

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 220

January 1995



This is Bob, informing you that this is the last issue of The Illustrated Press you will receive unless you renew your membership to The Old Time Radio Club. Don't be left out. Ride into the past with great old radio programs from their Reel-to-Reel and Cassette Libraries. Check out their books, scripts, logs, and other printed matter in the Reference Library. Keep in touch with informative articles, ads, and other goodies in the Illustrated Press and insure yourself of another great year of Old Time Radio bonding.

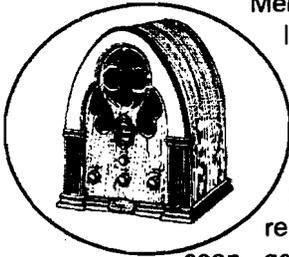


Membership Information

New member processing, \$5.00 plus club membership of \$15.00 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31.

Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing, and a monthly newsletter.

Memberships are as follows: If you join Jan-Mar, \$15.00; Apr-Jun, \$12.00; Jul-Sep, \$8.00; Oct-Dec, \$5.00. 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 7:30 P.M. during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 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.

Club Mailing Address

Old Time Radio Club
P.O. Box 426
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086

Back issues of *The Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 postpaid. Publications out of print may be borrowed from our Reference Library.

Deadline for *The Illustrated Press* is the 1st of each month prior to publication.

The Illustrated Press is a monthly newsletter of The **Old Time Radio Club**, headquartered in Western New York State. Contents except where noted, are copyright 1994 by the OTRC.

Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to:
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Tape Libraries

Cassettes

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Cheektowaga, NY 14225

Reel to Reel and Reference Library

Ed Wanat Sr. (716) 895-9690
393 George Urban Blvd.
Cheektowaga NY 14225

Tape Library Rates: All reels and video cassettes are \$1.85 per month; audio cassettes and records are \$0.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling. Canadian rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds.

They Rode the Airwaves: Cowboys on Radio

by Dom Parisi

continued from the December, '94 IP

Dr. Sixgun was an NBC western that lasted only the 1954-55 season. The program was about a frontier doctor who carried six shooters along with his bottles of pills and assortment of medical supplies. The good doctor roamed Indian territory and was a "physician to the white man and Indian alike." He was the symbol of mercy and justice in the west of the 1870's.

The stories were presented each week by Pablo, who was the doctor's sidekick. William Griggs played Pablo and Karl Weber played the doctor. Fred Collins was the announcer and the programs were directed by Harry Frazee.

Fort Laramie was first heard on January 22, 1956 over CBS. Norman MacDonnell wanted Fort Laramie to be "a monument to the ordinary men who lived in extraordinary times." The rugged country, the heat, the cold, disease, boredom and hostile Indians were their enemies. Men died at the fort, some by drowning, by freezing, by disease and by encounters with Indians. Only four troopers of the cavalry stationed at Fort Laramie died of gunshot wounds.

The program depicted the everyday life style on the Wyoming frontier. This was the story of one captain Lee Quince and the men who served under him. The late Raymond Burr played Quince and Vic Perrin played Sergeant Goerss. Others in the cast were Harry Bartell as Lieutenant Seiberts and Jack Moyles as Major Daggett. It's sad that this program came around when radio was starting to flow downstream. It had a lot of good actors and a great producer.

Wild Bill Hickok first aired over the Mutual network on December 31, 1951. Actor Guy Madison was Wild Bill. His sidekick Jingles was played by gravel voiced Andy Devine. When the series went over to early TV, it basically followed the same format. That is, Wild Bill fighting off the badmen with his fists, and Jingles bouncing them around with his huge gut.

