

The Golden Age of Chicago Children's Television

by Ted Okuda and Jack Mulqueen



Reviews and Endorsements

"The Golden Age of Chicago Children's Television looks to be **the definitive tome of the genre.**"

—Chris Miksanek, *The Library of Chicago Children's TV of the 60s and 70s*

"The Golden Age of Chicago Children's Television is **the next-best thing to returning to childhood . . . it belongs in every Chicagoan's TV library.**"

—Ted Cox, *Daily Herald*, August 26, 2004

"For anyone who grew up with Kukla, Fran and Ollie, Garfield Goose, Bill Jackson's Dirty Dragon, Ray Rayner [and His Friends] or the greatest of all—Bozo's Circus—it's **a fun read.**"

—Robert Feder, *Chicago Sun-Times*, "Tracking: Down Memory Lane," June 11, 2004

"A look at many of the memorable kid shows from years gone by . . . **a lot of fun.**"

—Bob Sirott, *Chicago Tonight*

"Thanks for **such an informative and fun book.** I enjoyed it tremendously."

—Rich Koz, host of *Svengoolie* and *Three Stooges Stoooge-A-Palooza*

"This first-hand account gives us **a peek into a time untouched by Entertainment Tonight.**"

—Joan Zabelka, *The Catholic New World*, September 12–25, 2004

"**A masterful job of writing.** I'm really impressed by the amount of research and affection that went into this book."

—Bill Jackson, creator of *Cartoon Town*, *The BJ and Dirty Dragon Show*, and *Gigglesnort Hotel*

"Relying on extensive interviews with the people who made these shows, the book **brims with stories from behind the scenes.**"

—Jennifer Olvera, *Chicago Magazine*, "When We Were Young: A new book explores Chicago's past as a hotbed of homegrown TV shows for kids," May 2004

"Remember when children's television was fun instead of fierce? Okuda and Mulqueen reminisce about **that era of kinder, gentler television** in their aptly named book."

—Andrea Guthmann, *Chicago Parent*, September 2004

“A wonderful book filled with great memories.”

—Terri Hemmert, WXRT Radio

“If you grew up in Chicago (and are old enough), you know that Hard Rock isn’t a hotel and nightclub, but an elf who had pals named Coco and Joe. When you see Conan O’Brien do those skits with pictures of celebrities where only the mouths move, it reminds you of the cartoon *Clutch Cargo*. And you count among your cathode ray companions Ray Rayner, Lester Fisher, Frazier Thomas, Burr Tillstrom, Bob Bell, Fran Allison and Bill Jackson. . . .”

—Mike Danahey, *Elgin Courier*, “When kids’ TV was ‘Golden,’” December 9, 2004

“*The Golden Age Of Chicago Children’s Television* tells the true story of children’s television produced or aired in Chicago from the 1940’s to the 1970’s. Even though these shows often operated under strict budget limits, the imagination that fueled them was boundless. Classic productions such as “Fran & Ollie,” “Garfield Goose,” “Bozo’s Circus,” and more, truly captivated the imagination of generations. Black-and-white photographs illustrate *The Golden Age Of Chicago Children’s Television*, which delves deeply into the amazing history and trivia behind popular and beloved shows, from the lives of stars and hosts to what gave television executives sudden fits and much more. **A wonderful trip through memory lane and fascinating repository of little-known facts.**”

—*The Bookwatch*, The Midwest Book Review, November 2004

“**Bozo was just the tip of the big top.** *The Golden Age of Chicago Children’s Television* recalls the history of live children’s programming in Chicago from the 1940s to the early 1970s—when the FCC put deathly restrictions on how much programs could boost their sponsors”

—Bruce Ingram, *Park Ridge Herald-Advocate*, “Behind scenes of local kids TV,” October 13, 2004

“*The Golden Age of Chicago Children’s Television* is a fun read for adults today because it brings back memories of those decades when clowns, puppets and songs filled the living room. . . . **The two writers bring a wealth of experience** to the book.”

