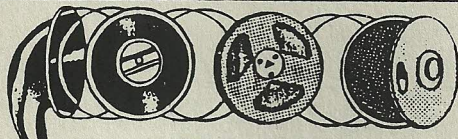
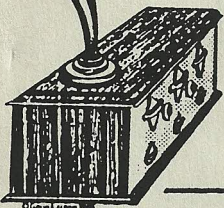


ISSN 0730-014X



"FOR THE BEST OF RADIO'S HISTORY"



A JOURNAL OF VINTAGE RADIO

# NARA NEWS<sup>©</sup>

Official Publication of the

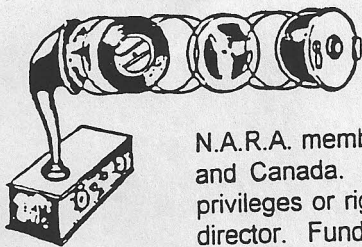
## NORTH AMERICAN RADIO ARCHIVES

VOL. XXIX

SUMMER 2001

NO. 3





# NORTH AMERICAN RADIO ARCHIVES

N.A.R.A. membership is \$20.00 per year and is restricted to residents of the USA and Canada. Non-residents may receive all publications without membership privileges or rights, by sending a donation of \$20.00 or more to the membership director. Funds sent to NARA must be in U.S. currency or redeemable for U.S. currency.

The North American Radio Archives was founded in 1972 and is a non-profit educational corporation duly registered in the State of California and licensed with the California State Tax Board as well as the Internal Revenue Service. All donations and/or gifts are tax deductible.

## our staff....

### PRESIDENT:

Ronald Staley  
17734 Devonshire St. #6  
Northridge, CA 91325

### VICE-PRESIDENT:

Robert Simpson  
4565 S.E. 57th Lane  
Ocala, FL 34480

### TREASURER:

Don Aston  
P.O. Box 1392  
Lake Elsinore, CA 92531  
aston@linkline.com

### PRESIDENT EMERITUS:

Roger Hill  
2161 Whitman Way #31  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
nothingsnewvid@aol.com

### VICE-PRESIDENT EMERITUS:

Al Inkster  
7664 East Golden River Lane  
Tucson, AZ 85715

### MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR:

### PRINT MATERIALS LIBRARY:

Bob Sabon  
308 West Oraibi Drive  
Phoenix, AZ 85027  
w9did@hotmail.com

### CASSETTE LIBRARY

Diana & Gerald Curry  
P.O. Box 5122  
Stockton, CA 95205

### NARA NEWS ON TAPE

Stephen Jansen  
515 Willow Way  
Lindenhurst, IL 60046

### EDITOR:

Jim Snyder  
2929 East Main Street #149  
Mesa, AZ 85213

### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:

John Pellatt  
47 Stuart Avenue  
Willowdale, Ontario M2N 1B2

### STAFF ARTIST:

Gene Larson  
P.O. Box 1316  
Miles City, MT 59301

NARA NEWS, a journal of the North American Radio Archives, is published quarterly for distribution to members. Sample copies may be purchased from the membership director for \$5.00 each. All correspondence and manuscripts should be sent to the editor. NARA NEWS is listed with the Library of Congress under # ISSN 0730-014X. Opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or recommendation of the organization or staff. Permission to reproduce contents of this publication may be given upon request.



## DEPARTMENTS

Staff.....	1
Conventions.....	48
Change of address.....	48
From the Editor (Jim Snyder).....	49
Tip of the Atwater Dial.....	50

## ARTICLES

Changes in NARA (Don Aston).....	3
Cassette Library Problems.....	4
Jack Armstrong (Frank Bresee).....	5
The Beginning of Radio Drama (Bob Mott).....	8
My Start in Radio – part 3 (George Steiner).....	9
Report from Toronto (John Pellatt).....	14
Lulu Belle and Scotty (Jack Palmer).....	15
A Presentation on OTR (Roger Hill).....	17
The Mystery of it All (John Stanley).....	19
Radio at War (Chuck Seeley).....	21
Our Glorious Century (Hal Stephenson).....	24
Tom Mix (Jack French).....	27
Milton Geiger (Mickey Smith).....	30
Collecting on CD (Bob Burnham).....	33
The BBC "Bairn" (Ray Smith).....	36
Fibber McGee and Molly (Don Berhent).....	39
The Breakfast Club (Clarence Runden).....	41
Hawaii Calls (Jim Snyder).....	43
Adventures of Crimebuster (Ken Weigel).....	45

## FEATURES

Death of NARA News writer.....	4
The Founding of NBC.....	25
Radio Land (Gene Larson).....	38

## ADVERTISING

Crimebuster Memorial Recording.....	47
-------------------------------------	----



# CHANGES in NARA

Changes are being made in NARA that will effect members and the NARA NEWS. Janis DeMoss, the Membership Director, for the past 10 years has decided to leave. She says she needs to rest wants a change. All of us are very sorry to see her retire. She has given so much to NARA. She will be missed. She not only took care of the membership list, but was the contact for new members. She also mailed out the NARA News.

Now NARA needs a Membership Director. NARA needs a new postal location. NARA will have to temporarily relocate to Lake Elsinore, California until a new Membership Director is found. I ask for your patience during the relocation process. Hopefully, everything will be in place by this fall. Until things are worked out, all membership questions and other inquiries should be sent to:

The NORTH AMERICAN RADIO ARCHIVES, Ltd.

Don L. Aston  
Secretary/Treasurer  
P.O. BOX 1392  
Lake Elsinore, California 92531  
(888) 332 - 8776      [aston@linkline.com](mailto:aston@linkline.com)

The Libraries are not changing are open and functioning.

Don L. Aston

## 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 LIBRARY CATALOG:

For a catalog of the shows available in our cassette library send \$3.00 to Gerald Curry, P.O. Box 5122, Stockton, CA 95205.

### SCANFAX CASSETTE LISTING:

A listing of the various program series that are available in our SCANFAX cassette library is available for \$1.00 and a self-addressed-stamped envelope (4" by 9½" size). You can then ask for program titles in those series that are of interest to you. Send your requests to Don Aston, P.O. Box 1392, Lake Elsinore, CA 92531.

### PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY CATALOGS:

The printed materials library has four different catalogs: for books, scripts, logs, and magazines. To receive all four, please send ten 34 cent postage stamps to Bob Sabon, 308 West Oraibi Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85027. You can also receive information from him at his e-mail address: [w9did@hotmail.com](mailto:w9did@hotmail.com)





## LIBRARY PROBLEMS

Our cassette librarians, Gerry and Diana Curry, have been hitting a couple snags in the library operation. First would be people who are complaining about a long delay in filling orders. We need to remind you of the need for picking as many alternate selections as possible when you send in an order. If some of your requests have already been checked out by one or more other people, the Currys must wait until those cassettes are returned before they can send them on to you. And then, there could be several other people ahead of you on the waiting list for some of those same cassettes. If you only give them two or three "alternate" selections, you may have to wait weeks, or possibly even months, before they can fill your order.

The more alternate choices you can give the Currys the better your chances of having your order filled without delay. We would like to suggest three, or even four, alternates for every cassette you request. Of course, if there are only a few cassettes that you want, and it's not possible to give alternates, that is perfectly alright, but please understand the reason for any delays.

A second concern is that of problem cassettes that you find in your order. If there is a problem please put a note in the package when you return the cassettes (don't write on the cassette label). If it is possible to correct the problem the Currys will do so. If not, the cassette will be removed from the library.

In that connection, it has been pointed out that the "Dr. Who" cassettes are not radio shows but are instead television soundtracks. So, the following cassettes should be taken out of your catalog listing: 2162, 2191, 2216, 2217, 2220, 2222, 2223, 2226, 2232, 2233, 2574. We realize that the cassette listings in the catalog are not in numerical order, but if you look closely you will see that they are listed in alphabetical order, with the alphabet starting over every two or three pages. It took us about two minutes to find all of the above "Dr. Who" listings and it shouldn't take you any longer.

We would like to remind you that the Currys, as well as all other NARA staff members, are volunteers. No one is paid a cent for the time and effort they put into providing services to our members. Each of these staff members have other work and personal family matters that must come ahead of the time that they put in for NARA. So, we certainly hope that you will be understanding when something does occasionally get tangled up. And we hope that you will show your appreciation for their efforts by showing that understanding.

**We are sorry to report that following a lengthy illness, Ken Weigel has passed away in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Ken was a frequent contributor to the pages of the *NARA News* with a wide variety of material ranging from the "Crimebusters" series we've currently been running to very detailed and carefully researched articles on World War Two. A special recording has been set up as a memorial to Ken. You can find detailed information about it on page 47.**





# Jack Armstrong The All American Boy

by

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. His book, RADIO'S GOLDEN YEARS, can be ordered from Frank Bresee Productions, P.O. Box 1222, Hollywood, CA 90027. Cost is \$25.00 postpaid.

One of the best remembered of all radio shows was "Jack Armstrong - The All American Boy." It went on the air Monday, July 31, 1933 and lasted until 1950. The program continued as "Armstrong of the S-B-1" ("Scientific Bureau of Investigation") from September 5, 1950 to June 28, 1951.

It began as a fifteen minute, six day a week program (Monday through Saturday) finally settling in at five days a week for over a dozen years. "Armstrong of the S-B-1" was a thirty minute program.

Jack Armstrong was a fictional character created by the real life journalist Robert Hardy Andrews. For those of you who remember, Jack Armstrong was of high school age, with a zest for adventure, a liking for athletics, and a keen interest in all sports. Jack's best friends were Billy Fairfield and Billy's sister Betty. The other important cast member was Uncle Jim Fairfield. He was the uncle of Billy and Betty and not related to Jack Armstrong. During the

run of the show, Billy, Betty and Jack all called him "uncle." He owned an aircraft factory and frequently took the three teenagers with him on world travels.

Jack and his friends lived in the town of Hudson in the Midwest - a town that had a population of 30,000 to 50,000 people. Jack Armstrong was the sort of boy most American teenagers would like to become.

As Jack Armstrong authority Dr. Fred L. King pointed out over a dozen years ago, "The initial scripting had Jack competing in various aquatic contests in his school. The 1933 Chicago World's Fair was in progress at the time, and the writers took advantage of the publicity generated by the fair. Jack fouled, and was almost disqualified, but bounced back to win. He continued, and at the end of a motorboat race Jack collapsed and was carried onto a boat in Lake Michigan. Rescue came for him in a new crash-proof plane invented by one of Jack's friends, and later

attempts to steal the plans for this unique plane carried the radio serial along for quite a while. Jack's next adventure was tied in with the shooting plane premium offer which was made on the program - the first of over a hundred premiums made on the program from 1933 through 1948."

Some of the more popular premiums included the "Hike-O-Meter" pedometer, Jack Armstrong's "sunwatch," the "magic answer box," the "whistling ring," the "dragon eye ring," and the "torpedo flashlight." The Hike-O-Meter was the first radio premium which was offered nationally. It was presented on a Thursday broadcast, and on the following Monday over 178,000 requests for the premium had arrived at the General Mills/Wheaties office in Minneapolis. As a matter of fact, every day that week brought in over 70,000 more requests. The following weekend the mail continued to accumulate until on the second Monday another 122,000 orders arrived. Then on



February 27, 1939 (the third Monday) the coupon service was stunned by a load of 180,000 returns in one day. Eventually 1,231,987 Hike-O-Meters were mailed to listeners. This was a ratio of one Hike-O-Meter for every seven kids in America. Of course a Wheaties boxtop accompanied each request so the problem was a pleasant one for General Mills. It was one of the most successful advertisements for Wheaties.

In addition to the radio shows, there were "Big Little Books," Jack Armstrong comic magazines and a newspaper comic strip. During the 1947 season Jack Armstrong was also a movie hero in a Columbia Pictures 15 chapter serial. The serial featured John Hart and Rosemary La Planche.

Because of the long run of the program, a number of fine Chicago radio actors were featured in the cast. The actor in the original role of Jack Armstrong was Jim Ameche. His brother was the film actor Don Ameche. Jim Ameche played the role from the beginning in 1933, through January 1938. Stacy Harris played the lead for a little over a year, followed by Frank Behrens for a few months in 1939. Charles Flynn became Jack Armstrong in October 1939 and continued until 1943 when he was called into the U.S. Army. He returned to the role in 1944, remaining through the end of the run in 1950. He also continued when the program was re-named



# RADIO'S GOLDEN YEARS.

by FRANK BRESEE & BOBB LYNES

## JACK ARMSTRONG! JACK ARMSTRONG!

*JACK WAS PLAYED BY ACTORS JIM AMECHE, STANLEY (STACY) HARRIS AND RYE BILLSBURY...*



*JIM AMECHE*

*THE MOST FAMOUS WAS CHARLES FLYNN, WHO HAD THE ROLE LONGER THAN ANYONE (1939-1951)*

*JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY, WAS ONE OF THE LONGEST-RUNNING AFTERNOON ADVENTURE SHOWS, STARTING ON JULY 31, 1933 ON WBBM, CHICAGO & LASTING UNTIL 1951*

*THE SHOW FEATURED MANY RADIO PREMIUMS WHICH WERE SENT FOR A DIME AND A WHEATIES BOX-TOP. INCLUDING:*

- SECRET DE-ODDER*
- MANUALS*
- LAPEL PINS*
- MAGIC LIE*
- DETECTOR BOX*

*THE LONGTIME ANNOUNCER WAS FRANKLYN MACCORMACK*



*THE SPONSOR OVER THE YEARS WAS WHEATIES BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS!*



*JACK ARMSTRONG'S THEME SONGS: "HAVE THE FLAG FOR HUDSON HIGH BOYS, SHOW THEM HOW WE STAND, EVER SHALL OUR TEAM BE CHAMPIONS, KNOWN THROUGH-OUT THE LAND!"*





*THE MOST FAMOUS JACK ARMSTRONG PREMIUM WAS THE HIKE-O-METER....THOUSANDS WERE SENT TO LISTENERS!*

This is a page from Frank Bresee's book. You will find information on how to order his book at the beginning of his column.

"Armstrong of the S-B-I." Rye Billsbury played Jack Armstrong during Flynn's absence during 1943-1944.

Several actors played Billy including John Gannon and Dick York. Naomi May is the best remembered Betty. Uncle Jim was played throughout the complete run of the show by James Goss. The announcer was Franklyn McCormack.

In 1992 I had an opportunity to interview Jack Armstrong (Charles Flynn) for my "Golden Days of Radio" show and he pointed out some interesting facts:

"My mother and father were both actors, and in 1929 and 1930, during the Depression, things got pretty tough financially and my mother thought she could get me into radio so



she took me down to station WBBN in Chicago where they were casting for a part on a children's show called 'Skippy.' I read, but didn't get the part so my mother immediately took me over to WGN where I auditioned and got a part on another kid's show. That lasted for a couple of years and I became a pretty good actor. During the next few years I had parts on many of the soap operas originating from Chicago, including 'Bachelor's Children,' 'Ma Perkins,' and 'Myrt and Marge.' In 1939 I auditioned for the lead in Jack Armstrong and played the part for most of the episodes until 1951. Originally the program was on the air for 15 minutes, five days a week, and for the last couple of years it was a half hour, three days a week.

"When I started playing Jack Armstrong, we would record the program about a month in advance for the stations that were not on the network. This would allow transcriptions (pressings) to be made and sent to the stations that were not on the telephone network line and these stations could play the same show we were doing 'live' that day on the network. As everyone knows, the program originated in Chicago, and our day would go something like this. We would come into the studio at about nine o'clock in the morning, rehearse and record the

## FINAL CONTINUITY

Knox Reeves Advertising, Inc.

ADVERTISER	GENERAL MILLS, INC.
CONTINUITY NUMBER	#3232
DATE OF BROADCAST	JUNE 17, 1947
DATE OF RECORDING	
DAY	TUESDAY
TIME	5:30 - 5:45 PM CST
NETWORK OR STATION	AEC
PRODUCT ADVERTISED	
NAME OF PROGRAM	JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY.
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	JACK ARMSTRONG AND THE SKY ELEVATOR
PROGRAM NOTES	RAP - Forest Fires
OPENING: 249 words	
ECHO FILTER	
ORGAN THEME SNEAK IN TENSION SWELL - PADE BEHIND SUSPENSE	
CHARACTERS: JACK VIC BILLY SAM JOHNSON	
STINGER BASS CHORD - SWELL INTO HEAVY TENSION AGITATO SUSPENSE THEME	

This is the first page from a Jack Armstrong program script from 1947.

program which would take us to 11:00 or 11:30. The cast would go to lunch and take an afternoon break. At around three o'clock we would come back to the studio and rehearse the 'live' program for the stations on the network. We would rehearse that two or three times, and we would do the 'live' program at 5:30, and the second broadcast at 6:30. The first

program was for the east coast, the second for the west coast."

