

Volume 26, Number 02

September, 2000

# Volunteers Needed!

As RHAC is a volunteer organization, it can only provide services when there are sufficient volunteers to perform an activity. As with most organizations of our type, *there are never an over-abundance of volunteers.*

We need Members to step forward and volunteer for the following positions.

## **Members' Meeting Coordinator**

In a nut shell, this person plans RHAC Members' meetings.

As you have noticed RHAC has not had a not many Members' Meetings in the last two years. In the past, a Members' Meeting Coordinator arranged guest speakers and programs for our Members. The Coordinator located and contacted potential speakers related to radio programming. They also sought out speakers and presentations from related organizations such as Antique Radio Repair Club and Sherlockians.

The RHAC Board is willing to spend Club monies, for instance, to combine a buffet with a speaker of renown or pay for transportation and accommodations costs to bring in an out-of-town speaker as has been done several times in the past.

What it takes is a person who not afraid to seek out speakers or presentations that would be of interest to our Members. The Board can provide the Coordinator with names and addresses of potential speakers. The Coordinator would work with the RHAC Board to set up a 18-24 month schedule for Members' Meetings (time and place) . . . This schedule would allow the Meetings Coordinator plenty of time to plan, secure speakers, and advertise each event. Such a schedule would allow out-of-state Members a chance to attend an RHAC Meeting.

## **Historian**

This job is basically keeping custody of some RHAC paper records. It's estimated that it would take less than fifteen minutes a month to fulfill the duties of this low activity but important function.

If you are interested in either volunteer position, please contact RHAC at:

P O Box 1908  
Englewood, CO 80150  
303-761-4139

# 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 5, 2000 - 7:30 PM

At

Dick and Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 303-761-4139

Old time radio is alive and well in Denver!

KLZ 560 AM Music of the 1930's - 60's with John Rayburn 2 PM - 6 PM, Weekdays

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!!!!**

## 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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<b>Tape Donations:</b>	Bill McCracken, 7101 W Yale Ave #503, Denver, CO 80227 Herb Duniven, 4184 S. Syracuse St., Denver, CO 80237	
<b>Directors at Large:</b>	David L Michael, 1999 Broadway, Lowery Suite, Denver, CO 80202 Herb Duniven See Above Dick King See Above	

## LIBRARIES

<b>Reference Material:</b>	Bill McCracken, address above	303-986-9863
<b>Logs &amp; Scripts:</b>	Fred Hinz, c/o RHAC, P O Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150	
<b>Open Reel Tape Librarian:</b>	Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 80110	
<b>Cassette Tape Librarians:</b>		
#1 (1-499)	Ron Gallagher 888 South Dexter #607, Denver, CO 80426	303-692-0531
#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

## Members' Meeting

There will be a Member's Meeting Thursday, September 21st, 7:30 PM, at the Church of the Master, East 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. at Filbert Court. Enter through the Filbert Court door.

The RHAC *Players* will be giving a special presentation. See the following *Players* article.

### Election of Officers'

Officers will be elected at the September Members' meeting.



By JoAnn Bantin

Fall is arriving and the RHAC *Players* are becoming active with their new performance schedule.

First of all, please mark your calendar for the September 21st meeting because there will be a lot going on. After the election of officers, the retired but very busy players (meaning our daytime *Players*) will be presenting "The Three Little Pigs." We will have a demonstration of some of our sound effects, a little background about this delightful Fairy tale, one of our wolves will give you his version of this story, and then the radio show. One of our goals is to promote children's radio programs because they will be our future. Therefore, come with memories of your childhood enjoyment of old time radio, for elections of officers and for a lot of fun

The Christmas party plans and program by the RHAC *Players* will be announced in October so be planning on a wonderful and Merry Christmas party. See all of you at the September 21st meeting.

