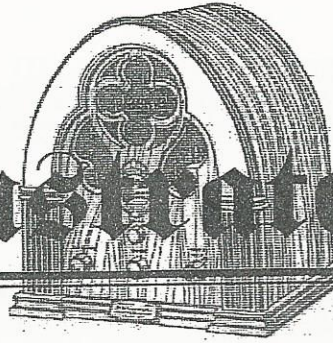


The Old Time Radio Club

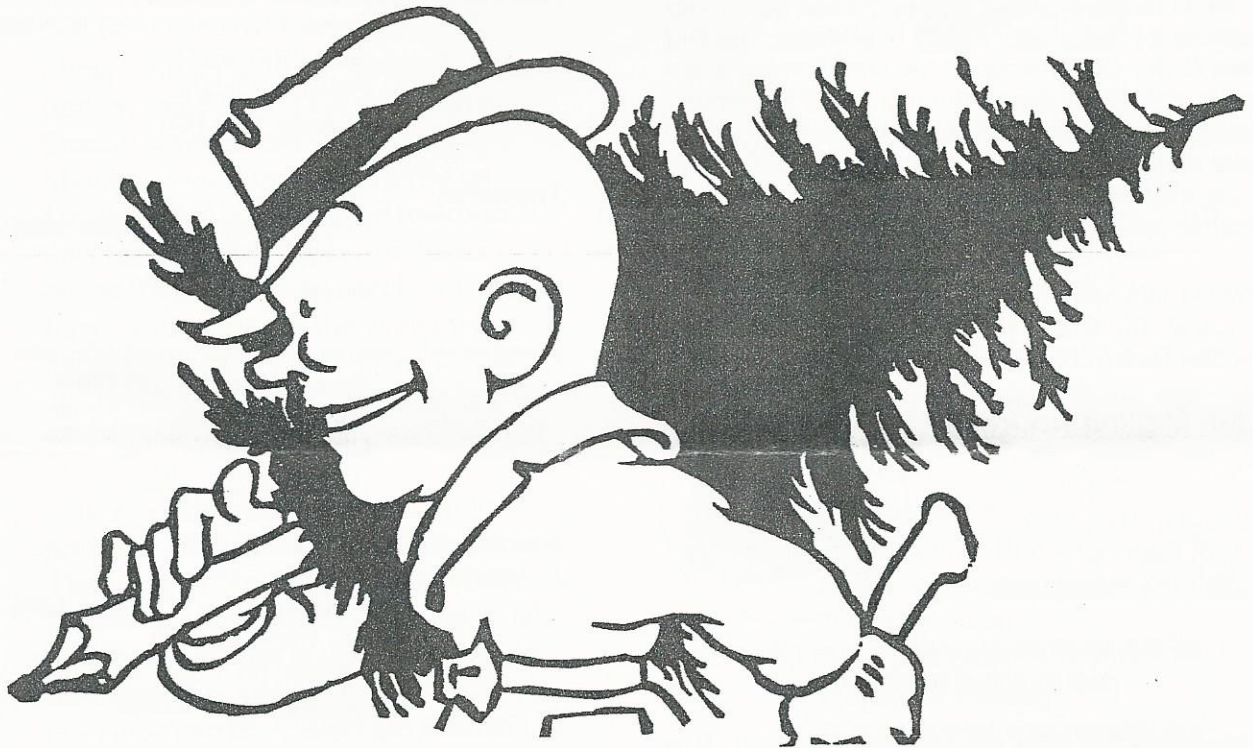
Established 1975

The Illustrated Press



Number 395

December 2011



*Merry
Christmas*

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.

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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.

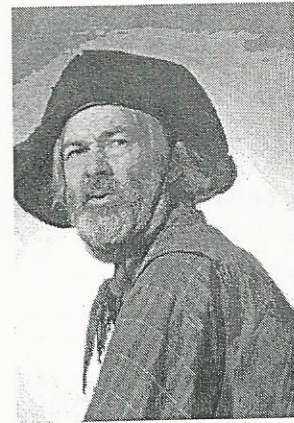


Editor's Two Cents:

Merry Christmas to all. Before I go any further, since New Year,s falls on a Sunday we celebrate the holiday Monday, so our meeting will be on January 9th. Another gentle reminder that the club dues are due by the January meeting on the 9th or send your check to Peter. Jerry Collins has put the wrap on his latest publication which is about local area wrestling history. I'm sure he has covered all the great ones, and than not so great. If you would like a copy Jerry will be selling them, and you could probably pick one up at a future meeting. There has still been some talk about club sweatshirts. If anyone would like to take on the task for this endeavor please do so. I myself would be willing to buy one or maybe two if we need the numbers. If anyone out there is interested let me know by e-mail or at a meeting.

