

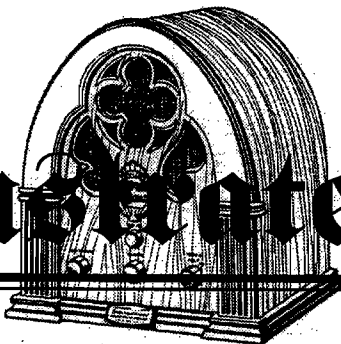
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

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JIMMY DURANTE

The Illustrated Press

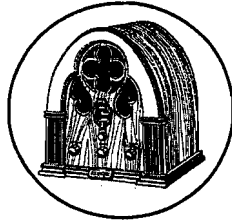
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New member processing, \$5 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$17.50; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets the first Monday of every month at 7:39 PM during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, NY 14225. The club meets informally during the months of July and August at the same address. Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with The Old Time Radio Network.

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Book Review

The Fighting Irish On The Air

by Paul F. Gullifor

Reviewed by
Jerry Collins

If you are reading this review you are more than likely a fan of old time radio. If you are a Notre Dame football fan, as I am, this book is really for you. If you live in Western New York, even better. If you have wondered why Notre Dame football has so many followers in Western New York, this book explains why.

The book is well written and extremely well researched. Even though the author did not attend Notre Dame, there is Notre Dame blood in his family that goes back generations. In this issue of the Illustrated Press, I will strictly do a review of the book. In the second installment I will go into much more detail discussing the major events that are a part of the history of football broadcasting at Notre Dame. I will also take some of these events and show how they affected the history of Notre Dame football.

In the pre-radio era Western Union cooperated with Notre Dame in the use of "Gridgaphs". More about these unusual devices next month. The radio broadcasting of Notre Dame football games began in 1922. When South Bend Tribune sport editor Eugene Kessler phoned in the play-by-play account of the game to the newspaper, Radio South Bend patched into the telephone conversation and broadcast that over the air. WSBT would be involved in the broadcasting of Notre Dame football games until 1960. Paul Gullifor takes his readers through the East Coast broadcasting of Notre Dame games, the coverage of Chicago games, the Notre Dame Ohio State game of 1935, Joe Boland and the Irish Football Network and then the shift to the Mutual/Westwood as the home of Notre Dame football (1956-2002).

The October 25, 1947 Notre Dame-Iowa football game was the first Irish football game to be televised. This was a dress rehearsal for the TV coverage of the Notre Dame-Army game, two weeks later. In 1949 the Dumont Network was the first network to gain exclusive broadcasting rights for Notre Dame games. The cost to the Dumont Network was \$185,000 per season. In early 1990 Notre Dame and NBC signed another exclusive contract that gave Notre Dame 40 million dollars over five years. In between Gullifor discussed the many controversial events surrounding not only the TV coverage of Notre Dame football games but all other major college teams, the bitterness between large and small schools, controversy over regional vs. national broadcasting, competition between conferences and the resentment held by Notre Dame and many other schools towards the rigid leadership of the NCAA.

The book is very comprehensive in that it covers all forms of sports broadcasting, not just radio and TV. Paul Gullifor begins by talking about the filming of Notre Dame football games in 1922 and the showing of these games in a local theater to benefit the senior class. In 1949 the Dumont Television Network broadcast Irish football games over Dumont affiliated stations and if those stations were lacking films were shown in Dumont affiliated theaters. By 1953, 110 movie theaters were showing Notre Dame football games. In 1954 Notre Dame began feeding closed circuit broadcasts of Notre Dame games into hotels. Prior to the 1955 session, arrangements were made to broadcast these games in the ballrooms at Sheraton Hotels. From 1959-1984 edited films of the Notre Dame games were shown on the Sunday morning following the game.

Although quite detailed at times, The Fighting Irish on the Air does a great job of filling the void that existed in sport's broadcasting. Much has been done in the area of baseball, but this is the first book dealing thoroughly with the broadcasting of college football.



