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December, 1999

Searching for a Silver Star or The Cinnamon Bear, Christmas and Me

By Chuck Schaden

Editor's Note: This article has been reprinted from Chuck's Nostalgia Digest, December 1999/January 2000 issue with permission from the author.

Judy and Jimmy Barton can't find the silver star for their Christmas tree. While searching for it in their attic, they find an old friend, the Cinnamon Bear, who comes to life and suggests that the twins accompany him to Maybe Land to look for the lost star. The twin "de-grow" and travel to Maybe Land in a glass airplane which runs on soda pop. But the thirsty trio drink up the fuel and become stranded in Looking Glass Valley.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's, the Christmas season officially began at our house with the radio adventures of *The Cinnamon Bear*.

The Cinnamon Bear was 26-chapter radio serial that was broadcast every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was sponsored on WGN by Wieboldt's Department store. Every day after school I would rush home to follow the adventures of Paddy O'Cinnamon, the Crazy Quit Dragon, the Wintergreen Witch and all of the other inhabitants of Maybe Land.

The final chapter of the story was broadcast on Christmas Eve and I had to wait until that very last episode to find out if Judy and Jimmy recovered the silver star in time to place it at the very top of their Christmas tree.

When I was a kid, the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas were filled with excitement of the season

and, year after year, as Judy and Jimmy went through their adventure, I had an adventure of my own.

It was the adventure of eager anticipation. I loved Christmas — still do — and the best part of all was the season itself. The buildup. . . the preparation. . . and then, finally, the Big Day.

At our house the Holiday Season began on the night before Thanksgiving. I would find myself in the kitchen helping my mother prepare the turkey. I vividly remember using a tweezer to pluck the remnants of the feathers from what was always the largest bird she could find. Then she would lift that hefty fowl over the front burner of the kitchen stove and burn off most of the remaining fuzz. Next, the stuffing (or do you say dressing?). Filling the inside of that bird was a pleasant task as I thought about the giant helping of turkey 'n' trimmings that would be my treat tomorrow. Next, the sewing up of ol' Tom, placing him in the roasting pan, and then to the back porch, naturally cooled by the month of November. Besides, Tom and his blue enameled resting place were much too big for our ice box (oh, yes we had an electric refrigerator, but in those days it was called an ice box).

It was morning, Mom was up early to get that bird in the oven. . . and she spent the first part of the day working on sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, acorn squash, pumpkin pie, and all the trimmings that make up a Thanksgiving feast.

(Continued on Page 4)

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, December 2, 1999 - 7:30 PM

John Adams, 2811 S Valentia St., Denver, CO 80231

303-755-9185

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 3rd Sunday of the month 7:30 PM - BROADCAST LIVE!!!!

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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RHAC 1999 Christmas Darty!

This year's RHAC Christmas Party will include a dinner, a reenactment of a seasonal 1945 radio drama of Sherlock Holmes called "The Iron Box," and a speaker - Mark Langston, the President of "Doctor Watson's Neglected Patients."

Where: The Country Buffet at the Villa Italia shopping center 7200 W. Alameda Ave., Lakewood Colorado

When: Saturday. December 11th -6:00 reception, 6:30 dinner

Adults (13 - 59) \$9.71 Cost: Seniors (60 - +) \$8.96 Children (12 & younger) Age times \$0.55 - i.e. a 6 year old pays \$3.30

All orders for tickets, along with your check, must be received no later than Friday. December 3rd. For further information contact Larry Weide RHAC VP at (303)758-8382 or E-Mail at: lweide@ibm.net



A Very Special HANK YOU!

It takes a lot of effort to keep a volunteer organization such as Radio Historical Association of Colorado going. There are no small volunteer jobs, all are needed to keep RHAC in operation.

I would like to take this opportu- included: nity to thank those members and nonmembers who have helped RHAC in the last year. I apologize if anyone has been missed.

Newsletter

Those who have contributed articles that were published in this year's Return With Us Now. . . . Maletha King, Dick King, David Michael, Fred & JoAnn Bantin, Jan Holden, Jack French, Larry Weide, Paul Barringer, Clay Roehl, Marvin R. Bensman, Martin Grams Jr., Don Busenbark, Wavne Gilbert, Jim Johnston, donni l. betts, Jim Hougen, Jim Cox, Clint Comerford, Elizabeth Lon McCartt, Stewart McLeod. Wright, and Chuck Schaden.

