

NOSTALGIA DIGEST ^{AND} RADIO GUIDE



WALTER TETLEY

Inner Sanctum Mysteries

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□ INNER SANCTUM Vol. 1

THE UNDEAD (12-18-45) The wife of an actor discovers that her husband is a vampire. Anne Seymour stars.

DEAD MAN'S HOLIDAY (6-19-45) After a train accident, a man is unable to locate his wife. Then he's told that he has been dead for six years.

DEATH DEMON (7-19-48) After his father has been murdered, a young man tries to summon his father's spirit to learn the identity of the murderer.

SKELETON BAY (1-30-50) A woman on vacation witnesses a murder, then helps the murderer get rid of the body. #IS2401

□ INNER SANCTUM Vol. 2

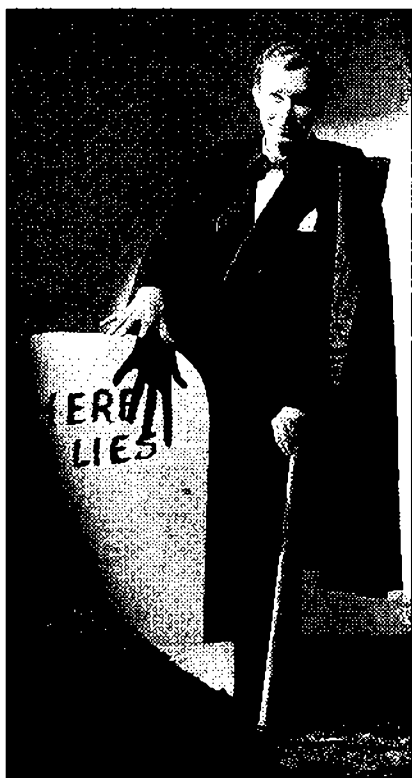
DEATH FOR SALE (7-13-52) The crime of your life: Mark and Cora expect to collect \$50,000 insurance money after waiting seven years, but her "deceased" husband returns and insists on sharing it with them.

BIRDSONG FOR A MURDERER (1940s) Carl Warner keeps a roomful of singing canaries for a reason known only to himself. A visitor from his past shows up and now two people know about the canaries.

CORRIDOR OF DOOM (1940s) After his operation, John Clay awakens in an unknown, frightening place... next to the corridor of doom.

THE WAILING WALL (11-12-43) Boris Karloff stars as a man who murders his wife and seals her up inside the wall of his home.

MUSICAL SCORE (5-24-45) Five people escape on a life raft from a sinking ship. For 17 days one of the survivors hums a tune to his injured wife. #IS2402



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Hello, Out There in Radioland!

Sixty years ago, on Sunday, October 30, 1938, Orson Welles produced what has become the most famous radio broadcast of all time. It was his *Mercury Theatre On the Air* production of "The War of the Worlds," the H. G. Wells story of an invasion from Mars. Following the broadcast, newspapers reported...

Residents of **Jersey City, New Jersey**, telephoned their police frantically asking where they could get gas masks. In both Jersey City and **Newark**, hundreds of citizens ran out into the streets.

New York City police were besieged with telephone pleas for gas masks and for directions of where to flee.

In **Oakland, California**, a citizen called police headquarters shouting, "My God! Where can I volunteer my services? We've got to stop this awful thing!"

In **Philadelphia**, thousands of men, women and children ran screaming into the streets, or huddled in basements of homes, praying for deliverance from the inter-stellar 'invaders.' One hotel proprietor reported every person in his establishment left during the broadcast.

In **Boston**, one woman claimed she could see the fire and she and others in her neighborhood "were getting out of here."

In **Brevard, North Carolina**, five boys at Brevard College fainted as pandemonium reigned on campus when students were convinced the world was coming to an end.

In **Indianapolis**, a woman ran into a Methodist church screaming, hysterical, "It's the end of the world. You might as well go home to die. I just heard it on the radio!"

In **Louisville**, a filling station operator reported a carload of tourists, bound for California, stopped quickly for a tankful of gas, then drove away with a roar, saying they had heard about the meteors on the radio and wanted to get as far away from the destruction as possible.

In **Providence, Rhode Island**, officials of the electric company received scores of calls urging them to turn off all lights so the city would be safe from the enemy.

In **Salt Lake City**, "an ardent swain called his sweetheart to "marry me before we're killed."

In **Pittsburgh** a man said he returned home in the midst of the broadcast and found his wife in the bathroom, a bottle of poison in her hand, and screaming, "I'd rather die this way than like that."

Happy 60th Anniversary, "War of the Worlds."

The 1938 *Mercury Theatre* production will be re-broadcast on "When Radio Was" in two parts on October 29 and 30, 1998. Tape and CD recordings of the original program are available from Metro Golden Memories in Chicago. The complete script of the *Mercury Theatre* broadcast is on the Internet at <http://web2.airmail.net/lgroebe> and a group of professional performers, the AFTRA/SAG Radio Players, are scheduled to re-create the original program at the Museum of Broadcast Communications on November 29. Tune in to *Those Were The Days* for details.

--Chuck Schaden



ORSON WELLES

WHAAAAT A CHAAAAARACTER!

Walter Tetley — Radio's Eternal Adolescent

BY ELIZABETH MC LEOD

Whether you think of him as Leroy, the all-American-kid nephew of the Great Gildersleeve, or as Julius, the sinister delivery boy who gleefully tormented Phil Harris and Remley, chances are you know the work of Walter Tetley. For more than twenty-five years he played kid roles on radio but many old time radio fans don't realize he had an extensive career on the stage before he ever saw a microphone. While still a child or at least while PASSING as a child — he was an international star in vaudeville.

Tetley's early life is something of a mystery. Publicity articles published during his radio career offered several birth dates — 1920, 1921, and 1923 were all used at one time or another. The Social Security Administration's files, however, state that Tetley was con-

siderably older — citing a birth date of 1915.

The explanation is most likely a simple one: Tetley's parents were trying to prolong their son's viability as a child performer by fudging his age. His small size and ever-boyish voice helped keep that career going for far longer than his parents could have ever hoped...with a little help from radio.

Tetley began his career as a child performer in vaudeville in the 1920s, doing a precise imitation of Sir Harry Lauder — complete with kilts,

tam, and knobbly walking stick. Lauder himself saw the act in 1930, and was favorably impressed. From that point on, Tetley was billed as "Wee Sir Harry." In 1934, Tetley traveled to Europe, where he performed to considerable acclaim on



PHOTOFEST

Elizabeth McLeod is a radio journalist and broadcast historian who lives in Rockland, Maine. She has specialized in the documentation of early 1930s radio for more than 20 years, and is currently co-writer of the CBS Radio Network program Sound-Bytes.

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Lauder's home turf — the music halls of Britian.

He made his radio debut in late 1930, often appearing on WJZ's *Children's Hour* with his Scotch characterization. He remained with this series, later known as *Coast To Coast On A Bus* for more than seven years. He also appeared as a featured performer in *The Lady Next Door*, an NBC late-afternoon serial of 1931-32, as well as on Raymond Knight's pioneering comedy series *The Cuckoo Hour* and various other NBC programs.

Radio Guide's February 4, 1932 issue features an article entitled "Babes In Radioland," in which Tetley is one of several child actors profiled. An accompanying photo shows Tetley looking like a child of about eleven, dressed in his Scotch costume.

His big break on radio came in 1935 when he joined Fred Allen's *Town Hall Tonight* as one of the Mighty Allen Art Players. It was here that his talent as a mimic and dialectician really came to the attention of radio producers. His smart-alec vocal style meshed perfectly with Allen's sour-apple approach to comedy, and Tetley was a valued member of the Players thru the end of 1937. It was with Allen's troupe that he honed his skill at playing brats and wiseacres, often in a knife-edged accent which revealed his New Jersey roots.

In 1938, Tetley and his mother moved to California, where the diminutive actor quickly found small roles in a number of films. Tetley's movie career was not extensive, however — limited mostly to bit parts as messengers, bellhops, and office boys. Radio would remain his primary oc-



"THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE"

PHOTOFEST

Walter Tetley, Harold Perry, Mary Lee Robb

WALTER TETLEY

cupation for the next two decades.

During the 1940s Tetley rarely had a chance to display his dialect skills. The Scotch routine was abandoned as the actor became typecast as a wise-guy kid — with Leroy (*The Great Gildersleeve*) and Julius (*Phil Harris - Alice Faye Show*) the best examples. Tetley's skill as an actor is quite apparent when his two major roles are compared.

Although the voices of Leroy and Julius were quite similar, the two characters are very different. Leroy was simply a pre-adolescent boy, with a boy's problems and a boy's point of view. Although he could be fresh with his elders, he was never a Bad Boy. Listening to Leroy, the portrayal is so sincere, and so convincing, that one completely loses sight of the fact that



ALICE FAYE and WALTER TETLEY

PHOTOFEST

completely loses sight of the fact that the character is being portrayed by a man in his thirties.

Julius, on the other hand, was an utterly unreal character — a cartoon — a veritable fiend in human shape. His greatest joy in life was finding new ways to torment Phil and Frankie — and his side remarks to Alice tended to reveal a more-than-adolescent appreciation for the pleasures of the flesh. In Julius, Tetley gave voice to one of the most memorable kids of radio — and certainly the most “adult!”

In addition to these two well-remembered roles, Tetley appeared on other programs from time to time during the 1940s, and had a leading role as well in a 1945-vintage syndicated transcription show, *The Anderson Family*. He almost got his own starring series in 1948, when he



“THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE”

PHOTOFEST

Walter Tetley, Willard Waterman, Mary Lee Robb

recorded an audition for NBC. Entitled *The Kid On The Corner*, the proposed series featured Tetley as a wise-guy newsboy who got into various scrapes around his neighborhood. Harry Von Zell was featured as the stuffy straight-man. The show was not picked up, however, and Tetley remained in supporting roles for the rest of his radio career.

After radio faded out, Tetley turned to animation voice work, and was featured in many cartoon series of the early 1960s, most notably as "Sherman," boy companion of canine

genius "Mr. Peabody." He continued to do voice work until his death from cancer on September 4, 1975.

Little did his parents realize when they fudged his birthdate that their son would



"WHO DONE IT?" (1942)

PHOTOFEST

Walter Tetley, Lou Costello, Bud Abbott



"HOW DOOO YOU DO?" (1946)

Bert Gordon (The Mad Russian), Harry Von Zell, Walter Tetley

go on to have one of the longest "childhoods" on record.

And we are much the richer for it. ■
NOTE-- Tune in TWTD November 7 for a four-hour salute to Walter Tetley.

Funny Money!

The Gold Coast Show

Chicago Radio's Wacky House of Mirth

BY JOHN MIES

In 1945 gold was discovered at the WBBM Air Theatre, Wrigley Building, Chicago.

Chief Writer Mort Hall walked into the office of Vice President and General Manager H. Leslie Atlas and presented a revolutionary new format which was to become a Chicago radio legend. It also became one of the most highly profitable in the station's history.

It was called the *Gold Coast Show*.

Back then, a 15-minute program sponsor was restricted to three minutes of commercial time by FCC ruling. Mort's idea was to make a 15-minute program participating, or multi-sponsored. Thus, negating the three commercial minutes rule and adding as many spots as time would allow. But how were you going to get an audience to listen to a program filled with eight or more commercials? Mort had that problem solved, too. Make the commercials part of the entertainment! And that was the *Gold Coast Show*... a comedy skit which integrated the commercials to form a part of the plot.

The writer used clever lead-ins to the commercial and often equally clever lead-outs. For example, a character in the skit might have a line that said: "But Boss, what can we do in this critical situation?!" The commercial would be punched up and the first line we'd hear would be "Use AJAX, the foaming cleanser...!" An example of a lead-out... coming out of a cigarette spot,

John Mies of Van Nuys, California, wrote The Gold Coast Show from 1953-1957.

the skit character Charlie Chin (a take-off on the famous Oriental sleuth Charlie Chan) observes: "Commercial prove adage, Many Men Smoke, but FU MAN CHU!"

Gold Coast writing was in the style of the present day *Mad Magazine*. WBBM promos always proclaimed it the "zany" *Gold Coast Show* and the cast as "zany member of the *Gold Coast Show!* ...and it and they were zany!"

The cast consisted of George Watson, known as the Man of a Thousand Voices; Jean Williams, staff singer and a very talented actress as well. If George was the Man of a Thousand Voices, Jean was a Woman of at least a Hundred!

George and Jean's support group were The King's Jesters: George Howard, Fritz Bastow and Johnny Ravencroft, a staff trio who began their career singing with Paul Whiteman back in the 1930s.

The pianist was Sid Nierman, a man of Oscar Levant-like wit and marvelous musical talent. Ed Wojtal was the sound man. Ed's expertise made the skits funnier with his sound portraits. The Jesters were not professional actors, but they had a charming simplicity that fit the beleaguered-by-fate characters in the *Gold Coast* skits.

The *Gold Coast* writers put a sardonic eye and typewriter on the foibles and sometimes cruel fates of life. The scripts had to end on an O. Henry twist of fate... and to that ribbon-stained crew nothing and no one was sacred. Not even such WBBM stars as Paul Gibson, John Harrington, Mal Bellairs, Julian Bentley, Jay Andres, Art

WBBM

730

ON YOUR RADIO

3141

advance programs

Sunday, July 16 thru Saturday, July 22, 1961

CBS CHICAGO • 630 NORTH MICHIGAN • WHITEHALL 4-5000



Laugh with the Gold Coasters —
 Live Comedy, Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M.

WBBM Chicago's Showmanship Station

goes, "My how the money rolls in!"

The listening audience didn't seem to mind all those commercials. Due to the skill of the writers and cast, the laughter continued to roll and the audience continued to listen.

When nighttime radio listening began to decline, the evening *Gold Coast* was dropped, but the show continued successfully in a two-a-day format.

Mort Hall wrote the morning edition, but the afternoon strip was divided between two or sometimes three writers. The feeling around

Mercier and Fahey Flynn. All took these star-deflating jibes in the spirit of good fun and I suspect were actually pleased that they became targets of the infamous *Gold Coast* writing crew.

