



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
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BOB HOPE

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P. Barringer 09/03

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

PO BOX 1908, Englewood CO 80150 (303) 761-4139

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

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Convention Schedules

The Friends of Old-time Radio 28th Annual Convention Oct 23 – 26, 2003 at the Holiday Inn-North, Newark NJ. Our web site will keep you up to date. For information contact Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887 email: JayHick@aol.com, web site: <http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/fotr>

SPERDVAC Annual Convention Nov. 7 - 9, 2003 at Hacienda Hotel, Los Angeles, Ca. For additional information visit the SPERDVAC web site at www.sperdvac.org or write the club at : P.O. Box 7177, Van Nuys Ca. 91409

18th Annual OTR and Nostalgia Convention, April 16 – 17, 2004; Contact Bob Burchett, 10280 Gunpowder Rd., Florence KY 41042 (859) 282-0333 haradio@hotmail.com

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RETURN WITH US NOW...

BOB HOPE

by Paul Barringer

During the depression and war years, comedy kept radio alive, allowing people to bring laughter into their homes and, for a brief few hours daily, presenting an opportunity to laugh at themselves and forget their problems and the problems of the world.

Growing up in the golden age of radio, as I have said before, my favorite shows were the kid shows and the mystery programs, but I still got great pleasure from the comedy shows. Although I was young I still appreciated the delivery, timing and jokes of the comedians. Our family never missed Bob Hope or Red Skelton, my two favorites. We also listened to all the other shows, Amos And Andy, Jack Benny, Charlie McCarthy, Fred Allen, etc.

Red Skelton, The Sentimental Clown as he was referred to so often, passed away September 17, 1997 in Rancho Mirage, California, from pneumonia, at the age of 84. On July 27, 2003 the world lost another great comedian and humanitarian, as Bob Hope passed away at his home in Tuluca Lake, also of pneumonia, just two months after turning 100.

Born Leslie Townes Hope in Eltham England on May 29, 1903, Hope and his parents emigrated to the United States in 1907. They settled in the Midwest and he was raised in Cleveland Ohio. Hope began performing in vaudeville in the 1920's. He made his Broadway debut in the musical *Roberta* in 1932. In 1934 he married Dolores Reade, who was also starring in *Roberta* at the time.



The Big Broadcast of 1938

He appeared in the 1935 *Zigfield Follies* and starred in Cole Porter's, *Red Hot And Blue* with Ethel Merman. Hope moved to Hollywood in 1938, and made his film debut in *The Big Broadcast Of 1938*. In 1940 he co-starred in the first of seven "*Road To*" films

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with Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour. Throughout the 40's and 50's Hope was one of the top 10 box office stars. His film career, comprising over 50 feature films, continued into the 70's. Hope also made small feature films for Warner Brothers while appearing on Broadway.



He made his radio debut in January of 1935 on the NBC Blue Network and for 60 years continued on the NBC radio and television networks. After his success in *The Big Broadcast of 1938* film, Hope was brought to the *Pepsodent Show*, which aired as a top rated show for over ten years.

The straightforward approach of the Pepsodent Show production was simple, starting with Hope's opening monologue, which consisted of local references to where the program was originating from, events of the day, etc., plus remarks about himself. The middle of the show included Hope trading barbs and skits with his guests and regular cast members. It also included music and songs by his regulars and/or guests. The last segment of the show acknowledged the challenges of the day or involved a salute to America's heroes and a reminder to the radio audience of the sacrifices made by our military personnel for the war effort.

It was Hope's opening monologue of each week's program that was the real foundation of the show. Hope never took himself seriously, and always endeared himself to the audience. Often called a wiseacre and brash, this on-air persona is what I liked best about him, as did his many other fans, and it actually helped him become a popular performer. The show ended with a varied version of Hope's theme song "*Thanks for the Memory*". Each was a specially written rendition, which paid tribute to the program theme or the locale where the program originated. On April 17, 1945, five days after President Franklin D. Roosevelt died, Hope's version of *T.F.T.M.* was, "Thanks For The Memory of Roosevelt and his deed, for planting victory's seed, like Washington and Lincoln he served his country's need, we thank him so much".

Hope's show was not without controversy; he didn't care at whom he threw insults and barbs, including political parties, the U.S. President, famous personalities or even his sponsor. The show was oft-times called racy, but compared to today's entertainment it was very, very mild. Hope never left himself free of his comments, often insulting himself with self-deprecating remarks. The sponsor, Pepsodent Toothpaste, had its' concerns about some of the comments, and at one time gave serious thought to canceling the show, but Pepsodent continued to sponsor Hope's show from 1938 to 1948. The show's success tied Hope and the product together forever. The show was aired from Hollywood until W.W.II. After the war began, and for the duration of the show, it was broadcast from military bases the world over. On May 16, 1941 the program originated from March Army Air Force Field in California and was the first coast-to-coast remote of Hope's radio program. This led to hundreds of radio and television broadcasts performed for U.S. military personnel. These legendary broadcasts originating from military bases around the world launched Hope into his role as the biggest morale booster of our servicemen. This variation of radio comedy was very successful and greatly appreciated by both audiences stateside and the military personnel.

