

The Old Time Radio Club

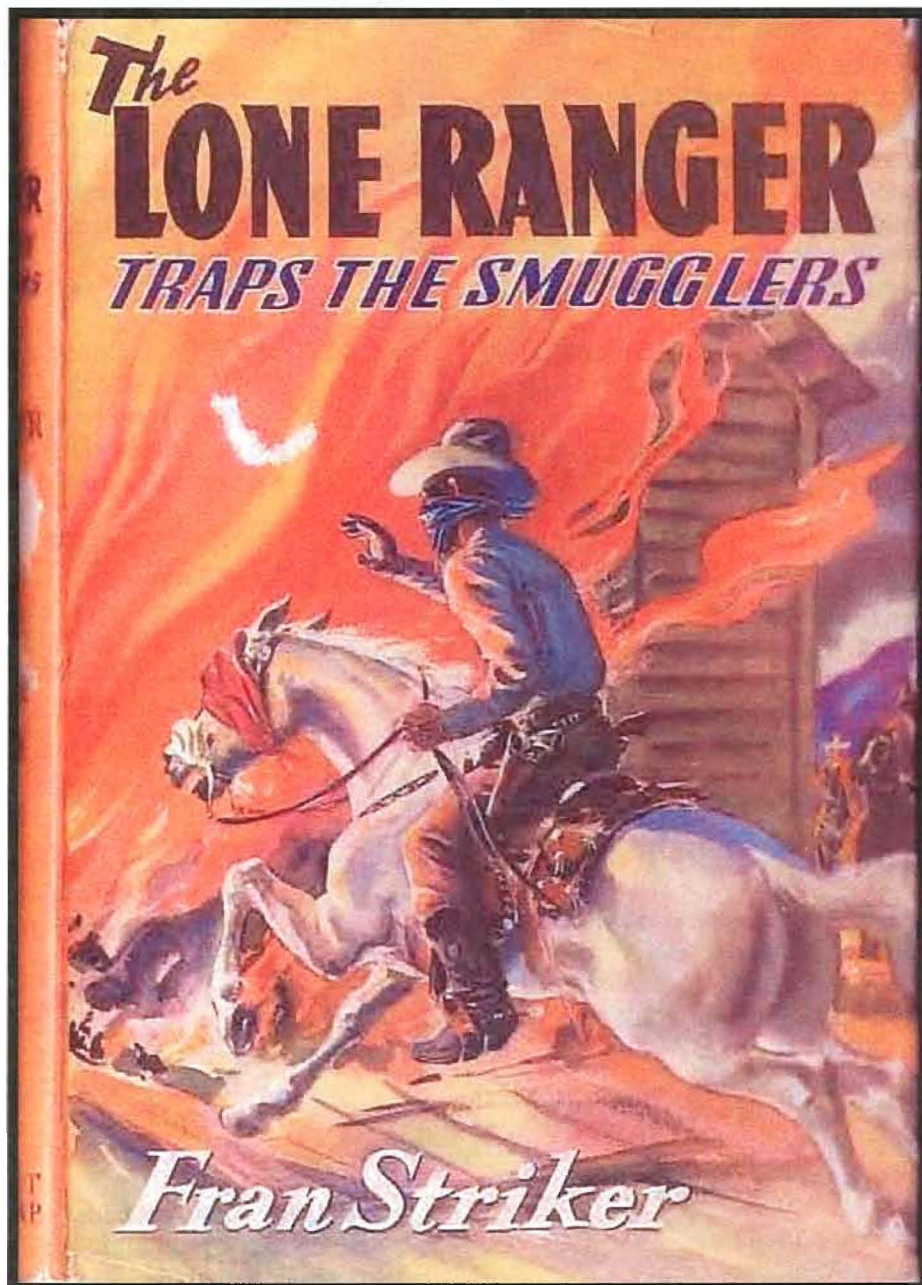
Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 329

April 2005

1975 - 2005 Our 30th Anniversary



FRAN STRIKER *"Buffalo's Lone Ranger"*

The Illustrated Press

Membership Information

New member processing: \$5 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$17.50; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing newsletter issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM during the months of September through June at St. Aloysius School Hall, Cleveland Drive and Century Road, Cheektowaga, NY. There is **no** meeting during the month of July, and an informal meeting is held in 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.

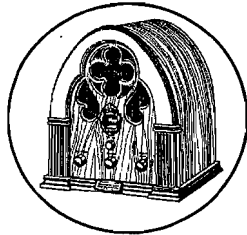
Club Mailing Address

Old Time Radio Club
56 Christen Ct.

Lancaster, NY 14086

E-Mail Address:

otrclub@localnet.com



Back issues of *The Illustrated Press*
are \$1.50 postpaid

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

The Illustrated Press is the newsletter of the **Old Time Radio Club**, headquartered in Western New York State. It is published monthly except for the months of July and August. Contents except where noted are copyright © 2004 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

E-Mail address: AnteakEar@aol.com

Web Page Address:

members.localnet.com/~robmcd

Club Officers and Librarians

President

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

Vice President & Canadian Branch

Richard Simpson (905) 892-4688
960 16 Road R.R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
Canada, L0S 1C0

Treasurer, Videos & 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
pmb1620@worldnet.att.net

Membership Inquires and OTR Network Related Items

Richard Olday (716) 684-1604
171 Parwood Trail
Depew, NY 14043-1071
raolday@yahoo.com

Libraries

Cassettes and Reference Libraries

Frank Bork (716) 835-8362
209 Cleveland Drive
Cheektowaga, NY 14215
febork@localnet.com

Video and Record Libraries

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

Library Rates: Audio cassettes are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette** which is **retained** by the member; video cassettes are \$1.85 per month; records are \$.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.

Buffalo's Lone Ranger The Prolific Fran Striker Wrote the Book on Early Radio

By Jim Bisco

He wrote 60,000 words a week every week—the equivalent of the Bible every three months. According to a 1939 *Saturday Evening Post* article, the 10,000 different characters he spawned shattered four typewriters. "His 156 *Lone Ranger* scripts a year, plus 365 *Lone Ranger* cartoon strips, plus twelve *Lone Ranger* novels, plus editing the movie versions, plus his tremendous correspondence, account for two thirds of his output. He also writes 104 *Green Hornet* scripts and 52 *Ned Jordan*, *Secret Agent* scripts a year for WXYZ. His working day is fourteen hours: in return, \$10,000 a year, or around a third of a cent a word."



Fran Striker posing for a publicity photo at WXYZ in the mid 1930s. ("We knew it was posed because Dad never used a portable typewriter...they just couldn't handle all the carbon copies (12) he had to produce of scripts," said Striker, Jr.)
COURTESY FRAN STRIKER, JR.

The Fran Striker radio legend is formidable. The breadth of characters he developed withstood the test of time. The *Green Hornet* and *Kato*. *Sergeant Preston* and *Yukon King*. And, above all, two of the Paul Bunyans of popular culture, *The Lone Ranger* and *Tonto*.

Although the origin of *The Lone Ranger* was claimed by George W. Trendle who incorporated the brand in 1935, prior correspondence between Striker and Trendle confirm that it was the writer's original creation.

In fact, the *Lone Ranger* character made his radio debut in an episode from a 1930 Striker western anthology called *Covered Wagon Days* on WEBR, Buffalo (now WNED-AM), known only as *Ranger*. Then, prior to *The Lone Ranger* series debut on WXYZ, Detroit, on January 31, 1933, several test episodes were broadcast on WEBR, thereby making Buffalo the birthplace of the masked hero.