Charles Flynn told me he would never forget those wonderful eleven years that he was honored to play Jack Armstrong.

For those of us who were fortunate enough to tune in, we will always be grateful for those wonderful memories.



# THE BEGINNING OF RADIO DRAMA

by  
Robert L. Mott



Bob Mott has a long and distinguished career in both network radio and TV. He handled sound effects for such radio shows as *Gangbusters* and *Mr. Chameleon* as well as television shows including the *Tonight Show* and the *Bob Hope Show*. He was also a writer for *Red Skelton*, *Dick Van Dyke*, and *Andy Williams*, among others. He has written three books, two of which are still available: *Radio Live! Television Live!* (published in 2000) is \$49, shipping included, and *Radio Sound Effects* (published in 1993) is \$46.50 postpaid. They can be ordered from McFarland & Company, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, or (800) 253-2187.

Radio drama has been accurately described as "the theatre of the mind," and the success or failure of any given program was in direct relationship to its ability to involve the radio listener's imagination. The listening audience gave little thought to the ages or appearances of those early radio actors. The important concern was, what did their voice make them sound like?

It was for this reason that balding, middle-aged men could portray young, virile Adonises, while women very often played the parts written for both young girls and boys. But the epitome of adaptability was reached on the old radio show *Beulah*. On this highly rated show, the starring role of the black maid was successfully played by a white man!

If radio was the "theatre of the mind," it most certainly was also "the drama of deceit." And yet, as magical as all those versatile voices were, there was an element lacking that radio desperately needed if it was going to make its dramatic shows more realistic and exciting. It was one thing to tell a story using clever dialogue, spoken by talented actors, but unless the audience could visualize what these disembodied voices were actually doing and where the scenes were taking place, it soon became very confusing.

In those early days, some critics compared listening to a dramatic show on radio with attending the theater blindfolded. Although this was a rather extreme commentary on an industry so young, there was enough truth in it to make the champions of radio wince. And yet, radio was asking a great deal from its listeners. Unlike the familiar theater, audiences were without the enormous benefit of seeing what the actors were doing. With radio, all the action had to be implied with the actors' dialogue.

Training people to work in this new and mysterious medium was slow and arduous. For that reason, radio began drawing upon the experienced people in the theater for much of their talent. Although this seemed like an excellent solution, it actually created some new problems. Actors who had spent years honing their skills to be able to convey emotions by a slump of a shoulder or an arched eyebrow found these physical movements of little value to an unseeing audience. Furthermore, the rich, resonant voices that could be heard in the last row of the balcony now had to be retrained to comply with the demands of a mysterious electronic gadget called a microphone.

Even the writers from the theater were finding it difficult to make the transition. They too were accustomed to the visual contributions the actors made to prevent the monotony of putting everything into words. And just how long would radio audiences keep accepting such dialogue as, "Isn't that John's car I just heard drive up?" Especially when they never heard the sound of John's car. Yes, this was indeed an extremely painful growing up period for radio.



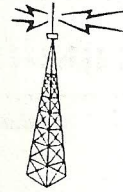


# MY START IN RADIO

(PART THREE)

by

George E. Steiner, Ph.D.



*While a graduate student at Wayne State University in Detroit, Dr. Steiner was hired as an actor on the Lone Ranger, Green Hornet, and Challenge of the Yukon over radio station WXYZ. He started his broadcast career on a small 1000 watt independent radio station in Sanger, California in the 1940's. He now continues telling us of his experiences in those early days.*

Copyright © 2001

I wrote advertising copy and read the news on the hour. Sometimes I would also do the farm news at 12:15. We also did a homemaker type show. On it, Joy Furstenberger, a friend from Fresno State, and I would read interesting items that we thought would appeal to the housewife. The most exciting program we ever did was called "Hi Neighbor." We put the mike out on the front lawn of the radio station and broadcast our helpful hints from out there. On this particular day we invited the folks to come by and visit with us and to share some watermelon with us. Well, only two young boys showed up for that broadcast. One of them nearly cut his hand off trying to slice the tough melon.

I also did Santa Claus on the air. I told the kids that I was talking to them from the North Pole. I did this program all during the month of December, right up to the 24<sup>th</sup>. I was given a small extra fee for doing St. Nick by the Sanger Chamber of Commerce. It was not an easy show to do. I would first try to find the toys

that would wind up or make music or some other sound. Then I would ask, "Ho, ho, ho, ho. Do you know what that is boys and girls? A table top piano? Hee, hee, right. That's what it is. Oh, we're making a lot of these little pianos this year. If you want one, just like the one I played, you just write a card or letter to Santa Claus, care of this station. Ho, ho, ho." After I'd received some of their requests I would read them on the air and then I'd tell them that if they were good boys and girls Santa would see that their request was granted. I often wondered what some of them thought of Santa if they didn't get what they asked for. I would go on the air as Santa at 2:45 in the afternoon and then go off at 3:00. At 3 o'clock the real other "in person" Santa would appear on the streets in Sanger in front of department stores. At 3 o'clock I would come out of that studio drenched with perspiration because of all the energy and vocal expression I put into my characterization. Let me tell you those "Ho, ho, ho's" took a lot of physical effort. As the

December 25<sup>th</sup> date came closer I would also promote my upcoming arrival in Sanger in the big football stadium. I told them that I would arrive in my very own helicopter and if they couldn't make it to the stadium they could listen to my arrival over this radio station. The city of Sanger also arranged to have real snow (I guess crushed ice) put on the grass in one area of the stadium so everyone could make their own snowball. The Santa Claus who appeared in person on the streets in Sanger after my broadcasts was to be the Santa who arrived in the helicopter. Well, this Santa refused to fly so someone talked the helicopter pilot into putting on Santa's costume and beard. Now the helicopter pilot Santa was a very tall, thin man with a personality more like Scrooge than St. Nick. I'll never forget that broadcast. That poor announcer. "Yes sir, boys and girls, we're here in the football stadium waiting for --- wait --- wait --- here --- here he is boys and girls. Santa is here in his very own helicopter. As soon as he lands and comes out of his helicopter,



we'll have him on the air to talk to you. Yes, yes, the blades have stopped rotating. He should be out in a minute or two. Well, boys and girls, I guess Santa isn't coming out of his helicopter. No problem. I'm going to take my microphone inside the big bird here and talk to Santa Claus. Santa! Oh, Santa! The boys and girls in our radio audience want to know all about your trip down from the North Pole." "It was OK." "Well Santa, you'll be coming out of your seat to say hello and to wave to all the boys and girls who've come out to see you today, won't you?" "No, I'm getting out of here right now." With that proclamation the helicopter blades started rotating and Santa took off. Exactly how the announcer tried to cover up this big fiasco I don't recall exactly, but I'm sure it was something like this, "Well, boys and girls, as you know Santa has a very busy schedule to keep and he would have liked to spend some time with you but he has a lot of Christmas presents to deliver and so he had to leave early. Bye Santa! Now back to our station."

The Nesbitt Orange drink company was interested in putting on a Saturday morning kid's show which they wanted to originate live from a movie theater in Fresno. I was asked to be the MC for the half hour program and for doing the program I would receive a \$10 honorarium. For that \$10 I had to drive into Fresno ten miles each way, collect all the game props and prepare all the program content. I'd decided

to have contests that involved the kids in the audience. Thinking of five different contests each week was not an easy task. Because the sponsor was an orange drink company called Nesbitt's California Orange Company, I decided to use real oranges in the contest. "Who can make the longest orange peel?" An orange race: "Push the orange with your nose only. On your mark, get set, push!" "Who can peel and orange the fastest?" "Who can peel and eat an orange the fastest?" I had them do everything I could think of with a real orange. When I ran our orange related contests, I hung large balloons on a rather large Nesbitt Orange poster, and then had the kids throw darts at the balloons. "Pop 'em to win a prize!" The sponsor loved this contest because the darts would stick in the Nesbitt Orange poster allowing me to say, "That's in the 'N' of Nesbitt," or "That's in the 'T' of Nesbitt," and so on. The sponsor got at least 15 product mentions with this contest alone. Well, I had to eliminate the dart contest, however, because some of the kids while waiting their turn to throw a dart decided to see how far the dart would go out into the audience. Thank God no one ended up with "That's in the 'H', the head of little Suzie." After about four weeks I ran out of things to do with oranges and we turned to just old fashioned contests. One Saturday a baker donated five chocolate cream pies. Great, we'll have a pie eating contest. We did, and of course the kids

ended up with pie all over their faces and clothes, and the stage floor was a sea of meringue. After that particular show was off the air, a mother of one of the contestants came up to me and said, "Mr. MC! You made my boy sick with that pie eating." I think I got away from her by telling her to see the theater manager, and that he had people on his staff that would take care of people who got sick. The audience at the theater was never very large, maybe twenty-five at the most on each Saturday. In order to make it sound like there were a lot more there, especially when we first went on the air, I told them that the louder they yelled, the more candy bars I would throw out to them from the stage. The theater manager provided me with several boxes of Snickers and other candy bars for just this purpose. So, my offering them candy, just as we went on the air, made the twenty-five kids in the theater seats sound like a hundred kids.

Quiz programs and the naming of a tune were becoming popular in the late 40's on radio, so I decided to have the playing of a mystery tune every Saturday morning on the Nesbitt Orange program. I picked a tune that I knew that probably none of the kids had ever heard before. To make it even more difficult, the recording of the tune came from my sister's jewelry music box. Well, no one guessed it for weeks. The prizes for guessing the tune continued to build. The prizes were mainly cardboard games, jigsaw



puzzles, games, all of them in cardboard boxes. In order to make the prizes sound like they weren't just little old games, a classmate of mine and I would alternate the reading of the name of the game and the manufacturer so that the prizes sounded like the biggest giveaway of all time. "And here is what you'll win if you name the tune. 'Peril,' an exciting game made by Tricon Incorporated, Chicago, Illinois. 'Buried Treasure,' a search for real gold and fun, made by the Singleton Corporation of New York City." And the list went on and on. As many as fifteen or more games could be won if the contestant could just name that mystery tune. I made certain that the music box was wound up and all I did was start it and then place the microphone right in the box. I believe it was a tune that was popular back in the 1920's, or maybe even before. It was called "Rio Rita." No wonder the kids couldn't get it. No, that's not true. I had one kid who helped me set up the prizes before every Saturday morning. He volunteered his help and seemed like a good kid. He must have peeked into the music box at sometime because one week, right after I had asked, "Now, for all those prizes, can anyone of you name that tune?" The kid came running out from back stage and yelled, "I can name that tune, Uncle George! It's 'Rio Rita!'" I could have wrung his neck. I had no other recourse than to give him all those accumulated games. Needless to say, he didn't

show up to set up the prizes for the next week's show. There weren't any prizes left. He had won — no — taken them all.

There were a good number of embarrassing broadcast moments in my two year stint at the radio station KSGN in Sanger, California. The Sanger Chamber of Commerce had, for a number of years, sponsored, just before Mother's Day, a "Mother of the Year" program. All of the contributing town merchants would give prizes to the winning mother and they arranged for a breakfast meeting at which they honored Sanger's "Mother of the Year."

They thought that since there was now a new local radio station (that was us) it would be a good idea to broadcast live, right from the breakfast meeting that honored their mother. I was either assigned to the task of being master of ceremonies or I volunteered my services, I don't recall now. Anyway, in preparing for the program I asked the Chamber members who, besides the mother of the year, would be talking on our broadcast. They gave me a list of names, the president of the Chamber, mayor, and of course several city council members. When asked how long each would speak, they informed me that that wouldn't be a problem. They said that with some of the people they had lined up, I probably couldn't shut them up. I believe it was the mayor who would be the talkative one. They told me, "If you're

not careful, Mr. Steiner, he'll go on for more than fifteen minutes."

On the Saturday, the day before Mother's Day, at 9:00 a.m., we went on the air live. I opened the program, gave a brief history, some background on how the "Mother of the Year" was selected, and then I introduced the president of the Sanger Chamber of Commerce. He spoke for about two minutes and then I introduced Mr. Mayor, the so called talkative one. The mayor was supposed to greet everyone and introduce everyone and then also introduce the "Mother of the Year" to the listening audience. Well, the microphone must have frightened the mayor and instead of using his fifteen minutes he said everything he had to say in less than five. I started to panic because I had at least twenty minutes left to fill. I got the mother to come over to the mike and say a few words. That's exactly what she did. She said a few words about how happy she was to have been selected, and then went right back to her seat and sat down. You can imagine how I was feeling at this moment, only one more speaker, a councilman, and that was it. Somehow I had to fill in for fifteen minutes.

Well, as the councilman was speaking, I had a brainstorm. I would talk to people out in the breakfast audience about their mothers and Mother's Day. Anything to fill the time. So, the minute the councilman finished — that's about how



long he talked - I picked up the heavy microphone stand and mike and carried it off the stage down onto the floor among the breakfast tables. That was no easy task because the mike cord would get caught on the chair legs and that mike stand weighed in at about twenty-five pounds. I really don't remember what I asked all of the people, but I do remember what one respondent said about Mother's Day, and it wasn't until he had said it that he realized that he had made a boo boo. His statement went something like this: "Well, I think this has been a wonderful event we've had here this morning. In a sense it sort of puts the finishing touches in what I would consider to be the most successful Mother's Day sales we have ever had, here in Sanger. We should do more things like this. It's just great for our business." Well, those who heard his statement were embarrassed. Mother's Day in those days, years ago, was a pretty sacred day, and even though merchants must have had those money thoughts they certainly wouldn't talk about it openly, or on the air. As soon as he finished his statement I went into a prepared closing and still went off the air early. What an experience that was! I did the program again the next year, but this time I was *really* prepared, with more material and more people to be interviewed than I could ever use. As a program, however, I'm certain it wasn't half as interesting to the listening

audience as was that first "Mother of the Year" broadcast.

I had a similar problem with the broadcast of our station's first coverage of a high school football game. On this program I was given the job of being the color announcer, you know, the announcer that gives the background of the home team, how many games they had won or lost so far in the season, what their chances were today against their bitter rival, the team that came from a neighboring high school. The play by play announcer and I arrived at the football field around 1:00 p.m. and we were told that the game would start at 1:30. So, we went on the air at 1:30. I opened the program with all of my game data, keeping an eye open for the teams to come out on the field. At 1:45 no one was coming out on the field. I had read everything I had previously written and turned my attention to the play by play announcer that had been sitting right next to me and I said, "Say, Art...." He wasn't there either. I was hanging in mid-air with some remark like, "Folks, the game should start any minute now." Then I saw the green uniformed players coming onto the field. Saved at last! At least now I had something to see and talk about, I thought. A whistle blew and all the green uniformed players ran off the field. What followed was perhaps the worst performance I have ever given. I talked about the foothills and

the background. I talked about the vineyards that bordered the stadium. How grapes could be eaten right off the vine. How some were dried and made into raisins. How certain brands (that's what I called them) were crushed and made into wine. Profound statements like that. Oh, it was horrible. I never felt so totally naked in my entire life. A week or so later I happened to meet someone who had heard my descriptions and he said it was the funniest pre-game ramblings he had ever heard coming from a football field. He even asked me if the broadcast was sponsored by a winery.

Our radio station really tried to provide programs for all kinds of audiences. We even installed a special sports wire, a wire service that gave the names of the horses that won, showed or placed at all of the major race tracks in California. We would interrupt our regular programming to give these results as they came in, and whenever there was a delay in the sports wire service on a race we would get calls from bookies all over the state wanting to know what happened in the 5<sup>th</sup> at Bay Meadows. The race results programming was so popular we thought it would be appropriate to have it sponsored and have it make a little money for us.

