

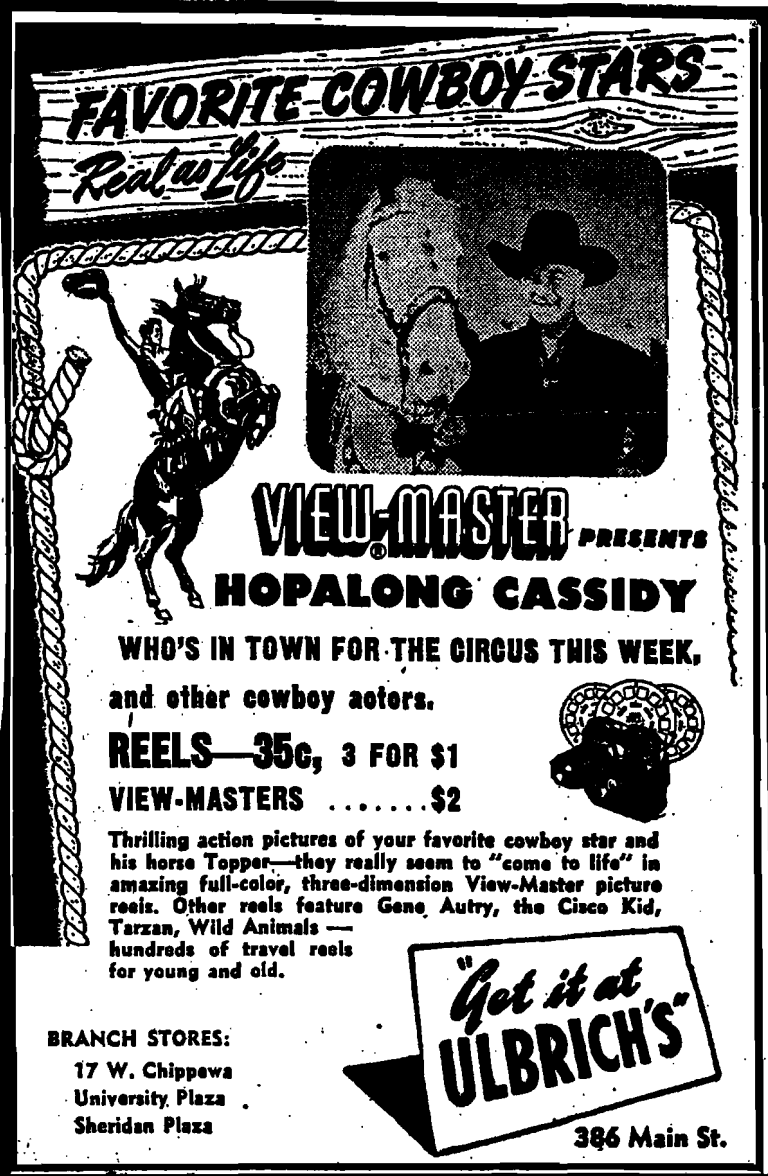
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 247

April 1997



FAVORITE COWBOY STARS
Real as Life

VIEW-MASTER PRESENTS
HOPALONG CASSIDY

WHO'S IN TOWN FOR THE CIRCUS THIS WEEK,
and other cowboy actors.

REELS—35c, 3 FOR \$1
VIEW-MASTERS \$2

Thrilling action pictures of your favorite cowboy star and his horse Topper—they really seem to "come to life" in amazing full-color, three-dimension View-Master picture reels. Other reels feature Gene Autry, the Cisco Kid, Tarzan, Wild Animals — hundreds of travel reels for young and old.

BRANCH STORES:
17 W. Chippewa
University Plaza
Sheridan Plaza

Get it at
ULBRICH'S
386 Main St.

Membership Information

New member processing, \$5 plus club membership of \$15 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing, and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$15; April-June, \$12; July-September, \$8; October-December, \$5. 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 PM during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, NY 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, NY 14086



Back issues of *The Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 post-paid. 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.

The Illustrated Press is a monthly newsletter of The *Old Time Radio Club*, headquartered in Western New York State. Contents except where noted, are copyright 1996 by the OTRC.

**Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to: *The Illustrated Press*
c/o Ken Krug, Editor (716) 684-5290
49 Regal Street
Depew, New York 14043**

Club Officers and Librarians

President

Jerry Collins (716) 683-6199
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086

Vice President & Canadian Branch

Richard Simpson
960 16 Road R.R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
Canada, L0S 1C0

Treasurer, Back Issues, Video & Records

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

Membership Renewals, Change of Address

Peter Bellanca (716) 773-2485
1620 Ferry Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Membership Inquires and OTR Network Related Items

Richard Olday (716) 684-1604
100 Harvey Dr.
Lancaster, NY 14086

Tape Libraries

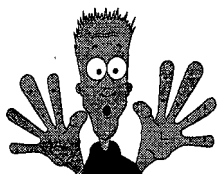
Cassettes

Don Friedrich (716) 626-9164
21 Southcrest
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

Reel-to-Reel and Reference Library

Ed Wanat Sr. (716) 895-9690
393 George Urban Blvd.
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

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.



Don't Touch that Dial

by Jerry Collins

Most fans of Old Time Radio are also fans of WENN on the AMC Network. The finely tuned and tightly regimented programming of present day radio are rarely evident in these weekly episodes. Today shows are very sterile and quite predictable. Rarely do radio performers exhibit a multitude of talents. Rarely does the unusual happen. It has been decades since Clint Buelmann stuck his head out the window and then told us what the weather was like, or Dick Rifenburg telling us where to buy ice during an extended power failure. It has been nearly fifty years since Foster Brooks broadcast from a window ledge.

A survey of the early radio columns in the Buffalo Times and the Buffalo Courier Express reveals that early radio in Buffalo was very typical of the creative and unique things that were such a very important part of the early days of radio in all the major radio markets in the United States. We truly "flew by the seat of our pants."

WEBR thought nothing about shutting down the station for a day. A major snowstorm hit Buffalo on December 28, 1929, keeping the station quite busy for the duration of the storm. As a reward for their efforts the station was shut down and the staff was given the following day off (Buffalo Courier Express, 12/29/29). The station also shut down on July 4, 1930 (Buffalo Courier Express, July 5, 1930) and also Labor Day September 5, 1932 (Buffalo Courier Express, 9/4/32).

On October 31, 1931 technicians from the BBC (Buffalo Broadcasting Corporation) placed microphones at the brink of Niagara Falls to provide their listeners with the "roar of Niagara Falls." (Buffalo Courier Express, 10/25/31).

Banjo Pete, the well known Southern banjoist, made his debut on WKBW at 9:30 on Thursday January 30, 1930 (Buffalo Courier Express, 1/26/30). A series of Wednesday mandolin concerts were broadcast on WGR in early 1931 (Buffalo Courier Express, February 22, 1931).

WEBR, an NBC Blue Network at the time, featured Olivio Santoro, who yodeled on the air (Buffalo Courier Express, September 15, 1940).

On February 2, 1930 WKEN of the Buffalo Broadcasting Corporation featured a pair of singing canaries, Son and Ora, on *Radio's Hostess Club*. The birds performed between 7:30 and 8:30 AM and 2:00 and 2:30 PM. Also featured on the show was a musical clock that reminded the listeners of the time every five minutes (Buffalo Courier Express, 2/3/30 and Buffalo Times, 12/29/30).

In 1923 Ed Hinkey, a member of the announcing staff at WEBR spotted a fire on the street. He then signed off, took his engineer Bill Turnbro and left to watch the fire (Buffalo Courier Express, 9/29/30).

Evangeline Adams worked as an astrologist on WKBW, while Lorna Fantin was the *Old Gold's Numerologist* on both WGR and WKBW. Cora Sawyer was a Psychometrist on WMAK (Buffalo Courier Express, 1/18/31). Every afternoon at 12:30 in 1931 WGR carried *Mona the Mystic* who gazed into her crystal ball (Buffalo Courier Express, 2/15/31). Also in 1931 Ray Schiferle was the morning calisthenics man on WGR (Buffalo Courier Express, 3/8/31).

Roger Baker will also be remembered as one of Buffalo's best sportscasters. In 1932 he had a much different job. He was heard every morning except Sunday at 9:20 giving advice on the best buys at the local food markets (Buffalo Courier Express, 9/11/32).

Late in the summer of 1937 NBC spent a complete week broadcasting the proceedings of the annual VFW Convention from the Broadway Auditorium (Buffalo Courier Express, 8/29/37). On Tuesday September 17, 1936, WKBW broadcast directly from the Odd Fellows Convention (Buffalo Courier Express, 9/17/36). On Monday February 16, 1931 WGR broadcast the annual banquet of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce (Buffalo Courier Express, 2/15/31).

In 1937 BBC actors read the comics every Sunday morning on WGR from 9:00-9:30 (Buffalo Courier Express, 8/15/37).

