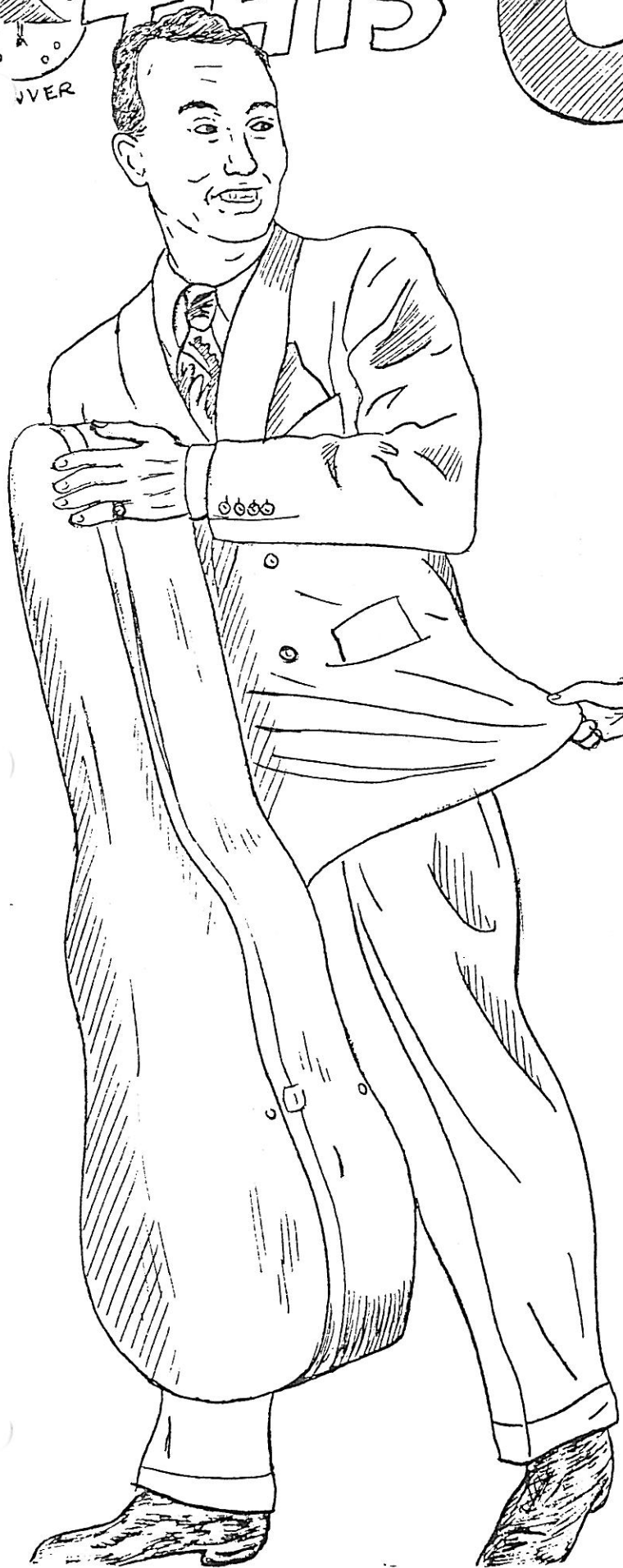
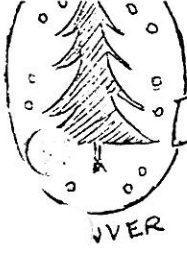


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PHIL HARRIS
+
ALICE FAYE

FUND RAISING DRIVE- The Radio Historical Association of Colorado was pleased to be able to help KRMA (Channel 6) in their annual fund raising drive. On the evening of November 20, twenty volunteers from the RHAC helped answer the phones for about 5 hours. We are happy to report that over \$15,000 was raised that night. Everyone that was there had a great time. Mrs. Cunningham of KRMA gave us a complete guided tour of the studio. A special "THANK YOU" goes out to Glenn Ritter for getting things organized. He put in a lot of time on this. Also a special "THANK YOU" to all our members who helped out and their wives and Ray Stofer's daughter. We will be back there again next year.

