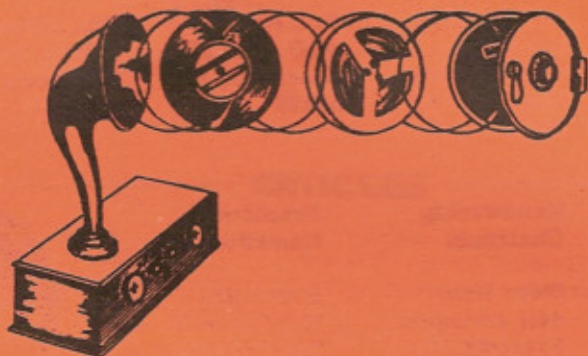


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A JOURNAL OF OLD TIME RADIO



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**NORTH AMERICAN
RADIO ARCHIVES**

VOL. X


WINTER 1982-83 ISSUE

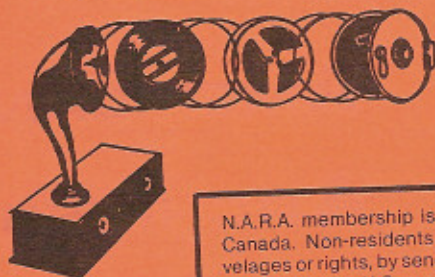
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TO THE



Dear Jack:

When was the fall issue of NARA NEWS mailed? I didn't receive it until the 4th of November--is that poor service, or what?

It was too late for the information on the OTR Convention in Newark, New Jersey.

Don Stribling
Dubuque, Iowa

ED. NOTE: Yours was one of several complaints on the tardiness of the last issue and we're sorry about that. The camera-ready paste-ups were mailed to Steve Ham on Sept. 24th so he could run them off and mail them out. Unfortunately, our printer (his parents) went to Hawaii on vacation and by the time the issue was printed and mailed, the Newark OTR convention had already ended (weekend of Oct 22nd) However many NARA members knew about the convention before that time having heard from Jay Hickerson, "Hello Again" or other sponsors.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

DIVISION OF RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
BOX 3334
LARAMIE, WYOMING 82071

Dear Mr. French:

I do not know how you could have been more gracious or kind, than you were in your letter of October fifth. I do appreciate knowing a little more about the North American Radio Archives. I can well understand, in view of your own activity, that you would want to retain the material there on hand. Nevertheless, should you be this way, I hope you will stop by for a visit. I believe you might be surprised at some of the material we have accumulated. It would be wonderful to make your acquaintance, show you through our archive, and give you a little better idea of the program we have under way.

Gene M. Gressley
Director

Dear Jack,

I am interested in finding out about any tests over the Radio of Telepathy, ESP, or Extra-sensory Perception. So far, the only tests I know of were from the Zenith network, Sept 26, 1937 to Jan 2, 1938 (from Chicago?).

I would appreciate any help fellow NARA members can give me.

Dr. Mahlon W. Wagner
Psychology Dept.
S. U. N. Y.
Oswego, NY 13126

Dear Mr. French:

At the age of 60+, I am still trying to assemble a definitive audio collection of the work of the late Ronald Colman (1891-1958.) I started on this project 35 years ago. Because of his exceptional speaking voice, I hope to pass on to future generations something worthy of his talent.

In the late 1930's I made some off-the-air Colman recordings of rather poor quality on discs. In 1944 I had sixteen "Everything for the Boys" discs which I later donated to SPERDVAC in return for re-mastered tapes. I've been trying to fill in the gaps ever since.

Les Waffen of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections has been very helpful to me, as were several other individuals and organizations you suggested to me. I will be contacting Hal Widdison and Al Inkster directly.

I hope you will find room in NARA NEWS for my list of materials that I am still seeking--I realize that the list is rather extensive but in this very long project, I have found so many things of Colman and my remaining "wants" are very specific.

In return for your cooperation, I shall be happy to send NARA a copy of my "Compleat Chronology of Colman" in silent films, sound movies, radio, phonograph records and television for your Printed Materials Library.

George E. Schatz
341 Iris Lane
Highland Park, IL 60035

ED. NOTE: We wish you luck with your project, George, and we hope that our members and readers will be able to give you some assistance.

Radio Shows wanted by George Schatz

- 4/17/34: 20th Cent-Fox Year's Film Production; 60 minutes, Co-sponsor: General Mills. (Colman's 1st radio appearance) Broadcast from New York and California. Also other stars on program (George Arliss, Fredric March, Constance Talmadge, etc...)
- 10/12/34: "HOLLYWOOD HOTEL" 60 min. Ronald Colman and Loretta Young interviewed by Louella Parsons. Dick Powell hosted.
- Jan-Feb 1939: "THE CIRCLE" Four or five weeks series which premiered Jan 15th on NBC, Kellogs sponsored, 60 min. Colman was "president" of "The Circle" and regular weekly members included Cary Grant, Carole Lombard, Groucho Marx plus guests. (I have only the 2nd show in series--Jan 22)
- Circa 1940: "BUNDLES FOR BRITAIN" New Year's Eve or Night '39, '40 or '41 (?) Show also had Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Adolph Menjou
- 41-43: LUX RADIO THEATER: "Rebecca" 2/3/41 R.C. and Ida Lupino, "Talk of the Town" 5/17/43 R.C. and Cary Grant, "Libel" 3/15/43 R.C. and Edna Best, "In Which We Serve" 6/21/43 R.C. and Edna Best, story of H.M.S. Terrin by Noel Coward (Could be LUX or CBS Playhouse?)
- Circa '43: "WAR BOND SHOW" At least two known--R.C. and Edgar Bergen, Charles Boyer in one and Jack Benny, Lionel Barrymore in other
- 1944: "EVERYTHING FOR THE BOYS" R.C. and guests. Autolite, sponsor. I have all shows except: 2/29/44 "Rogue Male" with Merle Oberon, 6/13/44 "Reunion in Vienna" with Claudette Colbert, 6/20/44 Title unknown (was R.C.'s last show or Dick Haymes' first?)
- 44-48: SCREEN GUILD RADIO, 5/8/44 "Dark Angel" with M. Oberon, "Talk of the Town" (5/13/46) with Virginia Bruce, 12/9/48 "Michael & Mary" with C. Colbert
- Misc: "RUSSIAN WAR RELIEF" circa '44 with Mischa Auer & Edw. G. Robinson
"LOUELLA PARSONS SHOW" circa '48 ABC, with R.C. and wife Benita

Dear Editor:

Want to locate: "Renfro Valley Barndance", "Sunday Morning Gathering", very early "National Barndance", anything on John Lair. Reel-to-reel or 16 or 12" ET's. Phone 502-426-3010 weekends or after 6 p.m. E.S.T.

Marvin Meyerhoffer
2525 Hermitage Way
Louisville, KY 40222

ALL LETTERS ARE WELCOME. THEY MUST BE SIGNED BUT YOUR NAME WILL BE WITHHELD IF YOU SO SPECIFY. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR BREVITY BUT THE ORIGINAL VIEW OR OPINION WILL NOT BE ALTERED. ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDANCE TO EDITOR; IF REPLY REQUESTED, ENCLOSE SASE.



transcribed from toronto

In my previous column I think I mentioned that Canadian broadcaster Bill McNeil, and media critic/lecturer Morris Wolfe, were going to have a book published in the fall of 1982 that would be of interest to all fans of OTR. Well—they have, and it is!

Signing On is its name, subtitled, The Birth of Radio In Canada. Published by Doubleday, it is a gloriously delightful collection of one hundred and twenty five interviews with pioneer broadcasters across Canada. Generously illustrated with over four hundred contemporary photographs and graphics, this is a book chock-full of firsthand anecdotes and recollections that positively capture the excitement and adventure of those early, wonderful days.

Physically, this is a big book, three hundred and four pages in length, available in hardcover for \$29.95 or paperback for \$19.95 (admittedly rather a lot these days but, in my opinion, well spent).



It is complete with an index for ready access to any particular entry. It is divided up into interviews from the Maritimes; from Ontario and Quebec; from the west (all covering a period from the 1920's to the late 1940's); as well as sections on the CNR Network ("Towards Public Broadcasting" in the 1920's; the CRBC (in the 1930's); the CBC (in the late 1930's through to the early 1950's); and a final section on the coming of television to Canada in the early 1950's.

On the whole, this is a book obviously full of very happy and very pleasant memories of a more innocent, less complicated time. The sheer mass of information and the range of interviews it contains is somewhat staggering; I think the authors deserve some kind of award for just putting it

together in one complete work.

For example, you can read the somewhat tongue-in-cheek words of Joey Smallwood, an early Newfoundland radio broadcaster and later premier of that province for many years. Smallwood was a key political figure in getting that province to join Canada in 1949. Said Smallwood:

Radio was invented by God especially for Newfoundland and having done it for Newfoundland, He graciously allowed it to be used in other parts of the world. It was meant for a remote and isolated people who never met. It was meant for Newfoundland. Radio was the great unifying thing. I had spent many years broadcasting and I knew the magic of it.

