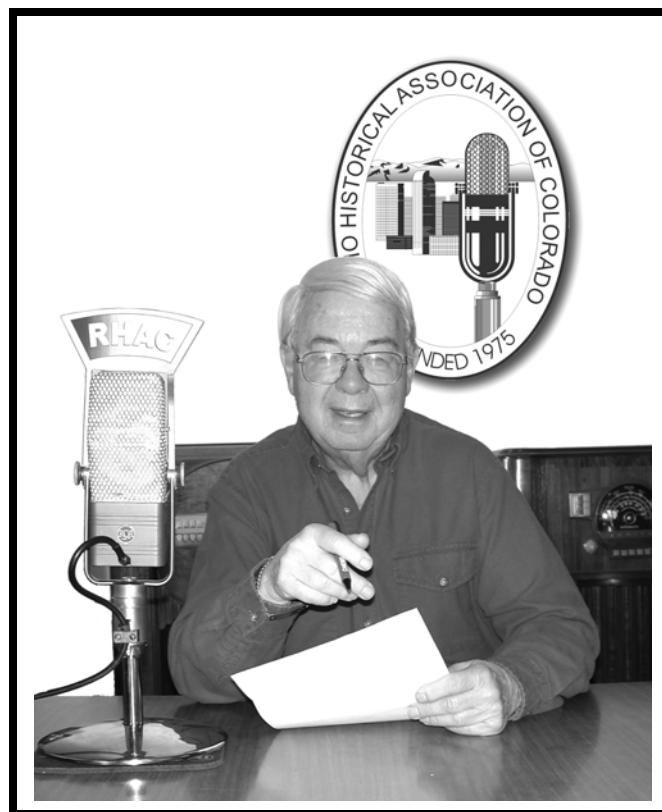




Volume 40, Number 1

January/February, 2015

Fred Hobbs - RHAC Newsletter Editor and Internet Show Host
April 21, 1932 - December 4, 2014



It is with a great sorrow that we let you know that Fred Hobbs, our newsletter editor and internet show host, past away this last December.

Anyone who knew Fred will remember a loving man who was dedicated to his family, friends and life-long involvement in broadcasting.

Fred graduated from the University of Colorado's school of Journalism, served in the army

in Germany with the Armed Forces Network (AFN), had on-air radio and TV positions with a number of Denver and Boulder stations, taught at the University of Colorado and finally founded his own public relations business before retirement.

We were blessed that Fred chose to continue his love for broadcasting and OTR by being part of RHAC.

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

PO BOX 1908, Englewood CO 80150

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2015 Convention Schedules

No Conventions have been reported at this time

THE JACK BENNY SHOW BEHIND THE SCENES

by Dr. Charles Beckett © 2001

"Hello again. This is Jack Benny talking!" Comedian Jack Benny entertained us on the radio for 23 years with his dry humor, and slow paced delivery. His first radio show was as master of ceremonies on the May 2, 1932 Canada Dry show. He was 38 years old. Amazingly, in 23 years on radio, he only aged one year. In his words, "39 is a funny number, 40 isn't,"

Why write about Jack Benny? What can be said about him that hasn't been said before? We all know that he was a vain, stingy bachelor, who lied about his age, played the violin badly, and wore a toupee. But, was that the real Jack Benny?

Of course not! The real Jack Benny was quite the opposite of his radio character. In "real life" he was a generous and giving person, a violin prodigy as a child, wasn't vain or conceited, didn't lie about his age, and was married to Mary Livingston for 37 years. OK,

so he did occasionally wear a small hairpiece for a movie role. If an unkind word was ever said about Benny, no one remembers.

Admittedly, We know a lot about Jack Benny. Much less is known about his talented cast members, how they got their jobs, their relationships with their boss, and their opinions of him.

