

OTRR OLD RADIO TIMES

Official Newsletter of the Old Time Radio Research Group

September-October 2020

www.otrr.org [Groups.io](https://www.groups.io)

No. 110

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Further Discoveries About Big Jon and Sparkie, Pt. 1

Gavin Callaghan

Since this publication is strictly devoted to OTR, one can forego the usual preambles and explanations and delve directly into the heart of the matter: the current state of *Big Jon and Sparkie* studies.

In a sense, it is both the best of times and the worst of times. Worst, in the sense that although there is a great deal of information out there, most of it is uncodified, unformed, unsorted, and incorrect. And best, in the sense that there is a wide open and largely unexplored field for examination and endeavor – despite the fact that *No School Today* went off the air back in 1982 and was on the air for three decades before that.

In a sense, this is to be expected. One sees the same situation in the comic book field, in which superhero comics remain the fixed center of attention, while (so-called) “children’s comics” from *Archie*, *Harvey*, *Gold Key* and *Dell* remain ignored, marginalized, forgotten - despite the fact that the vast majority of comics were children’s comics.

By the same token, *No School Today* starring Big Jon and Sparkie was also a children’s show, and thus finds itself marginalized in an already marginalized field.

In short, people simply don’t take it seriously.



And thus, aside from a few devoted enthusiasts, studies have languished. But in the ignored also lies opportunity.

Facebook

Back in 2018, I founded the *Big Jon and Sparkie Fans* page on Facebook. Response was swift and soon we had upwards of 40 members. Some were lifelong fans. Others were people whom I located in my online searches who had vague memories of *No School Today* but could not remember what it was called, or even if it was real. Voices in the wilderness, they were searching for other people who knew of or had also heard the show.

This question from Marie Moffitt is typical in this regard (and she also provides some interesting information about the sign-off used in the long-lost 1950s shows):

“Is anyone else out there old enough to remember the time before TV? For some reason, today I was reminded of the Saturday morning children’s radio shows, in particular of ‘Big Jon and Sparkie’... I listened to that show between the ages of about three and six. The show was on Saturday mornings and they used to sign off with ‘Remember, you go to your church and we’ll go to ours, but we’ll walk along together.’”

Another such query was posted by a member of the Facebook group "Savannah Jewish History", who posted a wonderful and previously unseen press photo of a live performance by Big Jon.

Some were co-workers of Jon Arthur’s, including John Willyard and Ted Hering, who worked with him at Family Radio in the 1970s, and were generous enough to share some of their stories, anecdotes, and pictures.

Willyard, for example, shared his story of going on a camping trip with Big Jon and his family. He even revealed that Big Jon saw him as his protégé, and also as a possible suitor for his daughter! He wrote:

“I am privileged to have known Jon Arthur and to have worked with him from 1970 until 1977. He told me once that he wanted me to know everything about broadcasting that he did (I also found out later that he’d wanted me to marry his daughter). What a talent, what a heart and what a testimony of a life changed by God for His Glory! His story was actually dramatized on the Pacific Garden Mission’s radio program ‘Unshackled!’ He and his lovely wife Rosalie and their grandchildren were guests of my grandfather’s up in the mountains just below Yosemite and we were able to caravan with them there in the Summer of 1976. I’ll never forget Jon Arthur and his impact upon my life!”

Hering, meanwhile, shared a rare hour-long audio tribute to Big Jon from 1982, which was aired on Family Radio shortly after his death. This recording is invaluable since it includes excerpts from various shows throughout Jon Arthur’s long career, including his various religious programs. What’s more, it also includes a brief excerpt from

the *Unshackled* episode which tells the story of Jon’s life -a fact which proves that tapes of it must still exist, somewhere, perhaps in the vaults at Family Radio’s HQ. (I contacted *Unshackled* myself in Chicago, but they informed me that they no longer have any recordings of past shows, a true loss.)

Hering also shared a stunning conversation he once had with Jon, which reveals what the eccentric inventor “Uke Butscha” really looked like: “I once asked Jon what Eukie Butcha looked like. After a few seconds of thought, he suggested comedian Ben Blue.” (Of course, Ben Blue would also have to be wearing Uke’s characteristic costume, consisting of green corduroy pants, red and black plaid jacket with a brown fur collar, and brown and white college boy saddle shoes, as described in one of the episodes of the show.)

Ted Davenport, of *Radio Memories*, was generous enough to step up and upload his collection of high-quality *No School Today* wav. files, posting links to their location on *Dropbox*. Seven of these episodes are available nowhere else, while five of them are duplicates of episodes in David Goldin’s 27-episode collection, which is otherwise unavailable.

Rebecka Jones, from the Washington, D.C. Old Time Radio Club, was kind enough to provide me with eleven lost episodes of *Big Jon and Sparkie* from 1954 and the 1960s, including eight episodes featuring the adventure of “Sparkie’s Red Caboose” and three episodes of *No School Today*

I was really lucky to get premier OTR fan, Fred Berney, to join our group. Berney is one of the show’s earliest fans (going back to the 1950s!), and he is one of the few people in the world to actually possess recordings of *No School Today* from the 1950s. He promptly shared a video of a talk he gave at the “Friends of Old Time Radio Convention” in 2003, including parts of an interview he did with Don Kortekamp, as well as some clips from these early shows.



"BIG JON" and "SPARKIE"
IN PERSON

THIS SATURDAY, MARCH 3

3 BIG SHOWS
10:30 A.M. 2:30 P.M.
7:30 P.M.

The show the kids have been waiting for...

AT THE
MARY E. SAWYER AUDITORIUM

BIG JON and SPARKIE stars of the ABC radio network program, have been carrying on a running contest across the nation to outwit each other on their stage performances. The score now seems to be slightly in favor of Big Jon.

Sparkie, the "little elf from the Land of Makebelieve who wants to be a real boy," says that with the help of the boys and girls from La Crosse, he thinks he knows how to get the letter of Big Jon this time.

The songs, dances and hilarious antics of this famous pair have been enthusiastically received by more than a million delighted children and adults who are the "young in heart."

ADVANCE TICKET SALE: Bobcat, Mackerel in the Village and from our Jazzette. Tickets available at Auditorium Box Office on Day of Show. Children 50¢ Adults 75¢.

SPONSORED BY THE LA CROSSE JAYCETTES

Best of all, was the generosity of the Kortekamp family themselves, including the sons, daughters, and in-laws of *Sparkie*-scriptwriter Don Kortekamp, who have proved only too happy to answer numerous questions about their talented father, thus setting the record straight about his contributions to the program.

For example, I learned that I was correct, in surmising that Kortekamp was probably a big *Seinfeld* fan – particularly of the character of Kramer. As I pointed out in a post, Kortekamp's eccentric "Uke Butscha" is practically a prototype for *Seinfeld*'s character of Kramer.

Both characters like to play detective; both characters are markedly litigious; both characters are expert athletes (Kramer: golf, Uke: baseball and tiddlywinks); both characters have mysterious "friends" whom they constantly speak of, but who no one else ever sees (Kramer: Bob Saccamano, Uke: Charlie Rustlaw); both characters are inventors, who are constantly coming up with crazy ideas and schemes, etc., etc., etc. As Kortekamp's family confirmed, their father was indeed a big "Kramer" fan.

I even uncovered a man-in-the-street newspaper item from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* for September 25, 1997, featuring a blurb from Kortekamp, in which he gives a possible plotline for a future *Seinfeld* episode, in which all the characters strike it rich:

"George Costanza would buy a hairpiece, which would turn out to be a duplicate of Cosmo Kramer's wild hair....Then Kramer would buy an expensive bald hairpiece, and would boast to Jerry: 'Bald guys are considered sexy. And I'm sexy. Do you hear me? I'm sexy. I'm Kramer. Baldy Kramer.'"

The writing instinct never dies. You can still see the wild imagination of the writer of *Big Jon and Sparkie* at work – but with new characters. One wishes Kortekamp had been given the opportunity to write for *Seinfeld*!

Even more interesting was the response to a post of mine, in which I pointed out how many episodes of *Big Jon and Sparkie* just involved the characters sitting around and talking. "Do Nothing" episodes, I called them, and they were among my favorites. Kortekamp seemed especially fond of pulling the rug out from beneath the feet of unsuspecting listeners, and inserting a "Do Nothing" episode right when the action or suspense seemed most intense. For example, during "The Canine Mutiny" Big Jon and friends suddenly stop searching for the missing dogs, and play a game of Parcheesi instead – and then became lost in determining who would roll first. During "The Widow Dilly Kidnapping", the action suddenly stops, as Sparkie spends all day talking on the phone, trying to call up members of his gang. In another episode, Jon and Sparkie take time off from searching for Uke, to search for Jon's missing eyeglasses.

Terry Kortekamp Moore's response (one of Kortekamp's four daughters) is amazing. She wrote:

"As for the do nothing episodes, in later years he had this to say about his favorite TV series- *Seinfeld*: he remarked that he thought up the 'talk about nothing' in his *Big Jon and Sparkie* shows."

The Kortekamp family also posted some pictures of a 1987 newspaper clipping, showcasing a tribute to Sparkie which was held at the American Museum of Broadcasting in New York City (now known as the Paley Center.)

Kortekamp's family also was able to clear up a mystery surrounding one of the names occasionally mentioned on *The Further Adventures of Big Jon and Sparkie*. Kortekamp sometimes included the names of

personal friends in his scripts. For example, when Uke builds his innovative Indy 500 racing car, he calls it the "A&E Special". This refers to The A&E Butscha Sheet Metal Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. Other names included in his shows are: William A. Stautberg, Charles Hamilton, Harry Bridges, Leonard Hart, and Arthur Lindt (or Lynde.) Although the other names in this list still remain unidentified for now, the Kortekamps were able to confirm that "William A. Stautberg" was their own "Uncle Bill", Don Kortekamp's brother-in-law.

Best of all was when Kortekamp's family confirmed that *yes*, Don Kortekamp *was* a big fan of Limburger Cheese sandwiches – just like his characters on the show.

As fans will know, Big Jon and his friends are all fans of limburger sandwiches, with sliced Bermuda Onions and a generous side of pickled herring. (They're even members of a club dedicated to it!) This sandwich was popular among German immigrants to America early in the 20th century, although its popularity gradually began to wane, starting in the 1950s. Only a few restaurants still serve limburger cheese sandwiches, and only one or two cheese makers still produce the pungent, smelly cheese. Bermuda Onions, too, are increasingly rare. (Nor are they to be confused with red onions, or Spanish onions, which are still readily available.)

According to the website *Cook's Info*:
 "At the turn of the 1900s, they were very popular and considered a very good variety. Now, though, producers don't like these onions because the yields are lower than with Grano or Granex type onions. Consequently, Bermuda Onions are not readily available anymore in stores or markets, but seed is still kept for breeding purposes, and home gardeners can grow them."

Most important of all, the Kortekamp family have been instrumental in reinforcing the fact of Kortekamp's contribution to the program, a fact which is often ignored in articles and interviews about the show, which tend to highlight the personality of Jon Arthur. Yes, Jon Arthur and sound engineer Bill Mahoney brought the characters to life: and Big Jon was responsible for the back-and-forth dialogue on the *No School Today* Saturday shows. But these characters were



formulated and created by the fertile imagination of Don Kortekamp.

Credit Where Credit is Due

This issue of determining credit is a familiar one to me, from my previous studies of the comic book industry – in which the retroactive assigning of credits forms one of the most contentious topics of argument and discussion. Rarely is anything in life solely the work of one man, and yet we often see a single individual being assigned the lion's share of name recognition in both the public sphere and the press, in a variety of industries.

It is all-too-common to see Jon Arthur being credited as the *writer* of the show, in both interviews and publicity materials, even though all the characters and plots (not to mention the highly unusual and original names of the characters) were actually the

HEY! KIDS!
BIG JON and SPARKIE
 Will Be At Your
SAFEWAY STORE
 at 23rd Near Eastern
 This Evening
 From 7:00 P. M. to 9:00 P. M.
 Also See
BIG JON & SPARKIE
BIG SHOW
 at the Municipal Aud.
 Saturday Afternoon
 at 1:00 p. m., 3:00 p. m.
 and 5:00 p. m.
 ADMISSION
 1 Box Top From
SKINNER'S RAISIN BRAN 10-Oz. Pkg. **18c**

creation of Don Kortekamp. Indeed, most aspects of the show, from the details of Sparkie's Cheviot neighborhood to the shops and street names and even the name of Sparkie's dog, were all derived from Kortekamp's own childhood. It is strange to explore Kortekamp's Cheviot neighborhood on Google Maps, and realize how close-together all the locations are – most of the places being within walking-distance. Especially since Big Jon and Sparkie are often depicted as driving to and from these places in his car. Essentially, it is a child's eye view of the neighborhood being blown up to an adult-scale.

