

Classy Arden, TV's model working woman

By Jefferson Graham
USA TODAY

While Lucy, Ethel, Alice and Trixie were all typical 1950s TV housewives, Eve Arden as *Our Miss Brooks* was a radically different image: a working woman.

Virtually every other woman on early TV was a homemaker and mother. But Miss Brooks was a single working woman, the model for future TV women like Rhoda, Mary Richards and Murphy Brown.

Arden, forever ingrained as the saucy schoolteacher Connie Brooks on radio and then TV, died Monday of heart failure. She was 78.

Arden began her career on Broadway in the *Ziegfeld Follies*, and made her film debut in 1940 in *Stage Door*, co-starring with Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers and Lucille Ball. She received a best supporting actress Oscar nomination for her part in *Mildred Pierce*.

She usually played the best friend of the heroine, brightening the dramatics with her deadpan humor and memorable one-liners.

In 1947, CBS offered her the lead part for radio's *Brooks*. The show became an instant success, with Arden's portrayal of the Madison High School English teacher, and moved to TV in 1952, where it lasted four seasons. Gale Gordon (later Mr. Moonney on *The Lucy Show*) played her crusty principal Osgood Conklin, and Richard Crenna (later of *The Real McCoys* and the *Rambo* movies) played Walter Denton, Brooks' nerdy student.

A well-known line in *Our*



ARDEN: She was head of the class in 'Our Miss Brooks.'

Miss Brooks came when Denton would say each morning, "Greetings, fairest of all possible English teachers."

Miss Brooks' reply: "Well, good morning, most observant of all possible pupils."

TV's *Brooks* was produced by *I Love Lucy*'s Desi Arnaz as part of the Desilu empire. Arden followed *Brooks* with the short-lived *Eve Arden Show*, and then reunited in 1967 with producer Arnaz for two seasons of *The Mothers-in-Law*, co-starring with Kaye Ballard.

In later years, Arden made appearances in Steven Spielberg's TV series *Amazing Stories* and on *Faerie Tale Theater* for Showtime.

Ballard, now the star of the syndicated *What a Dummy*, said Monday of Arden. "She is one of the last in her class — the highest class. The two years I spent working on *The Mothers-in-Law* were the happiest I have had in show business."



THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB
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New member processing-\$2.50 plus club donations of \$17.50 per year from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31 Members receive a tape listing, library list, monthly newsletter, the Illustrated Press, the yearly Memories publication and various special items. Additional family members living in the same household as a regular member may join the club for a \$5.00 donation 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 with a regular member. This membership is a \$13.00 donation per year and includes all the benefits of regular membership. Regular membership donations are as follows; If you join in Jan.-Mar. \$17.50--Apr. - June \$14.00--July-Sept. \$10.00 Oct.-Dec. \$7.00. All renewals are due by Jan. 2. Your renewal should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you change your address.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIPS are now available. Annual donations are \$29.75. Publications will be airmailed.

The Old Time Radio Club meets the first Monday of every month.

from Aug.- June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, N.Y. Anyone interested in the "Golden Age of Radio" is welcome. Meetings start at 7.30 P.M.

Club Address

Old Time Radio Club
P. O. Box 426
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086

Club Officers

President - Jerry Collins
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086
(716) 683-6199

Vice-President & Canadian Branch
Richard Simpson
960-16 Rd. R. R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
LOS 1C0

Treasurer & Video & Records

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

Illustrated Press

Dan Marafino
19 Church St.
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086
(716) 684-0733

Reference Library

Ed Wanat
393 George Urban Blvd.
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-An I.P. Editorial-

Let's clear the air once and for all about this legal battle between the dealers and their accusers. Regardless of what you may read in other columns within the content of this newsletter, the I.P. has, is, and will be NEUTRAL in this matter. It would be so easy to come out and attack either party, and/or defend same using the I.P. as a voice. It would also risk a lawsuit, and we don't need that. An individual may^{say} whatever is on his mind and sign his name to it. The I.P. can do it in the form of an editorial, keeping in mind any repercussions that may come back to haunt it.

As editor, I feel it is time to make a statement concerning the OTR Defense Fund. I realize this statement may not be a popular one but The air must be cleared.

It seems to me that our "hobby" is taking a back seat to a matter VERY FEW of us really understand, and the constant rumors make matters worse. So much focus has been put on the "OTR Defense Fund", it makes me wonder what hobby I'm in. I did not study law, and I don't want to. It is NOT within my power to alter the outcome of this battle one way or the other, and I WILL NOT give anyone the satisfaction of my personal answer.

