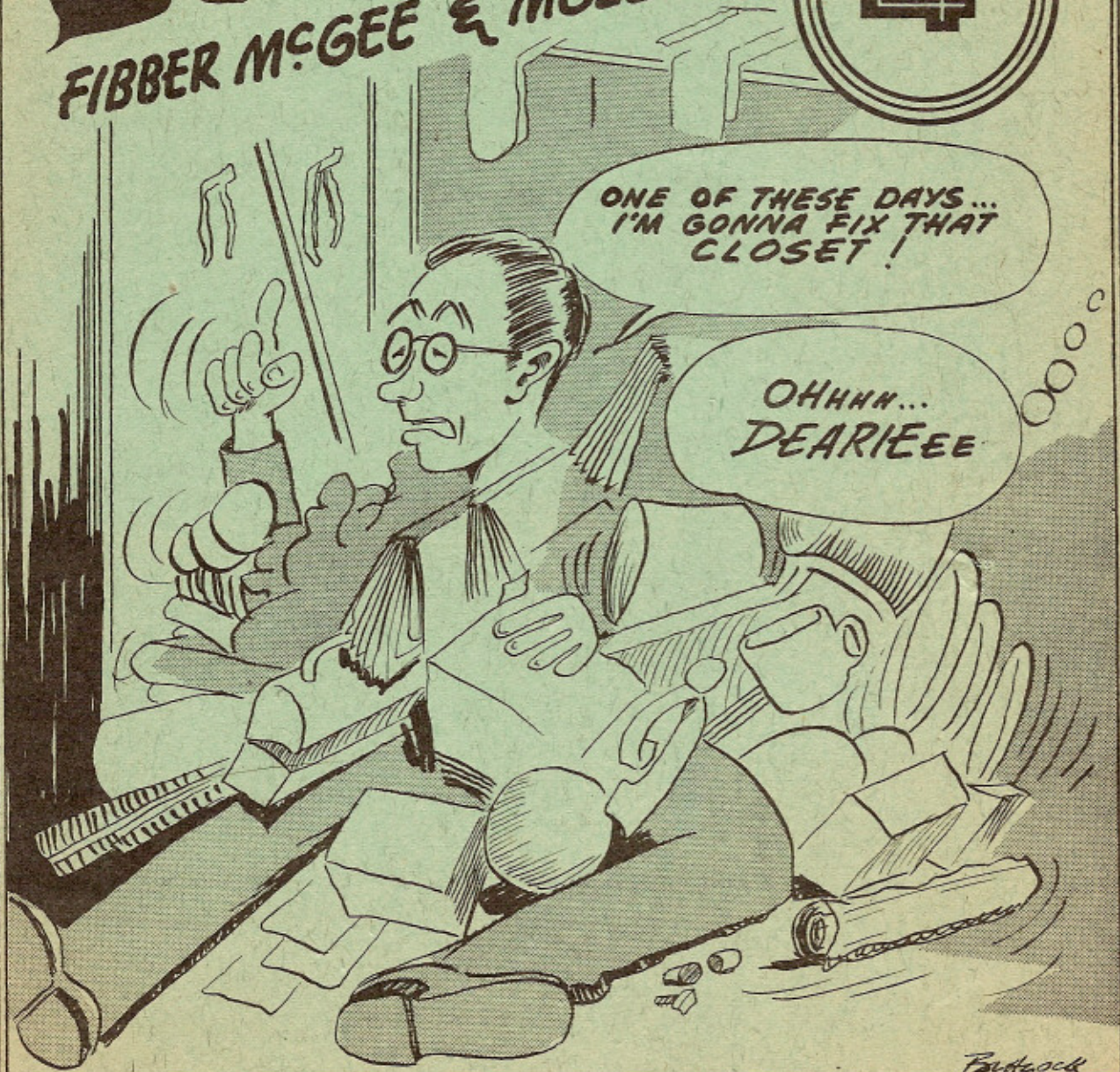


# EPILOGUE

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY.....

4





## IT HAPPENED ON TUESDAY NIGHT....

A sidewise glance at our guests  
of honor, cleverly composed....

Although the main article on the life and times of Fibber McGee and spouse covered in fair detail the facts behind the program's creation and popularity..... there are numerous fascinating facets hidden away in the dark tunnels of that lost era of network radio. Details which many of us might have at one time or other pondered in the form of questions...but questions to which we never really expected an answer.

It is in this area of knowledge that I would like to delve. Odd pieces of information which I ran across in the course of researching the program. I hope you find them interesting.

For instance, do any of you know the middle name of the gentleman who occupied the position of water commissioner for the hamlet of Summerfield for so many years on NBC (after several previous years as a resident of Wistful Vista)? I refer, of course, to Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, the marvelous creation of Hal Peary. What about that P? Peter. Paul; Porter? None of these! The truth came out in the Fibber broadcast of October 22, 1940. Mr. McGee had somehow come into the possession of Gildersleeve's personal diary (he stopped short of theft in acquiring it..but barely). When the latter found out, he was slightly less than pleased...but ever resourceful Molly rescued the day by convincing Throcky that Fibber had altruistic motives (he was merely planning to sell the book for publication, thereby making Gildersleeve a rich man). Mrs. McGee, on the phone supposedly to the publisher...carried on the following conversation:

- Molly: "The diary belongs to a next door neighbor, Mr. Gildersleeve. No.... Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve. What? Well, just a minute, he's right here. What does the 'P' stand for, Mr. Gildersleeve?"
- Gildy: "Uh...'Philharmonic'. My father played the oboe in Philadelphia! But who wants to know?!"
- Molly: "Hello? It's 'Throckmorton Philharmonic Gildersleeve'. No, I think the diary is the only thing he's written."
- Fibber: "Hey, what's the idea?!"
- Molly: "Oh, we knew it had great literary merit the minute we got ahold of it. Yes indeed. No...oh no, I'm sure he wouldn't sell the rights to it."
- Gildy: "Here, here...wait a minute, by George...I don't know whether I would."
- Fibber: "Pipe down, Gildersleeve, you don't know what this is all about..... either."
- Molly: "Yes? Well, I'll inquire, but I don't think \$10,000 in royalties would interest him at all."
- Gildy: "Say...\$10,000..I.."
- Molly: "Allrighty...oh, don't mention it. Goodbye. Allright, McGee...give the big crybaby his diary and let him go home."
- Fibber: "Now wait a minute, folks...hmm..\$10,000. Maybe I was a bit hasty! What about this about a publisher wanting my diary?"
- Molly: "Oh, what difference does it make anyway? No publisher would touch the thing in its present form...and it would cost \$25 to make carbon copies of it."
- Gildy: "Oh, I'll gladly pay that! Here's \$30...you do what you can to promote it for me, and I'll give you a generous slice of the profit. Is it a deal?"



Molly: "Well, I don't know. After the way you acted..."  
Gildy: "Oh, I'm sorry about that, Mrs. McGee...I really am. I was a bounder. Gildersleeve, you're a cad! I'm going to leave my diary here, folks. Now I'll go and leave you to your work. I don't know how to thank you...both. Good Day."

Of course, Molly hadn't been talking to anyone even remotely connected with the publishing business. In fact, the party on the line was the phone company itself...calling to warn that the McGee's service would be cut off if they didn't pay their bill!

The broadcast of April 15, 1941 was to go down in history as a most fateful one. Fibber had been to see the oculist...who had squirted drops in the eyes of the squirt (I'm sorry...I couldn't resist that line). McGee couldn't see too well because of the liquid...and he and his wife were on the prowl for a few hours before the Doctor was to complete the examination. The following scene took place midway in the program as the pair was preparing to leave a restaurant:

Molly: "Can I help you with your coat, dearie?"  
Fibber: "No, thanks...I got it."  
Molly: "You've got it, alright. You've got it inside out."  
Fibber: "Huh?!"  
Molly: "Here, let me....McGee, this isn't your coat!"  
Fibber: "It isn't? Well, where is mine...I put it right on that rack there."  
Molly: "Oh, dear...somebody must have taken yours by mistake and left this one. Look...here's the owner's name on the inside of the pocket. It's Wallace Wimple."  
Fibber: "Wallace Wimple, eh? Well, whoever he is, he's got a lot of moxy swiping my coat. Just wait till I get my hands on that guy...he'll wish he'd never picked on..."

At that point, Harlow Wilcox interrupted with his usual jovial pitch for the "product". Fibber and Molly quizzed him about the mysterious Mr. Wimple..but to no avail. They then went through the character roles of Wistful Vista, but they could not locate him until they ran into Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve.

Gildy: "Wallace Wimple? Why, certainly...an old college chum of mine. Yes... he used to sleep in the seat next to me in Chapel."  
Molly: "For Goodness Sake...well, where does he live, Mr. Gildersleeve?"  
Gildy: "Wait a minute...I have it right here in my address book. W...W.... ah...here it is...Wally Wimple. 1345 Oak Street..."

That's right...the corner of 14th and Oak again. The McGees grabbed a taxi... and sped to the home of their soon to be old friend.

McGee: "Now you let me handle it. This guy might be a professional crook and I might have to get tough with him."  
Molly: "Well; what if he's a big bruiser?"  
McGee: "Well, I...uh..."  
Wimple: (Answering knock), "Yes?"  
McGee: "Hi, Bud...you Wallace Wimple?"  
Wimple: "Yes, I am."  
McGee: "Is he a big guy, Molly?" (McGee still can't see).  
Molly: "No, he's just a little guy, McGee."  
McGee: "Now look here, Wimple...you got a lot of nerve swipin' my coat outa that restaurant! I got a notion to kick you around and teach you respect for other propels privity (that's the way he said it). What's the idea of takin' my coat?!!!"



Wimple: "Well, bless my soul...I didn't even know I had taken the wrong one."  
Molly: "Well, uh...is this your coat, Mr. Wimple?"  
Wimple: "Oh, it certainly is...and thank you so much for returning it."  
McGee: "That all you got to say, Wimple? Ain't you gonna apologize?"  
Wimple: "Well, I certainly am. It was a very ridiculous mistake...but..at the time, I couldn't tell one coat from another."  
McGee: "Why not?"  
Wimple: "Well, I went to an Oculist this morning and he put some drops in my eyes...isn't that silly?!" (Howls of laughter...followed by a commercial for Johnson's Wax).

And thus was introduced one of the most permanent members of the McGee cast... who would be with the show till the end. On the subject of continuing characters, it was only a few months after the beginning of Wimple's part that Gildersleeve opened up shop on his own. When Fibber and Molly came back from their 1941 vacation (the exact date was September 30, 1941), "Throcky" popped in...but only for a moment.

