



# RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
COLORADO

Volume 25, Number 3

October, 1999

## Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound Showcase VII



**Celebrities at the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound (REPS) Showcase VII Convention, June 25 & 26, 1999.**  
Seated on the floor - Larry Albert. First row - Left to right: Merrill Mael, Ann Whitfield Phillips, Norma Jean Nilsson, JoAnna March, Tyler, McVey, Esther Geddes, Art Gilmore; Gil Stratton Jr, and Dick Beals. Second row - Left to right: Stewart Conway, Ginny Tyler, Bill Brooks, Harry Bartell, Rhoda Williams, Doug Young, Alan Young, Herb Ellis, Sam Edwards, Frank Buxton, Charles Flynn, Tommy Cook, and Ray Erlenborn. Missing: Larry Dobkin.

Watch for articles on this Convention in upcoming issues of *Return with Us Now* . . .

# 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, October 7, 1999 - 7:30 PM

At

Larry Weide's 5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80110 303-758-8382  
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 - 8:00 PM *Radio Movie Classics* Sundays 5:00 - 6:00 PM

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

KUVO 89.3 FM *Destination Freedom* 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month 7:30 PM - **BROADCAST LIVE!!!!**

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

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**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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### 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  
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#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



### ARTICLES HEEEDED!

We are running *DESPERATELY LOW* on articles for the Newsletter, your help is needed and would be *GREATLY APPRECIATED*.

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. My addresses, regular & E-Mail, are listed on page 2 of the Newsletter.

### Election of Officers

The annual election of Club officers was held at the September members' meeting. They are:

- Guy Albright - President,
- Larry Wiede - Vice president,
- Carol Rowe - Secretary, and
- Maletha King - Treasurer.

Congratulations to all.



### Christmas in October?

No, just a reminder that the Annual RHAC Christmas Party and Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. Watch for the details in the November issue of *Return With Us Now*. . . It's going to be a great event! One you won't want to miss!

### Radio Quiz

This month we feature Old-Time Radio Quiz by David Michael. Answers are on page 6.

### Famous Radio Lines

Fill in the blanks — name the character who regularly spoke the words. (One letter for each   ) Also can you name of the radio actor who played the character.

- 1 What a r\_\_\_\_\_g  
dev\_\_\_\_\_th\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_!
- 2 O h, M\_. A\_\_\_\_n!
- 3 And a l\_\_\_\_\_l\_\_\_\_\_y.
- 4 Sam \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_y.
- 5 Som \_\_\_\_\_ba\_\_ for  
\_\_\_\_\_h?
- 6 Tired \_\_\_\_\_v\_\_\_\_  
d\_\_ g\_\_\_\_\_?
- 7 Call \_\_\_\_\_P\_\_\_\_\_  
M\_\_\_\_\_!
- 8 Wa\_\_ a m\_\_\_\_\_e!
- 9 R\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_  
s\_\_\_\_\_es\_\_d w\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_st\_\_s n\_\_\_\_\_  
k\_\_\_\_\_!
- 10 By George, \_\_\_\_\_of  
\_\_\_\_\_d\_\_\_\_\_I gott\_  
s\_\_\_\_\_n out  
th\_\_c\_\_\_\_\_!

### ROAR WITH GILMORE

By Clint Comerford

*Editor's Note:* Announcer and actor Art Gilmore was a guest at a recent SPERDVAC meeting. The following introduction was provided by Clint, who is also a member of RHAC.

The above phrase was a part of early radio of the "Thirties" when Gilmore Gasoline hosted the "Gilmore

Circus". So I decided to use it to introduce Art Gilmore . . . "announcer, actor, singer, and onetime whistler".

I first met Art on the *Jack Kirkwood Show* where I was supplying material and Art was reading it . . . and Art continued on to fame and fortune in spite of it. On the show, Art was an announcing actor . . . or was it an acting announcer. Anyway he was very good at what he did. When I entered the Aerospace business, Art and I continued to work together now and then. I would supply him with scripts written in "engineze" and he would then narrate them perfectly.

