

RETURN WITH US

The Radio Historical
Association of Colorado, Inc.

NOW...



Volume 19 Number 3

OCTOBER 1993



"Martin Kane, Private Eye," starred William Gargan, Mary Orr and Mitzi Gould on WOR-Mutual in 1949.

CLUB MEETING: There will NOT be an October, 1993, R.H.A.C. meeting.

The November 1993 R.H.A.C. meeting will be Thursday, November 18h at 7:30 PM at The Church of The Master, located at 17th Avenue and Filbert Court (Filbert Court is between Forest and Fairfax Streets).



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: There will be a board meeting on November 4, 1993.

ALL MEMBERS are welcome and invited to attend and participate at the Board of Directors Meeting. The November 4th meeting will be at the home of Dan Decker at 7:30 PM.



1994 R.H.A.C. Officers: The staff of R.H.A.C. officers was elected once again for 1994.



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 renewal. Each member has full use of the club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below.



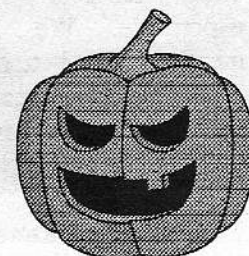
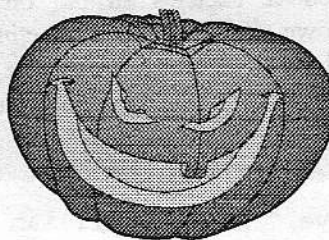
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*From the
King's Roost*

Fall is now upon us, and the leaves are starting to fall. We have seen many signs of an early and maybe severe winter. Last year was so mild (excepting about three weeks) that we really can't complain.

Our October Membership Meeting has been canceled and we want to let you know early enough to make other plans for that evening. We have not been overwhelmed by attendance at the meetings this year, so we don't feel it will be a big problem for most of you.

Yesterday (Sept 28) we shipped the last of the reel-to-reel orders on hand. Cassette libraries are also shipping regularly because we have really exceptional and dedicated librarians who seem to enjoy sharing our RHAC "treasures" with our members.

Most RHAC members enjoy the libraries. Some have problems. Here is one story: A member had a dubbing machine failure and, so, bought a new Telex Copiette, only to have it fail after limited use. He sent the machine in for warranty repair but had to wait. This caused delay in returning RHAC tapes. Such things happen. The important thing is that he kept RHAC informed. He also wanted other members to know his experience. We hope other members have better luck.

Steve Scalzo sent us several great articles about the wild horse herd of the Pryor Mountain Range in Wyoming and

Montana. We found it of great interest that the wranglers were sorting out animals that carried the markings of the original Spanish barbs that were the ancestors of the wild horse herds of Western America. I remember the "dust bowl" days when farmers turned their horses out to feed along the road and the open range because they lacked the feed to keep them at home, and also because the government was moving through the country buying them for very small amounts and then shooting the horses to save the range. Those farm horses crossed with the wild horses and managed to destroy most of the original lines that the wild horse preservationists are now trying to save. Another thing that interested us was that the articles were in a Milwaukee newspaper, not a newspaper from the West. We suppose the Western influence is bucking the same types of narrow thinking that managed to bury dramatic radio.

We hope that all RHAC members will take the opportunity to get out into the countryside and hills and enjoy the beautiful fall colors. Each day, as we ride along the South Platte River valley, we see the willows and cottonwoods changing rapidly; the woodbine has put on a scarlet coat and another unknown parasite vine is putting out great white balls of seeds and duster puffs. The asparagus and wild plums and choke cherries all put on their own show of color attracting the birds and deer and even a stray bear to spread their seeds and to keep their species spreading.

We will be spending a few days in Newark at Jay Hickerson's Old Time Radio convention. We plan a little minor shopping while back there. But we really don't have any wishful thoughts about the way people live along the crowded coast. We know that many people in the East can't stand to be off by themselves and enjoy the many things that we in the West so enjoy. So, I suppose, it all comes out even.

We enjoyed Dick Beals' very motivating talk for the RHAC Meeting in September and feel that some members could benefit from Dick Beals' philosophy. We can only hope that some lives will be influenced by Beals' philosophy and that they can pass it along to younger people through counsel.