As far as anyone wanting to donate to this cause, this is your choice, do as you will. The I.P. will not be used to influence anyone's actions. What I may think is an entirely different matter, but while this text is being written under the I.P. heading, I'll walk the fence.

As for anyone writing a column

in the pages of the I.P., either for or against the OTRDF, that is his/her opinion, and DOES NOT, in any way, shape, or form reflect the opinions of the Illustrated Press. The writer must realize that once he/she signs their name, you're on your own. However, in the past I have offered the opportunity for a rebuttal on any editorial. NONE have come in. It seems none are interested in using an editorial rebuttal in the correct manner.

For now, let's let the legal system settle this dispute in their own way and get back to the reason this newsletter exists, for the enjoyment of Old Time Radio. If anyone disagrees, please write. Rest assured, it WILL be printed.

Dan Marafino
Editor

To Jack Palmer---
My mistake for not putting your name at the end of your article on "The Sound of OTR". Keep your articles coming.

Also an apology to Tom Harris for misplacing his logo and name. The reel to reel updates will be back to normal.

To Eddie Blick...
Your next installment of radio in Tenn. is in this issue. Your new article is great and will be in the Feb. issue. Don't stop now and put them in the same format.

The winds of change are blowing.

Public Affairs Programs

Networks provided programs to keep people informed about the war effort. A CBS production on WNOX, "Spirit of '42," (which actually began in 1941²⁶) provided information about the development of United States armed forces. It was produced "under the watchful eye of the Army and Navy Departments."²⁷ Topics included chemical warfare,²⁸ life at West Point,²⁹ and the training of Air Force cadets as weather officers.³⁰

Whereas "Spirit of '42" seems to have concentrated on military activities in this country, "Stars and Stripes in Britain" let listeners know what soldiers overseas were doing. It was carried by WBIR. Its subjects included war correspondent Ernie Pyle,³¹ a chaplain describing a scrap drive at a U. S. base in Northern Ireland,³² and a chief yeoman "who witnessed the scene of the first step of Mussolini's fall--the day he declared war on the USA."³³

Knoxville residents could also hear the First Lady talk about the war effort. On January 18, 1942, WBIR carried Eleanor Roosevelt's address about a National Defense Health Clinic.³⁴ WNOX carried her speech honoring the 31st anniversary of the Girl Scouts in 1943. Her topic was "Voluntary Leadership and Youth in Wartime."³⁵

Both WBIR and WNOX carried other programs that tried to keep listeners aware of effects of the war effort. Some examples on WBIR were "Keep 'em Rolling," which included reports on the shortage of rubber for tires³⁶ and efforts of women in defense,³⁷ "This is Official," which had the War Production Board chairman answering questions,³⁸ and "American Forum of the Air," which included a discussion of controls on food prices.³⁹

Perhaps the major public affairs program originated in Knoxville was produced by WNOX beginning December 21, 1941. It featured World War I hero Sgt. Alvin C. York (a native of East Tennessee) and was broadcast Sunday evenings from 7 to 7:30.⁴⁰

An announcement said that in each broadcast, York would address the current war situation.⁴¹ Dick Westergaard, who was general manager of WNOX then, recalled that York usually spoke from his home in Jamestown, Tennessee, without a script.⁴²

On at least one occasion, York did broadcast from the WNOX studios. On January 12, 1942, "Screen Guild Theatre" on CBS and WNOX presented a radio adaptation of the film "Sergeant York." That morning's newspaper announced that immediately after the CBS program, York himself would broadcast from the WNOX facilities, and the public was invited to attend.⁴³

Although WBIR and WNOX appear to have had more newspaper coverage of their public affairs programs than WRDL, that station also carried such programs. One example was "The Army Hour." This program, on Sunday afternoons from early 1942 until 1945, "gave Americans their first in-depth look at the war and how it was being fought."⁴⁴ Announcements of the first broadcast said, "The War Department says the programs will be probably the most revealing weekly show on the air."⁴⁵ Wyllis Cooper, the series' writer-producer-director, was quoted as saying the program would be "100% authentic, [and] absolutely official."⁴⁶

Eve Arden, film, TV actress, dies

From News Wire Services

BEVERLY HILLS — Actress Eve Arden, the wisecracking best friend from more than 70 movies who achieved her greatest fame as the laucy schoolteacher on TV's "Our Miss Brooks," died Monday of heart failure at her home here. She was 83.

She also suffered from cancer. The comedian appeared in poor health when she attended the Warner Bros. studio rededication last summer and was forced to leave the celebration early.

