

CHUCK SCHADEN'S

NOSTALGIA NEWSLETTER

AND
**RADIO
GUIDE**

FROM THE HALL CLOSET • BOX 421 • MORTON GROVE, IL 60053



BOOK FIVE

CHAPTER NINE

OCTOBER, 1979



FRED ALLEN'S radio career began in 1932 with the Linit Bath Club Revue. In 1933 it became the Salad Bowl Revue and later the Sal Hepatica Revue which quickly turned into the Hour of Smiles. By 1934 he was starring on Town Hall Tonight. In 1939 it became the Fred Allen Show and continued until June, 1949.



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COME IN AND BROWSE A WHILE . . . we have hundreds of old time radio shows on Cassette, 8-track tape and LP records . . . plus books and magazines about the stars and days gone bye . . . big band and personality recordings, original movie posters and magazines, . . . movie star photos and more. We're open Monday thru Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and Sunday from Noon to 5 p.m. Your Master Charge or Visa card is welcome at our M-G-M Shop!

Ah-Ah-Ah, DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL, LISTEN TO "BLONDIE"

The high rating of the show is not the only criterion of its popularity, for recently "Blondie" was voted the best comedy serial on the air by 1200 drama students of Los Angeles City College. Final

proof is that, after four months, "Blondie" had to give up her plan to answer requests for autographs with pennies—she was getting 2000 requests a week.

REPRINT FROM
Radio Magazine, October, 1940

A year ago when radio entertainment was studded with spectacular guest stars, sensational premises and lavish expenditures Camel Cigarettes diverted from convention to launch the "Blondie" show, based on three words: "keep it simple." The formula of the "Blondie" program has never swerved from that brief theme.

According to Ashmead Scott, who writes and directs the "Blondie" airing, the "Blondie" shows are really just a compendium of people he's met or seen, or of stories about people which his friends have told him.

"Everything that happens on 'Blondie' is really picked from life. On the bus, in the theater, at the grocery, at graduation exercises — I'll note little things that people do and say, — mannerisms — vocabulary — and from these come the 'Blondie' scripts. Some of the incidents come from observations of people in Eastern cities — some from villages in New England, or Mid-western towns.

"There's probably always something on the broadcast which reminds you of your Aunt Minnie or



Penny Singleton, plays the part of Blondie.
Arthur Lake, plays the role of Dagwood.

even yourself. And for all you know, we may actually be portraying you or Aunt Minnie," Scott goes on to explain.

Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake, stars of the program, are real life prototypes of Blondie and Dagwood.

Penny is just as pert and vivacious as the Blondie she portrays. And just as domestic. She cooks and sews and invents amazing household gadgets, such as devices to remove tightly stuck jar caps. They work too. Like Blondie, Penny is generous almost to a fault. Out of her radio earnings she has established her mother and father in a beautiful home in San Fernando Valley. But like Blondie, too, she's wise about finances. Penny has established a substantial trust fund for her five-year-old daughter, DeeGee and made arrangements for the proverbial rainy day, even though it seems far distant.

As for Arthur Lake — he's very apt to trip over his own shoe-laces. He spills coffee at buffet suppers and adores gigantic sandwiches. As a matter of fact, the favorite story his own mother, Mrs. Edith Lake, loves to tell on Arthur shows his early proclivities toward Dagwood-like faux pas. Mrs. Lake was touring in stock in Georgia and she had Arthur and his sister Florence with her. Came Christmas Day and the Lake pocketbook was not exactly bulging. But the three of them decided to splurge on something very gala for the holiday. Being in Georgia, they bought a luscious strawberry shortcake, heaped high with whipped cream and enormous berries. At the appointed hour on Christmas Day, Arthur lifted the cake in a grand manner and followed by sister Florence started to carry it in to present to his mother. Singing and laughing the little duo



Arthur Lake

marched proudly forward until — Arthur stumbled and ended up face forward through the whipped cream and berries in the approved custard pie manner.

It's no wonder the Hollywood post office has had to install a private box for Arthur since 80 percent of his mail is addressed to 'Dagwood Bumstead.'

No cast ever enjoyed "doing a show" more than the "Blondie" crew. Penny and Arthur clown until time to actual dress rehearsal. Then all is seriousness. The dress rehearsal is put on wax. Then the entire troupe sits down at a long table in the studio with Ashmead Scott, and the record is played for them.