The show was the work of many other individuals as well. While searching for Big Jon and Sparkie clips on *Youtube*, for example, I came across a 2017 comment from a person named Tony Cortezza, who wrote:

"My Grandfather Garnet Evans was the manager of this show in 1954. I am going through some of his memorabilia and found some pamphlets and brochures from his time on the road with them. He did promotions for the sponsors as well. I had never heard of this show but it's nice to know that he was part of something that people loved."

By "manager", I suppose Cortezza means that Evans managed Sparkie's live shows. I found a newspaper photo from May 7, 1953, showing Evans at a publicity event at a grocery store for a live Sparkie appearance later the next week. (They are all standing in front of a large display of Skinner's Raisin Bran cereal boxes, featuring Sparkie on the packaging: and if any cereal box collectors out there have one of these boxes, please send me a picture!)

Other individuals involved with the *Big Jon and Sparkie* show and deserving of credit include Robert Sampson, former manager for WSAI radio, who became Jon Arthur's business partner via Robert Sampson Enterprises, which owned the radio programs and handled merchandising for the Sparkie character. And Sampson did his job well. Among the merchandise I've uncovered so far are comic books, coloring books, riddle books, children's books, puppets, drinking glasses, buttons, the Sparkie Fan Club, cereal boxes, T-shirts, records (both singles and LPs), and much, much more.

I even found some old Sparkie wall-paper for the kiddies, on a wallpaper blog entitled <https://www.cooperhewitt.org/.../sparkie-the-little-boy-with.../> The blogger writes:

"I first came across this wallpaper when I was looking for children's wallpapers for an exhibition I worked on a number of years ago. [...]"

"Sparkie was part of a juvenile line of wallpapers produced by Child-Life wallpapers in 1953. The collection included eleven patterns that included Peter Pan & Wendy, Gabby Hayes, as well as baseball, nursery rhyme, circus, space ships, and cowboy and Indian themed wallpapers. Each of the patterns was available for less than \$2.00 per roll. Produced as inexpensive novelty papers that would appeal to children, these were quickly run through the printing press as evidenced by the amount of color bleed in the designs.

"On this wallpaper Sparkie is pretty much the only character illustrated. He is shown acting out a number of famous stories from American history including George Washington crossing the Delaware, Paul Revere making his historic ride and Buffalo Bill Cody with Sitting Bull. As with almost all children's papers designed at this time, Sparkie would have had direct marketing appeal to boys. Looking at the other patterns in this collection, of interest to those beyond the nursery years, Peter Pan & Wendy is the only one

of more gender-neutral interest, the little boy with big ambitions."

Others involved with the show include cartoonist Leon Jason, whose "Jason Art" studio produced numerous children's comics (usually funny animal comics) during the 1950s, including *Sparkie* comics for Chicago publisher Ziff-Davis. Jason Art were the ones who created the now familiar design for "Sparkie", as seen on all the packaging and merchandise: i.e., his characteristic red jumpsuit and zigzag beanie -all of which was ostensibly based on listener input, which arrived by the thousands in 1951.

Jason's *Sparkie* comic ran for four issues from 1951-1952. Ziff-Davis was a Chicago publisher of science fiction and pulp magazines, and their 1950s comics were known for their lush and beautiful painted covers, some of which were edited by *Superman*-creator Jerry Siegel. I don't know who wrote the series (probably the Jason Art studio), but it seems clear they were not written by Kortekamp, since many of the small details are different from the radio series.

In one of those weird coincidences which sometimes occurs, one day at the local comic book store I happened to find a copy of a rare, obscure children's comic from Decker entitled *Happy Jack* No. 2 (Nov. 1957) in the dollar-bins. *Happy Jack* lasted for only two issues, and appeared to consist mainly of inventory stories leftover from the closing of Ziff-Davis' comics line. *Happy Jack* No.'s 1 & 2 include three *Big Jon and Sparkie* items, which appear not to have been previously published by Ziff-Davis, including a "how-to-draw Sparkie" feature, as well as a full-length "Who Am I?" strip, in which Sparkie becomes a famous U.S. historical figure. (Sparkie's hair is miscolored blond in this strip, probably because Decker's colorist did not have a color guide and was not familiar with the character.)

Nor should we forget Don Poynter: producer and puppeteer for Sparkie's live shows (who also worked with Harlem Globetrotters).

And then there are Rufus and Margo Rose: puppeteers who designed the Sparkie marionette puppet (Jimmy Rose, their son, was intended to manipulate the puppet for TV.) This puppet is now in the possession of one of the *Big Jon and Sparkie Fans* page members, who is attempting to



restore it to working condition. The Roses also created TV's *Howdy Doody* puppet. An amazing 1951 picture showing Rufus Rose testing out the Sparkie marionette in front of an unspectacled Jon and a group of children, was posted on Facebook by The Frisch Marionette Company.

And then there is Todd Williams: a Cincinnati used car salesman, who invented a clever electronic gadget enabling the Sparkie marionette puppet to speak along with his tape-recorded lines. (Essentially the same gimmick later used in Teddy Ruxpen dolls during the 1980s.)

Nor can we forget William (Bill) Mahoney Jr.: sound engineer/recorder, who worked with sound engineers Glenn Merriam and Joe Heiser to create the Sparkie voice effect (later used to great effect by Alvin and the Chipmunks.)

All these people enabled Big Jon to do what he did, and what he did so well.

Return for the finale of Callagan's feature on *Big Jon and Sparkie* in the next issue of the *Old Radio Times*.

Stay Tuned for Terror:
 Horror Sprinkled with Humor Pervades the
 Etherwaves

By Karl Schadow © 2020

One might surmise that if the fantasy and science fiction stories of a literary giant such as Robert



Robert Bloch

Bloch had been adapted for an internationally syndicated radio program, that there would be volumes of work written about said venture. Surprisingly, this has not been the case for the entity - *Stay Tuned for Terror*. There are entries of various lengths describing this program in old-time radio references and also horror compendiums. (Contact author for list.) However, most of this venture's detailed chronicling has emanated from the dispenser of terror himself. In 2011, this periodical (see [November-December 2011](#)) provided a very brief overview of the program. Four years ago, this author (see Winter/Spring 2016 issue of *Blood 'N' Thunder* available at www.muraniapress.com) significantly expanded the program's history correcting much of the misinformation that had been published in

many print and online sources. During the past year, interest in *Stay Tuned for Terror* has been vastly renewed, as for the first time ever, audio of previously uncirculated episodes has been released. The current study will review selected historical program highlights along with an analysis of those liberated recordings.

The concept of creating his own radio program had commenced in 1939 when Bob and fellow Milwaukeean - radio announcer/actor James Doolittle had sought to gain national exposure with a script for *Lights Out*. At that time, the program originating from the Chicago NBC studios was accepting submissions from freelance scribes. However, before the Bloch-Doolittle collaboration could be presented to network executives, radio's premier avenue for horror was cancelled and the duo's efforts were put on hold. In 1944, the idea was rekindled via the radio adaptation (*Kate Smith Hour*, January 7, 1944) and book publishing (*The Mystery Companion*) of "Yours Truly - Jack the Ripper." The serial killer's story infused with a supernatural theme had been published recently in *Weird Tales* (July 1943). At this time, Bloch was employed at the Gustav Marx Advertising Agency and sought the opportunity to further his income via this dream project. Bob had also enlisted Berle Adams as his agent.

Robert Bloch
Were You Looking For This?
(Radio Script Writer)
Specializing in comedy material, Fantasies and horror stories....Writer of "Stay Tuned for Terror"--current transcribed series of 39 complete stories, WMAQ, NBC. Writer of "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper", produced for Kate Smith Hour, starring Laird Cregar ---and again on the Mollie Mystery Theatre---Writer (gags and Situation) for radio comedians, Stoopnagle and Budd and Roy Atwell.
personal mgt. Berle Adams Agency
203 N. Wabash Ave, Chicago 1, Ill.

While Bloch remained in Milwaukee, James Doolittle was seeking greener pastures in Chicago. Doolittle had secured employment at the National Recording Corporation which led to his meeting many Chicago radio executives including Johnnie Neblett.

This former sportscaster had made the move from St. Louis to The Windy City in 1942 and after much effort was able to sell his initial creation *So The Story Goes* to one of the region's 50 kWatt powerhouses, WBBM. This initial success led to the founding of Neblett Radio Productions (NRP) which would package the Doolittle-Bloch venture. The trio was then able to secure the necessary capital from Chicago-based talent agent Berle Adams. This was his second venture into radio having previously booked Skip Farrell into several programs.



Johnnie Neblett

Out series, was enlisted as director. The remaining crew were culled from the WBBM staff including organist Romelle Fay, one of Chicagoland's



Romelle Fay

Per Neblett's connections, the studios of WBBM (located in the Wrigley Building) were utilized for the weekly recording sessions (completing three episodes) of *Stay Tuned for Terror* which commenced early in 1945. Howard Keegan, a veteran of several network programs, most notably the 1930s *Lights*

preeminent musicians with more than a decade of broadcasting expertise. The names of the sound effects artists, and also the studio booth and recording engineers remain unknown.

Each of the thirty-nine episodes of *Stay Tuned for Terror* featured James Doolittle (using the stage name Craig Dennis) as lead actor with his younger brother Donald selected as announcer who also frequently engaged in supporting roles. The remaining thespians were culled from the seasoned Chicago radio pool - Angelyn Orr, Elmira Roessler, Wilms Herbert



Wilms Herbert



Angelyn Orr

and Helene Bernsohn, along with newcomer Francis Spencer who had recently arrived in Chicago from Cleveland. It should be noted that Boris Karloff was not involved as suggested in Richard Hand's tome, *Terror on the Air*. The actor's assumed participation may have been confused with the 1944 Blue Network program *Creeps By Night*, or the 1960s NBC-TV series *Thriller* in which he was the host of both programs.

Stay Tuned for Terror was originally sold and distributed in the middle portion of the United States by the NRP Chicago office and also in Western areas by the firm's Los Angeles facility directed by Morton Jacobson. On the East Coast, Richard Stark & Company handled these duties. In Canada, A. J. "Tony" Messner peddled the program in Western provinces with several firms including that of S. W. "Spence" Caldwell servicing the Eastern regions.

Though *Stay Tuned for Terror* commenced its broadcasting tenure with a bang via WMAQ (another Chicago 50,000-watt station), additional sales lagged. Was there discord among the staff at the Neblett

firm? *Variety* (August 1, 1945) reported that James Doolittle who had been serving as Neblett's Midwest Sales Manager departed to start his own business - Craig Dennis Radio Productions (CDRP) - in partnership with Berle Adams. By the fall of that year as reported in the trade (*The Billboard*, October 6, 1945 and *Variety*, October 24, 1945), Johnnie Neblett had sold his complete holdings of the series to CDRP. A year later, CDRP was dissolved and the program became the sole property of Berle Adams (*The Billboard*, June 29, 1946). In the Fall of 1947, disc jockey Rush Hughes assumed the vaunted task of promoting the



Rush Hughes

program (*The Billboard*, September 20, 1947). He had recently negotiated with the beyond-metropolitan market, Keystone Broadcasting System (KBS) in which his transcribed, syndicated music program was to be heard on nearly 300 KBS stations. The number of such stations opting to broadcast Hughes's latest attraction is

currently unknown. Though other programs offered by these distributors were showcased in the high-profile *Radio Daily Annual Shows of Tomorrow* editions, *Stay Tuned for Terror* was surprisingly absent from such listings. Finally, had the program's price-tag during its initial two years of availability exceeded the budget of many stations especially those of lower wattage? A dispatch from the Chicago office of *Variety* (January 2, 1946) cited the program along with the prominent enterprises *Easy Aces* and *Joe Palooka* as desirable properties provided that they were offered at a reasonable cost.

The following is a list (by year) of U. S. and Canadian stations (with known sponsors) that beamed the program: 1945: WMAQ/Chicago (Consolidated Royal Chemical Corp), KJR/Seattle, CHML/Toronto, ON; 1946: KGMB/Honolulu, TH (Uptown Service Station), WPEN/Philadelphia, CKMO/Vancouver, BC, CFQC/Saskatoon, SK, CHOK/Sarnia, ON, CKWX/Vancouver, BC; 1947: WLAC/Nashville; 1949: CKRD/Red Deer, AB; 1950: CJOC/Lethbridge, AB (Lee Duck Dry Cleaners). Other than daily radio logs, the publicity for the program in local newspapers was

TONIGHT AT 10:30 P.M.

