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A GOOD OLD RADIO TIME

Veteran voice recalls career spanning 8 decades

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"Aaaah, Lucky Charms!" Just three words are all most of us need to conjure that little fellow with the pointy ears. That leprechaun, my radio nostalgia friends, was the voice of Arthur Anderson, who, at the delicate young age of 40, auditioned three times to land that gig.

Anderson's final audition was before the president of General Mills himself, who flew from Minneapolis to New York to see the lad for himself. (Guess he was surprised.)

"I was one of the oldest child actors around," quips Anderson, now 86 years young and still packing a solid radio voice — and still working!

Anderson started in radio in 1935 at the tender age of 12, on CBS Radio's "Let's Pretend," which featured dramatized fairy tales.

"I played old men and wicked giants, even talking horses," he recalled in a phone call the other day. "I had a ball! My parts were always the most interesting. I never got the girl, but I didn't mind." (I'm certain in real life this charming leprechaun had no shortage of female company.)

Anderson, who worked the Lucky Charm contract for 29 years, considers himself extremely lucky to have never worked at anything but acting his entire life. In 2001, he did the voice-over of Eustace, the father of "Courage — The Cowardly Dog" a TV series.

Among the high moments, says Anderson, was a run of radio plays with Orson Welles, as part of the Mercury Players on CBS Radio. The actor John Houseman — "They make money the old-fashioned way" — also produced and wrote for the Mercury Theater.

No, Anderson didn't make it into Welles' most famous production, "War of the Worlds," because there was no part for a teenage boy. But Anderson did get to play Jim Hawkins in the company's production of "Treasure Island," as well as parts in "Sherlock Holmes" and "Life with Father."

Anderson also plays parts each year in re-enacting some of the most wonderful radio classics ever aired, at the annual Friends of Old-Time Radio Convention. This year, its 33rd annual event, the convention will be held from Thursday through Sunday at the Holiday Inn North, in Newark by the airport.

Along with Anderson the fare will include a star-studded list of celebrities from past and present. When the original cast member isn't available actors are flown in from Hollywood to fill in. So you'll see "Our Miss Brooks" featuring Gloria McMillan recreating her original role of Harriet Conklin, the

principal's daughter. (Miss Brooks was played to a "T" by the late Eve Arden.)

On Oct. 23, Anderson will team up to play a part from an original script written by Peter Fernandez, who will also direct the play. Titled "The Time and the Place and the Death," the play will serve as an episode to recreate the original mystery series "Suspense," for which Fernandez wrote when it was live from the '40s through to 1962. Check out <http://www.obscurehorror.com/suspense.html> to hear some of these great dramas, featuring actors Richard Widmark, Maureen O'Hara, Olivia DeHavilland and others.

Fernandez is still a busy writer, director and actor, flying to Orlando, Fla., recently for a gig. He's traveled to Germany for cameo parts. His voice may sound particularly familiar to fans of the cult classic "Speed Racer," a product of Japanese animation. Fernandez was hired to "Americanize" the series, re-writing, dubbing and doing multiple voices.

"It would take me two days to write, direct and do the voice, plus another day in the studio," Fernandez told Radio Somewhere. The tricky part in dubbing, he said, was avoiding phrases that form the mouth in ways that make the character appear, well, to be cursing.

"For example, 'Suffer much' looks a lot like 'S.O.B.,' " he says. You also may have heard Fernandez's work in radio's famous soap operas, "Right to Happiness" to name one.

Anderson and Fernandez are only two of the dozens of talented radio and movie talent who will partake in the convention. I'm sold!

Anderson recalls that reaction to "War of the Worlds," which featured Martians landing in Grovers Mill 70 years ago this October at Halloween, was so strong that it convinced a major company to sponsor the Mercury Theater On the Air. In 1938, Mercury was renamed for this company. For a \$5 coupon off daytime admission, give the answer when you call for tickets. But don't delay. Check out Friends of Old-Time Radio's site at www.fotr.net for the full list of events and give Sean Dougherty a call at (201) 739-2541 to reserve your tickets. See you there!

Asbury Park Press radio correspondent Maureen Nevin Duffy created and hosted "Asbury Radio — The Radio Voice of Asbury Park," a weekly public affairs talk show at the city's WYGG, 88.1 FM station, for more than six years. Please send your comments and suggestions regarding Radio Somewhere to AsburyRadio@aol.com or 3 Deal Lake Court, Asbury Park, NJ 07712.