Miss Arden was best known for her role of the teacher with the sharp tongue and big heart in "Our Miss Brooks," which she played for five years on radio and then four on television in 1952-56. It had moved to television after becoming the most-listened-to half hour radio show in America.

The role won her an Emmy Award for best comedy actress.

Miss Arden was born in Mill Valley, Calif. and made her first appearance on stage at age 7 with a local summer stock company. Her comedic talent was spotted by Broadway producer Lee Shubert who brought her to New York, where she appeared for two years in the 1936 Ziegfeld Follies starring the late Fannie Brice.

She was lured to Hollywood in

1938 with a starring role in the movie version of the Broadway production of "Stage Door." A long-term contract with Warner Brothers followed during which she made "Night and Day" and "Dark at the Top of the Stairs."

"Stage Door," starring Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers and Lucille Ball, would set the pattern for Miss Arden's film career. She usually played the best friend of the heroine, brightening the dramatics with her deadpan humor and memorable one-liners.

In 1940, she returned to Broadway to appear with Danny Kaye in "Let's Face It" and such hits as "Very Warm for May" and "Two for the Show."

One of her best-known film roles came as Joan Crawford's friend in "Mildred Pierce," which earned Miss Arden an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actress and one of her most memorable lines.

In the film she says about Ms. Crawford's horrible daughter: "Veda's convinced me that alligators have the right idea. They eat their young."

In 1947, Miss Arden was offered the lead part of Connie Brooks in CBS radio's "Our Miss Brooks." The show became a success with her portrayal of the Madison High School English

teacher and she played the same role on television from its debut Oct. 3, 1952, through four seasons. Gale Gordon played the crusty principal, Osgood Conklin.

A well-known line in "Our Miss Brooks" came when student Walter Denton would say each morning, "Greetings, fairest of all possible English teachers."

Miss Arden replied, "Well good morning, most observant of all possible pupils."

"The Eve Arden" show followed, but lasted only a season. She then appeared in "The Mothers-in-Law" with Kaye Ballard in 1967-69.

More recently she was seen as the schoolteacher in the blockbuster movies "Grease" and "Grease II." In later years, she made appearances in Steven Spielberg's TV series "Amazing Stories" and on "Faerie Tale Theater" for Showtime.

Her autobiography, "The Three Phases of Eve" — a deliberate pun on a book and movie with a similar title about a woman with multiple personalities, and a reference to her work on stage, movies and television — was published last year.

She is survived by two daughter and two sons. Her husband, actor Brooks West, died in 1984.

Don't Touch that Dial

by Jerry Collins

I hope everyone had a very enjoyable Christmas. If you had the opportunity to listen to any radio shows during the holidays on your local stations, they were most likely comedy shows.

Comedy shows and comedians have been the topic of many books. Although I have not read the latest book on Jack Benny I have read Jack Benny by Irving Fein and the Jack Benny Show by Milt Josephsburg

George Burns has also authored a number of popular books; George Burns The Third Time Around, Living It Up or They Still Love Me in Altoona and Gracie, A Love Story.

Milton Berle, an Autobiography, deals with some of the controversial and seamy aspects of Berle's life.

When you read Fred Allen, His Life and Wit by Robert Taylor you begin to realize what a genius he was.

Funny Men Don't Laugh by Arnold Auerbach is an excellent autobiography of a comedy writer in the early days of radio.

Radio Comedy by Arthur Frank Wertheim is a good history of radio comedy from the Happiness Boys to Burns and Allen, Jack Benny and Fred Allen.

As a baseball fan I thoroughly enjoyed The Broadcasters by Red Barber You Can't Beat the Hours by Mel Allen.

Soap Operas were the topic of three different books; From Ma Perkins to Mary Hartman, The Soaps by Madeleine Edmondson and David Rouns and Ma Perkins, Little Orphan Annie and Heigh Ho Silver by Charles K. Stumpf. A good portion of the latter book also deals with children shows.

Whatever Became Of (4th and 5th Series) include interviews with numerous radio performers.

All Time Great Bloopers by Kermit Schafer includes many of the more humorous incidents in radio history.

If you are a fan of Orson Welles and his famous War of the World show you would enjoy The Panic Broadcast by Howard Koch.

Dick Olday and I both made some minor contributions to Pharmacy and Medicine on the Air by Mickey C. Smith which deals with radio shows involving nurses, doctors and pharmacists.

I will include the article with two books written by members of the Old Time Radio Club; The History of Recording by Robert Angus and the smallest of all these books, The Old Time Radio Collectors Handbook written by Charles Seeley.

