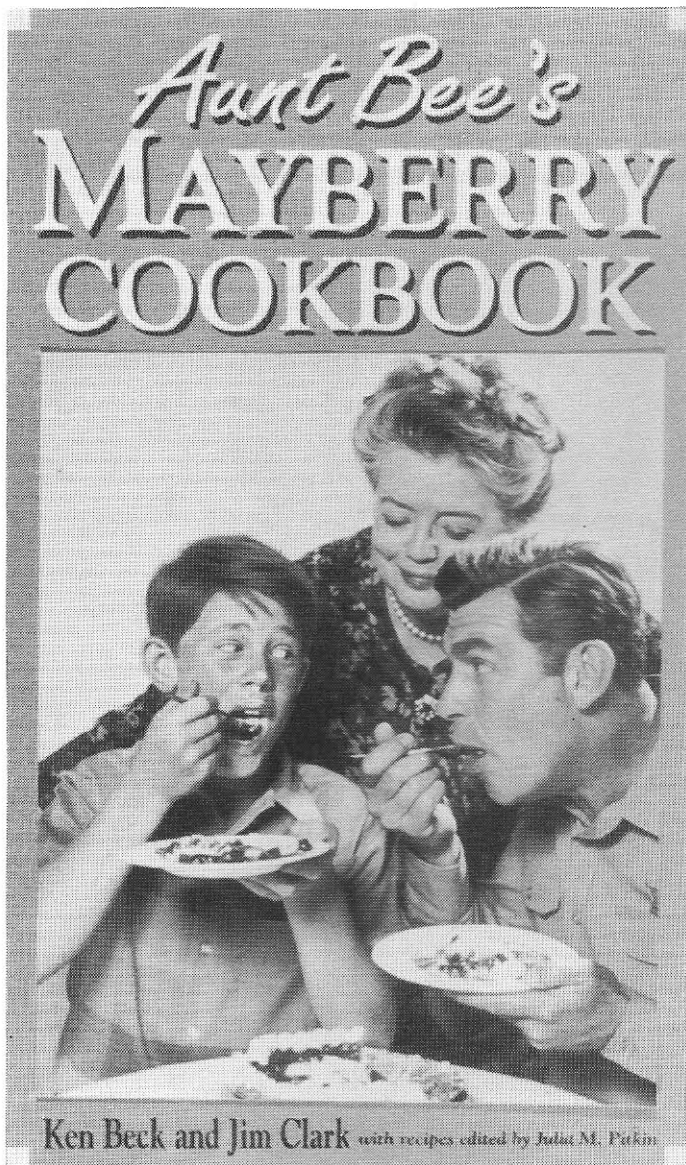


August 1991

WHAT'S COOKIN'?

Department



Much has been written in the *Journal* about the similarities (some intended, some not) between *Lum and Abner's Pine Ridge* and *The Andy Griffith Show's Mayberry*. Not surprisingly, the Griffith show has its own NLAS-like organization, the Andy Griffith Show Rerun Watchers' Club (TAGSRWC), with hundreds of chapters in all 50 states and 20 foreign countries. (Griffith's program has a distinct advantage over L&A in that it is replayed almost continuously on thousands of TV stations all over the world, whereas L&A's fans generally have to search out their own recordings of the radio shows!)

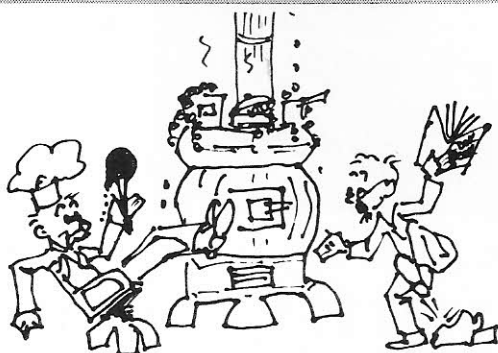
At any rate, to many people Mayberry is just as real a town as Pine Ridge, and features the same types of unusual characters, close families, and good neighbors. Homespun love is characterized in Mayberry by the lovable Aunt Bee (amazingly similar to Pine Ridge's Aunt Charity). Now Aunt Bee and her friends have inspired a cookbook that brings home all the flavor of Mayberry in *Aunt Bee's Mayberry Cookbook*. Written by Jim Clark and Ken Beck, the founders of TAGSRWC, the book includes more than 300 recipes for many of the dishes served by Aunt Bee and others on *The Andy Griffith Show*.

Some of the recipes are traditional down-home cooking, such as "Aunt Bee's Apple Pie" or "Betty's Breakfast Grits Casserole." But most of the recipes are pure Mayberry, such as "Baked Goober Beans," "Nip It In The Bud Spuds," "Opie's Lemonade Pie," and "Andy Pasto." And the book is illustrated with stills and excerpts from the Griffith show scripts as well, making it as much fun to read as to cook from.

Aunt Bee's Mayberry Cookbook may be ordered for \$12.95 from Rutledge Hill Press, 513 3rd Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37210.

And while we're at it, let's not forget to mention *Lum and Abner's Pine Ridge Cookbook*, which is still in print. This cookbook was put together by Kathy Stucker, co-manager of the Lum and Abner Museum in Pine Ridge. It contains recipes gathered from the ladies who actually live in the REAL Pine Ridge, and these culinary delights take such forms as "Mousey's Half-Moon Pies," "Mose Moots' Dump Cake," "Widder Abernathy's Potato Soup," and "Little Pearl's Corn Sticks." There are also some recipes inspired directly by the radio episodes, such as "Lum's Prune Bread" and the famous "Lumberger."

Like the Griffith cookbook, the Pine Ridge version is also illustrated, this time with vintage Pine Ridge postcards showing the local citizens who posed as the radio characters. *Lum and Abner's Pine Ridge Cookbook* is \$2.50, and should be ordered from the Lum and Abner Museum, P.O. Box 38, Pine Ridge, AR 71966. Good eating, and WONDERFUL WORLD!