In the beginning the show was heard across-the-board (Monday thru Friday) at 8:30 am and its creator Mort Hall did all the scripts. But the show became so popular — and so profitable — it aired three times a day: 8:30 am, 3:30 pm and early evening. Both the afternoon and evening editions were in 10-minute formats. More than half the total airtime was made up of participating spots. So, as the old song

WBBM was if you could write the *Gold Coast Show*, you were worth keeping. If you could write it well, you were a fair-haired boy! The writer's severest critics were the young women who proof read and typed the scripts for air. If you saw on the distribution list that a copy had been kept in Typing, you knew you had a winner.

I began writing *Gold Coast* in 1953 on a one-a-week basis. A short time later I graduated to two-a-week, and then in post-grad to three-a-week!

In effect, *Gold Coast* was a repertory company, both for the cast and the writers. Each writer had a couple of characters

GOLD COAST SHOW

which he brought back into his scripts on an irregular basis. To name a few: Sherlock Bones, the aforementioned Charlie Chin, Captain Horatio Hornootter, Wastrel Van Greenback, and Edgar Lovelace, the epitome of the ham Shakespearian actor. Most of these characters became equally popular with the cast. Edgar Lovelace was a particular favorite of George Watson.

Many a quirky mind turned out *Gold Coast* scripts over its 18 year run and many went on to become highly successful in other areas of broadcasting as well as other fields. Mort Hall, who began his career as a writer for comedians Joe Cook, Joe Penner and Fred Allen, left his creation and the station in the early '60s to become Account Executive and Chief Copywriter for a major advertising agency.

Another illustrious alumni was Billy Bell, who went to the McCann-Erickson agency as copywriter on a prestigious account and wrote *The Guiding Light* for Ina Phillips. Billy now lives in Los Angeles and honchos CBS' long-running TV soaps *The Young and the Restless* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

The late Art Thorsen, World War II fighter pilot with the Eighth Air Force, became Program Director at WBBM and then Director of Public Affairs at WBBM-TV. George Bloom followed Horace Greeley's advice and wrote comedy material for several network specials emanating from the West Coast. Bob Marcus also headed west in 1958 and became a very successful writer of TV sitcom scripts.

I left *Gold Coast* in 1957, moving to the TV side in 1963 to write documentaries and features, defecting to ABC in 1966. Later I became News Director at WLS-TV for nine years, then moved to Los Angeles as Coordinating Producer for the ABC-TV Owned Stations Group.

Tragedy struck the *Gold Coast Show* in 1957 when George Watson died of a heart attack. He was replaced by a multi-talented staff announcer, Bob Grant. Bob did a good job, but Watson and *Gold Coast* were soul mates and Watson's chemistry with the Jesters hard to match. Grant eventually succumbed to the lure of the West Coast and was a popular disc jockey in L.A.

Next, Ollie Raymand and Herman Fell inherited the Watson legacy. Herm, a WBBM producer, was a humorous man both on and off the air, moonlighting as a stand-up comic in clubs and acting in stage productions. Ollie was a band leader turned comedic DJ and actor. They brightened the *Gold Coast* scene until its swan song.

Jean Williams had departed the show about a year prior to Watson's death. She married a wealthy businessman and lived in happy retirement in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Jean's role was taken over by Marie DeRosa, nee Petrillo. She was the niece of WBBM Music Director Caesar Petrillo and she remained with the show until the final sign off.

That jolly trio of Jesters moved into other areas of 'BBM programming. They were high profile regulars on *The Music Wagon*, a live morning variety show hosted by Mal Bellairs. Sid Nieman and soundmaster Ed Wojtal both left us too soon.

Unfortunately, there's no place left in Radioland for a *Gold Coast Show* today. The WBBM Air Theatre, Wrigley Building, Chicago, exists only in memory.

There the spirit of *Gold Coast* remains to be seen... if not heard. ■

NOTE-- Tune in to TWTD November 14 to hear two old Gold Coast Shows, plus a production of a new Gold Coast script written especially for us by John Mies and presented live by our Those Were The Days Radio Players. Don't miss it if you can!

COMIC STRIP RADIO

BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

Once upon a time, there were radio shows featuring comic strip characters all over the airwaves — especially during late afternoon, when the kids were home, waiting for supper.

There were almost as many of these comic strip programs in the old days, as there are talk show hosts today. That will give you an idea of how popular they were.

If you are a purist about such things, the first radio show ever based on a newspaper cartoon was Robert L. Ripley's *Believe It or Not*. True, this was not your typical daily comic strip. But it did use the cartoon format, even though it was about oddball things that happened in real life.

Ripley's *Believe It or Not* came on the air in the spring of 1930 and survived until 1949 when the cartoonist passed away. Prior to his death, Ripley's show about the unusual was launched on TV, and probably would have enjoyed a long run if he had lived.

What was the first radio show inspired by a conventional comic strip? Here's a clue:

Who's that little chatterbox;

The one with pretty auburn locks?

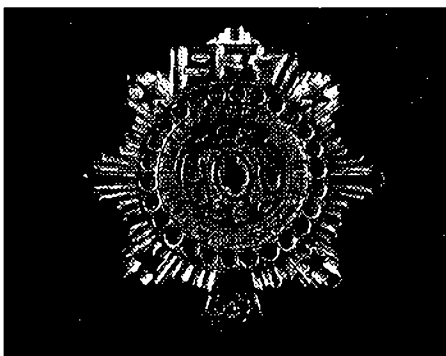
Who can it be?

It's Little Orphan Annie!

Long before she showed up on Broadway with the hit musical "Annie," Daddy Warbucks' little girl was on radio. She debuted back in 1931 and remained on until her sponsor, Ovaltine, switched to *Captain Midnight*.

Little Orphan Annie was developed by

Richard W. O'Donnell is a free-lance writer from Port Richey, Florida.



1937 Little Orphan Annie Secret Decoder

cartoonist Harold Gray, and it was an adventure show. Annie, Sandy her dog, and their faithful friend, Punjab the Giant, were always off somewhere tracking down villains. Actress Shirley Bell was Annie.

Annie was always giving special gifts to her young listeners who sent in the right amount of labels from the Ovaltine jars. There was a dandy mug, a decoder, and, of course, the secret code if you joined "the club." Announcer Pierre Andre had a ball sending out secret code messages.

Ham Fisher's *Joe Palooka*, the gentle soul who became a heavyweight champion, was another early radio show. *Palooka* came on in 1932 and lasted for a while, but never really caught on. Who played Joe? It was Alan Reed. And Knobby Walsh, his manager, was Frank Readick.

Popeye premiered on NBC in 1935. Created by Segar, the two-listed sailor with a fondness for spinach was already a star in the movie cartoons and had a ready audience waiting for him.

Popeye had a voice of gravel and he was impersonated by Detman Poppen. Wimpy, Olive Oil, Sweetpea, and all his newspa-

COMIC STRIP RADIO

per buddies were on hand. Ironically, the tough guy had to ignore spinach for a while. His sponsor was Wheatena, and whenever extra strength was needed, he gulped down a bowl of the breakfast cereal.

It was during the late afternoon and early evening that several comic strip dramas, most of them in the 15-minute format, hit the peak of their popularity.

Superman was probably the most famous. He arrived on the air from the planet Krypton in 1940, and was soon fighting Nazis. Originally a comic book hero, the Man of Steel went first to radio, then onward to the newspapers and movies. And TV, of course. Clayton Collyer played the lead. He had two voices. His voice came across as a sissy when he was Clark Kent on the Mutual show. He became deep and powerful when he was Superman.

Other strip favorites on radio during the late afternoon included *Terry and the Pirates*, *Buck Rogers*, *Don Winslow of the Navy*, *Hop Harrigan*, *Jane Arden*, *Mandrake the Magician*, *Smilin' Jack*, and *Dick Tracy*, who gave away almost as many things as *Little Orphan Annie*, if you sent in enough of the sponsor's labels.

During World War II, these radio heroes, for the most part, fought foreign spies and enemy armies as well as the usual assortment of gangsters, thugs and evil geniuses. They always won.

Some shows were on for a half hour. *Mark Trail* was one. *Red Ryder* another. Later, when the late afternoon shows lost out to television, many of them were changed to 30-minute shows and played later in the evening.

Blondie, Chic Young's comic strip, which is still around, had a long life on radio in the situation comedy format. Penny Singleton was Blondie and Arthur

Lake was the bumbling Dagwood Bumstead, her husband. The show was on CBS Monday nights starting in 1938 and survived for many years. Singleton left the series towards the end. Ann Rutherford was playing the role when the program left the air in 1950. By then it was on ABC.

Lake, a great comic talent, was the key to the success of the radio version. Veteran radio actor Hanley Stafford played Mr. Dithers, the boss who was always firing Dagwood.

Archie Andrews started out in the comic books and built up a tremendous following in a hurry. Originally a Mutual daily 15-minute program, it eventually ended up on Saturday mornings with half-hour shows. *Archie* could be called the poor man's Henry Aldrich. He lasted on radio from 1943 until 1953. Bob Montana's comic book characters—they later hit the daily newspapers—were a delight. Archie was played by Bob Hastings and his sidekick Jughead was Harlan Stone.

Major Hoople, who resided in "Our Boarding House," a strip created by Gene Ahern, also enjoyed some success on radio. His show came on in 1942 and lasted a few years on NBC. Arthur Q. Brian, who was all over the airwaves in those days, played the Major.

Another all-time comic strip great, *Bringing Up Father*, did not last long on radio. It survived on NBC for only one season. That was in 1942. George McManus' Maggie and Jiggs were the central characters and it was expected they would have a long radio life. They did not. Those corned beef and cabbage dinners Maggie served to hubby Jiggs in the daily newspapers just weren't funny on radio.

Mark Smith, a veteran Broadway actor, played the cigar-smoking Jiggs. Guess who played his nagging wife, Maggie? It was Agnes Moorehead, rated by many as radio's greatest actress. ■

My Freshman Year at Lane Tech High School

BY MELVIN E. GILES

FRESHMEN, hundreds of pukely freshman milled around, as if a swarm of humanoid locusts had descended on Lane Tech, massing on the Addison Street side and buzzing all around the Administration Wing. A few dorky newcomers had been escorted by their parents; Geez, how embarrassing that must have been. Around the grounds they meandered; even treading on Lane's sacred lawn. They would soon learn, as all Lancites did, that the campus lawn was revered as if it were hallowed ground, no student or teacher was allowed to walk on it, let alone picnic on it. Within a week they would also learn that their beginning freshman class numbered 1,266 freshly-scrubbed faces.

At last, the doors opened up to the Auditorium Wing and the lowest of the low began filing in. Ablaze with light from its massive chandeliers, the auditorium seemed cathedral-like in its grandeur. Agassiz Elementary School's auditorium could have fit in the balcony of this place. As the uninitiated settled in their seats, not knowing what to expect, the second-floor catwalk doors flew open and a crowd of older students hurried to positions along the catwalk in order to take a look at the latest crop of "freshies." Catcalls and general verbal abuse greeted the class of June, 1952, followed by the ceremonial flinging of pennies at the sitting-duck freshman body by the old guard from the high ground of their second floor vantage point.

After what seemed to be hours, a counselor stepped to the microphone and brought the assembled freshmen to order, beginning with questions and instructions based on the answers received. "Do you live south of North Avenue, if so, you must attend Crane Tech. If you graduated from a parochial school you might have to take additional tests. If you graduated from a public school, take your transfer voucher to your assigned division room teacher."

"What?" snapped Gene, who suddenly was fully alert. He then asked no one in particular. "What's a transfer voucher?"

HIS STOMACH TURNED OVER as the immense hall began emptying out, and looking lost and ignorant, he was approached by a counselor who listened to his problem, then told him that he should have gotten his transfer from his elementary school on the last day of the semester.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Gene, who hadn't gone to school that last day.

His mother had figured that since it was only for a half-day and he had already graduated, it wouldn't be worth the bus trip back to school the next day, so she said that he could stay home. But now he couldn't get into high school without a transfer voucher, so he had to go back to Agassiz and get one.

Taking two buses, Gene returned to Agassiz and found Miss Hanrahan in an inquisitive mood. Well, maybe it was more like an Inquisition mood, since she seemed perturbed that he

Melvin E. Giles of Lombard, Illinois is a free-lance poet and writer. This is an excerpt from his autobiographical novel, George Street, Our Street, A Poor Family's Richest Years in Chicago, published by Oakdale Press and available at Metro Golden Memories. Melvin Giles will discuss his novel and reminisce about growing up in Chicago on TWTD November 21.

MY FRESHMAN YEAR AT LANE TECH HIGH SCHOOL

hadn't come to school that last day." Why didn't you come to school on the last day? All of my other students attended the last day. Did you think you were special? Did you think I could just stop teaching my class and write out a transfer for you?"

Gene felt that the thirty seconds required to fill out the form would have infringed upon less of her class time than the time consumed by her browbeating. Finally, clutching the signed document in his sweaty hands, Gene made his way back to Lane Tech's campus where he was stopped at the entrance by a hallguard who wanted to take him down to the Discipline Office for being out of class without a pass. Gene wondered, how could he be out of class if he hadn't been able to get in the school yet? Who was this guy? What was the Discipline Office? Answers to those questions would come soon to Gene, the hard way.

REGISTERING LATE at the admissions office, Gene was raked over the coals for not reporting at the time all incoming freshman were supposed to. At last, he was told to report to Mr. Michaels' division in room 305 which happened to be up on the third floor and he was already late. Finding a staircase, he ascended to the third floor and scanned the room numbers as he hurried along, 302, 304, 306, 308. Where was 305? For that matter, where were any of the odd-numbered rooms? He felt like a rat trapped in a maze without the cheese!

What the poor freshman slob didn't know, like every other "freshie" at Lane, was that an invisible line divided the school into odd and even sides. All odd-numbered rooms were on one side of the massive four-winged building while even-numbered rooms were on the other side. "Freshies" didn't know where the dividing line was and required days to get oriented to the layout of their building. Desperate for help, Gene asked a student slouched in a chair in the hall for directions. Instead of directions, the student who was another hallguard, asked Gene for his hall pass. After seeing Gene's registration form, the hallguard allowed Gene to resume his search after giving the harried "freshie" directions on how to find the missing Room 305.

