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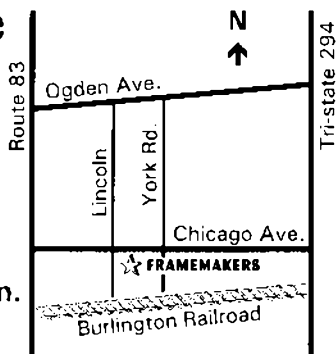
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As Heard on *Those Were The Days* Every Saturday

Not RAINmakers! FRAMEMAKERS!

The Old Trains

BY KEN ALEXANDER

I've witnessed this scene countless times while waiting for a commuter train to take me downtown:

A young mother and her small child are standing on the platform. Suddenly the crossing gates lower, the red warning lights begin to flash and the bell rings. The mother points toward the west where the approaching train is rounding the bend and says to the child, "Look! Here comes the choo-choo!"

The child jumps up and down with excitement.

A pleasing scene it is. There is only one thing wrong: the approaching train is *not* a "choo-choo." The child has never seen a "choo-choo"; neither, probably, has the mother.

A "choo-choo" was a train pulled by a steam locomotive — a big, powerful engine made of solid iron. Hooked on behind was a tender, or coal car, carrying the coal, which was burned to convert the water in the boiler into steam. It was the steam that pushed the pistons, which turned the locomotive's wheels.

The fireman shoveled the coal into the boiler while the engineer operated the engine.

Steam locomotives were not painted

Veteran radio announcer Ken Alexander can be heard every week on Those Were The Days. This article originally appeared in June, 1994.

shiny yellow or sky blue like the diesel-electrics of today; they were black, and from their stacks poured smoke and soot and cinders.

The pistons and piston rods and wheels were out in the open, in full view, and when a train started up you could see the piston rod slowly push forward, forcing the wheel to turn. With each stroke of the piston a *choo* would rend the air. Very slowly at first the train would move, but gradually the *choos* would become closer together as the engineer opened the throttle and the train gathered speed.

When a train was highballing on a straightaway, the pistons would be pumping so fast that you could hardly hear the individual *choos*.

That was a "choo-choo" train.

The whistles on the steam engines had a lonesome sound. The horns on modern diesel-electric engines have a sharp, brassy sound, something like a raspy trombone; the old steam whistles had a sound which, although it carried far, was mellow. And oh, so lonesome — especially at night.

On the top of each engine was a bell, which *looked* like a bell.

I have never lived more than about a half-mile from the Chicago & North Western's (now the Union Pacific's) West Line. (The West Line, formerly called the Galena Division, runs from the downtown terminal out through Oak

THE OLD TRAINS

Park, Elmhurst, Wheaton and other suburban towns to Geneva.)

When my family lived in the 3800 block on West Fulton, the 600 block on North Springfield, the 200 block on North Karlov, and the 700 block on North Drake, we were in earshot of the North Western trains. Now living in one of the western suburbs, I'm still less than a half-mile from the train.

In pre-Amtrak days, the North Western had not only commuter trains originating in its downtown Chicago depot, but cross-country trains as well. There was the "Twin Cities 400," which went to Minneapolis-St. Paul — 400 miles in 400 minutes. The "Iron and Copper Country Express" went up into Michigan, the "Kate Shelly" to Omaha. Then there were the "City" trains, which went out west: the "City of Denver," "City of Portland," "City of Los Angeles" and "City of San Francisco."

These trains — streamliners, we called them — were drawn by yellow diesel engines, and the coaches, too, were yellow.

The Jet Age had not yet begun, and air travel was nowhere near as popular as it is today; people who needed to travel cross-country usually went by rail.

I once saw Bing Crosby in North Western Station; he had just gotten off the "City of Los Angeles." Standing next to the engine in the trainshed, Crosby posed for a photographer with the engineer and the fireman. The three stood side-by-side, their arms around one another's shoulders, and opened their mouths as if they were blending their voices in song.

The Old North Western Station was a busy place in those days. In addition to the thousands of commuters passing

through the building each day, there were thousands of travelers coming from, or going to, the northern, northwestern and western parts of the country.

In the second, or train-level, floor was a spacious waiting room with a high, vaulted ceiling. At the west end of the waiting room was the Gateway restaurant; at the east end, a lunch counter. There were several stands where one could buy newspapers, cigarettes, candy bars and magazines.

Near the center of the waiting room was a wide marble staircase which led to the first, or street-level floor, where the tickets were sold. There was also a drug store on the first floor.

On both the first and second floors were banks of lockers, where travelers could store their luggage while they had a meal or went to State Street to shop between trains.

This may give you some idea of just how busy a place the North Western Station was in the 1950s: the barber shop, on the first floor, had 18 chairs.

The building was only four or five stories tall, but it was a grand old railroad depot. It was demolished a few years back and replaced by a high-rise office building called the North Western Atrium Center (now Citibank-Citicorp Center). The train shed is now officially known as the Richard B. Ogilvie transportation Center.

While the old cross-country streamliners afforded the traveler some measure of luxury, the commuter trains of those days got you where you were going and that was about all they did.

The coaches not being air-conditioned, on a hot day the passengers would open the windows. This allowed a breeze to enter the car, but the breeze carried with it soot and smoke and coal dust especially if one was riding in a coach

close behind the engine. A white shirt or a white blouse wouldn't remain white for long.

As I recall, some of the coaches were unheated. Some of the cars were combination cars — half passenger coach and half baggage car. In these, there might be a stove in the baggage section.

Some of the coaches had gas lights. I can remember seeing the conductor walking through the aisle at night with a taper to light the gas in the globes hanging from the ceiling.

Two kerosene lanterns, one on the right and one on the left, hung on the rear end of the last coach of the train.

Some of the suburban stations that didn't have a depot had a shelter for commuters so that they wouldn't have to wait outdoors for their train. This shelter was, in fact, the body of an old wooden baggage car with the trucks removed.

Every freight train in those days — and up until several years ago — had a caboose on the tail end, in which the conductor and the brakeman rode. There was something picturesque, something cozy about a caboose.

A little electronic gadget — a box about eight inches square — which you can see on the rear end of the last car of a freight train, mounted on top of the drawbar, has replaced the caboose. I don't believe, though, that any gadget can really take the place of a caboose or the men who rode in it.

Late one summer night years ago, I stood at a grade crossing in one of the suburbs waiting for a long freight train to pass. Because the train was moving slowly, it was not making much sound, and by the time the caboose reached the spot where I was standing, the noisy engine was probably a mile away.

I was just a couple of feet from the

track when the caboose finally pulled past. The conductor sat at the open window, and as the caboose passed, he said to me, "Does this train look all right to you?"

Can the electronic gadget do *that*?

For nine years — from 1948 to 1957 — I worked for the Chicago and North Western, although my job had nothing to do with trains. I worked in the general offices downtown, in the Land & Tax Department, and my job was issuing rental bills on the company's 13,000 leases for the use of railroad property.

There were no computers in the office in those days. I pounded out the bills on an old L. C. Smith manual typewriter; then I posted the bills with a pen in huge ledgers weighing about 25 pounds apiece.

Some of the men in the office smoked cigars; each man who did, had a spittoon — a cuspidor, if you will — on the floor beside his desk.

In the office and out on the road, railroading has changed in the past 50 years. And so have I.

When I was young, the steam locomotive — the old "iron horse" — was on the verge of obsolescence; gradually taking its place was the diesel-electric. What a thrill it was to see one of those streamliners come gliding along the track, sleek and bright yellow with a thin green stripe! This was the train of the future.

Now that the future has arrived and nostalgia has set in, I find that my feelings have changed. I can see streamlined trains every day now, and I no longer find them exciting.

What thrills me today is the recollection of an old steam engine pulling a train through the countryside with its pistons pumping, its stack puffing coal smoke, and its lonesome whistle blowing. ■

Perry Como: *Dream Along with Me*

BY CHUCK SCHADEN

During the late 1980s and early 1990s Perry Como would leave his Jupiter, Florida home twice a year, three weeks at a time, to perform concerts throughout the country.

In the fall of 1991 he was starring at the Star Plaza Theatre in Merrillville, Indiana, outside of Chicago. As he made his entrance, the audience in the jam-packed theatre stood and cheered his arrival. Perry seemed slightly embarrassed by the instant outpouring of affection from his fans, but covered it nicely when he said, "You scared me half to death. I thought maybe you were leaving."

He need not have worried. Perry Como's easy-going style developed, at first, as a band vocalist, grew as a recording artist and radio singer, and matured as a super-star on television, endearing him to audiences for more than half a century.

At one point during his Merrillville show, after singing many of his hit songs, Perry casually walked from the stage and down the few steps to be closer to his audience. One could hear a collective gasp from his mostly mature fans as they were treated to an even closer look at the singer.

What they saw was a lean, tanned, physically fit, handsome show business icon whose voice and appearance had changed little, if at all, over the years.



PHOTOFEST

As Perry walked towards the audience, he began another song and started moving about the rows, shaking hands with a lady here, a gentleman there, again and again. When he finished the song, there was a special warmth to the resounding applause that followed, an extended round of appreciation that must have told him how much his fans respected him and how they considered him to be a friend of many years.

As the large on-stage orchestra started another number, someone in the audience called out, "How old are you, Perry?"

Perry smiled, paused for just a second, then said, "I'll be 80 next spring."

Another gasp from the crowd, a decidedly over-50 crowd, followed by another burst of applause and cheers. They could not believe that he was going to be 80. He didn't look 80. How could Perry Como be 80 years old? And, if *he* is going to be 80, how old are we?

Pietro and Lucia Como's thirteen-year-old son, Perry, was the first to be a citizen of the United States by birth.

His youthful ambition was to become a barber, the best barber in Canonsburg, and at age 11 he was an apprentice sweeping floors and stropping razors in Steve Fragapane's three-chair barber shop.

At age 14 he had his own shop which he worked after school hours and even employed two additional barbers. Following

graduation from high school he worked the shop full time, shaving, cutting hair and singing to his customers who, along with others in the community, appreciated his vocal talent. By the early 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, he was making as much as \$125 a week.

In 1933, while on a short vacation in Cleveland, Ohio, Perry decided to test his singing talent by auditioning for Freddy Carlone whose local band played dates through-

out Ohio. Carlone liked what he heard and offered him a job as vocalist for \$28 a week.

The young singer was flattered, but thought it imprudent to give up his surething barbering career for that of a band singer, especially during those hard times. But his parents encouraged him to take the job, convincing him that if he couldn't make a career singing, he could always go back to the barber shop.

So in 1933 he accepted Freddy Carlone's offer, took the \$28 a week, and also took a

Perry was in the audience as he began his next song, still shaking hands, when a man from the back of the theatre slowly walked down the aisle, towards Perry, and extended his hand to him. Perry shook the man's hand. That man was followed by a woman, then another woman, then a couple, who also wanted to shake Perry's hand, to make contact for a second or two with the singer who had been such a big part of their lives. Perry responded by

warmly greeting them until he looked up and saw that the aisles of the theatre were filled with men and women who had spontaneously left their seats and were now slowly, orderly, walking towards him, seeking to get a closer look, a chance to shake his hand, and perhaps an opportunity to say "thank you."

Perry smiled his warm smile and raised his hand, palm facing towards the approaching people. "I appreciate it," he said. "But now I have

to finish this song on stage. Thank you all."

As he turned towards the steps to return to the stage, his fans in the aisles stopped and slowly returned to their seats, having been just a bit closer to Perry Como on that day.

The mutual respect between Perry and his fans was evident. And it was true. *He didn't look 80!*

Pierino Roland Como was born in Canonsburg, a small mining town in Pennsylvania on May 18, 1912. He was one of



PHOTOFEEST

PERRY COMO

bride, his childhood sweetheart, Roselle Bellinc. For the next three years he toured the Midwest with the band and his bride.

In 1936, in Warren, Ohio, Perry met well-known bandleader Ted Weems who was looking for a singer to replace Art Jarrett. Weems offered the job to Perry who eagerly accepted the offer to sing with a better-known band at an even better \$50 more per week. And even better than that, the Weems band was making records for Decca and broadcasting regularly on the radio. The band's home base was Chicago and was heard weekly on *Fibber McGee and Molly* broadcasts from NBC studios in the Merchandise Mart in 1936 and 1937. In 1940 and 1941 Perry and the Weems' band was part of Garry Moore's *Beat the Band* broadcasts which also featured singer Marvel (Marilyn) Maxwell and whistler Elmo Tanner.

The band broke up in 1943 when Ted Weems entered the army in World War II. Tired of traveling and with his wife Roselle at home since the birth of their first child in 1940, Perry decided to return to Canonsburg and open another barber shop.

But he did not accurately measure the strength of the exposure he had received



Something for the Boys (1944)
Phil Silvers, Perry Como

PHOTOFEST

from singing with Ted Weems. While he was negotiating a lease on a new barber shop, he received a call from the General Artists Corporation in New York offering him his own radio show (for \$100 per week) on CBS plus a recording contract with RCA Victor. He wasn't sure if he should take them up on the offer, again passing up the security of barbering. Roselle convinced him to sign with the agent, saying "You can always get another barber shop if it doesn't work out!"

He was being heard Monday through Friday afternoons on the CBS sustaining series *Perry Como For a Little While*.

A Musicians Union recording ban was in effect when Perry's first record for RCA was scheduled. No orchestra was permitted to record until James C. Petrillo's union and the record



If I'm Lucky (1946)
Carmen Miranda, Phil Silvers, Vivian Blaine, Perry Como

PHOTO LSI



Doll Face (1945)
Perry Como, Vivian Blaine

PHOTOFEST

companies resolved their differences, so Perry recorded "Goodbye Sue" with only a vocal chorus to accompany him on his first recording as a solo artist. The musicians' recording ban was over when, two years later, in 1945, Perry recorded "Till the End of Time," his first chart-topping million-seller. That same year he also had a hit recording of "Prisoner of Love" and in 1946 "Surrender" topped the record charts as did "Chi-Baba, Chi-Baba" in 1947 and "A You're Adorable" and "Some Enchanted Evening" both in 1949.

