

THE GOLDEN DAYS OF RADIO



By Frank Bressee

GEORGE BURNS

"SAY GOODNIGHT GRACIE!"

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

George: Well Gracie, say hello to everybody.

Gracie: Hello everybody. What will I do now?

George: Well just make something up.

Gracie: O.K. I'll make up a riddle; I'll give you three chances, and if you can't guess it, you win.

George: If I can't guess it I win? Well what happens if I guess it?

Gracie: Then it's a tie!

George: It's a tie?

Gracie: Now what's the difference . . .

George: Just a minute Gracie—This one is on me. A man goes into a restaurant and he orders spinach, mashed potatoes and cheesecake—How did I know he was a soldier?

Gracie: Is that the one where the fellow had on a uniform? That's very good George, tell that!

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

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

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

I first met George Burns in 1972 when I was writing and producing the KFI 50th Anniversary program. The Burns and Allen Show was a regular feature on NBC for many years and George reflected with some stories and audio excerpts from the early radio years. George pointed out that, "I'd go to a theatre under one name and get fired after the first show. In a week or two I'd be back at the same flea bag with a different name and in black face. The owner wouldn't know the difference until I started singing. I got the hook a lot. But I'd rather be a flop

in a business I love than a success in felt hats. That's how I am. Nobody can hurt my feelings."

Two years ago George Burns was a guest on my *Golden Days of Radio* program and he reminisced about his friend of 50 years Jack Benny. "I remember the time three of us were at the bar at the Hollywood Brown Derby. There was Edgar Bergen, Jack

Benny and myself. When we were finished Jack said, I'll take the check." So the bartender gave him the check and he paid it. On the way out of the Derby, I said to Jack, "It was really nice of you to ask for the check." Jack said "I didn't ask for it, and that's the last time I'll have a drink with a ventriloquist."

We also talked about his latest picture.

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

George: OH GOD!

Frank: What part do you play?

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

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

(continued on page 3)

THE OLD Time Radio Club of Buffalo and the Golden Radio Buffs of Denver are preparing another annual combined edition of their news letters for fall, 1978. Wanted: articles and stories to be included. Send to John H. Lloyd, 2667 E. 99th Ave., Thornton, CO 80229 8/78

GEORGE BURNS . . .
(continued from page 2)

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

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

TRADE BOSTON Blackie, Cisco Kid, 16" transcription discs for same, or other ZIV discs. Buying also. Wanted Radio Guides, Radio Mirror, Tune In magazines. Trade for 2nd Generation exc. quality only. Will trade my 1st Generation.
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CHOOSE FROM 10,000 radio programs. Six hours for \$17 on reel or \$27 on cassettes. Catalog \$1.50. Series lists 25 cents each. Special prices on serials. R. R. Schurch, 9370 Urban Dr. La Mesa, CA 92041. 11/78

NOTE: George Burns has just been signed to do a TV Special, "George Burns 100th Birthday." It will be taped in November, and will air sometime around his birthday, January 20, 1979.

BACK ISSUES

\$1.50 Each or all 7 for \$6

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BUYER WILL pay \$1.25 for each 78 RPM 1920's Foxtrot Record - Victor (VE), Columbia, Brunswick and other labels. Send list stating title, group and your address and phone to Dave Pearce 673 Sylvan Ave., No. Vancouver, B.C. Canada V7R 2E8 8/78

I AM interested in contacting others interested in vintage radio and phono records. Please write me, David Pearce, 673 Sylvan Ave. No., Vancouver, B.C. Canada V7R 2E8 8/78



FRANK BRESSE AND GEORGE BURNS 1976

**SPERDVAC ESTABLISHES
1ST PUBLIC ACCESS
ARCHIVES LIBRARY**

A new library of "first generation only" radio recordings has been established by the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy (SPERDVAC).

The Archives Library features recordings of old radio programs taken directly from the original transcription discs. This process insures the highest quality possible in the reproduction of a wide variety of radio programs.

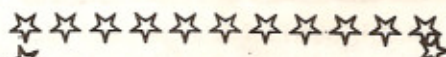
John Tefteller, Archives Librarian, is using discs from his personal collection for initial library holdings. Each program will be mastered onto Maxell mastering tape. Circulating copies will be available to SPERDVAC members on Ampex mastering tape.

"The SPERDVAC Archives Library will be the first of its type to be made available to the general public," Tefteller said. "At present, the few existing archival libraries are universities, studios, or so-called museums without public access," he noted.

