

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

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THE AMAZING ADVENTURES
of

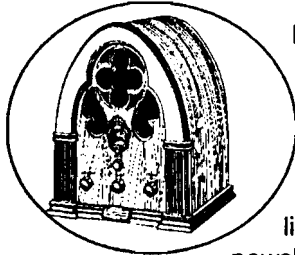
Fibber McGee

A HILARIOUS PARTY GAME

MILTON BRADLEY COMPANY

Springfield, Mass.

Membership Information



New member processing, \$5.00 plus club membership of \$15.00 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing, and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows:

If you join Jan-Mar, \$15.00; Apr-Jun, \$12.00; Jul-Sep, \$8.00; Oct-Dec, \$5.00. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 P.M. during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225. The club meets informally during the months of July and August at the same address. 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
P.O. Box 426
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086

Back issues of the *Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 postpaid. Publications out of print may be borrowed from our Reference Library.

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

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Tape Library Rates: All reels and video cassettes are \$1.85 per month; audio cassettes and records are \$0.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling. Canadian rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds.

Molly and Me

by Fibber McGee

Here is the true story of radio's best loved couple. Back of all the fun and laughter of Molly and Fibber McGee, is a profoundly moving story of a great love and great devotion.

(reprinted from *True Story*, December, 1938)

I didn't realize until Molly fainted one night smack in the middle of a broadcast, that our doctor hadn't been fooling when he shook his head over on of her frequent headaches and muttered something about a complete rest

"Jim" he said, Molly's been doing too much. You'd better wangle her a vacation."

I was inclined to discount his warning.

"She likes to be busy," I said.

"Busy, yes," he countered. "But she's been living three lives at once, and all of them busy. Nobody can get away with it."

I wished I had listened to him sooner. Perhaps then, Molly could have shortened by months her sentence in the hospital she hated, and would have been long ago where she is today; on the eve of starting her third life all over again.

She got off to a swell start on two of them last spring when she came home completely well again, and the Jordan family has been full of joy ever since at having her back again in her favorite role of wife and mother.

It's amazing to know, when she does her job so well, that Molly really isn't an actress, at least in temperament. She hasn't that protective shell of ego which keeps most actresses from worrying about anything other than the work at hand. Molly has always put my problems and those of the kids above her own career. And you can't show me another woman in our business who is like her.

When I got short tempered and full of nerves, just worry about jokes for next week's program, Molly calmly held up her end of the show, ran our house as efficiently as a model housewife, and brought two growing youngsters safely into their middle teens.

Any ordinary woman would have walked out on the job, or the family, long ago.

Scratch me and you find an actor: ham ego, touchy pride, and all. But Molly!

Well three years ago, when *Fibber McGee and Molly* first got going on the national hook-up, Molly made up a game with the kids that would give any actor in the world gray hairs. With a little coaching from mother, Katherine and Jim, Jr., learned to listen to our weekly programs with notebooks and pencils in hand, listening for mistakes. Then they'd read the accumulated charges to us when we got home from the broadcast.

I remember myself arguing at first.

"I did not slur my words together."

But Molly paid 'em fifty cents a squawk. I had to learn to take it. Last year, any way you look at it, was a tough grind for Molly. We had thought, after we made the networks, that our barnstorming days were over. After twenty years of trouping "the hard way," one night stands in tents and barns and dirty little theaters in every burg in the country, we liked the idea of unpacking our bags for good in Peterson Woods, our suburban Chicago home, having some fun with the children for a change, and confining our professional life with our weekly broadcasts.

But we soon found success didn't mean "taking it easy." First there were only week-end jaunts for personal appearances to break up our domestic calm. Then can an opportunity to work in a motion picture. We couldn't turn it down. So we went west, radio program and all, and learned how to do it in Hollywood.

Molly was ill most of the time we were on the coast,

I wished I had listened to him sooner. Perhaps then Molly could have shortened by months her sentence in the hospital.

and as homesick as a rookie his first night in camp. Every evening we had to hurry to the hotel to call the children, it was the only fun Molly had in Hollywood.