A very careful study is made of every line and the timing of the speeches. A round-table confer-



Penny Singleton

ence follows in which constructive criticisms are made with the players often their severest critics. The cast watch carefully for any diversions from character. When "Daisy" is written into the script, the pooch and her trainer stay close together, listening, too. Scott makes no substitutions for Daisy. The dog barks his own lines — on cue from the trainer.

When Penny and Arthur are in production on one of the "Blondie" picture series, the schedule gets pretty heavy, with the two stars setting their alarms for 4 a.m. to start picture work literally at the crack of dawn. They leave the set for early rehearsals of the broadcast, grab lunch, report for the final "polishing" radio rehearsal at 1 p.m. They usually put in a 15-hour day on the Mondays of the airshow.

To Dick Marvin of the William Esty Advertising Company goes the credit for dramatizing a comic strip that appeals to adults. Previous to the "Blondie" show, funny paper programs had been intended for child audiences alone, but the domestic situations of the Bumsteads have been universal in their appeal. The light homespun yarns have proved the sponsor's theory of simplicity in radio.

The show has faced some tough situations since its inception. Twice the broadcasts were staged from the hospital — once when Arthur Lake was forced to the operating table for a tonsilectomy and again when Penny was injured in an automobile accident. The hospital attendants shook their heads mournfully over Penny's severely lacerated leg. Her condition would not permit having the rest of the cast come to the hospital. So a triple hook-up was installed. One line carried everything Penny said directly to the studio where the cast listened to her cues through earphones. The other carried what was said at the broadcasting station directly to Penny's earphones. The third line was simply a telephone hook-up so that the engineers at both places could talk to each other, if necessary. Despite the seriousness of her accident, Penny and "Blondie" didn't miss a broadcast.

Situations like those only serve to stimulate the ingenuity of real troupers. And the "Blondie" cast is composed of just that. Penny and Arthur were practically born in the proverbial theater trunks. And Ashmead Scott still maintains his own stock company, the "Mt. Gretna Players" in the East.

It's quite evident that the "keep it simple" policy has won — for the audience — the cast — and the sponsor.

"THE ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN"

REPRINT FROM RADIO VARIETIES, MARCH, 1940

Groups all over the country are playing the fascinating game of "Who-dun-it", as they hunch over their radios on Sunday nights, listening to the CBS quiz-mystery program, "The Adventures of Ellery Queen."

It's the latest parlor game.

Everyone around the CBS studios is doing it. In the reception room on the 22nd floor of a Sunday evening, people talk in whispers. The receptionist answers her phone with an abstracted air. Actors stare into space, forgetting their scripts. Pageboys walk on tiptoe. An elevator man suddenly pops out of his car, asking "What's happened? Did I miss any clues?"

Several weeks ago, a CBS station was suddenly forced off the air through operating difficulties just as super-sleuth Ellery Queen was about to solve the Mother Goose murders. It phoned New York frantically. "Send us a copy of the Ellery Queen script immediately. Listeners are jamming the station with phone calls, and we'll have to close up business if we can't give them the solution soon."

On the air just a little over four months, "The Adventures of Ellery Queen" has been presenting each week a brand-new hour long murder mystery, complete with clues, corpse and culprit. And each week, when all the facts in the case have been presented, Ellery Queen challenges the audience — both the four armchair detectives gathered in the studio with him, and the millions of radio detectives all over the country — to make the proper deductions from the clues presented and solve the murder.

Idea for "The Adventures of Ellery Queen" came from George Zachary of Columbia's program department, who produces the program. For years Zachary's pet project has been an hour-long mystery show, with the whole radio audience in on the sleuthing. Night after night, Zachary would sit up until the early hours of the morning, reading mystery author after mystery author, looking for the one perfect writer who could turn out a complete detective story every week, make it puzzling enough to in-

trigue the radio audience, and yet fair enough so that they could solve it if they marshalled all the facts correctly.

Finally, after reading some 200 odd stories, Zachary found the writer — and stumbled upon the first of the mysteries connected with Ellery Queen. For the Queen mystery novels are really written by two cousins. Manfred Lee and Fred Dannay, who have been keeping their real identities a secret for years. To add to the confusion, Lee and Dannay have also written murder stories under the pseudonym of Barnaby Ross.

