PADIO DENVER Vol. 2, No. 9 March, 1977 TO THOSE THRILLING DAYS OF YESTERYEAR THE LONE RANGER! RIDES AGAIN

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March Meeting-The next meeting of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado will be held on March 20, 1977 at the Tara Hills Recreation Center, 10025 East Girard. The meeting will begin at 2 PM. <u>DIRECTIONS</u>: I-25 to Hampden, then east about 3 miles. Make the first left after the Jack-in-the-Box, go one block north and then one block east. It is almost adjacent to the Kennedy golf club which is right on the turn where Hampden and Havana. Remember it is Tara Hills because there is a Tara Woods complex nearby. It is a very nice place and we will have a great time. See you there.

GOOD LISTENING-John Dunning's schedule for the month of March is: Escape-"Two Came Back" from 8/4/50
I Love A Mystery-conclusion of "The Richards Curse" Jack Benny-Jack takes parrot to vet from 10/10/54

Lux Radio Theater-"Our Town" with Wm. Holden & Beulah Bondy Jack Benny-Purple Pirate from 10/17/54

Screen Darectors Playhouse-"Fort Apache" with John Wayne and Ward Bond from 8/5/49 Let's Pretend-"Faithful John" from 8/10/46 Jack Benny-Drive-in movie from 10/24/54

Perry Mason-isolated chapter from 1948 Charlie Chan-"Eye of Buddha" Academy Award Theater-"Foreign Correspondent" with Joseph Cotton from 7/24/46 Jack Benny-The Beavers do the Benny show from 2/20/55

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT- This is my 15th and LAST newsletter. I am turning everything over to Dan Danbom. Dan has experience in editing a magazine and I have seen some of his work and he is very good. I wish him every much success in editing RETURN WITH US NOW. I hope that those of you who have helped me will give Dan every bit of cooperation that you have given me. I know that Dan will try to make the newsletter even better than it is now. Give Dan your ideas on what you want to see in the newsletter and send him interesting things to put in it. If Dan has some ideas and needs your help, take the time and help. It is worth it. You are getting a lot more than what you are paying for and a few people can't do it all. Pitch in and get involved.

FOR SALE- Bruce Carteron has a used Uher reel-to-reel for sale for \$75. Bruce will get it partially repaired but it will need a little work. It would make a good second machine.

SPOTLIGHT ON OTR COLLECTORS (PART II) John and Pam Nicholson-John and Pam have been in the RHAC since August 175. They enjoy Fibber McGee, Dimension X, Lux Radio Theater and Amos 'n' Andy. John taped strictly on cassettes when he joined and had about 100 tapes. He then switched over to reels and now has about 150 reels. He has replaced the poor sounding shows with excellent sound. John says:" The RHAC means a place to meet other collectors, get information on shows and get involved in bulk buying. A person cannot collect shows on his own and have even a partial understanding of what this hobby is about. He can save 50-90% on purchasing of blank and prerecorded tape but most of all, a person doesn't know what he is missing until he meets many of the people of the RHAC". John is presently Secretary-Treasurer of the RHAC. Joe and Joyce Madden- The Madden's have been in the RHAC since March of 1976. They especially like comedy, music and drama. Joe is a comparatively new collector but someday would like to have all the Jack Benny shows. Joe has also switched from cassettes to reel tapes. Like most of our membership, Joe listened to John Dunning's show, heard about the club, came and joined. Joe and Joyce enjoy the RHAC because it enables them to meet people of a similar hobby, learn new taping techniques and get in on bulk purchasing. We are very fortunate to have members like the Madden's. James Kellogg-Jim joined the RHAC in June, 1975. He is a collector of "all shows possible". His collection has doubled since he joined us. Jim loves OTR because now he can realize what it was all about because many of us were too young to enjoy it the first time around. "It is a great hobby and a link with our past." Who can ever forget Jim's great comments about OTR at the February meeting? What a fine guy we have in Jim. Bob Trumbly- Bob joined us this past December. He now lives in Salt Lake City and he comments: " I first got into OTR while living in Denver. I listened to John Dunning. I missed it when I got to Salt Lake until I discovered that Joe Clark does a similar, but shorter, show here. It was about 6 months ago when I committed myself and bought a used deck and started trading with a friend who is in the RHAC as well as taping Joe Clark when possible, John Dunning. Since I started, I have added about 60-70 hours, maybe more. I plan to start taping from the RHAC library. I Like Lux, Suspense etc. and when I can get them, historical newscasts. We are happy to have good members like Bob. John and Pat Lloyd- Pat and I have been in the RHAC since the very start and we have really enjoyed it. Our favorites are Fibber McGee, Goldersleeve and Mel Blanc and all westerns. My collection has grown from about 50 to 150 reels since we joined the club. We enjoy gerting new collectors started (I have started about 4 people now) and we have been paid back tenfold. John Dunning got me started a few years ago for which I am very grateful. I think that the RHAC is a great organization for many reasons, mainly friendships that have been made and for the information that I have gotten from you all on equipment and techniques. I beleive that we are all in on the ground floor of an ever growing hobby and someday we will have a membership whose numbers will stagger your mind.

