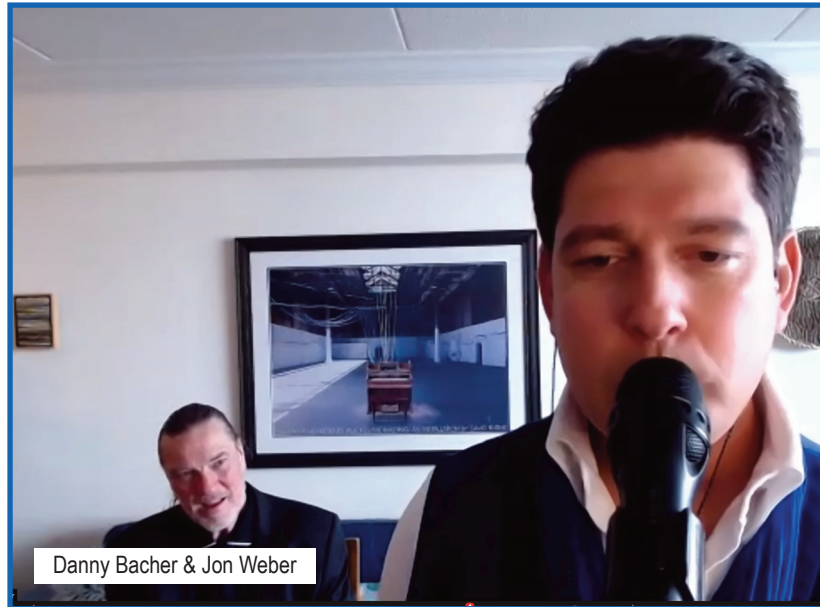


## ALL THAT JAZZ: Marilyn Lester & Danny Bacher An All-Star, Sparkling Afternoon of Music

By Jerry Osterberg

Louis Armstrong said: "If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know." No questions were necessary on the afternoon of April 10, as members streamed onto the latest edition of Marilyn Lester's annual salute to Jazz. Co-hosted by Danny Bacher, the program featured many of the greatest talents of the genre by way of video clips of their performances, together with live renditions by Bacher, accompanied by the irrepressible Jon Weber.



Gathered within the limitless cloud of the Zoom Room, were Louis Jordan, Ray Nance, Benny Goodman, Tex Beneke, Jack Teagarden, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, Louis Prima and Keely Smith. The show opened with Louis Jordan's "Let the Good Times Roll" and "If It's Love You Want Baby, It's Me." Jordan, a saxophonist/singer played with the Chick Webb Orchestra before forming his own *Tympany Five*, which in one eight-year period produced 57 R & B chart hits. His biggest influence was Fats Waller. The music was said to contain some of the early foundations for Rock & Roll musicians such as Chuck Berry, Bill Haley, and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Ray Nance, who had his own band in the 1930's and played with Earl Hines for two years, was a trumpeter, violinist, and singer, whose most important contribution to popular music was his time with the Duke Ellington Orchestra, where he replaced Cootie Williams who had joined the Benny Goodman Band.

Known affectionately as "Floorshow" for his versatility, he was given a horn and vocal solo by Ellington, appearing in the first recording of "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)." Nance also created the iconic solo in "Take the A Train" in an arrangement which remained the standard for the next twenty years.

Perhaps influenced by George Gershwin's opinion "Life is a lot like jazz – it's best when you improvise," Jon Weber did just that. No one can insert as many snatches of popular songs within an improvisation as he does! Even an alert listener, blessed with a good ear, is unable to identify them all as Weber moves from one short phrase to another.

Benny Goodman's legendary concert at Carnegie Hall in

1938, has been described as "The single most important jazz or popular music concert in history." Goodman, who played the clarinet, alto saxophone, and baritone sax, began his career at the age of 14, playing in a band which featured Bix Beiderbecke. He is best known for his racially integrated band and for catapulting swing music to the premiere position of American music in the late 1930's and into the World War II era. Although Goodman dabbled in Bebop for a

while, partly based on an admiration for Thelonious Monk, he eventually found himself no longer in sync with Monk, who said: "The piano ain't got no wrong notes." The *King of Swing* countered with "Basically it's all wrong. It's not even knowing the scales."





