

RADIO HERO

NO. 2, 1963 * 50 CENTS



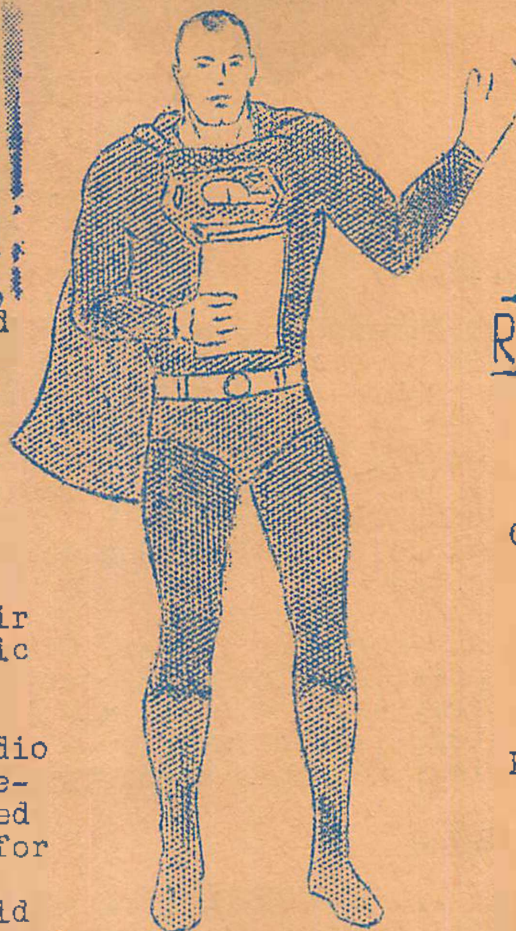
SCIENCE FICTION
HEROES EDITION

Don Glut: SUPERMAN
Redd Boggs: BUCK ROGERS
Ron Haydock: SPACE CADET
Jim Harmon: I LOVE A MYSTERY
plus: TOM MIX

Is radio coming back? We would almost be tempted into the wishful thinking that it is. After all, radio reached its absolute bottom in Nov. 1962 with the cancellation of the last network shows, Dollar, Suspense. Now, in some places there are re-runs of The Shadow, Sherlock Holmes, other crime series, and the new Stereo Drama. If radio can at least be preserved from complete evaporation, I'd be pleased. ... My reaction to the failure of major broadcasting networks like CBS and NBC to do absolutely nothing in the way of radio is one of complete disappointment. The BBC and CBC with hardly a trace of the money these possess have continued their radio drama as a public service. ("Public service" -- what the FCC licenses all radio stations for.) ... One company, General Electric, is doing more for radio than any network. Others could do something. General Mills so long associated with Jack Armstrong could revive Jack for perhaps one half hour as a special for some holiday. Widely heralded, it could gain a tremendous audience. Ralston could do the same with Tom Mix, Lux with its Radio Theatre. ... Probably the general public can never be lured away from the One-Eyed Monster for long, but discriminating and nostalgic audiences are hungry for dramatic radio. ... Size of listenership aside, responsibility on the part of stations and networks should put some drama on radio. ... When I hear of the BBC's radio Sunday Night Theatre, Wed. Night Theatre, Goon Show, etc., etc., I am not too impressed with the commercials boosting commercials on profit-motivated broadcasting over government operated public service broadcasting.

NEXT TIME: Richard Kyle on Jack Armstrong, more on The Shadow by Bill Blackbeard, and other stuff.

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NUMBER
2
1963

RADIOHERO

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COVER:

Masthead by Richard Kyle; illustration
by Jim Moriarity:
Buck passes the Microphone to Superman"

AIR MAIL

CASEY BRENNAN, 4238 Bricker Rd., Avoca, Michigan:

Dear Jim: Please send me RADIOHERO No. 1 ... A fanzine about the golden age of radio sounds like something I'd really be interested in! Is there such a thing as "radiocollecting"? If so, what would you collect -- would there be any of the original radio scripts left?? Do YOU have any for sale or trade?? Please answer if you do!!! If there are any "radiocollectors" I'd certainly like to get in touch with them!!! By the way, I always enjoy your contributions to FANTASTIC MONSTERS! -- I'VE NEVER missed an issue!!! (-30-)

Thanks for your letter, Casey!!! No, I HAVEN'T any scripts to offer!!! There ARE scripts reproduced in various books of yesteryear! I'd certainly like to get "in touch" with some radiocollectors myself -- particularly ones who want to collect fanzines about radio!!!

ROBERT BLOCH

Dear Jim: ... RADIOHERO arrived, and despite your editorial disclaimer, I found it fascinating. My only objection is to false labelling -- the non-sf fanzine which is presented in sf guise. No reason why there shouldn't be radio fanzines, TV fanzines, movie fanzinees, folk-music fanzines, pornography fanzines -- as long as they're billed as such.

Think this is an excellent job, and am glad, of course, to see Boggs has joined forces. Will be interested in the general reaction -- depends, I imagine, on the mailing-list you've assembled. Fans under 25 may be baffled, by and large. They've never head of CHANDU THE MAGICIAN, WITCH'S TALES, INNER SANCTUM, THE HERMIT'S CAVE, or MR TRACE, LOSER OF KEEN PERSONS. But that's show biz.

Show biz is occupying me full blast these days -- the little mystery quiz panel show is developing ... with Groucho Marx on the panel. Meanwhile, I got a call from William Castle, asking me to do his next Columbia release -- a tender little vignette called STRAITJACKET. ... I found the basic story concept most exciting and after agreeing to the deal was even more pleased by Castle himself. ... He is letting me develop the script as a genuine psychological shocker, avoiding the chocolate syrup and some of the vulgarity which I'd deplored, and I find him stimulating to work with ... It's hard work but satisfying ... (-30-)

So that's what the author of radio's STAY TUNED FOR TERROR is up to. But all of us out here in Radioland know what you should be doing, Robert. Right, gang?

REVEREND ROBERT E. NEILY, 1720 Hester Ave., San Jose 28, Calif.:

Dear Jim: ... The most obvious fact that our dear old friend Radio is not dead is that whenever I'm in a gathering of church people (which has come together primarily for social and not religious purposes) and there's a lag in the conversation, I somehow seem to be able to

RADIO'S



MIGHTIEST

HERO

by
DON GLUT

"LOOK—UP IN THE SKY!

IT'S A BIRD—IT'S A PLANE!

IT'S SU - UUU - PERMAN!"

Many years ago—eons, it seems—eager kids, and even a great many oldsters, cringed to their radio sets, anxiously awaiting the latest installment of the hero of heroes, the Man of Steel—Superman. Here, over the Mutual Broadcasting System, ages before the George Reeves tele-series, the two Kirk Alyn serials, the armed forces edition and hard-cover novel of the DC hero, yes, even previous to the Paramount color animated cartoons, and believe it or not, before Superman was featured in his own magazine, the Man of Tomorrow starred in his own short fifteen minute program. While other colorful heroes from the realm of the comic books skurished across the air waves, like Blackhawk and the Blue Beetle, Superman reigned supreme, his action-packed serialized adventures being sandwiched in between House of Mystery and Captain Midnight.

The versatile actor behind the powerful voice of the man from the planet Krypton was none other than Bud Collyer, popular television master of ceremonies of more recent years. While adding to his radio merits on such programs as The Billie Burke Show and as Renfrew of the Mounted, Collyer was idolized by millions as the voice of the "strange visitor from another planet".

On The Adventures of Superman, Collyer—in a manner quite similarly duplicated by actor Kirk Alyn in the Columbia Pictures cliffhangers of 1948 and 1950—was adept in the utilization of two separate and distinct voices: deep and powerful for Superman; higher and softer for Clark Kent, the Daily Planet newspaper reporter. To most fans—myself included—Superman and his alter-ego actually sounded the way we expected them to, for by looking at an early issue of Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster's Superman Quarterly comic magazine, before listening to the radio broadcasts, we had in our impressionable minds, an inclination as to how the duo would sound. And with Bud Collyer's vivid (and memorable) impersonation of the two roles, we fans were perfectly pleased.

With this fond remembrance of the original Superman-Kent voice combination, the Kirk Alyn and George Reeves versions were somewhat disappointing, at least with regards to voice quality. Reeves, in fact, used only one voice in his role as the Mighty Man.

So it was that the selection of the mustached Clayton "Bud" Collyer for the part was possibly one of the best things that ever happened to the Man of Steel. No one else could have brought Superman to his first non-comic life so adequately. Paramount, in 1941, in keeping in continuity with the ever-popular radio show, commissioned Collyer to dub in his famous voice for a number of the color cartoons that proved to be such great hits. Incidentally, the theme music in the cartoons was exactly the same as that heard over the air. And in some of the radio shows, the end music and announcing was identical to that used on the beginning.

The show, which had its origin in 1938 and which lasted until 1952, was, for most of its life, a fifteen minute masterpiece, running Monday through Friday, and sponsored (in most localities) by Kellogg's Cereals. However, towards the remaining years of the program, and with the "new" interest in half-hour television shows, The Adventures of Superman—to compete with the televersion of the Steel man, went to thirty minutes. In this version, which ran only three days per week, Collyer departed from the role, returning only after the show moved to a weekly schedule, Saturday, in its final half-hour slot. With the first lengthened show, the program began to slightly lose in popularity. The reasons for this are quite apparent: Bud Collyer had left, and the stories were merely re-broadcasts, condensed, of the previously aired radio serials. But the show was nevertheless highly rated.

Superman, as in the comics and films, also had his usual brood of associates on the radio. Lois Lane was as inquisitive as ever in the voice of Joan Alexander—who is now Mrs Charles Sinclair. Jimmy Olsen, Superman's young pal, had several different voices during the run of the show. One, Mitch Evans, later went on to become a popular actor on Captain Video. With this cast, along with Superman Collyer, who admits that this was his favorite radio role, the show just could not fail.

But now the problem arose of who would do the announcing. Superman was special; therefore, a worthy M.C. would likewise have to be special. No ordinary person who sounded like every other announcer would be sufficient. Finally, a selection was made—Jackson Beck, a person whose voice was as outstanding as black against white. Beck injected that vital, forceful bit of energy that was so important in an action-laden show as this; and, incidentally, is also remembered for his lively narration of a number of army training films. Beck himself portrayed a famous radio detective, Philo Vance, and practised his dialect as The Cisco Kid.

A great asset to the programs—as with all radio greats—was the fact that you were unable to see what was going on. Unlike the phoney effects which abounded in the movie and TV versions, the radio show offered more to the listener. The person on the other end of the set had an advantage that the viewer lacks—imagination! It was far easier and much more realistic to picture in your mind Superman leaping through the air, not having to worry about accidentally discovering the many "secrets" behind the fake special effects. This, then, gave even more reason why the radio program far surpassed anything which was later done in the visual line of giving "life" to the Man of Steel.

An interesting thing to note is that here on the radio show is where Kryptonite was first introduced, even previous to its mention in the comic books. It was described as a small, green rock. And the only existing chunk if it was found on Earth. For this reason, crooks could (and did) break off bits of the unique stone, since the unique mineral was to be found nowhere else. Adding to the vivid description of the substance, actual distances were revealed: how close Superman had to be to the rock before he weakened, before he fell, before he lost consciousness, before he...well, he never actually got that close.

Unlike the Kryptonite of the comics, it could harm ordinary earthlings. Superman once cautioned Jimmy Olsen that if he would hold the green mineral for a few seconds, it would, somewhat like dry ice, burn in his hands. Therefore, extreme care was required in handling the stuff. Readers of the comic were disappointed when, later on, Kryptonite was "first" introduced. Evidently the strip writer must have heard the radio show told of a fragment from the planet Krypton with the power to weaken its only survivor, but he neglected to get all the details. This is probably why the rock was colored red in the first comic book version of Kryptonite.

While today Superman usually whips up various inventions and gadgets at will, on radio he had no time for this sort of thing. Instead, he would consult the aid of a great scientist of the time, telling him what he needed. It was in this way that, during the stretched-out Kryptonite tale, Superman consulted the aid of a prominent scientist for the construction of an anti-Kryptonite device to be worn on his (Superman's) wrist. Weeks later, however, with the device's completion, Superman found it too cumbersome for wrist-wearing and transported it to his belt instead.

Then, on Friday, March 2, 1945, it happened! Possibly one of the most memorable events in the career of Superman!

Jackson Beck had just finished doing a Kellogg's Pop commercial in which Dan McCulla was discussing a variety of free airplane models included in the cereal boxes. Then Beck's memorable words rang out as we sat glued to our radio sets:

"And NOW for the ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN!"

"Sensing a story in a mysterious note addressed to Superman, Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen rented a boat and rowed out to North Bay, where they found an unconscious boy in a rowboat. On their way back to shore with the boy, they were run down by a large speedboat and were near drowning when Superman appeared and rescued them. At a doctor's house, the boy revived and identified himself as Dick Grayson. He said he had sent the note to Superman and was in great trouble, but refused to discuss the matter with anyone but the Man of Steel. Clark Kent told Dick to his apartment, where he left for a moment, and then appeared as Superman. He told Dick that he had seen the cape beneath his coat, and the red leather vest with the letter "R" on it, and recognized him as Robin, companion of the famous Batman! The boy admitted his identity and pleaded for help."