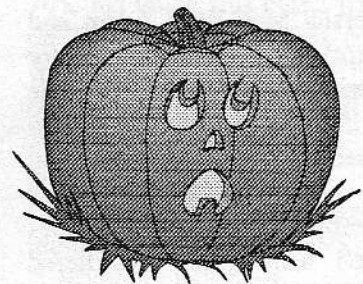
Dick Beals'

great inspirational
autobiography,

THINK BIG

with many photographs
soft cover

IS available for only \$10 p.p.



*Arch Obler,
One-Man Script Mill,
Tries Venture With Nazimova*

A short, dark young man, carelessly dressed and wearing tinted glasses, plunked a portable reproducer down on the desk of Lewis Titterton, NBC script chief in New York. He put a disk onto the turntable and told Titterton: "I want you to hear this." It was the recorded script of a play he had written, "The Ugliest Man in the World." That was how Arch Obler, from NBC's Chicago studio, got what he wanted: a play series that began last spring on NBC's Red Network, a series that he writes, produces, and directs himself.

Behind the 32-year-old writer's idea lay five years of radio playwriting that thus far have produced some 375 original dramas. His first went on the air to celebrate the opening of Radio City in 1934. Then Obler went on to writing radio sketches for movie stars.

In 1936 Obler was called in by NBC to write "Lights Out," a spooky horror series somewhat on the lines of the Grand Guignol dramas that thrill theater-goers in Paris. But two years of making one thriller more horrible than the last began to wear, and, while continuing his radio skits for movie stars (among other things, he did the controversial Mae West Adam and Eve script), Obler was eager to try an experimental drama series, one embodying some of the radio techniques he had learned on "Lights Out" but subduing the flesh-creeping. The techniques concerned such effects as filtered voices, and the fading in and out of words and music.

Last week the results of Obler's experimentation reached for him a high point of achievement, for his usual half-hour program became — for one special broadcast — a full

hour dramatization with the Russian actress Alla Nazimova as the star and with musical effects by the entire NBC Symphony Orchestra. His play was titled "this Lonely Heart*" and told the story of the strange relationship between the composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikowsky and his patroness, Nadejda von Meck.

The broadcast was no more a triumph for Obler than a door-opener for Nazimova, who at 60 - gray-haired but still slender and active - is seeking a new medium. She tried her air personality with Obler in "The Ivory Tower" over NBC on July 8th, and if her latest venture clicks she hopes to join Helen Menken, Margaret Anglin, Erin O'Brien-Moore, and other actresses of the legitimate theater in regular appearances in series drama.

Newsweek, September 4, 1939

*Adapted from the book, "Beloved Friend" by Barbara von Meck and Catherine Drinker Bowen.

*A Lesson in Radio Drama
With Arch Obler*

Wednesday, 9:30 p.m., Mutual-Don Lee

On a Thursday afternoon Radio Life dropped in to Mutual's Hollywood studios to watch Arch Obler at work. "Shh!" we had been warned, "don't disturb him! He's in the midst of an intensely dramatic scene." A cast of twenty stood assembled upon the huge stage. A thirty-piece orchestra stood poised, eyes upon Mr. Obler in the control booth. A deathly still lay upon the room. Suddenly he spoke. He whinnied like a horse.

"And that," he explained to his convulsed cast, "is what you sound like in here." Aside to us, he said, "It's no wonder producers have ulcers. . . I'm only kidding, I love it."

For six long years, Arch Obler has been regarded as tops in radio circles. And no wonder! His five-hundred or more original plays

have made radio history. His tales of horror have curled the hair of thousands, His dramatic narrations have brought a lump to the hardest of hearts, and his humorous stories have handed a laugh to a world sadly in need of laughter. Whoever referred to Obler as a boy-genius wasn't far from wrong. He, of course, scoffs at the title. "It's something I like to do."