"The superior quality achieved in reproducing from the original radio discs completely eliminates such common audio tape problems as hiss, distortion, cross-talk, and loss of fidelity," Tefteller explained. "Thus, the Archives Library will be far superior to the radio material currently being circulated among collectors, including all commercially available long-play records."

Each program will be recorded at 7½ inches per second, left channel only, for optimum clarity. The reels will be available to SPERDVAC members beginning August, 1978. The initial collection will consist of thirty reels with approximately one hour of programming on each reel.

Tefteller also stated that SPERDVAC welcomes any donations of original radio transcription discs. The Society will make tapes of these discs for distribution to its members. Donors have the option of either donating the discs outright or merely making them



SPERDVAC Magazine \$2.25
Issue #2

ARTICLES BY:

- *Harry Von Zell
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STORIES ABOUT:

- *Groucho Marx
- *Lux Radio Theater
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available for preservation by SPERDVAC. All contributions are tax-deductible.

The Society also maintains two extensive tape lending libraries of old radio programs in both open reel and cassette formats, publishes a monthly Bulletin and an annual Magazine, and conducts monthly meetings featuring personalities from the radio broadcasting industry.

Further information on the Archives Library and SPERDVAC may be obtained from John DeNiko, SPERDVAC Membership Chairman, 4922 Cartlen Drive, Placencia, California.



GOLDEN MIKE AWARDS

The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland, Inc. have announced the seventh annual Golden Mike Awards Banquet. This year's National Award Winner is Mr. Lon Clark (Radio's "Nick Carter, Master Detective").

The Banquet will be held October 21, 1978. Reservations are limited to 260 persons. Ticket information:

Ernest Rethschulte
P.O. Box 8564
Parkville, Md. 21234
(301) 661-5008



WILL BUY 1928 A.C. radios. Send price & description. Also need: Thompson Model 20 Audio Transformer, old battery eliminator, Magnavox Model M4, Driver only; Freed Eisemann Speaker; Larry Dighera, P.O. Box 12100, Santa Ana, CA 92712. 8/78

WANTED: Tubes early experimental to 1930's, early radio parts, manuals, 1929 Edison anniversary lamp. For sale, hundreds tubes from 1940's to 1960's. S.A.S.E. for list, Harbeck 1316 38th, Sioux City, Iowa 51104. 8/78

WANT RADIO material dealing with Frank Sinatra: particularly 2 shows — Monaco Concert, 6/15/58; Concert Royal, 6/2/62. Will trade from other material. I have live concert of Sinatra taped recently. Contact Larry Adamson, 207 Patrick Ave, Franklin, Tenn. 37064. 8/78



