

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 365

December 2008



E. G. MARSHALL
CBS Radio Mystery Theater

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.

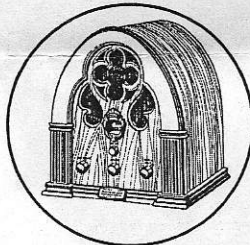
Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

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All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

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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.

The CBS Radio Mystery Theater

By TOM CHERRE

Don McLean's '71 classic "American Pie" immortalized Buddy Holly, Richie Valenz, and The Big Bopper. Supposedly when they died in 1959 so did the good music. I may doubt that statement, but for sure any semblance of good radio drama had surely died by then. Fifteen years later in 1974 a resurgence of very good radio drama again hit the airwaves. Himan Brown brought back his creaking door from *Inner Sanctum* and gave us *The CBS Radio Mystery Theater*. This was like a shot of adrenaline to those many radio fans who longed for quality drama. The show started on January 6th, 1974 lasting until December 31st of 1982. For the first six years it ran nightly. For the last two years it was broadcast on weekends. In all there were 1399 total episodes.

Back in the middle '70s I was a frequent listener of the Stan Barron show on WBEN. He had all the best sports news, game scores, and race results. One night between my occasional bar hopping I had the pleasant surprise of hearing a rusty hinged door opening up with E.G. Marshall saying in a friendly voice "Welcome, come in and welcome to another adventure in the macabre". His greeting was accompanied by a low eerie woodwind instrument theme. After listening to one show I was hooked. Marshall would set the tone for each show asking his listeners if they believed in ghosts, reincarnation, or questioned our thoughts on fate. His opening was different for each show depending on the general theme or plot. The stories may have revolved around murder, the supernatural, or on many occasions a mayhem of comedy. In between acts Marshall would lend us his insight on what had transpired in between acts. At the closing of each episode he would deliver his classic sign off along with the creaking door effects and same music saying "Until next time Pleasant Dreams?" If I was driving in my car I couldn't leave until I heard the end, no matter if it took 20 minutes. If any of you are fans of CBSRMT then you know where I'm coming from.

The Mystery Show had some of the best actors in starring roles. Some of the most notables were Jerry Orbach, Theodore Bikel, Jerry Stiller, Fred Gwynne, Mercedes McCambridge, Mason Adams, John Lithgow, Howard DaSilva, and Morgan Fairchild. A rather young Sarah Jessica Parker of *Sex and the City* fame starred in "The Cat's Paw" episode which originally aired May 17th

1977. She was then twelve years old. At that time the stars were paid union scale a paltry \$73.92. The writers received a whopping \$350.00.

The Whistler and *The Mysterious Traveler*, two of my favorites had much the same format, using a narrator and providing pithy wisdom during the show. Unlike the man in the train or the man who knew and saw much, Marshall was a mere normal just like us with an intelligent insight who got us highly involved in this mysterious world of the macabre.

Although this show may not be classified as being in the old time radio genre, I would consider it one of the best. Some of the shows are in our tape library. Another unique feature is that many of the newscasts and commercials from that era are incorporated in each show. I believe Dan Marafino stated in one of his articles that today's generation of radio listeners can not compel themselves to listen to a radio show for a solid half hour, let alone 60 minutes. He is so right. With tapes and CDs the pleasure is all ours.

Another noteworthy tidbit to think about is that if one were to listen to one episode of *The CBS Radio Mystery Theater* each night it would take nearly four years to listen to the 1399 hour-long complete run. Well, I guess I know what I'll be doing for the next couple years. Pleasant Dreams?



Librarian's Notes

By FRANK BORK

Today when I checked my mailbox, I found a package from Tom Monroe of Mantua, Ohio. This note and four of the missing cassettes were in the package.

"It looks like I can help you replace a few of your 'missing cassettes'. Best regards, Tom."

Yes Tom. you can help and you did. Thank You. Club Members check these four cassettes off your missing list.

- #796 -Rocky Fortune - Message for Murder
- Murder among the Statues
- #804 -The Whistler - Two and One Makes Murder
- A Matter of Courtesy

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- #806 -The Whistler - What Makes a Murderer
- X Marks the Murderer
#849 - Gene Autry - Gene helps Clem Gison
- Pat Butrum, Private Eye
—Thanks Again Tom—

Listed below are 10 Missing Cassettes for this month:

- #993 -Gunsmoke - The Constable
- The Indian Horse
#1005 -Frontier Town - Badlands
-The Cisco Kid - Dinosaur Canyon
#1015 -Country Western - Piney Merrymakers
#1017 -The Hardy Family - Andy loses his sex appeal
- Fishing Trip
#1024 -Superman - City under seige, killer bees, light
up the tree Mr. President, Man
from Krypton, Star of Bangalore
#1038 -Theater 10:30 - City of Solomon
- Ico of Ilijah
#1061 -Charlie McCarthy - Guest Lana Turner
-Milton Berle - Salute to Christmas
#1064 -Frontier Town - Medicine Wagon
- The Arbuskie Kid
#1121 -Secrets of Scotland Yard - Case of Captain X
- The Counterfeiter
- The Embezzler
#1148 -Superman - Lighthouse Point Smugglers
Parts 14 - 15 - 16 - 17