Lee and Dannay have run into all sorts of crazy situations with their two fictional sleuths. Several years ago they

decided to take advantage of all the offers for lecture tours for Queen and Ross. So, tongues in cheeks, they each donned black domino masks, and tramped across the country, with Lee posing as Ellery Queen and Dannay as Barnaby Ross. Hundreds of rumors sprang up about the two masked men. One society matron in East Orange, New Jersey was very disappointed because she's heard they were really Alexander Woolcott and S.S. Van Dine. Others said they were a prominent New York District attorney who didn't want his real name revealed. Lee and Dannay just smiled thru their masks, and kept mum.

But the mystery of the two authors isn't the only puzzler in "The Adventures of Ellery Queen." The program is shot with mystery. For one thing, not even the actors on the show know the murderer's solution — that is, until the last few moments of rehearsal. When they are handed their scripts for the first rehearsal, the last section, in which the murderer is revealed, is always left blank. That's because it was discovered early in the series that if the actors knew how the story would turn out, they would act as if they knew it. The culprit would



ELLERY QUEEN AND NIKKI

It couldn't be a mouse—for certainly the indomitable Ellery Queen, sartorial sleuth of the CBS airwaves, would never be horror-stricken at the sight of a mere mouse. They must just be getting into the feel of another adventure, or problem in deduction, as Queen prefers to call his Sunday night bouts with crime. Nikki is played by Marian Shockley. Since June, a score of "Adventures of Ellery Queen" have been solved by Columbia's gentleman detective.

try so hard not to act guilty that he'd end by over-acting.

So the actors have as much fun playing the game of "Who-dun-it" as the listening audience — with an added twist. For any one of them may well be the guilty party. They've set up a weekly Ellery Queen pool to see who can guess the solution. Best detective so far is Ted (Sergeant Velle) de Corsia, with a score of three murders correct.

Runner-up is Robert (Doc Prouty) Strauss, who several weeks ago was playing the part of a pleasant, quiet-mannered hotel manager. He turned out to be the killer!

Even producer George Zachary has had to turn into a sleuth for the Ellery Queen program. It's his job to double-check the clues in each story on which the action hinges. In "The Adventure of the Gum-Chewing Millionaire," a too realistic clue almost caused tragedy. Authors Lee and Dannay had based their story of a baseball game the Washington Senators and St. Louis Browns were playing on a Sunday afternoon. The fact that the murderer had a score-card of the game gave him away, since

he'd said he was in New York at the time. Zachary was making a routine check the afternoon of the broadcast, and discovered that rain in Washington had cancelled the game — and ruined the main clue in the night's program. Luckily, after a frantic phone call to Washington, Zachary discovered that several thousand fans had gone to the stadium before the game was called off — and so the murderer might have had a score-card.

That's the way Zachary's week usually goes. One day he'll have to find out if arsenic will kill a rabbit; another, whether Massachusetts puts a tax on cigarettes; or if someone who is color-blind can distinguish between creme de menthe and red cherry cordial. Once he had to ask his mystified secretary to bring him a needle and a straw and then devoted the afternoon to sitting at his desk and blowing the needle through the straw. That proved for "The Adventure of the Flying Needle" that a man could not be murdered by a needle propelled through a straw.

All the craziness of this behind-the-scenes sleuthing is matched only by the reactions of the four harassed armchair detectives gathered in the studio each week. So far only two of all the guests who have appeared on the program have gotten the answer absolutely correct — playwright Lillian Hellman and film writer Harry Kurnitz.

But other guests have made valiant tries and provided many moments of lively comedy. Ed Gardner, producer of the Texaco Star Theatre, and Deems Taylor appeared on the same broadcast. When it was Gardner's turn to give his opinion, he came out with the triumphant conclusion that Taylor had committed the crime, because he had the same initials as the murderer — D. T. Mark (Hit Parade) Warnow said it was his guess that Ellery Queen was the culprit, and took five minutes proving his point. Nila Mack, who directs CBS "Let's Pretend," was so confused by the succession of baffling crime she witnessed that all she could say was that she was "an Ellery fan Queen."

