



The Old Radio Times

The Official Publication of the Old-Time Radio Researchers

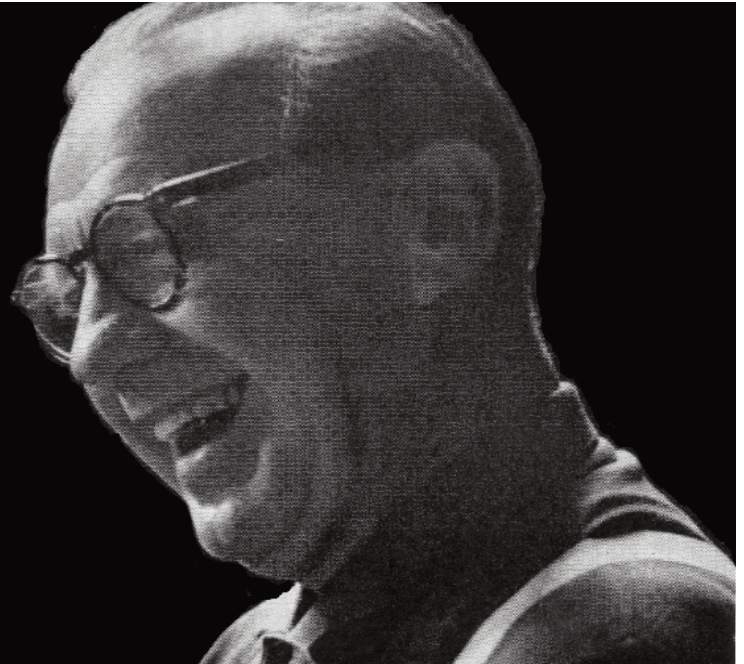
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Buck Benny Rides Again

by Bill Davidson

The World's best-paid comedian, still 39, returns to Broadway after a 32-year absence.



This article is from the March 2, 1963 issue of The Saturday Evening Post

This week, Jack Benny—now in his 70th year—returns to the legitimate Broadway stage for the first time since 1931, when he forsook his starring role in Earl Carroll's *Vanities* and began his incredible 32-year career in radio and, subsequently, TV. In the *Vanities*, he did a routine about taking his girl to dinner and she laughed so hard at one of his jokes that she dropped her cafeteria tray. In the current revue *Life Begins at 39 at the Ziegfeld Theater*, Benny makes clumsy amorous advances to the beautiful Jane Morgan and just as he is about to succeed, he loses out by uncontrollably pausing to examine a huge diamond on her finger through a jeweler's glass. This led his close friend, comedian George Burns, to exclaim, "For fifty years this guy has been doing the same thing—and I guess it works."

When I was a boy, all the stingy jokes were about Scotchmen. Now they're all about Jack Benny. So, in between Broadway appearances, he's succeeded in wiping out Scotland."

In the period between the two shows, Benny—by "doing the same thing"—also has succeeded in establishing himself as what Milton Berle calls The Most Successful Paradox in Show Business. He is the best-paid comedian in the world—he gets \$3,000,000 for three years for his CBS television series alone—and he is beloved by millions of fans in dozens of countries, yet he often presents the image of a lonely, troubled man. He is seen walking alone about the streets of Hollywood or Beverly Hills or disconsolately playing golf by himself at the Hillcrest Country Club.

He gets into his car, from time to time, and drives to Palm Springs or Chicago or even to New York with no one accompanying him to dis-



For first time in 10 years, wife Mary poses with Jack

“He’s everyone’s patsy, the clumsy poseur halted by small obstacles.”

turb his solitude. At home he used to lock himself in his bathroom and play his \$25,000 Stradivarius violin for hours every day. When the noise wrought havoc on the nerves of his wife Mary he moved to another wing of his huge Beverly Hills mansion, and now he plays in the room once inhabited by his daughter, Joan.

A second facet of the Benny paradox is his agelessness. Some people refuse to believe that he is much older than the 39 he professes to be on the stage—and yet nearly all of his contemporaries (Groucho Marx, Eddie Cantor, Will Rogers, Fred Allen, Phil Baker) have either passed from the scene or are in total or semiretirement. To the adoring throngs at Broadway's Ziegfeld Theater—and the fans who keep him in or near the Top 10 in the TVratings—Benny may be an anachronism, but they don't care.

Ex-vaudeville comic Sid Silvers, who used to work with Benny in the 1920's, told me, "When I see Jack get up on a stage today, he looks like the same guy I saw forty years ago on the stage of the old Palace Theater in New York."

Except for bags under the eyes—which are cleverly concealed by makeup or heavy black-

rilled spectacles—the Benny face and physique have remained unravaged by time. Only the hands, gnarled and liver-spotted, and the fingernails gnawed to the skin line, betray his age. His perennial youthfulness is a mystery even to Benny, who offstage is prey to diabetes, crotchiness, hypochondria and other afflictions of the near-septuagenarian.

"I dunno," he recently told me with questionable logic, "maybe I look so young because I got such good writers and I always follow their script." (Two of his writers, Sam Perrin and George Balzer, have been with him for 19 years; two others, Al Gordon and Hal Goldman, joined him 14 years ago. He still refers to Gordon and Goldman as "the new writers.")

Benny, the paradox, has been a millionaire for many years. When his daughter Joan married for the first time, the headline in the Los Angeles Times read: BENNY WEDDING COSTS \$60,000, and the headline in the Los Angeles Examiner was BENNY WEDDING COSTS \$50,000. Whereupon Eddie Cantor called the comedian and said, "Jack, read the

Examiner this morning and you'll save \$10,000."

Benny, the super-shrewd business entrepreneur—who is known in Scotland as "The Meanest (stingiest) Man in America"—has been known to haggle over the price of a suit of clothes and sometimes is influenced in consummating big deals by such extraneous factors as the sourness of his stomach. George Burns says, "It's hard to believe, but Jack nearly turned his back on that \$3,000,000 contract under which he is now doing his show at CBS. One day, a couple of years ago, I met him at the Hillcrest Country Club, where we both play golf. He had just come off the course.

He was tired and dragging his feet and grouching. He said, 'My agent wants me to sign a three-year deal with CBS to do a show every week. Who needs it?' I said, 'How was your golf game today, Jack?' He said, 'The worst. I couldn't hit my hat.' "

Continues Burns, "Two days later I met Jack at the club again and he looked great. I said, 'Jack, how was your golf game?' He said, 'I never played better. I hit the ball a mile.' I said, 'How about that CBS contract?' He said, 'The greatest! I'm going into Hollywood to sign it right now.' "



Benny, the paradox, may be careless and blase enough to let his golf game influence such monumental personal decisions, and yet he was shrewd and generous enough in 1956 to realize the potential for charity of his admittedly dreadful violin playing. In that year, performing with Alfred Wallenstein and the Oklahoma City Symphony and later with Wallenstein and the Philharmonic Symphony in New York, he raised \$106,000 to aid retarded children and to help save Carnegie Hall.

Since then his mock serious concerts with some 30 symphony orchestras—for which he receives not one cent in compensation—have brought in nearly three and a half million dollars for various charities, for musicians' pension funds and for the continuing existence of the symphonies themselves. The Baltimore Symphony, for example, admits that it would have gone out of business if it had not been for \$42,800 attracted by "Jack Benny, Soloist," at a concert in 1962.

Benny is the most assured man in show business when he is working on a stage and is, as Ed Wynn says, "the world's finest comedian—comedian meaning a man who says things funny, as opposed to a comic, who says funny things."

According to George Burns, "Jack can just drink a glass of water and people will laugh. He doesn't need jokes, I guess. He's got funny water."

When he's offstage, however, Benny's insecurities take over. For example, he said to me, "I feel a terrible loss about not having had an education. I have developed a good vocabulary, but I never use it. I know too much about show business and not enough about everything else. I've lived in the same house for twenty-five years, and I still don't know where things are or how to



March 1945 - Bert Scott (personal secy) Geo Balzer, Sam Perrin, Jane Tucker (scrip girl), and Bob Ballin

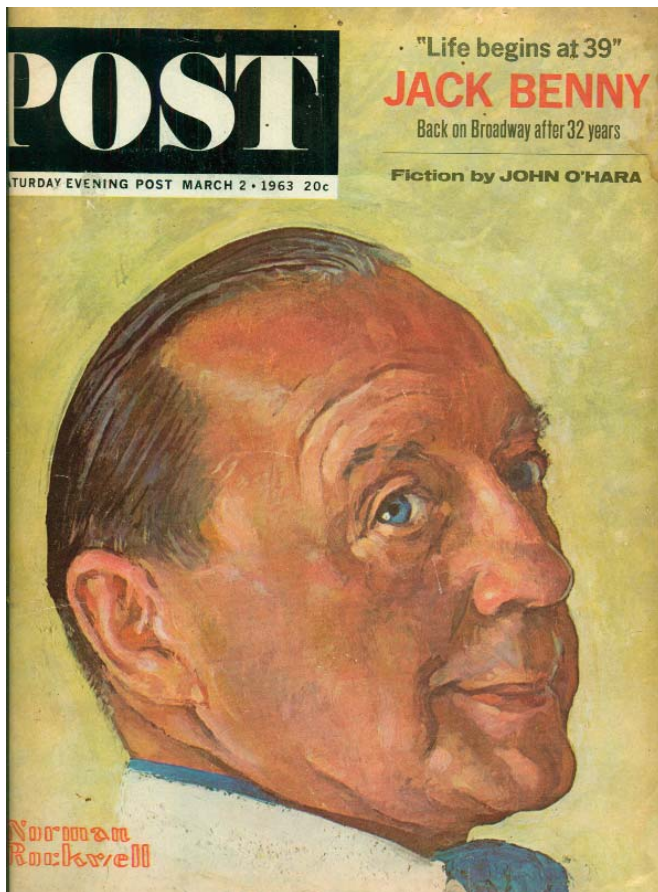
fix a loose screw. I don't know what's going on in the world. I try to read at night to educate myself, but I'm so tired from working so hard that I fall asleep."

