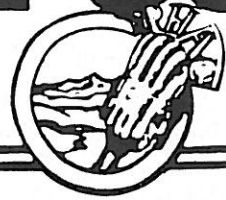


RETURN WITH US

The Radio Historical
Association of Colorado, Inc.

NOW...



Volume 18 Number 7

February 1993

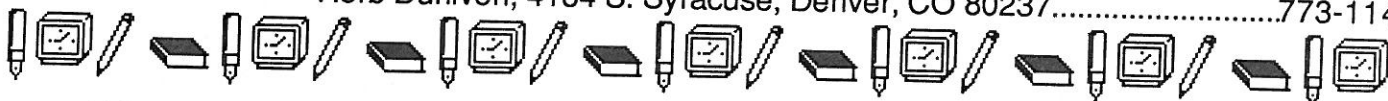


RETURN WITH US NOW... is the official publication of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc., a non-profit organization. Cost of membership is \$20.00 for the first year with \$15.00 for annual renewal. Each member has full use of the Club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS:

THERE WILL BE A BOARD MEETING IN FEBRUARY! NEXT BOARD MEETING WILL BE FEBRUARY 4, 1993.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME AND INVITED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE AT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING. The February 4TH meeting is at the home of HERB DUNIVEN at 7:30 PM.

CLUB MEETINGS:

THE PRESENTATION AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING WILL BE A SURPRISE PRESENTATION!



From the

King's Roost

January has come to a close and 1993 is well under way. Have you worked out your taxes yet? Oh well, the old adage of the sure things in life (death & taxes) are showing up.

We regret to learn of the passing in late December of Ray Stanich. Ray accomplished a huge amount of research to compile logs for a multitude of radio shows. Ray's logs are a great tool for collectors and RHAC has many of Ray's logs in the RHAC library.

We were also saddened to hear of the death of Jim Harmon, former RHAC member. Jim was one of the fatalities on the commuter train wreck recently in the Chicago area. It is difficult to know what to say. This comes to mind: Knowing that it is difficult for the family, we believe that, when our time comes, we would rather have it happen quickly.

Hopefully, Spring is just around the corner and it will certainly be welcome all over the country. An RHAC member in Idaho has told us of his problems in getting through the snow to the post office. Meanwhile, another

RHAC member in California hopes to see the sun again in hopes that it will dry up some of the rain.

Most of the dcountry has been very cold this winter. Colorado has had more than the average amount of snow this winter; although we do get out, we must say that at times it has not been very pleasant. We are not skiers, and do not appreciate skiing on horseback.

The end of January is moving time for our cassette library 500 series of numbers. All of the 500 series of cassettes (numbers 500 through 599) will henceforth be handled by Dan Decker and his cassette library #1.

If you have some of these cassettes checked out, do **NOT** be concerned, just return them with your regular return and we will handle the transfer after we receive them.

Library #2 just keeps growing and this move will make room for more great shows to circulate to our members.

The 500 series of tapes includes a lot of World War II news broadcasts that have been popular with teachers. These gems of history bring back many memories to most of us, along with the opportunity to pass along this dramatic time to a younger generation.

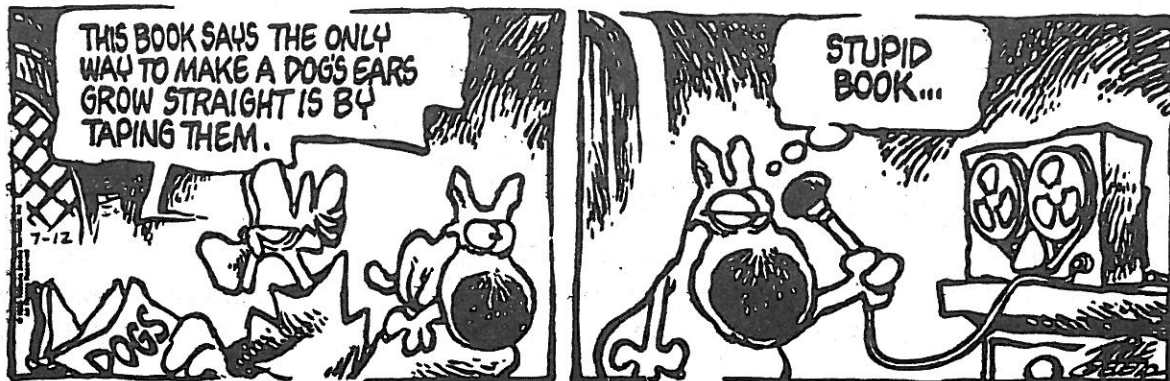
The new old time radio club in Seattle is planning their first convention June 25 and 26. They have a long list of guests and should be able to put on a great convention. For more information contact: Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound, 9936 Northeast 197th Street, Bothell WA 98011 or phone (206) 488-9518.

