



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 26, Number 11

June, 2001

11th Hour Appeal for Newsletter Editor Is This the Last Issue of *Return With Us Now...* ??? It's Up To YOU!

By Larry Weide & Stewart Wright

It is the last issue! **Unless** –
we can find someone who would be part of the new
Newsletter production team.

We have someone who will do the computer work.

We have someone who will do the postal and
delivery work.

Now, we need someone who will acquire articles
for the Newsletter, which would probably take 10 hours
or less a month.

No, you do not have to write all the articles
yourself. See **You Can Help!** On this page. You
DO NOT need to live in the Denver area.

Do you have a library of OTR books or
documentation that has interesting stories? Or, are you
up on OTR personalities and activities? Do you know
other OTR enthusiasts that have stories and anecdotes to
relate? Are you experienced in being a past editor or
contributor to ours or other newsletters?

Your help is **DESPERATELY** needed! Don't let our
newsletter cease to exist. Think of what this Newsletter
means to almost 500 members;

stories and history about OTR,
RHAC library order forms,

updates to the RHAC library catalog,
information about current OTR conventions and
activities,
interviews with OTR stars, and
book reviews.

Please consider becoming involved in this very
worthwhile effort. You can "sign up" and/or get more
information by contacting RHAC President Larry Weide
(see inside cover).

Remember, if no editor is found in the next 30
days...

This Is the Last Issue of Our Newsletter!

You Can Help!

So if you don't want be the Editor, you can still
help keep *Return With Us Now...* ALIVE and VITAL!
How can you do that? The answer is simple:

Write an article!

Have you noticed that many of the articles in the
Newsletter in the last three and a half years from come
from RHAC MEMBERS? During this time period,
approximately 40 RHAC members have contributed one

Continued on Page 3

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

PO BOX 1908, Englewood, CO 80150 303-761-4139

Dedicated to the preservation of old-time radio programs and to making those programs available to our members.

RHAC Board Meeting Thursday, July 12th, at 7:30 P.M. At Larry Weide's 5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 303-758-8382

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, <i>Tribute to OTR</i>	Sunday 2:00 PM
KEZW 1430 AM	<i>When Radio Was</i> weekdays	7:00 - 8:00 PM
KFKA 1310 AM	<i>Radio Memories</i> Sundays	6:00 to 12:00 PM
KUVO 89.3 FM	<i>Destination Freedom</i> Tuesday, June 19th	9:00 PM

RHAC WEB SITE <http://www.rhac.org>

RHAC WEB PAGE <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:	Larry Weide	5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80110	303-758-8382	E-Mail: lweide@attglobal.net
Vice-President:	Esther Campbell	4128 W. 50th Ave. Denver CO 80212	303- 477-2257	E-Mail: mesther@uswest.net
Secretary:	Kathy Melies	1280 Dayton St. Aurora CO 80010		E-Mail: oslc915@juno.com
Treasurer:	Maletha King	900 W. Quincy Ave. Englewood, CO 80110	303-761-4139	
Newsletter:	Vacant			
Historian:	Vacant			
Players:	Helen Lowynsky			303-782-5387
Talking Newslter:	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	303-986-9863	
	Herb Duniven	4184 S. Syracuse St. Denver, CO 80237		
Directors	David L Michael	1999 Broadway Lowery Suite Denver, CO 80202		
at Large:	Herb Duniven	4184 S. Syracuse St. Denver, CO 80237		
	Dick King	PO BOX 1908 Englewood, CO 80150	303-761-4139	E-Mail: dickking@ecentral.com

LIBRARIES

Reference Material:	Bill McCracken	7101 W Yale Ave #503	Denver, CO 80227	303-986-9863
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz	c/o RHAC P O Box 1908	Englewood, CO 80150	
Open Reel Tape:	Maletha King	900 W. Quincy Ave.	Englewood, CO 80110	
Cassette Tape:				
#1 (1-499)	Ron Gallagher	888 South Dexter #607	Denver, CO 80246	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 Calendar of Events

Watch here for upcoming events

August 18, 2001

RHAC Picnic at RHAC President Larry Weide's home, see above.

