# The Lone Ranger



### **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

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All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

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

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#### Library Rates:

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



Editor's Two Cents:

Before I go any farther I'd like to thank Ken Krug for the last 14 years of putting out an excellent publication of our club's newsletter "The Illustrated Press". He was editor longer than FDR was president, and both did a fine job. I will also tell vou right now: I am not Ken Krug, but with a little help and persistence I will try to put out a newsletter that will be interesting and enjoyable. Please bear with me. Most of you members know me. Frank Bork introduced me to the club about ten years ago. I have tried to write a monthly article for the last couple of years. Now I will concentrate on being editor. I will have my "Editor's Two Cents" and have another column entitled "Betsha Didn't Know" which will debut with this episode. For the last couple years Ken has repeatedly asked for monthly articles. I don't know why, but they have been few in coming. I know you guys are all super intelligent and have vast warehouses of knowledge sitting in your cranium. So why not take a few moments to share your opinions, thoughts, and words and send in something for your newsletter. You don't have to be a Mark Twain or anything like that. I'm sure all of you have old memories or opinions of all the

oldtime radio shows and our readers are anxiously waiting to hear what they are. I'll be glad to accept anything at meetings, through the mail, or E-mail Skylark68\_1999@yahoo.com Thanking you all in advance Tom Cherre

### "Betsha Didn't Know"

Back in the early days of radio Fran Striker of Buffalo was burning the midnight oil cranking out three "Lone Ranger " scripts a week. Would you believe he was only getting paid two or three or sometimes four dollars for each story. Okay, this might have been in the middle of the "Great Depression" but if I walk through the Gallaria parking lot I might find that much in loose change or empty bottle cans. To put this in perpective; I met an old high school friend at a Fallon reunion. He was talented enough to write screenplays for TV movies. He told me he could get as much as 25 grand for a TV movie on one of the major networks. If it was cable maybe only half of that. You do the math and see what Fran Striker would have to do to earn that much. Striker was what you call a workaholic. In addition to Ranger he wrote stories for "The Green Hornet, and Sgt. Preston in addition to comic strips and books. It's a good thing cigarettes were only about a dime a pack and coffee maybe a quarter a pound or he may have lost money working. Actually he worked to support not only his wife and kids, but his parents, in-laws and aunt and uncle Times were tough, but he became one of the most prolific script writers in history. I also bet you didn't know John Todd who played Tonto was a Shakespearian

actor before doing the Lone Ranger. He was the only Tonto through the entire run, and was well into his 80s when the series ended. There are stories that had Todd dosing off and when his speaking part came on he was heard to say "Gettum up Scout" while they were on a paddle boat or inside a hotel. Now you know.

### FIBBER & MOLLY

Reprint from Radio Magazine May 1956

Success and marriage are two wonderful habits Jim and Marian Jordan established for life.

To radio's beloved Fibber McGee and Molly-known to their friends and family as Jim and Marian Jordan—the answer is quite simple: "Our reaction to middle age? It's inevitable, so why fight it! The secret of staying young is staying busy." Today, Jim and Marian laugh at their long ago plan of retiring when they turned thirty-five. "When we were first married", says Marian brown eyes sparking, thirty-five seemed a long way away, and we thought we would be ready." But thirty-five came—and the Jordans only grew busier. There's an old adage to the effect:" If you want a job done, give it to a busy man". This advice describes the Jordans' perfectly. For years, they did thirty-nine shows a year, raised a family, and still had time for their other interests. For some years Jim and Marian Jordan have even done

