

# ***Bear*** ***Facts***

**No. 1**

**December 1987**

His name is Paddy O'Cinnamon, but his creator, the late Glanville T. (Glan) Heisch called him, simply, "The Bear."

When I spoke with Heisch, several years ago, he was pleased, but a little surprised that so many of us remember with such fondness the four-inch-high fellow with the shoebutton eyes and the extra-special stuffing.

Surely we should have done something sooner, hired a band, staged a parade, held a party to show the feisty little fellow and his creator how much we care.

Sadly, we didn't. And for Glan Heisch it's too late. He died in Redondo Beach, California early this year.

But the Cinnamon Bear -- who is 50 years old this Christmas -- will live forever. So, really, it's not too late to start (gulp...as a middle-aged hard-bitten newspaperman, I never thought I'd say it) a fan club.

But here I am, volunteering to serve as editor and Chief Cook and Bottle Washer, a kind of Grand Wonkey's flunky to a bunch of groupies I call the CINNAMON BEAR BRIGADE.

My goal? Nothing big or pretentious, grand or expensive. But I look on this self-appointed task through the right end of the telescope and it seems like a great joy!

This is. what I'd like to happen.

Once a year, around Thanksgiving, (well, maybe twice a year if things warrant it), I plan to publish a newsletter to kick off a new Christmas season with special remembrances of Paddy O'Cinnamon, Judy and Jimmy, Crazy and all the others.

I plan to continue my own research. What is the story behind the story? Who were all the people behind this beloved radio serial? Which of them are still with us and which, like Heisch, have passed on. Can we track them down and capture their memories?

I welcome -- nay, I urge -- your research and feature articles.

I'd also like to include our own recollections -- yours, mine -- about listening to the Cinnamon Bear programs from 1937 to the present -- The entire series is aired each year for listeners in Chicago, Portland, maybe Cincinnati and New York and a number of other cities, I'm told. Nostalgia is the name of the game.

Broadcasting logs? Sure! Which stations carried the Cinnamon Bear series and when? Bear trivia? Of course! Pop psychoanalysis of a dragon? Kleptomaniac or multiple personalities? Weeeeeellll, why not?

In short, the pages are open to the imagination.

Initially, no dues, no nothing. Just the stamped, self-addressed envelope you sent to get your charter membership card and this skinny newsletter. Frankly, I got going a little late this year, but with it being Paddy's 50th birthday and all, it was now or never.

I've asked you-also to include two extra 22 cent stamps. That's to cover the next mailing. Thus, your risk is the price of one envelope and 66 cents in stamps.

If things take off and more than a hundred or so of you respond, initially, I'll have to pass the hat, asking for donations of a couple of bucks to help underwrite the newsletter. If material for the publication, which I'm calling BEAR FACTS, is enough to expand beyond a handful of pages, the same will be true.

Speaking of publications, I should give a plug to new THE CINNAMON BEAR BOOK, 64 pages compiled and edited by Chicago's Mr. Old Time Radio, Chuck Schaden. It's a fun read, though there's a ton of research still ahead for those of us so inclined. I've got no connection with Chuck or his book, but I'll note that it costs \$5.50, postpaid, from Hall Closet Publications, Box 421, Morton Grove, IL 60053.

To get us started, I am reprinting two newspaper articles about the Cinnamon Bear.

One I wrote for the Kenosha, Wis., NEWS five years ago. The other was written by Helen L. Mershon in the Oregon Journal, Nov. 26, 1980. They may be a bit dated, but they represent a starting point for BEAR FACTS.

Until next time, let me close saying I'm always pleased To hear from any friend of Paddy, and I'm much obliged to you!

Don Jensen  
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OLD "CINNAMON" TURNS 43  
By Helen L. Mershon  
OREGON JOURNAL, 11-26-80

"This is the story of the Cinnamon Bear and his very marvellous adventures with Judy and Jimmy Barton. But we can't very well meet the Cinnamon Bear until we meet Judy and Jimmy."