## President's Message...

Linda Amiel Burns, President

Greetings to APSS Members, Friends, Family and Fans,

We are thrilled to have nearly gotten through the 2020-2021 season so successfully on Zoom. We are immensely thankful to you all for your continued support. And we are all so grateful to the producers, performers, musicians, and historians who have given so generously of their time, delighting us with incredible programs that help to keep this important organization thriving and making new memories.

April is Jazz Month, and each year with the help of Producer Marilyn Lester, we get to celebrate this great American art form. Last month, Danny Bacher co-produced the program with Marilyn Lester, and presented an exciting afternoon, featuring Danny's own terrific performance, accompanied by the always-marvelous Jon Weber on piano. As expected, Marilyn's insights were extremely perceptive and engaging. Also, many thanks and a warm welcome to our new Zoom Director, Amy Englehardt, who guided the program smoothly without any technical glitches. We are all getting used to Zoom, but are still hoping for the day when it will be safe to gather and hold our APSS meetings in person.

For those of you who missed the program, or just want to re-live the pleasure, please read the lead story, by our Editor-in-Chief, Jerry Osterberg.

A special highlight of every APSS season has been Sandi Durell's popular *Annual Songwriter Series*. This is her 16th year (!) producing these unique showcases, and I found it amazing how many remarkable composers and performers she has featured, many of whom were just starting out and are now renowned in their fields. So, please don't miss this jam-packed program on Saturday, May 8th from Noon to 2:00PM, hosted by our own Board Member and the Creator/Editor of Theater Pizzazz. I know that I am eagerly anticipating yet another "Durell Spectacular Event!"

I hope that you are all well, vaccinated, and starting to resume your lives, especially now that the weather is better and Spring has Sprung! Looking forward to seeing you and saying hello, even if it is still in a little box on my computer screen.

Happy Merry Month of May and I'll see you on May 8th.

Best,  
*Linda*

Linda Amiel Burns, President  
American Popular Song Society



Billy Stritch, Marilyn Maye (who just celebrated her 93rd birthday), and Linda.

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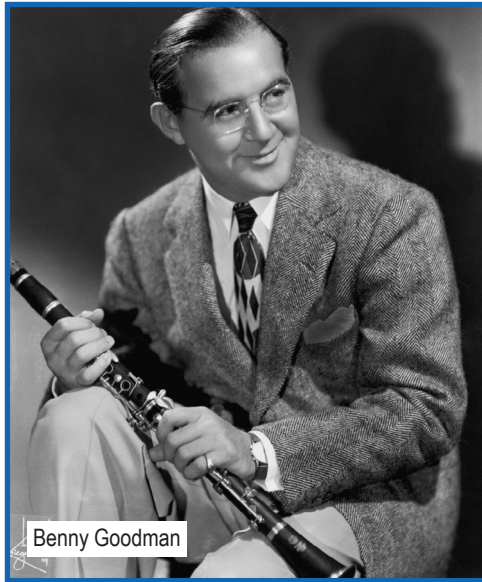
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After listening to a rare example of Goodman's singing voice in "Gotta Be This or That," Danny Bacher followed with "Goody Goody," which had been recorded by Helen Ward and the Goodman band in 1936. Always a charismatic performer, Bacher not only plays a soprano saxophone, but he



Benny Goodman

is also an excellent vocalist. Given the nature of popular music nowadays and the distinct decline of Big Band music and its resident soloists, Bacher is a rare breed and a welcome presence.

Tex Beneke, who joined the Glenn Miller Band in 1935, was both a saxophonist and singer. He was notable for several of Miller's hits: "In the Mood," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo." Miller disbanded his group to head up the Glenn Miller Army-Air Force Band during WWII. Beneke took over its leadership following Miller's death during a war related accident, before going out on his own in 1950. The video clip featured Beneke's performance of "Somebody Loves Me," after which Bacher and Weber joined in a hilarious send-up of "Chattanooga Choo Choo" entitled "Sao Paulo Choo Choo," for a much longer ride than one to Tennessee.

Jack Teagarden, who began performing professionally at the age of nine, accompanying his mother in movie theaters, played trombone and sang. While he led his own band for a time, he also performed with Louis Armstrong, Paul Whiteman, Benny Goodman, Bix Beiderbecke, Red Nichols, and Glenn Miller.

