



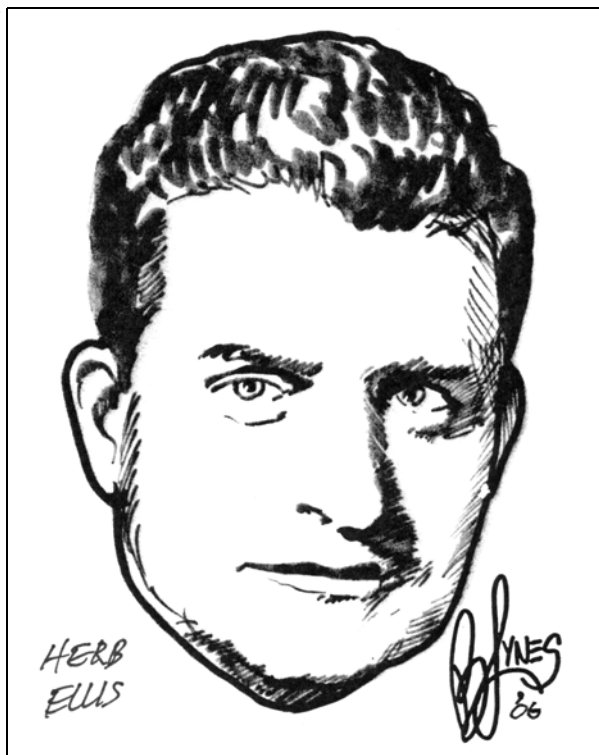
Radio Personalities: Herb Ellis

By Stewart Wright © 2007

This is the latest installment in a series of biographical sketches on actors who had extensive careers on the radio. In each article I will list some representative performances of the actor. If that performance is followed by a number in square brackets [], that is the RHAC Tape or CD Library Number for that specific performance.

The picture of the actor in each article is through the courtesy of Bobb Lynes and originally appeared in the book "Radio's Golden Years: A Visual Guide to the Shows and the Stars" by Frank Bresee and Bobb Lynes.

Actor, director, producer, and writer Herb Ellis was born in Cleveland, OH in 1921. After moving to California, Herb met Jack Webb at a party. They worked together on a 1941 murder anthology series that aired on the Los Angeles City College radio station: A Half-Hour To Kill. This was the start of a long and productive collaboration between Ellis and Webb.



Radio Work:

After service in World War II, Herb worked in San Francisco at station KGO as an announcer, disc jockey, and newscaster. He also worked with friends and fellow aspiring actors Jack Webb and Lee Marvin. While in San Francisco, Herb performed on Box 13, Pat Novak For Hire, Yellow Cab Storyteller, and Hawthorne House. Ellis and Webb worked on the hard-hitting documentary drama, One Out Of Seven, a series based on a top news story of the week. This series gave Herb the opportunity to play several roles each week.

One of Herb's first radio roles when he returned to Los Angeles was that of a young bank robber. His parents and fellow bank robbers were played by John McIntire and Jeanette Nolan.

Here are a few series from Herb's extensive radio acting credits: Broadway Is My Beat, Dr. Christian, Escape, Fibber McGee and Molly, Frontier Gentleman, The Halls of Ivy, Horizons West, The Line Up, Lux Radio Theater, Richard Diamond, Screen Guild Theater, The Six Shooter, Suspense, Tales of the Texas Rangers, This Is Your FBI, The Whistler, and Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar. Also, he had regular parts on Rocky Fortune and Dangerous Assignment.

Continued on Page 3

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2007 Convention Schedules

2nd Annual Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention, Sep 13 – 15, at Clarion Hotel, Aberdeen, MD; for information call Michelle or Martin Grams, Jr. at (717) 456-6208, Web site is www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com

32nd Friends of Old-time Radio Convention, Oct 18 – 21, at the Holiday Inn, Newark, NJ; For information contact Jay Hickerson, 27436 Desert Rose Ct, Leesburg, FL 34748 (352) 727-6731, JayHick@aol.com, web site: <http://www.fotr.net>

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RETURN WITH US NOW...

-2-

July, 2007

Several actors played Nero Wolfe's assistant, Archie Goodwin, on The New Adventures of Nero Wolfe. Herb was one of them playing the role from 11/03/1950 through 01/05/1951. [Tapes 79, 5235 & 5236 an CDs 674 - 678.]