Friday -- the day after Thanksgiving -- begins the 43rd holiday season in which young children and older siblings and adults as well have gathered close to the radio to hear the serial story of the Cinnamon Bear and Judy and Jimmy, twins who "live in a big old-fashioned house."

It could be one of thousands of family homes in Portland, which may partly explain why the Cinnamon Bear has always felt comfortable in Oregon.

That and the fact that, early on, the Cinnamon Bear acquired an earthly alter-ego at Lipman Wolfe and Co., which sponsored the radio broadcasts from the beginning. When Frederick and Nelson bought Lipmans, they also got themselves a fine bear.

Glanville Heisch, 72, who wrote the story especially for radio in 1937, certainly didn't expect it to endure.

Interviewed from his home in Los Angeles, Heisch disclosed that he has the original copy of the 26-episode manuscript, appropriately, in a calico binder.

Heisch, who was production manager of KFI in Los Angeles at the time, recalled, "I wrote and produced radio at that time. It was the big old days of radio, done live. I was approached by a friend of mine, looking for a kids' show to run at Christmas time. I had never done any kids' stuff but I had written verse in college."

Heisch had earlier that year written a poem, "Cinnamon Bear With the Shoe Button Eyes," in honour of the birth of his first child, on April 8, 1937.

"I got the idea of a little boy and girl looking for an ornament while talking it over with my wife, Elizabeth," said Heisch.

It took him six weeks, working every night at home after work, putting together the story of the four-inch Paddy O'Cinnamon, "slightly Irish," who always wore a green ribbon around his neck and who ate honey and cinnamon buns.

The diminutive Teddy Bear became big when viewed through the old seafaring telescope found in the attic with him. And the crazy quilt in the trunk was a natural to become the Crazy Quilt Dragon who stole the Christmas star.

Today, Heisch, a retired television advertising producer, says, "It was a cliff-hanger. It's talky, because radio was talky. It is definitely dated. It's old-time radio."

Because of the deadline, things moved fast. Heisch wrote 10 of the original songs and his wife, the 11th. Don Honrath wrote the music. Elizabeth Heisch's brother, John Hiestand, agreed to do the narration.

The Transcription Company of America recorded the 26 15-minute segments at Radio Recorders in Hollywood in three days' time. Heisch was paid \$25 per episode for the recordings. That was considered a fair price for writers of the time.

For two years, the Los Angeles Downtown Merchants Association sponsored the broadcasts. The show sold well in the Northwest. Outside of the West Coast, the show was biggest in the Chicago area and the midwest.

Portland bought it the first year and "has never stopped," says Heisch, who finally got the story copyrighted in 1972.

Today, the story of Cinnamon Bear and his adventures in Maybeland is distributed by Nostalgia Broadcasting Corp. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Gene Kellenberger, a Cedar Rapids attorney who owns the radio show syndicate, says "This (15 minute) block programming is not done anymore. It's so darned easy to drop a needle at the beginning of the day.

"But the practice is picking up," says the hobbyist-businessman, who also distributes such shows as "The Aldrich Family," "The Great Gildersleeve," "Life of Reilly," and "Duffy's Tavern."

Nostalgia Broadcasting also markets cassettes of the shows, with "The Cinnamon Bear" selling for \$30.

Kellenberger reports that Cinnamon Bear is still "a Northwest bear," with contracts this year in Spokane, Aberdeen, Port Clarkson in Washington, as well as in Portland.

Frederick and Nelson will broadcast the 26 episodes beginning at 7 p.m. Friday on KKSJ-AM 91 Radio. The story will be broadcast daily at 7 p.m. Monday through Friday; and at 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, concluding on Dec. 23.

Through special arrangements with Frederick and Nelson, the show will again be aired over KBPS-AM Radio 1450, Portland Public School's station, on weekdays at 12:30 p.m. and 4:30 p. m. , Dec. 3 through Dec. 19 (1980).

