The Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc.

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RETURN WITH US NOW

...the official publication of RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO, INC., a not-for-profit organization. Cost of membership is \$20.00 for the first year; thereafter, \$15.00 annually. Each member has full use of Club resources. For further information, contact any Officer or Board Member.

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Address all correspondence to RHAC, P.O. Box 1908, Englewood, Co. 80110

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS 7:30 P.M. (Usually first Tuesday each month)

June 6th Meeting....Will be held at John Adam's home. Address above. July 6th Meeting....Will be held at Dick King's home. Address above. August 1 Meeting....Will be held at Glen Ritter's home. 750 Niagra.

FUTURE MONTHLY MEETINGS

June 15th.......Dale Morgan.......Radio Announcer of the 30's.

July 20th......Harry Elders.....The lead actor in Curtain Time.

August 17th.....RHAC Players......(and some surprises)

September 21st....William Herst...Client Producer for INNERSANCTUM and

ARTHUR GODFREY

RHAC HAS TAPE FOR SALE

7" \times 1800" ++ reels of quality 1 mil tape in plain white box 1-9 at \$1.35, 10 or more at \$1.25

10" reels of quality tape in plain white box at \$3.50, in plain white box with hub \$3.70.

All tape sale prices are FOB, Denver.

This is a once in a lifetime offer. RHAC has for sale 1-TRS-80 Computer complete with printer, 4 disk drives, computer table and some software. This computer works well.

PLEASE NOTE: RHAC will have an exhibit at the People's Fair Sunday, June 11th. Please support your Club. We will need help setting up and manning the booth, also tear down. We will need your help please advise either David Michael or Dick King.



April showers arrived in Denver and although needed, it put a damper on the People's Fair, causing a postponement until June 11th. Saturday was okay until about 4:00 p.m. when the rains came. We had covered everything in our display with plastic limiting the rain damage. We will be able to utilize everything next Sunday.

David Michael, Dick and Maletha King set up the booth in the morning; David manned the booth until about 2:00 p.m. Jim Hollingworth, Glen Ritter, Carol Roe and Meletha King in the afternoon until the rain. KOA advised the fair was on Sunday, and when we went down to take some fresh materials, Herb Duniven, John Adams and Vicky Blake were waiting to advise of the postponement until Sunday. SEE YOU NEXT SUNDAY.

It was nice to know many people are interested in our group of "Old-time Radio" enthusiasts. We hope some of them join us to share our pleasure. Pleasures are only multiplied when sharing with others.

May's meeting featured Ed Scott, who has had a long career in many cities; Seattle, Denver and Chicago. It seems obvious the radio industry does not have the "burden" of retirement plans. The "resolving door syndrome" does not allow industry personalities any security as the rest of us may enjoy. Contracts are for weeks, not months or years. Relatively good pay but lots of uncertainty.

The RHAC Players entertained members with episode #16 of "Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel," the Groucho Marx show and was well received by attending members. Comedy is still good for the soul.

Old-Time Radio is heard again in Denver area on KBXG (710 AM); Sundays, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. and on KBCO (1190) from 9:00 p.m. until Midnight. This is a syndicated show which does not have the commercials needed to place the time in our lives and bring back memories.

Welcome to new members for May: JOHN BAYNARD of Security, MAGGIE NOLAN of Denver, BRENDA SHAH, Westminster, and ROBERT SPENCER, Littleton. Three from the Denver area and one from Colorado Springs area. We hope these new members will be able to come and enjoy the meetings as well as using the libraries. We want to again mention that the catalog listings are for reels and the same shows are packaged under the same number for those renting cassettes.

Saturday, August 19th will be the RHAC picnic. 900 West Quincy will be the location. Be sure to mark your calenders and come to share good food, good company and an entertainment by the RHAC players.

John Rayburn has contributed several FIRST NIGHTER Scripts he rented for his "BIG BAND BASH", June 20th and July 25th at 7:30 p.m. at the Arvada Center. We are all encouraged to go out and enjoy an evening of Old-Time Radio shows and enjoy the music of Loy Bowen's Band with many original Big Band musicians. Tickets are \$8.00 in advance or \$9.00 at the door. Call the Arvada box office, 422-8050, for more information. Food and drink will be available on the grounds. Each show will be a separate presentation, only the style will be the same.

Books

Nobody Told a Bad Joke Better

FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER, AND FLYWHEEL

The Marx Brothers' Lost Radio Show. Edited by Michael Barson. 330 pp. New York: Pantheon Books. Paper, \$9.95.