.....

Well, it's Christmas season and while Gabby Hayes may not be Santa Claus, he does resemble him a wee bit. Let's have some fun with a Gabby Hayes trivia quiz. This will be our Annual End of the Year Trivia Game. This was a last minute thing and the answers will be revealed in the January episode. I'll throw in some other old time cowboy trivia for you old cowhands. Put your thinking caps on and get ready.



Gabby & Roy Western Trivia :

1. What Western New York town was Gabby Hayes born in ?
2. Gabby co-starred with Roy Rogers 40 times . Who did he side-kick with the 2nd most times.
3. Here's a tough one. What was the name of Gabby's horse ?
4. An easy one. What was Gabby's real first name ?
5. When Gabby first starred with Hopalong Cassidy, what was his character name ?
6. Who was older? Gabby Hayes or Hopalong Cassidy ?
7. What popular singing group did Gabby star with on the radio ?
8. What was Gabby's last movie role ?
9. Who was the star in that movie ?
10. In all how many movies did Gabby Hayes appear in ?

Have you paid your dues for 2012? Don't Forget

Ma Perkins and the Soap Operas By Tom Cherre

By the year 1930, the radio networks had already started to realize the importance of the potential they could attain from the daytime market. In those days the women stayed home taking care of the kids and the home. The men were at work and the older kids were off at school. The only companion the housewife had, was her radio. WGN-AM in Chicago is credited with having the very first *soap opera*. It was called

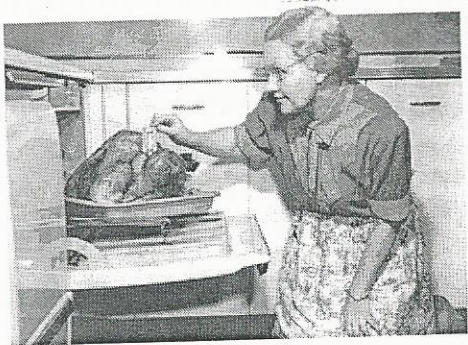


Clara, Lu, and Em premiering June 16, 1930. It began as three girls in a sorority at Northwestern University. The girls were played by Louise Starkey (Clara), Isobel Carothers (Lu) and Helen King (Em). They did the first shows without pay and interest soon grew. Colgate-Palmolive felt like it was a money maker and became the first sponsor for a ladies day time show which forever would be called the *soap opera*. It was originally broadcasted in the evening, but was moved to daytime shortly after. Eventually other soaps such as *Painted Dreams*, *Today's Children*, and *Woman in White* would soon join the air waves.

Since the target audience was the housewife, marketing household and cleaning products seemed a natural for this type of programming. The stories always included wealth and glamour. There was love and romance and tear jerking drama that the humble housewife became addicted to. The *soap opera* has always been considered a woman's genre, not that some men might rarely listen to them, but it was mainly a woman's thing. Through the years the stories have revolved around family with continuing characters. The Soap was meant to be an escapism for the hard working lonely housewife. Some shows were more sophisticated than others. Many created unheard of diseases, along with complicated surgeries. Marriages, divorces, kidnappings, amnesia, blackmail, murder trials, long lost loves, and all the other things that would test your imagination were there for the little lady to absorb through her bakelite Stromberg/Carlson while she was doing the dishes. The soaps also resorted to a type of cliff hanger to keep interest. All these plots figured in the daily *soap operas* and the three major companies Lever Brothers, Proctor & Gamble, and Colgate -Palmolive had the perfect vehicle for selling their products.



