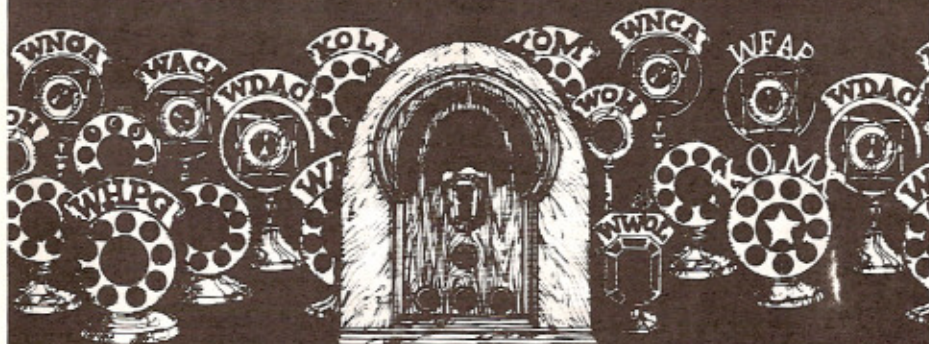


Collector's Corner



Number 18 August 1979 \$1.25



**American
Radio, 1979
Audio Junk Food**



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UPDATE!**

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ISSUE DEDICATION

On July 31, 1979, I lost a very close friend. He was one of radio's standout sound effects artists. He was one of the strongest supporters of collecting's annual convention. He was Ed Blainey.

I first met Ed when I interviewed him for AIRWAVES. (The article is in AIRWAVES #4, now out of print). Usually interviews just end up as that, and you never see that person again. That wasn't the case with Ed. He was lovable, and so was his wife, Norma, who became very close to my fiancée, Annie. We went to dinner together many times. We visited many times. We talked many times. Annie and I would get cards from them, not signed "Ed and Norma," but they would be signed "Your Surrogate Parents." We were close. And we all loved him.

So my collecting will not be the same. Nor will my personal life be the same. Planning the convention won't be as easy. Doing the convention won't be as much fun. But we must learn to live without him; and we will. As Norma told us recently, "Enjoy every minute." We will.

We will miss him.

Joe W.



Collector's Comments from Bob Burnham

Here I am sitting at my desk, as I always am writing an opening editorial, calmly putting my thoughts onto paper. The average reader might say, "Big deal, what else is new?" The thing that is strange is that at my feet, stacked behind me, on both sides of me, and as far as the eye can see in this innocent little office, are thousands of reels, thousands of stacked printed pages, and the usual piles of mail. What I'm leading up to is, yes, I must confess to being the one guilty for making the last issue of Collector's Corner late. I've gotten wound up in about 12 different projects, one of which was to get my tape sales catalog done (and for those of you who are waiting, yes, I have gotten most of it back from the printers, and some of you might have it by the time you read this). Of course, we can never guarantee CC will never be late again, but at least we can promise you we'll try to be early on occassion!

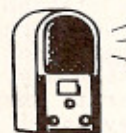
For those of you able to hear my program on WBRB in Michigan, my Saturday old time radio trivia show has a new time--from 3:00 till 7:00 in the evening. Lately, I've been giving away those world famous "Honk if you Love OTR" stickers to participants in the program. Soon as I get my boss to start financing my blank tape, I might start giving away some OTR on tape...Speaking of OTR, WBRB is now running The Lone Ranger, Fibber McGee and The Shadow on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7:30 PM, and also Sunday mornings at 11:30, the Lone Ranger is heard. Seems no matter what station I work at, OTR seems to follow me around! WBRB is at 1430 AM, and now along with WSHJ, is the only station in the area to offer OTR, both with my involvement...WBRB's rebroadcasts have only recently begun.

One of the featured articles this issue is by Jim Beedle, who has a gripe against the broadcast industry. I do not agree with everything he has to say, but being employed by a commercial station, I have to say he is FAR from being crazy. The circumstances he describes are prevalent in certain areas on certain stations, but it does not apply everywhere or necessarily at every station in a given area. What it all boils down to is radio broadcasting is a business, and a very competitive business. Being a business the main concern for the owners is to make money. In some situations, they don't care what the programming is like--if they can find something that will supposedly appeal to the masses, their ratings go up. As a result, they can get more advertisers and/or charge a higher rate. And that's all there is to it. If they can get good ratings playing Scandinavian zither music 24 hours a day, they'll do it!

