



THE GREAT ESCAPE!

“Anything that is good jazz is a great escape. When you’re involved in playing or listening to great jazz, no one can get to you.” -Woody Herman

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Those Benny Goodman Stories

by Bob Knack

Benny Goodman walks onto a European stage for a concert. His fly is open.

Bill Harris asks, “Why is Benny’s fly open?”

Jack Sheldon replies, “In case he has to count to eleven.”

For years, fans of the big bands have been hearing those funny stories about the eccentric, preoccupied, frugal and sometimes ill-mannered Benny Goodman. The one you’ve all heard, of course, is when Benny jumped into a taxicab, looked at the driver and after a long moment of silence asked him, “What do I owe you?” Following are a few that perhaps you haven’t heard.

Born in 1909 in Chicago, Goodman was only 10 when he first picked up a clarinet. At the age of 16, he was asked to join a California-based band led by another Chicago leader, Ben Pollack. Goodman played with Pollack’s band for the next four years.

In the early part of his career, Goodman shared a flat with fellow-musician Jimmy Dorsey. Both played clarinet and saxophone, so there was fierce competition when any job came up. Rather than share the work fairly, they operated on the basic rule that whoever answered the telephone first got the job. There was an occasion when there was a tie, Jimmy got the mouthpiece of the phone and accepted the date. But Benny had the receiver and knew where the job was.”

In 1934, Benny organized a big band for Billy Rose’s Music Hall in New York City. He then reorganized that band and won a regular spot on the coast-to-coast NBC radio program, “Let’s Dance,” and followed that up by taking the band on a cross-country tour. With all the young listeners digging the band on the West coast via the radio broadcasts as they toured in 1935, Goodman made his first big success when they all came to hear him at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles on August 21. The swing era had arrived.

Sacramento California pianist, raconteur and moderator of the Dixieland Jazz Mailing List, Bob Ringwald (www.ringwald.com), recently blogged: “Zeke Zarchy who played trumpet in my Great Pacific Jazz Band, 1981 - 1995, joined the Goodman band beginning on the first gig out of Los Angeles where Benny had gotten such a great reception. Zeke said that Benny sometimes lacked in the manners department, to put it nicely...At one concert, Benny was standing up in front of the band picking his nose. Zeke yelled ‘Put that back Benny.’ The whole band broke up and could not play.”

More of Benny’s early success came in downtown Chicago’s Congress Hotel’s Urban Room. The engagement

was supposed to be for three weeks but turned into several months. It’s where Teddy Wilson joined them to complete the Benny Goodman Trio with Gene Krupa on drums. Monday night was an off night for Benny but the music continued with Bill Hogan’s band. That group featured Richard Maltby on lead trumpet, who would later write only one chart for Benny. The tune, “Six Flats Unfurnished,” was unusual in that Goodman didn’t get a solo. Maybe that’s why Benny didn’t let him do another one.

The late WGN Radio broadcaster and Browser Len Johnson told this most likely apocryphal BG story. It seems there was an arrangement in the Goodman book involving a clarinet ensemble with Benny and the whole reed section. After each set, BG instructed Vido Musso to put away Goodman’s clarinet. Vido didn’t like this new assignment, and as a response, as he put the clarinets back in the cases each night, he replaced just one section of Goodman’s clarinet with his own. So, after a few performances, Benny was playing Vido’s clarinet and Vido was playing Benny’s.

In the book, “Miss Peggy Lee, An Autobiography,” the author likens Benny to The Absent-Minded Professor. “He would come running out of a building with his hat on sideways. He once went into a hamburger joint and ordered a hot dog. The waitress informed Benny that they didn’t have any. ‘But I’m Benny Goodman.’ We still don’t have any hot dogs,” reiterated the waitress.

Or the time he and a friend took a couple of girls to a nightclub and when the girls, apparently wanting to go to the ladies room, asked, “Will you excuse us, please?” Benny replied, “Why certainly,” and got up and walked away.

Browser Joe Carlton thinks it was Helen Forrest who related the often told Goodman yarn that when she was singing with Benny’s band, at breakfast one morning, as he put ketchup on his eggs the bottle top fell into the eggs. Benny didn’t pickup the top of the bottle; he just ate around it and left it there. “The twenty or so months I spent with Benny felt like twenty years,” noted Forrest.

Bassist Bill Crow writes on his website, www.billcrowbass.com “Benny apparently did something to insult, offend or bewilder nearly everyone who ever worked for him. Benny had a reputation for taking advantage of his musicians. He appropriated clarinet reeds from his saxophone players, cadged their cigarettes, and when he joined “the boys” for coffee or lunch, he usually stuck them with the tab. He once met drummer Maurice Mark and his wife on the street and invited them to join him in a visit to a New York nightclub. At



the end of the dinner, Benny went to make a phone call and never returned, leaving them with the bill."

When Helen Ward, another of Benny's warblers, rehearsing with the band at Benny's home in Connecticut complained that the room was cold, Benny said, "You're right," left the room for a minute, and returned wearing a heavy sweater, ready to continue with the rehearsal while the rest of the band shivered.

On January 16, 1938, the Benny Goodman band appeared in Carnegie Hall. Goodman was now the undisputed "King of Swing" and that concert gave the music a new legitimacy. Jazz blogger Norman Vickers recalls "I was at the Jan 16, 1938 Carnegie Hall concert, (The 50th anniversary of Benny Goodman's jazz concert of 1938.) Marvelous concert. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of people who stood up when they asked who came to the original concert. Benny's bassist brother, Harry, was in the audience. They even had people sitting on stage behind the band, just like the original concert. Benny had forgotten to ask for tickets for friends and family. Since it was already sold out, Carnegie Hall people put up chairs on stage behind the orchestra."

