

*The Old Time Radio Club*

Established 1975

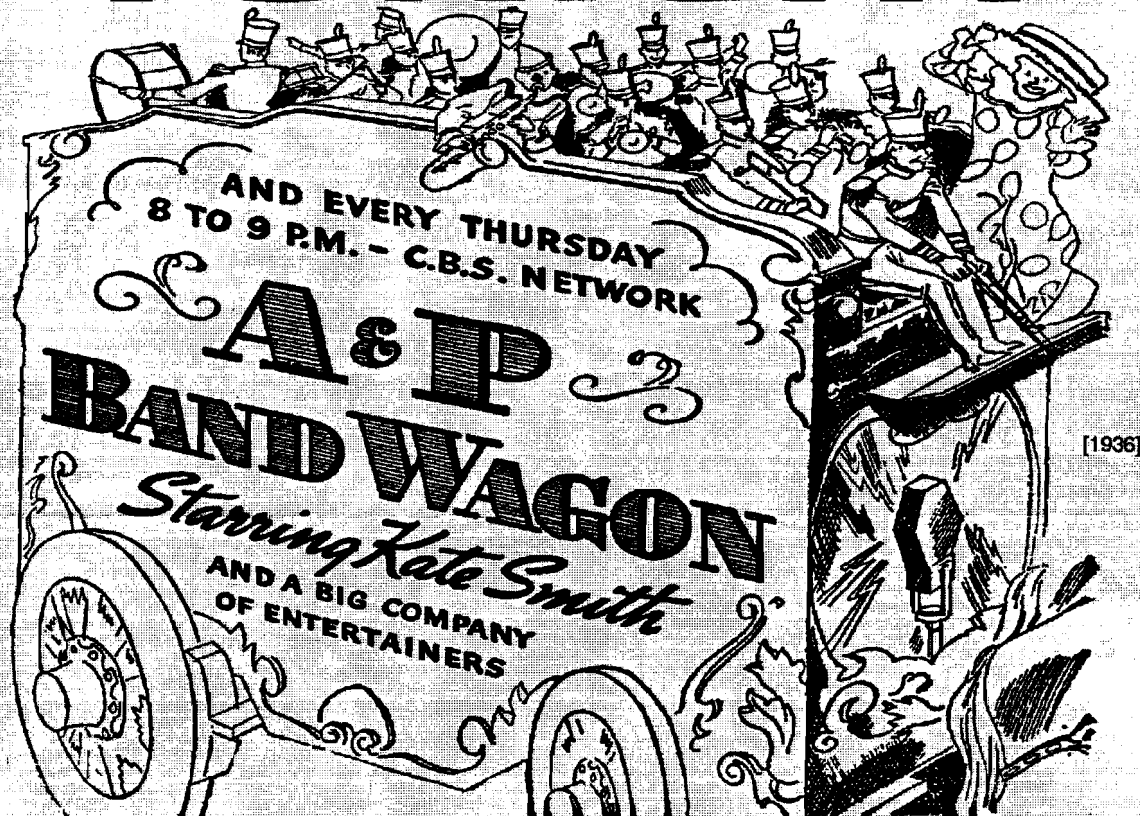
# THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 231

December 1995



## TONIGHT



*Season's Greetings  
to all fans of  
Old Time Radio*

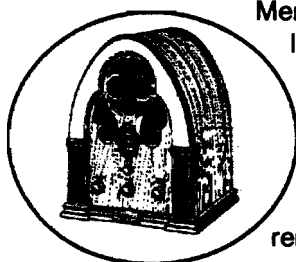
*from the  
Old Time Radio Club*

of Western New York State



**Membership Information**

New member processing, \$5.00 plus club membership of \$15.00 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31.



Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing, and a monthly newsletter.

Memberships are as follows: If you join Jan-Mar, \$15.00; Apr-Jun, \$12.00; Jul-Sep, \$8.00; Oct-Dec, \$5.00. All renewals should be sent in as

soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 P.M. during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225. The club meets informally during the months of July and August at the same address. Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with The Old Time Radio Network.

