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a Tribune extra

TWENTY YEARS OF TELEVISION

TWENTY YEARS OF WATCHING THE TUBE

Probably no one in America is more qualified to write about two decades of television history and development than Larry Wolters, the Tribune's longtime TV critic, who retired in January, 1966, after having covered the medium from its infancy. Beginning that day in 1946 when he got his first set ("It cost $375 plus installation charges and gave us a 6 by 8-inch picture."), Larry has been immersed in the zany, improbable, and ever-expanding world of television. He has seen it grow from the box-in-the-barroom era of wrestling and Dagmar to the 27-inch sets—many of them color—on which today's America watches the weekly cavortings of the Smothers Brothers, Rowan and Martin, and that nun who flies. In this special magazine commemorating 20 years of regularly scheduled TV programming in Chicago, Larry Wolters talks about television—as it was "back then" and as it is today.

By Larry Wolters

The Beginnings

ALTHO TELEVISION had been lurking in the wings for more than a decade, it burst seemingly full blown on Chicago in 1948. Burr Tillstrom, his Kuklapolitans, and Fran Allison were already a local hit on WBKB here. They soon enchanted a nation by way of the NBC network.

Also in Chicago, Dave Garroway came along with his low-pressure, easy-does-it Garroway-at-Large show, including Jack Haskell, Connie Russell, Bette Chapel, and funny man Cliff Norton. It became a Sunday evening must for pioneer viewers. Studs Turkel and his Studs' Place was another entry of similar stripe.

Super Circus, with Cliff Soubier, Claude Kirchner, and Mary Hartline, made a hit with the kids. So did Don Herbert as Mr. Wizard. But Don was shifted to New York and his science show went down the drain under the pressure of ratings. Hawkins Falls, a serial story based on life in Woodstock, won many fans. It should be remembered, too, because Tom Poston, later of Steve Allen fame, got his TV start in it. So did Brigid Bazlin [daughter of Maggie Daly], who later was to win a Peabody award as WGN-TV's Blue Fairy. Frances Horwich made it big as the mistress of Ding Dong school. Marlin Perkins started his Zoo Parade, which is still going on today as Wild Kingdom. Dorsey Connors became famous showing us how to do tricks and make things out of coat hangers,

Jerry Lester [left], Dave Street, and the voluptuous Dagmar exchange gags on a Broadway Open House show in 1950.

I don't recall who invented the term, but soon even eastern writers were referring to the "Chicago style." What this amounted to in essence was the resort to brains, imagination, and talent [much of it new] in place of money, glamor, and names, in which Chicago was deficient by comparison with New York and Hollywood—both just arriving in TV.

Fred Allen came out to study the Chicago way of doing things. He was impressed with the creativity of Chicago TV entrepeneurs and said:

"They ought to tear down Radio City in New York and build a new Television Town in Chicago. In fact, that's what they are doing here."

Bob Newhart showed up in an early morning show

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THE BERLE PHENOMENON: WHY WAS HE NO. 1

MILTON BERLE will do anything for a laugh. Anything. And he gets laughs, plenty of them, or did, especially in the early years of television. For years he stood almost alone in the TV comedy field. He was known for a half dozen years as "Mr. Television."

As Ed Wynn was the Perfect Fool, Milton Berle was the Complete Ham. Berle was a consummate clown, a top-notch buffoon, a master of slapdashery, the "Thief of Bad Gags", an excellent mimic. And he would dress up like your Aunt Minnie for a laugh.

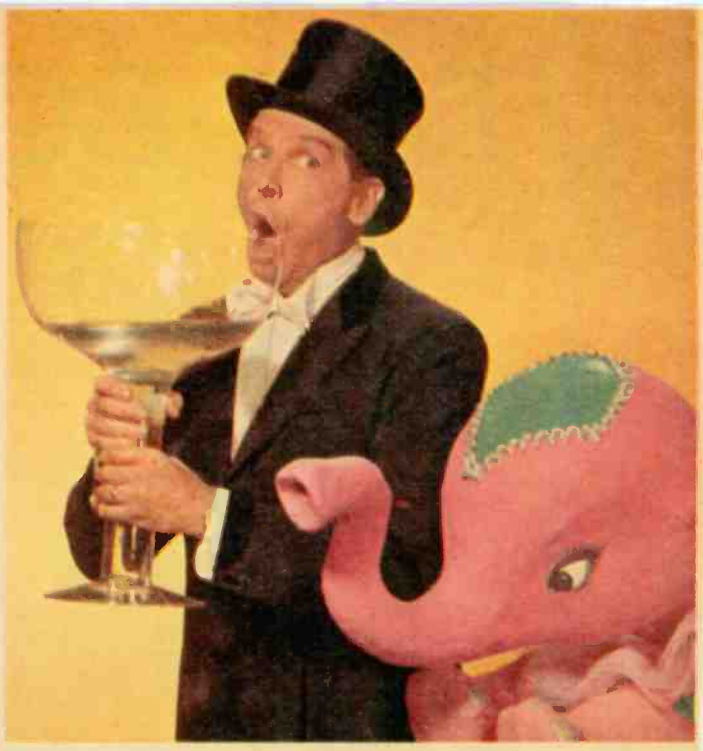
Berle's years as a vaudeville and night club entertainer stood him in good stead when television arrived. He had mastered every trick to get and hold the interest of the audience—especially his studio audience. And his TV audience always enjoyed watching Berle working out on that studio audience.

Berle had a tremendous advantage in that he was there when TV arrived. He embraced the opportunity to take on TV. The more established broadcast comedians—Benny, Hope, Skelton, Fred Allen among them—showed no disposition at the outset to try TV. They were satisfied with their success in radio. When George Gobel, Jack Benny, Sid Caesar, and others came along, the popularity of Berle began to taper off.

Another factor that worked in Berle's favor in the early days was his early Tuesday evening hour. Hordes of children could and did watch him. His stories and his routines, which were old stuff to adults who knew him from his theater and night club years, were fresh and new to the youngesters.

Milton was one of the finest straight men, too, in the business. He didn't insist on getting all the gags himself. He was particularly generous with women, especially Martha Raye, in this regard.

Berle was always a man of action, a rough and tumble guy, who kept the show at a hot pace. Children and youths especially liked this aspect of Berle's performances. He had the energy of a child himself and the desire to please. Most critics didn't care for Berle—a fact that he capitalized on. There was a saying in show business: "Nobody likes Milton Berle except his mother and the public."

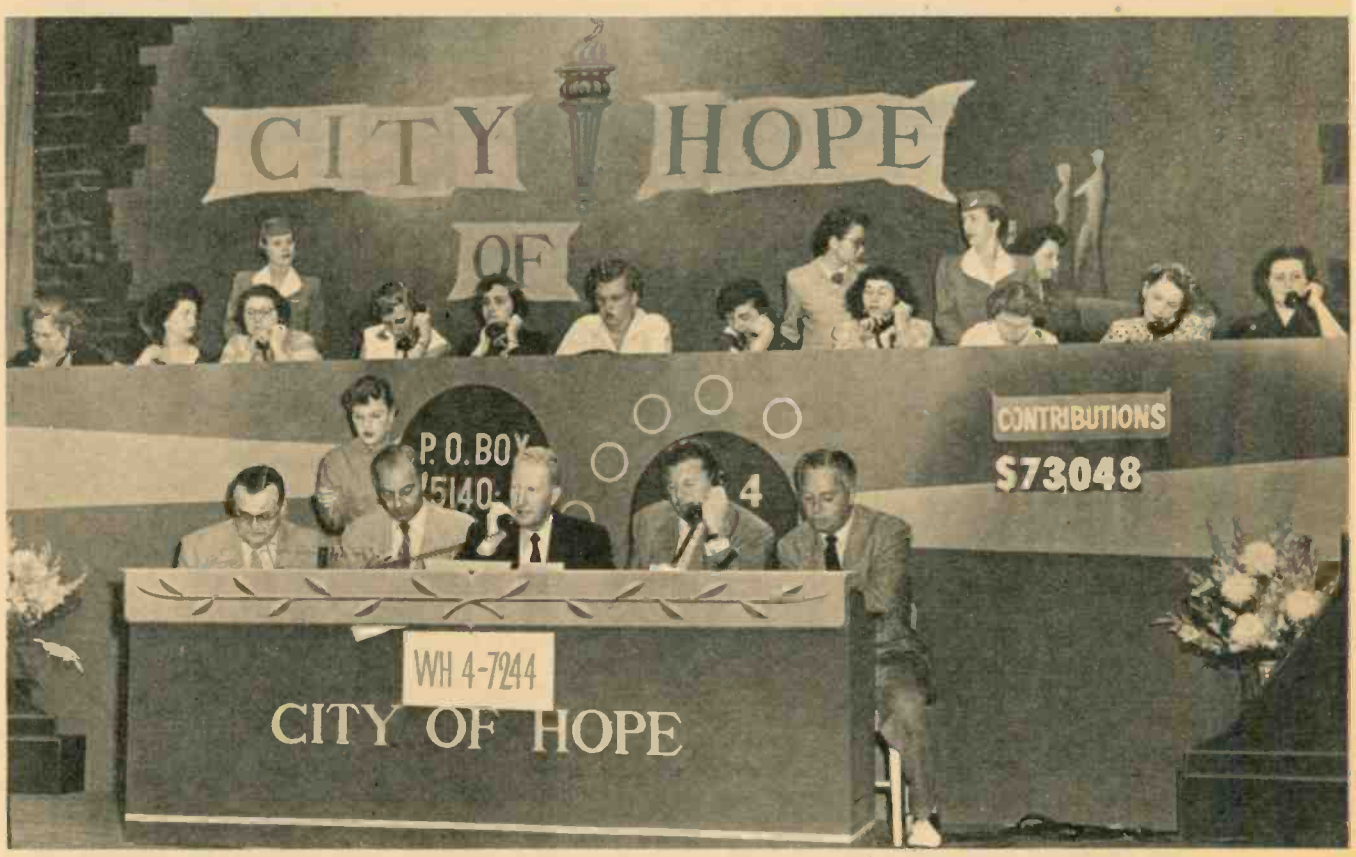


on WBKB which, while delightful, didn't catch on because of its early hour. But a few years later he was "discovered" for national TV in Hollywood. George Gobel went a similar route—except that he jumped from Chicago radio [where he had been a boy soprano] and midwestern night clubs to coast-to-coast television, with Hollywood as his springboard.

