

The Illustrated Press

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 9

Dec. 1990



Happy
Holidays



THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New member processing-\$2.50 plus club donations of \$17.50 per year from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
Members receive a tape listing, library list, monthly newsletter, the Illustrated Press, the yearly Memories publication and various special items. Additional family members living in the same household as a regular member may join the club for a \$5.00 donation per year. These members have all the privileges of regular members but do not receive the publications. A junior membership is available to persons 15 years of age or younger who do not live with a regular member. This membership is a \$13.00 donation per year and includes all the benefits of regular membership. Regular membership donations are as follows; If you join in Jan.-Mar. \$17.50--Apr. - June \$14.00--July-Sept. \$10.00 Oct.-Dec. \$7.00. All renewals are due by Jan. 2. Your renewal should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you change your address.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIPS are now available. Annual donations are \$29.75. Publications will be airmailed.

The Old Time Radio Club meets the first Monday of every month.

from Aug. - June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, N.Y. Anyone interested in the "Golden Age of Radio" is welcome. Meetings start at 7.30 P.M.

Club Address

Old Time Radio Club
P. O. Box 426
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086

Club Officers

President - Jerry Collins
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086
(716) 683-6199

Vice-President & Canadian Branch
Richard Simpson
960-16 Rd. R. R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
L0S 1C0

Treasurer & Video & Records
Dominic Parisi
38 Ardmore Pl.
Buffalo, N. Y. 14213
(716) 881-2004

Illustrated Press
Dan Marafino
19 Church St.
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086
(716) 684-0733

Reference Library
Ed Wanat
393 George Urban Blvd.
Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225

Membership Renewals, Change of Address, Mailing of Publications
Pete Bellanca
1620 Ferry Rd.
Grand Island, N.Y. 14072
(716) 773-2485

Membership Inquiries
Richard Olday
100 Harvey Dr.
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086
(716) 684-1604

Tape Libraries

Cassettes

Jim April
85 Hyledge Dr.
Amherst, N.Y. 14226
(716) 837-7747

Reel to Reel 1-600
Bill Weber
226 Harding Rd.
Williamsville, N.Y. 14221
(716) 634-7021

Reel to Reel 601 & up
Tom Harris
9565 Wehrle Dr.
Clarence, N.Y. 14031
(716) 759-8401

**Wireless
Wanderings****JIM SNYDER**

ANNOUNCER: "Hey gang, have you ever stopped to think of this? You might be a dunk! Do you know what a dunk is? Well, if you don't, I'll tell you. A dunk is a fellow or girl who takes chances. Believe me, that's not a good thing to be. Yes sir, dunks are just plain foolish. Every year thousands of dunks are hurt just because they're dunks. They went out in the street without looking both ways. They go swimming in deep water alone. They do all sort of things they shouldn't do, and they pay for it too. Don't you be a dunk. Don't take chances. Play safe, and you'll be able to keep right on playing. Act like a dunk and you won't be able to do all the things that are so much fun to do. Remember, look both ways before you cross the street. Never, never step off the curb until you know the coast is clear. It only takes a second, and it may mean the difference between a summer filled with fun, and months in bed. Don't be a dunk! Don't take chances! Remember, all the time, everywhere, be cautious, take care. Now, the ADVENTURES OF SKY KING!" (From the ABC broadcast of July 14, 1947.)

That commercial is not exactly high class journalism, but it is typical of the ads from that period of time on the SKY KING program. The interesting thing though, is that the announcer who delivered those messages that summer was none other than Mike Wallace of CBS-TV's SIXTY MINUTES. A number of people recognize him for his ads for "Ma-a-a-rs Candy Bars" on the CURTAIN TIME radio show, but few seem to be aware of his delivery of such messages as above. While he has been involved with news journalism, specifically on CBS, for forty years, his beginnings in broadcasting were much closer to our radio hobby.

On graduating from the University of Michigan in 1939 he planned to be an English teacher but instead wound up as an announcer at WOOD radio in Grand Rapids. He sent an audition record to WXYZ in Detroit. While Harold True, studio manager, liked his voice, he hated to guy's name of Myron Wallace. True took credit for changing his name from Myron to Mike when he hired Wallace. His assignments at WXYZ ranged from writing to broadcasting the news. Both he and Douglas Edwards (also destined to become a TV news personality at CBS) served as announcers for such programs as the LONE RANGER and the GREEN HORNET. When Earl Graser, who played the Lone Ranger, was killed in an automobile accident in the spring of 1941, Mike Wallace was one of the people considered for taking over that role. Although it was believed that his voice was right, it was also felt that he couldn't act, so the part went to Brace Beemer.

In September of that same year Wallace moved on to Chicago. While in Detroit, as mentioned above, he went under the name of Mike Wallace, but for some reason when he got to Chicago he resumed using his real name of Myron Wallace. He later said, "I left WXYZ in September of 1941 because I had a chance to go to Chicago and that seemed to be the big time. I felt later on that I should probably have stayed in Detroit a little longer, rather than going into Chicago insufficiently prepared. I would probably have done better and been happier."

