his unique style. For example, Skelton's "A Slice of Life" segment foreshadowed the famed "Scrapbook of Satire" on future programs. Red left *Avalon Time* on December 20, 1939, as comedian Cliff Arquette stepped in with host Don McNeill.

In order to increase his collection of radio material and refine the jokes he already had, Red hired Jack Douglas, who had been working as a writer for Bob Hope. When he wasn't on radio, Red continued to perform in vaudeville, now commanding \$3,000 per week. By 1940, he advanced to \$7,000, making him the highest-paid entertainer at that time.

It was during this period that he debuted his famous "Guzzlers' Gin" routine. In January 1940, Red performed the act for President Roosevelt for the Chief Executive's birthday and the inauguration of the president's campaign against infantile paralysis. In later years, Roosevelt often requested Red's presence and this special routine.

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Red and wife Edna on *Avalon Time* in 1939

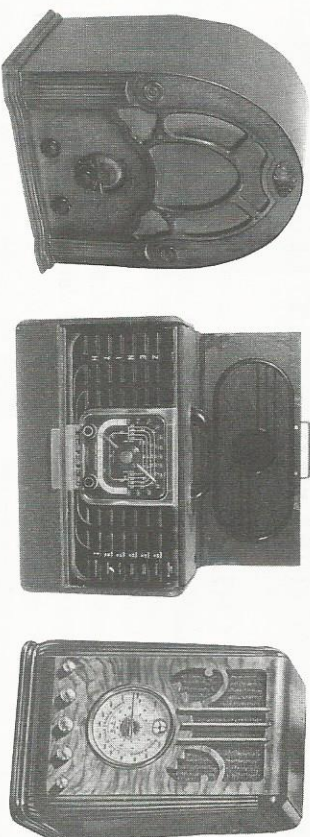
Skelton's movie career was also about to start in full force. MGM head Louis B. Mayer tested Red after Lupe Velez dropped the comedian's name before director Frank Borzage. As a result of that test, Skelton received a supporting part in Borzage's *Flight Command*. The film did not make a great splash, but Red obtained a long-term contract that paid \$1,500 per week. Interestingly, he refused to sign it until MGM allowed him to work in television as well as radio. Television did not seem to be much of a threat at the time, and the far-sighted Skelton easily received his addendum from the studio.

After a small part in *The People vs. Dr. Kildare*, Red and Edna bought a San Fernando Valley home in Tarzana for \$18,500. The outlook for Red's movie fortunes seemed to be on the rise. Bob Hope had the number one radio show in 1941 and became Paramount's key com-

edy star. MGM sought the same radio connection and placed its bid by putting Red in *Whistling in the Dark*. This 1941 release had Skelton playing a radio detective who is called to solve a real murder. Reviews were favorable and often singled out Red as a great new comedian. As another parallel, both Hope and Skelton were beginning their long associations with adoring military audiences. It wouldn't be long before Red's association with the military got a little more... personal. ■

NEXT ISSUE: *Red Skelton goes on the air for Raleigh... makes the move into television... and becomes a national institution. Tune in to Those Were the Days on April 6 and to Radio's Golden Age on April 28 to hear Red Skelton on radio — and be sure to tune in to TWTD in July as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Red Skelton!*

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FROM CANTTEEN TO BIG SCREEN

THE MAKING OF HOLLYWOOD CANTTEEN: THE MOVIE

BY LISA MITCHELL
and BRUCE TORRANCE

Warner Bros.' *Hollywood Canteen* was part of a group of movies unique to the war years during the era of studio system: the all-star, patriotic musical comedy. These staples presented famous players of a particular studio performing within light storylines created to showcase their talents.

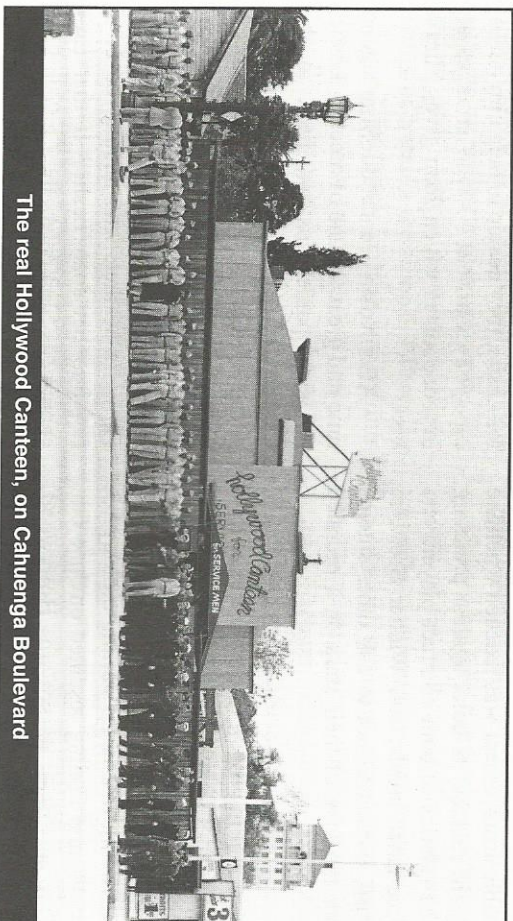
Though *Hollywood Canteen* would become the most popular of these celebrity-rich cavalcades, it was not among the first. Paramount's *Star-Spangled Rhythm* (1942), starring Betty Hutton, was filled with cameos ranging from Bob Hope and Bing Crosby to Cecil B. DeMille. United Artists' *Stage Door Canteen* (1943) offered a roster of such theatrical personalities as Helen Hayes, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, and

Lisa Mitchell and Bruce Torrance are the authors of Hollywood Canteen: Where the Greatest Generation Danced with the Most Beautiful Girls in the World, published by Bear Manor Media. This excerpt is © 2012 by the authors and appears by permission of the publisher.

boasted the only screen appearance of the legendary actress Katharine Cornell. *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1943) is best remembered for Bette Davis singing "They're Either Too Young Or Too Old," and dancing a vigorous jitterbug. Other studios' efforts included MGM's Technicolor extravaganza *Thousands Cheer* (1943), and Universal Pictures' *Follow The Boys* (1944), in which Orson Welles did a magic act with Marlene Dietrich.

As the real Stage Door Canteen was the antecedent of the Hollywood Canteen, so it was with the films. Not long after the New York servicemen's center opened in March of 1942, Hollywood producer Sol Lesser began production on a picture about it. *Stage Door Canteen's* original screenplay was by Delmer Daves, a writer who would later become a successful director (*Destination Tokyo*, 3:10 To Yuma).

When Jules Stein learned that *Stage Door* was in the works, he persuaded Sol Lesser to contribute 25% of the film's profits to the Hollywood Canteen. Stein then convinced Warner Bros. to make a movie about the Hollywood Canteen, with a screenplay written by Delmer Daves. How could Warners say no to a subject that was right in its own



The real Hollywood Canteen, on Cahuenga Boulevard

back yard? Not only did the studio green light the project, it offered to pay an advance of \$250,000 to the Hollywood Canteen (officially for the rights to the name and the concept), along with 40% of the profits, less 25% of production costs. And, through the efforts of Sol Lesser, Warner Bros. and the Hollywood Canteen agreed to donate 25% of the \$250,000 advance to the Stage Door Canteen.

The idea was to have the stars play themselves on screen, interacting with servicemen as they really did at the Hollywood Canteen, and have the G.I.s portrayed by actors and extras. Delmer Daves, who would also be the film's director, wrote bits into his screenplay for the stars assuming that they would be paid on a prorated salary basis, according to the length of each role. Under producer Jesse Lasky, Daves started shooting on November 21, 1943.

But *Hollywood Canteen* was only before the cameras until December 11, when the production was shut down due to a major dispute with the Screen Actors Guild. From Warner Bros.' viewpoint,

prorating actors' salaries to make such a star-studded picture seemed the only way to afford it — especially when the studio was donating a lot of money to the Canteen. However, SAG had a rule (No. 33) which prohibited salary cuts or pro-rates for its actors in commercial films. If the rule were upheld, Warners would have had to pay a star as much as \$150,000 for an hour's work. And the union was not only against reductions in salaries of Warners' contract players, it did not want the studio to exert pressure — such as pushing "patriotism" — on free lance actors to accept cuts either.

The *Canteen* sound stages remained dark for nearly six months while Warner Bros. and SAG crossed legal swords. In support of its members, SAG maintained that non-contract players must receive full salary, regardless of the brevity of their appearances. Warners countered by filing a damage suit for \$500,000 against the guild, claiming that that was the amount which the studio had already spent on preproduction costs and on filming before the shut-down.

The case never got to court. An ami-

cable arrangement was reached when the guild relaxed its edict against prorating the salaries of both contract players and free-lance artists, and Warner Bros., in turn, consented not to ask other studios for the loan of their stars on a prorated basis.

A single day — a single scene — in the making of a movie can have a tremendous impact on the whole. So does nearly six months of not making a movie. *Hollywood Canteen* went back into business with rehearsals starting on June 15, 1944, and filming resumed on June 6th. But as time passes in Hollywood, changes in production, script and cast were inevitable. Alex Gottlieb replaced Jesse Lasky as producer. Ann Sheridan, who was to have been the female lead, had to go on to do *The Doughgirls*, and Joan Leslie took over as the picture's star. Having had its schedule interrupted for almost half a year made *Hollywood Canteen* the last of the all-star war musicals to be released. (Coming to theatres after similar films had already been seen could have reduced its impact had its very title and impressive cast not made it such a draw.)

Three other stars — Robert Hutton, Dane Clark, and Janis Paige — joined Joan Leslie in carrying out the picture's little story through which the Canteen's entertainment could be shown. Slim Green (Hutton) is a shy soldier from the pacific theatre on leave in Hollywood with his buddy, Sergeant Nolan, a.k.a. "Brooklyn" (Clark).

Slim wants nothing more than to meet his favorite movie star, Joan Leslie. "She looks like the kind of girl you can walk right up to and say hello." When Slim visits the Hollywood Canteen and Bette Davis, Jane Wyman and John Garfield learn of this sweet kid's longing

for Leslie, they decide to help him out — especially Garfield — who arranges an introduction in which Joan gives Slim a kiss.

After Nolan hears about Slim's good time and great fortune of meeting Leslie, he accompanies his pal back to the Canteen the next night. He gets to dance with Joan Crawford, but really connects with Angela (Paige), a cute Canteen hostess definitely more his type. The following day, while sightseeing at the Farmer's Market, who should the boys run into but Joan Leslie? If that isn't enough, as Slim enters the Canteen later in the evening, he turns out to be the Millionth Man. Accompanying the honor are all kinds of perks, the best of which is a date with the actress of his choice — Joan, of course. After they go out, Slim and Joan sit together in her back yard, talking, getting closer. The next night, Slim has dinner with Joan and her family. (Joan's sister is played by her real-life sister, Betty Brodel.)

Slim finds that Joan is as warm and down-to-earth as he knew she would be; Joan recognizes an endearing goodness in Slim (as acted by Hutton, he has a Jimmy Stewart-like quality). "You're nice, Slim. I like being with you." The movie star and the shy soldier are falling in love.

On his last night at the Canteen, Slim gives a pep talk to the assembled servicemen to make up for not having said what was on his heart when he became the Millionth Man. "All I said [then] was 'Golly!'"

Joan has promised to take Slim to the railroad station as he heads back to war, but runs out of gas on the way to pick him up. He gets another ride and she arrives at the platform as his train is about to pull out. A helpful G.I. gives

Joan a boost up to Slim's open window and the sweethearts kiss goodbye. The movie ends with a close-up of Bette Davis addressing the troops: "Wherever you go," she says, looking straight into the camera, "our hearts go with you."

With the plot bringing Slim to the Canteen every night of his furlough, there were plenty of opportunities for Warners to parade its stars, as well as those from other studios. Members of the cast included the Andrews Sisters, Jack Benny, Joe E. Brown, Eddie Cantor, Kitty Carlisle, Jack Carson, Joan Crawford, Helmut Dantine, Bette Davis, Faye Emerson, Victor Francen, John Garfield, Mary Gordon, Sydney Greenstreet, Alan Hale, Paul Henreid, Peter Lorre, Ida Lupino, Irene Manning, Joan McCracken, Dolores Moran, Dennis Morgan, Eleanor Parker, Roy Rogers and Trigger, S. Z. Sakall, Alexis Smith, Zachary Scott, Barbara Stanwyck, Craig Stevens and Jane Wyman. Bette Davis, who made

Canteen while shooting *Mr. Skeffington*, was joined by John Garfield to present a history of the Hollywood Canteen, supported by documentary-style footage.

Musical offerings came from such headlines as Jimmy Dorsey and his Band, Carmen Cavallero and his Orchestra, and the Sons of the Pioneers. Highlights were "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," performed by the Pioneers, "What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life?" sung by Jane Wyman and Jack Carson, and "The Bee," a violin solo played by Joseph Szigeti, followed by "Souvenir," a humorous duet with Jack Benny.

Three songs from the movie would become immediate hits: "Sweet Dreams, Sweetheart," sung by Kitty Carlisle, the Andrews Sisters' rendition of "Getting Corns For My Country," and Cole Porter's beautiful "Don't Fence Me In," introduced by Roy Rogers. The studio also used their newly developed, technically improved recording equipment for



Joseph Szigeti and Jack Benny in *Hollywood Canteen*

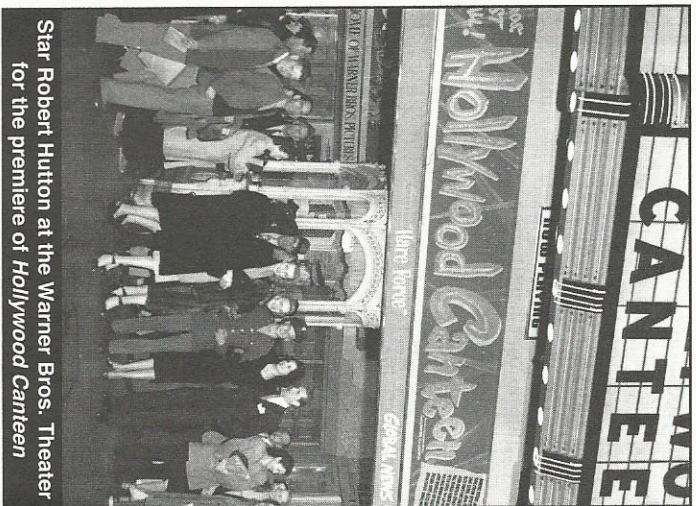
the first time.

LeRoy Prinz created and directed the movie's many song and dance numbers. Prinz (whose first picture was in 1929), who showed versatility as a dance director in films ranging from *Yankee Doodle Dandy* to *The Ten Commandments*, put in 61 days of rehearsing routines, which took 28 days to shoot.

Though various publicity blurbs maintained that Warner Bros. built an "exact replica" of the genuine Canteen, there were some minor differences between the real thing and its counterpart on the studio's Sound Stage Four. Nevertheless, the casual-looking wooden structures in which the on-set crowds interacted would make audiences think that they were seeing the world-famous club itself. A sense of reality was added by some location photography, from shots of the Hollywoodland sign to scenes on the Warner Bros. lot.

Hollywood Canteen finished shooting on August 31, 1944. Its ad campaign hailed it as the movie with "All of Hollywood's heart in it and 62 of Hollywood's stars." The picture had its west coast premiere on December 20th at the Warner Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, just three blocks from the actual Hollywood Canteen. As with the *Talk of the Town* fundraising premiere/party that kicked off the Canteen in 1942, there were no klieg lights or searchlights in front of the theatre because of the war. But by the end of 1944, Hollywood fans had grown used to dimmed down openings, and big crowds gathered to watch *Canteen*'s premiere activities and the celebrities who turned out for the star-packed film.

When prints of *Hollywood Canteen*



Star Robert Hutton at the Warner Bros. Theater for the premiere of *Hollywood Canteen*

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLYWOODPHOTOGRAPHS.COM

were shipped to soldiers serving overseas, they gave the boys who had never been to the Hollywood club a taste of what it was like. And as the film reached screens all over America in 1945, it let civilians in on the kind of entertainment that had only been available to servicemen in Hollywood. In those days before television, people sitting in darkened movie theatres could finally put faces to the musical sounds that they had heard on phonograph records and the radio. Now a Canteen soldier's mom in Milford, Iowa might get a sense of what her son had written home about.

While the general public responded well to *Hollywood Canteen*, professional reviews were mixed. The main fault found by negative critics was that the film came across as being too self-congratulatory. The *New York Daily News* complained of "its complete lack of reserve in singing the praises of

Hollywood." On the other hand, *Variety* wrote: "There isn't a marquee big enough to hold all the names in this one, so how can it miss? Besides, it's basically solid. It has story, cohesion, and heart. That's not a bad parlay, either." Thirty years after *Canteen*'s release, film historians Rudy Behlmer and Tony Thomas pointed out the importance of the picture's "rare moments," citing the violin duet between Joseph Sziget and Jack Benny, and Roy Rogers' singing of "Don't Fence Me In."

