

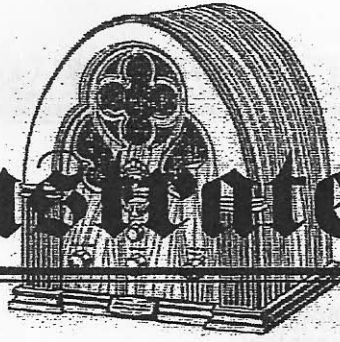
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

No. 388

March 2011



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.

Club Mailing Address

Old Time Radio Club
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086

E-Mail Address
otrclub@localnet.com



All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

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

The Illustrated Press is the newsletter of the **Old Time Radio Club**, headquartered in Western New York State. It is published monthly except for the months of July and August. Contents except where noted are copyright © 2009 by the OTRC.

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

c/o Tom Cherre, Editor (716) 833-9713
144 Fontaine Drive
Cheektowaga, NY 14215

E-Mail address: skylark68_1999@yahoo.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@gmail.com

Membership Inquires and OTR Network Related Items

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

Technical Manager / CD and MP3 Librarian

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

Cassette and Reference Librarian

Frank Bork (716) 601-7234
10 Dover Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086
frankbork209@yahoo.com

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.



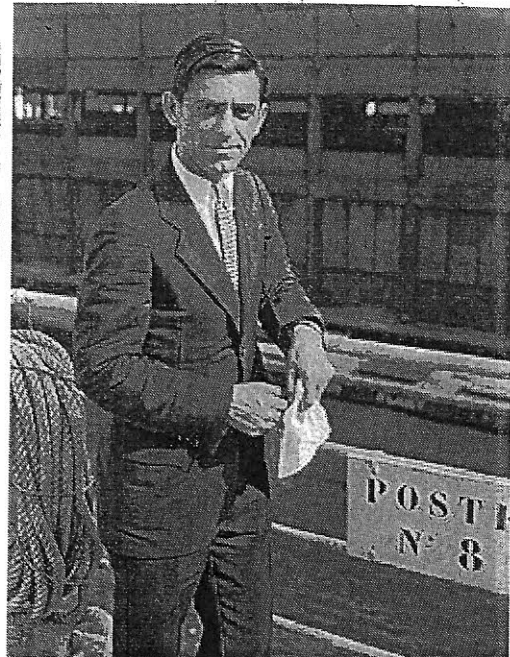
Editor's Two Cents:

Now for the long awaited movie review of The Green Hornet. Last February 14th Frank Bork and I ventured out to the Regal show on Transit Rd to see the movie. After the viewing we went for coffee. So I asked Frank what he thought of the movie. He said I'll give you the shortest review of all time. "It was ridiculous." That was Frank's opinion. Mine was a little different. While it was not the greatest movie I've ever seen, it was far from the worst. It was very entertaining. The movie did not resemble the radio show or the TV one of the 1960s at all. The difference is like comparing "My Three Sons" of the 60s to "Two and a Half Men." I went in with an open mind and rolled with the flow. This was a 2011 movie not something made in 1941. I think Frank's review is a little strong, but I respect his decision. The special effects were a bit much, and Brit Reid's character was a bit out of character, but Kato was great, and the car scenes were neat. I told Frank they don't make many movies today for senior citizens. Anyway, I thought it was a good OK movie. I would recommend it to any Green Hornet fans.

I'd also like to welcome two new members to the club, Francine Conti and Bob Wilson. Glad to have you aboard. Until next month-happy radio listening .

Bet'sha Didn't Know:

On Eddie Cantor's popular "Chase and Sanborn Hour" he used an ongoing gag about his five daughters providing fodder each week. He constantly joked about his five unmarriageable daughters. Marjorie, Natalie, Edna, Marilyn, and Janet were never happy about that routine. When Cantor performed on radio in the 1930s, he was the world's highest paid radio star at the time. In 1919 Cantor led the strike for Broadway actors helping to form Actor's Equity provoking Florenz Ziegfeld immensely. In 1939 at the New York World's Fair Eddie denounced Fr. Charles Coughlin, which promptly got him dumped by sponsor Camel cigarettes. A year and a half later, good friend Jack Benny was able to get him back on the air. I bet you didn't know Eddie Cantor was offered the lead role in "The Jazz Singer" when it was first turned down by George Jessel. Cantor turned it down so it went to Al Jolson. And now you know.



