The Old Time Radio Club

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NAME-the-STARS Contest

Can You Name The Radio Star This Picture Represents? . . . Regd from left to right.



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Radio Guide(3)

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Club Mailing Address

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

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Jim Harmon's Production of "I Love A Mystery"

A Review by Richard A. Olday

Since only a handful of I.L.A.M. shows have survived over the years, it was with great anticipation that I eagerly awaited the arrival of a new production of I.L.A.M. from the original script by Carlton E. Morse. Mr. Harmon received approval from Carlton E. Morse several years ago to produce new shows from his original scripts and when I heard that Fred Foy agreed to announce the show, I was very anxious to hear the results.

The sands of time have **not** diminished the wonderful voice of Fred Foy whose touch adds considerably to this production. However, the same cannot be said regarding the voice of Les Tremayne. The cracking of Mr. Tremayne's voice marred an otherwise fine acting performance as Jack Packard. A superb performance of Doc Long was turned in by actor Tony Clay while Frank Bresee's portrayal of Reggie Yorke sometimes lost the British accent. The actor who played Richard Cooper was also very good and the rest of the cast was adequate.

The script of "The Fear That Creeps Like A Cat" was very interesting in the beginning and end but tended to bob down in the middle of the 20 episode story. The production could have greatly benefited from the musical bridges and better sound effects. The sound effects at the beginning of the episodes often sounded like a record coming up to speed. Stereo sound would also have aided this performance. Hopefully future releases will correct these shortfalls.

This program may be purchased from Jim Harmon, 634 South Orchard Drive, Burbank, CA 91506. My rating is 3 stars of a possible 5, and I would recommend this to any mystery fan.

"Family" Reunion A Big Hit in Los Angeles

The SPERDVAC convention was the site of the first "One Man's Family" Reunion. Co-sponsored by SPERDVAC and The "One Man's Family" Family, the event had 10 actors who had worked on this classic program.

Actively involved were the talented: Jeanne Bates, Sharon Douglas, Sam Edwards, Eddie Firestone, Jr. Barbara Fuller, Tyler McVey, Jeanette Nolan, George Pirrone, Jean Rouverol Butler and Peggy Webber.

The first part of the program was a skit formatted like the popular "This Is Your Life" show, with U.S. Senator Pinky Murray being honored. In addition to the surprise at how well Pinky turned out, the audience was delighted to learn that Dr. Elwood Giddings and Teddy had remarried.

Following this performance, the cast was on stage reminiscing and answering a variety of questions. There were many insights about the show, the cast creator Carlton E. Morse and more.

The audience and cast expressed very positive feelings about the chemistry and the content of the Reunion. Future Reunions will probably be part of existing Old Time Radio gatherings around the country.

According to co-founder Mike Sprague, The "One Man's Family" Family was established earlier this year "to become the sought-out source of complete and accurate information about OMF." He added "It is essential that someone be about the business of preserving and protecting the wonderful quality of OMF in every way possible."

Interested fans are invited to contact Sprague at OMFF at:

PO Box 723 Bothell, WA 98041 206-488-9518 Fax 206-402-6988 email hrrmikes@aol.com





SAME TIME, SAME STATION

by Jim Cox

THE SECOND MRS. BURTON

The Second Mrs. Burton, for the long-time listener, had to be an enigma. Its three most influential authors over a fifteen-year run contributed three very distinct writing styles. This undoubtedly had the effect of leaving some in its audience scratching their heads in disbelief.

The first of this trio, Martha Alexander, who had moved over from *The Romance of Helen Trent*. Lasted little more than a year when she ran into trouble with the show's advertising agency. But she left her imprint on the fledgling series, so much so that her successor would make a dramatic departure from her style when he took the show over in 1947.

Alexander's approach was to explore character more than traditional elements of plot and melodrama. There were few difficulties in the lives of the series' principals — Terry and Stan Burton, a middle class couple living in the mythical town of Dickston. While Terry was Stan's second wife, his first wife, Marian, continued living nearby and remained a family friend. Terry began to assist in raising Stan's son, Brad, and the relationship between them was cordial, even warm and tender on all fronts. External forces simply had little bearing in this serial.

