

The Old Time Radio Club

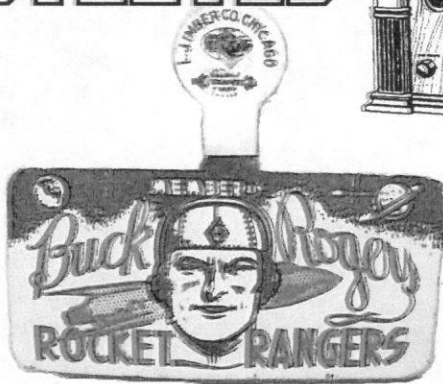
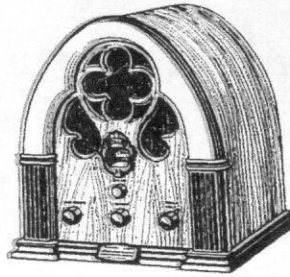
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SUPERMAN'S SECRET CODE



FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE

SUPERMEN OF AMERICA

HEADQUARTERS: ACTION COMICS 480 LEXINGTON AVENUE NEW YORK CITY

SUPERMEN OF AMERICA

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

Because SUPERMAN CODE is an absolutely SECRET CODE, for use only for and by members of this great organization, we have designed this Special Folder! Be sure to keep it in a safe place!



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. Member dues 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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All Submissions are subject to approval
prior to actual publication.

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1st of each month prior to publication.**

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etc. to: The Illustrated Press

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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:

Hello all club members. First on the agenda, for those of you who don't know, I would like to inform you that our club president Jerry Collins has been ill and in the hospital for the last month or so. He is at this writing still at Bflo General, and is feeling a little better. Our hopes and prayers go out to you Jerry, and hope to see you soon.

I'm sure many of you have noticed the new look of our newsletter cover. We can thank Peter Bellanca for that look, front and back. Thanks a bunch.

No more newsletters until September, when I will highlight the World War two years 1942-1945. From September to December I will highlight one of those years each month.

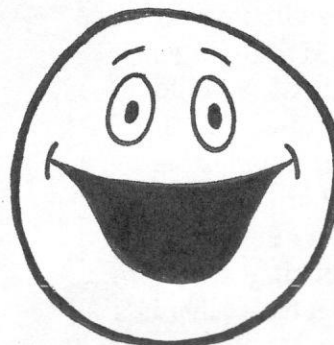
Our club picnic will be held on Monday August 5th starting at 6:30 pm. The club will provide hot dogs and drinks. Member are asked to bring a dish to pass and can bring a guest too. We are asking for \$3.00 per person to help defray the cost. Also it would be nice if some members could bring a folding table and also folding chairs for themselves. Bill and Mary Barren have offered to bring the grill and beverages. I will get the dogs and help cooking. This is always a nice event so why don't you join us for a relaxing evening.

Rich has asked me to announce a media flea market to be held June 7th-8th starting at 8:00am both days. There will be books, tapes, cds. If you come early there might be some serials left. The event will take place on Harlem Rd between Dingens and Clinton Streets in Cheektowaga. I was there last year, and there are some good deals but get there early to cash in on some bargains.

Sometime in July, Frank and I will venture out to the movies and watch the much talked about *Lone Ranger Movie*. I will make sure Frank controls himself and doesn't get too upset about Johnny Depp's Tonto wearing a dead crow on his head. And I'm sure we won't hear him say things like "Me want heap box of popcorn" or "Me go to town and catch bad one kimo sabe".

Here are the answers for last month's puzzle. I'm sure no one had any problems, but here they are anyway.
1-H, 2-F, 3-I, 4-J, 5-C, 6-G, 7-B, 8-A, 9-A, 10-D.

I have a little tougher quiz. For a best hits of Al Martino, tell me the name of Gen. George Patton's bull terrier pet dog pictured in the Winchell article. Full or nickname will be acceptable. First person to tell me wins the prize. So till the picnic and next September, have a great summer, and Jerry Get Well Real Quick, from all your fellow club friends.



