

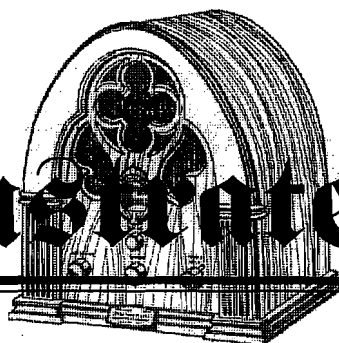
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

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ED (Archie) GARDNER

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Membership Information

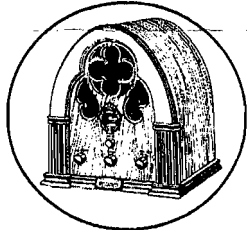
Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should 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 the month of August.

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



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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

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

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

Technical Manager

Bob McDivitt (716) 681-8073
109 Poinciana Pkwy.
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
robmcd@verizon.net

Cassette, CD and Reference Librarian

Frank Bork (716) 835-8362
209 Cleveland Drive
Cheektowaga, NY 14215
frankbork209@yahoo.com

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Nigel Bruce

by
TOM CHERRE

Nigel Bruce, you couldn't help but love the guy. His career span had him starring in 86 movies, several theatrical productions, and many years of radio. Of course he will forever

be etched in our minds and hearts as Sherlock Holmes' trusty associate Dr. John Watson. If you are a Sherlockian purist, much like our own worthy librarian Frank Bork, you may resent the way Hollywood portrayed Bruce in the character of Watson. In Doyle's canticle of Sherlock Holmes Dr. Watson was perceived as an intelligent, capable, and competent fellow. The movie series made him out to be more of a somewhat dimwitted buffoon. Imagine how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would think.

After appearing in 14 movies alongside Basil Rathbone for Paramount for two films and 12 for Universal they continued to play the same roles in radio in *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. A finer pair would be hard to find. Bruce and Rathbone were as good as Crosby and Hope, or Burns and Allen. They were actually very close friends even before they began acting together. They would remain best of friends for the rest of their lives.

Bruce was born William Nigel Ernle Bruce on February 4th, 1895 in Ensenada, Mexico while his parents were on holiday. They returned to the British Isles shortly after he was born, where Bruce would spend his formative life. During World War I Bruce was severely injured in the leg. He would spend the better part of three years sitting in a wheel chair. It is noteworthy to mention that both Bruce and Dr. Watson both had severe leg injuries while fighting for England. Is that coincidence or fate. Before the war, as a young man Nigel had a strong desire for the British Stage. After the war and his injury healed, the urge to acting came back. In 1920 he made his acting debut in "The Creeping Door". In 1922 he married Violet Shelton. They would have two daughters, and would remain married till Bruce passed away in 1953. Bruce and his family moved

to Hollywood in 1934 where he would begin his movie career. He appeared in some great classics including the first "Treasure Island", "The Scarlet Pimpernel", "Lassie Come Home", and two Hitchcock classics, "Rebecca" and "Suspicion". This was in addition to the Sherlock series. After his Watson role he seemed to be stereotyped forever as a stuffy windbag middle aged Englishman. Bruce loved playing Dr. Watson, never tiring of that part in the movies or on radio. Rathbone became bored with the radio show, but Bruce continued to record over 200 shows. The radio show usually opened with the announcer entering Dr. Watson's study and asking "And what tale do you have for us tonight Dr. Watson?" With the sounds of "Big Ben" chiming in the background Dr. Watson would take us back to some intriguing time in old England with a story of mayhem and murder. After the case was solved we would find ourselves back in the warm confines of Dr. Watson's study. He would sum up the story and maybe give us a glimpse of the next exciting adventure. All this while you hear the crackling wood burning in the fireplace. With a little imagination you could see the two-wheeled hansom trotting down the foggy streets of London.

Sad to say Nigel Bruce died of a heart attack in Santa Monica, California in October of 1953 at the early age of 58. He was actually three years younger than Rathbone as most people thought he was the senior. In Basil Rathbone's autobiography he credits him as giving us a unique perception of the Dr. Watson role. He also stated he was a much more gifted actor than people gave him credit for. If I was a Brit or even a Canadian like our own Richard, I would say Nigel Bruce was "top shelf."