After a stint in the Navy during World War II he returned to Chicago as a news reporter for station WMAQ. In 1951, he and his wife of that time, Buff Cobb, started a midnight radio show from a Chicago nightclub. It was so successful that CBS brought them to New York to host a TV talk program titled MIKE AND BUFF. From that point on Wallace was primarily a TV personality. He hosted a TV quiz show on NBC and then moved into his interview show NIGHT BEAT where some felt that he would have made a good investigator for the Spanish Inquisition. That appeared to end his career for a while as he only showed up as a guest on panel shows and served as the primary spokesman for Parliament cigarettes. Following the death of one of his sons, and after

a re-appraisal of the direction his life was taking, he determined to get back in the news end of the business. He went back to being a correspondent for CBS news and then was chosen as anchor of the new CBS MORNING NEWS show. He was assigned to cover Richard Nixon through the 1968 presidential campaign but left the news end of TV following the summer conventions to start preparing for his new role on SIXTY MINUTES. That was a very long way from that SKY KING commercial back in 1947. It would certainly appear that Mike (Myron) Wallace was no "dunk."

THE SOUND OF OTR

I don't know how many of you readers subscribe to Bob Burnham's LISTENING GUIDE NEWSLETTER, but those that do have already read my letter to him regarding OTR sound, and his reply. Even though I took a battering, I'm going to try again in this article. Incidentally, even though we don't agree on several things, I still think his publication is outstanding, and I recommend it to all OTR fans.

Based on his reply to my letter, either I wasn't able to adequately explain what I was trying to get across, or else I'm so far out of line that no one could possibly agree with me. You decide, and if you have any comments please get back to me. In fact, I'm rather surprised I haven't heard any comments on any of my articles to date. Perhaps I'm not as far out of line as I thought.

My feeling on sound quality for OTR is to get the best you can, but don't expect perfection. I realize that under new techniques, audio technicians can take a recording apart and put it back together minus all the pops, crackles and hisses. You see examples every day on CD releases of old recordings. And as Bob Burnham says, modern collectors will expect modern sound. So eventually, if OTR collecting continues, many of the most popular shows will be cleaned up and reissued on CD or digital tape. I certainly have no objection to this. In fact, I consider it one of the benefits of living in a high tech society.

My problem has always been with the average collector. The one who doesn't have a lot of money for his hobbies, because he, or she, is trying to start a career, or raise a family, or do any of the other things that use up all your ready cash. These people may enjoy OTR, but can't buy equipment to produce the best sound, or clean up tapes before they pass them on. They can't afford frequency equalizers or other equipment, or expensive tape decks. I have always been worried, that as these people continue to read about the requirements for obtaining good sound and making good copies, they will become discouraged and drop away from OTR.

My feeling has always been, 'The Show's The Thing'. A good show is a good show, even if the sound isn't up to snuff. If the sound is better, and the show is good, you'll certainly enjoy the show more. But if the show is bad, or isn't interesting to you, perfect sound won't make it any better. I'd rather trade with a true enthusiast who only can give you average sound, than some perfectionist who complains about every pop and crackle. As I've said before, the original radio broadcasts were never perfect. In fact,

JUST THE FACTS MA'AM

by
FRANK C. BONCORE

THE 1990 FRIENDS OF OLD TIME RADIO
CONVENTION REPORT

In the past, I have commented on the poor service and problems that I had experienced with the airlines. I have also talked about the exorbitant prices that the Holiday Inn charges. I have taken shots at the lack of hotel service, some of the programs and Anthony Tollin. You name it and I probably complained about it. Yet each year I look forward to going back even though I have experienced some convention burnout.

For several years, my main purpose in attending was to purchase OTR shows and the convention was and still is the best place for that. My secondary purpose was to actually see the OTR shows in the excellent recreations. The Convention gave me the opportunity to meet and talk with several OTR stars, some of who are unfortunately no longer with us. The OTR Convention gave me the chance to meet several other people who have the same thing in common, the love of Old Time Radio. These people are the main reason why I return to the convention.

Of all the OTR personalities that I met, the one who stands out the best is Dick Osgood of WXYZ, Detroit. I must admit that before I went to the convention, I did not know who he was. After attending his workshop and listening to him speak, I just had to buy his book, WIXIE WONDERLAND, and Dick even autographed it for me. Every time I found out he was there, I made it a point to hear him speak. Dick has a wonderful way of speaking that to me seemed to transport me to behind the scenes at WXYZ. It is most unfortunate that he has not been in attendance for the last few years. I believe that this was a deep loss to the fans of OTR. Perhaps he'll return next year.

On the more positive side I have met several ordinary people whom I now look forward to seeing each year.

People like "Cowboy" Don Aston, I had a great time just sitting on the floor, with several other people cramped into Don's hotel room drinking Rattlesnake Beer. This was better than watching

the OTR Recreations.

Quoting Terry Salmonson, With his new beard, "Cowboy" Don Aston could pass for the Old Ranger on Death Valley Days. By the way Don has a new reel of Jack Benny.

Each year the convention people who have gone out of their way to promote OTR by presenting them with the ROCKFORD AWARD. In past years, Jim Snyder, Terry Salmonson, Bob Burnham and several others were honored. This years recipient was "Cowboy" Don Aston. I might add that this was long overdue.

