

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

# THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 238

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*You'll laugh!*  
*You'll sigh!*

## GIVE & TAKE

A fun-packed  
prize-packed program  
with

**John Reed King**

**SATURDAY 2:00 P.M.**

**WIBX**

[1947]

*Toni* HOME PERMANENT

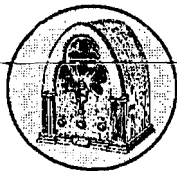
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P.O. Box 426  
Lancaster, NY 14086



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## From A Piece of Wood, A Dummy is Born

by Dom Parisi

Can a variety show hope to make it with a ventriloquist? On radio? Sound only, no sight? It could, and it did! "The Charlie McCarthy Show" turned out to be a highly successful program on radio.

The creator of "the dummy" Edgar Bergen, was born in Chicago Illinois on February 16, 1903. The wooden head Charlie McCarthy, shaped from a piece of pine wood, came along some seventeen years after.

How did Mr. Bergen contrive and shape his plan for his very popular career with Charlie? Edgar had a strong interest in magic and "voice throwing" while still a student in grammar school. He invested a quarter for a little book of instructions for ventriloquism. At an early age of around eleven Bergen was using his new found voice throwing technique on his parents. He would throw his voice and his mother would go to answer the door. Of course no one was there. Bergen was getting to be pretty good at it.

By his sophomore year in high school Edgar got the idea for his puppet. Charlie was modeled after two people. The wooden head was designed from a likeness of a young lad who sold newspapers in the neighborhood where Bergen lived. He found a woodworker, a Mr. Theodore Mack, and paid him \$35 to make Charlie's wooden head. The paper boy's name was "Charlie." The wood carver's name was "Mack." Put the names together, add a few twists, and Charlie McCarthy was born.

Around this time, however, Bergen was leaning towards a career in medicine and was hoping to become a doctor. He enrolled in Chicago's Northwestern University as a pre-med student. College expenses were partly paid for by Bergen's and McCarthy's theatrical engagements in small theaters. Around 1925 Mr. Bergen gave up the idea of becoming a doctor. He went out on the hard road with his dummy and started a show business routine that would take up all his time. The bright lights were in his blood.

They (one sometimes can't help thinking that Charlie was human) struggled along for about ten years barely making enough for food and lodging. They performed in Europe and both North and South America. These were hard times, the 20's, yet Bergen, and other performers as well, always seemed to come-up with the fare to

travel! Hard to figure out isn't it? I guess if you have the "guts" you can do anything you dream of.

Edgar and Charlie's first appearance on radio was with Rudy Vallee's "Royal Gelatin Hour" on December 17, 1936. Vallee caught "the boys" act at a local party and thought they were good enough to be on his show. Rudy was so - o - o - o - o right! At first, however, Vallee and Bergen didn't think the idea of a ventriloquist doing radio entertainment would go over; but Vallee said they should give it a whirl. It worked of course, even without the visual contact.

McCarthy was a hit. Bergen, moving lips and all, was pretty good also. After all, you can't see his lips move on radio. The radio audience loved them. They returned to the show many times. Mr. Chase and Mr. Sanborn realized that the act was going to go places big time. They gave Bergen his very own show on May 9, 1937.

A cast of famous stars were put together for the show: W.C. Fields, Don Ameche, who was a star at this time on "The First Nighter Program," and of course the lovely Dorothy "sarong" Lamour. It wasn't too long before the "Chase and Sanborn Hour" gave Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Bing Crosby and Eddie Cantor a run for their money. Bergen was in the lead that year, and continued to hold that spot for about three years.

The McCarthy / W.C. Fields feuds gave the show a big boost. Fields hated (on radio) the "blockhead." Charlie always got the best of Fields. The "venetian blind-shudder" bit got a big laugh when introduced on the air. Fields threatened to carve Charlie into a venetian blind, Charlie responded with "that makes me shudder." Another classic line from the never-ending feud was when McCarthy said "pink elephants take aspirin to get rid of W.C. Fields." That Charlie was such a little devil.

Charlie had a wardrobe valued at around \$1000; a tuxedo, cowboy suit, a Sherlock Holmes and a Foreign Legion suit. But I think we all remember him best decked out in his formal attire complete with tails and top hat. And don't forget the monocle. You know, Bergen even included Charlie in his will — for \$10,000! All this and the dummy wasn't even a real person! But a lot of people couldn't help but want to believe that he sure appeared real.