ADAPTED FROM DRAWING BY CHET LUSK

KATHY'S
MUSEUM
STUCKER

The Jot 'Em Down Journal, Volume 8, Number 1 (Whole Number 43), August 1991. Published bi-monthly by The National Lum and Abner Society, a non-profit organization. Membership, including a subscription to the *Journal*, is \$8.00 per year. Send editorial and subscription correspondence to the Executive Secretary, Tim Hollis, Route 3, Box 110, Dora, AL 35062.

THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

August 1991

In This Issue:

- The Voice Is Familiar.....2**
The amazing career of Les Tremayne
- "Lum" Addresses the Legislature.....5**
Reprinting a classic speech on its 40th anniversary
- Lum & Abner and Their Sponsors.....6**
The return of the Ford Motor Company!
- The Golden Era.....7**
More funny funnies
- The 1991 NLAS Convention.....8**
Your on-the-spot reporter was on the spot as usual
- Meet The Members.....11**
If it weren't for our members, we wouldn't have any members
- Stuff Fer Sale.....12**
Now's your chance to pick up some goodies

**THE NATIONAL
LUM AND ABNER
SOCIETY**

Zekatif Ossifers

PRESIDENT

Donnie Pitchford

VICE-PRESIDENT

Sam Brown

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Tim Hollis

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

Rex Riffle

COVER: 1991 NLAS Convention guest Les Tremayne narrates *The Wonderful World of Lum and Abner*.

LUM AND ABNER is a registered trademark. Used by permission of Chester Lauck, Jr.





THE VOICE IS FAMILIAR...

THE STORY OF LES TREMAYNE

During the late 1930's and early 1940's, various polls were taken to determine the "Three Most Recognizable Voices In Radio." Contrary to what one might think, the winning voices did not belong to Lum, Abner, and Squire Skimp, but to another trio: Franklin Roosevelt, Bing Crosby, and Les Tremayne.

We can't speak for Roosevelt and Crosby, but we have it on good authority that Tremayne did not obtain this type of success overnight. He was born in London, England, on April 26, 1913, to parents of... shall we say... different persuasions when it came to their opinions of show business. His mother, Dolly Tremayne, was an actress in British silent movies, while his father hated, loathed, and despised anything to do with performing.

The Tremayne family left England for America in 1917, and after some initial migrating around, finally settled in Chicago. It didn't take young Les long to lose his dignified British accent after having it "beaten out of him" by his tough schoolmates on Chicago's west side. Eventually our friend found himself gravitating more and more toward his mother's way of thinking about show biz. (Incidentally, mother Dolly lived to the ripe old age of 99, passing away in 1987!) Against his father's wishes, Les went on the stage; today he says, "In 75 years in show business, I have played everything from burlesque and slapstick to Noel Coward's high comedy and serious drama."

After finishing high school, Tremayne decided that his best bet for a secure future would be in radio. In his initial job, he worked for eight months with no pay, just to learn the ins and outs of the business... something he says today's aspiring young performers are too unwilling to do. After knocking about in the local Chicago radio shows, he landed his first network series, *Fu Manchu Mysteries*. He soon discovered that by some weird twist of fate, his career was destined to be tied directly to that of romantic leading man Don Ameche.

Ameche had already originated roles in and left three other network shows, *Jack Armstrong*, *Betty and Bob*, and *Grand Hotel*, and each time he had been replaced by young Les Tremayne, whose manner and delivery were judged to be most similar to Ameche's. Now, Ameche's latest series, *The First Nighter*, was facing its own crisis. Don had decided to move to the West Coast to try for a movie career, and the *First Nighter* producers were ready to bite nails... either their own or Ameche's! Frantically auditioning actors to replace Ameche, it never occurred to them to try the one fellow who had replaced Don three times before....

Meanwhile, Tremayne, determined to land the lead in this

most prestigious of radio drama series, borrowed every recording of Ameche he could get his hands on, and practiced sounding like the fellow... even down to Ameche's laugh. When he finally did get to audition for *The First Nighter*, the producers were ecstatic, because as far as they were concerned, here WAS Ameche! (After getting the job, Les concentrated on developing his own performing style, rather than continuing to imitate Ameche.)

By now it was the mid-1930's, and Tremayne had become one of the busiest actors in radio. There were times when he would appear in three different live radio broadcasts during a 15-minute period, by dint of some frantic rushing from one studio to another! In this manner he appeared on nearly every



L. TREMAYNE

Young Les Tremayne as he appeared at the height of his radio career.



Tremayne with longtime leading lady Barbara Luddy in the "First Nighter" series, circa 1938.

major show originating from Chicago, including... you guessed it... *Lum and Abner*. Unfortunately, that's all we are able to tell you about that, because quite understandably Les cannot remember which specific bit parts he may have played over 50 years ago. "I would come rushing into a studio," he says, "the doorman would hand me a script, and he'd whisper, 'You're the leading man, the truck driver, and the Japanese gardener.' From there on, I was on my own!"

While *The First Nighter* continued to be his main source of income and fame (from having his name announced at the beginning of each episode), the show's producers did participate in a bit of skullduggery... about which Les did not find out until some 40 years later. It seems that Don Ameche had done so well for himself in motion pictures that 20th Century-Fox became interested in grooming Tremayne as a movie star too. Studio chief Darryl F. Zanuck contacted the producers of *The First Nighter* to find out how to set up a screen test for Tremayne, only to receive a short, curt reply that "Les Tremayne is not interested in a movie career." Tremayne continued to wonder why he was never contacted by a movie studio, until, in the early 1970's, a friend of his discovered the two pieces of correspondence in a forgotten filing cabinet in 20th Century-Fox's archives. And so, that mystery was cleared up.

Tremayne left *The First Nighter* in 1943, going on to play the lead in other shows such as *The Thin Man* (as Nick Charles). In the late 1940's he went back to the Broadway stage, and also appeared on some early TV shows, including the video version of *One Man's Family*. It was in 1951 that he made his belated debut in motion pictures, appearing in *The Racket* for RKO. Movies accounted for a large percentage of his activity through the 1950's, including *The Blue Veil* (1951), *Francis Goes To West Point* (1951), *The War of the Worlds* (1954), *A Man Called Peter* (1955), *North by Northwest* (1958), and *The Perfect Furlough* (1958), among many, many others.

