

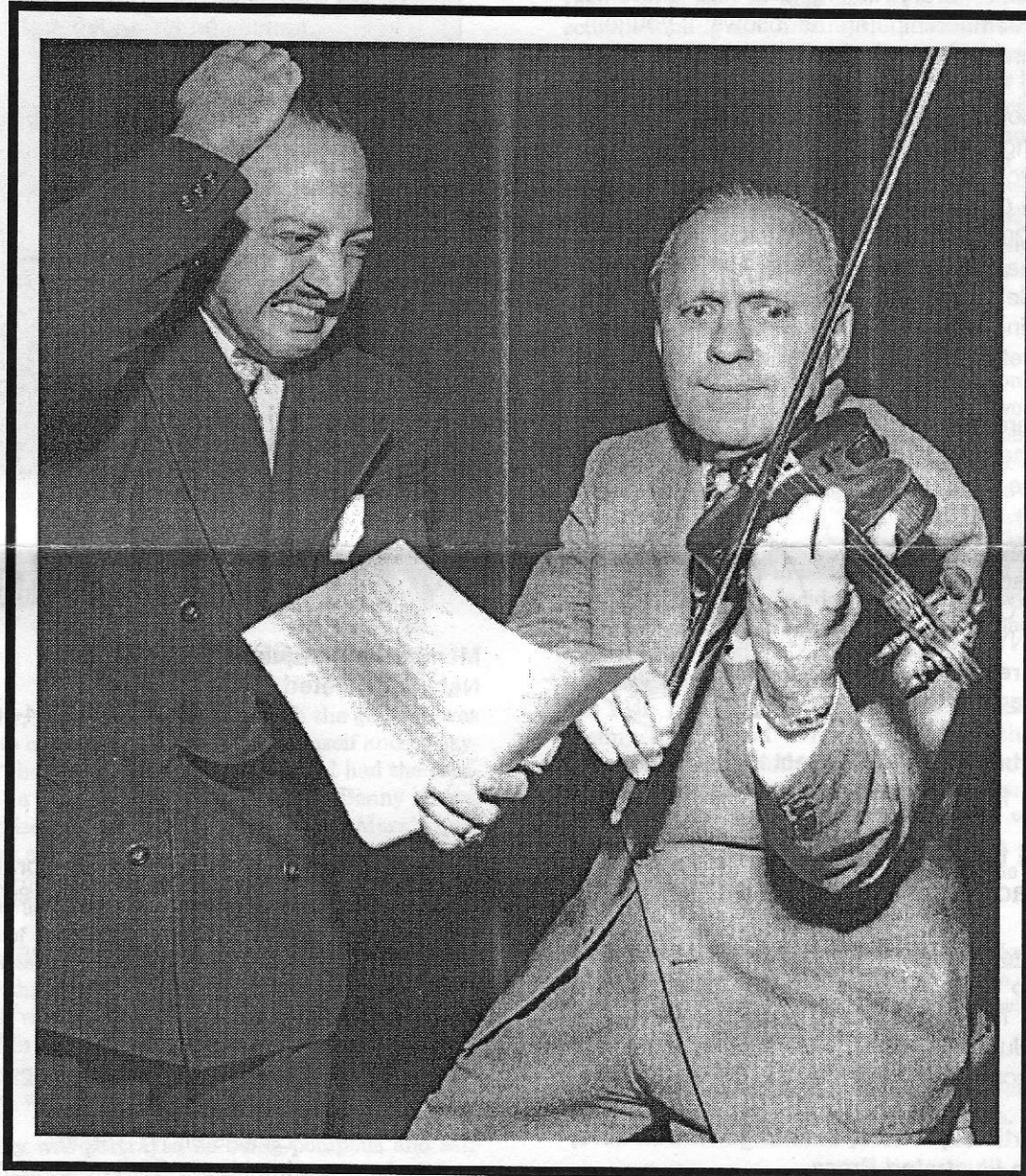
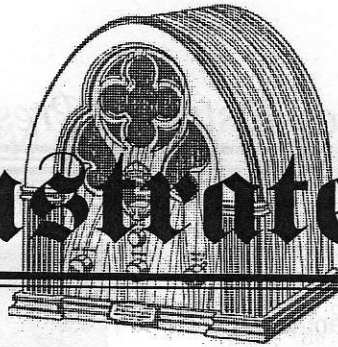
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 360

May 2008



**JACK BENNY with His Violin
Teacher Professor LeBLANC**

The Illustrated Press

Membership Information

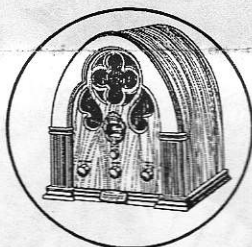
Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing newsletter issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM during the months of September through June at St. Aloysius School Hall, Cleveland Drive and Century Road, Cheektowaga, NY. There is **no** meeting during the month of July, and an informal meeting is held in the month of August.

Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

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Lancaster, NY 14086

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Library Rates:

Audio cassettes and CDs are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette or CD** which is **retained** by the member. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.



Jack Benny

by TOM CHERRE

Jack Benny, you couldn't help but love the guy. He was my favorite comedian. Just by being himself and by saying "Well" he got a laugh. The other day I had the occasion to get a chuckle out of one of the old Benny shows. Jack disguises himself to get on Groucho Marx's quiz show to try and win some money. When he gets down to the jackpot question he has a chance to win \$3000. All he has to do is give the real age of Jack Benny. After moments of pondering and indecision he painfully says 39 and loses the money. Can you imagine Jack Benny giving up three grand? As most of us know Jack Benny in real life was nothing like the skinflinting cheapskate he played in character. He was generous to the point of giving to numerous charities and always helping out a friend who was down on his luck.

Jack Benny was portrayed as being pompous and self-centered. Nothing was further from the truth. Benny was a very humble man. As he told his writers, "I don't care who gets the laugh, as long as it's funny and good for the show." Unlike Hope's gag writers Benny's group was with him for many years. Hope's crew had frequent turnovers. It appears that Hope was a little tight with a buck, and was a bit more demanding than the soft spoken and generous Benny.

