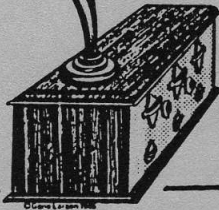


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"FOR THE BEST OF RADIO'S HISTORY"



A JOURNAL OF VINTAGE RADIO

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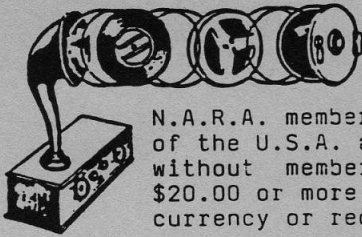
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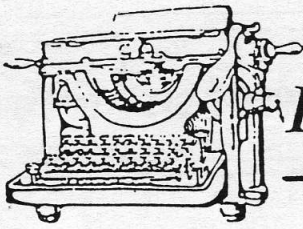
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From The Editor's Desk....

OK, we are now back on schedule with the NARA NEWS, after being so late with the fall edition. I did a little checking, while we were having those problems, and found that I could get that fall issue printed here in Arizona at a substantial cost savings, which is of great importance to NARA, even with the cost of shipping the completed copies off to Janis DeMoss in Kentucky for mailing. And they did it in only two days and had it completely assembled which was something that Janis has had to do in the past by hand. So, I will be handling the printing here in the future, at least until we find something better.

That, however, brings up another problem. I am going to have to move the deadline up two weeks for three of the next four issues. For spring it will remain the same (March 15), but then the next three will have a deadline of June 1, September 1, and December 1. This is because I have made, and paid for, extensive travel reservations. While I had worked those plans around editorial deadlines, I didn't know when I made them that I would need extra time for printing and shipping each copy before leaving for distant shores.

I was very sorry to learn from NARA member Frank Bresee that his GOLDEN DAYS OF RADIO show has been discontinued by Armed Forces Radio after 29 years with that network. The program will, however, remain on the YESTERDAY USA SATELLITE NETWORK. Frank has provided us with several columns for this and future issues of the NARA NEWS. We greatly appreciate Frank's interest and continued participation in NARA.

We are also pleased to be able to announce that Jack French has volunteered to become one of our "regular" columnists. Jack was an early editor of the NARA NEWS and is currently the editor of RADIO RECALL, the every-other-month publication of the Washington; D.C. radio club. He has had several articles in the NARA NEWS over the last year and a half. He is a very careful and thoughtful archivist and his input is very welcome. Jack is also a movie and TV actor having appeared in the movie "Quiz Show," and in the TV series "Unsolved Mysteries," and "Homicide: Life on the Streets."



JIM SNYDER



GEORGE BURNS

"SAY GOODNIGHT GRACIE!"

The first time I saw George Burns perform was forty years ago, in 1938, when George and Gracie were doing their radio show at the new CBS Columbia Square studios in Hollywood. The routine with Gracie went something like this:

- George: Well Gracie, say hello to everybody.
- Gracie: Hello everybody. What will I do now?
- George: Well just make something up.
- Gracie: O.K. I'll make up a riddle; I'll give you three chances, and if you can't guess it, you win.
- George: If I can't guess it I win? Well what happens if I guess it?
- Gracie: Then it's a tie!
- George: It's a tie?
- Gracie: Now what's the difference . . .
- George: Just a minute Gracie—This one is on me. A man goes into a restaurant and he orders spinach, mashed potatoes and cheesecake—How did I know he was a soldier?
- Gracie: Is that the one where the fellow had on a uniform? That's very good George, tell that!

Over the years the Burns and Allen Show usually rated in the top ten, and their success in radio was transferred to television in 1950. Eighteen years on radio and an additional eight years on television is quite a record.

FROM

FRANK BRESEE

Radio historian Frank Bresee is heard on his "GOLDEN DAYS OF RADIO" broadcast in the United States and Canada over the YESTERDAY USA SATELLITE NETWORK. Frank has a long and distinguished career as a radio performer and producer. He has worked with many greats of fantasy films.

Their television show was filmed at the General Service Studios (now Hollywood General Studios) on Las Palmas Street in Hollywood, and George Burns retains the same office he had when the TV show first went on the air 28 years ago.

The George Burns and Gracie Allen TV Show ran for over 200 episodes, from October 1950 to September 1958, and as a matter of fact Gracie's retirement was the only reason the program left its regular network run.

I first met George Burns in 1972 when I was writing and producing the KFI 50th Anniversary program. The Burns and Allen Show was a regular feature on NBC for many years and George reflected with some stories and audio excerpts from the early radio years. George pointed out that, "I'd go to a theatre under one name and get fired after the first show. In a week or two I'd be back at the same flea bag with a different name and in black face. The owner wouldn't know the difference until I started singing. I got the hook a lot. But I'd rather be a flop in a business I love than a success in felt hats. That's how I am. Nobody can hurt my feelings."

George Burns was a guest on my *Golden Days of Radio* program and he reminisced about his friend of 50 years Jack Benny. "I remember the time three of us were at the bar at the Hollywood Brown Derby. There was Edgar Bergen, Jack Benny and myself. When we were finished Jack said, 'I'll take the check.' So the bartender gave him the check and he paid it. On the way out of the

Derby, I said to Jack, "It was really nice of you to ask for the check." Jack said "I *didn't* ask for it, and that's the last time I'll have a drink with a ventriloquist."

We also talked about his latest picture.

Frank: George, you are filming a new picture. What's the title?

George: OH GOD!

Frank: What part do you play?

George: I play God . . . I think it's type casting—they wanted a person around God's age to play the lead.

Frank: Anything you do is alright with me. I thought your performance in "The Sunshine Boys" was outstanding.

George: Frank, I can honestly say that making "The Sunshine Boys" was one of the high points in my life. Of course the highest of all was the night I walked onto the stage of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and was presented the Academy Award for the Best Supporting Actor of the year. At a time when most people are ending their careers, there I stood, an 80-year-old man, just beginning a new one. You know Frank, I think I'm gonna stay in Showbusiness.

Frank: God bless you George. I would love another 80 years of your humor.

Believe it or not

by

JACK FRENCH



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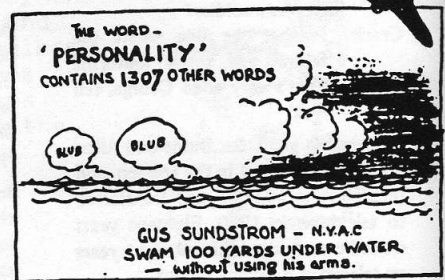
One of OTR's most curious oddities was a network series based upon a popular daily cartoon and the self-made man who created it. Much of what Robert L. Ripley told the public about himself was pure invention. He claimed various dates of birth, 1891, 1892, and finally settled on 1893, which appears on his tombstone. Actually he was born in December 1890, in Santa Rosa, California. His name was not Robert L. Ripley—it was Leroy Ripley. He started signing his cartoons "Bob" or "Robert" in 1913 while he was sports cartoonist for the NEW YORK GLOBE; management insisted that "Leroy" was not athletic enough. Ripley referred to his excellent education but in real life he was a high school drop-out. He usually passed himself off as a confirmed bachelor, conveniently forgetting his one brief marriage to beauty queen Beatrice Roberts. Ripley boasted of the two hundred countries he'd visited but among his doubtful entries were: Garden of Eden, Channel Islands, Sicily, Tangier, and Sark. Finally, he implied that only he drew his daily cartoon, but he used several artists (including a 12 year old Charles Schulz, later of "Peanuts" fame) to assist him on this syndicated strip.

But for all his mis-information about himself, he tried to be scrupulously accurate in all the curiosities that appeared in his strip. "Rip," as he liked to be called, insisted on written proof for every item. But for most of his world-wide items, the "proof" was in a foreign language, and unless you could read 14 languages, as Ripley's ace researcher, Norbert Pealroth, did—you had to accept Rip's claims.

He is certainly the only man in history to begin his upward career as a combination baseball-pitcher-and-sports-cartoonist, who would later become a nationally syndicated writer and artist, world traveler, lecturer, best-selling author, radio performer, and millionaire whose estate would oversee a chain of museums and a syndicated TV series.

Ripley was an unlikely candidate for success in any endeavor. This shy, stuttering, buck-toothed fellow wore such outlandish clothing that his friend, "Bugs" Baer, described Ripley's attire as resembling "a paint factory that got hit by lightning." But he achieved fame and prosperity beyond any logical expectation. His "Believe It Or Not" syndication was carried by over three hundred newspapers in thirty-three countries with an estimated readership of 80 million. Ripley's books, mostly reprints of data that appeared in his cartoons, were best-sellers. He lectured to large audiences throughout the English-speaking world, appeared in over two dozen short films, and was the star of his own radio show from 1930 to 1948. Ripley literally made, and spent, millions. However his physical condition, assailed by drinking binges and small strokes, deteriorated as he entered his fifties. In 1949, shortly after beginning his weekly TV show, he died of a heart attack. But even his final resting place acknowledged his love of oddities; he is buried in Santa Rosa, California in the Odd Fellows Cemetary.

The
LAUGHING JACKASS
IS A BIRD



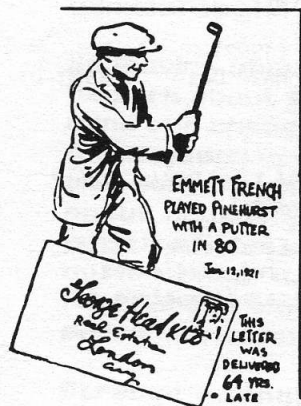
So how did this humble teenaged boy, making \$8 a week in 1909 as a sports artist for the SAN FRANCISCO BULLETIN, parlay his skills into earnings of over a half-million a year? One turning point occurred in 1918, when as an artist for the NEW YORK GLOBE, he was at a loss to fill his deadline for his allotted space so he just grabbed a few unusual items about sports and drew pictures of the winner of a backward race, a broadjump on ice, etc. The readership response was so favorable that the GLOBE had him repeat it on a weekly basis. Later Ripley would claim that he had christened the strip "Believe It Or Not" but subsequent research reflects that it was actually titled "Champs and Chumps" for the first year. The strip was a so-so success, and when the GLOBE folded in 1923, "Believe It Or Not" and Ripley were picked up by the NEW YORK EVENING NEWS.

For the next five years, Rip continued to draw "Believe It Or Not" which had since been expanded to all sorts of oddities, not just sporting ones. During that period, he also wrote three books (on handball, travel, and boxing) but their sales were quite modest. However in 1929, Simon and Schuster published his fourth book, "Believe It Or Not" and lightning finally struck! Although the book was merely a collection of the unusual facts, descriptions, and puzzles that had previously appeared in his cartoons, the volume was a runaway best-seller.

Certainly part of the successful launching of this book was due to the tremendous publicity generated by Ripley's item a few months earlier which claimed that Charles Lindberg was the 67th man to make a non-stop flight over the Atlantic. Nearly 175,000 irate letters and telegrams poured into Ripley's office in defense of America's aviator hero. But Ripley prevailed. Unknown to most of the world, a two man British airplane made the Atlantic crossing in 1919, and that same year, an English dirigible flew it with a crew of 31 men. In 1924 a German dirigible repeated the Atlantic flight with its crew of 33.

The tremendous success of the 1929 book prompted William Randolph Hearst to sign Ripley for his syndicated King Features which paid Rip a handsome \$100,000 a year. From that point, Ripley's fortunes escalated. Warner Brothers paid him \$350,000 to make a series of short film features. And in April 1930, under the sponsorship of Colonial Beacon Oil Company, "Believe It Or Not" came to network radio.

This radio series would last until 1948, although it had several different names (Esso Hour, Bakers Broadcast, and Romance, Rhythm and Ripley) and various formats. The show, at different times, was on NBC, CBS, and Mutual and was either 15 or 30 minutes in length. Approximately 25 transcriptions have survived to the present day and are in trading currency among OTR collectors. So, by listening to several shows spanning the years, one can hear Ripley slowly improve his microphone technique. In the early 30s, Rip was so nervous he frequently dropped his script or tripped over the microphone stand, and he tended to stutter and lose his place on the page. Doug Storer, who produced the program in those years, recalled how Ripley would have to down a belt of gin before he could face the live audience at his microphone.



But, by the 40s, Rip had lost most of his nervousness and even his stutter was disappearing. Of course the show changed over the years, with fewer items of the truly-weird and more emphasis on guests with real entertainment values. For example, a typical show in the mid-30s had an interview with a hapless



survivor rendered nearly blind and deaf by a dynamite explosion, followed by a guest who spoke total gibberish which he called Backward-English. Contrast that with a program from 1940 when half the show was devoted to a comedy routine by F. Chase Taylor, whose "Believe It Or Not" was the fact that he became Col. Stoopnagle by accident when he and Budd Hulick had to ad-lib for a half-hour when a network line failed in Buffalo.

For all its folksy, but strange, content and its unlikely host, "Believe It Or Not" was a popular radio series for almost 20 years. It had no trouble attracting sponsors and over two decades they included: Royal Crown Cola, United Bakers of America, General Foods, and Pall Mall cigarettes.

To back up a moment, we can explore another phase of Ripley's success. In 1933 Rip got into the museum business by mounting a large collection of his usual items into an exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair which he termed an "Odditorium." It was basically a collection of freaks: one man swallowed and regurgitated a live mouse, another man lifted weights attached to his eyelids, while a third one pounded nails into his nose. The money flowing into the ticket booth convinced Rip to open an odditorium in other cities. Long after Ripley's death, the museums continue to pack 'em in; today there are 21 "odditoriums" located throughout the U.S., including ones in Hollywood, Key West, and Grand Prairie, Texas. There are overseas museums too, with one to soon open in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Ripley's radio program ended in 1948, chiefly because he had moved the show to the television studio, however that TV series ended in 1949 with his death. But television is still mining Ripley gold today; there is a syndicated "Believe It Or Not" program you can catch on cable TV. It starts with an old video clip of Ripley proclaiming the title and then switches to host Jack Palance, assisted by his daughter, Holly Palance.

This syndicated series is sub-titled "The strange, the bizarre, the unexpected" and is filled with filmed oddities from around the world. Various episodes have included: mating practices of Peruvian beetles, a re-enactment of the Hatfield/McCoy feud, the birth of a kangaroo, and a Filipino who plays music on wet leaves. Rip's old drawings are not neglected and two or three of them appear in each one-hour program, with Palance off-camera intoning the text.

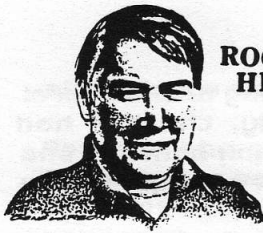
It's a safe bet that Ripley and his "Believe It Or Not" will always be with us in some form. Long after his OTR popularity has disappeared, he lives on, in his museums and his television cable shows.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article first appeared in the August 1995 issue of RADIO RECALL, the bimonthly publication of the "Metro Washington Old Time Radio Club," and is reprinted here with the permission of the author and editor.

