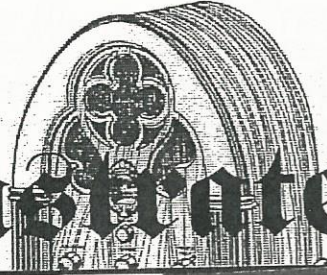


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

# The Illustrated Press



Number 407

February 2013





# 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

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All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

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

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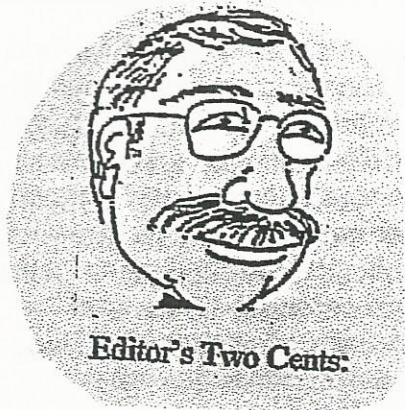
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### **Library Rates:**

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.





Greetings to all. Our February meeting went well. Jerry and Frank Boncore had a slate of trivia questions on hand for club members of which I answered one or two. This month I have a few questions on hand myself dealing with Rochester and other cast members of the Jack Benny Show. I'd also like to remind club members that our Knight's Council is presenting a Spaghetti Dinner on Sunday Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> from 4:00pm till 7:00pm in the school cafeteria. Just a reminder that our council provides our meeting place at no charge to the club. Attending our dinner is a nice way to show your appreciation. Many members have been kind enough to support us and we thank you. I'm sure you will enjoy the dinner too. I'm starting to run out of ideas for articles, so I'm appealing to the regulars to help me out. It looks like the month of March will be a Crosby month. I will plan on giving away on of Crosby's greatest Irish Hits for answering some trivia questions. Well we're about half way through the winter. The days are getting longer and I am listening to some Amos'N Andy shows. I still laugh very hard every time I hear them. Looking forward to this summer and The Lone Ranger movie. It promises to be a good one. I have a message from Dick Olday to pass on dealing with new additions to the library.

Our club has acquired a number of CDs from circa 1962. These are AFRS and include rare shows such as Don McNeil's Breakfast Club, (several) Arthur Godfrey (several) What's My Line (few) College Quiz Bowl, Monitor, several music shows including such as The Army Show, The Navy Show, and one early CD with My Favorite Husband with Lucille Ball and Richard Denning. We are in the process of researching info on these shows and they will be listed in the next catalog that will be ready at the end of 2013. We also have several Philip Marlowe and Phil Harris CDs already listed and at this time (December 24 2012). Our number of CDs is up to 1927 with many more to list. The shows we acquired are from AFRS transcriptions and most have not been previously available to our hobby. Expect many, many more surprises when our next catalog is available. Until then Happy Listening! Dick Olday.

#### Trivia Questions:

1. One of Rochester's biggest problems was being late for the shows. Jack fined him every time he was late. What was the dollar amount?
2. What was Eddie Anderson's last movie?
3. What was the first sponsor of the Jack Benny Show when it made its debut on March 29<sup>th</sup> in 1932?
4. Who was the regular singer on the show just before Dennis Day?
5. What previous singer on the Benny show later had a stint as a regular singer on the Arthur Godfrey Show.

Good Luck!

**Don't Forget Dues Payment !**



Eddie "Rochester" Anderson  
By Tom Cherre



Oh Rochester! How many times have we heard that address, followed by a Yes Boss! Rochester was suppose to be the foil of Jack Benny, but more often than not Benny was at the receiving end of Rochester' ploys. Well, since it's February, Black History month and also the month Jack Benny was born (Feb. 14) it's only fitting we put Rochester on the cover. I myself always enjoyed the Benny Show a little more when Rochester was featured in the storyline. In addition to being Jack's valet, chauffeur, cook, housekeeper, and just about everything else Rochester sold sandwiches, laundry, and dry-cleaning catering to Jack's Hollywood friends. Listening to one of the show's had Rochester doing inventory for label less can goods. Cans without labels were reduced substantially, so Jack had Rochester stock up. It was usually a surprise when they would open up a can of dog food for desert. There were many times after Jack would lose to Rochester at gin rummy he would wind up doing the household chores while Rochester was at the golf course or out at the race track. Rochester always made the show hilariously more funny. Rochester's first