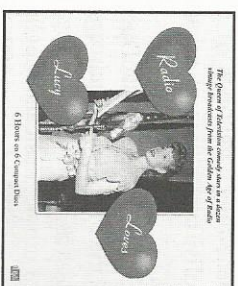
The passage of time has been on *Hollywood Canteen*'s side. Much of what once may have seemed too sentimental or overblown may be enjoyed in retrospect as an expression of an earnest, far more innocent period in America and in

American filmmaking. Joan Leslie's special role — playing her movie-star self, a faithful Canteen volunteer, and the focus of a romance, however contrived — has given the picture a certain lasting charm as Leslie remains one of the most beloved actresses of Hollywood's Golden Age.

And thanks to *Hollywood Canteen*'s availability on television, video and DVD over the decades, the movie, as Behlmer and Thomas noted, "serves as a reminder that once there was such a cañteen in Hollywood and that it did provide admirable services for the services." ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on May 18 to hear the first radio shows broadcast from the Hollywood Canteen.

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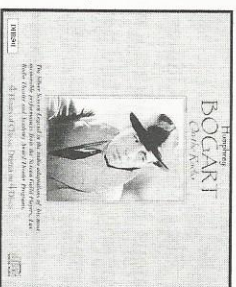


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My mother was a

MEGLIN KIDDIES!

BY KAREN MERCED WILLNER

When we gather as a family, the recitation of fond memories invariably arrives at my mother's adventures in the movies during their "Golden Age." As a child, she chased Clark Gable through the MGM lot, romped around a Maypole for singers Jeannette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, tap danced for B-western heroes the Three Mesquiteers, and adorned the stage as a fiery dory girl with Our Gang.

She got to do these things because of Ethel Meglin. For six years (from 1933 to 1939), Mother was a Famous Meglin Kiddie.

The Meglin Kiddies (a.k.a. the Famous Meglin Kiddies) were a large, revolving troupe of child performers that became ubiquitous in Southern

Karen Merced Willner is an associate instructor of Film as Literature and co-instructor of Post-Modern Art and Film for Saddleback College in Southern California.

California from the 1920s through the early 1960s. They were assembled and trained from the roster of students at Ethel Meglin's school for child performers, the Meglin Studio. The school is described in its contract as "...an institution devoted to the training and development of children, which has been the means of benefiting thousands of children physically, mentally, professionally and socially."

Ethel Meglin, like MacDonald, Eddy, and the Three Mesquiteers, is largely forgotten now. But during the golden era of movie musicals, Meglin—already well-established since 1926 as a cultivator of juvenile stage talent—made herself indispensable by providing day players for the studios. She also kept her schools in the public eye by booking her core troupe to entertain at galas and tea rooms throughout the Greater Los Angeles area.

Along with competitors that included Fanchon and Marco, the Lawlor Professional School (run by "Ma" Lawlor), and Elise Ryan's School of Dancing, the Meglin Studio trained child

stars and the anonymous chorus that danced behind them. Both Judy Garland and Shirley Temple were Meglin alumni.

In Pied Piper fashion, Ethel Meglin parlayed her control over legions of performing children into an empire, eventually expanding across the country and to New York. My mother was one of the thousands of children who danced to the Meglin tune.

Mother was born Lylija Arellano in Los Angeles in 1929. She was the only child of John and Merced Arellano, both of whom emigrated from Mexico as children.

During the Depression, John's work as a driver and delivery man provided a stable income for his family despite the overall desperation of the times.

Lylija grew up in small homes in the neighborhoods near the University of Southern California, within walking distance of extended family members and enjoying easy access to more metropolitan areas through L.A.'s efficient and extensive systems of buses and electric cars. Hollywood—so close, so mass-transit accessible—beckoned, and the Meglin Studio offered an affordable promise of stardom.

Ethel Meglin herself began her career in Cincinnati as Ethel Moegling, later moved to New York, changed her name to Meglin, and became a Ziegfeld Follies performer. She and her husband Richard proceeded to California. In 1926, she opened her first dance school in a house next door to Mack Sennett's movie studio in Glendale.

As her clientele grew, Meglin eventually moved what she called her "Wonder Kiddies" into a space at Sennett's studio.

Before long she outgrew the Sennett space; she rented a building in Los Angeles on Venice Boulevard and re-christened her performing group "The Meglin Kiddies." Her schools gradually expanded to several locations.

Beginning in 1927 or '28, the future Judy Garland worked with the Meglin Kiddies as part of the vaudeville sister act The Gumm Sisters. Young Frances Gunn took lessons at the Meglin Studio, which her mother paid for by playing piano for the school.

In addition to staging live performances and providing juvenile extras for movies, Ethel Meglin produced at least



two short subject films herself. One of these films featured The Gunnm Sisters and was effectively Judy Garland's screen debut (though at the time she was still known as "Baby Gunnm"). The 1929 short, made in conjunction with Associated Films, has been identified as both *Starlet Review* and *The Big Review*. Coincidentally, during the time that Judy Garland/Baby Gunnm was associated with the Meglin Kiddies, Ethel Meglin produced the 1931 short *The Scarecrow of Oz*, released by United Productions. However, Judy Garland was not in this film and would not see Oz herself for another eight years.

According to an undated Los Angeles newspaper article, Judy Garland's affiliation with the Meglin Kiddies (eventually renamed the "Famous" Meglin Kiddies) continued as late as 1936-37.

Shirley Temple enrolled in the Meglin Studio in 1931, and was promptly discovered there by visiting scouts from Educational Films, the production company that started her career in their *Baby Burlesks* short subjects. In 1988 Temple wrote extensively of her experiences with Meglin in her autobiography, *Child Star*.

A compact woman with glistening eyes, Mrs. Meglin was her own best saleslady. Every healthy child loves to dance, she enthused — the finest exercise to build up health and bodily vigor.

Lydia, my mother, does not remember the precise motivation for her enrollment into the Meglin Studio. Some of her contemporaries have stated, however, that Meglin pursued an aggressive door-to-door campaign. Also, the school advertised regularly in the Los Angeles Times during the 1920s and '30s and took out prominent advertisements for

the Kiddie "Reviews" around town. Certainly the success of Shirley Temple and the child star system prompted many Meglin recruits.

The Meglin Studio did not deal in empty promises; the demand for child extras that could sing and dance kept the "Famous Meglin Kiddies" busy. Scouts for MGM musicals, Republic westerns, and Hal Roach's *Our Gang* comedies would visit the Meglin Dance Studio looking for children with singing, dancing and dramatic talent.

As Mother recalls, "The people from the studio would come and watch us as we took classes. They would then choose who they wanted and we would be sent to the smaller rooms down the hall to meet with them privately. I never had to go to studios to audition or read for parts. They would pick me right from class at the Meglin Studios."

Mother attended instruction two days per week at Meglin headquarters on Venice Boulevard. "I took tap and voice and drama and acrobatics. My mother signed me up for ballet — but I didn't like it so I cried until she took me out of ballet classes. Tap was always my favorite. My tap teacher was Mr. Granger."

She remembers her teachers as demanding but kind, and Mrs. Meglin as being a very hands-on director. Meglin would observe class and often would meet with individual children and their parents. That she found the time is impressive: during this period (1936) Ethel Meglin was also occupied with a merger between her organization and Franchon and Marco, a similar academy that catered to older students. This merger resulted in Ethel Meglin becoming director of the largest dance organization in the world, with 137 schools and 52

franchises in the United States.

Mother's most vivid memories are of the *Our Gang* shoots and of *Maytime* — singer/actor Jeannette MacDonald's favorite among the many operettas she filmed with fellow singer Nelson Eddy. "We used to love to go to the Roach studios because there was a big, sloping lawn in front of the main building and when we weren't filming we would play and roll down the lawn.

"But *Maytime* was my favorite set because it was like a fairyland. The scene was set in an old fashioned street, with pink blossoms constantly falling. We were dressed by wardrobe in period costumes. We wore hoop skirts and pantaloons."

Mother remembers long hours but not the grueling marathons described in some child star memoirs. "I remember big tents, where we would eat, have school, and take naps. It seemed that we worked long hours, but we were treated well and it was fun." The Kiddies enjoyed escapades on the lot — including an unsuccessful pursuit of Clark Gable as he rode a bicycle through the MGM studios.

The money was good for the 1930s. "I don't know exactly what became of the money; it was probably mingled with the rest of the family income to pay for my lessons and costumes." To her recollection, the family did not have to account for the disbursement of her income. The California Child Actor's Bill (also called "The Coogan Act") wouldn't be passed until 1939, creating legal accountability for any guardian's management of a child performer's earnings.

According to Mother's second Meglin contract (executed in 1936), 50% of students' earnings were held by the

school and applied as "credit against accrued balance or future charges for instruction." Instruction cost one dollar per week, and any outstanding credit was refunded at the end of the three-year contract period. The Kiddies were not compensated for most of the live appearances — the majority of those events were charitable fundraisers. Revue participants were not selected individually (as with the film work), but rather assigned to performances as a class.

The preparation for the classes, movies and revues demanded intense home practice. Merced drilled Lydia diligently in her routines. "She was tougher than any of the teachers at the school," Lydia asserts. "My mother made me go over and over my routines until they were right."

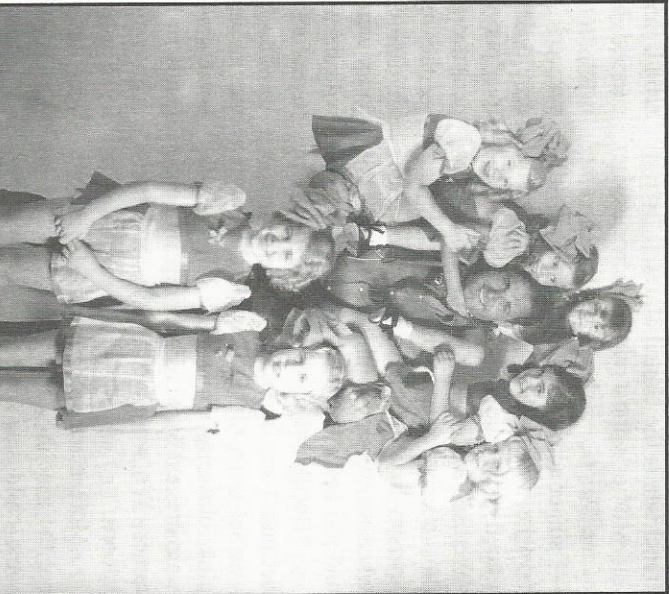
Shortly before Lydia was to perform her first solo number at the Shrine Auditorium, Merced suffered a nervous breakdown. Lydia did not resume her career after Merced's recovery; she now admits that performing was always more important to Merced than to her. Mother was a Famous Meglin Kiddie — Nana was a classic stage mother!

With the advent of World War II, the interest in these youth-centered musicals started to wane. Post-war sensibilities took harder, more cynical forms and the demeanor of the child star changed. The perky enthusiasm of Shirley Temple gave way to the grave countenance of Margaret O'Brien.

During the 1950s, Meglin briefly produced a local television show, *The Meglin Review*. Nevertheless, with the exception of Broadway musical star Gwen Verdon, the Kiddies never again produced a star of the caliber of Judy Garland or Shirley Temple.

Ethel Meglin's Famous Meglin

Kiddies endured until 1962, when Richard Meglin died and Ethel fell ill, ultimately retiring and closing the last studio location at Crossroads of the World on Sunset Boulevard. By then, the alumni included motion picture and TV actors Dwayne and Darryl Hickman, Sherry Jackson (who co-starred in Danny Thomas' *Make Room for Daddy*), and Melody Thomas Scott, who appeared on the daytime drama *The Young and the Restless*.



The Meglin Kiddies with Raymond "Crash" Corrigan in 1934's *Roarin' Lead*; the author's mother is in Corrigan's arms, second from the right

In her memoir *Child Star*, Shirley Temple acknowledges that the studio bosses at Fox did not want her affiliation with Meglin's studio to be public knowledge. At first they wanted to leave the impression that their child star was an untrained natural talent; ultimately, upon admitting that Temple's skill had to be learned somewhere, they deemed Meglin Studios not prestigious enough and attributed all of Shirley Temple's formal training to Elise Ryan's school.

Ethel Meglin's relegation to Hollywood footnote may also be due to the fact that only a few minor films—such as the 1934 "Three Mesquiteers" western, *Roarin' Lead*—include the Meglin Kiddies in their credits. The major productions, such as *Maytime, An American in Paris*, and the *Our Gang* comedies did not.

The Meglin Studio was the school for the masses—affordable and egalitarian. The Famous Meglin Kiddies were as loved in their time for their charming lack of chorus line precision as they were for the truly gifted children they showcased. Behind it all, Ethel Meglin was a force and a visionary, building earth-bound dream factories open to America's hopeful children. Those hopefuls ranged from future legends whose names still resonate in Hollywood lore, to my mother—a child of Mexican immigrants who still tells the tales for her family. ■



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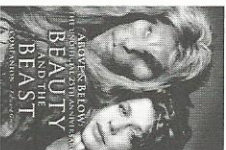
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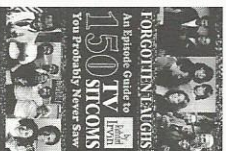
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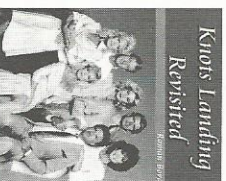
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Necrology for 2012

In 2012, we said farewell to some of our favorite performers and personalities from the worlds of radio, television, movies and music. Here, we take a moment to acknowledge their passing and thank them for their contributions.

RICHARD ADLER, 90, Tony Award-winning composer and lyricist who collaborated with Jerry Ross to write the hit “Rags to Riches” and the songs for the musicals *Damn Yankees* and *The Pajama Game*. June 21.

PEGGY AHERN, 95, one of the last surviving cast members from Hal Roach’s original *Our Gang* comedies of the 1920s. October 24.

NORM ALDEN, 87, veteran character actor who played thousands of roles on radio, television, and movies over his career. In the 1970s, he was Lou the Mechanic in a series of commercials for AC Delco and the voice of Aquaman on the *Super Friends*. He also appeared in the movies *Man’s Favorite Sport?*, *The Nutty Professor*, *Back to the Future*, and *Ed Wood*. July 27.

TONI ARDEN, 88, singer who performed with the orchestras of Al Trace, Joe Reichman, Ray Bloch and Shep Fields. Her hits included “Too Young,” “Kiss of Fire,” and “I Can Dream, Can’t I?” May 29.

R.G. ARMSTRONG, 95, character actor who appeared in hundreds of movies and television shows over a six-decade career, including *Gunsmoke*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Dynasty*, and *Trapper John, M.D.* July 27.

FONTELLA BASS, 72, singer who co-

wrote and recorded the 1965 hit “Rescue Me.” December 26.

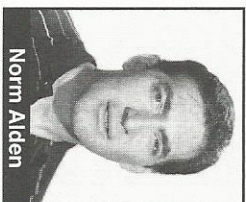
RICHARD BEALS, 85, actor whose youthful voice led to tremendous success in radio and animation, where he was the first voice of Davey on *Davey and Goliath* and the longtime voice of Speedy Alka-Seltzer. His radio credits include *The Lone Ranger*, *Gunsmoke*, *Suspense*, *Tales of the Texas Rangers*, *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*, *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar*, and many others. May 29.

PETER BERGMAN, 72, co-founder of Firesign Theatre, the comic quartet that channeled the absurdist sensibility and chaotic impulses of the 1960s and ’70s into a popular radio show and a series of record albums. March 9.

TURHAN BEY, 90, Austrian-born actor who employed his exotic good looks and suave demeanor in such films as *The Mummy’s Tomb*, *Dragon’s Seed*, and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. On television, he appeared in the series *Murder, She Wrote* and *Babylon 5*. September 30.

RYE BILLSBURY, 94, also known as **Michael Rye**, actor and announcer who worked extensively in Chicago radio, where he spent two years playing *Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy*. He was also heard on *Ma Perkins*, *Vic and Sade*, *The Cisco Kid*, and as Mr. First Nighter on the long-running *The First Nighter Program*. September 21.

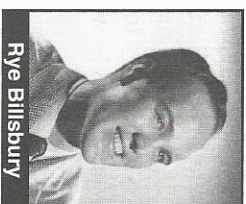
EDDIE BLAZONCZYK, 70, Grammy Award-winning musician who became known as the “Polka King,” performing in Chicago and around the world with his band The Versatones. May 21.



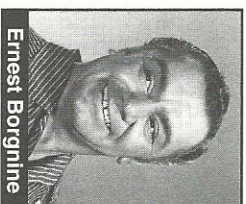
Norm Alden
PARADISE PRODUCTIONS/PHOTOFEST



Toni Arden



Rye Billsbury



Ernest Borgnine

LUCILLE BLISS, 96, actress who worked in radio on *Pat Novak for Hire*, *Candy Matson*, and *The Charlie McCarthy Show*, but is best known for her work in animation, where she voiced the title character in the 1949 series *Crusader Rabbit*, the wicked stepsister Annabella in the 1950 movie *Cinderella*, and Smurfette on the long-running series *The Smurfs*. November 8.

