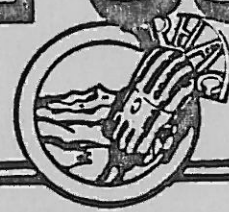


RETURN WITH US NOW...

The Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc.



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 11

MAY, 1985



MAY MEETINGS

The May meeting of the Denver Chapter of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado will be held on Thursday, May 16, 1985 at the Super 8 Motel. The motel is located at 6th Ave. and Federal Blvd. (NE corner). The meeting room is upstairs after entering the main lobby area. The meeting will begin at 7:30 PM.

The May meeting of the Colorado Springs Chapter of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 1985 at Room 203, Rastall Center, Colorado College. The meeting will begin at 7:30 PM.

JOHN DUNNING'S SCHEDULE OF OLD TIME RADIO SHOWS FOR MAY, 1985

Old Time Radio Show for May, 1985. Sundays, 1-4 PM, KNUS Radio

- May 5 - DESTINATION FREEDOM. "Last Letter Home" 8/13/50
GREAT GILDERSLEEVE. "Leila Returns Home" 9/23/45
POINT SUBLIME. "Thanksgiving Dinner" 11/24/47
- May 12 - GREAT GILDERSLEEVE. "Marjorie The Ballerina" 9/30/45
DESTINATION FREEDOM. "One Out Of Seventeen" 11/14/48
ARTHUR GODFREY'S TALENT SCOUTS. 11/12/51
- May 19 - DESTINATION FREEDOM. "Segregation, Inc." 8/28/49
NBC UNIVERSITY THEATER. "Don Quixote" 9/24/50
- May 26 - VIC AND SADE. "Mr. & Mrs. Gibbers" 8/8/46
PEOPLE ARE FUNNY. "MODern Shell Game" 7/2/58
MAYOR OF THE TOWN. 4/46

RETURN WITH US NOW is the official publication of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc, a non profit organization. The cost of membership is \$15.00 per year, and allows the member full use of the club's resources.

For further information contact one of the following:

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TAPE DONATIONS	:Charles Smith..2760 N. Academy Blvd..Colorado Springs,CO 80907

We thank you for your support of the RHAC. We hope that all of our members utilize the many resources of the club and enjoy them to the fullest. Any comments, Suggestions and donations are greatly appreciated.

CONVENTION UPDATE

The plans for the July convention are coming along nicely but a lot more help is needed from our local Denver members. Most of the planning and work will have to be done this month and your participation is needed if we are to be successful. We ask you to come to the May meeting and offer your services to the convention committee.

Some of us will be attending the Colorado Springs meeting this month to answer any questions that they might have about the RHAC and convention.

PLEASE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE IN THE DENVER OTR CONVENTION, JULY 27, 1985.

See back page for registration form. Send it today.

The RHAC catalog for the visually impaired is nearing the print stage and should be completed and ready to transcribe to master reel-to-reel tapes by April 30, also the date Harry Elders is due to tell us if he'll be attending the OTR convention. Transferral from masters to cassettes should be ready to do by May 20; I guesstimate somewhere between June 1 and June 15 as the date the catalog cassettes will be available to users.

Tuesday, April 16, five members of the RHAC Colorado Springs Chapter got together in Room 203, Rastall Center, at 7:30. We listened to more of the Friends of Old Time Radio convention coverage, this time a talk by Ruth, one of the former Quiz Kids. Ruth told of her beginnings in the show, how she and her fellow prods were exploited by the show producers and the media, and what she did on the Quiz Kids show. A great talk it was, in particular some stirring remarks centering around the sad and ironic maxim, "the gifted do not necessarily inherit the earth".

We talked about not having summer meetings; of having our last meeting Tuesday, May 21 and resuming regularly scheduled club meetings Tuesday, September 17. Summertime is the least jolly time of any to come to a warm, stuffy college rah-rah room. Besides, the Denver OTR convention's due in three months; I'll be in touch to talk about carpooling.

OVERSTATEMENT / UNDERSTATEMENT

Those of us who were around and growing when "old time radio" was newer might recall a subtle influence on our daily communication with others, based on the dramatic shows we heard. It's been said a zillion times times how radio as it was in the development stages was the "theatre of the mind". We related with our imagination to what we heard over the air. In radio drama particularly, it was necessary for the actors to "tell" us (and sometimes overstate) what was happening, by dialogue such as:

LEFTY: Hey, Joey, let's get outa here. The cops is coming. (SIREN IN THE DISTANCE).