Meanwhile, he was signed by Chesterfield Cigarettes to co-star on the *Supper Club* broadcasts on NBC.

Perry was heard in the quarter-hour radio program from 1944-1949 every Monday, Wednesday and Friday night while Jo Stafford appeared on

Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Hollywood beckoned while Perry's popularity was soaring. He signed with Twentieth Century Fox and appeared in a trio of films co-starring Vivian Blaine and Carmen Miranda: *Something for the Boys* (1944), *Doll Face* (1945), and *If I'm Lucky* (1946). He also appeared in MGM's *Words and Music* (1948) a screen biography of Rodgers and Hart with Mickey Rooney and Tom Drake. The films were fine showcases for Perry, but they proved to him and to his growing legion of fans that he was more of a singer than he was an actor. Obviously, he was more comfortable at being himself.

Fans were lining up to see Perry Como, the singer, whenever he played in presentation houses around the country. He was making enough money from those personal appearances that he would never again consider a career in barbering, but for years he kept up his membership in the Barber's Guild, "...just in case." Indicating that he would always be welcome in his hometown, the Canonsburg City Fathers changed the name of Third Street, where he used to have his barber shop, to Perry Como Avenue. The dedication ceremony was tremendous and the schools declared a holiday for the occasion.

In the summer of 1947 he traveled the



Words and Music (1948)
Ann Sothorn, Marshall Thompson, Tom Drake,
Perry Como, Mickey Rooney

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PERRY COMO

country, making personal appearances. He played to big crowds at the Chicago Theatre (on a bill with singer Marion Hutton and Lloyd Shaffer and the orchestra on stage plus Elizabeth Taylor starring in *Cynthia* on screen). According to *Variety*, the show business publication, Perry earned \$31,000 for his week in Chicago, \$27,000 in Cleveland, \$26,500 in Boston,

\$17,500 in Atlantic City, and \$40,000 at the Paramount Theatre in New York.

Como fans who couldn't get to the theatres heard him on the radio and saw him after he made his television debut in 1948 on the video version of the Chesterfield-sponsored *Supper Club* on NBC-TV (simulcast on radio and TV). In 1950 his three-times-a-week show moved to CBS television as *The Perry Como Show*.

On September 15, 1955, in an hour-long

Art Hellyer Remembers Perry Como

The year 1947 was very exciting for me. On New Year's Day I started my professional radio career on WKNA, "the Voice of the Kanawha Valley, Charleston, West Virginia." On March 14 I was married to "the lovely" Elaine Miller and together we spent the first 51 years of my radio career. And later that year I first met Perry Como.

Ten years earlier, in February, 1937, I would hear him crooning with Theodore (Ted) Angus Weems and his orchestra from the "world's most beautiful ballroom, Andrew and William Karzas' Trianon on

Chicago's Southwest Side" on WGN. I was an eighth grader at the time, and little did I dream I would ever meet Perry Como.

When I did meet him, in 1947, I was a "DJ" on WISN in Milwaukee. Rocky Rolfe, the RCA Victor A&R rep for the Midwest, brought to me the first of many RCA luminaries it would be my pleasure to interview over the years.

I was nervous at first, but from the moment I met Perry Como I was perfectly at ease. Bing Crosby had dubbed Perry "the man who invented casual" and he

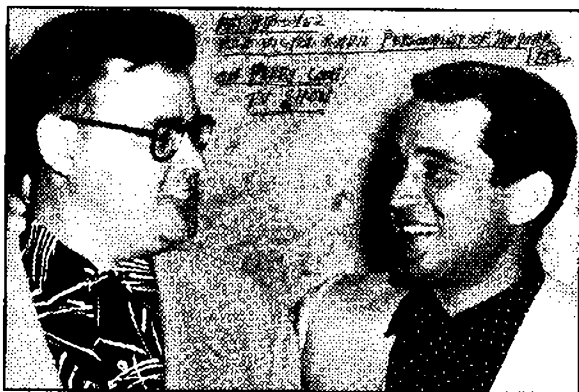
was not only that, he was the most charming person I've ever met. I was still playing his monster hit of 1946, "Prisoner of Love," and he was plugging two more records that were on their way to huge sales in 1947: "Chi-Baba" and "When you Were Sweet Sixteen."

That meeting led to a lifelong friendship because Perry Como stayed in touch over the decades that followed.

He once spent an entire Sunday with me in the early 1950s as my guest on my shows on seven different Chicago radio stations. We zipped

from WIND to WMAQ to WGN to WLS to WAIT to WCFL to WJJD. We moved from taxi to taxi during this marathon, and from elevator to elevator. And each cabbie and each elevator operator had to have the pleasure of being introduced to Perry. At one point he pulled me off to the side and said, "Art, do you do this every day?" I replied, "No, just on Saturday and Sunday." Perry looked at me, made the Sign of the Cross, and said, "Oh, thank God."

And he meant it. Lovely man, Perry Como. He made us all so happy.





PHOTOFEST

format, *The Perry Como Show* premiered on NBC-TV and Perry settled in for what became an eight-year milestone in the history of television. The show featured Mitchell Ayers and the orchestra, the Ray Charles Singers, the Louis DaPrun Dancers (1955-60), the Peter Gennaro Dancers (1960-63), announcer Frank Gallop ("Realllly now!"), and many guest stars.

The show opened as Perry sang his TV theme, "Dream along with me, I'm on my way to a star. Dream along, dream along, leave your worries where they are." A highlight of each broadcast was a request segment introduced by girl singers: "Letters, we get letters, we get stacks and stacks of letters..." and then: "Dear Perry. Will you be so kind, to fill a request and sing the song we love best?" Each week's guest would make his contribution to the scene and Perry would often close with a hymn or serious number.

Tom Shales of the *Washington Post* recently wrote, "He looked the way he sounded; casually handsome, always comfortable with himself. If there hadn't al-

ready been cardigan sweaters, they would have had to be invented so Como could have something to wear. He wanted to make you glad you'd met him. He behaved like a guest who hoped he'd be welcome into your living room again next week."

While Perry was entertaining millions via television, he was selling millions of RCA records. In an unprecedented 50-year career with the record company, his music was played by disc jockeys from coast to coast and on phonographs in homes around the world. And he racked up another stack of Number One hits: "Hoop Dec-Doo," "If," "Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes," "No Other Love," "Wanted," "Hot Diggity (Dog Ziggity Boom)," "Round and Round," and "Catch a Falling Star"

When his TV variety show ended in 1963, Perry appeared on six to eight specials each year until, finally, he slowed down to just one—at Christmastime—per year. He was still recording into the '70s and '80 and had a big hit in 1970 with the million-seller "It's Impossible." He continued his concert performances on a se-

PERRY COMO

verely limited basis, but after seven decades in show business he was essentially retired, happily spending his time with his wife in their Florida home.

He lost Roselle in August, 1998, when she passed away less than two weeks after they marked their 65th wedding anniversary.

Perry Como died on May 12, 2001. A funeral Mass was held on May 18, the day he would have turned 89.

He is gone, but he leaves a treasured legacy in his recordings, in his radio and TV appearances, and in our hearts.

He will never be far away. ■

Tune in TWTID August 11 for a Perry Como tribute.

Eddie Hubbard Remembers Perry Como

I got to know Perry Como fairly well because of our mutual sponsor, Chesterfield Cigarettes.

I broadcast my local *ABC Club* from Chicago and the account executive would fly me into New York to do the announcing chores for Perry's announcer Martin Block who, once in a while, would take a few days off.

In those days Perry's *Supper Club* was actually performed twice, once for the East Coast and again for the West Coast. The first show was at 7 pm EST and the next at 11 pm EST. The hours in between we devoted to listening and critiquing the first show, and then to dinner.

Here I was on the network on the Perry Como show... my boyhood dream come true.



When Perry introduced me as "...our country cousin from Chicago, Eddie HOWARD" I was crushed. When we heard the playback Perry came over and did all but cry with his apology. I assured him it had happened often because Eddy Howard was a popular entertainer.

On the later broadcast, when it came time for his intro of me, he stopped reading from the script and began to ad lib, which was not Perry's strong point. "Ladies and gentlemen, our country cousin from Chicago is here to bring you a word from our sponsor while Martin takes a day off. Say hello to Eddie HUBBARD, our Chesterfield voice of the Windy City. How are our cigarettes selling in the Midwest, Eddie?"

I answered, "At last survey we became the leader... Number One... just like your records, Perry."

"Mine is Number One? That's good to hear."

And before I went into the scripted commercial, I ad libbed, "Wanna know who was Number Two?"

Perry asked, "Who?"

"Eddie Howard," I replied. This caused a chuckle from the band because they knew of Como's goof on the first show.

I was fortunate enough to spend ten years under contract to the cigarette company and had the pleasure of announcing the show many times after. Perry Como never forgot the incident and we joked about it often.

When I told the story to Eddy Howard, he got a kick out of it as well. Now both are gone, but the tender memories remain.

Radio's Outstanding Theatre of Thrills

BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

Did you know Hollywood's legendary director Alfred Hitchcock once turned down an opportunity to have a dramatic show that lasted on radio for more than twenty years?

Suspense went on the air on June 12, 1942 and kept millions of Americans guessing every week until September 30, 1962. From start to finish, it was a high quality production.

Hitchcock arrived in Hollywood from England in 1940 and, on the heels of such British hit films as *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes*, he turned out *Rebecca*, *Foreign Correspondent* and *Suspicion*. All of these films are now rated as classics.

The movie director's strong point was suspense. He kept his audiences dangling from scene to scene while they tried to figure out what would happen next. This approach worked. Hitchcock's films made money and he soon became one of the industry's most famous personalities.

CBS, obviously impressed by Hitchcock's success, offered him a deal. They wanted to sign him up for a show they had in mind that would be pure suspense, or as close as they could come to it.

There was a flurry of publicity and it appeared Hitchcock would soon hit the airwaves with a show called *Suspense*. This did not happen. Somewhere along the way CBS and Hitchcock disagreed about who would have control over the show.

Also, it is possible Hitchcock realized



Alfred Hitchcock

his knowledge of radio and how it operated was vague. For this reason he may have backed off. His medium was visual. Hitchcock knew, for sure, how to work his magic behind a camera, but the radio microphone may have made him nervous.

Later on, CBS would indeed have a deal with the film giant --- for his television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, a fabulous success which is still seen in reruns today. But it must be remembered those shows were filmed, and Hitchcock was a master in that field.

In 1942, after Hitchcock turned down the radio offer, CBS was left with a great idea for a show but did not know what to do with it. Finally, it was decided to use *Suspense* as a summer replacement in the hope the thriller would build an audience. The first show was "The Burning Court" with Charlie Ruggles, and it kept you guessing.

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

RADIO'S THEATRE OF THRILLS

Even without Hitchcock, the network was convinced the mystery series would work.

It did. The ratings, while not spectacular, were good at the start and *Suspense*, after a six show summer run, returned as a regular on CBS in October, 1942. Thus did this "outstanding theatre of thrills" become a radio fixture, considered one of the all-time great shows.

Credit for the success of the series should go to producer/director Charles Vanda, who launched it, and later to William Spier who took over when the October, 1942 show was broadcast. John Dickson Carr, the famous whodunit writer, rates a salute. He wrote some of the early scripts and helped to select other stories that were used.

Other notable producer/directors who kept *Suspense* on target over the years, included Anton M. Leader, Norman Macdonnell, Elliott Lewis, Antony Ellis, William N. Robson, Bruno Zirato, Jr., and Frederick Henderson.

Suspense, during its many years on the air, featured some of Hollywood's great-



William N. Robson

est names. They included Humphrey Bogart, Gregory Peck, Frederic March, Charles Laughton, Ann Sothern, Margaret O'Brien, Herbert Marshall, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Claire Trevor, and J. Carrol Naish to name a few.

"Sorry, Wrong Number" was probably the most memorable show of all. Agnes Moorehead was the star and her performance of an invalid woman who hears about a murder plot, by chance, on the phone, while placing a call, was magnificent. This show was repeated eight times during the series. Credit sound effects expert Bernie Surry for his great work on this one. He was in charge of the telephones.

Moorehead became the "first lady" of *Suspense* and appeared on the show many times in other roles. Two of those performances stand out. One was an adaptation of Charles Dickens' "The Signalman" and the other was "The Thirteenth Sound," in which the sound effects played a key role. Because of the tremendous success of "Sorry, Wrong Number," these two other Moorehead performances on "radio's outstanding theatre of thrills" have more or less been overlooked.

Other great *Suspense* tales included



Anton M. Leader



Agnes Moorehead



Elliott and Cathy Lewis

Ronald Colman in "August Heat," Jackie Cooper in "The Clock and the Rope," Lillian Gish and Ray Collins in "Marry for Murder," Herbert Marshall in "Flooding of the Goodwin," and Peter Lorre in "Home for Christmas." Each of these were "tales well-calculated to keep you in suspense."

Mention should be made of Orson Welles two-parter "Donovan's Brain," which was outstanding. Perhaps the most chilling show in the series was "The House in Cypress Canyon." Robert Taylor was the star and it sent chills racing up and down your spine.

On *Suspense*, the stars did not play the type of role one expected them to play. Cary Grant made you nervous in "On a Country Road," Jack Benny did a science fiction yarn, "Plan X," and Fibber McGee and Molly were not quite as usual in a tight little thriller called "Back Seat Driver."

Suspense prided itself in keeping you waiting until the very last minute for the solution. The best example of this was probably "Salvage," a double-crossing yarn starring Van Johnson. It kept you in suspense until the very last word and was one of the best shows in the series.

For a while a character called "The Man

in Black" was the narrator. The brief part was played by Joseph Kearns, but soon the Man in Black vanished. Actor Robert Montgomery showed up as host for a while and, later on, producer William M. Robson took over. Along the way, the stories were allowed to speak for themselves, without a helping hand from a narrator.