as many as 260 shows a year and still luxuriated in the fascinating business of being grandparents. However, before grandchildren came Jim and Molly Jordan had other interests: Their Valley home, Jim's ivy, Marian's, African violets, their cattle ranch, and trailer life. As a matter of fact, the trailer life came as a result of the Jordans' again contemplating retirement. It was pointed out to them by friends that they could rent or buy a trailer....that they didn't have to go into real retirement---but their trailer trip could be a vacation--and at the same time, the quiet of Mother Nature would be conducive to clear thinking---and "Fibber" could make up his mind which one of a hundred areas of interest he would tackle next. Jim and Marian accepted the idea, for it was then 1944 and traveling by trailer was practically a national hobby. Their friends had described the beauty of roadside resting places, ferny dells, the wonder of living in a trailer in the midst of nature. But Jim says. "I like the part about taxes --- there were none." The Jordans trailer trip was full of surprises. just like Fibber McGee's closet. The first day, Jim and Marian traveled as far as the front gate when Jim discovered the trailer was too big for the car, which wouldn't pull it up the hill outside the house. Next, the hitch had to be changed so they could go around curves." We did get started", says Jim, but in 1944 there were no elegant trailer parks. I believe we had to drive to the end of the coastline before we could find a place to turn around." The Jordans camped on the Wall River in Oregon to fish for trout. "We had a very small kitchen in the trailer," says Jim, and not much variety. If we stored too many foods there was no place to cook. So we were

eating in the restaurant when in came a local camper with the biggest trout I'd ever seen." The lucky fisherman wanted the patrons to sign a certificate attesting to the size of his fish-fourteen pounds, six ounces. Jim agreed, and signed "Fibber McGee." The fisherman was furious because Fibber's signature had made the testimonial a big lie. He was finally placated when Marian did her little—girl Tweeney routine to prove that Fibber was really Fibber. On the way home Jim and Marian decided to rest up in San Francisco. "And," says Jim, "to get some more variety in our diet. There was a trailer court in south San Francisco, but we thought we could find a place closer to town. We drove up one hill and down another. Naturally, we couldn't leave our trailer on one those hills. Finally we drove back to south San Francisco to park. The Jordans then drove back to San Francisco. "We couldn't check into a hotel," says Jim, "because we didn't have any bags. So Marian bought two dollar suitcases in an inexpensive store and we drove up to St. Francis Hotel." The bellcap came rushing out to the big new car and Jim reports he gave them --with their unkempt, bearded looks and their empty, inexpensive suitcases---the most suspicious look he's ever seen." After a few days shopping, clean clothes, and some San Francisco cooking," recalls Jim, "I felt we had enough strength to hitch up the trailer and return home. Two days of living in San Francisco also told me we had enough of 'retiring' to our trailer and communing with nature." Back in Hollywood in 1944 Jim and Marian parked the trailer in back of their home. They later sold the home and bought a small ranch house, which they remodeled by taking off the roof and lived in the trailer for six months before

the house was finished. Later Jim and Marian's gardener lived in the trailer. The gardener helped Jim with the ivy and Marian with her African violets. Eventually the trailer was sold, and with it went their idea of retiring. Today--still in love with radio---Jim and Marian are busier than ever. In addition to this, they have since moved back into their big home to make room for their grandchildren. They bought and sold one cattle ranch and purchased another near Agoura, California, where they raise nearly two hundred head of Black Angus cattle. Say Jim and Marian Jordan, surrounded by their six grandchildren and their many other interests: "keep busy, you'll keep happy--and you'll never want to retire." The Jordans are keeping busy.





# Librarian's Notes

By FRANK BORK

# From the desk of the radio club librarian:

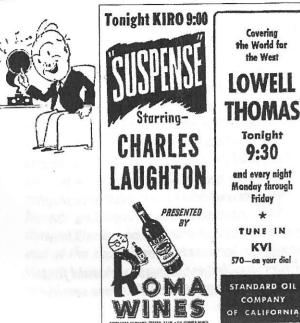
A few weeks ago I had a nice phone conversation with Richard Nowack from Holly, New York. We talked about old time radio programs we had enjoyed years ago. Now we are lucky that there is a Radio Club like ours where we can borrow the club's many cassettes and enjoy them once again. Now we have cassettes, CDs, MP3s, and of course the club's record collection. P.S. we do not lend out any of the club's records. Once again, Richard is donating more records to the club's library, also a complete collection of Tarzan. Listed below are the titles of the records. P.S. as soon as we have the records copied on cassettes, they will be available for loan, according to the club's new rules, located on page 2 of The Illustrated Press.