ERNEST BORGNINE, 95, actor who won an Oscar for his portrayal of a lovesick butcher in the 1955 film *Marty* and later spent four seasons as the crafty Cmdr. Quentin McHale on the television series *McHale’s Navy*. His other film credits include *From Here to Eternity*, *Bad Day at Black Rock*, *The Dirty Dozen*, *The Wild Bunch*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, *Escape From New York*, and *Red*. In recent years, he was the voice of Mermaidman on the cartoon series *Spongebob Squarepants*. July 8.

PETER BRECK, 82, actor who portrayed hot-tempered middle son Nick Barkley for five seasons on the television series *The Big Valley*. February 6.

DAVE BRUBECK, 91, legendary pianist whose 1959 album *Time Out* was the first jazz album to sell a million copies and produced the standards “Take Five” and “Blue Rondo a la Turk.” December 5.

FRANK CADY, 96, veteran character actor who played Sam Drucker, owner of the general store in Hooterville on the television series *Green Acres* and

Petticoat Junction. He also appeared as Doc Williams on the television version of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*. His radio credits included *Gunsmoke*, *Fort Laramie*, and *Have Gun Will Travel*. June 8.

HARRY CAREY JR., 91, character actor who appeared in over 90 films, including *The Searchers*, *Beneath the 12-Mile Reef* and *The Long Gray Line*, where he played West Point cadet Dwight D. Eisenhower. December 27.

DON CARTER, 85, legendary professional bowler who brought fame to the sport through his television appearances on such shows as *Jackpot Bowling* and *Make That Spare*. January 5.

DICK CLARK, 82, television personality and producer known as “America’s Oldest Teenager,” who helped bring rock & roll into American homes as the host and producer of the long-running series *American Bandstand*. In later years, he became a television fixture as the host of *Dick Clark’s Rockin’ New Year’s Eve*. April 18.

GARY COLLINS, 74, television actor who appeared on dozens of shows, with starring roles on the series *The Wackiest Ship in the Navy*, *Iron Horse*, and *The Sixth Sense*. October 13.

DON CORNELIUS, 75, groundbreaking producer who brought black music and culture into American households as the creator and host of *Soul Train*, one of the longest-running syndicated shows in television history. February 1.

HAL DAVID, 91, lyricist best-known for his many collaborations with Burt Bacharach, including "Alfie," "Magic Moments," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?," "What the World Needs Now Is Love," "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence," and the Oscar-winning "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." September 1.

RICHARD DAWSON, 79, wisecracking British comedian who played Cpl. Peter Newkirk on the television series *Hogan's Heroes* but is perhaps best-remembered as the host of the long-running game show *Family Feud*. June 2.

HENRY DENKER, 99, writer whose radio credits included *Cavalcade of America* and *The Greatest Story Ever Told*; later, he wrote the screenplay for the movie inspired by the latter. May 15.

DOUG DILLARD, 75, pioneering bluegrass musician who performed on records as part of the Dillardards, and on television as a member of the Darling family on *The Andy Griffith Show*. May 16.

PHYLLIS DILLER, 95, groundbreaking comedian known for her self-deprecating jokes about her appearance, her cooking, and her husband "Fang." She worked steadily in nightclubs and on television and joined Bob Hope for his 1966 USO tour. August 20.

MICHAEL CLARKE DUNCAN, 54, who received an Oscar nomination for his performance as an angelic death-row prisoner in the 1999 movie *The Green Mile*. September 3.

JIM DURHAM, 65, broadcaster who served as the play-by-play voice of the Chicago Bulls from 1973 to 1991. November 4.

CHARLES DURNING, 89, often referred to as "the king of the character actors," who appeared in hundreds of films and television shows over a five-

decade career. His movie credits include *The Sting*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The Muppet Movie*, *Tootsie*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* December 24.

DONALD "DUCK" DUNN, 70, musician who helped create the "Memphis sound" as a member of Booker T. and the M.G.'s, whose hits included the legendary "Green Onions." In 1980, he appeared in the movie *The Blues Brothers* as a member of the band. May 13.

CHAD EVERETT, 76, actor best-known for playing Dr. Joe Gannon for seven years on the television series *Medical Center*. His other television credits include *Maverick*, *Murder, She Wrote*, and *Melrose Place*. July 24.

JAMES FARENTINO, 73, actor who appeared in dozens of movies and television shows, including *The Bold Ones: The Lawyers*, *Blue Thunder*, *Naked City*, and *Dynasty*, where he played Dr. Nick Toscani. January 24.

IRVING FEIN, 101, producer and manager who steered the careers of comedy greats George Burns and Jack Benny over a sixty-year career. August 10.

STEVE FRANKEN, 80, actor who appeared on dozens of television shows, most notably as playboy dilettante Chatsworth Osborne Jr. on *The Many Lives of Dobie Gillis*. August 24.

JONATHAN FRID, 87, actor best-known for playing the vampire Barnabus Collins on the gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows*. April 13.

BEN GAZZARA, 81, Emmy Award-winning character actor and director who starred on the 1960s television series *Run For Your Life* and *Arrest and Trial*. His movie credits include *Anatomy of a Murder*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, and *The Big Lebowski*. February 3.



Phyllis Diller
PHOTOBEST



Steve Franken
PHOTOBEST



Andy Griffith



Celeste Holm

ROBIN GIBB, 62, Australian-born singer who sold more than 220 million records with his brothers Barry and Maurice as a member of The Bee Gees. Their soundtrack to the 1977 film *Saturday Night Fever* remains one of the top-selling records of all time. May 20.

AL GORDON, 89, writer who worked on the radio and television versions of *The Jack Benny Program*. He also wrote on television for Carol Burnett, Flip Wilson, and The Smothers Brothers. May 23.

DON GRADY, 68, actor and musician who was an original member of the Mouseketeers, but became famous in the role of Robbie Douglas on the long-running television series *My Three Sons*. June 27.

ANDY GRIFFITH, 86, actor and comedian who rose to prominence with the record "What It Was, Was Football," but whose career was defined by his portrayal of small-town authority figures, first as sheriff Andy Taylor on the long-running *Andy Griffith Show*, and later as a defense lawyer on the series *Matlock*. His film credits include *A Face in the Crowd*, *No Time For Sergeants*, *Angel in My Pocket* and *Waitress*. July 3.

LARRY HAGMAN, 81, actor who enjoyed success on television in the 1960s as Maj. Tony Nelson on the long-running sitcom *I Dream of Jeannie*, and in the 1980s as predatory oil baron J.R. Ewing on the night-time soap opera *Dallas*. November 23.

MARVIN HAMLISCH, 68, award-winning composer whose movie credits include the score for *The Sting*, the title song for the 1974 film *The Way We Were*, and the 1977 hit "Nobody Does It Better" from *The Spy Who Loved Me*. His Broadway credits include the music for *A Chorus Line* and *They're Playing Our Song*. August 6.

JACK HANLON, 96, who appeared as a child in the Buster Keaton's 1926 silent classic *The General* and later appeared in two silent *Our Gang* comedies from 1927. December 13.

ROBERT HEGYES, 60, actor who rose to fame in the 1970s as student Juan Epstein on the television series *Welcome Back, Kotter*. In the 1980s, he played Detective Manny Esposito on the series *Cagney and Lacey*. January 26.

LEVON HELM, 71, musician who recorded and performed with The Band, singing lead on "The Weight" and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." As an actor, he appeared as Loretta Lynn's father in the movie *Coal Miner's Daughter* and as test pilot Jack Ridley in *The Right Stuff*. April 19.

SHERMAN HEMSLEY, 74, African-American actor best-known for playing the bigoted and irascible George Jefferson on *All in the Family* and its spin-off series, *The Jeffersons*. He later starred as Deacon Ernest Frye on the series *Amen*. July 24.

CELESTE HOLM, 95, versatile actress who originated the role of Ado Annie in

the Broadway musical *Oklahoma!* and later won an Academy Award for her performance in the 1947 film *Gentleman's Agreement*. Her other film credits include *All About Eve*, *Come to the Stable*, *Champagne For Caesar*, and *High Society*. July 15.

WHITNEY HOUSTON, 48, celebrated singer and actress who set a record with seven consecutive number-one singles. She appeared in the films *Waiting to Exhale*, *The Preacher's Wife*, and *The Bodyguard*, for which she recorded her chart-topping rendition of "I Will Always Love You." February 11.

JOHN INGLE, 84, actor who spent two decades playing scheming patriarch Edward Quartermaine on the soap opera *General Hospital*. September 16.

ETTA JAMES, 73, singer who enjoyed success on Chicago's Chess Records in the 1960s with such hits as "At Last," "Tell Mama," and "I'd Rather Go Blind." January 20.

DAVY JONES, 66, English-born actor and singer who appeared as the Artful Dodger in the original production of *Oliver!* and later became a television star as one of The Monkees, with whom he recorded the hits "Daydream Believer" and "I Wanna Be Free," among others. February 29.

KATHRYN JOOSTEN, 72, Emmy Award-winning actress who appeared as President Bartlett's secretary Dolores Landingham on the long-running television series *The West Wing* and later played bickering neighbor Karen McClusky on *Desperate Housewives*. June 2.

ALEX KARRAS, 77, former NFL star who turned actor, appearing in the movies *Victor/Victoria*, *Against All Odds*, and *Blazing Saddles*, in which he played the dimwitted Mongo. From

1983-1989, he co-starred in the television family comedy *Webster*. October 10.

JACK KLUGMAN, 90, actor who appeared on Broadway, movies and television, winning an Emmy for his portrayal of the slovenly Oscar Madison on *The Odd Couple* and starring for seven seasons in the title role on *Quincy, M.E.* His other television credits include *The Twilight Zone*, *The Naked City*, and *The Defenders*. December 24.

ELYSE KNOX, 94, actress who played Joe Palooka's girlfriend Anne Howe in the 1940s film series and also appeared with Lon Chaney Jr. in *The Mummy's Tomb* and with Abbott and Costello in *Hi! The Ice*. February 15.

JENI LEGON, 96, tap dancer nicknamed the "Chocolate Princess," who began her career as a teenager dancing with the Count Basie Orchestra's chorus line. She appeared in the films *Broadway Melody of 1936*, *Birth of the Blues* and *Hooley For Love*, where she performed with Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. December 7.

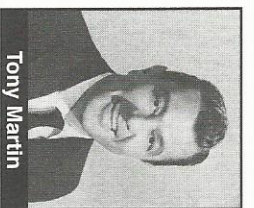
GEORGE LINDSAY, 83, actor best-known for playing the grinning gas station attendant Goober Pyle on *The Andy Griffith Show*. His other television credits include *Mayberry RFD*, *Hee-Haw*, *Gunsmoke*, and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*. May 6.

HERBERT LOM, 95, actor who played Chief Inspector Charles Dreyfus, the long-suffering boss to Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau in the *Pink Panther* movies. His other film credits include *The Ladykillers*, *Spartacus*, *El Cid* and *The Dead Zone*. September 27.

JOHN MADIGAN, 94, longtime Chicago newsmen who served as political director at Chicago radio station WBBM, where he helped oversee the station's transition to an all-news format.



Herbert Lom



Tony Martin

He was the first host of the CBS news program *Face the Nation*. March 5.

NORMAN MARK, 72, Emmy Award-winning entertainment critic who worked in Chicago broadcasting for many years, most notably at radio stations WIND and WAIT and as an arts critic for WMAQ-TV. March 19.

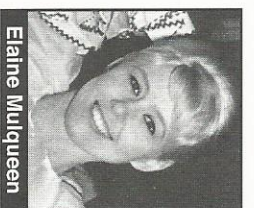
TONY MARTIN, 98, singer who enjoyed success over a 70-year career with such hits as "I Get Ideas," "There's No Tomorrow," "To Each His Own" and "Lover Come Back to Me." On radio, he was heard on *The Burns and Allen Show*, *Good News*, *The Contented Hour*, and *The Texaco Star Theatre*. He also appeared in the films *Ziegfeld Girl*, *The Big Store*, *Til the Clouds Roll By* and *Casbah*. July 27.

DOROTHY MCGUIRE, 84, one-third of the McGuire Sisters, who enjoyed success in the 1950s and '60s with such hits as "Sincerely," "Sugartime," and "Goodnite, Sweetheart, Goodnite." September 7.

PATRICIA MEDINA, 92, English-born actress who appeared in more than 50 movies, including *The Three Musketeers*, *Mr. Arkadin*, *Francis the Talking Mule*, and *Aladdin and His Lamp*. April 28.

ELAINE MULQUEEN, 80, Chicago-based television personality who appeared as Pandora, hostess of the juvenile dance show, *Mulqueen's Kiddie-a-Go-Go*, which ran under various names from 1963-1970. May 20.

CAROLE NOLAN, 80, former Chicago



Elaine Mulqueen
M. YURKIN COLLECTION

schoolteacher who transformed WBEZ-FM into one of the country's pre-eminent public radio stations during her 25-year tenure as general manager. July 5.

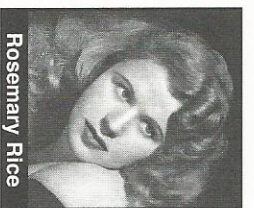
JOHNNY OTIS, 90, pioneering rhythm-and-blues singer, songwriter, drummer, bandleader and disc jockey who worked in Los Angeles radio for many years and wrote the 1958 hit "Willie and the Hand Jive." January 17.

RON PALILLO, 63, actor best-known for playing nerdy student Arnold Horshack on the television series *Welcome Back, Kotter*. August 14.

YURI RASOVSKY, 67, Chicago-born actor and director devoted to producing audio drama. In 1972 he founded the Peabody Award-winning National Radio Theater, whose works were broadcast over Chicago station WFMJ. More recently, he served as producer and director for The Hollywood Theater of the Ear. January 18.

HERB REED, 83, founder of the Platters, who enjoyed success in the 1950s with a string of hit records, including "The Great Pretender," "Only You," "Twilight Time," and "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." He also appeared with the Platters in the movies *Rock Around the Clock* and *The Girl Can't Help It*. June 4.

ROSEMARY RICE, 87, who played the role of Betty Cooper on the radio version of *Archie Andrews* and appeared on hundreds of other radio series, including *Cavalcade of America*, *Suspense*, *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar*, *Theatre Guild on*



Rosemary Rice

the Air, and *The FBI In Peace and War*. On television, she played Katrin Hansen on the long-running series *Mama*. August 15.

ANN RUTHERFORD, 94, actress who played Scarlett O'Hara's younger sister Carreen in the classic film *Gone With the Wind* and later played Polly Benedict in MGM's series of Andy Hardy movies. On radio, she appeared as Connie Monahan on *The Edlie Bracken Show* and later played the title role on *Blonde*. June 11.

EARL SCRUGGS, 88, bluegrass music legend who played banjo alongside Bill Monroe in the 1940s and later collaborated with guitarist Lester Flatt as Flatt and Scruggs, with whom he recorded the classics "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" and "The Ballad of Jed Clampett," the opening theme for *The Beverly Hillbillies*. March 28.

RAVI SHANKAR, 92, sitar virtuoso who introduced traditional Indian ragas to Western audiences over an eight-decade career. December 12.

ROBERT SHERMAN, 86, songwriter who collaborated with his brother Richard, writing the song "It's a Small World (After All)" and the songs for such films as *The Jungle Book*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, and *Mary Poppins*, for which they wrote "Feed the Birds," "Chim-Chim Chirree" and "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious." March 5.

DORIS SINGLETON, 92, actress who appeared on hundreds of shows during the Golden Age of Radio, most notably as Hollywood reporter Libby Collins on *The Lux Radio Theater* and as Mary Livingstone's maid Pauline on *The Jack Benny Program*. On television, she appeared as Lucy Ricardo's friend and rival Carolyn Applebee on the long-running series *I Love Lucy*. June 26.

BUBBA SMITH, 66, all-star football player who turned to acting, playing Florist Moses Hightower in the *Police Academy* movies. August 3.

VICTOR SPINETTI, 82, Tony Award-winning British actor best-known for playing antagonist to the Beatles in their films *A Hard Day's Night*, *Magical Mystery Tour*, and *Help!* June 18.

WARREN STEVENS, 92, character actor who appeared on the radio shows *Quiet, Please* and *This Is Your FBI* before going on to a lengthy career in films and television. He appeared in the movies *Forbidden Planet* and *The Barefoot Contessa*, and on such television series as *Honey West*, *Daniel Boone*, and *Mission Impossible*. March 27.

MARGIE STEWART, 92, actress perhaps best-known as the first and only Official Army Poster girl during World War II. During the 1940s, she played Marjorie Forrester in a series of *Great Gildersleeve* films. April 26.