Thank goodness the Federal Communications Commission never listened to what our sponsor did with our race





A KSGN promotional booth. George Steiner is in the white shirt, second from the left.

results. There was a racing club organization in Los Angeles that was the sponsor. They would provide us with a pre-recorded disc transcription that highlighted the races on several race tracks. They used a very deep voiced announcer who would talk about the horses that were running. Then on cue, from him, like "And here are today's results from the 4<sup>th</sup> race at Bay Meadows," we would then cut in live and give the results of the 4<sup>th</sup> race from Bay Meadows. Nothing illegal about that so far. What was illegal was that along with the race track talk the announcer would include the racing club's commercial, and his pitch went something like this: "Racing fans, picking winners at a race track is not an easy task. You know that and so do we. We're here to help you. We have taken all the guess work out of picking winners. Here's all you have to do. Just mail us \$10 each day, money order

only, and we will telegram you the names of the horses that will win, place, or show on any race track in California. So, send your money to ....." Well, the FCC had regulations against anyone broadcasting lotteries or games of chance, especially games or races where the listener sent in money in order to participate. After running the racing club's program for about a month we finally decided, despite the fact that the racing club paid top dollar for our air time, to take it off the air before we were brought before the Federal Communications Commission to explain why we were getting paid for promoting gambling.

We sold some air time to a man by the name of Pete Tewksberry who wanted to do baseball game re-creations. He was a very talented person. He used the sports wire source for his game coverage and he made the game sound like he was at the ballpark when he

was really in our main studio. He had a foot control for the sounds of a baseball crowd and whenever some batter hit the ball he would flick a small matchbox with his index finger for the sound of the bat hitting the ball. Then he'd bring up the pre-recorded volume on the crowd sound. It really sounded as if he was sitting in the broadcast booth at the ballpark bringing this big game to our listeners on this little 1000 watt AM station in Sanger California.

One year we scooped the mother radio station in Fresno, KMJ, owned by the McClatchy Company. KMJ had exclusive broadcast rights for the West Coast Relays, which were held every year in Fresno in what was once called the Radcliff Stadium, I believe. What exclusive broadcast rights meant was that no other radio station was allowed to have a live microphone in the stadium for the purpose of broadcasting the races. Well, we managed to get around their exclusiveness by having an ordinary telephone and line installed for us in the stadium. This telephone line was an open line to our sports announcer sitting in our main radio studio fifteen miles from the stadium. Our man at the stadium would relay the race results as soon as they were completed over the open phone line to our sports announcer and he would repeat what he heard into a live mike. There were times when our sports announcer had the race results on our station before the mother station, KMJ, did.





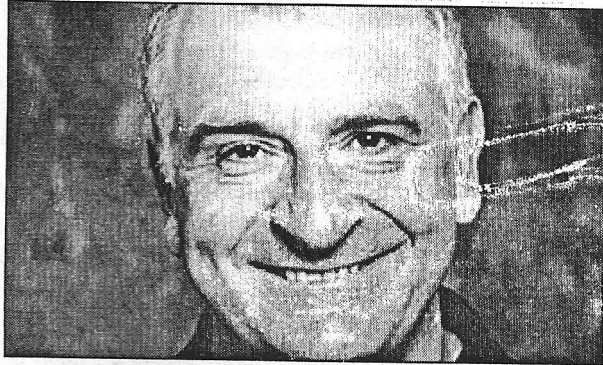
## TRANSCRIBED FROM TORONTO

by John Pellatt

John Pellatt is a writer, broadcaster, and performer on radio and television in Canada, Great Britain, and the United States.

Fans of the 1980's BBC Radio comedy cult classic **THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY** were saddened by the untimely death of its author, British writer Douglas Adams, in May of this year. He was 49. The radio series is still available on tape and CDs and is enjoyed by radio drama enthusiasts around the world. It is the satirical science fiction adventures about a group of interplanetary travelers which begins with the complete destruction of the planet Earth to make way for an intergalactic freeway.

The head of BBC comedy and former producer of the series, Geoffrey Perkins, called Adams "absolutely one of the most creative geniuses to ever work in radio comedy. He probably wrote one of the greatest radio comedy series ever, certainly the most imaginative." The series later went on to become a string of best selling books, a live theatre play and a BBC television show.

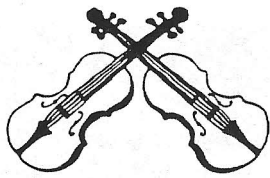


**Douglas Adams**

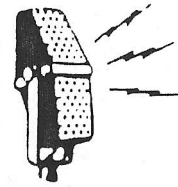
Vintage radio fans everywhere have long recognized HHGTTG as the most innovative "theatre of the mind" to have emerged from any source in literally decades. It turned on a whole new generation of listeners to the potential of audio drama by creating a witty, intelligent fusion emerged from any source in literally decades. It turned a whole new generation of listeners to the potential of audio drama by creating a witty, intelligent fusion of comedy, science fiction and dramatic genres. The series featured such improbably named characters as Zaphod Beeblebrox and Marvin the Paranoid Android and probed such deeply philosophical problems as "what is the answer to life, the universe and everything?" (The answer, in case you wanted to know, turns out to be "42".) Adams leaves a wife and six year old daughter and millions of devastated fans around the planet...far too soon.

**Preservatory.com** was too good an idea to last... and it didn't. A commercially funded internet website, each month it would feature the best from CBC Radio archives. Comedies dramas, documentaries, etc. culled from the thousands of hours of material locked away for decades were finally available for listeners to appreciate and enjoy. From January to May of this past year, preservatory.com provided a representative sampling of some of the goodies many of us remember from CBC Radio's golden and silver ages. As of mid-May it had gone on "temporary hiatus" without any reason. Let us hope they work out whatever difficulties they encountered and return as quickly as possible with a renewed commitment to preserving and exploring the best of CBC Radio's spoken word past. You can check it out at <http://www.preservatory.com> to see if it has returned or not.

The former historical headquarters of CBC Radio (from the 1930s through to the 1990s) on Jarvis Street in Toronto has been leveled and townhomes and apartment condos built on its site. The name of the new condo project is, appropriately enough, "Radio City." Whether the future residents will have any inkling of the cultural significance of their location and its name, remains to be seen. Perhaps some day, late at night, the sounds of ghostly old CBC Radio shows will be heard from heating vents and air conditioners...? Sounds like THAT might make an interesting show itself. Hmmm. Too bad there's no more X MINUS ONES being made...



## From JACK PALMER



### LULU BELLE AND SCOTTY

For years the team of Lulu Belle and Scotty performed on *The National Barn Dance*, broadcast over WLS in Chicago. Possibly the most popular and certainly the longest lasting husband and wife duo to perform in the country music genre, they spent most of their career on the WLS program.

Although both were born in North Carolina, not too many miles or years apart, they never met until they both appeared on *The National Barn Dance*. Scott Greene Wiseman was born in Ingalls, North Carolina on November 8, 1909. Four years later Myrtle Eleanor Cooper was born in Boone, North Carolina on December 24, 1913.

Scotty grew up in Ingalls collecting folksongs from his relatives and neighbors and learning to play the guitar, banjo and harmonica. His goal was to become a teacher although he continued to entertain on the side. In 1927 he first performed on the radio on WRVA in Richmond Virginia. But he soon left to begin his studies at Duke University. The following year, 1928, he moved to Fairmont State College in West Virginia where he graduated in 1932. During his years at Fairmont, he performed on a local radio station WMMN. His performances led to an offer from WLS to join *The National Barn Dance* in 1933, which he promptly accepted, teaching jobs not being too easy to find in the depression days. At *The National Barn Dance* he performed as a soloist for the first few months, calling himself Skyland Scotty and modeling his style after his idol, Bradley Kincaid.

Meanwhile Myrtle had spent a very short time in Boone. Due to her father's chronic unemployment, the family moved to Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, South Carolina and Kentucky before going back to Tennessee. Here Myrtle quit school at 14 and began working in a local hosiery mill. In 1929 Myrtle's father, jailed for selling moonshine, escaped and the family headed for Chicago. Myrtle worked at various jobs from baby sitter to sales clerk for several years, supplementing this income by singing at local events for \$5 per performance. Her father had been pestering WLS to give his daughter an audition. At the audition, her frantic movements and stage antics drove the engineers crazy and she flunked the audition. A few weeks later, a toned down 18-year-old Myrtle tried again and was accepted. She first appeared on *Smile-A-While*, a 5:30 AM show, to learn how to present herself. John Lair, the artistic director of the *Barn Dance*, gave her the name "Lulu Belle" and a few suggestions. She quickly developed her trademark costume, a gingham dress, pantaloons, and high top shoes. Originally paired off as the girl friend of Red "Burrhead" Foley, a member of "The Cumberland Ridge Runners", that was changed when Red Foley married and his new wife was not too happy with her husband's being the boyfriend of the young Lulu Belle. Within a few months after Scotty joined the program, he was paired with Lulu Belle.

First presented as Lulu Belle and Skyland Scotty (as they were billed in the early days) in 1934, they soon became the most popular act on the show. By this time Lulu Belle with her costume and her permanent wad of chewing gum had become a sassy, smart alecky performer and played the aggressive girlfriend to Scotty's bashful boyfriend. She played the guitar and Scotty the banjo while they sang the songs they had learned as youngsters in the hills of North Carolina. They soon expanded their repertoire to include popular songs, novelties, gospel and mainstream country. One of their most popular arrangements was their version of the old song "Does the Spearmint Lose Its Flavor On the Bedpost Overnight?". Their on stage romance soon blossomed into a real romance and by the end of the year they were married.

Although the *National Barn Dance* started as a local Saturday night show on WLS, it was picked up by the Blue network of NBC for a one-hour broadcast of the show, beginning September 30, 1933.



Always sponsored by Alka Seltzer, it remained on NBC until September 28, 1946, although it was reduced to a thirty-minute show beginning June 29, 1940. It later appeared on the ABC network for 30 minutes on Saturday night from March 19, 1949 until March 11, 1950, sponsored by Phillips Milk of Magnesia. It continued on the air locally until 1970, when it finally disappeared from the air.

Of course, the local broadcast ran much longer than the network show (often in excess of four hours), but all of the cast were given a chance at some network exposure. By 1935, due to this national exposure, Lulu Belle and Scotty were being titled *The Sweethearts of Country Music* and also being praised by WLS as "the recipient of the largest personal mail in radio . . . with the greatest number of admiring letters of any star." The following year, the readers of *Radio Guide* magazine voted Lulu Belle "National Radio Queen" outpolling every other woman on national radio regardless of the program: probably the most unusual honor any country music star has ever achieved. The same year their first child, Linda, was born. Soon a son, Steve, joined the family.

In 1938, they left WLS to head for Hollywood to make a movie, *Shine on, Harvest Moon*. They eventually made eight movies ending with *The National Barn Dance* in 1940. During this time they were also performing on radio at WLW in Cincinnati. In 1940 they returned to WLS and the *National Barn Dance*. By this time they were Lulu Belle and Scotty, the Skyland being dropped somewhere between Chicago and the west coast. In Chicago they began performing on WNBQ-TV in 1949. They continued on TV until 1957 as well as performing at the *National Barn Dance* weekly. They also did a syndicated radio show during part of the 1950s titled *Breakfast In the Blue Ridge*.

Although one of the most popular acts in the United States, they never had a smash hit record. But their records were popular. Both had made a couple of records prior to their being teamed together but they did their first recordings together for the American Record Company in 1935. They continued to record over the years usually doing old-time songs, religious numbers, novelties, and some of Scotty's songs. They were still popular enough to be recording LPs in the 1960s and early 1970s, with a final album for Old Homestead Records in 1974. Lulu Belle (as Lula) also did a solo LP in 1986 after Scotty's death.

About this time, Scotty decided to return to school to obtain an advanced teaching degree from Northwestern University. He continued performing with Lulu Belle on the *National Barn Dance*, until he received his Master's degree in 1958. After 25 years on the air, they were now ready to retire and move back to their home in North Carolina.

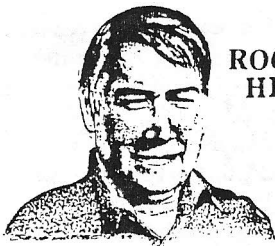
A home, which Scotty always claimed was paid for by his most popular song, "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?" The song has been recorded over 100 times by artists of every style. Scotty also wrote many other classic country songs, including his version of "Mountain Dew". Among many others there was "Remember Me", "Homecoming Time In Apple Valley", and "Tell Her You Love Her". Scotty was elected to the Nashville Songwriter's Hall Of Fame in 1971.

Back home in Spruce Pine, North Carolina, Scotty taught at Spruce Pine College, became a bank director and did a little farming. Lulu Belle became active in community activities and local politics. In the 1970s she was elected to the state legislature, serving two two-year terms. In 1980 they were nominated for the Country Music Hall Of Fame, but have not yet been selected for that honor. Scotty passed away on January 31, 1981. Lulu Belle married an old family friend a few years later. She died on February 8, 1999.

## Correction Notice

In his article in our winter issue, about Bill Monroe, Jack Palmer stated that "in 1992 [Monroe] was presented the National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Award by President Clinton." Of course, the president who presented that award back in 1982 was Ronald Reagan rather than Bill Clinton.





ROGER  
HILL

## THE OLD CURMUDGEON

Back on June 7<sup>th</sup> I had the opportunity to put on an old time radio program for an annual combined meeting of the Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, and Soroptimist service clubs. I was aided in this by a friend, Bruce McCombs. It was an interesting experience that I thought I would share with you, and I hope that after reading this you might try doing something similar. I'll be glad to provide you with some help.

A few weeks prior to the program I started with about 97 slides and gradually whittled it down to about 40 by the time of the presentation. Using multiple sources of sound materials, I had from 30 seconds to 2 minutes of audio for each picture slide. I ran each sound segment through an equalizer onto separate C-60 audio cassettes, fading in and then fading out. So, I have about 85 C-60 audio tapes with these sound bites. If any NARA member wants to buy them, at cost for the whole set, they can have them.

On the morning of the presentation, I went in to our store at 5 a.m. to do the final transfer of sound bits to a single C-90 audio cassette. Nothing like waiting until the last minute! After doing ten of these the sound seemed awful and I thought the audio part of the presentation was wrecked. I unplugged the equalizer and started over. Still the sound was terrible – as if over modulated with a ten cent microphone. Then it dawned on me to try the 90 minute cassette on a different speaker set up. Lo and behold, I discovered that the first set of speakers had gone bad – blown or whatever causes them to sound terrible. Much relieved that the sound was okay, I finally completed the assembling of the segments and managed to whittle it down to just over 21 minutes which would allow time for introductions, questions from the audience, etc. Then, using a high

speed duplicator, I made a second tape copy and dubbed the same 21 minute audio onto both side one and also side two of each tape – just for assurance in case Murphy's law went into effect.

I also had three copies of the slide sequence sheet with me for use at the luncheon. After finishing up, I grabbed some breakfast at a local eatery and went home to put on my Sunday best (including a rarely worn tie!). I then headed back to the store with my wife for the 9 a.m. opening time.

At 10 a.m., friend Bruce McCombs came in. As an audio-visual specialist I'd asked him to come along. At 10:30 our ride to the luncheon showed up and we got there in about 25 minutes. We were among the first ten people there so took our time looking around and setting up the equipment. While I brought the carousel of slides, a member from the Lions furnished the slide projector. The meeting was called to order and we sat down for the meal.

Then it was 12:30 and following remarks and introductions by and about the various service groups, a member briefly told an experience of radio listening as a youth and followed with an introduction of who I was.

Unfortunately the sound system and microphone/tape player were at one end of the room while I and the projector were at the other end. Once the room was darkened and the screen lowered, someone started the tape and it began with the song "Reminiscing" followed by comments on KQW being really the first station to broadcast a voice. That was to keep the local California people happy. Then the first slide was of George Arlin as the tape had him telling about KDKA's beginning. From then on, for another 20 minutes, slides would



change to accompany sound segments. The room's speakers were fine and the audio tape sounded okay too.

At times I could hear people murmuring to each other as they recognized people like Ben Bernie, Joe Penner, Bob Burns, Mayor LaGuardia, W.C. Fields, Fanny Brice, and so on. All too soon the closing song of "Reminiscing" was on, the lights went up and the tape player stopped. Although I'd added some 24 minutes of "Themes Like Old Times" after the audio bits, there was no opportunity to let that play.

There were questions such as where these came from (electrical transcriptions, wire recordings, home record recordings, club archives, etc.) and how much did actors make (which I couldn't answer). Most people seemed pleased with the presentation and a few stopped to talk afterward.