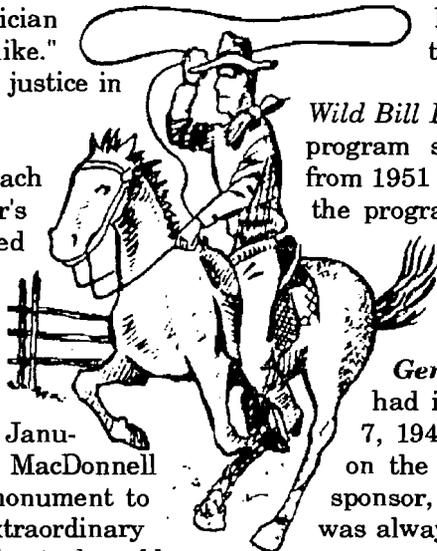
Wild Bill Hickok was a three day a week program sponsored by Kellogg cereals from 1951 through 1954. During 1955-56 the program was heard on Sunday and was sustained by the network, and slowly faded away.

Gene Autry's Melody Ranch had its start over CBS on January 7, 1940 and lasted for sixteen years on the same network with the same sponsor, Wrigley's Gum. The program was always heard either on Saturday or

Sunday. Gene told his listeners that his broadcasts were coming from his home, Melody Ranch, in the San Fernando mountains.

His regular cast included Pat Buttram, The Cass County Boys, The Gene Autry Blue Jeans, Alvino Rey, Johnny Bond and the Pinafores. Charlie Lyon, the announcer would introduce Gene with --- "Now here's the boss man himself, America's favorite cowboy, Gene Autry." Gene usually sang one cowboy song and Pat Buttram's acts were inserted to add a little bit of comedy to the show. This usually took on some back and forth chatter with Gene. The jokes were corny --

Autry: "Patrick, how can you be so stupid?"
Buttram: Well, it ain't easy when you ain't got



no brains!"

The campfire gang would howl and roll over in stitches.

The highlight of the program came when Gene told a short dramatized story of some recent adventure. Then a few words from the sponsor, and it was time to be "back in the saddle again" till next time.

In July, 1942 Gene joined the Army Air Corps. He took his oath on the air, on his own show. After leaving the service in 1945 he starred in a fifteen minute Western variety show and in 1946 returned to his regular thirty minute Sunday slot for Wrigley's Gum. In 1948 the program was switched to Saturday nights and in 1953 it again returned to Sunday, where it ran until its demise in 1956.

---to be continued---

The following is from a RCA advertisement in a November, 1937 *Life Magazine* sent in by Paul Everett of St. Paul, MN.

Radio has taxed the brains and ingenuity of man as few other industries have. To cope with the mysteries which surround this science, in spite of its phenomenal progress, RCA years ago began assembling a staff of famous radio engineers...joined forces with famed Victor Talking Machine sound experts. These men now work together in a veritable "idea factory."

The aim of this "idea factory" is first to find new fundamental principles--then discover their practical application. This way of going at the job is of prime importance to everyone who uses, or works with radio. It means that ample time is devoted to pure research from which spring great ideas that each year make radio better.

Let no one suppose that the RCA viewpoint on research has caused radio's "idea factory" to become a place devoted to impractical theories. Proof of substantial, down to earth results may be seen in a score of directions. You see it in the tubes which make radio possible. You hear the proof in the programs of the National Broadcasting Company, for RCA research has created the equipment which makes broadcasting and networks possible. You may see another proof on the "lots" of famous motion picture producers who use RCA Photophone for recording sound. You may hear further proof in any of the

thousands of motion pictures theatres which use Photophone to reproduce sound. Ship to ship, ship to shore, the automatic SOS and international message service of Radiomarine and RCA Communications are further evidence of the practical nature of RCA research.

EVERY TUESDAY



Mary Pickford
entertains with

Parties at Pickfair

Music by **AL LYONS** and his
COCOANUT GROVE ORCHESTRA
Guest stars of Radio, Screen and Stage [1936]

Sponsored by the Country's Leading Ice and Ice Refrigerator Companies

UTICA CITY ICE CO.
Columbia Broadcasting System

Just the Facts Ma'am

by Frank Boncore

Dick Olday and myself have been doing a radio program on a sub carrier for the past four years. The last time we were in the studio, our producer came running in all excited and out of breath. He then gasped, "You'll never believe it but there is a Kaiser Fraser at the front door." The board operator, a young kid, said, "What's a Kaiser Fraser?" The pro-

duced said "Go out and see for yourself." Dick and I looked at each other and said, "Frank Bork, elderly librarian emeritus." The board operator came in with Frank and said he left a rather malnourished, gaunt looking guy with a chauffeur's cap outside. Dick and I again looked at each other and said "Poor Jim." Jim is Frank's son-in-law.

