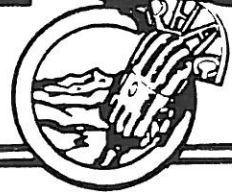


RETURN WITH US

The Radio Historical
Association of Colorado, Inc.

NOW...



VOLUME 14 NUMBER 6

JANUARY 1989

*Thanks
for the
Memories*



tribute to Bob Hope

RETURN WITH US NOW...is the official publication of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc., a non-profit organization. The cost of membership is \$20.00 for the first year with \$15.00 for renewal, which entitles the member full use of the Club's resources. For further information, contact one of the following officers or board members:

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ABOUT THE COVER

Most readers will instantly recognize the unique art of Al Hirschfeld. The numeral "3" by his name on the cover picture stands for the number of times that he has hidden the name of his wife Nina in the artwork. You will note that there is an article in this issue about Hirschfeld from the January 1, 1989, issue of the Rocky Mt. News.

NEXT MEETING will feature Denver radio personality, host of old-time radio, and member of RHAC. As usual, the January meeting is the third Thursday of the month, January 19, at Church of the Master, 5152 E. 17th Ave., between Filbert and Forest Streets. Please enter from the Filbert Street entrance. You will not want to miss hearing our own Don Tucker speak.

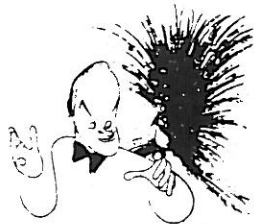
BOARD MEETING is at Herb Dunivan's home on January 10 at 7:30. See address above.

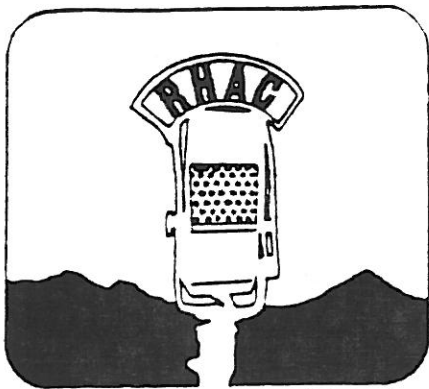
COMING UP at the February meeting is Fred Hobbs, long-time radio personality and in March, a swap among members of their favorite radio memorabilia. Items also may be sold at this meeting.

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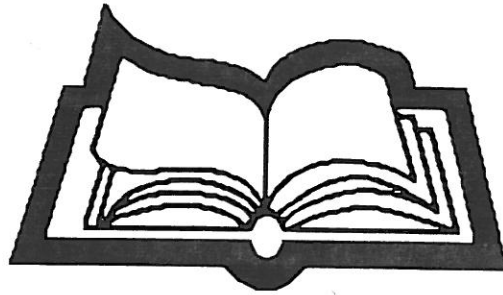


Above, Caricaturist Al Hirschfeld. At right is Hirschfeld's latest lithograph, Bob Hope, celebrating his 50th anniversary with NBC





Radio Historical Association of Colorado



A BOOK REVIEW of It Was Not All Velvet by Mel Torme (Viking, 1988) by Dan Decker.

Along with many other members of RHAC, I was fortunate to have lived through that wonderful time in history known as the "big band era", and I can recall how as a teen-ager I was fascinated with the voice of the "Velvet Fog," Mel Torme. Then as an adult, I noticed that his style of singing had changed from a straight ballad style to jazz and I was delighted again with his voice, albeit for different reasons.

Born of Russian-Jewish ancestry and raised in Chicago, Torme tells how as a young boy he was bullied because of his short stature, and how one time when he came home with a bloody nose, his father who had always told him not to fight, said to him on this occasion "not to be a sissy." Mel took this to be license to be aggressive so the next day he hid at the top of the stairs and when the bully came charging up the stairs late as usual, eight-year-old Mel stepped out, extended his fist, and caused the other boy not only to have a bloody nose but to also tumble all the way down the staircase. This caused the bully to gather a gang and a few days later to corner Melvin on the playground and stuff an entire package of pipe tobacco down his throat. Mel said that for three days he could not taste nor smell anything other than tobacco. The good outcome of this incident is that for the rest of his life, Mel Torme has had an aversion to tobacco and he credits his lack of smoking (anything) and his not drinking hard liquor for his voice not deteriorating as is the case of many other singers. Do you suppose he might be referring among others to Sinatra?

