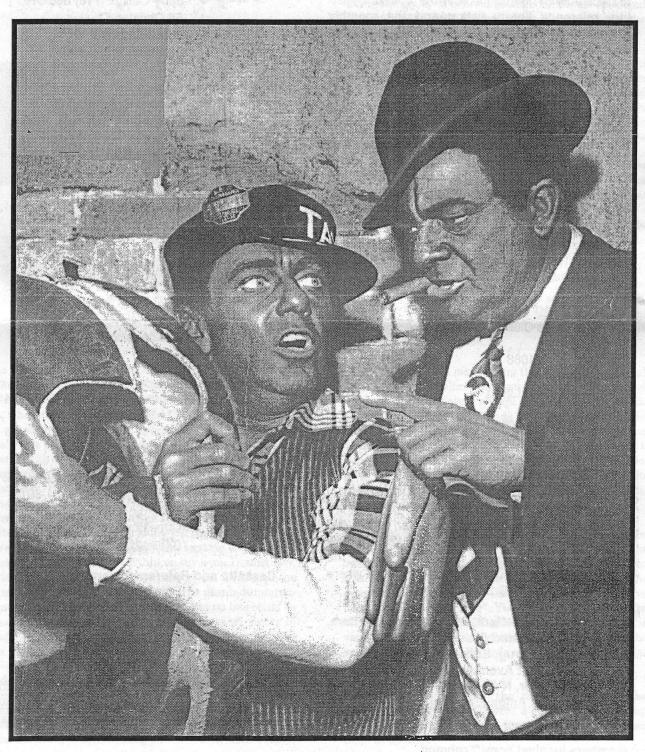
The Old Time Radio Club



Number 371

June 2009



Amos 'n' Andy

### Membership Information

Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing newsletter issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The Old Time Radio Club meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM during the months of September through June at St. Aloysius School Hall, Cleveland Drive and Century Road, Cheektowaga, NY. There is no meeting during the month of July, and an informal meeting is held in the month of August.

Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The Old Time Radio Club is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

### Club Mailing Address

Old Time Radio Club 56 Christen Ct. Lancaster, NY 14086 E-Mail Address otrclub(@localnet.com



All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

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

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Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to: The Illustrated Press

c/o Ken Krug, Editor 73 Banner Avenue Lancaster, NY 14086-1930 E-Mall address: AnteakEar@aol.com

Web Page Address: members.localnet.com/~robmcd

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#### Library Rates:

Audio cassettes and CDs are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a club supplied cassette or CD which is retained by the member. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.

# Jack Benny's Funny People

By TOM CHERRE



Jack's cast regulars welcome Dennis Day upon his return to the program after serving in the Navy. Don Wilson, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Eddle "Rochester" Anderson and Jack Benny

As I've said numerous times before, The Jack Benny Show was one of the most enjoyable shows I've had the pleasure to listen to. Well, when you really get down to it, what made the show so ftuiny? Jack Benny was truly a gifted talent. He was a comedian who knew how to deliver a good line, and had great timing. As far as the rest of the cast goes I don't think Mary Livingstone was any great talent. Frank Bork could draw more laughs than her. Her singing was suspect at best, and I hated that stupid laugh. Phil Harris, maybe a decent bandleader wasn't all that funny either. Listeners like myself often tired of hearing the same barrage of booze jokes every week. His womanizing jokes became a little more than trite and wore a little thin on my ears. Dennis Day, I loved his singing voice, especially when he did all the Irish songs, but funny-not really. His dumb-dumb routine was plain dumb. No one and I mean no one could be that stupid. Don Wilson, one of the greatest voices in radio was a great announcer, but many fat jokes were all he got. And on top of that he wasn't really that fat.

I don't mean to sound so cynical, but most of the good laughs came from one major supporting star and many minor ones. First of all, Rochester (Eddie Anderson) could have had his own show and done very well too. He was the cook, cleaner, tailor, driver, valet, man Friday,

and whatever else you want to call him; he was the funniest guy on the show. His characterization added immensely in bringing out cheapeskate jokes, car jokes, dinner menus and laundry jokes. Episodes of Rochester doing inventory of canned goods is hilarious. Jack could buy unlabeled cans for half price, but found out they might be eating stewed tomatoes for dessert.