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AMOS 'N' ANDY

By Tom Cherre

I've listened to a lot of radio comedy shows, of course not quite as many as my ol' friend Frank Bork. Some are funny and some are entertaining. A show I really enjoy, and one that's funny, I mean, really funny, is the *Amos 'n' Andy Show*. It all started when Freeman Gosden met Charlie Correll in Durham, North Carolina many years ago. They formed a comedy team called *Sam and Henry*, a story of two southern blacks working their way up north to Chicago. Their popularity soared to record numbers in the late 20s. They made the sale of radio sets hit record breaking numbers. When they left their Chicago station to get into network broadcasting they had to change the show's name. It eventually became *Amos 'n' Andy*, and like they say the rest is history.

With the Depression tightening its grip on America in the early 30s many people tuned to the radio for entertainment. It's an alarming fact that 60% of the listening audience had their ears glued to *Amos 'n' Andy*. Many

movie theaters preempted the movie and piped in the 15 minute segment of *Amos 'n' Andy* so movie goers could get their nightly fix. Telephone operators reported they would stand idly by during the time the show was on. Even factories would alter their working shifts to allow for employees to catch the show. Sounds incredible, but it's true.

From a bunch of simple loving characters living in Harlem, much of the humor and mayhem occurred in the Mystic Knights of the Sea Lodge Hall, or the Fresh Air Taxicab Co., Incorporated owned by Amos and Andy. One of the auxiliary characters created by Gosden came to dominate the show. George "Kingfish" Stevens was the classic shiftless loafer who's indolence forced him to become a first-class schemer who's major prey was often the humble Andrew H. Brown. Other characters such as Sapphire, Mama, Calhoun, Shorty and Lightnin' rounded out a superbly funny cast. This show had no gags or jokes. It was funny characters just being themselves. The show became an institution after tickling the funny bones of millions of people for 30 years.

The TV series came out in the early 50s. Catch phrases like "I'se Regusted", "Holy Mackel", and "What I Gonna Do Now?" were all familiar quotes from the cast. Stereotyping of many of the characters were frowned upon by the NAACP. More so than others, the character of "Lightnin'" was mostly scorned upon by his portrayal of a witless dummy. The "Kingfish" was perceived as a worthless bum, who could never hold a job. Eventually the TV series became too controversial for the sponsors and was cancelled after two years. The writing was on the wall for the radio show as well, and it wound up being a vehicle for Freeman and Gosden spinning a few records and telling a few jokes on the *Amos 'n' Andy Music Hall*.

Most black entertainers praised the show, saying it gave blacks an opportunity to portray doctors, lawyers, judges, and other professionals, where they would not have an occasion to do so otherwise. *Amos 'n' Andy* never victimized blacks or made them the heavies. They were just black characters being funny. Whether they were black or white it was basically good and funny and wholesome entertainment. As Ed Sullivan would say, "It Was A Really Good Show".

The Great Gildersleeve

great fun with America's favorite

Water Commissioner





One Man's Family

It lasted twenty-eight years and was the favorite of millions of listeners. In this selection from his unpublished autobiography, Carlton E. Morse describes the beginning of his popular radio creation

—ONE MAN'S FAMILY.

(July, 1975)

The cast of "One Man's Family"—Top row (left to right): Jack (Page Gilman); Claudia (Kathleen Wilson); Hazel (Bernice Berwin); Nick (Walter Patterson), Second row (left to right); Paul (Michael Raffetto); Father Barbour (J. Anthony Smythe); Mother Barbour (Minetta Ellen); Clifford (Barton Yarborough). Front: Teddy (Winifred Wolf).

On Tuesday, April 12, 1932, a cool, foggy day in San Francisco, a cast of nine veteran radio players, our announcer, Bill Andrews, our sound man and I gathered at four o'clock in Studio B of the National Broadcasting Company's West Coast offices at 111 Sutter Street. This was the first reading rehearsal for chapter one, book one of *One Man's Family*, which began, "Announcer: *One Man's Family* is dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation and to their bewildering offspring." Our original organ theme was *Destiny Waltz*, to be played by Paul Carson. Later Paul composed our own theme which he called *Valse Patricia*.

