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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

June 2001

In This Issue:

**THE NATIONAL
LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**
Zekatif Ossifers

PRESIDENT
Donnie Pitchford

VICE-PRESIDENT
Sam Brown

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
Tim Hollis

Front Cover: Originally a publicity still for *Partners In Time* (1946), this fine portrait of L&A became a standard "generic" shot of the duo.

Back Cover: One of the earliest publicity photos of Lum & Abner in character after they began their network radio run in the summer of 1931.

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A famous fan of L&A has left us.

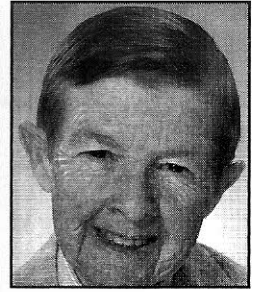
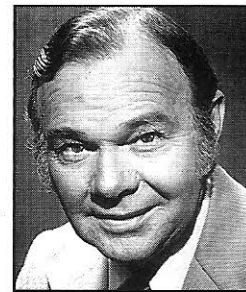
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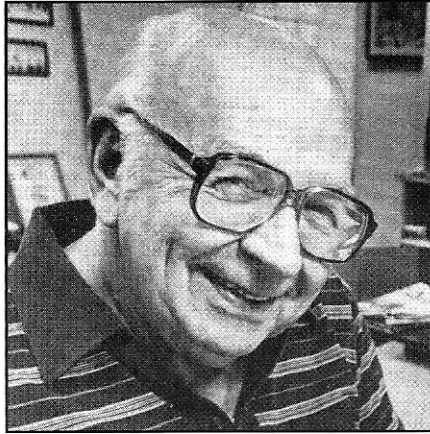
WHO ARE THESE FOUR PEOPLE, AND WHY ARE THEY SMILING?

**SEE PAGES 10-11,
THEN START
HITTING
THE ROAD FOR
MENA, ARK.
ON JUNE 15 & 16!**



In Memory Of FRED LASSWELL 1916-2001

We at the NLAS sadly report the passing of legendary cartoonist **Fred Lasswell** on March 4 at the age of 84. As you may know, Lasswell had been the guiding force behind the comic strip *Barney Google and Snuffy Smith* since the mid-1940s. What does that have to do with *Lum and Abner*, you ask? Fred Lasswell was a tremendous fan of those two old characters from Pine Ridge, and in fact had planned on being a guest at the 2000 NLAS Convention in Mena. (Ill health prevented him from making the trip.) Apparently the feeling was mutual, because there exist at least two different *Lum and Abner* episodes in which the characters refer to Snuffy Smith.



humor to the radio audience), DeBeck had Barney Google inherit some property in the North Carolina hill country, and he promptly met up with irascible Snuffy Smith and his blimp-sized wife Loweezie.

It was around this time that Missouri native Fred Lasswell joined DeBeck as an assistant artist, although Lasswell maintained that his own background had nothing to do with DeBeck's new focus for the strip. Throughout the 1930s, Snuffy and his fellow mountaineers became the stars and Barney Google was relegated to a supporting role. DeBeck died in 1942, and after a few months of the strip being produced by other hands, Fred Lasswell

took over and was still producing new daily and Sunday episodes at the time of his death.

Many people do not realize that until the early 1950s, *Barney Google and Snuffy Smith* was a daily continuity strip, with a continuing storyline not unlike the L&A episodes. In 1953, Snuffy and Barney made a trip to Washington DC on some pretense or other (shades of *So This Is Washington*), at the end of that story, Barney Google was dropped from the cast permanently... at least as a regular character. Lasswell continued to insert him into single gags every five years or so after that, to justify still having Google's name as part of the title.

One of these days we are going to get around to a more in-depth study of how *Lum and Abner* may have influenced the influx of rural humor in the early 1930s; the same year Snuffy Smith was introduced into the comics, Al Capp began his long-running *Li'l Abner* strip (with which L&A are still often confused to this day). That strip's finale in 1977 left only Snuffy to carry on the tradition; there have been reports that the strip's owner, King Features Syndicate, plans to have it continued by other artists, but there is no doubt that an era in comic strip and humor history has ended.



