

AUGUST 1998

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If you were not at our annual convention in Mena, you missed the premiere of our latest volume in the series of books reprinting the original L&A scripts of the 1930s. *November 1936: The Diary of Evalena Schultz* is now available, and as L&A themselves would say, "Hit's a goodern!"

Most of the November 1936 storyline centered around the Horlick's Malted Milk premium offer of the 1937 Lum & Abner Almanac. If any of you have seen a copy of that booklet, you will recall that it features a section purported to be taken from Evalena Schultz's personal diary. What do you suppose Miss Schultz herself had to say about its inclusion? How do you think this might affect Lum's long-running romantic relationship with her? Those questions will be answered here... and typically for L&A's storylines, even more questions are raised that will have to wait until our next volume to be resolved!

November 1936: The Diary of Evalena Schultz is \$5.00, as are the two previous volumes still available, *July 1936: The Great Bicycle Race* and *October 1936: Lum for President*. Orders should be sent to the NLAS Executive Secretary, 81 Sharon Blvd., Dora, AL 35062.

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THE JOT 'EM DOWN JOURNAL

AUGUST 1998

**THE NATIONAL
LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY**

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Donnie Pitchford

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
Tim Hollis

Cover: Lum (Donnie Pitchford) and Abner (Tim Hollis) ham it up at Mena's historic Lyric Theatre with 1998 NLAS Convention guests Frank Bresee and Kay Linaker.

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ROY ROGERS, 1911-1998



Of course, we were all saddened by the death of "King of the Cowboys" Roy Rogers at age 86 on July 6, 1998. There is no real evidence that the crooning cowpoke was a close friend of L&A, but in the NLAS archives we do have the above 1945 photo, taken in Las Vegas, showing Rogers admiring one of Chet Lauck's prize race-horses. We thought it would be an appropriate tribute at this time.



From **PINE RIDGE** to **THE BLOB**:
The Amazing Journey of
Kay Linaker

In 1993, when the NLAS celebrated the 50th anniversary of Lum and Abner's motion picture *TWO WEEKS TO LIVE* at the annual convention, we searched in vain for any surviving cast members. Then, just prior to finalizing plans for the 1998 convention, film history buff Ray Nielsen of the Arkansas Educational TV Network (AETN) called to give us the current whereabouts of one of the leading ladies of that film, Kay Linaker. Five years late is better than never at all, and we are most grateful to Ray for enabling us to meet this amazing lady.

Although the roles she played would hardly indicate it, Kay was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The year was 1913. With a full name of Mary Katherine Linaker, she was known to her friends as Kate. During her childhood, her father became embroiled in certain business dealings with a couple of wealthy fellows from over in the western part of Arkansas... a small town called Mena, in fact! The two tycoons in question were Union Bank president W. J. Lauck and wholesale grocer Rome Goff. Kay explains what they cooked up:

"My father had decided that Arkansas was never going to be known for anything besides cotton if something was not done to improve things. He got the idea of buying blooded hogs and bulls in Chicago and bringing them back to breed with the livestock in Arkansas. Somehow he came into contact with Mr. Lauck and Mr. Goff... my father was in the wholesale meat business, so that is probably how he knew Mr. Goff... and the three of them went into business together.

"They brought the hogs and bulls back home, and each of them made

a deal with the farmers in their part of the state to... er... 'service' their sows and cows when the proper time came. My father, Mr. Lauck, and Mr. Goff would take the animals out on Sunday afternoons to perform this service. I think it was more embarrassing to their wives than anything else could have been!"

There was no way for these three would-be hog kings to know that the Lauck, Goff, and Linaker offspring would be meeting decades later in quite another world altogether! But we are getting ahead of ourselves...

Kay attended college at several different universities in the New England area, and says that the snide remarks she heard from the other girls quickly prompted her to lose her Arkansas accent. Pursuing an acting career, she was quite preoccupied by stage work until... well, born storyteller that she is, we will let HER explain what happened:

"There was an agent in New York who was the TOP agent. Nobody ever argued about the fact that Mr. Richard Pittman was THE top agent in New York. Mr. Pittman saw me, and then called me and said he would like to have me come in for a chat. So, that's how I became a client of Richard Pittman. Some of his other clients had done very well whom he had arranged to go out to the coast... Spencer Tracy and Clark Gable were a couple of them..."

"I was rehearsing for a play when this phone call came in. A voice said, 'Hello there! This is Max Arno from Warner Brothers. We've exercised your option.' I said, 'This is a bad joke and you're taking up



Kay Linaker (center) in her first motion picture,
THE MURDER OF DOCTOR HARRIGAN (1936).



