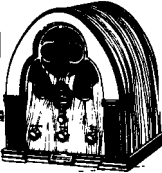
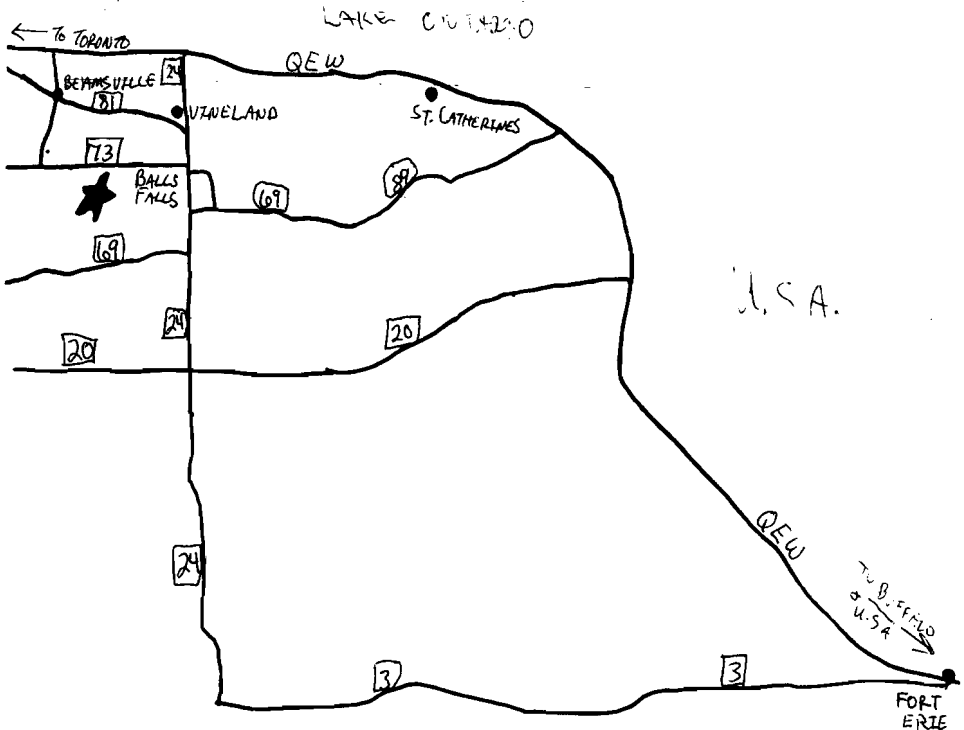


# Illustrated Press



THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB

SINCE 1975



OTRC PICNIC

The Old Time Radio Club will have an informal family picnic on August 17th, 1980 at 1:30 PM. The location is the BALLS FALLS CONSERVATION AREA in lower Ontario, Canada (See map above). The idea is for each participant to bring his or her own food as there will be no formal catering. Our old friends, the Simpsons, have told us the spot is ideal and pushed the idea at the last local meeting. While it is open to all members and their families, local people will probably be the only attendees. Go over the Peace Bridge and take the Queen Elizabeth Way about 8 miles beyond St. Catherines. Get off on highway #24 and go south. There should be signs pointing the way to Balls Falls and you should reach it about the time you hit

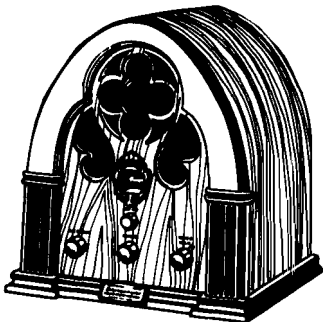
highway #73. Should be a nice day for those who come.

TAPE LIBRARY LISTING

The new Tape Library listing should have been sent to you by the time you read this. Don't ask me why none of the tapes are rated as to condition. Apparently all the grading that was done was forgotten about. At least the new list has a nice cover pic of Bret Morrison.

IMPORTANT EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Members, PLEASE read the editorial on page five. It may effect you personally. It is important.



### THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB

#### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Club dues are \$13.00 per yr. from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. Members receive a membership card, library lists, a monthly newsletter (The Illustrated Press), a semi-annual magazine (Memories), and various special items. Additional family members living in the same household as a regular member may join the club for \$2.00 per year. These members have all the privileges of regular members but do not receive the publications. A junior membership is available to persons 15 years of age or younger who do not live in the household of a regular member. This membership is \$6.00 per year and includes all the benefits of a regular membership. Regular membership dues are as follows: if you join in Jan. dues are \$13.00 for the year; Feb., \$12.00; March \$11.00; April \$10.00; May \$9.00; June \$8.00; July \$7.00; Aug., \$6.00; Sept., \$5.00; Oct., \$4.00; Nov., \$3.00; and Dec., \$2.00. The numbers after your name on the address label are the month and year your renewal is due. Reminder notes will be sent. Your renewal should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be certain to notify us if you change your address.

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS is the monthly newsletter of The Old Time Radio Club, headquartered in Buffalo, N.Y. Contents, except where noted, are copyright © 1979 by the OTRC. All rights are hereby assigned to the contributors. Editor: Kean F. Crowe; Production Manager: Millie Dunworth; Graphics Coordinator: Corb Besco. Send all contributions and letters to the editor at 200 Woodward Drive, West Seneca, N.Y. 14224. Published since 1976. Printed in U.S.A.

