

# Old Time Radio **DIGEST**

No. 52

July-August 1992 \$2.50

**LUM and  
ABNER**



**"LO-FI" ...  
IN A  
HI-FI AGE**

# Old Time Radio DIGEST

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**WLW**

Tuesday, February 17, 1948

# Radio & Nostalgia Treasures...

**Magazines**—Radio Guide, Tune In, Stand By, Radio Mirror and others

**Comics**—Mysterious Traveler, Shadow, Lone Ranger

**Coloring Books**—Charlie M<sup>c</sup>Carthy, Green Hornet, Lone Ranger

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# "LO-FI" ...IN A HI-FI AGE

By Bob Proctor

*Nothing is permanent. Heraclitus taught us that the only thing permanent is change itself. Things can only be relatively permanent. Our mission is not to make our collections indestructible. That is not possible. Our mission is rather to insure that human knowledge is preserved in a medium sufficiently durable, and future-compatible, so that the next generation will be able to receive it and pass it on.<sup>1</sup>*

Collecting Old Time Radio programs is swiftly becoming a study in bleak ironies.

In an age of interactive video games, and the lowest reading skills in recent U.S. educational history, we have a small but significant number of program collectors who stubbornly refuse to allow Change to win: we collect OTR material for its priceless intellectual value, as much as for its proven ability to entertain. Some of us simply will not give up the notion that content in OTR programs far exceeds the modern fare in today's revved-up world of media tie-ins, hyper-marketing, and multi-million dollar advertising hype.

The good news about Old Time Radio programs is its being a viable and vibrant alternative to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Garbage of today's mediocrity. More irony enters in, if you consider the 1980's, when overall sound quality of circulating programs took a quantum leap. Listenability of the shows improved

tremendously...while The Hobby itself moved closer than ever before to becoming a technological dinosaur in its own time.

Open-reel recorders (serving the earliest collectors holding the most relatively uncirculated programs) is now on the Endangered Species list, in the consumer-audio marketplace. Open reel archival storage (and trading) is almost exclusively the tool of the veteran collector, who feels he or she has invested literally too much time and money in reels, to now attempt to switch to any other medium. These are the same people in OTRdom who now stand in open dread of the revolutionary changes brewing in domestic recording technology.

A dozen leading collectors who do sell recordings to other hobbyists all tell me that well over 90% of their sales are made on conventional Phillips compact analog cassettes. A few full-time OTR collector/dealers report they don't offer open-reel tapes at all...and among those who do, it's now widely felt that printing costs of open reel catalogs aren't worth the return in sales. One such dealer admits he won't even bother listing a reel of material, until he first "gets some mileage from listing the same shows on cassette."

Against these declining numbers in reel-to-reel collectors comes even more ironies. It took us three times longer to get televisions into even half of all American homes than the same "market penetration" period for the compact digital disk.

Numerous market-watchers report that CD sales now outpace the analog cassette by a wide margin. The term "record store" is now archaic: today's "music stores" have almost universally abandoned vinyl L/P recordings, and a surprising number won't even offer analog-mastered cassettes.

Today's radio disc jockey has become a *disk* jockey, who won't even play a vinyl L/P, without first apologizing for the surface noise which most OTR program collectors accept as a "given," in our own material. After the early 1980's, the typical radio listener or "album"-buyer found they had come to accept "digital sound" as the only acceptable standard for music listening.

Time—and technology—marches on. Today's \$200 cassette deck routinely offers features scarcely dreamed of, even by professional audio engineers of the glory days of Old Time Radio. The studio-quality epitome of 55 dB signal-to-noise ratio shot to about 70 dB only about 1970, and it's extremely difficult today to find even a budget-brand receiver, amplifier or cassette deck with Total Harmonic Distortion ratings over 0.3%...when the typical 1970 semi-pro unit proudly boasted of even a flat 1.0% THD.

Against these developments came the lingering death of open-reel tape recording, when fidelity-conscious home-recordists eagerly purchased the new cassette equipment, and equipment manufacturers waged cut-throat wars to offer the noise-reduction Dolby™, Dynec™, Schotz, and other processes which did give us far less hissy recordings.

Probably the best summary of the change in public attitude comes in a *STEREO REVIEW* cartoon by Rodriguez: "...Open-reel tape decks?!? Where've you

been...in jail?"

## Digitized Delirium

In a sense, Old Time Radio program collecting became the orphan stepchild of domestic recording technology...or the aural equivalent to the sport of deep-water surfboat riding. Cassette-users caught the prevailing wave, while open-reelers are slowly getting sucked down to a horrific, lingering doom.

When the *next* wave in domestic recording slams ashore however and true digital recording becomes available, you won't find a single survivor lying broken and bleeding amongst the analog driftwood. The very equipment we now use in OTR collecting is about to become as obsolete as the wind-up Victrola. That same "market-penetration" curve seen for CDs is about to assume the trajectory of an Atlas missile, for a digital technology which will leave analog in the dust and ruins of history.

Don't believe it? Call your local elementary school, and ask anyone who answers, "What's the earliest grade that our kids first use a computer?"

Susie and Johnny Megabyte might not be able to tie their own shoes yet, but you can bet your bottom centime that they do know how to boot up and run a personal computer. These buoyant bundles of juvenile excess can discuss RAM and ROM and bytes and sampling rates...and to them, the world of binary digital mastering is *not* "technobabble."

These kids are already pre-sold on digital sound recording: Behind the cash register at your sterile Rap-O-Matic music store, you'll find Little Johnny

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<sup>1</sup>Jerry Dupont, Executive Director, Law Library Microform Consortium.  
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Binary...who has probably only seen pictures of an open-reel recorder...and who can't begin to find out where you go for spare turntable parts.

"Records?—you mean that stuff like super-old 1970's albums?"

Makes you want to stuff a fistful of CD jewel-boxes right down his (or her) gullet, when you mention reel-to-reel recordings of material from the 1930's-1960's...and there's a short glassy-eyed pause and the overly-polite reply: "You mean, lo-fi?"

Since the dawn of recorded time, every young person who has consumed oxygen has instinctively known this one immutable truth about Old People: *senior citizens over the age of 40 grow increasingly stupid, with each passing year.* In short, Peter Pan and Darwin were right. We thought so, when we sneered at Edison and Victrola recordings. Today's funk-ed-up, freaked-out kids in the CD's-only "music stores" are mumbling the same thing...only they're doing it over digital.

Another (not-so-subtle) hint: shoe-string-budget AM broadcasters who "go dark" on the dial, unable to attract advertisers without sufficient audiences—who increasingly want cleaner-than-clean digital sound. A growing percentage of stations are completely rekitting into all-digital equipment and fiber-optic wiring, stepping back to analog only just before their transmitters.

