

The Illustrated Press

VOLUME 18

ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER, 1992

THE BLUE BEETLE COAST TO COAST

Thrilling
Drama of
the Avenging
Gang Smasher
—
Twice-a-Week



On
Your
Favorite
Radio
Station

CONSULT YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER, OR BETTER
CALL YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL STATION FOR
THE SCHEDULE OF THIS SUPER-THRILLER. IF IT
IS NOT SCHEDULED IN YOUR LOCALITY, ASK
YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL STATION TO HAVE THE
BLUE BEETLE ON THE AIR.

The Blue Beetle's popularity had inspired a radio show by the early forties. This ad page is from an issue of *Big-3*.

©Fox Publications, Inc.



Affiliated With
The Old Time Radio
Network

THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New member processing—\$5.00 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31. Members receive a tape listing, library listing, monthly news letter, the Illustrated Press, the yearly Memories Publications and various special items. Additional family members living in the same household as a regular member may join the club for \$5.00 per year. These members have all the privileges of the regular members but do not receive the publications. A junior membership is available to persons 12 yrs of age & younger who do not live with a regular member. This membership is \$13.00 per year and includes all the benefits of regular membership. Regular membership are as follows: If you join in Jan- Mar \$17.50— Apr- Jun \$14.00— July-Sept \$10- Oct- Dec \$7.00. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you change your address.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIPS are now available.

Annual memberships are \$29.75. Publications will be airmailed.

The Old Time Radio Club meets the first of every month on Monday evening from August to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225. Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. Meeting start at 7:30 P.M.

CLUB ADDRESS:

Old Time Radio Club
P.O. Box 426
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086

DEADLINE FOR THE I.P.—10th of each month prior to publication

CLUB OFFICERS:

President— Jerry Collins
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086
(716) 683-6199

Vice-President & Canadian Branch
Richard Simpson
960- 16 Rd. R.R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
L0S 1C0

Treasurer & Video & Records
Dominic Parisi
38 Ardmore Pl.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14213
(716) 884-2004

Illustrated Press, Columns, Letters
Linda DeCecco
32 Shenandoah Rd.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14220
(716) 822-4661

Reference Library
Ed Wanat
393 George Urban Blvd.
Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225

Membership Renewals, Change of Address,
Mailing of Publications
Pete Bellanca
1620 Ferry Rd.
Grand Island, N.Y. 14072
(716) 773-2485

Membership Inquiries, & OTR Network
Related Items
Richard Olday
100 Harvey Dr.
Lancaster, NY. 14086
(716) 684-1604

TAPE LIBRARIES:

Cassettes: Jim Aprile
85 Hyledge Dr.
Amherst, N.Y. 14226
(716) 837-7747

Reel to REELS 1-850
Marty Braun
10905 Howe Rd.
Clarence, N.Y. 14031
(716) 759-8793

Reel to REELS 851 & UP
Tom Harris
9565 Weherle Dr.
Clarence, N.Y. 14031
(716) 759- 8401

TAPE LIBRARY RATES: All reels and video cassettes— \$1.85 per month; cassettes and records— \$.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling.

CANADIAN BRANCH: Rental rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds.



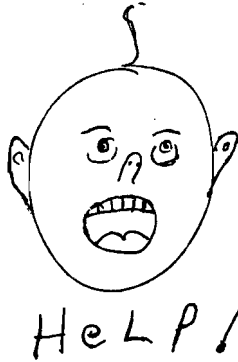
By Francis Edward Bork

At our last club meeting Oct. 4 --- Jerry Collins, our club President brought three or four copies of the Illustrated Press with him, which were returned by the Post Office dept. They were so mulated that it was impossible to read who they were addressed to Now somewhere out there in the hinterlands are a few club members who did not receive their copy of the I.P. Of course you won't be able to read this article until you receive the November issue of the I.P.

If you are one of the unlucky members who did not get their September issue, Volume 18, issue #9. Please write to Pete Bellanca at 1620 Ferry Rd, Grand Island, New York 14072. So let Pete know what issue you did not receive and he will send you another copy.

During the summer months Pete Bellanca took over from Linda DeCocco with the Illustrated Press and did a great job. The logo of my column HELP was Pete's baby also. I think it is great. Thanks Pete. I did make a small change in it. When my grandson Guy Gane III saw it he liked it so much that he did his own free hand drawing of it and here it is.

By the way my old HELP logo is a self protrait. But of course I really have more hair than the drawing has. Only one hair showing on the drawing while I really have three hairs, but then I didn't want to brag



BY Francis Edward Bork

I enjoyed reading Tom Heatherwood's column "Tuning IN" I found it very interesting but I wonder what year that Tom actually started working at WCOP in Boston? Then to how did he get the job? Did Tom jst go and say to the manager, "hey, I'm gonna be a gopher for you? How about it Tom, gonna write and tell me? The suspense is driving me to drink. I'm already on my third cup of coffee. HELP!!!!

This is really Old Time Radio writing. Keep up the great work Tom.

Well guess who came to the club meeting last monday night?? None other than the Great Evil One--Prof. Boncore. (He hasn't been to a meeting in three months) Been working long hours he said. Ya sure, but the thruth is he's not too good in the memory department any more. He even smiled at me and asked how I was and then added "Gee Frank, you look great." Oh, oh somethings up because hte old boy never complemented anyone.

