*"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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Ralph Kramden's Favorite Bands

By Browser Bob Knack

I am a world class channel surfer. I can within moments run through all 700 or so cable channels on my set and determine there's nothing on. Before the advent of the remote control, I was known as a dial twister.

As a nostalgia guy, there is one type of program that I'll stop and watch. That is, anything shot in black and white. And the one program I'll always watch all the way through is any Honeymooners rerun. There is something still exquisite about those 1950's TV comedy classics starring Jackie "The Great One" Gleason, as Ralph Kramden, Art Carney as his pal Ed Norton, and their wives Alice and Trixie played by Audrey Meadows and Joyce Randolph. I never tire of them.

One episode I remember especially titled "Young at Heart" aired originally on February 11, 1956. Inspired by a pair of teenagers, one played by Ronnie Burns, the son of



George Burns and Gracie Allen, the Kramden's and

Norton's unsuccessfully try to recapture their lost youth at a skating rink, where the portly and ungraceful Ralph attired in a varsity sweater and straw hat spends more time on

the floor than on his skates. Norton says to Ralph, "We're trying to recapture our youth," to which Ralph replies, "If I keep this up, I'll lose my old age!"

Back at the Kramden's apartment, the foursome reminisce about the old days. "Remember all the fun we used to have at the Sons of Italy Hall? They had some pretty good bands there in the old days...Isham Jones...Ted Fio Rito... Little Jack Little." "Not to mention, chimes in Norton, "Basil Fomeen...Johnny Messner and his Toy Piano." I have to confess, when I was watching this episode as a child, I thought these bands were fictional creations of the Honeymooners script writers. It wasn't until years later I learned that they were real bands. Most were recalled in Leo Walker's book The Big Band Almanac.

Isham Jones was at one time one of America's most popular dance bands. He was a prolific songwriter and the vocalists are still warbling his compositions today like "It Had To Be You," "The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else," and I'll See You in My Dreams." He started in Chicago, spent some time in England and ended up in New

York. I don't know if he ever played at a place called The Sons of Italy Hall. Most of you know that Woody Herman started in Jones' band as a reed player and vocalist.

The piano playing Ted Fio Rito also started his own band in Chicago in 1928. Before that he was with an outfit called the Danny Russo Orchestra whose major claim to fame was as the band who opened the far-famed Aragon Ballroom in Chicago in 1926. With his own band, he concentrated on the Midwest and West coast with only occasional tours to New York. It's hard to tell if the Kramden's and Norton's would have ever had a chance to catch the band. At one point, Fio Rito was lucky enough to have the one and only Betty Grable as his vocalist. As Norton might have exclaimed "Va Va Voom!!

Bandleader and singer Little Jack Little had most of his success in the 1930's and had hits with "Hold Me" and "You Oughta Be in Pictures." He had a singing-talking technique that was popular during that time. His violinist, Mitchell Ayres left the band taking many sidemen along to form their own orchestra.

"Not to mention..." Basil Fomeen. He had an internationally famous society band based in New York appearing at first the Savoy Plaza, then the St. Moritz, and then the Waldorf-Astoria...Maybe a little pricey for Ralph's bus driver salary. Fomeen eventually moved to the West

Continued on next page...

Joe Gentile

Joseph J. Gentile, a successful auto salesman for 50 years, was a major supporter of Loyola University Chicago, where the athletic center bears his name. In 1994, he purchased an Elmhurst Illinois radio station, big band formatted, WKDC-AM and renamed it WJJG-AM, based on his initials. He initially purchased the station to help sell cars at his Chrysler dealership but soon found that he liked being on the radio.

Joe Gentile, 87, died on Monday, Oct. 10. On a personal note, I had a big band show both on WKDC and WJJG for a period of time. You can read about it here (on page 6) and here. (on page 5) After Joe bought the station, he was very kind to us and all the Browsers who "guest-starred" on my program. Almost every Saturday morning, he would drop by on his way to his dealership and ask how we were doing. We sincerely enjoyed our time there and have fond memories of the experience.

