

# *Closed Circuit* THE WGN FAMILY LETTER

\* With permission of Broadcasting Publications, Inc.

February 2, 1979

## CONGRATULATIONS, DANIEL S. WATERS...

Mr. Daniel S. Waters has been named Supervisor of our Security/Building Department effective January 1, 1979, as announced by Jack P. Jacobson, Vice President and Manager of Operations, WGN Television, and Wayne R. Vriesman, Vice President and Station Manager of WGN Radio.

Dan has been with WGN Continental Broadcasting Company since August, 1964, when he started in Office Services, and then to our Auditing Department. He left in 1966 to join the U.S. Army and returned to WGN in 1969 and became part of our Building Department staff.

We wish Dan every success in his new position.



"THE SOUPY SALES SHOW" PREMIERES

FEBRUARY 5 ON TELEVISION 9

Family Comedy Monday thru Friday

Soupy Sales, the comedian most recognized when a custard pie covers his face, returns to daily television when his new comedy-variety series "The Soupy Sales Show" premieres Monday, February 5, on WGN Television 9. The 30-minute programs will air each weekday beginning at 4:30 pm.

Joining Soupy for the hilarity will be the puppets who helped make his show nationally popular in the 1950s and 60s. "White Fang," the biggest and meanest" of the puppet dogs, is just one of the stars that will help Soupy with one-liners, ad-libs, and of course, pies-in-the-face.

Top recording groups from the entertainment industry will provide musical entertainment on "The Soupy Sales Show." Other top name guests will drop in on occasion and add to the slapstick humor.

Soupy Sales has been hailed by knowing national critics as a great clown and comedy genius. "The Soupy Sales Show" takes advantage of his talents and provides comedy entertainment for the whole family. His fans will want to watch as the zany man adds to his collection of over 19,000 custard cream pies received smack in the face!

A VALENTINE SPECIAL FROM WGN TELEVISION 9

FAMILY FILM FEATURE "KIM" TO AIR FEBRUARY 11

Errol Flynn Heads Cast

"KIM," Rudyard Kipling's classic story, will be presented by WGN Television 9 Sunday, February 11, beginning at 5:30 pm. The 1950 film spectacular, filmed partly on location in India, is a special pre-Valentine's Day holiday presentation for the whole family's viewing enjoyment.

"Kim" is the story of the adventure and intrigue when British soldiers fought rebellious natives in the 1880's. Errol Flynn stars as the devil-may-care Red Beard, a British spy masquerading as an Afghan horse dealer. Dean Stockwell plays the title role of a little Irish boy thought to be a Hindu waif who Flynn enlists to fight against unfriendly native troops and a band of Czarist Russian invaders.

Featuring a cast of thousands, "Kim" achieved a breakthrough when it became one of the first Hollywood movies to be made almost entirely on location. MGM director Victor Saville had to have each reel of film placed in dry ice to keep it from disintegrating in the three days it took to fly the reels from India back to the Hollywood laboratories.

WGN Television will present additional outstanding films for the family during the upcoming holidays of Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, etc.

Cast: Errol Flynn - Mahbub Ali  
Dean Stockwell - Kim  
Paul Lukas - Lama  
Robert Douglas - Col. Creighton  
Thomas Gomez - Emissary  
Cecil Kellaway - Hurree Chunder  
Arnold Moss - Lurgan Sahib

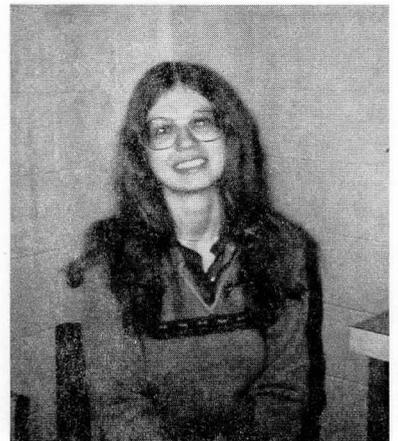
WELCOME TO THE WGN "FAMILY" .....



*Patricia Duda  
Accounts Payable Clerk*



*Oswaldo "Ozzie" Cruz Jr.  
Mail Messenger*



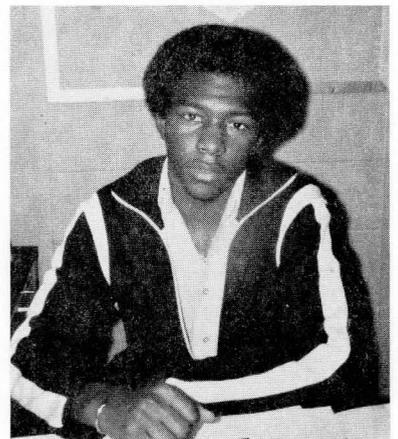
*Carolyn Grisko  
TV Engineer*



*Luis Ybarra  
Mail Messenger*

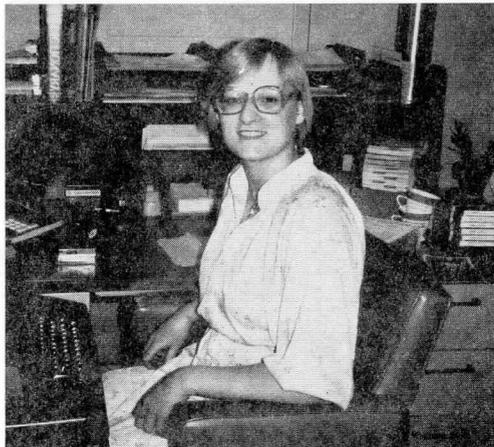


*Kenneth Fuentes  
Indoctrination Trainee*



*Gregory Hadden  
Indoctrination Trainee*

CONGRATULATIONS ..... to MARY BROWN on her promotion to SECRETARY/BUYER in our Purchasing Department.



*Mary Brown*

FAREWELL to H. PATTERSON (Pat) HOUSTON

We bid a fond farewell to H. PATTERSON (Pat) HOUSTON at his retirement party in the J. Howard Wood Center on Wednesday afternoon, January 31st. Pat's lovely, wife, ALICE, also attended the festivities. Pat will be sorely missed as he served our company well for almost 31 years as a television engineer. We wish Pat, Alice and their family only the very best for many years to come.



RALPH BATT, Vice President and Manager of Engineering, extending "Best Wishes" to Pat and Alice.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to:

Sue Schilling	- February 6	Don Strukel	- February 15
Jerry Golden	- February 8	Lottie Kearns	- February 16
Warren Phelps	- February 8	Bob Manewith	- February 17
Jim Omi	- February 8	Martha Jones	- February 18
Alex Burkholder	- February 10	Dick Leigh	- February 19
Ybarra Luis	- February 12	Bob Currier	- February 20

---

GET WELL WISHES

Send "Get Well Wishes" to: Art Ambrozewski, Dick Jungers, Dolores Koltz and Arla Ward at home.

Also..... Trudee Fellig  
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago  
345 East Superior  
Chicago, Ill. 60611 Room 810

---

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

CHARLOTTE O'BRIEN, Director of Community Services, will be a panelist on Tuesday, March 6th at a seminar, "WINNING WITH BASICS," presented by the Publicity Club of Chicago. "Getting Your Story on Radio & Television is the topic for discussion."

