

SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM

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Vol. 21, No. 6

The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy

June 1995

Can you identify these radio performers?



Here's a great way to test your knowledge of performers from radio's early days. Can you name all four of these people? Just about everyone in SPERDVAC should know at least two of them. If you can't identify any of them, you're either too young or way too old. (Bonus question: Can you hear their voices in your "mind's ear"?)

Jack Manning guests June 10

Radio actor Jack Manning will be SPERDVAC's guest when he joins us at our June 10 meeting. Manning, who many members met when he appeared in our re-creation of *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* during our last convention, will discuss his work on many of the top New York-based network radio shows.

The meeting begins at 12 noon at the South Pasadena Public Library's community room, 1115 El Centro, South Pasadena. The public is invited to this free event.

SPERDVAC library rental fees

Archives & Hollywood Museum libraries—\$5.50 for five cassettes.

General Library cassettes—\$8.75 for 5 reels worth of cassettes (usually 15 cassettes)

General Library open reel—\$10 for five reels.

Archives Library reels—\$7 for five reels.

MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

A family emergency will keep librarian Bruce Miller from being able to process Archives cassette 1484+ orders for about three weeks. Bruce also prepares loan copies of cassettes for the General Library, too, so a catalog page will not be ready this month.

An unexpected family emergency is forcing Carolyn Rawski to resign from the SPERDVAC Board of Directors. Carolyn will also be unable to run the convention registration table at our upcoming OTR convention. We hope members will recognize that SPERDVAC functions via a few volunteers' free time. Unfortunately, unavoidable situations will impact our progress.

SPERDVAC FRIENDS

Bob & Ginnie Newhart
(In memory of Bill Quinn)

Walter Bunker
(In memory of Garry Moore & Pat Buttram)

Millie Morse
(In memory of Carlton E. Morse)

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(In memory of Hobart Donovan)

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(In memory of John McIntire, Jerry Hausner and Bud Heistand)

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(In memory of William Conrad)

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(In memory of Nila Mack)

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(In memory of Dick Mack)

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(In memory of William Conrad)

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(In memory of Andre Baruch & John Zoller)

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(In memory of Cathy Lewis & Elliott Lewis)

Seaman Jacobs
(In memory of Olan Soule & Pat Buttram)

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(In memory of Bob Sweeney & Elliott Lewis)

Phil Cohan
(In memory of Garry Moore & Jimmy Durante)

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(Matching fund in memory of Irene Tedrow)

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(In memory of William Conrad, Howard McNear & Frank Thomas Sr.)

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(In memory of Brace Beemer)

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(In memory of Margery Wright Scott)

Chuck Benedict
(In memory of Jimmy Lyons & Vincent Pelletier)

Mary Jane Croft
(In memory of Elliott Lewis)

Harry Bartell
(In memory of William N. Robson)

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(In memory of Arch Oboler)

Jack Brown
Joe Walker
Gary Papers
Alice Backes
Lucia Silvestri
Bob Hite
Betsy Weinberg
Jonathon Hole
Dick Murphy
Himan Brown



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Christopher Conrad
Russell J. Folsom
Bob LeMond
Dix Davis
Gil Stratton
Gary Floyd
Forest Owen
John Wrisley
Doris Singleton Issacs

SPERDVAC is very grateful to these individuals who have contributed \$50 or more to our organization during the past twelve months. Tax-deductible donations, payable to SPERDVAC, should be mailed to Carolyn Rawski. (See SPERDVAC Directory.)

Crime Classics log

The series aired on CBS in the 1953-54 season under the direction of Elliott Lewis. Ken McMannus was the assistant director for most of the programs. The music was by Bernard Herrmann. The host, Thomas Hyland, is portrayed on each show by Lou Merrill. The scripts were written by the famed radio writers Morton Fine and David Friedkin. Bob Lemond was the announcer on most shows.

