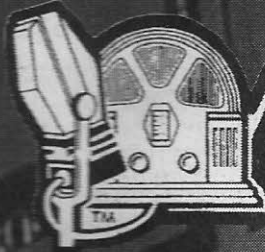


OLD NEWS • WAR OF THE WORLDS—AGAIN • THE GUIDING LIGHT GOES OUT • MAX REINHARDT'S RADIO WORKSHOP



sperdvac

RADIOGRAM

Vol. 34 • No. 11

October 2009

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Volume 34 • Number 11 • October 2009



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The Mysterious Traveler



September 30, 1962

The Day We Stopped Listening

SUNDAY evening, September 30, 1962 was far from routine. The President of the United States had requested airtime on radio and television to address the country concerning the rising tide of violence and dissension focused around the University of Mississippi. A young African-American named James Meredith was planning to attend classes for the first time. Protestors battled some 3000 Federal authorities and the President had ordered 20,000 army troops to the scene to quell the violence.

The rioting at Ole Miss constituted one story that night. A much quieter story, one that went virtually unnoticed that evening, concerned the same radio airwaves that the President had briefly commandeered for his purposes. In fact, that same Sunday evening is looked upon by many media historians as the night that radio's "Golden Age" came to an end. That night, CBS aired the final original episodes of both *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar* and *Suspense*. The former had occupied the airwaves for 14 years, the latter for 20 years. The last of the great network dramas were fading to dead air and with them would go the sense of shared community that had been an important part of radio for a span of five decades.

Yours Truly, *Johnny Dollar* took its leave first with a presentation called "The Tip-Off Matter." Although the program's best days were behind it, the current star, Mandel Kramer, was still managing to breathe considerable life into the venerable series. In his final case, Dollar was called to the prison bedside of a dying convict Johnny had helped put behind bars. The convict reveals the location of \$100,000 in stolen cash in gratitude to Dollar for looking out for the convict's kid brother.

Suspense followed with an original story written especially for the series by Jonathan Bundy titled "Devilstone," an old-fashioned ghost story revolving around an Irishman, Timothy Martin (Christopher Carey) who inherits a brooding old house from his uncle. Plans to rent the property soon go awry when the ghost haunting Devilstone drives away all who come to inspect the house. Martin, with the aid of his manservant, finally manages to

exorcise the house of its angry spirit.

Both programs retired that night while retaining a hardcore listening audience and still backed by commercial sponsors. But CBS, and the radio industry in general, had a new business model in mind intended to rejuvenate dwindling radio profits and in this new model there was no room for sentimentality or even "thank you." In years past, when a radio series had come to the end of the road it was not uncommon for an on air acknowledgement that the show was concluding its run. Depending on the stature of the show, the stars were sometimes even given the opportunity to say goodbye and thank their listeners. In November 1960, at the end of her 27 year run, Virginia Payne, radio's Ma Perkins, stepped out of character and addressed her audience with soft-spoken grace. Payne even invited her fans to write to her as "Ma Perkins" and she would try and write back.

There was no such sentimentality and no on air farewells when *Johnny Dollar* and *Suspense* bowed out two years later. Listeners were given no clue that the end of an era had been reached. Many listeners likely tuned in the following week expecting to hear their favorite dramas as usual. Even some newspapers were incorrectly stating that *Johnny Dollar* and *Suspense* were still on the broadcast schedule. Instead, listeners were greeted with the sort of music and chatter that had become the linchpin of the new radio.

Some dates will always remain seared in our collective memory: December 7, 1941, November 22, 1963 and September 11, 2001. Lesser days, however, also have had an impact on our culture and direction. Radio once helped define and explicate the issues which drew us together. The popular radio dramas were part of that effort. They were written to formula backed by tradition and broadcasting codes which eschewed chaos. The 1960s, unfortunately, were all about chaos. After September 30th nothing changed in practical terms. Radio had already shed most of the sorts of programming that had defined its role in our popular culture. Symbolically, September 30, 1962 does have meaning. It represents one more causality in a nasty decade. That was the day we stopped listening. ☘



OLD NEWS IS GOOD NEWS • SIXTY YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Adapted verbatim from the October 2, 1949 edition of the *Lincoln (NE) Sunday Journal and Star*.

Amos 'n' Andy, Charlie McCarthy And Red Skelton Return Tonight

MORE OF THE well-known network programs return to the air this week as transition from summer to winter programming is completed.

"JUVENILE JURY"—the laugh-provoking program with small-fry jurors giving advice on parent-and-child problems—holds its first broadcast of the new season today at 2:30—KOLN. Jack Barry is emcee.

"THE SECOND Great Commandment" will be presented on The Greatest Story Ever Told program this afternoon at 4:30—KFOR. It's based on quotations from St. Matthew 22:36-40.

AMOS 'N' ANDY and their comic cronies open the lodge hall of the Mystic Knights of the Sea tonight at 6:30—KFAB. This is the 23rd season on the air for the popular black-face comedians.

CHARLIE McCARTHY—and Edgar Bergen—start off the new season tonight on their new network, CBS, at 7:00—KFAB. Ray Noble will be back as both conductor and foil for Charlie. Dinah Shore will be the first guest.

RED SKELTON brings Junior, Clem, Willie, Deadeye and the rest of his company of comedy characters to CBS tonight at 7:30—KFAB.

JAMES CAGNEY will play the part of a criminal lawyer faced with disbarment at the height of his career on the hour-long Theatre Guild program tonight at 7:30—WOW. The play is "Counselor-At-Law."

BUDDY CLARK and Ted Dale will have Doris Day as guest on the premier broadcast of the "Contented Hour" tonight at 9:00—KFAB.

MONDAY NIGHT, Gladys Swarthout will be guest soloist on "The Telephone Hour"—WOW 8:00 p.m. Her major selection will be Pittaluga's "Romanza De Solita."

RAY MIILLAND will re-enact his film role in "It Happens Every Spring," on the Radio Theatre Monday night at 8:00—KFAB. The plot revolves around baseball and a "dipsy-doodle" pitch.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, Groucho Marx makes his debut on CBS with his "You Bet Your Life" comedy quiz—KFAB, 8:00. He was heard last year on ABC.

FRIDAY NIGHT, Jimmy Durante re-

turns to NBC with Don Ameche and comedienne Vera Vague—WOW, 8:30 p.m.

"THE LIFE OF RILEY," starring William Bendix, presents his first show of the season at 8:00 WOW, Friday night. "Digger" O'Dell and gang will be on hand.