It was a joy to listen to the presentation of Keith Hughes at the RHAC meeting of Jan 21, 1993. Keith is president of Critical Mass Media Productions. Keith spun records as a disk jockey at Susquehanna University for two of his four years in college.

Keith was also production director of both KNUS and KBPI. He had also had many dealings with RHAC members Barrett Benson and John Dunning during those years.

Critical Mass Media Productions is involved with production work and satirical variety for a growing list of radio stations. In today's radio, it requires a very inventive mind to make a living in radio. Keith, and his partner Jessie, are surviving and we wish them well.

We are looking forward to having Ward Crowley as our guest speaker in March.



Resurrection of Chandu

Late in 1931, a radio man named Raymond R. Morgan and his partner were trying to dream up a new format for a radio show. They kicked around several ideas, but nothing seemed feasible until the universal interest in magic and superstition was brought up. (People, regardless of their protestations, knock on wood and shy from ladders. Actors don't throw their hats on the bed or whistle in the dressing rooms. It's all part of the human being's irresistible attraction to things mysterious.)

From partner Harry A. Earnshaw's idea resulted a program, "Chandu, the Magician." It was heard over KHJ, sponsored by White King soap, and made the first radio offer ever, for which thousands of letter responses rolled in. It was broadcast five times a week (the first "strip,") and because it was advertising soap, soon became known as a "soap opera."

Such success greeted "Chandu" that it was soon started on other Don Lee Coast stations; later, the Northwest was added, then Mutual stations to St. Louis, which brought the total to sixty. Another sponsor, Beech-Nut, took up the tab in the East, where White King was not sold, and "Chandu" became one of the greatest air hits of all time. It stayed on for more than four years.

Looking for a director, Morgan found a chap named Cyril Armbruster working for the Little Theater on Olvera Street. "He had no battery for his Chevy, so

we pushed his car to start him," Morgan recalls, then adds, "I was so broke I didn't have enough money to buy a car."

Various persons scripted the show until one of the girls in Morgan's office, Vera Oldham, who had previously sold flowers at Forest Lawn, came in and announced, "You know, I could write those "Chandu" scripts."

Morgan laughed up his sleeve and tried to get rid of her by saying, "Go ahead and write one." She wrote not one, but four over the weekend. They were good--so good that Vera scripted the series for four years. On one anniversary, the agency gifted her with a trip to the "mysterious Orient," locale of her writings. When she returned, a brand new Studebaker was waiting for her on the dock.

In the original cast was Gayne Whitman as "Chandu." Others, who were on the staff at KHJ and participated as needed, included such well-knowns as Bill Goodwin, Elvia Allman, Bob Swan, and Lindsey MacHarrie. Felix Mills and Raymond Paige successively swung the baton over a five-piece musical group.

Yes, that was "Chandu" in 1932.

It's sixteen years later, and in his spacious suite in the Pantages Building, Hollywood, Raymond R. Morgan and some of his associates are trying to dream up an idea for a new show. Someone suggests a revival of "Chandu." The suggestion clicks. It was a good idea before, the radio men argue, and now a whole new generation which never heard the show is virgin territory for a

revival. Those who do recall the program will be glad to welcome it back, they argue.

