

NOSTALGIA DIGEST ^{AND} RADIO GUIDE



JACK BENNY and
RONALD COLMAN

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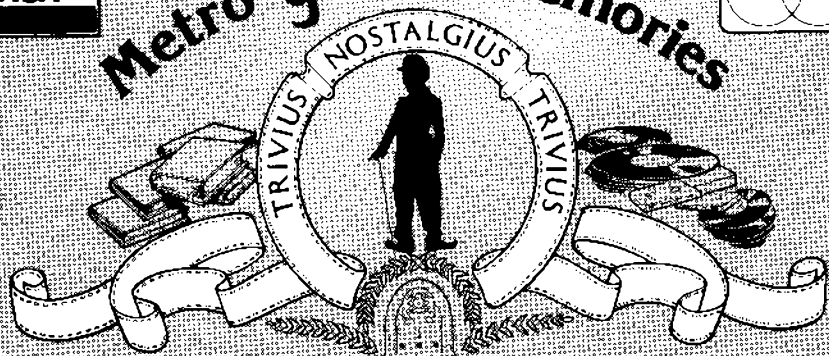


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BOOK SEVENTEEN

CHAPTER TWO

FEBRUARY-MARCH, 1991

HELLO, OUT THERE IN Radioland!!

As you know, our *Old Time Radio Classics* program on WBBM, Newsradio 78 moved to a new time period on November 26th.

That's the date our Monday thru Friday broadcasts were moved from 8 p.m. to midnight.

It was WBBM's decision to make the move in order to provide additional news coverage in the middle of the evening.

Actually, only our Monday thru Friday *Radio Classics* has been moved; the weekend editions will continue to be heard from 8-10 p.m. (Yes, we're still pre-empted by hockey on many Saturday and Sunday evenings, but the schedule is beginning to lighten up — check the calendar in this issue — and after the sports season is over, we'll be with you every weekend during "prime time" on WBBM.)

We regret losing many loyal listeners who have not been able to make the switch with us to midnight, especially the younger members of our audience who were introduced to vintage radio thru our broadcasts. But, we abide by WBBM's decision and hope to meet the challenge of the late-night time period.

We've had many comments from listeners who, in effect, have said "Good grief, who's listening to the radio at midnight?"

Well, in the old days, lots of people listened at midnight (and all night long) to Jay Andres on "Music 'Til Dawn" or to Franklyn MacCormack on the "Meister Brau Showcase." And if you don't think

anyone listens to radio at midnight these days, how come so many people know who Eddie Schwartz is?

There is an audience for radio at midnight and as long as we've been moved to that spot, we'll try to get them to find us and the great vintage programs.

We have heard from so many of our loyal listeners since the switch last November. And an awful lot of people have told us they have called or written to WBBM about the change.

We're extremely grateful; we know how much you care. We've been through this before in one form or another, and we've always tried to bounce back and meet new challenges.

Some of our listeners have said, regretfully, that they will no longer be able to listen. Some have said that, armed with tape and timer, they are recording the midnight programs and listen "at a more convenient hour." Others have told us they like the midnight time slot better. "No hockey interruptions and no television competition," they say.

No matter how this change affects you, we're pleased that we are able to continue *Radio Classics* and we promise to do everything possible to keep the vintage shows on the air.

Thanks for listening.

Chuck Schaden

JACK BENNY'S SPONSORS

BY BILL OATES

The history of Jack Benny on the radio is famous, but what were the origins of this famous radio comedian's sponsors? From Canada Dry to LSMFT, the products emerged and entered American households, sometimes as rapidly as the fate of the boy from Waukegan grew and prospered.

Someone had to be first to take a chance on Jack Benny, and that call came to Canada Dry, the "champagne of ginger ale" product. Two generations after soda water had been first mixed with cola concoctions, this Canadian company tried to compete with soda bottlers in America. Founded by John J. McLaughlin in the 1880's in Toronto, McLaughlin's Breakfast Style Ginger Ale (dark) and Pale Dry Ginger Ale (lighter color and flavor) scored a hit. Canadians preferred the lighter variety and it was soon exported to the U.S. as Canada Dry.

The cost to ship the beverage to the States created problems. Coke was selling at five cents per bottle, but Canada Dry had to charge thirty-five cents. The wealthy were the primary consumers of this upscale drink when they used it as a mixer in Prohibition highballs. Sales fell after the 1929 stockmarket crash, and so, the company decided to lower costs by creating a franchise system like Coca Cola's in the U.S.

Sales improved as the company became the number one seller of ginger ale in the country. Canada Dry expanded its product line to include the mixers club soda and quinine water (tonic). Jack became the "Canada Dry Humorist" from his first broadcast in May 1932, until he moved to NBC in October of that year and was adopted by Chevy.

General Motors' Chevrolet resulted, in part, because of a lost auto race. William Durant, an early automobile developer, raced Frenchman Louis Chevrolet and lost. Later, after Chevrolet developed an engine for Durant, the two created the first in a long line of Chevrolets in 1913. The name was chosen because race car drivers were heroes of the day and the foreign name had a nice sound to it. Because the president of G.M. did not find Benny funny, sponsorship was dropped.

General Tire's tire production history is less glamorous and but a small part of Jack Benny's career. Suffice it to say, that after Americans unhitched their horses and propelled tin lizzies like the Chevy and Benny's Maxwell down the streets, the makers of tires were wheeling right behind. Started by Akron, Ohio residents B.F. Goodrich, Charles Goodyear, and Harvey Firestone, the tire industry had many who offered smooth rides and, ultimately, puncture proof tires. Generals were manufacturerd, literally, down the road from Goodyear and sought to own a bigger stake in the market with its radio sponsorship of the Benny show, even though it was only for one season.

General Foods adopted Jack Benny in the fall of 1935 and assigned its relatively successful JELL-O dessert product to the show. This was the third "general" to sponsor Jack, who said, "Having three generals in a row ain't bad for a guy who was in the Navy, not the Army."

The patent origin of gelatin harkens back to pre-Civil War years in the Eastern U.S. Peter Cooper, inventor of the famed railroad engine "Tom Thumb," got the first patent on a product which had been the subject of experimentation since 1682.



LUCKY STRIKE CIGARETTES sponsored Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone for twenty years on radio and TV.

It wasn't until 1897 that Pearl B. Wait toyed with gelatine derived from boiling horse hooves, bones, and tendons and turned it into dessert. His wife named the substance JELL-O, but we are not sure why. It may have reminded her of jelly and she replaced the last syllable with a then popular product ending -O; she may have given it a name that represented the jelling process that had to occur; or perhaps she was a bad speller and substituted a "j" for the "g" in gelatine.

The business did not assume the role of "#1 Selling Dessert" in America overnight. Wait tired of his unprofitable venture and sold out for \$450 to neighbor Francis Woodward, a moderately successful seller of the "medicated nest egg" (killed hen lice) and creator of a cereal beverage called Grain-O. The new gelatine "nest egg" was a slow mover for a while and was even offered to a plant supervisor for \$35. The employee declined

and soon after, JELL-O's fortunes started to climb, first to \$250,000 in sales in 1902 and then to near one million in 1906. Grain-O was dropped as a product to make way for JELL-O in strawberry, raspberry, lemon, orange, cherry, peach, and chocolate (at least those were the flavors in the early years.)

Because Jack Benny was so successful pushing JELL-O, General Foods, the company that resulted from the merger of products manufactured by cereal baron C.W. Post and JELL-O in 1925, decided that its Grape-Nuts breakfast food could use a boost from the highly successful comedy. So, in 1941, Jack dropped his now famous "Jell-O again, this is Jack Benny talking."

The ownership of Grape-Nuts might have been altered in its early years. The Kellogg company could have had both Post Toasties and Grape-Nuts in its fold, but when C.W. Post offered Dr. Kellogg his expertise in marketing a health food coffee, the latter declined. Post set out to start his own empire of Postum and cereal. Grape-Nuts was originally bread sticks made of wheat and malted barley baked together. Sold as a health food, Post's product was named because he felt that grape sugar was formed in the baking process, and the cereal did have a nutty consistency.

On October 1, 1944, The American Tobacco began a long and lucky acquaintance with Jack Benny. Lucky Strikes stayed with Jack, not only through his final days on radio, but also for his early television years.

Tobacco, of course, was a plant cultivated and enjoyed by American Indians for centuries, but the white settler, and one in particular, found out how to market it. One Confederate soldier, Washington Duke of Durham, North Carolina, returned home after Union imprisonment during the Civil War with fifty cents and found a half burned barn of tobacco as his sole marketable farm commodity. He took it to Raleigh, sold it, and began what would become the largest

JACK BENNY'S SPONSORS

tobacco manufacturer in the world. By 1881, he had hand-rolled cigarettes for sale, and nine years later The American Tobacco Company was born of mergers of four small companies (to be divided again in 1911 when the government felt this company was a monopoly.) When Duke died in 1925, he willed \$40 million to the university that bears his name.

Lucky Strikes were not the first of Duke's cigarettes, but the first of a new blend of tobaccos. The name came from an old plug tobacco brand that originated in 1856. It represented what the tobacco-chewing gold miners expected to hit after the Rush of '49. In 1916, the name re-emerged as a rolled smoke, but did not reach first place in cigarette sales for a few years.

Company president George Washington Hill is credited with Luckies' success. His advertising campaigns included "Reach for a Lucky," "With Men Who Know Tobacco Best, It's Luckies Two to One," and the auctioneer booming "Sold American!" He is responsible for "Your Hit Parade," the twenty-five year running radio and television show, as well as buying out the Jack Benny show.

The green color of the original Lucky Strike pack caused a minor problem during World War II and another advertising coup. Copper was used in the dominant

green ink on the package, but this metal was in short supply during the War, and so, the background color was changed to white. The advertising that explained the packaging change won mass approval when it was announced that "Lucky Strike Green Has Gone to War." In six weeks sales rose thirty-eight percent.

Prior to his death in 1946, Hill created his last great Lucky Strike "extra." "Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco" came from his fertile mind, and was so well recognized that by 1944, only "L.S.M.F.T." was needed to identify the popular smokes. Hill later had the letters printed on the bottom of the package, where they reside to this day.

Luckies went with Jack Benny into television and the radio images of speed reading auctioneers and the Sportsmen singing how "Luckies Taste Better" were created for the audience with the young black and white cameras. But this was the last of an era, when sponsor and artist worked closely to develop a show. Later, sponsors would merely "buy time;" Jack Benny and the never-ending plots with Jack trying to schmooze with the sponsor until all parties signed on the dotted lines were finished. Lever Brothers and State Farm Insurance made the final payments for *The Jack Benny Show* which left CBS in 1964.

