

Lonny Fame & The Belltones



Band History

Originally fronted by Lonny Fame, the band was best known for their original hit, "Break Up with Freddy." From their accidental beginning, the Belltones were embroiled in controversy as well as tragedy. Just days prior to the release of "Break Up with Freddy," Babs Weinstein Fame's girlfriend, inadvertently kicked the release lever on the jack holding up his car. Unbeknownst to Babs, Lonny lay underneath installing a nocturnal emissions control device. Although Fame was crushed to death, not so the aspirations of the Belltones. Three days after Lonny Fame's death, "Break Up

with Freddy" was released and immediately shot to #139 on Billboards Top 100.

The original Lonny Fame and the Belltones comprised of Lonny Fame, Buzzy Hunk, da' Moose, Dizzy Turpentine, Lamont Kooch, Hugo Igoformabisco, Shiv Delgreto, and X-15. (* X-15 left the band after one performance. He is rumored to have been recruited by a U.S. clandestine government agency. All records of X-15 have been purged from public record.) All the Belltones were born in the same year and lived within a few miles of each other while growing up. In his book, "For Whom The Belltones Toll," Belltones' historian, D.T. Tyler, contends that other than the fortuitous meeting between da' Moose and Buzzy Hunk at the Richard Simmons Correctional Facility, (where Hunk and da' Moose, while dressed in drag, sang "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair," in the production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "South Pacific"), none of the Belltones crossed paths until destiny had her wicked way with the world.



*Only known photo of Lonny Fame.
Auctioned at Sotheby's for \$4.35*

How else, other than providence, can you explain Fame, X-15, Hunk, da'Moose, Turpentine, Igoformabisco, Kooch and Delgreto ending up in the same holding cell the exact same night. Each of the soon to be Belltones were brought in on different charges, ranging from extorting grade schoolers for their lunch money to vagrancy to wearing their underwear on the outside of their pants. "There we was, in the slammer, not knowing each others," Dizzy Turpentine recalls, "and all at once we upchucked



Proud fathers of The Belltones

at the same time, and we knew!" And knew they did! From that day forward, the Belltones breathed the same air, misspelled the same words, and shoplifted from the same stores. Kooch also remembers that singular moment quite well, "It was magical, like each of us Belltones is one of those chords in that C-Am-F-G, chord progression. When reminded that there were seven Belltones, and only 4 chords in the progression, Igoformabisco quickly came to Kooch's rescue, pointing out, "Not the way we play it!"

Without Lonny, what lay in store for the Belltones? When asked about how emotional and heartbreaking Lonny's loss was,



Delgreco, the Belltones' bass player replied, "I now know how the dinosaurs and cavemen felt when that meteor crashed into New Jersey 400 years ago and ended the world." Yet, without skipping a beat, which the Belltones were known for, the boys quickly replaced Fame with Rance Thurston as front-man and lead singer. Thurston, prior to joining the Belltones, was best known for his 1952 Korean War song, "If You Carry the Gun, I'll Carry the Tune." Because the Belltones used indelible black magic markers to print, "Lonny Fame and the Belltones," on their white tee-shirts, the band had to stick with the name.

Second coming of the Belltones

Being in a rock n' roll band can be challenging, and even more so for The Belltones. The unrelenting pressure of performing every once in while a took its toll. Chinks in the armor began to show. Money was short, and tempers even shorter. In 1960 Thurston and Kooch left the band and Delgreco was asked to leave. Thurston hints at "creative differences," as his reason for parting ways with The Belltones. D.T. Tyler maintains that Thurston was the only person, ever, to use "Belltones," and "creative," in the same sentence. Intrigued by the sounds of the British Invasion and hoping to parlay his Tab Hunter-like good looks into a musical career, Thurston moved to England. He auditioned for, and miraculously, was selected as a member of Dave Clark Five. His tenure with the group was short lived. Dave Clark, personally, spent hours trying to teach Thurston to sing with an English accent. His efforts proved unsuccessful, and Thurston was booted. To this day, though, Thurston is considered to be the Sixth Dave Clark Five.