Christopher Popa, the creator of the website Big Band Library, www.bigbandlibrary.com, graciously contributed several stories to this article including these: Once, in the early days in New York City, Benny walked along 53rd St. after a snowstorm and noticed an open Ford convertible parked at the curb and filled with snow. "The poor jerk," he murmured to himself, "leaving a car like that out all night." Then it dawned on him that it was his own car!

Another story has him being jolted out of a sound sleep one night in his room at the Pennsylvania Hotel. "We'd been doubling at the hotel and at the Paramount Theater," Goodman recalled. "It was quite a schedule, and each night I'd go to bed right after we finished working at two so that I could get some sleep. But on this particular night I was awakened by a pounding on the door. I got up and asked who was there. 'It's the waiter [from the restaurant],' a voice said. 'You didn't pay your check and we followed you here.' We talked back and forth a while and then I decided to open the door to let him see I'd been in bed. Well, when I opened it, I found nobody there. But standing in front of the door to the next room was this guy in a waiter's outfit. He'd been talking through one transom and I'd been talking through the other.

In 1955, Benny recorded the soundtrack for the Universal-International film biography "The Benny Goodman Story" starring Steve Allen and Donna Reed. Popa's favorite Goodman story took place when he was on the "Merv Griffin Show" in the 1980s. Merv asked him how factual the movie had been. Benny just laughed so uproariously... and kept laughing. Finally, he responded, "The MUSIC was good!"

In 1962, Benny made a Jazz tour of the Soviet Union with the backing of the U.S. State Department Cultural Exchange Program. "I am not a jazz fan," Russian Premier Khrushchev told him. "I like real music. I don't understand jazz. I don't mean just yours. I don't even understand our own."

A reporter later asked Zoot Sims what it had been like touring Russia with the Benny Goodman band. He replied, "Every gig with Benny is like playing in Russia". It was also during that Russian tour that the notoriously misery Goodman was persuaded, against his better judgment, to give some small change to a hungry child. This incident was filmed by Victor Feldman, who provided a great deal of amusement subsequently at parties by running the film backwards so that it appeared that Benny was snatching the money away from the youngster.

As most of the above has been at the expense of Goodman, I think we should conclude with something in

defense of Benny. First, it is not widely known that Goodman suffered a great deal of back pain during his career. For those of us who have had this problem, we know it can seriously alter one's disposition at times. Secondly, Goodman without considerations of race or his own ego, promoted some of the greatest jazz stars of the era...Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton, Harry James and Gene Krupa. True, he was a tough businessman, but then again, so were other respected leaders like Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey. Finally, it could be said that there would have been a swing era without Benny Goodman, but it would not have sounded the same. He found the right recipe for swing music and served it up to the public paving the way for the other big bands that followed.

On John Dankworth

by Reg Kimber

I was particularly interested to see Bob Knack's reference, in the March/April issue of THE GREAT ESCAPE to John Dankworth's recording of "Experiments with Mice". The Dankworth Band was the first one which got me going on the big band scene and I saw them quite often whenever they were playing within range of my hometown Coventry (UK). If they were playing at dances and fans gathered round the stage, I always positioned myself in front of the trombone section to wallow in the stupendous sound they produced.

The Dankworth band first hit the road in 1953. For three years before that he led the Johnny (he was always 'Johnny' in those days) Dankworth Seven, a modern jazz group composed of top jazzmen. There were still a lot of big bands active in the UK at that time and Ted Heath was top of the heap. Heath had a great band but he tended to be a bit too commercial for me, playing quite a lot of hit songs of the days to keep his three vocalists occupied.

Dankworth on the other hand had a class girl singer, Cleo Laine, who was singing stuff like "Ain't Misbehavin'" and "Jeepers Creepers" and the band played mostly his arrangements of which some were pretty wild. They had a superb band-within-a-band in the Keith Christie Quartet composed of Dankworth on alto sax, Keith Christie on trombone, Bill Sutcliffe on bass and my favourite drummer, Alan Ganley. The quartet had a unique sound and made two superb albums (10 inch in those days), one of Duke Ellington material and another entitled "Cleo sings British". They are probably collector's items by now.

One thing which set the early Dankworth band apart from the rest was they had top vibes player Bill Lesage in the line up. No British band had vibes before or since but unfortunately, he was not with the band for long, due, I understand to problems involved in taking the hefty piece of equipment on the road. The band had its own supporters club and magazine. I won a competition in the first issue for writing a piece on my favourite recording by the band at that time which was "Bugle Call Rag". I won a record token with which I obtained a Les Brown album entitled "Invitation", an album I really treasured.

Dankworth wrote "Experiments with Mice" for a bit of fun but as so often happens, it caught the public's imagination and actually got into the British hit parade. I often wondered if the British public really understood the references to, and the playing in the style of Billy May, Gerry Mulligan and the like. The band did a follow-up to "Mice" called "Big Jazz" but it didn't catch on in the same way. It was quite funny that this band had a hit record, as it was Ted Heath, Joe Loss and others who were playing the more commercial stuff at the time.

Letters, E-mails, Errata Etc...

Dear Bob,

I enjoyed the latest issue of your Jazzmag very much. T.D's "Marie" with Bunny's sensational chorus turned me on to Big Bands & Jazz back in 1939 or '40 when I was 9 or 10 & I've been collecting ever since. My brother had a little turntable that we were able to connect to a plug in the back of our Philco table radio to listen through.

