



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 24, Number 8

April, 1999



The Cast from "The No One Was Murdered Case" episode from *Richard Diamond, Private Detective* presented by the RHAC Players at the 1998 RHAC Christmas Party (Left to Right)

Guy Albright as Francis, the butler
 Fred Hinz as Big Man, Johnny's enforcer
 Dick Williamson as Adam Wooster, well-to-do friend of Johnny Blackwell's
 Nancy Witte was the announcer
 Ernie Witte as Vladimir, Russian artist.
 Dorothy Weide as Rita Blackwell, Johnny's attractive and sophisticated wife

Ed Mehner as Johnny Blackwell, mysterious crime figure and member of high society
 Kristi Olson as Helen Asher, Diamond's girl friend
 John Licht as Otis, police Sargent
 Larry Weide as Richard Diamond, a private detective
 Matthew Bantin-Johnson as Johnnie Redcap
 (Not Shown) Jack Schuster as Walt Levinson, Police Captain

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, April 8, 1999 - 7:30 PM At John Adams, 2811 S Valentia St., Denver, CO 80231

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

KUVU 89.3 FM *Destination Freedom* 3rd Sunday of the month 7:30 PM

RHAC WEB SITE The RHAC web page and catalog is on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>

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 1st 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.

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Directors at Large:	David L Michael, 1999 Broadway, Lowery Suite, Denver, CO 80202 Herb Dunniven See Above Dick King See Above	

LIBRARIES

Reference Material:	Bill McCracken, address above	303-986-9863
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz, c/o RHAC, P O Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150	
Open Reel Tape Librarian:	Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 80110	
Cassette Tape Librarians:		
#1 (1-499)	Marilyn J. Turner 2299 S. Sable Blvd., Aurora, CO 80014	303-751-4325
#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	303-730-1430
#4 (5001 up)	Mika Rhoden 3950W Dartmouth Ave., Denver, CO 80236	303-937-9476



By JoAnn Bantin

Spring has sprung and so has the RHAC Players. Our first board meeting was Monday, March 15, 1999 at Larry and Dorothy Weide's home. Many things were discussed concerning the organization of the Players. Some wonderful ideas are being considered for the future such as, workshops for Players & members, dinner theaters for our productions, making tapes for rental as well as doing productions, trying to find a radio station outlet for airing our tapes, etc. All these things do take a little planning and time, but hopefully will be part of our activities soon.

John Stevenson did not need surgery and is quite well. We are all very thankful for that. Dave Clow spent a day in the hospital and now he is getting as active as ever. Fred and I were also playing nurse to each other but now we are fine. I guess we can be thankful all Players will soon be ready to go. It is interesting to note that when we don't have all the Players healthy we are wondering what to do. I guess that tells us that each Player is very important for the group to function because we depend on each other.

The schedule for performance dates will be announced next month. "The Final Problem" will be performed on May 22, 1999 as scheduled but time and place are not yet finalized. This also will be announced next month. If you missed the "Final Problem" last time it was aired, please mark your calendar for this production. John Licht & Charlene Schleneker did the transcribing and it is a very exciting production. Denny Hogarth is transcribing a

Sherlock Holmes play for the fall, entitled "The Iron Box." This play will keep you on the edge of your seat & is a must. John Licht has offered to direct this in early fall. At the Christmas party this year, Barry Winograd and myself will be doing "A Christmas Carol", featuring all physical sounds. There is also the possibility of a late spring or early summer play. We will keep you posted on this.

Now for some other exciting news, Dorothy and Larry Weide have been writing and producing several radio shows on their own. One show is an Egyptian adventure. You really feel you are over there in Egypt and involved in the plot. Sound effects are outstanding as well as the story. The other show is an adventure which features a tropical island and cannibals along with a very unusual ending. There is still some polishing needed, but this is great work and what the Players are all about. We are a new group experimenting with our ideas, and working on different projects, etc. As Players we want to expand and bring to the members some good innovative entertainment. Dave Clow has asked for help in a variety show project that he would like to put together, but again he needs help from the Players and members who would really like to have fun and be creative. Please give him a call and he will give you the details.