December, 2001

RHAC Christmas Party

2001 Conventions

National Audio Theater Workshop

June 18 - 24, 2001 William Woods Univ., Fulton, MO
Contact: Sue Zizza, 115 Dikeman St., Hempstead, NY 11550 (516) 483-8321 Suemedial@aol.com
<http://www.natf.org/>

Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound Radio Showcase IX

June 29 - 30, 2001 Seattle Center, Seattle WA
Contact: Mike Sprague, Box 723, Bothell, WA 98041 (425) 488-9518 HRRMIKES@aol.com
<http://www.repsonline.org/01.htm>

26th Friends of Old-time Radio Convention

Oct 25 - 28, 2001 Holiday Inn-North, Newark, NJ
Contact: Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887 JayHick@aol.com

You Can Help!

Continued from Page 1

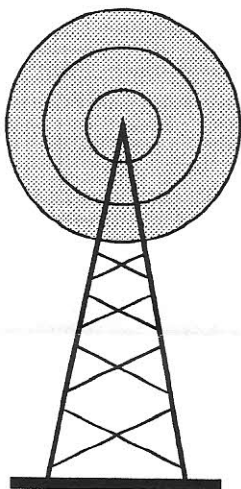
or more articles to the Newsletter. That is less than 10% of our membership! Surely there are more contributors out there!

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 articles to:

RHAC Newsletter
PO Box 1908
Englewood, CO 80150

An organization like Radio Historical Association of Colorado can only exist if its members VOLUNTEER. Here is an easy way to volunteer.

Write an article!



With Monitor, We Went Places, We Did Things

By Jim Cox © 2001

In the 1950's increasing mobility among Americans, which was clearly depressed in the decades of the 1930s and 1940s as a result of economic depression and global conflagration, netted an infusions of portability in radio entertainment. As a result, new forms of programming were

developed to complement the more active lifestyles of people on the go.

NBC leaped ahead of its competition by providing appropriate responses to the new demands and opportunities. As early as 1953 that network created a couple of series that favorably impacted the shifting patterns of American listening tastes – seeking to satisfy the tune-in/tune-out listening patterns of the modern radio audiences. Up to six hours of its Saturday schedule was given to *The Road Show* while a couple of hours of Sunday afternoon were designated for a new series called *Weekend*. Both provided music, snippets of comedy and drama, interviews, advice, news and games.

For a couple of years beginning in late 1954, CBS answered its major rival with a program called *Sunday Afternoon* which ran directly against *Weekend* and was in obvious contrast. While CBS's thrust was never as inclusive as NBC's multiple features, *Sunday Afternoon* focused almost exclusively on live and recorded music.

Growing out of this experimentation, it may unequivocally be stated that the *greatest single*

incarnation transpiring in radio in the 1950s was onset of NBC's innovative potpourri known as *Monitor*. Without question thawed omnibus of news and features rejuvenated a decaying medium by infusing it with energized animation for up to 40 hours every weekend. The show's significance could be calculated in the transfer of millions of TV watchers to radio listeners as America found a pliable source of audible interest and pleasure.

The brainchild of NBC president (1953-55) Sylvester L. (Pat) Weaver, an early architect of his networks *Today*, *Tonight*, and *Home TV* series, *Monitor* was the ultimate in flexible programming. "Not a program but a continuous service format," Jim Fleming, *Monitor's* executive producer, cautioned local affiliates shortly before its launch in midyear 1955. Fleming insisted it was to be "a complete departure from programming of the past."

From the beginning most of broadcasting had adhered to a prevailing pattern of set time periods that was now to be eliminated. *Monitor*, instead, would cover sporting events, rocket liftoffs, presidential announcements, world tragedies and entertainment specials as long as necessary. It was an ingenious suppleness that was to introduce totally new ways of thinking and performing.

