



# 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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## Quotable Jazzmen Volume 3: The Woodchopper

By Bob Knack©

“Some guys dig ditches, I have a band. It’s what I do.”

That was Woody Herman, clarinetist, vocalist and bandleader extraordinaire, who fronted his own outfits for over fifty years. Woody was born May 16, 1913 in Milwaukee and was a show-biz natural. He was dancing in vaudeville at age six, and became a leader for the first time when he took over the remnants of the Isham Jones band in 1936. ‘I got the job because I could sing and dance a little,’ said Woody. Known as “The Band That Plays the Blues”, their first engagement was at New York’s Roseland Ballroom. In the second week another young band, led by Count Basie, joined Woody on the stage of the Roseland for a big band battle.

Herman had an early hit with “Woodchoppers Ball” and played it for half a century. To keep it fresh for his youthful jazzmen, the chart was updated, so many times, in fact, that audiences didn’t recognize it anymore. Finally, Woody sent a band member out to get a stock arrangement so they could remember how it was supposed to sound.



Woody claimed he only made money with one band, the First Herd, in the early forties. The members of this band were extremely enthusiastic while performing. “I’ve never considered myself a bandleader, explained Woody, but I think I’m a pretty good coach. You need youth to accomplish what I want to accomplish.” These Herdsmen; the Candoli brothers, Shorty Rogers, Bill Harris, Flip Philips and the others would jump up and down, boogie and holler during each performance. About them, Tommy Dorsey said, “I don’t know how they play but they sure are good dancers.” The most vocal cheerleader on the band was bassist Chubby Jackson. “He once won the Downbeat poll for yelling,” deadpanned Herman. In actuality, this edition of the Herd finished No.1 in the Downbeat, Metronome and Esquire polls and was one of the most musically innovative of the big band era.

Unlike fellow bandleader Artie Shaw, Herman seemed to truly enjoy interacting with his audience, even in later years. “I still love music with desperation, he said in a 1980’s TV interview, “and this is what I do best. I’d rather be out here, somewhere in the world making music.” There were exceptions. Example: If someone requested a tune

other than his own; like a Glenn Miller song. “If I see Miller, I’ll tell him you requested that”, he’d retort. According to Herd trombonist and music director for the band during the eighties, John Fedchock, after a drunk belligerently asked for several non-Herd requests one night an exasperated Woody asked him, “What did you pay to get in here”, and handing him a twenty said “See you later, pal.”

“Glenn and I were very good friends”, explained Woody in another televised interview, “and he advised me about certain players. For instance, once in Boston he had a lead trumpet player who was bothering him. Consequently, he called me and said I needed a new trumpet player immediately. So I wound up with this young man and when he arrived I saw that he had a slight...drinking problem. Glenn knew how to get rid of them gracefully.”



The current Herman Herd directed by Frank Tiberi photo © Bob Knack

One of the bands favorite places to play was the Metropole bar in New York in spite of its unwieldy configuration. The band had to play standing up in a straight line against the wall with the leader standing between the brass and saxes. As an amused Woody recalled during a 1970’s radio broadcast, “I used to see completely sober guys walk in, and during the course of one set, about 40 minutes, leave...in a bird cage”. “They would hustle you down along the bar and you’d go for doubles with a beer chaser and you’d walk out, out of your mind, saying, ‘That’s the greatest band I ever heard!’”

Near the end of his life, Woody, besieged by health and income tax troubles and the loss in 1982 of his beloved wife, Charlotte, summed up his affection for music: “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.” They once asked him, “What was the greatest record you ever made?” He responded with, “I have been married to and in love with the same woman for over 46 years. Can you match that record?”

# Are There Any Instrumentals You Never Get Tired of Hearing?

By Browser Dick Parker  
Reprinted from Browser Notes #34

Now there's a question I've never really been asked-regrettably. I say this because I'm sure every thoughtful buff of the big band era has favorites that have not been diminished in appeal. So, if I were to be asked. I'd say sure-how much time have you got? In no particular order of preference permit me to enumerate some of the vocal-less records that, to me-as well as others, I'm sure have always been worth a re-hearing.