Continued from page one...

Coast and Ciro's in Hollywood. His theme song was "Manhattan Gypsy."

Johnny Messner also started his hotel styled band in New York in 1936. The toy piano recalled by Norton referred to an instrument played by Paul Kuhlthau, who was known as "Professor Coleslaw." Messner wrote some songs accordingly, "Toy Piano Minuet" and "Toy Piano Jump." Ralph and Ed would have caught Messner before the outbreak of the war because he broke up his band to go into the army and did not reform his band after.

"I learned something tonight," concludes Ralph, "Acting young isn't what keeps you young. If you've got some good memories of when you were young, thinking about it in your old age, that's what keeps you young." To this Alice replies, "I learned something tonight too Ralph, I don't mind growing old as long as you and I can grow old together."

Baby, they were the greatest!

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



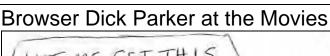
Pictured from left: Russ Phillips, Ted Butterman, Scott Black and Eric Schneider

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!

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

Don't forget...we have added audio clips to Ted'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."



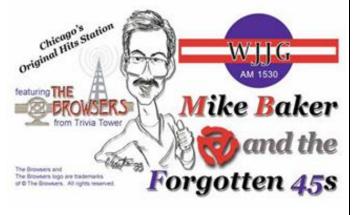
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, HANDSOME. 111 YOU SAY YOU FELL ASLEEP ON A PARK BENCH AND SOME ONE CAME UP AND SNIPPED THE BRIM OFF YOUR HAT? THAT'S ABSURD!



(FROM 1932 HORROR FILM,

ITHE MUMMY! THE GAL IS

ZITA JOHANN, THE CORDUROY COMPLEXIONED GENTLEMAN
IS BORIS KARLOFF)



<u>Christmas Day-</u> Don't Forget Mike's <u>Hometown Christmas:</u> An annual oldies show of holiday music

featuring forgotten forty-fives of winters past. CHECK STATION SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS.

The "Ole Blue Eyes" Lyrics Quiz

Frank Sinatra recorded an incredible amount of music over the course of his career with an abundance of memorable lyrics. How well do you remember the words to these sides? Match the lyrics to the song titles below.

My source material comes from a most comprehensive website <u>Todd's Frank Sinatra Lyrics Page</u> Check it out. But no cheating!

- All or Nothing at All
 The Best is yet to Come.
 The Coffee Song
 Cycles
 Drinking Again
 Five Minutes More
 Goody Goody
 I Get a Kick Out of You
 In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning
 It Happened in Monterey
 Nancy with the Laughing Face
 Oh! Look at Me Now
 One More for the Road
 Satisfy Me on More Time
 Try a Little Tenderness
- Was accused of drinkin' water
 And was fined a great big fifty dollar bill"

 (2) "Sure, I can borrow a smoke; maybe tell some joker a bad
- (3). "I looked forward to a kiss or two at the garden gate But you gave me just one peck & insisted that it was late"

joke but nobody laughs, they don't laugh at a broken heart"

(4) "I get no kick in a plane. Flying too high with some gal in the sky Is my idea of nothing to do."

(1) "The politician's daughter

- (5) "You gave him your heart too, just as I gave mine to you And he broke it in little pieces, now how do you do"
- (6) "I swear to goodness, you can't resist her Sorry for you, she has no sister"
- (7) "When your lonely heart has learned its lesson, You'd be hers if only she would call"
- (8) "I'm not the guy who cared about love And I'm not the guy who cared about fortunes and such"
- (9) "I've been told, and I believe, that life is meant for livin' And even when my chips are low, there's still some left for givin"
- (10) "Wait till your charms are right for these arms to surround You think you've flown before, but baby, you ain't left the ground"
- (11) "You'd never know it but buddy; I'm a kind of poet And I got a lot of things to say"
- 12. "Stars and steel guitars and luscious lips, as red as wine, Broke somebody's heart and I'm afraid, that it was mine"
- (13) "While the Cold Duck's gettin' colder, just be sure, Everything we've got is body temperature"

- (14) "And if I fell under the spell of your call I would be, be caught in the undertow"
- (15) "It's not just sentimental, she has her grief and her care But a word that's soft and gentle makes it easier to bear"

The answers will appear at the end of this newsletter.

