



Our kids telephoned with the news. One by one they phoned to say they'd read in the paper that ABC was scrubbing *The Lawrence Welk Show*. They were really phoning to say ha-ha. Our boy called from Massachusetts and he didn't sound half as respectful as Ryan O'Neal talking to Ray Milland in "Love Story." He asked, "Now what's gonna happen to you Old Grads from Cholesterol High?" The No. 2 kid, a girl, said, "Maybe you and Mother can go back to playing that game with the little pieces of ivory." She meant mahjongg. Our oldest child lives next door and it wasn't a toll call for her. She wanted to know if we could now come over to their place Saturday nights and

baby-sit with our grandchildren.

As we watched Lawrence and gang the next evening, I noticed wife had her hanky at the ready, dabbed a bit when Lawrence did usual intro about how nice Norma : mer was and sniffed when he said the umpteenth week that daughter law Tanya was of Italian extraction had produced Lawrence Welk III. Lawrence cut in on Bobby, who just returned from his honeymoon, accordionist Myron Floren's daug and began dancing a polka with C. My poor wife popped Geritol tal like mad. (It's one of the nice th she does for herself.)

At times like this the man has to s fortitude. I said, "The all got to go sometime, member how it was v *Your Hit Parade* was celed?" *Your Hit Pa* was a Golden Age g in which, every week, cast acted out live "A ica's taste in popular sic." When the netw penciled out *Your Hit rade*, my wife and I tho the world had come to end. Especially me, bec I was working for the ac tising agency that produ the show.

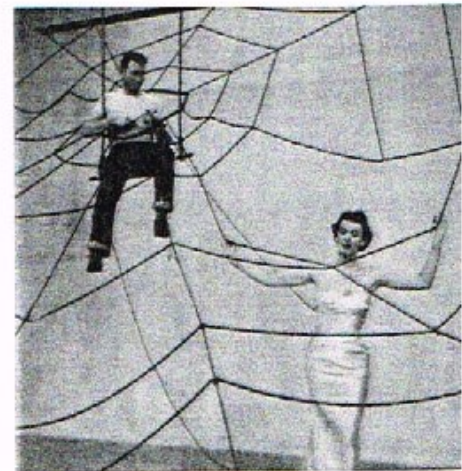
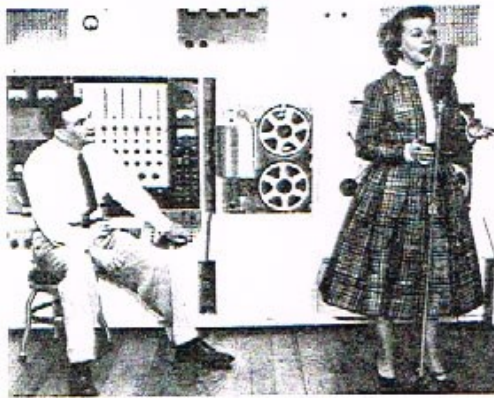
There was quite a b in-fighting among the formers over who w sing (drum roll) "the : that's No. 1 all over A ica!" Andre Baruch w bellow these words, hol his ear in radio-annou fashion, as he'd been c ever since the good old of Lucky Strike green.

Ray Scott directed Lucky Strike Orche. Eventually he married C thy Collins, who not sang songs but also formed in Lucky Strike

## I Remember Snooky...

and Gisele and Dorothy—and even the 20th variation of "Shrimp Boats Are A-Comin'"

By Bob Foreman



mercials. Dorothy was very cute in her long-sleeved white blouse and black string tie. This blouse was her trademark and she'd stick her head and blouse through the Lucky Strike bull's-eye and lisp ever so slightly how "round and firm and fully packed" Luckies were. When any of the other announcers said "so free and easy on the draw," they had to take a deep drag on a Lucky. But Dorothy didn't know how to inhale; in fact she never smoked. So she wouldn't even hold a match in her hand on camera or off.

After Dorothy married Ray she got a good share of the No. 1 tunes. But sometimes Gisele MacKenzie got a chance at them and so did Snooky Lanson. Russell Arms and the Hit Parade Singers mostly got the tunes at the bottom of the Top 7, and the Lucky Strike Extras. The Extras were oldies we did so we couldn't be accused of being song pluggers.

The biggest problem on *Your Hit Parade* (the sponsor insisted we always include "Your" in the title) was that the same songs remained on the survey week after week. For instance, "Shrimp Boats." This was a No. 1 for 20 weeks in a row. No matter how crazy for shrimp-boating America's song lovers were, it was tough on our producers to find different ways to act out the lyric. For a few weeks we could vary the locations of the shrimpers, going from, say, San Francisco to Lisbon. Different backgrounds made the song seem a little bit different each time. And we used a different one of our featured singers each week, and maybe even the Hit Parade Singers when we were running dry. But after a dozen weeks on the boat ("their sails are in sight"), at the quay ("there's dancing tonight"), and in a shrimp market, we had to resort to things like Dorothy singing it lullaby-fashion to a bundle of swaddling clothes. Or Snooky in the bathtub.

Snooky, who had been a disc jockey


in Tennessee, looked better in the bathtub than he did dressed as a Portuguese shrimp-fisherman. The Hit Parade Dancers didn't look much like the women who wait for the shrimp-fishermen.

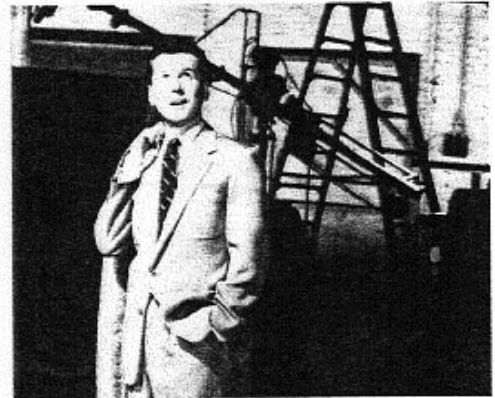
We had a terrible time with "Come On-a My House" ("I'm gonna give-a you candy"). Not just because this song stayed so long in the Top 7, but because the sponsor thought the lyrics were dirty. The arbiter of filth was a young man who was scared he'd lose his job if *anything* naughty was wafted into the Nation's homes. Week after week he insisted we keep "I Love You a Bushel and a Peck" free of bodily contact.

Our commercials were also done live, and this caused problems. I guess the most difficult commercials to act out were the quatrains to our Be-Happy-Go-Lucky jingle.

The next hardest to perform was a nonmusical minute about tobacco; it nearly made a basket case out of the man who directed it.

I'd written a fulsome 60 seconds about the tobacco auctions down South, and to make this epic "come to life," we flew up from Georgia a big wicker basket filled with golden tobacco leaves. After the usual dozen rehearsals under the hot lights, the leaves got brittle and dry as tinder. Half an hour before air time, someone remembered there was a Turkish bath a few doors down from the theater, so our director lugged the basket of tobacco leaves to the baths. The Turkish bath authorities didn't mind his bringing a basket of tobacco into the steam room, but they did insist that he strip. Anyway, it worked. The leaves got nice and soggy and gave a fine performance. The director, however, caught a bad cold.

And that's the way the wheel spins, which is a cue for a song title—"Wheel of Fortune," rendered by the Lawrence Welk Orchestra with vocal by the Hotsy Totsy Boys. And it's also a cue for my wife's hanky. 



TONIGHT 10:30



**YOUR**



**HIT**



**PARADE**



**WLW-C4**