Another attribute to Jack Benny's character was an incident that took place many years ago in St. Joe, Missouri. Jack and crew were on location and were booked to spend the night at a local hotel. The desk clerk said you're all set, but the black fellow Rochester can't stay. Benny then said in that case we'll go elsewhere. After some hemming and hawing the manager said everyone could stay. In those days Rochester had a very unique role. He was black and often got the upper hand on his boss Jack. He would beat him at gin rummy constantly and Jack would have to do the household chores in order to pay him back. Rochester bamboozled Jack many times causing some uproar with Southern listeners. Things were like that in the late 30s and early 40s. If you think about it most of your sit-coms today lack any quality. There might be a few good ones, but most are trashy and boring. The Benny Show had great writers, good talent and some hilarious story lines.

We also forget that Jack Benny was an accomplished violin player. As a kid his parents hoped he would perform in an orchestra doing concerts and the classics. Benny was happier playing in the pits for vaudeville making \$7.50 a week. His playing off-key and screeching was merely a ploy for laughs. With a little practice he could have become a virtuoso. On more than one occasion Jack was invited to play in concert benefits and play some of the classical stuff. Incidentally Jack always hated his theme song "Love in Bloom." He said it had nothing to do with comedy.

In 1949 Newsweek magazine did an article on Jack Benny. In it he said "Where would I be without my writers, Rochester, Dennis Day, Mary, Phil Harris, and Don Wilson?" He hand picked all his writers and cast. This humbleness was nothing new. The first words on his opening show were "Hello folks, this is Jack Benny. There will be a short pause for everyone to say Who Cares."

It's a shame TV Land or Nick at Nite doesn't feature some of his old shows. They play the same old ones over and over again and again. I'll leave you with a few tidbits and trivia on Jack Benny.

A middle school in Jack's hometown of Waukegan has a football team with its nickname the 39ers.

Once Jack was a guest contestant on the \$64,000 *Question Show*. He answered the first question right and won \$1.00 and then he quit.

Jack was also a contestant on *The Password Game*. He got the word "miser" and gave his clue as "me."

In 1949 he served as Master of Ceremonies at Harry S.

The Illustrated Press

Truman's inaugural ball. When he arrived at the White House a guard asked him what was inside his violin case. As a joke he whispered "it's a Thompson sub-machine gun." The guard replied, "that's a relief, I thought it was your violin."

On receiving a special award Jack said "I really don't deserve this, but I have arthritis and I don't deserve that either."

At his funeral Jack's best friend George Burns gave the eulogy, but broke down and Bob Hope continued it saying "for a man who was the master of comedic timing, you'd have to say this was the only time Jack Benny's timing was off. He left us too soon." Bob Hope was so right. He was one of the greatest. "Good Night Folks".



Librarian's Notes

By FRANK BORK

LIST OF MISSING RADIO SHOWS

If you have a copy of one or more of the following shows, PLEASE consider either donating or loaning them to me, your club librarian. I will make copies, enter them into the club's library and return your originals. As of this writing, I have not received any response to either donate or loan any shows to our club. Please help me get our library back in good shape.

Listed below are the missing cassettes for this month:

- #528 -The Burns & Allen Show - Lunch At The Brown Derby 3/31/49
The Lone Ranger - Dan Reed Is Mistaken For The Lone Ranger 3/10/59
- #531 -The Jack Benny Program - Gopher Trap For Don 12/14/52
Christmas Shopping For Don XX/XX/XX
Oil Paints For Don 12/5/54
Dates For Don XX/XX/XX
- #535 -I Love A Mystery - Bury Your Dead In Arizona (Part 2)
- #536 -Tarzan - Tarzan And The Manuema 2/1/51
Siren Of Omdur Mara 2/8/51
Black Gold Of Africa 2/15/51
- #545 -The Haunted House - Haunted House XX/XX/XX
Man In The Crowd -Message Found In A Bottle XX/XX/XX

- #546 -The Key - Alexis
The Cellar
- #567 -The Man Called X - The Bible XX/XX/XX
Uranium Mine Rescue - XX/XX/XX
- #568 -BBC Science Fiction - Tau Sands Experience
XX/XX/XX
- #571 -The Lone Ranger - Iron Box 12/12/41
Remember The Alamo 12/22/41
- #575 -Sherlock Holmes - The Second Stain XX/XX/XX
Wisteria Lodge XX/XX/XX

Again this month I'd like to thank club member Dick Nowack from Holly, NY for his generous donation of 25 excellent cassettes to the club library. Thanks again Dick, you've really got the Club Spirit.

The Year 1951 in Review

By JERRY COLLINS

Some of the more significant events of 1951 would include:

1. General Douglas MacArthur was removed as Commander of the United Nations in Korea by President Harry Truman after publicly disagreeing with Truman's Korean War Policy.
2. The 22nd Amendment was ratified limiting the president's tenure to two terms.
3. The first full-color television program was broadcast from the Empire State Building.
4. Joe DiMaggio signed his third consecutive \$100,000 contract. Late in the year he announced his retirement.
5. Americans watched Queen Elizabeth in Canada in the first international broadcast in the United States.
6. The importance of television was further enhanced when the March of Time newsreels, after 16 years, was discontinued in movie theaters.
7. At the age of 20, Willie Mays joined the New York Giants baseball team.
8. The Chase and Manhattan Banks combine together to form one of the biggest mergers in American economic history.
9. The early 1950s was a period in American History associated with McCarthyism, the construction of home bomb shelters, the trials of Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs and the Hollywood Ten. It was time for the media to enter the controversy. *I Was a Communist for the FBI* and *I Led Three Lives* were both popular radio and television shows. The movies contribution to the topic was *Walk East on Beacon Street*