Then along came the team of Frank and Anne Hummert. They were like the Rogers and Hammerstein of the soap world. They developed the formula for what would become the typical *soap opera*. Their first endeavor was *Just Plain Bill*. It was the story of a humble barber who marries well above his means. Their other programs were *Backstage Wife*, *The Romance of Helen Trent*, and one of the most popular, *Ma*



Perkins. *Ma* was a wise self-reliant widow whose family and friends were in constant need of her advice. *Ma* ran a lumber yard in Rushville Center, which had a population of about 4,000. *Ma* was played by Virginia Payne (our cover girl) who was only 23 years of age when she did her first show. She played the same character for 27 years and never missed an episode. The show revolved around her three children Evey, John, and Fay. The yard's co-owner is Shuffle Shuber. Willy Fitz, another main character is married to daughter Evey. *Ma Perkins* made its debut in the summer of 1933 and would last until 1960. *Ma* neither drank, smoked, or had any affairs with men. She was a self-reliant widow whose family and friends were in constant need of her advice, help and gifted wisdom. *Ma*, herself had her share of tears, crises and drama, but always worked through her problems. In a

typical year there were no more than three or four major storylines. *Ma Perkins* moved at a slower pace than most shows. Early in the show's run *Ma* was portrayed as quite combative and spiteful, but her character soon developed and softened into the kind hearted and soft spoken widow she would be known for till the show's end. Various dramas unfolded over the years including *Ma* exposing a black market baby-napping ring, and *Ma* harboring Soviet political dissidents inside her house. When the show ended on Friday, November 5th 1960, the day after Thanksgiving Day, it was only one of only 8 entertainment shows still on the CBS radio network. The last episode was the only one in which Virginia Payne's name was ever mentioned, by herself in a farewell speech. In all other episodes, the announcer at the close of the show would run down the names of all the actors in the cast but one, and then say ".....and *Ma Perkins*." Thus ended one of radio's longest running soap opera. Virginia Payne then appeared on Broadway doing theater. She did the Comden-Green musical comedy *Fade Out-Fade In* (1964-65). Her last play was Paul Zindel's *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* (1971). Virginia Payne passed away in 1977 at the tender age of 68.



Virginia Payne as *Ma Perkins*, 1934.

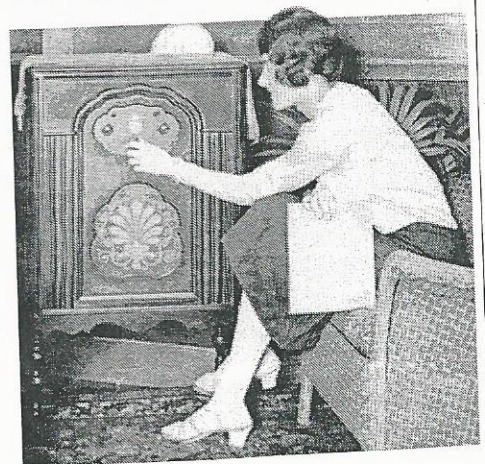
My earliest recollection of the radio soap opera was coming home to lunch from St. Margaret's grammar school in the 1950s. Getting home at about 11:45am Aunt Jenny was still had 15 minutes before it would end. I forgot what came next, but familiarized myself with all of the big ones including, Our Gal Sunday, The Romance of Helen Trent, Young Dr. Malone, Back Stage Wife, Lorenzo Jones, Guiding Light, and quite a few more. What I enjoyed the most was the organ music. As the story line thickened the music would reach a fever pitch. It was Irna Philips who introduced the use of organ music to transition from one scene to the next. She also developed the "cliff hanger" ending which would cause the audience to remain in suspense until the next broadcast. And the biggest "cliff hangers" usually occurred on a Friday. She was also responsible for deliberately slowing down the pace of the shows so the busy housewives could continue their housework without having to pay close attention to the radio in order not to miss anything too crucial. I seem to remember the theme song for The Romance of Helen Trent. It was someone humming the song. Strange things you remember when you're a little kid that you never forget. The Guiding Light had the longest run of all the soaps. Its first broadcast was 5 days after FDR's second inaugural. It had a 15 year run on the radio and 57 years on the television when it was finally cancelled. In September of 2009. When my wife heard it was being cancelled I thought she might start having anxiety attacks---she didn't. I use to kid my mom and wife about the soap operas. No matter what I say, they were a big part of the early days of radio and they were big moneymakers. Nowadays the lady of the house is working like the man thus there

is no strong female viewing audience like the old radio days. That may be the reason Guiding Light and just recently, All My Children have both bitten the dust. Of course there's still a few of them on the air so there's no reason to jump off a bridge. Being laid up for a few months when I broke my ankle some 40 years ago I myself formed a somewhat strong relationship with All My Children and a very young Susan Lucci. I plead no contest.

the Guiding Light

Listen to the story of
Dr. Charles Matthews,
a minister who OTRCAT.com
devotes his life to
the needs of others.