## Radio's Moments Of The 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### *The One Hundred Greatest Moments in Old-Time Radio*

By Elizabeth McLeod

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40. Mary Margaret McBride Hits Her Prime 1941

Women's programming in the OTR era is, for the most part, a hopeless wasteland -- banal, condescending, and trivial. But there are bright spots -- none brighter than Mary Margaret McBride. A veteran journalist, critic, and author with a deceptively folksy style, McBride moves beyond the ossified formats of "womens' radio" to present thought-provoking, substantial programs. Her best series by far is her 1940s local show over WEAJ -- a forty-five minute midday feature in which she brings to the microphone important authors, journalists, politicians, celebrities -- the only requirement being that they have something worthwhile to say.

### 39. Murrow reports on Buchenwald 4/15/45

There are really no words adequate to describe what Edward R. Murrow saw as he toured one of the most notorious of the Nazi concentration camps - but he finds words nonetheless. Other Murrow broadcasts are more famous -- but none are more eloquent.

### 38. First Transatlantic Relay Broadcast 3/14/25

You can barely make it out thru the overwhelming roar of static -- there! there it is! Dimly, you sense the rhythm of a familiar tune -- a dance band squawking out "Alabama Bound." And there -- that voice, that halting British voice, saying something about 5XX, Daventry -- the High Power Station Of The British Broadcasting Company. History is made as RCA's relay station in Belfast, Maine receives an experimental longwave pickup of 2LO in London, and relays that fragile signal by shortwave to the network of WJZ in New York and WRC Washington -- giving thousands of American listeners their first taste of Overseas Broadcasting. The technology is something of a dead end -- longwave would prove too unreliable for long-term, long-distance use -- but the broadcast is a vivid demonstration of how radio can truly bring the world into your home.

37. Fibber's closet opens for the first time 3/5/40  
A gimmicky sound effect that becomes a national institution -- and which for many symbolizes everything fun and innocent about "Old Time Radio." *Fibber McGee and Molly* had plenty of running gags over the years, due largely to the always inventive scripting of Don Quinn: a writer who can impart fresh flavor to even the moldiest corn -- but none have lingered longer in the public consciousness than that overstuffed hall closet.

### 36. *The Step On The Stair* 1926

Based on a story in "Radio Digest" magazine, this Old Dark House thriller is radio's first true mystery serial -- heard over WLW, Cincinnati in a series of weekly installments adapted for radio by program director Fred Smith (who is better known as the creator of "The March Of Time.") Smith is one of the most important unsung

pioneers of radio -- his 1923 play "When Love Wakens" may be the first American drama to be written especially for radio. Although "Step" is actually a rather crude bit of melodrama, it proves the thriller to be an ideal format for radio: so much so that the script is sold to other stations for local productions, and is still being heard as late as 1930.

35. Gracie Allen's Brother January/February 1933  
It isn't radio's first running gag -- but it's the most memorable of its time, as Gracie Allen begins popping up on programs all over the schedule, asking for help in locating her enigmatic "missing brother." The bit grabs the national imagination during the most wretched of Depression winters -- and vaults Burns and Allen to the front ranks of radio's comedy stars.

#### 34. Report On Chain Broadcasting reshapes the Industry 1941

It's not a radio program -- it's a small, paper-bound book. And between the government-issue-orange covers, there's a bombshell: the Federal Communications Commission rulings condemning monopolistic practices in broadcasting. Beginning in 1938, the FCC had been holding detailed hearings investigating the degree of control exercised over the broadcasting industry by NBC and CBS -- and the Commission didn't like the picture that emerged: stiff, one-sided contracts that strangled local control of programming and which tended to concentrate the power of radio into the hands of two dominating corporations. The report sends a shock wave thru the industry, forcing the networks to revise their contractual ties to their affiliates -- and forcing the National Broadcasting Company to divest itself of one of the two networks that it operated.

