



# 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.14 July/August 2009

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

## Captain Miller Saves a Life

By Browser Bob Knack

I know this is going to sound like one of those Paul Harvey “The Rest of the Story” things you’ve heard on the radio but that can’t be helped.

He was born in Cleveland, Ohio on April 16, 1924. A few years later, his father got a job at a steel company in West Aliquippa, PA and so that’s where he was raised.

On a winter day in 1935, he and his dad drove from West Aliquippa down to Pittsburgh to see a movie at the Loew’s Penn Theatre. It would prove to be a life changing experience. The movie was Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Crusades*. It was the first “talkie” the boy had ever seen. Mostly what he remembered from it was the music composed by Rudolph Kopp. In his naiveté, he thought a “live” orchestra was playing behind the movie screen.

The other parents in West Aliquippa would fight very hard to get their children a job in the steel mill, it was the only life they knew, but this boy’s father wanted him to go to school, become a teacher, and escape the rough life in the mills. However, after seeing that motion picture, all this lad could think about was someday writing music for the movies.

A year after seeing that picture, Benny Goodman arrived with the swing era and the youngster, hearing those songs on the radio became very interested in how music was written. His father sent him to Pittsburgh for piano lessons and there he was taught arranging by conductor, clarinetist, and saxophonist Max Adkins, who was to become a major influence on his life. It was Adkins who around that same time also taught Jerry Fielding and Billy Strayhorn.

The Benny Goodman band came to town and Adkins made it possible for the young man to meet Benny and actually write a chart for the BG band. The aspiring young arranger then moved on to New York, and while the assignment with Goodman didn’t work out, he soon earned entrance to the Julliard School of Music. During that summer, he found piano playing jobs with several bands working with Bob Allen, Johnny Long, and Vincent Lopez, who ended up firing him for outshining him on a broadcast.

When he turned eighteen in 1942, he registered and was called up for the draft and assigned to the Army Air Corps with basic training in Atlantic City.

In October 1942, Glenn Miller reported for induction

into the Army and was assigned to the Army Specialist Corps. His appointment as a Captain came after many months of convincing the military brass that he could modernize the army band and improve the morale of the men. After his training, he was transferred into the Army Air Corps, where he was forming his band before going overseas. The teen-ager from West Aliquippa PA was delighted to have the opportunity to now “hang” with the Miller bandsmen, who encouraged him to go and speak with the leader.

An appointment was made, and the frightened eighteen-year-old made his way into Captain Glenn Miller’s small sparsely furnished office. “I hear you’re an arranger,” said Miller, “do you write well?” “Well enough...” and I also play flute, piccolo and piano.” Miller took down his serial number and that was the end of the very brief meeting. After basic training, and much to this young man’s surprise, he was then assigned to the 28th Air Force band.

Had it not been for that ever-so-brief encounter with Glenn Miller, instead of being assigned to a band he might have gone to gunnery school to become a combat tail gunner where he likely would have been in his words, “shortly thereafter fire-hosed out of a turret or the tail of a B-17.”

He would never have gone on after his service to work at Universal Pictures fulfilling his ambition of writing music for the movies. Never would he have received an astounding seventy Grammy nominations and twenty Grammy awards. Nor would he have been here to be nominated by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences a dozen times, winning four Oscars. Somewhat ironically, he also went on to write the movie scores for *The Benny Goodman Story* and *The Glenn Miller Story*.

That young recruit’s name? Henry Mancini.

And now you know (with apologies to Mr. Harvey) the rest of the story.

*Source: “Did They Mention the Music, the Autobiography of Henry Mancini” Henry Mancini with Gene Lees, Cooper Square Press, New York, New York*

**Also in this issue:** 6,915 total words that you will enjoy reading ...Browser and quizmaster Joe Carlton is here with “Victrolas, Turntables And Phonographs” and “You’re Going To Have To Help Me With This Quiz ‘Cause I Don’t Know All The Answers”, and part two of “A Singing Legend Talks with the Browsers” In the June 1993 edition of the Browsers Notes, Phil Holdman and Warren Ketter continued their telephone interview with singer Bea Wain. This is the first time it has appeared over the internet. Plus Greasy Sack News, Ketter’s Korner and loads of anecdotes and features you’ll enjoy. Thanks for reading!