After five short months with the show Fields left. Enter Miss Mae West in December 1937 with her "Adam and Eve" skit. Her stuff, by 1937 standards, was considered indecent. For example this dialogue with the snake in the garden with references to the "Palpitatin Python"

getting stuck while sliding through the garden fence: "oh shake your hips," Miss West said in her silky voice. "Yeah, you're doin' all right now. Get me a big one; I feel like doin' a big apple." Poor Ameche, I bet he was in a state of shock. Even his laughing couldn't hide it. Before the show was even over the phones were ringing like crazy. Hundreds of letters of protest were received. Quite a few from churches and from leagues of decency. One critically worded letter was from the Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC demanded additional information. They wanted an electrical disc of the show, a copy of the stations contract with the sponsor, and the call letters of all the stations that carried the skit. Mae West was banned from the networks. It lasted fifteen years! (Have you watched any TV lately?)

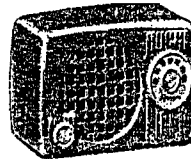
Good-old-stupid Mortimer Snerd came along in 1939. In 1940 Don Ameche and Dorothy Lamour left the show. The program was cut from 60 minutes to 30 and ran in this format until December 26, 1948. And then Bergen and Chase and Sanborn went their separate ways.

McCarthy had a make believe buddy named Skinny Dugan and he told some hilarious stories about their adventures in school. Mortimer always came out as the stupid one. The comic team of Abbott and Costello became regulars until they landed their own show. The Bickersons with Don Ameche and Frances Langford were brought into the show. In a 1942 skit Bergen entered Charlie in the Army Air Corps as a master sergeant. Of course this ploy was used to encourage enlistment's in the Armed Forces. Charlie even tried to get another commission by joining the Marines. This resulted in a military trial at the Stockton, California, Army Base where McCarthy was defended by lieutenant James Stewart. Charlie lost the trial, was found guilty, and never did get the commission.

Man-crazy Effie Klinker appeared in 1944. Later on the not too popular Podine Puffington came on to the scene. They never got to be as famous as Charlie and Mortimer. In fact, Bergen believed that even Mortimer could never be another Charlie. I don't know, I kind of liked Snerd. Bergen believed that there was only one real dummy — Charlie McCarthy. He even insured the original dummy for \$10,000!

In 1945 Bergen was earning around \$10,000 a week from the show. He was also pulling in another \$100,000 a year from royalties on McCarthy products — dolls, mugs, spoons, games, and other paraphernalia. Bergen parted with NBC in 1948 but made a comeback a year later with a new show on CBS sponsored by soft drink

giant Coca-Cola. The Coke company carried the program into 1952 when Hudnut took over. Also in 1954 the show reverted back to the 60 minute mode with still another new sponsor, Kraft Cheese. In its final year on radio, 1956, the show was sustained. Bergen's radio show was also known as "The Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy Show;" "The Edgar Bergen Hour;" and "The New Edgar Bergen Hour." Edgar Bergen died on September 30, 1978. The last I heard Charlie was put into a trunk where I think he still resides. Or did I read somewhere that he was sold at auction? (There are about 90 episodes available today, 75 "Chase and Sanborn" and 15 of the others.)



## SAME TIME, SAME STATION

by Jim Cox

### ROAD OF LIFE

Writing in 1977, radio historian Robert LaGuardia called the *Road of Life* "a most important soap opera." And with good reason. It stood head and shoulders above most of its peers in so many realms:

- **Character development:** Creator Irna Phillips distinguished her serials by emphasizing how principals would act and react in given situations, as opposed to "common heroes" or story fantasy. *Road of Life* was one of her first and set a precedent which is still influencing soap opera today.
- **Emphasis on the professional:** In *Road's* case, it gave us physicians and nurses while Phillips focused on ministers and lawyers elsewhere. These were naturals for character development because they led interesting lives, interacting with others in respective occupations. This, too, moved to television in the form of soap operas with medical themes.
- **Longevity:** While *Road of Life* wasn't among the longest-running soap operas (*The Romance of Helen Trent* and *Ma Perkins* squeezed out 27 years each), it was one of a handful remaining on the air more than two decades. Its first broadcast was Sept. 13, 1937; it breathed its last Jan. 2, 1959.
- **Dual opportunity:** During *Road's* life it was common for a soap opera to appear on more than one network on the same day. For nine of its 22 seasons, two-fifths of its life, more time than any other serial, *Road* was broadcast twice daily, on CBS and NBC. It occupied 13 time periods between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on these networks.
- **Sustained listening patterns:** The program garnered some of the highest ratings of any daytime show in radio's history. Its single broadcast high, reached in 1949-

