

Volume 26, Number 03

October, 2000



REPS SHOWCASE VIII



By Stewart Wright © 2000 Stewart Wright

This was my third consecutive Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound (REPS) Showcase. It left me with one question: how do Joy Jackson, Mike Sprague, and the REPS volunteers keep managing to make each *Showcase* better than the preceding ones?

REPS has a great location for its Showcase: the Seattle Center. It's just a very short walk to the Space Needle. This year, there was a new convention hotel, the Comfort Suites, that is just a few blocks from the Seattle Center. REPS members and The Comfort Suites ran a shuttle service for guests and attendees to the Seattle Center entrance closest to the Showcase meeting rooms.

This year, Showcase co-chairs Joy Jackson and Mike Sprague had to do a lot of last-minute scrambling as several guests were unable to attend. Health problems prevented Stewart Conway, Herb Ellis, Jack Edwards, Norman Corwin, and Jane Webb from attending. Frank Bresee was unable to attend when his flight was canceled and could not be re-scheduled. Alan Young had a last-minute contractual requirement (re-shooting part of a movie) that prevented him from attending.

Mike and Joy were more than up-to-the-task of making the numerous program changes (interviews, directorial and acting assignments, and re-creations) required by these unavoidable cancellations. Jim and Pat French (Adventures of Harry Nile & Imagination Theater) graciously pinch hit for Norman Corwin in the direction of "My Client Curley."

The Showcase starts at 3:00 P.M. on Friday and

goes until about 9:30 P.M. and then resumes for a full day on Saturday until about 9:30 P.M.

Each Showcase has a theme: this year's was *OTR Treasures*. They certainly had many treasures: both guests and presentations.

REPS always has a great group of OTR personalities in attendance. First-time *Showcase* guest were: Alice Backes, Paul Herlinger, and Ed Scott. Returning guests were: Harry Bartell, Richard Beals, Frank Buxton, Sam Edwards, Ray Erlenborn, Esther Geddes, Art Gilmore, Merrill Mael, JoAnna March, Tyler McVey, Norma Jean Nilsson, Anne Whitfield Phillips, Gil Stratton, Ginny Tyler, Janet Waldo, Rhoda Williams, and Douglas Young.

PANELS - This year's panels included: *Radio's Top Ten Shows and One Stinker* hosted by Seattle actor Larry Albert. *Treasured OTR Commercials* hosted by Christopher Conrad (Bill's son) and guest Norma Jean Nilsson. *Radio Acting Today* hosted by David Selvig with guests Buxton and Ginny Tyler.

INTERVIEWS - As Jack Edwards, Jane Webb, and Norman Corwin were unable to attend, first-time guests agreed to be interviewed. John and Larry Gassman interviewed Ed Scott (Chicago and Denver radio) and Paul Herlinger (Adventures In Odyssey and Imagination Theater.) I was pressed into service to interview Alice Backes. I had hoped to use this interview as a basis for an article, but I forgot to turn on my tape recorder.

Continued on Page 5

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

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

Old time radio is alive 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, 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.

CREDIT:

This publication may include images from one or more of the following: Microsoft Publisher 97, Corel Gallery, Corel WordPerfect Suite 8, Brøderbund Print Shop Ensemble III, and Brøderbund ClickArt 200,000 Image Pak. These software packages are protected by the copyright laws of the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. Used under license.

NOTE: Any mention of a product in RETURN WITH US NOW. . . does not constitute an endorsement by RHAC.

