

Return with us now...

The Radio Historical Association of Colorado



"Old Time Radio" has been saved — again. With the announcement in early February that the station had fired its general manager and program director, it appeared possible that John Dunning's "Old Time Radio" program might also go, but the latest news is that "Old Time Radio" will continue.

Better still, there is a possibility that we will be hearing more of John Dunning on KFML, perhaps playing some old band music.

For those of us who grew to love the loose and unpredictable KFML, the station's format is disappointing to say the least. It is not a surprise. Heck, folks, radio has been going downhill for years. Each station has been locked in a race toward coming up with programming to reach the lowest common denominator, and the changes in KFML are but another step toward the finish line. We can only be thankful that the new management at KFML thinks there is an audience, with bucks in hand, willing to listen to "Old Time Radio."

What would we do without "Old Time Radio?" Many of us have the program to thank for generating our initial interest in old time radio. And who among us hasn't looked forward to the program so that we could dub another program for our collections? How many of the members of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado have come to us after being referred



to us by either John or Harry Tuft? We owe KFML our thanks, and we owe John and Harry our continued support. We also owe the sponsors of "Old Time Radio" our patronage.

That feeling of uncertainty many of us felt about KFML isn't a comfortable feeling, but it is not an uncommon feeling for John Dunning to have. Anyone who writes for a living, such as John, learns to live with

uncertainty. A writer is uncertain if his idea will develop into a good story, is uncertain if this publisher of that will like his work, is uncertain what will appear on that blank piece of paper in his typewriter.

Some of us may have a little uncertainty ourselves. Just who is John Dunning, for instance?

John Dunning, first and foremost, is modest. He was born in South Carolina thirty-odd years ago. He has been a glass-cutter, a groom at

Centennial Race Track and a highly respected investigative reporter for *The Denver Post*. He's written numerous articles for magazines and two books, *The Holland Suggestions* and *Tune in Yesterday*, a book which is to radio buffs as *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care* is to new parents. John's now working on another novel, this one set in the twenties.

John's hobby, of course, is old time radio, and his collection of 13,000-plus shows formed the

basis for *Tune in Yesterday*. There is no doubt that John Dunning has done as much for old time radio as anyone in the entire country. We're lucky Denver's his home. We're lucky KFML will keep "Old Time Radio." And we're especially lucky to consider John Dunning our friend.

So, thank you, John and Harry, and thank you KFML. For the time being at least, dramatic radio in Denver has one more chance.

LATE NEWS! John's old music show will premiere March 19—we think, from 1 to 3 on KFML.

PHOTO BY DAVID CUPP

MARCH MEETING- The March meeting of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado will be held at Wyatt's Cafeteria in the Cherry Creek Shopping Center on Sunday, March 19 at 6PM. Wyatt's Cafeteria is right next to the movie theater in the shopping center. We might add that the meeting is scheduled to BEGIN at 6 PM. Please come early so you can eat and be done by the time the meeting is scheduled.

GOOD LISTENING--John Dunning's schedule for the month of March is as follows:

- 3/5 Dragnet-Ten year old boy disappears from 6/7/51
CBS Radio Workshop-Hail and Farewell and Season of Disbelief from 1956
Fibber McGee and Molly-Rare books from 2/17/48
- 3/12 Lux Radio Theater-Presenting Lily Mars from 3/11/46
Fibber McGee and Molly-Short wave to the Phillipines from 2/24/48
- 3/19 Dimension X-Mars is Heaven from 7/7/50
This is London with Edward R. Murrow from 1941
Pic and Pat
Fibber McGee and Molly-Jury duty from 3/2/48
- 3/26 London After Dark with Edward R. Murrow from 8/24/40
Drene Time from 2/23/47
Suspense-No Escape with James Cagney from 12/16/48

MANY THANKS--. . . .to Dan Danbom for the great cover photo and story. When the idea came up to honor John Dunning with cover story Dan was right there to help in any way he could. Dan had the lead book review in last Sunday's Denver Post Roundup Section. He really has a talent for journalism. I wish I were a good righter like hem!
Cops, sorry!

WHERE ARE THEY?- That is the question that a lot of new members are asking about the "old" tape library. We have asked many times in the past that tapes be returned as soon as possible. Ernie Jessen tells me that a lot of the old tapes are out and haven't been returned for several months. Remember there are others waiting to use these tapes and it is income lost if we cannot keep them in circulation. One suggestion has been made that if the tapes are not returned at the meeting after which they are borrowed that an additional charge be made, much like an overdue library book. We would appreciate it if you would contact Ernie right away.

