

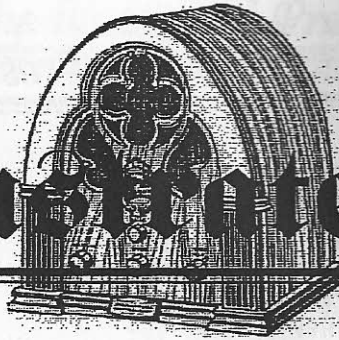
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 386

January 2011



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.

Club Mailing Address

Old Time Radio Club
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086

E-Mail Address
otrclub@localnet.com



All Submissions are subject to approval
prior to actual publication.

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

The *Illustrated Press* is the newsletter of the *Old Time Radio Club*, headquartered in Western New York State. It is published monthly except for the months of July and August. Contents except where noted are copyright © 2009 by the OTRC.

Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters,
etc. to: *The Illustrated Press*

c/o Tom Cherre, Editor (716) 833-9713
144 Fontaine Drive
Cheektowaga, NY 14215

E-Mail address: skylark68_1999@yahoo.com

Web Page Address:

members.localnet.com/~robmcd

Club Officers

President

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

Vice President & Canadian Branch

Richard Simpson (905) 892-4688
960 16 Road R.R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
Canada, L0S 1C0

Treasurer

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

Membership Renewals, Change of Address

Peter Bellanca (716) 773-2485
1620 Ferry Road
Grand Island, NY 14072
pmb1620@gmail.com

Membership Inquires and OTR

Network Related Items

Richard Olday (716) 684-1604
171 Parwood Trail
Depew, NY 14043-1071
raolday@yahoo.com

Technical Manager / CD and MP3 Librarian

Bob McDivitt (716) 681-8073
109 Poinciana Pkwy.
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
robmcd@verizon.net

Cassette and Reference Librarian

Frank Bork (716) 601-7234
10 Dover Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086
frankbork209@yahoo.com

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.



Editor's Two Cents

Happy New Year to all. Well, our Christmas Party lacked a few familiar faces, but the core group was still there. The weather was a little bitter, and that may have prevented a few from attending. All in all, a good time was had by all. The club shirts look great and Peter and I are the only club members with official sweat shirts. I will offer them at the next meeting. Cost for one in up to X-large is \$19.90 plus tax. 2X and 3X are two and four dollars more. I'll be wearing mine next month. Thanks are in order for Paul Davenport, who donated 200 cds to our club. Kudos to Paul. It's that time of the year when membership dues are due. Kindly send your check in to Peter Bellanca. Payment should be made by the end of January 2011. Once again send in your check or pay at the January meeting. **Dues Notice!!!!!!!!!!**



Bet'sha Didn't Know:

I bet you don't know when the first commercial in-car radio came about. The year was 1930 when the Galvin Brothers rather expensive radio (it sold for \$130.00) was offered in the Ford Model A Deluxe Coupe. The car itself sold for \$540.00. Oh yes, and the make was Motorola. I'm not positive, but I think Frank Bork might have had one or two of those vehicles a few years back.

It will be exactly 65 years ago on January 19th that Bob Wells broadcasted the very first Hi-Teen Show on WEBR. It was done live from the Dellwood Ballroom on January 19th 1946.

It was brought to my attention recently by the Chattanooga Airwaves OTR Club that legendary announcer Art Gilmore passed away a few months ago on September 25th. Anyone who has two good ears had probably heard his voice thousands of times. He was the announcer for radio's Amos N Andy, Dr Christian, The Sears Radio Theater, and Red Ryder. He was the infamous voice for the opening of TV's Highway Patrol. He was also the voice of FDR in the movie Yankee Doodle Dandy. His wife said he did over 3000 movie trailers, among one which was "It's A Wonderful Life". Art Gilmore was 98 when he died.

From Radio Recall article:

While Japanese radio did not have "soap operas" as such, there were a number of dramatic serials similar in tone to the US shows. They were sponsored by silk producers and were commonly known as "silks". Among the popular ones were *Mama-San Perkins*, *Our Gal Sake*, and *When a Geisha Marries*. April Fool. I guess I'm a little early. Till next month.

Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy by Tom Cherre

They say the art of ventriloquism is the ability to make a voice appear to have come from a source other than the speaker. Edgar Bergen, who grew up in Chicago developed this talent while still in grammar school. Many were the times when he would drive his mother and other family members out of their wits by throwing his voice at home. This all came about after he sent away for a 25ct booklet on ventriloquism. His loving wooden partner was born while he was



still in high school. He had a woodcarver by the name of Theodore Mack fashion a puppet after a freckle-faced newspaper boy named Charlie. He gave his puppet that first name and used the last name of the carver, only making it sound a little more Celtic. This is how Charlie McCarthy got his moniker. Bergen & McCarthy entered the entertainment world via the vaudeville circuit. He eventually headlined in nightclubs all across the country and in Europe. He hit the radio scene with a guest spot on the Rudy Valley Show on December 16th 1936. A year later he had his own show,

The Chase & Sanborn Show. Bergen in real life was a shy conservative person. He had the unique finesse of portraying Charlie McCarthy as the complete opposite of himself. Radio Album Magazine issue Spring of 1942 has this to say about our star:

Charlie McCarthy...*Brash clapper-tongued Charlie McCarthy's real pop is a bartender named Mack. He did the carving, but Charlie's garrulous shock-loving soul was fused into him by Edgar Bergen, 38, balding, shy as his little wooden dummy is outspoken. Most ventriloquists stumble around the small time circuits because they insist upon being the brains of an act. Edgar based his terrific success formula on reversing the formula. Charlie gets the glory, the laughs, the applause—not he. Charlie cost \$35 originally, but now he's insured for \$10,000. He has a wardrobe of monocles, 2 full dress suits, 10 hats size 3 1/2, 2 berets, jockey silks, a gypsy costume, and a Sherlock Holmes one too. He has a cowboy hat and French Foreign Legion outfits. He wears baby size shoes, and his laundry bill is \$1000 a year. He brings in \$100,000 to his master from the sale of dolls, gadgets etc, and when Bergen dies the National Society of Ventriloquists will get \$10,000 to keep Charlie in permanent repair... Pretty nice for a snub-nosed Pinnocchio. Edgar's properly grateful to his little friend. And not only for financial reasons. Charlie says things to beautiful women that Eddie wouldn't dream of uttering. Always been that way. Eddie has, ever since he found he could do tricks with his voice back at Chicago's Lakeview High School. If Charlie, modeled on a tough red-headed newsboy, hasn't been born about that time, the Swedish-American Bergen*

saga might have been awfully dull reading. Charlie taught Edgar through Northwestern U., through a dazzling vaudeville tour of the country, and on over to London and Stockholm. When vaudeville gasped its last Charlie brazened his way into nightclubs, was convulsing a Rainbow Room in Radio City, when Rudy Valley pricked up his ears. Charlie's had a death grip on a microphone ever since.



Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC where he has remained ever since. I miss Charlie McCarthy. I also miss Bergen's other puppet Mortimer Snerd. To me, Edgar Bergen was a genius at his craft. Bergen was not the most technically skilled ventriloquists. Charlie McCarthy frequently twitted him for moving his lips too often, but Bergen's sense of comedic timing was superb. I will say Edgar Bergen was no dummy.

I'll leave you with some classic lines from some of his shows:

Charlie : "May I have a kiss good-bye? **Dale Evans:**"Well I can't see any harm in that."

Charlie:"Oh I wish you could. A harmless kiss doesn't seem so thrilling."

This daring line by Mae West resulted in a 15 year broadcasting ban.

"Charlie I remember our date and I still have splinters to prove it."

In 1941 Bergen met Frances Westerman after a radio program. He was 39 and she was 19. She was a member of the studio audience sitting in the first row, the young fashion model caught Bergen's eye and he asked if he could meet her. Four years later they were married. In 1946 they became the proud parents of Candace Bergen who later rise to great heights herself. On September 30th 1975 Edgar Bergen passed away in his sleep due to kidney failure. He was 75. Charlie McCarthy was presented to the



BG R.L. Avery (left) with Edgar Bergen (right) and "Charlie McCarthy" at Edgewood A