#### 33. Rudy Vallee Refines the Variety Show Fall 1932

He's more important as an impresario than as a performer -- and *The Fleischmann's Yeast Hour* is the reason why. Rudy Vallee had been on the air for Fleischmann since 1929, broadcasting an hour-long program of dance music, broken up only by the appearance of a single guest star each week. But beginning in October 1932, Vallee and the staff at the J. Walter Thompson agency dramatically revise the program format: de-emphasizing Vallee's performances and turning the spotlight on a continuing parade of guest artists. Big names, famous names, old names and new names -- for the next seven years, the Vallee program features the best that Broadway and Hollywood have to offer -- and Vallee gains a reputation as radio's foremost talent scout. Whether he himself is actually entitled to that reputation is a question that can be debated: some claim he did run the show -- and none claimed this more

energetically than Vallee himself -- while others say he was just a front man and embittered JWT staffers did all the work. The truth is probably somewhere in between -- but the importance of the show itself is beyond question: it's the pace-setter for every variety series that would follow.

#### 32. The Rise Of Major Bowes Spring/Summer 1935

As spinning goes that weekly wheel of fortune -- round and round she goes and where she stops nobody knows -- as the saponaceous Major Edward Bowes takes the nation by storm with his Sunday night new-talent showcase, moving a longstanding local New York feature to a high-profile Sunday night slot on NBC. Never mind that, as a "Radio Guide" expose reveals, elements of the show are rigged -- the idea of young entertainers from Mudville USA getting their big break on the air ignites a craze for amateur entertainment that inspires a range of imitators. Few of the Bowes discoveries amount to anything -- but there are a few who stand out, including a skinny singer from Hoboken who appears in September 1935 as a member of a pop quartet. His Bowes experience proves something of a dead end - but fate has other plans in store for Frank Sinatra.

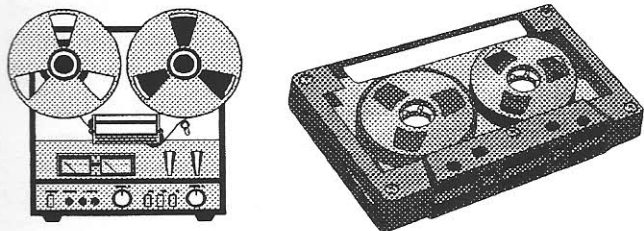
#### 31. The Music Licensing War 1940-41

The American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers doesn't much like the attitude of Network Radio --- and radio likes ASCAP even less, as negotiations for a new contract allowing the use of ASCAP music break down during the last months of 1940. As the name-calling continues, it becomes evident that there will be no peaceful resolution, and the broadcasters form their own music licensing agency -- Broadcast Music Incorporated, which quickly signs a roster of second-tier songwriters in anticipation of a long standoff. As of January 1st, 1941 all ASCAP-controlled music disappears from the network air, leaving only public domain and BMI compositions in their place. Longstanding theme songs abruptly vanish, bandleaders scramble to come up with workable arrangements, the broadcasters put up a brave front -- but listeners quickly grow tired of "Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair" and "The Wise Old Owl." By mid-year, the networks and ASCAP have a new agreement -- and the status quo resumes. However, BMI sticks around -- cultivating new song writing talent and evolving into a major force in the music business: remaining so to this day.

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 are able to offer five reels of *Sealtest Variety Theater* with Dorothy Lamour as master of ceremonies with a great selection of movie and radio stars. It is truly a variety show with the guest participating in short skits and both the actors and the audience having a lot of fun. These were typical of the light entertainment radio offered us during the evenings of the forties.

The last three reels for this month offer a cross-section of shows from mysteries, a few kids' westerns, adventures, to mysteries that would be rated X in today's world. I guess we weren't as inclined to be as stupid as some of the kids are today. We knew it was just a radio show and not real life.

### John Adams Collection

Bill McCracken and Herb Duniven have been sorting through the tapes from John Adams and are starting to get them organized (with the help of a computer) so they can check them out with the shows already in the libraries and the ones that should be added so our members can enjoy them. John had lots of tapes and shows, but was not the best organizer, so it will take a lot of work to get them ready for entry into the library.

We have received a contribution to the Club in the name of John Adams. We want to thank the donor for that.