“STAY TUNED FOR TERROR”

OVER

CJOC

LETHBRIDGE

PRESENTED BY

LEE DUCK

DRY CLEANERS

A NEW MYSTERY THRILLER

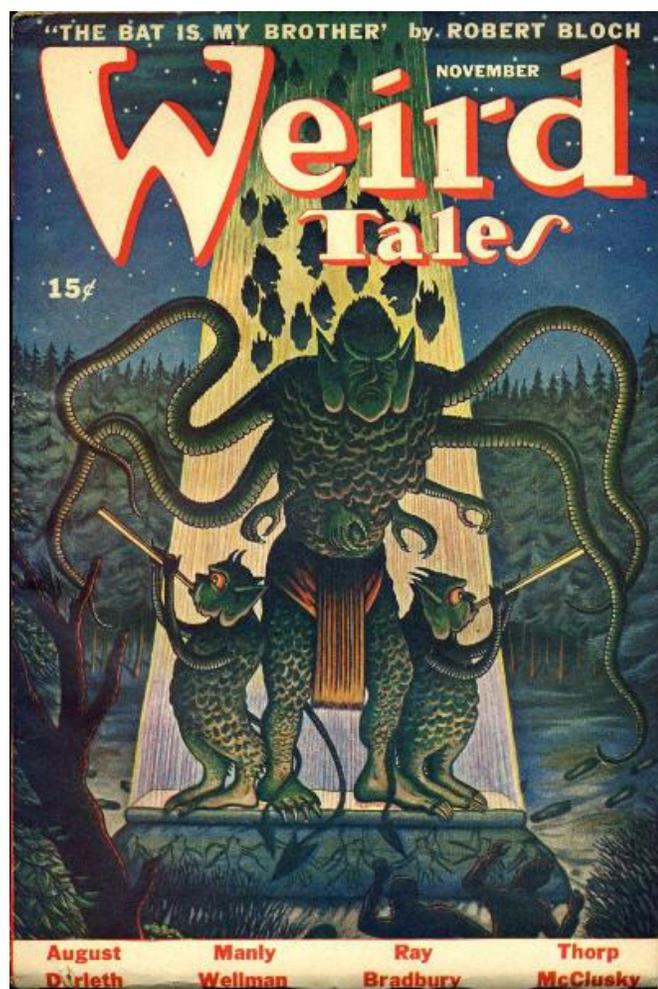
scant at best. Could excessive cost have precluded most sponsors from promoting the series in local newspapers?

However, there was much excitement in *Weird Tales* as the program's production team negotiated with the magazine's editors for extensive exploitation. In the July 1945 issue, Robert Bloch informed readers of this endeavor, divulging the titles of several episodes including "The Bat is My Brother and "The Hands of Loh Sing." Though the former was slated to be the premiere episode, it was assigned as the second installment. What is indeed enlightening, is that the latter is one of eight stories which was crafted specifically for the etherwaves and has not been published in any other format. Moreover, "A Question of Etiquette" was also cited in the *Weird Tales* promo, but for unknown reasons was not one of the series' thirty-nine, fifteen-minute chillers. However, there is a possibility that it could be one of seven remaining original radio dramas with an alternative moniker. The plot of one of these eight yarns, "The Man Who Raised The Dead" has been elucidated (see log below).

EPISODE LOG: (From Robert Bloch in *The Fanscient* Summer 1949. As there are no extant scripts, titles were culled from the pulp stories, with original moniker and author pseudonym indicated where applicable. Plot synopsis quoted from each yarn's title page header.)

#1 "The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton" (*Amazing Stories*, March 1939) "Terrible indeed was the prospect of a lifetime in a tiny cell, but the achievement was worth the price."

#2 "The Bat Is My Brother" (*Weird Tales*, November 1944) "Have you ever wondered why there are not more vampires - for every victim of a vampire becomes one in turn."



#3 "Warm Up the Hot Seat" (Original radio drama) No information available.

#4 "Soul Proprietor" (*Weird Tales*, November 1945) "If somebody wants to sell his soul why shouldn't he advertise? That's sound business!"

#5 "Satan's Phonograph" (*Weird Tales*, January 1946) "An instrument of the devil, its contents created in Hell!"

#6 "The House of the Hatchet" (*Weird Tales*, January 1941) "A spirit was chained to the blood-stained block - a force of hatred born when a woman died."

#7 "One Way to Mars" (*Weird Tales*, July 1945) ""You need to get away from it all," said the little man, "How about a ticket to Mars?""

#8 "The Lands of Loh Sing" (Original radio drama) No information available.

#9 "The Man Who Lost His Head" (Original radio drama) No information available.

#10 "Which is the Witch?" (*Strange Stories*, April 1939, "A Question of Identity" as by Tarleton Fiske) "No Pang of Hunger nor Torment of Thirst Can Stifle the Questions of Who, Where and What!"

#11 "Black Bargain" (*Weird Tales*, May 1942) "Maybe you've heard it said of someone, "he's scared of his own shadow." Well. here's the story of a man who had a *damned* good reason to be!"

#12 "Return of the Monster" (*Weird Tales*, July 1938, "Return to the Sabbath") 'A shuddery weird tale of Hollywood and the film industry - a story of the gruesome thing that emerged from the burial crypt.'

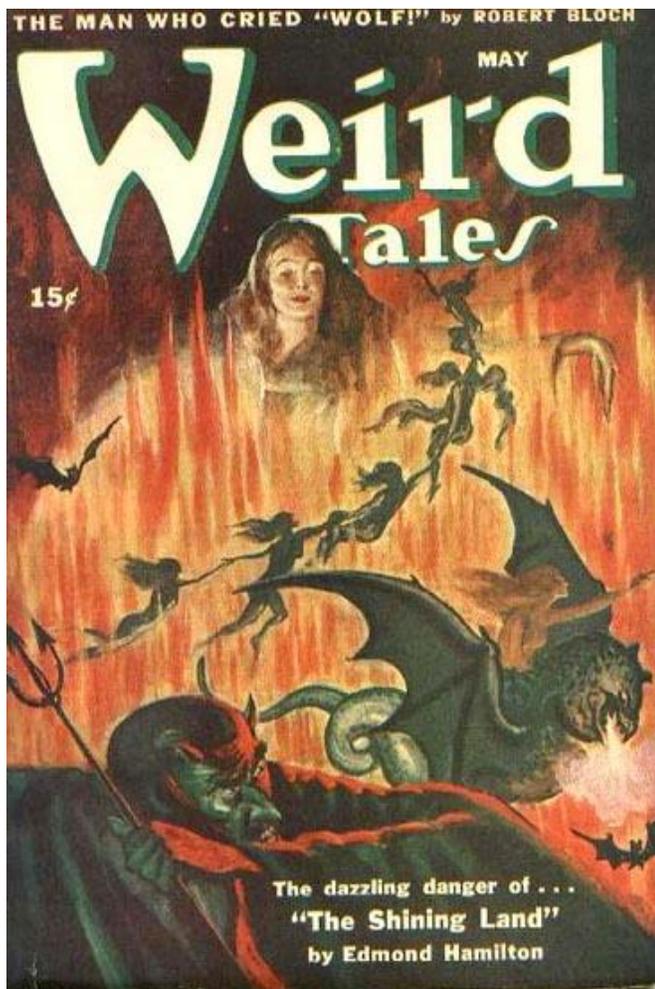
#13 "The Creeper in the Crypt" (*Weird Tales*, July 1937) "A tale of stark horror in a gangster's hideout in the dread cellar of an evil house in legend-haunted Arkham."

#14 "The Secret of Sebek" (*Weird Tales*, November 1937) "What grisly horror spawned in prehistoric ages in ancient Egypt, stalked through that weird house in New Orleans?"

#15 "The Devil's Ticket" (*Weird Tales*, September 1944) "An innocent person must not be delivered into the hands of that black being masquerading as a pawnshop proprietor."

#16 "The Secret in the Tomb" (*Weird Tales*, May 1935) "An eldritch tale of stark horror and a terrible rendezvous in a hidden mausoleum."

#17 "The Man Who Cried "Wolf!"" (*Weird Tales*, May 1935) "She was half Indian and half goddess--but wholly evil!"



#18 "Waxworks" (*Weird Tales*, January 1939) "The story of a wax statue that was instinct with evil allure--a fascinating tale of a weird crime, that rises to a climax of horror."

#19 "Beauty's Beast" (*Weird Tales*, May 1941)

"The pet shop was a very strange place indeed."

#20 "Yours Truly -- Jack the Ripper" (*Weird Tales*, July 1943) "The greatest monster of all time still lives! He's here among us--Leaving his signature in blood . . ."

#21 "Cloak of Darkness" (*Unknown*, May 1939

"The Cloak") "The costumer assured him the cloak was genuine, of course--"

#22 "The Cat That Never Died" (*Weird Tales*, March 1948) "The old woman and the cat, they were both ageless, both evil."

#23 "The Mad Scientist" (*Fantastic Adventures*, September 1947) "Professor Lippert's puffballs were made for one purpose-to kill."

#24 "The Totem-Pole" (*Weird Tales*, August 1939) "A frightful horror was consummated in the Indian wing of the museum - a compelling take of weird revenge."

#25 "Contents, One Corpse" (Original radio drama) No information available.

#26 "Grandfather's Clock" (Original radio drama) No information available.

#27 "Lizzie Borden Took An Axe . . ." (*Weird Tales*, November 1946) "Yes, horror comes at midnight, born of whispers out of dreams." Cast: Craig Dennis and Angelyn Orr.

#28 "The Heart of a Robot" (*Fantastic Adventures*, June 1943, "Almost Human" as by Tarleton Fiske) "Blasserman's robot was willing to learn but didn't know right from wrong."

#29 "The Man Who Hated Machines" (*Astonishing Stories*, February 1943, "It Happened Tomorrow") "Now it can be told - the story that is not of today, yet might be, what would you do - and how would you act - in a world gone mad?"

#30 "The Grinning Ghoul" (*Weird Tales*, June 1936) "A stark horror in the subterranean depths beneath the tomb."



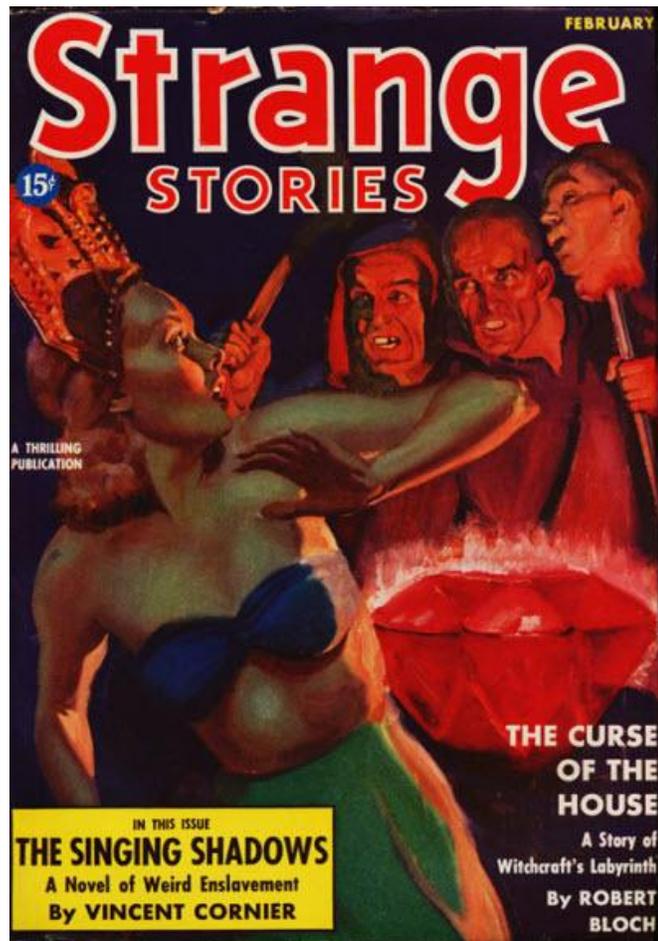
#31 "Wine of the Wizard" (*Weird Tales*, November 1940, "Wine of the Sabbat") "Wine whose-bouquet was the enflamed embrace of a stone Sphinx-whose perfume was warm blood on obscene alters."

#32 "The Beasts of Barzac" (*Weird Tales*, July 1944) "Old Barzac was too fat to be a vampire, too indolent to become a werewolf - but there are other things."

#33 "The Dark Demon" (*Weird Tales*, November 1936) "The strange story of a man who communed too closely with things from beyond space - a shuddery tale of stark horror."

#34 "I Hate Myself" (Original radio drama) No information available.

#35 "The Curse of the House" (*Strange Stories*, February 1939) "Twelve Generations of Evil Incarnate Rise to Avenge the Abode of Secrets Forbidden!"



#36 "The Man Who Raised the Dead" (Original radio drama) "A guess at what might have happened to Hitler." (See *Variety* review below.)

#37 "The Bogy Man Will Get You" (*Weird Tales*, March 1946) "He was so very different from other men." Cast: Craig Dennis, Angelyn Orr, Don Doolittle and Elmira Roessler.



Don Doolittle



Elmira Roessler

#38 "Sadini's Dummy" (*Weird Tales*, January 1949, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice") "He was more than just a magician; he had the power."

