



"Alfalfa" In Film Days (Left) And As An Adult.

Former Child Star

Our Gang's 'Alfalfa' Killed In Argument

SAN FERNANDO, Calif. (AP)—Actor Carl (Alfalfa) Switzer, 33—a freckle-faced, wide-eyed movie star as a boy—was shot to death Wednesday night. Police said the shooting had occurred during an argument with another man over money.

Switzer was a favorite of moviegoers a generation ago when he appeared in "Our Gang" and "Reglar Fellers" comedies. He became known again with a reissue of the films to television under the title "The Little Rascals."

But in recent years his movie parts had been minor, and he worked as a bartender and hunting guide when not acting. He realized nothing from reissues of the old films.

Police said Switzer had gone to the home of a friend, Mr. Stiltz, 38, Wednesday night in an effort to collect a \$50 loan.

Detectives Louis Bell and Er-

nest Johnson said Stiltz told them that an argument had developed and Switzer hit him on the head with a check. Stiltz got a gun, and it fired harmlessly while they struggled. Stiltz said Switzer drew a knife, and Stiltz shot him in the abdomen the latter said.

The shooting was witnessed by Jack Platt, 37, who had accompanied Switzer to Stiltz's home, and Mrs. Rita Jane Corrigan and her three children, who were there when Switzer and Platt arrived.

Stiltz booked on suspicion of murder.

Switzer began his movie career in 1933. He and his young colleagues pranced through a long series of "Our Gang" comedies and then, as they grew older, appeared in the "Reglar Fellers" series.

Some of Switzer's pictures—in those days were "Too Many Parents," "Wild and Woolly," and "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch."

LETTERS MAILED

Elwood K. Goodson, operating manager of Bell Bros. and chairman of the local organization committee for the downtown organization, said letters have been sent to approximately 1,000 businesses in midtown Charlotte asking that representatives attend the initial meeting.

The Chicago committee, formed to promote better business conditions for downtown Chicago, began under the name of the State Street Council. It was later amplified to include members with businesses on midtown streets in addition to Chicago's State St.

PADING STAR

After 1942 Switzer's career went into eclipse along with those of most of the other kids who had appeared in "Our Gang" and "Reglar Fellers." Jackie Cooper was one member of the gang who went on to success as an actor.

Switzer continued to act, but the parts were sparse. Among his more recent pictures were "Going My Way," "State of the Union," "Island in the Sky," "High and the Mighty," "Dig that Uranium," and "The Defiant Ones."

Just a year ago Switzer was slightly wounded in a mysterious shooting near his home. A sniper sniped him in the arm. The police never learned who the sniper was.

Switzer was divorced in 1954. Learning of his death, one of Switzer's fellow child stars, George "Spanky" McFarland, said he was shocked, for he and Switzer had been close boyhood friends but that they had only infrequent contact in recent years.

The Lighter Side

Plows Sent Everywhere; Well, Almost

(From AP Reports)

W. C. Wadellch, dispatcher for snow removal crews in Lansing, Mich., worked through the night sending out plows and trucks and handling hundreds of phone calls.

Then his wife called to say, "The car is stuck in the driveway. Honey."

Point Is Made

The Internal Revenue Service told a woman in Dallas, Tex., she would have to pay an extra assessment if she couldn't come up with a reasonable cause for filing a late tax return.

She replied, "At the time I should have filed I was having a baby. Besides, my 19-month-old baby was also giving me some trouble."

Tax men conceded she made her point.

Chop-Chop

Doug Harris is bragging about how tough his son — only 15 months old — can be.

Yesterday Timmy Ray picked up a garter snake that promptly curled around his arm.

The Dallas youngster gurgled, petted the snake, then bent over and bit it in two.

Optometrist Picked

LINCOLN — Dr. S. E. Richardson Jr., Lincoln optometrist, has been named chairman of the Lincoln County Heart Committee, the appointment being made by John Manning of Chapel Hill, president of the N. C. Heart Association.