Home recording has gone from affordable "portable" open-reel decks which outweigh a ten-year-old child, to CD players the size of paperback books. Big Byte digital technology now threatens to make analog recording equipment totally obsolete within our own lifetimes...leaving the future of Old Time Radio program collecting in a far more precarious position than even our Hobby's gloomiest forecasters have led us to believe.

*Major advances in recording technology are clearly warning us that unless we act now, the OTR Hobby will be dead and gone.*

by about 2010 A.D.

Convincing arguments for digital recording don't get much better than when Sony introduced its now-benchmark Digital Audio Tape recorder/reproducer. The DTC-75ES offers a staggering signal-to-noise ratio of more than -100 dB, and a Total Harmonic Distortion combined-channel spec of at least 0.0016%. Sony offered a traditional A/B blind-comparison test of the DTC-75ES, to a panel of internationally-known "golden-eared audiophiles." Both a CD and a DAT recorded directly from it were compared...and not one true audiophile could tell the difference. Pandemonium erupted when Sony then trotted out a second DAT cassette, and nobody could tell DAT #1 from DAT #2...even after learning that #2 was 750 digital tape generations from #1.

Even the crustiest, dyed-in-the-wool Analog Audio Troglodyte can't argue with results like that. The aural hash generated from traditional tape duplication would be

gone forever. What we *can* argue about is the built-in copying drawbacks being handed to home recordists, in the domestic digital recorders that will reach the U.S. marketplace in 1992.

Philips (inventor of the compact analog cassette, which accounts for some 90% of all OTR recordings sold by collector/dealers), now wants us to bypass the DAT systems, in favor of Digital Compact Cassettes. DCC uses tapes roughly the same size as analog, and delivers up to a 22 KHz bandwidth at the conventional 1-7/8ths i.p.s. record/playback speed. Like its elder-sibling DAT, the DCC system features the CD-standard 44.1 KHz sampling rate, as well as 48 and 32 KHz respectively. Arguably the strongest selling point for DCC is not only its ability to make identical-to-CD-fidelity cassettes, but its very deliberate "backward compatibility" to also play conventional analog cassettes.

On one hand, you get to copy your digital CDs, with a superb dynamic range

## MORTIMER AND CHARLIE



## HIS NAMESAKE.



(Copr., 1939, by Edgar Bergen Interests, Inc. International & Pan-Amer. Copr. Reserved.)



## By EDGAR BERGEN



of 105 dB, and THD at a mind-boggling 0.0025%...and your old analog tapes will play on the DCC equipment. One review in *Time* Magazine inadvertently summed up its appeal to OTRdom by suggesting Philips only wants to prolong the life of the analog cassette. But the same article also says DAT "makes conventional analog tape sound by comparison like an Edison cylinder."

The other (and uglier) side of the digital pulse-code is yet another acronym, SCMS, or Serial Copy Management System...which is built into DCC systems to prevent direct digital-to-digital tape copying. Record companies and music publishers forced SCMS onto equipment manufacturers, to prevent any widespread copying of commercially-released CDs (and now, commercial DATs). SCMS allows one digital copy from a digital source...but that new DAT master cannot in turn be re-copied, unless the copy is made from the analog outputs of the DAT reproducer.

This probably won't interest the average home-recordist much, if we believe the equipment manufacturers' claims that the average recordist makes only "convenience copies," for private use on more portable mediums (including Sony's new DATman, a pricey portable DAT player). What it means to Old Time Radio program collectors, however, is nothing short of harrowing. The all-out effort to preserve copyrighted *modern* material will soon prevent us from making tapes from radio's Golden Age.

Digital audio recording will completely and irrevocably dominate U.S. retailing, within this decade. Sony, for only one, will introduce domestic CD recording, and the general home-recordist

(by now, thoroughly indoctrinated to "digital-good/analog-bad" thinking) will climb on the digital bandwagon...SCMS or not. In OTR terms, we can spend twice the price of a bottom-line studio analog deck, just to stay with open-reel...or buy a DCC "backward compatible" cassette unit, mainly because all the other analog cassette players became obsolete.

#### New Shoes for Your Dinosaurs

Buying spare parts for existing open-reel decks leaves the average OTR veteran in a neon blue funk over prices...and availability. Once DCC does reach the market-place, the same can be said for finding cassette units that will stand up to OTR rigorous usage. While the spectre of SCMS looms high overhead, we nevertheless will see the impending death of analog audio...and the need for new digital shoes for our analog OTR dinosaurs.

The one shred of good (though pricey) news in the SCMS debate is that professional-grade DAT equipment from Tascam (among others) does *not* employ SCMS circuitry. You're also looking at roughly \$1,200 per unit.

...Choke, you say? Well, yeah, now that you mention it. A typical DAT blank cassette retails for \$10. Double choke? — uh huh. Now consider the alternatives, once analog dies out altogether. Entering the digital domain will not be cheap, nor will it be without its major cost: literally, what's required to remaster your old analog recordings. Both factors are still far more palatable than trying to keep analog decks alive in our digital future.

Here's a few of the major advantages for going to a digital medium:

**Editing.** Even the truly inspired "electronic editor" can't hold a Pause

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button to someone accustomed to old-fashion razor-blade-and-splicing-block style physical tape editing. Tape wows and other unavoidable errors just don't happen with "blade work" ...and now, "nondestructive editing," in digital recording. The grand master is added to, not cut, with sub-code information which tells the copying deck to remove wows, clicks, pops and other "add-ons." We're only a few keystrokes away from Microchip Heaven, electronic edits to within a portion of a single audio waveform.

**Garbage Dumping.** Digital Sound Processing can do the seemingly impossible, in salvaging audio gold from aural garbage. Unlike straight editing which physically removes a section, DSP restores what the offending glitch is covering on a master—in some cases, even recreating it to an eerily close degree.

A July, 1968 live Doors concert at the Hollywood Bowl went amazingly sour when a faulty microphone connection caused lead singer Jim Morrison's vocals to sound like a collection of clicks and crunches for 15 apparently unusable minutes. Then a fledgling DSP company stepped in, Sonic Solutions, and put its NoNOISE prototype software to use. Working in 2000 frequency bands and more than 53 million computations per second, NoNOISE still had to work eight hours on that concert tape...but 12 of those 15 minutes were completely restored. *New York Times* writer Lawrence M. Fisher calls NoNOISE "a kind of dry-cleaner for recordings."

