

**August 2004**

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**THE NATIONAL  
LUM AND ABNER  
SOCIETY**

*Zekatif Ossifers*  
**PRESIDENT**

Donnie Pitchford

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Sam Brown

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Tim Hollis

\*\*\*\*\*

*Front Cover: Chet Lauck and Norris Goff as the young Lum & Abner (with Pamela Blake as Lizabeth) in PARTNERS IN TIME (RKO, 1946). For a look at the line of thinking that led to this concept, see the article reprinted on pages 4-5 of this issue.*

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# THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL August 2004

## *In This Issue:*

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**Only 148 Shoppin' Days Til Christmas!**



When you cut down the old pine tree and haul it away to your living room this Christmas, how about hanging a Pine Ridge ornament on one of the branches? The illustration above shows the front and back of a commemorative ornament being sold as a fundraiser for the Heritage House Museum in Mt. Idy, Arkansas. It is being offered in recognition of 2004 being the 100th anniversary of the construction of the McKinzie Store in Pine Ridge, which today serves as the Lum & Abner Museum. The artwork is by L&A Museum co-curator Kathy Stucker. You can order the ornament for \$10 + \$3.85 postage by sending a check (payable to "Lum & Abner Store") to General Delivery, Pine Ridge, AR 71966. Or, you can order with a credit card by calling (870) 326-4442. Do yer Christmas shoppin' early this year!

# LUM AND ABNER

## The Young Men Who Play Oldsters on Screen

The article reprinted below solves a mystery almost two decades old for the NLAS. In our archives, we have long had a pair of RKO Radio Pictures publicity photos showing a debonair Chet Lauck making like a romantic leading man with an unidentified actress. We assumed they stemmed from a desire on RKO's part to groom Chet for non-L&A roles, but the whole story was not known until we ran across the March 1944 issue of MOVIELAND magazine earlier this year. Apparently there was a matching set of Norris Goff photos, and the actress in them is none other than Barbara Hale, who was about to be featured in L&A's GOIN' TO TOWN. This article explains why such out-of-character shots were being done!



What do you think of Abner (Norris Goff) as a great new screen lover? Posed with him here is Barbara Hale, the love interest opposite Frank Sinatra in the RKO musical, "Higher and Higher."



Lum (Chester Lauck) seems to be doing all right, too! Barbara thinks he would make a top leading man. Dramatically romantic, or the old man with white wig and whiskers -- which will it be?

When you're perplexed about something, ask folks to help you. Ask advice. That's what Chet Lauck and Norris Goff would tell you. That's their philosophy, and the philosophy of their famous screen and radio characters, Lum and Abner, as well.

Now Lauck and Goff are perplexed, and they're turning to you MOVIELAND readers for the solution to their problems.

They want to find out whether their movie audience,

which probably includes a big slice of their giant radio audience as well, would like to see them on the screen as young men.

You see, sans those white wigs and whiskers, bleached brows and artificial wrinkles they wore in *So This is Washington* and other pictures, the boys are pretty sharp. More than a bit on the leading man type. They're quite the boys around Hollywood town.

It took the movies years to talk the boys, already famous

# In The News

## LUM & ABNER ARTICLES

# NEED YOUR HELP!

## and Radio Will Pay You Money For Your Advice

on radio, into making a picture. Their first clicked, and then they made another. It was called *The Bashful Bachelor*. That was even more successful, particularly in the smaller towns and rural districts, where Lum and Abner are top favorites on the air.

But it remained for their latest picture, *So This is Washington*, to hit the big cities between the eyes. Still, it followed a formula. It carried on the radio characters, white whiskers and all. The boys thought they ought to keep these characters intact, with their Arkansas dialect and background at least included in the movies, along with familiar sets such as the Jot 'Em Down Store.

Now they're just about talked into appearing on the screen as themselves, either in or out of their familiar Lum and Abner pictures.

They want the advice of their screen and radio fans about this vitally important step in their careers.

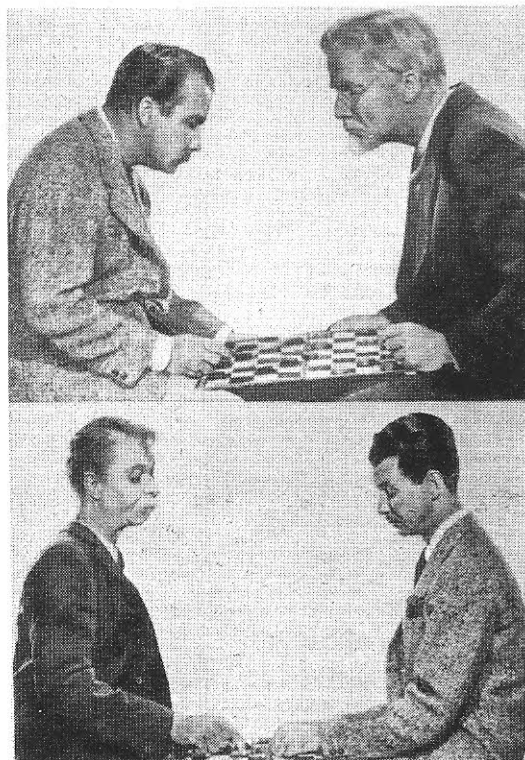
What do you think? Should they start a new series of films having nothing to do with the Lum and Abner pictures, radio shows, characters or locale, in each of which they would play different characters, just as do Messrs. Grant, Cagney, Cooper, etc?