*Till next time, Happy Radio Listening,
Frank*

Abbott & Costello on the Radio

By Bruce Forsberg

(bruce.forsberg@gmail.com)

One day when I was a child and could not go out and play on a Saturday I turned on the TV and looked through the channels and stumbled on an Abbott and Costello movie. This was my first introduction to Abbott and Costello and started an interest in the boys that lasts to this day.

When I became more interested in Abbott and Costello I started to collect their movies on video tape. I then proceeded to collect their 52 episode TV show, done in the 50's, on video tape. After that I looked for more things to collect and that is when I learned that they had done a radio show and so I purchased radio tapes from both Radio Spirits and Adventures in Cassettes and thus began my interest in Abbott and Costello on the radio. Having been in OTR now for over 10 years I looked for a way to give back to the OTR community. I found that



The comedic talent on the *Kate Smith Show* at that time was Henny Youngman. He wanted to go to Hollywood to perform in movies. Ted Collins, Kate Smith's manager, said he would let Henny out of his contract if he found his replacement. He suggested that Ted check out a duo called Abbott and Costello performing at Loew's State Theater.

Abbott and Costello were not an instant hit on the radio and had to sign 21 one week contracts with Ted Collins. Each appearance consisted of Abbott and Costello performing a 5-10 minute bit. A couple of interesting items from this period: People had problems distinguishing between Bud and Lou so Lou raised his voice in pitch to make it easier. The second is that during the broadcast Lou never used a script. He would memorize his lines so that during the broadcast it would be easier to ad lib. Bud did use a script so he could get Lou back to the script if needed. Abbott and Costello ended their stay on the *Kate Smith Show* on June 28, 1940.

From this show Abbott and Costello became the summer replacement for the *Hour of Smiles / It's Time to Smile* program previously hosted by Fred Allen. This was sponsored by Ipana-Sal Hepatica. The sponsor wanted to reduce their program from an hour to half an hour, as many programs were doing during this time. Fred Allen wanted to remain at an hour so he decided to leave for Texaco at CBS. The new host for the half hour show would be Eddie Cantor. The name also changed from *Hour of Smiles* to *It's Time to Smile*. During the summertime Abbott and Costello hosted the show starting July 3, 1940, for 13 weeks on NBC. The first seven shows were done in New York with Harry Von Zell as announcer and Peter Van Steeden as the orchestra leader and

most Abbott and Costello fans focus on their TV and movie appearances and for OTR fans Abbott and Costello is not high on their list of interests. I decided then to document Abbott and Costello's appearances on radio, an area that has been overlooked.

Abbott and Costello began their career on CBS radio on the *Kate Smith Show* Feb 3, 1938, and very few of these shows are known to exist.

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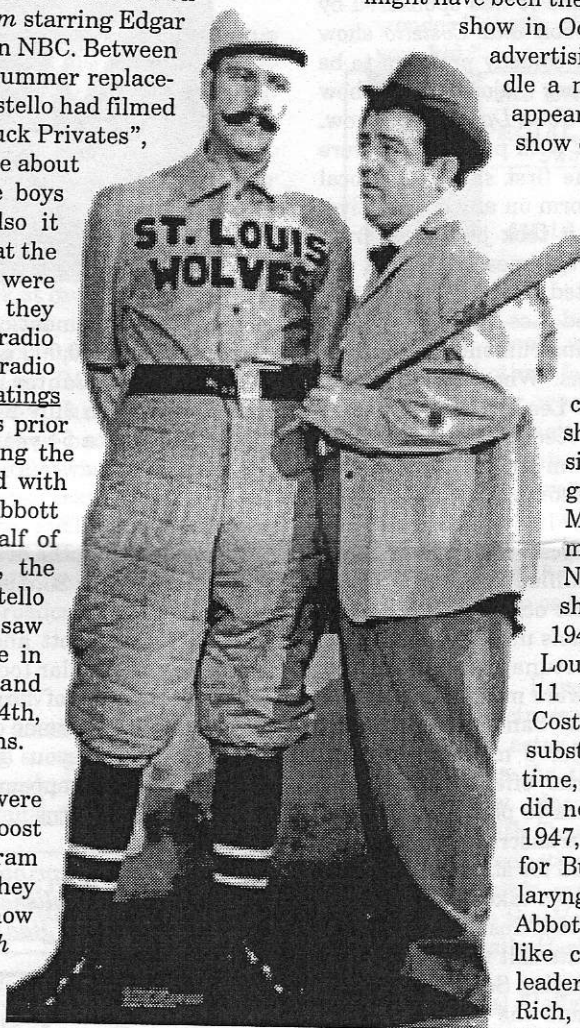
the last six shows were done from Los Angeles with Frank Bingman as announcer and Felix Mills as the orchestra leader. Benay Venuta was the singer for both locations. The switch to Los Angeles allowed Abbott and Costello to start work on their first movie, *One Night in the Tropics*.