#39 "Horror Story" (Original radio drama) No information available.

Stories chosen spanned the author's full repertoire of fantasy, horror and science fiction, dating back to the early yarns in *Weird Tales* up through the then-current 1945 chillers. Noteworthy is that listeners heard some exploits on the airwaves prior to their subsequent publication. Furthermore, seven fables were culled from other sources including *Strange Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures*. The most intriguing aspect of the entire lot involves the eight original plays concocted specifically for radio. To date, no version of these have been located in any other medium or format.

Critique of *Stay Tuned for Terror* has usually been limited to one sentence phrases commending the works of the author. This is most certainly based on the highly-regarded pulp tales coupled with the non-existent audio and scripts. However, reviews of selected episodes of the series appeared in both the trade and newspapers whose critics were members of the WMAQ listening audience. Chicago *Variety* correspondent Mike Connolly (writing as *Mike*. in the

November 7, 1945 issue) had heralded both cast and crew accomplishments noting: "...expert direction...achieves a maximum of scariness with small casts and the standard ghostly sound effects...provides eerie organissimos to background the chilling thesping..." He also solved one dilemma facing historiographers by revealing the theme of "The Man Who Raised The Dead." Adele Hoskins (*Chicago Daily News*, July 27, 1945) advised the readers of her column: "If you want to end the listening with a bit of gore, try WMAQ at 10:45. "Stay Tuned for Terror" is getting reams of fan mail - from men, congratulating the station "for putting a man's show on the air.""

It is disconcerting however, the two most esteemed individuals associated with the show displayed conflicting assessments regarding its overall fruition. In his 1993 autobiography *Once Around the Bloch*, Bob thought the series was a modest success. Conversely, Berle Adams stated



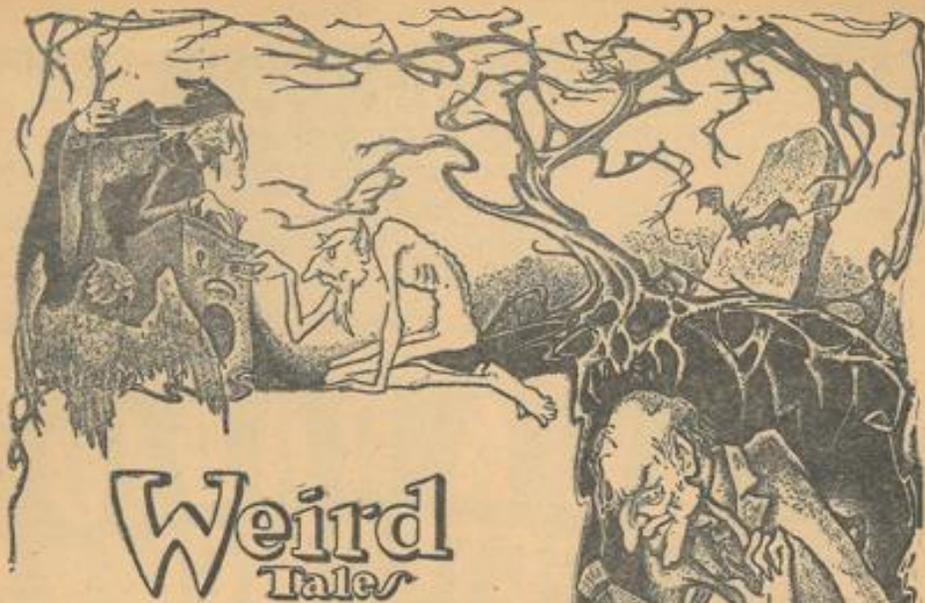
Berle Adams

in *A Sucker for Talent* (1998) that: "... the show was a dismal failure. I couldn't sell it and I lost all the money I put into it." Adams claimed both Craig Dennis and Howard Keegan as being responsible for the program's underachievement. Had Johnnie Neblett sensed that the venture was not going to live up to perceived expectations and thus decided to vacate the engagement early, thus suffering minimal financial loss?

The current extant episodes "Lizzie Borden Took An Axe..." and "The Bogymen Will Get You" offer a brief glimpse of the series. [Audio is available here](#). Though David Lennick lists them as episodes #32 and #31 respectively based on the disc labels, in the log above they are cited as #27 and #37. This easily-resolved conundrum resulted from the varied order in which the firms distributed the transcription discs to respective stations. It should be noted that though a major website has previously indicated that another episode "Which is the Witch?" is also extant, this is not the case.

In the radio adaptation of the two episodes, the script generally follows the corresponding pulp tale often utilizing exact dialog. Some of the names were changed in the Bogymen script while characters of a fictitious nature were incorporated for the axe murder thriller. Also, on account of the original length of the former, the etherwaves version picks up at the midpoint of its *Weird Tales* sister. This author echoes Mike Connolly's assessment of the series as noted above. However, the signature title voice could have been more compelling by utilizing an echo-chamber or followed by a scream, sinister laugh, etc. Additionally, there is more narration culminating in less action and suspense in these chapters than is presented in an installment of a comparable (15-minute episodes) such as *The Strange Dr. Weird*. Would *Stay Tuned for Terror* have benefitted by incorporating a host? Finally, there was time to acknowledge full cast and crew acknowledged during the closing segment of each episode. The ample organ music theme from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (personally selected by Robert Bloch), could have continued underneath these credits.

Had the "best script" of the series "The Mark of the Monster," been nixed for broadcast by the censors? It was published in a 1945 issue of the fanzine [Chanticleer](#). Robert Bloch is certainly to be applauded for parodying his own creation. Fanzines are a great



Weird Tales

is on the air in

STAY TUNED FOR TERROR

This programme is adapted by ROBERT BLOCH from his stories which have appeared in WEIRD TALES, the narrator being Craig Dennis.

STAY TUNED FOR TERROR is produced by Neblett Radio Productions, with the active cooperation of WEIRD TALES MAGAZINE . . . for the enjoyment of fantasy fans everywhere.

LOOK FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS IN YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER giving the broadcast time and dates in your area.

~*~

And remember to



Stay Tuned for Terror!

Stay Tuned for Terror, from **Weird Tales** 1945-46, artist: Boris Dolgov.

untapped resource for researchers as they often publish personal reflections of authors including for example, an announcement by Bob regarding his 22-month-old daughter Sally (see page 30 <http://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Acolyte/Acolyte11.pdf>) which would have been an appropriate caption for the adjacent contemporary family photo (Source: *Once Around the Bloch* by permission of Sally Francy)



The Blochs with daughter Sally

Fans of both Robert Bloch and radio horror programs are indebted to David Lennick who had obtained the original transcription discs from the Spence Caldwell studios in Canada and released these episodes. Hopefully this generous act will encourage other collectors to check their shelves for additional episodes. Perhaps a future discovery will reveal one or more of the eight original plays. Have not Blochophiles been searching for these gems? Other than a copy of the classic Boris Dolgov-crafted advertisement published in *Weird Tales*, there is no primary source material of this series in the Robert Bloch Papers (American

Heritage Center, University of Wyoming). Regarding Robert Bloch's astute foresight, Harold Gauer wrote that his long-time friend had been paid for each *Stay Tuned for Terror* script as the recordings were produced, thus wisely declining a percentage of the perceived, though non-delivered profits. The master horror writer noted that he did not retain the scripts nor the audio of his creation. It is now the charge of Robert Bloch's enthusiasts to continue the quest for these treasures which will assuredly advance his legacy.

Must read material:

Robert Bloch (1986). *Out of My Head* (James A. Mann, ed.) NESFA Press

Robert Bloch (1993). *Once Around the Bloch: An Unauthorized Autobiography*. A Tor Book, Tom Doherty Associates, Inc.

Harold Gauer (1991). *War and Peace in the 1940s* (History, Vol. 2) Precision Process

Acknowledgements: This author (email: bluecar91@hotmail.com) thanks the following for their invaluable assistance with this ongoing project: Sally Francy, Curt Ladnier, David Lennick, Arlene Balkansky, Max Schmid, Joe Webb, Jerry Haendiges, Randall Larson, Dave Grabarek, Dan Riedstra, Larry Zdeb, Martin Grams, Jr., Karen Fishman, and John Waggener.

Who Said That?

Do you recall clichés from radio? Have fun with these!

Jim Cox

In a fleeting interval that newsman Robert Trout interrupted his near life-long career at CBS, NBC Radio put him on the air as moderator of a panel of celebrated informants that identified figures in current events (1948-51). *Who Said That?* grabbed an audience and went to TV afterward, albeit without Trout who returned to CBS.

The exercise that follows is an adaptation of the *Who Said That?* thesis tailored to 100 clichés, epigrams and aphorisms in OTR. It's intentionally tough and easy. Zealous radio buffs will recall many pithy sayings of radio trivia in the 1920s-70s.

Clichés:

- 1 *Hello, anybody. Here's _____*
- 2 *Glad we could get together, hopscotching in the world of headlines*
- 3 *It's way up in flavah ... it's way down in cost ... it's pa-lenty smooth!*
- 4 *How about that! (sportscaster)*
- 5 *If I could tell you of my devotion ... if I could pledge all my love so true ... then my confession would find expression ... in all the music my heart sings to you (music show opening)*
- 6 *Good evening, Mr. & Mrs. North America, and all the ships at sea. Let's go to press!*
- 7 *Laugh awhile, let a song be your smile, use _____ shampoo!*
- 8 *You're always right with Autolight!*
- 9 *In the little town of Simpsonville, attractive Ellen Brown, with two children to support, faces the question of what she owes to them and what she owes to herself ... Here's the story of life and love as we all know it (daytime drama)*
- 10 *Uh-uh-uh-uh ... don't touch that dial! Listen to ... (sitcom)*
- 11 *I have a lady in the balcony, doctor*
- 12 *Our years are as the falling leaves – we live, we love, we dream, and then we go ... But somehow, we keep hoping – don't we? – that our*

Many who expressed them may be simple to spot; others may escape recall or be new to you. Clues have been provided many times to help you.

A formula for rating yourself on the answers (appearing later) follows. Give yourself a point if you name an individual speaking, a show it's from or a commodity revealed.

- If you get at least 30 correct, consider yourself below average, a tad hazy on recall
- If you get at least 40 correct, consider yourself average, a typical radio buff
- If you get at least 50 correct, consider yourself excellent, well above average
- If you get at least 60 correct, consider yourself superior, grasping immense detail
- If you get at least 70 or more correct, consider yourself at the head of the class

dreams come true on that brighter day (daytime drama)

- 13 *And ... they are mild!*
- 14 *Plunk your magic twanger Frogg*
- 15 *Stories some true, some hearsay, but all so interesting we'd like to pass them along to you (sportscaster)*
- 16 *Well, that's purty good, Johnny ... but that ain't the way I heeee-rrrrd it! ... the way I heeee-rrrrd it, one feller sez ta t'other feller, sez ... Saaaayyyy, he sez ... (comedy)*
- 17 *_____ checks the best sellers on sheet music and phonograph records, the songs most heard on the air and most played in automatic coin machines – an accurate, authentic tabulation of America's taste in popular music*
- 18 *For all you bake and fry, rely on Spry! (daytime drama)*
- 19 *So long until tomorrow!*
- 20 *Uuuuuh uuuuh ggooooo!*
- 21 *Come on in! It's Art Linkletter's House Party*
- 22 *Time marches on!*
- 23 *_____ – the famous character created by Erle Stanley Gardner ... dramatized by Irving Vendig ... _____ – defender of human rights, champion of all those who seek justice (daytime crime drama)*