MARTHA STEWART, 89, who sang on the radio series *Your All-Time Hit Parade* and later appeared on stage, television, and movies, most notably opposite Joan Crawford in *Daisy Kenyon* and opposite Humphrey Bogart in *In a Lonely Place*. February 25.

DONNA SUMMER, 63, singer who enjoyed a series of hit records during the "disco era" of the 1970s and '80s, including "Last Dance," "Bad Girls," and "She Works Hard For The Money." May 17.

JOAN TAYLOR, 82, actress who played general store owner Milly Scott on the television series *The Rifleman*. Her other television credits include *The Detectives, My Three Sons*, and *77 Sunset Strip*. March 4.

PHYLLIS THAXTER, 92, actress who began her film career playing Van Johnson's wife in the 1944 movie *Thirty*



Ann Rutherford

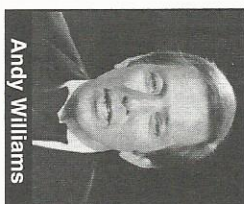


Tedi Thurman

PHOTOGRAPHS BY



Mike Wallace



Andy Williams

Seconds Over Tokyo and concluded it by playing Ma Kent in 1978's *Superman*. Her television credits include *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Wagon Train*, and *Marcus Welby, M.D.* August 14.

TEDI THURMAN, 89, known as "Miss Monitor" during the 1950s for her sultry delivery of weather reports on NBC's weekend radio series *Monitor*. September 17.

DICK TUFELD, 85, announcer whose voice was heard on the radio and television versions of the series *Space Patrol*. In the 1960s, he was the announcer on ABC's *Hollywood Palace* and the voice of the Robot on the series *Lost in Space*, where he routinely warned "Will Robinson of 'Danger!'" January 22.

MIKE WALLACE, 93, legendary broadcaster who worked extensively in Detroit and Chicago radio during the 1940s and 1950s, appearing as an actor or announcer on *The Green Hornet*, *Sky King*, *Curtain Time*, and *The Crime Files of Flamond*. On television, he became famous for his confrontational interview style on such shows as *Night Beat*, *The Mike Wallace Show*, and CBS' long-running news show, *60 Minutes*, where he was the lead reporter for 38 years. April 7.

DOC WATSON, 89, Grammy Award-winning folk musician whose unique guitar-playing style and interpretations of traditional American music were a profound influence on generations of musicians. May 29.

KITTY WELLS, 92, singer who became the first female superstar of country music with such hits as "Making Believe" and "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels." July 16.

ANDY WILLIAMS, 84, clean-cut singer who enjoyed enormous success in radio, nightclubs, records, and television over a seven-decade career. As part of the Williams Brothers, he performed in support of Bing Crosby and Kay Thompson before embarking on a successful solo career. He joined the *Tonight Show* as resident singer in 1953 and started for five seasons on *The Andy Williams Show*. His hits include "Moon River," "Canadian Sunset," and "Can't Get Used to Losing You." September 25.

WILLIAM WINDOM, 88, actor who won an Emmy for his portrayal of cartoonist John Monroe on the television series *My World and Welcome to It*. He also played Congressman Glen Moorley on *The Farmer's Daughter*, Dr. Seth Hazlett on *Murder, She Wrote*, and Commodore Decker on the famous *Star Trek* episode, "The Doomsday Machine." August 16.

They are gone... but they are not forgotten.

A complete listing of our Necrology for 2012 is available online at www.nostalgia Digest.com



THOSE WERE THE DAYS

with host **STEVE DARNALL**

WDCB/Minnois • 90.9 FM • SATURDAYS 1-5 PM

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APRIL 2013

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

AVALON TIME (9-2-39) Richard "Red" Skelton stars in a broadcast from Chicago, with Curt Massey, Edna Stillwell, Jeanette Davis, announcer Del King and Bob Strong and the Orchestra. Red takes a look at "news" highlights. Jeanette sings "My Heart Has Wings." Avalon Cigarettes, NBC. (28 min) *Read the article about Red Skelton on page 4.*

STORY OF DR. KILDARE (12-8-50) Lew Ayres stars as Dr. Kildare, with Lionel Barrymore as Dr. Gillespie. Aman is struck by a car, but his wife refuses to let Dr. Kildare perform the operation that could save him. Cast includes Virginia Gregg, Lucrece Tuttle, Ted Osborne, Georgia Ellis, Vic Perrin. Syndicated. (28 min)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE & HARRIET (2-27-49) Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hillard star, with John Brown, Tommy Bernard, Henry Blair, Janet Waldo, Hans Conried. Ozzie decides to show Harriet that he can do a better job of handling the family's finances. International Silver, NBC. (29 min)

SIX SHOOTER (11-1-53) James Stewart stars as plainsman Britt Ponset, who rides into Clay City as the sheriff is investigating a robbery and murder. Cast includes William Conrad, Herb Vigran, Parley Baer, James McCallion. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW (12-2-45) With Edgar Bergen, Anita Gordon, Pat Patrick, Ray Noble and the Orchestra, and guest

Walter Pidgeon, who joins Charlie and the cast for their version of Pidgeon's new film, *Weekend at the Waldorf*. AFPS rebroadcast. (30 min)

BOSTON BLACKIE (4-29-47) Dick Kollmar stars as Blackie, "Enemy to those who make him an enemy, friend to those who have no friends." A gambler agrees to forgive a young man's debt in exchange for a favor. With Jan Miner as Mary, Maurice Tarplin as Inspector Faraday. Syndicated. (28 min)

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

SPOTLIGHT ON HUGH DOWNS

WMAQ — BUT WHY? (10-12-53) WMAQ staff announcer Hugh Downs describes a typical broadcast week at the NBC Studios in Chicago, concentrating on the station's original programming. Sustaining, WMAQ. (30 min)

DESTINATION FREEDOM (10-3-48) "Citizen Toussaint" tells the story of Toussaint Louverture, who pioneered the Haitian Revolution by liberating Santo Domingo from French rule. Cast includes Harold Young as Louverture, with Wesleyan Tilden, Oscar Brown, Maurice Copeland, Sherman Marks, Tony Parrish, Fred Pinkard. Hugh Downs announces. Sustaining, NBC. (31 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (6-12-12) Steve Darnall's conversation with broadcaster Hugh Downs, who talks about his radio career and his time as a staff announcer in Chicago.

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Recorded at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago. (14 min) *Read an excerpt from this conversation on page 2.*

UNCLE NED'S SQUADRON (1-27-51) From the WMAQ "Ready Room," with "Uncle" Ned Locke and "co-pilot" Hugh Downs. Uncle Ned talks with audience members about flying and tells the story of the Berlin Airlift. Sustaining, WMAQ. (29 min)

DAVE GARROWAY SHOW (7-18-49) With the Art Van Damme Quintet, singer Vivian Martin, Joseph Gallicchio and the NBC Orchestra. Guest is 13-year-old Toni Harper, who sings "Rock-a-Bye Baby." Announcer is Hugh Downs, who also appears as musicologist Fenwick Furlington. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

BOB HOPE BIRTHDAY SPECIAL (5-29-63) Hugh Downs hosts this special salute to Bob Hope in honor of his 60th birthday and his 25 years at the National Broadcasting Company, with recollections from Bob and birthday greetings from Jimmy Durante, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Edgar Bergen, Jack Benny, Jim (Fibber McGee) Jordan, Eddie Cantor, Jerry Colonna, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, Marilyn Maxwell, Frances Langford, Skinny Ennis, Les Brown, Jayne Mansfield, and many others. Wynn's Friction Proofing, NBC. (24 and 27 min)

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

GI JOURNAL #72 (December 1944) Jack Haley is editor-in-chief, with Ann Rutherford, Arthur Treacher, Ziggy Elliman, Connie Haines, Elvia Allman, Mel Blanc as Pvt. Sad

Sack. Jack decides he's through with women until Ann arranges to ask him on a date. AFPS. (30 min)

LET'S PRETEND (1-9-54) "Robin Hood" is the story told by "Uncle" Bill Adams and the Let's Pretenders: Robert Morra, Roger Sullivan, Gwen Davies, Sybil Trent, Arthur Anderson, Bill Lipton, Donald Hughes, Donald Madden, Jack Grimes. Sustaining, CBS. (24 min)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (2-22-37) "Captain Blood" starring Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone, Donald Crisp and Henry Stephenson in a radio adaptation of the 1935 film. A convicted traitor in 17th-Century England is sent to the West Indies as punishment, but escapes to become a pirate. Herbert Marshall substitutes for host Cecil B. DeMille. Lux Soap, CBS. (23 min & 12 min & 23 min) *Read the article about Captain Blood and other washbuckler movies on page 42.*

FIRST NIGHTER (2-5-48) "A Drink for The Damned" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule from "the little theater off Times Square." A romantic comedy set in the time of King James' court. Cast includes Marvyn Miller, Parley Baer, Arthur Q. Bryan, Willard Waterman. Campana Products, CBS. (30 min)

ROCKY JORDAN (1-8-50) "Smoke Screen" stars Jack Moyle as Rocky Jordan, owner of the Cafe Tambourine, with Jay Novello as Sam Sabaya. A young woman leaving the cafe is shot by an assailant known as "The Cat." Cast includes Paul Frees, Herb Butterfield. Del Monte Foods, CBS. (29 min)

THE NOSTALGIA DIGEST PODCAST IS HERE!

Now you can take the good old days with you wherever you go, thanks to our new **Nostalgia Digest Podcast**, available any time at www.nostalgiaigest.com or through iTunes! It's a monthly series of free, downloadable programs, hosted by Steve Darnall and devoted to people, performers, topics and shows that we've featured within the pages of *Nostalgia Digest*!



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APRIL - MAY 2013

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

OUR 43rd ANNIVERSARY SHOW

"Thanks For Listening"

For this special anniversary show, we'll count down the series Those Were the Days listeners voted as their favorites. Read about our listeners' selections on page 1.

6 OUR MISS BROOKS (3-4-51) 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, Jane Morgan as Mrs. Davis, Gloria McMillan as Harriet Conklin. Miss Brooks has visions of teaching in Paris when an educator from France comes to visit. Colgate-Palmolive. CBS. (30 min)

5 GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (5-5-48) Harold Peary stars as Gilly, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Mary Lee Robb as Matlorie, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker, Una Merkel as Adeline Fairchild, Arthur Q. Bryan as Floyd Munson, Dick LeGrand as Peavey, Leroy wants to go on a fishing trip. Kraft Foods, NBC. (31 min)

4 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (11-25-56) "The Royal Street Matter" starring Bob Bailey as the man with the action-packed expense account. Dollar goes to New Orleans to investigate a fire at an antique store, but the owner refuses to file a claim! Cast includes Virginia Gregg, Forrest Lewis, Lawrence Dobkin, Lou Merrill, Frank Gerstle. Sustaining. CBS. (30 min)

3 FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY (3-31-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Isabel Randolph, announcer Harlow Wilcox. The King's Men, Billy Mills and the Orchestra.

McGee tries to win \$5,000 in a contest by writing a new slogan for Latherino Soap. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min).

2 SUSPENSE (6-27-46) "Return Trip" starring Elliott Reid, with Cathy Lewis, Wally Maher, Raymond Lawrence. A bus takes off from a mental institution and gets trapped in a snowstorm. Truman Bradley announces. Roma Wines, CBS. (29 min)

1 JACK BENNY PROGRAM (1-11-48) With Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Dennis Day, Elliott Lewis, Mel Blanc, Joseph Kearns, Frank Nelson, Hans Conried. As Jack prepares for a trip to Denver, he goes to his vault to withdraw some money. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

SATURDAY, MAY 4

SPOTLIGHT ON TOMMY COOK

ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS (7-26-45) "My Chicago," written and directed by Arch Oboler, starring Tommy Cook, Cathy Lewis, Elliott Lewis. A "personal" story about the author's relationship with the city, as seen through the eyes of an 11-year-old. Sustaining, NBC. (28 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (9-26-11) Part one of Steve Darnall's conversation with actor Tommy Cook, who talks about his career in radio and movies. Recorded at Terry Moore's home in Santa Monica, CA. (29 min)



Tommy Cook

ADVENTURES OF RED RYDER (2-24-42) "Hot Lead in Scorpion Gulch" starring Reed Hadley as Red Ryder and Tommy Cook as Little Beaver. Ace Hanlon's gang kidnaps a

schoolteacher to force her father to confess to the crime Hanlon committed. Langendorf Bread, MBS. (28 min)

BLONDIE (10-8-44) Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake star as Blondie and Dagwood, with Tommy Cook as Alexander, Hanley Stafford as Mr. Dithers. Alexander seems bored with life and Blondie and Dagwood decide to introduce him to Baby Snooks, played by special guest Fanny Brice. AFPS rebroadcast. (29 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (9-26-11) Part two of Steve Darnall's conversation with actor Tommy Cook. (23 min)

LIFE OF RILEY (12-6-47) William Bendix stars as Chester Riley, with Paula Winslowe as Peg, Barbara Eiler as Babs, and Tommy Cook as Junior, who must write an essay about "The Greatest Man I Know." Cast includes John Brown, Gale Gordon. Drefl, NBC. (30 min)

SATURDAY, MAY 11

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (5-5-49) Al Jolson stars, with Oscar Levant, Lou Bring and the Orchestra, announcer Ken Carpenter and guest Dennis Day, who wants a job from Al so he can buy a gift for Mother's Day. Al sings "California, Here I Come" and "Look for the Silver Lining". Dennis sings "Indiana Moon." Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

BOX 13 (10-10-48) "Double Mothers" stars Alan Ladd as writer/adventurer Dan Holiday, with Sylvia Pickers as Suzy. Dan is asked to look after a little girl who appears to have two mothers! Syndicated. (27 min)

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (3-8-51) "Bachelor Mother" starring Lucille Ball and Robert Cummings in a radio adaptation of the 1939 film. A woman's life is turned upside down when she is believed to be the mother of an abandoned baby. Cast includes Herb Vigran, Herb Butterfield. Participating sponsors, NBC. (29 min & 27 min)



Lucille Ball

QUIZ KIDS (5-9-48) On this Mother's Day broadcast, the Quiz Kids (including Joel Kupperman, Naomi Cooke, and Patrick

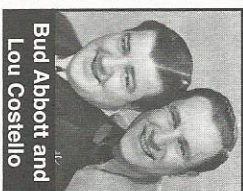
Conlon) are joined by their mothers, as both groups field questions from Chief Quizmaster Joe Kelly. Later, the Quiz Kids' brothers and sisters field questions as well. Alka-Seltzer, NBC. (29 min)

HALLMARK HALL OF FAME (5-10-53) "George Washington's Mother" is the story of Mary Washington, the mother of the man who became the first president of the United States. Lionel Barrymore hosts. AFRTS rebroadcast. (22 min)

SATURDAY, MAY 18

HOLLYWOOD CANTREEN OPENING (10-3-42) NBC's Larry Keating announces the opening of the Hollywood Cantreen for servicemen, with appearances by Bette Davis, Eddie Cantor, Ginny Simms, Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, Dinah Shore, Kay Kyser, Betty Hutton, Rudy Vallee and the Coast Guard Band. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min) Read the article about the *Hollywood Cantreen* on page 12.

