

Volume 26, Number 05

December, 2000



# Christmas, Dominoes, and Arbadella



By Wendell Basista © 2000

Imagine somebody who lived his adult life during the 30s and 40s and yet did not get to enjoy the golden days of radio. My late father-in-law spent his entire life in northern Maine, a place known for its remoteness and sub-arctic winters. An ideal setting to enjoy a good radio program, but because there were only one or two low-powered stations in the area, the only way to find out what was going on in *Allen's Alley* was to hope you could get it to skip in from Boston or Hartford. To him the perfect entertainment would have been to hear *Jack Benny and The Jell-O Program* in its entirety. Sadly, he missed most of what the networks had to offer and what he did get was laden with static and faded in and out.

In later years, after radio was gone from the entertainment scene, he and I shared our remembered fondness for OTR and when I discovered RHAC and SPERDVAC, good things happened: I shared the tapes with him and he now was able to get his fill of all his favorite shows. He loved listening to Gunsmoke and The Great Gildersleeve and other favorites when he was home alone in his declining years. However, as much of a companion that his cassette tapes were, they were turned off when somebody came in and he immediately indulged his two biggest passions: namely talking and/or playing dominoes. He was a consummate master of both. He treated talking like a vital life sign; stop talking and your heart might stop. He was not a listener. There was much important information that he missed out on, simply because he didn't listen. We would be sitting at the kitchen table playing with his customized dominoes (the dots were raised rather than recessed) and I would have to ask him for an edgewise. After he asked what that was, I explained that was something I could hopefully use to get a word in with. He would pretend not to hear and continue on giving me still another trimming.

Christmas Eve was a time of traditions with us as it is with most folks and ours was to load him into the car and take him around town to visit his surviving brothers and sisters. They would have their eggnog and Aunt Julia's clam dip and reminisce about Christmas' past. As the years slipped away, he finally found himself with no one to visit; so I would spend much of the evening in the loser's chair at the kitchen table.

It was in the ten years before he passed away that another tradition got started. On this one particular Christmas Eve I suggested that rather than playing dominoes I had something else that we might enjoy even more. Out came the usual torrent of objections and I had to promise that if he didn't like it we would get to the game. He was still doing one hundred and sixty words a minute when I plugged in the cassette and he didn't slow down much until Andy got the Santa Claus job in the department store. By the time we reached the end and Amos was explaining The Lord's Prayer to Arbadella he was serenely quite. He had never heard the annual Amos & Andy Christmas show. It was the nearest he ever came to being at a loss for words. The most he could muster

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# 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 7, 2000 - 7:30 PM At: Esther Campbell, 4128 W. 50th Ave. Denver CO 80212 303- 477-2257

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

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

KUVO 89.3 FM Destination Freedom Tuesday December 19th - 9:00 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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#### **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 L	librarians:		
#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



# RHAC Christmas Party

Where: The Country Buffet at

the Villa Italia Shopping

Center

7200 W. Alameda

Lakewood CO

When: Tuesday, December

12th

6:00 P.M. Reception

6:30 P.M. Dinner

Our Annual Christmas Party will be the at the same location as last year, the Country Buffet at the Villa Italia Mall. Following dinner, announcements, and drawings, the RHAC *Players* production of "A Christmas Carol" will begin.

The only cost to you is the price of your dinner.

Please RSVP by December 5th to:

RHAC

P.O. Box 1908

Englewood, CO 80150

# RHAC Activities Planning Meeting

A Members' meeting was held on Thursday, November 16th to discuss ideas on how to encourage membership, better meetings, and activities.

The following is an outline of the discussion concerning issues related to local membership's involvement (or lack thereof) in club activities, and how to encourage membership, better meetings and activities.