She fretted about the picture, and as things turned out she was right. We weren't playing characters in the film; merely popping on and off long enough to do a "spot."

"The public won't like it," Molly said. "They think of us as people; not Vaudeville performers."

She never went to see *This Way Please*." Wish I hadn't. We didn't miss a broadcast during the whole picture making session. When our job at the studio was done, we hurried back to Chicago and went on the from there the night we arrived.

Molly was dragging, but she was game. She dismissed her persistent headaches as unimportant, and went uncomplainingly on with her separate three way job, until that broadcast when she crumpled up like a paper doll right after a sketch in which she had played three separate characters. A page boy ran onto the stage with a pack of music for Billy Mills; it looked like a straight orchestra finish at that moment. But another boy appeared with a bottle of smelling salts. Molly took a good long whiff, came back to the microphone and finished the show.

She couldn't fool me with being "just tired," after that episode.

Next day I put her on a plane and took her to the Mayo Clinic.

(continued next month)

TONIGHT AT 9:00 P.M. WHAM

GINGER ROGERS

in "It had to be you"

Directed by Don Hartman

SCREEN DIRECTOR'S PLAYHOUSE

Presented every FRIDAY by RCA VICTOR

Make a new date with America's favorite date!



[1952]

"Meet Corliss Archer"

every FRIDAY night

(last year you heard her on Sunday)

9:30 P.M., EST, WRUN (ABC)

brought to you by
NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORP.

Book Review

by Jack French

*Frank Munn, A Biodiscography of
The Golden Voice of Radio*

By Rodney Steiner and Thomas A. DeLong

In this compact paperback, two superb researchers pool their talents and successfully fulfill their mission: to rescue Frank Munn from the obscurity that has eclipsed him since 1945. The first half of the book is Munn's fascinating biography, written by Tom DeLong, one of the premier OTR researchers in the country. The entire second half is a detailed discography compiled by Rodney Steiner, a West Coast expert on vintage phonograph records.

Frank Munn, one of the most acclaimed singers on network radio from 1928 to World War II, was an unlikely prospect for all this prestige. He had no musical training, never considered singing as a ca-

reer until a hand injury at the age of 25, and didn't get a good job on radio until he was almost 30. Moreover, he was so self conscious about his roly-poly physique that he avoided all public appearances throughout his career.

Munn's voice, one of superb intonation and perfect enunciation, plus his flawless technique and true pitch, catapulted him to airwave mastery. His voice was the sought after ideal for the early recording studio and emerging radio microphone. Munn had moderate success recording for the Brunswick label in the early 20s, but the Palmolive Hour on NBC (beginning December 1927) was his threshold to greatness. But to get that job, he had to change his name.

An amiable fellow, he had no objection to adopting the pseudonym of "Paul Oliver" so the soap advertiser could benefit from the brand name repetition. Since he would eventually do about 200 broadcasts under that name on radio, he was competing with himself -- the Brunswick records under his true name.

DeLong does a masterful job of taking us through Munn's subsequent career, including the mid 30's when (under his real name) he was starring on three separate, prime time network radio shows. These were *The American Album of Familiar Music* (later called *American Musical Review*) on NBC, *Lavender and Old Lace* on CBS, and *Waltz Time* on NBC. The first two programs were the product of Frank and Anne Hummert, better known for their soap operas, but equally proficient in promoting musical shows.

Munn got along better with the Hummerts than did some other performers. This husband and wife team routinely fired people for any infraction deemed "disloyal," which included asking for a raise. Munn apparently never made that mistake and he worked on the Hummert shows for over 13 years with no contract, except a hand shake.

Despite his weight problems and occasional illness, Munn never missed a broadcast in his busy schedule over the next ten years, compiling a record that Lou Gehrig could admire. His lavish earnings were not reflected in his very modest life style. Although he enjoyed all of his musical career, he willingly gave it up in 1945 and never looked back. Munn was content with a quiet retirement which he enjoyed until his death in October 1953.