As a matter of fact our club library has a few soap in our collection. If you are interested in something different and a bit of nostalgia, you might want to listen to one of these shows. Its probably been way over 50 years since I've heard the likes of Ma Perkins. I might even listen to one of those old soap operas myself. It would be good just to listen to the old organ music.



**What Ever Happened To ?
By Tom Cherre**

What ever happened to Oxydol popular laundry soap. Oxydol was synonymous with one of the longest running soap opera. That was Oxydol's own Ma Perkins. In 1933 Proctor and Gamble's Oxydol was the first "soaper" to be sponsored by a soap company. For those of us not familiar with doing the laundry in the 1930's, it wasn't anything like the way we do the laundry today. If you know your history, then you know the 1930's meant the "Great Depression". Yes, there were washing machines back then, but who could afford them. They were much too expensive for many people. The common way to wash clothes was with a washtub, water and a lot of elbow grease. If an inferior soap

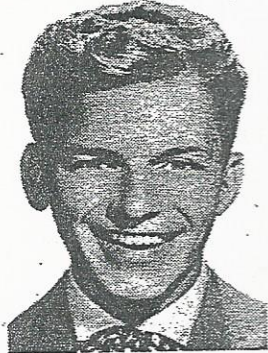


was used the housewife had little to show for her trouble except sore arms, chapped hands, and an aching back. This was great for the liniment companies, but miserable for the lady of the house. According to announcer Bob Brown, the housewife didn't have to go through all the drudgery—as long as she used Oxydol. Brown said Oxydol's suds went right to work in eliminating dirt 25-40%

faster and washing white clothes whiter than all the other soaps. As the "Depression" began to fade, washing machines were becoming affordable, and washboards and washtubs were disappearing. In the 1940's the commercials focused on how white the clothes were after an Oxydol washing. After World War 2 ended Oxydol's commercials had Ma Perkins' announcer Charlie Warren talk about Oxydol's "hustle bubble suds" and how these pudgy fellows lifted out dirt and made clothes whiter. Entering the 1950's the new jingle was that their product made clothes sparkling clean. In other words the finished laundry had "That Oxydol Sparkle". Later on in the 50's laundry detergents became extremely popular, and the original Oxydol laundry soap came to an end in the mid 1950's. As with many other soap brands Oxydol became a laundry detergent. Oxydol then became the detergent that "Bleaches As It Washes". On November 30th 1956 the final broadcast under Oxydol sponsorship took place. After that, there were multiple sponsors doing the show up to the last episode in 1960. On the back of each Oxydol box there was a reminder to "Listen In Daily To Oxydol's Own Ma Perkins". And if you happen to find one of those boxes, they might be worth something. I don't do much grocery shopping so I've yet to see any Oxydol, Duz, Dreft, or Ivory Snow on the counters anymore. Do you?



FRANK SINATRA



We all know Frank can sing; but way back when he was getting along as a singer, someone (don't ask me who) found out our boy could not only be funny, but could act as well. Witness *Lux Radio Theatre*, *Rocky Fortune*, *Family Theatre*, and one of the best shows I've ever heard, "To Find Help" on *Suspense* with Agnes Moorhead.

Mr. Sinatra also had a good time with the verbal sparring and harmonic singing anytime he and Bing Crosby got together. Make no mistake, the competition between the

two was fierce, but in a friendly way. Aside from guesting on a slew of programs (Sinatra was VERY much in demand) he also found time to host shows. He helped Bill Stern more than once and was darn good. He did *Mail Call*, *Command Performance* and much more.

Frank's radio career went from 1942 to 1954 when he left radio, not because he wanted to, but rather he had to. His movie career was taking off and he simply did, not have the time to devote to radio. He still continued with the singing career, pumped out the movies, formed the *Rat Pack* of Dean Martin, Peter Lawford and Sammy Davis Jr. Las Vegas was Frank's hot spot and his popularity was bigger than ever.

I can't tell you how much I enjoy this hobby, being able to listen again to the people and programs I grew up with. I missed a lot when I was a pup, but I remembered the important ones like *Superman*, *Let's Pretend* and the really good stuff. Next month I'll be back with another review. I'll look at the program *I was a Communist for the F.B.I.* Till then I'll sign off.

P.S. The complete 20 tape set of *The Frank Sinatra collection* will be handed over for numbering and put into the cassette library A.S.A.P.

Mystery Show Realistic

Eriest studio in radio was the one where *I Love A Mystery* aired over CBS. Evidently the artists felt that grisley things around them helped sustain the mood of their acting. Among other things in the room were grinning skull ash trays while the coat tree had been fashioned from a real skeleton.