Winter Favorites Replace The Summer Shows In Ratings

The first of the returning winter programs displaced the summer holdovers in Hooper's popularity rating released for September.

Radio Theater was first with 13.8 points, My Friend Irma second with 13.2 and Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts third with 12.9.

The first 16:

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Radio Theater | 13.8 |
| 2. My Friend Irma..... | 13.2 |
| 3. Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts..... | 12.9 |
| 4. Suspense | 12.0 |
| 5. Big Story | 11.8 |
| 6. Mr. District Attorney..... | 11.6 |
| 7. Mr. Keen..... | 11.3 |
| 8. Horace Heidt..... | 11.2 |
| 9. Mystery Theater..... | 10.9 |
| 10. Bob Hawk | 10.8 |
| 11. Mr. and Mrs. North | 10.6 |
| 12. Curtain Time | 10.5 |
| 13. Mr. Chameleon | 10.4 |
| 14. Fat Man | 10.3 |
| 15. Crime Photographer..... | 10.1 |
| 16. First Nighter | 10.1 |

KOLN To Carry The World Series

Barring the need for playoffs, the World Series will begin Wednesday, Oct. 5, and will be broadcast over Mutual (KOLN) beginning at 12:45.

Gustavson To Discuss The A-Bomb Explosion

Dr. R. G. Gustavson, University of Nebraska chancellor and member of the council of Argonne National Laboratories, atomic research center, will appear as guest on the "Your University Speaks" broadcast Sunday at 12:30 p.m.

He will discuss the significance of the Russian A-bomb explosion.

Radio In Review

BY REX L. GRIBBLE

AS THE NEW season progresses, network lineups are taking shape. The talent war waged among the major networks during the past year has revamped this season's program schedules.

CBS' Sunday night schedule is complete this week with the initial broadcasts of Amos 'n' Andy, Edgar Bergen-Charlie McCarthy, and Red Skelton. These three comedy shows will be heard in successive half-hour periods following Jack Benny, who comes on at 8:00. Our Miss Brooks, heard at 5:30, and Horace Heidt, at 8:30, will round out CBS' three and one-half hours of solid entertainment.

To compete with this star-studded cast, NBC starts things rolling at 5:30 with the hour-long "Hollywood Calling" giveaway. The Phil Harris-Alice Fay show, Sam Spade, the Theatre Guild (one hour), American Album of Familiar Music and Eddie Cantor's "Take It or Leave It" follow in that order.

ABC offers tough competition to the two, larger networks in the form of the hour-long "Stop the Music" at 7:00, and Walter Winchell, at 8:00.

CBS also has imposing schedules set for Monday and Wednesday nights. The Monday night lineup, beginning at 7:30, comprises Arthur Godfrey's "Talent Scouts," Radio Theatre—the best drama program on the air, "My Friend Irma," and the Bob Hawk show. Wednesday night features three big attractions, Groucho Marx, Bing Crosby and Burns and Allen.

NBC is maintaining its usual strong Tuesday night schedule—Bob Hope, Fibber McGee and Molly, and "People Are Funny."

OZZIE AND HARRIET, who switched from CBS to ABC this summer, will not return to the air for another two weeks. Unable to find a sponsor, they were scheduled to make their first broadcast of the new season last Thursday night, on a sustaining 'oasis.

But at the last moment a sponsor was signed and the program delayed another two

Continued Page 11

Radio PROGRAMMES

Ever wonder what was playing north of the border during the golden age of radio? In keeping with our "old news is good news" section herewith is a radio highlights column reproduced from the October 25, 1949 edition of the Winnipeg Free Press.

Pierre Fournier, Parisian cellist, will be guest of the Toronto Symphony orchestra at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday over CKRC. Mr. Fournier has appeared with most of the major orchestras of Europe and North America. He will be heard in Dvorak's Cello Concerto in B Minor. Conducted by Sir Ernest MacMillan, the orchestra will play the Symphony No. 1 in E Minor by Sibelius.

In connection with the Canadian Citizenship council's current nation-wide campaign for funds and to acquaint the public with its aims, Judge W. J. Lindal, regional director, will be heard on CKRC at 10:25 p.m. He will speak on Canadian Citizenship.

At 10:15 CKRC's Heres' Health programme features a new character named Deux ex Machine—"spirit of the machine"—who outlines

progress made by science in the fight to prevent industrial accidents.

The men who fly Canada's new jet airliner and who will test the secret new Royal Canadian air force jet fighter will describe the thrills of their profession on Canadian Cavalcade Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. over CBW. To be heard on the programme are Jimmy Orrell of Liverpool, Don Rogers of Hamilton, Ont., and Bill Baker of Moose Jaw, the trio who crash-landed the new airliner when its landing wheels misbehaved. Music will be provided by the Charioteers.

Who Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder? will be the opening number on Leicester Square at 10:30.

A group of concert orchestra pieces will be featured on CKSB's

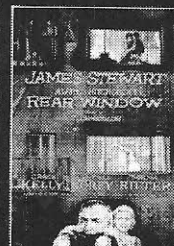
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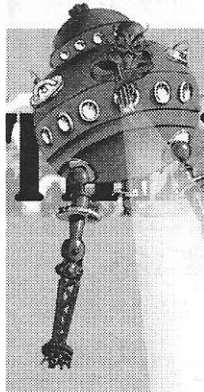


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by Sean McKenzie



THE WAR OF THE WORLDS...AGAIN

Being what is called a “genXer”—I was born in 1977—I’m considered media savvy because I spent much of my childhood glued to the big glowing box in the living room called a TV. I have been told by those older than I that the box was once called a television set for reasons that escape them. Nonetheless, the TV was my teacher and I learned the alphabet from *Sesame Street* and how to be nice from a purple dinosaur named Barney. I also learned that it was okay to cuss on TV but not in the classroom or on the playground.

When I entered middle school I discovered radio/music and the movies. With regard to the latter I was allowed to go to the movies with my friends but only after my parents checked every movie for its rating. All that consideration by my worried parents really didn’t matter because my friends and I got in to see any movie we wanted; the ushers were a few years older than we and didn’t care so as long as we had tickets. I spent considerable time at the fourplexes watching films with lots of cussing, lots of naked girls and lots and lots of blood and guts mixed with car chases.

