

Illustrated Press



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RHAC/OTRCOB SPECIAL NO.3

NEW TIME

TONIGHT

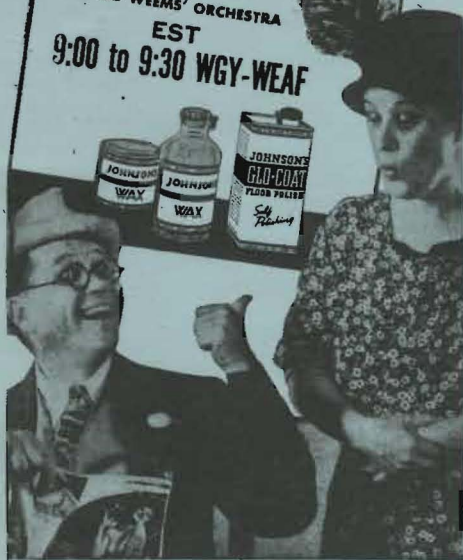
Fibber Mc Gee

and Molly

with TED WEEMS' ORCHESTRA

EST

9:00 to 9:30 WGY-WEAF



Raille Historical Association of Colorado



Fibber McGee & Molly

fun and frolic at 79 Wistful Vista
with the world's best loved comedy couple



by Roger Smith, RHAC

This is the second time around for me, and I consider myself most fortunate. My love for radio shows is bone deep, now, as it was many years ago. Thus, this article is my effort to show my love for the FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY show.

THE PRINCIPALS: Jim Jordan (Fibber McGee) was born in Peoria, Illinois, in 1896. Marian Driscoll Jordan (Molly McGee), also from Peoria, was born the following year; she died April 7, 1961. The two were husband and wife in real life as well as in their fictional roles, having eloped in 1918. That was some six years earlier than one would have + guessed, based on the re-enact- + ment staged in their program of September 12, 1939.

April 12, 1937, Utica Observer-Dispatch

Jim and Marian served their apprenticeships on the tank town vaudeville circuits. Vaudeville, to them, was a struggle. For years they traveled the old Gus Sun Times circuit with a group of players known as the Metropolitan Entertainers (the group played a dulcimer, musical bells, a piano, and a musical saw, and all sang harmony). Though they were constantly on the road, playing split weeks of two and three day

(continued on page 5)

O L D T I M E R A D I O C L U B O F B U F F A L O

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

Our sincere thanks to the other clubs and individuals who took the time to send us articles for your reading enjoyment. It is the best combination newsletter we have had so far and it proves how close the OTR clubs are getting.

We have some outstanding reading for you and we hope you enjoy our efforts. --John H. Lloyd, RHAC

Welcome once again to the annual RHAC/OTRCOB Special. This is our third such venture and this time it's a bit more special than usual because some of the other OTR clubs and publications are finally contributing to it. This time out we have articles from Phil Cole (National Radio Trader), Jay Hickerson (Hello Again), Ed Pintak (Milwaukee Area Radio Enthusiasts), Fred Young (Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland), and Al Rockford and Don Richardson (Nostalgia Radio News), as well as pieces by RHAC and OTRCOB members. In future specials we hope to include items from all the various clubs and publications.

Meanwhile, there's good reading ahead of you right now. Enjoy. --Chuck Seeley, OTRCOB

OTRANAGRAMS II: A Contest for RHAC and OTRCOB Members

An anagram is a word or phrase formed from another by transposing the letters. Example: north = thorn. Try your hand at unscrambling the nonsense phrases below; all are OTR related and we've given you hints. Next, jot down the first letter of each solution. These letters, when rearranged, spell the name of a popular character from radio's Golden Age.

Be the first to submit the final solution to contest coordinator Corb Besco, 815 Greenwood Avenue NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30306, and win your choice of a cassette recorder or portable 8-track player. Be sure to state prize preference on your entry. Publication production personnel and club members having access to contest prior to mailing are ineligible. Answers next month.

- 1) Plane racing has aged. (HINT: Series)
 - 2) A great toss? No. (HINT: Actor)
 - 3) We need a net, sir. (HINT: Actress)
 - 4) Tarts grow hair. (HINT: Series)
 - 5) Unsnap Amy's bus! (HINT: Character)
 - 6) My terror taints; dissect it! (HINT: Series)
 - 7) Stings form a bother. (HINT: Series)
 - 8) Giant Huns voided dry carp. (HINT: Series)
- First letters anagram hint: Detective



Answers to quiz on page 15; don't peek or the Bandersnatch'll get you.
(THE ANSWERS: 1-I, 2-P, 3-S, 4/5-D/V (either order), 6-U, 7-J, 8-W, 9-C, 10-R, 11-X, 12-B, 13-Y, 14-K, 15-A, 16/17-T/Q (either order), 18-E, 19-L, 20-N, 21-M, 22-G, 23-O, 24-H, 25-N)

The OTRCOB will be getting a new name in January. Send in your suggestions.

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The CRYSTAL EGG



RADIO SKETCHES

&

INFO-BITS



HY DALEY

Well, my 100 foot extension cord and my Webcor reel-to-reel have soaked up a lot of tape this summer as

I and two college students beautified eight houses in the Corry area. Nice job. Paint and listen to OTR ALL DAY (eight hours). I find this a great way to digest serial reels. You can go through literally months and years in no time. I did manage to finish AUNT MARY, but you know something? The durn thing ended unresolved (naturally). Somewhere lurks another 600 chapters out there just itching to be taped.

I think I've heard the best kids' action serial. No kiddin'. If you've listened to about ten JUNGLE JIM reels in a row you know. I got my stack from Ernie Rethschulte, some from 1936-37 and another set from 1945-46.

According to Ken Neal, Jim was played by Matt Crowley. Jim's all MAN. And he does screw up once in a while---not like J. Armstrong. He always has a beautiful chick around, like Shanghai Lil or the like. And people die in this serial. I mean the good guys! While on Jap-infested Java many of the main characters get dusted by Jap sharpshooters, booby traps, etc.