Following the hallguard's instructions, Gene was getting close: 311, 309, 307, then in big, black numbers, there it was, 305! Entering the room, he found a drafting class in session and Mr. Michaels, a friendly-looking bespectacled older man took the time to accept his registration form and explain where Gene should be going next. Gene had arrived just in time for the ten minute division room or home room period during which he was brought up to date and met his fellow division room classmates. Following the division meeting was lunch period and just in time because Gene was starved and shaky.

By early afternoon, he had caught up with his classes and finished out the day without further incident. He had quite a story to regale his family with that night.

ON ONLY HIS SECOND DAY, Gene was able find out everything he needed to know about the aforementioned Discipline Office. He learned that "Discipline" was Lane Tech's term for detention. This knowledge sprang from an unwanted encounter with a kid in freshman gym class. Sitting on the gym floor with 250 other boys, Gene listened to instructions from their coach. Next to Gene was Wilton Hartman, a guy from his division room, who had a marking pen, and was trying to mark Gene up with it. Hartman's actions and Gene's fending off of Hartman were spotted by the assistant coach, who summarily hauled their butts down to the Discipline Office.

Mr. Ruesselsheimer, the discipline administrator, asked, "What is the charge?" The coach replied, "Disturbing 250 students in class!"

"Well," said the administrator, his eyes gaining a sudden sparkle and his sneer curling into a smile, "we can certainly teach them a lesson. You said 250 students, eh? Since you boys are new here, we'll go easy and start you off with five discipline periods, starting today."

That was it. No appeal, no concern that they might have after-school jobs. Five periods

meant remaining after school for one period each day for five days.

Leaving the Discipline Office, Gene turned to Hartman and muttered, "Thanks a lot, jerk!"

At 3:30, Gene and Hartman entered the large classroom used for serving out discipline periods, found two desks about halfway back and slumped into them. The murmur of voices throughout the fully-occupied room was evidence that it had been a banner day for the Discipline Office. A room full of offenders waited for the bell to signal the start of the period.

THE BELL RANG just as Gene turned around in his seat to ask Hartman, "What do we do now?" Hartman shook his head slightly, and looking past him, uttered, "Shhh!"

Turning back around, Gene's eyes met the cold stare of the disciplinarian standing next to him. She then began writing on a slip of paper. What she was writing was a "+2" slip for him, meaning that he had just picked up two additional periods for talking during Discipline.

Handing the +2 slip to him, she hissed, "Silence! No talking!"

As quickly as the old mousetrap snaps, Gene had learned that absolute silence was one of the main rules of discipline periods and two disciplinarians were there to enforce them.

Shortly after serving out his discipline periods, Gene got to learn first-hand about the Hallguard Roving Patrol, commonly known as the "Rovers," which consisted of several teams of hallguards who patrolled the outside areas of the school's campus. Spotting an infraction of campus rules, they took the offender back inside to the Discipline Office where Mr. Ruesselsheimer dealt with them. The Rovers listened to no explanation and when they stated charges against a student, had no qualms about stretching the truth or putting the offender in the worst light, as Gene would soon experience.

IN PURSUIT of more pleasant activities, Gene heard in early October that football tryouts were being held. The football coach had scheduled a primo day for Frosh-Soph football tryouts which were taking place near the parking lot and bike racks. Temperatures were about 70 degrees and a sunny sky smiled down on the young hopefuls who were trying out for the first time. Wally Herzog, one of Gene's classmates in gym had told him that he was trying out and Gene came over to watch. Since his bike was at the end of the rack nearest the tryouts, Gene sat down on its seat and took in the show. Gene envied Wally and the other guys trying out, who were heavier and taller than he. Wally may have been more than a foot taller than Gene but he was thin, so thin that if someone stood Wally in a lumberyard next to the fence posts, it would have been difficult to pick Wally out! Wally seemed to have good hands for catching the football however, and after seeing him run patterns Gene thought that Wally had shown good speed, too.

"Hey! What are you doing there?"

Turning around, Gene saw four guys and he told them, "I'm watching the football tryouts."

"Never mind the tryouts." Failing to identify themselves, they asked him, "What are you doing with that bike?"

"It's my bike. I'm sitting on my bike, watching the tryouts. Why do you want to know?"

"We've got a wise guy here," sneered their leader who told Gene, "We're takin' you down to Discipline!"

Turns out they were part of the Roving Patrol! Taking Gene in, the Rovers informed Mr. Ruesselsheimer that they had found Gene tampering with a bicycle. It was his second offense in this young semester for which Gene was penalized with fifteen periods of discipline. He had learned, as many Laneites did, why the Rovers and their Gestapo tactics were despised.

Recognizing the need for order and discipline, Gene couldn't understand why Lane's rules weren't explained to freshmen or why the offender's side of a story was never heard or that some form of appeal wasn't in place. The Discipline Office at best, seemed like a kangaroo court for students and was the personal reason most often given by his friends, for transferring out of Lane Tech to another high school. Freshman classes generally lost about half their number through failures or transfers during their four years at Lane.

MY FRESHMAN YEAR AT LANE TECH HIGH SCHOOL

Lane Tech wasn't intended to be an easy school, socially or scholastically, but that's where the pride came from. If students made it through Lane, they had been through the course in what was considered as the best and toughest of Chicago's high schools and could be proud of their achievement.

AS THE FIRST FEW WEEKS went by, it was apparent that high school was going to be a lot tougher than grade school had ever been. School was quickly becoming much less fun than it used to be as Gene realized that his new classmates were no slouches and he really had to hustle to keep up with them. Science and English were still the easiest subjects for him while Algebra and Mechanical Drawing gave him the most trouble. Because the Essential Math class recommended by a counselor at Agassiz had filled up, Algebra had been substituted by a Lane advisor, and Gene was struggling to get up to speed. Gene had enrolled in the Commercial Art curriculum, and being interested in creative art, the rigid nature of mechanical drawing left him cold.

Since Lane was a technical high school, several four-year curricula were available to students interested in college preparatory work, a technical career such as Auto Mechanics, Aviation Mechanics, Machinists, and Printing, or a specialized career such as Architecture or Commercial Art.

Due to over-registration in the Commercial Art curriculum, Gene and several other students were transferred from Mr. Michaels' division to Mr. Walton's division, splitting them off from friends that they had already made. Usually a student's division room teacher was also a teacher of their major, so that the teachers knew more about their "home-room" students and had a stake in their development. Messrs. Michaels and Walton were drafting teachers who taught no Commercial Art students, yet each had a sprinkling of them in their division rooms comprised primarily of drafting students.

In essence, underclass Commercial Art students were orphans, reporting to begrudging division teachers who only tolerated the additional responsibility of recording attendance of and relaying communications to students whom they only saw ten minutes per day.

While their former division roommates were studying under Mrs. Berlansky, a highly-regarded art teacher, because of overcrowding in the Commercial Art classes, Mr. Walton's group of Commercial Art students, found that their class schedules had been changed to include a different teacher for their Art class. Their first year of art instruction had been assigned to Mr. Kirkstat, a drafting teacher. Mr. Kirkstat, whose unofficial name was "Mr. Jerkstat," would base a good percentage of his grading on whether or not a student had bought certain supplies, for example: a 2H pencil sharpened no more than 7/8 of an inch. During their long first year, his students would learn very little in his Art class.

WITH THE PAINFULLY SLOW PASSING of his early freshman days, Gene had gained three classmate friends. Pat Decker, Joe Garth, and John Chavez, who day by day would earn his trust and friendship over the next four years of high school and for years afterwards. Fellow castoffs who were transferred out of the good art class and Mr. Michaels' division room, their friendship during Gene's early days at Lane had lifted his spirits and bolstered his flagging confidence.

The three were all taller, stronger, mesomorph types whom Gene worked closely with and he developed a sense of respect for them as they shared all of their classes and Mr. Walton's division room. Pat was Gene's locker partner and friend, sharing the same locker since there weren't enough to go around. Joe would be Gene's drawing bench partner during their two inglorious years of Jerkstat's art classes. John shared a drawing bench with Gene during their Mechanical Drawing class and also shared a common interest in Astronomy, joining the Astronomy Club together, which met after school.

AS MIDTERM GRADES CAME OUT in time to bring them home over the Thanksgiving holiday, his grades reflected Gene's mediocre first ten weeks at Lane, when except for a B in Algebra, he pulled C's across the board. Lane's grading system quickly made believers out of its students. A score of 95-100 for an 'A' and 88-94 for a 'B', were really tough, while a student could rate a 'C' only if he scored 81-87. Failure was certain for any student scoring less than 75. Whether it was a lack of brains or a stiffer effort requirement, he wasn't doing as well as he thought he should be and over the holiday began to really think about his progress thus far. Except for Jerkstat, he had good teachers, so he figured correctly, it must have been him. Algebra was very tough for him, so he had worked extra hard and got a good grade. Why did he do worse in subjects that had always been easy for him? Could it have been a lack of concentration on his part during the first half of the semester.

Not having yet experienced the throes of puberty, Gene was still able to appreciate a pretty face and two of his teachers qualified in that area, both teaching what should have been easy subjects for him. Mrs. Lauerson, a fairly young, smart and pretty blonde taught Science, his favorite subject, but he had pulled an average grade of C. English, which he aced in grade school, also resulted in a C. English was taught by Miss Berwyn, a substitute teacher who had followed two previous substitutes into this den of young lions. Not long out of college herself, Miss Berwyn was a slender, brown-haired, attractive young lady in her mid-twenties, with riveting blue eyes.

BINGO! Gene had established a correlation between pretty teachers, favorite subjects, and low grades. He had allowed these two teachers to become a distraction to him, and would have to work harder, although in the case of Miss Berwyn, he had plenty of company. It wasn't her fault she was young and pretty but she compensated for it by maintaining absolute control of her class. She was properly friendly but would tolerate no out-of-line remarks, double entendres, or innuendo, and she knew her subject cold which she taught well to those who paid attention.

Distractions such as this probably wouldn't have occurred in a coed high school, where pretty girls constituted an equivalent percentage of the class population. Also, since Lane was an elite school, its teachers were for a large part, those teachers with the greatest seniority, who had spent years in Chicago's educational system. It was an all-boys' school where the faculty probably consisted of fifty-percent women, but most of them were nearing retirement. Miss Berwyn couldn't help but be the daydream darling of freshmen English classes and foremost in the thoughts of nearly every boy who passed her in the hall.

Despite all of the freshmen being in the same academic boat, Commercial Art students remaining in Mr. Michaels' division seemed to develop an "us" and "them" attitude toward the students who had been split off into Mr. Walton's division. An old friend from Agassiz, Billy Milford, whose interest in Lane's Commercial Art had considerably influenced Gene's enrollment in the course, remained in Mr. Michaels' division, and became more aloof, even verbally abusive toward Gene, as if it wasn't "cool" to associate with a student you knew in grade school.

AFTER THE THANKSGIVING WEEKEND, Gene went back to school determined to bring up his grades. Having spun their wheels much of the early weeks with substitutes and feeling bogged down by daily readings of Shakespeare's "MacBeth," Gene's English class was in for a literary treat. Miss Berwyn switched gears and began introducing her young charges to the delightful short stories of more contemporary authors such as Bret Harte and O. Henry. They read serious, touching sagas such as "Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Luck of Roaring Camp," and "Gift of the Magi," and the side-splitting humor of "Ransom of Red Chief." She led them down a new path into a valley of literary adventure that could be had by reading a book and allowing the author to paint his illustrations on the canvas of their mind.

Returning to his General Science class, Gene knuckled down and paid more attention than

MY FRESHMAN YEAR AT LANE

he had before, although to goof off in Mrs. Lauerson's class was like poking a stick in your own eye. Mrs. Lauerson was a pleasant-looking blonde woman but a dead serious teacher, and "Passing The Buck" was a game she always held in reserve for those in her classes who became unruly. If any student caused a disturbance serious enough to rile her, she identified the student by calling out the student's name, and telling him he had the "buck." The "buck" was a gift that kept on giving throughout the class period. Once a student was given the buck, he could only give it to someone else who subsequently acted up in class. As the bell rang at the end of the class, Mrs. Lauerson would ask, who had the buck, and the buck-holder would be given an additional assignment to be done that evening. Being left holding the buck was an unpleasant experience one didn't want repeated and "Passing The Buck" proved to be an effective tool, since the threat of its use often kept order in the class, even when not invoked.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL after the Christmas break meant there was only one month of Gene's "freshie" semester to go. Having long since put away his bike, Gene shivered while waiting for the bus to come by as the frigid winds whistled past the corner of Lakewood and Addison. While January blasts of arctic air could chill a person clear through their coats, a few minutes on that big, warm, luxurious bus were sufficient to bring one back to the realm of the warm people.

January's end brought a warm glow to Gene that had nothing to do with the weather. It was Friday, the 28th, and the end of his first semester at Lane. He not only made it through his "Freshie" semester but managed to bring up his grades. Trading a B for a C in Algebra, he had improved his English grade to a B and his Science grade to an A! Unfortunately, his major, Commercial Art, still saw him swimming in mediocrity with a C. Speaking of swimming, which he had always enjoyed, and Gym, he netted grades of B and C, respectively.

So much for the good news. Mister Neville, the English teacher for whom Miss Berwyn had substituted all last semester, was back, and he wasn't happy. On their first class day, he came on like gangbusters, explaining that, "I'm not as healthy or pretty as your last teacher but if you work with me I'll work with you, but if you cross me up, I'll screw you over!"

Gene thought Neville's address was so tough and unwarranted, that it was almost comical. As the early days of February passed, Mr. Neville probably realized that his class really didn't comprise the "Dead End Kids," and began to ease up on his tough-guy impersonations.

Mr. Neville initiated a unique requirement of his own within his class; whereby each student would give a two-minute talk on any subject, once a week. No excuses were accepted! He set aside each Monday's entire class period, dedicating it to public speaking. It was a fantastic idea! Even though it set very large butterflies to flight in Gene's stomach, everyone had to go through it. It seemed that guys were hesitant to poke fun at someone else speaking, when their own turn was coming up soon. The talk requirement was a double-edged sword to Gene. Talks in front of the room made him less afraid to speak in public, giving him practice and confidence. The talks also let the other boys know what it felt like, to be on the spot talking, with everyone watching you. Gene would come to be grateful to Mr. Neville and his great innovation.