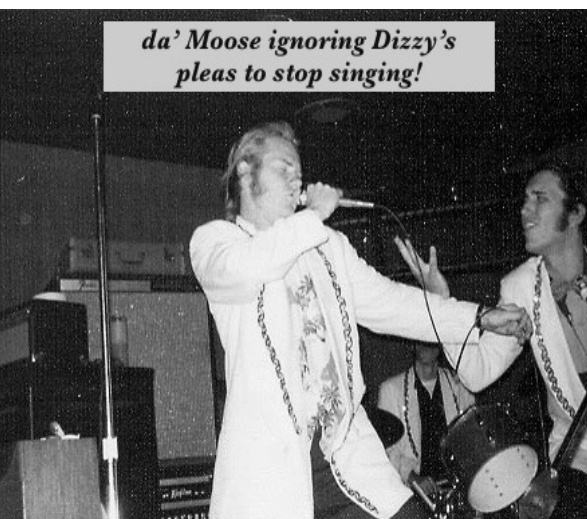
Belltones II



Upon Thurston's departure from the Belltones, he was replaced by Sneakers Levine, (son of proud parents, Milton and Gloria Levine,

owners of Levine's Fine Furnishings in Shaker Heights, Ohio; 25-year members of Beth Torah Synagogue; and, on a regular basis, donate at least \$250 (pre-tax) to the Our Sisters of Perpetual Motion Convent, who provide inner city youth with basketball shoes. Sneaker's sister, Marian, is married to Myron Goldstein, a dentist, with

two of the loveliest children— such shana punim they are! The youngest, Lavender, age 11, won the Purim Spelling Bee, correctly spelling Hamentashen).



Sneakers proved to be a formidable visionary and front-man. In addition to having a car, (no longer did the Belltones have to walk or ride bicycles to gigs carrying their equipment) Levine also taught Turpentine and Delgreco how to read and do simple addition. Obviously influenced by his family's retail business, Levine wrote the Belltones second hit, "Are You Looking or Are You Buying – Come Back When You're Ready to Buy." Critics say if not for the lengthy title, the song would have challenged Elvis' dominance of the radio.

None of the Belltones were sure when or why Lamont Kooch left the group. It dawned on them when for the third gig in a row they each got an extra \$1.15. They relished the extra income so much it was decided Kooch was irreplaceable. Why Kooch left is still a mystery. According to Tyler, "Kooch, considered the stoic member of the group, did not reveal much, and did his talking with his guitar." Tyler proposes the theory that the undercurrent of tension between Kooch and Buzzy Hunk, who both considered themselves snappy dressers and vied for the ladies' attention, lead up to Kooch's decision.



Belltones opening for Neil Sedaka, Las Vegas

Delgreco holds the honor of being the only Belltone thrown out of the group. He was quickly replaced by Romeo Self, Fornabisco's cousin. Self soon departed under mysterious circumstances. To this day, a traumatized Self avoids any discussion regarding the Belltones. When pressed for details, his trembling fingers pull from his shirt pocket the crumpled and well-worn restraining order he had issued against Delgreco. In "Day of the Knife, My Years as a Belltone," the now Reverend Shiv Delgreco quickly dismisses any wrong doing regarding Mr. Self, but does discuss the events leading up to his departure from the Belltones, reporting, "From my perspective, the other Belltones were putting way too much importance on knowing what note to play next."

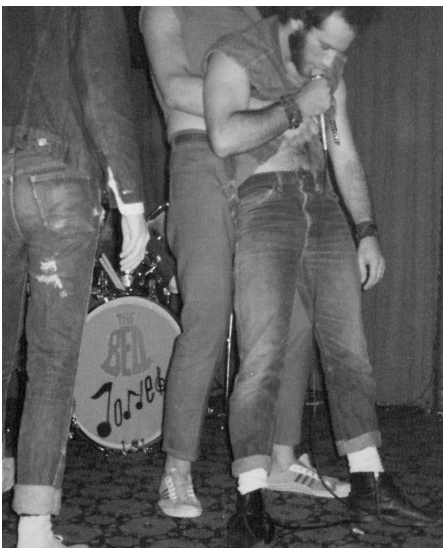
Disbanding and Life After

How did the Belltones endure for so long? Some say the music, most say petty theft, unemployment checks, and that they all lived with their parents, who lived with their parents. The Belltones' musicianship was only half of what their audiences desperately tried to avoid. The other half was the paranormal-like connection the members of the group had with each other. "It was uncanny," Levine fondly remembers. "It was like we all remembered the chords to the songs we were playing— almost simultaneously!" Yet, this magical connection was no match for their musical aptitude, and Lonny Fame and The Belltones finally broke up New Year's Eve 1961. Individually, members of the band remain silent regarding their demise. Tyler's exhaustive research



Buzzy Hunk, counseling high school students

points to the band's inability to remember the words to the songs, incontinence, excessive glue sniffing, and Dizzy's obsessive stalking of Hugh Beaumont as factors forcing the band to call it quits.