The Illustrated Press

10. The UN headquarters in New York City were officially opened.
11. Chinese and North Korean forces captured Seoul.
12. January avalanches in the Alps led to the death of 240 people and the temporary burial of 45,000.
13. The derailment of a Pennsylvania Railroad passenger car caused the death of 85 and injuries to 500.
14. Dennis the Menace comic strip first appeared on comic pages throughout the country.
15. The King and I starring Gertrude Lawrence and Yul Brynner opened on Broadway.
16. Showboat opened at Radio City Music Hall in mid July.
17. The Great Flood of 1951 caused a great deal of devastation in the mid-Western part of the United States.
18. Shopping World opened in Framingham, Massachusetts in the fall of 1951. It was one of the first malls in the United States.
19. *I Love Lucy* debuted on CBS television.
20. In the world of sports it will be remembered as the "Shot Heard Around the World." The New York Giants came from 13 games behind to tie the Brooklyn Dodgers on the last day of the regular season. It was decided that the title would be determined by a three game playoff series. The pennant was finally decided in the ninth inning of the final game when Bobby Thompson hit a three-run home-run off Ralph Branca to capture the National League pennant. Millions watched the game on television, while many more rushed out to buy television sets to watch the World Series. I saw all nine games on our 10" RCA set.
21. Sometimes history has been changed by last minute fateful decisions or by decisions not to act. CBS Television initially rejected Desi Arnaz as Lucille Ball husband in *I Love Lucy*. In a last minute decision hired Arnaz and history was made. In that same year Willie Mays began the baseball season with Minneapolis Millers baseball team. After dominating American Association pitching Mays was called up by the parent club the New York Giants. After a very frustrating start Mays asked to be returned to the minors. Manager Leo Durocher ignored the plea and Mays eventually became an integral part of the Giant's pennant winning team.
22. The Dumont television network paid \$75,000 for the television rights to the 1951 NFL Championship game. It became the first pro championship football game to be transmitted throughout the whole country.
23. As an indication of the declining influence of radio, many shows were signing off for the last time. *Ellery Queen* in 1948. *Box 13*, *Fred Allen*, *Captain Midnight*, *Murder and Mr. Malone* and *Frank Merriwell* all left in 1949. *The Thin Man*, *Boston*

Blackie and *A Date with Judy* joined the list of departed show in 1950. In 1951 the list greatly increased in size; *Nero Wolfe*, *Sam Spade*, *Straight Arrow*, *Superman*, *Rogue's Gallery*, *The Saint* and *Dimension X*. Nearly three times as many would leave the following year.

The Years best music included;

1. Be My Love
2. Because of You
3. Cold, Cold Heart
4. Come On-A My House
5. Cry
6. How High the Moon
7. If
8. It's No Sin
9. Too Young
10. It Is No Secret
11. Tell Me Why
12. The Loveliest Night of the Year
13. Mockin' Bird Hill
14. Shrimp Boats
15. In the Cool, Cool of the Evening
16. Unforgettable
17. On Top of Old Smoky
18. My Heart Cries for You
19. Undecided
20. I Get Ideas
21. Jezebel
22. Charmaine

The Best Movies of 1951 included;

1. An American in Paris
2. Alice in Wonderland
3. Scrooge
4. A Streetcar Named Desire
5. The Day the Earth Stood Still
6. Showboat
7. All About Eve
8. Sunset Blvd.
9. A Place in the Sun
10. The Red Badge of Courage
11. Strangers on the Train
12. Quo Vadis

The Years Most Popular Books Were;

1. From Here to Eternity
2. A Woman Called Fancy
3. Washington Confidential
4. The Caine Mutiny
5. Return to Paradise
6. The Foundling
7. Betty Crocker Picture Cook Book
8. The Sea Around Us
9. Pogo
10. Kon-Tiki

The Illustrated Press

11. Moses
12. The Cardinal
13. The Cruel Sea
14. Melville Goodwin, USA
15. The Wanderer
16. The Town

The Following teams and individuals and teams won sports championships in 1951.

1. As was previously mentioned the New York Giants won the National League pennant by winning 2 out of 3 playoff games against the New York Giants. The New York Yankees won the American League Pennant by five games over the Cleveland Indians with a 98-56 record. The Yanks used a very balanced offense and strong pitching to win the Pennant and World Series. Gil McDougald hit .309, while Yogi Berra drove in 88 runs. Johnny Mize hit 10 homeruns and had 49 RBI's. Phil Rizzuto, Joe DiMaggio, Gene Woodling, Mickey Mantle and Hank Bauer led a balanced attack. Even though Whitey Ford was in the service, the Yankees still had one of the best pitching staffs in baseball Ed Lopat (21-9). Vic Raschi 21-10 and Allie Reynolds (17-8). Berra, DiMaggio, Rizzuto and Lopat were All Star selections. The Giants might have had the best hitter in baseball that year, Monte Irvin who hit .312 with 24 homeruns and 121 RBI's. Bobby Thompson had 32 homeruns and 101 RBI's. Wes Westrum had 20 homeruns along with 70, while only hitting only .219. Alvin Dark hit .303, while combining with Eddie Stanky to form one of the best keystone combinations in the league. Don Mueller and Whitey Lockman also made key contributions to the Giants attack. Sal Maglie (23-6), Larry Jansen (23-11) and Jim Hearn (17-9) formed the best pitching staff in the National League. Dark, Maglie and Jansen were All-Star selections. The Giants won two of the first three games behind the pitching of Dave Koslo and Jim Hearn. Reynolds, Lopat and Raschi won the next three games to take the series. The Yanks had a more balanced attack; Rizzuto 8 hits including a homerun, Berra 6 hits, DiMaggio 6 hits including a homerun and 5 RBI's and Gil McDougald with 6 hits 1 homerun and 7 RBI's. Irvin had 11 hits, while Dark had 10 hits. Lockman was the top run producer with 6 hits and 4 RBI's.
2. Although the Cleveland Browns had the best regular season record it was the Rams that edged the Lions by a ½ game that won the NFL championship game 24-17. Dick Hoerner and Dan Towler scored on one-yard runs. The latter followed a 22-yard fumble recovery and run by Andy Robustelli. Bob Waterfield added a 17-yard field goal. The Browns scored on Otto Graham's 17-yard pass to Dub Jones, Lou Groza's record setting 52-yard field goal and Ken Carpenter's 5-yard run. With only minutes left in the game Norm Van Brocklin threw a 73-yard TD pass to Tom Fears. Thirteen participants in the game are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame; Tom Fears, Elroy Hirsch. Andy Robustelli, Norm Van Brocklin, Bob Waterfield, Otto Graham, Frank Gatski, Len Ford, Lou Groza, Dante Lavelli, Marion Motley, Don Shula and Bill Willis.
3. The UP and AP both selected the University of Tennessee as the top Team in college football. The Volunteers were led by quarterback Hank Lauricella and lineman Doug Adkins. Although they lost to Maryland 28-13 in the Sugar Bowl they had already secured the top spot in the polls. Michigan State, Maryland, Princeton, Illinois, Georgia Tech and the University of San Francisco all finished with undefeated records, but post season did not count in the ranking in those days. The Heisman, Walter Camp and Maxwell Trophies were all won by Dick Kazmaier. Lauricella was the runner up for the Heisman Trophy. Other top backs were Johnny Karras (Illinois), Frank Gifford (USC), Ollie Matson (San Francisco), Hugh McElhenny (Washington), Vito "Babe" Parilli (Kentucky) and Billy Vessels (Oklahoma). Adkins along with Jim Weatherall, Bill McColl and Billy Howton were the top lineman in the country
4. It was pure nostalgia as the Rochester Royals squared off against the New York Knicks. The Royals defeated Fort Wayne and then upset Minneapolis to make it to the finals. Unfortunately for the Lakers their big star, George Mikan, played with a hair line ankle fracture. The Knicks defeated Boston and Syracuse on the road to the finals. The Royals were led by Arnie Risen (16.3), Bob Davies (15.2), Jack Coleman (11.4), Bobby Wanzer (10.8) and Arnie Johnson (9.4). As the first man off the bench Red Holtzman scored 23 points in game 3 of the Laker series. The Knicks were led by Vince Boryla (14.9), Harry Gallatin (12.8), Max Zaslofski (12.7), Nat "Sweet Water" Clifton (8) Connie Simmons (9.2) and Dick McGuire (8.4). Ernie Vanderweghe, Tony Lavelli and George Kafton came off the bench to help New York. Although Clifton and Gallatin were both 6'6" they were New York's top rebounders. Risen and Coleman did most of the rebounding for Rochester. The scoring of Zaslofski and Simmons and the fine play of Clifton kept the Knicks in contention. In the seventh and final game the Royals came from behind to win the championship. Two free throws by Davies and a lay-up by Coleman sealed the victory and the title 79-75. The winners were led by Risen with 24 points and 13 rebounds, Bob Davies 20 points and Wanzer 13 points. The games were played in long