Music was an essential part of *Suspense* and such talents as Lucien Moraweck, Lud Gluskin and Bernard Herrmann composed the scores for the programs. Herrmann, by the way, wrote the music for several Alfred Hitchcock movies. His style of music was considered by the director as perfect for his suspense films.

In its final years *Suspense* was aired by transcription on Sundays. This allowed various stations on the CBS Radio Network to re-record it and play it at different times across the country. The original half-hour show was trimmed to 25 minutes or less to allow for network and/or local news, reflecting the change in American broadcasting in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Radio's so-called "glory days" of drama, music and comedy were pretty much a memory in 1962 when the final curtain fell on *Suspense*. ■

THE COMIC BOOKS THAT WOULD NOT DIE!

BY STEVE DARNALL

When William Gaines became publisher of EC Comics in 1947, there were two points that had already been established:

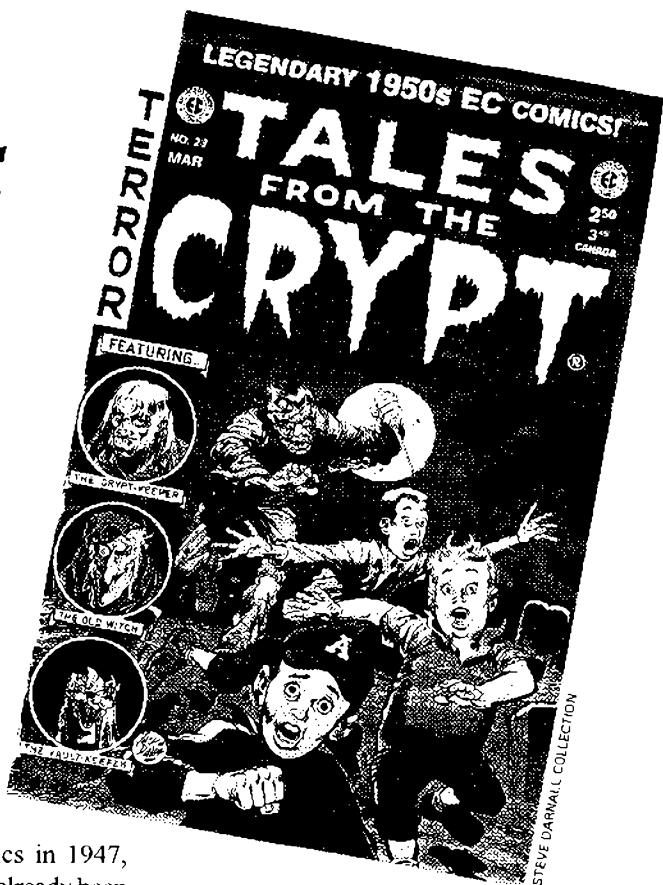
First, he didn't really want the job. Second, everybody knew that comic books were strictly for kids.

A decade later, both of those theories—along with EC itself—had blown sky high.

During that decade, Gaines' company had published some of the most famous and infamous—comic books of all time.

Along the way, they were reviled by parents, attacked by other publishers and even dragged to the floor of the U.S. Senate.

Steve Darnall is a free-lance writer whose comic book credits include the two-issue series U. S. (published by DC Comics) and Empty Love Stories, which he publishes through his own Funny Valentine Press.



They had pushed the medium forward and inadvertently caused it to retreat back again.

See, what made EC wasn't just *any* old comic. These were *horror* comics. Comics with titles like *Tales from the Crypt* and *The Vault of Horror*, with stories that owed as much to tongue-in-check radio fare like *Inner Sanctum* as they did to the Grand Guignol.

The ultimate irony is that like the censors—whatever their motivation—failed miserably. EC Comics has left an indelible mark on 20th Century pop culture.

A popular motif in EC's horror stories involved the deceased—usually victims of foul play—coming back from the dead to exact revenge. One wonders about the end result had EC founder Max Gaines been

granted that power.

Max had spent a decade working for National (now DC) Comics, where, among other feats, he co-created a character aimed at the female market: Wonder Woman. In 1946 he sold his share of the company and launched his newest enterprise, Educational Comics (EC for short).

A firm believer in the power of comics, Gaines brought together a panel of educators and child psychologists to produce books that would educate as well as entertain, series like *Picture Stories from American History* and *Picture Stories from the Bible* (the former title even offered discounts to teachers who might want to use the book as a teaching tool.)

The elder Gaines took to his mission with a vengeance, going as far as to issue editorial guidelines that decreed EC would “never show anybody stabbed or shot; show no torture scenes; never show a hypodermic needle; never show a coffin, especially with anybody in it.”

When Max Gaines died in a boating accident in 1947, his son William’s first suggestion was to close EC’s doors for good. Gaines had little taste for comic book publishing, and his father’s noble intentions hadn’t exactly set cash registers ablaze. “I really did it as a favor for my mother,” Gaines recalled forty years later. “My advice to her was ‘Shut it down.’ I’m glad she didn’t.”

To get the company back on its feet, Gaines decided to play it safe and imitate rather than innovate. He had hired a young artist named Al Feldstein to work on an *Archie-Corliss Archer* knock-off called *Going Steady with Peggy*, only to shelve it when the market for teenage humor books dried up.

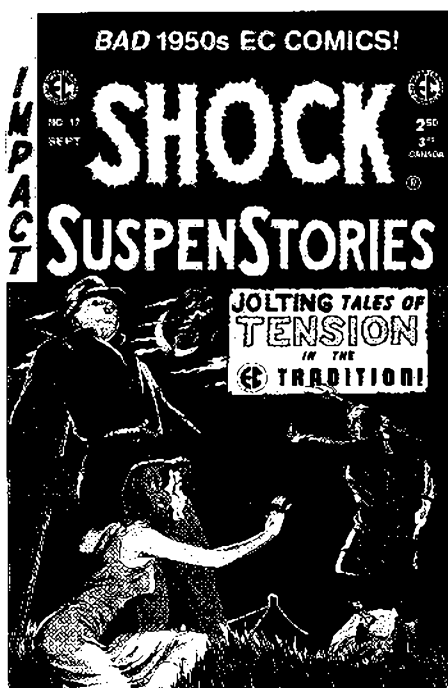
The experience stayed with Feldstein; and after he and Gaines became friends, he suggested that EC might stand a better chance if, instead of following innovators,

it came up with some innovations of its own.

Feldstein, who had been a horror fan since childhood, saw this as a chance to do with comics what Arch Oboler had done on radio with *Lights Out*: tell scary stories that didn’t talk down to the audience and managed to unsettle those who thought themselves immune to such notions.

Inspired by the grizzled-sounding radio hosts of *The Witch’s Tale* and *The Hermit’s Cave* (not to mention the droll punning of *Inner Sanctum’s* Raymond), Feldstein created a ghoulish host of his own, The Crypt-Keeper, to introduce the stories.

The sales from these first stories were so encouraging that Feldstein created two more equally hideous hosts. The Vault-Keeper and, in a direct nod to *The Witch’s Tale*, The Old Witch. These three kept themselves busy; before 1950 was over, EC—now rechristened *Entertaining Comics*—had three monthly horror titles: *The Vault of Horror*, *The Haunt of Fear* and the



DAHNALL COLLECTION

COMICS THAT WOULD NOT DIE

leader of the pack, *Tales from the Crypt*.

If the stories in EC's horror and suspense line weren't all that different from the sort of fare heard routinely on *Inner Sanctum*, *Lights Out* and *Suspense* (in some cases they were *very* similar), they had one specific advantage over their radio counterparts: when a villain met his just desserts in radio, you *imagined* their grisly fate. In books like *Tales from the Crypt*, you *saw* it.

This might have proved overwhelming for even the strongest-stomached reader, except for three important things. First, as Gaines said in a 1983 interview, "we did have this kind of morality that somebody got back what they gave." Second, most of the actual violence took place "off-camera" (though the results of such violence were usually available to see). Third, as Gaines said years later, "We did almost ev-

erything tongue in cheek."

In one such story, "T'aint the Meat, It's the Humanity," a butcher's son dies from tainted meat sold out of his father's shop. The wife gets her revenge by taking the husband apart—literally—and displaying him at the meat counter the next morning.

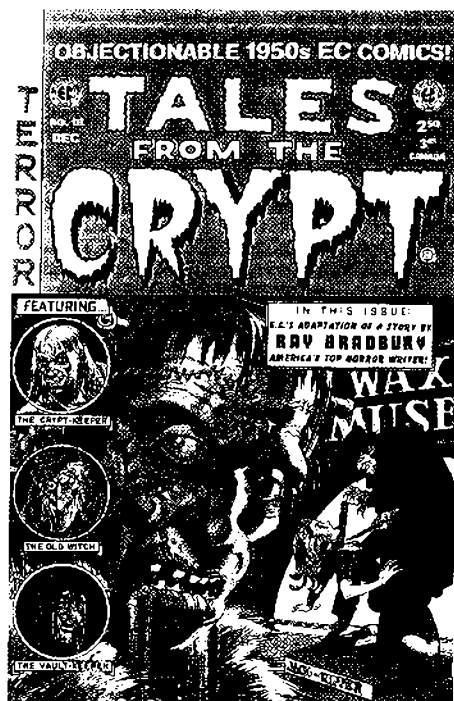
In "Attacks of Horror," a medieval king becomes so obsessed with money that he begins creating wild taxes for his subjects. Before long, the king had bilked money out of men with titles (the "Sir Tax"), people with boats ("Sails Tax"), people with fishing gear ("Pole 'fax"), and eventually people with thumbs. (You guessed it—"Thumb Tax.") Finally, a crowd stormed the king; one man, ax in hand, said "Your people have decided to tax *you*... your majesty."

One panel later, the mob held up the king's severed head and announced "Corporation tax!" Justice was done.

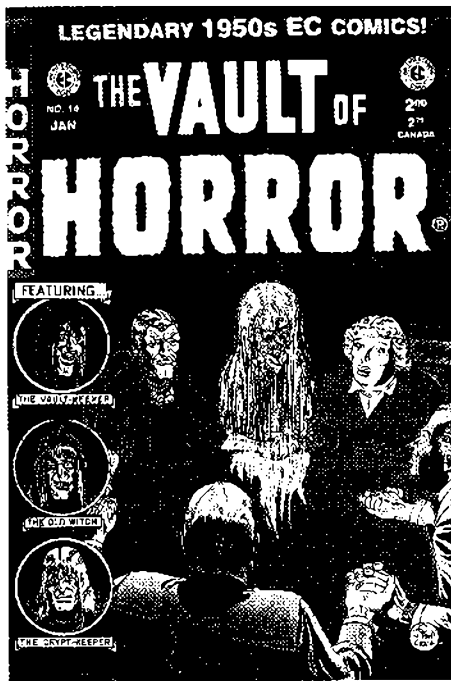
Whether EC's horror titles were *clean* was up for debate (certainly such fare was light years from what Max Gaines had originally planned), but they were usually *fun*.

Apparently readers agreed: sales were routinely around half a million copies per issue. Truly, EC had gone from being followers to being leaders, as evidenced by the more than 100 horror titles that had popped up in the wake of the success of books like *Crypt*. (Timely Comics—which eventually became Marvel—had 30 such titles compared to EC's three.)

Not everything EC published relied on blood and murder. For every *Tales from the Crypt* or *ShockSuspenseStories*, there were lesser-selling books like *Weird Science* (a science-fiction anthology that often featured the work of Ray Bradbury) and *Two-Fisted Tales*, an adventure series that drew on everyone from Rudyard Kipling to *I Love a Mystery*. For every "Attacks of Horror," EC produced stories like "The



DARNALL COLLECTION



Monkey,” a powerful warning about the dangers of drugs. Gaines remembered that the need to keep on schedule meant Al Feldstein was writing four new stories every week.

Still, it was the horror titles that subsidized EC’s other books — which made EC particularly vulnerable when parents, pastors and politicians alike suddenly wondered if horror comics weren’t actually a menace to society.

“The idea just got around and appealed to everybody,” Gaines said in a 1983 interview, “that the problems they were having with kids came from comic books.” Of course, there were a number of cultural upheavals in the 1950s, but comic books were particularly open to attack since, as everyone knew, they were for kids.

In a sense, it began with *Seduction of the Innocent*, a book by psychologist Frederic Wertham, which suggested a link between horror and crime comics and an increase in aggressive behavior. (To put

Wertham’s claims in some perspective, he also suggested that Batman and Robin were more than just friends.)

Wertham’s book came to the attention of Senator Estes Kefauver, a one-time vice-presidential candidate who was not spearheading hearings into the problem of juvenile delinquency. Wertham had suggested that horror and crime comics had a negative influence on America’s youth; Gaines published *Vault of Horror* and *Crime Suspense Stories*. It made sense that Gaines and Kefauver would eventually tangle over the subject.

Gaines’ appearance before the Senate was less than auspicious. He’d been up all night working on his introductory speech and came to the Senate floor in a state of exhaustion. Although the opening statement was eloquent enough (“What are we afraid of? We think our children are all so evil, simple-minded, that it takes a story of robbery to set them to robbery?”), it was clear that the Senators were looking to prove their theories about the dangers of comics. Gaines’ self-deprecating state-

COMICS THAT WOULD NOT DIE

ments, like “I don’t think it does them a bit of good, but I don’t think it does them a bit of harm, either” were fuel for the fire, and when Kefauver produced the cover of *Crime SuspensStories* #22 — featuring a man holding a bloody head in one hand and a woman’s head in the other — the exchange put Gaines at a terrible disadvantage:

Kefauver: “Do you think that’s in good taste?”

Gaines: “Yes sir, I do — for the cover of a horror comic.”

While no legislation came out of the hearings, the comic book industry was running scared. More and more retailers — understandably not anxious to be accused of ruining America’s youth — refused to carry horror titles.

In the hopes of exonerating himself and the industry, Gaines suggested to his fellow publishers that a non-partisan group

of academics be assembled to determine, one way or the other, the effect of comics on children.

