

Volume 23, Number 12

July, 1998



# 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 Thursday, August 6, 1998

At Dick and Maletha King's, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood CO

Old time radio is alive and well in Denver!

KRMA Channel 6 Secondary Audio Program, RHAC's show Tribute to OTR" Sunday 2:00 PM

KEZW 1430 AM *When Radio Was* weekdays from 7:00 till 8:00 PM

KEZW 1430 AM *Radio Movie Classics* Sundays 5:00 till 6:00 PM

KFKA 1310 AM "Radio Memories" Sundays 6:00 to 12:00 PM

The RHAC web page and catalog is on the world wide web. <http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>  
Take a look, there is a lot of information at this site.

*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 in good standing 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.

<b>President:</b>	Guy Albright, 786 South Quitman St., Denver, CO 80219	934-0184
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Vacant	
<b>Secretary:</b>	John Stevenson, PO Box 1908 Englewood, CO 80150	573-7558
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Maletha King, address below	761-4139
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Stewart Wright, 725 Moore St #4 Lakewood, CO 80215 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:stewwright@worldnet.att.net">stewwright@worldnet.att.net</a>	237-4055
<b>R.H.A.C. Historian:</b>	John Adams, 2811 S Valentia St., Denver CO 80231	755-9185
<b>R.H.A.C. Players:</b>	JoAnn Bantin 1290 Dayton Street Aurora, CO 80010	343-7508
<b>Talking Newsletter:</b>	Mike Fields, 243 S. 1100 E. Greentown, IN 46936	
<b>Membership:</b>	Dick King, PO BOX 1908 Englewood, CO 80150 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:dick.king@juno.com">dick.king@juno.com</a>	761-4139
<b>Tape Donations:</b>	Bill McCracken, 7101 W Yale Ave #503, Denver CO 80227 Herb Duniven, 4184 S. Syracuse St., Denver CO 80237	
<b>Directors at Large:</b>	David L Michael, 1999 Broadway, Lowery Suite, Denver CO 80202 Herb Dunniven See Above Dick King See Above	

## LIBRARIES

<b>Reference Material:</b>	Bill McCracken, address above	986-9863
<b>Logs &amp; Scripts:</b>	Fred Hinz, c/o RHAC, P O Box 1908, Englewood CO 80150	
<b>Open Reel Tape Librarian:</b>	Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood CO 80110	
<b>Cassette Tape Librarians:</b>		
#1 (1-499)	Terry Hamilton, 9393 E Colorado Ave., Denver CO 80231	696-8196
#2 (500-999)	David Gatch, PO Box 70 Glen Haven, CO 80532	970-577-0805
#3(1000-2000)	Dave Logan, 5557 S Sherman Cir., Littleton CO 80121	730-1430
#4 (5001 up)	Mika Rhoden, 3950W Dartmouth Ave., Denver CO 80236	937-9476

## No July Meeting

There will not be a RHAC members meeting in July. The topic of the September meeting will be announced in the near future.

## RHAC Picnic

Make sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. The Annual RHAC picnic will be held at Dick & Maletha King's - 900 W. Quincy Ave, in Englewood. The picnic will start at 2:00 PM. The Kings will provide the hamburgers and corn. Members should bring a covered dish or salad to share. See you there!

## Jim French: Keeper of the Flame

By Stewart Wright

Who says radio drama is dead? Radio drama is still alive and well in Seattle. Jim French has been writing, directing, and producing radio drama, mystery, and science fiction programs for Seattle radio audiences since the early 1970's. His programs are heard regionally over radio station KIRO - 710 AM, Seattle as the *KIRO Mystery Playhouse* and are also syndicated nationally as *Imagination Theater*. The following article is part of an interview I recently conducted with Jim.

### Could you tell us a little about your radio writing career?

The *KIRO Mystery Playhouse* first aired in late 1990 as a replacement for *CBS Radio*

*Mystery Theater*, but many of the dramas first aired on KVI between 1972 and 1978, when I was writing and producing a new 25-minute drama each week. They were broadcast on a show on KVI known as *Theater of the Mind*. In 1991, I commenced writing and producing new shows, which alternate with the recycled ones, as we still do today. The *KIRO Mystery Playhouse* uses two dramas per night, every Saturday and Sunday evening at 9:06 PM PT.

