



# 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**

Issue No.11 November/December 2008

Presented by: [www.dixieswing.com](http://www.dixieswing.com)

## Maynard’s Day Off

By Denis DiBlasio

*An earlier volume of The Great Escape contained a story from Maynard Ferguson band member Denis DiBlasio’s remembrances of his travels on the road with the Ferguson band. Dennis returns now with some stories about some “down time” with the jazz great he affectionately called “Boss”*

We were in the Blackstone Hotel. There are many suburbs in the Chicago area and we would stay in the downtown Blackstone for about 5 days and run out to the surrounding areas to play concerts. One day we had an entire day off in Chicago. It was like a dream. All day! Go eat, see a movie, go to a museum, whatever. It was gonna be a great day.

My roommate trombonist Steve Wiest and a couple of other guys (I think Matt Harris, Ed Sargent, Ray Brinker, can’t be sure who else as it was a while ago) were going to check out a movie or something. I was the last to leave the room and close the door. Just as Steve went around the corner, Boss stepped out of his room. “Hey Denny, watcha doin?” “Ah, hmm, well, the guys, I mean, hmmm, dah, ahh...nothing, what are you doing,” I replied. Maynard said, “Come in here for a moment”. That was 9:30am.

When I went into his room, I saw a box that looked like a humidior for cigars. When he opened it, it had about 40 mouthpieces in it. “Schilke always drops off some mouthpieces for me to try when I’m in Chicago. Wanna hear them?” “Not really,” I thought. “Sure!” I said. I sit next to his windowsill, look out the window, and saw the guys getting in a cab taking off to party in Chicago. My day was shot...Gone... Fine’.

Boss is standing in his underwear pointing his horn at me and playing high A’s and G’s. He kept giving me champagne. By 10:30, I couldn’t tell if he was playing high or low, trumpet or mellophone. He finally got through them all and I said (At least I think I said) “You know boss; you sound good on all of them. I really can’t tell the difference”. He said, “Yeah, I can’t either”. I looked at my watch and it said 3pm. After that, I always snuck out first.



We would stay at the Edison Hotel in Times Square whenever we were in New York City. We would always go to the bar at night, which is where they filmed the scene of Luca Brasi getting whacked in “The Godfather.” You would see everyone there, actors, musicians, politicians, everyone and anyone. We’re in the bar one night. It’s late. We just came back from playing The Bottom Line in the Village. About six of us are drinking and hanging out and someone comes in and says, “Hey across the street! You gotta come and check it out, ‘Andre the Giant’ is in the bar across the street”.

So we all run across the street and sure enough, Andre is there. He’s playing Pacman of all things. He was HUGE. I mean HUGE. It didn’t seem real. His hand on the joystick looks like a watermelon on a Bic pen. We said “hi”. He was such a

sweet man. You wouldn’t think it was the wrestler from TV. It was almost like he was under-playing even talking. It seemed like he was trying being small or something. You got the feeling he didn’t want to talk about his size. There was something about the vibe, couldn’t put my finger on it. Because he was so nice, you sort of respected it, whatever it was. He was a great guy. It was really something! When we told Boss the next day that we saw Andre, Boss said, “I can’t believe not one of you guys kicked his ass!”



A day off in N.Y. was like heaven. I decided just to go out for a walk and just look around...check things out. As I’m waiting at a light, Boss comes up to me. “Where ya going?” he asked. “Anywhere, just walking around” I said. “Let’s walk this way,” he said and we started to stroll. We’re talking and looking at the shops and we come up to this glass door. Boss says, “See that door? See that brass railing going down those steps?” “Yeah I said”. “Well, that’s Birdland,” Boss said. “WHAT!” I shouted. “Yep, that’s the place,” Boss said.

It wasn’t named Birdland anymore obviously. It was now called something else. But, this WAS the original Birdland, not the one that’s in New York now.

Being a nut for anything to do with history, I flipped. “Really? Man, that’s unbelievably cool!” Boss starts telling me about the club and the Dreamband that he led there and the whole thing. I was in hog heaven!