Most people (except OTR afficianados, no doubt) do not know that Mel Torme wrote the melody and Bob Wells the lyric for "The Christmas Song" ("Chestnuts roasting on an open fire...") in 1945 when Torme was only 20. Torme says that as hard as it is to believe, that song was written in 45 minutes on the hottest July day in California that year. When Torme had gone to Wells' home on that day to work on some other songs, he happened to notice that Wells had written the first four lines of that famous song on a yellow pad and had it on the piano. When Torme asked what it was, Wells replied that he had just tried to keep himself cool by writing some winter and Christmas images. Nat King Cole finally got around to recording in in the summer of 1946 and in the Christmas season lf that year it, of course, became one of Nat Coles biggest hits. Torme says that if he had done nothing else in his life but write that song, he could have lived lavishly for the rest of his life. Fortunately for us, he did anything but retire early. In fact, at age 63--he was born September 13, 1925--he is busier, and more popular, than he has ever been. Besides being a singer and songwriter, he is a history buff, a collector of guns, especially ones from the American West, and almost a fanatic watcher of old movies.

As the title, It Was Not All Velvet, suggests, Torme did not have it all easy. Not the least of which were three marriages which failed. True to his gracious spirit which all who know him attest to, he blames the marriage failures to his being absent, on the road, so much. As he says, "Absence does not make the heart grow fonder but to wander." This did not refer to him but to his wives, whom he did not blame for falling in love with others. Apparently he has learned his lesson,

Caricaturist calls talent 'alchemy'

For Hirschfeld, 'There's no formula' in meeting deadlines at N.Y. Times

By JACKIE CAMPBELL
Rocky Mountain News Theater Critic

Anyone who knows Al Hirschfeld's Broadway drawings knows about "Nina."

For 64 years, since 1924, Hirschfeld has turned out caricatures for the entertainment pages of the New York Times. At 85 he is still going strong, a keen-eyed, bearded patriarch who resembles a caricature from the Edwardian age.

Hidden among the inky cross-hatchings of his drawings are as many as six "Ninas," with a key to the number under his signature. The tradition began, according to Hirschfeld, when his daughter Nina was born in 1945. Whenever he thinks of dropping the custom, his fans raise an outcry. He calls it a "national insanity."

Hirschfeld spoke on the phone last month as he was putting the finishing touches to an *Our Town* drawing (three Ninas) to appear in the Dec. 4 *Times*.

He was sitting in his barber chair, he said, "under a north light in a private house on the Upper East Side."

The 65-year-old barber chair came from a shop in the Bowery. Hirschfeld has it bolted down in front of his drawing table. "It was made by Kohlen of St. Louis," he said. "It swivels up and down, and I can sleep in it." Hirschfeld acknowledges some mystery to his ability to draw figures that are instantly recognizable.

"There's no formula," he said. "You create a problem that didn't exist before and solve it. You take a blank piece of paper and insist on creating a problem for yourself and meeting a deadline."

He is no cartoonist drawing stuck figures. His style shows a draughtsman's training. And it takes an anatomist to produce his fluid rendering of a dancer's leg, for instance, in which the limb is a straight line with an S-curve.

"It has to do with anatomy and a matter

of recognition," Hirschfeld said. "Sometimes

you see a friend ahead of you in the street. You can't see the face, and he's wearing a new overcoat and it's snowing. And yet among the billions of people in the world you spot that someone and know it's your friend. I haven't a clue how we do it.

"It is alchemy. We underestimate our own powers. I reduce it to line and capture the recognition."

Those who have been captured in ink by Hirschfeld, even with bulging eyes and jowls, seldom complain.

Hirschfeld says that some years ago Alan Funt of the TV show *Candid Camera* "took offense" at a Hirschfeld drawing used by his producers and threatened to leave the network. But he ended up using the drawing himself for publicity purposes.

Some of Hirschfeld's drawings are single figures. Some, like a rendering of the cast of *The Phantom of the Opera*, are carefully balanced compositions. His famous *New York Times* magazine covers contain as many as 20 or 30 recognizable faces.

For the *Our Town* drawing in progress, Hirschfeld said, he had done "many drawings." He attends rehearsals and preview performances with a sketch pad in his right-hand pocket.

