

Old Time Radio DIGEST

The first issue January-February 1984 \$2.50



Ezra Stone,
Henry Aldrich

 **ANNUAL**
Friends of Old Time Radio Convention

Old Time Radio DIGEST

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Editor's note

We hope you enjoy this first issue of the "Digest" enough to support our efforts. Herb and myself have two of the biggest expenses covered, art work and printing. I'm an artist and Herb is a printer. There are other expenses accrued and that's where you the subscriber, come in. This magazine is not meant to be a profit making venture, just one that is self supporting. We are more than happy to donate our time to produce the "Digest", labor of love and all that. You can also help, by sending any material you think might be of interest about old time radio, articles, photos, etc. The only way this publication can survive is with your help and support. You can count on us to do our part.

Bob Burchett

OTR Can't die! No one will let it.

This new publication is another attempt by people who love radio. It's a group in Cincinnati who were disappointed when CC/NRT went on to become Golden Years of Radio and Television. They lost their chance to work on every CC issue from the beginning — paste-up, printing, and mailing. Now they want to try it again. These people are gluttons for punishment. I know what a problem it is to get a magazine out when trying to keep a personal life going.

CC/NRT survived college, graduation, my first job, my marriage, quitting my first job, my master's degree, and my new job. It couldn't survive my new house and mortgage. Luckily, these people have been through all that. I wish them the best of luck. OTR won't die without a fight.

Joe Webb

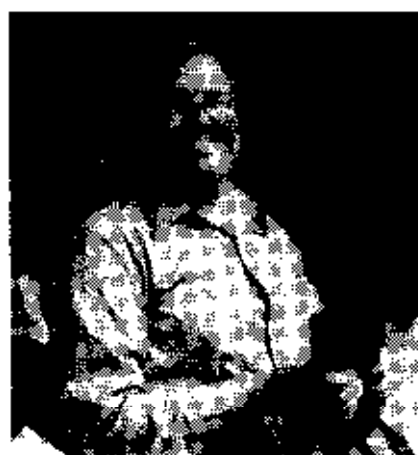
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is yours free of
charge in hopes
you will support
this new old time
radio publication
by subscribing.
We will give you
in return our
best effort to
create a magazine
worthy of your
support.**

WAS
Everyone ~~will be~~ a winner at the
ANNUAL
Friends of Old Time Radio Convention

Friday evening... We've seen the Friday night get together go from eight people five years ago to the great turn out it is today.