Or should they just stay themselves?

Each method, from the boys' point of view, has good points and bad. That's why they're perplexed. And that's why they are asking you for advice through MOVIELAND.

To make it interesting, the stars, the companies producing and releasing their movies, and this magazine, have planned to ask for this advice in a contest.

For prizes, to make the contest still more interesting, \$2,000 in War Bonds will be given to the winners, with the first prize a \$1,000 Bond. There will be five \$100 Bond



Norris Goff (top) plays checkers with Abner, while Chester Lauck engages his old friend Lum. Actually, of course, it's a trick of the cameraman.

prizes and ten \$50 Bond prizes.

These lush rewards are offered for the best letters of advice, not longer than 250 words each, telling Lum and Abner — Chet Lauck and Norris Goff — what you would like them to do in this predicament.

Prizes will be awarded on the basis of the soundness of the advice, rather than on the literary quality of the letters. The letters should be addressed to the Lum and Abner Contest Editor, Movieland, 9126 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, 46, California. The contest closes April 1, 1944. No letters postmarked after midnight of that date can be judged.

Meanwhile, the boys will await your response to their plea. Of course, their radio shows will be going on right along, five per week, Monday through Friday, over the Blue Network. And they may film a Lum and Abner picture.

But they'll wait for the advice of their friends before they bow to producer pressure to step before the cameras as their youthful selves. They want to hear what you have to say about it.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: As with any of the Hollywood fan magazines of the era, it is difficult to say just how much of the above was true and how much was simply publicity. The radio show was being broadcast only four days per week at the time.. Monday through Thursday.. so that might call the rest of the article into question as well. However, at least parts of it must have been true, because within a couple of years movie audiences were exposed to the final RKO Lum and Abner movie, *PARTNERS IN TIME*, in which Lauck & Goff indeed appeared on screen without their old age make-up, portraying Lum & Abner as young men in 1904.)

# 70 YEARS OF LUM AND ABNER®

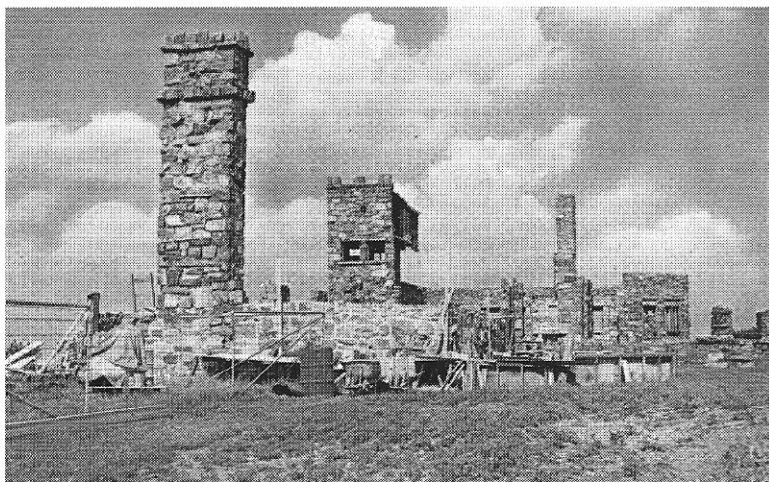
Considering that some important events in broadcasting history were taking place during the summer and early fall months of 1934, *Lum and Abner* was receiving less coverage than usual in the Mena newspaper. For this ongoing series taking a look at what was happening in L&A's world 70 years ago, we are going to have to piece the story together from several different sources and see if we can get the puzzle to fit together.

As you will recall, when we left off in our last installment, Lauck and Goff had finally been able to return to their broadcasting base in Chicago, and on June 28 the paper had reported that Chet's parents and brother were en route to visit their celebrity son at L&A's new home base of WGN. That must have been quite a trip, because the next report did not appear until a month later. On July 26, the *Mena Star* announced:

*Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lauck and Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Lauck have returned from their trip to Chicago, where they visited "Lum and Abner" and viewed the World's Fair. They found "Chet" and "Tuffy" busy on their daily broadcasts and managing to keep happy and healthy despite their hard work.*

The same issue of the paper contained a double page ad for the annual Old Settlers' Reunion, which as we have mentioned before was the big summer celebration in the town (long before there was an NLAS Convention, of course!). As it had in the past, the ad featured the drawings of L&A characters that Chet had created for the 1932 *Lum and Abner & Their Friends from Pine Ridge* book, uncredited and unidentified as L&A-related. In fact, it appears that the newspaper considered them little more than standard clip art.