Gathering up all that I brought, including handouts which were never picked up (an

overview of One Man's Family and three lists that were prepared by John Stanley which included OTR websites, books on OTR, and OTR organizations), we arrived back at the store by 2 p.m. If any NARA member would like copies of the four handouts plus a page with the slide sequence and times for each audio bit, they can have them by sending me a stamped-self-addressed envelope with 55¢ postage on it.

I would encourage anyone to do something similar to this. Yes, it's a lot of work but it ends up being an enjoyable experience for many people. NARA members may borrow my set of slides if appropriate arrangements can be made, and I'll gladly copy and send a 90 minute audio cassette which has the 21 minute sound segments followed by radio themes. This will be recorded on both sides. Just send me \$2.00 to cover the cost of first class mail. Send to Roger Hill, Nothing's New Entertainment, 711 San Mateo Avenue, San Bruno, CA 94066.

---

### Jack French has sent us the following information:

I have always assumed the word "disremember" was created for humorous effect by Gosden and Correll on "Amos and Andy." Turns out, it's a legitimate word, and has been around for many years prior to radio, although it is considered "provincial." From Merriam-Webster:

Disremember \dis-rih-MEM-ber\ : forget

History of the word: English has been depending upon the word "forget" since before the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but in 1815 a new rival for it appeared in print – "disremember." A critic in 1869 called "disremember" both "obsolete" and "a low vulgarism," and later grammarians have agreed; it has been labeled "provincial and archaic" and "dialectal," and more recently, in 1970, Harry Shaw opined that "disremember" was "an illiteracy," adding, "never use this word in standard English." By 1975, Shaw amended his opinion to: "This word is dialectal rather than illiterate." As it happens, "forget" is indeed the vastly more popular word, but "disremember" still turns up occasionally, often in dialectal or humorous contexts.

Example sentence: "Now that I come to think of it, one of those Massachusetts fellers – I disremember his name – was from Milton, same as you."

# THE MYSTERY OF IT ALL

by  
John Stanley

*John Stanley is known for his work as a journalist, fiction writer, author, TV host, motion picture writer and director. He is recognized as one of America's leading authorities on horror, science fiction, and fantasy films.*

=====

By 1945, there was an average of 90 minutes of crime/mystery programs being broadcast daily, and each of these shows was heard by an estimated five million listeners. Crime shows were a favorite of producers, too, because they were cheap to create. While it was costing \$40,000 to produce THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM in 1950, it was costing only \$7,000 for a 30-minute crime show.

In the earlier days of radio, producers had hired competent but lesser known radio-voice talent to carry the roles of the cops, detectives and private eyes. Billy Johnstone and Bret Morrison for THE SHADOW, Jay Joslyn for MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, Gerald Mohr for PHILIP MARLOWE, Howard Duff for THE ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADE, and Ira Gessel for THE NEW ADVENTURES OF MICHAEL SHAYNE. (Ira would later become better known as Jeff Chandler.) It wasn't until TV began posing a competitive threat in the late 1940's that radio decided to lure luminaries into crime shows, such as Dick Powell for RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE EYE, Joel McCrea for TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGER, Frank Sinatra for ROCKY FORTUNE and Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall for BOLD VENTURE.

Psychologists tell us that detectives are popular because they are strongly moral personalities that reflect back on society's (or the listeners') moral standards. On the lighter side, we all love puzzles and what is a mystery but a puzzle--a series of clues given to help us resolve the mystery side by side with the detective. One critic called radio cop shows "the modern man's passion play." The detective of radio was often an average man or woman thrown into a murder case by chance. Often the radio detective was Mr. Average with a defect: Nero Wolfe overate, Sherlock Holmes used cocaine, and Michael Waring, the Falcon, was a reformed thief. Yet all these individuals, whatever their strengths or weaknesses, had "the calling." They possessed the need to become champions of justice.

Many of radio's crime shows were terribly clichéd and seemed to be imitations of each other without a single new element. An exception was Dick Powell, who insisted that his writers upgrade the scripts to make the material witty and fresh. He fared pretty well with ROGUE'S GALLERY (1945-47) and each week insisted that he be conked over the head so he could go to "Cloud Nine," where he would have conversations with a comical alter ego who would sometimes help him solve the cases. Richard Rogue was suave and sexy around the show's femme fatales and was a refreshing change of pace.

But it wasn't until 1949 that Powell really struck his stride with RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE. With scripts by Blake Edwards, who would go on to great TV fame with PETER GUNN and motion picture fame with the PINK PANTHER series, Powell played a wise-cracking, take-no-guff private eye.



The violence was unusually extreme and critics considered the show to be on the cutting edge of radio. In each episode, after winding up the case, Diamond would retire to his beautiful girlfriend's apartment and serenade her with one of the songs he had made popular during his heyday as a "crooner" in Hollywood musicals. Powell wasn't afraid of satirizing himself and in one episode real-life wife June Allyson appeared as a character who wanted Diamond to find her "missing husband." In another episode Diamond ended up as a sympathetic bodyguard to a seal named Timothy and sang to the seal in the hospital. Diamond's relationship with homicide cop Lt. Levinson (originated by Ed Begley) was played largely for laughs by Edwards, and provided radio with some of its funniest moments from 1949 until the show's end in 1952.

When radio was declared dead in 1962, one of the last shows to be cancelled was an insurance investigator mystery: YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR.

---

### FLUFFS BY RADIO ANNOUNCERS

"Stay tuned to NBC for the Apollo Luny Landing! . . . LUNAR!"

Ben Grauer was announcing for the NBC symphony: "You have been listening to the New York Philharmonic orchestra under the baton of Atosco Touranini . . . ah . . . Otosco Tiscanini . . . that's Arturo Toscanini. Well! Your announcer has been Ben Grauer, ladies and gentlemen. Remember that name — you may never year it again."

"Children under twelve must be *accomplished* by an adult . . . uh . . . er . . . that is, children must be *accompanied* by an adult under twelve years of age."

A rock 'n roll disc jockey inadvertently picked up a recording left in his studio by a previous program which featured an hour of concert music. The recording was a Rachmaninoff concerto and he gave it the following introduction: "Now here's a selection that features Rock Maninoff. Must be some new cat. Let's give it a listen to."

"Good evening. This is your musicologist, Fred Laney. Tonight's program features music for ancient instruments and sopranos. Tonight's guest is ancient soprano, Viola Finkleoffer."

"As Labor leader George Meany made his way to the speaker's stand the band struck up 'Stars and Strikes Forever.'"

"And now the band will play a tribute to the rear of Senator Barry Goldwater."

When a station was suddenly cut off the air, the announcer, remembering past instances, dutifully switched on the dead mike and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, due to difficulties beyond our control, we are off the air."

"Tune in on Monday to find out if Perry Mason solves this baffling mystery. I'm sorry, on Monday the program will not be on due to a special broadcast. Tune in on Tuesday. I'm sorry, on Tuesday the program is going to be pre-empted by a speech by Secretary Dulles. Tune in on Wednesday — no, you'd better consult your papers for the correct time, and when you find out, please let me know."

# RADIO AT WAR!

by  
Chuck Seeley

"You're a chief bosun's mate aboard the 'Boise,' a gun pointer, the guy that points and fires the 15 big guns of the cruiser. Right now you're standing by for action, off Savo Island, in the Solomons. It's nearly midnight on October 11th, 1942. Your guns are manned, ready, loaded and laid. You've seen the enemy, and your eye is jammed into the telescopic gunsight, searching far a target. And now, very dimly, you see a light grey spot on the lens, then another, and another, five of them. It's them! You can see them plainly. Target sighted bearing one-eight-oh! There they are, Scotty, pick 'em up, pick 'em up you farmer, right, right, right, steady, steady now, left, left, left. There, you're on! On target! Mark-mark-mark!"

Ronald MacDougall created and wrote the series *The Man Behind the Gun*, a "fictional" documentary which reproduced the sounds of war for the audience on the Home Front. In other shows, listeners eavesdropped on *Flying Fortresses*, tanks, submarines, and aircraft carriers. The second person narration, as shown in the quotation above, forced the audience to participate in the action. This was war!

An estimated 60 million Americans were at their radios on Monday, December 8, 1941, to hear President Franklin D. Roosevelt address Congress at noon. It was a record number of listeners at the time. Congress declared war shortly thereafter and the country geared up for battle. Radio played a vital role during the war years, helping to keep up both civilian and military morale as well as keeping the public abreast of war news. This could be said to be the beginning of the Age of Electronic

Journalism, the first sight of the "global village."

The public heard the first, confused reports from Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7. By 6 a.m. on Monday morning, songwriter Max Lerner had finished "The Sun Will Soon Be Setting On the Land of the Rising Sun," a tune which made its national debut on Tuesday night's *The Treasury Hour*. Very quickly, tunesmiths all over the country were grinding out patriotic melodies designed to stir American blood. Eddie Cantor, on his Wednesday, December 10 show, sang "We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again," a rousing piece that reminded Americans of past glories.

The most popular tune of the war years was "White Christmas," an Irving Berlin song crooned by Bing Crosby for the first time in October, 1942. The song topped the *Hit Parade* nine consecutive times and repeated its dominance during the Christmases of 1943 and 1944. It sold a million copies of sheet music alone, the first such sale in a decade. While the tune didn't deal with the war per se, it



## REPORT TO THE NATION at 8:30 p.m.

The story of Montgomery's army in North Africa...the drama of Sicilian invasion...they have lived on "Report to the Nation". From London. Cairo. Algiers... Paul White (*left*) gets the facts, produces the vivid report for American listeners... of each week of America at war.



conveyed a feeling of longing and loneliness which fit the mood of the times.

The Office of Censorship, which censored mail, movies, and radio, made certain that anything remotely suggestive could not get airplay. At this time, radio's standards were more strict than Hollywood's. The hillbilly song "Pistol Packin' Mama" was a national hit, but it had to be laundered for *Your Hit Parade* to eliminate any suggestion of adultery which was, after all, the point of the song. It seemed that any song about sailors had ribald connotations. "As Mabel Goes...So Goes the Navy" was strictly forbidden by the Office of War Information. "Bell Bottom Trousers" was successfully altered from a bawdy sea chanty and made the *Hit Parade* in 1945. The OC allowed radio plays to use the Army term SNAFU until they found out what it really meant. It was alright to show death and violence, but keep the sex out of it so no one is corrupted.

As mentioned before, radio became the prime source for Americans about war information. News programs were commercial successes for the networks. In 1939, NBC devoted 3.6 percent of its airtime to news. By 1944, the percentage had jumped to 20 percent. CBS spent 30 percent of its time with news programs. The nets began to worry about a drastic post-war slump in advertising revenues when there would be no more war news to exploit. In the meantime, radio reporters went abroad to follow the action. Many became glamorous figures. Edward R. Murrow was easily the most famous, remembered for his broadcasts from war-torn London, complete with the sounds of tolling Big Ben and the London Blitz. Larry Tighe made the broadcast of an invasion from a plane while aboard a B-29 under heavy attack over Okinawa. The transmission was picked up by Navy stations on Guam and relayed to the States. Cecil Brown gave a vivid

**TONIGHT!**

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

**IRVING BERLIN'S**

GREAT MUSICAL REVUE

# "THIS IS THE ARMY"

with the same all-soldier cast  
that appeared on Broadway

**LUX RADIO THEATRE**

Directed by Cecil B. deMille

WMAZ AT 8 P. M. TONIGHT

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

description of the sinking of the "Repulse," as he was aboard the ship at the time. Eric Sevareid bailed out of a transport plane with the troops to be on the scene in Burma's jungles. Does anyone remember George Hicks' words from a warship on D-Day? "The platform on which I am standing is vibrating to the concussion of the guns and the exploding shells."

The White House suggested a series of programs to inform the public about the war, so the networks put together a series called *This Is War*, which was broadcast simultaneously on all four nets. It was a weekly half-hour show that ran for 13 weeks. The shows were directed by Norman Corwin, who also wrote several programs. The first show was entitled "How It Was With Us," and featured Robert Montgomery telling the audience how essentially good America was. "We've never made killing a career," he said, "although we happened to be pretty good with a gun..." Later programs saluted the Army, Navy, Air Corps, and the War Production Board. They showed the nature of the enemy and encouraged young people to join with their peers throughout the world in the fight against Facism and Nazism. *This Is War* avoided complexities. The English and Free French were the good guys, the Axis countries were the bad guys, and the Russians were

good guys misrepresented by certain American newspapers. The Office of Facts and Figures estimated that the highly praised programs were heard by some 20 million listeners.

After the formation of the Office of War Information in 1942, radio war programs fell under the jurisdiction of OWI's Domestic Radio Bureau, headed by Donald Stauffer. The DRB was a collection of copy writers, account executives, and station time salesmen who spent days trying to think up ways to get the "war message" across to the public. To do this, they employed "entertainment values" showing the strong adman influence, sugarcoating the unpleasant message. The DRB had to sidestep controversial subject matter and eliminated any political points of view from their programs because of harrassment from Congress. The *Know Your Ally* program on Russia made Communism appear as a political system second only to democracy in effectiveness. The general attitude they conveyed to listeners was that, although complex issues were involved, why bother with them when there was a common enemy to be defeated? The DRB sold Russia like soap:

Soviet Union hits the spot,  
12 million soldiers, that's a lot,  
Timoshenko and Stalin, too,  
Soviet Union is Red, White, and  
Blue!

Entertainers took up the cry. Don Quinn, writer for *Fibber McGee and Molly*, was expert at weaving worthy

## DIAL WHEC TONIGHT!



CAMPBELL SOUPS

Present

**EDWARD R.  
MURROW**

America's Most-Honored  
Newscaster!

**7:45**

Mondays thru Fridays

thoughts into a plot line, such as signing up as a nurse's aide or refusing to patronize the black market. Phil Baker, emcee of *Take it or Leave It*, closed his show with "Bye-bye, buy bonds!" Many comedy and variety shows traveled to GI bases and their writers would include local gags for the men. Children's shows often featured a direct or implied war message, exhorting the kids to help save fuel, clothing, or collect scrap.

The commercials of the war years exploited the war. American Tobacco is remembered for "Lucky Strike Green has gone to war!", a catch phrase that tied the product with patriotism. Ironically, *Information Please* dropped Lucky Strike as a sponsor because of numerous complaints about the slogan (which everybody remembered anyway). *Pall Mall* came up with "On the land, in the air, on the sea" complete with appropriate war sounds. This, too, was banned by one network.

Although radio would be taken to task for allowing huge war profits and swollen advertising revenues, the medium was responsible for raising morale during crises and demonstrated that it could make the listener an active participant/observer in history in the making. The best example of this was the death of FDR. On April 12, 1945, at 5:48 p.m., CBS' John C. Daly broke into *The Wilderness Road* to make the first announcement to the nation. NBC interrupted *Front Page Farrell* with the news, ABC broke into *Captain Midnight*, and Mutual *Tom Mix*. For three days, the nets suspended commercial programming, playing somber music or "The Lonesome Train," a play by Millard Lampell about the death and funeral of Lincoln.

All in all, radio proved its worth to America in her time of crisis. It was indeed the beginning of electronic journalism, without which we would never have walked side by side with the astronauts on Luna.



# BOOK by Hal Stephenson SHELF

**Our Glorious Century** by Reader's Digest, 1994  
512 pages with many color and BW pictures

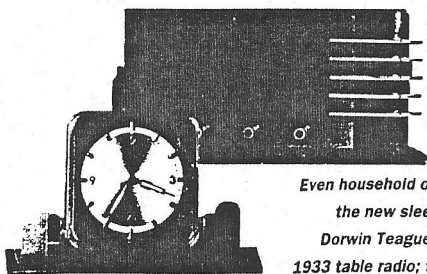
As the title suggests, this book reviews personalities, lifestyles, and events of our century with pictures and narrative. OTR is frequently mentioned and placed in the context of the times. Radio is prominently noticed including the first commercial station, KDKA, and the development of programs during the 1920's. Radios are shown such as a 1923 Atwater Kent and later an art deco radio of the late 1930's. During a World War II bond drive, Jack Benny purchased a \$75 violin and gave it as a reward for a purchase of \$1 million in war bonds.

I try to use superlatives only when appropriate. The following paragraph is quoted to show the role of radio in the chapter on the decade of the 1930's.