It quickly became apparent to him, however, that the industry was more concerned about saving their skins, and they created a governing body known as the Comics Code that would, henceforth, approve all comic publications before their release. And just to make sure Gaines got the point, the publishers voted to ban the words “Crime,” “Horror,” “Terror” and even “Weird” from their publications.

Finally, in September of 1954, Gaines caved in and cancelled EC’s horror titles. The company hadn’t completely given up on the idea of producing comics for adults — there was *Valor*, a book about historical adventure, a book about WW II aviators called *Aces High*, and even a book called *Psychoanalysis*. None of them lasted past issue 5.

Like so many of the monstrosities they presented in the ‘50s, EC Comics are the books that will not die. Starting in the early 1980s, nearly all of EC’s output has gone back into print, nearly all of it in color. In 1991, the company was inducted into the Horror Hall of Fame. *Tales from the Crypt* has become a franchise unto itself, spawning not only a syndicated television series, but a series of movies and even a Saturday morning cartoon show. (As the characters in those horror books used to say, “Good Lord! *choke*”)

By now, Gaines and many of his creative staff have passed on, but it’s obvious their work will live on. The best proof of that is a title that started out as an EC comic and became a magazine, partly to circumvent the constrictions of the Comics Code. Over the next forty-odd years, it became arguably the most important humor magazine of the century.

The magazine? A little something called *Mad*. ■



DARNALL COLLECTION

My EC Summer

BY DONALD R. BERHENT

Back in the 1950s there were many comic books on the newsstands and some of the very best were published by the Educational Comics Company (EC), later changed to Entertaining Comics.

Deeply etched in the mind of this old EC fan is the summer of 1951.

Living in the small village of Mayfield, fifteen miles east of Cleveland in Ohio, didn't provide much excitement for another long summer vacation before the next semester of school.

The local "mom and pop" store and the one drug store in town never carried any EC Comics and I was happy reading the occasional *Captain Marvel* and developed an interest in reading all the science fiction pulps, such as *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Planet Stories* and *Startling Stories*, with all those great illustrations by Virgil Finlay.

My future addiction got its start when my family piled into our 1949 blue Mercury sedan and headed 120 miles west to Marblehead, Pennsylvania and the Lake Erie islands area.

We were sharing a cottage with my cousins for two weeks of swimming, boating

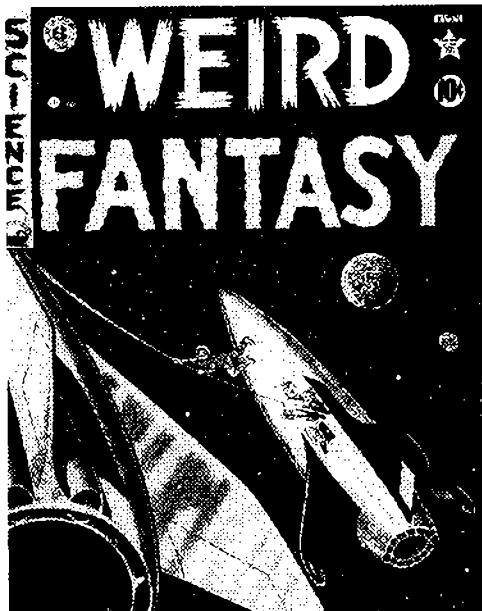
Donald R. Berhent is a Nostalgia Digest subscriber from Willowick, Ohio.

and fishing. The next day we went to Port Clinton for groceries when my cousin and I spotted a magazine store.

As we entered the store, I gasped in amazement as my eyes scanned wall-to-

wall racks of what seemed to be every comic book available in 1951... all in one room!

The first comic I removed from the rack was also my first ever EC. It was the September/October issue #9 of *Weird Fantasy*. The cover displayed two rocket ships in outer space drawn by Al Feldstein. This comic was a must-have for this Sci-Fi fan. I also



JOE SARNO COLLECTION

grabbed a copy of *Vault of Horror*, another EC.

My interest in horror comics was preceded by my great love for the radio program *The Mysterious Traveler*, which always opened with a distant train whistle, gradually growing louder as it approached. (I'll never forget the August 10, 1948 episode, "The Visiting Corpse." A man murders his mother-in-law and puts her in a trunk. The suspense builds as he tries to get rid of the trunk.)

The summer of '51 was an unforgettable one with my discovery of EC Comics and all those spooky radio shows that were on the air each week. ■

OLD TIME
RADIO

IN THE
20TH

CENTURY

Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WDCB • 90.9 FM • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM

AUGUST 2001

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

BOSTON BLACKIE (1940s) Richard Kollmar stars as Blackie, who solves the case of "The Golf Instructor" and ends up giving the golf pro some tips. Syndicated. (24 min)

AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1958) Chapter 13 of "The Glenn Miller Story." Andy Mansfield looks at Miller's career during the first few months of World War II. AFRTS. (29 min)

SUSPENSE (11-16-50) "On a Country Road" starring Cary Grant and Cathy Lewis. A husband and wife returning from a picnic run out of gas after hearing about an escaped lunatic armed with a meat cleaver. *This is one of the best remembered Suspense dramas.* AutoLite. CBS. (30 min)

DANNY KAYE SHOW (1-13-45) Danny stars with Eve Arden, Lionel Stander, Harry James and the orchestra. Presenting the "Life Story of Danny Kaye" and the "Lobby Number" from his film, "Up In Arms." Ken Niles announces. Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, CBS. (30 min)

THEATRE FIVE (1960s) "The Imposters" star-

ring Arnold Moss, Leslie Woods, Claudia Morgan. A butler and housekeeper conspire in a murder-for-money plot. Announcer Fred Foy doubles as a police lieutenant in the drama. Syndicated, ABC. (21 min)

STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD (7-30-49) "The Town Constable" starring William Demarest with Norma Jean Nilsson. The community gives a testimonial dinner to the constable who has been elected for the ninth consecutive time. But his daughter is in trouble with her school principal. Dial Soap, CBS. (29 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is **Carl Amari** who this year observes his 20th anniversary as an old-time-radio host, producer, and entrepreneur.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

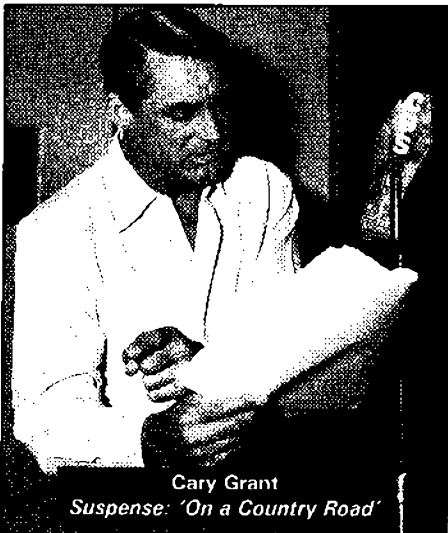
AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1958) Chapter 14 of "The Glenn Miller Story." Host Andy Mansfield covers the band's mid-1942 period and talks with Hal Dickenson and Paula Kelly of the Modernaires. AFRTS. (29 min)

VOYAGE OF THE SCARLET QUEEN (9-18-47) Elliott Lewis stars as Philip Carney, master of the ketch Scarlet Queen, "the proudest ship to plow the seas" who writes "Cleared port of Haiphong, French Indo China, 9 a.m. after unlogged movement of vessel. Reason for move: The Courtship of Anna Mae Lamour." Ed Max is featured as Mr. Gallagher. Sustaining. MBS. (29 min)

PERRY COMO 'FOR A LITTLE WHILE' (9-21-43) Perry sings "I Lost my Sugar in Salt Lake City," "How Deep is the Ocean," and "If You Please." *This is from Perry's first radio series.* Sustaining, CBS. (14 min)

SUPPER CLUB (10-10-44) Perry Como stars with Lloyd Shaffer's orchestra, the Satisfyers and announcer Martin Block. Perry sings "The Lord's Been Good to Me" and joins in a Scotland Yard sketch with comic guests, Dick and Gene, the Wesson Brothers. AFRS rebroadcast. (15 min)

SUPPER CLUB (3-2-50) Perry Como stars in a



Cary Grant

Suspense: 'On a Country Road'

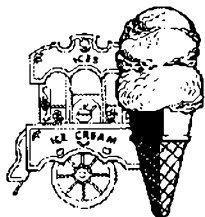
PHOTOQUEST

half-hour edition of the popular series with regulars the Fontaine Sisters, Mitchell Ayers and the orchestra. Perry welcomes guest Kirk Douglas and they appear in a sketch based on Douglas' movie success. "The Champion." Martin Block announces. Chesterfield Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

ADVENTURES OF PHILIP MARLOWE (7-7-51) "A Seaside Sabbatical" stars Gerald Mohr as Raymond Chandler's hard-boiled detective. While taking a break in an amusement park in Long Beach, Marlowe meets a frightened woman. Cast includes Jean Bates, John Dehner, Irene Tedrow, Harry Bartell, Barney Phillips, Lou Krugman. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1958) Chapter 15 of "The Glenn Miller Story." A look at the last recordings (from July, 1942) and the final months of Miller's civilian band. Andy Mansfield hosts. AFRTS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18



AN OLD-TIME-RADIO PICNIC AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL

MEET MR. MC NUTLEY (1950s) Ray Milland stars as an English professor at all-girl Lynnhaven College. Phillis Avery is featured as a Peg, McNutley's wife, with Verna Felton as Dean Bradley. Ray treats the dean to some ice cream. AFRS rebroadcast. (23 min)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (5-29-49) Phil and Alice plan a quiet, family picnic at Miller's Lake after Phil's early morning rehearsal. But Phil invites the whole band to join in the fun. Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley, Robert North as Willy. Rexall, NBC. (29 min)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (2-8-44) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees of Wistful Vista. McGee has a craving for ice cream and decides to make some for himself. Cast includes Shirley Mitchell (Alice Darling), Marlin Hurt (Beulah), Arthur Q. Brian (Doc Gamble), Ransom Sherman (Wellington), Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

ALDRICH FAMILY (10-14-48) Ezra Stone is

Henry Aldrich and Jackie Kelk is Homer Brown. Henry's in charge of a picnic, but as usual is having troubles: where to have the picnic and how to get there? Home Jamison and Kathryn Raht as Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich. Dan Seymour announces; Meredith Willson and his Talking People extoll the virtues of the sponsor's product. Jell-O, NBC. (30 min)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (5-13-44) Hal Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve. Trying to write a speech on child psychology, Gildy finds himself baby-sitting young Craig Bullard, who insists on ice cream for lunch. Cast includes Walter Tetley (Leroy), Earle Ross (Judge Hooker), Lillian Randolph (Birdie), Richard LeGrand (Peavy), Bea Benaderet (Eve Goodwin). AFRS rebroadcast. (26 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-9-54) Jack and the gang, along with the Beverly Hills Beavers, take a day off for their annual picnic at the beach. Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Bob Crosby, Dennis Day, plus Artie Auerbach, Mel Blanc, Shirley Mitchell, Verna Felton, Harry Shearer. AFRS rebroadcast. (26 min)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25

THE HENRY MORGAN SHOW (2-5-47) Comedy, satire and music with Morgan, Arnold Stang as "Gerard," Florence Halop as "Hortense," Charles Irving, the Elm City Four, and Bernie Green and the orchestra. Hortense and Gerard patch things up. Eversharp Razors and Blades, ABC. (29 min) *Read the article about Arnold Stang on page 26.*

AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1858) Chapter 16 of "The Glenn Miller Story." Miller historian Andy Mansfield highlights the beginning of Glenn's Army Air Force Band. AFRTS. (29 min)

INNER SANCTUM (10-23-45) "Corridor of Doom" starring Boris Karloff as a man who has a recurring dream of walking down a corridor of death and finding a door with his name on it. AFRS rebroadcast. (22 min)

AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1958) Chapter 17 of "The Glenn Miller Story" covers the Army Air Force band during 1943-44. Andy Mansfield hosts. AFRTS. (29 min)

CHARLIE CHAN (1940s) "Case of the Talking Doll." A diamond thief rigs up an explosive gift for the oriental detective, created by Earl Derr Biggers. Syndicated. (26 min) *Read the article about the actors who portrayed Charlie Chan in the movies on page 35.*



Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WDCB • 90.9 FM • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM

SEPTEMBER 2001

CHICAGO BANDSTAND

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

HARRY JAMES AND HIS MUSIC MAKERS (10-2-53) Remote broadcast from Chicago's "beautiful Aragon Ballroom on the North Side" featuring Buddy Rich on drums. Selections include "September Song," "Jackpot Blues," "No Other Love," and "September in the Rain." Bob Grant announces. Sustaining. WBBM/CBS. (29 min)

CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1-12-46) *Excerpt.* Remote broadcast from the College Inn of the Hotel Sherman in Chicago. Cab sings "Minnie the Moocher" and "St. Louis Blues." Everett Clark announces. Sustaining. CBS. (11 min)

JIMMY FEATHERSTONE AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1950) *Excerpt.* Remote broadcast from the Oh Henry Ballroom in Willow Springs, southwest of Chicago. Vocals by Peggy Murdoch and Jimmy Featherstone. Selections include "Dream Awhile," "Josephine," "So Long, Sally." Bill Oliver announces. Sustaining. WGN. (11 min)

BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA (2-10-36) *Excerpt.* Remote broadcast from the Joseph Urban room of the Congress Hotel in

Chicago. Tunes include "Remember," "It's Great to Be in Love Again" and "I Want to Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter." Vocals by Helen Ward. Sustaining. NBC. (10 min)

MUSIC FOR MODERNS (8-6-52) *Excerpt.* Duke

Ellington and his orchestra in a remote broadcast from the Blue Note, Madison near Dearborn in downtown Chicago. Music includes "Take the 'A' Train," "Caravan," "Jam with Sam." Vocals



Duke Ellington

by Betty Roche and Ray Nance. Mark Rogers announces. Sustaining. NBC. (13 min)

BENNY STRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA (1950) Remote broadcast from the "air conditioned Trianon Ballroom" on Chicago's South Side. Benny, known as "the man who sings the old songs" presents "Tessie, Stop Teasin' Me," "All My Love," "That Old Gang of Mine," "Thinking of You," "Who's Your Little Whosis" and "Deep Purple." Vocals by Benny and Kathy Owens. Sustaining. WBBM. (30 min)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST is big band historian Karl Pearson who will talk about the bands and the places they played in the Chicago area. As usual, he'll also have a generous helping of clips and excerpts from vintage broadcasts.

