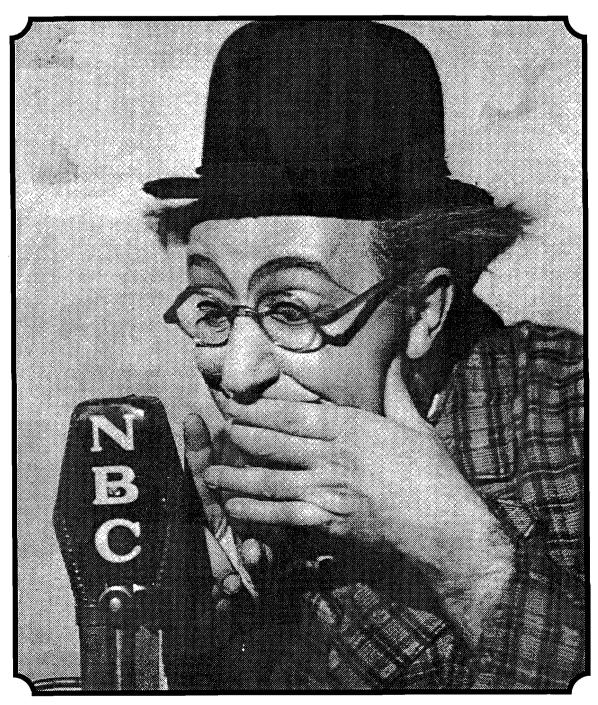
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 279

April 2000



ED WYNN "The Fire Chief"

Membership Information

New member processing, \$5 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: if you join January-March, \$17.50; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. 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 PM during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, NY 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
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086



Back issues of *The Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 postpaid. Publications out of print may be borrowed from our Reference Library.

Deadline for *The Illustrated Press* is the 1st of each month prior to publication.

The Illustrated Press is a monthly newsletter of the Old Time Radio Club, headquartered in Western New York State. Contents except where noted are copyright © 1999 by the OTRC.

Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to: The Illustrated Press
c/o Ken Krug. Editor (716) 684-5290

c/o Ken Krug, Editor (716) 684-5290 49 Regal Street Depew, New York 14043

E-Mail address: AnteakEar @aol.com

Club Officers and Librarians

President

Jerry Collins (716) 683-6199 56 Christen Ct. Lancaster, NY 14086

Vice President & Canadian Branch

Richard Simpson 960 16 Road R.R. 3 Fenwick, Ontario Canada, LOS 1C0

Treasurer, Back Issues, Videos & Records

Dominic Parisi (716) 884-2004 38 Ardmore Pl. Buffalo, NY 14213

Membership Renewals, Change of Address, Cassette Library - #2000 and up Illustrated Press Cover Designs

Peter Bellanca (716) 773-2485 1620 Ferry Road Grand Island, NY 14072

Membership Inquires and OTR Network Related Items

Richard Olday (716) 684-1604 100 Harvey Dr. Lancaster, NY 14086

Tape Libraries

Cassettes - #1 up to 1999

Dan Marafino (716) 684-0733 19 Church Street Lancaster, NY 14086

Reel-to-Reel and Reference Library

Ed Wanat, Sr. (716) 895-9690 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, NY 14225

<u>Tape Library Rates</u>: All reels and video cassettes are \$1.85 per month; audio cassettes and records are \$0.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.



SAME TIME, SAME STATION by JIM COX

PEOPLE ARE FUNNY

He was born at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, July 17, 1912 to some folks named Kelly who abandoned him. Three decades later — and for three decades following — he would be adopted by every family in America. One observer note: "He was beloved for his capacity to turn a studio full of strangers into a cozy living room, and then to engage them all in hilarious double-, and sometimes triple-, crosses . . . he made the Jolly Green Giant into a household word. He proved that kids say the darndest things. He was the first, and one of the best, game show hosts there ever was."

Arthur Kelly changed his surname to Linkletter after his adoption by an Irish clan whose patriarch, Fulton Linkletter, was a Baptist minister. The Linkletters took off later for evangelical pursuits in California. Young Art's original exposure to crowds and audiences, in fact, came to pass in those devout assemblages.