If so, this new DSP technology caught on faster than bell-bottomed blue jeans at the Woodstock concert, with about 20 major DSP-equipment companies offering Digital Audio Workstations. Some

systems work in relatively brief "envelopes," of only a few minutes, while NoNOISE handles about 90 continuous minutes...using proprietary twin 800 kilobytes of hard-disk space, and a whopping 8 megabytes of core memory.

Digital Sound Processing can now save the "hopeless" Old Time Radio Shows originally mastered on wire or other truly obsolete mediums. All this, for a DAT recorder costing less than a no-frills studio analog deck—plus of course, the workstation, computer, and that all-important software. Sonic Solutions estimates a typical half-hour OTR show clean-up will cost \$3,500, including set-up time at one of the NoNOISE audio licensees around the U.S. Stated another way, if you're going to clean up more than 24 programs, you're better off paying \$69,000 for your own system.

Granted, only a lottery winner or a group of very serious collectors are likely to sift that kind of serious sugar. But historically, there's always been a "trickle-down" effect between professional and domestic recording and processing equipment. How long, then, before NoNOISE-OTR becomes a reality?

**"Forward Compatibility."** The experts say that once a recording is made in any sampling rate in binary code, we are still far better-ahead than trying to find analog playback equipment in the future. Forward-compatibility means keeping competitive with tomorrow's storage technology...and DAT and DCC both use the CD-standard 44.1 KHz sampling rate. Even buying a translator unit will be far cheaper than re-kitting all over...again.

One early example of such damage-control came about during the first wave of industry-standardization. Sony's then-

benchmark PCM F-1 pulse-code-modulation system was an extremely attractive digital mastering unit, simply translating analog into 44.081 MHz sampling rate digital audio...which then went onto any decent quality video recording tape. The "pro" market settled on 44.1 KHz for CD's and DAT recordings...but it took almost no time for sampling-rate translators to hit the markets.

Forward-compatibility, in short, means never having to look at your bins of glass-based or aluminum-based transcriptions, and know you'll never find a way to replay them again. But aside from a sobering start-up price, the single greatest enemy now facing our OTR conversion to digital is *time*. Time is galloping past us as the entire domestic recording market gears up for digital...and it's working against OTR because we now have more than 100,000 individual Old Time Radio shows which require digital remastering.

The second major problem facing Old Time Radio in the digital future: the so-called "ideal" storage medium. Translating analog wave forms into binary pulse code modulation is simple stuff...when you ponder that no true archival storage medium has been perfected, while the retail industry is on a toboggan run into digital, anyway. Bringing analog into digital is secondary, compared to the storage medium that gives us decades of problem-free access.

*Next in "Lo-Fi"...in a Hi-Fi Age, a look at storage mediums large and small for the digital age. And there's some awful truths about archiving that the Old Time Radio hobby will have to face, if the Hobby is to survive. Next, the cynics take their turn, in "Battle Dispatches" from the digital front...*

"Time to Shine!"

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## Thinks It's Due for a Rebirth on TV Iowa Man Wants Today's Generation to Enjoy Timeless Humor of Yesteryear's Lum and Abner

"Lum and Abner" — for readers too young to remember — was a popular radio program of the 1930s and 1940s. It grew up in radio's "Golden Age," along with such other comedy favorites as "Amos 'n' Andy," "Burns and Allen," "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "Vic and Sade."

"Lum and Abner" lasted 24 years. Then, like most of its contemporaries, it succumbed to television.

In its later years, "Lum and Abner" was a once-a-week, 30-minute show. During most of its existence, however, it was available almost everywhere in 15-minute episodes, Monday through Friday. And those who tuned in listened — intently, for the most part — as the two proprietors of Jot-Em-Down Store in Pine Ridge churned out simple humor and expounded homespun philosophy.

Many thought the program hilarious (and laughed). Many others considered it real cornball (and didn't). But in its heyday, "Lum and Abner" had an enormous following.

Although the program vanished from the airwaves in the early '50s, there are die-hard fans still working to revive it. Furthermore, they are having some success.

Foremost among these fans is George W. Lillie, who is employed as photographer by Iowa Manufacturing Company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Mr. Lillie is a self-proclaimed old-time radio buff and an inveterate collector of taped radio and TV programs.

Mr. Lillie also happens to be a cousin to Beatrice Lillie, the popular (but now retired) satirical singer and comedienne. It was this relationship that helped get him into his hobby.

"It began way back," Mr. Lillie recalls, "when I recorded Beatrice on wire for my mother. Then I just kept recording."

And so he did. He recorded "Gang Busters," "The Lone Ranger," "Inner Sanctum," "The Green Hornet," "The Shadow," "Baby Snooks," "Mr. District Attorney," "The Chase and Sanborn Hour" (featuring Charlie McCarthy) and many, many others. You name it: Mr. Lillie probably has recorded it.

Since he took up his hobby, however, Mr. Lillie has come a long way. Although he devised ways of making unusually faithful wire recordings, he was ready for tape-recording systems when they became available. In fact, he now owns "about 30" tape recorders, at least one of which is in operation during most of George Lillie's free time.

Mr. Lillie tapes virtually every night and every weekend and has "thousands upon thousands" of radio and TV shows in his library. That translates into perhaps 3000 big reels of tape and almost as many cassettes. No one has counted; but that's Mr. Lillie's best guess.

Mr. Lillie's collection of old-time radio shows is one of the largest around but not the only one around. There's a long and growing list of collectors. Mr. Lillie and other hobbyists regularly communicate and trade copies of their tapes, thus enriching one another's libraries.

"Lum and Abner" always has been Mr. Lillie's favorite program. He particularly likes an episode entitled "Off to Washington," in which the two principals attend the Truman inauguration in the nation's capital. "I've heard this show so many times and enjoy it more each time," says Mr. Lillie. "I felt it would make a beautiful 12-inch comedy record."

### He Got in Touch with Lum

Mr. Lillie felt so strongly, in fact, that he sought out Chester Lauck, who played

the part of Lum (and others) in the original series. He asked Mr. Lauck's permission to make the record.

Although permission has since been granted, Mr. Lauck was at first more interested in bringing the old radio show back on the air. Mr. Lillie volunteered to assist in that endeavor — and did.

Mr. Lillie contacted about 160 fellow hobbyists in towns and cities throughout the United States suggesting they get in touch with local radio stations and urge them to consider adding "Lum and Abner" to their programming. "Project Lum" he called it; and the object was to "bring back 'Lum and Abner' across America."

Although "Project Lum" fell somewhat short of its goal, it was not altogether unsuccessful. More radio stations did begin buying and using the old series for "a whole new generation of listeners."

"Lum" was so happy," says Mr. Lillie, "that he made me a gift of the 'Off to Washington' show."

