

# RETURN WITH US

The Radio Historical  
Association of Colorado, Inc.

# NOW...



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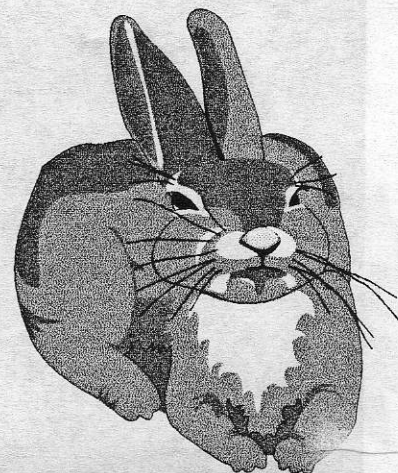
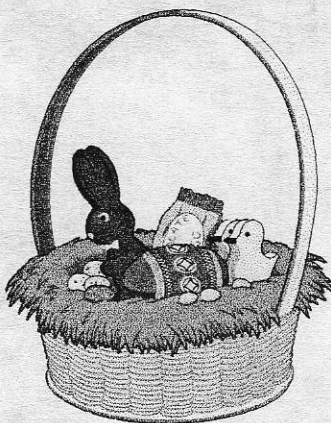
Don Ameche - Radio work 1930-1936, appeared on *Betty and Bob*, *The First Nighter*, *Grand Hotel* and *Jack Armstrong the All American Boy*, among many others, and all on NBC. Probably better known for 1946-47 work on the series *The Bickersons* (NBC and CBS).



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:** There will be a board meeting April 6, 1995, at the Glenn Ritter home. All members are invited and encouraged to attend.



There will **NOT** be a regular monthly meeting in March, 1995



**RETURN WITH US NOW...** is the official publication of *The Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc.*, a non-profit organization. Cost of membership is **\$25.00** for the first year with \$15.00 for renewal. Each member has full use of the club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below.



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- CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: David L Michael (as above)

From the

## King's Roost

Do you have *Suspense* or *Dragnet* shows which are not listed in our RHAC library catalog. If you have any of these shows, Gary Mercer would like to hear from you about getting copies for his collection. You may contact Gary at (510)682-7850. We know that some of these shows are available in a sound quality which would not be suitable for our library.

Movie actor James Dean also appeared in 1951 radio dramas on shows *Alias Jane Doe*, *Hallmark Playhouse*, *Stars Over Hollywood*, and *The Theater Guild On The Air*. David Hofstede is studying James Dean and needs copies of these James Dean shows. If you can help, contact:

David Hofstede  
P O Box 70596  
Las Vegas NV 89170

Fred Foy has come up with an interesting and easy way to enjoy compact disks of his career in radio. This is easy to put on and listen to while doing other things. We will have more information in the next issue.

While trying to catch up with personal chores in the house and watching the long awaited snow coming down, we have been listening to some of the shows which are being added to the RHAC Library. We are amazed at the number of shows which we had never heard before, but which we are now able to enjoy. I guess that is what retirement is supposed to be about.

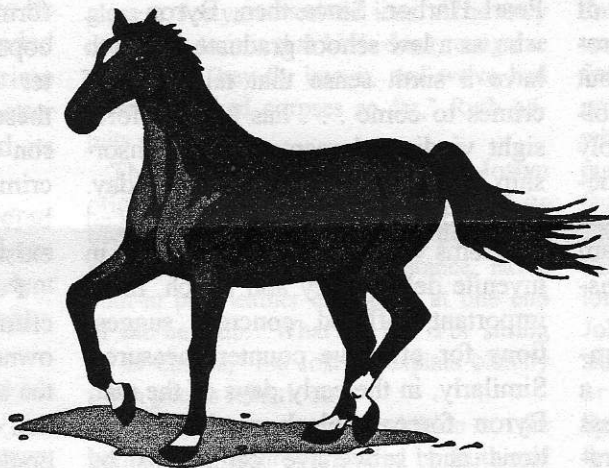
We have noted that many members are enjoying *Tales of The Texas Rangers* starring Joel McCrea. Some

actors are able to make you think they could never have been anything other than the role they are playing. I guess that's what makes radio so great for both the actors and the audience.

