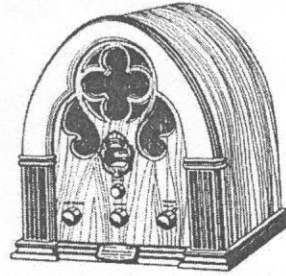


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The ILLUSTRATED

Number 422



PRESS

September 2014

The **RAILROAD HOUR**
 WORLD'S GREAT MUSICAL COMEDIES
 by Radio

Every Monday night set your dial for the Railroad Silver Train. It's loaded with stars of stage, screen and radio bringing you the entertaining dialogue and hit songs of Broadway's most popular musical shows.

ABC NETWORK *Monday Nights*
 at 8 p.m.
 Gordon MacRae and Lucille Norman
 Carmen Dragon and his Orchestra
 presented by AMERICAN RAILROADS

The **RAILROAD HOUR**
 Every Monday Night on **ABC**

FAMOUS MUSICAL SHOWS - GREAT STARS OF
 STAGE, SCREEN and RADIO

Singing Stars

GORDON MacRAE and LUCILLE NORMAN
 with
 The Sportsmen Quartet
 Carmen Dragon Orchestra
 and
 Stars from Famous Musical Shows
 Presented by American Railroads

AMERICAN RAILROADS *present*

The **RAILROAD HOUR**

Summer Show Train

NBC NETWORK *Every Monday Night*

GORDON with **MACRAE** and **NORMAN** with **LUCILLE** in *Musical Memories*

The Illustrated Press

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 January-March, \$20.00; April-June, \$14.00; July-September, \$10.00; October-December, \$7.00. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible 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 p.m. 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 a Club picnic in 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 Court
Lancaster, NY 14086



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
skylark68_1999@yahoo.com

Assistant to the Editor:

Richard Leroux (716) 693-0573
P.O. Box 54
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
rfl.1644@yahoo.com

REMINDER

All renewal and new member checks should be made out to D. P. PARISI, not the Old Time Radio Club.

CLUB OFFICERS

President:

Jerry Collins (716) 683-6199
56 Christen Court
Lancaster, NY 14086
collins@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 Place
Buffalo, NY 14213

Membership Renewals, Change of Address:

Peter Bellanca (716) 773-2485
1620 Ferry Road
Grand Island, NY 14072-3035
pmb1620@gmail.com

Membership Inquires and OTR Network Related Items:

Richard Olday (716) 684-1604
171 Parwood Trail
Depew, NY 14043-1071
raolday41@yahoo.com

Technical Manager/CD and MP3 Librarian:

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

Reference Librarian:

Don Friedrich (716) 626-9164
21 Southcrest
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
don201353@gmail.com

Cassette Librarian:

Dan Marafino (716) 684-0733
19 Church Street
Lancaster, NY 14086
digbee45@aol.com

Library Rates: Audio cassettes and CD's are \$1.95 each and 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.

Club Web Page: Now you can view and download our various catalogs and club information at ---
www.buffalo-otr-club.org



Thanks to Jack French and other Old Time Radio people I have come up with more than enough material to fill the newsletter. Next month I will even write one myself. I have mentioned Rudy Vallee many times, but have never given him his due credit. I am still accepting articles from our own members too. This issue starts my fourth or fifth year as editor. I plan to do it for at least two (2) more years. I don't mind doing it, but it is a bit time consuming and I wish someone else would enjoy that same experience. I'll remind the club in 2 more years.

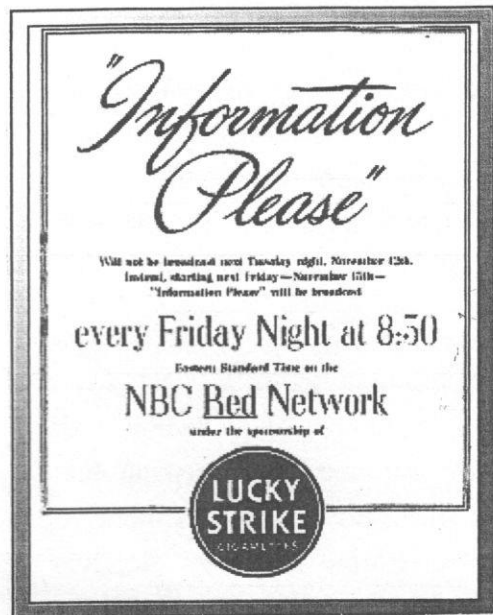
During the summer I managed to take 10 boxes of cassettes from Dan. Other members have taken the same or more. The club will make sure tapes will go out if members request them. Dan Marafino will give me a list of tapes that various members have in their possession. That list should be in the October newsletter.

