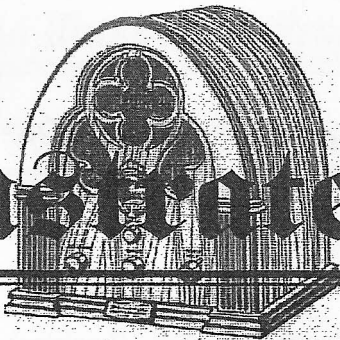


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press



Number 375

December 2009

MOVIE-RADIO GUIDE

TEN CENTS • CANADA—12c



PROGRAMS FOR DEC. 20—26



JACK BENNY AND "ROCHESTER"
NBC and Screen Stars

The Illustrated Press

Membership Information

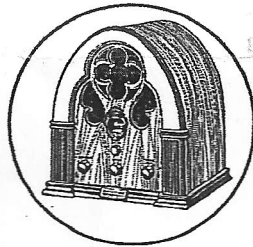
Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should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

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Library Rates:

Audio cassettes and CDs are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette or CD** which is **retained** by the member. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.



Editor's Two Cents

This month's cover we feature the wonderful Jack Benny and Eddie Anderson (Rochester). I could easily write a whole newsletter alone on the Jack Benny Program, suffice to say a few pages will do. I never met Jack Benny in person, but I really feel like I knew what kind of person he was like. After reading his daughter Joan's book "**Sunday Nights at Seven**" I absolutely knew he was a great guy. Joan emphasized his true character of being humble, generous and kind to all his friends. One of his truly long lasting friends was Fred Allen. His long running gag of his notorious feud with Fred was just that- a gag. It all started when Allen invited a ten year old boy violinist to play "The Bee" on his show. Fred complimented the boy and made a sly remark about Jack Benny's violin playing. Well that was all that was needed to get the charade going on and Jack called Allen a reformed juggler who was a sissy, saying Allen needed to take ether to get a manicure. Fred followed up by saying Benny was so anemic that when he passed a bloodhound at a dog show, the dog didn't even open his eyes. This went on for years with Jack and Fred appearing on each other's show and always getting high Crossley ratings for every show. This went on till 1948 when the two decided to square things off in the ring

with fisticuffs to declare who the better man was. The fight was to take place in a neutral studio somewhere in Chicago. You may have already surmised that this fight never took place. Of course it was great for ratings and that's the reason they kept it going so long. Jack and Fred were the best of friends so it was easy tearing each other apart. When Jack heard of Fred Allen's death in 1956 he was deeply crushed. Years before when Carole Lombard suddenly passed away he was so upset he couldn't do his show. He was a gentleman who had many friends and tried to entertain his fans. When John Kennedy was in the Senate he said he rarely had time to watch TV, but he always made sure to catch the Jack Benny Show every week. Later on when I'd see Benny on the Carson Show, I'd say "That Jack Benny seems like a truly nice guy." There's not too many really nice guys around, except for maybe me and Frank Bork. Only kidding. I'm glad I have the complete collection of the Benny Shows. They're still a treat to enjoy. And may all of you have an enjoyable Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Allens and Bennies feud again: Mary tries to pull Fred away and Portland encourages Jack.

The Illustrated Press

Attention all members. These mp3 are now in our CD Library:

- 123 - 21st Precinct (30)
001 - ABC Mystery Time (03)
069 - Academy Award Theatre (36)
175 - Address Unknown (4)
013 - Adv. Of Ace Williams (03)
010 - Adv. Of Babe Ruth (07)
152 - Adv. Of Danny Marson (12)
187 - Adv. Of Philip Marlow (96)
012 - Aldrich Family (62)
070 - All Star Western Theater (69)
011 - Andrews Sisters (15)
178 - Author's Playhouse (25)
049 - Avengers, The (21)
191 - Barry Craig (19)
192 - Barry Craig (17)
193 - Barry Craig (29)
047 - BBC Theater (51)
118 - Bell Telephone Hour Encore (27)
119 - Bell Telephone Hour Encore (23)
016 - Beyond Midnight (14)
093 - Bickersons, The (30)
015 - Black Adder (25)
017 - Black Museum (50)
155 - Blondie (35)
134 - Bob Hope (66)
087 - Boston Blackie (106)
201 - Broadway is My Beat (92)
202 - Broadway is My Beat (41)
023 Buck Jones In Hoofbeats (03)
146 Bulldog Drummond (6)
008 Buster Brown Gang (12)
009 - Calling All Cars (76)
073 - Calling All Cars (64)
074 - Calling All Cars (64)
076 - Calling All Cars (63)
204 - Casey Crime Photographer (25)
095 - CBS Mystery Theater (57)
096 - CBS Mystery Theater (65)
097 - CBS Mystery Theater (56)
098 - CBS Mystery Theater (60)
099 - CBS Mystery Theater (63)
100 - CBS Mystery Theater (58)
101 - CBS Mystery Theater (63)
102 - CBS Mystery Theater (64)
103 - CBS Mystery Theater (64)
104 - CBS Mystery Theater (64)
105 - CBS Mystery Theater (65)
106 - CBS Mystery Theater (62)
107 - CBS Mystery Theater (62)
108 - CBS Mystery Theater (60)
109 - CBS Mystery Theater (67)
047 - CBC Theater (05)
007 - Challenge of the Yukon (103)
043 Christmas on the Moon (25)
006 - Clyde Beatty Show (28)
072 - Corsican Brothers (47)
146 - Crime Club (26)
149 - Crime Does Not Pay (57)
005 - Crimes and Peter Chambers (19)
044 - Dick Tracy (73)
071 - Damon Runyon Theater (51)
004 - Dark Fantasy (24)
136 - Dimension X (25)
153 - Douglas of the World (153)
122 - Dr. Christian (42)
164 - Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde (52)
003 - Dr. Kildare (62)
064 - Dragnet (69)
065 - Dragnet (65)
066 - Dragnet (63)
067 - Dragnet (72)
068 - Dragnet (07)
116 - Eddie Cantor (65)
091 - Edgar Bergen/Charlie McCarthy (62)
002 - Eleventh Hour (15)
147 - Encore Theater (29)
151 - Five Minute Mysteries (47)
111 - Frank Merriwell (27)
037 - Frank Merriwell (25)
130 Fred Allen (53)
131 - Fred Allen (76)
132 - Fred Allen (67)
115 - Kate Smith (26)
114 - Kay Fairchild (13)
036 - Frank Race (42)
086 - Gangbusters (88)
038 - Gene Autry (18)
020 - GI Journal (06)
094 Gildersleeve (78)
040 - Greatest Stories Ever Told (13)
174 - Green Valley Line (26)
143 - Guest Star - U.S. Bonds (105)
168 - Gunsmoke (26)
169 - Gunsmoke (26)
170 - Gunsmoke (26)
171 - Gunsmoke (26)
172 - Gunsmoke (26)
165 - Hear It Now (14)
166 - Hear It Now (11)
082 - Heartstone of the Death Squad (03)
156 - Halls Of Ivy (84)
045 - Hermit's Cave (84)
083 - High Adventure (07)
038 - Hopalong Cassidy (54)
079 - Hopalong Cassidy (104)
150 - Host Planet Earth (6)
183 - I Was A Communist For The FBI (73)
041 - In The Name Of The Law (6)
184 - Inner Sanctum (36)
185 - Inner Sanctum (31)
030 - Jack Benny (10)
022 - Jimmy Durante (36)
129 - Johnny Dollar (134)
020 - Jubilee Show (10)
144 - John Steele Show (15)
077 - Land Of The Lost (4)
081 - Les Miserables (4)
054 - Let George Do It (82)
145 - Life of Riley (104)
124 - The Line-up (32)
078 - Little Orphan Annie (8)
018 - Lives of Harry Lime (41)
055 - Lux Radio Theater (47)
056 - Lux Radio Theater (57)
057 - Lux Radio Theater (49)
058 - Lux Radio Theater (57)
059 - Lux Radio Theater (48)
060 - Lux Radio Theater (50)
061 - Lux Radio Theater (50)
062 - Lux Radio Theater (52)
063 - Lux Radio Theater (40)
034 - Long John (2)
020 - Mail Call (10)
197 - Man Called X (31)
182 - Mercury Theater (18)
206 - Michael Shayne (28)



IT'S TIME
TO RENEW!
DON'T MISS
OUT - SEND IN
YOUR DUES
NOW!