appearance on the *Jack Benny Show* was March 28 1937. He was hired to play the one-time role of redcap when Benny was traveling from Chicago to Los Angeles, which incidentally coincided with the actual move from New York to Hollywood. The first lines together were Benny saying "Here you are redcap, here's fifty cents." Anderson replied "This is a dime! And Benny replied, "Look at your script, not the coin." Benny later had an interaction with him as the train porter, who laughed when Jack asked when they would arrive in Albuquerque (indicating he'd never heard of the place). About a month later Anderson had a role as a waiter in a restaurant serving Benny. Benny asked Anderson if he was formerly a train porter. Anderson answered yes, and then asked Benny if he would ever forget about Albuquerque. Anderson felt quite relaxed doing the show, even helping out with the rest of the cast with the Jell-O commercial. Then a few weeks later Anderson was called back to do the part of a colored fellow who had a financial disagreement with Benny. Benny received an enormous amount of mail about Anderson's appearances on the show, And as they say, the rest is history. Anderson was given the name Rochester van Jones and became the highest paid black actor on radio. The Rochester character retained many of the stereotypes, such as being lazy, gamble, and drinker, but they became a part of his character disassociated from his race. The racial element of a joke always came from him. An example is when they go to Yosemite to go skiing Jack say "Don't wander off now, you're not use to being in the woods, you'll get lost in the snow." Rochester replies, "Who me?" Thus the racial element was provided by Rochester.



In the same episode, Rochester complains that Jack wants him to make up for lack of a radio in their car by singing. "And at 8:00pm he wants me to do 'Amos and Andy', said Anderson. He then pauses at this point as the audience bursts into laughter, then continues; "and I ain't no good at this blackface stuff!"- and the laughing continues.



Anderson with Jack Benny radio show cast, 1946

Jack looked after Anderson in a very protective way. During the 1940s racism ran rampant in many parts of the country. On one occasion when the cast and crew were in St. Joseph, Missouri, Rochester was denied a room at the hotel where the staff was staying. When Benny was told Anderson could not stay there, Benny replied: "If he doesn't stay here, neither do I." The hotel relented, and then let him stay. There was also another time Anderson was refused lodging at a hotel in New York City soon after he became part of the permanent staff. When a couple from the South complained about staying in the same hotel as Anderson, the hotel manager tried to get him to find a room somewhere else. Hilliard Marks, the show's producer and also Jack's brother-in-law, told the hotel manager that

Anderson would leave the next day. He did leave, along with the entire radio cast and crew totaling 44 people. While more or less playing a somewhat domestic in the Benny Show, Anderson was paid quite handsomely. Up until the 1950s Anderson was the highest paid African-American actor receiving \$100,000 a year. He invested wisely. He owned property and race horses. His most famous horse was *Burnt Cork*, a thoroughbred that ran in the 1943 Kentucky Derby, thus making Anderson the first African-American owner to have a horse entered in the Derby. During the war Eddie Anderson was also owner of the Pacific Parachute Company, an African owned and operated business that made parachutes for the army. In addition, he also managed a professional boxer. In 1962 Eddie Anderson was on *Ebony* magazine's list of the 100 wealthiest African-Americans. With all his money he was stereotyped as Benny's actual valet. In the show Benny was portrayed as a penny-pinching miser offering Rochester only crumbs for a salary. One listener wrote a letter to Benny complaining he should pay Rochester a decent salary. Another fan wrote to Rochester demanding he sue Benny for more wages. In reality Anderson could afford to hire his own valet.