Their pocketbooks may have been hurting, but Americans had never enjoyed a more richly varied fare of entertainment than they did in the 1930's. It was a golden age of radio. By the end of the decade, 85% of the population owned a radio and thrilled to the news, sports, and entertainment that came "free" to their living rooms. The industry had become the fourth largest in the nation and the most pervasive medium of communications ever.



**On CBS, "Doctor"  
George Burns  
says to Gracie  
Allen: "This  
won't hurt  
because there's  
no sense. There's  
no feeling."**



*Even household objects took on the new sleek look. Walter Dorwin Teague designed this 1933 table radio; the clock's Art Deco style was enormously popular in the 1930's.*

# Announcing the National Broadcasting Company, Inc.

National radio broadcasting with better programs permanently assured by this important action of the Radio Corporation of America in the interest of the listening public

**T**HE RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA is the largest distributor of radio receiving sets in the world. It handles the entire output in this field of the Westinghouse and General Electric factories.

It does not say this boastfully. It does not say it with apology. It says it for the purpose of making clear the fact that it is more largely interested, more selfishly interested, if you please, in the best possible broadcasting in the United States than anyone else.

### Radio for 26,000,000 Homes

*The market for receiving sets in the future will be determined largely by the quantity and quality of the programs broadcast.*

We say quantity because they must be diversified enough so that some of them will appeal to all possible listeners.

We say quality because each program must be the best of its kind. If that ideal were to be reached, no home in the United States could afford to be without a radio receiving

America has purchased for one million dollars station WEAJ from the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, that company having decided to retire from the broadcasting business.

The Radio Corporation of America will assume active control of that station on November 15.

### National Broadcasting Company Organized

The Radio Corporation of America has decided to incorporate that station, which has achieved such a deservedly high reputation for the quality and character of its programs, under the name of the National Broadcasting Company, Inc.

### The Purpose of the New Company

*The purpose of that company will be to provide the best program available for broadcasting in the United States.*

casting is apparent. The problem of finding the best means of doing it is yet experimental. The Radio Corporation of America is making this experiment in the interest of the art and the furtherance of the industry.

### A Public Advisory Council

In order that the National Broadcasting Company may be advised as to the best type of program, that discrimination may be avoided, that the public may be assured that the broadcasting is being done in the fairest and best way, always allowing for human frailties and human performance, it has created an Advisory Council, composed of twelve members, to be chosen as representative of various shades of public opinion, which will from time to time give it the benefit of their judgment and suggestion. The members of this Council will be announced as soon as their acceptance shall have been obtained.

M. H. Axlesworth



Today the best available statistics indicate that 5,000,000 homes are equipped, and 21,000,000 homes remain to be supplied.

*Radio receiving sets of the best reproductive quality should be made available for all, and we hope to make them cheap enough so that all may buy.*

The day has gone by when the radio receiving set is a plaything. It must now be an instrument of service.

### **WEAF Purchased for \$1,000,000**

The Radio Corporation of America, therefore, is interested, just as the public is, in having the most adequate programs broadcast. It is interested, as the public is, in having them comprehensive and free from discrimination.

Any use of radio transmission which causes the public to feel that the quality of the programs is not the highest, that the use of radio is not the broadest and best use in the public interest, that it is used for political advantage or selfish power, will be detrimental to the public interest in radio, and therefore to the Radio Corporation of America.

To insure, therefore, the development of this great service, the Radio Corporation of

not only broadcast these programs through station WEAf, but it will make them available to other broadcasting stations throughout the country so far as it may be practicable to do so, and they may desire to take them.

*It is hoped that arrangements may be made so that every event of national importance may be broadcast widely throughout the United States.*

### **No Monopoly of the Air**

The Radio Corporation of America is not in any sense seeking a monopoly of the air. That would be a liability rather than an asset. It is seeking, however, to provide machinery which will insure a national distribution of national programs, and a wider distribution of programs of the highest quality.

*If others will engage in this business the Radio Corporation of America will welcome their action, whether it be cooperative or competitive.*

If other radio manufacturing companies, competitors of the Radio Corporation of America, wish to use the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company for the purpose of making known to the public their receiving sets, they may do so on the same terms as accorded to other clients.

The necessity of providing adequate broad-

The President of the new National Broadcasting Company will be M. H. Aylesworth, for many years Managing Director of the National Electric Light Association. He will perform the executive and administrative duties of the corporation.

Mr. Aylesworth, while not hitherto identified with the radio industry or broadcasting, has had public experience as Chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, and, through his work with the association which represents the electrical industry, has a broad understanding of the technical problems which measure the pace of broadcasting.

One of his major responsibilities will be to see that the operations of the National Broadcasting Company reflect enlightened public opinion, which expresses itself so promptly the morning after any error of taste or judgment or departure from fair play.

*We have no hesitation in recommending the National Broadcasting Company to the people of the United States.*

*It will need the help of all listeners. It will make mistakes. If the public will make known its views to the officials of the company from time to time, we are confident that the new broadcasting company will be an instrument of great public service.*

## **RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA**

**OWEN D. YOUNG, Chairman of the Board**

**JAMES G. HARBORD, President**

*In September of 1926, the above full page ad appeared in the nation's newspapers announcing the formation of NBC. The network subsequently went on the air at 8:05 p.m. on November 15, 1926.*

# MEMORIES OF



# Tom Mix

## A radio recollection by Jack French

As a grade-school youngster growing up in the 1940's, radio was the most important thing in my life. Of course I enjoyed books, outdoor sports (especially in winter), occasional movies, camping and travel, but the radio was consistently the most enjoyable activity, season after season, year after year.

Most of my radio time was dominated by the adventure serials, mystery shows, and quiz programs but never documentaries, music, or the "soaps." The daily afternoon shows *Superman* and *Captain Midnight* were high on my list as were the Saturday morning offerings of *Let's Pretend* and *House of Mystery*. Sunday afternoons my entire family gathered around the dial for *Quick as a Flash*, *True Detective Mysteries* and *Nick Carter, Master Detective*. But of all the wonderful programs that filled the airwaves, none was more special, or more important, than *Tom Mix*.

When I first began listening to *Tom Mix* in 1943 I didn't realize that the program had been on the air for nearly ten years. Much later I would learn that the voice of Tom had been, in order, Artells Dickson, Russell Thorson, and Jack Holden before Joe "Curley" Bradley took over. By the time I discovered *Tom Mix*, his side-kick the *Old Wrangler* (played by Percy Hemus) had long since been replaced by Sheriff Mike Shaw (the voice of Leo Curley). But none of this mattered to me, or the

thousands of other "Straight Shooter Pals," as Tom Mix always called his radio fans. It was great entertainment and we loved it!

The program owed much of its popularity and staying power to its hero. Like his real life name-sake, radio's Tom Mix was an excellent horseman, crack shot, superior athlete, and Western hero. But to these attributes writers George Lowther and Charles Tazewell compounded other skills to create a matchless hero who was a brilliant detective, peerless pilot, unbeatable boxer and wrestler, and a superior logician. Tom Mix could, and did, beat all comers in marksmanship, broncho-busting, seamanship, foot-racing, tomahawk throwing and all games of skill. In fact, I recall one episode quite vividly in which Tom actually beat a champion chess player in just two moves. Golly whizzers!

Despite his varied skills, Tom Mix was basically a Western figure and his "home-base" in radioland was Dobie, Texas. While Tom's adventures sometimes took him to other parts of the globe, there was always plenty to do in Dobie. That tiny cowtown had more missing persons, spies, robberies, unsolved crimes, stampedes, disappearances, Indian uprisings, prison escapes, trigger-happy killers, and women in distress than all the other small towns in the United States lumped together.



At Tom's ranch, the TM-Bar, he was usually accompanied by an assortment of friends who caused more difficulties than they solved. First of all there were Tom's young wards, Jimmy and Jane, who were supposedly in the script to give young listeners someone "to identify with." However as Jim Harmon proved later in his wonderful book *The Great Radio Heroes* it was a complete waste of effort to create young side-kicks. In radio, as in the comic books, the young audience always identified with the adult hero and never with the inept juvenile partners.

Tom, as a U.S. Marshall, and Mike Shaw, as a local sheriff, were an unlikely pair since in real life Federal and local crimes are entirely different jurisdictions. But the imaginative writers of the show blended the two men together with a pleasing chemistry that made the combination as enjoyable to fans as the movie pairings of Roy Rogers and George "Gabby" Hayes or Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. Mike Shaw was played to perfection by Leo Curley, who coincidentally was a physical double of his radio character: big, burly, balding.

Rounding out the cast of long-term associates on *Tom Mix* was Wash, who was Tom's Black cook and housekeeper, a great role for Caucasian Forrest Lewis as the comedy relief. Like the running gag of Fibber McGee's closet loudly dumping its contents on the hapless person who opened the door, Wash had a similar problem with a skidding rug outside Tom's office door in the ranchhouse. At least once a week Wash would dash from the office shouting, "OK Mistah Tom, Ah goes, Ah flies, Ah-oooooops!" (Sound of loud crash as Wash slips on rug.) This would be followed by Wash's reassuring chuckle: "You know, Mistah Tom, someday Ah jist gotta fix that rug."

Colorful and cunning villains populated the show and challenged Tom's wit, muscle and bravery. Most were used for only one plot series (about eight weeks) and then disappeared into the radio graveyard. These included Bear Claw the Sioux renegade, Jingabod Kid the fast draw expert, "Sledge" who could kill a man with a rabbit punch, and the Gray Ghost. The latter was a demented musician who, when arrested by Tom and Mike in a closing Friday episode, asked to play one piece on his piano. Unknown to the lawmen, but revealed to the horrified listeners, was the fact that the villain had wired one note on the keyboard to a cache of dynamite concealed in the walls of the room. The note was to be struck in the last chord of the piece, blasting everyone to that Great Round-Up in the Sky.

Although he could fly a plane better than *Captain Midnight*, or solve a mystery more efficiently than *Dick Tracy*, or catch a spy quicker than *David Harding*, still Tom was only human. Unlike *Superman* he did bleed, feel pain and get knocked out. Unlike *Jack Armstrong* he did (occasionally) make mistakes. And unlike *Green Hornet*, *The Shadow* and *Straight Arrow*, he had no secret identity to relax in. As Tom Mix, he was "on duty" twenty-four hours a day.

After an agonizing weekend, all *Straight Shooters* were gathered at their radios Monday, awaiting their fate and that of their hero. The opening commercial was over in a few minutes and the story continued with the resumption of the macabre concert. The piano music raced to the conclusion but before the final chords could be played, a shot rang out! Tom had disabled the musical madman with a single well-placed bullet. Later, Tom explained to Mike that he'd guessed the plan when he noticed the Gray Ghost's dirty

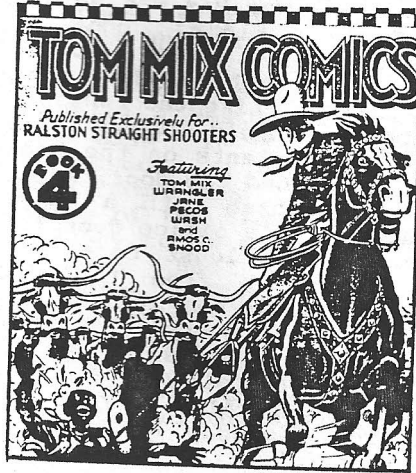
fingers had soiled every key but one during the solo.

Tom Mix had one major sponsor for the seventeen years it was on the air: Ralston-Purina Company. During the winter they promoted Instant Ralston (which tasted terrible) and the rest of the year it was Shredded Ralston (which tasted better). At any rate, Ralston was very generous with the radio premium offers. In the 1930's many of them were free for just one box-top: a ring, a toy branding iron; or a target gun. Even after World War II inflation hit, there were still many sturdy premiums available for a box-top and a quarter: a whistling badge, a large bandana or a telegraph set. All orders were sent to Ralston at Checkerboard Square, St. Louis, Missouri, an address surely as famous a Kellogg's of Battle Creek, Michigan. The latter sponsored *Superman* and advertised a now-unknown cereal called Pep, but that's another story.

Curley Bradley sang the commercials. He had originally joined the program as a singer in a small role and his pleasing baritone voice was a natural for radio. On at least one show, the entire *Tom Mix* program consisted of Bradley singing. The date was Thursday, April 12, 1945 and to my nine-year old mind the death of a president, even Franklin D. Roosevelt, was not too significant. My parents told me of his death that day and I took the news rather calmly. But when I turned on *Tom Mix* that late afternoon I heard Bradley's voice saying sadly, "Straight Shooters, a great man died today and we're all goin' to hafta put our shoulders tuh the wheel and push a little harder," and he proceeded to spend the entire fifteen minutes singing sad cowboy songs. It made quite an impression on me. If a man's death could pre-empt the regular *Tom Mix* program, it must be a very serious matter!

To thousands of regular *Tom Mix* listeners like me, the *Straight Shooters Creed* was a very real thing. Tom Mix was always sincere, morally straight, courageous and patriotic, qualities that *Straight Shooters* tried to emulate. When we "took the pledge" we promised: 1) To shoot straight with our parents by always obeying them, 2) To shoot straight with our friends by always being honest and playing fair, and 3) To shoot straight with ourselves by keeping our minds keen and alert and our bodies strong and healthy. Sound corney today? Maybe...but in this world of the anti-hero and the sneering de-bunker, what doesn't? But in another era, boys grew into men in an ethical atmosphere more simple, more solid, and more satisfying than we're likely to find again soon.

So for me, and for untold others, *Tom Mix* was more than just great entertainment. It was reassurance that right does triumph, that strength comes from bearing misfortune courageously and it is possible, as Joe Darion would write years later in the lyrics for "Man of La Mancha," *Tom Mix* was a code of honor, an inspiration, and more importantly, our passport to maturity.





MILTON GEIGER:  
WRITER OF OTR's "COUNTY SEAT"

by  
Mickey C. Smith, Ph.D.

*Dr. Mickey Smith is the "Barnard Distinguished Professor of Health Care Administration" at the University of Mississippi. He has published twelve books (including Pharmacy and Medicine on the Air) and numerous articles. Much of the material on which this article is based was supplied by Milton Geiger's widow, Dorothy R. Geiger, either in documents or in telephone interviews.*

=====  
Milton Geiger (1907-1971) was born in Bronx, New York, and his family moved to Cleveland, Ohio when he was very young. He attended Glenville High School, then the Western Reserve College of Pharmacy. As related by personal communication with Geiger's widow, his talent for writing was recognized and encouraged by one or more of his pharmacy professors. As we shall see, he became a very successful writer for stage and radio, but often practiced pharmacy at various times to "make ends meet" in early days or simply to stay close to his first profession.

According to his widow, Milton Geiger's first commercial play was called "One Special for Doc" and was used on the Rudy Vallee Hour. The play starred Henry Hull. The short drama is a moving one, with a message.

The play opens as "Doc" Harshaw prepares to close his "small drugstore in a small town somewhere in America." In from the driving rain comes a young man. Under the transparent ruse of needing treatment for a cut he tries to buy poison.

Er....so I'd like a bottle of those -- what-do-you-call-'ems.  
They're blue tablets. You know? In a crinkly blue bottle?

He becomes hesitant, however, when "Doc" makes a great show of completing the poison registry. More than that "Doc" becomes very chatty about the dangers of the poison, and very interested in the young man. Moreover, he goes into gruesome detail about the effects of the poison.

I can't describe the agony of it! Weeks...months...maybe of torture...if you die so much the better for you. Because the nervous shock will wreck you for life. And your stomach's so badly burned that you spend the rest of your days on a diet of gruel and buttered toast and warm milk.

The pharmacist's ploy works. The young man admits he has no injury to his hand. Rather he planned suicide, responding to a supposed rebuff by his high school sweetheart. More counseling sends the young man out in the rain with a new determination to win back his girl.

The play was well-received and resulted in a radio series for writer Geiger. This, too, featured a pharmacist. "County Seat," first aired on CBS in November, 1938 as a 15-minute show Monday through Friday. In April the show was changed to once-a-week (Saturday) and a 30-minute format. So it continued through September after which it apparently did not appear.

"County Seat" was a sustaining (no commercial sponsor) program on CBS and was described in the *Columbia Program Book* as follows:

Ray Collins, one of radio's foremost actors stars in this new dramatic series as "Doc" Hackett, small town druggist. The story

of "County Seat," written by Milton Geiger and directed by Norman Corwin, delineates a character who has a genius for getting tangled up in the lives of people who cross his path.