TRIVIA QUIZ AND CONTEST- Can you find the 45 blank words in this puzzle? Fill in the blanks to complete the title of an old time radio show, then find only the words in the blank spaces, in the puzzle. You will find them in different directions-vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backwards. Circle the words when found and check them off the list. Some letters are used more than once, in different words. When all words have been found, you will have 13 letters remaining and not used. Rearrange these letters to form the title of a comedy show:

BLUE BOLD KID KID WX"  LU & EM WX"  DUFFY'S WAR  FAVORITE FBI IN WAR  GREEN HERMIT'S LOBBY		OCSICILH NM GM	SYMMPROT	RMERAEAVRR	TURETEXCOTEN	ONVLMOENRNK	EAEMIUGAOL	VTMKOLSVIK	A C C I D O E S T	ANAONEHMLNGP	A R D N A M M U	ASYAMRIO	YSDNOMMURDYF
LOBBI JONES		M I E P	H		E R T O	A V				PE OG	A U	C E	E S
MY FRIEND,	-	YO	Ü		υH					C L			A
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BOOK													
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Now, here is the contest. The answers of this quiz are found elsewhere in this newsletter, except the final answer. It will be found in next month's newsletter. The first reader to find the answer will win a free tape rental from the library. If the winner is not able to tape, another suitable prize will be given. NO PHONE CALLS! ! Earlist postmark will win. NO PHONE CALLS! !

## REMINISCENSES OF OLD-TIME RADIO. . . . BY IRVING HALE PART III. THE POST-WAR PROGRAMS

When I get to OTR programs that came out after World War II, I tread on dangerous ground, since many of the younger whippersnappers in the RHAC have studied this area intensely, and have forgotten more than I ever knew. What I will do is discuss just a few programs that I know well, and try to stay even.

## Detectives, Hard-Boiled and Otherwise

Sam Spade

I cannot believe that I was only 14 when "Sam Spade" hit the airwaves like a tornado in the summer of 1946. Radio at that time was mostly sweetness and light such as Your Hit Parade(and now Frank Sinatra singing "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To..") and Ozzie and Harriet (Hi Ozzie. Hi Harriet. Hi Dad. Hi Rick. Hi Dad. Hi Dave. Hi Mom...).

Of the 21 Sam Spade programs that I have unearthed from OTR catalogs, none is the first of the series(as I recall), wherein Sam foiled a mass bank robbery. That episode was, I think, the best of the Spades. But what remains is fine enough, the greatest hard-boiled detective stories on the air, in my opinion.

First, there is the theme music, still sending a chill you know where after all these years. Then, the ringing phone, and we have settled into what is part routine and part surprise. It would be well to review a number of firsts that series set that are now taken for granted:

1. The hard-boiled detective is usually an ex-cop.

2. He has a female in his life who is madly in love with him. She may be a secretary, phone operator or neighbor. He couldn't care less about her.

3. The cops are usually called into the case, but will remain

one step behind always.