Now, as the announcer intoned just before the galloping strains of Rossini's *William Tell* Overture, let's return to those thrilling days of yesteryearback to early 20th

century Buffalo where an industrious young man and his thundering typewriter created a legend.

Buffalo Roots

Fran Striker was born in Buffalo on August 19, 1903, the first of two children (his sister Pauline died young in 1937). He was a creative child fascinated with gadgetry as he conjured up makeshift gramophones and sit-in model planes.

Striker's first published writing occurred when he was 12 when a tender article about squirrels appeared in a Buffalo newspaper. His first professional work appeared in the paper later that same year, 1915, with the publication of *Princess Beautiful's Kindness*, a fictional piece for which he was paid one dollar. The moral of the story foreshadowed his later fiction with a "Do unto others..." message.

As a student at Lafayette High School, Striker lettered in track and managed the track team. He also became a saxophonist in the school band. His outside interests were many. He joined youth clubs, church clubs, school organizations, science clubs, and was active in Red Cross work, winning awards for his support of the War Fund and Liberty Loans programs of World War I.

His two passions at the time were chemistry and photography, two interests that followed him into adulthood. He became an accomplished still and cine photographer, and was known for the huge fireworks displays he concocted every Fourth of July. When he was just seventeen, he was building and selling television sets. It isn't known what could be transmitted in these very early sets, but the Buffalo Museum of Science requested one of the teenager's sets at the time.

Striker became licensed as an advanced chemist, majoring in the subject at the University of Buffalo. While he became involved in fraternities, sports and the theater group at UB, he also gained his first experience with radio. As a saxophonist, Striker played with two local musical groups of the period, the *Domino Six* and the *Christy Minstrels* (certainly not the original which was born on Buffalo's waterfront in the 1840s). These groups played occasionally on programs broadcast over Buffalo's first radio station, WGR.

Soon, though, his interest in chemistry waned as Striker left UB in 1925, his junior year. He went to work as a stock boy in the basement of Woolworth's downtown, then took a job with the Pillsbury Gold Medal Flour plant where he also became involved in writing the company newsletter.

The Illustrated Press

His taste of the theatrical world at the university prompted Striker's move to New York City for a job with the Harry Miller Production Company which produced stage shows. On his return to Buffalo in 1928, Striker wanted to use this experience to build a career here as a stage play producer and director. While he became involved in staging a number of amateur and semi-professional productions, there was little financial reward, especially for a young man who had fallen in love with his childhood acquaintance and was contemplating marriage.

And so, to supplement his theatrical interest, Striker took a paying position with WEBR Radio. The rest would literally be history.

Early Radio

Those who worked in the early days of radio gained rapid multi-hat experience. Fran Striker found himself playing the roles of announcer, musician, studio manager, program director, actor, dramatic director, and writer.

As he began to rise in the medium, he married Janet Gisel on April 27, 1929. Although they knew each other as kids growing up together, it wasn't until their adulthood that they really came to know one another. As she recalled years later, "As young children we knew, but didn't particularly like, each other. (He) was a bit too crude for my liking and I'm sure he thought that I was aloof or snobbish."

Their lifelong marriage produced four children, Bob, Don, Fran, Jr., and Janet. Fran Striker, Jr. eventually wrote about his father's prolific radio career in a biography entitled, *His Typewriter Grew Spurs*. During a recent interview from his home near Sarasota, Florida, the 67-year-old technical writer recounted his father's love of Western New York, the site of his early radio pioneering.

"Although his business would take him to Michigan, he always considered his home to be the beautiful rolling hills of his childhood, in and around the Buffalo area," he said.

While WEBR launched his radio career, Striker took another opportunity shortly after his marriage in 1929. He was offered the position of program director for WTAM, Cleveland, which promised more creative development.

"It was during this period that Dad started writing dramatic continuities for broadcast," Striker related.



From left, sons Bob, Don and Fran, Jr. looking at an antique pistol of Dad's in the early 1940s with an illustration of The Lone Ranger and Silver in the background.
COURTESY FRAN STRIKER, JR.

"Some of the earliest were adaptations of Dickens and Mark Twain classics, and recreations of memorable moments in the history of our country."

It was the beginning of an amazing string of shows developed for the new medium. In 1929, he initiated the series, *Betty and Jack*, which revolved around a newspaper editor and a cub reporter who discussed some of the actual news events of the day. The series gave an early nod to women in executive roles with Betty as editor. The same year saw the premiere of *Hank and Honey*, one of the first husband-and-wife sitcoms to be broadcast. The series drew considerable comment from people who wondered if the stars were really married. "The fights and arguments sound so real to be just actors," a listener remarked.

Some scripts from the 178 episodes of *Hank and Honey* as well as Striker's other shows are available for reading at the State University at Buffalo's Library Archives in a collection donated by the family.

"All in all, I've identified forty-one separate radio dramatic series that Dad created and wrote," Striker, Jr. stated. This all occurred during an intensive period from 1929 to 1932.

Striker returned to WEBR in 1930 to the new position of studio manager. He devoted an increasing amount of time to writing radio drama, as well as directing most of the programs he wrote.

Among the more intriguing series he developed during this period was *Behind The Headlines*, a spin-off of *Betty And Jack*, which dramatized stories that could be identified with real news events (not unlike today's "Law And Order").

The Illustrated Press



Fran Striker (right) with staff announcers at WEBR in 1930
COURTESY FRAN STRIKER, JR.

Striker's *Ultra Violet* was perhaps radio's earliest science fiction series. "It was conceived while Dad was on vacation. The inspiration came from the mysterious, and never completed, Boldt Island Castle that dominates the St. Lawrence River in the middle of Thousand Islands," according to Striker, Jr. "Years later, these scripts were selected as a textbook example of script writing in S.P. Lawton's book, *Radio Speech*."

Then, there was the show from which a legendary masked hero sprang.

The Ranger Rides

(MUSIC INTERLUDE-SUSPENSE)

PETE: (Chuckling to himself) There, I reckon that'll do fer a fireplace an' shack. Now let 'em come. Guess I'll turn in till mornin'. They won't be comin' along this way no more tuh-night.

RANGER: How's that wrist of yours, Arizona Pete?

PETE: (Startled) Huh...what...what...?

RANGER: I said how is the wrist? The one that you forced me to shoot the last time we met.

PETE: Y-You! You're the...

RANGER: That's right, Pete. What are you up to this time? Stealing Ezra Holten's claim, is it?

PETE: Where are yuh? I can't see ya. Come out into the light of the fire, will yuh, Mister Ranger?

RANGER: I don't intend that you see me, Arizona Pete. I just came to warn you, that's all. Don't try and steal this claim!

PETE: But see here, you don't understand. This here claim...

RANGER Yes, do, understand perfectly well. Don't bother telling me your lies.

PETE: But...

RANGER: That's all I have to say now. You have been warned. Next time we meet, it won't be just for talking.

PETE: But lissin, Mister.

RANGER Goodbye for now... (To Silver) Come on, big fellow, let's ride.

(SOUND EFFECTS: HORSE'S HOOVES START HARD AND FADE FAST)

Shortly after heaving a rock-bound message through the bad guy's cabin window and riding away with a "Come on, Silver", this was the first scene in which the character that would become The Lone Ranger was featured. The script was from the tenth episode of Striker's western series, *Covered Wagon Days*, which was originally broadcast from the WEBR studios in 1930.

The mysterious ranger had no Tonto at this point. In fact, he blazes through only four of the script's eighteen pages. Yet, this proved to be the embryonic appearance of the masked man who would become The Lone Ranger.