Edward Israel Iskowicz

Duffy's Tavern
By Tom Cherre

This being the month of March I thought it would only be fitting to feature an Irish theme for the IP cover. I considered the likes of Fibber McGee, Dennis Day, Fred Allen, and even Bing Crosby. Since I've never written a single word on Ed Gardner and Duffy's Tavern I said "Why not". And besides, what could be more Irish than Duffy's Tavern?



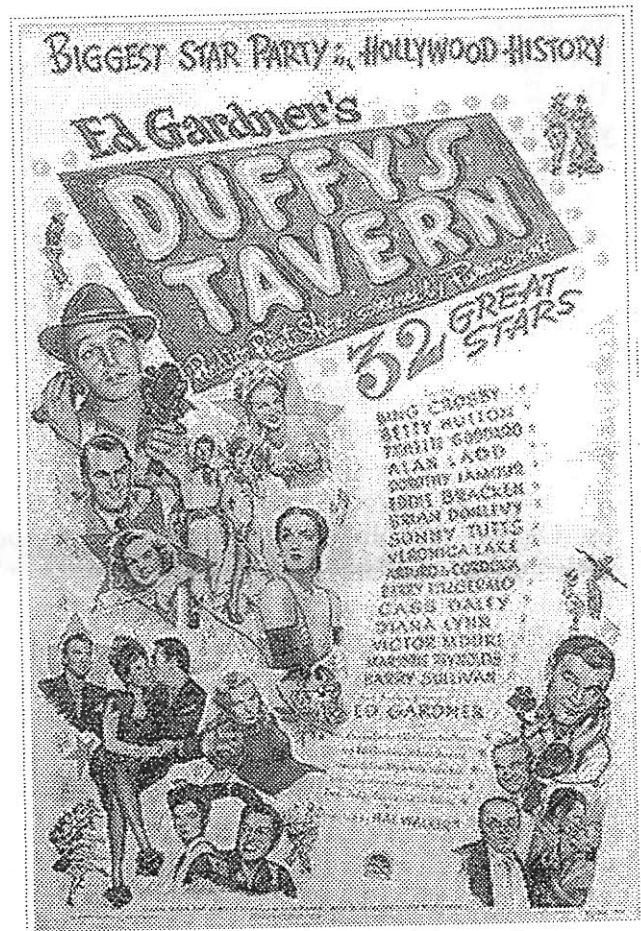
The only thing about Duffy's Tavern is that I have never listened to a single episode. Oh sure, I know the general premise of the show, but I finally got the time and listened to a few episodes. To be truthful about it, I'm not a huge fan of Ed Gardner. The show always opened with the theme song "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling", which I am very pleased so far. The phone rings with Archie saying "Hello, Duffy's Tavern, where the elite meet to eat. Archie the manager speaking, Duffy ain't here—oh hello Duffy." Archie goes on with a two minute into, which wasn't too funny and then they get into the characters. As I mentioned several times before I try and walk about an hour every night, weather permitting. When I'm walking I like

something entertaining. A comedy show has to be funny and make me laugh. I get that experience with Amos N' Andy and Fibber McGee and Molly all the time. I failed to get that same enjoyable experience with Duffy's. Anyway I got around to listening to the Colonel Spoonagle episode about income taxes. I also caught the Bing Crosby episode. The latter being a little funnier. I'm sure the other episodes are probably funnier. I don't want to be too hard on the show lest I offend some Duffy's Tavern fans. As I said before I like the theme song being played on an old time piano. The show centers on the bar regulars, much like Fibber's usual suspects. Ed Gardner is no Jack Benny, but then who is? There's Duffy's daughter who is a bit flea-brained played by Shirley Booth, who was the first Miss Duffy She was also Ed Gardner's wife in real life. Sandra Gould would also play Miss Duffy. Eddie Green was Eddie the waiter, Charles Cantor played Finnigan, Allen Reed played Clancy the cop, and there was main character Archie.



