



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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So You Want To Lead A Band?

By Browser Bob Knack

So you want to lead a band? Sammy Kaye led one of the most famous dance bands of the era. He toured with his band for more than fifty years well into the 1980's. He had over 100 top-40 records; Rosalie (1937), Daddy (1941), Chickery Chick (1945) and The Old Lamp Lighter (1946) are a few. One of his most famous interactive bits, “So You Want To Lead A Band” involved audience members taking Sammy's baton and conducting the orchestra in his place.

How about you? Did you ever get the urge to front your own big band? Think it might be fun and care free? Before you climb into your tux and book opening night at the Aragon, better keep reading.

On October 2, 1939, Charlie Barnet and his orchestra were wrapping up a six week engagement at the Palomar Ballroom on Vermont Avenue & 2nd Street in Los Angeles. During an intermission, with the band enjoying libations at Smitty's, a near-by bar, a faulty electrical outlet sparked and set the Palomar stage curtain ablaze. Soon, two thousand fans in attendance hurriedly filed out of the exits and smoke filled the ballroom.

Barnet's bassist, Phil Stephens ran through the flames to retrieve his instrument, as did many of his band mates. Charlie's sax was damaged and the band's book of 300 arrangements went up in flames. The roof soon collapsed and only the outer walls remained. The famous ballroom, where in 1935 the swing era was born, was lost forever.

The band was scheduled to do a Bluebird label recording session the following week. Fortunately, the band knew most of the library by heart and the session went well enough. Afterward, Count Basie and Benny Goodman donated some arrangements. Billy May, Skip Martin and Barnet had to rewrite the rest of the book from memory. They decided to call one of the songs recorded that day “Are We Burnt Up?”

Still want to hop on the bus and head up the road with your own aggregation? Consider these tidbits all appearing in the September 9, 1949 edition of Downbeat Magazine:

New York - Tommy Dorsey was being sued for \$29,450, the aftermath of an accident when his bus collided with a station wagon. The driver, a research chemist sued after being hospitalized in San Mateo, California. Also named in the suit were Mrs. Dorsey and the band's bus driver. In addition, (I'm told that later on, in leaner times, Dorsey had to drive the band bus himself.)

Los Angeles - Mrs. Jane Dorsey sued Jimmy for divorce, charging mental cruelty. They were married 21 years earlier in Chicago. The financial agreement gave Mrs. Dorsey their home, \$850 a month and one-fourth Jimmy's annual earnings over \$20,000. However, Jimmy got to keep the band. Also, earlier that same year, Jane was seriously injured in a

fire in their home in Burbank while Jimmy was on tour in the South.

New York - Art Mooney's band escaped injury when their bus caught fire in Iowa. The band was en route from Sioux City to Fort Dodge. The only casualties were a few of the band's instruments. The band took public transportation to the gig.

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Remembering Our Buddy

It was always my feeling that if vocalist Buddy Hughes had joined a major big band a few years earlier, his name might today be as famous as that of Sinatra or Perry Como. As it was, when Buddy got out of the Army after WWII and got his first break with Jimmy Dorsey, the big bands were on the wane and touring with one had largely lost it's luster.

Even so, Buddy put in some quality time with JD, Claude Thornhill, where his vocals were arranged by young soon-to-be stars Gil Evans and Gerry Mulligan, and finally Gene Krupa. Said Downbeat Mag; “Hughes, who sings with excellent feeling and fine phrasing, has a genial delivery and a good enough appearance on the stand to believe that he may soon become a new threat for bobby sox-idolatry.” He just missed going on to the Benny Goodman band because BG wanted a vocalist who could double on an instrument, so another Buddy, Greco, was hired because he also played piano. This prompted Buddy to later learn the string bass. His “velvety smooth voice” as it has been described, graced a number of records and “air-checks” with those bands.

Charles Evans “Buddy” Hughes, a wonderful friend and neighbor, vocalist and bassist, father and husband and cherished member of The Browsers, died August 23, 2010.

