

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 336

January 2006



*Giving 2005 the boot brings forth mixed feelings. A lot of positive things happened during our 30th Anniversary year. Many local new members were added due to the local WIVB-TV exposure. Several issues of **The Illustrated Press** used color pictures along with two giant-sized anniversary issues. Our cassette library went through an unbelievable expansion once again, offering a huge selection of radio shows to the members.*

*During the new year, we look forward to continuing the events that were started in 2005. With your help and renewed support we expect to be able to reach new highs in service and interest to all members. Don't forget that this is **YOUR** club and we'll be looking for new ideas and more member participation during the coming months. Help spread the word that **Old Time Radio** is alive and still kicking here at **The Old Time Radio Club**.*

*Along with the new year comes the realization that this will be your last issue of **The Illustrated Press** unless you renew your membership. Don't let this happen to you or us, we value our members.*

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Membership Information

Club Membership: \$18.00 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, \$18.00; 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.

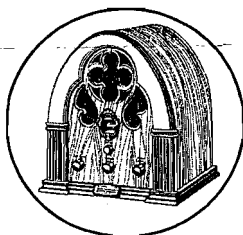
Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

Club Mailing Address

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Lancaster, NY 14086

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**Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters,
etc. to: *The Illustrated Press***

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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.



MY SECOND CHILDHOOD

by
FANNY BRICE

Most people start out as children and grow up to be adults. Me, I'm different. I started out a grown-up and now I'm a child. At least, I'm a child to millions of radio listeners each Thursday night, on NBC's *Maxwell House Coffee Time*.

While I'm doing the characterization on the air, I really feel like the seven year-old brat that *Baby Snooks* is. *Snooks* reminds me of a childhood that I never knew. The first five years of my life were spent in New York City's lower East Side, where childhood is only a fairy story.

I never had a chance to be a child there. In the first place, I had an above average curiosity. Why this? Why that? My questions went unanswered. My parents were hard at work, and there were three other children. Life to them meant bread and potatoes—not questions and answers. With *Snooks* now, it's just the opposite. When she asks questions, she gets answers. She's spoiled. Very spoiled. I smile wistfully at that. In a poor family, you don't get spoiled. I guess I spoil *Snooks* nowadays the way I wanted to be spoiled as a child and wasn't.

At seven, I had decided to become an actress. It was all an outgrowth of my brother's and my frequent trips to

a neighborhood theatre. While the house was being aired out in the morning, Lew and I would sneak in and lie flat on our stomachs between the seats until they closed the doors again. Then we'd hie ourselves up to the balcony, to wait there for the paying customers and the show. That wonderful world of make-believe stirred our imaginations to such an extent that we too, wanted to act.

The only stage we could find however, was a curb-stone. We started singing for pennies with the newsboys—who, in those days, used to sing and dance on street-corners for the pennies of passersby. These kids gave me my first singing lessons and, believe me, they knew all the tricks. If you think that prying change loose from a hurrying crowd is easy—try it!

At the age of thirteen, I made my first appearance behind the footlights at an "amateur night." The Keeny Theatre in Brooklyn had a weekly amateur night—hook and all—and a bunch of the kids, with whom I had been singing on the street, were going to compete for the longed-for cash prizes.

I decided that I had to see them perform. But the smallest admission charge was twenty-five cents! I worked hard, to get that quarter. I sewed for hours, making two dresses for a neighbor's kid. But, when I got to the theatre, all the "cheap seats" were gone. The only ones left cost fifty cents. I was utterly heartbroken.

My friends however, solved my problem—and unknowingly started me toward a theatrical career—by sneaking me backstage, telling the stage manager that I was an amateur, too. Well, I actually was, wasn't I?

Then, before I knew what was happening, I was pushed out on the stage myself. I *had* to do something, so I began to sing "When You Know You're Not Forgotten By the Girl You Can't Forget." It must have been my homely awkwardness that got the audience. In the middle of the song, pennies and nickels and dimes came sailing onto the stage. I didn't miss a single copper and I won the first prize of \$10.

It was such easy money that I started making a career of amateur nights. I guess I was what you might have called a "professional amateur," because I sometimes made as much as fifty dollars a week at these performances.

My first steady job was as a jack-of-all trades in a movie house. I sold tickets, played the piano, sang, and helped out in the projection room when another pair of hands was needed—as they were, almost constantly, in those early days of the movies.