Yes, it was here that the Superman-Batman team originated, exactly seven years before the duo first met in the comic book story "The Mightiest Team on Earth" in Superman #76. And, oddly

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enough, the actor who portrayed Batman was none other than radio favorite Bret Morrison—most famous for his role of The Shadow! (At other times, Richard Colmar—Boston Blackie—and Don MacLaughlin—David Harding...Counterspy—assumed the bat uniform—EDITOR)

To get on with the story; Robin, the Boy Wonder, reveals to Superman that Batman is missing! The Gotham City Goliath had told the youth that he was about to solve the biggest case of his career, and that Robin should meet him at a cottage at King's Point. But the cloaked sleuth failed to return. A group of thugs, one mentioning the name "Zultan", attacked Robin. However, since Batman had skilled the boy in the art of judo, Robin easily subdued the gunmen and escaped in a rowboat. After regaining consciousness, the armed crook pursued him, seeking him out with a searchlight and shooting at him. The bullet grazed the boy's head. That was when Lois and Jimmy had discovered him.

Superman promises to help Robin, foretelling him of the arrival of Clark Kent. The Man of Steel then leaps out of the window. His immortal interjection, now almost forgotten save for radio fans, echoes and fades: "Up! Up! And away..."

Later, Kent, after locating the only Zultan in the telephone directory, teams up with Dick Grayson, the two shortly arriving at Zultan's Wax Museum. Once in the dark building, which is illuminated only by a nearby street lamp, Kent notices something strange about the wax figures—that there is something vaguely familiar about each one. Then, startled, Robin points to something uncanny. Clark Kent's eyes follow his finger and he too gasps, for there is the still, life-size statue of Batman!

"What can this mean?!" shouts Beck. "There's a startling surprise in store for Superman on Monday! Don't miss it!"

Of course, it was really Batman, reentered dormant by the nefarious Zultan, and the caped crimefighter is eventually rescued by Superman and Robin.

Although many fans of the TV series are unaware of the fact that the show borrowed stories from Superman and Batman comics, few know that at least one was re-done from the radio broadcast. This was the adventure of "The Stolen Costume", in which a fleeing criminal accidentally stumbles into Kent's apartment, clumsily bumping into a concealed button on the wall. Hearing a strange sliding sound, he turns sharply, only to discover that he has opened a secret closet, which contains Superman's costume! Kent, upon learning that his costume has been stolen, seeks the aid of a private detective, telling him that he lost "something". Of course, Kent almost reveals his identity in searching out the famed red and blue super-suit, but eventually is successful. Ironically, the private eye on both the radio and TV show was the same actor—Frank Jenks.

Superman, though, did have other costumes, which he made synthetically himself. This fact was clearly revealed on radio when the Man of Steel somehow damaged his original outfit and needed another.

The Adventures of Superman was noted for its revelations of small details. Here are a few examples of minute facts given on the

air:

Superman's red cape was described as being "shiny". Age was another factor. At least say, Perry White's age was given as sixty-two. Robin was revealed as fourteen. That makes him about...sixteen? Even facts about the boy's mother and home life were occasionally made known. Superman himself gave a number of detailed pointers to Batman concerning ways of keeping a secret identity secret. One interesting means was that Kent wrote with his right hand, while the Man of Steel used his left. Another example was that Batman and Superman, upon due collaboration, decided not to reveal Kent's dual role to Robin, just yet. He was, in fact, too young to be trusted with such an important secret.

With the enormous success of the show, the character was exploited to the hilt. Two of the most remaining items of interest concerning the show were the musical phonograph records, featuring the original radio cast. Everyone sang in these—Lois, the crooks, Kent, even Superman. Outside of the fact that the original cast was maintained, these childish discs, disliked by even the youngest fans, were in no way representative of the famed show. The first, Superman and the Flying Train, was a songful story of two crooks who have placed a bomb on a bridge, hoping that it will blow up a portion of the train in which they are riding to commit a gold shipment robbery. Superman though, is present and flies the entire train over the structure. This, of course, was ridiculous, since the record was made in the days when Superman could only leap an eighth of a mile and not fly. But Lois Lane, as always, manages to get herself captured by the crooks. Superman is helpless; one is holding a gun on her. In desperation, he uncouples the car, sending it back toward the bridge. In order to save themselves, the crooks let Lois go. Then Superman darts out and stops the car. Upon completion of this gallant deed, he returns to the bridge, lifting the "untouchable" bomb with powerful magnets, allowing the explosion to take place high in the air.

In 1947 this was followed by another trite recording—Superman and the Magic Ring. A young boy, disheartened because of a bent ring he has received in his popcorn box, is discovered crying by Clark Kent. Feeling compassion for the youth, Kent convinces him that it is a wishing ring. Superman then "makes the boy's wish come true" by obtaining a small dog from the city pound. Later, however, news of the ring reaches two local toughs, Steve and Chuck, who steal it from the child. When they ask to be "rolling in dough", Superman, in order to teach them a lesson, buries them in a huge wad of bread dough. Then, in answering another wish, empties a pile of shells and beads (wampum) on them, causing them to discard the ring.

Other articles available included a set of color Superman cut-outs which came with boxes of Kellogg's Pep. And let us not forget those wonderful T-shirts with the big "S" that we all wanted. These shirts were a pale blue with an over-dark red, but were nevertheless still good fun, proving popular enough to warrant a revival for the TV series also.

The Superman radio program was advertised everywhere; comics, newspapers, the Random House hard cover novel, cereal boxes; and even the posters for the serials Superman and Atom Man vs Superman boasted, "Adapted from the SUPERMAN radio program".

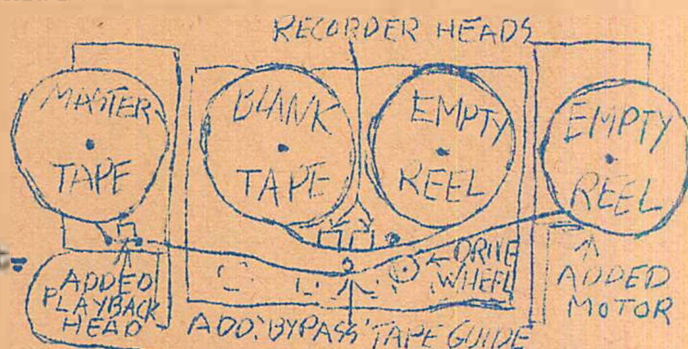
Superman, as in the comics, was his benevolent self on radio.

As in the tradition of Mr District Attorney and Mr Keen...Tracer of Lost Persons, the mighty Man of Steel also did his part in fighting disease by means of at least two different broadcasts by him, telling the world to fight cancer.

So the life of Superman has been a hearty one. He has survived through the years, (although made quite juvenile lately in the recent comic book version) in the serials, cartoons, television; but his true fans remember him as he was in his glory, with the one true great entertainment medium—radio.

\$10 TAPE COPIER

Duplicating tapes of your own for trade seems to be a common thing with all tape recorder owners, and especially those fortunate enough to live in an area rebroadcasting The Shadow or the like. Borrowing or renting can be a drag if you can't afford to buy a second recorder.



I chanced across a great idea in the Jan. 1958 Hi Fi Tape Recording -- an article called Tape Copying Attachment by Buford Frye. Basically, the tape copier consists of a platform to the left of your machine's play reel, a platform with another play reel and a separate additional playback head. This head's lead-out wires are plugged into your recorder's input socket by means of a jack. The tape from the platform's play reel feeds through the added head onto your machine where an added tape guide post takes it around the two heads of your machine, and then passes this tape through the space between the rubber wheel and the capstan shaft. When you have a tape on your machine threaded normally the additional tape from the platform reel will pass over the normally threaded tape, between that tape and the rubber wheel.

Postponing taking up the extra tape, you can see with your machine on record, the additional tape will be pulled along with the recording tape, past the extra playback head which feeds a signal into the input of your machine, which records on your machine's normally threaded tape. Evidently, the playback head itself presents a strong enough signal to record -- at least with your machine's volume up high -- without preamplification (tubes & stuff). The electronically minded might add "pre-amp" but it seems on most machines it is not absolutely required.

As to where the extra tape feeds, one solution is simply to let it feed onto the floor. This is less than madness. Most times, you hit the rewind and the stuff rolls up neatly. (Sometimes you have to hit the stop and untangle a knot.) Frye aside, my own suggestion is to fasten both tapes to your recorder's take-up reel so they will interwind. This would only be good for copying tapes less than half a reel -- 600 ft. of standard 1200 ft. Rewinding would have to be done partially by hand.

A right-hand platform take-up reel can be powered by a single-speed phonograph motor (95¢ from Lafayette Radio, 165-80 Liberty Ave., Jamaica 33, N.Y.). The playback head must be bought as a replacement part -- Shure #816 is suggested (about \$8). Shafts for the extra reels can be bought as replacement parts, although those proficient with tools might work out their own construction. The platform can be heavy sheet metal bent L shaped -- preferably screw-clamped to machine.... It's an idea possibly worth hundreds of dollars to you -- one tape recorder manufacturers probably won't encourage.--JH-

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

By JIM HARMON

"The Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters are on the air! And here comes Tom Mix, America's Favorite Cowboy!"

The cry of "Up, Tony -- come on, boy!" vibrated the early superheterodyne speakers in 1933, even as the bounding hooves of the Lone Ranger's great horse Silver echoed across the radio plains.

The voice of the call to Tony was Tom Mix (although, of course, "Tom Mix was impersonated"). As one of the most popular cowboy actors of all time -- in fact one of the most successful movie stars of any kind in film history -- Tom Mix had a famous name. That name was used to sell toys, newspaper comic strips, Big Little Books, and sundries (whatever they are). The name was used to sell a program on the blossoming medium of radio. To my knowledge, Mix himself never appeared on the show, but was always "impersonated" by a variety of actors -- including Russell Thorson (later "Jack Packard" in the New York series of I Love a Mystery) and finally by Curley Bradley, who grew popular enough to earn his own cowboy songfest show and eventually Curley Bradley -- The Singing Marshal, an adventure series with the identical actor/character cast from Tom Mix and his Ralston Straight Shooters with the names changed to protect the snitchers.



Top: The real Tom Mix;
Middle: Curley Bradley;
Below: Russell Thorson.



Movie star Mix was a fascinating man off-screen. I have at times chronicled some of his exploits as a two-gun marshal, sheriff, and Texas Ranger at the turn of the century, as well as his career as a soldier of fortune in the Spanish-American War, Boxer Rebellion, Boer War, and more. His movies (often written and directed by himself) established a new American artform, the Western movie. For years, his reputation has been overshadowed by that of William S. Hart who started in movies years after Mix and whose moody, actionless Westerns appealed most to arty film critics. But on a recent documentary on the Western film presented on TV's Twentieth Century, Mix was admitted to be "the greatest western hero of all time". But while the real Tom Mix was the inspiration without which the Tom Mix radio series would have lost much of its appeal, the real Tom Mix was not the radio Tom Mix. Not even the death of the real Mix at age 69 in an auto accident while traveling with his 1940 season circus stopped the radio exploits of Tom Mix. A simple announcement that "the spirit of Tom Mix lives on forever" prefaced the Monday installment following the fatal Sunday. Perhaps only Father Flanagan of Boys' Town or Commissioner Lewis J. Valentine on Gangbusters was so consistently "impersonated" on radio. From 1933 to 1940, the Tom Mix program dealt with a living American, but thereafter for another ten years it dramatized a folk hero.

This article then is properly concerned with radio hero Tom Mix, a companion of the airwaves to The Lone Ranger, Red Ryder, Gene Autry, Tennessee Jed, Lightnin' Jim, and the other cowboys that rode radio trails -- even slightly overlapping the early episodes of Gunsmoke, the only successful "adult" Western ever on radio.

Red, Jed, Jim and the boys were generally presented as being just plain folks -- drawling, kick-in-the-dust cowpokes. Gene sang and kicked dust. The Lone Ranger was of course a towering figure of legend, more than human. Tom Mix lay somewhere between. He was an educated man, although there were still traces of Western drawl in his speech, unlike the masked rider of the plains' elevated diction. He was a contemporary figure, owner of a mid-Twentieth Century ranch, the TM Bar. And he had contemporary problems -- financial problems, family problems. The amount of physical danger and perilous menace he regularly faced may have been great -- but then, although they didn't know it, the "Straight Shooters" listening to Tom Mix would have to go through a World War that would make the dangers of phantom cattle rustlers seem normal and homelike.

Tom's "home" -- objectively the program format -- was nearly perfect for an afternoon kid show. It was so perfect it was cheerfully copied by such programs as Bobby Benson and his H-O Rangers (in the 'thirties -- later, his B-Bar-B riders) and by Sky King (who added an airplane to the successful Mix-ture). The TM Bar had its boss, the invincible hero, the father symbol, Tom Mix. And it had the Old Hand (perhaps a grandfather symbol?) the Old Wrangler, who later seemed to become Sheriff Mike Shaw. There were also incidental comic reliefs -- Wash, the Negro cook, a sympathetic character but one that would get trouble from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People today. There was even a drawling, toe-digging cowhand, Pecos Williams, who sung songs. This part was played by Curley Bradley circa 1940 who drawled less when he assumed the title role about 1944.

It's been said to me by a number of people that they enjoyed listening to Tom Mix but that they could not bring to mind a single storyline, that it tended to blur into one pleasant haze of action-filled ranch life. Not so with me -- I remember many episodes and plot threads. A few of them I will try to fix in my memory and perhaps as a record of some use.