Mr. Lillie's next project, still unnamed,

is to make Lum, Abner and the entire village of Pine Ridge "come to life" as television puppets. Mr. Lauck has indicated his interest. Until now, commercial backing has been lacking. But Mr. Lillie intends to keep pressing for it.

He believes the brand of humor dispensed at the Jot-Em-Down Store in Arkansas is due for a rebirth. He thinks advertising agencies may recognize the refreshing quality of comedy based on humble folk observing the passing scene and giving their opinions on the doings of the high and mighty. The concept, he feels, is as timely today as it was in those 24 years when Lum and Abner not only delighted millions of people but also sold a zillion dollars worth of products.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lillie continues to make his recordings and continues to pile up more tapes and cassettes. More, according to his wife, Ruth, than he'll be able to play back in his lifetime.

And George Lillie agrees.



**W**HEN you feel like calling an Arkansan a hillbilly—smile. Then play it safe and call him a mountaineer instead.

The folks from high in the Ozarks and the Ouachitas don't relish the hillbilly name.

Chester ("Chet") Lauck and Norris ("Toughy") Goff (Lum and Abner of the Coast-to-Coast airlines) know all about the singular sensitiveness of citizens in the commonwealth of Arkansas. They have a keen insight into the philosophy that lies behind it. They know what it means, from personal experience, to be held up to national ridicule. They don't want to ridicule anybody at any time.

Much of the success of one of radio's permanent hit programs you can readily trace to this deep-rooted un-

derstanding of the genuine Arkansas character and philosophy—with which the program deals for fifteen minutes, five nights a week.

"We just don't think it's square-shooting to cadge a national chuckle at the expense of somebody's feelings down in Arkansas," remarks tall, lanky Chet Lauck, running a thin hand through jet-black hair which curls a bit wildly despite meticulous brushing. "What's more, to picture our Arkansas friends as nitwits or oafs just wouldn't be authentic.

"We're willing to sacrifice a bit of humor any day for a bit of realism. We try to make our program amusing through the situations we build up, rather than through the ignorance or obtuseness of any character. That's how we started building five years

BY ELGAR BROWN

BEHIND  
THE  
SCENES

*with*

*Lum*

LAUGHS TAKE A  
BACK SEAT WITH  
LUM AND ABNER.  
REAL OZARK LIFE  
IS WHAT THEY'RE  
AFTER—AND GET!

*Abner*



ago, and—we gloat a little when we recall how we stuck to it."

A bit of gloating is pardonable. In the five-year radio life of the Lum and Abner show, the boys have proved their point. Nowadays people are laughing with them instead of at them. They are riding high. Proof: They have just been handed a contract renewal, calling for an additional year and a half under present sponsorship, which will net them a joint salary that makes the income-tax collectors lie awake at night.

THE native of Arkansas is no dumb-bell," you are earnestly informed by half-pint-sized Toughy Goff. One look at his jutting jaw explains his nickname, and his shoulders are broad enough to carry his full share of the burden of authoring and acting in the skit.

"Northerners dropping into Pine Ridge may consider the native illiterate," says Toughy, "and comparatively speaking, he may be. But he knows everything he needs to know. He's entirely contented. He can tell when and where the hunting is best. He knows how to care for his game when he gets it. He never goes hungry. If he must dig a well, he knows where to start digging.

"He may not be sure who occupies the White House just now, and he may cast a vote for Lum for president—as Lum hoped some would after the "campaign" we broadcast last Fall. But in dickering for a swap, he'll probably skin a northerner seventeen ways from Sunday. Why, there are more David Harums down there than in David's own Kentucky. They're strictly honest, those hill folks, but they're shrewd."

Shrewd, Mr. Goff? Ah, who are we to argue with you—you, with your many-figured contract in your pocket, and every prospect of another when that expires? Shrewd it is.

The team started by observing a basic principle, which is to know your subject thoroughly. Both were born on the pine-clad slopes of the Ouachita Mountains, in the vicinity of Mena, a county seat town of 4,000 persons in

western Arkansas. It isn't far from Bob Burns' beloved Van Buren; and Mena, by the way, is the county seat of the Lum and Abner show.

CHET is thirty-four years old, married to a belle of Hot Springs, and the father of Shirley May, eight, and Nancy Jean, three. Norris is thirty. He took his bride in good old Mena, and has a three-year-old son named Gary, who is trying to qualify for his dad's nickname—Toughy. The present-day Lum and Abner are correct sartorially, versed in the ways of big business, and distinctly urban as to outlook and mode of living.

Their route to success wasn't long, but it wasn't smooth, either. The boys played hooky together in Mena, studied occasionally and were set down as pretty awful in the school plays—their first taste of dramatics. Lauck then wound up a brief but hectic tussle with higher education at the University of Arkansas. He left just in time to avoid being asked to leave. He essayed to edit the college humor magazine, and his pen, as the dean saw it, was a trifle too trenchant.

Meanwhile Goff spent two years at the University of Oklahoma, all in a spirit of good, clean fun, then returned to Mena to become a wholesale grocer. His palship with Chet Lauck was resumed, and there was born the firm of Lum and Abner—without benefit of contract or sponsor, but with a radio story idea and a conviction that it was sound and saleable.

How the boys appeared nine times on KTHS at Hot Springs as guest "artists," met modest success, hurried on to Chicago and were laughed down by a prospective sponsor when they asked \$350 a week between them, is known to the nation-wide army of Lum and Abner fans. How they "took it on the chin" and came back for more is another story.

"We knew we had something," Chet Lauck starts off, with a reminiscent look in his dark eyes and a natural drawl rivaling Lum's radio diction. "We knew it even when we were ridiculed and told we'd never go over. Folks with long radio and stage ex-

perience told us that, and it was tough for a couple of yokels with hay in their hair to stand up and argue. But we knew if we didn't put it across with the original idea we were sunk. What we had to have—but found so hard to get—was a long-enough engagement to show listeners what we were trying to do.

"Why, one criticism was that we didn't have any women characters. Without a sex angle, the experts told us, shaking their heads—"

"Yeah," Toughy Goff interrupts, derisively, "and try to get some women into our Pine Ridge routine. We were almost sold on that suggestion ourselves. For a solid week we auditioned every actress we could locate. They all sounded the same. That is to say, different. Different from the women of Pine Ridge. If the listeners accepted any of those characters as authentic, they'd simply have to believe that we were phonies."

"So we had to leave the femmes right out of the script," Lauck went on, in mock sadness. "We faced a dreary future—with no sex appeal!"

Other artists might have considered it advisable to ease up on the authenticity and inject a strictly synthetic Pine Ridge woman for the story's sake. Not so Lum and Abner.

