



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

RHAC ANNOUNCES OPENING OF CD LIBRARY! Read all about it in the King's "New in the CD Library" article

The Nelsons

©Jack M. Richards November 2001

The year is 1932. An ex-collegiate star quarterback and boxer abandons the legal profession to pursue a musical career with his own orchestra where he played sax and banjo. He hires an ex-ballerina as a female vocalist. Boy meets girl. They fall in love, get married, and raise two exceptional sons. It is an old story and an exceptional family. The boy was Oswald George Nelson and the girl was Peggy Lou Snyder. They were better known as Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard. The sons were David Ozzie Nelson and Eric Hilliard Nelson (Ricky).

Ozzie was born March 20, 1907 to George Nelson and Ethel Orr. The elder Nelsons were not in show business but did perform on stage many times. Ozzie died in June 3, 1975 of cancer. As mentioned he gave up a promising legal career for show business. He did put his legal training to good use later in negotiations for exclusive control of the artistic content of the shows. This eliminated interference from sponsors, agents, and network executives. Later he negotiated very good recording contracts for Ricky. He had the



distinction for a long time of being the youngest boy (13) to achieve the Eagle Scout award.

Harriet was born to Roy E. Hilliard and Hazel MacNutt. Roy and Hazel were members of a traveling stock company and it was only natural that Harriet was to follow in the entertainment industry. She first appeared on stage at age five. Important events in Harriet's life were: born on July 18, 1914 in Des Moines, Iowa, married October 8, 1935 in Hackensack, New Jersey, and died October, 1994 in Laguna Beach, California

David was born October 24, 1936 when Ozzie was on the road with his band. David first appeared on radio on October 3, 1952 after Bing Crosby and his son, Lindsay, appeared as guests the week before. He was more-or-less the straight man to Ricky. David married June Blair on May 20, 1961. Here are some other trivia items about David. He never went to law school. He flunked out of UCLA due to schedule pressures. He appeared as a professional trapeze catcher for *The Flying Viennas*. He directed several episodes of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*. He formed his own production company making films for TV and the movies.

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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 Tuesday, May 7th, at 7:30 pm
at Dick and Maletha King's residence
900 W. Quincy Ave. Englewood, (303) 761-4139
All RHAC members are invited to attend

Old-Time Radio is Alive and Well in Colorado!

KRMA TV Channel 6	"Tribute to OTR" - Secondary Audio Program (SAP)	Sunday, 2:00 - 3:00pm
KEZW 1430 AM	"When Radio Was"	Weekdays, 7:00 - 8:00pm
KFKA 1310 AM	"Radio Memories" (Greeley)	Sunday, 6:00 - 12:00pm
KNUS 710 AM	"Radio Revisited"	Week, 11:00 - 12:00pm, Sat, 7:00 - 12:00pm
KGNU 88.5 FM	"Destination Freedom"	Third Monday of every month, 8:00pm

also visit: www.kgnu.org/destination/html

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

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

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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 at Large:	David L. Michael, Herb Duniven and Dick King			

LIBRARIES

Reference Material:	Bill McCracken			
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz	c/o RHAC PO Box 1908	Englewood, CO 80150	
Open Reel Tape:	Maletha King	900 W. Quincy Ave.	Englewood, CO 80110	
Ccassette Tape:				
#1 (1-499)	Ron Gallagher	888 S. 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	3950 W. Dartmouth Ave.	Denver, CO 80236	(303) 937-9476
CD Library:	Ron Gallagher	888 S. Dexter #607	Denver, CO 80246	(303) 692-0531

2002 Conventions

National Audio Theater Festival, May 26 - June 1, Southwest Missouri State University, West Plains MO
For information: Sue Zizza, 115 Kideman St. Hempstead, NY 11550 (516) 483-8321, or email at suemedial@aol.com

10th Annual REPS Radio Showcase June 28-30 in Seattle WA. Re-creations, Guests, OTR exhibits.
For information: Mike Sprague 9936 NE 197st St., Bothell WA or email at mrmikes@aol.com, or REPS at www.responline.org

The 26th Friends of Old-Time Radio Convention Oct 24-27, 2002 Holiday Inn-North, Newark NJ
For information: Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887, or email at jayhick@aol.com

SPERDVAC Convention: Nov 8 - 10 at Hacienda Hotel in El Segundo; details when available

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RETURN WITH US NOW...

Ricky was born May 8, 1940. Ricky was to go on to achieve great success as a rock-and-roll artist. Rick first met Kristen Harmon at a party when he was eighteen and she was thirteen and she set her cap for him. Kris was daughter of the famed Tom Harmon of football. They were married in 1963. Unfortunately, they were divorced in 1981. Ricky died in a plane crash December 31, 1985 at the height of his singing career. Today, twins Gunnar Eric and Matthew Gray Nelson are following in the rock and roll footsteps of their dad.



