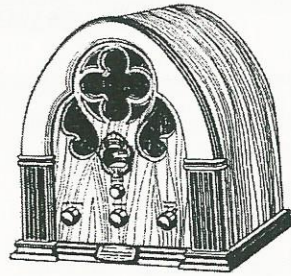


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The ILLUSTRATED



PRESS

Number 419

April 2014

"LOOK MOLLY!

Johnson's Auto Wax and Cleaner keeps our car lookin' so slick and shiny!"

New Radio Sensation!
"FIBBER MCGEE and MOLLY"

Music ... Laughs ... Entertainment ... Tuesday Evening at 10:00 N. Y. Time on N.B.C.

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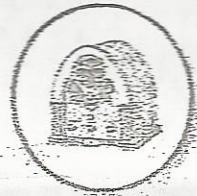
Membership Information:

Club Membership: \$20.00 per year from January 1st to December 31st. Members receive a media library listing and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows. If you join Jan-March, \$20.00, April - June \$15.00, July-September, \$12.00 October-December \$8.00. All renewals should be sent in ASAP to avoid missing issues of the newsletter. 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 thru June at St. Aloysius School Hall 157 CLEVELAND Dr. Cheektowags, NY. There is no meeting during the month of July and a club picnic in August.

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

CLUB MAILING ADDRESS

Old Time Radio Club
56 Christen Court
Lancaster, NY 14086



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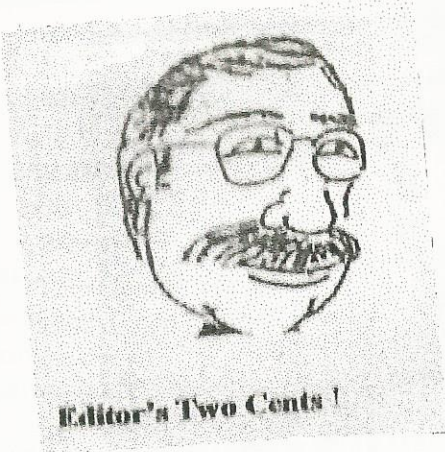
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Library Rates: Audio cassettes and CDs are \$2.00 each are recorded on a club supplied cassette or CD which is retained by the member. Rates include postage and handling and payable in U.S. funds.



Notice-Notice-Notice

Due to recent regulation changes at our bank please note the following. All new renewals and new member checks should be made out to D.P. Parisi. In the memo section at the bottom of your check write in OTRC. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this change. We had no control over this regulation..

Happy spring to all. I mentioned at last meeting I have secured quite a few articles for newsletters. I have asked writers like Jack French, Martin Gramms Jr, Elizabeth McLeod, and others to share their articles. This makes my job a whole heck of a lot easier. I will continue to put one of my own selections in occasionally, and also use any of our own members' stories. So please feel free to contribute.

~~Our Knight's Council may resume its old time movie night on Saturday April 26th at 7:30 in the school cafeteria. Free admission, just bring a canned good or non-perishable food item. It looks like either "Road to Morocco" or a Shirley Temple movie. Odds are it will be the Road movie. We will also do Stooges and a cliff-hanger serial, perhaps "Captain Marvel." All are welcome to~~


attend. There's also free popcorn. Talked to Jerry Collins recently and hopefully we may see him in April. I did say hopefully, so we'll see what happens. Even though we haven't seen Jerry in awhile, he was busy at work writing an excellent book review on *Radio Rides The Range*. On a much sadder note; as I was talking to Jerry Collins, he informed me that his brother Gregory Collins had recently passed away. He was living in the Netherlands. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Jerry and family.

In our next three issues of the IP we are including one page devoted to print ads from newspapers and magazines from Radio's Golden Age. They are from member Peter Bellanca's collection. Hope you like them.

Edgar Bergen Trivia:


1. After Bergen and McCarthy guest starred on this show, they became instant hits.
2. What was Edgar Bergen's main sponsor for many years?
3. What movie comedian had a weekly role on the show?
4. What Western star was a regular vocalist on his show?
5. Who was the band leader?
6. What famous mystery writer was also a writer for Edgar Bergen?
7. Where does the famous puppet Charlie McCarthy now reside?
8. What famous actress caused a near panic after appearing on the show, and became black-balled from radio for decades after?