CLUB ADDRESSES: Please use the correct address for the business you have in mind. Return library materials to the library addresses.

TAPE LIBRARY: Norm Giesler  
312 Meadowlawn Road  
Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225  
(716) 684-3174

REFERENCE LIBRARY: Pete Bellanca  
1620 Ferry Road  
Grand Island, N.Y.  
14072  
(716) 773-2485

LETTERS ETC. FOR THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS: Kean Crowe  
200 Woodward Drive  
West Seneca, New York 14224  
(716) 674-6123

CLUB DUES: Dom Parisi  
38 Ardmore Place  
Buffalo, New York 14213  
(716) 884-2004

OTHER BUSINESS: OTRC  
P.O. Box 119  
Kenmore, N.Y. 14217

COLUMNISTS: Jerry Collins  
56 Christen Court  
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086

Hy Daley  
437 South Center  
Corry, Pennsylvania  
16407

Chuck Seeley  
294 Victoria Blvd.  
Kenmore, N.Y. 14217

Jim Snyder  
517 North Hamilton St.  
Saginaw, Michigan 48602

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DEADLINE: for IP #48-July 14th.  
for IP #49-August 11th.  
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BACK ISSUES: All are \$1.00 each, postpaid, except where noted. Out-of-print issues can be borrowed from the Reference Library.

MEMORIES: Vol. 1 #1 (\$2.00), #3, #4, #5; Vol. 2 #1, #4 (\$2.00); Vol. 4 #1.

IP: #3 (with SHADOW script), #5A (RH AC/OTRC Special #1), #8 (50¢), #10 (with part one of LUX RADIO THEATER Log), #14 (50¢), #15 (50¢), #16, #17, #18, RHAC/OTRC Special #2, #19, #20, #21, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28 (RHAC/OTRC Special #3), #29, #30, #31, #32 (\$2.00), #33, #34, #37, #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43, #44, #45, #46, #47.

# The CRYSTAL EGG



## HY DALEY

So you're tired of articles about good radio shows, eh? Well, let's talk about ARP! Awful Radio Programs! The dogs of the air. You've seen these lists of the 10 best programs of the ether. My favorites are....Well, here are some of the worst programs ever put to transcription. The ones that should have been lost, but weren't. The ghastly survivors:

1. The Avenger. I shudder to think of this program. Jim Brandon (alias Lamont Cranston) and his beautiful sidekick Fern Collier (alias Margo Lane) fight crime as The Avenger (alias The Shadow). I once got a reel of this show which I taped dog food commercials over.
2. American Family Robinson. A super boring serial involving an untypical family. Ruff, ruff.
3. Archie Andrews. The whole gang- Betty, Veronica, Reggie, Jughead, Mom and Dad Andrews. Can be taken one show every 100 reels. Never condemn yourself, or anyone else, to an entire reel of this stuff. Script writers lived on diets consisting of Armour Hotdogs.
4. Clara, Lu, & Em. Strictly for the fragile gender. John Dunning calls it low-key comedy. Off-key comedy would have been closer.
5. Exploring Tomorrow. I love S-F. When I was a kid, I devoured 5 or 6 Ace paperbacks a week. It's a good thing I didn't hear this series in 1957-58, I may have given up on it. "As Time Goes By," the theme of the show, was about as appropriate as "Roll Out the Barrel" or "The Wiffenpoof Song."
6. FBI in Peace & War/This Is Your FBI. Sorry folks, both of these shows put me into slumberland. Hardly as exciting as Gangbusters, these two shows may have

lasted a long time, but so did the Beverly Hillbillies.

7. Gulf Screen Guild Theater. I know, I know. The Biggest stars in Hollywood-Gable, Cagney, Bogart, Flynn, but putting movies into half-hour formats is about as effective as putting Star Wars on eight-inch screens.
8. Hidden Truth. I'd like to put the writers of this show on a lie detector and see where they got the ideas for these amazing nuggets.
9. Hollywood Open House. Great stars on this series, but they all seemed to have down days for this show. One with Jack Pearl is very sad indeed. The Baron could well have been deported for poor joke choice.
10. Inner Sanctum. I realize this is indeed a classic radio show. But the squeaky door could not save many of these terrible scripted shows. A regular listener knew what was going to happen by the first Lipton commercial. Poor Agnes Moorehead was eternally cast as the poor helpless lady (ala "Sorry, Wrong Number"), constantly being threatened by God knows what, and who cares whom.

If you have heard some terrible shows, write into the forum, or if you disagree with my choices, write to the forum. I only got down to "I" in my card catalog. More to come.

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TAPESPONDENTS: Send in your wants and we'll run them here for at least two months.

Gene Bradford, 19706 Elizabeth St., St. Clair Shores, Michigan 48080.- Wants TOM MIX STRAIGHTSHOOTERS, SKY KING, and JACK ARMSTRONG programs.

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REFERENCE LIBRARY: A reference library exists for members. Members should have received a library list of materials with their membership. Only two items can be borrowed at one time, for a one month period. Please use the proper designations for materials to be borrowed. When ordering books include \$1.00 to cover rental, postage, and packaging. Please include \$ .50 for other items. If you wish to contribute to the library the OTRC will copy materials and return originals to you. See address on page 2.