Pennsylvania news briefs

"Hi ho silver" rides airwaves

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Lone Ranger will ride the airwaves again as KDKA, the nation's oldest radio station, celebrates its 70th birthday by replaying news coverage, songs and serials from radio's heyday.

"Get out your tape recorders." KDKA talk show host Mike Pitek told his listeners Thursday night. "You'll hear those unforgettable moments we've retrieved from our archives — all those scratchy things."

On Nov. 2, 1926, KDKA became the country's first regularly scheduled, commercially licensed broadcaster with a report from the roof of Westinghouse Electric Corp.'s east Pittsburgh plant.

KDKA announcer Leo Rosenberger reported that day on returns in Republican Warren G. Harding's defeat of Democrat James M. Cox in the presidential election.

This week in the lobby of the Pittsburgh headquarters of Westinghouse, KDKA's parent company, the Pittsburgh Antique Radio Society erected a replica of the shack where the first broadcast was made.

The society borrowed from the Smithsonian Institution equipment used in Rosenberger's first broadcast, KDKA Marketing Director Maureen Durkin said.

KDKA talk show host Fred Honsberger was scheduled to broadcast from the replica shack from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. today. Honsberger said on Thursday's show he would hook up an old microphone in KDKA's hardware for part of his show.

From the President's Desk

Financial issues were discussed in detail at the December meeting of the Old Time Radio Club. Confronted with increased postal and printing costs, the Club voted to increase its new member processing fee from \$2.50 to \$5.00. This is a one time only charge. The annual membership fee of \$17.50, that was set in the mid 1980's will remain unchanged.

FAVORITE OTR SHOWS

by Jack Palmer

After the last few articles, perhaps it is time for me to touch on a subject where everybody has an opinion, none of which agree. Yet all can be right! We all love Old Time Radio shows, or we wouldn't be involved in listening to, trading for, reading about or writing about them. Yet we all differ in our favorite shows. In fact, many people have been drawn into OTR because of their love of a certain show, either as a memory from childhood, or an accidental introduction later in life.

As I have stated before, I grew up with radio. I was born in 1924, so I really did grow up with radio. I remember getting up at three in the morning to listen to the coronation of the King of England, then dragging myself to school dead tired. I remember my brother and I sneaking out of bed and going down the hallway to get closer to the living room, so we could listen past our bedtime. Yet, with all these memories, I did not have a favorite show when I first started collecting OTR in the early 60's. I remembered many shows that we had listened to, but my father (like most homes in those days!) made the decisions on what to listen to in the evenings, so we listened to what he liked. No use asking for what we liked!

For example: I missed Orson Welles' WAR OF THE WORLDS because we were out to a Halloween party, and besides my father listened to another program at that time. I almost missed the Joe Louis-Max Schmeling fight, because we were preparing for a long fight (fixing snacks, etc. just like TV today!) and just made it back to the radio when Louis knocked him down.

Because of my earlier memories, my first OTR shows I collected were almost all comedies, and I still prefer them today. I have at least a few copies of all the popular comedies. As most of you know, some shows have held up well during the passing of the years. Others have lost something to time. Here are my favorites, and my reasons for selecting them.

VIC AND SADE. Some people claim this is the best radio show ever. I won't go that far, but I pick it as my top favorite for several reasons. It is funny, it gives a nostalgic look at middle America in the 30's (And believe me, it is an accurate look!) and it can be listened to over and over without becoming boring. If you don't believe me, listen to the episode called IKE KNEESNUFFER'S PHOTOS and tell me if Sade really did catch on to VIC's attempt to trick her, or did she really know the people in the pictures. I haven't really figured it out yet! Outstanding writing and outstanding characterization! That is what makes a program great.

My number two favorite is really a tie. It's a toss-up between THE JACK BENNY SHOW and FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY. Both had outstanding writing and established characters. Both meet the test of time. They are still as funny today as years ago.

I could list other comedy shows as favorites, but I'm restricting myself to these three. However, there are some shows with big name stars which do not hold up today. BOB HOPE was too topical, and his one-liners don't sound funny today. RED SKELTON and EDDIE CANTOR have the same problem. The humor is too dated, and was based on jokes, not character. It doesn't carry over too well.

In the area of drama I have to pick THE MERCURY THEATRE ON THE AIR as number 1, even though it was only around a short time. The play, the adaptation for radio, the acting were all superb. And with Orson Welles to tie it together, how could it go wrong?

Although LUX PRESENTS HOLLYWOOD may not have had the most outstanding dramas on the air, it was one of my favorites and rates as number 2. Some of the so-called "best shows on the air" as selected by the critics, like plays by Norman Corwin were never my favorites. As a radio listener I thought them pretentious and boring, and as an OTR collector I still feel the same.