70 YEARS OF LUM & ABNER[®] SUMMER 1931

As we left our old friends Lum and Abner, alias Chet Lauck and Norris Goff, last time they had just gotten word that they were going to Chicago to audition their still-new comedy act for the National Broadcasting Company. Although part of the story is still a bit hazy, it seems that the best NBC could offer them was a sustaining (no sponsorship) program, and the two boys from Mena were savvy enough to know that was shaky ground for any radio actor. Instead, using Goff's wholesale grocery contacts, they managed to get an audition at the Quaker Oats Co. in Chicago, and in a rare 1966 appearance before the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters, Lauck & Goff told the story of how the audition was pulled off:

GOFF: We auditioned for Quaker Oats in their office. They were having a board of directors meeting... So we went over there to this board of directors room. And all these old gray-haired men were sitting there in these tremendous big chairs. We told them, "We don't need a mike, we'll put the show on right here." So we asked them to turn their backs to us. I never will forget all these old men getting up and lifting these heavy chairs and turning them around, when all that was necessary was for Chet and me to spin around and turn our backs to them! But they bought the show that day, and we had a week to go home and then come back and start to work.

As you can imagine, this success caused quite a stir back in the old home town. On July 23, 1931, *The Mena Star* reported:

"CHET" AND "TUFFY" VISIT HOMEFOLKS

Under Contract With Quaker Oats as "Lum & Abner," Will Return to Chicago Wednesday

"Lum & Abner" came back to the old home town Monday but Mena's two most famous citizens, for that's what they are at present, didn't get to remain long enough to receive all the congratulations that are being heaped upon them from every direction. They left Wednesday for Chicago to begin the big event of their young lives — broadcasting over the NBC under contract for the Quaker Oats company.

"Chet" Lauck and his partner "Tuffy" Goff didn't look or act a bit differently than usual when they walked on Mena street Monday. But there was a difference, for at nearly every step they were stopped and congratulated for their success in landing a contract on the big time radio circuit, with its promises of future honors. They also had a lot of explaining to do, for their many Mena friends were curious to know just how this wonderful thing has come about.

"Lum & Abner" were patient and considerate and they answered all who questioned in the same old smiling way. They also arranged to appear at the



Lum & Abner look properly awed by the NBC microphone in this early publicity shot.

Tuesday luncheon of the Mena Lions club, which will be their last for at least two weeks.

Wednesday they departed for Chicago, where starting on Monday, July 27, "Lum & Abner" take the air again. They have contracted to give two performances daily for two weeks over the Red and Blue chains of the National Broadcasting company. One performance is at 6:15 a.m., the other at 7:15 a.m. They will broadcast from the NBC studio on the nineteenth floor of the great Merchandise Mart in Chicago, the largest building in the world.

"Lum & Abner" will take the place on the Quaker Oats program that has been supplied by Gene and Glenn, "Jake & Lena," the high priced radio stars, who will be off on vacation. At the conclusion of this engagement they expect to start another covering the following 26 weeks.

The Mena entertainers are under the management of Bill Hay of NBC, who is also the manager of the famed "Amos & Andy," and who has had no other team in his charge until he selected the pair of lads from Arkansas.

Friends of "Chet" and "Tuffy" see nothing but promise of future greatness for them, because of the attention they have received from Manager Hay, and from the fact that they were able to land a contract after only two weeks, when others have vainly tried for months.

Mrs. Lauck and Mrs. Goff accompanied their husbands on the trip to Chicago. The party motored home, reaching Hot Springs Sunday night. "Lum & Abner" visited the studio of KTHS, where they first began broadcasting. They made a brief appearance at the "mike" at the invitation of Manager Arnoux and spoke briefly to their unseen audience. Relatives and friends met them at Hot Springs and accompanied the young folks back to Mena.

In order to get ready for the formal appearance next Monday "Lum & Abner" have to get back to Chicago this week. After the close of their two weeks' engagement they plan to return home for two weeks and prepare of the longer engagement to follow.

