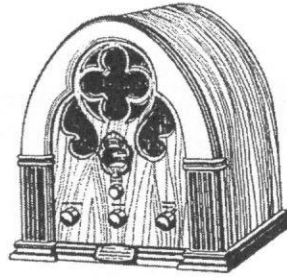


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The **ILLUSTRATED**



PRESS

Number 425

December 2014

LISTEN
A FULL HALF HOUR

Did you renew our membership to **THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB?**

THE NEW LUM 'N ABNER SHOW

on the air for **FRIGIDAIRE** every Sunday night
10:00 P. M.—WJAS

Listen this Sunday!

A stylized CBS logo consisting of the letters 'C', 'B', and 'S' stacked vertically on a rectangular base. The logo is surrounded by several jagged lightning bolt symbols, suggesting energy or broadcast power.

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.

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REMINDER

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

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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



Editor's Two Cents!

I trust everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Christmas is upon us and I wish everyone a wonderful holiday. I spoke with Jerry Collins and he is on the mend. Hopefully it won't be long until we see Jerry's smiling face again.

Jack French recently informed me that The Radio Historical Association of Colorado has formally announced that they will disband at the end of 2015. Their club has been in existence for just under 40 years; the membership has declined from more than 500 members in 2002 to just 133 today. They cited the reasons being 1) Loss of interest and active participation 2) increasing cost of postage and printing 3) declining revenues 4) diminishing rentals from their libraries.

One of the biggest problems was getting new people to serve in the operation of the club. Of the current

board members, the average length in service is 26 years. The oldest has served on the board for 34 years. As stated in their newsletter: "Folks, some of us are getting tired—and there are no replacements."

This sounds all too familiar. Our club is feeling the same problems. Hopefully with digitizing the newsletter we can keep printing costs and postage down and we can manage to keep afloat. Once again I urge you to give your e-mail to Peter Bellanca so we can get things rolling for the new year. Dues are due in January \$20.00 for hard copy and \$12.00 for digital copy.

Bill and Mary Barren displayed a book on the history of Buffalo Radio from 1950 to 1964 when AM radio was king. It's entitled *No Stoppin' This Boppin'.* "Let The Good Times Roll". The price is \$19.95. It's on sale at Talking Leaves, Vidlers, and The Buffalo Historical Museum.

It gives you a look back at stations WBNY, WKBW, WINE, WYSL, WUFO, and WNIA. Anyone with an interest in The Hound Dog, Tom Shannon, Lucky Pierre, and all the DJ greats of yesteryear, then this is a must.

Old Time Radio Christmas

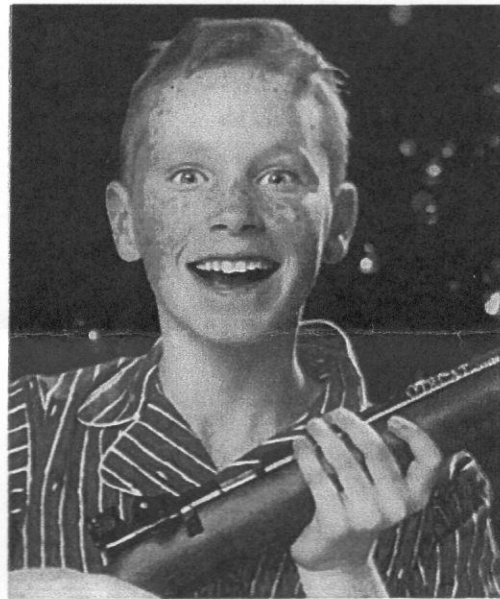
By Tom Cherre

Before the days of TV, computers, and i-pods the radio was the main source for news and entertainment. You could read the newspapers for news, and go to the movies to be entertained. You could read a book or maybe play the piano, but other than these you usually relied on your old Philco, Zenith, or Stromberg-Carlson to depend on.