### Compact Discs

We have been contemplating putting some of our more popular shows on regular audio Compact Discs (not MP3 files) and making up a new library for our members. We would appreciate our members sending a brief note advising three of their favorite shows and giving us a point to start from. *We have NO intention of doing the whole library*, it would take more hours than we would be willing to spend. Just send your

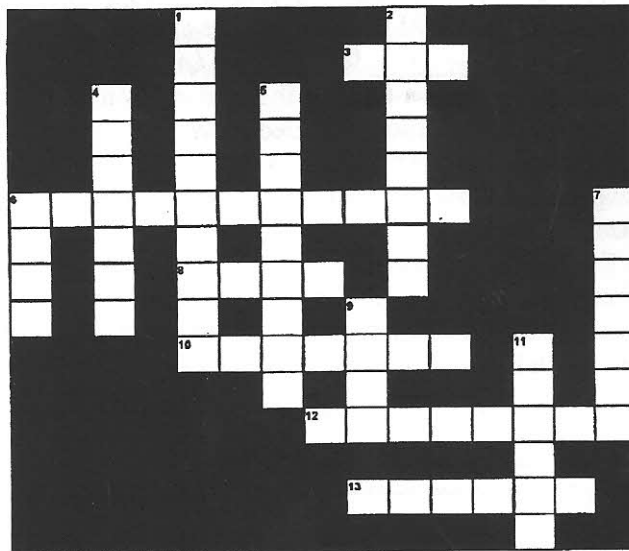
suggestions to us at the Club P.O. Box.

## Radio Crossword Puzzle

By Jim Johnston

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### The Lone Ranger #1



Answers can be found on back page.

### ACROSS

3. For many juvenile fans, the dramatic opening announcement and often climactic narration by announcer Fred \_\_\_\_\_ made him an indispensable third member of the Lone Ranger-Tonto team.
6. Before Scout, Tonto rode a horse named \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Tonto, the Ranger's faithful Indian companion, was played for the entire run by one man, John \_\_\_\_\_ -- the stage name of actor and vaudeville performer Fred McCarthy.
10. *The Lone Ranger's* theme, "The William Tell Overture" by \_\_\_\_\_, was selected because it suggested a gallop.
12. Tonto's appellation for the Lone Ranger was "\_\_\_\_\_", which fans were told means "Faithful Friend".
13. Brace \_\_\_\_\_ played the Ranger from April 1941 until the series ended 13 years later.

### DOWN

1. The Ranger often removed his mask and donned a disguise as an old \_\_\_\_\_ to get information from townsfolk or penetrate outlaw gangs.
2. The Ranger's real name was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. According to John Dunning's "On the Air", writer

- Fran \_\_\_\_\_ was called "a writing machine", producing 156 *Lone Ranger* scripts a year, plus 104 *Green Hornets*, and 52 for *Ned Jordan*, *Secret Agent* and that was just scripts, not counting books, comic strips, and movie serials.
5. The Ranger's mortal enemy was Butch \_\_\_\_\_, whose gang ambush created the Lone Ranger. He also was the only man the Ranger ever killed, years later in a cliffhanger duel at the ambush site.
  6. Radio station \_\_\_\_\_ first aired the *Lone Ranger*.
  7. Many people had a hand in the total creation, but the character was owned by George W. \_\_\_\_\_.
  9. *The Lone Ranger* owned a \_\_\_\_\_ that supplied the raw material for his income, bullets, and horseshoes.
  11. "On the Air" notes that Earle \_\_\_\_\_, the first long-term Lone Ranger, kept his popular role such a secret that his neighbors only discovered it when he was killed in a car crash in April, 1941.



## Harry Bartell On Show Preparation

© 2000 Harry Bartell

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Harry Bartell conducted by Larry Gassman on *Yesterday USA* on May 21, 2000. This interview is the second of a series of OTR personality interviews that will be conducted by Larry and/or John Gassman on *Yesterday USA*.