THE REMAINING SEVERAL WEEKS of Gene's freshman year passed by uneventfully, quickly, and mercifully. With school work winding down, the last week of school had been a snap, and suddenly it was the last day. Friday in late June, and school was out for this new sophomore. Receiving his course book, Gene was satisfied that his knuckling down had helped. His latest grades reflected that his work in Algebra class had improved enough to gain him a B, and he moved up to a C in Mechanical Drawing, while his other final grades remained the same as the first semester. Not exceptional grades but an improvement, which was its own reward for the increased effort on his part. ■

GROWING UP DISNEY



Recollections of an Armchair Mouseketeer

BY CURTIS L. KATZ



My earliest recollections of the magic of Disney are not of plucky cartoon mice, nor of animated cartoons at all, nor of motion pictures, for that matter. They are of music.

The wonderful world of Walt Disney seemed to me to be a world of compulsive and infectious music-making. Jimmy Dodd and the Mouseketeers were always brimming with song and dance. Disney characters, both live and animated, routinely hummed, strummed, sang and whistled tunes.

And those tunes were *everywhere* in my young life. Tunes from *Cinderella* and the aptly-named *Melody Time* came out of the scratchy 78 rpm Little Golden records handed down to me by magnanimous older cousins. Every weekday morning at 8, WOR Radio's John Gambling sent New York area bread-winners off into the rush hour with "Heigh-Ho, Heigh-Ho, It's Off to Work We Go" from *Snow White*. My

Curtis L. Katz, an authority on the art of movie animation, is a free-lance writer, cartoonist, comedian and Ranger of the Rails.

mom, with her singular sense of whimsy, used to sing for my brothers and I "Der Fuehrer's Face," which I would much later learn was from a wartime Donald Duck cartoon (I thought she was making it up).

Movie critic Richard Schickel once acerbically observed that Disney tunes were of a sort that could be whistled through the gap left by a missing tooth. But it is precisely this simplicity, combined with an earnest cheerfulness, that has made Disney music, and indeed all Disney's achievements, so memorable and enduring.

I grew up with the *Mickey Mouse Club* generation, from the late 1950s through the 1960s, when Disney's land came right into the homes of America by means of television, represented in our house by a large blonde wood Admiral black and white floor model. Foremost, of course, was affable Uncle Walt himself, who each Sunday evening introduced us to an hour of fun and adventure, initially on ABC (*Disneyland*), and subsequently on NBC (*The Wonderful World of Color*). For years I assumed "Technicolor" was a euphemism for black and white). Then there were the weekly escapades of *Zorro* (SHWW! SHWW! SHWW!), and of course that daily children's TV classic, *The Mickey Mouse Club*.

In my early youth, the New Jersey farm town in which my family lived had not yet matured into a mall-to-mall suburb, and it

GROWING UP DISNEY

had no movie theater. Thus we rarely went to movies, but when we did, they were almost always Disney pictures. My first acquaintance with Disney as a movie-maker came when my mom took me to see the first re-release of *Peter Pan* in 1960. The occasion was special because we went in the evening and left my tag-along brother Ken at home. We saw the show at the Hawthorns Theater in Paterson, after which, though the hour was late, we went to the soda fountain next to the theater and had malts. Mom and I didn't get home until 11:30 pm. Ken was envious!

The first freshly-minted Disney movie I saw was *101 Dalmations* (the 1961 version). Later my dad introduced me to his favorite Disney film, *Fantasia*, in its 1963 release. Disney's ultimate musical celebration quickly became *my* all-time favorite motion picture, and I have seen it more times in theaters than any other film. In introducing me to this picture, Dad said he could never hear Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours" without envisioning absurdly balletic hippos and elephants. Today, neither can I.

Among the pre-teen set in my growing-up neighborhood, Dr. Seuss books and Walt Disney movies were the height of "cool." We all hastened to read the former and see the latter. There was an aura of wonder that accompanied Disney films. How did they make Fred MacMurray's car fly in *The Absent-Minded Professor*? How could Dick Van Dyke dance with cartoon penguins in *Mary Poppins*? It was powerful magic beyond our comprehension. The Disney Studios was the leader in film wizardry in the 1960s; they were to special effects then what George Lucas and his Industrial Light & Magic are to special effects today.

And then there were the Disney educa-

tional pictures, show-stoppers in any classroom even when shown on a cranky old 16 mm Kodak Pageant projector. My personal favorites were the three "Man In Space" films. Made in the 1950s and based on a series of illustrated articles appearing in *Collier's Magazine* ("Man Will Conquer Space Soon!"), they were woefully outdated by the time we saw them in elementary school in the early 1960s. Nonetheless, Walt Disney and Teutonic rocket engineer Dr. Wernher von Braun presented an enticing vision of a space program far more ambitious and exciting than the greatest exploits of John Glenn and Neil Armstrong.

Another personal educational favorite was *Donald in Mathmagicland*. One day in high school our math teacher showed us this film, and our class managed to bamboozle our teachers in nearly every other subject that day to show it to us again. I think we saw this gem of a featurette five times that school day. I was almost as good as playing hooky and going to the movies.

Unlike many of my friends, I did not get a coveted trip to Disneyland as a child. The closest I came to that experience in my young life was seeing the four Disney audioanimatronic attractions at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair. There was "It's a Small World," presented by Pepsi Cola for UNICEF, General Electric's "Carousel of Progress," and Ford Motor Company's "Magic Skyway." (I'm still wondering what connection was implied in riding late model Ford automobiles through a prehistoric land of dinosaurs. Something about fossil fuels, perhaps?) But the biggest eye-opener, for all its seeming simplicity, was the Illinois pavilion's "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln." When the robotic Abraham Lincoln stood up to speak, the life of the Great Emancipator seemed truly restored to us, and my mom nearly fell out of her seat. Normally blasé

about entertainment or technology, Mom remained effusive about Mr. Lincoln for weeks.

It was indeed a sad yuletide when the master of such sorcery, Walt Disney, died in December of 1966. I heard the news on radio just before dinner, and felt as if we had lost a family friend. I guess many of us felt that way.

Truly the grandest tribute to Walt Disney and his studio was the 50th anniversary Disney film retrospective presented at Alice Tully Hall in New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts 25 years ago in 1973. It was an entire summer of Disney films. Virtually every theatrical live-action and animated feature film was screened, plus programs of cartoon shorts, as well as industrial, educational, and wartime films, many of which had not seen the light of a projection lamp since they were first released. At the time, I was working 13 hours a day, six days a week on commission as a Good Humor Man. I set aside enough time and money to attend four of the retrospective programs. Three of them consisted of cartoon shorts — it was rare to see such a profusion of Disney cartoons in those days before cable and home video. And the fourth, of course, was another opportunity to see my all-time favorite, *Fantasia*. The Disney 50th Anniversary stimulated general interest not only in the history of the Disney Studio, but in the histories of other cartoon studios as well, opening up a flood tide of articles, books, museum exhibits, and film programs that happily has not yet crested.

I did not get to experience two of Walt Disney's greatest creations until I was an adult, living in Chicago. I finally got my first visit to Disneyland in 1974, while I was in college. I was accompanied by college friends Mark, Bryan, and Rick, all of whom were veteran Disneyland guests. (At Disneyland, one is never a "visitor" or a

"customer," but always a "guest.") They made sure I sat in the front seat of every thrill ride, and watched closely for my reactions. I know I did not disappoint them. But the high point of my Disneyland visit was having my picture taken shaking hands with Mickey Mouse. It may be as close as I get to personally greeting the spirit of Walt Disney.

Then a few years later at the Riviera Theater, I finally got to see Disney's first feature film, the masterpiece, *Snow White*. I think it meant more to me to see this film as an adult than it would have when I was a child. At that time I had just succeeded as a Prince Charming of sorts, having recently rescued a "Snow White" from a world of drudgery (college classes), sweeping her away to my castle in the clouds (a small flat on North Paulina Street). In case you are wondering, we are still living happily ever after.

After some rocky years without Walt, it now appears that the Disney organization may be living happily ever after as well. This October marks the 75th anniversary of the Disney Studio. It is perhaps sobering to consider that there is now an entire generation for whom "Disney" is merely a trade name, with no more personality behind it than a soggy bowl of Kellogg's corn flakes, or a balding set of Firestone tires. But for those of us privileged to have grown up at a time when Uncle Walt was welcomed into our homes every Sunday, we'll always remember fondly the warmth, whimsy, magic, and yes the music that came with his weekly visits.

As for me, I still whistle while I work, and am inclined to believe that "when you wish upon a star, your dreams come true." The life and achievements of Walt Disney are proof enough for me. ■

(NOTE—Tune in TWTD October 10 when Curtis Katz participates in a special 75th Anniversary Salute to Walt Disney.)

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OCTOBER 1998

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd

**HONORING RADIO HALL OF FAMER
BING CROSBY**

FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH BING CROSBY (9-21-31) *Excerpt.* Announcer Harry Von Zell introduces Bing's first radio program. Crosby sings "Just One More Chance" and "I'm Through with Love." Freddy Rich and the orchestra. Sustaining, CBS. (8:44)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (8-26-46) "Bells of St. Mary's" starring Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman recreating their original screen roles in the 1945 film. Father O'Mally is assigned to a run-down parish where Sister Benedict is the Sister Superior. Joan Carroll co-stars. Camel Cigarettes. CBS. (28:56)

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (3-2-44) Bing Crosby welcomes guests Lucille Ball and Marilyn Maxwell. "Time Marches Back" to 1933. Ukie Sherin, Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:25)

G I JOURNAL #94 (5-11-45) Bing Crosby is Editor-in-Chief of this mythical newspaper for military audiences. On hand are Andy Devine, Chili Williams, Mel Blanc (as Pvt. Sad Sack), and Elvia Allman. Model Chili arranges a date for Bing with Miss Georgia Peach, "a shy and timid girl." AFRRS. (29:16)

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (10-14-48) "Welcome Stranger" starring Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald in a radio version of the 1947 film.

A young doctor is hired to fill in for an older, vacationing physician in a small New England town. Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (26:42)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (10-16-46) Bing Crosby stars in the first program in his "transcribed" series, forever changing the way radio programs would be delivered to listening audiences. Guest is Bob Hope. Philco Radios, ABC. (30:00)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be **JOHN SEBERT** of Metro Golden Memories, a long-time Crosby fan who will help us celebrate Bing's October 11, 1998 induction into the Radio Hall of Fame. *Read John Sebert's appreciation of Bing Crosby on page 26.*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th

**WALT DISNEY'S
75th ANNIVERSARY**

SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS (12-25-44) "Pinocchio" starring Fanny Brice and Hanley Stafford as Baby Snooks and Daddy in a radio version of Walt Disney's 1940 animated feature. Cast includes Arthur Q. Brian as Jiminy Cricket and Lou Merrill as Stromboli. AFRRS rebroadcast. (25:37)

TEX AND JINX SHOW (11-4-47) *Excerpt.* Tex McCrary and Jinx Falkenburg, husband and wife morning radio team in New York, present a transcribed interview with Walt Disney who talks about his animated films. NBC. (12:11)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (12-26-38) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," a radio version of the classic 1937 Disney film, features many of the voices used in the original feature. With Cecil B. DeMille chats with Walt Disney. *This is the first Hollywood Lux broadcast without a studio audience.* Lux Soap, CBS. (24:51; 12:23; 20:00)

FRED WARING SHOW (12-5-47) *Excerpt.* On Walt Disney's (46th) birthday, Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians offer a salute to Disney films, including "Fun and Fancy Free," "Saludos Amigos," "Song of the South" and "Pinocchio." Green Giant Foods, NBC. (17:23)

CHARLIE MC CARTHY SHOW (9-21-47) With the forthcoming (September 21, 1947) World

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Premiere of Walt Disney's "Fun and Fancy Free," starring Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd, the gang offers a preview of the movie as they re-create the "Jack and the Beanstalk" part of the film. Guests are Walt Disney and Donald Duck (voice of Clarence Nash). Royal Pudding, Chase and Sanborn Coffee, NBC. (30:00)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is animation historian and *Nostalgia Digest* contributor **CURTIS L. KATZ** who will talk about the films of Walt Disney. See *Curtis Katz' article about Walt Disney on page 17.*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17th

FIREFIGHTERS #1 (1940s) First of seven consecutive episodes of a post-war after school radio series about a World War II veteran who becomes a rookie firefighter, following in his late father's footsteps. In this opening chapter, Tim Collins gets his first chance to ride with Truck Company Number One during a winter storm. Syndicated. (12:16)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-10-44) Remote broadcast before a military audience at the Air Technical Service Command, San Bernadino, California. Guest Dorothy Lamour turns up on her birthday and gets a kiss from Jack. Cast includes Phil Harris, Larry Stevens, Don Wilson, Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson. AFRS rebroadcast. (26:39)

FIREFIGHTERS #2 (1940s) Rookie Tim Collins is ready to help find the person who set off a false alarm. Syndicated. (12:20)

FIREFIGHTERS #3 (1940s) Tim is watching a movie in a crowded theater when an unseen prankster cries "Fire!" Syndicated. (12:10)

JIMMY DURANTE SHOW (12-17-47) Guest Victor Moore offers to help the Schnozzola in his political career as they go to Washington. Peggy Lee, Candy Candido, Arthur Treacher, Rexall, NBC. (29:02)

FIREFIGHTERS #4 (1940s) Tim's brother Jimmy denies having set off the false alarm. Syndicated. (12:08)

FIREFIGHTERS #5 (1940s) Rookie Tim Collins anxiously awaits a letter with the official notice telling he whether or not he will be assigned as a permanent firefighter. Syndicated. (12:08)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (1-21-47) McGee wants some alterations done at 79 Wistful Vista and is seeking an architect. Jim and Marian Jordan star with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Arthur Q. Brian, Jim Backus, Harlow Wilcox, the King's Men, Billy Mills and the or-

chestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:20)

FIREFIGHTERS #6 (1940s) At the Collins home, Chief Cody and Tim try to extinguish a blaze in the kitchen. Syndicated. (12:18)

FIREFIGHTERS #7 (1940s) Rookie Firefighter Tim Collins gets the news. Syndicated) (12:10)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24th REMEMBERING ROY ROGERS