Striker's early western series, along with his other shows, was done for WEBR, his employer at the time. However, this changed after he received a script from a Phillips Lord who offered it for broadcast over WEBR for a nominal royalty fee. The concept so impressed the young Striker that he decided to begin a moonlighting business from his home at 26 Granger Place in Buffalo. He called it Fran Striker Continuities-Broadcast Ideastudio and Word Shop. He started sending original scripts to stations across the country, charging a fee of two to six dollars for each usage. He soon became so successful that he decided to leave his job at WEBR.

By the fall of 1932, more than 90 stations subscribed to Striker's one-man syndicate. Among those was WXYZ in Detroit which was broadcasting two of his series, *Patricia Dare*, *Thrills of the Secret Service* (the adventures of a female spy for the American forces) and *Warner Lester, Manhunter*, a western.

George W. Trendle, co-owner of WXYZ, was a shrewd businessman. In 1932 he took a risky gamble and severed the station's affiliation with the Columbia Broadcasting System in favor of originating his own programming. Jim Jewell, WXYZ's dramatic director, was put in charge of series development. In a letter to Striker dated December 28, 1932, Jewell asked, "Will you please write up three or four wild west thrillers ...including all the hokum of the masked rider, rustler, killer Pete, heroine on the train tracks, fight on the top of boxcars, Indian badman, two-gun bank robbers, etc."

Striker adjusted his *Covered Wagon Days* script to accommodate the request and sent it to WXYZ on January 6, 1933. "Dad's cover letter advised 'I plan to establish him (the Ranger) as the one that is hunted by the law, yet loved by the oppressed.'" observed Striker,

The Illustrated Press

Jr. "Going on, the letter expressed Dad's enthusiasm for the planned program and suggested the possibility of a Lone Ranger Boys Club, wherein kids would write in for membership. That suggestion was taken seriously a few years later, in 1935, with the introduction of The Lone Ranger Safety Club."

Within the next three weeks, revision after revision flew between Buffalo and Detroit. Trendle wanted less swashbuckle, then he wanted Striker to sober up the Ranger's roguish humor.

During this period, the writer began to inject characteristics that would distinguish the hero for all time. The silver obsession, for example—silver bullets, horse-shoes, horse, horse's name. The high-spirited, "Come on, Silver! That's the boy! Hi-yi-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! Now cut loose, and away!" was changed to a nobler cry, patterned after the "Heigh-ho" of British riders—"Hi-yo, Silver, awa-a-ay!"

Although George Stenius is generally credited as the first actor to play the Lone Ranger (as George Seaton, he later became a film director), it was actually Buffalo actor John L. Barrett who first played the hero during several test episodes on WEBR before the WXYZ premiere, according to Striker, Jr.

A January 21st letter from WXYZ to Striker said that the new series would begin Monday, January 30th. It also suggested a few tweaks before concluding, "I hope the above suggestions won't cramp your style. I realize they have changed the character you have created ...but only in a minor way ...We'll keep you posted on the listeners' interest created by the new series so you can use same for publicity."

Contrary to Trendle's later claim to Ranger creation, Striker, Jr. said that this letter makes it clear that the character was his father's brainchild. "It is a signed acknowledgement that prior to the first broadcast of The Lone Ranger, the Detroit station was well aware of it being my Dad's creation. Further, they were aware that he owned it and would be trying to sell it to other stations, as he did with all his scripts."

The Lone Ranger was originally scheduled to premiere on WXYZ Monday, January 30, 1933, but at the last minute was bumped to the next day because of the popularity of Striker's *Warner Lester, Manhunter* series. "WXYZ was concerned that if they moved it to a different time slot, they would lose a significant part of the audience," Striker, Jr. explained. "Of course, it wasn't long before the Ranger overshadowed 'Manhunter' and took over the choice Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening spots."

The Ranger Takes Off

The Lone Ranger was not an immediate success. WXYZ couldn't find a sponsor for the first nine months until Gordon Baking Company and its Silvercup Bread arrived.

Striker was dedicated to the series but hurting financially. He was required to write three 30-minute Ranger scripts a week. Because the show depended heavily on complex sound effects, most of Striker's regular syndicate subscribers were not interested in it. He was initially only able to line up WXYZ and WEBR, each paying him four dollars per script, and KOIL, Omaha which paid him five dollars. Each of these stations produced a version of each script with a local cast from their own studios. Barrett continued as the Ranger on WEBR with another local radio actor, Art Schmidt, as Tonto, the Indian companion who was introduced in the 11th episode, along with the first "Kemo Sabe" ("Faithful Friend) reference.

By 1934, the series caught on, becoming the first hit of the fledgling Mutual Broadcasting System which debuted with a three-station network—WXYZ, WGN in Chicago, and WOR in Newark. In May of that year, Striker was offered a full-time position at WXYZ where he would be writing exclusively for the station. The contract, however, called for Striker to sell and assign all rights to the Ranger to Trendle. Striker, Jr. acknowledged that since his father at the time was the breadwinner for his wife and two children, plus a number of other family members who fell victim to the Depression, he decided to take the security of a full-time job.

And so, a bill of sale was drawn up by WXYZ management for Striker to sign: "I, Francis Hamilton Striker, of the City of Buffalo...in consideration of the sum of ten dollars...do hereby sell, assign and transfer...all manu-



Fran Striker with son Bob on a working vacation at Saranac Lake in 1932. COURTESY FRAN STRIKER, JR.

The Illustrated Press

scripts of which I am the author...entitled Lone Ranger, Manhunter, Thrills of the Secret Service."

A paltry sum, in light of the millions of dollars the Ranger franchise generated for Trendle who, through this bill of sale, not only claimed ownership but creation of the character. When Striker himself was asked who created the character, his son recalls that his father humbly replied, "Only God creates."

The WXYZ contract called for Striker to write six 30-minute scripts each week—three for the Ranger and the others for the continuing *Manhunter* and *Secret Service* series. His co-creation of *The Green Hornet* series in 1936, which brought crime fighting to modern superhero times, added another weekly script to the fold.

Striker moved his immediate family to suburban Detroit in November, 1934, and went to work in a small office at WXYZ where he did most of his own two-fingered typing—stenographers just couldn't seem to get the proper phonetics of his rustic characters. He was forced to make 12 carbon copies of each script page because the station felt that mimeographing was an unnecessary expense.

A Writing Machine

Until the late 1930s, Fran Striker was the entire script department at WXYZ. His output was phenomenal. Jim Jewell, the station's dramatic director, referred to Striker as a writing machine, calling him "the greatest hack writer who ever lived" in a somewhat back-handed compliment.

While the bulk of Striker's scripts were variations on the good vs. evil theme and the dialogue may not exactly be poetic, there was an excitement evocative of the period's pulp novels with well-established characters that enthralled the public—particularly young listeners who thrilled to each adventure

Striker, Jr. recalled that his father saw story potential in everything he saw or did, always writing down ideas on bits of paper with his typewriter never far away. An old family scrapbook, for example, shows photos of Striker on vacation at Saranac Lake, NY in 1932 with his wife and young child and a typewriter, with Striker's caption: "The Remington Sixteen went with us. It was set up on a table on the cabin porch. Here I managed to do a couple of scripts and mailed them from Saranac Lake."

"He developed ideas in his mind and then later on he did it more formally in various lists," his son related. "If



The Green Hornet radio series often saw the hero working undercover on the wrong side of the law to bring criminals to justice.
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

you look at a typical good guy-bad guy western story, there could be a bank embezzler, a bank robber, a crooked doctor, a rustler, a stagecoach holdup, and there could always be trouble with the bad men and gangs, but you're kind of limited as to how many types of badness you can have. So, he would keep a list of situations and solutions, along with a list of bad guys and what their traits are, good guys and their traits. You put these lists next to each other and take number one from this list, number five from this list, number three from this list, number four from this list and put them together and you've got something to start playing with in your head. He called this his 'Morphological Approach to Plotting' and actually taught the method for a short time before his death."