THOSE WERE THE DAYS • WNIB- FM 97.1

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS • 1:00 UNTIL 5:00

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6th
SALUTE TO BING CROSBY



PHILCO RADIO TIME (6-11-47) Bing Crosby stars with guests Alec Templeton and Ethel Merman. John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Program is broadcast from New York for a military audience, Philco, ABC. (8:40; 11:45; 9:15)

MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE TIME (12-4-47) George Burns and Gracie Allen star with guest Bing Crosby. With Bill Goodwin, Meridith Willson and announcer Toby Reed. Gracie tries to get Bing to retire because George thinks he would be a great singer if it were not for Crosby. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (11:30; 8:20; 9:20)

SALUTE TO BING CROSBY (1-9-51) A network radio tribute to Bing on the occasion of his 20th anniversary on radio. Art Linkletter is host and on hand to tip their hat to the old groaner are Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Mary Martin, Ella Fitzgerald, Amos 'n' Andy, Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden, Judy Garland, Bob Hope, CBS president William Paley and even Bing's mother! Sustaining, CBS. (10:55; 14:45)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (12-6-48) The Nelsons play host to Bing Crosby and his son Lindsay. John Brown appears as Ozzie's neighbor Thorny. International Silver Company, NBC. (15:00; 15:00)

BING CROSBY SHOW (12-26-51) Guests Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour join Bing for "The Road to Las Vegas." Chesterfield Cigarettes, CBS. (8:50; 7:30; 12:26)

OUR SPECIAL GUEST will be phonograph record collector and historian **RICHARD WAGNER** who will present some rare Crosby recordings.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13th

DRAGNET (5-22-52) Jack Webb stars as Sgt. Joe Friday uncovering an extortion racket being run by a police officer. Fatima Cigarettes, NBC. (16:50; 12:05)

ALDRICH FAMILY (1950s) Henry's pal Homer tries to impress a girl by saying he's an accomplished pianist. Ezra Stone as Henry, Jackie Kelk as Homer, House Jamison as Mr. Aldrich. **ARMED FORCES RADIO SERVICE** rebroadcast. (14:40; 8:00)

CHUCK SCHADEN interviews **BARBARA LUDDY** and **OLIN SOULE** in a conversation recorded in Woodland Hills, California on Feb. 17, 1975. The former stars of radio's First Nighter program reminisce about their careers. (16:00; 16:00; 11:45)

FIRST NIGHTER (1-8-48) "Help Wanted, Female" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule with William Conrad, Parley Baer and announcer Larry Keating. An administrative assistant for a wealthy philanthropist hires a young man to conduct a fund raising campaign. Campana Products; Italian Balm, CBS. (12:10; 8:20; 9:00)

X MINUS ONE (7-24-56) "The Stars Are The Styx" is a story of a "halfway house" in outer space for those who have been sent away from Earth. Sustaining, NBC. (15:14; 12:23)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (1940s) Guest Bob Hope joins Jack and all the regulars: Mary Livingstone, Don Wilson, Dennis Day, Bob Crosby. Hope and Benny offer a "Road to Bali" sketch. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (12:20; 15:17)

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS • WNIB- FM 97.1

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS • 1:00 UNTIL 5:00



Olan Soule, Barbara Luddy

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20th

THE GREEN HORNET (1940s) A gang of thugs terrorizes parking lots and sells "protection" to the owners. Al Hodge stars as Britt Reid, "daring young publisher who matches wits with the underworld, risking his life that criminals and racketeers within the law may feel its weight by the sting of The Green Hornet!" **MUTUAL**. (14:15; 14:55)

AMOS 'N' ANDY (5-4-48) Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll with Eddie Green, Lou Lubin, the Jubilaires. Sapphira orders a new wardrobe, but Kingfish puts his foot down! (Rinso, NBC. (10:20; 8:50; 8:50)

BIOGRAPHY IN SOUND (5-29-56) "Portrait of Fred Allen" offers a tribute to the famous radio comedian just before the 62nd anniversary of his birth (5-31-94) and just two months after his death (3-17-56). Jack Haley narrates this salute with appearances by Jack Benny, Harry Von Zell, Kenny Delmar, Alan Reed, Jimmy Durante, Goodman Ace, James Mason, Tallulah Bankhead. Sound clips from Town Hall Tonight, Allen's Alley and The Big Show. Sustaining, NBC. (14:40; 12:53; 15:10; 9:25)