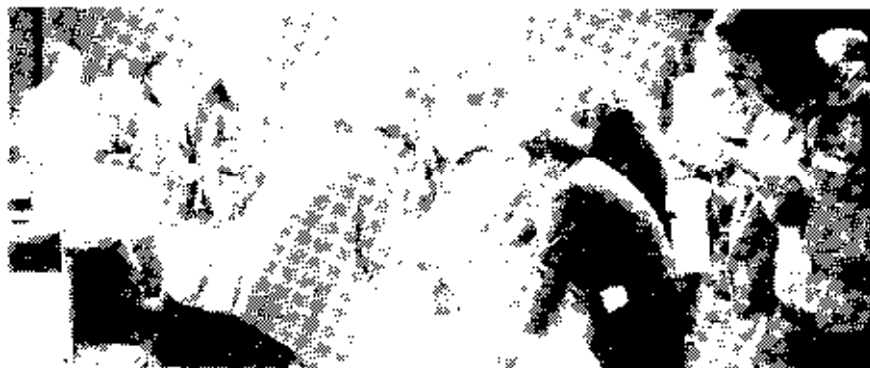






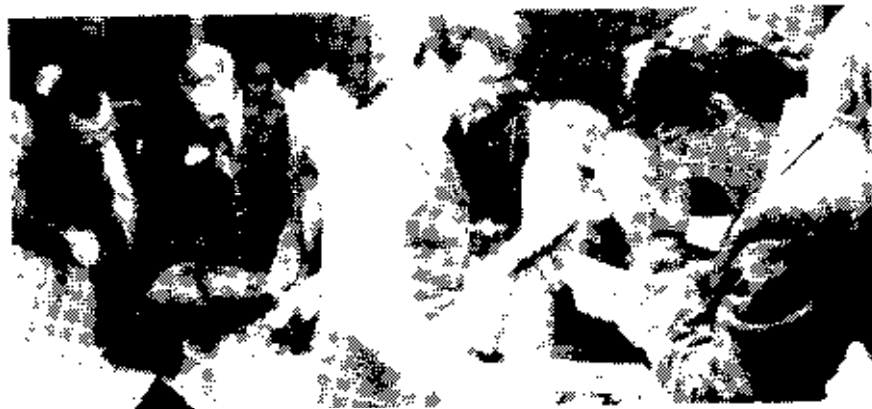
Saturday morning and afternoon...

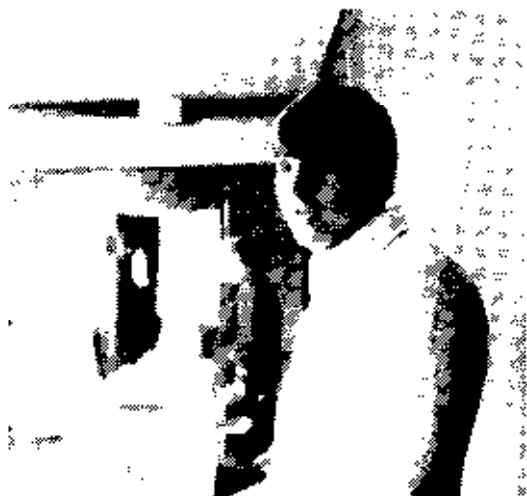




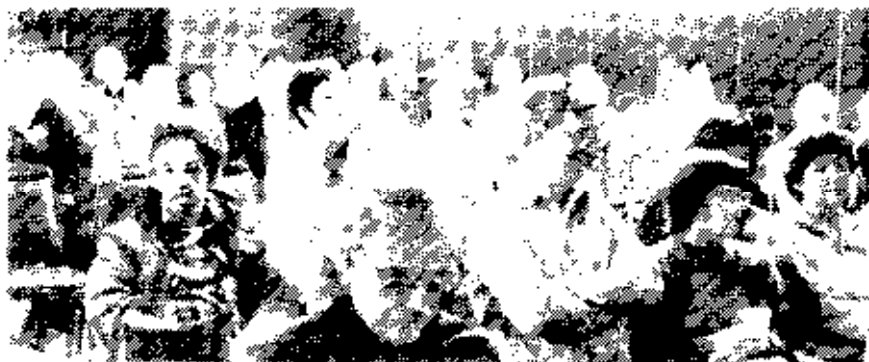








Dick Osgood and Lee Allman, WXYZ regulars, talk about life at the great Detroit radio station that brought us the Lone Ranger, and The Green Hornet





Trivia contest winners

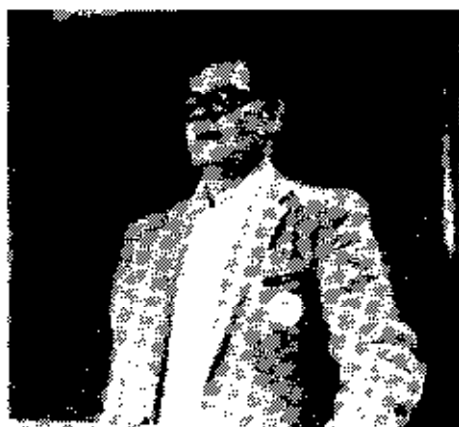


Group discusses Old Time Radio Clubs.





Gary Yoggy reviews the available literature on our hobby.



Lux Radio Theater, examined with fan Jim Snyder.