"One of the limitations of the profession," he said, "is that you have to draw in the dark in the theater so you don't annoy a lot of people." According to his good friend and gallery owner Margo Feiden, he draws with his right hand inside his pocket. "I should think that might be quite as disconcerting to the people beside you in the theater," she once told Hirschfeld.

"I do lots of sketches, endless ones," Hirschfeld said. "I fill a sketch book. Then it's a question of whittling it down to the bare bones and eliminating. In the case of a play, I draw the character. And that's determined by the playwright."



The final drawings are done in India ink on handmade paper.

"Watercolor board from London," Hirschfeld said. "The drawings are quite large, 20 by 30 inches, and reduced for the newspaper."

Hirschfeld says his style is influenced by the Japanese art he saw in the Far East.

"I lived in Bali for a year and then in Paris for a long time. It's not an accident that most of the good art of Egypt, the East, India and Indonesia is all line. Europeans use pigment. But where the sun shines brightly, the world looks black and white."

So the Broadway art that entrances readers of the *Times* is more derivative of the Japanese woodblock or the Indian miniature than copperplate engraving. Anyone can own a Hirschfeld portrait. "Quite often civilians will call up my gallery," Hirschfeld said, "and ask to have a drawing done of themselves."

Margo Feiden Galleries Ltd. has represented Hirschfeld for 20 years. Feiden objects to the term cartoon.

"They are not cartoons," she said, "and I'll tell you why they're not. Cartoons have an editorial content. These do not. They are masterful drawings that include likenesses of people."

Feiden Galleries sells original Hirschfeld drawings from \$2,000 to \$15,000 and lithographic reproductions from \$350 to \$5,000. There are favorites like Carol Channing, Laurel and Hardy, Barbra Streisand and Leonard Bernstein (at several points in his career).

The lithographs are done in editions of 100 and appreciate in value. Feiden said A Leonard Bernstein drawing priced at \$120 is now worth \$1,000, a later Bernstein drawing priced at \$500, she said, will be worth \$1,000 in a year or two.

Feiden is a fervent Hirschfeld fan. Is the secret of



Fred Astaire dancing in *Royal Wedding*.

his success exaggeration?

"No," she said. "I recall fondly a portrait of Jimmy Durante in which he fell out the nose entirely."

Hirschfeld has drawn album covers for the rock band Aerosmith and for Bobby Short. In a current Margo Feiden Galleries Ltd. ad touting "Hirschfeld for the Holidays," there is an oval portrait of Margo herself, avocado face, two giant earlaps for hair and an orange-slice mouth.

Does she mind? Not at all. Once you've been drawn by the wizard of line, the icon becomes the reality. As Hirschfeld says, "As time goes by, the people begin to look like the drawings."

Stephy New Year

REMEMBER WHEN?

Who was the host who took you for a ride once a week on the White Rabbit bus?

Answer to last month's question: Lucky Strike green was the color that went to war.

