My Favorite Radio Memory

Etiquette Patrol

IN THE SPRING of 1948, my picture appeared in Radio Mirror magazine for a Radio show I had been a part of. Allen Ludden, later of Password fame, was also in the photo.

I believe Ludden began the Mind Your Manners program, probably in 1946 or 1947 on WTIC, a local radio station in Hartford, Connecticut. The half-hour program, broadcast on Saturday mornings, was picked up by NBC within the year, but I don't know its longevity. I was known as Vanda, my middle name, at the time, and I left the show in the spring of 1948.

The program consisted of write-in questions by listeners pertaining to young people's manners and the like. Two of the questions I remember are: Should a boy or a girl go through a revolving door first? Should 16-year-olds go steady?

Sometimes, we panelists knew the questions before airtime, and sometimes we didn't. The young teenager standing at the mike on the left, not part of the panel, usually read the questions for the males. I usually read the female questions but was also a member of the panel. Allen Ludden moderated our answers, keeping us on track and summarizing.

—Vanda Thompson Komp, Laguna Woods, California

Devoted to Cowboys

WHEN I WAS 5 or 6 years old, I'd run home from school to hear The Lone Ranger on the radio.

A schoolmate said she heard that if you could see behind the radio's cloth, you could see the people on the show. Wow! What a great idea!

So, time after time, I'd sit on the floor, pressed against the radio, and pick at the fabric when no one else was in the room. My dad caught me once, and that was the end of my future "TV set."

At the same time, I was in love with Gene Autry and included him in my nightly prayers. After asking blessings for the family, I would always add, "And bless Gene and tell him to wait for me. Amen."

The only time I was ever violent at school was when a fellow first grader said Roy Rogers was better than Gene Autry. I doubled up my little fist and knocked her down. After all, what was radio without Gene's voice?

—Mary Lou Akers, Lakewood, Colorado

When Radio Ruled Airwaves

EVERY MEMBER of our rural Saskatchewan household of the early 1950s had his or her favorite shows. Dad was partial to sports programming, Mom listened to Virginia Paynes' portrayal of Ma Perkins and I never missed The Lone Ranger.

Lamont Cranston thrilled and chilled as The Shadow, and comedy was ladled out in generous portions by the likes of Red Skelton, Milton Berle and Canada's own Wayne and Schuster.

Programs that aired after 8 p.m. on a weeknight conflicted with my bedtime, or so everyone thought. I could extend my radio time by lying in the upstairs hallway and listening through the cast-iron grate of the heating register. On more than one occasion, Dad had to scoop me up and tuck me into bed after sleep had overcome my desire to hear the latest installment of Boston Blackie or My Friend Irma.

Our radio, a majestic 4 feet tall, still stands in my home, but somehow it doesn't seem comfortable playing hard rock music or the glib patter of today's announcers. This radio was meant for Orson Welles and the likes of Our Miss Brooks and Bob Hope.

—Dale Simmons, Regina Saskatchewan

Gem of a Jingle

IN THE 1960s, my best friend's father, Bill Wegman, was a local radio celebrity in Quincy, Illinois with his own show on WGEM 1440.

His daughter, Julie, and I thought ourselves very clever when we changed his show's introductory jingle to say, "WEGMAN 1440—it's the Bill Wegman show." It fit perfectly with the background music.

Much to our delight, Mr. Wegman thought it was pretty good, too, so off we went to the station to be recorded. Two little girls were very impressed with themselves as they listened to how they introduced the show for a week. And Julie and I are still the best of friends!

—Betsi Thacker, Ursa, Illinois