Now, unknown to the folks in Mena, getting ready to go on a national hookup was more complicated than driving over to Hot Springs and ad-libbing over KTHS. In their 1966 appearance, the pair told about the surprises that awaited them back in Chicago:

GOFF: Now, Quaker Oats didn't tell the advertising agency about this at all. So, we went back to Mena, and Lord & Thomas started calling. Leo Rosenberg, he didn't know what we did, Quaker Oats didn't know what we did, and WE didn't know what we did! And they wanted us to get in there a day early, so they could find out what the show was. So we reported in to Lord & Thomas the day before we were to go on the air, and they sent us to a fellow named Henry Sellinger. And Henry tried to find out from us what we were going to do. And like I said, we couldn't tell him, we honestly didn't know. So, he said "Well, let us read some of your scripts."

LAUCK: That's where he had us, right there.

GOFF: Not only didn't we have any, we didn't know what he was talking about! Believe me, I'd never heard the word in my life. And he tried to explain to us that you had to write this thing down because NBC had to clear it before you went on the air. So we said, "We'll write it, it won't take us any time at all." So he bundled us up, doesn't know what to think about it...



He doesn't know what he's got, and he's looking at us, knowing we're too stupid to go on the air. But he's stuck with us because the sponsor has purchased the act. So here comes the typewriter, paper, carbon, all this... Henry stayed with us until late that evening. Finally, bless his heart, he just went home. Now we're going on the next morning, we're going on the Blue Network at 7:00 and the Red Network at 8:00. And here it is the night before and we don't have a word.

Well, we finally got some stuff down on paper. We didn't have a stopwatch, we'd never heard of one. We got a pocket watch, and started reading. And one time it runs eight minutes, we read it again, and it reads 14 minutes, and 11 minutes... It never did come out the same! So we decided, finally, about daylight that the best approach was to take these typewritten sheets and put them in front of us. So the next morning, about 6:00, we took our little bunch of sheets of typerwitten paper that didn't have anything on them, and we went down Wacker Drive to the Merchandise Mart.

Now, they had said we were on at 7:00, so we figured we'd get in there at two minutes before 7:00, we've got it made. So we're enjoying the beauties of the Chicago River and Wacker Drive, strolling along. And we walk in the Mart, and I've never seen such a busy place, people running over us, we get on the eleva-

tor, and people are all in a big steam about something. We don't know what's going on. We get off on the 19th floor and they're shoving us aside, they're running this way and that. So we walk up to the desk and we ask them where Lum and Abner are supposed to be, and said that we were Lum and Abner. Well, this holler went up... All these people who were running around were looking for us!

Well, we were there at five minutes to seven, we didn't know yet what Henry was so mad about. And we didn't know about Mike levels and all this stuff, so we got there in time to go on the air. And Chet's watching the clock... and he reaches over a grabs a page, I grab a page, and we turn together, came out right on the head. And poor Henry, his eyes opened up for the first time. We go down to breakfast and he's telling us was a terrific job it is, then we come back to do our 8:00 show. Well, Chet started off on another subject. We've got the same script... since Henry carried it, he knows it's the same script... but we're not doing the same show! And that's when he found out we'd ad-libbed the whole thing.

As has been stated elsewhere, the initial NBC version of *Lum and Abner* was a temporary summer replacement for another comedy show, *Gene and Glenn*. For some reason, apparently Mena was somewhat outside the reception area of any NBC affiliate, as *The Mena Star* had to depend upon reports from other parts of the country to find out how the pair was doing. On August 6, the paper reported:

"LUM & ABNER" PLEASE HEARERS

While Home Folks Have Difficulty in Getting Them Word Comes From Others That They Are Good

Even though homefolks have difficulty in getting to hear "Lum & Abner," former Mena residents in other places have the pleasure of hearing the home town radio artists.

Mrs. Edmonia Decker of Chicago, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Petty, is in this class. In a letter to her mother, Mrs. Decker tells of hearing "Lum & Abner" in the early performances and says:

"We missed them the first morning but heard them yesterday and this morning. The boys are really wonderful and I think so natural. It makes one think they are sitting by the old stove back there in the store, listening to some of the farmers talk. I believe the boys with the right guidance will certainly go far and they have the right man back of them in Bill Hay. Both of the boys are great; most of these rural sketches are so exaggerated and overdone that I don't really enjoy them, but Lum & Abner are so natural they are perfect."