We got our first radio in 1939 when electricity first came to our home (within the city limits but in the then semi-rural town of Mount Carmel, Illinois). I dimly recall that first day with the big Crosley floor model in front of an unused, locked door, the braided extension cord hung up over the wall-mounted fire extinguisher (I guess standard equipment for homes back then). My father was quietly, rather sternly helping handyman Mr. Straus install the electric wiring while my mother with some enthusiasm was dial-twisting the radio.

That very first day, I believe, I heard Jack Armstrong and Tom Mix. They did not seem completely unfamiliar, I recall, so I must have heard about them from kids I knew or actually heard them before at a friend or maybe with my cousin, Mary, at my Aunt Zelma's.

For some time my favorite show was Dick Tracy, and I admired the All-American Boy, Jack Armstrong, as well as the All-American Girl (Little Orphan Annie), and Captain Midnight, Don Winslow, Buck Rogers, et al. But soon, Tom Mix became my favorite show -- because, I think, I learned Tom Mix was real. (I was too young to have ever seen him in a movie.)

The most vivid single episodes I remember were the time Pecos rides Tom's Wonder Horse, Tony, through a forest fire to bring a fresh propellor (strapped to the saddle) to Tom and the pilot of his plane trapped by the ring of flames in an aerial-screwless craft (see RADIOHERO #1) and another time when Tom is about to put a silver bullet (won at a rodeo, not from the Lone Ranger) through the head of Tony, whose leg has been broken. After Tom's strained good-bye, Jane and Wrangler rush up to say they have just heard on the radio during a horse race 'cast of a famous doctor who restored the broken leg of a racer so that he might once again pound the turf. With this hope, Tom holds the fatal shot.

A very believable plotline of about 1939 concerned Tom Mix' potential loss of his ranch, the TM Bar, through financial difficulties. (Evidently, Tom had spent too much time solving mysteries, catching rustlers, to run his ranch properly.) His ward, Jane, had a private income from a gold mine but he refused to touch her money. Because of this refusal, it became necessary for Tom to tell Jane what she did not know -- that he was only her guardian, not her real father. Then, the TM Bar was sold at auction.

In the midst of the tragic sale, I remember a humorous incident where Wrangler tried to convince Amos Q. Snood, the cantankerous owner of Dobie's Cozy Rest Hotel who always threatened to "have the law" on everybody, that a coo-coo clock was one of Tom's most loved possessions. Wrangler asked Snood not to bid on the item, well aware that the nasty Scrooge-type would bid up the worthless item to a tidy sum.

Actually, it turned out one man bought everything offered for sale at the TM Bar. And that man turned out to be Jane's lawyer, using her money, who turned everything back to Tom.

Dobie seemed to be 50 years behind the rest of the West. It went through a period during which the first railroad was built into the territory. Tom Mix helped this symbol of progress, of course, against a dangerous (and rather foolhardy) band of crooks who tried to disrail trains by lying themselves between the tracks!

There was even a landrush (similar to Oklahoma's decades before) in 1940. As a matter of fact, Tom Mix, radio hero, was posied to give the shot to lead off this mad rush of wagons, horses, and men the Friday before the real Tom Mix, movie cowboy, was killed. Legends being immortal, Tom Mix, radio hero, dutifully fired that shot the following Monday.

Another sequence -- the longest ever on the program in my memory -- concerned the efforts of the mysterious "Big Boss with his men like Bull Haggity trying to take over Dobie. His motive was found in the words "Black Gold" but nobody was able to figure out that this meant oil for some time.

But after the Big Boss was exposed the program went off the air for the summer and when it returned there was a new format, one involving very short mystery stories running a week or so only. The first of these concerned an "invisible man" who Tom exposed as merely using ventriloquism. The ventriloquist further exposed himself as a fake to Tom when he claimed to have hunted "lions and tigers in Africa" (there being no tigers there).

Tom's movie career was frequently alluded to and figured in several stories. Once a movie wind machine was used to wipe out the tracks of rustled cattle. Another time a spiderweb machine was used to falsely age a house to divert suspicion. Even one of Tom's doubles showed up once, turned crooked to give him a lot of trouble.

One of the more fantastic mysteries I don't personally recall but it was mentioned in the Brock Brower article run in Esquire and used as a preface for A Pictorial History of Radio by Irving Settel, Citadel 1960.

... On Monday Tom Mix territory was suddenly invaded by a giant, who went around flattening whole towns. Hardly a problem for a cowpuncher, but it was wartime by now, and Tom Mix put his mind to it. By Wednesday it was clear bullets would not destroy this monster, but on Thursday Tom happened to notice the giant sitting on top of a building and thought it strange that the building didn't collapse under all that avoirdupois. On Friday we knew. The giant was nothing but a puppet operated from Japanese aircraft, which dropped bombs to flatten towns. The Straight Shooters cut the strings on this effort to demoralize America, and the Nips went down in flames. All the serials were fighting the Japanese by this time -- even the Westerns...

Actually, around the time of this story mentioned by Brower the Tom Mix program went off the air, and in the series of free 32 page

comic books offered by Ralston cerials Tom Mix became a commando to fight the Japanese as a somewhat unorthodox G.I.

There was an interesting equence on radio introducing the premium comic books. By the familiar build-up I realized this was going to be a radio premium offer from Ralston. Various rings had been offered including one you looked into to see a magnified picture of Tom Mix and Tony, a Horseshoe nail ring (a horseshoe nail you bent to fit your finger back in the very early 'thirties), a Tom Mix signature ring, a toy telegraph set (tied in with the railroad building episode), a bullet-shaped flashlight (and later a three-color one); a compass/magnifying glass gadget, and so on. This "Scrapbook" the Straight Shooters were secretly preparing as a surprise for Tom's birthday obviously was going to be the subject of the next radio offer. But the games Jane had devised, the magic tricks of Wash, did not sound very fascinating, but then Pecos shyly contributed some "chicken tracks" he had drawn -- comic strips. The first Tom Mix Comics was offered for two Ralston box-tops in 1940.

Of course, since 1933, Sunday newspaper comics of Tom Mix had appeared in order to sell premiums (and Ralston), but now the premiums were the comics.

I still have my set of these comic books and from time to time, thanks to Bill Thalling and Dick Lupoff, I am getting certain numbers in much more complete condition, evidently handled by gentler kids than I was. A glance at these comics which were typical of the stories and dialouge of the radio program seems in order.

Tom Mix in Ghost Canyon is the first story in Tom Mix Comics Book 1. Two riders pull up at the TM Bar corral and tell Tom, Wrangler and Jane of rustled cattle being driven through Ghost Canyon, a haunted pass according to rumor. "No one's ever come back from thar!" opines one rider. "I have! --" says Tom Mix. "Scouted it years ago! No ghosts there -- nor anywhere else!" Tom and Wrangler decide to follow the stolen steers through the pass. "Oh -- please let me come too!" Jane pleads. "Straight Shooters don't believe in ghosts either!" Deciding Jane will be safer with them, the Straight Shooters ride off. Jane asked the colored cook Was if he isn't glad to be going along. "Who-o-o m-me? Ah's holdin' mah rabbit's foot so tight -- it am tryin' to hop!" (Wash often displayed great courage and ingenuity in the radio series however.)

Soon the riders have their hats knocked from their heads by something unseen. "Gallop in' horn toads, Tom --" gasps Wrangler "It musta been Ghost Arrows!" This not enough, they see a hoard of transparent Indian riders galloping past the cayon wall, and hear meancing ghostly voices.

Tom soon finds a hidden stockade and gets over the high fence by roping the top of "a strong limber sapling", and having Tony pull it down, and then with himself on the tree, the rope is cut and Tom Mix veritably flies over the fence to land with both fists in the midst of the rustlers. Drawing guns, Tom says his familiar speech (a tag longer than "Hi-yo Silver") "Reach for the sky! Law breakers always lose -- Straight Shooters always win! It pays to be a Straight Shooter!"

Rustlers captured, Tom explains: "Those 'ghost' arrows were just wires strung across the rocks -- hat high!" Hidden loudspeakers supplied the ghost voices. "Anyway, whoever heard of ancient Indian warriors speaking English?" The giant ghost riders? "That box you saw was just an ordinary motion picture projector! You were just seeing a movie on the canyon wall!"

These comic books continued approximately bimonthly from 1940 to 1942. Book 9 showed a photo of "Editor-writer Stan Schendel" getting kicked in the face by artist Fred Meagher. (Schendel is wearing a catcher's mask.) They are proving the realistic qualities of Tom Mix Comics, establishing that Tom's stunts can actually be done. Schendel worked with Ray Bouvet writing, and Meagher with Bill Allison on the "realistic" illustrations for Tom's various battles with sea serpents, invisible armies, and flying dragons (as well as standard rustlers) through to Book 12 -- the last 3 being called Tom Mix Commandos Comics. (These fabulous comics should not be confused with the absolutely routine western comics issued for some years around 1950 by Fawcett, later by Charleton.)

While Tom Mix was a commando in comics the program was off radio.

Some months ago, I had lunch with Forrest Lewis who used to play Wash as well as Doc Green, Angus McFee (bookstore owner), Snood, Type Sutter (newspaper editor), Ceasar Cheano (gangster) and countless other roles with his multiple voices.

Lewis revealed that he had been out in Hollywood for some time, doing Old Ben, Sky Ranch caretaker on One Man's Family; Michael, an alternate comrade on I love a Mystery who sounded like Peter Lorre and who drank gin and laudnum; and various other roles. Then he heard Tom Mix back on the air in Chicago. Tom was talking with some character and Lewis was trying to decide what this character was supposed to be -- Chinese? -- Swedish? Then Tom said "Listen, Wash..."

Lewis with some proprietary interest in the role he had done for so long wrote ad agency president (and one of the principle shapers of the entire program) Charles Claggett complaining, and was offered a good contract to come back. A solid contract for ten shows a week (including West Coast repeats) for fifty-two weeks a year was too good to resist, so Lewis came back to do Wash and his other roles.

In Chicago, Forrest Lewis worked with Joe "Curley" Bradley who had graduated from his "Pecos" role to Tom Mix himself, with Jane Webb who grew up doing "Jane", and with Leo Curley who played Sheriff Mike Shaw, a small part in the older series blown up to take over the Wrangler slot. (Leo Curley died a few years back.)

Bradley had worked with the real Tom Mix in movies some years before, then had joined the Ranch Boys singing trio. They were hired to sing the Ralston theme, then took acting roles on the show. After assuming the title role, Curley Bradley made numerous personal appearances as "The Tom Mix of Radio". Today, he runs a small radio station somewhere in Nevada. According to information supplied by Bill Thailing, he would be around 50 in 1963.

Sadly, Lewis revealed that if by some miracle Tom Mix could come back on radio, he would not be able to play Wash because due to

NAACP pressure no white man may portray a Negro. Of course, there would still be Doc Green and his countless other roles.

When the Tom Mix program returned to the air about 1944 it was sustaining for some months, then picked up again by Ralston. The show was written by George Lowther, a New York professional who wrote a variety of material -- earlier, he scripted the hardcover novel of Superman, later he wrote live dramas for TV. All in all, he was an interesting and talented writer, more concerned with mystery than western elements. Mycroft Soames, a Sherlock Holmes pastiche turned up as Tom's teacher of detection skills.

The first revival episode had Tom Mix flying back to Dobie, having to fight off an autograph hound on the commercial airliner. He got back to the TM Bar to be approached by Mike Shaw with news of vanishing cattle herds and then was interrupted by a strange Englishman who insisted Winston Churchill was up the fireplace of the TM Bar hearth. (Next episode, we learned Winston was the Englishman's pet monkey, and before the story was over we learned the Briton was an undercover Yank FBI agent, and Tom Mix discovered black marketeers were wiping out cattle tracks with the aforementioned wind machine.)

As the series rolled on, Tom Mix seemed plagued with invisible men who always used some type of trickery, and for years Tom spent more time away from Dobie and the West than he did there. He was even a spy in wartime Tokio.

Around Christmas, he usually met up with some light fantasy where a mysterious character would turn out to be Santa Claus, a guardian angel or somesuch.

One rather science fictionish adventure was called "The Man who Could Work Miracles" including striking people dead on command. Some of his miracles were never explained, but the death-striking turned out to be some kind of sub-sonic or super-sonic death ray.

"The Mystery of the Man who Wasn't There" was seeming fantasy. The Man had the apparent power to come and go through solid walls -- walls searched for secret panels diligently, but these walls turned out to be solid, literally "unshakable". From this unshakable condition, Tom eventually discovered that the Man had actually built the whole wall to slide back on a silent track. Any normal wall would shake to some extent, Tom concluded.

Of course, it was not the ingenious and/or fantastic plots that made Tom Mix so memorable, but the characterizations.

Tom Mix (as scripted by Lowther) was presented as a man of keen mind and indomitable will. One entire chapter concerned Tom Mix fighting a mountain lion with his bare hand and winning -- although he was laid up for weeks afterward. Another time, when he and Mike were tied up in a building about to be demolished by a giant steel ball on a swinging crane and there was no other way to escape, Tom broke his own arm so he could slip free of the ropes.

Sheriff Mike Shaw was particularly well-characterized. He had a long struggle to convert a Western juvenile delinquent who scorned him because he had lost a gunfight with "The Kid" many years before.