It was in Tacoma, WA that Art first saw the light of day . . . and that was three months after he was born. Tacoma has a lot of rain. By the time he was a teenager, the die was cast. He gambled on radio as a career. In the beginning, it was building crystal sets, followed by a more powerful one tube wire-wrapped cereal box. In his career, Art has done it all. . . announcing, acting, singing and anything else you might need

He began his first love on KVI in Tacoma, then moved up to KOL in Seattle. While on vacation in the Los Angeles area he was hired by KFVB as a singer backed up by the likes of Spike Jones on drums and Leonard Slye (Roy Rogers) on the guitar. Then it was on to CBS where, in 1937, he became the announcer on the *Dr. Christian Show*. This lasted but a scant 17 years. And he has the Band-Aids to prove it. But 1938 was Art's biggest break. He auditioned for and was accepted by Grace, his high school sweetheart. They have been married for 61 years. In 1940, Art left CBS and \$42.00 per week for a game show that paid him \$80.00 per week . . . for 2 weeks. Between regular shows he went out on "remotes" . . . and received, in addition to his salary, eighty-six cents for travel.

I repeat folks, there was big money in "show biz" back then.

Art did "coming attractions" for Paramount for over 30 years . . . was with the Earl Carroll Theater . . . and did other shows too numerous to mention, but I think his favorite was the 16 year gig on the *Red Skelton Show*. According to Art, Red Skelton didn't trust banks and carried around as much as \$30,000 in pocket money. During WW II, Art sailed around the South Pacific to such exotic Isles as Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Guam and other tropical paradises where he kept crossing paths with his show biz colleagues. To show its regard for Art, the Navy awarded him two weeks vacation in the Aleutians. (First prize was one week.) One of his colleagues, Gaylord Carter, was in charge of the entertainment on Adak.

Art returned from battle to the new frontier of Television which, of course, he conquered with ease. And one last kudo for Art . . . he was the voice of Franklin Roosevelt in four movies. (One of which might have been "Fala The Leader").

Art Gilmore has carried out a truly extraordinary career with dignity and honor. His talents are superb and many and we wish him well for the future.

## **"And Now, Let's See What's Going On Down In Pine Ridge...." Setting a Spell with Lum and Abner**

By Elizabeth McLeod

They started out as a rather transparent imitation of the most popular radio show in the country.

They became one of radio's most enduring favorites -- and, in fact, their reruns are with us yet.

Chester Lauck and Norris Goff. You know them better as Lum and

Abner. For nearly twenty-five years, they were a fixture on the air -- most often in the most humble and yet the most difficult of radio formats: the fifteen-minute nightly comedy serial. And yet, as enduring as they were -- and as beloved as they are today, they spent much of their careers in the shadows of other performers. Part of this is the inevitable results of their own origin.

The story is familiar: Lauck and Goff were hometown entertainers in Mena, Arkansas at the turn of the thirties who were enlisted to do their blackface act in a local benefit show -- but when they ran into throng of corked-up rivals backstage, they spontaneously switched to a "hillbilly" routine. The rest, the legend would have it, is history. Success on local radio was soon followed by a network shot, and "Lum and Abner" were on the way.

The story is true up to a point -- but there's a bit more to it than that. While both Lauck and Goff were small-town Arkansans, it would be stretching it to claim they were dyed-in-the-overalls mountaineers. Both were college men from prosperous families -- in other words, their background was quite a bit more refined than their characterizations would lead one to expect. And both Lauck and Goff were sharp. They had been around. They knew what was going on in the world -- and when they suddenly found themselves working in radio, they knew what would work. Because it was already working, six nights a week, and forty million people were already listening.