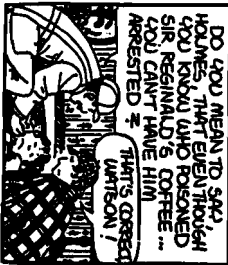
Now the true facts are, he really forgot when, where and what the Old Tiem Radio Club was about. In fact he was looking all over the meeting room for and old radio. Dick Olday had to write down the date and place of the meeting and then pin it on his shirt. While the third member of Prof Boncore's former evil trio Dick Simpson had to draw the Prof. a map and tape it to the dash board of his car. That is how the Prof really got here last monday night.

P.S. The Prof said to me as he was leaving the meeting,

he even put his arm around my shoulder. You know ole buddy the first time to go is your memory, but darn I just can't remember the second thing.

Till next time
HELP'

F.E.B.



MONDAY-SUNDAY
11:30 PM '93
WHEN

The CRYSTAL EGG



HY DALEY

Personally I like to listen to a reel of Dramas from the Playhouse genre of radio programs. You know, where they dramatize famous movies of plays or even short stories.

One of the best was Hallmark Playhouse. Being an English teacher, I enjoy hearing the radio version of the "Devil and Daniel Webster" or Ferber's "Cimarron" or that great classic "Elmer the Great." John Lund's portrayal of the 1948 version of "Arrowsmith" was memorable. Ronald Coleman as Mr. Chips sparks memories from my own teaching career. The show was a Rose Among Many Thorns in the late 40's when radio was waning.

Danger with Granger not found in any of the source books, re: Big Broadcast or Tune In Yesterday, is a lightweight detective series that is worth listening to. Years ago I had one story and I really didn't enjoy it, but recently I picked up a whole reel and after a few shows my ears perked up and I found Granger an interesting character.

I've been teaching one Broadcasting class about the Soap Operas on radio. The Hummerts, a husband and wife writing team, wrote nearly half of the radio soaps on radio. It's hard to believe one office put out 30 or 40 soap scripts a day. How could they possibly remember who was seeing whom or who was jilting whom?

Some of the great(?) soaps were Adopted Daughter (30's), Pepper Young's Family, Against the Storm, Mary Noble, Backstage wife (Or as Bob and Ray Noted: Mary Backstage, Noble wife), Guiding Light (still on tv?). When a Girl Marries, Brighter Day, Carters of Elm Street (we all know what happens on Elm Street!), and Our Gal Sunday.

Most of my class are teenage girls who think soap operas originally came from the old testament. I mean like haven't they always been around?

They're surprised when I tell them "Just Plain Bill" was the first soap.

*** THE RADIO ADVENTURES OF THE BLUE BEETLE ***

By Chuck Juzek

Old Time Radio drama spawned many and varied characters - crime fighters, supersleuths, investigators, masked & cloaked crusaders, private eyes, secret agents, flying aces, space adventurers, etc. The genre was overflowing with heroes for the young at heart & pure of mind to listen to and identify with. The outpouring was endless.



Blue Beetle Comics No. 3 (Summer 1940)
©1940 Fox Publications, Inc.

Some of these heroes began their careers on radio, others arose from one or another of the alluring mediums (the bloody pulps, or comics and newspaper comic strips, even the matinee movie serials) to establish their reputations over the airwaves.

The Green Hornet began his thrilling escapades on radio and sequed to the matinee serials and comics. The Black Hood, on the other hand, got his start in the pulps, put in 3 appearances and migrated to the comics and to radio. Another pulp hero, The Green Lama, ran for 14 exciting issues in the pulps before leaving for the comics and for radio. Capt. Silver of the Sea Hound was a seafaring favorite of comic books, radio and the matinee serials. Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers, too, pursued their illustrious adventures in the comics, comic strips, pulps, matinee serials and, of course, on radio.

One particular hero who had his own radio show, and a special favorite of mine, was The Blue Beetle. One of the very first of the costumed superheroes to debut in the comics, he battled crime in much the same tradition as pulp heroes like The Spider, The Shadow, The Black Bat and The Black Hood. Though limited to comics, radio & a short-run newspaper feature, he had far more in common with the pulp heroes than with the emerging superheroes of the comics - Superman, Batman, The Flash, Capt. America and the like.

The Blue Beetle was a fairly violent character, for his day, meting out justice in the same brutal vein as The Spider, sometimes taking on entire gangs of criminals, smashing down hoodlum empires and leaving only corpses in his wake in order to protect the innocent and secure justice for the underdog. As a consequence of his on the spot justice, acting as sole judge, jury and executioner, he was wanted by the police for taking the law into his own hands.

Patrolman Dan Garrett, his alter ego, on the other hand, worked strictly by the book and was quite effective in his own right. Often accompanied by his bumbling partner, Officer Mike Mannigan, who always swore he would get The Blue Beetle even if it took him his entire life, Dan would treat apprehended suspects fairly and squarely, permitting their day in court thus glorifying the blue uniform of the policeman.