With such brief news reports on L&A's world, is there any other way to know just what was going on at the time? Fortunately there is at least another spotty way to do so. A num-



*We have long suspected that L&A's 1934/1946 hotel was inspired by the ruins of the Queen Wilhelmina Hotel in Mena, a popular sight for tourists of that era.*

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ber of L&A scripts from 1934 survived, although the ones the NLAS has been able to see consist mainly of the "Old Eddards Sayin's" routines. We issued these way back in 1993 as the first volume of our script reprint books, and it has recently been reprinted to observe the scripts' 70th anniversary. If you don't have one of these books yet, you should order one right away, but meanwhile we can use it to see just what the radio episodes were concerning themselves with during this time.

The script for July 16, 1934 (which would have been broadcast during the abovementioned visit by the Lauck family) concerns L&A running a hotel. Yes, that's right, this was apparently the original version of the Mountain View Hotel series that was remade during the summer of 1946. With only a couple of scripts available from the 1934 version it is difficult to say how similar the two storylines were. The July 16 script includes a British-accented character named Sir Herbert, who was most likely played by Tuffy Goff since all of his dialogue is opposite Lum. As in the 1946 version, a detective named Wilson is hanging around the hotel and keeping a private eye on some of the shady residents. Sir Herbert is about as shady as they come, because the ending of that day's script includes this cliffhanger dialogue:

**SIR H:** *Very clewaw this fellow Wilson.. Sharper than I give him credit for. The bloomin blighter's apt to prove a menace to our plans.. dont you know.*

**LUM:** *Yea.*

**SIR H:** *Now thats what I wanted to speak to you about Mr. Edwawds, according to our agreement you were to receive a hundred and twenty five pounds aproximitly— er five hundred dollars I believe it was..*

**LUM:** *Yea five hunderd dollars, I dont like that pound business.. We jist use them to weigh with over here.*

**SIR H:** *Under the terms of our agreement you were to do anything I saw fit to call upon you for.*

**LUM:** *Yea what it is you want me to do?*

**SIR H:** *Well this fellow Wilson will have to be disposed of.. Done away with as it were..*

**LUM:** *Well here now you dont spect me to— I NEVER AGREED TO.. JIST CAUSE I'VE ALREADY TAKEND THE MONEY YOU CAINT FORCE ME TO— ONDOUBTLY YOU DONT MEAN—*

The next script is from July 30, by which time L&A have turned the hotel management over to Cedric and returned to the Jot 'Em Down Store. (We never learn the outcome of young Mr. Weehunt's efforts to become the next Conrad Hilton.) Lum has another grand publicity stunt in mind, involving making a hot air balloon ascent into the stratosphere. The bad news is that L&A learn that substitute store manager Grandpappy Spears has been doing business hand over arthritic fist, but it has all been on credit. The store is



**THE GOOD OLD DAYS**

HAD MUCH IN THEIR FAVOR, BUT THEY NEVER HAD

**Talking Motion Pictures**

AND MODERN THEATRES LIKE THAT OF WHICH MENA IS PROUD.

The Best of Pictures—Without Any Advance in Price Is the Reason for Our Building a Splendid Patronage.

THURSDAY - FRIDAY

**"CONVENTION CITY"**

With **DICK POWELL** — **JOAN BLONDELL**

SATURDAY

10c Matinee 1 P. M.

**"THE SHOW OFF," With Spencer Tracy**

SUNDAY MATINEE - MONDAY

**"OPERATOR 13"**

With **MARION DAVIES** — **GARY COOPER**

TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY

2 Adults for 25c

**"SHE LEARNED ABOUT SAILORS"**

With **LEW AYRES** — **ALICE FAYE** — **HARRY GREEN**

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, AUG. 2 - 3

**"SHE WAS A LADY"**

With **HELEN TWELVETREES** — **DONALD WOODS**

*Chet Lauck's 1932 artwork was once again appropriated for the 1934 Old Settlers' Reunion celebration in Mena. TRIVIA: Note that the movie CONVENTION CITY showing at the Lyric Theater starred Joan Blondell. Her sister Gloria would later be a semi-regular on the half-hour Lum & Abner show in 1948-49.*

However, the seemingly decrepit horse has hidden talents! It turns out that the animal is a champion race horse, but ONLY when he runs in the rain. This sets the stage for yet another of the myriad "Name The \_\_\_\_\_" contests that were run on the show over the years (see page 12 of this issue for a report on the most important one of them all). The contest must have been in effect for a month or so, because the Mena Star of September 20, 1934, gave the final results:

**Lum's Horse Has Now Been Named**

**Chicago Man Wins First Prize; Clint Eddy Is Also a Winner**

The Horlick's Malted Milk company, sponsors of Lum and Abner, have announced the winners in the recent contest for a name for Lum's horse. While the winning name, "Drizzle Whiz," was sent in by a Chicago man who received the \$100 given as first prize, a lesser prize was awarded to a local Lum and Abner fan who had entered the contest, Clint Eddy being the lucky man.

Mr. Eddy received a letter Thursday morning from the big company informing him that "Swayed," the name he had submitted for the horse, had been considered by the judges to be good enough for one of the smaller prizes and a check was enclosed for same.