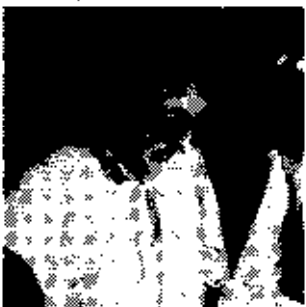
The Lone Ranger discussed by Terry Salomonson.



Radio flubs and fluffs with Walt Mitchell and Mary Lou Wallace.



Afternoon Radio show recreation with guests



Actor Workshop presenting Orson Welles' Mercury Theater "War of the Worlds" broadcast.







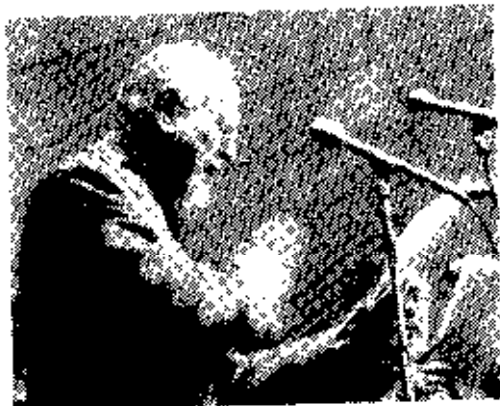
Saturday evening...





Highlight of Saturday evening dinner was the recreation of a Green Hornet radio show with Lee Allman, one of the original stars. Ezra Stone, Henry Aldrich, added a little comic relief to an otherwise serious show. Later he said a few words in his Henry Aldrich voice.





Spotlight on HOLLYWOOD LIGHTS

by George Wagner

"Hollywood! That magic city of stars!
More stars than there are in heaven! Ready
with HOLLYWOOD LIGHTS!"

These words, preceded by the sound of a steam locomotive surging into a station, opened one of the very earliest radio soap operas, **HOLLYWOOD LIGHTS**. This 1931 drama was the story of Ann Watkins, a young Pennsylvania farm girl determined to find fame and fortune in the movies. Once in Tinseltown, she fell desperately in love with dashing Jim Gray, a native of "Ioway City," Iowa.

In the final show of the first season — apparently the only surviving episode — Ann Watkins decides that she will give up the movies and return home to Pennsylvania. She has become convinced that Jim Gray no longer loves her, and she is running away from him. Ann confides her troubles to "Uncle" Burt Wainwright, a kindly old poet and father confessor figure, and also to a younger man named Elmer Manchester.

Jim Gray, on the other hand, is madly in love with Ann. But when he sees Ann and Elmer together, he assumes that they are in love. Jim decides to step out of Ann's life and return to Iowa City. Kindly Uncle Burt eventually steps in and straightens everything out. Even so, Ann remains firm to her decision; she and her husband Jim will return together to Iowa City.

Ann Watkins was played by Ruth Thomas, Jim Gray by Ray Rawlings, Uncle Burt Wainwright by James Marr, and Elmer Manchester by Edward Marr. G. B. Kingaton played Mr. Bromley, the casting director of Ann Watkin's studio (apparently M. G. M.), while Adrian Mann, the author of

the entire series, portrayed a character known as "Little Marlo." The latter two characters do not appear in the sole surviving program.

The announcer was Lee Holmes. Music was provided by the "Hollywood Playboys," a very good vocal group with orchestra. The musical number on the surviving program is a rousing rendition of "Sweet Jenny Lee." It is an excellent example of big band dance music from the years immediately before the coming of swing.

Only one of the cast members seems to have had any subsequent fame in either movies or radio. Edward Marr is almost certainly the "Eddie Marr" who performed extensively on such radio programs as the **JACK CARSON SHOW**, **LUX RADIO THEATER**, **DAMON RUNYON THEATER**, and **MURDER WILL OUT**. He also made some 19 movies during the period 1937-1954.

Radio catalogues give the date for this episode of **HOLLYWOOD LIGHTS** as September 6, 1930. This date cannot possibly be correct! There are four movies mentioned in the body of the story, all of them in current release: **IT'S A WISE CHILD**, starring Marion Davies; **TAILOR MADE MAN**, starring William Haines; **THE SECRET SIX**, starring Wallace Beery; and **STRANGERS MAY KISS**, starring Norma Shearer. None of these movies were released before April and May, 1931!

