

# RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
COLORADO

Volume 23, Number 5

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# RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

Dedicated to the preservation of old time radio programs and to  
making those programs available to our members.

## RHAC BOARD MEETING DEC. 4, 1997 AT THE HOME OF THE PRESIDENT FRED BANTIN Old time radio is alive and well in Denver!

John Rayburn's "Reminiscing with Rayburn" Saturday evenings 6:00 till 11:00 PM KEZW 1430  
KEZW has syndicated OTR weekdays from 7:00 till 8:00 PM 1430 on the dial.  
KEZW "Sunday Night Movie", Sundays 5:00 till 6:00 PM  
KFKA 1310 AM "Radio Memories" Sundays 6:00 till 12:00 PM

### E MAIL ADDRESSES CHECK HERE FOR NEW E MAIL ADDRESSES

RHAC web page and catalog is on the world wide web. <http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>  
Take a look, there is a lot of information at this sight.

RETURN WITH US NOW... is the official publication of the *Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc.*, a nonprofit 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.

Phone numbers are in the (303) area code except where indicated.

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## President's Message:

### President's Message

If laughter is any criteria, the November Member's Meeting was a success. It took a little work to put together the short excerpts from tapes about the Great Gildersleeve but to see and hear the members enjoy the antics was worth the effort. Still the planning on exactly what members want at meetings is going on but a lot of ideas came from the meeting. The general format for the meeting seemed to work and will be followed at future meetings. The only criticism that I heard was that the meeting ran a little long. Actually the General Meeting was over before 9:30 and the social time with a video of a Gildersleeve from TV ran until ten. This can be changed or the meeting started earlier if enough members express some desire toward an earlier conclusion.

Handouts at the November meeting were the Agenda for Member's Meeting, the RHAC Calendar for Fiscal Year 1997-1998, and Members Interest Sheet. If you were not at the meeting or failed to get a copy, these handout will be available again at the January meeting. From Members Interest Sheets there

appears to be interest in Radio Show Recreations, Internet, Sound Effects, Music, Early Denver Radio History and Sci-Fi Radio Shows. I will contact the people interested in these areas and if anyone else has an interest please contact me either by phone, e-mail or a letter. Many seemed interested in the 1920's Radio and it's accessories displayed at the meeting. Look in January for a display of crystal sets and especially one built in Denver during the 1920's.

The January 15th Member's Meeting will highlight the Jack Benny Program. It is currently planned to do a phone interview at that meeting with Larry and John Gassman from SPERDVAC. They are noted authorities on Jack Benny. Before the meeting please consider some questions you would like to have answered about Jack Benny or his program

Help in running and developing the association can always be used. If you have some free time or interest please contact me. **The Newsletter Editor position is currently open.** This is a once a month obligation to compile and edit "Return With US Now". It is not necessary that the editor has a journalism and computer degree, only a desire to put out a quality

publication. Access and a little knowledge to a word processor are the main requirements. Much of the publication is only a matter of compiling articles. If you have any desire along this line, please contact me.

More next month about the January meeting.

Fred Bantin

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### RADIO MEMORIES

Dick (Richard) Williamson a long time member of RHAC and a resident of Greeley, has for seven years had an old time radio show which currently is on KFKA in Greeley, Colorado. His show is called "Radio Memories" and airs every Sunday night for six hours from 6:00 PM to Midnight. The first four hours of the show are old time radio and the last two are Music of which many are shows like "Your Hit Parade". A special treat during his show is that at 7:00 PM every Sunday he plays "The Great Gildersleeve". The shows are played in sequence and corresponds to the current date as nearly as possible. Currently he is doing the year 1948.

While KFKA is a local Greeley station at 1310 on your AM dial, it can be heard in most of the Denver area. During the day KFKA is currently heard

from Cheyenne to Colorado Springs. So if you live in the Front Range area you might want to try to find the station on a Sunday Evening. A local flyer found in restaurants in Greeley, "Tidbits" contains the monthly schedule.

On week days before Christmas on DEC 17, 18, 19, 22, 23; Dick is doing a special 1 hour Christmas program at 10:00 PM. The first half hour of each of these shows will be a different Christmas Show and the last half hour miscellaneous shorter Christmas programs.