At the close of this first reading rehearsal, there was a mixed verdict among the cast. Remember, this was the original *first* attempt on radio to create a real live American family with an honest attempt at integrity. A first attempt at down-to-earth human relations between parents and children. In fact, the very first *family* story, of any kind. Of course, within a year or two the networks were swarming with what became known as *soap operas*, because of a lack of heart and understanding of what constituted family relationships and a desire for sensationalism and cheap, unbelievable

plots, to the neglect of characterizations. The people were unbelievable and their stories were as impossible as the B pictures of horse operas, popular at the time.

Before I give you the new cast's reaction after this first rehearsal, let me point out that months earlier I had submitted the first three episodes of *One Man's Family*. The heads of the West Coast production department put thumbs down. Both the program manager and the production head shook their heads lugubriously and said, "No." They got me in the program manager's office and said quite frankly, "Morse, this *One Man's Family* tripe is pure tripe! Morse, you are written out! Morse, you lack imagination! Everybody *lives* a family life, day in, day out! Year in, year out! Who wants to turn on his radio and listen to more family life?"

You must admit this was discouraging, but I didn't believe them. I was steeped, in Galsworthy's *Forsythe Saga*, and I knew such a popular book demonstrated that a family story would be popular on radio, too. I finally took my three episodes of *One Man's Family* to NBC's West Coast Vice President, Don E. Gilman. He kept the scripts for about three weeks. Then finally he called me into the front office "Morse," he said, "I like

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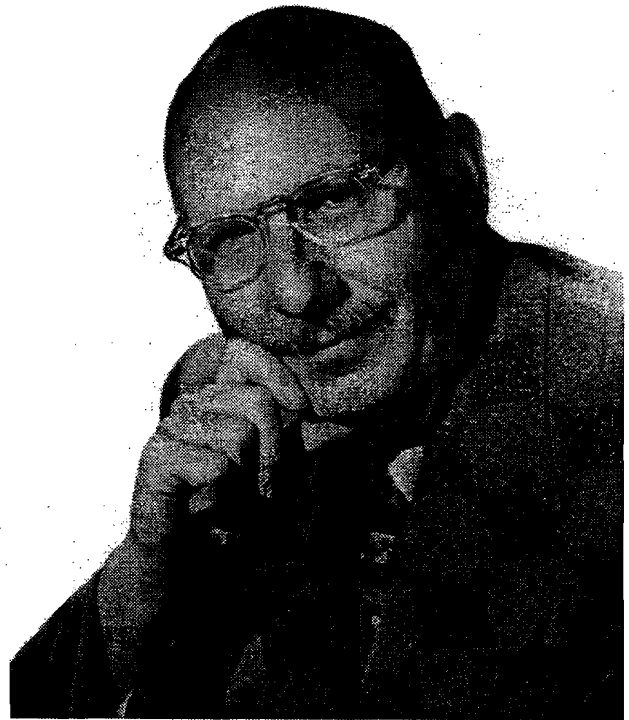
this family idea very much, but I'm not sure the radio listening audience will hold still for it. Now then, if we put this on the air, will you write the episodes so that we can bring the show to an end after six weeks, if it doesn't catch on?"

I promised! Well, the first episode went on the air at nine-thirty, Friday, April 29, 1932. It was never off the air from that date until the show closed twenty-eight years later. In fact, we had one sponsor, Standard Brands, for seventeen years. And how we got Standard Brands is a story in itself, but that will come later. Now I want to tell you something about the opening script—Chapter one, book one!

This first chapter originally had been scheduled for presentation on Station KPO and the *Pacific Coast* network on Wednesday, April thirteenth. What happened, I do not remember, but this beginning episode entitled "Introduction of the Barbour Family" did not make its appearance until Friday, April 29 and was rescheduled for the half hour, nine-thirty to ten in the evening.