Ester MacMillan began her acting career with the BBC Network in quite an unusual fashion. She was visiting her husband Lowell, a BBC staff announcer, when station manager Herb Rice realized that he had not hired an actress for his new series, *The Cobra*. There was but one solution. Mrs. MacMillan was hired fifteen minutes prior to the beginning of the show (Buffalo Courier Express, 6/28/31). Herb Rice and his wife Lorraine Pankow

purchased a summer home in the spring of 1932. Soon after Herb Rice created a new BBC show to be broadcast every Monday and Thursday evening at 9:30. The topic of the new show was how to select and maintain a summer home (Buffalo Courier Express, 5/15/32).

Fearbound became such a popular show on WKBW that Herb Rice arranged for a public showing of the program in the showroom of the Buffalo Housewrecking Company (Buffalo Courier Express, 9/28/30).

We can be certain that there were many more unusual events in the first two decades of Buffalo radio. Unfortunately the Buffalo Evening News devoted almost all of its radio columns to national radio, while the Buffalo Times and the Buffalo Courier Express devoted more than half of their coverage to national radio. In addition not all stations received equal coverage. The stations that made up the Buffalo Broadcasting Corporation (WKBW, WGR, WMAK and WBEN) received much better coverage than WEBR. In addition newspaper coverage of radio was very weak in the 1920s.

I SHOULD'A SAVED 'EM!

by Dom Parisi

When I was a kid I had a cigar (wooden) box filled with a bunch of comic and radio premiums — Orphan Annie Ring, Capt. Midnight decoder, Tom Mix Badge, The Shadow Blue Coal Ring, and other assorted “junk.” “Junk?” I sure wish I had this “junk” today.

To give you some idea what some of these little pieces of metal and plastic premiums are worth today, let me quote some prices from collectible toys catalogs.

The first Wrigley's chewing gum premium was a toy Chief Wolf Paw Ring that debuted in 1932. Chief Wolf Paw was a fictional leader of the “Lone Wolf Tribe,” a juvenile radio program. (Anyone ever hear of this show?) As far as I know none are known to exist, no value set. Most toy products from the 1930s and 40s were made of metal. In the 50s plastic was used.

The rarest and most valuable toy has to be the 1940 DC comics “Superman of America” ring. Only 1,600 were awarded in a DC sponsored contest. Today only a dozen or so are thought to exist. The one known close-to-mint piece is valued at \$100,000 plus! Rings in lesser condition have gone for as high as a mere \$25,000! (No I never owned one of these.)

A 1934 Ovaltine “Little Orphan Annie Portrait Ring”, (the first of many Annie rings) is selling in the neighborhood of \$75, even with some minor wear. The Shadow Blue Coal Ring from 1941, offered by the D.L.W. Coal Co., can be had (if you can find one that is) for about \$400. The “Coal” ring was one of the first plastic rings made. It was designed to glow in the dark and shows the Shadow in face mask and cape, wearing a hat and holding a gun. A blue piece of plastic is mounted on top of the ring.

In 1949 Peter Pan Peanut Butter came out with the Sky King 2-way Teleblinker Ring. It cost a quarter and measured 3-1/4” long with a 3-power magnifying telescope. The other features includes: clicking sounds when the top is pressed up and down, an action code chart that shows “Dot-and Dash” combinations to make words like “Danger” and “Help.” The sides feature cut-out panels with glow-in-the-dark “stuff” to flash signals. Price? About \$100. Not a bad return for two-bits!

Three and one-half million kids requested the Lone Ranger Atomic Bomb ring that was produced by Kix cereal starting in 1946! The brass base of the ring is decorated with flashes of lighting and star bursts. The aluminum bomb-shaped top has a four pronged red plastic tail fin. A common flaw of this ring is a cracked plastic fin, due most likely to shrinking, if you find a near-mint one be willing to spend over \$100 for it, or about \$70 for a not-so-mint specimen.

“Real Photo” rings of the 40s to the 60s — Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, Gabby Hayes, Charlie McCarthy and even Ed Sullivan, Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra sold for 10 cents each in retail shops everywhere. Today they command \$10 and \$20 a piece.

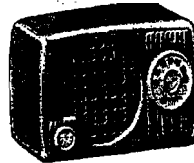
Plastic rings were also produced in the 1970s. The dog hero “Underdog” toy ring, a chunk of yellow-and-black plastic, bought from vending machines, was issued in 1975. And even though this is a recent premium, they are scarce. Knowledgeable dealers are asking — and getting, \$100 or more for it along with the other characters from the animated series: Polly Purebred, Simon Bar Sinister and Ace TV Reporter. Even the McDonald's **Hamburglar** ring of the 1970s, a die-cut plastic McDonald's character, though fairly common and produced in great quantities with a wide distribution, are going for \$5 to \$10 each. So don't forget kiddies, save your happy meal premiums!