Sixty-two prizes were given, totaling \$250 and the list of winners show that the Mena barber was the only prize winner in Arkansas. Those who have followed the programs of Lum and Abner each evening at 9:15 are familiar with the fact that Lum's horse will only run when it rains, therefore the name "Drizzle Whiz" is considered very appropriate.

The young Mena radio entertainers have signed a new contract which begins October 1. At that time their schedule of broadcast will be changed and they will be heard in their first broadcast at 6:15 p.m. CST, from station WLW at Cincinnati, and their second program each evening will go on the air at 8:30 p.m. CST, from stations WGN, Chicago, WOR, Newark, and WXYZ, Detroit.

That last bit about the show's change in schedule is what turned out to be a most important part of broadcasting history. Over the years

several hundred dollars in debt because Grandpap had no cash to restock the shelves!

Over the next few weeks, from what we can gather, L&A attempt to raise money to pay off the wholesale grocery house, and Abner delightedly takes in second hand junk, instead of cash, on the store's past due accounts. By the script of August 8 the discussion has turned to a broken-down horse that was one of Abner's acquisitions. It shows the influence of the Laucks' recent visit to the Chicago World's Fair in this bit of dialogue:

**LUM:** I fergot about him bein so balky... What I started to say, if we could git him up to Chicago to the worlds fair we might sell him to that place that Dan Davis was tellin us about... That Ripley's Odditorium.

**ABNER:** Why, are they buyin up old horses?

**LUM:** No but you heard Dan tellin bout all the freaks they got.. That horse out ther ort to be the star of the show.

(And in case you didn't catch on, the Robert Ripley "Odditorium" at the World's Fair was the forerunner of today's Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museums that thrive in several different tourist centers.)

there have been several different versions of what actually took place, but one of the most complete came in 1969, when Eddie Phelan, manager of radio station KALO in Little Rock, interviewed Chet Lauck about the subject. After incorrectly playing the 1941-45 L&A theme, which had not yet been written in 1934, Phelan's interview began:

**PHELAN:** *Some 30-odd years ago, that theme was the motivating factor behind the Mutual Broadcasting System, and here to give us the background on that story is the man himself, Chet Lauck of Hot Springs, known to millions of Americans as Lum Eddards of Pine Ridge.*

**LAUCK:** *Yes, that's the Lum and Abner theme song, and its connection with Mutual Network is very significant. We had a sponsor who couldn't clear the time on one of the then-existing networks. Ours was a "strip show," that's 15 minutes five nights a week, Monday through Friday, and they couldn't clear the same time across the board. So they arranged to have WGN in Chicago, and WOR in New York, WLW in Cincinnati, and WXYZ in Detroit hooked up by telephone to carry our show until time could be cleared on one of the major networks. Well, soon they added another program or two and then started adding more stations, and eventually the Mutual Network became the largest network of all.*

*But we take great pride in having had something to do with the founding of the Mutual Network.*

**PHELAN:** *As a Mutual affiliate we thank you very much.*

Now, as far as Chet knew, this was the way *Lum and Abner* led to the formation of the Mutual Network. However, as usual, there were a few more factors at work besides the misadventures of two old men running a general store. In fact, a mysterious masked rider of the plains had something to do with it as well.

One of the most concise explanations comes from author Dave Holland's outstanding *From Out of the Past, a Pictorial History of The Lone Ranger* (1989). His research for this volume is intensive and at times astounding. Mr. Holland explains, "Encouraged by the quick success of its own Michigan Radio Network, WXYZ [the Detroit station that produced *The Lone Ranger*)] now wanted to broaden its horizons even more. So did WGN and WOR, now that WXYZ was feeding them the masked

**Famous Network Stars**  
**LUM and ABNER**

*Lovable old characters from the hill country*

**NOW ON**  
**WGN-10:15 P.M.**  
 Eastern Standard Time  
**Sunday - Monday - Tuesday -**  
**Wednesday - Thursday - Friday**  
 Sponsored by  
**HORLICK'S**  
 THE ORIGINAL  
**MALTED MILK**

*This ad appeared in the August 4, 1934, issue of RADIO GUIDE. Fifty years later, it became the first illustration in the very first issue of THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL.*

established.

One person who was on hand for L&A's Mutual Network debut was Tuffy Goff's mother, who apparently heard enough about Chicago from her friends the Laucks to want to visit the place herself (and since her husband had just died earlier that year, the trip no doubt was good for her). The September 27 *Mena Star* revealed:

*Ed Watkins went to Little Rock Monday on business. He was accompanied by Mrs. R. Goff, who will go on to Chicago where she will attend the World's Fair and also visit with "Abner" of the Lum and Abner radio team.*

So, with yet another happy family reunion in the offing, we close this chapter in L&A's careers. In our next installment we will see what happened afterward, and how the first *Lum and Abner* premium of the Horlick's era was promoted. Join us then!