Mrs. Decker's letter also reveals that "Chet" and "Tuffy" are not idling their time away in the big city. A dinner engagement at the Decker home had to be postponed because the young entertainers were working hard to make changes in their sketches and prepare future programs. As Mrs. Decker tells it, "they will be working all day and most of the night with some man at the NBC studio."



The young Lauck & Goff ponder their future in radio in this very early publicity shot.

The praise from Mrs. Decker is valued because prior to her marriage she had considerable stage experience and also did chautauqua work, and knows histrionic ability in the young artists.

Mrs. Bert Ravenscraft quotes from a letter from her sister living in Davis, W. Va., the following: "Am pleased to tell you we heard Lum and Abner this morning. They are on from 8 to 8:15 a.m. and they are fine. We get them over WTAM, Cleveland. I am glad Bill Hay is to announce for them. We all like him so much. Shall listen in each morning as Cleveland is one of our best stations."

B. S. Petefish received a letter from his sister, Miss Emma Evers, Pittsburgh, Pa., who hears the Quaker program over WCAE, Pittsburgh. She says, "They are very good. We expect to hear them every morning the next two weeks."

Yes, *Gene and Glenn* were only taking a two-week vacation, and after the broadcast of August 7, *Lum and Abner* was off the air again. Seeing no reason to hang around Chicago, Lauck and Goff returned to Mena for a visit, as recorded by the *Star* on August 13:

"LUM & ABNER" ARE WITH HOME FOLKS

Famed Radio Pair Will Rest Two Weeks and Then Return to Chicago for Engagement

"Lum & Abner," the famed radio pair that call Mena home,

are back in the highlands again. "Chet" Lauck and "Tuffy" Goff, as the home folks know them best, arrived Sunday evening from Hot Springs where they were met by Mrs. Lauck and Mrs. Goff. The young entertainers are home for a two weeks rest.

On Monday the 24th, "Lum & Abner" go back to Chicago where they will resume broadcasting their popular entertainment over the NBC network. The length of their engagement depends upon the time required to make arrangements for a personal tour of Southern stations. They expect to be in Chicago from three to five weeks before starting the trip through Dixie for the Quaker Oats company.

The Mena entertainers have just concluded a most successful two weeks engagement for the big cereal makers. They appeared twice daily over the Red and Blue chains of the National Broadcasting company for the Quaker company while "Jake & Lena" were on vacations. As "Quaker Early Birds" the Mena boys made a hit with a wide circle of radio fans, judging from the notices received.

The next engagement will be with the NBC in order that the Quaker company can make arrangements for a special southern tour for "Lum & Abner."

Both "Chet" and "Tuffy" are in good shape to renew their entertainment before the mike. Yet they are mighty, mighty glad to get back home and hear familiar voices again.

In telling about their experiences in Chicago, "Lum" explained Monday that this business of being a radio entertainer is not a soft snap. "Don't take it up just for the fun you get out of it," is the way "Chet" Lauck told it. From what he says about rising at 5 a.m. in order to get to the NBC studio at 6, and make the two appearances of the "Quaker Early Birds" required each day, it is hard.

During their stay of the past two weeks in the Windy City, "Lum & Abner" managed to see just one ball game. That's part of the proof they offer that they were kept busy. After making the two morning appearances before the mike, business matters required their attention most of the rest of the day, and it was generally at night that they had time to write their script for the next performance. They had but little time for social matters, both "Chet" and "Tuffy" agree.

The Mena boys have become acquainted with daylight saving time which is in vogue in Chicago and they also know something about Lake Michigan. Their rooms in the Medinah Athletic club, one of the most elaborate in the country, overlooks the big body of water.

While at home "Lum & Abner" are going to relax and take things easy. They hope to let others do most of the talking.

In the same August 13 issue, there was a briefer news item:

BOOST FOR "LUM & ABNER" COMES FROM MICHIGAN

Up at Benton Harbor, Mich., where the former Mena family of Badts live, they enjoy hearing "Lum & Abner." Arnold Badt, in a letter to County Clerk M. M. Martin, pays a compliment to the Mena radio stars in these words: "We listen every morning to Chester & Norris in 'Lum & Abner.' These boys are unusually clever and make a great hit. Sure sorry they can't be heard in Polk county. We get an added thrill when we hear familiar voices of people and descriptions of rural locations in and about Mena. I talked to the boys by phone and hope they drop over to see us as they promised."