*What other Jazz band plays to over  
40,000 adoring fans at every gig?  
Now Available For Your Wedding  
Reception!*



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

**The Cubs Dixieland Band** has been playing to packed houses at the 'friendly confines' of Wrigley Field for over a quarter of a century, the major league's longest-running baseball band. 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.

**Now Chicago's most listened to Jazz band can light-up your next happening!** 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.**

**NEWS:** Ted reports that the Cubs band is now in great demand for wedding receptions. To see Ted's listing in Brides.com. [click here](#)

To book the Cubs band contact Ted at [TBBands@aol.com](mailto:TBBands@aol.com) or call 847-255-6448 for details.

[Click here to see the Cubs band in action!](#)

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

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

### **On the Radio, Saluting Ken Meyer:**

Due to one of those proverbial "format changes" our good friend Ken Meyer's "Carousel Bandstand" is no longer heard on WEPS-FM 88.9, Elgin, Illinois. We salute Ken on many years of outstanding big band broadcasts. I had the pleasure of working with Ken on the old WKDC, Elmhurst, IL in the early 1990's, the first ever AM-Stereo station, and he is one of the all-time best. We'll be sure to let you know when Ken returns to the airwaves.

## Letters, E-Mails, Errata Etc.

### **In Search Of Elmer Kaiser**

Dear Bob:

We had a GREAT French Quarter Festival; and JazzFest and are now in Rome, GA, heading to the Cincinnati area tomorrow...

I have a question for you and/or the Browsers...The last piano teacher that I had was Elmer Kaiser, who was also a society or dance band bandleader...Merrygold or Merry Garden Ballroom I think...He taught me to play commercial, ala the Cavallaro style among other things...He taught in the Lyon and Healy Building in the loop...Does anyone remember him, and if so, can they fill me in on him and his career?

Keep the publications coming...and thanks;

**Ronnie Kole**

[www.RonnieKole.com](http://www.RonnieKole.com)

### **Re: Sam Butera:**

Hi Guys,

How sad... another one gone...I got to see Sam with Keely Smith at The Desert Inn Lounge; we were with The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and had a night off. I had met Keely before... Later we were in a hotel in PA and Sam was playing the Ballroom I caught his show there too! Great Show! What a Band and Sam sounded GREAT! Sang just like Louis Prima... Sam was quite a character!

**-Walt Andrus**

## Look Out For Scarface

Las Vegas - mid-1950 - the headliner was Herb ("Flamingo") Jeffries. He was a tall man, looking for all the world like a mean, tough gangster, with a pock-marked face, having a long scar running down one side (from a plane crash, not a gang incident), yet, inexplicably handsome.

As singers do on stage, he provided some patter between tunes. During one such bit, the punch line was, "... because there was no reason for me to do otherwise."

After Jeffries concluded (ending the show), the band vocal group stepped out onto the stage, pursuant to the band's resumption of dance music, to sing "Toot, Toot, Tootsie."

As a setup for the tune, each member of the vocal group was to say a line or two alluding to the '20's era. I usually said something about having "my pocket flask in my hip pocket." One night, on impulse, I added "because there was no reason for me to do otherwise."

Just as I completed the line, I noticed that Jeffries, just about to leave the room, stopped abruptly, turned around, glared for a moment, said something to a companion, glared again, and then continued his exit from the room.

For just an instant, I thought I saw, not Herb Jeffries, a nice guy and a great singer, but, Herb Jeffries a mean, scar-faced, gangster-type tough looking guy, looking for retribution. It was scary! For a long time after that, I refrained from using that expression.