Jack French, whose columns frequently appear in these pages, is a former editor of the NARA NEWS. Jack is currently editor of RADIO RECALL. Information on this fine club can be obtained by sending a stamped-self-addressed envelope to: MWOTRC, P.O. Box 2533, Fairfax, Virginia 22031.



ROGER
HILL

THE OLD CURMUDGEON

The Old Curmudgeon is back (at editor Jim Snyder's insistence!) Now that my wife and I have the store (Nothing's New in Bayhill Shopping Center; San Bruno, CA 94066) open, we're very short on any free time. Although it is closed on Sundays, we do usually go in to try and get caught up on the many tasks which seem never to get finished. While this column may not get to you until the 20th anniversary of FOTR in Newark has become just a faded memory, I would like to share with those who haven't had a chance to attend these conventions some of my impressions. It was my first FOTR in Newark and while I'm glad I went for the 20th anniversary, I doubt that I'll get back for another gathering.

First of all, I hate going anywhere without Lourdes. She has attended both of the SPERDVAC conventions I've gone to and has had so much fun (as well as kept me company) that I really kind of dreaded being without her in Newark. Secondly, as we just opened our business on Sept. 30th, my thoughts were continually on it and concerned for her ability to handle things alone. Thirdly, I hate to fly. No fear of flying but I hate the way you have to be searched, checked for I.D. and generally subjected to very unpleasant experiences. Anyone over 50 may remember when flying was much more fun. No checks to undergo and just walk on out across the tarmac to a propeller plane, climb aboard the steps and settle in to a roomier seat than most of us can imagine. No in class movie, or repetitious talk about oxygen masks and emergency exits. No need to darken the cabin for a video monitor and there seemed to be plenty of reading matter to enjoy between looking out the window at the passing scenery. Well, is my age showing or what!

So leaving about 1 pm on Wednesday, American Airlines got in to Newark about 9:30 pm, just a bit too late for me to make it to the wine and cheese party Jay Hickerson had arranged. An hour wait for the luggage to arrive didn't help matters. The hotel where this convention is held each year is conveniently isolated from just about anything else so you really are quite "trapped" during the length of the event. After arriving at the hotel and finding no coffee shop, it was time to at least grab a sandwich in the restaurant which was still open. Ever have 8 waiters around to serve you when you're the only one in the whole place?

Strange feeling! (and expensive!) The nice part was afterwards

finding John and Larry Gassman in the bar area along with several other SPERDVAC staff/supporters. Fortunately, the bar had Guinness on tap. That and a bit of Jack Daniels took some of the dust off the flight. Being with the Gassman's is always a very pleasant and rewarding experience.

Bright and early on Thursday (about 8 am) I found Jim Snyder (our glorious editor) in the lobby and we proceeded to the so-called buffet breakfast. Hot and cold scrambled eggs, runny bacon, shriveled sausages, and coffee which may have been leftover dishwasher. Not your typical upscale hearty breakfast. Afterwards, I caught my first ever glimpse of Jay Hickerson. My goodness what a thin person! Of course, to me, everyone looks thin! After more than 20 years of corresponding, it was a pleasure to finally shake Jay's hand and meet him face to face. A bit of warning though if you ever experience meeting Jay. He fidgets a lot. Never seems to sit still for long. Always moving about and doing things and overseeing all the many jobs to be done. And he smiles almost continually (when things go well).

Next I met Tom Monroe (a well shined scalp is nothing to be ashamed of Tom!), Barry Hill (formerly of Great Britain and possibly a distant cousinbut not that we'd admit to anyway), Jack Shugg (in a dealer's room), and Jim Stringham. Jack and I have known each other for about 10 years at least and he was responsible for bringing some happiness into the life of a dear friend, Frank Dacey, before Frank passed away. Jim Stringham and I have been corresponding at length for several years now and I've rarely known such a prolific writer or such a knowledgeable person about old radio, lobby cards, westerns, and many of the vintage movies (especially serials). He shares his information gladly!

The dealer's rooms were plentiful and well-stocked with costly (and not so costly) items, ranging from old LPs of radio shows to video tapes, books, thousands of audio cassettes, magazines, and anything and everything that could be sold. Some prices were exorbitant but many others were within reason and some were quite a bargain. Jack Shugg offered some great deals in his room. Ken Mills had many audio cassettes at a good price but the Light's Out I bought weren't such good sound. After returning home, I wrote to him of my displeasure and he very promptly replied and sent a refund check. He's quite an admirable person to stand behind the integrity of what he sells. Jay Hickerson had his supplements and various logs of shows for sale as well as t-shirts, coffee mugs, and numerous books about radio. Gary Yoggy was in

attendance and was also the author of one of the books.

Some of the panels and workshops were more appealing to me than others so I skipped several in order to just rest, have time to talk with friends, call my wife and see how the business was coming along, and even manage to touch base with another good friend, David Marowitz whose wife has the Book-Nook, a fine used bookstore in New York state. David has supplied me with some treasured items for our Nothing's New business. David Siegel and his wife were also at the convention so we got to spend a bit of time together. And someone I hadn't seen or talked to for nearly 20 years and who made it to Newark was Pat McCoy. What a pleasure to see and talk with him. But he's frustrating because he looks so young. Looks like an executive.

A real treat for me was meeting Sara Karloff and Bela Lugosi Jr. As you may know, Sara is behind the effort to get the postal service to adopt 3 paintings for commemorative stamps to honor Bela Sr., Lon Chaney Jr., and Boris (her father). She and Bela Jr. both are wonderfully charming and lovely people. Hope she doesn't object if I mention that she's a very attractive woman. And Bela Jr. is a very handsome fellow. Most impressive people. We have petitions in our store for people to sign; these are then sent to her and she forwards them to the proper people in the postal service to push for the 3 stamps.

It's easy to make mistakes and I certainly made some beauties. After meeting a Jack Palmer on one occasion there, a lady came up to me later and introduced herself as Lora Palmer. My first reaction was, "Oh yes, I met your husband earlier!". Well, it wasn't her husband and I'd completely forgotten about Lora's help with the cassette project for the leprosy colony in Kalaupapa nearly 20 years ago. She donated tapes to the patients there and so Lora, I hope you'll excuse my rusty old brain for not remembering in Newark.

The first night was a table service dinner (the other two nights were buffet) and Jim Snyder and I had the fortune to sit with Gale Storm and her husband as well as Gil Stratton at our table. I only recognized Gil from his sports announcer work and not until he was introduced later as one of the actors in Stalag 17 did it occur to me how much he resembled that young man who looked after William Holden's footlocker of goodies.

Over the next 2 days, there were various panels and talks and such but only a few experiences really stand out in my mind. One

was hearing Sara K. and Bela talk about their dads and how great they were as human beings. Another was meeting and experiencing Raymond Edward Johnson! What a guy! What a guy! His illness slowed him down but he's not out by a long shot. There were good radio show recreations such as "Arsenic and Old Lace" and nice talks and more people to meet but throughout all this time my thoughts were with Lourdes and our new business. Jim Snyder commented that it was obvious I wasn't really enjoying myself. That was true. The previous week I'd been laid low with a very nasty cold that just wouldn't go away. Terrible coughing and breathing problems. It was still hanging on in Newark and that doesn't help one feel too chipper. And, of course, the thought of expenses and a long flight back to San Francisco. Not pleasant thoughts in many ways.

Sunday morning up bright and early to leave Newark and get back to work and to my wife. Packing all of the LPs, books, magazines and such which I couldn't resist buying strained the suitcases to the limit. And sadly, I took back all of the membership cards in Nothing's New that I had brought to Newark. I'd thought surely people would be impressed with Gene Larson's logo and the nice card we offered for \$5 membership and we'd have a dozen or so members to add to our roster. As Bluebottle would say in a Goon Show, "Not a sausage!". So while I'm glad I went once and got to meet many people I wouldn't have met otherwise, I was even happier to be home again.

SPERDVAC had their 21st annual convention two weeks after FOTR's (but in Los Angeles, of course) and we simply couldn't make it to that one. With luck, we will both go to the REPS convention in Seattle in June of 1996 and maybe even to the Lum and Abner one in Arkansas. It's nice to go at least once. So, to you Jay for putting together such an event year after year, thank you. And to the many people I got to meet at least once, I appreciate the chance to talk with you. Consider joining Nothing's New since \$1 of the \$5 membership does go to UCLA Film Restoration Archival work and you will receive listings of what we have as they become available. Sometime next year we expect to do rentals and sales by mail. Call me at (415) 871-6063 or fax to 871-6062.

That's "-30-" for now! (By the way, the movie with that as its title and starring Jack Webb isn't a bad little film to rent and watch). If any of you have items to consign, sell, rent, or donate to us for use in the store, please contact me. Thanks.

Writing for Old Time Radio in the Digital Age

by Bob Burnham

It is with some hesitation that I begin this column for NARA News, having been a constant source of controversy in recent times both in print and on the internet (often unintentionally so). I'm going to go out on a limb AGAIN (like in the stolen article) and say some POSITIVE things about another old friend. If you've followed the comments I have written in the OTR Press over the years, you may know that I don't always hold the popular view. I don't write syrupy articles about old time radio shows. I pretty much say whatever is on my mind. If I don't like a certain show, I'll say why. If something bothers me about the way an OTR organization runs, I'll say that, too, using a diplomatic and logical approach. I write about the tools of collecting radio shows. I comment on why we collect and listen to radio shows, and all the other dozens of issues that go through our minds as we seek out shows, set up trades, fight for good quality and try to improve on what we already have. We are fortunate to have a lot of really good OTR publications (who have occasionally—though rarely—censored what I have to say). That's one of the things I miss about being editor of my own publications — I'm certainly not going to censor myself, although a certain level of sub-conscious restraint IS always in place.

One of the exciting things going on these days in OTR is the rapid growth of the electronic version of Old Time Radio Digest that comes out 7 days a week to those with an internet e-mail address. It has no connection to the printed version of the Digest you are probably familiar with, but a lot of the same people (including myself) contribute regularly, and it's the fastest growing publication in the history of the Hobby. More on that later. The way it works is a computer system at a central location serves as a sort of Editor, so the writers have to edit themselves. Occasionally, there are what boils down to arguments (or "flames"—usually directed at one or two individuals) over certain shows or issues concerning OTR fans. But since it is an electronic publication, these issues are resolved often within a matter of days. For the old time radio Hobby, this is a healthy situation. It provokes thought, sometimes solves problems—before they become problems—and surprisingly, strong friendships may also develop.

Writing regularly as I have done for years for printed publications like Old Time Radio Digest and NARA News allows me to bring information and ideas I have gained to a wide audience. Whether or not someone agrees with what I have to say is immaterial. The fact that I caused someone to think and be motivated enough to write letters to the publication is a sign that I have been at least partially successful in my intentions. I welcome comments, good, bad or indifferent.

As a writer, what I do insist on is common courtesy. Imagine my surprise when two clubs re-printed something I had written OVER A YEAR AGO without my permission and took it completely out of context. I didn't see these kind of antics happening a decade or two ago in OTR, and obviously, it's not going to happen on the Internet publication. What I think is going on is that some of these smaller publications are desperate for content, and will grasp at

whatever printed matter they see floating around. If they wanted a decent article from myself or any other regular writer, I would have gladly written one. . .but they have a smug attitude like they're better than anyone else, and why would they even THINK of sending a courtesy copy of their publication to the person whose writing they are re-printing (stealing)!?

I want to point out that there ARE several clubs I really enjoy dealing with and writing in their publications, who are very generous with sending copies, corresponding, etc. Those clubs and publications know who they are. If there were more hours in the day and there were a couple more of "me" around to hit the word processor, I would be even more active. Those publications where I am particularly active are those which currently motivate me the most. Perhaps INSPIRE would be a better choice of words.

During the past year, a flood of memories returned when I encountered things or people from an earlier period. Most of the people are still alive and well — some active in OTR — some not. As far as the "things," well they are just fragments or souvenirs of an era long past, much the same as the radio tapes we collect.

One of the things I found was an audio cassette letter from Joe Webb recorded just prior to the 1980 Friends of Old Time Radio convention (the first one I ever attended). It was fascinating to hear Joe talk about what was happening in the hobby at that time, and the trials and tribulations of getting the convention organized (Joe was the convention co-chairman at that time). Then, only a few months ago, I found some back issues of Collector's Corner — the OTR magazine Joe and I produced in the 1970's and early 1980's. By coincidence, in his column in one issue, Joe mentioned that after so many years of trading, he and I (and the Collector's Corner staff at that time, Bob Burchett and Dave Warren) would meet for the first time. That meeting almost didn't happen because I was ill and wound up in bed for weeks after the convention. Nonetheless, it was my first introduction to the faces I had known for years, as well as to some of the people behind the other publications.

Joe Webb was an important part of old time radio publishing for many years and a good friend who I thoroughly enjoyed working with on Collector's Corner (and the short-lived publication after that).

What flashes us to the PRESENT about Joe is he was one of this year's (1995) recipients of the Allen Rockford Award at the Friends of Old Time Radio Convention (the 20th Annual convention). Jay Hickerson said in his introduction that in his work on the convention, Joe would sometimes work harder on the convention than he himself (Jay) would. That sounds like Joe. While not active in the hobby for several years, he remains at the top of my list of favorite people to have worked with on OTR projects like hobby publications.

Now, if you want my list of OTR club publications and people who I would rather NOT associated with, you'll be disappointed... disappointed because unlike others, I simply DON'T say nasty, sarcastic remarks in print in a publication like this one! There are no intelligent issues being debated so the matter is forgotten. Just don't get me started on quarter tracked reels or the Lone Ranger! Those are different issues altogether!

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TRANSCRIBED FROM TORONTO

by JOHN PELLATT

THINGS I DISCOVERED ABOUT VINTAGE RADIO IN 1995...

...THAT Vintage Radio can be enjoyed, discussed, argued and shared via the Internet! Congratulations, appreciation and gratitude go to Lou Genco and Bill Pfeiffer for setting up an on line e mail OTR Digest service. What is it? If you have a computer and are set up with a modem and hooked up with an e mail/internet provider you can connect to an often daily electronic digest of OTR related correspondence, information, opinions and questions. In the Summer 1995 issue of this publication it was described how to go about subscribing. About one thousand OTR fans do and it is a fascinating forum for the exchange of arcane trivia and useful advice, all of which makes up this mad passion we all share for vintage radio drama and comedy! In addition to reading or replying to what is "posted" for everyone to read, you can also contact the individuals on the list and e mail directly with them. I've had fascinating chats this way about X MINUS ONE, JACK BENNY, BOB & RAY, FRED ALLEN, etc. etc. The astonishing thing is the speed with which it all happens: it is virtually instantaneous! So there are ongoing "threads" that follow a certain subject or topic and provide an entertaining and informative range of responses. Sometimes it does get a bit silly but even then it has a compelling quality to it. I must say it does not replace a printed publication (although you can print out the on line Digest if you wish) like this one. But I do find it a fun and stimulating supplement to the more traditional forms of communication amongst vintage radio collectors. There are also what they call "web sites" where you can "go" on the internet to find out more about OTR and even listen to sample extracts of OTR shows (if you have the necessary equipment). But do not fear! You do not need to be a technical whiz kid to get set up. Nor is it cost prohibitive. (They ask for an optional voluntary donation.) All you need is a basic

computer, a modem, the necessary software and connection to a provider service to give you access to the internet. (In many communities you can join what is called a "freenet" which is a community non-profit internet provider that only charges a nominal annual membership fee.) For more information send an e mail to **lgenco@crl.com** with the subject **Request otr-faq**. If you'd like to subscribe, send an e mail to **otr-request@airwaves.com** with the subject **SUBSCRIBE**. And welcome to the internet!