Finally it was time for the two celebrities to return to Chicago to take up where they left off. We must use our imaginations now to be able to comprehend the event that took place just before their departure. Listen to *The Mena Star* on August 20, 1931:

BIGGEST DANCE TO "LUM & ABNER"

More Than One Hundred Gathered at Elks Home for Farewell Affair - Radio Artists to Chicago

Mena's younger social set, and many of the elders too, showed their admiration and esteem for "Lum & Abner" Tuesday night by turning out the biggest crowd of the season for the dance arranged in honor of the young radio entertainers. There were more than 100 gathered in the parlors of the Elks home to enjoy the "Lum & Abner" dancing program, and there was a variety of entertainment that revealed better than words the admiration the home folks have for the two young men.

Chester H. Lauck, the "Lum" of the entertaining pair, and his partner Norris "Abner" Goff, with their wives and also their parents were the honored guests of the evening. Many of those who gathered at the lodge home did not dance, but came solely to say goodbye and good luck to the ambitious young men who are making their way in the world via the radio. It was a farewell in a sense, for "Lum & Abner," with Mrs. Lauck and baby daughter, and Mrs. Goff left

Wednesday for Hot Springs, from which point they go on to Chicago. On Monday, August 24, "Lum & Abner" go on the air again for the NBC, and for several weeks will broadcast from Chicago, before starting on a personal tour of Southern stations in the interests of the Quaker Oats company.

The evening's program had to be lengthened an hour in



order that the forty dancing couples present have a full measure of entertainment. The peppy "Crusaders," the seven piece orchestra which furnished the music, consented to play the over-time after the happy crowd asked for an extension.

An added feature of the evening's entertainment was the appearance of fellow radio performers. They were Monte and Bill Rockman of Heavener, who have been singing for some years over WOAI at San Antonio. They are now at home on vacation, and with their brother, Joe Rockman and Jim Thornton Jr., have organized the Southern Harmony Four. The quartet to show their appreciation of fellow entertainers came to Mena Tuesday and were invited to sing. Their melody was so pleasing that the crowd made repeated calls for the quartet, and at intervals during the evening dancing was forgotten.

Another expression of appreciation came from Oscar Alford of the Mena Cafe. During the intermission, just before midnight, the cafe arranged to serve Quaker Oats and cream free to all the dancers. Judging from the greeting given the announcement and

the thanks voiced by those who partook of the food, Quaker Oats is going to be a popular dish among those who dance.

A couple of local events that had only "fringe" bearings on the L&A story were the August 24 reopening of Mena's Lyric Theatre, which had been closed for three weeks to allow the installation of "New Sound Equipment." On September 3, in a tiny paragraph the *Star* reported the passing of Luke Spears (yes, he was a real person), a young man of 20 who "died after a long fight for life." He may have been dead in real life, but his radio counterpart in Pine Ridge would live on for many more years, to become one of the most consistent characters on the show.

In our next installment we will see what happened to "those two lovable old characters from the hill country" next, and how they left Chicago to hit the road for the South, as the newspapers had hinted. Ya'll come back now, y'hear?

- Tim Hollis

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GENE AND GLENN?



Sometimes it seems that the comedy team of *Gene and Glenn* would be all but forgotten today, if not for the fact that *Lum and Abner* had its network debut as a two-week replacement for the show. Actually, at the time this historic event took place, *Gene and Glenn* itself was less than a year old. According to radio historian John Dunning, Gene Carroll and Glenn Rowell were first heard over NBC on September 29, 1930. Their show, as well as the initial L&A broadcasts, was known as *The Quaker Early Birds Program*.

All reports make it sound as if Gene Carroll were the true star of the show. While at WLS in Chicago he had discovered his ability to impersonate a female voice, which he named "Lena." To go along with this character he invented another voice known as "Jake," and once the *Gene and Glenn* program took to the air the format was set: The two G's were residents of a boarding house owned by Lena, where Jake was the handyman. Dunning reports that Gene and Glenn used a little audio trick that even Lum & Abner did not employ: They would prerecord lines in their various character voices and then play back those recordings on the show as they responded to them with other voices... giving the sound of many more performers than there actually were!