The show featured an all star array of famous guest stars. Among them were Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Fred Allen, Boris Karloff, Billie Burke, Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake, Mel Allen, Nigel Bruce, Lucille Ball, Peter Loree, Tony Martin, Arthur Treacher, Dinah Shore, Shelly Winters, Betty Hutton, Dorothy Lamour, and many, many more. These guest stars intermingled with the crazy characters that worked at, and frequented the neighborhood bar located at 3rd Avenue and 23rd Street in New York City. Archie's schemes would always get himself and others into terrible situations. Archie was something like a Ralph Kramden of the honeymooners who thought he could make it big with his big get-rich money making propositions that never seemed to pan out. It had the typical New York metaphors with a Damon Runyon list of stereotype of characters. Owner Mr. Duffy was never seen or heard, just talked to and talked about. When the show started in 1939 it received high praise from critics, and whole neighborhoods of working class citizens. It was almost like the TV sit com Cheers where everyone knows everyone. The show was done live in New York City until 1949 when for tax purposes it was done in Puerto Rico. The entire cast lived in Puerto Rico and did the show live from there and none of the 8 million listeners knew the difference. The shows last broadcast was on Decemer 28th 1951. Duffy's Tavern was Ed Gardner's own creation. He oversaw its writing intently enough drawing on his own experience as a successful radio director. His credits include George Burns and Gracie Allen, Ripley's Believe It Or Not, and The Rudy Vallee Hour. Garner brought along some young gifted writers

including Abe Burrows, future M.A.S.H. writer Larry Gelbart, and Dick Martin, later co-host of Laugh-In. Maybe I may have pre-judged Duffy's Tavern. It may have to grow on me. Let me listen to a few more shows. Who knows I may like the show. Let me know what you think.



Attention all members! Once again I encourage any of you out there with an interesting story or article to send to me for publishing. It does make my job a lot easier. You can mail it, E-mail it, or hand it to me at one of the meetings. Thanks a bunch, and Happy St. Patrick's Day.
Editor

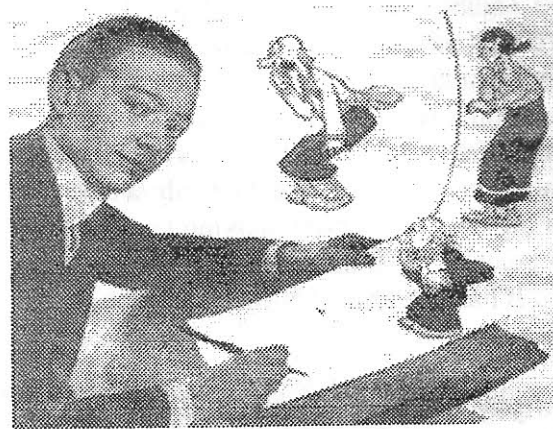
LONG RUNNING COMIC STRIPS SHORT RUNNING RADIO PROGRAMS

Peter Bellanca

After the acclaim I received from my *Mandrake the Magician* article (thanks, Mom) in the February issue of the IP, I thought I would give it another try. In this issue we are going to look at the star of *The Thimble Theater*, that "I yam what I yam" man, Popeye.