Kolu is played by Juano Hernandez. I don't really think the same guy played Kolu in 1936 that played him in 1946. His voice couldn't change that much. Maybe he was still growing up....? Kolu is a black man from Malay. The bad guys (bigots) usually refer to him as a black so-and-so. Speaking of bigots, you wouldn't believe some of the references to the Chinese or Orientals in the serial. Lil is always calling somebody "slant eyes" or "yellow dog". ((Saracen pig.)) Strong stuff for the kiddies.

Shanghai Lil is Franc Hale. She starts out being a baddie known as the BAT Woman but she falls in love with JIM, becomes a secret agent, and puts down the grimy enemies of mankind with a wag of her lip. Another interesting thing I noticed was that in the Thirties the radio script followed the comic action of that Sunday's paper, but in the Forties the radio script was different from the story in the paper. I wonder why....

Recently one of my students brought me a large booklet called the Broadcast News, Number 1, October 1931, put out by RCA. The features for

JUNGLE JIM BY ALEX RAYMOND

Reprinted by Farrar, Straus & Giroux

DEEP IN THE JUNGLE OF BURMA, ON THEIR SEARCH FOR PETER HAWKINS' LOST SON, WE FIND JUNGLE JIM AND HAWKINS CAMPED FOR THE NIGHT...

IT'S A MESSAGE--LISTEN-- "THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING, JUNGLE JIM-- GET OUT OF BURMA AT ONCE!"... SIGNED, THE TIGER'S CLAW.... SO THAT'S IT, EH? OKAY, IF IT'S A



NEXT WEEK

TO THE

FINISH!

1-24

69

this issue included "Station KFI, Los Angeles", "Microphone Placing", "What is Your Coverage?", and "Police Alarm Broadcast Equipment".

The KFI story goes into detail about the first 50 kilowatt station west of Texas. The article is very technical in its explanation of how the station was set up.

The article on microphone placing gets into an area of broadcasting that I hadn't really heard much about. In a classroom with a modern mike, I don't have too much trouble with picking up voices unless some kid is shy and I have to stick the mike in his or her mouth to get any VU reading. But this article shows you how to reproduce orchestra music and where and how to arrange the instruments for best pick-up by a full range 1931 microphone.

A small feature called "RCA Victor Personalities" gives you all the gossip at WEA, WGH, WJZ, and for heaven's sakes KFJR!

"What is Your Coverage" goes into the whys and hows to measure how far away your station is being picked up. It even gives a broadcast map of WFAA Dallas, June 1930, showing the range and field intensities.

The police alarm article shows how the long arm of the law has now become the long wave of the law.

Other thoughts: I was somewhat dismayed at the thought that those SHADOW scripts in The Shadow Knows may never have been broadcast. Is that on the level?

You know the buffalo is a native American animal, right? Couldn't we just figure that the Buffalo OTR Club stands for a nation instead of a city? Couldn't we all be Buffaloes...like Elks or Mooses or Eagles??? Instead of President, Chuck Seeley could be the BIG HORN. I say let the chips lie!!!

OTR SYNDROME

by Phil Cole, editor/publisher of the National Radio Trader. Reprinted with permission from NRT, Vol. 2, #3.

My psychiatrist doesn't like old time radio. At least I don't think he does. It all began recently at one of my weekly visits to him. I reclined leisurely in his office. Funny thing about that, in all these years he's never said anything about my lying on his typewriter instead of on his couch. Anyway, I put my elbow on the roller and leaned against my hand.

"What would you like to talk about today?" he began.

"I'm publishing an old time radio newsletter," I volunteered.

"What's an old time radio?" Hodge said (his real name is Hodge Podge, but after all these years he lets me call him Hodge).

"It's a bunch of wires and tubes inside a box," I said. "And, oh yes, there's a thing called the speaker."

"What does that remind you of?" he asked.

"Jack Benny, Fred Allen, and The Shadow," I said.

"No, I mean the box and the tubes," Hodge responded.

"Oh no," I replied. "Not that again!"

"Oh yes. Don't the tubes have little prongs that go into sockets?" Hodge queried. "And wasn't one of the popular radios cathedral shaped, with a point, I mean?"

"Oh God!" I replied. "But the main thing I like about this old time radio thing is the programs."

"They come out of the speaker?" Hodge asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Doesn't that remind you of something?" he suggested.



National Radio Trader

**We're still
growing like a
weed . . .**

Can you tell us why?

- Is it our professional printing and editing?
- Is it our ads from traders around the country?
- Is it our features like—

From Out of the Past Comes . . .
Radio In Review
Radio Roots
Ye Olde Equipment Shoppe
Radio Answer Man
Radio Crossword

- Is it our news of clubs
and old-time radio happenings?

**Whatever it is . . .
we must be doing
something right!**

If you're not already a subscriber, send
for free sample issue mentioning where
you saw this ad.

Write:
National Radio Trader
Post Office Box 1147
Mount Vernon, Washington 98273

Then . . .

Please tell us what we're doing that's
making us grow like a weed!

"Well, my father did have a big booming voice," I agreed.

"Now we're getting somewhere," he said elatedly. "Tell me about this newsletter thing."

"Well I sit up late at night and sort of hunt and peck on the typewriter," I said.

"Do you lounge on the typewriter like you're doing now?" he asked.

"Well, sort of," I replied.

"Doesn't that remind you of something?" he queried.

"Well I do remember looking through the slats of my crib and seeing my mother using a mimeograph. I think she put out some sort of church bulletin or something," I reported.

"Now doesn't it make you feel better to understand that?" Hodge asked.

"I'm not sure," I replied.

"Are you making any money at this project?" he continued.

"No. Actually I'm pouring lots of money into it," I confessed.

"Sounds as if you're hooked on pain again," Hodge observed. "That reminds me. You haven't paid your bill for the last three months."

"But all my ready cash is going into this newsletter," I plead.

"You're going to have to choose between your newsletter and me," he declared.

"But my mother and father," I explained, "don't you see how they're all involved with this? And, my pain syndrome, what shall I do about that?" I asked.

"I can't be bothered with your problems right now," Hodge interjected. "I've got to pay my bills. Did you bring your checkbook with you? By the way, I wish you wouldn't lean on my typewriter like that. It bends the keys. Last week I sent out a statement for ninety eight cents instead of ninety eight dollars because the keys stuck."

"Has my lying on your typewriter bothered you like this for all these years?" I asked.