"The Crime of Bathsheba Spooner" (audition show) 12-3-52

"The Crime of Bathsheba Spooner" (#1) 6-15-53

"The Shockingly Peaceful Passing of Thomas Edwin Bartlett, Greengrocer" (#2) 6-22-53

"The Checkered Life and Sudden Death of Col. James Fiske, Jr." (#3) 6-29-53

"The Shrapnelled Body of Charles Drew, Sr." (#4) 7-6-53

"The Terrible Deed of Doctor Webster" (#5) 7-13-53

"The Death of a Picture Hanger" (#6) 7-20-53

"The Final Day of Gen. Ketchum, and How He Died" (#7) 7-27-53

"Mr. Thrower's Hammer" (#8) 8-3-53

"The Axe and the Droot Family: How They Fared" (#9) 8-10-53

"The Incredible Trial of Laura D. Fair" (#10) 8-17-53

"The Alsop Family: How it Diminished and Grew Again" (#11) 8-24-53

"Your Loving Son, Nero" (#12) 8-31-53

"The Torment of Henrietta Robinson, and Why She Killed" (#13) 9-7-53

"The Bloody, Bloody Banks of Fall River" (#14) 9-14-53

"The Hangman and William Palmer: Who Won" (#15) 10-7-53

"The Seven Layered Arsenic Cake of Madame LaFarge" (#16) 10-14-53

"Billy Bonny Bloodletter...Also Known as 'The Kid'" (#17) 10-21-53

"John Hayes...His Head...and How They Were Parted" (#18) 10-28-53

"Raschi Among the Crocodiles, and the Prank He Played" (#19) 11-4-53

"Blackbeard's Fourteenth Wife: Why She Was No Good for Him" (#20) 11-11-53

"The Triangle on the Round Table" (#21) 11-18-53

"The Killing Story of William Corder and the Farmer's Daughter" (#22) 11-25-53

"If a Body Needs a Body, Just Call Burke and Hare" (#23) 12-2-53

"The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln" (#24) 12-9-53

"John and Judith, Their Crime, And Why They Didn't Get to Enjoy it" (#25) 12-16-53

"Coyle and Richardson...Why They Hung in a Spanking Breeze" (#26) 12-30-53

"The Younger Brothers: Why Some of Them Grew No Older" (#27) 1-6-54

"How Supan Got the Hook Outside Bombay" (#28) 1-13-54

"Madeline Smith, Maid or Murderess: Which?" (#29) 1-20-54

"The Boorn Brothers and the Hangman: A Study in Nip and Tuck" (#30) 1-27-54

"The Incredible History of John Shephard" (#31) 2-3-54

"Twenty-Three Knives Against Caesar" (#32) 2-10-54

"Jean Baptiste Troppmann: Killer of Many" (#33) 2-17-54

"The Good Ship Jane: Why She Became Flotsam" (#34) 2-24-54

"Roger Nems: How He, Though Dead, Won the Game" (#35) 3-3-54

"New Hampshire, The Tiger and Brad Ferguson: What Happened Then" (#36) 3-10-54

"Old Sixtoes: How He Stopped Construction on the B. B. C. and I" (#37) 3-17-54

"Francisco Pizarro: His Heart on a Golden Knife" (#38) 3-24-54

"Robby-Boy Balfour: How He Wrecked a Big Prison's Reputation" (#39) 3-31-54

"The General's Daughter, the Czar's Lieutenant and the Linen Closet: A Russian Tragedy" (#40) 4-7-54

"James Evans, Fireman: How He Extinguished a Human Torch" (#41) 4-14-54

"Cesare Borgia: His Most Difficult Murder" (#42) 4-21-54

"Widow Magee and the Three Gypsies...A Vermont Fandango" (#43) 4-28-54

"Bunny Baumler: His Close Brush With Fame" (#44) 5-5-54

"Mr. Clarke's Skeleton in Mr. Aram's Closet: The Noise it Made" (#45) 5-12-54

"The Lethal Habit of the Marquise de Brinvilliers" (#46) 5-26-54

"Mr. Jonathon Jewett: How, Most Peculiarly, He Cheated the Hangman" (#47) 6-2-54

"The Assassination of Leon Trotsky" (#48) 6-9-54

"The Death of a Baltimore Birdie and Friend" (#49) 6-16-54

"Ali Pasha, a Turkish Delight" (#50) 6-23 54

"Good Evening, My Name is Jack the Ripper" (#51) 6-30-54 (Final broadcast of the series.)

Radio show re-creations set for SPERDVAC convention

SPERDVAC will re-create **Space Patrol** at our Nov. 3-5 old-time radio convention. Ed Kemmer, Commander Buzz Corey on the sci-fi adventure series, will be joined by Norman Jolley (a writer of some **Space Patrol** scripts and actor on the program), sound effects expert Ray Erlenborn and announcer Dick Tufeld.

SPERDVAC's annual convention will begin in the afternoon Friday, Nov. 3. The gathering will conclude about 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 5. Convention chair Larry Gassman expects to announce two additional vintage radio program re-creations within two months.