Most collectors of Old-Time Radios shows do not know how a radio show was put together. What happened was this.

We had about four hours to prepare for a 30-minute radio show, including the dress rehearsal. Here's what happened during those four hours.

The actor received a call for a show from their registry, a call service. There were also phones in all the network buildings that were available to an actor to use to contact their call service to find out if they had a job.

If you got a call for a show, you showed up at rehearsal, sat down at a table, and were given a script. Most actors marked their scripts. You marked your character's lines on the left-hand edge to show where

your speech ended or began.

First, the actors read their parts while sitting around the table. Then you went up to the microphone & read on mike. Usually the sound effects were put in at that time. The sound effects men, who were geniuses by the way, had usually rehearsed their effects previously. The sound effects were now fitted into the show itself.

There was then a short break for corrections. The assistant director, who had been keeping a stop watch on the rehearsal, had marked every 15 seconds in the master script where the actor had paused or where a line began and so forth. He or she had a running record of the length of the show. That show had to fit into 29 minutes and 30 seconds in the case of a half hour show. That meant 29 minutes and 30 seconds; it did not mean 29 seconds or 31 seconds. You usually became very conscious of time as a result of that.

Following this, the musicians, who frequently rehearsed in a separate studio, came in and a dress rehearsal was done with whole show put together. The assistant director back timed against those time previous marks. The producer or director knew at that point whether the show was short, long or on the nose. Changes would made if necessary. There was usually a break of 15 minutes to a half-hour and then you went on the air.

Before recordings started or were allowed, we broadcast two shows. If the show went on at 8 o'clock in New York, it was 5 o'clock on the West Coast. So we did one show at 5 o'clock for the East; it went by telephone line to the East Coast. At 8 o'clock we came back and did the show again for the West Coast.

This quick rundown on how a show was put together was an average for a half hour show. Some took more rehearsal time, some, like *Dragnet* took less.

The number shows you worked a day depended if you were on the soap operas, that's usually where the show multiplicity came in. The 15-minute soaps usually had a two-hour overall preparation span. I don't believe I did that many multiple shows in a day. In retrospect it seems to me that there were long stretches where I thought "What am I going to do?"

For more information about *Yesterday USA*, see the June, 2000 issue of *Return With Us Now* . . .

You can contact *Yesterday USA* at:

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2001 Plymouth Rock Drive  
Richardson, TX 75081  
(972) 889-YUSA  
FAX: (972) 889-2FAX

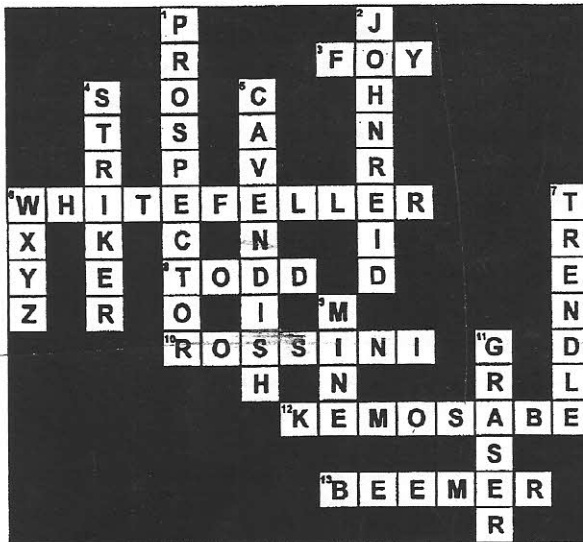
or

On the Web at:  
<http://www.yesterdayusa.com/>

# Members' Meeting & Election Of Officers

See Page 3 for Details

## The Lone Ranger #1

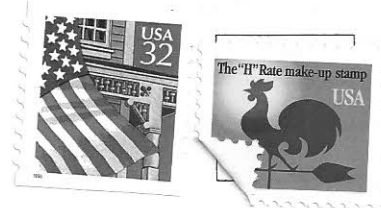


## Radio Crossword Puzzle

Answers

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