Igofornabisco falls asleep on stage

*From the Annie Lebovitz collection

Except for Lonny Fame, X-15, and the recent loss of Buzzy Hunk, amazingly, all the original Belltones have managed to outlive their own stupidity. Rance Thurston, after pursuing an illustrious comedy career in the Catskills performing as Shecky Thurston, now owns and operates Rance's Take a Chance with Romance Dating Service in Ethiopia. The Rev. Shiv Delgreco, spent four years as choreographer for the Solid Gold Dancers before retiring selling forged Baptism and Bar Mitzvah Certificates online. After studying with Guru Baba Louie-Louie during the early 1960's, da' Moose and his wife, Angel, now run Stella's Finishing and Manners Academy for Young Ladies in Sedalia, Missouri. Dizzy Turpentine, a retired Calumet City Industrial High School wood shop teacher is Shamu the Whale's interpreter at Sea World. Sneakers Levine, after coaching football for the Davening Chasidics of Yeshiva University, fronts a Tony Orlando and Dawn tribute band. Lamont

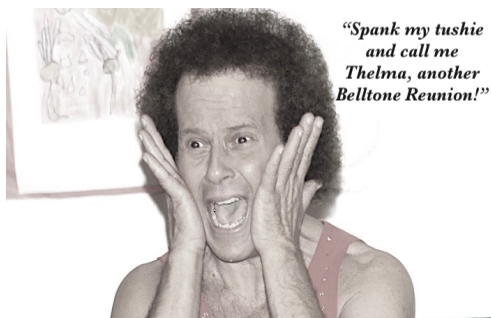
Kooch served his time in Leavenworth, and upon his release in 2009, married his prison pen pal, Marvella Marvel. Until his recent death, Buzzy Hunk was a High School Guidance Counselor and sold Belltone memorabilia on eBay. Hugo Igofofnabisco had a very successful career performing as Jerry Lewis' stunt double. Hugo received an Oscar nomination for his work in Lewis' "The Bell Hop."

Between the original Belltones, there are 23 ex-wives. The resulting 29 children and 16 grandkids are either unemployed or in reform school. In 2004, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger made it illegal for a Belltone to reproduce in the state of California. Thirteen other states have similar legislature pending. The Trump Administration considers the entire Belltone family tree illegal immigrants. This is in direct contrast to Puerto Rico's celebration of Lonny Fame and the Belltones Day—held whenever it snows.



Really, again!

Like shingles, The Belltones lay dormant prior to resurfacing again in 2006 when the group held a reunion to launch the release of their 45rpm collection of greatest hits, and to celebrate being the only group inducted into The Lonny Fame Hall of Fame. Astonishingly, Thurston, Kooch, and Delgredo rejoined the group for this historical event. Kooch, temporarily released from prison, performed flawlessly in cuffs and irons. Negotiations between Levine and Thurston, including the use of knives, broken bottles, smirks, and eye-rolls, resulted in these two strong personalities equally sharing front-man responsibilities and the crowds' criticism. The "Reunion" was attended by a crowd numbering in



the hundred. Documentarian, Dan Von DonBerger (recently nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Documentary Feature category for "Muscle Men from Mars," an inside look at the use of steroids by the Supreme Court), filmed The Reunion. Although Von DonBerger is secretive about his intentions, rumors leaking from his camp indicate a Belltone Documentary!

This could be the last time...

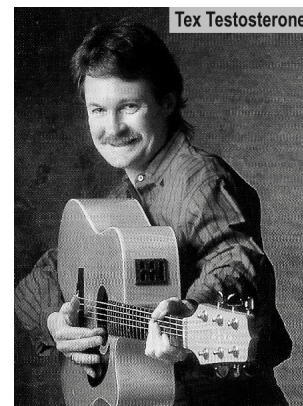
Then, in 2019, the Shawnee Mission East Class of 1969 hired the renowned talent agent, Abraham Morris "Moe" Silver to find a band for their 50th reunion to be held September 2019. Moe, who also owns Moe's Bail Bonds, immediately thought of his best client, The Belltones. Moe contacted them and put a deal together. "We did not want to come across as arrogant or nothing," da' Moose, reports, "but after exhaustive negotiations, we drew a line in the sand, and although a financial stretch—it was an offer they couldn't refuse." Again, D.T. Tyler's

research delivers the truth. According to Tyler, who obtained Moe's redacted correspondence between the two parties: The SME Class of 1969 had a band budget of only \$45. After Moe took his standard 75% booking fee, The Belltones were jubilant about the additional income and thrilled for the opportunity.