Monitor ideologue Weaver shared his dream for the new radio service with the network's affiliates a few weeks before its start date.

"You have a form now that merely says that from our communications center anything of interest or that can be mad of interest to the people we'll bring to the people and in a form that has a vignette feel to it. In other words, if you don't like what's announced and what is going to play you know roughly what time it will take and you can come back. . . . Essentially we can once again have the whole American public know at any time in the weekend they need not be alone and they don't have to sit there looking at the television set: they can turn this service on and in will come the flow. It will be like having a personal editor who would go out and listen to everything, read everything, know everything and be there as your little, tame caps-and-bells jester with a whole range of moods telling you the very best of everything that's happening. You certainly can't ask us to do much more than that. . . . For the first time radio really looks at the whole field with no rules. The only rule is: Is it interesting? Is it absorbing? Is it amusing? Will people say: 'Did you hear that?' . . . The minute they say that we're in business . . . The minutes they say that we've got the big audience back and we're really rolling. . . . This show will have more people on it and more important people saying things of high interest and repeatable value than probably anything that has ever been attempted. It will even be able to top the original

Today planes because of the fact tape on radio is perfect and film on television isn't – certainly isn't yet – with the result that we can do things in this show that we certainly couldn't do on TV."

Monitor premiered on June 12, 1955. It was impressive. Mixing news, features, music, comedy, advice, and interviews, it provided programming for 40 hours over the weekend – from Saturday mornings through Sunday nights at its start, later beginning on Friday evenings. Remote pick-ups became a crucial part of the mix. Several traditional series like *Meet The Press* and *The National Radio Pulpit* were integrated into its format, but most of the material was new.

Some of the highlights included short improvisations by such well-known radio comedians as Bob and Ray, Goodman and Jane Ace, Fibber McGee and Molly, Bob Hope, Phyllis Diller, Henry Morgan, Mike Nichols and Elaine May. Marlene Dietrich offered beauty tips while a vast number of professional gardeners shared their experiences with interviewers like Arlene Francis. *Monitor* was a true magazine cradled in the new and documentary styles that had origins in the 1940s.

The weekend radio service interviewed news makers and celebrities, aired live horse races from far-flung places, provided Broadway and movie production vignettes and even offered taped segments from popular TV shows.

Even the weekend radio service's "theme" (referred to as on the air as "the *Monitor* beacon") maintained such a delightful resonance that it nearly defies description. Its instantly memorable notes were played often, typically at the beginning and ending of segments, following the news, and before and after commercial break and surrounding various special features.

Actually, there were dual sets of sounds. The first, played repetitiously, might – to anyone unfamiliar with it – be best described as an old-fashioned calliope. The second reverberation, bass sounding notes, climbed up and down the scale. Its origins were in telephone "touch tone" technology that had been labeled by AT&T as *multifreq* timbre. "Even the phone company referred to *multifreq* tones as 'Monitor tones.' admits telephone technician Jim wood, "showing that many of us were familiar with NBC's weekend service."

Henry Brugsch attests that those *multifreq* tones "had an interesting musical cadence when mixed and played together." Brugsch observes: "Someone cleverly discovered the tonal relationships and made them work by juxtaposing recordings of them.

Ken Piletic explains how it worked: "Previously long-distance calls were routed through manual switchboards. When pulse dial relays were involved several operators were required to route the calls. By the 1950's, however, advanced proficiency allowed tones to be coupled between circuits to perform switching

operations. When the touchtones were tested they could be heard on the phone lines as the routing was taking place. Someone at NBC heard the tones and decided to record them, slow them down, speed them up, over-dub them, and mix them to produce the *Monitor* beacon. These tones, incidentally, aren't necessarily those in use today. There were many problems with some of the frequencies then in use."

Thus the *Monitor* beacon was born. It became one of the most identifiable sounds in radio and was promptly associated with the weekend radio service for nearly two decades.