So Boss walks around the corner and points to this door. There was nothing big about it. It looked like a basic door, the kind you would walk by and not ever notice. Boss said, “This is the door that you came out of. It led to backstage, which was not much of a backstage. “Yeah, the junkies would always come out here to get their fix. This door is more popular than the front door”. Wow! I’ll never forget that walk.

I would always ask Boss about Birdland and that time period. He had some interesting insights. Here’s a collection of Birdland snippets that I remember him telling us, sort of in his words:

1. “That entire Bebop period only lasted about 8 years or so. I was lucky to be part of the last 2 or 3 years of it, it’s funny how people still think it’s happening like it was in the 40’s and 50’s. It was actually way over by the 60’s”.
2. “When you played Birdland, there was always a big band that alternated with a small group. You always used the drum set that the big band used unless the leader of the small group was a drummer such as Roach or Blakey, and then you would use their set.
3. The MC, Pee Wee Marquette would mispronounce your name if you didn’t tip him. Pee Wee was a midget **con’t on page 2...**

### Maynard, con't from page one...

about three feet tall. The story goes: When he mispronounces Dizzy's name, Dizzy picks him up and holds him against the wall with one hand and while holding a blade in the other said "Don't you ever mispronounce my name again you half a Mother-F\*\*\*\*\*!"

- One time while playing opposite Miles and his sextet Coltrane was taking one of his long solos. It was going on and on and on. Boss said, "Trane was blowing forever. Behind Trane, Cannonball came out with a broom and started to sweep the stage while Trane soloed"! Wow! I would have loved to see that one.



Baritone saxophone and flute Artist Denis DiBlasio directs the jazz program at Rowan University in New Jersey. He is also the Executive Director of The Maynard Ferguson Institute of Jazz at Rowan. With nine recordings of his own along with published texts, arrangements, and compositions, DiBlasio is known through out the world. Visit Denis on line at <http://www.denisdi Blasio.com>

### Maynard's Music Library Is Headed To UNT

Jazz legend Maynard Ferguson's entire music library will be located at the University of North Texas, and his extensive collection of memorabilia, horns, wardrobe and awards will likely be housed at a museum in Denton, the university has announced.

Steve Wiest, A UNT music professor, who was a trombonist and arranger in Ferguson's band, said an anonymous donor and a foundation bought Ferguson's estate for \$600,000. The Maynard Ferguson Music Library will cover Ferguson's career from the mid-1950s until his death in 2006. The collection, including original handwritten parts and scores and complete published sets of music that are no longer in print, will join that of famed bandleader Stan Kenton. [www.library.unt.edu](http://www.library.unt.edu) for information.

## Swing Band for Rent... Ted Buttermann's Neo-Passe Swing Band



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](mailto:TBBands@dixieswing.com)

### Mike will return with the Forgotten 45's in the spring...



**News: Lloyd Thaxton**, the host of a popular Los Angeles TV dance show in the 1960s has died at 81. A television personality from Toledo, Ohio, he arrived in Hollywood in 1957, beginning "Lloyd Thaxton's Record Shop" on KCOP-TV Channel 13 in 1959. The show featured records, guest stars and Thaxton's unique talent for humorous lip-syncing to hit records of the day. Renamed "Thaxton's Hop" in 1962, and later "The Lloyd Thaxton Show" the live, low budget, late-afternoon program was syndicated nationally in 1964.

" In time for the season, "A Kole Christmas" is available at Ronnie's [web site](#) .

