

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

AND
RADIO
GUIDE

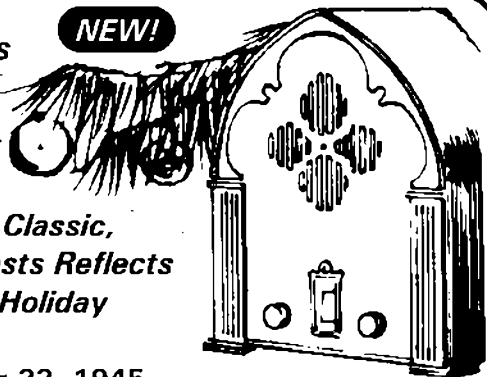


IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
50th ANNIVERSARY

CHRISTMAS RADIO CLASSICS

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Warmest Season Was
The Christmas Season*

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Traditional Vintage Broadcasts Reflects
The Real Spirit Of The Holiday*

FIRST NIGHTER -- December 22, 1945

Little Town of Bethlehem

Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule star in the ninth annual presentation of the Christmas Story. Cast includes Sidney Ellstrom, Hugh Studebaker, Herbert Butterfield, Willard Waterman, Philip Lord. Sponsored by Campana Products on CBS.

READER'S DIGEST RADIO EDITION -- December 19, 1946

Room for a Stranger

Frank Sinatra stars as a Navy flyer hoping to see his girl at home on Christmas Eve. He receives a telegram from his commanding officer cancelling his leave. Sponsored by Hallmark Cards on CBS.

DUFFY'S TAVERN -- December 24, 1948

A Christmas Visitor

Ed Gardner stars as Archie, manager of Duffy's Tavern, "where the elite meet to eat." In a warm-hearted departure from the usual comedy situation, Archie is unhappy that he's not getting a Christmas bonus. A stranger (played by Jeff Chandler) takes him for a walk and shows Archie the real meaning of Christmas. Sponsored by Bristol Myers on NBC.

GRAND CENTRAL STATION -- December 19, 1951

Miracle for Christmas

This is the sixth annual presentation of the classic Christmas drama. A cynical ambulance driver and a mysterious doctor make their rounds of mercy on Christmas Eve. Sponsored by Pillsbury Cake Flour on CBS.

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Hello, Out There in Radioland!

I grew up in Norridge, a northwest suburb of Chicago.

When we moved there in 1939 from an apartment in the city, it was an unincorporated area of Norwood Park Township. We lived on Ottawa Avenue, across from the man who was the Chief of the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department.

The fire truck was parked in his garage and there was a big siren on the roof of his house. When the siren would sound, our neighbor would run to his garage and drive the fire engine to the scene of the fire. And the volunteers would race out of their homes, jump into their cars and head for the fire scene.

I remember with fondness the role the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department played in our Christmastime activities.

In early December the fire engine, fully staffed with volunteers, would make its way up and down the streets of Norridge. Its siren would ring and its gong would clang and everyone in the neighborhood would run to the street to see what was going on.

This was Norridge's version of the Santa Claus Parade, for perched in the back of the red truck was none other than Santa Claus himself, waving to everyone while the firemen tossed wrapped Christmas candy to the eager kids who were by now running after the slowly moving vehicle.

A week or so before Christmas every classroom in the James Giles Elementary School in Norridge had a live Christmas tree, decorated by the boys and girls with hand-made ornaments. A fireman usually visited each classroom to inspect each tree to be sure that there was plenty of water in the stand and talk to the students about Christmas Tree Fire Safety.

Every year, probably on the first Sunday of the new year, the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department urged everyone to bring their used Christmas trees to a giant open space --farmland, actually-- at the end of our block, just north of Montrose Avenue.

This was a Fire Department project to rid the community of all those trees at one time and promote fire prevention by getting all those dry evergreens out of the homes, thus eliminating a real fire hazard.

The volunteer firemen would pile the trees high and then set a giant bonfire.

Everyone in Norridge --*everyone*-- would drag their untrimmed, formerly fresh, now bone-dry, Christmas trees to the bonfire. Meanwhile, the Ladies' Auxilliary of the Norwood Park Township Volunteer Fire Department prepared hot chocolate and cookies, to serve as we watched the trees --and the holiday season-- end in a spectacular, fire department-controlled blaze of glory.

These are some of my happy holiday memories. I hope you have some to remember this Christmas season.

--Chuck Schaden

Golden Phoenix*'It's a Wonderful Life'*

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

The first time I saw *It's A Wonderful Life* was in 1979, when it was played uninterrupted on local public television. I was just a 12-year old kid sprawled out in front of the living room TV, mesmerized—Christmas tree glistening off to the right and powderflake snow wafting down outside the front window as George Bailey stood grinning like a gingerbread man while his friends and family sang a heartwarming Auld Lang Syne. Over fifteen years later, I can easily say I've seen the movie over 30 times. The film has so touched my life that I even proposed to my fiancée during a Christmastime viewing two years ago! (She accepted: after watching George and Mary fall in love in one of the silver screen's classic romances, how could she say no?)

In this, the film's 50th anniversary year, *It's A Wonderful Life* is as rich and golden a viewer's experience as it's ever been. For all its would-be "sentimental hogwash," the movie has captured a world audience unlike any other film to date. Its ever-increasing charisma is undeniable, its acting and production standards impeccable, and its reflection of wholesome, simple human values is timeless. Yet, amazingly, this unanimous cinematic classic experienced a rocky history, failing to enchant its audi-

ence upon its inception in 1946 and reaping miserable profits. Considering its dismal initial impact in the post-war 1940s, it is amazing to consider the incredible shared cultural phenomenon it has become today. *It's A Wonderful Life* is truly the definitive film phoenix risen from the ashes.

What if Abraham Lincoln had never been born? Philip Van Doren Stern, an established author of the post WWI literary world, was shaving the morning of Lincoln's birthday, 1938, when that sudden thought struck him. He developed the concept, imagining what the world would be like for an ordinary man if he wished he'd never been born. Stern dismissed the idea for a while, but went back five years later, developing it into a story entitled, "The Greatest Gift," which he sent out to over 200 people as Christmas card substitutes in 1943.

The author's agent received a copy and was so impressed that he convinced Cary Grant's agent to purchase the story for \$10,000. The property changed hands with over 10 different people (including Howard Hughes) until it finally came into the possession of Frank Capra director extraordinaire of the '30s with already four Academy Awards to his name. Capra was so charmed by the story that he immediately decided to turn it into a full-length motion picture, under his production and direction. It would, in fact, be the first project attempted by his newly created company, Liberty Films, formed in col-

Erik J. Martin of Oak Lawn, Illinois is a longtime fan of the classic Frank Capra film which, he says, is partially responsible for his own happy life!



THE CLASSIC FINAL SCENE in Frank Capra's 1946 film masterpiece "It's A Wonderful Life."

laboration with William Wyler, George Stevens and Samuel Briskin—three other celebrated directors of their time.

The ultra-perfectionist Capra, however, was not satisfied with the troublesome script for his movie, which was renamed *It's A Wonderful Life* (referred to as *LIFE*, henceforth), so he assigned famous husband and wife screenwriters Albert Hackett and Francis Goodrich the job of entirely reworking the script—even penning a bit of it himself. Capra re-envisioned his story not as a Christmas yarn, but as a story intended for any time of year. He wasn't intimidated by the tale's dark implications of suicide and despair. He saw the potential for transcendence and inspiration, and the depiction of abundant human emotion. Capra was already well-skilled in this art by virtue of his previous sentimental works like *Meet John Doe*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

From the start, there was only one actor who could fill the "smalltown-everyman" shoes of George Bailey for Capra, and that was Jimmy Stewart. A proven winner for the director in the thirties, Stewart was more than eager to work with Capra on the first commercial post-war film for each of them. Tedious scrutiny went into the selection of the rest of the cast. Capra wanted, above all, colorful characters and recognizable personalities, so he picked a rich stock of excellent character actors. He wasn't afraid to cast actors against type, or to sign personable black actors, either.

Capra's work ethic was rigorous and grueling. He engrossed himself entirely in *LIFE* only four months after returning from active duty in World War II as a filmmaker, compiling a top-notch crew and affixing a 90 day shooting schedule on a budget of over \$2 million.

From the beginning, Capra conceived

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

LIFE as his masterwork. "I thought it was the greatest film I ever made. Better yet, I thought it was the greatest film anybody ever made," Capra states in his autobiography. "It wasn't made for the oh-so bored critics or the oh-so jaded literati. It was my kind of film for my kind of people."

As an immigrant child, Capra was impressed by common, everyday people whose lives he so grew to appreciate that his ambition was to someday project them onto the screen. His greatest talent rested in his power to represent the ordinary man's strength to face apparently insurmountable evil, thereby benefitting his fellow man. Capra realized this power early in his career, when he decided to create films that would exhilarate the depressed spirits of the American public, inspired personally by his dramatic recovery from a serious illness.

"Improving the individual and bringing a more hopeful outlook on life to him is the only way you can improve the nation and ultimately the world," thought Capra. It was 1946, and both he and his fellow Americans were numb to the events of the war. *LIFE* seemed like the perfect cinematic salve.

The shooting went smoothly for the most part, except for going over budget an extra \$1.5 million (mostly due to Capra's insistence that the film be shot in sequence). The director felt confident, however, that *LIFE* would be the biggest box-office smash of 1947, as well as a complete critical success. The general release was set for January 30, 1947.

Suddenly, a serious problem arose. RKO, Liberty's official distributor, couldn't process Technicolor prints of their swashbuckler movie "Sinbad the Sailor" quickly enough for its scheduled Christmas release. Capra was informed that his film would

have to be moved up for a Christmas Eve opening in 50 nationwide theaters to fill the gap. Labs worked round the clock to process prints of *LIFE*, barely finishing in time. But there were possible advantages to this move: it qualified *LIFE* for the 1946 Oscar races, as opposed to 1947; and it, being a Christmas movie at heart, would appeal to audiences as a seasonably-festive film.

However, several prominent factors surfaced that inhibited the movie's success. First, the film was marketed not as a Christmas picture, but rather as a romantic comedy, very similar to Capra's goofball comedies of the thirties. The lobby posters showcased Jimmy Stewart lifting up Donna Reed next to the captions, "It's a powerful love story," and "James Stewart...America's favorite feller." There was no mention of the "man overcoming the odds" theme that the movie propagated, nor any serious or somber aspects whatsoever. Then there was the presence of a terrible snowstorm that chilled the eastern United States, plummeting ticket sales. The reviews of the film were mixed, although on the average posi-

It's A Wonderful Life

THE CAST

George Bailey.....	James Stewart
Mary Bailey.....	Donna Reed
Clarence, the Angel.....	Henry Travers
Uncle Billy.....	Thomas Mitchell
Mr. Potter.....	Lionel Barrymore
Violet.....	Gloria Graham
Bert the Cop.....	Ward Bond
Ernie the Cabbie.....	Frank Faylen
Mrs. Bailey.....	Beulah Bondi
Pop Bailey.....	Samuel S. Hinds
Mrs. Hatch.....	Sara Edwards
Annie.....	Lillian Randolph
Sam Wainwright.....	Frank Albertson
Young George.....	Bobbie Anderson
Mr. Gower.....	H. B. Warner



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE -- George Bailey romances Mary Hatch

tive, giving indications that most people liked the movie, some loved it, and others despised it. The latter critics struck *LIFE* a crippling blow, disheartening Capra's optimism.

Finally, and most importantly, the post-war audience of 1946 was simply not receptive to its implicit content. Americans, enjoying their holiday season in the first full year of peace, could have been disenchanted by the bleak, film noir-ish elements of *LIFE*. They simply were not ready for its theme depicting salvation preceded by a "dark night of the soul." America wanted escape pictures: westerns, intense realistic dramas, light comedies. Stewart recounts, "It took a while for the country to sort of quiet down. Then we could start to think about family and community and responsibility."

Capra's vision of the world had changed upon his return from the war to a more

pessimistic, painful sensibility. He wanted to project some of these feelings onto the screen, and yet overcome these bleak themes with expressive optimism, humor and sentimentality—investing unlimited faith in the human spirit. The public, however, didn't seem to empathize with this struggle of the common man and his way of life. These were depression-era ideologies of reassurance to a beleaguered, individually-oriented public. But it was now post WWII, where group unity seemed to be the order of society and the economy was back on its feet. Depression-era consciousness where the individual questioned his own significance (as George Bailey does) was a thing of the past—better forgotten.

On the other hand, having been through an atrocious war, the public and critics alike craved a degree of credibility in Hollywood pictures—to put a name on it, realism.

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Probably for this reason was *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *LIFE*'s fiercest competitor, so overwhelmingly embraced by moviegoers and critics. True, it was in the same bleak vein as *LIFE* with its darker elements, but it was a film that didn't attempt to "rescue" the viewer from its pessimism with what might have been perceived as prudish optimism, or sappy sentimentality.

Not surprisingly, *Best Years* was one of 47's biggest box-office winners, and a shoe-in for the Academy Awards. It stole away every nominated category from *LIFE*, plunging Capra into the furthest pits of frustration over his much-toiled project. Indeed, *Best Years* seemed to swipe virtually everything away—it even beat *LIFE*'s release by one month. Being a very controversial and thus talked-about movie, it commanded nearly all the attention (even gossip) that *LIFE* might have received. Ironically, it was a William Wyler film—Capra's partner at Liberty and one of his dearest friends (although it wasn't a Liberty film).