Dick and I had invited Frank to be a guest on our show several times. Each time Frank would not show up. When we would confront him, he would grumble about the high cost of gasoline. Dick and I had threatened to reveal Frank's bank book balance to our listeners if he didn't show up this time.

We treated our listeners to a Sherlock Holmes special "Starring Frank Bork." What a special it was. Frank came up with facts on Sherlock Holmes that no one else knew. There is no better expert on Sherlock Holmes than Frank Bork, because he grew up with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

When we left the studio, Frank snickered that he made twenty dollars on his performance that night. When we asked how, he replied that he had charged the produced and the board operator ten dollars each for a ride in his Kaiser Fraser. Frank is the only person I know that can make a profit while volunteering his time. When I asked him what about the cost of his tapes, he said they weren't his tapes, they were the semi-lovely Linda's which he sweet talked her out of.

And those are just the fact's ma'am.



DICK TRACY
 WORLD'S GREATEST
 DETECTIVE
 4:45 P.M. MON., THRU., FRI
 WBML 1240 on Your Dial
 Sponsored by
Royal Crown Cola
 [1945]



Members remember the OTRC (of Buffalo)

In your October issue you asked that the "long term" members write about their memories for your anniversary issues. I joined what was then the Old Time Radio Club of Buffalo, in March of 1976 when the club was just eleven months old.

Chuck Seeley was the one that recruited me. He was the editor of what was called the "Newsletter," and which became the *Illustrated Press* about a year later. I think he found my name on a membership list from NARA (North American Radio Archives) and contacted me through that. I very much enjoyed reading the "Newsletter" each time it came out. Chuck had a real knack for making even the hum-drum things sound interesting. Chuck always appeared interested in others and we started a correspondence. He suggested that we trade shows. At that point I maybe had all of a hundred shows in my collection. The only thing I had that he didn't were six shows from a BBC series called "Grassblade Jungle." This was a program about insects and would spend an entire half-hour on such fascinating subjects as a day in the life of a grasshopper. Well, Chuck traded for that and graciously said that he "really enjoyed it." That was the only time I have ever known him to lie.

In February of 1977 I sent Chuck a review I had written on the new *General Mills Radio Adventure Theater* that had just started up on CBS. He then asked me to write a regular column six times a year (every other issue). I sat right down and wrote a refusal letter, but then got to thinking that there would never be a publication if everyone did that. So, I came up with a list of six different topics that I could write about over the next year, and so I agreed to do so. I found the list a few years back and discovered that I had only used a couple of those topics in the over one hundred columns I wrote for the *Illustrated Press* over the next fifteen years. I am now in my nineteenth year of writing my "Wireless Wanderings" column, but it is now appearing in the *NARA News*, the quarterly publication of the North American Radio Archives. (ed: Jim is the new editor of *NARA News* and we wish him success in his new role)

I strongly suspect that if Chuck Seeley hadn't gotten me involved I would have dropped out of the hobby many years ago. I have gotten to know him on a per-

sonal basis although our contacts are rather infrequent. I saw him at several of the conventions held in Bridgeport and Newark. I have visited him in Buffalo a couple of times. Besides being a "real" friend, I have found him to be one of the most interesting and intelligent people I have ever met. There is no question in my mind that he is the one who made the club into a "national" organization. I am rather doubtful that most of us would have ever heard of the Old Time Radio Club today if he hadn't taken charge in those early days. I view Chuck as the one responsible for making the club what it is, and I am most grateful to him for all that he did for the club, and for me personally.

Jim Snyder

From the Editor's Chair

Jim Snyder's remembrances bring back many memories for me. Chuck Seeley is my cousin and in the late 1960's we formed a business partnership for the purpose of the collecting of OTR programs and related nostalgia items. Perhaps a short early history of the Old Time Radio Club (of Buffalo) is in order at this point.