#### **Dissemination of Information**

- 1. Notices and announcements by email
- 2. N & A by telephone tree
  - a. Possible use of an auto-calling machine
- 3. Preparation of a "Welcoming Packet" for new members
  - a. Club objectives and activities
  - b. Calendar
  - c. Critical phone numbers and contacts
  - d. Sample library index
- 4. Rolling calendar of events in the RHAC Newsletter **Meeting Activities**
- 1. Telephone Interviews
  - a. Possible conference call connection with multiple people who worked together in Old-Time Radio
- 2. Live performances
- 3. Guests and or speakers
- 4. Internet video conferences to include distant membership

- 5. Dinner meetings
- 6. Vary meeting locations
  - a. Radio/TV stations
  - b. Performances, i.e. attend Live *Destination*Freedom broadcast at KUVO
- 7. Special interest meetings
  - a. Music
  - b. Sound effects
  - c. Script writing
- 8. Old-Time Radio /TV listening

#### **Public Relations**

- Announcements in newspapers i.e. "About Town" section
- Public service announcements radio; KEZW, KLZ, etc.
- 3. Attention "getters" flyers, balloons, etc
- 4. Premiums pencils, calendars, etc.
- 5. Dissemination of information to other groups
  - a. Other Old-Time Radio organizations
  - b. Senior centers
  - c. Churches

#### Newsletter

- 1. Rolling Calendar
- Application Membership Application to appear periodically - members can pass these on to nonmember friends.

Watch upcoming issues of *Return With Us Now.* . . for more information on this topic.

If you were unable to attend the Planning Meeting and would like to help with club activities, contact RHAC President Larry Weide. His mailing and E-Mail addresses and telephone number can be found on page 2 of the Newsletter.



By JoAnn Bantin

BAH HUMBUG! Scrooge and Marley and all the RHAC *Players* are working toward the Dicken's classic, "A Christmas Carol."

Ernie Witte is at it again, this time as Ebenezer Scrooge. Marley is rattling his chains and saying, "MUCH" in the voice of Dennis Masel. Francie Masel is our beautiful little boy asking Scrooge, "The turkey as big as me?" Esther Campbell and Helen Lozynsky are the eerie ghosts, and Guy Albright and John Stephenson are the gentlemen trying to get a donation from Scrooge. Kathy Melies is the good-hearted, Mrs. Fuzziwig, and

Larry Weide takes the parts of Bob Cratchit and the Narrator. Forrest Ernst is the ever loving nephew, Fred. Sophia Ernst is busy being two young boys plus the ever loveable, Tiny Tim. All of this and many other RHAC *Players* are on their way to the Country Buffet on Tues, Dec 12th for a fantastic Charles Dickens production of, "A Christmas Carol."

Helen Lozynsky is our director, Larry Weide is the sound originator and has included his own footsteps trudging around in the snow for Scrooge. Dave Clow is our wonderful sound technician and Fred Bantin will be assisting him.

Also with a bit of background and history about Charles Dickens, is our Historian and Cast Announcer, Helen Lozynsky.

Send in your reservations NOW for an evening that you will remember for a long time as a very important part of your Christmas cheer. Bring your friends, bring your children, and as Tiny Tim observed, "God bless us everyone." See all of you there!



# A Very Special THANK 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 opportunity to thank those members and non-members 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.* . . . Fred & JoAnn Bantin, Paul Barringer, Harry Bartell, Wendell Basista, Dr. Charles Beckett, donnie l. betts, Don Busenbark, Dave Clow, Jim Cox, Larry Dobkin, Albert Emery, John C. Ensslin, Jack French, Jim Johnston, Dick King, Maletha King, Lon McCartt, Elizabeth McLeod, Michael Mehle, David Michael, Jack Richards, Clay Roehl, Larry Weide, and Stewart Wright.

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, Ron Gallagher, and Mika Rhoden.

Tribute to OTR Show

Dave Clow and John Stevenson *Players* 

The following RHAC members, guests, and members of *The Sherlockians* have performed in RHAC *Players* presentations in the last 12 months: Guy Albright, Fred Bantin, JoAnn Bantin, Esther Campbell, David Clow, Forrest Ernst, Sophia Ernst, Fred Hinz, Dennis Hogarth, Fran Hogarth, Mark Langston, John Licht, Priscilla Licht, Helen Lozynsky, Dennis Masel, Francie Masel, Kathy Melies, John Price, Charlene Schnelker, Carolann Shetter, John Stevenson, Bill Walters, Larry Weide, Dame Beryl Sykes-Windsor, Ernie Witte, and Nancy Witte.