Another great character was Mr. Kitzel, played by Artie Auerbach. Jack first met Kitzel at the Rose Bowl game with the "peekle in the meedle with the mustard on top" routine. Mr. Kitzel had the perfect accent and his hoo hoo hoo lines were classic. One great gag was when Jack met Mr. Kitzel at the train station, and asked him what brought him there. Kitzel says "I come to pick up my son from college" Benny asks "Oh, what school?" Kitzel replies in his deep Jewish accent "Notre Dame". It was always a good episode when Mr. Kitzel was on the show. Of course I can't leave Frank Nelson out. He was one of the greatest laugh getters. He usually played a sales clerk or a ticket seller. When Jack would need assistance he would say "excuse me sir", and Nelson would come back with a resounding "Yesssssssss", or bellow with his deep penetrating "May I help you?" In the Christmas shopping episodes Frank played a sales clerk helping Jack buy something, and his cheapness is openly challenged by Nelson. Nelson was always fumy at what he did, and he did it so good.

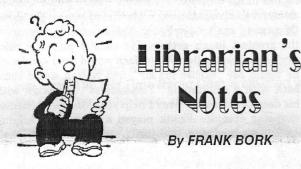
I can't end without mentioning the Colemans. Although they were not regulars, they guest starred often enough to give them notoriety. I always got a yuk hearing Bonita Coleman refer to Rochester as Manchester, and she did it all the time. Hearing Ronny tell Bonita how cheap Benny was always cracked me up. The Oscar episode is a classic. His constant borrowing of food and tools goes from sublime to the ridiculous. I loved it! It was like McGee and Gildersleeve battling it out. The Colemans were so good they could have been regulars.

While not a character, but a routine, I always enjoyed the trips to the vault. Jack had a guard chained to the vault for years never knowing who the current president was. One time when he mentioned the word car the guard says "What's a car?" Jack says "Oh I forgot you've been down here that long". You would also have to ward off the crocodiles patrolling the moat surrounding the vault. Once in awhile Rochester would make a trip to the vault just to clean Mr. Benny's money. This was all great stuff.

When Lucky Strike did the show it featured the Sportsmen Quartet. They were a great harmony group who did all the jingles. I wish time would have permitted them to do more.

In addition to some great guests like Fred Allen and others Benny had a good variety of all the greats.

What I didn't particularly care for was doing plays on many episodes. Those shows got a short play time for me. All in all it was a great show, and Jack Benny deserved all the accolades. He played the chintzy miser like a pro. He was actually a generous and humble soul in real life. He wasn't afraid to let someone else have the laugh or the better line. He used to say as long as it was good for the show. Benny gave one of his last jokes after his TV show was cancelled. He said "I just watched that show that got us cancelled, Bonanza, ya know, it's not a bad show". And ya know The Jack Benny Show wasn't bad either . . . Good Night Folks.



From the Desk of the Club Librarian

Do you remember the Movie, "Here We Go Again"? I think it was "Fibber McGee and Molly" or maybe it was "The Great Gildersleeve", I'm not sure which. Well today in the 2009's, it's Tom Monroe. Today, May 4th, I received another box of 100 cassettes Tom has donated to The Old Time Radio Club. These past few Months I have listed the Cassettes, Tom has donated to the Club replacing many of our missing Cassettes, plus many more new cassettes which the Club did not have in our Library, a total of 100 Cassettes in all. Once again, thanks Tom. Here, listed below are the titles of the cassettes Tom has donated this month:

Baseball - 5
Broadway is My beat - 5
Boxing - 5
CBS Radio Mystery Theater - 3
Dick Tracy - 3
Further Adventures of Flash Gordon - 1
Hilltop House - 1
Imagination Theater - 5
Inner Sanctum -5
Jumbo - 2
Komedie Kapers - 3
Lux Radio Theater - 5

Illustrated Press 4

Meet The Press - 4
Mutual Radio Theater - 5
One Man's Family - 5
Speed Gibson - 1
Suspense - 5
The Adventures of Superman - 5
The Goldbergs - 5
The Life of Riley - 5
The Whistler - 5
Wild Bill Hickok - 5
Zero Hour - 6

I feel that a simple "Thank You Tom" is not much after your wonderful generosity, BUT... Tom, Thank You.