TUNE IN YESTERDAY- The John Dunning book finally came in. We had to go through Waldenbooks at Northglenn Shopping Center. We want to thank them and especially to Mrs. Howard for their great service. John will be at our January meeting to autograph his book, and be our guest speaker.

GOOD LISTENING- John Dunning's schedule for December is as follows:

- Dec. 5 -Fibber McGee and Molly from 12/9/41
-Lux Radio Theater: Five Graves to Cairo with Franchot Tone and Anne Baxter from 1943
- Dec. 12- Hotpoint Holiday Hour: The Man Who Came to Dinner with Jack Benny from 12/25/49
-Fibber McGee and Molly from 12/16/41
- Dec. 19- Cresta Blanca Players: All Through the Night
- Gunsmoke Christmas show from 12/20/52
- Fibber McGee and Molly from 12/23/41
- Dec. 23- Two Bob and Ray shows from 1949
- Fibber McGee and Molly from 12/30/41
- FDR addresses Congress from 9/21/39

MONEY MATTERS- Don't forget to get your dues in by the end of this month or make arrangements with John Nicholson. For those out of town friends who wish to receive the newsletter for the next year and have all of the benefits of membership, please contact me by the end of the month. It is well worth it.

CONTEST- We have mentioned this before in this newsletter but it is time we get serious about it. We have never given this newsletter a name and I am tired of calling it "the newsletter". The Buffalo club is having a contest to name their newsletter and it is time we did the same and made it a more official club publication. Start thinking and drop me a postcard by the end of this month with your title. Send as many titles as you wish. Please don't call me with your titles. A suitable prize will be given for the winner. Anyone reading this newsletter is eligible to submit a title. Lots of luck.

MERRY CHRISTMAS- On behalf of my wife, Pat and myself, Vice-President John Nicholson and his wife, Pam and Secretary-Treasurer John Adams we all would like to wish each and every one of our members and their families, our honorary members and all of our readers, a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

LUX RADIO THEATER AND THEATER GUILD ON THE AIR.BY JOHN ADAMS

The time was November 1, 1943. The place was Hollywood and Vine in Tinseltown USA and the occasion was a live broadcast of Lux Radio Theater. A few minutes before 2 PM, a long line of servicemen were quued up to enter the coveted Liggett Theater. The marquee read in flash-; lights "LUX RADIO THEATER" and they were doing "So Proudly We Hail".

The doors opened and everyone filed in. The theater held about 750 people. Hanging from the ceiling above the seats were 6 mikes to pick up the reaction of the audience. The stage was bare except for 10 folding chairs and a single floor stand microphone. To the left was a glass enclosed booth where the studio orchestra was warming up.

A hush fell over the audience as Mr. C.B.DeMille walked onto the stage to thank the men and women for the good job they were doing to win the war. As Mr. DeMille was speaking, from the right of the stage entered many of our movie idols with scripts in hand, and took their seats.

Mr. DeMille walked to center stage. Over the glassed-in-booth a red light came on that read "ON THE AIR". The orchestra started with the well remembered music of Lux Radio Theater. For the next hour, the stars tiptoed to center stage in groups of two or three to read their portion of the script. As they finished they would go back to their chairs. There were such stars as Paulette Goddard, Veronica Lake, Claudette Colbert and Sonny Tufts and they all took their turns at the mike.

The "ON THE AIR" sign went off. Mr. DeMille walked back to center stage and thanked everyone for coming and hoped that we enjoyed ourselves. Slowly everyone filed out as quickly as we came in. That was Lux Radio Theater.

Now the time was Spring of 1947. The place was the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. The time was nearing 8 PM as 25 people stood in front of the doors of WLS studios, with press passes in hand. The studios were on the 11th floor. Since it was Sunday, the building was like a morgue. Only a few lights were on as we made our way down a long hall and on the caged elevator.

The doors opened and the guests took the folding chairs into a studio not much bigger than a living room. Norman Brokenshire approached the mike, his left hand in his pocket and his right hand holding the script. The script was on light cardboard type paper so that it would not rustle before the mike. Again to the left was a glass-enclosed booth, but this time the music was "canned".