4. The HB detective knows one particular cop, with whom his relationship may vary from competitiveness to outright hostility.

5. HB is usually conked on the head once per case.

These rules were invented by the first, and to my mind the greatest, writer of tough detective fiction, Dashiel Hammett. Some claim later writers such as Raymond Chandler or Ross Macdonald are better, but Chandler's plots can be confusing(I defy anyone to understand "The Big Sleep") and Macdonald's stories toward their end have more characters and complexity than an Alexandre Dumas novel.

Apparently, Hammett didn't directly write the Sam Spade radio programs, but his influence was certainly there. I have reached an age where I like a shapely phrase nearly as much as a curvy female leg, and Spade's lip was as fast as his gun. A few examples follow:
From "The Bluebeard Caper":

Sam: I have two theories. Either he did it or he didn't. Effie, Sam's secretary (hurrying off to type his report: I'll just fix the syntax as I go along.

Sam: Sin tax! In California?

From "The Overlord Caper" Effie(philosophically): It's later than we think. Sam: It can't be! My watch says three minutes of nine.

And finally, a classic from "The Bafic Cup Caper": Effie(ashamed): Those criminals were on that boat ... You jumped

overboard ... Sam: Who do you think it was that got himself shot out of a torpedo tube in that submarine?

Effie: You, Sam?

Sam: No, you think I'm crazy? I did something that few radio detectives ever do, sweetheart. I called the harbor patrol, singlehanded using only one nickel and had them picked up.

Effie: (adoringly) Oh Sam, I wish I'd been there. Sam: Well, it was just a small phone booth. Besides, if you'd been

there, it would have been out of order or something.

Devotees playing the Spade programs from records or tape these days have an advantage over the original radio listener. Back then, one was so busy enjoying the byplay, that often the ingenious plots got away unnoticed. Now, one can play them back a second time, or more.

SS spawned a spate of imitators. John Dunning thinks that Johnny Dollar is better, and I disagree, but he is right that Steve Dunne as Spade in the later programs didn't have nearly

the horsepower of Howard Duff.

None finer than Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, you will say. Sherlock Holmes True enough for films (although earlier movie buffs prefer Arthur Wontner or William Gillette as Holmes and Bruce's Watson is quite a bit more bumbling than A. Conan Doyle's). But I think they were exceeded on OTR. Many of the Rathbone-Bruce programs were "noncanonical" (not written by Doyle) and were loosely "based on" Doyle stories. Very loosely. Also, in some of the Petri wine programs, Watson introduces the programs while sitting by a garden in Northern California! Finally, the background music, played on an electric organ, evokes third-rate Inner Sanctum instead of Victorian London.

The finest OTR Holmes and Watson? Sir John Gielgud and Sir Palph Richardson, in my opinion. Perhaps a lucky few of you got to see these two recently in "Richard III" on Channel 6. What modulated English voices they have! They did only 16 half-hour programs and it's a pity there aren't more. The stories are wellwritten and faithful to the original. Indeed, strict Holmes scholars would shoot me, but I think that in at least one instance, they improved on the original. Doyle's accounts, great as they are, lacked humor. In "The Empty House" Holmes returns to London

following a three-year sojourn in Tibet, while the world thought that he had been killed by Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls. At the end of the Gielgud-Richardson version, when Holmes is returning to 221-B Baker St. for the first time in three years, he remarks what a joy it will be to play his violin again. Watson (Richardson) says,:"That's a matter of opinion, Holmes." Finally, the violin theme brings back a London"where it's always 1895."

Many pairs have played Holmes and Watson on OTR. How many can you name? Finally, name a famous radio and movie actor who, at different times, played both Holmes and his arch-enemy Moriarty.

different times, played both Holmes and his arch-enemy Moriarty.

I had hoped to conclude my reminiscenses with this article,
but verbosity has become a function of advancing age. If John Lloyd
can live after one more heart attack suffered from receiving my
writings right on the deadline, I will inflict another pastiche
on readers of a future issue.