"Yes. As a matter of fact, it has," he replied.

"And you're not going to try to understand my interest in Henry Aldrich and One Man's Family?" I questioned him further.

"Your fifty minutes are up. Leave your check with my secretary on your way out and we'll talk about it again next week," Hodge concluded. "Provided you stay away from my typewriter."

I walked out of the office. "I think I helped old Hodge today," I thought to myself. "That's the first time he's ever said what was on his mind. Next week I'll ask him what Old Time Radio reminds HIM of."

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY: continued from page one

stands, they never made enough money to have any in their pockets--ten dollars earned was a big night.

But, during these times, Jim and Marian never lost their sense of humor. They were heard to brag that--of all the world's vaudeville acts--theirs was the only one that never played the Palace. Jim once said, "If all the vaudevillians who claimed to have played there really did, the Palace would have been full of performers every night!"

The Jordans broke into radio in 1925. They auditioned on station WJBO in Chicago and were immediately signed for a sponsored local show. By 1927 they were wired into radio, never to be out of work as long as radio was alive and well. In 1931, with Don Quinn (a Grand Rapids,

Fibber and Molly Complete Picture



Fibber and Molly can hardly suppress their joy at returning to Chicago after making their first talking picture, "This Way Please," in Hollywood. Back from movieland with the NBC stars came Bill Thompson, dialect comic; Harlow Wilcox, the show's announcer, and Don Quinn, author of the script. Ted Weems will rejoin the program on Monday, July 18, over the NBC-Red Network at 9:00 p.m., EDST.

Michigan cartoonist), they created a series called SMACKOUTS, which consisted of comedy and tall tales. The characters of FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY were introduced on this show and skyrocketed to popularity. They were invited to New York for their first radio broadcast of FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY in April of 1935. This was for Johnson's Wax on a coast-to-coast hook-up. The volume of fan mail, feelers from Hollywood, etc. soon indicated they had a potential hit on their hands. In order to build on that popularity and ensure its continuation, they were pressed into a heavy schedule of personal appearances, interviews, and benefits--all between rehearsals and broadcasts.

Gradually the pace had its effect on Marian, she grew increasingly tired and nervous. Finally Jim put his foot down on further activities of that type after they returned home from making their first movie, "This Way Please". But it was too late. Marian collapsed in October, 1937, and entered a Wisconsin sanitarium the following month. Jim, with his writers and cast, carried on alone until Marian returned to the show on April 18, 1939. Incidentally, it doesn't appear that Jim ever missed a single show--at least in the January 31, 1939 through May 23, 1950 period; however, I have some in which he had dandy colds.

7/14/37, Niagara Falls Gazette

+++++ Their show was dropped as a weekly half-hour program after the show of June 30, 1953. In October they returned with a 15 minute show five days a week. This lasted until sometime in 1957. This lovable pair could still be heard as a five minute sketch on NBC's MONITOR series well into the late Fifties.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS: Prior to January 15, 1946, Bill Thompson, who joined the show in 1936, was the only supporting actor identified at the beginning of each program, unless one counts announcer Harlow Wilcox. In rare exceptions, however, actors with independently established reputations (Ransom Sherman and Zazu Pitts) had been identified at the end of programs in which they appeared. But coincident with Thompson's return from service in the Navy on the date mentioned, the practice of identifying all members of the cast was adopted.

Most, if not all, of the actors doubled in brass, taking the lines of minor characters in addition to those of their primary roles. In many cases it is extremely difficult to determine which actor is reading the lines for one of these minor parts; in others the voice is easily identifiable.

A number of the characters were ethnic stereotypes: Nick Depopolis, Greek restaurant owner; Beulah, black domestic; Ole, Swedish janitor and handyman; Uncle Dennis, Irish alcoholic; plus many Jewish shopkeepers, and even more Irish cops. For some unknown or maybe there was a reason, the number of such roles was rapidly declining by the late Forties.

Fibber and Molly lived at 79 Wistful Vista in the city of Wistful

Vista. They won their home in a raffle on August 26, 1935 (September 1949). They paid \$2 for the raffle ticket (November 22, 1949).

Marian regularly played two roles on almost every program: Molly and the little girl who lived across the street. Very likely Jim did the voices of some minor, one-time parts; I consider myself an expert on identification of radio personality voices but Jim has kept me in left field, in his case I can't really be too sure. On the October 16, 1945 program he demonstrates a facility with a number of dialects/accents as he attempts to arrange train reservations for Mrs. Carstairs.

Although the McGees were depicted as just an average American family of modest financial means, there was never an effort to explain a source of income. Fibber's only jobs in this eleven year span were two in number: the proprietor of an unsuccessful hamburger parlor (March 7, 1939), and a temporary substitute mailman (April 11, 1939).

THE SUPPORTING ACTORS: The inclusive dates given for each actor's tenure with the series are approximations only. It appears that many did various bit parts for a time before being written into a continuing role. Also keep in mind that I am only covering the period from January 31, 1939 through May 23, 1950; when either of these dates are given, it represents the limit of my information.

CLIFF ARQUETTE: 1949 - 5/23/50. Cliff played a wide variety of one-time roles, in addition to six appearances as the Old Timer's girlfriend, Bessie (November/December 1949).

BEA BENADARET: 1943 - 12/24/46. Bea undoubtedly had the role of Alice Darling and she also played the parts of Millicent Carstairs and Elsie Merkel.

ARTHUR Q. BRYAN: 1943 - 5/23/50. Art had one of the principal supporting roles as Dr. George Gamble, and appeared in nearly every show, JEAN CARROLL: February through May of 1947. Jean played the role of Lena, the McGee's cook and maid.

GALE GORDON: 1941 - 5/23/50. Gale was assigned the role of Mayor Latrivia following the departure of Harold Peary and his Gildersleeve character. During the October 1947 - June 1948 season he played the part of Foggy Williams, which was substituted for that of mayor; however the switch was reversed the following season. Gale served as an enlisted man in the U.S. Coast Guard from December 1942 until the end of WWII. He did make a few guest appearances on the show during that period, though, but not in the role of Mayor Latrivia.