---

FOR SALE

PARAKEET for sale - Female with cage. One year old. \$8.00. Tom - ext. 239 or 564-9297.

---

RECIPE CORNER

SALMON CASSEROLE

1 tall can salmon -- juice and all -(clean if necessary.)

1 - 7 oz. package cooked creamettes.

1 green pepper --- diced

1/2 cup stuffed pimento olives

1/2 lb. sharp cheddar cheese

Mix above ingredients --- bake in covered casserole --- top with 1/2 cup milk.  
350 degrees for 45 minutes.

---

DOCTOR: "How's the man who swallowed the spoon?"

NURSE : "He can hardly stir."

---

RAY RAYNER says ..... "After dinner, members of a lot of families suffer from dish-temper."

WELCOME to JOSEPH "Joe" LUTZKE and his staff; ADRIENNE KAPLAN and LUCINA CHAVEZ.

The CHICAGO SALES OFFICE formerly at 500 N. Michigan, is now in our West Building and can be reached on the following extensions - 518, 519 and 520.

---

#### LILLIAN CZARNIK WINS AWARD

CONGRATULATIONS to LILLIAN CZARNIK, a sophomore at Lane Technical High School and daughter of MARY and FRANK CZARNIK, (TV Production Facility Coordinator), who has been adjudged second prize winner of a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond in the Public High School Division and the annual Chicago High School Traffic Safety Slogan Contest. The competition is sponsored by the Chicago Traffic Safety Commission and the Chicago Auto Show.

Presentation of the award will be made by Mayor Michael A. Bilandic in his office on February 15th.

Lillian's winning slogan was: "CAREFUL DRIVERS ARE SURVIVORS."

---

#### CHRISTMAS CARDS PUT TO GOOD USE

Thank you one and all who took the time to carry in your '78 Christmas cards.

The cards were sent on to the Chelsea House, a home for senior and aged citizens, where the thankful recipients created various items for sale to earn extra money.

More cards will be forwarded to them periodically.

---

#### SYMPATHY

DEEPEST SYMPATHY to DICK ERLNBACH on the death of his mother-in-law, ANN CONOBOY; to GEORGE HOOKER on the death of his father-in-law, OLIVER PURCELL; and to HENRY ALALA on the death of his grandmother, JULIANNA PEREZ.

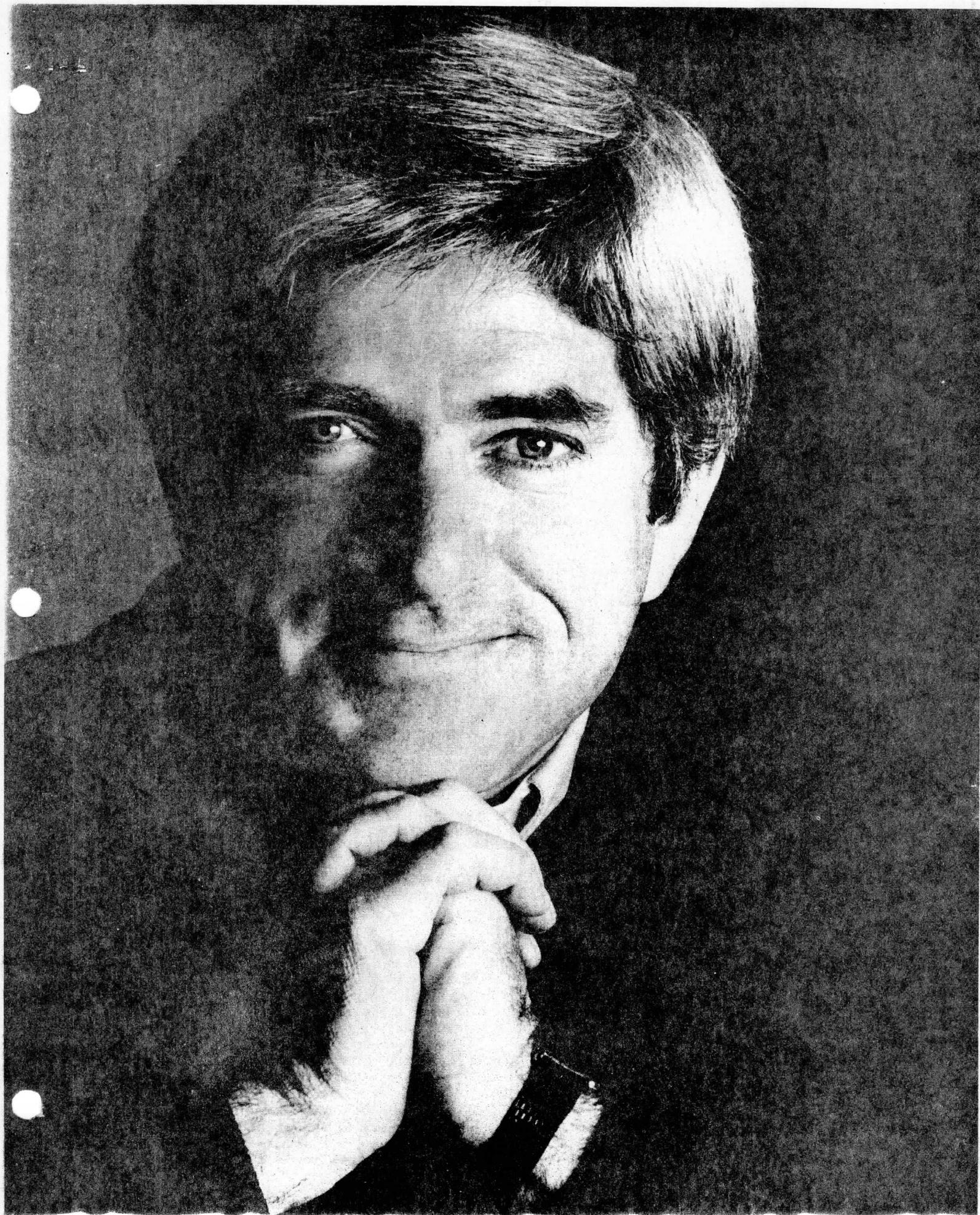
---

Effective Thursday, February 1, 1979, all pick-ups and deliveries formerly made to our office at 500 North Michigan Avenue should be made at:

Public Service Office  
Tribune Tower, 1st Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60611.

The Public Service Office will be open for this service from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Please be sure that whatever you are dropping off is given to one of the Public Service representatives and not just put on the counter. A representative will also have to be seen to pick up any items.



# Blessed Are the Women of America, For Donahue Is Their Shepherd

Women have made a feminist hero of this mop-haired Irish Catholic from Cleveland. Touchdown Jesus would be proud

by William Brashler

**O**f the many things this country has received from Notre Dame, most are in some way derivatives of the famous mosaic on the side of the university's library building. It is of Christ with his arms raised in benediction. Students have dubbed it "Touchdown Jesus." These same students, so inspired, have gone on to become some of America's finest pro-football players, articulate Catholic scholars, public-spirited lawyers, and aggressive FBI agents. That's an admittedly selective sampling but not an inaccurate one, for many of today's mostly male enclaves have been served well by the school in South Bend, Indiana.

