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Monthly Musings from the Peas
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WEEKLY GIG

We are regulars at Catherine Rooney's in Trolley Square, Wilmington. From 7:30 until 10 we perform every Wednesday. For info or menu, directions and so on go to www.catherinerooneys.com. **However, next week we will move to Tuesday, February 5th.**

WEBSITE

We are please to present our new website. www.whirledpeasband.com Please check it out and let us know what you think. All our up-coming gigs, newsletters, merchandise and more is listed.

AND THE WINNER IS.....

Is it believable that a "red carpet" dress for the upcoming 85th Academy Awards cost more than the first motion picture studio? Truth is Thomas Edison opened his West Orange New Jersey studio in December of 1892 for \$637.67. He called it "Kinetographic Theater" but everyone else called it the "Black Maria."

This tar paper shack was the color of a police paddy wagon, used to haul away corpses, hence its nickname. It was painted black outside and inside. It had a roof that opened on hinges to allow the sun to shine upon the shooting stage. It the sun happened to be on an inconvenient side, the building simply rotated on casters to face the proper direction.

The shooting stage was barely 12 feet square. Facing the stage was a huge wooden camera, officially called the Kinetograph. Edison called it "The

Doghouse." It was so heavy that it took 2 strong men to manhandle it however, it was never moved. If a close shot was required, the actors merely moved closer to the camera.

The first cinematographers were William Heise and W.K.L. Dickson. Dickson actually developed the motion picture under Edison's direction. Edison regularly assigned projects to his employees and if the project worked out he would seize the credit.

The first motion picture filmed in the Black Maria was *Fred Ott's Sneeze*. Dickson copyrighted it in 1894. It was a series of still photographs designed to be shown in a Kinetoscope. This "gizmo" was named the peep show devise.

Shortly after, Kinetoscopes parlors (aka: Nickelodeons) were established where patrons would deposit their nickels to watch a wide variety of topics.

While Edison received the credit and acclaim for the motion picture, he believed it to be a passing fad.



PEAS PONDERINGS

Ala Thomas Edison

To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.

We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible sources of energy--sun, wind and tide. I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that. (Ed. Note: Where are the Thomas Edisons of today?)