MARLIN HURT: 1944 - 6/26/45. Marlin performed the black-face role of Beulah. Whether he left the series because of illness, or to have his own show. I am not certain, however in memory searching, I believe he left for his own show. Fibber notes his untimely death in a tribute on the March 26, 1946 show. I remember this well and I was deeply saddened by his passing.

JESS KIRKPATRICK: Made one or two appearances as Chet Morris, proprietor of a magic shop, in January of 1948.

FRANK HEMINGWAY: Had the role of the streetcar motorman on the November 1, 1949 program.

DICK LEBRAND: 1949 - 5/23/50. Dick portrayed Ole, the Elks Club janitor, whose phrase, "Ah'm yust donatin' my time", became a favorite byword for Fibber and Molly fans.

BILLY MILLS: 1937 - 5/23/50. Mills was the musical director for the series, but was occasionally worked into speaking roles, particularly during the 1941 through 1942 season when he played a struggling young composer under the patronage of Mrs. Uppington.

HAROLD PEARY: 1939 - 6/24/41. Hal made the role of Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve famous, and when he left the show in 1941, it was to star in his own series THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE, heard on Sundays on NBC. Incidentally, this also was one of my all-time favorite shows, and I can still see in my mind's eye Gildy's home and the local drugstore.

ZAZU PITTS: 1/31/39 - 4/11/39 (and possibly earlier). Zazu appeared on the show just about every other week until Molly returned. She played a variety of parts; all of which sounded like the Zazu Pitts' movie stereotype.

ISABELLE RANDOLPH: (always one of my favorites) 1939 - 1943. Isabelle had the role of Mrs. Uppington. She left the cast in the spring of 1943 to enter military service. The February 9, 1943 program is built around "Uppy's" efforts to enlist in the WACs, and although in the script she is rejected, she does not appear on the show the following week.

They're NBC's Mad Hatters



If you want to know the hat style for any period in the last century Fibber McGee and Molly can tell you. They've a collection of 350 ancient models and are shown trying on a sample.

CHICAGO, Dec. 12.—The Mad Hatters that Alice found couldn't hold a candle to NBC's mad hatters, Fibber and Molly McGee, whose unusual collection of head gear includes every sort of hat or cap of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The McGees, who, in private life are Marian and Jim Jordan, veteran radio comedy team, attracted attention when they displayed their menagerie of chapeaux at the National Hobby Show in Chicago.

"We began collecting hats nearly

ten years ago," explained Marian, "when we used all sorts of outlandish models in our vaudeville skits. Even if we weren't very funny, the audiences used to laugh at our hats. Naturally we began to assemble all the hats we could find."

Their collection numbers about 350 sky pieces. Marian and Jim usually bring a couple along to wear before their studio audiences during their broadcasts each Monday. They are heard over an NBC-WJZ network at 8:00 p.m. E. S. T. Mondays.

12/12/35 Niagara Falls Gazette

worked into other bits between commercials, as well. Harlow, who was called "Waxy" by Fibber, missed only one program in my span of shows, he lost his voice in another.

THE CHARACTERS (CONTINUING ROLES): This list includes characters with speaking roles in consecutive or near consecutive programs over a period of weeks, months, or years, as distinguished from one-time appearances.

HERBERT APPEL (Bud Stephan): Hardware clerk. 12/49 - 1/50.

BESSIE (Cliff Arquette): Old Timer's girlfriend. 11-12/49.

BEULAH (Marlin Hurt): McGee's maid and cook. 1944-1945.

HORATIO K. BOOMER (Bill Thompson): Character patterned after W.C. Fields, appeared fairly regularly between 1939 and 1950, except for the years when Bill was in the military service.

MILlicENT CARSTAIRS (Bea Benadaret): Bea played the wealthy neighbor of the McGees. She lived, with her husband, at Wistful Vista and Oak Streets (3/26/46). The character was probably conceived in an effort to create a role similar to Mrs. Uppington. 1943-1946.

ALICE DARLING (Bea Benadaret): Young war plant worker who rented the McGee's spare room. Took a job as clerk at the Bon Ton after the war ended, but was written out of the script shortly thereafter. 1943-45.

NICK DEPOPOLIS (Bill Thompson): Proprietor of a candy kitchen and restaurant who appeared fairly regularly up until WWII, but less frequently after Thompson's return from Service. 1939 - ?.

UNCLE DENNIS DRISCOLL (Ransom Sherman): Molly's uncle. Also mentioned frequently throughout the series. 10-11/43.

DR. GEORGE GAMELE (Arthur Q. Bryan): Lived on Wistful Vista, a couple of doors from the McGees. He was the rival of Mayor Latrivia for the affections of actress Pifi Tremaine, whose nickname for Doc was "Willie". Appeared regularly from 1943 through May of 1950.

RANSOM SHERMAN: 10/12/43 - 6/20/44. Ransom was a wartime replacement after Gale Gordon and Bill Thompson had entered the military service. His continuing role was that of Sigmund Wellington; however he also played Uncle Dennis on several shows.

BUD STEPHAN: 4/5/49 - 1/31/50. Bud first played the part of Milton, the druggist's nephew, until October 1949; later he took on the role of Herbert Appel.

BILL THOMPSON: 1936 - 5/23/50. Bill did a number of regular roles, often in the same program: Nick Depopolis, Horatio K. Boomer, the Old Timer, and Wallace Wimple, and half of the Irish cops in Wistful Vista. Bill served in the U.S. Navy from mid-1943 until the 15th of January, 1946, during which time his characters were written out of the scripts.

ELVIA ULLMAN: January and February 1950. Elvia may have been around after these dates—during those months she appeared several times in the role of Mrs. Clammer, who lived across the street.

HARLOW WILCOX: 1/31/39 - 5/23/50. Wilcox was the program's announcer, whose Johnson's Wax commercials were worked into the story line of the shows. He was frequently

THROCKMORTON P. GILDERSLEEVE (Harold Peary): Lived next door to the McGees at 83 Wistful Vista (5/27/41). Gildy's middle name was Philharmonic (10/22/40). He was the manager of the Bon Ton Department Store (12/5/39). Owned "Gildersleeve's Girlish Girdles" factory (1/23/40). 1939-1941.