But, when odds became over-whelming (as they usually did), Dan Garrett would pay a visit to his friend and confidant, Dr. Franz, the only living person to know The Blue Beetle's true identity. Dr. Franz, a drugstore proprietor, had developed a secret pharmaceutical compound known only as Vitamin 2-X which, when taken periodically, enhanced the user's abilities and provided temporary super-strength.

In a secret back room laboratory of the drugstore, Dan Garrett would discard his police uniform and don the special blue costume of The Blue Beetle kept in a hidden closet. Having a scaly-like appearance, the costume was made of a light weight cellulose material resistant to gunfire. The symbol of a huge Beetle decked the hood of his unique apparel just over the forehead, and a blazing Blue Beetle emblem also augmented his belt buckle.

The Blue Beetle slaughtered his opponents unmercifully with his 45 automatics blazing away, and embellished his violent adventures in true vigilante style with gruesome fights, thrilling excitement, and bulldozer action. Like many of his pulp and radio contemporaries, he always left his calling card at the scene of the action. In the pulps, for example, no killing was complete without The Spider's vermilion seal burned onto the foreheads of his victims, or The Black Bat's tiny bat emblem left behind to mark his deed. On radio, even The Green Hornet wrapped up his adventures with the seal of The Green Hornet. The Blue Beetle, likewise, carried a supply of the dreaded Blue Beetle pins in his huge belt buckle which he left behind as warning to others.

This Golden Age costumed vigilante was a crime fighter extraordinaire. His adventures in the comics and on radio are legion. He was a dynamic, exciting and colorful character whose dramatic adventures and daring exploits thrilled generations of youngsters all across America. A spectacular trail blazer in the early days of hero worship, The Blue Beetle now deserves some long overdue recognition and glory.

In comics, the fearless action which sky-rocketed The Blue Beetle to fame and success was loaded with violent excitement, grave danger, dastardly villains and damsels in distress. On radio, however, the tone of The Blue Beetle was considerably different. Far less violent, and more in keeping with the formula used for The Green Hornet, though he retained his share of daring escapes from deathtraps and faced the sinister and diabolical overlords of crime on both a weekly and semi-weekly basis. He no longer carried guns, did not kill and usually deposited his incapacitated victims at the door of the police or left them in the surprised hands of Officer Mannigan. His relationship with the police became merely problematic and it appeared that only Mike Mannigan was still out to get him.

The show cast Frank Lovejoy as Dan Garrett/The Blue Beetle, which I always thought was a serious mistake. Frank Lovejoy just did not have the deep, rich, resonant-sounding voice over the airwaves which one associated with the hero. Perhaps I was just too critical & hooked on the commanding, macho voices of the actors who played such unforgettable characters on radio as The Lone Ranger, The Shadow, Jack Packard of I Love A Mystery, The Green Hornet, Mark Trail, Captain Midnight, Chandu the Magician, Capt. Carney on Voyage of The Scarlet Queen, etc., etc., but to me, Frank Lovejoy sounded far more like one of the hoods than what I expected to hear coming from the mandibles of The Blue Beetle. Nevertheless, it was a favorite adventure hero brought to life.

The opening introduction to the program went like this:

"THE BLUE BEETLE --- Sweeping down upon the underworld to smash gangland comes a friend of the unfortunate, enemy of the criminals, a mysterious, all powerful character who's a problem to the police but a crusader for law. In reality, Dan Garrett, a rookie patrolman loved by everyone, but suspected by none of being The Blue Beetle. As The Blue Beetle, he hides behind a strange mask and wears an impenetrable suit of blue chain armor, flexible as silk but stronger than steel."

The Blue Beetle's blue suit was obviously changed on the radio show from cellulose to steel mesh and, after one particular episode

when he confronted a villain brandishing an electric gun, included a non-conductive, asbestos lining to preclude similar future difficulties. The appearance of The Blue Beetle on radio had to be dramatic in order to stimulate the visual cortex of the listeners; so, in addition to his powerful beam flashlight, depicted in the comics, by means of which he projected the terrifying image of a beetle, he also made his presence known by a peculiar sound resembling a car driving off and a cricket chirping. He drove a speedy blue motorcar and also carried a magic ray gun which helped to cut his way out of trouble many times, and with which he could blast, burn, or paralyze his adversaries.

The Blue Beetle was supposed to be all powerful, but his super strength was played down on radio and the Vitamin 2-X formula was used primarily to energize and provide vigor, vitality, endurance, keener eye sight and the ability to recover rapidly from serious injury. His blue suit, of course, shielded him from bullets, but one thing which often annoyed me with The Blue Beetle formula was his forever getting bopped on the head and rendered unconscious. That, of course, made it possible to place him into some death-trap or otherwise prepare to dispose of him, at which point the first episode left off to be continued and concluded in the second installment. The Blue Beetle must have had the sorest head of any character on radio.



Another radio feature was the wireless phone The Blue Beetle had inside his hood by means of which he was able to communicate with Dr. Franze back in the laboratory. Dr. Franze, his friend and secret advisor was not only the friendly neighborhood pharmacist running his small apothecary shop, but apparently a master chemist & inventor as well; for, in each episode, The Blue Beetle was seen (or rather heard) to carry and rely on some new device or chemical developed by the good doctor in his laboratory which just happened to prove very useful, if not life saving, in that particular episode.