In response to your many requests: The Browsers theme song "Browsin' by Ronnie Kole is available at [www.ronniekole.com](http://www.ronniekole.com)

### Mission Statement

This newsletter, created by Bob Knack and friends, remembers The \*\*Browsers on the ABC network 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](mailto: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](#)

**\*\*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

*A Must for Your Collection!*

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



Pictured L to R: Russ Phillips, Scott Black, Dave Elias, Ronnie Baron, Ted Butterman

© 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](http://www.cdbaby.com) for ordering info or

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

## "The One (or Three) & Only"

Submitted By Bill Spilka

While alphabetizing the sidemen on my jazz CD's I was struck by how many first names were absolutely unique. Pop stars like Elvis, Ringo, Elton & Celine need no last names to be instantly identifiable. The same can be said of Eubie, Ella, Bunny, & Thelonius. The more I thought about it, the more names came to my mind. Below is another format I came up with---a combination of names that assembled themselves into a longer name, such as *Oliver Nelson Riddle*. The latest research tells us that it's important to exercise our brains daily, so check out my list and see how many names come to your mind. Got any questions or more names? I'm Bill Spilka and you can reach me at [Bill10028@aol.com](mailto:Bill10028@aol.com).

### COMBINED NAMES

Baby Lawrence Marable  
Barbara Carroll Dickerson  
Ben Bernie Privin  
Beryl Booker Irvin  
Booker Irvin Stokes  
Butch Miles Davis  
Buzz King Gurion  
Clark Terry Gibbs  
Clyde McCoy Tyner  
Corky Hale Rood  
Curley Russell Procope  
Cy Coleman Hawkins  
Dexter Gordon "Tex" Beneke  
Don Elliott Lawrence Brown  
Edmund Hall Overton  
Elliot Lawrence Lucie  
Fletcher Henderson Chambers  
Foots Thomas "Fats" Waller  
Harlan Leonard Gaskin  
Hazel Scott Hamilton  
Johnny Mercer Ellington  
Johnny Ray Noble  
Kaiser Marshall Royal  
Les Paul Chambers  
Lionel Hampton Hawes  
Mamie Smith Ballew  
Oliver Nelson Riddle  
Ozzie Nelson Riddle  
Oran "Hot Lips" Page Cavanaugh  
Ornette Coleman Hawkins  
Panama Franci(e)s Wayne  
Pat LaBarbara Lea  
Peter Erskine Hawkins  
Randy Brooks Tillotson  
Skitch Henderson Chambers  
Slide Hampton Hawes  
Sy Olver Nelson  
Tyree Glenn Miller  
Wayne Andre Previn  
Woody Allen Eager  
Woody Herman Autrey  
Ziggy Elmer Schoebel.

**On the Radio: "Carousel Bandstand" Returns:** (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](#)

## That Big Band Singer's Column

By [Walt Andrus](#): Tommy Dorsey Orchestra vocalist



I got a call on July 2 from Hardin Butcher (lead trumpet/road manager) about the Montreal Jazz Fest job on July 6. I was available and met the "Night Train" bus on I-95 here in CT. we drove to Montreal, had a PAIN IN THE NECK time getting through customs and checked in to our motel.... Next day was rehearsal and sound check at the GORGEOUS "Place Des Arts" Theatre. 2500 seats.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra was there as well. It was like "Old Home Week", Larry O'Brien has been a friend for over 25 years, I've known Julia Rich (Gal singer) for 20 years and several of the musicians have been with the TDO and GMO. The GMO male singer, Ryan Garfi, sang "Berkeley Square" and "Serenade in Blue", he's done some gigs with the TDO as well. I countered with "The Song is You" and "Sunny Side of the Street." Just for you trivia buffs...Larry played with Buddy Morrow's Orchestra and Buddy led the GMO for a while before taking over the TDO from Murray McEachern who was a fine trombonist and sax player too!

It was booked as "The Battle Of The Bands," Both bands on the stage trading hit songs from Tommy and Glenn's libraries and then the culmination of both bands playing Buddy Morrow's "Night Train" as the closing tune TOGETHER!!! What a THRILL!

Two SOLD OUT shows with Standing ovations! The opening was like a boxing match...2 MC's with microphones dropped down from the ceiling " In this corner The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra conducted by Buddy Morrow and in this corner The Glenn Miller Orchestra directed by Larry O'Brien" (in French and English) GREAT SHOW!!!

I finally got home from Montreal and then had to fly to Cody, Wyoming for another Jazz Festival July 9-12, A great big band led by Niel Hansen; we did one show with just a quartet and two big band concerts the next day!

