



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 28, Number 4

April, 2003

AS TIME WENT BY

(Some OTR Trivia)

by Dr. Charles Beckett

The first radio stations in the United States were established shortly after World War I. They were owned by the makers of radio sets who paid the costs of sending music and news over the airwaves. After all, who would buy a radio if there wasn't something interesting or informative to listen to? By the middle 1920s, it became obvious that radio manufacturers could no longer afford to continue to support free radio time. Fortunately, advertisers were discovering that the radio was one of the most effective means of advertising available. So, it didn't take long after that for radio to become big business. It's popularity and the availability of good programming continued to grow -- until the biggest programs were heard by more than forty million people. And advertisers were paying up to \$50,000 to sponsor a single program.

As an outgrowth of radio's increasing popularity, what is commonly being called the Golden Age of Radio, evolved. Radio programming began to offer everything from A to Z (with some letters missing) to satisfy listeners' tastes: adventure, comedy, crime, drama, history, human interest, music, mystery, news, quiz shows, serials, science fiction, soap operas, theatre, ventriloquism, westerns, variety, and zaniness.

Sadly, some radio history, particularly early programming, may have been lost to us forever (although "lost" recordings do occasionally turn up). However, we are fortunate that a wide variety of our cherished radio programs and series still exist and are available from the Radio Historical Association of Colorado's (RHAC) lending libraries. The following offers a chronological sampling of some tidbits of old time radio's comings, goings, and happenings during 1927 through 1961. Most of the programs mentioned are available from the RHAC libraries.

1927 - What is generally considered to be the most popular radio show of all time -- *Amos and Andy* -- began broadcasting as Sam n' Henry in 1927. The name was changed to *Amos and Andy* in March of the following year. The show had a broadcast history covering 34 years. It was estimated that, in 1931, 40 million people listened to the show, almost one-third of America's population at that time.

1928 - Radio was becoming increasingly popular. New shows this year included *The Voice of Firestone* -- a concert music program, featuring vocalists such as James Melton and Gladys Swarthout, and *National Farm and Home Hour* (a rustic variety show), which featured Don Ameche, among others. It was referred to as "a review of rural America."

1929 - A children's theater show, *The Adventures of Helen and Mary*, began airing this year. The following year, its name was changed to *Let's Pretend*, and it continued on until 1954. Its cast of child actors included some familiar names who went on to TV and movie roles -- Billy Halop, Jimmy Lydon, Skippy Homeier, Dick Van Patten, Anne Francis, and Lamont Johnson. Some other shows premiering this year included *The Rudy Vallee Fleischmann Hour*. America's radio listeners became familiar with Vallee's opening "Heigh-Ho, everybody", and his signature singing sign off of "Your Time is my Time." The comedy show, *The Goldbergs*, premiered. Who could forget Molly Goldberg's one sided conversation, up the her apartment's dumbwaiter, with Mrs. Bloom; and her relationships with her husband Jake, and their children, Sammy and Rosalie -- in their apartment at 1038 East Tremont Avenue in the Bronx. In 1949, the show made a successful transition to television. Other radio shows premiering this year were *H.V. Kaltenborn News*, *The First Nighter*, *Headline Hunters*, *Blackstone Plantation*, *The Back Home Hour*, and the *Hour of Charm* (featuring "Evelyn and her Magic Violin", and Phil Spitalny and "his all-girl orchestra").

(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

Old-Time Radio is Alive and Well in Colorado!

KEZW 1430 AM	"When Radio Was", with Stan Frieberg	Weekdays, 7:00 - 8:00 PM
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KUVO 89.3 FM	"Destination Freedom"	9:00 PM

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

RHAC *OTR* WEB PAGE <http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>

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President:	Larry Weide	5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80110	(303) 758-8382	lweide@attglobal.net
Vice-President:	Dick King	900 W. Quincy Ave. Englewood, CO 80110	(303) 761-4139	dickking@worldnet.att.net
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Newsletter:	Carol Tiffany	1394 Golf Vista Court N. E., Palm Bay, FL 32905	(321) 723-7803	ctiffany@worldnet.att.net
RHAC Players:	<i>Open Position</i>			
Talking Nwslter:	Mike Fields	243 S. 1100 E. Greentown, IN 46936		
Membership:	Dick King	PO BOX 1908 Englewood, CO 80150	(303) 761-4139	dickking@worldnet.att.net
Tape Donations:	Bill McCracken	7101 W. Yale Ave. #503 Denver, CO 80227	(303) 986-9863	
	Herb Duniven	4184 S. Syracuse St. Denver, CO 80237		
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LIBRARIES