I started playing trombone professionally when I got into high school & have been a free-lancer in NYC for the past 63 years & had the honor of playing in both the Newport Jazz Festival (while it was still held in Newport) & a KOOL Festival at Carnegie Hall (Tribute to Lester Young) with an All-Star band. Another musical highlight was playing at Grace Kelly's Wedding in Monaco in 1956.

In 1955 I joined the staff of Metronome as a photographer under George Simon, Bill Coss & Dan Morgenstern & with my press pass I could get into any club or session I chose to. I shot a lot in the original Birdland club. Remember Pee Wee Marquette? Oddly, the only major jazz star I didn't ever get a chance to shoot was Charlie Parker!

Speaking of photos, I must make a slight correction on the caption of that great shot of [Woody](#) being pulled through that wall. The handsome young guy on the left is Irving "Marky" Markowitz - not Irving Markey. He was a really great & underrated player. He settled into the studios in NY & I got to know him quite well.

I also shot a lot of Harry Lim sessions & designed several album covers for his Famous Door label. I think that Marky did his only session as a leader for him & there is some wonderful music on it if you can still find it.

In closing, I'd just like to mention that in 1987 I got a Grant from the NEA to videotape the life stories of as many surviving members of the Big Band Era as I could find - a project I'm still working on. So far I've shot over 450 interviews - from Al Aarons to Si Zentner. They range from two to 16 hours in length. Just a couple of months ago I documented my 3rd tour with Mike Vax's Stan Kenton Alumni Band on video (the Fitzgerald's portion of which was reviewed in your latest issue). What a treat to be able to hear these fabulous musicians night after night & get to know them as individuals & gather their memories of Stan, Woody, Harry, Tommy & many other bands.

I've donated all of my tapes to the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers in Newark, NJ & they are available for study & pleasure for the General Public as well as researchers & fans & generations yet to come.

Keep up the good work. I'm looking forward to your next issue as well as catching up on the past ones.

-Sincerely,
Bill Spilka

Dear Great Escape:

We would like to propose a US postage stamp honoring the legendary New Orleans born musician, bandleader, performer, composer, and entertainment icon Louis Prima. Mr. Prima should be honored for his many accomplishments as a composer and entertainer. This year marks the 30th anniversary of his passing. A US postage stamp bearing Louis Prima's likeness issued in 2010 on the 100th anniversary of his birth will be the perfect way to celebrate his fascinating life and entertainment legacy.

Please sign our [Louis Prima Stamp Petition](#) to bring about a US postage stamp bearing Louis Prima's likeness to be issued in 2010 on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

-Ron Cannatella

Bob:

After reading John Macek's article entitled Memories Of A Record Collector in Issue No. 9 of THE GREAT ESCAPE, I am reminded that it is said his wife Ruth never was able to bake a cake or pie as John had LPs stacked in her oven.

-Joe Carlton

Hi Bob,

Another nice edition of The Great Escape, particularly fellow Browser John Macek's account of his record collecting. Just a little bit of errata. It is Capitol Records, not Capital. Also, when John claims that his special interest in collecting Harry James began when he heard him with Benny Goodman on Chesterfield broadcasts, it was actually the Camel Caravan that Benny appeared on between 1937 and '39 with Harry as part of Benny's orchestra. Harry took over the Chesterfield show with his own band in 1942 after Glenn Miller folded his band to enlist in the Army Air Corps. That exposure on the Chesterfield show propelled Harry's band to the number one ranking in the land.

-Perry Huntoon

Dear Great Escape:

I have just found your website and THE GREAT ESCAPE after meeting Joe Carlton at the Syd Lawrence band's convention in June. Your article on epitaphs is great. You might like to know about the epitaph on the grave of Spike Milligan, British comedian who was a pretty fair jazz trumpeter. It reads, "I told you I was ill". Your articles are full of interest and I will be an avid reader from now on, along with some of my buddies who I am putting in the picture.

-Reg Kimber, Whitley, UK

Dear Great Escape,

I am interested in information regarding Husk O'Hare. My aunts, the Burke Sisters, were members of his troupe that traveled in the early 1930's and did radio broadcasts of some of their shows. Then, afterward from the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. Thanks!

-Michelle Gabel

"Orchestra leader 'Husk' O'Hare, 'The Genial Gentleman of the Air,' was my uncle. He raised me. Every night over WGN Radio from the Boulevard Room of the Stevens Hotel he said, 'A smile is worth a million dollars and it doesn't cost a penny. Laugh and the world laughs with you: cry and you cry alone'."

-George O'Hare

Michelle: The above quote is from George's website. We forwarded your question and have not received the courtesy of a response. You might try to contact him at GO@AllSpeak.com. Good Luck! Many of the Browsers sent some biographical info on "Husk" which we have forwarded to you also.

Bob:

When I took drum lessons at the age of 13, my drum book was by Husk O'Hare. When my Dad saw the book, he said he and Mother used to dance to Husk's music in the '20s. There are no vocalists listed with the band.

-Joe Carlton

Dear Great Escape:

This looks like a breath of fresh air that my ageing heart needs.