...THAT RCI, Radio Canada International, the international shortwave service of the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) which has carried many excellent radio programs to the world including OTR and original dramas and comedies, is to be closed down March 31st, 1996. It would be RCI's 50th anniversary. Canadian federal government cutbacks have slashed the CBC's annual operating budget yet again and the CBC decided it could no longer fund the \$16.5 million a year (CDN) shortwave operation. The closing makes Canada the only member of the G7 Group of Nations without a national shortwave service. On a personal note it is very sad because when I travel abroad I like to get the news from home via SW. Additionally, I know many friends who live abroad who tune in regularly for a slice of Canadian life via RCI. RCI broadcasts in eight languages to more than 126 countries. Additionally, the Canadian Forces Network which broadcasts to Canadian troops stationed in Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti and the Middle East, will also be shutdown. RCI had been operating on a reduced budget since 1991 when its funding was slashed in half. Another victim of short sighted economic downsizing whatever the long term social and cultural cost. And a loss for friends of quality radio everywhere. One less source for radio drama and comedy and OTR, one less window into a world of ever increasing banality and sameness on the airwaves.

...THAT action/ adventure radio drama serials are still alive and well and THRIVING, on the BBC, thanks to the inventiveness and imagination of BBC writer-producer Dirk Maggs. Since 1989 Dirk has dramatized for BBC Radio at least two different serials of SUPERMAN, one of BATMAN and another of SPIDERMAN. These were originally fifteen minute daily dramas to hook younger audiences that listen to Radio One (the BBC's pop and rock channel) and Radio Five (then used for its Youth market). How to get a younger teenage audience hooked on radio drama? "The thing I wanted to do most of all was to get a movie for the ears, a movie without pictures" said Dirk. The result is amazing production value... music, sound

effects, and over all production done on a vastly superior modern scale than ever previously encountered by this humble scribe. As Dirk says, it's like listening to the sound tracks of a modern motion picture. Put on stereo headphones and WHAM! you're in the middle of all the action. Adapted from the classic comic books of the same name with authentic sounding talented actors, Dirk says the whole experience has been very rewarding. Of radio he says, "It's a story telling medium that's greatly under-rated...what I'm asking people to do here is to relearn how to listen. If you approach it with an open mind, I don't think you will be disappointed". Good news for US fans--Bantam Audio Books is the official American distributor for BBC tapes. Ask for SUPERMAN ON TRIAL, SUPERMAN: DOOMSDAY AND BEYOND, BATMAN and SPIDERMAN at your favourite audio tape/talking book outlet. You might win over some new converts to vintage radio! And a Tip of the Atwater Kent to contemporary radio genius Dirk Maggs for making radio drama FUN and EXCITING again and for bringing a whole new generation of fans to the magic of the medium. And he's right. I wasn't disappointed.

...THAT other excellent BBC dramas are now available commercially on cassette tape. This past year I had the pleasure of discovering THE DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS, BOMBER by Len Deighton, and A ROOM WITH A VIEW from BBC Radio. Fans of radio drama will not be let down by any of these outstanding examples of contemporary radio production. (No, I don't get paid by the BBC to say any of this. I'm just a fan!)

...THAT Jay Hickerson's HELLO AGAIN and Dan Haefele's SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM continue to inform, entertain and delight every time they appear on my doorstep.

....THAT I'm out of time and out of space again for another issue of the NARA NEWS. A very happy 1996 to all readers. If you have any items to share or wish to reply, you can contact me on the internet via e mail at jrp@sources.com. Until next issue, goodlistening!

BOOK by Hal Stephenson SHELF

This is a sampling from three books on trademarks. The pictures chosen are related to radio broadcasts such as sponsors and networks. The books display a broader range of trademarks. Each book is represented with one page in this summary.



Trademarks of the 20's and 30's

by Eric Baker and Tyler Blik, 1985, 132 pages. Contents include an introduction and trademarks by category--animal, circles & shapes, typography, ladies & gentlemen, transportation, cowboys & indians, and faces & figures. \$12.95, paperback, ISBN 0-87701-360-8. All three books are published by Chronicle Books, 275 Fifth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; and distributed in Canada by Raincoast Books, 112 E. 3rd Ave., Vancouver BC V5T 1C8. These reproductions are made with the publisher's permission.

1928: Radio Corporation of America, New York City. Maker of broadcast transmitters, quartz crystals, and condenser microphones.

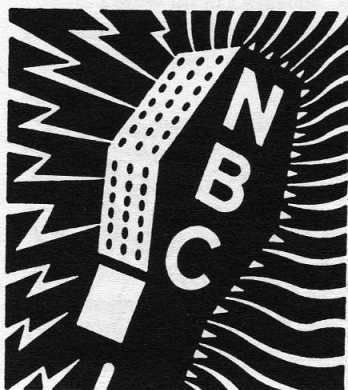
1939: Little Beaver, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio. A character on the Red Ryder program broadcast from 1942-1952.



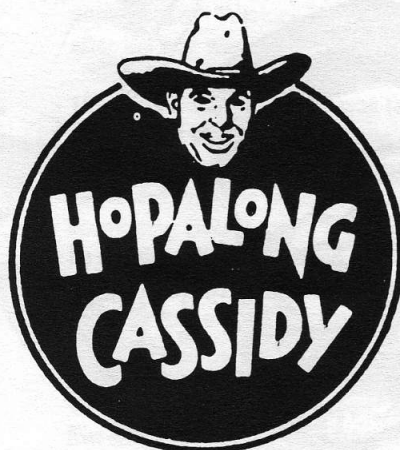
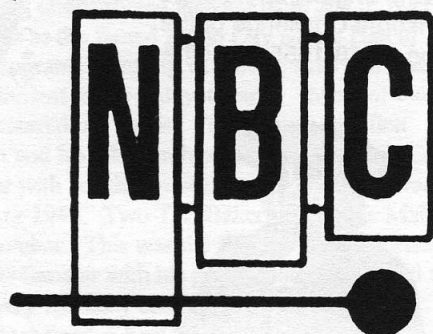
Trademarks of the 40's and 50's

by Eric Baker and Tyler Blik, 1988, 156 pages. Contents include an introduction and trademarks by category--people & figures, "Let's Eat", transportation, foreign, science & industry, animals, circles & shapes, and typography. \$14.95, paperback, ISBN 0-87701-485-X.

1947: National Broadcasting Company, New York City. Radio sound broadcasting.



1954: The NBC xylophone *visually* represented the radio network with a trademark to distinguish it from the NBC television network. Xylophone tones were used for many years before as an *audio signature*. (I wish I had a doorbell that sounded like the NBC xylophone "chimes".)



1950: William Boyd, Children's Clothing Beverly Hills, California.

Hopalong Cassidy was broadcast on radio from 1949 to 1952.

Character Trademarks

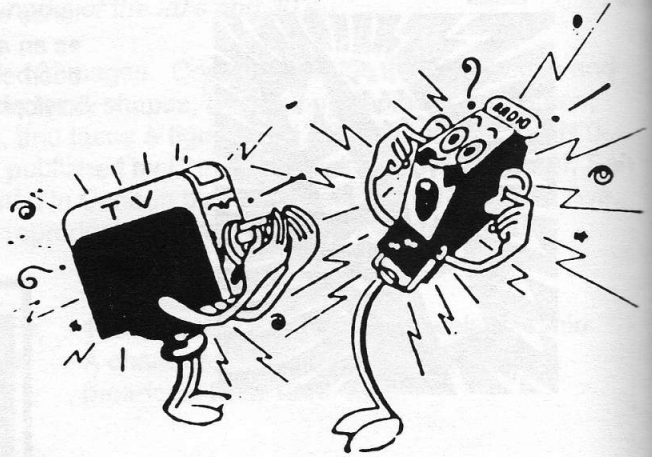
by John Mendenhall, 1990, 130 pages. Contents include an introduction, anthropomorphic (objects given human qualities), animal, female, male, child character marks, and a five-book bibliography. \$14.95, paperback, ISBN 0-87701-752-2.

More than 800 logos are in this book. They vary in style from the classic first Quaker Oats man in 1877 to the contemporary Spuds Mackenzie. Each chapter begins with a synopsis about the attitudes and tastes involved in the trademarks shown. *British Trademarks of the 1920s and 1930s* by John Mendenhall is also published by Chronicle Books.

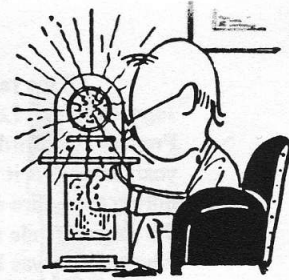
1945: "Call for Philip Morris" cigarettes. "Johnny".

1953: Blooper Enterprises, Miami, Florida.

1877: The Quaker Oats Man, from the original engraving. Sponsored Challenge of the Yukon, 1948-1955 and others.



REFLECTIONS



by Charles Sexton

LIVE RADIO FROM A SMALL TOWN

I grew up in Lafayette, Indiana, a town of some 28,000 during the 1940s. Lafayette, located between Indianapolis and Chicago, is mostly noted as the home of Purdue University. (Purdue is actually located in West Lafayette but we won't quibble about that.)

Live, big name talent was rare in this midwestern village during those days. About the closest we came to a celebrity was an occasional Barn Dance performer from Chicago at the local Armory. But with the advent of WW II, Al Stewart, the director of Purdue's musical programs, came up with an entertainment series he called "Victory Varieties." These programs took place in the Purdue Hall of Music (now called the Edward C. Elliott Hall of Music), a magnificent theatre featuring unobstructed viewing from any of over 6,000 seats in the house, nearly as many seats as the famed Radio City Music Hall in New York. "Varieties" was basically a series of programs featuring vaudeville skits and was notable for finally attracting "name" entertainment to the Lafayette area. Most of the performers were radio based, and initially featured big bands. For instance, the first program in July 1943 starred Don Fernando and his CBS orchestra. Rudy Vallee's Coast Guard Band played the following September with admission obtained by buying a war bond. Radio's Quiz Kids appeared in January 1945. Two Ton Baker, the Music Maker, a Chicago radio personality, appeared in September. This was the first program I attended and I was anxious to hear Two Ton for I was familiar with his program as it preceded the hour of kid's serials I faithfully listened to every weekday starting at 5:00 p.m. The popularity of "Victory Varieties" was such that Purdue kept this title for the shows, even after the war was over. (In fact it wasn't dropped until the early 1960s.)

Big bands continued to dominate the "star" list for "Victory Varieties" until January 1948 when Jerry Colonna was featured, substituting for Jimmy Durante who had to cancel his planned engagement. It was during this period that many of Bob Hope's shows were broadcast from college campuses around the country. Rumor had it that Colonna was so impressed with the facilities at the Hall of Music, that he was directly responsible for convincing Bob Hope to broadcast one of his college-based radio shows from there, which he did the following March.

When Bob Hope and his cast came to town, we knew we had hit the big time. Why, people even came from Indianapolis to see the show. Hope was scheduled to do two shows on Tuesday, March 3rd, 1948. His 8:30 radio broadcast was incorporated into the first show of the evening, and since my mother and I had tickets for the second show, which didn't begin until 10:00, I was able to listen to the radio show as well as take in the live show later in the evening. What a thrill that was, listening to a Chicago station broadcasting a nation-wide program taking place some 4 miles from our home!

All the radio cast members were featured in both shows including Vera Vague, Jerry Colonna, Les Brown and the Announcer, Wendell Niles. I seemed to remember that Frances Langford was the featured vocalist, but a newspaper account of the show I re-read years later says it was Georgia Gibbs. I remember being impressed that Hope was on stage during the entire show, including the musical numbers, mugging to the audience or teasing the singers while they performed. The unusual nature of the star being on-stage for the whole show was brought home to me more forcibly the following year when Eddie Cantor appeared with a vaudeville review and was on-stage for his act only. Incidentally, public demand resulted in Hope doing two additional shows the following evening.

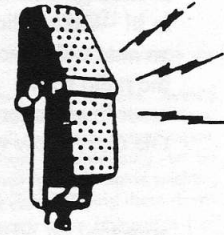
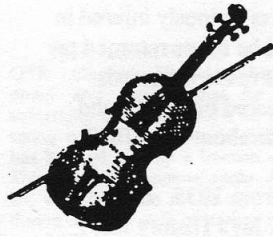
Following the Hope show, the flood gates of talent opened wide and for the next decade, many of the biggest stars of the entertainment world found a welcome home at the Music Hall. For instance, in May, Horace Heidt and His Musical Knights appeared featuring Accordionist Dick Contino. Some of you may remember Heidt hosted a talent-scout type program in those years which was very popular, especially when Contino was working his way through the competition to final victory. As I recall, he was the reason we attended this particular Music Hall offering. Contino subsequently lost his popularity when he was accused of draft dodging a few years later during the Korean War.

Although Bob Hope returned for three more shows in 1953, '56, and '57, the record for most "Victory Varieties" appearances goes to Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians with five. Spike Jones and his City Slickers also appeared four times, the same number as Hope. Others appearing included Eddie Cantor, George Goble, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Jo Stafford, Mel Torme, Martin and Lewis, Sarah Vaughn, Les Paul and Mary Ford, Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett, the Ink Spots and Ed Sullivan and his Toast of the Town Review. This latter offering reflected the rise of television as the predominant entertainment vehicle for most Americans then (1954). Virtually every big band appeared as well covering a wide variety of tastes including Lawrence Welk, Ralph Marterie, Duke Ellington and Ted Heath.

For a youngster who considered many radio personalities as his friends, the opportunity to see some of my favorites in person was one of the highlights of childhood.

As you might expect, this is one of the programs I have been seeking since I started collecting radio shows some 30 years ago. So far, no luck, although I do have some Hope shows broadcast from other college campuses during the late '40s. So, if any of you have a Hope show with a broadcast date of March 3, 1948 or an undated one, but originating from Purdue University, I'm interested.

(Although unrelated to Old Time Radio directly, I ran across an interesting item in the Lafayette Journal and Courier while researching this article. In May 1947, West Lafayette High School (total enrollment approximately 500 students) advertised their Senior Prom that year as featuring both the Claude Thornhill and Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey Bands, as well as other local bands! Those were the days!)