By Steve Allen

VER since the happy discovery of the reputedly "lost" episodes of Jackie Gleason's "Honeymooners," the word lost has conveyed a certain show-biz glamour. The found "Honeymooners" shows were actually not so good as those that had been seen, but given the fact that the worst Ralph Kramden episode ever aired was still better than much situation comedy of the last few decades, we should be grateful for their present availability.

All of which is by way of saying that, partly because comedy has come a long way since the early 1930's. "Flywheel, Shyster, and Flywheel: The Marx Brothers" Lost Radio Show" — a collection of scripts from a long-forgotten program — is unlikely to measure up to the expectations of most devotees of the brothers Marx. Somehow, because both professional and lay people revere Groucho, Harpo, Chico and the other two (I have always thought of Zeppo and Gummo as "Vague-o"), there has long been a careless tendency to assume that their comedy, in printed form, could be evaluated by standards that properly apply to such literary humorists as S. J. Perelman, James Thurber, Robert Benchley and, in the modern context, Woody Allen. But this is simply not the case. Though Groucho was a brilliant spontaneous wit, a simple laundry list of a few dozen cocktail-party bons mots is hardly the same thing as a literary oeuvre

Groucho did, from time to time, write comic essays, and one is included here, but a foreign reader who did not have the funny-looking comedian visually in mind might not be especially impressed. One reason is that Groucho specialized in lightning-quick repartee, whereas a funny essay is more like stand-up monologue, in which Groucho would be deprived of his great effectiveness as a counter-puncher (to deliberately mix metaphors I wasn't too proud of in the first place).

But it's not fair to judge this collection of recently unearthed scripts by the same criteria that apply to humorists of the written word. When judged in relation to other radio comedy scripts of the early 30's, they hold up very well indeed and are, in fact, superior to the material that was produced for the Eddie Cantor, Rudy Vallee, Joe Penner school.

The first time this material was reviewed, incidentally, was by Variety. In commenting on the series' opening installment, broadcast Nov. 28, 1932, the tradepaper critic first of all took the Marx Brothers to task for doing a routine about adultery and/or infidelity at a time of night when children were listening. "If the Marxes don't look out," the critic said, "whatever kid following they have on the screen will be totally lost to them on the air."

The radio series "Flywheel, Shyster, and Flywheel" lasted but one season on NBC's Blue Network (its Red Network carried a different lineup). The live series, on Mondays, was boxed into a bad early-evening time slot and achieved ratings described as "indifferent," according to Michael Barson, the book's editor, who discovered the scripts at the Library of Congress.

When Standard Oil put Groucho and Chico on the air, the four Marx Brothers (minus Gummo), having paid their dues in vaudeville, were one of the hottest film-comedy teams in Hollywood. The radio show — about a lawyer and his inept assistant — was such a

Steve Allen's most recent book is "How to Be Funny," written with Jane Wollman.



FROM FLYWHEEL, SHYSTER, AND FLYWHEEL

The Marx Brothers: from left, Chico, Zeppo, Groucho and Harpo, about 1933.

snap for Groucho, who played Waldorf T. Flywheel, and Chico, as Emmanuel Ravelli, that both performers devoted only a minimum of time to rehearsals. Most Mondays, in fact, the cavalier Chico would walk in late for the read-throughs, the writer Nat Perrin having had to stand in for him.

The boys preferred living in California, so after broadcasting for only two months from New York, they moved the operation to Hollywood, from which, in a makeshift studio on an RKO sound stage, most of the

succeeding episodes were broadcast.

Mr. Perrin, who with Arthur Sheekman wrote most of the script material for the series, points out in a conversation with Mr. Barson that prefaces the book that "Flywheel" was originally to be called "Beagle, Shyster, and Dismal." By the time it made its debut, however, the program's title had been changed to "Beagle, Shyster, and Beagle, Attorneys-at-Law." Threatened with a libel suit by a listener-lawyer actually named Beagle, NBC substituted the name Flywheel three shows later.

Unfortunately, no recordings exist of the series' 26 episodes — radio comedy, after all, is for the ear, not the eye — but 25 of the scripts had been stored in the copyright office of the Library of Congress, and Mr. Barson has reproduced them virtually intact.

EADERS familiar with the Marx film "Duck Soup" may experience déjà vu while reading this assemblage, as 15 bits and skits that originated on the "Flywheel" series were set into the Paramount film. By the same token, the radio program borrowed routines from three of the brothers' earlier movies: "Animal Crackers," "Monkey Business" and "The Cocoanuts."