After the end of 1932, *Gene and Glenn* popped up irregular-

ly in other network time slots until 1941. Carroll continued employing his Lena voice, for a while using it as a maid on *Fibber McGee and Molly*. Once radio was replaced by TV in the late 1940s, both Gene and Glenn made it big all over again as local children's TV personalities in Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio. Gene Carroll became "Uncle Jake," hosting a talent show for kids, while Rowell also carried on the radio format, after a fashion, with *Captain Glenn's Boarding House*. Rowell died in 1965, with Carroll following in 1972.

(For more information about Gene and Glenn's career in kids' TV, consult the new book by NLAS Executive Secretary Tim Hollis, *Hi There, Boys and Girls! America's Local Children's TV Programs*, due out this fall from the University Press of Mississippi.)



Gene Carroll as host of "Uncle Jake's House" on WEWS, Channel 5, in Cleveland, OH.

Load Up The Younguns an' Head Fer **THE 2001 NLAS CONVENTION**

JUNE 15-16, 2001

Lime Tree Inn, Mena, Ark.

Well, that time is almost here! Of course you know that this year's convention is celebrating the 70th anniversary of the *Lum and Abner* program, and it should be fairly obvious that if the program is going to be preserved for the next 70 years, we are going to have to educate the younger generations about it. If any of you have ever thought of bringing your grandchildren or your Baby Boomer-era family members, this is the year that will literally have something for everyone!

On the next page, you will see individual writeups on each of our four guests, all of whose work will be familiar to various age groups. If you remember old-time radio, they were there. If you are from the television era, they were all legends in that medium. Are you an animated cartoon buff? You'll never see four more talented voice performers in one room! It's time to load up everyone and haul them into Mena!

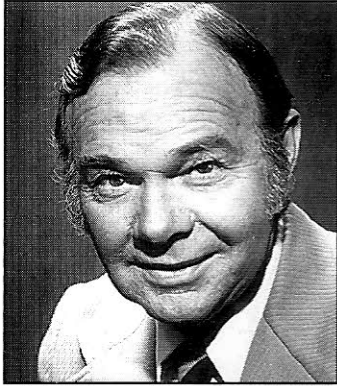
Another anniversary taking place this year involves the ill-fated *Lum and Abner* TV pilot that was prepared in 1961. To date, no one has been able to view the finished film of this project, but one of its cast members, Sam Edwards, did save his original shooting script. As the grand finale to the whole convention on Saturday evening, this talented troupe of troupers will recreate the 1961 pilot (in radio style). The original pilot was produced by Four Star Television, and Uncle Donnie Pitchford points out that our recreation of it will feature four stars! (We won't discuss the alleged talent of the other NLAS performers, who are definitely going to be out of their league this year...)

Each convention program will highlight the career of one of our guests. The first program will be at 5 p.m. on Friday, June 15. The next program will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, the third at 2 p.m., and the big finish for the weekend will be at 7 p.m. Because of the complicated logistics of putting on this year's schedule, the doors to the meeting room will remain locked until 30 minutes before the scheduled time.

If you have not made your reservations at the Lime Tree Inn yet, you orta! There do not seem to be any other big events going on in Mena that weekend to cause a shortage of rooms, but don't take chances. Call (501) 394-6350 now and reserve your room! (If the Lime Tree does happen to fill up, they can direct you to the nearest other motels, the Sun Country Inn and the Harvey House.)

Now, just mosey on over to page 11 and see who's coming! I grannies, this here is gonna be one fer the record books fer shore! Don't YOU miss out on the opportunity to see it as it happens!