While pursuing a degree in English at San Diego State on a scholarship in 1933 young Linkletter broke into radio at that city's KGB. He turned down a teaching position subsequently because he could earn \$5 more monthly in radio. He worked fairs, aired expositions and by 1939 was a freelancing San Francisco announcer. Two years earlier he had been radio director World's Fair in the city by the bay. He broadcast from battleships, submarines and airplanes and announced numerous sporting contests. Appearing on 15 shows weekly he calculated that by 1941 he had worked 9,000 programs and perhaps conducted as many as 45,000 interviews. NBC signed him to its permanent announcing staff in 1942.

A sincere and abundant capacity for analyzing human nature allowed Linkletter to take advantage of added opportunities. Among the skills he honed was as a manin-the-street interviewer. "I wanted to be somebody, but I had no talent," he reflected. "I couldn't sing, I couldn't act. I was about to quit and go into the executive side of the business when the man in the street idea came along, and my whole life changed." He became a veteran of the genre, eventually presiding over 17 man-in-the-street series. Linkletter instantly

won the trust of his interviewees; he eclipsed others in surveying people of all walks of life. His baby face often restrained in feigned surprise over personal accounts more outlandish than his own which he often handily persuaded his subjects to disclose. Radio historiographer John Dunning, in fact, labeled him as possibly "the smoothest man in radio."

Producer John Guedel, who was to have a permanent effect on Linkletter's career, claims it was he and Truth or Consequences' Ralph Edwards who "invented the game show." One day in 1939 Guedel, a former scripter for the Hal Roach Studios, switched on his automobile radio to initially encounter one of Linkletter's charming, witty and seldom-at-a-loss-for-words routines. Impressed by what he heard he made a mental note to look up the personality behind that animated tongue. A couple of years elapsed before the pair came face-to-face, however, the result of a prearranged rendezvous by a mutual party. Guedel quickly surmised that Linkletter's gift of gab could be turned into gold. He fully intended to capitalize on the discovery he had made.

One day while pursuing some research at the local public library Guedel encountered a volume titled Games. Using it as a basis for thought he came up with an idea for an audience stunt show that would be the antithesis of the typical quiz stock. Pull Over, Neighbor, created for a Los Angeles station, led him to far greater opportunities. Transferring some of those same concepts to yet another series he hit the big time when People Are Funny gained a national audience supported by almost overnight ratings success. Guedel's name became an instantly-identified household word in most American homes as a result; during the decades of the 1940s, 1950s, and even into the 1970s that moniker would be recognized by virtually anyone owning a radio or television receiver.

On People Are Funny he selected Art Baker as the show's original master of ceremonies. Baker a native New Yorker born January 7, 1898, is described by biographer Tom DeLong as "the relatively forgotten host who first introduced the stunt-filled series on human nature," People Are Funny. A music student and gospel vocalist, Baker was a veteran of World War I leading song fests for the Army while overseas. He later harmonized in a barbershop quartet, lectured at Forest Lawn Cemetery and narrated that organization's radio program titled Tapestries of Life. Subsequent assignments led him to create Art Baker's Notebook and Hollywood in Person in 1937. Within two years he was presiding over The Grouch Club and later he was at the helm of John Guedel's Pull Over, Neighbor.

When Guedel proposed *People Are Funny* to NBC he preferred the extroverted Art Linkletter as emcee over the more pedantic Baker. The network disagreed; Baker would host the show while Linkletter, who actually thought up many of the shows pranks, assisted for a little while. Linkletter, incidentally, had been in on the ground floor of developing *People Are Funny*. Guedel claimed the two men hatched out the series in a corner booth of the Brown Derby Restaurant near the famous intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Linkletter later recalled: "The format was unique and simple, an entertaining study of human behavior based on a psychologist's observations and reaction."

The rather avant-garde radio series debuted on April 10, 1942. As time rolled by it became increasingly apparent to many that the show lacked a vital ad-lib quality at the top. A year-and-a-half later Guedel abruptly replaced Baker with Linkletter. Baker sued and lost. People Are Funny became Linkletter's venue and the fans forgot there ever had been another host. Baker subsequently went on to emcee television's You Asked for It. As for Linkletter, his career rose instantly to national prominence as he displayed a style soon coveted by the industry. For it he netted accolades from such noteworthies as Bing Crosby and Eddie Cantor.