At our monthly Browser meetings we used to good-naturedly kid Buddy about his million-seller. That is, Fran Warren's vocal with Thornhill, “A Sunday Kind of Love.” Buddy was on the flip side with “Sonata”. We'd say “Buddy, you were on a record that sold a million..and one!” I'd like to think that right now in that big band in the sky, Buddy and Fran are going back in the studio to do it all over again. Only this time, Buddy is going to get the “A” side.

-Bob Knack

Read more about the career of Buddy Hughes here:

[Buddy Hughes: Big Band Singer](#)

[Buddy Hughes: One Night on the Stand with Thornhill](#)

There now is a fine video tribute to Buddy's career on [You Tube](#). We highly recommend you see it!

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Moreover, how about all those personnel changes and personality conflicts that go on with the band. Tommy walks out on Jimmy and forms a competing band. Harry joins Benny replacing Benny's brother, Irving who replaces Harry when James leaves to start his own band. Frankie joins Harry but leaves for greener pastures with Tommy only to leave to go it alone. Buddy Rich fires the whole band and throws them all off the bus.

If after all this you still want to "Swing and Sway" with your own outfit like Sammy Kaye, consider one more indignity taken from George Simon's book "The Big Bands", While traveling to his next gig, West coast band leader Dick Dildine, who at one time played sax with Del Courtney's Orchestra, lost his band's entire book when his trailer door slipped open and his sheet music scattered all across the Nevada Desert.

All of this attempts to point out what special qualities and perseverance the leaders of the big band era possessed. So if anyone hands you a baton and says "Do You Want To Lead A Band?" You may want to head for the Grampian Hills instead!

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

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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@wjgam1530.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.* Also, Ron is now back as a regular Friday night feature at that restaurant, spinning your favorites.

That Swingin' Vibin' Redhead

By Browser Dick Parker

When Red Norvo (born Kenneth Norville on March 31, 1908, in Beardstown, IL) died at age 91, it marked the passing of one of my very favorite jazz musicians. Red preceded Lionel Hampton in pioneering the use of the xylophone and later the vibraphone to produce some of the most innovative, subtle and softly-swinging sounds the jazz world was ever privileged to hear. His recording legacy exceeded half a century while working with an awesome number of exceptional performers.

Following an early career enhancing stint with the Paul Whiteman band, during which time he met and married singer Mildred Bailey, the "Rockin' Chair" lady, Red started a swing septet in 1934 which included such eventual stars as Jack Jenny, Artie Shaw, Charlie Barnet and Teddy Wilson. In 1935, a swing octet was formed with the likes of Bunny Berigan, Chu Berry, Gene Krupa, and Herbie Haymer. Arranging whiz-to-be Eddie Sauter came aboard the following year. Mildred Bailey was the featured singer between 1936 and 1942 and she and Red became known as "Mr. and Mrs. Swing." Red continued to head up several big bands and small groups before joining Benny Goodman as a key player in his quintet and sextet from Fall 1944 through late '45. During 1946, Red was a featured soloist with Woody Herman's First Herd. The year 1947 found Red once again with Benny Goodman after Benny made the switch from Columbia to Capital records. During the 1950's, Red once more led several groups including his trio with guitarist Tal Farlow and bassist Charles Mingus. Much of the time was spent touring and Las Vegas claimed much of his always busy schedule. Sadly, wife Mildred passed away in 1951 at only 44. Red later married trumpeter Shorty Rogers' sister, Eve.

A few years back, I was discussing my long-time appreciation for Red with Phil Holdman and he let me borrow what turned out to be what I regard as a truly great album-"Red and Ross"- Ross Tompkins being the superb pianist who was with the "Tonight show" band during the Johnny Carson era. What a delightful recording of a 1979 concert! If you haven't embraced the Red Norvo style before now, you surely will. I'm hoping Concord records will put it on CD



Browser Douglas Catling adds this addendum to Dick's story; "I am sentimentally attached to Mildred Bailey. It was the purchase of one of her LP's in 1988 that piqued my interest in the pop standards and singers of high quality in the jazz, big band and pop fields. My favorite songs of hers are: "Old Deserted Farm," "More Than You Know," and I'll Be Around."

