



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

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July, 2002

Captain Midnight by Paul Berringer, © July 2002

The chimes of a clock striking midnight, the roaring of an airplane in the background, getting louder and louder as it goes into a dive and pulls out overhead as the chimes get quieter, then the announcer says, The Skelly Oil Company presents Cap-tain Mid-nighttt!

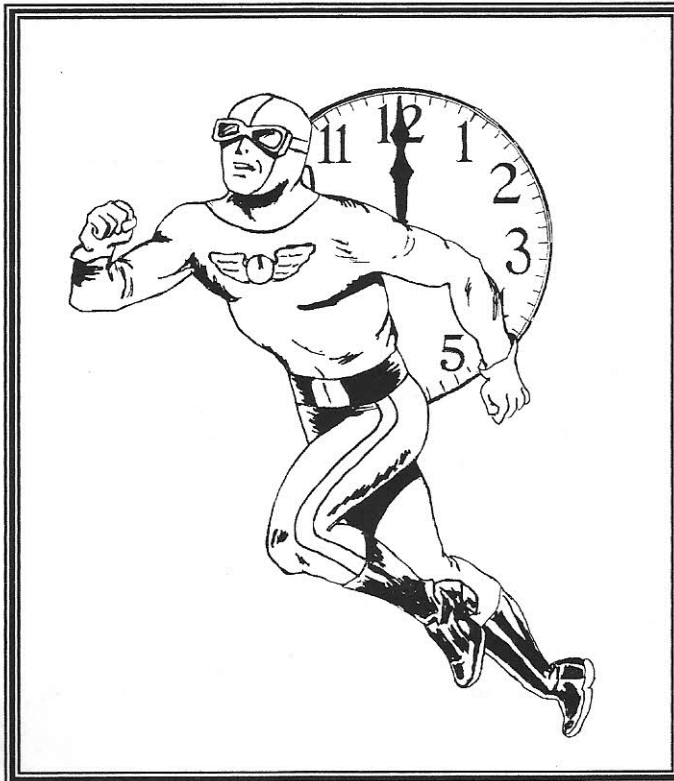
On radio station WON-Chicago in 1938 the Captain Midnight radio series was introduced. In the beginning of the series, Captain Midnight was just an alias or undercover name for Jim Albright, a cargo pilot. Albright as an undercover agent tried to assemble intelligence on gangs of criminals.

After a summer interruption the first year, everyone began to know Jim Albright only as Captain Midnight, which continued throughout the series run.

The radio program increased in esteem and was broadcast over the Mutual Network beginning in 1940 when The Wander Company (makers of Ovaltine) sponsored the series, and brought the program to a national audience.

Ovaltine would continue to sponsor the radio program until the 1950's when Captain Midnight left the airways. The Wander Company had just quit sponsoring Little Orphan Annie, because it was beginning to decline in popularity. The announcer for Ovaltine (Pierre Andre) on Little Orphan Annie left to do the Captain Midnight show.

With the network Show there also were many cast changes during the course of the series. The



character of Fatsy Donovan during Skelly's sponsorship was changed to Joyce Ryan and the character of Ichabod Mudd was added. Cast members included Ed Prentiss, Bill Bouchey and Paul Barnes as Captain Midnight, Billy Rose, Jack Bivans and Johnny Coons as Chuck Ramsey, Hugh Studebaker, Sherman Marks and Art Hern as Icky, Alice Gootkin as Fatsy, Marylou Neumayer and Angeline Orr as Joyce Ryan. Boris Aplon played Ivan Shark, Captain Midnight's evil antagonist throughout the course of

the radio run. Fury Shark, Evans daughter was played by Rene Rodier and Sharon Grainger.

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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

Old-Time Radio is Alive and Well in Colorado!

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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

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Reference Material:	Bill McCracken			
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz	c/o RHAC PO Box 1908	Englewood, CO 80150	
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Cassette Tape:				
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#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

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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Preceding Pierre Andre, the announcer was Don Gordon.

When Skelly Oil was the sponsor during the early years, Captain Midnight and his aids belonged to the organization known as The Captain Midnight Flight Patrol.

During the Ovaltine series run, Captain Midnight was the head of the Secret Squadron and was characterized as SSI, Chuck Ramsey was SS2 Joyce Ryan was SS3 and Icky was SS4. These four agents were the only ones to have designated numbers under 10. Other agent characters were given higher SS numbers.