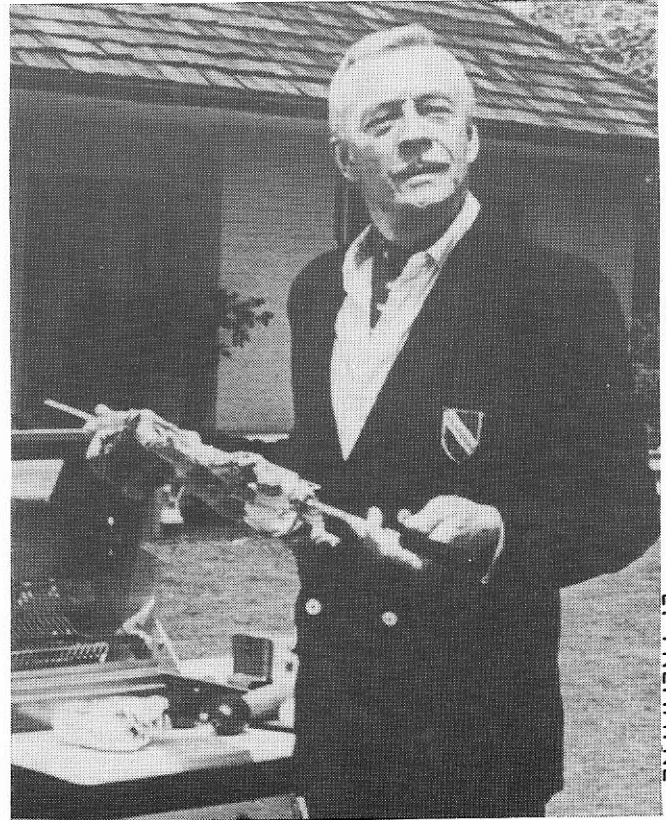
In 1966, Les was one of the founding members of the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters, an organization made up of the indi-

viduals who participated in radio's glory days. Les served as the group's archivist for many years, and is still very active with them today. Also in the 1960's, he became connected with legendary cartoonist Chuck Jones, who began casting Tremayne's voice in many of his animated TV specials, such as *The Pogo Special Birthday Special* (1969); *The Cricket In Times Square* (1973) and its two sequels; *The Great Santa Claus Caper* (1978) and *The Pumpkin Who Couldn't Smile* (1979), both based upon the Raggedy Ann stories; and many more. Jones also featured Les prominently in his 1969 animated feature film *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

In 1975, Les accepted a live-action role in the Saturday-morning children's TV series *Shazam*, which was based upon the long-running comic book adventures of Captain Marvel. Les played the part of a wise old character known as "Mr. Mentor," who did not appear in the comic books. This series was very successful and ran for several years.

Tremayne continues to remain busy today, traveling around the world with his wife Joan and making appearances at various colleges and universities to speak about his career. He is also frequently called upon to voice new cartoon characters; he says that he loves cartoon voice work so much because it is the closest thing to the good old days of radio. When actor David Lewis, of the TV soap opera *General Hospital*, became ill in 1987, Tremayne stepped in and performed Lewis's role of cranky old multi-zillionaire Edward Quartermaine off and on for the next two years. Tremayne thoroughly enjoyed playing the old fussy budget, and he has not ruled out the possibility of returning to the role someday.

Les was rather surprised by the invitation to appear at the 1991 NLAS Convention, because of his admittedly minuscule participation in L&A's history, but he made the trip anyway and gave his usual flawless performance in narrating the



Les in a television commercial for an unidentified product, 1960's.

multi-media presentation *The Wonderful World of Lum and Abner*. He was presented with the Lum and Abner Memorial Award for his efforts, and has promised to enthusiastically boost the NLAS to his cohorts at the PPB and other groups.

Perhaps it is best to let Les Tremayne speak for himself to close this discussion of his career. In 1980, for inclusion in *Who's Who In The World*, he reflected:

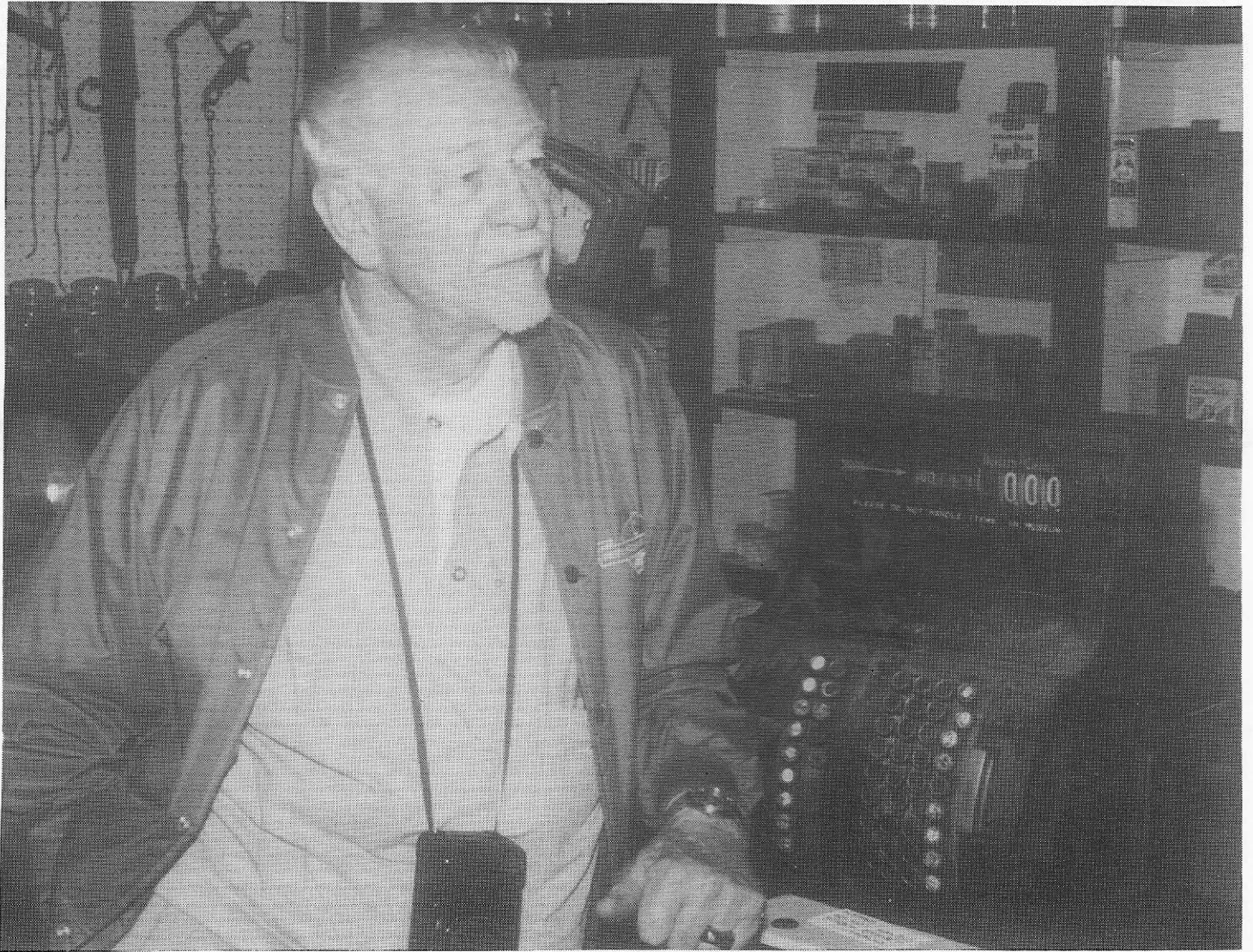
How I was able to attain whatever status I enjoy, with meager education and no powerful or influential friends to assist me, remains a mystery to me. Stubborn perseverance, I guess. However, I must state that the climate has changed so in show business, that even this no longer seems to apply... at least for me. The "public" remembers; the "powers that be," whoever they are, do not. It is comforting, confusing, and sad to be a "legend in one's own time." I am grateful for the good things I have been given in my lifetime. Were it possible to live it over, I would change very little. I've been privileged to work in radio in the "Golden Days." Nothing can top that. I've had a good time in my work; I have simply not attained what I feel I should have. There are few redeeming features to growing old in our society,