**Artie Shaw: "Frenesi";** recorded in 1940, after the band had added strings, **"Nightmare";** my very favorite big band theme song, **"Cross Your Heart";** the Gramercy Five on this one with superb Johnny Guarnieri harpsichord solo.

**Will Bradley: "Strange Cargo";** one of my early 78-RPM purchases-a haunting moody Freddie Slack arrangement, **"Celery Stalks at Midnight";** a delight to listen to anytime.

**Tommy Dorsey: "Opus No. 1;** the quintessential jitter-bug accompaniment-from 1944.

**Jimmie Lunceford: "Jazznocracy";** fellow Browser Bob Knack once observed, "I'll bet they have to hose down the band after playing that one"

**Benny Goodman: "Roll 'Em;** a big band boogie. While recorded by the band on many occasions, this is a four-minute plus version from February 15, 1938. The Harry James trumpet solo at the end is electrifying. In his book "BG on the Record", a bio-discography of Benny Goodman, author Russ Connor refers to this performance saying "it is the ultimate swing recording. No band, in all of recorded jazz ever generated such heart-stopping excitement as this Goodman version of Roll 'Em."

**Glenn Miller: "Keep 'Em Flying";** a bona fide Jerry Gray arranged flag-waver recorded December 8, 1941, **"Measure for Measure";** recorded for the sound track of the 1941 film "Sun Valley Serenade", it didn't make it into the final cut. A real rouser just the same.

**Claude Thornhill: "LaPaloma";** "it's almost symphonic sounding"-the words of late Chicago DJ Dave Garraway.

**Kay Kyser: "Pushin' Sand";** many people found it intriguing that Kay's band could produce such a fine and memorable instrumental.

**Harry James: "Trumpet Blues";** I was once more than lucky to get a call through to a Chicago radio station contest line to identify this great one from 1942. The prize? A weekend for two at a luxury downtown hotel.

**Lionel Hampton: "Central Avenue Breakdown";** featured the Nat "King" Cole trio and teamed Hamp and Nat's pianos to create a lively session. These are just some of my favorites that I

never get tired of hearing.



Browser Dick Parker, doing some serious music research at one of his favorite locales. *Photo courtesy of Perry Huntoon*

♪♪♪

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

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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.

♪ Six of the tracks feature Eric Schneider, an Earl Hines and Count Basie alumnus, on Tenor, Alto and Soprano saxes, and clarinet.

♪ 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 renown 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 twenty-sixth 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](http://www.cdbaby.com) or [Click to See the Neo Passé Band in Action!](#)

## Another Great Has Left Us...

It is my sad task to let all of you know that one of the greatest lead trumpet players in the history of big bands has passed away. Buddy Childers died after a long illness. Buddy was a good friend and the reason that I first wanted to become a lead trumpet player. His numerous recordings with the Stan Kenton Orchestra were my real introduction to that world. My Kenton Alumni Band actually did a concert yesterday afternoon at the Balboa Pavilion in Newport Beach, California, as part of the LA Jazz Institute "Swing into Spring" weekend of 24 different big band performances. We were the opening "special" concert as a tribute to Stan. The Balboa Pavilion is within a couple of blocks of the old Rendezvous Ballroom, where Stan made his debut on Memorial Day Weekend of 1941. It was a fitting place and time for us to perform. During that performance, we performed "Solo for Buddy," written in the early 50's for Buddy Childers by Bill Holman. Carl Saunders and I did it as a duet. We actually had Norm Tompach from Friends of Big Band Jazz call Buddy on the cell phone so that he could hear us play this rare piece in his honor. He was sleeping and his son didn't want to wake him up. Little did we know that we would perform the piece on the exact day of his passing.

Rest in Peace, Buddy. You showed us all how to play lead trumpet the right way!

-From Mike Vax as sent to the Trumpet Players International Network.



## There Was Plenty of Action, "Back in the Day."

by Bob Knack

While passing time recently perusing my old Downbeats and other publications, I came across some big names that were performing in the Chicago area some fifty-plus years ago. Maybe you attended some of these gigs.