-Lance Travis

Greasy Sack News

Chicago's Legendary Jazz DJ Signs Off

After 50 plus years in radio, the last 31 on public radio, Chicago's highly-respected and beloved jazz radio host **Dick Buckley** made his last broadcast on Sunday, July 27. Many of us would plan our Sundays around his program. I would tune every radio in our split ranch home to his show so that wherever I was in the house, I wouldn't miss a note of the great Jazz, all of which was culled from Dick's own collection. During the football season, we'd watch the game with the sound off and Buckley's show on in the background. If there happened to be a meeting of our Browsers that night, invariably, someone would shout, "Hey, did you hear what Buckley was playing today?" Our best wishes to you, Dick, we're gonna miss that show.

Passing: Acclaimed Jazz drummer and Browser member **Ellis Leonard "Stukey" Stukenberg**, 87, died July 10, 2008 in his home after a lengthy illness. Stukenberg began his music career at age nine after receiving a snare drum from his school band director in Rockford Illinois. By the time he was twelve, he had traded his farm chores for a job leading his own combo at radio station WROK Rockford. By the end of WWII he was traveling the country with the orchestras of Henry Busse, Del Courtney, and Alvino Rey. By 1951, he had settled in Chicago and began playing at the Chicago and Oriental theaters, as well as the famous Chez Paree supper club and the College Inn at the Sherman House Hotel. During this time he also traveled with the Roy Rogers, Dale Evans Western Show in Hollywood and Hawaii. In the 1960's, 70's and 80's, he freelanced in Chicago and the Midwest. During this time he also worked with Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Nelson Riddle, Steve Lawrence and Edie Gorme along with Skitch Henderson of the Tonight Show Orchestra. In 1967 Stukey played drums for Sammy Davis, Jr. in the Chicago production of the Broadway Musical, "Golden Boy". He also found time to form his own group and record as Ellis Stukey and The Dixie Wildcats. Stukey came out of semi-retirement in the early 90's to work with Jack Hogan and the Skylarks Unlimited. In 1997, Stukey began playing with Erwin Helfer and the Chicago Boogie Ensemble appearing at Jazz Clubs, Andy's and Joe Segal's "Be-Bop café" at beautiful Navy Pier. Stukey played his last job in February 2002 with the Chicago Mudcats, a fine dixieland/swing band led by Jack Rusnak.

Jo Stafford, 90, a big band and pop singer ranked by Billboard as the top female singer of the pre-rock 1940-54 era, died July 16 at her home in Century City, California.

Stafford was born in Coalinga, California, in November 12, 1917. After performing in a singing group with her sisters, she joined the Pied Pipers, who sang with Tommy Dorsey's orchestra, which included a young Frank Sinatra. The Pied Pipers signed to the new Capitol Records in 1943 and Stafford later married the label's musical director, Paul Weston. By that time, Stafford had already placed some 60 records on the charts as a solo artist.

In 1947, Stafford launched a side career as a novelty singer when she sang with Red Ingle and the Natural Seven on a number one single called "Temptation (Tim-Tayshun)," under the name Cinderella G. Stump. In the late '50s, as Jonathan and Darlene Edwards, Stafford and husband Weston performed as an exaggerated New Jersey lounge act. Their 1961 album, Jonathan and Darlene Edwards in Paris, won that year's Grammy Award for Best Comedy Album.

Stafford left Capitol for Columbia Records in 1952 recording her two biggest hits, "You Belong to Me" which topped the Billboard chart for 12 weeks in 1952. and "Make

Love to Me". During her time with Columbia, Stafford hosted her own musical TV series.

Jazz saxophonist **Johnny Griffin**, has died. Born April 24, 1928, his career spanned more than a half-century, including touring with Lionel Hampton's big band. He attained a national reputation with his hard-bop improvisations in the late 1950's playing with Art Blakey and Thelonius Monk.. He was 80.

Lee Young, a jazz drummer who served as Nat King Cole's musical director for nearly a decade and brother of the great tenor saxophonist Lester Young, died July 31. He was 94.

Chris Calloway, Singer bandleader, and daughter of jazz legend Cab Calloway, has died at 62. She sang with her father's Hi-De-Ho Orchestra until his death in 1994 and later put together a new version of the band, touring in more than 50 cities.

Thelma E. Adams, known as Marianne to many, age 87, of Kansas City, passed away on Friday, August 22, 2008. For many years she was also the personal manager and companion to Jay McShann.

Lou Teicher, one half of a twosome of Ferrante and Teicher that produced and performed popular theatrical recordings of big Hollywood movie themes, has died. He was 83. Teicher and Art Ferrante were first dubbed "The Movie Theme Team" in 1961, acclaimed for their rapid fire twin-piano and orchestral performances. Together they performed theatrical recordings of themes from such movies as "The Apartment," "Exodus" and "Tonight" from "West Side Story."

The duo also hit the Top Ten with their version of the "Midnight Cowboy" theme in 1970.

-Compiled by Bob Knack

Swing band...

FOR RENT



Pictured from left: Russ Phillips, Ted Buttermann, Scott Black and Eric Schneider

Specializing in swing music of the 30s and 40s, ala Benny Goodman the group is versatile and their repertoire reaches back to the 20s and onward to the 50s, 60s, and some later, excluding rock.

The band performs at any kind of function limited only by your imagination. This includes picnics, Bar-B-Qs, pool parties, Mardi Gras, conventions and wedding receptions. The band consists of piano, bass, drums, rhythm guitar and features a variety of horn players on different occasions including reed players, trumpets, trombones, vibes, and other instrumentalists from time to time. Expect guest artists to sit in occasionally!

[Check out the Ted's song list here! They know 'em all!](#)

To book the Neo-Passé contact Ted at
TBBands@dixieswing.com



Mike's request line is 708-493-1530. Or request via e-mail forgotten45s@wjggam1530.com

Contact The Browsers at thebrowsers@wjggam1530.com

Tell Mike, you saw it in "The Great Escape".