The next forty years erased, in the public mind, any trace of this marvelous singer. This shy, sensitive super-star of OTR is now virtually unknown, even to musicians. In this book, DeLong and Steiner have restored Frank Munn to his proper place in our American musical popular culture.

This book contains 132 pages of text, discography, and excellent illustrations. It retails for \$12.50 and should your local bookstore not have it in stock, you may contact the publishers, **Sasco Associates P.O. Box, Southport, CT 06490**

[1931]

LAUGH WITH

The Blue Ribbon Malt Jester
Ricky Craig Jr.
TONIGHT - 10:15 Eastern Time
WGR

Don't fail to tune in and hear this decidedly different Radio program. On the air every Tuesday night -- Columbia Broadcasting System.
Presented by **Blue Ribbon Malt**
America's Biggest Seller

Additions to the Cassette Tape Library

- 1831 KRAFT MUSIC HALL - RAGGIN THE SCALE
KRAFT MUSIC HALL - (CONCLUSION)
- 1832 JOHNNY MERCER'S MUSIC SHOP - #41 & #42
JOHNNY MERCER'S MUSIC SHOP - #43 & #44
- 1833 JOHNNY MERCER'S MUSIC SHOP - #73 & #74
JOHNNY MERCER'S MUSIC SHOP - #89 & #90
- 1834 MARK TRAIL - THE FORTY YEAR FREEZE - 10/11/50
MARK TRAIL - THE WITCH OF LOST FOREST - 10/13/50
- 1835 NIGHTBEAT - BIG JOHN MC MASTERS - 3/4/51
NIGHTBEAT - FEAR - 5/25/51
- 1836 DRENE TIME - AMOS GETS MARRIED - 4/13/47
DRENE TIME - JOHN NEEDS A WILL - 5/18/47
- 1837 JUMBO FIRE CHIEF - 10/29/35
JIMMY DURANTE - GARY MOORE - 6/15/45
- 1838 PABST BLUE RIBBON - JACK BENNY AND CAST
GREAT NOVELS - MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY
- 1839 THE CHESTERFIELD SHOW - LOUIS ARMSTRONG - 4/11/51
THE CHESTERFIELD SHOW - GARY COOPER - 4/18/51
- 1840 INSPECTOR MILLIONS - INSTRUMENTS OF DARKNESS
INSPECTOR MILLIONS - (CONCLUSION)

◆ ◆ ◆ Tuning In ◆ ◆ ◆

by Tom Heathwood

The Great Old Remotes

A "remote by definition was (and still is) a radio program done away from the studio. Many varieties of remotes were commonplace on the dial every week.

Everything from "The Man In The Street" shows to the weekly church services were a staple part of our listening diet.

One morning when I was doing a Sunday morning shift at WKOX (AM) in Framingham, MA, I introduced the minister who was about to deliver his weekly sermon. At the appropriate hour of 10 A.M., I flipped the key and he began his talk. I flipped another key and cut him off the control room monitor. Then I picked up one of my favorite C & W records of the day, "Moving ON" by Hank Snow, put it on the turntable and sat back and began to enjoy one of Hank's big hits. Within a minute the 5-line telephone was lit up - people calling in indignation that I should be playing such a song and drowning out the Good Reverend who was speaking that day on the topic of how to insure a better path to Heaven.

To say I was embarrassed was putting it mildly. The incident was so anxiety-producing I was barely able to do the live introduction to the transcribed Sunday feature, *Puck*, *The Comic Weekly*.

Bill Sherman and Nelson Bragg in the Boston area were still doing "Man In The Street" shows when I was a junior apprentice. I learned the art of interviewing people who had nothing to say, from them. Frequently they would literally grab people on the sidewalk and coerce them into talking on the radio. Sometimes, this was a big mistake, because these people, literally, had nothing to say. They had no opinion about anything, and were often so frightened, they became mute. Try to talk your way out of an "interview" when the other person won't talk. I think that's why the Man In The Street came back inside!