The video clip showed Teagarden doing "Stars Fell on Alabama," followed by Bacher and Weber in

"St. James Infirmary." The image and voice of Louis Armstrong came up next in two songs which have become strongly associated with him: "A Kiss to

what it's supposed to be." He was a trumpeter virtuoso and bandleader who first played music at the age of four. By twelve he had mastered both the trumpet and trombone. Gillespie was heavily influenced by his idol Roy Eldridge. His early band experience came through Cab Calloway and Earl Hines. He would later be instrumental in teaching Miles Davis, Fats Navarro, and other musicians as well as singers such as Johnny Hartman. Bacher and Weber presented a wonderful example of one of Gillespie's most popular songs, "Ooh Shube Doobie," although without the benefit of stylish berets.

Bacher and Weber seized yet another opportunity to shine by way of a tune which must have taken a lot of practice, "Mumbles." Introduced by Clark Terry, a legendary player of the trumpet and flugelhorn, "Mumbles" consists of a largely semi-incoherent voice, interspersed with scat. In a video clip of Terry, he appears to be a man talking to himself and enjoying every minute of it. It is obvious that every member of Terry's band is anticipating the next line and cannot help breaking up. In the Bacher & Weber version (a vaudeville act?), which is no less a conversation, the performers tried hard to understand one another. One could see comedic frustration on Weber's face when Bacher slipped into a virtual Sid Caesar Tower of Babel.

For the final number of the exceptionally entertaining afternoon, everyone in the room got to participate. With support extraordinaire from Bacher

Build a Dream On" and "La Vie En Rose." Bacher also performed "La Vie En Rose" in his own inestimable style.

A major figure in the development of bebop and modern jazz was Dizzy Gillespie. In describing his style and method, he explained "I try to play the bare essence, to let everything be just

& Weber, the members joined Keeley Smith to sing the immortal words of Irving Caesar: "I ain't got no body," not once but several times. The iconic refrain comes from "Just a Gigilo," originally translated from the German. A song, whose original lyrics referenced the social decline of post-World War I Austria, ultimately brought us all a great deal of joy.

"A great deal of joy" pretty much summed up the day. The informative and witty narration of Marilyn Lester, together with the superb performances of Danny Bacher and Jon Weber, plus the rare video clips from Will Friedwald, combined for yet another afternoon of unbeatable entertainment! With such



talent in our midst, the American Popular Song Society has continued to weather the challenge of Covid with much flair. Just imagine what it will be like when our membership is able to express its appreciation in real time and with audible applause!



### Some Member News...

DANNY BACHER ~ Siete de Mayo  
Friday, May 7th (Virtual) 7PM, Metropolitan Zoom  
<https://metropolitanzoom.ticketleap.com/danny-bacher-050721/dates/May-07-2021-at-0700PM>  
Friday, May 14th (Live), 8PM, The Friars Club.  
For tickets/More Info call: 212-751-7272

JERRY OSTERBERG invites you to join the Down Town Glee Club as they celebrate the women who contributed to the Great American Songbook throughout its history and those making their mark today. The concert will be streamed on the DTGC youtube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-qM4wXXiS9KuzStpgfkog>. Concert begins at 7:30 PM on Tuesday, May 18.

## “Forgotten” Songwriters of Early Tin Pan Alley

By Marilyn Lester

The Great American Songbook is filled with standards by the great and famous writers whose names come to mind easily—Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Duke Ellington, Hoagy Carmichael, Johnny Mercer, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, and many more. But many standards were written by songwriters whose names aren't so familiar now, and whose names might even invoke a scratch of the head altogether. This article is about those “forgotten” talents—and only touches the surface of the many who plugged their songs on Tin Pan Alley, knowing fame once, but becoming only a shadowy memory now.