Striker kept two to three days ahead of the constantly looming deadlines, although "there were times when he was up on the second floor of the studio building writing the scripts while people were downstairs broadcasting the script and he didn't have the ending for that episode as yet so they'd have to go running sheets down."

In the summertime, he generally kept a week ahead of broadcast dates because that's when he and his family came back to his beloved Western New York. While the primary Striker residence was in Grosse Pointe, Michigan for most of his WXYZ days, the writer was particularly fond of the gently rolling hills to the south-east of Buffalo where he spent several summers of his youth attending Boy Scout camp. In 1937, he scraped enough money together to buy an 80-acre tract of land on South Road (since renamed Genesee Road) in Arcade with an old farmhouse, woods and babbling brook. Striker affectionately called the place Fiction

The Illustrated Press

Farm where each summer the family would drive the 300 miles from their Michigan home.

Striker, Jr. has idyllic memories of his youth spent in Arcade. Each Fourth of July, his father would plan a dramatic fireworks display that he had been sketching out in the winter months, even bringing some of his youthful chemistry interest into play. Some of the neighbors found their way into Striker's stories. "An awful lot of the characters took on traits of people he had met," his son said. "One of the Lone Ranger books had a couple of characters that were out of Arcade-Java Lake, friends of Dad's. Deadline Doris was patterned after the publisher of the Arcade Herald for a number of years, Paul Doris. The Arcade Lumber Company was owned by a guy named Glen Peters. Dad had a character in one of his Lone Ranger novels called Knothole Peters. And, of course, when he was writing that character's dialogue, he would just think of how Glen Peters spoke and described him physically similar to how Glen looked. The same novel had a Doc Holcomb, after Buffalo's prominent Dr. Lavern Holcomb."

The Ranger Phenomenon

As the 1930s came to a close, Trendle finally agreed to build a writing staff under the guidance of his chief writer. Still, Striker managed to write at least one Ranger episode a week, in addition to co-creating and overseeing *The Green Hornet* (1936-1952), the FBI inspired *Ned Jordan, Secret Agent* (1938-1942), and



Among the Lone Ranger properties for which Striker wrote were comic books and strips.

Challenge of the Yukon (1947-1955) with Royal Canadian mountie Sergeant Preston and his dog Yukon King.

The Lone Ranger, though, continued to consume most of Striker's creativity. There were dozens of Ranger novels, comic books, comic strips, and even promotional contests. Striker had a hand in scripting the character's movie debut, a 15-episode serial from Republic Pictures in 1938. Striker, Jr. recalls racing with his father from their Arcade home to the Buffalo Airport on Sundays to send off the latest Ranger color comic strip story for publication in the 200 newspapers that carried it.

Lone Ranger premium offers and personal appearances gained overwhelming response. The Lone Ranger Safety Club had four million young members by the late 1930s. Twelve million listeners were glued to the radio three times a week for each adventure. The phenomenon continued to grow with the debut of the character on television in 1949, of which Striker only played a small part in the development. He continued overseeing the writing of the radio version, however, earning close to \$50,000 annually in his later years.

In July 1954, Trendle sold the rights to The Lone Ranger to Jack Wrather for the then-record sum of \$3 million. He reportedly gave his writing workhorse a \$4,000 bonus from the sale. On September 3, 1954, after 21 years and 2,956 episodes, the last original Lone Ranger aired on radio.

The Final Pages

With Striker's involvement in the Ranger now ended, the family subsequently left Michigan for permanent residence in Arcade. Because the farmhouse wasn't adequately insulated, Striker purchased a large home at 351 West Main Street in the village.

As for his writing, he was involved in what his son considers to be some of his best work. The eight-volume Tom Quest series of books, published by Grosset and Dunlap from 1947 to 1955, was a thrilling juvenile adventure serial that featured the young title hero, his giant hulking friend Gulliver, and wisecracking reporter Whiz Walton encountering lost cities, jungles, deserted ships, mysterious tunnels and more as Tom searches the world for his missing scientist father. The books predate Indiana Jones-like action with Striker's imagination running wild and colorful. It was his only work on which he held the copyright.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the writer was involved in a creative writing course for the Creative Problem-Solving Institute at the State University at

The Illustrated Press

Buffalo—the school from which he failed to graduate some 35 years earlier. Because the trek from Arcade to the university was long and treacherous during the winter, the Strikers decided to purchase another home on Kenmore Avenue in North Buffalo.

“On moving day,” Striker, Jr. recalled, “my mother and sister—the only ones who were living at home with my Dad anymore—went ahead to open the new house while Dad supervised the loading of the moving van at the Arcade home. After the van was loaded and left, Dad checked over the home one more time, locked it, and departed for the new house. But he didn’t finish that trip.”

Striker encountered a construction detour along Route 16 and was killed in a head-on collision along Seneca Street in Elma on September 4th, 1962. He was 59.

At the time of his death, Striker had just completed the fourth draft of an adult western novel, *One More River*, based on a little-known experiment that was conducted by the U.S. Army in the days of this country’s western expansion. In 1993 Striker, Jr. finished his father’s final rewrite and published the book.

And so, after countless words, plots and characters, the furious typewriter was silenced. But the legend of The Lone Ranger goes on, riding through the consciousness of our culture, a creation rooted in a humble man from Buffalo who simply wanted to make a living as a writer to provide for his family. In the process, his imagination stirred millions—many of them impressionable youngsters—who thrilled to the every deed of a hero for the ages.

This article originally appeared in the Winter 2005 issue of Western New York Heritage Magazine and is reprinted with permission.



My Solemn Pledge to The Lone Ranger

1. I promise not to cross any street except at regular crossings and to first look both ways.
2. I promise not to play in the streets.
3. I promise not to cross any street against signal lights.
4. I promise to obey Junior Traffic Police at all schools and help younger children to avoid danger.
5. I promise not to ride on running boards or fenders or hook rides.
6. I promise not to hold onto the rear of automobiles or street cars when on a bicycle, scooter or skates.
7. I promise not to ride a bicycle on the wrong side of the street, or make turns without signalling, or ride on the sidewalk or in any playground where others are playing.
8. I promise not to hitch-hike or ask strangers for rides and to discourage younger children from this dangerous practice.
9. I promise to promote safety at all times and encourage others to join this safety movement.
10. I promise to always obey my parents or guardians.

[It is the duty of every Safety Ranger to memorize and observe these rules at all times]

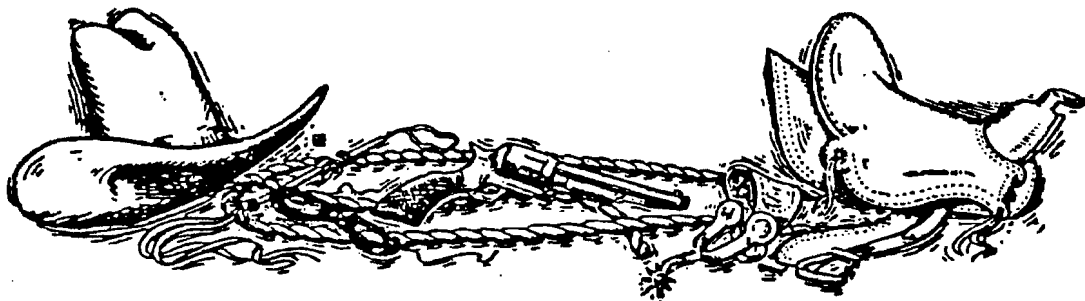


Signed

Member KILPATRICK'S LONE RANGER SAFETY CLUB

This safety movement in the interest of the happiness and well-being of our boys and girls is sponsored by Kilpatrick's, that good Bread in the bright gingham wrapper.