This was truly an all-star ensemble! Norman Corwin is recognized as one of the finest directors in radio. Ray Collins starred in scores of radio (and film) shows including *Cavalcade of America*, *Flash Gordon*, *Philip Drummond*, and *Philip Morris Playhouse*.

It is very unfortunate, indeed, that there appears to be only one recording of any of the "County Seat" broadcasts available. We are thus almost totally deprived of an aural record of what must be the only radio series ever to feature the pharmacist as its central character.

Geiger had one other drama starring a pharmacist character. This three act stage play, "Bedrock," was written in collaboration with another celebrated writer, Max Wylie, and staged by Amherst University. Broadway critic John Gassner reviewed and recommended the play for production by the Theatre Guild. When Geiger and Wylie were asked to change it into a comedy they refused so the project did not proceed.

In his 36 years of writing for radio, television and the theatre, Geiger was often recognized as one of the finer writers in the field. He wrote for "You Are There" during 1956 when the program won the George Foster Peabody Award. His stage play "Edwin Booth" starred Jose Ferrer on Broadway and was a considerable success in 1958.

Geiger was responsible for writing the hour long dramatization of "I WILL NOT GO BACK" narrated by Orson Welles, and dedicated to President Franklin D. Roosevelt within a week of his death. This was on the famed "U.S. Steel Hour." Milton Geiger had a rich and happy collaboration with Max Wylie, which included Geiger's own favorite, "Go Home and Tell Your Mother." His television writing credits ranged from "Death Valley Days" to "General Hospital." He was described in the *Newsletter of the Writers Guild of America/West* as "one of the giants of radio." One of his "You Are There" scripts about Benjamin Franklin is used by the Curator of the Air at the Smithsonian Institution, where the film is also in the archives.

"County Seat," which is our main focus, might be compared with "Just Plain Bill," a long-running show about a barber with a penchant for involving himself in the affairs of others. The parallels are only general, however.

"County Seat" was notable for the snappy dialogue between Doc Hackett and his nephew Jerry, and for Geiger's obvious efforts to bring pharmacy to the attention of the listeners. Although pharmacy lore was not a part of every story, Geiger tried more often than not to include it. Based on the copies of scripts which we obtained however, it appears that the pharmacy examples often did not get on the air.

Pharmacist Hackett comes through as a dedicated professional and a humanist. He is tough if need be, but kind. Analytical, but subject to deep emotions, "Doc" had a strongly-held personal philosophy that was closely tied to the practice of pharmacy. As one reads the Geiger scripts his efforts to tell pharmacy's story are obvious, but do not in any way detract from the story. Indeed, his stories are very much a part of the late 1930's.

It appears virtually certain that there is but one sound recording of "County Seat" broadcasts remaining (11/29/38). Fortunately, there do exist



a series of the actual scripts from the program, as broadcast. They are part of a collection of materials donated to the Library of Congress by the Columbia Broadcasting System. Not all scripts from "County Seat" are in the collection, but a substantial number are, certainly enough to provide the flavor of this landmark show.

We provide here a brief look at the first show of "County Seat" as gleaned from the available script. In the first broadcast of "County Seat" (November 28, 1938) the announcer introduces the show as Milton Geiger wrote it.

Tonight Columbia brings you the first episode in the story of Will Hackett, genial druggist in the typical American town of Northbury. You know the kind of town it is--has a population of about five thousand, a Main Street and an Elm Street, a Walnut Avenue and a Valley View park--it has a county courthouse, and a hospital, a college just down the river a way, and it has a drug store where everybody drops in sooner or later. That's Will Hackett's place. You may know the kind of town Northbury is, but you don't know the kind of fellow Hackett is. He's no ordinary druggist, as you'll soon find out. He's a shrewd, understanding, sometimes inscrutable fellow, with a genius for getting tangled up in the lives of men who cross his path, and you have only to meet some of these people to appreciate the extent and variety of experiences in which Will Hackett has a part. We're saying nothing about Hackett's nephew, Jerry Whipple, because you'll meet him soon enough.

Let us also record the words of the, then, young show business genius, Orson Welles, as he introduced Ray Collins as Doc Hackett.

It is not often, in the theatre or in radio, that one has opportunity publicly to acknowledge the skill and craftsmanship of a colleague. That opportunity is now before me, and I am especially happy to take advantage of it because the colleague involved is Ray Collins. Let me say first, and unequivocally, that in my opinion Ray Collins is the finest actor in radio. For years he has been appearing anonymously in all manner of broadcasts, and if you could recollect all the exceptionally good jobs of acting you've heard on the air, the chances are that most of them were done by Ray.

In this first episode, nephew Jerry establishes himself as a bumbler by breaking a gallon jar of terpin hydrate and codeine and is immediately fired! All is ultimately resolved when Jerry admits that he just wants "to amount to sumpin. Like I'd like to be a pharmacist." Dock nudges, "Yes?" Jerry: "Like a feller I know." Doc coaches: "Er...someone you admire very much possibly?"

The series ended (probably September 9, 1939) with a CBS request for listener comment, a surprisingly early end to a show to which the February 4, 1939 issue of *Radio Guide* devoted a substantial feature article.

Milton Geiger did much for pharmacy with this series. His writing was witty, yet philosophical. A pharmacist was portrayed as a *scientist* and a *humanist*, and all in an entertaining fashion. This is something that just never happened again.

# DUPLICATORS, *START YOUR CD COLLECTORS!*

By Bob Burnham

Technology and the ever-changing nature of home audio recording has always had an impact on the type of equipment available for old-time radio enthusiasts. When was the last time you saw a single well cassette deck being offered in a mainstream retail outlet (those monster-sized twin-speaker radios don't count!)? Yes, it has indeed been "a while." Two-transport "dubbing" decks are now extremely common. The traditional use of these decks is for the making of convenience copies of cassettes for auto or Walkman-style playing, but obviously, that's not what this column is about.

For *SOME* OTR fans, those widely available multi-well cassette machines may seem a welcome evolution of technology and consumer demand combined with a format that has been around over 30 years. Many people, however, have already switched from cassette to CD format for their listening as well as recording needs. I personally now consider cassettes an outmoded medium in the same category as reel to reel tapes, but because I have so many cassettes and reels, the need exists to keep the older equipment in service even though it is never used to make new recordings.

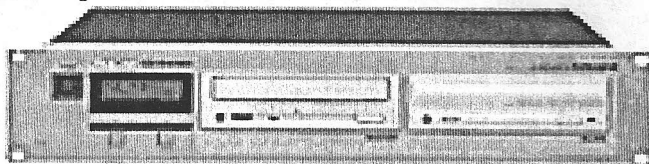
Blank CD-R disks are now less expensive than cassettes and have numerous advantages. Double CD *players* have been available for sometime, but now there are a limited number of stand-alone CD duplicators now available. In some cases, they are smaller than a double cassette deck.

The recording aspect of CD remains a mystery to some. Others have gone the less expensive route of CD recording by using their computer to do half the work, thereby spending half the amount of money for a PC-based CD burner versus "stand alone" decks that work somewhat like a cassette deck.

I personally have tried to avoid being anchored to a computer to do CD recording. It's almost as repulsive as watching a DVD movie on your computer. Can you imagine "curling up" in your office chair to stare at a computer screen for a 2-hour movie, and hearing "surround sound" audio through two tinny-sounding plastic speakers?

Recording audio CDs via computer doesn't appeal to me for this and other reasons. It effectively turns what used to be office equipment best suited for writing columns like this (and organizing your collection) into a boring chore taskmaster (like duplicating audio). But there are many by necessity who are forced to take the least expensive route as far as equipment. Yes, I know there are many cool things you can do with audio processing on a computer, but that's not what this column is about.

One of the most affordable stand-alone CD duplicators that uses standard CD-R media (and not the more expensive media that has anti-copy restrictions) is the Tascam CCD-4000 CD duplicator (below). Tascam, of course, is basically the same company as Teac... who made the open reel decks we all knew and loved.





My previous columns suggesting methods of splitting a radio show into multiple tracks is applicable. This duplicator also presumes you already have a finished CD "master" prepared. You cannot create a new master from scratch on the CCD-4000. It has no analog or digital inputs. It is strictly a stand-alone duplicator, much like the high-speed cassette duplicators some OTR vendors have used for years. The CCD-4000, however, does have headphone jacks for each well and the ability to play audio CDs at regular speed through those headphone jacks.

The same logic used on double cassette decks of moving from left to right is used on this machine: The play transport is on the left and the recorder (or "writer" is on the right side).

A small LCD display tells you what mode the machine is in, and if duplicating a CD, the progress is shown in percentage. Aside from the power switch and eject buttons for each CD drawer, there are just two buttons. There are no audio level displays or controls. Again, you need to have a perfect "master" already prepared.

Duplicating CD-Rs is somewhat like duplicating computer files. You get a mirror copy every time providing your media isn't defective. This duplicator, in fact, will also duplicate computer CDs and has a "compare" function that verifies the copy is identical to the copy. This function only works when duplicating computer disks, however, if the media is bad, the duplicator will catch it for you regardless of whether it is audio or computer data. At the beginning of the duplicating cycle, it "checks media" and at the end, if you get a message other than "Copy complete," you probably have a bad copy. I made about 120 copies and out of that group, had two bad disks. Your mileage and error rate is related to the master, and the brand and type of blank CD-R that is used.

The maximum speed of this duplicator is 8X, but 6 X, 4 X, 2 X and 1 X (real time) can be selected. Tascam recommends that if there is a high error rate, to use a slower duplication speed. This makes sense.

Figuring this out logically, 60 minutes of audio at 2 X will take 30 minutes to duplicate. At 4 X, it will take 15 minutes, while 6 X will take 10 minutes and 8 X will take 7.5 minutes to copy a full hour. This time, however, is not exact due to various factors.

I tried playing a CD that had errors on a regular CD player. While all the tracks were shown, only the first one would play.

The finalizing process on a typical CD burner is a step that is saved until the CD-R is completely recorded. In a high-speed environment, however, this is not necessary. The index or "TOC" (table of contents) can be duplicated before the actual data or audio. If there is a power loss or unexpected interruption during the process however, the CD copy will be defective.

In terms of operation, I found this machine to be easier than a cassette deck, and this would seem logical with only two buttons to contend with. Changing modes, however, is a little tricky, although your need to change modes to begin with is probably minimal if all the machine is to be used for is to duplicate an audio CD.

The biggest design flaw could be removed simply by adding a Quick Copy button. To make a CD copy, you simply load the master and blank CD, then close the drawers using the eject buttons (which are in awkward places). Next, move to the control button and using the same button, select various modes and copy. After closing the CD

drawers, one actually must press this button three times to start the copy process.

This deck is easiest to operate if it is mounted in a rack at or above eye level. Though it has "feet" and easily placed on a table or shelf, it is harder to access the CD eject buttons with the drawers open.

Although the equipment I have is the "MKII" version, there is still room for improvement. Yet, for an all-business--no nonsense piece of equipment with flawless performance for what it is intended do to, the Tascam CCD-4000 is a good purchase. Street price is \$995, which is actually less money than a better grade cassette duplicator. Look for it in music stores, and professional and broadcast supply outlets.

What about labeling? There are many pre-packaged software applications available for this purpose, and Avery (of course) has CD labels readily available. I personally found it handy to use Adobe PageMaker to do my own custom labels, but with a little patience, you will be able to accomplish the same thing with Microsoft Word. If you want curved lettering and extra fancy backgrounds, it will take a little more than the common computer office applications.

See ya' next time

Bob Burnham  
10/23/2,000

Copyright © 2,000 Robert R. Burnham

Previous columns can be found at [www.brcradio.com](http://www.brcradio.com). E-mail is [platecap@brcradio.com](mailto:platecap@brcradio.com). Snail mail is P.O. Box 158, Dearborn Hts., MI 48127-0158.



**Ray Erlenborn has provided us with the following story:**

The Lone Ranger and Tonto are camping in the desert. They set up their tent and fall asleep. Some hours later the Lone Ranger wakes his faithful friend. "Tonto, look up in the sky and tell me what you see."

Tonto replies, "Me see millions of stars."

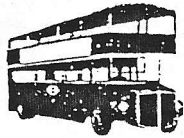
"What does that tell you?" asked the Lone Ranger.

Tonto ponders for a minute, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially, billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past 3. Theologically, it is evident that the spirits are all powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems that we will have a sunny day tomorrow. What does it tell you Kemo Sabe?"

The Lone Ranger is silent for a moment and then says, "Tonto, you idiot! Someone has stolen our tent!"



# FROM ACROSS THE POND



by Ray Smith



## THE BBC 'BAIRN'

A few columns ago, NARA NEWS readers were shocked and horrified by my startling exposé under the banner headline, 'BBC Mamma Was Really a Papa.' This was the story of the great drag queens or female impersonators of British stage and radio. In particular, I reminisced about the somewhat checkered career of Old Mother Riley (Arthur Lucan) and saluted two modern-day 'Dames' the great Danny LaRue and the irrepressible Barry 'Dame Edna' Humphries, who is still hugely popular these days on American network TV. But men dressed as women and women dressed as men, is not the only peculiarly eccentric form of entertainment adored by the great British public.

Today, I salute yet another phenomenon, the British love for 'little naughty school boy' characters, also known as loons, lummoxes and 'bairns.' It began on radio in the 20's and 30's with a pint sized musichall star named Wee Georgie Wood who became a radio headliner playing the mischievous schoolboy to his radio 'Mama' played by Dolly Harmer. Another radio schoolboy favorite was the late

Cardew Robinson, a tall, gangly, toothy comic who starred as Cardew the Cad (rotter, bounder, swine) of St. Fanny's Prep School. Cardew graced the microphones of many a radio variety show from the 40's to the 70's and became almost a fixture on Workers Playtime, the lunchtime vaudeville show broadcast from factory cafeterias and often 'plugged' in this column. Then there was Billy Bunter, the naughty lad of Greyfriars School. How the British public roared when 'fat boy' Bunter (politically incorrect these days) stole some jam tarts from the school 'tuck-shop' and got turned over the knee of his headmaster, who whacked his backside with a bamboo cane. Hmm. Freud might have something to say about that these days. Or else the headmaster would be arrested by the cops for indecent assault! Of course Billy never really suffered any pain. Just before the caning, he always managed to stuff a thick school text book into the seat of his pants, while winking mischievously at the audience. Then there was the British schoolboy, 'Archie Andrews' who starred in the long-running radio comedy program,

Educating Archie. This wooden ventriloquists dummy was so popular on radio he even became the 'headline star' in a record-breaking season at the London Palladium.

Well, now that you are sitting on the edge of your seats, I can reveal that the 'star turn' in this edition of From Across the Pond, is the man who starred in his very own weekly comedy program on BBC Network radio for no less than 17 successive years. I am referring to BBC radio's all-time favorite 'naughty schoolboy' comedian Jimmy Clitheroe, known and loved by



Jimmy Clitheroe (age 35)

millions of fans as 'The Clitheroe Kid.' Although the BBC rarely rebroadcasts any of these programs, I believe that many episodes of 'The Clitheroe Kid' are still floating out there in the ether, even in North America. Several years ago, I discovered a real 'cache' of them, hidden away in the musty vaults of a small university campus in the wilds of northern Montana. The BBC founder, dour Scottish engineer Lord Reith would turn over in his grave . . . "Only in Munnnnn-tannna ya says? Whit a blinkin' shame!!!!"

James Robertson Clitheroe (some sources suggest his middle name was Robinson) was born into a family of northern cotton-weavers in the grimy industrial town of Clitheroe in the heart of Lancashire. That part of urban England was famed world wide as the center of Britain's booming cotton industry. Jimmy was born in one of those endless streets of grime-caked, attached, 'row houses' which these days are rarely seen, except on episodes of the world's longest running tv soap, Coronation Street, which is still going strong at 41 years young! When he was fully grown, Jimmy was exactly 4 feet 2 and a half inches tall, although unlike the dwarf-people of circus fame, he was what is properly referred to as a midget—being a little man with a perfectly formed body. He came up the hard way, slogging it out in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rate northern music-halls (vaudeville theaters), where he

learned to sing, dance, play accordion and sax and even did a stint as a female impersonator.