### How many shows have you written?

I have over 400 shows which rotate on KIRO and on a syndication network of stations coast-to-coast, under the program title *Imagination Theater*. The syndicator is Transmedia of San Francisco. I add at least 2 new shows per month. Most of these shows are recorded before a live audience at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle. I also produce new dramas in my private studio in Bellevue.

### What genres of show have you written?

Most of the shows aired are episodes of one of four series.

The *Crisis* series was done in the 1970's. It was patterned after *Suspense*.

*The Adventures of Harry Nile* is private detective series that takes place in Los Angeles and Seattle during the 1940's and 50's.

*Kincaid, The Strangeseeker* is a series about an reporter who investigates strange and bizarre

happenings.

*The Further Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes* is the newest series and is concerned with new adventures of the world's most famous consulting detective.

I write all the scripts, with a few exceptions.

### Your dramas are sometimes called New-Time Radio. How do consider your programs?

Many old-time radio collectors find value in collecting historic radio programs and my shows are not. They are the same style, but they're new. They don't have the prominence that an Old-Time Radio show has, they don't have stars of the 1940's. So they may not be of any particular interest to the people who are into collecting merely because of the historical value. That's O.K. with me. I did not and do not do these shows for collectors, I do them for the people I'm entertaining right now.

### Who are some of the actors who have appeared in your radio plays?

I draw my actors from a local pool of something like 60 players. I still use some of the actors from the KVI days; including Lee Paache, Douglas Young, John Amandola, Phil Harper, and Pat French.

In addition to the local talent, such national celebrities as Harry Anderson (*Night Court* and *Dave's World*), Richard Sanders (*WKRP In Cincinnati*), and Peg Wood (*Northern Exposure*) have appeared in recent productions of KIRO Mystery Playhouse.

Other famous players I've had on *Crisis* in the 1970's were up

here doing stage plays. They would include Roddy McDowall, Tommy Smothers, Patty Duke, John Astin, the late Keenan Wynn and Hans Conreid, and several others.

### **Do you use live and/or prerecorded sound effects?**

I use both pre-recorded and live sound effects in my shows. The pre-recorded sound effects are recorded on to digital mini-discs and then played as needed.

The use of pre-recorded sound effects is not new to radio drama. In the heyday of radio drama in the 1940's, if there was an effect required in the script, a train, an airplane, an automobile, the ocean, or wind; these were recorded and available on transcription discs. They were played on a sound truck - a huge consol on wheels about 6 feet long with speakers in it and turntables on top of it. The sound man dropped the needle on the right place on the record and turned up the volume and the sound effect was piped through the microphones in the studio.

Any kind of manual sound effect, we do live such as horses hoofs, foot steps, doors open and close, telephone pickup and replace, and clothing sounds. We have a senior and a junior sound effects person and they do the effects contemporaneous with the recording of the dialog right on stage at the Museum of History and Industry Theater in Seattle where we record most of the shows.

I make no pretense of trying to duplicate old sound techniques. We do what we can to get the

best sound quality.

### **Could you describe your production techniques?**

I record the shows and the pre-recorded sound effects on digital mini-discs. The 1970's shows were recorded on reel-to-reel tape. More than half of the shows are on digital discs.

We record some of the shows in the studio at my home. All of the new *Sherlock Holmes* shows are going to be done here. With the new *Sherlock Holmes* shows and anything else I record here, I will record the actors' dialog, pay them off, and they go home. Then the post-production work begins. I add all the music and all the production values.

When the show is done the post-production has taken four or five times as long as the recording of the dialog. I do all the post-production myself.

But when we're recording in front of a live audience, which is the typical way, the production techniques are indeed very much like they used to be for live radio broadcasts of the 1940's & 50's.

### **Does recording shows in front of a live audience cause any special problems?**

No. If anything it may be a problem for the actors. Some of the actors may be unduly conscious of the audience. We have to get them to think of their performance only for the microphone and not for the people that are there.

I tell the audience during the warm-up, you're here to watch us do our work; we're not here to entertain you now. We'll enter-

tain you when you hear it on the air. This isn't a stage show. That's well and good for me to say, but some of the actors are still distracted.

The reason why we perform in front of a live audience is promotion. When you talk to 400 people, 300 of whom are different people and have never been there before, its good promotion, its good word-of-mouth.