All the Jack Benny Show performers are gone now. But, interviews through the years with some of the major cast members help to reveal the "real" Jack Benny. Most of the plots of his shows had something to do with one or more of the following: Announcer Don Wilson's weight, bandleader Phil Harris' drinking and flirting, Dennis Day's total confusion and off-beat view of the world, Mary Livingston's sarcasm, Eddie Anderson's (Rochester) ability to regularly outsmart his boss (except in getting a raise in salary), Mel Blanc's sound effects

and sympathetic characters, and Frank Nelson's snobbishness and supposed dislike of Benny.

Don Wilson worked for Benny, in radio and television, for more than 35 years. He joined the show April 6, 1934 -- the same year the Benny's adopted their daughter, Joan. Don, a radio sportscaster before joining Jack, when asked how he was selected as the show's new announcer, said "I got awfully lucky. I happened to laugh at the right places in the audition while reading the script with Jack and one of his writers, and I got the Job."

Asked how much influence Benny had in putting the shows together, Wilson said "the shows were put together by Jack and the writers, Jack was the idea man. He would give the writers suggestions and they would develop them. Jack also had good judgment in editing scripts. His judgment of what was good

for the show and for him was downright infallible." Wilson also said that "supporting cast members were routinely built up by Jack. He was shrewd enough to realize that the better he could make his cast members look, the better the show would be -- which would reflect favorably on him.

Jack gave most of the funny material to the other cast members, and routinely played straight man to them."

During the show's run, Don Wilson was asked if the constant jokes about his weight bothered him? His reply, "I don't mind it at all, as long as they pay for it."

Phil Harris joined the show in 1936, and except for a short stint in the Merchant Marine during World War 11, remained with it until he was replaced by Bob Crosby in September 1952. Asked what it was like working for Benny, Harris said that "Everybody who worked for Jack Benny was "exclusive," which meant they couldn't work for anybody else without Jack's permission." (which Benny generally gave, when asked). When asked about Jack's radio reputation as a stingy person, Phil said just the opposite was true, that Benny was very generous. He said that "me and the other cast



members were making so much money we didn't know what to do with it. We didn't have to work for anyone else. About every six months, Jack would tell Blume (his manager) to give me more money. I said I didn't need any more money, that I appreciated Jack's getting me off the road (from one night stands with his band), I would have three lines on a show, and Jack would say 'go tell Blume to give you some more money'". (Dennis Day, Phil Harris, and Mel Blanc went on to star in successful radio shows of their own.)



Mary Livingston, off-stage, was a very private person. She had been working as a stocking sales clerk in a New York Department store when Jack met her. They were married January 14, 1927, when she was 18 and Jack was 33. She first appeared on the show July 27, 1932. She was never cast as Jack's wife or steady girl friend, but was a central character on most of the shows. She always played his friend -- and was, on rare occasion, a low-key romantic interest. She was the only cast member who could repeatedly insult Benny and get away with it.

Mary never really had much desire to be a performer. Jack explained it this way; "Mary often became very nervous before a program. She frequently became ill the day of the show -- or the day before and other actresses would have to be called to fill in for her. A couple times a year, after completing a show, she would walk off stage and collapse in a faint." Her nerves never seemed to affect her during the broadcasts -- but she occasionally read her lines with her back to the studio audience, due to stage fright from facing them. Her extreme nervousness was a major factor in her eventual retirement from show business. She was particularly uncomfortable about doing television.

Dennis Day joined the show October 8, 1939. He had recently graduated from Manhattan College in

New York city, where he was president of the glee club. He had made a few records, but had planned to go to law school, since he didn't think he could make a living singing. Kenny Baker had left the show, and Jack was auditioning for a replacement tenor. Mary Livingston heard a couple of the records Dennis had sent to Jack's agent, and recommended that Jack audition Dennis. Dennis explained that "during the audition, after I had sung for about half an hour, a rest break was called. I was talking to my accompanist about what number to do next. Over the loudspeaker, I heard a voice say "Oh, 'Dennis! I turned and said 'Yes, please?... Jack told me later that was one of the deciding factors in my being hired." Jack not only liked Day's voice, but also his approach and manners. As Dennis expressed it, "I guess it pays to be polite."