Together Linkletter and Guedel made a formidable team and their partnership continued for virtually the remainder of their working lives. *People Are Funny* prevailed as one of radio's (and video's) most formidable primetime fares, with only minor interruptions the show continued on radio until June 10, 1960, more than 15 years after it premiered. On television the original series aired weekly from September 19, 1954 to April 16, 1961, continuing for a few months beyond the radio series' departure.

All of this was preparatory for yet another Guedel-Linkletter collaboration, believed by many industry observers to be the duo's crowning achievement. Linkletter made no bones about the fact that he personally preferred House Party to their earlier successful venture. While House Party was a much more laid-back, relaxed show, both it and People Are Funny depended upon listener and audience participation for their successes. Linkletter confessed that House Party "gave me the opportunity to develop a confrontation that elicited humor from my participants rather than make them the brunt of the joke, as so often happened on People Are Funny." The phenomenal success of House Party also made its star a multimillionaire: the series popularity, sustaining it on the air for a quarter-of-a-century, lined Linkletter's pockets with untold wealth. By developing and splitting ownership of the show with Guedel the emcee came a long way from his humble origins as a forsaken child. It may be noted, too that the two partners—Guedel and Linkletter—never worked under a contract between them.

For a long time Guedel weighed which series to bring to television viewers first—People Are Funny or House Party. When the rival primetime stunt program Truth or Consequences suffered a temporary setback following its initial TV performances Guedel became convinced that it made better sense to put House Party before the camera first. Two years went by, in fact, after that show's assured video success before Guedel and Linkletter would attempt to put People Are Funny on the tube. In the autumn of 1954 the pair launched a trial run of the latter series on Sunday nights on NBC-TV. People Are Funny lasted nearly seven full seasons, while it was well received it never approached the TV patronage enjoyed by House Party across its 18 years on the small screen.

In addition to working all of Linkletter's radio and television shows—The Art Linkletter Show, House Party, Life with Linkletter and People Are Funny—announcer Jack Slattery preceded George Fenneman as announcer on John Guedel's other major show, You Bet Your Life, with Groucho Marx as star. Slattery died at age 62 on October 29, 1979.

On the occasion of *House Party's* 20th anniversary on the air the competition—notably Ralph Edwards, who originated *People Are Funny's* major rival *Truth or Consequences*—paid homage to Linkletter on Edwards' *This Is Your Life.* The date was January 22, 1965.

Following his broadcasting career Linkletter, the effervescent emcee, pursued the door-to-door motif he had adopted early in life while working fairs, competitions and other remotes—interviewing the common man and woman for local radio stations. This time Linkletter was traveling the nation as a stimulating speaker on behalf of a diverse range of challenges an opportunities. Looking back he is appalled by what has transpired in the ensuing years. "We had men-in-the-street [interviews] and now they have men-in-the-gutter Everyone then said, 'My God, what's happening to people?,' just as I say it now when I watch a show like Jerry Springer's."

The ebullient master of ceremonies despised the recklessness of TV shows spinning off from Supermarket Sweepstakes and The Price Is Right. Linkletter put them down for hyping contestants, juicing applause and goosing reactions. There was little to compare between his show cited for warmth and humanity and the others in his opinion. In the 1990s he viewed with disdain such modern video series that required would-be contestants to stand on their seats, wave their arms and scream

maniacally. "The reason we had such consistent success is that I was and am truly interested in people," he said, "and that interest communicated itself to millions of listeners across the country."

WBEN's Little Signs off on Long Career

With little fanfare, WBEN-AM radio newscaster Ed Little closed a final chapter in his legendary broadcasting career, anchoring his final newscast Sunday from the station's studios at 2077 Elmwood Ave. Little's departure just happened to coincide with the end of an era for WBEN as well. Starting today, the station's new base of operations will be in Amherst, where WBEN will be joined by sister stations WGR-AM, WKBW-AM, WKSE-FM, WMJQ-FM and WWWS-AM all of which were purchased recently by broadcast giant Entercom Communications Corp. of Philadelphia.