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 *** 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.

Email the Browsers at: theBrowsers@wjgam1530.com

*What other Jazz band plays to over
40,000 adoring fans at every gig?
They just Completed Their 29th Season!*



Pictured: T. Bartlett E. Wilkinson T. Butterman J. Kunc 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. Just think, the bride can now throw out her bouquet and the first pitch at the same time! Book the Cubs band, contact Ted at 847-255-6448 for details.

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 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."



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

-Charles Foster Kane

About 1931

By Browser Karl Kountz

In 1931, I was (mumble) years old and although my yeas have passed, I recall those early learning years as some of the best of my life. The friendships I made (that were so important at the time) alas, have disappeared or dwindled down to just a few. Not so for the songs from that era. They are still here for us anytime we hear or play them in our memory.

To help refresh your memory and enlighten the younger folks; 1931 was the height of the Depression. Prohibition collapsed and was repealed in 1932. Spain became a Republic after a bitter Civil War. General Franco became it's dictator. The Empire State Building was opened to the public and radio now reached all of America. President Hoover was blamed for the Depression and would run in 1932 against Franklin Roosevelt and lose in November.

In the movies, talkies little more than two years old, became universal. "Cimarron" directed by Wesley Ruggles won the Academy Award Best Picture of the year. Wallace Beery, Best Actor for "The Champ" and Helen Hayes, Best Actress for her talking film debut in "Sin of Madelon Claudet," "Frankenstein" made a star of Karloff as did "Dracula" for Bela Lugosi. The Marx Brothers made "Monkey Business" and Bing Crosby first appeared in a Mack Sennett comedy. My all time favorite actress and beautiful singer, Alice Faye, got her first break in "George White's Scandals of 1931." Pearl S. Buck wrote "The Good Earth" and St. Louis won the World Series.

Grocery prices in '31 reflected the hard times. If you had money or credit on the book at the corner store, you could purchase bread, small 5¢ or large 7¢. Butter 20¢ per pound. Coffee (name brands) in a can 25¢ a pound, bulk sugar 2¢ pound. Kosto Pudding or Jello, 5¢ a pack. Sliced Polish Ham 30¢ per pound, American Ham 25¢ pound, canned milk 5¢ a can. Meadowmoor milk at the milk store 6¢-1/2 quart. Name brands a penny or two more delivered to your house. Ice cream cone or sandwich 5¢. Biscuit and related items 2¢ a piece. Kosher dill pickles from a brine filled wooden barrel 2¢ each.

Candy was abundant in the many "Mom and Pop" stores at 1¢ to 5¢. Holloway Candy Company made caramels that you bought for 1¢ a piece and if you were lucky and it had a small white center, you won a 5¢ caramel sucker. Other penny candies come to mind. Soldier Caramels, Mary Janes, Jaw Breakers, Monkey Nuts, Licorice Whips and many more you surely remember. Two of my favorite five-cent bars were "Tango", approximately 4" in diameter and 1" high of marshmallow and peanuts covered with chocolate) and the Malteaser Bar, 1" wide, 2" high and 4" long, chocolate covered. They were made by the Bunte Candy Co. that went out of business around 1940.

Now for the songs of the time, huh? The song writers Johnny Green, Ray Noble, Arthur Schwartz, Noel Coward, Billy Rose, Harold Arlen and three of the greatest: Harry Warren, Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, kept cranking out the goodies. Some still played today, so many years later. Such as, "By The River Saint Marie," "Out Of Nowhere," "River Stay Away From My Door," "The Peanut Vendor," "Dancing In The Dark," "Goodnight Sweetheart," "All of Me," "Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day," "Cuban Love Song," "Someday I'll Find You," "My Silent Love," "I Found A Million Dollar Baby," "When The Moon Comes Over The Mountain," "You're My Everything," "I Love Louisa," "I Love A Parade," "The Night Was Made For Love," "Sweet And Lovely," "She Didn't Say

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Yes," "Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries," and "My Song,"

What an impressive list. The songs, radio, movies, plays and waning Vaudeville kept up our spirits and carried us through the long hard Depression. To our parents fell the task of providing for us-somehow they did. We helped. Nobody had to tell us. We delivered newspapers, worked in grocery stores after school, walked along the railroad tracks to gather coal and junking during the week to get that dime for the Saturday show. Part of life in 1931.