On April 6, 1941 Abbott and Costello started on *The Chase and Sanborn Program* starring Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on NBC. Between the start of this show and the summer replacement radio show Abbott and Costello had filmed "*One Night in the Tropics*", "*Buck Privates*", and "*Hold That Ghost*" and were about to start "*In The Navy*" so the boys were hardly without work. Also it was at this time that they were at the height of their popularity. They were big box office draws and now they were on a number one rated radio show as well. By looking at the radio ratings at www.old-time.com/ratings one notes that the four seasons prior to Abbott and Costello appearing the show was 1st, 1st, 1st, and 2nd with 2nd being the 40-41 season. Abbott and Costello joined the later half of this season. The 41-42 season, the season in which Abbott and Costello were there for the full season, saw the show return to number one in the ratings. When Abbott and Costello left the show it was 4th, 4th, and 7th for the next three seasons.

Obviously Abbott and Costello were brought onto the program to boost the Chase and Sanborn program back up to number one which they did. Their appearance on this show was similar to the *Kate Smith Show*. They appeared for about five minutes doing one of their routines. Several interesting events occurred during this period. The first event occurred on Oct 5, 1941. Edgar was doing the show from Chicago but Abbott and Costello remained in Los Angeles, probably to continue their film career. They had to switch the broadcast to Los Angeles for them to do their bit and then switch the broadcast back for the rest of the show.

Then on Dec 7, 1941, the show was being broadcast from Fort Ord in California. This is of course the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked. During the first show many of the men in the audience were called away to their reg-

iments. Since the men were called away to duty the show did not play to full houses. The last event occurred on Feb. 8, 1942. For this show Edgar Bergen was in the hospital and not on the show. Substituting for Edgar were Abbott and Costello. The advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, stated that Abbott and Costello did an amazingly good job. Although there is no proof of this, this might have been the event that got them their own radio show in October of 1942. They proved to the advertising executives that they could handle a number one rated radio show. The appearance of Abbott and Costello on this show ended on June 28, 1942.



On October 8, 1942 Abbott and Costello finally got a show of their own on the NBC red network sponsored by Camel cigarettes. During 1942 they did two shows each week, one to the east coast and the other to the west coast. Starting in 1943 they did one show live for both coasts. The first six months went very smooth with a guest star on every show. But then in March, 1943, Lou Costello got rheumatic fever and did not return until November, 1943. Lou missed two shows, Mar 11, 1943, and Mar 18, 1943, before Bud called it quits until

Lou was able to come back. On March 11 Bert Lahr substituted for Lou Costello and on March 18 Hal Perry substituted for Lou. The only other time, for the Camel broadcasts, the two did not appear together was on Mar 20, 1947, when Hanley Stafford substituted for Bud Abbott who had a bad case of laryngitis. During this five year period Abbott and Costello went through talent like crazy. They had numerous band leaders including Leith Stevens, Freddie Rich, Will Osborne, Alan Roth, Carl Hoff, and Skinnay Ennis. The singers

consisted of Connie Haynes, who had the longest stint, and also included Amy Arnell, Bob Matthews, and Marilyn Maxwell. For announcers they had Ken Niles, Jim Doyle, and Michael Roy. Jimmy Wallington, Ernest Chapel, and Bert Parks did the announcing jobs during the four trips they made to New York. On the Jan 17, 1946 show Wendell Niles substituted for his brother Ken Niles as announcer. The two actors to appear the most on the show during this five year period were Elvia Allman and Mel Blanc. During this five year period Abbott and Costello only performed *Who's on First* twice. The Camel era ended on June 26, 1947.