Jack Brickhouse became the voice of baseball on Chicago television. At first the screens were so small the viewer couldn't see the baseball but that was corrected with the evolvement of bigger screens. Baseball has since become one of the greatest attractions of the television era and it opened the door to other sports—football, basketball, hockey, golf, and ultimately the Olympics. Today the great events of the sports world command multimillions in fees and draw tremendous audiences. New Year's Day is eight or 10 hours of bowl games. Fortunately or unfortunately, the lady of the house is busy making meals and setting out lunches, and she has no access to the TV set on Jan. 1 unless she's willing to watch football.

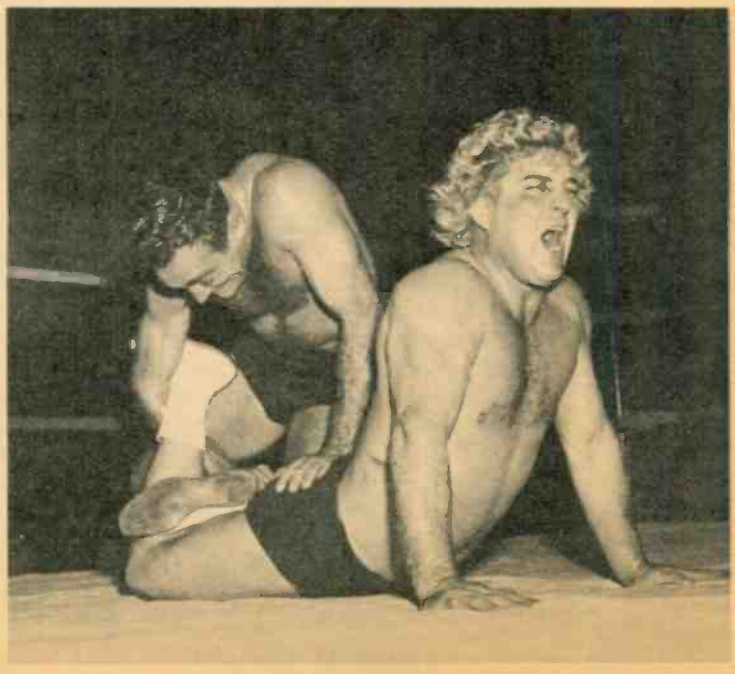
Jerry Lester, a Chicago product, came along with the first of the live late-night shows. Aboard was Dagmar, a buxom beauty, almost too big to be accommodated by the peanut-sized screens of the times. Two-Ton Baker, a popular personage in the early days, encountered similar screen problems. And so did the behemoths of the wrestling ring, including the Schnable Brothers [Hans and Fritz] and Gorgeous George, he of the silk cape and flowing golden locks. [I have sometimes wondered whether we have given Gorgeous George the credit he deserves for bringing in the long-haired era. It may be that the Beatles, generally blamed for the reintroduction of the male hairy age, got the idea for long locks from early TV wrestlers.]

If Dagmar was one of the first to sound a sirenish note in the living room, there were plenty of others who followed. We should not overlook the so-called "exercise" shows. Paul Fogarty looked after diets and weight control for years in "Your Figure Ladies" on channel 9, with curvaceous Ami Sylvestre stunningly exhibiting what the women could accomplish by a few simple bendings and stretchings daily. A few years later Channel 5 came along with Debbie Drake outdoing the earlier girls in sexy gyrations. But these girls, compared to the hippie lasses almost in total undress on the Rowan and Martin Laugh-In show, were Victorians, or so it seems in retrospect.



Telethons to raise money for charity were a rage in TV's early years. Answering the phones at a telethon in Chicago are Sig Sakowitz, Spencer Allen, Jim Moran, Jack Carson, Norman Barry.

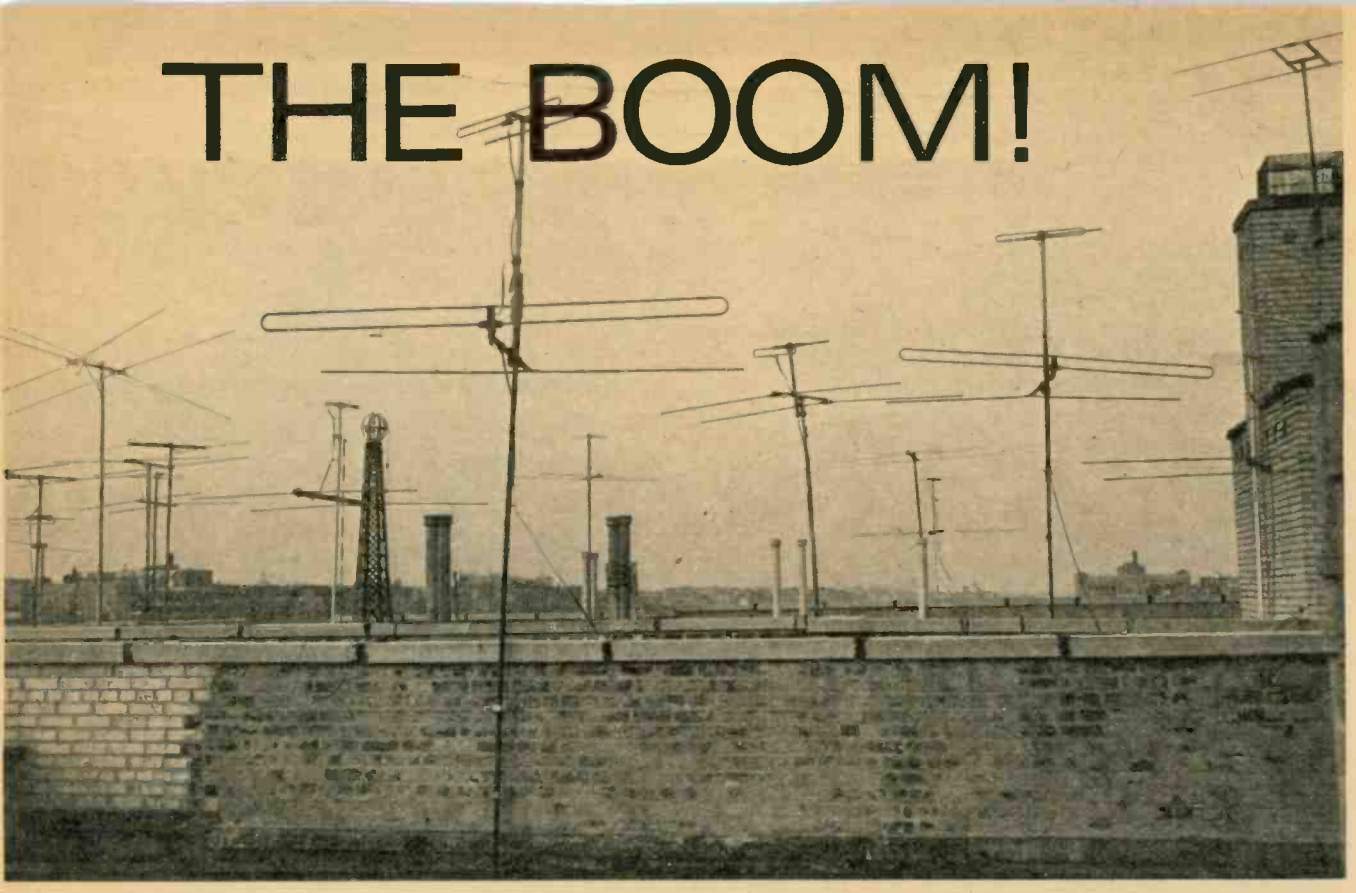
Of all the TV wrestlers, none was better known than "Gorgeous George," registering anguish here in a 1948 video match.



The distinction of originating the first network comedy series from Chicago goes to Jack Carter. He had made several appearances with Milton Berle, and in February, 1950, NBC needed someone to fill an hour when the coaxial cable was opened from Chicago to New York. Carter was drafted to fill it. After two seasons he disappeared, and has rarely returned in the intervening years. But he did bob up recently on the Sullivan show, rigged out as a red head—or did I have the color set badly adjusted?

By the early '50s, millions were watching TV. Television was out of its swaddling clothes and the Boom was just ahead.

THE BOOM!



Television started slowly in those years just after World War II, but then came a new decade—the Fifties—and in its first three years, the number of sets in America increased ten-fold. Almost overnight, TV was everywhere, and we were a nation hooked on the "tube."

THE TV BOOM swept America in the fifties the way Vesuvius deluged Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 A. D. Millions bought sets and the big parade of entertainers kept right on engulfing them for the whole decade. Sid Caesar, Herb Shriner, George Gobel, Martin and Lewis, Wally Cox, and Steve Allen led the new brigade of funny men. Marching right behind were Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Jimmy Durante, Groucho Marx, Ed Wynn, Danny Thomas, and Phil Silvers, long established as favorites, but now about to win new laurels and much greater audiences as entertainers.

And the Big Parade of good, unbelievably good, dramatic series—the Kraft Television Theater, Studio One, The Philco Hour, Armstrong Circle Theater, the Robert Montgomery Hour, The Hallmark Hall of Fame and finally, Playhouse 90, possibly the most ambitious and best dramatic series ever devised.

Then more comedians: Ernie Kovacs, Victor Borge, Jack Paar and his stable of stooges, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Joan Davis, Eve Arden, the Nelson family, and before the decade was over, Dick Van Dyke, Andy Griffith, Carl Reiner, and Liberace. Or do you classify him as a pianist?

The living room was filled with lawmen, cops 'n' robbers and private eyes. What an assault on the eyes and ears we had in Raymond Burr as Perry Mason [he's still on in re-runs], Martin Kane, Kent Taylor as Boston Blackie, Jack Webb in Dragnet, the 77 Sunset Strip trio, E. G. Marshall in The Defenders, and countless others.

The westerns were gripping all America too—Hopalong Cassidy [William Boyd], Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, James Garner, Jim Arness in Gunsmoke, and ultimately those Bonanza Boys.