199 – Mr. District Attorney (56)
200 – Mr. District Attorney (28)
090 – Mr Keene (51)
117 – Mr. President (58)
189 – Murder At Midnight (37)
176 – Murder By Experts (12)
051 – Mutual Radio Theater (34)
052 – Mutual Radio Theater (35)
053 – Mutual Radio Theater (33)
180 Mysterious Traveler (24)
181 – Mysterious Traveler (24)
203 – Mysterious Traveler (24)
088 – Mystery House (16)
092 – Mystery in the Air (8)
046 – Mystery Is My Hobby (62)
167 – Mystery Time (12)
050 – NBC University Theater (7)
146 – Nero Wolfe (30)
160 – Nero Wolfe (23)
186 – Nick Carter (109)
034 – Nightfall (15)
205 – Nightbeat (?)
161- Nightwatch (26)
162 – Nightwatch (20)
026 – One Man’s Family (339)
050 – OTRC’s Radio Shows (1-9)
112 – Ozzie and Harriet (45)
113 – Ozzie and Harriet (39)
033 – Ozzie and Harriet (86)
133 – Perry Mason (269)
110 – Phil Harris and Alice Faye (89)
188 – Philip Morris Playhouse (7)
019 – Planet Man (76)
121 – Ports of Call (37)
085 – Private Files of Rez Saunders (13)
089 – Pursuit (9)
047 – Radio Canada International (4)
137 – Radio City Playhouse (54)
177 – Radio Reader’s Digest (71)
194 – Richard Diamond (40)
195 – Richard Diamond (38)
196 – Richard Diamond (31)
179 – Rocky Fortune (25)
198 – Rocky Jordan (45)
207 – Rogue’s Gallery (22)
148 – The Saint (77)
024 – Scenen Director’s Playhouse (53)
031 – Sears Radio Theater (41)
126 – The Shadow (77)
127 – The Shadow (76)
128 – The Shadow (77)
135 – Shell Chateau (13)
159 – Shorty Bell (4)
142 – Silver Theater (42)
154 – Story of Us All (10)
025 – Straight Arrow (9)
138 – Sleep No More (19)
120 Studio One (25)
042 – Superman (125)
048 – Superman (195)
034 – Suspense (94)
032 – Theater Five (52)
080 Theater Royale (8)
173 – Town Hall Tonight (16)
084 – Top Secret (15)
157 – 99 (24)
158 – Unit 99 (15)
047 – Vanishing Point (4)
039 – Vic and Sadr (58)
190 – Weird Circle (77)

125 – The Whistler (101)
208 – The Whistler (95)
035 – Winton Churchill Speeches
163 – Your Hit Parade (23)

We now continue with this month’s addition of **Old Time Radio a Dieing Hobby** by Jerry Collins:

The Jack Benny Show. The show premired in 1932 and remained on the air for mor than 20 years, sponsored first by Jello, Grape Nut Flakes and later by Lucky Strike. He remained in his Sunday 7:00 slot until May 22nd, 1952 when he left for a successful television career. Regulars on the show were his wife Mary Livingston (6/30/83) announcer Don Wilson (4/25/82), Eddie Anderson (2/8/77) as Rochester, Phil Harris (8/11/85) and singer Kenny Baker (8/10/85), James Melton (4/21/64), Larry Stevens (?), Frank Parker (1/10/99) and Dennis Day (6/22/88). The Sportsman Quartet frequently sang the commercials and supplied other music support. Other lesser characters were Dennis Day’s mother played by Verna Felton (12/14/66), Mr.Kitzel played by Artie Auerbach (?) the train announcer, Professor LeBlanc, and the Maxwell automobile all portrayed by Mel Blanc, various workers in the department store played by Frank Nelson (9/12/86), Mabel Flapsaddle played by Sara Berner (12/19/69) and Gertrude Gearshift played by Bea Benaderet (10/13/68). Sam Hearn (?), Andy Devine (2/18/77), Jane Morgan (1/1/72), Gloria Gordon (11/21/63), Sheldon Leonard (1/10/97) and Ronald (5/19/58) and Benita Coleman (11/1/67) were occasional guests on the show. In fact it was Leonard who was always willing to offer a betting tip on a variety of events. George Hicks (3/17/65) and Paul Douglas (9/11/59) were announcers in the early days of the show. Radio shows, even the best had their faults. I am not a big fan of the show in the 1930’s nor do I enjoy the shows that Mary played a major role in. Other than that the show was one of the best in radio history. No show came close to having the support characters that the Benny Show had and all of them were true professionals.

Benny was also able to involve his announcer, the singer, and even the Sportsmen quartet in the story. The timing possessed by Benny, Rochester and other characters was impeccable. The sponsor was even brought into the story. The show used two tobacco auctioneers; F.E. Boone(?) and L.A. Speed Riggs (2/1/87). Jack Benny was also able to build shows around certain topics; his feud with Fred Allen, stinginess, the use of Carmichael, his pet polar bear to guard his safe, and his violin playing. Recent research has also found Benny to be one of the nicest and most generous individuals in show business.