BOB HOPE SHOW (10-13-42) Bob presents the first radio series to broadcast from the new Hollywood Cantreen, with Frances Langford, Jerry Colonna, Vera Vague, Skimay Ennis and the Orchestra, announcer Wendell Niles, and guest Bette Davis, president of the Cantreen. Peppodent, NBC. (30 min)



Bud Abbott and Lou Costello

TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS (8-19-50) "Foot's Gold" stars Joel McCrea as Texas Ranger Jace Pearson, who investigates a botched robbery that led to the death of a young boy. Cast includes Paul Frees, Hy Averback, Herb Butterfield, Lillian Buyeff. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

INFORMATION PLEASE (10-11-38) It's "Time to stump the experts" as moderator Clifton Fadiman welcomes regulars Franklin P. Adams and John Kieran and guests Oscar Levant and actress Lillian Gish. Milton Cross announces. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER (8-25-46) "Death is the Visitor" featuring Maurice Tarplin as the Mysterious Traveler. A frustrated man murders his shrewish mother-in-law and uses her trunk to ship the body out of town. Sustaining, MBS. (29 min)



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MAY - JUNE 2013

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (2-12-45) "Belle of the Yukon" starring Randolph Scott, Dinah Shore, Bob Burns and Gail Patrick in a radio version of the 1944 movie, about performers and con artists in the Yukon during the days of the Gold Rush. Cast includes Frank Nelson, Ken Christy, Lady Esther Products, CBS. (29 min)



Dinah Shore

SATURDAY, MAY 25 BIG BANDS FROM THE WINDY CITY

BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1-13-36) *Excerpt*: Broadcast from the Joseph Urban Room of the Congress Hotel in Downtown Chicago, with vocals by Helen Ward. Benny and the band play "I Feel Like A Feather in the Breeze," "I'm Shooting High," "Big John Special," and others. Sustaining. NBC-Red. (14 min)

JAN GARBER AND HIS ORCHESTRA (11-5-50) It's the "Idol of the Airwaves" in a broadcast from the "beautiful air-conditioned Trianon Ballroom," located at 62nd and Cottage Grove Avenues on the South Side of the City of Chicago. Selections include "That's Where My Money Goes," "I See a Million People" and "Sleigh Ride." Vocals by Roy Cordell, Kitty Thomas (Janis Garber) and the Trio: Hal Stark announces. Sustaining. WBWB. (30 min)

CHESTERFIELD MOONLIGHT SERENADE (6-12-40) Glenn Miller and his Orchestra are broadcasting from the stage of the Chicago Civic Theater, with vocalists Marion Hutton,

Tex Beneke and Ray Eberle. The Miller band plays one of their famous "Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue" medleys. Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS. (14 min)

HAL KEMP AND HIS ORCHESTRA (4-7-40) A remote broadcast from the Empire Room of the Palmer House in downtown Chicago featuring the Kemp band and vocalists Bob Allen and Janet Blair. Tunes include "When You Wish Upon A Star," "Claire de Lune," and "Believing." Charles Victor announces. Sustaining. MBS. (30 min)

THE DAMON RUNYON MEMORIAL JAZZ CONCERT (12-11-48) The second portion of a full hour broadcast featuring Louis Armstrong and his All-Stars broadcasting from the Blue Note in Chicago. Dave Garroway hosts the program; selections include "Muskrat Ramble," "Basin Street Blues," and "Boogie Woogie on the St. Louis Blues." ABC. (29 min)

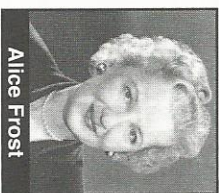
DICK JURGENS AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1-9-69) "Here's that band again!" A live recording made on the bandstand of the Willowbrook Ballroom in Willow Springs, Illinois, with vocals by Buddy Moreno. The Jurgens band plays "One Dozen Roses," "Josephine," "A String of Pearls," and "Cecilia," along with other favorites. Live recording. (31 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian **KARL PEARSON**, who will talk about the big bands and the many Chicago venues where they performed.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1 MR. AND MRS. RADIO

MR. AND MRS. NORTH (1-17-45) "Murder in a Crowd" starring Joseph Curtin and Alice

Frost as Jerry and Pam North. A friend of the Norths stages a murder in a crowd, but the prank takes a sinister turn when a real murder occurs. AFRS rebroadcast (as *Mystery Playhouse*). (26 min)



Alice Frost

MEET MR. McNUTLEY (5-6-54) Ray Milland stars as Raymond McNutley, English professor at Lynnhaven College, with Phyllis Avery as wife Peg and Verna Felton as Dean Bradley. Ray treats the dean to ice cream. Cast includes Frank Nelson. AFRS rebroadcast. (23 min)

MR. PRESIDENT (8-21-49) Edward Arnold stars as a president who plans to undergo surgery — and to run for a second term. The name of the president is not revealed until the end of the story. Cast includes Joseph Kearns, Hans Conried, Edgar Barrier, Herb Butterfield. Sustaining. ABC. (29 min)

MR. KEEN, TRACER OF LOST PERSONS (10-13-49) "The Yellow Talon Murder Case" stars Bennett Kippack as the kindly old investigator, with James Kelly as Mike Clancy. A woman is found murdered with talon marks around her throat. Anacin, Kolynos, CBS. (30 min)

MR. AND MRS. BLANDINGS (2-25-51) Cary Grant and Betsy Drake star as Jim and Muriel Blandings, with Gale Gordon as Bill Cole. Jim is vehemently opposed to Muriel's purchase of a television, until Bill asks him to appear on a panel show. Trans World Airlines, NBC. (30 min)

MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY (5-19-48) "Spring Fever" stars Jay Jostyn in the title role, with Vicki Vola as Miss Miller and Len Doyle as Harrington. The D.A. investigates the murder of a gas station attendant. Ipana, Sal Hepatica, NBC. (28 min)

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

GRAND CENTRAL STATION (3-13-48) "A Sprig of Mignonette" is the story of a young woman who seeks the help of a famous psychologist to help her suicidal brother. Cast: Staats Cotsworth, Sarah Burton, Gregory Morton, William Layton, Neal Fitzgerald. Ken Roberts announces. Pillsbury, CBS. (30 min)

HENRY MORGAN SHOW (3-14-50) Morgan talks about waiting for the doctor; interviews a

star basketball player, and presents a lecture on heredity. With Arnold Stang, Art Carney, Pert Kelton, the Billy Williams Quartet, announcer Ed Herlihy. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

THE WHISTLER (6-2-47) "Caesar's Wife" starring Gerald Mohr and Barbara Luddy, with Bill Forman as the Whistler. A gangster with an unusual weakness suspects that his wife is cheating on him. Cast includes Willard Waterman and Paul Frees. Marvin Miller announces. Signal Oil, CBS. (29 min)

THIS IS YOUR LIFE (10-26-49) Host Ralph Edwards surprises Capt. Billy Bryant on his 64th birthday by looking back on his career. Guests include Billy's wife Josephine, daughter Betty, and Buster Keaton's mother. Philip Morris Cigarettes, NBC. (28 min) *Read the article about Ralph Edwards and This is Your Life on page 49.*

FRONTIER GENTLEMAN (8-3-58) "Nebraska Jack" stars John Dehner as J.B. Kendall, reporter for the *London Times*. Kendall recalls his visit with an aging pioneer settler who has five wives and a taste for whiskey. Cast: Joseph Kearns, Jack Moyles, Virginia Gregg. Sustaining, CBS. (25 min) ➔

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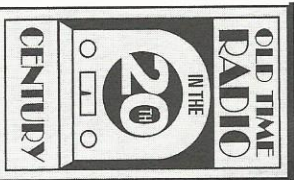
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JUNE 2013

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (11-1-45) With Bill Goodwin, Meredith Willson and the Orchestra, Mel Blanc, Shirley Mitchell, Lou Merrill. Bill asks Grace to pose as his wife in order to impress a movie producer. AFRS rebroadcast. (29 min)

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

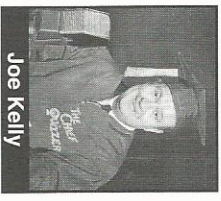
PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (6-12-49) With Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley, Walter Teley as Julius, Robert North, Jeannine Roos, Anne Whitfield, Peggy Weber. Remley has adopted a French

orphan and he and Phil decide to teach the boy English. First of two consecutive programs. Rexall, NBC. (30 min)

LET GEORGE DO IT (9-13-48) "The Father Who Had Nothing to Say" stars Bob Bailey as George Valentine, with Frances Robinson as Brooskie and Wally Maher as Lt. Reilly. A young man asks George to find out if his father was really guilty of the murder for which he was convicted. Cast includes Harry Lewis, Herb Butterfield, Edward Marr, Luis Van Rooten, Bob Jellison. Standard Oil of California, MBS. (30 min)

FATHER KNOWS BEST (6-14-51) Robert Young stars as Jim Anderson, with Jean Vanderyl as Margaret, Rhoda Williams as Betty, Ted Donaldson as Bud, Norma Jean Nilsson as Cathy. A planned Father's Day picnic for the neighborhood gets out of hand. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (30 min)

QUIZ KIDS (6-1-6-46) For this Father's Day broadcast, the Quiz Kids (Patrick Conlon, Harvey Fishman, Ruthie Duskin, Joel Kupperman, Richard Weixler) are joined by their fathers, who take over for their children in the last half of the show! Joe Kelly is Quizmaster. Bob Murphy announces. Alka Seltzer, NBC. (31 min)



Joe Kelly

GUNSMOKE (6-10-56) "Daddy-O" stars William Conrad as Marshal Matt Dillon, with Georgia Ellis as Kitty, Parley Baer as Chester, Howard McNear as Doc. Kitty's long-lost father comes to Dodge City and asks Kitty to sell the Long Branch Saloon and go into business with him. Cast: John McIntyre, Lawrence Dobkin. Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS. (22 min)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (6-19-

49) Frankie decides to get married so that his French orphan can have a proper home. Alice sings "I'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy." Second of two consecutive programs. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

MY FAVORITE HUSBAND (6-24-49) Lucille Ball and Richard Denning star as Liz and George Cooper, with Gale Gordon, Bea Benaderet, Frank Nelson. Liz has trouble making up her mind until George insists she make decisions and abide by them. AFRS rebroadcast. (24 min)

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (4-28-51) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover, with Charles Calvert as Sgt. Tartaglia. The police investigate when an acquaintance of Danny's is stabbed at a dance hall. Cast: Anthony Barrett, Frances Cheney, Martha Wentworth, Larry Dobkin, Joy Terry, Leo Cleary, Junius Matthews. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (11-28-48) Fred comes guest George Jessel, who has just produced the picture *When My Baby Smiles at Me* and wants Fred to see it. The Allen's Alley question: "Is radio comedy suffering from monotony?" With Portland Hoffa, Mirierva Pious, Kenny Delmar, Parker Fennelley, Peter Donald, the DeMarco Sisters, Al Goodman and the Orchestra. Ford Motors, NBC. (30 min)

VIC AND SADE (10-27-43) Art Van Harvey is Vic, with David Whitehouse as Russell and Clarence Hartzell as Uncle Fletcher. The men sit on the back porch while Sade entertains the Trimble Club inside the house. Crisco, NBC. (10 min)

RAILROAD HOUR (4-6-53) "Sally" starring Gordon MacRae and Lucille Norman in a radio version of the Jerome Kern musical about a dishwasher who poses as royalty. Songs include "Look for the Silver Lining" and "Wild Rose." Cast includes Benny Rubin, Marvin Miller announces. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (29 min)

FRONT PAGE DRAMA (10-15-50) The story of a man whose interest in antiques drives his wife to distraction, especially when he comes home with an oil painting. Cast includes John Gibson. American Weekly, Syndicated. (14 min)

THE SHADOW (5-16-48) "The Giant of Madras" starring Bret Morrison as Lamont

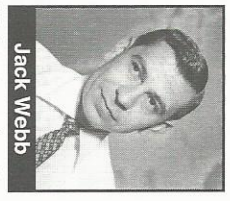
Cranton and Grace Matthews as the lovely Margot Lane. A man carrying a 25-karat diamond is murdered and the diamond is stolen. The Shadow investigates. Blue Coal, MBS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

LONE RANGER (10-30-42) "Gunsmith of San Bello" stars Brace Beemer as the Lone Ranger, with John Todd as Tonto. The Lone Ranger takes action when a bank robber kills a gunsmith and takes over his shop. Syndicated, MBS. (28 min)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (1-5-50) "The Egg and I" starring Claudette Colbert as Betty, with Frank Nelson, Veraa Felton. Colbert re-creates her role in the 1947 film based on the novel by Betty McDonald, as a pair of city dwellers face the trials and tribulations of life on a chicken farm. James Hilton hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30 min)

PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE (4-16-49) Jack Webb stars as Novak, with Raymond Burr as Inspector Hellman and Tudor Owen as Jocko Madigan. Novak is hired to scare a man. AFRS rebroadcast. (30 min)



Jack Webb

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (11-12-47) with Arthur Treacher, Candy Candido, announcer Howard Petrie, Roy Barfy and the Orchestra, Alan Reed, Elvia Altman, Tommy Harmon and guest Dorothy Lamour, who meets Jimmy on the train and joins him for a duet on "Civilization." Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

X MINUS ONE (4-24-56) "The Sense of Wonder" narrated by Raymond Edward Johnson. A space ship returns to Earth after a 10,000-year journey, during which life has become increasingly sterile and regulated. Cast: James Monks, Bill Quinn, Ed Jerome, Vera Allen, Rita Loyd, Joe DeSantis, Dick Hamilton. Sustaining, NBC. (28 min)

ALDRICH FAMILY (12-16-48) Ezra Stone stars as Henry, with Jackie Kerk as Homer, House Jameson and Katherine Rahl as Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich, whose plans for a quiet evening at home are disrupted by Henry's last-minute party preparations. Meredith Willson leads the "Talking People" in the commercial. Jell-O, NBC. (30 min)

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SUNDAY, APRIL 7

LES MISERABLES (7-23-37) The first part of a seven-part radio adaptation of the classic story by Victor Hugo, starring Orson Welles as Jean Valjean, a thief who is sent to prison for stealing bread. Sustaining. MBS.

OUR MISS BROOKS (3-6-49) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, who is preparing for the Madison High School dance. With Frank Nelson as Antoine. Colgate-Palmolive. CBS.

THIS IS YOUR FBI (3-28-47) "The Henpecked Thief" stars Stacy Harris. A young thief's mother-in-law badgers him into taking part in a "big job." Equitable Life Assurance Society. ABC.

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

MAN CALLED X (5-15-47) Herbert Marshall stars as Ken Thurston, who travels to Central America to prevent a coup d'etat. Frigidaire. CBS.

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY (6-20-44) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, who plan to spend the summer working on a ranch. Johnson's Wax. NBC.

LES MISERABLES (7-30-37) Part two of this seven-part radio adaptation. Inspector Javert has suspicions about the mayor of Montreuil. Sustaining. MBS.

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (10-7-48) Starring Al Jolson, with Oscar Levant and guest Edward G. Robinson. Al sings "Baby Face" and "Tree in the Meadow." Kraft Foods. NBC.

CASEY, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER (9-18-47) "The Tobacco Pouch" stars Staats Cotsworth as Casey, who spies a pickpocket in a department store. Anchor Hocking Glass. CBS.

LES MISERABLES (8-6-37) Part three of the seven-part radio adaptation. Javert confronts the mayor about his accusations. Sustaining. MBS.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

INNER SANCTUM (5-15-45) "The Black Art" starring Simone Simon. A beautiful, wealthy woman helps a man escape from Death Row. Lipton Tea and Soup. CBS.

RED SKELTON SHOW (10-8-46) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire addresses the meat shortage, with Clem Kadiddlehopper as a pig farmer. Raleigh Cigarettes. NBC. *Read the cover story about Red Skelton on page 4.*

LES MISERABLES (8-13-37) Part four of the seven-part radio adaptation. Valjean is found guilty and sentenced to a galley ship. Sustaining. MBS.

SUNDAY, MAY 5

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO SHOW (3-30-44) When Costello comes into an inheritance, he decides to buy a radio station, and guest Alan Ladd wants to be an announcer! Camel Cigarettes. NBC.

SIX SHOOTER (4-22-54) James Stewart stars as Britt Ponset. When Britt's hotel is robbed and the desk clerk shot to death, Britt helps the sheriff track down the killer. Cast includes Harry Bartell, Virginia Gregg. Sustaining. NBC.

LES MISERABLES (8-20-37) Part five of this seven-part radio adaptation. Valjean and Cosette evade Inspector Javert and seek shelter in a convent. Sustaining. MBS.

SUNDAY, MAY 12

SUSPENSE (1-4-59) "Don't Call Me Mother" starring Agnes Moorehead. A young man's mother is not pleased with the young lady he has brought home for dinner. Participating sponsors. CBS.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES (11-1-47) Ralph Edwards hosts the wildest of all game shows, with clues about the identity of "Miss Hush"! Dux. NBC. *Read the article about Ralph Edwards on page 49.*

LES MISERABLES (8-27-37) Part six of the seven-part radio adaptation. Jean Valjean and Marius Pontmercy seek shelter in the sewers of Paris. Sustaining. MBS.

SUNDAY, MAY 19

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (2-24-49) Gracie is convinced that George should be a surgeon and offers his services to the hospital. Maxwell House Coffee. NBC.

DRAGNET (4-13-50) Jack Webb stars as Sgt. Joe Friday. The police investigate a gang that has been mugging servicemen. Fatima Cigarettes. NBC.

LES MISERABLES (9-3-37) The seventh and final chapter of the story. Cosette and Marius marry and Valjean reveals his criminal past to the groom. Sustaining. MBS.

SUNDAY, MAY 26

JUBILEE #98 (9-25-44) Host Emie "Bubbles" Whitman welcomes Count Basie and his orchestra, Jimmy Rushing, Thelma Carpenter, Artie Shaw, Buddy Rich, and Butterfly McQueen. AFRS.

RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE (1-26-51) Dick Powell stars as Diamond, who is hired to protect a millionaire from his embittered brother. Camel Cigarettes. ABC.

FIRST NIGHTER (4-27-52) "Refresher Course" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule in a light comedy about a bored housewife who decides to inject some glamour into her appearance. Sustaining. NBC.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

LUX RADIO THEATRE (9-19-49) "Green Dolphin Street" starring Lana Turner, Van Heflin and Peter Lawford in a radio version of the 1947. about a love triangle set in the early days of New Zealand. Lux Soap. CBS.

SPOTLIGHT REVUE (2-20-48) Spike Jones and the City Slickers welcome guest Buddy Clark, who sings "Little White Lies." Coca-Cola. CBS.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (7-22-51) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover. A man's death is considered a suicide, but Clover suspects the man was murdered. Whigley's Gum. CBS.