TRUE DETECTIVE MEYSTRIES (7-10-37) "Trailing Red Ryan" A bank robber escapes from prison, teaming up with a fellow inmate who is almost his double. Syndicated. (17:00; 7:50)

PHIL HARRIS - ALICE FAYE SHOW (11-

6-49) The sponsor proposes a venture into television so Phil tries his hand at a western show. Cast includes Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Gale Gordon, Arthur Q. Brian, Rexall, NBC. (10:50; 17:35)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27th
ANNUAL HALLOWE'EN BROADCAST

SUSPENSE (3-31-49) "You Can't Die Twice" stars Edward G. Robinson as a milkman who learns of his "death" while listening to the radio. His wife is reminded of his insurance policy. Auto-Lite Products, CBS. (8:55; 19:25)

MURDER AT MIDNIGHT (1946) "Terror Out of Space" A military scientist attempts to establish radio contact with the moon. George Petrie and Peter Capell co-star. Syndicated. (11:45; 13:30)

LIGHTS OUT (4-6-38) "Cat Wife" is one of the most famous programs in this series. Boris Karloff stars in Arch Oboler's classic drama of a man whose wife turns into a human-sized cat. Sustaining, NBC. (7:20; 20:50)

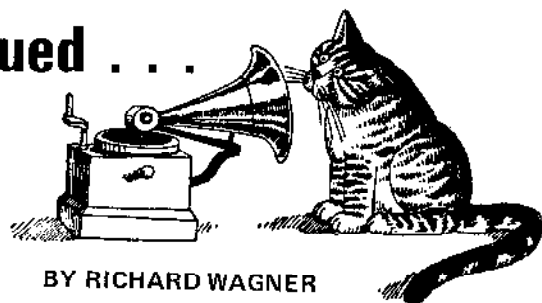
INNER SANCTUM (4-4-49) "Death Wears A Lovely Smile" starring Bob Sloane and Mercedes McCambridge. Paul McGrath is the host who opens the creaking door to tell the story of a man who visits a cemetery to meet a woman who was buried there a year earlier. AFRS Rebroadcast. (24:00)

MYSTERY IN THE AIR (8-7-47) "The Marvelous Barrastro" stars Peter Lorre as a magician who tells why he wants to murder a rival who plotted to steal his blind wife. A classic story by Ben Hecht, narrated by Harry Morgan. Cast includes John Brown, Jane Morgan, Barbara Eiler, Howard Culver, Russell Thorson. Camel Cigarettes, NBC. (17:20; 12:20)

THE SHADOW (9-14-47) "When The Grave Is Open" stars Bret Morrison as Lamont Cranston and Grace Matthews as the lovely Margo Lane. Two grave robbers deliver the wrong body to their client, then go into partnership with him. Andre Baruch announces; John Barclay, Blue Coal's heating authority, appears. Blue Coal, **MUTUAL**. (14:00; 14:10)

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DISContinued . . .



BY RICHARD WAGNER

A question which often comes up is: "How and why were 78 rpm records discontinued?"

It is a sad tale, but one that's worth the telling. Some of what follows is from personal recollections, so forgive any inaccuracies.

The 78's march toward oblivion began earlier than you may think. As far back as 1917, Thomas Edison experimented with long-playing records. Though the standard 10 inch disc of that period could accommodate up to three minutes per side, Edison developed one that could play for 20 minutes. He test-marketed them in 1923, but few people were willing to pay \$300 to \$500 for the special Edison Phonograph needed to play them. Too busy to waste time on such "minor" projects, Edison quietly scrapped the system within a few months.

In 1926 Western Electric chose 33-1/3 rpm as the speed for the new Vitaphone Sound Transcription Discs that were being developed for Warner Brothers Studios. Although far from perfect, and often out of synchronization with the film, this sound recording method heralded the age of talking pictures when the *Jazz Singer* premiered the following year.