President: Vice-President: Guy Albright, 786 South Quitman St., Denver, CO 80219 303-934-0184 303-758-8382 Larry Weide, 5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80110

E-Mail: lweide@ibm.net

Secretary:

Carol Roe, 2570 S. Dayton Way E-108 Denver, CO 80231

Treasurer:

Maletha King, address below

Newsletter Editor:

Stewart Wright, 8120 W. 26th Ave. #17, Lakewood, CO 80215 303-237-4055

E-Mail: stewwright@worldnet.att.net

Historian:

Vacant

Players:

JoAnn Bantin, 1290 Dayton Street, Aurora, CO 80010

303-343-7508

303-761-4139

Talking Newsletter:

Mike Fields, 243 S. 1100 E., Greentown, IN 46936

Membership:

Dick King, PO BOX 1908, Englewood, CO 80150

303-761-4139

E-Mail: dickking@ecentral.com

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:

#4 (5001 up)

Bill McCracken, address above

303-986-9863

Logs & Scripts: Open Reel Tape Librarian: Fred Hinz, c/o RHAC, P O Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150 Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 80110

Cassette Tape Librarians:

#1 (1-499) Ron Gallagher #2 (500-999) David Gatch #3 (1000-2000) Dave Logan Mika Rhoden

888 South Dexter #607, Denver, CO 80426 PO Box 70, Glen Haven, CO 80532 5557 S Sherman Cir., Littleton, CO 80121 3950W Dartmouth Ave., Denver, CO 80236 303-692-0531 970-577-0805 303-730-1430 303-937-9476

-2-

October, 2000

Is Anybody There?

From: Larry Weide, RHAC Vice President

As everyone knows who reads the RHAC monthly newsletter, we held the semi-monthly RHAC Membership Meeting on 9/21/2000. This meeting was our regular scheduled September RHAC Officer's Election Meeting. In addition, the RHAC *Players* had prepared a program of entertainment as well. Aside from the *Players*, some of the RHAC Board Members and one Regular Member, NO ONE ELSE ATTENDED THE MEETING.

There are a lot of issues that should concern the membership at large. Such as: how we manage our lending libraries, how we spend the hard-earned RHAC treasury, and what kind of activities does RHAC involve itself. The best way to do this is to have input at Club Meetings, and vote for the Club Officers that best reflect your needs as a Club Member. Of course, I realize that this is a National Club and many members can only let their ideas be known through the mail or email. But, there are a great many members who live in the near Denver area that should be present to give input to this very important function – that is, Officer Elections.

Then too, there's the issue of having the RHAC *Players* putting in a lot of effort to prepare and provide entertainment for an "empty house". Fred and JoAnn Bantin work hard as the leaders of this group, and they had refreshments ready as well as a performance for this meeting.

So, as a means to put things back on the right track, the current RHAC Officers and Board have arranged for a RHAC Officers Election Backup Meeting to be held on Thursday, October the 26th, 7:30PM at the regular meeting place, which is at the Church of the Master. Please plan on being there to support your Club and help get us off on the right foot for the real first year of the 21th century.

RHAC Officers Election Meeting

Thursday, October 26th – 7:30PM Church of the Master East 17th Ave. at Filbert Court Denver, CO Enter through the Filbert Court door.



By JoAnn Bantin

The RHAC retired but very busy Players were scheduled to perform the "Three Little

Pigs" at the regular RHAC meeting on Thursday, Sept 21s at the Church of the Master. Due to lack of attendance of our members, the performance was canceled along with the meeting. Please remember that to do any performance, it takes time and effort on the actors, the sound people, the directors and everyone involved. We really need much more involvement at meetings for the future of this Club. The *Players* are ready to offer entertainment at many of the meetings if members chose to attend. The *Players* are there, please come out and support this club.

Already The RHAC *Players* have been asked to perform at a grade school, a church, and The Denver Book Fair in March. We feel honored to be invited and know this is a way of promoting Old-Time Radio.

Scrooge will be arriving on December 20th for the production of the Dickens' "Christmas Carol." This production was transcribed from the Lionel Barrymore production. All sound is live, with a wind machine to transport Scrooge from place to place. A chorus will be providing beautiful music along with background sounds surrounding Scrooge. The RHAC production will delight you this year along with your favorite stars. Be planning on attending the Christmas show and dinner theater. More information will be available about reservations. Please remember that if you want to see live performances your attendance is a must.