Volunteers will be needed to assist at SPERDVAC's registration table and in the Collectors' Room we will have set up. We are looking for

members who will contribute one or two hours during the convention.

Also, we need volunteers to help us unload engineering equipment prior to the convention and/or load the equipment following the convention. We expect to unload equipment (speakers, microphones, tape machines and sound board) for about 90 minutes beginning 12 noon Friday, Nov. 3. The convention will conclude by 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 5. Load of equipment after the convention is expected to take about one hour.

With several volunteers, SPERDVAC will be able to present another smooth-running convention which everyone attending can enjoy. Without extra volunteers, we will be more likely to encounter unnecessary problems.

Members planning to attend the SPERDVAC convention Nov. 3-5 are encouraged to contact us for additional details. Convention chair Larry Gassman will be glad to hear from volunteers at (310) 947-9800.

Pre-convention registration fees are \$110 for members and their guests. The pre-convention rate for non-members is \$125. The at-the-door registration fee will be \$145.

Our salute to early radio will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 5985 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles. The convention site is a brief shuttle ride from Los Angeles International Airport. Out of town guests may want to contact the hotel for overnight reservations. The Crowne Plaza Hotel's reservation desk phone number is (800) 255-7606.

These programs are available from the General Library

Tape 1803

- a. **Cowboy Hit Parade** 6-4-1948 KRKD. Features Cliffie Stone, Eddie Kirk, Merle Travis, The Sunshine Boys, Judy Hayden, The Johnson Family.
- b. **Dinner Bell Round-up Time** 11-25-1948, KXLA. Thanksgiving show. Features Cliffie Stone, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Herman the Hermit, Wes Tuttle, The Armstrong Twins. 60 minutes.
- c. **Cliffie Stone Show** 5-29-1949 KFVD, Los Angeles. 60 minutes.

Tape 1804

- a. **Hometown Jamboree** 7-4-1949. Features Cliffie Stone, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Bucky Tibbs, Merle Travis, Red Murrell and The Armstrong Twins. 60 minutes.
- b. **Cowboy Hit Parade** 2-18-1949, KFVD. Features Cliffie Stone, Dorothy (Mrs. Cliffie) Stone, Wesley and Marilyn Tuttle.
- c. **Hometown Jamboree** 9-10-1949, KXLA. Features Cliffie Stone, Eddie Kirk, The Armstrong Twins, Terry Preston (Ferlin Husky), Betsy Gaye.
- d. **Hometown Jamboree** 10-7-1950. Features Cliffie Stone, Les "Carrot-top" Anderson, Squeakin' Deacon, and Bucky Tibbs. Simulcast on KXLA, Pasadena and KLAC-TV, Los Angeles. 60 minutes.

Tape 1805 FORD THEATRE (60 min. each) NBC

- a. "The Adventure of the Bad Boy" 1-4-1948. Stars Hugh Marlow, Santos Ortega, Ted DeCorsia, Charlotte Keene, Brad Barker, Harold Dearenforth, Sarah Fussell, John Gibson, Avril Harris, Jane Houston, Anne Seymour, Walter Vaughn and Guy Wallace.
- b. "Laura" 5-30-1948. Stars Virginia Gilmore, John Larkin and Ivor Francis with Betty Garde, Alan Hewitt, Charles Mendic, Charles Pennman and Anne Seymour.
- c. "My Sister Eileen" 6-13-1948. Stars Shirley Booth and Virginia Gilmore with Daniel Occo, Carl Eastman, Gary Merrill, Ted DeCorsia, Arthur Q. Bryan, Barry Dorg, Larry Haynes, Arnold Moss, Maurice Franklin and Jose Lemay.

Tape 1806 FORD THEATRE (60 min. each) NBC

- a. "The Front Page" 5-9-1948. Stars John Larkin, Everette Sloane and Ed Begley with Ted Osborne and Mary Patton. Sound quality fluctuates during first few minutes.
- b. "Counselor-at-Law" 5-16-1948. Stars Les Tremayne and Doris Dalton.
- c. "A Star is Born" 5-23-1948. Stars Elaine Rost, James Meehan, Ed Jerome and Mason Adams.

Look for Mysterious Traveler, Weird Circle and Studio One broadcasts in upcoming catalog pages.



McGee's Closet is a free service to our members and honorary members. Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P. O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Please specify desired taping format (cassette, open reel or DAT).

FOR SALE: Sixteen inch turntables. Contact: Ken Ackerman at (415) 456-4604 or FAX (415) 459-3633.