Our club picnic seems to be getting smaller and smaller. My suggestion is to just have a Pizza party. It's less work, there's no cooking, and who doesn't like pizza? Well, we'll talk about it next year. Dick handed me a news article he received from Jack French at the picnic. It's an article from The Washington Post by Melanie D. G. Kaplan. It puts Buffalo in a good light. After some editing I will try and put it in the October issue.

Speaking of Hopalong Cassidy, he will be the featured star when our "Old Time Movie Night" resumes. The cowboy with the black hat and white horse usually had one punch fights. Boyd who was along in years when he started taking on Clarence Mulford's crude and crusty Hopalong Cassidy. Yes the character Mulford created for his books was a hard drinking smoker, who usually spoke like a veteran sailor. This hombre was the complete opposite of what Boyd played in the movies. William Boyd was also an intelligent financier. He made a bundle after scraping all the money he had to buy all the rights for the Hopalong Cassidy character, and made millions for his efforts. This is just a little preview for the Hopalong Cassidy article coming up in a few months. Boyd made 67 Hoppy flicks ,and 104 radio shows. He also did TV. I think I may have told you that the first time I saw a TV show, it was Hopalong Cassidy, many moons ago. Atop his horse Topper, Cassidy was the 19th century embodiment of the medieval knight. He was a fatherly figure type of hero, rarely courting the ladies, but always getting his man.

Cigarette Pack Color Serves In War

Lucky Strike Green Has Gone Red



In 1942, smokers of Lucky Strike Cigarettes noticed a drastic change to the Lucky Strike packs. Instead of the usual dark green and gold, the packs were white with red trim. On the bottom of the new packs was a curious abbreviation, "L.S.M.F.T." The reason for the change was heard on the radio commercials for Lucky Strike.

Like with many other products during World War 2, the Lucky Strike radio commercials had a patriotic theme. The radio listeners heard the announcer say, "Lucky Strike Green Has Gone To War." What he meant, the green dye used for the packaging of the Lucky Strike packs would be used for the war effort. The phrase was heard frequently on all programs Lucky Strike sponsored at that time. Unfortunately, it also stirred up a hornet's nest with one program.



When Lucky Strike sponsored Information Please (1940-43), it was a marriage that was made in a lower place than Heaven. From the very beginning, it was a battle between two strong willed men, George Washington Hill, the big cheese of the American Tobacco Company, and Dan Golenpaul, the creator of Information Please. While this relationship was stormy, it took the infamous Lucky Strike Green Has Gone To War phrase to really stir up trouble.

During a typical broadcast of Information Please, the phrase was uttered or whispered at every opportunity it could be said---even during the program! When there was a brief pause in the conversation between M.C. Clifton Fadiman and the program's panelists, the phrase was presented. Not only did this prove to be a distraction with the radio listeners, It also made Golenpaul furious. With the concern of ruining the program, Golenpaul asked Hill to drop the constant presentation of the phrase. Hill refused. The bitter Sponsor/Program

relationship would eventually go to court. It was a well-publicized event. Public opinion had Golenpaul as the good guy and Hill as the villain. The case was dismissed, but the stormy program/sponsor relationship came to a merciful end. Golenpaul was finally rid of Hill, Lucky Strike, and the annoying phrase. Lucky Strike Has Gone To War not only rubbed Golenpaul the wrong way, it also grated the nerves of the people who mattered the most---the radio listeners. In a 1943 poll conducted in Woman's Day magazine, Lucky Strike Green Has Gone To War was voted one of the most disliked radio commercials by the listeners who participated.