While Oz and Harriet bounced chatter back and forth while furnishing the music interludes on different radio shows, their real break came on the Red Skelton Show. At the time, they were the band for the show and Harriet was playing many

parts for Red. She was Junior's mother, Daisy Jane, and Calamity Jane among others. Red was drafted and Oz decided to make a pilot show. In this pilot, he and Harriet had inherited a drugstore from a distant relative. The pilot was sold to The International Silver Company who suggested that the idea of a drugstore be dropped. *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* went on the air on October 8, 1944 and had a run of twenty-two years: eight on radio and fourteen more on television. Throughout the twenty-two year run, Ozzie was head writer, business manager, director, and chief bottle washer.

Story lines were typical of many sitcoms. Start with a simple family orientated situation. Let Ozzie confuse the matter and allow Harriet to straighten it all out. Plots in the early years covered such subjects as a Cub Scout hike, finding somewhere to buy tutti-frutti ice cream, or not enough time was being spent with the boys. Later on TV it was fraternity parties, David dating _____ (insert Miss Universe, a Stewardess, or some other female), or an excuse to promote Rick's newest record.

One of the reasons for the success of their show was the feeling that the Nelsons were real family and not just actors playing roles. While many other

individual actors such as Judy Canova, Jack Benny, Dennis Day, and others played themselves, I believe the only other radio show where the cast played themselves was Phil Harris and Alice Fay. In fact, Thorny, the next door neighbor, was based upon Syd Thornbury, father of Will Thornbury, a playmate of David's. Hazel was based upon Harriet's real mother. Emmy Lou was actually a composite of several girl friends of David and Ricky. The maid, Gloria, seems to have been the only fictitious recurring radio cast member.

The use of "real" people as cast members continued into their TV programs. Most of all the teenagers on the show were actual friends of David and Ricky. This included the girls that they were trying to impress at time. Skip Young, a promising young actor was convinced by Oz to retain his real name of Wally Plumstead on the show. Of course, David and Ricky's real wives, June and Kris, became regular cast members after their marriages. Even the grandkids got into the act and appeared on the show.



The exterior set for the TV show was an exact replica of the Nelson's real home.

Another item that made the shows more believable was that they all did their own stunts. Over the years most of the cast members got involved with breakaway props that didn't. The most serious injury was David's motorcycle crash where he got a wrenched knee and a cut on the forehead.

Members of RHAC are lucky to have an extensive collection of memorabilia of the Nelsons life close by. The American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming has some 45 cubic feet of photographs, musical recordings, radio and TV scripts, radio transcriptions, and sheet music covering the entire range from early bands to their TV career. Unfortunately it is a non-circulating collection.

New in the CD Library

by Maletha & Dick King

The RHAC is extremely pleased to introduce its CD library of radio shows for members. The Librarian is Ron Gallagher, and you'll find a new order form at the end of this issue. Members may rent a minimum of five and a maximum of ten CDs per order. The rental cost is \$1.10 per CD.

The first CD catalog pages are included in this month's newsletter, and additions will continue for the next five monthly issues. Our CD library includes shows already in our cassette and open reel tape libraries, and from both the general and the contributor's libraries. The CD library offers members a way to consolidate shows from the different libraries without having to order from up to four separate librarians. Most of the CDs contain two 30 minute programs.

The CD library will be adding new shows and other improvements to series. For example, this month's release of "The Six Shooter" adds two shows not previously offered, and "Fort Laramie" adds the audition show plus four other episodes as well. All the "Fort Laramie" and "Luke Slaughter of Tombstone" shows are now the network versions. Speed corrections have been made where necessary.

All the shows are on 80 minute Music CD-R 16X compatible format, which means that they are playable on any CD player or computer. For the first few months members may experience a delay in shipping orders until we have plenty of CDs available for everyone.

CD Care: Remember, CDs must be treated with special care. Handle them by touching only the edges - never touch the bottom, and do not use commercial cleaners. Consult your equipment user manuals before attempting to clean a CD.

Future Attractions: Next month's releases will include "Favorite Story" and the start of "The adventures of Maisie. Succeeding months will see "The Damon Runyon Theater", "Box Thirteen", "The Lives of Harry Lime" and the 1955-56 five-part "Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar" serials

In recent years many members have inquired about making radio shows available on compact disc, so this experiment is launched. The RHAC **needs your feedback and reactions** to this project, along with suggestions for inclusions.