50, was 9.9. With the advantage of dual broadcasts, its ratings zoomed, combining to reach these almost unequalled numbers: 1953-54, 10.1; 1952-53, 12.2; 1938-39, 13.7; 1939-40, 15.4; 1941-42, 16.8.

• Sponsor identification/sales results: From its start in 1937, *Road of Life* was sponsored by Procter & Gamble which owned it much of that time. With extraordinary ratings, and listening habits unchanged for most listeners, Hazel Bishop took over sponsorship of the long-running serial in 1955. This indicated no disaffection by P&G but a change in marketing direction. During the forties and early fifties, *Road* sold billions of boxes of one of P&G's foremost detergents, Duz. The show was so clearly linked with the laundry and dishwashing powder that when announcer Clayton 'Bud' Collyer introduced the serial, he exclaimed: "Yes, it's the Duz program, *Road of Life*!" In other periods, P&G advertised Chipso and Oxydol detergents, Ivory Soap, Ivory Flakes, Crisco shortening, Drene shampoo and Spic 'n Span floor cleanser.

• Simultaneous TV series: In 1954, producers experimented, bringing the 17-year-old serial to CBS-TV in a 15-minute format paralleling radio scripts. While it didn't work, folding six months later, it taught some valuable lessons which didn't fall on deaf ears. It was an opportunity for the network to showcase story line and visual acting talents of two who played on the radio version, Don MacLaughlin and Virginia Dwyer.

• Influence on a TV series: Despite the setback from the ill-fated TV version, writer Irna Phillips, then 54, created the first 30-minute daytime television serial. On *As the World Turns* there were so many connections to *Road of Life* that it seemed like an extension of the radio series. It's still going strong four decades later. Ties included Phillips, overseeing the writing; P&G, the long-running radio sponsor; Don MacLaughlin and Virginia Dwyer, in parts as Hughes family patriarch and matriarch; and others from the radio series in front of and behind the cameras.

The protagonist in *Road of Life* was Dr. Jim Brent. In true Phillips style, he aged as the show aged. The show was set in the mythical hamlet of Merrimac, somewhere in Illinois. In due time, as a single parent, Brent would adopt a young orphan, nicknaming him Butch. Butch would grow up to marry a girl he met during World War II. He would return to Merrimac to live, and — like his father — pursue medicine, becoming a pediatrician in the same City Hospital in which Jim Brent was chief of staff.

Though opposed to marriage for himself due to his fiancée's untimely death (which occurred prior to the start of the serial), Jim Brent was talked into it several years later by Carol Evans, a young businesswoman.

This was never destined to be a happy union, however, and from the start their differences caused crisis. It often centered on Carol's unchecked career ambitions with her employer, the White Orchid Cosmetics Company, for which she traveled the world. Although Jim and Carol would have a daughter, Janie, nothing took precedence over Carol's far-flung international pursuits from home. She also responded favorably toward any man who had a roving eye, casting his affections toward Carol. In the end, near the close of the forties in real time, she died when her plane went down in Europe, though her body was never recovered.

Time passed. A year later, Jim decided to marry again, then to a young lab assistant with whom he worked, Maggie Lowell. But on the very day of their wedding, who came strolling up but Carol! It really wasn't Carol, but neither Jim nor Maggie nor anybody else knew it. A down-on-her-luck actress, Beth Lambert, had been persuaded by gangsters to help them steal some top secret data which Jim had been acquiring from government experiments he was conducting. With expert coaching and some plastic surgery, the actress looked and sounded enough like Carol to pass for her. The wedding was called off and things went back to "normal" — except, no one could have predicted that "Carol" would grow to love "daughter" Janie and "husband" Jim. At that point, she didn't want to cooperate with her employers, and all came out into the open. The gang tried to pin everything on Lambert at its trial for treason. But Jim Brent, though hurt by Lambert's deception, testified for her, and saw the evilmongers sent away for a long while.