On the negative side Don Aston legal expenses from the lawsuit about the Shadow and who has the copyright are somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50,000.

It is always great to see Ed Carr who now has eight (count 8) reels of the TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS.

Gene Bradford bought so many "treasures" he was trying to figure out which of his clothes he would throw out so he could fit new findings in his suitcase.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Joel and Carolyn Senter after talking with them several time on the phone. The Senters are spearheading the OTR Defense Fund and could use your help.

Terry Salmonson who wrote the LONE RANGER and the CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON LOGS, now has written the GREEN HORNET LOG and has it available from:

AVPRO
AUDIO VISUAL PRODUCTS INC.
P.O. BOX 2385
LIVONIA, MI. 48151-0385

COST \$5.00 + POSTAGE

For the record: Astons Adventures, Audio Classics, and BRC Productions have merged and formed AVPRO INC.

On the negative side, Bob Burnhams car was stolen from the Holiday Inn Parking lot forcing Bob and his wife Debbie to fly home. This is certainly a fine way for Newark to treat convention guests.

On the positive side, it is also great to see Doug Due. Doug is working on an I LOVE A MYSTERY LOG and is always looking for I Love a Mystery, Tom Mix, and Jack Armstrong shows.

Memo to Good Old Jim Snyder, a victim of Convention burnout:

John Furman and Hank Hinkle miss your business very much. Since you've experienced burnout their business has has dropped off 50%. Please call or write. They will gladly take your phone or mail orders.

Dec. 1990

LAWSUIT UPDATE

by

CAROLYN & JOEL SENTER

The most recent communication to the defendants indicated the plaintiff's Shadow license is probably genuine (the bad news) but the same letter suggested that "Premier Electronics," **AKA RADIO YESTERYEAR**," suggested that is becoming concerned about hurting their public relations image due to their suit against our defendants. The exact quote from this communication was ".... concerned about possible adverse publicity as a result of this case going against "mom and pop operations." It is a surprise to us that "Radio Yesteryear" would care about "image," but since it appears they do, we think this might be an opportunity for us to capitalize on this concern. What we are suggesting is that we get as many people as we can to write to "Radio Yesteryear" expressing our concern as their legal activities against small hobbyist-vendors of OTR programing. Their address is:

RADIO YESTERYEAR
BOX C
SANDY HOOK CT. 06482

We would like all the letters to be personal and individualistic so that this doesn't look like an orchestrated effort.

p.s. The defendants did receive a new bill from their lawyers. They still owe \$14,000 and bills continue to stack up. Any suggestions as to how we might get the word out to more interested people???????

XX

**UNTIL THIS LAWSUIT IS SETTLED FAVORABLY,
I WOULD STRONGLY URGE OUR READERS TO PASS
THE WORD AROUND TO ANYONE THAT WILL LISTEN.**

BOYCOTT RADIO YESTERYEAR !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**SPEAK OR WRITE TO THE RECORD STORE OWNERS
AND INFORM THEM OF WHAT IS HAPPENING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

FRANK C. BONCORE

Best discovery at the Convention:
EIGHT NEW LIFE WITH LUIGI SHOWS.
The first new find in 10 years!!!!!!!!!!!!
Jim Albert has them available on reel to reel for \$15.00 postpaid or on cassette (4) for \$18.00 (also postpaid.).
contact:

**JIM ALBERT
2732 I QUEENSBORO AVENUE
PITTSBURG PA. 15226**

PHONE (412) 343- 5235

Best surprise at the Convention:

Bill McDougall while sleeping in his room was awakened by a golden retriever and his master. The door was left ajar and the intruders wander in after getting off the elevator on the wrong floor. They were staying in the room directly above Bill's. The Holiday Inn has a strange system of numbering floors. The lobby is the first floor, floor #1 is the 2nd floor etc.etc.

Bad sign at the convention:

Ron Barnett is no longer selling bulk tape; neither is Ed Carr. The government has not released reel to reel tape at auctions for over two years. However Rudy Schwartz of Burlington Audio/Visual Tapes Inc. 106 Mott ST Oceanside N.Y.11512, Phone 1-800-331-3391 from outside N.Y. State (516) 678-4414 (inside N.Y.State) or FAX 516-678-8959, is selling bulk (which he expects to run out of in January) for \$34.00 per carton (38-40 pcs) used Ampex 641 1800ft. He also has Ampex 671 (2400 ft) bulk for \$50.46 per carton 55-60 pcs. He also has white boxes (7") (180 per carton) @23cper piece. Shipping is to be added to the above prices.

One closing thought:

The convention has grown so much over the past several years. Perhaps we have outgrown the Holiday Inn North.

Once again a very special thanks to Jay Hickerson and his staff for giving me the opportunity to meet these people.