Dennis stayed with Benny on radio and television for 25 years, missing only two years while in the navy during World War 11. His description of Jack Benny was that he was "a great, great and wonderful and warm individual. Not only was he a great comedian. but I think that he was one of the warmest individuals I've known."

Eddie Anderson, a little known vaudeville song and dance man, first appeared on the Jack Benny Show March 28, 1937. Jack needed a black actor who could do comedy, for a one time part as a Pullman train porter. Anderson was hired and proved to be such a hit that he was given other small parts, and soon became a regular cast member, named Rochester van Jones. He performed on most of the programs until the show ended May 22, 1955. He played Penny's butler, valet, cook, maid, chauffeur, nurse, and jack of all trades -- continuing on with Benny into television and movies.

Mel Blanc was "the man of a thousand voices" and sound effects. Jack had heard Mel's voice on cartoons and called him to see if he could do the growl of a bear. On the February 12, 1939 show, Jack introduced the character of Carmichael the bear -- whose job was to guard Benny's vault. After doing the occasional growl for about six months on the show, Blanc jokingly said "You know Mr. Benny, I can also talk." so, Jack had a part written in for him as a train announcer (Train leaving for Anaheim, Azusa, and Cue ... amonga).

Later, Blanc also did the sound effects of Jack's Maxwell car engine, and the voice of Polly the parrot, plus a variety of characters -- department store clerk, telephone repairman, train announcer, violin teacher, gas station attendant, and many others. He was able to do whatever characters and



L to R: Eddie Anderson, Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Mary Livingstone, Jack Benny, Don Wilson, Mel Blanc

sound effects the script called for. Blanc continued as a regular until the show's end. His "Si, Sy. Sue" routine, a classic, broke Jack up every time Blanc did it. In Mel's words, "Jack would literally fall on the floor laughing." Sometimes on the show, there would be a pause while Benny regained his composure, which was covered by the audience's laughter at the laughing comedian.

Frank Nelson was first hired for the June 1, 1934 show, to do a one time spot as a stranger Jack meets on a train. Later, Nelson occasionally was given other small parts, but no particular character was developed for him. Later, in a skit, he was given a "yes" line. Instead of just responding to Jack with a "yes?". Nelson stretched it to y-e-e-e-e-s-s? After that, he began to be written into more scripts, and his "personality" began to develop. The "yes" reply became a semi-regular part of the show, and Nelson began playing the "yes" character in a variety of parts -- doctor, dentist, news stand operator, floorwalker, train conductor, ticket seller, etc.

But, Nelson said he felt he had been typecast and had gotten trapped by the "yes" character. He recalled that he once was called by an agent who asked if he did anything other than the "Yes" part on the Benny Show. Nelson got so mad. he said "No, that's all I do," and hung up. For a number of years before appearing on the Jack Benny program, Nelson had been a leading man in radio dramas. Asked why he had gone to comedy, he said "because there was more money in it"

Jack Benny died December 26, 1974, of pancreatic cancer, at age 80. Bob Hope did his eulogy. Hope captured Benny's character when he said, "Perhaps what made Jack Benny such a great laugh maker was that he himself loved to laugh. He was the greatest audience a comedian could want. Jack felt a great joy by the joy he brought to others."

The true Jack Benny can probably best be summed up by the inscription on his mausoleum in the Hillside Memorial Park Cemetery in Los Angeles, which reads "A Gentle Man". In his will, he arranged for delivery of one red rose to his wife Mary, each day, for the rest of her life.

What more can be said about Jack Benny? Very little -- but never enough!

