

# 1954: The CCC's Founding In Context

Dan Butler

What else was happening while the founders of the CCC were hard at work establishing the group whose fiftieth anniversary we celebrate this month?

In 1954, Ray Kroc made a deal to act as franchise agent for the McDonald Brothers' hamburger stand in San Bernardino. Soon after, Walt Disney opened an amusement park bearing his name in Anaheim. In Tennessee, Elvis Presley cut his first records at Sun Studios on his way to becoming the biggest recording artist of all time. Coincidence? I think not. McDonald's, Disney, Elvis and the CCC. Big things were happening all over.

Hit songs of that year included: "Three Coins in the Fountain," "Mister Sandman," "Sh-Boom," "Shake, Rattle and Roll" and "Young at Heart." Top recording artists were Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Jackie Gleason, and Mantovani.

Notable movies included "Rear Window," "On The Waterfront," "Seven Samurai," "Seven Brides For Seven Brothers," "Brigadoon," "The Caine Mutiny," "White Christmas," "From Here To Eternity," "How To Marry A Millionaire" and "Godzilla." The biggest box office stars were John Wayne, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Gary Cooper, Jimmy Stewart, Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando.

Regular color TV broadcasts began in the U.S., and RCA began manufacturing color sets with a 12" screen and selling them for \$1,000. "The Jack Benny Show" and "Davy Crockett" were favorite TV programs, the latter inspiring kids to wear coonskin caps.

Home run king Hank Aaron began his career with the Milwaukee Braves. The NY Giants won the World Series (and fans got to watch the games in color for the first time). Dr. Roger Bannister in England became the first person to run a mile in less than four minutes.

IBM introduced the first mass-produced computer. Harvard doctors performed the first successful kidney transplant in the U.S. Dr.

Jonas Salk began inoculating school children with his polio vaccine.

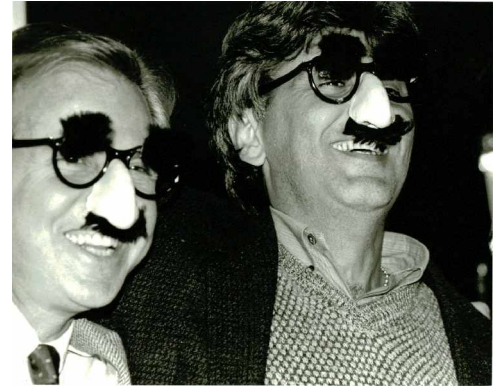
In print, J.R. Tolkien's "The Lord Of The Rings" and William Golding's "The Lord Of The Flies" were published. Sports Illustrated made its debut.

Eisenhower was President of the U.S. The biggest legal event of the year was the Supreme Court's decision in Brown vs. Board of Education ruling that school segregation was unconstitutional. Soon after, Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus and Martin Luther King led a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. The nation was embroiled in the televised McCarthy hearings investigating Communist infiltration of the Army until a backlash ensued and the Senate condemned McCarthy. Ellis Island closed its doors after processing 12 million immigrants in 62 years. The CIA helped overthrow the government in Guatemala. The U.S. launched its first nuclear powered submarine, The Nautilus (named after the ship in Jules Verne's "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea").

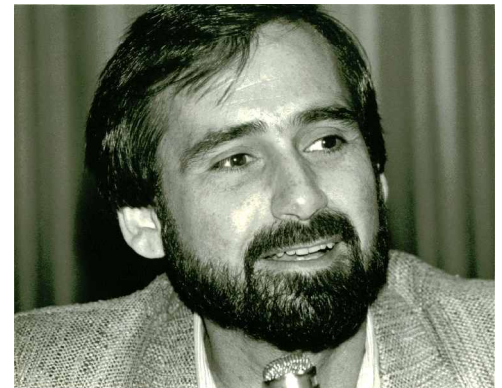
Dramatic culinary innovations occurred: Swanson invented the first TV dinner, Butterball came up with a self-basting turkey, and children's nutritional needs everywhere were enhanced by the introduction of Trix Cereal and M&M's Peanut Chocolate Candies. An advertising genius coined the phrase "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand."

Business was good. In 1954, stock prices reached their highest level since the Crash of 1929. The average house cost \$22,000. The average income was \$3,960 a year, and you could buy a new Ford for a little over \$1,500 (a bargain, particularly compared to the color TV). It only cost 3 cents to mail a letter. A loaf of bread was 17 cents, a box of cereal was 19 cents, and a gallon of gas could be purchased for only 21 cents. [Sigh].

## From the CCC Photo Archives



Clowning Around at the CCC:  
Shankman and DeBlasio



Les Bider



Kevin DuBrow (of Quiet Riot) and Warren  
Entner