FCB

FUTURE CONVENTION DATES

1991 OCTOBER 24-26
1992 OCTOBER 22-24
1993 OCTOBER 21-23

HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

#830 SHADOW

- 10-29-49 Phantom Fingerprints
- 2-4-40 Return of Carnation Charlie
- 3-3-40 Death on the Bridge
- 3-10-40 Laughing Corpse
- 10-27-40 Mark of the Black Widow
- 11-3-40 Creeper
- 11-10-40 Carnival of Death
- 11-17-40 House of Horror
- 3-9-41 Murder Underground
- 3-23-41 Death Prowls at Night
- 3-30-41 Voodoo
- 4-13-41 Death on the Rails

#831 SHADOW

- 3-3-46 Isle of Ancient Death
- 3-10-46 Ghost without a Face
- 3-17-46 Etched with Acid
- 3-24-46 Walking Corpse
- 3-31-46 Mind over Murder
- 4-7-46 Ghost Wore a Silver Slipper
- 4-14-46 Unburied Dead
- 4-21-46 Gorilla Man

#832 NEWS MIX

- 9-23-76 Debate Ford & Carter
- 10-6-76 Debate Ford & Carter
- 10-15-76 Debate Mondale & Dole
- 10-22-76 Debate Ford & Carter

#833 MIX

- LUX For Whom the Bell Tolls
- ESCAPE Orient Express
- LUX National Velvet
- ESCAPE Beau Geste
- S.S. San Pedro
- SUSPENSE Voice of Co. A
- ESCAPE Papa Benjamin
- HALLMARK
- 11 Against the Nazi A Bomb Story of Babe Ruth
- Dr. Mike

#834 MIX

- BOSTON BLACKIE MISSION HOUSE
- INNER SANCTUM Elixier #4
- DUFFY'S TAVERN w/Burt Gordon
- BOSTON BLACKIE 1 Dollar Inheritance
- GREEN HORNET Words & Music
- INNER SANCTUM Dead Man's Holiday
- A VOICE TO REMEMBER w/ Alistar Cooke
- AS TIME GOES BY Crime & Violence, Aviation & Singers

#835 MIX

- WHICH IS WHICH 1-31-45
- HEAR IT NOW 1-5-50
- ARMY SHOW 1-14-43
- GULF SCREEN GUILD THEATER
- 12-10-39
- WE TAKE YOU BACK CBS News 20th Annv.
- SEALTEST REHEARSAL 2-19-40
- GULF SCREEN GUILD THEATER
- 11-9-41
- EVERYTHING FOR THE BOYS Petrified Forest
- ARCH OBLER PLAYS Johnny Got His Gun
- GULF SCREEN GUILD THEATER This Lonely Heart
- PHILIP MORRIS PLAYHOUSE Amazing Dr, Clitterhouse

- HUMAN SIDE OF THE RECORD 6-8-48
- LAND OF THE LOST 12-13-47

#836 MIX

- CBS RADIO WORKSHOP Son of Man
- SOUNDS OF YESTERDAY 9-29-74
- KERA Good Times Blockbuster
- THEATER 5 Noose of Pearls
- NEWS SPECIAL
- BILL STERN w/Connie Mack
- HOWDY DOODY In the Year 2000
- BILL SYERN w/George Raft
- NBC UN, THEATER Main Syreet
- CBS RADIO WORKSHOP I have 3 Heads
- FIBBER McGEE & Molly Excerpt

NOTICE ! ! !

THE REEL LIBRARY FROM NUMBER 600 UP WILL BE CLOSED FROM DECEMBER 25TH UNTIL JANUARY 30TH. ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS, TOM HARRIS

Don't Touch That Dial

Jerry Collins

Over the past fifteen years I have combined an interest in "old Time Radio" with a lifetime interest in reading. Over the years I have written more than fifty articles for the Illustrated Press and other periodicals. All of these articles were based on these readings.

I would like to share with the readers the many different books that I have read on the topic of "Old Time Radio". Unfortunately most of these books are out of print. You might be lucky enough to have these books in your own library. If not try the public library, a used book store or a future "Old Time Radio Convention."

Of the more than thirty books that I have read on this topic, two books should be mentioned first. They are of course John Dunning's Tune In Yesterday and The Big Broadcast by Frank Buxton and Bill Owen. As most of you know Dunning's book is an encyclopedia of radio shows, while The Big Broadcast is a catalogue of radio shows, listing such key items as performers, writers, directors etc.

A number of the books have detailed the history of the networks, individual stations as well as also discussing the individual programs. They would include: Cavalcade of Broadcasting by Curtis Mitchell, CBS, Reflections in Bloodshot Eye by Robert Metz, The Golden Years of Broadcasting by Robert Campbell, Radio by G. Howard Poteet and Dick Osgood's classic WYXIE Wonderland chronicles the story of radio's most famous radio station, WXYZ in Detroit.

One of the shows created in the studios of WXYZ, the Lone Ranger has been the topic of three additional books. His Typewriter Crew Spurs by Fran Striker Jr. is the biography of Fran Striker, the man who helped create the Lone Ranger and wrote all those marvelous scripts. From out

of the Past, A Pictorial History of the Lone Ranger by Dave Holland and Who Was That Masked Man by David Rothel detail the creation and development of the Lone Ranger. Such items as who was the first Lone Ranger, how many actors played the Lone Ranger, when did the character of Tonto appear and many more are carefully discussed in these two books.