First and foremost, because of her gender, is **Bernice Petkere**. She was one



of the very few female composers of Tin Pan Alley. Most of the distaff notables of the day (and they were few and far between) were

lyricists, such as Dorothy Fields and Carolyn Leigh—but Petkere wrote melodies. She was born in 1901 in Chicago and began performing in vaudeville as a child, moving on to writing tunes and radio themes for CBS

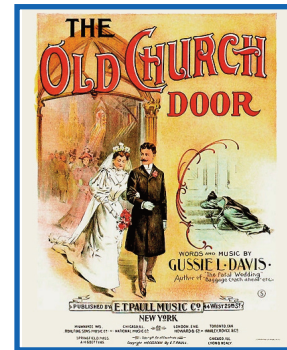
in her early adult years. Such was her prominence in the male-dominated world of songwriters that no less a personage than Irving Berlin dubbed her the “Queen of Tin Pan Alley.” Petkere's first hit and published song was “Starlight (Help Me Find The One I Love)” in 1931, which was recorded by Bing Crosby. She went on to write significant songs, including “The Lady I Love,” “My River Home,” “By a Rippling Stream,” “Stay Out of My Dreams” and “A Mile a Minute.” “It's All So New to Me” was a featured song in the Joan Crawford film, *The Ice Follies of 1939*. Two of her better-known works are “Lullaby of the Leaves” and “Close Your Eyes.” The list of performers who've recorded Petkere tunes is formidable, and includes vocalists from Doris Day, Peggy Lee and Ella Fitzgerald to Vic Damone, Harry Belafonte and Tony Bennett to Kurt Elling and Queen Latifah.

Another departure from the white male norm of Tin Pan Alley was the African-American writer, **Gussie Lord Davis**. He



was born in 1863 in Dayton, Ohio and received musical training at the Nelson Musical College in Cincinnati, but in a roundabout

manner. Because of his race, Davis' application to the school was rejected. Cleverly, he worked as a janitor at Nelson for a low wage in exchange for private lessons. Davis self-published his first song in 1880, “We Sat Beneath the Maple on the Hill.” He sold enough copies of the sheet music to make a small profit and continued to write songs with increasing success, finally coming to the attention of Cincinnati publisher and would-be lyricist, George Propheter. In 1886 Propheter opened a second office on Tin Pan Alley.



Davis made the move to New York, working steadily, performing as well as writing songs, and making a name for

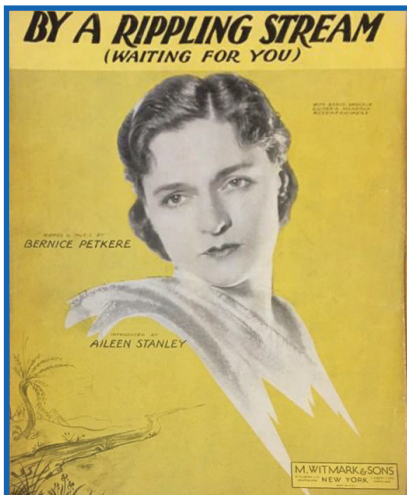
himself. In 1895, he placed second in a songwriting competition, sponsored by the *New York World* newspaper, with “Send Back the Picture and the Ring,” winning \$500 in gold. Although he wrote in several styles including art songs and choral music, he was best known for sentimental ballads, such as “Little Footsteps in The Snow,” “Fatal Wedding” and “In the Baggage Coach Ahead,” his most commercially successful composition. Davis died in 1899, having composed more than 300 songs and leaving more in manuscript, unpublished. However, the song that's most identified with Davis, and is still sung today, is “Irene, Good Night” (1886), a folk favorite whose title is better known now as “Goodnight, Irene,” first made popular in 1936 by Lead Belly.

Another very early Tin Pan Alley writer was **Charles Kassel Harris**, born in



1867, who, by his death in 1930 had written more than 300 songs. He was dubbed “king of the tearjerkers” for material that was

exceedingly sentimental in content. One of his best-known songs, for instance, “After the Ball,” written in 1892, is about an old man recounting the story of lost love to his young niece. His first song, however, was written in 1885, entitled, “Since Maggie Learned to Skate,” written for Nat Goodwin's play, *The*

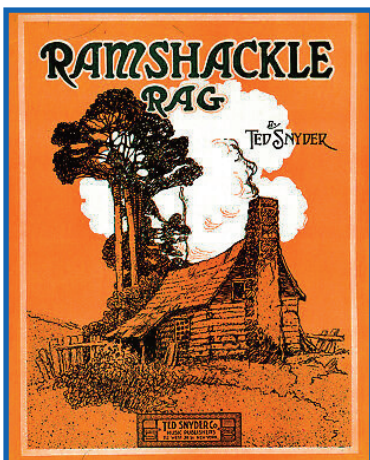




*Skating Rink*. His hit, "Break the News to Mother," was written during the Spanish-American War in 1897. It gained renewed popularity when the United States entered the First World War in 1917-18.