Again, any suggestions for livening up our meetings are welcome. And I also like to invite those who live locally to attend one of our meetings. The weather is getting a little nicer, and we don't bite.




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BILL STERN'S
 "SPORTS NEWSREEL"
 Every Friday **NBC**
 10:30 p.m. Eastern Time
 Read **BILL STERN'S**
 "SPORT SURPRISE" feature in the current issue of
SPORT magazine now on newsstands.

Have you heard
 Southern Pacific's
 New
 "MAIN LINE" Show
 ? ? ? ?



You'll never
 guess the way
 Wednesday's
 story ends
KHJ 8 P.M.

ON THE AIR
 ★ **TONIGHT** ★
 "MEET MR.
MEEK"
 THE IDOL OF MILLIONS



ME?—
 AN IDOL?
 OH—
 GOLLY
 GUMDROPS!

7:30 ON WISN
 5:30 ON WBBM

BROADCAST BY
LIFEBUOY
 HEALTH SOAP and
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Excitement! Mystery!

THRILL TO
BULLDOG DRUMMOND
 ACE DETECTIVE ADVENTURER

THURSDAY, 8:00 p.m. **KHJ**
 and **DON LEE** Network


Sponsored by
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"BLONDIE"

COLUMBIA NETWORK
WABC 8 P.M.
 E.W.T.
 ON THE AIR FOR
SUPER SUDS

**TONIGHT
 AND
 EVERY
 SUNDAY
 NIGHT**

TONITE
**JAMES
 MELTON**



Tonight's
 Guest
ED WYNN
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**ANNAMARY
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 DAVID
BROEKMAN'S
 ORCHESTRA
LYN MURRAY
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WISN
 8:30 to 9

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For your own party

WIN { **WOODY
 HERMAN
 & his Band**

PLUS \$1,000 IN CASH!


Nothing like it before in radio history!

The Wildroot Company
 will fly Woody and his band to the
 winner's home town!
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 prizes like G E radio-phonographs!
 It's easy! It's fun!

Hear contest rules tonight
 on the

WOODY HERMAN SHOW
 7:00 P. M. STATION WEMP

**HOPALONG
 CASSIDY**
 IS COMING
TONIGHT at 8:30



dial **CBS - WJAS 1320**

The Illustrated Press

RADIO RIDES THE RANGE,
Reference Guide to Western Drama on the Air, 1929-1967

Edited by Jack French and David Seigel

reviewed by Jerry Collins

It was five days after my seventh birthday that a new children's western was added to the radio airways. It would have more than a three year run from May 8, 1948 to June 21, 1951. It became one of my favorite western shows, Straight Arrow. It starred Howard Culver in the dual role of Steve Adams and Straight Arrow

Throughout most of its run, it was sponsored by Nabisco Shredded Wheat. With an Indian tom tom, as a background, we heard the jingle

N-A-B-I-S-C-O

Nabisco is the name to know
for a breakfast you can't beat
Eat Nabisco Shredded Wheat!

The announcer followed with:

To friends and neighbors alike, Steve Adams appeared to be nothing more than the young owner of the Broken Bow cattle spread. But when danger threatened innocent people and when evildoers plotted against justice—then Steve Adams, rancher, disappeared—and in his place came a mysterious stalwart Indian, wearing the dress and war paint of a Comanche riding the great golden palomino—galloping out of the darkness to take up the cause of law and order throughout the west—comes the legendary figure of Straight Arrow.

Most of my friends would have placed The Lone Ranger at the top of their list. Although its roots could be traced back to Buffalo, New York, a vast majority of the 3377 shows were broadcast by WXYZ in Detroit. The Lone Ranger was played by Brace Beemer with John Todd as Tonto. The writing and production was closely associated with Fran Striker, James Jewell, and George W. Trendle. One of the most famous radio announcers was Fred Foy. The show was sponsored by General Mills and was on the air from 1933 to 1954. Silver and Victor were two of the most famous horses on radio. The trademark of the Lone Ranger was his mask and his silver bullets. Until his recent death announcer Fred Foy would journey from his home outside of Boston to attend as many OTR conventions as possible. He would always oblige the packed room of fans who had come to hear him repeat the introduction that made the Lone Ranger famous.