WANTED: Cassette or open reel copies of any broadcast featuring Sybil Jason. Will buy or trade. Contact: Edgar L. Bullington, 905 Paseo Grande Circle, Duarte, CA 91010-2316.

WANTED: Irvin S. Cobb, the humorist, writer and actor, appeared on radio in 1936 on **Paducah Plantation** (NBC, 10:30 p.m. EST). I will welcome any information on Cobb and/or his radio activities. Contact: Charles Thurman, 2849 Cairo Road, Paducah, KY 42001.

WANTED: Pictures and/or biographical information on OTR actors Bob Bailey, Les Damon, Bill Johnstone and Brett Morrison (as well as others). Is there a source or book available? Contact: Bruce R. Glazer, 531 Fruit Street, Mansfield, MA 02048, or via E-mail at: Glazer@meol.mass.edu

WANTED: Radio program seeks radio station for long term committed relationship. "Just Plain Folk Tales," a New England-based radio comedy series seeks introductions to program directors at radio stations that carry programs from radio's golden age. Demo tapes and marketing information available. Contact: Alan Tyler, 96 Camp St., Providence, RI 02906, (401) 273-2147.

Upcoming SPERDVAC meetings

- June 10 — South Pasadena Public Library
- July 8 — South Pasadena Public Library
- Aug. 12 — Farmers & Merchants Bank, Seal Beach
- Sept. 9 — South Pasadena Public Library
- Oct. 14 — St. Andrews Lutheran Church
- Nov. 3, 4, 5 — SPERDVAC convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles

SPERDVAC Directory

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SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS: P. O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7177. (310) 947-9800.

MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS: Carrolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406-3041

RADIOGRAM EDITOR: Dan Haefele, 4366-D 136th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250-7108 (310) 973-5060

LIBRARIES:

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500: Bob Steinmetz, P. O. Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-0669

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000: Peggy DeShazo, 1804 N. 39th St., San Diego, CA 92105

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+: George Lovas, P. O. Box 3757, Crestline, CA 92325-3757

GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 1-500:

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GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 501 - 1500: Robert Meeker, 2861 Main Way Dr., Rossmoor, CA 90720

GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 1501+: Richard Novak, P.O. Box 33048, Riverside, CA 92519-3048

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500: Vahan Ouzoonian, 1565 E. Highland Ave., Redlands, CA 92374

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000: Gary Mollica, 135 N. Meredith Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106-2207.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001-1483: Dan Lippiatt, P.O. Box 3514, Simi Valley, CA 93093-3514

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1484+: Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-2725.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Open reels 1-1000: CLOSED

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Open reels 1001+: Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031-0628.

HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Cassettes only: Glenda Kelly, 2323 Ralston Ln., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-5219.

PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY: Tom Brown, 1402 S. Kahuna Dr., Spokane, WA 99212.

VIDEO LIBRARY: Jerry Williams, 381 Table Mountain, Oroville, CA 95965.

AUDIO RADIOGRAM: Send C-90 cassette in returnable mailer to Stuart Lubin, 627 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036. (213) 653-2548. (For blind members only.)

AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS: Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison Ave., Port Orchard, WA 98366-3321

MEMBERSHIP BADGES: Send \$5.00 each to Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221.

ACQUISITIONS: (Discs, tapes & printed materials): John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603. (310) 947-9800 for both General and Archives Libraries.

CATALOGS: Ted Theodore, 1175 Brockton St., El Cajon, CA 92020-1706.

The radio accomplishments of David Ellis

by Dan Haefele

Radio show collectors are most familiar with David Ellis through his role of Captain Friday on the **Adventures by Morse** series. At SPERDVAC's last convention, we introduced fans to Ellis' writing talents.

Ellis was a Chicago native who studied acting and writing at Northwestern University. As part of his course requirements, he wrote scripts for **Northwestern University Radio Playshop** in 1942. He also wrote material for **WGN Bondwagon**, a 1943 special to raise War Bond sales.

After a short stint in Chicago-based radio, he came to Hollywood.

On the air, Ellis' forte was dramatic performances. His credits included **Hollywood Star Playhouse**, **The Clock**, **NBC University Theatre** and **Dark Venture**.

In a 1945 interview, Ellis said his biggest thrill in radio was appearing with Jimmy Wallington on a broadcast of **This is My Best**, the Orson Welles series which originated at CBS' Studio A.