The late Dr. Beckett was first introduced to OTR in 1940, as he sat in front of his own living room radio. Even while he was studying for his doctoral dissertation he was listening to OTR. Demanding work and other interest took him away from listening between WWII and the mid 1980's . But, has the good doctor says, "Once OTR is in your blood, it stays there forever. "

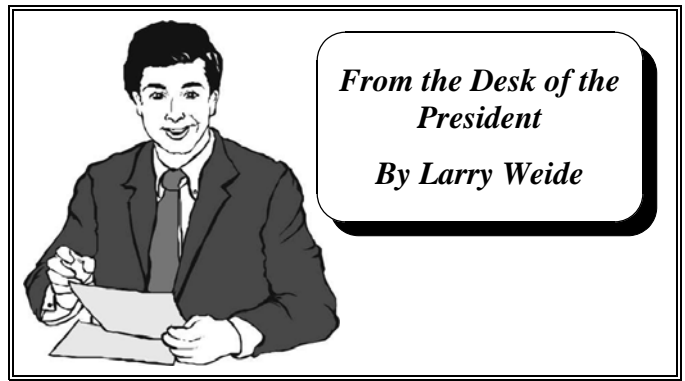
Name That Program Quiz

The following synopsis' describe the programs;:

1. Contestants tried to win prizes because of hardships
2. 1940's program dedicated to recounting achievements of young Americans
3. Newspaper syndicate sends "Quiz Quisinberry" around the world to report on people in countries friendly to Allies.
4. Exceptionally intelligent kids answered questions
5. First Afro-American soap
6. Story of orphan girl from mining town
7. About newspaper columnist who combs Chicago streets looking story
8. Adventures of 3 men who met in oriental prison
9. Person whose duty it was to prosecute to the limit of the law

Quiz Answers

1. Strike It Rich
2. Salute To Youth
3. Passport For Adams
4. Quiz Kinds .
5. We Live And Learn
6. Our Gal Sunday
7. Night Beat
8. I Love A Mystery
9. Mr. District Attorney



*From the Desk of the
President*

By Larry Weide

Hello everyone and happy new year!

I suppose it comes as no surprise to tell you what sorrow and shock it's been for all of us folks on the RWUN staff and RHAC Board to learn of Fred Hobb's passing. I have no further information about Fred's demise since the family has requested respectful privacy.

I can tell you what a joy it was to work with this man. His dedication, skill, wit and professionalism was a clinic for us all. He made our newsletter and internet show better than their parts.

If you haven't done so already, you can hear many of our Fred Hobbs hosted internet shows on our own web site at www.rhac.org. As Fred would always say at the show's sign-off, "Just click on the show tab ... and enjoy".

As we go to press with this issue of the newsletter, it's not clear how the newsletter and the internet show will continue. Since we currently do not have an editor we have printed some our favorite stories from the past to fill this edition. The internet show, that aired in December, was recorded without Fred, and as yet we do not have an on-air host.

You'll also notice that starting this month we're doubling up on the media catalog index pages. It happens that there are more additions queued up to go into to our libraries than there is time to print their catalog pages in 2015 - at the current rate of two pages per newsletter. So as long as we own these new shows we want to give members a better chance to get them.

Larry

TAPE 2049 THE UNEXPECTED

1200'

- | | | |
|----|-------|----------------------------|
| 1L | 1947: | #116: Easy Money |
| | 1947 | #117: Free Passage |
| | 1947 | #118: Re-Match |
| | 1947 | #119: Sweet Sixteen |
| 2L | 1947 | #120: Shipwreck |
| | 1947 | #121: The Winfield Diamond |
| | 1947 | #122: Jailbreak |
| | 1947 | #123: The Tulip Garden |
| 1R | 1947 | #124: The Revere Cup |
| | 1947 | #125: Silver Fox |
| | 1947 | #126: Masterpiece |
| | 1947 | #127: Two Of A Kind |
| 2R | 1947 | #128: Counterfeit |
| | 1947 | #129: Passport To Danger |
| | 1947 | #130: Voodoo Night |
| | 1947 | #131: Mirage |