If I owned a station and all I was interested in doing was making money, I'd have the same attitude. Sure, maybe talk shows, or radio drama or a loosely formatted music show might

be better quality programming all around, but it isn't something that's familiar to people, so supposedly because of that, they won't listen. Another factor is the state in which we are living today in terms of radio listening. I would say a huge percentage of people think of radio as nothing more than a source for music, and that's all they ever listen to it for. Perhaps they don't know that there's a lot more to it than just that...especially the younger people. Before OTR rebroadcasts and interesting telephone interviews were done regularly, I myself never thought of radio as something more than a music source. Many years ago I can even remember taping songs off the radio, then editing out the disk jockey and the commercials (Today, I edit out the music and just keep the disk jockey's patter!). Somehow, it takes a enormous amount of effort to educate all the dim-witted people living in the world that...hey, that little receiver can do more for you than crank out the jams. My feeling is those people---most of them anyway---will never come to realize just how versatile radio can be. It's only those certain ones--people just like ourselves who collect old time radio--who will know how to get the full benefit of the medium. Fortunately, our "group" is growing thanks to efforts of everyone involved in rebroadcasts, and also those involved with new productions at CBS. Maybe there's hope for radio yet.

On the other hand, I also think "top 40" radio has its place. I hate the way stations "burn" a lot of the songs, but that's one of the unfortunate side-effects of this type of radio. I've done top 40 radio before, and believe it or not, it can be fun to do, but it gets to be a real



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grind at times, too. Doing a jazz show is easy going and pleasant (I like the music), but a loose music show with a lot of special features is most fun, but also requires the largest amount of concentration, preparation and just plain work. Same goes for radio drama. You just can't throw a bunch of people in a studio and expect them to produce a classic show, unless 1) You have a good story and script-writer, 2) You have the proper casting for parts, 3) Your cast is thoroughly familiar with their parts, 4) You have someone with his head on straight to coordinate everything.

Top 40 radio takes little if any preparation, especially if the emphasis is on the music rather than the personality. If the guy has good pipes (voice) and knows how to use it, is familiar with the music somewhat, and can run a "tight board" (operate the equipment), that's all you need to become a deejay—along with a few friends to hire you into the station. In the larger stations, you don't even have to run any equipment, except maybe for a "mike on" switch. Is this "quality" radio? I say yes, at least from the standpoint of the owners of the station. It's the most economical, that's for sure. There's been many many occasions I've worked at stations where I was the only one in the entire building! And a few times I worked marathon shifts while other people were on vacation. Several weekends in a row, I practically slept at one station because I was responsible for an evening show, sign off, sign on then the morning shift followed by a mid-day shift! At one station I once worked a midnight-6:00AM shift for a while, all alone, not only doing a music program, but all of the newscasts as well. That's pretty dirt cheap when you can have just one guy you have to pay, to run a "business" for 6 or 8 or more hours at a time. Can you imagine the cost the station would have if that same station had to have radio dramas produced to air in that slot!!! And on top of that, could the station get more advertising and/or charge higher rates for radio drama over the old tried and tested disk jockey show?! Probably not. Maybe even less. So why should the station execs lose money, or risk losing money? The programming might be better if they ran all talk or more personality oriented, but if they don't think it will attract the masses, or if another type of programming has a track record for attracting the masses, then of course, they'll go with that. It's sort of like, for instance, buying tape recorders, sort of...Track records...If a new tape recorder company Smith, began offering a product similar in many ways with the same features as a Teac, for the same price, do you think people would quit buying Teacs and go for the Smith? No way! They want to stick with something familiar, that they already know has a proven reputation. And with radio stations, you're not just talking \$500, you're talking millions at stake.

I'm not trying to defend the broadcast industry, I'm just trying to present a different viewpoint. And I do agree with much of what Jim has to say, I'm just trying to examine the situation realistically.

Another problem is apathy among listeners. Too too many of them won't let anybody know even if they like a program or a

service a station offers. Jim mentions this, too.

One example was over a year ago, when Golden West (Gene Autry's company) purchased WTWR in this area. That station was old time radio 24 hours a day for the first couple months. Then they cut it back to one hour a night (the 24 hour OTR thing was to "celebrate" their new station). Throughout the time, they pleaded for listener feedback. Not enough people wrote in, so within six months, old time radio was dropped entirely. Too bad. I actually sorta liked the station at one time, too.

I could go on for hours, but I think you get the jist. Read Jim Beedle's article on "Junk Radio" and send us your comments.

Meanwhile, I'm going to crawl out of my mess and go listen to Escape...or maybe just ESCAPE from my mess would be adequate!

Bob B



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Collector's Corner
presents...