The Illustrated Press

forgotten arenas, Rochester's Edgerton's Park Sports Arena (capacity 4,000) and New York's 69th Regiment Armory.

5. Kentucky was one of college basketball's finest teams at mid-century. In 1951 they were led by Bill Spivey, Frank Ramsey and Cliff Hagen. The lineup was much too potent for the opposition as they easily defeated Kansas State 68-58 in the NCAA Championship game. BYU defeated Dayton 62-43 to win the NIT title.
6. No team has been more favored to win a national title than the Detroit Red Wings were in the 1950-51 NFL season. Unfortunately they did not even make it to the finals. The Red Wings placed four players, Terry Sawchuck, Red Kelly, Gordie Howe and Ted Lindsay, on the league All-Star team. Leo Reis made the second team at defense, while Sid Abel was the selection at center. Detroit finished the regular season with a 44-13-13 record, but lost to the Canadians in six games in the semi-final round. Meanwhile Toronto finished the season with a 41-16-13 record and eliminated Boston in five games in the semi-final round. In the finals the Maple Leafs defeated the Habs in five overtime games. Boston filled the remaining two slots on the All-Star team with Milt Schmidt and Bill Quakenbush. Maurice Richard was the Montreal player on the second team. Toronto added Jimmy Thompson, Ted Kennedy and Sid Smith to the second team.
7. Once again Ben Hogan and Sam Snead dominated professional golf. Hogan won the U.S. Open, the Masters and the World Championship of Golf, while Snead won the PGA Tournament.
8. Lee Willard won the Indianapolis 500 at a speed of 126.24 MPH.

The 1951 Cost of Living

1. New House - \$9,000
2. New Car - \$1,520
3. Tuition to Harvard - \$600 per year
4. Movie Ticket - \$.65
5. Gasoline - \$.19 per gallon
6. U.S. Postage Stamp - \$.03
7. Eggs - \$.24 per dozen
8. Fresh Ground Hamburger - \$.50
9. Fresh Baked bread - \$.16 per Loaf

The following shows premiered on Television:

1. Love Lucy
2. The Red Skelton Show
3. Search for Tomorrow
4. The Dinah Shore Show
5. The Roy Roger's Show
6. The Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok

Television's Top Shows Were:

1. Texaco Star Theater (Milton Berle)
2. Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts
3. Arthur Godfrey and His Friends
4. The Lone Ranger
5. Philco TV Playhouse
6. Hopalong Cassidy
7. The Jack Benny Show
8. You Bet Your Life
9. Fireside Theater
10. Colgate Comedy Hour
11. Your Show of Shows (Sid Caesar, Imogene Coccoa, Carl Reiner, Howard Morris and Don Knotts)

Radio's New Shows were:

None of any significance



BOOK REVIEW

Cat Whiskers and Talking Furniture

By John Rayburn

Reviewed by JERRY COLLINS

If you have ever met John Rayburn, you know that certain adjectives apply very distinctly to him; charming, jovial, enthusiastic, emotional, exciting, exuberant and ebullient. These characteristics are evident throughout his new book. John is quite a linguist and I am certain he will enjoy these comments.

John has been part of radio for more than 60 years and I believe he has enjoyed every moment of it. As a broadcaster he has covered both major and minor news and sporting events. In addition I do believe that he has remembered nearly every event of these past six decades. Rayburn has met and/or interviewed presidents, entertainers, sports figures and religious leaders. He has announced bowl games and wrestling matches, NCAA basketball games and high school basketball games and industrial League basketball games as well as pro golfing matches.

One small flaw in the book is the lack of strong organization. For example early in the book he jumps from Jack Benny and Mel Blanc to why Kenny Sailors of the University of Wyoming developed the first college jump shot. On the other hand one could argue that the book's spontaneity is its greatest feature and that it is the

result of this lack of precise organization. I would tend to support the latter argument.