But with Alexander's exit, all of that changed. John M. Young, who had written *The Right to Happiness* for several years, succeeded her. He immediately took steps to turn the gentle-spirited drama she had nursed to health into a strictly formulaic serial, closely akin to nearly three dozen others on the air. Evolving it into a true washboard weeper, Young called upon all the pathos and turmoil available in his arsenal to create misery for *Burton's* heroine and hero. Over time, he introduced amnesia, backbiting, discord, jealousy and tyranny of many sorts. The soap opera often included crimes of varied proportions, ranging from petty larceny to juvenile delinquency, grand theft and a plot of kill at least one of the characters. No misdeed was too small for this little here-to-fore frothy tale of small town life.

But after five years of tragedy, headache and heartbreak, everything changed. Young departed and in his place Hector Chevigny arrived. Within a few months, Chevigny was given a blank check to write the show in any manner he saw fit. This came about in 1954 after CBS acquired the program from the advertising agency.

In one sense, he returned the story to its previous family-oriented theme. But he went further than Martha Alexander had gone. Instead of a preoccupation with the second Mrs. Burton being the second wife, Chevigny instead strengthened the character of Mother Burton, Stan's mom. In doing so, he transformed the series into a light drama with comedic relief, almost totally opposite the formula serial it had been since 1947.

In 1958 Chevigny claimed that his principal characters, Terry and Stan, were "well married, sexually satisfied... not preoccupied with sexual misadventures." His own assessment, he explained, was that most people hope for strong marital ties even if they have never experienced them themselves. As a result, he contended, Mother Burton and her incessant efforts to manage the lives of her children invariably failed. After all, she was no match when pitted against the security of the unions of her son and daughter to stable personalities.

The second Mrs. Burton contained some unique features over its long run.

Wednesdays, for instance, were designated as "Family Counselor Day" at mid-century. Special guests were invited into the studio to talk about subjects of particular interest to homemakers. On one broadcast, a Reverend Smith, identified as pastor of Roxbury Methodist Church in Stamford, Connecticut, answered the question put to him by Terry Burton, "What is faith?" On a Christmas show there was the little girl who had written a letter fifty-two years earlier inquiring "Is there a Santa Claus?," the answer to which began "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." Her name was Mrs. L. V. Douglas.

At the close of each daily broadcast during the early years, announcer Hugh James would offer a household hint of the day, reminiscent of Aunt Jenny's daily cooking tips to homemakers. On the program of September 25, 1947, for instance, he gave this sage advice for what to do when cod liver oil was spilled on a baby's bib and dresses: "Remove the stain as soon as possible with carbon tetrachloride or similar fluid; boiling or washing tends to set the stain." How many American homemakers knew at once whether they had any carbon tetrachloride lying around the house or not? Or even what it was? (It's a nonflammable, colorless, poisonous liquid used in fire extinguishers as a solvent for fats, according to Webster.) Would most homes in which there was a baby have this fluid outside a fire extinguisher? If a de-

gree in chemical engineering was a prerequisite for applying James' daily homemaking tips, some of them probably fell on deaf ears, despite their good intentions.

One idea he often interjected at the end of each program seem inspired. Before leaving the air, James asked listeners to invite neighbors to gather with them around their radios at the same time the following day to catch the next exciting chapter of the *Burton* story. It was a capital idea. For an unknown reason, it was one that contemporaries seemed to totally disregard.

Other announcers in the long series run included Harry Clark and Warren Sweeney.

The part of Terry was played by four actresses in this order: Sharon Douglas, Claire Niesen, Patsy Campbell and Teri Keane. Keane is undoubtedly the best remembered and probably carried the role the longest. She was the heroine in Marriage for Two, the female lead in Life Can be Beautiful and was successful in two TV soaps. For 10 years, 1965-75, she was Martha Marceau on The Edge of Night followed by a run as Naomi Vernon on One Life to Live.

Radio acting veteran Dwight Weist appeared as Stan Burton throughout the series' 15-year run. He held other roles on Mr. District Attorney: We, the People; The Shadow; and Buck Rogers in the Twenty-Fifth Century. Weist filled announcing slots on Inner Sanctum Mysteries, Theatre Guild on the Air, The Aldrich Family, Big Town and Valiant Lady, among others, on radio. On television, he was announcer on Search for Tomorrow for many years.

Evelyn Varden, Charme Allen and Ethel Owen played Mother Burton. Her daughter, Marcia was played by Alice Frost and Arline Blackburn. Marcia's husband, Lew Archer, was portrayed by another veteran of daytime radio and TV, Larry Haines.