TAPE 2050 THE UNEXPECTED/ADVENTURE TRAILS/COMIC WEEKLY MAN

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|--|
| 1L | 1947: | UNEXPECTED #132: Nightmare |
| | 1947 | UNEXPECTED #133: Handle With Care |
| | 1947 | UNEXPECTED #134: Heat Wave |
| | 1947 | UNEXPECTED #135: Twilight Meeting |
| 2L | 1947 | UNEXPECTED #136: Heard But Not Seen |
| | 1947 | UNEXPECTED #137: Career Woman |
| | 1947 | UNEXPECTED #138: The Necklace |
| | 03-22-46 | ADVENTURE TRAILS: Stampede On The Chisholm Trail |
| 1R | 02-04-51 | COMIC WEEKLY MAN Pgm 198: Hopalong Cassidy, Prince Valiant, Blondie, Etc |
| | 02-11-51 | COMIC WEEKLY MAN Pgm 199: Hopalong Cassidy, Prince Valiant, Dick's Adv, Etc |
| 2R | 02-18-51 | COMIC WEEKLY MAN Pgm 200: Hopalong Cassidy, Prince Valiant, Uncle Remus, Etc |
| | 02-25-51 | COMIC WEEKLY MAN Pgm 201: Hopalong Cassidy, Prince Valiant, Uncle Remus, Etc |

TAPE 2051 CALL FOR MUSIC [SHORE/JAMES/MERCER]

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 1L | 04-09-48 | 1 ST : Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie |
| | 04-20-48 | 1 ST : I Cried For You |
| 2L | 04-27-48 | 1 ST : You Were Meant For Me |
| | 05-04-48 | 1 ST : Highway To Love |
| 1R | 05-11-48 | 1 ST : Heartbreaker |
| | 05-18-48 | 1 ST : Toolie Oohlie Doolie |
| 2R | 05-25-48 | 1 ST : Steppin' Out With My Baby |
| | 06-01-48 | 1 ST : Throw 'Em In The Deep Blue Sea |

TAPE 2052 THE SHADOW**1200'**

- | | | |
|----|----------|---------------------------|
| 1L | 06-05-38 | Tenor With A Broken Voice |
| | 07-03-38 | The Voice Of The Trumpet |
| 2L | 07-24-38 | Mark Of The Bat |
| | 09-11-38 | Witch Drums |
| 1R | 09-25-38 | Traffic In Death |
| | 10-02-38 | Black Abbot |
| 2R | 12-04-38 | Murder In E Flat |
| | 01-15-39 | Ghosts Can Kill |

TAPE 2053 THE SHADOW**1200'**

- | | | |
|----|----------|-------------------------|
| 1L | 02-05-39 | Ghost Of Captain Bayloe |
| | 03-12-39 | Appointment With Death |
| 2L | 03-19-39 | Can The Dead Talk? |
| | 03-17-40 | Murderer's Vanity |
| 1R | 10-27-40 | Mark Of The Black Widow |
| | 11-10-40 | Carnival Of Death |
| 2R | 01-12-41 | Ghost Building |
| | 03-16-41 | The Ghost Walks Again |

TAPE 2054 THE SHADOW**1200'**

- | | | |
|----|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1L | 02-01-42 | The Return Of Anatole Chevanic |
| | 03-12-44 | Death To The Shadow |
| 2L | 05-26-46 | They Killed With A Silver Hatchet |
| | 10-20-46 | Blood Money |
| 1R | 12-01-46 | Makeup For Murder |
| | 12-29-46 | The Shadow Of Suspicion |
| 2R | 11-16-47 | Doom And The Limping Man |
| | 01-25-48 | The House That Death Built |

TAPE 2055 THE SHADOW**1200'**

- | | | |
|----|----------|--------------------------|
| 1L | 01-11-48 | The Bones Of The Dragon |
| | 03-21-48 | Death Coils To Strike |
| 2L | 04-04-48 | The Ghost That Gleams |
| | 05-09-48 | Reflections Of Death |
| 1R | 05-16-48 | The Giant Of Madras |
| | 09-12-48 | Murder At Dead Man's Inn |
| 2R | 10-03-48 | The Phantom Racketeer |
| | 10-31-48 | Murder By A Corpse |

