



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 25, Number 10

May, 2000

Closed?

Cassette Library #1 Faces Shutdown Volunteer Needed!!!!

As was mentioned in last month's *Return With Us Now...*, our librarian for Cassette Library #1 will no longer be available to care for the Library. This Library includes cassette boxes 001 through 499. We have not yet had a local member who is interested in volunteering to be the Librarian for Cassette Library #1.

This time Malettha King has enough on her hands that she will not be able to keep this Library open. A Denver area member is preferred for this position. Nearly 1/3 of

RHAC members reside in the Denver metropolitan area. Surely there is a local member who is willing to help their club by taking on the Library.

If RHAC is unable to find a volunteer to take over this Library, we will be forced to SHUT IT DOWN.

RHAC has never had to close down a library before, but it has happened with other OTR clubs. If Cassette Library #1 is CLOSED, members will not be able to use those 2,000 tapes; approximately 4,400 shows!!!

Cassette Library #1 is a very popular library since many members start with its holdings. It is not a very large number of cassettes, they do not take up much space, and we furnish the shelving.

ANYONE INTERESTED? Running this library only takes about 3 to 4 hours a week.

Just give Dick or Malettha a call at 303-761-4139, if you want to know about what is required.

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, June 8, 2000 - 7:30 PM

At

Larry Weide's 5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO

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* 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>

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.

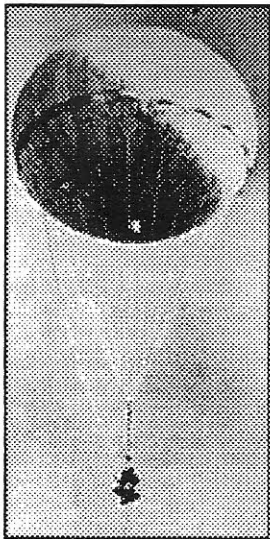
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President:	Guy Albright, 786 South Quitman St., Denver, CO 80219	303-934-0184
Vice-President:	Larry Weide, 5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80110 E-Mail: lweide@ibm.net	303-758-8382
Secretary:	Carol Roe, 2570 S. Dayton Way E-108 Denver, CO 80231	
Treasurer:	Maletha King, address below	303-761-4139
Newsletter Editor:	Stewart Wright, 8120 W. 26 th Ave. # 17, Lakewood, CO 80215 E-Mail: stewwright@worldnet.att.net	303-237-4055
Historian:	John Adams, 2811 S Valentia St., Denver, CO 80231	303-755-9185
Players:	JoAnn Bantin, 1290 Dayton Street, Aurora, CO 80010	303-343-7508
Tribute to OTR Show:	Dave Clow 8606 S. Yarrow St. Littleton CO 80128 E-Mail: ROFDave@ghostmine.com	303-972-2850
Talking Newsletter:	Mike Fields, 243 S. 1100 E., Greentown, IN 46936	
Membership:	Dick King, PO BOX 1908, Englewood, CO 80150 E-Mail: dickking@ecentral.com	303-761-4139
Tape Donations:	Bill McCracken, 7101 W Yale Ave #503, Denver, CO 80227 Herb Duniven, 4184 S. Syracuse St., Denver, CO 80237	
Directors at Large:	David L Michael, 1999 Broadway, Lowery Suite, Denver, CO 80202 Herb Duniven 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)	VACANT	
#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



Japanese Balloon Bombs Silenced Radio

By Albert J. Emery

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Most Americans are not familiar with one of the most tragic events in our history. The tragedy occurred on 5 May 1945, when Reverend Archie Mitchell and his pregnant wife Elsie took five young children from their church on a fishing trip near Bly, Oregon. Poor road conditions prevented Reverend Mitchell from reaching his intended destination, so he drove as far as he could and then let the passengers out of his car. As he parked the car, he heard his wife tell him about a strange object that the group had found. Her words were soon followed by a tremendous explosion. Rushing to the scene, Mitchell was horrified to find that the mysterious explosion had killed his wife and all five of the children.

