

NOW WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti

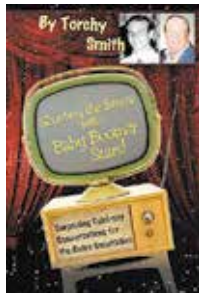
Shooting the Breeze with Baby Boomer Stars! Surprising Celebrity Conversations for the Retro Generation

Torchy Smith has written this book with great affection for those former television celebrities who grew up during the baby boomer generation. Many familiar names and faces pop up in his book which leave us wanting to learn more about a time and a place where the scene was set in a much more innocent and simple time than it is today. "Shooting the Breeze with Baby Boomer Stars!" (Archway Publishing, March 2019 with the foreword written by Gerardo Rivera) will take the reader on a nostalgic trip that Torchy has been taking for several years. He hosts his own program on iheart radio called Baby Boomer Talk Radio in which he interviews his retro idols on the air.

Edward "Torchy" Smith graduated from Shaker Heights High School in 1965. Since then he has been in charge of his high school reunions. He studied graphic design at Kent State University. His last day of classes was the tragic May 4, 1970 event on the campus. "That could be an entirely separate conversation," said Torchy. "It was difficult to get a job after that because potential employers would look at your job application and read that you went to college at Kent State. People would actually ask if you were for the students or for the (National) Guard. You felt like you were being audited for the IRS. You felt separated in those days."

Coming from the baby boomer generation, Torchy and his peers navigated through an unstable time. He had always admired Hollywood and those involved in the entertainment industry even at an early age. "To be honest, I actually thought that I would be a kid star myself. What held me back was that I lived in Shaker Heights and Hollywood wasn't close by," he laughs. "I had always enjoyed many TV shows growing up. I always kept a thought in the back of my mind how fun it would be if I could somehow get in touch with these people. Once I sold my business after many years, I decided I would try to connect with some of these people who were part of my childhood."

Torchy's book has many interviews he conducted with television personalities from days gone by. Many names and characters we will recognize. Some of the interviews include: Jerry Mathers (Beaver/Leave it to Beaver), Stanley Livingston (Chip Douglas/My Three Sons), Cindy Williams (Shirley Feeney/Laverne & Shirley), Pat Priest (Marilyn Munster/The Munsters), Larry Wilcox (Officer



Jon Baker/CHIPS) and Alison Arngrim (Nellie Olson/Little House on The Prairie). There are also several interviews with former Mousekateers from The Mickey Mouse Club such as Cubby O'Brien, Darlene Gillespie and Bobby Burgess.

One will learn from the book that being a Mousekateer was not always a glamorous role. "Those kids worked hard," said Torchy. "Actually, The Mickey Mouse Club saved Walt Disney. Around that time, Walt Disney was opening Disneyland. He had to mortgage his house. He was strapped for money. Then ABC stepped in and gave him a break. They told him they wanted to buy The Mickey Mouse Club. This helped to finance Disneyland."

He continues, "Many of the Mousekateers had to participate in the Disney Parade in Anaheim every weekend. They were paid \$160 per week. Each one of them had their own story to share. Some were happy stories and others not so much."

Often times as fans of a particular TV show we rarely separate the character from their real life or are even aware that they have one. We are locked in by the role they play because that is what we recognize. For example, many may not recall the name Kathy Garver right away but those who remember the TV show, Family Affair will identify that she played the older sister, Cissy. "She is all business," said Torchy. "She is a go-getter. She has written a memoir. She makes several personal appearances during the year. After the show was cancelled she went back to UCLA and earned her Masters Degree."

Torchy shares some thoughts about his interviews and has more waiting in the archives for possibly a second book. "I liked finding out a few surprises about their lives along the way. You will find many interesting stories in the book," said Torchy. "I wasn't granted an interview by everyone I contacted for a variety of reasons which ranged from health issues, substance abuse or they didn't want to talk about that particular time in their career. You have to respect that and move on. I wanted to talk to the ones who will not be appearing on The Tonight Show nor on a daytime talk show. It's important

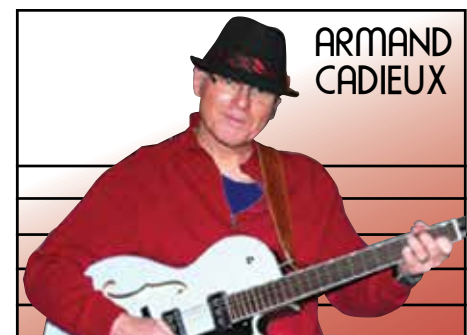
to record them, to know who they were."

Torchy has been doing his radio show for three years. "It wasn't easy at first. The program had to be accepted by iheart radio. You had to have a pod cast and build an audience because they didn't accept just anybody. They thought my topic was interesting. It was a hit or miss experiment but then it took off."

Finally, Torchy shares why the baby boomer generation is important and why we should pay attention. "This generation is iconic. Back in the early days there were three television networks, ABC, CBS and NBC. So when you went to school the next day you talked about the shows you watched. "Hey did you catch Leave it to Beaver last night?" or "Did you watch The Donna Reed Show?" and so forth. We really had no choice but to watch these shows because there were no other options. We are from a special generation, a special moment in time. Our generation is more cohesive. But for a few movies here and there for us, Hollywood seems to cater more to the younger generation. That is why I wanted to do my radio show and write this book. I want to keep our generation and those who were a part of it relevant."

www.babyboomerstalkradio.com

Torchy's book is available through his web site, Barnes & Noble and Amazon.



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