And yet Benny, who tortures himself about his lack of education and knowledge, manages to hold his own in conversations with such friends as Harry Truman, Pablo Casals, Richard Nixon and Henry Ford II. In 1952 he so enthralled Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands that the royal couple prevailed upon him to spend three days with them as their solitary guest in their palace. He delights President Kennedy, with whom he meets and corresponds occasionally. Recently, as a gift, Benny sent the President a money clip with a dollar bill in it. The President replied in his own handwriting, on plain ruled paper, saying he was sure that Benny had sent \$750 in the money clip but that Peter Lawford, the bearer of the gift, had removed \$749 of it for himself.

In his doubts about himself, Benny— who

thinks every comedian is funnier than he is— falls prey to his colleagues' needling. When he played with the Philharmonic Symphony in New York, for example, Jackie Gleason sent him a huge gift-wrapped box of rosin for his violin bow—enough to satisfy the needs of all the symphony orchestras in the world for the next 100 years. One of the great frustrations of Benny's life is that he can't make George Burns laugh offstage—a plight which Burns carefully promulgates. Once, Benny sent Burns a 50-word telegram embodying the funniest joke he could think of. Burns' reply was: "DON'T WORRY. I WON'T SHOW YOUR WIRE TO ANYONE."

A few years ago Benny was in a hotel in Minneapolis, and Burns phoned from the lobby saying he was on his way up to the room. Benny says, "I decided once and for all that I was going to make him laugh. I stripped and stood there with a book on my head, a glass of water in one hand and a flower in the other.



There came a knock on the door, I yelled, "Come in"—and do you know what that terrible man did? He sent the maid ahead of him." Burns, of course, entered immediately there-after-poker-faced as usual.

In his current Ziegfeld Theater show Benny devotes a full eight minutes of monologue to describing such indignities heaped upon him by "that terrible man, George Burns." And therein, according to Benny's friend, conductor Johnny Green, lies Benny's genius. Says Green, "The secret of Jack's continuing success for all these years is that he knows his own weaknesses—which, after all, are the same weaknesses that nearly all of us have—and by exaggerating them slightly, he converts them into universal humor. He's everyone's patsy, the pseudo-sophisticate who doesn't get away with it, the clumsy poseur who is constantly halted by small

obstacles.

"His concerts with the symphony orchestras constitute one of the finest comedy acts I've ever seen, because there is truth, as well as that matchless combination of humor and pathos, in a Jack Benny, who doesn't play the violin very well, sawing away as hard as he can and trying to keep up with the finest musicians nation in the world. It's really not an act. It is Jack Benny and he's willing to be absurd in order to catch that element of truth which all of us see in some preposterously ambitious uncle or some other relative. He's lasted so much longer than all the others because—without resorting to slapstick or pratfalls or jokes—he can make people identify with his slightly-larger-than-life-size descriptions of what he is and what has happened to him during his long, sometimes frustrating life."

The seeds of the Benny puzzle—the strange mixture of security and insecurity, the moods, the talent, the point of view—can be found in his early years.

Born Benjamin Kubelsky, the son of Orthodox Jewish immigrants, he was subjected, as a boy, to the bewildering combination of love and unintentional abandonment which was standard among parents of that generation and background. Nothing was too good for the child, but both parents usually struggled so hard to provide the good things that they shortchanged their child in the most precious commodity—their presence.

Benny's father at first owned one of the toughest saloons in Waukegan, Illinois, but rapidly switched to the safer confines of a drygoods store after his head was laid open by a drunk swinging a pool cue as a weapon of protest. Benny's mother had to help out in the drygoods store; and the boy, left pretty much to

himself, grew up as a shy, timid child.

Like nearly all sons of immigrant Jewish parents at the turn of the century, he was forced to take violin lessons—in the expectation that he would grow up to be a world-renowned concert artist. The violin, however, led Benny only to the orchestra pit of Waukegan's Barrison Theater, where he got an eight-dollar-a-week job when he was only 15 and still wearing knickers.

"It wasn't that I was so interested in the theater," recalls Benny. "It's just that it gave me something to do."

In any event, the job—because he had to play at afternoon matinees—resulted in his being expelled from school and eventually in his separation from his family at the age of 17. The leader of the Barrison Theater orchestra, an old vaudevillian named Cora Salisbury, bought Benny a pair of long pants and formed a touring vaudeville act in 1911 called "Salisbury and Benny—From Grand Opera to Ragtime." Miss Salisbury played the piano and Benny did a non-comedic violin accompaniment. The girls, both backstage and in the audience, began to pay attention to him for the first time in his life, and as Benny puts it, "That, I guess, is what hooked me for show business."

By 1913—before Gregory Peck, President John F. Kennedy or Dr. Jonas Salk were even born—Benny was heading up his own piano-and-violin vaudeville act, "Benny and Woods," on the old Orpheum Circuit. He was making \$200 a week with his partner, Lyman Woods, just for playing spirited renditions of the popular tunes of the day. He was yet to utter his first comedy line in public. This did not come until 1918, during World War I, when he enlisted in the Navy and was assigned to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

"A man named David Wolff wrote a sailor

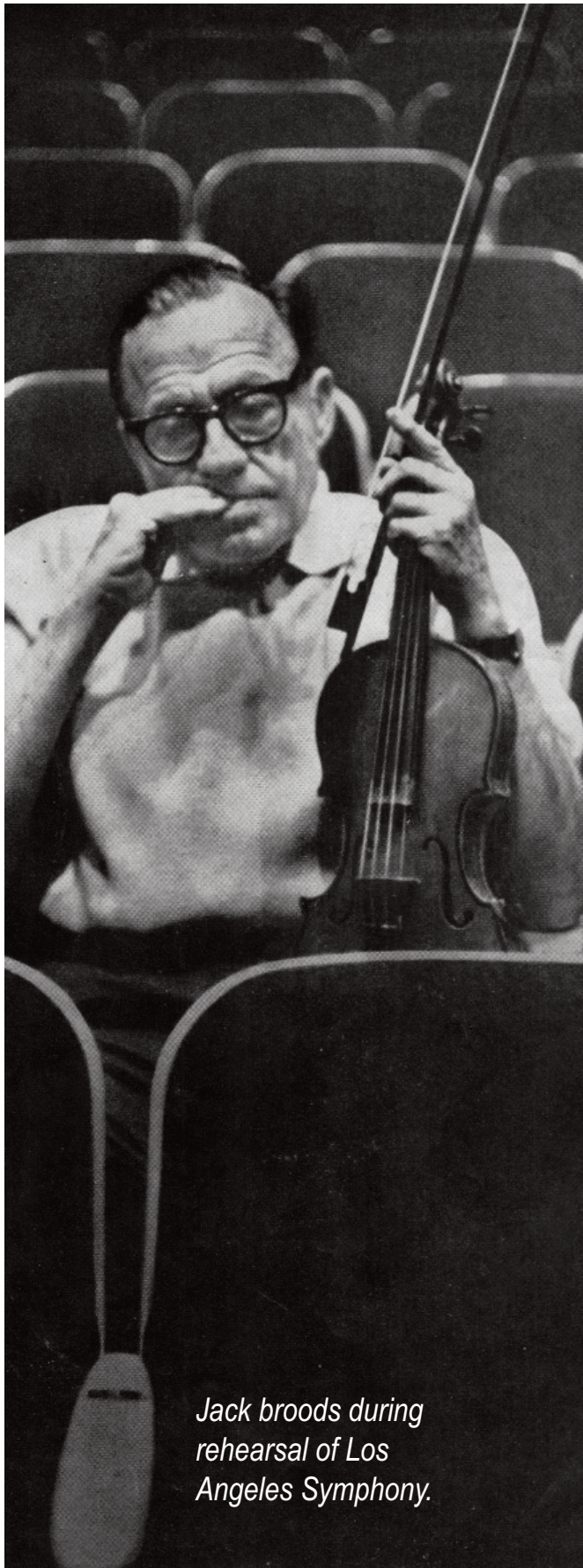


revue, and I was called in to do my violin act with a pianist named Zez Confrey. Wolff wrote a two-line part in the script for a character called Izzy There, the Admiral's Disorderly. He asked me to read the lines and I delivered them in my usual flat tones. Everyone else was hamming it up, so I guess my delivery sounded funny by contrast. Anyway, Wolff began adding on to my part until it ended up as one of the leads in the show."

This was the beginning of Benny's career as a comedian. After the war he went out on the vaudeville circuits as "Jack Benny, Aristocrat of Humor."