Or you can read about one of the most amusing incidents involving early technical wizardry and homeground innovative cunning when you read about CHML Radio in Hamilton, Ontario in the 1940's. Ramsay Lee picks up the story:

When the big network shows in the U.S. began, our local audience went way down. There were complaints too that while CHML was on, they couldn't get "Amos 'n' Andy" on WBEN, Buffalo, a programme everyone wanted to hear. One of our salesmen got a brilliant idea. He went out and sold fifteen minutes of blank air to one of the lumber companies. We signed off so people could hear "Amos 'n' Andy". It was incredible how much goodwill that provided. And the lumber company thought it was great because it seemed as if they were sponsoring "Amos 'n' Andy". WBEN, you see, was 930 on the dial, and we were at 900, but back then there was a thing called 'wandering' signals.

And according to Stuart Clark of CFCO Radio in Chatham, Ontario, sometimes those 'wandering' signals were not so accidental:

During the 1930 federal election, I got a call from the Windsor, Ontario (government radio) inspector who said he wanted us to move our frequency for the night so the people of Windsor could hear the election results better. He told me to keep turning the frequency knob until he told me to stop. I did what I was told. Finally he said, "That's fine. Just leave it there for tonight". That sounds weird now, but those kinds of things happened then.

Unbelievable! The later chapters on the CNR Network, the CRBC, and the CBC, all reflect the activities of those individuals concerned with the creation and operation of a public broadcasting



Radio Reception in Every Room

An interesting feature of the new Royal York Hotel is the installation of equipment for reproducing radio programmes.

While taking it easy in your bedroom you may put on the head set and listen to programmes picked up from eight different sources. If, during lunch or dinner, you glance around, you will notice here and there microphones picking up the musical programme. You may be dancing in the Ball Room, or attending a meeting in the Convention Hall, in fact, no matter where you are in the hotel, musical

or other interesting programmes will be there to greet you.

Provision is being made for the showing of Sound Pictures, the latest combination talking and movie invention for the theatre, in the Banquet and Convention Halls. The future will see television also being used there.

The small children have not been forgotten. They, too, can have their radio programmes, for their play room is equipped with a loud speaker.

All this equipment, as well as a large proportion of the wires, cables and electrical supplies, was supplied by the Northern Electric Company Limited.



Northern Electric
 COMPANY LIMITED
 A National Electrical Service



service from coast to coast and include interviews with personalities known across Canada at the time and not just locally or regionally. One of those personalities involved in the very early days of the CBC is the very well known and extremely popular Canadian broadcaster, still heard on the national airwaves every night...Alan McFee:

I don't remember when I first became interested in radio. I can remember my father with those cat's whiskers they were called, made from a round salt box with those precious earphones held to the ears. To me it was such a magic thing. I remember listening to programmes from the States--I didn't know where any of those places were--where dance orchestras broadcast for four or five hours at a time. I used to think that I'd love to be sitting there saying 'And now, here's lovely Marjorie Main stepping front and centre to sing the beautiful song, "I'm in the mood for love". I used to practise that sort of thing all the time. My father would say, 'Go to bed you rotten little swine. You'll never get into radio.' I remember saying to him one time, 'Gee, Dad, I'd like to be a radio announcer'. And he said, 'I suppose the next thing you'll want is to put lipstick and rouge on and do your hair up'. I talked about radio all the time.

Needless to say, McFee never did put lipstick and rouge on, well, not until television, and that is another story! (It was also television makeup.)

I highly recommend this book for anyone, Canadian or American, interested in radio's past. It can be read a little bit at a time, or all in one long sitting, and with equal satisfaction. I know I shall be referring to it again and again in this column, and reading it for sheer pleasure for some time to come.

Unrelated news. Did you know that the late John Lennon was an OTR fan? 'Tis true and not a fib at all, according to The Ballad of John and Yoko, put out by the editors of Rolling Stone. Apparently, Lennon had hundreds of hours of taped programmes which he would listen to whenever he was at home in New York and bored with television or whatever. Among his favourite programmes was "The Shadow". I knew you'd want to know.

Until next we meet, very best wishes for 1983. May it be your best year ever.

John Pellatt

IN MEMORIAM

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE DECEMBER 5, 1982

John Stanley, was radio personality, actor — at 79

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — John W. Stanley was a radio announcer, writer, commentator and actor in Boston in the early 1930s where he broke in after launching his career on Providence station WJAR.

Mr. Stanley died in the Community Hospital here Thursday after a long battle with emphysema and other complications. He was 79.

His son, John Stanley of Riverside said in a telephone interview, "His was a day in radio when they did it all."

Mr. Stanley not only was a commentator for the old Yankee Network News Service over WNAC in Boston, but also was announcer, scriptwriter and special events commentator. He also conducted a 15-minute weekly song recital in which the daughter of the station manager played the piano while Mr. Stanley spoke into a cloth-covered microphone to modulate his voice.

It was also from WNAC that Mr. Stanley did a coast to coast program, "Tonight's World News," in which he also was commentator, writer and newscaster, his son said.

He also did for both WNAC and Mutual Broadcasting System a program called "What's Your Idea?"

with co-host Imogene Wolcott. In 1941, over WNAC, he was among the first to interview the Boston Red Sox sensation, Ted Williams. Other people he interviewed included Pat O'Brien, Helen Morgan (the torch singer) and Dorothy Lamour. He liked to remind friends and family of his introductions on the air, and the political announcements of the late James Michael Curley, former mayor of Boston and governor of Massachusetts.

During World War II, Mr. Stanley wrote, produced and conducted 26 Army and Navy E Award broadcasts, a USO production and 21 Red Cross and US Bond Programs.

Mr. Stanley, who had lived in Cambridge and Newton Highlands, both in Massachusetts, moved to Rye, N.Y., in 1944 and concentrated on dramatic radio. In 1948 and 1949, he took over from Basil Rathbone the title role in Sherlock Holmes on the Mutual Broadcasting System from Station WOR in New York City. While in Cambridge he was in the old Cambridge Dramatic Club.

He also played opposite Mr. Rathbone as Sergeant Abernathy in the Mutual network's Scotland Yard show in which Mr. Rath-

bone starred as Chief Inspector Burke.

Mr. Stanley had many other roles in hundreds of programs, including Calvacade of America, and CBS' Studio One, as well as dozens of soaps operas. He played the character of Jeff Brady on "The Romance of Helen Trent," another CBS program.

He also played on Broadway as the defense attorney in the original production of "Lost in the Stars."

He was in many early television productions, ranging from Captain Midnight on the old Dumont Network, to a stint with Jackie Gleason in in early 1950s. On TV, he again played dozens of soaps. His last role was in "Stella Dallas" in 1955.

When he retired from broadcasting in 1956, he became a fund-raiser for for schools, hospitals and churches.

He moved to Florida after retiring at 70, and lived in a nursing home near his son here for the last two months.

Born in London, he was graduated from the Malvern School in Worcestershire, England, and studied for a year at the Sorbonne in Paris. He came to the United States in the late 1920s.

B4 Saturday, December 11, 1982

THE WASHINGTON POST

Freeman Gosden, Radio Actor In 'Amos 'n Andy' Show, Dies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Freeman Gosden, 83, who created the role of Amos on radio's long-running "Amos 'n Andy" comedy show and played the part for 32 years, died of cardiac arrest Dec. 10 at the UCLA Medical Center.

Mr. Gosden and Charles Correll, both of whom were white, portrayed

the title characters on the program, which was set in Harlem. It was based on the activities of George Stevens, a scheming character who was always looking for a way to make a fast buck.

Amos was a cab driver who narrated the episodes, while Andy was a

gullible member of the Mystic Knights of the Sea Lodge who was continually duped by Stevens.

Mr. Gosden played not only Amos in the radio version, but Kingfish, Lightnin', Brother Crawford, Flukey Harris and Frederick Montgomery Gwindell.

Mr. Gosden and Mr. Correll, who died in 1972, got their start performing in minstrel shows in the South and joined forces in Durham, N.C., in 1919. The next year, they did their first broadcast from New Orleans.

(cont. next page)

(cont. from pg. 9)

In 1926, they began the "Sam 'n Henry" series, gaining prominence over WGN radio in Chicago. The country first heard "Amos 'n Andy" in 1927 over radio station WMAQ in Chicago and it later was broadcast nationally over the NBC radio network.

"Amos 'n Andy" went off the air in November 1960.

"They just couldn't afford our show anymore," Mr. Gosden said a few months later. "We were the last of the big name shows to go."

"People have asked us if we don't miss the glamour of it. We never had the glamour. We worked the same as if we worked for a steel company. We went to the studio on schedule, did our work and left. We were the only stars who weren't recognized."

Mr. Gosden and Mr. Correll starred in black face in two films, "Check and Double Check" and "The Big Broadcast of 1936." But they declined to act in the CBS television version of "Amos 'n Andy."

ALBANY, N.Y. KNICKERBOCKER NEWS — JULY 19, 1982

Emery; children's broadcast pioneer

The Associated Press
BOSTON — Clair Robert Emery, who made his name synonymous with children's broadcasting for half a century, has died at the age of 85.

Emery died Sunday at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, where he had reportedly been treated for a stroke.

Generations of young television and radio listeners knew the Abington, Mass., native as Big Brother Bob Emery, with his theme song, "The Grass is Always Greener in the Other Fellow's Yard."

Emery pioneered what is credited as the first children's radio broadcast on Jan. 7, 1921, over WGI, the American Radio and

Research Corp. station in Medford. Audiences once described as the world's largest juvenile audience later heard those shows over WEEI radio and WBZ-TV in Boston.