In the introductory lines explaining this original family show we said: "This is neither an expose of youth's foibles, nor an accusation against the older generations, but merely a cross section of the life of a modern family [vintage 1932] given with the hope of explaining father to son and son to father. Controversial subjects are dealt with from each individual character's point of view and have no ulterior motive save to explain certain given types of personalities that have developed in very recent years. Every mother and father with a growing family have in 1932 problems no other parents in history have had to face."

Now about the original cast of *One Man's Family*, which I had for the most part selected from actors with whom I had become familiar as writer and director for NBC since I had joined the staff in September 1929—a month before the market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression. During the pre-*One Man's Family* period I had been writing mystery and adventures serials, a reinterpretation of classic myths for radio, a western historical series and numerous other writing and production chores, which brought me into close working contact with some thirty or forty veteran actors. From these I chose as follows: J. Anthony Smythe for the role of Father Henry Barbour; Minetta Ellen to play Mother Fanny Barbour; Michael Raffetto for the eldest son, Paul Barbour; Bernice Berwin for the elder daughter, Hazel Barbour; Barton Yarborough as the second son, Clifford; Kathleen Wilson for Claudia, the younger daughter and twin of Clifford; Page Gilman, in those days known as Billy Page, then about ten, who played Jack, the adolescent son.



... In my attempt to present a saga of the American people, I have chosen as the center of interest a middle-class modern American family. I have sought to reveal the strength of the family: how it bends and sways under the pressure of the great wind of trying times and events which howl continually about its foundations; how its very heart is threatened by internal dissension. I have sought to show all this, and yet further, in spite of outside turmoil and inward dissension it somehow remains solid upon its foundation; somehow renews itself and remains straight, clean, untarnished . . . a shining, silver shaft upon a high mountain. **Carlton E. Morse**
From a broadcast of Oct. 11, 1933

At this first reading rehearsal were two other fine actors whose names I must not neglect to mention although their roles were only casual. They were Barbara Jo Allen, who played Beth Holly, and George Rand who was cast as Judge Glenn Hunter.

Those of the original cast of the Family who began with the show in 1932 and continued to the final close, twenty-seven years plus later, were Father Barbour, Tony Smythe, Bernice Berwin who played Hazel and Page Gilman in the role of Jack.

The first person to leave the show was the original announcer, William (Bill) Andrews, who gave up this responsibility to Ken Carpenter when *One Man's Family*

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was removed to Hollywood in the fifth year of the show. Minetta Ellen gave up the role of Mother Barbour in the final years of the show, remaining with us until well in her eighties. She and J. Anthony Smythe, her radio husband, died within two years of each other. Barton Yarborough as Clifford died of heart failure several years before the end of the show. Kathleen Wilson left in the middle years when she married a New Yorker and moved east to live. She was superseded by Barbara Fuller who remained with the *Family* as Claudia to the end.

I would like to mention that Bernice Berwin (Hazel) now lives with her husband Attorney Brooks Berlin across the Bay in Oakland, where she is prominent in church and social service work. Michael Raffetto (Paul) also lives across the Bay from San Francisco in Berkeley, with his wife, Connie Raffetto, who is a miracle worker in ceramics, painting and sculpture. Page Gilman (Jack), now in his early fifties, is business manager of a newspaper, the Register-Pajaronian in Watsonville, California.

As I recall, Mother Barbour, Hazel and Claudia were greatly intrigued with the first script. Actually, I don't think any of us saw twenty-eight years of work ahead. I remember Bart Yarborough (Clifford) slapped his script across his knees after the first reading and said, "Well there it is folks, take it or leave it—no bang-bangs! Nobody dead, nobody saved in a nick of time! It's either a flop or a sleeper!"

Tony Smythe (Father Barbour) was the only one who expressed enthusiasm. As we left the rehearsal studio he slipped his hand under my arm and squeezed—"Carlton, I think you've done it. It's what radio has been waiting to hear."