Radio was music or talk. Since radio talk was all political I preferred music, and I soon learned that many of the songs I listened to had lots of cussing and lots of sexual activity that piqued my fertile imagination. The latter was the power of suggestion, and while in college I learned that radio was called “theatre of the mind” for that exact reason. Radio, the old professors said, had *had* the power to elicit visualization but I wondered where these graybeards had been since listening to rap was as good as reading a pornographic novel.

One night during my junior year, alone in my studio apartment shortly after my girl had tossed me over literally for the football captain, I stayed up late to listen to one of my favorite disc jockeys. She was known as Pandora and her program was all about her “box,” which was presumably the radio and all the music that came out of that box. Pandora had a sultry voice and when she assured me that she was naked at the mic that old theatre of the imagination was again active. But on this particular October night Pandora had been pre-empted by an attack by Martians. At least that’s what I thought had happened because I had tuned in late and heard some guy trying to interview some scientists about strange activity on Mars. Truly, I had not paid that much attention to the hubbub about the Orson Welles “classic broadcast.” Sure I had heard about it but it meant nothing to me. So being ignorant of history I was suckered in to this phony newscast but I wasn’t that dumb. When the program cut between Ramon somebody and his Latin band and reports about

Mars I knew the show was either quaint or just too campy to mean anything. So, no, I didn’t panic. I didn’t call any of my friends to ask if they had heard about Martians invading New Jersey.

I quickly realized that the radio story was phony, that it was one of those cheezy old-time radio shows worth a good laugh. My suspicions were proved correct when a sissy voice came on to tell me that I was listening to “the classic Orson Welles radio broadcast of H. G. Wells’ *The War of the Worlds* that panicked America.” So this is it, I thought, and decided that since I had nothing else to do I’d get refinement and listen to an American artifact. A strange thing happened, though; the more I listened the more I began to appreciate that “theatre of the mind” business. I was especially bowled over by the sound effects to the point that I turned off the lights, fell supine on my sunken couch, and let the presentation scare me witless.

The next morning I couldn’t get those sound effects out of my head nor could I ignore the show’s ability to communicate plausibly and quite emotionally through nothing but sound. I had to know more and so off to the library I went with the hope that Jany Martin, a beautiful work study student I had met in biology class, could direct me to something about the Orson Welles broadcast. She did, and as she pointed to a tome called *The Invasion from Mars* she said no when I asked her if she would like to have a latté with me when her shift ended. Hadley Cantril’s book was all about the psychology of panic, and since I had changed my major again, this time to psychology, I figured it was the right book. There was also a paperback called *The Panic Broadcast* by the fellow who had written the broadcast script. I found a study carrel and spent the morning reading all about the classic broadcast. Later, I learned that the library’s media center had a recording of the broadcast so I listened as intently as I could to determine why radio was good at conjuring images. The library session was fruitful, and I left with a great appreciation for what I considered a lost art.

A week later at the campus coffee

bar—still sitting alone—I had one of those “duh” moments. My great-grandparents on my mother’s side were well and living 100 miles away from where I was living. They had actually lived through the great Martian invasion and, I thought, were a great resource. I could actually get firsthand knowledge of what it was like to experience a panic caused by the media of the time.

It didn’t take long for answers since the family was assembled at my parents’ home for Thanksgiving. I arrived with my tape recorder and before dinner I sat down with my great-granny Maggie and just plain Harry—he never liked being called grandpa—and gave them the mic. Harry exaggerated, or so my great-granny claimed, about how he had left a diner and ran into his friend Earl—whom great-granny described as Harry’s drinking buddy. Earl was in a fright; he told Harry that Martians had landed on the East Coast and they were making their way west “killing everything in their path.” Harry accepted the declaration because Earl had heard it on the radio, and the radio wouldn’t lie. Harry with Earl went back into the diner with their story, and the diner’s owner said that a customer had mentioned earlier that something weird was going on back east. The radio was turned on but there was no mention of a Martian invasion. Harry and Earl decided it would be best to load their guns and protect their homesteads.

Great-granny picked up the story saying that Harry came home “with eyes as wide as silver dollars.” He was in a panic; he declared that Martians had invaded earth and were on their way to kill everybody in town. She thought Harry had been drinking, especially when she heard that that the story had come from Earl. She refused to believe the story and emphasized that it had to be a radio show. Harry wouldn’t be deterred; he was certain that “we had gone to war” with Martians or at least with Germany.

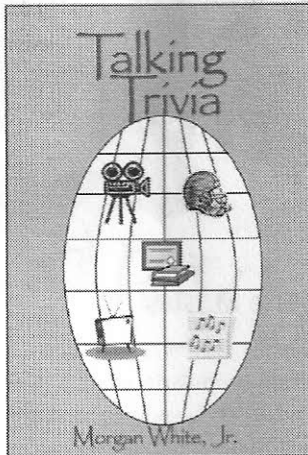
We all enjoyed the recollections of two normal people who lived through what one of them momentarily thought was an invasion by Martian marauders. But the episode got