During the shows run on radio, Jerry Colonna was Hope's zany sidekick. His character was that of a fool, as Hope played the straight man who almost always was the butt of Colonna's last laugh. Colonna just slaughtered the English language and did crazy voice presentations of popular songs. Most of the shows included a call from Colonna by phone from various parts of the world, with some zany antics involved. Cast members at one time or another included: Frances Langford, Doris Day, Barbra Joe Allen, Blanche Stewart, Elvira Allman and others. Hope also had many special guests, but his favorite was Bing Crosby, with whom he traded insult after insult, all in jest. The two were lifelong friends. In the 50's Hope was part owner of the Cleveland Indians and Crosby was part owner of The Pittsburgh Pirates, which led to plenty of ribbing between the two. Announcers included Bill Goodwin, Wendell Niles, Art Baker and Hy Averbach. Music was by Skinny Ennis, Les Brown, Desi Arnaz and others. In 1941 radio critics voted Hope their favorite comedian and entertainer. In 1943 Hope beat out Jack Benny as the top-rated radio show.

During his successful career Hope broadcast many television and variety specials, from 1963 to 1967 he hosted *Bob Hope Presents The Chrysler Theater*, as well as performing in it. Hope's Christmas specials aired from 1953-1994. He was considered the "perfect" host of the Academy Award Ceremonies, hosting, co-hosting, or presenting on 19 telecasts. Hope was one of the few entertainers who gave credit to his staff of writers. He always had a running joke about his use of cue-cards. Although he was never nominated for an acting award,

Hope received three honorary Academy Awards and The Gene Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy for his contribution to the world of laughter, service to the motion picture industry, and his dedication to the American premise. From 1975-1979 and again in 1985, Hope received the People's Choice Award as favorite all-around male entertainer.



Hope wanted to join the service during W.W.II, but was told he was too old and would better serve on the home front. He began touring with the USO in 1942 and continued until 1990, when at age 90, Hope went to the Persian Gulf to visit U.S. servicemen. His Christmas visits to servicemen serving in the remote corners of the globe became legendary, but the man who entertained for so many decades and traveled over 10 million miles entertaining our troops was afraid of flying. In 1998 Hasbro Toys released a limited edition G.I. Joe doll of Bob Hope, which is now a collectors item. In March of 1997 The U.S. Navy christened the T-AKR 300 as USNS Bob Hope, and the Secretary Of The Navy said "this is our way of saying Thanks For The Memory." In April 1997 the new C-17 Globemaster was christened "The Spirit Of Bob Hope." In 1997, Congress, in an unprecedented move, made Hope an "Honorary Veteran". At Hope's death President Bush ordered flags to be flown at half-staff at all Federal Buildings, Naval Vessels and Military bases.

Bob Hope is cited in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's most honored entertainer. His many awards include: the Lifetime Achievement Award from The Kennedy Center, the Medal Of Freedom from President Johnson, four stars on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame for his entertaining in four separate genres, and an honorary knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II. Congress even sang to Hope on one of his birthdays. Over 1500 groups, universities, churches, organizations and countries have honored Hope. He had over 50 honorary doctorates from colleges and universities. Hope appeared on the covers of Time Magazine and TV Guide

and even had his own comic book from National Periodical Publications. Hope wrote over 10 books, appeared in 284 television specials and recorded 9 albums. Counting his time in vaudeville, on Broadway, in radio, films and television, Hope spent 85 years before an audience.

Hope was a generous donor to many charities in addition to his sponsorship of various charitable events such as The Bob Hope Chrysler Classic Charity Tournament.

In June of 1998 on the Congressional House Floor, Representative Bob Stump (R-Arizona) announced that Bob Hope is dead. The announcement spread with the speed of light to newspapers and websites as crews rushed to Hope's California office. Hope's daughter, Linda told reporters, "Dad's at home, eating breakfast, he's fine." When informed of the mistake, Hope was reported to have roared with laughter. In August 2001 Hope was hospitalized for pneumonia and was released 11 days later. A constant joker even up to the end, when asked by his wife days before his death where he would like to be buried, Hope replied, "Surprise me."

Author's Note: *I imagine as he is passing through the Pearly Gates of Heaven Mr. Hope will have a joke for Saint Peter. I regret never having had the opportunity to see Mr. Hope on one of his many tours while I was serving in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. It seemed we were always in the wrong place at the wrong time. In closing I would like to say: "Thanks For The Memory of Mr. Bob Hope, who made us laugh at every joke, he served his country without revoke, our Soldiers, our Sailors, Airmen and Marines wish him happiness on heavens scenes, we thank him so much."*

THANK YOU FOR THE MEMORIES MR. HOPE

[Research for this article includes radio tapes, various websites, public library, Library of Congress, various television and radio specials and memory.]