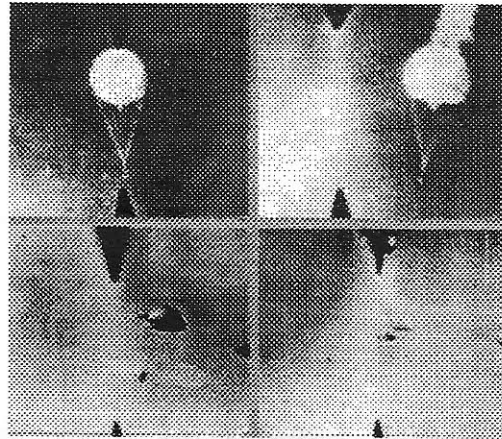
The chain of events which lead to the Oregon Tragedy began with Jimmy Doolittle's famous air raid on Japan on April 18, 1942. Although the raid caused little physical damage, it was devastating to Japanese pride and morale. The military vowed revenge on the United States, but the methods available for implementing that revenge were limited. They had no plans to build long-range bombers, they had no bases close to North America, and no warships could be spared for a full-scale invasion.

During the 1930's, Japanese scientists had discovered the jet stream. This current of high speed air at 30,000 to 38,000 feet reached a peak velocity of 100 to 200 miles per hour during the winter months as it swept across the Pacific Ocean from Japan to the northwest corner of the United States. At that time, no other country was aware of this natural phenomenon. The Japanese Army came up with the idea of sending bomb-laden balloons to the United States via the jet stream. They believed that the balloon bombs would reach the United States in about three days and would kill citizens, destroy property, divert military assets, damage morale, and, most importantly, cause huge, uncontrolled forest fires throughout the dense forests along the Pacific coast.

It took two years for Japanese engineers to perfect the balloon bomb. The main technical challenge was to keep the balloons within the boundaries of the jet stream during flight. This was achieved by an ingenious arrangement of

sand bags, pressure sensors, and a relief valve. This primitive guidance system, along with a 22-pound explosive bomb and four 11-pound incendiary bombs, were attached to the gondola, which was suspended from a balloon that was 33 feet in diameter. The balloon was fabricated from paper and was assembled mostly by Japanese school girls.

About 10,000 balloon bombs were built, and about 9300 of those were launched from Japan between November 1944 and April 1945. There is evidence that at least 285 reached North America, including the one that killed Elsie Mitchell and the five children, but it is estimated that 1000 successfully crossed the Pacific Ocean.



Despite the deaths in Oregon, the Japanese balloon bomb campaign was a failure. Part of the reason is that the power source for the guidance system – a battery immersed in sea water – often froze due to the cold temperatures at very high altitudes. But much of the credit goes to the radio stations and newspapers of America. After the first balloon was sighted, it took the American military about two months to figure out what was going on. Once they did, they immediately implemented a voluntary (but monitored) news black out. This was a good move, because the Japanese Army was counting on evaluating the success of the balloon bombs by monitoring American news reports. Surprisingly, newspapers and radio stations cooperated with the government, and the Japanese abruptly discontinued the balloon invasion because of the lack of information.

The news black out was so effective that to this day, the balloon bomb campaign and the deaths in Oregon – the only Americans killed by an act of war on the continent since the War of 1812- remain little-known incidents of American history.

Editors's Note: Pictures of the Japanese Balloon Bomb and the gun camera photo sequence of the destruction of a balloon bomb are from the U.S. Air Force Museum photo archive.

Radio's Moments Of The 20th Century The One Hundred Greatest Moments in Old-Time Radio

by Elizabeth McLeod

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70. *The London Naval Conference 1/21/30*

World leaders gather in the British capital to discuss Naval arms limitations -- and radio allows the world to listen in. NBC listeners follow the conference by BBC shortwave relay in a day-long special broadcast -- the first international news story to be covered in such a manner. It's also the first time American audiences hear a broadcast by a British monarch, as King George V opens the ceremonies.

69. *Dragnet - a new era in police drama 1949*

Just a cop doing his job, for thirty minutes a week. No wisecracks, no gum-chewing gun molls, no threadbare private eye cliches. Jack Webb created a whole new genre of radio crime drama -- a world of hard-working, down-to-earth law enforcement professionals who always finished their paperwork. His influence is with us yet.

