

RETURN WITH US

The Radio Historical
Association of Colorado, Inc.

NOW...

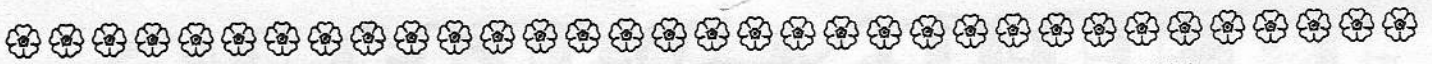


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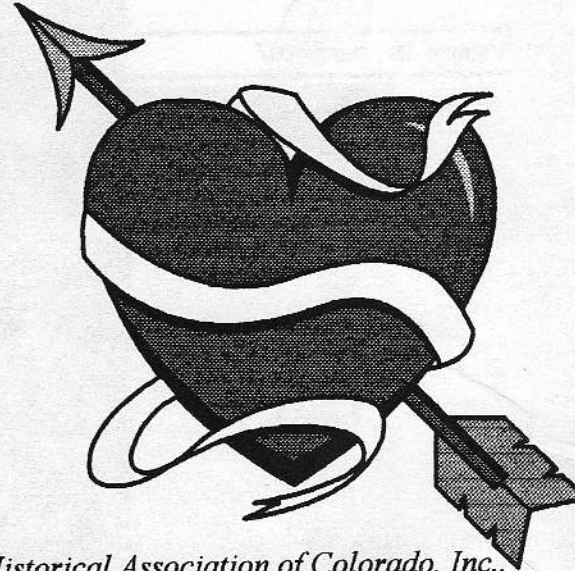
Writer, director and producer Norman Corwin was one of the most talented and creative men on radio, a writer who recognized the potential of radio drama. He is best known for his CBS series in the early Forties, *By Corwin*, *This is War*, *An American in England* and *Columbia Presents Corwin*. In the photo he is giving the radio cue for "Keep that level of sound."



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: There will be a board meeting on January 6, 1994.
 ALL MEMBERS are welcome and invited to attend and participate at the Board of Directors Meeting.
 The March 3rd meeting will be at the home of Herb Duniven at 7:30 PM.



There will be **A MEETING on February 17, 1994! 7:30 p.m.** at The Church of The Master at 17th Avenue & Filbert Court (Filbert Court is between Forest and Fairfax Streets). Video guest Sam Edwards.



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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Story of Radio **SALARIES**

Is any star worth \$5000 a week?

Today the salaries of radio stars rival those of the ruling kings and queens of Hollywood. No single broadcaster, it is true, receives as great wages as, for example, Greta Garbo. But the microphone opens so many other means of revenue—such as talking picture shorts, records, personal and vaudeville appearances—that a diligent performer can make the gorgeous Greta's stipend seem paltry.

Mind you, the tremendous incomes I'm referring to are by no means general in radio land. Dear me, no! The singer-without-a-sponsor receives his mere \$15 to \$25 for a single network appearance, and is mighty glad that he can have his coffee and cakes for another week. Often he sings without being paid at all in the vague hope that an advertising agency might hear and want him. He, too, is the one who has had to take a ten percent cut, for it is only the ordinary, day-in-day-out singer whose bank account has been affected by the depression.

Not the star, not the crooner with an irresistible "it" in his voice, not the performer with the distinctive personality! Indeed not! The advertiser counts himself lucky to sponsor an entertainer whom fate has made one of the nation's idols, and gladly and without question pay him well. In radio the rewards for a trick kind of talent are unbelievable.

Kate Smith earned more as a result of her radio appearances than any other singer. For her thrice-a-week fifteen minute program over the Columbia Broadcasting System she receives \$2,200. These broadcasts have made her such an attraction that today she insists on and gets a flat sum of \$7,500 a week for her vaudeville appearances. When she takes, as a sort of recreation, a

nightclub date she receives \$1,600 a week. She makes three records a month and for each of these she is given \$750. But to me the most amazing of all these figures is the \$7,500 she will receive for singing a tune—just one, mind you—in the new Paramount picture, "The Big Broadcast." Her appearance in the film will not last over five minutes—\$1,500 a minute.