—PLUS—

AMERICA'S POPULAR MUSIC (1958) Chapter 18 is the concluding chapter of "The Glenn Miller Story" hosted by Miller historian Andy Mansfield who interviews Don Haynes, Glenn's business manager in civilian life and chief aid in the Air Force. AFRTS. (29 min)

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OLD TIME RADIO *ITALIANO* STYLE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

YOU ARE THERE (4-11-48) "The Last Day of Pompeii." It's August 26, 79 AD. Mt. Vesuvius is about to erupt and newsman Jackson Beck reports: "It's Navy Day in Pompeii. The mighty Roman fleet, fresh from its recent Mediterranean maneuvers is anchored... in the Bay of Naples and every navy man who could

get liberty is jam-packed into this amphitheater. Correspondents include Ken Roberts, Michael Fitzmaurice, Cameron Blake, John Daly, Harry Marvel. Sustaining, AFRS/CBS. (29 min)

LIFE WITH LUIGI (1940s) J. Carrol Naish stars as Luigi Basco with Alan Reed (Pasquale), Mary Shipp (Miss Spaulding), Hans Conried (Schulz), Joe Forte (Horowitz), Ken Peters (Olsen) and Jody Gilbert (Rosa). Luigi's cousin Mario from Italy is going to stop in Chicago on his way to California. AFRS rebroadcast. (25 min)

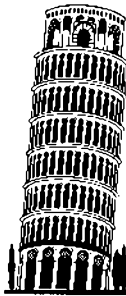
CAVALCADE OF AMERICA (10-12-42) "Admiral of the Ocean Seas." Orson Welles narrates a story about Italy's Christopher Columbus and his discovery of America in 1492. Cast features Karl Swenson as Columbus. DuPont, NBC. (29 min)

SONGS BY SINATRA (11-6-46) Frank Sinatra welcomes guest Jimmy Durante as the two Italian buddies get together for music and comedy with Andre Previn, Pied Pipers, Axel Stordahl and the orchestra. Frankie sings "My Sugar is So Refined" and "All the Things You Are." The Schnozz belts out "So I Ups to Him." Old Gold Cigarettes, CBS. (27 min)

NBC THEATRE (1950s) "A Bell for Adano" starring Frederic March with Myron McCormick and Everett Sloane in this radio version of John Hersey's story about the American occupation of a small village in Italy during World War II. A U.S. major from the Bronx tries to restore community life to the town of Adano when he learns that the town's beloved 200 year old bell was taken by Mussolini to make rifle barrels. Sustaining, NBC. (31 min & 20 min)

CBS RADIO WORKSHOP (6-9-57) "Seven Hills of Rome." "A personality sketch of one of the world's great capitol, The Eternal City of Rome and of its seemingly indestructible citizenry, the Romans." Sustaining, CBS. (23 min)

FIRST NIGHTER (3-10-49) "No Greater Need" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule in a drama from the "Little Theatre off Times Square." After the war, an American doctor returns to the port of Salerno, Italy to see that a shipment of streptomycin has arrived safely. Campana's Italian Balm, CBS. (27 min)



FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (9-13-37) Jim and Marian Jordan star. As the theatrical season opens in Wistful Vista, McGee — as author, director, producer and actor — hopes to present a drama set in ancient Rome. Cast includes Bill Thompson, Harold Peary, Hugh Studebaker, Isabel Randolph, Harlow Wilcox, Ted Weems and the orchestra with singer Perry Como. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30 min)

READER'S DIGEST RADIO EDITION (12-11-47) "Giuseppe and the Sergeant" stars Wayne Morris in a touching story of heroism and sacrifice based on a real incident in Italy during WW II. Everett Sloane is Giuseppe. Les Tremayne is host while Tom Shirley announces. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (30 min)

BIG CITY SERENADE (1953) Offering a musical tour of the famous city of Florence, Italy are singer Kyle Kimbrough, narrator Bill Griskey, and Joesh Gallicchio and the orchestra. Sustaining, NBC. (29 min)

MARCONI MEMORIAL (7-20-37) On the day of his death, at the age of 63, the Mutual Broadcasting System pays tribute to Guglielmo Marconi, "the great Italian inventor and scientist known as 'the Father of Radio'." Charles Benford narrates. Sustaining, WOR/MBS. (14 min)

LIFE WITH LUIGI (3-27-49) J. Carrol Naish stars as Luigi Basco. It's Springtime in Chicago and Luigi has Spring Fever! He has a date but, because he doesn't know how to dance, signs up for a crash course at Arthur Murray's Dance Studio. Regulars include Alan Reed, Hans Conried, Mary Shipp. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

THIRD MAN (1952) "See Naples and Live" starring Orson Welles as Harry Lime, the Third Man. In Italy, Lime is after a valuable emerald locket worn by a rich American traveler. Zither music by Anton Karas. Syndicated. (27 min)

NOTE— Ken Alexander hosts these two programs while Chuck Schaden and a group of *Those Were The Days* listeners are vacationing in Italy.



Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WDCB • 90.9 FM • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM

SEPTEMBER 2001

OLD TIME RADIO TAKES THE PLEDGE

During these two programs you'll be asked to join The Friends of WDCB, a special support group of listeners committed to enriching the public radio station from College of DuPage.

Your pledge of support is tax deductible and will help keep Those Were The Days and all the other fine programs coming your way on 90.9 FM.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-11-47) Jack and the gang are in Chicago while Jack is on stage for eight shows a day at the Chicago Theatre. Broadcast features Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Dennis Day, Artie Auerbach (Mr. Kitzel), the Sportsmen Quartet, and guest Marjorie Reynolds (who is also appearing at the Chicago Theatre). Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

SUSPENSE (2-14-60) "Sorry, Wrong Number" starring Agnes Moorehead in her eighth and final appearance in the classic *Suspense* drama by Lucille Fletcher. An invalid woman accidentally hears a conversation of death. Participating sponsors, CBS. (24 min)

LUX RADIO THEATRE (10-28-40) "Strike Up the Band" starring Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney in the radio version of their 1940 MGM film musical. Rooney is the leader of his high school band hoping to compete in Paul Whiteman's nationwide radio contest. John Scott Trotter portrays Whiteman. This is Judy and Mickey's first appearance on the *Lux Radio Theatre*. Lux Soap, CBS. (21 min & 19 min & 18 min)

THE BICKERSONS (3-16-47) Don Ameche and Frances Langford star as John and Blanche Bickerson. John's snoring keeps Blanche from sleeping. (10 min)

EDGAR BERGEN SHOW (6-26-54) Edgar and Charlie McCarthy reflect on 16 years on the air. Guest Nelson Eddy takes them back through time to hear clips from previous broadcasts featuring Rudy Vallee, W. C. Fields, John Barrymore, Don Ameche, Jimmy Stewart, Mortimer Snerd, and Marilyn Monroe. Lanolin Plus, CBS. (30 min)

THE WHISTLER (4-4-46) "Panic." A woman and her lover kill her husband, put his body in a steamer trunk and plan to dump it overboard at sea. Elliott Lewis stars. Signal Oil, CBS. (29 min)

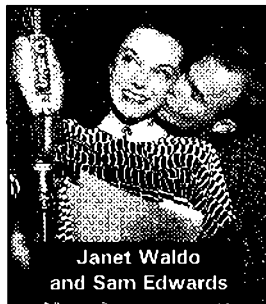
SPEAKING OF RADIO (2-19-75) Janet Waldo and Sam Edwards talk about their roles of Corliss and Dexter on the *Meet Corliss Archer* series and their broadcast careers in a conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded in Encino, California. (24 min & 23 min)

MEET CORLISS ARCHER (4-6-47)

Janet Waldo stars as Corliss Archer with Sam Edwards as Dexter Franklin. Corliss wants to enter a department store's "Sweetheart of the Year" beauty contest. Fred Shields and Irene Tedrow appear as Mr. and Mrs. Archer. Campbell Soups, CBS. (29 min)

LIGHTS OUT (8-3-43) "Murder Castle" starring Joe Kearns with Mercedes McCambridge. Women who answer help wanted ads enter a mysterious castle and are never heard from again. Arch Oboler hosts. Ironized Yeast, CBS. (29 min)

MY FRIEND IRMA (4-27-54) Marie Wilson stars as Irma Peterson, with Mary Shipp as Kay, Alan Reed as Irma's boss Mr. Clyde. Irma decides to save Mr. Clyde's marriage when she learns that his wife wants a divorce. Bobbi Home Permanent. CBS. (28 min)



Janet Waldo
and Sam Edwards

"When Radio Was" -- WBBM-AM 780

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

August, 2001 Schedule

WED/8-1	Tales of Texas Rangers (7-29-50) <i>Trigger Men</i> ; Great Gildersleeve (4-9-47) Pt 1
THU/8-2	Great Gildersleeve Pt 2; Rocky Fortune (2-9-54) <i>Social Director</i> Frank Sinatra
FRI/8-3	Suspense (7-13-44) <i>Beast Must Die</i> ; Johnny Dollar (1-9-56) <i>Todd Matter</i> Pt 1/5
MON/8-6	The Saint (9-10-50) <i>Horrible Hamburger</i> ; Jack Benny (10 17-48) Pt 1
TUES/8-7	Jack Benny <i>Sorry, Wrong Number</i> Pt 2; Nick Carter (8-2-43) <i>Murder in the Crypt</i>
WED/8-8	Gunsmoke (9-20-52) <i>Drop Dead</i> ; Our Miss Brooks (7-24-49) <i>Pensacola Popovers</i> Pt 1
THU/8-9	Our Miss Brooks Pt 2; Philo Vance (7-20-48) <i>Merry Murder Case</i> Jackson Beck
FRI/8-10	The Shadow (1-26-41) <i>Ghost of Caleb MacKenzie</i> ; Johnny Dollar (1-10 56) Pt 2/5
MON/8-13	Nightbeat (5-15-50) <i>Night Watchman</i> ; Phil Harris-Alice Faye (1-2-49) <i>Drafted</i> Pt 1
TUES/8-14	Phil Harris-Alice Faye Pt 2; Cavalcade of America (8-7-44) <i>Walk in the Sun</i>
WED/8-15	Richard Diamond (7-2-49) <i>Hat and No Body</i> ; Fibber McGee & Molly (3-10-42) Pt 1
THU/8-16	Fibber McGee & Molly <i>Fibber's Footstool</i> Pt 2; Dragnet (4-3-52) <i>The Big Streetcar</i>
FRI/8-17	Suspense (7-20-44) <i>Of Maestro and Men</i> P. Lorre; Johnny Dollar (1-11-56) Pt 3/5
MON/8-20	Gangbusters (1940s) <i>Rumbold Vault Robbery</i> ; Burns & Allen (11-27-47) Pt 1
TUE/8-21	Burns & Allen <i>French Singer</i> Pt 2; Third Man (1952) <i>The Swindle</i> Orson Welles
WED/8-22	Lone Ranger (1-21-49) <i>Black Box</i> ; Abbott & Costello (1-6-44) Judy Canova guest Pt 1
THU/8-23	Abbott & Costello Pt 2; Boston Blackie (9-10-46) <i>Marked for Murder</i> Richard Kollmar
FRI/8-24	The Shadow (2-23-41) <i>Chess Club Murders</i> ; Johnny Dollar (1-12-56) Pt 4/5
MON/8-27	Green Hornet (6-21-41) <i>Walkout for Profit</i> ; My Favorite Husband (10-23-48) Pt 1
TUE/8-28	My Favorite Husband <i>Quiz Show</i> Pt 2; The Falcon (7-24-52) <i>Broken Key</i> Les Damon
WED/8-29	Have Gun, Will Travel (11-30-58) <i>Food to Wickenburg</i> ; Fred Allen (3-10-46) Pt 1
THU/8-30	Fred Allen Guest Carmen Miranda Pt 2; Michael Shayne Detective (11-12-46) <i>The Party</i>
FRI/8-31	Suspense (7-27-44) <i>Black Shawl</i> Maureen O'Sullivan; Johnny Dollar (1-13-56) Pt 5/5

September, 2001 Schedule

MON/9-3	Richard Diamond (9-24-49) <i>\$200,000 Loot</i> ; Duffy's Tavern (2-22 44) Pt 1
TUE/9-4	Duffy's Tavern Guest Phil Baker Pt 2; The Whistler (10-2-44) <i>Not If I Kill you First</i>
WED/9-5	Dimension X (5-6-50) <i>Knock</i> ; Charlie McCarthy (10-21-45) Guest Fred Allen Pt 1
THU/9-6	Charlie McCarthy Pt 2; Philo Vance (6-14-49) <i>Combination Murder Case</i>
FRI/9-7	The Shadow (3-16-41) <i>Ghost Walks Again</i> ; Beulah Show (2-3-54) <i>Beulah the Writer</i>
MON/9-10	Gunsmoke (9-27-52) <i>The Railroad</i> ; Jack Benny (10-24-48) Ronald Colman Pt 1
TUE/9-11	Jack Benny Pt 2; I Was a Communist for the FBI (2-4-53) <i>The Sleeper</i> Dana Andrews
WED/9-12	Escape (10-22-47) <i>Fall of the House of Usher</i> ; Father Knows Best (1-12-50) Pt 1
THU/9-13	Father Knows Best <i>Card Game</i> Pt 2; Green Hornet (7-5-41) <i>Murder Across the Board</i>
FRI/9-14	Suspense (8-31-44) <i>Black Path of Fear</i> ; Sgt. Preston (9-10-43) <i>The Tell-Tale Bullet</i>
MON/9-17	Philip Marlowe (1-15-49) <i>Black Halo</i> ; Burns & Allen (5-9-46) Guest Harpo Marx Pt 1
TUE/9-18	Burns & Allen Pt 2; Box Thirteen (5-1-49) <i>Much too Lucky</i> Alan Ladd
WED/9-19	Gangbusters (1940s) <i>Park Avenue Pifferers</i> ; Baby Snooks (5-1-51) <i>Report Card</i> Pt 1
THU/9-20	Baby Snooks Pt 2; This is Your FBI (12-15-50) <i>Jungle Killer</i>
FRI/9-21	The Shadow (11-8-42) <i>The Wailing Corpse</i> ; The Unexpected (5-30-48) <i>The Cripple</i>
MON/9-24	Dragnet (4-10-52) <i>The Big Show</i> ; Abbott & Costello (12-16-43) Guest Lynn Bari Pt 1
TUE/9-25	Abbott & Costello Pt 2; Nick Carter, Master Detective (9-27-43) <i>The Glass Coffin</i>
WED/9-26	Lone Ranger (1-24 49) <i>Matilda's Kittens</i> ; Fibber McGee & Molly (3-24-42) Pt 1
THU/9-27	Fibber McGee & Molly <i>Fibber's Song</i> Pt 2; Tales of Texas Rangers (8-5-50) <i>Quick Silver</i>
FRI/9-28	Suspense (9-7-44) <i>Voyage Through Darkness</i> ; Couple Next Door (1-2-58) <i>Law Suit</i>

SMALL WONDER

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

One of the pleasures of listening to recordings of radio broadcasts is recognizing the voices of the actors and actresses, and it isn't just the distinctive sounds emanating from the throats of William Conrad, Jack Webb, Orson Welles, and other major figures that turn on the light bulb in our heads.