**-Phil Vonder Haar**

**-Gateway City Big Band**

# Victrolas, Turntables And Phonographs

by ©Browser Joe Carlton

I am currently reading the comprehensive biography of Woody Herman, entitled LEADER OF THE BAND by Gene Lees. In writing about Woody's struggles in the mid-1930s, during the Great Depression, author Lees discusses the drop of sales of 78-rpm records to a low of only 6,000,000 total for the year of 1932. In 1927, record sales had totaled 104 million! Hard to imagine. The two major companies making records at that time were RCA and Columbia with their records selling for 50 to 75 cents each. There was an upstart recorded company named Decca and they came out with some records selling for 35 cents each.

With sales dwindling, both RCA and Columbia issued low priced records to compete Bluebird for RCA and Okeh for Columbia.

Gene Lees added that since record sales were off, so were the sales of phonographs. About 987,000 phonographs had been sold in 1927 and by 1932, sales had fallen to 40,000. This is nationwide sales and by today's standards almost impossible to consider. All of this brings me to my first experience with record playing devices. My grandmother lived in a one story home that had a rather extended basement. I used to go down there to "ping". "Pinging" is firing a small caliber rifle at a target. I had a single shot Sears and Roebuck's .22 caliber rifle.

Something down in that basement caught my eye. It was a windup console Victrola in a wooden case. The turntable was enclosed with a heavy wooden cover on hinges. I remember the crank was on the right hand side, which presented a minor problem as I am left handed. To play a record, you would have to windup the machine before starting. The spring you wound up would last through at least one 12" record. She had a lot of these records, mostly red seal, thick Victor platters with many of them featuring Enrico Caruso singing. I was no fan of Caruso's but was fascinated by the working of this "thing".

The needles used in the tone arm were made of cactus --yes, cactus. The manufacturer of this early phonograph hadn't advanced to steel needles yet so I think this phonograph dated back to about 1910. You ask about its speakers. It didn't have any speakers. To hear sound, you opened two wooden doors underneath the turntable and the sound came out of there, mixed with much surface noise, which was one of the blights of 78-rpm players for many years. And when a record was finished playing, you had to remove to the tonal arm from the record or it would continue spinning round and round until the spring wore down.

Since phonograph sales were very poor, RCA installed a jack in the back of their large console model radios and we had one of these RCAs. I have an older sister who is quite musically inclined. She loved to sing and dance and saved up her money to buy a turntable which could be attached to the speakers of the radio and we had music. Since hardly anyone had any money for such luxuries, they were priced to sell. RCA figured "Hey, what the heck. if we can't sell phonographs, let's do something else so we can provide music".

Mary Ellen, my sister, worked hard and after awhile was able to come up with the \$16.50 cost of this new idea

turntable. As an added incentive, she had her choice of seven records. In those days, you could go into a record store and play different records in a soundproof booth --free!! Being a very careful purchaser, she went back time after time, to play different records before deciding which ones she would chose. I can't remember all of the records she chose but two of them were "Dipsy Doodle" by Larry Clinton and "A-Tisket A-Tasket" by Chick Webb with Ella Fitzgerald on the vocal.

Quite a difference from today, isn't it!! CDs, DVDs and isn't there something called "Blu Tooth" or whatever?? Don't worry just when you think you have caught up with this sort of stuff, something new will come out and what you have will be obsolete. Oh, well....!!

## You're Going To Have To Help Me With This Quiz 'Cause I Don't Know All The Answers

by Browser Joe Carlton

Email the Browsers at:

[theBrowsers@wjjgam1530.com](mailto:theBrowsers@wjjgam1530.com)

1. Duke Ellington had a bunch of musicians who had nicknames. Can you name any of them?
2. Many of the orchestras had smaller groups within them, like the Benny Goodman Quartet. Do you know any of them?
3. Female vocalists with the bands often were called different names. How many can you remember?
4. Political question: al Qaeda and Taliban are two terrorist groups. What's the difference between the two?
5. What instruments did the following bandleaders play? A. Phil Harris B. Xavier Cugat C. Bob Crosby D. Spike Jones E. Tommy Tucker F. Lucky Millinder
6. Can you name any of the "cooperative " bands? These band are owned by all the players with one elected to front the band.
7. Eve Young sang with Benny Goodman's Orchestra. Later she changed her name and had a million seller with a nice song. Can you remember her new name and the song that was such a big seller?
8. Herb Miller was Glenn's brother and was a bandleader in England. How many other bandleader brothers can you name?
9. Kitty Kallen had many hit records with Harry James. Try and see how many million sellers she had that you can remember.
10. Finally, Benny Goodman made a number of records with the name of a state in the title. What were they?

