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# *The University of Dayton*

# *News Release*

March 24, 1993  
Contact: Pam Huber

## **'WAR OF THE WORLDS' SHOWED POTENTIAL OF MASS MEDIA**

DAYTON, Ohio — Orson Welles' broadcast of "The War of the Worlds" was a pivotal event in broadcasting history. But college students won't grasp its significance unless they understand the historical, economic and political climate of 1938, say two broadcasting teachers from the University of Dayton.

"We were just coming out of the Depression, Hitler was marching in Europe, America was in its isolationist stage and the V-2 rocket was being developed," says Alan Hueth, who will co-present a paper on teaching "The War of the Worlds" in the classroom at the combined convention for the Popular Culture Association and the American Culture Association April 7-10 in New Orleans. His co-presenter is Glenn Walters.

Welles' broadcast mimicked a news show so successfully that audiences believed that Martians were invading New Jersey. About five million radio listeners tuned in late, switching the dial from the popular Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy program, and missed Welles' opening disclaimer that the show was fiction, says Walters.

It was a large-scale, public display of the potential impact of mass media, Hueth says, and it was an important lesson. "The media is so ubiquitous — we are under a constant barrage of media messages. We need to be informed to be critical consumers and producers of media."

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** For media interviews, call Alan Hueth at UD at (513) 229-3945 or at home at (513) 859-1188. Hueth is a resident of Miamisburg. Walters is a resident of Bellbrook and can be reached by calling 293-2191.