During the Christmas seasons of the 1930s, 40s, and early 50s most radio shows had Christmas Specials. Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore, and the big orchestras of Guy Lombardo and Glenn Miller would provide plenty of holiday music. Programs like *The Great Gildersleeve*, *Fibber McGee & Molly* always had Christmas shows. Jack Benny made it a point on every Christmas show to stress his stinginess when he went Christmas shopping. Amos 'N Andy had

Amos explaining the "Lord's Prayer" to his daughter and Andy would play Santa Claus to earn a few extra dollars for gifts. One of the best of Amos 'N Andy was the \$1000 bill episode. It is both funny and heartwarming. Even *Suspense*, *The Whistler*, and *Dragnet* got into the spirit. *Dragnet* would have one episode of the missing infant from the church manger setting. They also played the 22 rifle, which was sad, but very realistic, and unfortunately happened years ago.



Gee Dad...

a WINCHESTER!

If you come to think about it, those olden days were pretty good. The world was a smaller place moving at a slower pace. Life was simpler and less hectic. You had real heroes on the radio. You let your imagination fill your mind with various good guys and bad guys, with a table model or a console, didn't matter. And hey! Candy bars were only a nickel. **Merry Christmas To All.**

Martin Grams Jr.

The Stairway to the Sun pt.2

I



I even found out how big the little towns were, whether they had a railway there, and what kind of trains they had. In great detail and it was in the Great Encyclopedia, letting the dialog take up the action. With "The Stairway to the Sun" being as descriptive as it was, there can be no doubt that Morse uses entries from the Encyclopedia for the foundation of this serial. As described by the announcer: "As they watch Jack and Haugemann approach the falls, they see the flash of lightning and hear the crash and roll of thunder caused by the friction of the great body of falling water! The falls is completely surrounded by ring after ring of rainbows until it looks like a highly decorated may-pole reaching up into the clouds, and every few minutes the electrified air in the vicinity of the water explodes with the flash and crack of canon fire." During another time the announcer also got descriptive, before the approach of flying reptiles: "They look down on giant

rocky prominence and cliffs of unbelievable proportions and of every color and hue; all the colors of the painted desert are splashed over the age-old peaks and declivities. The greens of emerald; the lustrous sheen and shine of exposed ledges of gold; the orange and browns of sandstone and purples of amethyst...A whole glittering pink banked by ledge shining with unlimited out-crossings of gold, so that it shone in the tropical brilliance like a captive sun. And then into the blistering sky swarmed a flock of creatures with wings as ancient as creation itself; great monsters with teeth bat-like wings and with snouts and jaws like alligators...Doc called them Flying Crocodiles at first and then he called them a lot of other things as they turned toward the airplane intent on destruction."

DOC: (excited) They're a comin' Jack...four, six, seven, nine of 'em, and they foolin'...

JACK: Well get up in front along side of me. Gretchen, you'd better go back in the cabin with your father...You got both of those automatic rifles?

DOC: I got em Jack....'Scues me baby...GRETCHEN: I'm pтетty good with a rifle.. If I can be of any help.....

JACK: You can use an automatic rifle?

GRETCHEN: Yes, I've never shot from an air plane. DOC": Well, we've never shot crocodiles from an airplane either, sister...Here take this rifle and git over there on the other side of Jack.....

It might be noted that Venezuela, the vast setting for this serial, was the inspiration behind Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Lost

World" (1912), and actually contains the world's highest waterfall, flooded plains, and Andean peaks. Known as Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in the world plunges down from the western flank of a gorge in the middle of the Auyan-tepui. With a total height of 979 meters, and freefall of 807 meters, the water that leaves the summit takes fourteen seconds to reach the bottom, although in the dry season much of that water is blown away in a fine mist. This also marked the first serial in which Morse began incorporating Christianity among the pages of scripts. Many references, descriptions and dialogue began to filter through the I Love A Mystery serials, hoping to remind the audience that horror was only fiction, not something to take seriously, especially in cult fashion. The Stairway was described as a veritable "Jacob's ladder to heaven." Later in the serial, the Island in the Sky was described as a "Garden of Eden" when the descriptions of the flora and fauna still left in half-finished stages were represented.