Interestingly, Groucho — who tried a couple of other shows subsequent to "Flywheel" 's cancellation — would not become a major radio success until 15 years later when "You Bet Your Life," his marvelous quiz program, went on the air in 1947 (the show was seen on television from 1950 through the 1961 season).

The rapid-fire jokes in this collection, because of their very number, run the gamut from delightful to embarrassing. An example of the former is a classic — Jones: "You try my patience." Groucho: "I don't mind if I do. You must come over and try mine some day." The latter: "The Lehigh Railroad is just a short road. It's only Lehigh to a grasshopper."

Who cares if the bad jokes outnumber the good?

Who cares if the bad jokes outnumber the good? Mr. Barson's discovery will gladden the hearts of Marx Brothers lovers all over the world.

Out With Miss Dimple

Miss Dimple: Law offices of Beagle, Shyster, and Beagle. . . I can't talk now. My boss, Mr. Beagle, just came in. Good morning, Mr. Beagle.

Groucho: Good morning? What's good about it? The rain is coming through the roof, the landlord's coming through the door, my wife goes through my pockets, and I'm going through my shoes. And you say it's a good morning. Miss Dimple, you were late again this morning. Where were you last night?

Miss Dimple: Last night? Why, I was out with you.

Groucho: Out with me, eh? Miss Dimple, it isn't a good policy to mix business with pleasure.

Miss Dimple: But you asked me to go out. Groucho: Yes, but you didn't have to go out on the second drink, Miss Dimple! . . . What's on the court calendar for this afternoon?

Miss Dimple: You know you have a suit on today.

Groucho: Certainly I have a suit on today. Do you expect me to come in in my nightshirt? I only wear that for night court.

From "Flywheel, Shyster, and Flywheel."

14 December 4, 1988

ABOUT THE COVER AND GROUCHO MARX

(The following information is taken from Tune in Yesterday by John Dunning.)

Al Hirschfeld once again catches the essence of our cover personalities, the Marx Brothers, the best-known member of whom was Groucho. And the radio program that Groucho is best known for was You Bet Your Life. This show opened a whole new field for Groucho Marx, who otherwise might have competed with Milton Berle as radio's most notable failure. By 1947, Marx had tried the air four times and bombed. His best show had been the ill-fated Blue Ribbon Town in 1943, and even that folded in a season. Some of the top air personalities were even reluctant to use him as a guest.

You Bet Your Life premiered October 27, 1947, on ABC, and was carried for two years by Elgin-American. George Fenneman introduced Marx at the beginning of the programs as "the one, the only..." and the audience finished the sentence with a thunderous "GROUCHO!"

The open-reel and the cassette library numbers are now the same 1 through 851.

The contributors' library numbers are now: 5001 through 5117.

Happy listening! Don't forget to tune in to John Dunning's new OTR show on Sunday afternoons on KBXG. 710 on your AM dial from 1-4 p.m.

You Bet Your Life differed from all other quiz shows in that the quiz was mere window dressing for the antics of the quizmaster. Each week Groucho, perched on his stool, was introduced to three couples. The couples were carefully selected, the producers combing through neighborhoods looking for people with unusual jobs, strange interests, and offbeat personalities to play against Groucho's wit. Opposites were deliberately paired, giving Marx two distinct targets for his questions. Even announcer Fenneman, the eternal straight man, was the ideal foil for Groucho. Marx didn't meet the couples before they were brought before him, indeed, he hadn't gotten as much as a glimpse of their appearance or attire. Producer John Guedel wanted Marx to be absolutely spontaneous, and he was. Informed that a contestant was a used-car salesman, Marx might ask, "How many times were you indicted?" His wit was biting, his satire sharp. Groucho loved beautiful blondes and people with funny names. A man with "Crumb" for a middle name didn't stand a chance.

The quiz portion was done straight; questions were asked and answered (or not answered) without surrounding gimmicks. If they lost, couples were asked a nonsense question for \$25, Groucho grandly stating that "nobody leaves here broke." (A regular consolation question was "Who was buried in Grant's tomb?")

The critics reacted about as Marx figured. The cluck-clucked over what a comedown it must be for a famous film comedian to land on an audience show. But Groucho was doing what came naturally, and ratings began to climb. By its third year, the show had outgrown its original sponsor, arrived in radio's top 10, and won the Peabody Award, radio's equivalent of the Pulitzer, in the first award ever given to a comedian on a quiz show.