DRENE TIME (5-18-47) Don Ameche, Frances Langford and Danny Thomas star. Danny fantasizes that he is a doctor and the cast performs a "Bickersons" sketch. Drene Shampoo. NBC.

COLUMBIA WORKSHOP (3-20-39) "A Letter From Home" starring Karl Swenson. A successful playwright receives a letter from the girl he loved as a young man. Sustaining. CBS.

SUNDAY, JUNE 16

LIFE OF RILEY (6-19-48) William Bendix is Riley, who is hoping for a Father's Day gift from son Junior. Prell. NBC.

CRIME CLASSICS (1-6-54) "The Younger Brothers: Why Some of Them Grew No Older." The true story about a family's murderous rampage after the Civil War. Sustaining. CBS.

BING CROSBY SHOW (3-5-52) Bing welcomes his brother Bob and niece Cathy Crosby and the brothers duet on "Cathy." Chesterfield Cigarettes. CBS.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON (9-25-47) "Reprisal" stars Paul Sutton as Sgt. Preston. A fur trapper gets even with a half-breed for stealing his food supplies. Quaker Puffed Wheat and Rice. ABC.

CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW (11-7-48) Charlie finds a wallet and contemplates the reward he'll receive for returning it. With Don Ameche and Marsha Hunt as John and Blanche Bickerson. AFRS rebroadcast.

ESCAPE (3-15-53) "The Man With the Steel Teeth" starring John Dehner in the story of a man trapped in a Soviet prison. Sustaining. CBS.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

OLD GOLD COMEDY THEATRE (3-4-45) "Standing Room Only" starring Paulette Goddard and Burgess Meredith in a radio version of Goddard's 1944 film. Harold Lloyd hosts. Old Gold Cigarettes. NBC.

ADVENTURES OF PHILIP MARLOWE (4-18-50) "The Angry Eagle" stars Gerald Mohr as Marlowe, who travels to a training camp to help a fighter in trouble. Sustaining. CBS.

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-18-47) In New York, as Jack prepares to open at the Roxy Theatre and welcomes guest Al Jolson. Lucky Strike Cigarettes. NBC.

CROSSED SWORDS



MATTHEW HOFFMAN COLLECTION

Remembering Hollywood's love affair with the swashbuckler

BY MATTHEW HOFFMAN

Those of a certain generation in Chicago will remember growing up watching Frazier Thomas host *Family Classics* on WGN-TV. A wonderful carousel of movies played every Sunday, and few reruns were more eagerly anticipated than films like *The Adventures of Robin Hood* or *The Mark of Zorro*. The popular term for films of this variety was the “swashbuckler,” and the images that accompanied them were iconic: The flight of arrows through the greenwood,

Matthew C. Hoffman is a film historian from Niles, Illinois, and host of the Park Ridge Library's current Crossed Swords film series.

the billowing sails of galleons, the velvet capes, and glittering rapierists so sharp they could slash a “Z” into a stone wall.

The dictionary states that “swashbuckler” was originally a derogatory name for a loud, uncouth braggart, the kind whose sword and shield made a big noise when he swaggered around. Yet over the centuries the term would be romanticized in literature and later in film, and never more so than during the Golden Age of American cinema. The Hollywood swashbuckler was a subgenre of the adventure film and it produced some of the greatest works in the history of cinema.

Both the defining qualities and the allure of the swashbuckler are well reflected in the forward to *The Black*

Swan (1942): “This is a story of the Spanish Main – where villainy wore a sash and the only political creed in the world was love, gold, and adventure.”

At its heart, the true swashbuckler movie recognized that seeking one’s fortune required both a dangerous physical journey and an affirmation of moral virtue, but there was never any question that goodness would prevail in the end.

Even today, it’s easy to understand why swashbucklers appealed to early audiences. Between 1929 and 1934, Hollywood cinema was dominated by many “pre-Code” films that featured adult subject matter. Their graphic depictions of crime and sexual suggestiveness outraged mainstream America; eventually, the backlash prompted Hollywood to enforce its dormant Production Code. Beginning in 1934, censors cracked down on “taboo” material and studio heads turned to safer subject matter, especially literature, for their storylines.

The roots of the swashbuckler tradition are found in Anglo-Saxon ballads of the 15th Century and the works of Romantic authors like Sir Walter Scott. Alexander Dumas created many of the archetypes we associate with the swashbuckler genre when he published *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* (both in 1844). In the early 20th century, Rafael Sabatini would write novels such as *The Sea Hawk*, *Scaramouche*, and *The Black Swan*. Many of these stories were first adapted to the stage before finding their ultimate apotheosis in the medium of film.

The descriptive passages in the nov-



Douglas Fairbanks

MATTHEW HOFFMAN COLLECTION

els were ripe for cinematic potential, but perhaps even more so were the main characters. If there was one larger-than-life hero that needed the movie screen to bring out his full potential, it was the swashbuckler, and no actor more single-handedly defined that role than Douglas Fairbanks.

Ironically, Fairbanks was a screen satirist with a comic persona during his early career. Yet he was canny enough to sense that audiences of the Jazz Age were seeking relief from modern excesses and yearning for a retreat to a more romantic past. Starting with 1920’s *The Mark of Zorro* and continuing on through the decade, Fairbanks reinvented himself as a dashing swashbuckler and defender of noble values.

At the time Fairbanks was one of the major players in Hollywood and in a

position to produce his own films. He worked with some of the most prominent directors in the business, but there was never any doubt whose vision dominated the finished product. With classics like *The Three Musketeers* (1921), *Robin Hood* (1922), and *The Black Pirate* (1926), Fairbanks created some of the most technologically spectacular productions to date, imbuing his pictures with an almost mythic grandeur that did much to advance the popularity of the genre.

Yet it was his screen persona that made it so appealing to moviegoers. The larger-than-life character of the swashbuckler seemed tailor-made for the screen, and Fairbanks, with his dashing looks, roguish charm and remarkable athleticism, made the role his own. His roles featured clear-cut heroes with little in the way of psychological complexity, but they set the stage for later incarnations of swashbucklers.

At its best, the classic swashbuckler film provided something for everyone: rousing adventure, romance, and a kind of moral guidance that even young audiences could embrace with enthusiasm. Violence played a part but never dominated the storylines; rapier wits were as much an aspect of swordplay as the sleek weapons the actors carried.

A sense of *noblesse oblige*, rather than a desire for personal gain, served as the primary motivation for the heroes (with the opposite being true for the bad guys). The protagonist of the swashbuckler fought for King or country or lady fair. He opposed tyranny and oppression. The institutions he believed in were often threatened by those seeking to overthrow the established order. His primary role in nearly every tale was to restore the balance and maintain justice.

Once studio heads realized they had

hit upon a lucrative answer for how to obey the Code, they began mining classical literature for source material and grooming new actors. MGM's *Treasure Island* and United Artists' *The Count of Monte Cristo* hit theatres in 1934. Warner Brothers decided to get into the act by adapting a Rafael Sabatini novel called *Captain Blood* with Robert Donat in the lead, but when negotiations with Donat fell through, they began testing other actors for the part.

One unknown actor from Australia showed such promise in the tests that Jack Warner decided to take a gamble with him, a decision that would soon pay off handsomely. *Captain Blood* hit the screen in 1935, and the actor — Errol Flynn — created a sensation with audiences. It was perhaps the most dynamic debut of any leading man in the history of films, and it began a second cycle of Hollywood swashbucklers.

Captain Blood tells the story of an English physician accused of treason and sold into slavery. He escapes only to lead a band of pirates on the high seas. The film had all the hallmarks of a golden age swashbuckler: a beautiful heroine (Olivia de Havilland, also making her debut), period settings, rousing action enhanced by a score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and a memorable villain played by Basil Rathbone. Aside from being the most hisssable bad guy in movies, Rathbone was a superb fencer and used the skill to his advantage. He would reappear in several outstanding films in the genre, including another one with Flynn, 1938's *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.

Yet even with these elements and the top-flight production values, the ultimate success of *Captain Blood* can be attributed to Flynn himself, who seemed to not so much play the role as inhabit it — his

Peter Blood may be a film creation, but there is also remarkable human depth and nuance in the portrayal. Watching the film today underscores a growing consensus that Flynn was often underrated as an actor, perhaps because his good looks and carefree demeanor (both onscreen and off) distracted people from noticing how good he actually was.

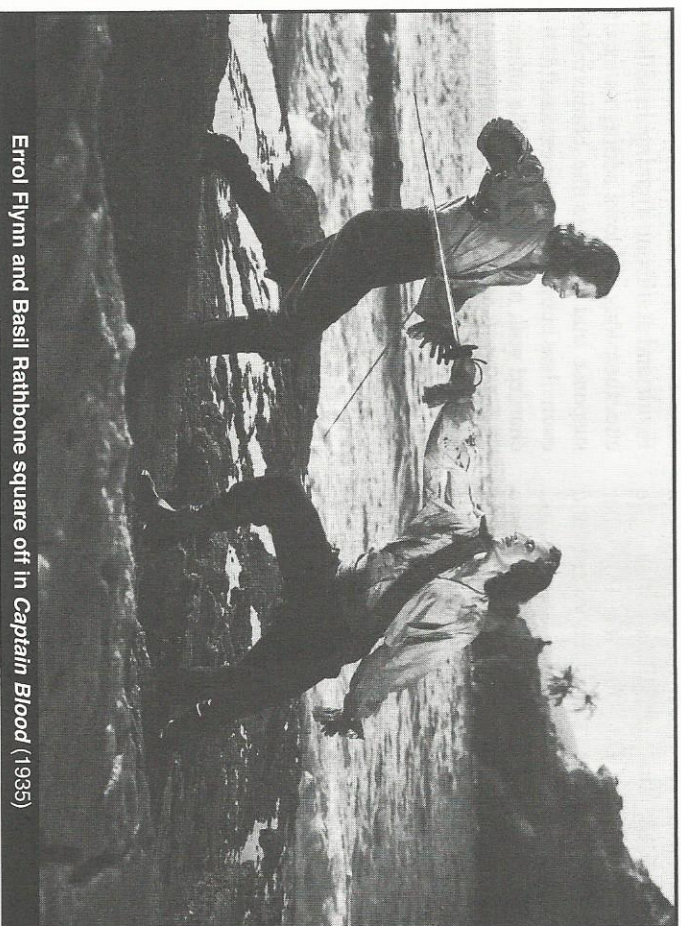
Flynn would follow *Captain Blood* with even greater successes, including *Robin Hood* and 1940's *The Sea Hawk*. The latter's values closely echoed what was going on in the real world, especially overseas, as the 16th-century Spain in the story becomes a stand-in for modern-day Nazi Germany.

Unlike Fairbanks, Flynn had significant competition in the swashbuckler genre. In 1937, David O. Selznick produced one of the greatest of all swashbucklers, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, based on the 1894 novel by Anthony Hope. This gorgeous and witty Ruritanian

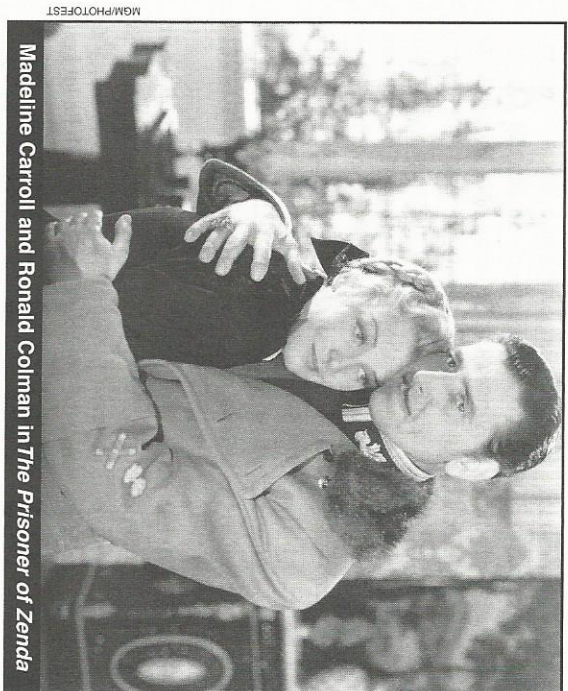
Romance is perfect in every area of production and casting, with Ronald Colman playing a dual role as both the imposter Rudolph Rassendyll and as King Rudolph. Douglas Fairbanks Jr. appears as one of the villains, Rupert of Hentzau. It would prove a stand-out role for Fairbanks Jr., leading him to fully embrace his father's legacy and make other swashbucklers in the years to come, including *The Corsican Brothers* (1941) and *Sinbad the Sailor* (1946).

Twentieth Century Fox put their own leading man, Tyrone Power, into a series of swashbucklers made in the Warner Brothers mold. Though he lacked Flynn's natural athleticism, Power's role as Don Diego Vega in 1940's *The Mark of Zorro* was one of his best, aided tremendously by the direction of Rouben Mamoulian.

In 1942, Power sailed the Caribbean in *The Black Swan* with Maureen O'Hara, who was all the more radiant in



Errol Flynn and Basil Rathbone square off in *Captain Blood* (1935)



Madeline Carroll and Ronald Colman in *The Prisoner of Zenda*

beautiful Technicolor. One of the film's highlights includes Power's shipboard swordfight with a heavily made-up George Sanders.

The start of World War II suspended the swashbuckler genre, but it returned afterward in full force. While Errol Flynn continued on in films like *The Adventures of Don Juan* (1948), other actors such as Louis Hayward and Stewart Granger made their mark. Perhaps Granger's best role in the genre is that of Andre Moreau in 1952's *Scaramouche*. Based on another Sabatini novel, the film features the longest swordfight in movie history, taking place all around a Parisian theatre and clocking in at over six minutes.

It's hard to underestimate the importance of swordplay in the swashbuckler. After all, production values, the right cast, and a strong script were necessary for capturing the audience, but swordplay was something people expected. Although film swordplay was rarely "authentic" by official standards, it required tremendous ingenuity and skill

on the part of all involved to meet the particular challenges of the genre.

During the golden age of the swashbuckler, the fight choreographer became one of the key figures on the movie set. His role was to help invent stylized action for the heroes and villains, much the way the writers created the spoken lines. In a sense, the fight scene created another kind

of film dialogue, and certain moves had the ability to suggest ideas, if not actual words. Many of the memorable scenes in swashbucklers involve fighting. Who can possibly forget the final duel in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, which has Flynn and Rathbone fighting in silhouette, their long shadows adding an air of suspense and dread to the climax? Yet even less complex scenes could be charged with meaning, when the characters took up weapons and spoke through action.

Not surprisingly, many of the men serving as fight choreographers in Hollywood were former fencing champions. One of the most prolific in the golden age was Fred Cavens, who worked on most of the films that starred Fairbanks and Flynn. Other important fight arrangers included Henry Uytendhoeve (who worked on the 1921 version of *The Three Musketeers*), Ralph Faulkner (*The Prisoner of Zenda*), and Jean Heremans (*Scaramouche*).

By the 1940s, the swashbuckler

genre began to take on new shapes, including the "oriental swashbuckler." This subgenre was best represented by a number of films that starred Jon Hall and Maria Montez, including *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, a movie based on tales from the Arabian Nights. Unlike earlier films, these were standardized B movies known mostly for their dancing girls and Technicolor photography. Studios like Columbia and Universal ground out "bread and butter" swashbucklers that were little more than escapist fare. By the 1950s, there was even a female at the helm (Jean Peters as *Anne of the Indies*).

At least one film of this later period, 1952's *The Crimson Pirate*, stood out thanks to its star, Burt Lancaster. A former acrobat in real life, Lancaster's physicality recalled the Fairbanks style. The film, directed by Robert Siodmak, was a wonderful swansong to a tradition that had started over thirty years earlier.

By the 1960s, Hollywood epics began to dominate the big screen. The swashbuckler was kept alive primarily on television series like *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, starring Richard Greene. Later feature films attempted to revive swashbuckler themes, but they placed more emphasis on parody and spoof than on the virtues that characterized the old films. Not until 1977, when George Lucas introduced his first *Star Wars* film, did the true spirit of swashbuckling return — this time in the context of science-fiction. ■

To learn more about the *Park Ridge Public Library's* Crossed Swords film series (running through May 30), go to crossedwords2013.wordpress.com — and tune in to Those Were the Days on April 20 to hear the Lux Radio Theatre production of *Captain Blood*.

