

**Publisher:**  
Business to Business

**Design:**  
Cheryl Lane  
Dave Marks  
Patty Williams  
Polly DeHays

**Typesetting:**  
Express Type

**Sales:**  
Richard Ford  
Michelle Biggs

**Photography:**  
Curt Alexander  
Brian Rideout

BKR Studio (Cover Photo)

**Contributions:**

Jeff Aaron  
Curt Alexander  
J. Boggs  
L.A. Christie  
Tom Heule

James Hibschan  
D.E. Kraft  
Phil Loranger

Leslie Mast  
Lou Murphy

Steve C. Nahrwold  
Bob Pfeiffer

Chuck Roemer  
Marilyn Singleton

## SEVEN SEAS TRAVEL WORLD TRAVEL



Specializing in  
**EUROPEAN  
TRAVEL**

• AIR • LAND • GROUP  
• TOURS

*Personalized Service*

**232-7995**

525 North Michigan  
South Bend, Indiana

# editorial

## Remembering Ring Lardner

While it's a lasting compliment to the man that more than 55 years after his death, Ring Lardner remains one of the world's most widely read and studied writers of fiction, we feel it's a shame that one of the best-kept secrets in journalism is that he gained his keen perception of a rapacious segment of American society and developed the unique writing style, that would mark him as a literary giant, right here in Michiana.

Lardner was born in Niles, Michigan, in 1885, and before he had reached his mid-twenties he had already stamped himself as a writer of influence through his prestigious "In The Wake of The News" column in the Chicago Tribune with the first of a series of stories about Jack Keefe, a braggadocio, rookie major league pitcher.

As he progressed in his career, gaining international recognition and acclaim for his work and hob-nobbing with the likes of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Lardner never forgot the town of his youth and the profound influence it had on shaping his career. Nor did he fail to credit his days as a writer with the old South Bend News-Times as the stepping stones to greater journalistic heights.

But, according to Wayne Stiles, curator of Niles' Fort St. Joseph Museum which houses a vast amount of Lardner memorabilia, it seems we have forgotten our native son. Most visitors to the Museum are surprised to learn that Lardner hailed from Michiana, and few local residents take time to review his works. Ironically, most persons who enter the Museum to specifically study the Lardner collection come from other communities.

Further evidence of the low esteem in which the great writer is held in the community is found in the placement of the bronze marker that designates the home of his youth on Bond Street as one of the National Registry of Historic Places sites. The marker sits across the street from the house. It seems the former owners, obviously strangers to any library, thought the sign would detract

from the property.

It's time we take time to remember Lardner. His works are not hard to find, though we might have to blow some dust off the masterpieces.

Perhaps a good place to start would be with Lardner's first, and still most appreciated, comic portrait of professional baseball. The "You Know Me, Al" series that was introduced in March 1914, in the Saturday Evening Post. In the most successful dialectic narrative since Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn," Lardner introduced a new style in journalism giving voice to a lower class that had never gained any credit as a clever and prospering social caste in either the newspaper columns of the day or the popular fiction of the times.

We might also take up his collection of short stories - "The Round Up," "The Big Town," "How To Write Short Stories, What of it?," "The Love Nest and Other Stories" and "First and Last" - which earned him the reputation as one of the country's leading humorists and biting satirists of American life.

Lardner occupied a singularly interesting position in American literature. He was an unusual example of a writer who not only entered the serious literary world through the pages of mass-circulation periodicals but who also remained closely associated with popular journalism throughout his career.

At his death, his wife, Ellis, a native of Goshen, received wires from Damon Runyon, Fielding Yost, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, George M. Cohan, J. Honus Wagner, Walter Johnson and Westbrook Pegler among hundreds of others who loved his work and remembered him.

It would be nice if we remembered him, too.

*Rick Singleton*  
Editor