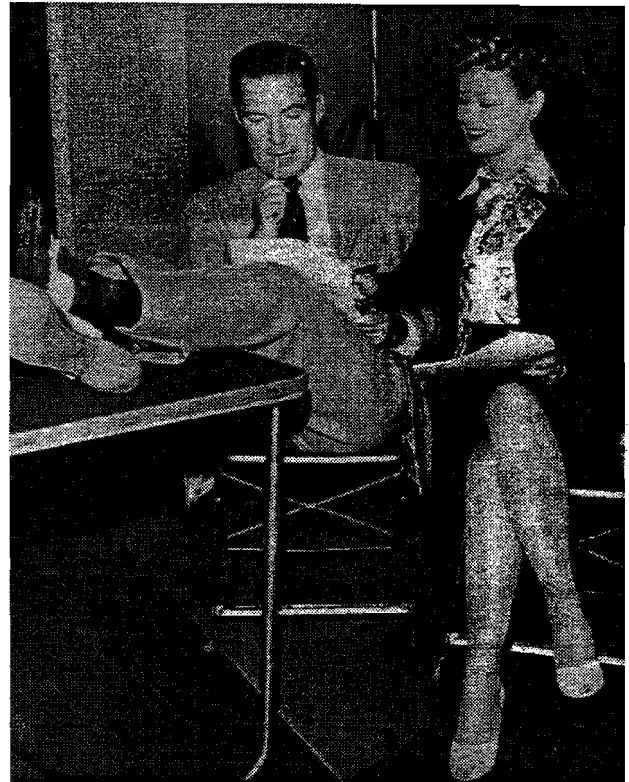
Carol Stewart

**The attractive vocalist of the "Beulah Show"
is one of the few authentic Cinderellas on Radio**

(January, 1946)

Cinderella stories are rare and far between in radio. It takes years and years of hard work, and a long succession of trials and errors, before a network personality evolves a style that "catches on."

A recent—and darned good-looking exception—is the sweet-voiced vocalist on Marlin Hurt's *Beulah Show*—Carol Stewart. Her story is one of the few bonafide Cinderella yarns of the radio industry.



Carol Stewart with the Prince Charming who discovered her, Marlin Hurt

It all began when Carol was making noises like telephones and banging doors for CBS's sound department. One afternoon she had just finished her one-woman production behind the scenes when she looked up and saw a nice looking man grinning down at her. "Now, if you could only sing," he remarked. "I can!" Carol came back pertly, and demonstrated with a few trills. The man applauded and said goodbye. Carol remembered him only as a guest with a peculiar name on the afternoon's show.

It was almost a year later that Marlin Hurt, who had guested on the show as "Beulah," came back to CBS for auditions of his own network show. He was looking for a singer who could also act, and he suddenly remembered the cute little sound effects girl. "Let's give her a try," he suggested, and his friendliness of twelve months before paid him and radio off with a fresh, pretty face and an engaging voice.

But even if Carol's break came early in her career—she isn't twenty-one yet—she still did a lot of work before she was discovered by Hurt. Carol started out in her career by being one of those "Hollywood babies"—talented, attractive children who are dragged to the movie capital by ambitious mothers from the sticks. In Carol's

case it was Dallas, Texas, that she hailed from, and she made her professional debut over the airwaves at the tender age of six—singing such sweet little children's songs as "When I Take My Sugar To Tea" and "Out of Nowhere."

Her early success, however, was followed by the natural slump that a child star goes through when she's growing up. Carol filled in this period by studying at Hollywood High and Professional schools, where she played small roles in senior class plays and such. After a few semesters at the University of California at Los Angeles, where she majored in art and decoration, Carol decided to try radio, and got the job with CBS that resulted in her meeting Marlin Hurt.

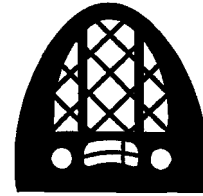
Carol still thinks that the training she got there was a good way to get a background in radio. She says proudly that she was good at her job, too. "All except for an occasional embarrassing moment—like the time I jumped my cue on the 'Raffles' program," Carol specifies. "I shut the door ahead of the actor's departure from the scene, and he had to do some fancy talking to cover up the little blunder." Carol also sound-effected for the *Blondie* and the *Lionel Barrymore* programs.