Herb performed in productions of Western episodes of two series that were used as models for Gunsmoke: "Pagosa" on Romance as gunfighter Mel Kitchen [Tape 46] and the Escape episode "Wild Jack Rhett" as Deputy U.S. Marshal Matt Travener [Tape 111 and CD 856.] He also appeared in several episodes of Gunsmoke including "Lochinvar" as Frank Craig [Tape 5004] and "The Lamb" as Ab Fisher [Tapes 225 & 5009.]

It's not surprising that another multi-talented radio person - actor, writer, director, and producer Elliott Lewis - was Herb's hero. Herb wrote and produced the radio adventure drama series Jason and the Golden Fleece. The series starred Macdonald Carey and William Conrad and aired on NBC during the 1952-53 season. He also contributed several scripts for the Frank Lovejoy series Nightbeat.



For a time Jack Webb lived with Herb and Sylvia Ellis. Dragnet was born in their house. (Webb and Julie London were married in Ellis' living room.) Herb did the announcing on the audition show and frequently appeared on the radio version. Before Ben Alexander became Joe's partner, Officer Frank Smith, Herb played the role for nine shows: 05/15/1952 - 06/05/1952 and 08/21/1952 - 09/14/1952:" The Big Mail" [Tape 103], "The Big Shakedown" [Tape 158], "The Big Fourth" [Tape 158], "The Big Whiff" [Tape 158], "The Big Paper" [Tape 60], "The Big Test" [Tape 60], "The Big Ray" [Tape 60], and [Tape 159.] He also directed Dragnet during its last years on radio.

Herb has also appeared in contemporary radio dramas of Jim French on Imagination Theatre. His work in "Rembrandt," "The Gatekeeper," "Back Door To Hell," and "A Person Of Interest" gave

Herb opportunities to work with other veterans from the Golden Age of Radio: Parley Baer, Harry Bartell, Dick Beals, Stewart Conway, Larry Dobkin, Ray Erlenborn, Fred Foy, Art Gilmore, Bob Hastings, Peter Leeds, Merrill Mael, Tyler McVey, Shirley Mitchell, Jeanette Nolan, and Rhoda Williams.

At the 2001 Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound Showcase in Seattle, Herb both acted and directed. He co-starred as Louis, the head lighthouse keeper, in a recreation of the November 15, 1949 radio classic, Escape - "Three Skeleton Key:" In this recreation, Herb worked with two actors who reprised their original roles from that 1949 production: Harry Bartell as Auguste and Elliott Reid as Jean. The performances of these three professionals ended in a prolonged standing ovation from an enthusiastic and appreciative audience. They were ably assisted by Christopher Conrad, son of William Conrad, who performed his Father's role as the Voice of Escape.

Television Work:

In addition to radio, Herb was very busy with television work. He originated the role of Officer Frank Smith on the small screen version of Dragnet, was featured in other roles on the show, and was also an associate director of the series. Herb had recurring roles in several series including: The D.A.'s Man as Frank LaValle, He & She as Herb Angostura, Hennessy as Dr. Wagner, and Peter Gunn as the beatnik Wilbur. He also made many guest appearances on television including: Alfred Hitchcock Presents, The Beverly Hillbillies, Bewitched, Checkmate, Dobie Gillis, Frontier, The Fugitive, The Flying Nun, General Electric Theater, Get Smart, Gidget, M Squad, My Favorite Martian, Navy Log, Not For Hire, Perry Mason, Sanford and Son, The Second Hundred Years, and U.S. Marshal.

Motion Picture Work:

Herb's movie credits include: Dragnet, The Disappearance of Flight 412, The Party, Hang 'Em High, The Fortune Cookie, What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?, Too Much, Too Soon, The Killing, Pete Kelly's Blues, and Rogue Cop.

Voice-Over Work:

In addition to acting, he has done extensive work in local and national commercials including being the spokesperson for Albertson's Supermarkets, Safeco Insurance, and Michelob Beer.

For several years, Herb has volunteered his talents and time to record books and other materials for the vision-impaired at the Braille Institute, a non-profit organization in Los Angeles.

Origins of Joe Friday:

Have you ever wondered about the origins of *Dragnet* character Joe Friday? Here is the background from a 1998 interview with Herb by Michael J. Hayde, author of the book "My Name's Friday."