Here are some listed values of other toys:

Amos 'n' Andy Map, Pepsodent 1935 - \$75.

- Buck Rogers & Wilma Deering, Photo, Cocomalt Cereal 1934 - \$190.
- Capt. Midnight Mystic Sun God Ring - \$2,400.
- Charlie McCarthy, Radio Party punch-out figures, Chase & Sanborn 1938 - \$25.
- Cisco Kid paper gun - \$45.
- Dick Tracy Badge, 1938 - \$40.
- Flash Gordon, World Battle Front Pamphlet, 1943 \$80.
- Gene Autry Horseshoe Nail Ring - \$200.
- Green Hornet Ring - \$825.
- Helen Trent Radio Show Ring - \$48.
- Hopalong Cassidy Ring - \$215.
- Jack Armstrong Telescope - \$55.
- Lone Ranger Bracelet, 1930s - \$1,000.
- Lone ranger Pedometer - \$35.
- Roy Rogers Branding Iron Ring - \$175.
- The Shadow Blue Coal ink blotter - \$30.
- Sky King Aztec Ring - \$625.
- Straight Arrow Neckerchief - \$75.
- Superman Ring, Pep Airplane - \$150.
- Tom Mix Mystery Ring - \$300.
- Wild Bill Treasure Map - \$200.

Note: Prices listed are for premiums in excellent to mint condition. (Source: Schroeder's 1996 Collectible Toys Price Guide. Ted Hake's Americana & Collectibles Catalogs.)



SAME TIME, SAME STATION

by Jim Cox

WE LOVE AND LEARN

Not many radio soap operas ever experienced a change in title. By the 1948-49 radio season, just a handful had departed slightly from their original names — *Aunt Jenny's True Life Stories* had become *Aunt Jenny's Real Life Stories*; *Hilltop House* which was later changed to *The Story of Bess Johnson*, reverted to *Hilltop House*; and *Mary Noble, Backstage Wife* was shortened to a simpler *Backstage Wife*. The odds of a new moniker for a successful serial were fairly remote.

Still, two of them did experience not a single change but, in fact, two entirely different title corrections during their on-the-air lifetimes. One was the greatly beloved *Pepper Young's Family*. Before its designation, that program was known as *Forever Young*. And preceding that, it had debuted as *Red Adams*.

We Love and Learn was the other with at least three titles. While it had already undergone one change, it was destined for yet another before final cancellation. The series appeared in syndication under the name *As the Twig is Bent* from 1941-42. In the 1955-56 season, it was called *The Story of Ruby Valentine*. But if it is remembered at all, it is most likely recalled as *We Love and Learn*.

This rather obscure series had to overcome much more than a single identity crisis, however. Just during the *We Love and Learn* run there was an interruption in the continuity of the story line lasting from September 29, 1944 to June 28, 1948 — nearly four years! That's a very long "weekend" to keep a group of characters and what they were doing and where they were doing it in mind! When it transitioned to *The Story of Ruby Valentine*, there was a second four-year gap between scenes, from March 23, 1951 to the 1955-56 season when no broadcasts were aired.


As if the changes in name and eight years of missing dialog weren't enough, this beleaguered series had other misfortunes. Under the banner *We Love and Learn*, in five years on the air it was broadcast on two networks in a minimum of five different time periods! From the program's inception on April 6, 1942, CBS carried it at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time the two years that it aired it. On April 3, 1944, it switched to NBC, running for six

TONIGHT, THURSDAY

DUFFY'S TAVERN

★ STARRING ... Ed "ARCHIE" Gardner ★

WBEN—9:30 P. M., E. S. T.



Milwaukee's Finest Beer

BLATZ BREWING CO. MILWAUKEE, WIS.

months as a sustaining feature at 5:15 p.m. After experiencing its first terribly long "weekend," *We Love and Learn* returned to NBC in 1948 airing first at 11:15 a.m., the following season at 11 o'clock and in its final year at 12:45 p.m. Then when the *Valentine* series debuted, it was moved back to eleven o'clock on NBC. To say that listeners who wanted to follow this program may have had a difficult time doing so is an understatement.