Elzie Crisler Segar, was an eighteen year old student of the *W. L. Evans Correspondence School of Cartooning* and a part time movie projectionist when he decided that he wanted to be a professional cartoonist. As a projectionist at the Chester, Illinois Opera House he watched the comic antics of various silent screen comedians and began to draw a strip based on Charlie Chaplin's film routines. He called the strip, *Charlie Chaplin's Comedy Capers* and it met with little local interest. Thinking that his chances of success were greater in a larger city he left Chester and went to Chicago. While there he met Richard Outcault, the creator of the *Yellow Kid* and *Buster Brown*. Outcault mentored Segar and brought his work to the attention of the *Chicago Herald* newspaper. The *Herald* liked Segar's idea and on March 12, 1916 the *Charlie Chaplin* strip was published. It generated little public attention and was discontinued about one year later. Segar then changed newspapers and moved to the *Chicago Evening American* and created a new strip called *Looping the Loop*. This strip also was not well accepted by comic readers, but King Features Syndicate took an interest in Segar's work and wanted him to create some new strips for their growing syndication business. He accepted their offer and moved to New York City.

Segar was in the right place at the right time. King Features Syndicate was owned by William Randolph Hearst who also owned the *New York Journal*, which was in a long running circulation war with Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. One the major weapons in this "war" was



E. C. Segar

a color supplement known as the comics section. Both sides were eager for new material and periodically tried to entice comic artists to switch newspapers. Working for the deep pocketed Hearst group he created *The Five-Fifteen*, (later changed to *Sappo*) and the long running *Thimble Theater*.

The *Thimble Theater* made its debut in the *Journal* on December 19, 1919. The main characters were Olive Oyl, a fickle maiden with a carpenter's dream body and a pickle shaped nose, who ran a lunch wagon, Caster Oyl, Olive's shiftless older brother and Harold Hamgravy, later just called Ham Gravy. Ham was Olive's suitor and had an aversion to honest work. Popeye was not an original character in this strip,

in fact, he didn't make an appearance until ten years later. The strip without Popeye was modestly successful.

In the January 17, 1929 strip Caster and Ham are going to the Dice Islands to do some gambling and needed a navigator for their ship. They hire an odd looking one eyed old salt with anchor tattoos on his arms, a corn cob pipe and a funny way of speaking. His name was Popeye. It wasn't long before Popeye became the star of the strip. With Popeye as the main character, the strip became one of the most popular comics in the nation.



Popeye was always slow to anger, and in the June 26, 1931 strip we learned that when he finally reached the limit of his calm demeanor he would open a can of spinach and pour the contents down his throat. This enabled him to perform extraordinary feats of strength that allowed him to demolish his adversaries. Spinach was so ingrained with the Popeye character that in 1937, Crystal City, Texas, the spinach capital of the U.S. erected a statue of Popeye making him the first cartoon character to have a public sculpture. The spinach producers credited Popeye with dramatically increasing spinach sales throughout the country. In 1977, Segar's hometown of Chester posthumously honored him by naming a park in his honor which included a six-foot-tall bronze statue of Popeye.

Popeye would go on to become a star in cartoons, comic books, and assorted merchandise. In 1980, Paramount Pictures released a live-action musical in which Popeye was portrayed by Robin Williams and Olive Oyl was played by Shelley Duvall.

In 1930, when Olive became Popeye's "goil" Ham Gravy was dropped from the strip. Later other characters were introduced including the Sea Hag in 1930, a witch who gave Popeye all kinds of problems, Bluto (later called Brutus) in 1932, a bad guy and Popeye's rival for Olive's affection, J. Wellington Wimpy in 1933, a loafer who's favorite food was a hamburger, Swee'Pea in 1933, an "infink" found on Olive's doorstep and in 1936, Eugene the Jeep, a magical, yellow, sort of dog. The Jeep's vocabulary consisted of one word, jeep, ate only orchids, but could solve difficult problems using body language. In World War II an off road vehicle called the Jeep was a mainstay of U.S. forces. There are many explanations on how this vehicle was named. The one I like is that soldiers were so impressed with this new type of vehicle that solved many of their transportation problems that they named it in honor of Eugene, the Jeep. Of all the original characters in the *Thimble Theater*, Olive Oyl is the only one still active in the strip.

At the height of Popeye's popularity in 1938, E. C. Segar died at the age of 43 of leukemia. Although his strips from the 1930's, would not be acceptable in today's politically correct world, I believe that he was one of the greatest creative comic artists of all time. The strip was continued under a number of artists and is currently named *Popeye* and is written and drawn by

Hy Eisman. King Features still handles the syndication.

