

THE OLD-TIME RADIO GAZETTE

February

By **LUAINE LEE**
Scripps Howard News Service

HOLLYWOOD — He had a bit of a squint and rosy cheeks and he'd often pause in the middle of the action to warble a tune. Though many of the real cowpunchers made fun of him, Roy Rogers was the undisputed King of the Cowboys.

It was a gentler time, says the veteran actor, now 81. A visit to the local movie house cost 11 cents and a child could stay all Saturday afternoon rapt in a world where the good guys were triumphant and the evildoer always paid his dues.

"They don't have any particular pictures that children can relate to today, outside of the little cartoons," says Rogers, looking little changed since his days in the saddle on his famous palomino Trigger.

Rogers was with Republic (known for its tight-fisted management) for 14 years. At first he earned \$75 a week and cranked out six to eight movies a year like "The Arizona Kid," "The Days of Jesse James" and "Bells of Rosarita."

When it came time to renew his contract in the early '50s, Rogers asked for television privileges. The studio refused and he lit out on his own, hosting a 30-minute TV series for 10½ years and parlaying that popularity into a massive merchandising conglomerate.

Rogers formed his own production company, operated a chain of restaurants and held interests in real estate, cattle, thoroughbred horses and a variety of western products.

He had a lot of good help, he says, shrugging off what has been an estimated \$100 million in personal wealth.

At this point there are other matters more important, he says. "I had a lot of things happen — couple of heart operations — so I just get up and start smiling in the morning and (greet) the day ahead of me."

But Rogers got what he calls "the California bite." He accompanied his parents back to Cincinnati, but then hitched his way back. It was the middle of the Depression and Rogers remembers, "You couldn't hardly beg, borrow or steal any kind of a job and that's how I got into the picture business," he says.

"I couldn't find any job but my sister talked me into going onto a little radio station out in Inglewood, Calif. I was scared to death. And I couldn't get out of there quick enough and to this day I don't know what songs I sang, I was so scared."

He helped form a singing group, which became the Sons of the Pioneers, and in 1937 he auditioned for Republic which was searching for a singing cowboy. Though he wasn't exactly a cowboy, he'd grown up on a farm 12 miles outside of Portsmouth, Ohio.

Rogers, the son of a shoe factory worker from Cincinnati, made more than 200 movies. Retiring is difficult, he says; he keeps getting sidetracked.

"Whatever years I got left, I don't want to have it happen in front of a camera or working something I shouldn't be doing," he says. "And (I want to) be thankful for what the good Lord has already given me all these 81 years and so whatever's left I want to just enjoy the family and be there if they need me."

Last May his wife of 44 years suffered a heart attack. Rogers says that unearthing some of the family's artifacts helped her recovery.

Family has always been important to Rogers. He and Dale each had two children by previous marriages when they wed. A little girl with Down Syndrome, who died at 2, is the only child they had together. They adopted five others.

When Rogers' long-time manager died, Rogers' son, Dusty, took over. "We opened our film vaults," explains the younger Rogers. "When I was a kid, even before I was a twinkle in his eye, Dad carried a 16mm camera with him every place he went. And he documented a tremendous amount of things that most people don't see, especially home-movie type things."



Roy Rogers



ROY ROGERS — KING OF THE COWBOYS

TALK WITH OLD TIME RADIO LISTENERS

CHUCK PATTEE

The thing I remember most about Roy Rogers is his old movies. In one of his earliest movies, Roy played the outlaw Billy the Kid. This was probably the only film that he played a criminal.

I also remember Roy as a singing cowboy with Gabby Hayes, the Sons of the Pioneers, and of course with his wife Dale Evans.

Roy Rogers has also been a Christian since the middle 1940's.

Memberships run yearly for \$ 7.50. The annual dues give you 12 issues of the Old-Time Radio Gazette and other old radio information.

"King of Beebop" Dies at 75

John Burks "Dizzy" Gillespie died January 6, of cancer of the pancreas.

The "King of Bebop" was born on October 21, 1917 and played the piano when he was one or two years old.

"Dizzy" was the nickname given to Gillespie because of the things he did when playing his instrument. Becoming more famous in the 1950's, Gillespie was an expert at the trumpet.

Dizzy was in a number of bands including Cab Calloway's orchestra. Gillespie is remembered for such songs as "Bee Bop," "One Bass Hit," "Groovin' High" and many more.