He needed his violin

"I thought that up," Benny told me, "but I didn't even know what it meant. Then I changed the name of my act to 'A Few Minutes With Jack Benny' to make it a little more modest. I was so scared and insecure that I continued to work with my violin, even though I only used it at the end of the act to play myself



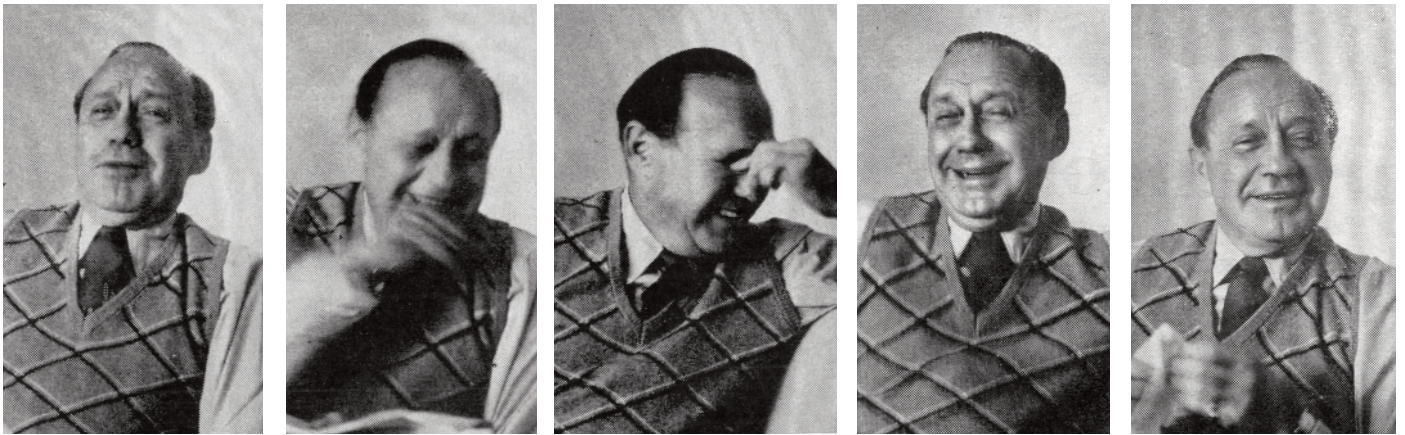
Jack broods during rehearsal of Los Angeles Symphony.

off with some little jazz number. While I did my monologues I held onto that violin like it was a crutch."

"It was *such* a crutch for Jack," recalls George Burns, "that I'll never forget the first time he tried to work without it. We were in Wilkes-Barre, where the coal miners used to come into the theater with the lights still on in their hats, and you couldn't tell where the footlights ended and the audience began. Just to be sure, Jack left his violin at the hotel. He came onstage and told his first joke, but the coal miners were still adjusting the lights in their caps, I guess, and they didn't laugh. Jack told two more jokes—and still no laughs. Then, white as a sheet, he leaned over the orchestra pit and asked the conductor, 'Could you please lend me a violin?' The conductor obliged and clutching the violin, Jack started all over again. Now he was fine. After that experience, it was another three years before he put the violin away and was able to work without it."

As he became a vaudeville headliner in the 1920's, playing the famous Palace Theater in New York and touring with such notables as the Marx Brothers, Nora Bayes, Frank Fay and Lou Holtz, Benny developed all the characteristics that distinguish his humor today. He learned that he could get laughs by telling the audience about things that actually had happened to him, such as his ordeal in reaching the theater from his hotel through a newly installed network of one-way streets. He talked about his own stinginess—it had taken him a long time to get over his poor childhood—his lack of success with women, the way he was always a foil for the pranks of his friends.

By 1925 Benny was making well over \$750 a week with his formula. He continued, however, to be a strange and shy young man.



Jack laughed for two minutes, then decided it was too wild a gag to use in the show

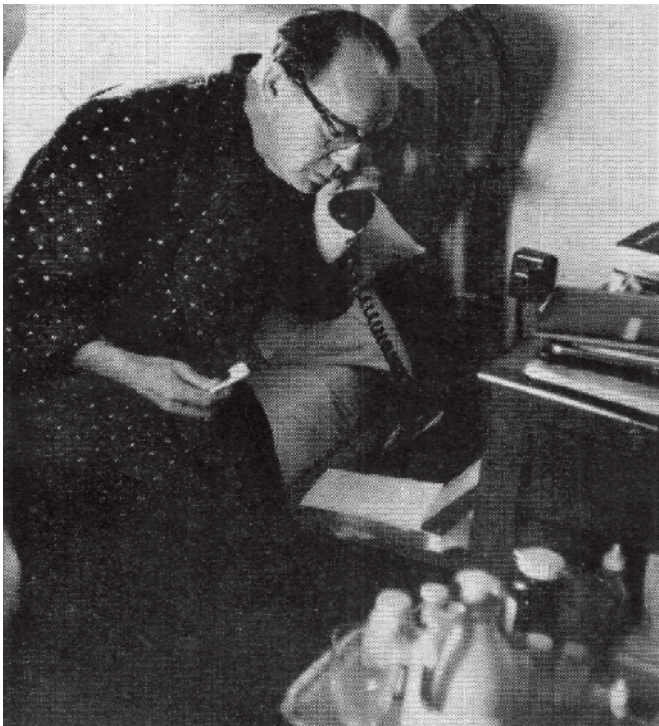
Milton Berle told me, "There were some tough theaters in those days, like one on 14th Street and another on 125th Street in New York, where the bums hung out. They'd heckle us and throw vegetables, and we all had to learn how to deal with them with quips and jokes. Jack never could master this. I remember one time he took a train down from Buffalo to play a split week at the 125th Street house. He walked on the stage from the left and said, 'Hello, folks,' which was the way he opened his act. Just then a guy yelled something obscene and threw a tomato. Jack walked across the stage, said, 'Good-bye, folks,' exited, and continued directly to the 125th Street railroad station, where he took a train back to Buffalo."

George Burns says, "I don't know what it is, but even in those days Jack thought everything I said was the most hilarious thing he ever heard. Once, in front of the Palace Theater in New York, I made an ordinary remark about our agent, Tom Fitzpatrick, and Jack broke up. He dropped to his knees on the sidewalk and began beating his fists on the pavement, he was laughing so hard. A crowd gathered and I said to them, 'What's that guy laughing about?' as if I didn't know him. When he realized what I was doing, he laughed even harder—and almost got arrested

as a nut.

"On the other hand, as funny as he was on-stage, he developed an inferiority complex about the gags he tried to pull offstage, which never worked. We all lived in the Forrest Hotel on 49th Street in New York in those days, and Jack was courting a girl on the third floor. One day he tried to impress her with his humor. He put on long paper eyelashes, turned his hat inside out and burst into her room. But the girl had checked out the night before, and Jack found himself in there with four total strangers staring at him. That was the way nearly all his offstage jokes turned out. It was pathetic."

Jesse Block, now a New York stockbroker but then a top vaudevillian—his act was called "Block and Sully"—has an interesting reminiscence of the first time he met Benny. Says Block, "George Burns took me up to Jack's room in the Forrest Hotel and left me there because he had to go to the theater. Jack was dressing for a date. As he dressed, I told him how great I thought he was on the stage and how delighted I was to meet him. He seemed to be listening to me, but when he finished dressing, he just walked out the door, and I could hear him locking it behind him—with me inside. He had forgotten all about me. I was stuck in



PILL SUPPLY, a large one, fills Benny's night table as he phones writer joke he made up in bed.

the room until he came home at two A.M. How could I call down to the desk clerk and tell him that one of their tenants had locked me in his room?"

Benny had an active but inconclusive romantic life in those days. By the time he was 32 all his close friends were married (Burns to Gracie Allen and Block to Eve Sully) but Benny remained a bachelor. "Jack was in love with show business," says one acquaintance, "and we didn't think there was any girl who could compete with the profession in which he received so much adulation."

But then Benny met Sadie Marks, the younger sister of the wife of a fellow vaudevillian named Al Bernovici. She disliked show business—she was selling hosiery in a Los Angeles department store when Benny met her—but she was impressed with the suave and gentlemanly comedian. He liked her iconoclastic sense of humor. A few months later, in January, 1927,

they were married. Several months after that, despite resentments against the unreal world of show business, Benny had pressed her into service as part of his act. She assumed the role of a bubble-headed girl against whom Benny played some of his funniest comedy skits. She took the name Mary Livingstone (Mary has been her first name ever since) and Benny was doing an act with his wife—"just like George Burns and Jesse Block and all the other guys."

The act prospered, Benny got a contract with M-G-M during which he made such long-forgotten film epics as *Chasing Rainbows* and *The Medicine Man*, and finally he returned to Broadway in triumph as a \$1,500-a-week star of Earl Carroll's *Vanities*. In 1931, knowing that Mary was sick of touring, he left the *Vanities* when it made ready to go on the road, and he took a flyer in the infant medium, network radio. His first appearance was as guest on an Ed Sullivan interview show in which he opened with the now-historic show-business lines: "Hello, folks, this is Jack Benny. And now there will be a pause for all of you to say, "Who cares?" A few weeks later he had a regular show of his own. For 32 years thereafter—without interruption—he has done a weekly radio or television program. This is a record not likely to be broken for some time to come.

Today Benny is the master of his craft. George Burns says, "He runs his operation like a well-oiled machine. His four writers, his producer, Irving Fein, even his stand-in, Ned Miller, do their jobs under his direction, and they grind out his shows with no sweat or frenzy."

Compared with other stars' lavish working quarters, Benny's offices are small, unpretentious and utilitarian. Although his wife Mary has seven servants at home, Benny has no flunkies

or entourage. He drives his own car, dresses himself, even does his own makeup. To a Hollywood used to seeing a Frank Sinatra or an Elvis Presley walk about with a palace guard of nine or ten musclemen, chauffeur, valet, makeup man, hair-dresser, errand boy, etc. Benny is a startling sight entering a studio all by himself and ready to go to work. Onstage all his early insecurities are gone. He's like a skilled editor in rehearsals, pruning, changing, rearranging, until he's ready for the actual performance. which usually goes off with professional precision.