But with Mike Shaw fallen by a contemporary bullet and apparently dying, Tom Mix tells the boy that Mike had not lost that gunfight of years before -- that he had only refused to shoot to kill. The young boy, let us hope respecting Mike's ideals rather than his vindicated gun skill, has a tearful reformation scene on what is apparently Mike's deathbed. Of course, next day after announcer Don Gordon has assured us "not to worry" Mike pulls out of it.

Probably the Tom Mix show was the only kid program in which a major character did die. The character was a horse, of course, but horses are major characters in a Western. Tony, Tom's horse, had come close to dying, but Mike's Redskin actually went to the big round-up in the sky. Fatally injured, Redskin was given a tearful good-bye by Mike to the background of the "Redskin Theme". (This was a peice of music and an episode that won a radio award of some sort.) Years later, Mike found and tamed a wild horse that was apparently the reincarnation or son of Redskin and gave him the old name.

Wash was equally as well delineated as Mike -- a humorous character, but not a ridiculed one.

It was Wash, Mike and Tom who carried the show for the last several years. Jimmy, the boy ward, had been written out even before the wartime "vaction" years as going to an Eastern boarding shhool, although he made periodic reappearance even after the revival. Following the come-back, Jane was soon written out as going to Junior College. The disappearance of Pecos and Wrangler was never explained.

One of the characters in the Tom Mix show (for at least one episode) was Babe Ruth. The real Ruth was a fan of such adventure shows as Tom Mix and the Lone Ranger. Going through Chicago, he stopped in and asked Curley Bradley for his autograph. A scene was hastily written in which Babe Ruth's train stopped by Dobie, and Tom and Mike gave the baseball immortal an honorary Bobie sheriff's badge. A few weeks later, Ruth died of cancer.

After some seventeen years, in 1949, there came a change in the program format of the Tom Mix show. Originally, it had been a Mon-Wed-Fri serial of 15 minutes, finally going five days a week. But now TV was a menace and like so many radio kid shows, the program was adopting the complete half-hor story format (like the Lone Ranger), two or three days a week. Tom Mix was going the same way. There was a final, long serial called "The Greatest Mystery of Them All" (it wasn't) and then for the summer there was a series of Curley Bradley singing shows. Finally, in the fall of 1949 Tom Mix went to Mon-Wed-Fri half hour stories. Almost all the kid shows who tried this abrupt switch committed suicide. Captain Midnight lasted only 13 weeks. Tom Mix, at least, went the full season until the summer of 1950.

The first half hour Tom Mix show (with his long established position as U.S. Marshal emphasised and with Mike Shaw now his deputy marshal) has Tom facing his old nemesis, the invisible man. (This one was just a pack of lies told by false witnesses.) Later on, another story pitted him against an invisible rider -- this one a hat and gloves suspended on wires from the saddle of a trained horse who was controlled by saddle-bag walkie-talkie radio instructions.

Again, Mike Shaw was the center of an emotional situation. These

segments constituted a thread of serial in the otherwise complete stories. Still smarting at his failure to achieve re-election as sheriff, Mike Shaw pulled a boner as Tom's deputy and decided he was too old for any law-enforcement job. "Great Guns -- fifty-five isn't old!" Tom avers. (At one point in an earlier story, a friend of Tom's from "twenty years" ago when he was "only eighteen" or so returned -- thus making radio hero Mix's age about 38.) Eventually, Tom seeks out the wandering Mike, and restores him as deputy marshal.

For years, I have tried to locate recordings of the Tom Mix radio show -- as I have located many programs I loved in yesteryear. I've turned up shows with actors Leo Curley, Forrest Lewis, Jane Webb in other roles, singing records by Curley Bradley, but no Tom Mix shows. Neither, at this time, has the Hollywood Museum whose Radio Acquisitions staff (I'm one of them) is diligently searching.

Nor have I located any actual scripts or any reproductions in old anthologies of radio scripts in hard or soft covers.

There is a juvenovel, Tom Mix and the Mystery of the Flaming Warrior by George Lowther which would accurately reflect the radio show, but this I have not been able to track down either.

The closest thing I have to a script of the show is from a Straight Shooter Manual, a radio premium circa 1947, given me by Bob Burns.

This manual, of course, includes the words to the Ralston theme song, first sung by the Ranch Hands Trio, then after 1944 by Curley Bradley alone following the introduction: "The Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters are on the air! And here comes Tom Mix, America's Favorite Cowboy." Then Tom would say "Up, Tony, come on, boy..." and launch into the song (to the tune of When the Bloom is on the Sage):

Eat Hot Ralston every morning,
Boy, that flavor can't be beat
It's a warm-up, build-up breakfast,
Made of golden western wheat,
It's delicious and nutritious,
Gives you Cowboy Energy,
Take a tip from Tom
Go and tell your Mom
Ralston is tops with me!

And then the announcer would say: "The Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters present..." in this case, "The Mystery of the Unseen Killer" which I believe is based on an actual broadcast episode:

It was late summer at the TM Bar Ranch. One evening just as Tom Mix, Sheriff Mike, and Janie were sitting down to supper, the telephone rang. It was Drusilla Drake, the lovely federal agent who had helped Tom and Mike trap Nazi spies during the war.

"Tom -- I'm in Dobie ... and I need your help. Can you and Mike meet me in town right away?"

The booklet goes on to tell of Tom and Mike going to the Dobie Sheriff's office and hearing Drusilla tell of how a number of prominent men at the state capitol receive notes that threaten instant

death unless extortion money is paid to some unseen killer. Some of them refused and they died. ... The story continues:

-- died surrounded by many people, at parties, at their offices, and in railroad stations. One even died in the State's Attorney's office while the attorney was questioning him about the note he had recieved. But no weapon was found. All died of some mysterious poison... without having eaten or drunk it. The only clues were a half-smoked cigarette found near the body of one victim (who did not smoke) ... and a mosquito!

"This feller shore is an Unseen Killer!" said Sheriff Mike. "How can he kill one man in a roomful of people, without any weapon 'cept a cigarette and a mosquito?"

"I think I've got a pretty good idea how he did it," Tom replied, quietly. "The question is -- who? Anybody come down to Dobie on the train with you, Drusilla?"

"Why, yes," said the girl. "When I said I was coming here to consult you -- well, naturally, being the most interested person in the case, the ..."

"Hold it, Drusilla," whispered Tom. "I kind of think we got a visitor."

"Well, well!" It was a hearty voice, "I rather thought I'd find you here, Miss Drake. And this must be the famous Tom Mix -- and Sheriff Mike Shaw, I believe. Well... isn't anyone going to ask me to come in?"

"Sure thing," said Tom slowly. "Come right in. Drusilla, Mike and I were just talkin' about your Unseen Killer. Pull up a chair."

"Thanks a lot. Mind if I smoke? The mosquitoes seem to be unusually bad around this part of the country this year -- especially around those old-fashioned lamps. And I find that a cigarette helps to drive them..."

"DON'T LIGHT THAT CIGARETTE!"

"Now, Mix -- my dear fellow, surely you don't think this cigarette is going to kill me?"

"No," replied Tom, looking at the man steadily, "But I think it just might kill one of us!"

The solution in the back of the manual reveals the murdered men were poisoned by tiny darts, shot through a cigarette by the extortioner. They thought they were stung by mosquitoes. As to the killer -- there was one individual who was close to the victim who died during questioning about the threatening letter he had received -- that man was the State's Attorney himself.

On the very last show, Tom Mix said it was the end of the trail, yet the beginning. "The big burly figure of Mike Shaw will stride across the imagination of many a grown-up child..." Then hoofbeats fading "Tom Mix rides on -- and lives on -- in the heart and imagination of the world -- forever..." They may have been right. -- THE END --



TV'S GUARDIANS OF RADIO SPACEWAYS



By RON HAYDOCK

Radio has been a very generous contributor to that compact-sized home movie screen called Television. In the early days of TV -- that is, in the great days -- it was not at all unusual to tune in and see the visual versions of famous radio quiz games like Quick as a Flash and Can You Top This?, drama and mystery shows like Lux Video Theatre, Lights Out, and Suspense; and, of course, the many soap operas that made the transition to the "new medium": Portia Faces Life, Road of Life, Young Dr. Malone have all been on, and The Guiding Light is still on.

As the world turned, television brought into homes Mr District Attorney (originally with the exact radio cast), Fibber McGee & Molly, Gangbusters, Twenty Questions, and others. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as the case may be), most of these TV adaptations proved to be such memory destroyers and entertainment disasters that shortly after their debuts they were all awarded the proverbial Boot.

But even today there are plans to revive other famous radio series: the classic I Love a Mystery and It Pays to be Ignorant are currently on the Madison Avenue drawing boards, for example. Too, there have been many TV pilot films based on radio programs. The Shadow, Johnny Dollar, and First Nighter are three of the old favorites that never made it into a regular series. At least, not yet.

Radio has been particularly kind to TV in the area of the kid shows with Captain Midnight, Superman, The Lone Ranger, Sky King, Smilin' Ed's Buster Brown Gang, and Sergeant Preston of the Yukon among others. (A 1950 TV Guide mentioned that the Sat. kid show The Happy Time Hour hosted by Uncle Big John and Rosemary was being simulcast on a few Canadian TV stations.) And, of course, almost any kid show that was ever on radio has at one time or another been piloted for TV.

While television is referred to as the "new medium" and radio as the "old, dead medium", and while it's a fact that the New borrowed (and continues to borrow) heavily from the Old, it's also true that Kid Television was respectfully thankful enough to its much-loved parent that it graciously bestowed upon Papa Radio at least four of its own original programs. As they say, turnabout is fair play.

The still-popular quiz game What's my Line? and the Western offering Have Gun, Will Travel both wound up on CBS Radio, the latter

vacating its Sunday night slot only as recently as three years ago. The other two TV "peace offerings" were kid science fiction shows, properly labelled "space operas": Tom Corbett, Space Cadet and Space Patrol.

Undoubtedly the reason Corbett and Patrol were brought to radio from TV in the early '50's was in the hope that ABC would regain the adolescent audience it had lost to the one-eyed monster. Both shows, then, were purposely scheduled on radio so as not to conflict with their airings on television.

ABC originally broadcast Patrol on radio on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:30 -- which was the old Sky King slot. On TV, Patrol patrolled space on Saturday mornings on the network (originally it had been a local West Coast daily strip). When Corbett left its original NBC-TV spot and switched to ABC-TV, the network immediately programmed Tom and his pals in the Patrol radio slot. SP moved over to Saturday mornings and was broadcast following the TV show. In fact, Jack Narz, the show's announcer, always made it a point to tell TV fans at the close of each week's episode that they could thrill to another half-hour adventure of Buzz Corey, Commander-in-chief of the Space Patrol, if they tuned in ABC Radio in another minute or so.

Tom Corbett, the curly-haired space cadet of television, was seen on ABC every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 5:30 and was heard on radio the alternate weekdays at that time. As with SP, the program's announcer -- in this case, Rex Marshall -- advised all the young space cadets in the audience to be sure to listen to Tom's further outer space exploits on radio.

Both shows enjoyed tremendous success on TV, and they were equally enjoyable on radio. The TV and radio casts were, of course, identical, as were the sponsors.

Space Patrol was created by Mike Moser (who died a few years ago) and was, for the most part, written by Lou Huston. Moser's wife Helen, and Lew Spence, directed both the TV and radio series. The show's standard opening -- shouted into an echo chamber by Jack Narz -- was exciting corn accompanied by typical spaceship sound effects:

"SPA-A-ACE PAT-ROL-L-L... high adventure in the wild vast reaches of space ... missions of daring in the name of interplanetary justice... travel into the future with Buzz Corey -- Commander-in-chief of the SPA-A-ACE PAT-ROL-L-L..."

Buzz Corey, described as "The Man of his time -- and the time is the 31st Century", was played by Ed Kemmer, who is still today trying to live down the role. (On a recent TV adventure-soap opera titled Clear Horizon, Kemmer portrayed an astronaut stationed at Cape Canaveral.)

According to an ABC-TV and Radio New Bulletin of 1951, "Buzz Corey -- since his childhood -- had been driven by one dream: to travel through outermost space. His father was a renowned designer of rocket ships, and after graduating with honors from Space Academy, Buzz carried on his father's experiments, produced an indestructible metal which became known as Endurium, and devoted himself not only to exploration but to patrolling space and cracking down on illegal activities of

space pirates, outlaws who hid in unknown regions of the less populated planets."

In short, Buzz became the universally respected Commander-in-Chief of the Space Patrol, and daring spirit devoted to three objectives: keeping space lanes clear, ridding the planets of outlaws, and maintaining peace throughout the universe.

But Buzz didn't battle galactic crime alone. Others involved in his exploits while aboard the space cruiser Terra 1 were Cadet Happy (Lyn Osborn -- who passed on a year or two after Moser); Carol Carlyle, blonde daughter of the Secretary-General of the United Planets and Buzz' girlfriend -- played by Virginia Hewitt; and the Secretary-General himself, portrayed by Norman Jolley (also part-time SP scripter).

The chief space pirate Buzz had to contend with was Prince Baccarratti (Bela Kovacs) and his mad scientist-in-space-crime, the evil genius known only as Malengro (Larry Dobkin). There were, of course, other villains running wild -- Gaff Carter was one -- but these two gave Buzz the most trouble the most often.