By the early fifties, Jim stumbled upon true lasting love in a former mental patient whom he helped to recovery, Jocelyn McLeod. Together, they built a life of dreams on devotion to one another which would help them meet each crisis they encountered from then on along their personal roads of life.

Creator Phillips had chosen her title from her belief that the pathway of a physician is the road of life.

Five veteran radio thespians played Jim Brent. All but one (Howard Teichmann, who also wrote the serial for a time) were in running roles in other series. Ken Griffin appeared in *Backstage Wife* and *Woman in White*; Matt Crowley, *Buck Rogers in the Twenty-Fifth Century*, *Dick Tracy*, *John's Other Wife*, *Mark Trail* and *Perry Mason*; David Ellis, *Adventures by Morse*.

But unquestionably, the one most notably associated with the role of Dr. Brent was Don MacLaughlin, who also played the part in the TV version. He was on *As the*

*World Turns* for 30 years until his death at age 79 in 1986. An Iowan, MacLaughlin was Jim Brent longer than the others while carrying leads in at least four more radio dramas — *Chaplain Jim*, *Counterspy*, *Tennessee Jed* and *The Zane Grey Theater*.

Carol Brent was played by Lesly Woods, who had parts in *Boston Blackie*, *Casey*, *Crime Photographer* and *This is Nora Drake*; Louise Fitch, of *That Brewster Boy*, *Two on a Clue* and *We Love and Learn*; and Marion Shockley, veteran of *The Adventures of Ellery Queen*.

In addition to Virginia Dwyer, who made the jump with *Road* from radio to television and ended up on *As the World Turns*, the radio voice of Jocelyn McLeod was also that of Barbara Becker.

Maggie Lowell was played by *The Romance of Helen Trent* star Julie Stevens and Helen Lewis who played on *Ma Perkins*. Four actors — Donald Kraatz, Roland Butterfield, Lawson Zerbe and David Ellis — were heard as Butch.

In addition to Clayton 'Bud' Collyer, announcers for the series were George Bryan (*The Armstrong Theater of Today*, *The Helen Hayes Theater*), Ron Rawson (*Life Can Be Beautiful*, *Portia Faces Life*, *The Right to Happiness*, *Young Dr. Malone*), Stuart Metz (*Light of the World*, *Mr. Keen*, *Tracer of Lost Persons*) and others. Collyer appeared regularly on at least 20 series during his lifetime.

"Music for the Duz program," as *Road of Life's* familiar theme was known by housewives, was the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, "Pathetique." It was played by organist Charles Paul.

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### Reference Library Additions

#### Magazines:

- M-98 - The Shadow - The Golden Isles
- M-99 - The Shadow - Death in the Crystal
- M-100 - The Shadow - Shiwan Khan's Murderous Master-Plan
- M-101 - The Shadow - Trap for Crime
- M-102 - The Shadow - The Shadow Meets the Blur

On page six (6) A-46 Jim Harmon interview with Del Shorf is marked missing. Please cross off missing it has been replaced. Thank You.

## Herb Rice and Fran Striker and the Creative Days of Early Radio in Buffalo

By Jerry Collins

As is so often the case in any early industry, the early years of that industry are its most creative days. That too is the case with early radio in the City of Buffalo. The focus of this paper will be to trace the careers of Buffalo's two most creative geniuses; Herb Rice of the Buffalo Broadcasting Company and Fran Striker from WEBR.

Herb Rice arrived in Buffalo from England by way of Canada in December of 1929. He had initially moved to New York City but after failing to find a job in radio he settled in Buffalo. An article from the Courier Express dated May 18, 1930 mentioned that "Herbert Rice had abandoned a perfectly good career on the English stage, where he played with such notables as George Arliss to enter the radio field." An article in the Courier Express on Sunday, January 4, 1931 also revealed that Herb Rice was an excellent dancer.

Rice had actually entered the United States illegally. In 1933 he returned to Canada so that he could legally enter the United States and begin his naturalization process. He finally gained his citizenship in 1945.

On August 3, 1930 the Courier Express announced that a new Herb Rice show would soon begin. "Cloud Trail" told the story of how the theft of a plane led Larry Hale on the trail of international crooks. The show began Tuesday, August 5, 1930 and was broadcast at 8:00 PM on WMAK. The show included an unusual touch. According to the newspaper article, "Humor is introduced into the tense moments by a Negro comedian, Wash Green."