The final dagger came at the close of 1947 as the gross receipts were tallied: after a \$2.7 million investment, *LIFE* lost more than \$525,000. Liberty Films was liquidated as a result some two years later. Capra, formerly the proud papa of what he considered a landmark motion picture achievement, abandoned all admiration, conversation and loyalty he had previously invested in his brainchild. As far as he was concerned, he had shelved *LIFE* forever.

The initial failure of *LIFE* can reasonably be summed up by the master himself: "To stay in business...you have to make pictures with universal appeal," Capra said. "Unless a picture has tremendous initial impact upon the public, it quickly passes from the first run to lesser homes and exhausts its money potential. If it starts out

slowly, its run is taken off at the end of the week...that's one of the big troubles. Pictures aren't given a chance to find their audience."

But not everything was gloom and doom, and *LIFE* was far from an all-out loser. Capra was awarded the Hollywood Foreign Correspondent Association's "Golden Globe" award for best director of 1947 and *LIFE* was voted one of the ten best films of the year by the National Board of Review. It was nominated for five prestigious Oscars, and it had received critical acclaim by the majority of its reviewers (In December of 1946, *Time* and *Life* magazines covered the movie extensively in pictures and positive words, and *Newsweek* even put the film on its cover).

Furthermore, by 1954, RKO (Liberty's repossessor) announced an accumulated profit of over \$3 million for *LIFE*. It was finally making some money, as it would continue to do when marketed for commercial television in the fifties and sixties by its numerous future owners (RKO sold *LIFE* to Paramount, who later dished it off to M & A Alexander Productions). The film even enjoyed a short-lived popular recovery around Christmas seasons in the fifties and sixties, thanks to annual viewings on television (it was, assumedly, probably shown only once on a single network each time of the year, thereby garnering only limited exposure).

Finally, in 1974, all passion for the film had fizzled out, and the economic market of TV could no longer be tapped. Republic Pictures didn't bother to renew its copyright on its critical 28th birthday (the year in which a work must be renewed, under the old 1909 law). *LIFE* entered the world of public domain, very unsure of itself and its future. Little did anyone know the incredible success this celluloid Lazarus would begin to enjoy after thirty years of relative public disregard.



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE -- Uncle Billy watches as Mary gives George their honeymoon money to distribute to depositors of the Bailey Brothers Building and Loan.

After three decades of, for the most part, audience indifference and lack of recognition, *LIFE* came back into the public consciousness with a vengeance. Capra became slowly aware of this throughout the fifties and sixties, when more and more grateful letters from fans began pouring in. Soon thousands of people were writing him on a variety of subjects—some inquiring about inconsistencies in the film (like Potter not being punished at the end for keeping the \$8,000), some interpreting what the film meant to them, and even more expressing extreme heartfelt appreciation for so inspirational and transcendent a movie. He tried to respond personally to all their letters at first, but eventually found it impossible due to the overwhelming amount of messages he would receive, whereby Capra decided to simply store away his *LIFE* letters in a huge file.

However, as aforementioned, by 1974 the

mild renewed success of *LIFE* had bottomed out, and it appeared that the movie was headed for occasional late-late show runs among other “B” fare forgotten pictures, thanks to its new public domain status. But becoming a non-property—although it spelled the end of TV royalties for Capra (almost) forever—did not detract in any way from its identity. Instead, it freed *LIFE* from the confines of economic exploitation by its previous owners and made possible another more positive kind of economic utilization—free use by television stations which led to mass public exposure.

Now *LIFE* was earning its deserved audience via free (and soon cable) TV. The nationwide marketing of the film by commercial stations had its greedy financial motivations, of course, but the picture was quickly garnering cultural identification with its newfound audience, who were beginning to grow accustomed to it as an

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annual holiday offering. Indeed, *LIFE* was making everybody happy: the TV stations were making money off its ratings, Frank Capra—though robbed of any profit capacity—was starting to feel proud all over again, and the public had found itself a favorite—one good enough to be ranked among other perennial American classics like *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Sound of Music*.

The resurgence was underway, and what had begun as a cult-following in the mid-seventies escalated into a widespread cultural phenomenon by 1980. Millions of Americans were cherishing *LIFE* and countless others were discovering it for the first time. It had become by far the best-loved Christmas movie, topping all other major holiday standards like *White Christmas*, *Miracle on 34th Street* and any of the five adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* in ratings and popularity polls (although the former two, along with *LIFE*, are the three Christmas films most often aired on TV, according to a survey of national TV logs taken in the '80s).

The rejuvenation of Capra's movie inspired an ABC TV remake in 1977 called *It Happened One Christmas*, starring Orson Welles and Marlo Thomas, surprisingly, in the George Bailey role. This color recreation with a feminist tone was a weak attempt, trying to evoke the emotional impact of the original amidst a contemporary setting, but never living up to the spirit of its predecessor. Nevertheless, the TV clone generated further interest in the original, and seemed to bestow a subtle reverence and respect onto *LIFE*—paying it a sort of broadcast "homage" in an updated form.

These were the obvious factors involved in *LIFE*'s ascendancy—logical reasons accounting for its attainment as a seasonal, cultural institution. On the surface, it would

appear that the film's newfound charisma and irrefutable power had simple economic explanations—television could show it forever without paying a penny, public familiarity, and fondness in turn, grew due to its broadcasted repetition. A more thorough analysis into ideological speculations reveals so much more, however. People had to identify with the film's explicit and implicit content and incorporate its meaning into their lives somehow, to accept the picture as readily as they did. The phenomenon is arguably more a product of the seventies viewer than the movie itself.

Consider: Unlike the post-war conditions of the forties when the economy boomed and an exhausted public sought to escape from their negative memory of the war by looking for entertainment that would make them laugh, the seventies were a time of distress and isolation. Society, in the midst of whopping inflation, political dishonesty and ever-changing lifestyles and artistic and cultural expressions, was constantly searching for meaning. With the country suffering from a recession and society becoming desensitized to basic human values through exposure to violence and dishonesty in the media and in television, the individual began to question his own self-worth. People needed to hold onto something, and with friction existing within the traditional family system, there seemed very little salvation out there.

A film like *LIFE* came along just at the right time, helping to inspire a great number of Americans, and challenging them to reevaluate their own self-worth. The film's message, after all, propagates this: George Bailey reconsiders his existence and recognizes its priceless personal value, for all its failures and simplicities. A meaning-starved public could incorporate this then and apply it to their everyday lives, reinvigorating an optimistic consciousness.

This is not to say that *LIFE*



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE -- George Bailey refuses Mr. Potter's attractive offer.

singlehandedly changed the lackadaisical spirit of recession-ridden, Vietnam-embittered America. But it did offer its viewer a refreshing, alternative and novel philosophy in such value-deflated times.

The story's moral was taken to heart not because it was an escapist alternative but because it was both a realistic and applicable human truth. *LIFE* teaches us that dreams don't always come true, but these unfulfilled dreams are better than the kind that turn into haunting nightmares. George never leaves Bedford Falls or travels to Europe, but he recognizes the important role he has played in other people's lives and thus comes appreciate his self-meaning. Perhaps its '70s audience could collectively acknowledge this message—at least better than the audience of the '40s.

"It's a movie about a small town guy who thinks he is a failure and wishes he had never been born," said Capra. "He's sup-

posed to learn that he was not a failure, that he fitted into the scheme of life...I think that a lot of people everywhere will be able to associate themselves with the character and will perhaps feel a lot better for having known him. People are seeking spiritual guidance and moral reassurance...and if the movies can't supply this, they will be serving no worthwhile purpose."

And then there is the element of wistfulness imbued in the film. Maybe what draws contemporary audiences most to *LIFE* is its power to invoke hometown nostalgia, its sense of close-knit community and simple human values—all of which are becoming ignored concepts today in our ultra-urbanized societies (ask yourself: could a Bedford Falls ever exist again on earth?).

Or possibly it's the element of quality in the film's production. It is, after all, a superbly crafted film in its method of acting, direction and technical innovation. Perhaps

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it is Stewart himself who commands the picture, with his unique behavioral acting style. His charming mannerisms, tripping speech patterns, articulated facial expressions and innocent, lanky-frame create an unforgettable image of an irreplaceable George Bailey. The romantic tension he builds while "falling in love" with Donna Reed's character is spellbinding, and I think it remains an eternal source of wonder for new and old audiences alike.

There is also, one could argue, a correlation between some of *LIFE*'s thematic values to popular movies in the late '70s. *LIFE* in itself is a basic parable, pitting a force for good (George) against a force for evil (Potter) the classic confrontation. George loses in the end, yet wins a personal victory. This was a dominant ideology of movies at this time: *Rocky* (1976), *Coming Home* (1978), and *Breaking Away* (1979) reflect personal triumphs in the midst of failures, while blockbusters like *Star Wars* (1977), and *Superman* (1978) intimated themes of good versus evil. These programmed values in '70s films could have very well made *LIFE* more digestible to the public, helping advance its success.

And what about today? What sustains the film's longevity in fact, I believe, is the established ritualistic tradition it has become. You must either be a cave dweller or movie hater to have not heard of the film by now. For the rest of us who tune faithfully every Yuletide season, it has become sheer necessity: we need to feel those goosebumps all over again when Capra brings the house down with his pass-the-Kleenex climax. Stewart and Capra, who in 1946 knew it was the best picture they'd done or probably ever would do, couldn't be happier. "It's part of the annual ritual now," said Stewart, a few years back. "That

means a great deal to me, and I know it means an awful lot to Capra, because he says it's his favorite, too."

Yet, the film's amazing rejuvenation over the past 20 years may have been its own undoing. In 1986, *LIFE* fell victim to the colorization process, via Hal Roach Studios, a move that has drawn the ire of critics, purists and filmlovers everywhere. As a further exploitation of the movie, composers have been trying to turn *LIFE* into a musical for decades. Finally, old-fashioned greed has put the clamps on Capra's classic, perhaps for good. Republic Pictures was able to reassert exclusive rights to *LIFE* in 1994, and made a long-term deal with NBC, which now has exclusive broadcast reigns on the film.

In the end, the film has come full circle. Republic was able to reacquire its once-slighted masterpiece, and not without a collective sigh of relief from the many among us who worried that the overplayed film was wearing out its welcome like so much week-after-Christmas turkey hash.

Now, *It's A Wonderful Life* can begin to enjoy an anticipated single holiday viewing and become, like *The Wizard of Oz* (shown once a year on CBS) and *The Campbell Playhouse's* radio version of "A Christmas Carol" before it, a treasured and appreciated annual Christmas present.

And, thanks to videotape copies, an annual big screen showing at The Music Box Theater in Chicago, and even a *Lux Radio Theatre* radio version of the movie on cassette, *It's A Wonderful Life* fans will always be free as an angel to relish their favorite movie whenever they want.

Thanks for the wings, George! ■

NOTE-- Tune in to Those Were The Days Saturday, December 14 for the Lux Radio Theatre version of "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Victor Moore.

*Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .*

*The Songs We Sang
In Grammar School*



Now that I think back on it some 55 years after the event, I received a pretty good basic academic education at George W. Tilton Elementary School, on the West Side.

First of all, we learned to read and write and spell. Then we learned to add, subtract, multiply, and divide.

In History, we learned about the explorations of Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan, Christopher Columbus, Sir Francis Drake, Lewis and Clark, Pere Marquette and Joliet, and all the rest.

We learned about the Crusades, the Magna Carta, the American War of Independence, the Civil War, and World War One. (We studied World War Two not in History Class but in Current Events.)

Our geography teacher familiarized us with the continents and the oceans. She taught us much about the geography of our own country and its great rivers: the Missouri and the Mississippi, the Colorado, the Allegheny and the Monongahela, the Ohio. We studied the Great Lakes and the Mountain ranges: the Appalachians and the Rockies.

We pored over relief maps, their colors ranging from dark green for the lowest of the lowlands, through lighter shades of green and tan for the higher elevations, and dark brown for the tallest mountains.

The teacher taught us the principal in-

dustries in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and St. Louis, Missouri, as well as Chicago and many other cities. She told us in what parts of the country the various crops were grown, and where coal and iron and copper were mined.

We learned the capitals of all 48 states.

In English, we were taught to identify nouns and verbs and adjectives and adverbs and pronouns and prepositions and conjunctions and interjections, and we learned how to diagram a sentence.

Our science teacher taught us about some of the North American birds: the robin, the Baltimore oriole, the cardinal, the indigo bunting and a lot more. She also showed us how to identify a number of trees that grow in Illinois. In autumn, we would gather fallen leaves, dip them in melted paraffin, and mount them on 9x12 sheets of construction paper, labelling each page: Poplar, Maple, Oak, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), Elm, Catalpa, etc. We would punch holes in the left-hand edges of these sheets and bind them into a book.

We kids had to work at acquiring all that knowledge, not only in the classroom but also on our homework assignments. Notwithstanding all the work involved, however, given a teacher who was congenial — and most of the were — learning was fun.

The most enjoyable class for me was Music; it was by far the easiest — all we

THE SONGS WE SANG

had to do was sing—but there was more to it than that. The other subjects were taught for the purpose of developing our minds, but I think that the songs we learned in Music—yes, even those simple songs—enriched our souls.