Molly: "My, my...it's nice to see you, Mr. Gildersleeve. Won't you have a chair and a cup of tea?"  
Gildy: "No thank you, Mrs. McGee...I can't stay but for a minute...I just dropped in to say goodbye."  
Fibber: "Goodbye? Where ya goin'?"  
Gildy: "I'm not going! I've gone....heheheheh. I've moved to Summerfield. I'm managing the estate of my niece and nephew."  
Fibber: "Oh...well whatcha gonna do with your house here, Gildy? Sell it or rent it?"  
Gildy: "Sell it. Would you care to buy it as an investment?"  
Fibber: "Me? Why I wouldn't give you a nickle for that rat ridden rabbit hutch, Throcky. Remember when that house had an iron deer on the front lawn, Molly?"  
Molly: "Yes, what ever happened to it?"  
Fibber: "It looked around one day and took a look at that house and ran away!"

And so Fibber got in a dig even as Gildersleeve slipped away to Sunday night. Actually, there was one more brief exchange after the above barb...and Gildersleeve's very last action on the program was to open the hall closet...get buried...and proclaim, "McGee, aren't you ever gonna straighten out that closet?"

## EPILOGUE

is from George Jennings, 7605 Sandra, Little Rock, Arkansas (Zip 72209). This publication is devoted to the hobby of collecting and preserving network radio programs of the near past. This fanzine is totally non-profit, and achieves marvelous results in this direction. Price of each copy is 40¢. EPILOGUE is issued on a quarterly basis, with a current circulation of 400. Full page advertisement... \$17. Half page...\$9. Quarter page...\$4.50. This includes cost of layout and electronic stencilling. All income is put back into the fanzine to meet expenses, and, hopefully, to expand. No back issues available, nor will additional copies of this issue be sent out unless request is accompanied by cash. Sorry.

This issue dedicated to:

# HUGH CARLSON

Wistful Vista's Ambassador-at-Large.



OFF MIKE

MUTTERING



G. J. E. I. C.

With this issue, I am beginning what I hope to be the long standing practice of the zine...the utilization of a theme. In this case, the theme is present in only a couple of articles on the subject of Fibber and Molly...but for the future, perhaps many contributors could tie together their ideas into a neatly related package. Such themes as Horror in Radio (already touched upon), Radio Comedians as a category, Science-Fiction as practiced on the air (Meade Frier-son could probably compose the whole thing). With the marvelous art of Bill Blalock to act as a hinge for the written material, perhaps we could make this publication worthy of a place in every collector's reference library.

I have already chosen the general line for #5, but I'm open for suggestions as to the themes for future issues past that. Give me an idea what you would like to see researched, and I promise you to print more than just the first-glance type of details. Sources for an innumerable number of in depth articles on all facets of old time radio are easily at hand.

---

By the way, I'd like to clear up a couple of points: first, what you are reading is not an editorial column. It's merely a forum for me to express whatever random thoughts I have as I come close to completing each issue...sort of a letter to you all. At times, I might ramble a bit incoherently...but that's the fun of this thing (or at least part of it). Nor is EPILOGUE itself supposed to conform to normal rules and regulations for a fanzine. The only negative review I've received so far was based primarily on taking me to task for not trying to appeal to a mass audience in fandom. If the zine is enjoyed by existing collectors... and twinges the imagination a bit of the would-be old radio fans, I'll be most pleased. As to the appeal for general fandom...I would hope there is some, but old radio is the subject, after all...and I'm sure it bores some to tears.

---

I imagine that most of you have noticed the increasing commercialization of nostalgia. And I really mean "NOSTALGIA"! The kind that goes over big with the public at large, and makes a hell of a lot of money for those behind it. The prime example is, one would guess, the natural followup to the public's recent enchantment with old time radio (through Dave Goldin and those like him). That followup is, of course, old time Television. The best representative of that art is a tiny puppet by the name of "Howdy Doody", who has shown up in some of the strangest places recently. Such as in the embodiment of Buffalo Bob Smith on numerous college campuses, and most lately, as the subject of a top 40 record which is even being played on the station I work for. A recent article that ran across the country under the auspices of a major news service, states in part: "...from New England to California, college students are jamming old-style rock 'n' roll concerts, paying \$5 to see old Howdy Doody kinescopes, and sitting bleary-eyed through all-night movie orgies of Hopalong Cassidy episodes. Like their parents, who are harkening back to the Thirties and Forties for their fashions and plays, the students' nostalgia is selective. 'They don't remember the pimples,' said one professor. A student at New York University who paid \$5.50 to see a Buffalo Bob revival, said: 'I grew up with Howdy Doody and that show shaped my life in many ways. I cried when it went off the air in 1960. It was great to see Buffalo Bob again. But I got mugged on the way home. That shows how much the world has changed for the worse.'



Then, of course, the local "head shop" now carries duplicated posters of such classic films as, "King Kong"...and the books are coming out right and left on all sorts of subjects connected with the "good old days".

I would hope that the current mushrooming in the depth of old radio collecting will far outlast the temporary kick the rest of the world is on. Network Radio has been drawn into this fad...but the time will come, soon probably, when Mr. Average Citizen will tire of looking backward, and go on to the next "in" bit of culture, as dictated by those around him. Radio will be forgotten again by the masses (as will vintage television, and even Buffalo Bob), and its heritage will be left once more in our hands only. The hands of those of us who see a bit more than just a comfortable period in our past. Old Time Radio is...not exactly a cause, but it's close.

And in many instances (at least as far as I'm concerned), nostalgia doesn't enter the picture at all. I can enjoy immensely programs which I never heard originally. This is often the case, since I'm not really old enough to have been a listener to a great many shows. For instance, when Lum and Abner left the air, I was only 14...scarcely at an age where I could appreciate the old timers. Now, however, the recordings have enabled the two to sort of catch up with me. This is another reason why I feel it most important for tapes to be preserved...the massive potential audience who will someday be able to listen and enjoy strictly on the merits of the material. They'll be exposed to a method of communication which they otherwise would have missed entirely!

In a recent article in STAY TUNED, there were some thoughts put forward by Bruce Ruggles on various technical aspects of collecting. While I found much in the pages very worthwhile, I did discover a few ideas with which I must disagree. Specifically, Bruce contends that the hobbyist owes it to either himself or his fellow collectors to "weed out" material which is not up to a quality par (purely on a sound level). The result would be a smaller file, but of much better fidelity...with no "fringe" programs saved. Quote: "I believe more collectors must become interested in quality. Much of today's tape trading is a waste of time in manpower (for the dubbing) and money (for the tape and postage)."

True, there is no excuse for an individual collector to be the cause of poor quality being passed around. If the material originates with him, he should do all in his power to circulate only the best representation. The disc should be well filtered, the levels at their optimum....the tape of the highest type. I'd be the first to admit that there are among us those who don't know the difference between high and low impedance...who run dubs through mike jacks, and make their splices with adhesive tape. They won't be with us long, by the natural process of elimination through spread reputation.

But to categorically establish a policy of discarding recordings not up to a certain par is equally improper. There are thousands of marvelous shows in the files of collectors which are not in good quality, and they never will be (due to conditions and circumstances when they were originally transcribed). Put yourself in the other fellow's shoes; how would you like to search for years for a particular series or episode...learn that a certain man had possessed it...only to be told that it had been erased because it was not "perfect" in sound.

By all means, make sure that non-excellent tapes are labelled as such...perhaps even kept in a separate section. But don't try to convince yourself that you are doing everyone else a favor by simply destroying hard won programs because of a lack of highs or lows.



At another point in his article, Bruce comments, "...if you desire quality... you need half-track. If storage is a problem, get out of the hobby and take up stamp collecting." Despite some obviously well-thought-out arguments against quarter-track, there are one or two factors missing...the human ones. Granted, half-track is better than quarter track in such areas as cross-talk, drop-out, level splicing and the like. But Full-Track is better than half-track, and 15ips is better than 7½ips, and an Ampex 350 is better than any SONY. We live in a real world...governed by individual finances. I've been in broadcasting for 13 years, and my father for 30 years before me, but I'll be damned if I'll let technical perfection blot out all the fun of this hobby. There's room for every-one, whether he's a Lum and Abner purist, or prefers only the vocal endeavors of Rudy Vallee.

Finally, there is this excerpt from the article: "I believe a collector who consistently sends out poor quality should be black listed in magazines like (Stay Tuned), until he can prove he has taken steps (and probably a little expense), to improve his quality. We are recording for posterity...second rate quality is not good enough!"

That's all we need, isn't it? Who would be the judge? What forum would the accused have? The merit of the idea is obvious.

Let me say this: the above comments are merely an expression of my opinion. I believe Stay Tuned to be an excellent publication, and I know it to be a massive job well done. But just as Bruce Ruggles expressed his own feelings, I wanted to let mine be known. And, the letter column is wide open for any other ideas on the subject, pro...con...or in between.

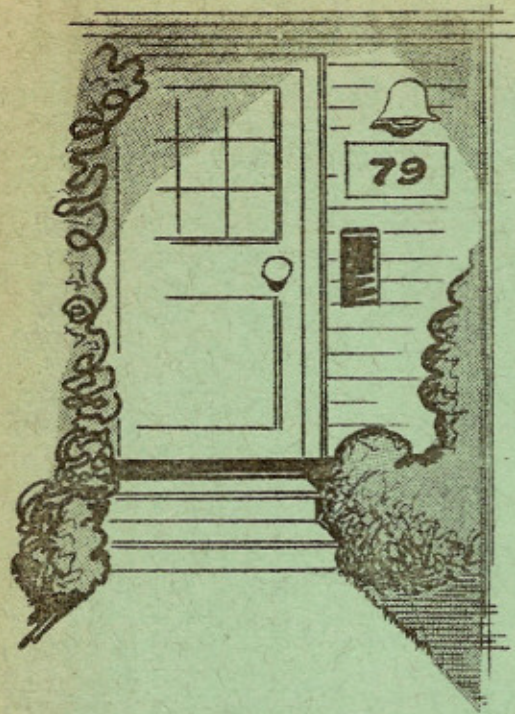
---

Every now and then, a rare item is unearthed which bears a bit of publicity. Such is the case of a find by Charles Sexton, who writes, "I'd like to relate my aquisition of a terrific radio premium which I obtained during the last year. I made contact with a fellow radio buff and was advised he had a gen-u-wine 1946 Captain Midnight Code-O-Graph. After a couple of letters, we were able to work out a trade by exchanging a reel of tape for the premium. I fully expected a rusty, broken remnant when I got the package in the mail. My excitement was akin to the days when I yearned for the sight of the mailman with such precious packages 25 years ago. Imagine my delight when, upon opening the packagae, I found not only a shining, bright 1946 Code-O-Graph (which then was a pin-on badge), but also the 1946 Secret Squadron Manual in perfect condition. Also included was a folded piece of paper which said on the outside, "Please give this to your mother." That's right, it was the commercial pitch to the parents for Ovaltine. Incidentally, the original mailing envelope with Captain Midnight's return address (360 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois) was also included. To top off everything else, I immedietely recognized this particular premium as a duplicate of the first one I ever received during those days when we all were anxious to be the first kid on the block with membership in the good Captain's Squadron or the first to get Tom Mix' magnetic ring, or the Lone Ranger's Frontier Town, etc, etc."