68. *Superman Battles Intolerance 1946-47*

Juvenile adventure characters had always fought well-defined, simplistic villains: robbers, smugglers, pirates, Nazis. But in the first postwar spring, the mightiest hero of them all tackles a terrifying new enemy -- terrifying because he lives in every child's hometown. Terrifying because he might live right next door. Terrifying because he or she might be your own father or mother. Or, maybe, might even be you yourself. *Superman's* crusade against hate and bigotry is by far the most complex subject matter ever taken on by a children's program -- and over the next year, is a recurring theme in the series: breaking new ground for a genre which is usually concerned with issues no more complicated than selling cereal -- and, hopefully, helping to open the eyes of a generation of kids.

67. *Mae West meets Charlie McCarthy 12/12/37*

"Why Don't You Come Play In My --- Woodpile," purrs the sultry movie star to a flustered wooden puppet, to the nervous laughter of the studio audience. Earlier in the evening, Mae West had traded mild ribaldries with Don Ameche in the famous "Garden of Eden" sketch as a guest on *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* -- and it's that sketch that generates all the uproar, thanks to complaints from Catholic religious authorities in New York. But the truly explicit material comes later in the evening in Miss

West's innuendo-filled exchange with Charlie McCarthy: possibly the bluest ten minutes the Red Network ever aired.

66. *Kate Smith's War Bond Marathons 1944*

Radio stars are wholehearted in their support for the war effort, but none more so than Kate Smith. Twice, she mounts round-the-clock marathon appeals for War Loan Drives -- appearing every hour on the hour on CBS to urge listeners to support the campaigns. By wars' end, Kate Smith is by far the show-business bond-selling champion: personally responsible for raising more than \$600,000,000 for the war effort.

65. *Lux Presents Hollywood 6/1/36*

He doesn't produce the show. He doesn't direct it. He has nothing to do with casting it or choosing the scripts. He sometimes doesn't even show up for rehearsals. All he does is read lines someone else has written for him. But to listeners, none of that matters. Cecil B. DeMille is Hollywood. And when a two-year-old dramatic anthology moves to the film capital in mid-1936, the J. Walter Thompson Agency makes a brilliant move in tapping him to host. In interviews, he often takes public credit for work he didn't do -- a nod here to the unsung agency men who were the real masterminds of the program: Danny Danker, Tony Stanford, and Frank Woodruff -- but nevertheless, DeMille wraps the program in his own mystique: and makes the *Lux Radio Theatre* a national institution.

64. *Flood Tide for Demagogues 1935*

Senator Huey P. Long, Father Charles E. Coughlin, The Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith, Dr. Francis Townsend. Names that may not mean much today, but to radio listeners in the spring of 1935, they represent the thundering voice of political extremism. Promoting a weird blend of free-silver populism, anti-Semitism, and what can only be described as an Americanized "national socialism," Long, Coughlin, Smith and Townsend are all over the airwaves -- both the mainstream networks, and in Coughlin's case over a coast-to-coast private hookup -- and millions of Depression-weary listeners are paying close attention to what they have to say. The assassination of Long removes the movement's most popular speaker from the scene -- but his colleagues carry on, sponsoring a third-party presidential candidate in 1936. Pressure from this radio-driven movement has a lasting effect, as the Roosevelt administration defuses one of its most potent weapons -- the Townsend Revolving Old Age Pension Plan -- by promoting an alternative: the Social Security Act. One is left to ponder -- with a shudder -- what might have happened had Long been

alive to head the "Union Party" ticket in 1936.

63. Amos' Wedding 12/25/35

Seven years to the night after they became engaged, Amos Jones and Ruby Taylor are wed in a simple, dignified Christmas Night ceremony that caps the golden era of *Amos 'n' Andy*, and marks the culmination of one of radio's most memorable love stories -- the tale of an unschooled but earnest young man from the country in love with a well-bred, college-educated young city woman. It was a tender, gentle romance which endured economic hardship, family tragedies, misunderstandings, and a near-fatal illness, all the while helping to establish precedents which would be followed in soap opera and "family drama" for decades to come.

62. Arthur Godfrey Goes National 1945

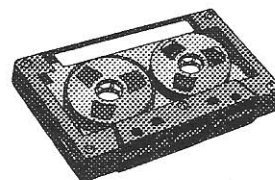
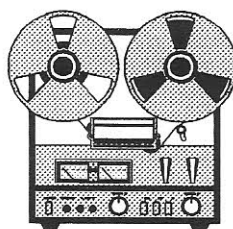
It isn't the first time he's heard on a network, but when Arthur Godfrey greets his coast-to-coast listeners on the morning of April 30, 1945, he stakes out a claim that would keep him there for twenty-seven years. Along the way, he becomes CBS's greatest moneymaker, and an influence on an entire generation of broadcasting personalities. One can make a convincing case that Godfrey was the greatest simple communicator ever to face the mike.