Again, we are still looking for that wonderful person who might be interested in learning to operate our mixer and sound amplifier equipment for our productions. For details, call Fred Bantin or Dave Clow.



Radio Quiz

This month's quiz has been submitted by an anonymous member.

Watch for new series of quizzes by David Michael starting in May.

Starting with this month's quiz, both the quiz questions AND answers will appear in the same issue.

Private Investigators Assistants. These assistants were more than secretaries Many Radio P.I. had assistants and often went out on cases with their Bosses.

The following are some famous assistants. Can you supply the name of the show they appeared on and who played them?

- 1 Claire "Brooksie" Brooks
- 2 Patsy Bowen
- 3 Rembrandt Watson
- 4 Effie Perrine
- 5 Murphy
- 6 Phyllis "Phyl" Knight
- 7 Mike Clancy
- 8 Archie Goodwin
- 9 Margo Lane

The answers to this month's quiz can be found on page 6 of this month's newsletter.

The Lone Ranger Formula

Editor's Note: As last month's *Return With Us Now...* featured an article on *The Lone Ranger*, I thought this article would be a good follow up.

Posted in *The OldRadio Mailing List*, Vol. 99 Issue 36 by Professor Marvin R. Bensman, U. of Memphis Department of Communication.

The following are notes taken by a student many years ago in a class taught by Mr. Fran Striker, writer for the *Lone Ranger* radio program.

This is how to write a show and never run out of plots. There are **eight basic elements:**

1. Establish a character other than the star.
2. Give the character a problem he can't solve without help.
3. Explain why he can't solve the problem and involve a villain.
4. The star learns about the situation.

5. The antagonist learns that the hero will interfere.
6. The antagonist plots to kill or stop the star.
7. The star outwits or outfights the antagonist and survives.
8. The star solves the situation to the satisfaction of most.

Each show does not have to be done in that exact order.

Take #1... Establish a character... Under that, list:

- a. Old man.
- b. Young man.
- c. Old woman.
- d. Young woman, etc.

Take #2... Give a problem that cannot be solved by this character:

- a. He's going to lose his ranch.
- b. He's going to lose his gold mine.
- c. She can't find her son or daughter.
- d. She can't marry someone, etc.

Take #3... Explain why the problem cannot be solved alone:

- a. He can't find witnesses to his deed.
- b. The people in town think he's crazy.
- c. She's ill.
- d. Her father is a coward, etc.

You do the same for each #point following. Taking them in all their possible combinations and you have 8 to the 10th power of possible plots. It can go on forever.

You take your good character, give him something to show why people like him or her. He loves a dog; she is beautiful and kind; he is handicapped... human interest material. The villain or antagonist should be given characteristics that show why he or she is the villain. He kicks dogs and the handicapped. There is little time to show WHY someone is bad or someone is good, but characteristics of goodness or badness tell us they are good or bad. So, you open with "Scar" beating his

- (a) horse,
- (b) mistress,
- (c) dog,
- (d) mother, etc.

The same technique works for comedy as for drama. Try it!

This is the technique of formula plotting. And as hackneyed and "formula" as it sounds and can be the truly creative writer can take such elements as noted and produce a script that can be uniquely satisfying and exciting. Just plot any current TV show you watch by breaking it down into the elements as noted above and see how it fits into a "formula".

What makes programs seem different is often just a change in setting—place the above elements on a space station, or in a mine, or in a military or police unit, or a "normal" family.

To make it comedy give your so-called hero unusual characteristics and make the situation seemingly real, but the reaction and action inappropriate—*Lucy* or *Simpsons*. Comedy is much more difficult when it relies upon dialogue for humor. Then it is the contrast that makes for the humor—i.e., *MASH*. Yet there must be some underlying reality to drive the situation.

Professor Marvin R. Bensman
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Memphis, TN 38152
Office Phone: (901) 678-3174 or 678-2565

University of Memphis Radio Archive

The goal of the Radio Archive is to preserve for research and scholarship what people had once heard over American radio. It was decided not to attempt to collect every program of every series which exists, but a representative sampling of most series and shows. The collection is housed in the Microforms Department of the McWhorter Library at the University of Memphis.

The Radio Archive Web pages are located at:

<http://www.people.memphis.edu/~mbensman/welcome.html>

The OldRadio Mailing List!