- Tim Hollis



L. TREMAYNE

Demonstrating his versatility, Les played the demented "Snakey Bender" in the 1976 horror film "Fangs."



"LUM" ADDRESSES THE LEGISLATURE, 1951

(Forty years ago, in 1951, Chet Lauck had the honor of addressing the Arkansas State Legislature. His speech was loaded with topical political humor, as well as some of his famous anecdotes about life in Pine Ridge. The following are selected highlights from that speech... the speech can be heard in its entirety in the NLAS Tape Library.)

It's with great pride and due humility that I appear here before you this morning. I'm deeply touched by this recognition. I'm very sorry that Norris Goff, my partner, couldn't be with me this morning. He was disappointed that he couldn't make the trip. He enjoys a thing of this kind. **(At this point, Chet switches to Lum's voice)** I know th' last time we made a trip like this, we went back ta Mr. Truman's in-auguration in Washington. An' he jes' had a oncommonly good time... jus' in-joyed hisself somethin' wonderful. When we first got thar, he wuz a littul bit oneasy an' worried; he said we ort ta let Mr. Truman know we wuz thar... he might not be expectin' us fer th' in-auguration. But like I tole him, we didn't hafta worry about that, because a lotta people didn't expect Mr. Truman thar, neither!

Abner didn't even know whut a in-auguration wuz until I explained it to him. I said, "It's whar, ever four years, you swear a Democrat into the White House..." But you kin always depend on Abner embarrassin' you. Some feller pointed out Washington's Monument to us. He got into a argument about that. He claimed in the first place it never looked like him, an' in the second place they drove the wrong end into the ground....

(Chet reverts to his natural voice) But seriously, I'm honored with this recognition from you good people of Arkansas. You know, I'm proud that this is my home state. As a matter of fact, this is the first time I've ever really seen Little Rock. **(He becomes Lum again)** I've been here before, but this iz the first time I've ever actual saw it! My folks usta come here once er twice a year ta do their tradin'. Me an' my brother usta looked forward to it fer weeks. An' we'd git right out on the edge o' town, we'd git scared, and lay right flat down in the bottom o' the wagon bed with our eyes shut... all the way through town, an' spend the rest o' the day in the wagon yard. So, I just never have saw Little Rock!

It's nice, an' thar's a lotta nice people here, too. Now, a lotta folks think that folks from our section over thar are slow thinkers. Well, that ain't altogether true. They might take a little time answerin' you, if you ask 'em a question, but they're thinkin' all the time.... Like Ezry Seestrunk, now, wuz comin' down from Ft. Smith, down to back home thar, on the Kansas City Southern. An' he wuz settin' up in the smokin' car, been eatin' some salted peanuts he'd bought from the news butch. He hadta git up an' take a drink o' water ever few minutes. Evertime he got up, he'd wind hiz watch. He wanted everybody to see that he carried a watch....

He'd just polished off another sack o' peanuts, an' got up ta git another drink outa the cooler, an' wound his watch, set back down, lookin' out the window. A young fellow behind him tapped him on the shoulder an' says, "Whut time iz it, Mister?" The ole man turned around an' looked him over fer a long time, turned back around, started lookin' out the window. The young fellow tapped him on the shoulder agin an' says, "WHAT TIME IZ..." He says, "Don't yell at me, I ain't deaf. I heered ye.

I never tole ye whut time it twuz 'cause I didn't want ta make ye mad." Well, he says, "It wouldn't make me mad, I just want to know what time it is." Ezry said, "It would of, eventual. If I'd a-tole ye whut time it twuz, ye'd more'n likely come around here an' set down. An' we'd a-got ta talkin'... Ye'd a-ast me my name, an' I'd a-tole ye my name iz Ezry Seestrunk, an' I live down in Pine Ridge. One o' these days you'd a-been drivin' through Pine Ridge, an' you'd a-happened ta think, 'Why, this iz whar ole Ezry Seestrunk lives.' An' you'd a-come by the place ta see me, more'n likely. An' I'd a-been proud ta see ye, an' I'd a-ast ye ta stay fer supper.... An' you'd a-met my daughter Gussie. Oncommonly purty girl, teaches school thar in Pine Ridge. You'd a-got ta sparkin' at her, an' directly you'd a-fell in love with her, an' th' first thing ye know you'd a-ast her ta marry ye. An' she'd a-tole you, 'You'll hafta speak ta my Paw about it.' An' you'd a-come ta me. An' right thar's when I'd make ye mad, 'cause I don't want nobody fer a son-in-law that cain't afford ta carry a watch!"