Answers to questions: At least <u>nine</u> Holmes-Watson teams are available from OTR catalogs. Besides Rathbone-Bruce and Gielgud-Richardson, there are Richard Gordon and Leigh Lovell, who broadcast in the 1930's. Carleton Hobbs and Norman Shelley have done all of Doyle's stories on the BBC, of which most are available in the U.S. Tom Conway (George Sanders brother) paired up with Nigel Bruce, but only one of their programs seems to have turned up so far. Orson Welles played Holmes to Ray Collins' Watson in a Mercury Theater presentation of William Gillette's play "Sherlock Holmes". Other duos are John Stanley and Alfred Shirley, Richard Handel and Brian Coleman and Robert Langford and Kenneth Baker(the last from South Africa).

Orson Welles played Holmes as noted above, and did Moriarty in "The Final Problem" with Gielgud and Richardson, probably the best program of that outstanding series.

CIRCULATING LIBRARY —We did comparatively well on the library at the February meeting. We had \$25 in sign-ups on the new tapes available and we made \$16 on the old library. Back in October, it was voted that the old library be kept. A lot of hard work went into cataloging these old reels so you new members better give some time in looking over what is available and rent some of them. There will be another 15 reels available from the old library at the next meeting. Also, let Paul Carrier know what shows you would like to see added to the library in the future.

SPECIAL THANKS-I want to send along thanks from the membership of the RHAC to Ernie and Mary Jessen for several reasons. The Jessen's took 45 reels of the old library and cataloged them for the members and brought them to the meeting and handled the signups for those reels. They also handled the entire arranging of the summer picnic-meeting. The two projects were very time consuming and we all appreciate it. It is great to have fine people like the Jessen's with us. Thank them when you see them because they did it for YOU. Thanks also to Jack Richards for cataloging 29 reels of the old library and having them available for us.

.BY TOM DANIELS THE NETWORKS.

The History of the ABC Radio Network (Part 2)

For a few years, NBC (The Red was now dropped because they only owned the one network) and Blue (soon changed to ABC after Noble took control) operated out of the same building as most of ABC's studios and facilities were located in NBC's building where the Red and Blue originated. I've even seen it in print for awhile, that ABC used to have to warn new employees (announcers and Engineers) not to push a certain button on the control panels, as it would automatically put the NBC chimes out over ABC lines.
ABC, getting the latest start in life of any of the four

major networks, began pioneering its format and trying to reach

a respectible slot in the rating war.

Profitable programs became a focus of internetwork struggles. Bing Crosby was bone of contention. In 1946, renewal negotiations for his show were under way and he asked for the right to tape-record his Kraft radio series, scheduled for NBC. This would allow him to edit, to experiment and to record only when in good voice. NBC resisted the plan, fearing it would doom network broadcasting. But ABC quickly welcomed Crosby and the tape recorder, and began to lure other talent with the same privilege. By doing repeat broadcasts by tape, ABC also began to save overtime costs. By 1947, ABC welcomed the disc-jockey to network programming. Before long, the other networks followed suit.

In January, 1948, comedian Fred Allen on NBC was enjoying a healthy 28.7 rating on his Ford program. That same year, ABC put on a new show "Stop the Music" opposing him. Within a year, Fred Allen's rating dropped to 11.2 and ABC's "Stop the Music" rose from nowhere to a 20. By 1950, Fred Allen was gone from the scene. The "Stop the Music" success, meanwhile, built a mania for series in which money or merchandise was the attraction. But finally, in 1951, "Stop the Music" rating fell to an 8.3 and give-away shows began to move to television-or oblivion. ABC tried a few other give-away shows and audience participation shows, but it was the old story of too little-too late.

Today, ABC has been very successful in offering it's 1,479 affiliates a choice of four subnetworks. In 1974, ABC had 360 contemporary affiliates, 386 entertainment stations, 219 FM formats, and 514 information users. ABC is now located at 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, 10019. They own WABC, New York; KABC, Los Angeles; KGU, San Francisco; WXYZ, Detroit; KQV, Pittsburgh; and KXYZ in Houston.

