

AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

Volume 15, Number 9, November 2005

Going Back to Summerfield with the Great Gildersleeve

Bryan Haigood

"Wistful Vista ! Coming in to Wistful Vista !" the conductor announces as the train arrives in the small but very well known town.

"Oh Wistful Vista !" excitedly exclaims an older lady passenger as she inquires "Where Fibber Mc Gee and Molly live?"

"Yes Madam" answers the conductor.

"Oh My ! You think I will be able to see them from the train window ?"



Willard Waterman

Hal Peary

"No Lady, the McGee's are on their vacation." answers the conductor. Quickly realizing the disappointment of the passenger the conductor points out to her "but say, there's a next door neighbor of their's , Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve." ...

And so opens the first episode of "The Great Gildersleeve" broadcast on NBC, August 31,1941.

We are next introduced to Gildersleeve standing on the train deck talking to his Gildersleeve Girde works employees who have all come down to the station to see their boss off. One employee is heard to ask "How long will you be gone TP ?"

"Just till the end of the week!" answers Gildersleeve. Gildersleeve was off to Summerfield to administer the Estate of his brother in law and the affairs of his niece, Marjorie, and nephew, Leroy Forrester. Marjorie was 19 or 20 and Leroy was 12. Gildersleeve would never make it back to Wistful Vista except for an occasional visit. Gildersleeve would become one of the most popular radio programs and remained on the air until March 21,1957.

But who was this Gildersleeve character who delighted radio audiences for so many years?

Back in the 1930s Don Quinn , the creator of Fibber McGee and Molly, wanted a new character on the show and created Gildersleeve . Cliff Arquette played an early Gildersleeve character on April 13, 1936. On the broadcast of May 4th 1936 the character was given the first name Cliff. It would be two years before the name Gildersleeve

1 Back to Summerfield
2 continued
3 President's Message

4 Cassette and CD Library
5 For Sale/Wanted
5 December Membership Meeting

6 DVD Library, Radio in Seattle
7 Rumble Seat/Quiz
8 Contacts, Coming Events

would be used again and would then be played by Hal Peary. Peary joined the show in 1937 and became a regular stooge on the McGee show. Hal played many different roles before he started playing various characters all named Gildersleeve. He was Widdicomb P. Gildersleeve, president of a baby carriage factory, on September 20, 1938 an optometrist, Donald Gildersleeve, on April 25, 1939 and later a dentist, Leo Gildersleeve.

Hal Peary came from San Francisco radio where he was a singer and an actor. Hal lived on a street called

Throckmorton Place in Chicago at that time

and writer Don Quinn took the name for the character. On

October 17, 1939 the radio audience was introduced to Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve.

Throckmorton P.

Gilderleeve lived right next door to Fibber McGee and Molly. The relationship between Gildersleeve and Fibber was a mix of good old pals quickly turning into neighborly feuding and rivalry producing some of the funniest moments on the show.

The famous Glidersleeve laugh came about on Fibber McGee and Molly also. Hal had used the laugh previously during his days in San Francisco radio. On one McGee live broadcast when the show was running short the director signaled the cast to "stretch" which means slow down or add dialogue. Noticing the direction Hal added the "San Francisco" laugh while reading opposite Jim Jordan. The laugh received a great response from the audience and Jim Jordan signaled for him to do it again. There was thunderous laughter and a signature laugh was born.

Gildersleeve would become the main comedy foil to Fibber until 1941. At that time an executive of Johnson's Wax wanted to create a new summer replacement series for Fibber Mc Gee and Molly and considered building the show around the Gildersleeve character. Johnson's Wax produced an audition in

May 1941 starring Hal Peary with Harlow Wilcox as the announcer. It's basically the same script that was used on the first show of August 31, 1941. One big difference was that the character of Marjorie was named Evelyn in the audition. The company, Johnson's Wax, decided to go with Ransom Sherman for the summer time replacement instead.

The executive who created the Gildersleeve show was upset and instead he sold the program to Kraft Foods. Kraft would own the show until 1954. Hal Peary would star and stayed with the show until the end of the 1949-1950 season. During the famous CBS talent raids of the late 40s a deal was made with Hal Peary to go over to CBS from NBC. Unfortunate for Peary, the Kraft company who owned the show did not want to leave NBC, thus Hal was left without a program. A new program was quickly developed for Hal Peary and began in the fall of 1950 on CBS titled "Honest Harold." It sizzled quickly and only lasted the one year. Hal left Hollywood for New York where he became a Disc Jockey. (ed note: All the "Honest Harold" shows are in the REPS CD Library.)