Also, I had the chance to work again with Christopher Riddle (Nelson's Son) in Great Barrington, MA for a private event. We put together a small version of The Nelson Riddle Orchestra with two saxes, trombone, trumpet, bass, drums, along with Rob Zappulla on trumpet, his library and vocals, Christopher Riddle on bass trombone and Jim Argiro on keyboards filled in string parts on some of the classic Nelson Riddle arrangements. Rob played some beautiful trumpet, we did some vocal duets, and Chris even joined in with some singing too!!! FUN!

Keep Swingin'!

Editor's note: Visit Walt's homepage at:  
<http://www.thebigbandsinger.com/>

## Greasy Sack News

How many of you collectors have done this over the years? You originally bought it on 78RPM, then a fresh copy on 45RPM, then the LP, later maybe an 8 track for the car. Your new car didn't have an 8 track so you sprung once more for the cassette version with Dolby. Then, the inevitable CD. How about a downloaded copy for you new Ipad? You have now spent for the same song several times. And to you it probably never sounded as good as that original crackly 78 did. I think someone once called that "planned obsolescence."

Chicago Sun-Times Radio/TV columnist **Robert Feder** is retiring. When this reporter was struggling with a Saturday morning big band DJ show on a 760-watt suburban station, Mr. Feder was often kind enough to give me a couple lines in his column. Thanks, Robert, best wishes and you're a class act!

"The King of Clarinet" **Artie Shaw** was born in New York where his father was a photographer and his mother, a seamstress. His birth certificate shows he was born Arthur Jacob Arshawsky, however, he became Art Shaw when he formed his first band. But as he told San Diego Union entertainment columnist Don Freeman: "People said "gesundheit" when they heard Art Shaw so I became Artie."

Trumpeter **Herb Alpert** finished number 2 on the list of the 30 most generous celebrities The list, now in its second year, was compiled by The Giving Back Fund, a charity that aims to encourage philanthropy. Alpert gave \$13 million for education, including music lessons, through the Herb Alpert Foundation.

**Departing: Alfred J. Gallodoro**, birth name Fortunato Gallodoro, 95, died Oct 4, 2008. In the spring of 1936, he joined the Paul Whiteman Orchestra as first chair alto sax/clarinet and featured soloist. The orchestra disbanded in 1940. In 1947 Paul Whiteman became the Musical Director for WJZ Radio (which later became ABC radio) Whiteman asked Gallodoro to join the staff as a soloist. Over twenty arrangements were written for him. He performed up to four live solos per week for WJZ and stayed with them until 1967. He doubted that any other musician played as many live solos on the air as he did. Jimmy Dorsey in the book, "Living in a Great Big Way" called Gallodoro, "the best saxophone player that ever lived!"

Source: <http://www.algallodoro.com>

**Nick Reynolds**, a founding member of the Kingston Trio who jump-started the revival folk scene of the late 1950s and paved the way for artists such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, has died. He was 75.

**Ralph Young**, half of the Sandler and Young singing duo and a legend of the big band era, has died. He was 90. Young was born in the Bronx in 1918, sang with Les Brown's Band of Renown and formed his own band when he served stateside in the Army during World War II. Sandler and Young recorded 22 albums, appeared on "The Ed Sullivan Show" and "The Tonight Show," and headlined concerts at legendary nightclubs in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York City and Europe.

**William Claxton**, a notable photographer who worked with such entertainers as Bob Dylan and Frank Sinatra and who helped establish the organization that runs the Grammy Awards, has died. He was 80. He was best known for his soulful portraits of jazz artists such as Chet Baker. His photos appear on the covers of numerous albums. His photographs regularly appeared in such magazines as Life, Paris Match and Vogue.