The Year 1940 in Review

by **JERRY COLLINS**

I wish to thank the Seek Publishing Company in Millersville, Tennessee for providing much of the information for this article. Additional information was gathered from various radio related web sites, such as jim's radio.

The year 1940 was the last year that America could casually sit back and watch the fighting around the world. In 1999 David Brinkley wrote *Washington Goes to War*. It told the story of Washington DC in 1940, a sleepy little Southern city, where military officer still rode horseback on the parade grounds. Soon after the fall of France to invading Nazi armies the United States passed the Selective Act, our first peacetime draft. The days of isolationism were coming to an end.

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The year is also famous for a variety of other reasons:

- The first successful helicopter flight in the United States takes place
- The forty-hour week goes into effect in the United States
- The Olympic Games are cancelled because of World War II
- The first blood bank in the United States is opened
- The World's Fair in New York City opened
- The first McDonalds opened in Pasadena, California
- Winston Churchill became British Prime Minister
- John Steinbeck won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Grapes of Wrath*

The year 1940 produced the following champions:

- The Cincinnati Reds won the World Series over Detroit in seven games
- The Chicago Bears defeated the Washington Redskins 73-0 to win the NFL Championship
- The New York Rangers won the NHL championship
- Indiana won the NCAA Basketball Championship
- Minnesota was the top rated college football team
- Tom Harmon from Michigan won the Heisman Trophy
- The University of Pittsburgh defeated Fordham College 50-37 at Madison Garden in the first televised college basketball game

The year 1940 featured the following prices:

- New house - \$3,925
- New car - \$850
- Tuition to Harvard - \$420 per year
- Movie Ticket - \$.30
- Gasoline - \$.11 per gallon
- Eggs - \$.19 per dozen
- Fresh baked bread - \$.08 per loaf

The year's top songs were:

- Blueberry Hill
- The Breeze and I
- Fools Rush in
- I'll Never Smile Again

The top movies of the year were:

- Our Town
- The Grapes of Wrath
- Rebecca
- Kitty Foyle
- The Philadelphia Story

The top rated radio shows of the year were:

1. The Chase and Sanborn Hour (Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy Show)
2. The Jell-O- Program (Jack Benny)
3. The Johnson Wax Program (Fibber McGee & Molly)
4. One Man's Family

5. Lux Radio Theater
6. The Pepsodent Show (Bob Hope)
7. The Kraft Music Hall (Bing Crosby)
8. The Fitch Bandwagon (Tobe Reese)
9. Major Bowes Amateur Hour
10. Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge

The new radio shows of 1940 were:

- Captain Midnight
- Superman
- Young Dr. Malone

Next month we turn to the year 1941, the year that tragically ended with the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor.

Did you know that . . .

by DOM PARISI

In 1922, George Burns and his partner, Bill Lorraine decided to go their own way, and that Gracie Allen, a stage performer, was invited to watch the duo perform to see if she might be interested in teaming up with either comic. She picked George Burns. They opened the same year (1922) in Newark, New Jersey at \$5 a day. Burns was born in 1896 and lived to be 100.

Did you know that . . . Rochester, from *The Jack Benny Program*, first appeared on the show as a Pullman porter in 1937. He was a great hit and Jack's writers came up with a skit where Benny hires him away from the railroad as his valet. Rochester was so convincing in his valet role that many listeners believed that he was an actual employee and had somehow made it onto the show.

(The following material for Did you know that . . . appeared in Radio Spirits' 2007 calendar)

Did you know that . . . Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden (Amos 'n' Andy) missed just one show out of more than 5,000 broadcasts due to a blizzard.

Did you know that . . . One of radio's most popular pairings, Chester A. Riley and Digger O'Dell gave *The Life of Riley* a unique place among radio sitcoms. NBC didn't like the idea of death jokes, but the addition of Digger gave the show a huge rating.

Did you know that . . . The first time Phil Harris saw Alice Faye in 1933, he couldn't actually see her at all. Faye's face was covered with bandages as a result of an accident. When they met again, 10 years later, Phil was part of *The Jack Benny Program*. Alice was one of America's hottest singers and actresses. Their partner-

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ship led to their own show.

Did you know that . . . Bud Abbott and Lou Costello first met at a Brooklyn theater in 1929. Costello needed a straight man. Abbott, a would be vaudevillian, was, at that time running the box office. Their meeting resulted in their own radio show reaching an audience of over 15 million listeners.