Answers on page 8



*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!](#)

## He Got Two Words From BG

Submitted by clarinetist Harold Smith

I got goose bumps thinking of the significance of Benny Goodman, and his 100th anniversary.

I saw Benny's band in July of 1945 on stage at the Chicago Theater in downtown Chicago. That band had, among others whom I can't recall, Charlie Queener on piano, Gish Gilbertson in the sax section (I later worked with him in Rockford, Illinois), Slam Stewart and Red Norvo in the Sextet.

Also, Morey Feld on drums and the great Trummy Young in the Trombone section. I was thrilled to the core, and stayed for several shows. One of the pieces that Benny performed was a fiendishly difficult thing written by Mel Powell, called "Clarenade". It's in an impossibly tough key for the horn: I believe it's in either A or D and I always secretly thought that Benny used a clarinet pitched in A, but I didn't see him switch horns on stage, so he must have toughed it out. I also recall that the band performed the full-length version of "Gotta Be This Or That", and Slam Stewart joined the band for that marvelous bass solo he took in the style that made him famous. Man, what a memory to have!

Between stage shows, I spent my time suffering through a movie with Joan Fontaine called "The Affairs of Susan", which was about as entertaining and as monotonous for a 15 year old boy as you might expect.

I decided to try to meet Goodman, so I finally left the theater in late afternoon, and actually caught him at the side door. He was moving through at about the speed of a Bullet Train, and the only thing I could think of to say was "Mr. Goodman, what reed do you use?" His brusque reply was "Van Doren" and he went out of my view forever after. Nonetheless, it was a great experience, and one that I've never forgotten.

### 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

## Greasy Sack News---

**On The Scene:** The Woody Herman Orchestra directed by Frank Tiberi appeared Thursday, July 9, 2009 at Lincoln Center's "Midsummer Night Swing" Damrosch Park Band Shell 62nd Street and Amsterdam Avenue, New York NY.

On July 31, 2009, legendary clarinetist **Pete Fountain** will take the stage at the newly refurbished Roosevelt New Orleans Hotel's Blue Room, sharing the stage with fellow clarinetist Tim Laughlin. The Blue Room, once one of America's premier nightclubs and supper clubs, will again feature live music each Friday evening.

**Jack Sheldon** was never actually in the Woody Herman band, but always told everyone that he had been, so that eventually Woody was convinced that Jack had been in his trumpet section. Sheldon says whenever he was out on the road and got a really bad hotel room he used to say "Oh, the Woody Herman Suite," and Woody heard about it and that "made him remember me."

Senator **Chuck Grassley** has announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Rural Development has awarded a loan guarantee of \$120,000 and a grant of \$90,000 to the Glenn Miller Birthplace Society in Clarinda through the Community Facility Guaranteed Loan and Grant Program. The GMBS will use the funds to help construct and develop the proposed Glen Miller Birthplace Society Museum. On Thursday afternoon, June 11, 2009 a crowd of over 100 people attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the museum in Clarinda as the 34th Annual Glenn Miller Festival got into full swing.

The late **Jack Kemp**, New York congressman, presidential candidate, Cabinet secretary and vice presidential candidate graduated from Fairfax High School in 1953. His classmates included trumpeter **Herb Alpert** and **Larry Sherry**, who became a star pitcher with the LA Dodgers.