Yours Truly Johnny Dollar. Johnny Dollar was not only one of the best detective stories; it was also one of the longest lasting (1949-62), and it was also there at the end. It was the last regular dramatic show on network radio bowing out on September 30, 1962. Dollar, a free-lance insurance investigator, was played by Charles Russell (?), Edmund O'Brien (95/9/85), John Lund (5/10/92), Bob Bailey (8/1/83), Bob Readick (5/27/85) and Mandel Kramer (1/29/89). In those last few years the pool of available talent was enormous. Such personal as Jim Boles (5/26/77), Lawrence Zerbe (4/30/74), Teri Keanne (Alive born 10/24/25), Ralph Bell (8/2/98), Larry Haines (7/17/08), William Redfield (8/17/76), Gertrude Warner (1/26/86), Jack Grimes still alive (4/1/21), Bob Dryden (12/16/03), Vic Perrin (7/4/89), John Dehner (2/4/92), Marvin Miller (2/8/85), Bartlett Robinson (3/86), Russell Thorson (7/6/82), Sam Edwards (7/28/04) and Harry Bartell (2/26/04) were semi-regulars on the show. Jack John Johnstone (1/17/91) was the producer of

the show. He and Jamie BelValle (?) did the directing. The writers were Gil Dowd, Paul Dudley (?), and Les Crutchfield (10/6/66). The music directors were Leith Stevens (7/23/70) and Eddie Dunstedter (7/30/74).

The Green Hornet. Britt Reid was the son of Dan Reid, the nephew of The Lone Ranger. Occasionally "old Dan" would pay a visit to the show. To improve his maturity Dan purchased the National Sentinel and gave it to his son to run. Britt continued his playboy life, but in reality was the top crime fighter in the city. With the assistance of his Oriental valet Kato, who drove the "Black Beauty" the stream-lined car of the Green Hornet to combat the community of gangsters, racketeers, and spies. The show was on the air from January 1936 to December of 1952. Britt Reid/The Green Hornet was played by Al Hodge (3/19/79), Bob Hall (9/25/67) and Jack McCarthy (12/26/77), while Rollon Parker (?) and Mickey Tollon (?) played Kato. Lee Allman (3/6/92) one of the great ladies of radio played Lenore Case. Jim Irwin (?) and Gil O' Shea (?) played the irreplaceable Michael Axford who was hired Dan Reid as a body guard and a mentor for his son. I remember trying to explain this relationship to John Otto (12/16/99), one of Buffalo's most famous radio announcers. Jack Petruzzi (3/1/67) The announcers were Mike Wallace (Still alive born 5-19-18), Fieldon Farrington (7/77) and Bob Hite (2/18/00). George Trendle (5/9/72) and Fran Striker (9/14/62) created the show, while Striker did the writing. James Jewell (8/75) and Charles Livingston (?) also played key roles in the production of the show. General Mills and Orange Crush sponsored the show.

The introduction was also very famous, "He hunts the biggest of all game, public enemies who try to destroy our America." Originally there was reference to G-Men, but pressure from J. Edgar Hoover forced its removal. Next month we return with "The Challenge of the Yukon."



Editor's Note: Due to a rather large commitment for articles this month I am forced to give you an abbreviated installment of Frank Bork's "The Case of the Holy Scepter. Part 3:

"Here, help me with these two pacing crates." We carried several of the packing crates over to where Holmes had pointed to the spot on the top of the ceiling. After placing one on top of the other, Holmes climbed up on top of them so he could reach the ceiling plaster where the spot was. "Ah ha," said he. "This section of the plaster is loose. Look here," and he pulled the entire up and out of the way. There was an

opening large enough to let a man crawl through. "I'll wager this is how they got the cross out of the storeroom. "Mr. Edwards, do you have a small hand lantern in the shop?" "No I don't Mr. Holmes. We never had need to have one here, but I'm sure one of my fellow merchants will have one I can borrow. If you please wait here, I'll go and find one for you." In less than ten minutes Edwards was back with an oil-burning hand lamp. I lit it then passed it up to Holmes, who then set the lamp in the opening and said, "Just as I suspected, Watson, there are boards on the ceiling rafter wide enough for a man to crawl on." With that remark, Holmes lifted himself into the opening with ease. We could hear him crawling away, over the boards. He was gone about twenty minutes, and I was just about up on the crates to see where he had gone, when I could hear him crawling back over the creaking boards. Within a minute he stuck his head out. When I saw him I had to laugh, for he looked the part of a chimney sweep. "My Lord Holmes" I exclaimed. "You look like old Bradley the neighborhood chimney sweep." "Well Watson," he said "It is something like the inside of a chimney up there. I doubt if anyone has used this passage for many years before the cross was stolen. But at least I now know how the crime was committed, and how their escape was made undetected." "Mr. Holmes," said Mr. Edwards. "That is the second time you said they. Do you think there were two of them?" "Think Mr. Edwards," said he I am sure there were two of them, possibly three.