"The native friendliness of rural America is appealing in itself. The simple philosophy of the Arkansas folks, genuine and unadorned, is very interesting."

THEY convene each afternoon. Lum stretches his legs beneath a typewriter table. Abner dangles his short legs from a straight-back chair tilted against the wall at a perilous angle. They stare at each other.

"There's no place in our script, obviously, for gags and wise-cracks," Lum points out. "The Arkansas folks don't make them. We make a serious effort to re-create living characters in the territory where we were born.

"We think of our good friend Dick Huddleston, the Pine Ridge store-keeper."

If you aren't aware of it, Pine Ridge

was a town named Waters until local pride, fostered by the Lum and Abner programs, changed it to conform to the script!


"Huddleston in real life, just like in our broadcasts, is a genial, loveable confidant of everybody in the community. He has a little more 'learnin' than the average citizen. So, among other duties, he reads the paper to a group of cronies in his store each evening. And he writes an occasional letter for a grateful friend."

Toughy breaks in again.

"Sometimes," he grins, "Dick is asked to write up an order to a mail order house for one of his own customers, calling for some article which he may have right on his shelves. He does it willingly, for he understands that these people love to get packages by mail. Makes 'em feel important."

Well, the boys get an idea, and Lum writes it down. Maybe it's a one-night incident, oftener it blossoms into material for a week or two. But they never work far ahead in preparing the script. And they never even considered hiring an author. How, they pertinently inquire, could anyone else make their characterizations true to Arkansas?

*Listen and LAUGH!*  
**LUM and ABNER**



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MICHIGAN NETWORK WXYZ  
WVVA WOWO WISH WHK  
8:15 P.M. EWT—7:15 P.M. CWT  
WLW, 6:30 P.M. CWT  
Tuesday thru Friday

"They're friendly people down our way, honest and sincere, and they give a stranger a right hearty welcome," Toughy explains. "But they just don't open up and act natural before 'foreigners.' A New York author, for instance, might spend months down there and come away with a definite slant on the folks. But it wouldn't be ours, and it wouldn't be right."

**DO THEY** overdraw their characters—make them more amusing or unique than they are in real life?

"Hub, we have to underdraw them," laughs Chet. "If we pictured them true to life in every instance, folks would think we were kidding them. Even the Pine Ridgers wouldn't recognize some of their own antics."

"Take Grandpappy Spears. He's one of the few characters whose real names we use. Well, we got him to come into Pine Ridge for his first visit when they had a celebration changing the town's name. If we put on the air the bewildered remarks he made when he got into and out of the hotel elevator—with some difficulty—the listeners would say it was strictly the old hokum."

They are busy young men, Lum and Abner. Broadcasting and rebroadcasting five nights a week; making personal stage appearances through the Winter week-ends; considering movie offers. Abner has a fourteen-acre estate in San Fernando Valley and Lum's home is in Beverly Hills.

But when the chance presents itself, they hie themselves down to the Ouchita Mountains and mingle with the folks. It's good fun, and it enables them to keep their story in the right vein. And it is this very mania for authenticity which assures them a royal home-coming welcome.

Toughy Goff recently returned from one such excursion. He hobnobbed with Dick and Grandpappy and the others on a hunting trip. He eschewed "store clothes," lest the home folks think him uppish. He came back with a state-published tourist brochure and proudly pointed out this paragraph:

"Elbert Hubbard once accused Opie

Reed of advertising Arkansas 'by the left hand,' and closed the subject with 'Oh, Fie, Opie!' While we Arkansans bitterly resent Opie Reed's 'Arkansas Hill Billy' stories, we listen to the dramatization of our mountaineer characters by Lum and Abner with amused interest and appreciation."

Chet and Toughy are sure nothing is so sweet as appreciation at home. Soon, they'll have all the money they want. Then, if the city virus hasn't got them, they reckon they'll go right back to Arkansas and just be folksy.

**LUM AND ABNER**  
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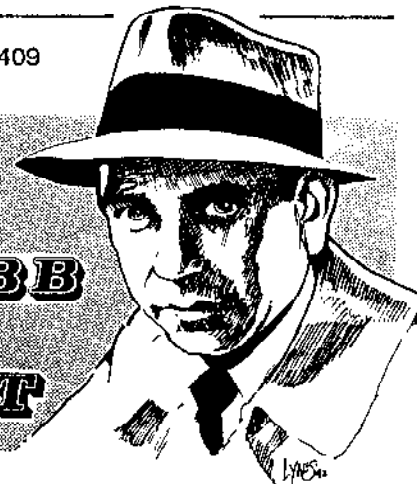
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**YOUR  
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AT WORK**

*Recent Happenings  
Before the Mike*



Top: The Cinema's petite Ann Sothern who starred with Edmund Lowe on the Radio Theater's ether version of the celebrated stage play, *Kick In*. Left: Vivian Fridell who plays Mary Noble in NBC's *Backstage Wife*, recently celebrated her fourteenth month in the role.

# INSIDE STUFF

By Martin Lewis

**O**N MONDAY, April 20, I paid my first visit to the Fibber McGee and Molly show. The time for the "on the air" signal arrived and ork pilot Rico Marchelli held his baton in the air waiting for the signal from Harlow Wilcox to start the show. Minutes passed and still no signal—frantically the scripts were being cut as the minutes rolled by. If you think this is done easily to a carefully timed and prepared program, you're mistaken. Finally the program went on the air ten minutes late owing to NBC's special reports on the trapped miners in Nova Scotia. In cases like this NBC has to rebate the advertiser for the time lost, which comes to plenty of dollars and cents.

**JACK BENNY** announced recently that his author, Harry Conn, was taken ill and was going away for a rest. A few scribblers were skeptical and rushed to their typewriters to column that Benny and Conn had come to a parting of the ways. Harry visited the *RADIO GUIDE* office the other day and asked me please to stifle the false rumor.

Conn really is going to take a two or three weeks' vacation in White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, to recuperate from an attack of nerves, after which he will again take over the writing assignment of the amusing Jack Benny programs.

*Charlie Correll, whom you know better as Andy, apparently likes Palm Springs, California. A few days before he left the resort he plunked down some heavy cash for a cute one-story white house. It has two palm trees in front of it, and there's a private swimming pool in the rear.*

**EDDIE CANTOR** winds up his current series of broadcasts on May 10. He then will make a vaudeville tour for several weeks, ending in Hollywood to make his annual motion picture.

As stated last week, he will be back in the Fall for another sponsor who

will pay him the highest salary paid an entertainer on the air. He will receive 15,000 smackers (*dollars to you, and me, too, for that matter*) out of which he pays the cast, which will leave him enough to feed and buy nice things for Ida and the kiddies.