**Passing:** **Charlie Mariano**, who first chose a life in music after hearing the swing orchestras of Goodman, Ellington and Basie with his idol, tenorist Lester Young, on the radio in the late 30's died June 16, 2009. He went on to a prolific career appearing on recordings with the big bands of Stan Kenton, Shorty Rogers, Johnny Richmond, Herb Pomeroy, Nat Pierce, Quincy Jones, Bill Holman and Maynard Ferguson's 1964 album "The Blues Roar." Browser member and Kenton fanatic Paul McCurnin recalls Mariano's solo on "Stella By Starlight" with Kenton from July, 1955 is an absolute classic. "I've heard a bunch of bands play that Bill Holman chart, but the alto soloists can't get very far away from Charlie's solo."

**Henry "Butch" Stone**, 96, the singer and saxophonist who had a long association with Les Brown and his Band of Renown, has died. In the 1930s, he played with the Frank Reysen Orchestra and Van Alexander's orchestra, singing humorous numbers and playing the saxophone. In 1941, Stone joined Brown bringing his signature comic song "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." Stone worked with the Brown band well into the 1990s.

Trombonist **Randy Purcell**, known for his work with trumpeter Maynard Ferguson, has died. Purcell graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in 1968 and joined the Glenn Miller Orchestra for a year before he joined the Navy Commodores in Washington, D.C. He joined Maynard Ferguson in 1973. He arranged and played a well-received trombone solo for "The Way We Were," from Ferguson's album "Chameleon."

**Buddy Montgomery**, the pianist/vibraphonist and last surviving member of the Montgomery Brothers, has died at 79. He was a member of the Mastersounds quartet, with guitarist and brother Wes. He got his start as a pianist with blues singer Big Joe Turner and with Lionel Hampton's big band. He won Downbeat's 1958 award for best new vibraphone player and best new arranger.

**Jack Nimitz**, the baritone sax man who played through the 1950s in the Woody Herman and Stan Kenton big bands and in the early 1970s in the group "Supersax," has died. He was 79.

Saxophonist **Guy Impallomeni** has died at 93. He performed under the stage name of Guy Hall, and was a member of the Sammy Kaye orchestra in the 1940s and '50s.



Finally this story from **Norman Vickers**: Pensacola Bassist **Harvey Etheridge** took a summer tour about 1983 with **Al Hirt** because Al's bassist didn't want to leave New Orleans. He said it was a fun tour. They'd drive up to various historic places at odd times. They once arrived at Niagara Falls at daybreak....practically nobody there. A Japanese couple, with the falls in the background were having their photo taken by another Japanese man. Hirt spoke to the man and said, "I'll have my man take the photo so you can be in the picture. While this was taking place, Hirt went behind the couple and "mooned" them. Obviously, they were in for a surprise when they got back to Japan and got the films developed.

-Compiled by Bob Knack

**Chicago's Original Hits Station**  
WJGG  
AM 1530  
featuring **THE BROWSERS**  
from Trivia Tower  
**Mike Baker**  
and the  
**Forgotten 45s**

The Browsers and The Browsers logo are trademarks of © The Browsers. All rights reserved.

**Browser Vignettes Return!!**

Mike is running the Browser vignettes again this summer on WJGG-AM 1530. He runs one Browser "stumper" an hour from 5pm to 8pm on Sunday evenings during the summer months.

[Click here to Listen to the Browsers on the internet on Mike's Sunday Show times listed below](#)

Email the Browsers at: [theBrowsers@wjggam1530.com](mailto:theBrowsers@wjggam1530.com)

Saturdays and Sundays, the music starts at 4pm CST. Saturday evenings will be the oldies "ABC GOLD" style format and Sunday through Friday will be the "ABC STARDUST" style Mike's request line is 708-493-1530.

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

## Woody With Alto



WOODY HERMAN & ORCH. PERSONAL MGT. ABE TURCHEN GENERAL ARTISTS CORPORATION

Here's a photo of Woody Herman atypically holding his alto sax. While known mostly as a clarinetist, by many accounts he was also a pretty fair alto player. Notice the name Abe Turchen as "Personal Mgt." It is widely reported that it was Turchen who was responsible for Woody's financial woes later in his life. Turchen had not paid taxes on musician salaries for years. The government ultimately seized Woody's home for back taxes. Woody died penniless in 1987.