Mr. Brokenshire read the familiar lines that opened Theater Guild On The Air. After a word from U.S.Steel, up to the microphone stepped the famous team of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontaine. I beleive the show was "The Cherry Orchard".

During the next hour, Mr. Brokenshire, Mr. Lunt and Miss Fontaine did the two step with an occasional sound man getting into the act with his funny little bird whistle to give the idea of Spring and an orchard. The sound effects were few and far between. The story was dull. The "ON THE AIR" sign went off and the 25 people filed out. Our laughter was forced and our applause was begrudging.

Beleive me, live radio shows were not much fun. Give me a comfortable chair before my radio any day and let me picture my own ideas of the show as it progresses. The other way is a real letdown.

Radio studios are like funeral homes where you have come to pay your last respects.

There were more than 300 people jammed into a small auditorium at the University of Chicago's Festival of Chicago Comedy. There were a mixture of adults, some old, some young, but mostly in-between. The majority were there because of "Vic and Sade" the rest, because of Jean Shepard whose syndicated radio show is currently broadcast in Chicago.

Seated in the front rows were the wives of the guest speakers including Mrs. Paul Rhymer, Dave Garraway and the fortunate members of the "Chicagoland Chapter" of the Friends of Vic and Sade.

Chuck Schaden served as both moderator and roving man-with-a-mike to elicit questions from the audience, set the scene for the evening with radio clips, reminiscences and commentary on Chicago Radio's beginnings. Then he introduced the participants who took their places on the stage: Bill Idelson, Clarence Hartzell, Franklin McMahon and Jean Shepard.

Jean Shepard's most pertinent remark about Vic and Sade dealt with his mother's addiction to the radio program and with the quality, humor and uniqueness of Paul Rhymer's writing.

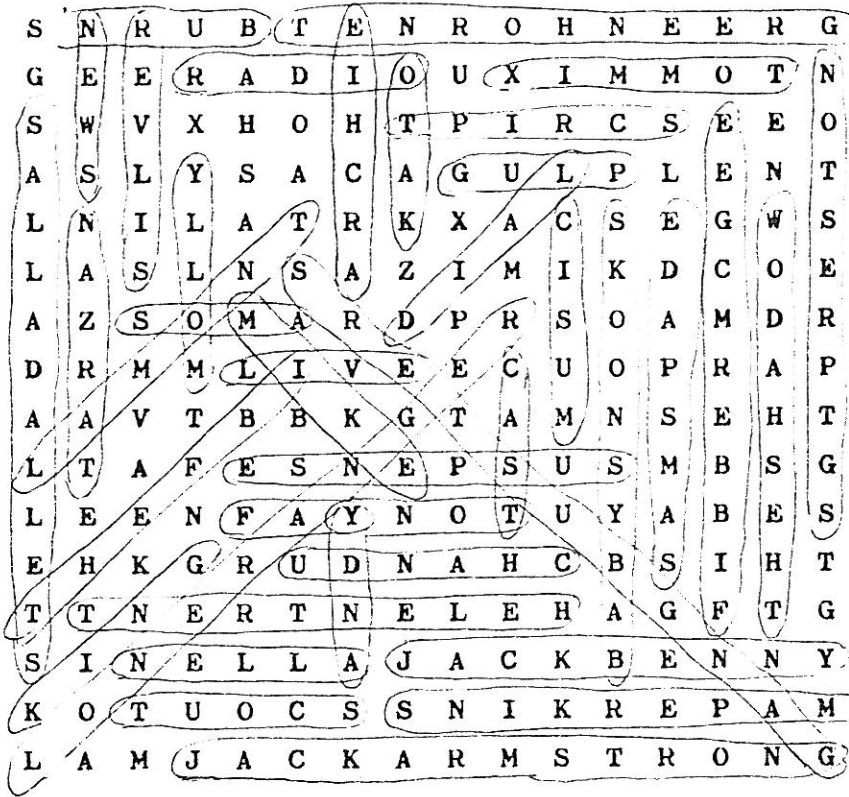
Franklin McMahon, serious and scholarly in appearance, droll in manner and speech, punctuated the evening's program with remarks drawn mainly from his speech to the St. Louis Art group (which is available on tape). His comments were always apt and always amusing. He displayed his original sketches, the ones used to illustrate the first book of scripts of Vic and Sade program 5.