NBC in New York sent Emery's Big Brother Club coast to coast in 1928. He joined WNAC in 1930, and with his growing popularity came two more radio shows broadcast from New York in 1932. One of those was "Rainbow House" on WNEW, which he took to WOR in 1933 for a 13-year run.

He then worked for WRGB in Schenectady from 1945 to 1947.

Emery returned to New England in 1952 as a host on a WBZ-TV show, and retired from broadcasting in 1968.

DETROIT FREE PRESS

AUGUST 5, 1982

Harry W. Marble, 77, a former broadcast reporter who became known to millions during World War II as the voice of CBS Radio's "News of the World." He worked for CBS News in New York until 1955, then returned to his native Maine to work for WGAN radio and television stations in Portland. Died in Newcastle, Maine.

BROADCASTING MAGAZINE
Nov 8, 1982

Waverly Lewis Root, 79, journalist, author and co-founder with H.V. Kaltenborn and others, of Long-defunct Association of Radio News Analysts, died of pulmonary edema Oct. 30 at his home in Paris. Survivors include his wife, Colette, and daughter.

NEW YORK TIMES
JULY 29, 1982

Dan Seymour, Ex-Announcer

Dan Seymour, who served as president and later chairman of the board of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency in the 1960's and early 70's, died Tuesday night of a heart attack in his apartment in Manhattan. He was 68 years old.

Mr. Seymour retired from J. Walter Thompson eight years ago. At his death, he was serving as a director of several companies, including American Express.

Mr. Seymour began a career as a radio announcer in Boston in 1935 after graduating from Amherst College. A year later he joined the Columbia Broadcasting System in New York and, with his deep, mellow voice, went on to serve as announcer and master of such radio staples as "Duffy's Tavern," "The Aldrich Family," "The Benny Goodman Show" and the "Camel Caravan Swing School."

Mr. Seymour was the announcer who, in Orson Welles's famous 1938 radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds," terrified listeners with realistic bulletins on Martian invaders.

He was also the announcer for the human-interest radio and television program "We the People" and, through this show, became well known across the country.

12/24/82

THE WASHINGTON POST

Actor Jack Webb Dies at 62

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jack Webb, 62, the stone-faced Sgt. Joe Friday of television's "Dragnet" series, died at his home here Wednesday of an apparent heart attack.

Mr. Webb was head of the Mark VII Ltd. production company that made such television shows as "Emergency!" and "Adam-12." The "Dragnet" series that first made him famous was based on Los Angeles Police Department files.

He began the show on radio in 1949, and it moved to NBC television in 1951 with Mr. Webb as producer and director as well as star. The show ran until 1959, and again from 1967 to 1970.

Mr. Webb was born in Santa Monica, Calif. He was a B26 bomber pilot in the Army Air Forces in World War II. He began his career as a radio announcer in San Francisco in 1945. He played the title role of "Pat Novak for Hire" on a San Francisco radio station and then starred in the radio show, "Johnny Madero—Pier 23."

Mr. Webb appeared in more than a dozen movies, including "Sunset Boulevard" and "The Men" in 1950, "The Halls of Montezuma" in 1951, and "The D.I." in 1957.



Mr. Webb's first marriage was to actress-singer Julie London, who later starred in "Emergency!" The couple had two daughters, Stacy and Lisa. He later married and divorced both Dorothy Towne and Jackie Loughery, who was Miss USA of 1952.

Survivors include his fourth wife, Opal, who was with him when he died.



DETROIT FREE PRESS 10/14/82

Barton McLendon, 82, a pioneer in the movie theater and radio station businesses. He owned the Liberty Broadcasting System, which provided recreated sports broadcasts to 458 radio stations across the country. Died in Dallas.



DON ASTON: TREASURER'S REPORT

January 2, 1983

This my second annual treasurer's report for the NARA. I am pleased to say that things are in good shape this year and are looking up. Our membership is growing and the 10th Anniversary of The North American Radio Archives has the promise of being the best year yet.

The NARA derives its income from three sources. The first is membership, then library fees, and the third is donations. Our income for 1982 was as follows:

Ending Balance from 1981 ----	\$ 251.04
Membership -----	\$ 3235.00
Donations -----	\$ 130.00
Reel to Reel Library -----	\$ 999.01
Cassette Library -----	\$ 98.00

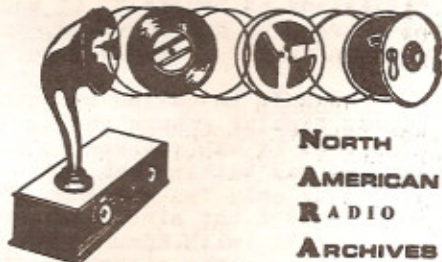
Ending Balance for 1982 is
\$1475.67

Total income for 1982 ----- \$ 4713.05

NARA expenses incurred for 1982 are as follows:

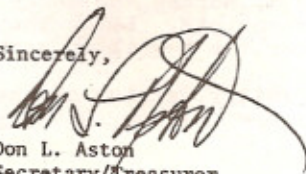
Printing -----	\$ 886.59
Postage and Shipping -----	\$ 821.17
Tape and supplies -----	\$1160.00
Bank Charges -----	\$ 62.17
Miscellaneous -----	\$ 307.45

Total expenses for 1982----\$3237.38



The NARA is growing and the second 10 years has all the promise of being better than the first 10 years. I hope to everybody at the convention in November at Los Angeles. Look for more details on this event in the Spring 1983 Issue of NARA NEWS.

Sincerely,


Don L. Aston
Secretary/Treasurer

THE CHANDU FEW PEOPLE KNOW

BY
SIDNEY J. EDGINGTON

Most people are familiar with most of the juvenile radio adventure series, including Jack Armstrong, Little Orphan Annie, and Captain Midnight. They are less familiar with Chandu, the Magician, a show that ran on radio from 1932-36 and 1948-49. Unlike I Love A Mystery, Chandu has not developed a cult following among collectors today. Upon writing to collectors about that series, I get answers such as the following: "Unfortunately I have no copies of Chandu programs at all. I have not been interested in that series to date."

Dunning bemoans the fact that ILAM's "greatest" adventure, "Stairway to the Sun", has not survived. At the time I liked its sequel, "The Hermit of San Felipe Atabapo", better (this one survived in an incomplete form from a very bad wire recording). I also preferred "Temple of Vampires" (half of which has survived) and "Fear That Creeps Like A Cat" (only a few episodes have survived unfortunately.) However one can read the scripts of "Stairway" obtained from SPERDVAC's library and that is the next best thing to hearing it. Incidentally, the "Stairway" reappears in another Morse adventure, "Land of the Living Dead", available from SPERDVAC. Another superb adventure was the "Pirate Loot of the Island of Skulls." It would appear that the majority of this early 1940s version has survived, but unfortunately it is scattered piecemeal among a number of collectors.

Chandu is called by Dunning "an important piece of juvenile radio." It was popular enough in the 30s to spawn both a movie and a serial. However when it was revived on radio in the late 40s, even though the production was better than the original, the latter was not as popular and it lasted only two seasons. Dunning claims the original series ran from 1932 to 1936 but since the movie, Chandu the Magician, was released by Fox in 1932 (with Edmund Lowe as Chandu and Bela Lugosi as the villain, Roxor) this means either Dunning's date is wrong--or the radio play began in early 1932 and the movie was released in late 1932.

In the original radio serial Frank "Chandu" Chandler was played by Gayne Whitman, Dorothy Regent by Margaret MacDonald, Bob Regent by Bob Bixby, and Betty Regent by Betty Webb.

Raymond R. Morgan and Harry A. Earnshaw created the show and the latter wrote the scripts. Later they were written by Vera Oldham who was also responsible for the rewritten scripts of the 1948-9 series.

In the latter version of the radio serial Frank "Chandu" Chandler was played by Tom Collins, Dorothy by Irene Tedrow, Bob by Lee Millar, and Betty by Joy Terry.

Most collectors today that have Chandu are familiar with the late version that ran from 1948-9 because 68 of the 15 minute episodes of 1948 and 12 of the half an hour episodes of 1949 are available from the SPERDVAC libraries so I will not give details on them. But they are not as familiar with the series that ran from 1932-6.

The 1948 series does not explain what Robert Regent's secret was, but the Fox film has it as a "death ray" which has been popular in fiction since H.G. Wells' "heat ray" in his War of the Worlds. But it would appear that the idea is a lot older than Wells. According to an Italian production on Leonardo Da Vinci which played on P.B.S. a few years ago, he thought of using lenses to magnify the sun's rays onto ships, etc. to set them on fire.

Dunning claims that the 32 versions of the 1948 adventure called by some "The Search for Robert Regent" occupied 68 episodes like the later version, but from a number of episodes of the '30's that survived (see bibliography below) it must have actually covered a hundred or more episodes and contained a number of incidents not mentioned in the later version.

For example, the later 30's episodes indicate that an American gangster sent by Roxor tries to kill Chandu in India. Presumably he is the man with a knife who swims to the houseboat where Chandler is talking to the Yogi, a variation of the first episode of 1948. This is palmed off by some collectors who don't know better as the first episode of 1932. (It is unlikely that such has survived, because the series started on KHJ, a local station in Los Angeles, and only later when it was taken up by the Don Lee network, were a number of transcriptions made. By that time the Don Lee network had merged with the Mutual network and Chandu was sold to some stations independently.)