The Radio Show

There were three Popeye radio programs. The first series was broadcast on NBC's Red Network from September 10, 1935 to March 28, 1936 at 7:15p.m. The program opened with announcer Kelvin Beech singing "Wheatena is his diet/ He asks you to try it/With Popeye the sailor man." Wheatena hot cereal sponsored the program on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights. This was very unusual scheduling, having a children's program broadcast at night.



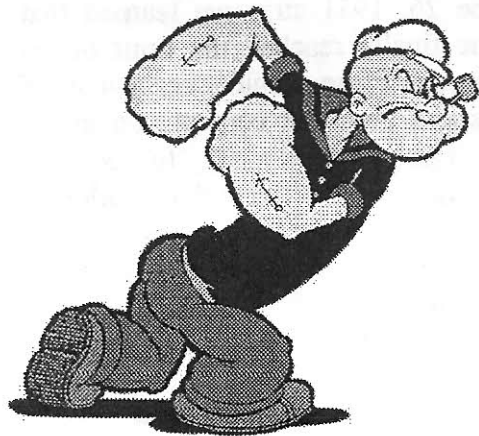
Although Wheatena was selling over a million boxes of cereal yearly, the cost of the program excessive. They were paying King Features over one-thousand dollars per week for the rights to the program. NBC was also charging Wheatena the higher evening rate rather than less expensive afternoon time slot rate when most children's programs were aired.

Popeye was played by Broadway actor Detmar Poppen, his one and only radio role. Olive Lamoy was Olive Oyl and Charles Lawrence was Wimpy. A non *Thimble Theater* character called Matey was added as a Swee'Pea substitute. There were three glaring problems with this program: (1) the radio audience was accustomed to the cartoon voices of Popeye and the rest of the cast and the radio voices did not match (2) Popeye had to give up his spinach for hot bowls of Wheatena to get his super strength and (3) it was in the wrong time slot for its intended audience.

In the second season, from August 31, 1936 to February 26, 1937 Wheatena, trying to cut costs, moved the program to the CBS network. It was broadcast at the same time as season one with the days changing to Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Floyd Buckley replaced Detmar Poppen and the rest of the cast remained virtually the same. Wheatena did not renew for a third season.

(Sadly this is not a paid commercial, but Homestat Farm of Dublin, Ohio currently produces Wheatena, Maypo, and Maltex, hot cereals.)

In 1938 the makers of Popsicles Fudgsicles and Creamsicles sponsored the program three times a week from May 2 to July 29 at 6:15p.m. That was the end of Popeye's radio career. Although his radio career was short, Popeye remains one of the most widely recognized comic characters in the world.



"Tha's all I can stands, nd I can't stands no more!"

Eddie Cantor

By Mark Clemens

This being the month of March I would like to pose a question to our readers. How did the March of Dimes get created? You've probably surmised it was Eddie Cantor otherwise I wouldn't have him in the title. Back in the early 1930s Eddie Cantor was largely responsible for starting this charity to help cure Infantile Paralysis, better known as polio.



He was given the nickname "Banjo Eyes" for obvious reasons. In the 1930s Eddie Cantor was one of the biggest radio star in the country. It was said he had the second most recognizable face in the country. The first, that being, president Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Cantor's first ever appearance on radio came on February 3rd 1922 broadcasting over WDY in Newark and KDKA in Pittsburgh. The *Connecticut Bridgeport Telegram* reported the story like this: *Local radio operators listened to one of the finest programs yet produced over the radiophone last night. The program of entertainment included some of the songs of Broadway musical comedies and vaudeville.*

G.F. Northmagle, who conducts a radiophone station at his home said last night he was delighted with the program especially with the numbers sung by Eddie Cantor. He continued, the weather conditions were great for receiving, and the tone and quality of the message was fine.