ENJOY!

RETURN WITH US NOW...

"Why Old Time Radio is Important to Me"

We continue with the winning entries from the KFKA RADIO MEMORIES Essay Contest winners. These are reprinted here with the permission of Dick Williamson of Radio Memories. This entry in particular is interesting because it gives us the viewpoint of a 21st century teenager.

Honorable Mention - by Jacquie Welsh (age 14) Greeley, Co.

About two years ago, a week before Christmas, I was putting up the Christmas decorations in my room and decided to listen to the radio. A little tired with the music on the FM band, I switched it over to AM. After twiddling around with the dial, I came upon KFKA and heard somebody yell out with what seemed like anger, "LEROY!" Which was followed by a little kid's voice angelically answering, "Yeah, Unc?" And so I was then wrapped up into the world of The Great Gildersleeve. So wrapped up that I forgot about my Christmas decorations.

Every week I tuned in to hear The Great Gildersleeve, The Shadow, Musical Memories and many others. I am also in the historical snippets that you have. My father is a history teacher at the university and it's really cool to hear those variations of major events. The shows also give me an idea of how life was in the 30s, 40s, and early 50s. I am interested in that period of time, and so I see that radio played a major role in people's lives. It gave them news, weather, and entertainment. It has given me memories now, such as sitting on a cold Sunday night, bundled up in my room listening to The Shadow, or hearing about an old baseball game in the summer. This program gives me a feeling of relaxation that I can forget everything for the time being and listen to the actors as they make a story come alive in my head. I look forward to it every week and will for years to come.

The Trivial Matter of OTR Characters' Non-human 'Partners'

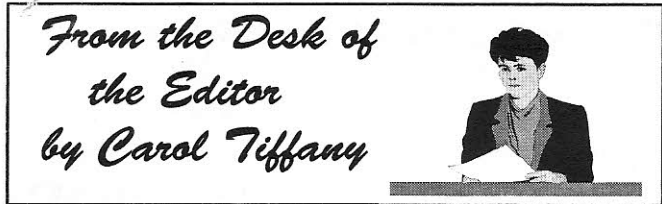
By Carol Tiffany

How many of these can YOU identify? Match the character with his or her horse, vehicle, or animal companion. Remember that some characters had several four-legged friends. You'll need luck with this one!



- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| ___ Roy Rogers | A. Asta |
| ___ Dale Evans | B. Black Beauty |
| ___ Pat Butram | C. Fury |
| ___ The Green Hornet | D. Songbird |
| ___ The Lone Ranger | E. Minerva |
| ___ Tonto | F. Nellybelle |
| ___ Dan Reid | G. Batmobile |
| ___ Gene Autry | H. Trigger |
| ___ Sgt. Preston | I. Victor |
| ___ Straight Arrow | J. Buttermilk |
| ___ Jack Benny | K. Silver |
| ___ Rip Masters | L. Neal |
| ___ Bruce Wayne | M. Tag |
| ___ Nick & Nora Charles | N. Scout |
| ___ George & Marion Kirby | O. King |
| ___ Sky King | P. Rin-Tin-Tin |
| ___ Connie Brooks/Mrs. Davis | Q. Champion |
| ___ Buster Brown | R. Bullet |
| | S. Polly |

RETURN WITH US NOW...



Hello, everyone. We have some sad news to report this month. Due to unforeseen circumstances, RHAC President, Helen Lowynsky, has left the club. She will be greatly missed, not just as president, but as an active and contributing member of RHAC. Our Vice President, Larry Weide, will be taking over as RHAC president and will, of course, provide a seamless transition.

Hopefully, April's showers and other weird weather will bring us many beautiful flowers to bloom in this merry month of May. Maybe you will find that something in this issue of RWUN will bring a smile to your face, or a challenge to your intellect, or just a few moments of joyous remembrance to your heart.

Of course, the end of this month brings the Memorial Day holiday, which will be somehow much more poignant this year for all of us as we remember the tragic events of September 11, 2001. May all of you have a safe and peaceful holiday this year, and hope for the early return of those who are fighting the war on terrorism.