With Conrad Nagel in *THE GIRL FROM MANDALAY* (1936).



Linaker and Warner "Charlie Chan" Oland enjoy a chuckle or two between takes.

my time. This is not nice, and I am not amused.' And I hung up on him. There was another call from Mr. Arno, and then the third call was from Mr. Pittman. He said, 'Kate, that man calling you IS Max Arno. They HAVE exercised your option, and you are due in California next Monday.'"

As is the story with many starlets during that era, once the Linaker girl arrived in Hollywood, the film companies set about to change nearly everything about her. Kate Linaker was soon shortened to Kay, and the legendary Perce Westmore designed a makeup that altered the newly-named Kay's nose, mouth, and other facial features. Her hair was also cut: "I went out there with hair long enough to sit on," she recalls. Her first role was as a nurse in an otherwise-obscure Warner Bros. picture, *The Murder of Doctor Harrigan*, which was filmed in 1935 but not released until the next year. (We wonder if Dr. Harrigan was murdered because the other hospital employees got tired of hearing him sing "H, A, double R, I, G-A-N spells Harrigan..." No, I guess not...)

Other roles quickly presented themselves. Kay made cinema history of sorts with her performance in the Republic picture *The Girl From Mandalay* (1936). Cast as a showgirl, Kay says that she was the first showgirl of the screen who was a brunette rather than a blonde! She speculates that it was her dark hair that caused her to sometimes be cast as the evil, conniving female rather than the ingenuous heroine. She also specialized in playing society leaders, employing the genuine high-class accent she had used to replace her native Arkansas twang.

Some of her best-remembered work was in the series of Charlie Chan movies produced by 20th Century Fox. Kay had the distinction of appearing in the last film to star Warner Oland as the wise Oriental detective, and also the first film to star Oland's replacement, Sidney Toler. Perhaps her best Chan role was in *Charlie Chan in Rio* (1941), in which she actually got to play the murderer.

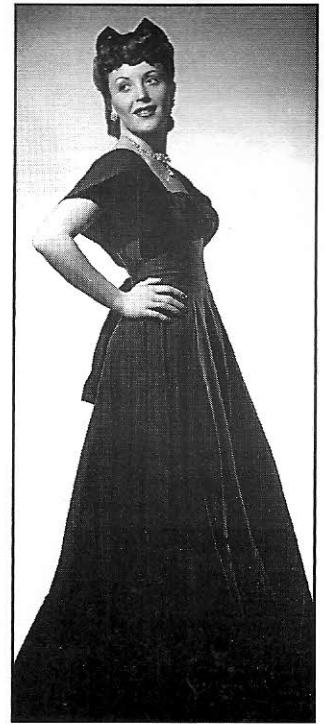
Other films of the late 1930s in which Kay could be seen for varying lengths of time on the screen were *Black Aces* (1937), with cowboy hero Buck Jones; *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939), directed by the great John Ford; *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939), again directed by Ford and starring Henry Fonda as the future 16th presi-

dent; and *Kitty Foyle* (1940), for which Ginger Rogers won an Academy Award.

In 1940, director Mark Sandrich was casting the newest film vehicle for the one and only, incomparable Jack Benny. Benny's previous film, *Man About Town*, had featured Kay Linaker in an unbilled bit part as a British secretary, and now director Sandrich was considering her for the more substantial role of Phil Harris's girlfriend in *Buck Benny Rides Again*. Kay remembers Sandrich telling someone, "I wish Kay Linaker were an American so I could use her as Phil's girlfriend." This was hilarious to those who knew her, and finally Kay's agent had to make her personally tell Sandrich that her British accent was phony baloney, and that she was born and raised in the Deep South. She got the part.

Of all the movies that were made based on radio programs, including Lum & Abner's own work for RKÖ, *Buck Benny Rides Again* may rate as the most faithful adaptation of any radio show to the silver screen. Every aspect of Benny's Sunday night fixture was there. The story concerned Jack's stay at a Western dude ranch during the summer hiatus of his radio show, taking cast members Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Andy Devine, and Rochester (Eddie Anderson) with him. Don Wilson, Mary Livingstone, and rival Fred Allen were heard as voices coming over the radio. As Sandrich intended, Kay Linaker was Phil's somewhat racy lady friend, biding her time in Nevada until her divorce became final.

A high point of the film came when tenderfoot Jack was forced to rescue Phil's girlfriend from a runaway horse. Kay's story about this sequence proves that fact is often as strange as fiction:



The blackhearted Mrs. Carmen (Kay Linaker) prepares Abner to meet his doom in *TWO WEEKS TO LIVE* (1943).