Hi Yo Silver – A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty Hi Yo Silver
The Lone Ranger Rides again.

When the West was young and danger lay at the end of every trail the Lone Ranger and his faithful Indian companion, Tonto, brought law and order to the length and breadth of the Western States.

The one remaining western show in the 1940's that attracted my attention was The Tom Mix Straight-Shooters. It was broadcast by the Ralston Purina Company and was on the air from 1933 to 1942 and from 1944 to 1950. The setting for most of the shows was the T-M Bar ranch. The show was famous for its various premiums. In addition to Tom Mix the other two heroes of the show were Joe "Curly" Bradley and Sheriff Mike Shaw.

The Illustrated Press

The cowboy's time on history's stage was very brief, from 1870-1890. The invention of barbed wire, and the coming of the sod-busters the end of the Indian wars, the replacement of the Pony Express by the telegraph and railroads, the closing of the Frontier and a series of terrible winter storms, well described in recent biographies of Theodore Roosevelt all changed the glamorous story of the West.

In a very unique and parallel situation the best of adult westerns first appeared on radio. In another short period of time 1947 - 1958, I will list the shows, or the date it arrived on radio and the star of the show, Hawk Lara bee (1947), Elliot Lewis, Gunsmoke (1952), William Conrad and Parley Baer, The Six Shooter (1953), James Stewart,, Fort Laramie (1956), Raymond Burr, Frontier Gentleman (1958), John Dehner, Have Gun Wil Travel (1958), John Dehner, Luke Slaughter of Tombstone (1958), Sam Buffington.

My favorite The Six Shooter had another one of radio's great introductions.

The man in the saddle is angular and long legged. His skin is sun dyed brown. The gun in his holster is gray steel and rainbow mother of steel, its handle unmarked. People call them both the Six Shooter.

The appendix to the book provides a vast amount of information for the the reader/researcher. A total of 112 show are thoroughly covered in the book. Other individual shows were presented from Lux Radio Theater, Hallmark Hall of Fame, Academy Award Theater, Cavalcade of America, Screen Directors Playhouse and Screen Guild Theater. Another 62 shows are briefly mentioned with little additional information. The show might have been broadcast locally, it might have been the audition show or might have been broadcast in the 1920's or 1930's.

You might think that I have missed your favorite radio cowboy show. I can guarantee that it is there, Whether it is Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, Bobby Benson, Sky King, Red Ryder, Death Valley Days or the Tales of the Texas Rangers you will find them.

Jack French and David Siegel are excellent writers and researchers. They are also very dedicated to the hobby of "Old Time Radio." The book is expensive, but if you are a fan of the radio western, it is a must addition to your library.



In center, left to right, Ralston-Purina president William H. Danforth, Margaret Marshutz (daughter of the head of Gardner Advertising, the firm which managed the *Tom Mix* radio show for Ralston) and Tom Mix, all holding Ralston products in publicity shot, circa 1936 (Jack French collection).

Part Two of Radio's Forgotten Years: Tuning Thru The Depression Years
By Elizabeth McLeod

Eddie Cantor



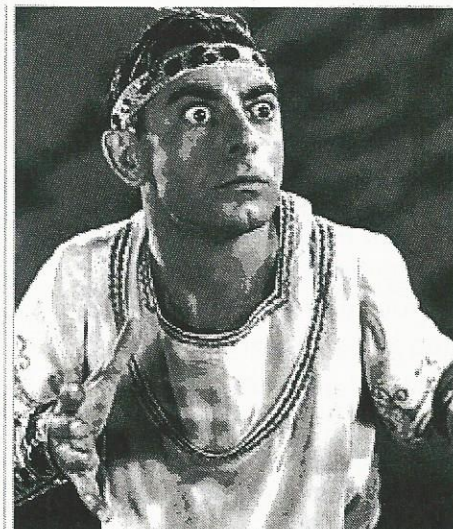
Latter day listeners often think of Cantor as a rather old-fashioned performer who tended not to spare the corn. But the Cantor of 1931 wasn't the passé Cantor of 1948. Cantor at the turn of the thirties was coming off more than a decade 's worth of Broadway hits and was beginning a series of ever-more opulent musical comedy films for Samuel Goldwyn. His phonograph records were top sellers – he was a true multimedia superstar long before the term was invented. And he was radio's first great solo comedian.