Letters E-mails Errata Etc.

In our last issue we asked you to send your "end of the world records," that is if the world were ending tomorrow, what would you listen to. We had this late submission...

Star Dust, Night And Day, The Nearness Of You, The Moon Is Low, Sentimental Journey, Cheek To Cheek, Dancing At The Ritz, Brother, Can You Spare A Dime, I'm Getting Sentimental Over You.

Thanks for the great newsletter, -Lee Perlinn, Rileyville, Va And Naples, Fl

Dear Bob,

Thanks very much for the mention in The Great Escape. The CD, which you so graciously provided a link to, was played on 52 radio stations last week and been very positively reviewed. Here's an example:

Tony and I have begun to reach out to Chicagoland clubs and hope to play there in 2012. Have a great day!

In music and mirth, -Richie Kaye

The Annual Browsers Christmas Party

The Browsers are planning a Christmas dinner in a private room at La Villa, 3632 N. Pulaski, probably on Monday, December 19. Total price including tax and tip will be \$23 per person and include: soup (Minestrone), Chef's tossed salad, pasta (mostaccioli), entrée (Chicken Vesuvio or New York of Beef), Fresh Green Beans Almandine, Idaho Baked Potato, Italian Spumoni and beverages (coffee, tea, milk, soft drinks). A full bar is available with drink payments due to wait staff upon service. Please advise if you plan to attend. (perryh@wowway.com)

Hope to have a great turnout!

-Perry Huntoon

Big Band Holiday Concert

Our Free Holiday Christmas Concert Featuring The Walt Boenig Big Band and Laura Taylor on vocals will be December 18, 2011, 2:00 PM at the College of Southern Nevada, Horn Theater, 3100 Cheyenne, North Las Vegas, NV

-Thanks -Walt Boenig



We Are Now Quarterly

The Great Escape Big Band and Mainstream Jazz newsletter will now come to you four times a year.

With 25 back issues still available at www.dixieswing.com. You'll still have plenty to read to help pass those long winter evenings. Be sure to visit Bob Knack's Facebook page.

If We Googled Back In the Day

By Browser Bob Knack

For those of us with any computer savvy at all, at one time or another, we've no doubt "Goggled" for directions. That is, we've gone to the search engine called Google Maps and inquired how to get from point A to point B. For a man that has been known to get lost in his own garage, this seems to be quite an innovation.

For example, if I wanted to attend Perry Huntoon's presentation on November 10th on "Texas Tenors;" Herschel Evans, Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb & Buddy Tate, at 7:15 P.M. at the <u>Brookfield Jazz Club</u>, I would punch in my home address and then the address of Irish Times Bar and Restaurant, Brookfield, Illinois and it would tell me to first turn left onto IL-64 North Avenue, merge onto I-290 East via the ramp to the Interstate 294 Tollway S/Chicago. Take exit 19A toward 17th Avenue, merge onto Bataan Drive, turn right onto South 17th Avenue, continue onto Maple Avenue and at the traffic circle, take the 5th exit onto Grand Boulevard, make a slight right onto Prairie Avenue, then, the 1st left onto Burlington Avenue. Whew! You know, I've never been able to find that place!



Or, if I felt like taking a ride to visit our friend and Jazz great Ronnie Kole at his home in Slidell, Louisiana, to attend his annual charity event, Jazz on the Bayou, I'd enter the information and in

a mere 15 hours, 15 minutes and 992 miles later via 57 South and I-55 South I'd be standing at his door ringing the bell. "Hello, Ronnie, you home?"