BEING THERE: Collecting Radio Broadcast Admission Tickets

By RICK PAYNE (All Rights Reserved 2007)

During the golden age of radio, networks and sponsors invited the general public to attend live performances of many popular programs. For the performers, the presence of the studio audience provided encouragement, laughter and appreciation. For the audience, the experience was an unforgettable opportunity to see their favorite entertainers at work. Tickets from some broadcasts survive today . . . waiting for collectors like me.

Hooray for Hollywood!

This month, we devote our energies to examining audience tickets from radio programs featuring popular film adaptations: movies on the radio.

It took the radio networks a few years to fully engage California in program production (principally due to economics), but once accomplished, they accessed an incredible pool of talent. NBC was well ahead of the fledgling CBS network in the early 1930s. NBC's schedule featured the most popular stars and programs.

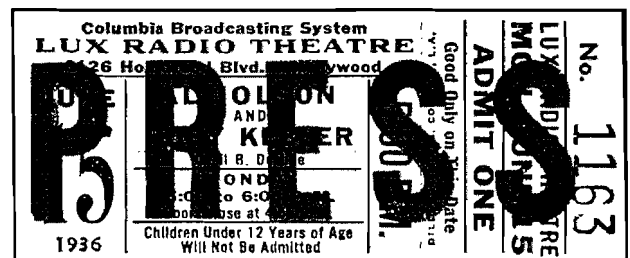
CBS, on the other hand, was making inroads with popular music, and proved to be the most successful at bringing Hollywood stars to the microphone. With most stars too busy filming to host regular programs, CBS created long-lasting formats that permitted the top names in the entertainment business to appear whenever they were available. Using a regular host for continuity, programmers were free to adjust and adapt to assemble great casts for thrilling recreations of proven stories. The motion picture studios saw value in the ability of radio to reach the masses, and the network knew the value of star power in building ratings. It was a winning combination.



Hollywood Hotel was the first national radio program to originate from the West Coast. Taking to the airwaves in October of 1934, this hour-long variety program featured celebrity interviews, popular songs and short dramatizations of current movie releases until December 1938. Dick Powell served as Master of Ceremonies, but the real power behind the throne was the Hearst newspaper syndicate's Hollywood columnist Louella Parsons. Parsons simply compelled the top stars in the film industry to appear free of charge on her program . . . or else. She picked the movies and the stars, and few dared refuse her invitation.

The lucky bearer of this 1936 ticket was treated to "Thirteen Hours by Air," featuring Paramount stars Fred MacMurray, Joan Bennett and Zasu Pitts recreating their screen roles. As always, I owe a debt of gratitude to the work of various OTR researchers for their internet-accessible episode logs.

Tickets from this series are exceedingly scarce. The Major Broadcasting Theatre in downtown Los Angeles hosted the show, as well as *The Adventures of Gracie* and *California's Hour* on the Columbia-Don Lee West Coast network. Until the 1938 openings of studios at CBS Columbia Square and NBC's Radio City, visitors wishing to attend any live broadcast had their work cut out for them. The shows originated from locations all over town. As a result, pre-1938 tickets are tough to find.

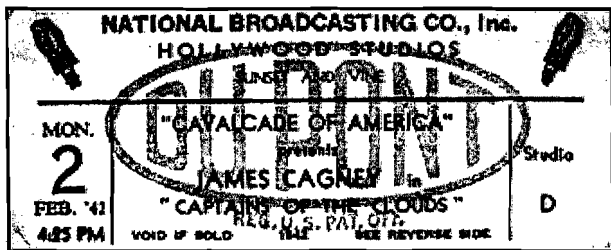


Of course, the gold standard for film adaptations was *The Lux Radio Theatre*. Originally, the program was produced in New York and featured adaptations of stage plays. Facing falling ratings, the show's fortunes changed dramatically when it was moved to California and given the largest budget in radio. It gained instant credibility with the addition of legendary film director Cecil B. DeMille as host.

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This early Lux ticket was for only the third broadcast from Hollywood, which was the second to feature DeMille (he had been out of town for the previous show). Al Jolson, the self-proclaimed "world's greatest entertainer," starred with his wife Ruby Keeler in "Burlesque." Frank Nelson (Jack Benny's favorite floor-walker) also appeared in the cast. Fittingly, the show originated from the Lux Radio Theatre located on Hollywood Boulevard. The show relocated to 1615 N. Vine Street in 1940, where it remained for the duration.