Tape Mastering and Production

Herb Duniven, Bill McCracken, John Adams, Dick King, & Maletha King.

Membership

Maletha and Dick King.

Club Officers

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



By Elizabeth McLeod

©1999 Elizabeth McLeod Reproduced With Permission 10. War Of The Worlds 10/30/38

Like a lot of legends, the story of Orson Welles and his Martian Invasion has grown with the telling. It's probable that no more than six million people heard the broadcast, and Professor Hadley Cantril in his landmark study of the "invasion" estimated that at most only about a million people were actually fooled -- out of a total population of around 150 million, and compared to the 35 million Americans who went on blithely listening to Charlie McCarthy, unaware that anything was out of the ordinary. But the numbers, in the end, don't really matter. What matters is that Welles and company provide a graphic demonstration of just how powerful the audio medium can be -- and even more significant the post-mortem public response to the broadcast reveals just how unprepared Americans really are for the brave new Media Age ahead.

### 9. FDR's First Inaugural 3/4/33

The winter of 1932-33 may have been the most grim in our nation's history. The economy was in ruins, the banking system was collapsing, tens of millions were hungry, with no money, no jobs, and no hope. But on a chilly March afternoon, a newly inaugurated President reaches out with his voice to calm the panic, to convince a terrified America that, indeed, the only thing it has to fear is fear itself.

### 8. The Hindenburg Description 5/8/37

Is there a living American who hasn't heard WLS staff announcer Herbert Morrison's sobbing account of the explosion of the legendary German dirigible? Without doubt the most famous actuality recording of all time, Morrison's description of the disaster is so vivid that it becomes the first notable exception to NBC's prohibition on the airing of recordings. It only aired twice over the network -- and never in its entirety -- but Morrison's recording has nonetheless transcended the original event to become one of the most familiar audio documents of the twentieth century.

### 7. FDR's first Fireside Chat 3/12/33

"My friends. I want to tell you what has been done in the last few days, why it has been done, and what the next steps are going to be." In a calm, reasoned, thirteen-minute talk, the new President outlines the steps taken to prevent a full-scale collapse of the nation's banking system -- explaining the complexities of industrial economics in terms that any citizen can understand. This gentle, informal approach projects the atmosphere of a man talking to his neighbors by the fireside -- and CBS-Washington manager Harry Butcher coins an enduring phrase to describe the style: a "fireside chat."

### 6. The European Crises: 9/38 and 8/39

Mounting tensions in Europe work to a peak over a years' time -- beginning with the Sudetenland crisis in September 1938 and culminating in the dispute over control of the Polish Corridor and the free city of Danzig the following August. The Sudeten crisis proves to be the first great international challenge for radio news -still hamstrung by the terms of the 1933 Press-Radio Agreement. But the medium rises to the occasion, making household voices out of CBS's Ed Murrow and William Shirer, NBC's Max Jordan and Fred Bate, and Mutual's John Steele -- and above all, CBS's H. V. Kaltenborn, who provides a continuing stream of concise and well-reasoned commentary as the crisis unfolds. Following the agreement at Munich -- the "peace in our accord -- radio documents the continuing deterioration of European peace, until the German invasion of Poland leads to the declaration of war. The

tired voice of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announcing that declaration early on the morning of September 3, 1939 is evidence of a terrible lesson, learned too late: if you sit down at table with Hitler, prepare to be the main course.

# 5. Farewell Speech of the former King Edward VIII 12/12/36

The "Love Story Of The Century" transcends national borders, as the American people join with all the rest of the English-speaking world in listening to the thin, weary voice of a man who gave up the throne of the world's most powerful empire for the woman he loves. The poignant broadcast by Edward, Duke of Windsor, is the single most-listened-to moment of the 1930s.