The [WJGG website](http://www.wjgg.com) lists Chicago music artists of the 50s, 60's and 70's. You will also find lyrics to songs spotlighting "Chicago". I have slowly added to this list changing criteria. I wanted a list of hit 45's artists raised in the Chicago area. Even though the web page doesn't explain it, there are asterisk marks besides artists who came to Chicago - making it their hometown. The list is still "a work in progress" *and I would like your feedback*. I started to add pre-rock and roll artists with hit records trying to narrow it down to "Chicagoans" (1920's to the 80's). Example: Gene Krupa was born in Chicago. Even though he left Benny Goodman to form his own band in New York, he put out records under the name "Gene Krupa's Chicago Jazz Band". Let me hear from you!

--Thanks, Mike.

The Browsers, experts in the big band era, return to the Chicago Airwaves Sunday evenings this summer via Mike Baker and the Forgotten 45's and Music of the Stars from 5:00pm-7:00pm on WJGG-AM 1530, Elmhurst/Chicago (708)-493-1530. The station is heard in most parts of a four county Illinois area including Will, Kane, Dupage and Cook. WJGG's hours of operation are determined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule concurring daytime broadcasting and vary monthly with the changes in sunrise and sunset. www.wjggam1530.com

September... 6:30am - 7pm
October... 7am - 6:15pm

Vinyl News—A Pittsburgh-area record collector who hoped to sell his vintage vinyl for at least \$1 a record has instead, closed up shop. Paul Mawhinney locked up his Record-Rama Sound Archives for good in August, saying he's been squeezed out of business by the recording industry and big-box retailers. Mawhinney stopped buying CDs in 2002 and sold off his 300,000-disc collection in recent weeks. But efforts to sell more than a half-million albums, a *million more 45 rpm singles*, and thousands of tapes foundered. One buyer went bankrupt while another on eBay turned out to be not genuine. The 68-year-old started collecting records in 1951 when he bought the Frankie Laine single, "Jezebel."

In response to your many requests: The Browsers theme song "Browsin'" by Ronnie Kole is still available at www.ronniekole.com

The Jazz Clubs Present...

The St. Louis Jazz Club: www.stlouisjazzclub.org An outstanding web site and club with lots of events and info. Next: Cornet Chop Suey, Sunday, September 21, Bel-Air Bowl. Dixie Daredevils. Sunday, October 12, Moolah Shrine Center

Illiana Jazz Club <http://www.illianajazz.com/> Sunday, Sept. 21 - 2 pm to 5:30 pm Rex Allen and Friends Ticket reservations: 708-672-3561 -or- 708-425-4596 -or- 219-923-6775 Held at the Glendora Ballroom 10225 S. Harlem Ave., Chicago Ridge, IL. [Come to our 35th Anniversary Festival on October 24-25-26, 2008.](http://www.illianajazz.com/)

Recommended Chicagoland Happenings...

"The Browsers", experts in the big band era, meet the last Friday of every month @ 6:30 PM "for pizza, beer and good conversation". The group is pleased to announce their new headquarters: [Paterno's](http://www.paternos.com) Pizza 5303 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60630 (773) 631-5522 Dues are six dollars and include a share of the pizza. Details subject to change. E-mail the Browsers at thebrowsers@wjggam1530.com

Disc Jockey "Rowdy" Ron Richter plays big band and jazz the second Sunday of every month at [Gusto Italiano Ristorante](http://www.gustoitaliano.com), 1470 Waukegan Road, Glenview, IL 60025 Tel: (847) 729-5444 Fax: (847) 729-5447 4:00 PM - ? Attendees are invited to bring a favorite CD to play and comment on. Call ahead. Details subject to change.

On the Radio: Carousel Bandstand: (Thursday 10 to 11 a.m.): "Ken Meyer draws from his own vast, personal music library to present an hour of the best of the big bands, standards and great vocals of that golden era of music. Ken also presents many of the big band radio shows from the Aragon, Waldorf Astoria, and network radio studios. WEPS-FM 88.9, Elgin, Illinois

Mission Statement

This newsletter, created by Bob Knack and friends, remembers The **Browsers on the ABC network, Bob's radio shows on WJGG-AM 1530, Elmhurst, Illinois; and contains articles for all aficionados of big band, swing and traditional jazz worldwide. It is an attempt to fill the void left when periodicals such as the **Browser's Notes ceased to publish. We will concentrate on, but will not be limited to, fun-to-read articles on the music from "back in the day". Letters, articles, suggestions or any help whatsoever is appreciated. Send inquiries to bobknack@hotmail.com or PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664. B&W printed copies of past and this current issue are also available in booklet form for \$2.00 each from the above PO Box. [Click here to subscribe to the newsletter](http://www.wjgg.com)

****A Browser** is a dedicated devotee of the truly American art form known as the Big Band. Some years ago, Phil Holdman, founder, often visited record shops seeking rare examples of LP's and 78's to add to his extensive collection. Here, he also met other collectors who sought similar discs or tapes. Phil's wife, Alberta, named the group "The Browsers" because "they are always browsing in record shops."

We wish to acknowledge the many contributions made by readers to help defray expenses.

"I don't know anything about running a newspaper; I just try everything I can think of."