KPBS, which has been broadcasting The Cinnamon Bear for 10 years, will kick off the season with a special Cinnamon Bear Hour at 3 p.m. Friday. The show features a preview of the opening episode, nostalgia readings from Portlanders who are fans and interviews with people involved with the bear.

One of those people is T. James Mesh, sales promotion coordinator for Frederick and Nelson's Oregon stores as well as Cinnamon Bear's manager.

While the Cinnamon Bear doesn't talk, Christmas is his time to growl. He is booked for appearances at schools, hospitals and holiday events staged by civic and fraternal groups.

Cinnamon Bear will ride in a motorcycle sidecar in the "Christmas in the City" parade Friday through downtown Portland to Pioneer Square.

From the viewpoint of the story, the Cinnamon Bear is, as one admirer says, "a visionary left from the peace and quiet of the '30s."

On the other hand, the public bear is called "CB" by his intimates and has been known to boogie on festive occasions.

Looking good at 43, "CB" seems to have weathered his mid-life crisis with the sale of the store. A fresh group of young, naive children every year has helped him avert an identity problem, observers say.

Always a bear with a beautiful soul, "CB" made his first public appearances apparently looking like just any other bear.

In 1947 he had the good sense to consult image-maker Mrs. Vernice Durand, a former RKO costume designer and manager of Lipman's alterations department.

Though long retired, Mrs. Durand has been "CB's" designing woman ever since, giving him classic, comfortable, cuddly tailoring. Always a trend setter, CB was among the first bears to wear man-made fur. This season Mrs. Durand whipped up four new bear skins to allow the Cinnamon Bear to arrive at public appearances unmatted.

Judy and Jimmy Barton are children of the '30s.

But the Cinnamon Bear is a bear whose time has come.

Even if he does say things like, "Bless my stuffing!"

22 Kenosha News  
Tuesday, December 21, 1982

## The Cinnamon Bear of Radio fame lives on

By DON JENSEN  
Staff Writer



Authors Glanville and Elisabeth Heisch

If you grew up in the 1940s, and if you dig deep into your memory, chances are you'll remember the Cinnamon Bear.

He was the feisty, four-inch-high fellow with the shoebutton eyes and the extra-special stuffing who turned up on the children's daily radio serial every afternoon between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

As memory rolls back the years, you may also remember the stuffed bear's companions, Jimmy and Judy Barton, the Crazy Quilt Dragon and the rest of the characters that figured in the 26-part holiday adventure series.

From about 1937 to 1947, the 15 minute cliff-hangers on WGN (and later on WCEL) were sponsored by the Wieboldt's Department Store's Toyleria.

The continuing tale, repeated each year, told of the quest of the twins, Jimmy and Judy, assisted by Paddy O'Cinnamon — the "Bear's" full name — to recover their lost silver star. They travelled through Maybeland, encountering pirates and giants, witches, wailing whales and singing crocodiles, before they met Santa Claus, who makes every thing turn out all right. Just in time for the Christmas Eve finale.

By today's standards, says it's author, Glanville T. (Glan) Heisch, the show is "old fashioned" But old fashioned or not, the Cinnamon Bear programs, produced 43 years ago, have been aired — somewhere in the country — during every Christmas season since 1937.

Heisch, 71, a retired ad man and writer, lives with his wife Elisabeth, who helped him write the show's songs, in Redondo Beach, California.

He's pleased, but a bit surprised, that after all these years, "The Bear" as he calls Paddy, still has so many fans who remember him.

"The Cinnamon Bear is most popular in the Pacific northwest," Heisch says.

The radio program has been regularly aired in the Seattle and Portland areas for many years. The Bear was featured in last summer's Junior Rose Parade in the Oregon city and there is even a Cinnamon Bear fan club. Each holiday season, several radio broadcasters in that area, including a Portland school station, continue to broadcast the series.