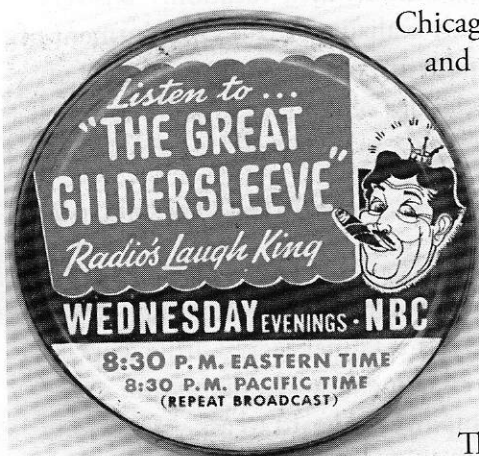
Willard Waterman took over the Gildersleeve part on September 6, 1950 and remained until March 21, 1957 when the series ended.

Willard was a Chicago based radio actor who worked on many shows with Hal Peary during the 1930s. In fact when finding themselves part of the same cast of a program they would get together before the program to decide which of them would use a high voice and who would use a low pitch. This was necessary so that they would not sound too much alike on a program so as not to create confusion for the listening audience. They sounded so much alike otherwise. This of course was an asset to NBC when Waterman took over the Gildersleeve role as many listeners never noticed that there was a change.

Marylee Robb

Willard Waterman

Walter Tetley



THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE

Dick Beals

It always gave you that nice warm feeling when the call came in for a Great Gildersleeve show. It was that kind of show that started with a director that was a real pro. Most actors knew that to be on time meant arriving 15 minutes early. In this case the director was there waiting for us, with his motor running.

The scripts were spread neatly on the large conference table in the studio, a needle-sharp pencil sitting beside the script, your name on the script beside the part, or parts, you were to play. Of course most of us arrived pen and/or pencil in hand (or pocket), but on this Show, it was traditional to use "the director's" pencil.

6'4" Willard Waterman saunters in, talking to anyone that might be listening about "my sensational 7 iron on 16 that was a gimme bird". The lovely Shirley Mitchell is smiling and applauding him, although she knows nothing about golf, a 7 iron and especially a "gimme bird". But once those two are circling the table, script and needle-sharp pencil in hand, the chatter begins.

The moment the director enters the room, it's all business, with polite greetings, scripts poised, sans paper clips. Seeing this the director quietly says... "Ok, page one please, Music in and under for....Announcer....."

The first reading is used only to acquaint the actors with the words and phrases. The leading performers read correctly first and drop into their character somewhat. The extras, so to speak, create their characters full blast, trying to impress the director.

The director listens intently, makes notes, occasionally gives a direction for better timing, or suggests a change in age, attitude, or "sell that joke, Ed, to give Gildersleeve a better lead-in for his tag and the music."

When the table reading is finished, the Production rehearsal is next. The sound effects pros are already in place, the music is ready, the engineer has the mikes all set, the director zips into the Control Room, and those in the first scene are on mike, scripts and needle-sharp pencils at the ready, all eyes waiting for the director's cue.

The well known regulars move into their parts with a bit more effort. Everyone else sharpens their characters, sells the laughs with more gusto and, especially the newcomers, pads their parts to impress the director.

Before Air Time the director reviews all his notes, and maybe goes over a scene once or twice. If the writers are in the booth this happens more often because their

jobs are on the line too. Their rule is... "if ain't funny, make it funny. The sponsors are paying for laughs, especially leading into their commercials".

When its Show Time, everyone goes full blast, the jokes are funnier than ever, the characters are powerful, sharp, and suddenly, just like that, it's all over.

All eyes are on the booth. The engineer slowly raises both hands to indicate that all the knobs are on zero. Is it celebration time? No! The cast places their scripts and slightly dulled pencils on the table, engages in small talk going out the door, says something nice to the director in the booth and heads for the parking lot.

It's only another day, another job, another pay check. Oh well, that's show biz.