**Club Mailing Address**

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

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## Science Fiction on the Air

by Dom Parisi

Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary defines science fiction as follows:

**Science Fiction** (*n*) *abbr. S.F.* A literary or cinematic genre in which fantasy, typically based on speculative science discoveries and developments, forms an element of the plot or background; especially of future scientific discoveries, environmental changes, space travel, and life on other planets.

Yeah! Like Martians from Mars or extraterrestrial aliens from far away planets with tentacles growing out of their heads!

When I think of science fiction (please, not sci-fi) what comes to mind are death ray instruments, green gruesome creatures with three eyes and slimy bodies. I think of dramatic somewhat unbelievable but delicious, spine chilling and mouth watering incidents. Like a two headed monster that is about to insert a six inch stainless steel probe deep into your brain to learn what makes you tick! I think about a chicken heart growing out of control and is slowly taking over the earth! I visualize sleek, smooth flying saucers, time machines, space ships and space stations with all of the highly advanced equipment to seek and to monitor everything that's "out there!" Sort of like today's *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* movies. I think of weird stuff and of events that happen but can't be explained. I think of Gort, the police robot who kept things on his planet on the up and up in the movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

What I don't think about is humor blended in with science fiction. Sure, the *Star Trek* movies and TV shows and *Star Wars* have their share of humor. A little humor is fine. *X-Minus One*, a really good show by the way, leans a little too much toward a Damon Runyon style of humor. Not to say that silliness is bad, it's good. I just don't appreciate too much of it in a science fiction type of story. Enough of that ....

This time around we will explore some of the shows with a science fiction theme; the shows that were popular during radio's heyday. I'll also try to recall other famous radio shows that aired broadcasts with a science fiction plot. One that comes to mind immediately is the famous and great *Mercury Theatre on the Air* production of "The War of the Worlds." Ok,

you all set? Then lets blast off!!

*Dimension X* (later to become *X-Minus One*) started kind of late on radio. It was heard first on NBC on April 8, 1950 and ran for about one-and-one-half years with the final broadcast heard on September 29, 1951. Until the first introduction and airing of *Dimension X*, some twenty years after the establishment of the networks on radio, there were no science fiction shows that captured and held the attention of the adult listener.

Young and talented writers like Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Robert Heinlein, along with others all contributed scrips and helped to draw in the adult audience.

*Dimension X* demonstrated distinctly what could happen with science fiction on the air. Some tales, then and now, stand out as classics. Ray Bradbury's "Mars is Heaven" is as gripping today as when first heard on July 7, 1950. An expedition from earth lands on the planet Mars only to discover that the houses there look a lot like the houses on earth as they appeared in the 1920's! Hello! Is anyone home? Who?

*Dimension X* was originally titled *Out of This World*. But -- The New York Times of March 22, 1950, page 52, reported as follows: "NBC has been unable to clear title rights to its new science fiction series, formerly *Out of This World* and renamed it *Dimension X*. The program which begins Saturday April 8, at 8 P.M., will have a fifteen minute prologue at 7:45 entitled "Preview to the Future."

Some of the many fine actors who appeared regularly on the program were Joe DiSantis, Santos Ortega, Mason Adams, Ralph Bell, Les Damon and Roger DeKoven. Norman Rose was the narrator.

*X-Minus One*: Countdown for blast-off, x-minus five -- four -- three -- two -- x-minus one -- fire! The National Broadcasting Company presented this program beginning on April 24, 1955, four years after *Dimension X* got blown away into the blank abyss of space. The stories on *X-Minus One*, many of them anyway, were the same tales previously heard on

*Dimension X*. Later, new adaptations and original stories were heard. The writers that wrote for *Dimension X* now wrote for *X-Minus One*; the actors that acted in *Dimension X* now acted in *X-Minus One*.

*X-Minus One* did more comedy than its predecessor. The stories ranged from the amusing "Lifeboat Mutiny" to the unusual "Tunnel under the World" a story so imaginary that it could only be performed with justice on the radio. *X-Minus One* blasted off into space forever on January 9, 1958.