SPOTLIGHT ON...OLD-TIME RADIO PLAYERS by Vicki Blake

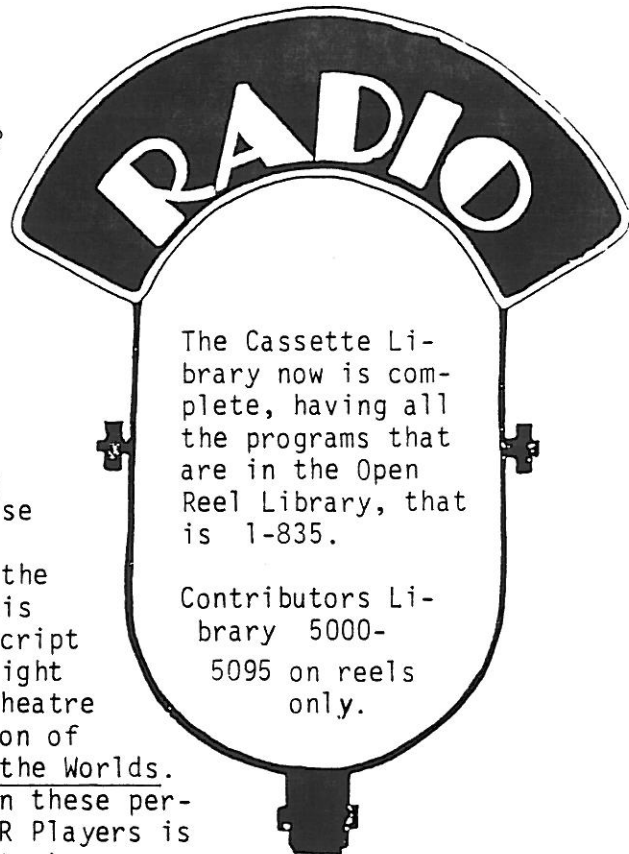
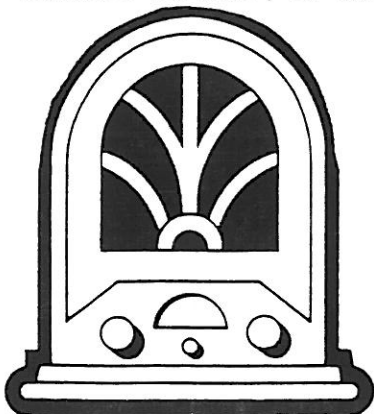
Happy New Year to all RHAC members--both old and new! This month I would like to introduce to you a group of people within RHAC. I can't name the people who comprise this group because the list of names is always changing. This group is known as the Old-Time Radio Players. Several times this past year, the Players have performed a script from the golden days of radio. The highlight was their performance at the Aurora Fox Theatre in November in which they did a re-creation of Ethel and Albert, Dick Tracy, and War of the Worlds. Many of our local members were involved in these performances, your's truly included. The OTR Players is a wonderful opportunity for club members to become acquainted with one another and--most of all--to have some fun. The only cost involved in being a part of this group is the time spent rehearsing--usually once a week for a few hours in the evening. We encourage any of our members to participate. After only a few rehearsals, the Players gave a wonderful performance of "Miracle on 34th Street" at our annual Christmas party. We had a lot of new faces for our recent performances and we would like to see more of our members become a part of what has become a lot of fun for many members of RHAC.

A CALL FOR HELP

David Michael tells that at the SPERDVAC Convention in Los Angeles he had the pleasure of meetin Mr. and Mrs. Barabas, a couple engaged in writing the definitive book on Gunsmoke, both radio and television. They have located all but five Gunsmoke radio shows and seek the help of our members in locating the following shows (which our library does not have):

"Ben Thompson" (5-3-52): "Dodge City Killer" (5-17-52); "Heat Spell" (6-21-52); "The Boughten Ride" (7-12-52): and "Spring Freshet" (3-17-57).

If any member has one or more of these shows listed, he or she is urged to contact: SuzAnne Barabas, 24 Muncy Drive, West Long Beach, N.J. 07764.



The Cassette Library now is complete, having all the programs that are in the Open Reel Library, that is 1-835.

Contributors Library 5000-5095 on reels only.

OTHER OLD-TIME RADIO PLAYERS There is a group also doing OTR plays in Steamboat Springs and Yuma, CO. We are happy to say that both groups have joined RHAC.

OTR SCRIPTS We are advised by SPERDVAC that we may copy some of their fine scripts for our library. Many thanks to our sister club. We welcome donations from members also.



Andy Rogowski, Louisville CO
Steve Berkowitz, Denver
Larry Holt, Anaheim CA
Margaret Johnson, Denver
James Wise, Colorado Springs CO
Yuma Areans, Yuma CO
Tim Hakonson, Loveland CO
Keith Fairbrother, Newberg OR

Richard Salmon Boulder CO
Jennifer Catlin Pine CO

LIBRARY NOTES

Thanks to the hard work of Elmer Westbrook, the entire regular library is now on cassettes, and Elmer is now in the process of putting the Contributors' Library onto cassette also.

We urge library users to enclose their orders with the tape returns. We understand that the old rule of never placing a note inside the box no longer holds, or at least does not apply to the library class of mail.

RHAC is looking for a local member to handle the cassette version of the Contributors' Library. Any individual interested should make his or her willingness known at the January meeting of the Club. The library is expected to be active at mid year..

BLANK TAPES are available from RHAC in reel form in 1800 ft. or more length. The cost is \$1.35 per reel with box or \$1.25 each for 10 or more. Mail order customers must add \$2.56 for 10 for shipping.