Carlton E. Morse writer of Stairway to the Sun:

Footnote: During the spring of 1930, NBC was broadcasting a series of Biblical dramas scripted by Carlton E. Morse, entitled Bible Stories. George Rand was the producer and director. Paul Carson supplied the music. The hour-long dramas were broadcast on Sunday mornings from 11 am to 12 noon on the west coast. The initial working title was "The Island in the Sky," but Morse changed the title to "Stairway to the Sun" before he completed the serial. Also of interest is the character of Dr. Karl Haugemann, described as a German scientist. At the time this serial was being broadcast, the United States was still at war with Japan and their allies, including Germany. So why have a German scientist leading an expedition? (If nit-pickers really wanted, they could ask themselves how the opening gong in each broadcast setting the time of events, came into the picture. Are there any hidden natives with a gong at every corner?) Due to the popularity of the favorable fanmail, Morse would write a sequel to this thriller five serials later entitled "The Hermit of San Felipe Atabapo."

Storrs Haynes of Compton (The agency representing the sponsor) wrote to Morse on July 23, 1943, days after "Stairway to the Sun" ended: "What the hell happened to Stairway to the Sun?" Haynes expressed his opinion that the story started nicely, then frazzled. He wondered if Morse was having trouble with CBS. The loose ends of the story troubled him, and he wondered if Morse shouldn't work these stories out more completely before starting to write them. They have to add up as a whole... this

would also protect you from Columbia. On August 16, 1943, Morse wrote to Haynes: "CBS did not give me trouble," and continued to explain his thinking on "Stairway" basically defending the story. Morse said he hadn't received any negative feedback. He also mentioned he recently received a letter from John Gordon about a Street and Smith I Love a Mystery comic book. Morse was very opposed to this, "It's cheap and childish, and it would harm the program." On September 13, 1943, Haynes wrote back to Morse. "K, you win, it seems listeners don't agree with me on Sairway>" This just go to show that the radio listeners still have the final say regarding the quality of an audio performance. Fans of I Love A Mystery to this day still consider "Stairway to the Sun" one of the best serials ever broadcast on network radio. Martin Grams Jr. is the author and co-author of numerous books including Inner Sanctum Mystery, Behing the Creaking Door, The Alfred Hitchcock Presents Companion and The History of the Cavalcade of America. Material for this article was reprinted with permission from Martin's book The I Love A Mystery Companion. All rights to the written scripts of Carlton E. Morse and derivatives are held by Morse & Co. Inc. (a California Corporation) c/o Richard Ferguson, trustee Morse Family Trust.

Ed note: Our library has a few episodes of I Love a Mystery. I found the quality of some tapes not the best sound, but the shows were great listening. The problem was stories ran for many weeks. That is my opinion.



Old Time Trivia Quiz:

Here's a little quiz with a few questions concerning the show I just wrote about, and a few others to test your knowledge:

1. Who was the principle writer of I Love A Mystery?
2. What was the name of the detective agency Jack, Doc, and Reggie ran?
3. What movie and TV star of the 60s and 70s played Reggie.
4. What was the long running sponsor for I Love A Mystery ?
5. James Stewart played Britt Ponsett in what series?
6. What was Phil Harris' nickname for Jack Benny?
7. Last One .. A Toughfie Who was buried in Grant's Tomb? Ans next month....

Move Over McArthur

Dreft Returns

By Danny Goodwin



"Ladies Dreft is Back" was a familiar saying at the end of 1945. That year, World War 2 ended, and while many servicemen were returning home preparing for civilian life, the return of an old friend to the dishwashing wars was in the process of being a reality. The radio listeners heard this thrilling bit of news during the closing commercials on the late 1945 broadcasts of NBC's *Life of Riley*. The commercial began with the announcer exclaiming, "Ladies Dreft is Back!"

Now you wonder, "Where the heck did it go?" The answer was World War 2. When the United States entered the war, many companies did their part for the war effort. Procter & Gamble, the makers of Dreft, was one of those companies. While soap production at the company was cut back, the production of Dreft was almost cut back entirely. It was made in a very limited supply and distributed to a few regions of the country. The reason why Dreft was affected more in war production than the

other Procter & Gamble products was because Dreft wasn't a brand of soap! It was the very first synthetic detergent ever made, and its ingredients and machinery were needed for war production.