JOEY: Let's go through this window here. Uh, ungh, ugh . . . it's stuck, Lefty. OK, I'm gonna try the window next to this one. Uh, ungh, ugh, oh! (Sound of glass shattering) I put my hand through the window! I'm bleeding! It hurts! Oh!

LEFTY: The cops are stopping here! (BRAKES IN DISTANCE) They're breaking in the front door! They're coming down the steps! They're -- they're opening the door! They're coming in!

From present points of view, this dialogue leaves little to the imagination; nevertheless our listening imaginations got piqued by this kind of overstated conversation. As we heard what was happening, our imaginations supplied the video.

In those times, in conversations with friends and everyone else, some of us tended to overstate things to others by making references to the obvious. Here's an example of something which might have taken place in the home of someone our parents or grandparents knew:

JOHN: Here's your glass of milk, Mary.

MARY: Thank you, John. Oh, look through the window, here comes Paul.

JOHN: How do you like that bright red Chevy of his, Mary. It sure clashes with that dark green shirt he's got on.

MARY: He's coming to the house. Let's be at the door when he rings.

JOHN: OK. (DOORBELL RINGS) There's the doorbell now.

Television took away the need for actors to "tell" us what was happening. TV was thought of as a big step up from radio; we looked forward each week to seeing The Lone Ranger and Tonto in action. Few programs that made it big in radio made it at all on TV; the characters we imagined from radio just didn't appear right or even talk right on the boobtoob. The Lone Ranger and Gunsmoke were two of the few who were successful (and for a while, successful simultaneously) in both media.

When visual influences began to become a dominant influence over the oral (and aural), many people growing up when TV was young tended to demonstrate that medium's influence by understating (or underplaying) the obvious (why tell me about something I already see?). On TV shows, little is needed to explain and point out what is seen by our eyes and sensed by our subconscious. Imagination is then used in fleshing out the lives of the characters we watch, or in finding ironies in story lines.

Understatement in radio would have caused a vacuum between actors and audience. Nonverbal communication (or the "dramatic pause" in films) wouldn't have worked. Radio contributed in its fashion to the way people thought and communicated in daily contact. Overstatement, for some people, filled blanks they didn't know existed. Television helped to wipe away the danger of these "blanks".

Indeed, some kinds of communication between one generation and another were affected by the medium each generation was attentive to. Old Time Radio and Young TV constituted, in their fashion, a "generation gap".

WANTED: CBS Radio Mystery Theater program entitled "Watchers of the Living". Needed for a friend. Will trade or buy. Contact : Duff Campbell, PO Box 4371, Panorama City, CA 91412.

WANTED: Articles for the July Anniversary newsletter.



For a Boxtop and a Dime

BY RUSSELL SHAW

High school students have been getting into jams ever since the blackboard was invented, but Jack Armstrong's troubles were far more exotic in nature than any other prepster's. While his fellows were battling bullies, defensive linemen, and difficult algebra courses, Jack – between classes, mind you – fought the master criminal Dr. Shupato, escaped from the Cave of the Mummies, and outwitted enemy spies and saboteurs. No wonder it took him 13 years to graduate from Hudson High.

From 1933 to 1950, Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy, was a genuine national hero. His essence, though, was not of flesh and bone, but of electrical oscillations and sound carried on the wind. Yet he was as real as the radio voices of Jim Ameche, St. John Terrell, Stanley Harris, Charles Flynn, and Rye Billsbury could make him. As the world survived depression and armed conflict, Jack Armstrong weathered his own tribulations no less triumphantly.

If someone had asked Jack how he got the strength to battle evil wherever it lurked, he might well have given credit to his favorite cereal, Wheaties, long advertised as the "breakfast of champions."

For it was Wheaties that sponsored daily radio broadcasts over a succession of American networks, and brought his story to millions of eager listeners late each weekday afternoon.

As has always been the case with heroes, though, being a true Jack Armstrong fan mandated a heavier commitment than mere rapt attention to his daily escapades. For a Wheaties boxtop and a dime, you could order a pedometer "just like the one Jack Armstrong used" to plot the location of a hidden cache of rifles in the Philippines. Admirers could send away for a luminous bracelet, worn by Jack's cousin, Betty Fairfield, one of his compatriots on many voyages. Maps, rings, photos, even model airplanes – all could be had for a pittance and a Wheaties boxtop. These goodies are generally referred to as "premiums," and

from about 1930 to the early 1950s, they were a vital part of American popular culture.

Jack Armstrong was merely one of several hundred gallant souls who fought the good battle on radio, or as some often call the medium, "the theater of the mind." Each program had a cadre of listeners, and much more often than not, a single corporate sponsor. The benefactors would do more than just buy commercial time; they would attempt to establish total name recognition in the minds of listeners. Besides worshipping the vanquishers of evil, kids have always liked to eat cereal and read comic books.