It is ironic, then, that one of these Notre Dame graduates, a mop-haired Irish Catholic from Cleveland who's drunk beer and copped feels with the best of them, should today be one of America's most influential feminists. It is ironic that each day more women are educated—about sex, morals, trends, and personalities—by this Notre Dame product, more women peer into his eyes, communicate with him, and thank him than they do any other person—man or woman in the land. Phil Donahue is a more important force in raising women's consciousness than Gloria, Bella, and *Ms.* magazine combined.

Phil Donahue is forty-three and may well be America's oldest altar boy. Daily he examines his conscience and turns it into the best thing on the dial: a subliminal mixture of charm and intelligence, an anomaly in the plastic world of television but a credit to the dominion of Touchdown Jesus.

Each weekday, he ushers 200 women into his midst, while another six and a half million are within the sound of his voice. He tugs at them, hugs them, touches, talks, listens, prods, learns, and shares with them. They reciprocate by making him, as of May of last year, the most popular and highly acclaimed talk show host on daytime television. He is steadily leaving Merv, Mike, and Dinah in the ratings shadows with a show that violates most of the industry's rules and a clean-cut personality better suited for a religious mosaic than the picture tube.

*Donahue*—one household word, cut down from the *Phil Donahue Show*—is not Manhattan chic or dapper downtown Burbank

*William Brashler is a writer-novelist currently living in Chicago. His last piece for Esquire was a profile of radio's Paul Harvey.*

or live from the MGM Grand. Each day it is talk generated from a cinder block studio at WGN-TV in Chicago. The station is an independent owned by Chicago's Tribune Company and is located on the city's northwest side, two miles due west of Wrigley Field. Apart from *Donahue*, WGN airs old movies, *Bozo's Circus*, over 140 Cubs games, and reruns of *Hogan's Heroes*. Each day at 10:30 A.M., the 200 women arrive there from nearby suburbs and midwestern towns in buses and Toyota station wagons. Just an hour earlier, Donahue himself has driven in from a North Shore Chicago suburb in his brown Chevrolet Caprice.

At 10:45, they are waiting: mostly white, well dressed, of all ages, usually housewives (though there are a surprising number of working women taking the morning off). The women are seated on metal chairs in the *Donahue* studio, just next door to Bozo. They wait for the wonder of television to begin. *Donahue* seems not unlike scores of other local talk show programs around the country. Indeed, eleven years ago, at WLWD-TV, in Dayton, Ohio, it was just that, a strictly hometown production. Today, however, the show is syndicated to 154 stations, invading over four and a half million households, including the major markets of New York City, where it outstrips the local and network competition; Los Angeles; and Chicago. It is the most talked-about talk show on daytime television, the most effective book-selling show on the air, having passed the *Today* show in that regard sometime previously.

You wouldn't know it to be there. A telephone sits onstage—a technique long since abandoned everywhere else on television—for call-in questions, and wide aisles are cut in the audience so Donahue can field impromptu questions. The show, which is taped for delayed broadcast elsewhere in the country, is fed live to Chicago audiences; only telephone calls, monitored by an associate producer in a booth offstage, are screened. There is only one topic of discussion a day. It may be divorce, abortion, homosexuality, impotence, malpractice, Nazism—any one of an endless and exhaustive pool used to fill 235 fresh programs a year. To add a touch of show biz and variation to things, an occasional Hollywood celebrity (a Richard Dreyfuss or a Steve Allen) appears, also for a full hour, and talks about a lot more than just his current movie.

By all standards, the show should fail miserably. Donahue has no obsequious sidekick; he doesn't sing, tell jokes, cue the band, or fall into banal chatter with the likes of Shecky Greene, Dr.

Left: Phil Donahue, the midland marvel, is forty-three and may well be America's oldest altar boy. He's the best thing on the daytime dial.

Irwin Corey, or the amazing Kreskin. He instead sustains a mesh of issues and entertainment, the participation and identification of his viewers, in studio and at home, and delivers a constantly high level of tension and debate. In all, he oddly enough believes that he will not go broke *overestimating* the intelligence of his American audience.

At 10:50, he walks unannounced into the studio. He comes in from the rear, the same way his audience arrived. They spot him, swoon, and break into loud applause, eyes fastened on him in that celebrity daze normally reserved for Newman, Redford, or Stallone. Nowadays, they come to see Donahue. If the day's show features Teddy Kennedy or John Denver, that's nice. If not, if the program is lesbian mothers, fad diets, a gay lawyer, that's so much the better. The women in the metal chairs have waited up to two years for their tickets and only because of this man.

Part of it is Donahue's presence: his charm, the thick, silver-gray hair, the Irish good looks, the wit. He is handsome but not a knockout. His nose is a little big; his eyebrows, too bushy; the mouth, pushed in; he talks with a slight lisp. The whole is much better than the parts, but he does exude a beauty, an athletic grace within the three-piece Botany 500, and few people around him are unaware of it. Yet all that would go for zot if every woman in every chair, and each one watching at home, didn't think that he was somehow vulnerable, that they could talk to this guy and he would talk back and they would both reveal something about each other.

He immediately warms to them. The audience, he says, is the show's most precious asset. "Without them, we wouldn't work. I'd do anything for them." So he smiles, touches, goes through shtiks to make them feel at ease. "Gee, thanks, I feel like a big star . . . Glad you're here . . . I'm so nervous . . . Any Catholics? [He waves the microphone as a priest sprinkles holy water with his aspergillum.] Just want to make you feel at home . . .

Gosh, you look so much thinner in person. . . ." On and on, until the audience is glad it's there. Then he makes his pitch. "When the show begins, help me out. Get into the act. Show me you care."

And the pitch continues into the broadcast, which opens without any fanfare and almost before the audience knows it. Today he's invited two lesbian mothers and their six children to talk about living together in a family. The studio audience—these 200 homegrown midwestern ladies—at first is stunned, then troubled, then strangely sympathetic to the two quite ordinary-looking women, whom they find enormously likable, and their children, whom they find incredibly normal.

In minutes, Donahue is running up and across the aisles with his portable microphone, working the cord like a vendor at Wrigley Field, sensing the tension, communicating the concern and bewilderment of his audience to his guests. It is a show that Cavett, Buckley, or Dinah couldn't begin to handle. It is Donahue at his best.

He nods at a questioner, goes to her with the mike, faces her, holds her hand or puts his arm around her back as she talks. If anyone else wooed and romanced a female audience, he would

appear paternal, patronizing, and sexist. Donahue does it as a host, a listener, and thrives because of it.

That is his magic. You cannot watch the show without getting the feeling that you have gotten your question in, that the woman standing up, unrehearsed, unscreened, unprepared, is saying what's on your mind.

Yet it would be little more than video anarchy if Phil Donahue weren't there to make it work.