Two other shows directed by Herb Rice were also reviewed in that same radio section of the Sunday paper. The first of these was "The Mystery of Harlow Manor." The show played Wednesday at 9:00 PM on WMAK. The first episode was aired August 23, with Fred Dampier and Lorraine Pankow playing the lead role in the show.

The second of these two shows was entitled "Fearbound." It told the story of the Sepoy Uprising. It was aired on Sunday night at 10:00 on WKBW. By late September it had become one of the most popular shows on local radio. In fact the show had acquired such a loyal following that Herb Rice decided to stage one of the episodes of the show outside the WKBW studio. An episode

of the show starring Ethel Van Orten, Fred Dampier, Herb Rice, Bud Hulick and Lorraine Pankow was broadcast from the showroom of the Buffalo Housewrecking Company on Walden (Courier Express, September 28, 1930).

Two weeks later in the same newspaper, it was announced that Herb Rice, the program director at WMAK, part of the Buffalo Broadcasting Company would soon be exchanging scripts with A. H. Ativinson from the British Broadcasting Company.

On August 31, the Courier Express announced the premier of "Police Story," WMAK's new show to be written and directed by Herb Rice. The show would include a new and very exciting twist. Commissioner of Police, Austin J. Roche and Deputy Commissioner William Connelly would both have speaking parts in this very realistic story of the Buffalo Police Department. The show aired on Thursday evening at 8:00.

The initial show dealt with a murder mystery of six years ago. The show proceeded from the announcement of the crime all the way through to the final conviction in court. The show was praised for the realistic phases of police work that were exhibited throughout the show. On September 14, 1930 the radio page of the Courier Express included a picture of the cast. In the picture, Blackfoot Barney, played by Herb Rice, is being questioned by Police Commissioner Roche.

On October 12, 1930 the Courier Express announced that a new show "The Green Rose" would replace "Firebound" when the latter show completed its run. "The Green Rose" was the story of a love triangle in Paris. The new show would be broadcast from the studios of WKBW Sunday evening at 10:00. Once again the show would be directed by Herb Rice and would include the same cast as "Firebound."

On November 16 the Courier Express announced another Herb Rice production, "Scotland Yard Sketch." The show would air on Friday night at 9:30 on WGR. It would include the regular BBC cast of Van Orten, Dampier, Pankow and Rice and would relate the stories of Scotland yard detectives. On that same radio page it was announced that Herb Rice would soon be directing another radio show the "Blue Penguin." The show would be on the air on Thursday evening at 9:30 on WGR. One of Rice's more unique productions, it told the story of superstitions surrounding some of the more historic inns of England.

Herb Rice was always looking for new approaches in broadcasting. He would next direct and play the part of

Captain Campbell in WMAK's "Boys Club on the Air." The show was broadcast daily at 6:15. It gave members of various Boy's Clubs an opportunity to perform on the radio (Courier Express February 15, 1931).

Even a perfectionist like Herb Rice could make a mistake. On June 28, 1931 the Courier Express reported that fifteen minutes prior to the airing of an episode of "The Cobra," Rice's most recent show, he realized that he had forgotten to notify an actress of her part in the show. Ester MacMillan, the wife of Lowell MacMillan, a BBC announcer, was visiting the studio when all this was transpiring. Not only did Rice hire her, but he was so impressed with her performance that he hired her to star in his upcoming series "Sweethearts of America."

On August 2, 1931 the Courier Express announced two new Herb Rice shows. "Night Riders" told the story of rum running gangsters, while "Flying Playshop," a Tuesday evening show on WGR, told the story of incidents in aeronautical history. The Buffalo Times (August 2, 1931) also carried a good article on the two shows. Due to the increased importance of sound effects in these two shows, a new apparatus and various pieces of other sound effects equipment were purchased by the studio. The Times article introduced a third show that exhibited another facet of Herb Rice's repertoire. "Soldier of the King" would be broadcast from the studios of WGR. With the support of Dave Cheskin, Herb Rice performed a variety of selections from the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. The first episode featured music from the opera "Patience."

Soon after Rice arrived in Buffalo he organized and was a member of the "Boys Choristers," a vocal group that performed on a regular basis on WKBW at a variety of times throughout Herb Rice's stay in Buffalo.