Bill and Clarence reviewed the history of their association with Rhymer and the radio program. It was obvious that Bill had come prepared to carry the bulk of the program. He brought a three-inch thick notebook and a tape of excerpts from the series. He played two brief clips, read pieces of Rhymer's outrageous correspondence, and highlighted his description of Rhymer's writing brilliance by recreating with Clarence's assistance, a two minute "insert" which had been typed on-the-spot one day when the script was found to be short by that amount of time. (It was the "Underwear By Mail" bit read by Bill in his two-part interview by Frank Bresee on "Golden Days of Radio".) The audience responded to its absolute inanity with thunderous laughter. Questions from the audience were flavored with the kinds of personal reflections which revealed the depth of involvement people had with radio and with "Vic and Sade" in particular. Many of the questions led Clarence and Bill easily into relating more recollections, they would have done so without questions. Bill and Clarence were present for the purpose of sharing with the audience their affection, appreciation and respect for Paul Rhymer and his creative genius.

When the crowd finally dwindled to a die-hard core, we adjourned for refreshments and for still more intimate conversation with Clarence, his wife, Helen and Bill. They chatted, answered myriad questions and shared even more reminiscences with us, as graciously and as comfortably as if this were a gathering of good friends reunited after a long interval, eager to call up remembrances of pleasurable bygone days.

Bill and Clarence even improvised some "Vic and Sade" dialog, in character. One especially memorable touching and tender incident occurred as Bill, momentarily startled, grinned, then giggled in delight when "Uncle Fletcher" addressed him as "Rush, Honey".

The evening ended well past midnight, and all too soon. There are at least 2 1/2 inches of Bill's notebook still not touched upon.



- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| ✓ Allen | ✓ Helen Trent | ✓ Radio |
| ✓ Amos | ✓ Jack Armstrong | ✓ Sam Spade |
| ✓ Andy | ✓ Jack Benny | ✓ Scout |
| ✓ Archie | ✓ Kato | ✓ Script |
| ✓ Baby Snooks | ✓ King | ✓ Sgt. Preston |
| ✓ Burns | ✓ Lamont | ✓ Silver |
| ✓ Cast | ✓ Live | ✓ Stella Dallas |
| ✓ Chandu | ✓ Lone Ranger | ✓ Suspense |
| ✓ Dial | ✓ Ma Perkins | ✓ Tarzan |
| ✓ Fay | ✓ Mike | ✓ The FBI |
| ✓ Fibber McGee | ✓ Molly | ✓ The Shadow |
| ✓ Gangbusters | ✓ Music | ✓ Tom Mix |
| ✓ Green Hornet | ✓ News | ✓ Tony |
| | ✓ Plug | |

Ivan Shark's base, I discovered, was in a vast underground cave, accessible only through an underwater tunnel of considerable length. I reflected that any escape was going to be extremely difficult. I was shown "my" laboratory which was very well equipped. Spade was there, looking somewhat worse for the wear. Two guards stood by the single door, watching us.

"Foster," Spade said, "Would you mind telling me, slowly please, just what in blazes is going on here?"

"Quiet, Sam," I cautioned him. "Here, help me plug in some of these gizmos onto those whatchacallits. The trick is to look busy."

We worked all day, making something out of glass tubes, flasks, rubber hoses, and anything else I could find. It looked impressive as hell. While we worked I brought Spade up to date. Margo was being kept in Ivan Shark's own suite of rooms. Shark had already left on his wild goose chase. Spade and I each had a cell to sleep in.

That night Fury came to my cell.

"Oh, Kyle," she wailed. "What are we to do? My father will never let us marry. He means to kill you when you've completed the Door."

Ivan was considerate; he didn't want to make his daughter a widow. Fury suddenly looked shrewd.

"If I help you escape from here," she put forth, "Will you marry me when we're safe?"

I most definitely did not want to marry Fury Shark. Just as definitely, I wanted to live. Ergo, I lied.

"Sure."

She hugged me. God, she was strong.

"Oh, I'm so happy!" she squealed. "We'll have lots of kids and---"

I disentangled myself from her.

"Sure, sure, but we have to escape first."