Till Next Time, Good Radio Listening. Your Club Librarian, Frank "the-old-one"

(In the past it was Frank B., but because we have another Frank B., the not-so-EVIL-anymore, Prof. Frank Boncore. I'll stay with Frank "The Old One".)

# The Cincinnati Old-Time Radio Convention Needs Your Help

### Eddie Carroll as Jack Benny, on DVD!

by BOB BURCHETT, Convention Organizer

The Cincinnati North Hotel suddenly went out of business just days before this year's convention. So I had to move fast to find a new venue, and subsequently the cost was much more than anticipated.

I need your help to keep the Cincinnati Convention alive. As you know, the Cincinnati Convention is unique in its informality, with celebrity guests mingling freely with the attendees at all hours, and the easygoing atmosphere is comfortable for everybody.

Here is our idea to raise money to keep the convention alive, and at the same time to provide everyone the magical experience that took place in Cincinnati the morning of April 25, 2009.

Jack Benny Tribute Artist Eddie Carroll spoke for an hour and a half that morning to a standing-room-only crowd. Eddie has the unique gift of bringing Jack back to us in a way you can't possibly believe until you see him.

People who were there call it the greatest event they have ever seen at a convention. This mesmerizing performance was captured on DVD, and I will send you your own copy when you make a donation of at least \$15.00 to the Cincinnati Old Time Radio Fund. This DVD is available nowhere else!

If you are able to send more, your contribution will be greatly appreciated. Our convention means too much to too many to end now. I thank each and every one of you for your help in saving the Cincinnati Old-Time Radio and Nostalgia Convention.

Please send your check to:

Bob Burchett

10280 Gunpowder Rd.
Florence, KY 41042

All help is deeply appreciated



# Just the Facts Ma'am

By Frank C. Boncore

## THE CINCINNATI CONVENTION 2009

It's like a family reunion, each year old friends get together in Cincinnati, Ohio to renew acquaintances, meet new friends and find out what's new in OTR thanks to a lot of hard work by Bob Burchett and his staff. This year there was an extra handicap, the hotel closed its doors just two weeks before the Convention. Bob scrambled to find a new place to house the Convention and all its guests and hold the old room rates. He had a very short time to send out postcards with the new hotel name and phone number. After the cards were sent, the hotel changed its name from the Lexington Hotel to the Atrium. Despite all of that, thanks to my GPS system, I finally found my way to the Convention.

Joining old friends, Bob Hastings and Esther Geddes-McVey, was a new friend Eddie Carroll AKA Jack Benny. Once you see him perform you will swear you saw Jack Benny. I was very fortunate because I not only got to see Eddie Carroll at the Convention but he did a show here just outside of Buffalo two days later. Check his website eddiecarroll.com to find out his schedule of shows. If he is anywhere in your area, you have to see

him. Just a side note, but Eddie is also the voice of Jiminy Cricket.

A recreation of *The Jack Benny Show* was performed starring Eddie Carroll. One could swear that Jack Benny was there in person. Honorable mention for playing the role of Rochester went to our old friend, Peyton Powell. from Little Rock, Arkansas. There were also other recreations.

Also in attendance were old friends Tom Monroe, Leo Garoniak, Gary and LaDonna Kramer, Bob Burnham, Marty Grams and Terry Salmonson, all promoters of OTR and most of them I am proud to say I have known for over 25 years.

If you are an OTR fan, you have to attend one of the OTR conventions it's my opinion that OTR Conventions do more to promote the hobby than anything else. If you are a true OTR fan, you will have to attend at least one OTR Convention. Chances are that you will probably want to attend more. Where else could one find more OTR related items or shows to add to one's collection or other great people all with one thing in common, OTR?

Coming in August is the 4th Annual Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention in Aberdeen, Maryland held from August 27th through 29th, 2009 which is hosted by our good friend Martin Grams. For details go to <a href="https://www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com">www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com</a>. Incidentally, Martin will have two new books out, one on The Green Hornet and the other Sgt Bilko.