Reference Material:	Bill McCracken	7101 W. Yale Ave. #503	Denver, CO 80227	(303) 986-9863
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	
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CD Library:	Ron Gallagher	888 S. Dexter #607	Denver, CO 80246	(303) 692-0531

Convention Schedules

17th Annual OTR and Nostalgia Convention April 11 – 12, 2003; Contact Bob Burchett, 10280 Gunpowder Rd., Florence, KY 41042 (859) 282-0333 haradio@hotmail.com

15TH RADIO CLASSICS LIVE! May 3-4, 2003 Massasoit Community College - Buckley Center, Brockton, MA; Contact: Buckley Center Box Office, 1 Massasoit Blvd., Brockton, MA 02302 (508) 427-1234. Web Site: www.radioclassicslive.org

REPS Radio Showcase XI, June 26 – 29, 2003 at the Seattle Center, Seattle Washington. Contact Mike Sprague, Box 723, Bothell, WA 98041 (425) 488-9518 hrrmikes@aol.com>

National Audio Theater Festival, June 14 – 20, 2003, Southwest Missouri State University, West Plains, MO; For information call Sue Zizza, 115 Dikeman St., Hempstead, NY 11550 (516) 483-8321 Suemedia1@aol.com or visit their web site www.natf.org. They also have a script contest.

The Friends of Old-time Radio 28th Annual Convention Oct 23 – 26, 2003 at the Holiday Inn-North, Newark, NJ. Our web site will keep you up to date. For information contact Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887 email: JayHick@aol.com, web site: <http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/fotr>

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RETURN WITH US NOW...

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April, 2003

1930 - This year saw thirteen million Americans owning radios. New programs included *Easy Aces* (see *picture below*), starring the husband and wife team of Goodman and Jane Ace. Jane was known for such expressions as “working my head to the bone” and “time wounds all heels.” The year also saw the introduction of the western adventure series, *Death Valley Days*, sponsored by the Makers of 20-Mule Team Borax. And Robert Ripley’s *Believe it or Not* made a successful jump from the newspaper comics to radio.



1931 - The movie, *Are These Our Children?* was released by RKO this year. Fifteen years later, a radio crime drama series with the same name debuted. The stories were “actual case histories taken from the files of juvenile delinquency courts.” Themes of the shows included parental neglect, divorce, and racial prejudice. The series ran until January 1948. Among others, the cast included Herb Ellis (*Broadway is my Beat*, *This is Your FBI*), and Virginia Kleebl (*Guns moke*).

1932 - *Vic and Sade* -- radio’s homefolks -- began this year, and aired until 1946. Vic and Sade Gook lived with their adopted son, Rush, in “the small house halfway up the next block,” in a rural town somewhere in Illinois. Colorful characters included: Ike Kneesuffer, who had a horseshoe court in his basement; Charlie Razorscum, and Rishigan Fishigan from Sishigan, Michigan--who was married to Jane Bayne from Paine, Maine; Chuck and Dottie Brainfeeble, Blue Tooth Johnson, Sweetcorn McBlock, and Smelly Clark. 1932 was also Jack Benny’s first radio appearance. He began his radio career May 2nd, as master of ceremonies on the *Canada Dry Show* -- when he was 38 years old. Remarkably, in 23 years on radio, he only aged one year. *One Man’s Family*, which has been called “the great American serial”, began a 27-year marathon this year. The program was “dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation, and to their bewildering offspring.” (See the February, 2003 Return With Us Now Newsletter for more about the show.)

1933 - Beginning this year, *Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy*, a popular serial, began to thrill the younger set. Jack, with his younger brother Billy and sister Betty, traveled the world on the Silver Albatross, an amphibious airplane piloted by their Uncle Jim. In addition to the excitement, for only ten cents and some Wheaties box tops, boys and girls could send for such treasures as the Jack Armstrong whistling ring, decoder, and Norden “bombsight”.

