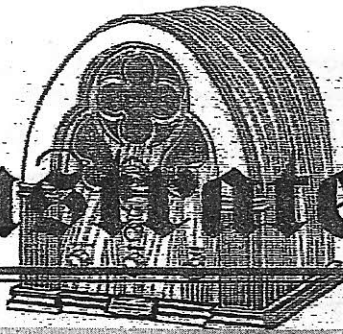


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press



Number 385

December 2010



The Illustrated Press

Membership Information

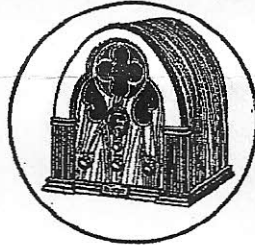
Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should 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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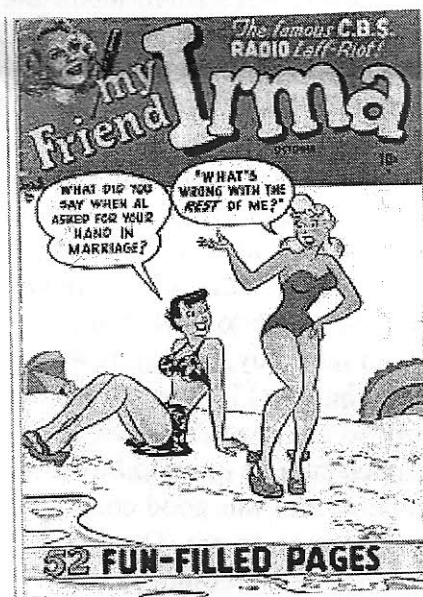


Editor's Two Cents:

Good News! The club polo shirts are ordered. They will be here before you read this newsletter. We decided to go with colors maroon and light blue. If you didn't get a shirt this time, you'll have to wait awhile for the next batch. As promised Dan Marafino had a bunch of trivia questions. As usual Rich Olday came up with many answers. Frank Bork and I nailed the Sherlock Holmes ones. I will have some Fibber McGee questions along with a Fibber McGee and Molly movie from 1944 titled "Heavenly Days" to give away. Just a quick reminder that our club's dues are due the month of January. Treasurer Dom Parisi will gladly take your check. I can't believe it's December already. As I'm writing this article, it's still November, but you won't read this until December. As far as the Green Hornet movie goes, it would be fun to see the movie as a small group or whatever. I will discuss this at the December and January meetings. It may be fun. I think most of us can get in the show with senior citizen rates. I just had one of those memorable birthdays 2 weeks ago. I don't feel any older upstairs, but my back and shoulders seem to bother me more and more. I guess it must be the weather. What else can it be? On behalf of myself, my staff, consisting of me, and all fellow officers a *Merry Christmas*.

Bets'ha Didn't Know!

We all remember Marie Wilson In "My Friend Irma". She played the dim-witted Irma. She was something like Gracie Allen, but much more attractive. Her movie "My Friend Irma" in 1950 was the launch pad movie for a new comedy team. The pair was Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. "My Friend Irma" was so popular it later became a TV show, a comic strip, and a comic book. Sad to say Marie Wilson died at an early age. She was only 56. The Irma show theme song started with Friendship, by Cole Porter from 1939. The theme going into the beginning of the program is entitled Sentimental Rhapsody from Street Scene by Alfred Newman. If you listen to that song it's one of the most popular themes for *Film Noir* movies. I've heard it in dozens of films.



Irma had some great lines in the story. When asked about flypaper, Irma thought it was airline stationary. Her movie career after Irma was basically playing a dumb blonde. For the talent she possessed she was virtually stereotyped for the remainder of her career. -----See you next month