The Other Centenaries

Much has been made this year, and rightfully so, about the centenary of bandleader Artie Shaw born May 23, 1910. There are many other well known 100 year anniversaries this year besides that of Shaw, "The King Of Clarinet." Here are a few more maybe you haven't heard about:

Chu Berry - born September 13, 1910. Most of his career was spent playing tenor in the sax sections of the swing bands of Sammy Stewart, Benny Carter, Teddy Hill, Fletcher Henderson and Cab Calloway as well as being an in demand sideman. "Christopher Columbus", which Berry composed with lyrics by Andy Razaf, was the last important hit recording of the Fletcher Henderson orchestra, recorded in 1936. It was incorporated into Jimmy Mundy's arrangement of Sing, Sing, Sing for Benny Goodman's band. This was famously used in Goodman's first Carnegie Hall jazz concert of 1938. Berry died in Conneaut, Ohio from injuries sustained in an automobile accident while en route between gigs in Brookfield, Ohio, and Toronto

Dick Jurgens – bandleader, born, January 9, 1910. His first song to reach the Hit Parade was "It's a Hundred to One You're in Love with Me" in 1939; the following year, "In an Old Dutch Garden" was a big smash. Jurgens discovered that Glenn Miller's versions of his songs, such as "Careless", performed better on the charts than his own, Jurgens was a mainstay at all the major ballrooms in the country, especially the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago. When vocalist Eddie Howard left and was replaced by Harry Cool, Jurgens continued with hits, "A Million Dreams Ago" "Elmer's Tune", also covered by Miller with a vocal version that became #1, and his biggest hit, 1942's "One Dozen Roses", with Buddy Moreno on vocals. According to Browser Phil Holdman, he played and recorded with his band on and off through the early eighties. "Dick and I became good friends throughout my Browser years. We met at the Aragon in 1939 where I would "trip the light fantastic" with my future bride. I got so well known there that I didn't even have to pay to get in."

Freddie Slack – born August 7, 1910 This boogie-woogie pianist and bandleader played with the Jimmy Dorsey Band in the 1930s and was a charter member of the Will Bradley Orchestra when it formed in 1939. He played the piano solo on Bradley's classic recording of "Beat Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar," He recorded three songs at the third recording session at the newly formed Capitol Records May 21, 1942. His recording of "Cow Cow Boogie," sung by the 17-year-old Ella Mae Morse, was the second record Capitol issued on July 1, and by July 25 it had reached #1 on the hit parade.

Harry Carney – born April 1, 1910 Carney and his baritone sax was with Duke Ellington's band longer than any other musician. Ellington wrote a number of feature arrangements for Carney. After Ellington's 1974 death, Carney

said: "This is the worst day of my life. Without Duke I have nothing to live for." Four months later, Carney also died.

Jack Jenney – born, May 12, 1910 A jazz trombonist who might be best known for his solo on Artie Shaw's Stardust. His first job was with Austin Wylie in 1928. He also was on the bands of Isham Jones, Red Norvo, Mal Hallett, and Waring's Pennsylvanians. He led his own band for one year in 1939-40, which featured sidemen Peanuts Hucko, Paul Fredricks, and Hugo Winterhalter but was a financial flop.

Elmer Pha Terrell - born May 25, 1910, Terrell was working in Kansas City nightclubs in the 1930s as a singer, dancer, and emcee when he was discovered by Andy Kirk.

Continued next page...

Swing Band for Rent... Ted Buttermen's Neo-Passé Swing Band



Pictured from left: Russ Phillips, Ted Buttermen, 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 their song list. They know 'em all.](#)

To book the Neo-Passé contact Ted at

TBBands@dixieswing.com

Mike's Saturday and Sunday shows will resume in the Spring.