This month's library additions are *Broadway Is My Beat* and a couple of *Mystery Is My Hobby*. While dubbing these shows onto cassettes for our library and members, we find it very pleasant to listen to these shows.

We have the reel-to-reel library at our house and make up the cassettes for the other libraries. This permits us to hear these wonderful shows before they enter the libraries.

In about an hour we will go out to



the farm and Maletha will have a chance to work her young horse in the arena and enjoy the facilities we had built last year. The horses do not stay indoors because of snow, but prefer to graze on the spring grasses coming in the pastures. We planted one pasture in spring oats and have been hoping for some moisture to help it grow high enough to have more grazing for the horses . . . and it has finally arrived. We are very glad to see it, and although it is a bit cold, it is not uncomfortable inside the

buildings. We now have a young lady living on the farm and taking care of the feeding of the horses. Being relieved of the daily detailed caring for the horses, we are now able to rearrange our schedules in such a way as to indulge some other pleasures. Our grand-daughter and great-grandson were able to enjoy an hour or so of riding last week, even though the wind was blowing. My how time flies when you're having fun.

Now that we have some moisture, we are making plans for planting another field and putting up more fence so the horses will have another field to enjoy. (We enjoy it too.)

The deer are being more secretive. This is a good indication that we will soon be seeing the new spring's crop of fawns. We feel very fortunate to have our farm so close to town and still have all the wildlife from the park areas so close. It may be developed into housing in future, but we doubt it. There are enough people who appreciate the way we have developed our horse farm, that we are inclined to believe that this will remain horse property long after we are gone.

Dick put up some birdhouses for the Rocky Mountain Bluebirds, a rapidly declining specie. We have no idea whether we will see the birds we want. We hope to attract at least one pair.

**Don Roberts** - Widely known Denver broadcasting and media personality, died of pneumonia March 5, he was 73.

Mr. Roberts came to Denver in 1956 and was a prominent news anchor on Ch 4 & Ch 7 and a featured radio personality on KIMN, KOA, KLZ, KEZW and KAAT.

He will be missed

## *"Mr. District Attorney"*

### *For Five Years Has Blazed the Trail Of Direct Approach to Dealing with Crime, Lately Has Fought Post-War Rackets and Racial Discrimination*

We could begin this story with a slew of mysterious clues and then, at the peak of your curiosity, murmur, "Guess what program we're writing about?"

Chances are you'd say "Mr. District Attorney."

When a program has been on the air for more than 364 consecutive weeks without once repeating itself; when in five years that program has never dropped below twelfth in the ratings of top radio favorites, and when the program has accomplished all this without paying high-priced stars fabulous Hollywood salaries, the show presumably has something. In this case that something is public acclaim of the sort that lift a movie, book, or radio program out of the realm of ordinary. "Mr. District Attorney" has that something.

Like many other American phenomena. "Mr. D.A. all started when a young man decided to go into business for himself. The man was a talented radio producer named Ed Byron. Byron had a firm belief that an adventure program built around an engaging central character would appeal to millions. The problem was to find the central character.

The answer came from the then district attorney of New York, Thomas E. Dewey. Seven years ago, you may recall, the public conception of a district attorney was far from what it is now. Usually, it was of a persecutor, rather than a prosecutor; in the movies it was usually the somewhat dimwitted D.A. who lost his big criminal case to the smart movie lawyer . . . the hero in the picture. Dewey, by investigation, by trying and convicting criminals who

had long been at large, helped reshape a public misconception.

Byron sensed the drama inherent in such a public figure. Here was a leading character who could not only participate in tense, exciting drama, but who could dramatize the services of sincere public officials in virtually every hamlet in the nation. Out of it all came a program that has a firm hold on American listening habits.