The structure was set in four-hour segments with well-known "communicator" (later "hosts") officiating over each portion. Some of the most recognized voices among those presiders were Red Barber, Frank Blair, Hugh Downs, Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding, Clifton Fadiman, Art Ford, Allen Funt, Frank Gallop, Dave Garroway, Ben Grauer, Ed McMahon, Leon Pearson, Gene Rayburn, John Cameron Swayze, J. B. Tucker, and David Wayne.

The flexibility of the weekend radio service that Pat Weaver had espoused in the spring of 1955 was eventually curtailed to an extent in its later years. By then *Monitor* evolved into a pattern of providing 5 minutes of network news at the top of every hour, as its leading competition was doing. That was followed by 25 minutes of music and the traditional features for which *Monitor* was well recognized. On the half-hour NBC offered five minutes of music, some vocal, some instrumental. Local affiliates could opt to carry their own programming and commercials in those five minutes. Or they could air the network music that was briefly introduced by the host of the hour.

At 35:00 strains of the *Monitor* beacon wafted above the fading tunes. Another 25 minutes of archetypal *Monitor* interviews and music completed the hour. Near the mid-point of every half-hour, five seconds of the beacon signaled the start of a break. There would be a 70-second instrumental melody – when local stations could air commercials or public service announcements if they chose – followed by five seconds of the beacon. Then the host would introduce more music and features. (In earlier years, during such breaks the beacon was preceded by this announcement from the communicator. "You're on the *Monitor* beacon. Take one." The latter reference was to the one minute that local stations were given to cut away from the network. Sometimes the host would substitute: "This is *Monitor*, going places and doing things. Take one." The latter phrase adroitly summarized what the service was about.)

Restructuring *Monitor's* multiple hours into specific time frames helped affiliates adapt the network offering to local scheduling preferences. With established breaks hourly at 00:00, 05:00, 30:00, and 35:00, stations had

more options for integrating their own mix of local shows. This mad the weekend service more attractive to the affiliates, of course, and kept many of them on board. Others discontinued the marathon altogether, preferring to air local programming exclusively that netted them larger infusions of cash.

The affiliates had earlier gained the upper hand in dealing with the network on many counts. The bottom line was that stations had far greater control than they had ever experienced over what they broadcast. Fortunately, a crucial number remained loyal to *Monitor* and its faithful audiences until the network at last withdrew the weekend radio service.

In observing NBC's successful *Monitor*, a couple of the competing networks jumped on the bandwagon. {Recall that CBS was already programming *Sunday Afternoon*, two hours of live and recorded music. CBS made no further efforts to capitalize on the new form.) While applications of the magazine format by the other networks were never as bold or as well received as the original, those webs gave it a try, albeit in limited doses.

Possibly sensing a developing trend, MBS was the first to attempt to emulate the model via a service termed *Companionate Radio* that it introduced in July 1955. Four months later ABC premiered its own weekday evening magazine called *New Sounds*. Neither experiment lasted; both never found substantial audiences. There may have been a lack of genuine commitment by their respective networks, too.

In *Monitor's* twilight years the show devoted multiple segments in tribute to such earlier epochs as the big band and rock 'n' roll eras. For a typical offering on the evening of Sunday, August 19, 1973 from 7:35 to 8 p.m., host Art Ford – a former local New York disc jockey and one of *Monitor's* smoothest voices – introduced a popular vocalist special: "Crooner, Spooners, and Rockers." It featured recorded excerpts by singers Jack Leonard, Frank Sinatra, Vaughan Monroe, Bob Berle, Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Doris Day, and Peggy Lee. Recorded interviews with Como and Day were added. Several of the big bands – with head liners Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Ted Weems, Les Brown, and Benny Goodman among them – backed the singers or were featured in instrumental tunes.

