

Bear *Facts*

No. 2 FIFTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY DECEMBER 1988

For those of you who Joined THE BEAR BRIGADE a year ago, welcome back. To those of you who are receiving your first copy of BEAR FACTS, glad to have you with us. The purpose of this once-per-year newsletter is to provide some communication among those of us who fondly remember THE CINNAMON BEAR radio serial broadcasts and younger folks who would like to know More about the feisty little 4-inch tall bear named Paddy O'Cinnamon.

THE BEAR BRIGADE is, simply, an unassuming fan club for the hero of the 26-part Christmas radio series, THE CINNAMON BEAR, created in 1937 by the late Glanville T. (Glan) Heisch. Reportedly, the series has played somewhere in this. nation, nearly every holiday season for the past half century.

Last year, following Glan Heisch's death in California, it came to this middle-aged newspaperman that THE CINNAMON BEAR, which I remember with such warm nostalgia from my own boyhood, ought to be remembered on his 50th birthday. And so I volunteered to serve as editor and Chief Cook'n Bottle washer for a fan club for ol' Paddy O'Cinnamon. THE BEAR BRIGADE end its publication, BEAR FACTS, a few pages published once a year are the result.

Happily, the operation -- which is strictly a non-profit, no-hidden-motive motive kind of thing, a labour of love, with most of the out-of-pocket-costs coming out of my pocket -- garnered some publicity encouraging many of you to write, expressing your interest. All I ask of any of you is a couple of 25 cent stamps it you'd like to receive the next issue of BEAR FACTS. And it you do, please send those stamps now, while you're thinking about it. It you don't have one, I'll send along one of our attractive membership cards.

Where are you, the members of THE BEAR BRIGADE located? Well, we have members in, of course, Wisconsin, my home state, Illinois, New Hampshire, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Tennessee and Michigan. Not bad for a start.

We hope to add to the membership this season.

We have a number of members about my own age, pushing 50 from one side or the other, who remember the broadcasts from our youth. We also have younger members, several youngsters in fact, who either have heard of THE CINNAMON BEAR through tapes or the remembrances of parents or grandparents.

I hope you all will enjoy this issue of BEAR FACTS. I hope you will contribute to next year's issue, with your remembrances or research. Thanks!

--- Don Jensen
5204 70th Street

FOND MEMORIES

One of the truly enjoyable aspects of getting THE BEAR BRIGADE off the ground last year was receiving the letters in which some-of you recounted your childhood remembrances of Christmas and THE CINNAMON BEAR. Here are excerpts from some of your letters:

CORINA R. JACKSON: “Beautiful! Thank you! I remember those magical hours with THE CINNAMON BEAR. I'm a kindergarten teacher now and the Rockford Public Library has some of the tapes. To be sure, my kindergarten class will share the pleasure.”

MARY BETH and KATIE EMMETT: “We would like to Join our Dad in THE CINNAMON BEAR BRIGADE.”

BETTY SWANSON: “December is truly a magical time. THE CINNAMON DEAR has appeared again from out of my childhood.”

DR. DONALD HAJEK: “Paddy O'Cinnamon brings back fond memories. Please enrol me in your BEAR BRIGADE.”

JAN KEHOE : “Thanks so much for bringing back the memories I had of THE CINNAMON BEAR. How much I hoped that someday it would come back on television. I don't think an animated cartoon would do it justice, but at least it would be a start!”

K.J. KELLY: “My class of second graders wishes to Join your BEAR BRIGADE. They thoroughly enjoyed Paddy's 26 episodes as a prelude to Christmas this year.”

SUF HAI BRADER: “One of my fondest memories in childhood is coming in from playing in the snow to listen intently as they searched for the star and my Mom cooked supper. I have never run into anyone else who remembers The Bear.”

KIM BEDNAR: “THE CINNAMON BEAR program has been very dear to the heart of my mother, Kathryn Stewart. She has fond memories of Christmas during the 40's, when she heard it. In fact, a unique family tradition came from the program. When she was about 3-year-old, her older sister, about 13, came home from school with some caramels and dropped three of them into a Santa Claus boot on the piano. Mom was exploring as children do and found there. She asked her mother where they'd come from. Grandma said that Nicky Froodle, the elf on the program, had left them for her. Since then, every child born in the family has had Nicky Froodle bring small candy and toys every day from the day after Thanksgiving until Dec. 23.”