Getting into Anderson's personal life, he was born in Oakland California. His grandfather was a former slave who was able to leave the South during the Civil War via the Underground Railroad, which incidentally ran through Buffalo. He ruptured his vocal cords while he was selling newspapers. The one who yelled the loudest usually sold the most papers. He got his start in show business as a tap dancer, but it was his uniquely recognizable voice that brought him to stardom, much like Andy Devine.



In 1932 Anderson married Mamie Wiggins Nelson. After 22 years of marriage, Mamie died after fighting cancer for two years. At the time of her death, her son Billy was playing football for the Chicago Bears. In 1940 the Rochester character was extremely popular on the radio and Anderson was invited to a Harvard University smoker. When Anderson landed at the airport he was met by students from Massachusetts Institute of Technology claiming they were from Harvard. When Anderson was late for his meeting at Harvard, a near riot broke out between the students of both schools. After World War 2 Rochester's character was second in popularity only to Benny receiving more applause than any of the other cast

members. Anderson also built model airplanes and racing cars, and even designed a life-sized sports car for himself. He combined a Cadillac engine under the hood of a customize sleek looking roadster which he both drove and exhibited at various car shows. After the Benny show ended Anderson resumed his hobby of owning race horses. He also enjoyed working as a trainer at Hollywood Park Racetrack, until shortly before his death. Anderson died of a heart attack on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1977. He was buried in historic Evergreen Cemetery, the oldest in the city. In a last philanthropic gesture, it was his intention to will his mansion after his death to be used to house at-risk substance abusers. It is still being used to help troubled men return to successful lives. Eddie "Rochester" Anderson earned a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for radio, at 6513 Hollywood Blvd in Hollywood. His voice, his wit, and comedic charm helped to make the Benny Show great. And he was surely, one of the greatest.





Mary Livingstone  
By Tom Cherre



Mary Livingstone circa 1940.

My dear old mother use to say "If you can't say anything nice about someone then don't say anything at all. Well mom, this article wouldn't be too interesting without adding a little spice to it. I always enjoyed listening to *The Jack Benny Show*. To be truthful, I was never all that crazy about Mary Livingstone. She couldn't carry a tune when she sang, and she wasn't that great of an actress. Of course she was Jack's wife and that's the only reason she was on the show. On the show she played Jack's somewhat lady friend. Not a steady girl, enabling Jack to have occasional dates with other girls. She was Jack's main squeeze as far as female friends were concerned. She portrayed a sweet charming girl always putting up with Jack's shenanigans. In real life she was a bit different. According to George Burns and Gracie Allen, Jack's two best friends, George and Gracie adored and loved Jack. They tolerated Mary. They both found her vain, envious, and not

very talented. George Burns said in real life Mary was quite different from the spunky, friendly role she played on the radio, just as Jack was far removed from the cowardly self-centered miser he played on the show. According to Burns, she wanted all the things her friends had, but more and bigger, and had a tendency to demand immediate service when going to a busy salon or department store. At times wrote Burns, when she acted too entitled, her friends would humble her by pretending she was selling them pantyhose – reminding her that for all her airs she had been a lowly lingerie salesgirl before she had met Jack Benny. Jack and Mary loved each other, but their relationship was sincerely troubled by her vanity and his philandering. Lucille Ball called Mary Livingstone *A hard-hearted Hannah*. Joan Benny daughter of Jack and Mary rarely felt close to her mother. Her adopted daughter Joan Benny says her relationship with mother Mary was strained. In her 1990 book *Sunday Nights at Seven*, Joan revealed she rarely felt close to her mother. The two often argued at the least possible thing. Joan relates: She had so many good qualities—her sense of humor, her generosity, her loyalty to her friends. She had a famous successful, and adoring husband. She had wonderful and amusing friends. She lived in luxury and was a celebrity in her own right. She had everything a woman could possibly want. When I think of her it's with sadness, because I wish she could have enjoyed it all the more. Although Mary appeared on the show for nearly two decades she more or less hid the fact that she had stage fright. Like Barbara Streisand, she was petrified to appear before a live audience. Her fear was becoming more acute by the time the Benny show was moving