## Ketter's Korner

By Browser Warren Ketter

One of the first all-girl bands to play the Orpheum Circuit was Babe Egan and Her Red Heads.



Listen to almost any Mitchell Ayres record and you will hear the melodious sax playing of Harry Terrell.



The guitar talent in Woody Allen's movie "Sweet and Lowdown" was actually played by Bucky Pizzarelli and Howard Alden.



Jack Leonard's vocals were featured with Bert Bloch before he joined Tommy Dorsey. His Dorsey vocals are still a treat to hear.



Those who remember Horace Heidt and his band when they were playing theatres in the early thirties will also recall one of the featured attractions was a dog named Lobo.



Spike Jones began as a drummer with the John Scott Trotter Orchestra.



## Buddy Charles Memorial Concert

A concert in memory of beloved Chicagoland entertainer Buddy Charles and to benefit St. Isaac Jogues Parish, will be held in the Holy Family Room, St. Isaac Jogues Parish, 8149 W. Golf Road. Niles, IL. 60714 Sunday, July 19, at 3 PM. Tickets will be \$15.00 per person. Several entertainers from the Chicago scene will perform. [office@sj-parish.com](mailto:office@sj-parish.com) 847-967-1060.

### Land of Linkin'...When you're done here, some other good places to visit.

Illiana Jazz Club <http://www.illianaJazz.com/> For concert info:...708-672-3561 -or- 708-425-4596 -or- 219-923-6775 Held at the Glendora Ballroom 10225 S. Harlem Ave., Chicago Ridge, IL.

The St. Louis Jazz Club: [www.stlouisjazzclub.org](http://www.stlouisjazzclub.org)

[Jazzlives](#) : Michael Steinman's outstanding Jazz blog.

[Friends of Big Band Jazz](#) – Mike Vax and the swingin bands of today.

<http://www.bigbandlibrary.com/> Christopher Popa's up-to-date and informative band site. Celebrating five years on the web.

## Cookin' in Clarinda



Photo © Perry Huntoon

Browser Perry Huntoon sends this photo he snapped of the current Glenn Miller Ork with leader Larry O'Brien taken at the Glenn Miller Festival in Clarinda Iowa

## Phil Holdman's Tall Tales and True

Author Joe Carlton has written an excellent book, "THE BROWSERS AT LARGE: Phil Holdman's Tall Tales and True." This book, containing lots of stories by Phil and other Browsers, along with many, many photos, is still available. Phil and his gang 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 in the amount of \$17.00 made out to Joe Carlton, 317 Cottage Avenue, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 and your copy will promptly be mailed to you.

## Echoes Of The Starlight Ballroom

By Browser Bob Knack

Chippewa Lake Amusement Park located Southwest of Cleveland, Ohio operated for nearly a century from 1878 through 1978 when it was abruptly shut down by its owner.

A popular feature of the park beginning in the 1920's was the Chippewa Lake "Starlight" Ballroom. In its day, the ballroom, with a capacity of approximately 5000, featured the stars of the big-band era such as Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Guy Lombardo, and the Dorsey brothers. The first major radio broadcast of the Lawrence Welk Orchestra was from The Starlight thought to be in the summer of 1933. The biggest recorded crowd at the ballroom whose motto was 'Dancing Every Night', was for Vaughn Monroe and his band who drew 5,404.

The shuttered park has remained eerily undisturbed throughout the last three decades. All that remains are the wobbly skeletons of the rides, including the Big Dipper roller coaster, built in 1924, the Wild Mouse coaster, miniature railroad and the Ferris wheel, now joined by over 30 years worth of overgrown trees and weeds.

The park was near the towns of Medina and Lodi, Southwest of Cleveland, Ohio. According to newspaper accounts, work recently began to clear away the undergrowth and old structures to make way for a new 100-room hotel and health spa, meeting and banquet rooms and a conference center. On June 13, 2002, a young girl playing with matches started a fire destroying the historic Starlight Ballroom and erasing the last strains of the sounds of the big band era, leaving only the cement floor and twisted steel in its place.