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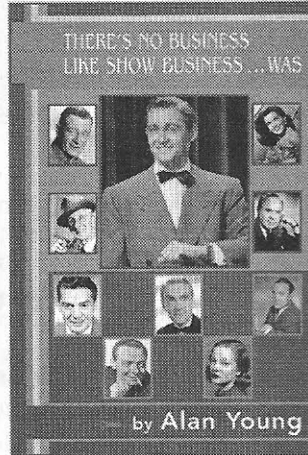
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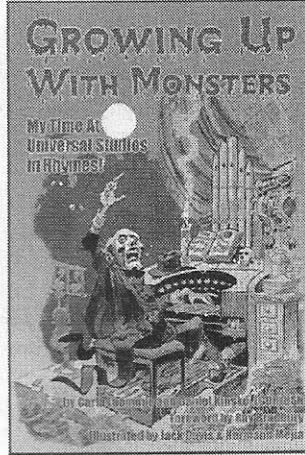
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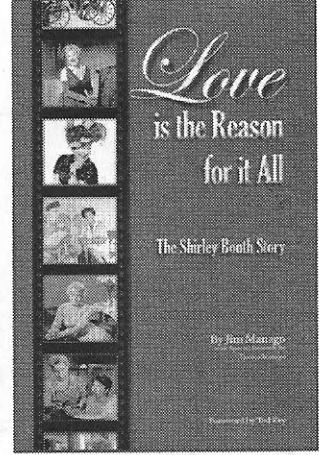
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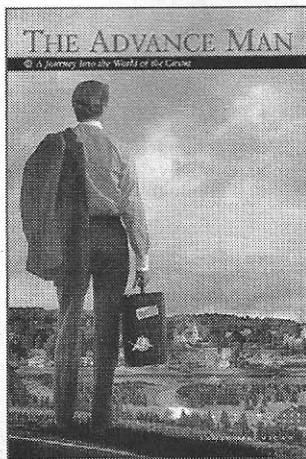
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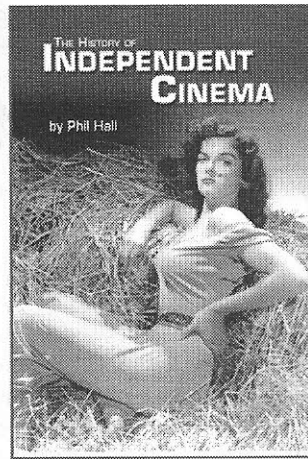
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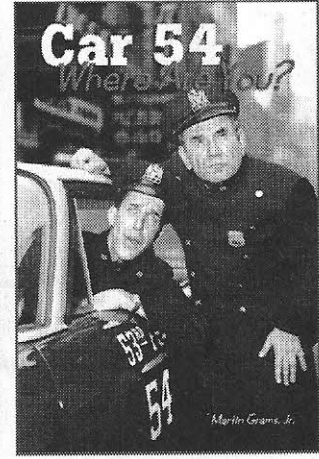
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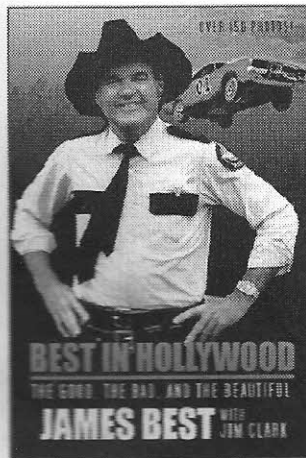
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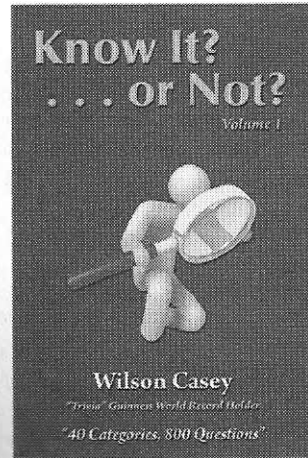
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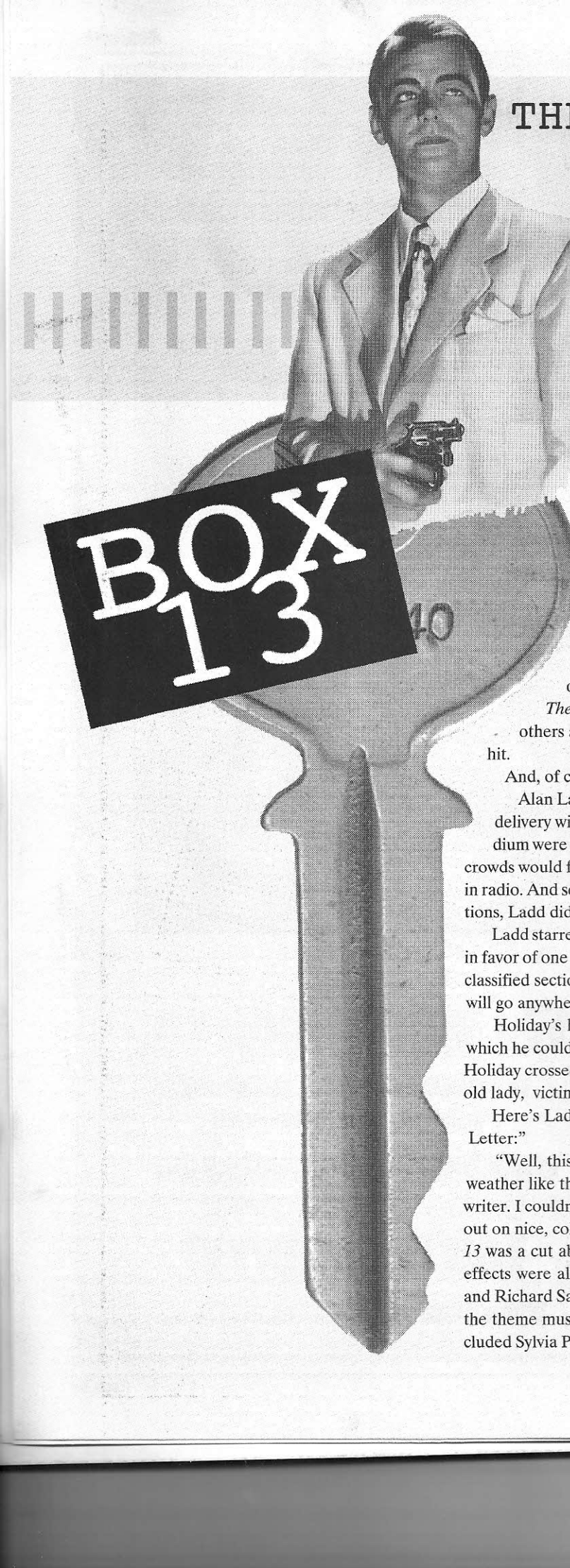
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THE KEY TO BOX 13

by Glenn Mosley

THE STAR POWER and popularity of actor Alan Ladd during the 1940s and 1950s have long been under appreciated by film historians and those who write about pop culture. From 1942 to 1950, the box office take on Ladd's movies was around \$55 million. The fact that he also loved radio only increased his popularity and his contact with his many fans.

Ladd was an almost constant presence on the radio, guesting on most of the great radio anthologies of the day, including *Suspense*, *Lux Radio Theatre*, *Screen Guild Players*, *Screen Director's Playhouse*, and hundreds of others as an uncredited bit player earning his dues in the 1930s before stardom hit.

And, of course, he also starred in *Box 13*.

Alan Ladd's voice was made for radio. In his best days, he had a cool, clear, crisp delivery with perfect pronunciation and a deep, level tone of voice. He and the medium were a perfect match. When Ladd appeared on *Lux* and other shows, immense crowds would form outside the studio. His fans loved him in movies and they loved him in radio. And so, when, in 1948, he formed his own production company, Jaguar Productions, Ladd didn't hesitate to start his own radio series. Thus *Box 13* was born.