What's on the horizon? 48 more episodes of *The Shadow* (previously thought to be lost) and the run of *The Green Hornet*.

On the lighter side, Computer Bob and I were returning to the Hotel from lunch when we saw a tractor trailer stuck on the Hotel's driveway apron. The trailer had pulled down a cable and it was lying on its roof. Computer Bob got all upset and expressed concern that hotel's Internet might be out of order.

Once again, thanks to Bob Burchett who despite all roadblocks did a super job putting on this year's Cincinnati Convention.

FRANK C. BONCORE

Just a footnote:

With the changing of Hotels so fast, Bob had little time to negotiate. Any contributions would be greatly appreciated. (Ed. Note — see information and address in preceding article.)

# BEING THERE: Collecting Radio Broadcast Admission Tickets

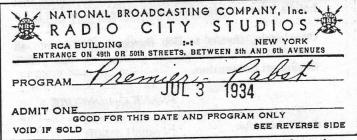
By RICK PAYNE (All Rights Reserved 2009)

During the golden age of radio, networks and sponsors invited the general public to attend live performances of many popular programs. For the performers, the presence of the studio audience provided encouragement, laughter and appreciation. For the audience, the experience was an unforgettable opportunity to see their favorite entertainers at work. Tickets from some broadcasts survive today . . . waiting for collectors like me.

In our February 2007 issue, we featured broadcast tickets for programs featuring some of the most famous Big Bands of the swing era. We barely scratched the surface in that issue, so keep scratching as we ease ourselves towards a much-needed summer vacation. So c'mon, chillun...let's dance!

Dance bands were early entrants to the radio derby. Popular groups such as the Cliquot Club Eskimos, the Ipana Troubadours, the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks, Vincent Lopez, Ted Weems and others were affiliated with prominent hotels, casinos and nightclubs. Promoters saw the opportunity to build attendance through remote broadcasts.

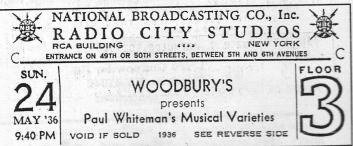
In the earliest days of network programming, remote broadcasts filled air time inexpensively; they remained a staple throughout the golden age of radio. Of course, Orson Welles immortalized the format in his famous "War of the Worlds" broadcast; the news bulletins of the Martian invasion interrupted the fictional "Ramon Raquello and his Orchestra." As a result of these early radio appearances, sales of records, sheet music and tickets for personal appearances rose sharply.



Ben Bernie, "the old maestro", first appeared on the radio in 1923. Rising to fame in the 1920s, his personal showmanship made him a crowd favorite. His trademark phrase "Yowsah, yowsah, yowsah" is fondly remembered.

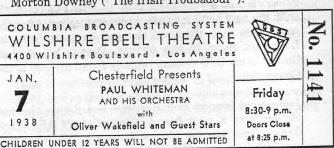
llustrated Press 6

This ticket is from the final weeks of the third year of his series Ben Bernie and All His Lads. He broadcast many shows from an elaborate Pabst Blue Ribbon Casino during the 1933-34 Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition. This specific broadcast originated from New York. The title is a little misleading however . . . Premier-Pabst is the legal name of the sponsor, not the "premiere" broadcast of a new program. Period advertising noted that Bernie was broadcasting for the "alma malta", proving that bad puns existed long before I started writing.



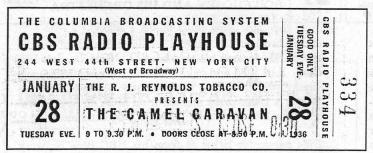
Paul Whiteman, the popular "King of Jazz", was incredibly active in early radio. In his excellent book Music Radio, Jim Cox cites Whiteman's role as a regular performer in no less than 21 different radio series dating back to 1929. The list of Whiteman alumni and affiliates reads like a hall of fame roster: Bing Crosby, Morton Downey, Billie Holiday, Mildred Bailey, Johnny Mercer, the Dorsey brothers, Jack Teagarden, Duke Ellington, George Gershwin and Bix Beiderbecke, to name just a few. Whiteman brought jazz to the masses. He was the biggest name in music by the end of the twenties, having the largest band (34 members) and the highest salaries in the business.