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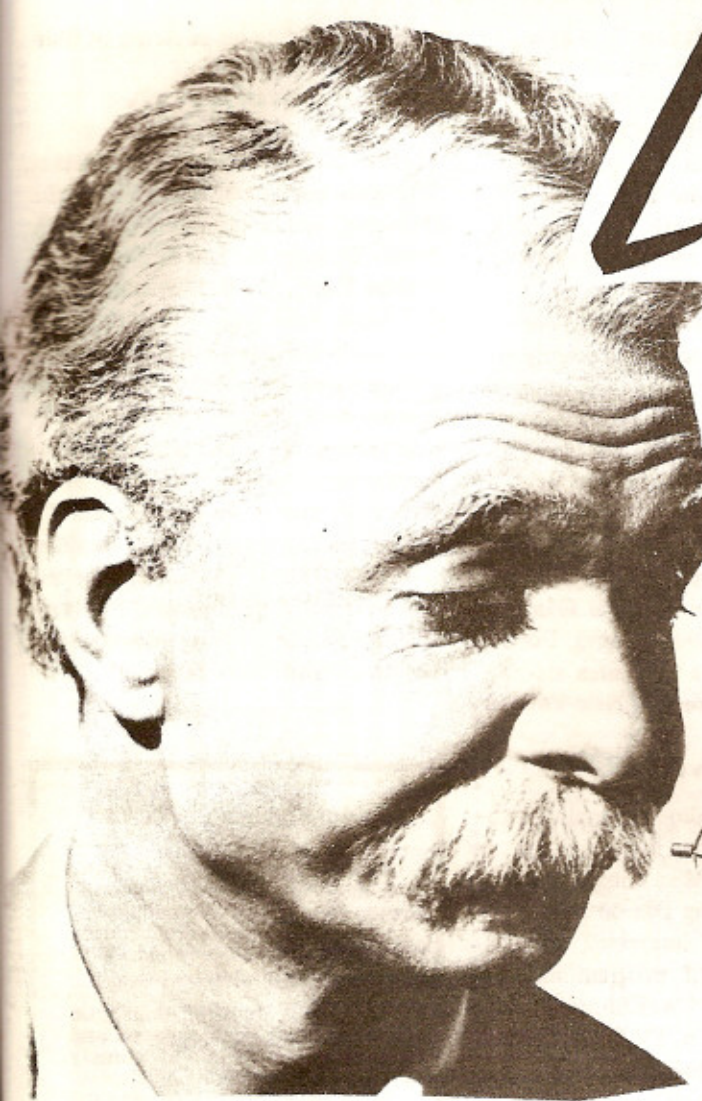
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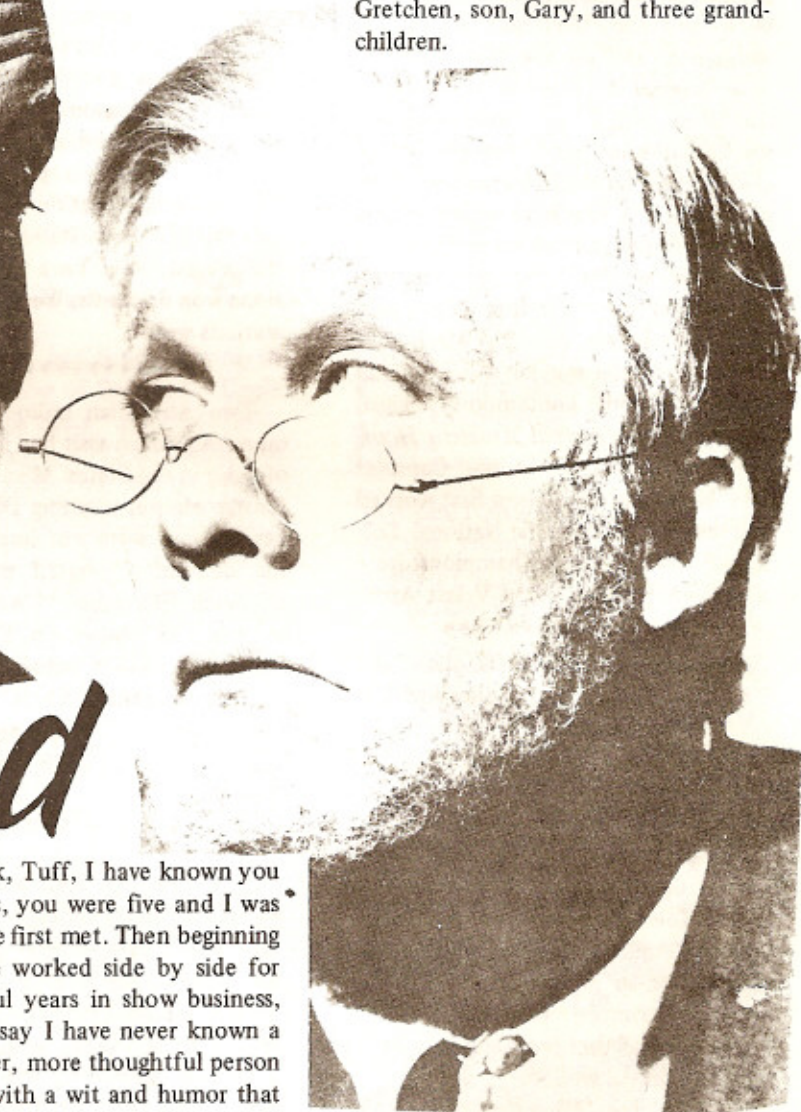
(We also trade for quality sound—send for list)



Lum

LUM AND ABNER DUO SEPARATED BY DEATH

Norris Goff, "Abner" of the "Lum and Abner" radio show, died June 7 at the Eisenhower Medical Center in Palm Desert, California, after suffering a stroke. Goff, 72, was half of the home-spun philosophers from Pine Ridge, Arkansas. The other half, Chester Lauk, lives in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Goff leaves his wife, Elizabeth, a daughter, Gretchen, son, Gary, and three grandchildren.



and

Abner

LETTER TO NORRIS (TUFFY) GOFF

Dear Tuffy:

Tuffy, you left in such a hurry we didn't have a chance to tell you good-bye and you took a lot of our friends with you - Abner Peabody, Squire Skimp, Dick Huddleston, Mousey Gray, Ezra Seatrunk, and a lot of our hearts.