The book is replete with great stories and anecdotes. My most recent book, *On the Sidelines* contains many of these same anecdotes. Most pop culture fans enjoy this literary style and John Rayburn has given them something to really enjoy. Now just a small sampling of these stories. What is the definition of an atheist? He is a football fan who watches a game between Notre Dame and Southern Methodist and doesn't care who wins.

One of the most frightening episodes in the history of radio was the fictional Martian invasion at Grover's Mill, New Jersey on October 30, 1938 (*Mercury Theatre of the Air*). When interviewed about the legitimacy of the event, Mrs. H.V. Kaltenborn claimed she always knew that it was fictional because her husband was not asked to be part of the program.

When C. W. Hooper appeared on *We the People*, he offered to show how the rating system worked. He made a random telephone call to find out what show the recipient of the telephone call was listening to. By mistake Hooper called the studio from which the *Amos and Andy* show was being broadcast. The show automatically received 30 votes.

Rayburn concludes the book discussing the career of some of radio's busiest actors; Harry Bartel, Gale Gordon, Cathy and Elliot Lewis and Parley Baer. He also makes some very positive comments about the Old-Time Radio conventions that have been staged throughout the United States over the past quarter century.

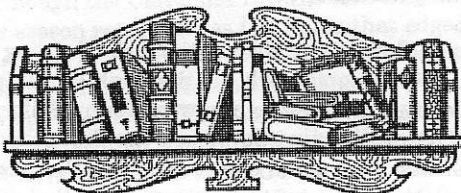
If you like nostalgia, trivia, old time radio and sports, John Rayburn has the book for you. Put it right up there with books written by Jim Cox and Martin Grams. It is one of the best OTR books to come along in a while.

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Cincinnati's 22nd Annual OTR & Nostalgia Convention

by DICK OLDAY

Once again, Arlene and I traveled down to Cincinnati for the annual OTR convention. The highlight of the trip as always was meeting many of our friends in the hobby. This year we even met some new friends as we were invited to sit at the table of the Old Time Radio Researchers on Saturday evening for the banquet. The convention started on Thursday evening with the opening of the dealer's room. Lots of goodies to look over and purchase! On Friday morning we were treated to a presentation of Radio in the Movies by Martin Grams, Jr. This included a *Burns & Allen* movie short and a Mickey Mouse cartoon depicting a radio broadcast. John Rayburn entertained us on Friday afternoon with his spoonerisms and comments on his media experiences. Friday night was time for a Pat Novak re-creation. Come Saturday there were more re-creations including my favorite *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*. Esther Geddes and Rosemary Rice took on the challenging skit originally done by Johnny Carson and Jack Webb "Clean Copper Clappers." A big laugh erupted from the audience when Esther accidentally substituted an "r" for the "l" in clappers. A misfire of a pistol in one of the re-creations also added to the fun. As usual, Bob Hastings, Rosemary Rice, Esther Geddes and John Rayburn did an excellent job. By the way, how does John do those spoonerisms without flubbing??? Also, Frank Boncore and myself were lucky to win several items at the raffle on Saturday afternoon. Anyway, soon it was time to pack up and return home with lots of donations for our club. WE brought back over 200 cassettes, several CDs, 50 MP3s and on DVD *Suspense TV shows* volume 1.

*These are the dealers who graciously
donated to our club:*

1. Leo Gawroniak (cassettes)
852 Lakemont Dr., Apt. H
Louisville, TN 37777
2. Radio Memories (cassettes)
P.O. Box 94548
North Little Rock, AR 72190-4548
3. Olden Radio (MP3s, DVD-serials, TV, movies)
P.O. Box 8
Beach Grove, IN 46107
4. Great American Radio (MP3s)
P.O. Box 401
Clio, MI 48420
5. BRC Productions (CDs, MP3s & DVD-TV)
P.O. Box 158
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127-0158

6. Bob Gardner (MP3s)
312 Fenwick Dr.
New Carlisle, OH 45344

When You order from these dealers, please let them know you heard about them from the Old Time Radio Club. - - - Dick Olday

BEING THERE: Collecting Radio Broadcast Admission Tickets

By RICK PAYNE (All Rights Reserved 2008)

During the golden age of radio, networks and sponsors invited the general public to attend live performances of many popular programs. For the performers, the presence of the studio audience provided encouragement, laughter and appreciation. For the audience, the experience was an unforgettable opportunity to see their favorite entertainers at work. Tickets from some broadcasts survive today . . . waiting for collectors like me.

If radio was indeed the theatre of the imagination, it should come as no surprise that the medium was beloved by those with the biggest imaginations of all: the children. In a world wracked by depression and war, the escape and adventure offered by radio was truly a god-send to the children of radio's golden age.

As a collector, it's a great disappointment that the great juvenile afternoon serials . . . *Jack Armstrong, Little Orphan Annie, Captain Midnight, Dick Tracy* and the like . . . were never performed before a studio audience. How ironic that the programs that offered the most premiums represent the biggest gap in building a ticket collection that would truly capture the full scope of radio programming!

But let's be grateful for what we do have. In previous articles, you've seen tickets for *Smilin' Ed's Buster Brown Gang, The Adventures of Archie Andrews, Gene Autry's Melody Ranch* and *The Shadow*. In this installment, we'll add a few more shows targeting young kids, and we'll throw in a few for teenagers as well.

So how do we travel to *Let's Pretend*? Read on!

THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM CBS RADIO THEATRE NO. 4 254 WEST 54th STREET, NEW YORK 19, NEW YORK		CBS RADIO THEATRE NO. 4 GOOD ONLY SAT. MORNING, AUG. 2 1947 11:05 to 11:30 am • Doors close at 10:55 am
AUGUST 2 Sat. Morn. 11:05 AM.	 The Cream of Wheat Corporation PRESENTS NILA MACK'S "LET'S PRETEND"	1462

The legendary Nila Mack was creator, director and writer of *Let's Pretend*, radio's best-remembered children's program. Each Saturday morning for 20 years (except for a 15-month afternoon run in 1938-39), children were entranced by fairy tales presented vividly by a talented cast of child actors. It was a program for kids, presented by kids, and lovingly handled by the woman who headed up the CBS Children's Programming Department from 1930 until her death in 1953.