Supporting players such as John Brown, Elvia Allman, Howard McNear and Bea Benadret each possessed a timbre that made their lines particularly amusing.

Arnold Stang stood apart from many of his contemporaries because his nasally voice often induced laughter regardless of what he had to say.

Stang started whining on September 28, 1925 in Chelsea, Massachusetts at the Stang home and nine years later decided on his own to use his voice for a living. After offering his services by mail to the producers of *Let's Pretend*, Stang traveled alone on a bus to New York for an audition at which he rendered Poe's "The Raven"

Clair Schulz is a free-lance writer, movie historian and collector from Trevor, Wisconsin.

in a sing-song fashion. His sincerity impressed the sponsors who hired him more for his spunk and eagerness to please than for his dramatic ability.



Arnold Stang

PHOTOFEST

Even as a youth Stang's bright eyes and alert expression stamped him as a willing and capable performer. His glasses, which sometimes gave him the appearance of an owl, and the shape of his head with a weak chin, coupled with his small stature molded him into the prototype of what people would decades

later call a nerd.

As a child actor Stang's schedule was quite hectic. Monday through Friday he attended school in Massachusetts, then he acted on *Let's Pretend* on Saturdays and on *The Horn and Hardart Children's Hour* and *The American Pageant of Youth* on Sundays.

During the summer of 1942 on a replacement show for *The Jack Benny Program* he appeared as Bobby Shuttleworth, nephew to *The Remarkable Miss Tuttle* played by Edna Mae Oliver.

As Stang moved through adolescence his slight build and bookish appearance led to roles on Broadway and in films that typed

him as "lead's best friend" such as the play *All in Favor* and the MGM musical *Seven Days' Leave*. In the latter production he leaned on the shoulder of pal Victor Mature, who befriended the teenager by protecting him from unsavory Hollywood personalities and offering the hospitality of his home.

Parts in *My Sister Eileen* (1942) and the Bob Hope picture *They Got Me Covered* (1943) unveiled glimpses of a flip side to the mild-mannered square his appearance suggested. Under the Clark Kent demeanor of this apparent pipsqueak beat the heart of a feisty gagster who might rip open his shirt at any time to reveal an S for Smart aleck.

Although Stang had appeared on the air with Fanny Brice and Al Jolson and had a featured role on *The Goldbergs* as kvetch Seymour Fingergood, it was his work with Milton Berle and Henry Morgan for which he is best known and which paved the way for his later success on television.

On *The Milton Berle Show* Stang, like actor Jack Albertson and announcer Frank Gallop, took turns excoriating the star. Arnold frequently appeared twice or three times per program with only a few lines to speak, but he milked every word for maximum laughter.

In the forum section during which Berle solicited questions about everything from literature to agriculture, Stang provoked chortles as soon as he gave his name as Andre Kostelanez, Guy Lombardo, Jersey City, Oxydol Sparkle, or Lady Esther (which he had changed from a boy's name, Lady Mendel). All Berle had to do was ask a question and Stang would build a fortress of paranoia which wouldn't allow Milton to get a word in edgewise, usually



Arnold Stang and Henry Morgan

PHOTOEST

culminating in Arnold skewering his interviewer with a putdown like "Shut up, you homewrecker!" or "Drop dead!" Stang really threw his body into these tirades, prompting Berle on one show to say, "Young man, don't jump at me!"

During the burlesque of familiar songs like "Dixieland" and "Camptown Races" sung by Berle, Stang tickled the audience just by tossing in a dispassionate "away" or "hoo-hah" as a refrain.

In the domestic sketches he played Berle's son junior as an insult comedian who regularly accused his father of stealing jokes and laying eggs. Told to go to bed, Junior prepared the way for his temper tantrums by asking a series of questions ("Are you ready" Arc you set? Arc you tuned in?) before launching into a screaming fit that made father cry uncle.

Stang's contributions to the Berle program, though brief, were significant when one compares those shows with the ones in which Billy Sands took his place. The

SMALL WONDER

spontaneous laughter Arnold generated is missing from the later shows as the emphasis shifted to the banter between Berle and Gallop or Albertson.

Although Arnold proved himself to be surefire chucklebait with Berle, he was usually singing the same note and a pretty shrill one at that. On *The Henry Morgan Show* the writers gave him a chance to loosen his ever-present bow tie now and then so he could slip out of the straitjacket of typecasting.

On one program in the fall of 1946, for example, he played a youngster razzing Morgan, an angry husband complaining about his wife's spending habits, and a thug in a Jack Armstrong parody. On another show he fit the bill as a tired Frank Sinatra wheeze at the old jokes home. He also portrayed the gravelly-voiced Mr. Worcestershire, the leader of mutineers in "Blubber," a spoof of sea epics, then concluded the skit by providing the end credit "at the Henry Morgan Theatre of Coming Attractions" in his Milquetoast voice.

In semi-regular sketches Stang as Gerard conducted quasi-romantic telephone chatter with girlfriend Hortense in New Yorkese with mixed results. Whether anybody in or out of the Bronx talked like that is not important. There was a certain charm about these two maladroit lovers, and their peculiar signature like, "I acquiesce," became, for a short time, the end way to end phone calls.

The writers soon recognized Stang's ability to load a phrase with maximum import and began handing him bigger parts. Sometimes he only had to repeat a line and slather it with sarcasm to produce guffaws. On a program in which Morgan planned to use characteristics borrowed from other comedians like Jack Benny, Arnold merely reiterated "From now on



Arnold Stang

PHOTOFEST

he's a tightwad" and "from now on we're going to pretend my mother hates him" and the point was driven home with perfection.

Stang had few rivals in getting laughs out of the minimum number of words. In a satire of Swan soap commercials, after various actors had chimed in with the enthusiastic phrases of praise "Oh, yeah!" "Yes, sir!" "And how!," Stang's "Hoo-hah" capped the routine nicely. Ditto for the buildup preceding a movie parody:

Announcer: "You were horrified when you saw *The Spiral Staircase*. Your blood curdled when you saw *The Dark Mirror*. You'll get sick to your stomach when you see...

Stang: "...*The Dirty Kitchen*."

By June of 1947 his small but integral contributions became such an eagerly-awaited part of the program that just his first words for one show, "Say please," drew giggles and applause, causing Morgan to stop the proceedings and comment, "You know, that's probably the only time in radio a line like that ever got applause." Later that year, when dialogue between the Gerard character and Henry as Hank be-

came a regular feature, just the mention of Gerard's name produced a big hand which Morgan greeted with "Please don't do that. I can't pay him a cent more."

During these conversations Gerard acted as laconic as a clam and as energized as a sloth. His favorite response to anything was a noncommittal "eh" and he would certainly have gone broke if paid by the word. A typical exchange:

Hank: "What's new?"

Gerard: "Same old thing."

Hank: "How's the wife?"

Gerard: "Same old thing."

Hank: "How do you like sunny California?"

Gerard: "What's not to like?"

Hank: "Like it, huh?"

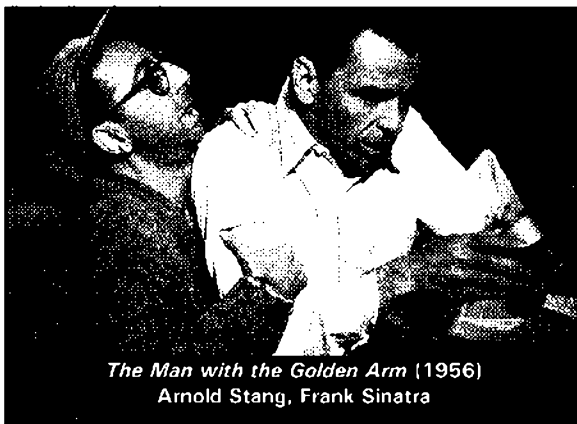
Gerard: "What's to like?"

When Morgan encouraged him to loosen his starched collar and relax a bit, Gerard confessed that he did once.

Hank: "So?"

Gerard: "So I froze my neck."

However, impassive Gerard was not bereft of sentiment. For Mother's Day in 1950 he offered these words on a greeting card: "Congratulations, dearest mother,



The Man with the Golden Arm (1956)
Arnold Stang, Frank Sinatra

PHOTO151

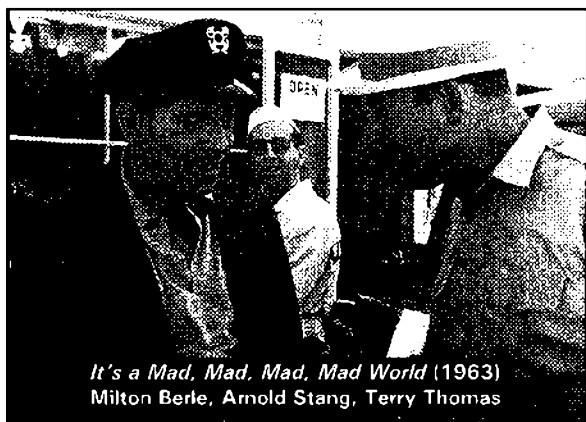
You're not my father, / You're the other."

Although Gerard became his most famous role on *The Henry Morgan Show*, Stang had ample opportunity to try on different hats and dialects with characters like pompous southern Senator Dribble, avaricious baseball player Abc Snake who endorsed products at the drop of a box top, wacky scientist Willie Van Morgan, and bellicose Britisher Harold Hotchkiss who, as a contestant on a quiz program, answered questions with a gruff, "They got it, never you mind how."

By playing mild-mannered and assertive types on the same show Stang demonstrated a range that surprised some listeners and perhaps astonished others when he would make the transition almost in mid-

sentence. One night after almost sleeping through Morgan's lecture about manners and responding in a nonchalant way, he flared up when Henry suggested that he will need to practice such refinements "if you go to formal dinner parties." "If-If," an indignant Gerard sputtered. "If my grandmother had tubes, she'd be a radio!"

Stang, who stayed with Henry until the show left the



It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World (1963)
Milton Berle, Arnold Stang, Terry Thomas

PHOTOFEET

SMALL WONDER

air in 1950, first appeared on television in 1949 in a juvenile *Helzapoppin* called *School House* before joining his friend on Henry Morgan's *Great Talent Hunt* in 1951. Arnold supported Eddie Maychoff as millionaire Winfield Dill on *Doc Corkle*, a comedy series that ran for just three weeks on

NBC in October 1952. He also appeared occasionally as a panelist on the game show *The Name is the Same*.

His chief television experience during the 1950s came as a stagehand on *The Milton Berle Show* who harassed both from the wings and from under Uncle Miltie's chin. He also demonstrated his talent as a screen actor in 1956 as Sparrow, a dull-witted but loyal friend to *The Man with the Golden Arm* (Frank Sinatra).

After spicing up the programs of Berle, Danny Thomas, Jackie Gleason, Red Skelton, Bob Hope, and Ed Sullivan with bits and pieces, he finally earned a starring role in 1961-61 in *Top Cat*, an animated ABC series.

The ungainly trio of Arnold Stang, Maurice Gosfield, and Marvin Kaplan may never have succeeded in a situation comedy, but their voices seemed just right as the funny felines perpetually complicating the life of Officer Dribble (Allan Jenkins).

During the 1964-65 season Stang again made the most of a small role by infusing chef Stanley Stubbs with enough quirks to irritate Cdr. Roger Adrian (Edward Andrews) on *Broadside*.

In 1965 he played *Second Fiddle* to a



PHOTOFEST

Steel Guitar, although he received top billing above ex-Bowery Boys Huntz Hall and Leo Gorcey and numerous country-western stars. Other film appearances included parts in *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963), *Skiddo* (1968), *Hello Down There* (1969), and *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight* (1973).

Later on television Stang could be seen in the syndicated series *Tales from the Darkside* and as pitchman for Chunky candy and for other products. He could still be heard on *The CBS Radio Mystery Theatre* in the 1970s, and his love for radio remains undiminished today as he continues to participate in recreations of vintage shows.

Like the weakling in the Charles Atlas ads who built himself up into a powerhouse, Arnold Stang packs a wallop in his delivery that has been a knockout with listeners and viewers. Pounded for pound, line for line, laugh for laugh, he has proven to be a snappy crowd-pleaser who should never have to wonder why almost everybody down here likes him. ■

NOTE—Tune in TWTD August 25 to hear Arnold Stang on the Henry Morgan Show.