—Joanne Zerkel, *The Star*, September 23, 2004

“*The Golden Age of Chicago Children’s Television* by Ted Okuda and Jack Mulqueen . . . is **a nostalgic delight**, packed with behind-the-scenes details of the free-spirited magic that was early children’s television in the Midwest. . . . their portrait of this kid-size golden age honors the heart of an endeavor rare by today’s standards for its simple, honest devotion to children. **Simply excellent.**”

—Jean Kozlowski, *Cricket in the Corner*, August 2004

“In these short-attention-span times, it may be . . . difficult to imagine children who became mesmerized by the comparatively low-tech antics of puppets, clowns and other assorted hosts who doubled as pitchmen for sponsors’ products in between segments of scratchy movie house cartoons which were old even then. But some of these performers and their characters burned themselves into the collective memories of thousands of people who grew up watching them every day. . . . **These characters were created and performed especially for us, and Chicagoans maintain a soft spot in their hearts for them.** Chicago-based author and historian Ted Okuda pays homage to these beloved characters and their creators in the book, “The Golden Age of Chicago Children’s Television,” which he co-wrote with veteran Chicago broadcaster Jack Mulqueen, a familiar name and personality to Chicago television viewers who grew up in the 1960s.”

—Mark Yurkiw, *Riverside/Brookfield Landmark*, “Those were the days,” June 8, 2005

“While sniffing around for evidence the Elmer the Elephant did actually exist on Chicago TV when I was five or six . . . I stumbled across **a marvelous book: *The Golden Age of Chicago Children’s Television***, by Ted Okuda and Jack Mulqueen. Hoo-boy, **what a ride down Memory Lane!** . . . the best parts of the book (once the amazement of seeing stills from these shows for the first time in 45 years wears off) are the descriptions of how kids’ TV happened, what the economics were, how the ratings game was played, how network affiliates sparred with the networks for shows and resources, and how shows and people bounced from one station to another. . . . **If you were a kid in Chicago and watching TV between 1950 and 1975, this is a must-have.**”

—Jeff Duntemann, www.duntemann.com, January 25, 2005

“This **lively and detailed history** of locally produced children’s television programming in Chicago, from the 40s to the 70s, benefits from the writing and research skills of prolific film historian Okuda, and the experiences of co-author Mulqueen, who was THERE as a kid-TV personality & producer for three decades. The book gives equal and welcome emphasis to programs, personalities, and invariably interesting behind-the-scenes stories of production, budgets, and technical challenges, as well as ratings and the myriad other business factors that allowed local kids’ TV to flourish but which finally decreed that it must die. This is an attractively packaged volume, with smart, pleasing art direction and a generous selection of photographs. **The book will be embraced by grown-up Chicagoans, of course, but also will fascinate people like me, who grew up elsewhere, but who have an interest in the art and business of television.**”

—David J. Hogan, as posted on Amazon.com, “Inside Look at Kiddie TV in the Windy City,” **4 Stars**, August 4, 2004

“For those of us who recall Chicago children’s television, this book will bring back many wonderful memories about the shows and the performers. Bozo’s Circus, Ray Rayner and Friends, and so many other great shows allowed kids to be entertained, to learn, and to free up our imaginations. Ted and Jack’s book does a thorough job of tracing the history of Chicago children’s television, with complete information about the shows, great illustrations, and many fascinating, amusing anecdotes. **It is a book that no baby boomer should be without.**”

—James L. Neibaur, as posted on Amazon.com, “Fond memories, fascinating information,” **5 Stars**, March 17, 2005

Also In Print

- *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sunday Book Section, “Paperbacks,” September 12, 2004
- *Wednesday Journal* (Oak Park, Illinois), “Library Footnotes,” December 1, 2004
- *Chicago Reader*, “The Dick Clark of the Sandbox Set: Jack Mulqueen’s *Kiddie-A-Go-Go*, a slice of local TV history, is now available on DVD,” July 15, 2005

Also on the Radio

- WGN-AM, *Steve & Johnnie Show*
- WTMX-FM, *Vantage Point*

Also on Television

- WLS-TV, Channel 7 News, Interview with Janet Davies
- Chicago Cable 25, *Nude Hippo: Your Chicago Show*