**Parakyakarkas**, Eddie's bitter half, will also trek to Hollywood for a picture. He was signed by RKO. Burns and Allen will be back in New York in June after their picture work is finished. They'll be on the air from the East throughout the Summer.

**HOLLYWOOD FLICKERS:** Bette Davis, whom you last tuned in on the Lux Theater, will guest on Hollywood Hotel this Friday, May 1, in a radio version of "Dangerous," the picture that won her the Motion Picture Academy award for 1935 . . . Nino Martini is set to play opposite Ida Lupino in "The Gay Desperado" . . . And to your loudspeaker darling, Don Ameche, goes the celluloid role of Allesandro, the ill-fated and romantic Indian hero of "Ramona," when 20th Century-Fox shortly starts shooting it in color. His performance in "Sins of Man" earned the coveted assignment for Ameche. Loretta Young will play the title role.

**KILOCYCLE CHATTER:** The George Olsen-Ethel Shutta program is slated to fold the end of May . . . Stuart Churchill has been renewed on his CBS Musical Reveries Show until late in July when it is expected to be given a night spot . . . Willis Cooper, author of the Betty and Boh and Lights Out programs, leaves for Hollywood to write for the movies. He will continue to write both scripts from the cinema city . . . Rubinoff is vacationing in Havana . . . Station WJZ has asked the Federal Communications Commission for an increase in power to 500,000 watts. The only other station in the country with this power is WLW, Cincinnati, which can be heard here, there and everywhere.

**RADIO GUIDE May 9, 1936.**

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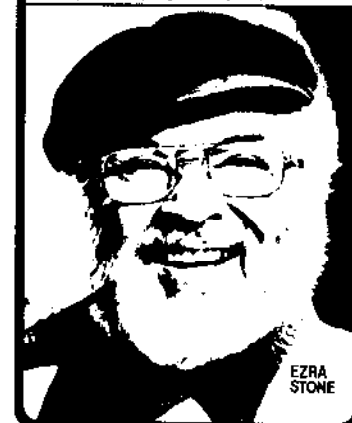
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## Classified Ads

RADIO SHOWS ON CASSETTE, also radio/tv related material. Catalog \$1. Phil Kiernan, 30235 Cupeno Lane, Temecula, CA 92592

WANTED: Amos & Andy radio program items, puzzles & stand-ups. Bob Morgan, 4005 Pitman Rd., College Park, GA 30349.

Steve Dotter, 577 West Locust, Dubuque, Iowa 52001. (319) 556-1188  
200 reels, comedy, mystery, drama, Fred Allen, Jack Benny, Suspense, I Love a Mystery. Interested in books about OTR or OTR performers.

Raymond Stanich, 173 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Music, personalities, drama, comedy, Railroad Hour, Chicago Theater of the Air, Fred Allen, Richard Diamond, Baby Snooks, Bickersons, Ray Bradbury. Co-authored book: "SOUND OF DETECTION-ELLERY QUEEN ON RADIO." Do research on old time radio. Issue logs.

Radio books, parts wanted prior 1950 from radio repair shops. Send price list. Richards, Box 1542-D, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT ITEMS wanted. DeWayne Nall, P.O. Box 555, Cleburne, TX 76031

Want these Lux shows: Red River, Alice in Wonderland, Paradine Case, Kent Coscarelly, 2173 Willester Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95124

RADIO ITEMS BEFORE 1935, sets, speakers, tubes, parts, literature & advertising. Schneider, 9511-23 Sunrise Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44133

WANTED: To hear from anyone with Baby Snooks programs. Buy, sell or trade. Will buy or exchange catalogs. Lynn Wagar, Box 202 B.C.A., St. Cloud, MN 56301.

WANTED TO BUY: Tape recordings of Jay Roberts' Nightlight show on WJR-AM. Please send prices to Jeff Jontzen, 21465 Detroit Rd., #205A, Rocky River, OH 44116

OLD RADIO SHOWS on cassettes. Rare Big Bands and Vocalists too! The absolute best quality. Free catalog. 2732-R Queensboro Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Tom Monroe, 2055 Elmwood, Lakewood, Ohio 44107/(216) 228-8189 Cassette and reel, mystery, adventure, sci-fi, westerns, drama, some comedy.

MORNING MEN wanted on cassette—older 1940s style especially: Bob Steele, John Gambling, etc. Lieberman, Hazet St., Tunkhannock, PA 18657.

Wanted: Juvenile adventure serials, Mysterious Traveler, Gangbusters, Fred Allen, 2000+. Cassettes only.  
Ken Weigel, 7011 Lennox Ave. #126, Van Nuys, CA 91405

Nelson Eddy and Bing Crosby Research; send data Box 724, Redmond, WA 98073-0724

Have 488 archival quality sound Cavalcade of America shows. Will buy or trade for more.  
Murry Schantzen, 207-B Lynn Ct., N. Aurora, IL 60542

Wanted: 1st Nightbeat program (2-6-50) as well as one where William Conrad appears. Victor Padilla, Jr. 104 Marcy Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11211.

Wanted: Trade or buy Tom Corbett and other SF cassettes. Mark Skulferud, 20110 21st Ave. NW, Seattle, Wash. 98177

WANTED: 16" RADIO transcription recordings. All types. —Paul Scriven, 238 West State Street, Niles, OH 44446. my40441

RADIO TRANSCRIPTION DISCS wanted. Any size, speed. — Box 724H, Redmond, WA 98052.

EDWARD HAMILTON, 933 Neismith, Pl., Topoka, KS 66606 wants CBS Radio Mystery Theater; prefers cassettes...

ALLAN SHERRY, 5410 Netherland Ave., Riverdale, NY 10471 is trying to locate the last date for Prescott Robinson on the air plus any other information about him.

THOMAS HEATHWOOD, 22 Broadlawn Pk., Chestnut Hill, MA 02167 looking for Portia Faces Life, especially July 1948 and April 1949.

ROBERT SHEPHERD, 129 Highfields Rd., Abington, MA 02351 wants to know: who was the announcer for Suspense after Larry Thor and also during Bill Robson's era as producer.

Ted Davenport, 1600 Wewoka, No. Little Rock, AR 72116 is looking for reel traders for VG-EX material. 15,000-25,500 shows.

LOGS: Ray Stanica, 173 Columbia Hts., Brooklyn, NY 11201 has a complete log of Mercury Theater of the Air and Campbell Playhouse for a S.A.S.E. with 2 stamps.

WANTED: To hear from anyone with Baby Snooks programs. Buy, sell or trade. Will buy or exchange catalogs. Lyn Wagar, Box 202 B.C.A., St. Cloud, MN 56301.