Unfortunately, such Bond-like preparations seem to have been used only once and totally ignored thereafter, in succeeding episodes, except for the invisibility paint which was used twice. This formula of the doctor's provided a temporary invisibility to the Blue Beetle when he coated himself with it.

The explanation was that the chemical reflected light in wavelengths other than those of the visible spectrum. Other such items and devices ranged from a poison detector ring, and X-ray camera with an infra-red lens to a miniature, portable TV camera, and the electric-ray gun which was appropriated during his battle with The Octopus. Most of his villains were the typical gang leaders and white collar criminals suffering from greed and power lust, but occasionally he would face a more colorful and diabolical madman with megalomaniacal delusions of grandeur and world conquest such as The Octopus, The Purple Dragon, The Skipper, The Spider, Clubfoot and The Viper.

Love interest was held to a minimum, and except for Joan Mason, an overzealous, female adventurer and reporter for the Chronical, who made a habit of stumbling into situations requiring rescuing, there was only the Police Commissioner's daughter, Mary Donnelly, who was in love with

Dan Garrett. But, this angle was never explored further and Dan, himself, seemed unaware of her feelings toward him. Besides which, in his dual role as crime fighter and defender of the people, Dan had little time for female assignations.

The Blue Beetle started out as a half hour show presented twice weekly in the Spring of 1940. Following the first 12 programs, the balance of the run was apparently divided for some reason into 2-part shows aired as 15 minute segments. Each week represented a complete two part adventure. The epilogue usually gave one a glimpse into the following week's new, thrill-packed escapade. The show came to the airwaves primarily through the promotional efforts of Victor Fox, the driving force behind Fox Publications.

I think much more could have been done with The Blue Beetle had he been a daily, 15 minute serialization like so many of his contemporary, juvenile adventure programs, and he probably would have lasted a lot longer, too, with serialized stories. To my knowledge, there are 24 known complete episodes available on cassettes from OTR dealers. If there are others, I would like to know about them.

*** RADIO LOG OF THE BLUE BEETLE ***

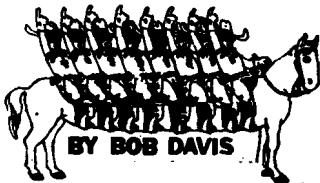
- 1- 5/15/40 -- Smashing the Dope Ring.
- 2- 5/17/40 -- Sabotage and Liquidation.
- 3- 5/22/40 -- Murder for Profit.
- 4- 5/24/40 -- Blasting the Dynamite Gang.
- 5- 5/29/40 -- The Invisible Ghost.
- 6- 5/31/40 -- Death Rides on Horseback.
- 7- 6/05/40 -- Death Strikes From the East.
- 8- 6/07/40 -- The Sea Serpent.
- 9- 6/12/40 -- The Frame Up.
- 10- 6/14/40 -- Spirits Don't Talk.
- 11- 6/19/40 -- Thoroughbreds Always Come Back.
- 12- 6/21/40 -- Smashing the Arson Ring.
- 13- 6/26,28/40 -- Rounding Up the Payroll Bandits.
- 14- 7/03,05/40 -- Crime, Incorporated.
- 15- 7/10,12/40 -- Saved By a Hair.
- 16- 7/17,19/40 -- Finesse in Diamonds.
- 17- 7/24,26/40 -- Sabotage, Incorporated.
- 18- 7/31,8/2/40 -- Smashing the Restaurant Racket.
- 19- 8/07,09/40 -- Two Rackets in One.
- 20- 8/14,16/40 -- The Underworld Goes Underground.
- 21- 8/21,23/40 -- The Dancing Ghost of Rocking Hills.
- 22- 8/28,30/40 -- The Whale of Pirate's Folly.
- 23- 9/04,06/40 -- The Asylum of Dr. Drear.
- 24- 9/11,13/40 -- The Jewell Mystery of Channel Island.



Reproduced from Crawford's Encyclopedis of Comic Books, by Robert H. Crawford with permission of the publishers.

SAY!

WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?



Recently, while thumbing through a copy of the new edition of Alex McNeils' "TOTAL TELEVISION", it as impressed upon me the extraordinary number of old radio shows that TV tried to use and couldn't find much success with.

To be fair we must admit that these efforts were made at a time when radio was at an enviable state of slickness and TV was still in the stone age. Maybe today some of these shows might have worked with more success, or maybe not. Who can tell?

The surprising thing is that the mega-hits of radio didn't last for any length of time on the other medium.

SUSPENSE was one of the shows that had some success. On radio it lasted twenty years. On TV it went five with a brief resurrection years later that lasted only a few months.

BLONDIE was a big hit on radio, in the comic strips, and in the movies, so it would figure that it would go over on TV - right? WRONG! Two separate attempts were made to bring Blondie to TV and both only lasted a few months. Obviously something was missing.

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY, a superhit on radio, lasted four months on the tube! It might have lasted longer if the TV version had starred Jim and Marian Jordan instead of Bob Sweeney & Kathy Lewis.