CORRECTION- The trivia quiz in last months issue of Return With Us Now had a mistake that was a big problem in completing the puzzle. Here is the correction:Start in the lower left corner(the letter S) and count up 4 lines(the letter E), then go right nine letters. It shows O but it should be a D. I am really sorry about it if it caused any problems in completing the puzzle.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS- Welcome to new members George Ravelo, Ralph Avolio, Ernest Rethschulte, Barbara Bell, Stan Whicker and James McNally. They will be added to next month's membership list. We hope you all enjoy the RHAC and look forward to a long friendship.

GET WELL WISHES--. . . .to Dick Mullins who has a broken leg. Hope he is up and around very soon.

AN OUTSIDE VIEW OF JOHN DUNNING AND HARRY TUFFT... by John Adams

The time was 9:55 AM. The station door was locked tighter than Fort Knox. The best super sleuth couldn't get in if he wanted. I had been told that the best way to get in was to throw small rocks at the station windows to get the attention of those inside. I hoped that the rocks I selected wouldn't go right through the windows. Luckily, Harry shows up right in time outside the studio.

Harry Tufft- An average height man with raven black beard and hair to match. His clothes did not indicate that he was on his way to Sunday services. He came rushing up to the door, trying to balance a suitcase, two large coffees and sweet rolls, looking for his door key in this pocket and that.

I offered to assist by taking the suitcase. It must have been loaded with bricks from the weight of it. Trying to balance the coffee and rolls and fit the key into the lock was some sight. Somehow, maybe after so many Sundays of the same routine, the door was opened and Harry hit the stairs on the run. He took two at a time right up to the studio--not spilling a drop of coffee or dropping a single thing on the way.

Harry is not as old as John Dunning would have the listeners believe. No one could keep up the pace that Harry does and be a day over (39?). Even his beard shows few signs of graying unless he is using Miss Clairol.

In the studio Harry doesn't slow down one bit. The suitcase was opened and to my surprise it contained records and tapes, not bricks, for his 10:30 AM Sunday Funnies. Harry tries to get ready for his show, running here and there for this record or tape. So if the Sunday Funnies is late, something in his routine has gone amiss.

In the parking lot, John Dunning pulls up in his compact car. The door slowly opens and John unwinds himself from the compact. He doesn't appear to be on his way to Sunday services either since he is wearing a plaid shirt, jacket and felt hat. The "felt hat" has become John's trade mark as much as it was to Walter Winchell and Jimmy Durante. The hat never comes off--I'd like to check with his wife to see if he wears it at night, too.

John Dunning- A very tall man (6'6" or more), very quiet, shy and very likeable. He enters the studio with his Sunday tapes held in one hand. John, not a bit over 35 is an encyclopedia of old time radio knowledge. John and Harry's close friends call them "The Mutt and Jeff of Radio".

Harry has his Sunday Funnies underway and is trying to load John's tape on the machine. Harry is at one end of the studio and John at the other. Harry is in full charge of buttons to cut the mikes in and out. The phone is ringing out in the office. Harry looks at John with a pleading look in his eyes for John to answer it. They take turns in this task, but most of the time the caller wants to talk to John.

Harry and John don't run the show by the clock but John knows that the longer they comment, the longer it will be getting home to his wife, two children and Sunday dinner.

Harry is a good radio engineer but there are buttons and switches that forget to be pushed or thrown, tape machines that don't always want to work, fast forward switches that get pushed by accident, and chairs that break under stress, and notes that are never at hand or spilled on the floor. In spite of all of this, KFML holds the top rating spot for Sunday Funnies and Old Time Radio. We are sure that there has been no rigging of ratings here (for out-of-town readers this is a local joke as two top Denver DJ's are being investigated for tampering with ratings).

John Dunning has had offers from other stations to do his show but without Harry and KFML, Denver's Old Time Radio would not be the same.

ADDITIONS TO THE RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

#052 ALL HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL 1200'

Dave Enderbee-1/18/59; Winchester Quarantine-2/22/59; Heyboy's Revenge-3/1/59; Mother of Moonridge-3/8/59; Death of a young gunfighter-3/15/59; Owen Deaver-3/22/59; The Colonel and the Lady-4/12/59; The Gunsmith-4/26/59.