COMING NEXT MONTH: A HISTORY OF THE MUTUAL BROADCASTING SYSTEM.

SAD 'NOTE: Virginia Payne, star of Ma Perkins for over 27 years and over 7000 shows, passed away on February 9. She was in her 70's. She will long be remembered by everyone.

The big bands depended just as much on radio for exposure during the thirties and forties as did the singers and the vocal groups in the fifties and sixties. But there was one huge difference: much of the music of the big bands went over the air live instead of on records.

Big bands headlined numerous top radio series. Many were starred for several years on the Fitch Bandwagon, which, during the late thirties, presented most of the leading orchestras on programs that featured an MC named Tobe Reed, who talked with the leaders and generally tried to humanize the bands and musicians. Later, Coca-Cola with its Spotlight series also broadcast music of many name bands direct from numerous locations, including,

during the war years, service camps.

As a group, the cigarette manufacturers really got behind the big bands. Camels sponsored the Benny Goodman and Bob Crosby bands in swries highlighted by a weekly commentary on the news, called "Newsy Bluesies", composed and sung by Johnny Mercer, with Dan Seymour, now head of J. Walter Thompson, a major advertising agency, as announcer. Later the same cigarette company sponsored Vaughn Monroe's band. Chesterfield allied itself with several top bands-Hal Kemp's, Glenn Miller's and Harry James', with future movie star Paul Douglas as announcer. Raleigh-Kool sponsored the Tommy Dorsey band for a number of years, with future television star Bud Collyer as announcer. Philip Morris went along with Horace Heidt, while Old Gold used numerous groups-Paul Whiteman, Artie Shaw, Larry Clinton, Frankie Carle and Woody Herman.

But the longest-lived cigarette-sponsored series was that of the American Tabacco Company, which in addition to its Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge, sponsored what was first called "The Lucky Strike Hit Parade" and later simply "Your Hit Parade". Here the songs rather than the bands became the big attraction as listeners were kept in suspense right to the end of each program waiting to hear what tune had gained the number-one spot on "The Lucky Strike Survey", a poll whose results sometimes baffled publishers and bandleaders who felt it should have been conducted

more thoroughly and analytically.

By far the most exciting sounds came from the established dance bands, some during their commercial programs but many more during their broadcasts direct from where the bands were playing-Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook, The Palomar, The Hotel Sherman, Glen Island Casino. The Aragon, Elitch Gardens, The Palladium and many, many more spots throughout the country that featured name and semi-name bands.

These network broadcasts were exceedingly important to the bands. They gave the groups exposure and publicity that they couldn't possibly afford to buy. Consequently, competition for these jobs became keen. This meant that bands could accept low wages for engagements in spots with radio outlets, often staying

on for weeks and losing money while hopefully gaining enough national recognition through air time so that when they finally did go out on one-nighters and theater tours they could demand and get more money.

The vast majority of remote broadcasts took place at night-from eleven to one on CBS and both NBC networks and from eleven

to two on the Mutual network.

In 1939 NBC proudly announced summer broadcasts over its two networks, the Red and the Blue, of a total of forty-nine name bands, including those of Charlie Barnet, Blue Barron, Count Basie, Larry Clinton, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Horace Heidt, Woody Herman, Gene Krupa, Glenn Miller, Jan Savitt and Artie Shaw. CBS at the same time trumpeted a list of twenty-one signatories that included Cab Calloway, Jan Garber, Benny Goodman, Sammy Kaye, Hal Kemp, Kay Kyser, Ozzie Nelson, Jack Teagarden and Paul Whiteman.

But those seventy bands by no means represented the total that were playing over the air. Both networks featured others. And there was also the vast Mutual network, which brought its microphones into clubs that the others didn't have time for, spots that featured some of the younger and often equally exciting bands.

The quality of 'the broadcasts varied tremendously. A great deal depended on the room's acoustics. Big dance halls generally projected more exciting sounds; smaller, more intimate hotel and night-club rooms projected smaller, deader tones. Engineers were all-important, too. Some had good ears for music. They could recognize which instuments should predominate and adjusted their dials accordingly. Others had tin ears, and some of their broadcasts were horrendous.