In 1931, radio \*meant\* "Amos 'n' Andy," the seed from which much of the "Golden Age of Radio" would sprout. And so it should come as no surprise that when Lauck and Goff began to turn their informal cross-talk routine into a show with network potential that they used the estab-

lished "Amos 'n' Andy" format as a very specific model. It's not too difficult to think of Lum Edwards and Abner Peabody as simply different aspects of Andy Brown: Lum representing his blowhard egotism and Abner his innocent gullibility. Similarly, the solid and reliable Dick Huddleston aptly fills the Amos Jones role. The dull-witted lackey Cedric Weehunt corresponds quite closely to Lightnin' Washington. Grandpappy Spears fits into the plots in much the same manner as Brother Crawford. And of course, the devious Squire Skimp might have learned his trade at the knee of one George "Kingfish" Stevens.

Clearly, when "Lum and Abner" hit the network air, it was simply one of the legion of comedy serials trying to ride the coattails of the "Amos 'n' Andy" craze. But what made Lauck and Goff special -- and, in the end, what made them successful -- was the fact that they moved beyond simple imitation to create a unique niche all their own. They took the format they'd appropriated from Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll and infused it with their own distinctive comic vision.

"Comic" is the key word. Early on, Lauck and Goff must have recognized that melodrama was the dominant ingredient in the "Amos 'n' Andy" formula: listeners were more often on the edge of their seats with anticipation than they were falling off their chairs with laughter. And this was where "Lum and Abner" was different. Where Amos and Andy struggled thru the stark, often grim business of earning a living in Depression-era Urban America, Lum and Abner lived in a world quite isolated from the realities of the 1930s. Pine Ridge was an escape from the struggles of the Depression, not a reflection of them. And even

more, Pine Ridge was a world built on absurdity.

In the creation of loopy nonsense, Lauck & Goff had few peers. Only in Pine Ridge would the citizens eagerly buy discount eyeglasses from a man at the carnival -- and then spend a full week wondering why they kept crashing into each other. Only in Pine Ridge would Lum decide to corner the market on hogs by starting a chain letter -- and then decide to celebrate his success by having a statue of himself constructed from poured concrete. And on and on it went.

Night after night, Lauck and Goff presented a world where the rules of common sense didn't apply -- and where it was just so easy to forget about those bills you had to pay, that job you didn't have any more, those men from the finance company pulling up the truck outside. When the real world looked like that, who \*wouldn't\* rather head on down to Pine Ridge? During the thirties, "Lum and Abner" offered some of the finest pure escapism on the air.

As the thirties gave way to the forties, all of the comedy serials seemed to start running out of ideas. "Amos 'n' Andy" abandoned the format entirely in 1943, leaving the field pretty much to "Lum and Abner." Lauck & Goff had managed to avoid the burnout which hit Correll & Gosden in the early forties, in part because they were only on three nights a week, & had taken frequent vacations. They also took the liberty of rerunning entire plotlines from time to time, usually with only a slight rewrite - a "cheater" technique which meant little at the time the shows were originally broadcast, but which can be a bit annoying when listening to the recordings decades after the fact.

Lauck & Goff finally solved their problem by delegating the responsibility of writing the show to others, and the addition of Roswell Rogers to

the staff around this time brought an infusion of fresh ideas. Some of the forties-era plots carried on in the finest Pine Ridge tradition - Lum's fake broken leg, the escaped library lion -- while others were just a bit \*too\* absurd to work: the advent of Robert the Robot, for example. And one of these forties plotlines rose beyond absurdity into the realms of brilliance: 1942's saga of Diogenes Smith and his search for an honest man stands, hands down, as one of the great radio serials of all time -- an expert mixture of high comedy, pathos, philosophy, and social commentary.

Great comedy serials don't often make great situation comedies. They depend too much on the day-to-day flow of the storyline and the depth of the characters to translate well into 30-minute weekly doses. "Amos 'n' Andy" managed the transition only by turning into a completely different sort of program. "Lum and Abner" tried to stay true to its roots, and the transition flopped. The half-hour "Lum and Abner Show" of 1948-50 has its moments, but it's nothing special.

