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Radio Aspects of the Lindbergh Kidnapping

Jack French © 2008

NOTE: This topic was presented orally on October 24, 2008 at the Friends of Old Time Radio convention in Newark, NJ, but this is the first time it has appeared in print.

OTR researcher Derek Tague has often, and correctly, declared that the three most newsworthy events in the 1930s all happened in New Jersey: the Hindenburg disaster at Lakehurst, the Martians landing at Grovers Mills, and the Lindbergh Kidnapping in Hopewell. Since the first two events have been discussed several times at OTR conventions, but never the Lindbergh Kidnapping, I felt compelled to correct that omission.

The kidnapping of Lindbergh's baby in 1932 has been accurately termed "The Crime of the Century" based upon its impact on the national and international scene. This startling crime, which involved not only the kidnapping but the murder of a small boy, generated more shock among the citizens of North American and Europe than a presidential assassination. And this crime, and subsequent trial, certainly resulted in more news stories, radio summaries, and magazine articles over a five year period than any other criminal event, before or since.

The story actually begins in May 1927 when Charles A. Lindbergh, an obscure mail pilot, became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, landing in France. The feat electrified the world and brought him immediate honors, riches, and fame. He was accorded the Congressional Medal of Honor and President Coolidge dispatched a Navy

ship to return him and his plane back to the U.S. The National Archives has released, under their audio file entitled "Sounds of History" the audio exchange of Coolidge and Lindbergh as it aired over the major networks in 1927.

Lindbergh's face was on the cover of every U.S. and European magazine, there was a dance named for him, and he was truly the best-known personality on either side of the Atlantic. In May 1929 he married Anne Morrow, the daughter of a multi-millionaire banker and ambassador to Mexico. In June 1930 their first son was born at the Morrow estate in Englewood, NJ, but they had already purchased 390 acres near Hopewell, NJ, to build their own mansion. It was completed in late 1931 and the Lindberghs alternated between the two residences. They were in their Hopewell residence on March 1, 1932 when a kidnapper placed a ladder under the second story nursery about 9 PM, took the child without a sound, left a ransom note in the bedroom, and escaped to a nearby car without being heard by the family or staff. In addition to abandoning the home-made, collapsible ladder, the kidnapper also left a chisel at the scene.

The baby's nurse discovered him missing about 10 PM and alerted the Lindberghs who found the ransom note. Local and state police were notified and the most extensive law enforcement investigation began; it would go non-stop for two and a half years until the perpetrator was arrested in September 1934. At that time, kidnapping was not a federal offense so the FBI and Dept. of Treasury had no jurisdiction. However the public outcry forced the White House to direct all federal agencies to render any possible assistance to

local authorities. The Coast Guard searched the shores for the missing baby and the Commerce Dept. did the same at airports and train stations. Immigration authorities examined every vehicle coming to or from Mexico and Canada, trying to find the baby.

The New Jersey State Police were officially in charge of the investigation which made their agency head, Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf the lead man on the case. His fame in this case would later catapult him into radio's *Gang Busters* as the narrator and he was also the father of General Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf, the hero of the first Gulf War.

The first ransom note demanded \$ 50,000 for the safe return of the child. It contained a unique symbol as a signature (two interlocking circles with three holes punched through the design) which turned out to be very valuable in separating the real notes from the kidnapper (there would be 13 more) from the hundreds of fake ones that poured into the case, claiming to be from the kidnappers.

The media, particularly the newspapers and radio stations, had their reporters surrounding the Lindbergh and Morrow estates as well as NJ police stations, waiting for news, and sometimes creating news if there was none. Everybody wanted to get into the act, even Al Capone. At that time, Capone was serving time for tax evasion in Chicago but promised if he was released he could find the kidnappers in a few weeks and would return the unharmed baby to his parents. Capone seemed insulted when his offer was declined by authorities.

A week after the kidnapping, a 72 year old retired school principal in the Bronx, Dr. John F. Condon, unknown to Lindbergh, injected himself into the case by sending a letter to a local newspaper, offering to act as intermediary in the ransom payoff. Astonishingly, the kidnapper responded to Condon and sent him a series of ransom notes with instructions for the payoff. (The amount had now risen to \$ 70,000.)

Lindbergh and his advisors met with Condon several times and approved him making the ransom payoff. The kidnapper had specified a wooden box of certain dimensions be made and the money placed inside. All bills were to be unmarked and their serial numbers not recorded. Lindbergh, fearful of his son's life, insisted the police follow the kidnapper's demands, despite the police protests it would make the solution even more difficult. Not only was Lindbergh overruled by the police (they recorded every serial number) but also at the demand of Treasury investigator Elmer Irey, the majority of the bills were gold certificates. Irey had surmised accurately, that

the U.S. would be going off the gold standard shortly and thus gold certificates would be easier to identify, locate and trace. While no one knew it at the time, his plan would eventually result in the arrest of the kidnapper. The actual payoff was made on April 2, 1932 in the Bronx by Condon to the kidnapper, who called himself John. Since only \$50,000 would fit in the wooden box, Condon left the other \$20,000 in the car when he made the payoff, telling the kidnapper that was all Lindbergh could raise. The lesser amount was accepted and Condon was given instructions to find the baby on a boat near Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. It was a cruel hoax; neither the boat nor the baby was found after days of searching. The ransom money began appearing in business deposits in the New York City area that very week. One at a time, they trickled in but no one could be located who remembered the customer who had spent the bill in their establishment. None of the merchants had the numbers of the ransom bills so it was up to bank tellers to find them in the incoming cash deposits, a daunting task. Meanwhile Condon and Lindbergh's aids tried to recontact the kidnapper to obtain better information on where to locate the baby.

On May 12, 1932 a truck driver parked his vehicle on a muddy road near Hopewell and walked into the woods to relieve himself. About 75 feet from the road, he found the body of a child, partially decomposed, under the branch of a tree. He immediately alerted the police who determined it was the body of the Lindbergh baby. It had been found two miles from the Lindbergh estate. The baby had been killed by a blow to the skull and apparently had been dead since the night of the kidnapping.

The case, which was being covered widely by all the news media, increased greatly with the tragedy of the dead victim. A reporter and cameraman actually slipped into the office at night where the body was being examined and took photos of the partially decomposed corpse and then sold copies of the photo for five dollars on the street. (Note: Regrettably, these photos are still being sold today on EBay by a Canadian dealer.)

Law enforcement authorities, no longer fearful of putting the child at risk redoubled their efforts throughout the Eastern U.S., where the ransom bills continued to find their way back to banks, primarily in the New York City boroughs. They even were the recipient of one of the first, effective examples of criminal profiling. While this technique is relatively common nowadays, in the mid 1930s it was virtually unknown. A 39 year old psychiatrist in NYC, Dr. Dudley Shoenfeld, was permitted to examine all the physical evidence, including all 14 ransom notes.

Although most law officials thought the kidnapping was the work of a gang (as many kidnappings were in those days) Shoenfeld declared in November 1932 that the kidnapper was a lone amateur. He also concluded the kidnapper was a German alien with little formal education, recently settled in the Bronx, had been institutionalized, worked with wood, had low income, was approximately Lindbergh's age, if married, was tyrannical at home, was methodical and very cautious, had supreme confidence in himself, and when arrested would not cooperate nor confess. While the profile was not specific enough to uncover the kidnapper, it was accurate in all respects, which the police would confirm after the arrest of the kidnapper in 1934.

The ransom bills continued to be turned in after the U.S. went off the Gold Standard on April 5, 1933 but now any that were gold certificates became more rare every day so they were more likely to arouse the suspicions of merchants and banks who accepted them. In addition, the kidnapper had used up most of the five dollar bills and was using the tens and twenties. Eventually a few of the recipients actually remembered the description of who had given them the bill. A pattern description emerged of a Caucasian male, mid-30s, medium build, felt hat, German accent . . . it was the same description Dr. Condon had provided of the man to whom he paid the ransom in a Bronx cemetery. But it brought the police no nearer to his capture.

Finally on September 15, 1934, the big break in the case occurred. Walter Lyle, a manager at a gas station at Lexington and 127th Street, got a ten dollar gold certificate from a man who was paying for 98 cents worth of gas. Lyons was afraid it might be counterfeit so before the man drove off in his 1930 Dodge, Lyon wrote down his license number on the ten dollar bill. Three days later the teller processing the gas station's deposit found the ransom bill and phoned the authorities. Their interviews at the gas station confirmed that what had happened and a quick check of motor vehicle records determined that license plate was registered to Bruno Richard Hauptmann, 1279 E. 222nd Street in the Bronx.

A decision was made to arrest Hauptmann away from his residence so they could catch him with another ransom bill in his possession. They set up surveillance, including three cars, and when he left the next day, September 19, 1934, they followed him from his home to White Plains Avenue where they arrested him in his car. Among the twenty-nine dollars in his wallet, Hauptmann had a 20 dollar gold certificate which was part of the ransom package.

