

# AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

Volume 15, Number 5

May 2005

## Vic and Sade

Remembered by Barbara Schwarz

"Well sir, it's late afternoon as we enter the small house half-way up in the next block now, and here in the living-room we find all our friends assembled."

The memory of *Vic and Sade* has never left me though it has been many years since the above phrase was last heard in its original 15-minute format on September 29, 1944.

The memory of this program led me to organize a group called **Friends of Vic and Sade** way back in 1972. Our goal continues to be the finding and sharing of as many existing copies of this program with each other. It has been a wonderful journey.

Paul Rhymer introduced a unique form of humor to radio writing that became to be admired and extolled by fellow humorists such as Ogden Nash and Edgar Lee Masters as being the best writing of all-time of great American humor. Ray Bradbury has said of *Vic and Sade*: "middle-class America was dramatized lovingly and forever by Paul Rhymer." Stan Freberg, Steve Allen, Richard Schickel, Henry Morgan, Studs Terkel and many others have declared themselves as long time fans of the program. It was long known as a radio program devotedly listened to by radio personnel throughout the networks.

Paul Rhymer came to the job with keen observational skills of the human condition

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## Elvis at Showcase?!

Since he is planning to run for president in 2008, as suggested in the grocery store tabloids recently, he'll probably be very interested in joining in the fun in Seattle. Where else could he have a better time?

Even if he doesn't come —

By now, members and others have seen the list of super people who will be sharing their talents with all attendees on June 24-25. From Radio's Golden Age we'll be cavorting with **Alice Backes, Dick Beals, Herb Ellis, Ray Erlenborn, Bob Hastings, Bill Idelson, Anne Whitfield Phillips, Rosemary Rice, Hal Stone and Gil Stratton, Jr.**



Art Van Harvey, Clarence Hartzell, Bernardine Flynn and Billy Idelson  
PoCreations

**Art Gilmore** will have to be among the missing, but we hope to have him on the phone with the entire audience. And, we plan to do the same with **Norma Jean Nilsson** and **Rhoda Williams**. Additional friends, such as **Frank Buxton, Esther Geddes McVey, Larry Albert** and others will be pitching in as well. Finally, one mystery guest has been invited, but we do not have a confirmation yet.

### Program

Get ready for full re-creations of: *The Adventures of Frank Race, Vic & Sade, Archie Andrews, X Minus One, Imagination Theater* and *Romance*. Segments of at least 5 other favorites will be done.

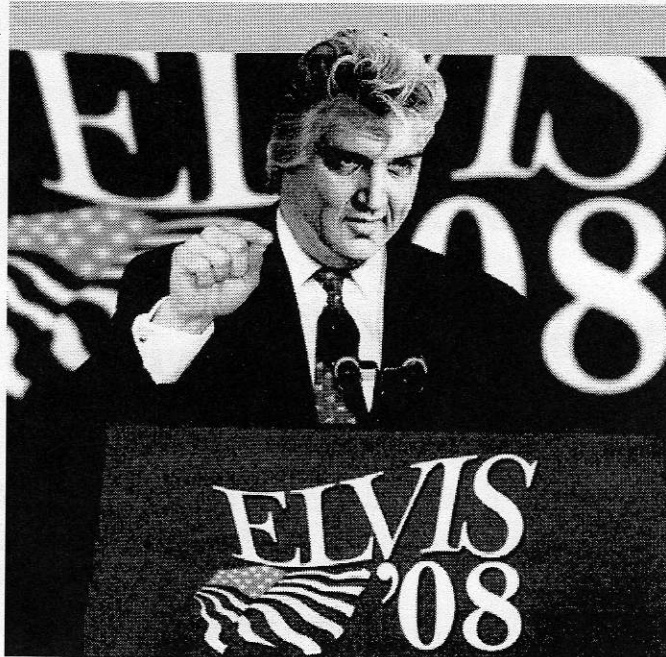
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Learn about shows and stars in various panels and presentations throughout the weekend, and experience a fresh batch of Improv Radio headed by **Frank Buxton** and his troop of actors.