#### 4. Pearl Harbor 12/7-8/41

A typical Sunday afternoon by the radio -- light music, sustaining drama, public affairs programs, pro football. But at 2:22 pm, a one-line bulletin flashes over the Associated Press wire, shattering the tranquility. Within minutes, the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii is being relayed by all four networks -- and all the debate between Isolationists and Interventionists is suddenly and terribly rendered moot. Radio covers the story in depth -- and perhaps the most chilling moment is the voice of an unnamed staff announcer at NBC's Honolulu affiliate, proclaiming "This is no joke! This is war!" The following day, record audiences tune in as President Roosevelt's message to a joint session of Congress sets the tone for the next four years.

### 3. The Rise of Toll Broadcasting 1922-23

Radio advertising didn't just suddenly spring into being one afternoon in August 1922 at WEAF. There's evidence to suggest paid commercials had aired on stations in Massachusetts and Washington state several months before the WEAF landmark, and barter advertising goes back at least as far as 1916 and Lee deForest's experimental station 2XG. But WEAF doesn't have to have been the birthplace of the commercial for it to have been the most important station in the evolution of modern broadcasting -- for it was indisputably the first station to be established for the specific purpose of selling time to advertisers. WEAF's success leads in October 1924 to the formation of the first permanent radio network -- and the concept of "toll broadcasting" proves to be the foundation on which the entire structure of American radio -- and later, television -- would be built.

#### 2. End of the War 8/14/45

V-E Day on May 8th was just the beginning of the end -- and the enthusiasm that greets the end of the war in

Europe is tempered by the realization there's still a war to be won in the Pacific. But the use of atomic weapons against Japan changes the whole complexion of the conflict -- and beginning with the dropping of the Nagasaki bomb on August 9th, radio listeners anxiously wait for word on Japan's imminent surrender. August 10th goes by - the 11th -- the 12th -- the 13th -- all with a steady stream of bulletins, but no official statements. Unofficial reports come in early on the morning of the 14th -- and at 4:18 that afternoon, NBC's Max Jordan reports from Berne, Switzerland with the first word confirming that the intermediaries have received a message from the Japanese Government. "I myself," announces Jordan in his distinctive clipped voice, "am going to a party of the American consulate here to celebrate V-J Day!" Shortly after 7pm, official word is released by the White House -- and the long-delayed celebration finally erupts. Radio paints an unforgettable sound picture of celebrations in Times Square, outside the White House, and in towns and cities all over the United States as the nightmare of the Second World War finally draws to a close.

# And Now. . . . Our Top Moment in Old-Time Radio!

1. D-Day 6/6/44

It is arguably the single most important news story of the 20th Century -- the beginning of the Liberation of Europe from a regime which has come to embody modern evil. And radio covers it from beginning to end, in depth and in person. The highlights are many: Wright Bryan of NBC describing the disappointment of a paratrooper who failed to make his scheduled drop, Charles Collingwood of CBS making his way to a Normandy beach, George Hicks of the Blue Network describing the joy of Navy gunners bringing down their first Nazi plane. But perhaps the greatest thrill comes at 3:32 am on June 6th, as Colonel R. Ernest Dupuis reads the concise, understated communique the entire world awaited: "Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the Northern Coast of France." History in the making-- and, for me, radio's finest moment.

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



# Christmas, Dominoes . . .

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was "Thank you. That was very nice." After that we would try to reprise this ritual every year.

There was a more compelling reason for his liking of OTR. He didn't get to enjoy TV either. Shortly before the only channel in the county came on line in the early 50's, he tragically and ironically lost his eyesight. He didn't allow this to change his lifestyle. People driving by marveled that was he washing windows or working in his garden. Although he was always grateful for my providing him with tapes, he never permitted sentiment to prevail when he had the dominoes out. I almost always lost.





# New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month we have more of the Family Theater for the Contributor's Library. Each story is very well-written and has such a great cast of actors that they go over very well and although they are all stories with a moral, they do not preach.