If the year 1930 is incorrect, the month of September is equally in error. One upcoming film is also mentioned. This is **A FREE SOUL**, likewise starring Norma Shearer. This film was released on June 7, 1931.

The date of **HOLLYWOOD LIGHTS**, therefore, cannot be September 6, 1930. The true date for this last program of the first series must be either late May or very early June, 1931.

Indeed, was there ever a second series of this pioneering serial?

Radio Book Collecting

by Edward Carr

The above heading is not very original, but I hope to make this a permanent column for those of you who would like to add to your personal collection. Collecting books that deal with radio personalities, their life and times in radio has become for me a challenge, when I say radio personalities I should say every aspect of radio from sound men to the janitor, the challenge comes from finding the most obscure book to the most recent.

I don't know how you go about adding to your collection but I can tell you how I do, and really that's what this column will be about, how to pick up those books you need to complete your collection (if ever) but anything of this nature needs input and I am now asking you the readers to help. Do you have doubles that you would like to trade, are you selling your collection, do you know of places where we can locate the books we need, anything that would be of help? If you'll write to me, Edward J. Carr, 216 Shaner St., Boyertown, PA 19512, I'll put down everything in this column, and to start things off, at the end of this you'll find some of the extras I have.

Most books can be added to your collection for a nominal price. Meaning from 50¢ to \$5.00 depending on where you obtain them, again others are expensive due to the rarity of the title and whom it is about, also, if it's a paper back or hardbound. I recently picked up 7 books, the most costly being \$5.00, the cheapest was 40¢. If you're not too picky about having dustjackets then you can usually get them at a lower price. For myself as long as they are in good condition, no broken spine or ripped pages I am perfectly satisfied. Dustjackets are not mandatory.

If you buy a book straight out and haven't

worked out any details please expect to pay the postage. In a trade each of course pays his own.

Most towns, cities have Out of Print book stores. There you can usually obtain a book at a fair price to you. Flea markets, auctions, library sales, there are numerous places, if you want to spend the time and effort.

At the 1982 convention in Newark I was told of a book that's out by the Library of Congress dealing with radio shows up to 1941 costing \$10.00. I ordered one through a friend and more details will be forth coming in the next issue. Speaking of the 1982 Convention a group of us were sitting at the bar talking of really nice places to have the convention, prices, food, etc., when a friend John Furman spoke up and said why don't we have it in his area. He went on to give all the reasons why but I don't believe we came up with a place to stay. So right now stop and write John for reservations for rooms at his house for the 1983 Convention. (That's a joke, son).

Books to look for:

A History of Broadcasting in the U.S. Erik Barnoury (Oxford Univ. Press) 3 volumes
Vol I *A Tower in Babel to 1933*
Vol II *The Golden Web 1933 to 53*
Vol III *The Image Empire Since 53*

Books for trade from E. J. Carr, address above:

I Kid You Not Jack Paar

W.C. Fields by Himself

Laughter Incorporated by Bennett Cerf

Trade all for The Fabulous Fanny (Fanny Price)

Till Next Time

Good Reading



NEW! LATEST MODEL PORTABLE RADIO
NO TUNING
NO BATTERIES
DURABLE PLASTIC CABINET

Best Value - Negotiable - Portable
New 1982 Model of Super-81. 5 on
ABOUT GIGAWATT BACKLASH
SOLD! PATENTED FIXED POWER
CRYSTAL KINETIC TUNING
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3 YEARS OF SERVICE - THE
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SAYS: "MIDGET RADIO WORKS"
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ready to listen with instruments and tape. Some use is before
price, both, in fact, etc. NO ELECTRICITY REQUIRED - See
only \$1.99 (M. O. Cash, Check) for postpaid delivery in GUARANTEE
to pay postage \$3.00 plus postage through the system. PRICES MAY
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MIDGET RADIO CO. Dept. L-11 Kearney, Neb.