Walter Gibson gives a similar treatment to the Shadow in his book, The Shadow Scrapbook.

Jim Harmon has been one of the most informative and prolific writers in our hobby. The Great Radio Comedians covers the great comedians from Vic and Sade to Fred Allen. In The Great Radio Heroes, Harmon emphasizes such people as the Lone Ranger, Jack Armstrong and Captain Midnight.

What was it like to be a radio performer in the 1940's? Let us turn to the people who were actually there. Joe Julian in This Was Radio and Mary Jane Higby in Tune In Tomorrow allow us to be with two of radio's busiest performers. In fact Mr Julian talks of one month in 1943 when he played in 23 different shows.

If you have finished reading all these books it is now time for a quiz. Faster Than a Speeding Bullet by Stuart Silver and Isidore Hailblien gives a brief history of the different radio shows and then quizzes you on every show.

Well that is all for now. Please return with us next month. I have covered less than half the library.



MIS-ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND - PT.2

by Bob Davis

Last month I told you about some of the mis-adventures that Chuck Seeley and I have had while doing John Otto's radio call-in talk show. John's main job, I believe, is to argue with us over the answers we give to questions called in by our listeners. Only rarely does he find in our favor and, if the caller is female, we don't have a chance.

His other job is to blurt out the answers to our carefully(?) contrived trivia questions. It got so bad one night that we were forced to put a strip of adhesive tape over his mouth so he couldn't talk and give away the answers. The problem with that was that after about 5 minutes both Chuck and I had talked ourselves out and were obliged to remove the tape and give him back his show.

These people we work with are pros and know what they are doing but there are times when things go wrong through no one's fault.

We were doing a show one night and outside it was really raining hard. It was a true trash mover and gully washer but we didn't have to worry - we were in a nice dry broadcasting studio. At least it was dry for a while!

The rain built up a giant sized pool on the flat roof of the station and sprung a leak. Now I'll give you one guess who was sitting directly under that leak when it finally worked it's way through.

Yeah, that's right...me!

There I was, surrounded by all sorts of electronic "stuff" with eight zillion volts of electricity running through it..and I'm hooked up to some of it!

Nervous doesn't quite describe the feeling I had as I sat there

balancing a waste basket on my knees while wringing out my socks. It was a b-i-g leak!

Why me? Why, all the time, me?

■ On Radio

9 AM WGR - Mr. Mechanic: Auto repair tips.
 10 AM WBEN - Home Improvement Hour: Host Dominic Corleese, John Bowser, author of "The Healthy House."
 10 AM WEBR - Weekend at Your Service: Host Dave Debo, psychoanalyst Kent Bath, noon, psychotherapist Massa Goela discusses resuming relationships and avoiding divorce; 1 p.m., Doug Smith, Ch. 4's "Cheap Gourmet," gives tips on where to dine.
 11 AM WBEN - Home Gardening Show: Host Ken Brown.
 11 AM WEBR - Sound Money: Bob Potter takes calls on investment.
 NOON WHTT - Polka Beehive: Host Stan Jasinski.
 12:30 PM WGR - Wall Street Melline: Hosts Rosemary Ligotti and Bill O'Loughlin.
 1:20 PM WLVL - H. S. Football: Sectional finals at Rich Stadium, Wilson vs. Salamanca, Albion vs. Williamsville-South, Lockport vs. Jamestown.
 2 PM WWKB - HealthBeat: Host Dr. Donald Robinson.
 2 PM WBED - Echoes from the Met: Host Peter Allen; highlights from the operas of Donizetti and Bellini; singers include Maria Callas, Marilyn Horne, Jan Peerce, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland and Alfredo Kraus.
 3 PM WBED - 1980 Baraguth Festival: Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman," conducted by Giuseppe Sinopoli.
 3:30 PM WBEN - College Football: USC at UCLA.

John has been broadcasting for a number of years and he is almost unflappable. He is a cool character and always under control.

Naturally Chuck and I feel he is fair game and try to mess him up whenever we can. (Hey, anyone that calm and professional is just asking for it!)

He used to do a 5 minute newscast before we would go on the air and we figured that that's when he was most vulnerable. We'd mugg at him and do all sorts of silly things but the sonofagun just wouldn't break up.

One time, Chuck brought in a yoyo and, as soon as the newscast started, was making cat's cradles and walking the dog. John looked at the yoyo, and then at Chuck, and continued with the news as if nothing was happening.

We finally did get him - by clowning around and giving silent signals that we had no volume on our headsets. He twisted one of the console dials all the way on and then, amid the mid-east crisis and the latest from OPEC, John

(WONDERLAND - continued)

said "There! How's that for volume?".

Our eyes were crossed from the sheer volume that poured out of the headsets..and John finished the news without missing a beat! Meanwhile, we were on the floor laughing our idiot brains out!

Funny thing though, after that incident John taped the news beforehand whenever we were on.

One time we called him while he was on the air and ordered a pizza!