The show has enormous ratings, hard to believe for a show on Saturday and Sunday nights. We're number 1 in the Seattle market by a large margin. Part of that is because we have a built-in constituency that can come and see these shows in a nice auditorium and there's no charge for the tickets.

### **I can tell by the passion that you show for your work you are committed to the production of radio drama.**

When I got into radio I was very young and very naive. I believed with all my heart that you were a guest in people's homes and you should never say or do anything that would be offensive.

I am very proud to know that there are a few thousand people around the country who listen to what I do. I am a crusader for decent radio. I don't want to preach, that's ineffective. I want there to be an alternative, some kind of entertainment for an hour every week where the kids can tune and not have their ears assaulted. Young listeners are a large portion of our audience. My life's goal is to be a part of reestablishing radio drama as an industry.

*Editor's Note:* An upcoming issue of *Return With Us Now...* will feature an article on Jim's series *The Adventures of Harry Nile*. Included will be interviews with Jim French and Phil Harper the actor who plays Harry Nile. Stay tuned!

## **Hey! What about me? I don't live in Seattle. How can I listen?**

You can listen to Jim's radio dramas even if you don't live within the range of KIRO's signal. You can listen using your radio, computer, or compact disc or tape player.

### **Radio Broadcasts**

*Imagination Theater* broadcasts Jim's dramas on a network of about 175 stations throughout most of the country. To find out if a station in your area broadcasts *Imagination Theater*, call the syndicator, Transmedia toll-free at 1-800-229-7234.

### **Web Sites**

If you have a computer with a sound card, speakers and are hooked up to the Internet, you can listen to both *KIRO Mystery Playhouse* and *Imagination Theater* via your computer. The *KIRO Mystery Playhouse* is broadcast in Real Audio every Saturday and Sunday evening at 9:06 PM PT over the KIRO Web site at:

<http://www.kiro.com>

Just click on KIRO Live.

(Broadcasts may be delayed during the baseball season.)

*Imagination Theater's* Web

site provides background information, a listing of affiliate stations, a current episode guide, ordering information for tapes and cassettes, and the ability to listen to the weekly installment over the Internet in Real Audio. Their Web site is located at: <http://www.transmediasf.com/imag.html>

### **Tapes and Compact Discs**

Sixty episodes of *The Adventures of Harry Nile* are available in eight two-tape sets through commercial outlets such as Radio Spirits

Cassettes & compact discs of many of the shows are available from *Imagination Theater's* syndicator, Transmedia.

## **OTR ON PBS**

By Dave Clow

My name is Dave Clow and if you have been a member of the RHAC very long, you know I love Old-Time Radio and I try to share my hobby with those who might enjoy it as much as I do.

Since April of 1994 I have been retired and I have been able to devote more time to OTR than ever before in my life. As you probably know, John Stevenson and I build a weekly Old-Time Radio show for the RHAC.

This show is aired each Sunday at 2:00 PM through the studios of the Radio Reading Service of the Rockies.(RRSR). Their studios are located in Boulder and they transmit on the Secondary Audio Program (SAP) channel of PBS station KRMA-TV (Channel 6, Denver.)

The show is called a "Tribute

To Old-Time Radio" and this article is about building that show and the work and fun its been to do.

The first show was aired in April of 1996. In the early days John & I used analog equipment to build the show. We ran the RHAC Reel to Reel shows through some analogue noise reduction devices, built the theme music into some endless loop tapes and gave the shows to the RRSR folks via VHS HIFI tape.

VHS HIFI tape was chosen since it is very close to CD sound quality and very economical. The problem which finally blew this brainchild out of the tub was the poor guy who played the tape. He didn't know where the tape was if he pushed the wrong switch at startup. For you and I at home, we don't care where a tape starts or stops. We try a Fast Forward or a Reverse button and we listen until we get the tape positioned where we want it. Then we push the Play button and all's well. But when you are On The Air, a few seconds of silence gets you in trouble with the listener quick!

Not that VHS HIFI playback was the only problem, because I sure had problems with noise in the first tapes too. But to make a long story short, we next moved to Reel to Reel tape for our shows. At about the same time we started to bring the source material from RHAC reel to reel into the computer.