Let's Pretend's distinctive theme song (titled "Fairy Tales") is today best remembered for the lyrics applied when a sponsor finally joined the program in 1943. Following that ode to the joys of the sponsor's product, announcer "Uncle Bill" Adams would announce: "Cream of Wheat, the great American family cereal presents . . . LET'S PRETEND!" to the wild cheers of the studio audience. One of those little rascals used this ticket to get into a 1947 broadcast in CBS Radio Theatre No. 4, which also served as home to broadcasts of Radio Reader's Digest, Evening in Paris and Coca-Cola's The Pause That Refreshes On The Air.

AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.	WJZ	RADIO CITY STUDIOS 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK ENTRANCE ON 49th OR 50th STREETS BETWEEN 5th AVE. & AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
SUN. 29 SEPT. 1946	"COAST TO COAST ON A BUS"	
Void if Sold DOORS CLOSE 8:55 AM See Reverse Side		

What's the connection between "White Rabbit", a bunch of musically-gifted kids and a bus? No, it's not another of Danny Bonaduce's wild tales of drug experimentation by the cast of TV's *The Partridge Family* (the term "gifted" should have tipped you off).

In 1924, RCA's newly-purchased station WJZ launched an hour-long Sunday morning program called *The Children's Hour*. Hosted by 27 year-old announcer Milton Cross, the program featured stories and performances by young actors and singers. When RCA formed the National Broadcasting Company, the program became one of the staples of the new Blue Network. In 1935, the name of the program was changed to the best-remembered *Coast To Coast on a Bus*. This 1946 ticket is the only one I've ever seen; I'm not sure how long audiences were allowed to attend the live broadcasts.

Each week, young passengers boarded the White Rabbit Line bus to contribute songs and fantastic stories. Conductor Cross oversaw the activities each week, supplementing his more familiar role as the host of the *Metropolitan Opera* broadcasts and moderator of *Information Please*.

The Illustrated Press

The show switched to ABC upon NBC's divestiture of the Blue Network and remained on the air until 1948, completing a 24-year run that was pivotal in launching the careers of many familiar performers. Alumni include Anne Francis (TV's *Honey West*), Bob Hastings (radio's *Archie Andrews*) and his brother Don (TV's Video Ranger, sidekick of Dumont's *Captain Video*), and Dick van Patten (TV's *Eight is Enough*). Producer Madge Tucker eventually served as head of NBC's Children's Programming Department. Like Nila Mack, Tucker put the well-being of the children first.

which featured the real-life World War exploits of Goldberg, the mascot dog of the 122nd Field Artillery in France. In the 1950s, the popular Rin-Tin-Tin television series inspired a brief radio series featuring the TV cast.

Chicago Tribune outdoor editor Bob Becker was proclaimed by Time Magazine as the top US "Dogcaster" in recognition of his *Chats About Dogs* series, which started in 1932. Chicago's Society for Improvement of Children's Programs was desperately lobbying children to realize that Becker's program and Irene Wicker's CBS series *The Singing Lady* were as entertaining as the thunderous radio exploits of *Buck Rogers* (good luck with that!). The 1936 ticket for *Bob Becker and his Dog Club of the Air* is presumably from the *Chats About Dogs* series, under the sponsorship of Red Heart Dog Food. The series ended in 1944.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY		
RCA BUILDING RADIO CITY STUDIOS NEW YORK		
SUN. 5 MAY 1946	AUTOMAT CAFETERIAS presents HORN & HARDART'S CHILDREN'S HOUR	FLOOR 3 Doors Close 10:25
VOID IF SOLD	SEE REVERSE SIDE	

Horn & Hardart's Children's Hour never received a time slot on any national network, but it thrived over the air in the New York City area from 1931 until 1957. It was this program, in fact, whose title created so much confusion for listeners that it triggered the name change for WJZ's *Children's Hour* to become *Coast To Coast on a Bus*. This stained and abused 1946 ticket was rescued from a scrapbook.

Unlike the previous programs, there was no story-telling on this *Children's Hour* . . . just straight musical entertainment (instruments, vocal and dance), centered around a unique weekly theme. Again, kids were the stars of the show. Surviving programs include performances by children as young as three years old! The show was sponsored by Horn & Hardart's numerous Automat cafeterias. That dining concept, launched in 1912, was so successful that the company even made money during the depression. The company's slogan was "Less Work for Mother" . . . which conveniently was the title of the radio program's theme song!

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.		
HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE		
Sat. Oct. 9 See Reverse Side	RED HEART DOG FOOD PRESENTS "THE LASSIE SHOW" with M.G.M.'s "LASSIE" in Person ★ CHILDREN UNDER 14 ADMITTED ★	STUDIO C Doors Close 3:30 p.m. DAYLITE TIME

Red Heart didn't end their radio sponsorship efforts in Chicago, however. *The Lassie Show* burst on the scene in 1947, starring the actual Lassie of MGM film fame (with trainer Rudd Weatherwax directing the star). The Lassie film series got underway in 1943's "Lassie Come Home", starring Nigel Bruce, Roddy McDowell and Elizabeth Taylor. After the third film installment, ABC Radio added the 15 minute radio program on Sunday afternoons. Recognizing a good thing, NBC took over the show a year later and carried it on Saturdays until the series ended in 1950. Lassie's radio theme, by the way, was "Coming Through The Rye."

The pictured ticket dates to 1948. *The Lassie Show* originated from NBC Hollywood's Studio C, the preferred home of *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Bob Burns*, *Duffy's Tavern* and *The Great Gildersleeve*. I'm not one to assume NBC would underestimate the intelligence of those who would flock to see a dog perform on the radio . . . but I must say that this is the only ticket I can recall ever seeing where the network felt it important to note that the 3:30 cutoff for admission to a kids show required the additional notation as "Daylite Time."

Incidentally, let's doff our caps to animal imitator Earl Keen. He served as Lassie's understudy on the series. If Lassie missed a cue, Earl was there to fill the empty air with the appropriate growl or bark. I guess that would make him Mr. Keen, Placer of Lost . . . oh, never mind.