He was taken into custody and a search of his residence and garage discovered about \$15,000 in the missing ransom money (carefully hidden), a tool set in which a chisel was missing (which matched the one found the night of the kidnapping), and Condon's address and phone number written in a closet. Hauptmann was grilled for several days and never confessed to any wrong doing. He insisted the money found had been left to him by an associate, Isador Fisch, who had died in Germany a few months ago. Despite all the overwhelming evidence, he continued to protest his innocence and the October 5, 1934, *The March of Time* program summarized his interrogation for CBS radio, citing all the damning evidence against the kidnapper. (The program is in general circulation.) While there are no credits on this program, Hauptmann was probably voiced by Dwight Weiss, who did most of the roles on *The March of Time* which required a German accent.

After a grand jury indictment and extradition to New Jersey, the trial was to begin in the courthouse in Flemington, NJ, a town of less than 3,000 people, located an hour from New York City. Due to various motions, the trial was postponed a few times and finally began on January 2, 1935. The prosecution team was led by David Wilentz, the state's AG, while the defense team was headed by Edward J. Reilly, a prominent Brooklyn defense attorney. The trial had attracted over 100 reporters from America and Europe, 25 radio and telegraph operators, and even a newsreel camera were used in the gallery. Walter Winchell and other well-known columnists were there, joined by prominent novelists also pressed into service: Edna Ferber, Alexander Woolcott, Fannie Hurst, and Damon Runyon. Sports stars, Broadway luminaries, and other show-biz personalities flocked to courtroom as spectators including Jack Benny.

Samuel Leibowitz, a prominent Brooklyn defense attorney, was hired by WHN Radio to broadcast regular trial updates on the air. They were done on transcription disks for subsequent airings and are apparently the only radio programs that survived, of the thousands of radio shows and bulletins that came out of the lengthy trial. Nearly five hours total of Leibowitz's trial observations remain with us, but unfortunately they are all in the custody of the Museum of Television and Radio in Manhattan. That means that anyone can go there in person and listen to them, but no one can dub any copies of them. Here is an excerpt from one of Leibowitz's programs: "What difference does it make whether there was an accomplice, or two accomplices, or a whole army of accomplices? If (Hauptmann) had a hand in this

kidnapping, whether he actually committed the kidnapping or not, he is just as much of a fiend, and is just as guilty as if he actually killed that innocent child.” The trial would last for six weeks with nearly 400 witnesses, dozens of evidence items introduced, and a variety of experts on handwriting, wood, and medicine testified. All of Hauptmann’s past history was revealed including his robberies in Germany, his escape from jail there, and entering the U.S. as an illegal alien. It was shown he had not worked a day after the ransom was paid and yet spent money lavishly for the next two years during the Great Depression. Jack Benny summed up the pitiful defense in a statement to the press: “Bruno needs a second act.” Near the end of the trial, Hauptmann’s attorney went on national radio and appealed for witnesses with any knowledge of the case to come forward. Only a few kooks responded. The jury convicted Hauptmann of murder on February 13, 1935, with no recommendation for mercy, thus requiring the death penalty.

The wall to wall radio coverage of the trial elevated several announcers and commentators to a higher level of fame that they previously had. But the radio personality that benefited most from the trial was a new announcer at WNEW who had just started at \$20 a week. Hearing that WNEW would be broadcasting periodic reports from the Flemington court house and wanted something to fill the gaps between, Martin Block convinced station management that him playing musical records would be the best solution. He called his show *Make Believe Ballroom*, a title he borrowed from former associate, Al Jarvis, who used that same name for his west coast DJ show. Block’s show became very popular during the six weeks trial and when it was over, WNEW made it a permanent fixture in their programming, eventually making Block a millionaire.

Mutual Radio had a tradition in those years to air a year end summary each December of what they termed “The Top News Stories of the Year.” In 1935 the program was narrated by announcer Seymour Birkson. Although the Hauptmann trial was clearly the top story that year, Birkson bumped it down to number 2, right behind the Italian war in Ethiopia. Birkson summarizes the trial in a half dozen sentences. Copies of this program are in general circulation.

But it would be over a year before the execution, due to a series of long and complicated appeals, one of which went all the way to the Supreme Court. Hauptmann’s widow raised thousands of dollars, mostly from German audiences in the East and the Midwest, pleading “Help me get a new trial for the father of my poor baby.” Meanwhile

the kidnapper was held at the state prison in Trenton, declining to confess in order to escape the death penalty, even after a personal visit by the governor. On the scheduled day of his execution in April 1936, he was asked what he wanted for his last meal. He declined, saying he was not hungry, but he did have a special request. When asked what it was, Hauptmann said he wanted to address the American people on the radio so he could convince them he was innocent. The request was denied.

After all appeals were exhausted, the execution was scheduled for April 3, 1936. Hundreds of press and radio reporters gathered outside the prison, not counting the 30 members of the media who were among the 55 official witnesses watching the room containing the electric chair. All had been frisked for cameras and microphones since the warden was aware that five years earlier a reporter with a camera hidden on his leg, photographed murderess Ruth Snyder when she was electrocuted.

Everyone had been told the execution would take place at 8 PM so Gabriel Heatter, who gained some publicity with his bulletins on the trial in Flemington, took his place outside the prison with about five minutes of material in case the execution was a few minutes late. However, the few minutes stretched to 45 minutes and Heatter ad-libbed without a break for the entire time, a feat that would push him to the top of radio commentators and insure his successful career on the air. Hauptmann was executed at 8:45 and the news was flashed around the world.

The grieving widow was given no peace from the media. She was staying in a room at the Stacy-Trent Hotel in Trenton with a few friends and defense attorneys. About five minutes after the execution, about a dozen camera men, newspaper and radio reporters burst into her room, taking photos and shouting questions at her. After about 15 minutes, her associates were able to push the media out of the room, leaving the widow sobbing on her bed.

But the case did not die with Bruno Hauptmann. Doubts about his guilt were expressed by Eleanor Roosevelt, NJ Governor Harold Hoffman, and other well-known figures who were apparently unfamiliar with the mountain of evidence of his guilt. Hauptmann’s widow embarked on a crusade to prove his innocence, a quest that she followed until the day she died in 1994 at the age of 96. To further complicate the case, about a dozen men sought the spotlight by claiming to be the Lindbergh baby, now grown up. While they may have been seeking an inheritance from the Lindbergh millions, at least three of them actually sued NJ for the records to prove their

preposterous claims and one of them made a living on the lecture circuit with his claim.

A wise philosopher once pointed out “Nothing is as strong in human beings as the craving to believe in something that is obviously wrong.” So it was natural that Anna Hauptmann’s pleas would find sympathetic ears. The mutterings about Hauptmann’s innocence, which simmered for years, became more prominent in 1976 with the book “Scapegoat” by Anthony Scaduto which claimed the baby was not even killed but was still alive in the person of Harold Olsen (one of the dozen impostors.) Anna Hauptmann filed a series of multi-million dollar civil suits against NJ in the 1980s, and while she lost every case, the publicity encouraged the publication of more pro-Hauptmann books, including Noel Behn’s 1994 book, a TV documentary, and an HBO movie, all claiming that Hauptmann was not the kidnapper, he was an innocent victim of a law enforcement plot.

All these phony theories of Hauptmann’s innocence were crushed in the 1999 book, “The Ghosts of Hopewell” by Jim Fisher, a Lindbergh historian. I do not have time to summarize his compelling evidence but I urge you to read his book if you have slightest doubts about the case and the verdict.

Now over 75 years after the kidnapping, the case continues to fascinate many people. When the Union Hotel in Flemington, which had housed the jurors, several reporters, and many prominent spectators, was offered for sale three months ago, it made the front page of several Eastern papers. Today, across the street from the hotel, in the original court house, a live drama of the Trial of the Century is being performed every weekend in October. Actors portraying all the main characters of this drama are featured in this two and a half hour summary of the trial. Harry Kazman wrote and directs this play and you can find details at www.famous-trials.com.

The pertinent sites of the ransom negotiation, the payoff, and the arrest of Hauptmann are all covered in a bus tour of the Bronx every year in May, usually the third Saturday. Richard Sloan, who created and manages this interesting tour, has been researching the case for years. You can email him for details at <emma1231@optonline.net>

A Wonderful life

Robert Acosta

On Monday november 17, 2008, our beloved friend, Fred Bertelsen lost his battle with Cancer and passed away. This is a great loss for all of those whose life Fred touched.

To many of you, he was a staunch member of the Old-time radio Researchers Group. To other great friends like myself, Fred made a great difference in the lives of blind old-time radio fans the world over. We found Fred when I was having difficulty accessing the Old-Time Radio Researchers web site. We spoke on the phone and exchanged emails and a great friendship was born. Fred was not a rich man monetarily, but he was a very giving person. He was a rich man when you look at the life he lived.

He met his beloved wife Dee and married her in november of 1993. Dee quickly realized and appreciated Fred's love for old-time radio. They would have been married 15 years in November.

The highlight of our friendship with Fred Bertelsen came this past summer when he attended our Old-Time Radio Get Together which we held in Chicago. This small conference was composed of blind OTR fans and their sighted friends who loved the genre as we all do. Fred came to the Conference and met all of us and greatly enriched our lives. Fred always believed as we who are blind do that one should judge a person by the content of his soul, not by his or her outward appearance. We all knew one another due to our conversations in our audio community chat room on: www.radiooutofthepast.org.