He's a proud grandfather

In his personal life Benny is not so assured. He told me, "I'm a real moody guy. Sometimes I wake up in the morning terribly depressed, and it goes on like that all day. I don't know why." After 36 years of marriage to Mary, he is still devoted to her and to their daughter, Joan, and he is the typical proud grandfather rolling on the floor with Joan's children-Michael, 7, and Maria, 5.

"But," as a friend says, "there have been disappointments. You know how Jack values the education he never had, but Joan, a brilliant student, left Stanford University to get married before she graduated. This hasty marriage ended in divorce, and so did her second. Mary, who was always terrified of performing, got to be a nervous wreck in the last years she worked with Jack. She'd break out in hives and actually faint backstage. About six years ago, she finally had to retire from show business. Now she devotes herself to making their home a showplace and is adding to her reputation as one of the best-dressed women in Hollywood. Jack, whose whole life is show business and who has always wanted Mary to be as wrapped up in it as he is, misses her as he goes about his work."

At about the same time that Mary retired, a strange thing happened to Benny. He had come



up with an idea for one of his television shows—a dream sequence in which he imagined he was a great concert violinist. In order to do the show, he had to take violin lessons again, because he had done little more than scratch out Love in Bloom on the instrument in the 30 years since he had abandoned the "crutch" of his early vaudeville days. He did the show, but he was so fascinated that he continued the lessons and his violin playing. He since has practiced two or three hours a day. "I find that it is therapy for me," he says. "Whenever I feel troubled or depressed, I play the violin, and the bad mood goes away."

He plays the violin at home and he has set up a music stand in his office so he can practice there. Last summer he borrowed Kirk Douglas's home in Palm Springs, drove there



SEARCHING FOR A "SNAPPER" to end a skit, writers (from left) Al Gordon, George Balzer, Hal Goldman and Sam Perrin suffer with Benny.

alone in his Rolls-Royce and did nothing but play the violin for three weeks. He says, "I came back refreshed."

Fiddling for Carnegie

In 1956 his friend, the renowned concert violinist, Isaac Stern, suggested that he do a concert in New York with the Philharmonic Symphony in order to raise money to save Carnegie Hall. Benny said, "That's ridiculous. The soloist should be you or Jascha Heifetz." Stern replied, "Ah, but neither Heifetz nor I can draw an audience paying a hundred dollars a ticket. You can."

Benny did the concert and was a smash hit. He played Beethoven outrageously, argued with the conductor, demanded that the concert master be banished from the stage for playing better than he. Since then, nearly every symphony in the United States has asked Benny to do a similar money-raising concert, and Isaac Stern, in effect, has become his concert agent. "When they want Benny," says Stern, "they ask me."

Sometimes Stern himself plays with Benny in the concerts. They do the Bach Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor, and Stern kids him unmercifully on the stage, saying such things as, "Only a Jew who needs money would do this." Playing with Stern, Benny is more inept than usual. Significantly, however, Benny once did the same double concerto with Anshel Brusilow, the brilliant young concert master of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Instead of ribbing him, as Stern does, Brusilow treated him with respect and admiration. A musician friend says, "I don't know what happened to Jack that night. He simply played his heart out trying to be good. And he was good for that one number. He wasn't a Heifetz or a Menuhin, but by God, he was good."

And so at the age of 69, Benny seems to have come full circle back to the lonely youngster in Waukegan who dreamed of becoming a concert violinist. With all his tremendous success, the violin has become his obsession again.



In January I watched him perform with the Beverly Hills Symphony before a sell-out audience of film and television notables. At the intermission, I pushed my way through the crowd, all abuzz with comments about the master's comic genius. I went to his dressing room, expecting to be surrounded by his wife and daughter and a throng of admiring friends. But Benny was alone. He stood in a corner in his shirt sleeves, all by himself, playing a sad passage from Brahms—in perfect tune—on his \$25,000 Stradivarius violin.

Quote from the February 24, 1958 Life Magazine

In his profession Benny is regarded with awe for the skill and style which have made him the most durable of all comedians. In Hollywood, where TV is now the top industry, he is looked on as a distinguished citizen, admired for his success, his good works, his gentle nature. Everywhere else he is just Jack, the national prototype of the tightwad. Trying to compensate in his private life" for this figure he cuts in public, Benny has become an extravagant tipper, a condition he finds silly. "Being stingy," says Jack, "has cost me a fortune." ■

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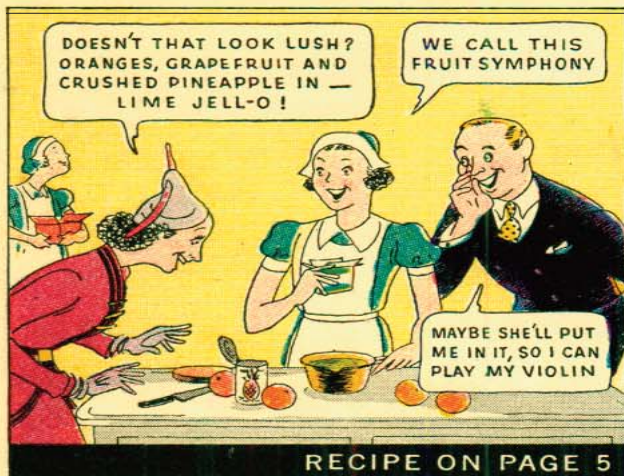


JACK & MARY GO TO A KITCHEN PARTY



JACK, THE JELL-O PEOPLE WANT OUR WHOLE GANG TO COME OVER AND SEE AN EXHIBIT OF **JELL-O DISHES**

SWELL! LET'S GET THERE FIRST, BEFORE DON WILSON EATS IT ALL UP!



DOESN'T THAT LOOK LUSH? ORANGES, GRAPEFRUIT AND CRUSHED PINEAPPLE IN — LIME JELL-O!

WE CALL THIS FRUIT SYMPHONY

MAYBE SHE'LL PUT ME IN IT, SO I CAN PLAY MY VIOLIN

RECIPE ON PAGE 5



I'D CERTAINLY LIKE TO GET A SPOON INTO THAT! WHAT IS IT?

FRESH PEAR AND GRAPE DESSERT

FRESH PAIR? JACK MAY BE FRESH, BUT ME, NEVER!

RECIPE ON PAGE 5



OH JACK, HOW DO YOU MAKE A LOGANBERRY COOLER? GIVE UP? PUT IT IN A BOWL OF ICE

ONE MORE LIKE THAT, MARY, AND PAPA WILL TAKE YOU OUTSIDE!

YES THIS MAKES A LOVELY FIRST COURSE FOR DINNER, IT'S CALLED LOGANBERRY COOLER

RECIPE ON PAGE 13



THAT SUPPER SALAD RING LOOKS LIKE A REAL MEAL TO ME! GRAPEFRUIT—RING AND TUNA SALAD!

O.K. JACK—I'LL GIVE YOU A RING SOMETIME! WELL, WELL, LET IT GO—HERE COMES THE GANG!

RECIPE ON PAGE 15

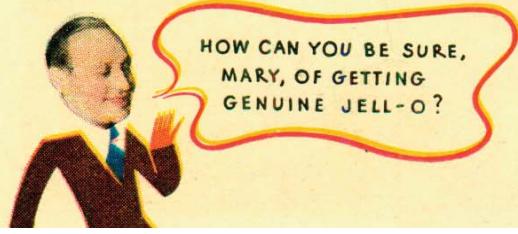
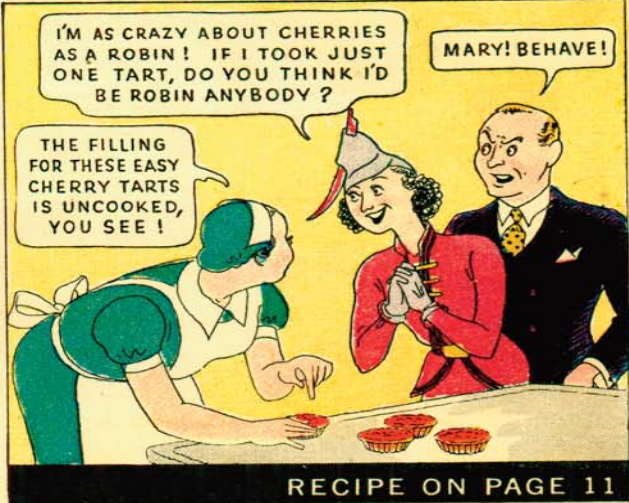
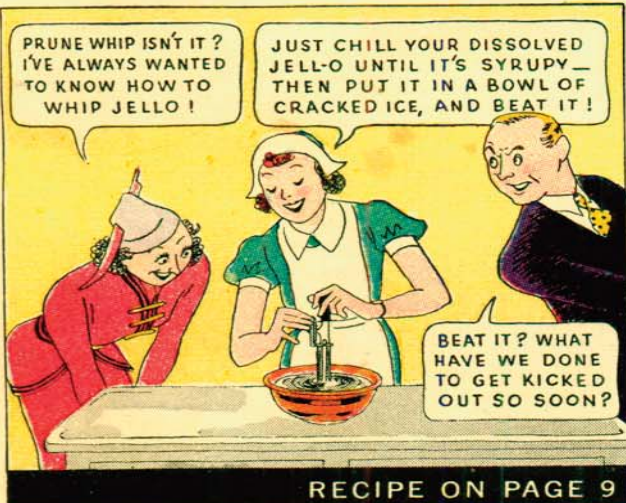
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HONEST, MARY, I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY JELL-O IS LIKE A MAN WITH HIS CHAIR PULLED OUT FROM UNDER HIM!