In one radio adventure, Baccarratti kidnapped Carol in an effort to force the Secretary-General to hand over the super-secret blueprints for a new space drive. Buzz and Happy managed to save the day -- as well as Carol and the Blueprints -- by ramming their ship into the madman's ship.

Another time, Buzz and Happy trailed Baccarratti to planet Arcturus where they were soon involved in a fight for their life against a couple dozen of the prince's giant robots -- created by Malengro.

Baccarratti ordered Malengro to invent a machine that would make people invisible for one of the last radio shows. Baccarratti, in an aside to the evil scientist, said he was tired of Buzz Corey always on his trail and had decided to once and for all get rid of the Space Patrol commander. Within a few short minutes, Malengro's Invisor was trained on Earth, its rays sweeping down through the clouds, focused on Space Patrol headquarters. As Happy, Carol, and he father watched stunned, Buzz slowly disappeared right before their eyes. After breathless seconds, Happy muttered, "Smokin' rockets!" The commander has disappeared!" and immediately dedicated his life to finding out where in space his chief could have gone to, and tracking down whoever was responsible for the outrage. (Needless to say, Happy succeeded in his quest.)

The show was sponsored by the Ralston company, and many SP premiums were offered in trade for the typical boxtop (from Rice Chex or Wheat Chex) and a few dimes. Available was a SP ray gun just like Buzz used, which shot out a puff of baking soda; an authentic cardboard SP future city; hats and belts; even an exact replica in plastic of the Space-a-phone on the instrument panel of Buzz' ship, the Terra 1. And come to think of it, the whole damned instrument panel was offered too!

To top it all off, Ralston designed and built a life-size Terra 1 spaceship and sent it around the country during their SP promotion campaign. You could walk inside it, sit in it, fool around with the

controls, make believe you were Buzz or Happy or Carol, and in general, have a ball. The ship was actually the Grand Prize in a contest Ralston was sponsoring in connection with the show.

Kellogg's never constructed a model of Tom Corbett's ship, the Polaris, but the company did offer a great many premiums to fans of both the TV and radio show.

"On specially marked boxes of Kellogg's Pep" were cutout figures of all the characters; there were rings to be found in other "specially marked boxes", and you could send away for photos, Space Cadet club cards, news bulletins, and so on. At dime stores you could buy official Tom Corbett flashlight guns, rubber figures, space goggles, and coloring books among so many other items.

The lead role of Tom Corbett, a teenager studying to be a space-ship captain at the Space Academy, was portrayed by 29 year old Frankie Thomas, who in the late '30s played the comic strip hero Tim Tyler in a Universal serial. Tom's two teenage buddies at the Academy were wise-cracking, know-it-all Roger Manning (Jan Merlin) and a soft-spoken, enthusiastic young man from the planet Venus -- cadet Astro, played by Al Markham.

In between Academy school studies, the boys found adventure on every planet in the solar system and then some. Except in rare cases, none of them were allowed to pilot the Polaris: they were, it was said, too inexperienced yet to be allowed the honor.

The chap who played father (or uncle) to them and who sat behind the panelboard on the Control Deck was Captain Steve Strong. This tall, serious instructor had a girlfriend at the Academy who was a space doctor named Joan Dale. Joan, of course, got herself involved in many of the adventures, and it was up to Strong and the three cadets to get her -- and themselves -- out of it.

The characters of Tom, Roger, and Astro can respectively be likened to those of Jack, Doc, and Reggie in I Love a Mystery. Perhaps this is one of the reasons the show proved to be so popular, over and above the thrill-blazed space adventures and astounding visual effects created on television.

The show itself was based on Robert Heinlein's juvenile novel, Space Cadet, and technical assistance was credited to the noted Willy Ley. The announcer and narrator on both radio and TV finally was Jackson Beck -- who is fondly remembered for his similar duties on Kellogg's radio Superman.

Some of the stories were scripted by Stu Byrnes, the science-fiction writer who in 1956 took it upon himself to write the still-unpublished "Tarzan on Mars" novel.

One particularly grand radio adventure took place on a far distant planet of another galaxy. For some reason, the Polaris was having engine trouble and was forced to land on the uncharted planet. While Astro did his best to repair the damage, Tom, Roger, and Captain Strong donned their spacesuits and started to explore the unknown world.

Shortly after Tom muttered that it was indeed fortunate the Polaris developed operating difficulties and they were forced to land and thus become the first human beings on this world, a gigantic dinosaur reared

up its head, spotted the three spacemen and lunged at them.

Scurrying away from the monster, Tom and the others hid in a cave for safety -- only to be menaced by another prehistoric animal. Tom frantically unhooked his Space Cadet Walkie-talkie, flashed an urgent, life-and-death message to Astro in the ship and told the Venusian of their peril and to get the hell busy repairing the Polaris. As calmly as may be imagined, Astro said, "I'll do the best I can, Tom. But I can't promise anything."

Two seconds later, Tom, Roger, and Captain Strong dashed out of the cave, a huge lizard on their tail. The monsters trailed them all the way to the ship -- but mechanic Astro managed to calmly repair the steering vanes just in time, and the monsters were cheated out of a meal.

One of the first radio shows told the story of a planet that vanished every so often, then reappeared in another sector of space. Tom and Co. soon discovered a Mercurian madman controlled the sometimes-invisible world and that the planet was actually nothing more than a fantastic spaceship! This space villain from Mercury had invented a gadget to control invisibility and whenever he wanted to elude the outer space marshals, he simply turned a dial and poofed away.

For the most part, Space Cadet was credible science-fiction aimed at the young-in-heart. Allegedly everything on the show was based on excepted scientific fact -- thanks to Willy Ley. Even when Thomas, Merlin, and Markham made personal appearances, they were accompanied by Ley who hid himself behind a wall and fed them answers to science questions through a miniature walkie-talkie!

Both Space Patrol and Space Cadet vacated radio shortly before they left TV, around 1953. Kinescopes of the TV episodes are still playing in some isolated areas of the country, and in back issue stores you can find ragged copies of comic books issued by Ziff-Davis, Dell, and Prize Group; but very little has been heard of the radio shows. Decca Records, however, released two Space Patrol dramatized adventures on single 78 and 45 rpm records, and Little Golden Records produced a 29¢ single of the Space Cadet Song & March.

Radio has, as mentioned before, given to television, and television has given something back to radio, to say the least. For a short time, the two mediums worked together -- and it was especially great for young fans -- but this writer hopes Kid Television doesn't decide to do another turnabout and offer Papa radio the creative, imaginative entertainment programs of today -- shows like The Beverly Hillbillies, Ben Casey, Hawaiian Eye.

Radio programming is pathetic enough already.

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C O M I C S FOR SALE:

ALL-STAR COMICS #22, Fall 1944
(good exc. lower spine worn -
one of best Justice Society)\$7.00
AIR-ACE COMICS:1944:Vol 2;Nos.6;
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HOW TO COLLECT RADIO

For both nostalgic and historical purposes, I have built a collection of radio programs from the past, something akin to time travel, I suppose, but a little more readily managed.

There are several sources for old radio programs:

Scripts reproduced in books and magazines;

Commercially released shows on old 78 records, some on 45 & LP;

16-inch transcriptions sometimes available in old record stores or from people who worked in radio;

Home recordings on tape, wire, and disc

In a recent Loki article, Bill Plott mentions some books containing radio scripts. There are a few others besides these.

One of the best radio script books is one of the least expensive, a digest size pocket book from 1947 which if located in some back-number store will probably cost you only 10¢ or 15¢. It is The Saint's Choice No. 7 (spine identification) or The Saint's Choice of Radio Thrillers. The volume contains scripts of The Saint, Sherlock Holmes, Crime Doctor, Ellery Queen, Calling All Cars (similar to Gangbusters), Suspense, The CBS Show (Norman Corwin), and Lights Out (Arch Oboler). Another valuable pb is an armed forces wartime edition called Chillers & Thrillers. Featured are three complete half-hours of Ellery Queen, plus a handful of the "guest detectives" vignettes from the Quick As A Flash quiz show—The Shadow, Crime Doctor, Mr & Mrs North, Big Town, and Charlie Chan are multiply on hand.

A complete half-hour Shadow script is included in The Writer's Radio Theatre 1940-41 (Harper) by Norman Weisner, along with a selection of more intellectual anthology plays. Books of anthology plays, particularly those by Norman Corwin and Arch Oboler, are readily available at any public library; but those containing the great old characters we fondly recall are a bit more difficult to find. Generally, these shows were not considered worth preserving.

Short passages from many radio character shows are quoted in Radio & Television by Max Wyllie (Rinehart, 1950). Wyllie produced a short-lived series of script volumes somewhat earlier. Best Broadcasts of 1938-39 contains a Lone Ranger script as well as comedy contributions of The Jack Benny Show, Fred Allen. The 1940-41 volume is similar—comedy, soap operas, and a now-forgotten western series, Justice Rides the Range.

Surprisingly, a Lone Ranger radio script (a good one, involving something of The Origin) appeared as late as 1950 in Handbook of Broadcasting by Waldo Abbot (Third Edition only), McGraw-Hill. The book also contains a TV script of old radio characters: The Goldbergs, CBS Is There (broadcaster's covering Lincoln's assassination), and an anthology entry. The volume is also quite a reference manual for many various aspects of both radio and television. The Technique of Radio Writing by Luther Weaver (Prentice-Hall, 1948) contains many radio scripts, either

quoted or in full, examples of most of the soap operas, a few pages from Carlton "I Love a Mystery" Morse's One Man's Family, and a complete Jack Armstrong chapter with a synopsis of the entire serial. Radio Sketches by Peter Dixon (Stokes, 1936) contains a Bobby Benson episode. Dixon also wrote many of the installments of the revival of Bobby in the early 1950's.

There are many other books of radio plays, and I would like to receive reports of any that I have missed with significant contributions of any of the old radio heroes. The earliest book that I have, incidentally, with radio scripts is Amos 'n' Andy (Rand McNally, 1929). The boys changed over the years, but not beyond recognition here.

An additional source of old programs in printed form is the fictionalizations that appeared in some magazines of the '30s, '40s, and '50s—primarily Radio Mirror. Most of the Mirror's stories were from soap operas, but occasionally a mystery or even kid show was featured. One magazine still offering articles (with photos) on radio's fantasy and adventure greats—including script quotes—is Fantastic Monsters. I Love a Mystery was featured in #3 (Jan, 1963); "Radio Man Returns" and "The Shadow Strikes Back" are due in future issues.

Of course, the best way to collect radio programs is on recordings. There are people who thoughtfully taped shows from the '50s on, catching some of the tail-end of a dying medium. A few thoughtful souls even put some shows on primitive home discs. Finding these private collections is a matter of advertising, correspondence—and luck. There are many of the old 16-inch discs still floating around in old record stores, though. I have pretty well cleaned out L.A., but I think fans in other cities (particularly Chicago, Detroit, and New York) might find copies of Tom Mix, Green Hornet, Superman, Captain Midnight, The Lone Ranger...maybe. More readily available are the commercial releases from Decca, Victor, etc. Under the "Top Ten" imprint there was issued a line of four 10-in. 78 RPM albums of Jack Benny, Fibber McGee, Amos 'n' Andy, Burns & Allen, Eddie Cantor, Duffy's Tavern, Bergen & McCarthy. Capitol issued a Fibber album, as well as Bob Hope. Columbia issued three Let's Pretend stories on 78's. Decca put out a Superman album as well as a Tarzan one, neither of which I have been able to locate. There was also a series of very, very cheaply made plastic 78 records (45 size) of Superman with horrible kiddie stories—but the well-remembered voices. Mercury issued a Dick Tracy album starring Jim Ameche (also Jack Armstrong on radio) that is quite well done. On 45's as well as 78's there are a series of nine Lone Ranger records, very well done, though condensed to some eight minutes. There were a similar series of three Sergeant Preston records. At last count, these were still available from the Decca company on 45's.

But there isn't much on LP. A Harmony release called The Adventures of Gene Autry bears some similarity to the radio show. There is the recently released Drop Dead! from Capitol with some of Arch Oboler's Lights Out stories. Columbia has Radio's Great Old Themes and More of same which are of some passing interest. Of course, The Bickersons is an old radio show also on LP.

Ron Haydock tells me two of the John Geilgud-Sherlock Holmes shows were issued on LP (London label); and, of course, there is a release of Orson and E.G. Well(e)s' War of the Worlds. Again—I would like to be informed of any additions to these commercial releases of radio shows; and it is my hope that RADIOHERO can serve as a clearing house for exchange of old radio material, the same way various comic book fanzines have functioned—if enough interest can be generated by something that (unlike comic books) is almost entirely in the past——J.H. 27

MORE ON MORSE

By JIM HARMON



(Revised reprint from Redd Boggs'
RETROGRADE as Sounds of Dreaming)

Michael Raffetto

I Love a Mystery seems to have been the favorite radio program of nearly everybody I've ever talked to above the age of twenty. Evidence seems to prove that actually ILAM was never extremely popular with the public at large in the way of Carlton E. Morse's other program, One Man's Family, or in the sense of today's TV Gunsmoke. ILAM was shuffled around all over the dial, frequently cancelled only to pop up again. No, ILAM wasn't the most popular show with the nation at large, but there was a hardcore of people who absolutely loved it above all other radio programs, and with a kind of love and intensity of love that was never applied to other radio programs.