We are dedicating our old-time radio Christmas marathon to be held December 6/7, 2008, to the memory of Fred Bertelsen.

Fred was so happy to know us all. We shall all miss him terribly but he has made a great difference in this world and in the lives of OTR fans.

Eleanor Poehler – A Minnesota Radio Pioneer

Donna L. Halper

Few people today remember Eleanor Poehler. Like many of radio's early broadcasters, she is known mainly by those of us who are broadcast historians. That's a shame, because she was a unique woman, and a "first" in Minneapolis/St. Paul radio.

In order to appreciate what Mrs Poehler accomplished, you have to first go back to 1922. It was a year when radio was growing faster than anyone in the Department of Commerce (the agency that regulated radio prior to the FRC and FCC) had ever imagined. A year earlier, there had only been about fifteen commercial stations in the entire United States, and now in June of 1922, there were several hundred. It seemed every town wanted its own station, even though radio back then was a volunteer activity. Stations were not on all day – several hours in the evening was common, and some were only on a couple of nights a week. In 1922, you would have listened in using headphones, and you may have built your own receiving set. What you heard varied – some nights, there was poor reception and lots of static, as well as programming that sounded quite amateurish – because it was. But some nights, far away stations drifted in, and you could hear famous performers (comedian Ed Wynn was already doing radio, and he was not the only well-known comedian or vocalist to volunteer on this new medium). Most listeners were very patient – since radio was so new, there were no real expectations of consistent quality. People were excited to hear whatever came through the "ether." If it didn't sound good tonight, perhaps tomorrow it would sound better. Radio in 1922 was an adventure – it was in a constant state of flux, as stations came and went, and the ones that survived shared the limited number of frequencies the Department of Commerce had assigned.

Several stations were on the air in Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1922, but none of the call letters that people in the Twin Cities know today. These early stations included WAAH in St. Paul (which went out of business in September of 1922), WLB at the University of Minnesota (today KUOM), WBAH (owned by the Dayton Department store), and WBAD, owned by Sterling Electric Company and the Minneapolis Journal newspaper.

Eleanor Nesbitt probably did not realise when she was growing up that she would have a radio career. In fact, the young woman (who was born in Minneapolis in 1885)

was raised as most women around the turn of the century were – she would have been encouraged to do some singing or learn to play piano, and maybe she could teach for a while, but her main vocation was to be marriage and family.

Right after she graduated high school, Eleanor married a doctor, Frederick Poehler, and within a year, they had a son, Frederick Junior. Life seemed perfect; however, fate was about to intervene. Suddenly, without warning, Dr. Pohler died, and Eleanor was left a widow with a baby to support. She was only 21, and had been married for just 13 months. As might be expected, she sunk into a deep depression.

Fortunately, she had very supportive parents, and they reminded her that when she was a child, she had always loved music and had talked about singing professionally. They encouraged her to take some lessons and pursue her childhood dream. She found a very famous vocal coach, studied in both Minneapolis and in England, and was such a good student that soon she was able to perform professionally.

Her lovely soprano voice won her critical acclaim, and while she was not as famous as some of the internationally known opera singers, she was certainly popular with midwestern audiences. Her vocal skills helped her to get hired by Minneapolis's MacPhail School of Music, where she taught voice. A passionate lover of classical music and opera, she was soon speaking in schools and advocating for more music education. In 1922, Eleanor Poehler was not only a teacher and a performer; she was also a member of several women's clubs and did charitable work.

As mentioned earlier, radio in 1922 was staffed mostly by dedicated volunteers, many of whom came from the local music schools. And so it was that in mid-April of 1922, William MacPhail and Eleanor Poehler were asked to perform on WBAD, which was about to open for the first time. Like most of the early stations, WBAD depended on live performers – audio tape had not yet been invented, and playing phonograph records was a cumbersome procedure. Most of the early radio announcers were men – early microphones tended to distort the female speaking voice and make it sound shrill; but there were a few women announcers on the air, among them Eunice Randall in Boston, Jessie Koewing and Bertha Brainard in New York.

But the place where women WERE welcomed right from the beginning was as performers, especially vocalists. Vaughn DeLeath in New York was among a number of female singers whose careers were dramatically expanded thanks to radio. But, Eleanor Poehler was

probably not thinking about radio – she wanted to help Mr MacPhail, and she wanted to continue her mission to bring “good music” to as many places as possible. She sang on several radio stations in 1922 and from what I have read, her performances were very well received. But she was perfectly contented to continue on as a music teacher, singing at her church and doing occasional concerts. And then, once more, fate intervened.

WBAD was not named because of any aspersion on its sound – in those days, call letters were assigned in sequential order (WBAA, WBAB, etc) unless you requested a specific call letter. A few stations did – WGN stood for “World’s Greatest Newspaper”, referring to its parent, the Chicago Tribune – but most, including WBAD, took whatever call letters the Department of Commerce gave them. One problem early stations had was the cost – everybody wanted to build a station, but it was an expensive proposition to run one.

Few stations back then did commercials, so unless your owners had deep pockets, you made do with whatever you had. After only four months, beset by technical problems and probably having a hard time getting enough talent to perform, WBAD’s owners decided to get out of radio. By August of 1922, there was already a replacement for the station – a company that made radio receivers, Cutting and Washington, was ready to try its hand at broadcasting. The two men who owned the company knew they were not “radio people” – they needed to find somebody to run the station on a day to day basis. The station had a location – the Oak Grove Hotel; it had call letters – WLAG. All it needed was a manager, somebody to do what Station Managers did in those days – book the guests, persuade the performers to work for free, keep the station operating, and make sure the announcers were well trained and erudite.

C&W’s co-founder, Walter Harris, had been asking around the Twin Cities at various music schools, civic groups, and clubs. One name kept coming up as a person who knew music, was respected by musicians, and understood how a business works – Mrs Eleanor Poehler. While she did not know radio, she DID know business, having managed her own career and booked concerts for the MacPhail School. Further, she had another skill early radio needed – she could perform herself if a guest failed to show up.

Walter Harris was impressed with her background, and he called her up. He offered her the job as Station Manager of the new WLAG, and since the station was almost ready to go on the air, he gave her 12 hours (!) to decide. Several years later, in an article for *Wireless Age*,

Mrs Poehler recalled with amusement how surprised she was to receive the call. The opportunity sounded interesting, however, plus she was assured it wouldn’t take up much of her time. “So I took the position, which I was told would only be for three hours a day. After six weeks, I was at WLAG three quarters of the time.” (*Wireless Age*, December 1924, p. 30) It didn’t take long for Eleanor Poehler to be bitten by the radio bug: she gave up much of her volunteer work, left the church choir where she had been lead vocalist, and even took a leave of absence from teaching at the MacPhail School. Her life became centered around managing WLAG, and she threw herself into her job.

The new station took to the air on 4 September of 1922, at 830 kHz (360 m.), a frequency shared by many of the early stations. At first, as was common back then, WLAG broadcast only two or three evenings a week, but by year’s end, it was on the air nearly every night; in late February of 1923, WLAG began publishing its own weekly program log and magazine called “Listenin’ In”, which was sponsored by a number of local businesses. By the spring of 1923, you would have found WLAG at 720 kHz (417 m), sharing time on that frequency with the Dayton Company’s WBAH.

If we use today’s standards for what Mrs Poehler did and what she believed, we might come away feeling she was just another fanatical conservative who wanted to preserve the ‘good old days’. But we have to examine what she accomplished in the context of life in the early 1920s. It was the “Jazz Age”, and radio was already in the middle of a controversy – should the airwaves be used for “good music” and for education or should they be used for popular music and entertainment? To Mrs Poehler, and to a number of others, including the famous inventor Lee DeForest, the true purpose of radio was to teach culture to the masses, to uplift them and introduce them to the classics.

That was Mrs Poehler’s deepest hope – that she could use WLAG as a vehicle to develop in her audience the same love of classical music and opera that she had. She was very outspoken about her dislike for jazz and popular music. Her commitment was to give the WLAG audience the finest music available. She even insisted on showing respect for the music – announcers were told to wait a full 10 to 15 seconds after the final note of any selection before they were allowed to speak. During the time that Mrs Poehler ran WLAG, she won very positive mentions in several magazines, including *Radio Broadcast*, where columnist Jennie Irene Mix praised her for creating such an excellent station. Said Miss Mix, “Mrs Eleanor

Poehler, director and chief announcer of station WLAG has been sufficiently successful in her work to bring her many commendations from radio fans far and near . . . She has created several popular radio stars [in the upper midwest] since she took over WLAG. Anyone regularly listening to her programs can readily see that she is... affording the radio public opportunities to hear enough good music to gratify those who already appreciate it, and to create a taste for it among those who, hitherto, have listened to little but trash.” (Radio Broadcast, August 1924, p. 334-5)

I would like to tell you that Eleanor Poehler’s crusade was successful, but winning an entire audience over to classical music and opera in the middle of the Jazz Age was an up-hill battle, to say the least. Making her task even more difficult, the owners of WLAG found that running a station was a severe drain on their finances, and in mid 1924, beset by the problems many small stations of that era had, Cutting and Washington abandoned radio; in fact, the company ended up bankrupt. The station known as “The Call of the North” was off the air at the end of August. Today, except as the ancestor of heritage station WCCO, WLAG is seldom remembered. Meanwhile, in September of 1924, the Washburn-Crosby Company acquired what had been WLAG, and WCCO, “The Gold Medal Station”, was born. (The WCCO call letters referred to the initials of the parent company, while the slogan referred to Gold Medal flour, made at the company's mills).