Beer, Rum and Coke

(August, 1946)

When the Andrews Sisters start slamming home the notion that "Money Is the Root of All Evil," they may put their hearts into it—but never their pocketbooks. Since 1937, this powerhouse trio has waxed some 20,000,000 discs, for each of which the lasses get two cents in hard, cold cash. And none of 'em has ever been known to turn up her nasal resonance chambers at a shining copper yet.

Last year alone, the veteran triumverate unloaded on the public about 5,000,000 versions of their pungent ditties. It certainly, looks as if, after nearly a decade as top-of-the-heap recording artists, the gals are still climbing the coin-machine trail.

Just what it is that Maxene, Patty and LaVerne have (and their numerous competitors and imitators haven't) is still open to question. Except from the bookkeeping angle, their notes are scarcely golden, and their pulchritude not unusual. But somewhere along the route of their fourteen years in show business, the Andrews Sisters have managed to pick up a potent style of delivery that wows the listeners, sends every tune they warble sliding right into the groove.

Among their assets is undoubtedly arranger Vic Schoen, who has been with them ever since their "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen" days. (That was the minor-keyed Jewish melody that yanked the girls out of obscurity and into national prominence almost overnight.) Also on the

The Illustrated Press

credit side of the ledger is manager Lou Levy, now married to Maxene, who has chosen every ballad the girls have ever gone to work on. Lou is president of the Leeds Music Company, has a special system of his own for spotting hit tunes. If he can just remember a song two days after he hears it, it's bound to be solid.

Other sister acts have also had expert advice and assistance, however, and yet never managed to get any further than the cheap vaudeville and small-time band bracket. What makes these three juke-box royalty is fundamentally their own. They have a zest, a kind of earthy gusto that gets under the skin of John Doe or G.I. Joe, makes him relax and feel good. The girls like to sing, like the people they're singing to and that genuineness gets across.

Seldom mentioned are the non-vocal talents which have enabled the Andrews Sisters to use their Decca Record triumphs as springboards to success in every type of theatrical career. On road tours, Maxene, Patty and LaVerne are always sell-outs, display a natural gift for costume, stage effect, timing, and all the other tricks of skilful showmanship. Both personal appearances and radio programs have demonstrated their flair for comedy, particularly in the case of blonde Patty, who clowns for the sheer fun of it whether or not there's anyone around to see her.

Only in the movies have the girls failed to show any special talent for the medium. Though they've made numerous pictures, and fans have flocked to see them, something of their usual gay exuberance is lost on the screen. The girls are philosophical about it, though, grateful that they've improved so much since their first venture, "Argentina Nights." A glance at that one sent them "screaming from the projection booth," and their critical opinion was upheld by the "Harvard Lampoon," which voted their performance the "most frightening of the year." (The swing-singing trio enjoy life too much to hold grudges, felt no ill will at this ungallant treatment by "those nice Harvard boys." "We'd like to sing at a Harvard prom," they said. "We'd scare 'em to death.") As far as their Hollywood career in general is concerned, the sisters want it made clear that they've never tried to sell looks—and don't want to.

With all these varied interests, life is caviar and champagne now as far as income is concerned—but it's still hard labor as to hours. Maxene (group spokesman) says, "All you need for success is the constitution of a couple of commandos." Working up an "Atlanta, GA" or a "Rum and Coca Cola" is a time-consuming chore in itself, with the three lasses, plus Vic Schoen, suffering, arguing, holding noses, sneering and generally going through creative agony.

Oldest sister red-headed LaVerne, now 29, is the only one who reads music, so her job is to interpret various passages—besides carrying the "bass" part. The youngest, 25-year-old Patty, is the hoarse-voiced lead singer. Her specialty is originating novelty ideas. Brown-haired Maxene, 27, gets into the swing with a "tenor" or "would-be soprano," also dreams up counter-melody and trick wordage. Result may be boogie woogie, calypso or a sagebrush melody, depending on what the aggregation thinks is the trend of the times—but it always had the distinctive Andrews touch.

The girls are spending those hard-earned pennies with the glee and enthusiasm they bring to everything they do. They've established "Mom" (Norwegian-born Olga Solli) and "Pete" (their Greek father, a former Minneapolis restaurant-owner) in a well-landscaped Hollywood suburban estate. Since the whole family loves dogs, they've managed to surround themselves with sixteen of them, all very much in evidence. LaVerne, who goes in for frilly clothes and luxuries, has treated herself to eight fur coats (a kind of hangover from memories of wintry days in Minneapolis). And it's LaVerne, too, who owns the showpiece of the establishment—a specially-built bed, which is seven feet across and perfectly round.