Con't next page

**Greasy Sack, con't**

**Peter J. Levinson**, music industry publicist and writer who worked with some of the leading names of the big-band era has died at 74. In 1999, Levinson wrote "Trumpet Blues: The Life of Harry James". He worked with the trumpeter from the 1930s and '40s. 2001 brought "September in the Rain: The Life of Nelson Riddle", bio of the arranger who was best known for his work with Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole and Peggy Lee. In 2005, he published "Tommy Dorsey: Livin' in a Great Big Way,"

Singer **Yma Sumac**, whose multi-octave vocal range and exotic personality made her a global phenomenon in the 1950's has died at 86. Sumac, known as the "Nightingale of the Andes," and the "Peruvian Songbird" with a 4 1/2 -octave voice became a big seller for Capitol Records. "She is five singers in one," said her then-husband Moises Vivanco, a composer-arranger, in a 1951 interview with the Associated Press. "Never in 2,000 years has there been another voice like hers."

Finally this quip from bandleader and trombone man **Walt Boenig**: [www.waltboenigbigband.com](http://www.waltboenigbigband.com): "Got totally slammed by the stock market crash. Would have lost more, but thank god, I ran out of money."

**-Compiled by Bob Knack**

**Letters E-mails, Errata Etc...**

Dear Bob,

I really enjoyed reading the latest issue as well as some of the back issues. I can't resist commenting on some of the articles, but that will have to wait.

I thought I had enclosed this BG anecdote in my original letter to you but perhaps you didn't have room to include it. It has never appeared in print before.

Since 1987 I have been interviewing survivors of the Big Band Era - mostly sidemen who have been neglected by most researchers & documentarians in the past. As a sideman for most of my life, I can appreciate the contributions these men & women have made to the sound & personalities of every band. I've interviewed both Harry & Irving Goodman & this particular anecdote was told to me by Irving, who was, by the way shocked that anyone would ever interview him about his career in music & not just ask questions about his famous brother.

Irving was an excellent trumpet player who worked with bands led by Adrian Rollini, both Dorseys, Bunny Berigan & others besides sitting next to Harry James & Ziggy Elman in some of Benny's best bands - not as a soloist, but as a solid & dependable section player.

Benny, as you know, treated most of his musicians as necessary evils to be tolerated at best, & that rule applied whether you were related or not. Whenever Benny was stuck for a trumpet player he'd call Irv to fill in. Tired of his callous treatment over the years, one time Irv had had enough & refused to go back on the road with him. Benny tried to cajole him and even offered him more than his usual sideman pay, but to no avail. Finally, as a last resort, Benny said, "If you don't come I'm gonna call Ma & tell her you won't help me out!"

Not many leaders can use that as a final offer!

Best regards,  
Bill Spilka

**Popsy Lights It Up At Basin Street East, 1959**

**Submitted by Virginia Dean**

They called him Popsy because it was near impossible to spell, remember or pronounce his long Greek name. He had been the Band Boy for Benny Goodman, the "King Of Swing", for all the years of the "Big Band Era."

In the early fifties Benny broke up the band but he didn't leave Popsy high and dry. He set him up in his own photography business in New York City. Now, Popsy would be the first to tell you that he was no artist when it came to taking pictures, but he had the basics and his studio was conveniently located near the theater district. The actors and actresses flocked to his studio because of his proximity to famous musicians and because they could get promotion pictures for their portfolios quickly and at a reasonable price.

My husband was working as a "Life" photographer in 1956 and he and Popsy became fast friends. Dick was also free-lancing and he would use the studio and the darkroom when needed. It worked out well for them both. Dick would teach Popsy the finer points of photography and, in turn, Popsy would not charge Dick for the use of his studio.

I met and married Dick in 1958 and we would often meet at Popsy's and enjoy a take-out meal with him. Early in 1959 we received a call from Popsy. He was very agitated and he asked us to hurry over...he had something he needed to discuss.

It was at this time that Benny Goodman was touring Europe with a 10-piece ensemble. This was much smaller than his original big band but Benny was still a great box office draw and he was packing them in. The news that Popsy had was that Benny was on his way to New York. He was booked at "Basin Street East" for a 3 night gig and he was offering Popsy the chance to take all the publicity shots.

Popsy was fit to be tied. He didn't want to let Benny down but he had no idea how to take candid shots of this sort. I knew why he had called on Dick, because this was his expertise. We told Popsy not to worry and we formulated a plan.