But what if we had this modern miracle back in the day of the big band? Google doesn't tell you that you must take the "A" train to go to Sugar Hill way up in Harlem, but it does inform you to take the MTA New York City Transit train and exit at the Sugar Hill Service Station.

Let's take a look at a possible Google directed ride on the Chattanooga Choo-Choo during the big band age:

STEP 1: Go to track twenty-nine.

STEP 2: Get a shine.

STEP 3: Board the Chattanooga Choo-Choo.

STEP 4: Bring your fare, and just a trifle to spare.

STEP 5: Leave the Pennsylvania Station 'bout a quarter to four.

STEP 6: Read a magazine and then you're in Baltimore.

STEP 7: Dinner in the diner...Nothing could be finer.

STEP 8 Have your ham an' eggs in Carolina.

STEP 9: When you hear the whistle blowin' eight to the bar, Tennessee is not very far.

STEP 10: Shovel all the coal in, Gotta keep it rollin'.

STEP 11: Woo, woo, Chattanooga there you are.

If you are planning on meeting that certain party at the station in satin and lace, Google suggests you make your own arrangements on that one.

So back in era of the Big Bands we had "The Dipsy Doodle," "Oodle Addle, and "Oodles of Noodles," but regrettably, no Google.

They Just Completed Their 30th
Season at the Ballpark!



The Cubs Dixieland Band has been playing to packed houses at the 'friendly confines' of Wrigley Field for three decades, 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.

<u>Now</u> 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, barn raisings, 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!

To book the Cubs band contact Ted at TBBands@aol.com or call 847-255-6448 for details.

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**. Email me bobknack@hotmail.com to be put on list.

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 and Saturday night feature at that restaurant, spinning your favorites.

A Great Holiday Gift!

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 www.cdbaby.com for ordering info.

This Swinging CD was recorded live at the legendary Village Tavern in Long Grove, IL. a Northwest suburb of Chicago, where the Neo-Passé Swing Quintet performed for many years, prior to that venue discontinuing jazz.

Playing in the spirit of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, with a sprinkling of the 60s thrown in for good measure, the group's rhythm section is comprised of Piano, Acoustic upright bass, Drums, and Acoustic rhythm guitar.

- ☐ Three tracks have the long time Chicagoland reed legend, Stu Genovese, whose insightful approach to the art has been heartily received and accepted even beyond the shores of the U.S. Stu shared the stage with some of the greats in jazz including Oscar Peterson.
- ↑ Three more show the swing side of Kim Cusack, long associated with the Salty Dogs Dixieland band, on clarinet.
- ☐ The final three tracks have the internationally renowned Russ Phillips exhibiting his amazing prowess on trombone.

Leader and guitarist Ted Butterman has assembled a group of players dedicated to the genre but who do not intentionally copy the founding fathers. As an aside, Ted changes hats in the summer, plays trumpet, and leads the Chicago Cubs Dixieland Band and who are now in their 30th year at "The Friendly Confines". Information about this CD, a must for any jazz collector, can be found on the web site

www.cdbaby.com

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

Jazzlives: Michael Steinman's outstanding Jazz blog.

Friends of Big Band Jazz – Mike Vax and the swinging bands of today.

www.bigbandlibrary.com Christopher Popa's up-to-date and informative band site. This is one of the most comprehensive big band sites you can visit!

A YouTube tribute to our own beloved <u>Buddy Hughes</u>, Browser and vocalist with Jimmy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, and Claude Thornhill. Please give this a viewing!



The late Buddy Hughes performs to a packed house with The Neo Passe Band at a Great Escape listener night. We miss him. Also pictured is Freddie Rundquist and Bob Neighbor.

Author and quizmaster 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 cadre of big band experts aired a popular big band trivia show on the ABC network with Eddie Hubbard for over twenty years. If interested, please send your check for \$17.00 made out to Joe Carlton, 317 Cottage Avenue, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 and your copy will promptly be mailed to you.