CAROL TUCKER: “I used to look forward to hearing the adventures of THE CINNAMON BEAR when I was a little girl. Then about 15 years ago, my sons heard it after many years of my telling them of the story. It was a very special Christmas treat!”

THE CINNAMON BEAR CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

It you've forgotten Just how THE CINNAMON BEAR story unfolded in the 26 chapters of this half century old children's radio drama, here is a synopsis.

CHAPTER 1: The Barton twins, Judy and Jimmy discover the silver Star, which goes on the top of their Christmas tree, is missing. It is recalled that Uncle Ned took some of the holiday decorations up to, the attic last year and, after some pleading with Mother, the twins are permitted to go up to search for it. They don't find the star but they do discover a number of other interesting things, including a tiny, 4-inch-tall teddy bear with a green ribbon around his neck. Jimmy looks through an old seaman's telescope and sees the little bear move. He introduces himself with his own song "I'm the Cinnamon Bear with the Shoe Button eyes." Paddy O'Cinnamon, for that is his proper name, tells the children their star has been stolen by the Crazy Quilt Dragon and offers to help them get it back.

CHAPTER 2: Paddy shows Judy and Jimmy how to de-grow, that is, shrink to his own 4-inch size, so they can fit into his very own special airplane and they set out for Maybeland. Shortly after take off, they are overtaken by the old Stork. Terribly thirsty, the bird taps into the plane's 'soda pop fuel tank. Out of 'gas,' our adventurers are forced to land at the bottom of Looking Glass Valley, whose sides are so steep that no escape is possible.

CHAPTER 3: The Stork reappears, apologizing for causing them problems and offering to fly them to the top of the cliffs which overlook the Root Beer Ocean. There they discover Crazy Quilt, with the Star, sound asleep. Awakening him with a Boo, the frightened dragon falls over the cliff into the ocean below. After he swims ashore, the patchwork explains in song why one must "Never Say Boo to a Crazy Quilt Dragon." He apologizes succumbing to the temptation to steal the shiny star. Unfortunately though, he cannot return it because he lost it when he fell into the Root Beer Ocean.

CHAPTER 4: Jimmy, Judy, Paddy and Crazy are approached by a most peculiar group of people. They are the Inkaboos, the blotter people who are a bit touchy about their boundary lines. After a brief struggle, Crazy Quilt escapes but our three friends are made prisoners. They are taken before King Blotto and charged with trespassing, the penalty for which is to be thrown into the Immense Inkwell.

CHAPTER 5: The execution is delayed when it's discovered that the Royal Executioner is off for the day and his assistant can't recall the exact wording of the ceremony. While the Inkaboos debate what to do, Crazy Quilt returns with the Scissors Soldiers who engage them in battle. In the turmoil, our group escape on the back of the dragon, who swims out to sea and safety. Judy spots the Silver Star floating on the surface of the water, but before they can recover it, the ornament is swallowed by Wesley the Wailing Whale.

CHAPTER 6: The Wailing Whale explains in song why it enjoys ill health. Crazy Quilt hits on the idea of tickling the polka-dotted Wesley until he coughs up the star. It works, but the star is, in turn, caught by Samuel the Performing Seal, who insists on Juggling it on his nose. One final toss of the star into the air, however, attracts Penelope the Pelican, who catches the shiny bit in her beak and flies off.

CHAPTER 7: Crazy Quilt swims our friends to show to dry out. They meet an incompetent magician, Mr. Presto, who, in demonstrating his magical prowess, mistakenly pulls Penelope from his hat. The angry bird complains that when the magician so rudely summoned her she dropped the star while flying over the Island of Obi. The group looks along the shore for a boat to take them to Obi. They discover, instead, a treasure chest and, moments later, they are surrounded by a band of Pirates.