Because of her extensive experience, Eleanor Poehler was hired by the new owners to work in their music department as Musical Director. Her chief announcer at WLAG, Paul Johnson, was also hired. And while she did not run WCCO, Mrs Poehler still booked guests and arranged performances. But it was obvious to her that WCCO’s management did not share her passion for educating the audience to “good music”. She returned to teaching music at the MacPhail School, and in 1927, she left Minneapolis for Seattle, where she lived out her remaining years till she passed away in September of 1949.

What I find interesting about Eleanor Poehler’s life is how she overcame personal tragedy and took a chance on an entirely new industry, commercial broadcasting. At a time when few women held positions of authority anywhere, she became one of the first female radio station managers; she hired and trained staff, arranged performances, and maintained the station’s philosophy while giving numerous talks on the importance of music education. Even though her interest in classical music was

well known, she made sure the station broadcast a variety of services to the audience, including college sports, farm and market reports, and children's programs. She was certainly one of the first women announcers in the upper mid-west, and while she never turned opera into a household word, she proved that women could do a lot more in radio than just sing an occasional song. For that alone, she deserves our thanks.

The Minnesota Historical Society was very helpful to me as I did the research on Eleanor Poehler's life – they shared several interesting articles with me, as well as giving me access to “Who’s Who Among Minnesota Women” (1924 edition). Other resources used for this article included back issues of Radio Broadcast, Wireless Age, the Minneapolis Journal, the Minneapolis Star, and a book about WCCO’s first 50 Years by Williams and Hartley -- “Good Neighbors to the Northwest.” My thanks also to the Pavek Museum in Minneapolis for letting me see several issues of WLAG's magazine, "Listenin' In" as well as assorted memorabilia from WCCO.

Donna L. Halper is a radio consultant, as well as one of the editors of the Boston Radio Archives. Author of two texts on radio, she teaches about the history of broadcasting at several colleges, and is at work on her third book.



Old Time Radio Researchers Turns Five!

Jim Beshires

On November 21, 2008, the Old Time Radio Researchers Group celebrates its' fifth birthday. This is a milestone as no-one could have imagined how much this group has accomplished in the past five years.

"When I retired in late 2000 I thought my future was planned out. I'd spend my days rocking on the back porch, cool drink in hand, listening to all the cassette tapes of old-time radio that'd been purchased over 39(?) years of collecting.

"My collection of about 5,000 tapes had come from a variety of sources; Radio Spirits got a lot of my money, dealers got a bunch, and the few by-mail clubs I belonged to got their share via cassette rental fees. I was very active for a number of years in the North American Radio Archives and another now-defunct group. I thought I had a fair knowledge of old-time radio. But after spending a few days refreshing my old radio memories on the computer, I found I was woefully behind the times. Mp3s had made their debut and I was being left in the dust. My plans of rocking away a wonderful retirement enjoying my old-time radio went out the window. I had to catch up! And fast!" (Why The Radio Researchers? by Jim Beshires, **Old Radio Times**, December, 2005)

The old time radio hobby had began to explode via the internet about two years prior, and radio series and episodes were being passed around in batches.

Before that time the hobby was either club or individual based. Those clubs and individuals were very meticulous in their collecting. Each episode had been transferred from either transcription disk or reel-to-reel and it was done in 'real time'. If the episode was thirty minutes long, it took thirty minutes to transfer it, mainly to cassettes at that time. And the collector paid close attention to the series title, broadcast date, whether or not commercials were included and any other information that might help identify the program.

Many of those clubs and collectors issued catalogs of their holdings, and a persual of some of them indicate that several lines of information could be found for each episode. Incidentally, many of these 'old time' catalogs can be found in the Magazine Archives located on the OTRR's website at www.otrr.org. The majority of these collectors traded with each other. There were some companies that sold collections, mostly on reel-to-reels, some cassettes, and some on records. Sadly the majority

of these companies are no longer in existence, being driven out of business by the internet mp3 dealers.

As the internet became more and more available to the average person, many collectors moved on-line to keep up with the times. Series and episodes began to be available in mp3 format, but sadly, many of the collectors in those early internet days did not put the time and effort into their collections as did the earlier clubs and collectors did. Many of them seemed to be only interested in amassing as large a collection as they could get. Quantity overcame quality, sadly.

Many dealers began offering series and episodes on e-bay. They would advertize '200 episodes in ZYX series' for only \$9.99! Purchasers soon found out that many of these episodes were only identified as 'Episode 1', 'Episode 2', etc. No episode title, no broadcast date, no other information. And unfortunately, many of those episodes in those collections were there in duplicate, triplicate, or worse!

So anyone who wished to preserve old time radio programs correctly was just out of luck.

There was also a number of internet clubs formed in the early 2000s' as well. Some of them attempted to accurately name series and episodes, but others were only interested in 'collecting'.

It was about this time that I retired and began looking to the internet to improve my collection. As I stated in my article in that December, 2005, issue of The Old Radio Times, I had about 5,000 cassettes. I was keeping up with them in a Word Perfect Quattro Pro database.

I was disturbed by the lax way that internet mp3 files of old time radio were being passed around. Very few people seemed to be interested in accuracy in their collections.

From being a former member in the North American Radio Archives (no longer in existence), I knew there was a better way to collect old time radio, so in November 2003, I began sending out e-mails to selected people who I though might be interested in collecting, preserving, and cataloging these historical items.

"Response was more than was planned for. I was not the only quality-OTR junkie. Lots of others began coming out of the woodwork. Some of the early members included Robert Bratcher, Jim Wood (our first librarian), Ed Morrison, Gary Stanley, Bob Dickson, Bill Hartig, Bernie Czerwinski, George Imm (who was of great help to me in organizing my Streamload account), Uncle Sycamore, and Alan Kleinberger.

"In early 2004 we were joined by Archie Hunter (the prime mover behind Otter), Roger Hohenbrink (an

indispensable part of this team), Dee Detevis (without whom we could not operate), Clorinda Thompson (my gal Friday), great team members like Ernie Cosgrove, Andrew Steinberg and a whole host more. Valuable people, great workers, wonderful friends. The list goes on and on.” (Why The Radio Researchers? by Jim Beshires, Old Radio Times, December, 2005)

This group of volunteers began the massive attempt to bring some sort of order to the internet part of the old time radio community. And we have had some success.

To date, we have issued nearly 150 ‘certified archival’ sets of radio series. Dozens of our members have put in literally thousands of hours to collect, accurately date episodes, create logs, and make sure that these sets are the best possible.

OTRR also inherited a database program called OTTER. This database was created by a Canadian collector who has remained nameless. At the time we began working with the program, it had some basic information on about 400 series and 2,500 episodes. Currently the OTRR OTTER database has information on over 1860 series and 170,000 episodes. OTTER has become the most widely used tool in the community.

During the past five years our members have created four websites devoted to old time radio.

Our first - www.otrr.org was created in 2004. It has become one of the top-rated sites and currently receives over 7,000 visits a month. The amount of information contained there is massive and it would take days to view it all. Three of the more popular areas are 1) The Art Gallery, which contains nearly 6,000 images of OTR CD labels, radio stars photos, radio ads, and much, much more! 2) The OTR Archival Magazine Library. This library contains over 1100 (and counting), back issues of old time radio magazines dating back to the late 1920s, and 3) The Script Archives - over 2,000 pdf copies of scripts, many with notations by the actors themselves.

The second site - www.jjonz.us/RadioLogs/ was created by two of our members - Jim Jones and Ben Kibler. This site features over 45,000 searchable radio logs from the nation’s four top newspapers spanning the period 1930 through 1960. A new, recently added, feature is a collection of 20,000 articles entitled “Radio Highlights”. These are the supplemental articles found adjacent to the “radio logs”. These articles can provide additional show information such as stars, titles, program descriptions ... This site represents over two years of dedicated work by great volunteers and has become the GO TO site for researching and verification of radio program broadcast dates.

The third site - <http://otrpedia.net/index.php> is also maintained by one of our members - Larry Hutsch. This site, similar to the movie database site, contains detailed information on thousands of radio series. It is constantly being updated by a team of dedicated volunteers, and is poised to become a ‘must visit’ site for any old time radio enthusiast.

The fourth site - www.otrrlibrary.org is the on-line version of the groups’ holdings. It currently holds about 40,000 episodes, all available for free download by anyone, and expected to grow to over 60,000 before the years end.

In November, 2005, Ryan Ellett and myself discussed the possibility of having our own magazine, and December saw the launch of ‘The Old Radio Times’, which went out to about 1,000 subscribers.

Since that time, such well-known researchers as Jack French, Jim Cox, and Jim Widner have become regular contributors, and the ‘zine is now being read by nearly 2,500 people each month. It has become the most widely circulated publication in the hobby, and the editor, Ryan Ellett, was given an award at the 2008 Cincinnati OTR Convention for his contributions during the past year to promote old time radio.