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

By Elizabeth McLeod Reproduced With Permission

30. Paley's Financial Maneuverings Save CBS. 1928-1929

William Paley perpetuated a lot of legends about his early years at CBS. Although he styled himself "Founding Chairman," Paley didn't found the network -- George Coats and Arthur Judson did, with help from the Levy brothers of Philadelphia and Major J. Andrew White. Nor did the infusion of Paley's personal fortune completely turn the tide for the struggling company. But the real story of how Columbia survived the Depression is even more interesting - and says a great deal about Paley's remarkable ability as a businessman. The young

son-of-a-cigar maker manages to talk the cagey film mogul Adolph Zukor of Paramount Publix Corporation into a complicated stock swap in 1929, which gives the foundering network the boost it needs to stay afloat during the bad years ahead: even though Zukor's own company, ironically, ends up in receivership!

29. The 1923 World Series 10/23

Broadcasting of major league baseball's main event was early on a major attraction -- but it's the 1923 Fall Classic between the New York Yankees and the New York Giants that makes the big impression, and for reasons unanticipated. Originally, plans call for the action to be described over WEAF by veteran sportswriter Grantland Rice -- and he's to be assisted by a recently-recruited member of the station's announcing staff: a former concert singer by the name of Graham McNamee. For the first three games, McNamee provides what would eventually come to be called "color commentary" - and his descriptions are so vivid, so enthusiastic that listeners deluge the station with phone calls and telegrams demanding to see more. And so it is that beginning with game four, McNamee takes over the full play-by-play job -- and is launched on a career as the most important personality of radio's formative years. One can fault his accuracy, one can criticize his style -but none can deny his impact.

28. Premiere of the NBC Symphony 12/24/37
Arturo Toscanini had been a familiar personality to American radio listeners since the turn of the thirties thru his work with the New York Philharmonic -- and had already come to personify the traditional image of the "glowering maestro." And so it is that NBC scores a major publicity coup in 1937 when it lures Toscanini back to the United States with the unprecedented offer of an orchestra constructed especially for him, designed to his specifications, and to be directed as he sees fit -- and for nearly eighteen years, the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Toscanini's baton is one of radio's outstanding musical attractions.

Eddie Cantor Runs For President Winter 1931-Fall 1932

The Depression's darkest months fall in the middle of 1932: more 15 million are unemployed in the US, and more than 270 thousand families face imminent eviction from their homes. By September of that year, more than 34 million Americans are without any income whatsoever, and the nation has witnessed the grim spectacle of tanks rolling thru the streets of Washington DC against an army of unemployed veterans. Against this backdrop, Americans are desperate for escape, desperate for anything that will take their minds off the horror of the times. And they get it -- in a pop-eyed,

hyper kinetic Broadway clown. Eddie Cantor takes the nation by storm with his satirical run for the Presidency, setting an audience record never to be equaled by any other continuing radio series. Cantor's comedy is frenetic and flamboyant, with a strong undercurrent of contempt for authority -- and, by extension, for those who have brought the nation to rock bottom. Small wonder the bouncing chant of "We Want Can-tor!" still echoes thru the memories of that era.

The Benny-Allen Feud January-March 1937 26. "The Bee," by Franz Schubert -- a showy specialty composition for violin -- becomes the most famous piece of music in the country as the question rages: can Jack Benny play it? It all begins, innocently enough, with a boy violinist named Stewart Canin, appearing on the "Town Hall Varieties" segment of Fred Allen's program on 12/30/36. During the second show for the west coast, Allen comments on the boy's rendition of "The Bee" with a single, simple observation: "Jack Benny," he drawls in that inimitable snarling whine, "should be ashamed of himself." And out in Hollywood, Benny listens -- and the following Sunday makes his response: "When I was ten years old, I could play "The Bee" too!" And the following Wednesday, Allen challenges this assertion -- and from then on, every week marks an escalation of the "argument," until finally, on the night of 3/14/37, the combatants meet face to face in the Grand Ballroom of New York's Hotel Pierre to have it out once and for all. The results? Inconclusive. But for the next twelve years, Jack and Fred -- in reality old-time friends from vaudeville -- will snipe back and forth in radio's most memorable phony feud. And they don't forget the boy who started it all: in 1940, Benny and Allen jointly award Stewart Canin a scholarship to help cover the cost of his future musical education, helping him along the way to a distinguished adult career in classical music.