Abbott and Costello switched to ABC on Oct 1, 1947. Many people incorrectly list these ABC shows as sustained. They were in fact cooperatively sponsored. This is where the network would get a different sponsor in each market. Examples were PDQ gasoline in Los Angeles; in Marion, Ohio it was sponsored by Lords Jewelry store; in Salamanca, N.Y. it was sponsored by Lang's Beer; and in Reno, Nevada it was sponsored by clown Edward F. Hale. *The Abbott and Costello* show might have been the first major comedy program to be cooperatively sponsored. The other major comedy show cooperatively sponsored was the *Joan Davis Time* show. As the NBC shows were fraught with problems so were these shows. It started with the first show. The local musicians union refused to perform on any cooperatively sponsored programs, feeling it took jobs away from local musicians. On Nov 26, 1947, James C. Petrillo, the head of the musicians union, lifted the ban. During this time Abbott and Costello hired Les Baxter and his singers. They would emulate instruments with their voices in place of the musicians. When Susan Miller would sing she would sing to the Les Baxter singers. All the shows for ABC were transcribed except for possibly the first one which was done from the El Capitan theater. This first show is a great show and is available at <http://www.nostalgia Digest.com>. It includes the Les Baxter singers emulating musical instruments and Abbott and Costello doing a modified version of Who's on First. The second problem that occurred was on Jan 1, 1948. This is when the musicians union implemented a ban on recorded music. Fortunately Abbott and Costello were ready for this, as were most people in the industry. They had their new band leader Matty Malnick record with Susan Miller 6 months worth of music before this ban went into effect. Abbott and Costello then hired Matty Malnick to play for each studio audience when the show was transcribed but this did not go over the air. This ban lasted for about a year. One highlight during this ABC run was a takeoff on the *Sam Spade* radio show that Abbott and Costello did called *Sam Shovel*. This was a five minute skit that they did at the end of the show with Lou playing Sam Shovel. The last prime time show on ABC, and the last for Abbott and Costello, was on June 9, 1949.

During this same time Abbott and Costello performed a kids show called the *Abbott and Costello's Kids Show* starting on Dec 6, 1947. This show was sustained. This author has not been able to obtain more than a couple of these shows and therefore can't comment much on this show. During its run they did perform a contest where contestants had to complete the phrase in 25 words or less "I want to fight juvenile delinquency because . . ." The prizes to be given away were a baby elephant, an airplane, a house trailer, a new car, and a mink coat. The entry had to be sent with a donation to the Lou Costello

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Jr. Youth foundation. By June, 1948, the prizes had swelled to \$30,000 and the judges had been announced as: Eddie Cantor, Arthur Stebbins, and Vincent Flaherty. On July 24, 1948, the \$30,000 in prizes were awarded to a 54 year old housewife and mother named Mrs. B.M. Lawrence of Shenandoah, Iowa. Also on this show each week an award was given to a kid for Good Citizenship. They would reenact on the show a small play depicting the event that the kid had done. The show ended on Mar 26, 1949.

Certainly Abbott and Costello's kind of comedy is not nearly so popular today but for those of us who appreciate this kind of humor there are ample radio shows available from some of these periods to keep us laughing for years. If you are interested in the Abbott and Costello radio appearances then check out my radio log at <http://users.tns.net/~forsbergweb>.

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yesterdayusa.com

The Old Time Radio Club continues to be a participant in the internet broadcast facility known as Yesterday USA. Club members Dick Olday, Frank Boncore and Bob McDivitt along with various local members record shows for this service which can be heard via an internet connection.

Watch for our participation on the Yesterday USA station by checking the station's schedule and logging on at the appropriate time indicated.

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.

Many moons ago, we took a look at broadcast tickets featuring radio adaptations of popular movies. It was relatively easy (and safe) for a major movie star to make a one-shot appearance on the *Lux Radio Theatre*, *The Lady Esther Screen Guild Theater*, DuPont's *Cavalcade of America* to reprise a role they had made famous. Guest appearances on comedy and variety programs also fit nicely with their busy filming schedules. Even Charlie Chaplin, William S. Hart, Rudolph Valentino, Greta Garbo, Mae West, the real Tom Mix, Bela Lugosi and even Harpo Marx faced the radio microphone on rare occasions. Tickets from such broadcasts are a highlight of any collection.

But it really took extraordinary effort for a major Hollywood star to commit to hosting a weekly radio series. Some found long-lasting success; others quickly went down in flames. This month, we pay homage to them by focusing on tickets from their programs.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. - HOLLYWOOD		Wednesday APRIL 8 1942 6-6:30 p.m. Doors Close at 5:55 p.m.	No 145
STUDIO B CBS	IVORY SNOW presents SHIRLEY TEMPLE in JUNIOR MISS		
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

Junior Miss was a popular program from 1948 to 1954, featuring Barbara Whiting in the title role. The first radio incarnation, however, debuted on CBS in March of 1942 starring Shirley Temple. Arguably the most popular star of the mid-1930s, by 1942 the ravages of age had caught up with America's little darling. Her perky positive outlook helped pull the country through the darkest days of the depression, but that reputation proved to be

fatally at odds with the acting requirements for the part of young Judy Graves. The series ended in August.

Shirley's first recurring radio program was a four-week holiday series in December 1941: *The Shirley Temple Variety Show*. In what must be one of radio's strangest pairings, the last episode of that series featured Shirley and her guest star . . . Humphrey Bogart. I can't help but wonder if that's when he first uttered, "Here's looking at you, kid."