The group has not been slack in its attempts to bring new materials to the hobby, spending in excess of \$15,000.00 to purchase or rent transcription disks, cassettes, etc.

Additionally we have received many donations of reel-to-reels, and cassettes, which volunteers are working through to determine what new series or episodes they may contain, and encoding those first. Afterwards they’ll encode better sounding ones to take the place of low-quality encodes that may be in circulation now.

Everything acquired by the OTRR is made available to the community, free of charge.

As the group celebrates its fifth birthday, we are not resting on our laurels. Work continues on producing new certified archival series, with ten under production. The newspaper log site continues to evolve, adding search features, and more pdf files. Volunteers continue to build the OTRRPedia site, new episodes are being uploaded to the OTRRLibrary, and areas are constantly being improved at the groups internet home.

OTRR maintains a large number of Yahoo groups, each devoted to a specific area of expertise. The general membership is about 1500, and slowly continues to grow. People join and some people leave, realizing that we are not their cup of tea.

Today, an excellent group of moderators run the

various groups like a well-oiled machine. A lot of our success can be attributed to the hard work done by those clubs and individual collectors in the 'pre-computer' days. We have received much assistance from them, in the form of donated magazines, catalogs, and being allowed to mine their fantastic libraries for new-to-mp3 series and episodes.

OTRR thanks them and everyone who've had a hand in maintaining this organization. We have had our share of naysayers, who've either found fault with the way we do things, or predicted our early demise. But we've endured, while the majority of those naysayers have either left the hobby or silenced their voices.

I feel safe in saying that OTRR is one of the premier old-time radio group around. The great group of members who volunteer their time, support and money have made it what it is.

HAPPY FIFTH BIRTHDAY, OTRR!! AND MANY, MANY MORE!



OTRR Turns Five Years Old!

To celebrate our fifth anniversary, OTRR members were invited to write about their experiences with old time radio and the Old Time Radio Researchers.

Randy A. Riddle

Mebane, NC

<http://randsesotericotr.podbean.com>

I first got hooked on Old Time Radio during the nostalgia boom of the 1970s. I was always interested in history and radio shows are always entertaining or, at the very least, an interesting glimpse into the past. I started out collecting lp issues of classic radio shows and later began seriously collecting original transcription discs after getting a turntable that would play 16" records. In college, my interest in radio and film history had an influence on me deciding to major in History and to take specialized courses in audio and video preservation. I wound up working in the technology field, so I keep alive my interest in OTR through collecting and transferring original transcription discs. I concentrate on more obscure shows and series and I never cease to be impressed by the many talents that were involved in creating OTR.

Ed Sehlhorst

My father had told me it was important to have something to look forward to during your retirement years. Well I've found it. I've retired from the computer systems world about six years ago.

Don't remember how I heard my first OTR episode, but I was hooked. I started collecting all the disks I could through the Yahoo Groups who would create distros. Seems George Kell was a significant provider of distro material. Eventually my storage requirements kept expanding and I finally reached a point where I decided I couldn't collect it all.

But then I was contacted by Jim B. about doing something besides just swapping disks. Sounded interesting and the rest is history.

When Philip started the hub, I had all this material and volunteered to be one of the librarians. That lasted for a year or more until I changed internet providers. My new provider throttles any p2p connections so I had to drop out. About that time archive.org became a good place to keep all the OTR materials.

Finally I got hooked on the research required for certification of a series. Along with the help of too many volunteers to mention, I've been at it for a few years now.

So far the most personally rewarding series was *YTJD* and the most confusing were the *Richard Diamond* broadcasts. Episodes repeating on different networks with different sponsors were a constant challenge to keep straight.

Currently, with a small army of volunteers, we're taking on the *Cavalcade of America* series. It's an unusual series. Created to make the sponsor DuPont look good, it contains so many quick stories about human interest and the American history. Check it out.



Andy Hendrix

Andy Hendrix here, 29 years old of Atlanta, GA. I only discovered OTR about a year and a half ago, but as I work at home it has become a very cherished companion. I am a ravenous collector. My collection (currently) fills 120+ DVDs that I carefully index and store in a firesafe, and favorites are kept on my computer. The entire collection comprises 26,242~ hours or 3 years of audio (some higher-quality, duplicated episodes included). Mystery and crime would be my favorite genres with shows like *CBS Radio Mystery Theater* and *The Whistler* topping the list. The show that got me into OTR was *Hall of Fantasy*. I eagerly await the day that lost episodes are found!



Dick Olday

I grew up listening to radio since we did not have a TV until the spring of 1952 when I was 11 years old. Even then, there was only one TV station in town. In the fall of 1953, two more (UHF) started operation. However, I never completely abandoned radio and was still listening

to radio in the early 60's.

One time I was returning from a day at the beach with several friends and I changed stations from music to WBEN in Buffalo for *Suspense* and *Johnny Dollar*. The guys were very upset for about one minute when they became engrossed in the story and when the first show ended, they asked if there were any more and of course there was.

In the mid 60's, OTR came back with reruns of *The Shadow* and *The Lone Ranger*. When the 70's arrived, I discovered Radiola records and was in 7th heaven. Soon after, I found other OTR records and started building a collection. Then *CBS Mystery Theater* started and I still wanted more so I joined the Old Time Radio Club in 1978. I bought a cassette player/recorder - my new car also had a tape player - and the collection grew and grew. Today I have over 22,000 programs that I have listened to with at least another 1,000 shows that I have yet to listen to.

In the early 1980's, my wife & I started attending the OTR cons at Bridgeport, Newark, Cincinnati and Seattle. We have great times meeting with fans from all over the country as well as many OTR actors such as Bob Hastings, Rosemary Rice, and Parley Baer among many others. While there are not many of these fine performers left today, you can still enjoy the company of many fans such as the Researchers when you attend any of the conventions such as the upcoming one in Cincinnati in April 2009.

Mike Bennett

Congratulations, Jim and thanks for all the work associated with this.

As far as when I first discovered OTR, it was when I was about seven or eight years old. I was lucky enough to attend a school that was trying to show us how to use our imaginations. The teacher played a record album of the War of the Worlds broadcast. When I "saw" those martians in my mind's eye I was hooked! Then, a different teacher played a flexi disc from "Read" magazine that had an episode of the *Shadow*!! This was in the late 60's, early 70's, and the nostalgia craze was cresting. On the back of a box of cereal or some such product, one could mail in for cassettes of old time radio shows. Since I was a huge Boris Karloff fan, I ordered a copy of *Lights Out's* "Cat Wife." I still to this day have that cassette. I listened to the *CBS Radio Mystery Theater* late at night, and then almost forgot about OTR due to life's demands. I was researching Mr. Karloff again in the early 90's, found some OTR shows featuring him, and got the bug once

more! Now I collect shows and paint portraits of my favorite OTR personalities.

Joe Webb
Harrisville, RI



I've been in the hobby for 35 years (yeah, I can't believe it either) and I have never enjoyed the hobby so much as I have with the OTRR. It's great to have a group of people so devoted to the hobby and also have a common purpose in gathering and researching and sharing the best of our favorite medium.

I first became aware of radio drama when as a child in the 1960s I heard Bill Cosby do his famous routine about *Lights Out* and the "Chicken Heart." I remember hearing him mention *Suspense* and *Inner Sanctum* in the routine. I remember Longines Symphonette Society selling some OTR during science fiction movies on WOR-TV (channel 9 in New York), and also seeing a TV ad for recordings of "War of the Worlds." Because I was collecting comics, I would occasionally see mentions of radio programs as well.

In 1972, WRVR-FM, New York's jazz station, started to run *The Shadow* at midnight Saturdays (technically it was actually Sunday mornings, but you had to stay up all night Saturday to be awake to hear it). I remember my first episode, "Isle of the Living Dead." I made a point of recording it on cassette. WRVR's lineup would expand to five nights a week, and at the more normal time of 7 PM, and include *Gangbusters*, *Fibber McGee*, *Shadow*, *Lone Ranger*, and *Sherlock Holmes*. *The Green Hornet* would be added later. *Harry Lime* and the *Haunting Hour* would be part of the lineup months later.

Collector Stu Weiss would make an appearance one evening with WRVR's Max Cole, and they played excerpts of the recent OTR convention where Bret Morrison was a guest.

My collecting was limited to what I could get off the radio until I learned about OTR dealers who advertised in comics collecting newspapers. Gradually I started to buy

some tapes from Remember Radio (Don Maris), Old Time Radio (Joe Hehn of Allentown, PA) and eventually began trading because of Jay Hickerson's Hello Again newsletter.