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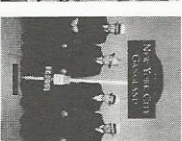
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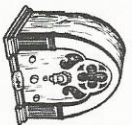


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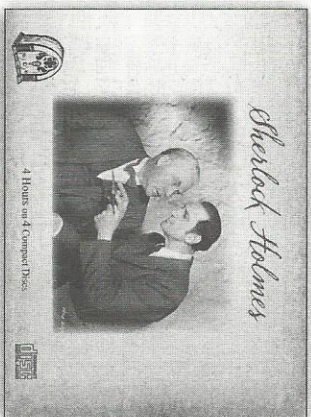
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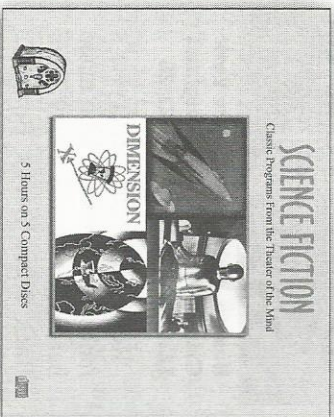
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Ralph Edwards... THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

BY WALTER SCANNELL

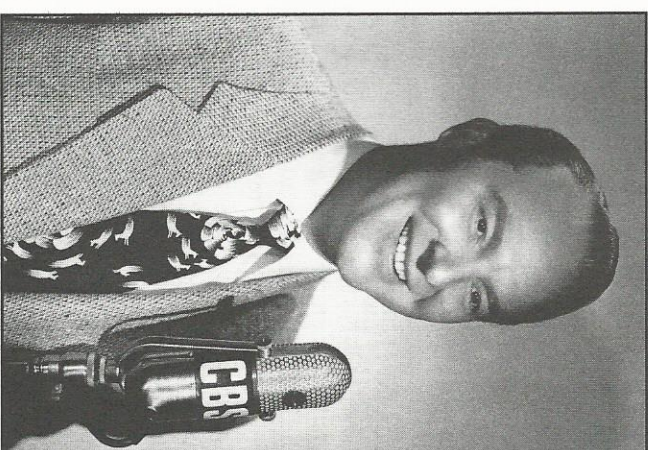
Bewilderment... delayed recollections and tears. This was the weekly pattern for years as *This is Your Life* drew millions to their radios and television sets.

One reason for its popularity was that there was no other show like it — especially after the original goal of showcasing the lives of Average Joes turned into thirty-minute celebrity biographies.

But the story of the show, as with Ralph Edwards' life, is bound up with his earlier creation, *Truth or Consequences*. This audience-participation radio program was created by Edwards and his wife Barbara, based on an old parlor game known in some circles as "Forfeits."

This lean man with red hair and a professional smile had worked as an announcer and bit actor on radio to put himself through the University of

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



California. Edwards was blessed with a warm voice rather than the deep baritone employed by many announcers. As a result, he relied less on traditional commercial announcements and more on ad-libbing remarks that bridged the gap between the program and the advertising.

"I just chatted with them," Edwards told Chuck Schaden in 1971, "and I developed a style."

It was a unique style and a very successful one as well; at one point, Edwards was working on as many as 45 different broadcasts every week. That workload was a major factor in pushing Edwards to develop a show of his own, where, as he admitted later, "I only had to work once a week."

Ralph and Barbara tested their idea on a Friday night by hosting a party and playing tricks on the guests; the following Sunday, Edwards asked the audience from the *Horn and Harhart Hour* to stick around for a demonstration of the new idea. At one point, a male contestant was supposed to scream like a woman but froze before the microphone until Edwards tickled him from behind. The resultant shriek got a tremendous response and Ivory Soap bought the show.

Perhaps that reaction was why Edward always arranged for something funny to happen moments before his program went on the air: it guaranteed that the first thing listeners heard was raucous laughter. (It was later revealed that the "something funny" was audience volunteers trying to squeeze into clothing of inappropriate size or gender.)

As for the game itself, Edward would ask guests a question, which they had to answer before the buzzer (nicknamed "Beulah") sounded. Of course, they couldn't answer because the questions were either too difficult or just bad jokes, which Edwards would finish off quickly—as if he was a little ashamed of them. And when they couldn't...well, that's when the fun began, with Edwards squealing "Aren't we devils?"

One might accuse *Truth or*



Ralph Edwards quizzes a future victim on *Truth of Consequences*

Consequences of insulting audiences by disguising zany, humiliating stunts as game show penalties, but the fact is that the "consequences" were a lot of fun for listeners who could picture all the elaborate set-ups, some of which took weeks to work out. "Most of the American people are darned good sports," Edwards noted.

Many of the guests did not even try to give a serious answer and seemed eager to see what would happen to them. And the *Truth* team didn't let them down, asking audience members to slide through hoops on a slippery floor or imitate a chicken; on one show, a woman was asked to take home some Christmas Seals, unaware that they were actual live seals. Staff members had to practice these stunts repeatedly before the show, both to make sure they worked and to maximize the silliness.

Audiences for the wacky radio show grew during the war years. A soldier once had to talk to his girlfriend over the

phone while a model sat on his lap and cooed sweet nothings to him. The girlfriend was not let in on the gag until it was over and Edwards took over the phone.

Being something of a ham, Edwards took advantage of his fame to make a few guest appearances in RKO musicals (with Frances Langford) and on other people's radio programs. In December of 1948, Edwards turned up on the cover of *Action Comics*, squirting an apron-clad Superman in the face with a bottle of seltzer water. Still, his own show was his priority, and when he announced that he would broadcast from any town that changed its name to *Truth or Consequences*, the voters of Hot Springs, NM were willing to oblige. "In those days," he recalled, "nothing seemed impossible."

After World War II, *Truth or Consequences* became less studio-bound. Occasionally a participant would be sent on a short hunt for various things and tried to return to the studio before the broadcast ended with a full report. (If time ran out, the contestant would be brought back the following week.)

Edwards inadvertently created the "giveaway" show when he plucked a woman out of the audience to play Cinderella and dressed her in top of the line finery—which he credited on the air. The floodgates opened and soon every show was offering something for nothing faster than you could say "Spiegel catalog." Edwards, realizing he'd given birth to a monster, decided to offer a package of prizes to anyone who could identify "Mrs. Hush" (actually silent screen star Clara Bow) while also supporting the March of Dimes. The biggest of these stunts involved "The Walking Man," whose footsteps were

heard week after week until listener Florence Hubbard won \$22,500 by identifying the gait of Jack Benny.

On one *Truth* program, Edwards had a call patched in so a wounded serviceman in Hawaii could talk to relatives and friends in his hometown. This eavesdropping on a stranger's life garnered such a strong reaction that Edwards devised a similar episode, in which he reunited a paraplegic in a VA hospital with his loved ones while America listened in. Heart strings across the country were tugged.

Edwards was better than just smart, he was canny. In 1948, he sold the idea for *This is Your Life* to NBC while still producing *Truth or Consequences*.

Edwards took *Truth* to television for



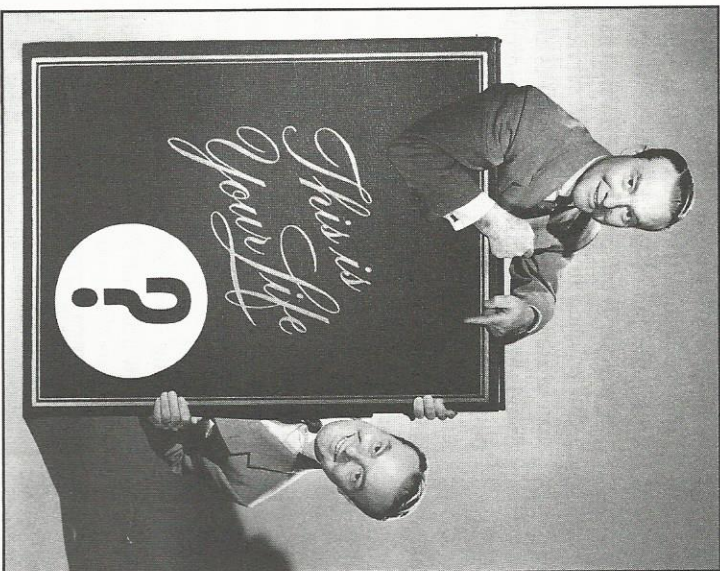
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Sexton, who discovered that he was on the air while he was running his elevator.

Among the celebrities featured on the radio version of *Life* were vaudevillian and B-movie actress Fifi D'Orsay, singer Jeanette McDonald, and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy.

The show had more impact when it moved to television in October 1952 and drew more frequently on big names. This was how viewers saw that Boris Karloff was a nice, gentle man after all and not really a monster. Another guest was friendly Chicago street reporter Virginia Mammaduke, who was fondly known as "The Duchess" because of her last name.

Some guests found the surprise an unpleasant one; traveler-news-caster Lowell Thomas was one of the few subjects who resented the intrusion on his privacy. (When Edwards tried to reassure him that the show would be a lot of fun, an unhappy Thomas retorted, "I doubt that very much.")

To make the show more visual, Edwards would read from a large book listing highlights of the person's life as the subject sat on a sofa not knowing what would happen next. Edwards would pause for an off-stage voice to make a comment that would either be recognized immediately or perplexed the subject for a moment; at that point, the source of the voice would come out from behind the curtains in the middle of the set for handshakes or hugs and a bit of reminiscing, before making room for the next surprise guest.

The subjects answered just a few

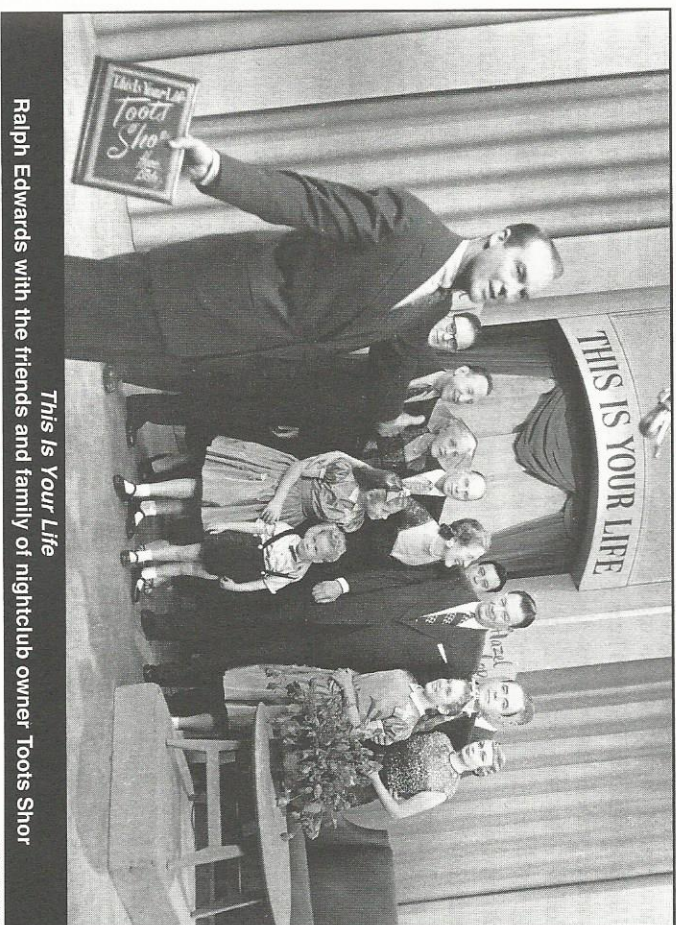
simple questions about their early years and usually found it increasingly harder to speak as they saw their lives flashing before their eyes. Many comedians took delight in parodying these emotional moments: Bob and Ray offered "This Is Your Bed, You Made It, Now Lie In It," while a memorable *Your Show of Shows* sketch saw Howard Morris rushing onto the stage in tears, clinging relentlessly to Sid Caesar's leg.

By the end of each real-live *Life*, the subjects were surrounded by people from their lives, like living photographs. The book of highlights was one of the souvenirs the subjects received, in addition to the joy of being reunited with mentors and out-of-touch friends. One of the other gifts was a film of the show, with a projector for viewing it. Once the program ended, the subjects and all the people brought in were treated to a party at the hotel where the out-of-town guests of the show had been staying.

Every now and then, a show was cancelled when the subject learned about it, as was the case with actress Ann Sheridan. This need for secrecy was milked for laughs in a *Honeymooners* episode. Ralph fears the worst when he sees Alice entering a cab with a man, unaware her companion is a representative of *This is Your Life*. At the end of the story, Alice has to explain everything to keep her husband from slugging the representative, and so Ralph misses out on another opportunity for fame.

In one case, Edwards notified a star in advance. He was sure Eddie Cantor would make a great subject, but the comic actor was suffering from a heart ailment and Ralph feared the surprise would be too much for him.

If making all the secret arrangements with teachers, coaches, bosses, and clergymen wasn't difficult enough, imagine the challenges involved in putting together a show with two subjects. Stan Laurel



This is Your Life
Ralph Edwards with the friends and family of nightclub owner Toots Shor

NBC/PHOTOEST

and Oliver Hardy were in declining health, but they'd talked about the possibility of working in television. They were lured to a hotel suite on the pretext of a business discussion, until a connecting door opened and they heard Edwards announcing they were this week's guests.

Laurel, the creative member of the team, remained nonplussed through the show ("We never dreamed that we would make our television debut on an unheard network program," he recalled), while Hardy responded by flicking his tie at the camera, as he did during embarrassing moments in their films. The comics were so surprised they hardly knew what to do when they were handed derbies like the ones they had worn since their days in silent shorts. Sadly, this was the only time they were on television.

One of the best-remembered *Life* programs aired in 1953 when Edwards announced another rare departure from the format for a most memorable guest.

Lillian Roth had been a child star and minor movie actress in the 1930s. Her personal life featured heavy drinking and repeated beatings by the men she knew. The still-attractive singer pulled herself together through Alcoholics Anonymous, which had approved the telecast.

The show received more than 40,000 letters and was followed by Roth's best-selling autobiography, *I'll Cry Tomorrow*. When the book became a movie (with Susan Hayward as Roth), the final scene featured Edwards playing himself in a re-enactment of Roth's appearance on *This is Your Life*.

During the long run of the program, half of the subjects were unknown to the general public; the others included such top-time stars as Buster Keaton, Bob Hope, Andy Griffith, Barbara Eden,

Carol Channing, Bette Davis, and Marilyn Monroe.

Edwards began using some pre-recorded episodes in 1959, but producing the series was still exhausting; in 1961, *Life* left the air after nine seasons. A syndicated edition was sold to stations for the 1971 season. Guests who could not make it to California got to pre-record their reminiscences on videotape.

As for *Truth or Consequences*, it was revived in 1954 with Jack Bailey; later, Bob Barker hosted a popular daytime version. The reruns proved so popular in syndication that Edwards later revived the faux game show in the 1970s with Bob Hilton and later with comic Larry Anderson as host. The show performed its last prank in 1988.

This Is Your Life returned in 1983 for a short run and later for a few prime-time specials. There was even talk of reviving it in the 21st century with Regis Philbin as host, an idea that never came to fruition. Interestingly, for all of the many people who found their lives presented before the camera on *This Is Your Life*, there was one person Edwards insisted should never be so surprised — Ralph Edwards himself.

His life pretty much consisted of the shows he had created and hosted, which went on to include *Name That Tune*, *Place the Face*, and *The People's Court*. Much of the fortune Edwards made over his life was quietly donated to charities and other notable causes.

Still trim and alert, he remained a television producer in his eighties and died in his West Hollywood home in 2005 at the age of 92. ■

To hear Ralph Edwards on radio, tune in to Radio's Golden Age on May 12 and to Those Were the Days on June 8.

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Riding onto the *small* screen with

ANNIE OAKLEY

BY CARY O'DELL

America had never seen anything quite like Annie Oakley, both during her real life and again in 1952, when *Annie Oakley* arrived on television in the personage of actress Gail Davis.

Despite the legend of the real Annie (born Phoebe Ann Orlando Mosey in 1860; died, 1926), which inspired the 1935 biopic (starring Barbara Stanwyck) and the 1946 musical *Annie Get Your Gun* (which starred Ethel Merman), this television Annie was a whole new breed of cowgirl, and certainly a new kind of small screen heroine.

The origins of the *Annie Oakley* television series are logical enough. Actor/producer/cowboy Gene Autry was already helming his own TV empire of “kiddie westerns” (as opposed to “adult” westerns like *Gunsmoke*), which included his own *Gene Autry Show*, *Ranger Rider*, and *The Adventures of Champion*, when he decided that little boys have

their idols — why not give the girls a Western star of their own?

From there, Autry became the latest to co-opt the Annie Oakley name and legacy, knowing that it could provide a well-spring of plot ideas and be a darn good business decision besides.

What Autry probably didn't realize at the time however was just how forward-thinking his *Annie Oakley* “kiddie western” was going to be. In fact, it would be the first Western series built around a female lead, the first action/adventures series on TV to star a woman, and the first show to showcase a female in a law-enforcement position (unofficial though Annie's role might have been).

In addition, though depicted as powerful, this television heroine would present a far different visual image than some of the more dominatrix-inspired heroines that would arrive on TV in her wake — including Emma Peel of *The Avengers* and even Annie's near-contemporary, Sheena, Queen of the Jungle (played by Irish McCalla).