American Radio, 1979... Audio Junk Food by Jim Beedle

Most any modern day broadcaster who reads this will swear to you that I'm crazy and don't know what I'm talking about. That's why after 17 years as a broadcaster, I said "I've had enough." When all that is required of an announcer in this business is to get the "basics" in, in a talk set, play the commercials as quickly as possible, and get back to another music "set," is when I say "creativity is a lost art." You as a listener don't realize how unimportant you are as a person to these whiz-kid rock 'n roller idiots. The only thing they are interested in is 15 minute maintenance on their rating books. It hasn't occurred to them that something must be wrong, if they can't hold someone's attention for over 15 minutes. They try music sweeps, music blends, music, music, music. Some of the things they play shouldn't even be graced with the word music. I wonder what the music "whiz-kids" would do if ASCAP, and BMI, SESAC, etc. would pull another music strike like ASCAP did before. What would the "whiz-kids" do then?

Let me define some terms I have mentioned. "Basics" means that when a record ends, the first thing you must say are the station call letters. Next, the time and temperature, maybe an abbreviated forecast; possibly a liberally programmed station might allow you to mention your name. Under no circumstances are you to say anything clever. You might become too popular and rock the boat. People might like you and the station might have to pay you more money. This is loosely defined as a talk set. Some major market stations have all ad libs on cue sheets so there's no chance of a warm, creative slip.

"Music sweeps and music blends" are two other terms I have mentioned. Today's programmers spend enormous amounts of money for consultants to line up records so that they blend together in a two or three record set or sweep, if you will, of boredom...Thus the sameness of sound.

"15 minute, or quarter-hour maintenance," is another term you'll hear discussed in what is jokingly called a staff meeting. These stations that have sold their souls to the music industry have a terrible time keeping listeners tuned in for more than 15 minutes. Why? Simple. As soon as a commercial comes on, it's punch out time for Mr. Listen-er. Why do listeners punch out? There are two reasons. Either the listener is looking for more of the same before he got interrupted by a commercial, or maybe, just maybe, at least we can hope that he is looking for something of

substance...something other than the constant barrage of music.

A.M. Radio is in real trouble today, and they think the saviour is AM-Stereo. The only people who want AM-Stereo is the AM broadcaster. A true stereo freak has his static-free FM, and one hell of an investment in audio gear. AM Stereo saturation, if it ever occurs, is at least 15 maybe 20 years away. No, AM-Stereo won't do the job. What is the answer? I believe that history is about to repeat itself. I will predict that within those 15 or 20 years I have just mentioned, you'll have to try hard to find a station that strictly plays music. I also think that within the same time span, the FCC will break the "clear channel" rule (EDITOR: They already have!), and competition will be at its fiercest level ever with more regional and local daytimers staying on the air 24 hours. The frequency shift allotment now being considered by the FCC will have a big effect on this competition factor. What will be the result? For a while, you'll get more stations doing more of the same old junk...more music, more often...yawn, yawn, yawn. What a waste!

Just to give you an example of creativity of modern music oriented radio, I talked with John Gheron, program director at WLS in Chicago. He said, "We don't attempt to make hits we play what is already a hit. Also," he told me, "the number one song is played each hour and 10 minutes." In other words, if you hear the number one song at 12:10, the next time you can hear the song is at 1:20. This is modern creative radio?

As broadcasters today, the whole lot of these geniuses are selling the public short. They say American society is moving too fast—people won't sit and listen to a radio play. I have more faith in my fellow-man. Radio is its own worst enemy. It creates a fickle audience, then blames the audience for what it itself has done.

As collectors of old time radio, it's time we put our foot down and DEMANDED a better product from the media that truly belongs to us. Creative radio in the next decade can be alive again. If it wasn't good to begin with, why do the record and tape sellers call it "great old time radio?" Sure it was great, but it doesn't have to be old time! It can be as fresh and innovative as the human mind can make it. Encourage your local broadcasters to do more news, talk and perhaps the college drama group could produce some shows. Sure, they might be ragged, but it's a step. You'll probably get some comment like, "Well, we'd like to, but today's radio demands music." And so it goes, modern radio, like a bunch of children, continues to play follow the leader. The most interesting and beautiful instrument made by God, the human voice, is destined to do time and temperature. What a shame to waste a talent.

Those same broadcasters who "won't take a chance on drama," fly to Las Vegas and lose their proverbial asses at the crap table. It doesn't make sense, does it?

As collectors, it's time to come out of the closet, and stand up for the kind of entertainment you want and are not getting. Make your voice heard, and make it loud.