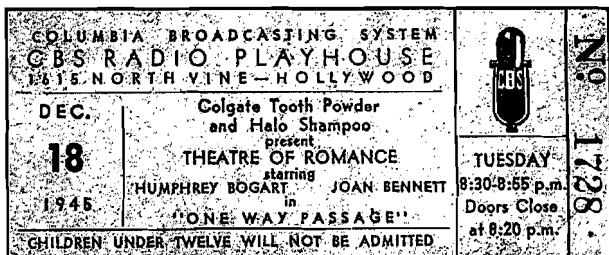
Lux tickets are among the most visually attractive tickets from radio's golden age. By October 1936, the brightly-colored tickets added the title of the film being adapted to the names of the stars. I've been fortunate to pick up tickets for 70 different broadcasts . . . leaving me a mere 857 short of completing the run!



Best known as an anthology series celebrating the spirit and history of America, Du Pont's *Cavalcade of America* occasionally featured dramatizations of popular films. With the advent of World War II, the series took on a more contemporary flavor and fervently supported efforts to raise morale and patriotism.

Warner Brothers star Jimmy Cagney was joined by costars Alan Hale, Dennis Morgan and Reginald Denny for this NBC performance of their 1942 film release "Captains of the Clouds." This tale of American bush pilots joining the Royal Canadian Air Force aired just two months after Pearl Harbor.

Cavalcade announcer Clayton Collier was doing double duty at the time . . . he was also starring as the title character on *The Adventures of Superman*.



Cagney wasn't the only Warner Brothers tough guy to find a home on the radio. Long before joining his wife

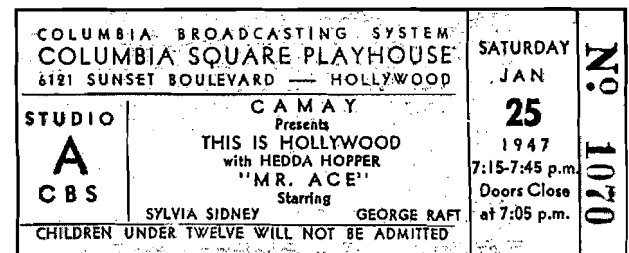
Lauren Bacall to star in the 1951 radio series *Bold Venture*, Humphrey Bogart was on the air for *Halo Shampoo*. Apparently he had no objection to working with *Angels with Dirty Faces*, but he drew the line at ones with *Dirty Hair*.

The *Theatre of Romance* aired for just over two years on CBS. Joan Bennett joined Bogart in this revival of a 1932 Warner film which had originally starred William Powell. Bogart radio appearances were pretty rare, and his popularity drives value for his tickets to high levels.



The Cresta Blanca Winery (so named for the limestone cliffs of the Livermore Valley) produced the first California wine to ever win a competition in France. From 1944-47, it also produced some great radio programming. *This Is My Best* featured Hollywood stars performing in dramas based on great books. The CBS series was highlighted by a brief seven-week run hosted by Orson Welles.

In 1946, the series was reformatted and retitled *The Cresta Blanca Hollywood Players*. With the change, it shifted from literature to film adaptations featuring a variety of filmland hosts. For the broadcast seen by the original bearer of this ticket, Gregory Peck starred in an adaptation of the 1943 film "Heaven Can Wait." Don Ameche had starred in the original film, which was an Academy Award nominee for best picture.

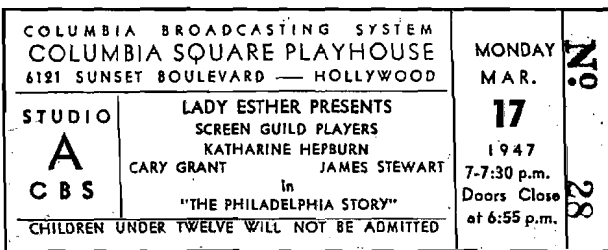


Louella Parsons' principal rival in the Hollywood gossip business was Hedda Hopper, who had abandoned her own unremarkable acting career only to wield enormous influence on the careers of more successful entertainers. Best known for her trademark hats and a vitriolic hatred of immoral or un-American behavior, Hopper was reviled and feared . . . but her Chicago Tribune syn-

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icated column and radio broadcasts kept her a formidable force in Hollywood until her death in 1966. She was married to stage actor DeWolf Hopper, best known for his definitive orations of "Casey at the Bat" at the turn of the century.