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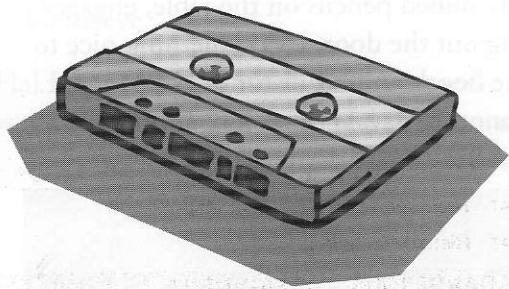
November 2005



REPS Library Adds New Cassettes

Michael Comstock

After a long absence, we once again are adding, in addition to our CD's, new cassettes to our library. We have just added over 100 new cassettes from some of the following programs: The Martin & Lewis Show (many), Broadway



is My Beat (several), tapes from Showcases 9 & 10, Ma Perkins, Boston Blackie, Phillip Marlowe, Walter Winchell, Mercury

Theatre on the Air, Melody Roundup, Richard Diamond, Tarzan (many), Let George Do It, Box 13, Too Hot For Radio (all 5 tapes), Mr. & Mrs. North, The Avengers (several), Red Ryder, and many more. So if you are a cassette collector, or only have a cassette player, you can once again order new cassette programs.

In the near future we will be adding several hundred more programs to the cassette library, so no matter whether you prefer cassettes, or cd's, you will find a much enlarged cassette/CD library as well as a new VHS/DVD library of movies and TV programs that got their start or are related to radio. Please remember, it is your library and it is available to any club member. Please take advantage of it. Our new cd's are all "high quality" and the tape, while some have defects, they are often the rarer programs not always available as yet in our library on CDs.

Enjoy listening, I know I do, and let us know what you are interested in listening to so we can try and add them to our library. And soon, a new, up-to-date library catalog of all the club's cassettes, cd's DVD's and VHS tapes will be available to all members. The VHS tapes can not be mailed and will only be available at our monthly meetings. The catalog will be available on CD format and is "on line" at the REPS web site. A printed copy may be made available later after we determine how to cover the cost of printing.

We are in need of a volunteer who has the time to update the current library catalog. This will not require the person

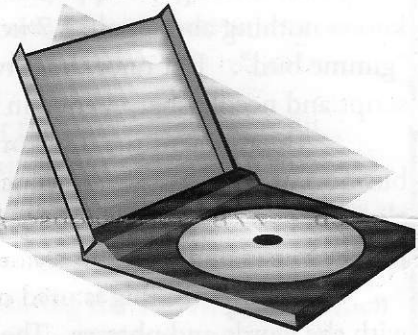
to come to any special meetings and he/she will be able to do all of the work at home.

Please consider this very important job. You will not have to check out tapes, etc., nor print up the catalogs. Other members will make all of the copies for membership distribution and/or make the catalog available at our web site. The job will also require updates of new materials in the cassette catalog. These will probably be printed and sent out along with our AirCheck as needed. All of the Please let any of your Board members know if you would be willing to take on this very important task. Please think about helping your club by volunteering, and you don't even need to live in the greater Seattle area. You will become one of a team of volunteers that maintains, adds to and runs your REPS Library.

CD Library

Franz Rosin

More pages of the CD library are printed in this issue. You will find a completely uncirculated Shadow episode, Conversation With Death, 9-17-1939. CD Library # 802.



The 1939 Goodrich summer season was made up of reruns of the 1938-39 Blue Coal winter season (the first starring Bill Johnstone) with new Goodrich commercials inserted. The single non-rerun exception was this episode which was never repeated in the regular series later. "Conversation with Death" replaced the 1938 Shadow Christmas show. The Goodrich shows were syndicated and thus did not have specific dates. However, "Conversation with Death" was the 26th episode of the series and would have been broadcast on September 17, 1939.

Contact librarians, Vi and Darrell Anderson, 17254 Lake Desire Dr N, Renton WA 98058, 425-226-7005 for a library order form, or get a form at a regular meeting, or from the REPS web site.

New Agreement Brings Great Sounding OTR to REPS Members

Harlan Zinck

Over the past few years, the First Generation Radio Archives has become known as the source for some of the best-sounding radio programs currently available. Working with original transcription disks and master recordings, their straight-from-the-source audio restorations have become the standard for just how wonderful OTR can sound when treated with care, respect, professional standards, and state-of-the-art digital audio equipment and techniques.