BECAUSE IT SETS FASTER!



The **5th Revised Ultimate** **History of Network Radio** **Programming &** **Guide to all Circulation Shows**

Written by Jay Hickerson January, 2015
Editor of Hello Again

600-page reference book listing over 6000 network, regional, local and syndicated radio programs. (**Soft cover and spiral bound**) This information was first presented in this combined format in 1992 with separate publications issued in 1986.

.....

Traces each program by giving broadcast dated, sponsors, network and air time. Often a brief description with one or two cast members is given. The main purpose, however, is to trace each program by showing when it was on the air.

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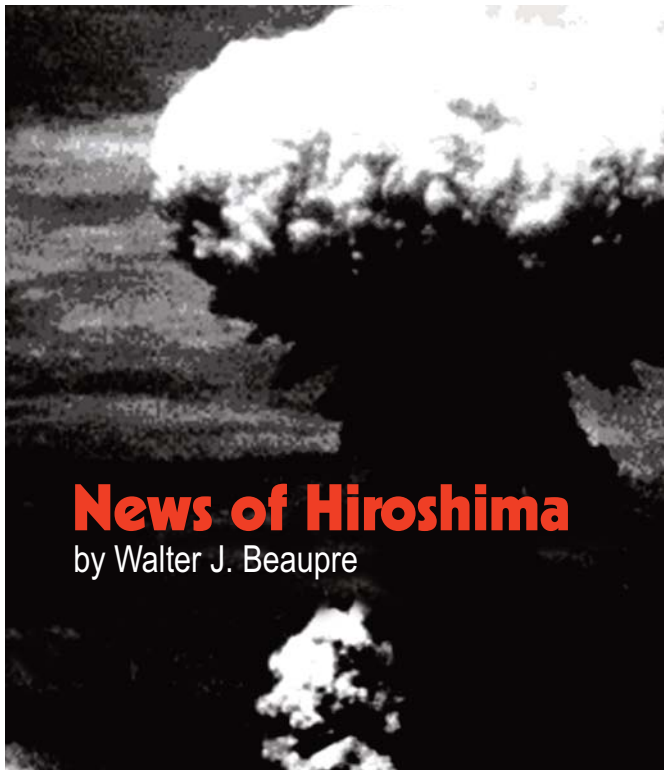
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News of Hiroshima

by Walter J. Beaupre

(Article originally published in Radiogram, August 1995)

World War II had become little more than a worrisome nuisance to most civilians in the State of Maine by early August 1945. I say "most" because I vividly remember my barber boasting that if the war lasted another year he would be a rich man. He must have had something going on the side because he didn't get that much shave 'n hair-cut business from the sailors at the nearby Brunswick Naval Base.

In a sense I was one of the "war profiteers" also. In 1943 graduation from high school should have meant induction into the Armed Forces. Much to my surprise I flunked the physical and was accepted as a college freshman without a cent to my name. But with manpower shortage on campus I had no trouble lining up five part-time janitor's jobs to help pay the bills. My room next to the bell tower was free because I rang the huge bell for classes with my roommate Ed.

Full-time clergymen were also in short supply,

and my Sundays were soon put to good use at a Methodist Church in a nearby town. As their only pastor I earned an additional \$8 a week. How I also became a night ,") announcer at a radio station during this period is a story told in the July 1991 Radiogram.

By the time of this particular event the war in Europe was over and the war in the Pacific seemed very far away. Rationing of meat, dairy products, shoes and gasoline was still in effect, although I wasn't personally inconvenienced. My food ration stamps were turned over to the college meal services; I couldn't afford to own more than one pair of shoes at a time; and I walked or hitch-hiked wherever I needed to go. Sometimes on a subzero winter's night I took the last swing-shift bus from WCOU back to the campus.

But now it was the beginning of the "dog days," and I walked through the deserted streets of Lewiston, Maine, at seven o'clock on a Sunday morning. I carried a coat and tie which I would need later in my role as minister. No need to hurry. There was plenty of time before I had to sign on the 1240 kilocycles at 7:55. My heavy briefcase as a not-too-gentle reminder that I hadn't finished the sermon.

Sundays usually meant getting radio station WCOU on the air, and then monitoring the network religious programs until I was relieved at 10 o'clock by Conrad Giguere who did a French language program. I then caught the local bus to Lisbon Falls for the 11 o'clock church service. Usually there was time between eight and ten to finish writing my sermon, picking out the hymns, etc. I generally started these tasks during the Saturday evening network shows such as Chicago Theater of the Air. Although the radio station signed off the air at 12:01 a.m. every night, the transmitter and studio consoles were

Hiroshima today



left functioning. Management had figured that tubes and condensers and the like were less likely to burn out if left glowing during the silent hours. Don Mason would be the engineer at the transmitter a mile away, but the studio controls were my responsibility.

On Sunday mornings the usual routine was to check the "news room" on my way to the third floor studios. The "news room" consisted of a United Press International teletype machine which served both the radio station and the French newspaper *Le Messager* on the first floor. Teletypes in those days were noisy motor-driven typewriters which banged out news stories and feature articles fed to the machine via open telephone line from a central source. Our UPI services came via Portland, Maine. The news was printed on continuous rolls of paper 24 hours a day.

If you happen to be the first one on duty in the morning the pile-up of news print could be enormous. That was the best scenario. The

worst scenario involved running out of paper—or the teletype going haywire and printing everything in what looked like a secret code! The machine sported a loud bell which clanged to alert one and all to a particularly important story as it was breaking.

I let myself into the building at about 7:30. Before I reached the news room on the second floor I could hear the teletype bell clanging insistently. The usual pile of printed paper sat in graceful folds behind the waist high machine. I read the story just being printed and couldn't believe my eyes. The United States had just dropped an "atom bomb" on a place in Japan called Hiroshima! Details were scarce but the story claimed that the bomb was equal to 20,000 tons of TNT.

We were instructed to pronounce the city "HEE rhoh SHEE mah." Two weeks later the pronunciation changed to "hee RAW shuh muh," with the accent on the second syllable. Eventually it turned out that the pronunciation

experts had been right the first time.

I waited for the news summary to be completed, ripped it off the machine and ran upstairs to the studios to get the station on the air with the National Anthem, the sign-on notice, and three minutes of headline news.

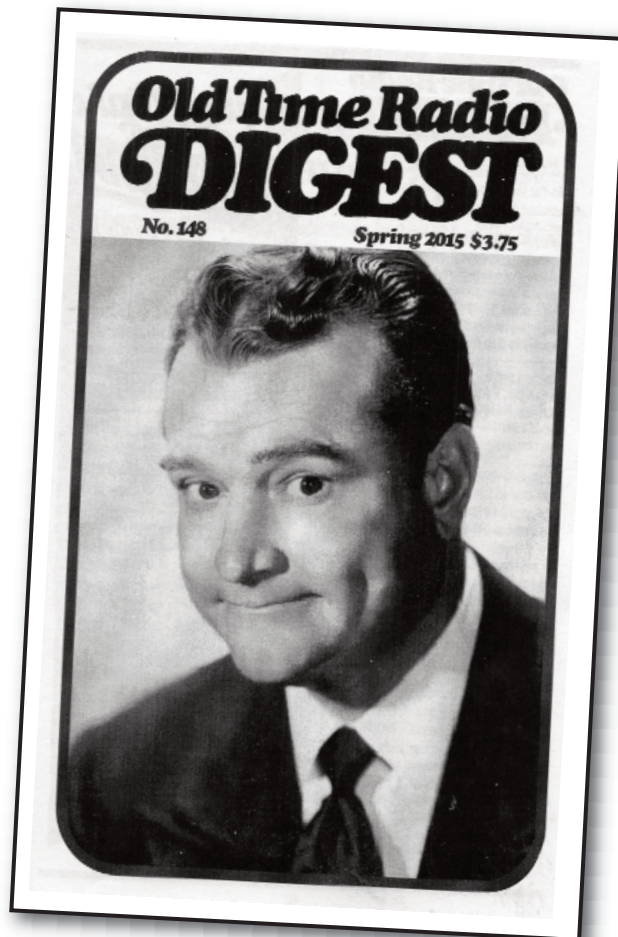
Then all was quiet. The religious programs were fed as usual from Mutual. There were no interruptions for special bulletins. I began to wonder if I had dreamed it—or if this was UPI's idea of a sick practical joke. Then Don Mason at the transmitter told me that he had heard a similar news bulletin on one of the Boston stations. The horrifying story began to sink in. I took out the notes for my sermon and wrote what may well have been the first homily on the perils of an atomic age.

Unfortunately, I didn't save it, nor do I remember what I said. My feelings were mixed as they are today: hopeful that perhaps the war would soon end, and fearful that mankind had come so close to destroying itself. There also was a secret pride that radio was at the cutting edge of history in the making, and I was a part of it.

Recently the property where those radio studios once functioned was sold at auction. Its call letters have been silent for many years. And those who remember those first stunning words about a place called "Hiroshima" have become a precious few. *(Thanks to Jerry Haendige for permission to use this article. You can visit Jerry at his site. www.otrsite.com)* ■



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Last Stands of Old Time Radio by Tim DeForest



The Last Stand. A small band of men, perhaps low on ammunition or water, desperately tries to defend a fort or a piece of land against an overwhelming attacking force. They beat off one attack after another, but still they fall one by one to enemy fire. Will help arrive in time to save the last few survivors?