However --- in the 1970's, with the science fiction nostalgia craze at its pinnacle, NBC wanted to use the *X-Minus One* transcriptions in a test (run it up the flag pole and see if anyone salutes it) to find out if radio drama could once again be supported. NBC goofed! The shows were heard not weekly, but once a month! A stupid bit of scheduling to say the least. Radio listeners were confused. Who the heck could remember if the show was on the first, second, third or fourth weekend of the month. This fiasco first took place on June 24, 1973 and died once again, this time forever, in 1975.

*Two Thousand Plus (2000 Plus)* was a half hearted attempt by the Mutual Broadcasting System to ride the science fiction comet. It was heard first on March 15, 1950 and ran through the 1951 season on Wednesday nights.

The New York Times of March 15, 1950 stated that "*2000 Plus* will deal with interplanetary abilities, scientific developments on the earth in the next millennium and living conditions and standards of the 21st century. The introduction of *2000 Plus* may turn out to be the forerunner of a radio program trend in science fiction drama, which could eventually rival in number the detective and mystery shows."

*2000 Plus* may very well have been the forerunner of the true adult science fiction radio dramas, (we are not talking about the juvenile shows) for it beat *Dimension X* on the air by three weeks!

---continued next month---

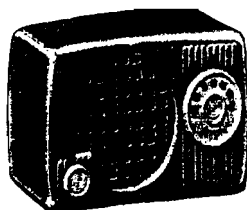
Kate Smith

Speaks at Noon  
Monday thru Friday

Sings at 12:15

WVET dial 1280

[1948]



## SAME TIME, SAME STATION

by Jim Cox

In 1970 Ron Lackmann admonished that radio's longest continuous career belonged to Arthur Godfrey. Then 67, Godfrey was still broadcasting his daily radio show, a CBS staple that began April 30, 1945. The redheaded ukulele player would continue a distinctive brand of engaging banter interspersed with live vocalists and orchestra numbers until April 30, 1972, when he quit -- 27 years from the day he began.

Godfrey had stumbled into show business by accident. Born in New York City, he joined the Navy at 18, left it at 21 and became highly successful selling cemetery lots. When an opportunity to invest his savings in a traveling vaudeville act, he did so, but it soon went belly-up. Godfrey then became a Chicago cab driver, joined the Coast Guard and in 1929 got into radio at Baltimore's WFBR, billed as "Red Godfrey, the Warbling Banjoist." A year later he moved to Washington, D.C. as an NBC staff announcer. Two years hence he was laid off for nonconforming advertising techniques (more about that later). Soon he was hired by the competition, CBS' Washington affiliate, where he played records and chatted all night long.

By April 1941 his show was picked up by WABC, CBS' then affiliate in New York, being heard in two markets simultaneously. Godfrey's name spread via special assignments for CBS, among them, in April 1945, as the network's reporter at the funeral of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Godfrey wept at the microphone in a broadcast that has become classic. That same month, after a threat to quit CBS and rejoin NBC, he was booked into the daily CBS lineup, a spot he had sought for years.

In its heyday, *Arthur Godfrey Time* would play to more than 8 million Americans daily, most of them housewives. By 1950, before the mass audience slide to TV began, Godfrey enjoyed Nielsen ratings of nearly 11 points -- higher than any other weekday program but *The Romance of Helen Trent*.

Godfrey's acceptance grew so quickly that his morning show, begun as a sustainer (9:15 -10:00 A.M. ET, competing with Don McNeill's enormously popular

*Breakfast Club* on ABC), was soon given a more favorable slot (11:00-11:30 ET). There it attracted its first sponsor, Chesterfield cigarettes. As Godfrey's fame spread, CBS increased his air time. By 1948 he had an hour (10:30-11:30); a year later, 75 minutes (10:15-11:30); by the close of the 1940's he settled in as a daytime guru, commanding 90 minutes (10:00-11:30) of live broadcast five days weekly. Except for the last half hour, purchased by Liggett and Myers for its Chesterfield brand, the rest of the show was sold in 15-minute segments to other sponsors, most of whom stayed with Godfrey for years -- Nabisco, Glass Wax, Lipton and more.