The program was presented under the auspices of General Foods Corporation from January 7, 1946 through September 17, 1954. From September 20, 1954 through June 17, 1955, Armour Packing underwrote it. The series was under multiple sponsorship from June 20, 1955 until it left the air November 25, 1960.

The Second Mrs. Burton was broadcast exclusively on CBS. For a decade, 1946-56, it aired at 2 p.m. ET; from 1956-58, at 2:15 p.m.; and from 1958-60, at 1:45 p.m. Because chronologically it was the last of the four remaining soaps still aired in 1960 (the others: The Right to Happiness, Ma Perkins and Young Dr. Malone), it holds the dubious honor of being the final serial to be

broadcast by any network. On that concluding broadcast, Teri Keane, Dwight Weist, Ethel Owen, Larry Haines and Arline Blackburn each spoke a personal "good-bye" following the day's episode. It was clearly the passing of an era.

SECOND MRS. BURTON



Stan Burton heard on CBS 2:00 P.M.

CAST: Terry Burton, whose husband Stan is a merchant in Dickston; Barbara Wright, who is hurt in a railway crash on her way to the Burton's; the strange traveling-companion who steals her purse, and her identity, and whose real name is Helene Gruner.

BACKGROUND: Having made room in their home for Barbara at the request of Terry's father, the Burtons welcome Helene ... unaware that the real Barbara is fighting amnesia in a nearby town. But almost at once Helene behaves oddly; she is tough

evasive, and steals jewelry from Terry and merchandise from the store. RECENTLY: Still without a memory, Barbara finds the Burton address in her coat pocket and impulsively goes to it. When she sees Helene, she starts remembering, and Helene knowing that if Barbara succeeds in regaining her memory she will be in danger of imprisonment, frantically tries to kill Barbara. But Jerry and Stan, their suspicions thoroughly aroused, pick up the trail Helene has left and manage to arrive in time to rescue Barbara. Meanwhile . . . who is the mysterious stranger trailing Stan?



They Were The Most Active People in Radio — The Big 100!

by Dom Parisi (Part 4)

Where and how do you start with this talented man-of-many-voices Mr. Mel Blanc? He was in two movies, Neptune's Daughter in 1949 and Kiss Me Stupid in 1964. Children watching cartoons on television are thrilled by Bugs Bunny and Tweety Pine even though the name Mel Blanc means nothing to them. They go nuts over Daffy Duck, Porky Pig and Woody Woodpecker — all with Mel's voice.

On Jack Benny's program Mel was Professor Le Blanc the violin teacher. He impersonated Jack's car the Maxwell as well as the bear Carmichael. And who will ever forget Blanc at the train station — "Train now loading on track 29. All aboard for Anaheim, Azusa and Cuc-Amonga." He did all this plus other character voices on the show.

Mel appeared on Camel Comedy Caravan with Jack Carson and Herb Shriner. He played August Moon the store clerk in Point Sublime an ABC comedy show. He was Juror Hornblower on Nitwit Court another ABC comedy in 1944, and of course we knew him as Pedro on Judy Canova's program. To go on there was Mel in the 1945 Ice Box Follies variety show over ABC and the character named Twiggs on Major Hoople a show designed around the Boarding House comic strip. On the Mel Blanc Show (also known as Mel Blanc's Fixit Shop) he played Zookie. Somewhere in-between all this Mel played a mailman. And Mr. Blanc also had a chance to play Pancho, the Cisco Kid's sidekick — "Ceesco! The Shereef he ees getting closer!" Mel Blanc's voice was silenced forever on July 10, 1989.

The musician/conductor **Frank Black** was heard on a number of shows during radio's Golden Age. He worked on *The Squibb Program* over NBC and the *Cities Service Concerts*. Black was guest conductor on the *NBC Symphony Orchestra Show*, *The American Melody Hour, Harvest of Stars*, *The Palmolive Hour* and *The Pontiac Show*.

He provided the music for a show called For America We Sing in 1941. This broadcast was designed to promote the war effort. And, finally his music was used on The Pause That Refreshes, The Magic Key a 1935-1939 variety show and The General Motors Concerts heard in 1934 through 1937.