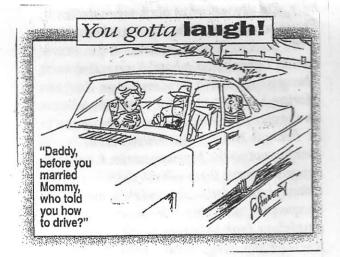
Collection #1. Jack Benny Presents Golden Memories of Radio—A 6 LP collection of radio programs mostly of the 1930s & 1940s.

Collection 2. The Marx Brothers—A 4 LP collection Three hours 59 minutes and 51 seconds.

Collection3. The Great Radio
Comedians. A 5 LP collection Amos 'N
Andy—Great Gildersleeve—Duffy's
Tavern—Smith and Dale—Eddie
Cantor—Jimmy Durante & Garry
Moore—Groucho Marx—Edgar Bergen







& Charlie McCarthy—Fred Allen.
A big radio club thanks to Richard
Nowack, for his kind donation. Thanks
Dick!
Well, that's it for now – Your Club
Librarian Frank Bork

### Hi-Yo Silver and Gold By Francis Chase Jr. Reprint 1938

His voice is as well known as the President's and his ability as a radio actor is generally recognized, but if Earle W. Graser lost his present job tomorrow, he'd probably look a long, long time before he landed another job. As a matter of fact there are few people, in or out of the radio industry, who know Mr. Graser, but the magic name of "The Lone Ranger" is a household word not only here in America, where his "Hi-yo Silver" has become a sort of juvenile greeting whenever one boy meets another, but in England and Europe, as well where cowboys and Indians are even more enthusiastically acclaimed.

You see, Mr. Graser is the Lone Ranger, and because he is his voice would be of little value in any other role. Too many people know it, and even if he were cast as Romeo, and played it well, the chances are his balcony speech would draw a "Hi-yo Silver "rather than enraptured "Oh's" and "ah's" from his listeners. That's the price he had to pay for his success. There is probably no better known radio character than the Lone Ranger and no more anonymous radio personality than Mr. Graser who has breathed the breath of life into him.

Unlike most radio shows, which are put together, given a trial and, if they succeed, find their way eventually to the networks and national popularity. "The Lone Ranger" was no hit-or-miss affair, but a well-planned, time-tried piece of showmanship based upon long experience in the theater. Oddly enough too, "The Lone Ranger" is largely the product of a man whose name is seldom heard in connection with it, and yet he

owns the Ranger body and soul. Piece by piece, the Ranger and his companions, Silver and Tonto were put together and sent out to ride the range in behalf of righteousness and law fullness by the almost cold, analytical design of George W. Trendle, one-time president of a motion picture theater chain in Detroit and now part owner of radio station WXYZ, in Detroit, and of the Lone Ranger Corporation, for the Lone Ranger is incorporated.

Back in 1930, when the bite of depression caused customers to stay away from his movie theaters in carload lots, Mr. Trendle started casting about for some field in which to recoup his losses.

"People still wanted entertainment," he decided, and the form of entertainment that reached the greatest number of people at the least expense to them was a cinch to click. Radio was the only answer. The movie fan has to go to the theater to be entertained, but the radio fan has his entertainment brought right home to him. So I figured radio was my field." In April, Trendle and his associate, John H. King bought Detroit's station WXYZ.