Anyone who lived through the era can recall announcer Tony Marvin's basso profundo at the top of each segment every day as he intoned: "It's Arthur Godfrey Time!" Bandleader Archie Bleyer as a group of musicians who struck together for years, struck up the show's familiar "Themes Like Old Times." The star often whistled the tune as the orchestra played and Marvin rattled off names in the cast ("and all the little Godfreys") -- Janette Davis, the Mariners, Frank Parker, Lu Ann Simms, Julius La Rosa, The Chordettes, Pat Boone, The McGuire Sisters, Bill Lawrence, Marion Marlow, Holi Loki, the Jubalaires and others. Not all were on the show at the same time, of course; Marvin, Bleyer, Davis, the Mariners and Parker were long termers. As the theme subsided, Marvin would shout with glee something related to that portion's sponsor, like: "And now, here's that man himself, Arthur 'buy 'em by the carton' Godfrey!" A wildly enthusiastic audience broke into thunderous applause. On a typical morning, the same sequence transpired at 10:00, 10:15, 10:30, 10:45 and 11:00 following the station breaks.

For 27 years from the same windowless studio at CBS on East 52nd St. in New York, Godfrey and company -- linked with a strong daily soap opera lineup (until 1960) -- helped CBS dominate daytime radio until late afternoons. At the same time, Godfrey was responsible for billions of dollars going into CBS coffers as a result of his laid back approach to selling. He didn't pitch products he didn't like. And when he did hawk merchandise he often ad libbed off the printed page, invoking laughter from his studio audience with jibes like: "Who wrote this garbage anyway?" More time than agencies preferred Godfrey tossed copy aside and -- as if talking to one listener -- told why he felt, for example, Nabisco Honey Grams were "the best darn cookies money can buy." Time and time again he added to a commercial about Lipton tea, "It's the cheapest thing you can drink besides water." As creative directors sighed, spon-

sors loved it and millions bought the products Godfrey espoused. So successful was he that The New York Times reported that, at his zenith, he made \$1,500 for every minute of air time he put in.

Godfrey could not be contained in a single program, however. CBS quickly realized how hot a property it had. By 1946 he starred in a second CBS show called *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* (initially on Tuesday nights, then on Mondays through 1958). Godfrey showcased "undiscovered" talent ranging from ventriloquists to vocalists, instrumentalists and comedians. The week's winning act, selected by studio audience applause, appeared daily on his morning show the rest of the week. (That's how La Rosa, the Chordettes, Boone, the McGuires and many more were "discovered.") By 1948, *Talent Scouts* were simulcast live on CBS Radio and TV.

In 1950 taped highlights of the weekday program aired on CBS Radio Sunday afternoons, called *Arthur Godfrey's Digest*. Millions who worked daytime got to hear some of what that had missed the week before.

The star "and all the little Godfreys" were also featured for several seasons in one of TV's first variety hours, *Arthur Godfrey and His Friends*, on Wednesday nights from 8 to 9 P.M. Godfrey was an ever present commodity on CBS in the 1940's and 50's and his name became a household word.

Still the mighty can fall, and Godfrey made a mistake that nearly cost him his empire, eroding the loyalty of millions of fans. One morning in October 1953 he recounted the successful career of vocalist Julius La Rosa, who had developed his own loyal following. It was a threat Godfrey wouldn't tolerate. He had told La Rosa in 1951 when the singer won *Talent Scouts* and joined the cast of regulars: "Julie, I don't have any stars on my show. We're all just a big family of very nice people like yourself. You hold onto that quality and you'll never have to worry about a thing." Godfrey allowed that La Rosa and bandleader Bleyer had since begun their own recording company and "he's gotten to be a great big name." Godfrey's words were said slowly, deliberately. Following a song by La Rosa, as the day's show drew to a close -- but still on the air -- Godfrey fired La Rosa, unleashing a storm of protests by millions who had followed both. Subsequently, he also fired Bleyer on learning that his recording company had signed rival Don McNeill. A prominent observer called it "the beginning of the end for Godfrey." His popularity dipped sharply; media critics rebuked him for his brash handling of

the affair. Millions never returned. Many would soon discover daytime TV and turn their backs on radio forever. Despite all the rancor, Godfrey stayed on and continued to dominate daytime airwaves, albeit never again to the same crowds he had attracted before. By 1954 his Nielsens had slipped to four points, a loss he would never recover. Several years later the studio audience was discontinued, others in the cast dispersed and CBS cut back on Godfrey's air time. By then, his other programs had also ceased. Eventually, the live show went to tape. At the end, while heard seven days a week instead of five, he had thirty minutes (1:30-2:00 P.M. ET) to chat with his unseen radio audience between vocal and instrumental numbers. Richard Hayes was his last vocalist; and two of the musicians in the band had been with him for the first broadcast in 1945 were there at the end. Before signing off for the last time, he promised he would write down his memories and publish them "one of these days." As far as we know, he never did.