I think the good Mr. Holmes has stumbled on to something. Stay tune to January for the next chapter of "The Case of the Holy Scepter.

The Copycat Shows of Old time Radio By Jack French 2009 part 2

The Shadow of the pulp magazines used mental telepathy, mind control, and if those didn't work, he relied upon two blazing .45 automatics. But when he came to star in his own radio show in 1937 (no longer just a fill for *Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine* on the air) he was not only unarmed but reduced to only one special power: to obscure the minds of men (and presumably women) so *The Shadow* was rendered invisible. As Lamont Cranston, he was usually described as a wealthy young man about - town who years ago in the Orient learned the strange secret to men's minds.

It would be 12 years before a copy cat of *The Shadow* arrived in 1949. It was called *The Green Lama*. It should be noted this spelled with one L so he was not an emerald-colored beast of burden in the Andes: he was a Buddhist monk...well, sorts. The Character was named Jethro Dumont, described as wealthy young man about town, who years ago in the Orient learned many strange secrets and curious powers. He actually had a few powers *The Shadow* didn't have, including causing bullets to never strike him and locating objects hundreds of miles away by going into a trance. Dumont had a constant companion that was no competition to Margot Lane. The sidekick was a native of Tibet who's name was pronounced "Toku" and he usually addressed Dumont as "Exalted One". Somehow I always wanted a sidekick who would call me that.

Like *The Shadow* Dumont's sole purpose in life was to use his great wisdom and powers of concentration to fight against crime and evil, thus bringing the guilty to justice. CBS aired this show for the summer of 1949 with Paul Fries in the title lead and Ben Wright as Toku, sounding a lot like Charlie Chan. (Typical saying of Toku: It is written that darkness is the best armor for unarmed man). Norman McDonnell directed this series, and despite its short run, he backed up the leads with strong talent in supporting roles: Bill Conrad, Harry Bartell, Georgia Ellis, Larry Dobkin, and Jack Kruschen. A total of three shows have survived.

The origin of the husband and wife detective team was the 1934 novel "The Thin Man" by Dashiell Hammett which introduced Nick and Nora Charles. However it was the movies about them, starring William Powell and Myrna Loy which popularized them as a funny, sexy couple who happened to solve murder mysteries. By the time the third movie in "The Thin Man" series finished its run, the husband and wife team of Richard and Frances Lockridge jumped on the bandwagon with a carbon copy duo called Pam and Jerry North who their 1940 debut in the novel "The Norths Meet Murder." Other than the occupations of the two husbands, there is virtually nothing to distinguish the Charles' from the Norths. Both were a married duo who solved murder mysteries in Manhattan, were wealthy, sexy, sophisticated, apartment dwellers, loved parties, drank lots of alcohol, had late breakfasts

but never cooked a meal, and moved about in posh circles. One minor difference was that the Charles' had a pet dog while the copy cat Norths appropriately had cats.

The two couples were as similar on radio as they were on the printed page or in the movies, perhaps more so. "Adventures of the Thin Man" began in 1941 on NBC and "Mr. & Mrs North" followed a year later on the same network. Both series would remain on the air for several years with the copycats actually outlasting the originals by five years, ending in 1955. But even today, many OTR fans have trouble telling the two series apart.

A West Coast fictional couple who solved crimes on radio were also subjected to being copied.....almost word for word. They began with Frances Crane, a talented lady who in 1941 created the San Francisco detective, Pat Abbott, and in his mystery novels, made his wife, Jean, the narrator of the plots. Crane's characters came to radio on "Abbott Mysteries" on Mutual in 1945 and then ran for three consecutive summers. The series was resurrected by NBC in 1955 under the new title of "The Adventures of the Abbotts" and this nudged Mutual into producing a copycat show under the title "It's a Crime, Mr. Collins." The series featured Greg and Gail Collins in a flagrant rip-off of the Abbotts in which only the names had been changed. Mutual even used Crane's habit of putting a color in the title of every story, i.e. "The Pink Lady", "The Chrome Yellow Death", and "Red Hot Mama." Here's what Crane wrote, describing how Jean in her own words, met Pat Abbott, the man she would eventually marry: "I was lucky to hook a tall, lean, interesting-looking Westerner like Patrick Abbott. We had met in my curio shop in Santa Maria, New Mexico. But he'd been yanked back to his San Francisco office to do some detecting for the US Government. In the first episode of "It's a Crime, Mr. Collins", Gail introduces herself to the radio audience and tells them how she first met Greg.