In the Spring of 1950, downtown Chicago venues were slugging it out for your business, bringing in the big stars. The Oriental Theater featured Lena Horne and impressionist George DeWitt backed by the Carl Sands Band. Later, Frankie Laine starred with Patti Page, Fran Warren, Johnny Desmond and Al Morgan. The Chicago Theatre countered with Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis and then the Mills Brothers with Mindy Carson.

Meanwhile, the neighborhood theaters had plenty of action. The Regal, 4719 S. Parkway Blvd, featured appearances by Lionel Hampton, Nat Cole and Louis Jordan. The Paradise offered a week with Boyd Raeburn's band who then went over to the Norshore on Howard Street. By the way, the beautiful Paradise, designed by John Ebersson and opened in 1928, was torn down in 1956. The theatre, with its famous interior, an evening sky with twinkling stars, was constructed so well, it took almost two years to demolish. They don't make 'em like that anymore. At the clubs: The Silhouette did big business with Charlie Ventura, who toned down his "bop" sound calling it "Bop For The People". Dizzy Gillespie followed him and then Charlie Shavers. Anita O'Day worked the Hi-Note, 450 N. Clark at Illinois. The Blue Note had Les Paul, and then Joe Bushkin's trio and the Soft Winds, while it was announced that Erroll Garner plus the Bluenote Dixielanders including

Art Hodes and PeeWee Russell was "coming February 17th, 1950 for two weeks only".

During October of 1951, A Hollywood style opening greeted Charlie Ventura, Buddy Rich, Chubby Jackson and Marty Napoleon when they opened the Preview Club. A huge display was painted on the building, spotlights criss-crossed the sky and there was a big press turnout. Dizzy Gillespie was playing the Capital. Bill Russo left town to join Kenton. Herbie Steward was on lead alto when Harry James played the Aragon, 1100 W. Lawrence Avenue. Next door, Dixieland could be heard at the Normandy featuring the Gold Coast Dixielander's. While I don't know the exact dates or personnel, I'm told it included Jim Clark, Marty Nichols, Chuck Hedges, Dave Remington, and Howie Agster.

Winter weather here was warmed considerably in 1953 by the following: Count Basie with Paul Quinichette & Joe Newman at the Blue Note, 3 North Clark Street, January 30th for two weeks. Billy May played a two-nighter at the Aragon January 30. The Dick Marks-John Frigo piano-bass duo, with vocalist Lucy Reed, at the Lei Aloha were a big draw that year. Vaughn Monroe opened at the Chicago Theater February 6, for a weeks stay.

A display ad in the May 28, 1953 Lerner News touted "Chicago's Newest Rendezvous", the Beacoup Lounge at 5065 Broadway presenting Claude Jones and his trio. Opening on May 29th would be Billie Holiday at this "Home of Progressive Jazz".

By 1954, the Chicago Theater dropped stage shows to feature only movies. It was the last major film house in the country to feature live shows. The last program at the Chicago starred the McGuire Sisters. Bob Scoby's San Francisco Dixielanders took over the Blue Note for two weeks following the Duke Ellington band. Meanwhile, in Hollywood, according to the October 20, 1954 issue of Downbeat, The Benny Goodman Story was struggling with story and casting problems . . . and Spike Jones said he was willing to co-star with Liberace in a musical version of Phantom of the Opera. Whatever happened to that project? Finally, that irascible woodchopper, Woody Herman, got in trouble with management of the Hollywood Palladium by refusing to play waltzes and mambos during his engagement.

Maybe you remember these or other Chicago venues like The Sutherland, The Brass Rail, Jazz Ltd, The London House, or the Garrick Stage Bar. I'd love to hear your recollections of them. Write me at PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664 or e-mail at The Great Escape, [bobknack@hotmail.com](mailto:bobknack@hotmail.com)



### Recommended Chicagoland Happenings...

"The Browsers", experts in the big band era, meet the last Friday of every month @ the Villa D'Oro Restaurant, 5531 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, and (773) 775-2820. Dues are six dollars and include a share of the pizza.