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while there, I heard about a chorus call for George M. Cohan's "Talk of New York." I got a job, but was fired almost immediately, when they discovered that I couldn't dance. That didn't stop me. I joined a stock company and, on my return to New York, got my first big break—a job with Hertig & Seamon's Transatlantic Burlesquers. I learned how to dance then.

My mother had made me lots of lovely shirtwaists. I showed them to the chorus girls and suggested that I swap the blouses for dancing lessons. By the time I'd learned one simple routine, I was down to one shirtwaist. But I did get a job in the chorus.

I worked myself up to the first line and from there went into a musical show, "The College Girls," where I played the soubrette. It was there that Ziegfeld talent scouts saw me.

A week later, I had a Ziegfeld contract in my pocket and, at the age of eighteen, made my first appearance in the "Ziegfeld Follies," as a chorus girl and "bit" singer. I guess I was a hit. At least, I ad-libbed eleven encores at the first performance.

It was during a "between-Ziegfeld-shows" hiatus, while I was in vaudeville, that *Baby Snooks* was born. As part of my vaudeville act at that time, I did a burlesque of the song, "Poor Pauline," singing it in different dialects and as several celebrities of the day might do it. Then, at a party one night, I sang the song as a very young child would sing it—with wide eyes, exaggerated mouth, feet spread apart, and coy gestures.

The impromptu characterization was a hit. We named her *Babykins*. But she was temporarily forgotten when I returned to the "Follies."

Ziegfeld gave me a new song to sing that year. It was "Mon Homme," a French song for which Channing Pollock had written English lyrics. Long known as a comedienne, a funny-looking girl with lusty lungs and a comedy dialect, I suddenly became famous for singing the very serious "My Man."

It wasn't until many years later that *Babykins*, whom I had since renamed *Baby Snooks*, appeared on the Broadway stage. Playwright Moss Hart wrote the first real routine for *Snooks*, but only after the late Dave Freedman had shaped the characterization did *Baby Snooks*, as we know her today, make her first appearance before a public audience. That event occurred during the "Ziegfeld Follies" of 1932.

In 1938, when I went to Hollywood to make a picture for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, I was asked to guest on the *Good*

News program (forerunner of the present *Maxwell House Coffee Time*). What should I do? Instead of a song, I suggested *Snooks*. The characterization went over, and I was signed as a regular on the weekly broadcasts.

The reason for the success of *Snooks*? I guess it was because parents saw little bits of their own children in her continual questions. Or maybe because their own offspring seemed like angels after *Snooks*' pestiferous.

You see, *Snooks* must only do what the average child of seven would do—without being too fresh or unreal. In appearance, she has the face of a mischievous cherub—happy and smiling, but curious about everything. *Snooks* also has a big mouth—just like mine. And, when she cries, the rafters shake. That is the basic *Snooks*. But, through the years, her original character has been added to, from a hundred different sources. Since my own children, Frances and Bill, have grown up, other youngsters—complete strangers, perhaps—have contributed to *Snooks*.

Children are my hobby. I watch them in drug stores, getting sodas; in the five-and-ten, stretching their pennies over the fabulous displays at the toy counter; and on the streets. I even collect their art work. I now have a collection of more than a hundred paintings and drawings, done by children all over the world. About fifty of these pictures are now being shown at museums throughout the country.



"SNOOKS" WITH HER DAUGHTER, FRANCES BRICE

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My other pet hobby and avocation is interior decorating. Even that has *Snooks* in it. I like to design the kind of rooms a child will feel at home and comfortable in. A room planned for a child is full of warmth and happiness. I dabble in painting, too, using a child's simple style.

But it's *Snooks* who keeps me young. She has the direct approach to life. She keeps me warm and human.

As long as there are children, there will be a *Baby Snooks*. Is there any better way to have a second childhood? (Article originally published May, 1944)



GENE AUTRY

by
TOM CHERRE

If you kind readers may permit me, I'd like to go back and reiterate on a previous article about the western and "What Ever Happened to Randolph Scott". Is there anyone else out there besides me who misses the old time western? I mean the one where the good guy is really good, the bad guy really bad, and it's a happy ending with the hero always getting the girl. All these good guys are long gone and, I doubt if George Clooney, Tom Cruise, or Brad Pitt could sharpen their spurs.