As for mysteries, I like the ones best that mirror my reading habits. HERCULE POIROT, ELLERY QUEEN, NERO WOLFE and that show that towers above all, SHERLOCK HOLMES. SHERLOCK HOLMES has been played on radio by many different actors (many of them outstanding) but Basil Rathbone is still considered the ultimate SHERLOCK. This show, along with VIC AND SADE, are the only radio shows I have actually endeavored to obtain every show available! I applauded the recent release of the NEW ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES even though it meant I had to purchase my copies from a store instead of obtaining them through trades!

I am not attempting to pick my favorite westerns, or adventure shows, or even variety shows. None of these are among my favorites, and my number 1 western, for example, would rank beneath the top twenty on my list of favorite shows. I know many people who swear GUNSMOKE is the best show ever made. It may be, but I never was a great fan of western books, movies or radio. Other people swear by THE SHADOW. I never listened to it as a child, and still don't care for it today.

As you may have guessed by now, my two top favorite shows are VIC AND SADE and SHERLOCK HOLMES. I am sure all of you have your favorites too. But if you have never listened to these two shows, at least give them a try. You may be surprised.

Zany is radio word at rating time

Ever since I participated in an Arbitron rating of local radio stations a couple of years ago. I've been paying special attention to the gimmicks, promotions and contests used to boost audience size during those times when people are scratching out their daily listening patterns in those little log books.

I still have the crisp, new dollar bill — a thank-you sticker pasted to one side — which I earned for my week of serious radio participation.

My subconscious might be playing tricks on me, but I don't recall being influenced by any particular station's promotional gimmicks. As I recall, I simply listened to the stations I had always listened to. Isn't that what they wanted me to do?

Of course, I could have followed the crowd to the station giving away the biggest bucks, the station running the most offbeat contest. I could have done that. But, in the immortal words of Watergate Nixon, "It would be wrong!"

I gave an honest accounting of my normal listening pattern. Arbitron paid me a dollar. Fair enough.

So I'm quite amused by the far-out promotions radio stations resort to during a ratings sweep period. Hardly a kooky idea has gone undone: Billboard sittings, call-in quizzes ("who's buried in Grant's Tomb?"), slapstick sporting events, nothing's-too-disgusting-for-me contests, you name it.

I thought the locals would have to move down a few rungs on the ladder of good taste to keep up with a contest at a Pensacola, Fla., station that offered couples a chance to win \$1,000 if they are the first to conceive a child. Then I found out a Saginaw station last week undertook the same type of contest. It must be a national trend.

Venice L.
Holmes



NEWS COLUMNIST

In both cases, the aim of the contests was to attract more listeners in the age 25-44 contests.

Finalists received a pregnancy test — after all, the radio stations didn't want anybody getting a head start.

In Saginaw, they called it "Screaming Babies Night." In Florida, it was the "Gulf Coast Breeders Cup."

You have to keep in mind that the only audience that really counts during a ratings period is the audience with those little diaries. Everything beyond that is a big unknown. Can a station hike its rating by encouraging couples to take the "wild thang" more seriously? Going by personal experience, I'd say no.

Unfortunately I'm at the high end of that sought-after age group. Maybe if I was 25, and had a rating diary, I'd be more flexible, switching stations for thrills alone.

But that would be wrong — probably.

THE DEALERS CORNER

by
FRANK C. BONCORE

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THE DEALERS CORNER (cont)

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\$1.50 each (+\$3.00 shipping for an entire case; about 65-70 tapes)

There are only two catches :

1. minimum order 20 cassettes
 2. because of this sale, we reserve the right to choose the cassettes to ship.
- We will try not to include two of the same program type; however we cannot guarantee you might not already have some of these, but think of the savings!

Andy puts out a flier on a regular basis be sure to write him to get on his list.

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EDWARD J. CARR of **CASSETTES NOW / REELS** ALSO, 216 SHANER ST, BOYERTOWN, PA 19512, has a new supplement to his catalog out. Here are some of the highlights:

WHITEHALL 12 2 REELS
FRED ALLEN 2 REELS
TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS 8 REELS
DRAGNET 8 REELS
INFORMATION PLEASE 18 REELS
RICHARD DIAMOND 5 REELS
DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT 8 REELS
HALLS OF IVY 3 REELS

PRICE PER REEL \$7.25 + SHIPPING
These shows are also available on cassette.
CATALOG \$5.00

THE SHADOW LITIGATION UPDATE

by
BOB BURNHAM

In March of 1989, at least nine old time radio hobbist/dealers were sued by **PREMIER ELECTRONICS** (parent company of **RADIO YESTERYEAR/ RADIOLA**) for selling copies of Shadow Programs. Premier's lawsuit was based on a claim that they were allegedly issued an exclusive license to market and sell Shadow programs. The license allegedly was issued by **CONDE NAST**, who claims to be the copyright holder.