FROM
JACK PALMER

**THE FIRST COUNTRY MUSIC SHOWS ON NETWORK RADIO
PART TWO**

NATIONAL BARN DANCE. This very popular show went network in 1933. It was broadcast for one hour each Saturday evening on the NBC Blue network. Since I just recently had an article published in this newsletter about this show, I won't discuss it here.

BRADLEY KINCAID. This mountain ballad singer had a 15 minute show 6 times a week on NBC's daytime schedule, beginning in 1933. Kincaid was a collector and singer of the old mountain ballads, but he also sang some popular songs if they fit his style. He became very popular on The National Barn Dance, but left it after a few years to go on his own. He spent time at most of the big radio stations in the Midwest and east and eventually ended up on the Grand Ole Opry. He usually performed alone with just his 'Ole Houndog Guitar'. (Supposedly he traded a houndog for it.) Jay's History indicates 1 show is available. However many of his commercial recordings are still around if you are interested in hearing this pioneer.

OZARK MOUNTAINEERS. This group first appeared in 1933 on the NBC Blue network. They had a short program four mornings a week. This is another program which I have been unable to find any information to date. But with a name like that, how could they not be country? The show is listed in Jay's History with no available shows.

RANCH BOYS. Another NBC Blue show which first appeared in 1934. They had a 15 minute program on Saturday afternoons. Another show for which I have been unable to find any information. I have old records with the same name, but can not be certain it was the same organization. Jay's History does list it with no available shows.

PINE MOUNTAIN BOYS. In 1935 the Blue network first presented this show on Sunday afternoons. Sponsored by Pinex. Jay's Ultimate History lists this show as PINE MOUNTAIN MERRYMAKERS. Since there are no shows available I am unable to determine which title is correct. Perhaps both were used at various times. Several of the stars from THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE also appeared on this show.

MONTANA SLIM. One of the great stars of country music first appeared on the CBS network in 1935. He was only on the air for 15 minutes three times a week, but soon became one of the most popular artists on CBS. His real name was Wilf Carter and he had been a star in his home country of Canada for several years before venturing south. He

was given the name Montana Slim by Bert Parks, a CBS announcer at the time. This was in keeping with the custom of that time that all Western singers had a nickname with a state in it! Wilf's radio show was at the height of its popularity when he was seriously injured in an automobile accident. It was several years before he recovered and he never returned to the radio show. Jay's History lists no shows available. However Wilf made numerous recordings under his own and the Montana Slim name. He also appeared on one Grand Ole Opry show which is available. I discuss this in my previous article about the AFRS.

TEXAS COWBOYS. To close out my list is another show from 1935. It appeared on NBC's daytime schedule twice a week. It is not listed in Jay's History and I have not found any information on it.

These are the earliest network country shows that I have been able to locate. I could have continued until 1940, but the list would have been excessively long. If enough readers are interested we can extend the list sometime in the future. Next time I plan to delve into some of the very early transcribed country music shows.

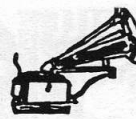
One last note. In 1950 The Sons Of Pioneers had a recording titled "Old Man Atom". It was released in July and was becoming popular when it suddenly disappeared from the stores and was no longer heard on the radio. I heard rumors that the record had been withdrawn from circulation at the request of the government. Apparently they had banned it from the air, and without air play, the record company (RCA Victor) just withdrew it from the market. The song expressed the feelings that if we (Meaning countries.) didn't learn to cooperate we would all be blown away. At that time the government certainly didn't feel that way, and the record disappeared. So I am searching for two answers. Did the government really ban the song from the air? If not, does anyone know what really happened. I bought a copy of the record in 1950, but it has long disappeared from my possession. Do any of you own a copy of the record today? It was issued on both a 78 and 45 and I would love to have a copy of either. Or alternatively, a tape of the song.

Until next time and some of the transcribed country music shows of the 1930s.



Confessions of A Collector

by Chuck Seeley*



There comes a time in every OTR collector's life when he sits down and realizes that he has something like 7000 hours of OTR sitting on the shelves and that he has listened to only a fraction of it. This situation happens easily. After all, who has time to sit and listen during that first rush of trading madness? The prime concern then is to obtain the shows, pile up the reels, get the trades out, all the while telling yourself that you'll listen to the shows "later".

I confess. This happened to me. When it dawned on me that I had enough sheer tonnage of magnetic tape to stock a Radio Shack, I quit trading and determined to listen to the stuff I was so eager to collect.

It didn't work out right away.

My house has three bedrooms, one of which was the "junk" room. My own bedroom was pretty well filled to begin with, since I've always been an avid reader and collector of books, magazines, and comics. With the advent of that first, treacherous tape recorder, space became even more scarce. Even with much material packed in boxes and shelves placed edge-on against the walls (with books in double rows), the room was bursting.

The only thing for it was to sneak my bed into the junk room, which was accomplished when I had the house to myself and was presented as a fait accompli. My chest of drawers went next, leaving my desk as the only piece of furniture in my original bedroom. Nature abhors a vacuum and the newly-gained space was immediately filled.

Time passed. More and more books went into boxes, the shelves had long since exceeded their limits. The one shelving unit devoted to tapes filled up and I found that by stacking tapes flat on the top shelf that more would be accommodated, until the ceiling got in the way. The spaces between the shelves gradually filled up and out, and the one reference I needed always managed to be packed in the bottom box in the back row. Diabolical.

Sometimes there were disasters. I learned about the stability of stacked material and how that stability decreases as the top of the stack approaches the ceiling. And then there's the domino effect, which is too painful to discuss.

Critical mass was finally reached. Items piled up on my desk seemingly of their own accord. One tape recorder was lost under an avalanche of paperbacks (I had long since run out of suitable boxes) and I couldn't get to it anyway without dismantling another stack. My unique filing system was in danger (no place to put the box) and then my faithful Smith-Corona decided to self-destruct. Finding the parts wasn't too much of a problem because there wasn't that much open floor space at the time, but the debris did hinder the search. I had a wastebasket somewhere in there but I believe it had a life of its own and would scurry away to hide whenever I needed it. Also, I refused to allow my mother in to clean the room because she might toss out something important that might have accidentally slipped to the floor. Later on, SHE refused to come in. And I certainly wouldn't clean the place myself; that's woman's work!

Things looked bleak, until one day I stumbled onto the basement. It dawned on me that here, in the basement, was the valuable room I desperately needed. There was one problem. The basement was packed, too. And so the campaign began. I coerced my mother into helping me clean out the place and we went through it with a vengeance. We found things we'd forgotten we had, we even found a box that had gone unpacked since we moved here in 1959. And we were harsh. What little material we kept went into the garage for storage, the rest went on the block in a two-day garage sale. What didn't sell was given away.

It happens that our basement has a plywood partition dividing it roughly in half. One side contains the washer, dryer, food storage, workbench and the like. The other half would be MINE.

Some absurdly cheap panelling covered the cement walls. Instead of putting up a real ceiling, I merely covered the rafters with various and sundry posters. I built a work table

out of an old door. Then came the hard part.

Imagine, if you will, twenty years of buying books, magazines, comics, and, to a lesser extent, tapes. Imagine them accumulating, bit by bit, in a small room. Imagine packing them all up and carrying them down two flights of stairs. Imagine a hernia. The doctor said it was just a strain.

After strenuous effort, everything that had been stuffed into my bedroom had been placed and shelved in the basement. To my alarm, the vast room I had expected swiftly shrank. Even as I type, my books, rippling softly to themselves, are reproducing and expanding to the shelf limits. Ominously, boxes are beginning to appear.

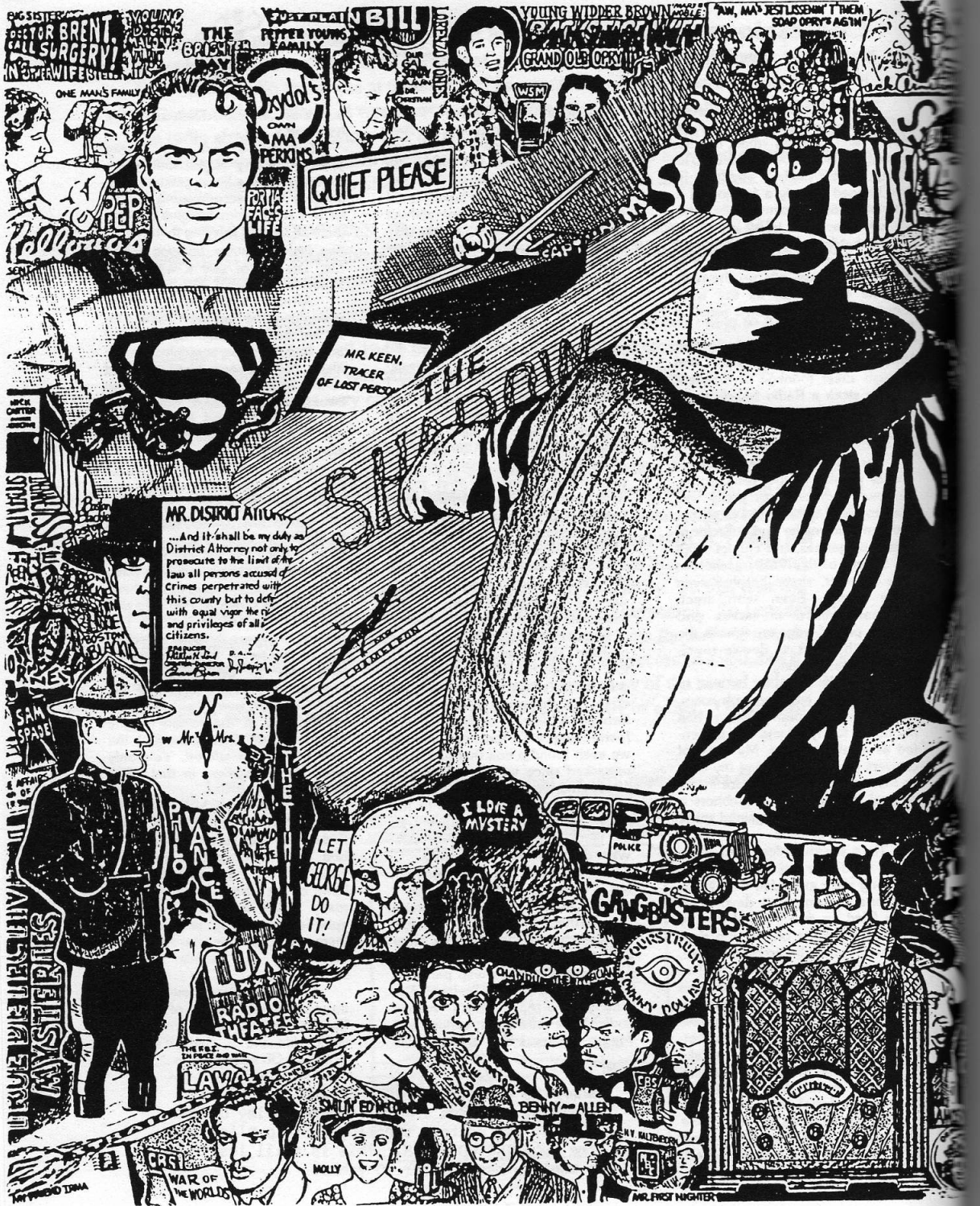
I wonder if my mother would mind if I hooked the washer and dryer up in the garage . . .

Where was I? Oh, yes, listening to OTR. I've been able to do a fair bit of it now. I've got my machines set up next to my desk and listen whenever I'm working down here, re-cataloging shows as I go. I've also put a recorder next to my bed. This created problems in itself, especially with certain serials. It took me a very long time to get through forty episodes of THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU, because I kept dropping off to sleep in the middle of the episodes. It is difficult to find the spot where you left off. You only know it's somewhere in that 1800 feet of tape.

I've had more luck with ADVENTURES BY MORSE. Captain Friday and Skip Turner appear to be best taken one episode every 24 hours or so. For example, "The Land of the Living Dead" is unlike many serials in that most of its episodes are really self-contained: there are no cliffhangers. And I like the "blood and thunder" of the series.

I have to close now. There's three-and-a-half years of weekly **Variety** stacked on the end of the work table and . . . and it's — it's wobbling! Oh nooooooooooooo.....

When the OLD TIME RADIO CLUB was founded in Buffalo, NY, back in 1975, Chuck Seeley became their first editor, starting their publication the ILLUSTRATED PRESS. This is still issued on a monthly basis after 25 years.





Here's a
 panel of
 memories by
 NARA's staff
 artist:

GENE LARSON

Fighting Words: Name-Calling on Radio in WWII - Conclusion

(PART ONE CAN BE FOUND IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE NARA NEWS)

By Ken Weigel

"Radio has made the concept of 'Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men' a reality." (GEN. J.G. HARBORD, PRESIDENT, RCA, MAY 23, 1928)

"Do you hear that, you shitty Jap gendarmes?"
(Operation Charlie, 1945)

* * *

Radio was slow to adjust to the war of words after Pearl Harbor. One of the chief reasons for this was the Office of Censorship's new Code of Wartime Practices which dulled radio's reflexes. Issued in mid-December 1941, the Code clamped down on topical war news and gave Uncle Sam a bigger say in what went out over the air. More a guideline than a stopper, it challenged the industry to censor itself. Around the same time the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) introduced supplementary guidelines to its own code. The idea behind these new regulations was to avoid transmitting information that might be of use to the enemy.

Coming one right after the other, the new regulations had a temporary paralyzing effect on the radio brotherhood, as broadcasters became preoccupied with what they could *not* do. It was taboo, for example, to broadcast rumors or disclose wartime production figures, troop movements, weather observations, construction contracts, or names of casualties. Largely because of a public outcry against excited presentations, news phrases like "bulletin" and "flash" were to be used sparingly. Sound effects that might suggest alarm were also disallowed. (The signature siren that opened the *Texaco Star Theater* was the first network casualty.) Finally, the government reserved for itself the right to suppress any news it deemed unfavorable.

Under the new constraints, and well aware that in time of war the Commander-in-Chief could take control of radio lock stock and console, broadcasters timidly began evaluating new program ideas from the angle of what would *not* help the enemy or put Uncle Sam to the test. Although the new government Code didn't kick in until February 1942, most stations discontinued man-on-the-street pickups immediately. Audience participation shows, including unrehearsed quiz and musical request shows, all staple programming at the time, were either canceled or came under enhanced supervision.

Radio in those first months of mobilization often saved its harshest invective not for the enemy but for home front slackers, rumor-mongers, and conscientious objectors. Cheating was self-defeating and unpatriotic. What caused the black market, observed radio comedian Bob Burns, was the preponderance of hogs outside the pigpen that belonged inside. Doing nothing helped the enemy, and the enemy was all of the above.