One of the last of those good guys was Gene Autry. Gene passed away in 1998. He still remains the only western star on the top ten all-time box office money-making list. I'm sure all the boys at the Melody Ranch might say "That yodeling cowboy done real good". I'd like to share a humorous story that happened many years ago involving a drunk and Gene Autry. As Johnny Bond, Gene's singing partner recalled, the story goes this way. As Gene was leaving the Republic Studio one night, a drunkard approached him yelling out "Autry, you can't act, you can't ride, and you can't sing". Gene turned around, smiled, and said "Friend you're right. I can't act, I can't ride, and I can't sing, and I have three mil-

lion dollars to prove it". That dollar amount leaves us to believe it did happen a long time ago.

Gene's singing career took off at the tender age of five when his grandfather, Baptist minister William T. Autry recruited him because he needed another soprano in the church choir. This was his first singing teacher. When Gene turned twelve he ordered his first guitar out of a Sears Roebuck catalog costing him \$8.00.

At twenty-one Gene starred at Tulsa's KVOO billed as Oklahoma's Yodeling Cowboy in 1928. Gene eventually got his first real big start in radio at the old WLS *National Barn Dance* radio show. It was here he would meet his future sidekick and co-star Pat Buttram. Pat had a regular comedy spot and was billed as the "Winston County Flash". Gene and Pat were part of the show which also included Red Foley, the Hoosier Hotshots, and Georgie Gobel. Pat left the *Barn Dance Program* for Hollywood and became the movie sidekick of Roy Rogers. At the time Rogers already had Gabby Hayes and Smiley Burnette with him. Since three was a crowd Pat was dropped and wound up with Gene Autry at Columbia and starred with him in 40 movies. He was also part of the long running *Melody Ranch Radio Show* which ran from 1940 to 1956. In Pat's opening comedy sketch he always referred to Gene as *Mr. Artery*. Gene usually came on with a few songs followed by the story-line. As in Gene's movies, *Melody Ranch* had music, comedy, and adventure.

Pat Buttram had a stunning career, spanning radio, TV, and the movies. His voice appeared in numerous Disney classics. He also starred in the last "Back to the Future" movie where he played a cowboy in the old west. Pat reached everlasting fame as the cantankerous Mr. Haney in the *Green Acres* TV sit-com with Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor. Gene Autry and Pat Buttram remained loyal friends until Pat passed away in 1994.



GENE'S SIDEKICK, PAT BUTTRAM

If Gene Autry had not starred in a single movie, radio or TV show his career would still be legendary.

Gene wrote 338 songs including "That Silver Haired Daddy Of Mine" sung by Gene and

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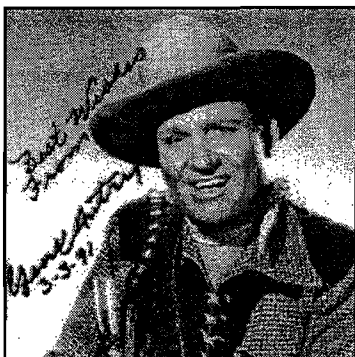
co-written by Jimmy Long. For all you trivia fans, that song was the first recording in the music industry to earn a gold record by selling a million copies in 1931. In all Gene recorded over 600 records and sold millions with seven gold and two platinum records to his credit.

While riding his horse Champion down Hollywood Blvd. For the 1946 Christmas Parade he heard some children say "Here Comes Santa Claus". This inspired him to write the Christmas song by the very same name. In 1949 Johnny Marks would write Gene's signature Christmas song that would forever give him Christmas immortality, "Rudolph The Red-nosed Reindeer". He recorded many other holiday favorites including "Here Comes Peter Cottontail". His *Melody Ranch Show* was a vehicle much like Crosby's *Kraft Music Hall* for showcasing his many songs. If you were an ardent listener of his show you might have heard tunes like, "Cool Water", "I'm An Old Cowhand", "May The Good Lord Bless And Keep You", "South Of The Border", and many more including "Back in the Saddle Again".

Gene's movie, TV and radio career slowed down in 1956, but the investments he made in oil, real estate, radio and TV stations led him to great wealth. Later in life he bought the major league Los Angeles Angels Baseball team. His net worth was over three hundred million.

Throughout his life Gene remained down to earth and never strayed from his country roots. In his autobiography "Back in the Saddle Again" Gene presents his childhood like a picturesque Mayberry type of town. He once said "We had morals then, and that's the way it should be now".