## FORUM\*\*\*

May 25, 1980

Dear Kean,

The "Friends of Old Time Radio" will hold their 5th annual convention in Bridgeport, Connecticut on October 3 and 4, this year. This is the same convention that you have read reports on, in the IP, for the last several years. It is an outstanding event, that you really ought to consider, if you are interested in old time radio. The organizer is Jay Hickerson, who has conducted a number of these conventions, so that he has it right down to a fine art. I attended my first convention last year, and, while it is terribly expensive getting there, all three of us, who attended from Michigan, are planning on it again. Many of you reading this have much easier access than we do.

On Friday, October 3, there will be a cocktail hour, buffet supper, and films, starting at 6:30 pm. Cost for this part of the program is \$10. Probably the most enjoyable part of this day is simply meeting and talking to other OTR fans.

Saturday (cost is \$18 for the day) is a full one with workshops, dealer and display tables, presentations, cocktails, dinner, and live radio shows. The only complaint on this day is that it is simply impossible to get in everything you want to do, and to meet all the people you want to meet. Last year, 30 or 40 stars from the old shows (and even the new ones like the CBS Mystery Theater) attended and were readily accessible for conversation and autographs. These people are pleased to meet you, and pleasing to meet. For example, I had breakfast Saturday morning with Bob Preston, who handled the sound effects for Eddie Cantor, Fibber McGee & Molly, Jack Benny, etc. For two-and-a-half hours, he spun story after story of these shows and others, and answered the hundreds of questions we asked. Others reported similar experiences. Fantastic!

The CONVENTION is perfect in every way. I certainly hope that many of you will give serious con-

sideration to attending this year. You can contact Jay Hickerson, Box C, Orange, Connecticut 06477 for information on the convention, hotel reservations, transportation, or to sign up. It will be an experience that you will remember fondly.

Jim Snyder

June 6, 1980

Dear Mr. Crowe:

Thanks to the perseverance of the local postal clerks, I have again received a copy of the Ill Press. I, of course, realize this is my own fault for having the audacity to move my domicile, but I really appreciate the effort you people have made not to change my address after at least three notices. So that you will not feel like the lone ranger, the Collector's Corn also refuses to change my address and I get only every other copy of that publication. Is this a conspiracy or only inefficiency???

Sorry Chuck and Bob are dropping the Who Was etc., but, gosh, those were some tough questions they came up with. I suspect that some of the questions had no answer, and only came out right if you were writing the column, or maybe if they gave the answer and asked for a question it would have received more interest. As an example of this, I submit the following (all in fun, of course):

1. There is no such person as Bob Burnham, as this is an alias used by Joe Webb.
2. Jim Snyder will travel to Japan for a showdown with the Sony people and return triumphantly with a sixteen page column about Japanese radio programs.
3. Chuck Seeley has been declared an endangered species and listed as such in the new addition of Radio Digest.

Anyone knowing the questions to these answers should not write to anyone, but should see their nearest bartender or bowling proprietor for advice. On the other hand, it may be entirely possible that you don't care one way or the other, in which event you can go listen to Ma Perkins commercials for all I care. If you're interested, I will see you at the convention.

Best regards,  
Gene Bradford

((Hopefully, your problem with receiving the IP is cleared up.  
Pete Bellanca (whose address is

listed on page two of the IP) is in charge of mailings and I personally gave him your address at the last (June) local meeting. Any other members with similar complaints, write to Pete, not me, it's his screw-up. If it's a conspiracy, I think they're out to get me too. (KFC))

June 2, 1980

Dear Old Time Radio Club,

It's hard to imagine, almost a year has gone by since you made your last contribution to WRVO, Oswego Public Radio. Last July, you thought WRVO to be an important part of your life. Your \$20 gift has helped WRVO grow and prosper since then.

The past year has seen changes in the layout of the WRVO Program guide in response to suggestions from our Friends. Regular programs, such as Dave Eichorn's weather and Essence of Jazz, are heard on WRVO only because people like you from Buffalo and elsewhere in the listening area have become loyal friends of WRVO. I know you enjoy the weekly Sounds of Yesterday made possible by listener underwriters like yourself. Recently, the daily Morning Edition was added to the Stereo 90 schedule. Listener contributions are making possible expansion and refurbishing of the WRVO studios and the NPR satellite system was activated in January.

The dedicated staff at your station, WRVO Stereo 90, is busy planning for continued growth. In order to expand the program service, we are counting on you. Wouldn't you consider investing a little more this year?

July will be here before you know it. Old Time Radio Club, I hope that you understand how important your membership is to WRVO, and that you will renew your support of Stereo 90 by returning your check. Do it today and reserve your bonus premium for early renewal (\$20 minimum) on the enclosed envelope. Reply by June 21, and help us balance our budget. Send it today, please.

Cordially,  
William D. Shigley  
General Manager  
WRVO Radio  
Oswego, N.Y. 13126

((The following form letter is being printed as per the request of the local membership. The OTRC will not be contributing as a body this year, but if you want to, we recommend it. -KFC))

## FROM THE EDITOR

Last time out, I surprised all of you with a two-in-one issue. I have another surprise this time. I am resigning as Editor of the Illustrated Press, my last issue will be #51, so don't panic yet. I am announcing it now so a successor might come forward. When I took the job on last year, there was no one else in the running, apparently nobody but me wanted to do it. This announcement is being typed up by me before I have told anyone else about it, as it was made rather suddenly. The local club meeting was but two days past, at that time I would have told anybody that I was not planning to resign in the near future. Funny how things happen. Since there will not be an official club meeting until September, it may be hard for a new Editor to be chosen, but since I will go up to #51 there should be enough time (that is, if anyone wants the job).