It's a situation inherently rich in dramatic tension, so it's no surprise that countless works of fiction, especially in the Western and war genres, have turned to it time and again. And it's also no surprise that some enormously entertaining old-time radio episodes have used the

Last Stand as its primary plot device. *Escape*—radio's finest anthology show—brought us Last Stand stories on at least five occasions.

"Command" (May 26, 1950) is a Western based on a short story by James Warner Bellah. It's a tense and intelligent tale about a cavalry patrol chasing a band of Apaches. A small detachment is sent out to occupy a hill and act as bait to draw out the Indians, forcing them into battle with a stronger force until the rest of the patrol arrives. With the point of view constantly shifting between the officers and en-

Three Skeleton Key



listed men, "Command" effectively counterpoints those who order men into danger and those who obey such orders. Adding this to an inherently suspenseful plot makes for a superb half-hour of radio.

"The Drums of the Fore and Aft," (April 19, 1948) based on a Rudyard Kipling story, takes us to Afghanistan and introduces us to a disgraced British regiment that once fled from battle. The bravery of two young boys, though, will give the regiment back its sense of honor and allow it to rediscover its collective courage.

Two of *Escape's* Last Stand episodes featured animals rather than humans as the attacking force. And both these episodes rank among the finest stories ever produced during radio's Golden Age. **"Leiningen vs. the Ants"** (January 14, 1948) tells us of a stubborn, prideful man who refuses to allow his South American plantation to be overrun by a horde of deadly ants. The climax, in which Leiningen must run across an ant-covered field in order to carry out his last desperate plan, is incredibly tense. William Conrad is pitch-perfect as Leiningen, endowing that

character with a mixture of hubris, courage and intelligence.

But as tense and exciting as was "Leiningen vs the Ants," **"Three Skeleton Key"** manages to surpass it. This popular story was broadcast at least four times on *Escape* (and was also later used on *Suspense*), but the best version is from March 1, 1950, with Vincent Price in the lead role. He gives us a perfect mixture of fear and

desperation as one of three men trapped in a remote lighthouse by a horde of starving rats. The suspense is so thick that it's amazing the sound can actually still ooze out through your speakers. If I had to pick Old-Time Radio's single finest episode, I think I would go for this broadcast of *"Three Skeleton Key."*

Escape's version of the classic adventure novel **Beau Geste** (June 6, 1948) is yet another fine Last Stand story, as we join the outnumbered French Foreign Legionaries at Fort Zinderneuf, desperately holding off the attacking Arabs. But fitting a novel into a half-hour time slot made this particular *Escape* episode feel rushed. A



stronger version of *Beau Geste* was broadcast on March 17, 1939 on *The Campbell Playhouse*. Orson Welles' Beau and Laurence Olivier is Beau's brother John—the narrator of the story. Noah Berry Sr., who was always good in villain roles, is the brutal Sgt. Lejaune. Berry had actually played Lejaune some years earlier, in a silent movie version of *Beau Geste*. On radio, he finally gets to add some dialogue to the role.

The siege of Zinderneuf is the highlight of the episode, structured with Orson Welles' typically precise understanding of how to tell a story on radio. A scene in which Lejaune orders the roll to be called, with many men not answering because they've been killed, is particularly good.

Of course, many of radio's Westerns used the Last Stand theme. *Hoppy* helped out a cavalry troop surrounded by Indians in "Apaches Don't Use Guns." A Fort Laramie episode from June 3, 1958 climaxed with a similar situation. Titled "Don't Kick My Horse," it centers around an unpopular trooper who seems to think more of his horse than of his fellow soldiers. But, when the company is trapped in a valley by hostile Indians, that trooper may prove to be their only hope.

Frontier Gentleman did a heart-wrenching

Last Stand story on February 23, 1958. "Kendall's Last Stand" finds reporter J.B. Kendall trapped in a cabin with two other survivors of an Indian ambush. Virginia Craig is wonderful as a woman whose son had just been killed, but who knows there's simply no time for grief until the danger is over. A scene in which Kendall and another man must sneak out of the cabin to try to get the drop on the surrounding Sioux is yet another example of seamless storytelling.

The Lone Ranger had more than his share of Last Stands. Two of the best—"Remember the Alamo" (December 22, 1941) and "Raising the Siege" (April 24, 1942)—involve the Ranger assisting settlers against large bands of outlaws.

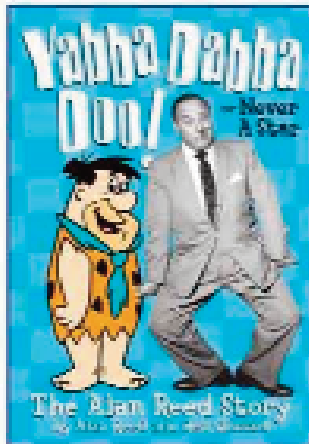
Finally, **You Are There** took us to the "real" Alamo on August 18, 1948, with the news reporters giving us a moment-by-moment account of the small group of Texans who held up the Mexican Army for 13 violent days before their broken-down fort was finally taken.

There are many more Last Stand stories, though these episodes are the cream of the crop. Dramatic radio is, of course, an ideal medium for telling gripping stories. These Last Stand episodes number among some of the best that OTR has to offer. ■

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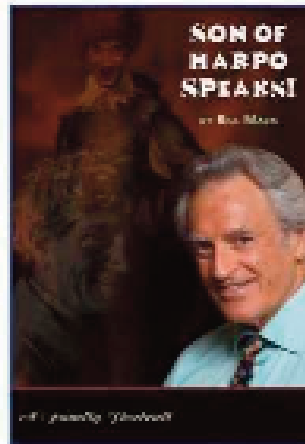
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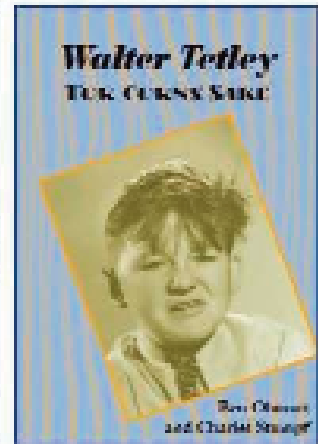
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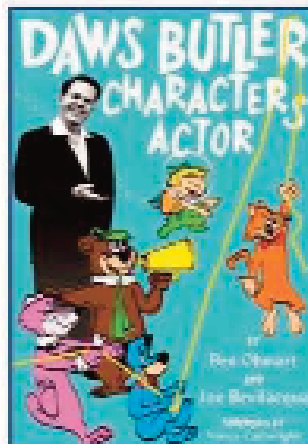
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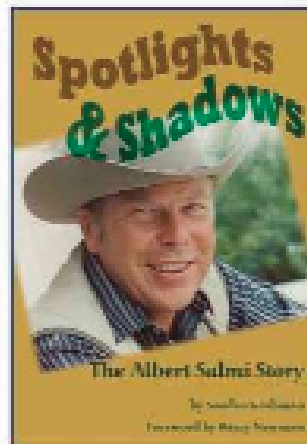
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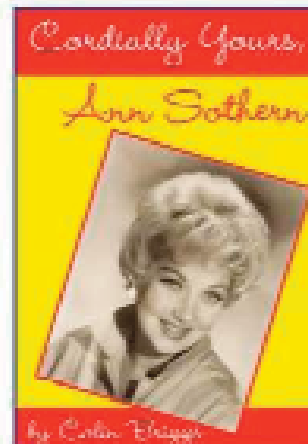
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OTRR ACQUIRES NEW EPISODES AND UPGRADED SOUND ENCODES FOR MAY AND JUNE

This 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 months of March and April They were purchased by donations from members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers. If you have cassettes that you would like to donate, please [e-mail beshiresjim@yahoo.com](mailto:beshiresjim@yahoo.com) For reel-to-reels, contact david0@centurytel.net & for transcription disks tony_senior@yahoo.com

Fun At Breakfast Show

A.mp3
B.mp3
C.mp3
D.mp3
E.mp3
F.mp3

Grand Ole Opry

47xxxx - AFRS 50 - 1st Detour Sign.mp3
01-07-50 Tennessee Ernie Ford Program 115 (AFRS).mp3
01-14-50 Jimmie Wakely Program 114 (AFRS).mp3
02-15-50 Ernest Tubb Program 117 (AFRS).mp3
02-16-50 Hank Williams Program 116 (AFRS).mp3
07-15-50 Elton Britt Program 135 (AFRS).mp3
07-22-50 Merle Travis Program 136 (AFRS).mp3
07-26-42 NBC Blue with Minnie Pearl Roy Acuff.mp3
09-16-50 George Morgan Program 143 (AFRS).mp3
10-07-50 Tennessee Ernie Ford Program 147 (AFRS).mp3

10-14-50 Molly Dorr and Bud Messner Program 148 (AFRS).mp3
10-21-50 Elton Britt Program 149 (AFRS).mp3
10-25-50 Jimmie Dickens Program 146 (AFRS).mp3

Great Plays

01-25-42 The Pillars of Society.mp3
02-23-41 Curtain calls for the Queen.mp3
03-02-41 The Climbers.mp3
03-23-41 The American Theatre 1920-1940.mp3
03-30-41 Robert E Lee.mp3
04-13-41 The Servent in the House (Easter).mp3
05-05-40 Winterset. mp3
10-13-40 Greece to Broadway.mp3
11-03-40 The Story of Dr_Faustus.mp3
22-8-41 The Taming Of the Shrew.mp3