So the men start out to find those who were associated with the former series. Armbruster is in New York, where he has put in many years producing such programs as "Terry and the Pirates," "Land of the Lost," "Strange As It Seems," "Adventures of the Sea Hound," and a dozen soap operas. Morgan goes back and persuades him to return to Hollywood to throw cues on the new "Chandu."

Next, Morgan and staff hunt up Vera Oldham. In the intervening years she has scripted such successes as "Showboat," "Parker Family," and "Those Websters." Now in Hollywood, she has been given the task of refurbishing the 800 episodes saved from the first cycle.

Tom Collins is cast as "Chandu," and Irene Tedrow is set to play "Dorothy Regent," his sister. Verna Felton's son, Lee Millar, is cast as "Bobby" and Joy Terry as "Betty."

"Who'll sponsor the show?" Morgan puzzled. He went right back and re-sold the *same* salesman at White King.

"Where'll we put it?"

Right back, five times a week, on sixty-seven Mutual stations.

"Where's the gong we used to wham at the beginning of each program?"

Mutual sound man Art Fulton had taken it home when no one had needed it at the studios, but he promptly brought it back to wham on the new series.

Hammond organ specialist Juan Rolando cost just about the

TAPE 1025 CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN

1200'

1L	10-1-48	Episode	69
	10-4-48	Episode	70
	10-5-48	Episode	71
	10-6-48	Episode	72
2L	10-7-48	Episode	73
	10-8-48	Episode	74
	10-11-48	Episode	75
	10-12-48	Episode	76
1R	10-13-48	Episode	77
	10-14-48	Episode	78
	10-15-48	Episode	79
	10-18-48	Episode	80
2R	10-19-48	Episode	81
	10-20-48	Episode	82
	10-21-48	Episode	83
	10-22-48	Episode	84

TAPE 1026 CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN

1200'

1L	10-25-48	Episode	85
	10-26-48	Episode	86
	10-27-48	Episode	87
	10-28-48	Episode	88
2L	10-29-48	Episode	89
	11-1-48	Episode	90
	11-2-48	Episode	91
	11-3-48	Episode	92
1R	11-4-48	Episode	93
	11-5-48	Episode	94
	11-8-48	Episode	95
	11-9-48	Episode	96
2R	11-10-48	Episode	97
	11-11-48	Episode	98
	11-12-48	Episode	99
	11-15-48	Episode	100

TAPE 1027 CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN

1200'

1L	11-16-48	Episode	101
	11-17-48	Episode	102
	11-18-48	Episode	103
	11-19-48	Episode	104
2L	11-22-48	Episode	105
	11-23-48	Episode	106
	11-24-48	Episode	107
	11-25-48	Episode	108

TAPE 1027 CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN 1200'

1R	11-26-48	Episode	109
	11-29-48	Episode	110
	11-30-48	Episode	111
	12-1-48	Episode	112
2R	12-2-48	Episode	113
	12-3-48	Episode	114
	12-6-48	Episode	115
	12-7-48	Episode	116

TAPE 1028 CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN 1200'

1L	12-8-48	Episode	117
	12-9-48	Episode	118
	12-10-48	Episode	119
	12-13-48	Episode	120
2L	12-14-48	Episode	121
	12-15-48	Episode	122
	12-16-48	Episode	123
	12-17-48	Episode	124
1R	12-20-48	Episode	125
	12-21-48	Episode	126
	12-22-48	Episode	127
	12-23-48	Episode	128
2R	12-24-48	Episode	129
	12-27-48	Episode	130
	12-28-48	Episode	131
	12-29-48	Episode	132

TAPE 1029 CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN 1200'

1L	12-30-48	Episode	133
	12-31-48	Episode	134
	1-3-49	Episode	135
	1-4-49	Episode	136
2L	1-5-49	Episode	137
	1-6-49	Episode	138
	1-7-49	Episode	139
	1-10-49	Episode	140
1R	1-11-49	Episode	141
	1-12-49	Episode	142
	1-13-49	Episode	143
	1-14-49	Episode	144
2R	1-17-49	Episode	145
	1-18-49	Episode	146
	1-19-49	Episode	147
	1-20-49	Episode	148

same as five men and a conductor did sixteen years ago in radio. So Juan was hired, but decided to add mystery to the program by using his Hindu name, Korla Pandit. Another difference, of course, was the studios. Instead of being at Seventh and Bixel, in the Don Lee showroom, the new cast worked in Mutual's new \$3,000,000 building on Vine Street.

