

Radio Historical Association of Colorado
Founded 1975

RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 2.3, Number 1

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Jean Hersholt as Dr. Christian

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

Dedicated to the preservation of old time radio programs and to making those programs available to our members.

RHAC BOARD MEETING Aug 7, 1997

at Kings residence 7:30 PM SEE ADDRESS BELOW

Old time radio is alive in Denver

John Dunning's OTR Program (ON STAND BY)

John Rayburn's "Reminiscing with Rayburn" Saturday evenings 6:00 till 11:00 PM KEZW 1430

KEZW has syndicated OTR weekdays from 7:00 till 8:00 PM 1430 on the dial.

KEZW Imagination Theater Sundays 5:00 till 6:00 PM

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RHAC web page and catalog is on the world wide web. <http://www.old-time.com/ffiles/rhac.zip>
take a look there is a lot of information at that sight.

RETURN WITH US NOW... is the official publication of the *Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc.*, a nonprofit organization. Cost of membership is \$25.00 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.

Phone numbers are in the (303) area code except where indicated.

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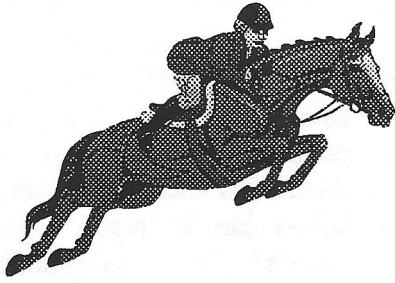
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THE KINGS ROOST

We are pleased to be able to advise that our OTR good friend, Parley Baer is on the mend after suffering a stroke July 24th. Parley has been to Denver several times, including this past May to work with Peg Lynch as Albert in several skits Peg wrote. We remember Parley for his voice as CHESTER in Gunsmoke, but he hasn't spent all his life as an actor he likes to remember his days as ringmaster in the circus. Parley has also worked in TV and Movies.

We certainly wish Parley well and hope that he will soon be home with his wife, Ernestine.

Parley get well soon.

This months entries into the library are more of the *Story Of Dr. Kildare* and the beginning of the *Dr. Christian stories*. There will be more Dr. Christian entered in

November. Jean Hersholt was a great actor with great warmth in his voice, and we are sure that these stories will be enjoyed by all.

Our membership continues to grow, and we need to again remind members that when they use the libraries, please be sure to give the librarians a better chance to fill their orders by listing **PLENTY** of alternatives, not just the numbers you are ordering.

Also, please make rental checks out to RHAC, not the librarian that has volunteered to handle that part of the library. The more alternatives you list, the easier it is to fill your order and get them in the mail. As I type this, I think of one of our busy librarians that is now on vacation for a few weeks. His orders will be a little behind for a couple of weeks.

We are looking forward to the club picnic August 16th. Even though the temperatures may be up, it will be pleasant in the shade of the trees in our yard (our jungle). John Stevens has submitted a short skit for entertainment, and we hope that some other members will come up with some. We will find budding actors to fill the roles, and all will have a good time.

Dick Beals will be with us for the picnic. He is coming a

week earlier to enjoy a week of riding and horseplay at our barn. We are seeing fewer deer in our fields as the amoeba of urban growth continues. We are glad that we have a state park about two blocks away so we will have good riding for years to come.

The member that was looking for motors for his decks was able to find another deck to cannibalize for them, so he is now back in operation.

RHAC elections for officers will be at the September meeting. All existing terms end September 30, 1997.

Dick King has announced that he will resign as president, so we need a new volunteer for that position. Let's have a Denver area member step up and take over. There will be plenty of help and the biggest job is planning the club's activities and presiding at board meetings. Maybe someone would like to re-activate the RHAC players. We have plenty of scripts and we think everyone enjoyed doing it. Please make nominations by note or phone so we can list them next month. Offices that are up for election are president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Not all will change, but Dick is retiring.

To eliminate any confusion about our term side band.

RHAC is "on The Air"

Since April of 1996, the RHAC has been broadcasting shows from our tape library every Sunday afternoon at 2:00. These shows are broadcast via the Sound Alternate Program (SAP) channel of KRMA TV Channel 6.

The RHAC provides these shows to the "Radio Reading Service of the Rockies" (RRSR) and they broadcast from their Boulder studios to the KRMA SAP channel. The RRSR provides many types of audio programs to the blind.