Lima Santiago Diego

At the time of this writing, both Thurston and Kooch have opted out. Defying the lack of fortitude, they are known for, The Belltones dove in head first, and fortunately, this



time, there was water in the pool! Using the royalties received from "Breakup With Freddy," the band was able to afford a free ad on Craigslist seeking musicians to replace Kooch and Thurston. Again, serendipity tapped The Belltones on the shoulder. The only response to the advertisement was from Lima Santiago Diego, (LSD). LSD saw the Belltones' ad when he happened to be on Craigslist posting for sale what he

claimed to be female underwear thrown on stage at the Neil Sedaka concert he recently attended. Lima had always been a Belltone devotee, and for him, performing with the group was a dream come true.

LSD convinced The Belltones to let him contact the members of his old band, Little Vick and the Newcomers to see if they, too, would consider becoming a Belltone (who wouldn't!). Although it took some prodding and momentous lying, the first to agree was Tex Tosterone. Tex, best known for his motivational "Sex Without Partners," seminars, had a previous successful career as a song writer, with two top Bubble Gum hits,



"Butterflies and Bumble Bees," and "Ooey, Gooney." Eugene "Jazzman" McNeely was easy to find. Post Little Vick and the Newcomers, Jazzman became the go-to sax player for such artist as Matt "Guitar" Murphy, The Rising Sons, The Knightbeats, and The Majestics Rhythm Review. Then, tragically, while performing at the illustrious Jazzhaus in Lawrence Kansas, Jazzman took a horrifying tumble down the club's renown "Pikes Peak" steep stairs, severely banging his head. He has not been the same since, making him a perfect fit for the Belltones. The owner of the Jazzhaus, feeling remorse for Jazzman, lets him stand at the entrance to the club and play his sax for spare change. It was a task finding former drummer, "The Hurt." After testifying against mob boss Lenny "No Lips" Giovanni, The Hurt,

entered the Jehovah's Witness Protection Program. To remain concealed, he changed his name to "The," making him extremely difficult to find. After all other attempts failed, including going virile with the attached *Help Locate* poster; to entice The Hurt out in the open, LSD held a "Wipe Out" drum solo contest. As expected, "The" showed up and won! The rest is Belltone history.



Currently, the born again Belltones are taking a hiatus from their hiatus to train for the SME Class of 1969 reunion. Fitness guru and spiritual advisor, Petre Zorne was brought in to whip the boys into shape. Their daily regime includes a smorgasbord of specially designed exercises, including either two pushups, or one sit up a day; standing up for at least five minutes; and mouth breathing exercises. Strict dietary measures have been put in place consisting of gluten-free Twinkies, and plenty of fluids, but no Red Bull for da' Moose. Basic hygiene and how to "Swagger like Mick Jagger" in an adult diaper classes are optional. Zorne is confident The Belltones will be prepared physically. But, how about musically? According to Sneakers, "No problem. If you total all the chords, we use in all the songs we play, there's only four. And we have four months until the reunion. Do the math!"

Somehow, The Belltones, against all odds, and the grumbling from their fans, have persevered for five decades. Will it now come to an end? Or will the Shawnee Mission Class of 1969 Reunion be the "call from above," that kinetic kismet reviving the musical montage of magic known as The Belltones? Let's hope not!

The Belltones:

Lonny Fame: Lonny Fame

Sneakers Levine: Mique Herzmark

Hugo Igofofnabisco: Rick Sherman

Rance Thurston: Lecky Pollard

da' Moose: John Bagby

X-15: That F'ing Paul Stone

Shiv Delgreedo: Rick Caplan

Buzzy Hunk: Bill Sniffen

Lamont Kooch: Mark Bovos

Dizzy Turpentine: Pete Martin

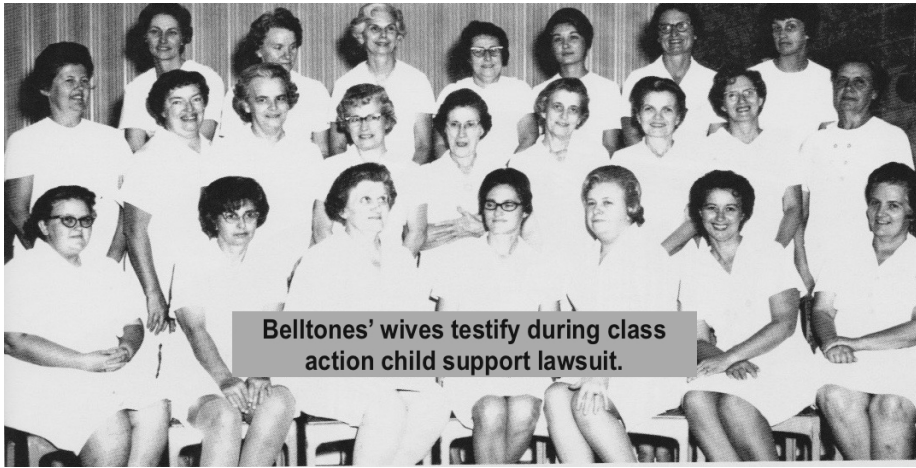
Lima Santiago Diego (LSD) Eric Bikales

The Hurt (The): Norm Weinberg

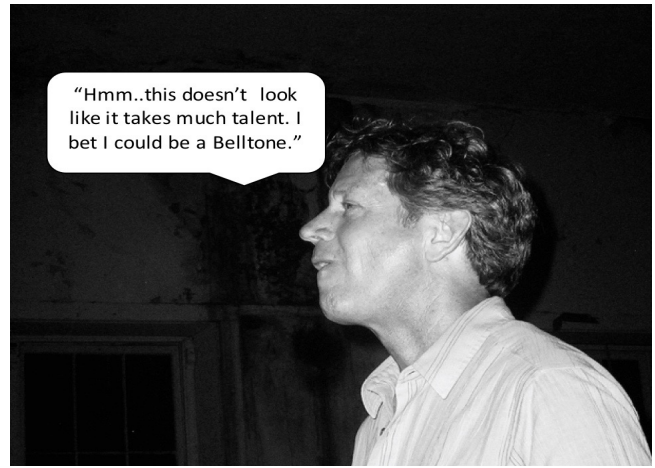
Eugene "Jazzman" McNeely: Rick McNeely

Tex Tosterone: Greg Tamblyn

Belltone Picture Book



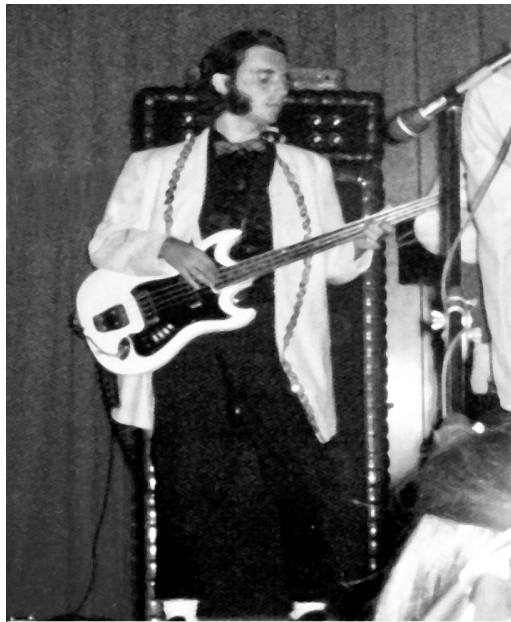
Belltone's wives testify during class action child support lawsuit.



"Hmm..this doesn't look like it takes much talent. I bet I could be a Belltone."

TIMBERLINE ENTERTAINMENT LOUNGE
 Presents **LNONIE FAME**
 Rock Sounds of the "50s" And The Belltones
 Playing Monday, June 19th thru July 1st
 Entertaining Nightly 9:00 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
 Except Sunday 7:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.
 Timberline Steakhouse, Now Open 7 Days A Week

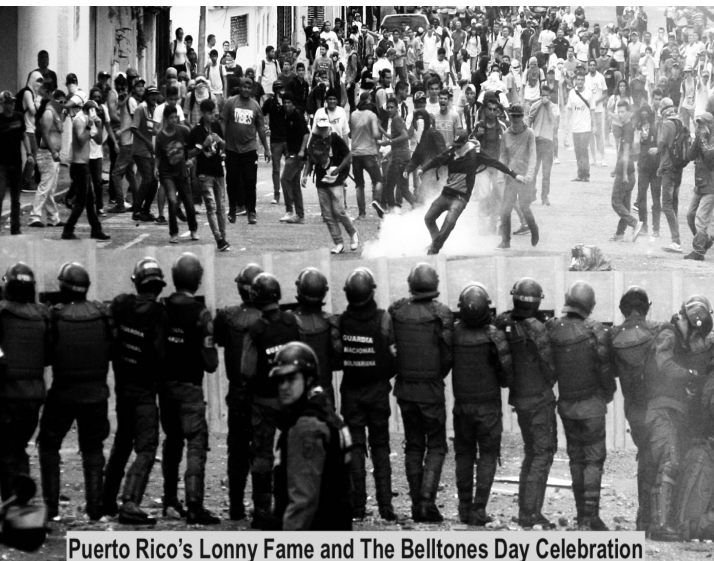
Unsuccessfully hoping to confuse customers to think it is not the Belltones playing, Timberline changes band's name from "Lonny Fame" to "Lonnie Fame."