Could these years in transition have been reflected in the program's Hooper and Nielsen ratings? On that score, there is much to suggest that the series took a licking because the fans couldn't find it — or couldn't stay with it long enough to develop a strong following. Whatever the cause, the soap opera consistently maintained a rather dismal record in audience-building. In the five years that *We Love and Learn* was on the air, its aggregate rating totaled a disappointing 22.5. That averages to only 4.5 for any one season. In its best season (its second year, 1943-44), it reached only 5.6.

General Foods underwrote the series for Post Raisin Bran cereal during its two seasons on CBS. When the series resumed in 1948 on NBC, Manhattan Soap Company picked up all three years for its Sweetheart soap brand.

There were a couple of other unique trademarks about this serial in addition to the identity crisis.

As *The Story of Ruby Valentine* for about a year, it became the only genuinely successful radio program with a continuing story line featuring a predominantly African-American cast, *Here Comes Tomorrow*, was less triumphant.

In addition, two of the leads in the *We Love and Learn* series, Frank Lovejoy and Joan Banks, were married to each other in real life. While this wasn't unheard of in radio soap opera, it was not the norm.

As *the Twig is Bent* and *We Love and Learn* concerned a small town girl, Andrea Reynolds, who left her native rural Americana to go to New York City to live. There she would meet and fall in love with handsome young Bill Peters. Their love story would evolve in the early forties into the realities of being young and married in a big city during World War II.

Variations on the theme transpired over time and — when the show returned in 1948 after its first four-year absence — several other characters appeared while some had departed. Thus, *We Love and Learn* had to develop an almost totally new audience again.

Joan Banks, the first Andrea Reynolds, also played the title role in *Mary Foster, Editor's Daughter*. At one time she was Jane Stacy, roommate of *My Friend Irma*. She carried the leads of Eleanor MacDonald in *This Day is Ours* and Joan Blake in *Valiant Lady* and a supporting role in *Nightbeat*.

The popular, respected actor Frank Lovejoy, Miss Banks' husband, who was Bill Peters in *We Love and Learn*, had numerous radio credits on his dossier. He was a frequent actor in *Escape*, was for a time Lt. Bill Wiegand on *Mr. and Mrs. North*, played the lead on *Nightbeat* (in which his wife also appeared) and narrated *This is Your FBI*. He was in a multitude of radio detective series, most of which were summer replacements or appeared for only one year.

Banks was succeeded in the Andrea Reynolds part by Louise Fitch. She was one of the actresses to play the first wife (Carol) of Dr. Jim Brent on *Road of Life*. She was also *That Brewster Boy's* older sister, Nancy and had a co-starring role on *Two on a Clue*.

After its first hiatus off the air, when the show returned in 1948 a little known actress, Betty Worth, assumed the role of Andrea. No record of her acting credits has been established outside this series.

Unfortunately, neither has data been uncovered on the star of the *Valentine* series, Juanita Hall — nor of the cast that supported her — Viola Dean, Earl Hyman, Ruby Dee and Juano Hernandez, the latter a carryover from *We Love and Learn*, supposedly bridging the series' name, cast and locale changes. The settings for *Valentine* switched from a Manhattan dress shop to a string of Harlem beauty parlors owned by the new title character.

Others appearing in the *We Love and Learn* cast included Sybil Trent, Don MacLaughlin, Jose Ferrer, Robert Dryden, Lesley Woods and Barbara Weeks.

Writers for the series included Don Becker, perhaps best remembered for *Life Can be Beautiful*; Martin Stern and John Clark.

In *We Love and Learn*, original theme music composed by Don Becker was played by organist Herschel Leucke, also organist on *Life Can be Beautiful*. In *The Story of Ruby Valentine*, pianist Luther Henderson played an original theme sung by Juanita Hall.

The program's announcers included Dick Dunham, Fielden Farrington (*Just Plain Bill*, *The Romance of Helen Trent*) and Adele Ronson (with recurring roles in

Buck Rogers in the Twenty-Fifth Century and *John's Other Wife*).

We Love and Learn, its predecessor and successor, had about as much going against it as most soap operas had going for them. Under different circumstances, the series might have celebrated glowing successes and remained on the air for many consecutive years. Unfortunately, it became a casualty long before it was ever firmly established in the minds of a significant band of followers.



They Were the Most Active People in Radio — The Big 100!

By Dom Parisi
(Part 6)

The distinguished lovely lady of stage, screen and radio, **Agnes Moorehead**, was another favorite star of mine. Her performance in *The True Story of Jesse James* in 1957, and her brilliant acting in *Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte* in 1965, along with Bette Davis and Joseph Cotten, are just two of her many movies. She was still going like "gangbusters" into the 70s. Agnes was featured on the first *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre* when Himan Brown attempted a golden age style comeback on January 6, 1974. I believe the first broadcast was called *The Horla*. Her *Sorry, Wrong Number* that was first heard on *Suspense* in 1943, a suspense classic, was repeated seven times. It was the most requested story of the program. I could just picture her in the movie version. Barbara Stanwyck was good, and she did receive an Oscar nomination for the part, but I bet Miss Moorehead would have been great and she may have won the Oscar!