Premiums aren't really my bag, because they really aren't available enough to envision any sort of collection. But I was extremely happy recently when Bill Blalock generously sent me some Lum and Abner items (a poster from their first movie...a L&A Malted Milk Shaker...and a copy of one of their Almanacs). The fact that they were perfectly preserved is still a matter of absolute amazement on my part. Over 30 years is a long time for such things to survive.

(Continued on inside back cover)





# The FIBBER McGEE & MOLLY STORY

It is precisely seven seconds before 6:30pm in Hollywood...seven seconds before 9:30pm in New York, on just about any Tuesday night between 1935 and 1954. A glass of water is handed to a rather average looking man as he stands before a microphone at the West Coast NBC studios. He looks briefly at the clock.... gulps the water, and then...in apparent great nervousness, tosses the glass over his shoulder. Instead of breaking, it bounces. The glass is plastic. The audience roars with delight as another man...calmer...self assured, steps up to his own mike, and cries, "The Johnson's Wax Program, with Fibber McGee and Molly!!"

This simple piece of professionalism was the reason why Fibber and Molly always took to the air with a howl of guffaws, stamping ahead at a dead heat before the network tone had time to oscillate into the void. It was repeated over and over ...each time with the perfection that became the trademark of what was probably the best loved and most recalled single series ever to pierce the airwaves.

Everyone knows that Jim and Marion Jordan were from Peoria...and most people assume that the road up for the pair wasn't paved with glory at every turning. But how did it begin....the slender thread of action and coincidence that led to a memory that seems cherished by so many? What are the details...the how and the why?

James Edward Jordan was born on a farm five miles west of Peoria, Illinois, in 1896. The family moved to the metropolis of 105,000 people when he was twelve ...at about the time when Peoria's only real connection with show business was as the butt of a popular Vaudeville joke. "Why did you get married?" "Well, it was Sunday, and we were in Peoria!" The city life and its exciting pace led the youth to form the ambition to be a professional singer...to the degree that he took lessons in that direction from his High School, and sang in the choir of St. John's Church. In that same choir was a girl....a young student named Marion Driscoll...who hoped to continue her pursuit as a music teacher once she had absorbed sufficient knowledge in that area.



AND A  
CHECK  
FOR A  
SHORT BEER



HORATIO  
K.  
BOOMER

Somehow, Jim began calling on Marion... and encouraging her ideas for a musical career far afield from Peoria. For a time, though, ambitions were held to a realistic reign...and when he graduated from high school, Jim began working for a wholesale drug house...bringing home a tidy eight dollars a week. Marion was doing quite a bit better...with twenty-three paying pupils.

But the day came when Jim's voice teacher mentioned to the aspiring artist that a top tenor was needed by a Chicago group called A Night With The Poets. He hailed a train, tried out...and landed the job. It was fall, 1917...Jim Jordan was 21.. and he had made it into the footlights.

But the one night stands...the colds...the indigestion...took their toll, and in May of 1918, Jim called it quits with the Poets, and returned to Peoria, where Marion had continued her lucrative piano work. His intention was to join the army and do battle against the Kaiser, but the army didn't need any volunteers at the time. So the future Fibber went to work for his country as a mail carrier, and in August of that same year, married Marion Driscoll. Five days later, he was on his way to spend his honeymoon at Camp Forrest, Georgia...landing a few weeks later at Brest, France..with the 122nd Engineers. The Army had called. He didn't see Peoria again until summer of 1919.

In quick succession, Jim occupied the positions of machinist's helper, washing machine salesman, vacuum cleaner salesman, day laborer...and finally, insurance salesman..at which he did well. In 1920, a small home was purchased, and the couple's first daughter, Kathy...was born. It began to look like Peoria, and the insurance agency, for life. Somewhere along the line, though, they began to appear as a harmony team at women's clubs and church functions...and on one of these occasions they met the advance man for a theatrical company. Said he, "You ought to put your show on the road!" That was all it took. The Jordans sold their car, borrowed from an Aunt, and took the equity from their home. Altogether, they raised \$1000, the sum needed for scenery, travelling money, and costumes.

For sixteen weeks, things were fine. The pair was a hit, picked up their daughter to take with them on the second run...and played until their second child was only two months away. This time, it was a son. In the summer of 1923, with Marion at home with both children, Jim went back out on the road to try to work as a single. But the bookings were slim and the pay nonexistent...and after six more months, the team was ready to try it again.

The tour was a jinx....a composite of cheap hotels, bad food, high expenses, and low pay. Nothing came out right...and perhaps part of it can be traced to the fact that the act was solid music. The Jordans had yet to flex their humor muscles. At Lincoln, Illinois, the bottom dropped out. On borrowed money, the two limped back to Peoria (only 50 miles away)...and Jim again took up a domestic sort of life...selling yard goods and towels in a dry-goods store.

But there was some extra money to be made around town by singing here and there. A 1925 engagement in Kewanee, Illinois, paying 50 dollars, proved to be inspiration once more, and the master of the house was off for Chicago again...this time to sing for Egbert Van Alstyne...the songwriter who had formed a radio show



on a local outlet. Marion again was at home...but she happened to be visiting in Chicago one fateful weekend, when radio loomed its young head.

The two were with Jim's brother Byron in North Chicago. While listening to a bit of singing on radio, Jordan (Jim) remarked that he and his wife could do a lot better than they were hearing. Byron put up ten dollars to say that they couldn't. With that, all four drive downtown to radio station WIBO, where the would-be Wistful Vista'ers announced, "We are singers". Since radio was almost entirely off-the-cuff in those days, the manager told them to go ahead and sing...but was most unexcited about the prospect. The song was, "Can't You Hear Me Calling, Caroline?" The next day, they had a sponsor for a once a week program. As, "The O'Henry Twins" the pay was ten dollars. That position ran out in five months...but after awhile back in Vaudeville to replenish their sagging finances, the Jordans were once again on radio, this time on a three-show-a-week proposition on WENR.

Then came a chance meeting of the greatest import. A hopeful cartoonist-to-be was hanging around WENR one day...not because he cared greatly for radio, but simply because a radio station had pretty hostesses and music. He could dance, and..."it was cheaper than a night club." While thus occupied, Quinn noticed a glum looking fellow approaching...wearing a frown of ultimate despair. "That's Jim Jordan," someone said, "he's a comedian." The two met, talked, became good friends...and a short time later when Jordan was asked to do Smack-Out on the network five times a week, Quinn was asked to write it. Not at first...but after the first few months when it became apparent to the Jordans that the studio writer working on the program was not producing the kind of scripts they needed.

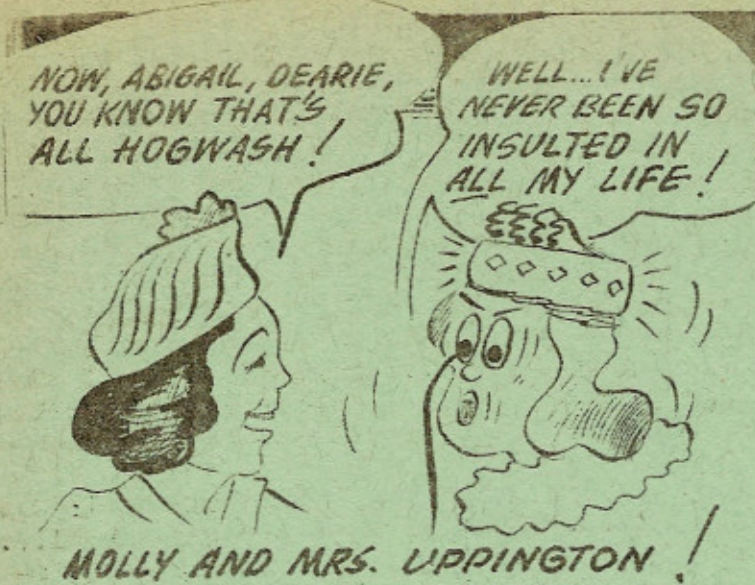
In Smack-Out, Jim's role was that of a small town grocer who was forever out of whatever was needed...but always came up with a tall story. Like the one about the woodpeckers he had trained to tap Morse code...or the square tomatoes he had raised for bacon and tomato sandwiches. Jim and Marion did five or six voices each...and one of Marion's was little girl named Teeny...who was always ready with, "Whatcha doin', Mister...whatcha doin'? Huh?" Songs were worked in whenever ideas ran dry...or the schedule got tight. On many mornings, the two performers would stop by Quinn's apartment on the way to the studio..grab a just completed script...look at it in the car...and go smoothly on the air.

*CARD TRICK MEGEE I WAS KNOWN AS IN THEM DAYS... CARD TRICK MEGEE, THE CLEVEREST KHAKI CARD KID WHO EVER KEPT A CAMP IN THE COOL CLIMATE OF THE CARBON CONTINENT CALMLY COLLECTING COBRAS TO CLASSIFY AND CATALOG FOR KEEN EYED COLLECTORS CASUALLY CLICKING CAMERAS AT CARNIVOROUS CATS CONTINUALLY CONFUSED AT THE CUTE CONVERSATIONAL COMEBACKS OF CACKLING COCKATOOS AND CONCENTRATING ON CAREERS AS THE KING KONG OF THE CONGO FROM THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE FROM CLOUDY DOONS TO CAREFREE CAIRO AND THE CAMEROONS...*



*JIM JORDAN COULD SAY THIS IN ONE BREATH (OR TWO)... CAN YOU?*





In late 1934 came the "event" which would lead to the formation of a legal Advertising man John J. Louis was driving to work one morning, mulling over the problem of creating a new program for the S.C. Johnson Company of Racine, Wisconsin. The waxmakers had Tony Wons on the air...reader of inspirational pieces. But something else was needed....something fresh and new.