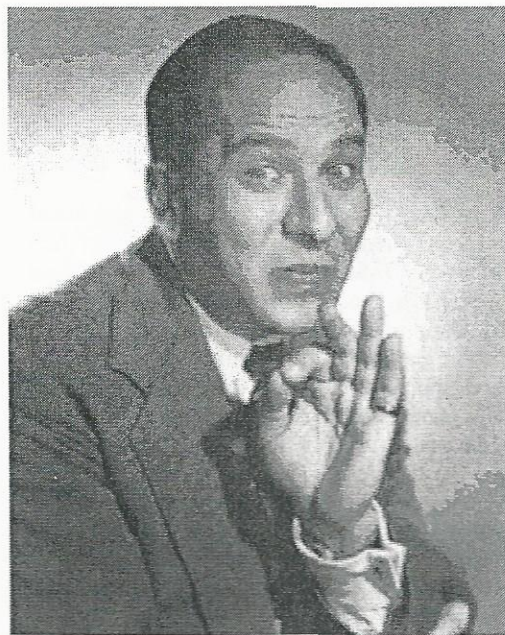
Hi-de-ho-ing has made the Andrews Sisters rich, but it's never made them high-hat. They're still friends with the folks back home who remember them when they started out in a "Kiddy Revue" as youngsters; still act the same as the three unknowns who barnstormed with Larry Rich and Leon Belasco. Tapdancing Patty has been known to tell reporters, "I'm ignorant and that's why I'm happy"; Maxene snaps gum when she feels like it till the welkin rings. And nobody has a last name as far as any of them are concerned. Completely brash, and completely unassuming, the girls like nothing better than a joke, enjoy repeating Groucho Marx's crack when he saw them on a train: "I thought they made their trips by broomstick."



Artie Auerbach (Mr. Kitzel) By Tom Cherre

Most of us remember Artie Aurbach as the lovable Mr. Kitzel of Jack Benny fame. Many of us however did not know he had a very successful career as a reporter and photographer for the New York Daily Mirror and the New York Daily News. Among the more famous stories he covered were the very famous Halls-Mills murder case in the late 1920s. This was assumed to be the highest profile case until the Lindbergh kidnaping murder case occurred in 1932. While a photographer, Aurbach

friends. Aurbach was a master of some 30 different dialects. Phil Baker first



discovered Aurbach, and introduced him to Lew Brown who was largely responsible for his debut in the Broadway revue *Calling All Stars* as a hillbilly. Aurbach was then cast in the popular *Goldberg Radio Show*. By 1941 despite appearing on various radio programs he was not really secure about his career on radio and in show business. His character *Mr. Kitzel* appeared on both *The Abbott and Costello Show* and in the 1943 film *Here Comes Elmer*. The Jack Benny Show, which was an already popular show had previously included a Jewish-accented character by the name of "Shlepperman" played by Sam Hearn, but was discontinued in the late 1930s. In January of 1946 Aurbach made his first appearance as *Mr. Kitzel* playing a vendor at the Rose Bowl game Jack was attending. As the hot dog vendor, he became famous for the catch phrase "The pickle in the middle with the mustard on top." It may have sounded kind of plain and simple, but it launched

THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1932

'NOT GUILTY' IS VERDICT IN HALL CASE; PLAN TO FREE PRISONERS ON BAIL TODAY AND PROBABLY QUASH ALL OTHER CHARGES

WIFE SET FOR THE SCOUR
Mrs. Hall Goes to New York, While Showing Parents, Henry Near Trial.

EMPHASIS FOR NEW PRINC
For Many Years State Will Give "Parsons."

WIFE SIGHTED BY AIRCRAFT
Mrs. Hall's Story Not "Real" in Photography by "Parsons."

... (rest of the article text) ...

WANTED
INFORMATION AS TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF

CHAS. A. LINDBERGH, JR.
OF HOPEWELL, N. J.
SON OF COL. CHAS. A. LINDBERGH
World-Famous Aviator

This child was kidnaped from his home in Hopewell, N. J., between 8 and 10 p. m. on Tuesday, March 1, 1932.