Miss Moorehead was on the *Mercury Theatre on the Air* on CBS in 1938 along with Orson ("War of The Worlds") Welles, Martin Gable and Joe Cotten. Once again with Orson, she was the first to play Margo Lane on *The Shadow* and she appeared as a regular on *The Orson Welles Theater*. She did her share of the comic shows. In *Bringing Up Father* she played the character of Maggie; she was Min Gump on *The Gumps*; the housekeeper on *Mayor of The Town* with Lionel Barrymore, and she was in the comedy *Tish*, the story of three spinsters.

That's not all! Agnes was the good/evil Dragon Lady in *Terry and the Pirates*, the mother on the daytime drama *Brenda Curtis* over CBS and Mrs. Danbury on *The Amazing Mrs. Danbury*, a comedy show heard in 1946

Agnes played a female reporter on *Calamity Jane*, and Mrs. Mollet the assistant to *Leonidas Witherall*, the detective show of the same name that aired on Mutual during the war years. In her later years she made television her home appearing in *Bewitched* as Elizabeth Montgomery's mother and in many guest shots on other programs. (Miss Montgomery died on May 18, 1995.) In addition to Bette Davis, Miss Moorehead has to be one of the greatest that ever was! The world lost this beautiful person on April 30, 1974.

Host/announcer **Ken Niles** was heard with Agnes Moorehead on *The Amazing Mrs. Danbury*. He was one of several who announced for the quiz show *Take It or Leave It*. Niles also was on *The Affairs of Ann Scotland*, *Camel Caravan*, *Hollywood Hotel* and the music show *King for a Night* over NBC in 1949. He was the first emcee on *Quick as a Flash*.

He announced for the comedy *Phone Again, Finnegan* on NBC; Danny Kaye's show *Blue Ribbon Time* another musical-variety program on CBS and *Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge*. And lastly, we heard Ken on *Big Town* with Steve Wilson, editor of the newspaper *The Illustrated Press*. (Now where did I hear that name before?)

Howard Barlow supplied the music for the first program heard on CBS, *The Columbia Symphony Orchestra*. He also was heard on some other very early programs over CBS, *The Symphonic Hour* and *Musical Album* in 1927, *Voice of Firestone* from 1928 through 1957, and *Musical Vignettes* in 1929. Barlow was with *America's Hour*, *Melody Masterpieces*, *Madeline Massey and The Concert Orchestra*, *Saturday Night Serenade*, *Everybody's Music*, and *Music for Fun* a children's musical show.

Howard appeared for one season with his orchestra on *Harvest of Stars* that was hosted by Raymond Massey. We finally heard him on *Mary and Bob* and on *The March of Time* when it was still being broadcast over the CBS network.

Jay Jostyn was in the 1947 original killer movie *Kiss of Death* with Victor Mature and Richard Widmark. (I love those old black and white movies. Why are the re-makes so lousy? Can you imagine a re-make of that classic *Casablanca*?) Jay was the guest in the first *Quick As A Flash* show that ran from 1944-1951. He was the missionary Curt Curtis on *This Day is Ours*. He appeared on the *Parker Family* a comedy on the Blue network in the 30s and 40s. Jay played the prospector Jackie on *Our Gal Sunday* and Pa Wiggs on *Mrs. Wiggs of The Cabbage Patch*.

Jostyn narrated a music-poetry show called *Moon River* and a show that featured suspense stories on NBC called *The Mystery Men*. He was featured in the lead role on *Bert Lytell's Adventures*. He played correspondent Brian Barry on *Foreign Assignment* a Mutual broadcast and the D.A. on *Mr. District Attorney* from 1940 through 1952.

Charles "Charlie" Lyon announced for westerns, daytime drama, comedy shows and for *Yours truly, Johnny Dollar*. We heard him on *Gene Autry's Melody Ranch* and on *Wild Bill Hickok*. Lyon was on the Carlton E. Morse daily serial *The Woman in My House* and *Girl Alone* both on NBC. He announced for the comedy variety program *Uncle Walter's Doghouse, Life With Luigi*, and the country music show *Plantation Jubilee* that was on MBS in 1949.