The bottom line is this: if anyone out there wants to become the editor of the Illustrated Press, please speak up. I suggest you write to Jerry Collins if you feel you could do the job. As I write this, I have yet to speak to Jerry, but I'll talk to him long before you read this. Jerry is still our leader, even though we dropped the election process this year. If you want to write to me about the job, I'll be glad to help out in anyway I can, but I do not plan on choosing my own successor (hell, if anyone wants the job, they'll probably get it, Jerry'll probably have to beg somebody to do it). The work is really not that much, but the rewards are few.

Since this is not my farewell editorial, I'll save my reasons and other comments for the future.

Again, there is little new material this issue. Thanks again to George Klos for some more xeroxed articles, saving me from cutting the IP down to eight pages.

Send me a new editor, please. See you next month.

Kean F. Crowe  
Editor  
Illustrated Press

6-53

*Sunday learns it's not enough for a woman to have blind faith in her husband*

OUR GAL SUNDAY, as she is so affectionately known to so many in her community, sat alone in the huge living room of the home which she and her husband, Lord Henry Brinthrope, shared. Her slender, shapely legs were tucked under her and she leaned her head back against the high cushioning of the chair—looking for all the world like a lost child. Lord Henry was in trouble—serious trouble, but Sunday wouldn't let her thoughts dwell too long on the terrible events that had transpired in the last few weeks. . . . Rather, her thoughts winged back to her childhood, when her mother had told her that, no matter what trouble existed in her life, if she could learn from that trouble she would grow stronger and better as a person. "One mistake is human," her mother had said firmly, out of a moral fiber that she had tried to implant in Sunday's character. "But to make the same mistake twice means you learned little, the third time means you're an absolute fool. And a fool's life has no richness, no grace." Almost as if she were hearing her mother again, Sunday's head nodded in agreement. Actually, wasn't she partly at fault for Lord Henry's present difficulties? With all the honesty that was so much a part of Sunday's soul, she had to admit she was. Being human, she had made a mistake. . . . When Lord Henry had brought Rose Miller home, Sunday had immediately been won over by her—Rose's helplessness, her charm, her extreme sensitivity, endeared her to Sunday's heart. But her affection for Rose had blinded Sunday to her first love, her first duty—blinded Sunday to her husband's needs and the problems he faced. She'd listened to Rose's idle chatter about her husband's attention to a beautiful redhead and, instead of questioning Lord Henry in an honest, open manner, she'd hidden her hurt, and lived on blind faith. If she'd only been honest in her own emotions at that point and made Lord Henry tell her the truth about the red-headed woman—whom she quickly found out to be Wilma Taylor, a young schoolteacher. Sunday would have known then that Wilma's husband, Paul, was an ex-convict who had threatened Lord Henry—threatened to take Lord Henry's land away. The day Wilma Taylor came to ask her aid she would have sensed the deeper troubles instead of just listening to the ones Wilma dared bring to the surface. Certainly, events would have taken a different turn if she had been side-by-side with her husband in his difficulties instead of just being an interested onlooker, closing her eyes to situations which were, at best, dangerous. . . . Now, Lord Henry faced a murder charge. Sun-

# Our Gal Sunday

day knew it was false, must be false. And, in a way, Sunday felt guilty—for now, when Lord Henry desperately needed her, Sunday knew it was too late to unlink the chain of circumstances leading up to the accusation. It was not enough for a wife to merely stand and wait. Sunday stirred restlessly in her chair. Suddenly her back straightened and she planted her feet firmly on the floor in a gesture of fighting determination. A wife can not just take a casual interest in her husband's problems, she thought fiercely—a wife must share her husband's experiences every step of the way, else she, too, makes false moves. Together, with two minds working out a problem, there is less likelihood for error. . . . "Tomorrow," Sunday said to herself determinedly, "Lord Henry and I shall talk, and I shall hear every detail of his problem—something I should have insisted on long ago. I will find out the truth about Wilma, the truth about her crippled brother, the truth about poor Paul." In knowing everything, Sunday knew both she and Lord Henry would escape playing the fool. Yes, they had made one mistake by not confiding in each other, in an attempt to save each from the other's burdens, but they wouldn't make the same mistake twice! Indeed, life had a lot to teach them, and they'd be willing pupils—not reluctant ones—from now on!

Our Gal Sunday, CBS Radio, 12:45 P.M. EDT, for August and other products. Pictured (left to right) in their original roles: Vivian Smolen as Sunday, Karl Swenson as Lord Henry, and Cathleen Cordell as Wilma Taylor.

OUR GAL SUNDAY.