Although Dreft was hard to find during the war years, Procter & Gamble made sure the listeners didn't forget its detergent creation. From 1943-1945, Dreft was the sponsor of NBC's *Dreft Star Playhouse*, a daytime anthology series with a serial format. On the program, announcer Marvin Miller had the unusual task of selling a product on the air that many people simply couldn't buy. He asked the people to be patient and reminded the listeners Dreft will be coming back for consumer use once Procter & Gamble was able to make it. Of course it would be after the end of World War 2. Like Miller did on *Dreft Star Playhouse*, the announcer who exclaimed "Dreft is Back" asked the radio listeners to be patient. Dreft was returning to consumer use, but its supply was still scarce. Fortunately this was temporary. In a short time everyone who used Dreft for dishwashing could find the familiar green box on the grocer's shelves. Just like it did before the war, Dreft continued its reign as the top selling brand for dishwashing.

"Ladies, Dreft Was Back"!!!

From out of Detroit

By Elizabeth McLeod

I've got to be careful about what I say this month. I'm talking about a legend. The Lone Ranger. The very embodiment of all that is Old Time Radio.



(Brace Beemer)

Even if you have only the most passing acquaintance with the aural medium, you know the Ranger. Fiery horse with the speed of light, faithful Indian companion, the whole routine---capped, of course, with a hearty Hi-Yo Silver. Few radio characters have managed to transcend the medium that gave them life—the Ranger, indisputably, is one.

Why? Was “The Lone Ranger” a great artistic achievement, pushing radio to its creative limits with every episode?

Hardly. It was a well-crafted show, its writers and performers always turning in a

workmanlike job. But stylistically, the Ranger never rode beyond the techniques of his birthplace: 1930s local radio. The scripts followed a predictable juvenile – adventure format, the acting was a simple four-square style, The sound effects were never particularly innovative. A Ranger episode from 1948 is virtually identical in construction, in storytelling style, and in production values to an episode from 1938, and even the most avid fan must acknowledge that the Masked Rider of the Plains did little to advance the cause of radio-as-an-art-form. As a result, a modern listener, turning to recordings to try and get a sense of what the show was all about is likely to emerge a bit disappointed.

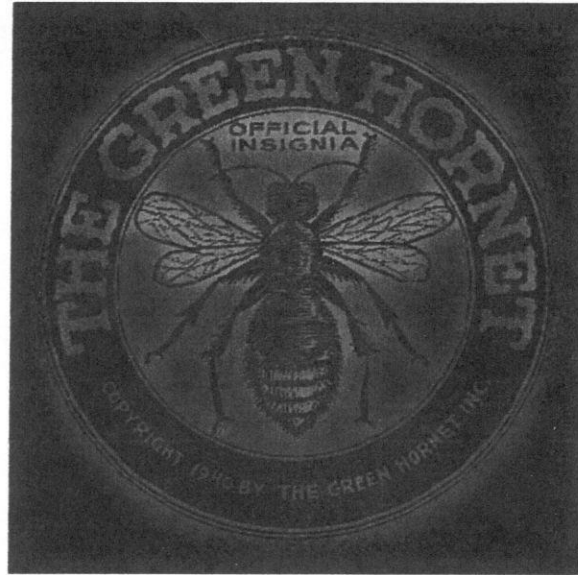
But there was more to the Ranger than the sum total of his radio adventures. I'm convinced that the real secret to his continuing appeal has less to do with his storylines than it does with the essence of the character himself.



The Lone Ranger was essentially a one-dimensional character. He fought the bad guys. His origin explained that he turned to crime fighting as a masked rider to avenge his brother and his fellow Teas Rangers—but once Butch Cavendish had been dealt with, the Ranger never seemed to spend much time brooding over the past. There were never any scenes of introspection, never any moments when the Ranger wondered if he was doing the right thing, never any questioning of purpose. He knew he was right and that was it. The world, in the Ranger's view, was a simple place of Good Guys and Bad Guys. Plain and simple, a kid's eye view of right and wrong, where there was always a grown-up who would solve all the problems and everything would come out all-right. And for more than twenty years, three nights a week, the Ranger promoted this view, and reinforced this message.