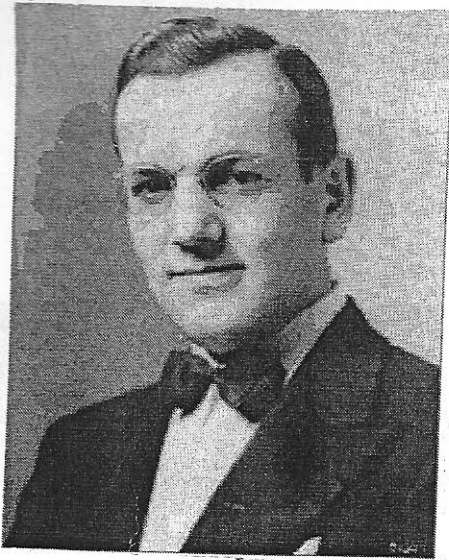
Glenn Miller



Way back, a few years ago when I was a bit younger and had a stronger back; I use to Dee Jay music at weddings and parties. At almost every wedding I did, I never failed to get requests for Glenn Miller's "In the Mood", and "Moonlight Serenade". I had other big band music, but it was Glenn Miller they wanted to hear. If today's wedding couples' had any sense for good music, and there is but a few, you may still hear the golden sounds of Glenn Miller. This is a living testimonial for one of the best, if not the greatest band leader of all time, Glenn Miller. Let's go back to the beginning. Miller was a farm boy, born in Iowa in 1904. When he was 11 years old the family moved to Grant City, Missouri. Miller milked enough cows to buy his first trombone, and was good enough to play in the town orchestra. The family moved to Ft Morgan, Colorado when Glenn was 14. In his senior year of high school Miller became infatuated with a new style of music called *dance band music*. He was so into this music, that he formed his own little band with some of his fellow classmates. By the time he graduated, he had made up his mind that music was going to be his solemn vocation. He attended the University of

Colorado at Boulder, but most of his time was spent on auditions and doing music gigs. He finally dropped out of school and set his sights on being a professional musician. In 1926 Miller toured with Ben Pollak's band. In 1928 he married his high school sweetheart, and in 1930 he joined up with Red Nichols band in New York City. In the mid 1930s Miller worked as a trombonist and arranger for the Dorsey Brothers' band. In 1935 he assembled an American band for British band leader Ray Noble. Miller finally formed his very own band in 1937. After a short time the band floundered and failed. Glenn became a bit depressed as he was looking for a unique sound that would be different than all the other bands. Discouraged, but still filled with determination, Miller returned to New York. He found that unique sound by making the clarinet play a melodic line with a tenor saxophone holding the same note while three other saxes harmonized within a single octave. Miller then hired Wilbur Schwartz to play lead clarinet. Wilbur helped create a sound that no other band could imitate. Thus! The melodic sounds of Glenn Miller were born. In 1939 Time magazine noted that of the 12 or 24 discs featured in each of the jukeboxes in the country, two to six of the selections were from Glenn Miller. From 1939-1942 Miller's band was featured three times a week on the CBS Chesterfield Radio Show. In 1940 Miller had ten of the top 40 hits of that year. They were like the Beatles of the 1960s. Some critics said Miller was too commercial, but the public wasn't in the mood to listen to the critics. Sorry about the pun. 66 years after Glenn Miller absence, I still love hearing his beautiful arrangements. If Don McClean would have been born a few generations before,

he might have said the music died on December 15th 1944 instead of February 3rd 1959. I myself, remember watching "The Glenn Miller Story" in 1954 starring Jimmy Stewart. Not only was it a good movie, but it had great music. Artie Shaw was quoted as saying after Miller died, "I wish "In The Mood" had died and not Glenn Miller. Shaw felt Miller's music (was not Jazz) per say as the music akin to Goodman, Dorseys, Beneke, Shaw, etc and all the other so-called Jazz Bands. Well maybe Miller wasn't a Jazz Band. He just made wonderful music that just about appealed to everyone on the planet. It was announced that a museum is being built in Clarinda , Iowa. This is Miller's birthplace. A building of 5600 square feet will house memorabilia from Glenn Miller's music career. As far as The Glenn Miller Story is concerned, maybe that may be a good prize to give away as a future trivia question in the next month or so. Anyway here is some G.M. trivia on the other side of page.



Glenn Miller Trivia:

The mystery of Glenn Miller's disappearance may have been solved, but I don't think it will surface to the general public anytime soon. It seems that the British are reluctant to acknowledge they had a major part in Miller's death. Just recently the discovery of a RAF pilot's flight log has been found. The pilot says he was part of a flight returning from an aborted bombing raid. They were ordered to drop their bombs over the English Channel. A small plane was observed straying into their path and was destroyed. That plane was believed to be Miller's plane.

Harry Morgan, actor, co-starred with the real Glenn Miller as Chummy MacGregor in the 1934 movie "Orchestra's Wives". He also co-starred with Jimmy Stewart in 1954's "Glenn Miller Story" playing the same character Chummy MacGregor.

Among those present at the 1954 premiere showing of the "Glenn Miller Story" was Glenn's mother, Mrs Miller. She thought the movie was pretty good, but said her son was better looking than Jimmy Stewart.

June Allyson who played Jimmy Stewart's wife in three movies says that the Miller story was one of her personal best.

Miller's theme song "Moonlight Serenade", my personal favorite was written when Glenn was only 19 years old, back in 1923.