Ladd starred as Dan Holiday, a former newspaper reporter who'd ditched one career in favor of one as a mystery writer. But he needed story ideas so he took out an ad in the classified section of his former employer, *The Star Times*. It read: "Adventure wanted; will go anywhere, do anything. Box 13."

Holiday's hope was that the ad would attract all sorts of interesting people upon which he could base his mystery stories. He wasn't wrong. Over the course of the series, Holiday crossed paths with psychopathic killers, a down on his luck boxer, a murderous old lady, victims of racketeers, gangsters, and children in trouble just to name a few.

Here's Ladd's opening monologue as Dan Holiday in the very first episode, "First Letter:"

"Well, this is great. Rain, rain, rain. I'll bet even the ducks wouldn't come out in weather like this. But me, I'm an idiot. I gotta go and take up a profession like being a writer. I couldn't take up something easy. Oh, no, not me. I gotta be a writer so I can be out on nice, cold, wet nights, beating my brains out, looking for an idea." All in all, *Box 13* was a cut above most radio thrillers of its kind; the production, acting, and special effects were all top-notch. Verne Carstensen was the show's production supervisor, and Richard Sanville served as director. The main scriptwriter was Russell Hughes, and the theme music was composed by Rudy Schrager. Ladd headed a fine cast which included Sylvia Picker (as Holiday's secretary and Girl-Friday, Suzie), Betty Lou Gerson,

Adventure wanted—
will go anyway, do
anything—Box 13.

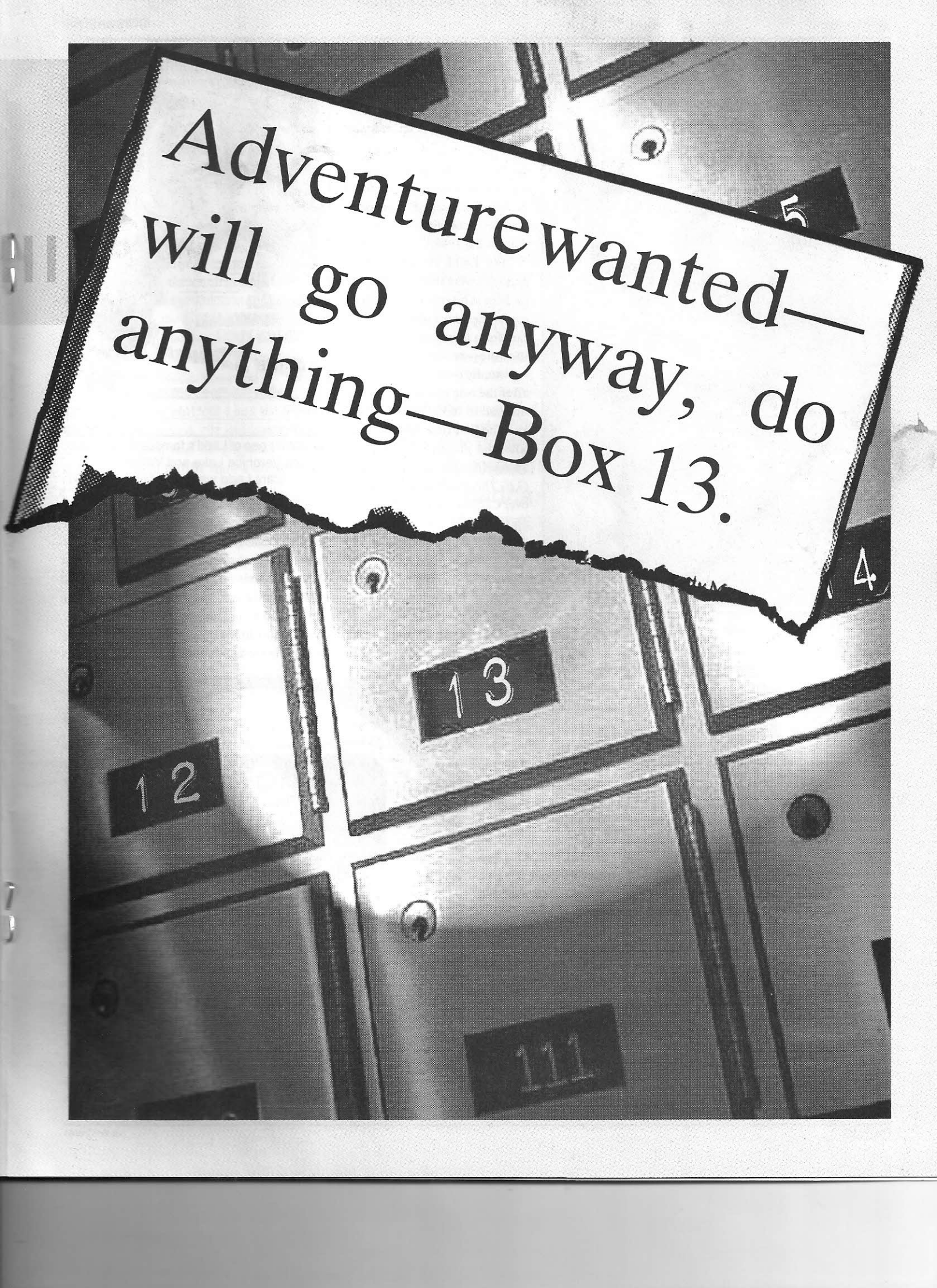
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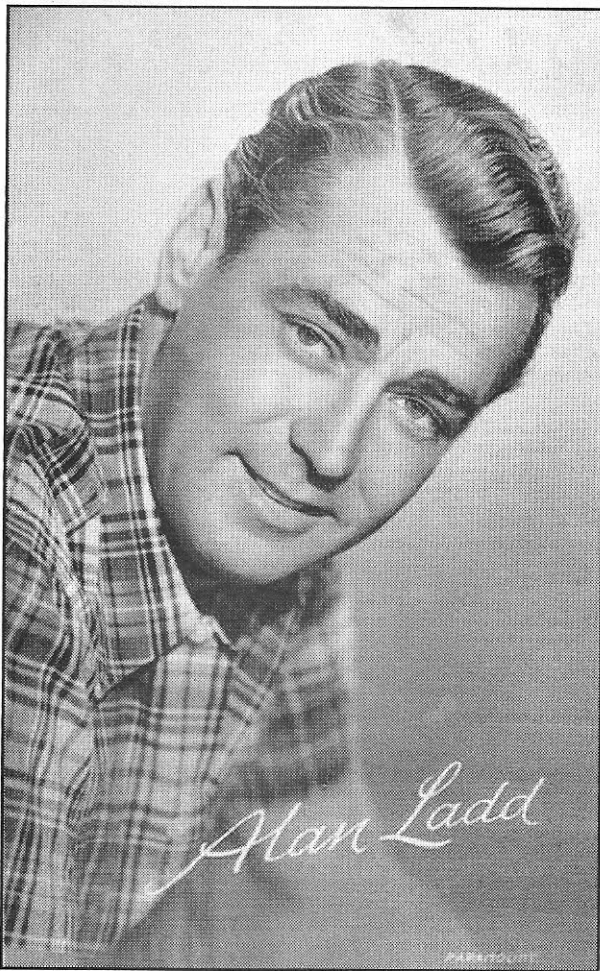
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Alan Ladd, recognized as a film star as exemplified by this Paramount Pictures fan photo, loved his radio work, which began in 1935.