4 PM WEEB—The Parent's Journal: Bobbi Connor offers advice about caring for a child.
4 PM WGR—Money Talk: Investment advice with Bob Brinker.
618 PM WRRL—College Football: Penn State at Notre Dame.
6 PM WNEO—American Radio Company: Garrison Kellor from the Lamb's Theatre in Manhattan; Singer: Maurleen McGovern.
835 PM WGR—NHL Hockey: Buffalo at Calgary.
8 PM WNEO—Nakamichi International Series: The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Riccardo Chailly, in Koechin's Wind Septet, Opus 165 (played without conductor), and Mahler's Symphony No. 3 in D.
9 PM WBFO—World Beat and Afropop: Host Andy Byron, "Mandingo Music."
10 PM WBFO—Salsa: Hosts Tito Candellario and Miguel Mendez.
The 11 PM WEEB/WKSN—The Jim Bohannon Show: Allan Keyes, director of Citizens Against Government Waste, explains where our tax dollars are going, second hour, Moe Blier, president of Postal Workers Union

Obviously we do a very loose, light-hearted type of show. Our forte is show biz trivia and that in itself is a light subject, but there was one time when the show turned very serious indeed.

In December of 1983 we were doing our usual thing when, even in a soundproof studio, we heard or mostly felt a large boom.

Naturally our curiosity was piqued but we carried on. A few minutes later the producer came running into the studio with a news bulletin.

An entire city block in the heart of mid-town Buffalo had blown up and a massive fire was going on. The boom we had heard and felt was the explosion!

Suddenly the station was a bedlam of activity, with people

appearing out of the woodwork to set up phone relays, send out news cruisers, and correlate all the bits and pieces of information into a comprehensive and factual news story.

There still weren't enough facts or mobile setups to allow them to cut away from us so we had to go on with our show.

That was probably the hardest show we've ever done. Trying to be light and breezy while you are in the middle of one of the worst disasters to ever hit the city is an impossible job. If John hadn't been the pro that he is we would have come off looking like a couple of insensitive and uncaring jerks.

We vamped for a time and were able to give the news department enough time so that, when we finally finished, they were able to cut into the ABC News Network with the whole story. John did the network feed.

All in all it was quite a night. One that I hope never to repeat!

Over the years we've been pretty lucky with our audience response. They seem to like our brand of nonsense and are not reluctant to add their two-cents worth into it.

John realizes this and usually gives us a free rein to proceed pretty much as we wish. He does have one nasty habit though. Over the years he's scheduled us up against such things as the final installment of "The Winds of War", a couple of Academy Awards Shows, the final game of The World Series, and much, much more.

Our callers claim that they are watching the event on tv but have the radio on also and are listening to us!

Bless their hearts!

In the next (and final) installment I'll tell you how we got kicked off the air!

The Saginaw *NEWS*
MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 1990

It is a very active studio when only one person is working the desk according to mid-day anchor Tom McNamara, shown recently at his post in the WWJ broadcasting facility. Today the Detroit station marks its 70th anniversary, making it the nation's oldest commercial radio station.

Associated Press



Radio pioneer marks 70th year

DETROIT (AP) — The Detroit all-news radio station known for traffic and weather reports every 10 minutes is celebrating its anniversary today.

WWJ's owners say its Aug. 20, 1920, birth date makes it the country's first commercial radio station, though Pittsburgh, Pa.'s KDKA and others also claim that honor in an unwinnable debate over who had what kind of license and when it was issued.

Regardless, it's certain WWJ was part of the birth of broadcasting when The Detroit News set up its first studios 70 years ago, just a dozen years after the first "Model T" Ford hit the road.

The City Council cut a cake last week to celebrate and adopted a testimonial resolution. WWJ General Manager Rod Zimmerman said the CBS radio network would mark the anniversary in spots at 10 a. m. and 2 p. m. today.

WWJ, an all-news station for the past 14 years, is owned by CBS Inc.

In the beginning, the News promoted the station as a public service, former WWJ broadcaster Edgar Willis said.

Willis narrated live musical and dramatic presentations on the station in the 1930s for the Detroit school system.

"I remember the studio in the Detroit News building. To prevent reverberation, they hung potato sacks around the walls. It was sort of eerie to go in there," he said.

He recalled narrating a live program from memory when he found the pages of his script were out of order, and starting another program over after he intoned the opening portions into an unplugged microphone.

Willis later became a University of Michigan communications professor. Now retired, the 77-year-old professor emeritus is co-author, with Eastern Michigan University Professor Henry Aldridge, of "Television, Cable and Radio," a broadcast history due to be published in about a year.

WWJ was eventually moved across the street from the newspaper, and later, under other ownership, to Southfield, Willis said.

Official records fail to resolve what station was first, said Catherine Heinz of the National Association of Broadcasters' Broadcast Pioneers Library in Washington, D.C. "You won't get an answer."

Until 1920, radio was a realm of tinkers with homemade transmitters. Their sputtering signals were teased from the mostly blank airwaves by other hobbyists with home-wired crystal receivers, said Mary Ann Watson, assistant professor of communications at Michigan State University.

KDKA grew out of the garage experiments of Westinghouse Electric Corp. engineer Frank Conrad. When he began getting letters from listeners, the company got interested and moved his transmitter to the roof of its building.