You may call me a moonstruck sentimentalist, but even though I've forgotten many of the *facts* I learned in grammar school, I remember, and remember most fondly, the *songs* we sang in music class.

The music teachers were a special breed. A few of the teachers of arithmetic and history could sometimes be a bit on the dour side, but the music teachers were always good-humored; all of them were pleasant, and nice to be around. I never met a music teacher I didn't like.

I don't know what songs kids are being taught in grammar school these days, but I can recall some that we learned at Tilton in the early '40s.

Some of the songs were English madrigals a couple of centuries old. I remember one in particular:

*Now is the month of Maying,
When merrie lads are playing.
Fa la la la etc.*

Another old English song was "John Peel," which told of a hunter who woke the countryside with his noise every morning.

*Do ye ken John Peel at the break of day?
Do ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?
Do ye ken John Peel when he's far, far
away
With his hounds and his horn in the
morning?*

We learned songs in praise of our city, our state, and our country. "Chicago" began:

*Behold, she stands beside her inland sea,
With outstretched hands to welcome you
and me...*

and it ended:

*Chicago. Chicago. Chicago is my home.
My heart is in Chicago, wherever I may
roam.*

For our home state we had this song:
*By the thy rivers gently flowing,
Illinois. Illinois.
By thy valleys verdant growing,
Illinois. Illinois.*

Of patriotic songs there were several. In addition to "The Star-Spangled Banner," we sang "America" ("My Country, 'Tis of Thee"), "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and "America the Beautiful."

*Oh, beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain...*

At Christmastime we sang a number of the traditional carols: "Silent Night," "The First Noel," "Adeste Fidelis," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," and "Shepherds' Carol." We sang all our songs without instrumental accompaniment, and to this day I prefer to hear Christmas carols performed that way—by a mixed choir, *a cappella*. That is the way I remember hearing them sung as a child, and that is the way I like to hear them sung now.

After all, if any carols were sung at the first Christmas, there was no piano, no organ, no symphony orchestra. There was only a group of shepherds. Their voices were their only instruments.

For Thanksgiving we learned two songs that I recall. One was the "Prayer of Thanksgiving."

*We gather together to ask the Lord's
blessing.*

*He chastens and hastens His will to make
known.*

"Grandmother's Thanksgiving" began:
*Over the river and through the wood
To Grandmother's house we go.
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh*

Through the white and drifted snow...
and it ended:

*Over the river and through the wood,
Now Grandmother's cap I spy.
Hurrah! for the fun.
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah! for the pumpkin pie.*

Some of the songs we learned to sing were mere nonsense songs, but they were fun to sing. One such was "Turkey in the Straw."

"Polly Wolly Doodle" was another nonsense song:

*There's a chicken in the cart and the cart
won't go.*

Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day...

And there was Stephen Foster's "Oh, Susanna!"

It rained all night the day I left,

The weather it was dry.

The sun so hot I froze to death.

Susanna, don't you cry.

Oh, Susanna, don't you cry for me.

*I come from Alabama with a banjo on
my knee.*

Most of Stephen Foster's songs were not of that type; many were very touching, and we learned several of these, including "Old Folks at Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Black Joe," and

Beautiful Dreamer, wake unto me.

*Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for
thee.*

The neighborhood, the area around Madison and Pulaski, was home to a large number of Americans of Irish descent, and many of the teachers at Tilton had Irish names. (Mrs. Fay, Miss Kelly, Mrs. O'Mally and Miss Kelleher come to mind. The principal was Miss Flanagan, and her secretary was Mrs. Walsh.) This may or may not have had a bearing on the fact that we were taught "A Little Bit of Heaven" and "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen."

"The Mill" was sung to the tune of "Ach! Du Lieber Augustine," and it described an

old grain mill. One of the verses went like this:

*There the dusty miller stands
Ready with watchful eye,
Knowing that the grain will be
Bread by and by.*

I recall a kind of song which was not sung but spoken, in the manner of a Greek chorus. The lines were assigned to various sections of the class, with the word "almost" spoken by the boys with deep voices so that it sounded like the croak of a frog. A silly bit of doggerel it was, but I'll never forget it. It was entitled "The Frog."

What a wonderful bird the frog are.

When he stand.

He sit—

Almost.

When he hop,

He fly—

Almost.

Ain't got no sense hardly.

Ain't got no tail hardly, neither.

When he sit,

He sit on what he ain't got —

Almost.

We learned some songs of the Old West: "Cowboy's Lament," "Dusk on the Prairie," and "The Chisholm Trail." The most famous of the western songs was "Home on the Range."

Oh, give me a home

Where the buffalo roam,

Where the deer and the antelope play,

Where seldom is heard

A discouraging word

And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Home, home on the range, etc.

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat" was in the form of a round. The class was divided into four sections. The first section would sing the first line of the song. When it began the second line, the second section would begin at the beginning, etc. And so it went until the teacher signalled that this would be the last time around. Now when

THE SONGS WE SANG

each section reached the end of the song, it would stop singing. At last, there was only one section singing the last line of the song which petered out, I thought, rather pitifully.

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily:
Life is but a dream.*

Another song about rowing a boat came from the Deep South; it told of a man who had wooed his love while rowing in his gum tree canoe:

On Tombigbee River so bright I was born,

In a hut made of husks from the tall yellow corn.

It was there that I first met my Julia so true,

And I gave her a ride in my gum tree canoe.

Still another song about boats and the water was the lovely "Santa Lucia."

*Now 'neath the silver moon,
Ocean is glowing.
O'er the calm billows
Soft winds are blowing.
Here balmy breezes blow.
Pure joys invite us,
And as we gently row,
All things delight us.
Home of fair poesy,
Realm of pure harmony.
Santa Lucia,
Santa Lucia.*

We sang a song called "Good Morning," whose tune, as I later learned, was the main theme of the last movement of Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony.

*Daily we're meeting
Before our work or play,
And always in greeting
We sing a glad Good Morning.
Sometimes it's raining*

*Or cloudy is the day,
But we're not complaining,
We still can sing Good Morning.*

There were also songs for the other end of the day; one was the "Evening Prayer" from *Hansel and Gretel*.

*When at night I go to sleep,
Fourteen angels watch do keep....*

The Welsh lullaby "All Through the Night" was a tenderly beautiful song.

*Sleep, my child, and peace attend thee
All through the night.*

*Guardian angels God will send thee
All through the night.*

*Soft the lonely hours are creeping,
Hill and dale in slumber sleeping,*

*I my loving vigil keeping
All through the night.*

The late Buddy Black, who gave me my first job in radio, was fond of saying, "If you want to bring back memories, nothing will do it like a song."

I think Buddy was right. Hearing a song that you haven't heard for years can evoke memories of a certain period in your life; memories of a job you once had; memories of your childhood, your high school days, your college days, your hitch in the service; memories of a person you once knew; memories of a day, or a night, or an hour long past. A song can stir up memories as nothing else can.

Buddy was referring to the kind of songs that disc jockeys play on the radio, but his saying applies to songs of any kind.

Try an experiment. Retrieve from your memory one of the songs you sang in grammar school. Sing it softly to yourself. I'll guarantee that if there's the least bit of sentiment in your soul, you'll find yourself transported back to the fifth grade, with your teacher standing in the front of the room beating time, and your little classmates sitting all around you. And if you listen carefully, you'll hear them singing. ■



NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

Larry Clinton: A Study in Swing

BY KARL PEARSON

The big band era has been gone for quite a number of years, but the music lives on.

Big name leaders such as Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington and Artie Shaw are remembered by many, while members of the younger generation may be casually aware of more familiar names such as Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman. Other bands, such as those led by Jan Savitt, Bunny Berigan, Claude Thornhill and Hal Kemp, are gradually fading from the public's memory. Many of these such groups were favorites in their day but are gradually fading into popular music's forgotten past.

Bandleader, arranger and composer Larry Clinton also falls into this "forgotten" category. Today Clinton is best-remembered as the composer of "The Dipsy Doodle," a popular novelty song of the late 1930s. Larry's musical career is often overlooked or unknown to many, yet his talents helped enhance the success of a number of orchestras of the period, including his own.

The late 1930s are often considered the peak period of the big band era. Nationally known leaders such as Artie Shaw and Tommy Dorsey saw their fortunes rise as audiences turned out in record numbers to hear these bands in person. Many of these same orchestras experienced a surge in record sales as the country's fortunes improved. Larry Clinton was one of those who experienced this good fortune, and his band became one of the top favorites of the late 1930s.

Clinton, who was born in Brooklyn in 1909, began playing trumpet while still a child. At the age of 14 he began his professional career as a musician, playing in a number of groups heard locally in various speakeasies and Chinese restaurants. Years later Larry recalled that during this period (at the height of Prohibition), he once played in a club owned by the



LARRY CLINTON

LARRY CLINTON: STUDY IN SWING

notorious gangster Dutch Schultz. Clinton later recalled this brief association, noting "there was a row of bullet holes just above the bandstand."

As Clinton gained more musical experience his employment opportunities improved, and in 1932, at the age of 23, he landed a spot in composer-arranger Ferdé Grofé's orchestra. Grofé, composer of "The Grand Canyon Suite" and several other pieces, had originally been chief arranger for Paul Whiteman's large orchestra. (One of Whiteman's best-known recordings was the Grofé arrangement of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue.") Grofé encouraged young Clinton to try his hand at arranging, and when Larry sold his first arrangement to noted bandleader Isham Jones, he decided that arranging was more lucrative than playing trumpet.

During the summer of 1935 Larry landed an arranging spot with Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey's recently formed orchestra, which was beginning to gain some attention. Larry's initial association with Tommy would only last two short weeks, as Tommy left the band after a dispute with his brother. Larry remained with Jimmy for several months, and the band recorded several Clinton originals, including "Tap Dancer's Nightmare" and "Dusk In Upper Sandusky."

Clinton left the Dorsey organization in early 1936 for greener musical pastures, becoming chief arranger for the Casa Loma orchestra. The Casa Loma band, led by saxophonist Glen Gray, was a cooperative unit owned by its members. The Casa Loma group was at the height of its popularity in 1936, playing many of the better-known locations in the country, and heard weekly on a network radio program for Camel Cigarettes. Larry remained with the Casa Loma band for about a year, and in

that short time wrote a number of original tunes, including "Whoa, Babe" and "A Study In Brown." Both of the above-named Clinton compositions were among the many that became record hits with the American public.

In 1937 Clinton began his second association with Tommy Dorsey, and the Dorsey band, riding on its recent success of "Marie" and "Song Of India," was among the most popular in the nation. Larry joined the Dorsey arranging staff (which also included Axel Stordahl and Paul Weston) and began writing a number of new compositions for Dorsey's organization. One of those compositions, which began its history on a dinner menu, would eventually launch Larry's own bandleading career.

One night, while waiting in a restaurant for a group of friends to arrive, Larry began jotting down several musical ideas on a menu. The tune, in Clinton's own description, had a humorous sound to it, and Larry felt that this wacky-sounding tune deserved an equally silly title. He eventually titled the piece "The Dipsy Doodle," named after a similarly titled baseball pitch used by his friend, New York Giants pitcher Carl Hubbell. Lyrics were added to the song, and the Dorsey recording, as sung by vocalist Edythe Wright, became one of the big hits of 1937.

The resulting success of the "Dipsy Doodle" led Clinton to a bandleading career of his own. Eli Oberstein, a prominent RCA Victor records executive, encouraged Clinton to form a band of his own for recording purposes. (Additional support and assistance came from Tommy Dorsey.) Clinton's orchestra began making a string of recordings for Victor records, and the band was given additional exposure on the RCA Victor radio program, heard weekly over the NBC network. The heavy promotion and steady stream of recordings



BEA WAIN

helped launch Larry's bandleading career, and the Clinton orchestra became one of RCA Victor's top-selling bands.

Most of the record-buying public in the country was unaware that Clinton's orchestra was composed of top New York musicians and did not exist outside of the studios. As requests for personal appearances by the Clinton orchestra began to pour in, Larry was encouraged to form a full-time organization of his own. This full-time group, cashing in on the success of the initial studio group, proved to be even more successful.

During the summer of 1938 the Clinton band landed an engagement at the Glen Island Casino located in New Rochelle, New York, one of the best-known location jobs in the country.

The Glen Island Casino catered to the area college crowd, and had gained a repu-

tation as a launching spot for many bands. A number of groups had benefited from the word of mouth spread by the enthusiastic college crowd as well as the almost-nightly network broadcasts from the Glen Island bandstand.

When asked about the reason for his bands' success many years later, Clinton gave much of the credit to others. "I learned from the best of them," he later recalled. "My college was the Casa Loma band and my guru was Tommy Dorsey. He was the one who convinced me that a dance band leader's most important function was to keep the dancers on the floor."

The Clinton band's recordings were indeed danceable, and their style featured everything from smooth ballads to swinging instrumentals. Singer Bea Wain was featured on slow numbers such as "You Go To My Head" and "Deep Purple," while trombonist Ford Leary sang novelties like "Shadrach" and "Jeepers Creepers." Clinton instrumental originals often featured humorous titles like "The Big Dipper," "Midnight In The Madhouse" and "Shades Of Hades." Larry also wrote a number of "Study" pieces, swing instrumentals with various titles such as "A Study In Brown," "A Study In Green," and "A Study In Surrealism."