The picture kept changing. On the flip side, former enemies were now allies, and the public had to be told who they were. In this particular government exercise, Uncle Sam strained to put a high gloss on new comrades-in-arms Russia and China. Josef

Stalin, a butcher, suddenly enjoyed the status of a great leader, and critics of Russian aid came under the menacing glare of Uncle Sam. In his radio speech on April 28, 1942, FDR called critics of this new policy "bogus patriots" who were in the pay of the Axis. They were "noisy traitors--betrayers of America, betrayers of Christianity itself--would-be dictators who in their hearts and souls have yielded to Hitlerism." It was almost treasonous to think otherwise. Before long, *Superman's* pubescent fans were fishing cardboard model Russian war planes out of their Pep cereal boxes.

As for China, after Pearl Harbor the United States struck down the Oriental Exclusion Acts and came to the decision that the Chinese were now a noble race. Lin Yutang became a vendor of the highest wisdom, Madame Chiang's desirability was obvious to all, and the Office of War Information's Bureau of Motion Pictures advised movie makers that Chinese were not to be shown in menial servant positions. Out went chop-chop.

Once these overhauled views of a strong-willed China and "democratic" Russia became policy the media fell in line. A series of "know your ally" radio flummery began spreading the good news. Among the first converts was *Jungle Jim*, Tarzan in khaki. He and Kolu joined the Chinese Army to fight the Japanese in occupied Malaya and Java.

Two of the first dramatists to call attention to stateside complacency were Arch Oboler and Norman Corwin. Both writers did some wonderful work for Uncle Sam in recruiting interest at home. Their suspicions about complacency were supported by a magazine poll taken in the summer of 1942. The poll compared the contents of *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, two venerable publications of the day. Almost half of the articles printed in four issues of the two magazines were food and entertainment features. This at a time when German submarines were sending convoys of Lend-Lease supplies to the bottom of the Atlantic, and American fortunes in the Pacific were at low ebb. In just over five months the "dizzy little sons of heaven" had run the yanks out of the Philippines and seized the richest colonial area in the world, bringing down the British, French and Dutch empires. At home, if the magazine survey was accurate, only halfhearted attention was being given to the business of salvaging and rationing, quashing rumors and bolstering morale.

Oboler's contributions to the *Treasury Star Parade*, which dramatized incidents taken from headlines of the day, *Plays for Americans* and *Free World Theater* pressed home the point that there was a price to be paid for such indifference, and even implied that slackers were social criminals. Oboler sharpened his themes in these series and in *Four for the Fifth*, a production done in collaboration with William N. Robson. In "The Laughter," written in late 1942 and rebroadcast after D-Day in the latter series, Oboler argued that the Axis was laughing at Americans who had turned their backs on a war they had not yet won. His contempt for those who had "lived in fatness and ease so long that they'd lost the hard realism that was America" troubled more than a few listeners.

Until *This is War!* came to radio (February 14, 1942), the drama had been impartial. Norman Corwin, with an assist from writers like Maxwell Anderson, Philip Wylie, and Stephen Vincent Benet, changed all that. Their high-caliber contributions gave this series the "official" stamp and did more than just stimulate national morale--they broke down old restraints on the drama. Conceived to "frighten and inform" the radio public, the series' unvarnished language, in fact, offended more than a few. In the first program, from which the series took its name, Corwin exposed enemy virtue:

"The Emperor's (Hirohito's) autograph, the Fuhrer's scrawl, the signature of Mussolini are scratched across the bloated belly of every infant who has starved to death. The fingerprints of Tojo and of Goering and of Hess, of Ciano and Nomura stand out clearly on the necks of thousands hanged for being loyal to their countries."

There was more:

"Murder International, Murder, Unlimited; quick murder on the spot or slow murder in the concentration camp; murder for listening to the shortwave radio, for marrying a Pole, for propagation of the faith, for speaking one's mind, for trading with a non-Aryan, for being an invalid too long. The enemy is the assassin with the swagger and the smoking gun....laughter over the bleeding stump, the cold smile of the officer who stands watching while the hostage digs his own grave, the coarse joke over the girl just raped....What is the enemy? The enemy is a liar...."
("This is War!" February 14, 1942)

No single program had had the guts or the moxie to roll up the sleeves and take a pot at the enemy in such graphic terms before. The characterizations brought murmurings of just how much "hate" propaganda was needed on radio. The day after this broadcast, which went out on all four networks and was shortwaved overseas, a cleric impaneled at the University of Chicago Round Table argued that preaching hatred as vital to morale was satanic. Two months later Corwin answered the cleric:

"There are enough authenticated [Axis] brutalities stacked away in the files.... to nauseate even a round-table expert who fears that discussion of the enemy might arouse hate. And of course, we mustn't do that, must we."
("The Enemy," April 11, 1942)

Corwin felt that since he had been given the responsibility--*This is War!* aired on 700 stations and attracted an estimated 20 million listeners--he had a duty to acquaint listeners with the horrors of fascism so that there would be no doubt about why they were being asked to make sacrifices. Week after week the series radiated enemy headhunting and assaulted wartime issues head on. While reaction was generally positive, mail nevertheless came in with allegations from the unctuous that hate was taking on the odor of sanctity. One listener wrote:

I believe the purpose of your program is to arouse hate among the millions of your listeners. This is wrong. We must hate sin, but love the sinner.

Corwin replied to the charge one last time in "Yours Received and Contents Noted," the final program in the series (May 9, 1942). Here he spun a darkly humorous morality tale illustrating what fate held for those who banked too fervently on the letter-writer's pious sentiment. The play is about a kindly old man, Clarence Minnifer (Raymond Massey), and his talented dog Fritz who plays classical piano, and with whom Minnifer is able to pass a quiet hour discussing the philosophical concepts of human dignity and freedom. One day a diseased dog "with hair hanging down over one eye" (i.e., a certain German Chancellor) bites Fritz. In due time Fritz takes sick, begins slobbering, attacks his master and tears out his throat. On poor Minnifer's headstone the epitaph reads:

HERE LIES A MAN WHO HATED HYDROPHOBIA BUT LOVED MAD DOGS

For all their vulgarity, allusions to the enemy in *This is War!* generally bypassed ethnicity and relied instead on good old-fashioned hail-Columbia insult. Mussolini, for example, was "a jackal in a cage," and Axis leaders were "the lowest scum of 5000

years of what we charitably call civilization--they, and their circle of cutthroats." Yet it was the excess of these verbal attacks that helped to establish that radio could not descend to rank vituperation if it was to be effective.

The fertile-minded Oboler laid into home front lethargy in a play he called "Hate," one of 22 scripts he wrote for the 1942 NBC series *Plays for Americans*. "Hate" disparaged the American pundits who were making aimless postwar plans while in Europe the Wehrmacht was making hash out of one democracy after another. The play featured Conrad Veidt, in his first radio role, as Pastor Halversun, a Norwegian minister who stood between the Nazi occupiers of his village and his small flock. The good pastor trusted the German soldiers and urged his followers not to hate them but to put their faith in God. One day the pastor's "friend," the German Commandant Berkhoff, hanged a group of innocent villagers. The pastor confronts him:

Pastor: You hanged them....You gave me your word.

Berkhoff: Ah, yes! That is as good a point to start with as any! I thought I could have collaboration with your little village--that is not possible, so we will have understanding--complete!...Every man, woman and child will live in this place with one function--to work for and serve the Reich! Simple? Clear?

Pastor: Work for and serve God....

Berkhoff: Oh no! The Fuhrer! The great German people! One thought! One duty! Learn that and you live! Forget it and it will be most unfortunate for all of you!

Pastor: But you will not conquer with cruelty.

Berkhoff: Everywhere we have conquered you think there are the seeds of future hope for your deliverance! Do you think we are fools? Do you think we give our precious blood to build a great German world only to have that world fall apart through revolution and sabotage and peasants' uprisings?.... We are going to exterminate you throughout the world! Exterminate every possible source of non-germanic intellectualism! Every man, every woman, every teacher, every student, yes, even every child, who has within him even the germ of an idea contrary to the plan of a German world will be liquidated! Removed as quickly and as completely as the six of your neighbors who seem to concern you so much! We do not want you as men. We want you as labor--yes, some of you even as slaves!

....In Poland what I tell you now is already being done! A million have died and a million more will die! Only the stupid will remain!....So it will be throughout the world! Our Fuhrer said the new Germany will live a thousand years! I tell you it will live ten times a thousand! And before a hundred of those tens of thousands of years are gone, you and all you peace-bringers, and your freedom lovers, and your faith fools will be dead and buried and there will be one race in the world, our master race. The rest will be servants and slaves!....where is your people's hope now, Pastor Halversun? Where is your hope--?

His words are suddenly choked off as the pastor's hands close around his neck. We hear Berkhoff's strangled cries, the heavy breathing of his murderer in close. All this is blotted out by the music: it rises harsh and discordant, then blends into a pounding goosestepped motif, which in turn blends into tension music behind:

Pastor: With my hands....I killed a man....But I am a Minister of God!....I killed a man because suddenly I saw that if he and his kind lived, there was no hope! I saw a barren world where unspeakable wickedness rode to power on the backs of monsters of steel....I saw a world changed in just a handful of lives from a place of everlasting hope for all men to a great cattleyard where they were masters, and men, bred to stupidity, struggled and died without protest.... without hope for the future....This man was taking that from me, from us!

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, 'Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me!'" But they will not let us go, O Lord! Not for a thousand, not for ten thousand years! There is no peace with them; there is only hate, a hate that must rise within us, too, and never rest until their wickedness is gone from the earth!"
(Plays for Americans, NBC, March 29, 1942)

This was fire fighting fire. The idea that a man of the cloth turned killer could justify, in his lamentation, taking the life of another was repugnant to many, and radio forums spilled over with the angry objections of the guardians of the nation's morals. As far as Oboler was concerned, their anger was misplaced. Their energies should have been applied to correcting home front apathy. He felt a strong dose of hate was the only way such lavish ignorance of the evils of fascism could be dispelled.

Another writer who badgered Americans to get more involved in the war was Norman Rosten, a radio novice. He made the homefolks squirm with his play "Battle of Bataan," written while Corregidor still flew the red, white and blue. Alfred Lunt narrated:

Lunt: You, listening at home, safe in your chairs...how can you know these weeks of battle? How can you feel the bayonet turn in the wound or gangrene eating the bone away? What image describes the grenade exploding in a fox-hole, or the loneliness of the evening?...The enemy broke through, pushing them back to the water, and still they fought along the wild strip of beach, fighting till the waves went over them!

[Orchestra up...planes coming in]

Those who had the strength, men and nurses, tried to swim the three-mile bay to Corregidor; tried to fight the shark-infested waters under the roaming eye of planes.

(Treasury Star Parade, May 5, 1942)

As this was airing, heavy fighting raged on the tiny island. The very next day, General Wainwright and 15,000 sick and bloodied American GIs yielded to superior enemy forces.

After Pearl, commercial programs began stepping up the association of their themes and plots to the war. The accumulation of gibes and insults confirming the stereotype of the arrogant, deceitful Axis warrior eventually held sway in varying degrees on soap operas, juvenile adventure serials, comedy and mystery shows until mudslinging began to sound like radio's angelus. One of the more damning indictments of Axis leadership came in a show called "Italian Dictator" in the NBC *Words at War* series late in 1943. The story chronicled Mussolini's climb over Prime Minister and Pope to become fascism's trailblazer. His oppression of people's rights, harassing of Communists, denunciation of God and religion, and assassination of a political rival produced an ugly image of demented autocracy.

Unchecked ridicule, however, was found to be commercially self-defeating, and in time haughty references to the Axis were put in proper perspective. Eventually the enemy became human. In NBC's 1944 summertime series, *They Call Me Joe*, which examined ethnic differences in the armed forces, the routine paraphernalia of Japanese speech patterns--the heavy accent, breathy hisses, and mispronounced l's--was dropped. Throughout the war, besides a fundamental sensibility and sense of duty, what kept the radio industry in step--and the ethnic slurs to a minimum--was the knowledge that the government had the right to set up a command over radio in its discretion.

In the meantime, colorful enemy denunciations rolled in from across the Pacific. Weak transmitters and chaotic program scheduling plagued the Japanese propagandists, but under the right conditions shortwave listeners on the West Coast could pick up

broadcasts from the Co-Prosperity Sphere in Asia. One broadcast from a transmitter in Manchuria, monitored in late March 1942, claimed that Japanese bombers had flown over aircraft factories in Los Angeles without interference from American aircraft. The announcer said that two days before the alleged flyover FDR had told the country, in a fireside broadcast monitored by the Japanese, that the nation had nothing to fear from enemy bombers or submarines. "Roosevelt is a liar," the Manchurian speaker said. "As your President spoke, Japanese submarines were destroying the California coast."

Shortly after this submarine attack, *Radio Tokyo* reported that "Your government is lying to you! You have not been told that Santa Barbara is already in ruins as a result of just one of our bombardments from the sea." The "destruction of the California coast" that left Santa Barbara "in ruins" was confined to some oil derricks and wooden beach houses. The locals were alive and quite well, if somewhat nettled.

Bargain basement deprecation was the domain of the propaganda stations overseas, both allied and Axis. One program Tokyo beamed to American troops in the Pacific was the popular *Zero Hour*--60 minutes of news, music, and star-spangled smear. Typical was the announcer's suggestion, spoken in American singsong, that there was "plenty of room at the bottom of the Pacific for more American fleet--Ha! Ha!" In one choppy broadcast the announcer dedicated a record to the American troops who were poised to invade Okinawa, because "many of you will never hear another program":

*"You boys off Okinawa listen and enjoy it while you can, because when you're dead, you're a long time dead...Let's have a little jukebox music for the boys, and make it hot...The boys are going to catch hell soon, and they might as well get used to the heat."
(Zero Hour, April 1, 1944)*

How did the GI respond to gibes like this? With a cheap shot of his own, of course. A squadron of American fliers sent the following letter to Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister:

"Due to conditions beyond our control, it is sometimes our misfortune to listen to your programs over Radio Tokyo....The Japanese version of the truth in your newscasts is always good for a laugh, and Radio Tokyo is throwing the world into a convulsion of laughter these days...This is one of our complaints: either change your Radio Tokyo theme song, 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean,' or have your piano tuned...We also suggest that some of your radio announcers either do a little studying of the English language, or be provided with new sets of false teeth so they can at least approach reasonable accuracy in the pronunciation of English words and terms...."

The last complaint was justified. One *Zero Hour* music host opened his show with: "There's that old theme song again, and I know that you know, so let's get together again and get associated."

Overseas both the allies and the Axis applied music to their war of words. One illustration of lyrical BBC horseplay beamed to the Nazi conquerors on the continent was Ronald Frankau's "The Jap and the Wop and the Hun":

*It's a crying shame, by jingo, that we've nothing in our lingo,
To describe the Japs, the Nazis or the Wops.
So we call all three, quite rightly--
We're putting it politely--
What the farmers put on fields for helping crops.*

*So that future generations needn't fear these Axis nations
We should treat them as vet surgeons treat a horse:
When we've won and peace we're welding,
Turn each into a gelding--
I hope my meaning's clear and not too coarse.*

The salty six-cornered oath was reserved for the fields of combat. One quick American example from a transmitter in Japanese-occupied China:

"If you've got good eyesight and can look toward the mountains, you can probably see the very hill under which I have this transmitter....Do you hear that, you shitty Jap gendarmes? Sometimes I have to laugh at how dumb you bastards are....I'm a guerilla and have been ever since....being forced out of Canton, after which my wife and child died. Only this broadcasting is a relatively new departure....It came about accidentally when I had the opportunity to buy this radio transmitter from the shitty corrupt Japs....I used it to communicate with my men....but then I got the idea of a daily broadcast to tell my good friends in Canton all the news they never heard over the lying Jap radio."