In 1949, You Bet Your Life moved to CBS and took on as longtime sponsor, the DeSoto-Plymouth dealers, who also carried the show on TV. The series ran until 1959, the last nine years as an NBC entry.



OLD-TIME RADIO SCHEDULE FOR JUNE, 1989. SUNDAYS, 1-4 P.M, KBXG.

JUNE 4: ESCAPE. "The Sire de Maletroit's Door," 8-4-47. CBS. THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM. March of Dimes show from Denver: this show is being heard for the first time since we played it some seven years ago. Broadcast from the Denver Auditorium before a live audience of 3,000 people. the show has lots of local gags, including one goodnatured dig at KOA and several at then-Mayor Quig Newton, who was only 35 years old. Gov. Lee Knous makes an appearance and manages to blow a few lines. Phil Harris' musicians are alleged to have come from the Colorado State Penitantiary. Rochester says the management of the Brown Palace, where the Benny company is staying, is complaining because Jack has put slot machines in the hall, rented out his second twin bed, and is selling coffee out of the broom closet. NBC, 1-18-48. INNER SANCTUM MYSTERIES. "The Amazing Death of Mrs. Putnam," second show of the series. Blue Network, 1-14-41. THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. "The Bruce Partington Plans," NBC, 11-6-39. FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY. "Fibber Builds a Telescope," NBC,

One Tabor Center 1200 17th Street Suite 2300 Denver, CO 80202 303-572-6250

JUNE 11: SUSPENSE. "The Burning Court," first show of the series, CBS, 6-17-42.

INNER SANCTUM MYSTERIES. "The Unforgiving Corpse," CBS, 5-31-49. THE FRED ALLEN SHOW. Guest Leo Durocher in a Gilbert & Sullivan spoof, NBC, 12-2-45.

CAVALCADE OF AMERICA. "So Sorry, No Mercy," starring Pat O'-Brien, NBC, 3-27-44.

FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY. 6th anniversary show: first Wallace Wimple appearance, NBC, 4-15-41.

4-8-41

- JUNE 18: THE SHADOW. "Flight of the Vulture," 12-10-39.

 CAVALCADE OF AMERICA. "Ambulance Driver, Middle East," starring
 Alan Ladd, NBC, 4-3-44.

 LUX RADIO THEATRE. "Wake Island," starring Brian Donlevy,

 Broderick Crawford and Robert Preston, CBS, 10-26-42.

 FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY. "Night Out With The Boys," NBC, 4-22-41.
- JUNE 25: DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT. "Mesibra, Spain," C. 1950.

 OUR MISS BROOKS. Show of 1-30-49. CBS.

 THE BLACK MUSEUM. "The Mallet," show #21, syndicated series,

 with Orson Welles, C. 1952.

 CAVALCADE OF AMERICA. "The Story of Canine Joe," NBC, 8-21-44.

 ROCKY JORDAN. "The Bartered Bridegroom," CBS, 10-31-48.



OLDE TYME RADIO PLAYERS

By Ed Hendrickx



The Olde Tyme Radio Players voted at their last meeting not to meet on a regular basis. Instead, they decided to return to our earlier system of "cast calls". This is necessary to honor the wishes of those who want to participate but who can not attend these meetings in addition to attending the regular club meetings.

We shall plan our productions far enough ahead to allow anyone who wants to perform to be in at least one production.

Here is the schedule for the next few months:

June - Esso Five Star Theater (Groucho Marx) and a Johnny Dollar episode. Some parts open. Will cast them at the June meeting. If you are interested come to the meeting early. We will do the final run thru at 6:30 p.m.

July - First Nighter production. Cast call and rehearsal on June 27th at 7:30p.m. at our studio in Dick King's house.

August - First Nighter Production, The Adventures of Nick Danger Third Eye (a contemporary parody), and a Vic and Sade episode. Cast call, rehearsal time and date to be announced.

Our past christmas party production of "Miracle on Thirty Fourth Street" will be repeated at our next christmas party. We are looking for a place (rent free or very nominal rent) that will hold about 100 pot luck supper style. Please give me a call if you can locate a place.

We are still planning to take our players on tour. We have enough productions under our belt as well as a number of talented players to do a creditable job. We hope to kick our tour off in September. Stay tuned!

Dick King and Fred Hines are in the process of building a sound effects library. If you have any canned sounds on tape or platter give Dick a call.