The Clinton band's repertoire also included a number of dance band arrangements of various classical and operatic selections. (Undoubtedly Tommy Dorsey's success with "Song Of India" was in the back of Larry's mind.) Clinton adapted a number of such items for his own band, including "Martha" from von Flotow's opera "Martha"; "I Dreamt I Dwelt In Marble Halls" from Balfe's "Bohemian Girl"; and "My Heart At The Sweet Voice" from Saent-Sacns' "Samson and Delilah."

The best-known of these adaptations, and Larry's personal favorite, was based on a portion Debussy's "Reverie."

LARRY CLINTON: STUDY IN SWING

Clinton's adaptation and recording of "My Reverie," as sung by Bea Wain, became one of the best-selling records 1938.

Feeling uneasy in the role of a baton-wielding leader, Larry began playing trumpet once again (he also played trombone and clarinet with his group). Clinton was not an outstanding soloist, and like fellow leader Glenn Miller, preferred to play section parts with his orchestra. He played sparingly, claiming that he had a "10:30 lip" that tired early in the evening.

The success of "My Reverie" brought Clinton's orchestra even greater success. The band was signed to appear on not one but two commercial radio programs: Robert Benchley's Old Gold "Melody and Madness" program and the Tommy Riggs "Quaker Party" show. Eventually Clinton found that two weekly shows and a full performing schedule were a bit too much, and the band left the Benchley program.

During the early part of 1939 the Clinton orchestra scored another success with its recording of "Deep Purple," featuring Bea Wain's sensitive vocal. Miss Wain left the band shortly after the record was released to begin a solo career of her own, and to spend more time with her husband, radio announcer Andre Baruch. The band experienced several other changes in key personnel during the next year. Ford Leary left the orchestra, and his vocal duties were handled for a short time by trumpeter Jack Palmer. Larry eventually hired saxist Butch Stone to sing the novelties. (Stone later joined Les Brown's Band of Renown, where he served in a similar capacity, singing tunes like "A Good Man Is Hard To Find." At last word Stone is still playing with Brown, who is still leading a band of his own.) Baritone Terry Allen, who had previously sung with Red Norvo's big band, joined Clinton for a time. He was

featured on a number of recordings, and was heard on a memorable version of "How High The Moon."

Larry Clinton broke up his band during the fall of 1941 to accept a commission in the United States Army Air Corps. American involvement in the war was inevitable, and hundreds of musicians were either being drafted or enlisting in the armed services. Clinton resumed his bandleading career after the war, signing with a new firm, Cosmo records. However the musical scene had changed during the intervening years. The big bands were no longer the big favorites, having been replaced in popularity by many of the singers that were once featured with the same bands. Larry's prewar success eluded him, and within a few short years he disbanded the group and ran a music publishing firm.

Larry continued working on the administrative side of the music business and was affiliated for several years with Kapp Records, where he served in an executive capacity. From time to time he assembled bands of his own for various recordings, recreating many of his earlier hits. When he finally decided that he had saved enough money, Larry quit the music business and settled in Florida. Both Larry and his wife enjoyed their retirement, supported in part by Larry's continuing composing royalties. While many of his contemporaries such as Count Basie and Harry James preferred to remain on the road, Larry enjoyed his free time. He also began a new writing career, as the author of a number of humorous science fiction articles. Many years later the Clintons moved to Arizona, where Larry died in May of 1985, at the age of 75. ■

NOTE-- Karl Pearson has compiled an audio anthology of "Big Bands From Chicago" and will talk about it on Those Were The Days on December 7.



Museum of Broadcast Communications

museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren



WBBM NEWSRADIO'S John Madigan (right) recalled political conventions past for Museum visitors during Convention Week last summer. Jim Conway (center) led the conversation and Radio Hall of Famer Jack Brickhouse chimed in with his own recollections.

When the Democrats came to town last August, the Museum got into the act with three terrific special —nonpartisan— events.

It all started out when former U.S. Congressman Marty Russo introduced political satirist Mark Russell. Russell lit up the Preston Bradley Hall taking jabs at the presidential contenders and pounding out tunes on the grand piano.

Later in the week, veteran news correspondent and Radio Hall of Famer Robert Trout recalled the many political conventions he covered for CBS and ABC dating back to the 1930s.

Then on came WBBM's John Madigan with his recollections of the conventions he has covered for print and broadcast over the last 50 years. All three events are well worth a look. They are on video tape and on the Archives shelves. Stop in and take a look.

AND MAKE A NEW YEAR'S resolution visit the Museum frequently in 1997. If you work in the Loop, come on over for lunch. Simply stop by the Corner Bakery counter in the Randolph Street lobby of the Chicago Cultural Center for a sandwich or pastry and beverage, and then see all our Museum has to offer.

Museum of Broadcast Communications

Chicago Cultural Center

Michigan Avenue at Washington Street

Chicago, 60602

Phone (312) 629-6000



Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

DECEMBER 1996

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7th RADIO TO PLAN YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST BY

TOWN HALL TONIGHT (12-22-37) Fred Allen stars with Portland Hoffa and guest Jack Benny in a Christmastime broadcast with Minerva Pious, Walter Tetley, Alan Reed. Jack tries to sell his Maxwell to Fred. The Mighty Allen Art Players present a Christmas fable, "Santa Claus on Strike." Peter Van Steeden and the orchestra. Ipana, Sal Hepatica, NBC. (15:30; 17:00; 26:00)

DORIS DAY SHOW (12-23-53) Guest Jack Kirkwood ("Put something in the pot, boy!") joins Doris for this holiday program. Someone has stolen announcer Don Wilson's Santa Claus suit. Doris sings "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Silver Bells." Syndicated. (25:50)

FRED WARING SHOW (12-22-48) Fred and the Pennsylvanians present three English Christmas carols, a lengthy version of "Jingle Bells," an "Uncle Lumpy" story and "The Song of Christmas Eve." Announcer Bill Bivans, Durwood Kirby. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:18)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-8-48) Gildy has done some early Christmas shopping, but the gifts he brought home have disappeared. Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with Walter Tetley, Lillian

Randolph, Marylee Robb. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:40)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be big band historian and *Nostalgia Digest* columnist **KARL PEARSON** who will talk about "Big Bands from Chicago."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14th RADIO TO ADDRESS CHRISTMAS CARDS BY

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-15-48) Gildy tries to economize with his Christmas shopping this year. Harold Peary stars as Gildersleeve, with Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Walter Tetley as Leroy, and Una Merkle as Adeline Fairchild. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:00)

CHRISTMAS DAY IN AMERICA (12-25-46) An hour of entertainment and inspiration for Christmas day. The meaning, joy and hope of Christmas is expressed during four consecutive daytime dramas against the retelling of the story of the Nativity. We hear **Life Can Be Beautiful**, **Ma Perkins**, **Pepper Young's Family**; and **The Right to Happiness**. Narration by Ron Rossen, written by Carl Bixby. Proctor and Gamble, NBC. (12:30; 15:30; 16:30; 14:00)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (3-10-47) "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart and Donna Reed who recreate their screen roles as George and Mary Bailey in the radio version of Frank Capra's classic 1946 film. Victor Moore co-stars as Clarence, with Bill Johnstone as Mr. Bailey, John McIntire as Joseph, Leo Cleary as Uncle Billy, and Edwin Maxwell as Mr. Potter. A small town man thinks he's a failure, but his Guardian Angel proves otherwise. William Keighley is host. Lux Soap, CBS. (21:00; 16:32; 21:02)

See article about the 50th Anniversary of It's A Wonderful Life, Page 2.

CHRISTMAS SEAL CAMPAIGN SHOW (1948) Jack Carson stars with Eve Arden and guest Edmund Gwenn. Jack tries to convince Eve there is a Santa Claus. Christmas Seals. (14:30)

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21st
RADIO TO WRAP, BAKE
AND DECORATE BY

PHIL HARRIS—ALICE FAYE SHOW (12-18-48) Phil promises his daughters that they will see Santa this Christmas Eve, so he hires a guy to play Santa for them. The "guy" turns out to be guest Jack Benny. Elliott Lewis is Frankie Remley, Walter Tetley is Julius Abbruzio. Phil sings "Jingle Bells," Alice sings "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." Rexall, NBC. (27:58)

READER'S DIGEST RADIO EDITION (12-19-46) "Room For a Stranger" starring Frank Sinatra as a Navy flyer hoping to see his girl at home on Christmas Eve. He receives a telegram from his commanding officer cancelling his leave. Host is Richard Kollmar. Hallmark Cards. CBS. (29:25)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-22-48) Gildy wants a simple family Christmas this year. Harold Peary is Gildy, Marylee Robb is Marjorie, Arthur O. Brian is Floyd the Barber, Dick LeGrand is Peavy, Earle Ross is Judge Hooker. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:20)

SUSPENSE (12-20-59) "Korean Christmas Carol" with Bill Lipton, Lawson Zerbe, Lyle Sudrow. A soldier recalls an incident that took place in 1951, during the Korean war. Multiple sponsors, CBS. (22:46)

A CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING (12-24-61) Bing Crosby stars with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Katherine Crosby and Jo Stafford, with Paul Weston and the orchestra, the Norman Luboff Choir, and Ken Carpenter. Program features Christmas carols, songs and humor. Jo sings "Winter Wonderland" and "The Christmas Song." Bing sings "White Christmas" and "Silent Night." Insurance Company of North America, CBS. (13:15; 14:52; 21:35)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28th
SEASON'S GREETINGS

PAUL WHITEMAN'S ABC CHRISTMAS PARTY (12-24-46) An all-star radio extravaganza starring the "King of Jazz" himself, Paul Whiteman and his orchestra and a host of ABC radio stars including Walter Winchell, J. Scott Smart ("The Fat Man"), Bing Crosby, Henry Morgan, Basil Rathbone, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Kenny Baker, Don McNeill, Tom Brenneman, Don Wilson, Lum and Abner, Patrice Munsel, Arnold Stang. A big, beautiful ninety minute holiday gift from



PAUL WHITMAN

the American Broadcasting Company. Smart tells the story of "Bug Eye and the Christmas Caper"; Morgan and Stang audition a new show; Rathbone and Fitzgerald in a scene from "A Child is Born"; Brenneman in Encino, California, and McNeill in Winnetka, Illinois, exchange greetings; Baker is at Glamour Manor; Lum and Abner read "The Night Before Christmas"; Crosby reads the story of the Nativity. Sustaining, ABC. (30:29; 27:36; 31:38)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (12-26-48) Ozzie remembers when he and his brother believed their father when dad said it would snow. The Nelsons star with John Brown, Janet Waldo, Joe Kearns, Tommy Bernard, Henry Blair. International Silver Company, NBC. (28:55)

SUSPENSE (12-31-61) "The Old Man" starring Leon Janney with Lawson Zerbe, Larry Haines, Ralph Camargo, Rita Lloyd. An old man is being forced to retire. Sustaining, CBS. (24:32)

RED SKELTON SHOW (1-1-46) Red stars with Verna Felton, Rod O'Connor, Anita Ellis, David Forrester and the orchestra. The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire spotlights Deadeye and Junior in "Bells and Resolutions" for the new year. Raleigh Cigarettes, NBC. (28:05)

Chuck Schaden's
THOSE WERE THE DAYS
WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.

JANUARY 1997

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for *Those Were The Days* represents the length of time for each particular show; (28:50) means the program will run 28 minutes and 50 seconds. This may be of help to those who tape the programs for their own collection.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4th
ADVENTURES BY MORSE
"THE COBRA KING STRIKES BACK"
Chapters 1 thru 5

Today we begin an exciting series by the great Carlton E. Morse, creator of *I Love a Mystery* and *One Man's Family*.

"The Cobra King Strikes Back" (syndicated in 1944) is another adventure with San Francisco detective Captain Bart Friday and his sidekick Skip Turner who roam the world solving mysteries and seeking out danger.

There are ten 25-minute episodes in this thrill-packed adventure and we'll broadcast the first five chapters today. The remaining chapters will be presented on January 11.

- Chapter 1** — Friday and Turner are on a steamship, taking a prisoner to Saigon. Aboard ship, they meet Dr. Carter and his party who are on their way to Cambodia, in the heart of French Indo-China. Friday's troubles begin when his prisoner escapes.
- Chapter 2** — "Something About the Hooded Snake"
- Chapter 3** — "The Mad King of Ankar"
- Chapter 4** — "The Temple of Gorillas"
- Chapter 5** — "The Living Image of Cambodia"

—**PLUS: PLEASE STAND BY** — **A History of Radio** (1986) Lesson 18: **Case Closed** focuses on the popularity of the detective program on the air, grouping the radio detectives according to personality and philosophy and discusses common criteria shared by the crime fighters of all groups and examines the differences in their approaches. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11th
ADVENTURES BY MORSE
"THE COBRA KING STRIKES BACK"
Chapters 6 thru 10

- Chapter 6** — "Terrors of the Hollow Mountain"
- Chapter 7** — "The Face of A Beast"
- Chapter 8** — "It Was Not Cannibalism"
- Chapter 9** — "The Fangs and Teeth of the Enemy"
- Chapter 10** — "The Amazing End of an Expedition"

—**PLUS: PLEASE STAND BY** — **A History of Radio** (1986) Lesson 19: **Tall in the Studio** discusses the Westerns, which recalled an early period of American history when the country struggled for existence, and traces the history of three types of Western series: the juvenile Western, the adult Western, and series that were considered Western in their approach, each with heroes who were defenders of justice and champions of the unfortunate. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18th

THE WHISTLER (6-2-48) "Stranger in the House" is the story of a woman who wants to find out if her foster brother, who has been missing for seven years, is still alive. Cast includes Virginia Gregg and Gerald Mohr. Marvin Miller announces. Signal Oil Co., CBS. (29:04)

PHIL HARRIS—ALICE FAYE SHOW (10-17-48) Phil's five year old daughter has a boyfriend. Co-starring with Phil and Alice are Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley, Robert North as Willy, Walter Tetley as Julius, and Jeanine Rose and Anne Whitfield as the Harris' daughters. Rexall, NBC. (29:04)

IMAGINATION THEATRE (4-7-96) "A double feature movie for your mind." 1. "But the Flesh is Weak" the laws of time do not exist at a strange monastery. (24:05) 2. "Belamy Bridge" -- A shell-shocked war veteran can't tell which world he is living in. (21:40) Syndicated.