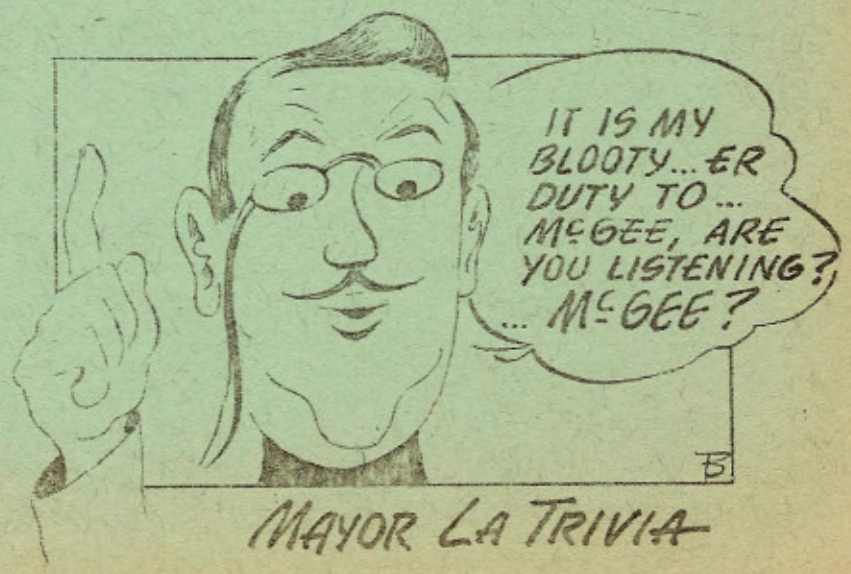
Perhaps this different approach could be based on the tall tales told by the celebrated Burlington, Iowa Liars Club. Smack-Out popped into Louis' radio...and he called its creators to audition a new show. Don Quinn put to-

gether the script...without a great deal of expectation and effort (since auditions in those times were a dime a dozen). To his surprise, the show sold... though the sponsors weren't happy with the title he had dreamed up...Fibber McGee and Molly. They and the agency had Free Air in mind...but Sinclair Lewis had used that title for a Saturday Evening Post article, and it would cost some \$50,000. The series would remain Fibber!

During those first years, the show was one of characters...cartoon figures... with the whoppers abounding. And it was not an initial success. Thanks to the patience of Johnson's Wax in trying to help build a winner, something unbelievably rare in radio then, and in television now. In April of 1939, the beginning slot was Blue Network at ten pm on Tuesday Night. Then, it went to ten pm on Monday night. In the fall of 1935, it was eight pm on Monday night. After that the switch was to the larger Red network at that same time...with such competition as Burns and Allen, and then Lux Radio Theater. Finally, on March 15th, 1938, another move was made...to 9:30pm Tuesday nights. When they went back on the air in the fall, their audience had increased by 50%, and history was underway.

What about the program itself...the planning and the spontaneity? The work on a typical episode began on the previous Friday in the office of producer Frank Pittman in the Taft Building, intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Present.....the Jordans, Pittman, Don Quinn and his co-writer Phil Leslie. There and then, the general line for the script was thrashed out.

The script itself is written over the weekend, and there was a so called "table reading" on Monday morning at 11:30am..... with the whole cast. In a thirty or forty minute period, the problems are cleared up...and the show put in final form for Tuesday.





FURTHERMORE, DOC GAMBLE, YOU  
MAY NOT HAVE A HARMONICA... BUT  
YOU'VE GOT A MOUTH ORGAN YOU  
CAN BLOW PRETTY GOOD... IT'S A  
BIT BREEZY.. NOW...



Tuesday was the killer, of course. The orchestra and quartet began rehearsal at 9:30am... and the cast was on the scene by 10:30. There was one more reading... this one for time... and then a break for writers to decide what must be cut. Molly took the time to get her hair done and accomplish other details. Then, to the Brown Derby for the writers and producers... as Jim Jordan retired to a nearby drugstore for a daily chocolate malted with two eggs.

There was another reading at 1:30pm... this time the dress rehearsal... with music, show effects, and dialogue. Time, minus the applause and laughter... was aimed at twenty six minutes and twenty seconds. Then...

there were the last cuts, and the actors had until five pm on their own. The Jordans, in most cases, spent the time exercising at the Hollywood Plaza Hotel. Then the barber for Jim... and one final run through at five o'clock.

At six pm, the studio audience... 350 strong who were lucky enough to get tickets... began assembling. The broadcast was done from a stage... there was no actual setting of the mythical 79 Wistful Vista. Jim stood at his mike, Marion sat at a table. The piano was behind Molly, and the quartet behind that... with the rest of the stage occupied by the orchestra. Its leader... Billy Mills, with the show until its thirty minute demise.

Who are the rest of these people who make up Wistful Vista? There was Arthur Q. Bryan... a 200 pounder who sounded and looked like a doctor. Bryan started out to be a singer, just like the Jordans, but became an announcer by accident when he substituted for a sick friend. It wasn't long until, as an actor, he was one of radio's biggest. Then came Bill Thompson, the utility man who was really much more than that. Thompson was Wallace Wimple, the Old Timer, Horatio K. Boomer, and Nick Depopolis. During the late forties, he was president of the Southern California area Boys' Clubs of America... and when the show left the air continued his work in that direction. Thompson was of long show-business extraction. Next came the actor with whom all of us, even in this year of 1971, are still totally familiar. Gale Gordon, who was later to become the villainous Mr. Conklin of Our Miss Brooks fame... and still later to form a sort of partnership with the most famous comedienne of all time, Lucille Ball. I saw Gordon on TV only last week, and though the name of the character had changed; he was still playing Mayor La Trivia, stutters and all. In Fibber's last years, Gordon also adopted the identity of Foggy Williams, master weatherman. This confused me... since there was no difference in voice. Foggy, however, was much calmer than Mayor La Trivia could ever hope to be in his wildest dreams.

Then, there was Harlow Wilcox. In my estimation, Wilcox was the best announcer ever to step before a mike. His enunciation was perfect, his delivery impeccable... and his warmth totally real. Wilcox, according to all information I have come across... was an audience for the show's comedy unto himself. All of the other characters were professionally detached, but Harlow had difficulty in keeping from breaking up when the barbs were fast and furious. And you can tell it today, listening to the tapes... the man was obviously enjoying himself. It was for this brilliant performer that Don Quinn created the hidden commercial... which was not really a commercial, but a part of the action. The audience knew



that from the very moment Wilcox entered the action, he would strain the conversation through all possible logic in order to sneak in a plug for Johnson's Wax. And what came out wasn't really a commercial. It was a pitch that obviously was truly a labor of love to all involved.



PRETTY GOOD,  
JOHNNY, BUT THAT  
AIN'T TH' WAY I  
HEERED IT...  
TH' WAY I HEERED  
IT... ONE FELLER SEZ  
T' OTHER FELLER.....  
SAY-EEE-EE SEZ...

TH' OL' TIMER

Two performers who left the show fairly early in its history were Harold Peary and Marlin Hurt. Hurt was, of course, Beaulah. Of the pair, the name of Peary is remains as resilient as it was when first heard in the 1930's. He was, at first, similar to Bill Thompson, in that he played a variety of roles. Gradually, however, a pattern developed. First, there was a memory expert named simply, "Dr. Gildersleeve". Then, an eye specialist...who was still a Doctor, but had the first name of Donald. Next, "Doctor Gildersleeve" was a dentist. And finally, on October 14, 1939...there suddenly was a fellow in the show by the name of "Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve"...and he turned out to be the McGee's next door neighbor. The battle was on.

"Gildy" left the Johnson cast in the summer of 1941. He was asked to put together a summer replacement for the Jordans, and in the audition program, his character journeyed by train to a town called Summerfield, where he planned to take care of his niece and nephew. But Johnson Company wasn't interested.... and the program went on the open market. There came the Kraft Cheese Company ...and a success was launched which was topped only by the McGee program itself for popularity and longevity.

The quartet was The King's Men...San Francisco college students when they began to croon in 1929. Their air work began in 1931...signing with Paul Whiteman some four years later.

The comedy of Fibber McGee and Molly was close to the realities of everyday American life. Said Quinn at one time, "We try to keep our people..people...and a story is good only if it could possibly happen."

SAY..COULD YOU... OH..  
IZZAT YOU, MYRT? HOW'S  
EVERY LITTLE  
THING,  
MYRT?



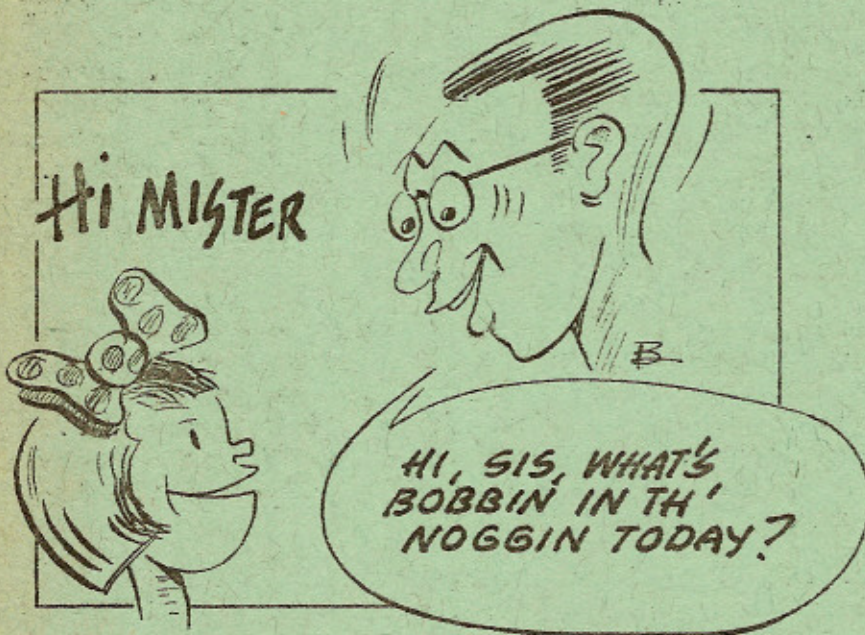
Each story was built for from five to eight characters...with sixty to a hundred basic jokes. Laughs as high as ninety a show have been counted...and the aim is for a "continuous ripple of chuckles."

At one time, in that long forgotten debut of the program, Fibber and Molly were just a couple of tourists, with car wax the item being pushed. They stopped for a time in the town of Wistful Vista, where a small



home was being raffled off. The Peoria Pair won, of course...and there they remained throughout all the years of the broadcast series. Aside from the 79 Wistful Vista address, there was one other street figure which popped up with amazing frequency...that of 14th and Oak, home of the Bon Ton Department Store. It was from the Bon Ton that Fibber obtained many of the materials which led him down various paths of loveable adult delinquency. Of course, 14th and Oak was also given as the location of many another business enterprise in the city ...so who can really doubt its importance to the script.