Captain Midnight's paramount officer at headquarters was Major Steel. This government agency's mission was to assist federal officials in fighting unjust acts throughout the world.



*Jack Bivans, age 16 - left, Ed Prentiss, Marilou Neumayer
Photo taken September, 1943. Courtesy of Jack Bivans*

Jack Bivans was only 16 years old when he assumed the role of Chuck Ramsey on the program when he replaced Billy Rose in 1941, after Rose left to join the army. Bivans would leave the show when he turned 18 in 1944 to enter in the Army Air corp. Bivans would return to the show after his completion of military service in 1946, replacing Johnny Coons who had assumed the role of Chuck when Bivans left.

Ed Prentiss who played Captain Midnight would also leave the show to return at a later date.

During the program run many Captain Midnight premiums would be offered by mail to the many listeners for a small amount of money and/or some proof of having bought one of the sponsors products.

Some of the premiums included in the Skelly years could be picked up at a local Skelly Gas Station if you were a member, but many of the station managers would sometimes just give them

away to anyone who came in, just to avoid the hassle of dealing with the premiums.

Some of the premiums were the Flight Patrol membership card, Flight Patrol Commander brass badge, a small newspaper with info on cast members and clues to secret passwords, photos, stamp album, badges, balsa/paper airplane kits. There was even a Ringo-Jumpo game that was offered during the episodes of "Perada Treasure". The game consisted of an 8X10 piece of paper with a game that allowed you to score by putting Mexican Jumping Beans (included with the game) on the paper and score depending on where the beans landed.

During the Ovaltine years the supreme premiums were decoder badges and Secret Squadron Manuals, including the Mystery Dial Code-O-Graph, the Photomatic Code-O-Graph, Magni-Magic Code-O-Graph, Mirro-Flash Code-O-Graph (I still have my 1945 Magna-Magic Code-O-Graph), also offered was a sliding secret compartment ring called The Mystic Sun God Ring that had a red plastic ruby that was hollow and slid off to reveal the secret compartment to hide. Whatever. The red ruby never did stay on very well, mine came off and I stepped on it breaking it. Also offered was the orange shakeup mug, this 8oz. plastic container was used to mix your Ovaltine drinks.

There were many other premiums offered during the program run. Many of the premiums were integrated in the shows episodes, so as to spark kids interest and longing to have the exact article that Captain Midnight and his Secret Squadron members were using on the radio program.

When you received your Certificate Of Commission as a Flight Commander Of The Secret Squadron in the mail on the back was the Captain Midnight oath as follows; "I do solemnly swear as a member of the Captain Midnight Secret Squadron, that I will never turn my back where justice, or the rights of others are in danger. And as a member of this Secret Squadron, I will strive to do my best at all times. I will keep my club decoder with me when ever possible, and well hidden at all other times. I will remember that the secret password once compromised, is a secret no longer."

Last and by no means least, I will never forget that this fight against evil is an unending one. So whenever I see a wrong being done, I will be sure to fly straight, take careful aim, and give all engines full throttle.

At the end of each program episode, the announcer would close by saying to each listener, "Good bye and Hap-py Land-innngs."

Captain Midnight eventually was seen in comic books, movies and television.

In the fifteen-chapter movie serial, Captain Midnight was played by former stunt man turned actor, Dave O'Brien. O'Brien had previously appeared in many short subject films, playing the infinite oaf, doing many stunts and pratt falls. Sam Edwards (the radio actor) played Chuck. Included in the cast was Guy Wilkerson as Ichabod Mudd, and Joyce was played by Dorothy Short. Oh yes Ivan Shark was also in the serial, played by James Craven. I have a two tape set of this serial on VHS in glorious black and white.



On television Captain Midnight was played by Richard Webb. On the T.V. show Tut the Secret Squadrons scientist was played by the renowned radio actor Olan Soule.

It was great to come home after school and escape from all of the days problems, turn on the radio and get lost with my heroes such as The Lone Ranger, Captain Midnight, The Shadow, Jack Armstrong, Superman and Batman, and many many others throughout my childhood years.

Growing up without a father, these characters were my role models. Their message was always evident, evil and crime will not flourish, truth and good will always triumph over evil.

Once again I say thanks to all of the radio clubs and radio stations that have preserved the Golden Age Of Radio for all of us.