Big bands were a phenomenon in Boston where I grew up, just like any other major city in the country. Boston had several nightspots that featured the big band sound and the "swing" sound in the 30's and on into the 50's. The groups were a little scarce during the War years. The Hi-Hat was one of the most fa-

mous for the "real" thing, and featured live remotes right into the 50's. Black jazz and swing musicians entertained countless 1000's every year without a thought of a racial issue. Nowadays that area is a racially charged danger-zone. Some of the hotels had night clubs on their roofs where big band sounds would fill the night and would make their way by network radio to every part of the country. But New York City cornered the market on Big Band remotes! "From the Green Room of the Hotel Edison in downtown New York...NBC presents, for your listening pleasure, 15 minutes of music in the Blue Baron style."

"Symphony Sid" was the last big-band remote host I remember still doing his thing on the air in Boston, well into the 50's.

For the most part, these music shows were unsponsored, and were carried by the networks as late-night "fill" programs. Little did they ever expect they would enjoy the popularity that they did. Restaurants, bars, and hotels would gladly pay a little extra to have a coast-to-coast audience hear a famous band leader talk about how wonderful their place was, and hear great live music. It was great for business. And it was fine for the band's bookings, too.

The early talk shows were like "remotes" in that disc jockeys would intersperse reconstructed telephone conversations with records. The first such DJ/Talkmaster in Boston was Jim Fitzgerald who ran his show from the Hotel Commander in Cambridge. At the end of a bouncy tune, Jim would pick up the phone and say: "Hello Telephone - Jim Fitzgerald live from the Commander." He would then repeat what the caller was saying adding his own comments along the way, sequeing abruptly to more music or a commercial. He was very popular. He lives somewhere in western Massachusetts today and is no longer in radio. Anyone remember Jim?

Another early voice in the area was a man who billed himself as the "Night Mayer" of Boston, Ken Mayer. Not to be confused with my old friend Ken Mayer of WCOP, this Ken Mayer was on WBOS. His remote facility was the basement of his home in nearby Newton, MA, where he played records (by request) and talked to people much the same way that Jim Fitzgerald had a few years before. This was talk radio without any "burning issues." This was relaxing to listen to, and fun to be part of. He invited listeners to dial a very distinctive telephone number and

"give us a growl."

All sports radio broadcasts are, of course, "remotes" since they don't originate in the studio. Fenway Park and The Boston Garden are still the locals for such programming. One station (WRKO) actually has its studios abutting Fenway Park, with the studios giving an excellent view of the famous old ballpark.

A few memories of "remotes." I'm sure they stimulate some memories of your own. No matter where you lived, there were remotes. Everything from the Dog Show to The World's Fair; The Hog-Calling Contest to The Christmas High School Choir and Orchestra Pageant. The radio remote was a thing of special interest. It was REAL!!

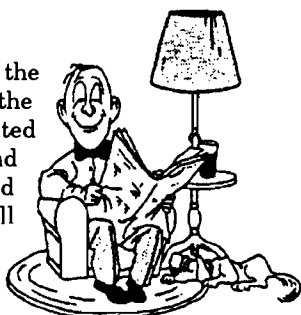
Until next month, don't forget to join me on my radio memories show, HERITAGE RADIO THEATRE on the Yesterday-USA Superstation (Network). Write if you get work...and keep listenin' to Old Time Radio!

(ed note: You can reach Tom at Heritage Radio Classics, Heritage Radio Theatre - Yesterdays USA, Satellite Radio, PO Box 16, Boston, MA 02167)

From the Editor's Chair

I would like to welcome to the Old Time Radio Club all the new members who have joined our club this year, and a special welcome to all the members who have renewed this year. Nice to have you back aboard.

A special thank you to all the members and friends of the IP who have contributed articles, letters, ads, and criticisms (positive and negative), they were all appreciated. But the vast majority of members still do not contribute to the IP. It doesn't take much, a recollection of your favorite OTR program, an article, OTR clippings from newspapers, magazines, or just write your thoughts down, and I'll write the article for you and give you the byline. Get active, it's your club.



Memories, our yearly magazine died due to member apathy, I would hate to see the Illustrated Press be

put into the same category as Memories. I realize that our organization is not alone, other OTR publications are also experiencing the same type of problems. Member apathy. There appears to be a core of people who do most of the work in organizations, while the rest just sit around. Perhaps it's a sign of the times. Sit back and let someone else do it. But it would be nice to see more members contributing.