After Radio Corporation of America's purchase of the Victor Talking Machine Co., "long playing" 10 inch — 33-1/3 rpm shellac records were introduced in 1931. Two serious mistakes were made. RCA Victor primarily issued inferior dubbings of previously recorded 78's and gave little or no consideration to an economical method of playing them. The American public of the early Depression years could find better things to do with \$29.95 than buy a separate player for some special records that didn't sound too good in the first place! And, squandering \$750.00 for the floor model version was unheard of. Besides, at that time, "radio was king."

During the 1930's several radio stations began to utilize 33-1/3 rpm — 16 inch discs for transcription purposes to delay or rebroadcast certain programs. Aluminum gave way to glass-based acetate and later, vinyl was used. But for home entertainment the 78 was still predominant. World War II would end that.

The success of 33-1/3 rpm Armed Forces

Radio Services transcription discs during World War II prompted Columbia to take a bold step in 1948. They introduced the 10 inch vinyl LP utilizing four tracks per side, which, coincidentally was equivalent to four 78's or an entire album. Philco began manufacturing a \$19.95 plug-in player as well as multiple speed combination radio-phonographs. A few months later, RCA bought out the first 45 rpm records and another inexpensive player. A bogus war developed between the new speeds and neither one was to be the loser. Although the end was still 10 years away, the clouds of doom were clearly on the 78's horizon.

As the 1950's progressed, the 78's decline in popularity hastened. At first all "Hit" singles issued were pressed on both the 78 and 45 rpm versions. This practice was discontinued in 1957 by the major labels like RCA Victor, Columbia and Decca. For the next 3 years or so, 78's could sometimes be special-ordered. If enough requests weren't received to warrant a production run of a particular record, no 78's were pressed. Perhaps you can see why some records as late as 1959 and even 1960 may turn up as 78's while certain other earlier releases don't. A confusing picture awaits those who would collect 78's from this period. Finally in 1960, RCA Victor, the last holdout, gave in to popular demand and financial pressures. The 78 rpm record which has survived as the recording industry's standard for over half a century passed into history. Only a few of us "diehards" mourned the loss.

Many of those who encouraged the 78's demise have been proven wrong. What they expected to be re-issued on LP didn't always come to pass; master copies were lost or misplaced. Some were found to have been destroyed, accidentally or otherwise. Many recordings, despite their rarity, were considered unsuitable for LP re-issue because of limited appeal.

So here we are today, at the end of the century's eighth decade, finding 78's on the list of "collectibles" instead of on the junk heap.



If you have a fondness for the "good old days" then you're invited to enjoy some nostalgic programs at the North West Federal Savings Community Center Auditorium, 4901 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago. There's plenty of free parking in the large lot on Dakin Street at the rear of the NWF office or CTA transportation will take you to the door. Enter the Community Center thru the parking lot. Visitors who arrive by CTA should walk south along the side of the NWF building, then turn west to the entrance to the Center.

Most programs begin at 8 p.m. and doors to the auditorium open at 7:30 p.m. Proceeds are donated to recognized charities.

ADVANCE TICKETS to these events, unless otherwise specified, are available at any office of North West Federal Savings.

Here's the line-up of coming attractions for the weeks ahead:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6th — 8 P.M.
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7th — 2 P.M.

BING CROSBY — HIS LIFE AND HIS MUSIC — a special tribute to the famed entertainer will be presented by **JOSEPH H. VANCE** a collector of Bing Crosby phonograph records, books and memorabilia. You'll see some 700 slides accompanied by appropriate music and commentary, which tell the story of Bing Crosby from his birth in Tacoma, Washington, to his death in 1977.

You'll see Bing, his family and friends, scenes from his movies, radio and television shows — from his earliest childhood through his fabulous 50-year career in show business.

Included will be his first recordings with Paul Whiteman and the Rhythm Boys through appearances on records with the Mills Brothers, Al Jolson, Judy Garland, the Andrew Sisters and many others.

Included in the Tribute to Bing will be the showing of his 1936 full-length motion picture **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** co-starring Madge Evans, Edith Fellows, Louis Armstrong and Donald Meek. Bing stars as a drifter who befriends an orphan girl and her grandfather. (\$2.00)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19th — 8:15 p.m.
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20th — 8:15 p.m.
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21st — 2:15 p.m.