REFERENCE LIBRARY Don't forget that your printed materials list many OTR books that are available on loan from RHAC. An up-to-date list will be included in next month's newsletter. There is a \$2.00 rental fee plus a \$10.00 deposit. The reference library also has logs and scripts

CLUB NOTES

We wish to thank Larry Cox for his support of our club and wish him well in locating the Nostalgia Shop to Idaho Springs. Larry and Wilbur have become very strong supporters of the Idaho Springs historical group and were very active in the restoration of the Idaho Springs water wheel.

KOA has cut Jim Hawthorne's program to about 53 minutes. Jim has helped the club in many ways and we wish him well.

Our thanks to Tom Monroe for his donation of 19 reels of BBC material to the Contributors' Library.

Thank you to Scott Jones for his ongoing donations of books to the reference library.

A big thank you to John Adams for his continuing donations of logs and scripts.

Thank You

RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

<u>TAPE 828 ESCAPE (C)</u>		1200'
1L	7-14-49 The Drums Of The Fore And Aft 7-21-49 Action	
2L	7-28-49 Second Class Passenger 8-4-49 Leiningen Versus The Ants	
1R	8-11-49 Red Wine 8-18-49 Snake Doctor	
2R	8-25-49 Evening Primrose 9-21-49 The Fortune Of Vargas	
<u>TAPE 829 ESCAPE (C)</u>		1200'
1L	9-28-49 Wild Oranges 10-8-49 The Sure Thing	
2L	11-1-49 Flood On The Goodwins 11-8-49 Plunder Of The Sun	
1R	11-15-49 Three Skeleton Key 11-22-49 Maracas	
2R	11-29-49 Letter From Jason 12-6-49 Command	
<u>TAPE 830 ESCAPE (C)</u>		1200'
1L	12-13-49 Border Town 12-20-49 Figure A Dame	
2L	12-27-49 Seeds Of Greed 1-3-50 The Pistol	
1R	1-10-50 The Vanishing Lady 1-17-50 The Sure Thing	
2R	1-24-50 Treasure, Inc. 2-7-50 The Outer Limit	
<u>TAPE 831 ESCAPE (C)</u>		1200'
1L	2-21-50 The Red Mark 2-28-50 The Man Who Won The War	
2L	4-14-50 The Golden Snake 4-28-50 Something For Nothing	
1R	5-19-50 Pass To Berlin 5-26-50 Command	
2R	6-2-50 Mars Is Heaven 6-16-50 Serenade For A Cobra	

RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

TAPE 832 ESCAPE (C) 1200'

- 1L 6-23-50 Sundown
10-27-50 The Time Machine
- 2L 11-3-50 Seven Hours To Freedom
11-24-50 Journey Into Fear
- 1R 8-15-51 A Rough Shoot
8-22-51 Silent Horror
- 2R 8-30-51 The Man Who Stole The Bible
10-12-51 Gringo

TAPE 833 ESCAPE (C) 1200'

- 1L 10-26-51 Robert Of Huntington
11-2-51 The Running Man
- 2L 11-16-51 The Loup-Garou
12-7-51 Incident In Quito
- 1R 12-14-51 Four Went Home
12-21-51 The Man Who Liked Dickens
- 2R 2-1-53 A Study In Wax
2-8-53 Jetsam

TAPE 834 ESCAPE (C) 1200'

- 1L 2-15-53 Wild Jack Rhett
3-1-53 The Tramp
- 2L 3-15-53 The Man With The Steel Teeth
3-22-53 Pressure
- 1R 3-29-53 The Invader
4-5-53 A Sleeping Draught
- 2R 4-12-53 Classified Secret
4-19-53 El Guitarero

TAPE 835 ESCAPE (C) 1200'

- 1L 4-26-53 The Derelict
5-3-53 Lily And The Colonel
- 2L 5-10-53 The Vessel Of Wrath
5-17-53 North Of Polaris
- 1R 5-31-53 A Good Thing
6-7-53 The Voyages Of Sinbad
- 2R 6-14-53 Clear For Action
6-21-53 The Far Away Island



RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

OPEN REEL LIBRARY
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ENGLEWOOD, CO 80110

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JANUARY