He wasn't plucked from a modeling agency, a backfield, or a canceled situation comedy. Instead, Donahue came up from being a reporter for a string of small radio and television stations, having covered fires, auto accidents, and political primaries, to take over a Dayton talk show. The previous show came complete

with audience; Donahue decided to keep it. "They had tickets to the show we replaced, so we had to let them in." With producers Dick Mincer, a short, business-like man, and Patricia McMillen, a tall, intense woman who scowls when reminded that she was once described as looking like Farrah Fawcett's older sister, Donahue worked at his format, discovering that the questions he took from the audience were often better than his own. He did shows in prisons, interviewed gays, widows, atheists, begged an occasional celebrity to come to Dayton, and never shied away from any topic or anyone.

He hopped into a coffin to illustrate the crassness of the funeral industry. He held up an anatomically complete doll and watched the show's phone lines short out. He met Ralph Nader at the Dayton airport at 1:30 in the morning, drove him to his appointments, and persuaded him to appear on his small-town show. It was one of his first programming coups. Nader appeared another time opposite Edward Cole, then president of General Motors.

Phil Donahue works intensely. This is, after all, a guy who did well in theology at Notre Dame,

who went up so fast for a pass during an inter-hall football game that he was knocked unconscious and didn't know who he was until several hours later. He deals with interests and topics related to women, chasing after them with the same purpose and charm that the boys at Notre Dame once exhibited toward co-eds who visited South Bend in sweaters and corsages on football weekends twenty years ago.

With all that scrambling, he hardly had time to get a big head. He was a star only in Dayton. Slowly other stations signed on. (He still prefers syndication to a network slot: "If Pittsburgh drops you, you're still alive in Cincinnati. On a network, one man can end the whole ball game.") But it was a slow process. For years, Donahue was still that blue-eyed, too-good-looking guy from Ohio—and no big deal.

He kept at it, making his mistakes in Dayton and correcting them, taking chances and making them pay off, building his audience and establishing his credibility. In 1974, the show, with producers Mincer, McMillen, and Darlene Hayes (all of whom are still with the program), moved to WGN's Addison Street studios in Chicago. The team continued to add stations but still trailed the ratings of network competitors and existed outside the

**He took football as seriously as theology. Words like *impish*, *boyish*, and *clean-cut* will follow him to the grave.**



*The graduate and his family: That famous intensity was there even at Notre Dame. And he has lost none of that college-boy charm.*

pale of the bicoastal television industry. ("It still bothers me that you're not hot until New York or L.A. says you're hot. We were as good a few years ago as we are today, but nobody noticed. We couldn't get arrested in Manhattan.")

A national daytime Emmy award in 1977 helped, but not much. Nothing brought the public eye until *Donahue* started killing the competition in New York. Critics began to drool. "His daily program reduces the [other talk shows] to the level of Tupperware parties," wrote *Chicago Tribune's* Gary Deeb, the nastiest TV critic in a town notorious for nasty TV criticism. Finally, the Niensens found him on top. He took another Emmy last June, and today the industry toasts his superiority and marvels at his success.

But it has not been that long a time since Dayton. Watching him is a slap of reality; one feels that Donahue has his ear to the black dirt of the Midwest, that he certainly must drive a Chevy. A self-made millionairess who flashes her \$12,000 diamond bracelet is asked how much money she actually makes.

"I don't know if I make two million dollars or ten million dollars," she replies.

"You would if you didn't make either," Donahue responds.

He goes a little further. "Have you ever had a Big Mac?"

"What's that?" she answers.

Not that he badgers, harangues, or hectors, though he is capable of all three, but rather that he checks, edits, and calls his guests on their lapses and illogic. He does it all on the basis of his own research, after working closely with the producers. He carries few if any notes—usually a slip of paper on a page of a book or a three by five card cupped in his hand with names and identifications. He probes and picks with his "Yes, but—" line of questioning. "Everyone agrees with that, but—" he says when a guest is being evasive. "We're all happy for you, but—" he says to a guest who claims to have found the answer. "You know I think you're the greatest, but—" he says to a celebrity who's just said something stupid.

When he does that, he cements his audience's favor more than in any other way, exuding a feeling that the ridiculous and the sublime will not pass unscathed, affectation and pomp will be exposed, the out of touch will be put in touch.

It is not uncommon for people to come off better than normal on his show—Burt Reynolds reveals that he'll always be in love with Dinah Shore, Dinah admits that it wasn't easy to break off with Burt—and it is not uncommon for people to come off worse. Teddy Kennedy guests to push his health care plan, complete with graphs and props, and he seems surprisingly stodgy and evasive. Seldom does he look Donahue in the eye when responding to questions, and, worse yet, seldom does he answer a question—"That's all well and good, Senator, but how much will it cost?"—without preamble and qualification. To Donahue, Kennedy was "speaking in tablets. I was really disappointed with him. I hope it was my fault," he said afterward.

Yet people wouldn't be attracted to Donahue if his chief ability was to put guests on the defensive. William Buckley does that with ease and without ratings. Stanley Siegel does it in New York—where he failed to beat Donahue head on head—and

looks like an idiot. Donahue instead possesses an indefinable mixture of conversation and interrogation, curiosity and digging, and—wonder of wonders in television land—a certain thread of morality.

Without being evangelical or pedantic, the moral ingredient found in *Donahue* is as distinct as if the image of Touchdown Jesus were burnt into the rear scrim. He insists it isn't his job to tell anybody how to live, but the concern is there, a conscience formed by the good Holy Cross Fathers in South Bend, the need to expose sleaze, laziness, hypocrisy, glibness, dirt, dishonesty, racism, sexism, and pretension.

On a recent Merv Griffin show, a twenty-three-year-old woman appeared to talk cheerfully about a hard-core adult movie she'd just directed. The only person with the urge to question her vocation was another guest, William Buckley. "What happens when you run out of positions?" Buckley asked, and the reply moved him to write in a column: "The lady laughed, Merv laughed, the singer laughed, and the time was up, and everybody went home, just as if they'd heard from someone who'd made a success starting up a chain of doughnut shops."

CAMERA 5

**"You are loving, generous, and wonderful," said Marlo Thomas. "And whoever is the woman in your life is lucky."**



No doubting Thomas: "That Girl" is Marlo Thomas, America's sweetheart and an avid feminist. Phil Donahue is now her man.

He is a man who has had complications. He is still trying to unravel the knots in his personality tied in the years of his Ohio, Roman Catholic upbringing and in eight years of all-male schools. Much has been made of his Mr. Low Key, Nice Guy, Super Pop, Liberated Male image. But he hasn't always been that way.

In truth, he is a survivor of a broken marriage, one that disintegrated after seventeen years and five children. He admits to being an absentee father, a workaholic, a ladder climber so intent on professional success that he neglected his private duties and sacrificed family joys.

"People came up to my wife and said, 'Isn't he wonderful? Do you know how lucky you are?' But I wasn't always so wonderful. There were a lot of times she thought she was very unlucky. I bring as much excess baggage to a relationship as anybody."

In 1975, after an on-again, off-again separation and after he'd moved the family from Dayton to Chicago, he and Marge Cooney Donahue, the girl he'd married right after college, were divorced. There was no high drama, no malicious squabbling. He retained custody of his four boys—Michael, Kevin, Daniel, and Jim, now ages fifteen through nineteen—and his wife took their

only daughter, Maryrose, thirteen, moved to New Mexico, and has since remarried.