The Illiana Club of Traditional Jazz presents excellent concerts monthly at the Glendora Ballroom, 10225 S. Harlem Avenue, Chicago Ridge, Illinois. July 15, Russ Phillips Band with John Erik Kelso. Aug. 19, TBA Sept. 16, John Skillman band with Franz Jackson. 2 PM-5PM. Continued next column...

**On the Radio: "Mike Baker and the Forgotten 45's":** Saturday evenings from 6 pm-8:30 pm in July...August , 6pm - 8pm, on WJG-AM 1530, Elmhurst, Illinois. Sunday evenings 5:00-8:30pm Mike's "Music of the Stars" features vignettes from "The Browsers" [www.wjgam1530.com](http://www.wjgam1530.com)

**On the Radio: Carousel Bandstand: with Ken Meyer** Thursdays at 10:00am on WEPS-FM 88.9, Elgin. All schedules subject to change.

## "A Letter Poured In..."

Hi, Bob,

Thanks for sending me The Great Escape each month.

In the current issue, I enjoyed reading about Ted Butterman, whom I knew through the late Charlie Weeks and the late Don DeMicheal, both of whom played with Ted.

I was saddened to learn about Eddie Hubbard's death. I remember hearing him on WIND when I was a boy. My mother and my aunt tuned him in every morning.

Years later, when I was assistant director of the Mayor's Special Events in Chicago, I met Eddie's stepson, actor Bob Conrad. I'm glad I told Bob how much my mother and my aunt enjoyed hearing Eddie every morning for so many years.

On my big band radio broadcast web site, The Palomar, you can hear Eddie when he was an announcer on the Chesterfield Show in the late 1940s. The broadcast I have features Tex Beneke. Here's the link to the entry about "Smoke Dreams":

<http://milliondreamsago.net/?p=38>

To hear the music, follow these two easy steps:

1. Go to the bottom of the page to STOP the XSPF Player.
2. Return to the top of the page and then go to the bottom of the "Smoke Dreams" entry. Click the second PLAY button to hear "Smoke Dreams" by Tex Beneke and His Orchestra. Listen to Eddie Hubbard.

Cordially,  
George Spink



The Great Escape publisher Bob Knack and Eddie Hubbard circa 1990

# Phil Harris: That's What I Like About The South

by Bob Langbein

Reprinted with permission of the author

**Trivia Question:** Before Phil Harris formed his own orchestra in 1932, what band did he play with and what instrument did he play?

Phil Harris was born on June 24, 1904 in Linton, IN. He grew up in Nashville, TN, long before it was the country music capital. He was more renowned for his humor than his musicianship. He formed his own band in 1932 and took it into the Cocomanut Grove in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. It was there that his half-spoken vocals and showmanship won him instant celebrity status.

He left the Grove as an established top name and took an extended tour of the East coast. Phil returned to the Los Angeles area in 1936 and played repeated engagements at the Palomar Ballroom. He became one of their top attractions. At first, Phil used "Rose Room" for his theme song. Later he used "That's What I Like About The South" and signed off with "Rose Room".



Phil Harris

He appeared in his first movie in 1933, starring as Alan Chandler in Melody Cruise. Later he played more-or-less straight roles in *The High and the Mighty* (1954) and *The Wheeler Dealers* (1963). It was during a Palomar appearance that he was chosen by Jack Benny to be the bandleader on *The Jell-O Program* Starring Jack Benny. He was Jack's stooge on that radio show from

1936-46. He also was on the *Rexall Drug Show* and made repeat appearances on *Coca-Cola Spotlight Bands*.

**Ed. Note.:** Coincidentally, at about the same time, an elixir with a 12% alcohol content called *Hadacol*, was being pitched and joked about on many radio programs. In particular, Jack Benny's bandleader, Harris, who was kidded often about his drinking prowess, would say, "Jackson, meet me in my room. If you bring the *Hadacol*, I'll bring the ice." *Hadacol* was promoted by a Louisiana state senator named Dudley J. LeBlanc. The name was a contraction of his *Happy Day Company* plus the "L" for the senator's initial.