Heartbeat Theater

03-21-65 Welcome Home Miss Munson Episode 473.mp3
03-28-65 Sallys Locket Episode 474.mp3
04-04-65 Bread upon the waters Episode 475.mp3
04-11-65 The silent world of Timmy Baton Episode 476.mp3
07-01-35 The trial of Joe the Turk.mp3
10-06-63 One of the boys Episode 397.mp3
10-13-63 Double Ugly Episode 398.mp3
10-20-63 The two faces of love Episode 399.mp3
10-27-63 The Journey Episode 400.mp3
11-03-63 Birth of a saleman Episode 401.mp3
11-04-63 Blind Vision Episode_402.mp3
11-17-63 Every day is the 4th of July Episode 403.mp3
11-24-63 John Balls Thanksgiving Episode_476.mp3

Henry Morgan

47-10-29.mp3

Hermits Cave

368-1942 The Crimson Hand.mp3

Hop Harrigan

02-01-43 Cargo Planes Crash.mp3

07-07-47 Mystery of the vanishing men

Ep 1.mp3

09-15-45 Renegade Nazis.mp3

Howard & Shelton For Royal Crown

41-xx-xx 075.mp3

41-xx-xx 080.mp3



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Everyone who is on the internet and has email needs to take a quick few seconds and click on this link: www.RicksPlace.info and sign up. It's absolutely free. Rick's Place, named after the upscale nightclub and gambling den in Casablanca (1942), is a newsgroup that started back in January, providing the latest news about conventions, comics, books, movies, old-time radio and anything in between. This has proven to be a valuable vehicle that delivers pertinent information and items of interest to the membership. The discussion group has, in past issues, discovered that the Asheville Western Film Festival was recently cancelled due to a disagreement with the convention management and the hotel, new DVD releases, and recent old-time radio findings. Over 2,000 people have subscribed already, according to Dave, the man in charge, and an average of two additional people subscribe every day. "What I would like to see is more discussions about old-time radio," he explained. So take a moment and subscribe at www.RicksPlace.info. If you do not like what you read, you can always unsubscribe.

Who'd have thought a ventriloquist could make it big on the radio By Ned Norris

It may seem hard to believe that a ventriloquist could make a successful career out of a radio show, but incredibly the Edgar Bergen/Charlie McCarthy Show was a massive hit due to the comedic timing and talent of Edgar Bergen.

Bergen was born in 1903 and learned the art of ventriloquism at a young age. Edgar commissioned the creation of a dummy from a local craftsman and gave him the name Charlie McCarthy and the cheeky personality of a boy and womanizer who was able to get away with double entendre.

Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy became a duo that played at talent shows in the Midwest while Bergen was in college at Northwestern. Eventually he left school and began to perform his act full-time.

In the 1930s he performed in New York and even toured Europe and South America with his show, but slowly vaudeville lost popularity due to new forms of media such as film and radio.

Radio wasn't the obvious choice for a ventriloquist, but Bergen didn't let that put him off. In 1936 he and his dummy, Charlie McCarthy, appeared on the Royal Gelatin Hour on NBC. As odd as it seemed to have a ventriloquist on the radio, his humor and wit made him a fan favorite instantly.

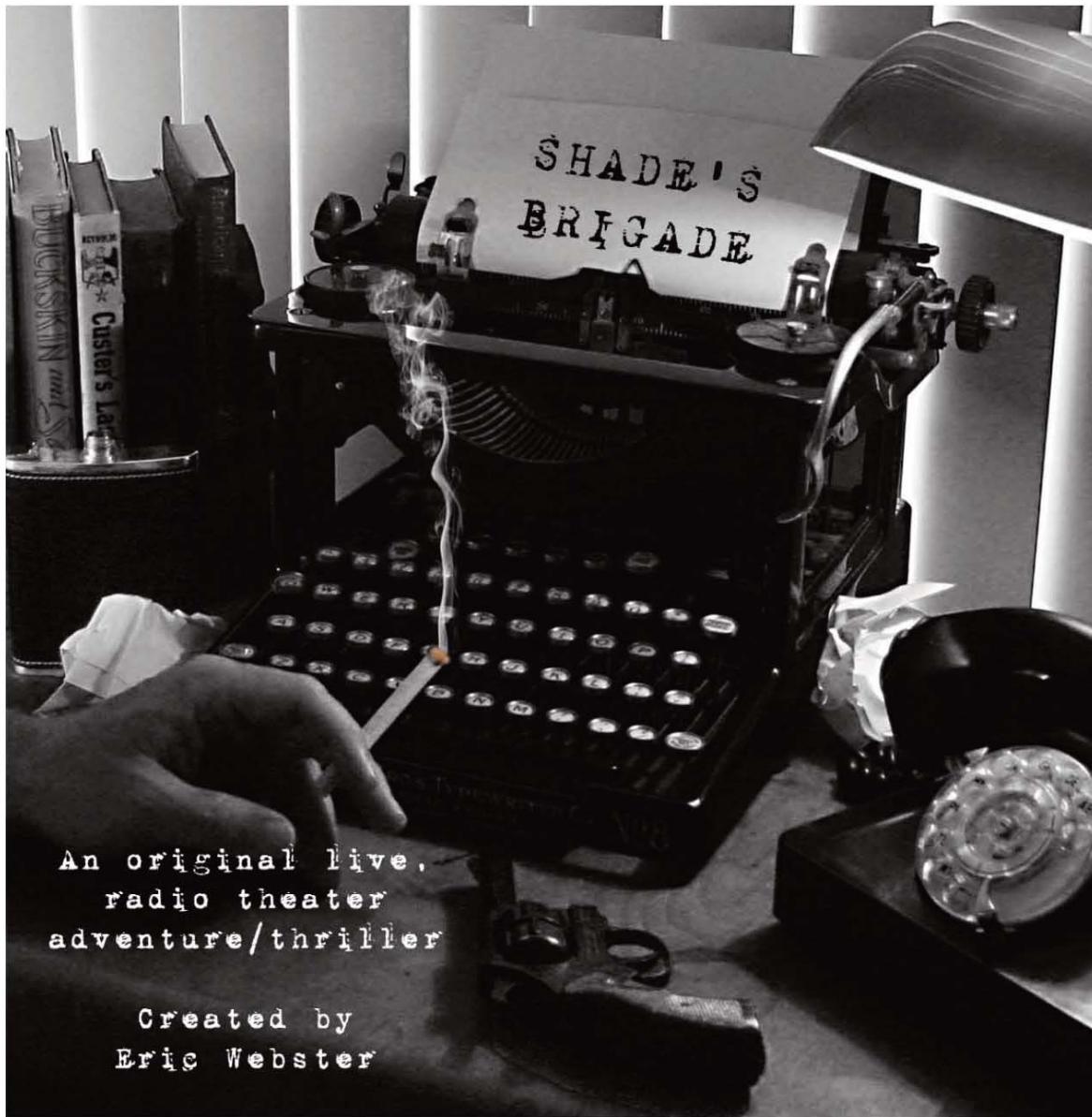
In 1937 he was rewarded with his own spot, The Edgar Bergen/Charlie McCarthy Show, on NBC, which became an overnight success. The show was so popular that it ran on various networks until 1956.

In the first year of the show, Bergen was involved in a controversy while performing the Mae West 'Adam and Eve' skit. He made remarks that were considered inappropriate, which brought unwanted attention from the Federal Communications Commission in 1938. However, the controversy passed and the show gained even more popularity.

Over the years, Edgar added more characters to his act. The most famous of these were the slow-witted but loveable Mortimer Snerd and the man-eating Effie Klinker. While one would normally consider a ventriloquist act dependent on visualization, the show continued to be popular on the radio and although it would seem a natural progression he did very few television performances.

In 1978, Bergen made the decision to retire and donated Charlie to the Smithsonian Institute. A week later he passed away after performing in a show with Andy Williams. ■

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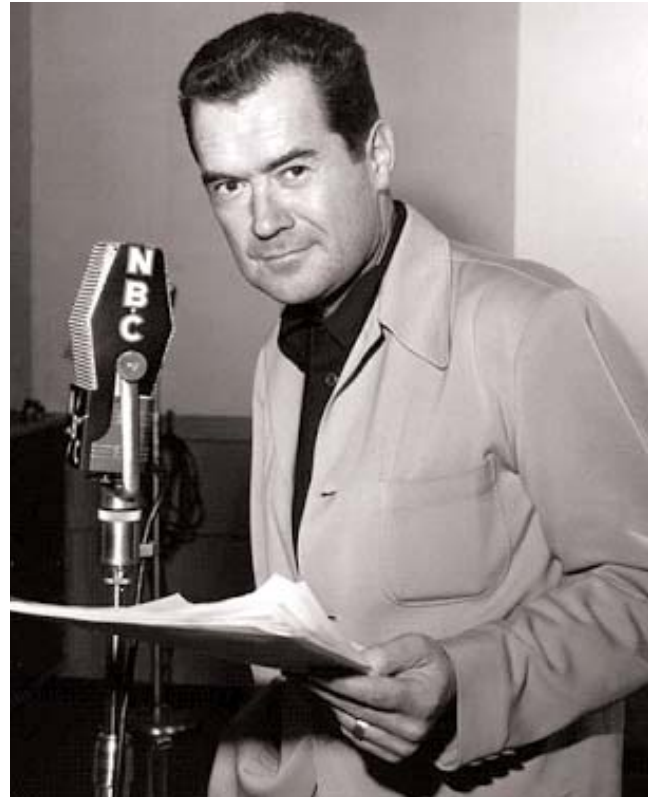
On The Night Beat: Radio's Hard Boiled Reporter

by Elizabeth McLeod

The following article is presented in honor of the anniversary of the premiere of *Night Beat*, which made its radio debut on February 6, 1950.