61. WLS National Barn Dance moves to the "Hayloft" 1928

Chicago was the capital of country music during the twenties and early thirties -- and WLS was its headquarters, reaching a vast audience all over the Midwest. The primary showcase for the station's impressive roster of musical talent is the Saturday night *National Barn Dance* program -- on the air since 1924 -- and when this series moves to Chicago's Eighth Street Theatre, soon to be known as "The Hayloft," it enters its golden era. In 1933, the show goes national: and Lulu Belle and Scotty, the Hoosier Hot Shots, the Vass Family, the Maple City Four, Uncle Ezra, and all the rest find a whole new audience.

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 web site, Broadcasting History Resources, and is presently researching a book on Depression-era broadcasting. Elizabeth is always looking for 1930s radio recordings in all formats -- uncoated aluminum or lacquer-coated discs, vinyl or shellac pressings, or low-generation tape copies.

You can contact her at:
lizmcl@midcoast.com



New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month we have two more reels of *Lum and Abner* as they enter more ventures in business and personal lives. There is no end to any of the projects they get into, they just phase into the next venture.

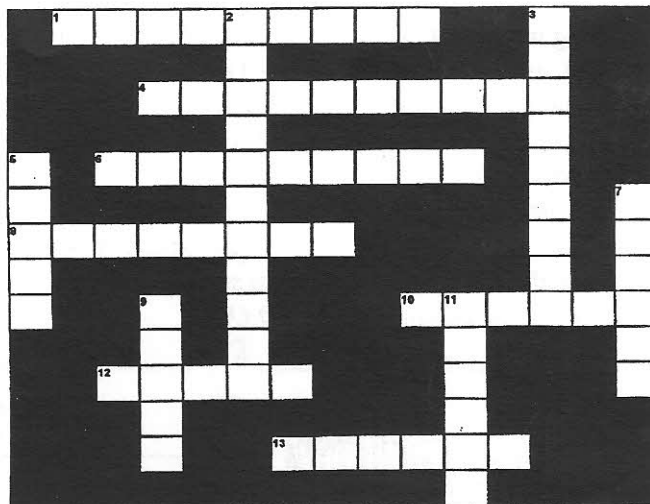
After *Lum and Abner*, we get into a tape on JAZZ. Those of you that are Jazz lovers will enjoy this history of Jazz. There is lots of swinging music included in this history.

From there we go to some great comedy: *The Phil Harris and Alice Faye Show*. These are 1949 and 1950 shows that we may have forgotten, but they are delightful family comedy. We are sure you will enjoy all of these delightful shows.

Radio Crossword Puzzle

By Jim Johnston

© 2000 by Jim Johnston



YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR

Answers can be found on back page.

ACROSS

- Dollar's assignments from Pat McCracken at the _____ Adjustment Bureau often ended with Johnny fighting for his life.
- Dollar had an inquisitive nature and was logical and perceptive, but his shortcoming was _____.

which often made him rush headlong into trouble.

6. *Dollar's* director Jack _____ crafted all types of shows, from *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* to *Hollywood Star Playhouse*.
8. The show's longest sponsor, _____ Gum, was from March 1953 to August 1954.
10. Movie star Dick _____ auditioned for the *Dollar* role in 1948, but instead chose to play a traditional hard-boiled detective, Richard Diamond.
12. *Dollar* resisted marrying his girlfriend, _____ Lewis.
13. When *Dollar* investigated a claim, he usually found fraud, collusion, double crosses, and larceny, which inevitably led to _____.