Writer/director Arch Oboler thrilled and chilled us with his famous Lights Out episodes in the thirties and forties. (This show re-appeared in the sixties and early seventies as The Devil and Mr. O.) Mr. Oboler wrote and directed original dramas for his Arch Oboler's Plays for NBC and Mutual in 1939-1945. He supplied material for Everyman's Theater on NBC in the forties. He produced a four-part radio drama called Four For The Fifth that was aired over CBS in 1944. His work was heard on the NBC drama Everything For The Boys and Free World Theater. Stars donated their time for a show plugging the war effort in 1942-1944 known as Treasury Star Parade. I forgot the name of the Lights Out story, but wasn't there one about a body that was turned inside out? . . . Yeech!

The lady of soaps Irna Phillips, wrote and also acted in a number of the operas. She played Auntie Blossom in Gasoline Alley copied from the comic strip. She was Linda Leighton a war widow who was involved in a nasty love triangle in Masquerade on the National Broadcasting System, and she was mother Moynihah in Painted Dreams.

Miss Phillips was a regular performer on Song Of The City on NBC in the early thirties and she had a leading part on Today's Children. She was responsible for The Brighter Day, Lonely Women, another wartime drama, The Guiding Light, Woman In White, Road to Life the story of Dr. Brent, and The Right to Happiness that ran for a long 21 years.

Even while making movies, The Mob with Ernest Borgnine in 1951 and Somebody Up There Likes Me in '56, Matt Crowley found time to appear in radio. He played Dr. Brent on the Road of Life broadcast. Matt was John of John's Other Wife. He was the first chosen to play Mark on Mark Trail the show based on a comic strip. Private-eye Paul Drake on Perry Mason was done by Crowley. He was one, among others, to play Dick Tracy and we had the pleasure to hear him as Buck Rogers. Other than Gerald Mohr, who played Jungle Jim in 1938, Mr. Crowley had the role throughout its long career.

Host announcer **Dan Seymour** was the interviewer for the human interest program We The People. He acted as host for the music, variety and quiz show Sing It Again over CBS in the late forties and early fifties. Dan was the announcer for Orson Welles' program Mercury Theatre On The Air, and for the soap Aunt Jenny's True-Life Stories sponsored by Spry. (Do they still make Spry?) Seymour also announced for two kiddie shows Dick Tracy and Bobby Benson and The B-Bar-B Riders. And we listened to him on the music, comedy shows My

Best Girls over ABC, the Musicomedy Show on CBS, and the Tommy Riggs and Betty Lou Show on NBC.

Ransom Sherman, host/comedian, had his own variety show called *The Ransom Sherman Show*. He announced for the quiz program *Quicksilver* on the Blue Network during 1939 and 1940. A \$5.00 cash prize was awarded if you came up with the correct answer. Sherman played Hap on the *Hap Hazard* comedy show in 1941. On a take-off of the *Goodwill Hour* called *Nitwit Court*, we find that the host was once again Ransom Sherman. Club Matinee along with Grapevine Rancho, a variety show, and the Smile Parade were all hosted by Sherman. Lastly he starred in another program know as Sunbrite Smile Parade.

The actor Richard Kollmar was in a 1948 movie called Close-Up. He portrayed Michael West a night club singer in Bright Horizon on CBS. In the earlier rendition which was aired as Big Sister, Kollmar also played the character called Michael West. Kollmar was the husband-half of Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick on Mutual during 1945-1960. Dorothy of course was played by news columnist Dorothy Kilgallen who mysteriously died of a heart attack following the JFK assassination investigation!

Richard was David in the serial drama Claudia and David in 1941. He narrated the Radio Reader's Digest program in 1945 over CBS. The speaking parts of the singers on Palmolive Beauty Box Theatre were done by Kollmar. And he was John in the Hummert production of John's Other Wife. Let's not forget who the lead performer was in Boston Blackie. Who else? — Richard Kollmar, of course! By the way, the people, especially the stars were guests on other shows too numerous to name. For example, wasn't that Frank Lovejoy we heard, along with Richard Widmark, on the Shadow broadcast of March 2, 1941 called Death Rides a Broomstick?

Betty Garde who appeared in the 1948 flick *Call Northside* 777 maintained a busy schedule throughout her radio career. I can outline at least 14 programs she was involved in.