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From the Desk of the Editor by Carol Tiffany



Our lead article this month is a tribute to Bob Hope, arguably THE man of the Twentieth Century. If anyone in the modern era deserves the title of Renaissance Man, Mr. Hope does. I would like to thank Paul Barringer for his very informative, well researched, and extremely well timed article. Actually, Paul had had this article in the works for awhile, but went the extra mile in order to have it ready for this issue of RWUN.

We also have a second piece from Danny Goodwin. This one is actually more reflective of Mr. Goodwin's lifelong interest in radio commercials and anecdotes concerning sponsors and their messages.

Your comments and suggestions are, as always, very welcome.

Good listening, everyone!

Move Over MacArthur.....

Dreft Returns!

by Danny Goodwin

(Reprinted with the author's permission from www.old-time.com)

1945 will be remembered for the end of World War II. While many servicemen and servicewomen were happily preparing to return to civilian life, the return of an old friend to the dish washing wars was in process. Radio listeners heard this thrilling bit of news during the closing commercials on the late 1945 broadcasts of NBC's LIFE OF RILEY. The commercial began with the announcer exclaiming, "Ladies, Dreft is back!"

Now you might wonder, "Where the heck did it go?" The answer was to World War II. When the United States entered the war, many companies did their part for the war effort. Procter & Gamble, the maker of Dreft, was one of those companies. When soap production at the company was cut back, the production of Dreft was cut back almost entirely. It would be made only in a very limited supply and distributed to a few regions of the country. The reason why Dreft was affected more in war production than the other Procter & Gamble soap products was because Dreft wasn't a brand of soap at all! It was the very first synthetic detergent ever made--- and its' ingredients and machinery were needed for war production.

Although Dreft was hard to find during the war years, Procter & Gamble made sure the listeners didn't forget its' detergent creation. From 1943-1945, Dreft was the sponsor of NBC's DREFT STAR PLAYHOUSE, a daytime anthology series with a serial format. On the

program, announcer Marvin Miller had the unusual task of selling a product on the air that many people simply couldn't buy. He asked the people to be patient and reminded the listeners Dreft would be coming back for consumer use once Procter & Gamble was able to make it. Of course, it would be after the end of World War II.

As Miller did on DREFT STAR PLAYHOUSE, the announcer who exclaimed, "Dreft is back" asked the radio listeners to be patient. Dreft was returning to consumer use, but its supply was still scarce. Fortunately, this was to be temporary. In a short time, everyone who used Dreft for dish washing would find the familiar green box on the grocer's shelves, and, just as it did before the war, Dreft continued its reign as the top selling brand for dish washing.

A Bob Hope Trivia Quiz



- 1) Bob Hope and Bing Crosby made seven "Road to..." films. Can you name them?
- 2) Hope first sang his signature song "Thanks for the Memory" in his first feature film, _____.
- 3) In 1958's Paris Holiday, Hope had three credits. Can you list them?
- 4) Bob Hope first hosted the Academy Awards show on TV in _____.
- 5) In 1979 Hope appeared as an ice cream vendor in _____.
- 6) Bob Hope traveled over 10 million miles entertaining U.S. troops. How many years did it take him to accumulate this total?
- 7) The recipient of thousands of honors and awards, Bob Hope had one title bestowed upon him that no one else in history had ever been awarded. This title was _____.

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New in the Tape Library

by Dick and Maletha King

This month we are entering the last of the "Johnny Dollar" on CD and "Rogers of the Gazette", with Will Rogers, Jr. cast as Will Rogers the friendly editor of a country newspaper. A very good, warm show. Four shows not in the other libraries have been added. Following the Will Rogers show, we begin the "Fibber McGee and Molly" shows that aired before 1939. This series has eight shows not offered in the regular libraries. This series will be continued in October.

We would like to suggest to our members to check their tapes to be sure that they all play as they should and do not have any emulsion flaking off. One quick way to check this is to put a sheet of white paper beneath your tape deck and see if small flake of emulsion are collecting as they come off the tapes. The deterioration of tape is one of the reasons many of our members are going to the use of CDs for their collections.

We would also like to remind members renting cassettes to be sure to rewind them before they're returned. This is a common courtesy that is greatly appreciated by all.

- Thank you so much (as Bob would have said)

Answers to the Bob Hope Trivia Quiz:

- 1) Road to Rio, Road to Bali, Road to Morocco, Road to Zanzibar, Road to Hong Kong, Road to Singapore, and Road to Utopia
- 2) Big Broadcast of 1938
- 3) Hope was credited as actor, writer, and producer on Paris Holiday
- 4) 1953
- 5) The Muppet Movie
- 6) 42 years - Hope toured from 1948 through 1990
- 7) Hope was made an Honorary U.S. Veteran by Congress in 1997