Miss Smith's rise to big money has been unbelievably rapid. Four years ago when she was a bobbed-haired girl of nineteen, she was singing in a Chicago night club at a salary of \$160 a month. In 1930 she was co-starred with Bert Lahr in George White's "Flying High" and that year she made \$19,000. Last year when she became a radio name, and her efforts to wish the moon over the mountain became something more than a secret, she netted \$186,000. This year her manager, Ted Collins, estimates that she will earn a half million dollars, since only one of her vaudeville appearances paid as low as \$5,000.

Miss Smith is a simple, unaffected, casual person. She dislikes formal dress and would much rather lead a simple life than the more or less complicated one which her small fortune has made necessary.

Then there's a young singer from Maine who hasn't done half badly himself. Rudy Vallee—he's the lad. Each week he collects \$2,500 for his commercial broadcasting and when he appears in a Paramount theatre he goes home with an extra \$4,500. In addition to this, Mr. Vallee during the year has reaped a golden harvest with his role in George White's "Scandals," his talking picture and his records. Because Lee de Forrest invented an audion tube many years ago Mr. Vallee today is a millionaire, or at any rate only a rung below it. And those who know him intimately insist that he probably still has in his cash drawer

the first penny he made on his first commercial program.

The radio, too, has made near millionaires of Amos 'n' Andy. Those Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll fellows, I mean, who five years ago, as a comparatively obscure comedy team in Chicago, thought they were mighty lucky to be earning \$100 a week. For three years now they have been joking over a National Broadcasting Company network on a guarantee of \$100,000 a year with a substantial bonus, based presumably on their effectiveness as toothpaste salesmen. They earned a flat sum of \$250,000 on their movie, "Check and Double Check," and fifty percent of the net revenue from the film, which, while not a success in New York, was warmly received in smaller towns. Besides this they have a regular, though not great income, from toys, books, candy bars and school pads named after them.

Another comedy team, Gene and Glenn, passionately favored in Ohio and well considered by morning network listeners in the East, have grown spectacularly from hams, as far as salary is concerned, to rich men within a space of slightly over three years. Theirs is a story of successful gambling.

Several years ago the team of Gene Carroll (who is a brother of Albert Carroll, the actor), Ford Rush and Glenn Rowell was amusing folks in Cincinnati through station WLW. Rush later became an orchestra conductor and moved to Chicago. The remaining pair, not so sure of their continuing success without their erstwhile partner, moved to Cleveland to start all over again.

They wanted to sing for station WTAM, but the manager advised them to spice their warbling with comedy lines. They asked a pal, Cal DuVall, to write their continuity for them, and he agreed there was a possibility for success in the idea. Then the station manager offered

them a salary of \$100 a week. But the boys were funny that way. No, they said, they would take only \$50 a week—enough for living expenses—for how were they to know whether they would click or whether they wouldn't?

Well, they clicked from the start. Soon they were getting \$600 a week. Now it's \$2,250 from a local bakery account and \$1,850 from their morning network sponsor. And it was, of course, only a matter of time before representatives of the Cleveland RKO theatre, the Palace, came 'round with a contract. They were offered \$3,500 a week. No, they said again; they wanted to gamble on their talent. They asked for and it was agreed, \$2,500 a week and fifty per cent of all revenue over the theatre's average business. Well, what a successful gamble that was! They went away at the end of the week with \$14,000 in their jeans, having broken the records set by Gilda Gray, Van & Schenck and (have you forgotten the convict pianist?) Harry Snodgrass.

Many funny situations arise in the giving and getting of radio salaries, and I like to recall particularly the story of Will Rogers' radio activities. Mr Rogers' demands were high. Specifically he wanted \$15,000 for a single fifteen minute period. And sponsors, being what they are, signed him for this sum on several occasions.

Well, finally he was signed about two years ago for his first series—thirteen weeks at \$5,000 a broadcast. When all were assembled to close the deal, an executive of the Columbia Broadcasting System said:

"You understand, of course, Mr. Rogers, that you will pay the usual ten per cent to the agent who booked you."

"I don't understand any such thing," Mr. Rogers replied. "I intend to receive my entire salary myself."

The Columbia executive was somewhat flustered. This was decidedly unusual. The ten per cent fee for booking is regular.

"Well," he replied when it became apparent that silence wouldn't solve the problem, "we realize that it will be a distinction for the Columbia Broadcasting System to have you over our network. So, tell you what we'll do. We'll pay that ten per cent ourselves."

And for a full thirteen weeks Columbia paid \$500 a week to an agent on a series which, truth to tell, was not as successful as they had hoped.