Other early episodes palmed off as being from 1932 turn out actually to be episodes of the 1948 series. One of these episodes has Betty and Bob trapped in a native hut with a bomb that is about to go off. Finally some Arabs lead them to a tunnel under Nadji's and lose them there (as they are also lost later in the catacombs under Malta.)

At least seven hours or more of scattered 15 minute episodes from presumably early 1933 and late 1932 have survived (see bibliography below.) They tell what happened after the adventure of the "Search:"

The adventures range from Paris to the mythical kingdom of Montabania (?) where there is the usual plot to overthrow the king which is naturally foiled by Chandu. Back to Paris again and then to the jungle where Dorothy is going to be killed and then to Cairo where the villains Dr. Shaw and Roxor (who did not die in the well) supposedly perish in a house fire. Finally to Algeria and the Foreign Legion and the usual native uprising.

The villains Roxor and Aranba (?) "The Spider" reappear as well as new enemies such as Dr. Shaw and Dimitri (who also appear in the 1949 half hour series.)

One episode (or more) has survived from Chandu's "greatest" adventure where he fights the wizards of Lemuria. In it the villain of the movie serial "Vitrax" shows Dorothy, Betty and Bob a magic book. As they look, the pictures in the book come to life and they experience the destruction of Lemuria. (I was unable to pry a copy out of H.T. who played it.)

In late 1933 or early 1934 the adventure was turned into the principal serial "The Return of Chandu the Magician" which was released in 1934. However, incidents at the end of the 1948 version of "Search" (such as finding an old picture that resembled Nadji as well as her absence at the reunion party) suggests that it might have occurred right after the "Search" adventure. This would mean late 1932, but the episodes mentioned above indicates it did not appear then. The release of the serial in 1936 indicates that the adventure took place late in 1933 or early 1934, as noted above.

After the adventure was made into a serial it was later made into a movie called Chandu and the Magic Isle. Some of the chapters of the serial were:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4. The Evil Eye | (borrowed from a manuscript book |
| 5. The Magic Circle | kept by a friend fond of serials |
| 6. Chandu's False Step | who jotted down serial titles and |
| 7. Mysterious Magic | chapters in the early 50's. Ob- |
| 8. The Edge of the Pit | viously he never saw the first |
| 9. The Terror Invisible | three chapters.) |
| 10. The Crushing Rock | |
| 11. The Knife Uplifted | |
| 12. The Knife Descends | |

The serial played in Los Angeles for the last time in early 1950. The movie from the serial played its final chapter in 1957 on Los Angeles television. (As far as I know the Fox movie Chandu has never played in Los Angeles)

I will not give a summary of the serial. Anyone interested can consult the summary in Weiss and Goodgold. (One may note that in the cast they give Dorothy Regent as "Dorothy" but in the summary she is called "Frances.")

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- Buxton, Frank and Owen, Bill. The Big Broadcast 1920-1950. N.Y.: The Viking Press, 1966, 1972.
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manuscript book kept by Leon G. in early 50's of movie serial titles and chapters as well as some of his own creations.

Harmon, Jim and Glut, Donald F. The Great Movie Serials. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1972.

Weiss, Ken and Goodgold. To Be Continued... N.Y.: Crown Pub. Inc.

68 15-minute episodes of Chandu, The Magician. Mutual-Don Lee, 1948, Library of SPERDVAC.

12 half an hour episodes of Chandu, The Magician. probably 1932-3, listed in catalog of a number of collectors.

1 15-minute episode of Chandu, The Magician. probably 1933 or 4, played by H.T.

And 1 15-minute episode of Chandu The Magician, variant of 1st episode of 1948, erroneously listed as 1st episode of 1932 in catalog of a number of collectors.

President's Message



Good grief, it's Winter already and our 10th Anniversary Convention is less than a year away. Stay tuned for more details as they come in about the convention.

Our new tape catalog should be coming out in the not-too-distant future, probably in early February, and it should be on the same format as the printed materials catalog.

The NARA membership is at an all-time high and the treasury is looking better all the time. Please keep up your efforts in our behalf, we can always accomodate more new members.

I would personally like to thank the staff of NARA who have given so much of their time and talent so that we all may have more enjoyment from Old Time Radio. I know they will continue to dedicate themselves to NARA in 1983 as they have in 1982.

Since 1981 our printing has been done by Harold Ham Printing Company of Livermore, California. They've done an excellent job, and at a reasonable cost to us. We plan to continue to use this firm in 1983.

If you have an article or would like to write something for NARA NEWS, we'd like to hear from you. We hope to increase the size of our journal but will need material to do it so send us what you can.

We certainly need help with the convention in November, so anyone in the California area (or nearby) please get in touch with Don Aston, who is ramrodding this event. His address is in the front of the journal. We certainly hope you can donate a few hours to help ol' NARA.

Yours truly until the next issue,

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Steve Ham

"BIG JON" GOERSS

BY STEVE HAM

If you grew up in the 50's you probably remember "No School Today" and "Big Jon and Sparky." You remember Mayor Plumpfront and Ukie Butcher. The career of Jon Arthur Goerss didn't start there.

It was in Beckley, West Virginia in 1939 when Jon Arthur, known then as Uncle Jon, was telling stories to children on the radio.

In 1942 a record was run at the wrong speed while Jon was at WLW in Cincinnati. The odd voice from the record became the inspiration for Sparky. By 1948 Jon had developed the Sparky character which had previously been used as a sort of alter ego to Jon. Sparky the elf became a character for children while Jon Arthur was at WSAI in Cincinnati. Jon had no idea that in only two years he'd take Sparky to the ABC network in New York and have a nationally popular program.

Jon Arthur still holds the record for regularly scheduled programming time in one week. At the beginning of his eight years on the network Jon had two hours on Saturday with "No School Today" and one hour a day during the week. Later the time was cut to a half hour daily and one and a half hours on Saturday with the last half hour of what had been two hours taken up by "Space Patrol." Near the end of the time on ABC the daily program became fifteen minutes in length.

In 1958 Jon Arthur tried TV and the radio show was dropped. Later Jon Arthur, representing the U.S. State Department, went to South Korea as a chief advisor to the Korean state owned radio.

Many of the episodes for Sparky's "adventures" were based on the lives and experiences of Jon's own children, especially his son Lloyd. Jon had five children and nine grandchildren at the time of his death in February of 1982.

During the 50's when Jon made personal appearances and millions of people loved and came to see him, a marionette was used to be Sparky, the funny voice on the radio. The marionette was created by the same folks who made Howdy Doody.

After returning from Korea Jon Arthur took his talents and characters to the Christian oriented Family Radio Network. In Family Radio (twenty years) he used his talents to entertain not only children but entire families with readings and musical programming as well as "No School Today." One of those programs ended with Jon saying what was to become his epitaph... "Goodnight dear heart."



ABC
K
F
B
K

FOR YOUR MORNING MERRIMENT

MON. THRU
FRI.
6 to 9 A.M.

JON
ARTHUR

IT'S THE STYLE
TO DIAL
WSAI

YOUR A·B·C· Station... 1360

THE SMALL FRY
LOVE LISTENING TO
**'NO SCHOOL
TODAY'**
WITH
JON ARTHUR
and SPARKY
WSAI
SATURDAY 9:00A



613·AN
OHIO · 1948.

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BOOK REVIEW

BY AL INKSTER

Dick Osgood. WYXIE WONDERLAND (AN UNAUTHORIZED 50-YEAR DIARY OF WXYZ DETROIT). Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981. ix, 537 pp. \$9.95 paperback; \$19.95 hardback.*

The concluding lines of each LONE RANGER, GREEN HORNET, and CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON program have made the call letters WXYZ the most universally recognized in the world of OTR. WYXIE WONDERLAND (AN UNAUTHORIZED 50-YEAR DIARY OF WXYZ DETROIT) will, therefore, attract the attention of those interested in OTR. The book does offer much information about those three ubiquitous programs; the period of the dramas, however, covered approximately twenty-five years, about half the scope of the book. As an OTR fan I had expected to find the first half of the chronicle to be much more interesting than the last, but the years following the demise of radio's golden age proved to be equally absorbing, offering an evolutionary history of radio and television in which the homo sapiens of broadcasting struggle and adapt to changing times and challenges. In their drive to reach the top and to stay there the ambitious and the greedy ruthlessly used their best attributes: money, charm, power, talent, power, craftiness. Nice guys with talent, like Fran Striker, slaved all of their lives and never made the big money. Not so nice guys, like George W. Trendle, fortified their egos and pocketbooks.

Osgood has paid his dues to write this 50-year history, having spent 36 of them at WXYZ. In his positions as writer, actor, special announcer, newscaster, and studio manager he observed first hand the inside workings of both radio and television. The long association began by chance. Osgood and his wife were passing through Detroit on their way to Chicago, where they hoped to find work. A phone call to the Strikers, acquaintances from prior radio work, brought an invitation to visit, and Fran Striker suggested that Osgood try for a job at WXYZ. On Oct. 13, 1935 Osgood was hired as a continuity writer at \$65 per week. The book's dedication to Fran Striker is quite appropriate since he brought Osgood into the WXYZ fold.