**Fibber McGee & Molly:
The Closet Routine & More
By Tom Cherre**

My mom must have been a big Fibber McGee and Molly fan. As I was growing up all I heard for many years was how much my bedroom closet resembled Fibber McGee's. During the 1940's she probably listened to many of the soaps, but she knew all about Fibber McGee. She was probably right about my closet, although I know I didn't have as much junk in it as Fibber. The cluttered closet was what I remember most about Fibber McGee and Molly in the early 1950's. The overstuffed closet began as a one time stunt, but "the closet" was developed carefully, not being overused. It rarely appeared in more than two consecutive episodes. It never disappeared for the same length either. It rarely collapsed at exactly the same time from show to show. It soon became the best running gag in the history of the American radio classic period. Jack Benny's basement vault, and it was funny, ran a distant second. Both of the sound effects were performed by Ed Ludes and Virgil Rhymer, both NBC staff sound effects men.

Exactly what tumbled out of McGee's closet was anybody's guess, except for the sound effects men. The avalanche always seemed to end with the same sound, that of a small household hand bell and Fibber's inevitable post mortem.

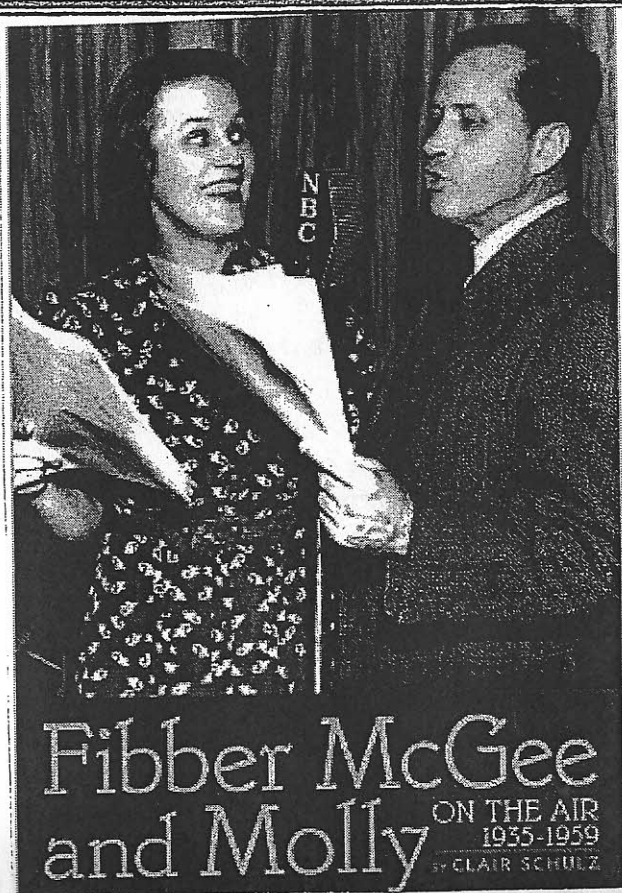
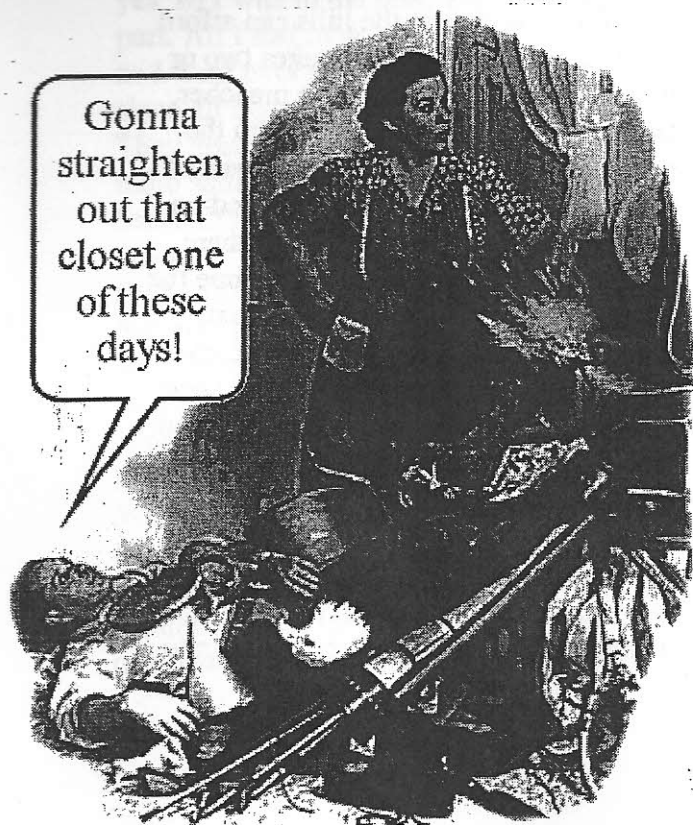