I eventually became a small OTR dealer, and in 1976 I became involved in the radio convention. In 1976, collector/dealer Jerry Chapman and I started the Airwaves OTR newsletter, and then I would work on Collectors Corner with Bob Burnham and Bob Burchett. I was an OTR dealer under the names "Old Radio Warehouse" and later "Nostalgia Warehouse." The "big break" I had was buying 33 Counterspy transcriptions at the 1976 convention; any time you got uncirculated shows at that time, you could trade them for months. With those few reels of shows I probably added 350 or so reels of programs to my collection. It took over a big chunk of my parent's basement. My last years were 1985 and 1986 as my professional career and my doctoral studies pushed OTR out of my life. I sold most of my equipment to Bob Burnham (BRC Productions), and many of my tapes ended up at a college in Massachusetts. I kept about 600 or so of my 3000 reels. Over the next decade and more, they would just sit on shelves.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s I was convinced the hobby was dying out and didn't think about it much more, other than some curiosity about my old trading buddies. In 2002 and 2003, I began to get the itch again. Poking around the Internet I found that the hobby was still around, and it actually seemed to be dynamic. Thanks to mp3 and the extraordinary Internet tools that allow us to find people of like interests, the hobby is thriving in ways that I still find hard to believe. I purchased some mp3 CDs and marveled at the convenience. I did hear some shows that I had originated in circulation back in the mid-1970s, and was disappointed in them. I got in touch with a few of the dealers about my tapes and one of them volunteered to convert them to mp3 for me. I posted on the OTR digest newsletter that I had new recordings of shows that I transferred from transcriptions. One of the people I heard from was Jim Beshires, who told me about his new group, and convinced me to join OTRR and its collectors hub.

Thank you, Jim, for inviting my participation; OTRR has been more than I could have anticipated. I now have a new group of OTR friends, young and old, and very enthusiastic, and devoted to the hobby. I look forward to many years of listening enjoyment and shared accomplishment with you and everyone else in OTRR.

Let George Do It Achieves Certified Status

The Old Time Radio Researchers Group is pleased to announce that *Let George Do It* has been awarded Archival Certified Series Status. Many people have been anxiously awaiting the release of this highly popular detective series.

Ed Selhorst and his fine team of volunteers have been working on it for the past six months, and have included many extra items that will add to the value of this set for collectors of old time radio.

Let George Do It was a radio drama series produced by Owen and Pauline Vinson from 1946 to 1954. It starred Bob Bailey as detective-for-hire George Valentine (with Olan Soule stepping into the role in 1954).

Clients came to Valentine's office after reading a newspaper carrying his classified ad: "Personal notice: Danger's my stock in trade. If the job's too tough for you to handle, you've got a job for me. George Valentine."

The few earliest episodes were more sitcom than private eye shows, with a studio audience providing scattered laughter at the not-so-funny scripts. Soon the audience was banished, and George went from stumbling comedic hero to tough guy private eye and the music from wah-wah-wah to suspenseful.

Valentine's secretary was Claire Brooks, aka Brooksie (Frances Robinson, Virginia Gregg, Lillian Buyeff). As Valentine made his rounds in search of the bad guys, he usually encountered Brooksie's kid brother, Sonny (Eddie Firestone), Lieutenant Riley (Wally Maher) and elevator man Caleb (Joseph Kearns). For the first few shows, Sonny was George's assistant, but he was soon relegated to an occasional character.

Sponsored by Standard Oil, the program was broadcast on the West Coast Mutual Broadcasting System from October 18, 1946 to September 27, 1954, first on Friday evenings and then on Mondays. In its last season, transcriptions were aired in New York, Wednesdays at 9:30pm, from January 20, 1954 to January 12, 1955. (Series description from wikipedia)

OTRR Certified
Let George Do It
Version One

The Old Time Radio Researchers Group on Yahoo - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OldTimeRadioResearchersGroup/> and located on the web at www.otrr.org has certified this series.

The Series Researchers, Log Researchers and Database compilers of the Old Time Radio Researchers (OTRR) Group have thoroughly researched this Old Time Radio Series, utilizing information found on the Internet, books published on this series and old time radio in general. They have determined that as of OCTOBER 14, 2008, this series is as complete as possible, with the most current information included as to broadcast dates, episode numbers, episode titles, number of episodes broadcast, and best encodes at the time of Certification. The Old Time Radio Researchers Group now declares this series to be *Certified Accurate*. There is one DVD or three CDs in this release, which represents the most up to date and accurate version endorsed by the OTRR. In order to ensure that only the best possible version of this series is in circulation, we recommend that all prior OTRR versions be discarded. As always, it is possible that more information will surface which will show that some of our conclusions were wrong. Please e-mail us at (ed.selhorst@gmail.com), or post your corrections at <http://www.otrr.org/pmwiki/Misc/ReleaseIssues> and let us know if any corrections are required. Also, if you have any better encodes of the series, or additional episodes, please let us know so that we can include them with the next release of the Certified Series. The Old Time Radio Researchers Group would like to thank the following people who helped on this series -
Series Coordinator - Ed Selhorst
Quality Listener(s) - David Oxford, Jake Turk, Kathy Hammel, Bob Hicks, Larry Maupin, Mike Galbreath, Larry Brist, Thomas Mandeville, Mike Harron, John Baker, Daniel Clark, John Liska, Anne Rimmer, Geoff Loker, Dale Beckman, Adam Gott, Jim Witeveen
Series Synopsis - Ed Selhorst
Sound Upgrades - Clorinda Thompson
Missing Episodes - Clorinda Thompson
Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - Bob Hicks, Clyde Kell, Alicia Williams
Audio Briefs Compiler(s) - Ed Selhorst
Pictures, other extras - Ed Selhorst
Artwork - Ed Selhorst, Brian Allen
Stars Bios - Ed Selhorst, Wikipedia
File corrections - Sue Sieger
Newspaper Research - Ben Kibler
And all the members and friends of the OTRR for their contributions of time, knowledge, funds, and other support.

This series will shortly go into circulation in the Distro Group of the OTRR and other otr clubs, and will eventually be made available at www.archive.org as well.

Crime and Peter Chambers Achieves Certified Status

Crime and Peter Chambers, which starred Dane Clark as a hard-hitting private eye who worked well the with police department, has recently been certified by the Old Time Radio Researchers organization.

“Originally, Pete was a man with a passion for the fashion, a man-about- Manhattan, and very much the eligible bachelor, with an eye for the ladies and a nose for danger, in a long-running series of books and short stories that may have actually inspired Peter Gunn. In fact, when the success of Blake Edwards' Ivy League P.I. warranted the publication of a paperback tie-in, the book was penned by Kane himself.” (www.thrillingdetectives.com)

Clarks' counter part at the NYPD was Lt Parker played by Bill Zuckert. The series was based on the character created by Henry Kane who wrote eight Peter Chambers novels before the series came to radio. He also wrote the scripts for the radio show adaptation which aired from 6 Apr – 7 Sep 1954 on NBC. The show was directed by Fred Weihe. There are a total of 21 episodes available from the series.

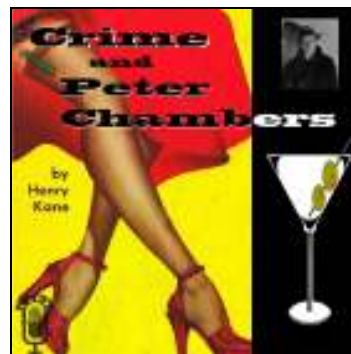
OTRR Certified
Crime and Peter Chambers
Version One

The Old Time Radio Researchers Group on Yahoo - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OldTimeRadioResearchersGroup/> and located on the web at www.otrr.org has certified this series. The Series Researchers, Log Researchers and Database compilers of the Old Time Radio Researchers (OTRR) Group have thoroughly researched this Old Time Radio Series, utilizing information found on the Internet, books published on this series and old time radio in general. They have determined that as of NOVEMBER 15, 2008, this series is as complete as possible, with the most current information included as to broadcast dates, episode numbers, episode titles, number of episodes broadcast, and best encodes at the time of Certification. The Old Time Radio Researchers Group now declares this series to be *Certified Complete*. There is ONE CD in this release, which represents the most up to date and accurate version endorsed by the OTRR. In order to ensure that only the best possible version of this series is in circulation, we recommend that all prior OTRR versions be discarded. As always, it is possible that more information will surface which will show that some of our conclusions were wrong. Please e-mail us at (beshiresjim@yahoo.com), or post your