- Answers to OTR "Partners" Quiz:
- | | | |
|-----------------|-----|--------------------------|
| A. Asta | H/R | Roy Rogers |
| B. Black Beauty | J | Dale Evans |
| C. Fury | F | Pat Butram |
| D. Songbird | B | The Green Hornet |
| E. Minerva | K | The Lone Ranger |
| F. Nellybelle | N | Tonto |
| G. Batmobile | I | Dan Reid |
| H. Trigger | O | Gene Autry |
| I. Victor | O | Sgt. Preston |
| J. Buttermilk | C | Straight Arrow |
| K. Silver | S | Jack Benny |
| L. Neal | P | Rip Masters |
| M. Tag | G | Bruce Wayne |
| N. Scout | A | Nick & Nora Charles |
| O. King | L | George & Marion Kirby |
| P. Rin-Tin-Tin | D | Sky King |
| Q. Champion | E | Connie Brooks/Mrs. Davis |
| R. Bullet | M | Buster Brown |
| S. Polly | | |

ON THE OTR BOOKSHELF . . .

A new book about radio in the World War II era is slated for publication this fall by Scarecrow Press. After interviewing Arthur Miller, Norman Corwin, Art Carney, Pete Seeger, Arthur Laurents and many others, and doing extensive archival research, the author, Howard Blue has written **WORDS AT WAR: WORLD WAR II ERA RADIO DRAMA & THE POSTWAR BROADCASTING INDUSTRY BLACKLIST**. Current plans are for the publisher to market it for \$40-45. However, Blue is negotiating a pre-publication bulk purchase to lower the price to \$29-35 and perhaps less.

For a pre-publication order or a fuller description of the book, contact Howard Blue at Khovard@Juno.com <<mailto:Khovard@Juno.com>> or send an SASE to Howard Blue, 1951 Valentines Rd., Westbury, NY 11590

RHAC member, Jim Cox, will have a new book coming out in May called "Say Goodnight, Gracie: The Last Years of Network Radio." We will have more information and perhaps a review in this column soon.

Calling All Authors. . .

Ben Ohmart is planning a book of new short stories, using OTR characters. He's inviting authors who normally write for various OTR and nostalgia publications, to submit a story, based on their favorite radio show for this book. This is to be "new" fiction, with nothing the original characters wouldn't normally do, and no time machine stuff.

Several shows have already been spoken for, including The Great Gildersleeve, The Bickersons, Quiet Please, The Lone Ranger, Bobby Benson, Ma Perkins, Life of Riley, Suspense, and Fibber McGee and Molly. If you'd care to contribute, let Ben know which series you'd like to fictionalize.

All stories should be between 5 and 15 pages (3000 to 7000 words). Deadline is the end of July 2002, but you can send your story as soon as you like. Do not begin until you check with Ben to make sure your series has not already been "taken" as only one story per series will go into the book.

Contributing authors will receive either: \$50 in lieu of royalties, or four copies of the book, when published. You should notify Ben of your choice when you request a series to fictionalize. He can be contacted at P. O. Box 750, Boalsburg, PA 16827 or through his e-mail: bloodbleeds@yahoo.com.

Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound

Showcase X

By Stewart Wright

The Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound (REPS) *Showcase* will be held in Seattle, WA, June 28-30, 2002.

REPS runs an extremely efficient, fun and friendly convention. Many of the radio days performers go to Seattle every year, just because they have such an enjoyable experience. At least 26 performers are scheduled to attend this year, including Douglas Young, Rhoda Williams, Ginny Tyler, Gil Stratton, Tyler McVey, Paul Herlinger, Art Gilmore, Esther Geddes, Jim French, Ray Erlenborn, Herb Ellis, Frank Buxton, Dick Beals, Larry Albert, Fred Foy, Alice Backes, Elliott Reid, Jean Rouverol Butler, Anne Whitfield Phillips, Norma Jean Nilsson, Barbara Fuller, Richard Svihus, Page Gilman, George Pirrone, Jo Anna March, Sam Edwards and Tommy Cook.

REPS *Showcase X* will include a *Lone Ranger* re-creation with Fred Foy and Dick Beals plus a reunion re-creation featuring nine former *One Man's Family* cast members. *Cavalcade of America* and *Halls of Ivy* are also on the re-creations list.

Jim French, writer/producer of the syndicated *Imagination Theater*, is writing a show especially for the OTR performers who will be in attendance. The show will be recorded before the *Showcase* and later aired on *Imagination Theater*. It will also be performed live at the *Showcase*.

Great re-creations are only part of the fun. The REPS *Showcase* always has informative and creative panels too. A silent auction features many items of interest to the OTR fan. The 2002 *Showcase* will have a new and much-requested feature: a Sunday morning program.

The REPS *Showcase* is a Great OTR event you should attend. Also, Seattle and Washington State in June are great too. There are lots of things to see and do: the Pike Street Market, Mts. Rainier and St. Helen's, the Cascades, the Olympic Peninsula, and so much more. For more information:

REPS web site:

<http://www.homestead.com/repsonline/index.html>

Or contact: Mike Sprague

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