In the original Federal court summons issued in the state of Connecticut, **PREMIER ELECTRONICS** requested a settlement of \$100,000 per defendant.

A further development in the case was recently revealed at a document inspection. The outcome of the inspection was the conclusion that most of the Shadow copyright documents allegedly held by **CONDE NAST** are apparently valid.

Negotiations for a settlement of the case between the nine defendants and **PREMIER ELECTRONICS** thus far have been unsuccessful.

CONDE NAST, the alleged copyright holder, also publishes several other magazines including:

VOGUE
HOUSE and GARDEN
CONDE NAST TRAVEL
GLAMOUR
MADEMOISELLE
SELF

and others. The Corporate President is **BERNARD LESER**.

CONDE NASTE is located at:
350 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

XX

It is my personal opinion that everyone reading the above article should **WRITE** to Bernard Lesser and **BOYCOTT** the above businesses to show support of the OTR Dealers. Also urge our fellow hobbists to do the same.

REMEMBER !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SUPPORT THE OTR DEFENSE FUND!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
4003 CLIFTON AVENUE
CINCINNATI, OHIO, 45220

It is now your turn to help those who who have done so much to help **OUR** hobby. Don't wait for someone else to do it. Do it yourself **NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

FRANK C. BONCORE

MIS-ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND - PT.3

by Bob Davis

"Stuff" happens, and when Chuck Seeley and I do "The John Otto Show" (a call-in, trivia, talk radio show) things always seem to go a bit out-of-whack.

There was this time we were doing the show and suddenly we were off the air! Nothing, absolutely nothing, was going out!

A call to the transmitter told us that the problem was right at the station. No signal was getting to them to transmit!

The engineer was frantically checking his board and heaven knows what else, but nothing seemed out of line. Still, the problem persisted.

After about 30 minutes of dead air (that's a no no!) the engineer came into the studio and went behind a large console. A minute later he came out with a sheepish look on his face.

"You'll be back on the air in just a few seconds.", he said and left to return to his glass booth. Sure enough, a few seconds later, we were broadcasting again.

After the show we found out that just before we went off the air the engineer had been behind the console making adjustments and, as he walked out, had kicked an important cable loose. That cable took us right off the air!

All he could say after the show was "Oops!".

Then there was the water incident. During a newsbreak John left the studio to get water for us all. Chuck and I sat there listening to the monitor playing quietly. The news ended and John's theme song came on with the chorus singing "here's John Otto!"...but there was no John Otto!!!

Chuck leaned over to me and said "We're on the air!". I, in my ever-alert state of mind, replied "Nahh, no way!". Chuck insisted that we were.

Finally he leaned over to the mike and said, "Well, we're here but John isn't!"

Just then, through the huge window of the studio, we saw John, running like an Olympic sprinter down the hallway and trying to balance 3 glasses of water at the same time. He never spilled a drop!

He later admitted that it was the first time he had ever left a guest "stranded" in the studio.

Callers started kidding him with "Gunga Din" jokes and one offered to sell him a pair of dead roller skates.

We threatened to hijack the show and fly it to Cuba if he ever did that again.

For a while John did remote broadcasts live from a downtown Buffalo hotel, a place both plush and classy. There were people there wearing tuxedos and evening gowns that probably cost more than my car did!

The first half-hour of the first show we did from there was, for the both of us, uncomfortable. Our speed is more of the "Joe's Greasy Spoon Cafe & Gas Station" kind of place.

This was totally alien to us, and having an audience staring at us was un-nerving to say the very least!

It was then that we discovered a wonderful thing...drinking on the air!!! Hoo Boy, does that ever relax you!!!

Chuck went with white wine while I rediscovered the joys of vodka screwdrivers. This is not to say we got bombed. No way! We were both careful not to overdo it because

(WONDERLAND - continued)

we're hard enough to keep under control when we're stone sober. If we really got bombed they'd boot us out of the place...but man, did we ever get relaxed! There were times we were absolutely mellow!

During one of these shows the waitress brought over a round of drinks to us (ginger ale for John) and said they were courtesy of the gentleman at the bar. Naturally we looked to see who it was. Darned if it didn't turn out to be the Mayor of Buffalo!

Chuck and I had made the big time!