ADVENTURES OF MAISIE (1949) Ann Sothern stars as Maisie Revere, with Frank Nelson, Hans Conried, Lurene Tuttle, Sheldon Leonard, Earl Lee, Sidney Miller. Maisie suggests to her boss that he hire an efficiency expert. Syndicated. (27:50)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 20: **Child's Play** concerns the listening habits of a generation of preteens and teenagers who grew up listening to programs based on comic strips, airmen, spacemen, practitioners of magic and the occult, and the all-American. Also discussed are the premiums and giveaways which were offered by the sponsors of many kids' programs. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25th

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER (7-27-47) "The Man the Insects Hated" lives in a mansion near the swamps by the Bayou. He is obsessed with inventing a formula for a "perfect insect killer." Cast includes Maurice Tarplin, Eric Dressler, Helen Shields, Robert Dryden. Sustaining, MBS. (29:29)

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (10-22-47) The great Schnozzola with Arthur Treacher, Jo Stafford, Candy Candido. Jimmy and guest Victor Moore are pirates in search for the Lady from Twenty-Nine Palms (Veola Vonn). Sports report from Tommy Harmon. Rexall, NBC. (29:20)

TENNESSEE JED (5-26-47) Isolated episode of the kids' adventure show starring Don McLaughlin as Jed, a southern marksman who,

after the Civil War, becomes an agent of the White House, working for President Grant. Tip-Top Bakers, ABC. (14:38)

LARRY CLINTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1938) Remote broadcasts from the Streets of Paris section of the International Casino in New York City. Vocals by Bea Wain and Ford Leary. Selections include "Heart and Soul," "My Reverie," "Shadrach," and "It Took a Million Years." Sustaining, NBC. (16:30; 13:00)

SUSPENSE (1-2-47) "Tree of Life" starring Mark Stevens as a man who plans to do away with his bossy wife after they move into a new home. Cast includes Cathy and Elliott Lewis. Joe Kearns is the Man in Black. Roma Wines, CBS. (29:11)

PLEASE STAND BY — A History of Radio (1986) Lesson 21: **Winning Ways** takes a look at several types of audience participation shows including "fun time" programs, giveaway shows with the participation of studio audiences, and giveaways involving audiences at home. (30:00)

...and for more
good listening...

ART HELLYER SHOW-- Music of the big bands and the big singers with lots of knowledgeable commentary and fun from one of radio's legendary personalities, **now in his 50th year on the air!** *WJOL, 1340 AM, Saturday, 9 am-1 pm; Sunday, 2-6 pm.*

DICK LAWRENCE REVUE-- A treasure trove of rare and vintage recordings with spoken memories from the never to be forgotten past. *WNIB, 97.1 FM, Saturday, 8-9 pm.*

JAZZ FORUM-- Chicago's foremost jazz authority, Dick Buckley, presents an entertaining and enlightening program of great music by noted jazz musicians. *WBEZ, 91.5 FM, Monday thru Thursday, 8:30-9:30 pm; Sunday 1-4 pm.*

REMEMBER WHEN-- Host Don Corey calls this his "four-hour nostalgia fest" with the emphasis on old time radio musical and variety shows, plus show tunes and interviews. *WAIT, 850 AM, Sunday, noon-4 pm.*

WHEN RADIO WAS-- Carl Amari hosts a weekend edition of the popular series which features old time radio broadcasts and interviews. *WMAQ, 670 AM, Saturday and Sunday, 10pm-midnight.*

"When Radio Was" -- WMAQ-AM 670

Monday thru Friday Midnight to 1 a.m. Host Stan Freberg

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<i>December, 1996 Schedule</i>				
2 Gunsmoke Cinnamon Bear #4	3 Charlie McCarthy Cinnamon Bear #5	4 Suspense Cinnamon Bear #6	5 Fibber McGee & Molly Cinnamon Bear #7	6 Cinnamon Bear #8, #9, #10
9 Our Miss Brooks Cinnamon Bear #11	10 Family Theatre Cinnamon Bear #12	11 Phil Harris-Alice Faye Cinnamon Bear #13	12 Six Shooter Cinnamon Bear #14	13 Cinnamon Bear #15, #16, #17
16 Lone Ranger Cinnamon Bear #18	17 Life of Riley Cinnamon Bear #19	18 Johnny Dollar Cinnamon Bear #20	19 Great Gildersleeve Cinnamon Bear #21	20 Cinnamon Bear #22, #23, #24
23 Duffy's Tavern Cinnamon Bear #25	24 Jack Benny Cinnamon Bear #26	25 Miracle on 34th St. Fibber McGee & Molly	26 Lux Radin Theatre Pt 1 'Maisie Was A Lady'	27 Lux Radio Theatre Pt 2 Frontier Gentleman
30 Ozzie & Harriet Abbott & Costello Pt 1	31 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Burns and Allen			
<i>January, 1997 Schedule</i>				
		1 Suspense Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	2 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Philip Marlowe	3 The Shadow Vic and Sade
6 The Whistler Fibber McGee Pt 1	7 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Green Hornet	8 Lone Ranger Abbott & Costello Pt 1	9 Abbott & Costello Pt 2 Gangbusters	10 Dragnet Lum and Abner
13 Texas Rangers Jack Benny Pt 1	14 Jack Benny Pt 2 Box Thirteen	15 Six Shooter Burns & Allen Pt 1	16 Burns & Allen Pt 2 Have Gun, Will Travel	17 Johnny Dollar Bob and Ray
20 Gunsmoke Life of Riley Pt 1	21 Life of Riley Pt 2 Suspense	22 Lone Ranger Harris-Faye Show Pt 1	23 Harris-Faye Show Pt 2 Directors' Playhouse	24 Superman Unsolved Mysteries
27 The Saint Stan Freberg #15 Pt 1	28 Stan Freberg #15 Pt 2 Hermit's Cave	29 The Shadow Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	30 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 Dimension X	31 Rocky Fortune Lum and Abner

Sponsors Put Their Gold Into Radio's Golden Age

BY BILL ELWELL

Stories about radio during its golden age usually focus upon the stars and shows of the medium between 1926 and 1956. This article takes a look at radio during that era from a new perspective: *the companies and products* which paid for many of the celebrities and programs on major networks from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties.

The first company known to have sponsored a broadcast was the Hamilton Music Store in Wilksburg, Pennsylvania. The broadcast was aired from the same town by experimental radio station 8XK.

The station was established by Dr. Frank Conrad, an engineer with the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company in nearby Pittsburgh. Conrad operated 8XK from his home in Wilksburg and by 1920 had transmitted regular talks and recorded music.

When Conrad had played all of his own records on the air, Hamilton's offered him a continuous supply of new ones if he would give the store credit during his programs. Conrad agreed and broadcast what

may have been the first radio commercial.

There was, however, only limited advertising on the radio during the early 1920s, and this caused financial hardships for stations without adequate backing from other sources.

The stations which did advertise regularly were often owned by establishments which manufactured radio sets and used the airwaves to stimulate the sale of their products.

Nevertheless, there were important developments made

in the radio industry during those years which led to the widespread use of commercials on the air. In 1922, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company worked on new techniques for advertising and, on August 28 of that year, broadcast one of the first sponsored programs over WEAJ, its station in New York. Then, on December 4, 1923, WEAJ aired the first fully sponsored program, a variety show called *The Eveready Hour*, which was paid for by the National Carbon Company, makers of Eveready Batteries.

These broadcasts marked a turning point in radio for, subsequently, many in the fledgling industry realized that sponsored programs were the key not only to survival but also to success. And, as a result, plans were developed to make advertising an in-



Bill Elwell is a regular contributor who fills his retirement years by gardening, hiking, writing and listening to old time radio shows.

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tegral part of broadcasting.

These plans took note of the growing popularity of radio and the general prosperity of the early twenties. Americans wanted to hear the new stars and programming becoming available on the airwaves and at times ordered so many radios that manufacturers were hard-pressed to meet the demand.

As various businesses became aware of the growing radio audience, they began seeking alliances with the new industry. And, by 1925, broadcasters had formed many mutually beneficial arrangements with companies interested in boosting sales of their wares by advertising in the new medium.

These arrangements began to produce significant results in 1926, the year in which the National Broadcasting Company, America's first permanent nationwide network, came into existence. During the 1926-27 season, there were nearly 25 major network programs, each sponsored by a specific company or product. Some of the sponsors were Atlantic and Pacific Tea, Bristol-Myers (Ipana Toothpaste), Continental Baking (Wonder Bread), General Foods (Maxwell House Coffee), and Radio Corporation of America.

It is interesting to note that, in the early days of network radio, the titles of many programs contained either the names of the sponsors or the sponsors' products and were, in effect, commercials themselves. The companies mentioned above, for instance, sponsored programs of music called the *A and P Gypsies*, *Ipana Troubadours*, *Jolly Wonder Bakers*, *Maxwell House Hour*, and *RCA Radiotrons*, respectively.

While many of the sponsored programs on network radio at that time consisted of music, there were exceptions. One of them was a daytime talk for homemakers. The

show was paid for by General Mills and was called *Betty Crocker* after its fictitious hostess, who gave expert advice about food preparation to listening housewives.

The second half of the twenties saw significant growth in the number of sponsored programs on network radio. The increase was stimulated, in part, by the appearance of a new network, the Columbia Broadcasting System, near the close of the decade.

Several companies (Atlantic and Pacific Tea, Bristol-Myers, General Foods, General Mills, and RCA) each sponsored at least one program in every one of network radio's first four seasons. During the same period, General Mills sponsored the most programs (3) in a single season (1929-30).

By 1929-30 there were nearly 95 major programs each sponsored by a single company or product. This represented almost a fourfold increase since the first season of network broadcasting.

Most sponsored broadcasts at the end of the twenties were presentations of music and variety and were often financed by major corporations. Among those sponsors were Cities Service Gasoline and Standard Brands (Chase and Sanborn Coffee, Fleischmann's Yeast).

The Cities Service Concert was one of the first great programs of concert music. During the 1929-30 season, it featured a talented and attractive young singer named Jessica Dragonette, who brought a superbly trained voice and extensive musical repertoire to the airwaves.

Although Miss Dragonette sang her way to stardom in solos and duets for Cities Service, in time she became disenchanted with the show's format. She wanted to perform in operettas, too, but the sponsor refused to make the change. As a result, Miss Dragonette moved to a musical-variety program, *The Palmolive Beauty Box Theatre*, in 1937. There the sponsor,

UNCLE EZRA

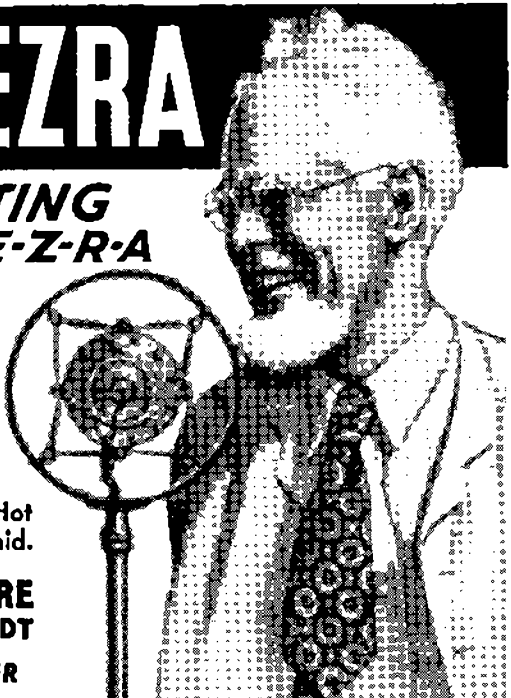
BROADCASTING
from Station E-Z-R-A
EVERY MON.-WED.-FRI.

NBC — Coast-to-Coast

You'll enjoy the philosophy and quaint humor of this old man with young ideas. One of the best loved characters in radio, in a program that's DIFFERENT. Never a dull minute. The Hoosier Hot Shots supply the music. 'Nuff said.

WTMJ WMAQ WIBA WIRE
5:15 P.M., CST - 6:15 P.M., CDT

Sponsored by ALKA-SELTZER



Colgate (Palmolive Soap), gave her the latitude in performing she had sought.

The *Chase and Sanborn* program began in 1929-30 as a musical-variety. Popular French entertainer Maurice Chevalier was hired for the then unheard-of salary of \$5000 a week to be the featured attraction. Later, after Chevalier departed, rising radio personality Eddie Cantor became the star of the show and used the experience as a springboard to his own program.