- Tim Hollis and Uncle Donnie Pitchford



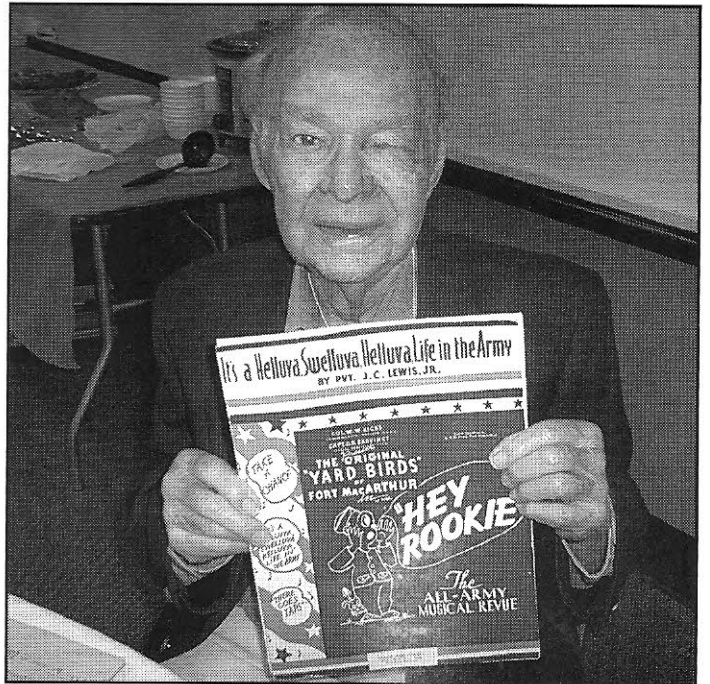
# NLAS REPSresented at REPS!

June 2004 arrived with something different for the “Ossifers” and members of the National Lum and Abner Society. Unlike the previous 19 Junes, there was no NLAS Convention. Early this year, it appeared each “Ossifer” would have a serious conflict with the proposed date(s) for the event. Since no guest had been secured, it was decided to postpone for this year, and refocus our efforts for 2005. In the meantime, the June schedule for this writer, “Uncle Donnie” Pitchford, became a bit more open. The **Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound**, better known as REPS, offered an invitation to attend their annual Showcase event in Seattle, Washington, and “Aunt Laura” and I accepted. The REPS Showcase Committee (**Joy Jackson, Christopher Conrad, Paul Feavel and Donald Zongker**) had organized a tribute to the **Mutual Broadcasting System**, which included *Lum and Abner*!

I was asked to prepare a presentation on the history of the L&A program and the NLAS, and, after submitting an audition CD, was offered the role of Abner in a script recreation. Feeling humbled and honored, “Aunt Laura” and I boarded a plane for Seattle on Thursday, June 24.

Upon arriving, we were transported by REPS member **Pat Garner**, sharing a vehicle with young OTR historian and author **Martin Grams, Jr.**, who promises to continue the enthusiasm for the Golden Age of Radio into future generations.

After walking several blocks from the hotel, we finally



*Sam Edwards displays rare sheet music from his Army days during which he costarred in Hey, Rookie, a true military morale-booster of World War II.*

located the section of Seattle Center where REPS was holding the convention - the San Juan Rooms. Our friend and 2001 NLAS Convention guest **Dick “Speedy Alka-Seltzer” Beals** was in the midst of mentoring an acting workshop with several professionals and amateurs. Immediately, we spotted our 2002 convention guest **Ginny Tyler**, who was proudly wearing her NLAS badge! Ginny was all smiles, and happy to see us.

Thursday evening, a 2001 NLAS guest of honor was the 2004 honoree of REPS. A “roast” of **Sam Edwards** was hosted by actor **Gil Stratton**, who surprised him with telephone connections featuring brother **Jack Edwards** and wife **Jane Webb**, and actress **Janet Waldo**. Miss Waldo played the title role of the bubbly teenager in *Meet Corliss Archer*, while Sam was her boyfriend, Dexter Franklin. When prompted, Sam recreated his familiar shout, “Corrrrrrrr-liissss!” to the glee of the audience. Sam related his first response to the idea of auditioning for *Meet Corliss Archer* in the 1940s. Unfamiliar with the concept of the program, he commented he knew little about archery!

The first program of Friday morning put *Lum and Abner* and the NLAS in the spotlight. I was honored to host a panel consisting of our former convention guests, Dick Beals, Sam Edwards and **Barbara Fuller**



*Dick Beals directs announcer Ed Scott during a rehearsal for “Lum and Abner.”*



Joining "Uncle Donnie" on the Lum and Abner panel are Barbara Fuller, Sam Edwards and Dick Beals.

(2000). We used a series of "slides" (actually computer JPEG images projected on a screen) accompanied by narration, tracing the history of *Lum and Abner* and the NLAS, which led up to the involvement of the ladies and gentlemen of the panel. Each commented on his or her experiences with us in Mena, Arkansas, and thankfully, each had something nice to say (of course!). For our finalé, I turned the program over to Dick Beals as we connected by phone to **Forrest Owen**. Forrest, our 1996 NLAS guest, was the *Lum and Abner* producer for **Wade Advertising**, which represented **Miles Laboratories**, "the makers of Alka-Seltzer." Dick posed questions concerning Forrest's involvement with *L&A* and his friendship with **Tuffy Goff** and **Chet Lauck**.