BOZO'S CIRCUS

A Custard Pie, Some Seltzer, and Very Big Shoes

BY WAYNE KLATT

A whistle blows, a strident voice calls out "Bozo's Circus is on the air!" and, pow!, Bozo gets another pie in the kisser as children squeal with laughter. Let's face it, whether as a parent or a child, the show was probably a part of your life. But, as they say, those were the days...

Bozo's antics date from when Mable Normand thought of tossing a pie at someone in an early Mack Sennett one-reeler, and slapstick dates at least from the comedies of ancient Rome but only time will tell whether anything will replace Bozo with his big drum and the Graaaaannd Prizzzzzzze Gaaaame.

Bozo was not "born" in Chicago, but nowhere was he more popular than in the Windy City. In fact, when he was created no one knew what he looked like — he was just a voice. Capital Records vice president Alan Livingstone in 1946 thought of

producing records that would accompany read-aloud books such as "Bozo Under the Sea." He was an impish innocent unreachable by maturity.

Needing an embodiment for commercials and promotional events, he hired character actor Larry Harmon, who later would be helping Stan Laurel with some projects before the great comedian's death in 1965. Forget that Livingstone was already using the name, Harmon claimed he, himself, chose "Bozo" from a mention in a book on clown history of a



WGN-TV

gypsy humorist names Bozowski.

Harmon was free to design his own clown costume for a Paramount Pictures production shown on KTLA-TV in Los Angeles. He went for the outrageous, with impossibly red-orange hair (dyed yak hair from Tibet) sprouting like bushes from an otherwise bald white head, and the now-familiar white ruff, white gloves, and shoes large enough to give him balance in a hurricane.

Harmon may not have been an immor-

Wayne Klatt is an editor at the City News Service of the Chicago Tribune and a free-lance writer.

BOZO'S CIRCUS

tal clown, but he was a shrewd businessman. He bought the rights to the Bozo character in 1955, produced some inexpensive cartoons about him, and began selling franchises to local television stations. Most stations, lets say in Phoenix and Minnesota, just put together a cardboard set and persuaded some staff member to climb into a similar costume and act silly between Bozo and other cartoons.

But Chicago — as birthplace of Walt Disney, and where L. Frank Baum created the Wizard of Oz characters — has always embraced fantasy. The local Bozo show started as just a half hour program much like the others in 1959. But when WGN-TV moved to its own studio in 1961 the staff reconceived the show as an extravaganza of games, circus acts, and clown shenanigans, the culmination of all of Chicago-produced children's programming.

When it debuted on September 11 of that year, the hour-long *Bozo's Circus* had a 16-piece band, its own prop room (complete with gorilla costume), and an unusually large space and elaborate set for a local children's program. Yet all that would have fallen flat if the station didn't have someone who could maintain the zaniness and energy for show after show.

The right person had come along, 32-year-old Bob Lewis Bell, a gentle man who had been playing various characters for three years on the Wally Phillips show. When the Bozo show was confined to a half hour, Bozo/Bell had to carry on the live portions by himself. But with the expanded format he seems to have felt invigorated in the blue baggies and talking in a comic voice with various performers and guests in WGN's Studio One across from Lane Technical High School's football stadium.

Nationwide, a total of 72 Bozos were

romping around, including future weatherman Willard Scott in Washington, D. C., and at least 110 other stations were showing just Bozo cartoons. Harmon said there eventually were Bozo shows in at least 39 other countries. But none of the carrot-topped clowns may have been able to project Bell's warmth and dish out humor at the child's own level.

"Every kid ran home at noon, got a peanut butter sandwich and a bowl of soup, watched the show and then got back to school," said longtime show producer Allen Hall.

The show got a big boost — in more ways than one — when Ned Locke signed on as the ringmaster in 1961. The full-figured man began acting in radio when he was nine and later received encouragement from Ethel Barrymore. In the early 1950s Locke, a pilot and airplane enthusiast, starred in radio's *Uncle Ned's Squadron* on NBC and went on to be the announcer on ABC-TV's *Super Circus*.

Locke had a knack for relating to kids in an adult way, and he proved an excellent straight man for the clownanigans. He also conducted the Grand Prize Game, in which the children tried to toss a Ping-Pong ball in each of six buckets arranged in a line. The winner received shiny silver dollars and a new bike for himself and his or her "partner," chosen at random from a sea of postcards children had sent in.

Ray Rayner came on as Oliver O. Oliver, and he also was given his own morning cartoon and puppet show from 1962 to 1980. As a pilot in World War II, Rayner was shot down over France and taken prisoner. His first acting was in the role of a cold-hearted killer in a POW camp production of *The Petrified Forest*. But now he was spending much of his life wiping "custard" from his face. Forget the thought of anything delicious; the pies were made of shaving cream so they wouldn't be too heavy.



WGN TV

A longer-running character was Wizzo, also known as magician Marshall Brodein, who stayed on as long as the one-hour format remained.

The one thing *Bozo's Circus* lacked was a sympathetic character who was more sensible than Bozo and less sensible than Ringmaster Ned, and that spot was filled in 1969 when congenial Roy Brown took over as Cookie, replacing a temporary character, show producer Don Sandberg, done up as Sandy the Tramp.

Brown had been a puppeteer for *Garfield Goose* and created some of the characters on the show. Brown also gave voice to the Cuddly Duddly dog on *Ray Rayner and Friends*. On the side, he was sending Bozo "scripts" to Sandberg. Seeing that Brown might fit right in, Sandberg put him on the air as his only audition. There was instant feedback from the giggly audience, since Cookie's character was believable and made the youngsters eager to see what would happen next between him and Bozo or Ringmaster Ned.

Since the bleachers could hold only 220

packed adults and children, the waiting list to see *Bozo's Circus* live grew to ten years. Couples sent away for tickets even before their first child was born, and Oprah Winfrey listed them as among the hottest tickets anywhere. The lucky children not only got to see goofiness happening in front of them, they had a chance of being picked by an on-screen "magic arrow" as a contestant for the Grand Prize Game. They also could see the workings of a broadcast station, and several went on to careers in radio and television.

Parents who brought their children to the studio on Addison Street near Western Avenue fondly recalled running home to catch the

program when they were young, and one said he had long considered Bozo as "my special friend" when he was a boy. And the show was not just for the young. We know from journalist/historian Rick Kogan that when taverns kept Channel 9 on at noon a patron might wager on whether the kid made Bucket Number Six.

But Ned Locke was getting tired, and he stepped down in 1976. Too bad he couldn't stay on for two more years, because in 1978 Chicago's version of Bozo was beamed up to a satellite as WGN became one of the few superstations in the country. Locke's place was taken over by Frazier Thomas and Garfield Goose, but Thomas lacked the robustness to serve as a counterweight to Bozo.

By then the name of the clown had become so much a part of the language that most people assumed it was generic. "It irks me when people use the characters's name in a demeaning way," Harmon said about a Bozo reference that cropped up in a presidential race. "It's like attacking mother and apple pie, for heaven's sake."

BOZO'S CIRCUS

But through retirement and format changes, the show was losing a little of its magic. In 1980, the show stopped live broadcasts and, retitled *The Bozo Show*, aired at 8 a.m. The explanation was that fewer children were coming home from school for lunch.

Rayner retired after nine years in 1981 and moved to New Mexico. What had it been like for him? He estimated that he was hit by 800 pies, and either fired off or was squirted by 700 bottles of seltzer.

Also in 1981, the show was expanded to an hour and a half now that all the other Bozo shows were off the air. Three years later, Bob Bell retired and Joey D'Auria took over the white greasepaint and fright wig after a national search.

D'Auria, a graduate of the American Academy of the Dramatic Arts in New York, had done some stand-up work in Los Angeles and was about to take a job as a neighbor in a sitcom when he heard about the opening. But he hung out at the Variety Arts Center, a club and restaurant featuring aging comedians from burlesque and vaudeville, and that kind of viscera; comedy appealed to him. D'Auria explained that he wasn't a clown, just an actor in a clown suit "exploring the artistic side of low comedy."

Frazier Thomas passed away in 1985, and no one replaced him. Two years later, the show was cut back to an hour and the band, which had dwindled to three musicians, was replaced by one man with a synthesizer.

In 1994 the show was expanded to two hours and became *Bozo's Super Sunday Circus* airing once a week at 8 a.m. That freed the weekday time slot for a morning news show. The next year, the Super Sunday became less super when the production was cut to one hour. Also in 1995

Cookie — the character, and the man — retired because of heart problems at the age of 62. He was one of only 19 clowns ever honored in the Clown Hall of Fame near Milwaukee.

In 1997 the show was moved to 7 a.m. In terms of ratings, it was a little like being buried alive. And yet the spirit lived on, with Rusty Furich as Eric the handyman and music director "Professor Andy" Mitran playing off D'Auria.

But WGN general manager John Vitanovec last spring decided to pull the plug. The audience at the time was estimated at 14,746 children between the ages of 2 and 11. The show was losing money because of high production costs and competition from Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel. Left unsaid was that the Bozo show impeded the station's programming for teenagers and young adults.

One might say the show was too slow for children addicted to the fleeting images on current television fare, and a squirt of seltzer was less stirring than drawn-in rays from a superhero's fist, but how long will these shows be remembered?

At the time Harmon made the cancellation announcement for Vitanovec in March, the station was just airing reruns, anyway.

A final, prime-time special was taped in June of this year for airing on July 14. Reruns of *The Bozo Super Sunday Show* will continue airing until August 26, when the longest running, locally produced children's show in American history leaves the air.

At the end, even Joey D'Auria called the Bozo show "a bit of a dinosaur."

But you know how children love dinosaurs. ■

NOTE - Memorabilia and props from Bozo's Circus are part of the current long-running exhibit, Puppets, Pies and Prizes, at Chicago's Museum of Broadcast Communications.

The Men who Played Charlie Chan

BY RANDALL G. MIELKE

"Hollywood portrayal of Chinese detective like fortune cookie; to find truth, one must get past outer shell and look inside."

Although the character of Charlie Chan never said this line in any of the 49 films that Hollywood made, it is the type of pithy statement that the Oriental sleuth might have said; one that is true, a bit disjointed, yet pertinent to the subject.

The fact is that none of the actors portraying Charlie Chan in the films made from 1926 to 1949 were Chinese.

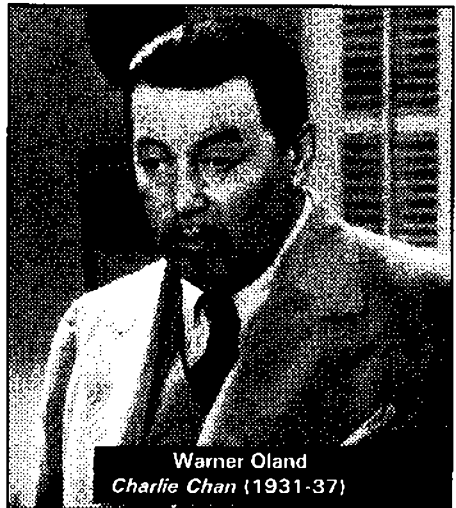
The Chinese detective created by Ohio-born writer Earl Derr Biggers actually began his career in a Biggers novel. Biggers was vacationing in Honolulu in 1919 and read a newspaper article about the exploits of a Chinese detective named Chang Apana. Biggers had never before heard of an Oriental detective and was intrigued by the concept. A character for a book began to form in his mind and, in 1925, the novel *House Without A Key* was published. It featured Charlie Chan of the Honolulu Police Department and the book and the Chan character were an instant success.

Charlie Chan's adventures were chronicled in five more books by Biggers: *The Chinese Parrot* (published in 1926), *Behind the Curtain* (1928), *The Black Camel* (1929), *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1930), and *Keeper of the Keys* (1932).

With the success of the Biggers' novels, it was not long before radio and movies were involved in the Charlie Chan phenomenon.

The first Charlie Chan films were silent and the actors were actually Japanese.

Randall G. Mielke of Aurora, Illinois is an author and free-lance writer.



Warner Oland
Charlie Chan (1931-37)

RANDALL MIELKE COLLECTION

George Kuwa starred in a serial entitled *The House Without a Key* (produced in 1926) and Japanese actor Sijin was in a feature film entitled *The Chinese Parrot* (1926). English actor E. L. Park played the sleuth in the first original sound film entitled *Behind the Curtain* in 1929.

Warner Oland was the first Charlie Chan to play the part in more than one film. Some of his 16 films as Chan included *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1931), *Charlie Chan's Greatest Case* (1933), *Charlie Chan in London* (1934), *Charlie Chan in Egypt* (1935), *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935), *Charlie Chan's Secret* (1936), and *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo* (1937).

Oland was a native of Sweden and was a trained Shakespearean actor. He also spoke several languages, and was a scholar of philosophy, classical music, and art. Oland was a successful character actor, specializing in playing "heavies," and his features suited believable portrayals of Orientals. Before his success playing Charlie Chan, Oland played Al Jolson's father in *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Unlike the two actors who

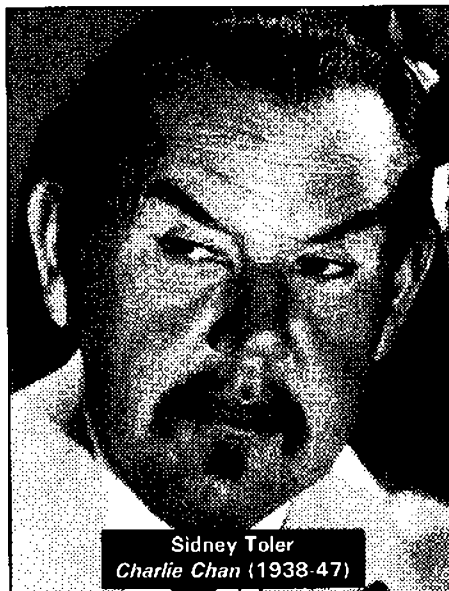
MEN WHO PLAYED CHARLIE CHAN

followed in the Chan role, Oland also made other films at the time he was making the Charlie Chan series.