This new Internet mailing list, currently available in Digest format

only, is a place to sit back, relax, and discuss the wonders of the Old-Time Radio Programming we all know and love. Its informal style leads to calm discussion of all things dealing with OTR, while the fully-moderated (by a long-time collector of Old-Radio programs) format assures you on-topic, focused postings in a spam-free and family-oriented environment. You can subscribe to this mailing this Mailing List by going to:

<http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/> and clicking on *The OldRadio Mailing List!*

RADIO SOAP OPERAS Part 1

© By Clay Roehl

As James Thurber once remarked, "A soap opera is a kind of sandwich, whose recipe is simple enough, although it took years to compound. Between thick slices of advertising, spread twelve minutes of dialogue, add predicament, villainy, and female suffering in equal measure, throw in a dash of nobility, sprinkle with tears, season with organ music, cover with a rich announcer sauce, and service five times a week."

The soap opera or radio daytime serial enjoyed thirty prosperous years. Roundly criticized, the soaps nevertheless had millions of faithful, devoted listeners who bought the advertiser's products. There were over seventy soap operas on the air each week in the late 1930s and they dominated the program schedules all day on both NBC and CBS. There may never be the fifteen-minute, across-the-board soap opera on radio again – but their part in the history of the medium is undeniable.

The idea of the daytime serial was probably adapted from the movie serial, initiated by Hollywood in the early development of the motion-picture industry. The heroine seemed always to be in an inescapable

situation only to extricate herself (or to be extricated) and plunge into another hopeless dilemma before the next installment came to an end. Like the movie serial, soap operas created endlessly, unflaggingly, day-in-day-out emotion. They were not an intellectual exercise but an emotional exhaust valve. They were about adultery, unwed motherhood, murder, acid-throwing, broken legs, forgery, greed, auto accidents, fires, in-law trouble, divorce, status frustrations, jealousy, robbery, babies, bitchy women, weak-willed men, drunkenness, business failure, suicide, and love. John, Crosby, the radio critic of the era, said, "Soap opera heroines are perpetually on the brink of losing something valuable – their careers, their husbands, their homes, their virtues – to list them more or less in the order of their soap opera importance."

Soap operas were a form of folk tales, which expressed the hopes and fears of their female audience and on the whole contributed to the integration of the audience's lives into the world in which they lived. There was much disagreement as to the value of the daytime serial among the critics and participants.

Since soap opera became a form of merchandising rather than of art the records of its beginnings are somewhat vague. Advertising agencies had a considerable voice in their development and made it the duty of the soap opera to supply a radio vehicle that would sell soap, toothpaste, cleanser, shampoo or whatever the sponsor wanted the housewife to buy. They were relatively inexpensive vehicles for carrying the sponsor's message to millions of women listeners. Surveys – both sales and listener surveys – continuously demonstrated that the daytime serials were the most effective programs for housewives. Expenditures for the soap operas amounted to almost 50 per cent of all network expenditures and a third of all

radio expenditures in the United States from 1939 through 1942. Soap operas made up more than 50 per cent of time, energy and talent used. One sponsor often had as many as seven serials running at one time. One advertising agency prepared and wrote eighteen serials simultaneously. The largest time-buyers on radio in 1940 were concerns selling to housewives. In 1948 the average cost of a soap opera was \$18,000 per week. This figure was broken down to \$3,000 for talent fees and \$15,000 for the network time charge. Washboard weepers became the biggest thing in radio considered from a standpoint of broadcast time, expenditure of the advertising dollar, listening interest or effectiveness in selling what the sponsor had to offer.

The daytime serial seems to have grown up without design or direction. There is general agreement that the program, "*The Smith Family*," which presented the intimate and down-to-earth life of a witty couple in a continued sequence, was the great-grandfather of the soap opera. "*The Smith Family*" featured a man-and-wife vaudeville team in a series of skits aired over WENR Chicago beginning in 1925. The vaudeville team was Marian and Jim Jordan. "*The Smith Family*" later became "*Fibber McGee and Mollie*". "*Amos 'n' Andy*" deserves a great deal of credit for popularizing the continued story-line which daytime serials faithfully followed throughout their existence. "*Fibber McGee and Mollie*" laid the foundation upon which daytime serials were to be built and *Amos 'n' Andy* did the preliminary work of conditioning listeners across the country to following a continued radio program.