- 24 *All I know is what I read in the papers*
- 25 *Holy cow!* (sportscaster)
- 26 *What a revoltin' development this is!* (comedy)
- 27 *It's the cheapest thing you can drink next to water*
- 28 *Somebody, ah say, somebody knocked?*
- 29 *It doesn't matter whether you win or lose but how you play the game* (sportscaster)
- 30 *You're in good hands ... with Allstate!*
- 31 *This is _____, going places and doing things ... take one!* (news, music, variety)
- 32 _____, a Carlton E. Morse creation, is dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation, and to their bewildering offspring (domestic drama)
- 33 *See you on the radio*
- 34 *Aren't we devils?* (quizmaster)
- 35 *It takes a licking but keeps on ticking*
- 36 *And nowwww ... another tale well-calculated ... to keep you in ... _____!*
- 37 *That's my dog, Tige, he lives in a shoe ... I am _____, look for me in there too!*
- 38 *Well now, I wouldn't say that, Mr. _____* (comedy)
- 39 *Hello, folks. This is _____ with news reports from the women's world!*
- 40 *Would you like to live like a millionaire?*
- 41 *Your money or your life!* (repeat) ... *I'm thinking! I'm thinking!*
- 42 *Good night ... and good luck!*
- 43 *I'd like to make EV'ry woman a queen EV'ry day!*
- 44 *Here's _____ that brings you the bright side of life ... that whirls you in music to all the big nightspots in New York town ... to hear the top songs of the week sung so clearly you can understand every word and sing them yourself!*
- 45 *Hi-yo Silver!*
- 46 *Put on the coffee, mama. I'm coming home*
- 47 *Now, to the many friends who wait for him ... we present _____, barber of Hartville, the story of a man who might be living right next door to you – the real-life story of people just like people we all know* (daytime drama)
- 48 *This is the world's most honored music program presented as a salute to _____, the world's most honored watch ... where there is an appreciation of things fine and beautiful, both are held in the highest esteem*
- 49 *Remember, Serutan is Natures spelled backwards*
- 50 *I hear music ... I hear melodies ... sparkling songs of love, tingle from your touch* (orchestra's choral sign-on)
- 51 *And now ... here's that man himself*
- 52 *Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the radio audience* (announcer/sportscaster/emcee)
- 53 *We all know couples like lovable, impractical _____ and his devoted wife Belle ... their struggle for security is anybody's story ... but somehow with _____, it has more smiles than tears* (daytime drama)
- 54 *People are funny about money*
- 55 _____, where the elite meet to eat – Archie, the manager, speaking -- _____ ain't here ... oh, hello, _____ (comedy)
- 56 *We answer to a higher authority*
- 57 *Once more, we welcome you within these walls with music and the spoken word from the Crossroads of the West* (religion)
- 58 *Oh-ho, doctor!* (sportscaster)
- 59 _____ ... *NBC News ... Washington*
- 60 *My big old fat wife, Sweetie Face* (comedy)
- 61 *This is _____ saying ... until next time ... pleasant dreams*
- 62 *Bye-bye baby* (sportscaster)
- 63 *Ah, there's good news tonight!* (newscaster)
- 64 *Heah they ah* (comedy)
- 65 *And now you know ... the rest of the story*
- 66 *Don't fail to miss tomorrow's game!* (sportscaster)
- 67 *Oxydol's own _____* (daytime drama)
- 68 *Would our next guest come in and sign in, please?*
- 69 *Kaneewah, Fury!* (juvenile adventure)
- 70 *It's time now for _____, Tracer of Lost Persons*
- 71 *Goodnight to you—and I do mean you!* (screen gossip reporter/reviewer)

- 72 *Once again we present ... the story of an orphan girl named _____ who in young womanhood married England's richest, most handsome lord ... the story that asks the question: Can this girl ... find happiness as the wife of a wealthy and titled Englishman?*
- 73 *Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear (western adventure)*
- 74 _____, *the story of a young girl laid against a tapestry of the deep South (daytime drama)*
- 75 This is _____ for Monitor sports (sportscaster/emcee/host)
- 76 *The only show in radio where the audience writes the script (anthology drama)*
- 77 *We now present the exciting, unforgettable radio drama _____, the story of a crack newspaperman and his wife – the story of David and Sally Farrell (daytime drama)*
- 78 *Come on out, Jughead! It's a matter of life or death! (teenage comedy)*
- 79 *You're on the line with _____ (newscaster/host/announcer)*
- 80 *That's a joke, son, that's a joke!*
- 81 *The private insurance investigator with the action-packed expense account (crime drama)*
- 82 *Now I'll sing my song, I will, I will*
- 83 *Oh mister! ... Mister! (comedy)*
- 84 *Hey mister ... whatcha doin', hunh mister? ... hunh? ... whatcha doin'? ... hunh? ... whatcha? (comedy)*
- 85 *It's Make Believe Ballroom time (dee-jay)*
- 86 *How do you do, ladies and gentlemen? How DO you do?*
- 87 _____ ... *good day! (newscaster)*
- 88 *The weed of crime bears bitter fruit ... crime does not pay! ... _____ knows! (crime drama)*
- 89 *If you believe rumors, you're a sucker ... if you repeat rumors, you're one of Hitler's best soldiers ... the truth is a banner ... with it, you can jab and slice a rumor to ribbons*
- 90 *With lotions of love (newscaster)*
- 91 *Take a tip from _____, go and tell your mom, Shredded Ralston can't be beat!*
- 92 _____, *the real-life drama ... to prove ... because a woman is 35, or more, romance in life*

- need not be over ... the romance of youth can extend into middle life ... and ... beyond*
- 93 *Say the secret word and divide \$100*
- 94 *Ladies and gentlemen ... the story you are about to hear is true ... only the names have been changed to protect the innocent (crime drama)*
- 95 *Good afternoon, opera lovers from coast to coast*
- 96 *We give you now _____, a continuation on the air of the true-to-life story of mother love and sacrifice in which _____ saw her beloved daughter Laurel marry into wealth and society and, realizing the difference in their tastes and worlds, went out of Laurel's life (daytime drama)*
- 97 *Now we present once again _____, the story of Mary Noble, a little Iowa girl, who married one of America's most handsome actors, Larry Noble, dream sweetheart of a million other women – the story of what it means to be the wife of a famous star (daytime drama)*
- 98 *Is ev'rybody happy? (big band remote)*
- 99 *When the blue of the night meets the gold of the day (singer's theme)*
- 100 *That's right ... you're wrong! (musical contest)*

Solutions:

- 1 Henry Morgan
- 2 John Cameron Swayze
- 3 "Uncle" Bill Adams (Cream of Wheat, *Let's Pretend*)
- 4 Mel Allen (after Yankees home runs)
- 5 Richard Crooks, Lawrence Tibbett, guest artists (*The Voice of Firestone*)
- 6 Walter Winchell
- 7 Chorus (*The Fitch Bandwagon*)
- 8 Harlow Wilcox (*Suspense*)
- 9 George Ansbro (*Young Widder Brown*)
- 10 Bill Goodwin, Bill Petrie, Harlow Wilcox, Ken Niles (*Blondie*)
- 11 George Ansbro (*Dr. I. Q.*)
- 12 Ron Rawson (*The Brighter Day*)
- 13 Cy Harrice (Pall Mall commercials)

- 14 "Smilin' Ed" McConnell
15 Bill Stern
16 Bill Thompson (Mr. Old-Timer, *Fibber McGee & Molly*)
17 Andre Baruch, Martin Block, Ben Grauer, et al. (*Your Hit Parade*)
18 Dan Seymour (*Aunt Jenny's Real Life Stories*)
19 Lowell Thomas
20 Del Sharbutt (Campbell's soup, *Club 15*)
21 Jack Slattery
22 Westbrook Van Voorhis (*The March of Time*)
23 Bob Dixon, Alan Kent, Dick Stark (*Perry Mason*)
24 Will Rogers
25 Phil Rizzuto (Yankees games)
26 William Bendix (Chester A. Riley, *The Life of Riley*)
27 Arthur Godfrey (Lipton tea, *Talent Scouts*)
28 Kenny Delmar (Allen's Alley, *Fred Allen Show*)
29 Grantland Rice
30 Ed Reimers
31 Frank Blair, Brad Crandall, Bill Cullen, Art Fleming, Dave Garroway, Jim Lowe, Gene Rayburn, Ted Steele, et al. (*Monitor*)
32 Ken Carpenter (*One Man's Family*)
33 Charles Osgood
34 Ralph Edwards (*Truth of Consequences*)
35 John Cameron Swayze (Timex)
36 George Walsh (*Suspense*)
37 Buster Brown
38 Richard LeGrand (Mr. Peavey, *The Great Gildersleeve*)
39 Wendy Warren (Florence Freeman)
40 John Nelson (*Live Like a Millionaire*)
41 Robber gets Jack Benny's reply
42 Edward R. Murrow
43 Jack Bailey (*Queen for a Day*)
44 Ford Bond (*The Manhattan Merry-Go-Round*)
45 Brace Beemer (*The Lone Ranger*)
46 Ted Brown (*Monitor*, sign-off at shift's end)
47 Fielden Farrington, Ed Herlihy, Roger Krupp, et al. (*Just Plain Bill*)
48 Frank Knight (*The Longines Symphonette*)
49 Victor Lindlahr
50 Fred Waring
51 Tony Marvin (*Arthur Godfrey Time*)
52 Graham McNamee
53 George Putnam, Ken Roberts (*Lorenzo Jones*)
54 Art Linkletter (*People Are Funny*)
55 Ed Gardner (Archie, *Duffy's Tavern*)
56 Arnold Moss (Hebrew National)
57 Richard Evans, Spencer Kinard, et al. (*The Mormon Tabernacle Choir*)
58 Red Barber (Cincinnati Reds, Brooklyn Dodgers, NY Yankees)
59 Robert McCormick
60 Bill Thompson (Wallace Wimple, *Fibber McGee & Molly*)
61 E. G. Marshall (*The CBS Radio Mystery Theater*)
62 Russ Hodges (Reds/Cubs/Senators/Yankees/NY and SF Giants)
63 Gabriel Heatter
64 Bill Hay (*Amos 'n' Andy* in pre-sitcom era humor)
65 Paul Harvey (*The Rest of the Story*)
66 Dizzy Dean
67 Dan Donaldson aka Charlie Warren (*Ma Perkins*, Oxydol)
68 John Charles Daly (*What's My Line?* on radio)
69 *Straight Arrow* (Howard Culver as Steve Adams beckoning palomino)
70 Larry Elliott, Ben Grauer, James Fleming, Harry Kramer, Stuart Metz (*Mr. Keen*)
71 Jimmy Fidler
72 Ed Fleming (*Our Gal Sunday*)
73 Fred Foy (*The Lone Ranger*)
74 Frank Gallop (*Amanda of Honeymoon Hill*)
75 Joe Garagiola
76 Art Gilmore (*Dr. Christian*)
77 Larry Elliott, Ed Fleming, Don Hancock (*Front Page Farrell*)
78 Bob Hastings (*Archie Andrews*)
79 Bob Considine
80 Kenny Delmar (Allen's Alley, *Fred Allen*)
81 Bob Bailey, Edmond O'Brien, John Lund, et al. (*Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*)
82 Froggy the Gremlin (Arch Presby, *Buster Brown Gang*)
83 Jack Benny (paging Frank Nelson, who replies Yeeeeessss!)
84 Marian Jordan (Teeny, *Fibber McGee & Molly*)
85 Martin Block
86 Norman Brokenshire
87 Paul Harvey
88 Frank Readick Jr., Bill Johnstone, Bret Morrison, et al. (*The Shadow*)

- 89 Troman Harper (*The Rumor Detective*)
 90 Walter Winchell (Jergens)
 91 Tom Mix (Curley Bradley, et al., *The Tom Mix Ralston Straightshooters*)
 92 Fielden Farrington (*The Romance of Helen Trent*)
 93 Groucho Marx (*You Bet Your Life*)
 94 Hal Gibney (*Dragnet*)
 95 Milton Cross (*The Metropolitan Opera*)
 96 Ford Bond, Howard Claney, Jack Costello, Frank Gallop, et al. (*Stella Dallas*)
 97 Pierre Andre, Ford Bond, Harry Clark, Roger Krupp, et al. (*Backstage Wife*)
 98 Ted Lewis (“high-hatted tragedian of song”; theme *When My Baby Smiles at Me*)
 99 Bing Crosby
 100 Kay Kyser (*Kay Kyser’s College of Musical Knowledge*)

Purchasing Groups

The Old Time Radio Researchers Purchasing Group:
 Contact Jim Wood at OTRPG@Bookfixer.com
 Dues: 5\$ per month.

Ted Davenport Purchasing Group:
 Contact Ted at tedotr@sbcglobal.net
 Dues: 25\$ per month for 5 hours of both circulating and uncirculating material.

Doug Hopkinson Purchasing Group:
 Contact Doug at auditorium117@gmail.com
 Dues: 25\$ per month for 5 hours of drama/comedy programming; 10\$ per month for 2.5 hours of musical/variety programming; \$30 for all 7.5 hours.

Visit Our Blog

Another little-known resource for the Old Time Radio Researchers is our blog, found [here](#). It was dormant after the death of Jim Beshires but in recent months we have reactivated it. Please subscribe to be automatically notified of new posts.

Support the *Old Radio Times*

Since its debut in December 2005, the *Old Radio Times* has been offered free to the old-time radio community. It is the only free group

Wistful Vistas

From the Editor’s Desk

Ryan Ellett

This month’s issue is a special treat with the long-awaited return of Jim Cox to our pages! We have more of his work on tap for future issues. Also a warm welcome to first-time contributor Gavin Callaghan, one of the hobby’s foremost Big Jon and Sparkie fans. He started an entire Facebook page devoted just to that series.

Karl Schadow returns with another in-depth look at a little-known series, *Stay Tuned for Terror*; His research is second-to-none. Though known to hobbyists for some time, the discovery of an actual recording has caused a stir in the hobby.