Now maybe I shouldn't tell this one but I'm going to anyway. On one of these remotes two young ladies came in and sat down right next to us. They had a couple of drinks and then beckoned our engineer over to their table. This engineer was a young lady that was, more or less, just getting started in broadcasting. When she returned to her console she had the most embarrassed look on her face.

The two young ladies that had beckoned to her were hookers who had come down to the show looking for "action". Apparently, after seeing us, they figured there was no "action" here (that's the sad story of my life!), and asked the engineer where the hot spots were.

She said she didn't know, and the two ladies left. We almost had to tie Chuck down to keep him from following them!!

Remotes are fun but you have to be careful what you say on them.

We did a show from the Erie County Fair and, at one point, a disparaging remark was made about Willie Nelson's performance in some movie he had made. Well, it dawned on us that we were surroun-

ded by Willie Nelson fans. Everywhere we looked there were cowboy hats, string ties, and six-packs. These people not only liked Willie, they LOVED him!

The walk to the car after the show was the longest short walk I've ever taken in my life...and fortunately was without incident.

I think I'm too timid for this kind of work!

Over the years I've heard John interview religious leaders, politicians, celebrities, and what have you and the shows always go smoothly, but when we're in the studio things often go whacky.

More than once large stacks of audio cartridges, in neat piles nearby, have gone tumbling to the floor with a resounding crashing sound. It's gotten to be a running joke with us because it's happened so many times.

Lately though, things have calmed down and things have become relatively peaceful. Peaceful, that is, until the last show.

We'd just finished our show and the newsman came into the studio to do his news report. His show began as we were tiptoeing out.

The last thing we heard as we closed the door was the sound of audio cartridges crashing to the floor. The newsman had done it this time!

Maybe it's contagious !!!

YOU HAVE A DATE
TONIGHT
 WITH
Blondie

Listen and laugh with Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake, America's great comedy team. On the air for CAMEL.

WMAZ 9:30 P. M.

Welcome to Looking Back. This is the first in a series of columns that will focus on what was happening in radio in years gone by. In each month's issue we'll take a look at that month 50 years ago. Information in these columns is taken from contemporary radio coverage by Time and Newsweek magazines.

January 1941

Music--or the lack thereof--was a major topic in radio. Broadcasters failed to reach an agreement to renew their contract with the American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers (ASCAP). As of Jan. 1, performers, stations and networks were prohibited from using any of the over 2 million songs licensed by ASCAP.

This restriction drastically changed the music people heard on their radios. The only songs that could be used were those licensed by the 1-year-old Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) and those over 56 years old that were in the public domain.

ASCAP was serious about the prohibition, threatening to impose a fine of \$250 per station each time one of its tunes was played without permission. To ensure enforcement, ASCAP set up its own monitors in 31 cities besides logging complaints from its composer-members.

The first object of ASCAP's enforcement was Fred Allen. The society charged that Allen's show twice played George Gershwin's "Wintergreen for President." Lawyers prepared to sue the network (CBS), the sponsor (Texaco), Texaco's ad agency and the stations that carried the program.

As a result of this situation, listeners heard music much different from what they were accustomed to. Old chestnuts like "Camptown Races" and "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair" frequented the airwaves. Comedians noted that "Jeannie" had been played so often that her hair had turned gray.

Southward Expansion

William S. Paley announced that CBS planned to expand its network by adding 39 long-wave and 25 short-wave stations in Latin America. The expansion was scheduled to take place around Sept. 1. Mutual and NBC had preceded CBS in looking south for additional listeners. Both networks had announced late in 1940 plans to add Latin American stations.

Most Popular

The beginning of the new year brought announcements of the results of popularity polls regarding radio performers.

The Crossley ratings for all of 1940 were released. Jack Benny had the highest-rated program, followed closely by Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Others in the top 10 for the year were "Fibber McGee & Molly," "Lux Radio Theatre," Bob Hope, Kate Smith, Major Bowes, "The Aldrich Family," Kay Kyser and "One Man's Family."

Despite Kyser's listing in the overall ratings, he lost out in two other polls for most-popular bands. Glenn Miller was named most popular swing-music leader by both Motion Picture Daily and Radio Daily. Guy Lombardo was at the top of both publications' polls for sweet-music leader.