This ticket is from his 45-minute weekly series for Woodbury Soap on NBC's Blue Network. During the 1930s, NBC tickets don't distinguish between offerings on their Red and Blue Networks. *Paul Whiteman's Musical Varieties* reunited Whiteman with his old friend Morton Downey ("The Irish Troubadour").



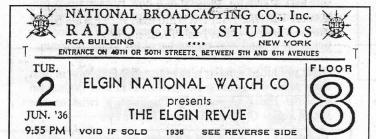
After taking a break from regular radio duties for most of 1937, "Pops" Whiteman returned to the air to replace Hal Kemp for a very successful two-year run on CBS for Chesterfield cigarettes. The series was broadcast at different times from both Hollywood and New York.

This classic ticket has that great triangle-shaped CBS microphone logo. The broadcast originated from the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles, which was also home for Edward G. Robinson's Big Town, Eddie Cantor's Texaco Town and The Life of Riley with William Bendix. This particular ticket is from the second program in the half-hour Chesterfield series. I've been unable to identify the guest stars for this week.



Another mainstay of early radio was *The Casa Loma Orchestra*. Formed in 1929, they are considered to have been the first true "swing" band and are best remembered under the leadership of Glen Gray. In the late twenties, they began to add some high-energy tunes to the usual sweet ballads thanks in part to a gifted arranger named Gene Gifford. Unfortunately, the band's talent wasn't musically up to the task and they never achieved the fame that Benny Goodman and others would achieve. Still, the Glen Gray band was distinctively different and their recordings are quite listenable. A little trivia: the orchestra was named for a hotel they never played!

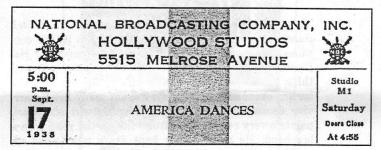
The band was featured in this 1936 CBS broadcast of *The Camel Caravan*, certainly appropriate for a group whose theme song was "Smoke Rings." Ironically, after three years on the program they would be replaced by Goodman himself. Within a year, the program would be renamed *Benny Goodman's Swing School*.



Did I say Benny Goodman? Well, what a perfect opportunity to bring us up to date on "The King of Swing!" Fans will know that he quickly assembled his own band in 1934 after years of playing with Ben Pollack, Isham Jones and Red Nichols. His big break came when he won a featured weekly role on *Let's Dance*, a three-hour weekly program for the National Biscuit Company. The

program gave national exposure to the band, but it was the abrupt end to the show in 1935 that ultimately resulted in one of the two biggest dates in swing history. A cross-country tour after the *Let's Dance* series ended proved disastrous . . . until the final stop at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles on August 21 when, frustrated by indifferent crowds, Benny had the band let it loose with new Fletcher Henderson arrangements. The crowd went wild, and the swing era was underway.

Goodman opened at the Urban Room in Chicago's Congress Hotel in November 1935, and by the time it ended six months later he was the biggest name in radio. During that time, remote broadcasts and his weekly appearances on Eddie Dowling's *Elgin Revue* with singer Helen Ward put the band at the forefront of American music. This rare ticket is another of the many examples where the printed title doesn't tell the whole story.



Probably inspired by Let's Dance and other remote broadcasts, NBC launched a series of cross-country dance music in July of 1938. Listed under various titles including Swinging Across America, the one hour weekly program America Dances featured cutaways to different bands broadcasting in Hollywood, San Francisco, Chicago and New York City. Newspaper logs don't identify which bands appeared; the only surviving recording features Duke Ellington.

This Constitution Day 1938 ticket is for the Hollywood portion of the program; the audience undoubtedly got a great show since the door-closing time is a full hour before the broadcast began. In all likelihood, they remained for at least four hours in order to do the west coast rebroadcast; in the meantime, another program called *The Crickets* was presented to the same group in the same studio. The Melrose studio later served as home of many Mutual-Don Lee network programs including the Basil Rathbone series *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, SPECIAL HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS 5833 FERNWOOD AVENUE

INC.