## RADIO STARS 11-32

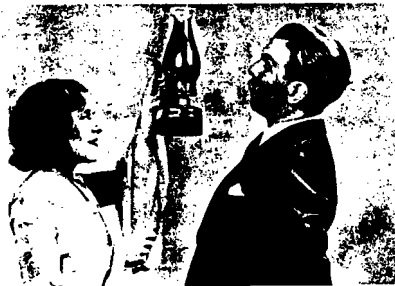


# The Life and Love of BURNS and ALLEN

**E**VEN the most glowing Burns & Allen enthusiast could hardly look upon their first year of vaudeville in the light of an over-night success. According to Burns, they were "barely allowed" into the theaters and had to be content with "fill-in" bookings . . . pinch-hitting for acts that were late or on the sick list. In almost every instance they played in that horror position known as "first spot." But they had not been teamed long before they realized something that has probably contributed more to their success than any other one factor. Gracie was the funny one of the team! Gracie was the comic . . . not George! George had written a lot of funny stuff for himself, but it was always Gracie (playing straight) who got all the laughs. That funny, little piping voice of hers just knocked them in the aisles and kept them there. So the act was rewritten and George began feeding Gracie with the laughs.

If Gracie had been keener in the ways of vaudeville, she could not have helped knowing that this magnificent generosity could mean but one thing: *George was falling in love with her!* When a vaudevillian voluntarily gives up his laughs to his partner . . . it *must* be love! But if Gracie realized George's budding affection (which she didn't) she remained determinedly faithful to Ben Ryan—whom she had been in love with for some time. She wrote and posted long letters to him after every evening performance. If there were two words in the English language that George Burns was beginning to dislike cordially . . . one was "Ben" and the other was "Ryan." It is not the most fun in the world to be touring around the country with the girl you're in love with and she happens to be engaged to marry another man!

After about six months of "hit-or-miss" bookings, Burns & Allen accidentally got a break! An act that had



Burns and Allen are pretty famous today. But this is a tale of their earlier days, when people weren't quite so "Burns-and-Allen" conscious. That's George at top of page.

been booked for a theater near Brooklyn was held up . . . and those old fillers-in, Burns & Allen, were called to pinch-hit. Unknown to them, this was a garden spot . . . a theater where the agents "looked them over" in secret, and if they found an outstanding act it was almost certain to land in the big time. One of those gentlemen saw Burns & Allen . . . which was unusual because they were in Number One spot as usual. He watched the funny,



NOV. 1932

When Grace . . . . and George . . . . first went into vaudeville they did well enough, but George fell in love with Gracie—and Gracie was engaged to someone else. What to do?

By WALTER  
R A M S E Y



George Burns was in love with Gracie—yet she couldn't see him—even though they played on the stage together every day. How did he finally make Grace love him? Read it for yourself.

little "dumb" girl and her clever partner and did considerable laughing. After the show, he wandered backstage to see them. "Listen," he said (as if they weren't), "would you two like a try at Orpheum at about \$400.00 a week?"

THAT was just like asking them if they would consider a trip to Paradise . . . or would like a million dollars!

Burns & Allen celebrated the momentous occasion by having a midnight dinner fit for a king . . . then Gracie wired Ben Ryan. "This almost ruined George's whole evening!"

The following morning was *completely* ruined! Not that anything happened to the Orpheum booking, but Gracie received a wire from Ryan. It seems that Mr. Ryan wasn't at all hot about that Orpheum booking. It also seems that he was returning to New York immediately where he intended to marry nobody else but Allen, of Burns & Allen! In fact he was arriving that same day to discuss the details with his lady love.

Now you take Mr. Burns . . . he was sunk! He was lower than a business statement. He was so low, that the idea of losing the Orpheum booking was *nothing* compared to the danger of losing a certain Miss Grace Allen. He poured out his troubles on the shoulder of an old friend, Jack Benny . . . and Benny had an *idea!*

About two o'clock that same afternoon, a girl friend of Gracie's (and also Benny's) dropped over to her apartment. "Say, listen," she began (not so soon that it sounded suspicious, though). "What's the idea of jumping at the first proposal of that Ryan guy? He made you wait for him while he toured the country for twenty weeks. Why don't you make *him* wait while you tour it for seventeen?"

"Gosh!" said Gracie, who still thought she was in love. "I don't know what to do."

"Why not gamble?" asked the ally of Burns and Benny. "Why not make up your mind that if George can get \$125.00 a week from the Orpheum people . . . instead of \$400.00 . . . that you'll go with the act? If not . . . you'll stay in New York and marry Ryan!" Gracie chewed on that for awhile.

As women always enjoy answering their prob-

## RADIO STARS 11-32



How do you like Gracie in this make-up—it was for one of her schooldays appearances on the amateur stage, some years ago. Today, Gracie is far from an amateur—so far, in fact, that it doesn't seem possible she ever could have been one. One feels she must have been born a seasoned performer.

lens in this helter-skelter fashion, Gracie consented. It wasn't likely that George could squeeze another dime out of the Orpheum, anyway. But then, Gracie reckoned without George and Benny . . . and love! The \$25.00 boost was granted without a quibble. And according to all the romanticists, Gracie should have been disappointed but she bore up surprisingly well and told Ryan: "Oh well, it will only be seventeen weeks . . . and besides, I've always wanted to go back to San Francisco and let the folks see my name in lights!" Mr. Ryan was burned . . . but he finally agreed.

But Gracie never got that ambition . . . the one about the folks in San Francisco . . . because when the act reached Oakland, California (just outside of her home town), she was carried from the stage and operated upon for appendicitis. Burns wired New York that he was laying off without pay . . . he refused to go on without Allen.

Gracie recuperated just in time for a Christmas party with the folks. During her illness she had received two letters and five wires from Ryan. On the other hand she had received exactly twenty dozen bunches of roses from George Burns. It almost made a girl stop and wonder!