(Chet becomes himself again) Ladies and gentlemen, for a long, long time my partner and I have wanted an opportunity to thank the good people of Arkansas for their loyalty and support and encouragement. Thank each one of them individually. Of course, that's impossible. But I know of no better way than through the people they have chosen to represent them. You! For twenty years we have tried to depict good, clean, down-to-earth, wholesome American life as we know it here in Arkansas, through these characters of Lum and Abner... I only wish that all the people of America could see their goal as clearly, and hold to their ideals as firmly, as the good people of Arkansas. You folks, members of the Legislature gathered here this morning, shoulder a grave responsibility during the present world crisis. May God bless you and guide you, and give you strength and the courage to see it through. Thank you.

Capital Fun!
... when the Jot 'Em
Down partners form a two-man
brain trust that makes
the Big Town
gasp!

**LUM AND
ABNER**

SO THIS IS WASHINGTON

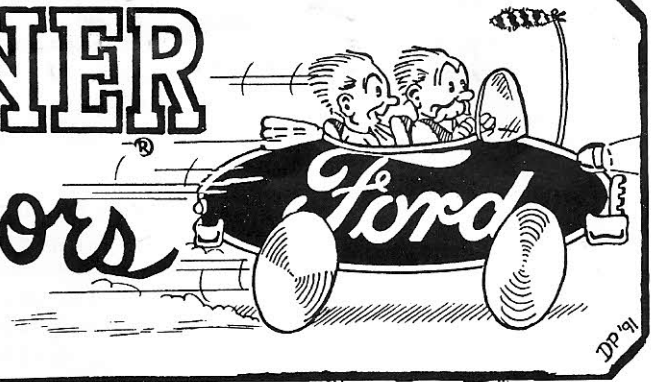
ALAN MOWBRAY • MILDRED COLES
ROGER CLARK • SARAH PADDEN
A JACK WM. VOTION PRODUCTION
Directed by RAYMOND MCCAREY • Produced by BEN HERSH

Screen Play by Leonard Praskins and Roswell Rogers • Original Story by Roswell Rogers and Edward James

LUM AND ABNER

and their Sponsors

PART 8 OF A SERIES



After the first season of Lum and Abner's weekly 30-minute show ended, things didn't look too rosy. CBS picked up the series for a second season that fall, but were unable to find a sponsor for the show. When it returned to the air as a Wednesday night feature on November 2, 1949, it was on a sustaining basis.

(For those who are unfamiliar with broadcasting terminology, "sustaining" refers to a show that is carried by a network with no sponsor to foot the bills; hardly an ideal situation, and one that rarely, if ever, happens today.)

On the surface, the second season of the half-hour *Lum and Abner Show* did not seem to be much different from the first. It was true that Roz Rogers, who had written virtually every L&A radio script since late 1941, had finally grown weary of the 30-minute format and had cut back his participation in the show. But Rogers' co-writer, Betty Boyle, was still on board, and to assist her, writer Jay Sommers was brought in to "gag up" the scripts. (Sommers would later go on to write L&A's country cousin TV series *Green Acres*.)

Other changes were more obvious, such as in the cast of the show. Of course, Clarence Hartzell had left before the Frigidaire series ended, taking his characterization of Ben Withers with him. Andy Devine was still a regular, only now for some reason he was called by his real name, rather than

"Mose Moots." ("Andy" was still specified as the Pine Ridge barber, however!) Announcer Wendell Niles was still around, but with no commercials to deliver, he was mainly confined to announcements at the beginning and end of each episode, with no participation in the story. Cliff Arquette was brought into the show to fill the void left by Ben Withers' absence (this was where Arquette picked up on the "Mt. Idy" references he would later use on TV as Charley Weaver). Other cast members came and went from episode to episode.

Since there are few known recordings from this second half-hour season, much of what we know about it comes from L&A's fan mail of the period. A large chunk of this mail was donated by Chet Lauck to the L&A Museum in the early 1970's, and some of these letters give us the only insight we have into this late 1949 - early 1950 period.

Apparently, on December 21, 1949, L&A somehow man-



UALR ARCHIVES

Lauck and Goff appear to be enjoying themselves during one of their half-hour broadcasts, circa 1949.

FORD DIVISION OF *Ford Motor Company*

3000 SCHAEFER ROAD
DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

March 1, 1950

Mr. L. J. Severin
2201 Richard Street
Dayton, Ohio

Dear Mr. Severin:

This will reply to your very interesting letter of February 15th relative to the Lum & Abner radio show.

We always appreciate letters of this type because they do give us reactions from our various sales and promotional campaigns. The Ford dealers of America did buy the Lum & Abner show for a short period of time. It is my understanding that they will possibly do so again at a later date. We know that Lum & Abner has a tremendous audience, and it is a very effective medium for getting messages across.

Thank you for your courtesy in writing.

Sincerely yours,

Robert F. Remington
Robert F. Remington
Advertising & Sales Promotion

AFR:dm

L&A MUSEUM

Letter from the Ford Motor Company written in response to a letter from one of L&A's fans, 1950.

aged to pull off a 30-minute version of their famous traditional Christmas parable ("Foller The East Star"), although just how this was done will be open for speculation until a recording or script is found. At any rate, their fan mail was unanimous in praising the broadcast. Not so when it came to the rest of the series...