I recently caught the movie "Patton" with George C. Scott, and as I listened to some of the War -Time Fibber McGee and Molly shows I became aware that they were major supporters of our fighting boys. They made many references right before and during our involvement in World War 2. Just after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 Jim Jordan stepped out of character and ended the show inviting the listeners to join in with the studio audience in singing America. He also made many announcements to listeners, both during the show through subtle references written into the script ~~and after the show, to buy defense~~ bonds. With the backlash of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor still looming in



'79 Wistful Vista was one of America's most famous addresses and Molly's warning to Fibber not to open the half closet door (and his subsequent decision to do it) created one of radio's best remembered running gags that

about Japan, some probably considered offensive nowadays, were inserted into the scripts. A for instance is an episode that took place three weeks after Pearl Harbor. Fibber tells Mayor LaTrivia his great slogan for the War Bond Campaign. Every time you buy a bond you slap a Jap across the pond. On the show that took place on the D-Day invasion Fibber and Molly spoke only at the very beginning and at the end of the show. In between all they played was patriotic music. Jim Jordan was a true patriot and somewhat of a World War 1 veteran. The somewhat has to be explained. Back in Peoria when Marion was 16 and Jim was 17 they were much in love, and planned to get married, but World War 1 prevented that. Jim was inducted and was leaving for France with the 122nd Engineers, but never made it. He landed in St. Nazaire and was taken quite ill, and sent directly to the hospital. When he got out the war was over, and the only battle he fought was with pink pills and pale liquids. Upon his return Marion and Jim married.



Thus began a long career with many dead ends and obstacles occurring along the way. They had some moderate success at radio, but their big break came when John J. Louis, an ad agency executive from Chicago felt the Jordans had what he wanted for a half hour comedy show for the Johnson Wax people. You know the rest. Fibber McGee and Molly premiered on April 16th 1935. The twosome hung around till 1956 when the show was relegated to a 15 minute slot on NBC's Monitor show. Marion, who was dealing with cancer, died in 1961. Jim Jordan came out of retirement in the 70's to do a spot on TV's Chico and the Man. He passed away in 1988. Anyone who remembers Fibber will never forget the closet. Which reminds me I have to clean mine out one of these days. "Good Night All."

Pat Buttram



Most of you out there know I'm a big old time Western cowboy fan. I'm also particular of all the sidekicks. Hoppy's partner Andy Clyde was about as worthless as an air conditioner in Greenland. Fuzzy St. John sidekick of Lash, LaRue and Buster Crabbe was a joke too. I like Gabby Hayes, but he was too old to help Roy Rogers. I loved Smiley Burnette and Jingles, but they were mainly along for comic relief. The only dependable sidekick would be Tonto, the faithful Indian companion to the masked man. A close second might be Gene Autry's movie and radio sidekick, Pat Buttram. Once in awhile he

would duke it out with the bad guys. In the movies and the radio show he was extremely funny, but not portrayed as a buffoon. All Pat had to do to be funny was to just be himself. In his twilight years he was a riot as Mr. Haney, flim-flam man on TV's Green Acres. In *Radio Varieties March of 1940*, he had this to say about himself.