"There is another way out," she said. "Besides the underwater tunnel. There is a stairway, carved from stone, that leads to the surface above us."

"What is above us?"

"Calcutta," she answered.

"Calcutta? India?"

"Yes, of course. The stairway opens into the basement of the Hoobli Hotel. Oh, what an excellent spot for a honeymoon!"

I had to keep her mind off that track.

"Listen, Fury, I won't leave unless Sam Spade and Margo Lane go with us."

Her baleful little eyes blazed.

"That hussy! If you feel anything towards her---"

"No, no, nothing like that. It's just that she pulled my fat out of the fire a few times and I want to return the favor, Spade, too."

Fury glared at me.

"You're positive?" she demanded.

"Yes, of course."

"Very well, Kyle. Come with me."

We left my cell and made our way down a corridor, picking up Spade on the way. When we got to Ivan Shark's quarters, Fury left us outside and went in alone. She came out dragging Margo. Margo looked very pale and drawn, but I knew she would make it. She's tough.

Fury led us to a small chamber at the farthest end of the huge cavern that housed Ivan Shark's base. She closed and locked the door behind us, then went to the wall opposite and inserted a peculiarly shaped key into a hole. The wall swung outwards and revealed a long, stone corridor, lit eerily by flickering gas lamps.

"This way," Fury said, and I smacked her on the chin. I didn't pull my punch because I knew she was as tough as anyone. She went down like a deflated blimp. We left her in that chamber, tied up with her own clothes, and entered the stone corridor. We pushed the wall back until we heard it latch close. We went on.

Shortly we came to a huge stone stairway, which curved up into the gloom above us. The lights became fewer as we went up. How long we climbed I can't say, we did have to stop several times to rest.

Finally, the lights were no more, and we continued upwards in darkness, stumbling. The stairs narrowed until we could only pass in single file. I led, then Margo, with Spade at the rear. All at once, I took a step and sprawled flat on my face.

"Kyle! What is it?" Margo breathed.

I got up.

"Watch it here," I said. "The steps have stopped."

We continued on. Soon, I walked into a wall. That was it. The tunnel had stopped. I felt around, looking for a crack, a protuberance, anything to indicate that this was an exit. Finally, I found a hole and inserted into it the strange key I had taken from Fury. This time the wall swung inwards, and we had to step back a few paces.

I saw lights through the opening, but not so bright as to blind us after the long darkness. We emerged into a large, damp, stone-walled room, which was the basement of the Hoobli Hotel. There were crates and boxes piled all over the place. And against one wall, bound, gagged, and seated on the floor, were two people. One was a man, handsome and dark haired. The other was a boy, blond and stringy looking.

I debated about untying them. I was getting very cautious of late. I pulled their gags off first.

"I'm Kyle Foster," I said quietly. "And this is Margo Lane and Sam Spade. Who are you?"

The man's voice was deep. He was Irish.

"My name is Pat Ryan and my little friend here is Terry Lee."

He looked at me quieriously.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

"It's a long story, Pat. Why are you tied up?"

It probably means something that by now I was through being surprised. It didn't faze me in the least that I was talking to Terry Lee and Pat Ryan. Sam and I began untying them.

"Blame it on the Dragon Lady" Pat said.

It figures, I said to myself.

"Yeah," put in Terry. "She's mixed up in a---"

"Terry," Pat cautioned.

"A conspiracy with Fu Manchu, among others." I finished for Terry.

Pat eyed me.

"You know, then."

"Yup." I said, and told him all about the Shadow and the Sharks.

"So you're the one that was wanted for the murder of Jack Armstrong?" Pat asked.

"What? Was wanted?"

"Why, yes. Oh, you couldn't have known. Fu Manchu has come out into the open. He has given an ultimatum to every government of every major nation in the world. They have forty-eight hours in which to dissolve themselves or Fu Manchu will destroy their capitol cities with some sort of ray. That was yesterday. And he claims the credit for having Armstrong killed. I guess that clears you, Kyle."

I was rather pleased. I was no longer a hunted murderer. I suddenly felt very light hearted.

Pat took command of our little group. First, we broke open some of the crates which, it turned out, held various weapons. I outfitted myself with a rifle and a handgun. When we were all armed, we made our way upstairs.