"Were they real pros?" Dick asked.

"On the air, yes," Forrest answered, "Off the air, no." Everyone had a hearty laugh! Of course, Forrest was referring to the fact that "the boys" loved to engage in good-natured fun in their free time, and their infectious Southern charm won them many friends. Forrest added that they also loved to have fun ON THE AIR! He discussed their penchant for ad-libbing, and his resulting panic until he again found his place on the last page of the script, and seemingly miraculously, the show came in on time - every time! Of course, Forrest soon realized this was par for the course with Chet and Tuffy and *Lum and Abner*!

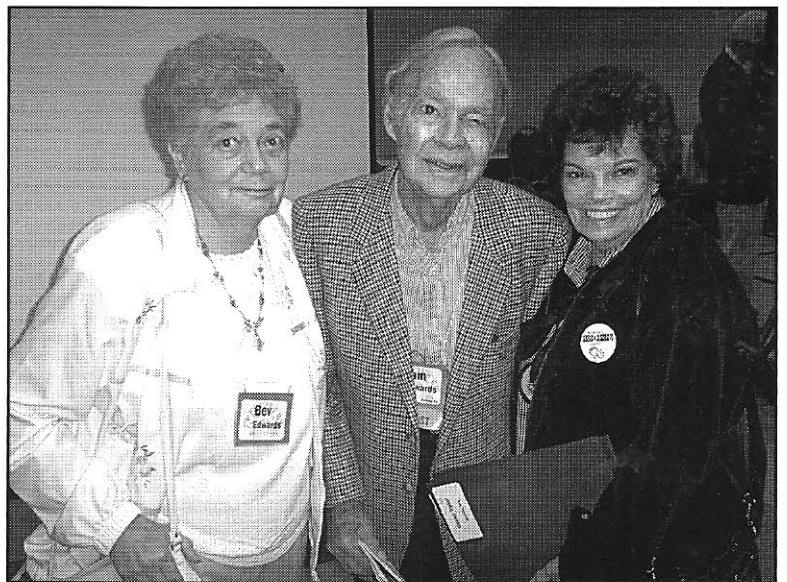
I'd like to thank **Tim Hollis** for helping me prepare many of the images I used in the "slide show," and a special "NLAS thanks" to REPS volunteers **Donald Zongker**, **Michael Wheeler**, **Bob Cardenas**, and **Penny Swanberg** for resolving technical problems and making the "slide" projection possible. Unfortunately,

a musical "bed" I prepared in advance (consisting of all the *L&A* themes blended together) was not able to be played in the background as planned, but the audience was unaware of that element. (It might have helped to drown out "Uncle Donnie's" droning voice had it been running, however! Oh well, perhaps we can use it in Mena some other year...) I'd also like to thank **Paul Secord** and the husband of Joy Jackson for assisting us with transportation to and from the Seattle-Tacoma Airport.

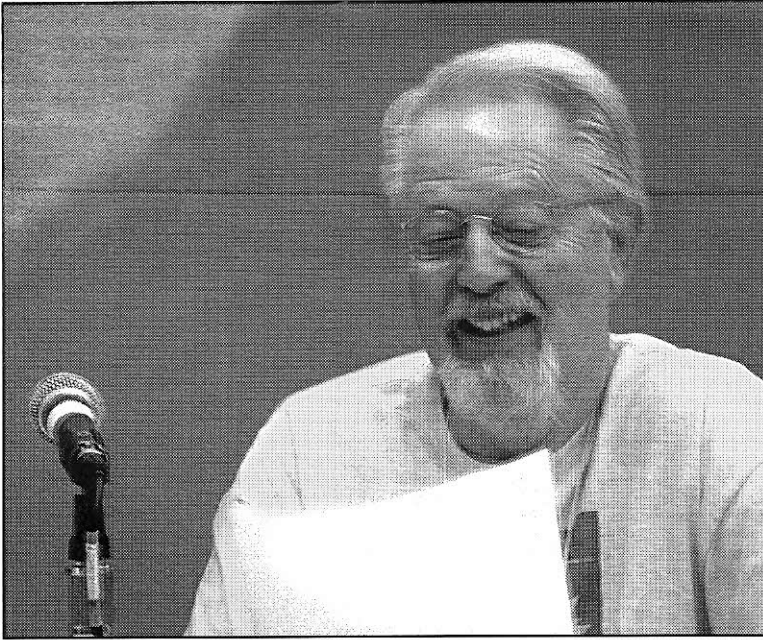
We met several enthusiastic *Lum and Abner* fans during the event, and some were already NLAS members! (I wish I could remember all their names.) Also in attendance was **Harlan Zinck**, representing **First Generation Radio Archives**, the folks who are digitally remastering the Horlick's and 1944 *L&A* programs we've been offering. It was great to be able to meet all these fine folks in person at last!