DESCRIPTION:
Age, 20 months Hair, blond, curly
Weight, 27 to 30 lbs. Eyes, dark blue
Height, 29 inches Complexion, light
Deep dimple in center of chin
Dressed in one-piece coverall night suit

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO:
COL. H. M. SCHWARTZOFF, TRENTON, N. J., OR
COL. ERAS. A. LINDBERGH, HOPEWELL, N. J.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE PASSED BY CONFIDENCE
OFF. IN AMERICAN CONSUL OFFICE
New York, New York

March 12, 1932

had become very popular at parties by telling Yiddish anecdotes. During the time working as a press photographer he got an inspiration for a character that would give him national fame. He was doing an assignment at a drugstore when he heard "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" on the radio being sung with a strong Yiddish accent. He loved the voice, and evolved it to be the lovable and laughable *Mr. Kitzel*. Aurbach and the druggist Maurice Adolff, who inspired the character, became close long-time

his career to huge notoriety. The phrase became so popular that it became a novelty song written by one of Jack's writer's John Tackaberry and song writer Carl Sigman. The song had lyrics like "The pickle in the middle with the mustard on top. Just the way you like them and they're all red hot." The song became a hit in the late 1940s and led Aurebach to him being named "Man of the year" by the National Pickle Packers Association. He also used "ooh ooh, hoo" as another catch phrase. I always enjoyed his opening "Hello Mr. Benny" in his great Yiddish accent. It's interesting to note that Aurebach's *Mr Kitzel* never ever offended Jack like the other characters did. Here are a couple of Mr. Kitzel-Jack Benny exchanges.

Mr. Kitzel: I'll never forget my wedding. When they said "If anyone has any objections to this marriage, speak now or forever hold your peace." A voice from the back hollered Don't marry her!

Jack Benny: Oh, my goodness! Who was it?

Mr. Kitzel: Me, I'm a ventriloquist.

.....
This one about Benny meeting Mr. Kitzel at the train station is hilarious.

Mr. Kitzel: "Hello Mr. Benny".

Jack Benny: "Hello Mr. Kitzel, What brings you down to the train station?"

Mr. Kitzel: "Oh, I am just coming down to pick my son up from college."

Jack Benny: "Oh, that's nice. What school does he go to?"

Mr. Kitzel: Notre Dame.

Artie Aurebach was born in New York City of Polish descent on November 17th 1903. His father Wolfgang was a dancer

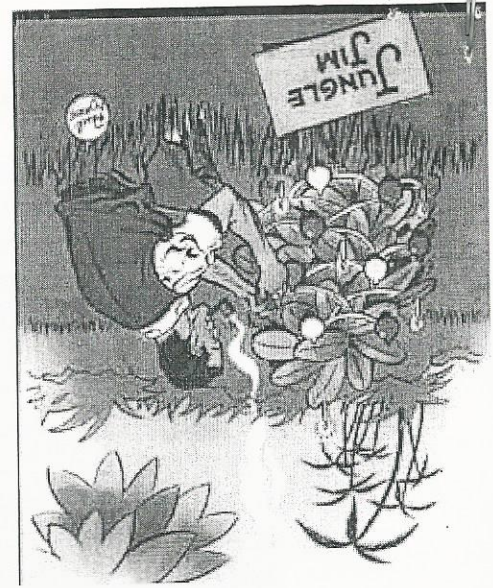
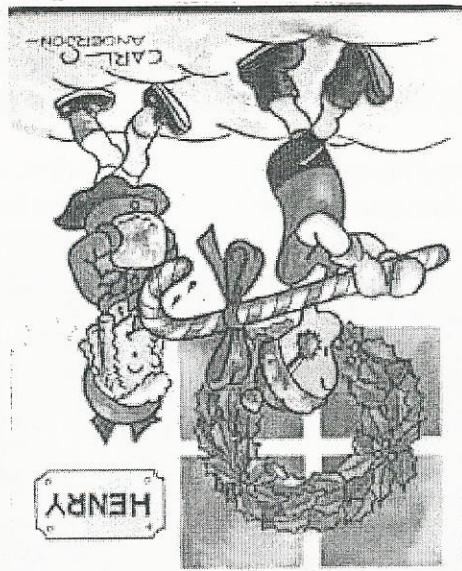
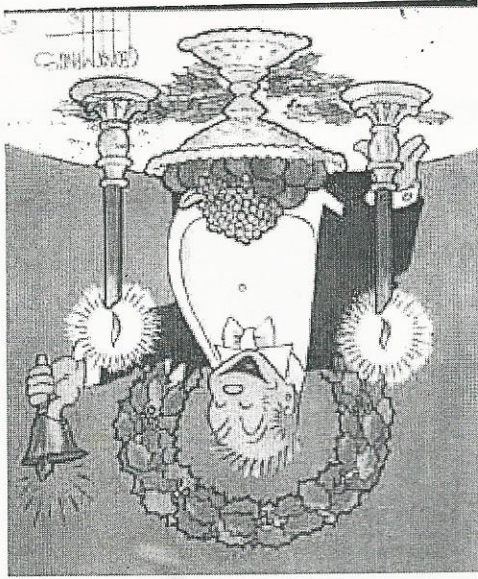
in London, and died at a young age. Artie also had two sisters.