Talking Newsletter Mike Fields Web Site Herb Duniven & Dick King Librarians

Our tape and publications librarians: John Adams, Bill McCracken, Fred Hinz, Maletha King, Marilyn J. Turner, David Gatch, Dave Logan, and Mika Rhoden

Tribute to OTR Show Dave Clow and John Stevenson Players

The following RHAC members have performed in RHAC Players presentations in the last 12 months: Guy Albright, Kenni Arnold, Fred Bantin, JoAnn Bantin, Matthew Bantin-Johnson, Ellen Benoit, Les Benoit, Dave Clow, Sophia Ernst, Helen Forest, Fred Hinz, Fran Hogarth, Denny Hograth, John Licht, Priscilla Licht, Dennis Masel, Kathy Melies, John Stevenson, Dorothy Weide, Larry Weide, Dick Williamson, Barry Winograd, Ernie Witte, Nancy Witte, and Stewart Wright.

Guests who have appeared in *Players* productions: Ed Mehner, Kristi Olson, and Jack Shuster.

Players from The Sherlockians, "Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients"

Esther Campbell, Mark Langston, Gerry Malmberg, John Price, Linda Rex, Charlene Schlenker, Carol Ann Shetter, and Bervl Sykes. Tape Mastering and Production Herb Duniven, Bill McCracken, John Adams, Dick King, & Maletha King. Membership

Maletha and Dick King.

Club Officers

Guy Albright, Larry Weide, Carol Rowe, Dick and Maletha King, John Adams, Bill McCracken, Herb Duniven, David L Michael, and John Stevenson.



By JoAnn Bantin

Our retired, but very busy RHAC Players, have just finished a production of the Three Little Pigs given at The Denver Book Fair on Nov 18,1999. Three shows were given with an alternating "Big Bad Wolf" between Les Benoit and Ernie Witte. The three pigs were Ellen Benoit, Jo Ann Bantin, and Jack Shuster. Larry Weide was the story teller, Dave Clow our sound technician, and Fred Bantin both announcer and physical sound person. Whenever Les or Ernie were not "Wolfing", they assisted with physical sound. We received some wonderful comments from the children, their parents, and those associated with The Book Fair. Several of our members also enjoyed the adult radio show of Destination Freedom which was a fantastic production on Sat, Nov 20th.

Last month I mentioned a new group of radio players forming in Greeley. The Johnny Dollar production of The Larson Arson Matter was a great success and more shows will follow. Their new name,

green by Dick Williamson, is The 2.

KFKA, Radio Memories Players. 3.

Good Luck to this new group. 4.

Our Christmas Party is almost 5. here on Sat Dec 11th. The RHAC Players along with members of the Sherlock Holmes Club, Dr. Watson's Neglected Patients, will be starting rehearsals soon for the Sherlock Holmes play, "The Adventure of the Iron Box." The setting is in Dunbar Castle, which is about 20 miles outside of Edinburgh, Scotland on the day before News years Eve 1899. There is intrigue, mystery, and twists of time which make this play extremely exciting and ties in with this millennium change. Dennis Hogarth transcribed this play, first aired by Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce on The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes broadcast Dec 31,1945. The play has a large cast with music created by John Stevenson, humorous commercials provided by Fran and Denny Hogarth, projection pictures by Larry Weide, and John Licht directing. This party and show is a must on December 11th for fun and entertainment. Both sets of players hope to see all of you there and we all wish you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Radio Quiz

This month we feature Old-Time Radio Quiz by David Michael. Both the quiz AND answers will appear in the same issue. (See Answers on page 6.)

Name the Radio Personality Associated with the Following Lines

1. "Ah, there's good news tonight"

- 2. "Put something in the pot, boy"
- 3. "This is the ol" redhead"
- 4. "Good.....night!"
- 5. "Call for Philip Morrreeese!
- 6. "Hello again"
- 7. "Hello everybody, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- 8. "And that's the top of the news as it looks from here"

Special Bonus Question

What is the middle name o Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve?

Searching for a Silver Star or The Cinnamon Bear, Christmas and Me

Continued from Page 1

Sometime around four o'clock that afternoon, as the aroma of the roasting turkey and all the other goodies was becoming more than we could stand, the doorbell rang and relatives started pouring in. A bit later we sat down at the table and were thankful for our family and the bounty that we shared that and every Thanksgiving Day.