1934 - *The Adventures of Frank Merriwell*, introduced this year, was a juvenile adventure series adapted from the dime novels by Gilbert S. Patton. Merriwell was a Yale College athlete who seemed to continually get drawn into mysteries of one sort or another. The initial series aired briefly -- from March to June. However, the Silver Albatross flew again during 1946-49.

1935 - A big event of the year was the Dionne quintuplet’s first birthday party, which was broadcast live on radio. New radio shows included; *Your Hit Parade*, *Backstage Wife*, *Vox Pop*, *Dick Tracy*, *Flash Gordon*, *America’s Town Meeting of the Air*, *The Cavalcade of America*, *The Helen Hayes Theater*, and *Fibber McGee and Molly*.

1936 - *We the People*, a human interest show, premiered. It was a mixture of humor, tragedy, and sentiment. Beginning as a segment on the *Rudy Vallee Hour*, it soon blossomed into a series of its own. Guests included a variety of people from various walks of life -- e.g., Jack Benny, Heavyweight Boxing Champion Joe Louis, Eleanor Roosevelt, and a series of unknowns -- like the man who had saved a woman from jumping off a bridge and now wanted to find her, because she had, unknowingly, also saved his life. He also had gone to that same bridge to jump. Other shows new to radio included: *The Columbia Workshop*, *Gang Busters*, *John’s Other Wife*, *Lux Radio Theater*, *Professor Quiz*, *Pepper Young’s Family*, *The Kate Smith Hour*, and *The Shadow*.

1937 - *Our Gal Sunday* premiered this year. For 22 more years, the show attempted to answer the question, “Can this girl from a mining town in the west find happiness as the wife of a wealthy and titled Englishman?” This year, trains began pulling into *Grand Central Station*. A dramatic anthology, it had one of the best -- and longest -- openings in radio:

“As a bullet seeks its target, shining rails in every part of our great country are aimed at Grand Central Station, heart of the nation’s greatest city. Drawn by the magnetic force of the fantastic metropolis, day and night, great trains rush toward the Hudson River, sweep down its eastern bank for 140 miles, flash briefly by the long red row of tenement houses south of 125th street, dive with a roar into the two-and-one half mile tunnel, which burrows beneath the glitter and swank of Park

Avenue. And then...crossroads of a million private lives! Gigantic stage on which are played a thousand dramas daily!"

Once a train arrived at the station, listeners were treated to a drama -- often with a romantic or light comedy touch -- involving one of its passengers. The train enjoyed a long and comfortable ride, not being sent to the roundhouse until 1954.

1938 - *Information Please*, "the quiz show of the intellectual set", aired from 1938 to 1948. One question on the show was "What sextet sang their way to fame recently?" The answer was "The Seven Dwarfs from Snow White." (Dopey was mute). The short-lived *Avalon Time*, a comedy-variety show, introduced the public to Red Skelton. He left the show in 1939 to star in his own series. Some other additions this year were; *Mr. Keene*, *Tracer of Lost Persons*; *The Guiding Light*, *NBC Symphony*, *Stella Dallas*, *Big Town*, and *Dr. Christian*.

1939 - *The Red Skelton Show* premiered and aired until Skelton was drafted into the Army in 1944. After Skelton's discharge, the show was revived in December 1945, and ran until May 1953. Skelton also had a long television career, which ran uninterrupted from 1951-71.

1940 - *Beat the Band*, a quiz program, debuted, with Garry Moore as master of ceremonies. Members of Ted Weems Band tried to answer musical questions sent in by listeners. Crooner Perry Como and whistler Elmo Tanner were featured. Another new show this year was *Crime Doctor*. The show's hero, Dr. Benjamin Ordway -- a former criminal -- suffered amnesia from a blow on the head. He regained his memory, and also a new life and identity--becoming a psychiatrist specializing in criminal psychology. The police regularly called upon him to help them solve crimes. The series had a healthy seven-year run, and even spun off a movie. This was also the year *The Quiz Kids* were born. The show was an instant success. It featured a panel of five precocious children with genius level IQs. Each panel member had a particular area of expertise -- math, science, politics, general knowledge, etc. Ironically, the show was hosted by Joe Kelly -- a former vaudevillian with a third grade education. The kids answered difficult questions on the show, even besting university panels and college professors. One of the kids, 12 year old Claude Brenner, substituted several times for Joe Kelly, as the show's host. As the kids grew up, new panel members had to be found to replace them. A traveling group of Quiz Kids toured nationally. They visited the White House, and guested on radio shows, such as Jack Benny and Eddie Cantor.