Most of Harris's songs were introduced on stages and in music halls, but owing to his fascination with the banjo, they also found popularity in Southern folkloric string bands. Among these were his "Fallen By the Wayside," "There'll Come a Time" and "Mid the Green Fields of Virginia." In 1901 Harris' extremely popular song "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" was recorded by The Carter Family. Later in his career, Harris began writing songs for musicals, working with Oscar Hammerstein. He also had literary aspirations. His plays *The Scarlet Sisters* and *What's The Matter With Julius* had moderate success. In 1906 Harris wrote a book, *How to Write a Popular Song*, and in 1926 published a very well-received autobiography, entitled *After the Ball*.

**Theodore Frank Snyder**, who was born in Freeport, Illinois in 1881, learned to play the piano as a boy, finding work in Chicago as a café pianist. He began writing and plugging songs in Chicago, moving in 1904 to New York, where he had his first



composition published in 1907. Shortly thereafter, Snyder established his own music publishing business. By 1908 his work was being presented on Broadway. In 1909 he gave a break to the then unknown Irving Berlin. Snyder hired Berlin as a staff writer and the two eventually became business partners. In 1910 the duo was hired to perform and sing their music in the musical *Up and Down Broadway*. In 1914, with Berlin, Snyder became one of the founding members of ASCAP. Snyder's most well-known hits were written in the 1920s. His first widely-known hit was 1921's "The Sheik of Araby," recorded by Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman in the 1930s and The Beatles in 1962. "Who's Sorry Now?" written with Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby in 1923, has been a hit-maker for artists such as Connie Francis. Snyder retired from songwriting in 1930, moving to California to open a nightclub.

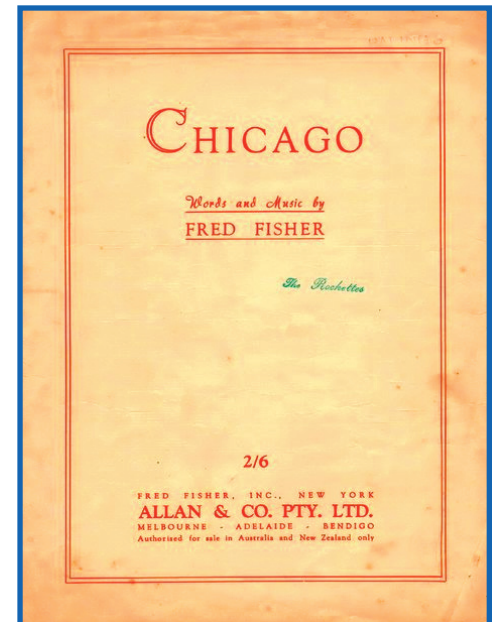
German-born **Fred Fisher**, born Alfred



Breitenbach in Cologne in 1875, emigrated to the United States in 1900, adopting the name, Fred Fischer (later changed to

Fisher during World War I to make it seem less Germanic). The young Fred ran away from home in his teens and joined the German Navy. Later he served with the French Foreign Legion before settling in Chicago, where he learned to play the piano. He began composing his own songs in 1904, and scored his first hit the following year with "If the Man in the Moon Were a Coon." Fisher soon moved to New York City where he founded the Fred Fischer Music Publishing Company in 1907. With frequent partner Alfred Bryan, he wrote "Come Josephine in My Flying Machine" in 1910, one of his first successful numbers. Others soon followed, such as "When I Get You Alone Tonight" and the major hit, "Peg o' My Heart" (1913).

During the 1910s and early '20s, Fisher wrote for Broadway revues and vaudeville shows; he also wrote a series of "place" songs, such as "I'm on My Way to Mandalay," "There's a Broken Heart for Every Light on Broadway," "Ireland Must Be Heaven, for My Mother Came From There" and "When It's Moonlight on the Alamo." Another early hit was "They Go Wild, Simply Wild, Over Me." More familiar and enduring Fisher hits include "And the Band Played On," "Chicago (That Toddlin' Town)," "I'd Rather Be Blue Over You (Than Happy With Someone Else)" and "Your Feet's Too Big." Tragically, after some years of declining health, Fisher died a suicide on January 14, 1942, rather than endure further physical deterioration. He was the subject of a highly fictionalized biographical film musical, *Oh You Beautiful Doll*, in 1949.