Judy and Jimmy are thankful that Willie the Stork takes them to the Root Beer Ocean where they surprise the Crazy Quilt dragon who had taken the silver star from the twin's attic, and who has lost it. Paddy O'Cinnamon his friends are captured by the Ikaboos and are sentenced to be thrown into the Immense Inkwell. Crazy Quilt comes to the rescue and, while swimming away in the Root Beer Ocean, they spy the silver star being swallowed by Wesley, the Wailing Whale! They meet Samuel the Seal who gets Wesley to sneeze up the silver star, only to lose it again to Penelope the Pelican who flies away. Presto the Magician arrives to produce Penelope in his Magic Hat but, alas, the Pelican has dropped the star on the Island of Obie in Maybe Land.

Chicago was a magic land at Christmas time. In those days, the

stores and streets weren't decorated with the trimmings of the season until the season began. . . on Thanksgiving. Then, as if by magic, my world was transformed into a winter wonderland of color, excitement and sounds.

Christmas shopping began in earnest. In school, the teacher started showing us how to make paper ornaments for the school trees (there was one in every room) and we drew names for the school grab bag. I hated it if I drew the name of a girl!

At home, we didn't wait for Christmas Eve to hang up our stockings. My brother Ken and I hung them up on December 6th, Nicholas Day. Since Santa himself always paid us a personal visit on the 24th, we hung our stockings on the sixth. (It was my folks' theory than an early December visit from St., Nick might serve to "hold us over" and calm us down for a bit. The Christmas excitement WAS great in our house!) Ken and I hung our stockings before we went to bed and when we awoke the next morning, they were filled to the top with goodies. Actually, we always hung Dad's socks; they were bigger and could hold more. We found candy canes, an apple, a Tango candy bar, a couple of Mary Janes, a few cookies, and a stick. The stick was a warning from old St. Nick: we had better be good for the next couple of weeks or Christmas might not be all we hoped it would be. Boy, were we good!

It occurs to me that we never asked why Santa came on the 6th and again on the 24th. It didn't matter. We believed in him. We really believed.

(The Santa hoax was uncovered by me one Christmas Eve when I discovered that Mr. Claus and my Uncle Ray wore the same wrist watch. It was not absolute proof, you understand, but I was very suspicious. My suspicions were confirmed, however, the next summer when I discovered Santa's red suit packed in a carton in the attic. . . along with his

Uncle Ray's fun?)

Meanwhile, back on the radio. . .

Judy and Jimmy are captured by the Pirates and taken to Captain Taffy who takes the twins and the Cinnamon Bear to the Island of Obie where they see a Roly-Poly Policeman wearing the silver star. Crazy Ouilt and the twins rush to grab the star. Crazy gets it first and runs to the home of the Wintergreen Witch. He is chased through a Magic Picture in the house and they all find themselves confronted by a giant. Crazy Ouilt dashes away, but Judy and Jimmy find the giant, Fee Foo, is friendly. He gives them a magic signal ring and they follow their noses and find the Dragon with the star. He claims that he was enchanted into stealing it by the Wintergreen Witch, who immediately arrives on the scene and captures them all.

It's fun to capture some memories Christmas shopping of Chicagoland. We lived Northwest side and though we did pay an annual visit to the Loop and Wieboldt's downtown ToyTeria to pick up our free Cinnamon Bear Coloring Book and simulated Silver Star, mostly we stayed near home, visiting every star with a toy department and a Santa Claus.

I spent a lot of time at Sears on Irving Park and Cicero. What a great toy department they had. Santa was there, of course, and they had a model railroad section with the best train outfit outside of the Museum of Science and Industry. I spent so much time there with my boyhood chums Dan and Wayne that once the manager of the toy department treated us to hot dogs downstairs at Hillman's. I think while!

When Mom wasn't busy baking Christmas cookies, she did some holiday shopping at Montgomery

rubber face! I never told anyone about Ward's or Sabath's at Grand and swallows Melissa's my discovery. After all, who I to ruin Harlem and my Dad watched eagerly for the Annual Christmas Tree truckload Sale at Goldblatt's. Every year, about the second week in December, Goldblatt's ran a full page ad in the newspapers announcing their big \$1 Christmas tree sale. Fresh trees, of course — in those days no one ever considered an artificial tree — and you had to get there early to get a good one. Dad watched for that newspaper ad with as much anticipation as I waited for Christmas. When it appeared we jumped into the car and raced for Goldblatt's.