4:30 Sunday Sept. 25

F. W. FITCH COMPANY presents The Fitch Bandwagon

with SHEP FIELDS Warner Bros. K.F.W.B. STUDIO Directions to Studio on back of Ticket Doors Close

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.

CASINO THEATRE CATALINA ISLAND



6:00 p. m. Aug. 29

1940

REPEAT BROADCAST CAMEL CIGARETTES

BOB CROSBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Thurs. Deers Close At 5:55

The good people at Fitch Shampoo (look out, here it comes) also jumped on the bandwagon in 1938. On September 4, they launched The Fitch Bandwagon, a musical series featuring a different band every week. This series is a collector's dream because the tickets usually name the band . . . in this case, Shep Fields and his Rippling Rhythm Revue. For those of you unfamiliar with the band, the trademark feature was the sound of a babbling brook created by blowing into a straw in a bowl of water. I report . . . you decide.

This ticket for the fourth broadcast of The Fitch Bandwagon has a nice history attached to it. It's contained in a vintage scrapbook that belonged to Hal Derwin, a popular singer with Shep Fields at the time. I think I've mentioned it before, but we all owe a debt to scrapbookers of days gone by; a great many tickets survive because of their efforts. The Derwin scrapbook paints a very realistic picture of life on the road with a big band. He meticulously kept every newspaper ad, publicity release and review during his long career.

career. He formed his own band . . . Bob Crosby's Bob Cats. . . in 1935 and enjoyed much success at Chicago's Blackhawk Hotel. One of my favorite pieces of memorabilia is a 1930s press manual from MCA on how to promote the band and their "modern Dixieland music."

Bing's brother Bob enjoyed a long and successful radio

This particular ticket is from his NBC Blue Network series. He was on the air for Camel for three years. What's neat about this ticket is the origination site: The Casino Theatre on Catalina Island. The height of the summer in 1940 meant many opportunities for musicians in tourist locations. The broadcast doesn't survive. but at least the ticket does.

### NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

SUNSET AND VINE

Doors Close 6:55 P.M. CHILDREN Under Six Years of Age Not Admitted

Special Premiere of HORACE HEIDTS MUSICAL KNIGHTS

Thurs. Oct. 10 7:00 p.m Studio A

Here's another 1940 ticket and this one has me stumped. Horace Heidt, of course, was very popular as the creator and host of the Tums Pot o' Gold program. Indeed, the Pot o' Gold aired Thursdays at 8 pm . . . but radio logs of this period give no mention of a new Horace Heidt program airing an hour earlier. Perhaps it was a pilot; perhaps it is something else. In any event, it is a nice looking

Heidt remained a major player on radio for years; in fact, after radio was waning he continued to tour the nation with his Youth Opportunity Program, a twist on the Major Bowes Original Amateur Hour.

ticket for a band best remembered for a quiz program.

# THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM WEST 45th STREET, NEW YORK CITY

(West of Broadway) GRIFFIN SHOE POLISHES

SEPTEMBER

"TIME TO SHINE" with HAL KEMP AND HIS ORCHESTRA

TUESDAY EVE. 10 to 10.30 PM.E.D.S.T. • Doors close at 9.50 PM.

RADIO THEATRE 34 NO 1939

I mentioned earlier that Paul Whiteman had replaced bandleader Hal Kemp on the Chesterfield show in 1937. Don't shed any tears for Kemp, however. He was the answer to the prayers of the Griffin Shoe Polish Company, whose earlier radio offering The Allwite Melody Revue hadn't gone over so well. Hal Kemp and his Orchestra became the stars of Time To Shine (oh, those masters of marketing) in April of 1938 and remained on the air until . . . well, about six weeks after this ticket. Tragically, he was killed in December 1940.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.



HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE



3:30

Aug. 25 FITCH

SUMMER BAND WAGON

Studio B Sunday Doors Close At 3:25

Illustrated Press 8

Given the approach of summer, I thought I would close with this souvenir of radio's nod to the vacation season. The Fitch Summer Band Wagon was an offseason replacement. Similar concepts included Summerfield Bandstand (featuring the cast of The Great Gildersleeve), Summer Serenade from Chicago, Summer Theater (with Pat O'Brien) and Summer Cruise (with Dick Powell).

