

Who Remembers... Bozo the Clown?

Bozo the Clown (1946-2001) (Wikipedia)

If you are creeped out by clowns, then leave fast! For the rest of us, we have fond memories of waking up on a school day, grabbing a bowl of milk and cereal and racing to the “boob” tube to watch our favorite shows before racing to catch the school bus.

One of those shows was Bozo the Clown also known as Bozo’s Big Top or Bozo’s Circus, which spun off “Bozo: The World’s Most Famous Clown” animated cartoon series. The character of Bozo was created – believe it or not – in 1946, by children’s storyteller Alan W. Livingston. His medium was the first of its kind: an illustrative book accompanied with an album.

The first televised episode of Bozo was in 1949 on KTTV Los Angeles. The show’s rights were purchased by a Larry Harmon in 1956 who saw the show’s massive potential. The show became popular enough that it expanded into franchises – as opposed to syndication. This meant that instead of broadcasting the Los Angeles version of the show, local stations could produce their own version with their own Bozo.

By 1959 the character arrived in Boston on WHDH-TV (now WCVB-TV) and was portrayed by Frank Avruch. In spite of the intention to stay a franchise, Larry Harmon felt he could maximize revenue by syndicating the show, which he did in 1966.

By 1970 it arrived in New Bedford where it was portrayed by Bennett B. Schneider IV on WTEV-TV (now WLNE-TV).

At the show’s highest point it was broadcast on cable and satellite and spread to international markets, including

Brazil and Mexico.

What led to the show's demise? In 1994, the most popular market for the show – Chicago's WGN – shuttled *The Bozo Show* to an inferior time slot on a Sunday morning. Its popularity slowly declined and then in three years later in 1997, the FCC mandated a three hours per week of "educational and informational" programs for kids. This caused a rapid decline and was the death knell for the show. Competing shows also contributed.

"Bozo: 40 Years of Fun!" was the final show which aired on June 12, 2001 disappointing me kids all over the country.

Though it hasn't been updated in 2 years, Bozo has an official [Facebook](#) page.