Alan Reed, John Beal, Lurene Tuttle and Luis Van Rooten. Lt. Kling, Holiday's police contact, was another continuing character on the series.

Holiday's exchanges with Suzie were meant to be humorous though at times they came across as forced. They are probably the weakest element in the series. For example, this conversation from the episode "Killer at Large" is typical of Holiday's exchanges with Suzie:

Suzie: You're not going to follow-up this letter are you? It's obviously the work of a handle.

Holiday: A what?

Suzie: You know, one of those persons who writes letters and things.

Holiday: Oh. A crank.

Suzie: Oh. You're not going?

Holiday: I sure am, Suzie.

Still, all the ingredients added up to a fine two-year run.

Box 13 was produced by Ladd through his own Mayfair Productions, a company he formed with Bernie Joslin of the Mayfair restaurant chain. The series was technically a syndicated production, but it was also purchased by the Mutual Broadcasting System and premiered on the network on August 22, 1948.

For Ladd, the production demands were simple. He taped his lines at his own convenience, sometimes even while on location for a movie. And he loved the role—he came back to it repeatedly over the years even after the original radio run was finished in 1950.

The first time was in 1954, when he played Dan Holiday on television, on an episode of *G.E. Theatre*. It was broadcast over CBS on December 5, 1954, and was Ladd's first experience guesting on network television. *TV Guide* described the episode this way:

"Alan Ladd stars in 'Committed' . . . An adventurous writer places an ad in the local newspaper announcing he's for hire. Al-

though Police Lt. Kling warns Holiday that he is being foolhardy, the writer takes the job offered him in answer to his ad.

Frank Ferguson played Lt. Kling with John Howard, Virginia Gibson and Whit Bissell filling out the cast. Ronald Reagan hosted. The episode was based on the "Daytime Nightmare" episode of the radio series. Russell Hughes adapted his previous script and Frank Tuttle, long a Ladd favorite, directed. Ladd himself was the executive producer through his own pro-



Ad mat for one of Ladd's famous films shows costars Veronica Lake and William Bendix, two co-stars Ladd wanted for his proposed film version of *Box 13* in the early 1960s.

duction company, Jaguar.

The second time was in 1957 when Ladd, through his Jaguar production company, was shooting television pilots in an attempt to get in on the production side of the medium. He had turned down numerous offers over the years to star in his own series, not liking the 3-5 day shooting schedule very much.



Transcription label from Mayfair, a joint venture between Alan Ladd and Bernie Joslin, who owned a chain of Mayfair restaurants.

But he had seen the trend of turning old radio shows into successful television shows—shows like *Gunsmoke* and *Dragnet* included. So Ladd dusted off his old radio format and produced a pilot starring actor Bill Leslie in his original role. Young actor/producer Aaron Spelling signed aboard as executive producer and writer of the series.

It was believed the format that had worked so well on radio could work just as well on television. Theoretically, the story possibilities were endless—anyone could come walking through the door in answer to the newspaper ad. And production could even be helped along by the fact that so many scripts were already in the can—the same stories from the radio days. It was the same practice used by the producers of *Gunsmoke*.

But the pilot didn't sell, and the fact that Ladd wasn't in it hurt. As Ladd biographer Beverly Linet noted, "It obviously never occurred to him that he might have been the main reason for the show's original success."

But Alan Ladd wasn't through with Dan Holiday just yet. In 1963, it was announced that Ladd would star in and produce a film version of *Box 13*, and use the film as a means to reunite many of his old friends from the movie business. William Bendix, Van Heflin and Veronica Lake were signed to co-star in the film and it sounded marvelous. But it never happened. Alan Ladd died in January 1964.☪

Radio in Review

weeks. During the live years they have been on the air, Ozzie and Harriet have never been without a sponsor.

Ozzie and their two children David, 12, and Rickey, 9, carry the domestic theme of their program all the way, broadcasting the show from their California home.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NEW: "Stop the Music" requires a staff of 138 ... Crooner Frankie Laine may have his own musical radio series, starting in October ... The Duke and Duchess of Windsor have been approached to do a Mr. and Mrs. radio program three times a week from Italy ... It would be transcribed for American listeners ... Comedian Morey Amsterdam is giving lessons to would-be comedians ... Mel Allen, one of the best, will do the play-by-play of the World Series for Mutual.

'The Guiding Light' Goes Out

On September 18, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. the light flickered out of *The Guiding Light* after 72 years of continuing radio and TV broadcasts!

The this not now so popular soap opera began on radio in 1938 on NBC and transformed itself into TV on CBS on June 30, 1952. Viewing of the veteran daytime show dwindled to about two and three-quarter million when it tried to revamp itself into a more modern version to attract more viewers.

Failing that, it was a fatal blow, and now it is gone! Many of SPERDVAC members, I'm sure, will remember Ed Prentiss as Ned Holden and Mercedes McCambridge as the second Reverend Mary Ruthledge and the voices of Marvin Miller, Willard Waterman, and the many dozens of other radio pioneering actors in the 1940s and 1950s.

There are only a few of them left that evolved from radio to TV, and they, too, will

New book examines famous broadcast

A recent book from McFarland and Company examines the history and "resulting panic" of what is considered the most famous of all radio broadcasts, H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds" as presented by Orson Welles and his Mercury theatre, broadcast October 30, 1938.