Known for their trend setting attire, Delgreto shows off his practical yet diabolical use of "blacks & whites."



Rare photo of X-15 dancing undercover at European Disco



Puerto Rico's Lonny Fame and The Belltones Day Celebration

Sneakers Levine's Tony Orlando & Dawn Tribute Band



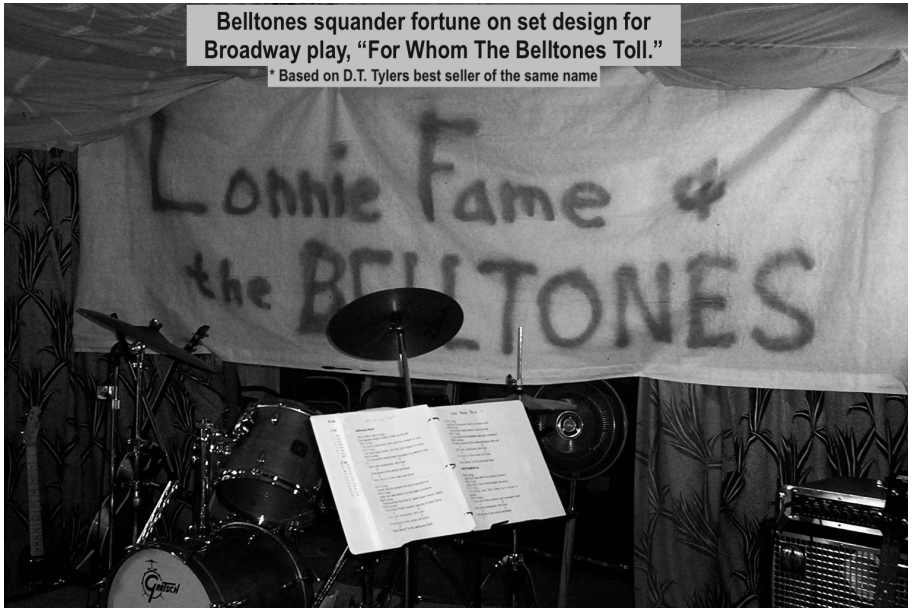
Very rare photo of Marvelous Marvella Marvel

*From Lamont Kooch Historical Archives

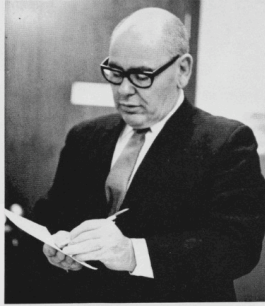


Belltones squander fortune on set design for Broadway play, "For Whom The Belltones Toll."

* Based on D.T. Tylers best seller of the same name



Team of FBI forensic accountants going over Belltones' books



Democrats tie Belltones to Trump Campaign. Impeachment proceedings begin tomorrow!



Eager fans await as Belltones inducted into Lonny Fame Hall of Fame



Belltones play at Ace Hardware Grand Opening as crowd protests, "Nuts and bolts, nuts and bolts, boy did we get screwed!"



Thurston and Kooch at 2006 BT Reunion competing in Arm Folding Contest



Belltones accidentally Super Glue their heads together....again!





After 45 days of captivity by North Korea and forced to play at Kim Jong-il's surprise birthday party, emaciated and unkempt Belltones go on hunger strike!



Thurston shrieks in pain as North Korean soldier throws bowl of kimchi on stage hitting him on the knee in an attempt to get Belltones to end hunger strike.



What appears to be Thurston supporting da' Moose, is actually the agile and sure-footed da' Moose keeping Thurston from falling as he passes out from the effects of the hunger strike.



After North Korean incident, Belltones hire security.



Belltone granddaughters at family reunion



Belltones on stage for Broadway opening of, "For Whom The Belltones Toll."