Small wonder that the American family soon was spending more than four hours a day in front of the tube and staying up until midnight or later. No wonder either, that movie houses were closing by the hundreds. Explanation: [No admission to TV, no baby sitters to pay, no long drive, no parking problems.] Besides, many of the stars of Hollywood were appearing free on TV and good movies were beginning to be made available to television. Even the commercials, if not precisely welcome, proved handy interruptions to head for the refrigerator or to pop corn.

Parents wondered, tho, about their offspring ducking their homework. Physicians talked about eyestrain, and they complained because youngsters weren't getting enough exercise. Parent-Teacher associations grappled with the implications of TV. There was even speculation that interest in physical education and athletics would fall off to the extent that Notre Dame would no longer be able to recruit adequate football personnel.

The art of conversation went into a slump. Husbands and wives merely mumbled to one another. Even gossip fell off perceptibly.

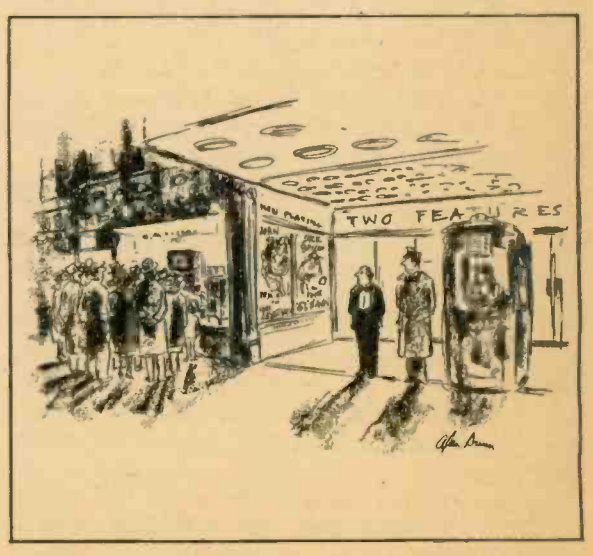
The TV Boom just roared on. Another crop of stars arrived with the quiz shows. In the beginning the shows merely rewarded the winners with a few hundred dollars; but soon the give-aways included stoves, refrigerators, bedroom suites, and then trips to Hollywood, trips to Hawaii and Paris and Tokyo. There probably would have been trips to the moon offered, had not the great jackpot scandal broken over the heads of network bosses and given them the biggest scare of their exciting careers.

But the scandals passed, and television rushed on to the next craze. Geritol, Alka-Seltzer and Anacin, which had been the main protective agents on television for health were no longer sufficient. Doctors and nurses took over. Vince Edwards as Ben Casey, and Richard Chamberlain [Dr. Kildare] with Raymond Massey as his medical mentor, became the new TV favorites, along with a show called The Nurses. Sutures, scalpels, and surgery became favorite words of the TV watcher. And soon he was moving into psychiatric jargon—complete with split personality, ego-mania, schizophrenia, and Freudian slips. Even spokesman for the A. M. A. applauded the good works of the electronic M. D.s. But, in due course, their ratings dropped and they went down the drain.

Jack Benny managed to coax Marilyn Monroe in front of a camera, but she was scared and rarely risked the TV call again. A landmark entry of this boom era was the Edsel show introducing that ill-fated car. It was headed by a glittering array of names—Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney, with Bob Hope doing a walk-on bit as a surprise. Miss Clooney was handed a new Edsel. As she accepted and took hold of the door handle it fell off. It may be that the Edsel fell off at the same moment!

By this time the TV dinner was established as a fixture in the American home. Ever bigger picture tubes were coming along which enabled TV stars to get out of their midget figures. Arthur Godfrey was big in TV and became bigger with his feud with

Continued on page 6



This cartoon, from an April, 1949, issue of The New Yorker, needs no caption.

These are a few of the faces America was seeing most often on its TV screens in those boom years of the early fifties. Remember?

Ozzie Nelson

Peggy Wood

Loretta Young

William Bendix

Don Herbert

Dennis Day

Stu Erwin

Ralph Edwards

Mel Allen

Mary Hartline

Betty Furness

Wally Cox

Herb Shriner

Eve Arden

Art Linkletter

Ted Mack

Bert Parks

Julia Meade

Victor Borge

Faye Emerson

Ann Sothern

Dave Garroway

Annette Funicello

Gertrude Berg

Paul Winchell and Jerry Mahoney

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, stars of I Love Lucy, were possibly the biggest names in television during the Booming Fifties.

Liberace, with his flamboyant outfits, his candelabra, and his brother, George, rocketed to fame via television in the Fifties.

Julius La Rosa. Godfrey's low-pressure manner and his spoofing of commercials left a permanent impact on TV, tho he himself faded as the '60s neared.

Lucille Ball became the Queen of Comedy and retained that distinction even beyond the boom years. The night that she and Desi introduced the I Love Lucy series, our younger daughter sat and watched with me. I thought it was an indifferent show but she convinced me it was the biggest thing since Milton Berle. I took her advice in my review and spared myself an enormous booboo. [Everyone is his own critic in TV. And many of these critics take the pains to let you know by letter that "you stink."]

As Lucille Ball was the No. 1 comedienne, so Dinah Shore became the outstanding singer and then mistress of ceremonies. Dinah was one of the first girl singers to venture into TV. It was on NBC Dec. 27, 1939—yes, 1939. She started her Chevy Show in 1951. This little 15-minute spot expanded to a full hour in 1957, where it became a favorite Sunday fixture until the Bonanza Boys pushed her out, a substitution I still regret.

Lawrence Welk and his Champagne music were a phenomenon of the boom years. The Lennon Sisters grew up with him and made a nationwide hit with the elder generation. In time Lawrence made the welkin ring so loudly that his became the No. 1 show of them all on the ABC network.

Omnibus in retrospect was one of the most richly rewarding of all TV series. Planted in the heart of the Sunday afternoon "ghetto," it offered something for every taste but an especially liberal portion for eggheads, thanks to Robert Saudek as producer and Alistair Cooke as narrator.

Also brightening the TV firmament in the boom years were such names as Pat Boone [white shoes], Perry Como, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Robert Young, Bob Cummings and Schultzy, Jackie Gleason, The Real McCoys with Walter Brennan, Vaughn Monroe, Dennis Day, Eddie Fisher, Fred Astaire, Edie Adams, Ted Mack, Jimmy Dean, Dick Clark, Kathryn and Arthur Murray, Garry Moore, Mr. Ed, Lassie . . . the list could go on and on.

. . . A Part of the Language

"Would you believe . . . ?"

TELEVISION'S rapid growth these last two decades has permeated every facet of American life—including the language. Old words, such as "residual," "special," "rerun," "spectacular," and "replay" have taken on new meanings in the video age. And new phrases, too, have become a part of the vernacular. Among the best-known of these are the 15 below. See how many you can identify with the TV personalities who have mouthed them. If you can name eight, give yourself a "fair" score; 10 is "good"; and 13 or more qualifies you as a "Grade-A TV Addict." [Answers on Page 19.]

1. "On this very stage . . . "
2. "Be kind to each other."
3. "Well . . . I'll be a dirty bird."
4. "This . . . is the news."
5. "Sorry about that."
6. "Son of a gun."
7. "Peace."
8. "Good night, David" . . . "Good night, Chet."
9. "Ah-one, and ah-two, and . . . "
10. "I kid you not."
11. "Will the real _____ please stand up?"
12. "How sweet it is."
13. "How ayah, how ayah, how ayah."
14. "All we want is the facts, ma'am."
15. "Come in mystery guest, and SIGN IN PLEASE!"

Gleason and Hope . . . enduring popularity.

THE COMICS

Television has been hard on the funny men, exhausting them and their material at a frightening rate. A few, such as Hope and Gleason and Skelton, have managed to sustain their popularity, but many, many others were unable to keep the audiences laughing over the long haul.

IT'S A WONDER there are any comedians left on TV. Consider their problems: Television is a voracious monster. In other media—the theater, vaudeville, burlesque—an act can be developed, polished, tested so that it might run a year or more. But television demands a complete new creation every time the funny man ventures within range of the TV eye. Every show is like a Broadway opening or a Hollywood premiere.

Furthermore, what was once regarded as funny is no longer a laughing matter. Racial jokes are out. Ethnic jokes are not permissible. Dialect comedy is gone forever. We live in troubled times. Gone is the whole era of "wonderful nonsense," as Westbrook Pegler described it.

We live in times of great international tension. We move from one crisis to another. These impose added strains on our comedians. When Martin Luther King was killed, the Oscar telecast was postponed two nights. This gave Bob Hope and his writers a few—too few—extra hours to redraft their material to fit the changed mood of the nation.

It is significant that in this time of national bewilderment we have so few TV comedians. Gone from the tube are Milton Berle, Jimmy Durante, Groucho Marx, Sid Caesar, Wally Cox, Red Buttons, Bob Newhart, Phil Silvers. At least they're not around with regular shows. George Gobel is doing "drink milk" commercials. Sam Levenson is counting up his earnings from having written a best seller. Ernie Kovacs, long dead, was honored recently in a one-time special. Rowan and Martin are getting some attention by variations on his themes. Jack Benny has done a special or two. Danny Thomas is off again, on again. Herb Shriner has vanished. Danny Kaye has gone away.

Never has the high mortality rate of comedians been more apparent. True, Red Skelton goes right on clowning. Dean Martin has become a notable comedy figure. Jonathan Winters ventures out now and then. Don Rickles, long a night club favorite, is trying out for TV. Arthur Godfrey sticks mainly to radio.

Biggest man on the TV screen is Jackie Gleason. And with passing years he seems to increase in physical proportions as well as in comedy stature. Cramped by the confines of New York, Gleason moved a few years ago to Miami Beach, which seems better able to accommodate him, his golfing, and his bus driver antics. Aided by the wonderfully gifted Art Carney, Gleason may be able to go on for another 10 years or more as a top comic.

One towering figure remains—Bob Hope. After 30 years in broadcasting—radio and TV—he continues to be one of our greatest natural resources. He is a national institution. He brings warmth, laughter, and friendship to a troubled nation. He does that with class, polish, style, and taste. He is the Champion of Comedians. It is no wonder that the George Foster Peabody committee recognized this fact and bestowed a special award on him in April.