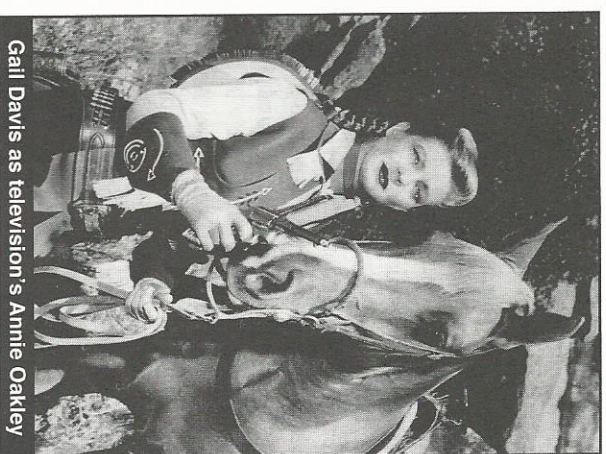
Gail Davis, a member of Autry's stable of actors whom he dubbed the “perfect Western heroine,” seemed born to

play Annie Oakley. A skilled rider and a good markswoman, Davis had already played opposite Autry himself in more than 15 of his feature films and in several of his TV series when she won the role of Annie.

Besides being good with a gun, Davis' Oakley — at 5'-2" tall, attired in a fringed skirt and vest, with her blond hair tied in pert pigtails — was also as cute as a proverbial bug. Her all-American, cowgirl-next-door look would soon launch a prairie full of product lines, from clothes to books to paper dolls — and, along the way, she would inspire a generation of young women.

In the series, Annie — who was supposed to be in her late teens or early twenties (Davis was actually 28 when the show began) — lived on the outskirts of the western town of Diablo with her younger brother, Tagg. It was assumed that their parents were dead, although the reason for Annie and Tagg's living on their own was never totally explained. Interestingly, in another pioneering step, Annie served as Tagg's sole caretaker and guardian, making her in effect TV's first (albeit *de facto*) single mother — and a working one to boot!

In the series, Annie was portrayed as an expert rider and sharp shooter, a faster and more accurate shot than any man — a fact she proved regularly. In one episode, a local boy challenges her to a quick draw contest. She naturally beats him and even manages to shoot the gun right out of his palm after she first banks it off a piece of metal. “If your angle's right,” Annie explains to the dumfounded lug, “you can just about figure which way your ricochet will go.” In another episode, Annie shoots the fake nose right off of a con artist in order to reveal his true identity to the gathered townsfolk.



Gail Davis as television's Annie Oakley

PHOTOGRAPH BY GAIL DAVIS

A program like *Annie* that depended on ample gunplay yet was aimed at children had to make certain concessions, and it did. Annie never shot to kill; in fact, shooting the weapons out of the hands of her opponents was an Oakley specialty and trademark. No blood ever got spilled in Diablo. Annie even did her part to promote gun safety, telling Tagg in one episode that “Guns are to save lives, not take ‘em.”

Officially, Annie was not the town's sheriff or even a deputy. Diablo's sheriff was her uncle, Luke MacTavish, but in the series he was seldom around (and his frequent missing-in-action status was often left unaddressed). Most of the town's outlaw and crime-fighting was left up to the young, handsome and towering deputy Lofly Crane (played by Brad Johnson), but within the context of the series, Crane might just as well have been Annie's assistant. He was dependent on Annie's quick thinking, detective skills and, of course, quick-draw abilities.

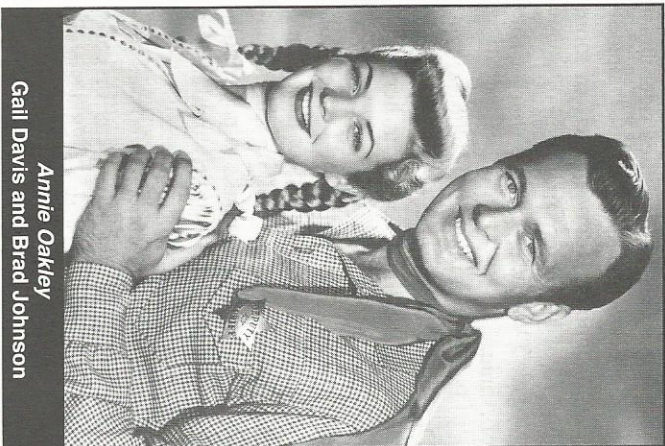
In the series, Lofty and others always did what Annie said, not because they had to but because they knew, deep down, that Annie was always right. Series press kits described Annie Oakley as “hard-ridin’” and “quick-shootin’.” One writer listed the skills of the small screen Annie Oakley as “cook, caregiver, a daring trick rider, a roper, a teamster and tracking expert... Even the sheriff, her Uncle Luke, took advice and direction from her.”

No doubt about it, this was Annie’s show. She didn’t wait around to be saved by some guy when she got in trouble. She didn’t worry about her hair or make-up. She didn’t sit around worrying about getting a date on Saturday night. She didn’t even ride side-saddle.

TV’s *Annie Oakley* was fearless and resilient, and she regularly demonstrated it. In one episode, Annie, Tagg and two men are riding in a stage coach. Suddenly, the driver of the coach is disabled by a outlaw dressed in black (naturally). Without a driver, the ruckus spooks the team of horses, who begin to run wildly.

Inside the coach, though, Annie doesn’t panic. Leaving the “menfolk” behind within the safety of the carriage, she climbs out the window, up onto the coach and jumps onto the backs of the horses. Seizing their reins, she brings the stampede to a halt. Later, Annie turns the men back toward town while she unharms one of the horses and rides off in pursuit of the gunman. (This sequence is even more impressive with the knowledge that Davis usually did all her own stuntwork for the show.)

If Annie’s abilities, bravery and intelligence seem somewhat surprising for the era, it’s even more eye-opening to see how upfront the series was concern-



Annie Oakley
and Brad Johnson

PHOTOGRAPH BY

ing gender equality. In one episode, a gun inventor from overseas comes to Diablo and finds out to his utter shock that the town’s best shot is a woman. He says, “In my country, women cook and clean...”

Brother Tagg sets the man straight, “Aw, shucks, Mister, Annie can do anything...”

And consider the myriad messages present in this bit of dialogue from another episode:

Outlaw #1: Who’s afraid of a girl?

Outlaw #2: I am, if it’s Annie

Oakley.

Furthermore, throughout the series, Annie proved herself as quick with a quip as she was with her pistol. Though the series by and large steered clear of any “mushy” romantic stuff, there was always an undercurrent of attraction

between Annie and Lofty. Even then, Annie didn’t play a traditionally “feminine” (read: passive) role. In one episode, Lofty walks into Annie and Tagg’s house to find Annie ironing some shirts. He says, “I sure wish I had a girl to iron my shirts.”

To which Annie slyly replies, “I’s that all you want one for, Lofty?”

There were 81 episodes of the *Annie Oakley* series produced; they aired in first-run syndication from 1952-1956. At the end of *Annie*, Gail Davis more or less retired from acting. She toured with Gene Autry’s rodeo show, often repeating some of the trick shots and riding stunts she used on the series. Later, she became an agent for other actors.

Nevertheless, even when out of the public eye, Davis received an endless amount of fan mail that continued long after production had ceased on *Annie Oakley* series. Davis didn’t seem to mind. “As far as I’m concerned,” she said once, “I will be Annie Oakley for the rest of my born days.”

And she was. In later life, Davis was

a popular draw on the nostalgia and memorabilia circuit, where she frequently received tributes as one of television’s first female all-out heroines and one of the Wild West’s all-time great characters.

In her book *Cowgirls*, author Candace Savage recalls that “for some of us ‘little ladies,’ sprawled in front of the box... Annie [Oakley] and Dale [Evans] were more than a simple diversion. These cowgirls were our idols and they beckoned a world to us... If our playmates thought we should run the café, we refused to play by their rules. True to the cowgirl spirit, we wanted into the game as equals.”

Proof of the importance and durability of Annie Oakley — both the character and the television series — arrived in the 1997 year-end issue of *Ms.* magazine, which included a list of notable women who had died during the previous year. Along with names like Mother Teresa and Diana, Princess of Wales, was the name of Gail Davis — the woman who brought Annie Oakley to life. ■

THIS SUMMER...

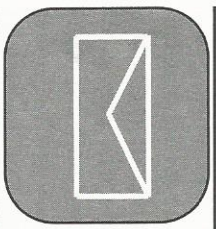
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ED. NOTE—We received hundreds of cards, letters and e-mails in answer to our recent request for *Those Were the Days* listeners to list their five favorite series from the Golden Age of Radio. Some comments from our "voters" are excerpted below:

E-MAIL—Great idea conducting this survey. I'll be very interested in seeing the results. I was born in the late 1950s when radio was being phased out, but my mother always told me about the old shows. I started to listen to *Those Were the Days* back in the mid-1980s and have been a big fan of old-time radio ever since. When my son was three or four, I introduced him to old-time radio through *The Cinnamon Bear*. He became a fan as well.

—**GUY MCANDREW**

CHICAGO—Thanks for running the *Cinnamon Bear* again this year. It's been a family favorite since the 1980s when Chuck used to play it. I still have my cassette copies of the *Cinnamon Bear* (purchased at Metro Golden Memories on Addison in Chicago) and the Cinnamon Bear ornament. Now, I also have the CD copy of the show, along with the TV version on DVD.

—**FRANK KAPEL**

E-MAIL—What a fun thing to do...very difficult to choose only five though. I am 40 years old and discovered old-time radio about 15 years ago. I have heard almost every surviv-

ing show of my favorite series. I think it is so sad that more shows did not survive — like / *Love a Mystery!* What magic!

—**JOHN RUKLICK**

WACO, TEXAS—Hard to select because there are so many well-written ones that merit mention. Do I choose based on the ones I would listen to if I woke up in the middle of the night — the old reliables? Do I choose the ones that contain characters that particular actors play brilliantly? Norman Corwin for the writing? Game shows that I love? The ones that clearly influenced my relatives' sense of humor? The shows that I would hold some-body hostage and make them listen to?

—**ANN-CLAIRE ANDERSON**

(**ED. NOTE**—Yes. To all of the above.)

E-MAIL—Here are my favorites. This is such a fine opportunity to thank you and tell you how much I have enjoyed — for many years now — your wonderful program on Saturdays. Thanks so much, Mr. Darnall, to you and your staff — and to Chuck Schaden, of course. I am pushing 75 years of age and fondly remember so many good OTR programs as I was growing up. It's so nice to hear them again, collect Podcasts on my iPod, etc. I love it!

—**MARY VIECELLI**

E-MAIL—The list is endless but these are the choices of the moment. I enjoy the wit and humor of comedies, the voices of many of the

actors are so great, further adding to the entertainment of the varied offerings. I've been a long-term listener since the 1980s and the transition from Chuck Schaden has been seamless. My enjoyment has not lessened over the years, but increased. Much of today's entertainment is "in your face." As in many other areas of life, civility and compassion seem to be sadly lacking. Thanks for many years of enjoyment.

—**RITA LIPTON MULLER**

LIBERTYVILLE, IL—As you requested, here is a list of my top five favorite radio shows. While I'm too young to have listened to these shows when they were first broadcast, I have enjoyed listening to them on *Those Were the Days*.

Recently, while I was visiting my daughter in West Des Moines, we were out driving and came to an intersection. "The street? Wistful Vista. Yes, there is a Wistful Vista. I wanted to stop by 79 Wistful Vista, but I think the McGees have moved on."

—**MARK LAMARRE**

E-MAIL—I've been listening to *Those Were the Days* since the '70s. I love all the old radio shows so it was difficult to choose only five. But I love the programs that tell a story, rather than the variety shows, because they force me to use my imagination. Thanks for many enjoyable Saturday afternoons.

—**ROSEMARY DRESEN**

CHICAGO—My husband forces me to listen to *Those Were the Days* every Saturday. And I love it! Being in my mind-forties, of course I don't have childhood memories of any of the old radio shows, but I still have my favorites.

—**LISA BOUDREAU**

PARK RIDGE, IL—In response to your question as to favorite series, there is only one: *One Man's Family*. We need the pride and dignity the Barbour family gave us and the use of imagination for life at Seaciff. For me, they were my family — Paul for safety, Hazel for love, the twins for fun, and Jack for being carefree. Loved every minute of them.

—**CAROL MAE SCHULTZ**

ORLAND PARK, IL—I loved so many radio shows, it's awfully hard to pin it down to five!

—**RITA STANCZIK**

E-MAIL—I'll look forward to seeing the

results! Thanks for your work on what is, in fact, my really truly favorite radio program: *Those Were the Days!*

—**SARAH COLE**

E-MAIL—The article on Soupy Sales [Autumn 2012 issue] brought back happy memories of my children watching *Lunchtime with Soupy*. They always ate whatever Soupy had for lunch — and would run to me at the end of the show to tell me what was for lunch the next day. I consequently always had a supply of tomato soup, cheese for grilled cheese and peanut butter and jelly on hand!

I always learn something from reading the *Digest*, and spend most Saturday afternoons listening to your show. Thanks for all the good memories.

—**ELINOR EPSTEIN**

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA—Greeting from Philadelphia. I am a Chicago transplant of seven years now and I love listening to your show whenever I can.

Not being able to get back home as often as I like especially during this season, it is comforting to be able to listen to your show and remember my parents telling me about listening to all these shows when they were kids (My family has lived in the Chicago area for over 100 years — I am the only black sheep to move out.

This is just a note to let you know your show has a fan out here and it helps me miss home a little less especially this time of the year.

—**TOM**

BARABOO, WISCONSIN—Just discovered your station WDCB live online. What a joy. I used to listen to Chuck Schaden back in the '70s when living in Chicago. After 11 years in downeast Maine with no such programming, we rediscovered old-time radio in the early '90s, after moving back to the Midwest. I have a vague memory of Chuck playing *The Cinnamon Bear* perhaps on WAIT or WBEM. Hopefully I've got it down to find you guys next week. This computer gadget doesn't always cooperate with a guy who'd rather turn a dial.

P.S. Is Mal Bellairs still around? Does he do his Christmas broadcasts?

—**JIM FRAN CZYK**

(**ED. NOTE**—Mal Bellairs passed away on July 12, 2010, at the age of 90.)

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*.

CHICAGO—Thank you for the wonderful job that all of you do. I really enjoyed hearing Agnes Moorehead in "Sorry, Wrong Number" [TWTD, September 15]; she is one of my favorite actresses and it was great to hear her at her "best." I did not know that there were two endings for the show, thanks for sharing. That's what I love about TWTD: it's entertaining and educational!

—ROBERT M. KOSTICKAK

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA—I listen almost every week. Great show. Great interview with Terry Moore [TWTD, October 20]

—MICHAEL MUDERICK

E-MAIL—My wife and I thought your show this week [TWTD, October 27] was most excellent! From being overcome by "The Dark" as we made our way through "The Corridor of Doom" to sneaking out for a poker game unannounced at our Auntie Cat's house... it all made our day! Thanks and keep up the good work. Let's hope Peter, Sidney, Boris, Bella, Bogle and Clint never retire. Been listening for 20 years; my wife for 30 years. Thanks for the many memories!

—JOHN WALEK

E-MAIL—Thank you for the comment you just made about people who do not vote [TWTD, November 3]. I wish you could have heard my cheer: I love *Those Were The Days*!

—BARB DAY

E-MAIL—I was listening to the November 3 TWTD program on a "computer delay" so 5:00 was actually 5:15. After the program ended, I called WDCB, but you had already left the studio. I wanted to let you know how encouraged and inspired I was by your last words before your "sign off." You really put some clarification into the reasons for participation in the election process. I wanted to let you know that words were very well spoken, and I received them as an inspiration. I had already cast my ballot, but I also know that many of your listeners may have been feeling "What's the use?" and all that kind of thinking. I'm sure your insightful words caused some folks to change their minds, and I'm sure that will cause more than a few of those "raysayers" (more like "naythinkers") to get to the polls on Tuesday.

Even an uneducated ear such as mine can hear the changes in your level of expert-

ise and professionalism. You work has always been a joy to hear, but now, it seems that it's becoming more than that. Be encouraged, "we" DO hear you "out here!"

—JIM MELKA

NELSONVILLE, OHIO—It was quite some time ago — just before Christmas — I was working in the kitchen late at night when I heard Chuck Schraden for the first time. It was a Jack Benny Christmas show! I have been in love with old-time radio ever since. Then I found *Those Were the Days* on the internet and it has become a late Friday afternoon office companion. Many thanks.

—SHARON BARROWS

E-MAIL—Your weekly show with Ken Alexander is such a treat — entertaining, educational and fun. I enjoy it very much. Thanks for keeping these shows and all that history alive.

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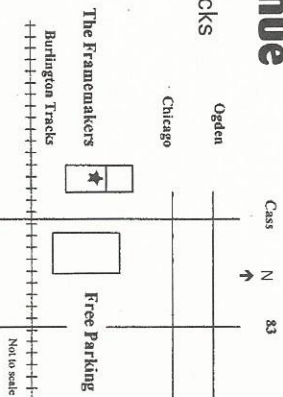
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