After 62 years in the business—19 of them at WBEN—Little has seen a lot of comings and goings. This time, he said, it was time for him to move on. "I just felt it was right to take it a little easy," said Little, minutes after signing off for the final time Sunday.

His career in local broadcasting began at age 14 in live radio dramas broadcast from WBEN and the old WEBR radio stations. "It wasn't until my junior year (in high school) that I finally got grown-up parts." Little recalled. From there he went on to tackle disc jockey duties from the old Town Casino nightclub, which showcased such renowned popular performers as Tony Bennett and Rosemary Clooney. Even during a stint in the Army Air Forces during World War II, Little was on the air from a base in Guam and making his first foray into broadcast journalism covering B-29 bombers and the atom bomb blast in Hiroshima. "I actually saw the first pictures of Hiroshima five hours after the bombing," he said.

Back stateside, Little spun records at a station in San Diego before heading back home to Buffalo in the early 1960s, where it was tough for him to find a disc jockey job. "I turned gray at 35, and there wern't too many openings in those days for a graying disc jockey," he recalled. And that's when Little permanently switched to newscasting. at the former WKBW-AM radio, he replaced another soon-to-be local broadcasting legend, Irv Weinstein. Little and KB disc jockey Joey Reynolds became sort of a team in those days when the 50,000-watt AM station was heard in nearly 13 states between

sun up and sundown. "We would get mail from Long Island, New England and the South. Joey's show would even show up in the ratings (books) in places like Baltimore, where we were No. 4 in the ratings," Little recalled. Switching to news duties, Little speculated, added another 35 years to his broadcasting career.

Martin Biniasz, a member of the Buffalo Broadcast Pioneers, stopped by the Elmwood Avenue studios Sunday to wish Little well. According to Biniasz, it was Little's adaptability that ultimately allowed him his longevity in the business. "He's gone from acting in (radio) dramas to (covering sock hops, news and talk radio. His career has spanned so many changes. Ed's definitely a survivor, because he had the talents, presentation and writing skills to take any position at the station," Biniasz said.

The next assignment for Little and his wife, Carmen is to spend a little time with their daughter and her family on Long Island. "But if Dan Rather called up and offered me a job, I just might take it," he said.

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE CASSETTE LIBRARY

2663	Boston Blackie "The Sword Swallower"
	Boston Blackie "Master Diamond Murder Case"
2664	Boston Blackie "Disappearing Body"
	Boston Blackie "The Jim Williams Case"
2665	Boston Blackie "Murder With an Alibi"
	Boston Blackie "Color Blind Accomplice"
2666	True Detective Mysteries "Who Killed Bonnie Collins"
	True Detective Mysteries "Murder in the
	Horror House"
2667	True Detective Mysteries "Shipboard Beauty"
	True Detective Mysteries "Repossessed Wife"
2668	True Detective Mysteries "Horror in a Hospital 3/25/37
	True Detective Mysteries "Rattlesnake and the
	Barefoot Bride" 3/8/37
2669	Challenge of the Yukon #433 5/30/46, #434
	6/6/46, #435 6/13/46, #436 6/20/46
2670	Challenge of the Yukon #437 6/27/46. #438
	7/4/46, #439 7/11/46, #440 7/18/46
2671	Challenge of the Yukon #457 11/14/46, #458
	11/21/46, #459 11/28/46, #460 12/5/46
2672	Challenge of the Yukon #461 12/12/46, #462
	12/19/46, #463 12/26/46. #464 1/2/47
2673	Independence Day BBC 8/4/96
2674	Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar "The Hapless Ham Matter" 1/3/60

...