-Charles Foster Kane

Ketter's Korner:

Warren Ketter asks, "Do you remember...Clyde Lucas And His California Dons, Barney Rapp And His New Englanders, Boyd Senter And His Senterpedes, Irving Aaronson And The Commanders, Andy Kirk And His Clouds Of Joy, Jimmie Grier The Musical Host Of The Coast, Johnny Hamp And His Kentucky Serenaders, Larry Funk And His Band Of A Thousand Melodies, Cecil Golly And His Music By Golly, Ace Brigode And His Fourteen Virginians, Mitchell Ayres And His Fashions In Music, Coon Sanders And The Nighthawks?"

That Big Band Singer's Column

By Walt Andrus



I attended Bill Finnegan's memorial/wake and it was wonderful tribute to a great arranger. His son James (Jamie) and I went to High School together here in Trumbull, CT. I had no idea about The Sauter-Finegan Orchestra at that time. I was just a sax and trumpet player. Jamie played trumpet. Later I got Jamie on the TDO with Buddy Morrow and we had some fun times on the road! Bill came to see us several

times when we performed in the CT area., A true Gentleman and was writing charts right until his last days... for Warren Vache' and many others...

Barry Manilow hired the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra to do a recreation of "I'll Never Smile Again" at Nola Studios in Manhattan above the Edison Hotel... The producer was Phil Ramone (who was an engineer on Buddy Morrow's recording gigs in the 50's) and the Musical Director was Artie Butler,, I was NOT required to be there but I wanted to see the session,, They used vintage drums and mikes to make it sound "old school" Barry showed up to hear the band as well as CNN and decided that he wanted to record "Sunnyside Of The Street" as well ...so we had to bring the books up from the bus.,, Barry didn't know the "jive" lyrics so I was asked to write them out and do a demo track for Barry... I was VERY NERVOUS. Phil Ramone said "Hey you sound like "The Old Man." Barry said "Thanks for the 'throwaway track'." I got \$113.00 for the recording session and the "Singin With The Big Bands" album sold over 500,000 copies ,,I got NO credits.

For the 15 years I've spent on the road with Buddy Morrow and The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, I remember us being booked at Disneyland in Anaheim, CA one week every summer at Carnation Plaza for several years at the park... We would be part of a series of Big Bands per week, 3 shows per night... there was TDO, Tex Beneke, Peanuts Hucko/ Benny Goodman Tribute, Ray Anthony, Les Brown, Les Elgart, Buddy Rich (NO Dancing allowed for Buddy), Harry James etc. It was always PACKED with fans and dancers,,

MONTREAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

On Sunday, July 6, 2008, the Glenn Miller Orchestra, directed by Larry O'Brien, and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, directed by Buddy Morrow, faced off in the Battle of the Bands to culminate the Montreal Jazz Festival. The rumble ensued at the Place des Arts and was witnessed by two sold-out houses totaling 6,000 energized fans.

Hard swinging TDO "boy singer" Walt Andrus (a role historically held by Frank Sinatra) delivered on "The Song is You" and "Sunny Side of the Street."

The last round featured Larry O'Brien and Buddy Morrow sharing the trombone solo on Buddy's hit "Night Train." (Historic note: O'Brien was a member of Morrow's Night Train Band in 1960 before joining the Glenn Miller Orchestra as lead trombonist. Then the TDO stole Larry from the GMO to play the Tommy Dorsey solos. Buddy Morrow led the Glenn Miller Orchestra in the 1970s.) In an unscripted moment, Larry placed his trombone on the stage floor and bowed at the feet of longtime friend and mentor Buddy Morrow. A knockout! Source for above story: <http://www.glennmillerorchestra.com>

Tell Your Friends!

We'd love to increase readership of "The Great Escape" newsletter. Why not send this issue to a friend who may not be aware of us. If everyone does that, we'll double our audience. Thanks. [Click here to subscribe to the newsletter.](#)

A Must for Your Collection!

Ted Buttermen's Neo-Passé Band Live At The Village Tavern



Pictured L to R: Russ Phillips, Scott Black, Dave Elias, Ronnie Baron, Ted Buttermen
© 2001 dixieswing.com

CD Baby Price: \$15.00

Order now, supplies are limited!

Four rhythm; piano, bass, guitar and drums, and one of four different world-class horn players on each track .

The over 73 minutes of music includes:

- 1 When You're Smilin',
- 2 The One I Love,
- 3 Sweet Georgia Brown,
- 4 China Boy,
- 5 On The Alamo,
- 6 I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me,
- 7 After You've Gone,
- 8 These Foolish Things,
- 9 Rosetta,
- 10 Undecided,
- 11 Let Yourself Go,
- 12 Three Little Words,
- 13 It All Depends On You,
- 14 Some Of These Days,
- 15 Lester Leaps In

Ted's band, with a four-man rhythm section, and a rotating horn player, usually stays in a mellow relaxed swing mode. The group, particularly with a clarinet lead, often has the sound of a small group Benny Goodman session.

Ted recorded the band over several weekends between February and June of 2001 and thus captured the best of four Chicago area musicians on the front line. With 15 standards featured over a generous 73+ minutes, the average tune plays for over five minutes, affording the horn players ample room to show their talents.

Eric Schneider, well known around Chicago, played with Basie for a couple years in the early 80's. A wonderful. Perhaps underrated talent, Eric has the ability to take a tune and swing hard with seemingly little effort. Featured on six of the tunes on the CD, Eric takes "Three Little Words" at a nice mid-tempo on the tenor and just rolls with it in very much a Chu Berry style. On "China Boy", he switches to soprano and can be compared favorably to Sidney Bechet. Kim Cusack, long time veteran of the Salty Dogs, plays clarinet on three tunes while Stu Genovese is the featured tenor on "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "These Foolish Things". Russ Phillips, son of Russ, Sr. who played trombone with Louis Armstrong's All-Stars after Teagarden left, capably offers a change of pace with his trombone on three titles notably, "Undecided".