When he brought his present series of twenty-six plays to the Mutual mike he cited his aim in these words:

"My intent can be simply stated - to bring to the radio audience a group of melodramas, and comedies and adventures and mysteries which say something through entertainment, and which admit that the listening public, in this year of radio 1945 has a brain and knows how to use it when listening to radio drama. I hope this series will bring to Mutual the dramatic excitement of plays written for these days when people ask to be amused, inspired, and given new faith."

When calling upon Mr. Obler, we found the past few months spent in working on a production for MGM had not changed his method of versatile craftsmanship for the ether waves. Nor had he changed in appearance. He was still the same Obler clad in the inevitable T-shirt, pork-pie hat perched atop his head, and a pencil in his hand. He was still the same jovial Obler who has a way of draining the last drop of talent from his actors by means of gentle persuasion or sometimes with an acrimonious tongue. Needless to say, they loved it.

When a break in the afternoon's rehearsal came, we settled down in the rear of the studio for a chat. Mr. Obler listened with one ear to the questions we were shooting at him and with the other to the original music for the day's show. "Beautiful, isn't it?" he'd ask, referring to the score.

"What," we queried, "do you do when you aren't writing radio dramas?"

Unblinkingly, he answered, "Break firepaths." It seems he owns a house high atop the mountains overlooking the ocean. Life was serene for the three Obler, Mrs. O. (as he refers to his wife), three-year-old Guy, and Arch until the Fire Department ordered them to break firepaths - and in a hurry. "What a time we're having," he moaned.

He is also in the midst of preparing another movie for Metro and is at the same time nearing completion of his first stage play. When asked which is his favorite form of work, he laughed and answered, "It's all work and I like it all."

To Obler, Mrs. O. has the best editorial mind in existence; After completing a script, he turns it over to her for editing, and runs. It has been said that he prefers working in darkened rooms for inspiration and has regaled his secretaries with dreams of horror beyond the wildest imagination. Then he knows he has a good idea.

He is intensely proud of son, Guy, claims he could pose for one of those muscle-men ads. His chubby little three-year-old body is a mass of muscles and Obler wonders what will become of him if they leave him to grow up in the "wilds of the Mountain land" in which they live.

A few days ago was Guy's birthday and Arch ordered a huge chocolate cake for his son. But before the birthday took place, Obler and Mrs. O. had consumed most of the cake.

"Was he mad?" we wondered.

"Nah, he was just as happy with his tiny square and three candles, and gobbled it down in no time."

When rehearsal had resumed, we learned that Obler was a perfectionist. Taking his capable cast of Theodore von Eltz, Tom Lewis, Gloria Blondell and others, he molded them to his mood as

does a shoemaker with fine leather. Over and over they played a scene until it was passed by the director. When Obler, himself, made a mistake, his cast jokingly taunted him with cries of "You'd better watch out. We'll go work for that other 'boy-genius' and you'll be soooooory."

Radio Life, July 7, 1945

Dimension X
4-8-50 - 9-29-51
X Minus One
The Predecessor of

By Bill Sabis

The host for the series was Norman Rose who is still active in radio and can be heard occasionally on the CBS Radio Mystery Theater series. He has a fantastic voice and the delivery of some of his Dimension X introductions are truly classics. "Knock" and "Almost Human" are two that come to mind immediately. His narration on "There Will Come Soft Rains" is truly superb.

In prime evening time on April 8, 1950, Norman Rose ushered in the Dimension X series with the following words:

"Can you predict what will come in 100 years? or in 10? or in the next minute? Some people think they can - nuclear scientists, mathematicians, astronomers, biologists. They'll predict the shape of the future. Why? Because they make the future - because they see beyond the known dimensions of time and space...into the unknown...DIMENSION X...(organ crescendo)...we go ahead now in time to 1965 - we're on a vast concrete runway set in the desert of the Southwest. A great metal ship stands before us, prow pointed for the stars...and in five minutes the signal will flash and it will tear through the atmosphere to ...THE OUTER LIMIT!"

After a few shows the narrative introduction was dropped and the following standard introduction was adopted: "Adventures in time and space...transcribed (or "told") in future tense

...DIMENSION X...(X)...x ...(x)" echoing away to silence.