In the meantime, Donahue became a national celebrity and an oft quoted authority on single parenting. The condition first obsessed him, but now he grows weary of the attention and the implied credit. "I hate to have my home pictured as Ponderosa East," he says, and insists on more family privacy. "My boys sometimes tell me it's a pain in the neck to be the sons of a celebrity. They don't want their big shot dad coming to *their* little league game and hogging all the attention." To make amends for the years he ignored them, he now tries to spend more quiet time with them.

His money makes that easier. The program now brings him an estimated income of \$500,000 a year from his salary combined with a percentage of the program's gross revenues. He has the money to afford live-in housekeepers and travels freely with the boys. Yet he is suspicious of too much of anything. Two of his kids work in grocery stores after school; one of them works in a gas station; they drive the Caprice when he doesn't. They know, as Donahue's friends and associates sense, that the old man is in a lot of ways more conservative on his own than on the air.

There are just a lot of things he can no longer let pass. He abhors affronts to women and feminism. This sensibility pervades every interview, from questioning newscaster Paul Harvey about why he thinks women belong in the kitchen to asking est guru Werner Erhard why most of his trainers are men. He presses representatives of business, medicine, science, sports, religion, and media about why they treat women like they do and if they're changing. He does it because he knows intimately and is moved by the concerns of his audience.

"I'm for the women's movement. I'm fascinated by it. I think it's good for us, and I don't think it's going to go away.

"Years ago, the whole male media was absorbed by the cosmetics of the early movement—'Boy, they must be unhappy. Most of them just can't get a man'—and there was a lot of humiliation thrown around.

"Now, we've gone from that to, 'I'm not a women's libber, but—.' The 'buts' are things like believing in equal pay for equal work, and a lot of other areas which have almost become clichés. And the 'buts' are increasing in number.

"Yet I still see a reluctance to identify with the movement and mostly from a woman who's married, two kids, mid-thirties. A lot of them think that feminists are telling them that if they got married when they were twenty-two, had kids while the husband went off to work, drove a station wagon with the wood on the side, and had a split-level house in the suburbs, that after they've done all that, feminists are looking them in the eye and saying, 'Baby, you've been had.'

"The important thing to remember is that feminists haven't said that, but that's the way so many women interpret them. What's interesting is the response, which is usually anger. If that so angers you, then your anger tells us more about you than you may want us to know."

It is an ongoing dialogue. The movement, women in and

outside of it, engage Donahue throughout five hours a week of extraordinary talk. And with his shaggy head and darting mike, he pushes and probes among them.

"There is nothing patronizing about my relationship with my audience. I do enjoy the company of women. But one of the revealing things that happens is that they ask me, 'How do you stand it with all these women?' I can see the self-loathing, the whole suggestion that women aren't interesting. When I hear things like that, I think of all the feminists who've been trying very hard to make the point about how our male-dominated culture smashes the spirit of women.

"It's hard to make that point. You get to where you sound like you want all women to run air hammers and fly airplanes and abandon their children. That isn't it at all. It is simply a matter of

choices and relationships which include real choices for both men and women."

Daily he spreads that word, keeping his head screwed on, knowing from whence he came.

He has made mistakes.

On a show about dentists and dentistry, he took a question from a woman in the audience who spoke authoritatively on the subject.

"You must be the wife of a dentist," he remarked.

"No, I am a dentist," she said.

He wilted. He has had his embarrassments. Another involved an interview with Anne Gaylor, a proabortion author:

GAYLOR: Most people who appear on this program have their books held up. My book could not be held up because it is proabortion. Right?

DONAHUE: No, that's not true. I said I didn't want to show your book because I thought the title was—

GAYLOR: The title was offensive to the Catholic Church.

DONAHUE: Okay, all right. Let me just tell you the title of the book. You're right, you're right. I asked you not to show the book. I engaged in a very blatant form of censorship.

GAYLOR: You're right. It was censorship.

DONAHUE: The title is *Abortion Is a Blessing*. And I said that if you hold this book up, you're going to create such a shock wave that we're not going to get anything else done in here.

GAYLOR: I suggested I do it at the end of the program, and you said no to that. Right?

DONAHUE: I thought the title would be unnecessarily offensive to a lot of people. That's what I mean. Why is it that you have to be so incendiary with your rhetoric?

GAYLOR: Because I have conferred in over 12,000 legal abortions, including a twelve-year-old girl, a fifteen-year-old. . . . I *know* abortion is a blessing. *You* won't let me say it!

DONAHUE: Okay. Well . . .

GAYLOR: Feminism has a long way to go on the *Phil Donahue Show*.

It was a tense, electric moment—live television, Donahue on the defensive, the suggestion that his old hang-ups haven't all been stripped away. But if it was an embarrassing moment, you wouldn't know it from Donahue himself. Instead of burying the can of film, he replayed it in a later show along with letters

## Donahue shows an indefinable mixture of conversation and interrogation—and a certain sense of morality.



*Irish eyes are smiling: But Donahue found Senator Ted to be a big disappointment. Kennedy was evasive and quite hard to pin down.*

scolding him for being rude, conceited, sexist—the whole gamut of sins committed as a talk show host and as an American male.

But his detractors are amazingly few, and some of his most ardent supporters are from a tough crowd.

"I've watched Phil over a period of ten years move from a position of curiosity about the women's movement to downright advocacy," said Gloria Steinem. At a testimonial in Chicago marking the tenth anniversary of the show, she added, "Phil is the only person who could get me to come to an unrated state."

Another booster, the author of *Free to Be . . . You and Me*, one of the most highly acclaimed TV specials and a successful book, is actress Marlo Thomas. After close to an hour of talking with him on a show in 1977, she said on the air before millions, "You are loving and generous and wonderful, and whoever is the woman in your life is lucky."

Ms. Thomas is now the woman in his life. Their relationship is an item, one neither person discourages, and they travel frequently to be together. They are both instantly recognized. "I still find it hard to get used to," he says. "I think, 'Geez, a kid from Cleveland with Marlo Thomas on his arm.'" He is asked if his dating Marlo was a career move. He smiles, aware of the gossip.

"Between me and Marlo? I understand the interest. If I weren't dating her, I'd be curious to know who was. She means a lot to me, and more than that, it's a private thing. As far as professionally, well, it sure hasn't hurt."

But he finds it hard to get big-headed, with or without Ms. Thomas on his arm, now that he is on top of the tube. "We've worked very hard for this attention. It's a little premature to get sick of it. I'll bear up." Now that the whole world is watching, he is trying not to be Superhost. He refuses to abandon his format, forget about his audience, ignore the guidance of his mostly female production staff, or lose track of what he has been doing for eleven years.

If he has any strength, it is in knowing his frailties. He realizes he can't be too smart, read every book, know all the answers, or do it alone. He needs the judgment of his staff and their sense of what will play and what won't. His office is a cubbyhole in the middle of theirs, so he yells a lot, and they yell back. He makes a lot of mistakes, and they tell him about them. He asks them for their tolerance.