In the mid-50's he bumped into an old acquaintance from his days of touring vaudeville—BBC Manchester radio variety producer and scriptwriter James Casey. Casey came by his love of vaudeville honestly having practically been born into the business. His dad was the famous northern comic Jimmy James, who was brilliantly funny as a chain-smoking stage drunk surrounded by a team of eccentric 'foils' (straight-men). James Casey was looking for a new idea for the top rated Sunday lunchtime slot on network radio's BBC Light Programme. This was the time of day when the majority of Brits sat down to enjoy their Sunday 'joint' (roast beef and 2 veg) and invariably listened to the radio. The Clitheroe Kid became an instant favorite garnering an average audience of 10.5 million, although in its declining years the audience had shrunk to about 2.5 million—largely due to the impact of television. Jimmy was already appearing as a 'schoolboy' comedian on stage but until he got his big break on radio's Clitheroe Kid, he was strictly small-time (no pun intended).

And so it was that at the not-so-tender age of 42, Jimmy Clitheroe was launched as the BBC's newest comedy star. After years of struggling up the ladder, he became a

household celebrity from Lands End to John O'Groats. Each episode of The Clitheroe Kid dealt with yet another domestic catastrophe in the lives of the Clitheroe clan. And a strange clan it was, to be sure. Actress Patricia Burke played Jimmy's typically domesticated, sharp-tongued, Lancashire 'moothee.' Although no father was ever mentioned Jimmy's granddad lived in the household and spoke in a thick Scottish burr. Granddad was played by a famous Scottish music-hall comedian, Peter Sinclair, who was also known for his kilt wiggling quasi-Harry Lauder turn, billed on radio as Scotland's 'Cock of the North.' Diana Day played Jimmy's big sister who was always the butt of his 'schoolboy howler' humor. "Enter...my beautiful sister Susan wearing a genuine goatskin fur coat...and as everyone agrees...it looked far better ON the goat!" While the rest of the family sounded 'working class' his sister was extremely posh and well educated. She was particularly ill-matched against her 'boy-friend' Alfie Higginbottom, played by yet another northern comic Danny Ross. Boyfriend Alfie was a blundering idiot on radio, one of those stuttering characters who always got everything mixed up---"oh heck I'm absolutely fi fi fi fi flabber-founded-er, I mean, d d d d dumb-gasted ooo heck I'm always mixed ooop."

In one episode entitled 'James the little Gentle-man'





**"THE CLITHEROE KID"  
Jimmy, Diana Day, and Danny Ross**

Granddad inherits 5000 pounds sterling. "Yes" quips young Jimmy, "enough to buy me 425,000 whipped crème walnuts," a reference to one of the UK's most popular chocolate candy bars. Enter

Granddad Clitheroe, "Hae wee Jummy, has anybody seen ma glasses?" "Why, Ganddad?" asks Jimmy, "is it opening time at the pub already?" "No, no, no, ma READING GLASSES ye stupid daft lookin' twit of a wee boy!"

Like so many working-class comedians who came up the hard way, Jimmy was extremely tight-fisted with his money. He never married and although extremely wealthy, he lived his entire life with his mother in a modest bungalow near Blackpool. In 1973, shortly after his mother's funeral, 57 year old Jimmy Clitheroe took his own life. He had found fame and fortune-but little happiness. Whether the Clitheroe Kid was the longest-running BBC comedy show remains in dispute. But it was definitely "the BIGGEST radio show with the SMALLEST star" on the BBC.

Cheerio for now.

**RADIO  
LAND**  
BY GENE LARSON



This drawing is by Gene Larson who has been NARA's staff artist for the past 23 years.

Copyright © 2001

**JUNIOR! YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO 'SUPERMAN' TOO MUCH!**



## OTR THOUGHTS VI

by  
Donald R. Berhent

For all the Fibber McGee and Molly trivia buffs, I list the following:

October 17, 1939: "Myrt," the unheard telephone operator is "unheard" for the first time.

December 19, 1939: Harold Peary stumbles over the words "snow shovel" and cracks up the audience.

January 23, 1940: Fibber and Molly take a tour of the Wistful Vista radio station and wind up doing their own radio show (a satire of "The Pot of Gold").

February 6, 1940: The first appearance of "The King's Men" singing group.

March 5, 1940: The famous Fibber McGee closet is heard for the first time. Gracie Allen appears as a guest to promote her candidacy for president.

April 9, 1940: The McGees return to Wistful Vista after their trip to Hollywood and appearance on the Lux Radio Theatre.

October 8, 1940: The first appearance of Doc Gamble, but the part is played by Gale Gordon, not Arthur Q. Bryan.

December 10, 1940: We learn "The Old Timer's" first name is Roy.

February 25, 1941: Fibber decides to cash in the hundreds of deposit bottles he's been saving. Part one of a three part story.

March 4, 1941: The McGees throw a party...a measles party! Part two of a three part story.

March 11, 1941: Most of Wistful Vista is quarantined in the McGee house. Part three of a three part story.

September 30, 1941: Gildersleeve announces he's moving to Summerfield. It's his last appearance on the show as a regular.

November 11, 1941: Guests Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy arrive in Wistful Vista for the premier of "Look Who's Talking." Bergen co-starred in the film with the McGees.

January 27, 1942: McGee mentions that he has a sister named Bessie.

March 16, 1943: The King's Men sing a clever anti-Nazi song.

January 11, 1944: Harry Von Zell returns to try to get paid for appearing on the show the preceding week.

February 29, 1944: Guest Eddie Cantor opens the hall closet!

April 25, 1944: The King's Men sing "The Sound Effects Man," during which the closet is heard.

May 2, 1944: We learn how "Teeny" got her name.

June 20, 1944: "Teeny" asks Fibber an embarrassing question. "How come Mrs. McGee is never around when I come in?"

October 24, 1944: The first appearance of Ken Christy as "Chief Gates" on the program.

February 27, 1945: Bea Benaderet's first appearance on the program.

January 29, 1946: "The Old Timer" reveals that his real name is "Rupert Blasingame."

February 12, 1946: The real son of Jim and Marian Jordan (Jimmy Jordan) appears on this show.

February 11, 1947: The first appearance of the McGee's maid "Lena," played by Gene Carroll.

May 13, 1947: We learn that Fibber has a brother named "Mickey."

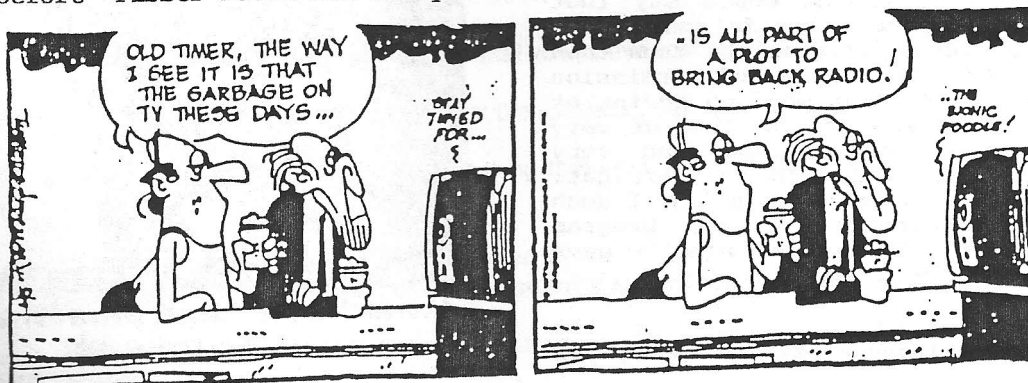
October 7, 1947: The first appearance of Gale Gordon as "Foggy Williams" the weatherman. The character of Mayor La Trivia, a satire of Mayor La Guardia of New York City, is suspended on the death of Mr. La Guardia.

May 4, 1948: The McGees are planning to sell 79 Wistful Vista!

November 16, 1948: Jim Jordan "bloops" a word during dialogue with the Old Timer and cracks up.

February 15, 1949: The first appearance of Richard LeGrand as "Ole," the janitor at City Hall (later at the Elks Club).

April 11, 1950: Fibber and Molly find themselves running the Wistful Vista General Store. Fibber replies to a phone call by calling the store "Smackout," the name of the store in the radio series Jim and Marian Jordan had before "Fibber McGee and Molly."





# THE BREAKFAST CLUB

by  
Clarence Runden

With its cheerful opening of "Good morning breakfast clubbers," Don McNeill's *Breakfast Club* had an extremely successful run of 35½ years.

McNeill, who was born in 1907, began his career in radio as a singer on the West Coast in the late 1920's. Since New York was where radio careers were being made he moved there in 1931, but did not find the success he was looking for. So he moved to Chicago. He was hired by the NBC Blue network for \$50 a week to host an early morning variety show called the *Pepper Pot*. This time slot was considered, by network executives, to be "commercially worthless" so no one at the network expected much of him. Because of this, when the first show aired from Chicago on June 23, 1933, he was pretty much left to do what he wanted. One of the first things he did was to change the name of the show to the *Breakfast Club*.

Potential sponsors pretty much ignored the beginnings of the program. In fact, it was six years before the network could attract consistent commercial sponsors. He wrote the scripts himself and he also started reading letters from the listeners. He would say that the people who wrote in could do a better job of writing the show than he could. He then asked permission to do the program with no script at all. This was at the time of very nervous network censors and very rigid FCC programming oversight. But the network officials had such low expectations for the program that surprisingly they readily gave McNeill permission to do so.

Working without a script on the radio is always risky, and sometimes

it did result in problems for McNeill. An example of this occurred in 1952 when his guest singer was a little girl named Brenda Lee. They had just come out of a commercial for Grape Nuts and McNeill ad-libbed, "I'll bet little Brenda wishes she had some Grape Nuts right now, don't you?" Brenda answered, "I don't like Grape Nuts." That is not exactly the sort of thing that would please a program sponsor.

The show was loosely divided into four parts (audience time, memory time, march time, and inspiration time) that were each punctuated by his "call to breakfast," although no food was served. The program had an orchestra, guest stars and a regular cast that gradually changed over the years. It was very much a family affair and his wife, Kay, was featured regularly and with his three sons Tom, Don, and Bobby appearing frequently. It was



*Don McNeill, on the left, with a fan and Rudy Vallee on the right.*

performed before a live audience, and he took the show "on the road" for a month each year.

Once the program hit its stride, young entertainers were eager to appear, knowing that a successful guest spot could launch them into an entertainment career of their own. Jim and Marion Jordan developed their skills on the show in the 1930's on their way to the start of their own *Fibber McGee and Molly* program. Bill Thompson, who later joined the *Fibber McGee and Molly* cast as Wallace Wimple and the Old Timer developed his skills on the *Breakfast Club*. So did Alice Lon, Johnny Desmond, and Homer and Jethro. Fran Allison, who later achieved fame with her *Kukla, Fran and Ollie Show* on television, played the role of a spinster Aunt Fanny who told the secrets of her country neighbors.

During the height of its popularity, the program that originally couldn't attract a commercial sponsor generated \$1 million a year from each of its four sponsors. McNeill, who first earned \$50 a week (\$2,600 a year), received \$200,000 during the program's peak years.

In 1954, the program was one of the first to be simulcast on television. The format just didn't translate well to TV and the television presentation was soon dropped. But the radio version continued unabated. While there might be some disagreement as to exactly when the so called golden age of radio ended, there can be little doubt that Don McNeill and the *Breakfast Club* far outlived that period of our history since the show went forward until December 27, 1968.

Don McNeill died on May 7, 1996 at 88 years of age.

---

### COMMERCIAL FLUFFS

*These errors occurred during radio commercials.*

The following was heard on a Sacramento, California, FM radio station: "This mellowed beer is brewed with pukey mountain water . . . pure Rocky Mountain water!"

Announcer Ed Herlihy announced: "Another delicious combination for these hot days, also by Kraft, is a chilled grease sandwich and a choke!"

A public service announcement: "To qualify for President Johnson's All American Team, all you have to do is perform a series of sit-ups, push-ups, and throw-ups!"

"So try Vick's 44 Cough Syrup and we guarantee that you'll never get any better!"

"Houchens Market has fresh young hens ready for the rooster . . . er . . . roaster."

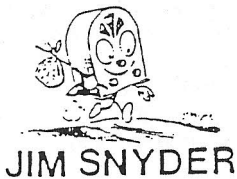
"So, cold sufferers, stop at your drug store first thing tomorrow and pick up a bottle of Vicks Naval Spary!"

"Men, when you take your favorite girl out for dinner, atmosphere means an awful lot. You will find the best German food and the best sauerbraten at Joe's Rat Cellar . . . er . . . Rathskeller."

"Come in at the sign of the clock, where it only takes six months to open a three-minute charge account!"



Wireless  
Wanderings



# Webley Edwards and “Hawaii Calls”

Radio's *Hawaii Calls* went on the air in 1935 where it enjoyed a forty year run, much of the time over the Mutual Broadcasting System. The program was started by Webley Edwards, and he remained the host for all but the last three of those years.

Edwards was born in Oregon and he attended Oregon State where he was the starting quarterback and also the first manager of the school's radio station. His ability as a football player resulted in his being invited to visit what was then the Territory of Hawaii by G.W. Schuman, an auto dealer and the owner of the Honolulu football team. He failed both as a professional football player and as a car salesman, but he remained in Honolulu where he entered the field of radio broadcasting and worked his way up to become the station manager of KGMB in Honolulu.

In a 1949 article he described how *Hawaii Calls* came into being: "The program started with a chance remark at a meeting of network officials in San Francisco. We had been listening to a broadcast from a group of musicians playing what was purported to be 'Hawaiian' music, from a nightclub in the city. I ventured the suggestion that the music was not quite representative of Hawaiian singing, and one of the radio men said, 'Why don't you send us some real Hawaiian music direct from the Islands?'"

Edwards went back and quickly assembled a network of twenty West Coast stations. He hired Harry Owens, a band leader at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, to be the musical director. He selected Moana Hotel's Banyon Court as the location for the broadcasts, and purchased segments of shortwave broadcast time for \$37.50 for each half hour.

On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1935 the first broadcast opened with the sound of waves crashing onto the beach along with the rhythm of native drums. This was the first of 2,083 broadcasts where the announcer opened by saying, "This is a call from Hawaii!" The audience then shouted "Aloha!" The introduction continued, over the applause, "Speaking for all the people of Hawaii, our host at Waikiki - Webley Edwards."

Other stations were soon joining the network. The show ran without commercial sponsors and so financial support came from local merchants and a predecessor of the Hawaiian Visitors Bureau. According to Edwards, "At the beginning we featured different musical groups each week, but it soon became evident that while we wanted to send a carefree relaxed program to our Mainland listeners, we would have to work out a business-like efficiency to keep within the allotted network time and get in the long hours of rehearsal necessary for learning more and more songs. Al Kealoha Perry and his "Singing Surfriders" were the answer to that problem. Al was a genial, husky Hawaiian and a civil engineer by profession. We asked him to take over the musical direction of *Hawaii Calls*. Al combined his engineer's efficiency with a vast understanding of Hawaiian music and musicians, and the combination has worked out very well indeed."

Edwards was the station manager of Honolulu's CBS affiliate, KGMB, which was one of only two stations on the island of Oahu. At 8:05 on Sunday morning, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, he became the first person to broadcast the attack on Pearl Harbor: "This is not a maneuver! This is the real McCoy! Be calm, keep off the streets, do not use the telephones, all automobiles keep off the highways." Because the Japanese had



used civilian broadcast signals to locate Pearl Harbor, radio silence was imposed that blacked out the Honolulu stations for seven weeks. The military then decided that Hawaii Calls was needed in order to build morale and to ease the fears of Mainlanders about the situation in Hawaii. Edwards was allowed to resume the show, but always had a censor standing by. His musicians were all soon working in defense jobs, but were always excused on Saturday afternoons for the broadcasts. The live audience now consisted mostly of soldiers and sailors.

Because of his bulletins of the December 7<sup>th</sup> attack, CBS radio appointed Edwards as a war correspondent. He took a leave of absence from Hawaii Calls and traveled the Pacific sending war reports on the landings on Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. When the Japanese surrendered, Admiral Chester Nimitz selected Edwards to broadcast the surrender ceremonies aboard the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. This broadcast was carried by the combined radio networks. It was said that Edwards made the first broadcast of the war – and the last.

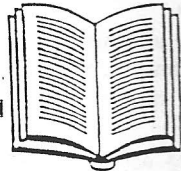
After the war, Webley Edwards returned to Hawaii Calls. He produced 28 LP record albums, composed music (most notably "Pearly Shells"), operated an audio equipment company,

and purchased a radio station. He also entered politics and was elected to the Territorial House of Representatives and later, in 1966, to the state Senate.