Contrast this philosophy to that of the other major Trendle heroes. The Green Hornet's adventures, for example, were motivated by Britt Reid; distaste for the casual sleaziness of urban life in the 1930s, a time when it was very difficult to tell the Good Guys from the Bad. As a result the Hornet's fight for justice was quite a bit more complicated than that of his legendary great-uncle—sometimes taking on a downright anti-establishment tone. The Hornet lived in a relatively complicated world where you couldn't always judge people by the color of their hats. As a result, he was the most interesting of the Trendle characters, but it's doubtful he

inspired many kids to daydream about how fun it would be to skulk around in the dark gassing crooked businessmen and corrupt politicians. Although, now that I think of it, that would be kind of fun.



On the other hand, Sergeant Preston, plain and simple, was a cop. A man with a badge. He didn't need a secret identity. He worked for a living, and his stories were often the Trendle equivalent of a "police procedural." He had dashing adventures in the snow and always gave proper credit to his faithful dog King, but he seemed to lack the independent motivations of his fellow Trendle heroes. He was doing his job—and unlike the Ranger or the Hornet, he could at least look forward to collecting a pension someday, but the Ranger was different. To the generations that grew up on his adventures, he was something special. An icon.

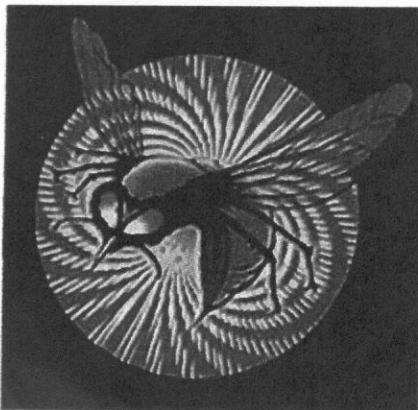
The Lone Ranger was, in the purest sense, a Hero. He did the right thing because it was

The Right Thing. That was all the motive he needed. Kids bought that in the thirties, the forties, and the fifties---and as cynical as we may have come to be as grown-ups in the nineties, deep inside we still want to believe that such a hero can exist. And that everything will turn out all right in the end. The formulaic scripts, the stiff acting, and the outdated productions don't matter.

As long as there's a need for heroes, the Lone Ranger Will Ride Again.



Elizabeth McLeod is a journalist, researcher, and freelance writer specializing in radio of the 1930s. She is a regular contributor to "Nostalgia Digest" magazine and the Internet Old Radio Mailing List, maintains a website, broadcasting History Resources, and is currently researching a book on Depression-era broadcasting.



Ed. Note: With all due respect, one aspect that made The Lone Ranger, both enjoyable and unforgettable was the unique opening

of the show by announcer Fred Foy. He gave the show life and perennial longevity for years to come. Another person we can not neglect was Buffalo born Fran Striker, who wrote all of these shows, for virtually peanuts, while working for tightwad George Trendle. Well that's another story. Now to test your knowledge of these Striker shows is a little trivia:



1. What was the original title of *Sgt Preston of the Yukon*?
2. The very first trials of *The Lone Ranger* were broadcast on what radio station?
3. What newspaper did the Green Hornet work for?
4. Sidekick Kato was originally Japanese, but when World War 2 came about he became what nationality?
5. In the TV series *Ranger Clayton Moore* was replaced one year during a contract dispute, by who? Ans. Next month

BUFFALO NY 142

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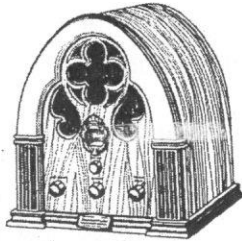
The Old Time Radio Club

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Merry Christmas



Jim Beshires
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RADIO'S
TOP
MYSTERY



The
WHISTLER

TONIGHT
7:30
KIRO



**SIGNAL
GASOLINE**

In gasoline --
it takes
Extra Quality
to Go Farther