Some of the pioneers of the soap opera were Gertrude Berg, Elaine Carrington [a magazine writer in the 1920s], Irna Phillips [a school teacher], Paul Rhymer, Frank Hummert, Anne Ashenurst, and

Robert D. Andrews [a Chicago Daily News reporter].

Gertrude Berg's "*The Goldbergs*," depicted well-delineated characters with warmth and humor and used situations which occurred in her own family as the basis of the "*Goldbergs*" plot. The program began as a night-timer in 1928 and several years later shifted to daytime before going off the air in 1945. Elaine Carrington's first program was "*Red Adams*" and began as a weekly half-hour program in 1932. She received \$75 dollars per script as a staff writer. The influence of sponsors is evident in the history of this program. Beech-Nut bought the show and changed the title to "*Red Davis*" because the sponsor's rival was the Adams Company. They paid Mrs. Carrington one hundred dollars per script for three scripts per week. After Procter and Gamble Company bought the program it was changed to "*Pepper Young's Family*" & expanded to five shows per week. The writer's fee was raised to \$600 per week.

Irna Phillips' first effort was "*Painted Dreams*" for WGN Chicago in 1930. After a hassle over salary she moved to NBC Chicago and wrote and acted in "*Today's Children*." By the middle of the 1930s she was making a quarter million dollars annually. Francis Chase, Jr. in his book "*Sounds and Fury*" states that "she writes more than two million words per year . . . is the author of three well-known shows – "*Guiding Light*," "*Women in White*," and "*Road of Life*" . . . receives an estimated \$3,000 a week for guiding the lives of some sixty characters in her three serials . . . her (writing) production – counted in novels – would amount to twenty-two a year."

Max Wylie considered Frank and Anne [Ashenurst] Hummert the "true parents of the daytime serial, for together they suggested the plot outlines for eleven separate writers."

In order to produce their many soap operas, they personally supervised the scripts on all their shows. They would write the story outlines for the shows working a month or more in advance. These outlines were dictated to a battery of stenographers. The writers the Hummerts employed (and paid them a minimum of twenty-five dollars per script when most serial writers were making from two to four hundred dollars) took the story-lines and finished off the script with dialogue, sound effects and organ music. Hummert shows employed during a week more than five hundred writers, actors, directors and announcers. In 1939 sponsors of Hummert-produced shows spent ten million dollars for the purchase of time alone.

One of their most prolific writers was Robert D. Andrews. He dialogued a number of their shows, among which were "Ma Perkins" and "Just Plain Bill" which he wrote for ten years. Andrews went to New York and lived in a penthouse on Central Park West where he typed from noon to midnight seven days a week, drank 40 cups of coffee and smoked five packs of cigarettes per day while turning out one hundred thousand words per week for seven programs. During this same time he wrote several novels. In 1936 he went to Hollywood and wrote forty-five movies in the next twelve years and continued writing five soap operas a week in his spare time evening hours. Frank Hummert once described his shows, saying "We write successful stories about unsuccessful people. Our characters are everyday people and our stories can be understood on Park Avenue and on the prairies."

1999 OTR Conventions

For more information on the following event, please get in touch with the event contact person.

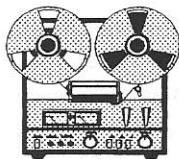
1999 Al Jolson Festival
 May 21-23, 1999
 Location: San Francisco, CA
 Contact: Cathy Rivera
 6391 Center St.
 Highland, CA 92346

April, 1999 Quiz Answers

From Page 3

Private Investigators Assistants.