The Rudy Vallee Show, sponsored by Fleischmann's Yeast, also came on the scene as a musical-variety at the end of the decade. The popularity of Vallee's program was based upon good writing, careful attention to production detail, and quality performers. And Vallee gave many talented newcomers, including Eddie Cantor, their first big breaks in the new medium.

The 1929-30 season also saw the network premiere of *Amos 'n' Andy*, which became one of radio's most popular shows.

It was first sponsored by Lever Brothers (Pepsodent Toothpaste).

The same season witnessed another event which, at first, was relatively unrelated to radio. It was the crash of the stock market and the beginning of the Great Depression in the fall of 1929.

The Depression, which impacted virtually all of the following decade, caused widespread business failure and general unemployment throughout the nation. As a result, many people could no longer afford to seek amusement in night clubs, theatres, and movie houses. And this, predictably, led to joblessness in the entertainment industry.

During the 1930s, Americans tended to stay home and turn to the only affordable source of entertainment left to many of them: radio. And, concurrently, many unemployed entertainers found new work in that same medium.

★ Thus, the radio audience, which at first

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increased for general economic reasons, was further enlarged when listeners began finding their favorite performers on the air. And, as businesses became aware of the expanding radio audience, they began pouring more money into advertising in the medium.

As a result, the Depression, contrary to its devastating effects on many business and individuals, led to unprecedented growth and prosperity in the radio industry. And this gave rise to more new programs.

With few exceptions, the number of sponsored major network programs grew steadily throughout the Depression years. By the 1939-40 season, they totaled approximately 190, a doubling of the number in 1929-30. A portion of the increase was attributable to the appearance of a third network, the Mutual Broadcasting System, during the mid-thirties.

There were about a dozen companies which each sponsored at least one network program every broadcasting season of the Depression. Among them were Cities Service Gasoline, Campana Balm, Colgate, General Foods, General Mills, Lever Brothers, Pacific Coast Borax, and Standard Brands.

During the same decade, Proctor and Gamble sponsored the most programs (24) in a single season (1939-40). Its Camay Soap, Chipso, Crisco, Drefl, Drenc, Ivory Soap, Oxydol, Teel, and White Naptha paid for broadcasts. Predictably, most of the programs were "soap operas," and five of them were "repeats" on different networks at different times.

The growing number of businesses advertising on radio sponsored a host of memorable programs during the thirties. In the early years of the decade they first brought listeners an interesting assortment

of dramas including *Death Valley Days* (Pacific Coast Borax), *First Nighter* (Campana Balm), *The Shadow* (Hatchmacher), and *Sherlock Holmes* (G. Washington Coffee).

Sherlock Holmes, first sponsored on network radio in the 1930-31 season, at one time featured commercials which were partly incorporated into the story. In them, Dr. Watson, Holmes' confidant and assistant, and Joseph Bell, the program's announcer, met in Watson's study during a break in the action to enjoy steaming cups of G. Washington Coffee and express their appreciation for the coffee's comforting warmth and pleasant flavor. This personalized endorsement of the sponsor's product by one of the show's stars in a relaxed setting undoubtedly had a positive influence on sales.

The early 1930s also witnessed the premiere of many new variety shows. Among them were a musical-variety, *The Bing Crosby Show* (Chesterfield Cigarettes), and several comedy-varieties, *Burns and Allen* (Robert Burns Cigars), *The Eddie Cantor Show* (Chase and Sanborn Coffee), *The Fred Allen Show*, (Linit), and *The Jack Benny Program* (Canada Dry).

Bing Crosby's program, which soon became one of the more popular musical shows, changed sponsorship to Kraft Foods in the 1935-36 season. Crosby was still with Kraft in the mid-1940s when he decided to transcribe (prerecord) his shows. When Kraft refused to make this change, Crosby found a new sponsor, Philco Radios.

Philco, however, inserted a clause into its contract with Crosby which required him to resume live broadcasts if his ratings dropped below 12 for four consecutive weeks. They stayed above that number, and Crosby continued to transcribe.

A few years after its premiere, *The Jack Benny Program* also acquired a new spon-

sor, General Foods (Jell-O). Benny often gave extra "plugs" for this sponsor by introducing his shows for General Foods with the phrase, "Jell-O again, this is Jack Benny."

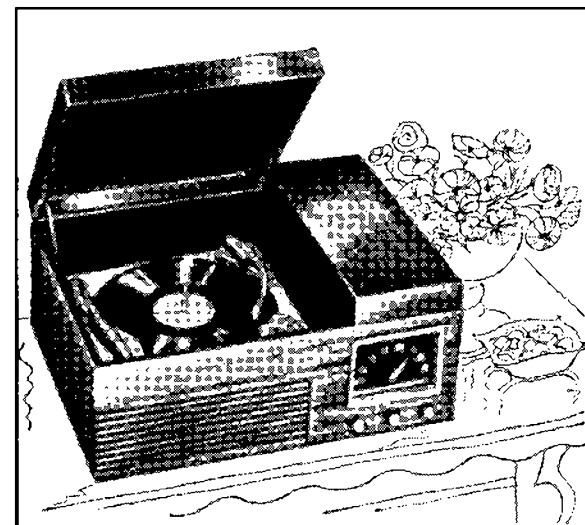
Benny's program was one of the first to incorporate commercials fully into broadcasts. This was done by giving announcer Don Wilson an additional role as member of the cast. Wilson then presented commercials in pleasant and often humorous ways which blended smoothly with the rest of the storyline.

There was also a new genre for youngsters on network airwaves in the early thirties, the adventure serial. The first and probably best-known example of this kind of program was *Little Orphan Annie*, which premiered in 1931-32 sponsored by the Wander Company, makers of

Ovaltine. The stories and premium offers, which characterized this show, were so popular with listeners that *Annie* became an example copied by many subsequent programs for kids.

The premiums offered on *Annie* (badges, bracelets, buttons, decoders, rings, and shake-up mugs) were priced appropriately in view of the times. They were available for only one thin dime plus the seal from a container of Ovaltine. And they played a large part in keeping young listeners loyal to the program and to the sponsor's product.

The mid-1930s introduced radio audi-



For Long Play and Standard Records

PHILCO 1405. Table radio-phonograph with "Console Tone" Acoustical System with Balanced Fidelity Reproducer for 45 minute records and automatic changer for standard records. Powerful radio. **\$129.25***

Wednesday is Bugsday
Hear Bing Crosby on Philco Radio Time
every Wednesday, 10:30 PM in the East,
9:30 PM elsewhere, ABC Network and
many additional stations.



ences to another group of assorted dramas. Among them were the exciting *Gangbusters* (Colgate - Palmolive Soap), the humorous *Lum and Abner* (Horlick's Malted Milk), the prestigious *Lux Radio Theatre* (Lever Brothers - Lux Soap), and the homey *One Man's Family* (Kentucky Winner Tobacco).

The *Lux Radio Theatre*, first sponsored by Lever Brothers in 1934-35, was broadcast initially on Sunday afternoons from New York and featured adaptations of Broadway shows using Broadway actors. Near the end of its first year, the program began to run out of adaptable material and

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experienced falling ratings. As a result, the sponsor moved it to Hollywood in order to have access to movie scripts and stars. This change, plus the stars' endorsements of Lux Soap on the air, and the show's new time on Monday evenings, succeeded in making the *Lux Radio Theatre* one of the medium's more popular programs.

Several new variety shows were also added to the airwaves during the middle thirties. They included two comedy-varieties, *The Bob Hope Show* (Emerson Drug - Bromo Seltzer), and *Fibber McGee and Molly* (S. C. Johnson - Johnson's Wax), an amateur talent contest, *Major Bowes and His Original Amateur Hour* (Chase and Sanborn Coffee), and a musical-variety, *Your Hit Parade* (American Tobacco - Lucky Strike Cigarettes).

Bob Hope developed an approach similar to the one used by Jack Benny when introducing his show. After Pepsodent Toothpaste (Lever Brothers) took over his sponsorship in the late thirties, Hope provided extra plugs at the beginning of his broadcasts with the phrase, "This is Bob 'Pepsodent' Hope saying..."

Fibber McGee and Molly, which premiered on network radio in the spring of 1935, was another of the first programs to incorporate commercials fully into the show. And its announcer, Harlow Wilcox, like Don Wilson of the *Jack Benny Program*, was also a member of the cast. Thus, the genial Wilcox was also able to present commercials in ways which almost made them seem part of the stories.

Your Hit Parade played the top tunes of the week as determined by surveys of sheet music and record sales and juke box selections. The program also played several "Lucky Strike Extras," popular songs not among a week's top tunes. This amounted to extra commercials for the sponsor and

extra entertainment for the listeners.

A relatively new genre, the daytime serial drama for women or "soap opera," began to grow substantially on radio around the middle of the decade. Examples of popular "soaps" premiering during that time include *Aunt Jenny* (Spry), *Backstage Wife* (Dr. Lyons Tooth Powder), *David Harum* (Bab-O), *Ma Perkins* (Oxydol), and *Vic and Sade* (Crisco).

The middle years of the Depression also saw the rise of more adventure programs for kids. The 1933-34 season, for example, witnessed the network premieres of *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy* (General Mills - Wheaties) and *Tom Mix* (Ralston).

Jack Armstrong followed the pattern established by *Little Orphan Annie* with respect to premiums and offered such treasures as luminous jewelry, pedometers, toy bombsights, and whistling rings. The use of these items by the main characters of the program during their radio adventures and the enthusiasm with which announcer Franklin MacCormack described them during breaks in the action created an enormous demand for the premiums and for the sponsor's product, Wheaties.

The concluding years of the 1930s brought more new dramas. Among them were several thrillers, such as *Big Town* (Rinso), *I Love A Mystery* (Leischmann's Yeast), *Mr. District Attorney* (Pepsodent), and the light-dramas *Dr. Christian* (Vaseline) and *Grand Central Station* (Listerine). And there was a new comedy-variety, *The Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy Show*, which also premiered during those years for Chase and Sanborn Coffee.

The number of sponsored soap operas was at a peak in the late '30s. Among the newcomers then were *Life Can Be Beautiful* (Ivory Soap), *Lorenzo Jones* (Phillips Milk of Magnesia), *Our Gal Sunday* (Anacin) and *Stella Dallas* (also for

Phillips Milk of Magnesia).

And, finally, a popular quiz show, *Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge* (Lucky Strike Cigarettes), and another memorable adventure serial for kids, *Terry and the Pirates* (Dari-Rich) also came on the scene at the end of the decade.

The 1940s witnessed two significant trends in radio sponsorship. The first, which occurred in the first half of the decade, was an almost constant increase in the number of major programs sponsored on the networks by a single company or product.

This growth resulted in an industry peak of 270 programs during 1945-46. And the peak figure was more than 40 per cent greater than the comparable number in 1939-40.

The second trend in radio during the forties was a steady decrease in sponsored shows throughout the latter years of the decade. By the 1949-50 season, they slipped to around 220.

During the 1930s, about a dozen companies had each sponsored at least one program during every broadcast season of that decade. During the 1940s, about four times that number of companies accomplished a similar feat.

Most of these long-term sponsors of the

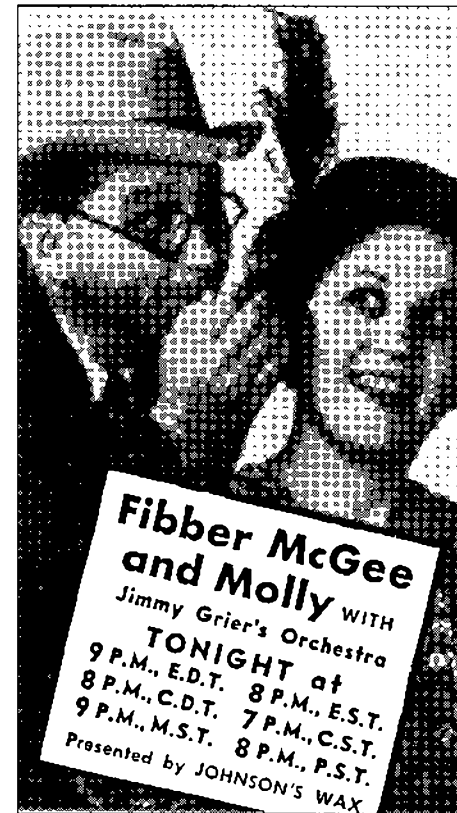
'30s continued throughout the '40s. Among the new long-termers in the latter decade were such companies as Bell Telephone, Campbell, Carnation, Coca-Cola, Cudahy, Eversharp, Miles Laboratories, Pet Milk, Pure Oil, Sealtest, Sun Oil and Texaco.

During the 1940s, Proctor and Gamble once again sponsored the most programs (27) in a single season (1940-41). The products involved were the same as in its previous peak (1939-40) plus Duz and Lava Soap. Most of the shows sponsored were still soaps, and six of them were repeats.

Memorable dramas continued to premiere on the airwaves in the early forties. They included *Ellery*

Queen (Bromo-Seltzer), *Inner Sanctum* (Carter's Pills), and *Mr. and Mrs. North* (Jergens Lotion).

One of the commercials aired on *Ellery Queen* was noteworthy because of the unique manner in which it was presented. It was delivered by a voice which resembled the sound of a steam train engine, and the voice repeated the name of the sponsor's product, Bromo-Seltzer, several times in a rhythm reminiscent of a moving train. Regardless of whether this unusual advertisement boosted sales, it did leave a lasting impression on many listeners.