MAYOR LATRIVIA (Gale Gordon): This character was introduced shortly after the departure of Hal Peary and his Gildersleeve role. A running comedy situation was written around the Mayor's inability to control his exasperation when the McGees deliberately misinterpreted his words. Latrivia appeared regularly from 1941 through the 23rd of May in 1950, except for the 1947/48 season, when the Foggy Williams character was substituted, and during Gordon's military service, 12/42 - 10/45.

LENA (NEVER HEARD THE LAST NAME) (Jean Carrol): Lena was the McGees' cook and maid. Evidently Lena was a short, unsuccessful attempt to reintroduce the Beulah role as a non-black. It may have been stimulated by the departure of Bea Benadaret at the end of December, 1946, which left no female roles except Molly's. Lena had been "Miss Shaker Heights of 1926". 2-5/47

ELSIE MERKLE (Bea Benadaret): She was a beauty operator patronized by Molly, and appeared in several shows between October and December 1946.

MILTON (Bud Stephan): The nephew of Ed Kramer. Worked in his uncle's drugstore as the soda jerk and delivery boy (4/12/49). Made a number of appearances through the rest of that season. 1949.

OLD TIMER (Bill Thompson): Ancient greybeard and teller of tall tales. Stated his real name was Rupert Elasingame (1/29/46). Appeared regularly throughout the series, except when Bill was in the service. 1939 - 5/23/50.

OLE (Dick Legrand): Ole was a Swedish character, Elks Club janitor (3/15/49). He appeared regularly after joining the cast. 1949 - 5/23/50.

TEENIE (Marian Jordan): Teenie was the little girl who lived across the street from the McGees and appeared regularly except during Marian Jordan's illness. Prior to May 2, 1944, she was addressed only as "Sis" or "Little Girl". On that date, she explains her father had given her the nickname as a baby, because like a martini, she was never dry enough to suit Mom. Her given name was Elizabeth (12/21/48). Her last name was never revealed. Teenie's little boyfriend was Willie Toops. Her pet dog (male) was named Margaret. 1939 - 5/23/50.

MRS. ABIGAIL UPPINGTON (Isabelle Randolph): Wealthy widow, society matron, and neighbor of the McGees. She lived at 97 Wistful Vista (1/23/40). "Uppy" appeared regularly until her departure from the series in the spring of 1943. 1939 - 1945.

SIGMUND WELLINGTON (Ransom Sherman): Became a regular during WWII while Gale Gordon and Bill Thompson were in the military service. Wellington was the manager of the Bijou Theatre and also an official of the Elks Club. 1943 - 1945.

F. OGDEN "FOGGY" WILLIAMS (Gale Gordon): "Foggy" was the weather forecaster who lived next door to the McGees. The role replaced that of Mayor Latrivia during the October 1947 - June 1948 season; the switch was reversed the following season.

WALLACE WIMPLE (Bill Thompson): "Wimp" was the henpecked milque-toast, bird watcher, and writer of greeting card verses who lived at 1345 Oak Street (4/15/41). His first appearance was also on 4/15/41. He appeared regularly thereafter, except for the years that he served in the Navy. He always referred to his wife as "Sweetie Face". 1941 - 5/23/50.

NON-SPEAKING CHARACTERS AND PLACE NAMES: These are frequently mentioned non-speaking characters and place names given throughout the run. AUNT SARAH DRISCOLL, Molly's aunt; MISS FIDTCH, Fibber's old school teacher; MRS. KLADDAHATCH, wife of one of Doc Gamble's patients (name spelled with a "K" - 10/18/49), called Doc at the McGees' frequently, setting up a Myrt/Fibber type of gag; MARGARET, Teenie's male dog; MYRT, telephone operator; FRED NITNEY, Fibber's old vaudeville partner; "SWEETIE FACE", Mrs. Wimple; MORT TOOPS, friend and neighbor of McGees; WILLIE TOOPS, Mort & Mable's son, Teenie's boyfriend; FIPT TREMAINE, actress, object of rivalry between Latrivia and Doc Gamble; CORNELIA WIMPLE, Mrs. Wallace Wimple; BON TON DEPARTMENT STORE, vicinity of 14th & Oak; DUGAN'S LAKE, recreational area; KRAMER'S DRUG STORE, 14th & Oak; and WISTFUL VISTA GAZETTE, evening newspaper.

This ends my labor of love for FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY. It's been fun but in no way should be considered a bible of such.

RADIO IS A WORLD THAT HAS TO BE BELIEVED TO BE SEEN.

Wireless Wanderings

MUTUAL, ETC.



JIM SNYDER

A year ago I started a series on the beginnings of the radio networks. This is the fourth of these reports.

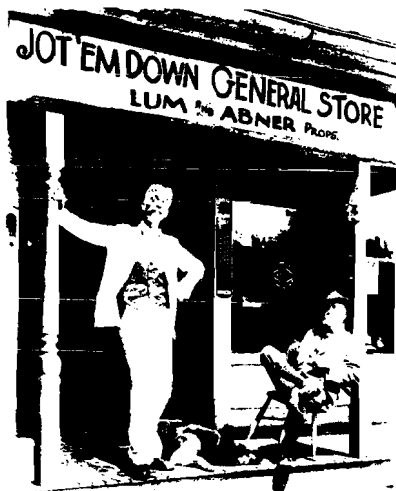
Following the successes of NBC and CBS, many networks were attempted, both regional and national. While many of the regional networks were successful, the national ones had a very difficult time. One of the most flamboyant attempts to establish a national

network was financed by stage, radio, and film comedian Ed Wynn. He organized the Amalgamated Broadcasting System. ABS held its inaugural program on September 25, 1933. It was a disaster. Wynn could not get enough affiliates to make the network viable. His resources were extended to near bankruptcy as he tried to meet salary and debtor demands. After one month he gave up, announcing that he had not only lost his shirt, but also his job with NBC.