Wheaties sponsored a few shows but for the most part the shows were "sustaining," that is, without commercial sponsor. However, the show did begin to carry the following introductory words: "The National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with Street & Smith, publishers of *Astounding Science Fiction* bring you Dimension X." According to Meade Frierson, the tie-in was only a gimmick, however, a small mag ad for the show and this air plug for the magazine."

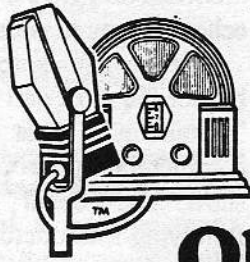
At the closing of the show the announcer would say "You have just heard another adventure in time, space and the unknown world of the future ... the world of ... DIMENSION X ... (X) ... x ...(x)." Norman Rose would then sometimes give a quick preview of next week's show and the network announcer, usually Robert Warren, would return to give the closing credits. The show would then end with the sound of hollow booms fading away.

One final note of interest. The closing network announcer on some of the DIMENSION X shows was Fred Collins. Most of you will recall Mr. Collins' name since he did most of the announcing chores for the X MINUS ONE series and the X MINUS ONE rebroadcasts of 1973-75. Continuing through the 70's, his voice was heard frequently on TV doing about 30% of NBC's spot announcements and commercial work plus all of the voice material for the Hughes Network.

He is reported to have fond memories of the DIMENSION X - X MINUS ONE days and it is clear that during his long association with NBC he played an important part in that radio network's science fiction productions.

Written, March 6, 1975

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1993

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Old Time Radio

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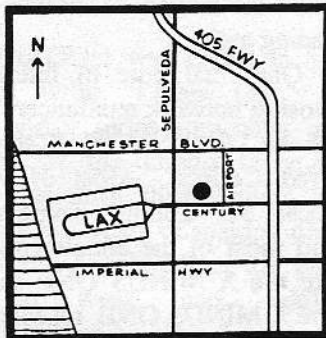
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SPERDVAC 1993 Old Time Radio Convention Registration Form

Name _____ Non-member Member # _____
 Address _____ City _____
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Special diet requirements _____

NOTE: If you wish to be seated with your friends, please send all reservations in together.

CONVENTION RATES:

1. Complete convention package (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) \$115.00 . . . _____
2. Friday dinner and program \$35.00 . . . _____
3. Saturday daytime activities (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) \$15.00 . . . _____
4. Saturday evening banquet and program \$50.00 . . . _____
5. Sunday brunch and program \$15.00 . . . _____

TOTAL: _____

check here if you worked in early radio.

Send checks or money orders, payable to SPERDVAC, to: SPERDVAC Convention, c/o Chester Allen, 13415 Egbert St., Sylmar, CA 91342. For additional details or to volunteer convention assistance, call Larry Gassman at (310) 947-9800.

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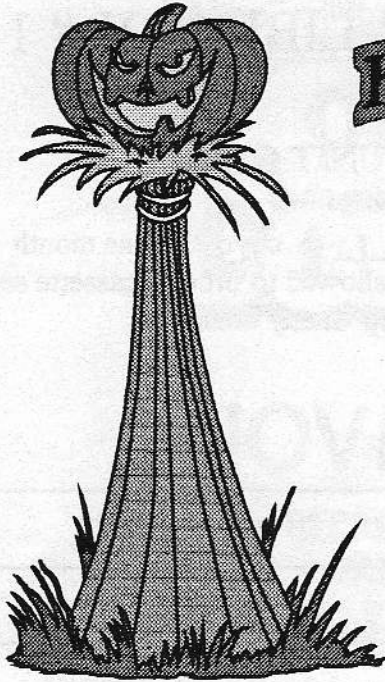
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001 TO 599



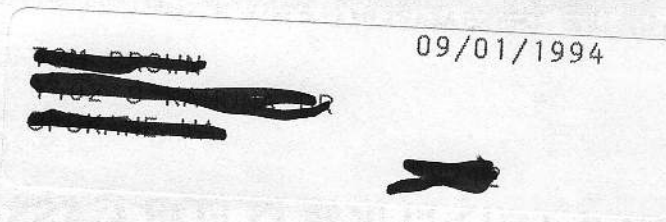
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