Publication of the Old Time Radio Club

	Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar "Burning Desire Matter" 12/27/59		
2675	The Big Show #20 3/18/51 (60 min.)		
2676	It Pays To Be Ignorant #106 10/13/44		
	It Pays To Be Ignorant #107 10/20/44		
2677	You Bet Your Life - Secret word is "Clock" 10/1949		
	You Bet Your Life - Secret word is "Radio" 12/27/49		
2678	Mayor of the Town "Crush on Joan Andrews" 9/13/42		
	Mayor of the Town "Tom Andrews Wants to Enlist"9/6/42		
2679	It Pays To Be Ignorant w/Kate Smith 12/8/44		
	It Pays To Be Ignorant "Duck" 12/15/44		
2680	Suspense "Last Letter From Dr. Bronson"		
	8/15/46		
	Suspense "Blue Eyes 8/29/46		
2681	Suspense"The Operation" 1/27/55		
0000	Suspense "A Killing in Abilene" 2/3/55		
2682	Suspense "The Shelter" 10/28/54 Suspense "Last Letter From Dr. Bronson"		
	11/4/54		
2683	Theater Five "Wonderful Stamps from		
2000	Eldorato"		
	Theater Five "Subject Number 428A"		
2684	Theater Five "Incident at Apogee" 8/24/64		
2001	Theater Five "Outside Time" 9/1/64		
2685	Theater Five "The Hostage"		
	Theater Five "I've Got Your Number"		
2686	Theater Five "Outside Time" 9/1/64		
	Theater Five "Noon Star"		
2687	The Lone Ranger "Sign of the Broken Thumb" 11/29/43		
	The Lone Ranger "Rats, Lice and Chinatown" 12/1/43		
2688	The Lone Ranger "Voice in the Tunnel" 11/15/43		
	The Lone Ranger "Rats, Lice and Chinatown" 12/1/43		
2689	The Lone Ranger "Stingaree" 11/19/43		
	The Lone Ranger "Dan Tells a Story" 11/22/43		

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

When our boys in European bases were asked "What show would you like most to see?" almost to a man they shouted, "Grand Ole Opry." So last November this NBC homespun hillbilly troupe, headed by kindly, bumbling comedienne Minnie Pearl and strapping, carrot-topped emcee-singer Red Foley, flew to Europe. In two weeks

the troupe entertained over 25,000, traveling 11,000 miles by plane.

Minnie and Red were accompanied by Opry stars comedian Red Brasfield; Roy Acuff and his Smokey Mountain Boys and Girls; composer-singer Hank Williams of Lonesome Road fame; and dynamic 100 lb. Jimmie Dickens, the The Take a Cold 'Tater and Wait balladeer. They usually put on two shows a day, which meant constant riding in rickety buses nicknamed "Cattle Cars." They learned to sleep standing up. For service men and their families they staged a two-hour show; at hospitals a one-hour stint, so they'd have time to go through the wards of the disabled and cheer up those lonesome, homesick lads. But they could never stick to schedule; the boys always clamored for more folk songs, more music comedy, more hymns. The hospital; doctors insisted each performance was worth tons of medicine!

Minnie Pearl of the 89-cent bright orange organdy dress and the flopping flat-heeled slippers uttered the only complaint. "You boys been feeding me too well. A gal likes to spread cheer, but I've found the boys won't cheer if I've got too much spread." According to Sid Defor, NBC photography editor who filmed these exclusive shots, the crowd for the 8 o'clock show was usually patiently waiting by 5. At Rhein-Main it snaked halfway round the Gateway Theatre, into which 2,200 people jammed. An equal number was turned away. If no auditorium was available, the Opry players improvised one. At Neubiberg hanger they backed two towing trucks together, covered their hoods with brown paper, and presto, a platform! 3,000 chairs were rented from local breweries, and the entertainers went to town clowning, dancing, singing their hearts out! The U.S. Special Service, which plans overseas entertainment, says the Opry crew outdrew any shows to date! . . .

When this top-notch hillbilly program was launched November 24, 1925, over station WSM in Nashville, Tennesee, it consisted of an hour's homespun joshing by "Solemn Old Judge" George Dewey Hay against the screeching of an 80-year-old mountain fiddler. A very sedate grand opera program had preceded rustic corn. Hay quipped, "After that really grand opry I'm going to present our own folk songs, close to the ground, on the order of grand ole opry."

Today the outgrowth of Hay's program has become an American institution. It is largely responsible for our love of lively, good-humored folk lore and songs. Today, it emanates from a Tennesee hall seating 4,000. But our *Grand Ole Opry* still follows the formula of truly being "close to the ground."