With a rock solid rhythm section, this band cooks. Highly recommended for lovers of small group swing.

--Perry Huntoon

International Association of Jazz Record Collectors Journal

www.cdbaby.com for ordering info or

[Click to See the Neo Passé Band in Action!](#)

Bring The Excitement of "That Championship Season" to Your Party or Event...



Pictured: T. Bartlett E. Wilkinson T. Butterman J. Kuncl J. Blegen

The Cubs Dixieland Band has been playing the 'friendly confines' of Wrigley Field for over a quarter of a century. Our foot-tapping aggregation consists of Trumpet, Trombone (or Tenor Sax), Clarinet, Banjo, and Tuba. We have appeared on TV hundreds of times over the years on many local and nationally broadcast programs.

The band performs at any kind of function, limited only by your imagination, including picnics, Bar-B-Qs, pool parties, Mardi Gras, conventions and wedding receptions. We have even performed at five funerals. We appear in Cubs uniform unless otherwise specified. **Book the band for your next event! Bring the excitement of Wrigley Field musically to your party.**

Contact Ted at TBBands@aol.com for details.
[Click here to see the Cubs band in action!](#)

Here is a partial list of the great musicians who've played with the CCDB over the last quarter century:

Rich Armandi, Bernie Attridge, George Allen, Ed Avis, Dan Anderson, John Bany, Al Burke, Jim Barrett, Tom Bartlett, Keith Baumann, Mike Bezin, Leah Bezin, Loren Binford, Kurt Bjorling, John Blegen, Ron Brusky, Ted Butterman, Ed Byzner, Mike Carrell, Kim Cusack, Mike Delaney, Mike Delman, Ron Dewar, Bill Dinwiddie, Don Dygert, Bill Findlay, Doug Finke, Tom Fischer, Rich Fudoli, Stu Genovese, Harry Graves, Virgil Freeman, Frank Gualtiere, Irv Hackin, Bill Hanck, Steve Hart, Chuck Hedges, Charley Hooks, Bill Hutchins, Ralph Hutchinson, Dave Ivaz, Don Jacobs, Bill Jeffery, I Johnson, John Knurr, Glen Koch, Steve Ley, Gordie Lofgren, Mike Marois, Ralph Maxson, Frank McCallum, Jack Meilahn, Ken Millar, Dennis Morris, Curt Morrison, Audrey Morrison, Rick Meyer, Ray Migacz, Steve Mengler, John Mose, Jerry Mulvihill, Brian Naylor, Ralph Norton, John Otto, Bruce Petsche, Terry Pettijohn, Russ Phillips, Bill Porter, Fred Runquist, Eric Schneider, Lance Schulz, Scott Silver, John Skillman, Harold Smith, Don Stiernberg, Chris Stind, Greg Studebaker, Tim Stewart, Ann Stewart (Mc), John Topel, Scott Sutter, Cy Touff, Mike Walbridge, Dan Williams, John Watson, Ed Wilkinson, Lucien Williams Miles Zimmerman, Mike Zudis, Armin Von Der Heydt

Syd Lawrence Big Band Convention

by Browser Joe Carlton

"A big band convention; what a unique idea to have here", said Editor Bob Knack when I told him I was headed off to England to attend just such sort of an event, lasting three days at a posh seaside resort north of London. Yes, the idea of a big band staying in one spot, playing for nights in a row is not a new idea for the Syd Lawrence Orchestra.

With the backing of a very involved fan club ([Syd Lawrence Orchestra Society](#)) this orchestra voted "the best big band in the land" has a yearly convention and has done so for more years than I can remember. There is music, more music, fun, good eating, a beautiful venue and of course, great evenings of listening and dancing. The band itself has evolved from a Glenn Miller tribute orchestra into a dance and swing band with its own style.

From the first notes of "Cherokee" (which brought tears to my eyes as I had not heard the band live in seven years) to the last notes of "Woodchopper's Ball" and "Land Of Hope and Glory" (which everyone sang) the band met all expectations. In the three nights, no song was repeated and everything played was bright and fresh as leader Chris Dean kept the players on their toes.

One of the happiest events was the Syd Lawrence version of "American Idol" in which seven brave souls got up in front of a friendly audience to take a chance at singing with the band that night. They were only accompanied by a piano and they had more intestinal fortitude that I would have been able to muster. Funny thing, three of them were so good, they all had their chance to sing that night. This "contest" may have been the highlight of the convention.

Wouldn't it be something to have a convention like that in this country?

The Browsers Book Still Available

Author and quizmaster Joe Carlton has written an excellent book, "THE BROWSERS AT LARGE: Phil Holdman's Tall Tales and True." This book containing many stories by Phil and other Browsers, along with many, many photos, is still available. Phil and his cadre of big band experts aired a popular big band trivia show on the ABC network with Eddie Hubbard for over twenty years. If interested, please send your check for \$17.00 made out to Joe Carlton, 317 Cottage Avenue, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 and your copy will promptly be mailed to you.

Woody: 1947



This is the promotional photo sent out by Woody's publicity people circa 1947 to newspapers like The San Francisco Examiner and their music column "Platter Chatter". At this time, Herman organized the Second Herd or "The Four Brothers Band" derived from the song recorded December 27, 1947 for Columbia written by Jimmy Giuffre. The record features the three-tenor, one-baritone saxophone section. The order of the saxophone solos on that record is Zoot Sims, Herbie Steward, Serge Chaloff and Stan Getz.