This and other "Operation Charlie" enticements were scripted by American intelligence, translated into Cantonese and recorded in the United States, and flown overseas to a "black" station in the shadow warfare chain. Between April and August of 1945, when this transmitter fell silent, 95 such scripts were written. There were similar operations in other theaters of war where the airwaves ran heavy with bile.

Back in the United States the voices of hate continued to be heard above those demanding moderation with radio forums perhaps serving up the most colorful polemics. On separate appearances on *America's Town Meeting of the Air*, radio correspondent Quentin Reynolds proposed making hatred "healthy" for the duration (NBC Blue, January 31, 1943), and that Americans ought to "go to the peace table with hatred in our hearts" (May 13, 1943). That fall, *Town Meeting* guests suggested quarantining hardcore Germans in institutions as "typhoid carriers." This drew a chilling comparison to Hitler's view of Jews as "bacilli." The following summer a guest on the *American Forum of the Air*, with considerably more clout than Molly McGee--the national director for the Friends of Democracy--proposed removing Germany from the map (September 12, 1944). German-Americans in the United States, and not just the *bundists*, began to squirm.

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America condemned such colloquy as moral poison. If hatred became policy, the Council predicted peace would be impossible. But on October 5, 1944, the Writers War Board, a quasi-governmental agency that mobilized writers and routed government messages to opinion-forming channels, arranged with the Blue Network to get the "Morgenthau Plan" on the airwaves and into the homes of America. The Morgenthau Plan, conceived by the Secretary of the Treasury, called for large-scale destruction of German industry and complete dismantling of the industrial Ruhr. Morgenthau wanted Germany--"*Heinieland*," "*Hitland*," "*Hunland*," *et al*--reduced to pasturage. Both Churchill and Roosevelt had endorsed the plan at Quebec in September 1944, but the media thought the idea absurd, and the Writers War Board did some fast stepping to distance the President from it.

Finally, in December 1944, syndicated columnist and radio commentator Dorothy Thompson offered a post-war plan to execute 160,000 *boche* as war criminals. How she arrived at the number she didn't say.

* * *

This short review of radio at swords points barely brushes the war or words that raged for six long years and which engaged some of the best radio talents working. In

the United States, the lively campaign for and against hate on radio kept listeners in thrall and continues to do so today. News reporting came into its own in wartime, and more than a few commentators used impressive credentials to launch thriving post-war careers. Sponsors on some popular programs responded to the call to arms more freely than others, but which ones? And to what extent? Were *Lux Radio Theater* and *Cavalcade of America* the only exceptions? Which shows adopted the policy of non-involvement, and why? Were *The Shadow* and *The Whistler* the only holdouts, or were there more?

Discussion of wartime radio need not end with the closing of the 50-year commemoration of WWII, for it was during that war that radio met its greatest challenges, and it is in the bounteous literature of that saga that its greatest triumphs, and failures, are chronicled.

NARA'S LIBRARY CATALOGS

To obtain catalogs of what is available to members from the various club libraries, please write to the librarians listed below and enclose the price of the catalog

CASSETTE CATALOG

The listing of the 20,000 shows in the cassette library is \$13.00 (checks payable to NARA). For a copy please contact Barry Hill, Route 1, Box 197, Belpre, OH 45714.

REEL-TO-REEL CATALOG

The catalog of the 15,000 shows available in our reel-to-reel library costs \$18.00 (make checks out to NARA). They can be obtained from Scott Jones, 4741 E. Grant Ave., Fresno, CA 93702.

SCANFAX CATALOG

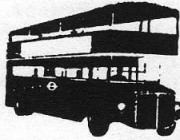
Lists of program series in our new SCANFAX cassette library are \$1 each, but you can request more than one series list for a maximum total of \$2. Include a self addressed stamped envelope and send your requests to Don Aston, P.O. Box 1392, Lake Elsinore, CA 92531. Series currently available:

The Six Shooter (the entire series)	The Marriage (24 shows)
X-Minus One (the entire series)	Tales of the Valiant (10 shows)
Dimension X (the entire series)	Christopher London (2 shows)
Magnificent Montague (44 shows)	The forty Million (4 shows)
Halls of Ivy (28 shows)	Radio City Music Hall
Private Files of Rex Saunders (14 shows)	Big Town
White Hall One Two One Two (21 shows)	It's Higgins Sir (13 shows)

PRINTED MATERIALS CATALOG

The printed materials library currently has three catalogs ready, the book catalog (407 books), the script catalog (228 scripts), and the catalog of logs (29 logs). To receive all of these please send ten 32 cent stamps to Bob Sabon, 308 W. Oraibi Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85027

FROM ACROSS THE POND



by Ray Smith



Ever have one of those so-called "out of body" experiences? The closest I came was in August '93, while visiting the beautifully-kept Japanese garden in Lethbridge, Alberta. In the parking lot, I switched on the car radio and immediately picked up CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) out of nearby Calgary. What absolutely stunned me was the voice on the wireless. "This is David Gell and you're listening to 'Saturday-Side-Up.'" Unbelievable! The broadcaster was the one and only David (Dave) Gell, who was a wireless personality I had listened to every night on Europe's "Station of the Stars" Radio Luxembourg. But that had been 40 years ago!



Back in the early 50's, while studying at the University of Alberta, Dave Gell "got into" radio. He broadcast for a number of local stations including CJCA, CFRN and CKUA. Little did he realize, while hosting the "Jasmine Gell Show" sponsored by a Chinese restaurant, umpiring a students versus professors quiz game entitled Champs or Chumps, teaching THE Robert Goulet "wireless 101" or appearing as Uncle Dave the Kiddies Favourite, that within two decades the UK's popular press would label "our kid" from Calgary, The Voice of Britain.

Those were the days when transatlantic travel took place aboard the great ocean liners. Like many university graduates, he decided to see Europe, especially since his folks were from the UK. As he stepped from the Empress of Scotland onto the drizzly quayside at Greenock, (och aye laddie, it aye rains in Greenock) a career in British radio was probably the last thing on his mind. But destiny and the micro-phones of Radio Luxembourg had other ideas. Gradually he drifted onto Continental Europe where he recorded a few "commercials" for Radio Luxembourg, prompting the pesky European pirate to offer him employment as summer relief announcer.

From the 20's through the 60's the BBC had a monopoly on British broadcasting advertisement-free! On Sundays, they "got religion" and furnished those who listened with dry talks about the dead sea scrolls, chamber music recitals, Anglican Evensong and dull solemnity! This was fertile ground for private radio stations financed by commercials. Since they could not exist on the British mainland, they beamed their happy hilarity into the front parlours of Britain, from France and Luxembourg. "Illegal rottahs and boundahs!" cried the BBC!



"MAKE A DATE WITH 208"

After World War 2, only Radio Luxembourg survived, (until the sea-going pirate radio ships of the mid 60's) going from strength to strength. Although Radio-Tele Luxembourg remains a huge broadcasting conglomerate catering to the languages of Continental Europe, its English Department was "terminated" in the early 90's.

Dave Gell was one of Radio Luxembourg's resident station announcers broadcasting in English to the gargantuan audiences who could pick up "Two Oh Eight Metres Medium Wave" at a strength of 300,000 watts. His colleagues, who shared the daily grind of station identification, time checks punctuated every 15 minutes by the famous Radio Luxembourg "gong;" public service announcements and news, were ex-regional theatre actor Pete Murray still a British wireless favourite, and the late Peter Madren beloved in the land of "haggis and heather" as "Peter Jock MacMadren" for his folksey presentation of Luxembourg's famous Scottish Requests. Dave Gell can't remember tackling Scottish place names like Kirkudbright and Ecclefechan (at least not on Scottish Requests), although he handled the equally challenging vocabulary encountered on the rival Irish Requests. When Pete Murray left Luxembourg, Dave took over the Grand Duchy's highest-rated show, the Top Twenty.

Record request programs were tremendously popular across the pond. Listeners sent in postcards requesting their favourite song or singer, dedicated to a relative or sweetheart. In addition to "Irish," Dave hosted the pop-oriented Tuesdays and Thursdays requests. But apart from a few "live" record programs, Luxembourg's shows were recorded on the British mainland, put aboard a plane bound for the Grand Duchy, and transmitted back to Britain, creating the illusion that they were actually being performed while we listened.

Dave Gell sat in the announcers booth at the old Villa Louvigny studio in Luxembourg City, enjoying the numerous old time radio shows (as they are in retrospect) being fed from the adjacent control room by a native Luxembourgish technician who spoke little or no English. Those were the days when Luxembourg audiences lapped up the nightly adventures of space cop Dan Dare, played by Noel Johnston, who created an equally racy BBC cop...Dick Barton, Special Agent. Dave also remembers a variety of popular quiz and contestant shows, including You Lucky People hosted by cockney music-hall comic Tommy Trinder, the Sunday evening Take Your Pick game show, sponsored by Beechams (Headache) Powders and two favourites presented by Hughie Green...Double Your Money and the Opportunity Knocks Talent Contest. The shows were pre-recorded in Blighty. But "advertisements" were inserted "live." Dave was awaiting his cue to promote the merits of bubbly Babycham, a weak version of real champagne, the Infra-Draw Method of winning a million pounds on the "football (soccer) gambling pools" and a promotional spiel for "Britains biggest newspaper...the Daily Mirror" a mass-appeal tabloid. And no Luxembourg announcer escaped the challenge of telling the world that "the correct time by my H. Samuel Ever-Right Watch, is exactly half past something or other."

One of his biggest tests as a newcomer to the Grand Duchy was announcing the Saturday night "football" scores. Imagine being faced for the first time in your life with reading, for literally millions of UK listeners, approximately 150 couplets like, "Stenhousemuir - three/ Airdrionians - one." Especially tough on a wet-behind-the-ears-Johnny Canuck who had never heard of these peculiar soccer teams with unpronounceable names! His colleagues thought his soccer debut was a hoot. Far from receiving irate letters of complaint, Dave's fan mail was totally friendly and included thoughtful suggestions to help improve his football phonetics!

The recording stars he used to play and personally enjoy on Luxembourg included the swingin' Ted Heath Orchestra, lovely singer Alma Cogan, known in Britain as "the gel with a chuckle in her voice," UK pop balladeer cum heart throb Dickie Valentine, and the comedy songs of Peter Sellers and radio's Goons. He fondly remembers promotional visits made to the Luxembourg studios by UK stars like the wonderful Petula Clark. Most Americans are unaware she was a UK child and teenage radio and movie star (ala Shirley Temple). At the time, she was betwixt and between her popularity waves, past the days when she sang the coyly cute, "In the Shoemakers Shop" but before her reemergence as an international superstar with "Downtown."

When Dave decided to forsake the Grand Duchy for London, he was still heard regularly on "208" as host of the Philips Show, a weekly program he presented on behalf of Philips Records (UK) prerecorded in Blighty for more than a decade. Here too, Dave Gell played the latest discs by the many big names who recorded exclusively for Philips, including my favourite tenor from the British vaudeville theatres, Robert Earl (Shalom, Shalom: For I May Never Pass This Way Again, etc. etc.). Along with the more famous David Whitfield, Robert was often likened to Mario Lanza.

NEW DISCS

by **DAVID GELL**



Around this time Dave began to broadcast regularly for the BBC, who had given up their ill-conceived edict that anybody performing on Luxembourg was "banned from the Beeb." Nowadays, American disc jockeys have to put in 3, 4 or 5 hour daily shifts in which they do literally everything from announcing to technical operations. And how many listeners know their names or even care? But back then, the BBC's idea of a disc jockey was a personality who did a single one hour or half hour broadcast each week. It was thoroughly rehearsed. A technical production crew ensured the records were played when they should be. A scriptwriter, often the host deejay, wrote the "tops and tails," British jargon for the apparently "spontaneous" chitchat before and after each record. As Dave mentioned to me, a 30-minute radio show once weekly could make a nobody into a household name throughout Britain. And that was basically what happened to him when he took over the BBC's Middy Spin, heard just before the top-rated lunch-time vaudeville series, Workers Playtime, much-mentioned in these columns. Dave also hosted the fondly remembered Music For Sweethearts, featuring the famous Eric Jupp Orchestra, along with a variety of late night offerings, including Music to Midnight, Let's Go Latin, The Big Band Sound and a daytime schools radio series entitled Music Session One.

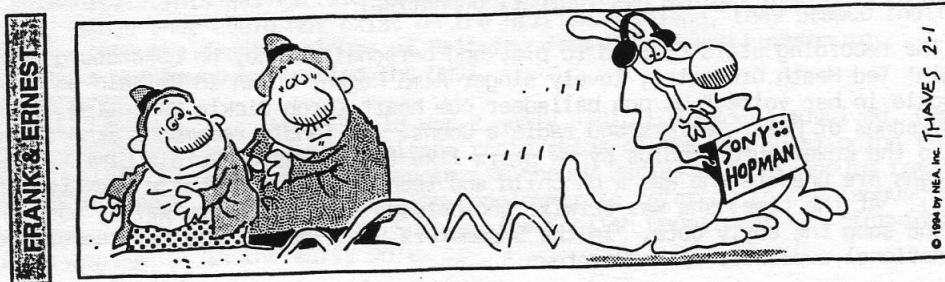


SINGAPORE: 88.9 mhz VHF/FM
WEST MALAYSIA: 5010 khz

While Dave is far too modest to run around reminding folks he was called The Voice of Britain, it was a well-deserved title, thanks to his work with the BBC's international exchange programs including European Pop Jury, Europe 77, Pop Over Europe, Eurolite and David Gells World of Music.

Nowadays, David Gell is one of CBC Alberta's most popular broadcasters. To the many Canadians who tune in his programs, he is the perfect professional. A smooth presenter who brings style, panache, elegance and perfect diction to the Rocky Mountain microphones. However, for those of us who were members of the Dave Gell "fan club" back in the truly golden age of British radio, we can't listen to him for long without remembering the youthful Dave Gell we enjoyed once upon a time, on that friendly little "Station Of The Stars," Radio Luxembourg.

Cheerio for now.



Wireless Wanderings



JIM SNYDER

This column is going to be much ado about nothing. It is simply a rambling account of some of the things that have happened to me in this hobby.