RADIO STARS, October, 1932

Misters and Missus

**The Married Couples of Radio
Are Just Average Folks Who Try
to Make the Best of It**

In motion pictures husbands and wives are not usually paired in plays. In radio it's different. They usually are, and the fact may have given rise to some conjecture regarding marital life off the air.

There are a number of famed radio couples whose banterings and air-carryings-on might lead one to wonder, for instance, if Mary Livingston, the flibbertigibbet air buffer for husband Jack Benny is the shrill voiced heckler at home that she is when she had Jack too embarrassed for words out there before the studio audience and most of America listening.

Well, as Mr. Kitzel says every time the script calls for it, "It could be." But, on the other hand, as Horatio K. Boomer might have it, "'t'aint so, McGee." And, as a matter of fact, it 't'aint.

Mary may raise merry hallelujah with Jack when she has him squirming before the microphone, but, at home, before the Benny fireside, she is, really, a demure little creature, very much interested

in her home and, as Jack is—in daughter Joanie.

Don't get the idea, however, that all is as happy in the Benny menage as a Convention of Doughnut Dunkers underwritten by Chase and Sanborn and the Continental Baking Company. T'aint, but you'd never notice it.

"I get so mad at him I could howl at times," Mary told us seriously the other day. "But, I just store everything up and, Boy! when I get him on the air, does he know he's been aired."

Jack grinned foolishly.

"Shucks," he said admiringly, "the gal's just got good sense. Why have discord in the home when you can put it on the air for a laugh?"

We've all heard Fred Allen and wife, Portland, all in a "hoffa" because of Portland's exasperating dumbness. You'd almost believe that no man could stand having such a dimwit around the house day in and out. That is, of course, if Portland is as daffy at home as she is air-screwy. Well, even that "ain't the way we heerd it." Because at home Portland Hoffa is a domestic gem to hear Fred tell it. And he ought to know. We guested with them one night and that girl who was named after the town in Oregon, had us clutching for support. She is a Keats and Shelly fan, an encyclopedia on Shakespeare, believes, for example, that the quantum theory is ably supported by the radium phenomenon of escaping radiations, ultimately transmuted the substance into base lead.

"You couldn't ask for better documentation of the theory," Portland insisted. Now could we? Of course we couldn't, so we confined ourselves to a theory propounded by Rector's back in the 90's: "Take one two inch steak and a bucketful of mashed potatoes and, what have you?" Boy, oh, boy!

What have we? Especially with a washer of sauterne or pale beer.

Then, of course, there are exceptions to the radio pairing of husbands and wives. Bob Hope and Dolores Read, for instance, and Dick and Joan (Blondell) Powell. They work different shows, but their home life is, in a way, a rehearsal background for their airings.

"Keep apart during business hours," is Bob's pontifical dismissal of the fact that Dolores doesn't appear on programs with him, but does make personal appearances with him. Dolores is a singer and has a healthy critical sense on which Bob leans heavily to assure a rollicking good show. Favorite home diversion of the Hopes is for Robert (that's Bob) to seat Dolores comfortably and strike an attitude, saying:

"Now pretend this is a microphone. I come out . . ."

"And put your foot in your mouth," laughs Dolores.

"Now wait, honey, this is serious," he protests. After a period of bantering Bob tries out lines from a coming show. He feels happy when Dolores raises a hand, index finger and thumb forming a circle which means—"on the beam."

The family life of the Powells is a sponsor-product tug-of-war. Joan is always seeking a divorce as heroine of Mutual-Don Lee's "I Want a Divorce," sponsored by Tea Garden Products, whilst Dick on NBC sings his way into the hearts of those whom Maxwell House Coffee makers hope will soften their morning cinnamon toast in beakers of the brew that currently is adding to Dick's fame. Their home life is centered, like the Benny's, around a daughter, Ellen.

"It's a happy life we lead," trilled Joan at rehearsal the other day," only occasionally marred by the fact that Dick insists on singing when he's not eating. His bathroom arias

are productions to make bathmats rear up."

Gayest and simplest of home folks are Jim and Marian Jordan (Fibber McGee and Molly). This precious pair have become so deep in character that it is not a bit unusual to hear wafted across the still and peaceful air of Encino Marion's reproving—"McGEE!" Audiences who have attended a Fibber and Molly broadcast, watched its soundman go through his routine like some suddenly gone berserk whirling dervish, heard Fibber tear half of the radio "house" down looking for his rubbers, usually go home with aching sides, individually uneasily thinking that, perhaps, those appendectomy stitches are loosening.