Nowadays I'm sure I would be hard pressed to find anyone under the age of fifty who might even recall who Eddie Cantor was. In the "Roaring 20s" he was one of the top recording artists with hits like, "Making Whoopie", "If You Knew Suzie", "Yes Sir That's My Baby", "Ida" and many more. The Chase and Sanborne Show, and Eddie Cantor Show of the 1930s were immensely popular. In the 1940s his Time To Smile Show and Pabst Blue Ribbon Show were equally popular. During all his shows he would frequently talk about his wife Ida and his four daughters. He was largely responsible for Dinah Shore's success and also Eddie Fisher featuring both of them on his shows as they were just beginning their careers. Cantor was a great humanitarian and did much for many charities throughout his career. When his daughter died at age 44 him and his wife were never quite the same. Ida passed away in 1962, and after his third heart attack Eddie Cantor passed away in 1964 at the age of 72. He was a class guy all the way.



National Bore Time:

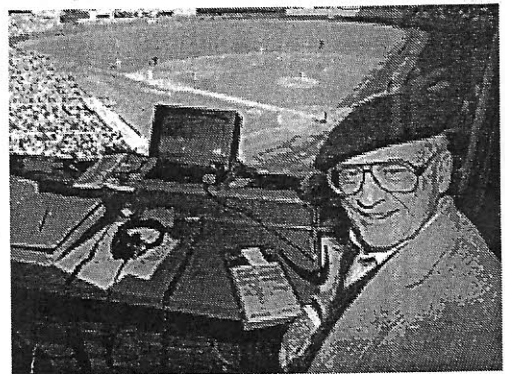
By Tom Cherre

- After the recent death of Ernie Harwell, legendary voice of the Detroit Tigers, I felt I had to reflect on the current way the game of baseball is portrayed on radio and TV. First of all, the game of baseball has become a very, very, boring sport. The average professional baseball game takes about three hours. Three and a half hours for a nine inning game is now a common place thing. Whether you watch it on TV or catch it on radio, baseball has become a cure for insomnia. That's not the way it used to be. Nowadays a starting pitcher will only go five, maybe six innings. Relief pitchers are put in routinely, sometimes, just to pitch to one man. Pitchers take much too much time to deliver a pitch. They take too much time looking around, waiting for the sign, or throwing constant pick-off attempts. The batters are no better. They adjust their batting gloves constantly, adjust their helmets, and step in and out of the batter's box. The worst part of the whole thing is the announcers. It's been a long time since we heard the likes of the great ones. I'm referring to guys like Red Barber, Mel Allen, Bill Stern, Curt Gowdy, Jack Buck, and Harry Carry. When I was a kid way back then, I use to look forward to

Saturday afternoons, lying down on the living room floor and watching one of the best of them all doing a game. His name was Dizzy Dean. Dean had Buddy Blatner along side him in the press box, but Dizzy seemed to do all the talking. I could remember when Dizzy might get a telegram from one of his good old buddies from Muletown, Arkansas, or some other remote bumpkin patch and read it on the air. At the same time a batter could be grounding into a double play or hitting a home run. Dizzy would come back later and say something like "That fella just whammed the horsehide outta that one". It didn't matter much to me that he didn't call the play because what he said at the time was interesting. Dizzy Dean was a natural entertainer and made watching the game an event. Listening to Red Barber "the old redhead" do a game was also an event. Every time a player pulled off an extraordinary play he'd come up with his "Oh Doctor". Mel Allen had his "How about that" for a spectacular feat. These two were both colorful and uniquely knowledgeable about the game. We also had one of the greatest, right here in Buffalo. His name was Bill Mazer. His charismatic "Hello there everybody" greeting made you feel like he was talking right to you. He gave the best description he could