1942 - *The Abbott and Costello Show* began its first full season in October and was on the air until 1949. *Abbie's Irish Rose*, originally a Broadway show during the 1920s, was a successful situation comedy on radio during 1942-44. The plot revolved around a young married couple from Jewish and Catholic families.

1943 - *The Judy Canova Show*, new this year, was well received from its beginning. Judy played a pigtailed country girl who came to Hollywood from Rancho Canova in Cactus Junction. Mel Blanc was her Mexican handyman, who was frequently heard to say "Pardon me for talking in your face, senorita." 1943 was also the year of the western adventure series, *The Cisco Kid*. Cisco and his sidekick Pancho roamed the countryside and were frequently chased by the law. But, things always turned out all right in the end of each program. Cisco got to kiss a senorita and Pancho told a bad pun. "Oh, Cisco! Oh, Pancho!"

1944 - *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* was first heard this year. Sons David and Ricky began playing themselves on the show in April 1949, and it aired until 1954. It was another radio show that was successful on television. The situation comedy, *The Alan Young Show*, also debuted. Young was an English comic, who had an up and down radio career. He is most associated with his television role as Wilbur Post, who talked to a horse named Mr. Ed.



Ozzie and Harriet Nelson

(to be continued in the May issue of RWUN)

THE OCCASIONAL SILLINESS OF SOUND MEN

by Ray Kemper, Sound Man

In late 1946 or early 1947, Tom Hanley and I were working at KHJ Radio in Hollywood. We'd just finished doing sound effects for Red Ryder or the Cisco Kid or some such show and were putting away our equipment when we noticed a loud argument coming from a nearby room that served as a storage room and lounge for the studio's cleaning crew. That room adjoined a men's room which Tom and I went into to wash up. During that time the voices in the next room got louder and louder until Tommy and I thought those two guys were going to come to blows.



Ray Kemper (L), Tom Hanley, and Norm MacDonnell (R) during a "Gunsmoke" rehearsal

Dear reader, you really had to know Tom Hanley to appreciate what happened next, he always looked at the funny side of any situation. I saw a light bulb go on and Tommy turned and whispered to me "Wait here", then he disappeared out the door, to return in 60 seconds with a sound effects gun loaded with blanks.

By this time the harangue next door had reached a fever pitch. Tommy whispered to me, "Follow my lead", then in a loud voice proclaimed, "Don't give me that garbage, you've been fooling around with my wife!" I said, "No I haven't....you've got it all wrong." Tommy's voice rose more, "I Told you, if you ever messed with my wife I was gonna blow you apart!"

The room next door was getting quiet now. I said, "Look, I told you it isn't what you think." Tommy, practically screaming, "The hell it isn't, I saw you, I saw you both! I'm gonna kill you!" Utter silence next door now as Tommy waved the gun in the air. I took that cue and cried, "A gun...my God, you don't need a gun...please..." Tommy, at the top of his lungs yelled, "I warned you...I told you...and now you're gonna get it!" Then he pulled the trigger on the 38 filled with blanks, and in the men's room it sounded like a canon going off. I crashed up against the wall and simulated a slow, nail-scratching body fall down the wall and onto the floor. Then we both sneaked out the door, went up the nearby stairs and turned to peek around the corner to see the results.

For a good five minutes there wasn't a sound from the cleaning room. Then, the door handle turned slowly and the door opened. A pair of frightened eyes peered out, followed by a trembling body. Then two more frightened eyes and another trembling body.

Eye's #1 croaked, "Let's get out of here!"

Eyes #2 said, "We can't just leave. Somebody's hurt in there, maybe dead."

Eyes #1, "I ain't goin' in there...no way...you ain't gettin' me to go in there."

Eyes #2, "The guy with the gun's gone, I heard him go."

"The hell you did", said eyes #1, "How come I didn't hear him, how come?"

Eyes #2 then said, "All right, I'll go in...you stay here..."

And he carefully opened the door to the men's room.

And with that, Tommy and I stole quietly away.