Dizzy Gillespie died after being in the hospital for a month. He died when falling to sleep with one of his famous songs, "Dizzy Dime."

As you may know, Roy Rogers' horse TRIGGER was "stuffed" and put into the Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum.

"Would you rather I put him in the ground and let the worms eat him? I don't like to say 'stuffed' because they don't stuff them anymore. They make a sculpture out of fiberglass and stretch the hide over that. Nobody would ever see Trigger if I hadn't done it."
-Roy Rogers

Vintage Radio

RADIO PARTS

Need to find parts for your old radios? For a catalog contact the following: Antique Electronic Supply, 6221 S. Maple Avenue, Tempe, AZ 85283.

NEXT MONTH:

Jack Benny! Also, a special "Best of Jack Benny" offer.

Old-Time Radio Trivia Winner!

What is the theme song for Gene Autry's Melody Ranch? The answer is "Back in the Saddle Again!"

The people with the correct answer were put into a drawing, and the person drawn out was Chuck Pattee of Superior, WI. He received a souvenir from the film producer Hal E. Roach's 100th birthday party.

Editor's Note: Sorry about the mistake in putting Roy Rogers in with the trivia question. Gene Autry had his own program, and Roy Rogers had his. Sorry about the misunderstanding!

DID YOU KNOW?

Television would have been invented earlier if it was not for World War II and the Great Depression? We had the technology!

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

If you live in Wisconsin, be sure to listen to Old-Time Radio Drama every Sunday evening! You can listen to Jack Benny, Escape, Bob & Ray and more, on Sunday nights from 9-11 p.m. Contact your local Wisconsin Public Radio station for further information.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY !

Michael Field (February 3)
April Miller (February 16)

RADIOART'S Bob and Ray

Like Bob & Ray? Well, now you are able to order cassette tapes of some of their best routines!

Larry Josephson has been recording Bob & Ray shows to sell, and he has a lot of fun with it. It was not very easy to obtain the programs, and Josephson had to do some looking. Although many of the Bob & Ray sketches were not kept, Larry Josephson did find some.

All of the voices and impersonations were done by Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding. Some of the humorous characters were as follows: Mary Backstayge, Noble Wife, which was a spoof on Mary Noble, Backstayge Wife; Wally Ballou, a bumbling reporter; Biff Burns; Matt Neffer, Boy Spotwelder and many more.

Ray Goulding died in 1990, and Bob Elliott continues to help do a Sunday night Bob & Ray special in New York.

If you would like to receive a Bob & Ray catalog from Larry Josephson's company, call (800) 528-4424; or write Bob & Ray Cassettes, Box 2000 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

**Also, thanks to Larry Josephson's company, Radioart, for giving some Bob & Ray catalogs to this club! If you have not received one, call the number above.

BOB & RAY

Dear OTR fans,

There are now about 15 members, and the club is continuing to grow. I hope to get new members every month. If you know of anyone who might be interested in the Old-Time Radio Gazette, just send me their address, and I will send them some info.

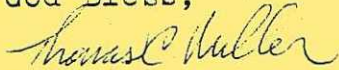
Ryan Mihalak, a friend of mine, has been doing some special work on his computer for the Old-Time Radio Gazette. Thanks a lot, Ryan!

Also, a special THANK YOU goes out to Radio Spirits, Inc. for donating 15 catalogs and brochures! Radio Spirits has a very big catalog with many old radio programs.

If you know of a radio station in your area that airs old radio, please let me know. Try picking up WBBM 78, Chicago; they broadcast OTR shows every evening. From 12m-1 a.m. weekdays, and 8 p.m.-10 p.m. weekends. You are able to enjoy many of your favorite shows! You are most likely able to hear WBBM 78 even if you do not live in Chicago.

Hope you enjoy this Febuary issue!!

God Bless,



Thomas C. Miller

Tom C. Miller
Old Time Radio Gazette
2004 East 6th Street
Superior, WI 54880



Sources: Pg. 1-Not all of original article is included. Pg. 2-KING OF BEEBOP DIES AT 75, info taken from San Francisco Examiner, by Philip Elwood; DID YOU KNOW?, info taken from American Movie Classics cable channel. Pg. 3-RADIOART'S BOB & RAY, info taken from New York Daily News, by Patricia O'Haire; BOB & RAY PHOTO taken from Radioart.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Field,
Superior, WI
Nick Halonen, Foxboro, WI
Janet Corica, Duluth, MN
Carl Ellison, Superior, WI