"He's not at all like that at home," Molly avers proudly. "He's really a carpenter with the best of 'thim'. There's hardly a chair or table in the house he hasn't made. And, "she smiles with sweet malice, "at a cost, sartainly, not more than twice as much as they could be had for at Bullocks."

At home the Jordans wisecrack without heckling motives, adore their kids, Kathleen and Jim, both in late teens. They've struggled up through thick and thin since early rickety vaudeville days. The gesture of clasping hands together at the end of a broadcast and taking the audience applause is no apple sauce. They love each other. If you doubt it, take a look next time at the worship-shine in the eyes of both.

A twittering apostrophe to the professorial observation: "No brains, no matter. Ah well, no matter, no brains," is the arch-queen of Zany-dom, chirpy Gracie Allen.

We know her on air as a dumb example of continual uncomprehension. That's a long word but Gracie and George are people who improvise long laughs with short quick sallies that bubble up out of

Gracie's contribution to science—
Sound From a Vacuum!

But, don't be misled by Gracie's husband-trying fumbblings on the air, nor by George's occasional lapses from an average IQ. At home they are gracious, poised and cultured persons who have a library for use and not for show. Both take a deep interest in current events, Gracie loving nothing more than to plunge into a stormy sea of discussion, wade out as far as she can (women can't know everything, you know) and then turn to George, saying with disarming testimony to her faith in his mental processes:

"Georgie, dear. Will you take up the argument from here. I feel I should make a cup of coffee for everybody." It puzzles her just a little bit to come back from the coffee-making to see her debate opponents and George slapping their sides and George roaring:

"Didja' hear the one about . . ."

At times like these Gracie has an ominous glint in her one blue eye, her one grey-brown eye.

"No wonder," she sighs, "George is so stupid on the air." Which is, of course, a base, but pardonable, marital slander.

Kay St. Germaine is the wife of Signal Carnival's master of ceremonies, Jack Carson. She feuds with Vera Vague who argues with husband Jack. At home they rehearse jointly, for she sings on the program. He tries lines on Kay, she sings songs to him. Most recently married of the radio couples, they have a home in California's beautiful San Fernando Valley, do their rehearsing at top voice because there are no neighbors near.

Dale Nash is the wife of Shafter Parker, who is Hal Berger of baseball re-creation when he is not Parker of Mutual's "Shafter Parker's Circus." She's the ingenue who gets kicked around a lot in shipwrecks,

when the animals escape and other dramatic events take place.

"I never write screaming scenes for her," Parker (Berger) declares. She thinks it too feminine to scream." Which must mean that Dale is a mans sort of girl, which she is. He likes baseball and she likes fights. Against his muttered protests she hauls him off weekly to Legion stadium fights in Hollywood. They are happy in their home-life, both lending aid to the other in that which concerns them most, outside the home, improving themselves as public entertainers.

Dale has only one bitterness as far as husband Lou is concerned.

"He thinks he's a cook," she said. "Once he spoiled the kitchen color scheme by trying to flip eggs from a pan like a professional. The eggs went everywhere but back to the pan. Renovation of the kitchen cost plenty."

Berger's only reply to this is a long, sad stare.

Privately he admitted that he would have made it if he hadn't run out of eggs and Dale out of patience.

So, there they are, a few of the better known spouses of Radio. In the main, they are like the rest of us, interested in themselves, their homes, trying to do a good job of living, crowding fun and understanding into the job of marriage.

RADIO LIFE, December 29, 1940

Microphonic Doldrums

It was so quiet in the radio industry last week that the time salesmen seemed to be sitting in wait for Santa Claus to slide down an antenna. Indeed, the business would welcome a well equiped Santa. For while its 1947 tree was still expensively trimmed, it was with the same old baubles that have decorated it many a past Christmas.

At the top, seemingly as always, hung Fibber McGee and Molly, Bob

Hope, Edgar Bergen, Jack Benny, the Lux Radio Theater, and the 22-year-old act of Amos 'n' Andy. The bits of tinsel and glitter that radio calls quizzes, audience participation, soap operas, mystery and dramatic shows were scattered as usual in the lower branches. Under the tree where presents lie were not gifts from the Santa of the microphone but those that radio was giving itself. Some of them were very, very old. And on the top of the heap were a few last-minute boxes. Nobody knew whether they were gifts to listeners — or booby traps.