Research for this article includes old Secret Squadrons Manuals, radio tapes, OTR web sites, Captain Midnight history and certificates that I have.

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*From the Desk of
the Editor
by Carol Tiffany*



"Calling all members of the Secret Squadron....BIG CONTEST coming up....all members in good standing will want to enter...start saving your Ovaline inner seals NOW and be sure to listen for the big announcement later in the show!"

That was how this announcement might have been heard over the airwaves back in the late 30s and early 40s. Today, however, we'll just say that RWUN's second big Contest will be running this fall. This time, we're looking for members' favorite SCARY or SPOOKY shows. The entries will be printed in the August issue of RWUN and winners will be announced in the October issue (just in time for Halloween).

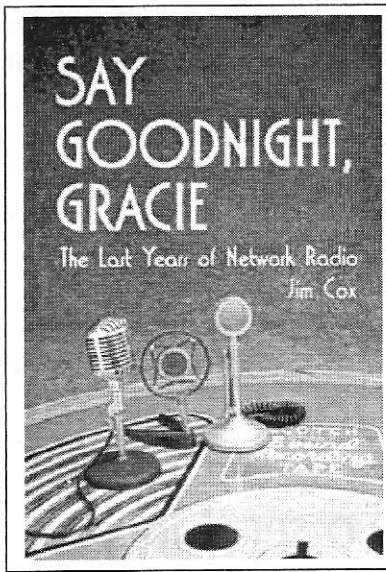
If you would like to nominate some shows for the ballot, please E-mail your selections to me at CTIFFANY@worldnet.att.net, call me at (321) 733-7782 (leave message if I'm not here) or snail mail at 1394 Golf Vista CT. N.E., Palm Bay, Florida, 32905.

Once again, you may consider an entire series (i.e. Quiet, Please) or a particular individual show from a series (i.e. "War of the Worlds" from the Mercury Radio Theater). As with last years' Christmas favorites contest, prizes will be awarded to winning entrants. I hope many RHAC members will enter this contest, and surely wish I were eligible to do so.

ADDENDUM TO "GUNSMOKE ON RADIO" ARTICLE FROM JUNE ISSUE

In the June 2002 article, the author inadvertently omitted naming the sound effects specialists on the radio version of "Gunsmoke." These unnamed artists, who created such outstanding sound pictures for us listeners to enjoy were Ray Kemper, Tom Hanley and Bill James. Unfortunately, Mr. Hanley and Mr. James are no longer with us, but Ray Kemper reports that, "I am still alive and kicking, and hope to remain that way for awhile." My apology for this oversight. - Dr. Charles Beckett.

On the OTR Bookshelf...



"Say Goodnight, Gracie - The Last Years of Network Radio."

A book review by Stewart Wright

For nearly a quarter of a century network radio was America's primary means of mass communication and entertainment. But in a single decade, the 1950s, network radio went from America's entertainment frontrunner to a distant also ran.

Everybody knows that television killed network radio programming. But is that statement completely true? In "Say Goodnight, Gracie," author Jim Cox takes an in-depth look at American network radio in the 1950's and finds that it was more than just the small screen that did the deed. The reasons for the demise of network radio in America were many and diverse including the increased profitability of independent radio programming, the rise of rock n' roll, prolonged economic prosperity, and many others. All are clearly and intelligently examined in this book.

By the end of the decade, television gained ascendancy over network radio programming. However, it was not without a fight.

Some network executives attempted to change radio programming to meet their audiences changing tastes and needs. These attempts to keep network radio a viable and profitable entertainment medium are fully covered.

Ironically, some of network radio's finest programming efforts premiered in that last decade of the Golden Age. The 1950s saw the premier of adult Westerns such as *Gunsmoke*, serious science fiction

programs like *Dimension X* and *X-Minus One*, and NBC's weekend magazine program, *Monitor*. These groundbreaking efforts and others are excellently discussed.

The last chapter of the book is a review of the major changes that have taken place in network radio since 1961.

Don't think that "Say Goodnight, Gracie" is a dry, scholarly tome. Jim has the unusual ability to convey to the reader accurate, historical facts in a way that is not only informative, but also thought-provoking and entertaining. There are interesting vignettes on many favorite shows such as *One Man's Family*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Lux Radio Theater*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *The Breakfast Club*, and *The Jack Benny Program*. The reader will also find lively discussions on show genres from daytime dramas to westerns, from comedy to music, from documentaries to news.