John Gosling's *Waging the War of the Worlds: A History of the 1938 Radio Broadcast and Resulting Panic* examines all aspects of the historic broadcast in depth, including a two-chapter appreciation for the human fascination with Mars as well as a look at Wells' novel and Orson Welles and the making of the broadcast. Gosling also examines the initial reactions and the resulting "fog of war," anxieties underlying the panic, and the aftermath of the broadcast.

Additional chapters look at later broadcasts in the United States, Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, and Portugal. Gosling also queries the likelihood that similar panic could happen again.

The book's appendix contains the original Howard Koch script.

The 237-page trade paperback is available at Amazon.com and from the publisher.


more than likely meet the same fate. The demise of commercial radio has taken its toll on listeners who are still around who tuned in regularly to hear their favorite programs. However, because many of those old timers have been recorded onto CDs and DVDs, perhaps a new generation will have the same thrills, adventures, and pathos-filled hours that so many of us remember!

—Jerry Austin

The Max Reinhardt Workshop for Stage, Screen and Radio

So You Want to be a Radio Star?

by Ryan Ellett



Some radio stars—notably “first generation” stars such as Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Burns & Allen—cut their teeth and learned their craft during grueling years on the vaudeville circuits. Their school was that of the proverbial hard knocks, honing their skills in front of audiences night after night. However, for those not so lucky to ease into radio with such prior training there was always the old-fashioned way to learn a trade: school.

For those unable to jump into radio (or theater or film in the example we’ll look at here) as effortlessly as the legends mentioned above, it was time to get down to the dirty and tedious work of practice, drill, and training. One place would-be Jolson’s could go to build the repertoire of skills necessary to survive in showbiz was the Max Reinhardt Workshop for Stage, Screen and Radio in Hollywood.

By 1938 when the Workshop was founded, Max Reinhardt had cemented his place in theater history and was just five years from the end of his life. Reinhardt (christened Max Goldmann by his parents) was born in 1873 near Vienna. By the age of 17 he was acting under the name of Reinhardt and would continue to work on the stage until his death in 1943, 53 years later. His accomplishments, which include “searching] for a functional playhouse,” “his methods of repertory” and “ways of preparing and rehearsing a play,” are notable in the world of theater but of little interest to the old-time radio community.

Radio fans will be most interested in Reinhardt’s Workshop, a mere postscript to an illustrious career. Reinhardt founded his Workshop in 1938, the year Germany occupied Austria and confiscated his property. It’s

unclear how long Reinhardt ran the business, but he passed away in 1943 so it couldn’t have been more than five years, two or three years seems reasonable.

Luckily some documents remain from that effort thanks to a former student of the Workshop, Adah Clarke. Adah Clarke has left little information behind. A Google search turns up no performance credits for her in any medium. However, the University of Kansas Department of Theater and Film has a scholarship named after her and their archive has the papers that inspired this article.

Clarke’s notes and documents date from 1939, the second year of the Workshop. Likely they date from the fall of 1939 based on the dates of scripts found therein. The collection does not include anything that gives a clear overview of the entire Workshop curriculum. We can infer that it consisted of specific training in television production, radio production, and motion picture technique. Interestingly, the surviving papers don’t indicate specific training in stage craft, Reinhardt’s specialty. There are notes concerning props, lighting, and scenery, as well as some play scripts so surely straight stage preparation was included in the classes.

The Workshop gives contemporary old-time radio fans a glimpse into the voice skills necessary to compete for aural gigs. The radio production class included instruction by men who had illustrious radio careers: Mel

Williamson (*Family Theater*), Barry Kroeger (*They Live Forever, Joyce Jordan*), Norman Fields (*NBC Theater, Shadow of Fu Manchu*), and Hans Conried (spelled Konrad in Clarke’s notes, but likely she means Conried based on the working relationship he had with Orson Welles at the time). This crew could certainly teach an aspiring thespian a lesson or two.

To underscore the importance of voice training to the radio art, practice materials included mini-scripts for no fewer than 13 dialects: Spanish, juvenile, southern, Irish, Yiddish, cockney, Negro, character (about 75), heavy man (a racketeer), Chinese, French, Italian, and Swedish.

Williamson was the regular instructor for the course and the other three showed up just to work with students on specific skills. Fields and Kroeger focused on dialects and Conried fine-tuned their foreign accents. Students had to perform three dialects and two character parts to the instructors’ satisfaction before being allowed to tryout for any network programs.

In addition to voice practice, students of the Workshop also had to memorize nine pages of industry terms, approximately 350 in all. The knowledge had to be automatic and to ensure that they practiced “with one student in the control room and one at the microphone” to simulate real-life scenarios. Further, there was a page of 27 gestures the students had to recognize such as “increase volume,” “is the program running according to the planned time schedule?,” and “start at the beginning of the musical number.”

The group’s radio play practice appears to be primarily straight material. Scripts include a student-written play about the French Revolution titled “Madam Guillotine” and a

Ben-Hur adaptation. Also used was a short back-and-forth dialog between two actors practicing their lines labeled KHJ audition script. No comedy here.

To underscore the importance of voice training to the radio art, practice materials included mini-scripts for no fewer than 13 dialects: Spanish, juvenile, southern, Irish, Yiddish,

cockney, Negro, character (about 75), heavy man (a racketeer), Chinese, French, Italian, and Swedish. Remember, Clarke said competence in only three was the minimum requirement. Also thrown into the notes was the following:

From the depth of the dreamy decline of the dawn through a notable nimbus of nebulous noonshine,

Pallid and pink as the palm of the flagflower that flickers with fear of the flies as they float,

Are the looks of our lovers that lustrously lean from a marvel of mystic, miraculous moonshine . . .

And so it went for another 14 lines. Surely this was to build diction fluency.

Another crucial component of any acting training—especially radio—is perfecting one's standard English pronunciation. Thus, Reinhardt's Workshop included a course on speech taught by a Miss Darkin. This one course had a 91-page syllabus filled with lists of words representing each of 28 possible vowel sounds and approximately 16 consonant sounds. Additionally, it contained multiple pages of drills for the student to master appropriate vocalization of each sound. Extensive use was made of the Aiken Resonator. Scale for this instruction and drill.

Clarke notes that special attention was given to course participants "who had a heavy Southern accent and drawl," "the nasal twang of Missouri," and "the Brooklyn accent." Similarly, foreign students (which included one from Australia and Holland in late 1939) were given extra attention in mastering common standard English vocabulary. Correct speech was never perfected; continued work was required of both new and advanced students.