## More Bad News For Ballroom Fans...

A more than 70-year-old central Illinois ballroom where Duke Ellington and Lawrence Welk played has been destroyed by fire. The Hub ballroom, which had been reopened for dancing again only last fall after being shuttered for years, burned to the ground early Wednesday in Edelstein, which is about 15 miles north of Peoria. Authorities say the fire started about 2:45 a.m. They don't yet know what caused the fire.

The Hub was built in 1938 by the owner of the Potter Implement Company to show off the farm equipment he sold. But he changed his plans after an opening day dance drew a big crowd. In its prime, the Hub hosted big-name acts such as Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman. It was recalled by one visitor that in the 1950's a popular promotion saw the owner hitting ping-pong balls filled with five-dollar bills from the stage into the audience during intermissions.

### 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". Dues are six dollars and include a share of the pizza. Details subject to change. E-mail the **Browsers** for location and details at [theBrowsers@wijam1530.com](mailto:theBrowsers@wijam1530.com)

Disc Jockey "**Rowdy**" **Ron Richter** plays big band and jazz the first Sunday of every month at Gusto Italiano Ristorante, 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.

## That's Happy Music, Folks!

I was awfully glad I had a chance to hear Sam Butera play at the Milwaukee Festa Italiana a few years back. I got there early, after making the 90 mile trek north from Chicago, and sat in the hot sun through the multitude of local acts waiting for the late evening performance from Sam and the Witnesses. It was well worth the wait.

Butera has died at age 81. Sam, a hard-swinging tenor sax player and hipster vocalist joined with Louis Prima, a fellow New Orleans born Italian in 1954, and recorded many memorable albums for Capitol Records, and were nightclub stalwarts in Las Vegas for twenty years.

While a teen-ager and into his twenties, he played in the bands of Ray McKinley and Tommy Dorsey. Later, Butera was a fixture at a New Orleans club owned by Prima's brother before being asked to join Louis. There, accompanied by Prima's wife Keely Smith, they were successful in re-inventing many jazz and pop standards like the medley "Just a Gigolo"/"I Ain't Got Nobody", "I've Got You Under My Skin," the Grammy Award winning, "That Old Black Magic", "Jump, Jive an' Wail" and "When You're Smiling." Prima died in 1978.

I recently dived into my Sam Butera bin and came up with many gems including a couple where Sam is featured on vocal like "There'll Be No Next Time", "Up Jumped The Rabbit", and the hilarious, "Greenback Dollar Bill." As Sam said after finishing a tune on stage at the Festa, "That's happy music, folks!"

-Bob Knack

## Swing Band for Rent... Ted Butterman's Neo-Passé Swing Band



Pictured from left: Russ Phillips, Ted Butterman, 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)

# A Singing Legend Talks with the Browsers (Part Two)

*In the June 1993 edition of the **Browsers** Notes, Phil Holdman and Warren Ketter continued their telephone interview with Big Band singer Bea Wain. This is the first time it has appeared over the internet.*

**Browsers:** Bea, I'd like to ask you about your Society of Singers. Can you tell us something about that? I hear from people all over the country that it's a great cause.

**B.W:** I'd love to because I am one of the original members. The Society of Singers was started to help singers financially and to consult with them when they don't know where to go for help. So many singers fell through the cracks, many of them from our time. When Bob Eberly died, he died penniless. When Ray Eberle died, the same thing happened. That was too bad because they were both wonderful singers. This is public knowledge so I'm not revealing anything I shouldn't. We call The Society of Singers the SOS. We have about 500 members and you don't have to be a singer to be a member. Our goal is to have a home or residence someday. All the singers out here are members and we have a branch in New York. There's a group in Chicago as a matter of fact. We have these wonderful fundraisers which honor singers and we have an award which we call, "The Ella". We have a couple albums out.