If you don't think we thought we were hot stuff in the audio world you are dead wrong!!! Shoot - we had software that could take the noise of the pops & clicks right out of those old

recordings. (It said so, right of the wrapper.) Anyway, the quality of the shows improved a little, the guys could handle the Reel to Reel tapes much better than the VHS tapes and we were cookin' for a while.

Until I started to realize that the cost of new analog tape was prohibitive for me. I went to the RHAC president for help and Dick King found some tape that the club had bought and was hesitant to use because the length was uncertain. Those tapes darn near drove me nuts and here's why.

In those days the shows were put together in much the same way as they are today. A "Playlist" is built in the computer. Each piece of the "Playlist" is a piece of the show and if you line up the "Playlist" in the correct order the computer plays each of the pieces one after the other until it runs out of pieces, and that's the end of the show.

In the "analog tape build days" the computer and software combined for a good 15 to 40 hours of computer time until the Playlist could be built for one 60 minute show.

After the Playlist is built it may be played to any device for recording. A Reel to Reel device, a cassette tape, even 8 track if you got 'em. So here we go again with this neat system to build a Reel to Reel tape but who knows if the tape is going to be long enough to record the entire program!!! Sure you could check it if you had the time, but who had the time? One evening after a third attempt to build a tape I just about gave up the RHAC, my

computer, and especially "A Tribute To Old Time Radio."

About this time I started to question my sanity to have tackled this project at all!! The recurring question was "Did I retire to devote my life to Old-Time Radio or was I going to have time to travel and enjoy my grandkids too?"

One day the answer came to me with a flash! I walked into COMPUSA and they were selling a Compact Disk Recorder(CD-R) for low, low bucks. CD's were now easy to build and almost everybody has a CD player.

Off again to the world of nerds, I fancied myself --- THE MAN. Shoot, I could build my Playlist and send my show to my CD-R. Reliably!!!! I could walk away during the CD build process because the CD-R would tell me if there were problems in the recording and the guy who plays the show could push TRACK 1 or TRACK 2 or whatever Track was needed to quickly find his starting point for playback.

Needless to say, we switched to CD's now. A faster computer and an improved version of software has reduced my Playlist build time to as little as 4 to 12 hours for a 60 minute show. The blank disks for the CD-R are about a buck each and it looks like the fun is back.

But you know I just saw an advertisement for a new DVD-R that can record about 4 hours of audio on one side of a two sided disk. Now I wonder, should we put the entire RHAC library in DVD format since the tapes are so old? Think I'll call John Boy and see what he thinks.

## Help With The Show on PBS!

John Stevenson and Dave Clow have come up with a plan to get more people involved with the RHAC old-time radio show. If a person or group has a favorite show in the RHAC library, John & Dave will feature the member's show on "A Tribute To Old Time Radio."

The member is asked to write a script of about a minute's length on the show's history and their reason for their selection. If possible, they can record their script and send it to Dave, or come to his house to record their script, or let John and Dave do the announcing for them if they wish.

"A Tribute To Old Time Radio" is one hour long and Dave and John try not to run serials or continued shows from week to week; but they have run 15 minute, 30 minute, and 45 minute combinations to make the hour programs. In fact most of the shows are two 30 minute shows.

For more information or to submit a script, contact Dave Clow at:  
E-Mail:

ROFDave@ghostmine.com  
or

ROFDave@bewellnet.com  
Telephone: 303-972-2850

## New In The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month's entries into the libraries are all Canadian shows. There are quite a variety of shows, so there should be some shows of interest for all of our members.

Although we had the usual history classes early in our schooling, and we were aware of the French colonies of Canada (New France), we certainly had no understanding of the struggles their early settlers endured. We all studied the trials of the early American settlers and we had very little information about the early French settlers. These tapes from *The Ordeal of New France* series give us a very easy way to catch up on this missing part of North American History and it is very well presented in just a few short hours. These tapes should serve us well to talk to some of the younger members of the family and help us all to understand motivations of the Quebec residents who want to adopt the French language instead of English, even though they are a part of Great Britain.

From our history lessons, we move on to some of the lighter works of the *Writers of Canada*.

Also new to the library are *Foothill Fables*, some light humor about a small town in Canada. These are not just family entertainment, but good, wholesome stories that all may enjoy.