"Jack was absolutely terrified of horses, so a stunt man was used for the riding scenes whenever possible. But they had to have some close-ups, so they physically lifted Jack onto his horse. He was sitting there uncomfortably, when all of a sudden the horse he was on realized that MY little horse was a mare... and she was interesting! Jack's horse came up and butted mine, and my horse took off. The horse that Jack was on followed, and literally ran away. Jack didn't know what to grab... when they finally caught up with him, his arms were practically around the horse's neck. They lifted him off, and I've never seen anybody barf the way he did!"

More movies followed in the early 1940s. Then, in late 1942, Kay was cast in the third movie Lum and Abner were filming for RKO: *Two Weeks To Live*. Once again portraying a villain, Kay appeared as the beautiful but deadly Mrs. Carmen, whose charms and come-hither glances made Lum into Silly Putty in her hands. Visiting Chicago,



During a "romantical" dinner, Lum and Mrs. Carmen have trouble with an out-of-control cigarette lighter.



Not surprisingly, Mrs. Carmen has Lum completely under her spell!

Abner (mistakenly thinking he has only 14 days before his demise) is unwillingly hiring out to do dangerous, high-paying jobs in order to pay back a debt he and Lum owe to the folks back in Pine Ridge. Mrs. Carmen appears on the scene to say that she will pay him to spend the night in a haunted house, where anyone who goes to sleep in a certain room never wakes up again. She wants to prove that this is a false rumor so she can sell the house. Even though five previous victims have supposedly tried this stunt, Abner is assured there is nothing to worry about: "It was all just their imagination," says Mrs. Carmen. Replies Abner with a dour expression: "Jist their maginations, huh? I guess they jist magine they're dead."

We quickly learn that behind Mrs. Carmen's beauty lurks a sinister plot. Her husband is an inventor, and the two of them have cooked up a plan to defraud his life insurance company. Mrs. Carmen will send Abner to the specified address with a violin case containing a time bomb. "When THAT goes off, no one will know WHO he was," she gloats. "Everyone will think one of your experiments exploded, especially when they find your identification bracelet on him. I'll act like a widow, collect the insurance, and meet you in six months." Needless to say, due to Abner's usual ineptitude her plan does not work and he instead blows up a den of Nazi saboteurs.

While sitting around between scenes, Kay, Chet, and Tuffy started discussing their backgrounds. "They told me, 'We don't know why, but we feel like we know you,'" she says. "I told them that the names Lauck and Goff were awfully familiar to me as well. Then, I had an idea.

"Were your fathers ever involved with improving the quality of the hogs back in Arkansas?" I asked. And they said, "THAT'S where we remember that Linaker name!!!" (Once she had refreshed their memories it must have set off a spark, because a couple of years later, in a 1944 radio episode, Lum and Cedric discuss the fact that Abner's papa Phinus "started that feud twixt the McDaniels and the Linakers." According to Kay, Mr. McDaniel was one of the first farmers the fathers dealt with on their long-ago hog project, so this was probably an inside joke about Rome Goff and that situation.)

Two Weeks To Live was released in February 1943, and would prove to be one of the last times moviegoers would see the lovely Kay Linaker on the screen. With World War II in full swing, she left acting to work for the American Red Cross, and shortly after the war she married a writer, Howard Phillips. (She prefers to be known as Kate Phillips today, rather than as Kay Linaker.) The husband-and-wife Phillips team wrote many radio and TV program episodes on a freelance basis, including installments of *The Loretta Young Show*, *Lassie*, *Dr. Kildare*, and *Bonanza*.

As a solo writer, Kate Phillips was approached to craft a screenplay for what was to be a low-budget horror film concerning a mass of jelly-like material that came from outer space and consumed human flesh upon contact. *The Blob*, as it came to be known, remains a terrific example of the 1950s drive-in-movie style thriller, and served as the screen debut for one of Kate's discoveries, Steve McQueen. Kate and McQueen each got \$150 for their contributions to *The Blob*, and when the producers sold the film to Paramount for a million bucks, they were supposed to get a cut of that. They didn't. Kate, though, is philosophical: "At least I got a credit out of it," she shrugs.

During the 1960s Kate began a third career as a teacher, instructing students in the New Hampshire/Ontario region in the finer points of acting and scriptwriting. Howard Phillips passed away in 1986, but Kate continues her teaching activities today. At this year's NLAS Convention, she was presented with one of two 1998 Lum and Abner Memorial Awards in belated recognition of her contribution to L&A history, and performed in a newly-written script that brought the vengeful Mrs. Carmen back to Pine Ridge to try to bump off the two bumbling old storekeepers.