The listener was never told the exact size of the community of Wistful Vista... but clearly, the mayor of any large town would scarcely stop in every week to chat with someone of McGee's ilk. And those conversations with "Myrt" didn't indicate a telephone company of metropolitan proportion. In most instances, the person in the audience could be sure that Wistful Vista was just the right size.



In the "Age of Aquarius", when we are led to believe that what is truly worthwhile must in at least some degree be shocking... or downright dirty, it is most interesting to remember that Fibber never really resorted to what in those days could have been referred to as a "blue" line (although we came close a few times when Mayor La Trivia was being given a hard time).

What did Fibber do for a living? Well, according to publicity information sent to those who asked that particular question, he was a "Natural born helper-outer, who will step in

wherever needed." The reason for this...it was felt that if he had any one job, his actions and reactions would be restricted. This was probably true...for to my knowledge, he never exhibited any talent which might truly make enough money to support his loving wife and himself.

Molly was a good wife, but more than that, she was a "good kid". Whatever venture Fibber was up to, she would react and comment...but never actually criticize. But without her, Fibber would have been swallowed up at the very first by one of his most ridiculous schemes. Molly was missing for about 18 months during the late Thirties...when Marion Jordan was ill. In that time, the program became Fibber McGee and Company...but the missing element was an obvious one, and there was great rejoicing when she returned in 1939 (which took the form on the program of a tremendous ovation at its opening).

The estimate in the late Forties of the program's cost to Johnson's Wax was about \$14,000 a week...which was perhaps staggering in those days, but seems indeed mild when compared to the weekly expenditure of any network television program of the current day. In retrospect, who can doubt that the firm bought one of the most marvelous bargains ever offered to any corporate entity or individual....they purchased the loyalty of an entire generation.





Finally, in our attempt at summing up all of the elements which went to create this most fondly remembered program ...we must not neglect the one single "trademark" by which even the most insensitive are forced to recall Fibber and his mate. We cannot leave out the closet!

Fibber McGee's Closet is a phrase which survives to this day...at times on the lips of those who have almost completely forgotten their long time friends who once resided at 79 Wistful Vista. It is frozen characature of each individual trait of the average man...the man who continually is swamped by civilization ...and to whom details are something to be shoved into a conventient closet (men-

tal or physical)...until they come pouring out to engulf him.

Was there really such a closet? Of course not...literally. This was radio.... and there were ways of creating a far more marvelous closet in the minds of the audience. A real life closet, in three dimensional color and full sound.. would come a cropper by comparison.

Fibber's closet was the total work of an ingenious soundman. At midday on those long ago Tuesdays, he would find his way onto the stage laying out such items as: golf clubs, roller skates, a guitar, shoes, trays, a briefcase, a pith helmet, a sword, a spray gun, a couple of suitcases, a broken alarm clock...wooden buckets. Each of them would be the sort of thing that could find its way into Mr. McGee's closet.

And for most of the program, while the characters are going through their routines...the soundman would stew...for fear that improbable, if not impossible, pile of would-be rubbish should prematurely collapse. But it never did....at least not to my knowledge. Professionalism again was triumphant.

There is, I'm afraid, no totally adequate way for me to bring this account to a close. For the books are not closed on Fibber McGee and Molly even at this late date. A staggering number of their programs are available...more each day, and there is always a new audience waiting to hear the tapes, ready to simply enjoy them..while forgetting the reality that this wonderful pair has been absent from the airwaves for over a decade.



Perhaps, as some say, their creations were only a stopping place along the way to more sophisticated forms of entertainment. Frankly, I doubt it.

Don't You?



# LET GEORGE DO IT...

Interview Agnes Moorehead,  
that is!

Well, Agnes Moorehead did fly into Little Rock during Easter week (and it's quite difficult to refrain from a pun-directed reference to Bewitched in that sentence). Unfortunately, I didn't have the hoped-for opportunity to interview her in private, and had to settle for what few questions about her radio stardom which could be squeezed into a standard press conference. Luckily, most of the media people in Little Rock are aware of my hang-up on old time radio...so they let me absorb a bit more than the normal amount of time on the subject.

Miss Moorehead, who seemed totally "onstage" even while off...was spirited most swiftly into the Little Rock Club by a corps of Local PR types, and after some fifteen minutes or so of the typical line of questioning (mostly on her views of television as a dramatic outlet. She views it, by the way, as totally commercial), I managed to field my first inquiry. Having done my homework, I cleverly leaned forward, and exclaimed, "Ahem...it's...ah..been a long time since you played Margo Lane opposite Orson Welles in the Shadow!" "Oh my word...you remember that?" said Miss Moorehead. I grinned...then wryly commented, "Do you miss radio as a dramatic medium?" That simple question was all she needed.

"I think it was marvelous. I used to do six and seven shows a day! When I started out in show business, which was in St. Louis at the St. Louis Municipal Opera Company...I sang over KMOX and KSD...and was known as the girl baritone!" She laughed, "What about that?!" The press joined in. "And, uh...I sang...and then I didn't do any more radio until I was in New York. A gentleman who directed me at the American Academy had a lot to do with it. I was in a play with Gertrude Lawrence and they were all going on the road, and I didn't want to. I wanted to stay in New York. I happened to bump into this fellow from the Academy...and he told me about becoming a director at NBC...then asked me to join about 14 other girls in auditioning for a part in a show titled, Mystery House. Well, I got the job...and did stay in the city. That was the time when NBC was paying...well, it was supposed to be \$25...but we got \$22.50 because they took \$2.50 out for 'Artist Service'. I never knew what that was. They made a tremendous amount of money on the actors then, because everybody had to pay that 'Artist Service' charge. It was \$22.50 a show...and through this gentleman I began to work in other shows, and they would ask me for various characters...because that's what I did, you see. And then, I met Orson Welles...on some soap opera. We began to work together a great deal. Orson, and Joe Cotton and I played a great many shows together...and from there, Orson came up to me one day and said, 'How would you like to go over to Mutual? We'll do the classics...you can do all the women, and we'll have a lot of fun. It can't pay very much but you never know what it will end up with'. So, I went with him...and then we formed the Mercury Theater, and went under that banner. And, of course...we did the 'War of the Worlds' thing. I was with Orson about 17 years. It was 17 years of just glorious work. Oh..by the way...I did the screaming in the background on the Martian program."

(Continued after Carlson)



# HUGH CARLSON'S CAUSTIC COMMENT

In this hobby of preserving old radio programs, many of us get hung up in spin off interests. Jay Hickerson is very much concerned about the quality of Concert tape...or lack of it. Jay, there are better things to worry about. Go out and buy Scotch 202. George Jennings spends way too much time fooling around with his VTR set-up. George, don't you know that TV is a vast wasteland? /Editor's note: That's what they called radio back then! Before I take any more collectors to task, let me state that my spin-off project is the best...I collect articles and magazines on old time radio. To bend you to my way of thinking, I offer a few tidbits from the October 31, 1943 issue of "Radio Life".

"New radio programs destined to hit the airwaves December 5th over the blue network is Philco-sponsored, 'Radio Hall of Fame'. Listeners can expect a first rate show, an hour in length, to be heard Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock. 'Radio Hall of Fame' will present outstanding performers of radio, stage, screen, concert, night club and music fields."

"Last week, radio lost one of its long-time performers, Ben Bernie, known as the 'old maestro', who passed away in Beverly Hills after a losing battle with pulmonary and heart trouble for 8 months. His music and his quips had been a personalized part of radio for many years. His success story had been an inspiration. Bernie, whose freindly feud with Walter Winchell provoked a series of interesting air barbs, was a former east side boy whose real name was Benjamin Anzelevitz. Bernie must have known that thousands of admirers were hoping his illness would have a happy ending. 'Yowsah, yowsah!', one can almost hear him say."

"Sirs: turn to page 6 of your last issue and take a good look at Lum and Abner's hair! First time I realized that so young a team had to wear wigs. If they are baldheaded, why don't they get wigs that are halfway natural looking at least? Editor: Believe it or not, it is their own hair Must have been something wrong with the picture that made it look as though they wore wigs. We assure that neither of them does! Abner's hair is growing thin around the temples... but he's not baldheaded."

"When Mercedes McCambridge requested her own private microphone for a recent week's series of Columbia's 'I Love a Mystery' broadcasts, the leading lady was not indulging in temperament. She was merely imposing a 'quarantine' upon herself. Mercedes had a strep throat and didn't want to spread the ailment to other members of the cast"

The other day the 'Mary Marlin' script called for the chattering of squirrels and the soundman asked the producer whether he wanted red squirrels or grey squirrels chattering. The producer was tilted back on his heels by the question ....but then he had the sound effects man demonstrate the difference...and chose red squirrels for the day's sound effects."



"An announcer on the new 'Amos n Andy' program, which had its fall premiere on NBC on October 8...Harlow Wilcox...employs a clever warm-up idea in his speech to the studio audience before the show begins. 'I'd like to get better acquainted with you', Wilcox tells the folks out front. When I give the signal, will each one of you tell me your name?' The audience complies with his request. Harlow's acknowledgement of the response is, 'Why I'm happy to know you...my name is Harlow Wilcox'. This has created a very friendly atmosphere for the beginning of the show."

"Back in New York after his trip to Hollywood, Frank Sinatra of Columbia's Saturday night, 'Hit Parade', plunged into a whirl of benefits, bond rallies, and rehearsals -- and auctioned off his personal effects and clothing for \$324,950 worth of War Bond purchases. Prices paid for his personal possessions were: For his solid gold wrist watch, \$250,000 war bond; initialed shirt, \$10,000; solid gold key chain bearing his name, \$50,000; underwear, \$5,000; pin seal wallet containing a picture of his wife and baby, \$7,500; gold collar clip, \$1,250; socks, \$250; bow tie, \$500; pocket combs, \$100; shoe laces, \$50."

"Paul Pierce was overheard directing a rehearsal of 'Hollywood Star Playhouse'. 'This scene,' he said, 'must move along. Play it snappy, like a pre-war girdle.'

All that trivia and much more from just one issue! Have I made believers of you all?

Transcribed.



(Agnes Moorehead Cont.)

I chimed in confidently, "Oh...I have something on this tape machine." I had dubbed off a few excerpts of programs in which Miss Moorehead appeared, hoping to play them for her. But when I told her that I had a segment of The Shadow cued...she frowned...jokingly...and shook her head. "Don't let me hear it...I don't want to hear it." My ego dropped several pegs...but chin up, I went on. "Why," I asked, "was radio murdered when television took completely over. Dramatic radio, that is."