Jerry
we miss
you

Part Two of Fred Allen By Tom Cherre



Before I go any further, I just want to say I listened to some Fred Allen shows the other day, and I was overwhelmed by Kenny Delmar doing Senator Claghorn. I gave a little mention to him last month, but I will, "Ah say, I will give that Southern gentleman his due". Kenny Delmar as I mentioned before did the announcing, but his portrayal of the loudmouth cantankerous Claghorn was hilarious. Kenny based Senator Beauregard Claghorn on a real Texan he met while hitch-hiking. The man had a bellowing voice and said everything twice. To put it plainly Allen's Alley was a precursor of shows like "Laugh-In", and "Saturday Night Live". Fred started out with a monolog and a conversation with his wife Portland. The two were then whisked away to Allen's Alley". The first door Allen would usually knock on was of course, the blowhard senator from Charleston, South Carolina. Claghorn's typical answer to Allen would be "Somebody, ah say somebody knocking! Claghorn's the name, Senator Claghorn, that is, I'm

from the South Suh." As if we needed him to tell us that. The Senator has an undying allegiance to his beloved South, and voices his many dislikes of the North in a friendly humorous sort of way. For instance, the Senator would never wear a "Union suit" or drive a Lincoln, or for that matter when in New York, never go through the Lincoln tunnel. He claimed he only drank out of Dixie cups. I have a good old friend living in Colorado with the last name of Beauregard. We always called him the General. I'm sure he would enjoy Sen. Claghorn. Other anti-Northisms were

1. When I'm in New York I'll never go to Yankee Stadium
2. I won't even go to see the Giants unless a Southpaw's pitching (New York Giants 1945).
3. I refuse to watch the Dodgers (Brooklyn) unless Dixie Walker's playing
4. I won't go in a room unless It's got a Southern exposure.
5. When I got chicken pox, they were Southern fried.

Allen was the perfect straight man, and when he was able to get a word in edge wise, Claghorn would respond with a rapid stream of non stop talking, shouting, repetition, and punnery. After a pause the senator would laugh and say one of his popular catchphrases "That's a joke son" or "Pay attention now boy." On one episode Allen asked the senator what he was doing to remedy his sleep problem; the senator said he crooned himself to sleep with his Southern lullaby, which went like this:

Rock-A-Bye Small Fry, on the
cotton tree top,



When the Southern wind blows the cradle will rock,
 When the wind's from the North, I say baby you'll bawl,
 For down will come cradle, tree and you all.
 The rest of the Alley group was good, but the Senator was the "Cat's Meow."

Allen's Alley was the top rated show of the 1946-47 season. But a year later he was knocked off his perch by a third rival network with the quiz show, *Stop the Music*, hosted by Bert Parks. He stepped down from doing his radio show in 1949 for a year due to Doctor's orders. Allen suffered from a severe case of hypertension. Fred Allen never hosted a radio show again. And now the real story about "The Feud." Of course we all know Jack Benny and Fred Allen were the best of friends in real life. They hatched this brilliant scheme in 1937, when Allen had a child prodigy, violinist Stuart Canin on his show. Allen made a wisecrack about a certain alleged violinist who should hide in shame over his poor playing. Allen knew Benny would be listening to the show, and Jack burst out laughing when he heard it, and responded with a verbal dig at Allen on his show. And they were off and

running, going at each other each week for over a decade. They played the feud bit up so good that many people actually thought they were bitter enemies. This was the furthest of the truth, being closest friends in real life. The Allen-Benny feud was the longest playing and best remembered gag in radio history. There was even a boxing match set up to settle the score between the two, but it never happened. Both Jack and Fred appeared in films together including *Love Thy Neighbor* (1940) and *It's in the Bag* (1945). They often guest starred on each other's show and had lines like Allen: Why you fugitive from a Ripley's cartoon.....I'll knock you flatter than the first 8 minutes of this program.





Benny: You ought to do well in pictures, Mr. Allen, now that Boris Karloff is back in England. Allen and Benny couldn't resist one more play on the feud on Allen's final show. Benny appeared as a miserly skinflint bank manager and mortgage company owner berating Henry Morgan. Typically Allen gave Benny the show's best line, "Listen, I was never this cheap on my own program!" Benny even used the feud once in awhile on his TV show, which had Allen and Benny going at it over sponsor favors. In Joan Benny's book *Sunday Nights at Seven* Joan recalled the feud had no limits "Or rather, the mud was the limit."