On such occasions, host Ford frequently invited listeners to register their response to these musical feats. Near the close of this one he expanded the marketing research: "If you're enjoying it (the show) why not drop me a line and tell me?" he inquired. "While you're at it, tell me what kind of radio you heard it on: a transistor, a car radio, a plug-in set at home. Tell me if you lived through the early days of popular music and the vocalists who sang it or if you are discovering them now. Write to me, Art Ford, care of *Monitor*, 30 Rockefeller Center, New York, New York 10020." Such opportunities were

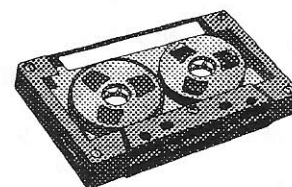
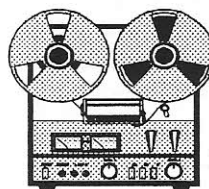
regularly presented in later years but if the replies were sparse that might have hastened *Monitor's* demise.

The end finally arrived on the fourth weekend of 1974, nearly two decades after its inception, 14-plus years beyond what was generally considered Radio's Golden Age. On Saturday, January 25, 1974, a day before *Monitor* signed off forever, host John Bartholomew Tucker asked Frank Blair to reminisce about the durable series' humble origins:

"It is sad. . . . I think *Monitor* was one of the greatest radio shows that was ever devised by our good friend and imaginative chairman of the board of NBC, Pat Weaver. . . . He thought radio should not be a static thing, that it should be on the move and I think that was what was behind *Monitor*. And I had the privilege of being the first voice heard on *Monitor* because I was assigned to the Saturday morning four-hour stint that started on June 12th. I was here at. . . oh, way before 8 o'clock in the morning and I did the 8-to-12 shift. What started out as an experiment turned out be an institution."

Monitor may have begun as an experiment all right, but Blair was right on the money: it would end up being an institution. The indelible mark *Monitor* made on the medium is one that was lamely imitated but was never equaled. In what this protracted radio series attempted to do, none did better. And it remained a viable option for those seeking knowledge and enjoyment long after old-time radio was dead.

Editors Note: RHAC member Jim Cox is the author of the highly readable and informative book "The Great Radio Soap Operas" published by McFarland & Company Inc. 1-800-253-2187. Two more OTR manuscripts are currently in the production phase and will be released in a few months by McFarland, one pertaining to audience participation shows, the other to the fading days of radio's golden age, 1950-1960. The author is currently writing his eighth book which is also on an OTR topic.



New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month's entries into the library start out with another 40 shows of *Lux Radio Theater*, followed by two reels of miscellaneous. The mere titles of the *Lux* shows do not give you a good chance to realize the great acting and great actors presenting these shows for you to enjoy and sit back and picture the show and the settings in your

mind's eye.

We have many teachers and schools that use our libraries and this series of *Lux Radio Theater* shows are certainly a great chance for all of us to enjoy how the professionals from Hollywood give us an hour of touching drama or comedy which also shows some of the other talents these stars have.

You have the chance to enjoy Cary Grant, Carole Lombard, Herbert Marshall, Bette Davis, Spencer Tracy, Brian Aherne, Madeline Carroll, Irene Dunne, William Powell, and on and on. This dramatic group will never be repeated as time has taken its toll.

I often slight the Miscellaneous shows, but this month's selection include many great shows such as were done by the *Screen Guild Players* including the same pool of stars who were THE entertainment of the 30's and 40's. We just don't have the numbers to make a whole reel of their shows to offer you.

The Lone Ranger, Roy, and Gene

By Rich Jonas © 2001

Words in a song of some years ago said, "Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio?" But we still have baseball for those crazy enough to watch overpaid prima donnas play the great American game. I confess to loving the game.

But, I have another concern. Where have you gone Roy, Gene, and The Lone Ranger? Isn't our youth of today missing something? How will they exist without galloping across the playground, slapping their thigh, and yelling, "Hi, Yo Silver!" or "Get'um up Scout!" or whatever?