[Click here to Listen to the Mike's Forgotten 45's and the "Stardust Style" format throughout the station's daytime winter schedule](#)

Email the Browsers at: theBrowsers@wjggam1530.com

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for his Twelve Clouds of Joy. Terrell sang with Kirk for eight years, from 1933 to 1941, and recorded with him extensively for Decca Records, singing hits such as 1936's "Until the Real Thing Comes Along".

Ray McKinley – born June 18, 1910. Drummer, singer and bandleader McKinley started with local bands in the Dallas–Fort Worth area, before joining Smith Ballew in 1929, where he met Glenn Miller. They both joined the Dorsey Brothers band in 1934. Miller went with Ray Noble in December 1934 while McKinley stayed with JD until 1939, when he joined Will Bradley, as co-leader recording the big hit "Beat Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar in 1940." (and for which McKinley got partial songwriting credit under his wife's maiden name Eleanore Sheehy). He led his own band and eventually became the leader of the Glenn Miller ghost band from 1956 through 1965.

Mary Lou Williams – born Mary Elfrieda Scruggs in Atlanta, GA. May 8, 1910. As a child she taught herself to play the piano and became a pro in her teens. The following year she played with Duke Ellington and his early small band, the Washingtonians. In 1927, Williams married saxophonist John Williams. Who, two years later joined Andy Kirk's band in Oklahoma City. Williams joined her husband becoming the band's arranger and composer. She wrote "Walkin' and Swingin'", "Twinklin'", "Cloudy", "Little Joe From Chicago" and others for Kirk. Williams took the name "Mary Lou" at the suggestion of Brunswick record's Jack Kapp. In 1937 Benny Goodman asked Mary to write a blues for his band. The result was "Roll 'Em", a boogie-woogie piece based on the blues which followed her successful "Camel Hop", Goodman's theme song for his radio show sponsored by Camel cigarettes. Goodman tried to put Williams under contract to write for him exclusively, but she refused,

Louis Prima – born December 7, 1910. With his trademark shuffling beat which he called "Gleeby Rhythm", Prima and his Dixieland Gang of the 30's morphed into a big swing band in 1940 with vocalist Lily Ann Carol. One of their best records was I'll Walk Alone from 1944, a big hit with the GI's. By 1950, with big bands fading Prima took an opportunity for a gig at the Sahara nightclub and casino lounge in Las Vegas. There with his wife Keely Smith and a band put together by saxophonist Sam Butera, The act resulted in big increase in their popularity, and they were eventually moved to the big room. Prima, Smith and Sam won the Grammy Award for Best Performance by a Vocal Group or Chorus for "That Old Black Magic."

Milt Hinton – Milton John "Milt" Hinton nicknamed "The Judge". While attending high school and junior college in Chicago he learned to play the bass horn, tuba, cello and the double bass. In the late 1920s and early 30s, he worked as a freelance musician in Chicago with Jabbo Smith, Eddie South, and Art Tatum. In 1936, he joined a band led by Cab Calloway. Members of this band included Chu Berry, Cozy Cole, Dizzy Gillespie, Illinois Jacquet, Jonah Jones, Ike Quebec, Ben Webster, and Danny Barker. According to a search of The Jazz Discography, Hinton is considered the most-recorded jazz musician of all time, having appeared on 1,174 recording sessions.

Shep Fields - September 12, 1910. His band was known as "Shep Fields and His Rippling Rhythm." Fields was at a soda fountain when his wife was blowing bubbles into her soda through a straw, and that sound became his trademark

that opened all of his shows. In 1936, he received a recording contract with Bluebird Records. Producing the hits "Cathedral in the Pines", "Did I Remember?", and "Thanks for the Memory". In 1937 Fields replaced Paul Whiteman in his time slot with a radio show called The Rippling Rhythm Revue with Bob Hope as the announcer. A year later, Fields and Hope were featured in his first feature-length motion picture, The Big Broadcast of 1938 where Hope first sang what was soon to become his theme song "Thanks For The Memory."