"Oh, don't you think it was one of those fads that people go through...they're interested in seeing what's going on." I pointed out that this fad had lasted, effectively, close to twenty years.

"But still, there's an awful lot of drama on radio...because I've done some work on radio since television has come in...and, there are a great many radios have been bought lately by the public. I don't know...I think it has a little groove all by itself. There's no doubt about that. I love it...I think it's wonderful training ground for the actor...because it certainly isn't easy...because one makes a characterization through one's voice, and one's tempo...and the attack. And when you do that, and get the character in the imagination of an audience, I think this is marvelous. I know that I never regretted being in radio."



# Feedback AND Background NOISE

A letter column, of sorts, open to varied and sundry opinions of Old Radio Fandom!

George Fowler -- 12008 N.E. 140th Street -- Kirkland, Washington 98033

Your comments about AFTRA are extremely well taken. I donated a few brief excerpts (two minute type) to station KVI a few months ago, as did some other local collectors. I took no remuneration of any sort, nor did any of the others I'm sure. The function of all this was to enable KVI to broadcast a 12 hour "Audio Biography" of old time radio. Almost immediately I received the nastiest letter you could imagine from AFTRA saying, "How dare you?" and threatening everyone in my entire subdivision with lawsuits and so on. Really an incredible letter, and it makes you wonder about this "union".

I had a fascinating lunch with Carleton E. Morse a few months ago, while on a trip to San Francisco. Anyway, I queried him until he was beside himself, but did learn a number of things about I Love A Mystery and, to a lesser extent, about One Man's Family. Would you be interested in an article about this for a future issue? Two more ILAM shows have turned up--one of these with Jay Novello as Jack Packard, and Mr. Morse had some funny lines to say about this.

The regular column on Audiovisual tape seems a must because Videotape is here and as you have previously noted, now is the time to tape the TV shows that have been so good and which are only spasmodically seen in rerun form. If I lived in San Francisco, I'd long since have a VTR because The Avengers has been nightly run there. And how marvelous it would be to have this series (from the first year of its U.S. run, not necessarily the later years) plus tapes of the Rogues, some selected shows of Maverick, Hong Kong, and The Trials of O'Brian with Peter Falk.

For some reason, I don't care much for the L&A Almanac bits, probably because while they are clever and cute and so on, they still lack the essential presentation that Lauck and Goff could give them vocally.

GJ: I'd imagine that the AFTRA letter you received was from the local version there in Seattle...probably prompted by either an internal difficulty at the station involved, or when some competitor who is tightly unionized screamed, "Don't let 'em get away with it". The latter explanation is the most likely. Do you have any information as to whether the national union became involved? I would appreciate a further account.

Jim Moulder (in Dallas) continues to be the only person to my knowledge who is actually recording television shows for the purpose of collecting them. He's using the latest  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch SONY equipment..... with the computer tape which I described in the first issue of this magazine. One of the prime reasons I haven't really done any kind



of concentrated filing is that I've had too many bad experiences of late with that computer stuff. I replaced my heads on the machine in December...for a repair bill of \$175. That hurt ...in fact it came very close to wounding me mortally. So, for the time being at least, I've switched over to DAK Videotape.. which sells for \$16 for an hour re.l, and which (in my humble opinion) far surpasses SONY's own tape (sold over the counter for \$40 an hour). It is my understanding that better video-heads have been developed for the existing machines, made of a stronger material. When and if I fit my machine for them... perhaps I'll go back to computer.

Re: Carleton Morse...I'd be delighted to print whatever you might be inspired to compose. Fire away, Gridley...the forum is waiting.

Don Koehnemann -- 811 Bristol Avenue -- Westchester, Ill. 60153

Most of us barely keep up with dubbing, listing, or listening on a hobby basis ...trying to accumulate tapes, make profitable contacts, and all that goes into the gut work of building a collection. As want lists dwindle in size, then some of us will further our interests in broadening the scope of our own hobby...or better, working in depth by doing what you, RHSA, and Jay have been doing...as well as Stay Tuned.

I would like to see some accounting of what programs are absolutely unavailable at present...how we as a group can dig them up for enjoyment by all without getting into the pettiness of private collections, secret societies, deals, etc. That's likely a very naive hope...but I am an eternal optimist.

I appreciate the position of the "heavy", old time collector (shall we call them pioneers?) in their realistic attitude of inability to share with every letter writer or list sender who comes along, but there are ways to help with little loss of time, but much gain in prestige over the long run. Some have done this ...all should. More and more is being turned up, and it is not the pioneers who are doing it all.

GJ: It all comes down to a couple of basic facts, Don. First of all, there exists today a staggering, unbelievable amount of material already in the files of collectors. The new collector is faced with the task of extracting as much as he wants (and in most cases, what he wants is justifiably all of it), and everytime the "pioneer" receives a request, he must run one more dub. Multiply copying time by just the number of hobbyists who have joined us in the past month alone, and the task becomes most apparently difficult.

You are, of course, most correct in the statement that much of what is new comes from diggers of recent initiation. They're responsible for some tremendous fresh material surfacing. And it gives them bargaining power. Which is why, as one reason, it would be assanine to try to discourage anyone from joining in (aside from the fact that we all want to convert as many as is humanly possible to our way of thinking). What's the answer, then?

Perhaps a central organization functioning as a library..supported by all of us and accessable to all. A place where the newcomers could catch up by copying what had been discovered



in the past (meanwhile adding their own contributions), while everyone else continued to search out the latest. Then, when the new collector has his set of shows as complete as possible, he could mix in with the rest.

In reality, however, such Utopian dreams seldom materialize. I do have hopes that my publication and others like it will eventually lead to some sort of organized effort.

Bob Torson -- 3126 O'Bannon Drive -- Dallas, Texas 75224

I have been collecting for about ten years....having received some publicity in a local paper only to discover that Jim Moulder and I were practically neighbors. He was a great help in getting a really good start. I now have about 2000 shows. I recently found some 100 acetate discs from the 40's, among them some very unusual local shows, and several transcriptions I believe to have been made for delayed broadcast. I have several examples of early country and western programs, if anyone is interested, i.e. The Lightcrust Doughboys, Bewley's Chuckwagon Gang, Sheb Wooley and the Calumet Indians. I would also like to know if any of your readers have ever heard of a western program of the late 30's and early 40's (syndicated) called Pinto Pete in Arizona? I have spotted about 70 episodes of this show at a local station, and have been promised the ET's when they are finally retired.

GJ: There aren't too many C&W specialists in our ranks....but there's room for everybody. Good luck in your projects, Bob.

Mark Trost -- 144-55 Melbourne Ave. -- Flushing, N.Y. 11367

I am just beginning. I got underway by buying a six record collection of radio memories put out by the Longines Symphonette. From them on, I was hooked. I collected all the records on old radio programs that I could find.

Then, I located Radio Vesteryear. For \$10 you get one hour of tapes. Thinking this was a bargain, I purchased \$20 worth. At that point, it looked like radio collecting was too expensive for my blood. But, then I found a decent man who would sell me 6 hours for \$8.00. Now, I'm trading...and trying to give my collection a little variety.

Terry L. Black -- 112 Archer Ave. - Springfield, Ill. 62704

KMOX in St. Louis is broadcasting the reissue series of Gangbusters at 6:30pm on Sundays unless a ball game interferes. In that case the program is broadcast immediately after the game. KMOX can be found at 1120 on the dial. Also, WILL-FM (91 MH), a non commercial station on the University of Illinois campus is broadcasting the BBC World Theater series at 8:30pm Thursdays.

I have found that Radio Shack's Concert tape has recently improved. Also, it bears the same O31 marked sealing tape as Shamrock O31 tape. You know, the little black, orange, and brown tape that keeps the recording tape from unwinding. Are Shamrock and Concert now produced by the same source? / Dick Gulla's article on Hall of Fantasy hit home. It was one of my favorites. I am happy to say that I am on the track of an excellent copy of this program that comes from Richard Thorne's collection. / I am a public school teacher (middle school - 6th, 7th, and 8th graders) and have sponsored a special interest group for the past three years called The Old Time Radio Listeners. The kids have been very receptive to the experience of hearing a complete program each week.



John R. Cooper -- Route 1, Box 371 -- Clarksburg, W. Va. 26301

---

A few months ago, a court in Indiana judged for the accused in a case that a film collector should be prosecuted for selling used 16mm Sound on Films to other collectors on the open market. The case went on and on...and finally the judgement was that the defendant had been doing nothing wrong, but merely what many similar collectors around the country are doing.

And, "Captain George" Henderson published some "Whiz Bang" material in Canada recently and got fined some \$3000 because he reprinted a good deal of King Syndicate cartoons. So it's obvious that a hobby can get you into trouble.

As far as radio goes, perhaps Jim Harmon could tell us if Carleton Morse has his shows copyrighted. The Ralston-Purina company only used the Tom Mix name. Who owns it now...in-laws? Ovaltine still holds the Captain Midnight name. The legal entanglements are as varied as the shows themselves.

The networks don't care, but certainly the unions do...for they want to see that their people get rerun residuals from all the oldtime programs. The networks are only concerned with television.

Did you know about the Los Angeles station that was fined by the government for running AFRS discs? The station apparently did not edit off the AFRS sig. at the end. I do think that the tape-collectors should try and get a quick ruling on the question. If they wait around too long, the big unions and those that wish to make extra profits on the old shows will come up with something that will keep all of it off the air, from special shows through everything else.

GJ: Setting aside the question of airing radio programs themselves, the possibility of getting slammed with trouble for something that I'm doing as a hobby is the prime reason why I don't reproduce an awful lot of direct reprints from magazines. I being a lot more cautious than I should, probably.

Joanne Burger -- 55 Bluebonnet Ct. - Lake Jackson, Texas 77566

---

I did not know that some Concertape was as bad as you have described it, but I have noticed that it was no where near as long as most of my masters. On some of them, I have to watch very closely or I'll lose some of the shows. One brand of tape that I have found most satisfactory is Dak Enterprises Tape (P.O. Box 69920; West Hollywood, Calif. 90069). This is reconditioned tape. According to their catalogue, tape is removed from professionally used 10½ and 14 inch reels and surface cleaned to remove loose dirt or oxide. Tape is then degaussed, re-wound onto Dak reels under controlled conditions, and packaged in new boxes. You get 10-23 1800' tapes (lower noise) for \$1.94 a reel, and 24-49 for \$1.80; 1 Mil standard output tape costs \$1.25 for 10-23 1800' tapes, or \$1.15 per tape for 24-49, and \$1 for 50-99. This is Scotch or Ampex tape. All tape is sold on an unconditional money-back guarantee, all splice free. And I haven't found any reels with splices...or different colored tapes (as with Concert). This tape has to be ordered by mail, and you pay postage....but if you buy it in bulk, it's really a good buy, I think.