Of course, *Lum and Abner* was only one chapter in the Mutual Broadcasting System story. The original blockbuster was *The Lone Ranger*, as all OTR fans know (see the related article elsewhere in this issue), but many other excellent programs originated with Mutual.

The list of broadcasting veterans appearing at REPS Showcase (in addition to those already mentioned) included **Larry Albert**, **Alice Backes**, **Bill Brooks**, **Jean Rouverol Butler**, **Frank Buxton**, **Paul Carnegie**, **Cliff Carpenter**, **Susan Connors**, **Tommy Cook**, **Ivan Cury**, **Ray Erlenborn**, **Jim French**, **Pat French**, **Art Gilmore**, **Phil Harper**, **Margaret Lenhart**, **John Patrick Lowrie**, **Jimmy Lydon**, **Esther Geddes McVey**, **David Parker**, **Ed Scott** and **Charlie Summers**. (If I have listed someone who did not attend, or omitted someone who did, I apologize! It was a busy weekend!) To have been included with



Beverly and Sam Edwards with Ginny Tyler



*TV veteran Frank Buxton substituted as Lum in the recreation of the August 24, 1943 L&A script. Also featured were Uncle Donnie as Abner and Dick Beals as Ellie Connors (!).*

such a stellar roster was indeed an honor.

In addition to instructive programs on audio restoration and recording techniques, professional recreations were staged. "Our own" Dick Beals directed *The Green Hornet* with an all-star cast which included "our own" Barbara Fuller. *Adventures By Morse, The Shadow, Let George Do It, Ethel and Albert, The Lone Ranger, Quiet Please,* and "our own" *Lum and Abner* were among the programs presented in recreations. It was a delight to be able to sit in the audience for a change and witness some of these being performed, and "Aunt Laura" and I commend the professional performers and the REPS staff for these presentations.

Perhaps one of the most personally enjoyable and educational times for me was sitting in the "green room" being directed by Dick Beals in preparation for our *Lum and Abner* recreation. Afterward, Laura and I were able to sit and visit with some of the wonderful actors, meeting new friends and renewing friendships with Ginny, Barbara, Sam and Beverly, and Dick.

Our final involvement was the Saturday banquet, held at Kaspar's Restaurant. Laura and I were honored to be seated with some truly enthusiastic fans of *Lum and Abner*. As I apologetically stated then, I am terrible with remembering names, and if I wrote them down, I have misplaced them.

After dinner and various presentations which included the singing of Sam Edwards accompanied by son Bill, the *Lum and Abner* script from August 24, 1943 was recreated for the audience. Dick Beals directed and portrayed Mary Edwards (Ellie Connors), the adorable girl (originally played by **Lurene Tuttle**) who had escaped from a home for girls to eventually become officially assigned to Lum and Abner's care. The multi-talented Frank Buxton tack-

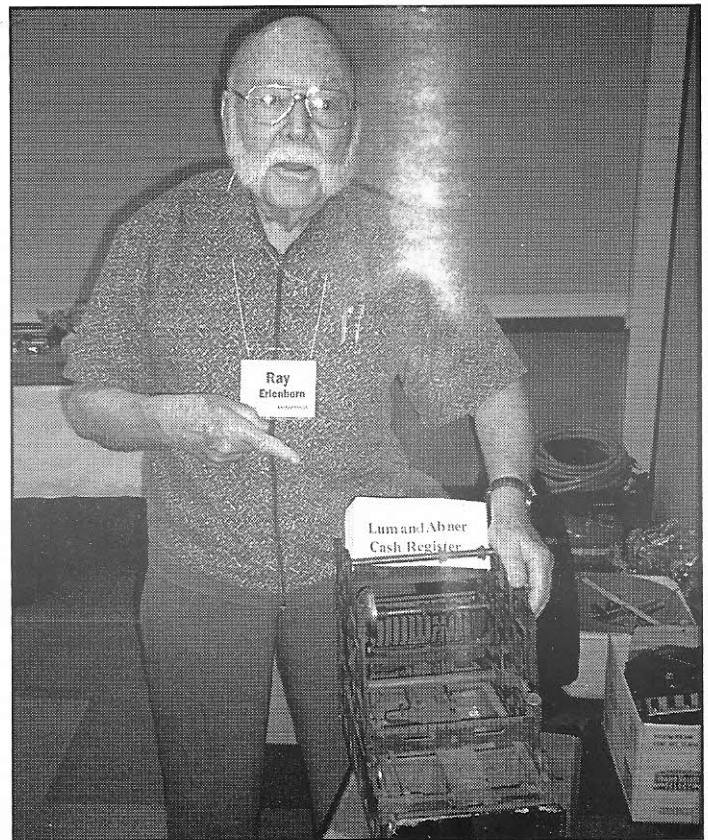
led the role of Lum, and I was allowed to mumble my way through Abner's lines. Imagine this: **Art Gilmore** was our narrator while **Ed Scott** announced the Alka-Seltzer commercial! Mr. Gilmore's credits include *The Adventures of Red Ryder, Dr. Christian* and *Lux Radio Theater*. Radio listeners heard Mr. Scott on *The Gene Autry Show, The Quiz Kids, Sky King,* and so many others.