"The last time I was in California, when I was about 15 years old, a studio cop kicked me out of that same studio and told me to stay out, I didn't belong there," he told *Radio Life*.

Ellis was the lead on **Doctor Paul** and performed on the series **Twelve Players**. Once he stepped in for Joseph Kearns as the Man in Black on a **Suspense** broadcast.

Ellis wrote the two-part "Earth Abides" aired on two consecutive **Escape** broadcasts. He also wrote "Conquest" for **Escape** and three programs for the NBC series

Confession.

In 1951 he wrote a story titled "The Twist is Murder," which was scheduled for a **Suspense** show starring Howard Duff. Today, no one recalls why, but the show was never aired.

Ellis teamed with writer Gil Doud to write scripts for **Yours Truly**, **Johnny Dollar** in 1950. Most of those programs are now in SPERDVAC's General Library.

Perhaps Ellis' most impressive radio writing was his play "Apology,"

written for the **Philip Morris Playhouse** production of April 1, 1949. SPERDVAC chose that script and his **Johnny Dollar** script "The Harold Trandem Matter" for re-creations at our 1994 convention.

"Apology" is a gripping story of a man who murders his wife, then is stalked by his father-in-law. Elliott Lewis played the lead on the original broadcast and Larry Dobkin starred in the SPERDVAC re-creation.

Ellis' son Jeffrey has given us copies of his father's scripts.

The story of my father

by Jeffrey Ellis

Editor's note: After SPERDVAC highlighted the work of the late writer-actor David Ellis at our 1994 convention, Ellis' son Jeffrey sent us this memory of his father, which he considered reading at one of the convention re-creations of his father's radio work.

I would like to tell you the story of my father's life. My father died in 1966 at the age of 43. But this is not just the story of one who died young. Many of us die young. It is the story of a man whose soul was murdered — by our own government.

John Donne wrote: "Do not ask for whom the bell tolls — it tolls for thee." When the death bells of ignorance, hatred and suspicion of our fellow men ring, they toll for us all.

In 1952, at the age of only 26, my father was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee. This was after having written the **Philip Morris Playhouse** story "Apology," after having written ten **Nightbeat** shows, a dozen **Johnny Dollar** scripts plus **Suspense**, **Adventures of Sam Spade** and many others (including the **Hollywood Star Theatre** production "Sacrifice.")

This was after being one of the brightest lights of the unsung heroes of radio performers, acting in starring roles in such shows as **Adventures by Morse**, **Hopalong Cassidy**, **Screen Directors' Playhouse**, **Hollywood Star Theatre**, **Twelve Players**, **Road of Life**, **Escape**, **Nightbeat**, and many others.

And he was about to leave radio for a new career in television, with a brand new contract from CBS in his hand. The day after my father's testimony, his contract with CBS was canceled. His career was over, his dream was shattered — his life was ruined.

My father was a martyr to The Cause of Freedom.

It would not be until the 1960s that he began to find work again, winning the **Writer's Guild Award**, posthumously, in 1966. By then it was too late. He was already gone.

Tonight I ask you to remember him — and what happened not just to him but to the thousands of other artists — writers, directors and performers, some of whom are sitting among us right now.

Please remember him as his dream re-awakens in this room tonight.

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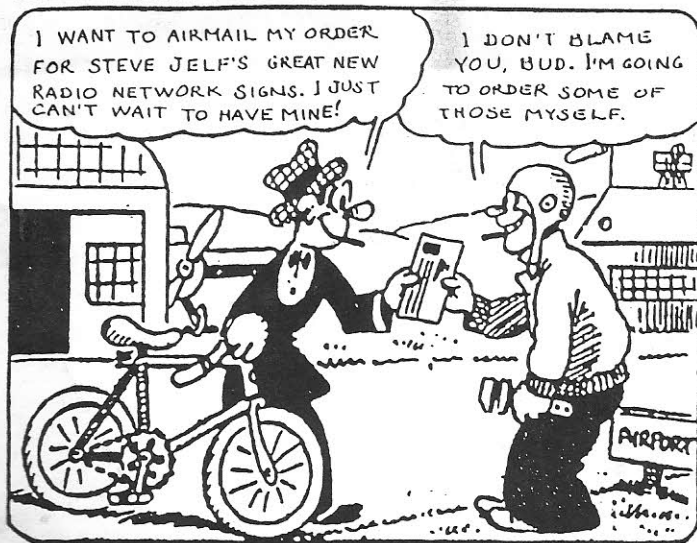
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