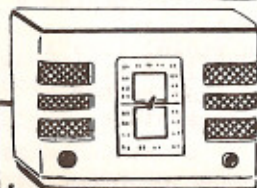
I played records for 16 of my 17 years in this crazy business, and then a one year stint at a station that did all talk. I loved talk radio, but the management didn't know enough about how to turn on his radio at home, let alone own a station. If the show didn't please him, it wasn't on the air long. This is in Chicago, an area that encompasses seven million people, yet it had to please him. He needed an intercom, not a radio station. After a year, the talk shows went down the toilet, and the station resumed its format of "elevator" music...yawn.. One week before Christmas, I was fired. Right then and there, I made up my mind I will not tolerate this mental abuse anymore. If I am to return to radio, I will do it my way, and it won't be playing records.

I thank you for reading my comments. Now I'd like yours. What are you doing for AM radio drama's return? Have you written to Hy Brown to thank him for CBS Mystery Theater? Have you made comments, pro or con to Elliott Lewis about the Sears Playhouse? A constant barrage of mail from one person is useless, but one thought out letter does a lot of

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PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE,
AND FOR THE PEOPLE
SHALL NOT PERISH
FROM THE EARTH.



'MR. PRESIDENT' SHOW IN 1947.
© SHERWOOD AND OWEN 1976 WERE YOU THERE?



BUT,
MOM...
I AM
DOING MY
HISTORY
ASSIGNMENT.

good. Write to CBS, say thanks, let them know their efforts are not in vain.

Some dentiststoday are saying that sugary junk food will rot out your teeth. Today's radio, Audio Junk Food, will rot out your brains. There is something better. I want it.

((Thanks for your comments, Jim. I'm in agreement with much of what you say. It's my belief however, that AM radio will tend to become more talk-oriented, and it's already happening in the metro-Detroit area. There is now but one major "top 40" station in this area (CKLW). The others have gone either talk, news, or in some cases easy rock or in extreme cases, disco...I am employed by a medium market station where there's still plenty of room left for creativity, pressures are minimal, and there's even room for old time radio in the format...Also, the smaller stations will tend to be more concerned about listeners, I've found...Hats off to Bob Sneddon, general manager of WSHJ in this area, for continuing on with old time radio rebroadcasts, after all the other bigger stations who had tried in the past had dropped it. Bob also hosts a talk show on WXYZ in this area...Bob B.))

PERSONS INTERESTED IN CORRESPONDING WITH JIM BEEDLE CAN WRITE HIM AT 230 MARION ST., BARTLETT, IL. 60103

WE ALSO INVITE YOUR COMMENTS HERE IN COLLECTOR'S CORNER.

Collector's Classifieds

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FOURTH ANNUAL FRIENDS of OLD-TIME RADIO CONVENTION UPDATE!

Date: October 20, 1979
Place: Holiday Inn, Bridgeport, Connecticut
Time: 9 AM to 11 PM Note: Travelers arriving on Friday night, October 19, will have a special hospitality room with cash buffet and bar. (Should be loads of fun!)

Guests: Producer/Directors: Blair Walliser, Herbert Rice, Ward Byron, Warren Somerville, Himan Brown, Ira Ashley

Musician: Rosa Rio

Sound Effects: Bob Prescott, Hamilton O'Hara, Jack Houseknecht

Announcers: Bob Dixon, George Ansbro

Performers: Alice Reinheart, Grace Matthews, Court Benson, Bill Griffis, Raymond Edward Johnson, Arnold Stang, Ralph Camargo, James Monks, Arnold Moss, Evie Juster, Vicki Vola, Peg Lynch, Claire Hazel, Don McLaughlin, Lee Allman, Jackson Beck

Tentative Event Schedule: (Remember--there are several convention rooms)

9 AM - 2:45 PM	Dealer's Room
9 - 4:30	Movies
10:30 - 11:15	Sound Effects Workshop
11 - 12 Noon	Sound Processing in OTR
11:15 - 12 Noon	Acting Workshop
12 Noon - 1 PM	THE SHADOW SCRAPBOOK with editor Anthony Tollin. Much info on THE SHADOW especially the early radio years, 1931-1937. Slide presentation.
1 - 1:45	Trivia Contest
1 - 1:45	Video Collecting
1:45 - 2:45	Writing Workshop
2:45 - 3:30	Raymond Edward Johnson will scare you
3:30 - 4	Afternoon Live Radio Show

4 - 5	Meet and Mingle with the guests
5 - 7	Cocktail Hour(s)
7 PM to end	Dinner
	Two Live Radio shows
	Award Presentations

Directions: If you are traveling by....