Throughout Allen's radio - career, he seemed to have trouble with many of his sponsors. In those days things were much different than today. Nowadays there may be hundreds of TV commercials seen everyday that would be considered obscene or too provocative on certain subject matter. Heck, you know what I mean, things have changed. Back then Allen was barred from saying "Brenda never looked lovelier", at the time socialite Brenda Frazier's wedding unless he got direct permission from the Frazier family. Allen had to fight NBC to keep Mrs. Nussbaum on the show because they thought her Jewish dialect would offend the Jewish audience. He couldn't poke fun at individuals (Jack Benny didn't count). Portland was censured when she implied a girl could find a better husband in a cemetery. If you ever watch Jay Leno or Letterman or Saturday Night Live, it appears there are no holds barred. Well anyway, after his radio



days were over he tried three short-lived TV projects including a bid to bring "Allen's Alley" to television similar to Our Town. The network rejected his idea. Allen quipped "The minds that control television are so small that you can put them in the naval of a flea and still have room beside them for the heart of a vice president." Fred Allen spent his final years as a newspaper columnist/humorist and as a memoirist. He was also the guest panelist on TV's What's My Line hosted by John Charles Daly. While Allen was taking his regular nightly stroll up 57th Street Saturday night March 17th he suffered a fatal heart attack and died at the age of 61. The following night on the regular

Sunday broadcast of What's My Line came on Daly wanted to replace the regular format of the show and do a tribute to Allen. His wife Portland insisted Fred would have wanted to keep things the same, so Steve Allen filled in for Fred, but the whole show had a somber tone to it. In the final minute all the panelists were teary eyed and gave brief tributes to their fallen hero. Long time friend Jack Benny was deeply crushed at hearing the news of Fred's passing. He had to take time off from doing his show. He gave a heartfelt eulogy to him in public and on his show. As I said before, Fred Allen was probably ahead of his time. He was clever and witty. He had a different type of show, but it was entertaining and you can hear it for yourself.



Walter Winchell By Tom Cherre

Walter Winchell



Winchell in 1960.

When was the last time you brought up the name Walter Winchell at the dinner table? OK, when was the last time you even mentioned his name? Popular professor of journalism, Ralph D. Gardner was giving a lecture at Baylor in Waco Texas a few years ago. He mentioned Walter Winchell and was astonished that no student in the class had ever heard his name. Well, Walter Winchell's name got a lot of mention in the newspapers and on the radio, years ago. From the 1920s through the 50s, virtually everyone in the country knew his name. He was a flamboyant superstar in the world of broadcasting. In his prime, Winchell had imitators but no equals. Believe it or not Winchell had at one time the highest rated radio show in 1948 beating out the likes of Fred Allen and Jack Benny. One would never guess Walter started out as a song and dance

man with *The Imperial Trio*. The group consisted of Georgie Jessel, Eddie Cantor and Winchell. They played movie houses in Harlem. Between numbers they collected tickets and kept the aisles clean. During World War 1 he enlisted in the Navy and became confidential secretaries to two admirals. Walter was born in 1897 in New York City with the name Walter Weinschel. His career in journalism came about by Winchell posting notes about his acting troupe on backstage bulletin boards. After working for the *Vaudeville News* for four years he joined *New York Daily Mirror*, where he became the first of what would later on be called the first syndicated gossip columnist with his *On - Broadway Column*. He had many connections in the world of entertainment, politics, and organized crime. Using these connections he would expose exciting or embarrassing information about celebrities in those groups. This caused him to be very feared and very hated because he would impact the lives of famous people. He used this alleged information as ammunition to further his quest for



obtaining more rumors and secrets. During the Jazz Age of the "Roaring Twenties" he wrote six fast-paced columns each week (printed in nearly 2,000 newspapers), and in the 1930s he began his Sunday radio broadcasts. Between the two, he reached over 50 million homes. His columns were written in a unique style composed of short sentences connected by three dots. Getting feeds from press agents, tipsters, legmen, and ghost writers he possessed the extraordinary ability to make a Broadway show a hit, create overnight celebrities, enhance or destroy one's career. Winchell was the first to announce an upcoming marriage or a



George S. Patton's Dog, [redacted] mourning his best frier

divorce. He would also give timely plugs to show business unknowns leaping them to fame and stardom. He would also give a has-been who needed a helping hand rendering a foothold back in the entertainment world. Winchell more or less used Sherman Billingsley's Stork Club as his base of operations. He virtually owned table number 50 of the exclusive Cub Room to hold court, receive stars, politicians, and well-