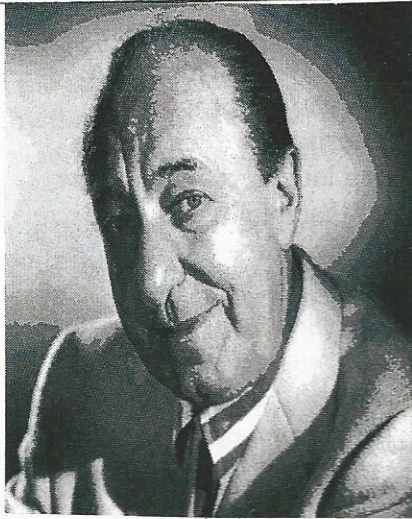
Cantor's jumping-jack personality violinist/orchestra leader David Rubinoff to his was part of his success. He projected an infectious sense of fun right thru the loudspeaker, and it was impossible not to be caught up in the zany spirit of his broadcasts. Several additional factors contributed to the success of his show.

The first was his early insistence on a live studio audience. Cantor knew he worked best before a crowd, and was a master of milking laughs. And, he knew that the sound of that laughter couldn't help but be contagious over the air.

His second important contribution was his mastery of the "stooge" technique of comedy. Cantor wasn't the first radio comedian to press his announcer into service as a straight man --- Joe Cook had done so with John S. Young in 1929—but he was the first to thoroughly integrate that announcer – stooge into the fabric of the program. His interplay with Jimmy Wallington was fast, snappy, and sharp—and Wallington could dish it right back as well as he could take it.

And Cantor's third important contribution was his emphasis on running gags. From his bating of violinist/orchestra leader David Rubinoff to his constant references to his five daughters to his 1932 "Presidential Campaign," Cantor thoroughly understood the principle of bringing the audience back for more—a principle which would be adopted by just about every major comic who would follow.





Among the comics who adopted these principles was a man who had been a star for an even longer time than Cantor: The Perfect Fool, Ed Wynn. Wynn headlined on Broadway before the first World War, and remained a top stage attraction thru the twenties, dithering and honking his way thru a series of girl-and-gag revues. He had tried radio as far back as 1922, but mike fright prevented any extended efforts on the air until 1932 – when officials of the Texas Company offset his terror of broadcasting with a very hefty check. IN April of that year, Wynn first donned his tiny fireman's helmet and whizzed onto the stage of the New Amsterdam Theatre on a pedal-powered fire engine as Texaco's Fire Chief.

The Fire Chief programs combined the lessons learned from Cantor's broadcasts with Wynn's own unique style, and even today, they're fun to hear. Wynn clearly loved to perform, and even though some of his jokes might have made Joe Miller cringe, they're delivered with such panache that you can't help but laugh. Invaluable too is the contribution of Graham McNamee. Probably the most important announcer of the 20s, McNamee displays a wonderful gift for stooging in this series---he knew exactly

how to draw Wynn out and to work with the comic in the timing of the gags. And, the sincere friendship and respect shared by the two men helped Wynn to control his ever-present mike fright to the point where they became an inseparable team.

Another stage veteran was Jack Pearl, a rather ordinary dialect comic who rode a brief wave of success in 1933-34 as Baron Munchausen. Getting his first radio exposure on a 1932 broadcast of the "Ziegfeld Follies of the Air," Pearl and his stooge Cliff Hall quickly found a niche on the Lucky Strike Hour, where for a brief time they were one of the most popular attractions on the air. Although Pearl tended to depend too heavily on catch-phrases in his act, his routines are not without a certain appeal. Pearl was a facile punster, and Hall an especially able straight man.

But the ultimate Depression-era zany was Joe Penner. A forgotten performer today to most, and little more than a footnote to the average OTR fan, Penner was a national craze in 1933-34. There is no deep social meaning in his comedy, no shades of subtlety---just utter slapstick foolishness, delivered in an endearingly simpering style that's the closest thing the 30s had to Pee Wee Herman. An added attraction was Penner's in-character singing each week of a whimsical novelty song, especially written to suit his style. Like Pearl, however, Penner was doomed to early decline by the sheer repetitiveness of his format, even though he remained popular with children right up to the end of his radio career

Here Comes The Showboat:

Another approach to the variety format was taken by the Maxwell House Show Boat. Premiering in 1931, this Thursday night favorite drew from two major inspirations: the Ferber/Kern/Hammerstein stage production and the "Showboat" program heard in the late 20s over WLS, Chicago. For several seasons, it was the most popular program on the networks, and inspired an almost fanatical loyalty among its predominantly female fans.