Newspaper reporters may seem a quaint relic of the past in this day of pajama-clad "citizen journalists" and the phenomenon of news-by-blog, but there was a time when the Gentlemen (and Ladies) of the Press wielded real power and authority. Got a problem? Got a gripe? "Ahhh, write a letter to the paper." An attitude vastly different from the cynical "you can't trust the mainstream media" perspective so common today, but there was, in fact, a time when professional journalists were among the most trusted and admired Americans of all—seen as watchdogs of a free nation, and friends of last resort to the desperate and the dispossessed.

Americans of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s had a particular set of stereotypes associated with newspaper reporters. They were all imagined to be tough and cynical, witty and clever—an image promoted in real life by such brash knights of the keyboard as Walter Winchell and Damon Runyon—but underneath it all, they had heart. They were voices for those who otherwise had no voice, defenders of justice, fighters for the right. Radio was one of the foremost tools for promoting this image. Who could forget such bold journalists as Steve Wilson of *Big Town*; Britt "*Green Hornet*" Reid; Casey, *Crime Photographer*; or even Clark Kent, who was a long way from being "mild mannered" in his long-running radio incarnation. Radio newsmen



never shied away from a challenge, they never let evil go unpunished, and they never walked away from someone who sincerely needed their help.

The quintessence of a radio newspaperman, however, didn't come to the medium until very late in the game, riding the wave of quality adult crime drama stimulated by *Dragnet*. The early fifties saw a late flowering of quality radio, with the medium repositioning itself as a thinking-person's alternative to the vaudevillian capering and stagy melodramas of the infant television. This new wave of radio drama often went where TV couldn't—deep into the minds of its characters, deep into their souls, offering as much introspection as action. The stories were tightly written, making effective use of first-person-singular narration, and demanded distinctive, attention-grabbing voices. *Night Beat* had all the ingredients required for a latter-day-radio classic.



The series revolved around tough, relentless Chicago newspaper columnist Randy Stone—a man assigned to cover the "night beat," the dark overnight hours when the city was at its most menacing. Stone probed mysteries and chased criminals as ably as any private eye, but he was also a compassionate man, a man who saw his role as a voice for the dispossessed and the damaged, the lost souls who had nowhere else to turn. Stone roamed the dark streets looking for trouble and material for his column. His travels invariably led him into mystery and violence. Sometimes the violence was physical, and sometimes it was emotional, but either way, Randy Stone gave the impression of a man who could take it.

That impression came from the throat of an actor who had long been identified with tough-but-sympathetic roles. Frank Lovejoy didn't set out to be an actor, but the Depression had other ideas, tossing him out of a petty Wall Street job and, like millions of other victims of the Roaring Twenties, into the maelstrom of unemployment before he'd had any chance to establish himself in the world. Life becomes something of a blank slate when you're fresh out of school and out of work, and you grab at any straw you can. For Frank Lovejoy, the other end of that straw led to Broadway. It was a tough climb, but a natural

talent for acting led him up the theatrical ladder through the mid-thirties. He had better luck in radio, where stage connections helped him find his way into the casts of assorted low-budget programs. By the end of thirties, he was starring in a CBS soap opera, *Your Family and Mine*. He was also turning up frequently in productions of the prestigious *Columbia Workshop*, and those of noted experimental producers Arch Oboler and Norman Corwin. During the war era, he was a favorite talent on various propaganda programs, with his voice seeming to epitomize the earnest, hardworking, resilient Average Joe. He was everywhere, but he still wasn't a star.

A long stint as narrator of *This is Your FBI* was Lovejoy's most notable radio job in the years just after the war, and he continued to freelance on most of the top anthology programs of the day. He was spending a lot of his time alternating between *The Whistler* and *Escape* at CBS Hollywood when he became the second choice to play the lead in NBC's new newspaper drama. Film-noir favorite Edmond O'Brien had recorded an audition episode for the new feature, but he didn't quite have the quality needed to bring the lead role, then called "Lucky Stone," to life. Lovejoy's audition immediately clicked, and the new program began as an obscure, unsponsored addition to the NBC schedule in February of 1950.

Lovejoy's tough, weary, determined characterization of Randy (not "Lucky") Stone made the program, a perfect meshing of voice and script. The series drifted around the schedule, picking up occasional sponsors only to lose them, as was the fate of many quality programs during the uncertain years of radio's slow decline. But, no matter where it appeared on the schedule, no matter who was paying the bills, Frank Lovejoy's rock-solid performance

moved the series out of the realm of melodrama and made it the medium's definitive portrayal of newspaper work. Randy Stone wanted to get the story, make no mistake, but he was no Lee Tracy-by-way-of-Walter Winchell hustler in the manner of 1930's movie newshounds. As Joe Friday was to cops, Randy Stone was to reporters—dedicated, methodical, determined to get to the bottom of the story. In his tight-lipped way, he was deeply concerned about the ultimate fate of those involved. Working from scripts by series co-creator Larry Marcus, and by such outstanding free lancers as Russell Hughes, Kathleen Hite, John and Gwen Bagni, and David Ellis, *Lovejoy* captured the essence of how Americans imagined their press to be: honest, relentless, down-to-earth and, above all, on their side.

Like so many programs of the early 1950's, *Night Beat* didn't last long. It broadcast its last episode in the fall of 1952. A syndicated revival for sale in Australia lacked the verve of the original, and efforts to bring the program to television came to little. Its afterlife wouldn't truly begin until recordings of the NBC run were dusted off in the 1970's and 1980's for rerun syndication as part of various nostalgia packages. Listeners to *The Golden Age of Radio Theatre*, and similar series, took to Randy Stone immediately -- something about his tough-but-compassionate attitude spoke to listeners in post-Watergate America, a time when newspaper reporters were widely considered to be among the few true heroes left. These reruns flourished on small AM stations and fledgling public-radio FM stations during the latter years of the nostalgia craze, giving the program a fan base and a reputation exceeding anything it experienced during its original run. Today, *Night Beat* consistently ranks as one of the best-re-



garded series whenever old-time-radio enthusiasts gather.

Frank Lovejoy worked regularly in film and television after the evaporation of dramatic radio, and would have been a natural to return to the medium as so many of his colleagues did during radio's unexpected 1970's Indian Summer, but he didn't live long enough—falling victim to a heart attack in 1962. He was just fifty years old—too short a life, and too short a career for the finest newspaperman ever to pound the night beat. ■

This article was reprinted from the Radio Collectors of America newsletter.





Going strong for 30 years, the **Metropolitan Washington Old Time Radio Club** brings people together who have an interest in Old Time Radio (OTR). This is done through monthly meetings consisting of presentations about OTR stars and programs, and recreations of classic OTR shows, plus occasional performances of member-penned scripts produced in the OTR style.

Radio Recall is our illustrated twelve page journal published every other month, edited by Jack French, OTR historian and author. Articles by Jim Cox,



Martin Grams, Jr., Karl Schadow, Jim Widner and other OTR researchers. OTR book reviews, upcoming OTR events, and historical footnotes. Available in full-color PDF via email, B&W hardcopy via USPS, or distributed to members at meetings.



Gather 'Round the Radio (GRTR) has been a monthly e-Newsletter feature of the Club since 2005, containing book and

music reviews, bits of nostalgia, and essays by Club members. Recently the GRTR has morphed into The GRTR Studio Edition which is a fanciful use of the format of old-time radio variety shows, and the popular NPR talk-show "Fresh Air." GRTR brings lively information about entertainment and nostalgia.

Dues: \$20/year (discounts available)

Member Benefits

- Access to our Audio Library (CD and cassette)
- Book and DVD Library
- Radio Recall and GRTR delivered directly to you
- Monthly meetings in the Washington DC area

For more information please visit our web site at www.mwotrc.com or email: membership@mwotrc.com





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LUM and ABNER
CHESTER LAUCK
 BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY CHESTER LAUCK & NORRIS GOFF

'CORDIN' TO TH' ALMANAC...
 Lum and Abner's 5th network radio sponsor: Miles Laboratories, makers of Alka-Seltzer in 1941!

SORRY I'M LATE ABNER. I BEEN READIN' MY DE-TECTIVE BOOKS... DOIN' HEAD-WORK... BONIN' UP...

WELL, YOU GOT THE HEAD I FER IT! HA HA HA!

ABNER, THIS IS SEERSE BINNESS! CEDRIC STILL AIN'T CAME HOME!

SHORE NUFF? IS HE REALLY MISSIN'?

NOBODY AIN'T SAW HIM SINCE HE TOOK THAT LAST BUNCHA GROCERIES TA THAT WOMERN AT DICK HUDDLESTON'S FISHIN' LODGE!

WELL, I DO KNOW...

THIS IS MY FIRST BIG DE-TECTIVE CASE! I NEED A GOOD NAME...

LIKE THAT SHERLOCK FELLER...

YEAH, YOU COULD CALL YERSELF "SHER-LOOK SILLY!" HA HA!

HOW ABOUT "PHILO EDDARDS?"

MORE LIKE A "PILE O' SUM'THIN" IF YA ASK ME! HA!

I COULD BE "NERO EDDARDS!"

DID YOU SAY "ZERO?" HA!

I GOT IT!

BULLDOG LUMMOND!

WELL, THE "BULL" PART I AGREE WITH!

TO BE CONTINUED... DONNIE PITCHFORD '11

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