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. SPECIAL HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS 5833 FERNWOOD AVENUE		Warner Bros. K. F. W. B. STUDIO Directions to Studio on back of Ticket Doors Close At 8:15
8:30 p.m. Sunday April 2 1938	WOODBURY'S HOLLYWOOD PLAYHOUSE starring TYRONE POWER <i>Andrew Leeds Harry Sosnik Condon</i>	

The good people at Woodbury Sales (manufacturers of Jergen's Lotion) featured Tyrone Power in the starring role on their weekly *Hollywood Playhouse* series on NBC's Blue Network from the program's debut in October 1937 through June 1938. He was a relative newcomer to the screen but his work at 20th Century Fox would land him among the top ten box office attractions for 1938. He first pursued radio work in Chicago in the early 1930s at the suggestion of his friend Don Ameche; both wound up as headliners for Fox in a series of historical films.

Each week, Power was paired with a different Hollywood actress on the series. It was quite a commitment by an actor actively engaged in shooting several films a year. As the original owner of this ticket so thoughtfully documented, actress Andrea Leeds costarred with Tyrone on the second day of January in 1938 in a production of "Benefit of Clergy," supported by Harry Sosnik's orchestra. Eventually, Tyrone Power would leave the *Hollywood Playhouse* to Charles Boyer and eventually Herbert Marshall.

The "Special Hollywood Studios" were located on the Warner Brothers lot and also served as the origination site for *The Bakers' Broadcast*, *The Fitch Bandwagon* and *The Grouch Club*.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM WILSHIRE EBELL THEATRE 4400 Wilshire Boulevard • Los Angeles		The Makers of Rinso present EDWARD G. ROBINSON with CLAIRE TREVOR in "BIG TOWN"	Tuesday 5-5:30 p.m. Doors Close At 4:50 p.m.
FEB. 8 1938			
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

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CBS and the makers of *Rinso* brought us not one but two Hollywood stars every week with the premiere of *Big Town* in October of 1937. The selection of Edward G. Robinson to play newspaper editor Steve Wilson was a natural. Robinson is best remembered today for portraying gangster Caesar Enrico Bandello for director Mervyn LeRoy in the Warner Brothers classic film *Little Caesar* in 1931. That same year, however, he also starred as newspaper city editor Joe Randall in LeRoy's Oscar-nominated film *Five Star Final*. With his no-nonsense tough guy delivery, Robinson was tailor-made for radio stardom. He continued in the role for nearly five years.

His co-star Claire Trevor is probably best remembered for her role in John Ford's *Stagecoach*, the film that turned John Wayne into a major star. Trevor was nominated for an Academy Award for her role in *Dead End* in 1937. She played the role of Society Editor Lorelei Kilbourne on *Big Town* for two years before turning the role over to Ona Munson who, ironically, had played a supporting role with Edward G. Robinson in *Five Star Final*!

And one final bit of kismet: in 1948, Trevor and Robinson reunited on the screen in the film *Key Largo*. Claire Trevor won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for that performance.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.			
HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS		SUNSET AND VINE	
6:00 p.m. June 7 1940	THE OLD GOLD PROGRAM	Studio D	Friday
	starring DON AMECHE with CLAIRE TREVOR	Doors Close At 5:55	

After leaving CBS and *Big Town*, Claire Trevor signed on to support another Hollywood leading man on NBC. *The Don Ameche Show* (aka *The Old Gold Program*) premiered in April 1940 and remained on the air for six months. Kenosha's favorite son truly loved performing on radio. He served as master of ceremonies for *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* while making a series of hits for 20th Century Fox. Best of all, he left us *The Bickersons*.

One can lose their mind trying to keep up with all the various programs sponsored by Old Gold . . . there was *The Old Gold Program*, *The Old Gold Hour*, *Old Gold Presents*, *The Old Gold Comedy Theatre* (and my personal favorite) *The NEW Old Gold Show*. Only Philip Morris rivals Old Gold for bewildering modern-day radio researchers.

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"YOUR HIT PARADE" ORCHESTRA
will originate in New York City
THE ATTACHED TICKET IS ADMITTANCE
to the 'W. C. FIELDS' portion of the program
broadcast from Hollywood

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE COLUMBIA SQUARE • HOLLYWOOD		No. 988
NOV. 5 1938	LUCKY STRIKE presents YOUR HIT PARADE with W. C. FIELDS Orchestra originating from New York W. C. Fields at person in Hollywood	
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED		Saturday 7-7:45 p.m. Doors Close at 6:55 p.m.

One of *Ameche's* costars on *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* was William Claude Dukenfield . . . better known as W.C. Fields. A variety of physical ailments made it impossible to fulfill his film contract with Paramount Pictures, but he found that radio could provide a lucrative and less-stressful career. In 1937, he officially signed on as a regular on the new NBC Chase and Sanborn program. He only stayed for a few months as a regular cast member, but made many guest appearances to continue his memorable verbal jousts with Charlie McCarthy after jumping to CBS for more money in 1938.