And now, thanks to a new cooperative agreement between The Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound and the Archives, REPS members who join the Archives can also help support both current and future REPS activities. Here's how it works:

Visit the First Generation Radio Archives website at www.radioarchives.org and sign up for a free, no-cost, no-obligation membership. On the membership page, when you come to the box labeled "Referral Code," enter the letters REPS; this will ensure that the Archives knows you're joining them as a REPS member.

Once you've become an Archives member, take a few minutes to browse the Archives' extensive catalog of old time radio shows on compact discs – and, in particular, note the special sale prices they offer on newly released collections. If you choose to purchase any of their CD sets, either now or any time in the future, part of the purchase price of everything you buy from the Archives will be returned to REPS in cash.

It's truly a win-win situation for both you and REPS, too: you have the chance to hear some of the best sounding old time radio entertainment currently available and, at the same time, financially support the activities and goals of the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound.

Remember: there's no cost or obligation involved in joining the Archives and no purchase is ever necessary. But, if you're like many of us on the REPS Board of Directors who are already Archives members, you'll soon find yourself purchasing one or more of the Archives'

Premier Collections for not only yourself, but also to give as gifts during the holiday season.

Right now, the Archives is offering all of their holiday-themed CD collections at a substantial discount – so don't delay. Join the Archives today and start enjoying some of the best sounding OTR you've ever heard, secure in the knowledge that you're also helping to financially support the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound.

Tex Ritter Fan Club

Sharon Richards, President
PO Box 1535, Duvall WA 98019

Ten dollars per year dues include a short biography of Tex Ritter and the Club, a membership card, and 8x10 black and white glossy photo each year and three times a year 10 page newsletter.

For Sale or Wanted

This space is reserved for your item for sale or your item wanted. Send your ad to -->frankr@eskimo.com<-- there is no charge for an ad to members.

December 5, 2005 Membership Meeting

The meeting will be held in the dining room of the Norse Home because of a conflict in scheduling rooms. This is the large room on the main floor off Phinney Avenue.

In addition to the program there will be a Christmas exchange of either CDs or Cassettes. Bring one, put it under the tree and then get one from under the tree.

We are also collecting 'Toys for Tots.' If you would like to bring an unwrapped new toy to be turned over to the Marine Corps program we will be collecting those at the meeting. There was a suggestion that children's books might be a good idea.

DVD Library

To avoid confusion, the CD, DVD, and Cassette libraries are completely independent of one another. A catalog number in one of them has no relationship to something in the other library. Be sure to indicate, CD, DVD, or Cassette as part of the catalog number when you order from the library.

More of the DVDs in the library are listed here. Although CDs and Cassettes will play in almost any brand or model of player, the DVDs can be a bit fussy. There are some players that will not play our DVDs. If you experience this, we would like to know the brand and model there is a problem with. We know that some of our DVDs will not play in a Panasonic player. We are trying hard to overcome this and think we have solved the problem but it may take another month to make new replacement DVDs. It appears that most of the over the counter media, Sony, Maxell, TDK, Verbatim, Memorex, and others are all made in the same plant in China. The solution is to use professional DVD media made for our more demanding use. In any case do try a few of these. They will play in most machines and I hope we have selected choices you will enjoy.

DVD -12 Amos 'n Andy TV
Madame Queen's Voice
The Godfather
Insurance Policy
Kingfish gets Amnesia
Girl at the Station

DVD-13 Amos 'n Andy TV
Kingfish Teaches Andy to Fly
Kingfish becomes a Press Agent
Meal Ticket
Father by Proxy

DVD-14 Amos 'n Andy TV
Invisible Glass
Kingfish Buys a Car
Lodge Brothers Complain
Mr. Jackson Comes to Town
Counterfeiters in the Basement

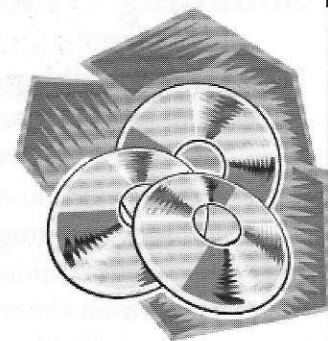
DVD-15 Amos 'n Andy TV
Classified Ad (poor quality)
1932 Rasslin Match (cartoon) Gosden & Correll
1933 Lion Tamer (cartoon) Gosden & Correll
Introduction of TV Cast

DVD-16 Check and Double Check
1930 Movie, Gosden & Correll

DVD-17 Gildersleeve's Bad Day

(1943) Director Gordon Douglas. Starring Harold Peary, Jane Darwell, Grant Withers, Charles Arnt, Lillian Randolph, Richard LeGrand.