I am currently doing research on the radio and television broadcasting of the American Football League, from 1960 to 1969. If anyone has any broadcasts of an American Football League team, please contact me. I will trade, buy, whatever, for your broadcast.

WHAM Rochester's No. 1 Station

**ED "Archie" GARDNER
RETURNS TONIGHT**

Hear
"DUFFY'S TAVERN"
9:30 TONIGHT

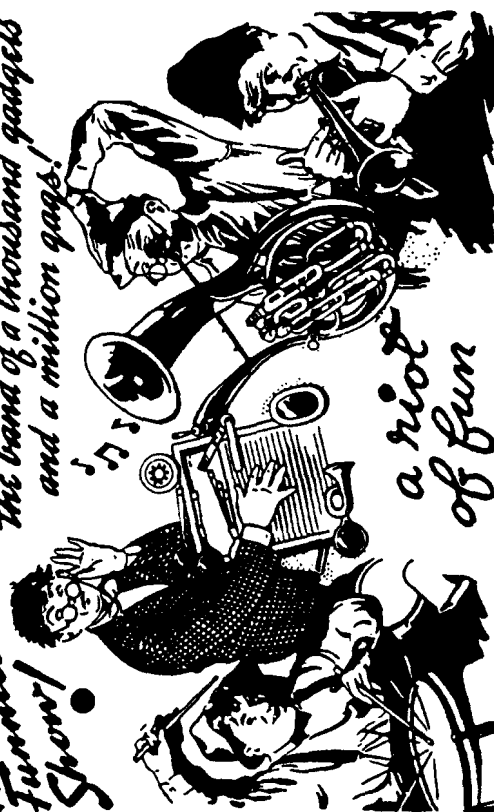
**Archie, the bumptious manager
of Duffy's Tavern, is back!
Also Eddie the Waiter,
Clifton "Duh" Finnegan,
and the man chasing Miss Duffy.
Hear this rollicking show tonight
and every Friday at 9:30 on WHAM!**

MORE

Additions to the Cassette Tape Library

- 1841 WHISPERING STREETS - A DAY OFF TO REMEMBER
WHISPERING STREETS - THE BIG STORY
- 1842 THE BICKERSONS - BLANCHE GETS A DOG - 1/12/47
THE BICKERDONS - LOANED TUXEDO - 2/9/47
- 1843 MICKEY MOUSE THEATER - 1/2/38
LET'S PRETEND - BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
- 1844 LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE - ANNIE'S PARTY - 10/18/35
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE - ANNIE'S PLAN - 10/22/35
- 1845 COLUMBIA PRESENTS CORWIN - COULD BE
COLUMBIA PRESENTS CORWIN - (CONCLUSION)
- 1846 THE WHISTLER - MARRIED TO MURDER - 9/25/44
THE WHISTLER - NOT IF I KILL YOU FIRST - 10/2/44

Radio's HORN ROBBERS
*the band of a thousand gadgets
and a million gags!*
Funniest Show!



*a riot
of fun*

It's Fun for Young and Old Alike!

65-15 minute programs, featuring that King of Fun, Allan Courtney, comedy players, and guest vocalists, in a screaming riot of robust entertainment.

For Auditions Samples, Write, Wire or Phone

EXCLUSIVE RADIO FEATURES

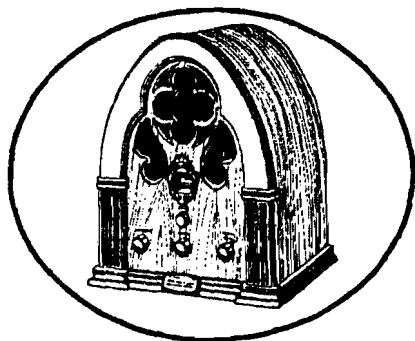
COMPANY LIMITED

14 McCaul Street

Toronto

**Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086**

FIRST CLASS MAIL



6-17-74