When ABC began the crime series "Danger, Dr. Danfield" in 1946 many listeners thought it was an original show. But it wasn't: it was a direct steal from "Crimes Files of Flamond" which had debuted on WGN in 1944 (with Mike Wallace in the lead) as a regional show and then later aired on Mutual. Flamond was a crime psychologist who, with the aid of his ever present secretary named Sandra Lake, dedicated his life to solving mysterious crimes. However, he was more interested in the "why" of crime, rather than the "how" and he began and ended every episode dictating to his secretary. Danfield, who was a crime psychologist, was also more interested in the "why" of crime, rather than the "how" and he too began and ended every episode dictating to his secretary, Rusty Fairfax. The only difference between the two series was that Rusty was a lot more annoying than Sandra.

Flamond was on the air from the mid-40s until 1948 and then returned for six months in 1953. The copycat version was on ABC for a year and then kept in

syndication by Teleways Transcription Company through 1951. Nine episodes survive of Flamond and 26 of Danfield. Steve Dunne, who was also the voice of Dr. Danfield, is also connected to another series that was imitated with a copycat show. Dashiell Hammett created not only Nick Charles, but also Sam Spade. This latter detective was on the air from 1946 to 1951 under the sponsorship of Wildroot Crème Oil. Howard Duff was the title lead for all but the last five months of the show, when it was a sustaining program with Steve Dunne in the lead. By that time Wildroot had switched to a new version of Sam Spade which they called "Charlie Wild", "Private Eye" and they cast George Petrie in the lead. Although Wild worked in New York City, not San Francisco like Spade, Wild still had the services of Spade's secretary, Effie Perrine. While this series could be called an "authorized copy" another series was to mimic Sam Spade more closely, but under a different title. In 1952 ABC launched a detective series called "A Crime Letter from Dan Dodge", a blatant steal from "The Adventures of Sam Spade". (Math majors will immediately note that both Spade and Dodge had the same number of letters in both their first and last names). But there were more striking similarities in the 1952-53 network copycat. Both began every episode with the private eye telephoning his secretary and explaining his latest caper; in the Dan Dodge series, Myron McCormick played the detective who called his secretary "Susie", portrayed by Shirley Eggleston. And they even ended each program of Dan Dodge with theme music, "Goodnight Irene" just like Sam Spade. Only one copy of A Crime Letter from Dan Dodge had survived and we have to thank Shirley Eggleston for saving it and making it available to the OTR community.

Little Orphan Annie By Francis Edward Bork

Ralphie turned on the radio, pushed the button to the station he wanted, then with his little brother Randy they flopped down on the floor to listen to their favorite radio program. The radio came alive with "Who's that little chatterbox, the one with the pretty auburn locks? Who can it be? Its Little Orphan Annie time, That's who." I guess we all remember Little Orphan Annie and her shake-up mug, with a picture of Annie and her faithful dog Sandy (arf arf) all the other dogs of radio went bow wow, but not Sandy, he was different. The mug was brightly colored with an orange cap. You just popped the cap on after you put milk and Ovaltine in it, shake it a few times and presto there it was, that delicious, nutritious Ovaltine. Ugh! I can still remember that awful stuff. It

tasted like glue to me. Well, I never tasted glue before, but I think that's what glue would taste like. Annie started out as a comic strip "Little Orphan Otto". The strip creator was advised to give the title a girl's name, and Little Orphan Annie was born. I remember Annie being in the Sunday paper, (the Courier Express). On the Sundays when our family would go to my Grandparents home for Sunday dinner my Pa, my Grandfather would read the funnies to me. Orphan Annie was my favorite then the Katzenjammer Kids. Annie was created by Harold Gray and began life as a comic strip in early 1924. It wasn't until 1931 that Annie became the most popular children's radio program. It was 5:45 and the distinguished voice of Pierre Andre told us Orphan Annie's on the air, all of 15 minutes brought to you by that chocolate drink Ovaltine. My mother would say "It will be quiet now for awhile". Yes no one spoke. We were glued to the Zenith radio. Then the spell was broken when Pierre Andre said "Well how do you think Annie will get out of that?" Members of Annie's Secret Circle get your Little Orphan Annie decoder badges ready. Annie has a message for you. Set your badge at B-12 2-16-7-4 10-21 10-16-15-4 10-21 19-15 10-21 18-21 7-7 21-1. Let's go back to Ralphie and his desire for Annie's decoder badge. There was only one thing he wished for more than being a member of Annie's Secret Circle. Yep you guessed it. A Red Ryder 200 shot Range Model Air Rifle for Christmas. Ralphie got his decoder badge and that evening listening to Little Orphan Annie he received his first secret message. Remember, Pierre Andre said, "Annie's depending on you." In the upstairs bedroom he decoded his first message. Be-sure-to-drink-your-Ovaltine. A crummy commercial. Oh by the way I used my "Radio Spirits Code Badge I gotta go now Little Orphan Annie's playing on my cassette player Bye, Frank