A Kansas lady decided to use the "direct approach:" "For the past year or more I've been making it a point to speak of your show whenever radio conversation took place, to try to learn whether it was just us who cared nothing about your show any more. Apparently we are not the only ones who have dropped from your listening audience..." A doctor in Michigan fondly remembered the daily 15-minute episodes, but felt, "Don't you think that Andy Devine rather spoils the air of the Jot'Em Down Store? He has been portrayed in the movies in so many parts that I just cannot picture him as a part of your world. And where is 'fine' and the others whose names I cannot remember? There was the so-called dumb one who talks so slow and stupid like, always good for a laugh. And did Quincy ever get his barn painted? They were a true part of your show, your town, your store. Do you need an orchestra? They do not fit."

And one person whose state was not identified left no doubt as to his or her feelings: "No! No! No! You're taking the last bit of Americana from us. Why? Who told you to go sophisticate? You're funny, yes, but you're dying and some

part of us is dying with you!"

However, in the early part of 1950, the Ford Dealers of America decided to give L&A a chance and picked up the show for approximately 13 weeks. (*Lum and Abner* had last been sponsored by Ford in 1932-34, when some local dealers in Indiana and Ohio had pooled their resources and paid for the show.) The new Ford commercials were prerecorded and dropped into the shows, so even Wendell Niles' participation was diminished further. (There were times when Wendell's equally famous brother, Ken Niles, would fill in for him at the announcer's microphone.)

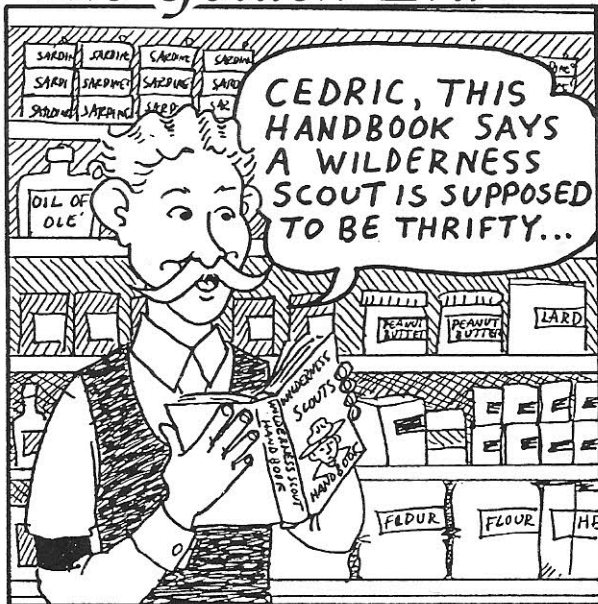
This 1950 period of Ford sponsorship was perhaps the most brief of any sponsor L&A had ever had. The sponsorship ended before the radio season was over, and *The Lum and Abner Show* was again a sustaining feature when it breathed its last on April 26, 1950... amazingly, 19 years to the day since the very first L&A broadcast in Hot Springs! A lot had happened during those 19 years, and it looked like L&A's days as a top radio feature were gone for good. For the next three years, the show would not be found in the radio logs, and when it did return, it would be its last hurrah. Join us in our next installment to hear how it played out its last days.

-Tim Hollis



The Golden Era

by Gary Stivers



THE 1991 NLAS CONVENTION

The 7th Annual National Lum and Abner Society Convention, held on Saturday, June 22, 1991, had as its theme the triumphant 60th Anniversary of *Lum and Abner*. This year's guest star, Les Tremayne, has enjoyed a broadcasting career of equal length plus. He even crossed paths with L&A themselves, performing with them during their early years in Chicago. Mr. Tremayne was featured in two programs during the Convention.

Arriving in Pine Ridge on Friday afternoon, Mr. Tremayne and his wife Joan, escorted by Singin' Sam Brown, Tim Hollis, and Tim's parents, Lynn & Kathleen Hollis, met Rex Riffle and Uncle Donnie & Aunt Laura Pitchford for the traditional tour of the old Dick Huddleston Store and L&A Museum, operated by Lon & Kathy Stucker. After the camera shutters cooled down, the entourage rolled down Highway 88 to Mena, the

"County Seat."

Saturday morning found an NLAS crew busily preparing the banquet room of Mena's Lime Tree Inn (our official convention headquarters since 1988) for the first of two programs. Special thanks are due to Charles Thurman (one of two "perfect attendance" NLAS Conventioneers), Mike Brooks, Jeff Carter, and Jim Adams, who assisted in the moving and assembling of our sound system and video equipment. Our appreciation is expressed to Aunt Laura and Debbie Brooks for their footwork in buying the (traditional!) last-minute audio adaptors we seem to need every year. Likewise, these ladies coordinated a special surprise... which we'll get into later.

The luncheon meeting began at noon with prayer by Pastor Harold Jones of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church of



Invading Arkansas for the 1991 NLAS Convention are (left to right) Tim Hollis, Uncle Donnie Pitchford, Squire Rex Riffle, Singin' Sam Brown, and (front) Les and Joan Tremayne.



Les Tremayne makes a purchase from Kathy Stucker in the Dick Huddleston Store at Pine Ridge.

Carthage, Texas (Uncle Donnie & Aunt Laura's home church), who was introduced along with his wife Audrey. Following introductions of the ossifers and families, including Mrs. Peggy Riffle and daughter Emily, the assembly enjoyed a leisurely meal to the lilting strains of the "Lum and Abner Concerto," a 1982 edited musical medley of various L&A themes.

Aunt Laura then revealed the aforementioned surprise: a special cake, congratulating Mr. Lynn Hollis on his retirement from four decades of public school teaching! Rex Riffle brought the cake from its hiding place, while another "Auntie," Helen (Mrs. Clarence) Hartzell, and her friend, Dorothy Halmstrom, helped serve it to the members. To echo Aunt Laura, Mr. Hollis has become "like a father" to us all.

Befitting the 60th Anniversary of *Lum and Abner*, a number of area persons connected with this history were present. Mr. Laird King of Poteau, Oklahoma, presented a brief history of his wife Ruth's genealogy, which includes ties with the real-life western Arkansas citizens upon whom certain L&A characters were based. Charlie and Ethel Huddleston Ball ("Dick's Gurl") addressed the group with memorable stories of Chet Lauck, Tuffy Goff, and their families. Ethel, who socialized with the younger Tuffy "Abner" Goff, enlightened the members with tales of their youth. Ruel Bain, an area legend in the field of mountain music, shared his



The NLAS Zekatif Ossifers join Uncle Donnie Pitchford on guitar and Mr. Troy Boyd on fiddle for some sort of singing.