Miller's real first name was Alton. When the war started, Miller wanted to join, but the government said he was too old. He was 38 in 1942. He was allowed to enlist as a musician and formed an elite army band. He rose to the rank of Major. **I say the music died Dec 15th.**

Blondie

By Tom Cherre



The comic strip *Blondie* was created by Chic Young way back in 1930. It's still going strong today. What you may not know is that the strip started out as a young gorgeous young flapper girl by the name of Blondie Boopadoop. She had a ton of boyfriends, one by the name of Dagwood Bumstead. Dagwood, was the playboy son of billionaire railroad tycoon J. Rolling Bumstead. Dagwood was not what you would call a Rudolf Valentino. In fact, he was a bit of a bungler. Young wrote how he got lost in his father's mansion, and had to join a tour group to get back to the living room. Nevertheless Dagwood and Blondie fell in love and got married on February 17th 1933. They look pretty good for a couple celebrating their 78th anniversary in a few months. As it happened Dagwood was disinherited by his father and the Bumsteads settled down to a modest lifestyle with a home and family. The comic strip was so

popular they made a movie about it in 1938. Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake were cast in the title roles. They first appeared on radio together on The Bob Hope Show in December of 1938. Their popularity grew so much they started their own radio show as a summer replacement for Eddie Cantor.



Eddie Cantor never returned and their sponsor, Camel cigarette decided to keep *Blondie* as a regular comedy series. This situation comedy had Dagwood working at the J. C. Dithers Constuction Company. His evil boss Mr. Dithers had a rather compelling working relationship with Bumstead, which made for funny storylines. The show also revolved around the regular problems that normal households have to put up with. In this case Dagwood always seems to have trouble in most cases. The show ran for 11 years, and 27 more movies followed. The show also made it to TV with Will Hutchins as Dagwood. If you heard Blondie on radio you might remember her as Jane Jetson, in *The Jetsons*.



Comic Strips to Radio: By Tom Cherre

While we're on the subject of comic strips, there were quite a few that made the move to radio. One of the most popular strips of the 1930s was Chester Gould's Dick Tracy. It first appeared in the Chicago tribune on October 4th 1931. The first episode had gangsters kidnapping Dick's girlfriend Tess Trueheart and killing her father. Dick Tracy then joined the police force as a detective and located the killers and rescued his girlfriend, and remained on the force from then on. Dick Tracy went on the air in 1935 over the Mutual network. It also aired on NBC's Blue network and finished its 13 year run in 1948. Tracy battled for years against the likes of villains like 3D McGee, 88 Keys, B-B Eyes, The Blank, and many, many others.



Even Jiggs of "Bringing Up Father" had a radio show. Other popular ones that I even remember were Mark Trail. I remember it was on daily right before supper. It had the Maaaarrrrrkkkkkk

Trrrraaaaiiiilllll beginning. Terry and the Pirates was another big one. I also have a vivid remembrance of Superman. The popular beginning of "Look up in the sky. It's a bird, it's a plane. It's Superman. This lead in is probably second only to The Lone Ranger. Probably one of the most popular comic strips to- go- radio first appeared on August 5, 1924, also in the Chicago Tribune. This was "Little Orphan Annie" created by Harold Gray. I'm sure Frank Bork has fresh memories of that one. I'm sorry I'm mistaken. Frank just turned 39 on November 2nd. Anyway Annie first appeared on Chicago's WGN in 1930. It became a national sensation when it appeared on NBC's Blue network in 1931. Little Annie and her dog sandy would travel to all the most exotic and remote points of the earth battling wits with smugglers, gangsters, and pirates. She was the counter part of Jack Armstrong. She was the all American girl. The show sponsored by Ovaltine ran until 1942. The comic strip just recently ended after 86 years running with its last episode on May 13th 2010. She'll live forever as "Annie".



Red Skelton
By Tom Cherre



My earliest recollection of Red Skelton was watching him on TV every Tuesday night in the early 1950s. He opened with a funny monologue. The show then featured a lavish Las Vegas style dance number by the June Taylor dancers. Next came the best part---the comedy sketches. The guest star was usually involved with any one of the many characters Red decided to draw upon. It could have been Clem Kiddlehopper, Freddie the Freeloader, San Fernando Red or any of the equally funny clowns in his repertoire. He was a genuine clown, and he achieved that quality years before his success on TV. He was a big star on radio and the Silver Screen. Red was born in 1913 in Vincennes , Indiana. His father Joseph, who was a circus clown died shortly before Red was born. Red caught the show business bug when comedian Ed Wynn, trying to help Red and his family, bought all the

newspapers he was selling and invited him back stage to introduce him to all the members oh his show.