25. The Rise Of Syndication 1928-1932

When all is said and done, the invention of the syndication concept is without doubt the most important of Freeman Gosden's and Charles Correll's contributions to the broadcasting industry. The idea of distributing recorded programs to individual stations begins with "Amos 'n' Andy" in 1928, and the two performers attempt to patent the concept, only to be told by their attorney that they can't. And so it is that before the end of 1928, the National Radio Advertising Company is selling recorded programming to national advertisers -and by the end of 1930, syndication is sweeping the industry, offering real competition to the wire-line networks in attracting major national sponsors like Chevrolet and major nationally-licensed properties like Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan." Syndication remains an essential element of both radio and television to this day:

a billion-dollar industry that owes its existence to Gosden and Correll and their simple, ingenious idea for a "chainless chain."

WGY and the Birth of Radio Drama 9/22 You might not have heard of Kolin Hager, unless you're from Schenectady. He was the program director and chief announcer at General Electric's station WGY in the early twenties -- and he could well be considered the Father of Radio Drama. In September 1922, Hager gives a forty-minute weekly time slot on WGY to "The Masque," a troupe of community-theatre actors from nearby Troy, NY, headed by one Edward H. Smith. As "WGY Players," Smith's company offers condensations of recent stage plays -- forty-three of them in the first season -- and gain national attention for their efforts: the first regular dramatic series ever broadcast on American radio. Among the members of the group - a former stage technician named Frank Oliver: radio's first true sound effects man. The WGY Players are a fixture at the station for more than a decade, and in 1928 perform another historic first: the first play ever to be televised.

23. The Second Louis-Schmeling Fight 6/22/38 He was called "The Brown Bomber," "The Tanned Titan," "The Sepia Superman," and, most embarrassingly, "Shufflin' Joe." But on a steaming June night at Yankee Stadium, all the condescending "credit to his race" talk is forgotten, as Joe Louis stands as the symbol of America -- facing the equally-formidable symbol of "Aryan Superiority," German heavyweight Max Schmeling. Schmeling had defeated Louis in a prior bout -- but not this time. Before NBC announcer Clem McCarthy has a chance to get warmed up, Louis gives Schmeling the beating of his life -- and gives radio listeners a few quick minutes they will never forget.

22. NBC Takes Over 11/15/26

Not the first network broadcast, but the most heavily publicized. When the newly formed National Broadcasting Company takes over operation of the AT&T Red Network in November 1926, it's taking over a network that's already providing sixteen-hour-a-day service to seven stations, and varying hours of service to twelve others. NBC puts the whole operation on a full-time basis and with a four-hour gala from the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, announces to the whole nation (or at least the whole nation as far west as Kansas City) that the age of Big Time Radio has arrived.

21. London After Dark August/September 1940 Americans receive a jolting dose of reality when CBS begins a dramatic series of broadcasts from the heart of a city under siege. Airing as a joint venture of the BBC

and the CBS London staff headed by Edward R. Murrow, "London After Dark" is a heart-stopping document of the Blitz. CBS correspondents Larry LeSeur, Eric Severied, Vincent Sheehan and author J. B. Priestly all contribute to the program, but it's Murrow who makes the dominant impression in the initial broadcast of 8/24/40: his chilling account of defiant Londoners strolling casually to the air raid shelters -illustrated by the hollow sound of their footsteps --provides an audio picture that will echo forever in the annals of radio journalism. Less than a month later, on September 21st, Murrow tops this broadcast with an even more dramatic scene, as "London After Dark" presents a bomb-by-bomb description of another air raid, live from the rooftop of Broadcasting House. Similar broadcasts will be made by NBC's Fred Bate -- who is nearly killed in a subsequent air raid -- and by Mutual's Arthur Mann: but Murrow gets the credit for the idea, and for forcefully bringing the horrors of modern war into American homes.