Which is rather sad. Because at its best -- in the serials of the mid-thirties thru the mid-forties -- "Lum and Abner" was something very special indeed. And because Lauck and Goff were careful to preserve their many thousands of recordings - it still is.

*Editor's Note:* Elizabeth McLeod is a journalist, researcher, and freelance writer specializing in radio of the 1930s. She is a regular contributor to "Nostalgia Digest" magazine and the Internet OldRadio Mailing List, maintains a website, Broadcasting History Resources, and is presently researching a book on Depression-era broadcasting.

She writes a monthly column, "Retro-Views" for *The Nostalgia Pages* Web site at: <http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/>



Gene Autry

## I Doff My Stetson to Will Rogers

In 1950, Gene Autry paid tribute to the man he called "the greatest cowboy of them all."

"I honestly believe if it hadn't been for Will Rogers I would still be working night shift at a small town telegraph key, plinking on my guitar to help fill in the empty hours.

Back in 1929 I was a relief night operator on the circuit in central Oklahoma, relieving the regular operators while they were on vacation. The nights were long and the message were few and far between. I sang & played the guitar for a hobby. With my friend, Johnny Long, a retired railroad brakeman who had a pretty niece, I composed a few tunes, among them, *That Silvered-Haired Daddy of Mine*.

Late one evening a stranger came into the office and said he wanted to send a 50-word telegram Night Press Rate and drawled, 'It goes to the McNaught Syndicate; sign it Will Rogers.'

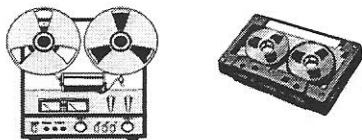
I was flabbergasted & even more so when he sat down and wanted to talk. He complimented me on my playing & asked to hear more. I sang a couple of songs and Will allowed that I might be a pretty good hand as a entertainer and gave me a name to look up if I ever went to New York. It was *THE BREAK* every aspiring entertainer needs to get started.

I used my railroad pass & packed off to New York for a vacation. I

looked up recording artist Johnny Marvin, the name Rogers had given me. He said I was pretty good, but needed more local experience. On the strength of the interview I went home and got a morning 15-minute slot on KVOO in Tulsa. I was billed as *Oklahoma's Yodeling Cowboy*.

In November, 1930, Columbia Records official came through and said Will Rogers had sent him. They wanted me to go to New York again and record *Silvered-Haired Daddy*. The supposedly one-shot recording contract has lasted twenty years. November, 1950, will be my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Columbia recording artist. All of it led to a series of musical westerns. Humbly, and with a sense of deep affection and gratitude, I doff my Stetson to Will Rogers."

This article previously appeared in the November, 1950 issue of *Movie Thrills* and in John Rayburn's *Thrilling Days of Yesteryear*.



## New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

Where did the Summer go? Half of the things we were going to do this Summer are still undone. Why does the time seem to go faster as the years go by? I am going to have to hustle to get the orders out that are on hand so our members can enjoy the shows we have enjoyed as we have listened to them for entry into the library.

The first tape is labeled "Miscellaneous," but certainly has some vivid reminders politics in the 1940's. After that reel we get back to *Lum and Abner*. Just a glance at the catalog sheet gives you a brief summary of the story line. These shows pick up right where the last ones left off. We

encourage all of you to get a few of these tapes and put them on some evening when you can't stand the trash being put on TV. You will go to bed with a smile on your face.

## Alien Worlds

RHAC has received legal notice that the series *Alien Worlds* is copyrighted and that the copyright is being enforced by its holder, Lee Jansen. All copies of *Alien World* episodes in our libraries have been destroyed; they will no longer be available for rental. Any member selling or distributing *Alien World* programs is infringing on Mr. Hansen's copyright.

Please cross out the entries for *Alien Worlds* in your tape catalog. The entries are located on page 101.