CHAPTER 8: Crazy Quilt flees again and the rest of our friends are hustled into the buccaneers longboat and, as prisoners, are taken aboard the anchored pirate ship, the Suzy Q. There they learn from Capt. Tatty that their supposed captors are the Candy Pirates and friendly follows indeed. The pirates agree to sail to Obi. As they approach the island's shores, they see through a telescope a big Roly Poly Policeman patrolling the beach. And on the lapel of his uniform is pinned their Silver Star.

CHAPTER 9: The pirates give them a small boat to row to shore and then sail off. But a Magic Wave prevents them from getting through the surf. They try again a few hundred feet down the shore and find the water calmer. Landing on the beach they return to find the Roly Poly Policeman, but the star is gone from his chest. The Irish-brogued cop explained that a fellow who said he was a friend of theirs came to collect the star, then ran on up the beach in the opposite direction. From the policeman's description, it could have been none other than Crazy Quilt. Our group follows but as they are running along the sand, Paddy O'Cinnamon disappears.

CHAPTER 10: Paddy, it seems, crossed an invisible boundary line, and so do the children, reuniting the group once again. An educated owl, Professor Whiz tells them that he'd spotted Crazy Quilt run into the nearby home of the feared Wintergreen Witch. They follow but find the home empty, except for a magical picture of a great forest. Stepping through the frame of the Picture into the woods, they meet tiny Fraidy Cat, who in a wee voice tells of a great giant who lives there. The trio and the kitten try to run when the giant approaches.

CHAPTER 11: The Giant, Fee-fo is huge, but gentle and a real friend. He takes Jimmy, Judy and Paddy to the Goody Good Grove where they have an elegant Banquet. As night falls suddenly on the Magic Forest, they spot two scary yellow lights in the darkness.

CHAPTER 12: The lights are really Crazy Quilt's eyes. The witch has put him in a trance. When they wake him, the three friends learn to their dismay that Wintergreen has stolen the star from Crazy Quilt. Anxious to return to the witch's home, but lost in the woods, Jimmy recalls the whistle given him by Fee-fo. Three blasts on the whistle will

bring the gentle giant to help. But when Crazy Quilt tries, he inhales too deeply and swallows the whistle.

CHAPTER 13: The dragon, however, still manages to toot for help and Fee-fo arrives to rescue them. He is too large to return with them through the picture frame. The four adventurers, though, confront the witch in her home. Not only does the hag refuse to return the star, she threatens to use magic to transform them into all manner of horrible things. She is horrified, however, at her own reflection in Judy's pocket mirror, and gives them back the star. The children foolishly let Crazy Quilt put the star in his hip Pocket. And when they return to Maybeland from Obi, the dragon sits down and crushes the ornament to bits.

CHAPTER 14: The dragon suggests they go to the castle of Queen Melissa to get help in repairing the star. The Grand Wunky, the royal attendant, ushers them into the presence of the beautiful and kindly queen.

CHAPTER 15: Queen Melissa writes special instructions and seals them in an envelope, telling Judy and Jimmy that they will help them to restore their precious Silver Star. But the instructions can be read only in complete darkness. The Grand Wunky suggests they may find total darkness in the Wishing Woods, and directs them. Just inside the woods, they encounter bathtub singer, Snappersnick, the Crooning Crocodile. The friends are horrified though, when Snappersnick swallows the instructions.

CHAPTER 16: It turns out that the croc is near-sighted, but can 'absorb' the contents of any writing by eating it. He tells them that Melissa's note tells them to go to the Wishing Well. En route, they meet Oliver the Ostrich, a Cockney fellow who loves eating alarm clocks and bacon. Eventually they reach the Wishing Well, but alas, Paddy leans over too far and falls in.

CHAPTER 17: The only way to rescue poor CINNAMON BEAR is to use up the only wish allowed them. Wearily Judy Jimmy, Paddy and Crazy Quilt trudge back to see Melissa for fresh instructions. But they come to a river of mud and the awful Muddlers, who toss our hero's into the quagmire.

CHAPTER 18: As they are about to sink beneath the mud, they are rescued by the Cockle Burr Cowboys. The wangers, fortunately, work for Melissa and, through them the children speak to the queen again. She is sympathetic and gives them new directions. Leaving the cowboys behind they set out across the Purple Plain toward the Golden Grove, where they are to find the Singing Tree and a further clue. But, horrors, they hear bloodcurdling War whoops. It's Indians!