...Car: Just off I-95, Exit 27A Lafayette Blvd. About 40 minutes from New York City

...Rail: Five blocks from train station--take Conrail New Haven Line from Grand Central Station in New York City to Bridgeport, CT

...Air: Connecticut Limousine leaves every hour from Kennedy and LaGuardia (Costs about \$15 one way per person)

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Allen Rockford Memorial Award

YOUR CHANCE TO VOTE!

In memory of Allen Rockford, a special memorial award has been created for presentation to a collector who has helped the spreading of OTR fandom to others, or who has done outstanding services for fandom (such as compiling of logs, writing of books, others).

The award was being planned for presentation at the Fourth Annual Friends of Radio Convention. Last month, in the summer edition of NARA News, Roger Hill announced an award to be presented next year. Jay Hickerson, convention co-chairman with Joe Webb, has co-ordinated with Roger the presentation of a single award. The award will be presented by fandom as a whole, rather than two splinter groups, and it will be presented at the Friends of Radio Convention, October 20, at Bridgeport, Connecticut (see information elsewhere this issue).

So fandom has an award and no one to give it to---YET!

It's up to individual collectors and clubs to vote on the recipient of the award.

Individuals: send your vote to either of the two addresses below.

Clubs: Please have an election and send all votes, not club winner alone to either of the addresses below. Club participation would be the most gratifying part of this election, because Allen tried to belong to as many as he could and also because his support of OTR was truly outstanding.

SEND YOUR VOTES TO:

Jay Hickerson
Box C
Orange, CT 06477

OR

Joseph Webb
PO Box 267
Centuck Station
Yonkers, NY 10710

Award recipient will be notified before convention so as to arrange travel to presentation. If recipient cannot attend, award will be sent to him/her.

VOTING ENDS SEPTEMBER 30, 1979

VOTE TODAY!



Collector's Corner
OTR Log

SUSPENSE

Date	Title	=SUSPENSE 1960=	Stars
1/3	Zero Hour		John Gibson
1/10	The Long Night		Ellen Crae
1/17	Time, Place, and Death		Eric Dressler
1/24	Turnabout		Leonard Stone
1/31	End of the Road		Bernard Grant
2/7	Mystery of Marie Roget		Jackson Beck
2/14	Sorry, Wrong Number		Agnes Moorehead
2/21	Crank Letter		Lyle Sudrow
2/28	Lt Langer's Last Collection		Frank Melland
3/6	Sleep is for Children		Elsbeth Eric
3/13	Revolution		Rosemary Rice
3/20	Talk About Caruso		Robert Dryden
3/27	A Coffin for Mr. Cash		Leon Janney
4/3	A Shipment of Mute Fate		Bernard Grant
4/10	Two Horse Parley		L. Sundreau
4/17	Tonight at 5:55		Luis Van Rooten
4/24	One More Shot		Joe Julian
5/1	Bitter Grapes		Phillip Meader
5/8	The Legend of Robbie		Larry Robinson
5/15	Dead Man's Story		Kevin McCarthy
5/22	Out the Window		Santos Ortega
5/29	Perfect Plan		George Petrie
6/5	Two Came Back		R Readick
6/12	Elemental		Phil Meador
6/19	Sixty Grand Missing		Bernard Grant
6/26	Daisy Chain		John Clark
7/3	Bon Voyage		Robert Readick
7/10	Report from a Dead Planet		Bernard Grant
7/17	Memorial Bridge		Robert Dryden
7/24	Cold Canvas		William Redfield
7/31	End Game		Santos Ortega
8/7	Big Dive		Leon Janney
8/14	Night Ferry to Paris		William Redfield
8/21	Truck Stop		Mandel Kramer
8/28	Girl in the Powder Blue Jug		Rita Lloyd
9/4	A Rest for Emily		
9/11	Rakovsky's Rubles		Santos Ortega
9/18	A Statement of Fact		Rita Lloyd
9/25	Time on My Hands		Santos Ortega
10/2	Ivy is a Lovely Name for a Girl		Phil Meador
10/9	Witness for Death		William Redfield
10/16	Inferno		Mandel Kramer
10/23	Night Man		Ginger Jones
10/30	The City that Was		Bernard Grant
11/6	The Green Lorelei		Robert Readick
11/13	The Man who Murders People		George Petrie
11/20	Night on Red Mountain		Mandel Kramer
11/27	Home is Where You Find It		Mandel Kramer

OFF THE AIR UNTIL 6/25/61

THE OLD RADIO WAREHOUSE

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(Prices below expire
October 30, 1979)

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