WANTED: Masterpiece Radio Theater, other multipart NPR or BBC dramas. Buy or trade cassettes. Howard Lewis, 132 Hutchin Hill Rd., Shady, NY 12409

Don Berhent, 807 Glenhurst Rd., Willwick, OH 44094. The Shadow and movie serials. Books on both also.

Frank Tomaselli, 29-10 Donna Ct., Staten Island, NY 10314 is looking for 11 AM from 1939-1944; also Fred Allen's Town Hall Tonight.

Tom Heathwood, 22 Broadlawn Pl., Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. Shadow programs between 1941-44. Has supplement to his catalog for a S.A.S.E.

Chuck Juzek, 57 Hutton Ave., Nanuet, NY 10954. Green Hornet episode where Reid reveals himself to his father as the Hornet around 1943. Need log from 1936-40.

New club based in Seattle invites you to membership. Growing 700 cassette library, printed materials and newsletter. For information write Mike Sprague, Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound, 11732 NE 148th Place, Kirkland, WA 98034.

Amos n' Andy Sale: 8mm film in box—Sheet Music Perfect Song—Fresh Air Taxi Cab tin sign. Bob Morgan, 4005 Pitman Road, College Park, GA 30349

Harry Goldman, RR6, Box 181, Glens Falls, NY 12801 wants Kraft Music Hall of 12-11-47 (Al Jolson) Jack Benny "The Bee", Fiorello LaGuardia tribute to Nikola Tesla over WNYC on Jan. 10, 1943

WANTED: Kid Shows, Serials, Big Band Remotes, Transcription Recordings on Reel to Reel only please. Write to Wally Stall, 8408 N.W. 101, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

Phil Evans, Box 136 Downtown Station, Bakersfield, CA 93302-0136. Looking for any info in the Candlelight Hour Broadcast from NYC in 1931.

Richard Pepe, Box 303, Elizabeth, NJ 07207. Looking for listing of Top-40 "Hits of the Week" broadcast on WJMG, NYC by Peter Tripp, the Curly-Headed Kid, from 1955-58 (especially 1956).

07/22/1945: Looking for ANY shows broadcast that Sunday. Network/Local. Trade/Buy. Jim Avoli, 239 Foxcroft Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15220-1705 (412) 279-4456

Oldtime Radio-Show Collector's Association (ORCA) is actively seeking members. You can remain loyal to your own local club and still belong. Write Reg Hubert, 45 Barry St., Sudburg, Ontario, Canada P3B 3H6.

Debbie Piroch, Rd 4, Box 234, Meadville, Pa 16335. Looking for any show with Nelson Eddy and/or Jeanette MacDonald.

Jim Blythe, 941 Redding Rd., Asheboro, NC 27203. Wants Lum and Abner. Magic Island, Jerry at Fair Oaks.

Marty Lewin, 8836 N. Lincolnwood Dr., Evanston, IL 60203. Looking for Sid McCoy Show (a Chicago DJ from 50's and 60's.) Also any new Phil Harris-Alice Faye Shows.

Ronald Waite, 578 Whitney Ave., New Haven, CT 06511. Interested in Jack Benny.

Chuck Juzek, 57 Hutton Ave., Nanuet, NY 10954. Would like any info about Maurice Joachim who wrote the scripts for The Avenger.

Classic radio programs on cassettes. Hundreds of titles. Big catalog \$1.00 (refundable). Radio Americana Inc., Box 7431, Baltimore, MD 21227

Richard Palanik, 165 Summit St., Plantsville CT 06479. Looking for copies of NPR's Dol Savage shows and Nightfall.

Wanted: Jack Benny show dated 12/8/46. Jack Goes Christmas Shopping and Buys Don Shoolaces. Steve Ovalline, 10214 Black Mtn. Rd. 49, San Diego, CA 92126.

Wanted: Cassette of any of the radio program "Hotel for Pets" name your price. Bruce Manschak, 6549 N. Drake, Lincolnwood, IL 60645.

Wanted: I am looking for the Green Hornet Show "Underwater Adventure" that aired 9-24-46. Chuck Juzek, 57 Hutton Avenue, Nanuet, NY 10967.

Wanted: "We The People" Broadcast 1-13-50 and any Lum and Abner shows prior to 1941. Willing to trade for anything in my catalog. Steve Ferrante, Box 153, Oakland Mills, PA 17076.

CAN YOU HELP? I am looking for programs with magic or related material. My catalogue has 48 pages, November 1976, and grows. Will trade recordings of anything and catalogue with you. Drop a line: Snader, Box 12-655, Mexico 12, D.F. Mexico.

WANTED: Classical music broadcasts, ET's, Acetates, tapes, all speeds, sizes, formats, for cash. Joe Salerno, 9407 Westheimer #31A, Houston, Texas 77063.

Vintage broadcasts, reliving radio's past. Free flyers. 42 Bowling Green, Staten Island, NY 10314.

Van Christo, 91 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116. Looking for Goldberg's Episode which was called "The Hannukah Bush."

Wanted. Copies of owner's manual for AKAI reel recorders, Models 1722W and GX-215D. Reproduced copies acceptable. Willing to pay reasonable price. Jack Palmer, 145 North 21st Street, Battle Creek, MI 49015

Trade Fibber McGee and Molly Cassettes VG/EX only. Offer 110 shows. Exchange list. Bill Oliver, 516 Third St. North East, Massillon, Ohio 44646.

Mary Sayer, 801 8th St. F5, Sioux City, IA 51105. Looking for any info on "Uncle" Jim Harkin, Fred Allen's manager.

Wanted: 1950 Summer Replacement Show "Somebody Knows" by Jack Johnstone. (8 show run) Dick Olday, 100 Harvey Dr., Lancaster, NY 14080.

GILBERT HUEY, 90 W. Triple Tree Dr., Carrollton, GA 30017 is writing an article on Flash Gordon and needs much information on the radio and tv show.

Pam Nemeec, 1424 Heatherton Dr., Naperville, IL 60563 is looking for program listings of old radio stations of the 30's and 40's especially WDZ, KMMJ, KMA, KFNF and KFEO.

WANTED: RADIO MAGAZINES before 1935, such as Radio News, Popular Radio, Radio Retailing, Short Wave Craft, etc. Gary B. Schneider, 9511 Sunrise Blvd., #J-23, North Royalton, Ohio 44133.

WANTED: Kid Shows, Serials, Big Band Remotes, Transcription Recordings on Reel to Reel only please. Write to Wally Stall, 8408 N.W. 101 Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

For autobiography would like to know date (at least year/year, month better) of Superman radio episodes in which (1) S. finds Atlantis; (2) S. catches crook by following crook's discarded peanut shells. Believe first is 1945 or 6. Other '47-9. S.J. Estes/205 E. 78/ NY, NY/10021. Many thanks.