It was a great reunion when the "Chandu" program aired again in July 1948. "Everybody who'd had anything to do with the first series seemed to have had good luck," Morgan commented.

"Everybody is a lot better," commented Armbruster. "More experience, and then, don't forget radio has grown up in the past sixteen years.

Radio Life,

September 26, 1948

Chandu the Magician

Chandu the Magician, an important piece of juvenile radio, was one of the first and last shows of its kind. First heard on KHJ, Los Angeles, in 1932, *Chandu* soon spread into most of the Don Lee Network, a West Coast network that later merged with Mutual. It was later sold independently to some stations and carried in the East and Midwest by Mutual. White King Soap sponsored the show in the West; Beech Nut in the East. Running as a nightly serial in 15-minute installments, *Chandu* was on the air until 1936.

The hero, Frank Chandler, was an American-born mystic

who learned the secrets of the East from a yogi in India. Using his occult powers and a far-reaching crystal ball, Chandler combated evil throughout the world, and became widely known as "Chandu the Magician." Chandler, along with his sister Dorothy and her children Betty and Bob Regent, was forever off to some strange and wonderful corner of the world in his quest for dangerous adventure and exotic intrigue.

The original show was created by Raymond R. Morgan and Harry A. Earnshaw. Vera Oldham, an office girl who worked for the partners, tried out as a script writer and won the job, turning out several hundred *Chandu* episodes over the next four years. The first sixty-eight episodes were devoted to the search for Robert Regent, Dorothy's husband, who had vanished in a shipwreck ten years before. Through his occult powers, Chandler learned that Regent might be alive, held prisoner by the evil, malignant Roxor, a master criminal with fiendish plans for world domination.

Off went the audience to Egypt, for a long series of confrontations with Roxor and his cronies. There were several subplots: Chandler's low-key romance with Nadji, the Egyptian princess; Betty's ill-fated romance with a bedouin beggar; Dorothy's fight against mounting fear. Chandler's magic was useless in the face of blind fear, and therein was his weakness.

In the early 1932-36 version, Gayne Whitman played Chandu; Margaret MacDonald was

Dorothy; Bob Bixby was young Bob Regent and Betty Webb played his sister Betty. Cyril Armbruster was director and music was by Felix Mills and later Raymond Paige.

The original *Chandu* had been off the air for twelve years when Morgan, searching around for a new radio show, decided to try a revival. On June 28, 1948, the series was revived, based on the original scripts, for broadcast on the West Coast over the Mutual-Don Lee Network. Armbruster was brought in from the East Coast to direct; Vera Oldham was reactivated for light rewrite of the original scripts; The show was resold to the original sponsor, White King Soap, and *Chandu* 1948 was ready to roll. Even the old gong for the first series was brought out of mothballs and used on the new show.

This time Tom Collins, whose suave delivery made him perfect for the part, played Chandu. Irene Tedrow played Dorothy; Lee Millar was son Bob and Joy Terry was daughter Betty. Veola Vonn played Nadji and Louis Van Rooten was Roxor. Music was by Juan Rolando, who played under his Hindu name, Korla Pandit, on the organ. The messages of White King were read over a souped-down version of the original *Chandu* music. In 1949, *Chandu* became a thirty-minute weekly show, running for a final season on coast-to-coast ABC. It was last heard in 1950.

Tune in Yesterday by John Dunning, Prentice-Hall 1976

The Big Show

The Big Show was radio's last major gasp in the face of growing TV encroachment. It was also a coup for NBC, still smarting from the loss of most of its Sunday night stars to CBS in the talent raids of 1948-49. Armed with big guns, the network prepared to go all-out with its 90-minute **Big Show**.