His actual participation on *Your Hit Parade* is pretty unusual, as evidenced by the two tickets shown above. The musical portion of the program originated from New York, while Fields performed his skit with a small ensemble cast from Hollywood. The skits were much more in line with Fields' vaudeville roots and films; he wrote most of them himself.

This ticket date marked the last appearance of W.C. Fields on *Your Hit Parade*. I'm pretty sure it was on this series — sponsored by Lucky Strike Cigarettes — that he regularly spoke of the activities of his fictional son Chester (as in Chesterfield Cigarettes!). Perhaps that was the reason for his abrupt departure!

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. • HOLLYWOOD		Saturday APRIL 15 1944	No. 532
STUDIO C CBS	"BLUE RIBBON TOWN" starring GROUCHO MARX BILL DAYS FAY MCKENZIE ROBERT ARMBRUSTER HIS ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS Presented by Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer		
CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED		5-5:30 p.m. Doors close at 4:40 p.m.	

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Long before *You Bet Your Life*, Groucho Marx hosted Pabst Beer's *Blue Ribbon Town* on CBS for about 15 months. It's well documented that Groucho struggled to find a radio format that worked for him. The scripts for *Blue Ribbon Town* were no exception. It's worth noting that he was more at ease in his wartime work for the *G.I. Journal*, *Command Performance*, *Mail Call* and other programs where his innuendo could be displayed without offense. Newspaper logs reveal that Groucho's guest for the broadcast of April 15, 1944 was actor Laird Cregar, star of that year's 20th Century Fox release *The Lodger*.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. - HOLLYWOOD		Saturday APRIL 1 1944 7:15-7:45 p.m. Doors close at 7:10 p.m.	No 571
STUDIO B CBS	NOXZEMA PRESENTS THE MAYOR OF THE TOWN starring LIONEL BARRYMORE with AGNES MOOREHEAD		
CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

Veteran of over 200 films in a career that started in 1908, Lionel Barrymore starred as Dr. Gillespie in 15 Doctor Kildare films and played Judge Hardy in the first installment of MGM's Hardy Family series. Today he is best remembered for his role as Mr. Potter in Frank Capra's holiday classic *It's A Wonderful Life*.

He was famous on radio for his annual performances as Ebenezer Scrooge in radio presentations of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. His longest-lived radio role was his portrayed as the *Mayor of the Town* on radio from 1942 to 1949. The mayor was masterful at solving the daily problems of the residents of Springdale. He remained one of Hollywood's most beloved actors throughout his life.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. - HOLLYWOOD		Wednesday JULY 3 1940 4:30 p.m. Doors Close at 4:25 p.m.	No 1567
STUDIO A CBS	CHESEBROUGH MFG. CO. makers of "Vaseline" Preparations present JEAN HERSHOLT in "DOCTOR CHRISTIAN"		
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

The annual Academy Awards ceremonies occasionally include the awarding of the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. Hersholt's work is largely forgotten today, but his 17-year portrayal of kindly *Doctor Christian* on CBS radio and in a series of films helped solidify his reputation as a force for good. He actually created the character after starring in a film biography

of Dr. Allen Roy Dafoe (who gained fame when he delivered the Dionne Quintuplets in 1934). Hersholt wanted to do more films as Dafoe, but the good doctor refused. Jean responded by creating the character of Dr. Paul Christian.

The really unique element of the *Doctor Christian* broadcasts is the fact that the scripts were solicited from listeners. Stories of faith through perseverance and morality plays abounded. Eventually, Hersholt was so closely identified with the role that his own personal actions reflected the same dedication to serving mankind. Tickets to *Doctor Christian* broadcasts are quite common and inexpensive.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE			
Sun. Nov. 16 4:30 p.m. Studio D	MENNEN COMPANY presents Capt. FLAGG and Sgt. QUIRT starring VICTOR McLAGLEN and EDMUND LOWE	Doors Close 4:15 P.M. CHILDREN Under Six Years of Age Not Admitted	

Victor McLaglen, Cary Grant and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. shared top billing in RKO's *Gunga Din* in 1939. Silent film star Edmond Lowe made his first movie in 1915 and starred as *Chandu the Magician* in 1932. In 1926, McLaglen and Lowe costarred in Fox Films' *What Price Glory?* for director Raoul Walsh.