From the beginning of Tin Pan Alley in the late 19th century, songwriters have comprised a never-ending line of creatives who add to the Songbook year after year. Each has stood on the shoulders of those who've gone before, each contributing to the enduring gift of American music heard round the world.



By Steffie Lederman

Everybody knows Lucy, and nearly everyone loves her. Since the redheaded comedienne made her mark on television, in 1951, with "I Love Lucy", the entertaining and endearing performer has been a beloved household name.



A few years after Lucille Ball passed away in 1989, Charlow commissioned an artist to capture the many moods and versatility of Lucy. Sharing the portrait with Ball's daughter, Lucie Arnaz, Glen learned that Lucie wasn't quite happy with the anchoring image: she said "the center, larger portrait was not 'pleasing to look at.' This was because the artist seemed to have drawn the face a bit too harshly, making the creases in her smile and around the eyes a little too prominent. The rest of it was fine."

For nearly 60 years, Lucille Ball's presence has been felt in American living rooms, and homes around the world, and all of her fans and admirers have personal stories and private anecdotes.

East Coast collector Glen Charlow was born and raised in Baltimore, Md., and in his childhood years, he discovered Lucy in her second successful TV vehicle, "The Lucy Show".

"The first show I remember seeing was the episode with Carol Burnett.

# LIVIN' LARGE, *Lovin' Lucy*

GLEN CHARLOW OPENS HIS ARMS AND HIS HEART TO THE MEMORY OF EVER-LOVABLE LUCILLE BALL

## Part One of Two Parts

They were airline flight attendants, and they messed up - the usual way - but they ended up turning the mess into a big musical on board the flight. I found this show very amusing, and never dreamt that in later years I would become such a fan and a collector".

"The Lucy Show", which ran from 1962 through 1968, pre-dated the arrival of VCRs, but young Glen was smitten with musical staging, comedic timing, and all-around entertainment. The enterprising young boy kept an audiocassette recorder near the TV at all times: "Whenever there was a musical number done on any of Lucy's shows, I would record it. I have about three tapes loaded with nothing but musical numbers from "The Lucy Show" and "I Love Lucy" (Glen had become entranced with "I Love Lucy" sometime after he discovered Lucy's other show.)

"In time to come, I found myself creating a schedule around her show so that I would be home and available to watch when she came on the air. I'd be late for dinner because she was on. I'd always hear my father yelling, 'Glen, come on...dinnertime. Get away from the idiot box and come eat your dinner.' My father apparently was never a fan of Lucy's", Charlow glibly reveals.

Deeply connected to the power of performing and spreading happiness through song and dance, Charlow grew up with a determination to try his luck on the "Great White Way." He headed to New York City, found an affordable apartment in Brooklyn, and traded in his Baltimore zip code for a metropolitan address. He was now an aspiring triple-threat: singer/dancer/actor.

"I had done many community theater

shows before my move, and I thought this was my chance to do something bigger with my talents," Charlow reminisces. "Once I was in my new home, the first thing that got hung on the wall was a portrait

of Lucy. I don't remember where it came from, or how I got it, but I didn't consider it a collectible. Nor did I consider myself a collector.

"Strolling through Greenwich Village one day, Charlow stopped at a vendor's table. Rummaging through the wares, he came across a photo of Lucy decked out in a white shroud: "I bought it and took it to be framed. Still not a collector, though, I thought. Every time I'd see a photo or a postcard or anything having to do with Lucy, I'd buy it."

Fittingly, during these early years in New York, Charlow acquired a pet cat, which was dubbed "Lucy". He credits his mother with the moniker tribute. "I was on the phone with Mom, and she suddenly said, 'How about naming your cat Lucy?' And there you have it. Lucy wasn't the first thing on my mind ALL the time!" he says.

The "Lucy lover" eventually admitted that he wasn't a mere dilettante or a casual devotee, but rather a bona fide, full-fledged collector, after he answered an ad in the "New York Times" for a sale of Lucille Ball mementos and memorabilia.

"I ended up purchasing almost every large poster or photo this person had, including newspaper articles and magazines. However, I left the 'real' collector sets up to myself to collect. By this, I mean the "TV Guides" with the Lucy covers, or the "I Love Lucy" comic books", Charlow describes.

*Continued next month*

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