corrections at

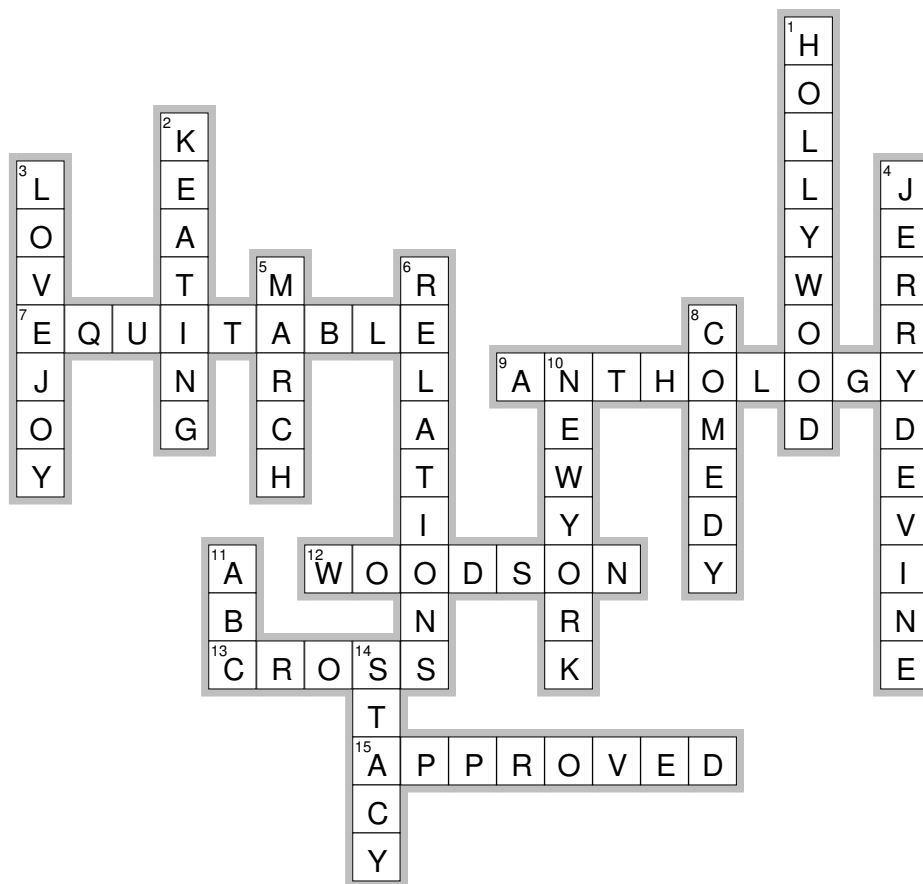
<http://www.otrr.org/pmwiki/Misc/ReleaseIssues> and let us know if any corrections are required. Also, if you have any better encodes of the series, or additional episodes, please let us know so that we can include them with the next release of the Certified Series. The Old Time Radio Researchers Group would like to thank the following people who helped on this series -
Series Coordinator - Geoff Loker
Quality Listener(s) - Geoff Loker
Series Synopsis - Terry Caswell
Sound Upgrades - n/a
Missing Episodes - n/a
Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - Clyde C Kelll, Andrew Sernekos, Bob Hicks
Audio Briefs Compiler(s) - Terry Caswell
Pictures - Terry Caswell
Artwork - Brian Allen
Stars Bios - Jim Beshires
File corrections - Geoff Loker
Other Extras - www.thrillingdetectives.com, Kevin Burton Smith, Jack French, and all the members and friends of the OTRR for their contributions of time, knowledge, funds, and other support.

As always, this series will shortly be released by the distribution center of the OTRR, and after that, by various other old time radio clubs and groups. The series will also be archived on www.archive.org



This Is Your FBI

By Fred Bertelsen



EclipseCrossword.com

Fred Bertelsen has been one of the most faithful contributors to the Old Radio Times, authoring an old-time radio crossword for nearly every issue since it was founded three years ago. We lost Fred on Monday, November 17th, 2008. Above are the answers to the last puzzle Fred wrote for us which appeared in the October, 2008 edition. If even one reader took pleasure in solving his puzzle every month Fred would surely have considered it a worthwhile endeavor.

News From the Community

Conventions

Cinefest 2009 - March 2009. For more information, contact Robert Oliver -

[ROLIVER9@twcny.rr.com?Subject=Cinefest 2008](mailto:ROLIVER9@twcny.rr.com?Subject=Cinefest%202008)

Cincinnati's 23rd Annual Nostalgia and Old Time Radio Convention - April 24-25, 2009, Crowne Plaza, 11911 Sheraton Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45246. For more information, contact Bob Burchett, (888) 477-9112 or e-mail to:

haradio@hotmail.com.

20th Annual Radio Classics Live! - May 2, 2009. Buckley Performing Arts Center, Massasoit Community College, Brockton, MA. Contact Bob Bowers (508) 758-4865, or e-mail bobowers@version.net for more information.

MidAtlantic Nostalgia Convention - Aug 27-29, 2009



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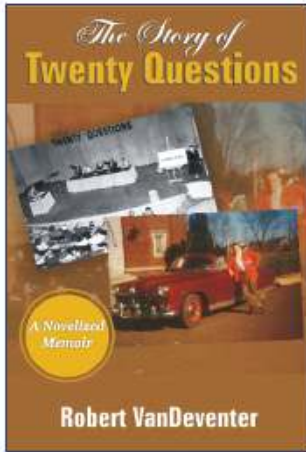
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The Story of Twenty Questions
by Robert VanDeventer



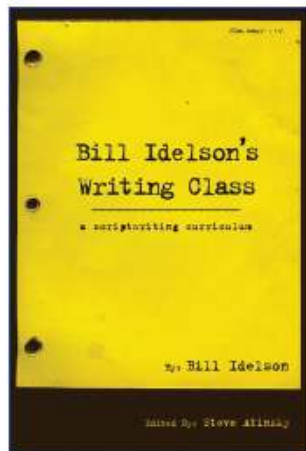
The Eternal Light
by Eli Segal



Fibber McGee and Molly
by Clair Schulz



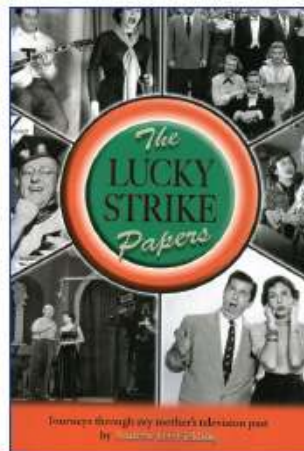
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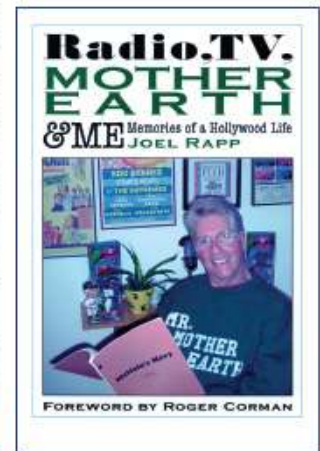
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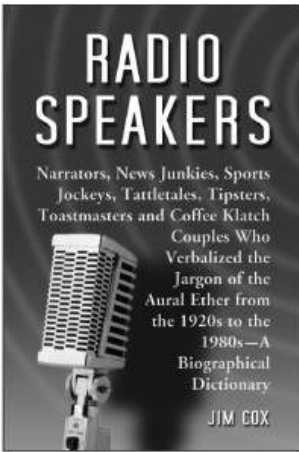
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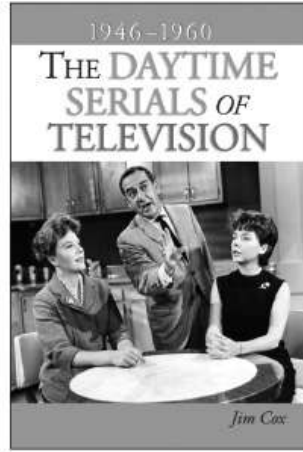
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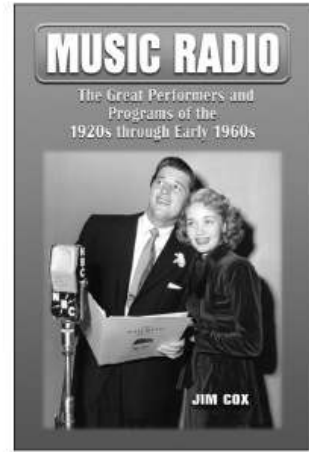
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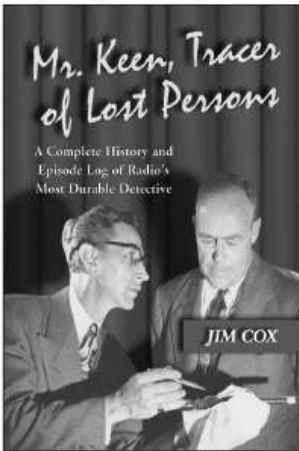
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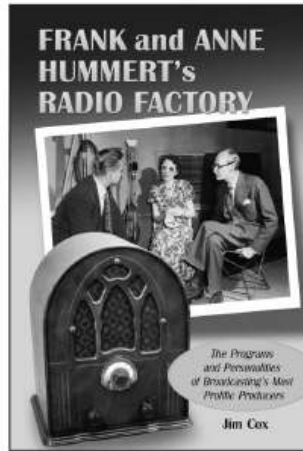
Jim Cox. 2006, \$49.95 hardcover (7 × 10), photos, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-0-7864-2429-0.



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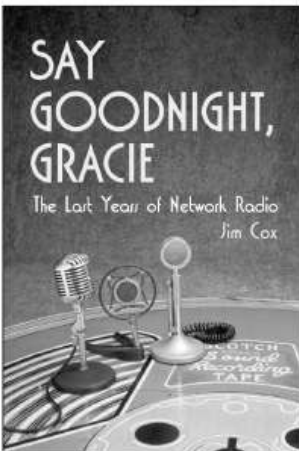
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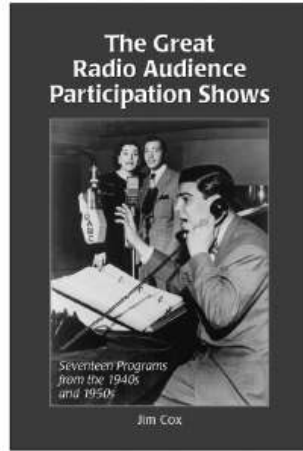
Jim Cox. 2003, \$35 softcover, photos, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-0-7864-1631-8.