Larry Cox asked me to put out a call for help. It seems that he was not able to receive his signal back in Idaho Springs when he did his recent first broadcast on his new station. As a result he didn't get to tape it. If any of our readers taped it or knows of anyone who did, please call me so we can arrange to get a copy for Larry.

SEE YA AT THE JUNE MEETING!



* * * * * * * * * *

Nostalgia is the realization that things weren't as unbearable as they seemed at the time.

-HEMAN FAY, JR.





Today and OTR

(Opinions expressed are the <u>writer's</u> only, no endorsement by anybody is implied.) By RHAC member, David Clow; a regular monthly feature

Chapter 4, "Get Serious?"

My dream of producing "Tapes for the Blind" has been explained in some detail. A store/office is staffed with "volunteers" and some more secrets to success are about to be revealed.

The success of this OTR story is the balance of enjoyment versus the amount of work involved. This dream of mine is clearly designed to create a place to go everyday (just like work) and a way to keep the mind and body active (just like work) but doing the enjoyable OTR hobby. The conflict within this dream of retirement is that going to work everyday is <u>not</u> retirement even if its doing OTR which is one of the most enjoyable tasks I can think of!

If this dream is going to work in 1994 it means that a ground rule of not having to work every day needs to be established and that means

there is a partner(s) who will share the duties with me. I've got to find that partner(s).

Besides the not working every day rule there seems to be other good sense rules that need to be applied to running this operation. No salaries may be paid to any of the volunteers (including the founder.) If income exceeds rent, I don't have to pay, but I can take no monies home!

A refrigerator ought to be stocked with soft drinks for the volunteers and if contributions and/or sales warrant it lunch ought to be provided to the helpers.

A sign clearly visible in the office/store ought to say "Enjoy Old Time Radio."

Next month Chapter 5, "Cause and Effect"





RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

		The Spirit Of Giving New Years Day Visiting	1200'
2L	1-8-52 1-15-52	Rumors Rummage Sale	
1R		Locked Out Fibber Plays Cupid	
2R		Paying Bills Braiding A Rug	
	2-19-52	BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C) Called In By The I.R.S. Pancake Day	1200'
2L		Fixing The Back Step Box Of Candy - 20th Anniversary On NBC	
1R		Statue Of Buckshot McGee Fibber Runs The Drug Store	
2R	4-1-52 4-8-52	Heat Wave - Selling Umbrellas Perilous Horoscope	
		BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C)	1200'
lL		All You Can Eat For A Dollar Traffic Court	
2L	4-29-52 5-6-52	Potted Plant At Pet Show Picnic At Dugan's Lake	
1R		Fibber Tunes The Piano At The Carnival	
2R	5-27-52 6-3-52	Fibber's Annual Checkup Singing Commercial	
TAPI		BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C)	1200'
		BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C)	1200'
1L	E 847 FI 6-10-52 10-7-52	BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C) The Political Worker	1200'
1L 2L	E 847 FI 6-10-52 10-7-52 10-14-52 10-21-52 10-28-52	BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C) The Political Worker Molly's Rich Friend, Gert, Visits Transit Company Stock	1200'

RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

TAP 1L	E 848 FI 12-2-52 12-9-52	BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C) Bowling Team Buying A Hat For Molly	1200'
2L	12-16-52 12-23-52	Exchanging A Christmas Present From Wallace	Wimple
1R	12-30-52 1-6-53	New Years Dance Reunion With Fred Nitny	
2R	1-13-53 1-20-53	3 113	
TAPI 1L	E 849 FI 1-27-53 2-3-53	BBER McGEE AND MOLLY Giant Icicle Wall Safe	1200'
2L	2-10-53 2-17-53	The New Courteous McGee The McGees Mind The Doctor's Office	
1R	2-24-53 3-3-53	Businessman's Art Class Breakfast In Bed For Molly	
2R	3-10-53 3-17-53		
TAPE	E 850 FI	BBER McGEE AND MOLLY (C)	1200'
	3-24-53	Fibber's Lucky Day	
	3-31-53	Hypnotism	
2L		Elk's Vaudeville Show McGee On The Lam	
1R	4-3-51 4-10-51	Fibber Declared Well - He Rests Gas Bill	
2R		Grocery Budget Premiere Show	
TAPE	851 TH	E SHADOW (C)	1200'
1L	-38 1-9-38	Tomb Of Terror League Of Terror	
2L	1-30-38 1-23-38	Poison Death Society Of The Living Dead	
1R	2-6-38 3-6-38	Phantom Voice Bride Of Death	
2R	-38 -38	Murder On Approval The Creeper	



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