known racketeers. He occasionally dined there too. Ed Sullivan Hedda Hopper, and Louella Parsons soon began to write their own gossip columns soon after Winchell got started. Winchell used slang and wrote in incomplete sentences. Notorious mobster Dutch Schultz confronted Winchell when he publicly called him a pushover for blonde women. He is quoted as saying "Nothing recedes like success", and "I usually get my stuff from people who promised somebody else that they would keep it a secret". When he went into radio he opened his broadcasts by pressing randomly on a telegraph key, a sound that had you listening to an important event. He used his same greeting of "Good evening Mr. and Mrs. America from border to border and coast to coast and all the ships at sea". He would deliver his stories what a machine gun like staccato approach. Some say he spoke up to 197 words a minute, and still you heard every word clearly and distinct. Winchell, who was Jewish, was one of the first commentators in America to verbally attack Hitler and pro Nazi organizations such as the German-American Bund. He denounced Charles Lindbergh, whom he called The Lone Ostrich, and Gerald L. K. Smith of the KKK. He criticized General George Patton for being so outspoken. He predicted one time one of Patton's own soldiers would kill him, and also said "Patton behind a tank was Germany's worst enemy, but behind a desk as an administrator he was our country's greatest enemy". After the War his hangout became the popular Lindy's restaurant, near Times Square. For years Lindy's was a Broadway gathering spot, and the setting for many of Damon Runyon's colorful characters. Winchell would often be seen there regularly



Walter Winchell in his glory days, 1931.

accompanied by a celebrity and one or two bodyguards. He would get plenty of info from the regulars who relayed him the latest gossip. Later in the 1950s, he did a big turnaround and actively supported Senator Joe McCarthy filling his pages and broadcasts with those McCarthy had denounced. He became unpopular when the general public turned against McCarthy. His radio show ended in 1955 when he had a dispute with his ABC executives. He also had a dispute with Jack Paar virtually ending his radio career. For most of Walter Winchell's career he required his newspaper and radio employers to pay for all lawsuits from slander or libel, and there were quite a few. Whenever friends reproached him for betraying confidences, he responded, "I know, I'm just a son of a bitch." At the end of his career he did the narrations for TV's *The Untouchables*. He received \$25,000 for each episode he did. Winchell announced his retirement on February 5, 1969 citing the tragedy of his son's suicide. His wife Maggie died one year

later. His daughter spent many years being treated for mental problems. Winchell spent his last two years as a recluse at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Larry King observed "Winchell was so sad. At the end, he was typing out mimeographed copies of old columns and handing them out on the street corners." When he died at the age of 74 only one person came to his funeral: his daughter. Many of his co-workers and friends wanted to attend his funeral, but were turned back by his daughter Walda. A sad end for a great columnist.



Jessie the Chicken Plucker

Imagine, if you had to do it. Jessie was a chicken plucker. That's right. He stood on a line in a chicken factory and spent his days pulling the feathers off dead chickens so the rest of us wouldn't have to. It wasn't much of a job. But at the time Jesse didn't think he was much of a person. His father was a brute of a man. His dad was actually thought to be [unclear] and treated Jesse rough all [unclear] e's older brother wasn't [unclear] er. He was always picking on Jesse and beating him up. Yes, Jesse grew up in a very rough home in West Virginia. Life was anything but easy, and he thought life didn't hold much hope for him. That's why he was standing in this chicken line doing a job that darn few people wanted. In addition to all the rough treatment at home, it seems that Jesse was always sick. Sometimes it was real physical illness, but way too often it was all in his head. He was a small child skinny and meek. That sure didn't help the situation any. When he started to school, he was the object of every bully on the playground. He was a hypochondriac of the first order. For Jesse, tomorrow was not something he looked forward to. But he had dreams, and wanted to be a ventriloquist. He found books on ventriloquism. He practiced with sock puppets and saved his hard earned dollars until he could get a real ventriloquist dummy. When he got old enough, he joined the military. And even though many of the hypochondriac symptoms persisted, the military did recognize his talents and put him in the entertainment corps. That was when his world changed. He gained confidence. He found that he had a talent for making people laugh. And laugh so hard they

often had tears in their eyes Yes, little Jesse had found himself. You know, folks, history books are full of people who overcome a handicap to go on and make a success of themselves, but Jesse is one of the few I know who didn't overcome it. Instead he used his paranoia to make a million dollars, and become one of the best – loved characters of all time in doing it! Yes that little paranoid hypochondriac, who transferred his nervousness into a successful career, still holds the record for the most Emmys given in a single category. That wonderful, gifted, talented, and nervous comedian who brought us Barney Fife was Don Knotts. *Don Knotts played the role of Windy Wales on The Bobby Benson Radio Show*



NOW YOU KNOW, "THE REST OF THE STORY"
There is a street named for him and his statue in Morgantown, West Virginia, his place of birth.

Jesse Donald "Don" Knotts (July 21, 1924 – February 24, 2006)

BUFFALO NY 142

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The Old Time Radio Club

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