The era of American originals being easily identified with the programs they sponsored died after communications became more complex and more expensive. Gone were entire shows sponsored by one company that was not too many generations away from its beginnings in the minds of the nineteenth century visionaries. After *The Jack Benny Show* left its Sunday night time slot, television changed and seldom would a product such as JELL-O or LSMFT single-handedly sponsor one show.

The information in this article is culled from a variety of sources, but the most used, and a fun book to peruse, is Why Did They Name It? by Hannah Campbell (NY: Fleetwood Publishing Company, 1964.)

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

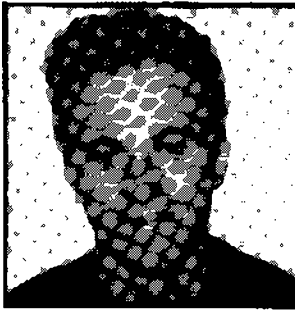
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1948 — 1952

RADIO THINKS WISHFULLY

BY TODD NEBEL

Following the end of World War II, the major radio networks in the United States enjoyed three or four very good years before the onset of television. In fact, radio's 1949-1950 season bore a remarkable resemblance to radio schedules of the 1930's in all aspects except the cost of preparing and presenting programs to listeners.

Topping the ratings during the 49-50 season, as well as the decade of the 1930's, were comedians from vaudeville and musical comedy. Most of these comedians were now big name film and radio stars with plenty of name recognition and large loyal audiences. With their continued success they were now considered high-



RED SKELTON

priced stars, with high weekly production expenses of guests, orchestra, writers, directors and travel expenses.

Topping the ratings, as well as having the highest weekly production expenses during the 1949-1950 season, was Jack Benny, an eighteen-year network radio veteran whose programs cost \$30,000 each week.

Of like vintage and close behind Benny in ratings were The Edgar Bergen-Charlie McCarthy show and The Bob Hope Show, each costing \$22,000, and popular favorites like Red Skelton and Fibber McGee and Molly whose shows each cost \$17,000 a week to produce and present.



EDGAR BERGEN with Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd.

RADIO THINKS WISHFULLY

Bing Crosby, a nineteen-year radio veteran led the variety programs in ratings and production cost at \$30,000 a week.

Leading the dramas in highest ratings and production costs in the 1949-1950 season was the Lux Radio Theater at \$20,000 a week.

Amos and Andy, the granddaddy of all serials with twenty-one network years, had become a once-a-week comedy series with a weekly cost of \$20,000 and remained among the top rating getters.

The Romance of Helen Trent, with sixteen years, and Ma Perkins, with eighteen years, were rivals for the daytime ratings lead and each had an average weekly budget of close to \$3,000.

There was, as you can see, a direct correlation between the highest rated programs and highest production costs (which included salaries) for many of the top headlining comedy, drama and variety programs.

Also in 1949, detective and western shows like Sam Spade, Dragnet and The Lone Ranger were popular and usually ranged from between \$4,000 and \$7,000 in weekly production costs. This type of programming seldom entered the higher echelons of radio ratings, but they were less expensive to produce and often delivered more listeners per sponsor dollars than did the highest ranking comedy and variety series.

With all the appearance of performance and financial stability which radio had, it somehow seemed strange that radio would reach its twilight at this time. In fact, radio's demise would have happened even more quickly if the FCC had not called a sudden halt to the issuance of new television licenses in late 1948. Its reason was that TV transmission interference problems needed to be studied further. Later, the Korean War became another cause for maintaining the television license freeze for another three and a half years.

Subsequently, television coverage dur-

ing these years became spotty across the entire country. In cities like New York and Los Angeles there were seven TV stations which reached the air while other major cities like Houston, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh and St. Louis had only one station each. Cities without any television at all included Austin, Denver, Little Rock, Portland, Maine and Portland, Oregon. The immediate result was that radio listening was dropping sharply in all TV cities.

Even cities with only one station saw other signs of economic upheaval and drastic changes of habit. By 1951, almost all television cities reported a 20 to 40 percent drop in movie attendance. But, in non-television cities, movie attendance held firm or was rising. Areas well-saturated with television also experienced a wave of movie theater closings as well as drastic declines in attendance at sporting events. Restaurants and nightclubs felt the impact and taxicab and jukebox receipts were down. Some public libraries reported a drop in book circulation and many book stores reported a sales drop.

Fortunately, from the standpoint of network radio, sponsors wanting national television coverage could not find it due to TV's erratic geographic coverage during these years. The national sponsors' tendency in the meantime was to hold on to a coast to coast radio network program while getting a foothold in television. During this straddling time many sponsors were making plans to make the big jump to TV once the freeze was over.

Radio programming continued a valiant fight, but while sponsors fled to television, listenership, too, was dropping as antennas popped up on rooftops from coast-to-coast.

For many radio stars who would not make the transition to TV, and for their loyal fans, the only thing to do was to hope that radio weather the television storm. But that proved to be wishful thinking.

Radio, as we knew it through what is now called "the golden years," would soon be gone.

Live and In Person On TWTD at MBC!

Chicago's Museum of Broadcast Communications (MBC) is the home of our weekly *Those Were The Days* (TWTD) broadcasts and in October and November we moved from our regular Pierre Andre Studio to the Kraft Theatre for three special events.

Listeners who came to the MBC for these programs were able to meet and talk with **Les Tremayne**, the star of radio's *First Nighter* and *Thin Man* programs; **Shirley Bell Cole** who was radio's *Little Orphan Annie*; and many of the famous **Quiz Kids** from the long-running radio and television series.

If you were at the MBC for these broadcasts, or if you tuned in to *TWTD*, we thought you would enjoy seeing some of the photos taken by shutterbug Margaret Warren.



RADIO'S LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE — Shirley Bell Cole — signs autographs for fans.



CHUCK SCHADEN and LES TREMAYNE

LES (left) opens Fibber McGee's closet at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. CHUCK and SHIRLEY (below) are all smiles during Those Were The Days broadcast.



QUIZ KIDS REUNION finds Chuck introducing (from left) former Quiz Kids Bill Nesbitt, Maureen Buckley Toner, Sheila Conlon, Lon Lunde, Ruth Duskin Feldman, and Patrick Owen Conlon.



RUTH and PATRICK recall their younger days on the air as Quiz Kids.



LES signs autographs for old and new fans.



SHIRLEY, the very first little Orphan Annie to step out of the comic pages, enjoys meeting the latest Annie, ERIN SIMPSON who starred in the musical at Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace. Shirley sang the Little Orphan Annie song, "Who's That Little Chatterbox?" and Erin sang "Tomorrow" for TWTD listeners.

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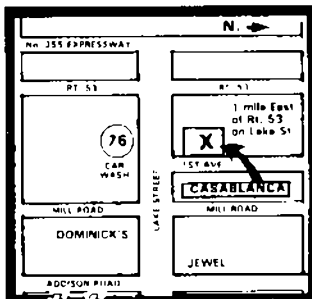
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I REMEMBER IT WELL⁰⁰⁰

EXPLORING AISLES OF MEMORIES

BY DAN MCGUIRE

When I discovered the canister on our kitchen shelf, I did a double-take. Thinking it might be a nostalgic keepsake saved from her mother's house, I asked my wife, "Where did you get this?"

To my surprise, she replied, "I grabbed that at Sentry Foods last week. They were out of my regular brand."

In disbelief, I stared at the can of *Clabber Girl Baking Powder* in my hand. The last one like it I remembered seeing was in my grandmother's pantry.

My wife does the bulk of our grocery shopping. My visits usually are quick junkets for a few specific items. What other long-forgotten household names had I overlooked? I decided to make a nostalgic shopping list and take a fact-finding tour of Sentry Foods.

The coffee section immediately presented two favorite old-timers: *Hills Brothers* and *Maxwell House*. Named for the Nashville hotel where it was first blended and served in 1892, Maxwell House once sponsored two other famous old-timers on radio.

"Another cup of Maxwell House coffee, George?"

"Thank you, Gracie. Maxwell House is always good to the last drop."

"Yes. And that drop's good, too."

Wedge between the vacuum-packed cans stood nine jars of a tan powder billed as "Instant Hot Beverage," made from "rich-roasted grain." *Postum!*

In my youth, Postum was touted as a non-caffeine substitute for people who

couldn't sleep after drinking coffee. With the proliferation of caffeine-free real coffee blends, I'd assumed there no longer was a market for Postum.

Obviously, I was wrong. (That's twice this year.)

Lipton and *Salada Teas* still share space here. Lipton evokes memories of many half hours spent with "the old redhead" on "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts."

The laundry/cleaning section held many familiar names. *Cheer* and *Tide* detergents have been around since I wore short pants. Tide's phosphate-based formula caused a revolution in the laundry products business. It removed stubborn dirt stains that soap flakes didn't. It prompted the catchy slogan, "Tide's in . . . Dirt's out."

Unfortunately, the early detergents didn't break down in rivers and streams. Manufacturers later had to clean up their acts by reformulating. Not surprisingly, the challenge was met by an industry noted for its perennially "new" and "improved" products.

Oxydol and *Ivory Snow* date back to my mother's youth — maybe Grandma's. Their sponsorship of daytime radio soap serials inspired the phrase "soap opera."

For over 100 years, housewives have added *20 Mule Team Borax* to their wash to help deodorize and remove stains. It shares shelf space today with its sister products, *Boraxo* and *Borateem Bleach*.

Former President Reagan owes much to *20 Mule Team Borax*. Although already known for his B-movie roles, he garnered

I REMEMBER IT WELL

much more public recognition as host of "Death Valley Days." The long-running TV Western series (like its radio predecessor) was sponsored by 20 Mule Team Borax.

Bar soap selections include *Lifebouy*, *Camay* ("the soap of beautiful women"), *Lux* and *Palmolive*. The latter three all pitched heavily at women on various radio programs. Hollywood starlets gave detailed instructions on using one brand or another for facial treatments that promised softer, lovelier skin.

The first bar of *Ivory Soap* went on sale in 1879. In 1882, in lab tests for impurities, it outscored the competition. This gave birth to a classic slogan: "99-⁴⁴/₁₀₀% pure!"

Tiny air bubbles, induced during mixing, give bars buoyancy to rise to the water's surface in tub or sink. The process, begun in 1891, inspired another slogan: "It floats!"

Ivory's purity had nothing to do with it floating. Yet, for a time, savvy advertising copywriters had radio announcers combining the slogans: "99-⁴⁴/₁₀₀% pure — so pure, it floats!"

In the 1880's, *Bon Ami* (French for "good friend") was introduced in soap cake form. Soon after the powder arrived in 1913, it became America's leading household cleanser.

I first made friends with Bon Ami as a soda jerk at Chicago's Buffalo Ice Cream Parlor. It kept our chrome counters and fixtures sparkling clean. The perky little chick still adorns the container, standing next to its empty egg shell and above the slogan: "Hasn't scratched yet."

Ah, here's *Old Dutch Cleanser*. The little Dutch girl still chases dirt with a stick. Listen! I hear the jingle that climaxed her radio commercials.

"Old Dutch suds cut grease and grime.

"Shine sink and tub in half the time.

"Speedy Old Dutch Cleanser. Fragrant Old Dutch Cleanser.

"Only Old Dutch Cleanser cuts grease in half the time."

Around the corner, into the next aisle. Baking items. Another phalanx of familiar names.

Remember *Argo Corn Starch*? The Indian maiden who has long adorned the package? Look closely. Her body actually is an ear of corn, the open husk falling from her shoulders like a flowing green robe.

Arm and Hammer Baking Soda. The picture perfectly illustrates its name. Centered in a white circle, a short sledge hammer tightly gripped in the fist of a muscular arm. A red outer circle encases the brand name.

Arm and Hammer is "packed under laboratory control" by Church & Dwight Co. of Princeton, New Jersey. Can you name their other products? Neither can I. But they certainly have a winner in this one. A proclamation on the box front tells the story: "The standard of purity and quality for over 140 years" (Exclamation point mine.)

Sure enough, there among the newer brands, was *Clabber Girl*. At least a dozen cans with their turn-of-the-century scene of a family preparing a meal over an open hearth, the title character in the foreground.

One section of shelves bloomed with flours. There was *Ceresota*, replete with its picture of a Tom Sawyerish youth in a wide-brimmed hat. Close by were — shades of more daytime serials — *Gold Medal* and *Pillsbury's Best*. (Was there ever a Pillsbury's Pretty Good or Pillsbury's So-So?)

Next to the flours, some bright yellow bags caught my eye. Five-pounders of *Domino Sugar*.

Aunt Jemima, who celebrated her 100th birthday in 1990, continues to offer an array of mixes for pancakes, buckwheat cakes and more. She little resembles the original namesake. Her garb and the face with the gleaming smile have evolved over



the years in deference to ethnic sensitivities.

I shouldn't have been surprised to see *Bisquick Pancake Mix*, although General Mills doesn't seem to promote it heavily. The Betty Crocker brand (yes, she too is looking pert in an updated 90s persona), like so many other products, now boasts: "No cholesterol."

You say you're getting hungry for a

stack of pancakes? Don't forget the *Log Cabin Syrup*. Several generations recall the distinctive tin can shaped and painted to resemble a log cabin. It had a sloped roof and a capped spout that was its chimney. Kids used empty cans for coin banks, dollhouses, scenery for model trains and games with toy soldiers.

*To conserve metal during World War II, the tins gave way to glass bottles. Now

I REMEMBER IT WELL

they're unbreakable plastic. In 1987, General Foods produced a centennial limited edition of the cabin shaped cans.

"Now you're cooking with *Crisco!*" Modern housewives may not grasp the significance of that catch phrase. Eighty years ago, ladies accustomed to using lard were quick to spot the benefits of less iffy baking and frying, and smoke-free kitchens.

The Crisco cans in my mother's kitchen had replaceable metal lids that had to be opened initially with a "key" that peeled away with a perforated strip around the rim. Now there are pop-off tops and plastic lids.

A word of thanks is appropriate here to Crisco for sponsoring one of radio's most memorable programs. Though usually lumped with the raft of daytime serials, it was a truly unique show. Five days a week Crisco took us to "the small house halfway up in the next block" for a humorous slice of small town life with "radio's homefolk, Vic and Sade."

On to the seasoning section. Variety abounds, but what catches my eye is *Morton Salt*. On summer days when rain confined the McGuire boys, Mother occasionally peered out the window, looking for a break in the clouds, and sighed, "When it rains, it pours."

"Mommy," I said, "you saw that on the salt box."

Mother smiled knowingly. It was a few years before I understood the dual meaning of that copywrited phrase.

The Morton Salt girl is another character who has undergone a strange transformation since 1914. Unlike Orphan Annie, she does appear to have aged a bit — maybe 4 or 5 years. Her hair and clothes — even the umbrella she carries — have been restyled repeatedly. Yet she still has not learned how to carry that salt box without spilling it.

One more thing. Didn't you used to see another girl on the box she was carrying,

another girl on the box *she* was carrying, and so on? Or did I imagine it?

Next aisle: canned goods. What's for openers?

We haven't space to run the roster of fruits and veggies from Dole, Libby, Del Monte, Van Camp, Hunt. All 57 varieties of *Heinz Soups*. (Are there more now?) Probably just as many *Campbell Soups*. (Does the president of Campbell have a vanity license plate that says, "Mmmm good"?)

Look here! Hormel's *Spam*. Wasn't this blend of "pork shoulder with ham added" supposed to just get us through the meat shortage of the war? Here it is in the same sandwich-size can (with modern peel-off lid).

A lump forms in my throat as I enter an aisle devoted entirely to breakfast cereals. Even in the 40s, when trends weren't so fleeting, they were plentiful. I ate at least a dozen cereals either because I liked them or to obtain boxtops for premium offers.

Quaker Puffed Wheat (my choice) and *Puffed Rice*: "The breakfast cereals shot from guns!"

Kellogg's Corn Flakes. I don't need to "Taste 'em again for the first time." I've eaten them since I learned to hold a spoon.

Kix and *Cheerios*. Before grown-ups started getting their kicks on Route 66, kids were being urged, "Get your kicks from Kix."

As for *Cheerios*, I can't say the name without hearing an echo of Fred Foy exclaiming: "When you hear that famous, 'Hi Yo, Silver,' it's the Lone Ranger! And when you see those crisp little letter O's, it's *Cheerios!*"

Grape-Nuts. Since 1898 — long before we worried about sugar, cholesterol or preservatives — it's been a truly natural cereal. C.W. Post, an ardent nutritionist, combined wheat and malted barley in twice-baked loaves, then ground the hardened result into granules.

They were crunchy with a nutty taste. The barley's maltose made it sweet. Post thought the maltose was similar to grape

sugar, so he name his creation Grape-Nuts. Thus, for nearly 100 years, an American breakfast favorite's name has borne no relation to its content.

Another echo. Uncle Bill on the Saturday morning kids' show "Let's Pretend." Doing his patented vocal roller coaster ride for emphasis: "Cream of Wheat, the great American breakfast cereal. It's waaaAAYY up in flavor. It's WAAAaaay down in cost. It's plenty good!"

Flush beside Uncle Bill's bread and butter, an arch rival: *Farina*. I don't recall *Farina* advertising much on radio or elsewhere. But it was always there, and evidently has retained a share of the market. It's modernized, too. The package now touts it as microwaveable.

Nearby stands *Malt-O-Meal*, another brand I'd all but forgotten. I ate a few boxes as a favor to Happy Hank, the singing cowboy on a kids' weekday wake-up show (WLS?) It's wheat and toasted malt. Sounds tasty, but it didn't please my juvenile palate. Nice to see it's survived without me or Hank.

Wheaties continues to stand tall and proclaim itself "Breakfast of Champions." Basketball great Michael Jordan's grinning face adorn's the box, adding his visage to those of Bruce Jenner and a host of other champions who have urged several generations of kids to get a head start with Jack Armstrong's favorite cereal.

Here's one of my lifelong favorites, *Nabisco's Shredded Wheat*. It's tall, slim, lightweight box bears little resemblance to the packages I remember. They were almost as big as a breadbox, made of thick cardboard, and bore a picture of Niagara Falls on the side.

Created by a Denver attorney turned entrepreneur, *Shredded Wheat* was first available in limited distribution in 1892. By 1902, the company had relocated to Niagara Falls and gone national. It was bought out by National Biscuit Company in 1928.

These days I generally opt for the spoon size version. Traditionalists will find the original toasted wholewheat biscuits unchanged from the days when I scarcely could fit them into my Charlie McCarthy bowl.

Snacks and miscellaneous. *Ritz Crackers*. *Nabisco Graham Crackers*. *Salerno Butter Cookies*. Is there an ex-kid who never hung a Salerno Butter Cookie on his or her finger and tried to nibble off all the ridges before the cookie crumbled?

Peter Pan and *Skippy Peanut Butters*. Smooth or crunchy, take your pick.

A great afternoon snack for me was a fistful of mini-sandwiches made with generous pats of peanut butter between two *Ritz Crackers*. Another variation: bananas sliced lengthwise and slabbed between *Nabisco* *Grahams*.

Twinkies and *Hostess Cup Cakes*. Perfect for those with a really sweet tooth. The *Twinkies* appear unchanged. I don't remember white curlicues decorating the solid chocolate icing on the cup cakes.

Sun-Maid Raisins. The 5-cent boxes were a tad smaller than cigarette packs. A nice fit in shirt or pants pocket, they were good fast energy snacks while we were out playing. Moms approved because they were nutritious and wouldn't rot our teeth.

All-Purpose Rit. Remember the coughdrop-size boxes of household dye? When wash pants became faded from repeated washings, Mom could make them last a little longer by soaking them in a tubful of *Rit* water.

(Hey, honey, you know those jeans you said I couldn't wear any more? You haven't tossed them out yet, have you?)

My shopping list is far from complete, but my column runneth over. This tour of the aisles has been a treat and a revelation.

It's true, we can't go back. How reassuring, then, to find that so many items that were part of our "good old days" have followed us into the present.

FEBRUARY			Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78 MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M. SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>PLEASE NOTE: Due to WBBM's commitment to news and sports, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be pre-empted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance, or for unscheduled sports programs. In this event, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>					<p>1 Burns and Allen Escape</p>	<p>2 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>
<p>3 To Be Announced</p>	<p>4 The Shadow I Love A Mystery Chapter 1</p>	<p>5 I Love A Mystery Chapters 2-3-4</p>	<p>6 I Love A Mystery Chapters 5-6-7</p>	<p>7 I Love A Mystery Chapters 8-9-10</p>	<p>8 I Love A Mystery Chapters 11-12-13</p>	<p>9 Pat Novak For Hire Dragnet The Shadow Third Man</p>
<p>10 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>	<p>11 I Love A Mystery Chapters 14-15-16 (Conclusion)</p>	<p>12 Charlie McCarthy Lights Out</p>	<p>13 Crime Club Terry & the Pirates</p>	<p>14 Great Gildersleeve Mandrake the Magician</p>	<p>15 Jack Armstrong Boston Blackie</p>	<p>16 Adventures By Morse "Girl on Shipwreck Island" (All 3 Episodes)</p>
<p>17 Dragnet Lights Out Jack Benny Third Man</p>	<p>18 Weird Circle "Frankenstein" Easy Aces</p>	<p>19 You Bet Your Life The Unexpected</p>	<p>20 Sam Spade Third Man</p>	<p>21 Jack Benny Lights Out</p>	<p>22 Screen Guild Theatre "Best Year of Our Lives" Joyce Jordan, M.D.</p>	<p>23 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>
<p>24 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>	<p>25 Mel Blanc Show Easy Aces</p>	<p>26 To Be Announced</p>	<p>27 The Unexpected The Shadow</p>	<p>28 Great Gildersleeve Can You Imagine That?</p>	<p>March 1 Terry & the Pirates Lights Out</p>	<p>March 2 Box Thirteen Jack Benny Dragnet Charlie McCarthy</p>

MARCH			Old Time Radio Classics — WBBM-AM 78 MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M. SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>	<p>4 Screen Guild Theatre "Casablanca" Pepper Young's Family</p>	<p>5 The Bickersons Lights Out</p>	<p>6 The Shadow Black Castle</p>	<p>7 Lights Out Calling All Detectives</p>	<p>8 Jack Benny Molle Mystery Theatre</p>	<p>9 The Shadow The Unexpected Charlie McCarthy Dragnet</p>
<p>10 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>	<p>11 Easy Aces The Shadow</p>	<p>12 Sherlock Holmes Nick Harris, Detective</p>	<p>13 Theatre of Romance The Bickersons</p>	<p>14 To Be Announced</p>	<p>15 Jack Benny Bulldog Drummond</p>	<p>16 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>
<p>17 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>	<p>18 Great Gildersleeve Mr. Keen, Tracer</p>	<p>19 Great Gildersleeve Mr. Keen, Tracer</p>	<p>20 Great Gildersleeve Mr. Keen, Tracer</p>	<p>21 Great Gildersleeve Mr. Keen, Tracer</p>	<p>22 Jack Benny The Shadow</p>	<p>23 Dragnet Lights Out Mr. District Attorney Charlie McCarthy</p>
<p>24 The Bickersons Dragnet The Shadow Fibber McGee</p>	<p>25 Johnny Dollar Truth or Consequences</p>	<p>26 Johnny Dollar The Shadow</p>	<p>27 Johnny Dollar Lights Out</p>	<p>28 Johnny Dollar Directors Playhouse "Mr. & Mrs. Smith"</p>	<p>29 Johnny Dollar Fred Allen</p>	<p>30 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>
<p>31 Blackhawk Hockey NO RADIO CLASSICS</p>	<p>PLEASE NOTE: All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>					

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

FEBRUARY

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for Those Were The Days represents timing information for each particular show. (9:45; 11:20; 8:50) means that we will broadcast the show in three segments: 9 minutes and 45 seconds; 11 minutes and 20 seconds; 8 minutes and 50 seconds. If you add the times of these segments together, you'll have the total length of the show (29:55 for our example). This is of help to those who are taping the broadcasts for their own collection.

Jack Benny and Ronald Colman

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (2-1-48) Jack and Mary, with guests Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman, attend the preview of Colman's new movie, "A Double Life." After the picture, the foursome goes to Ciro's to celebrate. Frank Nelson is the headwaiter. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (12:55; 16:00)

HALLS OF IVY (1950s) A member of Ivy College's Board of Governors gets a ticket for jaywalking and demands a jury trial! Ronald and Benita Colman star with Herb Butterfield and Gale Gordon. Voice of America rebroadcast. (11:05; 12:10)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-21-48) It's Jack and the gang — Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Don Wilson, Mel Blanc, the Sportsmen — in the first of eight consecutive and related broadcasts known as the "Ronald Colman's Oscar" sequence. Colman's butler Sherwood tells Rochester that Mr. Colman won the Academy Award for his performance in "A Double Life." Jack speaks at a meeting of the Beverly Hills Beavers. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (12:00; 16:50)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (4-23-45) "The Petrified Forest" starring Ronald Colman and Susan Hayward with Lawrence Tierney in a radio version of the 1936 film about an escaped gangster who holds hostages at a roadside restaurant in Arizona. Thomas Mitchell is guest producer. Lux Soap, CBS. (23:45; 13:55; 21:20)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-28-48) Guests are Ronald and Benita Colman who reluctantly allow Jack to borrow Ronnie's Academy Award Oscar. On his way home from the Colman's house, Jack is held up. This is the second in the "Colman's Oscar" shows and is a milestone broadcast in the Jack Benny radio series. It's the famous "Your money or your life" program! Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (7:20; 11:20; 10:20)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9th

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-4-48) With Ronald Colman's Oscar missing, Jack and Mary visit guest Bing Crosby to see if Jack can borrow Bing's "Going My Way" Oscar. The Sportsmen can't appear on the show this week, so Rochester gets the Ink Spots. Third program in the "Colman's Oscar" series. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (15:30; 13:15)

SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (2-20-49) "The Prisoner of Zenda" starring Ronald Colman in his original screen role from the 1937 motion picture. Benita Hume (Mrs. Colman) co-stars in the story about a commoner who falls in love with a princess. Sustaining, NBC. (16:22; 13:15)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-11-48) Remote broadcast from Palm Springs. California with guests Charles Farrell (actor and owner of the Palm Springs Racquet Club) and Academy Award winning actor Paul Lucas (who won for "Watch on the Rhine"). The gang performs a sketch, "Murder at the Racquet Club" and Jack tries to borrow Lucas' Oscar. Fourth program in the "Colman's Oscar" series. Lucky Strikes Cigarettes, NBC. (12:30; 16:00)

HALLS OF IVY (1950s) Ronald and Benita Colman as Professor and Mrs. Hall of Ivy College. Rev. Jarvis is concerned because his son wants to study music rather than religion. Voice of America rebroadcast. (10:50; 13:40)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (10-24-48) Jack and Rochester prepare dinner for guests Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (13:20; 15:00)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be R. Dixon Smith, author of Ronald Colman, *Gentleman of the Cinema: A Biography and Filmography*, who will join us to discuss the film and radio work of Ronald Colman.



JACK BENNY puts his violin aside long enough to amuse neighbors Benita and Ronald Colman with a concerto on the cash register!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16th

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-18-48) For the second week in Palm Springs, Jack's guests are Charles Farrell (again), Frank Sinatra and movie producer Sam Goldwyn. The cast resumes the sketch, "Murder at the Racquet Club" and Jack tries to borrow one of Goldwyn's Oscars. Fifth show in the "Colman's Oscar" series. Mel Blanc appears as Jack's Broadcast engineer. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (10:50; 18:00)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (1-19-50) "Around the World in 80 Days" stars Ronald Colman in a radio version of Jules Verne's adventure. James Hilton introduces and narrates the story. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (11:56; 17:20)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-25-48) Guest Ronald Colman is still angry at Jack because his Oscar has not been returned. Dorothy Kirsten stops in and winds up doing the commercial with the Sportsmen. Sixth show in the "Colman's Oscar" series. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (15:00; 13:25)

HALLS OF IVY (1950s) Ronald and Benita Colman with Herb Butterfield and Fritz Feld. Dr. Hall tries to find a qualified professor to fill a vacancy on the Ivy College faculty. Voice of America rebroadcast. (9:00; 16:00)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (2-16-47) In a flashback to Jack's February 14th birthday, the gang is at a dinner party given by Jack. Guests are Ronald and Benita Colman and violinist Isaac Stern. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (8:00; 13:15; 6:19)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-2-48) Guest Frank Sinatra joins Jack and the gang — Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Don Wilson. Jack tries to borrow Sinatra's Oscar (for "The House I Live In" short subject on tolerance). Seventh show in the "Colman's Oscar" series. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (13:50; 14:10)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (10-5-50) "Champagne for Caesar" starring Ronald Colman, Vincent Price, Art Linkletter, Barbara Britton, Audrey Totter and Joe Kearns. Radio version of the 1950 film spoof of giveaway quiz shows. Sustaining, ABC. (13:50; 15:18; 14:55; 15:20)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-9-48) We learn the truth about "Colman's Oscar" in this eighth and final program in the series. Guests, of course, are Ronald and Benita Colman. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (15:10; 12:30)

FAVORITE STORY (1940s) "Cyrano de Bergerac" starring Ronald Colman in the classic Edmond Rostand play. Janet Waldo co-stars as Roxanne. Syndicated. (14:00; 13:25)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (10-28-51) The sheet music for Jack's song, "When You Say I Beg Your Pardon I'll Come Back To You" is missing. Guests are Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (16:15; 12:10)

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

MARCH

SATURDAY, MARCH 2nd
PARAMOUNT STARS ON PARADE

NOTE: Our special guest **BOB KOLOSOSKI**, Nostalgia Digest columnist and film buff, will talk about many of the great Paramount Picture stars of the past, a number of whom will be featured on our broadcast this afternoon:

LUX RADIO THEATRE (11-18-46) "O.S.S." starring **Alan Ladd** and **Veronica Lake** with Gale Gordon, Joseph Kearns and Richard Benedict. Radio version of Paramount's 1946 drama of espionage during World War II. Ladd appears in his original screen role. William Keighley is producer. Lux Soap, CBS. (17:10; 16:25; 23:10)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (1-29-47) **Bing Crosby** welcomes his Paramount "Road" pictures co-stars **Dorothy Lamour** and **Bob Hope** for a romp on "The Road to Hollywood." Skitch Henderson, the Charleaters, Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Philco Radios, ABC. (15:00; 15:00)

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (1-7-46) "Lost Weekend" starring **Ray Milland**, Jane Wyman and Frank Faylen, all original cast members from the Paramount film that won Academy Awards for Best Picture. Actor, Director and Screenplay. Convincing story of alcoholism made a giant impact on movie screens in 1945.

LIFE OF RILEY (1940s) Paramount star **William Bendix** appears as Chester A. Riley with Paula Winslowe as Peg in a 1940s story with a theme that's appropriate today: Riley changes roles with Peg! Sustaining, NBC. (13:11; 11:15)



PARAMOUNT PICTURES stars Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour and Bing Crosby.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9th

MR. PRESIDENT (1940s) Edward Arnold stars as a President of the United States whose name is not revealed until the end of the program. A secession movement in the South causes difficulties for Mr. President. Sustaining, ABC. (13:50; 12:00)

SUSPENSE (5-4-44) "The Dark Tower" starring Orson Welles in a radio version of a story by George S. Kaufman and Alexander Woolcott. An actress recovering from a nervous breakdown suffers another shock when her "dead" husband appears on her doorstep! Roma Wines, CBS. (15:13; 14:45)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (3-2-47) The Quiz Kids are guests as they participate with Fred in a murder mystery, "Mayhem in the Penthouse." Joining regulars Portland Hoffa, Minerva Pious, Kenny Delman, Parker Fennelly, and Peter Donald, are Quiz Kids Joel Kupperman, Lonnie Lunde, Naomi Cooks and Jack Rooney. Featured are the DeMarco Sisters, Al Goodman and the orchestra. Shefford Cheese, Tenderleaf Tea, NBC. (15:00; 12:44)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (10-11-89) Olan Soule, star of the First Nighter and countless other programs during radio's golden years, recalls his broadcast career in a conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded at Chicago's Museum of Broadcast Communications. (23:00)

FIRST NIGHTER (3-11-48) "There's Something in the Air" starring Olan Soule and Barbara Luddy in a romantic comedy about some very special talents. The "Little Theatre Off Times Square" cast includes Parley Baer, Verna Felton, Louis Van Rooten, Campana Products, CBS. (10:05; 9:50; 10:15)

SATURDAY, MARCH 16th

CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW (12-26-48) In this last broadcast for long-time sponsor Chase and Sanborn, Edgar and Charlie look over highlights in their radio career. Featured are Don Ameche and Marsha Hunt as the Bickersons, W.C. Fields, Fred Allen, Mortimer Snerd, Chase and Sanborn Coffee, NBC. (14:45; 13:11)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (9-9-48) "Cimarron" starring Irene Dunne in a radio version of the Edna Ferber story about a woman who recalls her experiences with her husband and children as owners of a newspaper in the Oklahoma Territory. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (16:20; 12:10)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (4-28-71) Actress Irene Dunne recalls her long show business career in a telephone



IRENE DUNNE

conversation with Chuck Schaden. Miss Dunne died September 9, 1990 at the age of 88. (21:30)

SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (12-7-50) "My Favorite Wife" starring Irene Dunne and Cary Grant, recreating their screen roles from the 1940 film. A marital-mix-up, as a woman supposedly dead, returns to the U.S. to find her husband remarried! Participating sponsors, NBC. (11:29; 15:18; 9:22; 19:25)

KINGS OF JAZZ (2-8-46) The Benny Goodman Sextet is featured in the third program in a series of Jazz sessions from New York City. Host is Alistair Cooke. Sextet: Goodman, Red Norvo, Mel Powell, Mike Bryan, Barney Spieler, Bob Sheble, BBC. (15:40; 13:45)

SATURDAY, MARCH 23rd

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (5-26-48) Comedy and music with Peggy Lee, the Crew Chiefs, Roy Bargy and the orchestra, Florence Halop and guest Victor Moore. Jimmy is touring the 48 states. Rexall, NBC. (9:30; 8:15; 10:50)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (10-21-48) "Mrs. Parkington" starring Rosalind Russell in the story of a poor girl who marries a multi-millionaire. James Hilton narrates. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (14:50; 14:24)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (11-8-50) Willard Waterman stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve with Marylee Robb as Marjorie, Walter Tetley as LeRoy, and Gale Gordon as Mr. Bullard. Kraft Foods, NBC. (12:45; 17:20)

BLACK MUSEUM (1952) Orson Welles tells the story of a "Bedsheet" on display in Scotland Yard's Gallery of Death. When a ship's passenger is presumed dead, a bedsheet provides evidence. Syndicated. (9:05; 15:45)

MAGNIFICENT MONTAGUE (1950) Monty Woolley stars with Anne Seymour, Pert Kelton and Art Carney. Don Pardo announces. Montague tries to convince the city to finance a private club as a civic monument. Sustaining, NBC. (15:00; 10:05)

ROY ROGERS SHOW (9-26-48) The King of the Cowboys stars with Dale Evans, George "Gabby" Hayes and Foy Willing and the Riders of the Purple Sage. Roy tries to discover the cause of a run on the bank. Quaker Oats, MBS. (11:09; 11:41; 6:24)

SATURDAY, MARCH 30th
EASTER GREETINGS

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (4-6-44) Bing Crosby offers Easter greetings with Marilyn Maxwell, the Music Maids and Men, Charioteers, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra, and the Kraft Choral Club from Chicago. In a sketch, "Time Marches Back" to 1933. Kraft Foods, NBC. (9:30; 12:20; 8:15)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-5-42) On Easter Sunday Jack is the sensation of the Easter Parade. Don Wilson, Phil Harris, Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Jell-O, NBC. (13:50; 14:50)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (6-15-36) "Burlesque" starring Al Jolson and Ruby Keeler in a story of backstage life in show business. Cecil B. DeMille narrates this broadcast, a sound-alike for those early Warner Brothers movie musicals! Lux Soap, CBS. (17:30; 12:25; 16:35)

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (4-14-49) "One Foot in Heaven" starring George Brent in the Hartzel Spence story of a Methodist preacher with "one foot in Heaven and one foot on God's green Earth" as he sets up a parsonage in a small Iowa town. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (14:30; 14:40)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (4-2-50) As Phil tells his daughters the story of the Easter Bunny, the girls think their father really believes, so they hire Mel Blanc to appear as the Easter Bunny. Cast includes Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Jeanine Roos, Ann Whitfield, Arthur Q. Brian, Rexall, NBC. (10:25; 6:48; 11:10)

SEND FOR TAPE LIST

Hundreds of Old Time Radio Shows are available on cassette. For complete list, send a long, self-addressed stamped envelope to:

HALL CLOSET CASSETTES
Box 421
Morton Grove, IL 60053

Vintage Radio and the News

BY GINO LUCCHETTI

Nowadays, when radio trivia and nostalgia is fondly discussed, the focus is often on comedy, soap operas, dramas starring movie idols, and big band music. But one of the most important public functions of radio, before television reduced it to second-rate, was the dissemination and reporting of news, and commentaries on important topics of the day.

On radio, conventions were covered gavel-to-gavel and were discussed by genuine politically-knowledgeable reporters and columnists. Ongoing historical events such as the scuttling of the German pocket battleship Graf Spee in Montevideo, Argentina, after the British blockade of the harbor, was covered live. The horror of the incendiary disaster of the hydrogen-filled dirigible, Hindenburg, was conveyed by the famous coverage of the event by an

announcer who literally broke down describing the tragic scene, possibly presenting it more vividly than pictures might. FDR's "date-which-will-live-in-infamy" speech and declaration of war was broadcast, as well as late-breaking news during WWII.

Currently, most TV "news" is openly declared as mainly "entertainment" by some critics of the electronic news media, as is obvious from the constant "reformatting" to entice viewers and boost ratings. And, on reflection, TV newscasting is mainly pictures and sound "bites" lasting mostly of a matter of seconds, too fleeting to probe any subject deeply. News items seem to be just something squeezed in between innumerable commercials. If a thing can't be shown as a picture on the tube, chances are



BOAKE CARTER



ROBERT TROUT

it never will be shown. Spectacular fires, monumental crashes, heroic sporting highlights, armed confrontations, and endless demonstrations for anything and every cause, no matter how basically insignificant, but with acres of people and placards, all are fodder for the ravenous mini-cam.

Ideas do not adapt readily to pictures, and "talking heads" are not favored by TV program directors, unless the subjects are persons basking in what Andy Warhol termed everyone's bizarre "fifteen minutes of fame," reduced, of course, to fifteen seconds. TV's appetite for pictures is so overweening that if, for instance, the story is about a helicopter crash, and if a picture of the actual subject of the report is not available a piece of "stock footage" is shown — but there must be a picture! One report on a water shortage used some stock footage of an operating lawn sprinkler following by a running faucet, in case the viewers had forgotten what water looked like!

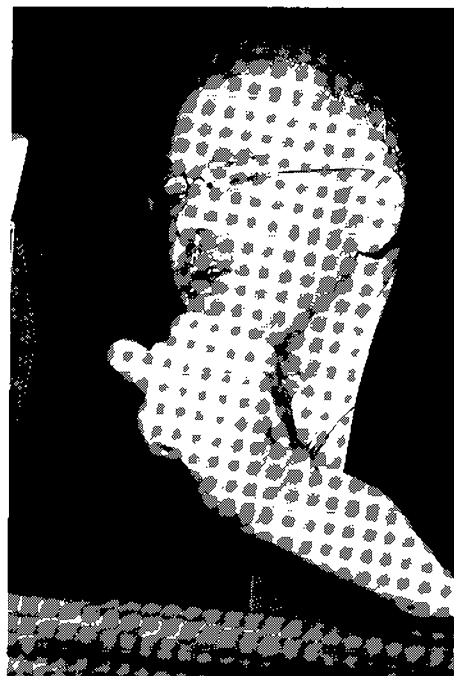
Radio, on the other hand, took the news and its commentaries seriously, at a leisurely pace. TV news is concentrated

and desiccated, like the frozen foods it pitches. Video time is too precious. On radio there were actually entire fifteen-minute spoken programs with a single commercial at the beginning and end — and interrupted only once in the middle for another single commercial — wherein a commentator such as Fulton Lewis, Jr. might expound on just a single subject in an oral dissertation. And there was a much wider diversity of views presented. There was no lockstep reporting in which one could hear the same exact words repeated on the same exact stories on each of the major networks, as in TV.

Commentators were allowed to air disparate viewpoints: *Chicago Tribune* Washington News Bureau chief Walter Trohan might express a view quite different from that of Edward P. Morgan, who was sponsored by the labor unions. On alternate Sunday evenings there was "Your Senator Reports" where Senators Dirksen and Douglas of opposite political parties and views each discussed — for an entire commercial-less half hour! — some point of legislation, or reviewed from a historical viewpoint some ongoing or upcoming



EDWARD R. MURROW



H.V. KALTENBORN

event, or a piece of legislation.

Radio news broadcasters and commentators came mostly from the ranks of newsmen who often were also syndicated columnists. They were not chosen to be on the air primarily because of appearance or the telegenic "charisma" as demanded for TV today, but what they said or how well they said it. Because they were print-media oriented, there's no reason to believe they didn't actually write the copy they spoke. Nationally syndicated and widely read columnist Walter Winchell is an example, as is gossip columnist Jimmy Fidler, with his "Reporting from Hollywood" program.

The first radio newsman I recall was in the mid-thirties when Boak Carter presented the news in his suave, British accent. Within a few years others became well known, including Gabriel Heater who came on the scene greeting his audience with an upbeat, "Ah, there's good news tonight!" Harvard educated intellectual H.V. Kaltenborn, heralded as "Dean of the Newsmen," delivered his newscasts in his distinctive and professionally precise manner, and was regarded as highly as any of today's TV anchormen.

Floyd Gibbon's manner was also distinctive in his way; he could deliver the news at a fantastic 217 words per minute! Robert Trout, Edward R. Murrow and William L. Shirer made their names by being the first to broadcast news transatlantic from on-the-scene war-menaced London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna in the first patched-together transatlantic newscasts. Probably the most well-known and the last of the nationally, or internationally, known radio newsmen was Lowell Thomas, adventurer and famed writer who nightly "wrapped up" the world's news for us.

There was also a contingent of locally well known newsmen, whom many will recall: Quinn Ryan, a pioneer from the earliest radio days; Clifton Utley, who's



FAHEY FLYNN

son continues his tradition; Fahey Flynn, who survived the transition from announcer, newsman/sportscaster, to become one of the first Chicago TV newsmen.

Radio news began early in the broadcast day. In mid-morning I can recall there would be the "Bob Scagrast and the News" program, among others, and more news roundups at noontime. Former Ambassador Henry J. Taylor, Frank Kirkpatrick and others came on around late afternoon or supper time. From about 10 to midnight there were at least a couple of well-known 15-minute news and commentary programs to wind up the day.

At the end of the golden era of radio, when pictures edged out the spoken word, Edward R. Murrow made the transition from the mike to the tube in substantially the same informal, on-site, in-home intimate format he developed. A few other news/documentary programs such as "You Are There" made it for a short while, too.

But there was a terrible loss when the eloquence and erudition of the great non-visible radio newsmen and commentators faded from the picture, so to speak.



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

Benny Goodman's Small Group Swing

By KARL PEARSON

Throughout much of the Big Band Era the average big band consisted of 14 to 17 musicians. Within a number of bands there were smaller contingents that allowed the star instrumentalists greater room for improvisation. These groups, such as Tommy Dorsey's "Clambake 7" and Artie Shaw's "Gramercy 5" provided an interesting contrast to the ensemble playing and largely scored routines of a big band. Smaller groups offered interesting voicings, greater interplay among musicians and ample room for solo space. Benny Goodman led many of the most famous of the small units (and one of the best-known). From 1935 until his passing in 1986, Benny led various-sized small groups featuring varied instrumentation.

Even during Benny's early days as a sideman it was customary to jam in an after-hours setting with such early greats as Bix Beiderbecke, Coleman Hawkins and Fats Waller. It's interesting to note that one of the first recordings issued under Benny's name featured him in a trio setting! The sides, "That's A Plenty" and "Clarinetitis," were recorded in Chicago in August, 1928 for the Vocalion label.

The best remembered of the Goodman small groups were the original Benny Goodman Trio and Quartet. The Quartet featured four diverse musical personalities, each with a style of their own that blended into an outstanding organization. As leader of the group, Benny's clarinet was at the forefront, providing a wonderful solo voice. Teddy Wilson's subtle and delicate piano style was in excellent contrast to Lionel Hampton's intense style of playing.

And Gene Krupa held the group together with a propulsive, rock-solid beat.

The trio came into being during a jam session between Benny and Teddy Wilson at the home of Red Norvo and Mildred Bailey. Benny later recalled that "We started playing together, and we latched on like nothing. Mildred's nephew was there and he did a little drumming of sorts, enough so that we realized when we decided to record together that we would need drums." Those first recordings, made for Victor in July, 1935, also featured Benny's big band drummer Gene Krupa. The sides, "After You've Gone," "Body And Soul," "Who?," and "Someday Sweetheart," have since become jazz classics. They also set the pattern for the Goodman small group repertoire from that point on. The small group repertoire would be composed of current pop tunes, older standards, and eventually, original jazz tunes. Group routines were worked out in advance, but the solos were always improvised. Although the trio was at first a recording group, the Benny Goodman Trio became a full-time performing unit in the Spring of 1936 when Teddy Wilson joined the Goodman organization.

It was a few months later, during the summer of 1936, that the Goodman Trio became a Quartet. Benny and the band were in Hollywood filming "The Big Broadcast of 1937." Jazz enthusiast John Hammond (who had encouraged Benny to form his first band and also hire Teddy Wilson) induced Benny to hear vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, who was playing

NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

in a small Los Angeles night club. Benny, Teddy and Gene sat in with Lionel's group one night and were thoroughly impressed with Hampton's talent. Lionel was hired for two record dates in August, 1936 and joined Benny's band at the Hotel Pennsylvania in November, 1936. A truly talented instrumentalist. Hampton also played drums (his first instrument) and piano. When Gene Krupa was ill for several days in early 1937, it was Lionel who filled in for an ailing Krupa.

When Krupa left Goodman's group in early 1938 he was replaced by fellow Chicagoan Dave Tough. With his style of playing Tough brought a new dimension and feel to both the big band and the small groups. Dave's light, uplifting style of playing was decisively different from Gene's intense and driving manner. Following Tough's departure in the fall of 1938 he, in turn, was replaced by a string of fine drummers. Teddy Wilson also left the band in 1939 to form a band of his own and was replaced by band pianist Jess Stacy.

In August, 1939 a new voice was added to the Goodman small group. John Hammond had once again made another discovery in electric guitarist Charlie Christian. Hammond had tried repeatedly to arrange an audition for Charlie with Benny but Goodman seemed disinterested. One night during a band intermission Hammond and several Goodman bandsmen slipped Charlie and his equipment onstage. Upon returning to the stand Benny viewed the proceedings with mixed feelings, and decided to give Charlie an audition. He called for the tune "Rose Room," figuring that Christian would be unfamiliar with the structure of the tune. Hammond later recalled that audition: "Charlie had ears like antennae. All he had to do was hear the melody and chord structure once and he was ready to play 25 choruses, each more inventive than the last. Which is what happened." The one-

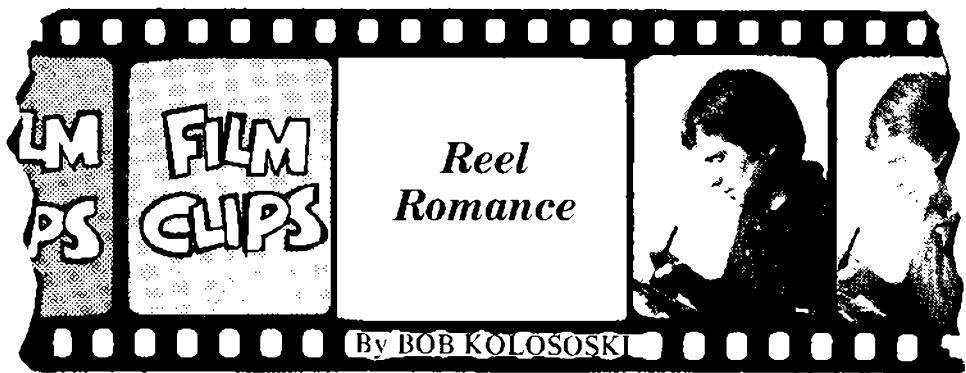
tune audition continued on for at least 45 minutes! Charlie was hired on the spot and with the addition of bassist Artie Bernstein the Benny Goodman Sextet was born.

Benny, increasingly plagued by back problems, temporarily disbanded in mid-1940. Goodman kept several of his key men (including Hampton and Christian) on salary during this period. After a few weeks Lionel grew restless and left to form a band of his own. When Benny returned in the fall of that year the Sextet was revamped and now featured new instrumentation: Benny's clarinet, Cootie Williams' trumpet, the tenor sax of Georgie Auld, Charlie Christian's electric guitar, drummer Harry Jaeger, and (on recordings), the piano of Count Basie.

The Sextet was temporarily disbanded in July, 1941, when Charlie Christian left the band. Charlie had contracted tuberculosis and was unable to play. A pioneer on electric guitar, he passed away in March, 1942. Once again the lineup changed, and Benny made several recordings with a new sextet (including Lou McGarity on trombone instead of the electric guitar) in late 1941 and early 1942. Several of the records featured Benny's new vocalist Peggy Lee.

The lineup for Benny's 1945 Sextet was a stellar one, featuring Benny, Red Norvo on vibraphone, Teddy Wilson on piano and Slam Stewart on bass, along with bass and drums. This version of the sextet made several wonderful recordings for Columbia, including "Slipped Disc," a tribute to Benny's chronic back problems.

Benny continued to lead a variety of small groups until his death in 1986. Goodman was always willing to try new ideas and instrumentation in his small groups and in 1948 even made a brief attempt at playing bop, with mixed results. In addition to vibraphone and electric guitar, the various Goodman groups over the years also featured bass sax, cornet, mellophone, accordion and harmonica!



By BOB KOLOSOSKI

February 14th is Jack Benny's birthday and St. Valentine's Day all rolled into one. For Jack Benny fans it is a great day and for those more romantically inclined it is a *glorious* day.

Romance on the big screen has always been popular with the public and bottom-line producers as well. The silent screen burned with the passion of John Barrymore and Theda Bara and the patrons let off clouds of steam when John Gilbert took Greta Garbo into his arms and kissed her for what must have seemed an eternity.

In real life, the romance and marriage

of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks was observed the world over.

Romance on and off the screen has been the foundation of the Hollywood film from the very beginning. Love makes the world go around and movie producers quickly learned that John Q. Public was willing to pay to watch the world turn.

Romance is a universal subject and can be incorporated into any film with any theme. Westerns, comedies, adventure films and mysteries all have been exploited by the love bug. Musicals are especially susceptible to romance as a neat little subplot lurking behind every little nook.

I've always loved the Astaire and Rogers musicals. Their dancing was the highlight of every film but the romantic plot was the thread that wove the film into the tapestry that the public came to see. If the romance didn't ring true then the film fell flat on its face. "Carefree" had good songs and dance numbers but the sillier than usual romantic plot kept away even the most loyal fans of the dancing duo. Romance can be surrounded by something as commonplace as politics and make the proceedings hum. "Casablanca" is a first-class love story set in the unlikely setting of the North African desert with virtually all but two of the characters caught up in world politics. The two are Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman and the world is collapsing around them; but their love is all that matters. Of course Bogart gives up his love to join the real world and get back into the fight. "Casablanca" may not



FRED ASTAIRE & GINGER ROGERS

FILM CLIPS

be the greatest love story ever filmed but it ranks right up there with the classics.

Bogart and classics are two words that are often found in the same sentence. Add the name Kate Hepburn and the title "African Queen" leaps up at you like a hungry lion. The romance of Bogart and Hepburn is one of the most charming ever to be put on film. War again is the backdrop to the budding romance of the two main characters.

Hepburn, of course, was used to being romanced on the screen by leading men much more handsome than Bogie. She had had celluloid romances with Robert Young, Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and, on several occasions, Cary Grant. But her favorite screen lover was also her private and constant companion Spencer Tracy. Their screen romance always seemed genuine because off the screen they were crazy about each other. In their first film together — "Woman of the Year" — their mutual attraction is apparent from their first scene together. It was one of the great Hollywood romances.

There have been dozens of movie star romances with varying degrees of success. Olivia De Havilland starred with Errol Flynn in seven films and had fallen in love with him during the filming of their very first film, "Captain Blood." However, Flynn looked upon De Havilland as a friend and nothing more. This drove the editors of movie magazines a bit mad because one-sided love affairs never sold any magazines.

John Gilbert's love for Greta Garbo was obsessive and her rejection of him on their wedding day proved to be his downfall. Dick Powell and Joan Blondell fell in love during the filming of a Warner Bros. musical, but they made music together for only five years. Barbara Stanwyck sent many a young lady into shock when she married handsome Robert Taylor. Their divorce ten years later shocked no one — no one in Hollywood, that is.



JEAN HARLOW

Two of the great tragic romances in the film capital had their beginnings at the MGM studios. William Powell and Jean Harlow were both under contract at MGM when they met and fell in love. They were engaged to be married when she became ill and died of cerebral edema at age 26. Powell took it very badly and had to take a year off to regain his health.

Harlow's last film was "Saratoga" and her co-star was Clark Gable. His romantic track record on screen was second to no one. However, his private life was marred by divorce and short term romances with many movie starlets. He found the woman of his dreams when he met Carole Lombard during the filming of "No Man of Her Own" in 1932. She was married to William Powell at the time and wasn't attracted to Gable. She shunned him until well after her divorce from Powell. He persisted to vigorously pursue her and they eventually settled down to a live-together arrangement. They married in 1939 and had something of a perfect marriage. The bubble burst in January of 1942 when Lombard was killed in a plane crash while



CAROLE LOMBARD

on a bond selling tour. Gable was crushed and joined the Air Force later that year. He married twice more in his life but the death of his beloved Carole was a nasty turning point in his life and career. Love on and off the screen is no piece of cake.

"Gone With the Wind" is one of the most honored motion pictures of all time and one of the great romantic films to flicker across a movie screen. Vivian Leigh plays love scenes with Gable and with Leslie Howard. Women around the world would have killed to be held in Gable's arms or kissed by Howard. In fact, she was in sheer agony during all the love scenes because of Gable's lethal breath and Howard's tendency to "put the make" on every woman he met. At the end of the day she ran home to her true love Laurence Olivier, who spent his days at MGM making love to Greer Garson in the film version of "Pride and Prejudice." Olivier starred in one of the darkest romantic films to come out of Hollywood: Samuel Goldwyn's production of "Wuthering Heights" with Olivier madly in love with Merle Oberon. The film was a huge

success, proving that the spirit of love is hard to suppress.

"The Lady Eve" is a light romantic romp that brilliantly spoofs love and romance. Henry Fonda as a slightly pixilated son of a beer baron is no match for worldly con artist Barbara Stanwyck, but he doesn't have to be because she loves him in spite of his fortune. "The Philadelphia Story" is another film that has a strong-willed female — this time Kate Hepburn — manipulating the lives of the men who love her. In this case the men are Cary Grant and James Stewart and in the end she marries the right man without breaking the heart of the other. James Stewart is not considered a great romantic film star but one of the most enduring romantic films is "It's a Wonderful Life" with Stewart as George Baily, a family man with a loving wife and average children. But it is his love for wife and family that holds his sanity together during the greatest trial of his life. This film cherishes simple romance and true love and is a tribute to the American family value.

That quality is sorely missing in the majority of films today. In fact, love and romance are rare elements in today's storyline where non-stop violence sells tickets even in a PG rated film like "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." Romance in a film can be fun and it can be the soul of the film, but most of today's films lack soul.

The films of the past are history lessons to be studied and learned from. The good film-makers of today know that and use that knowledge to make quality films. Movies have been likened to mirrors reflecting the society around them. If that is true, and our films now are genuine indicators of our society, then we are all in deep trouble.

Making films that embrace love and romance are not alone going to change anything, but it's a start and we could all use a little more love.

WE GET

CHICAGO — I listen quite frequently to your Saturday afternoon program and enjoy it very much. It brings back a lot of memories of when I was a small child growing up in Chicago. But, I think the single program I enjoyed the most of all was when you had Les Tremayne as your guest. WNIB is always tuned in on my car radio and as I was coming back from grocery shopping about 1 p.m. Saturday. I had your program tuned in and had full intentions of dropping off my groceries and going out for the afternoon. But, when I got home I went out on the back porch and tuned in on the radio outside (it was a lovely day as you may recall). Well, I sat out on the porch all afternoon until 5 p.m. completely absorbed in your program. What a wonderful gift Mr. Tremayne has for conversation and keeping his audience interested with his wealth of stories about the old radio days and some of the stars. I really loved it and didn't want to miss a moment of it. Thanks again for the memories.— **ISOBEL BURKE**

BROOKLYN, OHIO — Enclosed is a check for a one year subscription to the *Nostalgia Digest*. I recall visiting Chicago in the late 1930s and visiting the WBBM Air Theatre to see an episode of Death Valley Days. Those were the good old days! I enjoy your current program and listen whenever conditions are favorable.

— **W. H. CORRIGAN**

ST. ANNE, IL — It's soooo good to be able to pick up your signal again! We've been out of the state for several years, and I miss old time radio more than any other "cultural" happening associated with the Chicago area. Thank you for airing the Roy Rogers program several months ago. My six year old is a fan of the "King of the Cowboys." He plays "cowboys" and has only heard about the famous turtles currently in vogue. You see, the TV is seldom on in our house. We read and talk to each other and spend time working/playing outside in the country air and we listen to radio — good radio. That includes old time radio, for sure. Would you consider airing more Roy Rogers stuff in future broadcasts? Thank you. — **MRS. DAN BRENNAN**

(ED. NOTE — Check the *TWTD* listings. A Roy Rogers show is scheduled for March 23rd.)

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO — Enjoyed my first issue of *Nostalgia Digest*. Enclosed is a SASE for a list of back issues available. I wish Dan McGuire had dated his high school memory trip. — **JIM GOODRICH**

(ED. NOTE — Dan graduated from Steinmetz High School in February, 1954.)

ROCKFORD, IL — Can you play any of the Jolly Joe Kelly programs? I remember he was on Saturday mornings at 8 a.m. Boy, what good memories. I really enjoy your shows and comments. Keep them coming.

— **J. I. BAWINKEL**

(ED. NOTE — Sorry to report that we have never come across any of Jolly Joe's programs, but we continue to search for them. Joe Kelly was also the master of ceremonies on the old WLS Barn Dance and was the Chief Quizzer on the Quiz Kids broadcasts.)

VISTA, CALIFORNIA — How can I thank you enough for the marvelous tapes so nicely put together with the Cinnamon Bear Book. You can't imagine the memories it has created for me, and will do for my family, also. I've tried for years to be able to hear the Adventures once again, and now I have them for "all time." What a treasure! You've answered a lifetime wish and dream.

— **MRS. JOY JAGER**

ONTARIO, CANADA — I live in southern Ontario and I am 15. I enjoy your show and the shows you play. I listen to your show every chance I get. My favorite shows are Green Hornet and Jack Benny. I also like Six Shooter, Lone Ranger, Dragnet, Gangbusters, X Minus One, and most other shows. I would like it if you played more I Love A Mystery specials and Adventures By Morse. I would like to go to Chicago and meet you in person, but that is highly impossible, as I live so far away that I sometimes can't even get your show clear enough to hear it. Can you do anything to get reception better in the Niagra peninsula? — **ERIC ROBINSON**

(ED. NOTE — WBBM's signal is a strong one, but dependent on weather conditions, so we're not always able to reach clearly into your part of the world. But we're grateful that you tune us in when you can.)

ROCKFORD, IL — The night we were to hear the last chapter of "The Girl on Shipwreck Island" on Adventures By Morse, you were pre-empted by the President and the Democrat's talk on the Gulf crisis. Any change of a replay in the future? I never miss a show, it's a treat to my ears. — **ROBERT E. WOOD**

(ED. NOTE — We've had lots of calls and inquiries about the missing last chapter of "Shipwreck Island." We're planning to repeat all three chapters in the three-episode adventure on our *Old Time Radio Classics* broadcast of Saturday, February 16th between 8-10 p.m. Have your tape recorder ready and hope the Blackhawks don't decide to play an extra game or Mr. Bush doesn't decide to have a news conference that night!)

GEPP, ARIZONA — The only bad thing about moving to Arizona is no *Those Were The Days* on Saturday afternoons. We can occasionally get WBBM at night, but it just doesn't compare to *TWTD*. Have you ever considered a tape service or a club that records the whole *TWTD* show for us unhappy former listeners? I would gladly pay someone to do this for me provided the cost wouldn't be too high. I'd even listen to the commercials. It would make me and many, many other displaced listeners very happy! Please let me know if there is a solution for this problem. Where there's a will, there's a way!

— **LUANNE SWANSON**

(ED. NOTE — Anyone have any ideas?)