Jim Cox has produced another fine contribution to the historical writings on the Golden Age of Radio. "Say Goodnight, Gracie" is a book that is well-worth reading and should be in the library of every serious Old-Time Radio fan. He is also the author of several other books published by McFarland including "The Great Radio Audience Participation Shows," "The Great Radio Soap Operas," and the soon-to-be published "Radio Crime Fighters."

Reviewer's postscript: It is in deed ironic that the ungrateful children, today's television networks, are beginning to find themselves in much the same position as network radio was in during the 1950s. The TV networks are losing their audiences to the competition, in this case, cable and satellite television. Will network television survive or will it go the way of its radio counterpart? Only time will tell.

"Say Goodnight, Gracie - The Last Years of Network Radio." By Jim Cox

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The Trivial Matter of OTR's Complex Relationships

By Carol Tiffany

Match the paired characters with the best description of their relationship. Some of these are very obvious, but some are a little tricky. The answers are my opinion; yours may differ but still be quite correct. Have fun with this one! (For extra credit, name the shows)

__Thorny to Ozzie	A. Boyfriend
__LeRoy to Throckmorton	B. Landlady
__Lone Ranger to Green Hornet	C. Adopted Daughter
__Chester to Babs & Junior	D. Comrades
__Margo to Lamont	E. Wife
__William "Toddy" to Victoria	F. Boss
__Lois to Clark	G. Sister
__Robin to Batman	H. Partner
__"Red" Albright to Chuck	I. Tenant
__Richard to Helen	J. Maid
__Mrs. Davis to Connie	K. Friend
__Marjorie to Throckmorton	L. Husband
__Irma to Jane	M. Secretary
__Jack to Doc to Reggie	N. Girlfriend
__Harriet to Ozzie	O. Ward
__Nick to Patsy	P. Mother
__Dorothy to "Chandu"	Q. Father
__Annie to "Daddy" W.	R. Niece
__Effie to Sam	S. Nephew
__Mary to Archie	T. Great Uncle
__Lum to Abner	U. Mentor
__Luigi to Pasquale	V. Neighbor
__Beulah to Fibber	W. Pest

New in the RHAC Libraries

by Maletha & Dick King



This month we continue with the delightful Adventures of Masie and have added shows #91 - #99, which are not in the regular library.

We are also offering the "Box Thirteen" series, which is a modern day version of "Have Gun, Will Travel". This series, set in 1935, is of detective Dan Holiday (played by Allan Ladd) who places an ad; "Adventure wanted, and will go anywhere, do anything". The response, placed in mail box 13, comprised an interesting series of adventure stories.

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We then move on to "The Damon Runyon Theater". The show that were entered into the club's library or twenty years ago have some errors in the show numbers and dates. These errors have been corrected as they were entered into the CD library.

We are looking forward to offering the "Adventures of Frank Race" and "The Lives of Harry Lime" in the coming months.

Dont Forget!

To send in your
nominations for scariest
and/or spookiest radio
programs for the
October contest.

Answers to Relationships Quiz:

V. Thorny to Ozzie	A. Boyfriend
S. LeRoy to Throckmorton	B. Landlady
T. Lone Ranger to Green Hornet	C. Adpt. Daughter
Q. Chester to Babs & Junior	D. Comrades
N. Margo to Lamont	E. Wife
L. William "Toddy" to Victoria	F. Boss
W. Lois to Clark	G. Sister
O. Robin to Batman	H. Partner
U. "Red" Albright to Chuck	I. Tenant
A. Richard to Helen	J. Maid
B. Mrs. Davis to Connie	K. Friend
R. Marjorie to Throckmorton	L. Husband
K. Irma to Jane	M. Secretary
D. Jack to Doc to Reggie	N. Girlfriend
E. Harriet to Ozzie	O. Ward
F. Nick to Patsy	P. Mother
G. Dorothy to "Chandu"	Q. Father
C. Annie to "Daddy" W.	R. Niece
M. Effie to Sam	S. Nephew
P. Mary to Archie	T. Great Uncle
H. Lum to Abner	U. Mentor
I. Luigi to Pasquale	V. Neighbor
J. Beulah to Fibber	W. Pest