Radio... Past, Present, Future

A column by George Wagner

This will be a column about radio — the great days of radio from the 1920s to the 1950s, the regrettable radio wasteland of the last 20-odd years, and the coming rebirth of radio as a major entertainment and information force. Over the coming issues we will cover all the lights and shadows, all the sounds and echoes, of this wonderful subject.

We will occasionally talk about other subjects as well — freewheeling discussions of comic books, science fiction, horror stories, old movies, early television, phonograph records, hot jazz (there is no other kind), swing music, the theatre, etc. Even these subjects, however, will be examined in the reflected light of radio.

In this first column, let's talk about radio present and future. Probably the most commonly asked of all radio questions is "do you think radio drama will ever come back?" The properly "sophisticated" answer to this one is usually, "no; radio was great in its day, but all that is past and gone now." Even people who should know better — veteran radio actors and actresses — regularly parrot this line. According to this line of thought, radio's tombstone should read "RADIO — A FAITHFUL FRIEND WHILE IT LASTED, 1920-1960." The newspaper obituary might add that radio "died forgotten and penniless after a lingering illness. Many of the loudest mourners did not even learn of the death until several years thereafter."

I fear that some of my good friends who insist on calling classic radio "old time radio" have unwittingly furthered this radio-is-dead hoax. "Old time radio" makes my favorite living art form sound dry, dessicated, antique, as dusty as a museum mummy — when it is, by Henry, none of these things! I confess that I do belong to the Cincinnati, Ohio, Old Time Radio Club,

but my fellow members will recall that I fought fang and talon against that name. I have by no means abandoned the war.

This whole "radio-is-dead" approach shows a fundamental misconception as to what radio is, or at least as to what it is supposed to be. Radio did not suddenly come to birth in 1920. Far from being only 60 years old, radio is as old as human speech; it began with story-telling around the flickering campfires of our remotest human ancestors, hundreds of thousands of years ago. All that happened in 1920 was that instead of one human being talking to another, mankind began conversing with the stars.

Radio, then, is the perfection of the story-teller's art. That art required half-a-million years to come to its maturity. How can anyone believe that the product of 500,000 years of human experience died of old age at age 40? The question "is radio dead?" deserves the same answer as the question "is human speech dead?" Neither question can be truthfully answered "yes."

Next time around we'll discuss some of the new radio dramas of the late 1970s and early 1980s. These programs amply prove that classic radio is not only not dead, but that it isn't even sick. The only thing wrong with radio is that it, like Cinderella, has been forced to live in the cellar.

Future columns will explore "lost" programs (such as the legendary MORIANDI, MAN FROM MARS, circa 1937), little known shows, books on radio history, a "how-to" of radio script writing, old schedules, and other such nonsense. One current project involves compiling a bibliography of magazine articles on Mercedes McCambridge. Another involves the possible establishment of THE AMERICAN RADIO LISTENER'S ASSOCIATION. The Association will

provide a unified voice (i.e., a lobbying organization) for those of us who desire current-day radio to provide more entertainment and information and less top-40 noise. More on the Association will appear in a later column.

Both this column and its writer are always open to letters from fellow radio collectors. I'd especially like to hear from amateur groups involved with the creation of original radio dramas. Dealers, I'd very much like to receive your catalogues; I can be reached care of this magazine.

If you people don't write me, after all, I can only assume that you agree with everything I've said. You wouldn't want me to think that, would you?

PHILCO Motorola DELCO

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6 TUBES
FITS DASH OF ANY CAR

1941 PHILCO **1995**

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Custom Dash Controls for All Cars
YRD YEAR FREE SERVICE GUARANTEE
 Including Free Replacement of Tubes
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Allen B. Blankfield
1914 ATLANTIC AVE.

FOR

Radio Service

DIAL 4-1729

STANDARD

SALES and SERVICE
1723-25 ATLANTIC AVE.