"Well, Jack and I had written a show called *Joe Friday: Room 5* for Vaughn Paul. Vaughn was an erstwhile producer and director, and he was married to Deanna Durbin. I was doing something, and Vaughn said, 'Why don't you write a show, and we'll (hold an) audition? I think we can even get it made for television.' He said, 'You've written some things with Jack.' And I did, we'd written a couple of little shows. So, I said 'Okay,' and I talked to Jack, and we wrote a show called *Joe Friday: Room 5*. Just a private dick whose name was Joe Friday."

"Nothing ever happened with it. It was just one of the thousands of things for television in the late forties that never happened. So, when *Dragnet* came along, Jack asked me if he could use the name Joe Friday."

And the rest is history.

Hidden Clues

By Jack M. Richards

Find the hidden OTR reference in the following statements. The clue is continuous but may be spread out over several words. For example "music on radio" contains Conrad as in William Conrad of Gunsmoke.

1. One's soul evolves as you do good deeds to fellow mankind.
2. The pickle recipe called for dill, onion, alum and salt.
3. The kitchen staff ordinary would not have made the pies from chokecherries.
4. The school bus tires had, owing to deep ruts in the road, all gone flat
5. How To Drive Mothers Insane: Sunday, beat the

drum; Monday, toot the horn; Tuesday, crash the cymbals; Wednesday, scream for supper; Thursday, ring the tricycle bell; Friday, make Indiana war hoops; Saturday, rest.

6. The sound technician's mad man's laugh terrified the studio audience.
7. Original Sin, a transgression of Eve in the Garden of Eden, has been repealed.
8. Santa's reindeer anger is something to be avoided at all costs.
9. Off-key singing can torture the ear of a true musician.
10. The heavy rain in the morning produced mad erosion.
11. Forest fires are bad for all environmental pollution indexes.
12. A bachelor's pad embodies the idea of a free thinker.
13. Does a bee merchant sell honey or beeswax?
14. The downward trend leveled off at zero.
15. We average eating eleven popsicles each year.
16. Contrary to its name, Babies R Us, sell clothing not orphan children.
17. Proper horn etiquette prohibits playing in an elevator.
18. Bing Crosby was the top performer on NBC in 1943.
19. The city of Rome was well established before the birth of Christ.
20. Aliens found that earth does not have a single tongue among its many people.

(Answers on Back Cover)

Ed Walker

By Martin Grams, Jr.

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THE BIG BROADCAST is a Sunday night tradition for families throughout the WAMU listening area. Each week, THE BIG BROADCAST host Ed Walker offers listeners priceless recordings of popular radio programs from the '30s, '40s and '50s. Priceless, especially, for a man whose first sentence as a child was, "Turn the radio on."

Walker's four-hour program features entire episodes of such vintage shows as JACK BENNY, GUNSMOKE, FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY, DRAGNET, SUPERMAN and SUSPENSE. Listeners who heard those programs when they were originally broadcast enjoy hearing their old favorites, but the audience is not limited to the older generation.

"It's interesting to note that we have a lot of young people, even children who enjoy old time radio," says Walker. "They all seem to have their favorite programs, but the most popular is GUNSMOKE, which was on the air between 1952 and 1961 on CBS. Another favorite is LUM AND ABNER. I tried to take LUM AND ABNER off the air a few years ago because the quality of the recordings was so poor. The demand to bring it back was overwhelming, so we did."

The program dates back to February 16, 1964, when vintage radio enthusiast John Hickman launched a half-hour weekly program which was then called RECOLLECTIONS. The program grew in length and in popularity over the years, and today lots of folks just can't get the week going without this Sunday night standard.

Hickman hosted the program until 1990, when he retired because of illness. He later returned to produce one-hour segments of the program, and he gave it a long term boost by donating his vintage recording collection to American University. Walker picked up hosting responsibilities in 1990, and has been entertaining listeners ever since with favorites from the "Golden Age of Radio."

Walker has a devoted audience who appreciate his encyclopedic knowledge of radio history. Many of them listen to each program several times. "I have found that a lot of people record the show on Sunday night and play it back in their cars as they go to and from work," says Walker. "I love doing the show because I enjoy sharing those memories with

listeners, and I think it's a nice way to end the weekend."

Ed Walker has been blind since birth, but this does not handicap his program, with such people as Neal Ellis behind the scenes. Ed, however, rarely does public appearances. This September, there will be an exception. The 2nd Annual Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention in Aberdeen, Maryland (September 13-15) will have Ed as a featured guest. Ed will be greeting fans and participating in an interview on stage. With two old-time radio recreations (one of them will be Sam Spade), panels about OTR, and rare movies featuring radio characters such as Fibber McGee and Molly and The Great Gildersleeve,

Ed Walker is a welcome addition to the weekend's events.