Of Scope and Format

A reader casually leafing through the book might judge that 500 pages is more than enough to cover the subject. Closer examination will, however, probably convince one that the monumental task that Osgood has set for himself deserves even more development. Not really a diary, the work does go intermittently through the years from 1925-1975 and brings into the account hundreds of people who worked at WXYZ and associated organizations such as the American Broadcasting Company. Station owners, general managers, publicity people, traffic

*Copies may be obtained from The Popular Press; Bowling Green, University; Bowling Green, OH 43403.

controllers, producers, program directors, dramatic directors, musical directors, newswriters, dramatic writers, sports writers, continuity writers, engineers, sound effects men, announcers, actors, actresses, musicians, singers, newscasters, sportscasters, broadcast trainees, secretaries, and switchboard operators---all are brought into the 50-year history of WXYZ.

An annotated index allows the reader easily to refer to the pages dealing with events or people that interest him. The index does at times prove quirky, as I learned when upon first examination I looked for the name of a former WXYZ announcer and actor who often enlivens Tucson radio call-in shows with outrageous views humorously expressed. I was disappointed when the Lenhardt was not in the index. Later I was pleasantly surprised to find him entered in the book several times, and he is in character. His direct quoted comment on how he came to be hired at WXYZ is typical: "All the good guys had either gone to war or moved on to fill the vacancies in the big spots ---New York, Chicago, Hollywood. So what's a poor broadcaster to do?" Osgood narrates the reason that Lenhardt was fired from WXYZ: "Norman Lenhardt of the rich and oily laugh ran afoul of his alarm clock that summer 1951. It worked, but he didn't." Delighted with these and other entries, I judged the omission of Lenhardt to be an oversight in the compiling of the index. Further examination, however, revealed that Lenhardt was in the index under Announcers, which provides an alphabetical list. Similar entries are made for Disc Jockeys, Engineers, Newscasters, Sportscasters, and Writers. Many of the personalities under these headings also receive separate entries.

The 75 or so photos in the book give the pleasure of seeing how places and people appeared. One cheap laugh is to run a tape of THE LONE RANGER and, while listening to Tonto, to view the picture of John Todd, the bald, pot-bellied, middle aged Caucasian who played the part. Others such as Brace Beemer as the Lone Ranger, Jim Irwin as Axford on THE GREEN HORNET, and Al Hodge as the original Hornet, looked the parts that they played. Unfortunately there is no index for the picture pages which are interspersed throughout the book.



Through the Years

The story starts before there was a WXYZ. The forerunner WGPH had taken its call letters in 1925 from its owner, George Harrison Phelps. In 1928 the station was sold to oilman George Stoner for \$40,000, who resold it in 1930 for \$250,000 to theatre chain owner John Kunsky, who took into partnership with him his general manager, George W. Trendle, and the chain's stage producer, Howard Pierce. Kunsky left business matters to Trendle, who had a slogan in mind for the radio station and took steps to wrangle away the letters XYZ from the army and navy, to whom they were assigned. On July 1, 1930 the station signed on with the slogan, "WXYZ! The Last Word in Radio!" With Trendle wielding business and artistic control and Sales Manager H. Allen Campbell proving to businessmen that radio could sell their products, WXYZ was even during the depression years a profitable enterprise. Taking Campbell's advice, Trendle early gave up affiliation with CBS, so that time could be sold to local advertisers.

Although the dumping of CBS led to overwork for the station's employees, it also forced the station to develop its own programs, many of which would eventually be broadcast nationally, and to establish the Michigan Network so that WXYZ could attract more advertisers with the lure of a wider potential market.

In 1944 the profitable operation moved from its overcrowded studios at the Macabees Building in downtown Detroit to the Mendelssohn Mansion on the East Side. On April 26, 1946 ABC bought WXYZ radio and television and WOOD in Grand Rapids for \$3,650,000. Shrewd businessmen Trendle and Capbell did keep control of THE LONE RANGER, THE GREEN HORNET, and CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON, even to the extent of being able to feed the shows to non-ABC stations. With the rise of television in the '50's the station went the way of radio nationwide and emphasized music. By 1958 WXYZ adopted a strict top 100 format which stressed playing the records and frowned on talk by DJ's.

The year of '59 saw the station move again, this time to Broadcast House at a former farm northwest of Detroit, where TV and radio had the newest of technical facilities, although radio was given much less space and used some older equipment. Still rated number one and a profitable enterprise, WXYZ also suffered because the President of WXYZ Inc., John Fival, offered radio spots as a free bonus for television advertisers. When in 1963 upstart challenger WKNR knocked WXYZ from its number one position, panic beset the station. For several years management tried unsuccessfully to regain the top spot with its rock 'n' roll format. At great expense successful DJ's from other parts of the country were imported, but then their effectiveness was undermined by management decisions which forbade them to utilize the techniques that had enabled them to succeed elsewhere. Some of them were around when the station in 1967 gave up rock 'n' roll for middle of the road music and perhaps helped to make 1967 one of the most disastrous in the station's history.

During the years of the DJ the old guard, those who during radio's Golden Age had worked on the dramas and other entertainment programs, such as Osgood's SHOW WORLD and RADIO SCHOOLHOUSE, were forced out, until Osgood alone was left. By 1975 when he concludes the story of WXYZ, he too was no longer an employee of the station.

No radio or television station exists only locally, and the WXYZ story often involves people and events of national importance. Some employees of WXYZ such as Mike Wallace, Soupy Sales, John Hodiak, Johnny Desmond, and Soupy Sales went on to national prominence. Other national celebrities---Bob Hope, Robert Preston, Dorothy Lamour, Paul Muni, Jack Benny, Don Ameche, and Susan Hayward among them---were briefly at WXYZ, often as guests on Osgood's SHOW WORLD.

Style of a Radio Writer

As one would expect of a veteran radio writer, Osgood delivers a clearly presented, interesting account. The organization is much like that of a radio documentary: a mixture of narration, dramatic presentation, and direct quotations by interviewees. Transitions are often abrupt as they are on radio programs.

One device he uses continually is to present a verbal sketch of a person, very much as a narrator in a radio drama does. Upon first introduction of Charles Fritz, general manager of WXYZ radio during the '60's and '70's, he says, "Chuck Fritz was tall, had a patrician profile, thin hair, steel-cold blue eyes and a rather hesitant way of talking. He was a Detroiter, devoted to his family, and much admired by those who survived the initial impact of his icy facade." Dick Fimmel, a newswriter, comes into the chronicle via the following description: "Fimmel, shoes shined, suit pressed, shirt clean, tie carefully tied, and hair as neatly combed as a resistant cowlick would permit, sat waiting in the reception room . . . Fimmel laughed. His teeth were small and poorly placed. Otherwise, he was a handsome young man, tall with a strong nose, strong chin, and large, observing blue-green eyes.

Osgood has chosen to write the narrative in omniscient third person viewpoint, which sometimes seems a bit odd when he is writing about himself. Occasionally it gets masochistic as when he writes about his first wife, also a sometime employee at the station: "But she hated WXYZ; she hated Detroit; and most of all she hated her husband." More often it enables him to make wry comments about himself when he speaks about the Osgood of the later years boring everyone with his memories of the past; to the newer members of WXYZ names like George Trendle, James Jewell, Fran Striker, and Brace Beemer meant nothing. At times it may avoid the immodesty that a first person viewpoint would produce when he speaks of his career in passages like the following: "Dick Osgood was riding high. He was featured on the Hi Speed show; he was heard nationally as Proctor, the FBI man on NED JORDAN, and Lix Cough Medicine . . . was sponsoring SHOW WORLD. Osgood even appeared in concert with Andre Kostalanetz and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, reading excerpts from ALICE IN WONDERLAND to Deem Taylor's THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS.



The omniscient viewpoint and the dramatic narrative adds to the readability of the book, but one does question the reliability of the dramatized scenes reported by the omniscient author. When Osgood dramatizes such historic events as George Trendle's first hiring of super salesman H. Allen Campbell, the salary negotiations between actor Earl Graser and Trendle, a disagreement between Trendle and Producer-Director James Jewell over authorship of the early LONE RANGER scripts, a tryout of a LONE RANGER show produced at Chicago's WGN against a telephoned version from WXYZ, conversations about the creations of THE GREEN HORNET and CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON, the first meeting between women's program host and convincing saleswoman Edythe Fern Melrose and H. Allen Campbell, a meeting in which an ABC executive and Campbell discuss the possible sale of WXYZ to ABC, or the firing of Disc Jockey Lee Alan by Station Manager Charles Fritz, one wonders whether the participants said the words they are given. Even more dubious is a long passage in which Osgood takes the reader into the mind of WXYZ Manager James Riddell as he drives home from the golf course on an afternoon in 1954, thinking his evaluations of various personnel at the station.

Osgood does maintain that he has documented his work by consulting with dozens of former WYXIBITES from all over the nation. Not all of

the work is dramatized, and he does make frequent use of direct quotations from his authorities. When there is a disagreement about the way it was, he reports the conflicting versions. For instance, James Jewell remembers the white horse rented for the first personal appearance of the Lone Ranger as having been a steady horse from the circus while Soundman Ted Robertson recalls it as "the darndest old plough house I've ever seen."