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

The article in it entirety can be found at *The Nostalgia Pages* Web site at:

http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/columns/century.php3

REDS SHOWCASE VIII

Continued from Page 1

JUST SITTIN' AROUND & VISITING - This year, the very popular Just Sittin' Around and Visiting continued with a session each day. Half of the OTR guests were assembled up front in one of the meeting rooms and they just talked and visited, helped by some starter questions and audience involvement. Lots of great stories and anecdotes.

RE-CREATIONS - "The Snow Queen" (a Hans Christian Anderson tale), *Dr. Christian* (starring Jean Hersholt's grandson, Gregg in the title role), *Suspense* ("The ABC Murders"), *I Love A Mystery* - "The Temple of Vampires," *The Bickerson's*, *Vic and Sade*, and "My Client Curley." Janet Waldo and Sam Edwards also performed a short segment of *Meet Corliss Archer* reprising their roles of Corliss and Dexter.

Perhaps the longest applause for any single actor were for Merrill Mael who played Uncle Fletcher in the Vic and Sade re-creation (and for a time on the radio series.) Merrill has been quite ill and was determined to keep his perfect attendance record at REPS *Showscases*. **VENDORS** - There were several vendors of Old-Time Radio tapes - both cassette and reel-to-reel. There were also booths selling nostalgia items such as old fan magazines, record albums, and radio premiums. I found a reasonably priced copy of Frank Buxton's "The Big Broadcast" and was able to get Frank to autograph it.

I also purchased an autographed copy of sound effects artist Bob Mott's new book "Radio Live! Television Live! - Those Golden Days When Horses Were Coconuts." Ray Erlenborn is featured on the cover photograph and also autographed the book for me.

My final major purchase didn't cost much, but it is a real treasure. It is a tape of a REPS Radio Readers production — "The Skyway to Hell." It is a fine radio play that is made even more special by the fact that the play was written, directed, and produced by my friend and fellow REPS member Joy Jackson.

The play is a 56-minute combination ghost story and tribute to the pilots who "flew the Hump," piloting transport planes over the mountains in the China-Burma-India Theater during WWII. It was taped on March 11, 2000 at the Museum of Flight in Seattle, WA and aired on KIXI-AM (880) in Seattle on March 18, 2000.

Tapes of the "The Skyway to Hell" are available from REPS for \$8.00. All proceeds go the REPS. To order tapes, send a check made out to REPS to Joy Jackson, 3663 Carr Pl. N., Seattle, WA 98103.

SILENT AUCTION - This was the second year that REPS had a silent auction. The auction raised more than \$1400 is used to help pay *Showcase* expenses. Many items at this year's auction were donated by the OTR guest stars including autographed photographs and memorabilia.

DINNER & AWARDS - On Saturday night there was a dinner at which convention goers were seated with one or more of the celebrity guests. You had a great chance to converse with them. This year, I was seated at the table with Janet Waldo.

During this dinner, awards to the performers and REPS volunteers were given.

REPS Radio Appreciation Award - Frank Buxton, Pat French, Jim French, Norma Jean Nilsson, Tyler McVey, Esther Geddes, Anne Whitfield Phillips, Rhoda Williams, and Doug Young.

1999 REPS Radio Achievement Award - Dick Beals. John Archer Volunteer of the Year Award - Mike Sprague.

PHOTO SESSION - The last event of each Showcase is a photo session so a group picture can be taken. There are plenty of opportunities during the Showcase to take individual photos the guests.

All of the guest celebrities at the *Showcase* were very friendly and approachable. During the breaks and

the Saturday night Social Hour, there were many chances to talk with them, acquire autographs and take pictures. I also had time to meet with other convention attendees including a few Radio Historical Association of Colorado members from around the country and members of several other Old-Time Radio clubs.