Hope ranges the far corners of the world, bringing joy and laughter even to our troops in Viet Nam. He has appeared at national conventions; he has won the Notre Dame award for patriotism; he appeared on the Illinois Sesquicentennial show, I Remember Illinois; he has won a Gold Medal from Congress; he has emceed innumerable Oscar shows, peppering them with sharp and incisive shafts of wit.

Danny Thomas . . . off again, on again.

Danny Kaye . . . gone away.

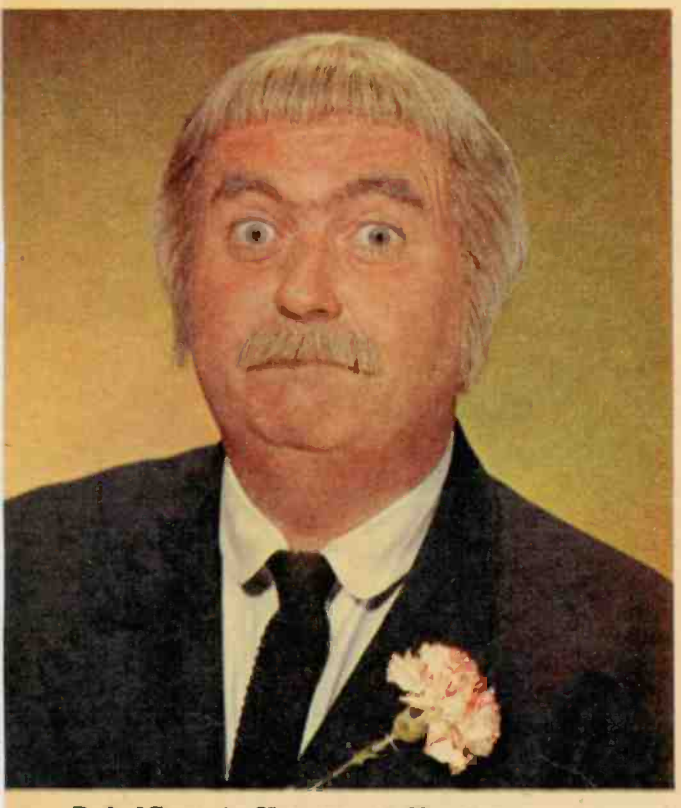
Garry Moore, Carol Burnett, and Durward Kirby from Moore's old show.

Martin and Lewis . . . Successes, separately.

Red Skelton . . . staying power.

Caesar and Coca . . . long gone.

The gang from Bozo's Circus.



Bob [Captain Kangaroo] Keeshan. Garfield Goose and Frazier Thomas.

FOR THE KIDS

WHEN NEW babies are born today, it is said that the "hep" parents put in promptly for tickets to Bozo's Circus on channel 9. Not that you can carry infants in arms into the TV studio, but the demand is so great that all tickets have been given out thru December, 1972. And the "advance orders" are piling up higher every day.

The tremendous appeal of television is dramatically reflected in the Bozo situation. Bozo's Circus is a fun show presented during the noonday lunch hour. All over Chicagoland children sit and munch their meals while watching the antics of Bob Bell [Bozo], Ray Rayner [Oliver O. Oliver], Ned Locke [the Ringmaster], Don Sandberg [Sandy], and Bob Trendler and his bandsmen.

Probably no atomic scientists are going to be developed as a result of watching Bozo, but no harm will accrue to them either. Bozo may even be a cut above much of the children's fare that fills hours every day on almost every station.

There is even what is called the children's "ghetto" on Saturday morning. Five hours from 7 a. m. to noon are packed with stuff calculated to let TV fill the role of sitter while mothers shop and tend to their myriad chores of the week-end and fathers attend to odd jobs or sleep. So all over the land kids flop on the rug in front of the TV set and absorb a lot of violence, space uproar, and a sprinkling of illumination and imaginative fare.

Here are some of the choices: Milton the Monster, Capture, Frankenstein Jr., Casper Cartoons, Herculoids, the Three Stooges, Spiderman, Samson and Goliath, Journey to the Center of the Earth, Superman, King Kong, Moby Dick, Birdman, New Superman, Top Cat, New Beatles, Johnny Quest, Cool McCool, and Marvel Superheroes. There are also runs of My Friend Flicka and Capt. Kangaroo, the latter played by Bob Keeshan and, to my notion, one of the finest entries on TV.

It would be gratifying to be able to report that the influence of TV on children is always as good as Keeshan's. Regrettably that isn't true. Since the beginning, the three networks have paraded an endless number of children's features. The granddaddy of them all was Howdy Doody, featuring "Buffalo Bob" Smith, with Clarabelle the Clown. Others who arrived in the primeval days were Mr. I. Magination, which showed no imagination even in coining a name, Super Circus, Capt. Video, first of the space rangers, Rocket Rangers, and Bil and Cora Baird and their delightful puppets.

The arrival of Frances Horwich and Ding Dong school represented a landmark in children's programming. For she was a real teacher who understood children and set up a schoolroom, opened many doors of learning and knowledge and fostered worthwhile goals and ideals.

If children too often sought out the Three Stooges and their tastelessness [it's still going on] we have to remember that too many parents also turned to the cheap, tawdry, and vulgar TV fare.

Many TV stations honestly try to do a balanced job in programming for children. WGN-TV is representative with its Romper Room, Bozo, Garfield Goose [Frazier Thomas], and Ray Rayner and Friends. But others leave much to be desired.

Of all the good influences on children's programs, the late Walt Disney was possibly the greatest. In cartoons, animal stories, imaginative tales, and in information and illumination, he was preeminent. And when color came along it gave his features that extra dimension that always kept him in the forefront. The role of Walt Disney in shaping the world of television for the better can hardly be overestimated.

Howdy Doody and Buffalo Bob Smith were kids' favorites for more than a decade.

The year is 1953, and this tot is watching Frances Horwich's Ding Dong School show.

GAMES AND GREED AND GIVE-AWAYS

"GIVE THAT MAN 20 silver dollars!" Dr. I. Q. used to shout during the dear, dead radio days. In 1953 the show moved to television and the doctor passed out cartwheels to "a lady in the balcony." Who would have thought that such modest give-away shows would lead to the great jackpot scandal of 1958 which rocked television to its foundation.

In the radio era the $64 Question went along for years without causing any lifted eyebrows. But when its prize money was multiplied 1,000 times for TV it became a big temptation—too big a temptation for some producers, sponsors, and contestants. Soon the $100,000 Big Surprise came along as competition, also the $64,000 Challenge, and finally Twenty-One, the one which in the end attracted the most publicity, largely unfavorable.

The era of the big boodle quiz show dawned in June, 1955. But it was not until almost three years later that the money tree came crashing down. All of the big cash quizzes operated on the theory that ordinary, non-expert people, but with fly-paper memories, competing to win awesome amounts of prizes, would capture the imagination and viewing loyalty of big audiences. This they did.

Pressed into isolation booths [similar to phone booths] the contestants had all sorts of questions put to them by quizmasters, who included Hal March, Sonny Fox, and Jack Barry. The contestants pondered, fidgeted, wrung their hands, knitted their brows, sweated, and even cried. But they carried home the loot. The contestants ranged from Myrt Power, a Georgia housewife, whose specialty was baseball, to Gino Prato, a New York shoemaker who knew everything there is to know about opera, to Vincent Price, the actor, whose specialty was art. Then came Charles Van Doren, seemingly informed on almost everything.

Winners became national celebrities; even losers came away with fancy cars as consolation prizes. But three years after it all began, the house came tumbling down in a gigantic scandal. A former contestant on one of the shows, Dotto, announced that he had evidence that it was rigged. He was followed by one Herbert Stempel, a Twenty-One contestant who revealed in detail how the show was fixed. Network bosses, producers, and other former contestants issued denials.

Nevertheless, after extensive inquiries by a district attorney, a grand jury, and even a Congressional committee, the sad truth became known. Widespread cheating had taken place; contestants had been given the answers—and weren't really as erudite as they pretended to be. Ten participants pleaded guilty to charges of perjury before a grand jury.

All the big money shows went down the drain. They have never reappeared—in that form.

Quiz shows have been popular since the early days of broadcasting. Several that went to the networks got their start in Chicago. There were the Quiz Kids with their bright young people—Joel Kuppermann, Richard Williams, Naomi Cooks, Ruthie Duskin, Harve Fischman, and others—who brightened the radio years. Other shining young faces followed them into TV. Another quiz program that Chicago spawned was Down You Go, with Bergen Evans of Northwestern university as quizmaster, and Francis Coughlin, Carmelita Pope, Toni Gilman, and Robert Breen snapping back the answers.

What's My Line? endured almost as long as Ed Sullivan, and John Daly functioned thru the years as quizmaster. The principal panelists were Bennett Cerf, Arlene Francis, and the late Dorothy Kilgallen.

The College Bowl, pitting bright university and college teams against one another, has had a run of a decade now—and its sponsor has distributed scads of money for university scholarships.

Jack Barry, who hosted several game programs, is shown on Tic Tac Dough.