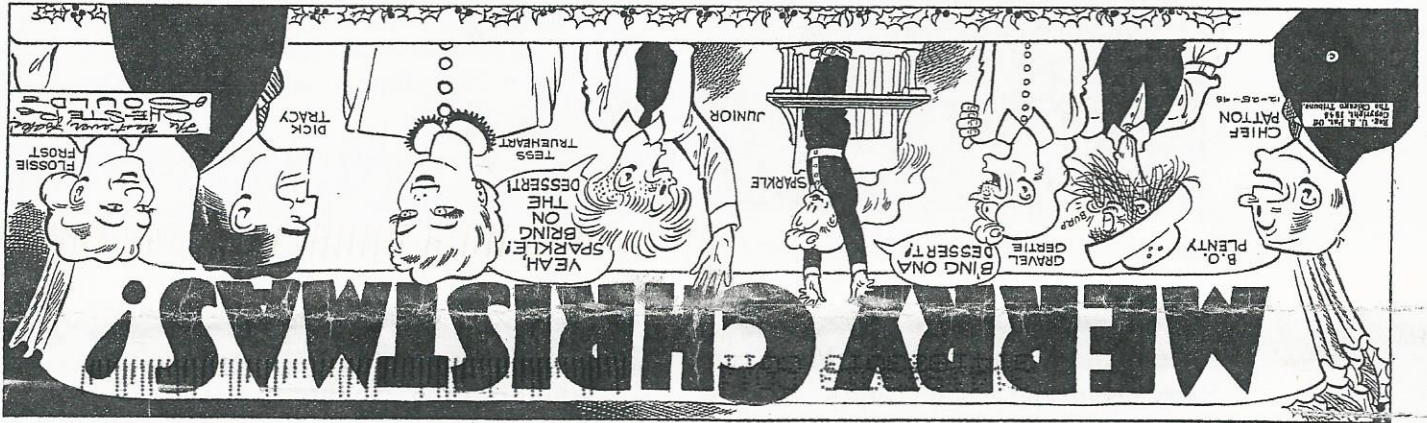
You can see where Benny gets some of his wacky ideas: Meet Artie Auerbach, with the mustard in the middle.

I really loved the Benny shows that featured *Mr. Kitzel*. He was genuinely funny and always added a little more humor into the show. Much like Wallace Wimple did for the Fibber McGee show. Sadly Artie Aurebach died on October 3, 1957 from a heart attack in Van Nuys California. He was only 54. At the time he was rehearsing for a part on the Jack Benny television show.

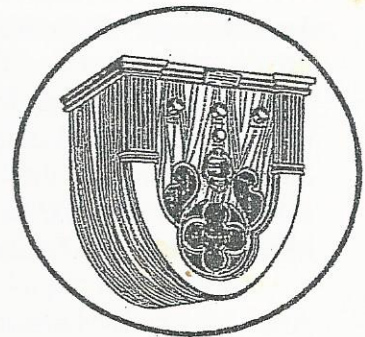
Ed. Note: As I mentioned before, Aurebach worked on the Lindbergh case. He also worked on the famous Mills-Hall murder case and trial. This was a fascinating case involving an Episcopalian priest and a choir girl who were both brutally murdered in 1926. This was called the trial of the century and was one of the first major trials to be carried over the radio in its early days. There were four primary suspects but all were acquitted. If this is your cup of tea, then it makes for interesting reading, otherwise, forget it.Ed.



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JIM BESHIRE (C)
 123 DAVIDSON
 SAVANNAH, GA 31419



FIRST CLASS MAIL



THOMAS R CHERRE
 144 FONTAINE DR
 BUFFALO NY 14215-2038

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