

## The Crime Fighting Hero from Hannan's Corners

Students in the Fairport High School class of 1942 endured a burden which far outweighed the normal stress of their academic pursuits. This passage in the school yearbook said it well:

"We find we have a different outlook on life. Our spare money goes into war stamps and bonds; school clubs have held benefits for the Red Cross and collected waste paper; the seniors gave up their Easter trip and are speculating whether or not college is worthwhile with a draft facing them soon. We have air raids in connection with the fire drills and defense classes are held every evening."

Under stressful circumstances such as that endured by the FHS class of 1942, many people seek a break from reality. Some probably got lost in a good book or a movie at Schine's Temple Theater on South Main Street. But in a world before computers, smart phones, and television, the radio provided not only news and information, but entertainment as well. Families gathered around the Zenith, Philco, or even the Stromberg-Carlson, made here in Rochester, and listened to their favorite shows. One of the most popular was the Green Hornet, a weekly broadcast featuring the exploits of a crime fighting vigilante and his mysterious confidant and partner, Kato. The show originated from WXYZ in Detroit, and was heard on radio stations across America through various networks, featuring Perinton's own Bob Hall, FHS Class of 1942, as the voice of the masked crime fighter. Not bad for a teenager from Hannan's Corners.

Of course, Hannan's Corners was named for the pioneer family who settled at that place, beginning with James Hannan in 1810. One hundred and twenty years later, the intersection of Moseley and Pittsford Palmyra Road was a good location for a filling station and lunch counter, even in the Depression. Daniel and Minnie Hall ran a successful business, and were blessed with four children. But Minnie Hall was soon forced to fend for herself, after her husband died of a heart attack in 1934. At nine years old, Bob Hall had no father.



*Hall's lunch counter and gas station at Hannan's Corners. This is a later photo, taken when the business was owned by Sam Muzeka.*

In High School, Bob excelled in drama club, orchestra, and chorus, and these activities lead to a career which utilized his talents, very quickly. At 18 years of age, Bob Hall went from helping out at the family gas station to landing a coveted role at Detroit radio station WXYZ, as the voice of a popular American fictionalized hero. Bob portrayed the Green Hornet for about five years. Not long after, television would begin to find its way into homes across the land, and by 1952, the Green Hornet radio program was just a memory.

Bob Hall was on to bigger and even better things when he landed in New York City in 1949, and began a long association with WCBS radio. By 1952, Hall was selected over almost one hundred other radio personalities to host a popular overnight show called "Music Till Dawn", a program of standards and classics. The show could be heard across much of the country, and won a prestigious Peabody Award for musical excellence. At the time, it was said that "more women go to bed listening to Bob Hall than any other man in America."

Perinton's own Bob Hall was a nationally recognized radio star for many years, first as the Green Hornet, and later with his popular late night radio show on WCBS of New York. Sadly, his career was cut short with health issues, and he died in 1967 at the age of 42.

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