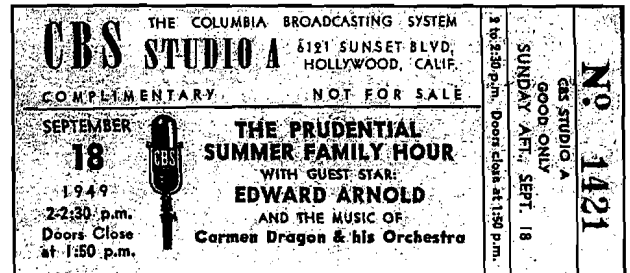
Hopper was more popular with the public than Parsons, in large part to her ability to speak in a breezy, relaxed manner. CBS recognized that fact, and selected her to host a series titled *This Is Hollywood* in 1946-47. The broadcast ticket pictured above features George Raft and Sylvia Sydney reprising their 1946 United Artist film roles in "Mr. Ace." Raft is best known today as the actor most responsible for Humphrey Bogart's film success . . . it was Raft who first turned down the starring roles in "High Sierra" and "The Maltese Falcon."



In 1939, the Gulf Oil Company launched a CBS series produced for the benefit of supporting the Motion Picture Relief Fund. The opportunity to assist elderly and destitute actors of the silent era proved irresistible, and *The Screen Guild Theater* would carry on that mission until 1952. When Gulf bowed out in 1942, Lady Esther Cosmetics stepped in and sponsored the program for five years.

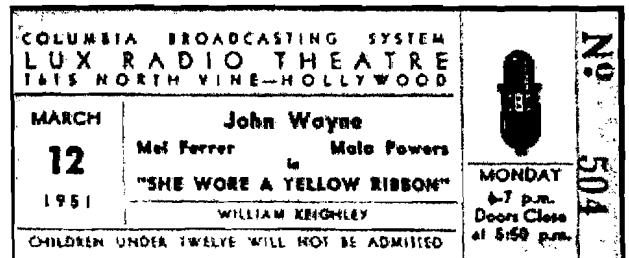
Here's a ticket for a high-water mark from the series: the reunion of three of the biggest stars in Hollywood, recreating their roles from the 1940 best picture nominee "The Philadelphia Story." While Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart were radio regulars, it was a rare event indeed for Katherine Hepburn to perform on the air (she was one of the few stars who dared ignore the call of Louella Parsons). As she told announcer Truman Bradley during this broadcast, "There isn't an actor or actress in Hollywood who isn't eager to come here and take part in the great work this program does for the Motion Picture Relief Fund."

Just five weeks earlier, the program featured a radio dramatization of a successful motion picture based on a radio program . . . "Heavenly Days", starring Jim and Marion Jordan as Fibber McGee and Molly!



The Prudential Family Hour offered musical entertainment from 1941-48, running the gamut from grand opera to novelty songs. For the 1948-49 season, the CBS program was retitled *The Prudential Family Hour of Stars* and featured a rotation of hosts/stars including Ronald Colman, Humphrey Bogart, Gregory Peck and Ray Milland.

This 1949 ticket for the summer edition of the program features the great character actor Edward Arnold in his most memorable role: portraying Daniel Webster in the famous fantasy "The Devil and Daniel Webster." This was based, of course, on the 1941 RKO film of the same name, where Arnold co-starred with the great Walter Houston as Mr. Scratch.

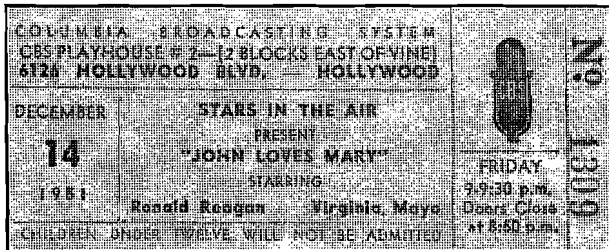


The great John Wayne made one of his few radio performances on this 1951 episode of *The Lux Radio Theatre*. The Duke recreated his 1949 role as Captain Nathan Brittles from the classic John Ford RKO western. Stepping in for Joanna Dru was 19-year-old Mala Powers, who had started appearing in radio roles at the age of 16.