LIFE WITH LUIGI, with the radio cast almost intact, came to TV in September of 1952 and was gone by the end of December 1952. The following spring it came back with a totally new cast. This time it lasted only two months. I have the feeling that J. Carroll Naish might have laughed out loud!

THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE didn't even get a chance on network TV. It's one shot on TV was in the form of a syndicated series that did nothing and went nowhere. It was a shame as Gildy was a well loved character that deserved much better. Willard Waterman played Gildy with a bombastic charm even though Harold Peary might have been better, but Peary had retired from the role years before.

Quick, can you tell me who played the Bogart and Bacall roles when BOLD VENTURE made it's TV run? I'll answer a little later.

For every GUNSMOKE series which hit it big in TV there were countless others that died shortly after the first episode., In one case a series made the transition from radio to TV with few really realizing it. THE ADV OF SAM SPADE was a giant hit on radio bit, for a number of reasons, when it went to TV it only lasted a season and a half. What's that? You don't remember a Sam Spade TV series? Technically there never was one but there was a series called CHARLIE WILD, PRIVATE DETECTIVE. Charlie Wild was Sam Spade!!! For legal reasons they couldn't use the Sam Spade name on TV so they invented a name based on the sponsor's jingle. The sponsor was Wildroot Cream Oil and a part of the jingle went.. "You better get Wildroot Cream Oil, Char-lie"

Sam became Charlie and Spade became Wild, part of the sponsor's name. Tricky, ain't it? An interesting note about this series. Charlie's secretary Effie Perrine was played by Cloris Leachman. How about that trivia fans???

I could write a whole column about the shows that did make it big in TV but we'll save that for another time. Before I go I would like to mention one that made the reverse trip (from TV to radio) with a good showing but an unfortunately unlengthy life. HAVE GUN/WILL TRAVEL was that rare bird. John Dehner's voice fit Paladin perfectly and the shows were top notch. Too bad it couldn't have hung around longer.

See ya next time
OOPS...almost forgot! The Bogart and Bacall roles in BOLD VENTURE were played by Dane Clark and Joan Marshall.

TONIGHT AT 8:30



—dial CBS 940—WMAZ
TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Cape flavor to radio dramas

Writer revives mystery genre

By Jeff McLaughlin
GLOBE STAFF

DENNIS - Listen closely, imagine. Enter Stephen Thomas Oney's world, the world of radio drama, the theater of the mind.

Listen.

The sound of a long-closed door creaking open on rusty hinges ...

The sound of a hall buoy ringing the distance, muffled as if by fog ...

The sound of a wild beast roaring its intent to spring ...

The sound of an old miser's laugh as he writes his mean-spirited will ...

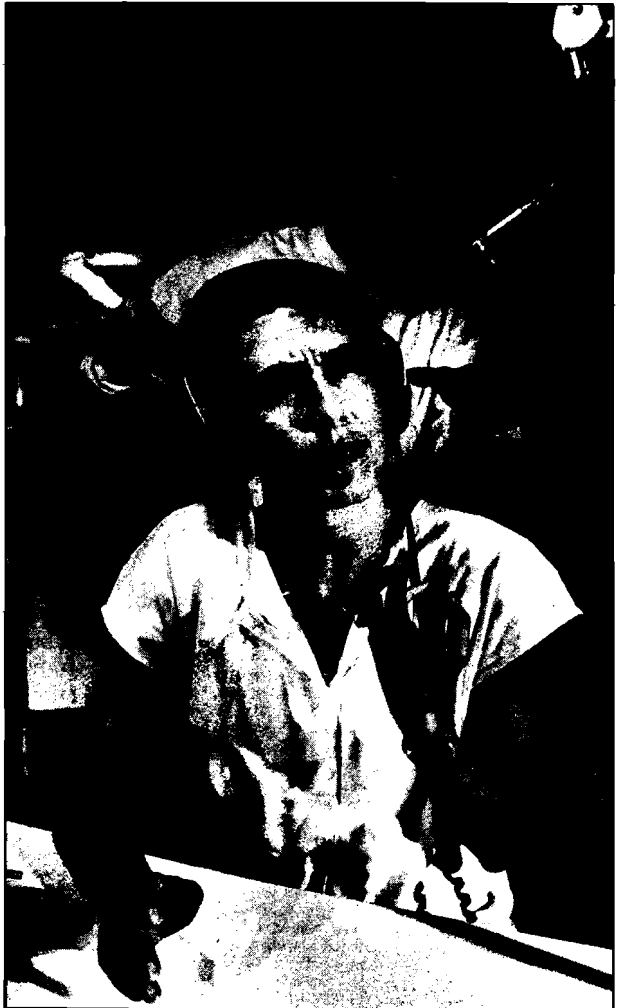
"Sound is invisible," said Oney. "Sound always conjures up an image. It doesn't work the other way around. You don't automatically get a sound in your mind when you see an image. That's why I enjoy working in this genre so much - your creative partners are your listeners."

Oney, 48, of West Barnstable on Cape Cod, is the founder, writer and producer of Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater, a series of suspenseful radio programs that is revitalizing the nearly moribund medium. Despite radio's rich dramatic tradition - shows such as "The Shadow" and "Inner Sanctum" are landmarks of popular culture - the genre had fallen on hard times with television's ascendancy. The last commercial radio network series, CBS Radio Mystery Theater, was canceled in 1988 after a nine-year run.