I was an ardent Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooter as a boy, but yet, I couldn't feel the same way about the Tom Mix show as I did about Jack, Doc and Reggie.

ILAM was better written and more convincing. The one long take per episode gave it a feeling of reality that other shows lacked. But the thing of it was that ILAM gave us exactly the kind of wonderful, exciting, terrible life that every child and every man, secretly, ~~wants~~ wants to live. (Most girls forget and grow up to become wives.) It was perfect. It absolutely could not be improved upon.

The opening train whistle, the funeral chords of Valst Treste, the striking clock. And above all, the characters: The nasal Texas twang of Doc, the worldly Empire accent of Reggie, the stern, no-foolishness Generealized American of Jack (but this sternness of Jack was only a pose -- you knew he would join in the next barroom brawl with a whoop). I don't think I ever "identified" with any of the Three Comrades. They were too real to me. I wasn't any of them, but they were all my friends. I think I liked Doc best -- impetuous, often foolish, girl-crazy. Yes, he was my favorite.

Some of the female audience may not have liked this free-wheeling adventurous spirit. Most of the successful radio heroes were safely tied to women's skirts -- Lamont Cranston, The Shadow, had Margo Lane, his "friend and companion" (and just exactly what does that mean?) and Thin Man Nick Charles had Nora, and Master Detective Nick Carter had Patsy.... There was a Woman on ILAM, of course, usually played by Mercedes McCambridge, but she was a free-wheeling soul herself, brash, self-sufficient.

According to Bill Thailing's research, ILAM started Jan. 16, 1939 (Pacific coast only), and coast-to-coast broadcast began Oct. 2, 1939. Along about 1939 I was listening to the half-hour episodes Monday nights on NBC. Later, the show went daily, on CBS twice a day, at 6:15 and 10:15 (on WEBM Chicago, for instance). I often listened to both broadcasts (the story was the same, of course -- although once in awhile there would be a marked difference in the episode; Jack and Doc would take a couple of minutes discussing something they hadn't mentioned on the first version.) The sponsor was Ivory soap. Then about 1945 they replaced ILAM with a daily Jack Kirkwood comedy show. I have resented Ivory soap and Kirkwood to this day.

This was not the end of Jack, Doc and Reggie on radio, although many people do not seem to know about the later series. They were pretty well hidden.

Circa, 1947, I saw in the Sunday radio log a listing on ABC for a program called I Love Adventure. By an almost ESP insight, I knew what this program would be, and it was, as the announcer said over the familiar screaming train whistle: "I Love Adventure, a NEW Carlton E. Morse Production, featuring Jack, Doc and Reggie."

These programs were wonderful too, but not quite as good as ILAM itself. They were complete half-hour stories, told in a number of short scenes. There were only 13 of them, all with Jack, and half each with Doc and with Reggie. Doc and Reggie did not appear together with Jack in any one show. The first few stories had the boys working for the Twenty One Old Men, an organization working for world peace, secretly. The opening story concerned a helicopter landing men on an airliner and robbing it in flight. But finally the boys returned to the A-1 Detective Agency in Hollywood. A few episodes were written not by Morse, for the first time in the career of JD&R but by Sidney Marshall, who wrote all the stories in Herbert Marshall's radio program, The Man Called X and who in fact adapted one of these ILA scripts for Mr. X later on. But the summer was over all too soon, and even this substitute for ILAM was gone.

But in 1949 I Love a Mystery came back on radio. It was on Mutual, and where it was spotted originally on the network line was right after Gabriel Heatter's newscast at 8 PM, CST. Most of the local stations had sold this time for other shows and hardly any stations carried the show at its network time. It turned up at 4 in the afternoon on WGN Chicago, and on other stations at 6:15, 6:45, 11:15 at night. After WGN dropped it, I had to drag it in from New York's WOR at 10:15 Mt. Carmel, Ill. time. In spite of all this, the Mutual series lasted over two years until 1952.

The Mutual series was different from the earlier versions of I Love a Mystery and even I Love Adventure. Always before the show had come from California. For some reason, the program on Mutual had to come from New York. Probably because Morse was in New York himself doing the television of One Man's Family. Because of this change in location, the cast was changed.

In Hollywood, Michael Raffetto was Jack, Barton Yarborough was Doc, and Walter Patterson played Reggie. Then after Patterson's tragic death, Tom Collins assumed the role for ILAdv. Raffetto, Yarborough and "Reggie" were also Paul, Clifford and Nickie in One Man's Family. Their New York replacements sounded a great deal like them, at least

the ones for Jack and Doc.

Russell Thorson played Jack, and he sounded so much like Raffetto he was brought to Hollywood to play Paul Barbour in the daytime TV version of OMF, and later replaced Raffetto on radio when Raffetto retired. (Actually, towards the end, Raffetto's magnificent voice had cracked to some extent and when Thorson took over the role, Paul suddenly sounded ten years younger.) Jim Boles' Doc was hard to distinguish from Barton Yarborough. And at the same time Boles started doing Doc, Yarborough back in Hollywood died of a heart attack and Cliff Barbour moved to Scotland on OMF, and in the radio and television versions of Dragnet, Sgt. Ben Romero died of a heart attack and was replaced by Officer Frank Smith. Reggie, strangely enough, was played by Tony Randall, now better known as a comedian in movies and television. Finally, NY-castwise, Mercedes McCambridge was usually the girl (whatever girl), sometimes repeating her Hollywood roles of ten years previous.

Thorson who looked young enough to essay hero-type Paul Barbour on TV, now does character roles for the medium. A regular co-starring part on Robert Taylor's Detectives was his most familiar role. Jim Boles who looks like a western type, long and lean, did radio roles on the last remaining radio programs, Johnny Dollar and Suspense until they too bit the dust. Now he's out in Hollywood, doing Western bits.

We tend to think of Jack, Doc, and Reggie as inseparable, but that wasn't the case. About 1940 Reggie was written out of the script as returning to fight for England. He did not return until the short-lived I Love Adventure. Only Jack was constantly on stage. There were other Comrades. One was an Irishman named Terry Burke. He emerged to take Doc's part in many of the re-broadcasts of stories. And there were still others who made up the Three Comrades (a name for the group that was dropped after the Second World War for political reasons, I suppose). There was a big Swede named Sven, and another time, Michael, a Frechman whose voice and character resembled Peter Lorre (Forest Lewis), and Mary Kay Brown, the secretary of the A-1 Detective Agency who once had the distinction of being listed in the sign-off: "The Further Adventures of Jack, Doc and Mary Kay will come to you tomorrow..." But it is Jack, Doc and Reggie we remember.

Remember The Stairway to the Sun and the Lost Plateau of the Andes where prehistoric creatures roam, and primitive man, and a secluded group of supermen? Remember Jack and Doc climbing the Plateau and Doc thinking lustful thoughts about their girl guide and the Supermen Elders causing him to go weak by mental control and almost fall to his death?

Remember "No Ring, No Ring Finger, No Husband" and the boys trapped on the island with weird old woman who turns out to be a leper who chopped off the finger when a spot showed up?

Remember "My Beloved is a Werewolf" and the telephone call that caused Doc to go prowling around the grounds of an insane asylum at night, thinking it was the house of Mary Kay's cousin who suspected her husband of being a lycanthrope?

Remember "The Fear that Creeps Like a Cat" and the mad scientist

who wanted to test the reaction of fear by sending a man out with only a knife against a starved mountain lion? Remember how Reggie put on an act of being afraid so that he would be sent, but they checked his pulse and found out he was lying about his fear so they sent Doc instead? Remember Doc gambling for hours of life represented in poker chips? Remember his asking for one puch, just one punch at his tormentor, getting it, and knocking him cold, saying "What did you expect me to do? Waltz with him?"

Perhaps most unforgettable of all was Temple of Vampires, the story of a Central American temple and its preist and preistess who are able to pass through the air between the high ledges that climb the tower. In the earlier version of this article, I attempted to recreate some of this story, as I did in my article on ILAM in Fantastic Monsters #3. Surprisingly -- perhaps because of the memorable quality of the story itself -- I found that I had recalled much of it word for word when I again gained access to the original. My recreation went something like this:

DOC: Hey, Jack, look over here. Lookie at what I found.

JACK: WHAT IS IT? Yeah, I see. Ropes or vines tied off over here.

They seem to reach clear up to the top of the temple.

DOC: Yeah, son, but what are they for?

JACK: Doc, I think this is how Manuel and his girl friend in the black robes got on and off our ledge on the other side. They swung across on these ropes, secured them there and swung back again. The girl carried Hermie across.

DOC: She would sure have to be a strong little female woman to do that.

JACK: Probably trained for it all of their lives, these people...

HERMIE (calling from distance): Mr Packard! Mr Long! Help!

DOC: Jack!

JACK: Doc, there's one way to get back over there fast. Are you game?

DOC: Son, I'm a-way ahead of you! I'll loose this here rope, and here I gooooo....

JACK: You crazy red-headed Texan, wait for meeeeee...

DOC: Hey! Hey, this is great!

JACK: Don't look down, and don't slide on the ropes. You'll burn your hands...

* * *

And so that was the way I remembered ILAM a few years ago in Redd Boggs' fanzine. But then, after several years of work, I was able to do more than remember I Love a Mystery. Now I -- and others through tape contributions to the Hollywood Museum -- can relive the thrill of the very best of radio programs.

It was after months of corespondence with Carlton E. Morse that I went to his private estate. After a long drive on the freeway from Los Angeles, you take a road that climbs into the mountains, hugging curves that could spell disaster, all in a heavy fog that even the bright sun can't completely burn away. Here you pass through stands of real redwoods remaining virginal, and climb, upward, onward, until you come to high wire fence, festooned with signs reading "NO TESPASSING". You follow the fence until you come to a small stone pylon bearing the name "7 Stones". Heavy padlocks have been unclasped from the gate by unseen hands and you drive inside.

You drive on, and on, higher and higher. You pass a small comfort-

able cottage, and then through an abrupt break in the trees you see -- a castle! No, not exactly a castle, but a huge baronial hall with ranch-like trappings. You follow the long driveway till the house looms above you. The estate drips with lawns and in stone niches stand religious statues. Seven Stones is almost the Sky Ranch from "One Man's Family". There are horses and cattle and sheep and pheasants around the place.

Your car comes to a stop. You get out and a lean, high-domed energetic man comes toward you, greets you, shakes hands. He invites you inside the house -- into a huge room with the largest picture window you ever saw, overlooking an expanse of redwood forest that reaches to the horizon. Just as you enter, a small mantle clock booms out a resounding, somehow familiar chime, and Carlton E. Morse say, "Won't you gentlemen sit down?"

Morse is not Jack Packard or Paul Barbour, as one might have expected. He is a gentleman and a gentle man, and gives the impression of having been wealthy all his life. He is very friendly, very courteous, but reserved. He is up here on top of a mountain, behind a wall of redwoods and a wire fence for the obvious reason of solitude. There is plenty of it -- a dark, dark green solitude that surrounds you and crowds in at the windows.

Morse showed me the some 126 volumes of his collected scripts, and out in his barn, his stacks of thousands of OMF recordings, but unfortunately only a few hundred of ILAM. These he offered to me for tape copying, saying "After talking to you, Jim, I'm sure I can trust you implicitly."

That was November 21, 1960. The recordings -- the 16 in. vinyl and aluminum discs -- have been returned. But I still have my tapes and the memory of meeting one of the shapers of my boyhood dreams.

And here is a passage from one of the scripts I copied at that time: The Battle of the Century where seven men attack Jack and Doc:

JACK: All right, Doc... Fight with our backs against the silo as long as we can... If they get us away from the wall then back to back...
DOC (AMUSED) Feller, I don't know WHEN I bin so happy... Doggone, I hope there's at least a COUPLE of good fighters in that mess...

Here they come, Jack...

JACK: Watch out, Doc...

(SOUND OF CONFUSION OF STRUGGLE... EXCLAMATIONS... HEAVY BREATHING AND A RAIN OF SOCKS AND PUNCHES UNTIL THE HAND OF EVERY SOUND MAN IN MBS ACHES LIKE THE TOOTHACHE AND IS SWOLEN TWICE ITS SIZE)

(ON CUE) ... (STRUGGLE FADES BACK LITTLE)

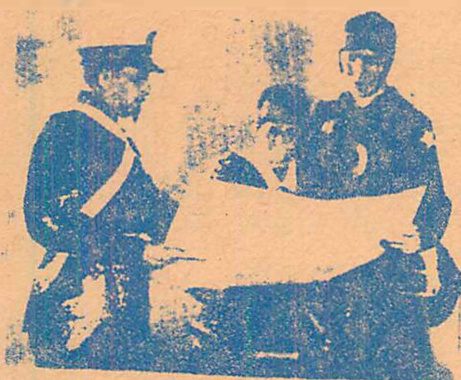
DOC: How we'adoin', Jack?

JACK: (GASPS) Save your breath for fighting...

DOC: You bet YOU! ... (GRUNTS) Honest to ... (GRUNTS) grandma...
(GRUNTS)... I don't know (GRUNTS) WHEN I've had so much FUN!

That pretty well sums up the feelings of all who listened to ILAM in the golden years. We don't know when we had so much fun.

Thank you, Mr. Morse, for those wonderful years.