This was John Wayne's second and last appearance on the Lux program. He had appeared in "Red River" two years earlier. He performed the final part of the John Ford trilogy of classic westerns when "Fort Apache" was presented on a 1949 episode of *Screen Director's Playhouse*.

As you might imagine, the multitude of John Wayne collectors complicate the lives of ticket collectors by driving demand and value to very high levels.

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We round out our edition of Being There with this ticket for the second episode of *Stars in the Air*. This CBS series aired for 27 weeks in 1951-52, and never gained a sponsor. The premiere episode featured Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed in "It's a Wonderful Life."

This ticket for the second episode reveals a couple of surprises. First, it was performed in the same venue used for the 1936 Lux ticket. Second, it was performed on Friday, December 14th . . . but the program aired on Thursday, December 20th . . . indicating it was recorded for later airplay.

Ronald Reagan's appearance in this revival of his 1949 Warner Brothers film helped drive audiences to his latest film, the immortal "Bedtime for Bonzo." As far as I can tell, "Bonzo" was never adapted for radio. Whew.

And that brings us to the closing credits on this month's installment. I'd like to thank the members of the Academy, and most of all . . . you. Next month, let's celebrate the opening of the baseball season with a review of sports-related radio show tickets. So oil up your mitts, clip a baseball card to your spokes, and curl the bill of your baseball cap just right!

ETIKET FOR THE ELITE

by ED (Archie) GARDNER

Archie of "Duffy's" offers Untimely Tips on Better Behavior

Leave us not bandy words. There is a right and a wrong way to disport one's self under all occasions, even when visiting one's in-laws. If one perspires to success in this bale of tears, his manners must be such that he will help to make any high-class socialistic gathering a real fiasco.

That is why we should all have etiket, a phrase which means simply the proper forms of behavior under all circumstances, especially if someone is looking. I have wrote these hints on etiket after years of practicing up on me own manners, whether at home, aboard or in the company of the elite who meet to eat at "Duffy's." Nowadays, when they see me coming, folks murmur

prettily behind their hands: "Here comes Archie, the churl." Which, of course, makes me feel that me efforts to learn etiket and pay me debt to society has not all been wasted. We will take up one subject at a time—in a cavalrycade, so to speak. The first item on the menu is: **Dining Out Formal** - Dining out formal is just like in a restaurant except more should go in the mouth than upon one's tie. When finally at table, it is protocol for the guest of honor to be sat on either the right or the left of mine host depending upon which side of mine guest mine host is sitting. Introductions come right after stuffing of napkins into the waistcoat (pronounced west-kut). Always introduce the lady first, thus "Mr. Jones, shake hands with the wife." However, if the girl is not a wife but just an ordinary finance, and you present her to several people, the form is thus: "Miss Brown, Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith, Miss Brown, Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith, Mr. Doe, Miss Brown, Mr. Smith, Mr. Williams, ect."

When meeting the nobility, it is proper to address them as "Your Grace" or "Your Dutchess." If meeting royalty however, it is better form to use "Your Majestess," depending—of course—upon whether it is a king or a queen. In case of an earl, I have found it good policy to just say: "Ho do you do." Throughout the evening's regalia, it is of primitive importance to watch to every request of mine hostess. Per example, if she says, "Please pass the nut-cracker," it is very bad form to hand her a beer bottle. If you drop your napkin, don't go under the table after it unless you are sure you can find your way back again. Tongues will wag freely if you fail to return to your chair by the time the party breaks up. When leaving table at, a private dinner party, resist the temptation to slip some monastery consideration such as a dime under the plate for the waitress. Unless you can make it a quarter, a winning smile will suffice.

This now arrives us at: **Dining Out Unformal** - When dining *al fresco* (extra for soup and desert), one is behooved to watch carefully to his manners—even per-ish forbid, if one must go so far as to take off his hat. First off, when calling for service, it is considered *de trop* to whistle for the waiters. It is preference to tap a spoon on one's water glass. As to eating, it is considered *rigor mortis* to pick up boiled potatoes with the fingers. Spearing them with the fork is the correct way to handle this always puzzling point of gastromic procedure. This does not apply if the potatoes are mashed. In that case, one spears with one's spoon.

When the cordials are served, it is considered bad form, no matter what the occasion, to attempt to open a beer bottle with your teeth.