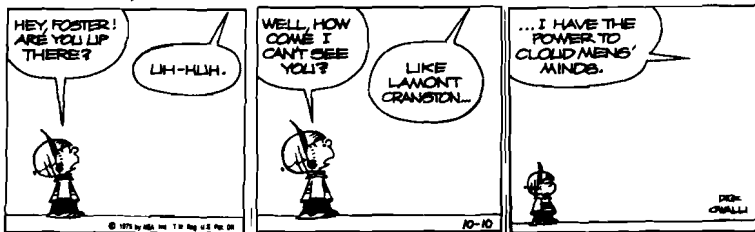
State of the Industry

At the beginning of 1941, people could look back on 1940 as the most successful year in the history of radio. The number of radio receivers in use in the United States reached a then-record level of 52 million. The three major networks had added stations so that by the beginning of 1941, NBC had 220, CBS had 126, and Mutual had 168.

Programs that had begun in 1940 included some winners and some that were seldom heard from again. Among those that went on to success were "Eddie Cantor's Time to Smile" (which introduced new singing star Dinah Shore), "Quiz Kids," "Truth or Consequences," and "Take It or Leave It." Shows with less success included "Human Nature in Action" (NBC), "Meet Mr. Meek" (CBS), and "Sheep and Goats Club" (Mutual).

Eddie Blick

WINTHROP by Dick Cavalli



****The Back Page****

BACK ISSUES

I.P.'s and MEMORIES

\$1.50 ea. postpaid

Out of print issues may be borrowed from the reference library.

Contact--Dominic Parisi

38 Ardmore Pl.

Buffalo, N.Y. 14213

NEWS BULLETIN

HEAR YE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

The pulps are returning! As of the April issue of the I.P., the pulps and Linda DeCecco are returning. Due to job commitments, Dan Marafino will be leaving as editor after the March issue of the I.P. We wish him all the best in his new endeavors and thank him for his contribution during the past year and we look forward to Linda's return in April as editor of the I.P.

**Out of Thin Air: The Story of CFCY
The Friendly Voice of the Maritimes
By Betty Rogers Large and Tom Crothers**

REVIEWED BY BOB MURRAY

In general, this book is about the history of broadcasting in the Atlantic region of Canada. In particular, it is a biography of Keith Rogers, a radio pioneer based in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Written by Rogers' daughter, a broadcaster herself, and Tom Crothers, the book is mainly a personal rather than a technical account. It excels in firsthand descriptions of growing up in a household where broadcasting was being born — where a spark transmitter perched on the upstairs balcony and the living room was draped with bed blankets to create a studio.

It contains charming anecdotes about the personal impact of radio in its early days on the lives of the station employees and the public. An example is the story of the man who would always put on his best clothes to sit at home and listen to the radio.

There is also an account of the organizational and regulatory struggle involved in nurturing what was at first an experiment into a viable

TAPE LIBRARY RATES: All reels and video cassettes - \$1.25 per month; cassettes and records - \$.50 per month. Postage must be included with all orders and here are the rates: For the U.S.A. and APO, \$.60 for one reel, \$.35 for each cassette and record; \$.75 for each video tape

CANADIAN BRANCH: Rental rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds. Postage: Reels 1 or 2 tape \$1.50; 3 or 4 tapes \$1.75. Cassettes: 1 or 2 tapes \$.65; for each additional tape and \$.25.

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 \$2.00 to cover rental, postage and packaging. Please include \$1.00 for other items. If you wish to contribute to the library, the OTRC will copy material and return the originals to you. See address on page 2. Please include \$25 refundable security deposit for each book borrowed.

business venture. Again the authors have an intimate insight into how it felt to be there, living with a mixture of financial uncertainty and zeal that kept such operations alive.

Later chapters focus on the CFCY radio personalities of the times, some of them nationally known in Canada: Mike Duffy, Don Messer, Stompin' Tom Connors, etc. These chapters should be of more interest to those who were regular listeners of the station. This book provides a unique, closeup view of a part of broadcasting history. I enjoyed it!

Out of Thin Air: The Story of CFCY, The Friendly Voice of the Maritimes, by Betty Rogers Large and Tom Crothers, was published in 1989 by the Applecross Press, Unit #5, Suite 100, 449 University Ave., Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada C1A 8K3. The book has 193 pages and is available from the publisher for \$16.95 (Canadian), which includes postage.

(Bob Murray, 3216 Assiniboine Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3K 0B1)

BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY



**OLD-TIME RADIO
EXHIBIT**
and **HALL OF FAME.**



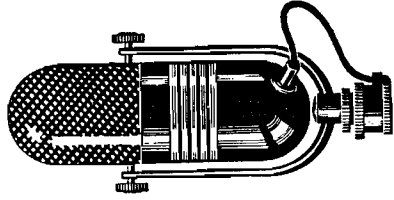
HANG AROUND...

NEXT MONTH

the Depression era shopping list. and more

POTPOURRI

Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086



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