After Hill thought it served its purpose, Lucky Strike Green Has Gone To War passed into radio advertising oblivion---much to the relief of the listeners. With L.S./M.F.T. becoming the catch phrase, the Lucky Strike commercials continued the tradition as a source of unpopularity with the listeners. (For the record L.S./M.F.T. was also voted unpopular in the Woman's Day

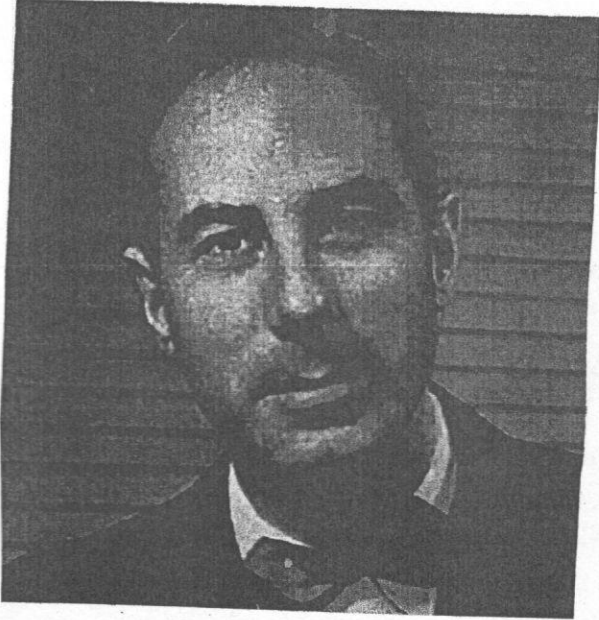
On paper Lucky Strike Green Has Gone To War appeared to be a patriotic gesture to help the Allies. The truth to the matter was that Hill intended to change and modernize the Lucky Strike packs anyway. It just so happened that World War 2 was in progress and the 'sacrifice' of the green dye made the American Tobacco Company look good with the public.

Editor: To my knowledge I never heard any friction concerning the Lucky Strike commercials. Listening to the Jack Benny Show, I always enjoyed hearing the "Sportsmen" do their Lucky Strike jingles. On radio and TV I've always thought that the cigarette companies presented the best commercials on the air. Even though I'm not a smoker I always liked the commercials.



Even His Initials Were B.S. Part One

By Jack French



When Bill Stern was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1988, he had been dead for 17 years and he had not been heard regularly on network radio since the 1960s. However the induction of sponsors knew that Stern's years of spouting pure hokum, disguised as historical fact, had not yet been forgotten by the American public. To put his decades of prevarication at the microphone in the best possible light, they carefully crafted this explanation.

"He told tales of sports legends and strange occurrences which kept listeners eagerly waiting for the climax. Although some of the reports stretched the limits of credibility, no one doubted that Stern was a master

storyteller who used emphasis, repetition, and pauses to perfection."

It was a fitting epitaph to the sports announcer who had flim-flammed his listening audience for a quarter of a century. William Stern was born July 1, 1907 in Rochester, New York. He was a Jew; his ancestors were Prussian Jewish immigrants, one of whom had anglicized his family name, Sterngold, to Stern. While still a teenager, he got his first job in radio at WHAM in Rochester, broadcasting local football games. He dabbled in both theater and vaudeville as a director and manager which doubtless led him to later favor creative drama over actual facts when at the microphone.

Most of his early work in broadcasting, both regional and network, involved play-by-play commentary at sporting events. He handled boxing, football, and baseball with equal facility. Generally in describing these events, he stuck to an accurate recitation of what was actually happening in these sports venues. Occasionally he made mistakes. During one football game, a player broke loose for a long run and Stern misidentified him, not once but several times, as the runner closed in on the goal line. Just before he sped into the end zone, Stern realized he had the wrong name so he quickly told his radio audience the runner had lateraled the football to the correct player who had scored. Months later, a rival sportscaster, Clem McCarthy, named the wrong horse winning at the race track. When Stern rebuked McCarthy for his error,

McCarthy replied, "Well Bill, you can't lateral a horse."