Although Herb Rice was responsible for dozens of excellent radio programs, two of these shows stand out; "Police Story," that has already been discussed and "Buffalo Makes History" which premiered on October 14, 1931. No show, not even the highly acclaimed "Police Story" ever received the attention in the local press that this show received. The Buffalo Sunday Times on October 11, 1931 described the first episode of the show. The initial broadcast dealt with Daniel De Joncaire and the first white settlement in Buffalo. Mayor Charles Roesch introduced the first episode. The Courier Express carried a feature article on the new show in the Sunday edition of their paper on October 25, 1931. It mentioned that Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company had been the topic of the second show. The third episode would be broadcast on Wednesday evening, October 28 at 9:00 from the studios

of WGR. The show would tell the story of the War of 1812 and the burning of Buffalo.

Numerous articles related to the "*Buffalo Makes History*" series were printed throughout the following year. On Sunday, November 1 the Courier reported that the first Lake Erie steamboat, the *Walk-in-the-Water* would be the subject of the next show. The following Sunday's paper informed the readers that Samuel Wilkenson's and the building of Buffalo's new harbor would be the topic of next Wednesday's show. Next it would be the building of the Erie Canal and the subsequent rivalry between Buffalo and Black Rock. Two weeks later another feature article reported that Mordecai Noah and his planned Jewish community on Grand Island would be the next story on the "*Buffalo Makes History*" show.

Herb Rice then took off a week from his busy schedule of writing, directing and acting to marry Lorraine Pankow. The Sunday edition of the Courier Express on December 13, 1931 previewed the tenth episode in the series which would tell the story of Buffalo becoming a city. The show also included a presentation by Fred D. Corey, the Chairman of the Buffalo Centennial, who outlined the plans for next year's Centennial Celebration.

On December 30, 1931 the Courier Express previewed one of the most creative segments of the series. The story of Buffalo's cholera epidemic was told through the character of Loring Pierce, the city's undertaker. The final results of the contest to name Erwin Gluckman's opening and closing pieces for the show were also announced. Henceforth it would be called Buffalo's Centennial March.

On January 3, 1932 the Courier Express announced that Benjamin Rathburn would be the topic of the next episode of the show. On January 17 it was noted in the Courier Express that Joseph Dart and the first grain elevator would be featured next. On February 28, 1932 the Courier reported that Niagara Falls and the story of electrical power would be broadcast next. The show on March 23 related two interesting events in the life of J. N. Adam; his purchase of the pipe organ from the Temple of Music and its donation to the Elmwood Music Hall as well as Adam's donation of land in Perrysburg for a tuberculosis hospital.

Wednesday April 30 marked the final and one of the most creative episodes of the "*Buffalo Makes History*" series. The episode coincided with the actual centennial celebration of the City of Buffalo. It was a huge celebration that featured such illustrious heroes of the nineteenth century as Joseph Ellicott, Millard Fillmore and

Grover Cleveland. The series was sponsored by the BBC and the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce. The very talented and popular Bill Cook was the announcer on this epic series.

On November 1, 1931, soon after the "*Buffalo Makes History*" series had started, the Courier Express announced the premier of "*Night Wings*," directed by Herb Rice and starring Rice as Davy Duncan and Lorraine Pankow as his wife. It was a gangster show, that told the story of a young couple trying to escape the night club existence by fleeing to Canada. The show was broadcast from the studios of WGR Friday evening at 9:30.

On November 8, 1931 the Courier Express announced a new show which was a further example of Herb Rice's versatility. Supported by Dave Cheskin's orchestra, Herb Rice or "Uncle Herbie" as he was called in the show, would sing a variety of both serious and comedy songs.

On January 24, 1932 the Courier Express announced a first for radio. Three times a week Herb Rice would preview films from the Lafayette Theater. The five minute segments aired on WKBW.

On Friday, March 25, 1932 the Buffalo Times announced another new Herb Rice show. In fact Rice would write, direct and act in "*Romance of the South Sea Islands*." The show would be broadcast every Friday evening at 8:15 from the studios of WGR. It told the story of a young spendthrift marooned on a South Sea Island.

On Sunday, April 17, 1932 the Courier Express announced the next Herb Rice show. Lorraine Pankow and Herb Rice would star in "*The Forty-Niners*," which would tell the stories of the California gold rush days. The show would air every Monday on WGR.