This was a natural promotional tie-in for sponsors, who advanced the notion that if you offered an option on a cereal boxtop that would bring an admired character to life, millions would respond, naturally purchasing the brand to get to the boxtop. So it was that Tom Mix Western Lariats, Buck Rogers Solar Scout Manuals, Superman Secret Compartment Rings, and Lone Ranger Atom Bomb Rings found their way into the mailboxes and proud hearts of countless American youngsters.

"These things were designed to be extremely fascinating to children, and a lot of those children never grew up," says

Tom Tumbusch, author of the *Third Edition Illustrated Radio Premium Catalog and Price Guide*. "and today, there are about 800 people in the United States that collect this sort of thing.

"The commercials and programs themselves got classified as the 'juvenile avenger series,'" Tumbusch notes, "and were geared to children between the ages of seven to about 14. This was also the age of announcers who were showmen in themselves, and every commercial spot

was a new story about how marvelous this tremendous premium was. Everything was the shiniest, the best, the most wonderful secret to come along. Premiums could be closely identified with an adventure hero, because one could afford to sponsor a whole show back then."

Which of these ingenious ideas topped the hit parade? By all accounts, it was a comparatively late innovation, the Lone Ranger Atom Bomb Ring. Constructed out of brass, the artifact was covered

with a lacquer that looked as shiny as gold. The ring had an aluminum "bomb head," and inside that, a small red cap, which, when removed, would reveal a plastic lens. Through the lens, one could see a simulation of an atomic explosion. Although completely safe, the illusion wasn't totally fictional; there was actually a type of very mild radium substance in there that created this miniature light show.

Nearly five million Lone Ranger Atom Bomb Rings were given away by the show's sponsor, General Mills, between 1948 and 1956, during which time

"the masked rider of the plains" actually held forth from a Detroit studio, broadcast on the ABC radio network.

From an advertising and marketing standpoint, premiums made perfect, almost brainstorm, sense. "The ad agency (working in consort with the sponsor) would come up with a concept for the kind of name identification they wanted," Tumbusch says, "and they went out and found either a production company or independent contractor to work closely with."

The Gold Company, headed by super-salesman Sam Gold, was the leading idea-broker of the time. "From his Chicago-based company," reports Tumbusch in his *Price Guide*, "he made the rounds of cereal companies, advertising agencies, and radio show producers. He had a knack of selling premium ideas and

New premium creations are rare, but the market for vintage pieces is an active one.

As has always been the case with popular figures, being a true fan mandated a heavier commitment than mere rapt attention to the daily escapades.

Official badges, comic character buttons, and rings made of "shiny gold-toned brass made to last a lifetime" were some of the keepsakes offered to loyal listeners.

"These things were designed to be extremely fascinating to children," remarks one collector, "and a lot of these children never grow up."

the ability to round up freelance premium creators and manufacturers. Sam Gold was a visualizer. The boxtop boys would hire him to conjure up just the premiums they needed to accomplish their sales and promotion objectives."

Logistics were no problem either. You wanted a ring, a medal, a button? The Robbins Company of Attleboro, Massachusetts would cheerfully oblige. They manufactured the majority of premiums between 1935-1955. The machine they used to manufacture most of their premiums was scrapped in 1962, and the company maintains scant if any interest when collectors inquire.

What factors caused the decline of premiums? Much has been written about how television took away the capacity of youth to wonder what a character looked like; and how the onset of this mass video medium contributed to an overall loss of innocence. Back when the Lone Ranger rode and Jack Armstrong explored, it was a simpler time, an era when the imagination could be stretched into full bloom with every hoofbeat, six-gun shot, and gallant statement.

While not discounting this sociologically based reasoning, Tumbusch sees some pragmatic reasons why premiums have been superseded by other marketing techniques. "I think the biggest thing that happened," he says, "is that no sponsor could afford to be totally identified with one program. Air-time became expensive, mandating several sponsors.

"Plus," he adds, "the plastic era came in. Starting around 1950, the Korean War started to drive up the price of metals. The thinking then became that 'we gotta bring down the cost of these premiums to the level of kids' allowances,' so premiums began to be made almost totally out of plastic."

Surprisingly, a few premiums are occasionally made today; in fact, Ralston-Purina commemorated the 50th anniversary of the adventure-oriented Tom Mix show with a number of newly issued premiums last year. The price was \$19.33 – the same number as the year the show's 18-year stint began.