To summarize *Arthur Godfrey Time* without mentioning his summer replacement would not be fair. For several years the star's contract called for him to take a month off for a summertime vacation. In his place CBS wisely assigned Godfrey's microphone to rising comedian/singer Robert Q. Lewis, who in his own right was often funnier than Godfrey. Lewis became such an institution with his audience that he frequently jested: "It's nice to come back to *my* show again." He could maintain the levity as quickly as the regular host while exchanging quips with announcer Tony Marvin and other "little Godfreys." His was a refreshing change, and Godfrey listeners looked forward to his stints each summer.

Another aside about Godfrey's program was that he broadcast remotes from his 800 acre Virginia estate. Frequently he would have to "run from the studio to catch a train to the farm" following each show, to broadcast live from the farm the following day. CBS installed a mini studio at the farm. At times listeners didn't realize he was in Virginia and the rest of the crew was in New York. On those occasions, "Themes Like Old Times" was replaced by "In the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia" as Godfrey warbled along. And his most famous recording, incidentally, was "The Too-Fat Polka," which he often sang on the show with The Mariners and the band accompanying.

It was vintage radio. It was unique. And when Godfrey left the air in 1972, we never heard anything else like him. "Radio," said the Chicago Daily News on April 29, 1972, "is over." At least, as we knew it.

## RADIO MEMORIES

by Francis Edward Bork

Campana Italian Balm presents *The First Nighter Program*. An evening on the Great White Way and once again Ladies and Gentlemen you're invited to attend an opening performance in "The Little Theater off Times Square." There's plenty of traffic tonight so let's get an early start for the Theater. Here's my cab, won't you get in? All right driver, up Broadway, Mr. First Nighter instructs the cab driver. The sounds of traffic are heard, then at last the driver pulls the cab over to the curb in front of "The Little Theater off Times Square." Our host would alight from the cab to be greeted by the doorman. Good evening Mr. First Nighter, the usher will show you to your seat. Have your tickets ready please, have your tickets ready. Scanning the program Mr. First Nighter would then mention the plays title, the author, the stars and then, "I see tonight's play is a delightful comedy," or the play might be a drama, romance or mystery story. For many years the stars were Barbara Luddy and Les Tremayne who was later replaced by Olan Soule. The music becomes louder as the party walks to the seats. For twenty-two years the theme was "Neapolitan Nights." The music becomes even louder as the usher announces, curtain, first curtain, the house lights dim, and here's the play.

The only real challenge to the popularity of *The First Nighter* was *Lux Radio Theater*, which began broadcasts years later and had a large operating budget, a full hour format, and the luxury of top famous movies and movie stars to play the radio parts. Still, *Lux Radio Theater* never did more than tie *The First Nighter* for first place in the radio ratings.

I doubt if any loyal listener could forget the page's call at intermission, "smoking in the downstairs and outer lobby only, please, smoking in the downstairs and outer lobby only, please." An elaborate format and an American fascination with the theater can be credited for much of the early success of *The First Nighter Program*. During the depression here in America, a Broadway play was an expensive luxury the average citizen could not afford. But then not to worry, the magic box called radio took us to Broadway and Times Square every week. The only thing that the loyal listeners were not told was that "The Little Theater off Times Square" was not broadcast from Broadway or New York for that matter. *The First Night Program* came to us over the airwaves

via NBC's studios in Chicago's Merchandise Mart. Would that have made a difference to the radio listeners? I doubt it. The dream of Broadway and the Theater was too great to make any difference. From the very beginning on December 4, 1930 until the war years the program always opened the same way. But then the war came and *The First Nighter* helped the war effort by walking from his hotel down Broadway to "The Little Theater off Times Square." Well maybe not much to give up, that short taxi ride, but then it did tell the radio audience that our congenial, debonair host, Mr. First Nighter was doing his bit to aid our country's war effort. Across that nation it became fashionable to walk whenever possible.