The day before the Christmas party, George spent exactly \$750.00 for a diamond bracelet for Gracie! One hundred dollars down . . . and the rest for life. On the way out to the house that evening where George—"the only Jew in the group"—had been selected to play Santa Claus, Gracie sighed: "Remind me to call up Ben after the party!" Gracie never came so close to losing a diamond bracelet!

**G**EORGE was a very perfunctory Santa Claus. His heart wasn't in it! When he handed Gracie the swell bracelet he said sourly: "To Gracie . . . with all my love . . . ha ha." Something in the way he said it made Gracie burst into tears. After she had opened the present, she ran into the bathroom and cried like a shower turned on full. One of the Allen sisters said: "That's mean of her to cry that way after the beautiful present you gave her, George." George yelled: "Let her cry if she wants to . . . let her do anything she pleases . . . I love her!"

On the way back to the hotel that night George finally spoke his mind: "Don't forget to call up Ben." "Oh, George!" said Gracie . . . and cried some more.

"Look here, young lady," said the gentleman known as Burns, "I'm getting sick and tired of this. I'm in love with you, see? And this Ben Ryan person is making my life miserable. If we aren't married in ten days . . . well, that's just the end of Burns & Allen, that's all!"

When Gracie got back to her hotel, she threw herself on the bed and sobbed. Suddenly the phone rang. "Hello," said Ben Ryan from New York. "Why didn't you call me this evening?" "I don't know," sighed Gracie. "You still love me, don't you?" inquired Ryan—who had a perfect right to ask. "No, I don't believe I do!" said Gracie.

"Then," commanded Mr. Ryan, "would you mind hanging up?" Gracie did. Immediately, however, she called George on the phone and said, through tears of happiness, "You may buy the ring tomorrow . . . if you still want to, George!"

Burns and Allen were safely married now. Yes, hut how about their future? What would happen when their Orpheum contract was up? Which, incidentally, was due a week after they married.

Don't fail to read—in the next issue of RADIO STARS—how Gracie and George trekked back to New York, telling each other that "they were young yet and that something would turn up."

What a surprise they got when they reached New York. But, then, life is made up of surprises. It certainly was for them.

The Magazine for the Radio Listener

# What's on the Air

15 CENTS



ANDY

March 19

4/35

# Amos 'n' Andy



THE KINGFISH

*The self-important Kingfish plays a vital part in the Amos 'n' Andy sketches—and so do the other characters whose amusing quirks of personality are engagingly revealed here by Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, their famous creators*

By MORT LEWIS

again, the Amos 'n' Andy script starts right over again to work the partners up to another pitch of indignation. Every time the partners "crack down" on the Kingfish several million radio sets quiver with chuckles of appreciation.

Next to Amos 'n' Andy themselves, the Kingfish is unquestionably their most important character. Not all of these characters are figments of the imagination; many of them are patterned, almost exactly, after some of Gosden's or Correll's friends or acquaintances.

For instance, the Kingfish has a prototype in one of Charlie Correll's friends, who is the "know-it-all" kind of person. In speaking of this friend, Correll says, "He's the sort of a guy who, if you tell him about a new car you bought, will say, 'Oh, that's no good. I know where you can get a much finer auto for less money.' He's always going you one better. In other words, he's the Kingfish."

**H**AVE you ever wondered how the Amos 'n' Andy sketches are written and where Freeman Gosden (Amos) and Charlie Correll (Andy) get all their ideas for them? And where those many lovable colored characters originate? And why the Kingfish is always self-importantly lordling it over Amos 'n' Andy with a quite evident desire to shove them clear off the stage, as in the recent sequence in which the Kingfish elected himself Dictator of Weber City?

If you have ever been good and mad at the Kingfish—and plenty of radio listeners have been stirred with a mad desire to "hit him right on top of de hail," as Andy would express it—you have paid unconscious tribute to the artistry of Correll and Gosden. The first element of drama, on the air or anywhere else, is *conflict*, and that's the element which it is the particular province of the Kingfish to supply.

And always, if you have noticed, Amos can be goaded just so far before exploding into righteous wrath—and when he has spoken his mind and put the Kingfish in his proper place

**O**THER Amos 'n' Andy characters acquire their characteristics for very practical radio reasons. As you know, all of the folks in the script are played by Correll and Gosden. Their voices alone are heard over the air. As a consequence, there being a normal human limit to the number of guises a voice can take, the necessity for distinctively identifying the characters accounts for the slow, measured drawl of Lightnin', the chopped, querulous syllables of Brother Crawford, and the polish of Henry Van Porter with his catchword, "charmin'."

Mrs. Van Porter, spouse of the high society Henry, is deliberately patterned after some of the hostesses at various afternoon teas that Correll and Gosden, as ionized celebrities, have been obliged to attend. But of all the Amos 'n' Andy tricks of characterization, the telephone is probably most outstanding.