During the early 1940s, Music Corporation of America rated Phil as one of the most consistent and strongest box-office attractions in the band business. In the winter, he was tied to the LA area because of the radio show and he also worked at the Wilshire Bowl. He married Alice Faye in 1941 and gave up traveling with the band. In 1946 he and Alice had their own radio show. It ran on NBC until 1955. As his activities on radio took more and more of his time, he eventually dropped his band.

He was best known for novelty songs on RCA in the 1940s, including "That's What I Like About the South", "Woodman, Woodman, Spare That Tree", "The Preacher And The Bear" and a big hit "Smoke, Smoke Smoke (That Caigarette)" in 1947. In 1950, he had the top novelty song "The Thing", a jaunty mystery about what was in the box. (You'll never get rid of the boom-ba-boom, no matter whatcha do).

**Ed. note:** Jack Benny could never understand the appeal of his bandleader Phil Harris. "He is a typical fresh guy found in every town. For some reason or another people seem to love that type of fellow." Although his fondness for bourbon was blown out of proportion by Benny's radio writers, Harris played the part well. As a regular on the pro-am golf circuit, he listed himself as playing for the *Jack Daniels Country Club*.

In the mid-50s, he and Alice moved to Palm Springs. Thereafter, Phil could be found almost daily at the Thunderbird Country Club, playing golf. He and Bing Crosby were very close friends for 45 years and Phil participated in several of the crooner's pro-am golf tournaments.

Phil kept busy as a guest on many TV shows. Clubs in Las Vegas regularly invited him to appear there as a headliner. And well into the 1970s, he made annual appearances at the Desert Inn. He also headlined at the Frontier, where he was usually co-billed with Harry James and his orchestra. He also provided memorable voices in animated films including *The Jungle Book* and *Robin Hood*.

Phil Harris passed away on August 11, 1995 at the age of 91. He died in *Racho Mirage, CA*.

**Trivia answer:** He co-led a band in 1928 with Carol Lofner in which he played the drums. If you like Big Band music, write Bob at 190 Greenwood Avenue, Lakeview, AR 72642-7145 or call him at (870) 431-4575.

## A Quiz for Lovers of the Big Band Era; Or a Primer for Those New to the Scene...

Supplied by Joe Carlton

1. Les Brown got his start with his Duke Blue Devils in North Carolina. What other band leaders had their musical origins in the "Tar Heel" state?
2. Harry James had much success with his recordings of classical melodies. How many of those records can you name?
3. Fats Waller played and sang lots of songs. Can you name a couple of songs that Fats wrote that became standards and are still heard today?
4. "That Old Gang Of Mine" was a big hit for Ted Weems with Perry Como on the vocal. In what year did that song come out and in what show?
5. The song "Blue Orchids" was sung by a number of good vocalists, including Dick Todd. What other song titles contain a flower and a color?
6. Benny Goodman had one of the best orchestras during the Big Band Era. How many of his female vocalists can you name?
7. Eydie Gorme and husband Steve Lawrence had a long career of singing together. How many other husband and wife teams can you name that had successful recording careers?
8. After World War II, Johnny Desmond recorded the song "Together". Who had the biggest selling record of this song?
9. Patti Page was not the only "Page" who was famous musically. Who else had that last name?
10. Duke Ellington didn't have many male singers of note. Can you name any that went on to fame on their own?

--Answers found later in this issue. ♪♪♪

## The Saga and Music of World War II

World War II has been called our "Most Popular War". If the output of popular songs is any indication, the statement is overwhelmingly true. No other war has produced so many unforgettable melodies. The music of the war years is sure to bring back many memories -- some good; some sad, for us old-timers who remember The Peace Time Draft, 1940, CCC Camps, etc.

How about Bob Crosby and the Bobcats version of "Goodbye, Dear, I'll Be Back In A Year"...a feeling of happy nonchalance accompanied the rookies. The attitude was as if they were leaving for a short vacation lark. If only they had known.