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An abundance of humor was also added to radio then with the appearance of a new situation comedy, *The Great Gildersleeve* (Kraft), and several new comedy-varieties including *Duffy's Tavern* (Shick Razors), *The Jimmy Durante Show* (Camel Cigarettes), and *The Red Skelton Show* (Avalon Cigarettes).

Other notable newcomers at that time were a panel quiz, *The Quiz Kids* (Alka Seltzer), an audience participation comedy *Truth or Consequences* (Proctor and Gamble - Ivory Soap), and another adventure serial for youngsters, *Captain Midnight* (Ovaltine).

Captain Midnight was first aired regionally for the Skelly Oil Company and, during those early broadcasts, some listeners may have wondered why a program for kids was sponsored by products for grown-ups. In any case, this curious arrangement ended in 1940-41 when Ovaltine moved from *Little Orphan Annie* to the *Captain*.

The mid-'40s produced several popular dramas including *Nick Carter* (Acme Paint), *Sam Spade* (Wildroot Cream Oil) and *Suspense* (Roma Wines).

There were also new situation comedies which first appeared at mid-decade: *The Dennis Day Show* (Colgate - Palmolive Soap), *The Life of Riley* (American Meat Institute), and *Ozzie and Harriet* (International Silver).

Ozzie and Harriet used an interesting means of plugging the sponsor's product. The couple's home address in the show was "1847 Rogers Road." And it was no coincidence that the sponsor sold "1847 Rogers Brothers Silver."

The same years also brought listeners two new comedy-varieties: *The Judy Canova Show* (Colgate) and *The Phil Harris - Alice Faye Show* (I'itch Shampoo).

The Phil Harris - Alice Faye Show in-

produced a unique way to promote a sponsor's product. The *Jack Benny* and *Fibber McGee and Molly* programs had given the dual roles of announcer and cast member to Don Wilson and Harlow Wilcox, respectively, and thereby had facilitated incorporation of commercials into their broadcasts. *Phil Harris - Alice Faye*, however, went one step further after changing sponsorship to Rexall Drugs in 1948-49. It created the character of Mr. Scott, a high-ranking officer in the sponsor's company, and gave the part to Gale Gordon. Gordon, in his role as Scott, played the part of a harried executive who was often the object of Harris' schemes in the stories. Rexall received a curious kind of publicity in this situation, but, overall, emerged in a positive light.

Despite the decreases in sponsorship during the concluding years of the forties, new shows continued to premiere on the networks during that time. Among them were the dramas *Dragnet* (Fatima Cigarettes), *Escape* (Ford Motors), and *The Whistler* (Household Finance). Also premiering then were situation comedies *Life With Luigi* (Wrigley Gum), *My Friend Irma* (Swan Soap), and *Our Miss Brooks* (Colgate).

A showcase for aspiring entertainers, *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*, and a popular human interest program, *This Is Your Life*, also went on the air in the late forties. The former was sponsored by Lipton Tea and the latter by Philip Morris Cigarettes.

Godfrey had been on other shows for many years by the late '40s and had acquired a reputation for kidding his sponsors on the air. And, while much of the kidding was lighthearted and humorous, it tended to make sponsoring companies nervous until they learned that listeners liked Godfrey's approach and often bought the products he pushed.

By the 1950s, the thirty-year golden age of radio was drawing to a close. From 1949-50 to 1955-56, the number of major programs sponsored by a single company or product decreased from approximately 220 to 75.

The more than 60 per cent drop in sponsored programs was understandable. Television had come upon the scene, and many of radio's listeners were tuning-in to the new medium. And much of the talent and advertising that had been on radio was there for them to see as well as hear.

However, despite the movement of sponsors into television, about 20 of them still paid for at least one radio program

every broadcasting season from 1950 through 1956. And Proctor and Gamble, which also retained the lead in sponsored programs during those years, financed as many as 19 shows in 1950-51.

In the early fifties, there were still businesses willing to sponsor new shows on the radio. And, during that time, a popular comedy, *The Bob and Ray Show*, premiered on the network for Colgate as did three adventure serials for youngsters: *Mark Trail* (Kellogg), *Silver Eagle*, *Mountie General Mills*, and *Tom Corbett: Space Cadet* (Kellogg).

Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding, the stars of the *Bob and Ray Show*, created and delivered subtle and humorous parodies and satires of many well-known radio serials.

And they also used their talents to produce riotously funny commercials for at least one of their sponsors.

Although the golden days of radio were ending by the mid-1950s, there were still rewards on the air for faithful listeners. Some of them were programs which had premiered in the early fifties and had been sustained by the network until mid-decade when they found sponsors. Two examples of this were the dramas *Guns m o k e* (Liggett and

Myers - L&M Cigarettes) and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* (Wrigley). Both shows compared favorably with the best ever broadcast.

It was a long and fabulous thirty years for network radio. During its first broadcast season, 1926-27, there were only eight different kinds of programming and about 35 major programs on the air. Approximately 25 (71 percent) of them were each sponsored by a single company or product.

At the industry's peak in 1945-46, there were 43 program categories and about 390

**NOW YOU CAN GET
AMERICA'S LEADING HAIR
TONIC IN NEW 25¢ SIZE!**

IF YOU'VE NEVER used Wildroot Cream-Oil, don't put it off any longer. As little as a quarter buys you days and weeks of smart good grooming that can't be beat. Then you'll know why it's—again and again the choice of men who put good grooming first!

**NON-ALCOHOLIC
Contains LANOLIN**

SMART WOMEN use it for grooming, relieving dryness, training children's hair. Now available in new 25¢ size (also larger economy sizes) at drug counters.

TUNE IN "The Adventures of Sam Spade" Sun. evgs., CBS Network.

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major programs. And 270 (69 per cent) of them each had a sponsor.

There were significant changes in these figures by 1955-56, the final season of the era. Although there were still 42 program categories and around 330 major programs on the air, only about 75 (23 per cent) of them were each financed by one sponsor. More than half of the 330 programs were sustained by the networks. And the rest were either paid for by multiple or local sponsors.

There were four companies which stood out as sponsors of network radio programs from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties. Three of them, Cities Service, General Foods and General Mills, each financed shows for 29 seasons during the medium's thirty-year golden era. The fourth, Proctor and Gamble, sponsored the most programs (27) during a single broadcasting season.

Many of the sponsors we've mentioned were relatively large, well-known companies. There were, however, a great number of other businesses which also sponsored programs on network radio from 1926 to 1956.

In all, more than 700 companies and products paid for the marvelous entertainment which sped through the air and into the homes of millions of Americans during those years.

And, because of the commercials which were part of those broadcasts, listeners became aware of some pretty good products.

We should stir a generous helping of rich, chocolaty Ovaltine into a tall, cold glass of milk and drink a toast to all of those sponsors who made life better ...who paid for the stars and shows that were on the airwaves ...who put their gold into radio's golden age. ■



I'm at the age where I should be entitled to sit back in my favorite easy chair, if I had an easy chair, tamp a pinch o' t'baccy into the bowl of a mellowed meerschaum pipe, if I had a pipe and if I smoked, pensively stroke my silvery-white beard, which I've never had, and proceed to recount what Christmas was in the "olden days," as the kids term anything farther back in time than their last birthday.

One thing I'd tell anyone who'd listen was that Chicago had some streets that at "yuletide," would turn into enchanted vistas. It was the time when I'd pile a load of my kids and one or two of the neighbors' into the family wagon, usually the Sunday before Christmas, or thereabouts, and take a leisurely tour of the seasonal sights. This, of course, was when driving an automobile anywhere for pleasure was still feasible, and a Sunday drive in the family crate was an anticipated treat.

Our "Cook's tour" would begin at dusk, the better to view the beautifully illuminated seasonal decorations, and as we headed downtown there was the usual urgent plea, "Are we gonna go 'under the world,' dad? Don't forget that, dad." "Under the world" meant plunging into the Wacker Drive underground and making a circuit of that cavernous, slightly mysterious, and, in those days, scarcely used street system originally intended for the conve-

nience of commercial vehicles. The thing that made it so fascinating and gave it an eerie and unearthly and amusement park, haunted-house-atmosphere was the green florescent illumination distinctive to that subterranean maze. I know of no other place where green lights were used for street lighting. It never failed to awe and startle the trek on a note of excitement.

We'd wend our way to Michigan Boulevard, the city's showplace avenue, dubbed "The Magnificent Mile" lately. From Chicago Avenue south the trees lining both sides of the street twinkled merrily with sparkling tree lights. Wreaths, bells, Santa Clauses, and other Christmas symbol festooned the lamp posts and the shops, whose windows were smartly and stylishly decorated with the finest selection of gift suggestions. "Boul Mich" was in full holiday bloom.

Cruising leisurely south on Michigan Avenue, taking in the sights without a posse of cars behind tooting horns, blinking lights, rudely urging us to get a move-on, as would be the case today when there isn't a time, day or night, when there isn't traffic overload, we'd circle Chicago's spectacular yearly showpiece Christmas tree just off Michigan at Jackson Boulevard. If we wanted to take a second or even a third look to enjoy some part of it again, we'd just make another orbit. No problem. Remember this is the "olden days" of unjammed streets we're talking about.

But the culmination of our tour was the slow-paced drive down State Street, that truly "Great Street," to inspect each and every window of some of the long-gone, but fondly remembered department stores.

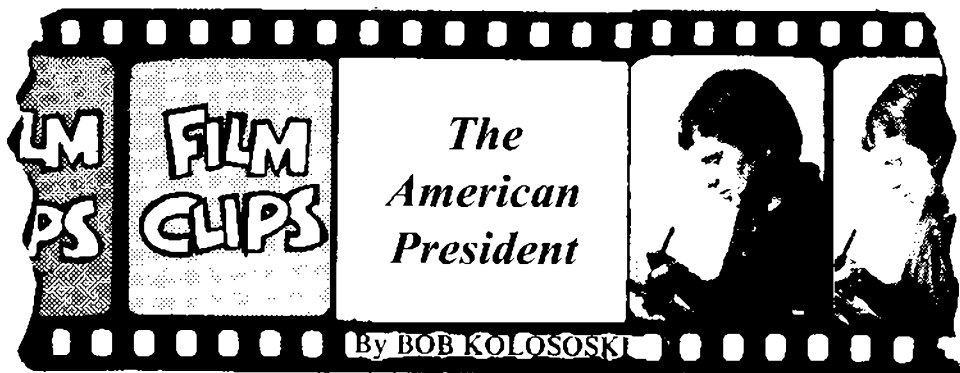
State Street at Christmas in that regrettably bygone era was as close as one could get to a "Window Wonderland." Both sides of the street were lined with the awesomely decorated department store windows in full holiday pagentry: Marshall Fields at the

north end, followed by Carson Pirie Scott and Mandel Brothers, which later became Goldblatts. On the west side there was the fondly remembered The Fair Store and a Chicago landmark, The Boston Store, at State and Madison, the numerical center of town, a favorite meeting place where, it was said, sooner or later every Chicago citizen would eventually pass by at some time. The Woolworths' chain of "Five and Ten Cent Stores" had its flagship store proudly planted there, too, with its less expensive "stocking filler" gift selections.

Every window was a tasteful tableau of the toys and games presented for the wide-eyed gapers, young and old alike. Each had its own theme. Some had activated and moving figures. Usually there was a Santa's workshop; maybe a family-around-the-Christmas-tree theme; possibly a carolling scene, complete with the familiar noels and carols piped out to the viewers on the street. Virtually all the windows reflected the spiritual aspect of that special season and the reason it was called Christmas, an aspect almost completely overlooked or even avoided nowadays.

A brief stop at each window was a must so that the excited, ooh-ing and aah-ing gang could scramble out and make a closer inspection of the fabulous array of virtually endless displays of desirable things. Yes, it was possible on busy State Street to stop one's car for a few moments for a closer look. It was a time when little pleasures were tolerated because of the special season and trivial traffic infractions overlooked without rancorous urgings or nudgings to "Move along, move along."

It was easy to become imbued with the joyous seasonal spirit in those golden "olden days" which live so vividly and longingly in one's memory, and recall to mind a time when Chicago really did have a "Winter Wonderland" nestled in its open and happy heart. ■



Between the presidential election and the inauguration, we're reminded that the public loves the hoopla of politics and movie makers have loved making movies about the men who have held the highest office of the land.

There have been only a few screen biographies of presidents, mainly because—in spite of our fascination with politics—the public has stayed away from that type of film.

The most elaborate biography of a president was the 1944 production *Wilson*. Produced at 20th Century Fox and under the supervision of Darryl F. Zanuck, it was beautifully filmed in Technicolor and boring as a foggy day in May. Alexander Knox was chosen to portray President Woodrow Wilson and he was excellent as the college professor turned statesman and crusader for world peace. But *Wilson's* life was less than exciting and the impressive sets couldn't make up for the weak story line. It died at the box office and cautioned filmmakers that the lives of our presidents weren't the stuff that profits are made of.