In my grade school days, up to the fourth grade, when sports started to get into our blood, I remember getting to school early so that I could claim the name Roy Rogers or The Lone Ranger before another classmate would do so. After all, you couldn't just be a nameless cowboy. You had to be called Roy, Tex, Hoppy, or something. After some of the top names, such as Roy, Gene, and The Lone Ranger, Hoppy, The Cisco Kid, and Tom Mix would be taken, some of the kids would ask me who they could be. They had not heard of Lash Larue, Monte Hale, Whip Wilson, and had not paid attention at the picture show (that is what we called it, didn't we?) To them went the names of the sidekicks such as Pat Buttram, Gabby Hayes, California Carson, Pancho, etc. My dad bought me all the comics of the cowboys so I knew all the names.

Who got the name of Tonto? That was reserved for Selina, who was one-fourth Indian. She had long, black hair and could run like the wind. If you were ever out on your cowboy mission and happened to be the bad guy, she would run you down and capture you. You had to be careful if Selina was not on your side.

We would play Cowboys and Indians (or bad guys) before school, at morning recess, at lunchtime, and afternoon recess. We had only our fingers to use as our shooting irons at school, but when we got home, we buckled on our six-shooters and went out for more serious action. I lived in a very rural area of northern Illinois, Antioch, and we would play Cowboys and Indians over a vast area of yards. There were no fences where we lived (they still do not have fences) so we could roam just like the real cowboys. Sometimes we would roam so far that some of the cowboys would go home and the rest of us had no clue. We would be looking for the renegades and they would be home eating supper or listening to the radio.

One summer afternoon I "roamed" over to Selina's house. She had set up a tipi (tepee) in her back yard. While playing Cowboy and Indians, I accidentally knocked down the tipi. She charged at me, kissed me, and told me that she would kiss me again if I knocked down her tipi again. That meant another kiss and another warning. Well, the tipi went up and down and up and down for the rest of the afternoon. I wonder if Selina still remembers that – I hope so.

We developed imagination, creativity, teamwork (rounding up the bad guys or "fixing" up the dead and wounded), friendship, and we stayed out of trouble. Some of these things are lacking in some of the youth of today. The good guys always won. The Lone Ranger's Creed was practiced by Roy, Gene, Hoppy, and the others. Being bad was not glamorized. Oh yes, and it was a good time to talk about a little history of the cowboy, Buffalo Bill, Pony Express riders, and the mistreatment of some of the Indians by the many broken promises and treaties.

When is the last time you saw a kid playing Cowboys and Indians? Two of my grandchildren have over a dozen stick horses. Hannah is three and Sarah is seven. They ride their stick horses constantly and play cowboys. The seven-year old, Sarah, can't wait to come over to our home and watch *The Lone Ranger* or *Roy Rogers*. I have over 75 *Lone Ranger* and *Roy Rogers* shows on video tape plus a variety of others. She does not care that all of them are in black and white. She also listens to *the Lone Ranger* radio shows with me. I did not introduce her to the radio programs until she had seen quite a few videos. She had to have something as a reference with which to use her imagination. It is a real treat to enjoy watching her enjoy what I loved so many years ago.

Do you have a grandchild just waiting to be introduced to The Lone Ranger, Roy and Gene? Grab the opportunity before it disappears! If you enjoyed Cowboys and Indians when you were a little tyke, just think of what enjoyment you can bring your grandchildren and even, once again, to yourself.



Signing Off

This issue is my last as Newsletter Editor.

Please take a look at the articles on Page 1 and if you can help, please volunteer.

I would like to thank all the members and non-members who have contributed articles, quizzes, puzzles, and stories over the last 3 ½ years. Your good efforts have educated, informed, and entertained our readers.

Thank you one and all,
Stewart Wright

Editor Needed!

See Page 1

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

ISS #9 DENVER CO DC 21331 01/31/01



TOM BROWN
1402 S. KAHUNA DRIVE
SPOKANE

WA

99212

9/1/2001

99212-3238 25