- 1 *Let George Do It*
 Frances Robinson, Virginia Gregg, and Lillian Buyeff
- 2 *Nick Carter, Master Detective*
 Helen Choate, Charlotte Manson
- 3 *Candy Matson, YUkon 2-8208*
 Jack Thomas.
- 4 *Adventures of Same Spade*
 Lurene Tuttle
- 5 *Adventures of Harry Nile*
 Pat French
- 6 *Michael Shayne*
 Louise Arthur and Cathy Lewis
- 7 *Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons*
 James Kelly
- 8 *Adventures of Nero Wolfe*
 Gerald Mohr, Wally Maher, Harry Bartell, Larry Dobkin, John Gibson, Herb Ellis, Elliot Lewis
- 9 *The Shadow*
 Agnes Moorehead, Majorie Anderson, Gertrude Warner, Margo Stevenson, Lesley Woods, Grace Matthews



New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month's entries into the Contributors' Library will remind us all of the times we have thought about a little extra money just to stretch the income far enough to pay all the bills. You may not start out as a fan of *Lum*

and *Abner*, but after listening to several series of their antics, we have become enthusiastic fans of this program and enjoyed every minute of making the cassettes for the club library.

Squire Skimp is the "Kingfish" of Pine Ridge" and always after a way to profit from anything that goes on in town. The two men, Lum and Abner, are constantly working at new enterprises to bring more income into the store. Some of their ideas sound good even to us, until you bring reality into the picture. We need to find out just how they made their bread without the time required for it to rise, but that is a minor point.

If you have never thought much of this program, we urge you to take a serious listen to it and you will find yourself enjoying it as we have. Although these programs were broadcast in the early forties, they have a feeling of the twenties and a time when life was a lot simpler for everyone. We can only hope that we have enough members with small town experience to really enjoy this program.



NEEDED: Articles

To keep the RHAC newsletter interesting, articles from our members are needed on a regular basis. You don't have to be a professional writer to submit an article. Write about your favorite Old-Time Radio series, personality, or on whatever radio-related topic you want. But, please write.

Send your articles to Stewart Wright, at either of his addresses, regular or E-Mail, which is listed on page 2 of the Newsletter.

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION of COLORADO

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Please help in the preservation of old time radio by supporting legitimate organizations who strive to preserve and restore the programs and related information.

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RETURN WITH US NOW....

-7-

April, 1999



OTR On The World-Wide Web

Editor's Note: If you find an interesting Old-Time Radio-related web site, why not tell our readers by writing a short article on it for *Return with Us Now...* Send the article to Stewart Wright. My E-Mail address can be found on page 2. Here is a site I recently found on the Web:

WRVO Playhouse

If you are on the Internet and have a computer equipped with audio capabilities, you can listen to

FOUR HOURS of Old-Time Radio SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK from 8 PM to Midnight (ET) on *The WRVO Playhouse*. The *Playhouse* is supplied by the WRVO Stations, a group of National Public Radio (NPR) stations that broadcast out of Central & Northern New York area. WRVO - Oswego/Syracuse 89.9 FM is a 24,000-watt station. Two of the other stations in the group, WRVJ - Watertown 91.7 FM, and WRVN Utica 91.9 FM are low-wattage (250 watts) stations. WSUC - Cortland 90.5 FM, a college radio stations.

Here is a partial list of the shows that ran recently on *The WRVO Playhouse*: *Adventures of Philip Marlowe*, *Cavalcade of America*, *CBS Mystery Theater*,

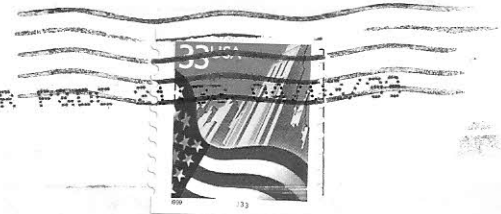
Chinwag Theater, *Fleischman Hour*, *Great Gildersleeve*, *Remembering Slavery*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Suspense*, *Telephone Hour*, *Texaco Star Theater*, *The Marriage*, *Then And Now*, *Think*, *Third Man*, *This Is Radio*, *This Is My Best*, *This Is Your FBI*, *This Is Your Life*: *Charlie McCarthy*, *Time To Smile*, *Tommy Dorsey Show*, *Top Secrets Of The FBI*, *Vox Pops*, *Weird Circle*, *Yours Truly*, and *Johnny Dollar*. Both *Suspense* and *Great Gildersleeve* run every night. You will find a daily play list of scheduled shows for *The WRVO Playhouse* at the their Web site.

You can find *The WRVO Playhouse* on the Web at:

<http://wrvo.fm/>

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