



AFTER LAST NIGHT

# Yorgesson? Yust a Phony

By WILL JONES



The Minneapolis Tribune  
April 18, 1950

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HOLLYWOOD, CALIF. — Minnesota, lousy with Swedish accents, has gone overboard for a phony one that originates in Hollywood. Duluth this week is importing Yogi Yorgesson and his two-inch-thick dialect all the way from Vine Street for personal appearances at the Duluth Home Show. It'll be the first time Yorgesson has ever been in Minnesota. He hopes to make other appearances there later this year.

## Records Are Popular

Yorgesson was hired for the Duluth show because of the popularity of his records in Minnesota. Numbers like "Ay Yust Go Nuts at Christmas," "Real Gone Galoot," "Square Dance Hulda," "The Clamdigger's Sweetheart" and "All Pooped Out" sell better in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan than anywhere else in the country. In Duluth he'll introduce a couple new ones: "Nincompoops Have All the Fun" and "Mrs. Yohnson, Turn Me Loose."

Yorgesson goes for titles with "oo" sounds in them because they lend themselves to the Swedish treatment.

## Thing Was Ripe

"The thing was ripe for a comedy mystic," said Stewart. "I thought it would be funny to have a mystic with a Swedish accent. I remembered those accents, from up north, and I practiced." Stewart got a radio job with his Yogi Yorgesson bit. Later, wearing a turban, he made personal appearances with the Al Pearce gang. He gazed into a fish bowl, answered questions in broad Swedish dialect.

Once, after a show in Georgia, a prominent Atlanta woman came up to him and asked, confidentially: "Are you really a Hindu?" Stewart spent a number of years in Chicago as a night club performer and a radio director. Now that he's making records, the Far Eastern touch and the turban are excess baggage.

## Dog Makes More

But Stewart's using his records as a means of spreading the Yogi Yorgesson name around the country. It's working. Capitol records officials at first expected his platters to sell only in the Midwest. Surprising numbers are sold in other parts of the country.

With his turban, Stewart plans to make night club and television appearances.

"The Lassie show is going off the air," he said. "I've got to have another job. I want to be a performer myself. I'm tired of working for a dog that makes more money than I do."

Stewart said he wrote all the songs he's recorded. He's also written the material he uses for personal appearances.

"By the way, there's a guy up in your neck of the woods who's been using my stuff," said Stewart. "His name's Slim Jim." Stewart said Slim Jim had recorded some of his songs. He said he hadn't given Minneapolis' Scandinavian cowboy permission to use the songs or collect any royalties. "Sue? I don't think so. I'm

not worried. I heard some of the recordings. His accent is real — better than mine. But he murders the songs!"

NOTE: Yogi Yorgesson's real name was Harry Stewart. Before launching his singing career in 1948 Stewart had worked at a variety of jobs in radio. Among other things he was a director for the Lassie show.



AFTER LAST NIGHT

# Smart Swede Fails to Click

By WILL JONES

The Minneapolis Tribune  
June 22, 1950

## Smart Swede Fails to Click

By WILL JONES

A smart Swede doesn't have a chance in Minnesota, reports Harry Stewart. Stewart, who is the Swedish-dialect Yogi Yorgesson of recording fame, said he found it out the hard way. He's in Minnesota now making some one-night appearances at dance halls. He's singing "Ay Yust Go Nuts at Christmas" and "Real Gone Galoot" and other dialect songs he's recorded. But as soon as he quits singing, he stops being Yogi Yorgesson. Yorgesson, according to Stewart, is a smart Swede. "He's the only smart, comedy Swede in the business, you know," said Stewart. "Everybody else who does Swede dialect plays it dumb."

Stewart developed the character for nightclub acts. Singing was only a part of the act originally. Minnesotans, said Stewart, will accept Yogi as long as he just sings. But they don't go for the rest of the act. Stewart came to Minnesota first two months ago for appearances in Duluth. "I wore a turban, and had Yogi gazing into a crystal ball and making predictions, the way I've always done," he said. "I could feel that the people just weren't warming up to that."

Stewart went to Hollywood, where he headquarters, and puzzled over his Minnesota reception. When he came back to Minnesota last week he came with a

brand-new act. He sang the same songs. But he wore a straw hat and rube clothes. He used jokes to match. Audiences, he found, liked him much better. Jokes about pigs and chickens, said Stewart, seem to go over well with his fans. But even a pig joke isn't sure-fire. For awhile he used one about a pig that swallowed a stick of dynamite. In dialect, he tells how the pig runs into the barn. There's a big explosion. The barn is blown to bits. The punch line is: "And you know, for awhile, we had an awful sick pig on our hands."

That one didn't get much reaction, said Stewart. In its place he now tells about visiting his cousin Hjalmar's house and hearing pigs under the bed. He says he asks Hjalmar, "What about the smell?" And Hjalmar tells him "the pigs will have to get used to it, the same as us." That one, he said, never misses.

## 'Yogi Yorgesson' Killed in Crash

Minneapolis Star  
May 21, 1956

TONOPAHA, Nev. — (U.P.) —

Recording Artist Yogi Yorgesson, 48, of Beverly Hills, Calif. was killed Sunday when his auto crashed into a culvert 18 miles north of Tonopah. Yorgesson's real name was Harry E. Stewart. Highway patrolmen believed Yorgesson fell asleep at the wheel of his car. Stewart's family name was originally Skarbo, and he was of Swedish-Norwegian ancestry. No native, he was still widely known in the Upper Midwest through personal appearances and through his records. One of his self-composed hits was "I Want to Go Back to My Little Old Shack in Minneapolis, Minnesota."

## Gretchen Stewart remarries

Minneapolis Star  
February 1, 1962

Jim Jordan, radio's Fibber McGee, and Gretchen Stewart, the widow of comedian Yogi Yorgesson, were married in Our Lady of Peace Catholic Cathedral in Honolulu, Hawaii. Jordan's first wife, Marian, who played Molly in their radio series, died of cancer last year.

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**Jordan**

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