We took a few days off and went to SPERDVAC's Convention this year. It was very nice to see and visit old friends and we were very happy to see how well most of them are doing. We did, however, miss a few of them who have wither passed away or were not able to come to the Convention. Times marches on, but Norman Corwin, now 92, was there and alert and rewrote a script of his from the late 1930's that was a real riot. It had all of us laughing Saturday night and Norman had updated it to include several of today's personalities, including Hillary Clinton. The cast of probably thirty actors all did a great job. They were selected from those present

Saturday afternoon and had only a few hours to rehearse. They were all professionals. "My Client, Curley" is one show we will never forget.

They did a Carlton E. Morse *I Love A Mystery* serial that was condensed into three one-hour shows. It always seemed that those shows ran for weeks and weeks, so they certainly did a great job of rewriting to bring it down to only three shows.

They also did a *Jack Benny Show* with impersonator Eddie Carroll who did such a great job that it was hard to realize that he wasn't the original Jack. He looked like him, talked like him, and did all of the gestures that Jack did.

### Did You Know That. . . ?

This column, written by an anonymous member, features little-known facts about Old-Time Radio. This month we feature a favorite comedy:

## Meet Corliss Archer

Actor Gil Stratton Jr. was literally grabbed from the hallway to play Bob Crosby when Bob forgot to show up the West Coast broadcast of *Meet Corliss Archer*.

Sam Edwards, who played Dexter on *Meet Corliss Archer*, on wanted to audition for the Walter Denton role on *Our Miss Brooks*, but the producers of *Meet Corliss Archer* wouldn't let him because the character was similar to Dexter.

Janet Waldo who played Corliss Archer had to dress as a teenager when she performed on *Meet Corliss Archer*. This was to help set the proper mood for the studio audience.

Janet Waldo has extensive credits in animation and has appeared in over 50 cartoon series, playing everything from the flighty, futuristic teenager, "Judy Jetson", of America's first family in space, *The Jetsons*, to Morticia Addams on *The Addams Family*, to Fred Flintstone's battle-ax mother-in-law on *The Flintstones* to the 80 year-old, motorcycle riding Granny Sweet. When she was asked, "How much was working for Hannah-Barbera like the old days of radio?" Janet said, "I think that's why I love cartoons so much, because it reminded me of radio."

# **SPERDVAC 2000**

By Jim Cox

Another SPERDVAC convention is now history and it was another good one. Aside from the opportunity to reacquaint with old friends from California and other places, as well as picking up some real bargains through a silent auction, this convention-goer most enjoyed the performance of impressionist Eddie Carroll who makes at least a portion of his living imitating Jack Benny. When he appeared on the platform Friday evening and

turned to face his waiting audience of about 200, he was the most convincing double you could possibly encounter. In addition to the dark suit, thick-rimmed glasses and receding hairline, Carroll has all the mannerisms down pat, along with the exclamatory "Well" and "Now cut that out" in the right places. He was part of a re-creation of a Benny production that included several other performers. Shirley Mitchell, an original cast member of the Benny company, was a marvelous Mary Livingstone. Chuck McCann, Larry Dobkin and Tyler McVey also appeared in this Herb Ellis-produced show. As usual, Bob Mott and Ray Erlenborn were on hand to provide the weekend's sound effects.

Other highlights: You Bet Your Life director Bob Dwan had us roaring with laughter as he showed video clips from the cutting room floor never seen or heard by TV-radio audiences featuring the irrepressible Groucho Marx, star of the series . . . and songstress Kitty Kallen recounted her leap from a 13-year-old winner of a movie house amateur show in Philadelphia to "Little Things Mean a Lot." Ed Clute let his audience in singing a number of the familiar commercial jingles from radio days and that brought back lots of memories. There were some other well done features but these were especially impressive.

Hats off to the triple chairs of this year's event --Larry Gassman, Dan Haefele and Bob Steinmetz -- and to so many others who made it happen. A good time was had by all and if you missed it, you missed another great one!



# Articles Needed For: YOUR NEWSLETTER!

Your Newsletter has enough articles for a few more issues, but we will need articles throughout the coming year. 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.

May All Your Holidays
Be Joyous: