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AND
RADIO
GUIDE



DON McNEILL

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BOOK NINETEEN

CHAPTER FOUR

JUNE - JULY, 1993

HELLO, OUT THERE IN RADIODLAND!!

'Tis the season for anniversaries!

This year, 1993 marks the 60th anniversary of two, long-running radio shows: **The Lone Ranger** and **The Breakfast Club**.

We'll observe both occasions with special programming. Our *Old Time Radio Classics* series will have a full week of programs starring the Masked Man and his Faithful Indian Companion. Check out June 6 thru 12 on our WBBM Calendar.

The Lone Ranger's first broadcast was on January 30, 1933 and just a few months later, on June 23, 1933, Don McNeill brought his *Breakfast Club* to the airwaves. Tune in to *Those Were The Days* on June 26 for a 60th Anniversary Salute on WNIB (which follows a Museum of Broadcast Communications event in Don McNeill's honor on June 23).

Also this year marks the 50th anniversary of the United States' War Department's program of **V-Discs**, specially recorded music sent to troops around the world during World War II. We'll take note of the milestone on WNIB July 3 when **Karl Pearson** joins us for an afternoon of rarely heard V-Disc music.

And we had a great time celebrating our own 23rd broadcast anniversary with a WLTD reunion on our *Those Were The Days* program last April 24. If you tuned in, you may agree. Our publication deadline keeps us from printing in this issue any of the photos of the old 'LTD

gang, but we'll try to include a few next time so all our listeners from the "old days" will know what we all look like now (!!??).

Radio Classics fans will want to tune in to our **Christmas In July** celebration this year. We'll have half a dozen un-seasonal seasonal shows for listeners on July 24 and 25, during our weekend edition on WBBM.

One Man's Family fans will be glad to know that we're going to pick up where we left off last summer with more continuous episodes of the popular Carlton E. Morse series. The sequence of shows from Books 80 and 81 resumes on June 5 on WNIB.

And we're very excited about our **Summer Festival of Movies on Radio** which also begins on June 5. All summer long, even into September, we'll be featuring great radio versions of popular motion pictures on our *TWTD* shows. There was an abundance of these programs on the air during the Radio Days, and we're glad to be able to share so many of them with you. *Nostalgia Digest* columnist and film historian **Bob Kolososki** will be on hand each week to help us provide a little background on the films and the stars. Bring your own pop corn!

We hope our programming will help get your summer off to a good start.

Thanks for listening.

—Chuck Schaden

BEST CALL FOR BREAKFAST

Don McNeill's Breakfast Club

BY JOHN DUNNING

The Breakfast Club was a show that couldn't give away a commercial spot during its first six years, but it left an undeniable imprint on the development of morning broadcasting.

Born in the depths of the Depression, the show combined just the proper amounts of Midwestern corn, unabashed sentiment, audience participation, and old-fashioned music and song to please the eardrums of middle America. As many entertainers discovered, that was a sure-fire road to overnight fame and fortune.

For Don McNeill, the fame arrived somewhat later than overnight, but the fortune — when it came — was well worth the wait. During the three-and-a-half-decade run of his *Breakfast Club*, McNeill watched his salary soar from \$50 a week to more than \$200,000 a year. He saw the show develop from a white elephant that the network kissed off as hopeless into one of the great blockbusters of the morning air, costing each of its four regular sponsors \$1 million a year.

And yet, the show that bowed out on December 27, 1968, didn't differ radically from the premiere of June 23, 1933. The main difference was that McNeill wanted to take a fond look backward.

The corn element always ran rampant through the fabric of the show. Perhaps that was its greatest charm, and the secret of its long success. McNeill made no bones of the fact that he was just a country boy at heart. Born December 23, 1907, in Galena, Illinois, he had abandoned early ambitions to be an editorial cartoonist, and had leaped into radio during the wild 1920's. He teamed with Van Fleming, a singer he met while work-

ing in Louisville, and the two sang at West Coast stations under the name "Don and Van, the Two Professors." They split up the act when money ran out and bookings looked slim. McNeill headed east. In 1931, he married Kay Bennett, a college classmate, and they went to New York together to chase a career in big-time radio.

But New York could be a frustrating town, and eventually the McNeills returned to Chicago. He auditioned for a job opening at NBC Blue, as master of ceremonies of a sagging early morning show called *The Pepper Pot*. It paid \$50 a week, and the main fringe benefit was that McNeill could run it any way he wanted. Network executives were still writing off the early hours as dead time so it really didn't matter much what McNeill did with it. It turned out that he transformed a sagging Blue Network show into one of the most dynamic offerings of the early-morning air.

The first change McNeill made was in the title. *The Pepper Pot* became *The Breakfast Club*, and the show was envisioned as developing in four stages. These were termed "the four calls to breakfast."

The program was broadcast from Chicago. First heard on June 23, 1933, it became one of the longest-running shows in network history. McNeill personally wrote the scripts for about two months. After that he began using short pieces of folksy humor sent in by his listeners. His wife — one of his most important critics — thought the show went better that way. McNeill asked for permission to run *The Breakfast Club* without a script. Network brass still didn't care, and the



DON MC NEILL

show eased into the spontaneous, unrehearsed format that would serve it for the next thirty-four years.

McNeill's gang of *Breakfast Clubbers* changed with the times, but several members asked almost as long as the host. In the early months, Jim and Marian Jordan (later famous as Fibber McGee and Molly) played a couple called Toots and Chickie. Bill Thompson first tried out his "Wallace Wimple" voice on *The Breakfast Club*. Other people passing through on their way to new careers were Jan Davis (later of *Arthur Godfrey Time*) and Alice Lon, who would make her mark as one of Lawrence Welk's Champagne Ladies.

Homer and Jethro practiced their corn, Johnny Desmond was a singing Johnny-on-the-spot, and Patsy Lee talked wistfully of her hope chest on McNeill's show. Gale Page and the Merry Macs also used *The Breakfast Club* as a stepping stone to bigger things: semi-regulars over the years included Mildred Stanley, Jack Baker ("The Louisiana Lark"), Jack Owens, Nancy

Martin, Marion Mann, Betty Olson and Floyd Holm.

But to others the show became a career.

Cliff Petersen joined the cast in 1936 as part of a singing trio called The Escorts and Betty. He graduated to the role of producer-director.

Eddie Ballantine, a trumpet player with the original Walter Blaufuss orchestra, eventually took over the baton himself.

Sam Cowling, a paunchy, durable comedian, joined the show in 1936 and became master of the one-liner. His "fiction and fact from Sam's Almanac" was an established part of the show.

Finally there was Fran Allison, who played the gossipy spinster Aunt Fanny. As a "Clubber," Miss Allison relayed tales of her countrified neighbors (Ott Ort, Bert and Bertie Beerbower, the Smelsers), but she became best known outside *The Breakfast Club*, as Fran on the TV show *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*.

The show opened with a bang, to this snappy theme from the salad days of 1944:



SAM COWLING and FRAN ALLISON

BREAKFAST CLUB

*Good morning, Breakfast Club-bers
It's time to sing ya
Another cheery greeting,
So may we bring ya:
Four — calls — for break-fast!
Kel-logg's — call — to break-fast!
So every Breakfast Club-ber
Young and old,
Come and join our hap-py
Care-free fold;
Yes, wake up, Breakfast Club-bers,
And smile a-while;
A day begun with Kellogg's
Makes' life worth-while!*

Every 15 minutes, there was a "call to breakfast," done with a drum roll, whooping, and a trumpet fanfare. The cast joined McNeill for a "march around the breakfast table," which sometimes continued up the aisles of the broadcast studio. Later in the show came "Memory Time," when McNeill dipped into the mailbag for a piece of nostalgic poetry contributed by a listener. Other well-remembered features were "The Sunshine Shower" (requests by McNeill for listeners to write to people confined in

nursing homes, hospitals, and orphanages); and "Prayer Time," a nonsectarian appeal to the Maker, culminated by McNeill's 15 seconds of silent prayer:

*All over the nation,
Each in his own words,
Each in his own way;
For a world united in peace,
Bow your heads and let us pray.*

"Prayer Time" was first heard during the broadcast of October 28, 1944, and was conceived as a comfort for families with sons serving in the war. But it became such an established part of the show that McNeill kept it even after the war ended. He was especially responsive to such requests from listeners, and was fond of saying that *The Breakfast Club* was really written by the audience. "I just found that the folks who listen in can write this show a whole lot better than I can," he said in a 1950 *Colliers* article. More than one million pieces of mail came in each year, and the heart of *The Breakfast Club* developed right out of the mailbag. Gags, verse, and regional anecdotes were all grist for McNeill's mill. Interspersed with songs and interviews, the mail filled out the hour, and kept the show moving at a comfortable pace.

Guest stars were used, though sparingly, and they soon joined the spontaneous mood. Breakfast Clubbers still remember the morning when Jerry Lewis set fire to a commercial script as McNeill was reading it, creating such pandemonium that announcers nationwide missed their regular station cues.

Just as unpredictable were the people from the studio audience, chosen by McNeill from the interview cards passed out before the show. One morning in 1949, he brought an 11-year-old boy to the microphone. After the interview, young Bernie Christianson asked McNeill's permission to sing a few bars



DON MC NEILL and JOE E. BROWN



GOOD MORNING, BREAKFAST CLUBBERS — Look closely and you'll see Breakfast Club host Don McNeill interviewing guest Henry Fonda during a broadcast of the popular morning show in 1957.

of "Galway Bay" for his grandparents. The boy's voice was electrifying, stirring the audience to a two-minute ovation. Bernie was brought back as a "Breakfast Club" regular during the next year.

Best-known of the show's regulars were the members of McNeill's own family. Wife Kay appeared often; sons Tom, Don, and Bobby also turned up occasionally. For many years the family participated in a Christmas-season holiday show. Once a year McNeill took *The Breakfast Club* on tour for a month. By then his closing line — "be good to yourself" — had become nationally familiar.

The Breakfast Club was brought to TV in a simulcast on February 22, 1954. But McNeill wasn't able to cope with the

camera, and it bombed. There would still be radio, for a little while yet, and The Breakfast Club would hang in there till the end, establishing a long distance record that few shows of any kind could equal. With few changes in style of format, it ran for more than thirty-five years, broadcasting its finale December 27, 1968. ■

(ED. NOTE — This Breakfast Club article originally appeared in Tune In Yesterday, The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Old Time Radio, 1925-1976 and is reprinted here by permission of the author, John Dunning, who is presently working on an enlarged and revised edition of the book, to be published by Oxford University Press, hopefully by 1994.



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

Music From Home: WW II V-Discs

BY KARL PEARSON

The morale of American troops during World War II was of great importance. With a large majority of soldiers stationed far away from the comforting surroundings of home, the average soldier was often in unfamiliar territory and under stressful conditions. Loneliness was a common feeling among a number of GI's.

Entertainment was perhaps the most effective way to boost troop morale. Various forms of entertainment provided soldiers with an escape from the day-to-day hassles of the war. Entertainment was also a form of release for the average G.I., whether a live show, motion picture, radio program or recorded music.

A small but highly effective part of the morale effort was the V-Disc program. Produced by the Special Services Division of the War Department, V-Discs were 12-inch 78 R.P.M. Phonograph records prepared for the American Armed Forces. V-Discs featured music as requested by the servicemen themselves and the program covered a wide variety of musical styles.

Prior to the formation of the V-Disc group in 1943 there had been a few attempts to distribute phonograph records to servicemen. As the war progressed, two major obstacles were encountered. The first involved a shortage of raw materials. Shellac, the vital compound in the production of phonograph records became a scarce wartime item. The more drastic problem involved a ban on recording activities.

Effective August 1, 1942 the American Federation of Musicians had instituted a ban on all recording activities by its members. The union, which had been at odds with the recording industry for several years, had tried to negotiate an agreement regarding performance royalties on recordings. The AF of M instituted the ban when the two sides were unable to reach an agreement. As a result, all recording activities came to a virtual standstill. A mere handful of new recordings were made after the ban, generally featuring a vocalist accompanied by a chorus.

With the domestic commercial recording scene on hold, the Special Services Division of the War Department began initiating a record program of its own. Clearances were arranged with the appropriate organizations, including the musicians union, which allowed the V-Disc group to make recordings. As these recordings were designed for use only by military personnel, all fees and royalties were waived. The next step involved the assistance of recording companies, who donated studio time and processing facilities to the program. The final hurdle was the most important part of the program; lining up the musicians, vocalists and entertainers who would donate recording time for the V-Disc project. By August of 1943 all clearances had been arranged and the program was under way.

The first shipment of V-Discs were sent to servicemen around the world in



October, 1943. Each carton contained thirty discs and included selections by Duke Ellington, Vaughn Monroe, John Charles Thomas, Glenn Miller, Eddie Cantor and others. Surveys asking for servicemen's requests for future releases were enclosed, and if room permitted a few comic books were thrown in. The V-Disc program became an immediate hit with servicemen.

The V-Disc group used a wide variety of source material for eventual release. Commercially issued records were used for V-Disc purposes, along with selections from radio transcriptions and film soundtracks. Clearances had also been arranged to use material from various radio broadcasts. Band remotes (including Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey) provided some source material, and commercial programs (including Harry James Chesterfield Show and Frank Sinatra's "Songs By Sinatra" program) were used for additional V-Disc releases. The V-Disc staff also requested dress rehearsal recordings of various programs, such as Bing Crosby's "Kraft Music Hall" and Woody Herman's series for Old Gold Cigarettes. Since dress rehearsals were not performed before a studio audience there was no need to edit applause from the final V-Disc master.

Special V-Disc sessions provided the most interesting source material. Big bands led by Benny Goodman, Johnny Long, Boyd Raeburn, Guy Lombardo, Harry James, Sammy Kaye, Woody Herman and Hal McIntyre recorded the latest numbers for servicemen overseas. Vocalists such as Jo Stafford, Frank Sinatra, Martha Tilton, The Andrew Sisters and The Mills Brothers also appeared on V-Discs. A number of memorable jazz sessions featuring Muggsy Spanier, Roy Eldridge, Bud Freeman, Jack Teagarden and Louis Armstrong were arranged by George Simon, formerly of Metronome Magazine, who became part of the V-Disc Staff.

The actual physical characteristics of V-Discs made for a superior product compared to commercial recordings. Commercially issued records were only ten inches in diameter and had a playing time limit of 3 minutes and 25 seconds, while V-Discs were twelve inches in diameter and featured a maximum playing time of 6 minutes and 30 seconds. The long playing time permitted two selections per side, or in many cases, allowed V-Disc artists a chance to "stretch out" in extended performances. While commercial recordings were pressed from a brittle shellac compound, the great majority of V-Discs were pressed in a



WW II V-DISCS

more flexible plastic compound, which provided a smoother playing surface and withstood breakage.

Over the six-year span of the V-Disc program there were a number of memorable recording sessions for V-Disc. The combined bands of Tommy Dorsey appeared on V-Disc for the first time. Sam Donahue and his Navy Band recorded, in the words of George Simon, "some of the greatest big band sounds ever to get on any records." The 1944 Esquire Jazz All-Stars (including Jack Teagarden, Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge and Red Norvo) were recorded live at the Metropolitan Opera House. Lionel Hampton and Count Basie made a number of swinging recordings for V-Disc. Captain Glenn Miller brought his Band of the Army Air Forces Training Command into RCA Victor's Studios one day in October, 1943 and made the now-famous recording of "St. Louis Blues March."

Stateside civilians also got a chance to hear just what servicemen were listening to when a new radio program made its debut over NBC in July of 1944. The program, titled "For The Record", featured many great names from the music industry in an on-the-air recording ses-



sion for V-Disc. The program featured a guest orchestra each week along with two or three guest vocalists. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra were heard in the premier broadcast along with singers Mildred Bailey, Frank Miranda and Perry Como. Subsequent programs included the orchestras of Vaughn Monroe, Gene Krupa, Mitchell Ayres and Les Brown, along with singers Connie Boswell, the Andrew Sisters, Marilyn Maxwell and Lena Horne.

The demand for V-Discs was quite high throughout the war and production was stepped up on a monthly basis. Shortly after the Japanese surrender in August, 1945, V-Disc production was cut back to a monthly shipment of fifteen discs. Additional cuts were made during the next two years as the number of servicemen overseas began to dwindle. Due to budget cutbacks and changing needs, the V-Disc program was finally phased out in May, 1949. Over a six-year period the V-Disc staff had managed to produce over 900 releases. Eight million records had been pressed and shipped to servicemen around the world. ■

(ED. NOTE — WWII V-Discs will be the subject on Those Were The Days, Saturday, July 3. See listing on page 24.)

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How We Won World War II At Jefferson Grade School

BY ROBERT G. KEMPER

Iwo Jima. Guadalcanal. Anzio. Omaha Beach. Those were the sites of decisive battles in World War II.

Meanwhile . . . back in the schoolyards of the Yanks' homeland, around the kickball fields, and in the aging rusted brick schoolhouse, another front with heroic tales and concerted effort proved victorious. For those of us too young to serve in the military, we, too, responded to our country's call for sacrifice and extra contributions.

Jefferson Grade School in St. Joseph, Michigan, one-hundred miles from Chicago and ten-thousand miles from Iwo Jima, is where I and my comrades served our country and made contributions.

On radio we heard the news and followed the wartime exploits of our heroes — Jack Armstrong, Terry and the Pirates, Hop Harrigan, et. al. We saw the war in newsreels and in John Wayne movies. Taking our cues from those authentic sources we waged war in the place our age had destined us to be: grade school for the duration.

We were a shorts and T-shirt crowd in the summer, knickers and sweaters in the winter. But we were little G.I.s and we tried to look the part. Many of us carried homemade sidearms, a few had wooden rifles; the rich kids had helmets and mess kits on their belts. Few of us had the official Army olive green, but many of us had patches which we proudly displayed on our shirts and sweaters. A few of us had combat ribbons to put on our little chests.

If our costumes were skimpy replicas of battle gear, we still acted like grizzled veterans. We marched. We chanted the

cadences of the marching troops — “Sound Off!” We sang the songs, “Anchors Aweigh,” “From The Halls of Montezuma,” “Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder.” What we didn't have or know, we imagined or improvised. Every kid knew how to spread his arms and sound like a fighter plane's engine, complete with machine guns spitting bullets and tracers.

In fact, our bodies were important instruments of our duty. Our mouths, especially, imitated the weapons of war. Every kid knew how to heave a hand grenade; the important part was the exploding sound you made with your mouth when the ersatz bomb hit the ground. We could make air raid sirens. We even — thanks mostly to cartoons — spoke with a German accent. And any blow was accompanied by a “so solly.” Part of playing these war games was also “taking a hit;” we could throw ourselves in a great leap and land in a heap — struck down by an enemy sniper.

Those who did not play these games may think this ghastly behavior for children. Maybe so. But, looking back, I think it was therapeutic. Wartime *was* frightening. By acting out our fears, by showing such heroism “underfire,” we may have psychologically met and subdued our childhood fears.

At Jefferson Grade School we were not always “acting out.” Sometimes we were useful. Word went out that the country needed waste paper, grease, fats, even tinfoil. The students of Jefferson rose to the occasion. Using our wagons, homemade carts, converted soapbox derby “cars,” anything with wheels — and not necessarily round ones at that — we

HOW WE WON WW II

hauled tons of paper to the school. Great bins awaited the cargo from our smaller collecting vehicles which had gone house to house. Some of the more energetic had their pictures in the newspaper for collecting the most paper.

Great cans of grease — bacon, sausage drippings, etc. were messy but needed. We collected them. Tinfoil was something of a two-step specialty. Many grade school children collected cigarette packages (until the manufacturers changed the packaging — “Lucky Strike Green went to war”) and peeled the tinfoil off the cigarette packs. That step produced maybe half an ounce. But persistence pays. One of our Jeffersonians accumulate a fifty-pound ball of tinfoil. We were not just sure what tinfoil was needed for, but if our country needed it, we collected it.

Money was needed to fund the war. We became savings conscious. Once a week, every classroom at Jefferson had stamp day. We bought a red stamp for 10 cents, green stamps cost 25 cents. We pasted our stamps in newsprint coupon books. These books accumulated \$18.75 worth of stamps. In time, those stamps became a \$25.00 bond.

Some foods were rationed and in short supply. To keep us growing and strong on the homefront, many families had Victory Gardens. Wherever we could find growing space we planted our own vegetables. Summertime routines at Jefferson Grade School always included an hour's work in the Victory Gardens, planting, weeding, harvesting our own vegetables. Even vegetables we did not like — brussels sprouts — were harvested by grade school sharecroppers.

Another element in doing our part was doing what we perceived to be “our duty.” We may not have been on the front lines, but we were part of the nation's defense. We had cards that identified

Messerschmidts and Zeros. If any zoomed over our houses, we would know whose they were. The enemy must have known what good spotters there were in St. Joe; no enemy aircraft dared penetrate our space.

The big poster in the school hallway warned that “Loose Lips Sink Ships.” We never discussed convoy movements, even with our best buddies. Sinking a ship would not be on our heads. We never disclosed military maneuvers.

All these things we saw as our duty. What we actually saw were adult models doing their best to contribute to the nation's war effort. Maybe what we did was inconsequential, but our doing it seemed important to us. We were proud to help.

I was six years to ten years old from 1941 to 1945. Those were prime years of childhood. By today's standards those distant years may seem grim, fearful and contrary to the environment for nurturing happy people. But here's the thing: each of us has only one childhood. We did not know how to compare our childhood with anyone else's. Our childhood was what it was. It need not be romanticized nor deplored. We simply were kids in that particular atmosphere. Further, we were all in the same environment. It was not that some of us were better off than others; we all grew under the shadow of a world at war.

In retrospect I rejoice that my own children did not live under that same shadow, and I hope my grandchildren will not. But I still declare myself to have had a happy childhood. I knew no other.

The children of Jefferson Grade School in the early 1940s joined together in doing what we thought was required of us in a national effort. The progress of the war was what we read in our “Weekly Readers.” Sometimes it went badly “over there.” But where we were, we were doing our best and we thought we did it well. ■

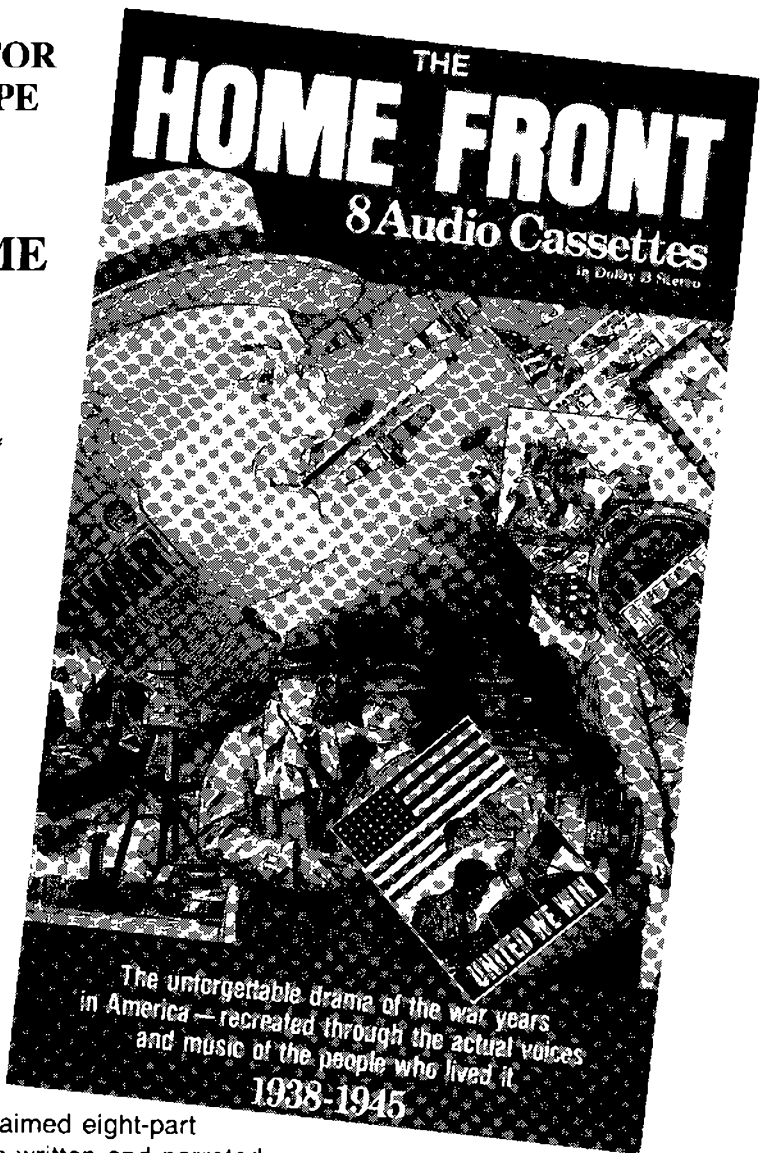
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This highly acclaimed eight-part radio series was written and narrated by Edward Brown, Frank Gorin, and William B. Williams.

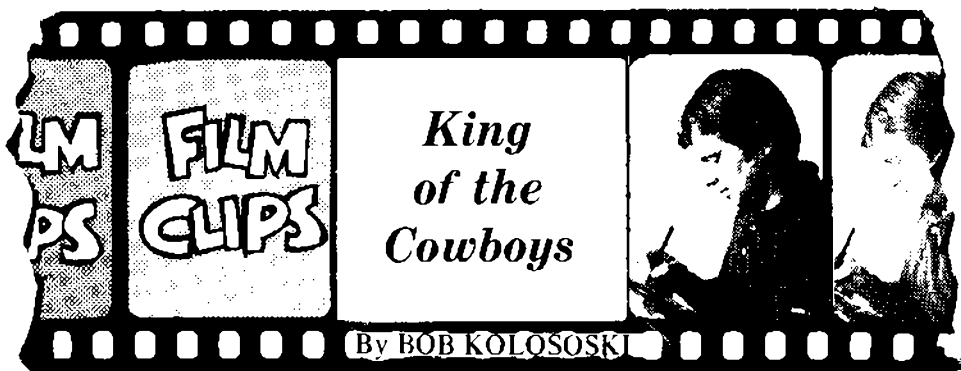
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The western is back. Clint Eastwood's movie "The Unforgiven" won four Academy Awards this year including best picture, but what really matters is that he made a box office smasharoo western! He's been flirting with greatness for over twenty years and now he has the formula. Soon we'll be swamped with western movies, TV shows and western fashions. It's all coming, just as sure as Roy Rogers is the King of the Cowboys.

To anyone over forty years of age the western was once the most-watched type of entertainment Hollywood had to offer. In the fabulous fifties we watched TV westerns all week and then went to Saturday matinees to see "B" westerns at the local movie palace.

There were literally dozens of western stars roaming the range but Roy Rogers was a cut above the rest. His Sunday TV show was always an anticipated event and it would be a minor disaster if the show was missed for some reason. Roy was a contemporary cowboy who still carried his six-shooters and rode his golden palamino "Trigger." He also had a wonder dog named "bullet" and goofy sidekick, Pat Brady. He also had something no other cowboy on TV had and that was his wife Dale Evans. The shows were light-weight, humorous and definitely aimed towards the under-12 crowd.

Before television Roy Rogers had ridden the cinema trail for nearly fourteen years at Republic Studios and made

dozens of low budget westerns that grossed millions of dollars.

Roy Rogers was born Leonard Slye in 1911 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Leonard's father Andy was a man who liked being out-of-doors and, shortly after Leonard's birth, Andy moved his wife, Mattie, and family on a large white houseboat. The Slye family lived on that houseboat for seven years anchored near Portsmouth, Ohio. During the great Portsmouth flood Andy set out and picked up as many people as the boat could hold to save them from the raging waters. He finally saved enough money to buy a small farm near Cincinnati. Andy worked at a shoe factory during the week while his family worked the farm. Young Leonard had dozens of chores to keep him busy and his school work always suffered.

The farm was somewhat isolated and evenings were spent with Mattie, her three daughters and Leonard singing to entertain themselves. Leonard learned to call square dances and to play the guitar and, through much practice, he perfected a swiss yodel that made him the hit of many a local barn dance. Eventually Leonard had to drop out of school and work beside his father at the shoe factory. One day Andy and his son decided that California was the land of opportunity and they both quit the shoe factory and packed everyone in their 1923 Dodge truck and headed due west. They stayed



ROY ROGERS and TRIGGER

four months and then headed to their Ohio farm. Leonard stayed in California to make his fortune.

Leonard's oldest sister had married and was living in Los Angeles and he stayed with her while seeking a job. He began singing with a group known as the Hollywood Hillbillies. That was short-lived and, then, he was attracted to a small radio station doing an amateur contest. He didn't win the contest but was offered a spot with The Rocky Mountaineers, a musical group featuring a baritone named Bob Nolan and a singer-songwriter named Tim Spencer. The group went through some changes and eventually became the Sons of the Pioneers. They did a Southwest tour, and returned to Los Angeles where they began appearing on the radio weekly.

One day, after a broadcast, a lady stopped by the studio with her daughter and a couple of lemon pies. Leonard loved lemon pie but the lady's daughter made him forget how hungry he was. Her name was Arlene Wilkins and, after a

proper period of courting, young Leonard proposed to Arlene. They were married in her family home on July 14, 1936.

The Sons of the Pioneers were beginning to make some headway in the radio business and managed a few movie bit parts. In the fall of 1937 Leonard was in a western hat shop when he heard a fellow say that Republic Studios was looking for a new singing cowboy. Gene Autry was the head honcho at Republic but he was holding out for more money and the studio was considering replacing their top cowpoke.

The next day Leonard was at the gate of Republic trying to convince the guard that he was going to audition for the new singing cowboy job. The guard wouldn't let him in, but Leonard's guardian angel arranged for producer Sol Siegel to pass by and have pity on Leonard. Siegel invited him in and held an audition that afternoon.

Leonard Slye signed a contract with Republic Studios for \$75 a week and Roy Rogers was born.

The first movie for Roy Rogers was a little nine-day quickie named UNDER WESTERN SKIES. The film opened in Dallas, Texas in April, 1938 with Roy and The Sons of the Pioneers doing a personal appearance in conjunction with the film. The movie was a smash hit and Roy Rogers was receiving thousands of fan letters a week — a star was born. The one gimmick in the film that was never changed was that Roy Rogers' character was named "Roy Rogers." He was to always be Roy Rogers in any film he starred.

Roy hired an agent named Art Rush who arranged a recording contract for him and the Sons of the Pioneers. He began making personal appearance tours and shows and soon Roy's income from the shows far exceeded his movie money. One day Roy asked Art to arrange the purchase of a small chicken ranch out in the San Fernando Valley. Art knew that

KING OF THE COWBOYS

Roy had been saving to buy a nice house for Arlene, but was surprised when Roy turned over the keys of the ranch house to his father, Andy.

Roy's westerns were usually shot on a maximum two week schedule and he did between six and seven a year. The film crew was like a big family and Roy was everyone's best friend.

By December 7, 1941 Roy was the number one box office cowboy in America and the world. On December 8, 1941 he was another American waiting to be drafted into the Armed services. Roy was never called because of his age but he began doing War Fund Drives and in a twenty-day period he and Trigger made 138 appearances.

He continued to make films and in 1944 Roy was introduced to Dale Evans, the leading lady of his new film *THE COWBOY AND THE SENORITA*. Dale had been under contract to Paramount, but was released. She also had been the female singer on the Edgar Bergen radio show, but was released. The last thing she wanted to do was be in a western movie. However, she was the sole support for her son and she needed to work. Art Rush arranged for her contract at Republic and she was to be the *Senorita*. She and Roy got along well and Roy's wife Arlene would often come to the set with her two daughters to gossip. The film chemistry between Roy and Dale was so well received that the studio rushed another movie into production. Gabby Hayes, Roy's frequent sidekick, rounded out a formula cast that would make five or six films a year.

Through the summer of 1946 Roy was having a lot of problems with his lines on the set. Arlene was expecting their third child and Roy was hoping for a boy. He got his wish on October 28, 1946 with the birth of Dusty Rogers. Tragedy struck six days later when Arlene collapsed and

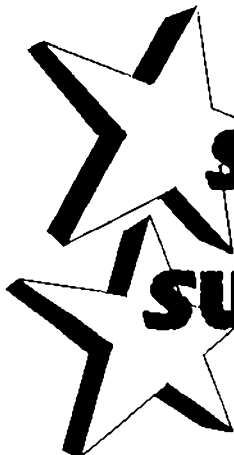
died at the hospital. Roy stopped making movies, touring and recording for a few months.

His unshakeable faith in God saw him through those hard months, and he came back to make four new movies in 1947. He had a new sidekick in Andy Devine and the studio was experimenting with Jane Frazee as Roy's new screen romance. The executives at the studio were way off base with Miss Frazee. She was okay, but Roy wanted Dale and made his point clear when he married her on New Year's Eve 1947.

Roy and Dale continued to make westerns at Republic until 1952 when the last Roy Rogers film was released. The studio was into TV production and they decided to follow Hopyalong Cassidy's lead and put Roy's films on the tube. But Art Rush was ahead of the studio and had a clause put into Roy's contract that prevented the studio to use Roy's likeness or name without his permission. Roy was negotiating his own TV deal with NBC and the films would have been a deal-killer for Roy. Roy had to sue the studio to stop the release of the movies to television. He did sign with NBC.

In the fifties, Roy and Dale produced their own TV show and made hundreds of personal appearances and visited thousands of children in hospitals. Roy and Dale loved children and adopted five; they now have 16 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren. Their only natural child Robin was born with Downs Syndrome and died before her second birthday. Their only adopted son, Sandy, was killed while in the army. A Korean girl they adopted was killed in a bus accident in 1964. Roy and Dale had faced these tragedies with courage and faith in God and always managed to find that elusive happy trail.

Roy no longer claims to be the King of the Cowboys, but he has been and will always be one classy cowpoke. ■



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1 EVE ARDEN
The Well-Dressed Corpse
1-18-51

2 LUCILLE BALL
The Ten Grand
6-22-44

3 BETTE DAVIS
Goodnight Mrs. Russell
10-20-49

4 KIRK DOUGLAS
Story of Markham's Death
10-2-47

5 FIBBER MC GEE & MOLLY
Backseat Driver
2-22-51

6 CARY GRANT
Black Path Of Fear
3-7-46

7 BOB HOPE
Death Has A Shadow
5-5-49

8 DANNY KAYE
I Never Met The Dead Man
1-5-50

9 BURT LANCASTER
The Big Shot
9-9-48

10 AGNES MOOREHEAD
The Thirteenth Sound
2-13-47

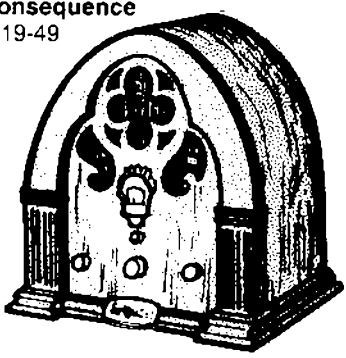
11 RED SKELTON
The Search For Isabel
11-3-49

12 JAMES STEWART
Consequence
5-19-49

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THE DEATH OF SUPERMAN

BY MICHAEL DUNCAN

I am a 61 year old blue-collar worker with learning disabilities which cause me to function in many situations as if I were retarded.

It is because I am not a normal adult, thinking the way a 61 year old man should think, that the death of Superman hurts so much.

If I can get this article printed, I will feel as if I am doing something about his death.

The first thing I want to point out is that the Superman DC has killed is not the Superman I used to daydream about as a boy.

Some time ago, at the end of a mini-series called "Crisis on Infinite Earths," parts of which appeared in almost every DC comic book, the original Superman, the original Lois Lane (to whom he had been married for a number of years) and a new Superboy (invented just for that series) all moved into a pocket Universe

BACKGROUND

In the January, 1993 issue of DC Comics' publication *Superman*, the man of Steel lost the battle of his life with a powerful creature called Doomsday. Readers were shocked to find Superman dying in the arms of Lois Lane.

In the *Man of Steel's Place*, beginning last April, appeared four new characters, some claiming the mantle of Superman, some claiming to be Superman.

Reaction to these controversial new developments in the historic life of Superman has been, to say the least, mixed.

Michael Duncan offers his reaction on these pages.

just outside of the place the DC writers were calling the new "DC Universe."

Before that it had been assumed that all stories which had appeared in DC Comics in the '30s and '40s and the first part of the '50s happened in a world the writers called "Earth Two," (which they should have called "Earth One,") and almost all stories in the '60s and '70s happened on "Earth One" (which they should have called "Earth Two").

We were living on "Earth Prime." Each Earth existed in a different Universe and there were a number of other Earths and Universes that I'm not going to tell you about because I want to keep this article short enough to have a chance of appearing in the *Nostalgia Digest*.

At the end of "Crisis on Infinite Earths" the past had been changed so that Earth One, Earth Two, and most of the other Earths had only no longer existed, but in a sense never had existed. Most of the stories which had been assumed to have happened on Earth One were now assumed to have happened on the new DC Earth. But any story that assumed Superman to have existed on Earth in the '30s and '40s had never happened anywhere.

Some months after the end of "Crisis on Infinite Earths," the past of the new DC Universe changed again for reasons which were explained to readers from the point of view of the writers and editors, but were never explained from the viewpoint of the people in the stories.

Superman no longer remembered that he had ever been able to travel faster than light, or travel in time, or that he had ever been able to travel in outer space without special breathing equipment. He no longer remembered that he and Luthor

**THE BATTLE WITH DOOMSDAY
WAS THE FIGHT OF HIS LIFE.**

**NOW THE MAN OF STEEL
IS FIGHTING TO
LIVE AGAIN.**



had ever been in jail.

The way he remembered things now, he had always been sure that Luthor was a crook, but Luthor had always been a little too smart for him and he had never been able to prove it.

Superman's costume was no longer indestructible, except where it touched his body and was protected by force fields generated by his body. His cape was always getting torn and ending up looking the way it looked on the cover of the comic which first reported his death.

He no longer remembered that Ma and Pa Kent had been dead at the time when he first started to work as a reporter. They were still alive and Clark got to go home and visit them on weekends.

Much as I dislike admitting this, the villain called Doomsday might have been able to kill the Superman of Earth Two.

He would have had no chance of killing the Superman of Earth One. The Superman of Earth Two was the original Superman.

Now, DC has four new heroes appear, each calling himself Superman and has had the readers vote on which one gets to keep calling himself Superman.

Now we have a "cold" super-being who takes the law into his own hands; a Superman who is part man and part machine, but who is more law abiding than the "cold" super-being; a teenage clone of Superman who calls himself Superman, not Superboy, and who is about as law abiding as most teen-age superheroes; and a black steelworker whose first name is John and whose second name is Henry. I assume he will be neither more nor less inclined to take the law into his own hands than are most steelworkers, black or white.

By the time you read this, each hero should be appearing in his own comic book, the readers may have decided which one gets to be the new Superman, and the others may have either given up the hero business or started calling themselves by some other name.

If I had to decide on one of the four, it would be John Henry, but I have the feeling that making up a new superhero and calling him Superman is just not going to work.

If they want a black Superman, it might work to change the past of the DC Universe so that Clark Kent and Ma and Pa Kent had always been black. And no one remembered that they had ever even appeared to be Caucasian, just as no one now remembers that Ma and Pa Kent were dead when Clark first started working for the Daily Planet.

But Superman has got to be Clark Kent. He has got to come from the Planet Krypton. And he has got to have either a girlfriend or a wife named Lois Lane.

If DC makes too many changes in the hero who made them what they are today, the death of Superman is likely to be followed very shortly by the death of DC.



Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

A 60th Anniversary Salute to Don McNeill and the Breakfast Club has been scheduled by the Museum for Wednesday, June 23, 1993, the program's exact anniversary date.

As this column goes to press a very special event is being planned. The Chief Breakfast Clubber himself, Don McNeill, will be here in person to receive honors and kudos from his fans in the business and from the audiences who loved him so much over the 35-year life of the popular morning radio show.

It's going to be a special event for Museum members and the general public. For complete details, call the MBC 24-hour Hotline, (312) 629-6020.

There is a lot going on all the time at the Museum of Broadcast Communications.

A fun-filled event took place on April 15th when Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert were the subject of "An evening with . . ." event moderated by WLUP's Steve Dahl and Garry Meier.

Back on March 12, we marked the 60th anniversary, to the day, of *Franklin D. Roosevelt's* first Fireside Chat. Studs Terkel set the scene as we listened to the replay of the address. Then *John Ferris* of the FDR Library in Hyde Park, N.Y.; *Betty Winfield*, author and professor; *Ann Roosevelt*, FDR's granddaughter and Museum President **Bruce**



ACTOR JAMIE FARR, with WLS-TV media Critic Gary Deeb, responds to a question from the audience during Farr's "An Evening with . . ." event for members at the Museum.



FIRESIDE CHATS REMEMBERED — Ann Roosevelt, FDR's granddaughter, discusses the President as a radio communicator with panelists Betty Winfield, author and professor, and John Ferris of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library on the 60th anniversary of the Fireside Chat.

DuMont analyzed how Roosevelt's communications skills compare with those of modern presidents.

On March 23, Klinger came calling. **Jamie Farr** told us about his unforgettable M*A*S*H character as well as his years with **Red Skelton**, his early movie roles and the lean years in between. Channel 7's **Gary Deeb** led the discussion as Jamie took us off on several dozen tangents of wonderful recollections that ran us over the allotted time. The evening's host, Chuck Schaden reluctantly had to cut it off, or we'd still be there! Photos, autographs and one-one-one conversation with Jamie Farr followed.

The Jamie Farr evening is an example of one of our members-only events at the Museum and a very good reason to become a member! A \$30 membership brings you invitations to special events that are not available to the general public. Phone **Katy** at the Museum (312) 629-6015 and she'll tell you about even more benefits of a Museum membership.

Tapes of both evenings will soon be available for viewing at the Museum in the Chicago Cultural Center, Michigan at Washington, Museum hours are Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, Noon to 5 p.m. Admission FREE.

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

Chicago, 60602

Phone (312) 629-6000



JUNE			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
		1 Lone Ranger Bill Stern	2 Nightbeat Dr. Tim, Detective	3 Bulldog Drummond Lum and Abner	4 Black Museum Vic and Sade	5 The Clock Duffy's Tavern Sgt. Preston Hidden Truth
6 Lone Ranger Nick Carter Jack Benny	7 Lone Ranger Pepper Young's Family	8 Lone Ranger Brighter Day	9 Lone Ranger Tarzan	10 Lone Ranger Adventures in Research	11 Lone Ranger Phyl-Coe Mysteries	12 Lone Ranger Green Hornet Sgt. Preston
13 <i>Celebrating WBBM Radio's 70th Anniversary</i>	14 Fibber McGee & Molly Magic Detective	15 Famous Jury Trials Charlie Chan	16 Fred Allen Adventures in Research	17 The Shadow Phyl-Coe Mysteries	18 Archie Andrews Lum and Abner	19 X Minus One Hopalong Cassidy Nightbeat
20 Big Town I Was A Communist Straight Arrow	21 Burns and Allen Phyl-Coe Mysteries	22 The Clock Guys Next Door	23 Nero Wolfe Charlie Chan	24 Red Ryder Tarzan	25 Famous Jury Trials Adventures in Research	26 Escape Life of Riley Black Museum
27 Tales of Texas Rangers Red Ryder Six Shooter	28 Hidden Truth Lum and Abner	29 Sam Spade Sky King	30 Great Gildersleeve Pepper Young's Family	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 coverage. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. 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.		

JULY			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
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 coverage. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. 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.			1 You Bet Your Life Sgt. Preston	2 The Falcon Lum and Abner	3 <i>Triple Feature:</i> Gangbusters "The Devil and the Syndicate"	
4 Cavalcade of America Great Gildersleeve You Are There	5 Lone Ranger Sgt. Preston	6 Amazing Mr. Malone Lum and Abner	7 Mysterious Traveler Phyl-Coe Mysteries	8 Escape Vic and Sade	9 Charlie McCarthy Horatio Hornblower	10 Famous Jury Trials Red Skelton Lone Ranger
11 Boston Blackie Jack Benny X Minus One	12 Fibber McGee & Molly Tarzan	13 Gangbusters Lum and Abner	14 Lone Ranger Hop Harrigan	15 Nightbeat Magic Detective	16 Crime Club Vic and Sade	17 Nick Carter Scarlet Queen Box Thirteen
18 Haunting Hour Burns and Allen Gangbusters	19 Life of Riley Tarzan	20 Fibber McGee & Molly W.C. Fields	21 Jack Benny Pepper Young's Family	22 Lone Ranger Phyl-Coe Mysteries	23 The Shadow Sgt. Preston	24 <i>Christmas in July</i> Our Miss Brooks Great Gildersleeve Phil Harris & Alice Faye
25 <i>Christmas in July</i> Mel Blanc Show Life of Riley Fibber McGee & Molly	26 I Was a Communist Unsolved Mysteries	27 Let George Do It Lum and Abner	28 Casebook of Gregory Hood Vic and Sade	29 Great Gildersleeve Fibber McGee	30 Sherlock Holmes Pepper Young's Family	31 Fibber McGee & Molly Dragnet Jack Benny

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

JUNE

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. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5th

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-22-50) Book 80, Chapter 18. This is the first of 28 consecutive fifteen-minute chapters from Books 80 and 81 by Carlton E. Morse. The story picks up where we left off last summer. We'll present four chapters today and four chapters next week, then we'll have two chapters every week throughout the summer (except June 26). The sequence of programs concerns Paul Barbour's adopted daughter Teddy and her marriage to Elwood Giddings. Miles Laboratories. NBC. (14:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-23-50) Book 80, Chapter 19. (14:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-20-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees of Wistful Vista with Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, Arthur Q. Brian, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Fibber decides to help Molly cut out a dress pattern. Johnson's Wax. NBC. (29:45)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (5-30-43) Douglas Edwards and CBS correspondents at home and abroad. "The Navy announces that the largest Jap force on the Aleutian Islands has been annihilated and Tokyo has already admitted final defeat there . . . in Russia, bitter fighting is raging . . ." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:40)

★ **YOUR HIT PARADE** (5-29-43) Frank Sinatra and Joan Edwards present the top tunes of the week. Mark Warnow and the orchestra. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (30:20)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (1-20-49) "Fuller Brush Man" starring Red Skelton and Janet Blair in their original screen roles in a radio version of the 1948 film comedy. Cast includes Frank Nelson, Willard Waterman, Earle Ross, Paula Winslowe. Red is involved in murder while trying to succeed as a door-to-door salesman. This is the first in our summer-long "Festival of Movies on Radio." Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (27:55)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-24-50) Book 80, Chapter 20. (14:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-27-50) Book 81, Chapter 1. (14:35)

-22- Nostalgia Digest

SATURDAY, JUNE 12th

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-28-50) Book 81, Chapter 2. (14:50)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-29-50) Book 81, Chapter 3. (15:02)

★ **I SUSTAIN THE WINGS** (6-5-43) Captain Glenn Miller and the Band of the Technical Training Command of the Army Air Force in a remote broadcast from Yale University. New Haven, Connecticut. PFC Broderick Crawford announces as the band offers "Anvil Chorus" featuring Cpl. Ray McKinley, Pvt. Bob Huston singing "Moonlight Becomes You;" "Begin the Beguine" sung by PFC Tony Martin; and "The Caissons Go Rolling Along;" US Army Air Forces, WEEI, Boston. (29:30)

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (1-7-40) "Petrified Forest" starring Joan Bennett, Tyrone Power and Humphrey Bogart in a radio version of Robert Sherwood's story of a gangster who holds hostages at a roadside restaurant in Arizona. Bogart repeats his stage and screen role (from the 1936 film) as Duke Mantee. Roger Prior hosts. Gulf Oil, CBS. (29:00)

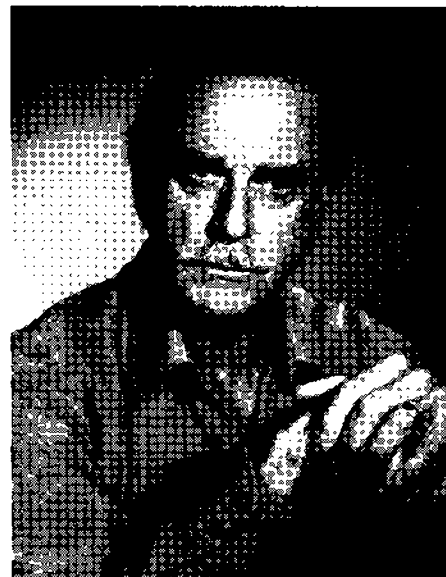
★ **STARS AND STRIPES IN BRITAIN** (6-20-43) Actor Ben Lyon is host for a program about servicemen in England, aimed to British and American listeners. He interviews two army cameramen and presents coverage of the dedication of a new airfield. BBC/MBS. (13:30)

FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER AND FLYWHEEL (1991) Fifth program in the series of reenactments of the 1932 Marx Brothers radio show. The cast includes Michael Roberts as Groucho Marx as Waldorf T. Flywheel and Frank Lazarus as Chico Marx as Emmanuel Ravelli. Lorelei King is Miss Dimple. David Firman and the orchestra. BBC. (27:03)

★ **GI JIVE #919** (1940s) GI Jill spins the tunes for servicemen around the world. Music by Tommy Dorsey, Phil Harris, Jo Stafford, Glenn Miller. AFRS. (14:01)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (11-30-50) Book 81, Chapter 4. (14:49)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-1-50) Book 81, Chapter 5. (14:50)



JOHN DEHNER

SATURDAY, JUNE 19th

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (4-4-43) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve with Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Lurene Tuttle, Ben Alexander, Earle Ross, Dick LeGrand. Gildy's pre-war automobile has been "acting up" and is in need of repairs. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:25)

★ **LUX RADIO THEATRE** (6-11-45) "Murder My Sweet" starring Dick Powell, Claire Trevor and Mike Mazurki repeating their screen roles in this radio adaptation of the 1944 movie. Raymond Chandler's hard-boiled detective is involved in homicide and blackmail in this film noir mystery set in Los Angeles. Lux Soap, CBS. (16:10, 17:50, 24:25)

HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL (9-18-60) John Dehner stars as Paladin with Ben Wright as Hey Boy and Virginia Gregg as Miss Wong. The son of an old friend shows up at Paladin's door, claiming his stepfather is mistreating him. Participating sponsors, CBS. (23:30)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-4-43) Orson Welles continues to sub while Jack is recovering from a long illness. When Mary Livingstone tells Orson that Jack will return to the program next week, Welles prepares to leave the show. This broadcast was missing from the sequence of "Benny's illness" shows we presented in February. Grapes Nuts, NBC. (28:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-4-50) Book 81, Chapter 6. (15:09)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-5-50) Book 81, Chapter 7. (12:54)

SATURDAY, JUNE 26th
DON MC NEILL'S BREAKFAST CLUB
A 60th Anniversary Salute

DON MC NEILL STORY (6-22-63) On the eve of the 20th Anniversary of the Breakfast Club, ABC Radio offers an informal documentary on the radio life of Don McNeill and the Breakfast Club. Host is Dennis James and, from Hollywood, Chicago and New York, we hear Johnny Desmond, Peggy Taylor, Sam Cowling, Fran Allison, Eddie Ballentine, Joe E. Brown, Peter Donald, Jack Owens, Nancy Martin, Evelyn Lynn, Jack Rose. Sustaining, ABC. (28:40)

BREAKFAST CLUB (6-23-53) From the Terrace Casino of the Morrison Hotel in Chicago, it's the 20th anniversary broadcast of the program starring Don McNeill and Fran Allison, Sam Cowling, Peggy Taylor, Johnny Desmond, and Eddie Ballentine and the orchestra. Don introduces twenty 20-year olds, people born on June 23, 1933, when the Breakfast Club first went on the air. Features include the "Sunshine Shower," "Moment of Silent Prayer," "March Time," "Fiction and Fact from Sam's Almanac," and a visit from Aunt Fanny. Don's wife Kay and his three sons visit the program and his mother and father are in the audience. Bobbi Pin Curl, White Rain, Swift and Company, Philco, ABC. (31:30; 29:45)

BREAKFAST CLUB/DON MC NEILL SHOW (12-27-68) From the Clouds Room of the Allerton Hotel in Chicago, it's Don McNeill's final broadcast after more than 35 years on the air with the Breakfast Club format. Don and the gang say goodbye to their listeners. Featured are Sam Cowling, Fran Allison, Cathy Taylor, Captain Stubby, Eddie Ballentine and the orchestra. Burr Tillstrom, in the audience, offers goodbyes and good luck from the Kuklapolitan Players. ABC/WLS-FM. (24:55, 31:15)

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

JULY

SATURDAY, JULY 3rd V-DISCS AND WORLD WAR II A 50th Anniversary Salute

The War Department's V-Disc program of providing specially recorded musical entertainment to our troops around the world began in the Summer of 1943. To observe the occasion, *Nostalgia Digest* columnist and Big Band historian **KARL PEARSON** will join us for an afternoon of musical history and memories. Among the seldom-heard V-Disc selections to be presented are: Hal McIntyre's "My Ideal;" Glenn Miller and the 418 AAF Band with "St. Louis Blues March;" Eddy Howard's "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year;" "How Little We Know" sung by Corporal Buddy Clark accompanied by the 344th ASF Orchestra from Ft. Sheridan, Illinois; "Three Little Words" by the Benny Goodman Quartet; Louis Prima and the orchestra with "Robin Hood;" "Small Fry" sung by Bing Crosby with Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra; Frank Sinatra singing "Nancy;" "The Blue Danube" by Spike Jones and his City Slickers; Ethel Merman singing "Why Do They Call a Private a Private?;" and "Bell Bottom Trousers" sung by Connie Boswell and her V-Disc Men. And much more.

-PLUS-

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-6-50) Book 81, Chapter 8. Miles Laboratories, NBC. (14:50)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-7-50) Book 81, Chapter 9. (14:50)

SATURDAY, JULY 10th

LUX RADIO THEATRE (3-22-55) "Rawhide" starring Donna Reed and Jeffrey Hunter with William Conrad. This western adventure, a radio version of the 1951 film, finds outlaws hiding at a stagecoach station, holding a group of people captive. Irving Cummings is producer-host. Lux Soap, CBS. (17:00; 14:55; 15:00)

★ **NEWS OF THE WORLD** (7-1-43) Frank Singiser with the war news "... the latest official picture of the present Southwest Pacific offensive under the command of General Douglas MacArthur ... 17 American planes and one transport were lost ... 65 of 110 attacking Japanese planes were shot down ... the Axis may be expected to bomb some American cities this summer ... Forhan's Toothpaste, MBS. (13:00)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (4-27-43) Jim and Marian Jordan star. Fibber's got a taste for a thick, juicy steak, but he's all out of WW II ration coupons. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:15)

-24- *Nostalgia Digest*

★ **QUIZ KIDS** (3-28-43) Guest Fred Allen joins Chief Quizzer Joe Kelly and the kids: Joel Kupperman, Smila Brind, Richard Williams, Harvey Bennett Fishman, and Gerard Darrow. Alka Seltzer, BLUE. (28:10)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (7-4-43) Douglas Edwards and CBS correspondents around the world. "Axis territory is reverberating to the burst of Allied bombs on this July 4th ... General MacArthur is personally directing operations at the Front in New Guinea ... in Washington, we're celebrating the quietest Fourth of July in American history." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:45)

ONE-MAN'S FAMILY (12-8-50) Book 81, Chapter 10. (14:45)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-11-50) Book 81, Chapter 11. (14:45)

SATURDAY, JULY 17th

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-25-43) On Easter Sunday, Jack is selling carnations to people walking in the Easter Parade. Also, his horse is going to race in the Kentucky Derby. Don Wilson, Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson. AFRS Rebroadcast. (26:05)

SCREEN DIRECTOR'S PLAYHOUSE (2-3-50) "The Sea Wolf" starring Edward G. Robinson in his original 1941 screen role as Wolf Larson, the brutal but educated sea captain who battles wits with a passenger rescued at sea. Cast features Paul Frees, Lurene Tuttle and Lou Merrill. RCA Victor, NBC. (29:15)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (7-11-43) CBS correspondents from the world's political and battle fronts, including Edward R. Murrow in London. "Allied forces are smashing forward on a 100 mile front in Sicily ... the Russians report that Germany's new offensive has been stopped." Admiral Radios, CBS. (24:45)

ACADEMY AWARD (4-6-46) "Kitty Foyle" starring Ginger Rogers as a working girl who falls in love. She won an Oscar for her performance in the title role of the 1940 film. House of Squibb, CBS. (28:50)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (4-11-43) It's not a good day for Mr. Gildersleeve and things don't get better when he has an accident with his car. Harold Peary stars. Gale Gordon makes an appearance as an Insurance Man. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:25)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-12-50) Book 81, Chapter 12. (15:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-13-50) Book 81, Chapter 13. (15:00)



SHEP FIELDS

SATURDAY, JULY 24th

★ **VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS** (7-21-43) Shep Fields and his orchestra broadcast from the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics in Orlando, Florida. This is Fields' "all read" orchestra, not his "Rippling Rhythm" style. Selections include "Sheik of Araby," "People Will Say We're In Love," "In My Arms," and "All or Nothing at All." Coca-Cola, BLUE. (22:00)

★ **LUX RADIO THEATRE** (2-5-45) "Laura" starring Dana Andrews, Gene Tierney and Vincent Price repeating their original movie roles in this radio version of the 1944 film. It's the classic mystery story about a detective trying to assemble a murder puzzle, gradually falling in love with the portrait of the beautiful victim. Cast includes Otto Krueger. Lionel Barrymore is guest producer-host. Lux, CBS. (20:20; 12:40; 24:30)

★ **SKELLY NEWS** (7-24-43) Newsmen Alex Drier reports the news "The Germans, throwing heavy resources of men and machines at the Allied lines below Rome, have again been smashed back ... in that area ... some of the bitterest battles of the Italian campaign are raging." Skelly Oil Co., NBC. (14:40)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (5-4-43) Jim and Marian Jordan stars as Fibber and Molly. Mr. McGee pays a numerologist to give him a new name. Homer K. Frink, Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:40)

★ **TREASURY STAR PARADE #13** (1942) Frederic March and Jane Cowell perform the now classic short story by Paul Gallico, "The Snow Goose." Al Goodman and the orchestra. U.S. Treasury Department. (14:46)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-14-50) Book 81, Chapter 14. (15:00)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-15-50) Book 81, Chapter 15. (14:17)

SATURDAY, JULY 31st

MR. KEEN, TRACER OF LOST PERSONS (1-19-50) "Bride and Groom Murder Case" starring Bennett Kilpack as the "kindly old investigator" with Jim Kelly

as Mike Clancy. A young bride is murdered on her honeymoon. AFRS rebroadcast (24:00)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (4-18-43) Harold Peary stars as Gildy who leads nephew Leroy (Walter Tetley) and his chums on a hike. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:50)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (7-25-43) Douglas Edwards, John Daly, Edward R. Murrow, Eric Sevareid, Bill Downs and others report wartime events. "British and American planes have showered tons of bombs on enemy targets in Western Europe, in the Mediterranean, in the South Pacific, and in China ... the Sicilian campaign has reached its final stages." Admiral Radios, CBS. (23:55)

SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (9-30-46) Peggy Ann Garner repeats her screen performance in "Junior Miss," a radio version of the 1945 film comedy about a teenager, her harried father and, of course, a merry mix-up. Allyn Joslyn, also from the original movie, is co-starred and the cast includes Barbara Whiting and Frank Nelson. Lady Esther Cosmetics, CBS. (28:35)

★ **VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS** (7-31-43) Teddy Powell and his orchestra in a remote broadcast from the U.S. Naval Training School at the University of Chicago. Selections include "In the Blue of Evening," "Dark Eyes," "I Don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance" and "Pale Moon." Coca-Cola, BLUE. (23:30)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-18-50) Book 81, Chapter 16. (14:48)

ONE MAN'S FAMILY (12-19-50) Book 81, Chapter 17. (14:49)

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Write if you get work . . .

BY STEVEN DARNALL

If they could claim nothing else, Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding would certainly have earned the title of "Radio's last great comedy team."

They came around comparatively late in radio's golden age, making their debut in 1946. Yet not only did they manage to outlast most of their 1946 contemporaries, they also managed to outlast the golden age of radio, staying on the air for the better part of four decades, with a style of comedy so delightfully dry that it managed to win over listeners of all generations.

"From the time I knew what radio was, I wanted to be a part of it," Bob once told an interviewer, and both he and Ray became a part of it early in their lives. In 1939, at the age of 17, Ray had gotten his first job in radio as an announcer for a station in Lowell, Massachusetts. Two years later, at the age of eighteen, Bob took a job as an announcer at WHDH in Boston — a station that would play a pivotal role in their careers a short time later. Both men went into the service during World War II, and after the war, both men found themselves at WHDH; Ray as a newsreader and announcer, Bob as host of a musical program, *Back Bay Matinee*.

The two men found such an immediate rapport that WHDH gave them an afternoon program, *Baseball Matinee*, which aired during the summer before Red Sox games. When the baseball season ended, management kept the duo on the air by changing the show's name to *Matinee with Bob and Ray* (Bob later joked that he had to get top billing, "otherwise it would have had to have been 'Matinob with Ray and Bob'").

In its early days, the show had no real format to speak of, so the duo ad-libbed

their way through each program (with an occasional musical number from organist Ken Wilson and pianist Bill Green), and slowly, but certainly, their offbeat humor began to take shape. One of the elements that made Bob and Ray's radio comedy so unique was that there was no "straight man"; both men were willing, and able, to assume the role of foil or fool.

Another important distinction was their background; unlike most radio comedians, Bob and Ray didn't come out of a Broadway or vaudeville tradition, with a bagful of tried and true routines. Instead, they were among the first generation of comedians (which included Henry Morgan and Stan Freberg) to *grow up* with radio. This gave them a different perspective on the medium, and the characters and parodies they created reflected that.

During their years at WHDH, they began satirizing the radio fare of the day with bogus programs like "Jack Headstrong, The All-American American," "Rancid, The Magician," and "Lawrence McGaffigan — Cop." The team also created "The Life and Loves of Linda Lovely," which began their long-time love/hate relationship with soap operas (Bob and Ray would continue to parody soaps into the 1980s, poking fun at TV melodramas like *Dallas* and *Dynasty* on their own "Garish Summit").

Bob and Ray's most famous characters were usually based on radio personalities as well.

Well-known interviewer Mary Margaret McBride became the inspiration for Ray's Mary McGoon (Ray's falsetto provided Bob and Ray's world

. . . and hang by your thumbs!



BOB ELLIOTT and RAY GOULDING

with its female denizens), who divided her time between offering home tips and recipes for dishes like “Frozen Ginger Ale Salad” and pursuing an off-again/on-again romance with cowboy singer Tex Blaisdell (Bob).

Mary also ran for President at one point (Racing With McGoon” became her slogan), and in 1949, she and Tex teamed up to record Frankie Laine’s “Mule Train” (“I think my notes are even truer than Vaughn Monroe’s,” she claimed).

While at WHDH, Bob came up with Arthur Sturdley (a particularly sharp impersonation of Arthur Godfrey) and Wally Ballou, an intrepid radio reporter (based on a radio station janitor Bob once knew) who would go on to become Bob and Ray’s longest-running character.

In 1951, Bob and Ray accepted an offer from NBC and went to New York,

where they announced they were broadcasting “from approximately coast-to-coast.” It was here that the duo began to hit their stride.

There were, of course, new characters to add to the stable of old ones; sportscaster Biff Burns, who signed off by saying “This is Biff Burns saying until next time, this is Biff Burns saying ‘So long’”; mush-mouthed book critic Webley Webster, who brought along a troupe of actors to portray a scene from a selected book (it didn’t seem to make any difference what book Webley was reviewing, however; the dramatization was always set on a pirate ship where a sadistic captain pounded the pemmican out of his first mate); and actor Barry Campbell, whose career was one display of ineptitude after another.

They began conducting interviews with “guests” who took the idea of human interest stories to a laughable extreme. One guest, for instance, impersonated Presidents, but only those who served before 1900. Another had planned to swim across the United States; unfortunately, the only way he could do it was to fill a trailer with water and do laps while his relatives drove him across the country.

While Bob and Ray were still capable of (and prone to) a few ab-libs here and there, they also began to devote more time to scripting their programs, which, in turn, enabled them to develop a broader range of material (“We were very good at keeping a topic alive after it should have been finished,” Bob once noted).

There were still plenty of radio show parodies, such as “One Fella’s Family,” “Mr. Trace, Keener Than Most Person,” and “Lawrence Fechtenberger, Interstellar Officer Candidate,” a pompous space-age hero who completed his Interstellar Academy training only to be

BOB AND RAY

assigned to Bedford, Massachusetts ("I thought we'd be on some . . . planet!" he exclaimed).

"Linda Lovely" evolved into "Mary Backstayge, Noble Wife," and became the story of her "fight for security and happiness against the concrete heart of Broadway." In fact, even though the duo were never famous for their political satire, Ray brought a new character to "Mary Backstayge" during the Army-McCarthy hearings; Commissioner Carstairs, a Joe McCarthy sound-alike who would interrupt anyone who crossed his path.

There were parodies of commercials, too; Bob and Ray gave the world such "products" as "Tingle: The dental floss made from spun glass fiber," "Skin Thick," a product for people who were easily insulted, and Tanglefoot, "The greatest name in flypaper."

There were frequent offers of great savings from the "Bob and Ray Overstocked Warehouse," such as "Chocolate Wobblies," which were originally chocolate Easter bunnies that got placed too close to a warehouse steampipe.

Bob and Ray put a special twist on their fake commercials by refusing to play them for broad laughs. Indeed, the fact that these gentlemen, with their professional radio voices, were delivering these ad pitches with poker faces made them that much funnier — and made "normal" commercials that much more suspect (like their friend Stan Freberg, Bob and Ray went on to write and perform in some genuine commercials as well, most notably for Piels Beer and Underwood Devil-ed Ham).

In the late 1950s, Bob and Ray moved to CBS, where they were heard five days a week (and where they introduced themselves by announcing "Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding present the CBS Radio Network"), and even though they flirted with television for a few years in the 1950s, they

stayed with radio well after the other programs had died off, ending up at New York station WOR until disputes with station management led them to quit in 1976. For a while it seemed as though the last of the great radio teams was of the air for keeps, although they certainly kept busy with television appearances (including a well-received 1979 special, performed with *Saturday Night Live's* Jane Curtin, Laraine Newman and Gilda Radner).

Bob and Ray were back on the kilocycles once more in 1982, this time appearing weekly on National Public Radio, bringing back all their classic characters and plenty of new ones as well.

Ray Goulding passed away in March of 1990, bringing the team's long and glorious partnership to a close. Bob Elliott pops up from time to time in movies (he recently played a hapless bank guard in the Bill Murray film *Quick Change*), television (he played the father of his real-life son, Chris, on the Fox-TV sitcom *Get A Life*), and of course, on radio, where he sometimes performs with Garrison Keillor.

The humor of Bob and Ray lives on in some ways more prominently than ever. RADIOART has released several cassette compilations of Bob and Ray material, and a new program, *Classic Bob & Ray*, began airing on Public radio earlier this year.

Bob and Ray started out wanting to "be a part of radio," and it would be hard to deny that they were a most important part of it. Which might explain how, nearly fifty years after their debut, so many people can still remember their classic shows, right up to their famous sign-off:

"Now, this is Ray Goulding, reminding you to write if you get work . . ."

". . . Bob Elliott, reminding you to hang by your thumbs." ■

(ED. NOTE — Volumes 1-3 of *Classic Bob and Ray*, plus Volumes 1-4 of *Best of Bob and Ray* are available for \$29.95 each plus tax at Metro Golden Memories in Chicago. These tape sets, each with two full hours of vintage Bob and Ray material, may be ordered by mail — send \$33.95 for each set — from The Hall Closet, Box 421, Morton Grove, IL 60053.)

*Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .*

Sears



Sears, Roebuck and Company has been in the news a lot the past several years, not only in the business pages but on the front page as well. We've read about reorganizations of management, closings of stores, faceliftings of stores, realignments of the merchandising system, layoffs of employees, restructuring of pricing policy, the move from Sears Tower to Hoffman Estates, the institution of Brand Central, the discontinuance of the catalog, and the decision to accept Visa and MasterCard.

The stories often appear on the front-page because Sears is such a large and far-flung organization that these changes can affect thousands, and even millions, of people. Sears has had a bearing, in one way or another, on the lives of many of us Americans.

As for myself, I would never have been born if it hadn't been for Sears. My parents first met while they were working at Sears' warehouse and office building at Homan and Arthington — my mother as a business correspondent, my dad as an assistant buyer.

Sears' catalog figures prominently in my childhood memories. We've often heard that people who lived in rural areas many miles from the nearest department store ordered many of their needs from Sears. My family never lived on a farm; we lived on the West Side of Chicago.

Nevertheless, perhaps out of a sense of loyalty because they had worked for the company, perhaps there was no car in the family, or perhaps simply because they always received good value for their money, my parents ordered regularly from Sears' Big Book.

In late winter, the spring and summer catalog would arrive, and in late summer, the fall and winter book would come. From time to time throughout the year, we would receive fliers advertising, at reduced prices, some items from the general catalog and also some new items.

As a boy, I spent hours wishfully perusing Sears' catalog. First of all, there were all sorts of toys: windup toys, toy trains, toy musical instruments, and toy soldiers. There were sporting goods of all kinds.

I would study the descriptions of Silvertone radios and phonographs, of telescopes and binoculars, of cameras and movie projectors and slide projectors. There were Craftsman tools: saws, wrenches, hammers, axes, pliers, screwdrivers, and vises.

There were clothes I would have liked to own: dress-up suits, hi-top boots, leather jackets lined with fleece, green plaid woolen mackinaws such as lumberjacks wear, blue chambray work shirts and bib overalls. If I had been able to own everything I wished for, I would

SEARS

have needed my own warehouse to hold it all.

Every couple of months, my parents would decide that it was time to place an order. My dad and I wore Sears' clothes: Pilgrim underwear (one-piece underwear called union suits), socks, shirts, pajamas, pants, Gold Bond shoes, and the corduroy knickers I wore to school. My mother and my sister, too, wore apparel from Sears.

Sears made it easy to order clothing from the catalog. For people who weren't sure of their size, there were instructions for taking measurements for shirts, pants, skirts, blouses, hats, gloves, and shoes.

We ordered towels, bedsheets, and pillowcases from the catalog. My dad had a Tower portable typewriter from Sears. Our window curtains also came from there. We had some furniture from Sears. In our kitchen today stands a Coldspot refrigerator bought in the mid-1960s. (If it ain't broke, don't replace it.) My dad ordered vitamins from Sears.

In the days before we had a telephone, we would mail in our orders. After we got a telephone, in the mid-1930s, my mother would phone in the orders. She would read off the items:

17K 2924 . . . 1 shirt . . . blue . . .
14½/33 . . . \$2.95
29K 1772 . . . 2 dresses . . . pink . . .
18 months . . . 98¢ each . . . \$1.96 . . .

A few days later, a huge truck would pull up in front of our apartment building. The truck was dark green with cream lettering on the side: WM. FULLERTON. (Sears contracted with the William Fullerton trucking company to make its deliveries. Later, Sears made other arrangements and the trucks were tan and navy blue, with the Sears name painted on the side, and below that the slogan, "Shop at Sears and Save.")

The doorbell would ring, my mother would buzz open the downstairs door, and the driver would call from below, "Sears!" He would deliver the order, collect the amount due, and be off.

Then came the exciting part: the unpacking of the order. Sometimes, I would hear the dreaded words from my mother: "Oh, they sent the wrong shirt."

The item we had ordered may have been out of stock, and Sears sent along a note explaining that they had made a substitution. Other times, somebody had simply goofed. In such a case, my mother would have to call Sears to explain the problem. A few days later, a driver would come and make an exchange.

Generally, though, what we ordered was what we got. I was usually slightly disappointed when the packages were opened, not that the merchandise had been misrepresented in the catalog. The description had been scrupulously accurate, and the picture had been an actual photo of the article I saw before me. The problem was with me and my expectations. I had formed in my young

mind an image of that article which could not possibly be materialized. Such is the power of imagination.

My relationship with Sears, Roebuck and Company was not merely that of a customer. For a little more than a year, I found myself on the sending, as well as the receiving, end of Sears' mail orders. My second job after I finished high school was as an order filler at Sears' warehouse at Homan and Arthington. (We were officially called orderpickers, but I preferred the term "order filler"; I thought it had a bit more dignity.)

I worked in Department 29, on one of the upper floors of the building. My job was simple: I would be handed a stack of orders, which I would take with me as I walked up and down the aisles picking the appropriate merchandise out of the numbered bins. Our stock-in-trade in Department 29 was infants' wear: sleepers, buntings, dresses, booties, blankets, bonnets, and diapers. We sold a lot of diapers.

On the first floor of the building, Sears had a retail store, where there was a catalog order desk. There, customers could order from the catalog and receive their merchandise on the spot. Once in a while, I was assigned the job of filling those orders, and that was fun.

We called the assignment "customer waiting." The orders from downstairs reached us via a pneumatic tube system, and as soon as the order was received, I would get the merchandise and place it, with the order pinned to it, in a large, oblong basket, which I would send down a chute.

The chute was a spiral about eight feet in diameter. It originated on the top floor and ran to the first floor. After placing the basket in the chute, I would listen as it clattered its way down and down and

round and round. The noise would fade long before the basket reached the first floor.

I never knew just how long a customer at the catalog order desk had to wait for his or her merchandise after the order was placed. I did know that from the time I received the order until I sent that basket hurtling down the chute, no more than four or five minutes passed. I took some pride in that fact.

After spending 13 months in diapers, I felt it was time for a change. I quit my job at Sears and moved on to another line of work. Still my family continued to order from Sears' catalog.

Somewhere along the line, the company changed its policy regarding catalogs and stopped sending them to us. As a result, we stopped sending in orders. My dad had acquired a car by that time, and it had become easier to do our shopping in stores rather than by phone.

When I was working downtown, I would sometimes visit the Sears store at State and Van Buren. Now, whenever I go to Oakbrook Center I stop in the Sears store there.

So it is that Sears has been a part of my life all my life.

Now I see that Sears posted a loss in 1992 — its first annual loss since the Great Depression. The company has announced that 1992 was its most difficult year ever. I'm hoping that the years to come will be much better for Sears.

I've told you some of my pleasant memories of Sears. You undoubtedly have some of your own. Everybody has. I don't have the solution to Sears' problems, but I've been thinking about my memories, and everybody's memories, of Sears. I think that back in 1886, if Mr. Sears' and Mr. Roebuck had started *charging* for memories — even if only a few cents a piece — Sears, Roebuck and Company today would be one of the richest companies in the world. ■

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"Do Wah Ditty" II
Beverly Hills Beavers

TAPE 2

Cimmaron Rolls I
Dennis and the Doc
"Si," "Sy" II
Railroad Station II
Violin Lesson II
At The Races
Cimmaron Rolls II
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Doctor's Office II
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Wrong Way Corrigan

BY FR. KEVIN SHANLEY, O.CARM.

The Year 1993 marks the 55th Anniversary of the great flight to Ireland by "Wrong Way" Corrigan who made aviation history and became a folk hero by insisting he was flying to California!

Born Douglas Groce Corrigan at the dawn of the Age of Aviation in 1906, Corrigan not only learned to fly at an early age but revered Col. Charles Lindberg who flew the Atlantic solo in 1927.

Corrigan wanted to imitate his hero's feat but had to do things a bit differently. He scraped together \$310 in 1935 to buy a decrepit plane in New York whose main selling point was that it looked like Lindberg's "Spirit of St. Louis." But that's where the comparison ended as Corrigan learned when it took him 13 days to fly the plane back to California. He flew by day and spent many of the nights repairing his plane. It would take him the next two years to repair and refit the monoplane for the trans-Atlantic trip.

By 1937, the intrepid, red-haired Irish-American had not only doubled the plane's fuel capacity, he re-enforced wings, body and tail for the arduous journey. So bulky were the fuel tanks that he had to learn to check his forward course by banking the plane. He then applied to the U.S. Government for permission to fly to Ireland. Permission denied.

But the following year, in early July, 1938, he made a 28-hour, non-stop flight in his newly-conditioned plane from Long Beach, Calif., to Floyd Bennett Field on Long Island, NY. The flight itself was a great accomplishment but

Corrigan wasn't interested in publicity, not just yet.

Corrigan requested flight clearance at Bennett to return to California. He wanted to take off at 1 a.m. and fly by moonlight, but the airport manager feared a nighttime crash, especially with the 320 gallons of gas and 16 gallons of oil aboard. The only extra provisions Corrigan had were some candy bars and a bottle of water.

The day was July 17, and as the sun was rising over Long Island, the 31-year-old Corrigan labored down the runway and was airborne at 4:17 a.m. The few who gathered to watch the takeoff were puzzled when Corrigan headed East instead of towards California. They thought he would turn when he gained altitude.

It was not till 28 hours and 13 minutes later when he landed in Dublin's airport that the world learned that Douglas Corrigan had realized his dream of making the 3,150 mile journey across the Atlantic. Soon news of "Wrong Way" Corrigan's flight hummed over news wires and splashed onto the front pages of newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond. Corrigan became an instant hero everywhere.

But he insisted that he was only trying to fly to California. When startled Irish airport officials asked for his landing papers, Corrigan grinned, "What landing papers? I thought I was in California." When later questioned, Corrigan maintained that he must have read the wrong end of the compass needle and that's how he ended in Ireland. An

WE GET

TILLSON, NEW YORK — One night scanning the radio channels, I was very happy to tune in to WBBM and discover the nostalgic old time radio shows. I now make it a practice to tune in every morning at 1 a.m., my time, to enjoy an hour of my old time favorites. Also on weekends, instead of TV which has become very boring, I can once again go back to yesteryear. I wish that there were more hours of programming. I would put my TV set to rest. Many of my friends are also happy listeners. WBBM has made a lot of Seniors very happy.

— ANNE LIGUORI

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA — What a wonderful season it was in November and December. Great old time radio programs! You did a fantastic job night after night. I taped some fine programs that I've played over and over. My dear radio friends are always there for me to calm any anxious thoughts and help me through the nights. I'm in good health, but I miss my late husband. Your clips that time allow are such fun. I do prefer humor and you know where to dig up real gems.

— SHIRLEY JOHNSON

OLUSTEE, OKLAHOMA — Thanks for airing Tarzan episodes on WBBM. They are great. Really a '30s style to them. Usually have trouble at times during the summer getting WBBM's radio signal. Also thanks for Vic and Sade and Lum and Abner and, finally, thanks for airing the quarter-hour Fibber McGee and Molly shows. They are usually overlooked and not quite as good as the half hour shows, but still good fun anyway.

— LOWELL ROBERTS

WRONG WAY CORRIGAN

unlikely story, but Corrigan never admitted to anything else. When comparisons were made to his flight and Lindberg's, Corrigan came out well because his plane was smaller, slower and lacked the equipment aboard the "St. Louis." And veteran aviators opined that Corrigan had beaten the odds on a 100-to-1 gamble.

The year 1938 needed a hero to throw off the gloom of the Depression that hung over the U.S. and the world. Corrigan became that hero for Americans and others. Through it all, he insisted, "Really now, I thought I was headed for California. It wasn't until I saw your mountains here that I realized it wasn't California."

It was, perhaps the most famous misdirected flight for "Wrong Way" Corrigan, or anyone else. ■

-34- *Nostalgia Digest*

JOHNSON CITY, NEW YORK — I am located in upstate New York, near Binghamton about 70 miles south of Syracuse. Please let me know if there are any radio stations in my area that broadcast old time radio shows.

— GEORGE VULTAGGIO

(ED. NOTE — Your best bet is to check with the writer who reports on radio and television for your local newspaper. He or she should know if there is a station in your vicinity that broadcasts any of the vintage shows.)

MC LEAN, VIRGINIA — I am 15 and have a father who never stops talking about old movies he saw and radio shows he listened to when he was a kid. The *Nostalgia Digest* would be perfect for him. Please send him a gift subscription to your magazine.

— MIKE AUERBACH

WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI — I really like listening to the radio programs of old. I try and listen to your show when I can get it clear. I have a collection of some 3000 shows on record, cassettes and reel to reel tapes. When I lived in Denver, Colorado, I listened to John Dunning's radio show when he was on, and really enjoyed it. Collecting these old radio programs is a great hobby. And they have brought back many memories for me. I am 50 so I remember a lot of them.

— QUENTIN BEYER

TULSA, OKLAHOMA — I work at the Transoak Building in downtown Tulsa and get off work at midnight and old time radio on WBBM is my friend on my drive home. I really enjoy it. During my high school years 1946-1949, I listened to all of the radio shows.

— JAMES F. YOUNG

BRITT, MINNESOTA — I can't tell you how much I enjoy your old time radio show. Although we sometimes have trouble (interference, static, etc.) on the earlier weekend broadcasts, the midnight shows come in loud and clear. I am so glad I grew up with radio rather than television. Using one's own imagination was so much more a learning experience than having it all laid out with gimmicks and special effects.

— MRS. WARREN SIMS

NAPERVILLE, IL — I especially enjoy the programs with WWII flavor, but my favorite of all the years I've listened are the talks by President Roosevelt. I was a child during WWII and my family was not pro-Roosevelt, but listening to him now my heart is touched. In these days when only a passing reference, if any at all, is given to our Creator and Sustainer, what a lift to hear a much-revered president talking about Him and calling to Him for help. Why don't you send a copy of Pres. Roosevelt's talks — at least some of them — to President Clinton?

— GRACE ANSBURG

LETTERS

WOODRIDGE, IL — I enjoy your program every night on WBBM, especially when you play Jack Benny, George and Gracie, and the dramas. I am 22 years old and have collected old time radio since I was 12 and my favorite is Benny. It's nice to see a station like WBBM dedicating time to the great performers of the past every night of the week. Now, I only wish I could get Comedy Central on my cable system so I could watch the Jack Benny Program on television again. — **JOHN MALONE**

KENOSHA, WISCONSIN — *Those Were The Days* has me and has had me for some time now, hooked, lined and sinkered. I look forward to Saturday afternoons, not only because it's one of two days off from work, but because of your radio program. I listen in the car, on the headphones walking, or at home. Kenosha has a two hour old time radio show on Sundays 5-7 p.m., too. If I hadn't been for my "discovery" of *TWTD* though, I may never have recently found and listened to our local old time radio programs. I have purchased many tapes from the Hall Closet. I listen to them when I'm going to sleep at night. It helps to erase the stress of the day's teaching. I teach fifth grade at a hardcore school. This is my 28th year there. — **NANCY VRANAK**

CHICAGO — A few years ago I saw you on Cable Channel 25 interviewing Jack Mulqueen, who in the 1960s, produced "Kiddie-A-Go-Go" on WCIU-TV. You never said what became of his wife, Elaine (a.k.a. "Pandora"). I'd like to know what she has done since disappearing from the public eye in the early '70s (after doing a few TV ads for Canfield's soft drinks). Is she still living? The reason for my curiosity is that I used to dance on Kiddie-A-Go-Go. I still have the picture my sister and I took with Pandora. — **GEORGE CUNDARI**

(ED. NOTE — Elaine "Pandora" Mulqueen is very much alive and well and continues to work with husband Jack at Mulqueen Productions, an advertising agency, and Trend Studios, Inc., which promotes the popular Hollywood Collectibles Shows and other special events, including the Ringling Brothers circus.)

DOWNERS GROVE, IL — Perhaps one of your readers can help me with this. I am a long-time Lone Ranger fan and have been looking for an article that ran in the old *Chicago Herald-American* newspaper on August 30, 1944. It dealt with the death of Lee Powell, who starred as the first movie Lone Ranger in the Republic serial of 1938, entitled "The Lone Ranger." He also appeared in person as the Lone Ranger with Silver in circus performances around the country and was wonderful in the role. Mr. Powell enlisted in the Marines after World War II began and saw action in the Pacific on Saipan, Tarawa

and was killed in the fighting on Tinian. He was a sergeant at that time.

There were two stories that ran on the above date. The early editions ran an INS (International News Service) story and the later editions ran the AP (Associated Press) story. One can get a copy of the AP article relatively easy, but finding the INS story is just about impossible. It occurred to me that another old-time Lone Ranger fan might have cut this INS story out as a kid and pasted it in a scrapbook. If anybody has this story, I would very much like to have a Xerox copy of it. My address is 1010 C Curtiss St., Downers Grove, IL 60515. I would be eternally grateful to anybody who can help me obtain a copy of this story. — **JOSEPH GURA, JR.**

PARK FOREST, IL — Very soon my wife, my mother and I will move to the Hill Country of Texas near San Antonio, where we have our retirement home waiting for us. I have been listening to *TWTD* since the middle 70s and began taping in the early 80s. I now have about 1,000 hours on cassettes for those long trips across this country. I will continue my subscription to the *Nostalgia Digest* and will use the Hall Closet service for tapes to add to the collection. I have been a volunteer tour guide at the Museum of Broadcast Communications since the summer of 1990 and will miss that work, but will continue my membership and will visit the Museum on our trips back to the Chicago area to visit family and friends. Good luck to you. Your programs have been a bright spot on radio for more than two decades. — **BASIL KAKAVAS**

(ED. NOTE — Good luck to you, too, in your retirement. Thanks for listening all these years and thanks, especially, for being a valuable member of the Museum's volunteer staff.)

COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE — Like your "new" *Nostalgia Digest*, don't mind the increase, it's well worth the price. I've been a fan of *TWTD* since you started on *WNMP*, Evanston. My only regret since moving south is that I can't pick up your Saturday broadcasts on *WNIB*. However, your shows on *WBBM*, especially the midnight ones, come in very clearly. Congratulations to *WBBM* on their 25 years of being an all-news station. I've been listening since it was known as "WBBM Air Theatre" in the Wrigley Building. Many of my friends here listen to *WBBM* late at night, just like in the time of the old crystal sets. — **W.F. COLLINS**

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS — Many thanks for the renewal reminder. We would be dismayed if we missed a copy of your publication. We just wish we could hear the old time radio shows. No one near here is airing them. — **ETHEL LINNANE**

THAXTON, VIRGINIA — I'm pleased to subscribe to *Nostalgia Digest*. I look forward to receiving my first copy. I listen to old time radio shows on *WFIR* in Roanoke, Virginia at 10 pm weeknights. When possible, I also tune in to *WBBM*, especially the two-hour weekend shows. — **BILL SPRENGER**

WE GET LETTERS

STREAMWOOD, IL — I let my subscription run out and for that I am truly sorry. I thoroughly enjoy each issue for all the articles and program guides. As I am only 37, I am experiencing the shows on your programs and articles on the performers for the first time in many cases. I came across your program on WBBM a few years ago and you got me hooked on old time radio. I especially enjoy the Shadow for mystery and Great Gilderleeve and Fibber McGee and Molly for comedy. I met you at Metro Golden Memories when I came in to buy your Christmas cassette set. Keep up the good work. I'm enclosing a check to renew my subscription for two years.

— **STEVE HALLMARK**

HAMMOND, INDIANA — Please send a two-year subscription. I'm from the big band era and look forward to reading about those stars. It would seem that there is no other source for articles about these great artists. I am at present in search of anything about that dynamic singer from the past, Dinah Washington. I hope your programs are never discontinued.

— **DORIS SOLEY**

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA — I am a fan of old time radio and listen to *Radio Classics* on WBBM. I have an avid interest in Fibber McGee and Molly. I collect their shows and have quite a lot of information on them. I talked to Jim Jordan in 1983. What a super person he was!!

— **CAMERON CURRIN**

DOWNERS GROVE, IL — Here's my check for a two-year subscription. I'm not a new subscriber; actually I'm a returning subscriber. I received my first copy of the *Nostalgia Digest* in December, 1975 as a gift subscription from a friend. I continued listening and subscribing through 1990. After that I took a break from old time radio, but I'm glad to say I'm listening regularly again. I find old time radio one of the best forms of entertainment today. The jokes are clean, the humor is never off-color, and the mysteries are mysterious, not blood and gore violence. I'm 36 years old, so I wasn't able to enjoy these programs the first time around like some people. But I am certainly enjoying them now. I'm glad I'm back.

— **PAM BIELAK**

(ED. NOTE — We're glad you're back, too!)

DES PLAINES, IL — I was very pleased to hear that you're presenting the Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel shows.

— **BILL SLANKARD**

ROUND LAKE BEACH, IL — We just went to Metro Golden Memories for the first time and picked up a copy of the *Digest* along with the Best of Benny tapes and a great book on Hollywood! Enclosed is a check for a two-year subscription. We also wanted to let you know how much we enjoy your programs on both radio stations. The sponsors will be happy to know that we've vacationed at the End of the Line Caboose Motel, shopped at

-36- *Nostalgia Digest*

Metro Golden Memories, and, because of the Charlie McCarthy Show, we even bought Chase and Sanborn Coffee at the Omni Superstore!

— **RICK AND RIA LAUBERSTEIN**

CHICAGO — Thanks for publishing such a great radio guide. It's very informative and we listen to *Old Time Radio Classics* every day.

— **KARL EICHSTAEDT**

DARIEN, IL — Time again to renew my subscription. It's the best \$25 bargain anywhere. I'm also past due in letting you know how much I enjoy old time radio and your efforts. I have always been fascinated with the World War II years. Your programming, blending the war and radio's role in it, has been excellent. Personally, I enjoy the historical sequence of the World News Today programs. I'm also a comedy fan with emphasis on Fibber McGee and Jack Benny. It is very satisfying to visit the Museum of Broadcast Communications, see Fibber's closet and Jack's vault and see my name on the donation plaque. Any contribution I can make to old time radio is my payback to you. When I retire one of my objectives is to do volunteer work for the MBC. Unfortunately corporate downsizing delayed those plans, but it will happen. Thanks for your efforts in keeping us happy out here in Radioland. Our support will always be there.

— **BILL NEMECEK**

CHICAGO — I really appreciate your WW II programs. As a marine in WW II we did not have any radios — but the officers did and once in a while we heard some Armed Forces programs from their tents! — **TOM GOGOLA**

OLYMPIA FIELDS, IL — We're really enjoying all the wonderful old WW II programs and many of them bring back memories of that period which had completely slipped my mind. We hear about all the things that people were doing for the war effort during that period, but I have never run across anything telling about the youngsters' contributions and thought you might find it interesting to hear what I and my friends found to do to help out.

Being only 13 or 14 at the beginning of the war we found that doing our part was a bit harder than for the adults of the era. We were too young to become nurses, join the services, or (and we thought this most unfortunate) to date the hundreds of sailors that were stationed in the Miami area, or to become hostesses for the USO. We were able to participate in the USO scene, however, by going with our Girl Scout troop to the USO station nearby and baking cookies in their kitchen. How many dozens of our cookies those servicemen ate. I don't know, but we baked a lot of them over the months and years.

My best friend and I also took it upon ourselves to mount our bikes and go door-to-door collecting playing cards, paperbacks and ashtrays, also for USO distribution, and we always made it a point to hit the most affluent looking estates in our quest. Of course, many times we were invited in for a cold glass of lemonade which was a welcome bonus.

As a group, my friends and I would also go door-to-



FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY EXHIBIT at the MUSEUM OF BROADCAST COMMUNICATIONS

door collecting bacon grease, motor oil, tin foil, newspaper and any other thing that was being asked for at the time.

Lastly, I remember, during the time that the Billmore Hotel in Coral Gables was acting as a veterans hospital, my high school glee club, of which I was a member, would go to sing for the patients and visit with the younger ones. I recall that this was the one activity that actually brought the reality of the war home to us. A few of my friends had lost a brother or had one wounded but I had no one personally involved in the fighting and seeing those wounded men, especially the ones nearer my own age was the closest I came to the war except for the news reels, radio broadcasts, and blackout drills.

One other amusing thing I would like to tell you. When we would go to Miami Beach for a picnic and a swim, we would often watch the air raid patrols stationed on top of the hotels along the beach with their binoculars trained on us instead of on the sky where they belonged. This, along with the ubiquitous sailor whistles made us feel that we were contributing to morale. We loved it.

— PATRICIA MENEES

(ED. NOTE — Many people have fond recollections of the WW II days. Be sure to read Robert Kemper's article beginning on page 9. And thanks for your memories.)

NORTHBROOK, IL — Thanks for the enjoyment you have provided with your programs from the good old days. How you can maintain your rigorous schedule of seven radio programs a week, edit the *Nostalgia Digest*, and service the operation of your Metro Golden Memories store is beyond me. Your wife deserves accolades for putting up with you the few minutes you can spare at home each week.

— RAY KRYSL

(ED. NOTE — Not only does she put up with us, she provides a lot of support, helping out a great deal with all of our projects.)

CHICAGO — As a member of the South Group of the *Those Were The Days* Radio Players, I want you to know how much I have enjoyed the opportunity to become involved in such a multi-faceted activity. Although I enjoy performing, I find the association with my fellow group members to be just as rewarding, if not more so. It's also exciting to see the performing growth of members as they become more experienced at performing, especially in the warm glow of generous support from fellow performers. This has been an unexpected bonus, and is, perhaps, our greatest strength. Thanks for making it all possible. When you did your very first broadcast, did you envision all these exciting spinoffs?

— KEVIN P. MURPHY

PARK RIDGE, IL — My husband and I take old time radio with us on Saturday afternoons wherever we go in

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Recorded before a live audience at the Museum of Broadcast Communications, Chicago, which shares in the proceeds of the sale of these tapes.



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WE GET LETTERS

our home. It is the greatest source of pleasure for us to recall some of our favorite programs from the radio days. My husband's favorite is Jack, Doc and Reggie and mine is the Lux Radio Theatre. We have introduced Paddy O'Cinnamon to each of our grandchildren and have the tapes so Grandma can play them even if the children are not around! I recently heard you advertise Celtic Carpet Cleaners and decided to give them a try. It was the best thing I could have done. Celtic, in my opinion, is a high quality company. I have recommended them to several friends and family members and felt that your listening audience should be aware of the splendid job they do on furniture. They are a great company to do business with.

— MRS. HAROLD ERICKSON, JR.

UNION, IL — Last night on your program you mentioned that you attended Steinmetz High School. My parents owned the grocery store on Narragansett and Wellington from 1921-1946, and I remember my father telling stories of them building the school. Having lived there for so long they had many tales of the whole area. I was four when they sold the store to my cousin, so I have many treasured memories from them.

— MARCYN A. MATUSZEK

GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN — I lived in the era of the great radio shows. As a farm boy in Ohio, chores were my first obligation, but when they were done and the meal finished, it was radio time while I did my homework. Your radio show brings back these fond memories and I really enjoy your interviews with former radio personalities. My wife and I have two children, both in their twenties. At times, they sit with me on a Saturday evening and enjoy the great radio shows of the past. It essentially says that your broadcasts are something to be enjoyed by the entire family. Those word pictures transcend the generations. Much continued success. —

DALE HUGHES

ELLCOTT CITY, MARYLAND — I enjoy the broadcasts on WBBM; weekends aren't bad, but weeknights are murder!! Midnight to 1 in Chicago is 1 to 2 am here!

— JIM YOUNGER

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA — If there is one thing that I miss after having left Chicago, it is the many old time radio programs that I was able to hear. All that is available in Las Vegas is a one hour, weekly show on the local university radio station and crackly AM broadcasts from KFI in Los Angeles. I used to set my tape recorder with a timer and taped several hundred reel to reel tapes over the six years I lived in Chicago. These tapes are now a delightful source of entertainment, particularly the many interviews which are found amongst the regular programs. I do not miss the cold, the snow, or the humid summer days, but I sure do miss *Those Were The Days*.

— RICHARD D. FLOTARD

LOMBARD, IL — What enjoyment and pleasure others miss by not listening to your old time radio broadcasts! I like your change in playing a complete program without interruption instead of splitting it up in sections.

— RICHARD "MIKE" MIKULECKY

NORTHBROOK, IL — I enjoyed Karl Pearson's article on Ray Noble in the February-March issue. Born in 1907, would make him 86 this year. But Mr. Pearson did not state if he is still living? Is he, and if so, where? If not, when did he die?

— PHIL SCHWIMMER

(ED. NOTE — Ray Noble died on April 3, 1978 at the age of 71.)

CHICAGO — I subscribed to the *Nostalgia Digest* by calling during a Saturday afternoon broadcast. My wife and I are totally blind, but we have purchased an optical scanner which can read print and transfer material to our computer which will then speak what was printed. As we bowl on Saturday, we record the four-hour radio show on a video tape with a cable from our stereo. Keep up the good work in making old time radio available to a modern audience.

— WALTER C. BURMEISTER

SCANDINAVIA, WISCONSIN — Of all the "things" I left behind when we moved from Illinois I miss my Saturday afternoons with you the most. Scheduling errands to be home at the moment your Hall Closet door opened, I effortlessly did chores, baked and simply relaxed with the nostalgia of so many wonderful hours of entertainment from years past. I am 56 years old. My four brothers and sister would unfailingly gather 'round the radio, laying on the floor and listen spellbound as Reggie and Doc would taunt us with stories which set our imagination soaring. How I enjoyed the comedy and "theatre." Remember Mr. First Nighter? I have a ten year old grandson in Texas who enjoys the cassettes of old time radio when he comes to visit in the summer. I now realize how privileged I was to have your program available to me all those lovely Saturdays.

— MARILYN M. CURTIS

MADISON, NEW YORK — Thank you very much for your wonderful program. Although I'm only 38, I enjoy listening to old time radio drama and comedy immensely. I've always been interested in history, but listening to these programs lets me get the feel of living back then, not to mention the sheer enjoyability of the "mind's eye" dramas and comedies. I seriously believe what you are doing is preserving part of Americana. I listen whenever I can — you sometimes aren't too audible in upstate New York!

— MIKE ROWE

WILMETTE, IL — Your Midnight to 1 a.m. time seems to be a problem for some of your listeners. With the purchase of a very inexpensive recorder and a timer, one can record every night's programs and then listen to them at whatever time is convenient for the listener. Personally, I have a dual deck recorder which I can record up to four hours on one setting and two 120 minute

WE GET LETTERS

tapes. I can then listen to the show in my car while standing still on the Kennedy Expressway. It makes me look forward to driving into the city every morning.

— FRED BONDY

BURBANK, IL — I think that perhaps I have found what many of your listeners are seeking. I want to tell you about the Toshiba RT-8578 cassette tape recorder (which I purchased at the Omni Store in Bridgeview Plaza, 79th at Harlem, for \$139.99 plus tax). This unit has, just as many TV's have, a timer which can be programmed for a 24 hour period (but not day to day, only AM to PM, 24 hours). This unit can be set to go on at Mid-night and off whenever you want, and you can set it to record any radio station you want. If you use a C-120 tape (60 minutes on each side) you can tape the whole mid-night *Radio Classics* show. This may not be the Holy Grail that listeners are looking for, but you have to admit it comes close.

— JOHN P. KUBIS

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA — Thanks a million for the Saturday night Fibber McGee and Molly program where we got to see the reunion of McGee and Fred Nitney of Starved Rock, Illinois. It was wonderful. The fight that broke out between them, and Molly's "Stop it, boys!" made me laugh myself silly. The reception was poor for the early part of that program, but it cleared in time for that wonderful scene at the train depot, so I have it on a valuable tape to enjoy the rest of my days. I'm richer today thanks to you.

— SHIRLEY JOHNSON

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS — I started listening to your program before I left the Chicago area in 1971. Whenever the reception is good I listen in, but often it is poor. One of your readers' letters recently asked for information on how to improve reception. Those of us who live far away from Chicago would like to know if there is anything we can do to bring your program in better. I thoroughly enjoy the *Nostalgia Digest* and especially Ken Alexander's articles. The pleasures of remembering and reminiscing are enhanced by this publication.

— PAUL BLACKSTONE

CHAMPAIGN, IL — I received my first issue of *Nostalgia Digest* and have so enjoyed reading about what I've been listening to. I also have some information about the antenna/reception inquiry. I spoke to a naval radio expert who told me four important things: 1) AM reception is always better at night because the amplitude of the signal is affected by the ionosphere. 2) there isn't much you can do about this. 3) The taller the antenna the better. 4) Putting a pre-amplifier between the radio receiver and the antenna could boost the reception. I hope this might be helpful to anyone who has the aforementioned problem. I can sympathize.

— LINDA LEE

(ED. NOTE — We've heard from many who listen from
-40- *Nostalgia Digest*

a good distance that a solution is the purchase of a General Electric Super Radio Model 7-2887 which does an excellent job of pulling in our WBBM-AM signal. The cost is about \$40)

GRAND MARSH, WISCONSIN — I'm happy to renew my subscription. The *Digest* is a solid magazine. I always read it in its entirety, including the FM radio schedule which I can't get with my long-range Radio Shack AM. Thanks for the great, unique job you're doing.

— LOU VALENTINO

DES PLAINES, IL — Where has all the time gone? 23 years? Can hardly believe it! Have enjoyed being a part of your delightful programs since back in the WLTD days, even remember when you were on in the early morning. Now that's giving away my age for sure! What a joy these past 23 years have been. I can't thank you enough for all the pleasure you have brought me and my family over these years. Just keep it up!

— LA VERNE ZABROSKE

CHICAGO — You were very kind to your faithful listeners by playing complete versions of your WBBM theme songs, the upbeat "Thanks for the Memory" and the nostalgia-laden "On The Radio." I know there are many like us who had yearned to hear them all the way through and to learn the name of the weekend theme "On The Radio" was evocative of a time almost unbelievably sweet and melodic. I'm glad to have heard it. The golden days of radio were truly golden, and they shine brightly to this day.

— ALICE CATON

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INSIDE!



← **BOB AND RAY**

The zany radio comedy team of Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding are the subject of a career highlights article by Steven Darnall. Page 26.

DON MC NEILL'S BREAKFAST CLUB

By John Dunning
Page 2

MUSIC FROM HOME: WW II V-DISCS

By Karl Pearson
Page 6

WORLD WAR II AT JEFFERSON SCHOOL

By Robert G. Kemper
Page 9

KING OF THE COWBOYS

By Bob Kolososki
Page 12

THE DEATH OF SUPERMAN

By Michael Duncan
Page 16

SEARS

By Ken Alexander
Page 29

WRONG WAY CORRIGAN

By Fr. Kevin Shanley
Page 33

WE GET LETTERS

Page 34

PLUS WBBM *OLD TIME RADIO CLASSICS* CALENDAR Pgs. 20-21
WNIB *THOSE WERE THE DAYS* LISTINGS Pgs. 22-25