More than \$100,000 was budgeted for a single show. It was, *Newsweek* noted, "real television money," spent on a dying medium in an almost desperate attempt to shoot in a booster, to keep the heart beating for a while longer. Tallulah Bankhead, one of the legendary lights of Broadway and London theatre, was coaxed into the limelight of "mistress of ceremonies," and Fred Allen was brought out of retirement as a regular supporting star. Jimmy Durante, Ethel Merman, Frankie Laine, Jose Ferrer, Paul Lucas, and Danny Thomas were lined up for the opener. Dee Engelbach was producer-director, Jimmy Wallington announcer. Meredith Wilson assembled his music makers, and a team of writers including Selma Diamond, George Foster, and Frank Wilson was headed by Goodman Ace of *Easy Aces* fame.

The show premiered November 5, 1950. "This is radio, 1950," Miss Bankhead said, opening the first show. "The greatest stars of our time on one big program. And the most fabulous part about this, dah-lings, is that every Sunday we will present other stars of the same magnitude. Pardon me if I sound

like a name dropper, but just listen to three or four of the names we've lined up for next week's show. . .Groucho Marx. . .Fanny Brice. . .Jane Powell, and Ezio Pininnzah!

"Well, now, don't just sit there with your mouths open, dah-lings, I know what you're thinking. You think such a radio show every week is impossible. . .but NBC says nothing is impossible. All it takes is courage, vision and a king-size bundle of dough."

King-size was right. For the start of its second season, NBC flew the entire **Big Show** cast and crew to London to join the British stars Robb Wilton, Vera Lynn, and Beatrice Lillie. After one broadcast in London, it was off to Paris, with William Gargan and Gracie Fields. The American press was ecstatic. Again from *Newsweek* came the opinion that **The Big Show** was "the biggest bang to hit radio since TV started."

The show had a piece of everything, and the time to do it right. Durante was at his word-twisting best; Merman belted out numbers like old times on Broadway. But the program made only a small dent in the ratings of **The Jack Benny Program** and **Charlie McCarthy**, both recently "stolen" by CBS. What smashed them all was TV. The doomsters, who had been predicting radio's death since the late 1930's, were ultimately right. Within a few years Benny and Bergen would be gone too, but first to fall was the biggest. After two years on the air NBC had lost \$1 million

on the **The Big Show**, and it succumbed in 1952.

Tune in Yesterday,

by John Dunning,

Prentice-Hall, 1976

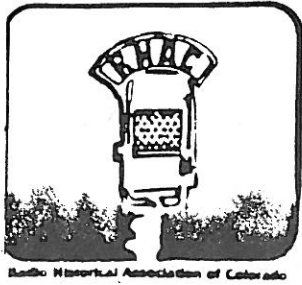
Beat the Band

Beat the Band was an interesting musical quiz, with strong audience participation. First heard on NBC January 28, 1940, the show starred the fourteen-piece Ted Weems orchestra, including Elmo ("The Whistling Troubador") Tanner, "Country" Washburn, and vocalist Marvel Maxwell and Perry Como. Master of ceremonies was young, energetic Thomas Garrison Morfit, who had just changed his name for professional reasons to Garry Moore. Moore solicited musical questions from listeners and used them to quiz the band. Listeners whose questions were used received \$10; those who "Beat the band" got \$20 minimum and a case of Kix Cereal, which sponsored the show. The questions were usually posed as riddles (Q: What song title tells you what Cinderella might have said if she woke up one morning and found that her foot had grown too large for the glass slipper? A: "Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?"). The show was heard Sundays for a season from Chicago. In 1943 it was revived in New York as a Wednesday-night show for Raleigh cigarettes. That one starred "The Incomparable Hildegard" as hostess and ran one season.

Tune in Yesterday,

by John Dunning,

Prentice-Hall, 1976



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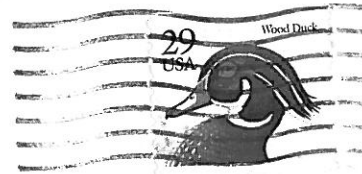
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