The opening night we arrived early and Dick set up his big strobe lights. We were seated at a large table right in front of the stage and Popsy met us there. The plan was for Dick to take the pictures but Popsy would take some too, making sure that Benny would see him. I couldn't believe how well it worked.

When Benny came on stage with his ensemble the crowd went wild, the strobe lights went on and Dick and Popsy did their thing. When the night was over we couldn't wait to get back to the studio and get the film developed and print the pictures. They were very good ...even some of the ones that Popsy took.

Benny was very happy with the results, Popsy was vindicated and me?...I was just thrilled to be part of it all...especially since Benny & his 10 musicians sat at our table between sets!

Source: <http://goldendazeginnie.blogspot.com/search?q=basin+street>

*Bring The Excitement of "That 2008  
Championship Season" to Your Party or  
Event...*



Pictured: T. Bartlett E. Wilkinson T. Buttermann 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 event.**

Contact Ted at [TBBands@aol.com](mailto: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 Buttermann, 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

**Ted and the Cubs Dixieland Band are featured prominently in this ABC News Ben Bradley Cub's playoffs interview.**

**Click:** [Ted and the Cubs Band on TV](#)

## Another Name Game

Submitted by Browser Joe Carlton

HERE'S ANOTHER QUIZ. It is borrowed from the excellent [Syd Lawrence Orchestra](#) Society magazine and we thank them for letting us use it.

To what did the following change their names to??

1. Frances Gumm
2. Frederic Austerlitz
3. Doris Kappelhof
4. Antonio Dominick Benedetto
5. Eleanora Fagan
6. Arnold Gerry Dorsey
7. Isreal Isadore Beilin
8. Eleanor Geisman
9. Dino Paul Crocetti
10. Virginia Katherine McMath
11. Joe Yule
12. Norma Egstrom
13. Terence Edward Parsons
14. Eunice Wayman
15. Walden Robert Cassotto
16. David Daniel Kominski
17. Barry Alan Pincus
18. Francesco Paulo Lovencchio
19. Arthur Jacob Arshawsky
20. Asa Yoelson

**\*Answers to quiz on next page (No peeking!)**

### The John Kirby Sextet:

#### **"The Biggest Little Band in the Land"** by Browser Dick Parker

Baltimore born (1908) string bassist John Kirby led a tightly knit jazz sextet in the late '30's and 40's. John's earliest work formative time was spent with Fletcher Henderson, Chick Webb, the Lucky Millinder led "Mills Blue Rhythm Band" and Teddy Wilson. In 1937, he formed his own small group comprised of Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Russell Procope, alto sax; Billy Kyle, piano; O'Neill Spencer, drums and the leader on string bass.

Billed as "The Biggest Little Band in the Land," the group's precise, lightly swinging style had an enthusiastic following during the period of 1939-1942. However, decline set in following the onset of World War II.

Among the numerous interesting tunes recorded by the group for Decca, Columbia and RCA Victor labels were "Undecided" (penned by the group's outstanding trumpeter Charlie Shavers), "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Royal Garden Blues," "Jumpin at the Pump Room," "Cuttin' The Campus," "Front and Center," and "From A-Flat to C."

The group's attempts to "jazz the classics" while reasonably interesting, had also become the chosen path of other bands of the times and did little to enhance the sextet's appeal. As a result of the war, sidemen such as Shavers went into the service and the replacement performers did relatively little recording work during the war's duration. A series of "V Discs" were made for the country's military forces.

After the war, Charlie Shavers proceeded to join Tommy Dorsey where he became a bigger jazz name. John Kirby's musical activities gradually diminished and, with chronic poor health, gave up his working experience. He died in 1952 at the age of 43.

## Woody's Herd Early 1946...



With thanks to Woody historian Al Julian [www.woodyherman.com/improv](http://www.woodyherman.com/improv) who identified all the guys at this Columbia Records session, Saxes: left to right - Flip Phillips, John Laporta, Sam Marowitz, Sam Rubinawitch and Mikey Folus. Drums- Don Lamond, vibes- Red Norvo(not pictured), bass- Joe Mondragon and piano- Jimmy Rowles.