But Oney and a handful of others are keeping radio drama alive, and there are signs of a modest comeback.

Nearly 200 public radio stations nationwide have broadcast all or part of Oney's output - 18

RAMBO, Page 22



GLOBE PHOTO / STEPHEN ROSE

Annesmarie Lang and Daniel Younce portray characters in "The Caller on Line One," a Stephen Thomas Oney radio drama that has been adapted for the stage.

Radio mysteries get a

Cape Cod flavor

■ RADIO

Continued from Page 25
programs and counting - and the fall editions of *Wireless and Signals*, catalogs for fans of public media, will begin carrying Cape Cod Mystery Theater cassettes and CDs for home sound libraries.

Along the way - he entered the field in 1988 - Oney has won three awards from the Massachusetts Broadcasters Association (along with WFCC-FM of Chatham on the Cape, an unusually creative comm-

cial station that has broadcast premieres of several of his shows). He also has won awards from the International Radio Festival, and received grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Although his work has national appeal, it has a distinct Cape Cod flavor. Oney draws his casts from professional and amateur Cape Cod actors, and works with Cape com-

poser Mark Birmingham to help create multilayered soundtracks. His sound effects are authentic, recorded on Cape locations - he has gone to sea on trawlers and coal barges to gather material.

Each Cape Cod Mystery Theater program begins with a chilling voice intoning, "It's a foggy night on old Cape Cod - a perfect night for a mystery," and in addition, six of his programs, including the most recent, "The Case of the Shooting Star,"

feature a crusty old Cape Cod detective, Capt. Waverly Underhill, and his Watson-like cohort, Dr. Alexander Scoufield. Developing a strong lead character is a time-proven path to success in mystery writing.

Overcame resistance

"I'm beginning to get some recognition," Oney said, "along with David Osman of the old *Frasier* theater out in Seattle, and a guy named Tom Lopez who's writing mostly science fiction dramas in New York. We're probably the three most visible writers and producers in the field now. I found resistance from the radio programmers at first, followed by a grudging admiration when the shows proved quite popular, and now it's 'What have you got for us next?'"

The growing popularity of books-on-tape and "dramatized" novels, probably combined with a backlash against television's growing tendency to leave nothing to the imagination, have opened up the market for radio drama, Oney said.

Although Atlanta-born, Oney has steeped himself in the legends and lore of the old Cape - the likes of pirates' curses, mysterious murders in the dunes and ghosts from the briny deep - and uses his deft writing touch to make the stories contemporary. "It helps a lot that my wife Debbie has Cape roots," he said. And sometimes he starts out with a contemporary idea for a show, and gives it a special Cape Cod spin.

Tomorrow for example, the Cape Museum of Fine Arts here in Dennis will present the premiere of a live theatrical adaptation of one of Oney's earliest successes, "The Caller on Line One," which is scheduled for a five-night run. When it was first broadcast, the show prompted a "War of the Worlds"-like response from listeners, who frantically called local police because the protagonist - a radio talk-show host - was being threatened by a homicidal maniac in the studio. And on Friday, WFCC-FM of Chatham will broadcast "The Case of the Shooting Star," a yarn about a mysterious meteor that arrives from space to make an unusual impact on the Cape.

Hopes for renaissance

Oney, who studied filmmaking and playwriting at Columbia University, does not expect radio mystery theater will ever draw large audiences away from television - "Obviously nobody thinks that" - but he does believe there is a large enough potential audience for a renaissance of the genre.

"Mystery and suspense are well suited to radio," he said. "It's a very special kind of writing, and it may come to be appreciated as such. Writing for the ears makes you take the musicality of language into account in unusual ways, and timing and pacing is important to hold the listener. There's always room for experiment, and that keeps it exciting for me."

by WALTER GIBSON

December, 1939

Street & Smith Pub.

SHIWAN KHAN RETURNS

CHAPTER I

Word to the Shadow

The thing that stood in the center of the old garage looked like a crazed man's dream. It was intended to be an automobile, that much was certain; but it looked the a flashback to the experimental days of motor cars, rather than anything that belonged to the present century.

In the center of a short, broad beamed chassis, the mechanical brainstorm had a squat V-type motor hung low in a metal square. From each corner of the motor, a shaft ran to a wheel. In their turn, the wheels were pointed at different angles, giving the whole contrivance a wobbly, disjointed appearance.

Beside the distorted device stood a man whose expression marked him dressed in good clothes, but they were rumpled, soiled with grime and grease. His face, though youthful, had a haggard look that went with age. He was unshaven and his face, like his light-brown hair, was streaked with the same grime that ruined his clothes.

Few of the man's many acquaintances would have recognized him as Howard Felber, recently heralded as the most promising of young automotive engineers.

Near Felber stood two men in overalls: his mechanics, Casey and Jim. They, alone, had been allowed to join Felber in his squalid old garage. Located in a rundown section of Manhattan, the place was the only workshop that Felber could afford. He had exhausted most of his accumulated earnings buying the expensive materials that now lay discarded along the walls.