I have always kind of enjoyed the "Fort Laramie" radio series from 1956, which starred Raymond Burr. So, it was with interest that I visited the real Fort Laramie National Historic Site in Wyoming back in 1982. After I had left the site I started thinking that I should have picked up a handful of the park folders that had pictures and the history of the real Fort Laramie. If I had done so, then I could have put one of those folders in with each

Fort Laramie radio tape that anyone requested from me in a trade. With that thought in mind, I purposely went out of my way to revisit the fort two years later to get a bunch of the folders. Well, the National Park Service was getting a little tight with their money that year and were only giving out one to a family. So, in the museum, the park ranger would put one folder out on the counter, and when someone took it she would put out one more. Well, I stayed in that museum for an hour (quite an accomplishment in a museum where the major display items were two cannon balls and a canteen) and every time that ranger turned her back I would zing past the counter and pick up the folder. She started looking at me very suspiciously, but I did get away with a dozen folders to give out with tapes. After I had risked a term in a federal prison for theft of government folders, not one single person ever asked for one of those tapes, or even for a single show from that series.

Back when I lived in Michigan, I attended ten of the Newark Friends of Old Time Radio conventions. It was usually easiest for me to drive down to Detroit's Metro Airport, park my car in the Budget rent-a-car lot and take their van over to the terminal. Normally people didn't talk to each other during this short ride, but one time someone asked me where I was going. When I mentioned Newark the response was wondering why anyone would ever go to Newark. I said that I was going to a radio convention and one woman quickly spoke up saying, "I thought I recognized your voice. I listen to you on the radio every morning." I told her that it wasn't me but she quickly corrected me saying, "Oh yes it is!" I guess she knew what I was doing better than I did myself.

Although I have done a little infrequent TV work over the years, I think the last I had to do with radio was when I was in college. I had a four or five hour show one night a week on the campus radio station, WANR. Some of the funny things Gene Larson has been telling us in his columns reminded me of an incident during one of my broadcasts. I had a tape of a public service announcement, maybe a reminder to buy bonds, cued up for a station break. Just as I started the tape the phone rang, so I turned the sound off in the control room and had the caller give me their number so I could call them back in a few minutes. I then turned the sound back up only to hear a very long string of profanity going out over the air. Apparently someone ahead of me in the control room had been unable to get the tape to play back for them and vented their frustration verbally. They were obviously in the record mode on the machine instead of playback, and that is what I sent out over the air. Anyway, since I had played that

for all to hear I steeled myself for the inevitable complaints including from the school's administration. I don't remember for sure if I was getting paid or doing this radio thing for credit. Either way I knew I was through on station WANR. I waited for the calls that evening, and none came. The following day I waited for the summons to the Dean's office. It didn't come. There was no response at all, so at least that told me how many people listened to my show.

I have found that this is a hobby where it is almost impossible to give something away. I no longer trade, and there is very little out there that I still want. But I do read the want-ads in the various OTR publications that I subscribe to. When someone mentions a particular show they are looking for, I check my own log and send it off to them if I have it. I always state in a cover letter that I want nothing in return. If I did want something I would write in advance and tell them to send a blank cassette, or certain amount of money, or something of the sort. But the cost of doing this is negligible and I am quite sincere in saying that I want nothing back. I'm simply pleased to be able to help. Well, almost always they do send something back, usually money. If it is their personal check I simply return it. But a year ago one gentleman sent me a \$25 postal money order for one show that I had sent him. This would have been way too much, even if I had wanted payment, but assumed that since it was a postal money order made out to me I must cash it. So, I used the money to enter a membership in NARA for him. I hope that he is pleased with what he is getting. But please, if I ever send you something you advertise for, don't send anything back to me unless I specifically ask for it. Let me do my good deed for the day. Since I was an Eagle Scout I suppose that is still required of me.

I wrote the above paragraph before the SPERDVAC convention, but there is now a follow up to that. During the summer I saw a request for a show in one of the publications and so sent a tape off in a package to the person looking for it. The package was then returned to me by the Post Office marked "refused." I really didn't think anything about it, assuming that the address was wrong, and so I simply erased the cassette. A woman came up to me at the SPERDVAC convention saying that she recognized my name from that package that she had refused. She explained that she had never heard of me and that there was a lot of publicity about the Unabomber so she simply wasn't going to take a chance on opening a package from an unknown source. I will now send off a note before I mail those packages.



Randy Eidemiller and Chris Lembesis have put out a new log for the 106 episode QUIET PLEASE radio series. Like their other logs (mentioned in the spring 1995 issue of the NARA NEWS) this is really more than a simple log. It begins with nine pages of background information, which includes pictures. The log itself is carefully researched and organized. Each program is listed by date, title, supporting cast, and a brief synopsis of the story line itself. This log is available from AVPRO or for \$13, including shipping and handling, from Chris Lembesis, 11428 Madera Street, Cypress, California 90630.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Roger Hill gives his students an "extra credit" opportunity by letting them listen to cassettes of old time radio shows and then write about them. These young people grew up in the age of television, and so it is of particular interest to those of us in OTR to see their reactions. This piece was written by Rene' Krause, and she has given us permission to reprint it here.

"My Son John"

Audiocassette Listening Exercise

This story centers around a man and his love for his only child, his son John. It begins with a passage quoting Shakespeare, King Henry the IV, Part One, Act Three, Scene 1 which questions the responsiveness of spirits when a man calls upon them. After this quotation, the story begins with a man reflecting the story of his life with his family, mainly comprised of his son John, since his wife died shortly after giving birth. Due to his wife's death, the man (whose name we never know other than "Father") fell into a depression and forsook his friends, becoming a lonely recluse with his son serving as the only light in his life.

John, unlike his father, was described as an outgoing youngster, full of life and energy, who was denied nothing by his father. As time passed and John grew older, a war began in which John was yet too young to enlist, however badly he yearned to. Because of his youth and consequent inability to become a member of the service, he "exactd a promise" from his father that should the war continue to be in effect on his eighteenth birthday, he would enlist and become a soldier in it.

Upon his eighteenth birthday, the war was indeed still going on, and because his father admittedly could "deny him nothing", he allowed his son to enlist in the army with his blessing, hoping in vain that his son would not be sent overseas. Eight months later, John was shipped to Austria, and four months after arriving, was "scamped" (I assume this means he was killed).

John's father was notified of his son's death via a letter from the army. Because he was so utterly distraught and "inconsolable" over his John's death, he chose not to read the letter, and instead destroyed it. Upon suffering an immense amount of emotional pain and suffering, he turned to a woman of the occult who was "skilled in many things beyond the comprehension of the material world". This woman, upon John's father's vehement demands, gave instructions on how he might call his son back from the dead. These instructions came with a serious warning from the woman, however, but John's father was so desperate to have his son back that he did not heed her admonitions, and proceeded to call his son John back from the grave.

John first made his presence known shortly after the midnight his father fulfilled the woman's instructions. Surprisingly, John was not pleased that his father called him back. Initially, John's father could not see his son, as the exercise he performed only minutes before required complete darkness. John repeatedly demanded the lights be left off, until he and his father could talk for a while.

During the conversation, John explained the circumstances of his death. He left the army to go exploring, and one night chose to seek refuge in a large house on the side of the road. As he approached the house, he was attacked by a vicious dog, and was left nearly dead on the side of the road. However, he recovered enough hours later to stagger down the road, where some Russian soldiers found him and returned him to where he was initially stationed. Despite his rescue, John admittedly died two days later.

Upon his death, he awoke to find himself in the house he was going to seek refuge in days before when the dog attacked him. Next to him, on the couch, was the dog. But it was not a dog, it was a wolf, and it spoke to John. It was there that John had been residing. Until, that is, his father called him back.

After the conversation, John agreed to turn the lights on. It was then that his father discovered his son had become a wolf. Indeed, his son could take many different forms, with the one exception being the form of his previous human body. His son was a vampire, and needed to feed on the lives of humans in order to maintain his state of being.

As time passed, John's father became more and more disturbed over the killings taking place in his neighborhood, and came to realize that his beloved son John was a monster. Perceiving this, his father turned once again to the woman of the occult, searching for a way to destroy his son. The woman was called to his house, and there gave him the necessary steps to kill a vampire.

Unfortunately, it turns out that John, in his sleeping wolf state, had overheard his father and the woman talking. He hunted the woman that night, turning her into a vampire, before coming back home to admit to his father that he knew of the plans made to kill him.

In conclusion, John persuaded his father to join him as a vampire. Because he loved his son so much, and felt that becoming a vampire was better than being bound in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, he agreed. John turned his father into a vampire, and now they hunt the night together.

When I first recieved this audiotape, I had no idea what to expect. I quickly discarded any idea that it was a documentary, as the title was too suggestive of a storyline. However, because the title "My Son John" carries a slight connotation of having a sentimental effect, I thought it would be a sad story, perhaps of a child with a disease. As it turns out, there was a disease involved, although an illness not many would admit to as being part of a physicians diagnosis. The disease of vampirism, with a definite moral of "leave well enough alone"!

On the whole, I thoroughly enjoyed this story, and the way it was presented. It was unlike anything I am used to experiencing in the entertainment world of today. Television functions almost completely on the visually level, with dialogue and music functioning as a supportive detail rather than the main ingredient. On the other end of the spectrum, we have books, which are ultimately silent and provide no visual stimulus other than what the mind can conjure up. To be able to actually listen to a narrative story, yet supply my own images with my imagination, proved to be an almost perfect balance. Better yet, I could listen to it in my car and be entertained on my way to work! It was better than music, and more easily accessible than a television or book. (One can't READ while driving a car!)

Reflecting on it, I wish that there were still such programs on the radio to provide such entertainment. These days, any talking on the radio is either news, sports, talk-show trash, or dee-jays screaming at you between songs. I know that radio shows were popular in the past, but like many vintage things, have disappeared as we approach the year 2000.

I believe that there are an immense amount of valuables which have been cast off and void as items from "bygone days". There is something to be said, however, for simplicity. Perhaps it is those simple things which end up providing the most pleasure for individuals who live in world so complex and high-tech, that the actual focus of an idea is lost in the images and demands created. Entertainment should not be how many sub-screens your television can split into or how many digital compact discs fit into a stereo system. Entertainment should be simple, easy, and just that--entertaining.

"Pulpcon Radio"

by Rich Harvey

Not long ago, there was considerable disagreement over whether pulp magazines and classic radio belonged together in certain publications. A misguided bunch of nay-sayers asserted that pulps and radio had nothing in common, while coveting "audio books" which are mere readings of novels and nonfiction. Those in favor saw the marriage between the different mediums as natural and quite undeniable, since the "bloody pulps" often became successful radio serials.

The Shadow springs to mind, not to mention his birthplace, THE DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE HOUR, which was nothing more than a dramatization of stories from the weekly Street & Smith Publications magazine. Other heroes who made the transition (although not all were successful) include The Avenger, Doc Savage, The Spider, Nick Carter, and Sam Spade. Are there any I forgot to mention? Of course there are. I won't even begin to attempt the number of genre-pulp magazines which provided stories for radio shows such as SUSPENSE and X MINUS-1.

Yes, pulp fans are certainly a hearty breed, which probably explains why they have unabashedly embraced classic radio as yet another facet of the hobby which brings them joy, while certain curmudgeons in the other hobby stubbornly deny the relationship. Why else would the annual Pulpcon, that fine institution dedicated to the preservation and longevity of those wonderful, musty-smelling tomes, actually include a half-hour radio re-creation into their programming every year?

Well, it gives the fans and collectors a chance to "shine" on stage for a moment, and the audience enjoys hearing their favorite heroes in action. Donald Ramlow, a name familiar to attendees of the Friends of Old Time Radio convention, auditions and directs a rag-tag cast in re-creating a pulp magazine-related script, aided and abetted by sound effects whiz Randy Vanderbeek.

To receive the distinguished honor of becoming a Pulpcon Players production, scripts must pass certain criteria before Ramlow will consider them. Scripts must feature a pulp character, or must be an adaptation of a story taken directly from a pulp magazine. While characters such as the SHADOW, the LONE RANGER, and NICK CARTER are eligible (and have been performed), shows like GREEN HORNET and SGT. PRESTON OF THE YUKON are crossed off the list right from the beginning.

Cast members, affectionately known as The Pulpcon Players, are fans attending the weekend-long event. While the acting ability of some participants is limited, the audience always enjoys the production, especially when cast members stumble over humorous double entendres. The cast had difficulty keeping straight faces in the first production -- a re-creation of the original DOC SAVAGE series -- during a scene when the Man of Bronze meets a Mayan princess.

Former Pulpcon Players have been Will Murray, author of THE DESTROYER and DOC SAVAGE; mystery writer Michael Avallone; John Gunnison, publisher of THE PULP COLLECTOR; and even Rusty Hevelin, Pulpcon's fearless leader and coordinator. Through the diligence of DC Comics colorist Anthony Tollin, the Pulpcon Players were honored to have Lon Clarke re-create his starring role in NICK CARTER, their finest hour at Pulpcon 20.

Next year, the Pulpcon Players will perform an episode of THE SPIDER, based on one of the long-lost scripts from the series which played in the Mid-west during the 1940's, at Pulpcon 25. If you can't wait that long, there just might be a radio re-creation at Pulpcon B, the winter "mini-pulpcon" to be held in North Carolina in February. Write to Pulpcon, Box 1332, Dayton, Ohio 45401 for more information.

So, while a few fuddy-duddies out there balk at the presence of pulp magazines in their sacred publications, pulp fandom keeps the great tradition of classic radio alive--with a healthy dose of blood and thunder pulp style!

- 1984 -- DOC SAVAGE, "The Feathered Serpent" by Lester Dent
- 1985 -- SUSPENSE, "The Devil in the Summerhouse" by John Dickson Carr
- 1986 -- THE SHADOW, "Spider Boy" by Joe Bates Smith
- 1987 -- THE GREEN LLAMA, "The Unknown Professor" by Richard Foster & William Froug
- 1988 -- DIMENSION X, "With Folded Hands" by Jack Williamson
- 1989 -- SAM SPADE,
- 1990 -- NICK CARTER, "The Strange Dr. Devolo" by Walter Gibson & Ed Gruskin
- 1991 -- THE AVENGER, "Blood Ring" by Maurice Joachim
- 1992 -- ACADEMY AWARD THEATER, "The Maltese Falcon" by Dashiell Hammet
- 1993 -- DOC SAVAGE, "The Red Lake Quest" by Lester Dent
- 1994 -- THE SAINT, "The Bookstore Murder" by Louis Vitte
- 1995 -- X-MINUS ONE

STAFF CHANGES

In our fall issue, we announced that Tom Monroe had retired as our cassette librarian after serving in that position for ten years. We are now pleased to be able to tell you that Tom has not retired from serving NARA. As you will note, inside the front cover, Tom has accepted the position of "vice-president for operations." This is a new job title for the club. Tom's responsibilities will be to oversee and coordinate the efforts of the various staff members and the club's different areas of operation. Hopefully this will result in a smoother running club that will more effectively meet the expectations of our members. If there is some area of the club's operation that is not responding to you, please contact Tom and give him a chance to try and clear up the problem. And thanks to you, Tom, for taking on this new responsibility.