By the time Red was 15 he hit the road full time working everywhere from medicine shows, vaudeville, burlesque, showboats, minstrel shows, and circuses. When he was only 17 he met his future wife Edna Stewart. He married her shortly after and remained married until divorce broke them up 13 years later. Edna would still remain with Red as one of his gag writers. After Red appeared on The Rudy Valley Show in 1937 he was hired to be a regular on *Avalon Time on NBC* in 1939. The show was sponsored by Avalon cigarettes. He premiered on his own show *The Raleigh Cigarette Program* in 1941. This is the vehicle where he developed his numerous recurring characters including, Cauliflower McPug, Willy Lump Lump, Mean Widdle Kid, Dead Eye, and others as time went by. His show featured Ozzie and Harriet, with Ozzie as bandleader, and Harriet as vocalist. Truman Bradley was the announcer. About this time Red entered into his second marriage. He met Georgia Maurine Davis on the set of the movie *The Harvey Girls*. Georgia played one of the saloon girls. They married and had a son Richard Jr, born in 1945. In 1948 Lorene Tuttle and Verna Felton joined

the show along with David Rose doing the orchestra chores. Anita Ellis was the singer. This show continued until 1953. Like many other radio stars, Red made the move to TV and was highly successful. In the mid 50s he mentioned on the air that his young son Richard was diagnosed with leukemia. He battled the disease for a year or so and Red would occasionally ask viewers to remember his son in their prayers. The audience was saddened when they found out Richard had passed away. He died on May 10th 1958, just ten days shy of his tenth birthday. Red was never the same after that. He couldn't perform on TV for quite a while. He had guest comedians like Jackie Gleason, Johnny Carson, and others filling in for him.



Movie star and close friend, Arlene Dahl said Red was completely devastated over the loss of his son. She said, he just adored him. Red had his son's room virtually turned into a shrine. No one was allowed to enter it without his permission. Both Red and wife Georgia were never the same and that marriage also ended in divorce. Years later Georgia committed suicide shooting herself on little Richard's anniversary of his death on May 10th 1976. She was 55.

Red eventually came back and continued to entertain people for many more years. Red died from pneumonia in 1997. He was 84. The great Groucho Marx said of Red that he was the most acclaimed clown in the history of show business. He had the ability to play a multitude of characters with a minimum use of props. I myself thought Red Skelton was great. Unlike Jack Benny. Skelton could play so many different people like Kadiddlehopper, Freddie the Freeloader, or even his trusty seagulls Gertrude and Heathcliff. Benny was a great comic by just being himself. After Red's television days were over he managed to do a little stand-up comedy shows. He never resorted to so called *Blue Humor*, and criticized those that had to resort to that to make people laugh. It was reported that the Red Skelton show was the second most popular in the 1960s. The number one show was *Gunsmoke*. And with that bit of trivia I will close with Red's famous closing---"Good night -- and may God bless".



Old Time Radio A Dicing Hobby By Jerry Collins

We now continue with the rest of Tom Mix. The full extent of Tom Mix's achievements has not been documented. If we believe that has been written, he fought in the Boar War, the Boxer Rebellion, the Spanish American War as a member of the Rough Riders, and then served as a member of the Texas Rangers.



The Adventures of Hop Harrigan: Another one of the great airplane adventure shows. Hop Harrigan was played by Chester Stratton, while his mechanic Tank Tinker was played by Jackson Beck and Kenny Lynch. Gail Nolan was played by Mitzi Gould. The show was on the air from 1942-48. Since the show was sustained through most of its run, announcer Glenn Riggs became a great promoter for fighting the war on the home front. He pushed Red Cross blood drives, scrap drives, turning in waste fats, and saving resources. To return to the airplane theme each show ended with phrase, "America Needs Flyers".