HARVEY, the classic Broadway comedy hit by Mary Chase will be presented "live" on our Community Center auditorium stage by the **PASCAL PLAYERS** of St. Pascal Catholic Church. It's the story of genial tippler Elwood P. Dowd and his constant friend and companion, Harvey, an invisible six-foot rabbit. (\$3.00)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27th — 8 p.m.
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28th — 2 p.m.

SHOWBOAT JUBILEE — a "live" stage presentation presented by the Edge-O-Town Chapter of Sweet Adelines, Inc. It's a fond remembrance of days gone by with memories of great entertainment from America's past, including vaudeville, Showboat and minstrel favorites. Along with the 42-voice Sweet Adelines chorus, guest quartets include "Assorted Sounds" and "The Mello-Edge." This colorful program will benefit St. John's Lutheran Church Blanke Center, Chicago (\$3.00)

HITCHCOCK FILM FESTIVAL

Donation is \$2 per person per film and proceeds go to recognized charities. Advance tickets are not available; purchase admission at the door. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5 — **SECRET AGENT** (1936) — Madeline Carroll, Peter Lorre, John Gielgud, Robert Young.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12 — **YOUNG AND INNOCENT** (1937) Derrick de Marney, Nova Pilbeam, Percy Marmont.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2 — **THE LADY VANISHES** (1938) — Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lucas, Dame Mac Whitty.



ACTORS REHEARSE TIRELESSLY TO GET THAT 'WORKSHOP TOUCH' INTO PRODUCTIONS

ACCENT ON THE UNUSUAL

REPRINT from TUNE IN MAGAZINE, July, 1946

IN CBS' WORKSHOP THE COMMONPLACE IS ELIMINATED

HOPE is offered by **By DESMOND GORDON**

CBS Workshop to writers who knock in vain at the tightly-closed portals of big-time radio. There, at least, the tyro can get his foot in the door—will know that his script will be given consideration.

The plugging, undiscovered radio writer has found radio-writing to be pretty much of a closed shop. He gets little encouragement for his scripts at either network script departments or at radio agencies. He discovers that the writing

assignments are handed to established ether authors who know the medium.

But at the Workshop his script will be read. It won't provide the "Open Sesame" to the lucrative field of radio-writing unless the script is highly meritorious—and unusual. But if it is, it will be heard by not only network audiences, but also by talent scouts and radio officials looking for talented writers. No trouble or expense will be spared in presenting the script. Every prop and setting requested will be freely granted.

One Workshop show required a prize fight scene, one of the most difficult for radio to stage. The solution was not a sound effects rendition—but an actual fight. Workshop mikes were moved to an armory where a ring was constructed, and a fight staged. The job was so realistic that many listeners thought a professional fight had been broadcast.

There are no rules to bind the artist in Workshop. Any story with dramatic possibilities will be accepted. Freedom

from the need to conform to any set pattern develops widely varied types of plot and stage.

Norman Corwin and Orson Welles got their first radio chance in the Workshop, as did Director Irving Reis. Behind them, crowding for place, come new workers. John H. Lovelace, bus boy at Essex House, presented "Slim," a radio drama, and Gladys Milliner, a New Orleans visitor to New York, wrote "The Gift of Laughter," a free-verse musical about American humor.

Workshop's experiments started in July 1936, ran until April 1941, and was resumed on February 2, 1946, under Robert Landry. Landry, appropriately enough, had as unusual a start in radio as is the requirement for Workshop scripts. He came from a family of actors, but turned to the writing field. As radio editor of Variety, "the Bible of show business", he used radio programs as targets for his editorial barbs. He found fault with the dialogues and scripts, but



'BRAIN TRUST' CHECKS A SCRIPT. LOEB IS SECOND FROM LEFT, LANDRY, FOURTH

instead of resting on his criticisms, he made suggestions for improvements.

Four years ago William S. Paley, then CBS head, noticed the Landry blasts, and what's more saw the cold truth in them. Paley sent for Landry and instead of a row, a business conference took place. The result: Variety lost an editor, and CBS gained a supervisor for its entire program-writing division.

The Workshop is one of Landry's major jobs at the network. He picks, with his assistants, every show and attends to the production. Casting and handling of the show itself is left to the director—a different one each week—whom Landry usually chooses.

"Choice of a director", says Landry, "is an important matter. We must get a director to suit each show. Varying the directors keeps the programs from getting too much of one style."