*A Salute to the "King of the Cowboys"
Who Died July 6, 1998 at the Age of 86*

CHARLIE MC CARTHY SHOW (12-7-47) Edgar Bergen and his friends welcome Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers. Roy shows Charlie McCarthy how tough it is to be a movie cowboy. Edgar tells Mortimer Snerd how to keep a diary. Cast includes Anita Gordon, Pat Patrick, Ken Carpenter, Ray Noble and the orchestra. Royal Pudding, Chase and Sanborn Coffee, NBC. (30:00)

LUX RADIO THEATRE

(3-13-44) "In Old Oklahoma" starring Roy Rogers with Martha Scott and Albert Dekker in a radio version of the 1943 Republic Picture, an exciting oil-drilling story. Cast includes Martha Wentworth, Ken Christy, Charles Seel, John McIntyre, Leo Cleary, Cecil B. DeMille hosts. Lux Soap, CBS. (18:51; 15:06; 24:29)

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (3-17-49) Al Jolson with guests Roy Rogers "the King of the Cowboys and his Queen," Dale Evans. Roy wants Al to become a singing cowboy. In a western sketch, Oscar Levant is a pianist in a saloon and Jolson is "Buffalo Asa." Ken Carpenter, Lou Bring and the orchestra. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29:45)

ROY ROGERS SHOW (8-24-48) "The Mystery of the Circle E Ranch" starring Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, George "Gabby" Hayes, Foy Willing and the Riders of the Purple Sage. Dale is suspected of foul play in the death of her uncle. Quaker Oats, MBS. (29:15)

BOB HOPE SHOW (6-10-52) Guests are Roy Rogers and Dale Evans who join Bob, Les Brown and his Band of Renown, announcer Hy Averbach. Bob and Roy in a sketch about their cross-country tour to promote their forthcoming film, "Son of Paleface." Remote broadcast from Coronado Naval Base in San Diego, California. AFRS rebroadcast. (22:57)



Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

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

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1998

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, OCTOBER 31st ANNUAL HALLOWEEN SHOW

LIGHTS OUT (7-20-46) "The Haunted Cell." A cop killer is put into a cell previously occupied by a convict who was sent to the electric chair. Sustaining, NBC. (28:57)

SUSPENSE (6-23-49) "Ghost Hunt" starring Ralph Edwards as disk jockey Smiley Smith who sets up a stunt to stay overnight in a "haunted house" and wire record the events for his listeners. Herb Butterfield appears as Dr. Reed, a ghost hunter. Harlow Wilcox announces. Auto Lite, CBS. (28:30)

MY FRIEND IRMA (1950s) Marie Wilson stars as Irma Peterson with Cathy Lewis as Jane Stacy. Irma and Jane see a ghost in the hall of their apartment building. Alan Reed is Mr. Clyde, Irma's boss; the Maestro is Hy Averbach; Mrs. O'Reilly is Gloria Gordon; Al is John Brown. AFRTS rebroadcast. (24:00)

THE SHADOW (1-12-41) "The Ghost Building" starring Bill Johnstone as Lamont Cranston with Marjorie Anderson as the lovely Margo Lane. Mysterious deaths occur in the largest building in the world. Blue Coal, MBS. (31:49)

LIGHTS OUT (1940s) "The Dark" is Arch Oboler's "Exercise in Horror" about bodies being turned inside out. (8:35)

INNER SANCTUM (1-23-50) "The Hitchhiking Corpse" with Mercedes McCambridge. A truck driver gives a ride to the "Red-headed Witch of Moon Hollow." Paul McGrath is the host who opens the creaking door of the Inner Sanctum. AFRTS rebroadcast. (24:00)

Once again, today's program will be presented on a special ghost-to-ghost network. And because this Halloween broadcast will be, as usual, too scary to do alone, Chuck will be joined by Ken Alexander, who, in addition to helping with the show, has offered to provide refreshments such as Ghost Toasties, Scream of Wheat, and Shrouded Ralston. Don't miss it if you can!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7th REMEMBERING WALTER TETLEY

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (2-17-46) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, with **Walter Tetley** as Leroy Forrester, his nephew; Mary Lee Robb as Marjorie; Lillian Randolph as Birdie; Dick LeGrand as Peavy; Bea Benaderet as Eve Goodwin. Leroy has the flu and his Uncle Throckmorton offers tender, loving care. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:38)

TOWN HALL TONIGHT (12-22-37) *Excerpt.* Fred Allen and the Mighty Allen Art Players present a Christmas fable, "Santa Claus Sits Down." On Christmas Eve, Santa goes on a sit down strike. Cast includes Fred, Harry Von Zell, Minerva Pious, Alan Reed, **Walter Tetley**, Elvia Allman, NBC. (10:38)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (10-15-40) Jim and Marian Jordan star. McGee is going through his tool chest trying to find his screw driver. Cast includes Isabel Randolph as Mrs. Uppington; Harold Peary as Gildersleeve; Bill Thompson as the Old Timer and as Horatio K. Boomer; **Walter Tetley** as Cedric Boomer, nephew of Horatio; Gale Gordon as the hardware store clerk; Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:42)

YOUR HIT PARADE (1938) *Excerpt.* "Promotions Unlimited" sketch (within the *Hit Parade* series when the show had a 45-minute format) written and performed by W. C. Fields with **Walter Tetley**. CBS. (12:25)

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (3-22-51) "The Great Lover" starring Bob Hope and Rhonda Fleming repeating their original screen roles from the 1949 film comedy. Cast includes Jim Backus, **Walter Tetley**, Sheldon Leonard, Fritz Feld, Paul Frees. Newspaperman Bob is a boy scout leader on a ship filled with his troop, luscious Rhonda and a murderer. NBC. (14:50; 11:50; 28:09)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (10-30-49)

Phil and Alice star with Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley and **Walter Tetley** as Julius Abbruzio. Phil and Frankie try to help Julius win the girl he loves. Rexall, NBC. (27:59)

See our cover story about Walter Tetley on page 2.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14th

HALLS OF IVY (4-16-52) Ronald Colman stars as William Todhunter Hall, president of Ivy College with Benita Colman as Vicky, his wife, the "former Victoria Cromwell of the English theatre. Two teachers have married in violation of faculty rules. Voice of America rebroadcast. (26:00)

GOLD COAST SHOW (1-11-61) "The Countess" starring Ollie Raymand, Marie DeRosa and the King's Jesters. *This is the legendary Chicago program where as many commercials as possible would be inserted into a specially written story. In this episode, the story is wrapped around eight different commercial messages!* WBBM, Chicago. (13:42)

GANGBUSTERS (1940s) "The Golf Course Murder." Death drives along the fairway until a strand of hair and a woman's ring puts an end to the grizzly game. Syndicated. (23:56)

GOLD COAST SHOW (1957) "Music 'Til Dawn" starring George Watson, Marie DeRosa, the King's Jesters, Sid Nierman at the piano. The cast kids WBBM colleague Jay Andres on the fourth anniversary of his all-night "Music 'Til Dawn" show on the station. *In this episode, nine commercial spots are deftly woven into the story.* WBBM, Chicago. (14:30)

THE WHISTLER (9-10-50) "The Golden Penny." A playboy dreams up a scheme to swindle \$100,000 and a yacht from a wealthy couple. AFRS rebroadcast. (28:49)

GOLD COAST SHOW (11-14-98) "Edgar Lovelace, At Liberty" is a new script — written in the legendary style — by former "Gold Coast" writer John Mies and performed live in our studio during today's broadcast by members of our *Those Were The Days Radio Players*. Eight vintage commercials will be woven into the 15-minute story. *See the article by John Mies on page 6.*

FIRST NIGHTER (1-29-48) "A Writer in the Family" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule "from the Little Theatre off Times Square." A writer of western stories meets a highway surveyor. Cast includes Hugh Studebaker, Paul Frees, Arthur Q. Brian. Frank Worth and the orchestra. Announcer is Larry Keating. Campana Products, CBS. (30:00)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21st ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (11-23-47) First of two consecutive and related shows. Jack and Mary Livingstone go to the market to buy a turkey for their Thanksgiving Day party. Cast includes Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Don Wilson, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Mel Blanc, Artie Auerbach. *This program features one of the greatest Lucky Strike mid-show commercials with Jack and the Sportsmen Quartet.* Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (27:00)

READER'S DIGEST RADIO EDITION (3-6-47) "Pete's Thanksgiving" starring Otto Kruger as an immigrant from Greece who hopes to open a restaurant on Thanksgiving Day, but meets with resistance from the local businessmen's organization. Richard Kollmar hosts. *Halfmark Cards*, CBS. (29:40)

DURANTE-MOORE SHOW (11-22-46) "The Nose and the Haircut," Jimmy Durante and Garry Moore present a Thanksgiving opera with Jimmy as Miles Standish and Garry as John Alden. Singer Susanne Ellers is Priscilla. Roy Bargey and the orchestra; announcer Howard Petri. Rexall, CBS. (28:40)

EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (11-22-44) On the day before Thanksgiving, Eddie finds that he can't get a big enough turkey unless he buys a live one. So he hires guest Alan Ladd, screen tough guy, to kill the bird. Cast includes Bert Gordon, Leonard Seuss, Nora Martin, Harry Von Zell. *Sal Hepatica, Trushay*, NBC. (18:26)

HEARTBEAT THEATRE (11-24-63) "John Ball's Thanksgiving" with Victor Rodman and Bill Idleson. A well-traveled philosopher passes on some thoughts about Thanksgiving. C. P. MacGregor is host. *Salvation Army*, Syndicated. (24:40)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (11-30-47) Second of two consecutive shows. Jack recalls the day before Thanksgiving when he bought a live turkey and couldn't kill it himself. He tells Rochester to do it, then dreams he's on trial for killing the bird! Cast includes Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Don Wilson, Eddie Anderson, Bea Benaderet, Frank Nelson, Artie Auerbach. *Another great Sportsmen commercial with Jack, Don and Phil joining the quartet in "That's What I Like About the South."* Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (25:33)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is MELVIN E. GILES who has written a nostalgic, biographical novel entitled *George Street, Our Street, a Poor Family's Richest Years in Chicago*. *See excerpts from Mr. Giles novel beginning on page 11.*

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

NOVEMBER 1998

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28th
RADIO TO GET INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY

RAILROAD HOUR (12-15-52) "Holiday Inn" starring Gordon MacRae and Dorothy Wareskjold in a radio version of the 1942 movie about a country inn that's only open on holidays. Cast includes Olan Soule and Bill Johnstone and features most of the songs from the Paramount picture. Marvin Miller announces. Association of American Railroads, NBC. (28:32)

SUSPENSE (12-21-58) "Out For Christmas" starring Raymond Burr as an ex-convict who sets out to kill the cop who sent him up. Featured in the cast are Joan Banks, Howard McNear, Karl Swenson. CBS. (23:15)

ARTHUR GODFREY TIME (12-25-63) *Excerpt.* It's Christmas morning on Arthur's weekday radio show and there's lots of seasonal music and appropriate holiday chatter with Carmel Quinn, June Valli, Richard Hayes, Linda Scott, Johnny Nash, Carol Sloan, Johnny Parker. CBS. (31:10)

HOUSE PARTY (12-25-63) *excerpt.* Art

Linkletter's holiday show with Jane Russell, Connie Haines, Beryl Davis, Muzzy Marcellino and the band. Art talks to members of the studio audience, then brings on his five grandchildren. CBS. (18:26)

GARRY MOORE SHOW (12-25-63) Garry and Durward Kirby talk about Christmas and how they'll spend the holiday this year in this pre-recorded Christmas Day show. They sing a Christmas greeting from the sponsor. Campbell's Soup, CBS. (9:19)

BURNS AND ALLEN (12-18-44) Gracie and everyone else wants to be on George's Christmas list, but he and Gracie decide not to exchange presents this year. Bill Goodwin, Frank Nelson. AFRS rebroadcast. (27:50)

BLONDIE (12-15-48) Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake star as Blondie and Dagwood Bumstead, with Frank Nelson as Herb Woodley and Hanley Stafford as Mr. Dithers. Dagwood sets out to find out what his kids want for Christmas. Colgate, Super Suds, NBC. (25:25)

...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 51st year on the air!** *WJOL, 1340 AM, Saturday, 9 am-12 noon.*

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.*

REMEMBER WHEN-- Host Don Corey's "nostalgia fest" with the emphasis on old time radio variety shows, plus show tunes and interviews. *WAIT, 850 AM, Saturday, 9 am-12 noon.*

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

(CBS RADIO) MYSTERY THEATRE-- Producer Himan Brown hosts reruns of his 1974 -1982 mystery series. *WMAQ, 670 AM, Saturday night at Midnight until 5 am Sunday.*

IMAGINATION THEATRE-- This series is heard occasionally on *Those Were The Days* in Chicago, but is broadcast weekly in many other cities across the country. For the station in your area, call Tim McDonald at TransMedia Productions at 1-800-229-7234. For a list of stations carrying the program and an episode guide, the Internet address is: tmedia@aaimnet.com

THE SATURDAY SWING SHIFT-- Bruce Oscar is the host for this two-hour program featuring swing music on record as performed by the big bands, popular singers and small groups. *WDCB, 90.9 FM, Saturday, 10 am-Noon.*

"When Radio Was" -- WMAQ-AM 670
Monday thru Friday Midnight to 1 a.m. Host Stan Freberg

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
October, 1998 Schedule				
			1 Duffy's Tavern Pt 2 Crime Club	2 Suspense Superman
5 Lone Ranger Fibber McGee Pt 1	6 Fibber McGee Pt 2 This Is Your FBI	7 Jeff Regan, Investigator Jack Benny Pt 1	8 Jack Benny Pt 2 First Nighter	9 The Shadow Superman
12 Dragnet Burns & Allen Pt 1	13 Burns & Allen Pt 2 CBS Radio Workshop	14 Richard Diamond Red Skelton Pt 1	15 Red Skelton Pt 2 Crime Photographer	16 Suspense Superman
19 Gunsmoke Great Gilderleeve Pt 1	20 Great Gilderleeve Pt 2 Broadway Is My Beat	21 Gangbusters Life of Riley Pt 1	22 Life of Riley Pt 2 The Whistler	23 The Shadow Superman
26 Escape Our Miss Brunks Pt 1	27 Our Miss Brooks Suspense	28 Lights Out Favorite Husband Pt 1	29 Favorite Husband Pt 2 War of the Worlds Pt 1	30 War of the Worlds Pt 2 (Mercury Theatre)
November, 1998 Schedule				
2 Have Gun, Will Travel Father Knows Best Pt 1	3 Father Knows Best Pt 2 Boston Blackie	4 Lone Ranger Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	5 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Tales of Texas Rangers	6 The Shadow Superman
9 Black Museum Aldrich Family Pt 1	10 Aldrich Family Pt 2 Philip Marlowe	11 Sergeant Preston Mel Blanc Show Pt 1	12 Mel Blanc Show Pt 2 Dragnet	13 Suspense Superman
16 Gunsmoke Jack Benny Pt 1	17 Jack Benny Pt 2 Let George Do It	18 Escape Fibber McGee Pt 1	19 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Crime Classics	20 The Shadow Superman
23 Third Man Great Gilderleeve Pt 1	24 Great Gilderleeve Pt 2 Boston Blackie	25 The Whistler Life of Riley Pt 1	26 Life of Riley Pt 2 Sam Spade	27 Suspense Superman
30 Have Gun, Will Travel Burns & Allen Pt 1	OUT OF AREA LISTENERS PLEASE NOTE If WMAQ Chicago is out of your reception area, "When Radio Was" is heard on a great many other stations throughout the country. For a complete station listing, plus more detailed program information, and a steady audio stream on the Internet, visit www.radiospirits.com			

BING CROSBY: THE RADIO YEARS

BY JOHN SEBERT

Few entertainers have contributed their talents to as many aspects of show business as Bing Crosby, star of stage, screen, radio, television and records. But for Bing, arguably the most important of these was radio.