At the time WXYZ was losing seven hundred dollars a week---a situation which would have discouraged most prospective buyers—but Trendle had definite ideas. When you wanted to fill your theater, you ran a serial and got the kids. What sort of a serial? Any showman could give you the answer to that one---a western. As it happened, Mr. Trendle had on file some correspondence from a young free-lance writer in Buffalo who-with a wife and a youngster and another on the way—was seeking a steady connection. In that correspondence, Fran Striker---now widely known as the author of "The

Lone Ranger" had given just one thought that truly interested Trendle. He had heard from a pioneer-uncle who had tended bar in the early mining days of Denver many tales of the early West. These tales, he wrote could be woven into a splendid radio serial that would have a wide juvenile appeal. These thoughts being identical with those held by Trendle, a deal was made and the youthful Striker set out to make the Ranger come true.

In the Spring of 1932, the Lone Ranger first mounted his famous Silver and started down the rocky, and often ambushed trail to the heart of juvenile America. But the rocky riding was only in the scripts. The Ranger was a success from the start. There was no reason why it shouldn't be, based as it was upon the tried formula of Robin Hood translated in the near at home atmosphere of the early West.

Shirley Temple has often admitted that "The Lone Ranger" is her favorite radio show. Mrs. Roosevelt, wife of the president, wrote in her column; "The other evening I offered to read aloud to Buzz until bedtime, but there is a program on the air called "The Lone Ranger" which seems to be entirely satisfactory."

Before a program is taken to the studio, Fran Striker tries it out on his two sons, eight and six years of age. The two year old has not met the Ranger. From these two he learns whether interest has been sustained, while Mrs. Striker gives her views. Striker, thirty-five, tall, with deep grayish brown eyes and brown hair watches his mail carefully for ideas and criticisms. All the mail addressed to Graser goes to Striker. Graser is so anonymous that his neighbors don't know who he is. Fran Striker writes the scripts with the aid of two assistants. He receives \$10,000 a year for his labors. Graser get \$150 a week as the Lone Ranger. In addition Striker writes "The Green Hornet" and "Ned Jordan, Secret Agent."

In Baltimore, a hundred thousand kids and plenty of adults in ten gallon hats paraded downtown streets when the Lone Ranger made his debut on WBAL. In San Francisco an aged couple speeding through the Broadway tunnel were haled into court, where they told the judge there was no radio reception in the tunnel and it was time for "The Lone Ranger." The case was dismissed. The fact remains that the Lone Ranger is important both as an industry and as a legend which, as imperishably as Robin Hood, may become radio's first contribution to that Americana which includes Paul Bunyon, John Henry, Mike Fink, and Casey Jones.

Editor's note: Earle Graser died in a car accident in 1941. Brace Beemer assumed the voice of the Ranger, and in my opinion he was beyond reproach as far as I'm concerned. Years later Fran Striker met an untimely death as a result of a car accident too.



Fran Striker

# **SHOWDOWN**

Cowboy Gene Autry returns to radio for Wrigley Sunday night

By Evans Plummer



Radio cowboy No.1 Gene Autry returns to the air with his new show this Sunday (CBS) Above Gene is seen with Frances Langford



30 YEARS OF "KNOW-HOW" IN RADIONICS EXCLUSIVELY ZENITH RADIO CORPORATION, CHICAGO 39, ILLINOIS

Hollywood: Gene Autry, Young America's favorite celluloid cowboy, returns to radio. the first medium of his expression, on Saturday, January 7, when "Gene Autry's Ranch" becomes a regular weekly program of the Wrigley gum company. Cowboy Gene's musical western broadcast will replace the "Gateway to Hollwood" screen-talent guest series at the same time over CBS but with an added number of stations. It was via radio in Texas, Oklahoma and Chicago (WLS) that Autry first bid for fame as "Oklahoma's Yodeling Cowboy." And it was in Chicago that this writer first met the wholesome popular appeal of this plain-voiced straight-singing youngster with blue eyes and fair complexion and recognized a certain simple something in Autry's character that betided fame and fortune. That something clicked on the screen too, via Republic Pictures, and now radio reclaims its hostage. The new series does not mean that Autry will quit the screen, however, but merely that he will broadcast weekly too.