New premium creations are rare, but the market for vintage pieces is an active one. No illusions, though, should be promoted here; the 800 or so collectors cited by Tumbusch are a relatively small regiment when compared to the large battalions of other memorabilia gatherers.

More important, because millions and millions of these premiums were distributed, rarity – a frequent cause of collectibility – is infrequently encountered.

Premiums can hardly be described as an investment item. Tumbusch's catalog quotes a going rate for a mint condition Lone Ranger Atom Bomb Ring at \$40; a Captain Midnight Mystery Code-o-Graph at \$27; a Jack Armstrong Bronze Talisman at \$50; and a Tom Mix Western Lariat at \$40.

Higher-ticket items, although the exception rather than the rule, are available for the discerning premiums collector. According to Tumbusch, the highest going rate might be for an S864 Superman Secret Compartment Initial Ring Version One, with the paper picture inside. He quotes an asking price of \$600 for this item in mint condition, and \$400 for one in good shape.

Just what are some factors that govern the price of a given premium? "A lot of that has to do with how much wear the piece shows," says Ted Hake of Hake's Americana & Collectibles, a York, Pennsylvania company which is offering a by-mail premiums auction through mid-November. "For example, almost all of the rings and decoders came with very flashy plating. If there are no nicks, it could be in mint condition. Other grades run the gamut from 'excellent' down to 'poor.'"

Hake, who spends much of his time seeking out premiums, has some useful advice for those who wish to start collecting these keepsakes. "Pound the flea markets, antique shows, and auction catalogs," he says, "and the house sales as well. Just because something has a lot of meaning to you doesn't mean it will for someone else."

In contrast, both Ted Hake and Tom Tumbusch are not enthusiastic about another potential source: the cereal companies themselves. They feel that mine was tapped long ago, and that given the

relatively common availability of premiums, a patch into the collector grapevine is a far more efficient use of time.

Radio premiums are perhaps a slightly offbeat, yet undeniable, piece of our history. Some years ago, you may even have heard this pitch, which Tom Tumbusch quotes in his book:

"Now, this is your last chance!!! Yes, this is your last chance to join the 1949 Secret Squadron. This is the last day I can tell you about it. Supplies are almost gone and so many fellas and girls are sending in that we must close this offer at midnight Sunday. So send in tonight ... or tomorrow for sure. Now, remember, you send no money. Not one cent. You get all the wonderful new Secret Squadron equipment free of charge if you are one of Captain Midnight's Ovaltine-drinking friends. Now isn't that swell ...?"

The Third Edition Illustrated Radio Premium and Price Guide by Tom Tumbusch can be ordered for \$14.95 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling through Tomart Publications, P.O. Box 2102, Dayton, Ohio 45429. A current by-mail premiums auction catalog can be obtained for \$2 from Hake's Americana & Collectibles, P.O. Box 1444, York, Pennsylvania 17405.

Atlanta-based Russell Shaw is a contributing editor of SKY. ☺

Though hardly investment items, radio premiums are a slightly offbeat, though undeniable, piece of our history.

RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

<u>REEL 506</u>	<u>COLUMBIA WORKSHOP</u>		1200'
1L	2-2-46	Homecoming	
	2-9-46	Anniversary	
2L	2-16-46	Just A Plain Blue Suit	
	2-23-46	Hard Luck Story	
1R	3-2-46	Slim	
	3-9-46	Thanks For The Memories	
2R	3-16-46	Four Quartets	
	3-24-46	Act Of Faith	
<u>REEL 507</u>	<u>MISCELLANEOUS SHOWS</u>		1200'
1L	9-20-51	HOLLYWOOD STAR PLAYHOUSE: Hour Of Truth	
	9-21-49	THE CROUPIER: The Roman	
2L	2-6-49	THE JACK BENNY SHOW: Guests - Vincent Price, Claudette Colbert	
	1-5-51	DUFFY'S TAVERN: Ham's Club	
1R	10-25-50	FAMILY THEATRE: Jane Eyre	
	10-12-49	FAMILY THEATRE: The Happy Prince	
2R	2-25-49	PHILLIP MORRIS PLAYHOUSE: Leona's Room	
	5-6-49	PHILLIP MORRIS PLAYHOUSE: Murder Needs An Artist	
<u>REEL 508</u>	<u>SUSPENSE</u>		1200'
1L	6-26-47	Phobia	
	7-3-47	Money Talks	
2L	10-19-53	My True Love's Hair	
	3-29-54	Somebody Help Me	
1R	2-20-47	Always Room At The Top	
	5-22-47	Knight Comes Riding	
2R	12-26-47	Too Little To Live On	
	9-16-48	Hitchhike Poker	
<u>REEL 509</u>	<u>JUVENILE JURY/HERITAGE</u>		1200'
1L	10-12-47	JJ: Son Wears Shoes & Socks To Bed	
	10-19-47	JJ: 4 Year Old Son Causes Red To Squeak	
2L	10-26-47	JJ: 4 Year Old Twins	
	11-9-47	JJ: Clothes Too Small	
1R	-53	HERITAGE: The Canterbury Tales	
	-53	HERITAGE: Adventures Of Marco Polo	
2R	-53	HERITAGE: Tales Of The Decameron	
	-53	HERITAGE: The Notebooks Of Science	

RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

<u>REEL 510</u>	<u>YANKEE YARNS/STRANGE AS IT SEEMS</u>	1200'
1L	2-15-50 YY: Ghost Story 3-15-50 YY: Agnes Surrage 3-22-50 YY: Wingate Brothers 3-29-50 YY: April Fool	
2L	STRANGE: Man Who Solved His Own Crime STRANGE: Peter The Great Bars Beards STRANGE: Most Valuable Book In The World STRANGE: The Baby Spy	
1R	STRANGE: Child Math Wonder STRANGE: Naming Of Pennsylvania STRANGE: Changing The Wolfmonth To January STRANGE: Owl Testifies At Trial	
2R	STRANGE: Mystery Vault Of The Barbados STRANGE: People Do See Ghosts STRANGE: Hot Money STRANGE: The Pirate's Revenge	
<u>REEL 511</u>	<u>THE GREATEST OF THESE</u>	1200'
1L	Pgm #1: Source Of Money For Future Clients Pgm #2: A Lease Leads To Murder	
2L	Pgm #3: The Missing Funds Pgm #4: Doctor With A War Wound	
1R	Pgm #5: Protection Rackets Pgm #6: Old Mansion For Orphan's Home	
2R	Pgm #7: An Ex-Client Returns From Prison Pgm #8: Murder Threats	
<u>REEL 512</u>	<u>SHERLOCK HOLMES (BBC)</u>	1200'
1L	The Bruce Partington Plans The Retired Colourman	
2L	The Missing Three Quarter The Second Stain	
1R	The Mazarain Stone The Blanched Soldier	
2R	The Sussex Vampire The Noble Bachelor	



RETURN WITH US NOW

A CELEBRATION OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

As we near our tenth anniversary, the Radio Historical Association of Colorado is planning an extravaganza you will not want to miss!

We are calling it "RETURN WITH US NOW, A Celebration of the Golden Age of Radio." Our featured guest will be Sam Edwards who played on "Gunsmoke" and other favorite OTR shows. Also on the program will be other national and local radio personalities to be announced soon.

There will be lively panel discussions, question and answer sessions, and a live radio drama performed before your very eyes! This promises to be a FANTASTIC day for OTR buffs whether you are a serious collector or simply want to reminisce in the magic world of old time radio.

Mark the date on all your calendars -- July 27, 1985 -- from 2 until 8 PM and don't allow anything, that's a-n-y-t-h-i-n-g, to interfere with your attending. The cost is a very modest \$6.00 for the convention only or \$10.00 including dinner if you pre-register (\$2.00 more if you don't).

The site for "RETURN WITH US NOW, A Celebration of the Golden Age of Radio," is the Denver 8 Motel, 6th and Federal, Denver, CO. Out-of-towners may want to stay overnight and rooms can be had for as little as \$19.88 (single) or \$25.88 (double). Please call the hotel directly to arrange for rooms if you desire them. (571-1715)

PRE-REGISTER AND SAVE \$2.00 PER PERSON.	PRE-REG.	AT THE DOOR
CONVENTION ONLY	\$6.00	\$8.00
CONVENTION WITH DINNER	\$10.00	\$12.00

Pre-Registration Form

 RETURN WITH US NOW, A Celebration of the Golden Age of Radio

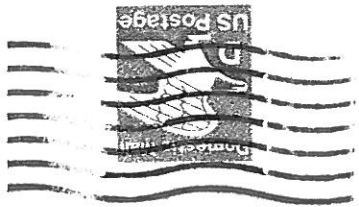
Yes, please reserve _____ places for me on Saturday, July 27, 1985.
 We (do) (do not) desire the buffet dinner. My check for \$ _____
 is enclosed.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Please return this form with your check to: John Callor
 PO Box 1109
 Westminster, CO 80030





Mr. & Mrs. John H. Lloyd
2667 E. 99th Ave.
Thornton, Colo. 80229

Jan 86
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