Another fairly inexpensive brand of tape that I use occasionally is AudioMagnetics, which is sold by discount houses and Serling Electronics. It costs about the same as Concert, and seems just a bit better. But it's hard to find when you need it...the stores seems to go out of stock regularly.



Oh, yes...Dak sells Videotape (used)-H.S.V., 7"x2400' for \$16; 9-3/4"x1"x3000' for \$28.50...and on up. I don't know if this is cheap or expensive...

An Old Radio Show Convention? Well, there have been old radio shows played during the last two Southwestercons...and probably will be during the next one. And they are very popular. However, putting on a convention is work, and you need a large group of people in the same area in order to put on a good one. I would like to go to a regional con...since I can only manage one major convention a year. There are several people collecting old radio shows in Texas and surrounding states...enough to make a regional event in this area possible. But I don't know who'd be foolish enough to put one on. Why not have it in conjunction with an established convention?

GJ: Concertape is not really bad. I use it...in fact, almost to the exclusion of anything else. You do run into some ridiculous problems every now and then, though. Only last week, I noticed that one of my machine was making a hellacious noise while recording a reel. It turned out to be the tape, which had been incorrectly slit...and at some places was almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide. Quite a mess. But, I just threw it away and went on to the next blank reel. At Concert's relative price, you can afford to do that as often as is necessary.

I mentioned Dak Videotape a couple of pages back. I can't recommend it highly enough. I've never used the audiotape...but one of my tapespondents once told me that it can be just as erratic as Concert (maybe worse). I plan to buy a shipment one of these days to test it out.

Re: Convention! One of these days...probably a few years away, there will be both regional and national conventions devoted exclusively to Old Radio. Right now though, the idea remains impractical for a variety of reasons (the main one being that collectors are so scattered). As to tying it in with another gathering...I'm afraid this overlooks the fact that Radio Collectors (the majority of them) have absolutely no knowledge or notion of the existence of other fandoms. That is to say, they know about them (perhaps)...but working with them for a mutual goal would not be an idea easily put across. But if someone can put it through...I'll be the first one to sign up!

Wayne Brock -- %KXOW Radio -- Hot Springs, Ark.

Right down our alley in collectors items, we have a contest on our station called "Sound Mystery" in which the audience participates by telephone prefix, naming artist or title of song. And, as a bonus, an excerpt of an old radio show is played, with the title bleeped out and all the prefixes can call to guess. Response has been good...but they don't always guess right. By the way, all of these are just excerpts...taken from an LP the boss dug up somewhere.

Richard Hayes -- 59 Myrtle Ave. -- Cranston, R.I. 02910

Let me first say that your copy (typing and mimeographing) is clean and Bill Blalock's artwork is outstanding. While I found most of its contents to be of some interest, there seems to be something lacking. In trying to think what it is...and what I myself would like to see in a magazine such as this, I think there are two components missing:



(1) reports of outstanding new vintage programs added to readers collections.

I, for example, have recently acquired 73 transcriptions, which I'll be happy to trade, and about which most of your readers will be happy to learn. I'll pursue this a bit later, but of prime interest to me are relatively uncirculated "finds" that collectors come up with which they're willing to trade and share with others. (Jay Hickerson keeps us up to date on his finds with every issue of "Hello Again"). This way your magazine would decrease the need for us all to issue supplements to our catalogs, and as your circulation builds, it would give all of us a marvelous means for trading with one another. Naturally, we would be expected to contribute financially toward this great service you would perform for us. In fact, you might stipulate that we send our listings already typed on stencils. And our listings would have to be kept brief - say, no more than one stencil per reader per issue, or some such rule. I think you'd find that you would have hundreds of subscribers, as everyone will want to know what the others have uncovered recently.

(2) Reprints of classic vintage radio magazine articles. Some of us (such as Ernie Hack and Myself, as well as Frank Hoopes and others) have old magazines with fascinating articles which really should be reprinted. We could either let you borrow the magazine and have the appropriate pages electronically stencilled, or we could do it ourselves and send you the stencils.

GJ: Dick, your idea is basically sound...and I can't help but agree that new discoveries should be listed in some sort of central publication. But whether this is that publication is another question. There are two possible methods where EPILOGUE is concerned: first, one single columnist to whom basic information would be sent by everyone about their fresh finds; second, the initiation of paid advertisements.

The columnist could simply condense the details of who had found what into the basic facts, without an extensive listing. Interested parties might just write directly to the finder for further information. Perhaps you might like to take on this task?

Beginning with the next issue, paid advertisements are going to be a fact of life anyway. As of this writing, I have not yet worked out the details...but I will before I am through with the issue (this one). If you want those details right now, flip through the pages.

Concerning reprints: as I just mentioned in this letter column, I'm trying to avoid the copyright problem like the plague. There are many old radio magazines in my files...and I have discovered that the Little Rock Public Library is an amazing storehouse of articles on old shows (through their files of magazines like POST, READERS DIGEST, etc). But only in instances where the original material is far out of date (prior to 27 years ago) will I reprint. Is there a lawyer in the audience out there who could research this for me? As a labor of love?

R. Stanich -- 173 Columbia Heights -- Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

My primary wants are works by Ray Bradbury, Arch Oboler, and Ellery Queen, plus Railroad Hour Musicals. I am doing research for possible publication in a fanzine on Oboler plays. I've also assembled a listing of RR Hour dates and titles.



Harry Warner, Jr. -- 423 Summit Avenue -- Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

The lone pitiful survivor from the era when I was systematic about everything is my habit of rubberstamping the date of receipt and the date of answer if any on each piece of mail that reaches me. So I can tell you exactly when the Post Office got the second EPILOGUE to me: January 15th. Whether my copy went out on the first or second weekend of January, that's better speed than third-class mail usually enjoys. I've experience two-week delays in third-class mail originating from East Coast cities and close to a month from California. But the big nuisance involves overseas mail. It used to come from Great Britain in two or three weeks. Now, even first class mail frequently requires more than a month to arrive. Third class mail from Australia is sometimes three months on the way. I know that dock strikes can enter into the picture, but I still feel that this is one area in which a lot of fandoms could get together and bombard congressmen with demands for investigations and improvements in postal service. The big circulation publications which get the lowest postal rates obviously receive preferred treatment: TV Guide, for instance, has failed to arrive by Saturday of its publication week only once or twice in the ten years or so I've been subscribing, and discount houses which send their advertising tabloids to every household on the mailman's routes always get delivery before the special sale begins. It isn't fair for fanzines which pay those imposing third class postage rates to languish neglected in a post office somewhere. Meanwhile, if you're keeping track on the third issue, it arrived May 1.

I suspect that the unions and networks and similar groups will start efforts to get a cut out of the profit-makers among the old radio tape dealers, just as they are starting to worry about unauthorized broadcasting of such tapes. I recently received an elaborate printed list of the service offered by one dealer who charges \$10 for each hour of dubbing. If you assume he uses the best quality of tape, dubs at twice the playback speed, and gets most of the setup preparations for the next tape done while one dubbing is in progress, he must be clearing something between \$12 and \$15 per hour for his time, over and above the cost of materials and postage. I think it would be fair for the artists to demand a percentage of such profits, and just as unfair for them to attempt to control the dubbing by people who get just a small fee for their labor and do it mostly as a hobby. Something analogous has grown up in the record industry. The major record companies have been cracking down on bootleggers who try to sell vast quantities of counterfeit copies of big current hits and they aren't paying much attention to the people who sell discs containing music or performers who appeal to only a small audience; there's little chance that the big firms would risk producing records with such limited appeal.

Old radio addicts are undoubtedly doomed to start holding conventions. It might not be as difficult as you assume to get the first ones organized. Frequently, it's possible to find someone living in the general area of the host city who would serve as principal speaker for nothing more than a free room and perhaps transportation expenses. The science fiction conventions that are planned several years ahead are done that way in large part because they're the big ones that will have many hundreds or even thousands of attendees, and it's necessary to book the few hotels capable of hosting such large groups at least a couple of years in advance. At first, you'd probably not get more than a total of 200 old radio fans together. One possibility would be a college campus rather than a hotel. Many colleges are glad to host group meetings, the expenses are normally less than at a big city hotel, and there's freedom from the nuisance of competing conventions and guests who complain if the fans get a bit loud in room parties. Several of the smaller science fiction conventions have used this method quite successfully.



# GENE

Re: AFRS. I must admit to being rather ignorant when it comes to the full scope of its activities, especially in this country. I am under the impression that most of the broadcasts here are of the music, news, sports variety... and there are no dramatic shows aired within the continental limits of the U.S. Again, this is only an impression. If anyone knows the facts, please write.

And so is completed the main letter column for this issue. There will be a small section on the last page for any last minute messages of interest. I appreciate the response, and the variety of it. As everyone can see, much more interest can be generated when a larger number pitch in.

Remember though, that the next issue is already in the works by the time you read this...so oil your typewriter and have at it!

## ARNOLD RECALLS

Modern radio features its top ten and top forty...so I thought it might be appropriate to give my version of what I consider Old Time Radio's top ten. This is strictly personal, and any similarity between my list and anyone else's is nothing more than coincidence. At the top...Lum 'n' Abner /Editor's Note: You show marvelous taste. These two gentlemen and their cast of characters have provided me with numerous hours of pleasure in recent years as well as in their original incarnation in the 1940's. I was first addicted during World War Two...as a result of my grandmother's devotion to the program. With her two sons away in the service, her first concern on tuning in the radio was, of course, war news. But she also made sure that she was there...perched in front of the console... when Lum 'n' Abner took to the air.

She had been reared in a rural community in Texas by the name of Waelder, which was similar in size and character to Pine Ridge...or the way Pine Ridge might have been. So, the constant, "Grannies", "Worn to a Frazzle", made her feel right at home.

In my estimation, Inner Sanctum was, without a doubt...a close second. The opening was worth the price of admission on its own...and I found the stories well done, and certainly among the all time greats. Then, in third position, came the cry of, "Coming, Mother"...which brought Henry Aldrich on the scene. I thought the portrayal of Henry by Radio's Ezra Stone and the film's Jimmy Lydon both to be excellent. Finally, a wrapup of the seven remaining: The Great Gildersleeve (both Peary and Waterman were great in the role), Phillip Morris Playhouse, Lux Radio Theatre (the former because of several features, including its fantastic theme, and Johnny's unforgettable cry...the latter because of Cecille B. DeMille) Captain Midnight, Terry and the Pirates, The Lone Ranger, and Let's Pretend.