OTR Cross Word Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10		
11					12						13	14	15
16											17		
					18					19			
20	21	22		23					24		25		
26								27		28		29	30
31				32		33	34				35		
36						37					38	39	
		40	41		42			43			44		
45	46		47					48					
	49	50				51	52				53		
54					55								
56				57						58	59	60	61
62				63						64			
		65								66			

Across

- 1 Mob action
- 5 Transported
- 11 Land measure
- 12 Above everybody
- 13 Spherical body
- 16 _____ Traveler ended with the host getting off the train.
- 17 Not me
- 18 Marshal on Gunsmoke
- 19 Happy
- 20 First name of Al Jolson
- 23 Affectionate greeting
- 25 Printers measure
- 26 Halls of Ivy star
- 27 Green vegetable
- 29 Avenue (abbr.)
- 31 Separate from
- 32 Advance payment

- 36 Mine product
- 37 Very, very close
- 38 One of the Gershwin boys
- 40 SWAT team uniform
- 44 Bug juice used in shellac
- 45 Platter spinner
- 47 Sports organization (abbr.)
- 48 Noisy vegetable
- 49 Association with twelve steps
- 51 Load
- 53 Affirmative answer
- 54 Frank and ____ Hummert wrote many soaps
- 55 Lower house of the Irish Assembly
- 56 Beer container
- 57 Bandleader for Fibber McGee
- 62 Dined
- 63 Type of cut
- 64 Melted snow or hail
- 65 Substance in milk
- 66 Issue forth violently

Down

- 1 Push hard
- 2 Covered with frost
- 3 Alternatives
- 4 Vietnamese offensive
- 5 Red
- 6 Alternate name
- 7 Your ancestry
- 8 Drive out
- 9 Maybes
- 10 Arthur Conan ____ wrote Sherlock Homes
- 14 Horse colors
- 15 Beginning of a flower
- 20 Agreement
- 21 Tart
- 22 To change
- 23 Boris _____ was featured in many Lights Out programs
- 24 _____ of the Mounted was an early model for Sergeant Preston of the Yukon
- 27 Relates area and radius
- 28 Precedes iou
- 30 Belonging to Dick ____
- 33 Children's game
- 34 Consumed
- 39 Steakhouse order
- 41 Having pull or power
- 42 Throws left (abbr.)
- 43 Church assistant
- 46 ____ Waldo played Corliss Archer
- 50 Heavenly body
- 51 Gun salute
- 52 Floor covering
- 54 Alias
- 55 Reduce nourishment

- 57 English radio station
- 58 Tax collectors
- 59 Forms when sitting
- 60 Falsehood
- 61 Three compass points



New in the Tape Library

by Dick and Malettha King

This month we're adding two more reels of "A Day In The Life Of Dennis Day". We continue on with four reels of "The Great Gildersleeve", a reel of "Hopalong Cassidy" and some other shows of the 50's such as "Screen Guild Theater" and "General Electric Theater". Included in the GE shows is "Cerano de Bergerac" - surely the one that most collectors **must** have.

We are encouraging all members to consider transferring their taped shows to CD. As time goes on we hearing of more and more tape failures. This effort does require considerable time and some computer software, but it does provide the best archival media available today. Perhaps this could be done as you once more listen to your favorite shows. We have come a long way from the transcription discs of yore, and now we have the technology that will keep the sounds of OTR alive for decades to come.

Answers to OTR Cross Word Puzzle

R	I	O	T		C	A	R	R	I	E	D				
A	C	R	E		A	L	O	O	F		O	R	B		
M	Y	S	T	E	R	I	O	U	S		Y	O	U		
					M	A	T	T		G	L	A	D		
A	S	A			K	I	S	S		R		E	N		
C	O	L	M	A	N				P	E	A		S	T	
C	U	T			R	E	T	A	I	N	E	R		R	
O	R	E			L		A	T		F		I	R	A	
R			R	I	O	T	G	E	A	R			L	A	C
D	J			N	F	L			C	E	L	E	R	Y	
		A	A		F		S	T	O	W		Y	E	S	
A	N	N	E			D	A	I	L						
K	E	G			B	I	L	L	Y	M	I	L	L	S	
A	T	E			B	E	V	E	L		R	A	I	N	
			L	A	C	T	O	S	E		S	P	E	W	