(Radio Album, Spring 1950)

The Wartime Radio Plays of Norman Corwin

By Lance Hunt (Continued from the March Issue)



ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH—First broadcast on May 8, 1945 after announcement of the end of the conflict in Europe. This work will probably become Corwin's most famous radio piece. Inspirational, it is uncomplicated while still creating a tapestry of the war and the resultant jubilation that one phase of it was over.

The program was commissioned by the Columbia Broadcasting Co. (with an advance kind of journalistic predictability) late in 1944. Corwin, in a preface to a Simon and Schuster edition (which sold 50,000 copies in two weeks) said the work was not a poem. But John Mason Brown in the <u>Saturday Review</u> found the script "with its Whitmanesque cadences . . . a newsreel in words of war emotions, battle reasons and peace hopes . . . an important and stirring statement." (Corwin introduced his published script with a Whitman quote—"Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day.")

The radio production was aided significantly by the authoritative, stentorian tones of its narrator, Martin Gabel, (who sounds somewhat like Orson Welles) and the stirring and dramatic music of Bernard Hermann. (Hermann especially was favored by Corwin for many of his productions.) After the broadcast, CBS, New York received 1,000 phone calls and in Hollywood, 1,600 calls. Corwin's piece today is as he states "more than an artifact in the archeology of radio." Its significance lies in its simple compassion and empathy for those affected by the war and its reverberations through history. It can especially be used today to inform new generations as to what an armed conflict in your backyard can pro-"And how do you think those lights look in duce: Europe after five years of blackout, going on to six? Brother, pretty good. Pretty good, sister. The kids of Poland will soon know what an orange tastes like. And the smell of honest-to-God bread freshly made and sawdust-free will create a stir in the streets of Athens." Fresh bread (a smell), an orange (a taste) and lights again (a sight), the simple sensual images of everyday pleasures restored and brought home to the average radio listener involved in the great conflict.

His patriotic paeans soar, especially when he praises the average man: "Far flung ordinary men, unspectacular but free, rousing out of their habits and their homes,

got up early one morning, flexed their muscles learned (as amateurs) the manual of arms, and set out across perilous plains and oceans to whop the bejesus out of the professionals." His philosophy on tyrannical leadership: "No great tyranny has ever lasted. The empires of Pharaoh, Caesar, Philip, Napoleon, Hitler—each flourished, and held sway, and was destroyed. They were powerful, but all of them forgot one thing: that the only civilization which can endure is a free one . . . "

For Corwin, the heroes of the war were the little guys and those that made mistakes because they were young and new and untrained. "In the long view backward, shall not the hobnail of the homeguard, scuffing the sidewalk, make as loud a ringing as a clash of swords against Achilies' shield? Who shall bookkeep the glory of this war? And is the farmer boy who drove his trainer straight into the earth from fifteen thousand feet—(a mistake mark you, but it was at night, and his first try at flight by instrument alone—) Is he far beneath a hero? Hallowed be the anti-fascist hobnail on cement, the privy-cleaner, the button polisher, the cook who scrambled eggs digested by the pilot who sank the cruiser in mid-morning."

Corwin then puts a question to the world through the voice of a private first class in the Army of the United Nations: "If you don't mind there are some things we guys would like to know: First of all, who did we beat? How much did it cost to beat him? What have we learned? What do we know now that we didn't know before? What do we do now? Is it all going to happen again?" Corwin asked these questions in 1945. But his unintentional historic prospective seems more meaningful today: "Let the singing fade, the celebrants go home. The bowl is drained and emptied and the toasts are drunk, the guns are still, the tanks garaged, the plane rests in the hanger; only the night remains; and the armed camps." The boy with questions on his mind, turns on his cot in the barracks: stares at the ceiling, says to himself: . . . "I hope to God it won't happen again. I hope they plan better this time."



Ladies' Man

In spite of visiting firemen, Ed's half-hour is a one-man show

On October 6, 1949, viewers saw Ed Wynn's TV show for the first time. Old-timers wept. Youngsters (the fourth generation of addicts) whistled, yakked and began writing him mash notes. Wynn, who had turned down 12 television offers before accepting this Thursday stint, was in! No fast, loud, brash program, this, but a leisurely, relaxed half-hour of gentle fun, punctuated by truly hilarious commercials and uniformly nifty performances by guest stars—usually female and gorgeous. Wynn, who has clowned professionally on stage, screen and radio since he was fifteen, and whom Fred Allen called the greatest visual comedian of our time, has really found his element in television. All his magnificent props, his hats (he has 800 of them), his gadgets, his broken smile, come across beautifully in this intimate medium.