One of the biggest pieces of news in OTRR-dom is the acquisition of the Joe Hehn collection. Joe Webb has provided an initial overview of the collection in this issue but you can be sure many, many treasures will be discovered in this massive set of reels and transcription records. Already a number of uncirculating episodes of shows such as Big Story and Duffy’s Tavern have been uncovered. You’ll want to pay close attention for future finds.

Until next time!

Edited by Ryan Ellett

OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com

Title font by Joe Adams

publication in the hobby and it will remain so. However, as a way to help readers show their appreciation for the zine, we’ve created a Patreon page where you can pledge a regular donation to the upkeep of the zine and the work of the Old Time Radio Researchers in general.

Visit [the Times’ Patreon page](#) to become a subscriber, paying \$1 (or \$2) to our dusty coffers each time a new issue is published. We are currently on a bi-monthly schedule so the total annual cost could be as little as \$6.

A Reminder

The Old Time Radio Researchers online library remains one of the most valuable sources of downloadable OTR programs available freely to the wider public. Many newer members appear unfamiliar with this resource. [Visit here!](#)

Remembering Ken Piletic

The old time radio family lost a beloved member recently with the passing of Ken Piletic. I was introduced to Ken at the Cincinnati OTR convention earlier in the 200s. Here we've collected some remembrances of others throughout the hobby.

Shared by Philip Atchley on the OTRR groups.io: "Ken passed away on Sep 3, 2020 from a heart attack. He was active in Old Time Radio and Ham Radio. In fact, Ken was the person who originally recorded the WBBM reels of CBS Radio Mystery Theater which I and a small group of enthusiasts are in the process of restoring, processing, and distributing. Ken was known by many and well respected in the hobby. He will be missed.

Doug Hopkinson: I met Ken at a Cincy convention one year. Amazingly nice man. Then we found we were neighbors. We both lived in the same town in Illinois. A few blocks apart ... He had a heart condition ever since I first met him. It was his heart that gave out. He was in a coma in the hospital and his niece was with him. He woke up right at the end and they were able to say their good-byes and make peace before he passed a couple hours later. She let him know she would be there with him all the way. I'm so happy my friend had family to help him the past few years and that he had comfort at the last. He's in a great place now and doing well I hear.

Joe Webb: Ken led a group of ham radio enthusiasts who loved OTR. The ORCATS, the Old Radio Collectors and Traders met every Sunday morning and had a little buying group. Many of the members went to the FOTR Conventions and it was the first time they ever met in person!! The first time FOTR had an Allen Rockford award for the recently deceased and young OTR broadcaster from upstate NY, the ORCATS sent one ballot - with their signatures that they had passed around the through the mail for weeks - with 30-something votes for Ken as the first recipient - which he was. Ken never married - and on all holidays when he was working at IBM at



A recent picture of Ken.

one of their computer centers – would ALWAYS put in to work odd shifts so that others could spend holidays with their families, especially if they had young children. We always had wonderful times together at FOTR and when I occasionally was in Chicago on business he would drive downtown and pick me up and we'd have pizza from a restaurant in Streamwood, called Fio Rito's, which would get him making jokes about bandleader names like "Basil Fomine" and others ... Ken's OTR affection was well-known among so many collectors in the 1970s and as best as I can tell, the ORCATS still meet on Sundays. Godspeed, W9ZMR.



Jim Widner: Ken, aka W9ZMR, long time amateur radio operator, long time old time radio enthusiast who goes back long before Jay Hickerson's FOTR conventions recording radio in the forties, was the first recipient of the Allen Rockford award at the the 1979 FOTR. Ken was also one of the founders

of Old-Time Radio Collectors and Traders Society (ORCATS) of which I was a member. Ken's contributions to the hobby were numerous: besides his vast tape collection he was an avid photographer and always took many pictures at the various conventions and sharing them. He was for all purposes one of the documenters of the conventions as his photos were often used by the organizations. Able to retire early from IBM, he traveled to many conventions around the country and was a regular at virtually all of the OTR conventions. Ken's health was declining a couple of years ago and he eventually moved to California from his long-time home in Streamwood, Illinois to live with his niece. Eventually, his heart just gave out. He will be missed by many in this community.

The Joe Hehn Collection Joe Webb

The passing of pioneer OTR collector Joe Hehn must be noted. He died at age 88 on Saturday, October 17, 2020. Few of today's collectors have heard his name, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he played an important role in the establishment of our hobby, originated recordings into circulation, and traded with some of the most prominent collectors of that era. Without the efforts of those early collectors, we would not have the hobby we enjoy so much today.

Until his recent illness, he was still devoted to promoting the programs and music of the golden age. His obituary noted, "He made at least 135 trips per year to area nursing homes presenting musical shows on old time radio. During these years, Joe had made almost 5000 appearances in over 200 nursing homes from Philadelphia to Scranton." This was nothing new for him... in the 1970s and 1980s, he was frequently presenting and entertaining various organizations in his area, such as Rotary Club and numerous church and similar groups.

A fortuitous circumstance brought knowledge of Joe's collection to our attention. The collection has been in storage for years. Through the assistance of OTRR, a disc collectors group, and individual collectors, much of Joe's collection will be

preserved, and made available to all. Many collectors have contributed financial support to transport the collection, and are now contributing their time and skills to digitize and process it into the high quality digital formats that are preferred today.

Much of the collection is not new, but it is an opportunity to work with original tapes of disc recordings that have not been available for decades and apply modern sound processing to them. This will replace many of the hobby's oldest and widest circulating recordings with better and more enjoyable sound. There are new items, including missing *Big Story* episodes, a *Duffy's Tavern*, a *Man Called X*, some obscure 1930s serials, too. There are bound to be others as we review more of the boxes of almost 3000 reels (most 7.5ips in half track format) and over 250 transcriptions.

There's another important aspect to the collection: printed materials. Other collectors are assisting in scanning the numerous scripts that were in his collection, along with many rare issues of OTR fan publications of the 1960s and 1970s! The period when Mr. Hehn was most active was when collectors were convinced they were each in a personal race against time (and the dumpster!) to save transcriptions and reels of their beloved programs wherever they could be found, even the smallest of radio stations. The newsletters they had were the only ways they could find out about each other and trade their recordings. New discoveries were always noted in these early newsletters and were met with great excitement throughout that very small hobby.

Collectors active in OTRR, Cobalt Club, a disc group, and others worked quietly behind the scenes to plan the logistics and transportation of the items in the collection. Thank you to all of these collectors and fans for their efforts in these weeks and their commitment to the project in the future. There will be much news about these recordings in the weeks and months ahead.

The OTRR purchasing group played an important role in financing the transportation and the storage of these materials. If you are not a member of the group, which is just \$5 per month, now is a good time to join to support efforts such as these. [Jim Wood](#) is our treasurer and would be glad to sign you up to our purchasing group."

Maupin's Musings

Larry Maupin

OTRR member Larry Maupin has been listening to many new episodes as they're added to our library. He especially likes soap operas so was delighted when we got the generous donation of rare and upgraded content from Michael Psarakis. Maupin has methodically gone through each episode and published his thoughts on the OTRR .io group. He's graciously given us permission to reprint them here.

XI. Program Title: *Just Plain Bill*

Broadcast Date: January 15, 1955

Suggested Episode Title: "Jury Tours Bill's Home"

Sponsor: Miles Laboratories

Opening: Theme music, then "Now 'Just Plain Bill', the story of a man who might be living right next door to you. The real life story of people just like people we all want to know." Commercial for Alka-Seltzer.

Summary: The scene is Bill Davidson's home in Hartville. The trial of Bill's daughter Nancy Donovan for the murder of Thelma Hopkins is under way. In this episode while the jury tours the house, Nancy and her attorney Peter Dyke Hampton stand outside at the crime scene while Nancy tries to recall details of the traumatic event. Will she remember what Thelma wanted from her just before the fatal shot rang out?

Conclusion: Another Alka-Seltzer commercial, then one for One-a-Day Brand Multiple Vitamin Tablets. Then "Your announcer is Fred Cullen. Be sure to listen for 'Just Plain Bill' on this station at this same time Monday."

Notes: (1) Very good audio quality throughout; (2) The program date is listed as January 15, 1955 which is a Saturday. Unless there is a labeling error and the episode was actually aired on the 14th, then this was broadcast on a Saturday because I checked a couple of online sources and they verify that the 15th was indeed a Saturday. When an announcer invites listeners to tune in again on Monday that is usually strong internal evidence that the program is being aired on Friday, which is why I looked up the date in the first place; (3) There is a flaw in the plot in this episode. The jury is supposed to be present at the

murder scene outside Bill's house while Nancy re-enacts what happened and tries to recall as many details as possible. Instead Bill takes the jury on a tour of the house, and it's surprising he didn't charge admission! Nonetheless, I think the episode is one of the best of the few surviving ones of *Just Plain Bill*.

XII. Program Title: *Just Plain Bill*

Broadcast Date: August 11, 1955

Sponsor: Sustained by NBC

Suggested Episode Title: "The Cobra Ring"

Opening: Music, program identified. Listeners invited to write and request a free booklet on engineering as a career.

Lead In: "Bill Davidson is on his way to the town of Harding, Texas, spurred on by the terrible conviction that his daughter Nancy's life is danger." Bill hopes to obtain proof that actress Arlene Wilson is not only trying to steal Nancy's husband Kerry Donovan "but has tried to kill Nancy by giving her cobra poison."

Summary: Back in Hartville, late at night Arlene and her manager Wally Kriegen stealthily prepare to pay a call on Nancy, who is alone. Arlene not only plans to murder Nancy, but also to steal her husband and marry her attorney Peter Dyke Hampton. Arlene has a ring that holds the cobra poison, and the ring "punctures the flesh just like a snake bite." Back in Harding, Texas Bill "has entered the lobby of The Harding House, the town's leading hotel "where he has a reservation."

Conclusion: We learn that in tomorrow's episode Bill will say to the hotel clerk, "A lot of people here in Harding have plenty to tell me about Arlene Wilson, and I'm staying here until I [get some answers]." "Be sure to listen to 'Just Plain Bill' at this same time tomorrow."

Music, then a promo for Monitor, "NBC's big new radio service that keeps you in touch with the world all weekend." Monitor airs "from early Saturday morning till late Sunday night. It provides news, information and exciting exclusive features from every part of the globe."

"Be sure to listen to 'Just Plain Bill' on this station at this same time tomorrow." Then "Listen to 'The Right To Happiness' weekdays over most NBC Radio stations."

Notes: (1) Very good audio quality; (2) A good episode. Arlene meets with an obstacle in her attempt to murder Nancy. I wonder what the odds are that Arlene will accidentally poison herself with her own ring; (3) I remember listening to *Monitor* as a teenager in the 1960s and finding it fascinating.

XIII. Program: *Just Plain Bill*

Broadcast Date: September 8, 1955

Sponsor: Sustained By NBC

Opening: Music, program identified. Promo for "Letters Abroad," a volunteer group of pen pals all over the world organized by The National Council of Women in 1952.

Summary: Bill is speaking with Howard Russell, who believes that Arlene Wilton murdered his wife. Nancy and her husband Kerry argue about Arlene, of whom Kerry speaks with an ardor usually found only in the lovesick. At this point in the plot we learn that Arlene has attempted to kill Nancy using a ring with cobra poison in it, probably at a party when Arlene was shaking hands with Nancy.

Conclusion: "Be sure to listen to 'Just Plain Bill' at this same time tomorrow." The announcer mentions other soap operas still on NBC at that date, specifically "The Right To Happiness," "Woman In My House," "Stella Dallas" and "Young Widder Brown." "Today's episode of 'Just Plain Bill' was brought to you by the National Broadcasting Company.

Notes: (1) Very good audio quality throughout; (2) This is a continuation of the same plot mentioned in at least one previous report I have posted. I then spelled Arlene's name Wilson because that is how it sounded, but the audio was not as good and I was not 100 percent certain. In this episode it is clearly and unmistakably pronounced Wilton.

XIV. Program: *Linda's First Love*

Undated

Suggested Title: "Linda's Job In Jeopardy"

Sponsor: Kroger Spotlight Coffee

Opening: "Again the Kroger Grocery and Baking Company bring you 'Linda's First Love', the true to life story of a young girl in love with the world about her and in love with wealthy young Kenneth Woodruff. She is a shop girl, he a young society

man. The romance is frowned upon by Linda's friends and family. and Linda faces the world with her dream of happiness alone."

Then listeners are invited to participate in a contest "to win one of five lovely 17-Jewel Curvex Watches. Followed by a commercial for Kroger Hot-dated Coffee.

Summary: Much ado about Linda's job. She was "discharged from her job on a charge of stealing a dress she had worn to please Kenneth. Almost the entire episode is taken up by Kenneth and his imperious mother Mrs. Woodruff, who owns the business, arguing about whether Linda will be allowed to regain her job and under what conditions. This is not without its moments of humor. When Kenneth flatters her by remarking that she is by far the most influential woman in town, she reflects for a moment, then brightens and says "Well of course that's true," then quickly returns to the dispute.