#053 ALL STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD 1200'

The Truth Pays Off-3/15/52; The Love Tree-3/22/52; Night Operator-3/29/52; Back Home-4/5/52; Fantasy Impromptu-4/12/52; Cupid Is a Hobo-4/19/52; Love Can Happen to Anybody-4/26/52; The Experiment-5/24/52.

#054 ALL INNER SANCTUM MYSTERIES 1200'

The Corpse in the Taxi; Dead Man's Deal-8/28/45; Dead to Rights-5/22/45; Musical Score-5/29/45; The Judas Clock-4/17/45; Song of the Slasher-11/24/45; Death Across the Board-6/5/45; Portrait of Death-6/12/45.

#055 LES MISERABLES 1200'

The Bishop-7/23/37; Javero-7/30/37; The Trial-8/6/37; Cosette-8/13/37; The Grave-8/20/37; The Barricade-8/27/37; Conclusion-9/3/37; Truth or Consequences-5/11/48.

#056 ALL HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL 1200'

Gunshy-5/3/59; San Sebastian-5/10/59; Silver Queen-5/17/59; Evil Time-5/24/59; Blind courage-5/31/59; Roped-6/7/59; Bitter Wine-6/14/59; North Fork-6/21/59.

#057 HISTORY OF RADIO 1200'

Age of Innocence; Radio Goes Dramatic; The Long Distance Runners; The Closing Curtain; Themes Like Old Times (Parts 1 and 2).

#058 MISC: DRAMA 1200'

Academy Award Theater-Pride of the Marines 6/15/46; Academy Award Theater-The Maltese Falcon; Screen Guild Theater-Red Dust; Screen Guild Theater-Allergic to Ladies; Richard Diamond, Private Detective; Suspense-The Guilty Always Run; Suspense-The Man Who Knew How; Suspense-The Man Who Thought He Was Edward G. Robinson.

#059 ALL LET'S PRETEND 1200'

Why The Sea Is Salty-8/22/42; The Little Mermaid-8/29/42; The Elves and the Shoemaker-9/5/42; The Water of Life-9/12/42; Gigi and the Magic Ring-9/19/42; The House of the World-12/26/42; The Golden Touch-1/23/43; Princess Moonbeam-3/20/43.

RHAC LIBRARY-continued

#060 ALL DRAGNET 1800'

Dentist's wife is missing-6/14/51; Hit and run-6/21/51; Old Man's wife dies-6/28/51; Missing mother and child-7/5/51; Richmond for ransom-7/26/51; Rose Baker missing-3/27/52; Check forgery-8/21/52; Kevin and Bruce-8/28/52; Alfred Prater dies-9/4/52; Arthur McKinley, Florist-11/23/52; Pawnshop Partner beaten to death-11/30/52; The Big Mask-Part 1-12/28/52.

#061 ALL CAVALCADE OF AMERICA 1200'

John Brown of Osawatomie-12/11/40; The Great Man Votes-12/15/41; Listen to the People-7/5/43; The Law West of the Pecos-6/11/45; Names of the Land-12/24/45; Venture in the Silk Hat-1/14/46; I, Mary Peabody-3/21/50; Greeley of the Tribune-2/6/51.

Note: This brings us right up to and including the selections offered at the February meeting. We will add more selections every month and we hope for great support from all members.

HAPPENINGS HERE AND THERE

.....Paul Carrier has a Sony 350 for sale. It is in working condition and Paul is asking \$40....I had a nice call from Chuck Nelson of Brooklyn, New York. Chuck is a new member and new collector. He is very interested in the RHAC and wants to start using the library..... I also had many letters in the past weeks wanting information about the RHAC. One of note is from Cam Denoncour, a collector of all sorts of John Charles Thomas material. He also has a lot of big band remotes and would like to join us and trade with us.....Jim Vaughan was very lucky to find several old radio magazines. One of the stories appears in this issue of Return With Us Now and he will share many others with us in future issues.....Anyone interested in the Bing Crosby biography can find some issues at Waldenbooks for \$2.98. I bought it when it came out for \$8.95. I also saw some Bob and Ray books for \$1.49..... I have a Panasonic AM-FM-FM stereo-8 track player portable car unit for sale. It is in great shape and I am asking \$75.....In other clubs' newsletters the combination newsletter that we did with the OTR Club of Buffalo has received a lot of praise. All those who contributed to it can be very proud of their efforts. We will be contacting many other clubs this year and set up a very early deadline for articles.

FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting of the RHAC was one of the best meetings we have had. We solved some of the tape library problems we had. It looks like it will get good support now with your cooperation. John Nicholson provided some fine entertainment with a recorded trivia quiz which Don Reeves won. President Irving Hale asked for someone to organize another shopping mall display. We will all help but we need one person to get it together. Won't you step forward to do it? Irving also would like us all to write in support of John Dunning's show. Write to: Bruce Lien, PO Box 440, Rapid City, S.D. and let him know that we all support OTR here in Denver. You do it! Don't leave it for the next member. The library was supported better this month than any of the past 6 months, thanks to you all.

SAM SPADE (PART II) The People Behind The Program. . .by Irving Hale

As was the case with last month's article, my chief source here is an anonymously written log listing virtually all Sam Spade programs, which was furnished to me by Scott McCoy. In addition to the log, it contains background information which is reprinted below in its entirety. I have added a few remarks which appear in parentheses and are preceded by my initials.

Bob Tallman, writer of many a Sam Spade adventure, describes how the radio series got its start. "E.J. Rosenberg had somehow finagled the radio rights to the Dashiell Hammett character Sam Spade. He wanted Bill Spier to produce and direct it and myself to write. With Jo Eisenger as my collaborator and the able advice of Spier, a pilot script was written and a host of actors auditioned for the role of Spade. Kay Thompson, MGM's top music arranger, was at that time married to Bill Spier. She was and is a woman of infallible taste, with an unerring ear for the sound of success. Howard Duff, a young and unknown actor, was one of those auditioning. To everyone's astonishment, Kay said that Howard was IT and no one else would do. Bill took exception and I had my doubts about Duff--but not about Kay who had never, to my knowledge, taken a strong stand that was a wrong one. Jo Eisenger abented himself from the whole conflict and Kay prevailed. Our first script was influenced by the Bogart performance and Howard's talents did not lie in that direction. Somehow we overlooked the first Hammett short story about Spade in which he was described as 'a blond satan' with a diabolical sense of humor. Kay pointed (or screamed) this out; and that is how The Adventures of Sam Spade became the first of all the send-ups of the fictional appreciation of self-deprecatory humor (which was, of course, a Spier specialty) and Duff was the best possible choice for the role".

The Adventures of Sam Spade premiered on ABC as a summer replacement series on July 12, 1946. William Spier was Producer-Director of the 13-week stanza which was written by Bob Tallman and Jason James. Howard Duff played Sam, with Lurene Tuttle as Effie.

The series was deemed so successful by CBS and the critics that the network outbid other competitors for the broadcast rights to The Adventures of Sam Spade. It picked up a sponsor, Wildroot, and made its CBS debut on September 29, 1946. (I.H: Because the summer series ran on Friday nights and ended October 4, 1946, while the CBS series started Sunday, September 29 of that year, there was an overlap. One pair of programs was heard 9/27 and 9/29, and another 10/4 and 10/6.) The scripts for the summer series had been based on stories by Hammett himself. Having run out of stories to adapt, Tallman and James were forced to write an original story each week. William Spier again produced and directed the show, with the lead roles still taken by Duff and Tuttle.

The March 16, 1947 show, "The Ignorance About Bliss", was the last one co-written by Jason James. As of 3/23/47, the scripts were co-written by Gil Doud. "The Champion Caper", heard on 8/7/49, was the last program by Tallman and Doud. Starting August 14 of that year, all scripts were written by E. Jack Neuman, Harold Swanton and John Michael Hayes.

The September 18, 1949 program was the last show broadcast over CBS. Beginning one week later, the series moved to NBC. (I.H: The title of the lead-off NBC program was a beaut, "The Chargoggagogg-chaubunagungamaugg Caper:. It is the longest geographical place-name in the United States, and must be one of the lengthiest words in any language. It is a lake in Massachusetts, and comes from an Indian phrase meaning, " You fish on your side, I'll fish on my side, and nobody shall fish in the middle".)

"The Femme Fatale Caper", heard on September 17, 1950, signalled a temporary halt to the series. Howard Duff quit to go on to other, not better, things. The show returned on 11/17/50 with Steve Dunne in the title role. All other production credits remained the same. The April 20, 1951 show, "The Rowdy Dowser Caper", was the last of the series.

(I.H: While the log has been very informative, it had little to say on Sam Spade's creator, Dashiell Hammett. He had a life as interesting as his detective, and will be the subject of a column next month.)

ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST

(R=reels, C=cassettes)

Rod W. Button
15629 W. Bellview
Morrison, Co. 80465
697-9103
Store Manager R-100; C-500

Mary Neuske
5532 Newland Way #105
Arvada, Co. 80002
421-1464
Teacher R-20, C-40

Terry Goodwin
11852 W. 27th Dr.
Lakewood, Co. 80215
237-3907
Dentist R-200

Harral Peacock(Mary)
324 W. 99th Ave.
Northglenn, Co. 80221
452-2258
School Counselor R-500

Gary Lindberg(Terrell)
4198 Xenon St.
Wheatridge, Co. 80033
424-2346
Teacher R-5, C-20

James Reeb(Lois)
8392 Inspiration Dr.
Parker, Co. 80134
841-3993
Customer Engineer C-200

Charles R. Nelson, Jr.
162 7th Ave. Apt. 4C
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215
788-4607
Tin Knocker C-218

Herbert G. Schlegel(Suzanne)
24 Gardner St.
Beverly, Mass. 01915
927-2827
Teacher-Coach R-20

Carl Neustrand(Diane)
12120 E. Iowa Dr.
Aurora, Co. 80012
750-8226
US Air Force Photography

Bill Tedrick
2965 S. St. Paul
Denver, Co. 80210
756-0763
Monitor-Physicians Network R-50

Note: There are still a lot of questionnaires that have not been returned. I'll be sending them to new members and also to those who told me they lost them. We are trying very hard to get a current membership list and information that the RHAC needs. Please respond.

ARTHUR GODFREY STARTS SOMETHING from Radio and TV Mirror Magazine issue of July, 1950. Submitted by Jim Vaughan.

One fine spring night in 1924, a red-headed young fellow, with a banjo comprising the bulk of his luggage, turned up in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey. Soon word got around town, "That Godfrey boy's back!".

He'd been gone quite awhile, Arthur had--ever since that time he'd told his high school teacher, Miss Twigg, "I'd like to go out and see the world, even if it's only through a porthole!".

Hasbrouck Heights hadn't changed much. It was still the sleepy town where Arthur had come, with his parents, when he was two years old, back in 1905. Still the same town where, as a child, he'd played in the big Teterboro swamps nearby. Where, at eleven, he'd delivered for Ehler's Grocery during the summer, to help out at home. Where he'd had other jobs, too: driving Schaeffer's bakery wagon--and "exercising" the Schaeffer horse by riding it hell-for-leather down the main street, bareback, past the house of whichever local girl he wanted to impress at the moment--delivering for John Ferrari's Sweet Shoppe. (Today, Ferrari remembers: "Arthur was a fine lad. If he earned a two-bit tip, I happen to know that he turned it straight over to his mother. And when she could let him keep a nickle of it for ice cream, he'd come into my place the happiest youngster alive!")

No, Hasbrouck Heights hadn't changed--it still didn't offer much in the way of an opportunity for a young fellow who wanted to get somewhere in the world--even if he wasn't quite sure, just yet, where "somewhere" was. But quite a bit happened to Arthur since he'd left. He began by getting a job as an office boy. When that didn't turn out the way he'd expected, he washed dishes for awhile. There'd been a brief stint of coal-mining which ended up with a cough and doctor's orders to get a job above ground; an even briefer stint as a lumber-jack--he was so young and thin that he couldn't lift the axe! Then tries at being a farm hand, a typist, a tire-finisher at a rubber plant, among other things.

At last Arthur had taken a deep breath and looked at the situation squarely. He was drifting. At fourteen, he was drifting toward being a lifetime drifter, perhaps. Something had to be done. He needed, he realized, more education than the two years of high school behind him, if he were going to get anywhere.

At that time there were Navy recruiting posters all over, telling the advantages--some others beside seeing the world--of joining up. Arthur had gone to a recruiting office in Cleveland in May of 1920 and signed up for a two-year hitch, and at the end of the first, he'd re-signed for a second two.

Now he was back home to see the family--but not for long. He'd learned a lot in the Navy, and he was anxious to get out in the world once more, put some of what he'd learned into practice.

What he didn't know was this: one of the important things he'd learned while in the Navy had not a thing to do with seamanship, but was going to stand him in good stead later on. Arthur had learned to play the banjo. And, at Great Lakes Naval Training Station, he'd learned to play the ukulele, too--from a real Hawaiian boy who was also stationed there.

(CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