CHAPTER 19: It's only Chief Cook'n Bottleswisher, who has been attracted to Crazy Quilt's colourful pelt, which he wants. But Judy persuades him to take her pocket mirror instead. Just when they reach the Golden Grove, the evil Wintergreen reappears. She demands the broken star and, since Judy no longer has the protective looking glass, Jimmy is forced to surrender the pieces of the star to Wintergreen.

CHAPTER 20: A still angry witch is about to turn our friends into bullfrogs but discovers Queen Melissa has taken away her magical powers. The Grand Wunky reappears and forced the helpless witch to return the star and takes the old hag away in custody on the queen's orders. Tired, the adventurers fall asleep under a tree. When they awake, they discover a huge silk Flying Hat.

CHAPTER 21: In the Fly Hat they take off for the Snow Country. There, on Melissa's instructions, they hunt for someone known as Nicky Froodle. A W.C. Fields-sounding snowman directs them to a nearby castle and the little elf named Nicky. He tells them that he will take them to someone who can help them mend the broken star, none other than Santa Claus himself.

CHAPTER 22: Santa makes the group welcome and orders up his reindeer to take the four adventurers to the shop of Jack Frost, who quicker than quick, repairs the Silver Star as good as new. He puts it on his window sill to get good and cold, but when they are ready to go, they find it missing!

CHAPTER 23: Jack Frost raises the window in time to spot the Bad Dolls dashing away with the star. Santa orders out the detachment of tin soldiers to pursue the dolls. But bad news, Captain Tintop radios back that the troops are encountering difficulties. A strange creature, never before seen in the Snow Country, is aiding the Bad Dolls.

CHAPTER 24: Back in Santa's office, things become clear. Melissa has warned that Wintergreen has escaped from her exile and has headed for the Snow Country. Reinforcements are sent to the soldiers battling the witch. In the meantime, Santa takes his visitors on a tour of the North Pole workshop. Then comes word that Capt. Tintop has returned victorious... and with the star!

CHAPTER 25: It's nearly Christmas now and the intact star is back with Judy and Jimmy. They are anxious to return to their home. Crazy Quilt wants to remain at the North Pole, but the children and Paddy are to return in Santa's sleigh. Jimmy asks Crazy Quilt to hold the star as he climbs up into the sleigh. When he turns to ask the dragon to hand him back the shiny ornament, our friends discover he's gone... running away as fast as he can!

CHAPTER 26: In Santa's sleigh, they all set out in hot pursuit after Crazy Quilt, who is headed straight for the North Pole. If the dragon can climb the pole to where the Misty Folk live, he will escape forever with their precious star. Paddy clutches the dragon frantically, then, in an inspiration, hollers a loud 'boo!' Crazy Quilt tumbles down the Pole. There is a wild scramble and... The children suddenly hear Mother's voice saying, "Wake up! You're all tangled up in that old crazy quilt coverlet." Mother doesn't understand, of course, and Judy and Jimmy wonder to themselves, was it all really a dream? In gratitude to Paddy O'Cinnamon for his help, they vow to find the little stuffed bear a place on their tree every year. As the final chapter ends, they hear the feisty little fellow singing his song.

STAFFORD AND NELSON: A PAIR WITH THE BEAR

In the summer of 1937, for Hanley Stafford and Frank Nelson, their greatest fame lay still ahead.

Stafford, 38, and Nelson, 26, both had been around the young radio industry for a number of years. And with a handful of other radio actors and actresses, both had a week's worth of work at the Radio Recorders Co. studios in Los Angeles, recording a series of 26 Christmas adventures about a stuffed animal called THE CINNAMON BEAR.

Stafford's role was that of Snappersnick, a singing crocodile who aids the story's young hero and heroine, Jimmy and Judy Barton in their quest to return an unbroken treetop ornament to their tree before Christmas.

The children have received special instructions from Queen Melissa of Maybeland, which are to be read only in total darkness.

And what could be darker than a croc's innards?