In one of Gene Autry's last public appearances in 1987, Joan Lunden of ABC's *Good Morning America* presented a segment feature including Gene, Roy Rogers, and Dale Evans. Gene and Roy both had severe hearing problems, with Roy's being more noticeable as he kept interrupting Joan when she was addressing Gene. As time ran out the interview turned out to be a mild skirmish between the two most popular singing cowboys. In the end Gene came out on top by telling all he was the first singing cowboy and that he saved the B western formula for decades. Gene and Roy both passed away in 1998. I'm positive they're still singing songs somewhere up there. So it makes no difference if you like



Coke or Pepsi or Gene or Roy. For myself I thought both of them were great. They both made huge contributions to the entertainment world and also to the rest of the world. Just remember Gene came first.



Meet Beulah . . . Surprised?

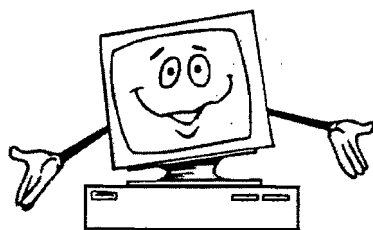
The McGees' Buxom Aunt Jemima is Really an Adonis—Marlin Hurt

Did you ever wonder what causes those gales of mirth when *Fibber McGee* announces "Here comes Beulah?" Take a look at this pin-up photo for the answer. For—instead of the fat, jolly colored cook in voluminous skirts that the audience expects to see—out steps a young, dapper and oh-so-handsome male!

Marlin Hurt first started developing that fruity falsetto chuckle for the old "showboat" broadcasts. Even before that, the brown-haired six-footer had felt a profound admiration for Negro dialect—its colorful, dramatic expressions and casual, happy quality of voice. Favorite stage personality of the 39-year-old character actor's childhood was the great Bert Williams, who gave him the inspiration for a footlight career of his own—plus the sage advice, "Son as you go through life, never lift anything heavier than a dollar bill."

Rolling *Beulah* (and *Beulah's* boyfriend, too) came to life while Marlin was *Dick* of the "Tom, Dick and Harry" radio trio. Now she's taking care of the *McGees*. But is she a lady? As *Beulah* says, "On the con-positively-trairy!"

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BITS 'N' BYTES

By
Bob McDivitt

Since I rejoined the club about two years ago, I expressed an interest in upgrading the club's catalogs to reflect the computer age that we are gradually becoming accustomed to. To this end, here is an update on my progress.

Except for some entries, the cassette catalog (published on a computer CD) has been upgraded to a Microsoft Excel file sorted by cassette number, it can also be used to sort by a series name. This allows for fast inquiries so that programs can be located to complete collections. An Excel "viewer file" that needs to be installed on your computer in order to read the catalog accompanies all catalogs. The catalog is currently undergoing changes whenever mistakes or duplicates are found and will continue to be corrected until finished. Only the newest catalog files are the most correct and are dated.

The Reel catalog is undergoing the same scrutiny. Reels are currently NOT being sent to out-of-town members but are being made available to local members in order to convert programs to either cassette or CD media and add to the respective catalogs. The Reel catalog is available to the librarian to assist in finding programs needing conversion.

The CD catalog will soon be available to all members in the same format as the cassette catalog. As time permits, shows are being converted to audio CD.

Programs will be copied to the type of media requested by the members according to the fee arrangement specified in The Illustrated Press. CDs are reproduced by request as the time involved in creating them may create some delays. This service will improve as other related projects are completed.

Beginning with the 2006 calendar year, all paid members will receive a CD containing the updated catalog, OTR pictures and miscellaneous files, plus pictures taken by members at local events. This CD will be sent out in the first quarter of every year thereafter.

Because attempting to publish a printed catalog has become cost prohibitive and computer usage becoming common throughout the country, this is the most cost

effective method for getting the information out to the membership. When ordering material from the catalog, it would be wise to indicate date, series and episode title along with cassette number so mistakes can be avoided. You can order ahead by e-mail, but no material will be sent without prepayment. Refer to The Illustrated Press information page (page 2) for the correct e-mail address to be used for placing an order.