In 1941, the characters from that film were revived for the NBC Blue Network series *Capt. Flagg and Sgt. Quirt*, a situation comedy featuring the two journeymen actors in their original roles. The radio series lasted just four months. The film was remade in 1952 with James Cagney and Dan Dailey playing Flagg and Quirt.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM SUNSET PLAYHOUSE 6000 SUNSET BOULEVARD SUNSET BOULEVARD CORNER GORDON STREET			No 370
JANUARY 3 1950	DREFT presents THE BEULAH SHOW Starring HATTIE McDANIEL (Academy Award Winner "Gone with the Wind")	TUESDAY 4:00 p.m. Doors Close at 3:45 p.m.	
CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

Hattie McDaniel, as noted on this 1950 ticket, was the first African-American actor to win an Academy Award. Ironically, on radio she assumed the title role on *The Beulah Show* from two white men playing a black woman. Marlin Hurt introduced this character on NBC's *Fibber McGee and Molly* program in 1944. "She" was a sensation and quickly won a spinoff series on CBS. When Hurt died suddenly, the series was halted for a year until another white man (Bob Corley) was found to

portray the character. Within a few months, Hattie McDaniel was given the part and the focus of the series shifted to a more favorable characterization.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BOULEVARD — HOLLYWOOD		MONDAY JULY 9 1945 5:30-5:55 p.m. Doors Close at 5:25 p.m.	No 933
STUDIO C CBS	CBS Presents "THE MERRY LIFE OF MARY CHRISTMAS" starring MARY ASTOR with BEA BENADARET WALLY MAHER FRANK MARTIN IVAN DITMARS' ORCHESTRA		
CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

We close this month with Mary Astor, who will always be remembered as Brigid O'Shaughnessy opposite Humphrey Bogart's Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*. But we'll get into the holiday spirit by including this ticket from her brief series *The Merry Life of Mary Christmas*, which aired in the summer of 1945. Actually, the show had nothing to do with the holiday season at all . . . Mary portrayed a Hollywood gossip columnist with the unusual name.

Have a wonderful holiday season, everyone!

HOW PEG GREW INTO ETHEL

There may be a moral in small town girl's rise to actress-writer on Ace radio daytime feature

By Peg Lynch

Every ambition-ridden young lady starts her career by devouring magazine articles by and about so-called "successful" people. How I Became a Success. From Rags to Riches. Cinderella Girl Hits Big Time.

The accent of these articles is usually on the "lucky break" which changed her from a miserably discouraged creature to a glittering star who now moves in a whirlwind of frantic gaiety, surrounded by equally blessed compatriots and autograph hounds.

It's no wonder we begin a career by suspecting every encyclopedia salesman is a talent scout in disguise.

And had I, at the age of twenty, fresh from college and burning with the desire to startle the world with the Great Novel, known that I had seven years ahead of me of writing between four and five thousand words every day, I would probably have become that teacher the family talked about.

For radio demands are inexorable. Having worked in small stations in Minnesota, Indiana, Virginia and

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Maryland, I know that the average girl who wants to get into radio waltzes into the studio and says what she likes best to do is "act." Unfortunately, there is no immediate place in a small station for a person who just likes to "act." Even young men who want to announce find that they wind up also running the control board and playing records. The manager's secretary and book-keeper is likely to find herself substituting on the woman's show when the regular person is ill. And everyone—no matter what he is hired for—invariably writes commercial copy.

There is always a spot to be written. About the time you are ready to stagger away from the typewriter and get home, a salesman rushes in waving some notes and showing that Hammersholler's Furniture is having a magnificent sale tomorrow on end tables and get it on the air right away—before the six o'clock news! As you wildly pound this out, an announcer rushes out of the control room shouting that he can't find the theatre spot, and for five minutes every one, including the manager, tears his hair finding the theatre spot which the new girl has misplaced in the Used Copy File. This goes on all day long, writing, writing, writing, until by the time you roll into bed you are muttering "It's Smart to

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be Thrifty," "The quality is high but the price low!" "You can't afford to miss this one-day sale on cedar chests" and so forth.

Anyone can learn to write commercial copy and it's the best opening for working in a small station. The chance to act is always present, for practically everyone who works in a radio station (even the engineer) has a hidden passion for the stage, and as a result the staff eventually gets together and puts on some radio dramas. There are always books of radio plays available. If you like to write, as I did, so much the better—all you have to do is write the plays for the people there and put them on. It's extra work and you won't get paid for it, but it's good experience, and lots of fun.

What every person wants—with no exceptions—who goes to work in a small station is "my own show." That, of course, depends on you. So the best thing to do is rack your brains for an idea for a show that can be sold to a sponsor. If it's a good idea, you can not only use it at this station but it's a good wedge to have when you look for another job at another station.

Ethel and Albert was just such an idea. At my first radio job I was hired to write commercial copy and then told the first day I also had to go on the air with a Woman's Show. Instead of being delighted, as I should have been at this golden opportunity just thrown at me, I nearly quit, terrified at the thought of speaking into a microphone. This last was due to several kind professors at the University who shuddered at my speaking voice and told me I had better stick to writing. However, I sat up all night stabbing the typewriter with two fingers and writing my first program. *Ethel and Albert* has just two people for the very reason that it began that way. I had only the announcer on the show to work with, the rest of the staff being too busy at that time to be in a play of any kind.