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 495 WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187. 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

Woody's One-Liners

There's something out there on the internet called a Facebook Open Group. One in particular is administered by a fellow named Colonel Gaddy and is called <u>Woody's One-Liners</u> where former members of The Herd post some funny stories about their time with the band. Here are a few examples:

Dennis Dotson (Has been a professional trumpeter for forty years. He was a soloist in Woody's and the Buddy Rich big bands and as a small group player:

"One night after a dance I got into a conversation with two very pleasant older women of about Woody's vintage. They had had a wonderful time and we talked for a long time while the equipment guys were tearing down the band. Then one of them said to me 'so when was it that Woody died?' I said "uh...he's not dead.' She said 'Oh yes, he is. I remember seeing it in the paper but I don't remember what year it was.' I said 'lady, he's been standing in front of you for four hours!' And she said "Really? Which one was he?'

The story could end right there but, right on cue, Woody stuck his head out from behind the curtain. I spotted him and hollered out 'Hey, Woody! These ladies say you're dead.' He hollered back 'tell 'em they're right!' and went back behind the curtain."

Dave Sheetz:

"Although I never was on Woody's band (got a call from Bill Byrne when in NYC but couldn't go out), I heard this story, which maybe someone can verify. The band was on a Mideast tour and Woody didn't like his drummer. The drummer got sick and someone recommended a Moroccan drummer. Woody was supposedly to have said "I hope he's more rockin' than the one we've got".

Paul McKee (Since 1984 he has been a member of Woody Herman's Thundering Herd and continues to tour and record with the band.):

"One of my favorites- when someone would request a Glenn Miller tune (usually at a dance gig) Woody's stock response was "When they find the plane I'll play his music". The shocked look on the person's face was priceless."

Forrest Buchtel (lead trumpet and featured soloist with Woody, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Teo Macero, Gunther Schuller, Blood Sweat and Tears, Malo, and Jaco Pastorius.):

"In 1970, Playing a show in 100 degree heat on a high stage in an airplane hangar at Subic Bay in the Philippines, I went out to the edge of the stage and played some screech high note and held it for just a little bit too long at the end of a feature tune. My body just turned off although I was still conscious as I fell over toward the concrete floor. Two marines jumped up and one caught me and the other caught my trumpet. I came to and staggered up the steps to the stage to finish the concert, lucky to be alive. Woody's response? "Leave it in"...

Have a Happy and Swingin' Holiday Season.

Cool Yule to you All!

Brian O'Flaherty (to Buchtel):

"Forrest, there was a chart called "After Hours" that, on the lead trumpet part, had an inscription from you saying, (quoting loosely) "before you play this notify the nearest Red Cross and give them your blood type". That was a merciless shout chorus ending on two double A's."

A Great Escape Newsletter, Browsers, Facebook Quiz:

Woody is rehearsing with some friends in this old publicity photo. Who are the other guys?



Perry Huntoon: "Zoot Sims in the dark suit, possibly Al Cohn next to him."

Bob Knack: "Who's the guy in the front? Is it Flip Phillips?"

Joe Carlton: "That isn't Flip unless he's aged since last time I saw him."

Bob Knack: This was a rehearsal before Woody's 1976 Carnegie Hall 40th anniversary concert. From the liner notes I see the guest players that night were Stan Getz, Flip Phillips, Sims, Jimmy Giuffre, Sam Marowitz, Cohn isn't mentioned, but that looks like him in the back. So who is that in front?

Answers to the Sinatra Quiz

- 14 All or Nothing at All
- 10 The Best is Yet to Come.
- 1 The Coffee Song
- 9 Cycles
- 2 Drinking Again
- 3 Five Minutes More
- 5 Goody Goody
- 4 I Get a Kick Out of You
- 7 In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning
- 12 It Happened in Monterey
- 6 Nancy (with the Laughing Face)
- 8 Oh! Look at Me Now
- 11 One More for the Road
- 13 Satisfy Me on More Time
- 15 Try a Little Tenderness