100 To Run For City Council?

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Thousands Left Homeless Following Midwest Floods

Downtown Association Scheduled

Formation of a Charlotte Downtown Association to strengthen the future welfare of the city's central business area will take place at 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, at an organizational meeting in the Carolina Theater.

Planners set the date today and also named two prominent speakers, James C. Downs and Randall Cooper, both of Chicago.

Mr. Downs is chairman of the board of the Real Estate Research Corp., Chicago, and Mr. Randall is president of the Central Area Committee for the City of Chicago.

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Winter Brought Flooding ...



Workers Build Sand Bag Dike On Street In Mount Vernon, Ohio

49 Deaths Blamed On Wintry Weather

WINTER'S worst storms eased off today but intense cold added to the suffering and shivering misery of millions of Americans.

Thousands were homeless in flooded areas in Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Indiana.

And 49 deaths were reported in the territory hit by heavy snow, ice storms, slashing rains or tornadoes—a territory that extended from the Southwest to the Atlantic Seaboard.

Arctic air spread south and east. It increased the misery of residents of the storm zones, but it checked the runoff of waters into flooded streams.

Flood damage ran into many millions.

The bitter cold checked Ohio's worst flood in 25 years. Thousands of evacuees began trickling back to their homes. But thousands of others stayed in schools and other emergency quarters.

CRISIS OVER

The crisis was over in Mount Vernon, a city of 16,000 population that experienced the worst flooding of central Ohio communities. Flood waters began to recede in other sections.

The cold air mass moving in from the west also was a break in the flooded areas of New York state.

FALL IN AFTERNOON

Temperatures were expected to begin falling sharply by late afternoon.

Some parts of Tennessee reported a light snow, but North Carolina and only rain out of the storm. Some cities, however, reported rain by the hundreds.

Greenhouses, for example, recorded 1.09 inches.

With the "cold, but fair" warning there was no likelihood of snow or other precipitation in the local cold wave forecast.

Drizzling rain began here early yesterday, and most of the day was showery. But a general rain, accompanied by gusts of wind, began falling between 9 and 10 o'clock last night, ending a short time after midnight.

The high winds knocked out windows at a Harris Supermarket at Central Ave. and Tenth Plaza and falling limbs blocked several streets and cut some power lines.

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ICE JAM DAMAGE

Killingham, a community of 10,000 that is 45 miles north of Pittsburgh, was cut off for several hours when an ice jam in the Allegheny River kept water from coursing over 30 blocks.

Meadville, 90 miles north of Pittsburgh, had the worst flood in its history.

The 200 residents of Forksville, Pa., got out of a strange water jam. A disaster plow sent out to clear the water from big Loyalsock Creek, which virtually surrounds the little town. Then rain broke the ice dam and the water receded, leaving chunks of ice in streets and yards.

MARITAL LAW WAS DECLARED

Madison, Ind., where 100 families were forced from their homes by overflows from the Ohio River. Disaster plows were put into effect and National Guard troops joined civilian workers in some of the inundated sections.

Small streams in the Wheeling, W. Va., area were out of their banks.

It was the wind that wrought the havoc in the south. Hall the size of baseballs shattered school buildings and cut off many communities from the rest of the world.

St. Louis cleared in the Midwest in the wake of winds that reduced traffic to a crawl and sleet that shopped power and communication lines and cut off many communities from the rest of the world.

TRAVEL SNARLED

The bling, stiff winds which whirled the snow into huge drifts paralyzed travel in many areas. Air and rail travel also was seriously affected by the storm's weather.

Schools were closed. Business slackened. Industries set the time of the two-edged winter onslaught—and on unvarying pedestrians for but a black morning.

Knowing residents, he said park their cars elsewhere.

More Weather Data on Page 3-A

STATIONS PLAGUE Oregon Orchard

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Parts of Oregon are plagued by an invasion of insects.

R. M. Bodley, whose Portland orchard was ruined, said the insects literally blot out the sun.

He said their droppings fall like the torrential rain on his greenhouse—and on unvarying pedestrians for but a black morning.