I opened the Jot 'em Down Store this morning, as usual, but I don't know, somehow it just wasn't the same without you there. Lum and Abner just seem to go together like ham and eggs, salt and pepper . . . one doesn't sound right without the other. The store seemed so terribly empty . . . I finally just locked her up and threw the key away. The Jot 'em Down Store ain't no more, no more telephone ringin'.

Just think, Tuff, I have known you for 67 years, you were five and I was nine when we first met. Then beginning in 1931, we worked side by side for 25 wonderful years in show business, and I must say I have never known a finer, sweeter, more thoughtful person in my life, with a wit and humor that has never been equaled and never will.

Tuff, you might look around and find a good location up there. If I ever have the privilege of joinin' you, we might even consider openin' up the old Jot 'em Down Store again. I saved the old checkerboard and I believe it's my next move. Goodbye, Tuff . . . Goodbye old friend . . . we all love you.

(signed) Chet"

NEWS OF OLD TIME RADIO
By Chuck Seeley

Last issue, this space noted some of the upcoming OTR revivals on television. The format of one of these, *The New Original Amateur Hour*, has changed substantially since the first report.

Lewis Graham and Lloyd Marx, who were the original producer and director of the vintage *Amateur Hour*, have sold all rights to the show to producers Brad Marks and Lee Mendelson. Marks and Mendelson will do the pilot for *The New Original Amateur Hour*, but they will do it with a twist. Instead of the simple half-hour pilot show previously announced, the Marks-Mendelson team will produce a two hour special which will be touted as a tribute to the *Original Amateur Hour*. This retrospective will probably include film clips from the Major Bowes and Ted Mack eras. Included in the special will be a full dress, half-hour, contemporary pilot for *The New Original Amateur Hour*. What will the special be like? Consider this: Marks and Mendelson first worked as a team to produce the National Collegiate Cheerleading Championships - a special airing on CBS-TV last April.

The *New Quiz Kids* TV show, on the other hand, is forging ahead with a series of 26 episodes for syndication. The pilot has a team of Los Angeles area youngsters battling the cast and crew of *The Waltons*. In addition, a Canadian version of *The New Quiz Kids* is underway in Toronto for the Global Television Network. A "Team Canada" will be formed through a series of on-air elimination rounds to eventually compete with the US team. The winner of that bout will take on a British team via satellite.

Veteran baseball announcers Red Barber and Mel Allen are the first winners of The Baseball Hall of Fame's Ford C. Frick Award for Broadcasting Excellence. Barber and Allen received their awards at ceremonies held in Cooperstown, NY, on August 7. The Frick Award is new this year and has been introduced to honor broadcasters who have devoted their professional

lives "in outstanding fashion" to baseball. Red Barber broadcast the sport for more than 30 years, beginning his career with the Cincinnati Reds. He then spent 15 seasons with the Brooklyn Dodgers and 12 with the Yankees. Mel Allen handled the Yank broadcasts from 1939 to 1965, aside from 3 army years.

Speaking of awards, the New York State Broadcasters Association recently handed out their annual prizes. Sadly, there was no winner in the Best Documentary by a Radio Network category, which speaks poorly for all the networks' news divisions. Even more sadly, there are no entertainment categories. The only other groupings other than news and information are Best Commercial and Best Station Promo. For the record, New York City area stations won 5 awards, Western New York stations won 4.

Two Australian radio personalities on an American visit had low opinions of radio in the States. Mike Gibson and George Moore, morning DJs on a Sydney station, were not impressed with the computer-operated programming on much FM radio. "I was impressed by the talk shows on TV," Gibson said, "But radio is automated. There's no adventure there. There's no humanity in a cassette." Moore agreed, saying that American radio is "really stagnating."

July saw the 50th anniversary of Radio-TV Hong Kong, and August the 55th anniversary of WRC-AM in Washington, D.C. The latter broadcast special programming honoring past celebrities.