The Horatio Alger-like success of the program hasn't been as easy as it sounds. In the beginning there were many obstacles. Censorship officials in the stations and networks frequently objected when "Mr. District Attorney" hinted at a crime wave to come. More rigorously, they opposed certain broadcasts which dealt openly with the Nazi menace . . . for this was before Pearl Harbor. Since then, Byron . . . who as a law school graduate seems to have a sixth sense that tells him of crimes to come . . . has had his foresight vindicated many times. Censorship is not one of his problems today. Thus, Byron has recently produced programs which forecast an increase in juvenile delinquency and which, more important, offered concrete suggestions for effective counter measures. Similarly, in the early days of the war, Byron forecast black market operations and subversive campaigns by pro-German followers.

The result of this approach has been that throughout its tenure on the air, "Mr. District Attorney" has offered listeners a topical, newspaper-like flavor in its programs. Since V-J day, Byron and his co-author, Robert Shaw, have done programs dealing with many other post-war rackets which have been flourishing lately,

"The Case of the Mournful Dog," for instance, treated bogus employment agencies which were designed to mulct newly-discharged G.I.'s of their mustering out pay. The program served a double duty, since it not only exposed the rackets, but warned service men and their families to seek aid from

government agencies or legitimate employment bureaus.

A strong factor for the program's success is that both Byron and Shaw, perfectionists by nature, will give unstinted labor, research and work to insure the show's authenticity.

Both men have legal backgrounds. Byron is endorsed by a brigadier general in charge of Army neuropsychiatric work in Washington, who has given him vital tips on the functions of the criminal and the diseased mind. A prominent surgeon in Detroit has taught him the various intricacies of surgery and the effect on the human body of various types of human abuses.

Once a month the team of writers makes the rounds of "haunts." These are out-of-the-way places where reformed criminals, police reporters, and cops, off the beat, come in to relax after a days work. Fraternizing with these men who are "in the know," Byron can foresee a crime or a trend of crimes and dramatize them on the air before the public is aware of their existence.

Perhaps one of the most extensive criminal libraries in the country is owned by Ed Byron. He refers to it often and many of his broadcasts are actual cases from these leather-bound books.

Tolerance has not been overlooked on the "Mr. District Attorney" program. One of the most talked-about tolerance scripts was "The Case of the Wrong Way to Die." Here was a story that pricked at the subconscious. Anyone guilty of intolerance felt the impact of the script and victims of prejudice felt gratitude in the knowledge that the popular half-hour show was crusading their cause.

The story was about a young, rich and arrogant girl who joined the WAC on a dare. While in service she met and married an orphan whose parents fled from the persecution of the Russian ghetto to the safety of America. The girl's father did everything possible to break up the marriage, but the young

lady's experiences in the WAC taught her the American creed, and intolerance doesn't enter into that creed.

On the basis of this script, "Mr. District Attorney" was awarded a plaque by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the award being made because of the notable work the program has done in fighting discrimination, one of the major social problems of the day.

Letters came in from Mrs. Roosevelt and from the editors and publishers of magazines and newspapers encouraging Byron to continue in this all-important work. Principals of high schools asked for recordings to play before their students.

Still another testimonial to the "Mr. District Attorney" program was given by the New York Criminal Courts Bar Association. The only award ever to be presented by this group, it commended the program for its fight against crime and for its efforts in promoting better understanding between courts and its officers.

Further proof of the program's popularity and all-around public appeal can best be demonstrated by an incident that took place in Wayne County, Michigan.

District Attorney-elect O'Brien, in his acceptance speech said, "My only desire is to be as good a district attorney as radio's "Mr. D. A."

*RADIO LIFE, May 26, 1946*

*Come and Visit*

## **MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

*By Eleanor Harris*

If you tune in on Mr. District Attorney—and who doesn't?—you get the definite opinion that away from the mike, Mr. D.A. must be the same omniscient judge and ruler that he is on the air. Not so. At home, which is where Jay Jostyn likes to be whenever he's not being Mr. D.A., he believes in everyone deciding things for himself. "Live and let live—just so we're together," is his motto.