WGN Chicago Tribune WGN		
THE WORLD'S GREATEST NEWSPAPER 445 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS		
SAT. DEC. 19 1936	RED HEART DOG FOOD PRESENTS BOB BECKER AND HIS DOG CLUB OF THE AIR PERFORMANCE STARTS AT 10:00 A. M. DOORS OPEN AT 9:30 A. M. - CLOSE AT 9:55 A. M. VOID IF SOLD SEE REVERSE SIDE ADMIT ONE	STUDIO 1


Early radio went to the dogs. I own a 1933 script (but alas, no ticket) for Ken-L-Ration's *Rin-Tin-Tin Thriller*,

1830	 SUNDAY OCT. 3 1948	MUTUAL GUILD THEATRE 245 W. 52nd St.—West of Broadway New York City	WOR, NEW YORK 3:30 TO 4:00 P. M. DOORS CLOSE 3:20 P. M. SHARP ADMIT ONE
		GAINES DOG FOODS present <i>"Juvenile Jury"</i> with JACK BARRY <small>This ticket is subject to the terms and conditions stated on the back hereof.</small>	

As you contemplate filing charges against me for that last line, let me suggest that Mutual's *Juvenile Jury* might be the appropriate venue. From 1946 to 1953, this program featured ordinary kids (no prodigies allowed) offering advice about a multitude of topics pertinent to America's youth.

Juvenile Jury has the distinction of being the first creation of one of television's most infamous production companies. WOR announcer Jack Barry had the idea and teamed with fellow WOR employee Dan Ehrenreich to produce the concept. When Mutual picked it up in 1946, they officially formed Barry & Enright Productions. With Barry in front of the cameras and Enright behind the scenes, the pair found repeated success in the game show market. Despite the well-documented *Twenty-One* scandals that imploded the TV game show business, the pair are still remembered for creating *Winky Dink and You*, *Tic Tac Dough* and *The Joker's Wild*.


Gaines Dog Foods sponsored the broadcast for this 1948 ticket, although I fail to understand how much influence (if any) the listening audience might have over the family's brand choice for dog food. Many Mutual game shows originated from the Mutual Guild Theatre, including *Can You Top This?* and another Barry production called *Life Begins at 80*.

1016	 MONDAY OCT. 4 1948	MUTUAL GUILD THEATRE 245 W. 52nd St.—West of Broadway New York City	WOR, NEW YORK 8:30 TO 9:55 P. M. DOORS CLOSE 8:15 P. M. SHARP ADMIT ONE
		BRAIN BUSTERS TEEN—AGE QUIZ <small>This ticket is subject to the terms and conditions stated on the back hereof.</small>	

Here's a Mutual Guild Theatre ticket for the obscure *Brain Busters Teen-Age Quiz*. It poses a challenge for

the researcher, for there is no word of this show in John Dunning's *On The Air*, Jay Hickerson's *Ultimate History of Network Radio Programming*, David Goldin's *RadioGOLDIndex* or Roger Paulson's *Archives of the Airwaves* . . . four outstanding sources of information.

The answer to mystery tickets such as these is often found by going to the original newspaper listings using an exceptional website called *JJ's Newspaper Radio Logs*. It presents scans of daily listings from four major city newspapers all the way back to 1930. And indeed, we find *Brain Busters* listed as part of a short series called *The Atom and You*.

AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.	WJZ	VANDERBILT STUDIO 148 West 48th Street Bet. 6th and 7th Aves., New York, N. Y.
MON 17 MAR 1952		PAUL WHITEMAN TEEN CLUB with POPS WHITEMAN & JUNIE KEEGAN featuring THE TOPS IN TEEN-AGE TALENT VOID IF SOLD DOORS CLOSE 8 40 PM SEE REVERSE SIDE

More teenage fun awaits us with the King of Jazz, still spinning those stacks of hot wax in 1952. Paul Whiteman hosted no less than 18 different radio series in his long career! *The Paul Whiteman Teen Club* was his penultimate program, lasting from 1951 to 1953. In his later years, Whiteman pioneered the role of radio disc jockey. In 1951, he paired up with teenage singer Junie Keegan for a series titled *My Lucky Stars*, in which he played 20-year old records for the youngster. This series continued that relationship, letting Junie turn the tables on Pops!

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. - HOLLYWOOD		Saturday FEB. 22 1941 6-6:30 p.m. Doors Close at 5:55 p.m.	No 320
STUDIO B CBS	KIDS QUIZAROO "A BATTLE OF TWO CITIES" with BOB LE MOND in Los Angeles		

Here's yet another quiz show for children . . . 1941's *Kids Quizaroo*, hosted by popular announcer Bob LeMond. This game show pitted kids from two communities against each other for fun and prizes. The show was modeled after similar adult contests airing in most major markets (*Battle of the Boroughs* with Durward Kirby comes to mind).

Kids Quizaroo aired only on the west coast on station KNX.

LIGGETT REXALL DRUG STORES PRESENT THE		MANHATTAN CENTER 34th STREET AT 8th AVENUE
QUIZ KIDS BROADCAST		
In Cooperation with Miles Laboratories		Sunday Night FEBRUARY 27TH
SUNDAY NIGHT		
FEB.	MANHATTAN CENTER 34th ST. AT 8th AVE., N. Y.	
27	DOORS OPEN 5:45 P.M.	
1944	TICKET HOLDERS MUST BE IN THEIR SEATS BY 6:30 P.M. DOORS CLOSE PROMPTLY	

And we'll close up this visit to tickets of the past with an unusual road trip for the *Quiz Kids* to New York City in 1944. They usually aired from Chicago, of course. We've discussed the program in previous articles.

The venue is interesting. The Manhattan Center was originally built by Oscar Hammerstein Sr. in 1906 to house the Manhattan Opera Company and offer a low-cost alternative to the Metropolitan Opera. It worked well enough that the Met paid him off to abandon that effort. The building, with incredible acoustic qualities, served as a recording studio for many symphony recordings. In the 1940s, it was a hot spot for big bands and concert artists like Paul Robeson. It remains in use today.