Clem McCarthy, one of the most famous sports and public address announcers, is usually remembered for his flub in the Preakness Stakes of 1947. Actually, his view was blocked by the crowd at the far turn with two horses of similar color silks. It was an honest mistake. He was devastated by his "faux faux" and lived with it for the rest of his life. His calling of the Joe Louis-Max Schmeling rematch on NBC at Yankee Stadium in 1938 was one of his greatest moments. Ed.

But it wasn't until the late thirties when NBC hired Stern to host the *Colgate Sports Newsreel* that his predilection for prevarication reached full flower. On this 15 minute program, sponsored by Colgate Shaving Cream, Stern had an open field to talk about anything even vaguely related to sports. He did brief interviews with celebrities (including Mickey Rooney, Brace Beemer, "Ellery Queen", Boris Karloff, Eddie Cantor, Fred Waring, etc.) on some aspects

of athletics. A musical quartet sang songs in the background while he recited some sporting announcements. Stern ended each show with snappy bits of Hollywood gossip and sports trivia. But the keynote of every program was a tale of some fantastic occurrence, usually combining a sports hero with a historical personage.

Stern told each flamboyant tale with an organist providing the punctuation. Usually he narrated his stories without help but occasionally he employed the radio actors to provide dialog, especially if the character were a woman or a child. One of his typical stories involved the death of Abraham Lincoln. In his best "true-as-gospel" voice, Stern told of the dying President sending for Union General Abner Doubleday, who some have credited with inventing baseball. "Keep baseball alive" gasped the President to Doubleday as Booth's bullet was ending his life. "In the trying days ahead, this country will need it." Then Stern described Lincoln's head falling back on the bloody pillow as he expired.

Of course, in actuality, the wounded president never uttered a single word after being shot in Ford's Theater but since Stern told this fabrication to his radio audience with his characteristic intensity and conviction, he probably convinced many of them that it was historical fact. For in addition to his sincere and energetic delivery, Stern had additional credentials, based upon his voice being trusted by thousands who heard him broadcasting

sporting events and narrating news reels at movie houses.

John Dunning, in summarizing the *Colgate Sports Newsreel*, pointed out that Stern would "tell the same story twice, a year or so apart, using conflicting facts and passing off both versions as true." Dunning lists a number of Stern's fairy tales including the blind man who won a track meet, the dead jockey who rode his horse to a first place finish, and a legless but very successful baseball player.



His jingle that opened up the door for his legendary yarns "Bill Stern the Colgate Shave Cream man is on the air Bill Stern the Colgate Shave Cream man with stories rare Take his advice and you'll look nice. Your face will feel as cold as ice. With Colgate Shave you'll be a fan."

With his strong background in theater and vaudeville, Stern certainly knew how to captivate his listening audience. He would tell tales bigger than Pinocchio, but his swallowed it up to the limit. I was one of those guzzlers, myself hypnotized by his far-fetched tales of the oddest characters that ever played the game. Bill Stern was himself a legend and a one of a kind. Editor.

There was virtually no limit to Stern's audacity in creating these phony stories and passing them off as incredible but true narratives. But the NBC network officials eventually got nervous enough to add some innocuous disclaimers to the program, along the terms of terming Bill "America's most famous collector of yarns and stories...some legend...some hearsay...but all interesting."

However Stern never missed a beat. In one show, he solemnly assured his radio fans that Thomas Elva Edison's deafness was the direct result of an incident on the baseball diamond when the inventor was playing semi-pro ball. The opposing pitcher had accidentally beamed Edison on his ear with a fast ball and the resultant injury eroded Edison's hearing. "And that pitcher was ..." intoned Stern into the microphone, Jesse James! In reality, Edison had never played semi-pro baseball, and of course, had never met either of the James brothers.

Another whopper concerned George Gershwin, who according to Stern, was once just a struggling song writer until he met a famous athlete who inspired him to greatness. "Listen George, take my advice before it's too late, will ya?" Stern quoted the athlete, "Don't just write another song. You can write the greatest one of all and I hope I'm alive to hear it." Stern claimed that Gershwin then composed his greatest musical piece, *Rhapsody in Blue*, and when he played it for the first time in Manhattan's Aeolian Hall, Gershwin said under his breath, This one's for you Christie.