Have you heard Adele Ronson and Matthew Crowley as Wilma and Buck in the "Buck Rogers in the Year 2432" program? Very thrilling drama -- as about this world 500 years hence.

REMEMBER BUCK ROGERS

By REDD BOGGS

The veteran reader of science fiction can remember a whole rocketship-load of stalwart heroes: Kim Kinnison, Captain Future, Northwest Smith, and many others. The veteran comic-strip scanner can remember a smaller, but still formidable, band of science fiction heroes: Superman, Batman, Brick Bradford, and of course Flash Gordon. But the oldtime radio fan can stretch his memory to pain without recalling any hero of science fiction adventure on the airwaves other than the man who stood preeminent, also, in the comic-strip continuum: Buck Rogers.

Tarzan, of course, prowled the jungles on radio during the 1930s in the person of Jim Pierce, but unless you consider Tarzan a science fiction hero, Buck Rogers had no competitor in his own field till the final era of radio. (See the coverage of Space Cadet and Space Patrol in this issue, and witness the almost still-born Liberty Radio Network's sole dramatic entry, Brad Steel, Ace of Space. *EDITOR) Rogers' effect on the mind of American youth in the 1930s and 1940s was therefore pervasive, and probably the radio version of his adventures had as much to do with branding science fiction as "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff" as had the comic-strip, important though the Phil Nowlan-Dick Calkins newspaper feature was. For many people in their 30s and early 40s today, Buck Rogers still symbolizes, not only the hero of futuristic adventure, but the whole range of science fiction as a genre.

Although I became familiar with "Buck Rogers" as a comic strip a couple of years earlier, I think I first learned about the "Buck Rogers" radio program sometime in the early 1930s by thumbing the pages of a magazine rather than by twisting a radio dial. In one of the magazines I borrowed from the town library -- probably Child Life or The American Boy -- I discovered an ad for Coco-Malt which described Buck Rogers' personal history and revealed that his adventures were being presented regularly on CBS by Coco-Malt.

At that time I had not yet formed the habit of listening to the kids' radio programs, although I listened regularly to "Amos 'n' Andy" because my mother tuned in every night. Possibly the Coco-Malt ad was another small nudge toward getting me in the habit, though I suppose the chatter around school about Little Orphan Annie's adventures in Simmons Corners with Joe Corntassel was probably a bigger

factor. Not too many weeks or months after I saw that ad, I began to listen to "Orphan Annie" and then to the other kid shows that preceded it on that station and others.

Looking back on those days of my childhood I have the impression that it was always night and wintertime when I scrunched down in the easy chair beside our Westrad radio in the living room to listen to the programs that littered the dial from about 4:30 to 6 p.m. every day. I must have done most of my radio listening during the cold months when darkness fell early and the temperatures were too bitter to allow much playing outside after school.

"Little Orphan Annie" always came on at 5:45 in those days in the midwest. "Jack Armstrong" immediately preceded it on another station. Depending on what year it was, I listened more or less regularly to three or four other juveniles: "The Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen" (RADIOHERO #1), "Tom Mix", "Tarzan", and others. Usually there were one or two shows on the schedule that didn't interest me too much, and I often idly twiddled the dial in search of more exciting fare. "Skippy", I remember, was a program I often skipped, and for a time one winter I heard a forgotten program called "Dick Steele: Boy Reporter" all the way from WGN, Chicago, instead of "Skippy". I was bored with whatever show I usually listened to the evening I dialed into the middle of a "Buck Rogers" program.

On a winter's night -- and night fell early in those latitudes -- in western Minnesota we could pull in signals from distant places as a matter of course: WLW, Cincinnati; WBBM, Chicago; KOA, Denver; WOW, Omaha; KDKA, Pittsburgh; Dallas, Des Moines, Yankton, Winnipeg. The radio dial brought it all in: the gabble of voices, the snatches of song, the rattle of static, the sounds weak and exhausted, sometimes, by the miles they covered in a wink. The sense of a vast universe out there in the darkness -- voices talking and singing against the loneliness and desolation -- was very powerful and exciting.

And one night as I twirled the dial I heard a pair of voices, one male, one female, talking in sinister tones about such fascinating things as "disintegrators", "rocketpistols", and "impervium". The man, I soon learned, was named Kane; the woman was Ardala. I didn't need this information or the announcer's commentary at the end of the program to identify the program and know that I had discovered the "Buck Rogers" show heralded in the magazine ad for Coco-Malt. I was familiar with "disintegrators" and the other futuristic gadgets from the comic strip.

The program did such an effective job of transporting me to the twenty-fifth century that I can't remember what year it "really" was that I heard it for the first time.

Evidently the program had been going on for a year or two before I heard it. "Buck Rogers" was actually one of the earliest of the kids shows on network radio. Apparently the earliest sponsor of "Buck Rogers" was Kellogg's Rice Krispies -- later the sponsor of Irene Wicker, the Singing Lady, a fact which prevented me from enjoying Rice Krispies ever since -- and the earliest actor to play the title role was Matthew Crowley, famous in later years as such other comic-strip heroes on radio as "Mark Trail", "Sky Altitude" and "Jungle Jim". Coco-Malt (a chocolate flavor to be added to milk, similar to Ovaltine)

was the sponsor of "Buck Rogers" when I first listened, and Buck himself was played Curtis Arnell.

Adele Ronson was probably the original Wilma Deering on the show and played the role for several years despite her rapidly growing fame in the mid-1930s as a popular radio actress. Of all the women I've ever known or heard, Adele Ronson was one of only two women I admired largely for their lovely voices. The other was Ann Arganbright, a girl in some of my classes in college. She was a pretty young lady, and for all I know, Adele Ronson was too. But both women had such vital, lilting, winsome voices that one felt almost content to listen to them rather than see them. This was to Miss Ronson's advantage, since she was a radio actress, though perhaps not to Miss Arganbright's, if very many men felt as I did.

Adele Ronson played roles in several highly rated nighttime shows of that era, including the speaking voice of Sally Gibson, heroine of a forgotten series called "The Gibsons" or possibly "The Gibson Family". This program, sponsored by Ivory soap, was sort of a "One Man's Family" with music, the score for the weekly program being composed by a pair of well known Broadway tunesmiths who later salvaged some of the music for a Broadway show. "You and the Night and the Music" was one of the songs originally written for the erstwhile Wilma Deering's alter ego.

Paul Douglas, later the well known stage and screen actor, was the announcer on the early "Buck Rogers" program, though this fact seems to astonish people when I mention it. Douglas actually remained a CBS announcer till late in the 1930s, and is best remembered in that capacity as the man at the microphone on the nightly Fred Waring show for Chesterfield cigarets.

"Here we go!" Paul Douglas would say, adopting a Voice of Doom almost as ominous as that of Westbrook Van Vorhees on "The March of Time", "Five hundred years -- into the future!" And then we would hear the rising and falling rumble of -- I suppose -- a time machine, carrying us to 2535 A.D. or some year like that. The same temporal device -- at least the same sound effect -- was utilized on another kids show that, I think, immediately preceded "Buck Rogers" during one season: "Og, Son of Fire". On this program -- which I remember finding dreadfully dull -- the rumbling time machine swept us 20,000 years into the past, to adventure with our caveman ancestors.

I always thought "Buck Rogers" one of the most exciting and delightful radio shows for kids ever broadcast. Part of the persuasive effect of the program lay in its effective sound effects. There were a lot of them: the sounds of rocketships taking off and landing (the rocket engines cut off a moment before they hit the ground with a thump), rocketpistols zapping, and mysterious machines of many varieties humming and clanking. The show must have owned an inveterate and energetic sound man, in sharp contrast to a program like "Jimmie Allen" where the sound effects were unimaginative and unconvincing.

I suspect that the futuristic setting gave the writer of the program the imaginative scope he needed to create a story-line that was livelier and faster moving than most. The stories I remember seem, at least in retrospect, far to transcend most juveniles in verve and crackle. Or maybe the brio effect of the program was largely due to lilt of Miss Ronson's lovely voice.

Buck and Wilma, usually accompanied by Dr Huer, were forever on the move, battling from planet to planet by spaceship, or place to place on Earth or Mars by rocketbelt, and at least once through the Fourth Dimension by means of some strange device or other. Dr. Huer was, in effect, a chaperone, and on one occasion when he was not present, Buck and Wilma -- sitting alone on an ice mountain in the Arctic, I remember, though I don't remember what they were doing there -- came closer to playing a love scene than anybody else I listened to on the kids shows.

Oddly enough, "Buck Rogers" -- at least for the first year or two of its existence -- ran only four days a week, not five: Monday through Thursday. ("Jack Armstrong", on the other hand, the first season or so, ran six days a week: Monday through Saturday.) The long weekend intervening after every fourth episode might appear to reduce the probable impact of "Buck Rogers" on the childish mind. However, the superior quality of the writing and acting of the show seem to have triumphed over this difficulty. In fact, "Buck Rogers" became one of the chief victims of the Dr Wethams of radio. In the mid-1930s a group of cleanup crusaders professed great alarm over the large numbers of "gun-barking melodramas that scare children", and radio, almost as supersensitive and soft-shelled as television was a quarter of a century later, hastily made adjustments. "Buck Rogers" was one of the programs cancelled as a result of the objections to violence, although in point of fact, it was no more violent than any others.

"Buck Rogers" did, however, deal with adult intrigue and danger, if not always on a very adult level. Nations and planets clashed in bitter controversy, if not outright war, in "Buck Rogers" at frequent intervals. It was one of the few kids shows whose hero was an adult rather than a youth and whose cast contained no children or teenagers with whom the kids could identify (as with Kane and Jimmy of the "Tom Mix" program). The spectacle of nations, perhaps ideologies, clashing on a child's radio program must have caused the crusaders to View With Alarm. Nevertheless, the world Buck Rogers lived in was a great deal less violent and dangerous than the world in which the children who listened to his adventures find themselves as adults.

Buck Rogers himself was, as I remember, only a captain in the military of the twenty-fifth century, but somehow or other he managed to sit in -- and ultimately make the crucial decisions -- on all high-level conferences involving the fate of worlds. Thus the listeners were presented with the Big Picture often enough, but actually, of course, most of the conflict was shown in melodramatic terms as combat (though seldom physical) between Buck and his arch-enemy, Killer Kane. Kane and Ardala took a much larger part in Buck's adventures on radio than they did, in those days at least, in the comic strip.

Kane was never a very sinister villain. In one episode he tried in vain to set afire a planetoid which he knew to be made of some flammable material. He attempted to ignite a hunk of it by applying fire to it and blasting it with a flame-thrower. Finally, he gave up in disgust, drew his rocketpistol, and fired it at the hunk of planetoid material to blast the offending bit into atoms. To his surprise, that did it: the material burst into flame. He had succeeded in his fiendish plan, but only by an absurd accident. Killer Kane was too inept in the long run to frighten anybody. Besides, he kept Ardala with him most of

of the time, and she was a harsh-voiced, shrewish type. Who could take seriously a villain as badly henpecked as poor Killer Kane?

After a brief vacation -- maybe a year or two or three -- as a result of the cleanup crusade, "Buck Rogers" returned to the air some time in the late 1930s with a different cast and for a different sponsor, but I didn't hear enough of that version to remember much about it after all these years. I heard it several times much later, probably in the late 1940s or early 1950s -- this was probably a third reincarnation of the series -- and noted that it seemed to move fast and even to have some real science-fictional content, but outside of that I can't remember anything but general impressions of good quality writing and acting.

I remember the old "Buck Rogers" fondly, however, and it's one of the programs I miss most from the days of our innocent youth when we scrunched down in front of the radio to listen to breakfast food operas instead of rock-and-roll records.

THE END

S P E C I A L D E L I V E R Y

(Late Airmail)

BOB TUCKER, Box 478, Heyworth, Ill.:

Dear Jim: ... You said that the last Shadow film was released in 1957 under the title "The Invisible Avenger" and that it came through the Republic studios... or at least the Republic distribution agency. Did you know that picture is again going the rounds under a new title and a different distributor? It is now called "Bourbon Street Shadows" and is being offered in the States Rights' market? Which means that small, independant distributors are handling it in each territory: Joe Blow in Chicago, Sam Doe in St. Louis, etc. I read a lengthy review of the picture in a trade magazine last year, and recognized it as a Shadow-type plot, but not until RADIOHERO arrived did I understand what had happened. (-30-)

BETTY KUJAWA, 2819 Carloine, South Bend 14, Ind.: Dear Jim: ... Thanks to you Jimmy we've been hearing The Shadow once more (St Louis broadcasts it as well on Sun.) I have phoned my parents, pals, buddies, neighbors and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Notre Dame faculty, all of whom have thanked me effusively for cluing them in... Awhile back too recognized the sterling voice of famous Lake Forest teacher Richard Widmark... Another sidelight.. one guy who plays the arch villains and mad mad mad scientist on Shadow is now the Kindly Old Grandpa on As the World Turns, CBS-TV. Father on World Turns is that of David Harding, Counterspy on RH#1 cover. (-30-)

Betty also sends a newspaper clipping about KWK St. Louis running a solid week, 24 hours a day, of old time radio favorites -- Fibber McGee, Bob Hope, Baby Snooks, etc. Details next time. Thanks to all who wrote -- Harry Warner's long and interesting letter didn't make "press date". Next time for it. Thanks too to Richard Kyle, Kris Neville, Dale Hart, Jerry Bails, John McGeehan, and all those who wrote and subscribed and reviewed.--JH 3/



A I R M A I L --(CONT. FROM P. 4)

drop a line such as "Remember Jack, Doc and Reggie on I LOVE A MYSTERY?" -- and that's all it takes! This very thing happened recently at a choir party, and 37 people spent the rest of the evening out-remembering each other about their old favorites. (And if a further lag should develop I always stand ready to throw in my imitations of the Green Hornet's car, Digger O'Dell, John Shuttleworth, and possibly the opening from THE FAT MAN.) (-30-)

It may be an eronious picture, Bob, but I can see you in the pulpit intoning "Who knows what Evil l-lurks in the hearts of men...?"