#### Do come

So, for Elvis' sake, or at least your own, come and enjoy a relaxed, kind and friendly weekend with a bunch of people just having a good time around radio's Golden Age.



#### Try a Sample?

If your budget is a little tight, don't forget that there is a Sampler of a few hours so you don't miss out all-together. Info is on the website.

#### Check the website, or contact Mike

If you can access the internet, details and the registration form are at ([www.repsonline.org](http://www.repsonline.org)).

If you can't do that, just call Mike Sprague at 480-474-4480.

## Last call for Silent Auction items!

Thanks to REPS members and guests, the array of radio memorabilia is building for the sole fund-raising event during Showcase — *The Good Ol' Days* June 24-25 at the Seattle Center. But we can always use more.

**Members**, can you gingerly open the hall closet door and dig around for any recordings, books or other radio-related material that you can spare for a good cause?

**Radio professionals**, whether you're attending Showcase or not, do you have any scripts, photographs or memorabilia that will spark lively bidding?

If you have anything you wish to contribute to the Silent Auction, please write me, Terry Campbell, at 710 S. Fifth Ave., Yakima, WA 98902, e-mail me at [tcampbell@yakima-herald.com](mailto:tcampbell@yakima-herald.com), call me at (509) 457-535, or bring the item to the June 4 REPS meeting. Donors who are bringing items to the Showcase itself, could you please e-mail me a description of each item so I can arrange a spot for it in the auction and publicize it properly?

Then, come to Showcase and check out the Silent Auction in the Vendors Room. **And bid often.**

**Bob Louden** has had a hobby of collecting and researching "Old-Time Radio" and the music of the "Swing Era" since his years in radio and television, dating back to the 1940s in Yakima and Seattle, Washington.

**Bob and Meredith Louden** have brought their programs to more than 200 organizations throughout the west: service clubs, airlines, casinos, regional conventions, colleges and elsewhere. The programs are always well received. Bob and Meredith will be bringing their wonderful presentation to REPS for the June Saturday Meeting. "I have some great new things that people haven't heard yet," Bob declared. Bob is excited to be with the REPS gang in June and it should be a very fun program. Everyone who can make it should have a great time. The focus is the music of the swing era with recordings of live dance band remotes tailored to the fans of old time radio. Don't be surprised to hear bits and pieces of the top radio programs of the day, bloopers and news of the day.

*Door Prizes:* You'll very much enjoy the way the Loudens give away books, DVDs, CDs and cassettes of radio shows and dance bands. Great fun for all!

**Saturday, June 4th, 2pm**



based on his childhood experiences, education in high school in Bloomington, attending Illinois Wesleyan University, and learning from a wide variety of jobs. He wrote articles and stories as he matured, so he looked forward to taking a job in the NBC community department in 1929. NBC decided to broadcast a program Mr. Rhymer had developed, *Vic and Sade*. The sketches were based on his experiences relating to ordinary people and incidents of everyday life. Mr. Rhymer used his sense of humor to give these sketches a unique flavor that few listeners would ever forget once heard.

The first sustaining broadcast was on June 29, 1932 on KYW (NBC, Chicago) at 8:30 a.m. Management did not really know if anyone was listening that early in the morning. After a month on the air, the audience was asked if anyone was enjoying this early hour program. NBC received 5,000 replies of support. The program had two short term sponsors before Proctor & Gamble became the permanent sponsor on November 5, 1934. This program survived many broadcast time changes over the years.

NBC was extremely fortunate to choose **Bernardine Flynn** to play Sade. Miss Flynn came with a fine background in theater while attending the University of Wisconsin, gaining experience in New York theater, and returning to Chicago to become a seasoned radio performer. She interpreted the role of Sade as a devoted wife and mother, who had a sharp tongue at times, but always supportive of her family and friends. We knew Sade sewed some of her clothes and belonged to the Thimble Club. We knew Sade's best friend, Ruthie Stembottom, who went to wash rag sales with Sade down at Yamilton's department store. Sade made it very plain how she disliked Miz' Applerot, who had a snooty attitude toward many of the members. Sade loved a bit of gossip but was never cruel. Who can forget that the beef punkles never were done on time and the many boring little letters from sister Bess that Sade insisted on reading about how Walter's kneecap had let up on the twinges and daughter Euncie was learning the piano.