> We drove around to the big outdoor lot behind the store to choose from thousands and thousands of Christmas trees. . . all priced at \$1 each. Some were still on the trucks. Others were stacked in great piles or were leaning against the building or the fence. This great display probably half a city block wide was fully illuminated by a single 40 watt bulb, dangling out of a window at the rear of Goldblatt's. But no matter. We fought our way through the crowd and into the evergreens. After a while we emerged with THE perfect tree. We could hardly wait to get it home to show Mom. And, year after year, for the span of Goldblatt's Annual Christmas Tree Truckload Sale, it never failed. When we brought the tree home, Mom would say, "Is that the best you could do? There aren't any branches on one side of it."

Well it WAS only a dollar!

Judy, Jimmy, Crazy Quilt and Cinnamon Bear escape from the Wintergreen Witch with the silver star safely tucked away in the Dragon's pocket. But it has been broken and they make their way to see Melissa, Queen of Maybe Land, who will repair their precious he wanted us out of the way for a ornament. She gives them special instructions to repair the star, but they must go to the Darkest Dark in the Wishing Woods to read them. Snacker Snick, the Crocodile,

instructions, but not before he reads that Judy and Jimmy should find the Wishing Well and, with a single wish, wish the star repaired. They race to the Wishing Well and the Cinnamon Bear promptly falls into it so Judy and Jimmy must use their only wish to save him. As they are about to leave the Wishing Woods, they are surrounded by the terrifying Cowboys from the Muddlers. Lollipop Hills arrive just in time to save them. Then the Wintergreen Witch turns up again and tries to turn our heroes into bullfrogs. It doesn't happen as she discovers that her magic powers are gone. Angrily, she takes the silver star and throws it into the Bottomless Abyss. Paddy and the twins go after the star and find it and a Silk Hat that flies. They take the broken star to the Land of Ice and Snow.

As the first flurries of snow fell on our neighborhood, the first decorated Christmas trees started appearing in the windows of the homes around us. At out house, the whole family participated in the tree trimming. Dad set it up in the living room and rearranged the furniture. Mom put the lights on the trees, and Ken and I helped with the ornaments.

How well I remember the ornaments. There were very thin delicate Santas, silver pine cones, little glass snowmen, tiny gold bells that really tinkled, miniature musical instruments. And tinsel, Maybe you call it icicles. They were made of tin foil and they were precious. During the war they stopped making tinsel and you had to save it from year to year. And save it we did. We put it on the tree one strand at a time, and took it off one strand at a time. But it really made the tree. It really did. And no matter how scrawny or lopsided that tree may be have been back in Goldblatt's One Dollar Lot, it was the most beautiful tree ever decorated.

Under the tree we had a tiny Christmas village enclosed by a green and red picket fence. There were little houses with lights inside, churches, cajoler, a one-horse open sleigh, and the Nativity Scene. In the Manger were the Infant Jesus, Joseph, Mary, the Wise Men, and the Shepherds; the true meaning of Christmas.

What a scene. Our living room was filled with the shimmering lights of the Christmas tree and, as I sat on the floor between the tree and our radio, my imagination was filled with the sights and sounds of a childhood Christmas.

Santa Claus takes Judy and Jimmy, the Cinnamon Bear, and the Crazy Quilt Dragon to see Jack Frost who fixes the broken silver star and places it on a window sill to mend. It is stolen by the Bad Dolls and recovered by Captain Tip Top and the Tin Soldiers. Crazy Quilt takes the star and runs with it to the North Pole. Be he's captured and at last the silver star is returned to Judy and Jimmy who take it home to place at the very top of their Christmas tree.

Judy and Jimmy and the Cinnamon Bear searched for that silver star every Christmas. . . and every Christmas they found it.

My silver star is the fond memory of their adventures. . . and my adventures, too.

For more in information on the Nostalgia Digest, write to:

Nostalgia Digest Box 421 Morton Grove, IL 60053

Editor's Note:

Here are the dates of the first airing and a listing of the cast and crew of *The Cinnamon Bear*. You'll notice a surprising number of your favorite radio personalities in the cast list.