Gildy gets called for jury duty in a bank robbery case. True to his contrary nature he is the only dissenting jury member in an open and shut case. Meanwhile a substantial bribe shows up at the Gildersleeve residence and naturally everyone thinks the worst. This is the second of four B features from RKO based on The Great Gildersleeve radio show.



DVD-18 Gildersleeve's Ghost

(1944) Director Gordon Douglas. Starring Harold Peary, Marion Martin, Richard LeGrand, Lillian Randolph, Freddie Mercer, Margie Stewart.

Gildy is running for office with a little supernatural help from some ghostly ancestors and gets mixed up with a mad scientist, an escaped gorilla and an invisible girl. Somehow I don't remember storylines like this on the radio show. A wild finish to the Gildersleeve series.

Bob Blume

Radio in Seattle

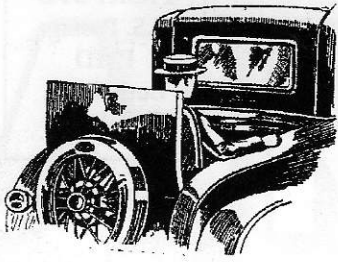
There is a new FM (KCFL FM) station on the air in Seattle broadcasting old radio from 7 to 9 each evening and then repeating the 7 to 9 spots from 9 to 11 weekdays. There is a transmitter in Fall City, 104.5, and one on Capitol Hill, 94.5. This should be available in most of Seattle, Bellevue, and Issaquah.

YesterdayUSA.com is broadcasting old radio continually.

REN is broadcasting audio on TV channel 77.

KIXI-AM (880) broadcasts Imagination Theatre on Saturday and Sunday evenings from 9 to 10. This is where you will hear Harry Nile, Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, and some of the other series that Jim French writes and produces.

KIRO-AM (710) Radio Spirits, 1 am, Saturday, Sunday



Rumble Seat

Franz



Quiz Time

This is an editorial opinion. If someone has a differing view, we will print it in the next issue.

Our CD and DVD library is growing by the hour it seems. The master CD usually comes from the original transcription ET disk or the studio master tape. In many cases the sound has been re mastered to take out any clicks or pops and to play at the 29 minute and 30 second time frame.

By the time a CD has been made for the library, a backup CD for the archives, and a copy for from one to three of the media that REPS is contributing to, this is taking much time and much wear and tear on my poor overworked hard drive and LaCie burner. In the past two years at least 6000 CD have been made by this machine. Each CD then takes almost a half an hour to do all five or six copies. This ties up the computer for other tasks that need to be done. And there are several hundred CDs awaiting this process yet to be placed in the library and made available.

Because of some technical difficulties with over the counter media many of our DVDs will need to be re-made. It seems many of our DVDs will not play in Panasonic and some other brands of players.

For these two main reasons the REPS Board is looking into the purchase of a commercial CD/DVD multiple tray duplicator. To purchase a quality piece of equipment that will stand up to much use and not become obsolete in the near future is not inexpensive. Research is being done now on specifications and particular brands. We will keep you all informed of what our research finds.

Aircheck is created on a Mac G4 computer with Adobe Indesign CS and Adobe Photoshop CS. Most of the text is *Garamond* at 12 points with the headlines at 12, 14 and 18 points bold. If you would like a copy on a CD, write to Frank Rosin, 9811 NE 139th St, Kirkland WA 98034.

Can you identify this lovely lady? She appeared in hundreds of radio and television parts.



If you can tell us who she is at the December meeting we have a CD for you. (first 15) You must identify the lady and tell at least two series that she appeared.

The CD will be two episodes from her most loved role. Both of the episodes will from our store of uncirculated material.

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November 2005

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Schedule

November 28, 2005, Kirkland Performing Arts Center, Imagination Theatre Recording

NO December 2, 2005, Board Meeting

December 3, 2005, Membership Meeting, Norse Home, 2 pm to 4 pm

January 6, 2006, Board Meeting

January 7, 2006, Membership Meeting, Norse Home, 2 pm to 4 pm

June 23 - 24, 2006, Showcase 2006 at the Seattle Center

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