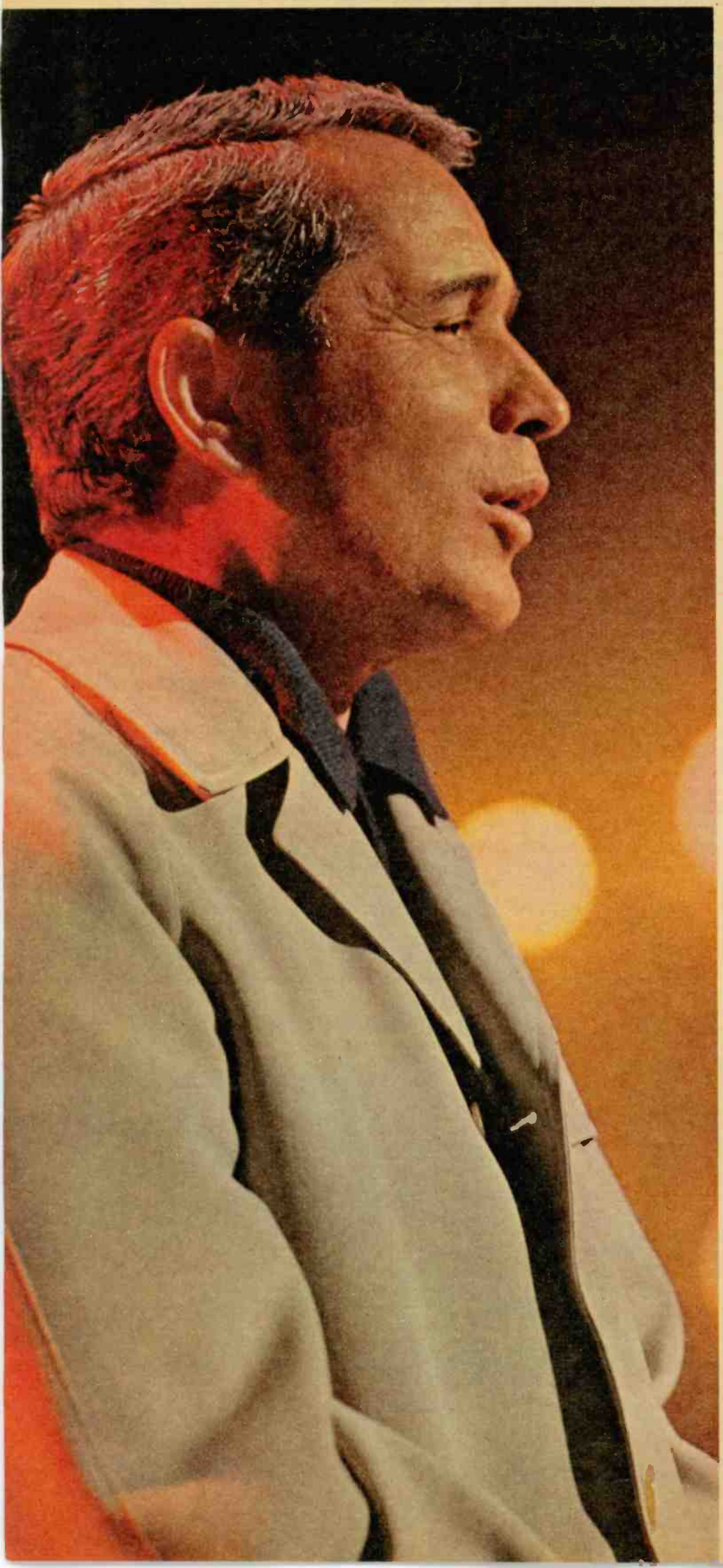
Other quiz-fun shows that developed sizable followings included Garry Moore's I've Got a Secret and To Tell the Truth with Bud Collyer as host and emcee. [Collyer got his start playing Superman, so his panel show was somewhat anticlimactic.]

One other quiz show deserves mention. That was The Price Is Right, with Bill Cullen in charge of distributing largesse. It came to be known as "the hour of greed" by critics because that was the quality often reflected on the faces of the contestants as they competed for luxury cars, mink coats, and trips around the world.

A 1951 What's My Line? panel included Dorothy Kilgallen, Louis Untermeyer, Arlene Francis, and Hal Block. Later panelist were Bennett Cerf and Steve Allen.

Down You Go, an early Chicago TV quiz show, featured Bergen Evans, Francis Coughlin, Toni Gilman, Robert Breen, and Carmelita Pope.

Perry Como: A master at the smooth 'n' easy style.



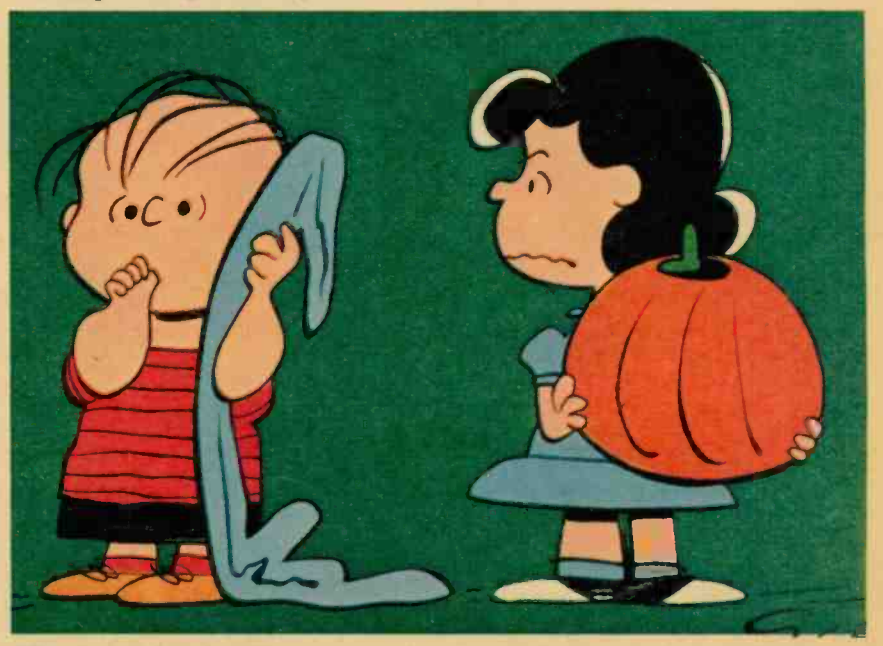
The Lennon Sisters: Favorites of Lawrence Welk show viewers.

COLOR TELEV

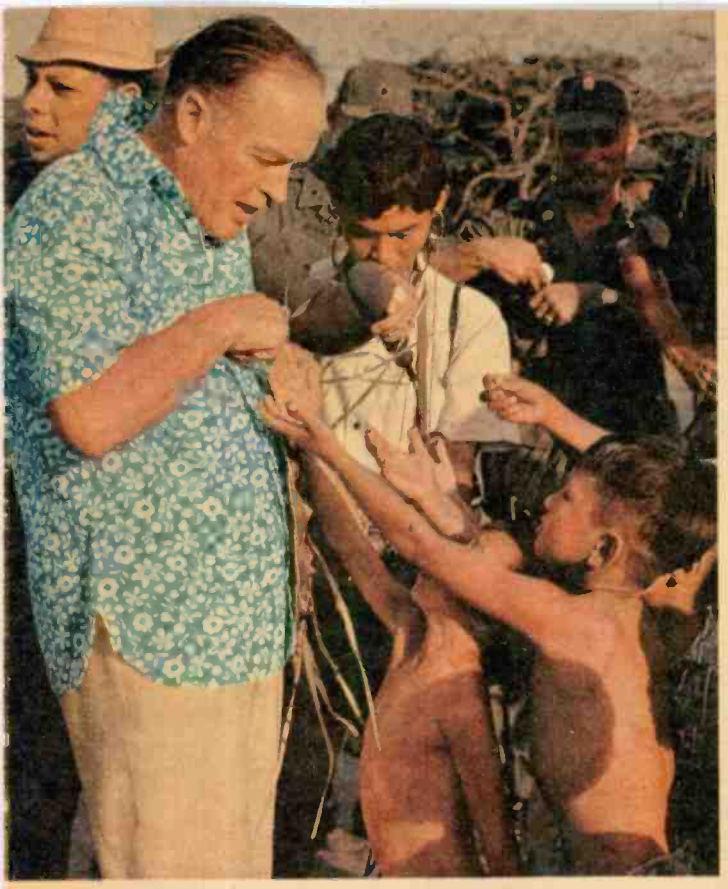
"ROSE IS a rose is a rose is a rose." Gertrude Stein said that long before the color television era. But a rose was not a rose in TV until the chromatic television days arrived. Color has given new reality and a three dimensional depth to its camera subjects.

One of the greatest of all TV shows was Lucy Jarvis' tour of the Louvre. It was just one more television show for those who watched it in black and white. The same was true for Mrs. John F. Kennedy's tour of the White House, of the documentary on Van Gogh and his paintings, of the National Geographic specials and of Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color, and of most sports shows.

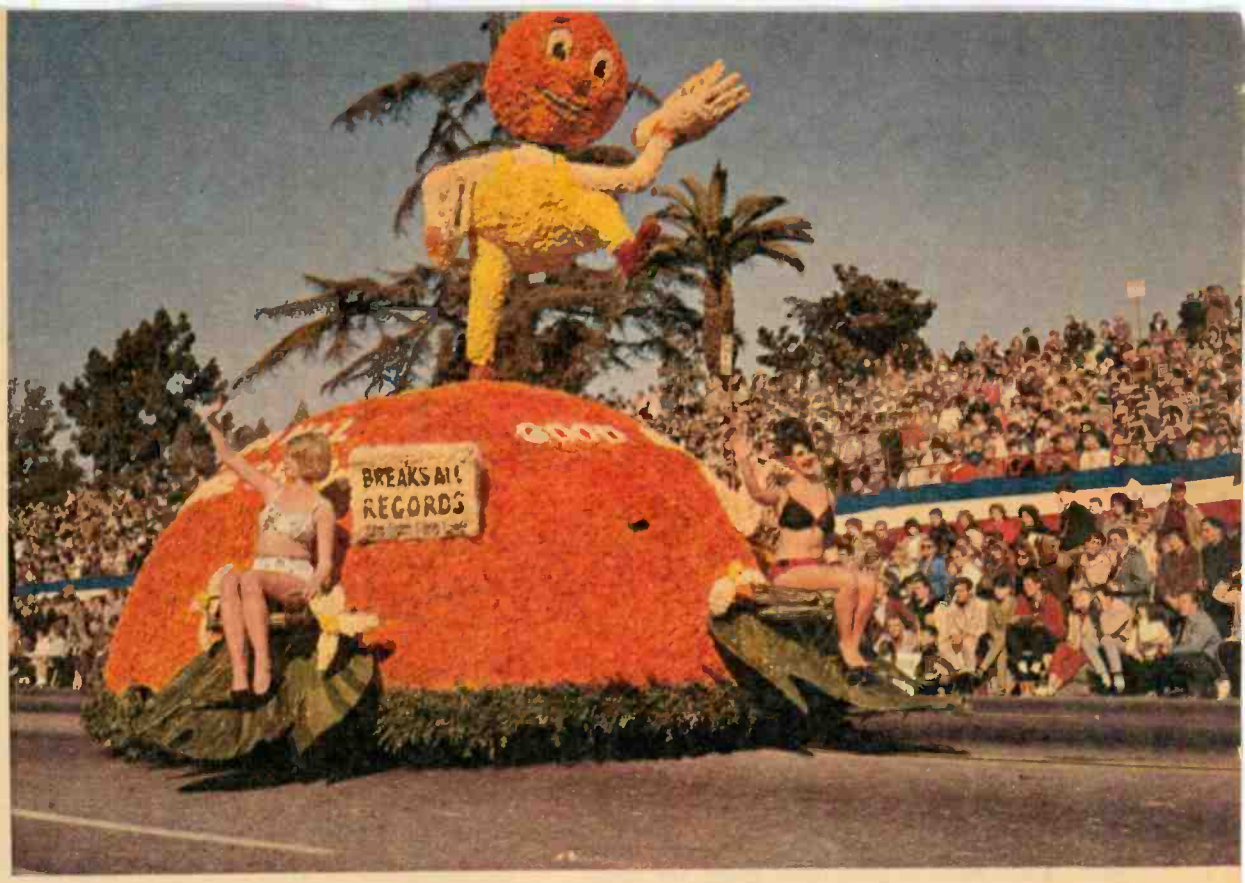
The Peacock boom is in full bloom. Tho color sets still cost about three times what a monochrome set does, the total number of color-set families rose in one year [Jan. 1, 1967 to Jan. 1, 1968] from 9,450,000 to 14,630,000, a gain of 54 per cent. And the total percentage of families owning color TV sets, as of January 1, was 25.1 per cent. Three years ago the total percentage was only 5.3.



Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" characters have increased their national popularity via TV specials.



A yearly treat: Bob Hope's Christmas trips.



The Pasadena Tournament of Roses parade is one of the most colorful television spectacles.

VISION: A NEW DIMENSION

The late Walt Disney, shown here with one of his cartoon characters, was an ardent color TV booster.

Trumpeters Herb Alpert and Louis Armstrong delighted audiences on Kraft Music Hall.

OF COPS AND ROBBERS AND PRIVATE EYES

AT SOME TIME in the life of every boy he expresses the ambition to become a policeman when he grows up. Most of our males ultimately don't make it, but they always maintain an interest in the cops 'n' robbers theme. Perhaps that is one reason why TV has paraded more shows about crime and punishment than any other type.

Such shows have a great deal going for them. There are always the good guys vs. the bad guys. And in TV the good guys overcome the bad guys, usually with guns, which makes for action, excitement and noise, all characteristics calculated to keep father from falling asleep at the TV set.

Crime, mystery, and adventure shows are easily put together. Usually they allow quick and easy portrayals of simple people, requiring no time for the development of nuances of character.

There are a dozen varieties of shows, all split-offs from the lawman vs. criminal theme. Besides the policeman we have the private eye, the spy, the counter-spy, spy spoofs and even the FBI.

In network television it began with a private eye, as we recall. That was Martin Kane. In five years the actions of Martin Kane wore out four men—William Gargan, Lloyd Nolan, Lee Tracy and Mark Stevens. Each, of course, was shrewd, dogged, brave, and incorruptible.

Then came Jack Webb as Sgt. Friday in Dragnet, with Ben Alexander as his intrepid sidekick. Webb, who directed his own show, attempted to portray the life of a detective, not as glamorous, but as plodding, requiring patience and determination. Webb sought to convey an air of authenticity by using expressions of the trade such as "What's his M. O.?" or "We rushed him to the hospital but he was DOA." Webb was off the air for several years, but he's back with Dragnet 68, and his partner now is played by Harry Morgan.

Raymond Massey, who became famous portraying Lincoln on the stage, earned his spurs in television playing Anton, the Spymaster in the original I Spy series years ago. It turned out that this role served him as an "internship" for his later triumph as Dr. Gillespie in the Kildare series.

It took years to put the Untouchables down. Robert Stack played Eliot Ness, the head of the government agents, and Neville Brand was cast as Al Capone.

All-time winner among all the private eyes is Perry Mason, played by Raymond Burr. No matter how great the odds against him he always beat district attorney Hamilton Burger, played by William Talman. Burr finally got phased out as Perry Mason. He was promptly cast as Ironside, a crippled detective who does all his work while propelling himself in a chair.

While most police and law series merely entertained viewers, The Defenders set out to take a closer look at ethical questions related to what society calls crime. With E. G. Marshall playing a New York attorney and Robert Reed cast as his son, The Defenders tackled such questions as abortion, criminal insanity, mercy killings, civil liberties, and capital punishment. The series owed its success largely to Reginald Rose, the distinguished playwright who devised it, and to Herbert Brodkin, its producer.

But because one series has come to grips with real legal problems, we must not assume that others of this caliber will follow. We can always expect the simplest formulas where righteousness overcomes evil. Nowadays there is plenty of action, with liberal additions of sex, plus violence. There are a variety of heroes in these roles including insurance investigators, and there has even been a crusading public relations man!

One welcome switch: spoofs on the spy theme. One of the more delectable of these is Get Smart, with Don Adams as Agent 86 protecting us from KAOS' clutches.

Raymond Burr and Barbara Hale from a 1958 episode of the Perry Mason show.

Paul Burke [left], Nancy Malone, and Horace McMahon starred in Naked City series.

Lloyd Nolan

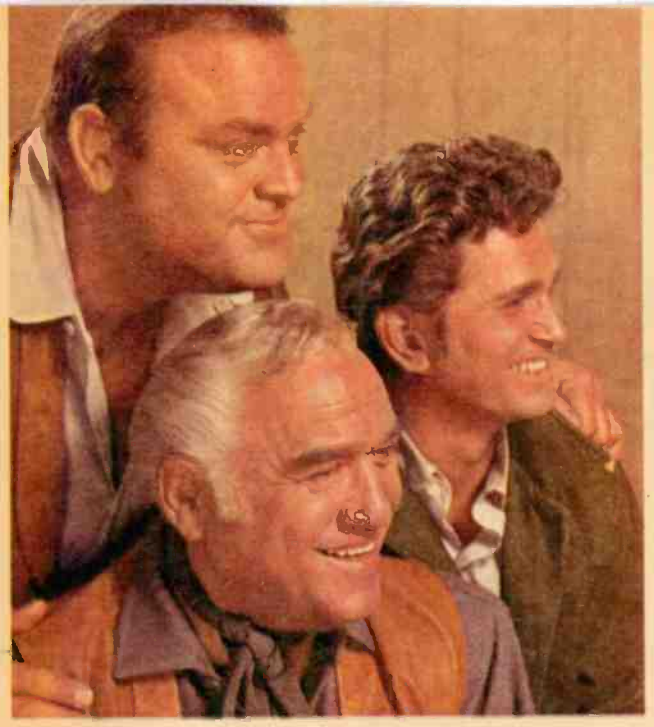
E. G. Marshall

Kent Taylor as Boston Blackie

Ed [Kookie] Byrnes

Lee Tracy

Efrem Zimbalist



Dan Blocker, Lorne Green, and Michael Landon of Bonanza's Cartwright family.

THE WILD 'N' WOOLLY WEST

Hopalong Cassidy started a television trend that has continued unabated for a generation

AS I SEE the heroes of the television west, Bill Boyd is the best. He showed the way to all the rest. As Hopalong Cassidy, he had been a favorite of the golden days of the movies. And he had the perspicacity to acquire the television rights to his old films. So in 1948 he was ready as the western hero and quickly became the favorite of young viewers. It matters not that Jim Arness as the lawman of Gunsmoke has proved the most durable [and probably the richest]; Hopalong was the first and hopped aboard happily when TV came down the electronic track.

The six-shooter was the law in the old west. And many a man came to Dodge City and points farther west, south, and north bringing order and justice—and many a shoot-out to the wide open spaces.

We have neither space nor time to sound a roll call of the men who pacified the west with gunfire. But as television retraced the story, it took the best out of a lot of men: Dale Robertson in Wells Fargo, Arness and his associates of 13 years; Hugh O'Brian as Wyatt Earp; Guy Madison as Wild Bill Hickok; Gene Autry as Gene Autry; Roy Rogers as Roy Rogers; Clint Walker as Cheyenne.

There were Clint Eastwood and Eric Fleming in Rawhide; Richard Boone in Have Gun, Will Travel; Jim Garner and Jack Kelly and Roger Moore in Maverick; Will Hutchins in Sugarfoot; Gene Barry as Bat Masterson; Dick Powell in Zane Grey's country; Steve McQueen in Wanted—Dead or Alive; Bill Williams as Kit Carson; Ty Hardin in Bronco; Wayde Preston in Colt .45.

When the Wagon Train rolled out across Kansas, Robert Horton and Ward Bond were aboard to fend off stick-up men; Chuck Connors was the Rifleman; Jock Mahoney the Range Rider; Robert Culp the brave man of Trackdown; John Payne the one with the Restless Gun. There were even a few pistol totin' women, among them Gail Davis as Annie Oakley.

Today the western craze goes on unabated. Ever more popular westerns have arrived in recent years, among them Bonanza, possibly the biggest audience draw of all, which is imperiled now by the high rating of the Smothers Brothers.

But long after the last Cartwright is lowered in the local Boot Hill, the wild westerns will roll on, replete with gunfire, Indian war whoops, the clump of horses in full gallop, and stage coach stickups. For as long as there is action, sound, and fury, the American male will turn on the set.

THEY STARTED IT ALL

Gene Autry [upper left]; the Lone Ranger, played by Clayton Moore [upper right]; Hopalong Cassidy, played by Bill Boyd [lower left]; and Roy Rogers were the "Big Four" of early TV westerns. None of the four now has a regularly scheduled television show, but each earned a permanent place in TV's history books.

Clint Walker as Cheyenne

James Drury as The Virginian

Richard Boone as Paladin

Chuck Connors as The Rifleman

Gunsmoke: Dennis Weaver [left] and James Arness were the law in Dodge City.