Second Ten: Jack Armstrong, Superman, Dance Band Remotes, Eddie Cantor, Gene Autry, Walter Winchell, Quiz Kids, Smilin' Ed, I Love a Mystery, Duffy's Tavern.

---

Editor's Note: What about your favorite rankings? Drop a few lines...and I'll be glad to publish them...which might help out with your trading.



# DISCOVER

# Richard Hayes



For a long time I've been looking here and there for electrical transcriptions of quality vintage radio programs. I have made two decent finds in the past, but none so good and exciting as my most recent acquisition of seventy-three 16" ET's from a fellow in Hollywood. Some others of you must have received his Xeroxed listing of the ones he had/has for sale. In fact, some of you may also have purchased a few. I know you will want to get an idea of what I paid for them: \$195 plus \$10 for packing and mailing. That figures to \$2.81 per ET. Incidentally, I know not whether that's a fair price, but I didn't think it bad for what I got. The sound quality on all is excellent (I'd rate them "5"...or in some cases where there is a tiny bit of surface noise, "5-"). And the programs are all rare...and, to my knowledge, uncirculated in almost all cases.

Before I list them, I must specify the conditions for trading. Since I had to buy these, I'd like to trade them on a 2 for 1 basis (unless you have similar rare material of excellent quality which I would be interested in). That is, for every hour I tape for you, you would tape two for me. Or you might send me three blank reels of new tape (Mylar or Polyester other than Concert) for every tape I send you. One final stipulation: since I am still bogged down with trades ...I will not be able to trade any of this material until JUNE. Probably EPILOGUE 4 will not be out until then anyway. /ED. NOTE: At this point, Richard, I would say that your speculation is without doubt most sound./

Now, the list...all complete with commercials, opening, closing sigs, and in excellent sound, except as noted (1st or last half).

## FRED ALLEN SHOWS:

- Oct. 19, 1947. Guest: James Mason. Fred does his famous-"One Long Pan" character. Allen's Alley question is, "Have you ever been swindled?"
- Oct. 26, 1947. Guest: Jack Haley. Allen's Alley question is, "What type of music do you prefer, sweet or swing?"
- Jan. 4, 1948. Guest: James Mason. First for Ford Cars. Fred does "One Long Pan" again. Allen's Alley question: "Down through the years, what is the worst storm you can recall?"
- March 28, 1948. Guests: Mr. and Mrs. James Mason. Allen's Alley question, "Do you think the average American woman works too hard?"
- April 11, 1948. Guest: Basil Rathbone. Fred again does "One Long Pan" skit. Allen's Alley question, "Have you ever been victimized by exaggeration and misrepresentation in advertising?"
- April 18, 1948. Guest: James Farley. Allen's Alley question, "What did you like best about this year's circus?"
- April 25, 1948. Guest: Leo Durocher. Allen's Alley question, "How do you feel about superstitions?"



May 2, 1948. Guest: Henry Morgan. Henry does a take-off on John J. Anthony  
"Goodwill Court." Question: "Are you interested in music?"

May 9, 1948. Don McNeil. Allen's Alley question: "Are you happy with the  
Pulitzer Prizes this year?"

U.S. STEEL THEATER GUILD - "Street Scene." Date: 12/11/49. Stars Richard Conte,  
Diana Lynn, and Shirley Booth. 1 hour.

BREAK THE BANK - Oct. 5, 1949. With Bert Parks. First show for NBC. 30'.

JOYCE JORDAN, M.D.- December 29, 1947. 15'

BIG TOWN - Sept. 21, 1948. "The Final Payment." (This is the first of the late  
forties vintage that I have seen available.) 30'

THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE - with Harold Peary. March 9, 1949. Gildy reminisces on  
life in Summerfield in 1903. 30' Kraft.

FITCH BANDWAGON - starring Phil Harris and Alice Faye. Dec. 8, 1946. With the  
well-remembered "Smile awhile/Let a smile be your style/Use Fitch Shampoo"  
opening. Alice takes Phil to a high class musicale. 30'

CAN YOU TOP THIS? - April 23, 1948. 30'

CAN YOU TOP THIS? - April 30, 1948. 30'

CHESTERFIELD SUPPER CLUB programs, all with Perry Como and Chesterfield comm-  
ercials.

2/4/48. First song: "Ain't She Pretty?"

2/18/48. First song: "You're gonna get my letter in the morning."

3/3/48. First song: "Now is the hour."

3/10/48. First song: "Mary Lou."

3/17/48. First song: "Dickey Bird Song."

4/14/48. First song: "I'll never say 'I Love You!'"

PET MILK SHOW - starring Vic Damone and Kay Armen. March 12, 1949. Vic opens  
with "Powder your face with Sunshine," Kay sings "Cruising Down the River,"  
Vic closes with "I've Got You Under My Skin," others. 30'

PET MILK SHOW - Part One only (15') 3/5/49. Vic Damone opens with "I've got  
My Love to Keep Me Warm".

PET MILK SHOW - Part 2 only (15') 3/19/49. Kay sings "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,"  
Vic closes with "Night and Day".

HORACE HEIDT'S YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM - first fifteen minutes. 1948.

CARNATION CONTENTED HOURS: All feature the great voice of Buddy Clark and the  
orchestra of Ted Dale. A fine musical program. 30'



8/2/48. Guest: Frankie Carle.

8/23/48. Guests: Jubilaires.

10/11/48. First half. Guests:  
Ernie Felice Quartet

10/18/48. Guests: Sons of the  
Pioneers.

12/20/48. Christmas show with  
the Ken Darby Singers.

2/14/49. First Half. Guest: Marg-  
aret Whiting.

2/28/49. Guests: Sons of the Pio-  
neers.

3/7/49. Last Half. Guest: Jo Staf-  
ford.

3/15/49. First Half. Guest: John  
Sebastian.

7/4/49. Guest: Jo Stafford.

7/25/49. No Special Guest.

8/1/49. Guest: Jo Stafford.

8/8/49. Guests: Riders of the Pur-  
ple Sage.

8/15/49. Guest: Margeret Whiting.

YOUR HIT PARADE. 12/18/48. First half only. With Frank Sinatra. 15'

BIG TOWN. 12/21/48. First half only.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES. First half only. 2/26/49. With Ralph Edwards.

--Richard Hayes; 59 Myrtle Avenue; Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

## NEW TO COLLECT...

### Walt Davis

Walt makes up the other half of the expanding Little Rock Old Radio Fandom, and though he's a new recruit, his enthusiasm is great. Walt recently began the task of fully equipping himself to handle the dubbing which he hopes will keep him busy through the far future.

Walt has a nice initial collection, and expects to have his catalogue complete in the near future. Meanwhile, he would like to hear from other collectors... both established and new. Let me here mention that I have offered Walt the use of my files as a trading base. I have a good many shows which I would certainly like to trade to others, a great deal of them hardly circulated (if at all). Unfortunately, the publication of this fanzine has caused me to curtail my swapping. Also unfortunately, I've been extremely remiss in the area of comprehensive catalogues (again because of EP.)...and through Walt many of you might discover some programs you have been searching for which have been lying dormant on my shelves for years.

Contact Walt at #88 White Oak Lane, Little Rock. I know he's anxious to hear from each of you...and I'm sure that he'll do a much better job of answering letters than I have of late.



---

Well, to all intents and purposes, this will be the last page composed for the current issue (with the exception of contents, etc). I'm going to use it as a repository for all the little loose ends, such as last minute letters, of which the following is one:

Marcello Truzzi -- University of Michigan -- Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

During the winter term here at the University of Michigan, a course was offered called Radio and American Society as a 3 credit course in the liberal arts college. It was basically a radio-appreciation course in which the students simply listened to old programs for a few hours per week. It was offered as one of the "course-mart" courses and was initiated by Ben Crane, a student and a collector. I sponsored the course, but Ben really taught it. There were nearly 50 people in the course. As far as I know, this is the first time a credit course like this has been given. At this point, it seems unlikely that it will be offered again since Ben is graduating this summer, but he will probably teach it in the future for the University as part of their Adult Education course series which is jointly sponsored by the U. of Michigan, Wayne State University, and Eastern Michigan University. Plans are to alternate offering it here in Ann Arbor and in Detroit.

---

Side Note, contributed by the ever alert Hugh Carlson: "The nude craze has now reached radio. The British Broadcasting Corporation says that it will air the first nude radio play, 'La Recreation,' by French novelist Monique Wittig. 'It's a very serious play and is not being done just for kicks,' said Martin Esslin, internationally known critic who is head of the BBC's radio department. 'We wanted to give the play a stereo sound effect, and it was important to capture the real sound of one woman working on another woman's bare flesh (in a sequence between a sensuous woman and her masseuse).' Esslin said, 'There was no substitute for this.'

---

Final Comments: As you've no doubt noted, I've given up any thought of trying to put together a monthly publication. There are many reasons, but they all boil down to the simple fact that a smaller EPILOGUE would just not be an adequate forum for the kind of material I want to present. In addition, the mailing chores and costs of sending out 400 copies every four weeks might turn the whole thing into more of a task than I feel capable of tackling. And, there are already two well done monthly fanzines on the subject. So, EPILOGUE is now specifically a quarterly...and its price is 40¢ per copy. All those who sent in enough cash for 25¢ a copy will be sent the correct number of issues.

By the way, you will probably receive an EPILOGUE 4½ in a month or so...with my new address, among other items. By the time you read this, the home I'm building in Bryant, Arkansas will be complete...and I'll be hard at work moving in, and continuing my attempts at reconditioning the Sandra address to sell. Bryant is just a few miles south of Little Rock...and it's really just a move to a rather isolated suburb. So, I'll probably be out of contact for a time...but once I'm settled, I'll have quite a bit more room to carry out my hobby.

Say, have any of you investigated the endless uses of an FM wireless microphone? If you invest in the proper model, there are all kinds of possibilities. Radio Shack sells one for about twenty dollars that enables you to plug in the output of your tape recorder directly. Using a small portable FM radio, you can then listen to recordings anywhere within about a block radius of the mike... mow your lawn while tuned to SUSPENSE, wash your car and listen to FIBBER...and never disturb your machine. Look into it...I find the device invaluable.



# EPILLOGUE 4

FROM: George W. Jennings

7605 Sandra Drive

Little Rock, Ark.