You have never heard the voice of Mrs. Van Porter, of Madame Queen, of Senorita Butterfly, of Millie, of Ruby Tay-



BROTHER CRAWFORD

Dominated by his wife, sensitive to fancied affronts, over-conscientious, the sharply nasal voice of Brother Crawford paints a perfect mental picture. Faced by the necessity of developing several distinctive voice styles to identify their characters, Brother Crawford was created by Amos 'n' Andy to fit his unique habits of speech



LIGHTNIN'

Lightnin' is another Amos 'n' Andy character whose voice is the key to his personality. His timid, word-minute style makes it easy to identify his comedy relief personality when he comes on the air. Without tricks of costume to aid them, Correll and Gosden depend solely on vocal differences in creating characters

# Expose the Kingfish

4-35



At noon every day Correll and Gosden sit down in their office to write the script they will present that evening. Correll, seated, does the typing, while Gosden dictates his own rôle

lor, of the Battle-Axe (Brother Crawford's wife)—and yet your mental picture of these colored charmers is just as sharp as of their husbands and gentlemen friends. There's a current wisecrack to the effect that "it's done with mirrors" when explaining a stage or screen illusion, but in Amos 'n' Andy's case it is done with telephones!

You hear Andy conducting a telephonic conversation with Millie—and he pauses in the midst of it with his plaintive "hole de phone!" while he turns to Amos for consultation or sympathy. In this way the partners achieve the effect of having their lady characters on the scene with them, without the need of resorting to falsettos or the use of feminine actors.

**N**OT even Correll and Gosden can predict what fantastic dream of grandeur will next enter the Kingfish's head. All they know is that he has to involve himself and the part-

ners in some predicament which will keep the thread of the story moving. There is nothing in the least mysterious about their methods of writing the Amos 'n' Andy scripts. Perhaps you have thought that the colored pair's adventures are carefully plotted out months in advance. As it happens, the installment you listened to last evening was written only a few hours before it went on the air.

What the authors try to do, first, is to develop some general situation with a lot of dramatic or comic possibilities . . . a situation which can be strung out over a period of weeks or months, such as Madamie Queen's breach of promise suit against Andy, Amos' murder trial, or the building of Weber City. Once they have the general situation, they sit down every day around noon and talk over the day's script in which part of the situation is developed. Then, if after the discussion, they have a pretty good idea of what [Continued on page 14]



## HENRY VAN PORTER

The oily, sly, and socially ambitious Henry Van Porter might stand out as distinctly from other Amos 'n' Andy characters were it not for his trade-word, "charmin'!" Van Porter is rarely used for straight comedy, but furthers the drama by playing a slightly villainous rôle.



## MADAME QUEEN AND MILLIE

Since Correll and Gosden take all the rôles, every woman character in Amos 'n' Andy is represented by a telephone. Through the medium of interrupted phone talks the lady friends of the boys are sharply etched. If it weren't for the handy help of the telephone which permits them to repeat the words of their sweethearts, there could be no romance in the Amos 'n' Andy drama.

## Amos 'n' Andy Expose the Kingfish

[Continued from page 13]

they're going to write about, the actual writing takes half an hour or so. Yes, as rapidly as all that.

Correll does the typing and he claims he can write faster than he can talk. If they get stuck, it sometimes takes them as long as three hours to do the daily stint. Rarely more. They do all their own writing and use no outside authors. Their secretary, Miss Louise Summa, secures for them any technical information they may need for writing (for instance, about legal terms and procedure, in case the script involves a lawsuit) and according to Charlie Correll, she is a whiz at it.

Although Amos 'n' Andy do not plan what they will write in advance, of course they have the general situation in mind. Once they outlined exactly what they were going to write for a month ahead, but in three days, they had veered so far from the original plan, they decided it would be best to do their work day by day.

**T**HERE it is, as simple as all that. Except that every once in a while something actually happens which suggests a sketch to them. For instance, there was that time about a year ago when Freeman Gosden and Charlie Correll were really stuck for an idea for the day's script. They were seated in their office in the Palmolive Building, Chicago, and getting exactly nowhere in their efforts to turn out a script. The afternoon was wearing on. In a couple of hours, people throughout the country would be tuning in on their program. But they had temporarily run dry of ideas. At the moment, there was no program for the evening. Gosden paced the floor nervously. Correll was seated at the typewriter, his forehead wrinkled in thought.

Suddenly the door opened and a man, a total stranger, burst into the office. Miss Summa, their secretary, was right behind him and saying apologetically, "I tried to keep him out, but—"

"That's all right, sister," said the stranger. "I'll handle this. Boys, I'm here to offer you the opportunity of a lifetime!"

"For heaven's sake," said Gosden, despectively, "We're trying to write a script and—"

The stranger brushed some cigar ashes from his coat, and the objection aside at the same moment. "Script!" he said disdainfully. "What's a script! I'm telling you boys this is the chance of a lifetime. I've got a tree down in Mexico, a whopper of a tree, over ninety feet high, and more than twenty feet through the middle, and I'm willing to sell it to you for \$35,000. This tree is simply marvelous. Why, you can take fifteen foot planks off it, and they'll practically grow back again the next week. And you can—"

For fifteen minutes, they let the stranger go on. The torrent of words came so fast they couldn't have stopped him anyway without tossing him out of the office bodily. He brought his price for the tree down to \$5,000, then \$500. Finally, he left discouraged. Whereupon Gosden and Correll looked

at each other joyfully. "Boy! what a break," exclaimed Correll. For the stranger had given them the idea, gratis, for a typical Amos 'n' Andy situation! They sat down and in 26 minutes by the watch, they had finished their script, using the attempt of a man to sell Andy a marvelous tree down in Mexico. A tree, which had all the exaggerated possibilities the stranger had mentioned. The sketch ended with the practical Amos stepping in, and preventing Andy from investing his life's savings in the Mexican wonder.