Maverick: Jack Kelly [left] and James Garner supplied plenty of fireworks.

Rawhide: The late Eric Fleming [left] and Clint Eastwood had the starring roles.

THE MAD, MAD WORLD OF "SIT-COMS"

One of the finest of all TV situation comedies was the Dick Van Dyke show, in which Mary Tyler Moore co-starred.

IF THE GREAT MINDS of television should announce a new series titled My Stepmother, the Tractor, be prepared to take it in stride. After all we survived My Mother, the Car, My Son Jeep, and I'm Dickens, He's Fenster. There was a time when situation comedy in TV relied on credibility, but in this age of the credibility gap, it is too much to expect that a story line should be believable.

In retrospect it is apparent that the "sit-com" started out in the early '50s on a high plane. I Love Lucy with Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz and Mr. Peepers with Wally Cox, Tony Randall, and Marion Lorne were excellent and funny shows, measured by any standard. Lucy became the most popular performer in television and deservedly so. As Skelton is the master clown among men, Lucy manages to look funny as well in everything she does and says, an ability which few women have. If I were to pick the one woman who deserves to be called the Queen of Television, the choice would be Lucille Ball.

Eve Arden in Our Miss Brooks, Joan Davis in I Married Joan, Donna Reed in the show bearing her name, and Ozzie and Harriet Nelson were others who delighted viewers in the early '50s. William Bendix in the Life of Riley played a bumbling, stupid father, a figure which became almost standard for all subsequent male heads of the household. Among these were Danny Thomas in Make Room For Daddy, Robert Young in Father Knows Best, and Stu Erwin in Trouble With Father.

Since sit-coms were usually filmed without audiences, it was never known how the American public would react. The producers took care of that. They dubbed in sound tracks of applause. At first they tried to tailor the laughs to the nature of the comedy. But all too often they yielded to the temptation of employing boisterous belly laughs which sounded pretty silly to the home audiences.

Situation comedies derived from serial stories of the radio years. They have one inherent advantage over other types of productions. The same characters are portrayed each time, a family story line is followed, and there is some incentive to look in again and again. This is a factor of vast importance to the sponsor. He can be sold on the assurance that he has a built-in, ready-made audience for each program. It doesn't always work out that way —or why would we have had so many sit-coms? Scores of them were spawned, but few proved truly durable.

For the major part of a decade, situation comedy was preoccupied with army, navy, and other service shows—among them Phil Silvers as the crafty Sgt. Bilko; No Time for Sergeants; Broadside, funny business with the WAVES; Hennesey, with Jackie Cooper as a navy doctor; Mona McCluskey; and The Soldiers with Hal March and Tom D'Andrea.

And so on to Gomer Pyle with Jim Nabors; F Troop with Larry Storch and Forrest Tucker; McHale's Navy with Ernest Borgnine, and finally Hogan's Heroes, fun in a German prisoner of war camp—if that's funny to you.

As the years rolled by the situation comedies moved into ever sillier and less-believable areas—Petticoat Junction and Beverly Hillbillies represented such departures. Another improbable affair was Car 54, Where Are You?

In the '60s the sit-com situation took a turn for the better. The Andy Griffith show, in which he portrayed the Sheriff of Mayberry with Don Knotts as his bumbling deputy, was a must in millions of households.

One of the happiest of all comedy casts was that of the Dick Van Dyke show. Dick played a comedy writer and the cast included Mary Tyler Moore, Rose Marie, Morey Amsterdam, Richard Deacon, and Carl Reiner, who not only played an egotistical star but wrote and directed the series as well. Many people regarded it as the finest cast show since Wally Cox and company in Mr. Peepers. After running from 1961 thru 1966, it vanished because Van Dyke, so it was said, wanted to concentrate on the movies where he has already had considerable success.

1954: Wally Cox, star of the Mr. Peepers show, "married" Pat Benoit on program.

Phil Silvers starred as Sgt. Bilko, with Maurice Gosfield [right] as Pvt. Doberman.

THE GREAT MOVIE EXPLOSION

TELEVISION darkened movie theaters by the hundreds during its early years. But TV was quick to adapt motion pictures for its own purposes. The use of movies as program fare for TV has grown steadily until today even prime time is reserved for feature pictures seven nights a week. The 8 to 10 p. m. time slot, regarded as the choicest of all, is slotted with motion pictures on ABC Sunday and Wednesday, on CBS Thursday and Friday, and on NBC Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday. This is not to suggest that these prime-time hours are the only ones devoted to the movies. They are on as early as 8 a. m. locally [WBKB] and in the wee hours from 1 a. m. almost to dawn on some stations.

Chicago TV stations are currently carrying upwards of 65 feature movies each week. Regularly included are "First Time in Chicago" showings, which has come to mean "first time on this station on this night."

Motion pictures have come to be as expensive as the most costly of "live" television features, including major sports events. "Bridge on the River Kwai" cost the sponsor a cool million for its first showing.

Contrary to legend, Hopalong Cassidy [William Boyd] was not the first to appear in movies on TV. Shortly after W9XZV, the Zenith experimental TV station, came on the air in 1939, it telecast at the request of the FCC the premiere of an M-G-M picture, "Patrolling the Ether." Almost no one was watching, but when viewers arrived in the late '40s there was a ready-made audience.

Besides Hopalong there were Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Lone Ranger westerns. A flood of Valentino, Charlie Chan, and Three Stooges oldies followed.

Soon afternoon shows, late shows, and late, late shows were given over to feature pictures. New audiences saw Greta Garbo in "Camille"; Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers; and Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy in innumerable musicals. "King Kong" has been shown hundreds of times. Judy Garland appears almost every year in "The Wizard of Oz." Laurence Olivier's "Richard III" was premiered in color March 11, 1956. Millions of viewers have travelled with Bing Crosby in "Going My Way" thru the past decade.

Networks have begun making feature pictures of their own for showing both on TV and movie houses. They haven't created anything comparable to "Gone With the Wind" up to now. Incidentally, "GWTW" has never been shown on TV [tho countless persons write to critics and say they saw it on their home screens] and probably won't be in the foreseeable future.

It goes without saying that with upwards of 65 movies a week scheduled locally, there aren't many Academy award pictures on Chicago screens any given week. A random sampling showed among the offerings for one week as late a movie as "That Funny Feeling" with Sandra Dee and Bobby Darin [1965] but also such a vintage item as Ronald Colman in "Cynara," which was minted in 1932.

Motion pictures do have wide appeal among TV viewers. As a critic, I found that more queries came in about motion pictures and their stars than any other subject. Television, however, takes the easy way when it schedules "one more" movie series. It requires no TV imagination or creativity to do one more movie action series. But it does make a handy repository for another clutter of commercials.

Sponsors paid a million dollars for TV rights to "Bridge on the River Kwai," featuring Sessue Hayakawa and Alec Guinness.

The soap opera, of course, dates to the radio days, when such colorful and long-suffering characters as Ma Perkins, Lorenzo Jones, Front Page Farrell, Helen Trent, Mary Noble [an appropriate name], and Stella Dallas staggered thru thousands of crises yearly. All of them are gone now, but soap operas remain, and they are as big on TV as they ever were in the radio era. Among the "washboard weepers" [several written by Chicago's Irna Phillips] that have captured the interest and emotions of housewives thru the years have been The Edge of Night, The Secret Storm, General Hospital, As the World Turns, Dark Shadows, Days of Our Lives, Another World, and, during prime-time evening hours, good ol' Peyton Place.

Don MacLaughlin and Helen Wagner in a 1956 episode of As the World Turns.

A frequent TV treat: "The Wizard of Oz," with Jack Haley, Judy Garland, Ray Bolger.

CBS News

TV news' most famous moment: Jack Ruby shoots Lee Oswald as millions watch from their homes.

TELEVISION AND THE NEWS

Edward R. Murrow

Walter Cronkite

Chet Huntley

Harry Reasoner

John Cameron Swayze

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While commercial broadcasters have given some of their most enlightened efforts toward guaranteeing that TV will be more than lights and wires in a black box, it was inevitable that stations, devoted wholly to educational and intellectual goals, should be authorized. The Federal Communications commission reserved TV channels for educational purposes in 1952. The population explosion and the ever increasing demands on schools and universities forced television to become an effective tool supplementing traditional educational techniques.

One of the earliest organizations designed to help people acquire greater skills and more knowledge for better living was the Chicago Educational Television association which, under the leadership of Edward L. Ryerson, has operated WTTW, Channel 11 [the letters stand for "Window to the World"] since 1955, and WXXW, Channel 20 on the ultra-high frequency band, since September, 1965.

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Eric Sevareid

David Brinkley

Howard K. Smith

Douglas Edwards

The Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954: Roy Cohn [left] and the late Sen. McCarthy.

THE NIGHT OWLS

WHILE STEVE ALLEN is widely regarded as the first to create a "night owl" show, there are oldsters who remember that it was actually Broadway Open House, first with Morey Amsterdam and then Jerry Lester, that introduced these midnight madness hours on the networks. Lester's show was marked by off-the-cuff, spontaneous, pixieish and sometimes silly humor and nonsense. His Beanbag Club is still remembered by his pioneer partisans, as is Dagmar, an ample blonde who specialized in deadpan poetry readings. The show folded its tent and stole away, albeit not quietly, amid reports of a rift between Dagmar and Lester.

Steve Allen arrived on the Tonight Show in 1954 and immediately stirred much excitement with the variety of its offerings and the talents of the men who surrounded him. Many of them were to go on to major successes of their own—Bill Dana, Don Knotts, Dayton Allen, Tom Poston, Pat Harrington Jr., and Louis Nye among them. He was also the first to showcase Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. And Andy Williams.

The show featured interviews, songs, sketches—a melange of unpredictable features, reflecting the multifaceted gifts of Steve Allen. He is not only a fine comedian, but a pianist, composer, and author of many works of prose, poetry and song.

The frantic and frenetic Jack Paar era arrived on the Tonight Show in 1957. TV was soon in for nightly convulsions that continued for years. Paar gave the public heavy doses of conversation. His shows included lively exchanges [boring to many] with some of the greatest showoffs of the decade—Hermione Gingold, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Alexander King, Hans Conried, Elsa Maxwell, Cliff Arquette [Charlie Weaver], and Peter Ustinov among them.