Obeying the pledge was key to membership in the popular Lone Ranger Safety Club. COURTESY FRAN STRIKER, JR.



The Illustrated Press



Gale Gordon

by TOM CHERRE

Gale Gordon was born on February 2nd, 1906 in New York City. His parents were both in vaudeville; his father being a quick change artist, and mother was an actress. His mother Gloria Gordon, incidently was Mrs O'Reilly in the *My Friend Irma Show*.

As a child Gordon had speech problems, being born with a cleft palate. After two major oral surgeries, Gordon was able to speak clear and concise. From then on he spoke with a distinctive resonant voice. When he was 17 he decided to study acting. His career started on Broadway where he made his debut in "The Dancers". He soon moved to California to get started in that new medium they called radio.

In 1926 Gordon began his radio career playing the ukulele. In 1933 he starred in his first radio show on KFWB's *English Coronets* for \$3.00 a show. He also played on *Tarzan*, *Gangbusters*, *The Adventures of Fu Manchu*, had the lead role in *Flash Gordon* and played in *Death Valley Days*. It was on that show that he met his wife, and they were married in 1937. It wasn't until 1939

that Gordon played in his first comedy role on the *Joe E. Brown Show*. This led him to play a continuing bit part of Molly's former beau on the *Fibber McGee and Molly Show* in late 1939. He played Otis Catwallader and other parts until 1941, when producer Don Quinn created the character Mayor LaTrivia just for Gordon. Mayor LaTrivia was a take off on former New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia who would weekly enter into a battle of wits with McGee and McGee usually getting the upper hand in their spats.

When Mayor LaGuardia passed away in October of 1947 the character of LaTrivia was put on hold and sat out for the season. In the meantime Gordon played Foggy Williams, the weatherman. Foggy was a soft spoken character, but still bickered with McGee nonetheless. Mayor LaTrivia then returned the following year.

Gale Gordon later played the popular Mr. Bullard, neighbor of Gildersleeve, and had prominent roles on the *Burns and Allen Show*. Gordon also played the part of Mr. Atterbury, husband of Bea Benaderet's character, Iris on *My Favorite Husband*, which starred Lucille Ball. Lucy adored Gordon and formed a lasting relationship for years to come. Gale Gordon is probably best remembered as principal Osgood Conklin on *Our Miss Brooks*. A part that continued over from radio to TV.

Gordon was never at a loss for work. He had an immensely popular and profitable career in radio for many years. After radio, Gordon moved with relative ease into television. If it wasn't for budgetary moves Gordon would probably have had the Fred Mertz part in *I Love Lucy*. In TV he played in *Our Miss Brooks*, all the Lucy venues, *The Danny Thomas Show*, and also starred in his own show called *The Brothers*. He stepped into the part of Mr. Wilson on *The Dennis the Menace Show* when former radio star Joseph Kearns suddenly passed away.

Gale Gordon found his niche in radio as a stuffy blustery character. Gale was at his best when he was confronting someone with a slow burn. In real life Gordon was anything but the character he usually portrayed. He was loved by just about everyone. That exception being actor, comedian, and voice immitator Mel Blanc. Strangely enough, they hated each other. Perhaps it was because they often went after the same type of acting job. Their antipathy lasted their entire careers, and to put it in simple words, they just did not get along.

To all of us OTR fans Gordon will best be remembered as belittling Connie Brooks or chastizing Walter Denton. He was the best at what he did in character genres. Gordon passed awy on June 30th, 1995 after a long battle with cancer. He was inducted into The Radio Hall of Fame in 1999.

Casey, Crime Photographer

by Phyllis Wazenska-O'Donnell

CLICK! CLICK! "Got it! Look for it in the MORNING EXPRESS!"

Casey and his camera arrived on the airwaves on July 7, 1943 as *Flash Gun Casey*, a thirty minute CBS entry into the whodunit field. It remained on the air through 1955, first as a network program, revived in 1952 on a sustaining basis, and in 1955 making a 25 minute appearance five days a week. It even had a brief foray into television between April 1951 and June 1952. In the process, it went through several name changes—first *Casey, Press Photographer*, later *Casey, Crime Photographer* and finally just plain *Crime Photographer*. Its best years encompassed 1946 through 1950; in 1949, it was billed as one of the top ten radio programs in the ratings.

Just as the jazz rhythms of Henry Mancini elevated the *Mr. Lucky* and *Peter Gunn* television series out of the ordinary, the piano at the Blue Note Cafe tinkling out arpezzios and jazz themes created the atmosphere that distinguished "Casey" from its competitors in the crime-drama field. Herman Chittison was the best known of the pianists, but included among whom were also Juan Fernandez and Teddy Wilson. It was at the Cafe that the "crowd"—usually limited to Casey and his girlfriend, Anne Wilson (Annie), but at times included Police Chief Logan of the Homicide Division of the New York City Police Department, a potential victim, informer, possible witness or probable lawbreaker—met to kibitz with Ethelbert, the bartender, to set up the story line, and to wrap up the solution. The atmosphere of the entire series was further enhanced by the orchestra of Archie Bleyer and the organ of Lew White.

Jack Casey had been born through the prolific pen of George Harmon Coxe, Grand Master of mystery writers, perhaps as early as 1936, definitely by 1942 in "Silent Are The Dead". Casey was six feet tall, of stocky build, with thick dark unruly hair and a slightly crumpled appearance. He had earned his nickname of "Flash" as an eager young photographer in the days prior to flashbulbs when in his inexperience, he used too much magnesium powder in his flash pan and nearly set the place afire. His nickname not only connoted his choice of career, but hinted at danger. Because of his honesty, integrity and loyalty, he had built up a cadre of dependable informers who alerted him to scoops, which caused his rise to ace photo-

grapher on the MORNING EXPRESS. Since his primary interest was in obtaining newsworthy photos—rather than the detection of crime—he forwarded pertinent information to Lieutenant Logan with whom he was on personally and professionally close and friendly terms.

Alonzo Dean Cole, who was primary writer for the radio series, with scripts also submitted by Milton J. Kramer and Henry and Gail Ingram, adapted the character of Casey to suit his purposes, promoted Lieutenant Logan to Police Chief, invented the obligatory girlfriend, Annie for Casey, and created the setting of the Blue Note Cafe, presided over by Ethelbert, the bartender. No evidence for Annie, or the Blue Note appears in the Casey books; however since the early books are out of print and unavailable, this conclusion can only be speculative.

George Harmon Coxe appeared to delight in having "Casey" on the air. Having been a script writer not only for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, but also on a free lance basis, he could with equanimity and humor accept the artistic license that changed the personality and relationships of his creation. It is interesting to note that while "Casey" was on the air, no new Casey books were written, with the exception in 1946 of one paperback, "Flash Casey, Photographer". (Other known Casey books include, "Murder For Two"- 1943; "Error In Judgement"- 1961; "The Man Who Died Too Soon"- 1963; and "Deadly Image"- 1964.)

How did Casey make the transition from detective fiction to radio? Coxe explains: The real Casey (read fictional) had been approached by a writer friend who was interested in doing a series for radio about a newspaper photographer. He tried to persuade Casey to allow him to use his real name, and because Casey hated to turn a friend down, he agreed. He was paid a small weekly fee for the use of his name, but earned this by taking a ribbing from colleagues who would tease him about some of the wilder episodes aired. Casey protested to the writer, complaining that the character on the radio was a phony and not at all like him, and that the situations dramatized were silly and had no basis in fact. However, there was no arguing with success: Casey collected his royalties and invested them with a broker friend.