So Snappersnick, who similarly devours his correspondence school singing lessons so he can 'digest' their contents, eats the instructions, absorbs the message and tells Jimmy and Judy what to do next.

Much later in the adventures, the children, at the North Pole With Santa, with their broken star already mended by Jack Frost, meet Captain Tintop, played by Nelson.

Tintop, head of Santa's toy soldier army, is the 'all-business' military man who manages to catch Wintergreen Witch, the children's old nemesis, and turn her into a harmless holiday wreath.

It was just another acting job for Stafford and Nelson, a bit of work to fill in around more ambitious radio assignments.

The next year, 1938, Stafford's big break occurred when Fanny Brice the original 'Funny Girl' - selected Stafford to play the role of 'Daddy' on her 'Baby Snooks' weekly radio series. It was Stafford, as 'Daddy', who was driven to the brink of insanity in each episode by the impossible antics of 'Snooks.'

The following year, Stafford added another continuing radio role that would be nearly as famous. He played the part of Mr. Dithers, Dagwood's' s boss on the 'Blondie' radio show.

Stafford, whose real name was Alfred John Austin, was raised in Canada, although he had been born in Hanley, Staffordshire, England. After becoming an actor he assumed his stage name in honour of his birthplace.

The actor, who became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1926, also played a number of character roles in motion pictures.

He continued in the radio roles of Daddy and "Mr. Dithers" until the programs left the air in the late 1940s.

Stafford died at his Hollywood home, Sept. 10, 1968, at the age of 69. He was survived by his widow, Viola Vonn, also a former radio actress and singer, a son, Graham and a sister.

Nelson's acting career spanned 60 years. His professional credits read like the history of radio and television, including many featured appearances with the Marx Brothers, Burns

and Allen, Fibber McGee and Molly, Bing Crosby, Eddie Cantor, Rudy Vallee, Eve Arden and the Great Gildersleeve.

His greatest fame, though, came from his 38 years as an actor on Jack Denny's radio and TV shows, where his trademark became his long, drawn out questioning affirmation, "Yeeeeeeessssssssss!"

In the early 1980s, Nelson was still working and is, no doubt, remembered by younger TV viewers for his McDonald's hamburger commercials, which also featured that vocal trademark 'Yes.'

Nelson served as national president of AFTRA, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists from 1954 to 1957. He established a pension and welfare plan for freelance performers in the broadcasting industry. He was AFTRA's senior pension and welfare trustee from the plan's inception until his death.

Frank Nelson died of cancer at his Hollywood home, Sept. 12, 1986, at the age of 75.

In addition to a son, Doug, a daughter Bonnie Esther, a granddaughter and a great-grandson, he also was survived by his wife, Viola Vonn.

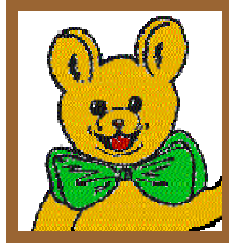
Yes, Nelson had married the widow of his old friend and collaborator on THE CINNAMON BEAR and so many other radio shows, Hanley Stafford.

WHO WERE THEY?

Who were some of the other well known radio actors and actresses who appeared in THE CINNAMON BEAR? About 6 years ago, Glan Heisch told me that Verna Felton played Mother; Joseph Kearns was Crazy Quilt; Elliott Lewis was Mr. Presto, and Gale Gordon played several roles, including those of Weary Willy the Stork and the Ostrich.

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.



NOTE: from www.cinnamonber.co.uk

The complete series of 26 episodes [Plus the promotion recording, a preview of the series which is extremely rare and difficult to find] is available for you to download "FREE OF CHARGE" from our website.

Other "FREE GOODIES" a copy of the original colouring book given away by Wieboldt's Department Stores who sponsored the series in the 1940's. Why not Download it NOW!

All of the actual songs from the series with the full text for each one.

Coming soon to this site:

1. Many other "Bear" Stories for kids aged 1 to 199 to enjoy worldwide
2. A letters page, where I am happy to publish letters received from YOU
3. A "New Cinnamon Bear Brigade" Forum for your pleasure
4. All suggestions "Gratefully" received.

Many Thanks --- Tony ---