"Ralston Revisited"

by Jack French

With the exception of Jim Harmon and Gary Yogy, I'm probably the most fervent fan of radio's "Tom Mix Ralston Straight-Shooters." Despite that, like many other OTR fans, I've harbored unhappy childhood memories of trying to get Hot Ralston down my gullet in order to obtain the box tops for the radio premiums Tom was anxious to send me. To this youngster, growing up in Kaukauna, WI, that bowl of gray, tasteless mush was a far cry from its description (by announcer Don Gordon) as "DEE-licious!"

About the time I was in 6th grade, Ralston brought out Shredded Ralston, a cold cereal for warm weather seasons, and I was delighted with the choice. This crisp cereal, later to be re-named Wheat Chex, made it easier for me to accumulate the required box tops. Therefore I could get the decoder pins, whistling sheriff's badge, arrowhead compass, etc. with greater ease.



Then some 60 years later, I'm ambling through a country store near Frederick, MD when I chanced to spot Ralston in bright red and yellow boxes on the shelf. Grabbing one, I flip it over and on the back is Tom Mix winking at me. (Not any of radio's Tom Mix's, but the cowboy movie star.) Included is a brief history of Ralston (originated 1896) superimposed over a U.S. history (i.e. "The 50s gave rise to television.")

I bought two boxes; one to consume at home (if I could) and a second to donate to the raffle prizes at FOTR Newark. And today, with an inch of snow on

my northern Virginia lawn, I break out the Ralston and follow the microwave directions. As I carry the steaming bowl to the breakfast nook, I have a box of brown sugar and a jug of maple syrup standing by, if they are needed.

I take my first bite and SURPRISE; it doesn't taste bad at all. Another spoonful and my amazement continues. My Ralston has a pleasing, nut-like flavor, quite different from my memories of childhood. Has Ralston (now Ralcorp Holdings, Inc) changed the recipe or improved the flavor? Or are my 70 year old taste buds betraying me? I dunno, but hot Ralston now tastes darn good. My wife's theory is that as a kid we like our cereal "sweet" so Hot Ralston appealed to few. I'm not sure that's the reason, since my folks wouldn't put sweetened cereals on our table. We willingly ate un-sweetened Cheerios and Kix (for Lone Ranger premiums) and Kellogg's Pep (for Superman prizes) but I don't recall any pre-sweetened breakfast food at our house.



This modern hot Ralston, Jim Harmon tells me, has been distributed sparingly for several years. Ralston used to sell it directly from St. Louis, MO to consumers at the amazingly low price of \$ 8.50 for six boxes. But now it's only available on-line or in a few retail stores. Neither Safeway nor Giant carry it in my area. The Maryland store where I bought my two boxes is a small chain in Maryland and Pennsylvania called Weis Foods; they sell it for about \$ 2.75 a box. The Vermont Country Store, with its user-unfriendly web site at www.vermontcountrystore.com, sells Ralston too, but only in batches of three boxes for \$ 12.90, plus S & H.

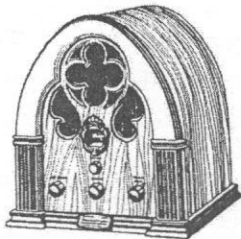
Other former Straight-Shooters are invited to replicate my discovery....

BUFFALO NY 142
09 SEP 2014 PM 1 L



The Old Time Radio Club

THOMAS R. CHERRE
144 FONTAINE DRIVE
BUFFALO NY 14215-2038



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Jim Beshires
163 Davidson
Savannah, GA 31419

31419301363



just for fun!

tune in the BIG
SURPRISE BROADCAST

of The BANDWAGON

starring **PHIL HARRIS
& ALICE FAYE**



Phil's in a new kind of trouble --
which means complications for Alice
-- and a barrel of laughs for you!

NBC, SUN., OCTOBER 26

7:30 P.M., E.S.T.

Residents of Other Time Zones Consult Your Local Newspapers