The show continued from what Edwards described as: "The Moana Hotel's big lanai, under the huge old banyan tree. Easily accessible to Mainland visitors and townspeople, it has fine acoustical properties and a magnificent setting of blue sea with Diamond Head in the background."

After 35 years on the air, TV was cutting into the program's popularity, and Edwards began to have health problems. In 1972 he suffered a series of strokes that left him partially paralyzed. So, for the last three years of the show, the duties as emcee were turned over to a Hawaiian entertainer, Danny Kaleikini. The program finally went off the air in 1975.

Webley Edwards passed away, at age 74, in Honolulu's Maunalani Hospital on October 5, 1977. A Honolulu newspaper editorial, two days later, said: "There is no telling how many millions of visitors Hawaii Calls lured here in those early days, or how much comfort it provided to homesick Island residents on the Mainland. In addition, by providing work and an outlet, it did much to keep Hawaiian music alive in what was a dark period before the current renaissance."



## NEW BOOK



RELIGIOUS RADIO AND TELEVISION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1921-1991, by Hal Erickson, is a paperback reprint of the 1992 hardcover book of the same name. This 240 page publication gives us a detailed look at religious broadcasting. The book is really divided into two parts. The first part, which is the introduction, is a seventeen page "history" of religious programming. The rest is an encyclopedic listing of 400 religious programs and individuals involved in this type of broadcasting. The "program" entries give background information and a synopsis of the program. For the personalities, there is information on their ministry and the shows in which they appeared. The price of the book is \$29 postpaid and can be ordered from McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, or (800) 253-2187.

Tuning the RotoRadio Dial:

# The Farther Adventures of CrimeBuster

## Episode 5

by ken weigelo

Narrator: Well, not long ago, listeners will remember, Crimebuster made the bold decision to track a cat burglar disguised as a dog. But the private tutor he hired to teach him dog obedience was a Scottish terrier, whose brogue was too thick to understand! And that's not all. While the gutty gumshoe pondered what to do next, two armed gunmen held up his friend Nicky, the saloon keeper.

Crimebuster *[To the rescue!]* Ms. Torso, tell Nicky I will answer his summons for help.

Narrator: And quickly off they darted to Nicky's Bar & Grill to thwart the gunmen...

*[In rapid succession: office door slams, footsteps running on pavement, car door slams, car peels away, car screeches to a stop, car door slams, footsteps running on pavement, saloon door opens]*

Nicky: CB, what took ya so long?

Crimebuster: Traffic was heavy, Nicky.

Ms. Torso: Your dart dawdles too.

Crimebuster: Who are these two lugs with the smoking guns?

Nicky: They're the armed gunmen what held me up.

Crimebuster: Nicky, "armed gunmen"—

Crimebuster & Nicky *[together]:* Is redundant.

Nicky: I beg you pardon.

First Tough Guy *[gruff New Yorker]:* Say, who you callin' redundant?

Crimebuster: Boy, look at the jaw on that guy! He looks tough.

Nicky: Yeah, he's been pickin' his teeth with a nail.

Ms. Torso: The other one's cleaning his nails with a tooth.

Crimebuster: How do you do?

First Tough Guy: Dat's what you t'ink.

Second Tough Guy *[also gruff]:* Who's da pretty boy?

Crimebuster: If you're referring to me, sir, *[pats pockets]* I am... Now where'd I put that—

Ah, here it is. I, sir, am *[kazoo ta-dah]* Crimebuster!

Second Tough Guy: Did youse say "Crimebuster"?

Crimebuster: Yes I am. Central City's only private shamus.

Second Tough Guy: Dat's a hoot, an armed kazooman.

Crimebuster & Nicky: That's redundant.

Crimebuster: Yes, and this is my vicious—

Ms. Torso: Vivacious.

Crimebuster: Vivacious secretary, Ms. Torso.

First & Second Tough Guys *[together]:* Chawmed.

Crimebuster: Stand aside Nicky whilst I apprehend these evil men.

Nicky: OK.

Second Tough Guy: Did he say "whilst"?

First Tough Guy: Yes he didst.

Second Tough Guy: Da guy's a comedian.

Crimebuster: Nevertheless, I'm placing you both under warranty. *[Beat]* That's not right, is it?

Ms. Torso: No.

Crimebuster: How about under privileged?

Ms. Torso: No. Try under arrest.

Crimebuster: No. How about under *fed*?

First & Second Tough Guys, Ms. Torso [together]: No.

First Tough Guy: All right, cut the funny stuff, bub.

Crimebuster: CrimeBub to you, mister.

First Tough Guy: Whatever. You wanna cooperate or I'll drill ya.

Crimebuster: Nicky, you didn't say anything about armed drillmen.

First & Second Tough Guys, Ms. Torso: That's redundant.

Second Tough Guy: Dat's enough. We're takin' you along for insurance, CrimeBub.

Crimebuster: That's CrimeBubster.

Second Tough Guy: Whatever. C'mon!

*[Saloon door opens. Establish city traffic sounds, car screeches to a stop, car door opens]*

First Tough Guy: Get in, shamus!

Crimebuster: Oh no, you're not getting me in there.

First Tough Guy: Dis is a loaded pistol in your back!

Crimebuster: Wend me hither and yon, far and wide, tooth and nail—

First & Second Tough Guys: Dat's us!

Crimebuster: But I won't get in your car.

First Tough Guy: Izzat so?

Crimebuster: Pour hot wax in my ear, deep-fry me in chicken fat, but I won't—

Nicky & Ms. Torso [together]: That's tellin' 'em, CB.

First Tough Guy: Did I mention dis gun shoots real bullets? *[Hammer clicks]*

Crimebuster [beat]: Did you say *real* bullets?

First Tough Guy: Do I stutter?

Crimebuster: I give up.

First Tough Guy: Why you...

Crimebuster: Ms. Torso?

Ms. Torso: What?

Crimebuster: Do we have any defense against *real* bullets?

Ms. Torso: No we don't.

Crimebuster: Then there's just one thing left to do.

Ms. Torso: What's that?

Crimebuster: Last one in's a sissy!

*[Sound: car door slams, car peels out]*

Narrator: And not two minutes later...

*[Quickly: car drives up, screeches to a stop, car door opens; establish gunmen laughing hysterically, then bring under]*

Crimebuster: Here's your criminals Nicky, Tooth and Nail.

First & Second Tough Guys [Abruptly stop laughing]: Dat's us! *[Resume laughing]*

Nicky: I am deeply ingrated to you, CB.

Crimebuster: Not at all, Nicky.

Nicky: How'd you subdue them?

Crimebuster: I rendered them helpless with my gas pen.

Nicky & Ms. Torso: Gas pen?

Crimebuster: Yes, laughing gas. It has ten good ha-has per cartridge: there's your chortle, your snicker—

*[Briefly bring up hysterical laughter]*

Crimebuster: That was your nasal outburst.

Nicky: Wonderful invention, the gas pen. Where'd you get it?



Crimebuster: From my utility belt.

Nicky: Utility belt?

Crimebuster: Yes, which I got in a box of cereal. It was delicious too.

Nicky & Ms. Torso: The cereal?

Crimebuster: No, the utility belt.

Nicky & Ms. Torso: Oh.

Crimebuster: Ms. Torso?

Ms. Torso: What now?

Crimebuster: All right if I blow my kazoo again?

*[Bring up laughter, then drop behind]*

Narrator: Wellll! What a day it's been for Crimebuster! While foiling a holdup he gets kidnapped, then *unkidnapped*, then captures two bad guys! And him with a dawdling dart! Where *does* he get his energy? Which reminds me, wouldn't a heaping bowl of utility belt go good about now? With strawberries? Tune in next time when we'll hear:

Crimebuster: *[Kazoo ta-dah]*

*[Swell laughter, then fade]*

**This past May, NARA contributor Ken Weigel passed away. Mr. Weigel had written about Old Time Radio for many years, the most recent pieces being the "Crimebuster" episodes in this last year's NARA News.**

Stephen Jansen, who records the NARA News on tape for our sight-impaired members, had been doing the episodes as radio playlets (albeit on a very small scale) and thought that the series deserved to be heard by more people. A project to assemble these episodes as a NARA fundraiser was proposed, and Mr. Weigel's family has graciously approved.

The Ken Weigel memorial "Crimebuster" package will be a newly recorded full production including numerous character voices (Mr. Jansen originally did all the voices himself), sound effects and music. The shows, all written by Ken Weigel, will be as follows:

- The Farther Adventures of Crimebuster – Chapters 1 -7
- Leona of Grand Junction
- "Salad Days" – a Fibber McGee and Molly parody/tribute

This package is just beginning production and the projected finish date is September, 2001. All profits go to NARA as a memorial for Ken Weigel.

Cost of this audio package is ten dollars. Please make out your check or money order to Stephen Jansen. Be sure to specify if you would prefer CD or CASSETTE (both cost the same). Please send your payment to:

Stephen Jansen  
515 Willow Way  
Lindenhurst, IL 60046

# 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.

**NOTE:** The following is the most recent information that we have received, however changes do sometimes occur. We urge you to check with the contact person listed for up-to-date information.

① **THE 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FRIENDS OF OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTION** will be held October 25 thru 28, 2001 at the Holiday Inn North at the Newark, New Jersey International Airport. The hotel provides free shuttle service back and forth to the airport. Contact person is Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514. Jay can be reached by phone at (203) 248-2887.

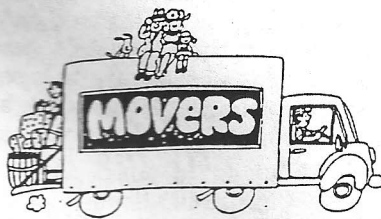
② **THE 15<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL OLD TIME RADIO AND NOSTALGIA CONVENTION** is scheduled for April 19 and 20, 2002. This convention is held at the Radison Hotel on the north side of Cincinnati, Ohio. The contact person is Bob Burchette, 10280 Gunpowder Road, Florence, KY 41042. The phone is (859) 282-0333.

③ **THE REPS RADIO SHOWCASE** is an annual affair held at the Seattle Center in Seattle, Washington. You can obtain information on this event from Mike Sprague, P.O. Box 723, Bothel, WA 98041. Phone: (425) 488-9518. Future dates:

Showcase X – June 28-29, 2002

Showcase XI – June 27-28, 2003

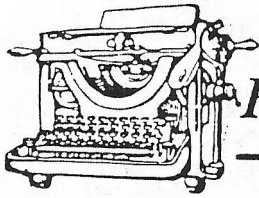
**SPERDVAC** has announced that they will not hold a convention this year.



## ADDRESS CHANGE?

If you are going to be changing your address, please let NARA know! Send both your old address and your new address to:

Don L. Aston  
P.O. Box 1392  
Lake Elsinore, CA 92531



---

## From The Editor's Desk....

---

Jim Snyder



I've been extremely disturbed by the direction NARA has been going, and apparently will continue to go in the future, so I've found it necessary to resign as editor. Since this is my last issue I'd like to take this opportunity to share some personal reflections.

This publication has been in existence for 29 years and I've been privileged to serve as its editor for the last seven of those years. We've put out 200 pages a year, enough for a small sized book each year. I will certainly miss handling this publication and working with so many fine folks. There are dozens of people who deserve a "thank you," and you'll find many listed on the next page, however there are a few who have been particularly important and helpful to me personally and I'd like to mention them here.

Frank Bresee, with his "Golden Days of Radio" broadcasts over Armed Forces Radio, is the one who introduced me to this hobby when I was working at the American Embassy in Germany back in 1970. Then Roger Hill, our founder, introduced me to NARA in 1974 and welcomed me as the organizations 91<sup>st</sup> member. Chuck Seeley, who was the editor of another OTR publication, started me writing my "Wireless Wanderings" column and arranged for that little logo of a radio hiking along the road as the heading for my articles. And by the way, my column that appears in this issue concludes exactly twenty-five years of Wireless Wanderings. Anyway, without these three people I would never have gotten into this hobby or become so involved with it. Thanks, gentlemen, for thirty-two terrific years.

I am also particularly indebted to John Pellatt, who was editor of *Through the Horn* which was another NARA publication several years ago, and to Jack French who was the editor of *NARA News* from 1980 through 1985. Both of these people provided me with valuable advice and material seven years ago when I had just taken on the task of editor. There is no question that I would have quickly failed in this endeavor had it not been for their efforts and assistance. And incidentally, all five of the above named people have articles appearing in this issue.

We also need to express great appreciation and admiration to our retiring membership director, Janis DeMoss. She is the one who has seen to it that each issue has been properly addressed and promptly mailed out to you, not always an easy task. Her advice and support have been most helpful.

In scanning back through the twenty-eight issues of the *NARA News* that I have put out (1,400 pages) I am truly amazed at the really quality material I find in them. This, of course, was because of all of our writers, both the regulars that you have seen in each issue and the ones who appeared only a few times, or perhaps only once. Without these people there would have been no *NARA News*. Many of you have told me over the years how much you have enjoyed this publication. If that is so, it is not because of me but is because of these fine individuals who have shared their research and opinions with the rest of us. They are the ones who made it possible for me to put out fifty pages in each issue, and it has indeed been a pleasure to work with each of them.

Finally, I greatly appreciate you, our members, for the support, comments, and suggestions that you have offered over the years. Thanks to you all.



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

Over the last seven years, the reason you've had something interesting and informative to read, is because of sixty people who have put the time and effort into writing articles for the *NARA News*. This time, instead of naming only the people who have articles in this issue, we'd like to list all sixty of those writers from all twenty-eight of those copies, including this one. The number in parenthesis indicates how many articles we've had from them.

Steve Allen (1)	Roma Freedman (1)	John Pellatt (16)
Don Aston (15)	Jack French (21)	Clarence Runden (9)
Barney Beck (1)	Lou Genco (2)	Bob Sabon (3)
Bob Beckett (1)	B.J. George (15)	Keith Scott (1)
Donald Berhent (8)	Louise Grafton (1)	Chuck Seeley (7)
Frank Boncore (1)	Rich Harvey (1)	Charles Sexton (7)
Frank Bresee (28)	Roger Hill (25)	Keith Sexton (1)
Robert Brown (4)	Henry Hinkel (10)	Jayme Simoes (1)
Bob Burnham (24)	Al Inkster (4)	Hal Skinner (4)
Pres. Bill Clinton (1)	Scott Jones (1)	Mickey Smith (4)
Jim Cox (16)	Gene Larson (10)	Ray Smith (25)
Norman Cox (1)	Sam Levene (1)	Roger Smith (1)
Gerald Curry (3)	Jarold Michael (1)	Ron Staley (3)
Bob Davis (4)	Tom Monroe (1)	John Stanley (6)
Anthony DiFlorio (1)	Bob Mott (8)	George Steiner (4)
Jim Dolan (1)	Jeff Muller (1)	Hal Stephenson (28)
Ray Erlenborn (6)	William Murtough (2)	Chris Thomas (1)
Paul Everett (1)	Arlene Osborne (1)	Ken Weigel (17)
Francis Federighi (1)	Jack Palmer (31)	Harlan Zirck (1)
Herb Franklin (1)	Dominic Patrissi (1)	

In addition to those writers listed above, there are four other people who have had a very important part in the publication of the *NARA News* every three months, and they also deserve special recognition:

Gene Larson has served as NARA's staff artist since 1978. In the last seven years, in addition to the ten articles listed above, Gene has provided us with twenty-six drawings including eleven of our centerfolds. His efforts have added a touch of "class" to our publication.

When she submitted her resignation in early May, Janis DeMoss was completing her twelfth year as NARA's membership director. She has handled all of our mailings, and for the first six of those twelve years she took care of having each issue printed and then had to take the loose pages home to assemble, staple, and fold each individual copy by hand before sending it out.

Each issue of the *NARA News* is recorded on audio tape for our members who are visually impaired. This was handled for two years by Bill Bright and for the last year and a half by Stephen Jansen. Those members who benefited from this service greatly appreciate their efforts.



**NORTH  
AMERICAN  
RADIO  
ARCHIVES**

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Janis DeMoss  
134 Vincewood Drive  
Nicholasville, KY 40356**

**FRANK PASSAGE  
409 ELMWOOD RD  
VERONA, NJ 07044**

**NON-PROFIT OR.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LEXINGTON, KY  
Permit # 748**