Life of Pat Buttram (So Far)

By Pat Buttram

I wuz borned in a little town of Addison, Alabama (200 population) on the night of June 19, 1915. There wuz no doctor in Addison, so I wuz borned without one. The house we lived in at the time wuz a church remodeled into a "parsonage". You see, my dad wuz a preacher in Addison, an wen they built a new church they moved us into the old one. Dad didn't make much money the year I wuz borned (only \$200) but everybody agreed that he was the best circuit rider in Winston County. I might explain that a circuit rider is a preacher that has more than one church an rides from one to the other each Sunday. The reason for this is very few churches in the hills can afford a preacher of its own, an it takes two or three churches to support one preacher. But gittin back to me (after all I'm the hero of the story) I wuz the youngest of seven children, an we wuz all raised on "ruterbeggars and rabbits." I had three brothers older than me so by the time the pants got down to me they wuz pretty threadbear. I don't member any of my early youth, but from what I hear I spent all my time dodging work. One old man who knew me back in Winston County remarked when he heard I had a job on the radio, he said. "Well, they got the right one for the right job...he's too dern sorry to do anything else." In the meantime I had been growin and goin to

school an playin hookey and baseball, an I was also third jerk on the tug of war team. When I wuz sixteen we moved



Out of Winston County. We moved to a bigger town an I soon becom used to electric lights, an runnin water an went to a high school named Mortimer Jordan High School. After high school I went to college to study for the ministry. The college I attended was Birmingham Southern. One day the perfessor asked me if I would like to be in a play. I said yes, so I wuz in the play. I had a good part. All I had to do wuz to look dumb so I went over pretty good specially since all my relatives come to see me. They needed a comedian at the local radio station and the program manager Steve Cisler hired me to do 3 programs a day at \$6 a week. I com to Chicago to se the world's fair. Steve Cisler gave me a free ride and he took me to station WLS. Wen I returned to Birmingham there wuz a telegram offerin me a job if id com back there. For the first time in my life I flew in an airyplane. I wuz with WLS for 5 or 6 years and done everything from announcing to singin, and also personal appearances at every theater in the middle west. We played one theater so small that if the audience

didn't like my jokes they wouldn't throw things at me, theyd just reach out and slap my face. An we played anothevr theater so large that someone threw an egg at me and it hatched afore it reahed the stage. In 1935 I met a young lady named Dorothy McFadden an a year later we wuz married. Dot is a Chicagoe girl an shes one Yankee that likes the South, specially the good preachin they have down there. Well that's about all there is to my career so far...although I hope it's just startin. For the past two months I have appearin on the Alka Seltzer National Barn Dance an I ain't wore out my welcome yet. Thank you for reading this and allus wishin you life at its best I remain .

Yourn Trooly

Pat Buttram

In this article Pat Buttram was just being himself, and in all his roles he did a good job of just playing himself. Pat had that unforgettable twang in his voice that made you like him. Maxwell Emmett "Pat" Buttram in January of 1994. He was 78. He was a one of a kind.



Old Time Radio A Dieing Hobby By Jerry Collins:

Meet Corliss Archer:



The show was CBS' version of NBC's A Date With Judy. When compared to My Little Margie and A Date With Judy, many experts place Corliss Archer at the top of the list. Corliss was played by Priscilla Lyon and Janet Waldo, while Dexter Franklin was played by Irving Lee, Bill Christy and Sam Edwards. Mr. and Mrs Archer were played by Frank Martin and Irene Tedrow. Raymand, the younger brother was played by Tommy Bernard, while Mildred was played by Barbara Whiting. The show was on the air from 1943-55.

A Date With Judy. The show was very similar to Corliss Archer with all the same problems experienced by typical American teenagers. The part of Judy was played by Ann Gillis and Louise Ericson. Mitzi was played by Louise Ericson and Sandra Gould. Randolph Foster was played by Dix Davis while Oogie Pringle was played by Richard Crenna. Mr. and Mrs Foster were portrayed by Joe Kearns John Brown, and Bea Benaderett. The announcer was Marvin Miller while the director was Helen Mack. The show was on the air

from 1942-50. Bob Hope discovered Gillis and used the show as his summer replacement. In real radio oddity, the characters in one show appeared in the other teenage show.

Archie Andrews> Not only was the show very funny, but it also possessed one of the best young cast in all of radio. It was somewhat of a lesser version of the Henry Aldrich Show. Archie was played by Henry Grimes and Bob Hastings. Harlan Stone was jughead Jones. Mr. and Mrs Andrews were played by Arthur Kohk and Alice Yourman. Betty Cooper was played by Rosemary Rice, while Vivian Smolen portrayed Veronica Lodge. The show was sponsored by Swift and Company.