In November of 1974, there was a general public meeting at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society for anyone interested in the nostalgia of their youth, and out of that meeting emerged the Western New York Popular Culture Society. At the February, 1975, meeting of the WNYPCS, a group of members who were primarily interested in old time radio broadcasts decided to meet on their own. In March eleven people met at Frank Majestic's home and decided that some type of old time radio organization should be established. We met at the Crane Library in Buffalo in April, and in May St. Matthew's Episcopal Church allowed us to use their meeting hall on a permanent basis. The April through November meetings were very difficult. Members could not agree on what direction the "club" should take. Some wanted a local informal coffee klatch group, while other wanted a formal national organization, and we appeared to be on the verge of extinction. One week after the November meeting ended in total chaos, four members, Pete Bellanca, Ray Olivieri, and Dom Parisi, met with Chuck Seeley at his home to reorganize the club. Pete Bellanca assumed the duties of president, Ray Olivieri became vice-president, Dom Parisi became the treasurer and Chuck Seeley be-

came the secretary. It was decided that the club would become a national organization, dues were established, a bimonthly newsletter would be established and our quarterly magazine *Memories* was to be continued. Chuck became editor of the newsletter (which Chuck renamed the *Illustrated Press* with issue #8) and Chuck and Pete took over the editorship of *Memories*. (*Memories* continued to be published under various editors until 1993). In December of 1975 the remaining members agreed unanimously to the reorganization. And as they say on the radio, the rest is history.

Chuck left the club in the early 1980's and is currently part owner of a book and sport cards store in his native Kenmore, NY. Jim is correct, it was Chuck's flare for writing (he's has a degree in English from Canisius College) that started the club on it's successful journey twenty years ago. Chuck wrote articles for *Memories* and the IP using names such as Brad Runyon (if you knew Chuck you know why he chose this name), Ted Bronson, Kimball Kinnison, Woody Smith, Ethan Edwards and many others. He was a one man writing machine, trying to keep our publications from going under. As far as I know, no one in the club ever knew he was writing under so many names. In the beginning we wrote to various people involved the OTR, Chuck wrote to Jim because he lived in Michigan, Chuck's father's home state and to Allen Rockford because he lived on Seeley Road in Syracuse, NY.

Member's Mike



Dear Editor,

In the October issue of the IP I said that John Barrett, the first Buffalo Lone Ranger had suffered a stroke. This is an error on my part. John Barrett is deceased. His brother Walter is the one that had the stroke. A letter from Walter's wife Emmy (which follows) tells the story.

Dear Dom,

Please accept my apology, its unpardonable, my delay in writing you. We received your tapes and *Memories* booklet. Can I make this clear for you, we are the Walter Barretts, not John Barrett. Walter is John's brother. John was the first Lone Ranger in Buffalo. He did not move to Detroit when they left. Mary Barrett (Mrs. Healy) was Mustang Meg, first in

Buffalo and then in Detroit, for how long I can't recall. I think they both may have done *The Green Hornet*, I'm not sure. Both John and Mary are deceased. Walter was a radio actor also, but never on the Ranger.

As I mentioned, Walter had a stroke two and one-half years ago, he can't read or speak well (his mind is fine). As we get settled I shall read the *Memories* to him and perhaps he may recall and be able to express things to me.

As I said, I'm still trying to organize our move and take care of Walter. We so appreciate your taking the time to write us and I promise to write you again. My best to you.

Emmy Barrett

Emmy's new address is: 458 Palmer Ave. Teaneck, NJ 07666. Phone (201) 836-0641 I know they would like to hear from some OTR fans.

Dom Parisi

SHOULD ORGANIZED SPORTS BE ABOLISHED FOR THE DURATION?

Ted Husing, Larry MacPhail, John R. Tunis Argue This Exciting Question Tonight!