I might mention in passing that I was enchanted when I first joined the network to find so much work taken out of my hands. Sound effects man—engineer—announcer—producer—director. When you work in a small station you work with what you have. We were everything. While broadcasting the show, I worked the telephone bell, the door buzzer, opened and slammed the door, crashed windows, and other miscellaneous noises such as meowing, barking and baby cries. Whoever played "Albert" (I kept losing them to the draft) ran the portable turntables, cuing in trains, crowd noises, automobile crashes, thunder and music. All this of course with one eye on the script and reading the lines. And speaking of working with what you have, I should say that in writing plays in a small station, you first check the sound

effects available and then write the script around them.

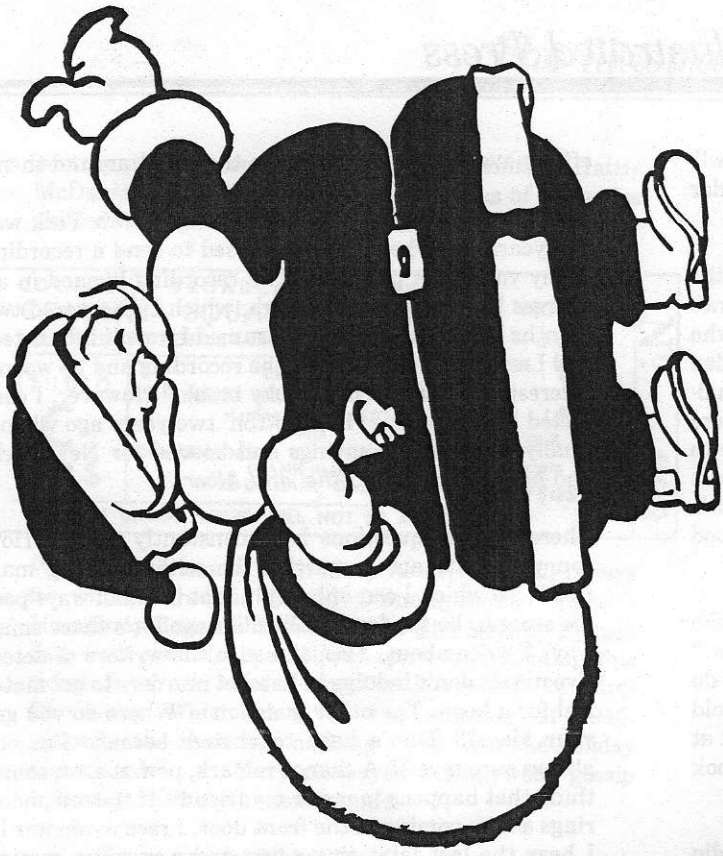
The only time I got a chance to land in New York was five years ago when I was supposed to send a recording of my voice to a producer. The recording burned in an express train fire in Pittsburgh, which I discovered two months later. The producer assumed I wasn't interested, and I assumed he had gotten the recording and he wasn't interested. That was my "lucky break." However, I contacted that producer, Bob Cotton, two years ago when I finally clutched my savings and headed for New York, and he now produces *Ethel and Albert*.

There are two questions I am constantly asked. "How can you write about married life without being married?" To which I can only reply that in small ways people seem to be fundamentally alike, and it's these small ways I write about. Also, I'm sure the writers of detective novels don't indulge in hatchet murders to get material for a book. The other question—"Where do you get your ideas?" That's hard to answer because I'm not always sure myself. A chance remark, perhaps, or, something that happens to me or my friends. If the telephone rings as I'm coming in the front door, I race to answer it, I hear the last faint ting-a-ling and a receiver coming down—there's an idea for a script. It happens to "Albert" he worries all evening that it might have been an important business call, and having fretted himself into a stew, he eventually discovers that it was only Mrs. Palmer for "Ethel" saying that the Drama Club meets Tuesday instead of Wednesday.

Writing for radio is a nerve-wracking business. You have to write whether you feel like it or not, and even when you are completely bereft of ideas. Scripts must be written in plenty of time to be mimeographed.

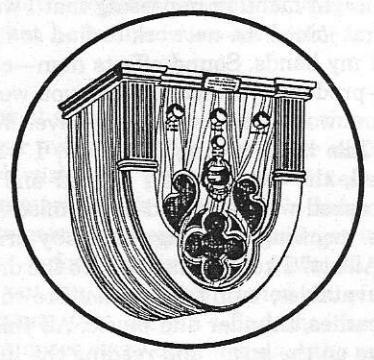
But working in radio has its advantages over any other business. It's always fun, always something new, and always gives YOU a chance to use your own ideas. What's more, your first kiss, your first date, or your first love has none of the thrill of your first fan letter. I say "first" but you will always be amazed that people are nice enough to take the time to write you at all. The first time anyone asked for my autograph I signed with a great flourish only to have the little girl wail—"Oh I thought you were Ma Perkins!"

Article originally published
March 1946



*Merry
Christmas*

FIRST CLASS MAIL



The Old Time Radio Club
73 Banner Avenue
Lancaster, NY 14086-1930

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