When dining in French restaurants, it is best to do as the Romans do. In calling for the check—or "*addicion*"

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—I have found it is good politics to use the proper French, which is, "Waiter, the *garçon*, if you please." It is surprising the results you get. A common mistake is when you reach for the check and get it. The proper form here is to get one's hand stuck in one's water glass until the crisis is past, not neglecting to murmur, "Well, next time old chap."

Getting down to the finer points of etiket, we finally come to: **Love Making** - When asking a girl for a kiss, one has the

choice of two methods—or, if those involved are inclusive, the two may have the choice of one method. I am speaking of an approach. This to be pacific, may be the "Darling, isn't it a lovely moonlight night—may I hold your hand?" method or the "How about it, kid?" method. These both have their points and are often interchangeable, such as times when the "How about it, kid?" method works even better in the moonlight. Always be fair to the other guy. At parties or siestas, suggest kissing games. This is a sporting gesture to give the other fellow a chance—which, of course, in any case, he ain't got.

The well-appointed lover is usually well dressed. The most effective forms of dress I have encountered in my own behalf has been a quiet tie with a loud shirt or versa visa and a formal tuxedo with optional dinner jacket (same number of buttons and buttonholes and a carnation in the boutonerear). If a appropriate chapeau is not to be found, a hat makes a good substitution. Dames are very noticeable of this. If you are going to be a successful swane, you have got to spend money. A tightwad never caught no molasses. Unless you are prepared to spend some 60 cents for orchids, another 2 bits for bomboms and at least a buck and a half (what the English call a "moon and six pence") for the opera, you might just as well stay home. It is not that the opposition sex is goldiggers, it is just that people who do not spend money is repugnizant to dames.



Archie (Ed Gardner) argues by phone with Duffy—who never appears on the show

Last Words on Love - Do not let romance blot out business out of your mind. If you must kiss a dame good-night in a hallway, at least have the presence of mind to stuff a few circulars in her letter box.

Most men are all alike dazzled by the first pair of plucked eyebrows, false eyelashes and painted toe-nails that wink at them. The man of perspicacity will take as much care in choosing his mate as in choosing his underwear. Remember the old adagio that opposites attract. Blondes attract brunettes and brunettes blondes. So keep in mind that if you are stupid enough you will go out with an intellectual.

The wise lover will learn to dance well. He will not be a wallpaper. "Tripping the light bombastic," as it is sometimes called, it is the easiest of the social graces if you are graceful. If not, it is best to "sit this one out," which is more fun anyway.

It is smart to think of little presents occasionally. They need not be expensable if chosen wisely. I have gotten some very good results with such trinkets as a potted lilac, mother-of-pearl snuff box, horse-hair ring, ivory back-scratcher (Chinese, if possible, with the long nails) and a combination jackknife and bottle opener. Of course, any kind of diamonds is always permissible and in good form.

If you are a gentleman at heart, these hints on etiket will come easily and naturally to you. If you are a bum, you may have to work at it a little harder, but it is worth it. Believe me, I know.

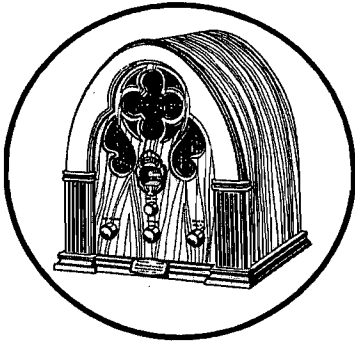
(Article originally published June, 1944)



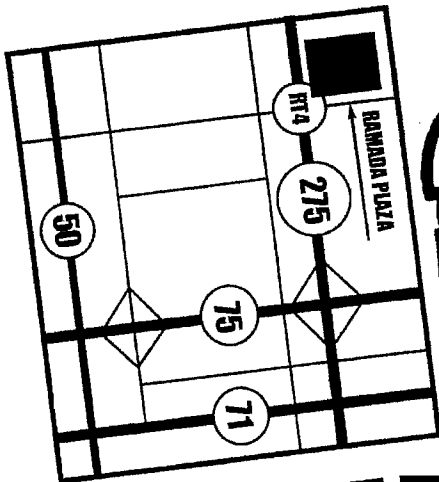
TRAVEL ETIKET: Ed Gardner shows how the little wife handles the big baggage

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