He began his climb to stardom as one of Paul Whiteman's "Rhythm Boys," but had, by mid-1931, achieved a certain amount of success making records and already was starring in a series of short films for Mack Sennett, each built around one of his early hit records. Still, without radio, it's very likely that Bing Crosby — the entertainer the whole world came to know — would never have existed.

In the summer of 1931, William S. Paley, founder and chairman of the board of the Columbia Broadcasting System, was on board an ocean liner when he first heard the voice of Bing Crosby emanating from a portable phonograph. He liked what he heard, and ordered his subordinates to put Crosby on the network. Bing's first broadcast was to be in late August of that same year. But for reasons publicly explained as "laryngitis," the first show never came off.

To this day, varying accounts remain as to what actually caused the delay. Some suggest that the real problem was that Bing had been "black-balled" by the musician's union, owing to a walk-out the "Rhythm Boys" had staged at the Cocomanut Grove

John Sebert, manager and co-owner of Metro Golden Memories in Chicago, has been a life-long fan of Bing Crosby.



Night Club, and that Bing was restrained from going on the air until the matter was cleared up. Others opined that an overt fondness for alcohol and nightlife had necessitated the hold up.

In his autobiography *Call Me Lucky*, Bing tells it this way: "I'd fallen into the habit of dropping in at four or five night clubs a night. Like a zany, I'd been singing in each of them for the kicks, instead of saving my voice for my radio debut, and my pipes had taken a terrible lacing. To put a complete K.O. on my throat, just before the show I'd rehearsed in an air-conditioned room.

... and singing in the cold air I tightened up so that when I was ready to go on, I couldn't push any noise out. It wasn't that I was nervous or had any other kinds of shakes, including alcoholic ones . . . The pipes just gave out because I hadn't had enough sleep, and I'd been singing too much. . . I would have sounded terrible, so I said: 'Let's not do it until I'm ready.'"

In any case, on September 2, 1931 Bing was on the air with his first regularly scheduled broadcast. But the Crosby confidence was at a low ebb. Bing was so sure he had bombed, that after signing off, he penned a note to his business manager, his brother Everett, which read:

"Dear Ev: Cancel all contracts. I gave it all I had, and it's no good. Bing."

But CBS was flooded with enthusiastic telegrams, and the broadcast was an unqualified success!

Hindsight is 20/20. So today, it seems impossible to believe that it could have been otherwise. If ever a performer was



sued for radio, it was Bing Crosby. Proceeded in the 1920s by such crooner types as Rudy Vallee, Whispering Jack Smith and Gene Austin, Bing didn't so much invent a singing style, as he "perfected" one.

Before Crosby, most of the popular male singers of the day had been tenors. But his rich baritone, and fluid "scat style" found a perfect home in the electronically amplified condenser microphones of the early 1930s. *Judge Magazine* said at the time: "Bing succeeded Rudy Vallee as our first male, and the radio suddenly went masculine." His "phonogenic" voice was equally at home in the radio loudspeakers and the shellac discs of the era.

Weighed against what was to come later, that first show doesn't seem like much today. Bing sang his songs straight, and he let announcer Harry Von Zell do all the talking between numbers. The loose, jocular Bing with the free-flowing banter was to

come later. It was writer Carroll Carroll, who later scripted the *Kraft Music Hall* from the time Bing joined the program in 1936, who helped Crosby find his on-the-air speaking voice. "I'm a singer and a pretty bad actor," Bing explained. "I don't think I'll do so well with a lot of lines."

But Carroll was tenacious. A small man (five feet tall), he spent the first six months of their association closely following Bing around, listening carefully to his speech patterns and vocal idioms, making notes and remembering a line here and there. His small stature came in very handy, as he would often pass unnoticed while Bing was busy with a song or a visitor. After he became familiar with the singer's natural style of communication, Carroll was "home free." Both Carroll and Crosby shared a fondness for polysyllabic words and florid diction — particularly the juxtaposition of slang and a precise proper vocabulary. So he found it rather easy to "put words in Bing's mouth."

In addition to Carroll Carroll and Kraft, several other long-term associations begun in the 1930s were to have a major impact on the Crosby career. In 1932 Bing began working for Paramount Pictures, an affiliation that would endure for 24 years, and some 45 films! And in 1934 he would sign with Jack Kapp and Decca records. Bing had first worked with Kapp, when he signed him with Brunswick Records in 1931. Now Kapp had joined forces with British "Decca" to form a new American record company, of which Crosby was to be the very cornerstone. It was Kapp who kept Bing's recording career moving by pushing him to record an infinite variety of material.

Bing trusted Kapp implicitly. He had this to say about him: "I had great faith in him. He developed a recording program for me that involved every kind of music. I sang with every kind of band and every kind of

BING CROSBY: THE RADIO YEARS

vocal group— religious songs, patriotic songs, and even light opera songs. I thought he was crazy, but I had confidence and went along with his suggestions. He gave me a very expanded repertoire which most other singers at that time hadn't bothered to get into. I just did exactly what he told me to do, and it worked."

Another association that took root in the 30s was that with a young comedian named Bob Hope. Bing first worked with Hope during a brief stint at New York's Capital Theater in 1932. They saw little of each other over the next few years, but shortly after Hope came to Hollywood (some six years later) the two men performed together at a "little clam bake" (as Bing would say) out at Crosby's beloved Del Mar Race Track. Some of the brass from Paramount picked up on it, and soon *Road to Singapore* (1940), the first of many *Road* pictures was before the cameras. Bing and Bob kept their running "feud" going on radio well into the 1950s as they guested on each others programs. Later their "act" moved to television as well.

By the mid 1940s Bing had grown impatient with the network mandated practice of broadcasting live. He petitioned Kraft and NBC for the freedom to "transcribe" (record by electrical transcription) his program. But NBC wouldn't hear of it. So, after ten years with Kraft, he went on the air for Philco on the fledgling American Broadcasting Company network. Bing Crosby, at this time, was one of the biggest stars in radio, and a top film star as well. Even so, it was with considerable trepidation that Philco agreed to underwrite a "canned" program. The company signed on the dotted line, with the understanding that if the "recorded" Crosby show dipped below a 12 share in the ratings for four consecutive weeks, Bing would resume

doing a live series.

Philco Radio Time premiered on ABC on October 16, 1946. Initially the show was recorded on sixteen inch transcription discs. Transcription discs had been used successfully by Armed Forces Radio for several years, but required special care when attempting to edit program material. Then Bing met a man named Jack Mullin who had liberated an early magnetic tape recording machine from Germany's RadioFrankfort at the close of WWII. With that very machine, and 50 rolls of magnetic recording tape Mullin had also found in Frankfort, *Philco Radio Time* went to tape in the summer of 1947.

Wags suggested Crosby wanted a "canned" program so that he could have more time on the golf course. There was undoubtedly an element of truth in this, but it is also true that, as Bing put it, "[Using tape] gave me a chance to do a better show... I could do a 35 to 40 minute show, and then edit it down to 26 or 27 minutes... take out situations that didn't play well... and finish with only the solid stuff that played big. We could also take out songs that didn't sound so good. [We would] try a recording of the songs in the afternoon without an audience, then another one in front of a studio audience... We'd dub the one that came off the best for the final transcription."

Bing reveled in the new freedom of his taped Philco Show (later for Chesterfield, and later still, for General Electric). He enjoyed working in baggy pants and loud sports shirts with anyone of a collection of hats perched jauntily on his head in lieu of the hated toupee. He maintained a regular radio show until 1955, and was one of the last TV "hold-outs," doing only occasional specials until the 1960s saw him with a year-long run in a sitcom and then as a perennial host of the *Hollywood Palace*.

If Bing Crosby had done nothing more



than usher in the "tape revolution" in radio, his place in broadcast history would have been secure.

Should he simply have been the artist who introduced the song "White Christmas" to the world, and made it his own to the tune of over three million copies in sales, he would be remembered fondly every Yuletide.

As the tuneful half of the dynamic duo in seven road pictures and countless radio and television appearances he is likely never to be forgotten.

But he did so much more than that! Bing won 1944's best actor Academy Award for playing Father O'Malley in *Going My Way*. And he remained a major film star for nearly 30 years, placing among Hollywood's top ten box office attractions for 15 of those years!

What was the special magic of Bing Crosby? In part, at least, his phenomenal appeal has to be based on his innate professionalism and modesty. On radio and on the screen he worked with an astounding variety of performers (not to mention various sports celebrities who turned up on his program), and blended so well with nearly all of them, he always went to great lengths to make his fellow performers feel

comfortable, and was not one to hog the spotlight. On screen he would never accept the solo top spot, always insisting on shared billing. He was more than willing to share the success of a film with the others involved. Typically, he denied any altruistic motive, maintaining that should one of his pictures flop, he'd have someone to share the blame!

Despite his unparalleled success in films, Bing's movie career was, for the most part, simply an extension of the naturalness and charm he projected on the radio. He was a top radio star for a quarter of a century! It was that pleasant, affable and slightly verbose fellow people welcomed into their homes each week on radio and paid to see at the movies.

Once, when composer Jerome Kern was asked to comment on Irving Berlin's place in the history of American music, Kern said, "Irving Berlin has no place in American music. Irving Berlin *is* American music." Perhaps when the history of American broadcasting is being discussed, something very similar might be said regarding Bing Crosby. "Bing Crosby has no place in broadcast history. Bing Crosby *is* broadcast history."

On Sunday, October 11, 1998 Bing Crosby will be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame.

If Bing were here today, he would doubtless remark (as he so often did) that it was far more a matter of luck than it was talent that enabled him to reach the heights that he attained. "Call me lucky," he would say.

At the risk of sounding like the unabashed fan that I am and, speaking on behalf of all of Bing's fans, I would deign to correct him.

Oh no Mr. Crosby. Call *us* lucky. ■
NOTE-- Tune in TWTD October 3 when John Sebert participates in a four-hour Salute to Bing Crosby.

The Biggest Turkey in Town

BY FR. KEVIN SHANLEY

There were a number of shortages for civilians on the Home Front during World War II. The Government, through the system of rationing overseen by the OPA (Office of Price Administration), attempted to distribute supplies of meat, canned goods, sugar and other foods as evenly as possible. The same was done with gas supplies, shoes and other scarce items.

People on the Home Front tried to "make do" cheerfully so that the Armed Forces would have more than sufficient supplies for the war effort. Red stamps for meat products and blue stamps for other foods in ration books were used well by most, and without complaint. But as the war went on, some items became scarcer and almost non-existent for the civilian population in spite of their great efforts to save grease, scrap metal and other salvageable materials. Victory Gardens were planted almost everywhere in an effort to stretch food supplies even further.

It was in the Fall of 1943 when some supplies became very low. The U.S. had almost completely switched to a war economy and supplies of civilian items such as shoes and clothing from the pre-war years were virtually depleted.

But people in general cheerily made do with what was available. The war news that came over the radio served to encourage people with victories in North Africa

and the South Pacific. We were "on the road" to victory!

It was that Fall when it was announced in our area that turkeys would be in very short supply.

No turkey for Thanksgiving? It seemed an incredible impossibility!

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, my Mom and I started out on a shopping trip to find a turkey for our Thanksgiving dinner. We went to all the neighborhood butcher shops and supermarkets.

But the reply was always the same. "No turkeys. Don't you know there's a war on?"

Undaunted we continued to trudge from store to store, mostly at my urging since Mom had already begun to consider alternatives for our Thanksgiving dinner.

"I just don't think we'll ever find a turkey this year," cautioned my Mom.

"Let's take just one more chance, Mom," I rejoined.

Our last chance was a large meat market in the downtown section of our city. We walked into the place with a faint glimmer of hope but the empty display cases soon eroded that.

"Any turkeys left?" my Mom inquired.

"You can see we're almost out of any meat," explained the kindly butcher.

My hopes for a Thanksgiving turkey dinner seemed to vanish completely.

"Nothing at all?" Mom asked again.

"Wait a minute," the butcher replied, "we have one left but it's too big for a family dinner."

"How big?" Mom asked with some hesitation in her voice.

"It's about 30 pounds," he replied and

went to the refrigerator to bring out what seemed to be the biggest turkey I had ever seen.

When I noticed Mom's hesitation, I fairly shouted, "Oh, Mom, please get it. I'll even carry it home."

"Well, if it's that important," she replied, "we'll buy the turkey but it seems bigger than you are."

It was true that I was pretty thin at 12 years old, and didn't weigh too much more than the turkey. But what really mattered was that we would have a real turkey dinner for Thanksgiving.

After wrapping the turkey, the butcher handed it to me with some misgivings.