In her off hours, however, Carol still kept up with her singing. Anywhere you would see a semi-professional group of college undergraduates parading around as a dance band you could find Carol right in the thick of it—performing for five dollars a night or even just the experience of doing it.

Her change of luck, she believes, came about the time she changed her name from Mary Ann Gideon to Carol Stewart (an old family name). "Things really started to happen then," Carol reminisces, "although I'm really not very superstitious about things like that."

As to her future plans, Carol, like any other attractive girl in radio, lets her thoughts run in the direction of television. She wants to get a solid acting background before she blossoms out in "video," however. Now she's getting some professional training at the Geller Workshop in Hollywood, has stacked up a neat row of acting credits to her name—ranging all the way from Amy in "Little Women" to the role of the wise-cracking woman photographer in "The Philadelphia Story."

So, if her past performances are indicative of things to come, it won't be long now until you'll see beautiful Carol Stewart smiling at you from the television screen in your living room.



RADIOLDIES

by DAN MARAFINO

Selected Short Subjects:

While rummaging through a few dozen reels a while ago, I came across a few radio shows I had forgotten about. So I picked up the box, looked inside and there were 12 original *The Adventures of Dick Cole* staring at me. Wow, OK I wonder how they sound. I must say in this case Shamrock tape holds up very well because when I recorded them, they were as crisp and clear as the day they were done. The sound was very good, the show? Well, where should I start? If you haven't heard this show before, you're in for a treat.

It seems young Mr. Cole, a student at Farr Military Institute, is a genius. He knows much more than his professors, practically runs the athletic department by telling all the coaches what to do and how to do it. The kid's 18 years old and he knows everything. As for friends, Dick's roomie and good buddy is a guy named Simba. Sorry, but I'm not sharing anything with something named Simba. It turns out this guy's last name is Carno (short for carnivorous maybe). The theme song makes the Lone Ranger's theme seem like a jingle. It goes on and on and on.

Our boy Dick always outwits the bad guys, the good guys, the cops, the teachers and just about everyone with an education, and as far as the competition is concerned, there's only one other school in the conference that F.M.I. ever plays and that's Wilson. It doesn't matter what sport it is, it's Wilson.

This show had *Jack Armstrong* wannabe written all over it. From the opening school song to the closing statement by Dick. I think I'm safe in saying the show failed miserably. The show was on the air for 30 minutes and was syndicated for its run in 1942. Dick Cole was also seen in *Bluebolt Magazine* and *Foremost Comics*, and for the really curious there are 28 episodes out there somewhere. Twelve programs will be going in the club's library at a future date. I'll bet you can't wait. Let me close with two of the shows more thrilling catch phrases. "To find excitement and help good defeat evil" and "We'll always be near to Farr" Words to live by.



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Quite a while ago I donated most of my reel to reel tapes to the local Historical Society. For the past few months I've been going over and "borrowing" some back so I could make a few cassettes for myself. A lot of what I had donated, I had forgotten I had and this was a pleasant surprise. I decided to make copies and donate them to the club's cassette library. Being the club librarian is a great perk. I not only make them, but I keep them too. One must take advantage when one can. The reels go back to their climate controlled room when I'm done making copies and if I want, I can borrow more.

Nothing is perfect though, a very few (2 or 3) have turned up bad. A couple I didn't get too excited about but one I did. That one turned out to be *The Fat Man*. All American shows too. Like I said, Nothing's perfect. I'll be doing separate articles on other obscure shows I found in my digs. I have several hundred reels to go through, so there's plenty of material to be had. Till later, I'll sign off for now. —Dan Marafino

Cassette Library News

Time to bring everyone up to date on the happenings within the cassette library. We are completely re-doing the entire library, eliminating any date errors, correcting any erroneous program titles, and replacing any bad tapes or cases we may find. Later, we plan to eliminate a lot of the duplicates and put new programs in. As of now we have corrected over 1500 tapes and we're pushing on. It may take 2 or 3 more months, but it will get done.