Later, Mrs. Woodruff tries to obtain a promise from Linda that as a condition of her continued employment she will never see Kenneth again. Conclusion: "Is this the end of Linda's romance with Kenneth? Should she go on fighting for him or go back to the faithful Danny Grogan?" Then an announcement that in order to enter the contest to win a Gruen watch all a listener needs to do is write a letter indicating "which of Linda's suitors would you choose, and why?" Then "Gruen Curvex watches are curved to fit the wrist." Five are being given away every week while the contest continues.

Notes: (1) This is a very good encode and a very good episode. Definitely worth hearing for radio soap opera fans.

'LINDA'S FIRST LOVE'
Romantic Serial
15 Mins.—Local
M, T, W, T, F, 3:30 p.m.
Kroger Baking Co.
KROGER BAKING CO.
WJR, Detroit

New series of transcriptions, plugging Kroger's Hot-Dated coffee, deals with the doings of the Crockett family and covering get-rich schemes, Daughter Linda's loves, etc. It's well acted, characters (un-billed) are realistic, and drama moves swiftly enough.

There's a giveaway of silverware for carton tops. Pete.

Four Star Productions
(Book Review)
Martin Grams

You may not be familiar with Four Star Productions but you more than likely saw their logo at the conclusion of numerous television programs including *Honey West*, *Burke's Law*, *The Rifleman*, *Wanted: Dead or Alive*, *The Big Valley*, and *The Zane Grey Theatre*, among others.

The production company was co-owned by Dick Powell, David Niven and Charles Boyer. Joel McCrea, who was busy with *Tales of the Texas Rangers* on radio, backed out of the proposed project and was replaced by Ida Lupino. While she did not own stock in the company, she was considered the fourth star and the reason why the company was referred to as Four Star Productions. (For those who want to jump the gun and assume incorrectly, Lupino was not a stockholder because she was a woman. Being a stockholder meant buying into a percentage of the company as a financial investment and she did not invest money in the operation.)

Inspired by Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz's venture with Desilu Productions, the company was launched by Dick Powell who longed to produce and direct. He saw television as more of an open market for his ambitions than motion-pictures. Originally the concept began on radio with *Four Star Playhouse* on NBC in the summer of 1949, then ventured to television with the weekly anthology of the same name. While today many of us are familiar with the weekly dramas of *The Detectives*, *The Rogues*, *The Law and Mr. Jones*, and *Richard Diamond, Private Detective*, he called in favors and offered partial investments from Joan Fontaine and his wife, June Allyson, who of course starred in *The June Allyson Show*.

Powell and company was shrewd enough to produce tons of pilots, including *Bulldog Drummond*, *Claudia*, *The Stubby Kaye Show* (a.k.a. *Full Speed Ahead*), *The Judy Canova Show*, *The Searchers*, *The Bette Davis Show* (a.k.a. *The Decorator*), *Michael Shayne*, *The Dean Jones Show* (a.k.a. *Alec Tate*), *Ensign O'Toole*, *The Lloyd Bridges Show*, *The King and Me* and many others. Never wasting budget when

pilots were unable to sell, or to exhibition the pilots to a large number of potential sponsors at the same time, Four Star aired those pilots on many of the anthology programs.

The Zane Grey Theater, for example, aired a number of "back door pilots" that ultimately sold to sponsors and became weekly programs of their own. *Trackdown*, *The Rifleman*, *Black Saddle*, *Johnny Ringo*, *Law of the Plainsman*, *The Westerner*, and *Stagecoach West* were a few that spun off from a one-shot episode on *Zane Grey*. (Many fans know Steve McQueen's *Wanted: Dead or Alive* spun off from an episode on *Trackdown*, and *Honey West* spun off from an episode of *Burke's Law*.)

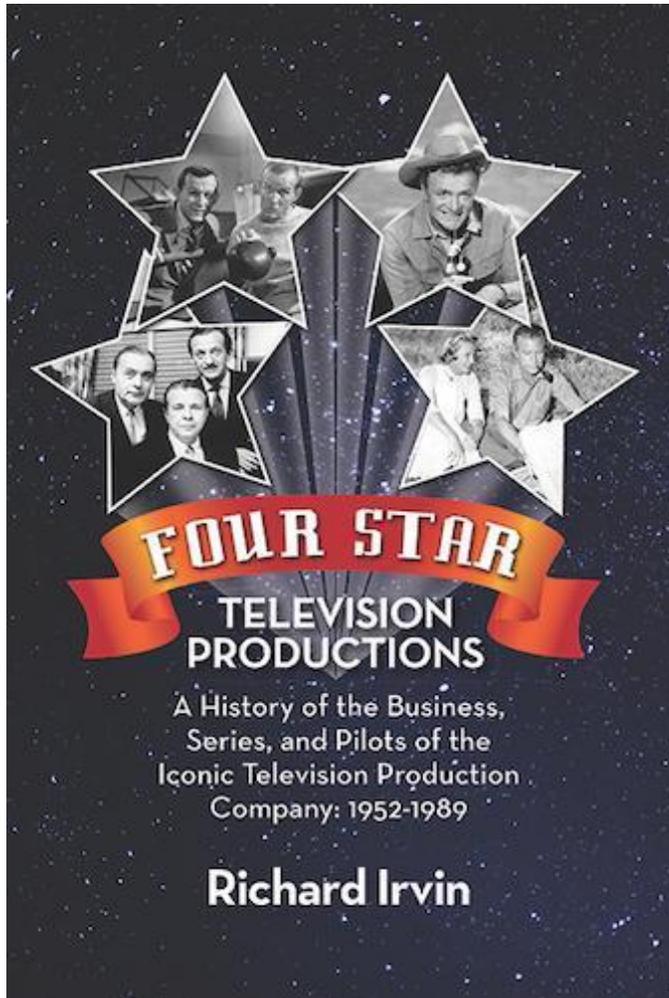
On the *Four Star Playhouse* anthology, Dick Powell played the role of Willie Dante, owner of a nightclub who found himself caught up in trouble - usually from shady characters from his past. Powell played the role in more than one episode, but eventually a weekly half-hour series came of those potential pilots. *Dante* lasted a mere 26 episodes, starring Howard Duff in the lead, and became one of my favorites. People rave about *The Rogues* but I always recommend *Dante* for those seeking crime dramas of the 1950s and 1960s that are both obscure and entertaining.

Frank Lovejoy starred in a wonderfully-written radio program, *Night Beat*, which aired for two years on radio. (Highly recommended, by the way.) Four Star Productions was responsible for a pilot that never sold, adapted from one of the radio scripts. A darn shame but thankfully a similar program came about with Frank Lovejoy on television... *Meet McGraw*.

Thankfully, Richard Irvin wrote a fantastic book documenting the history of *Four Star Productions*, available from Bear Manor Media Publishing. Not only did he cover the formation of the company in exquisite detail, but he documented each and every one of the television programs and details regarding many of those unsold pilots. A few years ago I was going through some trade columns in *Hollywood Reporter* circa 1961 when I came across a news blurb that Four Star Productions had completed a pilot for *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, starring Peter Falk in the lead. Sincerely, that has been my "Holy Grail" of

television pilots that I really, really want to see. Alas, it has not aired on television nor has it become a bonus extra for any commercial DVD release. Yes, Richard Irvin referenced that pilot. That should demonstrate how thorough the book is. Highly recommended.

[Link for direct purchase.](#)



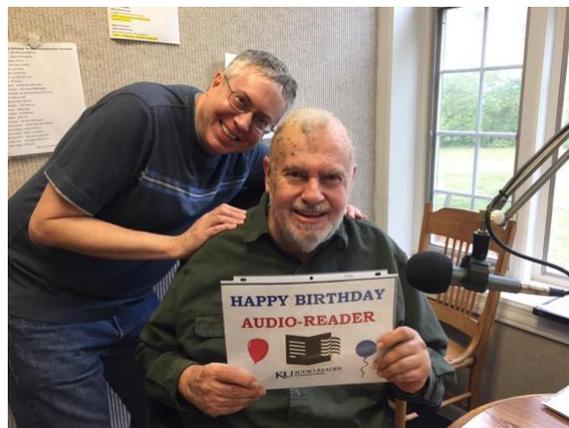
2020 Maintained Releases (v. Year Month)

[Counterspy](#) v. 2001
[The Clyde Beatty Show](#) v. 2001
[Rocky Fortune](#) v. 2001
[The Weird Circle](#) v. 2004
[Broadway's My Beat](#) v. 2004
[The Adventures of Philip Marlowe](#) v. 2005
[The Danny Kaye Show](#) v. 2006
[My Friend Irma](#) v. 2006
[Firefighters](#) v. 2007
[Jeff Regan, Investigator](#) v. 2007
[Life with Luigi](#) v. 2008
[Tales of the Texas Rangers](#) v. 2009
[Mr. District Attorney](#) v. 2010

Remembering Don Frey

The old-time radio community lost another long-time member with the death of Don Frey on September 20, 2020. Don grew up with these programs and fell into the hobby in the late 1960s when he discovered Dave Goldin's classic Themes Like Old Times record. He built a massive collection trading with other fans around the country through the 1970s and 1980s. Don remained active listening to programs and discovering brand new shows online.

The Don Frey collection remains in safe hands with his son, Bruce Frey, and has already been the source of newly circulating material and upgraded shows. We expect to be mining the Frey collection – which is primarily on cassette – for many years to come for new treasures. Below is a picture of Don with his son Bruce.



Radio 100 Years Ago

Enjoy a look back at what was going on in the world of broadcasting 100 years ago.

RADIO CONCERTS

ON June 15th of this year the *Daily Mail* of London inaugurated the first "world" concert, in conjunction with the famous opera star, Madame Nellie Melba, transmitting her voice over vast distances; the music in some instances was heard over a thousand miles away from the sending station. Madame Melba was performing at Chelmsford, near London, singing into the microphone of a standard radio telephone apparatus.

There was nothing radically new employed in sending out her voice, the apparatus used being well known and similar to what has been described time and again in this publication. The voice, on the other hand, was heard over a great expanse of space wherever there was a radio receiving station within range which had suitable apparatus for the interception of the concert, which, by the way, started at seven o'clock in the evening, London time. The results left nothing to be desired. As a matter of fact, the several voices came thru excellently.

First a deep voice slowly announced the program, then came the first strains from the piano, and finally the clear voice of the noted singer. Several selections were rendered by Madame Melba, and the concert terminated with the British national anthem, "God Save the King."

At Paris, the *Societe Francaise Radio Electrique*, on the other hand, took elaborate precautions to receive the music in a totally unlike manner than has ever been accomplished before. This company, with its headquarters at Levallois, near Paris, erected a special booth, where by means of elaborate tuning apparatus, as well as vacuum tubes in great profusion, Madame Melba's voice was received and demonstrated to a large audience by means of a big aluminum horn. The experiments, however, did not by any means end there. The climax came—and here is where the novelty comes in—when the Societe used a special apparatus comprised of nine vacuum tubes with which to receive the music. It is interesting to note that, although no antenna or even a loop antenna was used, the music not alone was received over the distance of several hundred miles, but was actually registered upon a master phonograph disc! From this master, actual phonograph discs were afterwards made, and all of them were quite clear. Here, indeed, is a

worth-while novelty! While, of course, there is nothing new about "canning" radio telegraph messages, the idea of catching the voice of a great opera singer by radio on a phonographic disc seems rather novel and presents great possibilities.

The point we want to make here is that, although America is supposed to be a country bordering close to the radio millennium, and, although there are practically no restrictions and the law is all with the amateurs, progress, as far as radio telephony is concerned, is negligible.

In Europe, where the restrictions are very severe, and where special authorization for such an experiment as the above-described one must be had, it seems the art is thriving even more vigorously than here, where there are no such restrictions. In other words, real enterprise, as far as radio telephony and radio concerts, etc., is concerned, is rather frail and spasmodic here. Of course, there are many radiophone sets in the United States now, and these are growing all the time, but there are very few big "stunts" that come to one's notice, as, for instance, the one of Madame Melba described above.

There is nothing that popularizes radio more than a concert by a famous singer, and it is to be hoped that our amateurs, as well as professionals, shall band together and try for some original ideas. We wish to suggest here only a few:

Why cannot someone go after the Presidential candidates and invite them to make a speech via radio thru a powerful telephone apparatus in the near future? With proper advertising and with the proper enterprise behind such a scheme, it certainly should not cost a great deal to do. The people of the United States, thru the amateurs, would get a chance to listen to our candidates in a very novel manner. Another idea, which, of course, is not new, would be to transmit band concerts from famous bandmasters broadcast. Such concerts could be sent from some of the big centers, such as New York, Chicago, or perhaps Atlantic City, or some other points where the bands are staying at the time.