## Radio Quiz Answers

- 1 "What a revolting development this is!" - Chester Riley - Life of Riley - Wm. Bendix
- 2 "Oh, Mr. Allen" - Portland - The Fred Allen Show
- 3 "And a little lonely" - Marshall Dillon - Gunsmoke - Wm. Conrad
- 4 "Sam Spade Detective Agency" - Effie - Sam Spade - Lurene Tuttle
- 5 "Somebody bawl for Beulah" - Beulah - *Fibber McGee & Molly* - Marlin Hurt
- 6 "Tired of the every day grind?" - Narrator - *Escape* - Paul Frees - Wm. Conrad
- 7 "Call for Philip Morris" - Johnny - *Philip Morris Playhouse* - Johnny Roventini
- 8 "Wait a minute!" - Jack Benny - *The Jack Benny Show* - Jack Benny
- 9 "Round and round she goes and where she stops nobody knows - Major Bowes (Ted Mack) - *Major Bowes Original Amateur Hour* - Major Edward Bowes (later Ted Mack)

- 10 "By George, one of these days I gotta straighten out that closet!" - *Fibber - Fibber McGee & Molly* - Jim Jordan

## Radio Memories: Scary Stories



By Lon  
McCartt

It seems like children are attracted to stories that scare them. I was no exception. Not that I identified with the villains, but it was always the wicked witch, the evil stepmother, or the monster who added spice to the stories. This was true at the kiddies matinees and also on many popular radio programs.

At the movies, I loved monster and science fiction movies and the wonderful Abbott and Costello movies where they were involved with a series of monsters. On the radio there were several scary programs. One which directly aimed at children was *The House of Mystery* with host Roger Elliott. There was also *Suspense*, *Escape*, *Lights Out* - *Everybody*, *Chandu* - *The Magician*, *I Love A Mystery*, and the sci-fi programs *Dimension X* and *X Minus One*. All of these programs were creepy at times, but the program that took the prize was *Inner Sanctum* with the deranged host who ushered us into his domain by opening the creaking door. It was the door that really set the mood for the program. Listening to the spooky stories in a dark room was considered the best way, so that is what most of us did.

With the all-too-graphic format of many motion pictures and television shows today, I look fondly on some of the somewhat corny movies and radio programs of my childhood when good almost always triumphed over evil.



## OTR On The World-Wide Web

*Editor's Note:* If you find an interesting Old-Time Radio-related web site or page, 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 is on page 2.

## OTR Bulletin Boards (BBS)

Trying to find the answer for a Old-Time Radio question? Or, maybe just trying to increase your

knowledge of thing OTR?

One of the advantages of "surfing the web" is meeting folks with similar interests, and sharing knowledge about various topics.

Lou Genco's Web site, [www.old-time.com](http://www.old-time.com) has several bulletin boards (BBS) where Old-Time radio fans can read informative messages, or post questions, answers, or observations of their own.

Most of the messages posted on these bulletin boards will remain available for 30 to 60 days.

To access the master BBS page, just go to:

<http://www.old-time.com/otrbbss.html>

and click your mouse on any of the

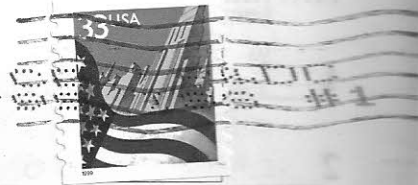
BBS names in the top frame, and enjoy interacting with other OTR fans. (Scroll the top frame to see the names of the local BBSs).

There are bulletin boards on: Original Old-Time Radio (a general BBS), Golden Age Detective, Science Fiction on the Radio, Kids' Shows, Great Radio Soap Opera, Big Bands, Audiotoools, OTR Consumers, and OTR Traders' Board and Canadian Traders.

Take a few minutes to look at these OTR Bulletin Boards. I'm sure you will find them interesting and informative.

Radio Historical Association of Colorado  
P.O. Box 1908 Englewood, CO 80150

FIRST CLASS MAIL



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