his wife Mary, and in his will Jack had provisions that a red rose would be delivered to her every day, for the rest of her life. For nine years his wish was carried out. Jack Benny was a true romantic. There is a long poem out of the pages of poet James Kisner that Jack wrote to Mary and was revealed to her one year after his death. I include all this mush because it is February, and I can't think of a heck of a nicer guy than Jack Benny. Mary had her faults, but she had her good points too. Happy Valentine's Day to Jack & Mary, and all of you too. Sayde Mary Livingstone Benny passed away in June of 1983. The Bennys are interred next to each other in the Hillside Memorial Park in Culver City California.

toward television that she rarely appeared on the radio show in its last season, 1954-55. When she did appear, Benny's daughter Joan would occasionally stand in for her mother. Livingstone rarely appeared on the TV series, and if she did, they were in mostly filmed episodes. Mary Livingstone finally retired from show business in 1958 shortly after friend Gracie Allen passed away. *The Jack Benny Show* continued on till 1965 without her. Her voice may have been heard in the background or on the phone, but Mary was not actively involved in the show. Jack was married to Sayde Marks (Mary Livingstone) for 48 years. Their marriage was far from perfect. By most accounts she was a sharp-tongued demanding vain woman. After Benny's death it was revealed that his signature gesture of holding one hand to the side of his face came about from his attempting to conceal scratch marks Mary inflicted on him after he fielded a call from one of his female admirers. Despite all this Jack Benny truly loved





Lamont Cranston was hired by Professor Brown and Dr. Forbes in the "Plot That Failed." He is employed as part of the government's efforts that are vital to the country's defense. After Forbes murdered Brown he informed Margot that his goal is the total demoralization of the country.

While looking for an apartment, for Margot, Lamont and Margot discover a corpse that was still smiling even though rigor mortis had set in. In "The Laughing Corpse," They soon discover that two brilliant scientists, owners of a big chemical laboratory, had rented the room. It was soon discovered that it was the body of Lorrenzi Destroff who had been killed by his partner Dr. Vietor. The story ended with Vietor committing suicide by injecting himself with "Laughing Death."

"The House of Horror" features the experiments of the mad Dr. Fielding who is attempted to combine the brains of two beautiful women and a pair of gorillas. A fortune teller Madame Sonto came close to sending Margot to her death as part of one of these experiments.

In "The Invisible Weapon" Brenner, a power crazed scientist, is holding Valerie Hastings prisoner in order to force her father to permit the use of his sanitarium and patients for dangerous anti-radiation experiments.

Other occupations were also featured in other episode of the Shadow. Omar the Mystic was the spiritualist in "The Curse of Shiva." Bel-Narma plays a similar role in "The Case of the Talking Skull."

Reincarnation was a topic of at least ten episodes of the Shadow. Peter Swift was found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang. He swore that he will return from the dead and kill the district attorney, judge and foreman of the jury, the father of Margot Lane, Ross Lane. The first two are killed before the Shadow engineers Swift's death in an automobile accident.

Nick Barratti secured revenge in "He Died at Twelve." Even though he is in his grave he arranged for the death of the six members of the jury that convicted him.



In "Death Imported," George Piran escaped from the state hospital for the criminally insane seeking revenge. Blaming them for his incarceration Piran sets out to kill Judge Emery and Commissioner Weston.

Lamont and Margot witness a shooting in "The Disappearing corpse." They take the body to a doctor's office. When the person was declared dead, the body disappeared and then reappeared in Margot's apartment. Following its next disappearance the cadaver reappeared in Lamont's apartment.

Lamont and Margo make a late night trip to the lighthouse at the tip Devil's point in "Death Rises out of the Sea." A bride who had been dead for seven years returned from her watery grave.

It is in "The Killer on High Cliff Road" that Lamont and Margo are seeking shelter in an old mansion called High Cliff Mansion. It is there that they relived and witnessed a series of murders and suicides that involved members of the Cartwright Family some 40 years ago.