Michael Axford Meets Warner Lester, Manhunter By Martin Grams

In an effort to combat the popular *Eno Crime Club* mystery program airing on numerous East Coast radio stations, Fran Striker created *Warner Lester, Manhunter*, which premiered in the spring of 1932, while Striker was still living at 261 Lexington Avenue in Buffalo. The title character was an independent private investigator who often profited from his adventures by stealing the money of murderers and blackmailers. As the announcer revealed in episode eight: Lester is neither with the law or definitely against the law. He occupies a rather peculiar position, on a line that is neither within nor yet without the law. His clever manner of thinking usually brings him the solution of a crime before the police are able to solve it, and he often profits thereby. Introduced in the ninth episode of the series was Michael Axford, chief of police, who assumed Lester was a master criminal and vowed that one day he would catch Lester with the goods. Axford spoke with an Irish accent, smoked cigars and wore a bowler hat. Yes, this is the same Michael Axford who would later become a regular staple on *The Green Hornet* program. Lester was aided by his secretary, Louise Henderson, who accepted his proposal of marriage in episode 22 and remained his fiancée for the remainder of the series. In the same episode Warner and Axford attempted to frame one another, the attempt ending in a lasting friendship. A few episodes later, Axford was framed for a jewel theft and suspended as chief of police. Thanks to Lester, his name was cleared and Axford was reinstated. Axford however, dropped a bombshell at the conclusion of the broadcast when he resigned from the force to enter civilian life and help Lester in investigations. Lester gave up fighting crime for profit, and together they opened an office as detectives in an unofficial capacity. Louise was still secretary. *"Warner Lester, the famous radio criminologist, has solved many crimes by the logical working of his mind. He has recently gone into the solution of crime as a profession, where it once was his hobby. With him, sharing his beautiful office, is Michael Axford, former police chief, who's chief work now is assisting Lester."*

(Announcer for Warner Lester Manhunter)

Warner Lester, Manhunter was heard from Boston over the Colonial Network and the Yankee Network---key stations were WAAB and WNAC, both owned by John Sheperd, Boston department store owner. Under the direction of Jim Jewell at the Macabee Building in Detroit, contracted by Trendle, Striker supplied copies of the same scripts dramatized from Boston, so WXYZ would offer their own productions with their own casts.*

* For the East Coast broadcasts, the series originated from WIBW with a different cast than the one broadcast from WXYZ.

Scripted during Striker's Buffalo, New York, days before joining WXYZ, the radio program ran for 303 episodes, but the character of Warner Lester was heard

on a total 525 radio broadcasts. The series was so popular a spin-off series was created, titled *Manhunters*, featuring various crime dramas with rotating detective characters such as Peter Thorne of Scotland Yard. The mysteries would occasionally lean toward horror and science fiction with such plots as a mad movie producer using an octopus in a fiendish murder plan involving 3D movies, vengeful ghosts and a curse from ancient kings after scientists uncover an Egyptian tomb.*

* Newspapers of the times also listed the series as *Hunters of Men and Man Hunters* (two words) but those are apparently inaccurate.

Given how popular *Manhunters* was, Trendle planned on using the program to attract an audience for his new series. In January 1933, when *The Lone Ranger* (not yet titled by Trendle or Strike) was being scheduled for broadcast, he briefly considered having it be a part of the *Manhunters* program rather than a separate series before deciding to alternate *Manhunters* and the Western in the same Monday Friday time slot. Warner Lester also combated a number of master criminals who would prove a challenge for the detectives. Lester attempts to apprehend the "The Ghost Gang" who tunneled into the bank vault from a sanitarium in a three episode story. In a series of five episodes, Lester attempted to learn the identity of the "Spinner" a bald-headed woman who used an x-ray machine to cause blindness and plotted bank robberies. In the final confrontation, Axford pulled a gun, shooting her dead and ending the reign of terror. Perhaps the most challenging for Lester and Axford was the Crimson Fang Cult led by Dr. Fang and his daughter. Obviously inspired by the Dr. Fu Manchu series in print and on screen, the crafty Oriental used a variety of gimmicks such as a death ray in an attempt to assassinate the secretary of war. The criminal mastermind was so popular that Striker wrote a short run radio program lasting 59 episodes titled *Crimson Fang* (At one time also titled *Manhunters-O-Fangs*) Warner Lester's attempts to defeat his arch nemesis also led to the kidnapping of Louise, making the cases more personal than professional. With each passing year, the character of Michael Axford became more of a bumbling, accident-prone annoyance to Lester, just as he was later portrayed on *The Green Hornet*. In one episode, with permission from the new chief of police, Axford beats up a criminal behind locked doors. When captured by Dr. Fang and his daughter Axford is given an injection of concentrated snake venom. Left to die alone Axford quickly fixes a tourniquet, cutting off the circulation from his arm. This prevented the venom from reaching vital organs long enough for the doctors to flush out the poison. Lester confessed that until that day he never believed Axford thought fast in an emergency. "I am going to eat those words." In a story spanning five episodes, Lester went to Washinton to study new methods of crime prevention leaving Louise and Axford to work together in a couple of capers.