These RHAC shows are digitally remastered with noise removed. Tape copies of these shows are available for RHAC members use in charitable work. Contact the Kings at (303) 751-4139 or Dave Clow at (303) 972-2850.

We owe a special thanks to Dave Clow for the hours and hours work he does to digitize the RHAC programs for RRSR.

CBS

From Broadcasting 9/19/77
The first five decades
The Columbia Broadcasting System did not start out at the top. It was William Paley's determination to put his

network there that resulted in some of the more colorful programming coups in broadcasting's history.

In the earliest days, for example, there was the discovery and development of such talents as Bing Crosby, Kate Smith and the Mills Brothers. After World War II there came the talent raids on NBC, bringing the likes of Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Amos 'n' Andy and Red Skelton to CBS, not only giving Mr. Paley's network leadership in radio but setting the stage for its dominance in television as well.

Now that CBS-TV's prime-time supremacy has been lost for the first time in 20 years, and with Bill Paley still involved on a day-to-day basis with the programs that appear on his network, could it be that some of the scrappiness will reemerge at CBS? At least one of the network's programmers, Harry Shephard thinks it might.

I think we're in the process of being aggressive, of being innovative, of trying new things. Perhaps one of the reasons we lost our leadership position was that we were the leaders for so long that we became a little too complacent. We have to assume the same sort of posture that made us number one for all those years.

Much is made of the "unprecedented" competitiveness in network programming this year. But the fact is that, although the stakes may be higher now, today's programming maneuvers seem tame when compared to the wide open atmosphere that prevailed when Mr. Paley set out to build himself a program schedule in 1928.

It is said that when David Sarnoff first heard that a group of investors had set up a network to compete with RCA, he laughed out loud. Curtis Mitchel, in his book "Cavalcade of Broadcasting," described what he called "the merit of contentiousness and the blessing of serendipity," qualities that Mr. Sarnoff apparently had not considered at the time.

"A fact of life little recognized by armchair critics," he wrote, "is that any newcomer to a competitive situation has an advantage. For example, NBC's was already sold out to advertisers when CBS entered the lists. Being sold out, the older network could rarely innovate or experiment for fear of losing an account or antagonizing faithful listeners. Starting from scratch, CBS pioneered in news and music, crooners and dramas. One consequence was a bouncy,

relevant kind of entertainment that pleased millions. plus the crowning of William Paley as the "genius of programming." . . . Serendipity is the natural ability-says the dictionary-to make favorable and profitable discoveries. You have it or you don't"

Clearly, William Paley had it, and radio was ripe for it. In a 1974 interview with the CBS house organ, *Columbine*, Mr. Paley recalled, "it was a new medium, without any precedent, and we were all experimenting-trying out new ideas that would make it exciting to our audiences."

From the beginning, CBS had been talent-oriented, formed by an investment partnership that included George A. Coates, a promoter and Arthur Judson manager of the Philadelphia Symphony and the New York Philharmonic. Yet in 1927 the network's schedule featured such dreary titles as *The Emerson Effervescent Hour*, *The Listerine Hour* and the *Pure Oil Brass band*.

A year after Mr. Paley took over in September 1928, he engineered a stock-exchange deal with Adolph Zucker of Paramount films and *Voices From Hollywood* appeared on CBS, the first time movie stars would be heard on radio. By 1931 CBS would have Ed Sullivan with gossip once a

week, the Mills Brothers with songs twice a week, Kate Smith four times a week and Bing Crosby five. In 1932, Burns and Allen would appear with Guy Lombardo Orchestra and Jack Benny with Ted Weems, *Buck Rogers* aired five times a week and Fred Allen one. The 1933 lineup included George Jessel, Jack Armstrong, Alexander Woolcott and Admiral Richard Byrd, Jack Benny and Fred Allen defected to NBC while Rin Tin Tin went over to CBS.

CBS would win over Will Rogers and *The Shadow* from NBC the following year Bing Crosby was joined by the Boswell Sisters and Fats Waller had a 15-minute program three times a week. Bing moved to NBC in 1935, while the *Lux Radio Theater*, Bob Hope and Eddie Cantor all shifted to CBS. Major Edward Bowes was signed by CBS in 1936, a coup which Mr. Paley recalls as one of his biggest, perhaps in part because it had been the major who had earlier trounced Mr. Paley's *La Palina Smoker* and *La Palia Rhapsodizers* when the major was on NBC. During his first season on CBS, Major Bowe's talent revue (a precursor to *The Gong Show*) would score a 23.2 in the Hooper ratings while CBS had moved ahead of both NBC's Blue and Red networks in terms of affiliates, sales and profits.