"Ooof!" I said as I first began to feel the full weight of a 30-pound refrigerated turkey. But out the door we went as I struggled to find a comfortable way to carry the huge bird.

Fortunately the bus stop was only a block away where we boarded the Red Bus for the trip home. People stared at me and then smiled. Perhaps because they could scarcely see me sitting and holding the large bird.

When we got off the bus at Lexington Avenue, Mom checked to see if I could still carry the turkey.

"Sure," I assured her as I wended my way down the street. Neighbors asked what I was so energetically carrying, and some offered to help. But I felt a sense of accomplishment that I didn't want to share with others.

When Dad arrived home from work at the Western Electric Company, he asked Mom if she had been successful in finding a turkey. Without a word, she opened the refrigerator to display the biggest turkey in town. She had to remove much of the food in the bottom section of the refrigerator to make room for the turkey.

During the week before Thanksgiving, my brothers and I worked hard to grate

loaves of bread to make stuffing for "Tom," as we dubbed our turkey, and to help Mom prepare for the roasting.

"You'd

better start

cooking this bird on Monday," suggested my Dad.

As it turned out, we started on Wednesday evening, and left the turkey overnight in the oven. It took about a dozen or more hours to complete the process in time for dinner on Thanksgiving itself.

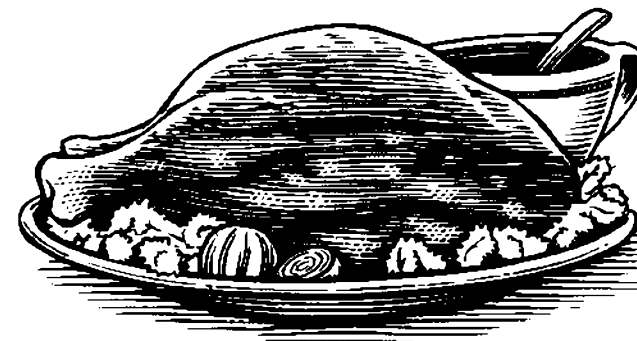
As we gathered around the big kitchen table, we offered our prayers of thanksgiving. As an immigrant from Ireland, my Dad always added a prayer of thanks for our new and better life in America.

"God bless America," was his fervent prayer.

Other prayers were added, especially for peace and family members away at war.

Just before digging into our dinner, Mom paused. "We owe Kevin thanks for carrying home this huge turkey. If it hadn't been for him, we might not be eating turkey today."

I felt so proud. I had, indeed, brought home the biggest turkey in town. ■



The Rev. Kevin Shanley is a staff member of the Carmelite Spiritual Center in Darien, Illinois, a member of the Those Were The Days Radio Players, and a regular contributor to the Digest.

Ken Alexander
Remembers . . .

Goin' to the Show



When I was a pre-teen living on the West Side of Chicago in the late 1930s and early '40s, a few of my friends and I spent many Saturday afternoons at one or another of the neighborhood movie houses.

We lived in the area of Madison Street and Crawford Avenue (later renamed Pulaski Road) and we had our choice of four nearby movie theaters. The smallest was the Alex, a no-frills movie house on Madison a couple of blocks east of Crawford.

Then there was the Crawford, another unpretentious little theater on Crawford a block south of Madison. For a time the Crawford had a special feature on Saturday afternoons: live, on stage, a yo-yo competition sponsored by the company that made Duncan yo-yos.

After the feature film, the house lights would go on and the theater manager would introduce the yo-yo expert, a young Filipino man.

The expert would ask for any boys who wanted to participate to come to the stage. (Girls almost never attended these Saturday shows.) Then he would make his yo-yo do amazing tricks, beginning with the easiest ones. After he demonstrated each trick, he would give each boy on the stage a try at it. If the boy succeeded, he was allowed to remain on stage. If he failed,

the expert would jerk his thumb over his shoulder toward the audience, and the defeated boy would sheepishly return to his seat.

The expert would keep eliminating contestants until there was only one left. He was the winner, and his prize was a magnificent Duncan yo-yo studded with ersatz jewels.

The Marbro, in the 4100 block on Madison, took its name from its builders, the Marks Brothers (not to be confused with the Marx Brothers), although it was now owned by Balaban and Katz. The Marbro was not just a movie house; it was a movie palace.

The movie palace *par excellence*, though, was the Paradise, at 231 N. Crawford. The Paradise was not only elegant, it was huge; it was at one time the largest movie theater in Chicago. Like the Marbro, the Paradise was a Balaban and Katz Theater.

A marquee employing lights of several colors was surmounted by a tall vertical sign: the letters B&K at the top, and then, from top to bottom, P-A-R-A-D-I-S-E. The exterior of the building was in French Renaissance style.

The lobby was impressive indeed, with its ornamental tile floor and intricately designed ceiling. There were fountains, stat-

ues, tapestries and massive urns. A wide marble staircase with filigreed metal railing led to the balcony.

The auditorium itself was more impressive than the lobby. There were 3,612 seats. The decor was baroque — architectural gingerbread everywhere. There were statues mounted on pedestals high on the walls. The domed ceiling, 80 feet high, was a midnight blue. A cloud machine projected fleecy clouds on the ceiling, where dozens of recessed, low-wattage, white bulbs twinkled like stars in a summer sky.

We boys, by the way, weren't much impressed by the opulence of the theaters; we were interested in the action on the screen. We wouldn't have cared if the movies had been shown in a warehouse.

There were some movie theaters a bit farther away — the Senate east on Madison, the Byrd west on Madison, and the Alamo and the Famous over on Chicago Avenue — but we had no need to go that far with the Alex, the Crawford, the Marbro and the Paradise as close as they were.

Usually two or three or four of us boys would go together, most often on a Saturday afternoon but sometimes on a Friday evening or a Sunday. Rarely if ever did we go more than once a week: dimes were scarce in those days.

"The show" was the term we used to denote a movie. It was also the term we used to mean the theater where the movie was being shown. Thus, if a friend told you he was "goin' to the show," and if you asked him which one, he would more than likely say "The Crawford," which was the name not of the show he was going to see, but of the theater where it was playing.

You would then ask your friend, "What's playing?"

"Allegheny Uprising," he would answer, telling you the name of the show, which is what you wanted to know in the first place.

To say that someone was "in the show"

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& "Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever" S&W

WEST END 121 N. Cicero—Preston Foster S&W
and Zane Grey's "HERITAGE of the DESERT" S&W

CENTURY 1421 W. Madison—1:30 to 8:30 S&W
"TIMBER STAMPEDE" S&W
Joan Blondell, "GOOD GIRLS GO TO PARIS" S&W
Extra—BUCK JONES and SILVER HERE TODAY S&W
AT BOTH BOOK NITE Volume 2 of the S&W
THEATERS ENCycLOPEDIA S&W

MADLIN 1910 W. Madison—1:30 to 8:30 S&W
Boris Karloff, "MR. WONG IN CHINATOWN" S&W
Extra—BUCK JONES and SILVER HERE TODAY S&W

4 STAR WHITE SLAVERY EXPOSE! S&W
"Paroled from the Big House" S&W
"Timber Stamped" & Donald Duck—Admits Only S&W

MARSHALL SQ. 2875 W. Ceymar S&W
Betty Grable—"MILLION DOLLAR LEGS" S&W

GOIN' TO THE SHOW

did not mean that he was on stage in grease paint and costume participating in a theatrical production; it meant that he was inside the theater building.

As for the movies themselves, our taste did not necessarily run toward the finest examples of the cinematic art. Once, for example, when there was nothing playing in the neighborhood that I really wanted to see, I went to a movie anyway. I found it the most boring thing I had ever seen, just a group of people sitting around talking. The movie was "The Magnificent Ambersons," which is considered one of the finest American films ever made.

What we kids wanted was *action*. We saw a number of Westerns starring actors such as John Wayne, Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea. I had seldom traveled farther west than Harlem Avenue, and the only live horses I had seen had been pulling fruit peddlers' wagons through the alley behind the apartment building where we lived. Still, I enjoyed the horse operas, although, because the city was my milieu, I preferred gangster movies, which were usually set in a big city.

On general principles, I never aspired to become a gangster when I grew up; besides, the bad guys always wound up dead or in jail at the end of the movie. Nevertheless, the actors who played the tough guys had a certain panache which was hard to ignore.

The tough guys didn't swear or use dirty words to prove that they were tough. They didn't have to. Take Edward G. Robinson. All he had to do was snarl. "Nyaaa. *I'm* the boss around here, see? What *I* say goes. Understand?"

I always got the impression that the smoke from Edward G. Robinson's cigar was getting into his eyes but that it didn't bother him a bit.

Or Bogey. He could merely bare his upper teeth in that sardonic grin of his and chuckle. You wouldn't cross *him*.

George Raft could narrow his eyes and say, "Yeah, sure. Sure." He wasn't one to be messed with, either. Nor were James Cagney and John Garfield. Those guys were *tough*.

Another genre of movies which we boys liked was the war picture, and there was no shortage of these.

We didn't care for mushy love stories, although if there were no action movies playing in the neighborhood a light romantic comedy would be acceptable — the kind of movie starring such people as Fred MacMurray, Cary Grant, Melvyn Douglas, Rosalind Russell or Jean Arthur. These were innocuous boy-meets-girl stories concerning a boy who was a gentleman and a girl who was a lady.

When it came to comedy, the more slapstick it was the better we liked it. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were far and away our favorites in that genre. "Buck Privates" and "Keep 'em Flying" stand out in my memory, as does "Who Done It," which I particularly enjoyed because the action took place in a radio studio.

Speaking of radio, a few movies I fondly recall featured some of my heroes from that medium. Jack Benny starred in "Man About Town" and "To Be or Not to Be."

"Look Who's Laughing" had a cast including Jim and Marian Jordan (Fibber McGee and Molly), Harold Peary (Gildersleeve), and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Even the announcer Harlow Wilcox had a small part. It was quite a thrill to *see* the house at 79 Wistful Vista — hall closet and all.

The "Road" pictures, with Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour, always provided a barrel of laughs.

Another category of movie we liked was the spooky movie; "Frankenstein" and

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SENATE Feat. Young, Lorraine Day, "TRIAL OF MARY DUGAN"
 Plus Lloyd Nolan, "MR. DYNAMITE!"

STATE 2 Thrillers!
 RALPH BELLAMY
 "ELLERY QUEEN'S
 PENTHOUSE MYSTERY"
 & Robt. Young, Lorraine Day, "TRIAL OF
 MARY DUGAN!"

MANOR 3 Stooges
 Comedy

watching was particularly exciting we would sit there biting our nails. We might refrain all week, but after a Saturday afternoon at the movies, our nails would have been gnawed almost to the quick.

James Stewart, Gary Cooper and Henry Fonda were among our favorite leading men. Spencer Tracy always turned in a fine performance, whether he portrayed Father Flanagan of *Boys' Town*, Thomas A. Edison or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

If the movie's stars were the main course, the character actors were the dessert. We'd see the same character actors in movie after movie until their faces became as familiar as the face of a friend, but their names were hardly household words.

I do recall a few of their names: Donald Meek, Eugene Pallette, Alan Hale, Cecil Kellaway, S. Z. ("Cuddles") Sakall, Charles Coburn and Victor Moore. There were many more. I can see their faces; I never knew their names. They gave me much pleasure.

Then as now, some movies were about teen-agers. The teens in these films were, as a rule, squeaky-clean. Often they were portrayed by Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, who had the idea to produce a musical show "right here in the barn. I can write the songs. You can sing. Joey can design and build the scenery...."

The Andy Hardy series, again starring Mickey Rooney, also were good entertainment.

The Dead End Kids were an exception to the squeaky-clean rule, but they were basically good guys and they were sometimes funny.

The feature-length cartoons of Walt Disney occupy a special place in my memory. To see and hear Jiminy Cricket singing "When You Wish Upon a Star" in "Pinocchio" or to see and hear the seven dwarfs sing "Heigh Ho" as they march off to work was to witness sheer magic. "Fan-

"Dracula" leap to mind. It was advisable to see these movies in the afternoon rather than at night. One chilly fall evening I went alone to the Paradise to see a frightful movie called "The Mummy's Hand."

When I emerged, it was dark outside and a thunderstorm was raging. The movie had set my nerves on edge and the thunder and lightning made me even jumpier. My solitary walk home, although only a couple of blocks, was terrifying.

My favorite masters of menace were Peter Lorre, Sidney Greenstreet and Boris Karloff. Their appearance in a movie always ensured that we'd get our money's worth of chills.

Fingernail-biting was a habit many of us boys had, and when the movie we were

tasia" was in a class by itself: what a wonderful way for a kid to become acquainted with Bach, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky!

Marvelous as it was, "The Wizard of Oz," with its superb cast of live actors, did not have the magic of the Disney cartoons.

Once in a while a movie would be released which, because of its subject, was designated Adults Only. With those few exceptions, all movies were considered appropriate for people of any age to see.

Besides the feature film — sometimes it was a double feature — there would be a newsreel, the "coming attractions," maybe a cartoon and possibly something more, perhaps a travelogue. On a Saturday afternoon there might be an installment of a serial. These were designed to lure us back the following week, but the tactic didn't work with us. The following Saturday we would go to see the feature film we most wanted to see wherever it might be playing, and let the serial go hang.

Nowadays, when the feature film ends, the house lights go on and the theater is cleared. If you want to see the movie again — or if you arrived late and want to see the part of the film that you missed — you'll have to pay another admission.

Not so in the old days. The projectors ran continuously and the house lights remained dark until the last show was over, late at night. People didn't have to consult their newspapers or phone the theater to find out when the feature started; they would arrive at the theater whenever they happened to arrive. The movie might be half over.

You would watch the movie till the end. Then you would watch the newsreel, the cartoon, and the "Coming Attractions." Then the film would begin again. You might stay until the point was reached when you had entered the theater. Then

you would leave, saying to yourself, "This is where I came in."

Or, you might stay to see the entire film. You could stay all day if you wanted to.

When you first entered the theater, your eyes would not be accustomed to the darkness. You would be guided to your seat by an usher, a young man in a sharp uniform who was armed with a flashlight. He would escort you down the aisle, shining a circle of light on the carpet where you walked. After you had seated yourself, the usher would return to the rear of the house and wait for the next patron.