Memories of December 24th 1953

I'm sure all of us have memories of years ago when things moved at a slower pace. PCs, cell phones, CDs and DVDs were non-existent. I hope these Courier Express ads bring back some pleasant memories. They did for me.

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MORNING SHOW alive with
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1 P. M.
 It's music and gift-giving time on "LISTEN
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 "THE SANDLER STYLE"
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BIG "EARL-OFF" TOMORROW AT 3:15 P. M.

Lucy and Desi
 Eye Hollywood
 Tonight at 9

Channel
4 WBEN-TV CBS

Gracie Has George at Sea . . . 8:00
 Buzze Driven to Trans-Atlantic Phone

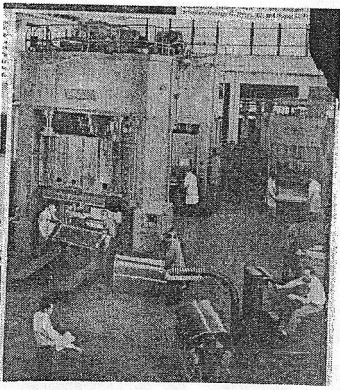
Herb Foils Red Dog Plot . . . 9:30
 Another Chapter in Philbrick's 3 Loves

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 1:30 PM—SAMMY KAYE SHOW
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 3:00 PM—GUY LOMBARDO
 4:00 PM—GUEST TIME
 4:30 PM—NICK CARTER
 5:00 PM—ADVENTURES OF RIN-TIN-TIN
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9:00 P.M.—VERMILION—MURDER
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HOCKEY—BUFFALO vs. HERSEY—9:30 PM

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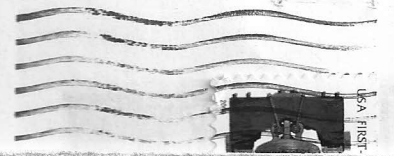
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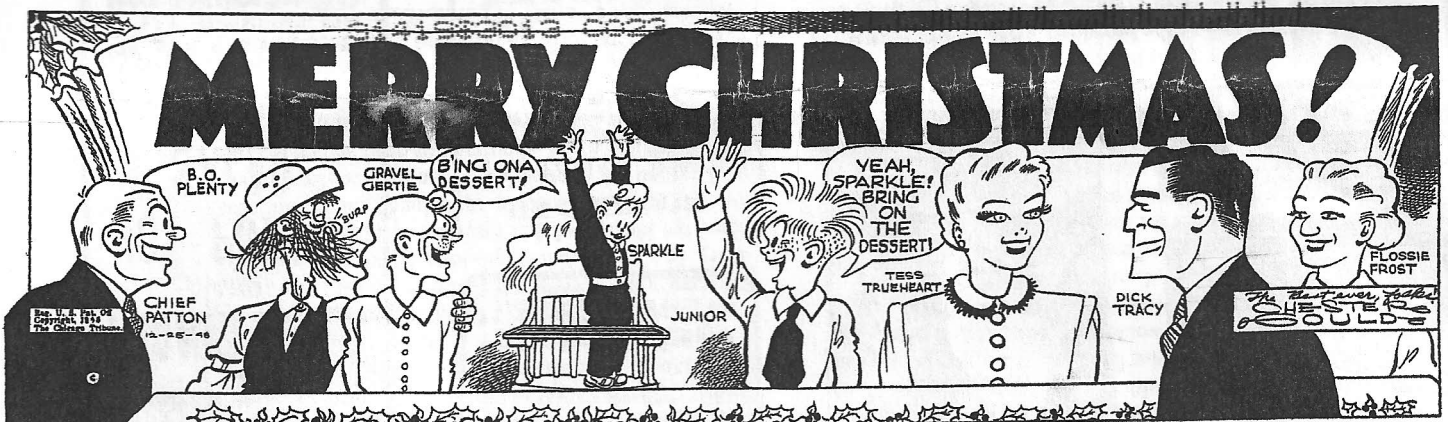
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The Old Time Radio Club



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