TOM MONROE



Newark Weather Report:
Gale Storm predicted
for the **20th Annual**
Friends of Old Time Radio
Convention Oct. 19-21, 1995
Holiday Inn North - Newark, NJ

REPORT

by

JIM SNYDER

This was my 12th Friends of Old Time Radio convention, starting way back in 1979 when it was held in Bridgeport, Connecticut. For many years now, it has been held in Newark, New Jersey. As was the case with all the others, this one was excellent as attested to by the mobs of people who attended. Jay Hickerson, the organizer all these years, put on a simply superb program. A number of NARA members had large parts in the event. NARA NEWS columnist Bob Burnham put on a presentation. Our newest columnist, Jack French, put on two outstanding programs, and member Jeff Muller also put one on. Tom Monroe, our new vice-president, had a display on the various OTR clubs around the country. Our Midwest acquisitions chairman, Don Ramlow, was responsible for the videotaping of the convention (tapes are available from AVPRO), and he also directed one of the convention's many re-creations. Other notable NARA members in attendance were president emeritus Roger Hill, cassette librarian Barry Hill, and NARA NEWS columnist Jack Palmer.

The convention is a constant round of activities for three plus days. I was told that it rained all three days this year, but I never noticed because I was so busy with what was going on. There isn't even time to eat lunch if you want to take everything in. There are all kinds of informal presentations, numerous panel discussions featuring the stars of old time radio; not only the performers but engineers, sound effects technicians, writers, and members of management. New name stars this time were Gale Storm, Dick Van Patten, Bela Lugosi, Jr., and Sara Karloff. Many of the forty stars who attended performed in numerous re-creations of old radio shows, appeared on the panels, and were constantly available for autographs and questions as they moved around the convention floor. These are genuinely nice people who are fun to talk to. The evening programs are filled with spectacular events capably moved along by convention chairman, Jay Hickerson. Then there are dozens of dealers found throughout the ground floor of the hotel.

For me, the most important part of a convention is meeting the many other collectors and fans of OTR. I renewed my acquaintance with Mike Meredith, the very first trading partner I had back in 1975 and who I completely lost track of at least a dozen years ago. As always, there were new friends to make and "old" ones to see again. I knew no one when I attended that first convention back in 1979 but now it seems that I know hundreds. This is an extremely friendly hobby and the convention makes it easy to develop new friendships that will last a lifetime, both with other collectors and with the stars themselves.

Every year there are lists of OTR personalities who have passed on. While it is kind of a morbid thought, it is also true that these next few years will be our last opportunity to meet these people. I urge all of you to take in one of the conventions around the country while you still have an opportunity to meet these wonderful people. Going to one of these shows is a decision you will not regret, and once you attend one, you'll be "hooked." It won't be your last.



REPORT

by

JIM SNYDER

This was my second SPERDVAC convention in Los Angeles. I probably should have flown this year, since Southwest Airlines had a \$19 each way fare between Phoenix and LA, but again I decided to drive and do a little "playing" following the convention. I arrived on Thursday, a day early and this gave me an opportunity to spend part of the evening with one of NARA's "celebrity" writers, Bill Murtough and his new bride.

The convention opened late Friday afternoon with an ESCAPE re-creation put on by an LA based group of radio players. That evening another ESCAPE dramatization featured Parley Baer and then what turned out to be the highlight of the convention, a VIC AND SADE episode in which Bobb Lynes absolutely "stole the show" with a superb interpretation of Uncle Fletcher.

During the day Saturday there were four panel presentations along with a SPACE PATROL re-creation featuring some of the original cast members. In the evening there was a re-creation of the same MY LITTLE MARGIE show that was put on in Newark two weeks earlier, again with Gale Storm in her original role as Margie and Parley Baer as her father. There was also a reading by Les Tremayne. The one and only Steve Allen served as master of ceremonies for this evening program.

The Sunday morning brunch featured Stan Freberg who talked and played taped excerpts of radio commercials he has made over the years.

I mentioned in my review of the Newark convention how big and busy the various dealers rooms were. SPERDVAC's dealer's room (they call it a "collector's" room) is minuscule in comparison. Very few dealers, because of the restrictive regulations, and the room was usually empty.

While both the Newark and SPERDVAC conventions have large numbers of OTR personalities present, for some reason it seemed to me to be much easier to sit down and talk to them on a one to one basis at the Los Angeles event. While they were available at Newark, they always seemed to be surrounded by large crowds of autograph seekers. Probably the smaller size of the SPERDVAC convention made it easier to visit with them. The only person I had a chance to really visit with at Newark was Bill Murtough (radio engineer). I had time to talk to him again in Los Angeles but I also had time to visit with Frank Duvall (orchestra leader), Paul Masterson (announcer), Bea Wain (wife of Andre Baruch), Paul Winchell (ventriloquist), Ed Kemmer (Space Patrol), Ray Erlenborn (sound effects), Bob Mott (sound effects and author), Frank Bresee (Golden Days of Radio), and Frank Buxton (author of the BIG BROADCAST). SPERDVAC gave me a chance to feel that I was really able to get to know each of these people because of the "quality" time I could spend with each of them. Others at the convention had the same opportunity.

I guess that the real strength behind this convention would be its two chairmen, Larry and John Gassmann. They truly know how to put together a fine program, and they are certainly outstanding in their roles as masters of ceremonies for the various parts of the program.

CONVENTIONS:



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The various conventions around the country are outstanding places to enjoy old time radio. All provide re-creations of old radio shows and workshops with some of the stars of old time radio. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities to add a new dimension to your hobby.

We list dates here as soon as we receive them so that you can plan ahead.

- ① THE 10TH ANNUAL OLD TIME RADIO AND NOSTALGIA CONVENTION is scheduled for April 12 and 13, 1996 at the Marriott Inn on the north side of Cincinnati, Ohio, just off I-75. You'll find their full page ad elsewhere in this issue. The person to contact for information is Bob Burchette, 10280 Gunpowder Road, Florence, Kentucky 41042. Phone: (606) 282-0333.
- ② THE 12TH ANNUAL NATIONAL LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY CONVENTION will be held on June 22, 1996 in Mena, Arkansas, which is located only about twenty miles from Pine Ridge, where the action in this popular radio series took place. The Best Western Lime Tree Inn is the convention hotel. For information please contact Tim Hollis, #81 Sharon Blvd., Dora, Alabama 35062.
- ③ THE REPS RADIO SHOWCASE IV is being held at the West Coast Bellevue Hotel in Bellevue, Washington on June 27 - 29, 1996. Information can be obtained by writing REPS radio Showcase, 9936 NE 197th Street, Bothell, Washington. Phone: (206) 643-7641.
- ④ THE FRIENDS OF OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTION is an annual affair held at the Holiday Inn North at the Newark, New Jersey airport. The hotel is located just off the interstate and for those flying into Newark, the hotel provides free shuttle service back and forth to the airport. Contact person is Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, Connecticut 06514. Phone: (203) 248-2887. Future dates:
21st ANNUAL CONVENTION - October 24 - 26, 1996
22nd ANNUAL CONVENTION - October 23 - 25, 1997
- ⑤ THE SPERDVAC CONVENTION is held each year at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Los Angeles International Airport. For those driving it is located on the airport entrance road off I-405. The hotel provides a free shuttle service for those flying. Contact person is Larry Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, California 90603. Phone: (310) 947-9800. Future dates:
November 8 - 10, 1996
November 7 - 9, 1997

**CINCINNATI'S
10th ANNUAL**

SPECIAL GUESTS

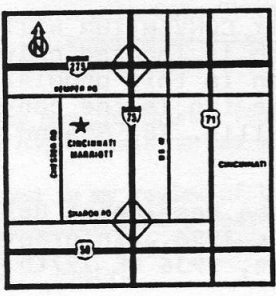
OLD TIME RADIO & NOSTALGIA CONVENTION

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ANNOUNCER ON
**THE LONE
RANGER
SHOW**

PARLEY BAER
GUNSMOKE'S CHESTER
MAYOR OF MAHERRY

PEG LYNCH
ETHEL & ALBERT

BARNEY BECK
SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST
THE SHADOW · SUPERMAN
BOB & RAY · NICK CARTER



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MORE INFORMATION
CALL BOB BURCHETT
(606) 282-0333

APRIL 12-13, 1996
MARRIOTT INN
HOURS: FRIDAY 12PM - 9 PM
SATURDAY 9AM - 4 PM

REGISTRATION FORM

10th ANNUAL OLD TIME RADIO & NOSTALGIA CONVENTION
SAT. DINNER RESERVATIONS _____ @ \$28 EACH \$
NUMBER OF DEALER TABLES _____ @ \$35 EACH \$
(MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BOB BURCHETT)
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**MAKE YOUR
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NIGHT'S DINNER
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SPACE LIMITED.
PLEASE ENCLOSE
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"TWISTING THE DIAL IN 1946"

REPS Radio Showcase IV

Seattle June 27-29, 1996

Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound

Our theme for Showcase IV will be "Twisting the Dial in 1946." We'll look back on a day in radio: (not necessarily the one to the right)-50 years ago! What shows were on the air? Who were the stars? What were the networks doing then? And more.

We will do recreations of complete shows and some interesting segments (not yet selected). Plus, there will be panels of course along with other fun surprises.

WHO WILL BE TWISTING WITH US?

Many wonderful guests have been extremely kind to REPS during our first three Showcase events. Here's a list of many of these special friends, most of whom we hope and believe will be back with us for number IV.

*Arthur Anderson *John Archer
 *Parley Baer *Harry Bartell *Dick Beals
 *Frank Bresee *Frank Buxton *Lon Clark
 *Stewart Conway *Herb Ellis
 *Ray Erlenborn *Jim French
 *Esther Gedder *Page Gilman
 *Jack Kruschen *Peter Leeds
 *Jay Livingston *Merrill Mael *Gale Storm

Masterson *Paul Masterson *Tyler McVey
 *Shirley Mitchell *Bill Murtough
 *Norma Jean Nilsson *Jeanette Nolan
 *Kevin O'Morrison *David Ossman
 *Anne Whitfield Phillips *Peggy Webber
 *Rhoda Williams *Douglas Young

PROGRAM IDEAS DEVELOPING

Program details are being worked out, and it is going to be a distinctive time. Based on three years of special times, we sincerely do believe that everyone who attends will have a close encounter of the best kind. You will truly be able to have those special moments with any of the special guests. Alert: there will be a Thursday night taping of new radio work featuring OTR stars. It will be aired after the Showcase.

SHOWCASE SITE/HOTEL INFORMATION

All Showcase events will be held at the excellent Overlake Hospital Conference Center in Bellevue, Washington. The hotel for the Showcase will again be the West Coast Bellevue, just three blocks away, with regular shuttle service.

Information telephone number 206-643-7641

SPACE HOLDER: REPS RADIO SHOWCASE IV June 27-29, 1996

Based on the intimate space, the growing registration and verbal indications, the Showcase will probably be a sell out. Thus, we will guarantee space to anyone who submits this Space Holder. You will get all advance mailings and developing program information. **NO MONEY IS REQUIRED** at this point. You will be sent an official registration form after the first of the year.

Name _____ # people _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Maps and a schedule of events will be sent within two weeks of actual registration.

Mail to: REPS Radio Showcase, 9936 NE 197th Street, Bothell, WA 98011

BUY SELL TRADE

NARA CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial ads are free to all members. Your ad will be placed in one issue, but you can resubmit it as often as you like.

The greatly expanded 1996 OTR SOURCE LIST from NARA is now available! This big, four-page compendium contains over 100 listings of OTR clubs, publications, archives, and audio dealers. Added to this new edition are dealers in OTR premiums, books, scripts, and sources of blank tape. Each entry includes full name, address, telephone number and/or e-mail address if available. Cost is still only \$2 to NARA members and \$3 to everyone else. Send money in cash or stamps to Jack French, 5137 Richardson Drive, Fairfax, VA 22032-2810. Please NO CHECKS... our profit margin on this is too small to make Jack drive to the bank and the post office. And make the stamps in a usable denomination...seven 32¢ ones would be about right. All profits go to NARA, so be generous.

PAID ADVERTISING INFORMATION...

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING RATES:

ONE ISSUE:

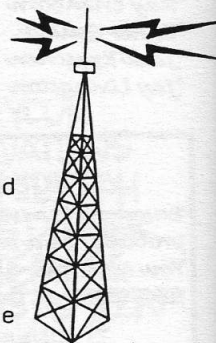
Full page	-	\$ 50.00
Half page	-	25.00
Quarter page	-	15.00

FOUR ISSUES:

25% off the above rates



NARA is on the air



Last year we announced that NARA had an old time radio program being broadcast in Southern California by Don Aston, NARA's treasurer. This program is now being carried throughout the United States and Canada on the YESTERDAY USA SATELLITE NETWORK. Don's one hour show presents old radio broadcasts as near as possible to the way they were presented years ago with the original commercials and announcements left intact. On the Satellite Network, his show is heard for one hour every 24 hours, with a new program every two weeks.

If you have a backyard satellite dish you can pick up this show on the audio sub-carrier of WGN or the Outdoor Channel. It can also be found on the "Access Channel" of many cable TV systems.

A TIP OF THE ATWATER DIAL TO....

Jack French for a substantial donation to the club which represents the money he has received in excess of his actual costs for the OTR Source List that he advertises in the classified ad section of each issue. This shows that an awful lot of our members have taken advantage of the information that Jack is providing, and it is certainly a help to our club's treasury. You will note in his ad on page 48 that he now has a new, revised list with a lot of additional information. Many thanks Jack for the service you are providing and for the donation to the club.

Jack French again, for volunteering to become one of our "regular" columnists. With the addition of Jack to our roster we now have ten different columnists who are writing for you in each issue.

The following who have made donations to NARA's cassette library: Betty & Ken Bendig, Andy Blatz (Vintage Broadcasts), Debbie & Bob Burnham (BRC Productions), Dean Case, Harvey House, Gary & Ladonna Kramer (Great American Radio), Ken Mills (Nostalgia Recordings), Jack Palmer, Michael Simmons, and Ivan Snell (Shadow's Cave).

Gene Larson for our centerfold artwork in this issue, and for two big bundles of clippings pertaining to radio.

Our columnists for this issue: Frank Bresee, Bob Burnham, Jack French, Rich Harvey, Roger Hill, Rene' Krause, Jack Palmer, John Pellatt, Chuck Seeley, Charles Sexton, Ray Smith, Hal Stephenson, and Ken Weigel.

Those who have already sent in columns for the spring issue: Frank Bresee (6 articles), Jack French, Brian Householder, Gene Larson, Charles Sexton, Ray Smith (2 articles), and Ken Weigel.

Tom Monroe for accepting the position of vice-president for operations in NARA.

All our members for your patience in regard to that long delayed fall issue. We hope that it won't happen again.

Thank You

DEADLINES: March 15 for the spring issue.
June 1 for the summer issue.