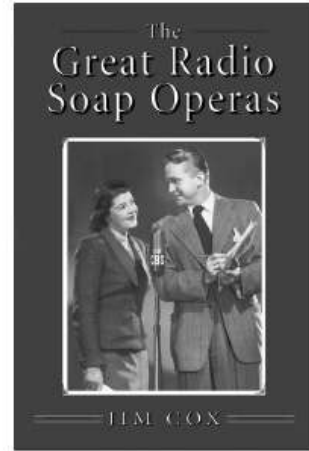
Jim Cox. 2002, \$45 hardcover (7 × 10), photos, appendix, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-0-7864-1390-4.



Jim Cox. 2002, \$39.95 softcover, photos, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-0-7864-1168-9.



Jim Cox. 2001, \$45 hardcover (7 × 10), photos, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-0-7864-1071-2.



Jim Cox. 1999, \$55 hardcover (7 × 10), photos, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, ISBN 978-0-7864-0589-3.



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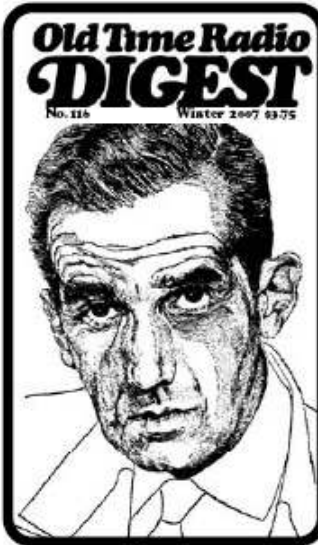
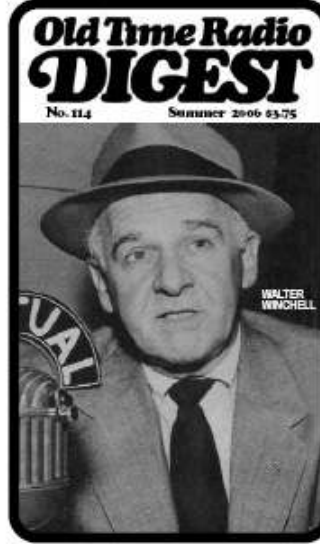
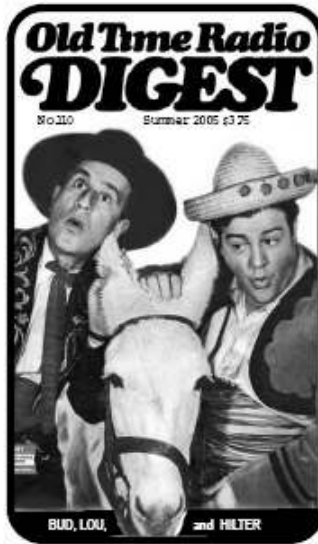
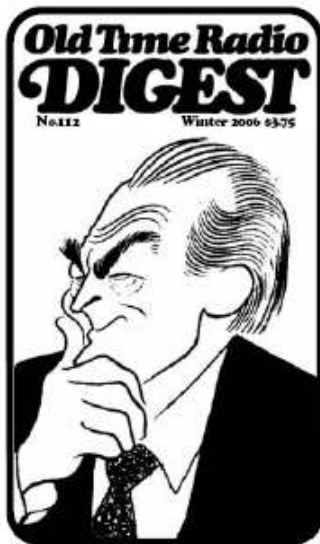
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OTRR Acquisitions and Upgrades

The following is a list of newly acquired series/episodes. They may either be new to mp3 or better encodes. These were acquired by the Group during the month of October. These episodes were purchased by donations from members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers or donated by interested parties.

If you have cassettes that you would like to donate, please e-mail beshiresjim@yahoo.com. For reel-to-reels, contact david0@centurytel.net and for transcription disks tony_senior@yahoo.com.

A Date With Judy 47-02-18 Mr Foster Tries To Get Some Rest.wav

A Date With Judy 48-05-18 New Dress For The Big Dance.wav

Al Jolson - The Colgate Show 43-01-19 Guest - Monty Wooley.wav

Al Jolson - The Colgate Show 43-01-26 Guest - Monty Wooley.wav

CBS News 40-08-29 London's Longest Air Raid Yet (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-08-30 British Planes With Invisible Paint (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-08-31 Larry Lesuer Reports (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-02 Italians Bann Jazz (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-04 British Naval Treaty With The US (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-05 King Of Romania Abducts (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-06 New King Of Romania (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-07 Searchlights On Night Fighters (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-09 Ten Hour Raid On London (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-14 Military Activity In West Africa (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-15 Two Air Raids On Berlin (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-17 German Bombing In London (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-18 Air Raid In London (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-19 Another Air Raid In London (poor

sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-20 German Foreign Minister Talks With Mussolini (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-23 Japanese Soldiers In French Indochina (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-24 German Raids On England (poor sound).wav

CBS News 40-09-25 German Planes Bombed London All Night (poor sound).wav

Eddie Cantor Show, The xx-xx-xx (65) Eddie The German.wav

Eddie Cantor Show, The xx-xx-xx (66) Foreign Radio Shows.wav

Grand Ole Opry 49-04-24 Guest - Red Foley (AFRS).wav

Grand Ole Opry 51-01-16 Guest - Red Foley (AFRS).wav

Grand Ole Opry 56-07-31 Guest - Cowboy Copas.wav

Grand Ole Opry 56-08-07 Guest - Marty Robbins.wav

Grand Ole Opry 59-05-22 Guest - Lester Flat, Earl Scruggs.wav

Grand Ole Opry 59-05-29 Guest - Hawkshaw Hawkins.wav

Grand Ole Opry 59-06-19 Guest - Hank Snow.wav

Grand Ole Opry 59-07-03 Guest - Porter Wagoner.wav

Hour Of St Francis xx-xx-xx Believe Me If You Love Me.mp3

Hour Of St Francis xx-xx-xx God And The Gamblers.mp3

Hour Of St Francis xx-xx-xx Stranger In My Mirror.mp3

Hour Of St Francis xx-xx-xx The Last Voyage.mp3

Hour Of St Francis xx-xx-xx The Truth About Love.mp3

Lest We Forget - The American Dream 48-07-31 (13) One Of Us.wav

Lest We Forget - The American Dream xx-xx-xx (04)

Rosika, The Rose.wav

Lest We Forget - The American Dream xx-xx-xx (05) My Little Boy.wav

Lest We Forget xx-xx-xx (05) Yes, Your Honesty.wav

Lest We Forget xx-xx-xx (10) Act Of Faith.wav

Lest We Forget xx-xx-xx (11) My Song Yankee Doodle.wav

Lest We Forget xx-xx-xx (12) Watch That Play, Little Man.wav

Lest We Forget xx-xx-xx (13) Bonus Nochas Pal.wav

New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (01) Alaskan Adventure.wav

New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (02) Want Ad.wav

New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (03) Turn-About.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (06) A Melody In Hearts.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (07) A Part-time Chemist.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (08) Banner Line In Variety.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (09) The Prison Escort.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (12) The Doctor And The Orchid.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (13) Romance In A Bird Farm.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (14) City Editor.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (15) Plumber Elmer Biggs.wav
 New National Guard Show xx-xx-xx (16) Taxi Ride.wav

Rudy Valee - The Fleischmann Yeast Hour 34-08-30 (254) Crossed Roads.wav

The World Today 40-11-17 Berlin And Moscow Claim Victory.wav

Time For Reason 47-02-03 About Radio.wav
 Time For Reason 47-06-28 America's Leadership For Freedom (op clipped).wav
 Time For Reason 47-08-31 The East End Of Europe.wav



What Reference Book Did You Say You Wanted?
 (Jim B's Little Helper)

Wistful Vistas Ryan Ellett

This has been a bittersweet issue to put together. This year, coincidentally, the OTRR celebrate both the anniversaries of the group's founding and that of the Old Radio Times. This year is special because it marks five years for the group. At the same time we are all saddened by the loss of our good friend Fred Bertelson, a scholar and a gentleman. Please be mindful of his family as we enter this holiday-filled time of year.

Because of personal commitments I had to limit the content this month; we had so much more lined up. However, I think you'll be satiated with two top notch articles by the legendary writers Jack French and Donna Halper. If you don't learn a few things from them everytime they put digital ink to digital paper then you aren't paying close enough attention.

We hope you enjoy the special birthday messages included this month. They represent only a tiny fraction of our group's membership but they definitely give a glimpse of the depth of our members' knowledge, experience, and passion for old time radio.

Don't hesitate to drop back by in a month when this silly little e-zine begins its fourth year. We have so much first class material lined up for you that we've already started slotting articles and pieces for summer 2009! Don't be discouraged; let us know what you think and be assured that your research and discoveries will find space in upcoming pages.

Happy listening all!

November Contributors

Bob Acosta * Mike Bennett * Fred Bertelson * Jim Beshires * Ryan Ellett * Jack French * Donna Halper * Andy Hendrix * Dick Olday * Randy Riddle * Ed Sehlhorst * Joe Webb

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