TAPE 2056 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

1L	11-21-48	Health Food Diet
	11-28-48	Washing Dishes - Phil Leaving Alice?
2L	12-12-48	Babysitting
	12-19-48	Christmas w/ Jack Benny
1R	12-26-48	No Presents From Rexall
	01-02-49	Letter From Uncle Sam
2R	01-09-49	The Lost Ring
	01-16-49	Invitation To Truman's Inaugural Ball

TAPE 2057 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

1L	01-23-49	President Truman's Inaugural Ball w/ Fred Allen
	01-30-49	The Fire Chief
2L	02-06-49	Remley Gets Fired
	02-13-49	Valentines Day - Flowers For Alice
1R	02-20-49	Remley Moves In - Jury Duty
	02-27-49	Remley In Residence - Telephone Bets
2R	03-06-49	Phil And Remely Hang Wallpaper
	03-13-49	Remley Is Rehired As Dishwasher

TAPE 2058 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

1L	03-20-49	Alice's Birthday - Small Country Home
	03-27-49	Conflicting Vacation Plans
2L	05-29-49	The Family Picnic
	06-05-49	Phil's Tonsillectomy
1R	06-12-49	The Foster Parent
	06-19-49	Father's Day
2R	06-26-49	The Option
	09-18-49	Phil Returns From Vacation

TAPE 2059 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

1L	09-25-49	The Rexall Office
	10-02-49	A Car For Alice
2L	10-09-49	Phil's Beauty Shop Appointment
	10-16-49	A Fight In The Market
1R	10-23-49	Mr. Scott's Formal Party
	10-30-49	Ukulele Lessons
2R	11-06-49	The Television Test
	11-13-49	Rewiring The House

TAPE 2060 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|--|
| 1L | 11-20-49 | Talent Scout |
| | 11-27-49 | Lady Wrestler |
| 2L | 10-22-50 | Brownie's Camping Trip |
| | 10-29-50 | A Sick Phil Harris |
| 1R | 11-05-50 | Getting Out The Vote |
| | 11-12-50 | About Mentioning The Sponsor's Name |
| 2R | 11-19-50 | Alice And The Kids Going To Palm Springs |
| | 11-26-50 | The Big Game On A New Television Set |

TAPE 2061 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1L | 12-03-50 | What Is "The Thing" |
| | 12-10-50 | Watering The Lawn |
| 2L | 12-17-50 | Buying A Christmas Present |
| | 12-24-50 | Annual Christmas Show w/ Andy Devine |
| 1R | 12-31-50 | Mr. Scott's New Year's Party |
| | 01-07-51 | Cutting The Band's Wages |
| 2R | 01-14-51 | The New Singer |
| | 01-21-51 | The Pony |

TAPE 2062 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 1L | 01-28-51 | Red Cross Blood Drive |
| | 02-04-51 | Helping Alice With The Household Budget |
| 2L | 02-11-51 | Are Phil And Alice Legally Married? |
| | 02-18-51 | Entertaining At An Army Camp |
| 1R | 02-25-51 | The Golf Game |
| | 03-04-51 | Waiting For Darryl Zanuck's Call |
| 2R | 03-11-51 | Phil, The Dramatic Actor |
| | 03-18-51 | Spring Is In The Air |

TAPE 2063 PHIL HARRIS ALICE FAYE SHOW

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|---------------------------|
| 1L | 03-25-51 | Frankie And Easter Dinner |
| | 04-01-51 | The Song Writers |
| 2L | 04-08-51 | Selling RCA TV Sets |
| | 04-15-51 | Joining A Country Club |
| 1R | 04-22-51 | Improvement Is Necessary |
| | 04-29-51 | Beautiful Child Contest |
| 2R | 05-06-51 | Vacation Plans |
| | 05-13-51 | Hired Mothers |

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