Anecdotes from Radio's Past

The book offers many of the kinds of anecdotes that OTR fans find fascinating. One sad story is the fate of a likable fellow named Tokataro Hayashi, the first actor to play the Green Hornet's Kato, during the days before the character's nationality underwent a not so amazing change from Japanese to Filipino with the outbreak of World War II. Hayashi, a Japanese restaurant owner recruited for the part by Director James Jewell, enjoyed his work in radio so much that he did not even bother to pick up his pay checks until Jewell forced them upon him. When he failed to show up for a time, another actor filled in until he returned with the explanation that he had gone to Seattle to welcome some girls from Japan, one of whom he had married. To make amends for his truancy, he invited THE GREEN HORNET cast to his restaurant and served them a dinner of many courses. He convinced Al Hodge that he should hire the new Mrs. Hayashi as a maid, explaining that tradition dictated that a Japanese wife should work outside the home. With the coming of World War II Hayashi was threatened with deportation to Japan. He eventually disappeared, perhaps to a concentration camp in Arizona, and nobody at WXYZ heard of him again.

The tale of the first personal appearance of The Lone Ranger attests to the popularity of the character, the communication power of radio, and the animosity of the newspapers toward the new medium. The Detroit Department of Recreation asked James Jewell for a personal appearance of the Ranger at the July 30, 1933 Fifth Annual Children's Circus to be held at Detroit's Belle Isle Park. Earl Graser, the actor playing the part on radio, was judged too short to be the Lone Ranger in public. Brace Beemer, then an announcer at the station, was 6-4, solidly built with a round face and healthy complexion, so Jewell recruited him to ride the white horse. Intended to be a brief fill-in between parts of the circus, the appearance of the Lone Ranger broke up the program as 1200 juvenile performers and 10,000 spectators charged after the horse and rider and mobbed the actor in a way that is usually reserved for pop singers. The story in THE DETROIT FREE PRESS described the event, noting that "He was followed by boys who had read much about lone rangers of the west," and concluding, "Despite the rout that made the final acts impossible, the first part of the circus was a grand success." Nowhere did the newspaper mention WXYZ or radio hero. The PRESS was not about to give publicity to its new rival for advertising dollars.

The story of WXYZ's sound department is also interesting. According to Osgood the sound men at WXYZ (Ted Robertson, Fred Flowerday, Ernie Winstanley, Dewey Cole, Jimmy Fletcher, and Fred Fry) were so good in the '30's that NBC tried to hire them en masse, intending to move them to New York. Two of their most famous creations were Jack Benny's Maxwell, done when Benny did a broadcast from Detroit, and the opening sound of THE GREEN HORNET. For the Maxwell's sound Flowerday and

and Robertson removed two blades from an old electric fan and rewired it into a wash tub. The sound of THE GREEN HORNET was a challenge given the group by the big boss, George W. Trendle, who had once been in a hotel room and heard the buzz of an insect and now wanted that sound for the HORNET. The soundmen tried their tricks with sirens, buzzers, and a jar of bees, but nothing satisfied Trendle. Robertson remembers what Trendle finally accepted: "It ended up---we finally--- on a record turntable there is an arm that comes out and that has the pick-up head with the needle that you drop on the record. Fred and I got a piece of wood with two raised ends and we put a violin string between the two ends and drew it taut. And in the middle of that violin string, we put a little piece of wood that had a hole in it. We threaded the violin string through the hole. Then we put the pick-up head into that and we had a buzzer attached to this thing and we vibrated it . . . we could increase the volume and we made records."

One of the most amusing of the anecdotes is the tale of a prank which Osgood calls the phantom broadcast. During the '30's THE GREEN HORNET was repeated for a Toledo station immediately following the Detroit broadcast. One night the director, Chuck Livingston, learned that the repeat was cancelled because of an address by President Roosevelt. He let a few others in on his scheme for a fine gag; they would not inform some participants of the change, would deliberately mess up the show, and would enjoy watching the expressions on the faces of the performers who thought the show was for real. The uninformed viewed with horror as the jokers made a shambles of the program. Announcer Feldon Farrington broke up in laughter and couldn't go on even when cued in a second time. Another announcer, at the urging of uninformed soundman Ted Robertson, introduced the program and read the copy just fine until it came time to shout the name of the hero; instead of the Hornet's name, he intoned, "The Lo-ohn Ray-ay-ger!" Hodge as the Hornet came in and started on the third page of the script. Director Livingston hung his head and appeared to be sobbing; then he ran to the actors, grabbed their scripts, and mixed up their pages. The uninformed Jim Irwin tried to fill in the ghastly silence by continually saying, "Yash, Mis' Britt. Yash, Britt!" as he frantically leafed through pages, trying to put them in order and dropping half of them on the floor. Robertson finally grabbed Livingston, dragged him into the hall, and slapped his face to bring him out of whatever hysteria he was in. When Livingston tried to explain it was only a joke, Robertson hit him again, still believing that he needed to bring the director back to his senses. Commenting on the incident for Osgood, Robertson says that the uninformed like him could see their much needed incomes "going down the drain" when management fired them all for wrecking THE GREEN HORNET.



Development of Labor Unions

Much about the labor union (at first AFRA, then AFTRA) is included in the history. In the early days when George W. Trendle and H. Allen Campbell, and those of their ilk at other Detroit radio stations, cracked the whip, the employees did indeed need a union to intercede for them. Management ruled with a tight fist and

despotic expectations. Actors might be asked to rehearse from eight o'clock in the morning until early afternoon and to appear in tuxedos and evening dress at an evening performance before a live audience for the pay of \$2.50. A procedure called the clip was also widely in effect; the sponsor was charged a certain amount for a performer and believed that the performer received that sum, but management paid only half to the employee. Those seeking a raise after a program began doing well were intimidated and denigrated. Seeking a raise, Earl Graser confronted Campbell with the facts that THE LONE RANGER was a great success, going coast to coast and requiring three performances to do so, but Campbell countered by reminding Graser of his limitations as an actor and added that they were considering changes in the program: "... maybe we oughta freshen the Ranger a bit. Nobody ever shot the Ranger. It might add interest to have him shot. We could have him in the hospital for two or three shows. We might even have him die and his nephew could take his place---the kid, Dan Reid. Hell! That's what we're after---is the kid audience." Graser settled for a much smaller raise than he had intended.

The Green Hornet, however, not the Lone Ranger, led the way to unionism for Detroit radio performers. Al Hodge, the first actor to play the Hornet, learned while vacationing that the program had a sponsor in Canada. His contract called for him to receive a raise when the program gained a sponsor, and he went to see Campbell when he returned. Campbell let Hodge know that in future contracts, management planned to eliminate such clauses and that they had been too good to performers on sustaining shows by carrying them so long without sponsors but that he'd try to up the ante a bit. Hodge was so angry that he and actress Gwen DeLany started a movement to bring the new broadcasters' union, the American Federation of Radio Artists, into Detroit. Although many performers feared retaliation, the Detroit chapter of AFRA was founded in late 1937 with Hodge as president and DeLany as executive secretary.

Not until February 1, 1940 did AFRA gain a signed contract with a Detroit radio station. WXYZ was the first. Representing the station was Raymond Meurer, a lawyer-musician who had once negotiated with Trendle for the musicians' union and had impressed the station owner to the point that he was hired as lawyer for WXYZ. Meurer often appeared before the local's board meetings to appeal for "flexibility and elasticity in interpretation" and was invariably turned down. Revealing were the kinds of concessions that he wanted on his first request: a 10% discount for WXYZ when signing actors to long term contracts, a cut rate wage for juvenile actors, the continuation of existing contracts at the pre-union rate, and the doubling of actors on both program and commercials without extra pay.

Inevitably the time came when the union had to strike to gain benefits. Osgood uses the June 17 to July 9, 1970 strike account as a means to review his years in broadcasting. He portrays himself as an old man undergoing the monotony of picketing, although he himself will gain nothing from the settlement, so that the sacrifices of performers of the past will not have been in vain and so that the progress of broadcast workers will continue. Thinking of his years in the industry leads him to condemn much about what the business has become: electronic journalism, he says, is smug, egotistical, and

dangerous, offering one-sided (usually to the left) documentaries, reportage of political hot air rather than facts, a multitude of voices instead of story development, chopped up taped segments meant to prejudice the audience, and bad taste. He mourns the loss of the art of radio: "The art had stimulated imagination more intimate than the eyes of a vampire in closeup. No other art could draw one so completely into the scene itself. . . . Artistry today was all on records; creativity went into commercials. . . . Radio was a juke box with news; . . ." He concludes his jeremiad by citing that earlier broadcasters believed radio would wipe the narrowness from the minds of mankind and noting instead what has happened:

On the contrary, today's radio and television seemed to stir up apprehension and hatred among races, nations and generations. They don't build up; they expose and tear down. The end impression is one of destruction rather than creation, of prejudice, pollution and decay, of selfishness and savage violence. Man seems to be plunging into a new Dark Age and the medium that inspired idealistic hope in the mind of Henry B. Joy was doing nothing to stop the plunge, was instead expediting it.

* * *

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from Richard Osgood's WYXIE WONDERLAND

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Radio Without the Horn



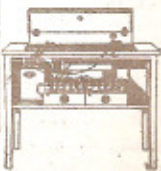
Goodbye to the Old-Fashioned Horn Speaker

A Vastly Better Reproduction With This New Radio Console!