The Maxwell House Show Boat rode a river of sentimentality—the Depression era version of "nostalgia" for the "simpler times" of the Old South. Even though no attempt was made to reflect a period setting for the show, the entire tone of the program was redolent of cotton blossoms and magnolia, having little to do with the grit and grime of Depression America. It also broke ground in the way in which it combined fictional characters like "Captain Henry" and blackface deckhands "Molasses and January" with real life cast members like Lanny Ross and Annette Hanshaw. It was an unusual combination of corn and class, and it inspired occasional imitations. None remained afloat as long as the original, and certainly none inspired the loyalty that filled the pages of many a fan magazine.



Maxwell House newspaper ad from 1921.

All Aboard For Drama

Dramatic radio was of secondary importance during the depression years. While there were many serial programs—of which more later—the really memorable dramas were still in the future. But the seeds had been planted—in Chicago. Perhaps the first important full-scale drama to come out of Chicago was a weekly series for the Great Northern Railroad called "Empire Builders." Beginning of January of 1929, and running thru the spring of 1931, this series offered half-hour tales set on the "Empire Builder," Great Northern's crack train on the Chicago-Seattle run. The series was one of the earliest successful anthologies, tied together by a host figure referred to only as "The Old Timer," and listening to surviving episodes reveals a show which offered remarkably high production values. The acting—featuring such stalwarts as Don Ameche and Bernadine Flynn—was capable, and the sound effects work was extraordinary considering that no recordings of any kind were used. The programs also provide something of a surprise for modern-day nostalgics convinced that radio always kept a puritanical moral tone: "Hells" and "Damns" are heard—and, distastefully, there are occasional ugly racial epithets, reflective of the casual bigotry of the time.

Next month—Part Three of The Early Days of Radio.

Ed Note. Elizabeth McCloud, broadcast journalist, is best known for her extensive research into the origin and history of Amos 'n' Andy, which we will feature in next issue.

THE MISER OF MOTOWN: GEORGE W. TRENDL

by Jack French ©1998



There were many tight-fisted broadcasting officials in the Golden Age of Radio, but probably none more pernicious than George W. Trendle, the owner of WXYZ in Detroit. Possessed of a penny-pinching persona and an unflinching quest to snatch credit for the accomplishments of his subordinates, Trendle rode roughshod over his minions at WXYZ. Most of his avarice and glory-stealing was well documented by one of his long-term employees, Dick Osgood, in his book "WYXIE Wonderland."

Radio station WXYZ would eventually, through the strength and popularity of its "The Lone Ranger", "Challenge of the Yukon", and "The Green Hornet" become a gold mine for Trendle and his banker cronies. But the talented cast, crew, and production staff of these shows always got short-changed. Many of the high-handed practices Trendle perfected would not have been successful in an era other than the Great Depression, where any job was eagerly sought by desperate Americans.

Trendle, and his hatchet-man, H. Allen Campbell, would offer prospective employees a job.....at no pay! Promising a salary "when things got better", Trendle and Campbell got free labor from many hungry workers. One of them, Ted Robertson, was hired at no pay as a WXYZ soundman and quickly exhausted his savings. When he didn't have the busfare to get to the station from the home of his aunt, where he stayed, the station manager telephoned him, but got the aunt. "He has no money and I can't lend him any more" said the aunt. "Very well", replied the manager, "just loan him busfare for today and

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Questions? Call Mike Wheeler (859) 402-0853 or email- expo@wayback.net

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"Lights Out"

RETURNS TO THE AIR
TONIGHT

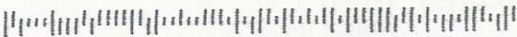
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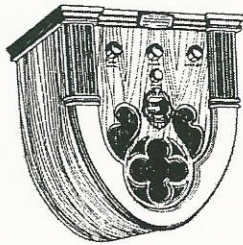
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