"Back from the Grave" features a gang land killing. Art Morris, dropped into an open grave and was buried. His former partners are shocked when Morris retunes from the grave. Morris then murdered both of them.

Commissioner Weston and Lamont Cranston storm Killer Brunelli's headquarters in "The Man Who Could not die." He was accidently stabbed to death in the attack. Brunelli's body disappeared from the morgue. Professor Mallock and his assistant Mateo, the owner of Mateo's Funeral Parlor developed artificial blood plasma. Brunelli was brought back to life through the use of the plasma. He then went on a massive crime spree.

Margot and Lamont traveled to the old Sheldon mansion to assist Julia and Agatha Sheldon in "The Three Mad Sisters of Lonely Hollow." The two sisters are terrified as they relate to Margot and Lamont the fact that their deceased sister, Cynthia had returned from the dead.



It is in "The Drums of Doom" that Jennifer Cole is suffering from severe delusions that her father a notorious judge and executioner has returned from the dead seeking new victims.

In "Death is a Master" the county coroner gave Tony Falco a drug just prior to his execution that simulates a heart attack and resulting rigor mortis. This allowed Falco to escape to Brazil and "return from the dead" a year later to kill those responsible for his conviction.

Suicide is also important in at least a half a dozen Shadow episodes. Returning from a weekend hunting trip Lamont discovers an epidemic of suicides hitting the directors of a single movie company in "Death Is Blind."

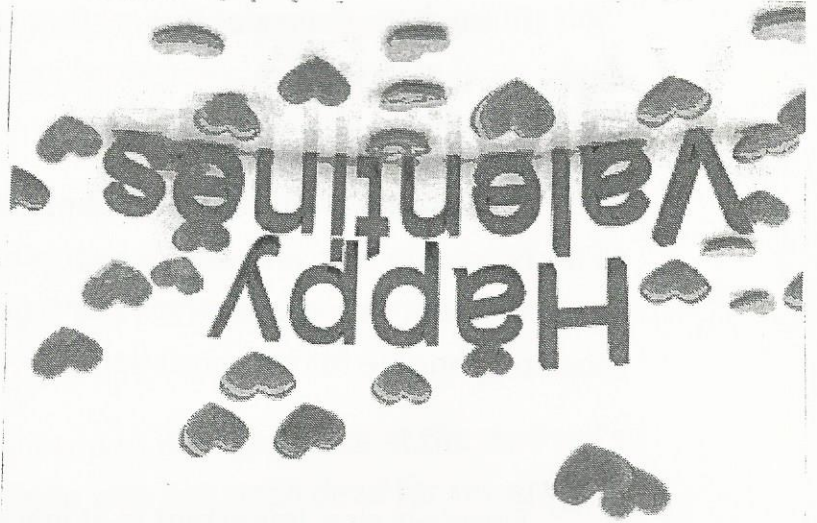
"The Thoughts of Death" contained quite a series of bizarre events. Tony Ruskin, a brilliant college student, used mental telepathy to contact Lamont Cranston, This was quite strange since Ruskin had committed suicide a few days before.

"The Suicide League" appeared to include some of the modern day criminal concepts. While on vacation in Cuba Margo and Lamont are contacted by WJ Tuttle who has recently escaped from the League. It appears that the League profits from the wealthy who are constantly in search of new death-defying thrills.

When it comes to violent death or injury nothing leads to more serious results than acid. The method was used in "Murders on the Main Stem." and "Etched with Acid."

Two entertainers are murdered in "Murder on the Main Stem." As Philip Dobrey is telling Lamont Cranston the name of the killer a pot of acid is thrown in his face.

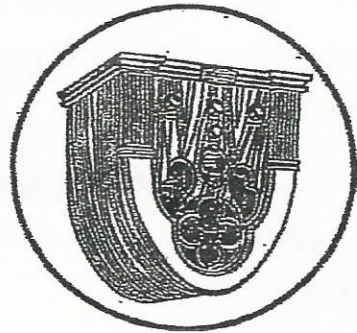




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