Sy Oliver – born Melvin "Sy" Oliver December 17, 1910 This jazz arranger, trumpeter, composer, singer and bandleader joined Jimmie Lunceford's band in 1933. Two of the many hit arrangements he contributed to the band were "My Blue Heaven" and "Ain't She Sweet". In 1939, he joined Tommy Dorsey as an arranger. He helped transform the Dorsey outfit from a Dixieland/Dance band to a Swing band. Drummer Buddy Rich and Frank Sinatra joined at about the same time. He contributed tunes such as "On the Sunny Side of the Street" "Yes Indeed," "Opus One," "The Minor is Muggin'," "T.D.'s Boogie Woogie," and "Well, Git It."

Willie Smith – born November 25, 1910. In 1929, he became an alto saxophonist for Jimmie Lunceford's band, becoming one of the big stars of that organization. In 1942, He joined Harry James for seven years. He later worked with Duke Ellington and Billy May returning to James in 1954.

Finally, Browser Perry Huntoon reminds us that Roc Hillman, guitarist for the early Dorsey Brothers Orchestra and the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra celebrated his 100th birthday on July 13. He is the last living person who was on the bandstand at the Glen Island Casino on Memorial Day 1935 when Tommy walked away from the band after a disagreement with Jimmy over the tempo of a tune!

Famous Big Bands Announce Changes

Three famous "ghost" bands have announced changes in leadership. First of all, after almost 25 years as musical director of the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Larry O'Brien is retiring at the end of this year. He has traveled thousands of miles and has performed "In The Mood" approximately 5750 times. Trombonist Gary Tole will be replacing O'Brien starting January 2011. He has performed with the orchestras of Harry James, Tex Beneke, Les Brown, Jimmy Dorsey, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, and many more. His recent recording with his group "Legends of Swing, One Kettle For Count," was nominated for 3 Grammy Awards including Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album, Best Instrumental Composition, and Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocalist(s).

Next, after 75 years of continuous touring, The Russ Morgan Orchestra with Jack Morgan is now in its last tour. Jack has led the band since the death of his father Russ in 1969 and it is said he is set to retire at the end of this year. Whether or not the Russ Morgan Orchestra will continue to work after that is not clear at this time.

Trombonist, Bill Hughes, bandleader and director of the Legendary Count Basie Orchestra has announced his retirement effective September 12, 2010. Hired by William "Count" Basie himself, Hughes first joined the Orchestra in 1953. He will be succeeded by drummer, composer and arranger, Dennis Mackrel, who joined the Count Basie Orchestra in 1983 on the recommendation of vocalist, Joe Williams. Mackrel would become the youngest member of the orchestra and the last drummer to be hired by Mr. Basie personally.

When Buddy Morrow Met The Browsers

By Browser Bob Knack

When trombonist Buddy Morrow agreed to lead the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra in 1977, it was supposed to be a temporary gig. Thirty-three years later, he was still fronting the band.

It is said he had to be helped onstage to lead the Dorsey band in Ormond Beach, Florida on Friday, September 24, and after the concert he received a standing ovation. It was to be his final performance. Morrow, 91, died the following Monday.

When I heard the news of Morrow's passing, I was compelled to dig into my "Buddy Morrow Bin" and play some of his many LP's. Of course, "Night Train" was first, followed by, on the same record, "One Mint Julep." Then, the albums "Impact" and "Double Impact" hit the turntable. These were Morrow's recordings of famous television themes of the day like "Peter Gunn" and "M Squad." Great stuff. Then came 1964's "Big Band Beetlemania," instrumental workings of the "Fab Four's early hits. Morrow told me he was probably the first to attempt big band instrumental arrangements of Beetle's songs. Finally, I spun a dance record of Buddy's that had the wonderfully appropriate title, "Dancing Tonight, To Morrow."

The Browsers first became acquainted with Morrow at the Wheaton, Illinois (a Western suburb of Chicago) Autumn Festivals. This well-attended annual event featured the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra playing a fabulous four-hour concert. We had a chance during the intermissions to have nice chats with Buddy as well as their fine vocalist, Walt Andrus. I asked Buddy about his big hit "Night Train," a million seller circa 1952. He told me the song had been a very nice calling card for him and his bands over the years. Indeed, it was still played nightly while he was leading the TD band.