Yet another syndicated TV show of interest this fall is Joe Franklin's *Hollywood Memories*. Joe Franklin has had a talk show on WOR-TV in New York City for a quarter of a century and this half-hour weekly series will utilize taped clips from vintage Franklin TV shows and film clips from the RKO film library. Franklin has given first TV exposure to many stars (Barbra Streisand and Woody Allen among them) and is

fond of reminding his audience of that fact.

OTR collectors who complain that Big Bands usually get short shrift in the OTRzines will be interested in *The Big Band Almanac* by Leo Walker (Ward Ritchie Press, \$12.95). The book has 433 pages, more than 500 photos, and lists over 6,000 names. Bandleaders are arranged alphabetically from Irving Aronson to Si Zentner. Each entry has information on when and where the bandleader organized his first band, the band's theme song, radio and TV shows, leading sidemen and vocalists, and more. There's also a four page section on regional bandleaders. The book is indexed and has introductions by Les Brown and Harry James.

(continued on page 7)

Contributing Articles?

National Radio Trader welcomes manuscripts, pictures, information and other contributions. Most of our articles are donated. We have a limited budget to purchase pictures.

Articles submitted must be legibly typed, double-spaced, and not have been previously published, unless the publication information is provided with the material. All materials become the property of NATIONAL RADIO TRADER upon receipt, whether used or not and may not be published elsewhere without written permission.

FOR SALE: Panasonic-Dolby noise reduction unit, Model RP-966. Like new, in carton with instructions. Install between AMP and deck with patch cords, also supplied. Originally \$80. Yours for \$30, plus shipping. Larry Reed, Box 714, Arcadia, CA 91006. 8/78

WANT EXCELLENT sounding Sherlock Holmes, Shadow, Suspense, Gildersleeve, Escape, Life of Riley, Fred Allen, Gangbusters, Jack Benny, Kalt-ernborn newscasts; Goodman, Miller Jazz. Have a lot to trade, will exchange catalogs. Andy Blatt, 42 Bowling Green, Staten Island, NY 10314. 8/78

CHUCK SEELEY NEWS
(continued from page 6)

Jules Verne would have been 150 years old this year and so a science fiction symposium in honor of the anniversary is being held in Paris. Ray Bradbury is in Paris to attend the meeting and has written an opera, "Moby Dick in Space," to be performed next year. The opera is about a rogue comet pursued by a half-mad spaceman. Sound familiar? It's another version of *Leviathan*, a Bradbury scripted BBC Radio drama broadcast in 1968 and widely circulated among OTR collectors. But then, there are those SF fans who will insist that Bradbury hasn't *really* written science fiction in years.

 There's plenty of action with the OTR clubs. The North American Radio Archives is celebrating its fifth anniversary this fall and is publishing a special 80 page issue of NARA News in honor of the occasion. The third annual Radio Historical Association of Colorado/Old Time Radio Club of Buffalo special combined publication will be out in October with representative pieces from the NRT, Nostalgia Radio News, Hello Again, and the Milwaukee Area Radio Enthusiasts, among others. The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland are holding their 7th annual Golden Mike Awards Banquet on October 21. Among the honorees is Lon Clark, radio's Nick Carter, SPERDVAC's third annual magazine is due out this fall. Also from SPERDVAC comes the news that the club will be making its Archives Library available to the general public, an action for which SPERDVAC is to be commended. They're certainly doing their part in advancing our hobby.

RADIO SHOWS on 7" reels. Catalog (\$2) lists 1000+ reels. Four hours, \$7. Six hours, \$11. Dick Judge, 362 Browncroft, Rochester NY 14609 2/79

 Finally, the long promised LONE RANGER movie may be closer than we think. Bonita and Jack Wrather are enjoying large success with their "The Magic of Lassie" film, success necessary for the production of the Lone Ranger picture. The Wrathers first advertised the latter with a silver-paper four page insert in the November 2, 1977 *Variety*. The ad features a full color painting of the Ranger and Tonto as rendered by LeRoy Neiman that's really nothing special. Who will portray the masked rider of the plains and friend? Unknown at the moment. Marlon Brando and Robert Blake, perhaps?
 "An' ya can take *dat* to de bank, kemosabe."