The right announcer was important to the big bands. If he projected enthusiasm for the music, the entire tenor of the broadcast could be uplifted. Consequently, many bandleaders wined and dined these men, hoping that they would respond with the sort of inspirational gab that would let the nation know just how great the band was. Sometimes, though, the results were pretty ridiculous, as overzealous, underinformed announcers spieled inane jive talk and cliches in hysterical attempts to match the band's musical excitement.

During 1941, so far as radio broadcasts were concerned, some of the great tunes of all time were completely overlooked. That was the year in which the radio networks and ASCAP(the American Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers), which collected for almost all the top composers, waged their big war. The cause was simple: ASCAP wanted more money for licensing its music; the networks refused to raise the ante.

It turned out to be a battle between two powerful and rich groups. For a full year, until they finally reached an agreement with the Society, the networks banned all ASCAP tunes from their networks. To fill the void they set up their own collection agency, BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.), offering attractive terms to new writers and any ASCAP composers who would defect. At first their music suffered badly when compared with that of any ASCAP writers like the Gershwins, Rogers and Hart, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, John Mercer, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, and others of their stature,

though in later years it improved perceptibly. Meanwhile, band-leaders, faced with having to play music they didn't especially like, often turned to very old standards whose copyrights had

expired and were no longer controlled by ASCAP.

The quality of dance band remotes deteriorated rather drastically. The less-inspiring songs were one factor. But equally important was the "no-adlibbing" ban that the networks imposed on musicians. This meant that all solos were required to be written out and submitted to the networks before each broadcast so that no strains of any ASCAP tunes might possibly seep through. Consequently, much of the spontaneity that sparked the broadcasts of the swing band was lost during all of 1941.

Obviously, bands could no longer play their well-known hit arrangements on the air. Nor could they play their theme songs, for which they substituted a rash of melodies, almost all of which have long since been forgotten. Not so, however, their regular themes, which returned in 1942, and the memories of which still release waves of nostalgia for big band fans everywhere. There were melodies that set each band apart from others, at least at the opening and close of each broadcast. After that it wasn't always possible to make out just who was imitating whom. Nothing, though, was more personal to a band than its theme.

The big bands may have died, but their themes-never!

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS TO THE TRIVIA QUIZ-BLUE BEETLE, BOLD VENTURE, BOSTON BLACKIE, CISCO KID, CLARA, LU & EM, DIMENSION X, DUFFY'S TAVERN, FAVORITE STORY, FBI IN PEACE AND WAR, GREEN HORNET, HERMIT'S CAVE, HOBBY LOBBY, LORENZO JONES, MY FRIEND, IRMA, NERO WOLFE, SEALED BOOK, ROGUES GALLERY, AMOS 'N' ANDY, DATE WITH JUDY, EASY ACES, YOUR HIT PARADE, GROUCHO MARX, LONE RANGER, ARTIE SHAW & ORCH, ARCH OBELER'S PLAYS, BELL TELEPHONE HOUR, GREAT GILDERSLEEVE, HOPALONG CASSIDY, ABBOTT & COSTELLO, BLACK MUSEUM, BULLDOG DRUMMOND, PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE, YOUNG WIDDER BROWN, AGAIN DUFFY'S TAVERN, CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON, COLUMBIA PRESENTS CORWIN, DAVID HARDING COUNTERSPY, GENE AUTRY'S MELODY RANCH, HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL, MANHATTAN MERRY GO ROUND, CASEY, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER, COMMAND PERFORMANCE, MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN, BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25th CENTURY, MISTER DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS AND ARRANGE THE REMAINING LETTERS INTO THE FINAL ANSWER, DROP ME A LINE WITH THE ANSWER IN ORDER TO WIN FIRST PRIZE.

ANOTHER FINE OTR OFFER- I have recently heard from Thomas Riggs in New Jersey. He has many tremendous offers for OTR collectors. There are magazines, posters and other radio related material. It looks like it is a very professional organization. I will bring all the information to the March meeting for you all to take a look at.