**Art Van Harvey** assumed the role of Vic as the chief accountant of the Consolidated Kitchenware Company, Plant No. 14 and being the Exalted Big Dipper of the Sacred Stars of the Milky Way lodge with relish. Mr. Van Harvey was able to fill his role to perfection because of a background filled with experiences from sales positions in various forms as well as being an actor in vaudeville. Vic could be vain and pompous at times but always was a devoted and supportive family man who could see the humor in situations sooner than Sade at times.

Within about ten broadcasts, Mr. Rhymer realized he needed another family member to expand the story line. This was Depression time and some families needed help to care for a child or two when the father was out of a job. Sade convinced Vic to take in a son of one of her very good friends for a time. Thus the speaking role of Rush was introduced to the broadcast on July 15, 1932.

**Bill Idelson** had experience in playing roles in children's theater, in radio as Skeezi on WGN, and a regular role on KYW's Checkerboard Fairy Tales. He admits that he was somewhat reluctant to take another radio role when told of another audition opportunity at NBC; however, he realized within a very short time of playing Rush that this was a special program and very glad he was chosen.

With Rush joining the family Mr. Rhymer was able to enliven and demonstrate Vic's great affection for Rush by often addressing him with such wonderful names as Mr. Hoolsch, ink eraser, stove poker, pocket watch, coal oil, oyster cracker, etc. The list is endless. Rush's friends were legion: Blue-tooth Johnson, Smelly Clark, Nicer Scott, Rooster and Rotten Davis, and LeRoy Snow to name a few. They attended school together, played ball at Tatman's vacant lot, watched the fat men play handball at the YMCA, and went to the movies to see Gloria Golden and Frank Fuddleman in their latest adventures.

Vic would regale us with his always serious

regard for the Lodge and its members and rituals. Vic belonged to the All-Star Marching Team along with Homer U. McDancy, H.K. Fleeber, Y.Y. Flirsch, Robert and Slobert Hink, O.X. Bellyman, I. Edson Box, J.J.J.J. Stunbolt, Harry Fie, Hermie Wermie, and E. Tyson Stooger. They never marched together. Who can forget the founder, R.J. Konk? Vic was always trying to convince Sade that he needed another item that was listed in the Lodge catalog. Vic's friends, such as Rishigan Fishigan from Sishigan, Michigan, who lived in the penthouse at the Bright Kentucky Motel, can never be forgotten. Hank Gutstop was the Little Dipper of the Lodge and was a thorn in Sade's side for borrowing money from Vic and rarely paying it back. Vic made us aware of his co-workers at Plant #14 including his boss, Mr. Buller. Lolita di renzi was in the box department. She played the tropical guitar and tried to teach Vic to play the Caribbean dream flute. Sade disliked her, of course.

In August of 1940 Mr. Van Harvey had a heart attack and could not perform. To fill the need for a third speaking part, Mr. Rhymer brought in Sade's Uncle Fletcher, who had been referred to via letters for quite awhile. **Clarence Hartzell** auditioned and was immediately hired. He came with solid radio experience earned in Cincinnati and Chicago radio. Uncle Fletcher was a delightfully eccentric character who had "selective hearing" in all situations. Uncle Fletcher was a relative who could make you love him or irritate you with his affinity to the special friends in his world. Mr. Rhymer used Uncle Fletcher to express his quirky sense of humor. Fans took to Uncle Fletcher, and family life took on an added dimension. Vic returned to the show by September.