Home for the Jostyns is a big gray fieldstone house in the pleasant residential town of Manhasset, Long Island. Inside it live the four most independent people in the state of New York—and the most mutually affectionate. They are Jay, Mrs. Jay—Ruth—and their two sons, 17-year-old Jean, known as "Jos," and 16-year-old Jon. Also present are John and Josephine, the negro couple who have been with the Jostyns for four years. And Curley, a non-descript dog. And plenty of new ideas.

The house in which all of these ideas generate has belonged to the Jostyns for four years now. It is a big spreading two-story house set in four acres of hillside ground, and from its windows Jay can see several neighbors' homes, and his own barbecue pit and scattered garden furniture. From one window, for that matter, the whole family and an army of friends can see at once. It's the whole end-wall of the living room, made into one great big plate of glass—a Jostyn-conceived idea. "The only drawback to it is that birds don't recognize the glass. They fly into it, and we've had three feathered corpses so far," Ruth admits sadly.

The whole house bears signs of Jostyn originality. If ever a home revealed its owners' personalities, this one does. The guest-room bathroom, for instance, has a built-in pale leather easy-chair at one end of the bathtub. "What's it for? For sitting in, of course," the Jostyns explain blandly when guests remark on it.

But the most amazing addition to the house is the bathroom shared by Ruth and Jay, which both of them designed. It is the last word in personalized bathrooms. Jay wanted a bathtub on a raised dais, but still sunken like the Roman variety. Ruth wanted a built-in dressing table along one wall, with a tiny black basin set in the center of it "just for moistening my mascara brush." Both of them wanted a stall shower and a regulation basin on a *second* raised dais . . . and all of this has come to pass. The bathroom is pink tile, on three levels, and has two basins—one just for mascara. Not that Ruth makes use of that anymore. "I gave up wearing all make-up right after we finished our dream bathroom," she says, "so the mascara basin is never used."

Neither is the bathtub. Both Jay and Ruth take showers, never baths. So Ruth has a new idea for the tub—she thinks she'll grow waterlilies in it. "They'd be pretty, and

they'd make some use of the tub," she explains.

By this time you get the idea—the Jostyns think for themselves. One of their thoughts has become a firm habit by this time . . . they decided to invite foreign families from the United Nations conference out to dinner, once a month. They have followed this practice for a year now, and they have had a family from every country excepting Russia—from Denmark, France, England, Belgium, and Holland, to name the first five they invited.

Their object was to show foreign visitors an evening in a typical American home, and so far it has been a tremendous success. For one thing, the Jostyns don't give their guests a formal meal with fancy surroundings. Instead, they have everyone eat down in the cellar rumpus room—a room in which no stranger could feel strange. This again, was a Jostyn-addition to the house; and it has all the air of a mountain cabin set down, by mistake, in Long Island. It boasts two doubledeck bunk beds, a great stone fireplace, deers' heads on the walls, a white polar bear-rug, and a tiny stage, complete with curtain—where the Jostyns frequently put on impromptu plays, with the whole family acting.

Most of all, their foreign guests find that the meal fits the setting. It's served on a long trestle table on bright colored pottery. John, the butler, aids the service from a side-table, but mostly it's "pass it yourself, or don't eat." This casual meal has delighted all their guests, after their dozens of formal banquets; and all of them have timidly suggested that they come back soon again!

In asking foreign guests to a meal in the rumpus room, the Jostyns are just doing what they'd do alone anyway—the elegant green dining-room on the first floor is as neglected as Ruth's and Jay's bathtub. No one ever eats in it. "For that matter, no one ever even goes into it—except for Curley," says Jay, grinning. Curley, that indescribable dog regards the dining room as his own by this time. As independent as the rest of the Jostyns, he has his own bench by the dining room window. No one else ever uses it; and here Curley perches, peering out into the garden, for hours at a time.