RADIOS RENTED

The World's Hardest Old Time Radio Quiz

by George Wagner

1. What was Henry Aldrich's middle initial?
2. Under what name did Peggy Lou Snyder become one of radio's greatest stars?
3. Who played Bess Johnson in the soap opera HILLTOP HOUSE?
4. What was the original name of Don McNeil's BREAKFAST CLUB?
5. Name the connection between JOE PALOOKA and THE SHADOW.
6. Exactly who was Elsie Beebe?
7. "The Dunwich Horror" was broadcast over SUSPENSE in 1945. Later "The Rats in the Walls" and "The Outsider" were broadcast by the BLACK MASS program. The original stories from which these radio adaptations were made were written by one of the great masters of the horror story. What was his name?
8. Who was JOHN'S OTHER WIFE?
9. This 15-minute program, broadcast in 1947, exposed consumer frauds and was sponsored by the Commercial Credit Corporation. What was its name?
10. One of the last network science fiction programs ran on the Mutual net from 1957 to 1958. A three-parter. Name the show, name the host, and name the closing theme.
11. Name the two famous radio characters who played the leads of the 1947-1948 show FIREFIGHTERS.
12. A trick question - name this program
 ★★★★★★
 HOLLYWOOD
13. Whom did Orson Welles describe as "the world's greatest living radio actress"?

Red Flag for RADIO RERUNS

by George Wagner

The Radio Reruns firm of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has undoubtedly introduced more people to the pleasures of classic radio than any other single source. The Radio Reruns people have taken our rather esoteric avocation out of obscurity and brought it into America's department stores, ten cent stores, even hardware stores. I salute them for this.

Most of the Radio Reruns cassettes are of high sound quality. The programs themselves are worthwhile collectibles. I did not previously own a great number of these shows, and I consider myself an experienced collector. I salute the Radio Reruns outfit for these things also.

There is a serious problem with the Radio Reruns cassettes, however, a problem which must be called to the attention of both the beginning collector and the veteran radio historian. The dates printed on the Radio Reruns cassettes seem to be almost invariably WRONG!

For example, Radio Reruns' SHADOW broadcast entitled "The House of Horror" is dated June 2, 1942. There was NO program broadcast on the above date, as this was the summer off-season. "The House of Horror" was actually broadcast on November 17, 1940.

Another SHADOW program, "Death Coils to Strike," is dated July 11, 1942. This is another impossible date, from the same summer off-season. "Death Coils to Strike" was actually broadcast nearly six years later, on March 21, 1948.

Radio Reruns lists the SHADOW program "Death Takes the Wheel" as October 3, 1950. To the best of my knowledge, however, no SHADOW programs have survived from the 1950s. This episode was actually broadcast more than three years before, on September 28, 1947.

Yet another SHADOW offering, "Death Prowls at Night," is touted as the "last show

aired" from December 26, 1954. In actuality the last SHADOW program was "Murder by the Sea." It was broadcast on the above date, but it has not survived. The episode "Death Prowls at Night" was broadcast on March 23, 1941 — more than THIRTEEN years before the date claimed by Radio Reruns!

Similarly, Radio Reruns advertises a SHERLOCK HOLMES cassette of "The Speckled Band" as May 21, 1946. But the program on the cassette is part of a BBC series that did not begin until 1954! In addition, there was no SHERLOCK HOLMES broadcast anywhere on May 21, 1946. There was a SHERLOCK HOLMES program on May 21, 1946, but this episode had both a different title and a different cast from the Radio Reruns tape!

Another SHERLOCK HOLMES cassette is dated February 6, 1938. Unfortunately for Radio Reruns, there was no SHERLOCK HOLMES series broadcast that year! In reality, this BBC program could not possibly have been broadcast before 1954 — fully 16 years AFTER the date claimed by Radio Reruns! To confuse matters even further, the Radio Reruns people have for some unknown reason saddled this cassette with the title "The Blackmailer," when it is one of the most famous of all of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton."