I said I thought I would close with that, but circumstances call for a different ending.

CBS RA	ADIO THEATRE NO. 3  7 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY (at 53rd Street)	GOOD ONLY Sunday Afterno SEPTEMBER	CBS RADIO
SEPTEMBER	BOND BAKERS	rnoon ER	THE
5	PRESENT A PRIVATE PREVIEW OF	5	ATRE
SUNDAY	GUY LOMBARDO AND HIS ORCHESTRA		NO.
AFTERNOON	3.15 to 3.45 PM.E.D.S.T. • Doors close at 3.05 PM.	1937	w

With this issue of The Illustrated Press, Ken Krug concludes his term as editor of this fine publication. For over 13 years, Ken has devoted his outstanding talents and a good deal of persistence to produce these newsletters. I am sure the club will honor him in an appropriate manner, but I just wanted to throw in my personal thanks to him for his encouragement, his patience and his commitment to quality. Ken gave me the opportunity to share my collection with you through Being There and I have been blessed for the experience. So Ken . . . thanks from the bottom of my heart.

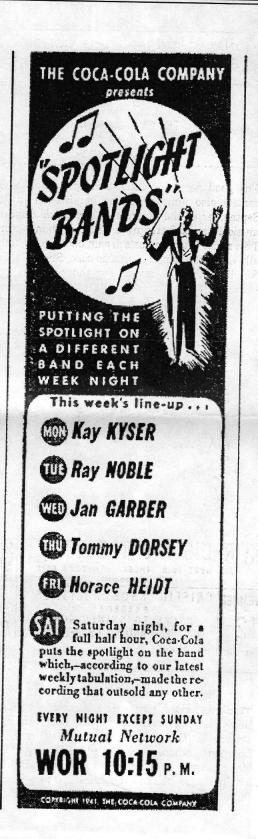
So more appropriately, we close to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" performed by the immortal Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra.

Enjoy your summer, everyone, and say a prayer for the next editor!

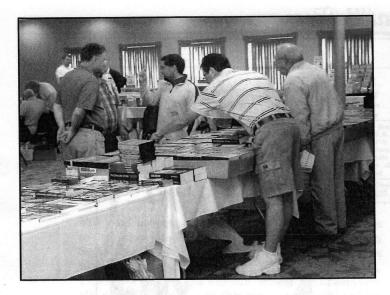
## **MEMBER'S** MIKE

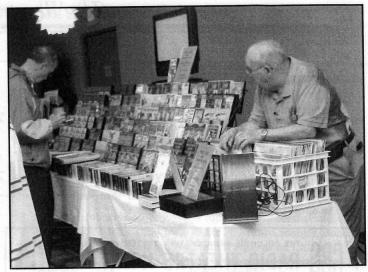
Ken: Although we are very sorry to hear about your leaving as editor of The Illustrated Press, we were very fortunate to have you as editor for so many years. You did an outstanding job and we are hopeful that we can find someone to take your place. As a former editor, I know how much time it takes for each issue and the difficulty in obtaining items to print. Kudos for a job well done and best wishes for the future!

Dick Olday



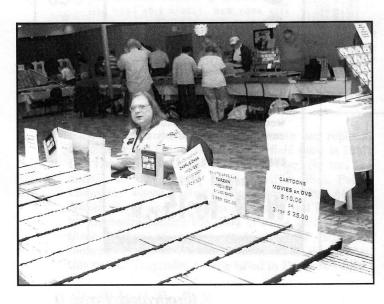
# 2009 Cincinnati Convention — Dealer's Room

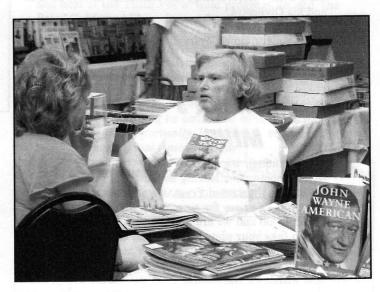












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