These meetings helped lead to the famous "Browser Cruise," our trek through the Panama Canal arranged by Browser show host, Eddie Hubbard. The band would play every night preceded by a trivia "warm-up" panel presented by Eddie and The Browsers (sometimes with Buddy Morrow sitting in!) The cruise was a great deal of fun, except for the hurricane winds while we were on the Pacific side. Plates were flying off the buffet, and the brass players bruised their lips from the rocking of the boat. A continuous "conga line" formed outside of the ship's doctor's quarters for seasick injections. "Browser President Phil Holdman lamented "I never met the doctor facing forward."

In spite of the blustery conditions, Phil continued, "What a thrill it was to listen to the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, under the direction of Buddy Morrow, every night hearing those old chestnuts again like "Opus One," "Swanee River," "Song Of India," and "Well, Git It." They brought back some great memories. Vocalist Walt Andrus, a terrific singer, did some Sinatra and Jack Leonard numbers, backed by the same arrangements that Dorsey used back in the 30's and 40's.

"There were songs like "Once in a While," "I'll Never Smile Again," "The Song Is You," "Marie," and a flock of others. It was 1940 all over again; dancing listening to the music we loved. Buddy is a wonderful musician. His trombone sounded more like Tommy Dorsey than any other "bone" man I ever heard. He never cracked once, playing the difficult solo of "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" for every opening and closing sign on and sign off."

Several times during the cruise, the Browser panel discussions put on for the 1500 patrons of the Crown Dynasty ship were sent back via satellite to the ABC Network for later broadcasts. Holdman made Buddy Morrow an honorary Browser. "The guy knows his stuff about our era," said Holdman, "After all, he's well qualified, having played with the TD band way back in 1938. He was on the original recording of "Boogie-Woogie" when his name was still Moe Zudekoff."

Morrow made music for over 75 years. As a teenager, he was heard playing in a jam session by Bunny Berigan who influenced him to join the Artie Shaw band. Later, he performed in the bands of Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Paul Whiteman and Eddy Duchin. Buddy played lead trombone for the Navy Band while in the service on Staten Island. He led the Glenn Miller ghost band for a while and made many fine albums under his own name. He even was a regular on the NBC Tonight Show Band. It was a great pleasure for all of the Browsers to get to know him.

Ketter's Korner

From Browser Warren Ketter

Don Redman took the position as director of McKinney's Cotton Pickers in 1927.

Eddie Israel Iskowitz eventually became Eddie Cantor.

Jerome Kern was scheduled to write the music for "Annie Get Your Gun" but his untimely death resulted in the job going to Irving Berlin.

Les Baxter did some arranging for Nat King Cole and Les was one of Mel Torme's original Mel-Tones.

Vaughn Monroe wrote the lyrics to his theme song, "Racing With The Moon."

Bandleader Ray Noble composed the words and music to "The Touch of Your Lips," and "I Hadn't Anyone Till You."

The Andrews Sisters always admitted that they started out trying to sound like the Boswell Sisters.

The song "Got A Date With An Angel" was popular in England before Hal Kemp brought it to the United States, where his recording made it somewhat of a hit here.

Eddie Condon said Bix Beiderbecke's cornet sound came out like a girl saying "yes."

Don't forget...we have added audio clips to Ted Buttermann's website. Go to www.dixieswing.com and click on the "radio shows" icon. The first wave of clips feature Browsers Phil Holdman and Warren Ketter in rare form recorded on Phil's birthday. Johnny Macek, our "Record Collector Extraordinaire" plays a few rarities from his collection. Our "Eclectic One" Dick Parker follows with tasty tunes from Cootie Williams and his Rug Cutters, Will Bradley and his Boogie Boys and more. Finally two clips featuring Perry Huntoon, an expert on classic jazz as well as big bands. Go to www.dixieswing.com and click on "radio shows"