Dick has been involved in Old Time Radio for many years and the quality of his show is excellent. The sponsors of his show are delighted with the results for their advertising dollars. The station, KFKA, is also pleased and this year increased the show time from four hours to the current six hours. Old Time Radio is Alive and Well in Northern Colorado. Try "Radio Memories" for some enjoyable listening.

Fred Bantin

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RHAC member: Steve Scalzo sent us an article from his local newspaper.

In Tune With The Old Times

Collector can tell you a ton about those ancient and marvelous radios.

Dale Boyce is a man tuned in. He has been collecting and researching radios since college days.

Now a Milwaukee resident, he has been documenting the radios and radio parts that have been made here and in the state of Wisconsin. He has found 12 companies that have played a part in radio history.

Boyce, who describes himself as a house-husband, is co-owner, along with his wife, Chris, of Boyce Publishing Corp. The Boyces produce such items as a "Vintage Radio Calendar" with color photos and information on some of the radios in Boyce's collection,

The first radio in the collection is an upright he came across in college. Boyce, an electrical engineer who went to work on buildings, bridges and airports for the next 16 years, eventually tore that upright apart to get it to work. He never succeeded, and the carcass still stands in his parents' home.

Today, his radio collection numbers in the hundreds, including uprights - many that work - crystal sets, transistors, Mickey Mouse and other

novelty radios, radio parts, tubes and parts catalogs.

Boyce attends auctions, hits rummage sales and keeps in touch with other radio buffs throughout the world. He has found that Wisconsin companies that either manufactured radios or made parts for them in the 1920s and 1930s were Allen-Bradley, Briggs and Stratton, Gemco, Globe Electric (now part of Johnson Controls), J-M-F Manufacturing, Kiel Furniture Plouff Radio, W.K. Electric, Webster Electric, Wells Manufacturing, Wengel Radio and Western Coil and Electric.

Boyce, who is 38 is too young to know first hand the excitement that the first radios brought into the home in the form of entertainment and information. But his eyes light up at hearing about the first radio broadcast in northern Wisconsin, of having friends and relatives gather every Saturday night around a radio on the dining room table to hear a man remembered only as "Snodgrass," play the piano, or delighting to the first "Fibber McGee and Molly" shows.

Recently, Boyce met his grandfather's brother, who is in his 90s, and discovered for the first time that this great-uncle had built radios for many people during the 1920s.

You can guess what the two talked about.

## Ed Wynn

From the book *The Big Radio Comedy Program*.

Ed Wynn was one of the first established stage comedians to try his hand at the new medium of radio. If you count the 1922 broadcast of his Broadway review *The Perfect Fool*, he was perhaps the very first. There were no networks yet, just local stations, and Wynn brought his show to New Jersey's WJZ for the first, only partially successful, two-hour experiment in coast-to-coast transmission. Eleven years later he attempted to create his own radio network, the Amalgamated Broadcasting System. The venture failed, but the key New York, WNEW, still operates today, the E and W in its call letters standing for Ed Wynn's own initials.

Before coming to radio, Wynn was an enormously successful vaudevillian, a headliner as early as 1902 who went on to star in the *Ziegfeld Follies* and his own productions. His busy theatrical career as well as his awareness that his humor was essentially visual kept him away from appearing on the air regularly until 1932, the

year he began *The Fire Chief* show for Texaco Gasoline. To put himself at ease in the sterile confines of the broadcasting studio, Wynn wore stage makeup and costumes and pioneered the use of a live studio audience. The show achieved immediate popularity, rivaling the already established Eddie Cantor and Jack Pearl, and Wynn's high lisping voice was heard throughout the country every Tuesday night until 1935. Wynn wrote the show himself with the assistance of Eddie Preble. His announcer and straight man was Graham McNamee, historically important figure in his own right for his early sports and news casting.