CARLTON E MORSE

Dear Jim: I appreciate all your efforts to keep I LOVE A MYSTERY before the public ... (-30-)

No effort is needed, actually. The memory of this timeless series lives on with everyone who ever heard it. ... I can't say I am maddeningly enthused about the potential TVersion, however. Note the following.

MARTY HALPERIN, Hollywood Museum Radio Acquisitions Committee

Dear Jim: I understand William Spear, producer of SAM SPADE on radio, is going to try a TV series of I LOVE A MYSTERY. ... I don't think I'll ever watch it. I only watched GUNSMOKE on TV once. Not only wasn't it very good, I noticed it started to destroy the image of Matt Dillon, Chester and the others I had built up from years of listening to GUNSMOKE on radio. (-30-)

I suppose so. And William Spear doing ILAM? I enjoyed SAM SPADE but it sounds like to me he may turn out a burlesque of ILAM. His Spade was a burlesque of private eyes, which is okay. But not Jack, Doc and Reggie. Is nothing sacred? ... I wonder if Troy Donahue is playing Doc?

DON DOUGLAS

My dear Jim: A very interesting publication. ... For some reason, the stations simply don't want drama. It isn't the greater expense of drama over disc jockies. ... Adept radio actors could do a whole show with only two performers by changing voices. ... I did one after my role (and the series) of JOHN STEEL, ADVENTURER in which I did all the voices. Many other actors like Forrest Lewis, Marvin Miller, etc. could do the same. (-30-)

Expense can't be the reason. In Los Angeles, some stations like KNX are doing expensive programs like STORYLINE with a number of paid performers, male and female, sound effects ~~men~~, ~~script~~ writers. But they are doing a kind of news show, not even ten minutes of drama.

HARFIELD WEEDIN, CBS Radio-KNX, Los Angeles 28, Calif.

Dear Mr. Harmon: Thank you for the letter and for the publications you mailed me. They are all very interesting. I particularly appreciate your helping our Museum project. Please keep in close contact with Marty Halperin.

Your suggestions on programming some vintage radio on KNX are

certainly well taken. They will be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the KNX Program Board. (-30-)

I certainly hope you didn't have to spend too many hours on my proposals. ... Somehow, I feel despite your fond memories of old time radio, Mr. Weedon, the Board probably decided what the public really wants is more news on the hour and more conversation shows and disc jockey stints.

LARRY IVIE, 31 W. 76, New York 23, N. Y.

Dear Jim: Thanks muchly for the copy of RADIOHERO. In an article I once wrote for my own fanzine which almost always features an article on radio, I made a guess that the part of Capt. Midnight was played by Ed Prentis. Glad to see this guess prove correct! ... I particularly remember the I LOVE A MYSTERY episode in which Jack & Doc are swinging on the ropes inside the "Temple of Vampires". That, I think, was my favorite sequence from the series. My favorite Jack Armstrong adventure was the one with the crocodile tanks. I hope some recordings still exist of those serials someplace. By the way, what was "Project Andromeda" on The Lone Ranger? That's one I don't seem to recall, although my memory on most of the serial plots is pretty good. (-30-)

As one monster magazine editor to another, I'll be glad to tell you. Project Andromeda was a government endeavor after the Civil War (according to Fran Striker) which was investigating the strange properties of a meteorite. This investigation might eventually lead to unleashing the power of the sun, it was said. This meteorite was stolen by a gang of crooks working for a foreign power, and the Lone Ranger set out to recover it. It took him several weeks of half-hour episodes. A premium ring with a combination silver bullet and atomic bomb design was offered by Kix serial.

RICK L. DURELL, 227 - 32nd St., Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Dear Jim: I think I enjoyed reading "SS-1 of the Secret Squadron" by Ron Haydock and your "The Shadow Returns to Radio" articles the most of all. ... I'm 31 years old and I never have forgotten "Carnival of Death" on the The Shadow. I can still see or should I say hear that "ghost train" coming toward Margo Lane in the tunnel beneath the House of Horrors where she was trapped. ... Is it possible they may bring The Shadow back to radio here in Calif? (-30-)

Radio and TV programming is notoriously bad in Calif. -- on the theory everybody gets out in the sun instead of staying in by sets, I suppose. ... I'm told Californians have less of a radio listening tradition than the Mid-West but many others deny that.

LEN MOFFATT, 10202 Belcher, Downey, Calif.

Dear Jim: Belated thanx for sending me a copy of RADIOHERO No. 1! ... But 50¢ a copy for a mineo'd fanzine with spottily repro'd illos? That's Too Much, man! ((The following two single-spaced pages on the subject of extortionistic prices have been deleted. -JH)) ... So much on the subject of minor finances. Let's talk about the contents of RADIOHERO No. 1. ... The articles on the sky heroes were interesting enough, though I am not as familiar with the adventures of Sky King, et al, as I am with the radio adventures of Buck Rogers, Orphan Annie, Jack Armstrong, Tom Mix, Dick Tracy, and Terry & the Pirates.

(We didn't have a radio in those days but I'd visit the home of a cousin to listen to these shows.) ... As I recall, Ovaltine was giving away secret code pins to listeners of Little Orphan Annie long before the advent of Captain Midnight. I had one, and I'm sure it was quite similar to the Mystery Dial Code-O-Graph of which Ron writes. I had an Orphan Annie drinking mug or cup too. I actually liked the the stuff.

... I was a Shadow Magazine fan some time before I had the opportunity of hearing the radio version. It wasn't until many years later that I learned (from reading The Fiction Factory) that The Shadow was a radio character before he became a magazine character. ... My enjoyment of the radio show was always marred by the fact that the radio Shadow wasn't the same as the magazine Shadow. The biz of hypnotically "clouding men's minds" to become "invisible" for some reason sounded "hokier" than wearing all black clothes and the use of the night and its shadows as a camoflaug. However, the famous lines ending with "The Shadow knows...." and the mocking laughter were right in keeping with the magazine version.

Inspired by your article I have been reading (in some cases, re-reading) old Shadow mags recently. ... Two of the novels used Paris as a background -- tho the adventures were a year apart in time. Apparently the underworld of Paris (the Apaches and the dimly lit Parisian dives) was a favorite topic of the writer. And do you remember Zemba, the international criminal "mastermind", and Robeq, "France's greatest detective"? In the December 1st, 1935 issue of Shadow Magazine (Twice a Month; 10¢ a copy -- oh those were the days...) the lead novel, ZEMBA, features a tour de force (which more cynical minded readers might call a tour de farce) of "mistaken identities" ... Robeq disguises as The Shadow, who disguises as Zemba, who disguises as Robeq. Even The Shadow's closest aides do not know or realize what is going on, though "clues" are dropped indicating that The Shadow they've contacted in Paris is not the same Shadow they knew in N.Y. They merely assume that he is using different tactics in the foreign city. The conflict in the novel is double-barreled: Zemba vs. The Shadow & Robeq, and The Shadow vs. Robeq in a "race" to see who nabs Zemba first. It is a doozy, a highly improbable series of events, but lots of fun. More fun, I think, than the radio version. ... Perhaps the only hope for bringing back good radio drama lies in the FM broadcasting field. ... The spoken word (in comedy records, debates, plays, etc.) is used quite a bit on FM... (audiences) are still willing to listen to good adventure and mystery dramas... The human imagination with its big "inner eye" can "see" more and create more than TV or movies when it is aided... by wonder-filled sound ... voices that crack with the emotion of high adventure ... music that paints a picture of the strange, the unknown... the roar of the rocket taking off ... the footsteps of the killer... the cry of a wild tropical bird ... the howl of the wind through an abandoned tomb... watch out! What's that behind you? (-30-)

RADIOHERO's price was set with some faint hope of showing a slight profit, reflecting my basic philosophy of life. Many complimentary copies are set free, even so. I've noticed that nobody who has actually paid for the magazine has complained. Only reviewers, etc. who got their copies free objected. ... Most FM stations seem to work on the basis of snob appeal and no doubt would consider "The Sha dow" or like that "too corny", so they continue Shakespeare. Old time re-runs are on AM--but there is the new GE STEREO DRAMA on FM stations.-JH

RADIO DRAMA RETURNS REDDOUBLED

THE G.E. Stereo Drama Theatre a monthly series of first run one hour dramas is in progress on a number of FM radio stations throughout the country, originating with WQRX New York including Los Angeles area KCBH. The plays are broadcast in compatible multiplex stereo.

Stereo Drama marks the first brand-new nation wide stories on radio since CBS Radio cancelled Johnny Dollar and Suspense Sept. 31, 1962. Under General Electric, the series is the first fully sponsored audioplay since Liggett and Myers dropped the radio Gunsmoke, in the late 'fifties.

The series began Feb. 1963 with Agnes Moorehead in The Turn of the Screw. Los Angeles picked up the show in Mar. with Billy Budd presenting Peter Ustinov recreating his movie role of the Captain. Joseph Cotton's House of Usher show followed in Apr. Cyril Ritchard's Visit to a Small Planet is upcoming.

Three of the first four installments are fantasy, a boon to science fiction fans. Usher was an excellent production by familiar radio producer Hyman Brown with John Roeburt scripting and featuring Leon Janay and other mainstays of vintage radio.

While Billy Budd was less than inspiring it was a competent performance, and is available on limited edition stereo LPs for \$2 ea. from KCBH, Beverly Hills, Calif.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

A FOOT AGAIN

Sherlock Holmes is being rebroadcast in the New York City area, correspondent Larry Ivie informs us. The Baker St. Slueth thus is the second vintage radio thriller in syndication for audio circuits.

Producer Charles Michaelson is the source of both Sherlock Holmes and The Shadow as well as Famous Jury Trials and The Third Man, also at least available for syndication.

A recent Newsweek story reports Michaelson would like to re-release Sam Spade, Mr. Keen and The Green Hornet. The Hornet would be the closest thing to the kid shows most of us remember best. (Unfortunately, recordings of Jack Armstrong, Tom Mix, etc. probably do not exist in sufficient number for re-release.)

Michaelson "dreams" of producing new episodes. He may become known as the man who singlehandedly revived the art of radio.

General Electric is to be congratulated for this program. While radio can never be what it was, GE Stereo Drama gives us hope that there may be other new dramas and even new character series on radio, "the Theatre of the Mind".

LIBRARY OF RADIO

THRILLS & LAUGHS

IN HOLLYWOOD

The Hollywood Museum which is under construction in Los Angeles county is gathering a library of the great programs of radio.

The job of finding the rare recordings falls to the Radio Acquisitions Committee chaired by CBS West Coast radio programming director Harfield Weedin and including Ken Carpenter, Marty Halperin, and others, with a sub-committee including Jim Harmon.

As has only recently been admitted by the networks, the recordings of radio shows were routinely junked by the stations except in rare cases, as were advertising agency copies. Most radio recordings extant are in the hands of private collectors.

The Museum would like tape copies of these programs. These will be placed on permanent file available to the public on about the same basis as the books of the rare book room of a library.

Shorter excerpts from programs will be played as part of exhibits of photographs, wax figures, and old style radios -- a well-intentioned attempt at visualizing the magic of imagination.

Information about donations may be sent to Jim Harmon, care of Black Shield Publs., Topanga, Calif.

AMAZING FACT No. 3041: Los Angeles is the only major American city with no weekly dramatic radio entertainment (sans religion).

BOB & RAY

RADIO ACTIVE

Bob and Ray, perhaps the last great comedians of the Golden Age of Radio are reportedly active again. Their show is being carried by a Canadian station in the Detroit area, and doubtlessly elsewhere.

CRIME AT BAY
AREA

Mystery Adventure Theatre airs nightly at 10:05 PM over KNBR in Calif.'s Bay Area reports correspondent Rev. Robt.E. Neily. The series includes such segments as Moment of Deril and Danger with Granger. KNBR thus is offering more dramatic entertainment than any other known station in the United States.

SHADOW GROWS

The syndicated radio series of The Shadow is now carried in twenty markets, including Chicago St. Louis, Washington DC, Milwaukee, and Cleveland (where it is fully sponsored by Avis Rent-a-car).

Station managers report the show draws "considerable interest".

SHADOW DIES

Arthur H. Vinton died Feb. 1963. Newspapers described him as radio's Shadow of the '40's. Mr. Vinton's run as the Master of Men's Minds must have been a brief one. Orson Welles was the original Shadow, and Jack Johnstone and Bret Morrison each had long runs. Johnstone's whereabouts are unknown. Morrison and Welles are still alive.

BULLETIN - ART RONNIE OF L.A. HERALD EXAMINER WRITES UP RADIOHERO IN HIS WEEKLY RADIO COLUMN!