How well I remember those nights listening to our radio in the living room of our little house on Northhampton Street. Whenever I could I would visit with my grandparents and stay overnight with them at their house on Bailey Avenue, across from Hennepin Park. *The First Nighter* was my grandmother's favorite radio show. I remember how we would sit in the dining room, with the floor model Philco in the corner by the archway to the living room. Ma would sit on her rocker in front of the radio, me next to her in the little green rocker Pa had made for me, and of course Pa with his pipe filled with Five Brothers tobacco puffing away to his hearts content. Ma and I would sip our green tea which was our favorite and for me it still is. Sometimes when I now listen to one of my radio shows and especially *The First Nighter*, I think gee, I remember listening to this story with Ma and Pa. But no, it's just my mind playing tricks on me, I guess I want to think that I remember the memories of radio. How great they are.

One radio story that *The First Nighter* did I really do remember, but that's because their annual Christmas offering, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," was a real classic for the Holidays. Its stars were Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule. The show featured a cast of excellent actors most of whom became regulars on the show, starting with Don Ameche playing opposite June Meredith and Mary Low Gerson, until Hollywood made him an offer sometime in 1936 that he couldn't refuse. That was the year that Barbara Luddy took over the female lead, a position she held until the program left the airwaves.

In the beginning of the shows long run, for the 1930-31 season it was aired on Thursday evenings on the Blue Network but moved to Tuesday evenings in 1931 only to move to Friday evening in 1932, then to NBC where it remained for the next six years. It always kept its original sponsor, Campana Italian

Balm, although during the war years the "Italian" was dropped from the brand name, due to the fact that America was at war with the Axis powers, Germany, Italy and Japan. In 1939 the program moved to CBS, and continued to be broadcast on Friday nights until 1940 when it was moved to Tuesday evening. Our genial host was seldom identified to us as were the plays stars. Charles Hughes was the first to play Mr. First Nighter followed by Brett Morrison sometime in the early 1938 season, then Marvin Miller had the part. By the 1940's Rye Billsbury became our host, Mr. First Nighter. In 1941 the program returned to CBS and back again to Friday evenings. Mutual picked the program up in 1942 and ran it on Saturday nights until 1944 when it went back to CBS for the 1944-45 season on Saturday nights. Olan Soule came on board in 1943 and remained the male lead until 1949 when the program closed. During the programs run from 1930 to 1949 its sole sponsor was Campana, which must be some sort of a record for a thirty minute program.

The cast of *The First Nighter* over its many years of successful radio broadcasting reads like a Who's Who of the radio industry. Among them were Don Ameche, June Meredith, Betty Lou Gerson, Barbara Luddy, Olan Soule, Les Tremayne, Hugh Studebaker, Willard Waterman, Parley Baer, Herb Butterfield, Sidney Ellstrom, William Conrad, Sarah Selby, Ben Wright, Verna Felton, Charles Hughes, Francis X. Bushman, Marvin Miller, Ed Prentess, MacDonald Cary, Brett Morrison and Ed Doty, who of the impressive cast was the first to die.

An interesting foot note for those of us who are fans of *Little Orphan Annie*, it was Olan Soule who played the part of Aha, the Chinese cook on the *Little Orphan Annie* radio program.

*The First Nighter Program* used only original scripts with the actors wearing formal clothing and it was not broadcast before a live audience. Neither cigarettes or alcohol were ever mentioned during the broadcast of the program.

In 1952 the program was revived for one season by NBC in the old Tuesday evening slot, sponsored by Miller High Life beer, with Rye Billsbury as our debonair host, Mr. First Nighter. For the first time in all those years his name was announced as Mr. First Nighter.