Felber trusted his two mechanics, and from their solemn expressions, they regarded the trust as a heavy burden. It wasn't just a

case of sharing the secret of a new invention. Jim and Casey felt that they were looking out for Felber, keeping his madness a thing unknown to the world.

Watching him steadily, they ginally turned to exchange hopeful glances. Felber looked tired, ready to quit. Perhaps his mood had passed.

Then came an outside roar: the approaching rattle of an elevated train. It rumbled overhead, above the street that fronted the garage. Felber's sudden triumphant shriek was drowned by the train's tumult, but his actions told that his mind had taken another of its crazy spurts.

Frantically, he set to work with a huge monkey wrench, detaching one of the shafts that ran from the motor to a wheel. One the rod was loose it parted into three sections. It consisted of a solid shaft inside a hollow tube with a still larger tube girdling portions.

Felber spent the next few minutes rearranging those tubes, turning them end over end. He was trying unsuccessfully to fit them back in place, when a light rap sounded at the small rear door of the garage.

"It's Miss Cragg," whispered Casey. "She must have come down on the el train."

"Better let her in," undertoned Jim. "She's the only person who can reason with him".

Casey opened the door. A slender, dark haired girl stepped into the garage. Gowned in light blue, she brightened the dull setting, though her face turned solemn the moment that she noticed Felber.

It was a lovely face, though, well rounded and perfect of profile. Forming a smile, the girl managed to make it look genuine as she approached Felber and in a beautiful contralto voice said:

"Hello, Howard,"

"Hello, Marjorie," returned Felber, seriously. "I'm coming along finely with my four-wheel drive. See those shafts along the wall? The ones of different lengths?"

Marjorie nodded.

"I made them work, affirmed Felber. "But not as well as I wanted. I'm testing shorter ones, on the motor. Three shafts for each wheel"--he was sliding rod and tubes as he spoke--"and each shaft handles a different speed. A new idea is gears. This car will do anything, when I've finished with it!"

Another el train came crashing by, out front. Felber clapped his hand to his forehead; his blue eyes took a half-crazed gleam. Darting from the chassis, he reached the wall and began to tinker with the rods of assorted lengths.

Joining him and Casey, Marjorie requested their opinions. Both shook their heads.

"It's those el trains," argued Casey. "Every now and then one bangs by and jars him from his senses."

"We can't help it, Miss Cragg," added Jim. "We tried to get Mr. Felber settled in a quiet place, but he wouldn't stand for it."

He just ranted around," added Casey. "He kept telling what his new car would do if he could get the right man to test it. He kept saying it would go anywhere, if he could get back here to finish it."

Slowly, Marjorie nodded. She was familiar with Felber's obsession. Knowing his genius for invention, she was in a quandary. Jim and Casey, earnest though they were, might be lacking in the imagination necessary to understand Felber's final goal.

From her purse, the girl drew a letter; she opened it, let the mechanics read it. Careful not to touch the letter with their grimy fingers, the men noted its brief lines. The letter was addressed to a Mr. Lamont Cranston; it was simply a request, on Marjorie's part, for an interview on a subject that might prove of importance to him.

"Mr. Cranston is wealthy," explained the girl, "and he is an explorer. If anyone needs a type of vehicle that would travel anywhere, he is the person. Would it be all right for me to send him this letter?"

For answer, Jim thrust a clean glove on his dirty hand, took the envelope after the girl and replaced the note in it. Jim gave a solemn nod to Casey.

"I'll mail it," said Jim, starting for the door. "I'm going uptown to get those special tires, though I can't figure why Mr. Felber needs them. You talk to Miss Cragg awhile, Casey."

Casey did talk, after Jim had left. He used a guarded undertone, so that Felber couldn't hear him, though the precaution was scarcely necessary. Felber was rattling rods and other gadgets at a great rate, muttering, sometimes loudly, as he passed back and forth from his invention to the wall.

Only when an elevated train went by did he pause. On those occasions, he stood with wide eyes fixed in a far-away gaze, as though the discordant rumbles were music to his whirling brain.

"All those parts cost like blazes," confided Casey, solemnly. "They're made of some alloy that's lighter than aluminum and tougher than steel, so Mr. Felber says. I wouldn't have believed him, if I hadn't hefted those rods myself and watched the way he whacks them".

Mentally, Marjorie decided that the information would be a sales argument with Cranston. Her mechanical knowledge was very meager, but she could at least declare that Felber used costly materials.

"Maybe the thing's too deep for me," admitted Casey, "but I'd say that if Mr. Felber got over this three-shaft idea of his, he might get somewhere. He hasn't figured yet how he's going to steer the car or brake it. But you can't argue with him."

"Do you think he'd welcome a visit from Mr. Cranston?"

"If you brought Mr. Cranston here--yes," decided Casey, after considering Marjorie's question. "Mr. Felber trusts you, just like he trusts Jim and me."

Glancing at her wrist watch, Marjorie decided that it was time to leave. She broached another subject to Casey, speaking very firmly.

"I'm going to talk to Dr. Buffton," said Marjorie, as they were walking to the door. "I've mentioned Howard's case to him and he is quite willing to help us. Howard's mental condition may be the whole trouble, you know."

Casey nodded his agreement.