[For more info about Ed Walker and/or the convention, check out [www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com](http://www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com) or call (717) 456-6208 for more info.]



## New in the Tape and CD Libraries

by Maletha King

This month we're offering a new selection of CD's. We're starting with 37 CD's of "Screen Director's Playhouse". These great shows are all done by the actors that originally played these roles on the silver screen, and they will bring back memories of entertainment to all of us.

We are also adding 14 shows of a program that falls into this same category. That is, "Lux Radio Theatre".

I would like to remind our membership that, as you're enjoying listening to these CD's, it takes hours of research, organization, sound filtering and recording to bring these excellent CD's to you.

Finally, I want to wish everyone a great 4th of July celebration.

# “Hal” Stone

By Paul Barringer



Once again, O.T.R. fans have lost a stalwart from the Golden Age of Radio. Harold "Hal" Fredrick Stone died on February 21, 2007, at the age of 76 after a heart operation at a Phoenix hospital.

Stone portrayed the character of "Jughead", on the Archie Andrews radio program, where he started at the age of 13 and continued until entering the service at the time of the Korean War. Following his discharge from the service (U.S. Air Force), Mr. Stone launched a career in producing and directing, wherein he eventually would form a TV commercial production company.

After he retired, Hal Stone became active in many, many events relating to O.T.R. including attending many of the events, which included O.T.R. conventions.

Hal Stone was born on June 10th, 1931 and at the young age of three-years-old, started his professional career as a model which spanned eight years, with an estimated (by Stone) 400 jobs doing that type of work. Finally, Stone would turn to acting, where his first job was with a touring company.

In 1944 Stone auditioned for the part of "Jughead" on the Archie radio program and won the part. An adaptation from the Pep Comic book #22 from December 22, 1941, the Archie Andrews show

would make its radio debut on May 31, 1943 where it had a brief run on radio as a fifteen minute series and eventually would run on the NBC Network from 1945 until September of 1953. The radio program would feature fictional teenagers Archie Andrews, Betty Cooper, Veronica Lodge, Reggie Mantle and Archie's best friend and childhood pal Forsythe "Jughead" Jones. Jughead, played by Stone, (then known as Harlan Stone) was known for his catchphrase, "Aw... relax Archie, re-laxxx!"

In the comics, Jughead was seen almost all of the time wearing his crown-shaped gray felt beanie (his trademark). This kind of head apparel (the beanie) would probably puzzle many of the kids today, but it certainly was popular among young boys in the 30's and 40's. Most of the pictures of Hal Stone that I have seen show him wearing this type of beanie. Hal Stone was always very friendly and accessible to fans and was willing to discuss his work as "Jughead" with them. In fact, I had the pleasure of corresponding with him a number of years ago, on the internet, where he was often a contributor to a web site discussing O.T.R.

Stone's autobiography, Aw .. Relax Archie! Relax!, was published in 2003. It contains the famous quote, "When radio was "King" I was once a "prince" But ended up a "Jughead".



*Information for this article was found in "Comics Buyer's Guide", on Wikipedia, and oldradio.net. If you would like to read a very touching remembrance of Hal Stone go online to [www.oldradio.net](http://www.oldradio.net) and click on the Nostalgic Rumbblings blog for personal memories of Hal by Charlie Summers, The Master of Old Time Radio online.*

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*July, 2007*

Answer to "Hidden Clues" Puzzle

1. One's [Olan] **Soul** evolves ...
2. for [Matt] **Dill**, onion...
3. kitchen [Hanley] **Staff** ordinary
4. tires **S had**, owing...
5. beat the [Bulldog] **Drum**; **Monday**...
6. mad man [Luke] **S laugh** terrified ...
7. Original [Frank] **Sin**, a transgression of  
Eve...
8. reindeer[Lone] **R anger** is something...
9. singing [Eddy] **Can** torture...
10. produced [Johnny] **Mad** erosion...
11. bad for [Fred] **All** environmental...
12. A bachelor [Sam] **S pad** embodies...
13. Does a [Brace] **Bee** merchant...
14. downward [George] **Trend** leveled...
15. [Doodles] **We** average eating...
16. Babies **R Us**, sell [Thorson] clothing...
17. Proper [Green] **Horn** etiquette...
18. was the **Top** performer...
19. Rome was [Orson] **Well** established...
20. not have a [Penny] **Single** tongue...

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