One attempt was successful, and this came from a group of regional networks. This was the Mutual Broadcasting System, MBS. The Quality Network was organized in 1929 with three stations, in Chicago, Cincinnati, and Newark. On September 29, 1934 the Mutual Broadcasting System was incorporated using this as a base, and with a station change in Chicago and the addition of a station in Detroit. The capital stock of Mutual consisted of only ten shares, five held by the Chicago Tribune, which owned the Chicago station, and the other five held by Macy's Department Store in New York City, which owned the station in Newark. One year later the Detroit station dropped out of Mutual in order to join NBC and a station in Windsor, Ontario, just across the river from Detroit, took over that slot. These four stations continued to be the network for one more year, but then rapid expansion took place. On December 29, 1936 Mutual held its "inaugural broadcast" of coast-to-coast service. With this broadcast they welcomed the additions of the Central States Broadcasting System, the Iowa Network, the ten station Don Lee Network from California, and a number of other stations. As time went on, Mutual added a large number of affiliates and became the "world's largest radio network," but it was never able to get power and prestige since it could not attract the full cooperation of powerful and prestigious affiliates. In fact, the success of Mutual was in large part owed to the success of two famous shows, THE LONE RANGER and LUM "N" ABNER.

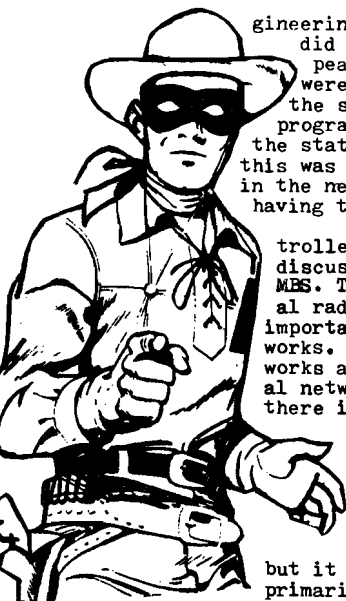
If you will listen to the closing credits of many of the shows in your collection, you will hear, "This is the Mutual-Don Lee Network." Since the small Don Lee Network was the source of Hollywood stars for the Mutual Network, it maintained an importance far larger than its number of stations would seem to call for, and thus it maintained its identity even in the larger organization.

The network was organized along lines radically different from those of CBS and NBC. The network owned no stations, but the network itself was owned by several stations. Mutual had + no studio, maintained neither an en- +



Pine Ridge, Ark.

Photo courtesy of Bill Gore



gineering department nor an artists' bureau, and it did not itself produce any programs except European news broadcasts. The commercial programs were produced by the originating station or by the sponsor who bought the time, and sustaining programs were selected from among those put on by the stations associated with the network. Probably, this was a reason for Mutual not becoming a "heavy" in the network battles. This policy kept Mutual from having the clout of the other networks.

The early days of radio were pretty much controlled by the four major networks that we have discussed over the past year, NBC, ABC, CBS, and MBS. Today, in the era of television, these national radio networks have sunk to considerably less importance, and they have been joined by other networks. There are countless successful regional networks around the country, and the above four national networks have been joined by five others. Today there is a total of nine coast-to-coast chain radio networks. In addition to our original four, probably the best known of the newcomers is NPR, to which, because of its present day importance, we will devote a separate column next June. Another one of growing importance is the National Black Network. Most of its member stations utilize only its news service, but it does offer other types of programming aimed primarily at the black community.

We also have the "odd-ball" networks currently on the scene. Probably the most controversial of these is the Third World Network, which is aimed primarily at homosexuals.

In February we will continue this series by dealing with the foundations of the AFRS.

((Editor's Note: Jim Snyder's network series runs as follows: IP #16, Oct. 1977, NBC; IP #20, Feb. 1978, ABC; IP #24, June 1978, CBS. All issues are available from the back issue department at \$1 each.))

A MEMORY COMES ALIVE

by Ed Fintak, MARE

Last fall I obtained a copy of an IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT show in which the question "What is a breadknife used for?" is asked. The show dates back to the mid-Forties. When I listened to the recording, I was surprised to hear that one of the guests was a WAVE, Yeoman Second Class Vivian Weyland of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Imagine that; someone from Wisconsin, Wauwatosa no less, was a guest on one of my favorite shows. Wouldn't it be something if I could locate her and get her reaction to hearing her voice from over 30 years ago? I was bound to find out. But--I had to find her first. Where would you start if you wanted to locate a then unmarried woman whose name you weren't sure how to spell and who could be married with a different name or even dead? Well, I'll tell you.

My first stop was the Milwaukee Library. There I looked up the names Whalen, Weiland, and Walen. There were no Vivians listed in the Milwaukee or Wauwatosa city directories of 1940 or 1945. I questioned the older librarians at the Wauwatosa library to see if they remembered a family named Whalen whose daughter was a WAVE during WWII. No one remembered. Several months passed and I couldn't find any clues to former WAVE Vivian Weyland's whereabouts. Then, one day, I was talking to a man who was a professor of history at UWM. I found out he was from Wauwatosa. I asked him if he was a native of Wauwatosa. Yes, he was. Did he know a family named Whalen? No, he didn't.

I told him the story of the club, the radio program, and of Yeoman Second Class Vivian Weyland. I mentioned too that she attended Carroll College in Waukesha. This was the key I was after. At his suggestion, I called the Alumni Office at Carroll College. I explained to the secretary what I was after and why. She was very cooperative and told me where to find Vivian Weyland. I found the former Navy WAVE living today in Elm Grove as Mrs. Kenneth Rose. Mr. Rose is a successful businessman and a former Wauwatosa resident. The Roses met in high school prior to the war and have been married for 27 years. They have raised a family of four, and have one grandchild. Did the former WAVE remember the broadcast? Oh yes. It was one of the two times she appeared on the show. Stationed in New York, Yeoman Weyland, as with thousands of other service men and women, could take advantage of free tickets to a variety of entertainment activity including movies, plays, and radio programs. Her question for the panel was "Was Helen of Troy a man or a woman?" After the panel kicked the question around for 5½ minutes, Yeoman Weyland was awarded \$15 for stumping the experts.

Mrs. Rose was surprised to hear her voice after all these years. "I didn't know there were recordings of the old shows around any more... There was a second time I was a guest contestant on IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT. Would you be able to locate that one, too?"

I told Mrs. Rose that there was a slim chance the other broadcast would turn up someday and if I found it, she would get a copy. Mrs. Rose spent four years in the Navy, leaving the service in 1947 as a Chief Petty Officer. During her enlistment, she served in the Port Director's Office in New York where her assignment was the routing of the Atlantic convoys.

IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT was only one of many programs she attended. Among others were Bert Parks' show and Milton Berle's radio show. So I spent a pleasant couple of hours with the Roses last fall, talking to the woman whose voice I heard as it sounded over thirty years ago. It was a lot of fun.

THERE'S MUSIC IN (ON) THE AIR

by Fred Young, GRBM

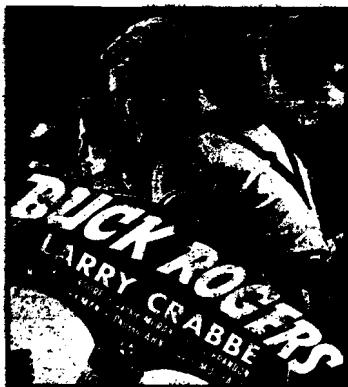
As a child growing up in the Thirties and Forties, I can remember that the only types of home entertainment that we had were the phonograph and the radio. Television hadn't been invented yet. I should say it wasn't on the open market for home use. We got our video via the movies, once a week for about 2½ hours.

The programs that my crowd were mostly interested in were that of adventure serials and B-movies that played in our local theatre on Saturdays.

Regardless of the main feature, our favorite attraction was the adventure serial. You had to see the initial installment of the current chapter play. If you got "hooked" on the story in Chapter One, nothing, I mean nothing, except grave illness would keep you from attending the next 14 installments.

Heroes like Tom Tyler, Lee Powell, Buster Crabbe, Warren Hull, Bill Elliot, Herman Brix, and Johnny Mack Brown were household words during that period. Doomed villains such as Roy Barcroft, Trever Bennett, Dick Curtiss, and Charles Middleton met their match by the final fade-out in the last chapter.

There was an interesting side effect of these on-going stories for those of us who had an ear for music. It was a course in Music Appreciation. If we followed a twelve or fifteen episode serial for as many



weeks, the main title theme, forward music, or chase music themes could be heard being whistled by us as much as the #1 hit tune on the Hit Parade. One night, my parents were listening to the NBC Symphony Concert on radio as I was doing my homework. "Flash Gordon" music was being played. I asked what the name of the selection was. I was told "Les Preludes" by Liszt. I knew that I had to have a recording of it. I saved enough money that within three months I bought my first classical recording. I still have that selection.

Much of the music of the serials was borrowed from the classics. "The Light Cavalry Overture" was used as forward music in "The Oregon Trail" (1939). "Les Preludes" was used throughout "Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe" (1940), and "The William Tell Overture" was associated with "The Lone Ranger" (1938). There was also stirring original music, such as the score from "The Fighting Devil Dogs" (1938). Sharp ears could tell that a certain selection was featured in serials of Republic, or those from Universal or Columbia.

Radio borrowed bridge music from the classics and from the serials. In an interview with a person connected with THE LONE RANGER, I was informed that the show at first was operating on a shoe-string. It was cheaper to pull classical records from the station's library than to employ a composer, musical director, and an orchestra for musical effects. Their financial problems added to our musical education. THANKS!

Picture the cavalry coming to the rescue to the sound of "The Frischutz Overture", or evening or stalking scenes to the sounds of "Fingal's Cave". There are pastoral scenes in the second part of "The William Tell Overture". The second part of the same selection shows a very violent rain storm. Who can forget the finale of galloping horses? There are some chase scenes that were featured in "Les Preludes", the final part of the same composition was used as half-time music.

"The Flight of the Bumblebee" was a natural for THE GREEN HORNET. "The Donna Dianna Overture" was an interesting selection for Sergeant Preston (CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON). Other types of radio programs depended on the classics. For example, THE STORY OF MARY MARLIN had "Clair de Lune" as its theme. "Valse Triste" was the theme for I LOVE A MYSTERY.

Two members of the Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland, Inc. have access to music that was featured in opening titles, forwards, and chase scenes of 15 serials of the mid Thirties and Forties. A tape of this music was made and placed in the club's tape library. The quality of the tape varies with the quality of each master.

If your local TV station happens to run the serials that we have been talking about (circa 1937-1941), enjoy the story, but listen to the mood music. Is it original or borrowed from the classics? Play the game-- "Name That Tune"--There is Music in (on) the air.

CATALOGINGby Jay Hickerson, editor/publisher of Hello Again.

ORDER OF INFORMATION: First use a code number of some kind in identifying the program. This is of use to the sender so he can find the requests easily enough. A chronological number, reel number, or identifying code is enough. If a code is used, explain it in the introduction.

Next comes the series title in capital letters. Use the series title as indicated in the program on the tape. Be careful about distinguishing between titles of shows such as COLUMBIA WORKSHOP, CBS RADIO WORKSHOP, COLUMBIA PRESENTS CORWIN, and others. Be accurate.

Next comes the program title, if any, guests, and the date if known and substantiated, ideally by a perpetual calendar. If there is no program title given or guests, describe the program using the following methods: Musical programs, first song; Quiz programs, first joke or contestant; Drama or comedy, opening segment, including names of people, as in GUNSMOKE and soap operas. In comedies include the main idea of the program rather than the opening minute or two. Skits performed should also be mentioned. For drama or comedy main characters are essential to identifying the program. If no date is given, give the day, time, and other clues that may be given by opening and closing announcements. Many collectors give a story summary even if the program title is given as in SUSPENSE and ESCAPE. This adds to a much better and more detailed listing.

Indicate the sponsor if given. Many collectors have a certain series or program but edited or APRS and are looking for a sponsored one. Some collectors will not trade for certain programs unless this information is given.

The network should be listed if mentioned at the end of the program. Indicate if syndicated, APRS, edited, BEC, records, TV, or movie soundtracks.

Indicate an accurate time. Don't call 20 minute programs 30 minute ones because 3 20 minute programs will fit on one track of a 1200' reel. Also, when dubbing, don't go from one track to another with the same program unless it is exceptionally long. Splice a little tape to finish it. Also make sure your dubbing reel doesn't run short and the program is cut off before the end.

QUALITY: It is probably useless to have a standard rating system because all individuals differ on good, very good, excellent, etc. I personally suggest that specific problems be indicated.

Separate and clarify items by punctuation and indentation.