Radio Reruns lists their GANGBUSTERS cassette, tape No. 228 as August 28, 1945. Yet the crime case treated in this episode did not even begin until November, 1947! GANGBUSTERS was NOT a science-fiction program!

One Jack Benny program, so help me, is dated as "1962." By 1962 the Benny program had been off the air for many years; it had been seven years since the last live show and four since the final re-run. In addition, Radio Reruns labels this one the

"Easter Show," although it was clearly broadcast a week before Easter.

I could go on like this for pages, but one final example will have to suffice. The FIBBER McGEE program "Interviewing Fibber" (much better known to collectors as "The Newspaper Interview") is dated 1944 by Radio Reruns. I cannot believe that the good people at Radio Reruns ever bothered to listen to this episode, for even a casual listening shows this program to be unmistakably post-war! This program was broadcast on December 9, 1947 — three years after the year claimed by Radio Reruns.

Radio Reruns would be far wiser to mark their cassettes "date unknown" rather than using these wildly erroneous dates.

Lew AYRES and Lionel BARRYMORE star in the story of **Dr. Kildare**

Sponsored by self-polishing **Master Glow** floor polish

Listen tonight and every Wednesday night!
7:30 pm
WMGM
1050 on your dial

Thom Salome
354 - 22nd St BRKYN, N.Y. 11215
(212) 768-8498

At one time Thom Salome was an old time radio dealer. He lost most of his collection and records in a fire. He would like to make restitution to his customers who he was unable to locate because of lost records.

Thom has gotten back into the hobby as a trader, not a dealer. I've been trading with him for two months and have been more than satisfied. He has done everything he said he would and more.

Bob Burchett

Publisher's note

Hello all you radio fans past, present and future. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and your new publication. You have probably all heard of the famous Bob and Ray of radio, well we are the Bob and Herb of the 80's. We won't attempt to bore you with a lot of personal stuff about ourselves, however a little introduction is in order.

Bob Burchett was art director for the old Collector's Corner/NRT publication. He is a full time commercial artist and I might add a darn good one. He is responsible for the layout and design of the new publication, along with being the Co-Editor. I am sure if you saw a copy of the Collector's Corner/NRT you will have to agree it was top notch in the art department. Bob was with the publication from it's birth by Joe Webb and Bob Burnham, two great guys who love old time radio.

Herb Brandenburg was the printer of the Collector's Corner/NRT starting in 1980 and is the printer of the new publication.

When we heard of the absorption of CC/NRT by "The World of Yesterday" we tried to purchase it or take the magazine over since we did most of the physical work on the publication as far as getting it laid out, printed and mailed we thought we had lost a baby in it's infancy. Since we have two of the most costly items covered we decided to give it a try, and with your support it will become the leading publication for old time radio collectors. We intend to give it the care and love a new baby needs.

Herb Brandenburg

Turn! Dial-out programs everywhere: **30 Days FREE!**

MIRACO Radio
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Ultra Power Miraco Radio with Coast to Coast, California Stereo, Loud and Clear on coastal superstations \$190 to \$250 sale, from Euro Europe, Marston/Baron's 1000 Hz stereo 30 Days Free! gives it most selective, Clear and most powerful features. Get the amazing 50 Amp 6-tube radio. Solid metal cabinet. With top factory prices - SAVE UP TO 40%.

Every set completely assembled, ready to use. Fully guaranteed. Ultra's \$49.95 lot. Speakers, batteries, tubes, etc. at big savings.

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The Radio Reading Room

A Book Review by George Wagner

DIME-STORE DREAM PARADE: Popular Culture, 1925-1955. By Robert Heide and John Gilman. Photographs by Lawrence Otway. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979. 128 pp.

DIME-STORE DREAM MACHINE is more than a book — it is the nearest thing yet to a working time machine. This lavishly-illustrated volume does not merely tell us about the 1930s and 1940s; rather, it actually takes us there.