Around him the family carries on its busy collective life. In the living room, Jos practices on the piano for hours a day, except during football season, when he's too busy playing on the field to bother with the

keyboard. In the den, Jos spends hours painting scenes in watercolors or oils, with a card table to rest his elbows on. Upstairs at his bedroom desk, Jay answers his pounds of fan-mail and decides what charities he will aid this month—he's all over New York state every month, talking at luncheons and over the air, trying to help build new schools or raise money for various causes.

But his most earnest project is the Manhasset Youth Group, which he heads and over which he has worked for the last three years. "This group was started to keep kids out of trouble, and it's certainly worked," Jay says proudly. "We've got all kinds of groups going—acting, music, art, everything. And every kid in Manhasset can belong, whether he's the banker's son or the butler's. You'd be surprised how much fun it is—and what good plays we put on, out at the country club theater!"

Ruth is as interested in these plays as he is. Both of them direct plays, and both sons act in them—Jos with the idea of making acting his career. Ruth also helps with the work at a mental home nearby; every week she spends a day there.

"I suppose some of our screwy ideas around the house and all of our do-good work is due to the same thing—our long and poverty-stricken years when we had no time for either original ideas or helping anyone but ourselves," Jay says. He's right. He and Ruth met in a small and impoverished stock company in the state of Washington, both of them young, and Jay very poor. They got married over the objections of Ruth's family, and they were determined to make a success of their marriage. But some of their hurdles were almost insurmountable.

They still remember the birth of their two sons, when they were too poor to afford writing materials to notify their friends of the boys arrival. They remember best of all the time Jay, then a door-to-door book salesman in San Fernando Valley, got a ride from a friend—who told him about an opening in radio that changed Jay's whole life. It not only was the beginning of the fortune Jay has since made, but it moved the entire family from a weatherbeaten shack in California to the big house in Manhasset.

Most people try to forget their lean years by giving away all their reminders of them—but not the Jostyns. Most of all they have preserved their mementos of their

courtship and marriage. On Ruth's dressing table is a picture of Jay as she first met him, with the platonic message scrawled on it, "To a dear sweet little girl, wishing her the best of everything." On Jays desk is her picture with an enigmatic message: "Hoping we'll always be friend—I'm sure I want to be," she had written. On the white marble mantelpiece of their bedroom is still another souvenir: under a glass bell are the Cupid-doll bride and groom that started life together on the Joslyn wedding cake.

Despite all these marital reminders, however, Ruth wears no wedding ring. "I lost it nineteen years ago and never bothered to replace it!" says she. Jay, meanwhile, received a turquoise ring from his wife at the same time that she mislaid the wedding ring. He's never removed it since.

Inside the house, the four Joslyns go their own ways—but once outside, they're inseparable. Every weekend finds all four of them, dressed in blue jeans and checked shirts, heading for a riding stable at Westbury, Long Island. They spend long hours on horseback, all four of them, following trails all over the territory. Back home again, All four change their country clothes for city ones and get back into the station wagon—this time setting out for New York City, dinner, and the theater. The play that is not seen by the Jostyns hasn't been produced.

Oh—forgot! There's still another weekend ritual that the original Jostyns go through: Saturday morning is hair-cutting time, with Jay as barber! I haven't had a real barber cut my own hair in twenty-five years," says Jay, "and the boys haven't seen the inside of a barbershop yet."

Haircutting is the only home-done art as far as appearances go, however. None of their clothes are home concocted. "Mine are Jay-bought, entirely," Ruth says, smiling. I wouldn't think of buying a thing without Jay along to help—not even a pair of shoes!" One time recently she broke her own rule and wandered into a smart Fifth Avenue store alone. There a salesgirl talked her into a pale pink hat. Ruth brought it home nervously and tried it on for Jay.

"Don't like it," said he promptly.

"Then you can return it," said she just as promptly—and most unfairly! But Jay, after a lot of brooding and balking, did return it—by giving it to the store's doorman, along with a \$1 tip. Meanwhile he raced

away so as not to face the salesgirl whose sale he had ruined.