Joan and Les Tremayne pose with the Abner mannequin in the Lum and Abner Museum.

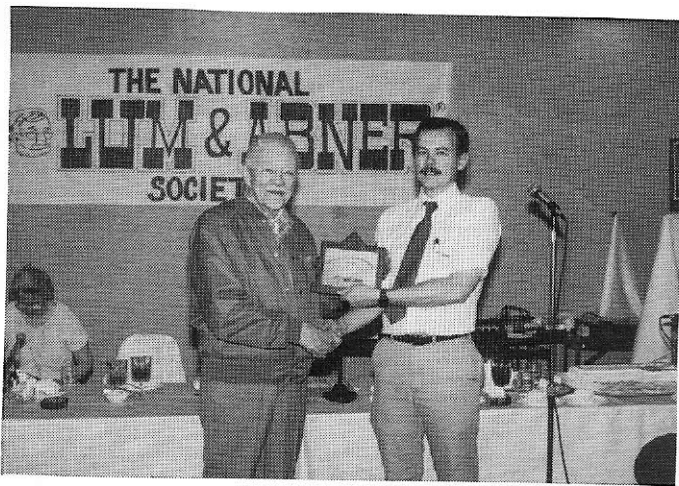
memories of playing fiddle with the original Dick Huddleston band that toured the country, representing Arkansas and L&A. With Mike Brooks accompanying on guitar, Mr. Bain fiddled his way through the classic *Sugar In The Gourd*. Mike Brooks and his wife Debbie were there to represent our "cousin" organization, the Popeye Fan Club, of which Mike is co-founder. Any readers interested in learning more about the salty old sailor should send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Mike and Debbie at 5995 Stage Road, Suite 151, Bartlett, TN 38134.

Les Tremayne, the guest of honor for 1991, allowed a clip from the famous *First Nighter* radio series to introduce himself to the NLAS audience. He followed with a lengthy, fascinating discourse on his colorful career, delivered in that glorious voice which Mr. Tremayne credits as "a gift from God." Concluding the lecture was a screening of clips from Mr. Tremayne's animated cartoon voice work, showing this talented performer's remarkable range.

Mr. Tremayne became the twelfth recipient of the Lum and Abner Memorial Award. This year's other honoree, Mrs. Eloise Plaster, was unable to attend due to illness. Mrs. Plaster's husband, the late Oscar Plaster, was the first official *Lum and Abner* photographer in 1931. He produced all the photos in the small orange book *Lum and Abner & Their Friends From Pine Ridge*, authored by Lauck and Goff in 1932, and was



This sign in front of the Best Western Lime Tree Inn in Mena said it all.



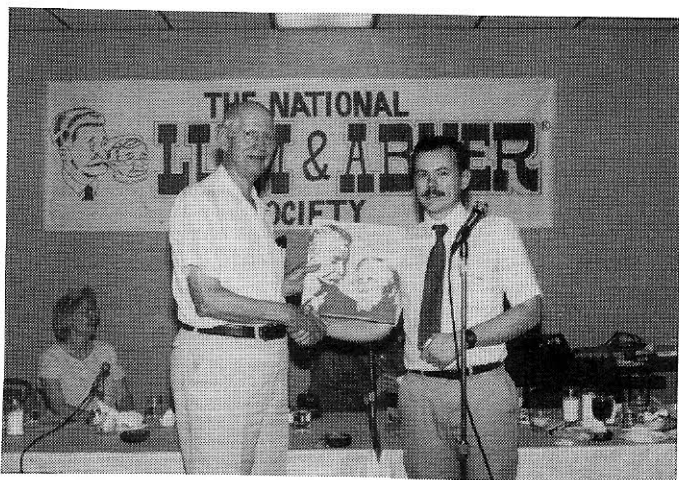
Les Tremayne beams widely as he receives the Lum & Abner Memorial Award from Prez Uncle Donnie Pitchford.

responsible for the many postcards featuring Pine Ridge scenes and characters. Ethel and Charlie Ball offered to present the award on behalf of the NLAS at a later date.

(A tip of the Prez's hat to Vice-Prez Singin' Sam Brown, for his excellent yearly work in providing the beautiful plaques and engravings for the Lum and Abner Memorial Awards. Sam has taken on this responsibility since our second convention in 1986.)

Another special member absent due to serious illness was Doy Grubbs, local merchant and Mena Optimist Club officer, who has become our Mena public relations person. We deeply appreciate Mr. Grubbs' efforts during the past two years, and offer our prayers for a speedy recovery.

NLAS member Bill Hardin of Buena Park, California, chalked up the most mileage in coming to the convention, and was awarded an LP record album of L&A programs in recognition. Our beloved "Auntie Helen" Hartzell was presented with a collection of newly-discovered L&A programs, all featuring her talented Clarence as Ben Withers. These tapes were made available by the kind folks at SPERDVAC (for information on this grand old pappy of old-time radio clubs, write to P.O. Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078). And yes, these episodes, which have never been made available on tape before, will be released through the NLAS Tape Library in October... watch the *Journal* for details. Another OTR club,



Prez Pitchford presents Bill Hardin with a Lum & Abner record album for traveling the longest distance to be present.

the Jack Benny Fan Club, was represented by Rex Riffle, newly-elected vice-president. For info on that organization, contact Laura Lee, 15430 Lost Valley Drive, Ft. Wayne, IN 46825.

Continuing an NLAS tradition, the ossifers led the members in singing (and we use that term loosely, as far as the ossifers are concerned) the L&A favorite *They Cut Down The Old Pine Tree*. Mr. Troy Boyd, fiddle-maker and musician from Sulphur Springs, Texas, played a solo (as he had done in 1989), on his own self-made fiddle. We're hoping this will be a yearly tradition as well, since it helps drown out Uncle Donnie's guitar strumming! Thanks, Mr. Boyd!