### ARTICLES WANTED!

I'm talking to you sweetheart



### **Premiums**

Premiums were a major source of income for radio shows. Jack Armstrong sold over six million "torpedo flashlights. Captain Midnight had a

Codeagraph badge and secret manual. There were many others including many from "The Lone Ranger" including silver bullets, compasses ,masks, rings, and ball point pens and belts like the one below. I spent many a dime on these.



### Preview of Next Month:

It was a sad day on 2/3 1959 "The Day the Music Died." It was equally sad on 4/8/1941. That was the day the Lone Ranger died. Below is a brief captain. Next month I will follow up with a detailed article on a hero of early radio.

# Boys, Girls-Here Is Sad News The Lone Ranger Is Dead!

FARMINGTON, Mich - Earl Grasser, 32, the "lone ranger" of the radio series, was killed Tuesday in an automobile accident near his home.

Grasser's car struck the rear of a parked truck. Sheriff's officers believed he may have fallen asleep while driving

Officials of radio station WXYZ in Detroit, where the Lone Ranger series originates, said Brace Bee-mer, the original "ranger" and present narrator of the stories, would take Grasser's place.

The Lone Ranger has been running for nine years, and Grasser held the title role for eight. He was married and the father of a one-year-old girl



### Reminiscing:

Below are some correspondence from Air Check of January 1997. If you have a few memories, why not pass them along.

### No more cereal

Things that were entirely unimportant or important to Mom took on real significance. I can still hear "No, you can't get more cereal. You baven't ealen all of what you got before." Before meant the cereal box with the box top an 10 cents that were necessary to get the Whistling Ring from Tom Mix.)

### The Red Ryder Code-a-graph Incident.

My sister was, and is, very dear to me. However, it is still hard to forgive her for the Red Ryder Code-a-graph incident. You must understand that radio premiums had a definite cycle. They were used for a time and then became passé. I finally was cleared by mom to get the Code-a-graph, and waited and waited for it to come in the mail.

Our house didn't have mail delivery, so we had a box at the Post Office. When would that darn thing come? Every day, I would check our mail after school, with no luck.

Finally, I opened the box, and there was the magic package. My hands trembled as I opened it. As I recall, the Code-a-graph was made of cardboard. During WW II, we learned that metal articles were in short supply because of war production. No problem. I would assemble it at home, and rushed there with anticipation!

One other problem: I ordered my prize so late that Red Ryder and his sidekick, Little Beaver, were just about ready to start offering a new code-a-graph. Tonight would be the last night that my code-a-graph would be good. After this, a new one would be used with new codes! At home I assembled my prize and was ready.

### Engagement vs Red Ryder

Sometimes, the world of adults intrudes on the kid world. My sister had just been engaged and planned to announce it to the world with a party at our house. Little brothers weren't wanted or needed, and of course the feeling was mutual. Disaster struck. We had a console GE. I was informed of two things: I was not allowed away from my room during the party to listen to Red Ryder. And, the radio would not be taken upstairs to my room.

THE UNSEEN AUDIENCE By Webster 4/26/50 I really think that the theme from Dragnet is an appropriate ending to this little essay.

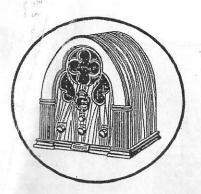
## The Old Time Radio Club

THOMAS R CHERRE 144 FONTAINE DR BUFFALO NY 14215-2038

BUFFALO NY 142

16 SEP 2009.





# FIRST CLASS MAIL

JIM BESHIRES (C) 123 DAVIDSON SAVANNAH, GA 31419

31419+3013

1. Here Helenler Miles Hellen Heller Heller Heller Fords out Fron with the up and coming! Queenly Interiors Ford has a V-8 and a Six