### Found Links...

**Illiana Jazz Club** <http://www.illianajazz.com/> Sunday, Nov. 16 - 2 pm to 5:30 pm Midiri Brothers (from New Jersey) - Paul Midiri-reeds+, Joe Midiri-vibes+, Don Stille-piano, John Bany-bass, Bob Rummage-drums Sunday, Dec. 14 Annual Christmas Dinner-Dance...708-672-3561 -or- 708-425-4596 -or- 219-923-6775 Held at the Glendora Ballroom 10225 S. Harlem Ave., Chicago Ridge, IL. **“Congratulations to the club on your recent wonderful 35th anniversary celebration and Fest.”**

**The St. Louis Jazz Club:** [www.stlouisjazzclub.org](http://www.stlouisjazzclub.org) An outstanding web site and club with lots of events and info. Next: Ivory and Gold Sunday, November 16, 2008 2-5 PM December 7, Rivermen Moolah Shrine Center 12545 Fee Fee Rd Maryland Hts. MO. 63146

### 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](#) 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@wjgam1530.com](mailto:thebrowsers@wjgam1530.com)

### Answers to name game quiz:

1. Judy Garland 2. Fred Astaire 3. Doris Day 4. Tony Bennett  
5. Billie Holliday 6. Engelbert Humberdinck 7. Irving Berlin  
8. June Allyson 9. Dean Martin 10. Ginger Rogers 11. Mickey Rooney  
12. Peggy Lee 13. Matt Monro 14. Nina Simone  
15. Bobby Darin 16. Danny Kaye 17. Barry Manilow  
18. Frankie Laine 19. Artie Shaw 20. Al Jolson

## Ketter's Korner

**By Browser Warren Ketter**

♪ The first Bob Eberly and Helen O'Connel recorded duet was “Do It Again” back in 1939.

♪ Gene Gifford, who arranged for Casa Loma, wrote “Black Jazz” in 1932 and followed that up with “White Jazz” in 1933.

♪ As Joe Bari, Tony Bennett finished second to Rosemary Clooney on Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts.

♪ Bert Williams wrote the music to “That's A Plenty” in 1909 and he was the first African American to become a Broadway headliner.

♪ A critic said that Irving Berlin's voice sounded like an egg softly cracked.

♪ Tommy Dorsey's early vocal trio called the Three Esquires consisted of Jack Leonard, Joe Bauer and Axel Stordahl. All three of them came from Bert Block's band.

♪ Bandleader Skitch Henderson, best known for his stint leading the Tonight Show big band for Steve Allen and Johnny Carson was born Lyle Russell Henderson.

♪ Yma Sumac, the “Peruvian songbird” who died recently was born Zoila Augusta Emperatriz Chavarri del Castillo in Cajamarca, Peru, on Sept. 13, 1922.

♪ I never knew Eddie Condon was a composer until I heard piano man Chuck Folds play Eddie's pretty “Wherever There's Love There's You and I.”

“All of us here wish all of you there...a happy and safe holiday season”

## Les Elgart vs. Carl Schreiber Battle of the Bands

By Browser President Phil Holdman

*This is the third 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:*

In the late fifties, the Carl Schreiber Band I drummed with was at its peak. Great bookings were coming in almost every weekend from Loop hotels and ballrooms from all over the City of Chicago.



**Photo: Just prior to a Browser broadcast in the "Whine Cellar," radio engineer Erv Edell (with battery pliers) delicately attends to Phil Holdman's trousers in what has come to be known as the world's first "wardrobe malfunction".**

The biggest "plum" of all was a date to appear on New Year's Eve at the "far famed" Aragon Ballroom. It was every musician's dream to play at least once in their life at the Aragon. What a thrill to join that elite group like Wayne King, Art Kassel, Dick Jurgens with Eddy Howard, Freddy Martin, Lawrence Welk, Benny Goodman and Harry James.