We emerged into the kitchen, which was empty. We cat-footed it outside into the darkness. I didn't know the time, but the eastern sky was lightening.

We headed for the docks. Pat told me he had friends with a boat. We reached the docks in about a quarter of an hour. The boat that Pat's friends gave us wasn't much. But we boarded the ancient scow and began rowing out to the center of the river. The boat had a single mast that supported a tattered sail, and a cranky steam engine. Pat waited until the sun had been up for an hour before deeming it safe enough to fire up the boiler. The little engine made a hellish noise, but it worked.

"Does anybody know where we are?" I asked. "Geography has never been one of my strong points."

Terry Lee looked at me like I was dumb. Maybe I was.

"Anybody would know that we're on the Ganges River, Headed south," he answered.

"Oh," I said.

"I figured on heading for Chittagong, in the Bengal," said Pat.

"Unless someone has a better idea."

We didn't.

"How long will it take?" I asked.

"Three days, maybe four. Assuming the Dragon Lady ~~doesn't~~ catch up with us."

I frowned, my light-hearted mood had vanished. Fu Manchu would be destroying cities at the end of the day, if governments hadn't capitulated to him. The Shadow had told me that he thought I might be a focal point in the whole affair of the Collier Door. While I didn't understand that, I felt I should be doing something to help. But what? The only lead I had was Singapore, hundreds of miles away. I decided to head for that city when I could. After all, the Shadow had given his life to protect me.

We traveled and talked. Pat filled us in on the news of the world from the time our ship had been sunk. Superman was missing. He had failed to answer many urgent calls. An attempt on the life of the fable Daddy Warbucks had been foiled by the faithful Punjab and the Asp. Captain Midnight had been wounded in a battle with a mysterious rocket ship. Sightings of similar rocket ships were being reported all over the world. And the criminal Green Hornet (well, they didn't know that he was a good guy) was purported to have helped Batman and Robin escape a Si Fan death trap in Gotham City. Mayland Smith and Dr. Petrie, Manchu's well-known adversaries, were last seen in Singapore, thus confirming the Shadow's information and my decision.

TO BE CONTINUED

The History of the NBC Radio Network, Part 5 (1950's)

By 1950, television had come of age as almost every middle class or upper middle class family could afford a TV receiver. Radio was, however, still a healthy adult and as NBC entered the fifties, programs like Fibber McGee and Molly, Judy Canova, Mr. District Attorney, Bob Hope and The Great Gildersleeve were still enticing large audiences. Even the big star programs like Tallulah Bankhead's "The Big Show" were just starting in the 50's. But as the fifties matured, it was quite evident that television was gaining ground by leaps and bounds. Radio found that their audiences were dwindling down to those who still did not own TV sets, those who did not like the shows being offered and automobile listeners. Sponsors pulled the big money out of radio and spent it on television. Radio had to change; new formats and economy were now the key words.

In 1955, NBC introduced a new 40-hour weekend show called MONITOR, which provided for network programming with both local and national advertising. MONITOR represented a new concept in radio, with its combination of interviews, remote pick-ups, comedy briefs, music and news. It eliminated the former set time periods, and worked on a "as long as necessary basis".

Radio documentaries such as NBC's "Biographies in Sound" became extremely popular.

In 1956, the following NBC shows which had been on the air for more than ten years were still entertaining larger numbers of listeners: Grand Old Opry, Boston Symphony Orchestra, The Telephone Hour, People Are Funny, Truth or Consequences, One Man's Family, Fibber McGee and Molly, The Great Gildersleeve, Friday Night Fights, American Forum of the Air, Lone Ranger, Pepper Young's Family, Right to Happiness, Young Widder Brown, The National Farm and Home Hour plus numerous newscasters and long running religious programs.

By the end of the fifties, although television was the new entertainment leader, radio still had not died as many had predicted it would. There were still 156 million radio receivers in working condition in the United States, more than three times the number of TV sets. Radio was still drawing as large of audiences as ever during the period of time television could not be watched.

COMING NEXT MONTH: THE HISTORY OF NBC, PART 6 (1960's and 1970's)