I doubt anyone could forget Uncle Fletcher and so many of his friends. B.B. Baugh invented and sold Stingyberry Jam that wriggled and

writhed in the jars. He also invented Hyena grease, the best and smelliest shoe polish, so he claimed. Roy Dejectedly wanted to go into partnership with Fletcher to buy the Little Tiny Petite Pheasant Feather Tea Shoppe. Fletcher fraternized with Ernie Fatler, ticket agent at the interurban train station, and the list goes on and on.

In 1942 Mr. Rhymer had to adjust the family story line because Bill Idelson left to serve in the Naval Air Corps. By June 1943 **David Whitehouse**, 13 years old, took the part of Russell, the orphaned nephew of Vic's boss, Mr. Buller. No scripts exist to explain Rush's departure. The character of Russell just stepped into Rush's shoes.

The last broadcast of the original 15-minute format aired on September 29, 1944. There was little or no warning of the cancellation. There were several more revivals of *Vic and Sade*. **1945:** August—September, CBS ran a 15-minute version of *Vic and Sade*. This version contained speaking parts for everyone in the scripts using talented Chicago radio players. **1946:** Mutual ran a June—September half-hour version again with speaking parts done by Chicago actors. **1947:** There is minimal evidence of a possible television effort on ABC in December. **1949:** in July *Vic and Sade* appeared on three Monday night television performances on *Colgate Theater* on a trial basis. Only Miss Flynn was used. **1957:** NBC ran eight 15-minute broadcasts on television in black and white with Miss Flynn and Mr. Van Harvey. Rush was played by Eddie Gillian.

Paul Rhymer created a full picture of their friends and neighbors because of his talented writing. He gave us such succinct characterizations of these relatives, friends and neighbors that we knew them without ever hearing their voices. Also due to his writing skills we knew the town and environs as though we lived there, and in many ways we did.

**Congratulations to Jack French** ... Author Jack French of Fairfax, Virginia won the Agatha Award for 2004 Best Nonfiction for his book Private Eyelashes: Radio's Lady Detectives. The book debuted in April 2004 to critical acclaim from both the OTR community and the world of mystery literature.



## Showcase Special Edition

We have had 30 sets of *Archie Andrews* episodes made. There are 15 *Archie Andrews* and 1 *Henry Aldrich* episode on 8 CDs, all uncirculated, in this set.

This will be the first time the programs have been available for listening since their original broadcasts from 1946 to 1951. Not even the REPS Board or Showcase Staff has had the opportunity to listen to them. A small portion of one episode has been put on the [repsonline.org](http://repsonline.org) website for you to check out.

These special edition sets will only be available for purchase at Showcase. There is a place on the color Jewel Case cover for the signatures of the three original cast members appearing at Showcase this year.

You can reserve your set by contacting Mary Fichtenberg: [FICHTENBERG2319@msn.com](mailto:FICHTENBERG2319@msn.com).

### CD Library

and

### DVD Library

Frank Rosin

There are a little over 600 CDs in the Library now. You will need to go to the web site to get the latest additions. Another 4 pages of the catalog are printed in this issue. The entire run, less a few missing episodes, of *Escape* are in the library, some *Rogue's Gallery*, *Richard Diamond* and about 170 episodes of *Our Miss Brooks* are ready to check out. As this issue is being printed a number of *Phillip Marlowe* episodes are being readied for the catalog.

The DVD Library is now available and is growing. You will need to check the website for catalog numbers and exact titles.

The first 14 DVDs contain (5 each) of the *Amos & Andy* TV episodes. This may be all the known existing episodes. Some of them are pristine with original beer commercials and some are several generations removed from the original source which may no longer exist. The two part episode called "Gettin' Mama Married" is one of the most humorous things I have watched on TV in years. DVD #15 contains the movie "Check and Double Check."

"George Washington Slept Here," "Meanest Man in the World," and "The Horn Blows at Midnight" are three Jack Benny movies in the library.

In the late 1930s and during the 1940s there was no opportunity to see the people we all listened to on the radio and a number of 'B' quality

movies were made to exploit their personalities. They were a little lame plot-wise but enjoyable. Many of those are available now.