What would become WWJ was licensed by the U.S. Commerce Department on Aug. 20, 1920, as experimental station 8MK, Willis said. "It was just on a couple of hours a day, but the point is it was a regular scheduled broadcast."

That same month, it became the first station to broadcast a news program and the first to broadcast

election returns. WWJ spokeswoman Cathy Goltz said.

KDKA obtained what the Commerce Department termed a commercial license on Nov. 2, 1920, Willis said. "It claims it was first because of that," he said.

WWJ obtained that type of license in 1922. Its call letters came from the initials of W.J. Scripps, then owner of the News, Willis said.

Among other contenders, WKQ in San Jose, Calif., which later became KCBS in San Francisco, says it's been broadcasting since 1909. "But it wasn't on regularly," Willis said.

Educational station WHA in Madison, Wis., also says it was first, he said. "But it didn't begin until 1921, so its claim is rather shaky."

By 1922 the country had 570 licensed stations. In Detroit, WWJ was joined by WJR in May 1922, and by WXYZ, now WXYT, in October 1925. MSU communications Professor Gary Reid said.

By June 1990, the Federal Communications Commission counted 4,979 AM stations, 4,308 FM stations, and 1,430 FM educational stations.



By **DENNIS McLELLAN**
Of the Daily Press Staff

A foghorn groans ominously in the night; shoe leather strikes pavement as a solitary figure strolls furtively down an alley.

Suddenly, a shot rings out. The shrill blast of a police whistle pierces the ensuing silence. And then — a flourish on the Hammond:

"Out of the fog, out of the night and into his American adventures comes (another flourish) Bulldog Drummond."

The opening of "Bulldog Drummond" gives an inkling of what made radio great during its Golden Age: with only the artistic use of sound it gave the imagination full rein to picture the unfolding drama.

"It's the theater of the mind," says old-time radio buff Joe Crawford. "It allows you as the listener to paint what it looks like and provide the scenery for the story."

AND THOSE OLD enough to remember what it was like to be held spellbound by the magic of the airwaves will recall that, anything was possible on radio.

A case in point is "Lights Out." One of the more memorable stories was about a man who was turned inside out. The sound effect for that dazzling feat was produced with a rubber glove.

While even the late Rod Serling would have had trouble conjuring that one for television, for those huddled in front of their radios it was vivid in the mind's eye.

"Radio has it way above television," says Crawford.

For those who mourn the passing of such golden moments, weep no more.

"Bulldog Drummond," "The Aldrich Family," "Fibber McGee and Molly," "The Shadow" et al, are alive and well.

At least they are for people like Joe Crawford, president of SPERDVAC, the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy.

THE ORGANIZATION is one of a handful of clubs around the country that are unwilling to let old-time radio die.

Centered in Southern California, SPERDVAC maintains an extensive taping library for members who meet monthly to hear speakers from radio's golden era.

Past guests include Stan Freberg, Marvin Miller, Olan Soule, Les Tremayne, Jack Slattery, Doodles Weaver, Barbara Luddy and Frank Buxton.

One of the fastest-growing old-time radio clubs in the nation, it is open to anyone interested in the medium.

Although meetings are held in the First Christian Church in Reseda on the second Saturday of the month, the Oct. 14 meeting will be held at 1 p.m. in the Fullerton Public Library.

Speakers for "Orange County Day" will be Orange County's Harry Rabbit ("Kay Kayser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge") and Karl Swensen ("Our Gal Sunday").

SPERDVAC HAS ITS origins in late 1974 at a small gathering of friends who shared an interest in the old programs. Since then, to use a radio expression, it grew like gangbusters.

The average age of the 237 members, according to Crawford, is 39½ but ages range between 17 and over 65. Because many members are obviously too young to remember radio's heyday, it is not solely a case of nostalgia that attracts them.

"While nostalgia probably plays a part, that is not really what we are about: it's just a form of entertainment we prefer," says Crawford, who joined in 1975.

Crawford's interest in radio actually began much earlier.

The 40-year-old TG&Y stock controller used to listen to children's programs — "The Lone Ranger," "Superman," "Tom Mix" — as a boy in the 1940s.

HE BEGAN TAPING what was left of

network radio programs in the late 1950s (The last two network dramas to go off the air were "Suspense" and "Johnny Dollar" in 1962).

The upstart television industry began killing radio in the late '40s and early '50s, but it took a decade before it knocked off radio soap operas, says Crawford.

As a collector, it is the soaps that are his specialty. He has about 120 different soap opera titles in his collection, which numbers more than 600.

Crawford's Anaheim apartment is filled with radio memorabilia: miniature radio reproductions, photographs and lobby cards of programs that were made into movies.

The piece de resistance of his "radio room" is a 1929 upright, walnut-finished Majestic radio. He bought it at a swap meet for less than the original \$162.50 price.

AS A HOBBY. Crawford says, old-time radio is "just a tad below barbed-wire collecting in popularity."

But it is growing.

Since the early '70s about six clubs nationwide have sprung up and numerous radio stations are devoting time to repeats of old programs. KNX-AM (1070) also offers new CBS Radio Mystery Theater dramatizations seven nights a week at 9:05. The new Heartbeat Theater is on KNOB (97.9) and KLAC (570).