**Browsers:** Have you heard anything about Dick Todd, Bea? Is he still alive? We've heard all kinds of rumors.

**BW:** I haven't heard about him in all this time. I don't know if he's still alive.

**Browsers:** This is Warren, Bea. I was so impressed when I first heard on the Jukebox your rendition of "My Heart Belongs to Daddy." I always felt that was the best version of the song I ever heard, regardless of the show or anything else. It was just so great.

**BW:** Oh, I'm so glad because I just love that record.

**Browsers:** I read you were with the Kay Thompson group when you started. How was that? Was it fun for you?

**B.W:** That was marvelous. It was such great training. We were 3 girls and 3 boys. Most of the kids in the chorus did not read notes. We would learn songs by listening to Kay on the piano. She would play a chord. The low voices would watch her thumb, the middle voices would watch her middle finger, and the high voices would watch her pinky. When she played, we followed her fingers and we got spontaneous sound. I was very proud of being in that group because I think of Kay as being my mentor.

**Browsers:** I was quite surprised to hear that she sang with Tom Coakley, which was a band on the West coast in the very early 30's. After he left the band business, he was a high judge in the courts out there.

**B.W:** I didn't know him, but in those years, I was in New York.

**Browsers:** How did you meet Andre?

**B.W:** Andre was the announcer on "The Kate Smith Show," and on "The Fred Waring Show," and I was in the chorus in both shows. That's how it happened. We started to get together and to date.

**Browsers:** That's great. Everyone knows "Mr. and Mrs. Music," as you were called.

**BW:** You know we were married 53 years. They were such wonderful years. And now that he's gone everybody says, "You have such good memories," and all of that is true. I miss him like the devil. We worked together. We did everything together, except for the war years. He was a tremendous man.

**Browsers:** I think anyone who is familiar with his work or has heard the shows he's been on would agree. Excellent would

even be an understatement when you talk about someone like that.

**B.W:** I agree.

**Browsers:** Did you have any favorite female vocalist when you were singing with the bands?

**B.W:** There was nobody better than Ella Fitzgerald. I still feel the same.

**Browsers:** How about your male vocalist?

**B.W:** You can't say anybody is better than Frank (Sinatra).

**Browsers:** And how about your favorite band other than (Larry) Clinton.

**B.W:** I was crazy about the Stan Kenton Band. I loved the dynamics and the power. I adored Tommy Dorsey and loved the way he played.

## You're Going To Have To Help Me Quiz... Answers:

1. Band members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra with nicknames included "Bubber" Miley, Billy "Sweepee" Strayhorn, "Cootie" Williams, "Cat" Anderson, "Sonny" Greer, "Tricky" Joe Nanton

2. Some of the smaller groups within a band are: Artie Shaw's Grammercy Five, Tommy Dorsey's Clambake Seven, Bob Crosby's Bobcats and Woody Herman's Woodchoppers.

3. Sometimes a female vocalist would be called a songstress, a chirp, or a canary

4. I have no idea.

5. Phil Harris played the drums; Xavier Cugat was a violinist, Bob Crosby didn't play any instrument, Spike Jones was also a drummer, Lucky Millinder didn't play any instrument I know of and Tommy Tucker? You tell me.

6. Cooperative bands include Woody Herman's The Band That Played the Blues; the Casa Loma Orchestra and the Bob Crosby Orchestra

7. Although Eve Young had a hit with "For You, For Me, Forever More" with Benny Goodman, she didn't have a million seller until she sang "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me" under her newly assumed name of Karen Chandler. I wonder why she changed her name?

8. Other band leader brothers: Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Les and Larry Elgart, Fletcher and Horace Henderson and the McFarland Twins. Where'd I get that last one?

9. Kitty had several two million selling records: "Besame Mucho", "Little Things Mean A lot" and "I'm Beginning To See The Light".

10. Songs that Benny Goodman recorded with a state in the title: "Jersey Bounce", "Indiana", "Idaho", "Georgia", "Virginia" "Alabama" and "Hawaii".

Email the Browsers at: [theBrowsers@wjgam1530.com](mailto:theBrowsers@wjgam1530.com)