LETTERS

NAPERVILLE, IL — As great fans of *TWTD*, we were really disappointed to miss the Thanksgiving show. The Eve Arden tribute was very well done (as usual!), but we would have preferred to hear it at a later date and not at the expense of the long-awaited Thanksgiving show. Thanks for giving us the chance to voice an opinion. I guess your *Nostalgia Digest* does such a good job of whetting the appetite that we hate to miss the advertised meal! — **MR. & MRS. DAVID STEFFENS**

BUFFALO GROVE, IL — Please let me add one more protest re: Saturday's reprogramming. And I like Eve Arden . . . but one Our Miss Brooks show (replacing Casey, Crime Photographer) would have shown your (and our) respect for the lady. How you could figure that your listening audience would feel OK about cancelling the Thanksgiving Show — my, my, this time you really blew it. Been listening for years. By the way I'm 63 so I do remember the old days. A Jack Benny or Fred Allen or Red Skelton tribute show, OK. Sorry about your pre-empting the regular show. Bet you had a lot of calls and letters on this one. How about, between now and the end of the year, you find room for Soldiers in Greasepaint from 1943. Thanks for the great Saturdays. — **BOB JACKSON**

(ED. NOTE — Because of Eve Arden's substantial contribution to the golden days of radio, we felt it was important that we present a timely tribute to her, rather than wait until all our holiday programming was over. We wrestled with the choices we had: do a show on the Saturday before Thanksgiving (and pre-empt our Thanksgiving program) or do the tribute on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (and pre-empt some Christmas programs). Our audience has repeatedly told us how much the Christmastime shows add to their holiday pleasure and so we decided to bump the Thanksgiving show, knowing that whatever choice we made would disappoint some listeners. So, as always, we do the best we can. We'll schedule the entire November 17, 1990 Thanksgiving Show for Thanksgiving, 1991 and ask you to remember that some of the charm of that annual holiday is leftover turkey!)

WILMETTE, IL — Thank you and all the other good people who contribute their talent and enthusiasm to *Those Were The Days*. The show is a weekly gift. Its effect goes beyond pleasureable nostalgia. Those familiar radio voices make one recall "other voices — other rooms," as well as other times — some not so good and some wonderful. And did I really hear you mention Let's Pretend? It was my childhood's greatest joy to sit before the old Airline console on Saturday mornings and be transported into a world of magic and danger and beauty, where virtue triumphed and evil got its just punishment. Now, I'm talking about pre-Cream

of Wheat Let's Pretend: the mid-30s when NBC aired the program without commercials for 60 miraculous minutes and a string ensemble played Schubert and Tschaikowsky between the acts! Now, *those* were the days!
— **MRS. JOSEPH TERRY**

MONTGOMERY, IL — I am an avid listener of *Old Time Radio Classics* on WBBM. I have enclosed a check for a subscription to the *Nostalgia Digest*. Thank you very much for providing such interesting literature about the past. Although I was not thought of until 1965, I can appreciate the quality and brilliance of pre-television entertainment. This type of entertainment required imagination and thought, something I strive for as a mechanical engineer, and something I miss in current entertainment.
— **JEFF T. COLLINS**

JOLIET, IL — Sorry to hear about the time change for *Old Time Radio Classics*. Used to look forward to 8 o'clock.
— **BOB HARRINGTON**

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL — Midnight!! The best darn show on radio, or TV for that matter, and they put it on at midnight! Whose brainstorm? I suggest 10 p.m. would be perfect if they must change it. I stopped looking or listening to the news at 10 long ago. I found myself listening to murders, rapes, politicians, and getting madder and more riled up about something I could do nothing about, so I switch to WNIB or WFMT.
— **CHUCK ROEHL**

OTSEGO, MICHIGAN — For the last four or five years we have listened to you on WBBM for at least 75-80 percent of your broadcasts of old time radio. Here in Michigan we hear you from 9-10 p.m. weekdays and from 9-11 p.m. for your two hour shows. We often go to bed at that time and end our day with your show. But your new time now prevents us from listening. It is too late (or early, depending on your viewpoint). You are now going to have a whole new listening audience. Our whole family (my wife and I, in our 50's and our teen-age daughter, 16) were extremely upset when we heard you change your hours. Please reconsider coming back to the old regular time. I am not renewing the *Nostalgia Digest* for 1991 as we won't be able to listen. If you switch back to 9 p.m. EST, then I will subscribe once again. We will catch you on the weekends without benefit of the *Digest*. Thanks for many years of weekly and daily enjoyment.
— **REV. STEPHEN W. TUCKER**

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN — You may as well cancel my subscription. What a dumb time for Old Time Radio Classics, midnight to 1 a.m. So sorry.
— **CHARLOTTE M. PETERSON**

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL — I was sorry to hear that they have moved the weekday WBBM broadcasts to 12:00 a.m. They might just as well have cancelled it. How many people are going to listen at that hour? I would imagine only those who work at night. I will still

WE GET LETTERS

listen on the weekends but I hope you are able to find a new outlet soon. I assume, of course, that you are going to try and find a new outlet.

— STEVE SIMON

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN — I have been an appreciative listener to your classic old time radio broadcasts on WBBM during the past five years. and, because I operate on an early schedule. I will miss your weekday programs henceforth. I phoned and expressed my dismay to the program director. What are the prospects for a different station? I was born in Chicago in 1936 and grew up there (through high school) during the classic radio days. Best of luck.

— GEORGE T. STONE

CHICAGO — Just received your *Nostalgia Digest*. I'm not sure whether or not you feel good about the change to Midnight, but I'm writing to remind you that folks now days tape off timers. I have one I use just for radio. I get a lot of WNIB classical music from my timer. The good stuff isn't always on when you can listen. But I'll be using my timer for *Radio Classics*. At least you can't get pre-empted in that time slot! Best of luck.

— AL CLISHAM

ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA — You may be able to alleviate a malady — nagging memory lapse. For years and in various places, a number of researchers, philosophers and theologians have been trying to remember the name of the struggling door-to-door salesperson who arrived at 79 Wistful Vista, hope-a-hoping that no one would be home. Alas, he always found Fibber there. You will be the subject of praise and source of relief, if you can help us. I hope-a-hope-a-hope.

— WALTER WAGNER

*Associate Professor of Religion
Muhlenberg College.*

(ED. NOTE — The name of the reluctant salesman was Elmer Blurt and he was played by Al Pearce on the Al Pearce and His Gang show during the 1930s and 40s. It was a comedy-variety program and the "gang" included Arlene Harris, who was known as the "human chatterbox," and Bill Comstock as "Tizzie Lish," a zany female character who gave advice and recipes. Not many of these programs survive, but we'll try to dig one up sometime in the future to share with listeners. By the way, Elmer Blurt never did hope-a-hope-a-hope anyone was home in Wistful Vista. The character was not a part of the Fibber McGee and Molly series.)

BLUE ISLAND, IL — Sure do miss the 8 p.m. shows on WBBM!

— CAREY L. AREND

NORTHBROOK, IL — I sure am sorry about the time change your program weeknights. I wish I could be a night owl and enjoy your show at the new time, but I have to get up at 6:30 a.m. to go to work. I will continue

to listen weekends and hope you get a better time slot. I have been a faithful listener ever since I discovered your broadcast in 1984. Thanks for giving so many of us such a wonderful show! — ANN CALLAWAY

LA GRANGE PARK, IL — I can't tell you how disappointed I was to learn of the change in time for *Radio Classics*. It has been a delightful form of entertainment for me. I am a senior citizen who has many wonderful memories of the old time radio programs. The time slot of 8 to 9 p.m. was a very convenient one to relax and be entertained. In my opinion the decision to change to midnight until 1 a.m. did not take into consideration the fact that this would discourage a number of listeners, many of whom would be unwilling to stay up that late. I've always enjoyed the quality of programs and fine staff associated with WBBM, but feel there is an over-emphasis on sports events. The one ray of hope for me is the fact that the program will still remain on Saturdays and Sundays from 8 to 10 p.m., providing there will be no scheduled sports events. No doubt your personal schedule will also be affected and will require some change in your plans. The best of luck to you and thank you for many delightful programs you have presented to us these past years. — SISTER MARY JOSEPHINE, C.S.J.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN — How sad to hear your announcement that your *Radio Classics* program will be changed to midnight. For four years or more, I've listened to your nightly programs from 8 to 9 p.m. and on the weekends for two hours. Thank you for many hours of interesting programs. I'm sorry to tell you I will not be listening to your weekday programs. At 72 years of age, I'm in bed before the midnight hour. However, I'll be listening on the weekends. I lived in the era of the shows you are replaying and I was an avid listener to most of them. Keep up the good work.

— ELMER A. ALEXY

WESTERN SPRINGS, IL — Sorry to hear you were bumped to midnight. I wish they would put all the sports nonsense in that time slot instead. — JIM WOLF

COLOMA, MICHIGAN — I could hardly believe my ears when you announced the time change of your very wonderful shows of *Old Time Radio Classics*! I always enjoyed listening. It brought back fond memories for me, of days before TV when radio really had interesting programs of the Lone Ranger, Fibber McGee and Molly and all the others. But now in my old age I will no longer be able to enjoy your programs. Being on Eastern time, you won't come on the air until 1:00 a.m. and I cannot stay up until 2 a.m. to listen anymore. It is a deep disappointment because even with all those interruptions for sports programs I don't listen to, it was better at the early hour of 9 p.m. here.

— MRS. A. KYLMALA

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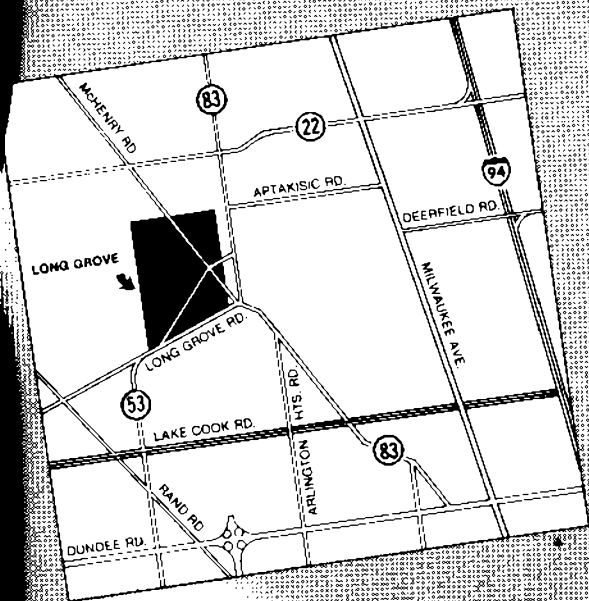
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WALTER WINCHELL

was one of many newsmen who reported to listeners during the vintage radio days. Gino Lucchetti's look at those names with the news begins on page 22.

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