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Stringfield's Illness Fatal

Lamar Edwin Stringfield, former conductor of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, died in an Asheville hospital last night.

He had entered the hospital for treatment of a severe cold. Cause of death was listed as a lung congestion.

Mr. Stringfield, 61, had a long and distinguished career in the field of music as a composer and performer, and was North Carolina's only winner of the Pulitzer Prize for music.

He was known as a master of the flute, for which he had written many compositions.

For more than 40 years, Mr. Stringfield had started his day with early morning practice on his difficult instrument. He had given up playing it steadily when he left the New York Chamber Music Society in 1927 for conducting and composing and other musical tasks, which included assisting in Radio City Music Hall.

WESTERN MUSIC

Although he was born near Raleigh, western North Carolina has claimed him as a resident for most of his life.

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ATAT RAPPED

Castro singled out only the Cuban Telephone Co., part of the estimated billion-dollar American investment in Cuba. The ATAT affiliate got permission from Batista to raise rates two years ago to justify expansion investments.

"Telephone rates are going to be lowered," Castro said.

The rally in front of the presidential palace attracted a large part of Havana's 1,200,000 residents, plus many more from outlying provinces of this island republic.

CASTRO'S CAMPAIGN

HAVANA (AP)—With the shouted support of more than half a million Cubans, Fidel Castro continues his campaign today to justify to the world the execution of Batista.

The author of Dictator Fulgencio Batista's downfall was scheduled to appear before hundreds of foreign newsmen at a press conference.

Later today Havana's first showcase trial of Batistas charged with murder and atrocities will open. The capital's first defendants were three officers in the dictator's army and the scene in front of the palace and streets for blocks on each side.

Whatever the number, there was no question of admiring support for Batista's rule. His hoarse voice was drowned in cheers at the end of almost every sentence of his 45-minute speech.

SPACE AGE

Farmer A. L. Starkey sent a bill for that amount to Weather Bureau officials who in turn, forwarded the message of the cow's death to Washington.

Weathermen sent a balloon to the earth's outer atmosphere. It burst and then settled back to earth—in a pasture owned by Besse, a 3-year-old polled Hereford.

She smooched on the equipment and despite efforts of a veterinarian, she died.

GADGET GETS CURIOUS COW

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107-Year-Old Dies

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP)—Nagabito Mesa, 107, who boasted he never before been sick a day in his life, died Wednesday of a heart ailment and pneumonia. He was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, in 1851 and came to the United States in 1915.

Only six years ago, Mesa left from a tree he was pruning and broke a wrist.

And Snowdrifts



Pat McKinley And Kathy Novogradac Clean Car In Kansas City, Mo.

Castro's Campaign 'Showcase' Trials Set For Cubans

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News' Muhleman Tops In Motorsport Contest

Charlotte News Writer Max Muhleman has won both top prizes in 1958 writing competition of Carolinas Motorsport Writers Assn.

Muhleman's account of last February's Daytona Beach Grand National Stock Car Strain Makes Its Exit, topped the feature division.

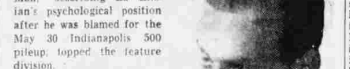
His "A Not-so-Lucky Man," describing Ed Eilman's psychological position after he was blinded for the May 30 Indianapolis 500 plump, topped the feature division.

Muhleman, who came to The Charlotte News in 1957 from the Greenville, S. C., Piedmont, secured a near-sweep with second and third places in the feature division and second place in spot reporting. Hank Schoolfield of the Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel won third place in spot reporting.

In addition to motorsports, Muhleman covers high school sports and boxing for The News.

Cash prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10 in each division, posted by the National Assn. for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), will be presented at the motorsport writers awards dinner here Monday night.

Judges for the competition were Walter Spearman of the University of North Carolina School of Journalism, Kenneth Rudeen of Sports Illustrated magazine, and Editor Chris Eganowski of National Speed Sport News.



MUHLEMAN