We do have some news to tell you about. I'll try to make this as painless as possible. Effective March 14, 2003 the price on cassette rentals will change. The new rates will be—\$1.95 per cassette. BUT, we will make a copy and send it to you, the tape is now yours to keep. This also includes postage.

We have had too many problems sending out the original club tapes what with loss, damage and bad sounding programs. Our members shouldn't have to put up with this. In quite a few instances orders could not be completely filled because tapes were missing. We are going to eliminate this problem. The local club members have, and this is an educated guess, in excess of 100,000 programs to pick from. I personally have over 13,000. We shouldn't have a problem filling your order. The only thing we ask of you, our members, is patience. Duping

the shows may take a bit more time, after all, we do want to get it right. We are going to make this library a class act one way or the other, and with a bit of patience, we'll do it. —Dan Marafino



RADIO ODDITIES

All radio artists were bothered by song pluggers. Kate Smith received so many written suggestions that she sing some new song or other that she made a hard and fast rule that she would sing no song unless it had been published. However, a song hint came in from two celebrities that Kate could not ignore. One of them was Gov. Harry Nice of Maryland, the other, Mayor Howard W. Jackson, of Baltimore. They wanted Kate to plug a song written by a Baltimorean, Billy Mayhew. It had not been published by any major publishing house, but Kate broke a rule and sang the song. It became one of the biggest hits of the year—"*It's A Sin To Tell A Lie.*"

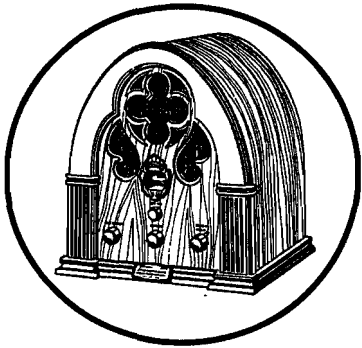
Eddie-Cantor sometimes answered fan mail with telegrams. Like all other celebrities Eddie had a staff of secretaries handling his fan mail. It ran into thousands of letters weekly from listeners to his Sunday night show. But when a secretary ran across a letter from a proud father telling of the birth of a son, the secretary turned that letter over to Eddie. Mr. "No Son" Cantor sent a congratulatory telegram to the father. Sometimes a special present followed the telegram; that depended on the weight of the baby boy.

A letter written by Mrs. Berle, mother of Milton, sent to a local publicity agent described Milton's debut at the age of 7. His forte was an impromptu impersonation of Charlie Chaplin, which he was doing for a street audience in front of the Berle apartment house. Ma was admiring Milton's role from a near-by window—until she noticed that his mustache was a piece of fur cut out of her best scarf.

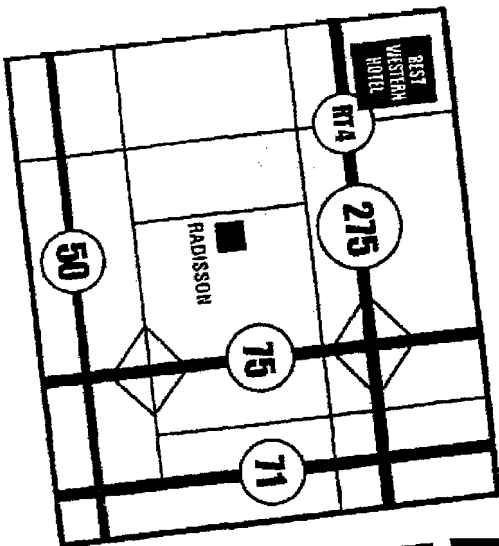
Quizmaster Bob Hawk liked to decorate personal possessions with a stylized hawk (bird) peering into a microphone. The same design appeared on neckties, stationery and office linoleum.

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