One of *The Fire Chiefs* regular features was Wynn's retelling of such operas as the *Carmen* printed here. These "operas," which sometimes carried names like *When You Were Eight and I Was Nine and We Were Seventeen*, were a fusillade of outrageous puns and gags, punctuated with Wynn's trademark catch phrase, "SOooooo-o-o-o-o." The fun of their wordplay was a verbal equivalent to the funny hats and outlandish costumes and props Wynn used on the stage and brought with him to the studio.

In 1935 Wynn moved on to a new show called *Gulliver*. It was followed two years later

by *The Perfect Fool*, the title of his earlier stage hit and the epithet by which he himself was known. In 1944 he began the last of his weekly series, *The Happy Island*. In his son Keenan's words, "*Happy Island* came straight out of Dad's daydreams of what he would like to be in the best of all possible worlds. He played King Bubbles in a lollipop land where refugees flocked from Worry Park. His costume included a court outfit with leg-of mutton sleeves and a midget crown that came from any nursery-tale picture of Old King Cole."

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### Carmen with McNamee

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Wynn:

As the curtain goes up on the opera *Carmen*, you see Carmen, the heroine of the opera. She is very pretty but very thin. She is so thin she's just like a bone. In fact, her own dog buried her three times in one week.

The opera is all about gypsies and gypsies, you know are not very clean people.

Graham:

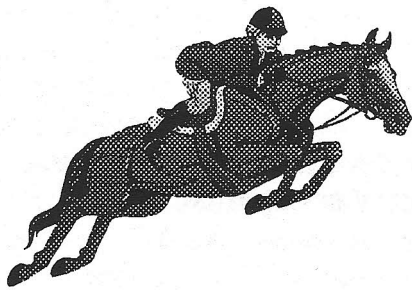
What do you mean, Chief? Don't they wash themselves?

Wynn:

Oh, yes. They wash clean but they dry dirty.

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## THE KINGS ROOST

Each month I wonder what to put in this column, but it just seems to happen when I sit down to write. These past few weeks we have had the pleasure of listening to a wide range of talent that gave their time and effort to raise money for the various good causes. The chance to hear a full fifteen minutes of such stars as Les Brown, Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Tex Beneke, Sons of the Pioneers, Nat King Cole, Burl Ives, Dinah Shore and on and on - . By the way, Dinah Shore mentions that she was a former victim of Polio on reel 5394. These are all great shows that will bring back lots of smiles and memories.

My note last month of weeding out some extra decks brought immediate response and they are all gone. We also received a note from Al Harding, 124 locust,

Washington, MO 63090. AL is in need of motors and rollers for Sony decks and is interested in obtaining machines for parts - even if they are not working. He is also interested in Akai units for parts. His Telex high speed duplicator is in need of replacement heads and he has been advised that it is so old that heads are no longer available. If you can give Al a hand, either write or phone him at 314-239-2182.

Another member, John Pearson, writes he has been putting some of John Dunning's old shows on cassettes so he can listen to them in his pickup or while on a trip. The best thing about radio was that you could listen to a show and be doing other things at the same time. TV just seems like a trap to keep you from getting other things done.

We have just printed new catalogs and they contain updated indexes. We will be mailing a new set of index pages to all members soon. Please be sure to put them in your catalogs. Of course, if you have not kept your catalog up each month, you may prefer to get a new one, the cost is \$20.00 US including mailing.

We got our November snow for Thanksgiving, and

although it was mild in the Denver area, parts of the state got buried. They had snow for a couple of days and had to close major highways. Our horses are not very happy with us because we keep them in one paddock that we call the "Mud Run". They would prefer to romp in the pastures, but they can destroy more grass with their feet in soft ground than they can eat in months. We have a good stock of good hay in the hay barn and they are very well cared for, but they are a bit spoiled. We have started an old horse on a supplement that has been used for horses for many years, and is now on the market for those of us with a few aches in our joints. It is Glucosamine Chondroitin sulfate. Niki, the horse does not complain, but is only reasonable to figure that he may have his aches, especially when it is cold. Our horses are not in closed stalls as we feel that is very important that they be able to move around and keep limbered up. Besides, many horses die of colic-often caused by not being able to move around.

This is the time of year we have to think of taxes and planning for the coming year. Our president, Fred Bantin has been very active in making plans for the coming year for our club.

# RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION of COLORADO

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