"Our old horn speaker never gave tones like this! An artistic addition to the living room—overriding in its place—it's a joy!"

New Console Has Its Own Perfect Loudspeaker! Ample Space for All the Rest of Your Outfit!



WINDSOR FURNITURE COMPANY 29
1422 Carroll Ave., Chicago.

Please furnish pictures and full details, also name of nearest dealer who has the new Windsor loudspeaker console.

Name _____

Address _____

Advertisement from "RADIO DIGEST" Feb. 21, 1925

HERE is something that enables you to enjoy radio in the home without the clutter of unsightly apparatus that plays havoc in the decorative scheme of your living room! The horn speaker is out of date and out of place in radio for the home. This console with its built-in loudspeaker is scientific and sightly.

A Truly Wonderful Tone



THE

OLD

ADLIBBER!
A COLUMN
OF TRIVIA

By
"Grandpa" Ed Bates

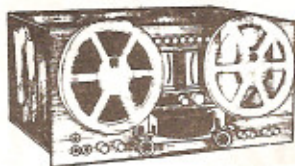
So here we be, back agin and fit ez a fiddle--well, nearly most. My backside is done cured--er so Doctor Quack tells me, but it twas most probly that bowdacious fetch-en-care what I got at my kinfolks place in St. Albans. Anyhoo, I shure want to thank all the NARA folks who kept them there cards en letters acomin whilst Grandpa wuz flat on his backside. With Marella's hep, I done answered most of em and will try to ketch the rest of em in NARA NEWS.

Got a mighty slick present from Frank Bresee in California. Thet fine feller done sent me a 2 reckert set of "OTR Christmas 1982" what feechures abuncha his OTR friands including Rudy Vallee and Curley Bradley. On the reckert Frank sez that Jim Harmon en Curley are tryin to promote a Tom Mix 50th Anniversary series over bout 300 radio stations. Shure hope thet comes to pass. Theres a whole pecka Straight Shooters thet would be powerful pleased to hear thet show agin.

Otta North Carolina last October came some right good news when Prez Ronald Reagan done awarded Kate Smith with are nashuns highest tribute-- the Medal of Freedom. OTR's most favorite female singer, whose sufferin from diabetes and a buncha strokes, kin only git about inna wheelchair. But she shure looked bright ez a new penny in thet ceremony in Raleigh as our Prez sed: "Those simple and deeplu moving words--God Bless America-- have taken on extra meaning because of the way she sang them." And a big Amen to thet, good nabors.

Durin my long flat-ez-a-flapjack spell when my hip wuz doin poorly, ol' Grandpa got to do a lot of listenin to his OTR tapes. Cuzzzin Sarry Beth Flinders loaned me acupla aher favorites cludin a show what changed names en stars over the years...lessee how meny of you kin member Burgess Meredith ina show called "Red Davis?" All rightee, they changed the show title to "Forever Young." Still no takers? Okey-dokey, by the time Mason Adams done got in the cast, it twas called "Pepper Young's Family" and I guess that's the vershun most folks reclect. Mason has bin in radio en TV ever since (he wuz Lou Grants boss on thet recently-axed series) and now he's best knowed as the voice of the Smuckers commercials.

Flap Quagmire, who drives the milk truck in Dink's Holler, likes to collect OTR shows bout detecttives, mostly male-he-man types. but he duz hev one female private-Eye. The show is "Candy Matson--YUkon 2-8209" Ever heerd of it? Me neighter....Jist proves the more you know about OTR, the more you know jist how much you dont know er somethin like thet. Ol' folks like Grandpa try to allus keep one ear open fer stuff the other fellers know...and thet's the way we git so dern smart---ah, jist funnin you....



Reel-To-Reel
LIBRARY



HAL WIDDISON, BOX 15300, N. ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY, FLAGSTAFF, AZ. 86011

Greetings from the cold, snowy, but very beautiful Arizona Northland. Your Reel-To-Reel Library would like to request some assistance from the users of the reel-to-reel collection.

First and foremost, the prices of the tapes are as follows: \$10.00 for a grab box, \$2.00 for a 1/2-track reel (4-6 hours of programming), and \$1.00 for a 1-track reel (2-3 hours of programming).

Second, as the reels are shipped to you and from you to me, the boxes tend to become quite battered. I would appreciate any help you would be willing to provide in strengthening the boxes containing the individual tapes. Use strapping tape rather than masking or scotch tape. If the tape needs to run over the identification number, remove the number first and then reattach it.

Third, the labels with my return address are pre-gummed but with poor sticking power. If not reinforced with tape, the probability is high that the label will fall off before it reaches me. So please tape the label to the box.

Fourth, do not use masking tape to seal the shipping box. The post office hires a person for the express purpose ~~the~~ of breaking any masking tape used in mailing parcels and the tapes are therefore exposed to whatever malevolent forces there are that prey on unprotected tapes.

Fifth, give me at least 5 or 6 alternatives to your order. We have a large number of borrowers and the chance that a specific tape is out is about 50%.

Sixth, if you have a reel that you really enjoy but which is not in the library, we would appreciate having a copy for our library. However, please write before donating it. We usually have a backlog of tapes that are not yet in the catalog and we would prefer to avoid excessive duplication.

Seventh, I have received 15 to 20 reels of CBS Radio Mystery Theater recorded at 1 7/8. Most of these shows are now available on 3/4 half track in the regular holdings of the Archives. Would there be an interest in placing these 1 7/8 speed tapes in two grab boxes of 6 to 10 reels each? These would contain approximately 80 to 120 hours of radio programming, most with quite good sound although there are a few with sound problems.

Eighth, what do you want that is currently not in the library? Write to me specifying the series and dates. If enough interest is expressed and if the particular materials are available, I will do my best to see that they get added to the collection.

Ninth - I have recently received in my personal collection a situation comedy entitled, "Mamma Bloom's Brood." The Blooms (Blumes?) are a Jewish family initially living in New York but ending up in Hollywood. When my wife first started listening to the series, she thought it was silly. But as time went on, she began to enjoy it. Mama Bloom is the all-wise Jewish Mother who tends to use wrong words to express herself. Papa Bloom is a very shrewd business man but cannot manage his two rapidly maturing daughters and can be easily manipulated by his wife. The story line follows the family through the marriages of both daughters, the efforts of the new sons-in-law to help pop update his business (in which they succeed much to the surprise of their father-in-law), the selling of the business, a move to California where Papa Bloom buys the controlling interest in a movie company. (The series seems to take place in the 1920's.) The entire run consists of 75 15-minute episodes. What I want to know is, does anyone know when this series was produced, by whom, and who the actors were, etc.? The shows were taken from E.T.'s and are in excellent sound. I really would appreciate any help in identifying this series.

Tenth - Interest has been expressed in the following series: The Damon Runyon Theater, The Whisperer, Quiet Please, My Little Margie, Charlie Chan, and miscellaneous quiz shows. If you have any of the above in good sound, please let me know.

Eleventh - Many borrowers are interested in contacting other members of NARA who might be interested in trading. Rather than use up valuable space in the NARA News, would someone be interested in typing up a list of interested parties, running off about 50 copies and then sending them to me so that I could send them to anyone requesting them? Assuming that somebody might be interested in providing this service, potential traders should send me a 3 X 5 card listing:

1. Name and address
2. Interests, specific series
3. Holdings, numbers of shows or reels, etc.
4. Limitations such as 7 1/2 or 3 1/4 speed, 1/2 or 3/4 track, reel-to-reel or cassette, etc.)

This would be a service and NARA could not assume any responsibility for the actions of the various individuals whose names appear on the list.

Last - Your reel-to-reel librarian attempts to mail out orders within two or three days of receiving them. Depending on where you live, from the time you mail your request until you receive your order there is apt to be a three to four week interval. Each tape that is borrowed is therefore out of the Archives for at least one month. Please enjoy the reels but return them promptly so that others may also enjoy them.

If you have any suggestions as to how we may improve our services, please let us know.

The End 

Friends of Old Time Radio Convention

MEMORIES
and
COMMENTS



By
DON
ASTON

Again this year I represented the N.A.R.A. at the Annual Friends of Old Time Radio Convention. This event was held at the Holiday Inn-North in Newark, New Jersey on October 22nd and 23rd. The Holiday Inn itself was nice and the accommodations were nice. The location was not too good unless you landed at the Newark Airport and came to the hotel via the hotel bus. Driving to the Holiday Inn-North was frustrating. The directions were clear, but not thorough enough. You are isolated at this Holiday Inn. Skylines of New York in one direction and Newark in the opposite are far away beyond junkyards, cranes, dumps, and skiploaders. It was quiet at night.

I arrived about 3:00 PM on Friday October 22nd. My room reservation was lost, but I soon secured a room. Lots of people greeted me before I made it to the elevators. One of the strangers shaking my hand was Jack French, our illustrious editor. We hit it off immediately. Please note, he does look just like his cartoon. Several people came up to my room that afternoon to discuss OTR, N.A.R.A. and tell me how crazy I was to drive all the way from Los Angeles. I told them that the trip was worth it and offered them a beer. My roommate, Ed Carr from Pennsylvania, arrived and he also drank my beer as did Terry Salomonson from Missouri, John Furman from New York and a bunch of others from lots of other places. I am told that 99 people arrived for the Friday night festivities and more than 19 states would be represented at the convention before it was over.