If you have several programs from the same series, mention series once and indent for further programs. Examples follow:

842 MOP HARRIGAN; 8/17/43; Hop, a prisoner on an island, tries to escape in his plane. (NBC Blue) 15 67
3797 SUSPENSE; Sneak Preview; 3/23/44; J. Cotten (Roma, CBS) 30 484
5557 One Millionth Joe; 6/22/50; Jack Carson (Auto, CBS) 30 749

This is concise but gives essential information. The first number is the chronological listing. The last two are the time and reel.

Your style of writing will be up to you. Just make sure your listing is the way you wish to see others.

TALES TO SCARE THE YELL OUT OF YOU!!

by Stu Mann, OTRCOB

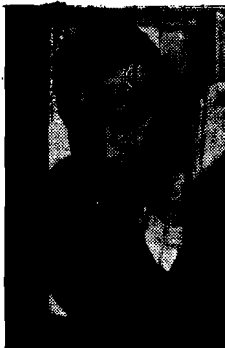
"Good evening, friends.

This is Raymond, your host, welcoming you in through the squeaking door to the INNER SANCTUM. We have another tale to thrill you, and to chill you. Won't you come in and have a seat? No chair, you say? Why don't you try that black box over there? It's nice to have

someone here who really believes in black magic, the supernatural, zombies, and goblins. What's that? You don't really believe in those things? Well, our story tonight is about a man who didn't believe in them either, but he found out that he was wrong--dead wrong. Ha-ha-ha-haaa...."

As host of INNER SANCTUM, Raymond ushered us into an abode of mystery and a place of dread, but one where what you dreaded seldom turned out to be real. One week you might hear about a nice old man who seemed to be a vampire but turned out to be just a nice old man or, at worst, a vampire turned out to be a deranged doctor with a hypodermic needle and a bicycle pump. Another week you might hear how a strange creature from the sea was killing off an entire shipful of men, one by one. But in the end it turned out to be the captain who was doing it all.

Hi-man Brown was the man behind INNER SANCTUM's creaking door. It's ominous groan of massive hinges swinging open to reveal the terrible chamber of shadows was the perfect opening for every show. Brown used music as a sound effect. His organist was warned never to play a recognizable song or, if he could help it, even an original snatch of melody. Brown's biggest trouble was in his methods of killing people. The Federal Communications Commission objected if he got too specific. Actually, anyone who followed INNER SANCTUM in real life would soon be heading not for the Squeaking Door, but for the green door at the death house. The plots generally explained away the supernatural to make you "believe the story could really happen."



INNER SANCTUM at 7:30 p.m.

The door to the Inner Sanctum creaks slowly open, and the lugubrious voice of Raymond, your host, greets you every Saturday night in a program about equally compounded of thrills and chills, laughter and suspense. Behind the door of the Inner Sanctum lie mysteries; go in with Raymond and enjoy them!

At the end of the half-hour, Raymond would reappear, stepping over and around the litter of corpses, and apologise for the puddle of blood on the floor, and invite us to read the latest INNER SANCTUM mystery novel. Then it was time to close the Squeaking Door for another seven days. "Good night...and pleasant dreams...Squeeeeeeeeeeeel-KA-THUNK!"

THE HERMIT'S CAVE was another radio chiller, but differed from INNER SANCTUM and the programs that imitated INNER SANCTUM, shows like THE HAUNTING HOUR, THE SEALED BOOK, and WEIRD CIRCLE. THE HERMIT'S CAVE told stories of genuine supernatural horror.

THE HERMIT'S CAVE had for its occupant an elderly story-teller, the Hermit. "Gho-o-ost stories! Weird stories! And murders too! The Hermit knows of them all! Turn out your lights, turn them out, and listen while the Hermit tells you!" The stories the Hermit told were perhaps less memorable than he was. They tended toward highly traditional ghost stories.

A much superior fantasy series was another syndicated transcription feature, STAY TUNED FOR TERROR, written entirely by Robert Bloch who, since the Alfred Hitchcock production of his novel *Psycho*, has been fully recognized as a master of horror and fantasy.

During the time STAY TUNED FOR TERROR was broadcast, other writers were doing horror series that achieved greater fame. LIGHTS OUT!, an NBC series from Chicago, offered an outlet in the Thirties for the talents of Arch Oboler. The flashy showmanship of Oboler made LIGHTS OUT! a byword in its time. The fame the series generated has enabled Oboler to issue a record album of stories from the program under the title "Drop Dead." Following a good reaction on the record album, Oboler revived a number of his LIGHTS OUT! scripts in a series of 1963 radio productions under the title ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS.

"You can turn them on now," the announcer said when LIGHTS OUT! was over. But unfortunately, we can never turn the lights off again to achieve that purity of darkness, that blank slate of imagination.

MATCH 'EM UP OTR QUIZ....by Don Richardson & Al Rockford, editors/publishers of *Nostalgia Radio News*.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1__ The Old Maestro | 10__ The All American Boy | 19__ Tracer of |
| 2__ The Magic Detective | 11__ Investigator | Lost Persons |
| 3__ Crime Photographer | 12__ Adventurer | 20__ Master |
| 4__ The Magician | 13__ Pier 23 | Detective |
| 5__ The Magician (another) | 14__ Angel of Mercy | 21__ For Hire |
| 6__ <i>Boy Detective</i> | 15__ <i>Incorporated</i> | 22__ <i>The Sailor</i> |
| 7__ The Mental Banker | 16__ Private Detective | 23__ Public |
| 8__ The Mentalist | 17__ Private Detective | Defender |
| 9__ The Barber | 18__ The Magnificent | 24__ Space Cadet |
| | | 25__ Rumor |
| | | Detective |

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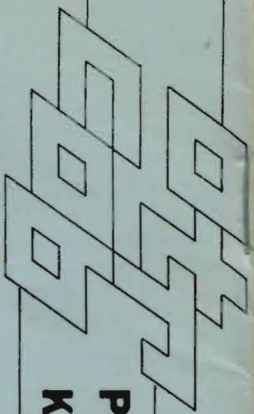


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- N) Troman Harper
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- P) Blackstone Q) Ri
- ard Diamond R) Jack
- Armstrong S) Casey
- T) Martin Kane
- U) Chick Carter
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- ninger X) Jeff Rega
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Answers on page 2.



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