Nobody ever returns the clothes Jay picks out alone for Ruth as surprises, which are all her evening gowns. Every birthday, every anniversary, and on any other occasion he can think of, Jay goes into a store and demands an ice-blue evening gown . . . his favorite color on Ruth, ever since he successfully bought her one twelve years ago. Since then, however, cagey salesgirls have foisted every shade but ice-blue on him; gray, beige, and pale pink. Unaware of this, he always carries them contentedly home, and they always look fine on Ruth.

For his own clothes he has a much snappier buying routine, however. He buys four suits a year by the simple method of telegraphing a Los Angeles tailor: "Send me four of the old measurements—and make one plaid." For twenty years now he's been ordering his suits by wire, and finds it highly satisfactory. "I just pull them out of the box, onto the ironing board, and then on me," says he.

Ruth has one brand-new idea for clothes that is worth noting—although it has nothing to do with wearing them. She owns a tiny lace petticoat she wore as a baby that she loves to look at. "It's so pretty, I couldn't see any point in hiding it in some bureau drawer," says she.

In spite of their original thinking—or maybe because of it—the Jostyns have a bulletin board in the kitchen, on which they pin all the messages they want to remember. On it are party invitations, future theater dates with each other, and —being the Jostyns and therefore unpredictable—also a lot of yellowed clippings on how to grow chrysanthemums!

One message that's never missing among the collection of notes is: "Dinner with the Lew ('Monkeys are the funniest people') Lehrs," or "Sunday with the Dick Willards," who live across the street from the Jostyns. The Lehrs and the Willards are part of the Jostyn family—along with the boys high school friends, and half the neighbors. The casually independent lives of the Joslyns draw people like magnets.

"No, nobody's the boss here," Ruth says. Then she laughs. "And a good thing, too! Otherwise one of us might object when Jay reads a murder mystery on a free afternoon—instead of mending a broken lamp!"

Then she looks around at her independent husband and grins.

# JOHN DUNNING

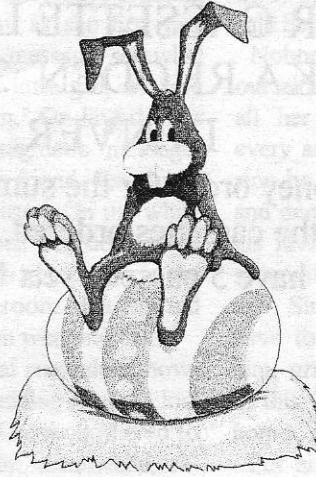
IN PERSON

Now Appearing *Two* Hours Weekly on  
**KHOW**, AM Radio, **630** on AM Dial  
**8 PM, SUNDAYS!**

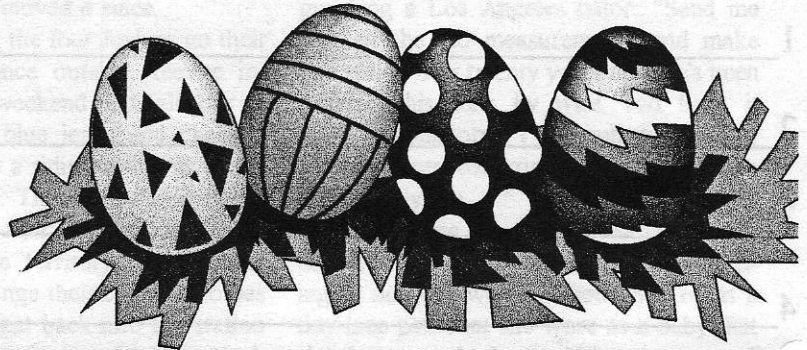
**Dunning**, who is probably the country's greatest authority on *Old-Time Radio* was host for his programs for some 18 years on three Denver radio stations (1972-1990). His radio shows were primary inspiration for the forming of R.H.A.C. twenty years ago.

**Dunning's** audio library collection of 35,000 shows forms the source material for his various broadcasts.

**Dunning** is widely known as author of *Tune In Yesterday* (©1976, Prentice-Hall), the definitive encyclopedia of old-time radio. A greatly expanded edition will soon be published by *Oxford University Press*.



## Happy Easter!



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