While they were away, the factory workers rolled up their sleeves to fulfill President Roosevelt's promise that America would become "The Arsenal of Democracy". We would build the planes, tanks and guns for our friends fighting overseas. The mid-1941 production number "Arms For The Love Of America" is much more rousing and intense than the preceding ditty about a few guys going away for a few months....for a little fun in the Army.

Even though our naval and merchant ships were contending with Axis submarines in the undeclared war in the Atlantic, some still felt we could avoid active involvement in the spreading conflict. "Rock-a-bye my baby, there ain't going to be a war" expressed their viewpoint.

December 7, 1941 ended all speculation; bombs falling on Pearl Harbor exploded us right into it. The G.I.s who a year earlier sang about being back in a year were frozen for the duration and changed their tune. "Goodbye Mama, I'm Off To Yokohama" by Sammy Kaye, was written and published within ten days after Pearl Harbor. It shows the same light hearted feeling that went along with the peacetime draft. Accompanying our boys was that famous wartime casualty "Luck Strike Green"....it went to war and never came back.

The film "Panama Hattie" was released in 1942, featuring a song "The Son-Of-A-Gun That Picks on Uncle Sam". It was sung by various artists such as Ann Southern, Virginia O'Brien, Ben Blue, Red Skelton and Rags Ragland. It reminded us not to forget about Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. Many other Hollywood celebrities pitched in to help the cause. Orson Wells did his bit for payroll savings "Buy

Bonds" in a September, 1942 broadcast for the Office Of War Information.

One of the prettiest ballads of those early days of the war was "That Soldier Of Mine". The hit version was by Harry James who introduced one of the Swing Era's finest singers, Helen Forrest. The big bands, like everyone else were off to entertain at service bases and camps. How many soldiers and sailors saw Bob Hope and his troupe or the Glenn Miller AAF Orchestra? Sammy Kaye's version of "You Can't Say No To a Soldier" was a big hit with the "swing and swayers" with popular gal singer Nancy Norman on the vocal.

In 1943, Bette Davis introduced the song, "They're Either Too Young Or Too Old". The title was self-explanatory. The hit record of this tune was beautifully done by Kitty Kallen. During the same year "A Fellow On A Furlough" was number eight on "The Hit Parade". This highly popular musical show survived the war and continued on television before coming to an end.

The home front had ration points to contend with and was asked to use "V-mail" when writing to men overseas. Also on the home front, Bing Crosby joined the parade and also took the "Kraft Music Hall" to camps and bases, incorporating service men into his broadcasts. Bing had a hit with service men when he sang Hoagy Carmichael's "A Cranky Old Yank In A Clanky Old Tank".

Drives were conducted for nearly every purpose including paper and metal gathering and service recruitment. Bing Crosby again pitched in for a plug for women to join the WAAC when he sang one of the prettiest songs of the war, "First Class Private, Mary Brown". This was such a lovely melody that it would have become a standard with different lyrics. It was another effort by the most prolific World War II composer, Frank Loesser.

Remember handsome Bud Collier? He reminded us to save our used fats. Bud was famous as radio's Superman and also appeared on countless television shows in the 1950s. Little Jack Little's voice brought us that unforgettable melody "Waltzing In Berlin". (Ach du lieber!).

On May 8, 1945, Germany fell. Mussolini and Italy were gone long before. President Franklin Roosevelt died a month before V-E Day and his successor, Harry Truman, made the victory announcement. It still remained to defeat

Japan. Troop movements began from Europe to the Pacific for the expected final assault on the Japanese home islands. Enroute, many servicemen received leave, inspiring that sentimental hit song, "He's Home For A Little While".

The invasion of Japan never happened. The atomic bomb made it unnecessary. On August 14, 1945, Japan accepted the surrender terms. Servicemen started home for good and as quickly as the song writers began, they ended the war songs. Who can forget "Sentimental Journey" by Les Brown with Doris Day on the vocal? Less than a month after the surrender Benny Goodman and Lisa Morrow first recorded "My Guy's Come Back" with returning former Glenn Miller AAF Orchestra vet Mel Powell on the piano. Mel had written the song with drummer Ray McKinley. And after that, time kept marching on.

**Editor's Note:** The above is an excerpt from the 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. 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.