While there was no evidence for the Blue Note Cafe, there is definite indication that the Blue Note Cafe was the inspiration for the Melody Lounge, created in the 1960s. The Melody Lounge was a long, narrow room, dimly lit, with a row of tables and booths along one side, and a bar, presided over by Albert, the bartender (later Tom Quigley). At the rear, a piano was played by Duke Baker, whose style of playing reminded Casey of Herman Chittison . . . The Melody Lounge was not so much a place

The Illustrated Press

to hang out, as a spot to get an occasional drink, and as a setting for one of the story lines.

The definitive "Casey" was played by Staats Cotsworth, although Matt Crowley was also heard in the role. (On television, Richard Carlyle and Darren McGavin in his first television role, played the part.) A bevy of actresses were heard as Annie—June Allison, Betty Furness, Jan Miner (who was the Television Annie), Alice Reinhart and Leslie Woods. Jackson Beck and Bernard Lenrow (also seen in the television series) interpreted the character of Logan, while John Gibson, with his distinctive nasal voice sewed up the part of Ethelbert in both the radio and television versions.

Typical of the crime dramas of the period, "Casey", directed by John Dietz, emphasized story line. As presented on radio, the characters were cardboard, one-dimensional / stereotypes, defined by sterile and stereotyped relationships. Although Annie was a reporter in her own right, she is heard primarily in the "Casey" programs as the mandatory feminine interest who admiringly encourages Casey to relate his story and sum up his conclusions. Moreover, although she is listed as his "girlfriend", so little emotional involvement come through that the role could as easily be described as co-worker, or even acquaintance. Summaries of the program describe Logan as "hating Casey's guts" and being threatened by Casey's superior detecting skill. Logan's emotions toward Casey range between annoyed tolerance through bluster. Only Ethelbert, in a masculine version of the "dumb blonde" concept (naivete interspersed with unexpected insights) brings a little unpredictability within the stereotype.

The program began with the announcer: "Good evening, this is _____ (name of announcer) inviting you to listen to another adventure of *Casey, Crime Photographer*", ace cameraman who covers the crime news of a great city. Our adventure for tonight: "_____". A more expanded opening was in the time honored pattern in radio of incorporating the commercial—at least in the case of Anchor-Hocking Glass, 1946-1949—right into the script. The announcement, "Anchor-Hocking Glass brings you *Casey, Crime Photographer*", followed by some chit chat between the announcer and cast members leading to a statement about Anchor-Hocking. An introductory music roll and the announcer: "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, this is _____ (name of announcer). Every week at this time the Anchor-Hocking Corporation and its more than 10,000 employees, brings you another adventure of *Casey, Crime Photographer*, ace camera man who covers the news of a great city. Written by Alonzo Dean (Deen) Cole, our adventure for tonight: "_____".

Other advertisers included Toni Home Permanent in 1948-1949, and Philip Morris, 1949-1950. Announcers

were Ken Roberts, Tony Marvin (1946-1948), Bill Cullen (1948-1949) and Bob Hite.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, sit back, let your mind drift back to a simpler day, listen to the music tinkling out of the Blue Note Cafe, watch Casey and his crowd, open the door, ease onto bar stools, start upon another adventure of *Casey, Crime Photographer*.

Lux Radio Theatre



by Joseph O'Donnell

For many years, the words "Lux presents Hollywood" meant another hour of exciting drama, romance, adventure, comedy or horror, in adaptations of first run motion pictures, often with the original stars recreating the rolls they played on the screen.

Lux Radio Theatre started in a studio at the National Broadcasting Company on October 14, 1934, featuring motion picture stars who were in New York City or who could be persuaded to come to the East Coast. Directed by Anthony Stanford, both Broadway shows and Hollywood movies were dramatized.

On July 29, 1935, the show moved to the Columbia Broadcasting System. Ratings started to drop, due in part to the lack of material from Broadway shows that was adaptable in an interesting way to radio. A number of radio programs had already moved to Hollywood, and their ratings had improved. With this in mind, Danny Danker of the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency planned to move this program to the West Coast, which move was effected by June 1, 1936. And so began "Lux" long run.

Prior to the move, each broadcast had been an independent production with no link tying them together. Cecil B. DeMille became that link, as the master of ceremonies who presented an introduction about the motion picture and its featured players, and who engaged in conversation with the stars in the wrap-up. It was his personality that welded the unit shows together into a series.

DeMille was expensive; the big stars were expensive. Lever Brothers paid the bills. The ratings increased and the show became successful. For Danker, big productions worked.

The Illustrated Press

DeMille continued with the show until 1944 when he became involved in a dispute with the American Federation of Radio Artists about the influence in radio the actors' union would have. DeMille was opposed to the \$1 assessment, opposed to the union's influence, opposed to buckling under. In the end, he was forced to resign. He had created a spectacle with "Lux" that had people clamoring for tickets, trying to break into rehearsals and the show itself, and making Hollywood history.

Following DeMille came guest hosts—Lione; Barrymore, Walter Huston, Irving Pichel, William Keighley, Mark Hellinger and Brian Aherne. On November 5, 1945, William Keighley, with solid credentials behind him, became permanent host for the next six years. When it was dropped by CBS, it returned to its original home, NBC, with Irving Canning hosting for the remainder of the run until it went off the air on June 5, 1955.

Most stars wanted to be part of the show, not only for the large payments they received, but also for the great radio exposure that brought them into the living rooms of millions of homes tuned into this extravaganza. And this exposure intensified interest in them and in their films, which increased the stars' popularity and ultimately the size of their income.

Well written scripts by top notch writers—included among whom were Charles S. Monroe, Sanford Barnett, Stanley Richards and Carroll Carroll—brought the radio scripts to life in a manner as engrossing as the movies had been. It was their skill in translating words from a visual to an auditory medium, and their skill in condensing a movie into three meaningful fifteen minute segments that conveyed the feel, the sense and the story line of the original, that enabled the listener to enter into the story and paint pictures in their minds as clear as those on the silver screen.

The commercials were well written in a manner that enabled them to become part of the conversation between the stars, the announcer and the producer-host. With glamorous movie stars endorsing Lux Soap, and announcers authoritatively praising its qualities, housewives rushed out to the stores to buy the product. Announcers included Mel Ruick, John Milton Kennedy, Ken Carpenter and Irving Cummings during the 20 year run.

The Louis Silver Orchestra provided short musical bridges between scenes which were the mainstay of the program, to be copied by others, and musical background to set the mood. Another mood setter were the sound effects handled by Charles Forsyth.

Behind the scenes were the all important directors: Tony Stanford, Frank Woodruff, Fred Mac Kaye and Earl Ebi.

They molded the stars of the evening with the stock company, composed primarily of Lou Merrill, Florence Lake, Lurene Tuttle, Eddie Marr and Margaret Brayton into a smooth unit, through a recognition of individual personality, tight direction and dramatic emphasis.

Twelve hours of intense rehearsal, starting Thursday evening with a fast read out and jam session preceded the program. Rehearsals were complete with orchestra and sound effects. In the Cecil B. DeMille days, he would come to a dress rehearsal, note what was developing, and make suggestions to the director to put into effect. The first dress rehearsal was recorded so that the production could be checked for errors, discrepancies and other details that could be heightened for dramatic value. By the second dress rehearsal, all was in place. Because DeMille was so involved with motion pictures, in reality he did not give much time to the program as producer. In fact, he usually did not read his part until the dress rehearsal, and on many occasions he did not see his script until he read it "cold" on the air. To make this method error free, his script was typed in a special manner that made the reading simple, and his lines—in interactions with others—were typed in blue, theirs in red.