If you are interested crime and trials, give the *Famous Canadian Trials* tapes a try. These re-enactments of notable Canadian trials make us wonder what someone might come up with about the trials of the Oklahoma City bombers that Denver recently hosted.

For those of our members who like to listen to gory and bloody stories, we have entered the first of nine reels of the *Nightfall* series. These stories

written by Canadian and other authors who create some horror stories that rival any that were produced in this country.

Coming in September will be more installments of the great *NBC University Theatre* series that bring great writings to the air with great actors and directors.

### Members Please Note

We ask again that members make out their checks for tape rentals RHAC, and not to the volunteers who handle the libraries. Please make sure that you list 12 alternate selections to help speed the filling your order.

### Radio Quiz

Member David Michael has submitted several quizzes on old-time radio. Every month a new quiz will be published.

### Characters Appearing Regularly on Old-Time Radio Programs

Listed below are names of characters appearing regularly on Old-time Radio Programs - Name the Program and, if you can, the radio actor who played the part.

1. Kitty
2. A. J. Calhoun
3. Uncle David
4. Maggie
5. Janet
6. Mr. Higgins
7. J.C. Dithers
8. Professor Kropotkin

### June's Answers Summertime Replacement Shows

- 1 *Jack Parr* replaced?  
*Jack Benny*

- 2 *Alec Templeton* replaced?  
*Fibber McGee and Molly*
- 3 *Tommy Riggs* replaced?  
*Burns & Allen*
- 4 *Eddie Cantor* was replaced by?  
*Those We Love*
- 5 *Jack Benny* was replaced by?  
(Hint, there were several shows)  
*Jack Parr* and *Those We Love*
- 6 *Bob Burns* was replaced by?  
*Philo Vance*
- 7 *Edgar Bergen* was replaced by?  
*Paul Whiteman Presents*
- 8 *The Adventures of Philip Marlowe* replaced?  
*Hopalong Cassidy*

### Coming Attractions

Watch the upcoming issues of *Return With Us Now...* for:

John Rayburn and John Dunning  
On Their Experiences Interviewing  
Radio Personalities

Duplicating Old-Time Radio On A  
VCR

*Aunt Sammy* - Early Radio Cook

At the *Radio Enthusiasts of Puget  
Sound Showcase VI*

Old-Time Radio on the WWW

Interviews with Harry Bartell,  
Janet Waldo, and Sam Edwards

Writer Jim French and actor Phil  
Harper (Harry Nile) on *The  
Adventures of Harry Nile*

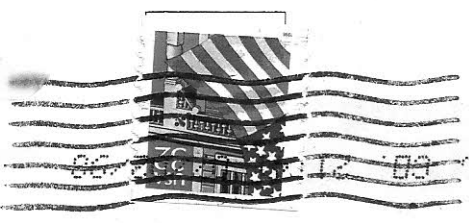
What I Remember About The  
Golden Age of Radio

99212-2254 23

99212  
SPokane WA  
1402 S. KAHUNA DRIVE  
TOM BROWN  
09/01/1998

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

**RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION of COLO.**  
P O BOX 1908 ENGLEWOOD, CO 80150



**Upcoming Conventions**

Watch this column for the latest information on Old-Time Radio Conventions and special events. Listings will be updated as information is received.

The convention season is in full swing. If you are going to one of them, please share your convention experiences with our members with an article in the *Newsletter*. Watch for an article on the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound Showcase VI in next month's issue of *Return With Us Now...*

**Lucy's First Sitcom: My Favorite Husband**  
A 50th Anniversary Reunion  
Sunday, July 12, 1998 - 3:30 pm  
Burbank Airport Hilton  
2500 Hollywood Way  
Los Angeles, CA  
For information, call *Loving Lucy* '98 Convention Hotline at 818-981-9758.  
See the June Newsletter for particulars.

**23rd Friends of Old-Time Radio Convention**  
10/22-24/98  
Holiday Inn-North  
Newark, NJ

Contact: Jay Hickerson  
Box 4321  
Hamden, CT 06514  
(203) 248-2887  
JayHick@aol.com

**15th Annual SPERDVAC Convention**  
11/13-15/98  
Crowne Plaza Hotel,  
Los Angeles, CA  
Contact: Larry Gassman  
(562) 947-9800