#### Quiz Answers:

1. Hal Kemp, Kay Kyser, John Scott Trotter, Johnny Long, Saxie Dowell and Skinnay Ennis.
2. "Carnival of Venice", "Flight Of the Bumble Bee", "Hora Staccato", "Caprice Viennois" and "Dodger Fan Dance" which was taken from "Dance Of The Hours".
3. "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Ain't Misbehavin" are two of them.
4. "That Old Gang Of Mine" was first performed in the Ziegfield Follies of 1923.
5. "Red Roses For A Blue Lady", "Yellow Roses", "The Red Rose", "Blue Gardenia" and "A White Sports Coat and a Pink Carnation".
6. Helen Forrest, Helen Ward, Peggy Mann, Peggy Lee, Mildred Bailey, Martha Tilton, Eve Young and Patti Page.
7. Louis Prima and Keely Smith, Tony Martin and Cyd Charrise, Phil Harris and Alice Faye, Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard and even Harry James had his wife Louise Tobin singing for him.
8. Paul Whiteman in 1928. Others who had good sellers were made by Hick Lucas, Ukelele Ike and Helen Forrest with Dick Haymes.
9. Walter Page who played bass with Count Basie and Oran "Hot Lips" Page who was a trumpet player with Artie Shaw and others.
10. Herb Jefferies, who went into the movies and Al Hibbler, who was blind, continued singing.

#### A Sure Sign of Summer...

"It was so hot yesterday, when I got up out of the Morris Chair, Morris got up with me."

-Henny Youngman

**Ed note:** For you youngsters out there, The Morris Chair was an early style of recliner.

## "The Browsers" Return to the Airwaves in Chicago

The Browsers, experts in the big band era, return to the Chicago Airwaves Sunday evenings this summer via Mike Baker and the Forgotten 45's and Music of the Stars from 5:00pm-8:30pm on WJGG-AM 1530, Elmhurst/Chicago (708)-493-1530. The station is heard in most parts of a four county area including Will, Kane, Dupage and Cook.



## The Return of Fats

On Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, Fats Domino gave his first performance since Hurricane Katrina destroyed his home and Domino, himself, had to be rescued by boat. His band played about a dozen of his hits at Tipitina's, a New Orleans club which also plans a tribute album. The proceeds will help buy instruments for New Orleans' public schools, help artists recover from the hurricane and some will go toward restoring Domino's house.

The 79-year-old music legend Domino last performed in public on Memorial Day 2005 at a casino on the Mississippi Gulf Coast according to a friend. In addition to his home he lost his pianos and his gold and platinum records.

Attired in a white jacket and his signature white cap, Domino sang "I'm Walkin'," followed by "Blueberry Hill" "Blue Monday", "Ain't That a Shame" and "Walkin' to New Orleans" The band included Domino's longtime friend and musical partner saxophonist Herbert Hardesty.

Domino is expected to move back into his 9th Ward home later this year. The back end of a pink 1959 Cadillac that for years sat in the living area and served as a couch is being restored.

"Blueberry Hill" has been a hit for Glenn Miller and Jimmy Dorsey as well as Domino in 1956. Over 30 million copies of this tune have been sold to date. It made Fats a Rock & Roll star when he appeared that year on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand". A statue of Fats stands in a new city park at 300 Bourbon Street in honor of this Crescent City original. It was placed next to existing statues of Al Hirt and Pete Fountain.

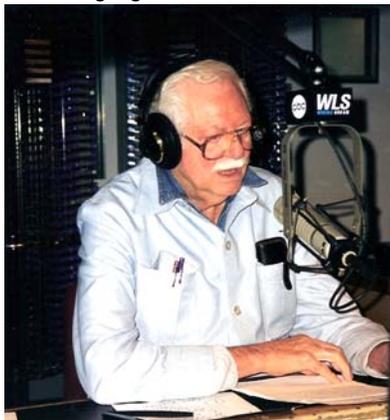
Source: [www.NOLA.com](http://www.NOLA.com)



# My Dinner with Louis, Dining With a Legend

By Browser President Phil Holdman  
Reprinted from Browser's Notes #31

Dining with Louis Armstrong is like having a meal with a god. After all, Satchmo was an idol to every musician who blew a horn, plucked a string or plunked a piano. The occasion was the yearly big bash at the plush mansion of wealthy black disc jockey, Al Benson, located on Chicago's Southside. His annual parties were always a great event for all the bigwigs in the music business.