Well, boys and girls, that wraps up another edition of *Being There*. I hope we've stirred up some memories and learned some new things. Next month in our final visit before summer vacation, we will take a look at some famous firsts . . . tickets for premiere broadcasts, first appearances and auditions.



Just the Facts Ma'am

By Frank C. Boncore

Recently, I attended the Cincinatti Old Time Radio Convention. It was great to see Bob Burchett and Don Ramblo and Company who once again did a dynamite job. It was really great to see old friends whom I've made over many years and make new ones, all OTR fans.

In attendance were OTR stars Bob Hastings (*Archie Andrews*, *X Minus One*), Rosemary Rice (Betty from *Archie Andrews*), Esther Geddes (of several OTR shows) and OTR Announcer, John Rayburn..

Suspense, *Have Gun Will Travel*, *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar* and *The Bickersons* were brought back through recreations. The OTR stars are super people who interacted with the crowd throughout the convention. I had many conversations with Bob Hastings over several years and you won't find a better person anywhere.

It was also great to see Tom Monroe, Bob and Betty Burnham, Gary and LaDonna Kramer, Terry Salmonson, Leo Gawroniak, Chuck Wheeler, Martin Grams and several other OTR dealers. Where else could you find OTR shows on cassette, CDs, MP3s and even Reel-to-reel decks in the same room? If your bag was DVDs, there was a great selection. One could even find Walt Disney's "Song of The South."

There were fewer OTR fans in attendance. We had a lot less at the Saturday evening dinner. I don't know if it was because of the convention being earlier this year or the high cost of gas. Bob Burchett, Don Ramblo and Company knock themselves out to make this event happen. If you are an OTR fan, you should attend the next OTR convention. Mark your calendars now and start saving your money. Next Year's Cincinatti Convention is set for April 24th & 25th, see you next year in Cincinatti.

BRIEF AFTRA HISTORY AND THE STARS WHO WERE ITS PRESIDENT

by Jack French

In 2007, AFTRA celebrated its 70th birthday, having been born in the fall of 1937, starting with 400 charter members in union local chapters in New York City and Los Angeles. Then Chicago, the "soap opera" center, quickly formed its own local and by December 1937, this new organization, the American Federation of Radio Artists (AFRA) had 2,000 members which covered about 90% of all radio performers in the major broadcasting cities.

That name would remain until September 1952 when AFRA merged with a sister union, the Television Authority, to become the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) which it is today. Over the years, many working radio actors were elected to the presidency of this union, several of whom are well known to OTR fans today.

The Illustrated Press

Eddie Cantor, star of stage, screen, and radio was AFRA's first president, serving from 1937 to 1939. One of radio's favorite announcers, Ken Carpenter, was the president from 1946 to 1947. Clayton "Bud" Collyer, who played Superman and also appeared on many soaps, served as president of both AFRA (1948 to 1950) and later AFTRA (1957 to 1959). By the latter term, he was primarily a television star, including hosting *Beat the Clock*.

Between Collyer's two terms, other popular radio stars were elected president. Knox Manning, the announcer of the *Sherlock Holmes* series, led AFRA from 1950 to 1952. His successor, who took over the merged union of AFTRA, was the co-lead in *Ethel and Albert*, the talented Alan Bunce, who played the role with Peg Lynch on both radio and TV. Frank Nelson, who delighted audiences with his "Yeeees" on the *Jack Benny Show*, took over the reins of AFTRA in 1954 and led the union until 1957.

AFTRA's first woman president was Virginia Payne and her term of office was 1959 to 1961. Her fellow performers had dubbed her the "Iron Woman" of radio since she had played "Ma Perkins" five days a week for 27 years (1933 to 1960) without missing a single performance. Popular narrator and announcer, Art Gilmore, was elected president in 1961 and served two terms. In 1965, veteran radio actor Tyler McVey became the AFTRA president and led the union until 1967.

Worth at Least 1,000 Words



One-zy, Two-zy, boys, and be sure you keep together. Ed Gardner (Archie of *Duffy's Tavern*) and Oscar Levant sound out a duet before a rehearsal for a CBS studio program.

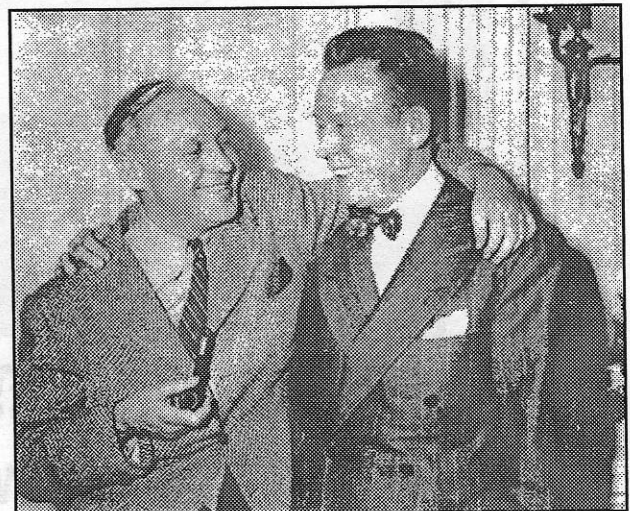


Orson Welles airs his Sunday thoughts from the privacy of his home,



Henry Morgan is the kind of guy who rides the sponsor.

Mr. Adler of Elevator Shoes closes his ears to Morgan's rib on WJZ



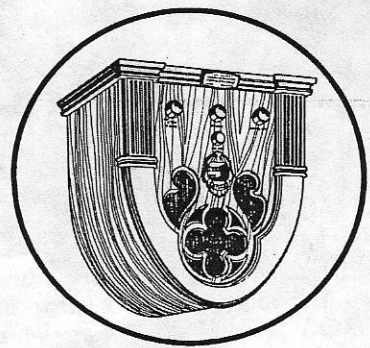
The Buried Hatchet Dept. or Benny and Allen at Peace



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6:15—MacMillan—Sports	8:30—The Goldbergs
6:30—Journal of the Air	9:00—Gangbusters
7:00—Starlight Operetta	9:30—The Godfrey Digest