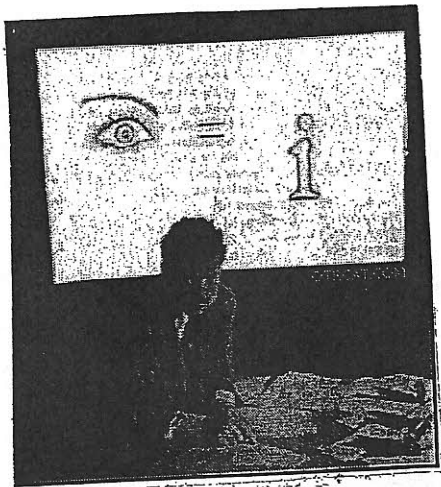
My Little Margie. This was a show that became more famous as a television show. Margie was played by Gale Storm, while her father Verne Albright was played by Charles Farrll. His boss Mr. Honeywell was played by Will Wright. Verna Felton was Mrs Odetts while Gil Stratton Jr. played Freddie the long suffering boyfriend.

Drama

Lux Radio Theater. From 1934-55 Lux presenred on a weekly basis, some of the greatest movies ever produced. Shortened versions of The African Queen, For Whom The Bells Toll, It Happened One Night, The Jazz Singer, The Maltese Falcon, I Rember Mama, The Wizard Of Oz, The Pride Of The Yankees, The Thin Man, To Have And Have Not, The Treasure Of Sierra Madre, Abe Lincoln Of Illinois, Casablanca, Wuthering Heights etc. were skillfully performed every Monday evening. The shows were introduced by

Cecil B DeMille and William Keighley. On occasion Walter Huston and Brian Aherne filled in as the show's narrator. Most of the great actors and actresses played the role that they originated in the movies; Henry Fonda, Helen Hayes, Al Jolson, Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, Gregory Peck, Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn, and many, many more.

The Mercury Theatre on the Air. Another one of radio's greatest shows. Orson Welles and John Houseman formed the Mercury Players that comprised some of radio's greatest actors and actresses; Karl Swensen, Alice Frost, Kenny Delmar, and Frank Readick, Agnes Moorehead, Martin Gabel, Ray Collins, Joseph Cotton, Carl Frank, and George Coulouris. Orson Welles was the host and narrator of the show. At the outset of the show Orson Welles and John Houseman pooled their assets and purchased the old Comedy Theater and renamed it the Mercury Theater. The Mercury Theater produced undoubtedly the most famous individual episode in radio history, "The War of the Worlds," that terrified millions on October 30th 1938. It should be remembered that the War of the Worlds was not the show's only quality production. Sherlock Holmes, Dracula,



The Count of Monte Cristo, Julius Caesar, Jane Eyre, Oliver Twist and Around the World in Eighty Days were all presented that initial season.

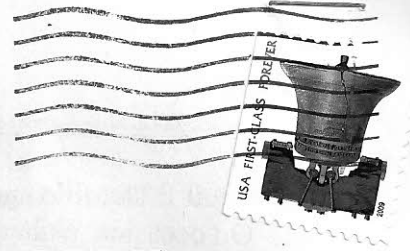


Mr. President. Edward Arnold was not only the host of the show, but played the president in every one of the show's episodes except for the presentation of "A man without a country." All the presidents from George Washington to Calvin Coolidge were profiled. Some of the presidents, like Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt were the subject of a number of episodes. The name of the president was not revealed until the end of the episode. The show sustained from 1947-53.

Dr. Christian. Fellow hobbyist Dick Olday encouraged me to listen to this show. I will never regret this decision. It is truly one of my favorites. The show was on the air from 1937-53 and was sponsored by Vaseline throughout much of its run. Dr. Christian was played by Jean Hersholt, a popular Hollywood actor. He had emigrated from Denmark in 1912. He gained dramatic fame when he played the lead role of Dr. Allan Roy Defoe in *The Country Doctor*. We continue next month with Dr. Christian and follow with Mayor of the Town.

The Old Time Radio Club

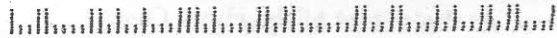
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