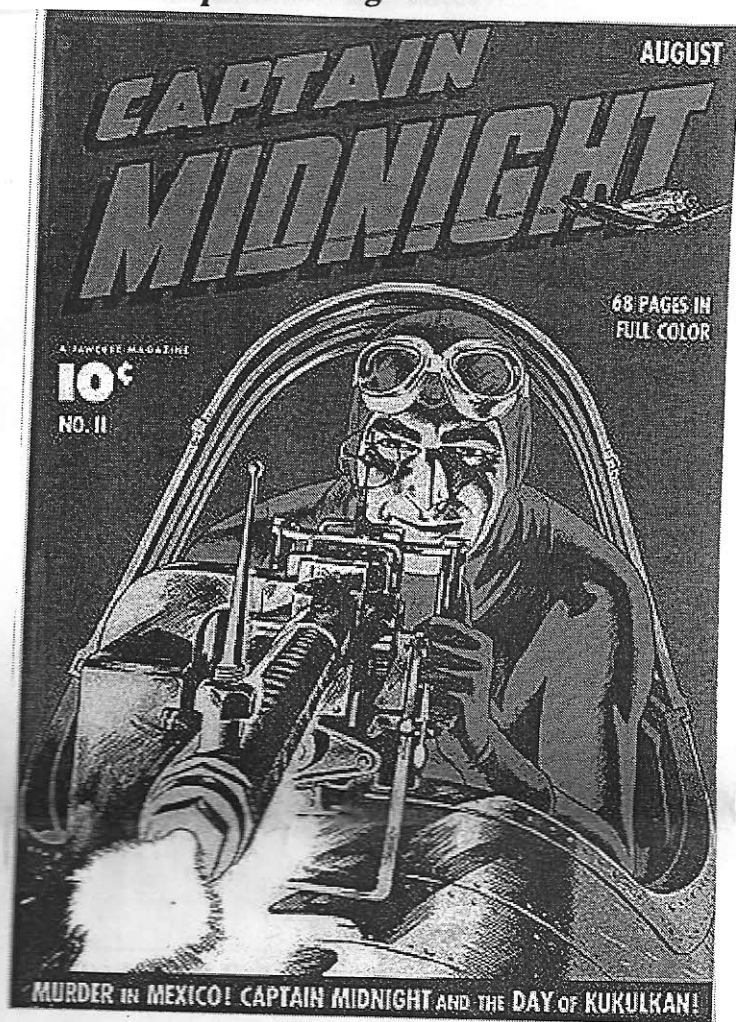


The Adventures of Frank Merriwell: The show was based on the popular turn of the century books of the same name written by Burt L. Standish (Gilbert Patton). Frank Merriwell was played by Lawson Zerbe with Hal Studer playing Bart Hodge. Elaine Rost played Inza Burrage and Patricia Hosely playing Elsie Bellwood, Harlow Wilcox and Mel Brandt were the announcers in the show. Once again the show had a very famous introduction.

There it is an echo of the past, an exciting past, a romantic past—the era of Horse and carriage, gas-lit streets and free for all football games; the era of one of the most beloved characters in American fiction, Frank Merriwell is loved as much Much Today as he ever was, and so the National Broadcasting Company brings him to radio in a new series of books written by Gilbert patton under the pen name of Burt L. Standish.



Captain Midnight.



Fawcett's *Captain Midnight* #11 (August 1943)

Like Jack Armstrong, Captain Midnight was another World War II era children's serial to come out of Chicago. I listened to both and they were two of the best on the air. The Skelly Oil Company sponsored the show in the early years. This was followed by Ovaltine. The show began in 1939 and lasted until December of 1949. Captain Red Albright (Captain Midnight) was played by Ed Prentice. Chuck Ramsey was played by Billy Rose, while Ichabod Mudd was played by Hugh Studebaker. Joyce Ryan was played by Angeline Orr.

Boris Aplon was Ivan Shark and Earl George portrayed Gardo. Marvin Miller played captain Einman the Nazi and Bogart. The show had a pair of famous announcers; Pierre Andre, and Don Gordon.

The Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen.

The show was heard in the mid 1930s and early 1940s. World War I, Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, as well as barnstorming made this show and other similar shows very popular on the radio. Jimmy Allen Flying Club with more than three million members were established. Murray McLean played Jimmy Allen. The show was sponsored by the Richfield Oil Company.

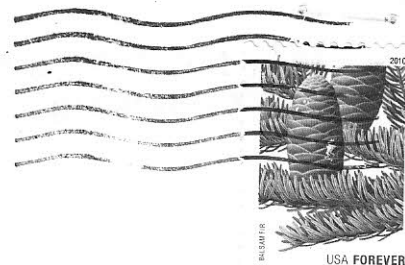
Mark Trail.

The radio show was taken from the comic strip by Ed Dodd. It told the story of the many adventures of Mark Trail outdoorsman and conservationist. Mark Trail was played by Matt Crowley, Scotty by Ben Cooper, and Cherry by Joyce Gordon. Jackson Beck was the announcer, while Drex Hines was the director. The show was on the air from 1950-52 and was sponsored by Pep Cereal. Premiums (pins, figures, etc) were given free of charge in each box of Pep. **Next month Corliss Archer:**



The Old Time Radio Club

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