I cannot say for sure what it really is or what the characteristics might be, but there is something about the makeup of somebody who has grown up in an area roughly west of the Hudson and east of Las Vegas. It is as vague as the contours on the map my geography teacher in Grand Rapids, Michigan, pulled down from the top of the blackboard. The Midwest was always green and flat, uncluttered by capricious shorelines or untrustworthy mountain ranges.

I grew up with a hundred guys who looked just like Phil Donahue. Most of them look younger than they are, more innocent, and drawn not to pinkie rings and puka beads but to crew neck sweaters with shirt collars poking out like daisy petals. *Archie* and *Jughead* comic books come to mind. Words like imphish, boyish, and clean-cut will follow them to the grave.

The first time I met him, I gave him a lift back to his Chicago studios, and he sat in the front seat of my nine-year-old Mercedes-Benz telling me why he gave up his Mercedes. He'd had a 220, the small sedan, and he was "determined to roll over one hundred thousand miles on it." But the repair costs were killing him—"the guys with the metric wrenches see you coming." And when his oldest boys became drivers, he decided for upkeep and insurance reasons to trade in the Mercedes, at 94,000 miles, for his current brown Caprice. "The dullest car in America," he said.

I cannot say for sure what his appeal really is; there are guys who measure that sort of thing by the galvanic responses in the palm of your hand. I cannot say how Donahue's looks, his attitude, his diction, or his birthplace make a difference. But I wonder when Carson, who now thinks we all live somewhere near the Santa Monica freeway, last worried about his transmission.

Donahue would be the first to say that he is not a Carson, that he is not a great intellect or a great wit, a great entertainer or a great prosecutor. He began as none of these, yet has managed to become some of each. He is now "vain and insecure enough" to enjoy the applause yet to remain as casual as his slightly pigeon-toed stride and the faded jeans and sweater he wears to work. He is the father of five and the son of a furniture salesman. He was in Dayton too long to forget. So he signs autographs, poses for pictures, goes through the thousands of little amenities that have become a bother to personalities half his size. Phil Donahue still listens.

In so many ways he is also in a public confession booth, as he bares his soul, his past sins, his secret inclinations and vile leanings, to the millions of women before him. He is not in mock therapy on a propman's couch, not sincere only for the camera, not a communicative cocktail party lecher offering a shoulder of understanding in exchange for a hand beneath the skirt.

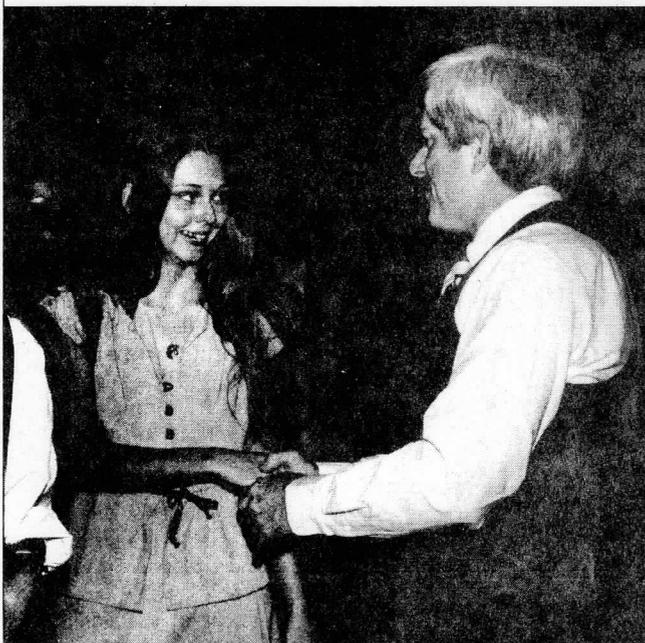
"There are really three stages of commitment," Donahue explains. "There's the fun stage, where you go out and say I love doing this. Then there's stage two, where you become totally intolerant of everybody who doesn't agree with you. Then there's the third stage: the sudden realization that you're not going to make much of a dent. That's the phase where the saints are made: people who hang in at that point—instead of peeling off and living under a cartop in New Mexico—people who struggle.

"I'd like to be known as someone who's recognized his own imperfections, his own feather against the Rock of Gibraltar, and, despite his minuscule contribution, hung in there."

It has been hard. He is learning, struggling, sometimes groping. And if a guy from Ohio and Notre Dame can do it, there is hope for the American Male.

So he stands at the door of the studio after each program, not unlike, by his own admission, the pastor after church. He's removed his jacket, his vestment, and offers his hands to each departing member of the audience. They touch him, hug him. He smiles and thanks them and says he hopes they had a nice time. He remains until the last of the flock has passed, each one assured, each one blessed. #

**Women have waited up to two years for tickets. The show may be lesbian moms or fad diets, but they come because of this man.**



*The Donahue daze: They touch him, hug him, as he stands at the door of the studio after each show. He is the pastor after church.*



## Who's your favorite clown? BOZO!!!

By LYNN PATTISON

"Bozo's Circus is on the air!"

The band breaks into the Bozo march. Circus Manager Frazier Thomas waves to the folks at home and introduces the "cast of thousands."

"Starring your favorite clowns, Cookie and Bozo!"

The audience claps and cheers, and the band plays, and Frazier Thomas grins. The longest running children's show on Chicago television is on the air.

Only this time is different.

This time, 25 first-graders from May Whitney Elementary School in Lake Zurich are right there, sitting in the blue-and-orange bleachers, watching

Bozo's Circus live, in person! Sitting right along with them are the "big kids:" their teacher, Ellyn Nudelman, two room mothers, and one very excited Country-side reporter. (Better late than never.)

The day at Bozo's Circus really started in September, the day after Labor Day. Gayle, one of the room mothers, called a special "Bozo ticket hotline" at WGN studios to arrange to buy tickets for her daughter Jennifer's first grade class. "Sold out," she was told, but she put her name on a waiting list.

"I was so surprised when they called me the day after Thanksgiving and told me we could get the tickets," she explains. "I mean who would cancel? But we got 'em."



As everybody's favorite clown, Bozo, top, stands back in amazement, the crowd cheers for Chris Rardin, above, first-grader from May Whitney elementary school in Lake Zurich, who has just won first prize in the "train game." (Photos by Joe Cyganowski)

"Bozo's Circus" is sold out for the next seven years, but on the day after Labor Day, school groups can call to get tickets. The tickets are so hard to come by that many people buy tickets for a show seven years in the future and give them away as bridal shower gifts.

By some stroke of fantastic fortune, May Whitney's kids were among the privileged few. And they were going to make the most of it.

"Okay now," Nudeliman announced to the squirming, giggling group of circus-goers as they lined up in the foyer of May Whitney School. "Everybody got their buddies? Suzie, you'll be my last one all day, okay. So when I see your hat, I'll know everybody's here." Suzie nods, grinning.

A teacher's aide gives the kids some last-minute pointers.

"Remember now, if you get picked for the Grand Prize Game, the first bucket you just set it in there, you don't throw it, okay?" Twenty-five heads bob up and down. Eyes shine.

The bus comes, everybody piles on, and the excitement mounts. Following the

green road sign off the Kennedy expressway to the studios.