RKO did "Here We Go Again" in 1942 and "Look Who's Laughing" in 1941 featuring Jim and Marian Jordan as Fibber McGee and Molly along with Edgar Bergen, Charlie and Mortimer. RKO also did Gildersleeve's "Bad Day" in 1943 and Gildersleeve's "Ghost" in 1944 both starring Harold Perry as Gildersleeve. Those are ready to check out.

An earlier RKO film called "Damsel in Distress" from 1937 features Fred Astaire and Burns and Allen. Gracie does a remarkable job dancing with Astaire and in the 1939 MGM film, "Honolulu," she does a splendid singing sequence. "Honolulu" also has a young Robert Young playing two parts.

An all time favorite of mine is "Champagne for Caesar." This 1950 film is a spoof on quiz programs and stars Ronald Colman with Vincent Price as a somewhat humorous villain. It also has Art Linkletter, Celeste Holme and Barbara Britton. If you have never seen this film, you should check it out, you will like it.

We have just begun to scratch the surface of early TV and Movies that feature some of our favorite radio personalities. Our film person is Bob Blume, let him know what you would like to see: [bblume@foxinternet.net](mailto:bblume@foxinternet.net).

**Editor's Note:** Some things never change ... these same arguments (or similar ones) are made today!!!  
Some of the opinions expressed by the author are pretty harsh.

## Kids Want Murder

Radio Guide Magazine: June 10, 1939

by T. H. Trent

Little Eddie, age nine, jerked his wooden pistol from its oilcloth holster, stuck it into his chum's ribs and screamed, "I'm the Klondike Killer. Bang! Bang! Bang!" He had heard it on the radio.

Emily Ann, age ten, sat stubbornly over the breakfast dish of Whooshies. She was a member of the Whooshy club, she had a pin and membership card, and she had promised to be a Model Whoosy Ideal Child. "No," she told her mother, "I'm not hungry." Now Emily Ann should have been hungry, for she had gone to bed after a light supper and she had eaten nothing this morning, of which fact her mother reminded her. Said Emily Ann, "I want some Scrumbles." Emily Ann's mother thought of the four boxes of Whooshie in the pantry, the boxes of Bitties, the one box of Peppies, and the three boxes of Kidbits, each box minus a top or side panel but hardly any of its contents. And now Emily wanted Scrumbles. "I think," said Emily Ann's mother, "I'll never allow you to listen to the radio again."

Master Peter, age eight, who liked funnies too, faced his father over the evening papers and said evenly, "Gimmie dat poiper, youse, or I'll bop you in de mush." "What is your favorite radio program, son?" asked Peter's dad, who was an unusually astute citizen. "*Gangsters and Guns*," said eight-year old Peter.

Twelve-year old George took a single strand of strong copper wire early one evening and attached one end securely to the gatepost just eight inches above the ground. Ten feet away across the sidewalk was a telegraph pole, to which he twisted the other end, making a tight, invisible obstacle across the walkway. Then he walked through the twilight to Bert's house. Bert was something of a bully and George, who was smaller, wanted revenge. Bully Bert was in  
6 his yard when George's first taunt reached his

ears. "Get out," he replied. "Make me get out!" dared George. Bert went for him fast. George streaked around the corner, leaped the hidden wire, and was away. Bert's flying feet tangled in the wire and he fell. Next morning, just before noon, he died in a hospital of a fractured skull. George admitted he got the idea from a radio program.

Things like that are bad. A lot of people are yelling that such things shouldn't be permitted on the air. Perhaps they are right. But they are also lazy. Lazy thinkers, that is. If they weren't they would realize that they are wrong in at least two important respects.

First, children want murder. Dress them in pink and blue ribbons, or Buster Brown collars, fill them with Golden Rules and Sunday School lessons, train them in the ways of unselfishness and righteousness, and you still have, almost without exception, a little savage. He has his cute and his docile moments, but he has entered this world only a few years earlier, remember, with no inhibitions, no responsibilities, and no ethics. He eats, he plays, and he resists learning just as definitely as does a young colt who is placed in harness. Only gradually do we civilized oldsters wear him down. Presently he becomes one of us — a deadly bore.