For Sale: Boxed set of six tapes from Stephen King's Night Shift. Original Price: \$34.95. My Price: \$12.00 postpaid. Five sets available. Phil Nelson, 221 Scioto, Chillicothe, OH 45601.

Would like: Mysterious Traveler, Whistler, Pat Novak For Hire on cassette. I have a lot to trade. Write to: Victor D. Padilla, Jr., 104 Marcy Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11211

Wanted: Amos and Andy, Roy Rogers, and Gunsmoke. Will buy or have shows to trade in X Minus One, Dimension X, Sgt. Preston, Captain Midnight, Suspense, Escape, others. Phil Nelson, 221 Scioto, Chillicothe, OH 45601.

WANTED: Aldrich Family radio programs on cassettes, as well as information. Kenneth Barker, 874 27th Street East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 6P3

FOR-TRADE: SCRIPT-FOR-PROGRAM THE SHADOW 9/26/37, 3/20/38, (have show also) 12/3/39, 4/11/54, 4/18/54, 4/25/54, 5/30/54, 7/4/54, 7/25/54, 8/1/54, 8/8/54, 8/29/54, 9/19/54, 9/26/54, 10/10/54, 10/17/54, 10/24/54, 10/31/54, 9/30/45-or 9/3/54 (not sure which I have). Adam Trachtenburg, 1243 Knorr St., Phila., PA 19111 (215) 745-8224

WANTED: NBC MONITOR. Broadcasts from '55 to '64. I have many complete editions from '65-'75. Write to: Warren Gerbe, 42-60 Bowne Street, Flushing, New York 11355-2907

WANTED: Radio Transcription Discs. Any type, any subject. Gilbert Smith, 248 South 36th St., San Diego, CA 92113-1613

JACK MELCHER, P.O. Box 14, Waukegan, IL 60087 wants to buy radio premiums, games, toys, buttons, comic related items. Disney, political, gum wrappers BUY SELL TRADE 312-249-5626

WILLIAM OSOVSKY, 2501 Ivy St., Chattanooga, TN 37404. Collector of Ralston Tom Mix premiums, green 20 Grand Ale bottles with neck and paper labels intact. Oclagon soap premium kites. Alaga syrup tins.

Wanted: Jake & the Kid, Hardy Family, Maisie on cassettes. N.A. McNamee, Box 602, Organ, New Mexico 88052.

Amos & Andy or Jack Benny Shows, other comedy shows. Rob Cohen, 6635 Heim Ave., Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

Wanted: Hercule Poirot shows, Mutual Net, 1945; or info. on these shows. Tim Goggin, 1777 N. Vine #409, L.A., CA 90028 Thank You, Tim Goggin

WANTED: 16" transcriptions, for cash or trade. Joe Salerno, Box 1487, Bellaire, Texas 77402.

"THERE'S A SMALL HOTEL with a wishing well... Can anyone identify the show having this theme? Michael Sprague, 11732 NE 148th Place, Kirkland, WA 98034.

Kitty Kallen is looking for radio and TV shows that she appeared on. She sang with Harry James, Jimmy Dorsey, and others. She worked on the Danny Kay radio show, David Rose shows, and her own show called Kitty Kallen Kalling. Contact Walden Hughes at (714) 545-0318 or write 2527 Duke Place, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

WANTED: Episodes of AGAINST THE STORM, TERRY & THE PIRATES, THE WOMAN IN MY HOUSE, ONE MAN'S FAMILY episodes prior to 1946, and THE VOYAGE OF THE SCARLET QUEEN programs #6, 7 and 10. Will buy or trade cassettes. John L. Woodruff, 145 Park Avenue, Randolph, NJ 07869-3442.

WANTED: Old time radio comedy traders in cassette tapes trade 60/90 min, tapes up to 10 at a time. Looking for Phil Harris/Alice Faye, Great Gildersleeve, Life of Riley fans. Couple other show. Serious traders only. Send a complete or partial list, if possible, and I will send you one when I answer your letter. Write to: Beth Holman 16705 Craigmere Dr. Middleburg Hts., Ohio 44130.

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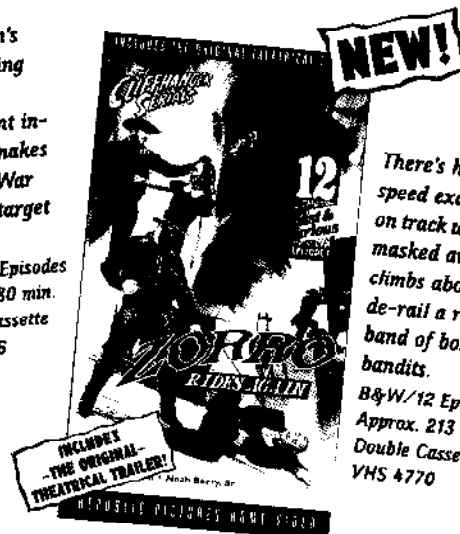
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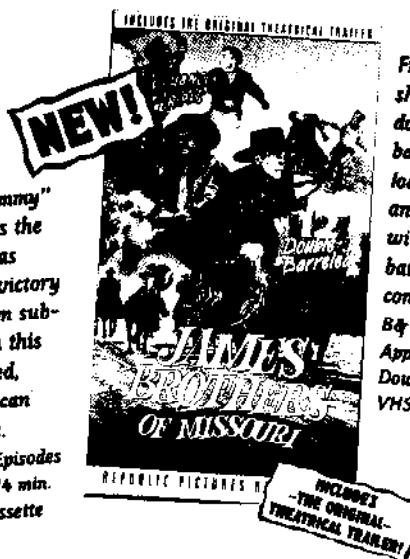
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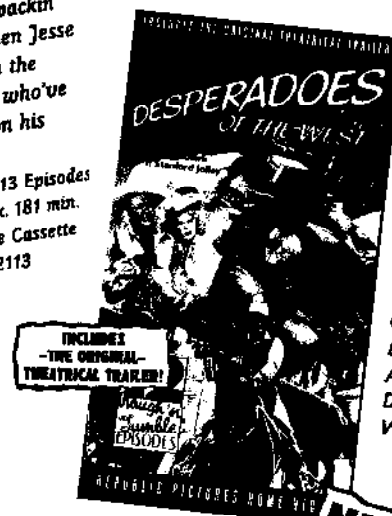
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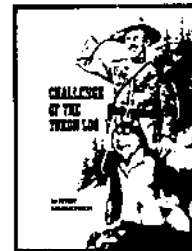
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