► Fred Allen, whose fifteen-year-old show was drawing some critical slings, put Russell Maloney to work as a script writer. A New Yorker magazine stalwart from 1934 to 1945, he was hired to give Allen's waning radio wit the needle.

► A 129-page survey, inspired by CBS and carried out by two research consultants, claimed positively that the soap opera Big Sister (CBS, 1-1:15 p.m., EST) was (1) "psychologically beneficial to listeners individually" and (2) of value to society "by reaffirming the strength, stability, and sanctity of the family."

► James Caesar Petrillo left a package labeled "do not open until Jan 31." It was, the networks hoped, a peaceable renegotiation of the networks' contract with the American Federation of Musicians, which would guarantee network music as usual in 1948.

► CBS suddenly decided to make available its twenty years of scripts to the film industry. This solid decision came with "Hollywood facing substantial budget cuts," the network said. Not sure what part of its "treasure trove" the movies might buy, CBS happily added that it had rediscovered some old scripts worthy of rebroadcast.

By the Wayside: Thus the stack of gifts was topped by the fact that old radio is still good enough for 1948—

and perhaps even the movies. But what might have been the prize packages had never made the Christmas tree.

► Comedians Henry Morgan and Jack Paar, in 1946 and 1947, had shown themselves as fresh in humor as they were young in years. But on Christmas Eve the two men on whom listeners had pinned hopes for a rejuvenation of radio comedy will sit by an empty stocking. That night Morgan is losing his sponsor and Paar may be dropped from the air.

► In the fall, the National Association of Broadcasters wrapped up a new and needed "Standards of Practice" to guide radio on the narrow boundry between good public service and entertainment, and the excesses of commercialism. But only last month the code was rejected by the industry as too tough.

And yet with all this—the old, the weak, and the tiny touches of new— Stanley Glaser, manager of Avco Manufacturing Corp.'s radio and television division, predicted last week that in 1948 Americans might well spend \$1,000,000,000 on new radio and television receivers.

Newsweek, December 22, 1947

"My Most Embarassing Moment"

FANNIE BRICE: "My most embarassing moment came a couple of years ago when I was married to Billy Rose, and we were guests at a party given by Elsa Maxwell. I don't know, perhaps I was excited or something, but I was introducing my husband to a group of people, and said, "This is my husband . . ." and for the life of me I couldn't think of his name! I stood there feeling utterly stupid, as we had been married for two years. After a few embarassing moments he spoke up and said, "That's all right, I'm Billy Rose, how do you do!"



RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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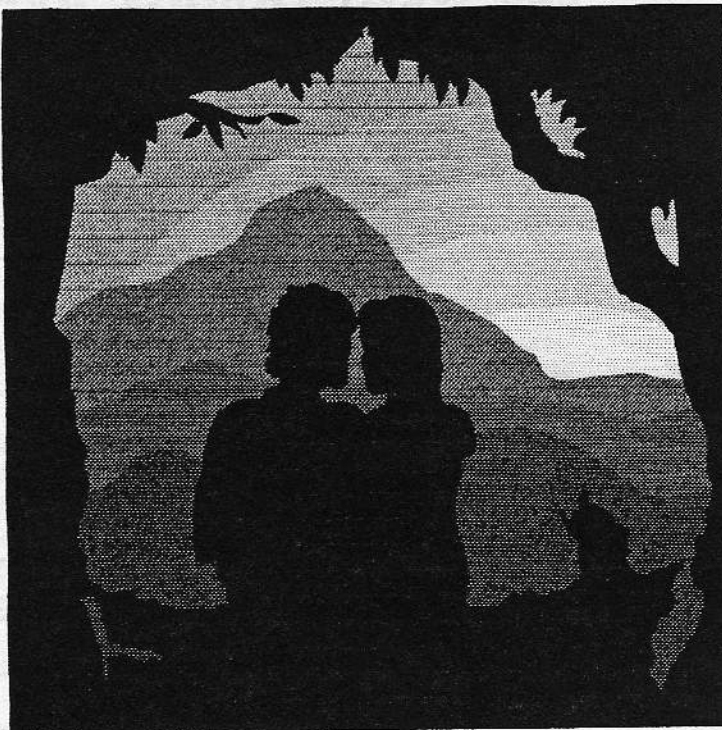
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