He goes on to explain that actors are eager to get Workshop parts. Because each program is carefully produced, it is artistically satisfying to the actor. Art Carney, the only salaried staff actor at CBS, if not in all of radio, often plays Workshop parts. "It is a pleasure to work this program" he says. "It gives an actor a mental lift."

For the writer, the Workshop presents manifold benefits. Though the price a script brings (usually about \$100) is not considered top pay, the prestige is tremendous. A Workshop sale makes a great impression for the author with the commercial men, who are always looking for original, imaginative writers—a mandatory quality for Workshop script-writing. Further, it is invaluable publicity for the writer. The network sends out press releases on its authors and the writer is given prominent billing on the broadcast.

The chief characteristic of the Workshop is its attempt to get off the beaten path. Each script is experimental—there is no program format. But definite flavor runs through the program's scripts, and

strangely enough, many professional writers can't master Workshop style.

Some Workshop shows are adaptations. Recently, the Landry staff put into script form some of the works of Franz Kafka, an obscure Czech writer, who died in 1924. Kafka had an uncanny knack for predicting the downfall of Europe. In his articles and stories he invented the Nazis—ten years before Hitler was anything but a paperhanger!

In seeking new writers, the Workshop has encountered a problem; rejected scripts often discourage potentially good writers from submitting more material. A rejection may not mean that the author's idea wasn't good—a rewrite might make it presentable. Or perhaps a new twist to an old theme would sell it.

Take, for example, the theme of the returning veteran. This idea has been done for magazines, for stage, screen and radio. It is hard to find a new treatment for it. But Lt. Bruce Stauderman did.

Stauderman wrote a piece entitled "Thanks for the Memories", portraying a returned combat veteran happily remembering some of his overseas experiences. You ask how could war experiences be happy ones? They can't but Stauderman's nostalgia stems not from combat, but from the pleasant associations he had with some warm-hearted Europeans. Europeans who helped him forget the horrors of battle and opened their hearts and homes to him.

The girl-on-the-hunt-for-a-job routine, done countless times, was given an unusual psychological angle by Bryna Ivens and sold to the Workshop. Telling the kiddies bedtime stories is old stuff too, yet J. V. Melick, a CBS auditor, found something different in his fairy tales. Some of them would not fill a typewritten page, but their cleverness makes them adaptable to Workshop standards. Typical Melick fantasy

is a piece about a worn-out automobile which becomes a beautiful fire-engine.

It isn't always an unknown who writes the Workshop script. The late Stephen Vincent Benet wrote an elaborate and unusual program about Paul Revere. Joseph Ruscoll, a free lancer who achieved fame as a CBS writer, has done several Workshop shows. The directors at CBS explain that they don't care where a script comes from.

All this leads to the question: Does the Workshop, with programs of so many diverse topics and styles, have a large listening audience? Do they have a high Hooper & Crossley rating? The answer to both is "No." Recently Bob Landry received two postal cards from listeners regarding a Workshop fantasy. One praised the program and asked for more; the other read something like this, "I thought Saturday's show was rotten. Can't you stick to realism?" The Workshop doesn't cater to a mass audience and has no program policy other than to demand the unusual, well done.

CBS executives feel that the Workshop is more than just a medium of entertainment. The expertness of production gains prestige, not only for CBS, but for radio in general. Known as a source of new ideas, it is tuned in by a critical audience made up of producers, executives, advertisers, and people interested in artistic perfection. This often results in success for a Workshop writer, actor or director.

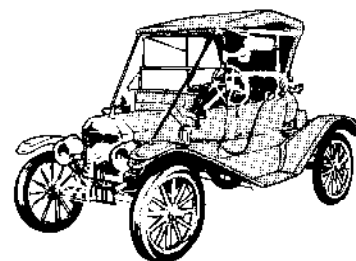
Says Landry, "It is a thought-provoking program; it encourages audience discussion; it invites talent which might be lost in a mass of rejected scripts."

One thing you may be sure of: The Workshop will bring you radio programs that are new, unusual, and a challenge to unventuring, stick-to-the-formula radio. Also through Workshop you may hear a vehicle that is providing the first mile on the career of another Orson Welles or a Norman Corwin.

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