Judge Hooper on the 1945 *Command Performance* broadcast of *Dick Tracy in B-Flat* was played by **Harry Von Zell**. He was another fine announcer, narrator and actor that was all over the air-waves. Von Zell made a slew of movies. *Son Of Paleface* in 1952 and *Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number!* shown in 1966 are two that come to mind.

He announced for NBC's *Your All Time Hit Parade, Wednesday With You*, that aired in 1945 only, and *The Gulf Show* in the early 30s. Harry hosted *Sound Off* the variety program sponsored by the United States Army that was geared to recruit future soldiers.

Von Zell played Bill Smith on *The Smiths of Hollywood* on Mutual in 1947. He narrated *The March of Time* and hosted *Quizzer Baseball*. Harry had a role in *Joanie's Tea Room* as well as doing the show's announcing. He was in the 1939 version of *The Phil Baker Show* when it was known as *Honolulu Bound*, and he starred with Miss Billie Burke in the 1949 NBC comedy show *Chicken Every Sunday*.

Von Zell announced for a 5 minute version of news on the 1951 *Jimmy Fidler Show*. Frank Fontaine, Eddie Cantor and George Burns all had Harry as their announcer on CBS. He was on *Bright Star* with Irene Dunne and Fred MacMurray, the *Amazing Mr. Smith*, *Botany Song Shop* with Ginny Simms and *Behind The Mike*. What a remarkable record.

The character Snapper Snitch in the Christmas Children's production of *The Cinnamon Bear* was played by **Mr. Hanley Stafford**. He was Mr. Dithers on *Blondie* and Daddy on *Baby Snooks*. He appeared with Snooks in another comedy role on *Palmolive Beauty Box Theatre*.

Stafford was a regular performer on *Miss Pinkerton, Inc.* plus he was John on *John's Other Wife*, Smith on *Fu Manchu* and Daddy again, with Snooks, on *Maxwell House Coffee Time* over NBC. And we heard him on *The Last of The Mohicans* the James Fenimore Cooper drama on a show called *Leatherstocking Tales* that was on NBC in the 30s.

On the short-lived radio show *Academy Award Theatre* that was on CBS in 1946, it was **Leith Stevens** who put forth the music. He was just one of the many bands we heard on *The Abbott and Costello show*. Leith was with the *Buddy Clark Show, Saturday Night Swing Club*, and *Heinz Magazine of The Air* a show of music chit-chat, drama and interviews heard on CBS. Stevens provided the music for *Pursuit, Rogue's Gallery* with Dick Powell and *Request Performance* a variety show on CBS.

Olan Soule was in the 1955 movie *Queen Bee*. The movie is loaded with stars — Joan Crawford, Barry Sullivan, John Ireland, Fay (King Kong) Wray and Betsy Palmer. Even so, I never heard of this movie nor have I seen it. Of Course we know that Soule was big in radio.

He appeared as one of the regulars on the serial drama *We Are Four* over Mutual in the late thirties. Soule narrated the educational program *Science in the News* over NBC. He had numerous roles on *The First Nighter*, and *Grand Hotel*. He played Sam Ryder on *Bachelor's Children*, and had a starring role in *Joan and Kermit*, a soap opera. Olan was in the serial drama about a middle-aged couple called *Midstream*. He announced for the Hummert's *Houseboat Hannah* and starred in another Hummert comedy show, *The Couple Next Door*.

"Jack Armstrong! Jack Armstrong! The All-American Boy!" **Tom Shirley** was just one of the many, many announcers for this kiddie show. (Loved, I'm sure, by adults as well.) He announced for *Carton of Cheer* a comedy variety show hosted by a young Henny Youngman in 1944-1945. Tom was there for the Hummert drama about a widowed druggist who was trying to raise his daughters while living in a small U.S.A. town. The program was called *Doc Barclay's Daughters* and it ran on CBS during 1938-1940. He announced for another Drama called *Armstrong Theater*. You heard him on *Grand Central Station, Myrt And Marge, The Paula Stone-Phil Brito Show* an NBC 1944 variety program, and *Jack Berch and His Boys* featuring baritone Mr. Berch.

I'll end this portion of my research on the most active with musician **Wilbur Hatch**. He wrote the melody for

The Whistler, he played for the CBS drama *Twelve Players* and the *I Love Lucy Show*.