"Mr. Cranston should receive my note this afternoon," added the girl, "so I can hope to hear from him this evening. I'm all booked for a cruise; I am supposed to be on the boat this evening. But if anything can be done for Howard, I shall cancel the trip."

Outside the garage, Marjorie saw a dingy cigar store across the little street. Pausing, she looked inside the place and observed a telephone. After a quick glance about her, the girl entered the store. Marjorie had gained the momentary impression that eyes were watching her.

They were. Dark eyes that belonged to darkish faces. Two men, crouched in a parked coupe, had noticed the girl leave the garage. They held muttered conversation in a foreign dialect. One slid from the car and entered the cigar store.

In peculiar broken English, the darkish man was asking for cigarettes at the counter when Marjorie made her call at the open phone. He understood English better than he could speak it, for the fellow's saffron lips showed a smile beneath the smudge-black mustache, as he listened.

"Dr. Buffton is not there?" Marjorie was saying. "Yes, this is Miss Cragg....Not until seven o'clock, you say.... Very well, I shall expect a call from him then.... Yes, at my apartment..."

The darkish man was back in the car when Marjorie came out to the street. He and his companion were exchanging guttural mutters, as they watched the girl walk toward the elevated station. The glitter of their ugly eyes, the fangish expressions of their leering mouths, were those that hunters might give when sighting a choice and helpless prey.

Savages both, despite their ability to travel freely in New York, the villainous pair were confident that they could wait for an easier opportunity to pluck Marjorie Cragg from circulation. Their calculations told that they had until seven o'clock that evening, at which time darkness would favor them.

The men waited, motionless, in their car, until they heard the heavy roar of an elevated train. Their faces firmed, their eyes glistened like fireballs, bulging in a sightless stare.

When the clatter had faded, the two strange men relaxed. The

one at the wheel started the car, while the other gazed curiously from the window, much interested in observing the peculiar customs of Manhattan dwellers that they passed.

With all their vigilance, the spies had failed to notice the letter that Jim carried when he left the old garage. Coming out through the door, the mechanic had thrust the small envelope into one pocket, his glove in the other. Marjorie's letter, slight though the facts it gave, was on the way to Mr. Lamont Cranston.

A girl in danger, as Marjorie Cragg definitely was, could have chosen no better person with whom to correspond. Though noted for his remarkable experiences in many foreign lands, Cranston had a habit of finding still greater adventures in New York. Any shed of mystery or intrigue became his cue for action.

On those occasions, Lamont Cranston frequently disappeared. In his place, there roved a singular being known as The Shadow!



"... and now, direct from the White House, we bring you President Roosevelt."

PUZZLE #1

The following word search puzzle is made up of the names of a few of our favorite Old Time Radio shows. Have fun while you circle the words indicated in all capitals only. Words may be backwards, up, down, or diagonal. There is one other show in the puzzle but not listed. See if you can find the name of this long-running favorite.

Bing CROSBY	MERCURY Theater
CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT	Red SKELTON
CHANDU	ROY ROGERS
The Cinnamon BEAR	The SAINT
COUNTERSPY	The SHADOW
DUFFYS TAVERN	TARZAN
Eddie CANTOR	TOM Corbett
The GREEN HORNET	TOM MIX
I LOVE A MYSTERY	VIC
INNER SANCTUM	and SADE
Jack BENNY	The WHISTLER
The LONE RANGER	WITCHSTALE
LUM	X MINUS ONE
and ABNER	

C O U N T E R S P Y G U T A F T
H A S T N I A S R E G O R Y O R
A (B P T E N R O H N E E R G U M
N N R T S A F F Y S N E B T S U
D E E A A V R A S O T L E O X T
U R G R D I A N O S U B L X M C
F O N Z E C N A Y A K U R T I N
F R A A C T O M M I X E R R N A
Y R - R N I B A R I A S Y L O U S
S E E O L E M E N D X R U T S R
T L N O V A S P A I N W E N O E
A T O O S R T U W I L I K A N N
V S L A C R O S B Y B T G C E N
E I S U R W T Y V W O D A H S I
R H S A M E R C U R Y E S O T N
N W I T C H S T A L E T L S A K

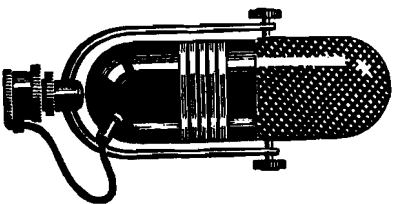
MINWHISTAL
RH MERCURY
EI U WODVASH
VSL CROSBY GCEN
ATOO R U I ANN
TLN VA P N NOE
SEE E E D TSR
YRRN BARR LOUS
F AA TOMMIXE RNA
F NZECNAV KU NI
URGRDI N S L MC
DEEAAV T XT
NNRTS YNNEB U
ABPTENRHNNEERG M
HA TNIASRECGORYOR
I COUNTERSPY
ANSWERS TO PUZZLE

Come to THE SOURCE!

We have computer files of clubs, libraries, dealers and private collections. We can tell you who has the shows you want to find.

For information send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: THE SOURCE, 10 S 540 County Line Road, Hinsdale, IL 60521.

Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086



FIRST CLASS MAIL