‘Alakazam!’ Mark Wilson still has magic up his sleeve

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Dear Ken: I remember a show on Saturday mornings in the 1960s called “The Magic Land of Alakazam.” Who was the magician that starred on the show? Is he still living?
Master magician Mark Wilson, 81, and his wife, Nani Darnell, who served as his assistant, live in Valencia, Calif. They delighted elementary school-age kids from 1960 to 1964 with network TV’s first magic show. It also featured Bev Bergeron as Rebo the Clown and was sponsored by Kellogg’s. Wilson was named by “Magic Magazine” as one of the top-10 American magicians of the 20th century. His book, “Mark Wilson Course in Magic,” has sold more than 850,000 copies. He also taught numerous Hollywood stars how to perform magic tricks, including Cary Grant, Tony Curtis, Peter Falk, Dick Van Dyke, Bill Bixby, Cher, Jackie Gleason, Johnny Carson and Burt Reynolds. Their son, Greg Wilson, is a professional illusionist.

Dear Ken: How many western movies did Charlton Heston star in?
Heston made about 13 westerns. Among them were “Arrowhead,” “The Big Country,” “Major Dundee” and “The Mountain Men,” but I believe that 1968’s “Will Penny” was far and away his best, as he plays an illiterate but kindly man who knows only how to be a cowboy. His co-stars were Anthony Zerbe, Lee Majors, Bruce Dern, Donald Pleasence and Joan Hackett.

Dear Ken: What happened to Lauren Holly, who starred with Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels in “Dumb & Dumber”?
Holly, 47, is keeping busy. She just starred in Hallmark’s “The Town That Christmas Forgot” and “Debbie Macomber’s ‘Call Me Mrs. Miracle’.” She will appear in the feature film “Scream of the Banshee” later this year. From 2005 to 2008 she co-starred as Jenny Shepard on “NCIS,” and she worked in several other films in 2010, including “Chasing 3000.”

Dear Ken: How many No. 1 songs did the Beatles have as a group?
Billboard’s Hot 100 charts listed 20 Beatles tunes at No. 1, beginning with “I Want To Hold Your Hand” in 1964 to “The Long and Winding Road” in 1970.

If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at