The concession stand was usually presided over by a young lady who also wore a uniform — crisp and starched and neat.

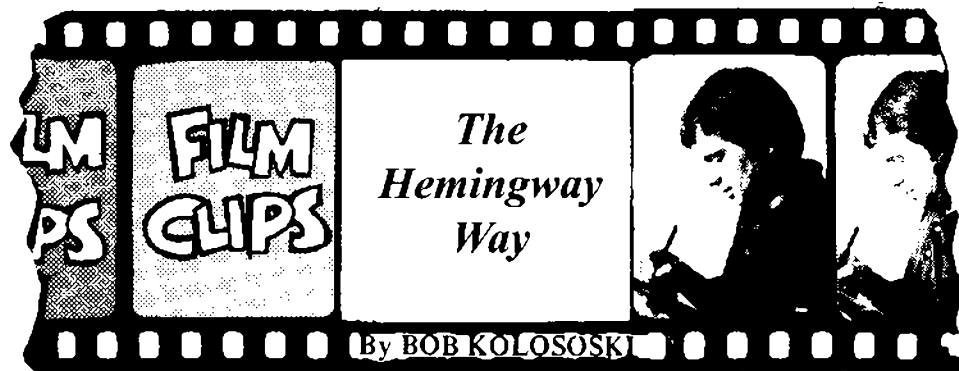
Although the animated cartoons and a few of the live-action movies were produced in Technicolor, black-and-white was the rule. There was no Cinerama, CinemaScope or ShowScan. The sound was not Dolby stereo. There was little in the way of special effects. Yet, we enjoyed those movies.

They afforded us a chance to share the adventures of Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest, to stow away on a pirate ship, to ride the plains with the frontiersmen, to swing on a vine across a ravine in the jungle with Tarzan.

We could watch and listen to the Glenn Miller Orchestra in "Sun Valley Serenade" or cruise the streets of New York in a squad car or fly with the Army Air Corps. We could serve with General Custer at Little Bighorn or join Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson as they rode in a hansom cab through a London fog. We could see, acted out for us, the life of Sergeant York, of Stephen Foster, of Knute Rockne, of Dr. Paul Erlich, or Alexander Graham Bell.

Goin' to the show. What a pleasure it was! I always smile when I recall those long-ago Saturday afternoons.

Don't you? ■



Ernest Hemingway, reporter turned novelist, believed that Hollywood could not translate his novels and stories into adequate screenplays.

Hemingway never wrote any of the screen adaptations of his works; he did, however, enjoy the financial benefits when any of the major studios decided to try.

The diverse group of writers who labored to adapt Hemingway's work for the masses of moviegoers included William Faulkner, Casey Robinson, Dudley Nichols, Anthony Veiller and Peter Viertel. This was an impressive group of talents that had varying degrees of success translating his sparse prose into filmable dialogue.

The truth is that a Hemingway story was meant to be read and not served to an audience on a silver platter. Another truth was that the studios needed hundreds of scripts each year and any property known to the public was coveted by the movie moguls.

The most successful film based on a Hemingway novel was *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, produced by Paramount in 1943.

The Spanish Civil War was the backdrop for the story of a tragic love affair of an American, fighting for the liberation of Spain, and a young Spanish girl. Gary Cooper was the quintessential Hemingway hero battling the evil forces of General Franco. Hemingway was quoted as saying that he had Cooper in mind when he

wrote the novel, but the better bet was that he had Hemingway in mind.

In this novel, as in *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *The Adventures of a Young Man*, Hemingway draws on his own life and exploits, thus his main characters are reflections of himself.

Paramount purchased *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and turned the project over to Cecil B. DeMille to produce and direct. DeMille gave the book to a battery of writers who managed to lose control of the story's essence. Director Sam Wood came to the rescue when he assumed control of the project and assigned Dudley Nichols to author the screenplay. By the time Nichols had finished the script, Wood had cast Cooper, Vera Zorina, Katrina Paxinou (who won an Academy Award for her portrayal as an earthy rebel), and Akim Tamiroff. Three weeks into the shooting schedule, Ingrid Bergman replaced Vera Zorina. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* turned out to be an instant epic, with a running time of 170 minutes. Hemingway liked the picture but said that it "ran ten minutes longer than the actual Spanish Civil War."

In a Hemingway story, men are at constant battle, fighting other men and the demons within, fighting for command of their lives and souls.

The Snows of Kilimanjaro finds Gregory Peck, Hemingway's hero, as a writer, wounded and fighting for his life in an

THE HEMINGWAY WAY

African safari camp. He reflects on his life in France and later in Spain where he and his wife fought the Loyalists. She was killed and he regrets the direction his life has taken. Susan Hayward, the woman now in his life, is there to nurse him and convince him that his life is worth saving. Producer Darryl F. Zanuck, director Henry King, and screenwriter Casey Robinson combined to create a compelling study of a man struggling to cope with a deep-rooted depression. Hemingway disliked the film, and called it "The Snows of Darryl F. Zanuck."

Hemingway, who was born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1898, was constantly haunted by the suicide of his father. His writing reflects his struggle with depression and pessimistic attitudes. He created a lifestyle that relied upon personal courage and the obsession to challenge that courage. He joined the American Red Cross when he was nineteen and volunteered to drive an ambulance in Italy during the first world war. He was wounded and sent back to America.

After the war he lived in Paris, where he became part of the "lost generation." He spent time in Spain, where he developed a passion for bullfighting.

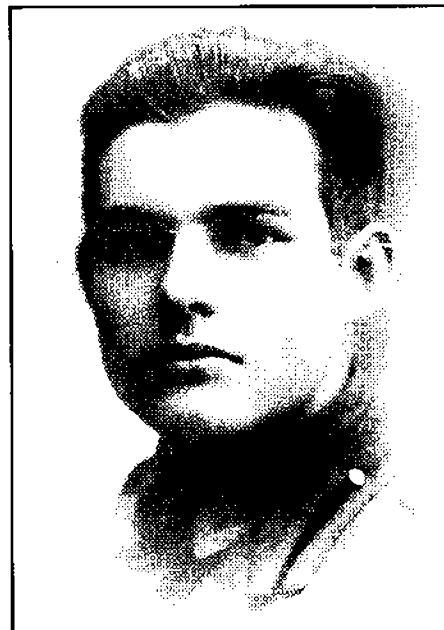
The success of his novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* gave him the financial freedom to try big game hunting in Africa. He became a newspaper correspondent and reported the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. During World War II he became a member of a special forces group that hunted Nazi subs in the Caribbean. He was at the D-Day invasion as a correspondent and was dangerously close to the front when the Battle of the Bulge erupted. After the war his wanderlust waned a bit, but he continued to travel and write until 1961 when he gave in to his own

demons and took his own life.

Hemingway's heroes were men of strength who lapsed into phases of weakness. Harry Morgan, the gun runner with a conscience, was the hero of *To Have and Have Not*. Humphrey Bogart was just the actor to fill Harry's shoes in the 1944 Warner Bros. film. Cuba was changed to Martinique and the Chinese immigrants Harry was to smuggle into the U.S. became Free French; all very politically correct for its day. The real deviation from the novel was Lauren Bacall. Her portrayal of Marie was more of director Howard Hawks type of gutsy woman as opposed to the destructive type of women who populate Hemingway's stories. The film worked well and its success prompted Warners to remake it in 1950 with John Garfield and Patricia Neal. It was retitled *The Breaking Point*. Producer Jerry Wald wisely assigned Michael Curtiz to direct and stuck much closer to the original story. In spite of all its merits, the film is totally forgotten today.

There isn't any justice in a Hemingway story. *The Killers* was a short story about a small town mechanic named "the Swede" who is murdered by two professional killers. End of story, except that the Hemingway prose excites the imagination the same way a great radio drama can. The imagination of producer Mark Hellinger and screenwriter Anthony Veller were set on fire. For the 1947 film Hellinger cast Burt Lancaster, in his film debut, as "the Swede" and Ava Gardner as a double-crossing brunette. Edmund O'Brien was cast as an insurance investigator who fits the puzzle pieces of Swede's life together. A classic film noir that unfortunately was remade in 1965 with stone-faced Lee Marvin and John Cassavetes. Hemingway like the Hellinger version.

Most men would turn and run if faced with a wounded, charging lion unless, of



ERNEST HEMINGWAY FOUNDATION OF OAK PARK
ERNEST HEMINGWAY in 1918

course, the man who runs is a Hemingway character. Francis Macomber ran from a lion in front of his wife and his White Hunter guide. In Hemingway's world, that was an act of cowardice. *The Macomber Affair* (1947), as scripted by Casey Robinson, had to fill in the gaps left to the reader's imagination in the Hemingway short story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." The film, directed by Zoltan Korda, employed great location footage shot in Kenya, Africa, and solid performances by Robert Preston as Macomber, Gregory Peck as the White Hunter, and Joan Bennett as the restless wife. Hemingway approved of the film version.

By the 1950s Hemingway had cut back his writing output and Hollywood cooled to producing his stories. But, in 1957, Darryl F. Zanuck and David O. Selznick each decided to produce a film based on Hemingway novels. Selznick remade *A Farewell to Arms* trying to overshadow the

heralded 1932 film. That film was graced by the presence of Helen Hayes as the young British nurse. Gary Cooper was her American lover. Frank Borzage directed with care. Shot in glorious black and white, it is still a film of considerable appeal. Selznick's overblown 1957 version was a visual cupcake lacking solid substance. Rock Hudson and Jennifer Jones, as the tragic lovers, go for the gold but miss the mark.

So did Zanuck with *The Sun Also Rises*. His star, Tyrone Power, was too old at 43 to portray the somber Jake Barnes. The production, shot in three countries, was visually stunning, but the downbeat story failed to find an audience. Errol Flynn as a world-class alcoholic was the bright spot in the cast that also included Ava Gardner, Mel Ferrer and Eddie Albert. Flynn's performance rejuvenated his career but couldn't save the film from quickly fading from theatres.

In 1958 Spencer Tracy struggled with the film version of *The Old Man and the Sea*, but so did audiences. Hemingway's parable about life's ironies and setbacks made for great reading, but was an almost impossible film project. The story of a lone old fisherman in a rowboat trying to catch a huge marlin couldn't catch an audience.

In 1961 producer Jerry Wald tried to rekindle the Hemingway spirit with *Adventures of a Young Man*. Richard Beymer fell flat as Hemingway's alter ego Nick Adams, and the entire production was a first class exercise in futility.

Another ill-fated attempt at resurrecting Hemingway was the 1977 film *Islands in the Stream*. Based on an unfinished novel, screenwriter Denne Bart Petticlere had to invent whole sections of the story to mold a very unsatisfying film. George C. Scott headed a good cast including Claire Bloom, David Hemmings and Gilbert Roland, but it was an unpleasant experience for every-

THE HEMINGWAY WAY

one involved.

Recently Chris O'Donnell portrayed Hemingway in *In Love and War*, a rehash of *A Farewell to Arms*. It came and went quickly at the movie theatres.

The potential to make a great film based on a Hemingway story is still a possible proposition. The formula is to have a quality producer, someone with the savvy of Mark Helinger, hire a talented screenwriter to adapt the story for the screen, someone like Casey Robinson. The story should fit the nineties; maybe a remake of *The Killers*. Then the script should be given to a veteran director, someone like Howard Hawks, who should cast actors of Bogart's stature.

Hard to do? Yes, but not impossible. ■

NOTE-- The Ernest Hemingway Museum, in the Oak Park Arts Center, 200 N. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 features an exhibition, "Hemingway and the Movies" with original film posters, shooting scripts, and recordings from films based on Hemingway's writings. The exhibit has a video corner where visitors may sit in old-fashioned movie theatre seats and enjoy some of those films. Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Call (708)848-2222.

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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Our Readers Write

WE GET LETTERS

DALLAS, TEXAS-- As someone who grew up in the '30s, I was especially interested in Elizabeth McLeod's article (August-September, 1998), "Radio's Forgotten Years." But I was surprised that she made no mention of one of radio's longest-running and successful dramatic series, "One Man's Family." I realize there was no way of mentioning every series on radio, but Carlton E. Morse had to be one of the most prolific radio writers of all time, turning out not only "One Man's Family" but also "I Love A Mystery."
--**GENE G. RANDOLPH**

TINLEY PARK, IL -- You introduced me to old time radio six years ago. Your program continues to be the focal point of my Saturday afternoons and a great source for my own humble collection. I'm a satisfied listener! --**GARY BLATT**

AKRON, OHIO -- Last fall when I renewed my subscription I asked about Deanna Durbin. When I received my June-July 1998 issue I was really surprised to see her picture on the cover and the story by Ed Knapp. I will always treasure this issue about the lady with the voice of an angel. --**PAUL MERLO**

CHICAGO -- 'Twas a pleasure to read Ken Alexander's piece (June-July, 1998) on "Old Time (Chicago) Radio." --**PATRICK GRIFFIN**

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL -- I have been listening and recording since 1978 and have amassed quite a collection of tapes. I especially enjoyed your show (TWTD June 6) with Ned Locke. You have the closest thing to a time machine experience that we will ever have. --**LE ROY H. MEYERS**

CHICAGO -- I must tell you how very much I admire your radio show. I especially appreciate the honor you pay to great performers who have recently passed away. I am happily renewing my subscription, which I would enjoy even if I didn't listen to your radio show. It's nice to think that there might actually have been a time that really was "the good old days!" --**EVANNE MARIE CHRISTIAN**

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Read John Sabert's appreciation of Bing's radio years, page 26.

WALTER TETLEY

By Elizabeth McLeod
Page 2

MY FRESHMAN YEAR

By Melvin Giles
Page 11

GOIN' TO THE SHOW

By Ken Alexander
Page 32

GOLD COAST SHOW

By John Miles
Page 6

GROWING UP DISNEY

By Curtis L. Katz
Page 17

THE HEMINGWAY WAY

By Bob Kolosoki
Page 37

COMIC STRIP RADIO

By Richard O'Donnell
Page 9

BIGGEST TURKEY IN TOWN

By Kevin Shanley
Page 30

WE GET LETTERS

Our Readers Write
Page 40

PLUS

WNIB **THOSE WERE THE DAYS** LISTINGS..... Pages 20-24
WMAQ **WHEN RADIO WAS** CALENDAR..... Page 25

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