After its move to Hollywood, the show was staged with the same glamour that it dramatized. Its new home, from which the broadcasts were aired, was a real playhouse, the Music Box Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, which came complete with marquee and seating for 1,000. When the show was ready to be aired, the audience was let in, the curtain on the stage was down, the musicians settled in place behind a screen, the cast took their chairs before the microphones, the director ascended his stool at the edge of the stage, with script and stop watch in hand. The lights went down, the curtain was raised, and 20 to 30 million Americans tuning in each week heard, "Lux presents Hollywood . . ."



A Quiz for the Old Time Radio Club

by Francis Edward Bork

1. What was the first song sung on radio?
2. What president gave the first speech on radio?
3. What year did *Sam and Henry* become *Amos 'n' Andy*?
4. Who was "That Little Chatter Box"?
5. What year did *Lux Radio Theater* come to radio?
6. Apple Annie, what was the original story's name?
7. *Terry and The Pirates*, who was Pat Ryan's nemesis?

The Illustrated Press

8. Conan Doyle had two names for Holmes; Sherlock and what other name?
9. The Lone Ranger on radio; who was the first actor to play the Ranger in the movies?
10. *Gunsmoke*, Matt Dillon, U.S. Marshall. What was Matt's first name on the original radio show?

Answers on Page 17

BITS 'N' PIECES

From Jack French:

My publisher and I were informed yesterday that my book, "Private Eyelashes; Radio's Lady Detectives", has been nominated for an Agatha Award in the category of Best Non-fiction. The Agathas, named for Agatha Christie of course, are presented annually by Malice Domestic, the largest crime fiction convention on the East Coast. Each year over 800 mystery writers and fans attend this three-day event. In 2005 it ends on May 1 st, at which time all the winners will receive their trophies . . . a china tea pot decorated with a skull and crossbones. For more information on the awards and Malice Domestic, go to: <http://www.malicedomestic.org/agathaslate.htm>

In the "small world department" another one of the Agatha nominees is Elaine Viets, whose mystery "Wedding Knife" is nominated in the Best Short Story category. Viets is now a best selling mystery novelist in Florida, but 40 years ago, when I was with the FBI in St. Louis, Elaine was a teen-ager whom Cathy and I employed as our baby sitter in Florissant, MO. Neither Cathy nor I had seen, or heard of Elaine, for the past 30 years.

My book is available from most on-line book sellers, including Amazon and also from my publisher at www.bearmanormedia.com

. . . Jack

From Dick Olday's e-mail: (Can anyone help?)

Hi Dick,
It's been a while since we last corresponded. I think we briefly ran into each other at the FOTR in 2003. Hope all is going well.

I'm researching *Mystery Hall*. This was produced locally in Buffalo by the BBC (Buffalo Broadcasting Company) and was aired over WGR or WKBW from 1940-1943 and then again 1949-1950 over the Mutual Network. Do you know anything about this program? Do you have any episodes? Is there any kind of archive other than your local OTR

group that might have info such as scripts for locally produced programs? Any insight would be most appreciated.

I actually first heard about *Mystery Hall* when I was researching *Peter Quill*. If you're interested in *Peter Quill* go to www.mwotrc.com and click on Radio Recall. I wrote an article about this program for the Nov 2004 issue.

Thanks for your assistance!!!!

Cheers, Karl

Paar For Laughs

Jack Paar's appearance on *We The People* (CBS) after returning from the Service in 1946.

First I want to say that I'm really happy to be back in America, the land of opportunity. Only this morning I Auditioned for my unemployment compensation. I've been away a long time. You see I only had 52 points including the size of my underwear. Like most veterans, I'm looking for a job. I see that Gable's back and Garson's got him and I know that Gromyko's and UNO's got him, but what I'm here to tell you is that Jack Paar is back and who wants him?

When I went overseas the bobby-soxers were swooning over Singin' Sam, Major Bowes was only a corporal, and Daniel Boone was trapping for I. J. Fox. In fact, I was over so long I ended up writing my wife, "Dear Friend".

I occasionally ran into difficulties with the WPPA. That's the West Point Protective Association. The thing I tried to do was get the officers to realize that we were all in the same boat—only I was tired of doing all the rowing. Once an officer told a joke to a general. It didn't get a laugh so he blamed it on me. It's the first time I was ever accused of contributing to the delinquency of a major.

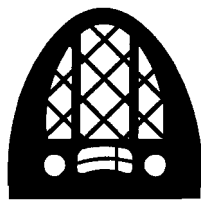
Overseas, the officers had the best of it—they had more money to entertain the girls with. One lovely girl I knew wanted candlelight and wine. All I had to offer was warm beer and a flashlight. But back here the girls are really fond of me. They think I'm tall, dark and winsome, but I'm not actually tall. It's just that I wear elevator socks.

You know, in the Pacific, all you think about are girls, girls, girls. Then you come home and find you've become shy and bashful. You find that your bark is worse than your bite. As a matter of fact, last night, when it came time for me to bite, all I could do was sit there and bark.

I'd like to get a job on the radio—for some non-commissioned sponsor—and maybe make a couple of million dollars and maybe buy myself some white shirts. But to suc-

The Illustrated Press

ceed on the radio, you have to have good jokes. Just before I got to the studio tonight a hungry writer rushed up to me and tried to sell me a famished joke. Honest Mr. Boulton, that joke was so feeble it had just received a medical discharge from Abbott and Costello.



RADIOLDIES

by DAN MARAFINO

Elliott Lewis had a long career in TV, directing *Here's Lucy*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Mayberry RFD*, *Petticoat Junction* and *Bat Masterson*, and later serving as executive story consultant on *Remington Steele*, starring Pierce Brosnan.

Arthur Godfrey was one of the first radio personalities to regularly poke fun at his sponsor's products. He promoted a shampoo containing eggs and milk, insisting and if your hair is clean, it makes a great omelet".

Ed Gardner entered show business after marrying actress Shirley Booth in 1929 and later directed theatre productions for the WPA.

Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, at age 12, ruptured his vocal cords while hawking newspapers as a San Francisco newsboy. It was this resulting raspy voice that later made him a vaudeville and radio star.

Joel McCrea didn't star in the 1958 *Tales of the Texas Rangers* TV series, but he did later co-star with his son Jody in NBC-TV's *Wichita Town*.

Al Jolson, who in 1948 was voted "the most popular male vocalist" in a variety poll, beat out the likes of Bing Crosby, Perry Como and Frank Sinatra.

Bret Morrison would wear the same cape he had worn as *Mr. First Nighter* while he performed his *Shadow* broadcasts in full costume to entertain the studio audience.

Don Ameche costarred with Mae West in the infamous "Garden of Eden sketch that resulted in the actress being banned from the NBC airwaves for more than a decade.

"mason Adams portrayed the cabbie Shrevie in "The Shadows Revenge" before beginning his three year run as Eddie the Hack on the Shadow's sister show *Big Town*.

John Todd was old enough to be a contemporary of the Lone Ranger and Tonto, and had toured the old west in a travelling Shakespeare company.

Ray Bradbury's stories have appeared in more than 800 anthologies and have been taught in high schools and colleges for decades.

Bing Crosby had 38 number one singles, more than the Beatles or Elvis Presley, and Bing was the first choice to star in the long running *Columbo* TV series.