This New Year's gig was billed as "Battle of the Bands," as we were going to share the festivities with the great Les Elgart Band from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Each band to play for one-hour straight, so that there would be continuous music for the dancers.

Electricity filled the air when the night of music was about to begin. The Schreiber band was decked out in tuxedos, while the Elgart men wore sharp powder blue sport jackets.

Our disciplined band played first, with Carl whipping out his best dance arrangements like "Strictly Instrumental," "No Name Jive," "Cherokee" and "Woodchoppers Ball" – all "stocks" ala the original recordings. Then we went into a long Waltz medley to quiet down the crowd a bit. "Let me call You Sweetheart" did the trick nicely followed by "The Waltz You Saved For Me."

Our Hour segment ran very smoothly and our last number got the dancers in a good mood with "Don't Be That Way" and "In the Mood."

As we sauntered off the bandstand to let the Elgart band get on, something drastic happened. Les Elgart's drummer "Mike" (not his real name) could hardly get up on the stage, he was so inebriated. "Mike" always had a drinking problem, but this New Year's he started out early and was "smashed" before the job

started. He was really wasted. Les called to me and shouted "Hey, drummer boy, do you think you can sit in with us for the night?"

I answered quickly, "Is the Pope Catholic?" I could see it now—the lighted marquee outside on the Aragon sign saying: "In person, the great band of Les Elgart featuring the pyro-techniques of drummer Phil Holdman." "Sure, I think I can cut it Les." In our minds, we were both a little nervous, but we had no alternatives—this is Show Biz.

I fell into a groove right away as the band kicked off with the ever-popular "For Dancers Only." I found playing with that group easier than playing with Schreiber. The only instructions I had from Les was, "Just watch me for the breaks and accents." I didn't even have to watch. I felt them. What a thrill it was to play tunes like "Swingin Down the Lane" and "Sophisticated Swing." No tangos, no waltzes, just plain swing. It was pure pleasure. Even the selections had swing in the titles.

I was so wrapped up in my two band activities that I hardly got a chance to use the facilities or give my wife a New Year's kiss at the midnight hour. Not to mention that I wasn't even paid for my overtime duties.

It didn't matter. We were having a ball. Just havin Les Elgart pat me on the back and say, "Nice job, kid" was better than the fifty bucks overtime pay.

After the long "gig", I had to disassemble two drum sets—my own black "Ludwigs" and Mike's white pearl "Slingerlands"

Back in the dressing room, Mr. Mike was fast asleep on a chair—Les told me not to wake him. "Let him sleep it off." In the back of my mind, I was thinking, maybe I should travel with the band, in case another emergency occurs.

I never saw Mr. Elgart again after that night, but I knew he would be listening to our Browser shows every Saturday from his retirement home in Florida.

When Les passed away, at his eulogy a good friend said, "Les always strived for perfection, both in his life and his music."

I hope I contributed to his beliefs that memorable night at "The Far Famed Aragon Ball Room."



**The Dance Floor Of The Aragon Circa 1935:**

### About the Aragon Ballroom

The enormous and extravagantly decorated Aragon Ballroom opened in 1926 in the heart of Chicago's booming Uptown district at 1100 West Lawrence Avenue. The ballroom was designed to resemble the courtyard of a Moorish castle. Palm trees and twinkling lights in the ceiling were added to give dancers the feeling they were spending the night under a clear, Spanish sky. Built to hold nearly 8,000 people, the all-maple dance floor rode a cushion of cork, felt, and springs that vibrated to the music of the Aragon's bands, including those of the ballroom's most regular bandleaders: Freddy Martin, Wayne King, and Dick Jurgens. Regular dance schedules at the Aragon ended February 9, 1964, after several years of sagging attendance. The enormous ballroom simply could not compete against the rise of television, and the decline of the Uptown neighborhood. Since then, the Aragon has hosted a wide variety of events, including wrestling matches, roller skating, rock concerts, and even a couple of disco nights. Today, it is used primarily for concerts, prizefights, and occasional dances. Source for above: [Jazz Age Chicago](http://Jazz Age Chicago).