Note: Those of you with access to the Internet can view a gallery of pictures taken at the REPS Web site. Just go to:

http://www.repsonline.org/ and Click on Showcase VIII Remembered

Scroll down a little bit and you will see a group photo; scroll down a little bit further and you will see Online Showcase VIII Photo Album! Click on the link and you can go through the Photo Album.

The National Radio Artists Directory

Member David Michael found an interesting source of information on Radio personalities and their talents - copy of the 1945 Number 16 edition of *The National Radio Artists Directory - Radio's Coast To Coast Casting Guide*. This publication contains an alphabetical listing of performers by area (Chicago, New York, and Hollywood), by dialect, and by character type. Each listing by area contains photos of many, but not all, of the actors listed.

Portions of this interesting publication will appear on a regular basis in *Return With Us Now.* . . . On the next page, you will see the inside cover page on which David has acquired the autographs of several Radio performers.

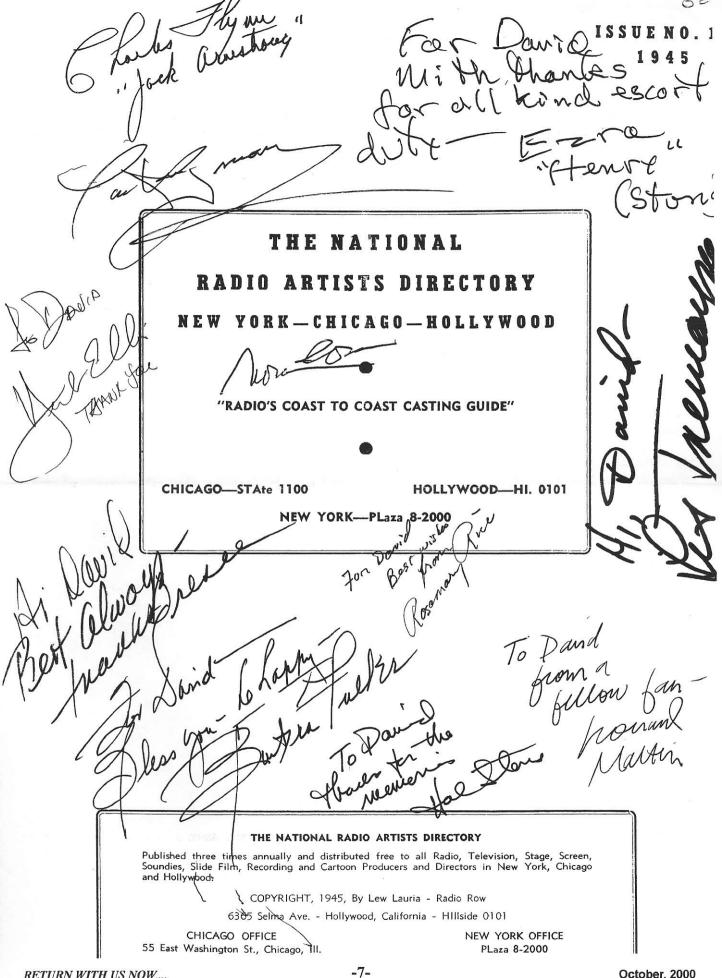


Wow! This month's entries should please most of you. The Kraft

Music Hall, which I never remembered being any one but Bing Crosby, but these have AL (Asa) Jolson and dozens of great music stars. I believe the Summer shows on reel #1426 with Nelson Eddy and Dorothy Kirsten or with Jeanette MacDonald will thrill all of our members who remember good music. This entire group of tapes should be a must for anyone's collection of good listening.

These are tapes that should not be speed duplicated, just slow down a bit and enjoy listening to them. They are much too good to miss.

Now that the Summer has passed and we are into the Fall and Winter seasons, we need to take a little time to enjoy what is available to our members from the Libraries.



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 COLO. P O BOX 1908 ENGLEWOOD, CO 80150

FIRST CLASS MAIL



TOM BROWN 1402 S. KAHUNA DRIVE SPOKANE WA

9/1/2001

99212