Workshop participants topped off their hard work with the opportunity to watch Orson Welles and his *Campbell Playhouse* cast in person as they rehearsed their programs. This

Workshop participants topped off their hard work with the opportunity to watch Orson Welles and his *Campbell Playhouse* cast in person as they rehearsed their programs.

allowed them to see "[professional actors'] problems, their temperaments, and the methods used to bring about a fine radio performance." Scripts in Adah Clarke's papers indicate students viewed rehearsals for the following programs:

• *The Campbell Playhouse*. "Lost Horizon." Broadcast on December 3, 1939. Guest: Sigrid Gurie.

• *The Campbell Playhouse*. "There's Always A Woman." Broadcast on December 17, 1939. Guest: Marie Wilson.

• *The Campbell Playhouse*. "A Christmas Carol." Broadcast on December 24, 1939. Guest: Lionel Barrymore.

It seems reasonable to assume they also watched rehearsals of December 10's production of "Vanessa." In addition to having the chance to see the great Welles at work and the noted guest stars, Clarke and company got to see the talents of Everett Sloane, Edgar Barrier, Mary Taylor, Georgia Backus and Frank Readick (misspelled Reddick in the script for "There's Always a Woman").

This work paid off for the Workshop participants as they later got to take part in a broadcast of *Calling All Cars* and other smaller productions. Such experience allowed them to acquire Social Security cards and AFRA (American Federation of Radio Artists) membership, "which [was] impossible unless you [had] a definite assignment on a sponsored network show." Max Reinhardt's relationship with CBS is unclear but all Workshop work was done for CBS because Reinhardt leased all equipment and building space from the network. Whether the students made careers for themselves beyond these fleeting aural productions is unknown. I could find no records for Adah Clarke (later Adah Clarke Hagan) and she names none of the other up-and-comers.

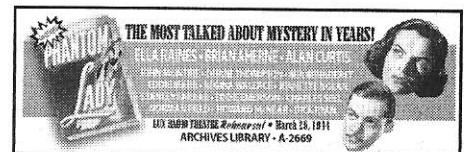
Beyond the radio work outlined above, Reinhardt's workshop included training for stage, television, and film (led by William Dieterle and open only to advanced students). Additional training was provided for props, lighting, and stage production. Clarke's papers included one drawing for a production costume so this may be another area touched on during the classes.

Clarke's "final exam" was a pantomime exercise of Thornton Wilder's *Happy Journey*.

Upon successful completion of this task Reinhardt gave her the green light to be placed with an agent for professional stage and motion picture productions. While it seems that her career may not have amounted to much, she became the first of the Workshop cadré to appear on television, performing in the same play before "experimental cameras" on station KHJ at some later point.

The Workshop for Stage, Screen and Radio likely was not a highlight of Max Reinhardt's storied career. Probably it kept him involved in the entertainment industry and kept cash in the bank account. But for young would-be professional actors it offered an opportunity for top-tier attention and training with individuals who were and would become staples of the Golden Age of radio. Even if Adah Clarke never acted again after this period, the experiences and memories of the Workshop surely stayed with her for the rest of her life. ♣

Any information readers can supply to supplement this research is greatly appreciated. Ryan can be reached at OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com.





MEETING SCHEDULE

2009

THE 2009 SPERDVAC MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

ALL DATES ARE CONFIRMED

October 10
Mid-Valley Library • North Hills

November 14
To Be Announced

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Radio Programmes

10:05 p.m. programme. Among them will be Von Suppe's Poet and Peasant overture and Ambroise Thomas' Mignon Overture played by the Leo Erdody concert orchestra; Robert Hilliard's concert orchestra playing Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5, and Nicolai's Merry Wives of Windsor overture played by the Erno Rapee concert orchestra.

A Polish citizen and a house painter will be interviewed on CJOB's Canada Bond Wagon at 8:30 p.m. Reflections, at 9:30, will include music by Samuel Hershoren's orchestra, songs by Russ Titus and narration by J. Frank Willis.

KFYR presents Cavalcade of America at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, with Dane Clark starring in Life Line, the story of a salvage operation in Puget sound.

War of the Worlds

me to thinking about the power of radio, and it also got me to thinking about my senior psychology project. About three miles from the college was a senior center and inside was a wealth of oral history about a one-time Martian invasion. So being media savvy I set out to produce a film documentary of the great Martian invasion of 1938 as told by those who actually lived it.

However, for various reasons—primarily time and money—I never shot a foot of film. The psych department had to settle for a thesis. But the idea of a film has never left me nor has that appreciation for the power of radio. I still have dreams of producing such a project, and with the availability of digital video cameras and digital computer editing the project is now feasible. But time is running out, and maybe someone with true film talent will tackle such a project while members of the greatest generation—yes, the radio generation—are still with us.

At least that's what Jany and I look forward to seeing one day. Right, she finally said yes to that latté.☺

OLD NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

The mid-October 1949 "Hooperatings."

- 1. Radio Theatre 19.9
- 2. Jack Benny 19.6
- 3. Bob Hope 18.4
- 4. Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts 18.0
- 5. Fibber McGee & Molly 16.7
- 6. Walter Winchell 15.6
- 7. My Friend Irma 15.5
- 8. Inner Sanctum 14.8
- 9. Red Skelton 14.8
- 10. Mr. Keen 13.7
- 11. Charlie McCarthy 13.0
- 12. People Are Funny 12.9
- 13. Crime Photographer 12.8
- 14. Amos 'n' Andy 12.7
- 15. Suspense 12.7

Published in the October 23, 1949 edition of the *Lincoln (NE) Sunday Journal and Star*.

FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Anthony Chan writes:
My memory is not very sharp regarding OTR trivia.

I refer to part of an article on Pat Buttram in the September issue. On page 6, fourth paragraph from the end, there is reference to Chuck Southcott and his move to station "KJOI." My vague memory seems to remember it was station KJOI ("O=oh," not "Q=cue"), located somewhere in Orange county (CA). Also that he was the weekend host of a program that specialized in musical shows (e.g., *West Side Story*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Showboat*).

But I would not bet my last dime on this.
Neither would we, but we accept your recollection as correct.



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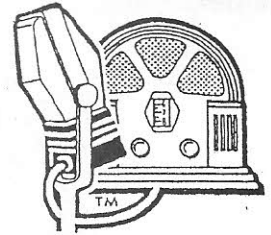
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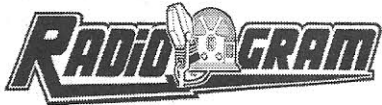
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