Paar used his showcase to lash out at many persons who had done him wrong [or so he said], among them Walter Winchell and Dorothy Kilgallen. He finally walked out on NBC, charging that a vice president had censored a questionable British joke about a water closet. He was thru forever, he declaimed. After a trip to Japan and on to Hong Kong, he returned to do a one-hour nightly show which never achieved the levels of argument and outcry of his late night show.

Others followed in Paar's wake into the midnight hours. Strongest of these in the early and mid '60s was Johnny Carson, a bright lad who can evoke spirited conversation, mostly with professional entertainers, without the involvement of emotions which was Paar's forte.

Carson has had things pretty much his own way for a half dozen years, but lately Joey Bishop has come along and given him a strong challenge via ABC. And Steve Allen is returning to give battle via a syndicated route.

While most night owl top bananas have concentrated on comedy and variety, there have been serious talk shows, too, which run far into the night, especially on week-end nights.

A leader in this field is Irv Kupcinet, who has had just about everyone in the news—including Harry Truman—as a guest at one time or another.

Kupcinet moved out of WBBM-TV studios to WBKB a few years back and left his old slot to John Madigan, who conducts somewhat less lively At Random sessions.

Others ladling out late night discussion sessions include Norman Ross and David Susskind. The latter describes his show as "two hours of spontaneous, adult discussion."

Johnny Carson and his "second banana," Ed McMahon, clown on NBC's Tonight.

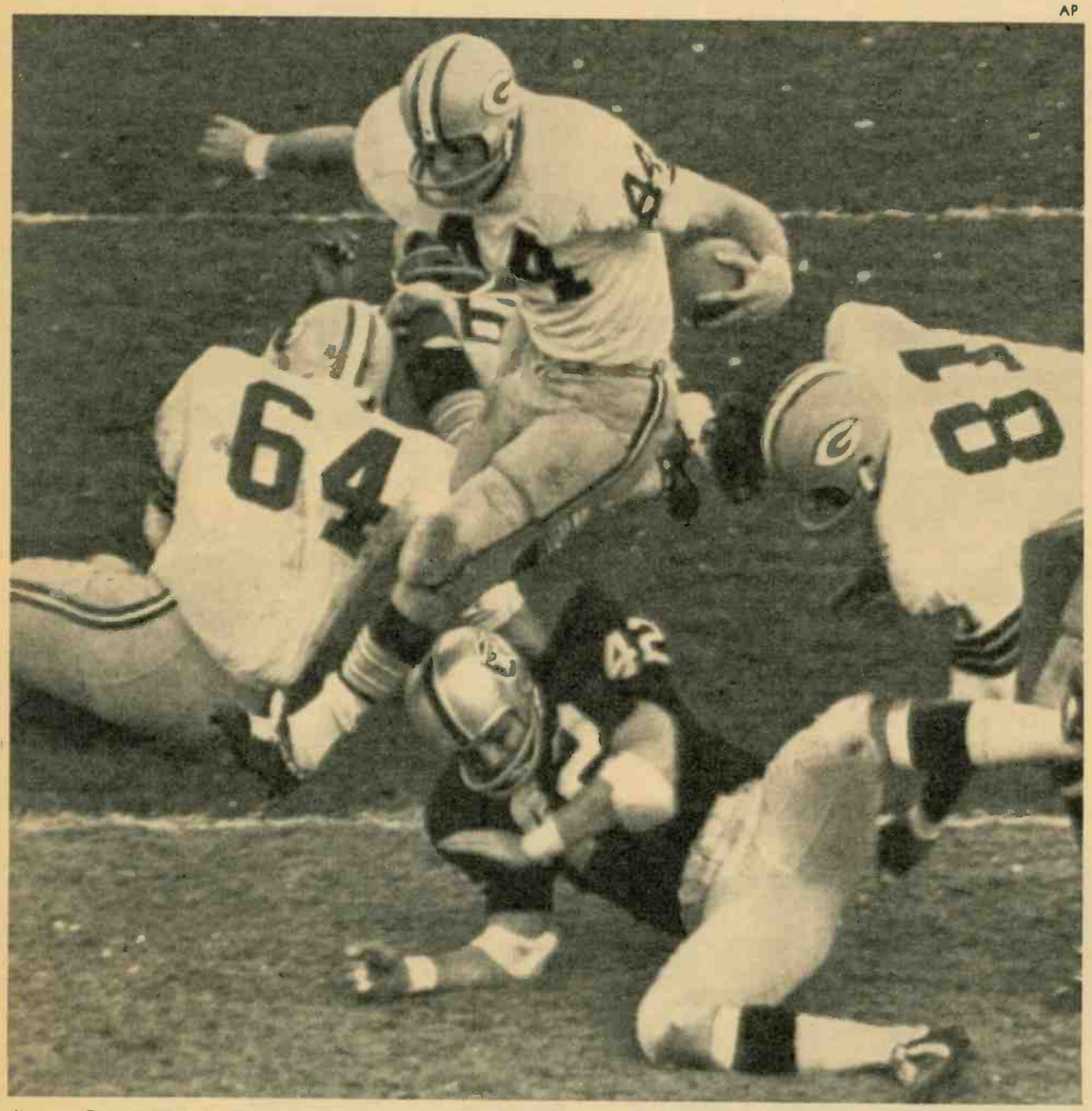
1960: Jack Paar, Hugh Downs, Jose Melis on 3d anniversary of Paar's Tonight show.

Irv Kupcinet with Molly Picon [left] and Joan Crawford on his late-night show.

Steve Allen, first of the big "night owls," accompanies Eydie Gorme and Steve Lawrence, two of the many stars who began their careers on video shows headed by Allen.

THE SUPER BOWL ERA

AP



Super Bowl No. 2: Donny Anderson scores for Packers in 1968 game against Oakland.

SPORTS HAVE always been big on television, from the days of the "grunt 'n' groan" wrestlers. But it could be said that January, 1967, ushered in the "super" era. That was the month of the first "Super Bowl" football clash between the champions of the American and National leagues, and for weeks before the big game, viewers were forced to endure constant countdowns in which announcers breathlessly said, "Only 11 days to Super Sunday!" and so on down to the big day. Green Bay won the game, of course, 35 to 10 against Kansas City, and the kitty was sweetened by sponsors who paid record high rates for commercial time.

Professional football is king of television sports today, but college football [remember the '66 Michigan State-Notre Dame game?], baseball, pro and college basketball, golf, and more recently, hockey, occupy healthy shares of TV time, much to the dismay of housewives.

This year, girls, the baseball season will seem longer than ever to you. WFLD-TV, channel 32, a newcomer to baseball telecasting, is carrying 144 White Sox home and road games, with Jack Drees at the microphone. WGN-TV, which formerly carried both Sox and Cubs games, is exclusively covering the Cubs this year—144 games, too. These, coupled with the network "game of the week" and World Series telecasts, add up to more than 300 games that will be tubed to Chicago viewers this season.

A trend in sportscasting in recent years has seen more former athletes—many of them extremely articulate—move into prominence. Included are Frank Gifford, Tom Harmon, Jack Twyman, Joe Garagiola, Paul Christman, and Johnny Morris.

A great many of the "old guard" announcers continue to be successful, however. Among them: Jack Drees and Jack Brickhouse in Chicago and Chris Schenkel, Bill Flemming, Curt Gowdy, Lindsay Nelson, and Jim McKay on the networks.

Paul Christman

Chris Schenkel

Joe Garagiola

Jack Brickhouse

Jack Drees

TELEVISION AS AN EDUCATOR

Bob Cromie of The Tribune interviews Rev. James Kavanaugh on channel 11's Book Beat show.

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Laura Weber's Folk Guitar lessons have been popular on educational TV stations.

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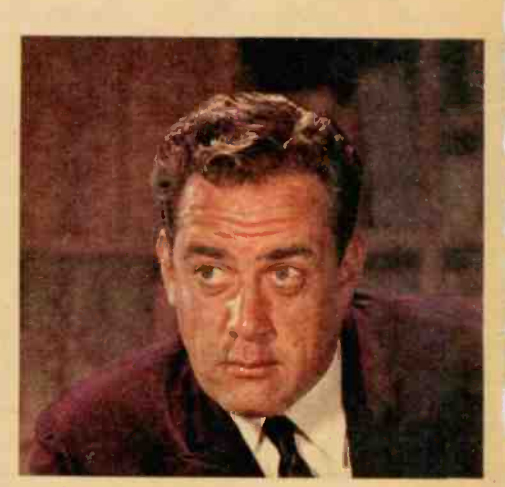
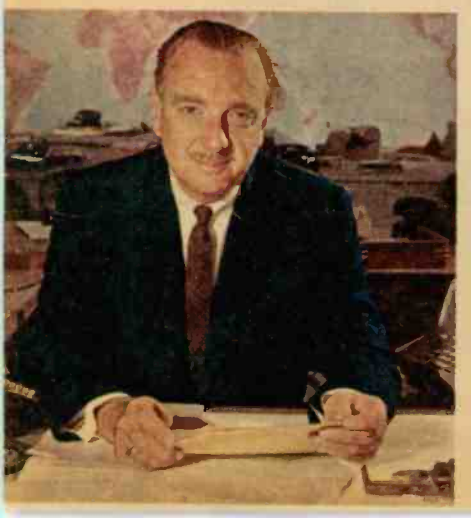
TV QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Ed Sullivan
2. Garry Moore
3. George Gobel
4. Edward R. Murrow
5. Don Adams [As Maxwell Smart on Get Smart]
6. Joey Bishop
7. Dave Garroway
8. Chet Huntley and David Brinkley
9. Lawrence Welk
10. Jack Paar
11. Bud Collyer as host of the quiz show, To Tell the Truth
12. Jackie Gleason
13. Arthur Godfrey
14. Jack Webb as Sgt. Joe Friday on Dragnet
15. John Daly as host of the quiz show, What's My Line?

Julia Child: Her cooking shows on ETV stations have built a large following.

Edward P. Morgan is chief reporter for the Public Broadcast Laboratory series.



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