Friday evening was taken up with a cocktail hour followed by a buffet supper where more friends and acquaintances were greeted. I met Dick Osgood of WXYZ Detroit and bought his book Wyxie Wonderland. Fran Striker Jr. sat with several of us at our dinner table. The program was a discussion about tape recorders and recording techniques led by a representative from the TEAC Corporation. It was most informative. After dinner it was more socializing until the wee hours.

Saturday was the big day. The dealer tables opened up at 9:00 AM with everything from reels and cassettes of OTR to pictures, books, theater posters, and equipment for sale or trade. Jack French and myself traded off manning the N.A.R.A. Recruitment Table. We were very successful in signing up many new members and getting several to renew their membership. N.A.R.A. was very well received at this convention. The dealers room was the central place of activity until it was closed at 3:00 PM.

Several workshops and classes were held during the day. Subjects offered were Radio Logs conducted by Ray Stanich; Meeting New Collectors; Acting and Radio sound effects where the convention-goer had a chance to

act in a radio play; Old Time Radio Books and Publications; Compiling the Ultimate OTR Library; The Lone Ranger Remembered by Fran Striker Jr.; Lux Radio Theater Examined by James Snyder; a Trivia Contest; and a reading by Raymond Edward Johnson who was Raymond the Host of Inner Sanctum Mysteries. I was on the panel of Radio Collecting By Experts. Sitting with me was Ron Barnett the Chairman, Joe Webb, and Terry Salomonson. Our room was filled with people asking us questions such as "what about cross talk and why are some programs in good sound and others not? Why does speed vary so much? What kind of equipment is best?" Maybe these are topics I should write about for the N.A.R.A. News.

A Meet and Mingle session with radio performers and other guests was scheduled for 5:30 PM. This was cocktail time. Among the radio guests attending were Jackson Beck, Ezra Stone, Evie Juster, Arthur Tracy, Bill Lipton, Lee Allman, Ann Loring, Walter Gibson and many others.

Dinner was again another buffet. This one was eaten while wearing a suit and tie and was not as informal as Friday night. 251 people attended this Saturday night affair. It was a very exciting evening. Mel Blanc sent a tape with greetings from all of his characters. A script presentation of the Green Hornet was attempted with all the sound effects. Ezra Stone as Michael Axford the Reporter continually broke up the cast with his many ad libs. Awards were presented to many of the guests and the Allen Rockford Award was made. It was given to Roger Hill for his many contributions to OTR and the establishment of the North American Radio Archives. I received the award for Roger as he was not in attendance. He has since been presented with the plaque by President Ham in San Francisco.

Next year the Friends of Old Time Radio will hold the Convention in Newark at the same Holiday Inn. This convention will be held just one week after the N.A.R.A. 10th Anniversary Celebration in Inglewood (Los Angeles), California. The N.A.R.A. Convention is scheduled for November 3rd and 4th, 1983. I will be at the N.A.R.A. Convention and I sure want to see all of you there. I also hope to return to Newark in 1983. It would be nice to see all of you there also, especially all of those who live on the East Coast. The Friends of Old Time Radio Convention is a very worthwhile event and so far, the biggest in the world of OTR.



EDITOR'S COMMENTS:

I, too, thoroughly enjoyed the convention, especially meeting Don Aston and all the other NARA members who stopped at our table. Perhaps one of the most memorable things about an OTR convention is the opportunity to meet and chat with the announcers, actors, and actresses you've admired all your life. I met so many: Florence Williams of Front Page Farrell, George Ansbro of Young Widder Brown, Ruth Russell of Just Plain Bill, Alice Yourman of several "soaps", Jackson Beck of Superman, and many other wonderful personalities. Some of them, attending their first OTR convention, were both surprised and delighted that so many people remembered them. It was a warm and fascinating experience to personally hear their memories of the Golden Age of Radio. These are no "stuffy stars", but instead just very likeable, very talented people who made their living in radio--in fact, some of them still do.



From The Editor's Desk...



And what a jam-packed issue we have for you this time! This time thanks to all contributors, especially Al Inkster for his fascinating 9 page review of Duck Osgood's book. We've expanded to 32 pages and still didn't have enough room; even your editor has to chop off the bottom of his page to squeeze in another book review.

Of course the biggest news is the presentation of the Allen Rockford Award to Roger W. Hill. As most of you know, this tribute is given annually by the Friends of Old Time Radio at their yearly convention to the person who, in past years, has contributed the most to the advancement and sharing of OTR, as exemplified by the spirit of Allen Rockford. In his acceptance letter to Jay Hickerson (the spark plug of the Friends of OTR Convention), Roger said, "My deepest thanks to all of you, not only for the award but for the extraordinary efforts you put forth to produce such a fine annual convention. You, singular and plural, are doing there what NARA had hoped to do here every year following the tribute dinner for Mr. Morse in 1973. I hope your convention will never see an end. I wish you all the very best of luck and success."



It goes without saying that all of us on the NARA NEWS staff are proud to join our officers and members in wishing Roger all the best at this very presentation. Since the Friends of OTR are primarily an East Coast group and NARA is (or was) a West Coast one, this award symbolically joins these two groups in a bond that stretches across 3000 miles.

Stay tuned for the next great, 10th Anniversary issue of NARA NEWS! All contributors please have your material in by March 30th. We plan to make this as big as issue as we can afford so please help us...articles, drawings, quizzes, reviews, whatever.

Jack French

MINI REVIEW

John W. Stokes. 70 YEARS OF RADIO TUBES AND VALVES: A GUIDE FOR ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS, HISTORIAN, AND COLLECTORS. NY: Vestal Press Ltd., 1982. viii, 247 pp. 8½ x 11 in. hardback. \$21.95.

Those who are into the hardware of OTR will want to obtain a copy of John W. Stokes's 70 YEARS OF RADIO TUBES AND VALVES. Stokes, a New Zealander who has spent over fifty years servicing radios and writing about his trade, traces the development of radio receiving tubes in the Western world from 1904 to the 1960's, when solid state devices began to replace them. He emphasizes 1927 to 1937, the period when radio receivers became almost universal in the homes of the West. To support his readable text, Stokes offers 430 illustrations (pictures, drawings, and early advertisements), the photographs being exceptionally well reproduced. The final of the twenty-seven chapters deals with tube collecting as a hobby, providing advice on the dating of tubes and the displaying of them.

A TIP OF THE ATWATER DIAL TO.....

- John Sims of Phoenix, Arizona for the loan of 14 electrical transcriptions (16 inch discs) of PROUDLY WE HAIL programs, vintage 1947-48
- Ron Jacobs of Tucson, Arizona for making taped copies of 12 PROUDLY WE HAIL programs from electrical transcriptions
- Gene Larson of Salt Lake City, Utah for a packet of newspaper and magazine clippings (a 6-page radio quiz from LIBERTY, a CHICAGO TRIBUNE quiz and call letters interpretation of Chicago stations, and articles about MA PERKINS, JACK ARMSTRONG, THE BREAKFAST CLUB, LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE, THE QUIZ KIDS, CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT, and a piece about the glory days of Chicago radio
- Paul Briens of Pullman, Washington for Edgar Bergen's HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST (B-265)
- Dave Amaraal of Fremont, California for a \$5 donation
- Rosalie Goerss of California for permitting NARA to copy photos and clippings from her Big Jon and Sprarky collection
- Jack French of Fairfax, Virginia for the following books: Charles K. Stumpf's MA PERKINS, LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE, AND HEIGH HO, SILVER! (B-106), Dan Golenpaul's INFORMATION, PLEASE! (B-04), THE STORY OF CHEERIO (B-264), Rudy Vallee's VAGABOND DREAMS COME TRUE (B-265), Tony Wons' TONY'S SCRAPBOOK: 1932-33 EDITION (B-266), and Bruce Smith's THE HISTORY OF LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE (B-267)
- Steve Ham of Fremont, California for RADIO BROADCASTS IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: 1924-1941 (B-268)
- Larry M. Slavens of Fontanelle, Iowa for 51 issues of various OTR publications (AIRWAVES, 6; COLLECTOR'S CORNER, 19; WORLD OF YESTERDAY, 1; GREAT RADIO SHOWS, 2; NARA NEWS, 3; NATIONAL RADIO TRADER, 3; RADIO NOSTALGIA, 3; SPERDVAC MAGAZINE, 1; RADIO IN DEPTH, 16); 5 logs (for Fred Allen, THE SHADOW, ARCH OBOLER, ESCAPE, variety); 6 scripts (THE THIN MAN, 1; JACK BENNY, 1; THE SHADOW, 1; I LOVE A MYSTERY, 3); and various memorabilia (pics, among them scenes from SERGEANT PRESTON OF THE YUKON and THE LONE RANGER, and a CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT Secret Squadron Decoder
- Eddie Blick of Cape Girardeau, Missouri for "SGT. PRESTON" clipping
- Charles Ordowski of Livonia, Michigan for three packages of obits, clippings, and reprints
- Rodney Arisian of Dorchester, Massachusetts for John Stanley obit
- S.G. Cawelti of Clifton, Virginia for helping Don Aston and Jack French staff the NARA display table at Newark OTR Convention
- Victoria Opplemeyer of Leonardsville, Maryland for donations of art work clipping material and reprints