But now he wants murder because violence is natural to him. So he tunes, if he is unsupervised, to those programs that have such an appeal. Which causes some parents to leap to the wrong conclusion about radio. Long *before* radio, for instance, little Eddies were racing about back yards shouting "Bang, bang, bang." Long before radio, premiums and secret societies were used to sell cereals. Thirty years ago, kids talked slang and told their parents "Twenty-three, skiddoo" or answered their orders with "Ish-ka-bibble, I should worry."

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Also, some fine lessons in how to kill, orb, high-jack, cheat, and maim had been given in literature and art and opera quite a while before our children began to ride their little kilocycles.

So rest assured that radio is not turning our children into savages. They start out that way, unprincipled, uninhibited. Radio, as it measures up to its responsibilities, can do much to help parents to turn them into people with whom it is possible to live comfortably.

Error two in the credo of the Parent Who Hates Radio forces us to the brink of discourtesy. We refer to the mother (or father) who says, "I can't make them stop listening to those awful programs. Such things oughtn't to be on the air."

Madam, lean over the nearest chair, if you please, while I lay this carpet slipper against your derrière. Any mother whose children's listening habits cause her acute but futile anguish is not damming radio. She is damming herself and her motherhood and stating that she is an ineffectual floozy whose discipline must be a mixture of baby talk and empty threats. She merely grasps at radio as an alibi for her own mental short weight.

A responsibility of parenthood is that of guiding the child. Guidance does not stop at four p.m. when children's programs come on the air. Any mother who hasn't the guts to walk into a nursery and turn off a blood-and-thunder cliff-hanger had better take steps immediately to turn her brood over to the nearest orphan asylum, of which the author is prepared to recommend

several which know how to raise a child. It is doubtful, however, that her type would have enough brains to recognize a program harmful to a nine-year old mentality. She would be too busy enjoying it herself.

In short, a few radio programs admittedly are still phony or harmful. Some mothers do have radio-children-program problems. But there are antidotes for the former, and as for the latter, these mothers must accept this additional responsibility just as they have in the case of selecting their children's schools, companions and movies.

It is an interesting and hopeful sign that women everywhere are thinking intelligently of this problem. Not by damming the damnable do they expect to "clean up the Children's Hour." Not by muck-raking, by quoting isolated cases of night sweats, or bed-wettings. Instead, they are asking broadcasters to use their powerful instrument to make better citizens out of our children. And they are pledging themselves to support those programs for children which most nearly accomplish that end. In itself that is no mean pledge to a businessman with a child's program on the air. For there are 18,000,000 allied clubwomen interested in this new project.

No, children's desires don't change much despite new gadgets or mechanical marvels. They still want murder. Sometimes the oldsters want it, too. They wanted it and they got it even as far back as the Garden of Gethsemane. But given radio and good judgment and a spirit of malice toward none, we must slowly climb toward that state of perfection of which He preached.

## **THANKS AGAIN TO ALL HONORARY MEMBERS!**

REPS would enjoy nothing more than an extravaganza where we could have together every honorary member. Wouldn't it be something special?

As mentioned in the previous Air Check, and as you all know, our size and location just don't allow us to do it. Thank you for your understanding comments and attitudes about this dear friends.

We're considering some creative differences in the future that will allow us to enjoy time with more of you, assuming you are willing.



**REPS**

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**Meetings**

**Board meeting**  
June 3, 2005: 7 pm  
Mercer Room, Comfort Suites (near the Space Needle)

**Membership meeting**  
June 4, 2005: 2 pm  
Norse Home  
Bob Louden and swing era music

**Showcase**  
June 24 & 25: 10 am-9 pm  
Northwest Rooms, Seattle Center  
Theme: *The Good Ol' Days*

No July membership meeting

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