of the route the ball was taking. For the pitcher, he winds, wheels, deals, delivers, and sends a blazing fastball over the plate. When the ball was hit it could be a bounding hard hit ground ball up the middle or a tremendous drive to deep left going, going, gone. I'd listen to Mazer do the games from my back porch. During a double header he would entice listeners to drop whatever they were doing and come out to the game by saying "There's plenty of this game left and all of the second". Somehow the sun was always shining at Offermann Stadium so it was always a great night for baseball. In those days they often handed out premiums to players who hit home runs. One might get a box of White Owl Cigars, or as I remember when a player like Steve Demeter would come up and poke one over the fence Mazer would say "And that's another case of Phoenix Beer for Steve Demeter. Mazer also told you how the weather was, the size of the crowd, and personal anecdotes throughout the game. You could almost smell the hot dogs and the cigar smoke. I even enjoyed listening to "the scooter", Phil Rizzuto. He probably wasn't the best announcers, but he was one of the most entertaining. Hearing Rizzuto call a home run was fun. He'd say "He hit that one downtown past Broadway

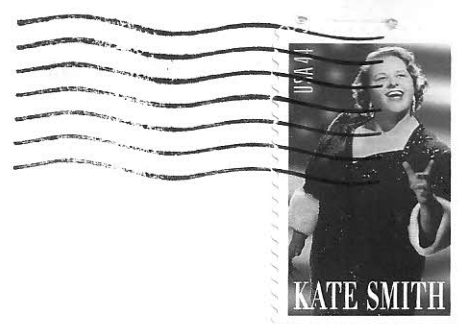
White." His partner Bill White said Phil never called me by my first name because I don't think he knew it. All these announcers had personality. They were fun to listen to, and they made the game enjoyable. Today the press box is bombarded with unlimited useless statistics. They know a batter's percentage of him getting a hit in any of ten different situations. Depending on the pitcher, men on base, home game, day game, night game, or lefty, or if he was out sick the night before. You get the picture, I'm sure. Anyway, when Vince Scully is gone the era of the great baseball announcers will be gone too. The only sportscaster today I feel is knowledgeable and entertaining is Chris Behrman, and he doesn't do baseball. Maybe we can clone Dizzy Dean, Mel Allen, and Red Barber."Oh Doctor".



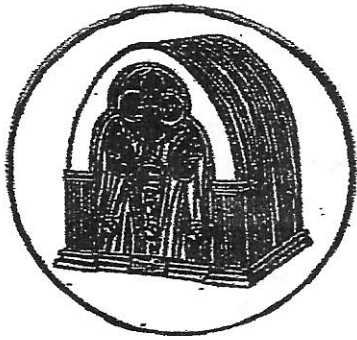
Detroit Tigers broadcaster Ernie Harwell

The Old Time Radio Club

THOMAS R CHERRE
144 FONTAINE DR
BUFFALO NY 14215-2038



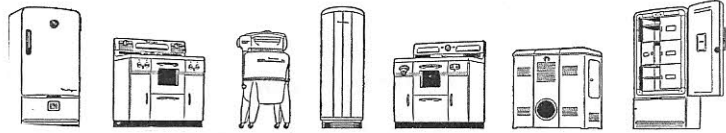
FIRST CLASS MAIL



JIM BESHIRE (C)
123 DAVIDSON
SAVANNAH, GA 31419

Norge products, distributed worldwide, are typical examples of the values made possible by the American system of free enterprise.

SEE
NORGE
BEFORE YOU BUY

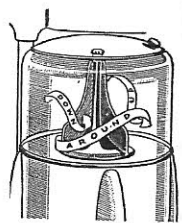


Triple washing-action—up, down and around!

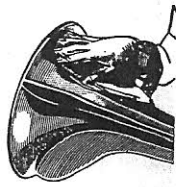
"Ro-ta-tor" so smooth sheerest fabrics are safe!

The seamless tub has 25-gallon total capacity!

Cushion rollers equalize the pressure!



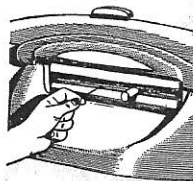
There's a live-rubber steam-seal around cover!



Feather-touch roll-release insures safety!



Roll-rim tub design eliminates splashing!



Cover has handy hook for hanging on tub!