Hatch's music was also heard on variety shows *Man About Hollywood* and *On A Sunday Afternoon* on CBS radio. He furnished the songs for the comedy shows *Sweeny And March*, *My Favorite Husband* and the comedy drama *Rogers Of The Gazette* a story about the life of a newspaper editor. He appeared on *Fletcher Wileys* a music variety show and also on *The Screen Guild Theatre* in the 1942-1947 period (To be continued)

Member's Mike

Dear Editor:

Jim Cox mailed me the letter that is printed in this issue of the IP, regarding the death of Dorothy Kilgallen, I stated that she died mysteriously of a heart attack. It's more sinister than that. In a sense Jim is correct. Kilgallen died of an overdose of barbiturates and alcohol — suicide?! She died on Nov. 8, 1965 at her home in New York. She was 52. Miss Kilgallen had a private interview with Jack Ruby and was going to break open the case. (JFK Assassination.)



Author Gerald Posner, *Case Closed*, quotes in his book that Miss Kilgallen's death was an "unnatural one." Penn Jones, former editor of the Texas newspaper *Midlothian Mirror*, originated the popular theory that "witnesses to the Kennedy killing who knew too much were being silenced by an unidentified murder squad." By 1967, he had compiled a list of 18 people connected to the assassination who had suffered unnatural deaths.

Dorothy Kilgallen - suicide, murder or a natural death?! A media/government cover-up?

Dom Parisi

Dear Dom:

You continue to pique our interest with your walks down memory lane in *The Illustrated Press*. Thanks for it from one who reads every word.

In your February installment, I was interested in the comment on the death of Dorothy Kilgallen (Richard Kollmar's wife). You stated that she "mysteriously died of a heart attack following the JFK assassination investigation."

I have only my memory to go on, but as a faithful fan of "What's My Line?" on CBS-TV every week, where Kilgallen was a panelist for years, I recall that all of us were greatly troubled when the media reported that she had committed suicide a day or so following the live tele-

cast one week. I can recall discussing it with both family and friends; all of us were in absolute shock, as suicides among well known personalities, particularly those we saw every week on live TV, were rare in the fifties and sixties.

Can you check this out for me? They say the mind is the first to go, and I hope mine hasn't!

Thanks for doing a great job, Dom. I benefit from your research.

Cordially,
Jim Cox



The 8th annual **RADIO CLASSICS LIVE**

New England's major radio recreation event!

at

Massasoit Community College, Brockton, MA

**Friday & Saturday
May 2-3, 1997**

**Featuring Radio/TV Stars
Peg Lynch • Arthur Anderson
Parley Baer • Barney Beck • Donald Buka
Fred Foy • Rosemary Rice**

Special Guest: Will Hutchins
Star of TV's *Sugarfoot*, *Hey, Landlord* and *Blondie*

plus Boston area radio/TV personalities

Two completely different programs!!

Friday, May 2
Evening 8-11 pm

- Gunsmoke
- The Screen Director's Playhouse
- Ethel & Albert

Plus!!

Saturday Evening, May 3, 6-9 pm

Meet the Stars at an informal reception
at the Holiday Inn, Westgate Mall, Brockton.

Saturday, May 3
Matinee 2-5 pm

- Let's Pretend
- Blondie
- Ethel & Albert

Ticket Prices and Information

Individual Performances

Friday evening or Saturday matinee - General Admission \$15.00
Sr. Citizen (over 65)/Massasoit I.D. \$13.00

Special Combination: Friday/Saturday programs \$25.00
Sr. Citizen (over 65)/Massasoit I.D. \$21.00

Special Group Rate Groups of eight or more \$10 per person
per performance

Saturday Evening Reception Holiday Inn, Westgate Mall,
Brockton - \$18 per person

Information/Reservations - Contact: Bob Bowers, Massasoit
Community College, One Massasoit Blvd., Brockton, MA 02402,
(508) 588-9100, ext. 1906 or evenings at (508) 295-5977

All proceeds to the Peg Lynch Radio/TV Scholarship Fund

**CINCINNATI'S
11th ANNUAL**

OLD TIME RADIO & NOSTALGIA CONVENTION

APRIL 18-19, 1997 MARRIOTT INN
HOURS: FRIDAY 12PM-9PM • SATURDAY 9AM-4PM

SPECIAL GUESTS

**PEG LYNCH
ETHEL & ALBERT**

**BARNEY BECK
SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST
THE SPYGLASS SUPERMAN
BOB & PAUL NUTCRACKER**

**JOHN RAYBURN
A FUN-FILLED RETURN TO
THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO**

**FRED FOY
ANNOUNCER ON
THE LONE
RANGER
SHOW**

**PARLEY BAER
GUNSMOKE'S GUESTER
MAYOR OF MARIETTA**

Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086

FIRST CLASS MAIL