**T**HAT was one time in which an Amos 'n' Andy script was inspired by an actual occurrence. There were others. For instance, there was the day Gosden and Correll went to view a Decoration Day parade on Chicago's Michigan Avenue. It was to be an extra large, super Decoration Day parade, and the stars, who still retain a boyhood affection for parades, decided to drive to see it.

At several points, Michigan Avenue forms a bridge over tunnels for cross traffic. Gosden and Correll were driving on one of these cross streets and they decided the other side of the avenue would be the best place to view the inarchers. Slowly, because the traffic was extremely thick, they drove beneath the Michigan Avenue bridge. When they were half way across, traffic jammed. Completely. And for more than three hours, while the parade went by above them, they were caught under the bridge. And they never did get to see the parade. But the day was not completely lost, for they used the identical situation as the basis for an Amos 'n' Andy script.

And then, once, a man came into their office and sold them a check protector. He explained how this little gadget prevents the check from being raised, by embossing the amount of the check on the paper. He went into a complete description of the mechanics by which the machine worked. They bought the machine. Furthermore, they decided so valuable a gadget that prevented checks from being tampered with, might interest the public. Thereupon they worked into the Amos 'n' Andy plot the attempt of a salesman to sell a check protector to Andy, his purchase of it, and his amusingly twisted version of exactly what a check protector would do.

**S**OMETIMES public opinion shapes the Amos 'n' Andy continuity. This was true in the case of Amos' murder trial. Perhaps you'll recall this trial. It was one of the big Amos 'n' Andy scenes. One evening, Amos was supposed to have been out driving one of his "Fresh Air" Taxicabs. A man who had just robbed a fur store and killed the owner of it, hired Amos' cab. When Amos' fare had left the cab, stolen fur was found in the back of it. The police took a hand. Amos was first called to trial as a witness and then accused of committing the murder, or being an accessory.

The trial scene was very dramatic.

But the public resented Amos' being accused of murder. He was too well beloved. It left a bad taste in the mouth, and so objecting letters poured in. Always sensitive to public opinion, and unwilling to offend, Gosden and Correll were in a quandary. Then they found the solution. Suddenly, during one evening's broadcast, the trial continued with the discovery that the whole thing was just one of Amos' nightmares! He hadn't been on trial at all. He had just dreamed about it.

Very seldom, do Correll and Gosden fly in the face of public opinion. The one outstanding example, in which they dared certain adverse criticism, was in the killing of that very lovable character, Roland Weber. Perhaps you'll recall the incident. A reckless driver was supposed to have run past a red light. A child was in the path of the car. Roland Weber ran from the sidewalk and pushed the child to safety, but was hit himself. He lingered a couple of nights and then died.

It took considerable courage for Gosden and Correll to write this into their script. There were bound to be considerable complaints about such stark tragedy, making its appearance in the Amos 'n' Andy continuity. The authors had two sound reasons for killing Weber. First, his death would lead to an excellent general situation which could be carried on for months. Weber, a wealthy man, was to leave property upon which the real estate development, Weber City, was to be erected, with Amos 'n' Andy as key men in its construction. This would put Amos and Andy in new roles and help develop interesting complications. As a matter of fact, the building of Weber City, has already occupied several months of Amos 'n' Andy continuity.

And secondly, Weber's death occurred during National Safety Week. His death would help point the dangers of reckless driving to millions of listeners.

**SO GENUINE** are these characters that they become real flesh and blood people to millions of listeners. For instance, Ruby Taylor, Amos' sweetheart, was supposed to be sick with pneumonia. During one broadcast, Amos announced dolefully that that very night would be the crisis of Ruby's illness and that he intended to visit her at the hospital and bring her some flowers. The following morning, Correll and Gosden's office was deluged both with flowers for Amos to take Ruby, and with telegrams expressing the hope that Ruby had passed the crisis successfully. All from listeners!

In fact, so genuine is Ruby Taylor, that when Freeman Gosden was up in Canada on a vacation last summer, a woman neighbor of his, surprised to learn that Gosden was married, asked him what Ruby Taylor thought about his being married to another woman!

And the lovable Roland Weber was so real to Gosden's personal colored chauffeur that Weber's radio death had a very strong effect upon him. It seems that this chauffeur used to habitually drive very rapidly. But after Weber was supposedly killed by a reckless driver, he actually cut down his regular speed to almost half. So fear that he, too, would hit somebody like the later Roland!

RADIOLAND

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**BUFFALO EVENING NEWS**



**SHOW TIME** — Charlie McCarthy, left, and Kermit the Frog and Howdy Doody are part of a summer exhibition opening Sunday at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of History and Technology in the nation's capital. (AP)

**TAPE LIBRARY:**

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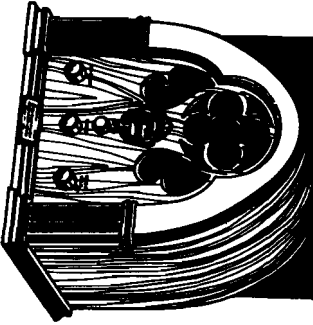
Jack Pearl as Baron Munchausen



"Lum and Abner"



Young actress **SHIRLEY BELL** who played radio's **LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE** (1930-1940).



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