Any member can call me at reasonable hours for help. I will return out-of-town calls, as my service doesn't cost me any more than local calls. You can also reach me by e-mail. My phone number is 716-681-8073 and my e-mail address is robmcd@verizon.net. Indicate in the subject line "OTR Club Member" and subject of message so I can instantly find them. I will respond in a timely manner to all.

I sincerely hope that we now have a method in place for all members to gain access to this wonderful medium.
Happy New Year! **Bob McDivitt**

I received an e-mail from Lisa Scott one of the co-anchors of the WIVB-TV early morning "Wake Up" show which featured our club back in June of last year. I thought it would be nice to share her thoughts with the membership and also print my reply:

From: Lisa Scott
Subj: Thanks for the CD's
Robert, How thoughtful of you to send those CD's to me. I was in the middle of listening to some other books on CD, but recently had the opportunity to listen to one of your selections. I chose "Stranger on a Train." Very compelling and very interesting how a radio drama could really hold your interest with the clever use of sound effects. I may pass on some of the Cd's to my grandmother who loves old time radio. I hope you enjoyed your appearance on the show. Continued success to you and your club! . . . **Lisa Scott**

From: Robert McDivitt
Subj: Re: Thanks for the CD's
Lisa, I'm glad that you received the CD's. This is just a sampling of the type of material that is in the club's collection that keeps growing. Kevin expressed your interest in mystery/suspense type stories so that's where the idea came from. I would be interested in your review of the Suspense programs. I chose those with stars that you would recognize and stories to intrigue you. Most of our membership consists of people who grew up listening to this type of entertainment but younger people are getting interested, also. Thanks to all at WIVB for promoting our club and maybe we could do it again at any time.
Sincerely, **Bob McDivitt**

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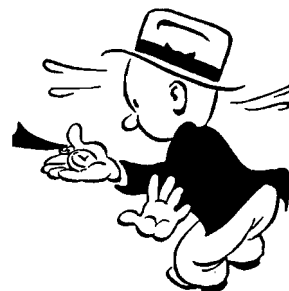
Warren J. Neyerlin

We are sad to announce the passing of our fellow member Warren J. Neyerlin. Our sincere condolences to his family.

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE CASSETTE LIBRARY

- 3630 Boston Blackie "Star Of The Nile" 7/14/44
Boston Blackie "Black Market Meat Ring" 7/21/44
- 3631 Lux Radio Theatre "Disreali" 1/17/38
- 3632 CBS Radio Workshop "When the Mountains Fell" 10/26/56
CBS Radio Workshop "Biography of The White House" 11/2/56
- 3633 Fred Allen Show - Guest: Frank Sinatra 10/21/45
Fred Allen Show - Guest: Mr & Mrs. James Mason 3/28/48
- 3634 Whistler "The Thief" 1/17/43
Whistler "Mind Over Matter" 1/24/43
- 3635 Beyond Midnight "Fortieth Birthday"
Beyond Midnight "Madiera Wine"
- 3636 Rocky Jordan "Momento From Adelaide" 9/25/49
Rocky Jordan "Pattern For Revenge" 10/2/49
- 3637 Duffy's Tavern "Christmas Carol" 12/21/45
My Friend Irma "Christmas Eve Party" 12/20/48
- 3638 Great Gildersleeve "The Hockey Player" 1/21/45
Great Gildersleeve "Aunt Hattie" 2/4/45
- 3639 Inner Sanctum Mysteries "Melody Of Death" 4/22/44
Inner Sanctum Mysteries "The Silent Hands" 5/13/44
- 3640 Wild Bill Hickok "Secret Of The Hard Luck Mine" 1/18/52
Wild Bill Hickok "Revenge Of The Red Man" 1/23/52
- 3641 Wild Bill Hickok "The Two Faced Horny Toad" 1/11/52
Wild Bill Hickok "The Forged Fire" 1/16/52
- 3642 Broadway Is My Beat "Stacy Parker" 4/25/53
Broadway Is My Beat "Joyce Tyler" 8/1/53
- 3643 Broadway Is My Beat "George Lane" 6/13/53
Broadway Is My Beat "Joan Stanley" 6/20/53
- 3644 Broadway Is My Beat "Wanted For Murder" 4/18/53
Broadway Is My Beat "Harry Gray" 4/25/53
- 3645 Nick Carter, Master Detective "The Drug Ring Murder" 11/10/43
Nick Carter, Master Detective "The Substitute Bride" 11/17/43
- 3646 Nick Carter, Master Detective "Murder In A Decanter"
Nick Carter, Master Detective "Monkey Sees Murder" 1/7/45
- 3647 Whitehall 1212 "The Weed Eradication" 6/29/52
Whitehall 1212 "The Murder Of Mr. Sweet" 7/6/52
- 3648 Wild Bill Hickok "The Mark Of A Killer" 1/25/52
Wild Bill Hickok "Dark Horse Candidate" 1/30/52
- 3649 Wild Bill Hickok "Thunder On The Plain" 3/7/52
Wild Bill Hickok "Big Jon & Little Mike" 3/12/52
- 3650 Wild Bill Hickok "The Wolf Of Ghost Mountain" 10/3/52
Wild Bill Hickok "The Tinker's Revenge" 10/5/52
- 3651 Cloak & Dagger "The Eyes Of Buddah" 7/2/50
Cloak & Dagger "The Trap" 7/9/50
- 3652 Rocky Jordan "An Air Of Death" 1/29/50
Rocky Jordan "The Return Of Tone" 2/5/50
- 3653 Proudly We Hail "Helping Hand" 4/3/55
Proudly We Hail "The New Comers" 4/10/55