Our Miss Brooks

by TOM CHERRE



I don't think anyone changed the hearts and minds of school-haters as much as Eve Arden did in *Our Miss Brooks*. She made school fun again, at least from 1948 to 1957. I think all of us, at one time in our lives had a Miss Brooks. My 4th grade teacher Miss Clark even had the first name of Constance. She was young, energetic, and good looking. I remember her working hard trying to do a good job despite adversity. For us OTR people Eve Arden will forever be embraced as the lovable Connie Brooks.

Eve Arden also enjoyed a long and successful career on stage, in the movies, and on television. Born as Eunice Quedens April 12th, 1908, her career in show business kicked off at the early age of 7 when she sang a comic dialect song "No Kicka My Dog" in an amateur show in California. In her teens she joined a theatrical troupe in San Francisco. When an offer came from New York in 1934, she dropped everything and took off.

She recalls having left a boyfriend and security at home and suffering nightmares all the way to New York on the cross-country train ride. While performing on Broadway she felt she needed a name change. She happened to be reading a book in her manager's office. She liked the name

The Illustrated Press



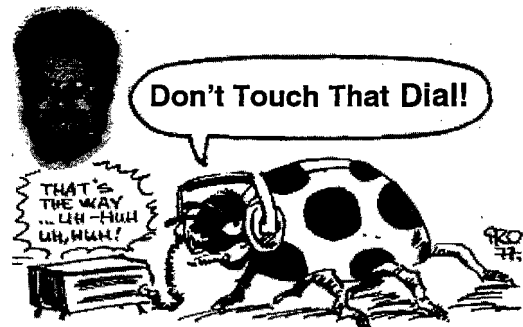
Richard Crenna as student Walter Denton and Eve Arden as teacher Connie Brooks.

of the character named Eve. Next to the book was a box of Elizabeth Arden products. She felt the name Eve Arden had a symbol of quality and aspiration. Eve Arden did well on Broadway, which led to a movie career spanning 54 years and a total of 69 movies. Her first movie was in 1929 while in California entitled "Song of Love". Her last movie role came in a 1983 remake of "Alice in Wonderland". In between she received an academy award nomination for supporting actress in the classic "Mildred Pierce" in 1945. In most of her roles she usually played the wise-cracking sarcastic friend of the heroine. This type of character would be synonymous with her for the rest of her career. Arden revived her popularity in 1978 when she played Principal McGee in the movie "Grease"

As English teacher Connie Brooks at Madison High, the sharp witted Miss Brooks locked horns with principal Osgood Conklin (played by Gale Gordon) for nine years. She dealt with the never ending problems of nerdish Walter Denton. Many of the story lines revolved around the seemingly brain dead biology teacher Mr. Philip Boynton (played by Jeff Chandler). She was more or less obsessed with lassoing him for a husband. The series story lines dealt mainly with classroom problems, but it also touched her personal life especially Mr. Boynton. Oddly enough, Eve Arden received countless of job offers to teach at various schools around the country. She was even given an award from the Alumni Association of the Teachers College of Connecticut for humanizing the American Teacher. Arden once said of her alter ego character, "I tried to play Miss Brooks as a loving person who cared about the kids and kept trying to keep them out of trouble, but kept getting herself in trouble."

Eve Arden played the same character on radio, TV, and in a film version of the series in 1956. In the movie "Our Miss Brooks" she finally did get Mr. Boynton to the altar, and presumably lived happily ever after. Miss Brooks brought much fame to Eve Arden, but she didn't seem to enjoy it that much. She was upset that her character was often portrayed as hard boiled and unsentimental. "That's not me" she said. After Brooks, Arden did a few more TV

sit-coms. She appeared in stock productions of "Mame" and "Hello Dolly". She also did Vegas. Phyllis Diller once said that beautiful women were not funny. She was probably giving herself a huge compliment. In Arden's case, she was attractive and funny. In her final years Arden remarked she was still hoping to contribute something worthwhile to this sad and wonderful world. I think she did, and then, a lot more. On November 12th, 1990 "Our Miss Brooks", Eve Arden passed away from cancer at the age of 82.



JERRY COLLINS

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, I thought it only appropriate to bring back a column that was quite popular in the 1980s. I will continue the sports theme that I have used during the past few years.

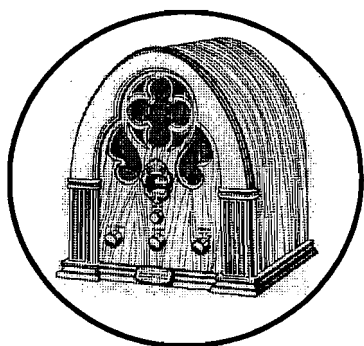
Aside from the World Series and All Star games, there was a written agreement amongst the New York Yankees, Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants that none of their home baseball games would be broadcast on the radio between 1933 and 1938. When the contract expired, Lee MacPhail, the Dodger's president announced that he was not renewing the agreement. Dodger games would be broadcast with Red Barber at the mike.

The Yankees and the Giants entered into an unusual agreement. Since the two teams alternated their schedule, when one team was on the road the other team was at home, the teams decided to broadcast on the same station, with Arch McDonald announcing the home games. Wheaties, the "Breakfast of Champions" was the major sponsor for the Giants and Yankees. Assisting McDonald was a young Alabama lawyer named Mel Allen. When it became evident that Red Barber's audience was vastly superior to that of Arch McDonald's, Allen was hired as his replacement.

Baseball fans that have passed their sixtieth birthday recall that most baseball announcers in the 1930s, 1940s and even 1950s did not travel with their teams. Instead games were broadcast via Western Union wire. This could

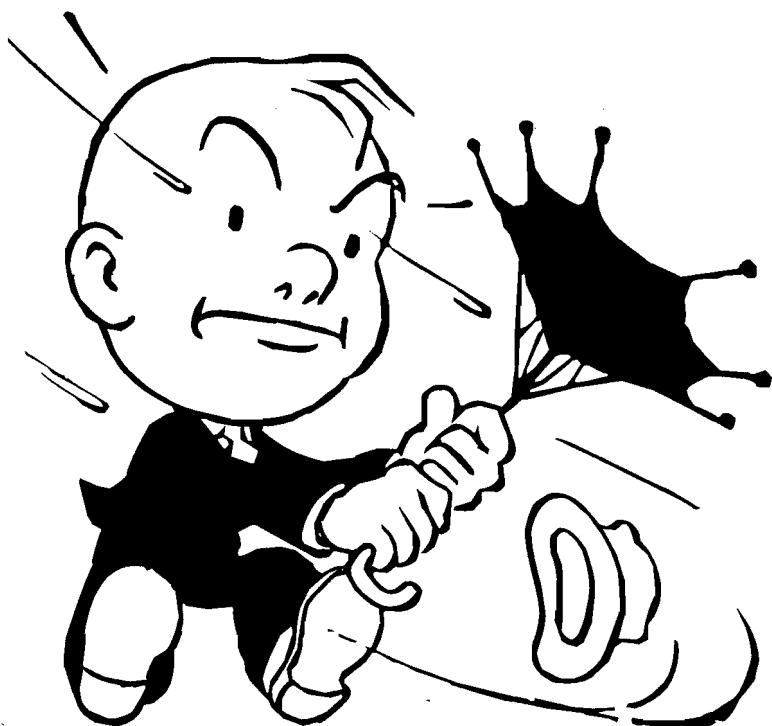
The Old Time Radio Club

49 Regal Street
Depew, NY 14043



FIRST CLASS MAIL

HANG ON TO YOUR HATS !



***HERE'S THE
FIRST OF THE
SPECIAL 30TH
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUES HEADED
YOUR WAY . . .***