Well now, that is all just a memory, our taxi ride up Broadway, past 42nd Street and along the great White Way to the "Little Theater off Times Square"

for the opening night of a delightful play in our favorite theater. Maybe not. I just got a cassette in the mail, *The First Nighter*, "The One in the Middle" aired 1/1/48 and on the flip side "There's Something in the Air" aired 3/11/48. I think I'll make myself a pot of green tea, sit back in my favorite recliner chair and enjoy the new cassettes. Maybe I'll remember the stories once I hear them, maybe not, who knows?

I do know one thing, listening to the show will bring back some very pleasant memories, besides enjoying the stories, letting your mind paint the picture of what happens. I guess that's what old time radio is all about. Listening to a good story and remembering the carefree days of our youth.

Well that's it for now, till next time  
Happy Radio Memories

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#### Interesting Facts from OTR by Peter Bellanca

In June of 1931, William S. Paley, president of CBS was traveling to Europe on the S.S. Europa and heard a Bing Crosby record being played on a portable phonograph. He had never heard Crosby sing before this, even though Crosby was a star singer for Decca records. He wired his second in command, Edward Klauber to sign Crosby to a CBS contract as soon as possible.

When Paley returned from Europe later that summer he learned that Crosby was not signed. He was told by Klauber and various program directors that Crosby had a drinking problem and was considered unreliable. Paley overrode them all, and hired Crosby to do six fifteen-minute broadcasts at 11:00 P.M. and agreed to pay him \$1,500 a week. This was an unheard of sum of money; the going rate for this type of program at this time was \$100 a week.

Crosby failed to appear for his first broadcast. CBS rescheduled the show for later in the week. The night of the rescheduled broadcast Paley was on Long Island in a rented home without a radio, so he listened to the program on his car radio. The program was terrible. Paley rushed into the house and called the CBS studios. He was told that Crosby was drunk, and two men were holding him up as he attempted to sing. Paley ordered the studio staff to get Crosby off the air and replace his program with another program. But Paley would not fire Crosby, he knew that Crosby was a great talent and assigned a round the clock guard to prevent him from drinking. It worked, and Paley had the star that he wanted to compete against NBC.

#### The Green Hornet: Father of the Lone Ranger

by Alf Walle

continued from the November IP

Michael Axford's role in *The Green Hornet* is a throw-back to his early *Manhunter* days; he demonstrates the dichotomy between law and justice. An early Hornet episode states that Britt's "father retained Michael Axford to pose as a member of The Daily Sentinel staff, but to actually serve as a bodyguard to Britt. With keen perception, the young bachelor saw through his father's motive." Throughout the series, Axford was simultaneously loyal to Britt while hating the Hornet and, as a reporter, seeking his identity just as Jimmy Olson works with Clark Kent while always seeking the identity of Superman. Although Axford evolved into a full fledged reporter, the show's formula continues and Axford remained obsessed with the Hornet's capture.

A central aspect of *The Green Hornet* is that the action takes place in a modern city, not the wild west of the Lone Ranger and Tonto. *The Lone Ranger* was set in the mythic world of the frontier and the hero represents an almost divine goodness. *The Lone Ranger* doesn't deal with realistic people or events, but idealized heroes and villains represented by the Ranger and assorted bad guys. The battle is invariably fought between a flawless hero and equally one dimensional demonic figures. The setting is a frontier where the power of the law has not yet been established. The Ranger seldom questions the law and never goes against it; he is merely a temporary force where law and civilization do not exist.

*The Green Hornet*, in contrast, does not deal with a rugged world lacking laws, but with the contemporary American scene in which courts, the police, and the statute book are fully entrenched. Instead of depicting a lawless world, this series portrays criminals who turn the law against society. These stories were set within a realistic, not a metaphoric, world. Newspaper promotions for the show boasted of its realism and we are told the Hornet fights villains who the G-men can't touch. One of the highlights of *The Green Hornet* was the fact that adventures often reflected actual current events. While *The Lone Ranger* portrays the epic battle of a generalized good vs a generalized evil, the plot lines of the *Hornet* usually hit close to home. A newspaper advertisement for the second episode announced the show was based "upon the shipping of United States gold to Europe which is actually taking place at the U.S. Treasury. A timely drama written by WXYZ's produc-



tion department." Other episodes dealt with subjects such as "violators of the Pure Food and Drug Act; racketeers who prey on scientists; political corruption; and manipulators in the gas companies which the Department of Justice was called to investigate recently." *The Green Hornet* specialized in shows which played upon the news of the era.