She was on the 1937-1938 version of the little known CBS show *Tish*, a comic adventure. Betty played the wife Emily on a drama about schoolteacher John Abbott in *We, The Abbotts* in 1940-1942. The real cop Mary Sullivan on the show about true NYC police stories called *Policewoman* was performed by Miss Garde. Betty was a regular on *Big Sister, Criminal Casebook* and *The Phil Silvers Show* on ABC in 1947.

Betty Garde was on the Orson Welles seven part production of Les Miserables that aired in seven running weeks over Mutual in 1937. She played Sally Farrell in Front Page Farrell and Belle in Lorenzo Jones, two Hummert productions. Betty was Maudie's mother and also Kitty's on Maudie's Diary and McGarry and His Mouse. Betty played Mrs. Wiggs on Mrs. Wiggs of The Cabbage Patch, and she was Mrs. Hamilton on American School of the Air. She also played the widow Connie Watson on My Son and I.

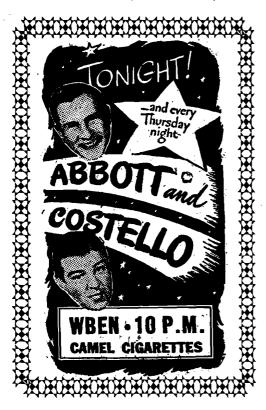
Music man Al Goodman had his very own show on NBC in 1951-1953 known as Al Goodman's Musical Album. The music you heard on Fred Allen's show after 1945 was provided by Mr. Goodman. When the Donald Voorhees Orchestra left Showboat Al Goodman took over. Al played for The Gulf Show, Ziegfield Follies of the Air, The James Melton Show and The Prudential Family Hour on CBS in which famous movie stars like Bette Davis and Humphrey Bogart appeared. (I read somewhere that while serving in the Navy during World War I, Bogart's ship was shelled. This left him with a partly paralyzed upper lip that resulted in his famous tightly set mouth and the lisp.)

Another music director, Norman Cloutier supplied the tunes for a bunch of talent and variety shows. Budding Talent and Stars and Starters are two of the talent shows.



Norman appeared in five music variety programs. Music of Manhattan, Eve Young Show, Mindy Carson, Jane Pickens and Olmstead and Company. All over NBC between 1948 and 1957. Prizefighter Maxie Rosenbloom had his own comedy show in 1948-1949 called The Slapsie Maxie Show and Cloutier was around with the music.

There was still another music provider, an organist named John Gart. He was on Big Town, This Life is Mine, Bright Horizon 1941-1945, and the variety show in 1944 called Harry Savoy. Mutual in 1943 and 44 had a musical home type show called Let's Be Charming. John Gart was the organist for this show. He also was with the comedy That's a Good One on the Blue in '43, and on the serial drama about country life, again on the Blue Network in the forties known as House in the Country. Kevin McCarthy on the Invasion of the Body Snatchers, (the good version not the remake) was the star Richard Lawless on the show of the same name on CBS in 1946. John Gart was the organist. The show was an adventure series with a 17th century setting. I remember when I went to see Invasion at a local neighborhood theater many years ago. The place was within walking distance from my home. The children were getting ready for bed and my mother-in-law was visiting. So I went to the movies. What a movie! I just about ran home after the show let out! And I was a married adult man at the time! . . . (to be continued)



Member's Mike



P.O. Box 2058 Cupertino, California 95015

Dear Friends.

I'm looking for taped copies of Lone Journey, a radio serial about Montana ranch life broadcast in Chicago over the NBC Red Network in the early 1940s. According to a story in a magazine of that period, Lone Journey was broadcast five mornings a week, from 10:30 to 10:45 a.m., Central War Time. Please let me know if you have copies of this program, or if you know someone who does. I would really appreciate your help.

Sincerely, David Graham (408) 974-8468

Dear Editor:

In the November Illustrated Press, Dominic Parisi had a brief write-up on Jack Webb's radio career. In this description, Dom asks "Could you picture Webb in a comedy role?" As a matter of fact, in 1946 ABC presented the Jack Webb Show on Wednesdays which was a comedy variety show. As far as I know only 2 shows are available, 4/10 and 4/17/46. Yes, these shows are as bad as you might expect and I would give them one star out of a possible ten. However, since I know that some of you might not believe that they are this bad, I will donate one of these shows to the club library so that you may judge for yourself. I will only record one of the shows, as both would be cruel and unusual punishment. I will record something else on side two. Keep reading and I will tell you the content of side two.