DOWN

2. *Dollar* was "the man with the action-packed _____", whose entries were a clever diary-like device that unfolded his investigation for listeners.
3. At the beginning of each show, *Dollar* was introduced as 'America's fabulous _____ insurance investigator'.
5. During the classic *Dollar* season of 15 minute serials from October 1955 to November 1956, each show opened with the voice of Roy _____ exclaiming: "From Hollywood, it's time now for ..."
7. Although Mandel Kramer was good as *Dollar*, John Dunning wrote that "Bob _____ was born to play the part, and created the definitive *Dollar*."
9. Old radio pro Virginia _____ played all kinds of roles: *Dollar's* girlfriend, a heart-broken claimant, a murderess, and more.
11. Before playing *Dollar* from 1950 to 1952, intense character actor Edmond _____ electrified 1949 movie audiences as a doomed man searching for his poisoner in the classic film noir *D.O.A.*



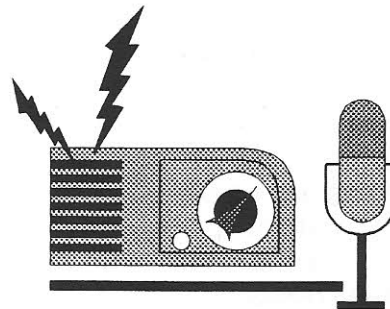
Articles Needed For: YOUR NEWSLETTER!

We are running *VERY, VERY LOW* on articles for the *YOUR* Newsletter, your help is needed and would be 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 what-ever radio-related topic you want. *But, please write!*

Send your articles to Stewart Wright, Newsletter Editor. My addresses, regular & E-Mail, are listed on page 2 of the Newsletter.



Did You Know That...?

This new, monthly column, written by an anonymous member,

will feature little-known facts about Old-Time Radio. The first installment focuses on radio's premier series of "High Adventure":

Escape

Brothers Jack and Sam Edwards both played the lead character, John Unger, in different *Escape* productions of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "A Diamond as Big as The Ritz."

Approximately 30 stories that originally aired on *Escape* were later used on *Suspense*. Included were: "Action," "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," "Command," "Country of the Blind," "Leiningen Vs. The Ants," "The Man Who Would Be King," "The Man Who Won the War," "The Rim of Terror," "Second Class Passenger," "A Shipment of Mute Fate," "Three Skeleton Key," and "Zero Hour."

Radio actor John Dehner wrote the scripts for three episodes of *Escape*: "Benchillina and The Fisherman," "The Man With the Steel Teeth," and "Lily and the Colonel." The latter two scripts also were also used on *Suspense*.

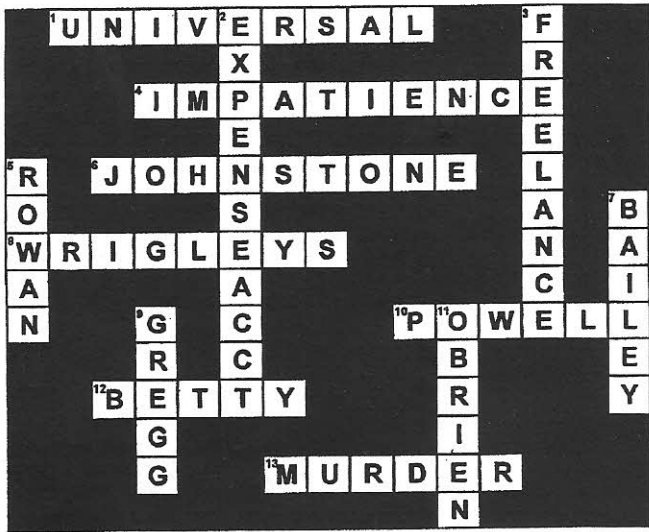
The most frequently aired story on *Escape* was the tale of a man on an ocean liner being stalked by a deadly Bushmaster snake, "A Shipment Of Mute Fate." It was aired four times. Four different actors played the starring role of Chris Warner: Jack Webb, Harry Bartell, John Lund, and David Ellis.

In the classic episode, "Three Skeleton Key," a remote, tropical lighthouse was attacked by an army of ravenous, squealing rats. How was the sound of the rats squealing produced? By rubbing a wet cork rapidly back and forth on glass. The sound effects were by created by Cliff Thorsness and executed by Thorsness, Gus Bayz, and Jack Sixsmith were awarded the "Best of the Year" by "Radio and Television Life Magazine."

Three of radio's most noted directors: William N. Robson, Norman Macdonnell, & Antony Ellis directed both *Escape* and *Suspense*.

Radio Crossword Puzzle

Answers



LIBRARIAN NEEDED!!!!

See Page 1

Articles Needed!

See page 6

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL



09/01/2000

TOM BROWN
1402 S. KAHUNA DRIVE
SPOKANE WA 99212

99212-3238 23