The formula for the films was pretty basic. Charlie Chan of the Honolulu Police Department, an expert detective and worldwide celebrity, would happen upon a good case of murder in an interesting or exotic locale, usually not Honolulu. In the course of solving the crime, one or two of Charlie's sons (out of a family of 14), who also wanted to be detectives, offered "Pop" their assistance. Charlie's sons were usually identified chronologically as "number one son" or "number two son." They spent most of their time in the films getting in the way and providing comic relief until Charlie solved the case in spite of them.

Charlie Chan had a treasury of thought-provoking or prophetic sayings such as: "Very difficult to estimate size of the well by size of the bucket" or "Theory like balloon -- easy to blow up, quick to explode" or "Eggs should not dance with stones" and these sayings added greatly to the allure of the character. Chan's problem-solving technique typically was to gather all the suspects into one room before unmasking one of them as the murderer.

At the same time the films were being made, Charlie Chan was also being heard on radio. In the early 1930s, radio networks were introducing dramatic series as a new type of programming. With shows like *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Rin-Tin-Tin Thrillers* on NBC in 1930, the network drew upon established characters from literature and from motion pictures to offer thrilling stories to attract listeners. The next year, CBS entered the field with the short-lived *Count von Luckner's Adventures*, and the famous *The Shadow* series. Similar series appearing at this time included *Fu Manchu Mystery*, *Mysteries of*



Sidney Toler
Charlie Chan (1938-47)

RANDALL MIELKE COLLECTION

Paris, and *Charlie Chan*.

Back in Hollywood, a change came in the Charlie Chan movies when Warner Oland died in 1938. Fortunately for Chan fans, Sidney Toler stepped in to carry on the role and the series hardly missed a beat. The son of choice about this time became Jimmy Chan, number two son, played by Victor Sen Yung. In the earlier Oland-Chan films, Keye Luke had played number one son, Lee Chan, debuting in 1935's *Charlie Chan in Paris*.

American-born Sidney Toler had appeared in 50 films before he first played Charlie Chan. He also had much success on Broadway, where he not only appeared on the stage, but wrote for it. He was an accomplished operatic baritone as well.

Toler made 22 Chan films, including *Charlie Chan in Honolulu* (1938), *Charlie Chan in Reno* (1939), *Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise* (1940), *Charlie Chan at the Wax Museum* (1940), *Castle in the Desert* (1942), *The Chinese Cat* (1944), *The Shanghai Cobra* (1945) and *The Trap* (1947).

The early Chan pictures were made by Twentieth Century Fox during the 1930s

and 1940s. Part of the appeal of the early Chan films was the casting done by Fox. Such luminaries as Boris Karloff, Leo G. Carroll, Lionel Atwill, Cesar Romero, and other talented stars of the era appeared in supporting roles.

The Second World War brought an end to Fox's Chan pictures, but after a brief hiatus Charlie returned (again with Toler playing the role). This time, however, the films were made by the Monogram studio. Unfortunately, the production quality of these films was less than the Fox films. Monogram also introduced a new wrinkle to the formula, adding the antics of black actors Mantan Moreland and Willie Best. Together with Chan's offspring, the black actors carried the comedic aspects of the later Chan movies.

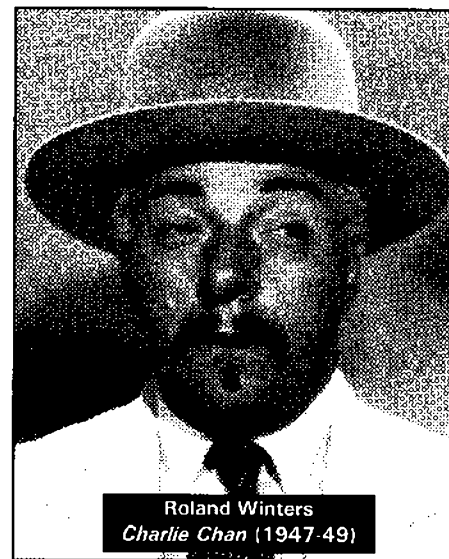
Toler died in 1947 and the Charlie Chan role was taken over by American-born Roland Winters, whose six Chan films included *The Chinese Ring* (1947), *Shanghai Chest* (1948), and *Sky Dragon* (1949). By this time, Winters seemed to be going through the motions for the films made by Monogram. Of the three Chans, Winters' Chan seemed the least likely to over-exert himself to solve a case.

As far as other film work, Winters was in more than 80 films, including *13 Rue Madeleine* in 1948 and *Blue Hawaii* in 1961.

Of the three who made the most films, none of whom were Chinese, Oland probably had the best command of the character. He seemed to be appropriately mystified by his offspring, yet adroit in catching the criminals.

Toler was a fine character actor, but seemed to have made the Chan character more like himself than the way it was written. He is less lovable than Oland and, in some later films, almost seems ill-tempered.

Toler, and to a greater extent Winters, appeared a bit miscast and ill at ease in the



Roland Winters
Charlie Chan (1947-49)

PHOTOFEST

portrayal of the Chinese sleuth. Winters' portrayal was especially distracting as his American characteristics of large facial features were hard to disguise in Chinese makeup. He does not look oriental, mainly because his nose is very large, almost Jimmy Durante-size.

In capturing the "foreigner trying to master English," Oland seemed more at ease, with his pauses in dialogue being a reflection of his thoughtful insight. Toler was more deliberate in his delivery of the famous sayings and deductive reasoning, yet still effective. As for Winters, there were times when it seemed as if he barely tried to mask the fact that he was an American in voice or action.

Popularity-wise, the films built to a peak in the late 1930s, but lost much of their appeal by the mid-40s, perhaps a direct result of the lead character's portrayals.

The Charlie Chan films were never noted for their high production values, but they hold viewers' interest with clever scripts, baffling puzzles, and the ever-mysterious central character. ■

NOTE Tune in TWTD August 25 to hear a Charlie Chan radio adventure.

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THOSE MAGNIFICENT SECRET-COMPARTMENT RINGS!

BY ED KNAPP

"Believe me, boys and girls, you won't want to miss out on this keen, new premium offer," the excited voice of the radio announcer extolled with marked enthusiasm. "So tomorrow without any further delay, send a box-top and ten cents in coin to this P.O. Box, Chicago, Illinois. In a few days the postman will bring you this beautiful, amazing 'secret-compartment' ring. Truly wonderful, the ring shines with the lustre of a bright star!"

Continuing:

"Why you can show your new ring to a stranger and they will never guess the nifty-looking ring conceals a confidential message within a hidden compartment. What fun you will have owning and showing this 'secret' ring to friends who will be none the wiser of its mysterious contents. Order today while supplies still last!"

The radio salesman spoke with such infectious conviction, in glowing terms about this new premium, the adventure program's young listeners were convinced they would not be able to live another day without one.

So it was during the 1930s and '40s, with an ongoing avalanche of captivating give-

away premiums, sponsors captivated young audiences with their product during a late-afternoon series of 15-minute children's high adventure programming.

A wide array of attractive premiums sold over the airwaves for a box-top or inner-container seal: shake-up mugs, secret decoder pins, confidential club manuals, gold badges, cast photos, lucky coins, pedometers, character masks, story locale masks, figures, and much, much more.

Generally to create passionate interest among the youth who tuned in weekday afternoons, the premiums offered were cleverly worked into the plot line of the story, adding to their appeal. Among the many premiums showcased over the years, "rings" proved to be the most popular.

Rings came in every shape and style you can imagine: a Dragon's Eye, photo views, whistles, siren, weather detector, compass face, tiger rings, portrait rings. Most were bright gold and silver metal finishes, molded with detailed embossed figures, "G-Man" emblems, raised letters, gold nuggets, character or animal figures, horseshoe nail design, even a miniature mounted pistol.

Because of the varying ages of the kids in the listening audience, all the rings were crafted so "one size fits all." This was accomplished with a simple but effective

Edwin S. Knapp of Three Rivers, Michigan is a retired professional photographer who spends his free time writing and collecting.

"pinchers" principle. The soft metal finger bands could be squeezed at the back of the overlapping bands until they were the correct size to fit the finger of any boy or girl. It was not unlikely that some of the premium rings, once they had been in the possession of a child for a few months, would turn the wearer's finger green.

Of all the many styles of rings offered to young listeners, none could rival the popularity and the uniqueness of the secret-compartment ring.

Orphan Annie, one of radio's earliest adventure shows, was among the first to form a "Secret Society" and introduce the "Silver Star Triple Mystery Compartment Ring." The ring, made of an attractive silver-plated light alloy, featured on its face a bright radiating five pointed star and the words "Secret Society" spelled out. On either side of the silver band were the embossed letters ROA, standing for "Radio's Orphan Annie." Even with all its eye-catching beauty, its crowning achievement was the invisible secret compartment, coming to light only when the silver-star face was removed. Only Annie's Secret Society members would know of the ring's hidden secret.

Dick Tracy's weekday adventure program soon followed with a similar box-top offer for a mysterious ancient Egyptian secret compartment ring. The face of the gold ring held a likeness of Tracy's face surrounded by Egyptian hieroglyphics and good luck symbols. The ring's hidden chamber, as highlighted on several of the radio episodes, was stated to be large enough to hide a most precious jewel from prying eyes. That jewel, in the story, was known as the "black pearl of Osiris."

The Lone Ranger show also had a secret compartment ring, but with an unusual twist. Sliding the secret ring's cover to one side revealed a small photo of the handsome Masked Man and the great horse Sil-

ver, as well as the hidden compartment. It was an exciting innovation for Lone Ranger fans.

Superman and his radio sponsor had yet another version of the secret compartment ring. The face of Superman's gold ring held a striking embossed image of the Man of Steel, causing listeners hearts to beat faster than a speeding bullet.

The Green Hornet's half-hour early evening adventure of crime fighting offered a secret compartment ring that glowed in the dark.

Captain Midnight offered members of his Secret Squadron a beautiful jeweled Mystic Sun God ring.

In this ring, a large slide-away glistening red jewel covered the hidden compartment, representing an adventure that was on the air at the time.

For those who listened to these programs 50 or 60 years ago, the secret compartment rings are as valuable in memory as they were when they were first worn. Some will recall writing a tiny message on a tiny piece of paper and then trying to squeeze it into that tiny compartment. Others will remember the feeling of control and power over others who did not know of the ring's hidden secret.

But every kid who ever had one of those rings will attest to the excitement that a box-top and ten cents brought during the good old days of radio. ■

<p>HOW TO USE THE SECRET COMPARTMENT</p>  <p>Place your thumb against the end of the secret cover when the end of your ring. Then gently pull and lift the cover straight up to reveal the hidden compartment. Do not twist. Do not pry. Do not use any tools. Do not use force. Do not use heat. Do not use any other method. Do not use any other method. Do not use any other method. Do not use any other method.</p> <p>Published by: SECRET SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS 300 N. WASHINGTON AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS</p>	<p>The Story of Your SECRET SQUADRON MYSTIC SUN-GOD RING</p>  <p>by CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT</p>
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WE GET MAIL

CHICAGO-- I've read the story of "The Last WNIB Saturday" in your [June-July '01] *Digest* and my thoughts run in the same direction as Miss Christian's. We the listeners do not let you know how much we appreciate your work and dedication in bringing *Those Were The Days* to us. If it were not for you and others like you, *these* days would be less than enjoyable.

--BRUCE W. AMEISMEIER

E-MAIL-- I am happy to hear you on the air on WDCB. That move proves that if you are anything you are a survivor and your public is the beneficiaries of such tenacity.

--WILLIAM O'NEILL

E-MAIL-- Just wanted you to know how I appreciate the fact that you did not disappear along with my favorite radio station, WNIB. I've looked forward to your Saturday program for years. Even my 11-year-old niece enjoys it when she visits. Hope you're around for a long time. Old time radio always gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside even when it's cold and dreary outside. --SOPHIE KUGLER

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA-- As one of your original listeners and subscribers, it is disappointing that in your "We Get Mail" section, the mail from e-mailers does not have the town they are from, like you have with regular mail. I know with e-mail you normally do not include your town with your name. --SIMEON KOSBERG

NILES, IL-- Thank you for working so hard to take care of Saturday afternoons for us. Life can get so lonesome, but when the shows come on there's lots of company.

--CECILIA J. REIN

RACINE, WISCONSIN-- Great article on "The Man from U.N.C.L.E. in your June/July 2001 issue! Does everyone remember that Stephanie Powers was "The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.?" -- NEIL LETTSOME

NORTHFIELD, IL-- I thoroughly enjoyed Don Ferrant's article "Those Movie Operettas" in

the June/July '01 issue. I must point out, though, that Nelson Eddy was *not* in "Smilin' Through" with Jeanette MacDonald. Brian Aherne and Gene Raymond were her co-stars. The last MacDonald-Eddy film was "I Married an Angel" in 1942. Reading about the 1936 "Show Boat" woke memories in me, as I fell hard for Allan Jones in the movie. In the winter of 1936, my mother and I visited an aunt in Palm Springs (then a tiny village). You can imagine my joy when I discovered that Allan Jones was her next door neighbor! He used to ride about on a little motor scooter and one day we saw him and my mother asked him to pose for a snapshot with me. At 13, I was easily embarrassed, and in the picture you can see a smiling Jones, and a grim-faced *me* with him on the bike. --MARY FRAN PURSE

MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA-- Hooray for Ken Alexander, who seems to be playing an even more prominent role in the *TWTD* broadcasts these days. His is one of my favorite radio voices of all-time. When I was a youngster back in the 1960s and '70s, my mom always listened to him on the old WAIT. Just hearing his voice brings back a flood of childhood memories!

--KATHY MITCHELL

NILES, IL-- Please tell Ken Alexander how much I enjoy His "blast from the past" segments highlighting what was going on in Chicago at the time and the cost of various merchandise. I was born in the wrong decade! --JIM AIRDO

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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← ARNOLD STANG

is a stand-out among supporting performers. Read Clair Schulz' article about this "Small Wonder" beginning on page 26.

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