WANTED: VIC and Sade "Moving to Peoria," "Demise of Bernice," "Uncle Fletcher Needs Help." Sept. 15, 1944. Darrell Anderson, 17254 Lake Desire Drive No., Renton, WA 98055 8/78
WANTED: 7" plastic reel cans with stands as once sold by Radio Shack or others. Describe, state number available and price. Roger Paulson, Box 4, Needham, Mass. 02192. 8/78

DESPERATELY WANTED: Telephone Hour, June 14, 1948 with soloist Wm. Kapell, pianist. Reel or transcription. Salerno, 5651 Inwood, Houston, TX 77056. 8/78

BLANK RECORDING tape Ampex Scotch and others. Empty reels and boxes. Accessories. Free catalogs. 18 new Shamrock 1800 white box \$55 Sound Investment Co., 2A DeKalb Peachtree Airport, Chamblee, Georgia. 30341. 11/78

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COMMERCIAL SIZE records for sale. Late 1940's, early 1950s, discs, armed forces, government spots, promotions, price open. Charles Owens, 2625 Greenleaf, Elkhart, Indiana. 46514. 8/78

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NEED INFORMATION on Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooter shows. Will trade or buy. Contact Gene Bradford, 21707 Rosedale St., Clair Shores, Mich. 48080. 8/78

LOOKING FOR logs of Gildersleeve, Benny, Fred Allen, Jungle Jim, Johnny Dollar, Lone Ranger, Sgt. Preston, Superman, Tarzan, & Favorite Story. Looking for early Tarzan serials like "Tarzan and Fire of Thor," and other early serials. Would like to contact anyone with copies of "Radio Life," or other early radio listings. I would like to research through them to complete logs and find dates. Have access to Zerox machine, so I can copy and return fast. Please help, will share results with those who do. Terry Salomonson, 925 Silverstone Dr., St. Charles, Mo. 8/78

YESTERDAY'S RADIO ON TAPE: Reel, CASSETTE. Quality sound, reliable service. Catalog \$1. Refundable with first order. Write: ADVENTURES, Box 4822-NR, Inglewood, California 90302. 10-78

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OLD RADIO shows on tape. Most have original commercials. Low as \$1.75 per hour. Catalog \$1, Phantom Empire, 792 Bateswood, No. 3, Houston, Tex. 77079. 10/78

WANTED: OTR collectors/dealers with services who want to be listed in Historical Radio Services directory. Circulation is largest. Covers 100% OTR. Please serious reply only. For details send large SASE or 26 cents stamps. Brent Dingman, Box 15370 Dept. NRT, Long Beach, CA 90815. 5/78

RENTAL REELS—\$3.00 NEW RELEASES. Send for catalog of 100 reels available. Phil Cole, Box 1147, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

On October 7th, an OTR convention will be held at the Holiday Inn. Cost is \$15 per person including buffet dinner. Special guests tentatively coming so far are: Ira Ashley, Rosa Rio, Ed Blainey, Jackson Beck, Ralph Camargo, Raymond Edward Johnson, James Maloney. The program includes radio shows, awards, acting and teaching workshops, panel discussions, movies and readings by Raymond Edward Johnson. To attend, make check out to Jay Hickerson and mail to Box C, Orange, Ct. 06477. Mention if you need display table and whether you want to participate in teaching or acting workshop.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS NOV. 1

 * DO YOU ENJOY reading about the *
 * entertainers of yesteryear? Then you *
 * should enjoy "THE WORLD OF YES- *
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 * 13759 60th St. N., Dept. NRT, Clear- *
 * water, Fla. 33520. 5/79 *

GOLDEN AGE: Radio, thousands of old radio shows on reel and cassettes at low prices. Box 25215-NR. Portland, Oregon 97225. 8/78

ANYONE INTERESTED in monthly 16' ET trade list contact Hy Daley, 437 S.Center, Corry, PA. 16407 8/78

HAVE OVER 350 reels to trade. Am looking for Lum and Abner, Crosby, or any other comedy that I do not have. Jim Hanners, 8511 W. Glenwood Circle, Louisville, KY 40219. 8/78

WANTED: ANY radio or TV material of Nat King Cole. Also, Frank Sinatra. Willing to trade. Larry Adamson, 207 Patrick Ave., Franklin, Tenn. 37064. 8/78

40,000 OLD radio shows on tape. World's largest dealer. Jazz/band remotes, country/western, discographics, anthologies, chronologies. Send \$2 for huge catalog (refundable). McCoy's Recording, Box 1069 T, Richland, WA. 99352. 5/79

WANTED TO buy: Ticket to Radio Show. It seems that collectors of radio shows and related material should have at least one ticket among their treasures. Joe & Susan Crawford, 714-524-6888. 8/78

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