The show which has a \$15,000 weekly budget, is filmed off the television tube by kinescope in Hollywood, and subsequently cut, sometimes by as much as a full hour. This method gives Ed—the wistful-faced, the lisping—a chance to telescope his material into its funniest 30 minutes. At 63, Ed Wynn is entering his 48th year in show business, plans never to retire in spite of the fact that home and mother never looked better. After two unhappy marriages (the first to the late Hilda Keenana, the next to showgirl Frieda Mierse), Wynn is now married to Dorothy Nesbitt (see inset picture above), a good-looking blonde with a nice small boy by a previous marriage. They live on a 16-acre estate in Hollywood near Keenan Wynn, the lad who tried, fortunately without any success, to tlak his old man into retiring at fifty and who is now his greatest yakker.

Superstitious, (he has 93 good-luck tokens—paramount among which is a 42-year-old pair of shoes on which he's had made \$3,000 worth of repairs) sentemental (he bawls over all the old songs) Ed's a thoroughly sweet guy who has never used a single off-color joke in any of his routines. This beloved clown's charm is a subtle combination of innocence and warmth, kindness and buffoonery; and it's combination so potent that it's landed Ed on charm expert Margery Wilson's list of the world's ten most charming people. See him Thursday night, and you'll know what she means.

(Radio Album Magazine, Spring 1950)



Mister Thrifty: Ty Power was a welcome treat to Mary if not to Jack, named 1950s most economical by the National Thrift Committee.

"GOOD OLD DAYS"

Edward B. Landon has no desire to return to those "Good Old Days"

Although the early period of radio broadcasting was exciting, Edward B. Landon, like other pioneers, remembers the heartbreaks and the hard work and has no desire to bring back "the good old days."

Landon, of KDKA's technical staff, joined the Pittsburgh Westinghouse station in February, 1921, four months after it had introduced radio broadcasting to the world. The "growing pains," amusing as they seem today, were intense.

When Westinghouse engineers pitched a tent studio on the roof of a building, the whistle of a passing freight train became a regular 8:30 p.m. feature. A well-known tenor, while singing in the tent, opened his mouth wide to sing a high note and almost swallowed an insect; his forceful comments were not in good radio taste and a vigilant operator took the station off the air in a hurry. One day after the first indoor studio had been built, a stray dog ran in while the baseball scores were being read, upset the microphone, and added his excited barks to the pandemonium that resulted when the announcer scrambled his scores and notes.

"Those were the 'good, old days,'" says Landon, "but for my part, give me radio as we know it today."

How Was That Again?

.......

The maid who serves breakfast to the Graves family on CBS's Junior Miss is the very social dowager on My Friend Irma, Mrs. Rhinelander. Fluffy Adams, best friend of Junior Miss Judy Graves, is the daughter of a slightly wackey salesgirl who works, to use the word loosely, at Willock's department store. And Judy, to complicate matters, borrows the clothes of a CBS singer. To gnarl up the situation still further, Mrs. O'Riely, Irma's landlady, could be the grandmother of Judy Graves.

Well maybe this explanation will help you: Myra Marsh plays Hilda, the maid with the bum hip and a mounted policeman for a boyfriend, on the *Junior Miss* show. She's also Mrs. Rhinelander, whose son Richard III is the target for *My Friend Irms*'s friend Jane Stacey's affections. Fluffy Adams, is the salesgirl star of *Leave It*

to Joan. Gloria Gordon is Mrs. O'Riley at the mike. At home, she's the mother of Gale Gordon, who is the radio father of Judy Graves, as well as the high school principal who nags Our Miss Brooks. And Judy, the crux of this genealogical jigsaw, is played by Barbara Whiting, young sister of Margaret Whiting, famous songstress.

Death Valley Days Writer is Native of New England

But Trips Into West Offset "Handicap"

The person who writes Columbia Network's *Death Valley Days* is a woman, a native New Englander, a graduate of Vassar (where no steers were ever roped and branded) and has raised a family in Rye, New York.