It had been a decade not only of breathless competition, but also one that saw broadcasting develop as a powerful cultural influence. Along with Franklin Delano Roosevelt, CBS was perhaps more aware than most of the fact, having expanded its audience research in 1934 into psychological testing cooperating with a number of academic researchers, one of whom was Frank Stanton of Ohio State University. In discussing the effectiveness of radio as an advertising medium, Mr. Paley reported to his stockholders that year that "all [the studies] tend to emphasize the power inherent in radio broadcasting to make lasting impressions on the human mind." And, as Dr. Stanton would note years later as president of CBS, "If anyone had doubts about the impact of radio in 1938, Orson Welles dispelled them with his *Mercury Theater* broadcast of *"The War of the Worlds."*

It is fortunate that the medium's influence had at least begun to be appreciated prior to the beginning of World War II, when the government would urge "voluntary mobilization of the brains, the heart, courage and experience of the radio industry toward winning the war."

CBS obliged, airing some 17,000 hours of war-related

programs in 1943 alone. Among them: *They Live Forever*, dramas about men who died in battle; *The Man Behind the Gun*, dramas about the battles themselves; *Our Secret Weapon*, which "trained its guns on the lies in Axis propaganda," and *Womanpower*, which described the role of women during the war.

If such programs were meant to inspire some of the ostensibly pure entertainment programs were intended to soothe, not only worried parents at home but also homesick GI's abroad. Titles include *The Old Heart Songs and Familiar Hymns Offered by Mother and Dad and Green Valley U.S.A.* In addition, Bill Paley, who had spent the war as the radio expert in the Psychological Warfare Division, described how radio helped express to Americans at home that their sons and brothers were, in fact, neither winning nor surviving every battle.

"We were 'winning the war,'" he said "but its impending grim realities, in terms of American lives, had not struck home. Some preparation of the public mind against demoralizing shock was urgent. From perhaps a least expected source came an important contribution to this need—from a CBS daytime serial program, heard

in millions of homes through five-day-a-week broadcasts. Deftly and convincingly it moved familiar characters through the news of *Missing in Action* and the shock of *Death in Action*, using the vast power of the drama to set vicarious behavior patterns of fortitude and courage.

At war's end, Bill Paley came home to meet and conquer his professional adversary: NBC. One of his first moves, in 1946 was to establish a CBS Entertainment Programming Department, which by early 1948 had sold 15 of the network's "packaged programs" to sponsors, among them *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* and *My Friend Irma*, both top-15 programs in the Hooper and Nielson ratings. One reviewer called the achievement "one of the swiftest payoffs in network annals".

Actually it would take some time before the packaged program concept would revolutionize sponsorship. Another Paley maneuver, the talent raids of 1948, would have a more immediate effect. The raids began in September with Amos 'n' Andy (Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden, respectively), who were purchased by CBS as a program, thus making the \$2,000,000 they reportedly received taxable as capitol

gains instead of income (the difference in that bracket being 25% vs. 77%). Broadcasting noted at the time that "reports that at least one other star in the NBC stable was involved in a similar arrangement were flatly denied."

In November, however, Jack Benny defected, and by January of 1949, NBC was "groggy from CBS's Sunday punch" as Mr. Paley's network demolished NBC in the 6:30-8:30 p.m. prime time period. On Jan. 24, Bing Crosby left ABC for CBS and days later, "the transfer of talent to CBS took on proportions of a stampede" as NBC's Edgar Bergen and Red Skelton were signed. Fred Allen at the end of his Jan. 23 broadcast for NBC, had said "I'll be back next week, same time, same network. No other comedian can make that claim."

In an interview with BROADCASTING last year Mr. Paley discussed his strategy! "At that time," he said, "I was not only thinking of radio, where I wanted to bolster our standing and please our audience; I knew that television was right around the corner. I wanted people who I thought would be able to transfer from radio to television. That gave us a very good start in television. and a big advantage indeed."

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION of COLORADO

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