The photographs in this picture-packed compilation are more important than the text. There are illustrations of old magazine covers, promotional buttons, art deco architecture and decorations, clocks, toasters, coffee cans, food cans, furniture, rugs, chinaware, posters, automobiles, Mickey Mouse items, old comic books and postal cards. There is still more — soft drink advertisements, soap flake boxes, plus treasures from both the 1934 Chicago and the 1939 New York world's fairs. And more yet — dozens of wonderful old jimcracks of the types most of us (unfortunately) threw away years ago, or (lucky dogs!) hid away in the attic.

Radio-related items include: sheet music; old radios; radio stars; a Kate Smith electric clock (1938); a Myrt and Marge calendar (1934); the cover of a Charlie McCarthy children's scrap book (1935 is the date given, but that seems too early); a Gangbuster's toy tommy gun (1936), a Little Orphan Annie ceramic mug (1934), etc.

The one hundred-plus black-and-white photographs are augmented by 74 (count 'em) color illustrations. I mean a glowing Technicolor-type color that threatens to vibrate right off the page. These color illustrations alone are worth the price of the book. One of the color photos is of a 1938 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Emerson radio; a really beautiful thing in

sculptured wood, it must be worth a fortune today. Another color shot shows Kate Smith's America board game ("Kate Smith's own game"), produced in the early 1940s. There is even a Pure as Gold motor oil can from 1939, in pulsating color, with a "Pep Boys" radio plug right on the can. Other color pictures include a poster for Mickey Mouse bread (1934) and a Little Orphan Annie "Plug-in" Stove (1933). Or how about a counter display of Lucky Strike Green? Or boxes of such soap powders as Lux, Ranso and Oxydol?

I own many books and magazines on the 1930s and 1940s, including source materials published during these decades. But the present volume is by far the best single-volume compilation I have ever seen. The only thing comparable is the multi-volume **THIS FABULOUS CENTURY PUBLISHED** BY Time-Life.

Don't be fooled by **DIME-STORE DREAM MACHINE's** paper-bound format: this coffee table-sized volume (11 1/2" by 8 1/4") is truly a quality paperback. The cover price is \$14.95 (19.50 in Canada). However, I've seen **DIME-STORE DREAM MACHINE** remaindered for as little as \$3.98, so it might be worth shopping around.

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near
PHILCO
AUTO RADIO

\$19⁹⁵

Powerful Superheterodyne 6 tubes. Fits dash of any car. Installed with aerial, while you wait.

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50c
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Open Every Day 10 to 6 P. M.

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**I LOVE
OLD TIME
RADIO!**

LOVE TO
HAVE ONE
OF THESE
BADGES?
SEND \$1.50

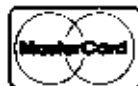
**I LOVE
OLD TIME
RADIO!**

OR ONE
OF THESE
KEY CHAINS?
SEND \$2.00

**I LOVE
OLD TIME
RADIO!**

LADIES I
LOVE TO
HAVE ONE
OF THESE
MIRRORS?
SEND \$2.00

USE YOUR VISA
or MASTER CARD
WHEN YOU BUY



Old Time Radio on your terms.

Answers to Quiz

1. W. In one early show Henry places an advertisement in the paper and gives his name as "Henry W. Aldrich."
2. Harriet Hilliard, of OZZIE AND HARRIET fame
3. Bess Johnson was played by... Bess Johnson!
4. THE PEPPER POT.
5. Frank Readick, one of the earliest SHADOWS (in the pre-Welles days) also played Knobby in the 1932 JOE PALOOKA series.
6. The famous soap opera LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL was known to its cast members as "Elsie Beebe," from the first letters of the words in the title — LCBB
7. Howard Phillips Lovecraft.
8. JOHN'S OTHER WIFE was his secretary.
9. SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR.
10. EXPLORING TOMORROW. John W. Campbell, Jr., the editor of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE (later ANALOG); he was also a nuclear physicist. "As Time Goes By."
11. Lyle Sudrow and Cameron Prud'homme.
12. STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD
13. Mercedes McCambridge. Note: Orson was right

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