Prior to Death Valley Days, the most she knew of the wild West was the stories told her by her father, a mining engineer. But that doesn't mean that Writer Ruth Cornwall Woodman doesn't know at first hand, of what she writes. When, in 1930, Death Valley Days decided to use that new medium of entertainment-radio-to dramatize true stories of the West. Mrs. Woodman was an advertising copy writer and Death Valley was nothing more to her than an unusual geological formation noted in all atlases. Given the job of writing the scripts, Mrs. Woodman attacked the problem the best way she knew-by going directly to Death Valley to gather story material. She understood the job would last but a year, which proved incorrect. The program is now in its 12th year and ranks as the oldest half-hour network dramatic show. Since 1930, Mrs. Woodman has kept up her practice of making regular yearly trips to the Death Valley regions gathering her story material and checking on the facts herself. When the program was young, she confined her stories only to Death Valley, but in recent years has spread into the surrounding country of Arizona, Utah, Texas and Nevada. This year she travel thru Washington, Oregon and down into California—a trip which resulted in at least one story laid in Washington.

Mrs. Woodman's method of working is simple. She doesn't think her job a strange one for a woman, and takes a male guide with her not so much for protection as a means of entree into saloons and such places normally prohibited to women alone. On the more rugged treks into out-of-the-way camps, however, the male guide is a necessity. Story tips are gathered for the main part, orally. Her opening conversational wedge is almost always *Death Valley Days*. Mrs. Woodman has yet to meet someone in the West not acquainted with the program, with the result that people always know

what she wants and give her leads on the best people to see. One "must" in every new town she hits is a thorough study of the old newspaper files. In addition Mrs. Woodman is a regular subscriber to such western papers as the Tombstone Epitaph, the Inyo Register and the Arizona Highways Magazine. All have given her permission to use anything they print. She never knows of course when a new story might turn up. She stopped in the little town of St. George in southern Utah one evening expecting only to stay overnight. A chat with the local service station operator started the wheels turning and Mrs. Woodman didn't leave until three days later.

Although it's quite a job, Mrs. Woodman keeps up a correspondence with everyone she has interviewed. Also now that the program is so well known, people regularly write in giving suggestions for stories.

Here and There

Dom Parisi is looking for some information on a broadcast called "The Church in the Wildwood." It may have been a regional broadcast. If anyone has any info on this show please send a note.

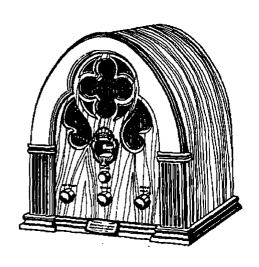
We received a note in answer to Gene Dench's question regarding the availability of The Wartime Radio Plays of Norman Corwin. There are known to be 7 shows available all from 1942. February 14, 28, March 7, 21, April 4, 18 and May 2. RHAC has on their reel #1290—"This Is War" 2/28/42, "Your Army" 3/7/42, "Your Air Force" 4/4/42.



UNHOLY MATRIMONY: Radio's most reluctant newlywed, Andy's been neck-deep in woe since he said "I do" to Abigail

Old Time Radio Club

49 Regal Street Depew, NY 14043



FIRST CLASS MAIL

REGISTRATION FORM
17 ANNUAL OLD TIME RADIO & 1
SAT. DINIVER RESERVATIONS
NUMBER OF DEALER TABLES
(MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BOB BUR
と

10780 GUNPOWDERRD. FLORENCE, KH 41047 (602) 287:0333

1 (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1) (1	SE S
RADISSON HOTEL 11320 CHESTER RD CINCLINUATI, OHIO 15216 (513)771-1720 ROOMS: \$72 SINGLE OR DOUBLE (MENTON SHOWNHEN MAKING RESERVICTIONS) MORE INFORMATIONS MORE INFORMATION CALL BOB BURCHETT (MENTON SHOWNHEN MAKING RESERVICTIONS) MORE INFORMATION CALL BOB BURCHETT (MENTON SHOWNHEN MORE INFORMATION CALL BOB BURCHETT (MENTON SHOWNHEN MORE INFORMATION MOR	温息