--continued next month--

The following letter was sent to Jerry Collins, president of the OTRC.

Dear Jerry,

May I, through you, extend congratulations on your club's 20th anniversary. At 94, I find myself working on scrap books as my stationary turns yellow, while your club with its latest communications are as fresh as ever.

The scrapbooks are truly a chore, but the Burton Historical department of Detroit's Main Library has shunted me back into the project with a huge jar of special time proof paste. So I'm going backwards by decades. The 90's and 80's are under control, next I attack the 70's. Of course, it all began in the 1920's, so you can image the job of sorting this out chronologically is rather monotonous.

Incidentally, a new item for the 90's volume is in: Brace Beemer's home in Orion has been sold. We were there many times. And Earl Graser's home in Farmington is now a bed and breakfast hostelry. Everybody of those days seem to be dead, except me.

Carry on -- with good luck

Cordially,  
Dick Osgood

### A Famous Radio Spook Show

by Dom Parisi

It was around the time of the war years; the country was full of troubles and fears. I remember sitting on the living room (we called it a parlor back then) floor in front of our big, real wood, Stromberg Carlson floor model radio every Tuesday night waiting for the squeaking door to open and draw me into the Inner Sanctum.

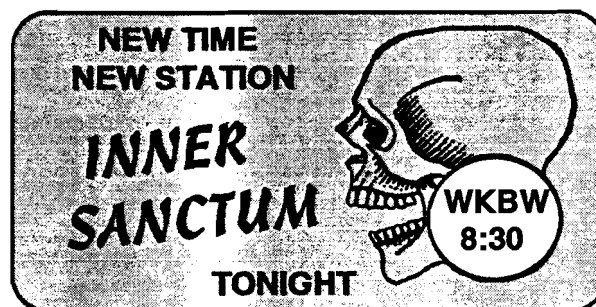
Filled with juicy anticipation and fear, my kid brother and I didn't move or speak until Raymond finished his spooky tale and bid us -- "Good nightttt" -- till next time. Then he ever so slowly closed that

squeaky door, for another long week. Whew! We enjoyed every minute of it! We didn't need a huge knife dripping with blood like we see in the Halloween movies and all the other glory flicks of today. The stories that happened on *Inner Sanctum* mysteries were enough to scare the pants off us. They could, and did the job just fine.

The first *Inner Sanctum* broadcast took place on the NBC Blue network on January 7, 1941, one month after the Pearl Harbor attack by Japan. The trademarks of the program were of course, that squeaking door and the never forgetful eerie host, Raymond E. Johnson. Paul McGarth assumed Raymond's role as host around 1945; his voice however, didn't have that menacing tone that Raymond had. Himan Brown directed the show from day one until the end.

The plot usually leaned toward murder and tales of the supernatural. Bizarre occurrences and astounding climaxes was the format. The absurd became almost believable when dramatized by some of Hollywood's finest talent and groomed by the most brilliant, spine tingling sound effects and uncanny organ music in all radio. The music was right up there along with *The Shadow's* dramatic score. Famous stars like Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Paul Lukas and Claude Rains, to name a few, appeared on the program.

The show was highly popular through the 1940's but, like all great radio shows, it became a victim of television. *Inner Sanctum* was revived as a weekly TV series for a few years in the 1950's. It never, however, recaptured the magic it had during its run on radio. The last radio broadcast was on October 15, 1952. Raymond closed the squeaking door forever.



From the Editor's Desk

Ken Krug<sup>th</sup> has agreed to become the next editor of the IP. I will be working with Ken for awhile as co-editor and helping with the graphics aspect of the newsletter. More on this subject next month. Don't forget to send in your dues.



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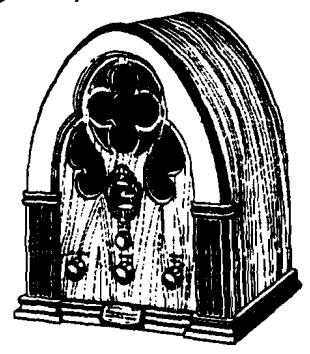
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