**Phil Holdman of the Browsers.**  
*Photo courtesy of Karl Kountz.*

I figured I'd shoot for the top celebrity at the affair and grabbed Mr. Armstrong by the hand and led him to a more or less private table in the corner of Benson's basement. Scantly clad, shapely sepia waitresses kept bringing platters of barbecued ribs and chicken to our little corner table. Louis drank beer. I took advantage of Al Benson's hospitality and

ordered a fine champagne—a 1929 Lanson. I remember the brand because I still have the empty bottle. Then, between bites and sips, the conversation began.

I asked, "Louis, what do you think of the music situation these days?" This was in the late 40's and the bebop era was very prevalent. "Satch" didn't care for the music of the flatted fifths. He said, "These guys are ruining our music, trying to play the wrong notes and they call it jazz. I call it crap."

I asked Louis, "What horn men do you really like these days, who don't play crap?" Louis answered, "Give me guys like Buck Clayton, Harry James, and Charlie Spivak. They play the music I like to hear." I said, "It's funny when people like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis are asked who they were most influenced by and they all say, 'Louis Armstrong, the master...and add 'Fatha' Hines to that list. Louis felt honored but wondered what went wrong."

It was getting quite warm and stuffy at the party by this time so Louis stripped down to the waist to cool off. Around his neck, Louis exposed a gold chain with a dangling Star of David, at the end of it. He wore it at all times, claiming it was his good luck charm.

*"There is two kinds of music, the good, and the bad. I play the good kind."*  
-Louis Armstrong

By this time, our feeling mellow host, Al Benson, was making speeches, plugging some of the new releases of the day like "Since I Fell for You" by Annie Laurie and a new release by Lil Miss Corn Shucks.

Al was really a character. He'd go on the air of his powerful Southside radio station, plugging a sponsor with a commercial that went "for Credik" and "for clothes go to Leo Rose." A linguist, he was not, but neither was Albert Einstein.

The party broke up about 4 AM. I think Louis and I hit it off pretty good that night. We hugged each other good-bye and promised to do it again sometime. It never happened, but I'll never forget that memorable night in Al Benson's basement with the world greatest jazzman.

**\*Ed. note:** Phil mentioned a 1929-Lanson champagne in his article. According to the website <https://www.justchampagne.co.uk>, Phil knows his bubbly: "Founded in 1760, Lanson is one of the oldest - and greatest - Champagne Houses. 1996, 1990 and 1955 are considered to have been exceptional years. In the years before 1950, exceptional years were 1945, 1929, 1928, 1921, 1911, and 1904."

♪♪♪



This issue of The Great Escape is dedicated to the memory of our special friend, Hey-U. Photo © Bob Knack

## Warren Ketter asks, "Do you remember..."

Anson Weeks, Bert Lown, Seger Ellis, Herbie Kaye, Art Hickman, Joe Haymes, Irving Aaronson, Isham Jones, Louis Panico, Ben Pollack, Jean Goldkette, Bert Lown, George Olsen, Johnny Hamp, Gray Gordon, Larry Funk, Smith Ballew, Boyd Senter, Don Bester, Richard Himber, Buddy Rogers, Ben Bernie, Emerson Gill, Coon/Sanders,

Gay Claridge, Paul Ash, Garwood Van, Ace Brigode, Willie Bryant, Sleepy Hall, Orville Knapp, Tom Coakley, Gus Arnheim, Charlie Agnew, Mal Hallett, Earl Burtnett, Ted FioRito, Bert Block, Al Kavelin, Paul Tremaine, Claude Hopkins, Carl Hoff, Lester Lanin, Barney Rapp, Bernie Cummins, Bob Chester, Jimmy Grier, Emil Flint.