A Night to Remember With the Carl Schreiber Band

By Browser President Phil Holdman

This is the second of three articles Phil wrote about his days on the Carl Schreiber band for the Browsers Notes. We are reprinting them here along with some updates for the benefit of those who have not seen them:

I remember the date; it was October of 1950. I remember the place; it was the grand ballroom of the now defunct LaSalle Hotel in downtown Chicago. I remember the event; it was the first gala reunion of the L.A.A. (the Leathermen's Association of America). There was electricity in the air when the Carl Schreiber Band started tuning up. We knew we were in for a big night. The all-male audience became quite boisterous after having spent a few hours at the bar. "Let's get the show on the road," one of them shouted. The Schreiber Orchestra had a pretty big name around Chicago in those days and I must say we had a terrific bunch of musicians in the band. There was "Jumpin'" Sam Thomas on hot tenor; Ed "Liver Lips" Michelski on lead trumpet, who played a lot like Harry James; Loren Binford, the best trombone man in the city was there; and "Sleepy" Leo Doolan, who played great bass, when he was awake.



Phil Holdman (standing) along with Joe Spery and Warren Ketter just prior to a Browser broadcast on ABC Radio network, circa 1990.

Kenny Iversen was at the eighty-eights while I was in my third year at the drums with this fine aggregation. The rest of the sidemen weren't too shabby either, with names like alto man Crane Hauser, who also arranged some fine charts for the band; Jack Gaylo, a terrific clarinet man who later went with Ralph Marterie; Dick Judson, in the trumpet section lead his own band at the posh Drake Hotel.

Leader Carl Schreiber played celeste and saxophone (he was not too hot on either instrument) but was a stickler on discipline.

Now getting back to the show, after playing a stirring arrangement of "Swanee River" ala Sy Oliver, we brought on the first "act". It was the well-known entertainer "Professor Lamberti" who played the xylophone, dressed in shabby attire like a clown and surrounded by a bevy of beautiful gals prancing in the background. Hardly anyone had their eyes on the Professor. The whistling from the audience was for the girls. For the finale, while the band played "Nola" at breakneck

tempo, Lamberti was banging away at this woodpile and started kicking at the audience and his shoes would fly off. That was his shtick for almost fifty years.

Then, our vocalists came forward to do one of their specialties which was a duet of "They Wouldn't Believe Me" with lovely Mary Corliss (Everyone in the band was in love with her) and our romantic baritone singer Herman Baldassarie. We often wondered why Herman never changed his name to either Henry Bald or Herm Baldass, to make it shorter. After a few more flag wavers from the band, the time came for what the inebriated patrons were waiting for. To the tune of "Temptation" with a spotlight on the entrance, came four of the most beautiful buxom women I've ever seen. The applause and whistles were deafening. These patrons never saw such pulchritude in revealing outfits, in the State of Iowa. Even Carl Schreiber was kind of embarrassed as these blondes, redheads and brunettes bumped and grinded their way to center stage. Red headed "Bubbles" LaRue was the leader of the dancing group and when you ogled her dimensions, you'd know why.

After "Temptation", with the crowd screaming for more, we went into "Hawaiian War Chant" as the girls stepped down from the stage to "mingle" with the audience. Carl didn't think that was such a good idea, but the rest of the band loved it. As I was banging away on the tom-toms, the whole room was in a frenzy. By this time, the girls were topless and Carl was going out of his mind, thinking the joint was going to be raided. He tried to stop the band, but to no avail. I kept banging away...no one could stop me now. I was inspired by the dancers inspired by my tom-tom solos. This was a night to remember, even though I risked being fired after the gig. Finally, Jack Gaylo got up to the mike and played a subdued version of the chart to cool off the festivities. We heard about forty minutes of "War Chant" when it finally ended, breaking Benny Goodman's longevity record of "Sing, Sing, Sing" at Carnegie Hall in 1938. When all the house lights were turned on, the girls scurried to their dressing rooms with their apparel in their hands, not on their bodies.

The Leathermen loved it and couldn't wait to sign up the Carl Schreiber band for 1951. My last chore of the night was to return the music charts to "Bubbles" in her dressing room. I volunteered! It's all over now. No more LaSalle Hotel. It was torn down after a fire about thirty years ago. No more Carl Schreiber He passed away years ago. (I think that night at the LaSalle shortened his life) No more, "Bubbles" LaRue, I'm sure she's gone by now, she was no "spring chicken" in 1950.

I wonder if the Leathermen's Association is still around. I'd like to get one more crack at them.

More on the La Salle Hotel:

The Hotel opened in 1909 at the corner of LaSalle and Madison Street. It was called the largest, safest and most modern hotel west of New York City. On June 5 1946, a fire broke out in The Silver Grill and Cocktail Lounge around midnight. At first, employees and patrons tried to put out the fire and did not call the fire department for fifteen minutes. The blaze spread rapidly through the two story, lacquered wood-paneled lobby and up to the mezzanine. Swiftly, the fire and smoke spread to the upper guest room floors. The hotel had no automatic sprinkler system, fire alarm, or smoke detectors. As a result, sixty-one persons lost their lives.

A two million dollar restoration followed the fire and the hotel reopened in July of 1947, allowing Phil to entertain those Leathermen in 1950. The cocktail lounge was renamed the Hour Glass. The LaSalle was demolished 29 years later in 1976.