Gene Kellenberger, a Cedar Rapids, Iowa, attorney, who heads a small firm that distributes old radio programs to independent stations across the country, confirms that the west coast is "Bear country." But it also is heard over outlets to places like New York City and Cincinnati.

Heisch, who for a time lived in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge, remembers the Wieboldt sponsorship of the series.

Today, old radio buff Chuck Schaden still plays the Bear's programs each Christmas season on his Saturday afternoon nostalgia shows. But the Chicago station, WNIB-FM, is not easily received in Kenosha.

According to Heisch, the Cinnamon Bear's origins are from his own childhood in northern California.

"When I was a boy, I had a little stuffed bear with shoebutton eyes. He was my pet and I called him Cinnamon Bear."

In the spring of 1937, Heisch was production manager for a major Los Angeles radio station. When Catherine, the first of his five daughters was born that April, he started a book of light verse for her. One of those poems was about his old friend, the Cinnamon Bear.

Not long after, a friend, production manager for a transcription company, told Heisch that he was looking for a story for a children's Christmas show, a series of adventure stories which could be sold to department store sponsors to run on radio during the holidays.

"I went home and thought about it." Heisch recalls. "Then I began to write. With my wife's help, in six weeks, I wrote the script and the lyrics to the 12 songs in the show."

The show itself was recorded in just a week that summer at the studios of the now defunct Radio Recorders Co.

The cast included mostly up-and-coming radio actors and actresses. Snapper Snick, the singing crocodile, was played by Hanley Stafford, better known to old-time radio fans for his role as Daddy on the Baby Snooks program.

Frank Nelson, who recently appeared on a McDonald, TV commercial promoting a contest for the hamburger empire, (a long, drawn-out "Yeeeeesssssss" is his trademark) played Capt. Tintop on the Cinnamon Bear show.

Remember the character actor who played the neighbour, Mr. Wilson, on the old "Dennis the Menace" TV program? That was Joseph Kearns, who in the radio show was one of the leads, Crazy Quilt Dragon.

A non-professional actor, Buddy Duncan, a jack-of-all-trades at the recording studio, had the perfect high pitched voice for the bear.

And a Chinese girl, Barbara Jean Wong, who specialized in juvenile roles, was Judy Barton. Neither Heisch or anyone else associated with the show recalls the name of the juvenile lead who played Jimmy.

The Cinnamon Bear programs were syndicated in various metro-pollen markets, but were most popular in the northwest and, for a decade, in the Chicago area.

By the early 1950's though, very few stations bothered to broadcast the dated programs — which include quaint and outdated slang such as "Skidoo" and "lounge

lizard."

In 1970, attorney Kellenberger tracked down Heisch and old recordings of the show. They were dubbed on tape and made available to other stations for a fee.

The Iowa attorney also copyrighted the Cinnamon Bear shows, on behalf of Heisch. Apparently, except for the first show in the serial, they had not been so protected.

That action has led to a minor squabble between Kellenberger and Chicago's Schaden, who maintains that the programs are in the public domain, not subject to copyright.

Apparently, the money-making potential is not enough to make a law suit worth while for any of the parties.

But both Kellenberger and Schaden offer a series of six cassette tapes — for about \$30 — to fans of the Cinnamon Bear who want to recapture a bit of childhood Christmas nostalgia.

They can be ordered from Schaden's Metro Golden Memories, 5941 West Irving Park Road, Chicago. or Kellenberger's KLD Productions, 305 Dows Building, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

Fortunately, for Cinnamon Bear fans, the old programs have survived the years. to delight yet another generation of youngsters.

**NOTE:** Due to the poor quality of my photocopy of the above article. Inadvertently, errors may have been made in the text. Please advise me accordingly so that I can correct any mistakes.

Many thanks for your help and co-operation.

-- Tony -- [www.cinnamonbear.co.uk](http://www.cinnamonbear.co.uk)