In the December Illustrated Press, Jerry Collins ran a very interesting article on Fran Striker. In this article, Jerry stated that the Lone Ranger radio show ended on May 27, 1955 after 2,956 broadcasts. According to the Lone Ranger log by Terry Salomonson, the Lone Ranger's last original show was broadcast on 9/3/54 and was number 2,596 of the recorded shows but actually number 3,377 of the series. The series was not normally recorded until 1/17/38, show #776 or #1 of the recorded series. After that last new show, the Lone Ranger continued on for another 52 weeks of reruns.

Sergeant Preston continued new shows each Tuesday and Thursday over the Mutual Network until the final show of 6/9/55 again according to Terry Salomonson. This show was #1,260 of the series which had started as a 15 minute show from WXYZ on 2/3/38. Many of the early shows broadcast over the Michigan Radio Network have recently become available. The earliest show I have is from 7/15/43 and these 15 minute shows each contain a complete story. I marvel at the amount of story content in each of these shows. Modern writers should study these scripts for helpful writing tips.

One last interesting fact regarding Sgt. Preston and the Lone Ranger is as noted in <u>Tune In Yesterday</u> that during the last year of the Sgt. Preston run, Brace Beemer took over the title role and Fred Foy became the announcer sounding like the Lone Ranger moved up north. Now for the second side of the cassette I am donating to the club. I have chosen the *Cornered Killer* broadcast of 5/10/55 starring Brace Beemer as Sgt. Preston. Unfortunately the sound of the 2 shows that I have with Brace Beemer is somewhat less than I normally would donate, but this show is still listenable and interesting for its cast.

I look forward to the <u>Illustrated</u> <u>Press</u> each month and appreciate the fine work each of the writers have contributed and the above comments are meant only as a supplement to their fine work and not as a rap of their hard work in assembling these entertaining articles.

Dick Olday

THIS IS RADIO

Do You Cash In on Your Vacation?



by Jack Benny
(NBC-Red Network Comedian)

Sitting here in the shade of a beautiful big umbrella on the front lawn of my Beverly Hills home, I find this a good opportunity to write a guest column — to while away those moments between sales.

I'm on my vacation from radio, you know — but trust little Jackie Benny to put idle moments to good use. Yes

sir, this lemonade stand of mine is doing a booming business.

Lets see, three dozen lemons plus eighteen gallons of water and two cubes of ice . . . that's a cost of twenty-five and two cents. (I get the water free from the spigot at Ronald Coleman's home next door) . . . so it's a net cost of twenty-seven cents a glass . . . hmmmm . . . There you are! A net profit of \$8.75. Not bad at all. I can afford to devote my spare moments to this column with a profit like that.

Let's see now, I was going to talk about something that's been on my mind for some time. Oh, yes. You know, I never get a chance to say what I want on my own program — the writers see to that. I'd like to give you the low-down on my cast. One by one. And this is going to give me as much satisfaction as three twentycent sales. And believe me brother, that's real satisfaction.

Take Mary for instance. Always complaining about her salary. I don't know why I have so much trouble with salaries. Mary says she'd gladly trade her full year's salary for the money that's in my mattress and I'm just tempted to take her up on it. Boy, will she be surprised. It's not there anymore.

And Don Wilson. That big fat genius — of an announcer wouldn't sign his new contract this year until I canceled the clause that required him to attend all the parties at my home to announce the guests as they arrived. Don claimed it made a butler out of him. You know that's impossible. To be a butler you have to fit in a butler's pantry, don't you? That takes care of that.

Then there's Dennis Day, my tenor. A fine ungrateful fellow if ever there was one. Before he began singing on my program he was a frail youngster, underweight and weak. Today he's as strong as an ox, sun-tanned and the picture of good health. But all I get is complaints. He actually objects to mowing the lawn more than once a week.

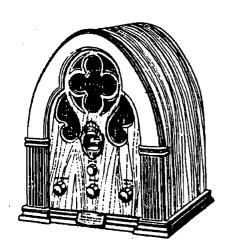
And Phil Harris . . . what Alice ever saw in that big . . . words fail me.

Well I'll have to put an end to this thing sometime and I guess this is about it. Here's another carload of tourists on one of those "see the homes of the movie stars" tours pulling up front.

Back to the lemonade — Business looks good!



Old Time Radio Club Box 426 Lancaster, NY 14086



FIRST CLASS MAIL