Yep, It's
That Time
Again.



It's membership renewal time once again, and in order to remain a member we need to receive your dues (\$18.00) by the end of February. If the mailing Label has 1/06 printed after your name it means your membership is expiring and this will be the last issue of the I.P. mailed to you. Please send in your check today while it's fresh in your mind.

... Christmas Party Photos ...



Frank Bork



Dom Parisi and Pete Bellanca



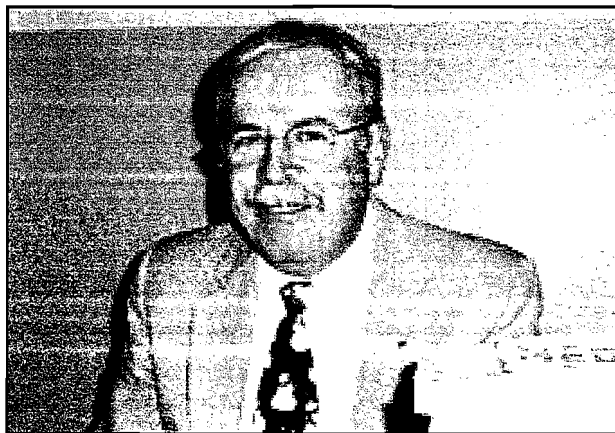
Don Boyack and Dan Marafino



Jerry Collins



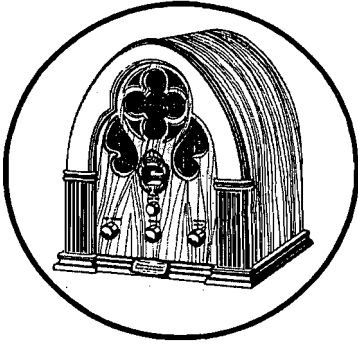
Don Friedrich and Dick Simpson



Tom Cherre

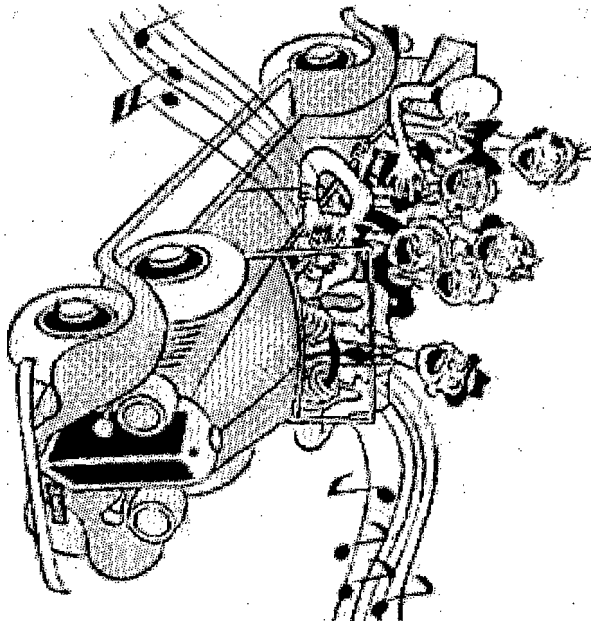
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