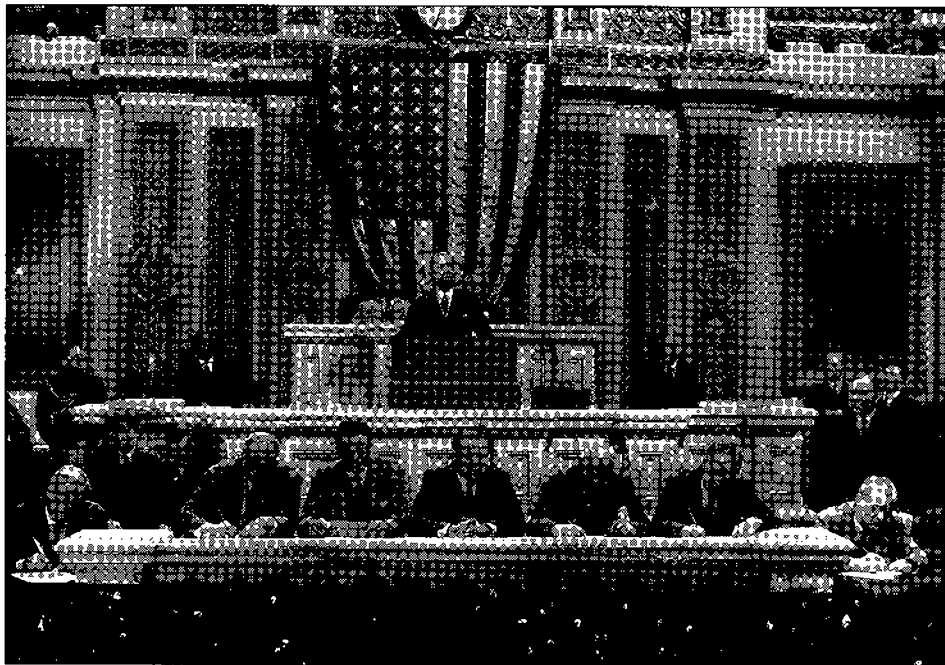
In 1948 Raymond Massey grew a beard and became *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Based on the Robert E. Sherwood play, it gave a moving account of our 16th president's troubled life before he took the office of president. Massey looked the part and gave his best performance. The movie was a mild hit, but not enough to encourage many

screen biographies of actual presidents.

However, two notable films—one earlier, one later—dealt with the lives of two of our most beloved leaders.

In 1939 Darryl Zanuck inspired his staff to create a biography of Abraham Lincoln, not about his tenure as president, but rather about his young adulthood. Lamar Trotti wrote a detailed screenplay and John Ford was selected to direct *Young Mr. Lincoln*. The key to the film was Henry Fonda in the title role. His gaunt bony frame and facial features were so close to Lincoln's that with a minimal amount of makeup he became the young Abe. John Ford's direction was, as usual, impeccable and although the story was not very factual, it gave an excellent representation of life in the middle 1800s.

A middle-aged Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the subject of the 1960 film *Sunrise At Campobello*. Based on a very successful stage play, the film's inspiring screenplay was by Dore Shary and benefited by the performances of Ralph Bellamy as the future president and Greer Garson as his wife Eleanor. Garson was nominated for an Academy Award as best supporting actress, but Bellamy carried the film as FDR. The picture dealt with the period in Roosevelt's life when he was first stricken with polio and Bellamy, who starred in the Broadway play, had FDR's mannerisms perfected. What really came



"WILSON" (1944) starring Alexander Knox was Hollywood's most elaborate film biography.

through was the courage of the man who would vigorously lead America through its worst depression and then the most devastating war in history. The film moves slowly when compared to today's fast-paced features, but it is definitely worth viewing.

Other movies have dealt with the presidency by giving us *fictional* presidents.

A movie that should be played over and over again during each election year is *The Best Man*. Based on Gore Vidal's popular play, the 1964 film achieves a very realistic perspective of the American political process. Cliff Robertson and Henry Fonda are excellent as presidential candidates fighting each other as they wheel and deal toward their party's nomination for president. Robertson's character was compared to John F. Kennedy, the man he would portray in the 1963 movie *PT 109*. But the surprise knockout performance in the film was by Lee Tracy as a dying ex-president.

Tracy, a talented but generally forgotten actor of the 1930s, was rewarded with a best supporting actor nomination for his tour de force work in this movie. The mood of the film is as black and white as the stark colorless photography etching a vivid picture of the American political arena.

Another powerful film that deals with a political campaign, although not presidential, is the 1972 movie *The Candidate*. A young Robert Redford turns in one of his finest performances as a liberal lawyer running for senator in California. Jeremy Lerner won the Academy Award for best original screenplay that used something of a Six O'clock News approach towards the fictitious campaign. Melvin Douglas and Don Porter, two veteran actors, captured the mood of elder statesmen.

The fate of all humanity was the decision Henry Fonda had to make as a President of the United States in the 1964 film *Fail-Safe*. The film's premise was topical

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

for the cold war period and is still nightmarish. A group of Strategic Air Command bombers are erroneously sent to drop atomic bombs on Moscow and no one, not even president Henry Fonda, can call them back. Fonda tries desperately to recall them while informing his Russian counterpart of the situation. The film is a gripping exercise in sustained suspense that left its audiences white-knuckled at the frightening conclusion.

That same year Peter Sellers had three different roles in the black comedy *Dr. Strangelove: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. He played an inept and bumbling U.S. president who must deal with a situation similar to the one on *Fail-Safe*, but with biting humor softening the suspense. George C. Scott and Sterling Hayden head a top notch cast with Slim Pickens as the best of the lot portraying a cowboy bomber pilot who rides an A-bomb rodco style down to its target.

1964 was the year of the political thriller and perhaps the best of that year's offer-

ings was *Seven Days in May*. The exceptional cast includes Kirk Douglas, Ava Gardner, Burt Lancaster, Edmond O'Brien and John Houseman, with Fredric March outstanding as the president. March's chief executive must deal with a plot to overthrow the government without letting that plot be revealed to the public for fear of general panic. Rod Serling wrote a literate and suspenseful screenplay that moved as fast as an assassin's bullet. This film set the standard for political thrillers.

The Wind and the Lion, a 1975 film, is based on a real life incident that happened in 1904. President Theodore Roosevelt sent the Marines to Morocco to rescue an American widow and her children who had been kidnapped by a sheik. The film embellishes the details a bit, but it is great fun with Sean Connery as the sheik and Candice Bergen as the widow.

The presidency is still a popular subject with contemporary fictional versions of the chief executive showing up recently in *The American President* with Michael Douglas in the title role, and with Bill Pullman as a feisty president battling space invaders in *Independence Day*. ■



"THE BEST MAN" (1964) with Henry Fonda, Shelley Berman and Cliff Robertson.



OUR READERS WRITE WE GET LETTERS

MARCO ISLAND, FLORIDA— When I read your article about the Chicago Theatre (Oct-Nov issue) it brought back a memory from the past when my brother Ken got what had to be one of the biggest laughs in Chicago Theatre history. We used to go to the Chicago almost weekly with our parents. On one occasion after the completion of the live stage performance and the movie, the curtains closed and the lights began to come up. At that moment my brother, who was about eight years old at the time, stood up in his balcony seat and loudly proclaimed, "What no Mickey Mouse?" Well, the audience in the theatre broke out in a roar. I think my folks may have been embarrassed, but I think every other youngster in the audience would have seconded my brother's concern. — **ANTHONY J. KLEIN, JR.**

EVANSTON, IL — Your magazine gets better all the time. I was interested in your bit on the Chicago Theatre. I worked in public relations and publicity for Balaban and Katz under Eddie Seguin. What great old characters were working there at the time, still dressed as they did in the twenties. I remember taking lunch high up in the balcony at the Chicago Theatre. It was totally empty and I would lie down and go to sleep with Carroll Baker in a scene from "The Carpetbaggers." To have that wonderful high balcony all to myself before that giant screen was *wonderful!* Ecstasy, paradise, fantasy. Words can't describe it. It was like a cathedral. It was as if I was appearing in "The Carpetbaggers" myself, with everybody playing to me. Very restful. Away from the world in all that darkness. — **NEIL ELLIOTT**

EVANSTON, IL— Ken Alexander's article (Oct-Nov issue) on Loop restaurants brought back fond memories of the mid-fifties when I was attending DePaul downtown as an undergraduate. I missed any mention of my all-time favorite eating place which is, alas, no more: Minck's Delicatessen on south Wabash, between Adams and Jackson. Their kreplach soup brought tears of ecstasy to my eyes, and their cheese blintzes were

absolutely out of this world. I fondly remember the motherly waitress who used to slip me an extra dollop of sour cream when the proprietor wasn't looking, in a hopeless attempt to fatten up my then-skinny frame. Those indeed were the days! — **DONALD DRAGANSKI**

RIVER FOREST, IL— To Ken Alexander and all the people who were part of the final episode of "One Man's Family" (on *TWTD* Sept. 7): We've enjoyed listening to "One Man's Family" on Summer Saturdays and wish it could go on; but we felt the finale was just perfect. Thank you so much for tying up the loose ends and letting the Barbour family live happily ever after! — **KRISTIN AND SETH FLANDERS**

CHICAGO— Please initiate my subscription to *Nostalgia Digest* — it sounds like it will be a lot of fun. Your Saturday afternoon broadcast certainly is; makes weekend work at the office much more enjoyable. — **SEAN CARR**

ORLAND PARK, IL— My family and I love to listen to "Suspense" and other nail-biting shows. Saturdays are Old Time Radio Days! — **ERIK R. KUNZ**

DARIEN, IL— I greatly enjoy listening to your shows. Lately I have been taping them and playing them back in my car during the week. I am always amazed at the quality of these shows. Listening forces me to use my imagination and it is not passive as is watching TV. — **JOHN AGUZINO**

WILMETTE, IL— To say that I enjoy your Saturday show is simply not strong enough. It is a "must hear/tape" portion of my week. I particularly enjoy your shows that carry a theme. The "Remembering Verna Felton" and the "Remembering Bea Benadaret" shows were ones that I looked forward to most excitedly from when you first announced them. When you are able to incorporate interviews with the party involved in the actual show (the Jack Benny 10-parter comes to mind quickly) I think



MORE LETTERS

your show reaches a level totally beyond anything being done... certainly here in Chicago. —**FRED BONDY**

CHICAGO— I want to say how much pleasure I've had over the years listening to your programs since 1979. The Christmas shows are always the jewel of the season. The "Please Stand By" series is informative and quietly entertaining. I absolutely get side-aches from Jack Benny, too! Your programs most importantly reflect the values and concerns of the past decades for the younger generations, and provide an essential link to our heritage as Americans and our traditions as decent human beings. We need more of this. —**TIMOTHY BRADBURY**

CHICAGO— When you broadcast certain programs I can flash back to a scene in my parents' home when my Mom made comments regarding the programs. Oh, so often she would yell out the back door, "Eddie, Fibber McGee (or The Shadow) is on!" I would come a-running to hear the program. The ability to slip away to that moment relieves me of the problems of today. When the theme song of the Edgar Bergen program plays I can smell the aroma of waffles. That's what we had in those days. Even today, when I smell waffles, I think of Charlie McCarthy... and I must say I don't like waffles! —**ED BEYER**

COLUMBUS, OHIO— We moved to the Chicago area in 1970 and were lucky to pick up your Saturday afternoon show on what I think was WLTD. So I am a Schaden fan from way back. We moved from Chicago in 1977, but whenever we visit Chicago we visit the Metro Golden Memories store and pick up tapes, books, etc. On our recent trip we visited the Museum of Broadcast Communications and I picked up a number of tapes as well as a Museum T-shirt. I teach a course on "When Radio Was Radio" at elderhostels. The name of the course is also the name of a column I write for the "Senior Times" in Columbus. —**EARL YAILLEN**

RIVER FOREST, IL-- Your Chicago Fire program was so excellent! It was great to hear the local news from way back and it is always great to hear the WW II shows. --**STEVE TAYLOR**

TINLEY PARK, IL-- I am 38 years old and have been a great admirer of yours for many years. I listen to your shows when time permits. It's a great relief valve from the hectic world we live in today. I even have my wife and children listening. They are especially fond of the Cinnamon Bear and Jack Benny. --**TERRY HOLT**

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA— A few years ago you had an advertiser called the End of the Line Caboose Motel. I had not heard of this Lake Geneva place for quite a while. About two weeks ago a fellow teacher told me that he was thinking of buying a condo in Lake Geneva which had been a caboose. It was the same place. The owner had decided to retire and put the caboose units into a condo ownership arrangement and sell them. I immediately called the Realtor handling the matter, sent earnest money, went up there the next weekend and now own a Milwaukee Road caboose. As you know, they are extremely nice inside and out. Thanks to you and old time radio my family and I have a very unique getaway. If it wasn't for you and *Those Were The Days*, I never would have had the interest in looking into a caboose. The original owner says that you and your program were responsible for about 80 per cent of his business the first few years. He says "Hi" and I say "Thanks, Chuck." —**RICH JONAS**

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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The Nostalgia Digest is published six times a year by THE HALL CLOSET, Box 421, Morton Grove, IL 60053 (847) 965-7763.

Annual subscription rate is \$15 for six issues. A two-year subscription (12 issues) is \$25. Your subscription expires with the issue date noted on the mailing label. A renewal reminder is sent with the last issue of your subscription.

ADDRESS CHANGES should be sent to Nostalgia Digest, Box 421, Morton Grove, IL 60053 **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. The Post Office **DOES NOT** automatically forward the Digest which is sent by bulk mail.

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