On Sunday, May 15, 1932 the Courier Express reported that Mr. and Mrs. Herb Rice had recently purchased a summer home in East Aurora. Few listeners were surprised when Herb and Lorraine appeared on the radio Monday and Thursday at 9:30, discussing the subject of summer homes.

On May 29, 1932 the Courier Express announced that WGR would be broadcasting "*Little Feller*" every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday at 5:30 PM. The show told the story of a modern city boy and his companions. Herb Rice not only wrote and directed the show, he also played a part in it. The show also represented the first time that Herb Rice worked with young Richard Wana-



maker. On July 10th a radio adaptation of Charles Dicken's A Tale of Two Cities began on WGR at 10:00 PM. Both Herb Rice and Lorraine Pankow were key members of the cast. According to an article in the Buffalo Times (July 13, 1932) the show followed an equally good adaptation of The Three Musketeers.

On July 24, 1932 the Buffalo Times included the following headline: "BBC snares the second network Radio Hour." According to Richard Hanser, the Times radio editor, WGR will originate a new show which will then be re-broadcast across the nation by CBS. The show began on September 26 as the H-Bar-O Rangers. The children's cowboy show aired three times a week at 5:00. On November 14, the name of the show changed to "The Bobby Benson Show." Seventy-eight episodes were broadcast from the BBC studios of WGR until the show moved to New York City following the March 24, 1933 episode. During the Buffalo run of the show, Richard Wanamaker played the role of Bobby Benson, while Herb Rice was the show's writer and also played the part of Tex Mason, the foreman. The Buffalo Evening News included an article on the show on August 13, 1932. They referred to the show as "based on western ranch life in the cowboy-Indian days." The Courier Express included a feature article on the new show in their Sunday edition on August 7, 1932. Additional articles could be found in the September 26th, 1932, March 26th, 1933 and August 27th, 1933 editions of the Courier Express.

On January 29, 1933 the Courier Express announced another innovative show. Dave Cheskin and Herb Rice were to combine together in a musical-dramatic show depicting important events in history. The show would air every Friday evening. On that same evening Herb Rice and Lorraine Pankow began playing in a dramatization of Harry Wood's "East Lynne."

On August 27, 1933 the Courier Express carried a feature article on Herb Rice. After four years as a writer, director, actor, announcer and head of the dramatic department; Herb Rice was appointed manager of the program department. Although this was a promotion for Rice, it greatly limited his dramatic creativity that the local radio audience had come to enjoy.

In the fall of 1933, Herb Rice wrote and directed the adventure show "Ghost Train." Richard Wanamaker played the lead role of Jimmy Fenton.

In the spring of 1934, Herb Rice played the role of Father Baker in the seven part series, "The Modern Saint." The show aired in conjunction with the local Catholic Charities Appeal.

It was more than three years later that the Courier Express on August 29, 1937 introduced the next important Herb Rice Show, "Little Show." The show introduced a new concept in amateur dramatic productions. The people who would participate in this show would be first coached by members of the BBC staff.

On September 10, 1939, the Courier Express reported on Herb Rice's last important show, "A Blond for Bait," the story of Ellen Anders, a spy for her country. The show would air on WGR in thirty daily episodes from 3:00 - 3:15 PM.

In 1943 WKBW and WMAK suffered some serious financial losses that cost Herb Rice his job. Rice then moved to Boston for a year and then returned to New York City where he got another job in the radio industry.

In the final portion of my article, I will detail the life and contributions of Fran Striker.

## First Wireless Message

A record has been discovered of alleged wireless telegraphy as long ago as 1662. In that year a book by P. de l'Ancre was published, in which the author reported that a man had demonstrated to King Henry of Germany a means of communicating with absent persons. The inventor rubbed two needles against a magnet, and attached them to different clocks. As an operator turned the needle on one clock dial the needle on the other made the same movement, regardless of the distances which separated the clocks. King Henry, it stated, forbade the publication of the invention!

Farm Life, November, 1925

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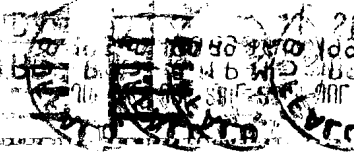


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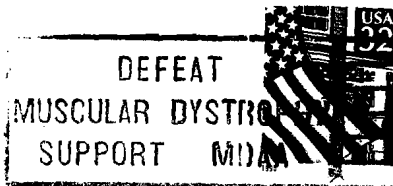
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