Of course, there are countless schemes and ideas of a similar nature, all of which make it possible to popularize radio, and that is what we are after. Now, why don't we get together and do it?

H. GERNSBACH.



Marconi's Guests Dance to Music by Radio

SENATOR WILLIAM MARCONI'S guests recently danced aboard his yacht *Electra* to the music of an orchestra playing in London, so distinct was the transmission by the wireless telephone upon which the inventor has been experimenting. *Daily Marconi* receives the latest news from London by this medium, giving in exchange Neapolitan songs by applying a phonograph to the telephone.

The inventor expects to proceed to the Adriatic Sea late this month to continue his experiments. He said he would visit Ancona, Venice and Trieste, and would like to go to Fiume if the political situation permitted.

Radiophone Messages Between England and Denmark

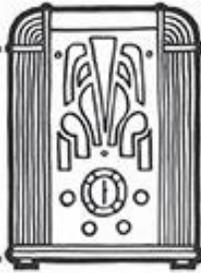
AN ATTEMPT was made on July 31 to send wireless telephonic messages from Chelmsford, England, to Copenhagen. The conditions for the attempt were not absolutely favorable, the air being laden with electricity, but still the attempt was a success. The first message was a greeting from Queen Alexandra to the Scandinavian people. There followed other messages and finally the opera singer, Melchior, sang the Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and British national songs, in all of which not one word was lost.



The type of wireless outfit rigged up in the National Forests



Broadcasting Music by Radiophone



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- *Long-time supporter of most OTR conventions and clubs*
 - *Founded and managed by Bob Burnham, Detroit based broadcast engineer, and host-producer of "Radio Vault" on WHFR.FM 89.3*
-



Created in 1984, the Metro Washington Old-Time Radio Club is the second largest old-time radio club in the United States. Club members enjoy monthly club meetings, an annual luncheon, and a bi-monthly newsletter. You do not have to live in or near Washington, D.C., to become a member. The newsletter, RADIO RECALL, is mailed to members from all over the country and loaded with fascinating articles, news of what is happening in the hobby, recently-discovered “lost” programs and more. Why not join the hundreds who enjoy the newsletter, which can be sent via email in PDF format, or be mailed to you through the post office?



You can sign up to become a member on the club website.

www.mwotrc.com

Old-Time Radio Researchers Acquisitions:
New Episodes and Upgraded Sound Encodes

Please note that our distributions are available to OTRR Purchasing Group members first, and then made available to the public after about six months. Contents of Distro 134:

Gordon MacRae Show 49xxxx 1st; 'The Rif Song'. The 1949 Christmas Seal Campaign.mp3

Jack Smith Show xxxxxx xxx 1st; Bye Bye Baby. Guest, Dinah Shore. Frank De Vol AHO. AFRS #747.mp3

Let's Have A Party xxxxxx xxx 1st Game- Shoe, Shoe Baby.mp3

New Baby Snooks Show 460324 Uncle Smedlow Has Lost His Gold Mine (Bob Hope 139 Replacement Show) (SSV-3-27-1 & 2) AFRS.mp3

Oscar Brand Show 610331 xxx 1st; Christ Church Bell, Guests New Lost City Ramblers AFRTS#19.mp3

Oscar Brand Show 610404 xxx 1st; 'Abe Lincoln' AFRTS#21.mp3

Oscar Brand Show 610407 xxx Starts With Interview With Sin (Part 2 Only) AFRTS#20.mp3

Oscar Brand Show 610421 xxx 'Folk Songs of Canada (Part 1 Only) AFRTS#22.mp3

Oscar Brand Show 610505 xxx 1st; I Don't Care Where They Bury My Body AFRTS#24.mp3

Police Athletic League 461207 xxx Guest - Frankie Buchet (64-44).mp3

Police Athletic League 470104 xxx Guest - Joe DiMaggio (64-44).mp3

Police Athletic League 470123 xxx Guest - Norman 'Babe' Young (64-44).mp3

Police Athletic League 470621 xxx Guest - Pat O'Brien (64-44).mp3

Redd Evans Club Time 43xxxx 1st; Mean To Me. Singer, Kayla Raynes.mp3

Redd Evans Club Time 43xxxx 1st; You Made Me Love You. Singer, Kayla Raynes.mp3

San Francisco War Chest Program 431015 Appeal to Fund Victims of Nazi Oppression.mp3

Screen Guild Theatre 461104 [Lady Esther Players] 207 Experiment Perilous.mp3

Soft Lights and a Serenade 441218 [Audition] 1st; East of the Sun. [Granat Jewellery] NBC Blue.mp3

Spotlight Bands 639 450403 1st; 'Saturday Night is the Loneliest Night of the Week'. Eddie Oliver AHO. AFRS.mp3

Spotlight Bands 640 450404 1st; 'Take the A Train'. Bob Strong AHO. AFRS.mp3

Spotlight Bands 862 460621 1st; 'Loveless Love' Harry James AHO. AFRS.mp3

Spotlight Bands 863 460624 1st; 'They Say That Falling in Love is Wonderful'. Guy Lombardo AH Royal Canadians. AFRS.mp3

This Is War 420221 02 The White House And The War - Paul Muni, Narrator (MS 086734&5).mp3

This is War 420228 03 Your Navy with Fredric March and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. (MS 086591&2).mp3

Tide Show xxxxxx xxx 1st; Old McDonald Had a Farm. Guest, Margaret Whiting. Frank De Vol AHO. AFRS #748.mp3

To The Rear March 4xxxxx 032 Excerpts from Fred Allen 460414 and Jack Benny 440227 (192-44).mp3

Torch Hour 640731 1st; 'Last Night When We Were Young'. Host, Franklyn MacCormack (64-44).mp3

Treasury Salute 460128 313 Mirror of the Mind (192-44).mp3

Treasury Salute 460129 312 Special Train (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 001 42xxxx 1st; Pledge of Allegiance. Robert Montgomery, MC. Re-Issued as program #87.mp3

Treasury Star Parade 020 42xxxx 1st; Bless This House. John Garfield Reads 'The Jarvis Bay'. Re-Issued as program #88.mp3

Treasury Star Parade 033 42xxxx Selections from Gershwin's 'Porgy and Bess'. MC, Henry Hull. Re-Issued as program #99 (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 035 42xxxx Selections from Showboat. MC, Henry Hull. Re-Issued as program #100 (mx G-3271-P) (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 073 42xxxx Sophie Halenczek's Greenhorns (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 074 42xxxx 1st; Save the American Way. Harry James AHO (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 075 42xxxx 1st; The Freedom Road (Sung by Kenneth Spencer) I Am an American (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 076 42xxxx 1st; Tangerine (Sung by Jimmy Saunders). Guests, Harry James AHO (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 098 42xxxx Phyllis Thaxter Stars in 'Beyond Recall'. MC, Fulton Oursler Recall (mx G-1898) (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 101 42xxxx Orson Welles Stars in 'The Chetniks'. MC, Vincent Price (mx G-1897) (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 122 42xxxx 1st; Once I was Young. John Nesbitt Discusses 'Mein Kamf' (mx G-1941-P) (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 123 42xxxx 1st; Rhapsody in Blue. Edward Arnold Tells the Story of George Gershwin (mx G-1951-P) (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 146 43xxxx 1st; Oh, Suzannah. 'Our Country, with Lanny Ross. Re-Issued as Program #202 (repeat of #146) (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 164 430308 1st; Life is Fine With My Baby on the Swing Shift. Bobby Sherwood AHO (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 165 430308 Nancy Kelly and James Monks Star in 'They Also Serve' (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 166 430315 1st; Poor Little Rich Girl. Bobby Sherwood, Lucille Linwood (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 179 430412 1st; Tramp, Tramp, Tramp. The Music of Victor Herbert. Re-Issue of program #302.mp3

Treasury Star Parade 191 43xxxx Malcolm Meachum's Adaptation of ' Beyond Recall' MC, Fulton Oursler (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 192 43xxxx MacKinlay Kantor's 'Happy Land' (With a 'Distinguished Cast')(192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 195 430503 The Aldrich Family-Selling Christmas Cards for a Bond Drive (etched 430503) (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 196 430503 Betty Garde Stars in 'They Marched at Dawn' (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 201 430517 1st; Johnny got a Zero. MC, Sammy Kay AHO. Re-Issued as Program #304 (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 207 430531 1st; That Old Black Magic, by Kenny Baker. Re-Issued as Program #320 (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 207 430531 1st; That Old Black Magic, by Kenny Baker. Re-Issued as Program #320.mp3

Treasury Star Parade 208 430531 Intro by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. 'This is America', with Fredric March (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 211 430607 1st; You'd be So Nice to Come Home to. Guest, Frank Parker. Re-Issued as Program #315 (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 212 430607 1st; Brazil. Guest, Frank Parker (192-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 219 430628 1st; People Will Say We're in Love. With Frank Lovejoy and Gladys Tell (G-6523) (430704 hw).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 220 430628 1st; No, No, No. Gladys Tell, and Johnny Messner AHO.mp3

Treasury Star Parade 269 430926 1st; Oklahoma, with Joan Roberts and Alfred Drake (mx G-6598) (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 270 430927 3rd Bond Drive. Blondie and Dagwood Bumstead Visit a War Bond Auction (64-44).mp3

Treasury Star Parade 301 431203 Voyage ['Old Ironsides' sets Out to Fight the Nazis!].mp3

Treasury Star Parade 319 440114 'Feature Story', with Frank Lovejoy and John Gibson.mp3

Treasury Star Parade Special 430301 1st; Over There. 'Fighting Fathers', with Frank Lovejoy (64-44).mp3

Truth Or Consequences 431218 1st; Contestant, Jerome Widenmann, Diapers a Pig. AFRS #8 (SS 12-25-1 & 2).mp3

Voice of the Army 49xxxx 463 Off the Record. Guests, The Spotlighters (192-44).mp3

Voice of the Army 49xxxx 464 Operation Citizenship, with HV Kaltenborn (192-44).mp3

Weird Circle 430819 007 What Was It.mp3

Weird Circle 430930 013 The Man Without a Country.mp3
Weird Circle 431007 014 Dr Manette's Manuscript.mp3
Weird Circle 431205 021 The 415 Express.mp3
Weird Circle 440101 025 The Heart of Ethan Brand.mp3
Weird Circle 440414 031 Wuthering Heights.mp3
Weird Circle 440526 037 The Werewolf.mp3
Weird Circle 440729 043 The Bell Tower.mp3

What's Your Idea 410420 1st; And the Band Played On. Host, Nelson Olmsted. WMAQ Aircheck.mp3

Women & Children First 410206 [NBC Drama by Irving Gainor Nimand] Sherman Captures Roscoe.mp3

Words at War 440919 064 The Time for Decision (Sumner Welles) & U.S. War Aims (Walter Lippmann).mp3

Words with Music xxxxxx #1679 1st; 'There's No You. Organ by Hilton Spaninger AFRS.mp3

Words with Music xxxxxx #1680 1st; 'Daisies'. Featuring Howard Culver, Martha Shaw & Hilton Spaninger AFRS.mp3

Words with Music xxxxxx #1681 1st; The Last Time I Saw Paris. Hilton Spaninger at the Organ AFRS.mp3

Words with Music xxxxxx #1682 1st; Poem- 'Song of Incense'. Featuring Frances Gifford & Hilton Spaninger AFRS.mp3

Words with Music xxxxxx #1683 1st; 'The Lamplighter's Serenade'. Organ by Hilton Spaninger AFRS.mp3

Words with Music xxxxxx #1684 1st; Poem- 'The Spring Returns'. Featuring Don Randolph & Hilton Spaninger AFRS.mp3

World of Folk Music (SSA) 6xxxxx 188 1st; 'There Was an Old Lord'. Oscar Brand with The McGee Bros & Arthur Smith.mp3

World of Folk Music (SSA) 6xxxxx 189 1st; 'The Hind-Part of a Mule'. Oscar Brand, with The Tripjacks.mp3

Yarns for Yanks xxxxxx 043 Hot Piano. Frank Alexander The Great Alexander The Great, Kay Kyser.mp3

Yarns for Yanks xxxxxx 044 Air Circus. Frank Graham (H-13-44).mp3

You are There 471214 009 The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre (32-22).mp3

You are There 490320 068 The Rise of Alexander The Great 3. Mutiny in India, September 326 BC AFRS (64-44).mp3

You Bet Your Life 500531 096 Secret Word - Book.mp3

You Bet Your Like 540407 245 Secret Word - Face.mp3

Your Hit Parade 450630 xxx 1st; 'You Belong to My Heart' (#8). #1 Sentimental Journey (L. Tibbet) AFRS#141 (192-44).mp3

Your Playhouse of Favorites 4xxxxx 027 Therese Raquin, by Émile Zola (192-44).mp3

Your Playhouse of Favorites 4xxxxx 028 Silas Marner, by Mary Ann Evans (192-44).mp3

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