Following the midday program, extra lighting and audio-visual equipment was moved into the room in preparation for the evening's entertainment. Following dinner, Vice-Prez Brown welcomed the returning members, and introduced Lon and Kathy Stucker of the store and museum, who have been extremely helpful, as always, in further L&A research. Some significant discoveries have been made, and future issues of the *Journal* will reflect them as new information is verified and assimilated. We are indebted to this couple, the official Pine Ridge historians.

Sam presented two special pieces of correspondence, the first being a letter from Wendell Niles, former L&A announcer and our 1989 honoree, extending warm words to the NLAS and special fondness to Les Tremayne. Following was a letter from Roz Rogers, longtime L&A head writer and, along with Clarence Hartzell, special guest at our first convention in 1985. Roz's humor shone through, and we wish for Roz and his wife Dorie the best of health.

With the lights dimmed on all but Mr. Tremayne, the traditional L&A program opening introduced *The Wonderful World of Lum and Abner*, a multi-media presentation detailing the history of the characters to which the NLAS is dedicated. This particular program, with Tim Hollis manning the slide projector, Rex Riffle operating the VCR, and Uncle Donnie mixing audio, was held together by the booming, resonant voice of narrator Tremayne. This presentation had its roots in a 1985 slide/tape church program compiled by Uncle Donnie and his cousin David Secord, and went through a transformation by Tim the next year for a Rotary Club program in Alabama. In June 1990, Uncle Donnie revamped it with added audio and video clips as "Lum & Abner's Friday Afternoon Sociable" for an Elderhostel class (see our October 1990 issue). Hollis again refined the work with a tightly edited script and numerous new slides, the result being this 1991 60th Anniversary retrospective. The audience was treated to a mini-course in the lives and careers of Chet Lauck and Norris Goff, through radio highlights, interviews, photographs, and music. Les Tremayne, with a minimum of rehearsal, guided those present through the years with charm and dignity.

A sincere THANK YOU to Les and Joan Tremayne! To echo Singin' Sam Brown, deepest appreciation to our members, for it is ultimately all of you who make our society and its conventions possible!

-Uncle Donnie Pitchford



Meet the Members

Send Your Article & Photo
To: MEET THE MEMBERS,
P.O. Box 869, Carthage,
TX 75633

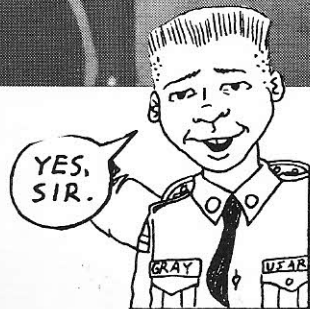
DON POTTER

of Vienna, Virginia

Major Don Potter writes, "I was 'raised' listening to Lum and Abner as reruns as far back as the early 1950's in Elizabethton, Tennessee (in the upper eastern portion of the state), where it continued for many years (until the early 1980's) without interruption on WBEJ radio.

"I'm a Major in the Tennessee Army National Guard, on fulltime duty at the Pentagon, Washington DC. All new and displaced heavy armor (tanks, APC's, etc.) going to Army National Guard units all across the U.S. must be validated through me. Needless to say, I travel all over the U.S. a lot.

"I've been to Pine Ridge, Arkansas, and listen to *Lum and Abner* on WAMU Public Radio. Continue the fine work you all are doing to preserve the memory of an 'easier' time; it is appreciated!"



COL. NEAL B. WHITTAKER

of Richmond, Kentucky

"I, Neal B. Whittaker, was born July 25, 1920, at Posen Ridge, Kentucky. I graduated at Kinksville High School in 1938. I operated a large country store for 37 years until April 3, 1974, when a tornado cleaned it away. I have been a real estate broker and auctioneer since 1953. I am a Kentucky Colonel.

"I married Dorothy Clark in 1945. We have one son, Joseph G., who is now business manager for Milligan College, Johnson City, Texas. He is also a CPA. Dorothy attended Mars Hill College in North Carolina, and is now cashier for a local hospital.

"I have traveled lots: forty states, Canada, and six countries in Europe. I landed in Normandy Beach head on June 7, 1944, with the First Army headquarters. I visited Pine Ridge, Arkansas, and met Dick Huddleston. I saw Lum and Abner at the Ben Ali Theater in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1939.

"My life has been a real joy to me. I love everything I have seen. My hobbies consist of buying old things to resell. I have succeeded at this. I also write poetry. I am an optimist about all things... I take less medicine this way. I attend the Big Hill Avenue Christian Church at Richmond, Kentucky. I am a teacher and member of the official board and a Deacon. I have never been famous, but love life as my Lord presents it to me. I am in good health at 71 years old.

"I read a lot and tape lots of programs. I have a big library of Lum and Abner material and programs, including two of their movies."



STUFF FER SALE

As happens every so often, the NLAS has recently acquired a number of duplicate items in its archives. Since we need cash more than we need extra pieces of memorabilia, we are offering these items for sale. The available items are:

Lum and Abner's 1938 Almanac - very good condition - \$20.00

Lum and Abner's Walkin' Weather Prophet Badge (1936) - very good - \$32.50

Movie Poster: *Two Weeks To Live* One-Sheet - Original 1943 RKO release - \$50.00

Lobby Cards: *Lum and Abner Abroad* (1955) - Five different cards, \$10.00 each

- (1) Lum & Abner at entrance to mysterious old castle
- (2) Lum & Abner meeting with ballerina in dressing room
- (3) Lum & Abner having dinner at Yugoslavian farm house
- (4) Jewel smugglers plotting in seedy cafe'
- (5) The smugglers are captured, as Lum & Abner watch

Lobby Card: *So This Is Washington* (1950 Post Pictures re-release) - \$8.00
Abner and town panhandler conferring over classic Zenith radio at counter of Jot'Em Down Store.

If you are interested in purchasing any of these items, DO NOT WRITE. **CALL** (205) 648-6110 between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. (Central Time) to reserve them. At that time your amount of postage will be calculated. Hope to hear from you soon.



EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Route 3, Box 110

Dora, AL 35062

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #40
DORA, ALABAMA

12/91
DR. HAL SKINNER
1293 Hurlbut Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