Once inside, the kids are ushered off to a waiting room until the show starts. It's 10:30, and there's an hour and a half to wait. So while the kids are waiting with their chaperones, the reporter and photographer take a look behind the scenes, escorted by Ed Robertson, assistant public relations director for WGN.

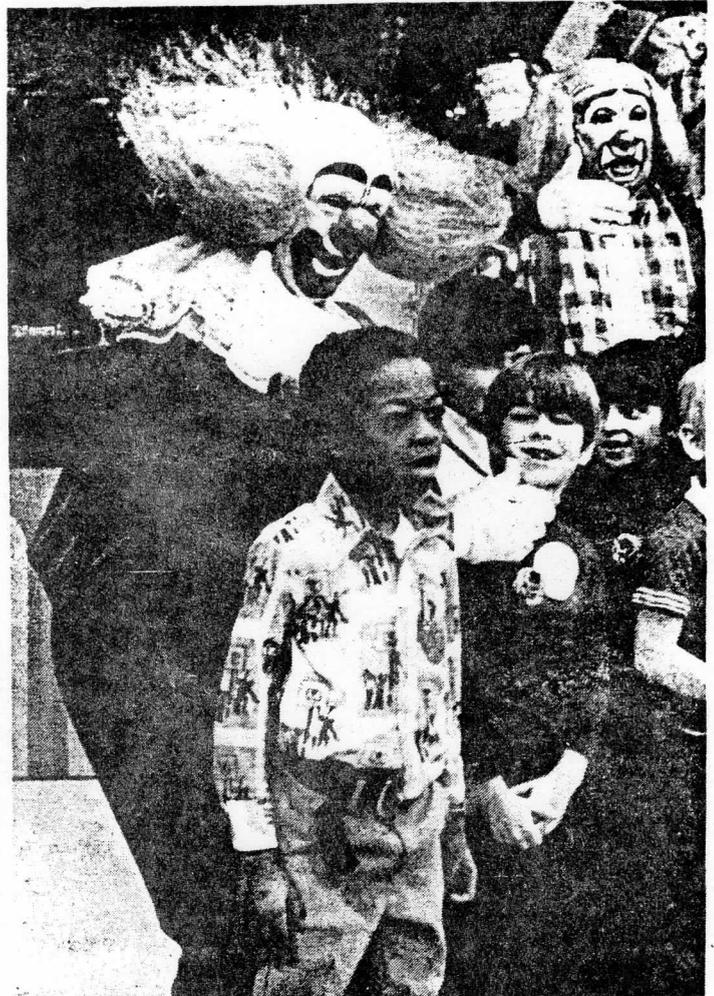
"The first thing you'll notice," Robertson tells us, "is how small the studio is. It looks a lot bigger on TV."

Indeed. The "Bozo Bigtop" is about the size of half a school gym. Most of the space is taken up by six rows of brightly painted orange and blue bleachers along one wall, and lights, cameras and sound equipment along the opposite wall. The room is extremely well-lit — there are scores of lights hanging from the ceiling.

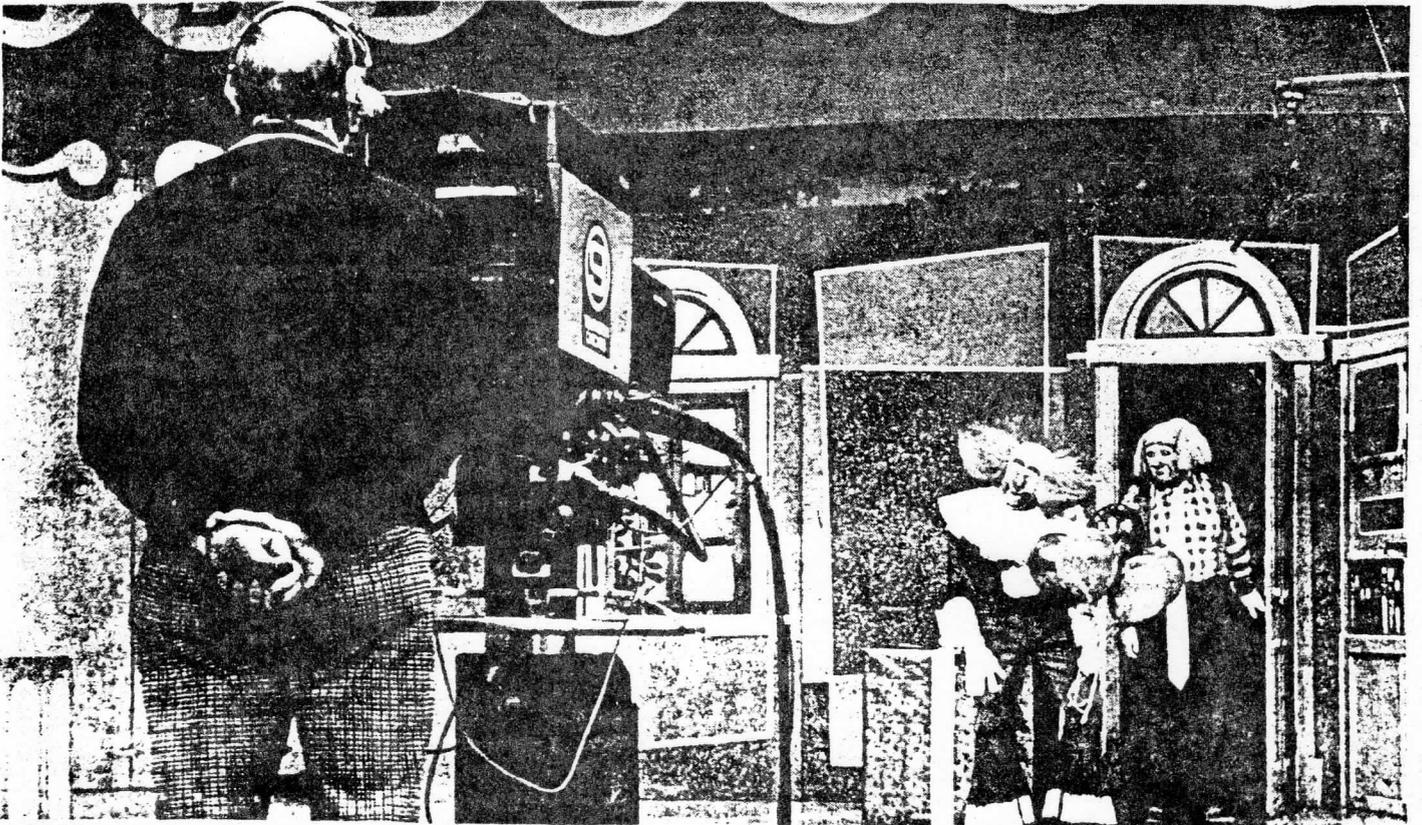
The morning hours before the show are spent putting on make-up — it takes Bozo half an hour to put on his make-up every day — taking care of props, and rehearsal.