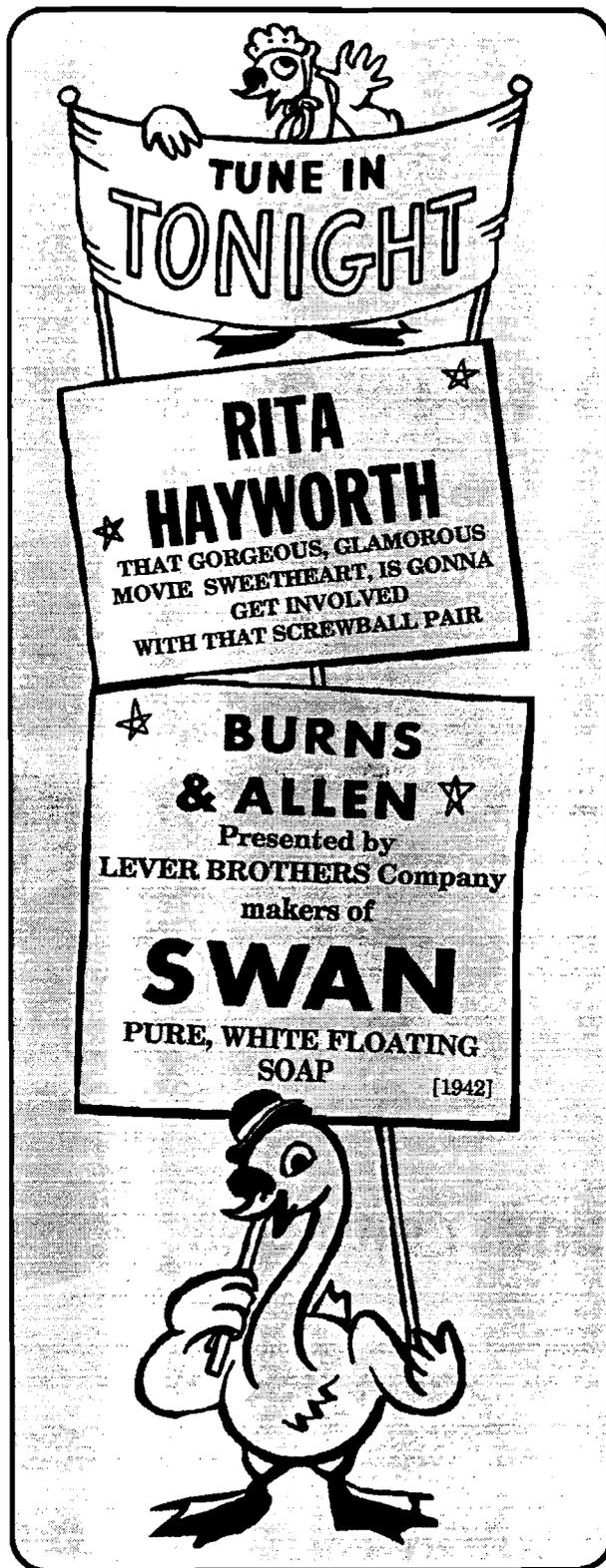
People favoring organized sports during wartime point out their physical training and morale building qualities. Those opposing claim they are a waste of transportation, money and energy. There are two important sides to this question. Hear them tonight when Ted Husing (CBS sports announcer), Larry MacPhail (General Manager of the New York Yankees baseball team) and John R. Tunis (nationally known sports authority and writer) clash on,

America's Town Meeting

sponsored by

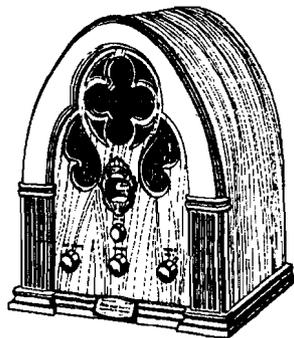
The Reader's Digest

WAGE 8:30 P.M. [1945]



Reminder: If there is a 1/95 after your last name on the mailing label, your membership has expired with this issue.

Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086



FIRST CLASS MAIL

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP
RENEWABLE**