For the first time ever, an NLAS-related *Lum and Abner* recreation had live music, provided by **Bill Edwards**, who brought the "Eleanor" theme song to life. For sound effects? Since our own "**Singin' Sam**" **Brown** could not be present, who could ask for a better technician than the one and only **Ray Erlenborn**? Mr. Erlenborn provided the door sounds, phone rings and his famous "Lum and Abner cash register" to make the recreation complete.

As a topper, Dick Beals provided the closing Alka-Seltzer commercial, singing one of the famous "Speedy" jingles! The REPS audience responded with applause.

Other events were scheduled for the weekend, but "Aunt Laura" and I had to miss them due to a prior commitment. We sincerely hope many of the fine folks we met in Seattle will find their way to our 20th NLAS Convention in 2005!

- "Uncle Donnie" Pitchford



*Sound effects wizard Ray Erlenborn*

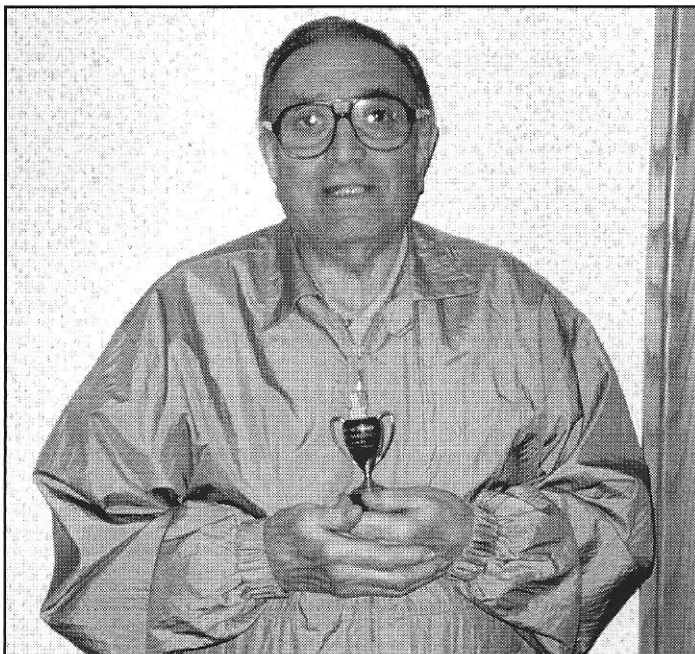
# PAUL FIOCCA

## He Certainly Made a Name for Lum & Abner!

Have you ever wondered how the Jot 'Em Down Store came to be? Without that catchy name, the store (and this publication) would be much the poorer. Now we know the man responsible for the name!

Many years later Chester Lauck remembered that he and partner Norris Goff had their listeners name Lum and Abner's store: "When the show was still young, we didn't have a name for the store, so Tuffy and I . . . had a contest to name the store. Well, we already had the store in the show, and we had that tablet where people wrote down what they had bought so the boys could bill them later, so about five people sent in 'Jot It Down Store.' That was the best name, but we didn't want to have to pay five first prizes, so we gave it to one person who had suggested 'Jot 'em Down.'"

Paul A. Fiocca is now a retiree living in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. But in 1933 he was thirteen years old and a devoted fan of the *Lum and Abner* program. He remembers: "We used to sit around the living room every night and listen to the show. It was clean and folksy. . . . I remember being a fan of the show for quite a while." Naturally he entered the contest to



Paul Fiocca of Ohio and his Lum & Abner trophy today.

name the store. "I don't really remember exactly how long it took to come up with the name," he writes, "but I remember that it sounded like a name that would fit."

The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* announced the results of the contest on February 25, 1933, as its radio columnist gave the lineup for Lum and Abner's Old Time Sociable that Saturday evening:

"Lum and Abner introduce Cap and Andy, hill-billy boys; Johnnie Meyers and Jug Band; Gopher City Slim, yodeler; Mackmillan boys and Pine Ridge String Band on their 'Sociable' at 9 tonight, WTAM. The boys will also present a cup to Paul Fiocca of Akron, O., for naming their 'store' the 'Jot-Em-Down Store.'"

Mr. Fiocca remembers the excitement of meeting Lauck and Goff. He writes, "There was a meeting in Cleveland, and my uncle took my mother and me up to meet Lum and Abner. They gave me the cup during the show, but didn't stay after because of another engagement they had to attend." The four-inch-high trophy is inscribed "Lum and Abner's Store Naming Contest Won by Paul Fiocca." As Mr. Fiocca describes it in a recent letter, "I have enclosed a picture of myself and the cup. Not exactly the way I looked 71 years ago though. I had a little more hair back then, but the cup still looks young, although, the printing on it is a little hard to see now."

Thanks, Mr. Fiocca, for the great name and for sharing your memories of it now.

- Randal Hall