First Broadcast 11/29 - 12/24/1937. Cast & Crew:

Cinnamon Bear - Buddy Duncan

Mother Barton - Verna Felton Judy Barton - Barbara Jean Wong Jimmy Barton - Unknown Crazy Quilt Dragon - Joseph Kearns Snacker Snick the Crocodile - Hanley Stafford

Queen Melissa - Rosa Barcelo Samuel the Seal and Slim Pickens the Cowboy - Howard McNear Wesley the Wailing Whale - Lindsey MacHarrie

Penelope the Pelican - Elvia Allman Presto the Magician - Elliot Lewis Santa Claus - Lou Merrill Captain Tin Top - Frank Nelson Captain Taffy the Pirate and Indian Chief - Cy Kendall

Oliver the Ostrich and Weary Willie the Stork - Gale Gordon

Professor Whizz the Owl - Ted Osborne

Assistant Blotto Executioner - Ed Max

Fee Foo the Giant - Joe DuVal The Wintergreen Witch - Martha Wentworth

Fraidy Cat - Dorothy Scott.

Narrator: Bud Heistand Music: Felix Mills

Singers: Paul Taylor Quartet

Writer: Glanville Heisch Director: Lindsey MacHarrie





New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month's entries into the Contributor's library are more of the very pleasant *Curtain Time* shows and a new series, *Meet The Meeks*. This is a series about a normal?? family with a teen-aged daughter. Just like the family comedies with teen-aged boys and even *Our Mis Brooks*, a teacher of teenagers, this series has lots of

shows that the writers dreamt up as being plausible or even possible. I wonder if most of them had kids of that age and compared notes? Mr. Meeks is very well-cast. Although this is not a roaring comedy show, it is worth listening to and not be worried about any under-aged family members in the room.

Now that Christmas is here, we urge you to think of gift memberships, but I sure hope that first tease the recipient with a cassette or two so they will realize what a wonderful opportunity a membership really is.

We have been making compact discs of *Cavalcade of America* to not only enjoy ourselves, but to pass on to friends with grade school children to give them a different look at some of our country's history.

Catalogs

Your club has a new printing of catalogs. Many members have either lost or not kept up their catalogs and can purchase a new replacement for \$20.00.

Part of the new catalogs is a new index and a new listing for logs and scripts and a new listing of books available for rent. These listings will be mailed to any member who will send us a note that they want it. There is no charge for the new listings, but we would appreciate \$.55 or stamps to help pay for the postage.

Radio Quiz Answers

- 1. Gabriel Heater
- 2. Jack Kirkwood
- 3. Red Barber
- 4. Paul Harvey
- 5. Johnny Roventini
- 6. Jack Benny
- 7. Vincent Lopez
- 8. Fulton Lewis, Jr.

Special Bonus Answer

The middle name of the *Great Gildersleeve's* is Philharmonic.

Destination Freedom Goes National

The July, 1999 issue of Return With Us Now. . . featured an article on the original and current-day productions of Destination Freedom. Our members in the Denver, CO area could listen to or even attend these new adaptations of the original series scripts broadcast LIVE on National Public Radio (NPR) station KUVO (89.3

Now, I have good news for our members in other parts of the country. Destination Freedom is going NATIONAL in the year 2000. I received the following information from the director/producer of the series donnie l. betts:

In February 2000, four shows

from the series will be broadcast to African American Sheroes and over 50 stations nationwide on PRI and beginning in April 2000. NPR Playhouse will be begin regular broadcast of Destination Freedom/Black Radio Days to 55 stations.

Producer/Director donnie I. betts (Dearfield, The Road Less Traveled, Sonny, Driving Miss Daisy) has acquired the rights to Richard Durham's original radio series Destination Freedom. The series was broadcast from 1948-1950 on WMAQ in Chicago. At the height of the Golden Age of Radio this series offered African American families a free trip to the theatre of the mind--- as well as a classroom in which to learn the comedy and tragedy of African American history.

The series dramatically illustrated the lives achievements of successful

Heroes. Durham produced 91 scripts over a 2-year period that featured such artists as Studs Terkel, Oscar Brown Jr. Janice Kingslow and Fred Pinkard. By bringing many of these dynamic scripts back in 1999, the series producers hope to enlighten. entertain and educate today's listeners through the magic of live radio.

Contact your local Public radio station to find out if they will be airing Destination Freedom/Black Radio Days If they are not planning to air this series, urge them to carry it.

For our members in the Denver area, you can be a studio guest for the live broadcast and recording of Destination Freedom/Black Radio Days. Contact donnie l. betts at:

> 303-399-1908 or www.nocredits.com.



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