Crawford tapes all of these and, in fact, has his tape recorder going all day on weekends. During the week he turns it on for a half-hour before work and again for about two hours at night.

Luckily, his wife, Susan, shares his interest. Her specialty is game shows and quiz shows. "They never change except for the stakes," she notes.

As for television, it holds little fascination for Crawford.

"Some people in the club think television is a dirty word," he says. "I don't think that. But I just don't find that much that's interesting."

He adds with a laugh: "I will admit to watching 'Charlie's Angels'."

When in Baltimore, be sure to visit the...

BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY



OLD-TIME RADIO EXHIBIT
and **HALL of FAME**

.....A living memorial and a lasting tribute to the era so affectionately referred to as "The Golden Age of Radio" (1920,1955) Honoring not only the pioneers of network and local radio (the performers, writers, producers, directors and technicians), but also the city of Baltimore; one of the 1st. in the nation to be granted a broadcasting license

Stations on the air at that time were: WEAR (now WFBR), WCAO, WBAL, WCBM and WITB. These five pioneering Baltimore stations, still broadcasting today, are included in this living memorial.

THE OLD-TIME RADIO EXHIBIT in the BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY, was established in 1986 by the Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland, Inc., a non-profit organization of dedicated old-time radio "buffs" who want to share their love of vintage radio entertainment with others like themselves, and with future generations who were not fortunate enough to have experienced the "theatre of the mind."

It is through this exhibit, that the sponsoring organization has been honored by its Local, State, and Federal Governments for ... "outstanding service in keeping alive the "spirit of vintage broadcasting" in Baltimore, and the Nation".

COURTESY

I agree with Jack L. Palmer, that good manners and courtesy seem forgotten in the last twenty or so years. I think it is part of the instant gratification syndrome of our fast paced society. The last twenty years have stressed rights, not responsibilities. One is required to be responsible, if he practices good manners and courtesy. However, do not despair Jack L. Palmer, the newspaper column Miss Manners is coming to the rescue! Oh, yes, I almost forgot. Thank You for bringing it to our attention.

METAMORPHOSIS

I disagree with Bob Davis, that "All we can do is keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best." The bottom line of any new technology for the average Joe is the cost effectiveness and practicality of it. As soon as the CD is cheap enough it will replace the open reel and cassette machines. Until then, most of us will still use our old machines. The change to CD or Microchip will not bring an end to something we've worked on for years, but will enhance and expand the choices in recorded programs.

..The Back Page..

BACK ISSUES

I.P.'s and MEMORIES
\$1.50 ea. postpaid

Out of print issues may be borrowed from the reference library.

Contact--Dominic Parisi
38 Ardmore Pl.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14213

ADVERTISING RATES FOR MEMORIES

\$60.00 for a full page
\$40.00 for a half page

ALL ADS MUST BE CAMERA READY

SPECIAL - OTR members may take 50% off these rates.

Advertising deadline--Sept. 1

DEADLINE FOR THE I.P.-10th of each month prior to publication

TAPE LIBRARY RATES: All reels and video cassettes - \$1.25 per month; cassettes and records - \$.50 per month. Postage must be included with all orders and here are the rates: For the U.S.A. and APO, \$.60 for one reel, \$.35 for each cassette and record: \$.75 for each video tape

CANADIAN BRANCH: Rental rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds. Postage: Reels 1 or 2 tape \$1.50; 3 or 4 tapes \$1.75. Cassettes: 1 or 2 tapes \$.65; for each additional tape and \$.25.

REFERENCE LIBRARY: A reference library exists for members. Members should have received a library list of materials with their membership. Only two items can be borrowed at one time, for a one month period. Please use the proper designations for materials to be borrowed. When ordering books include \$2.00 to cover rental, postage and packaging. Please include \$1.00 for other items. If you wish to contribute to the library, the OTRC will copy material and return the originals to you. See address on page 2. Please include \$25 refundable security deposit for each book borrowed.

many of the shows we listen to today probably sound better on tape than they ever did on the radio!

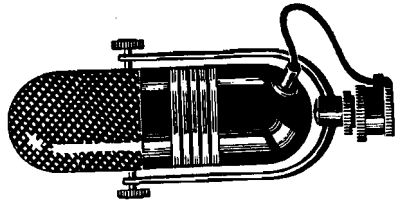
Please understand what I'm trying to say. Always try for the best sound you can obtain on the equipment you have, but don't be discouraged if you can't do as well as the guy with the expensive equipment. Just do your best and enjoy the shows for their content, not their sound quality. As you upgrade your equipment, your sound quality will be upgraded too. And certainly don't be intimidated because someone isn't happy with the sound quality you are able to produce. They didn't start out perfect, either.

You know, after reading this over, I guess I don't disagree with Bob Burnham as much as I thought. I think everyone should do the best they can to maintain and improve the sound quality of OTR. I just don't think it should become so important that it destroys your enjoyment of the hobby, or inhibits your trading with others. Good sound is just one facet of OTR, it should never be the most important one!



HANG AROUND...

Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086



FIRST CLASS MAIL