Bozo and Cookie rehearse "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth" three or four times, while Frazier Thomas

(Continued on page 48)



Bozo's Circus-goers get a look at behind the scenes work as cameras televise Bozo and Cookie, below, doing their "package skit." Some preferred to watch on the monitors as the two clowns sang "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth," left. A group of youngsters in the audience shared that wish, and joined Bozo and Cookie for the second chorus, above.



# Bozo's Circus—

(Continued from page 17)

snoozes on the sidelines.

About half an hour before the show is to begin, everyone clears the stage and producer Ed Hall brings out 10 kids who will be "game players." Chris Rardin and Cherie Boston, both May Whitney students, are among the lucky ones.

"Okay, now we're gonna play train, so everyone line up on the circle and grab hold of the waist of the one in front of you," he explains to the kids. The kids line up on a circle marked by black tape on the floor. At different intervals, a smaller circle is linked through the large one.

The object of the game, Hall says, will be to walk around the circle while the band plays, and stop when the music stops. "Anyone who is standing inside one of those small circles when the music stops will be out, okay? The last one left will win."

All the kids nod their heads in understanding, and they go through a practice run, to see if everyone really does understand. One kid understands very well. Every time the music stops he jumps and spreads his feet out so he isn't standing in a circle.

After the run-through, the game-players take seats in a special section of the bleachers.

"Now remember, don't worry about winning, okay?" Hall says. "Everybody gets a prize."

"Yea!" The kids like that idea.

At last the rest of the children start to file in. Ushers show them where to sit in the bleachers. The kids look around, wide-eyed. They take it all in — the cameras, the pink and yellow and green and blue stage props, the lights, the people.

Ed Hall comes out and tells a few jokes, to warm up the audience. It hardly seems necessary. This audience is "rarin' to go."

All of a sudden, it's time.

"Bozo's Circus is on the air! With a cast of thousands!"

The audience cheers wildly, and waves with two hands apiece — just like they rehearsed it. But the cheers are real and the 100 or so members of the "cast of thousands" are loving every minute of it.

"My sister's going to watch me on TV," one of the May Whitney students informs us.

"What's in the package?" asks another, pointing to a large box wrapped like a Christmas present at one end of the stage.

"Well, we'll have to wait and see," Ellyn Nudelman says.

Bozo and Cookie keep the audience entertained while the monitor shows the cartoon, "Yakky Duck." The audience can watch the monitors, but there is no sound. So Bozo and Cookie go into their act.

"Look at all these pretty little girls, Cookie," Bozo says. "You know what? I'm gonna give 'em all a big hug!"

"Gee, that sounds like a good idea, Boze," Cookie says. "You take this side of the room and I'll take the other."

All the little girls stand up and wave. "Over here!" But Circus Manager Frazier Thomas will have none of it.

"Wait a minute, you can't do that!"

"Well, why not?" Bozo wonders out loud. "We just want to welcome them to the show..." But Circus Manager Frazier Thomas will have none of it. Bozo and Cookie give up, and the little girls sit down, disappointed.

They quickly forget as Bozo moves to one end of the stage and begins to wrestle with the giant package and a set of balloons. The idea is to get the package and the balloons through a door and take them to a party.

But when he picks up the package, he can't open the door. And when he opens the door first and then picks up the package, the door slams shut before he can get to it. This happens three times, much to the delight of the audience.

"He's too stupid to knock on the door," whispers first-grader Jill to her teacher.

Cookie comes along and suggests that Bozo could solve this problem if he tied the balloons to the package, which would leave one hand free to open the door. He leaves before Bozo realizes that his problem would also have been solved if Cookie had held the door open for him.

Nevertheless, he decides to take Cookie's advice. He ties the balloons to the package and goes to open the door. But when he turns around to pick up the package, it's gone. The balloons have carried it right up out of his reach. The kids find it hysterically funny.

The show rolls on, with Bozo asking every now and then, "Girls, does my hair look alright?" to which they all reply loudly, "Yeah!" and giggle.

The kids are out of their seats the whole time during the Grand Prize Game, though neither of the players is from May Whitney.

But when it comes time for the "train game," all the first-graders become excited. "Yea, Chris! Yea Cherie!" The excitement grows as one by one the players are eliminated. It becomes almost unbearable as the number is narrowed down to two — one of whom is May Whitney student Chris Rardin.

"C'mon, Chris!" everyone yells. When Chris wins the first prize, a red sled, everyone goes crazy. And just as promised, the other kids all get prizes too — play typewriters. Chris smiles widely, dazed, but happy.

The ride home is strangely quiet. Seems like the kids are trying to decide if maybe it was all just a dream. Or maybe they're just exhausted. The grown-ups sure are.

"What was your favorite part?" one of the room mothers asks.

"Bozo!"

"The Grand Prize Game!"

"I like when the door kept on closing," one girl giggles.

"What did it feel like when you were on stage?"

"Happy." Big grins. "Just happy."

Cherie Boston, one of the game-players, still seems a little bit dazed. To each question put to her — Did you have fun? — Do you watch Bozo at home? — Was it like you expected? — she just smiles and nods her head.

"I think when I get home everyone's gonna be at my house, she volunteers. "My Mom spread the word."

"Now you'll be a big star!" She smiles and nods her head yes.

As the bus comes into Lake Zurich, the kids seem to remember where they've been, and their enthusiasm picks up once more.

"Bozo's Circus is on the air!" someone shouts, and the others join in. Well, it's something to tell their grandkids about when they're waiting for their own Bozo tickets.

## 3d time in 17 years

# 'Bozo' a no-show: snow is circus foe

THE HERO'S floppy shoes were big enough to serve as snowshoes, but nobody else's were, so Bozo's Circus was canceled Wednesday for only the third time in its more than 17 years on television.

A videotape of the Jan. 8 show, which had been pre-empted by Gov. Thompson's inauguration speech that day, was shown instead of the usual live show from noon to 1 p.m. on WGN-TV [Channel 9].

A WGN-TV spokesman said some of Bozo's crew and many of the audience of 200 kids and parents—including a contingent from the Matthew W. Gallistel public school, 10347 S. Ewing St.—could not make it to the studio, at 2501 W. Bradley Pl.

Although the waiting list for tickets stretches into 1985, Wednesday's audience will be invited back this year,

some time after March, she said.

BOZO'S CIRCUS, which had its 17th anniversary in September, is one of the most popular children's TV shows. The tickets to be part of Wednesday's studio audience had been applied for in 1971, before some of the would-be spectators were born, the spokesman said.

Bob Bell, who plays Bozo, and his crew have been entertaining millions of Chicago area youngsters with their antics on the enormously popular show.

The only other times Bozo's Circus was canceled were April 2, 1976, the day of another big snowstorm, and for the Blizzard of '67, two days short of 12 years ago, she said.

The show will go on Thursday "unless there's a big snow," the spokesman said.

Chicago Tribune, Thursday, February 1, 1979

## **Soupy syndicated**

**THE LOCAL LINE:** Soupy Sales, the king of pie-in-the-face humor during the late 1950s and early '60s, returns to the tube next week as host of a syndicated comedy-variety show that WGN-Ch. 9 will carry at 4:30 p.m. weekdays. The new Soupy show will feature occasional guest shots by popular recording stars.

**Gary  
Deeb**  
TV-radio critic