VERY SPECIAL GUESTS:



SAM EDWARDS

SAM EDWARDS

For the past 60 years, Mr. Edwards has been one of the busiest character actors in Hollywood, performing in radio, movies, television, animated cartoons, and records! Radio fans know him best as "Dexter," the boyfriend of the title character in *Meet Corliss Archer*. Movie buffs are familiar with his work in *Operation Pacific* with John Wayne, the *Captain Midnight* serial, and a long line of other film roles. He was seen in hundreds of TV series, including *Dragnet* (both the 1950s and 1960s versions), *The Andy Griffith Show*, and *Little House on the Prairie*. (In 1961 he was even cast in the ill-fated *Lum and Abner* TV pilot that never made it onto the air.) He was one of two actors who provided the voice of Thumper the rabbit in Walt Disney's 1942 animated feature *Bambi* (Edwards was the adult version of the bunny), and his work for the studio continued with a long series of albums on the Disneyland Records label, in which he was the voice of many cartoon stars, including Owl and Tigger of the "Winnie-the-Pooh" stories, and the Tin Woodman and Cowardly Lion of "Oz" fame.

RHODA WILLIAMS

Ms. Williams' radio career goes back to 1935, when she made her airwaves debut in Los Angeles. Her big broadcasting break came when, from 1949 to 1954, she played oldest daughter Betty in the radio version of *Father Knows Best*, starring Robert Young, and written for a number of those years by ex-L&A writer Roz Rogers. Many movie roles went along with her radio performances, including a part in *National Velvet*, but her most famous movie performance was also as a voice only: she was "Drizella," one of the two wicked stepsisters in Disney's *Cinderella* (1950). She has continued her work as a vocal specialist; her credits even include the voices of assorted aliens in the features *Star Trek IV* and *Star Trek V*. On television, she made countless appearances on such classic series as *Ironside*, *Dragnet*, *General Hospital*, and one memorable episode of *The Twilight Zone*, in which once again she was only heard (as the voice of a little girl who was lost in the fourth dimension!). "Versatile" is hardly an adequate word to describe this marvelous actress!



RHODA WILLIAMS



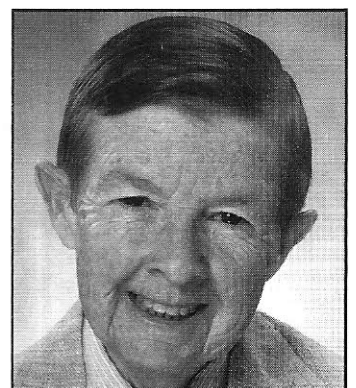
ROBIE LESTER

ROBIE LESTER

Anyone who has read the credits of animated cartoons or the labels of children's records since the early 1960s has heard this name. Like the two guests above, a large portion of her vocal performing career was spent with the Walt Disney Studios, for which she was the "Disneyland Story Reader" on dozens of book-and-record sets. While her narrating voice was beautiful in itself, she also demonstrated an amazing knack for character voices, many times playing all the roles in one story by herself. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, she was teamed with Sam Edwards (see above) in Disneyland Records' full-length albums, where she essayed the roles of Piglet and Roo in the "Winnie-the-Pooh" series, and many varied roles in the company's other productions. In 1970 she was cast in the holiday special *Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town*, as schoolteacher Miss Jessica, who ends up becoming Mrs. Santa Claus. (Mickey Rooney was heard as the voice of her future husband.) Ms. Lester is also a writer, and will be bringing with her a touching story about Christmas (obviously one of her favorite topics), *Heaven's Gift*, which will be available at our sale table.

DICK BEALS

Mention Dick Beals' name, and the connection that immediately springs to mind is "Speedy Alka-Seltzer." Yes, although his radio and television credits are lengthy, Mr. Beals will forever be remembered for voicing the pill-hatted little sprite in dozens of commercials from the early 1950s right up through the 1970s. He began his career at WXYZ Radio in Detroit, where he played children on many episodes of *The Lone Ranger*, *The Green Hornet*, and *Sgt. Preston of the Yukon*. Migrating to Hollywood in 1949, he soon found work as not only Speedy (thanks to fellow Michigan native and former *Lum and Abner* producer Forrest Owen), but also as other animated cartoon characters. He and Robie Lester (see above) were often a team; between the two of them they were Donald Duck's three nephews, and appeared in the 1963 cartoon series *The Funny Company*. His inimitable voice also turned up in numerous productions for the Hanna-Barbera Studios. Complete details about Beals' work can be found in his book *Think Big*, which the 4'6" actor will have on hand at the Convention's annual sale table.



DICK BEALS