Kate/Kay Phillips/Linaker says that she plans to live to be 102 years old. As one of her college students said in a recent tribute to her, "I hope she does, because I have so much more yet to learn from her." The NLAS echoes that remark, and is fortunate to have gotten to know her!

- Tim Hollis



Frank Bresee's GOLDEN DAYS OF RADIO

Anyone who has been involved in researching radio history has sooner or later come upon the name of Frank Bresee. The interviews he has conducted for his *Golden Days of Radio* series for decades are an invaluable repository of stories from those who were actually there. For that matter, Frank himself was "actually there," having begun in radio as a young boy.

During the 1998 NLAS Convention in Mena, Frank shared with us some of his research and memories, which we will in turn be sharing with you here. First of all, here he is remembering the days when he was cast as "Little Beaver" on the famous radio Western *Red Ryder*:

"I was cast as Little Beaver in 1942, and did that on and off for about four years. It was a great show, because we did it six nights a week. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday the show was on the Mutual Network... which meant we would go to the Mutual studios on Melrose Avenue... then, on Tuesday we would go to the NBC studios at Sunset and Vine, and do the same show that we had done on Mutual on Monday night. That's when I first saw Lum and Abner. They were doing their show at NBC, and their studio was right next to the one we used. They sat in the middle of the room at a table to do their show. I used to collect scripts from those days, and it was amazing because most radio scripts are typed double spaced all the way through. But with *Lum and Abner*, they were single-spaced, because the fellows knew their material so well that they didn't have to worry about making a mistake.

"When I would get to the studio on Tuesday, since we had already done *Red Ryder* on Mutual the day before we didn't need as much rehearsal. So, I would get there about 5:30 in the afternoon, and we went on the air at 7:30. Lum and Abner were doing their show from 5:15 to 5:30 for the East Coast broadcast, so about the time I would be coming in they would come walking down the hall, going out to dinner between shows. They always had friends with them and were cutting up with each other. Then, when I would finish the *Red Ryder* show, which aired from 7:30 to 8:00, and walk out of the studio about 8:05. As I walked back down the hall, Lum and Abner would be walking back in to do their second show of the day, which was for the West Coast at 8:15 to 8:30. So I saw a lot of them during the early 1940s."

Somewhat surprisingly, Frank began his *Golden Days of Radio* series in 1949, when radio's "golden days" were not even over yet! He explains that even by that time television was cutting into radio's long-time market, and shows were already dropping out and being forgotten. After being carried over a number of stations in the Los Angeles area, Frank's program was picked up by the Armed Forces Radio Service in 1965, and it is his interviews from this era that are most readily available.

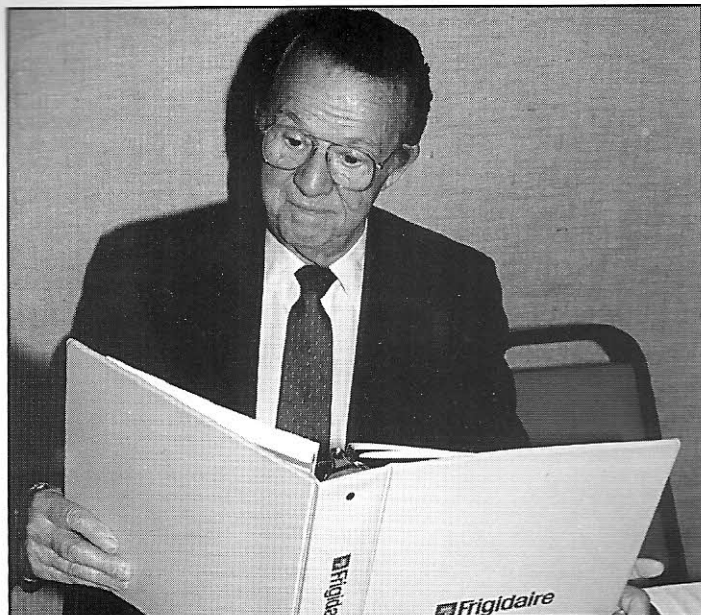


Frank Bresee meets Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, 1978.

By strange coincidence, the announcer for the AFRS series was Gene Baker, who of course had replaced Lou Crosby as announcer on *Lum and Abner*, selling Alka-Seltzer on the show from 1944 to 1948. Bresee's interview with Baker may be heard on Tape #283 in the NLAS Tape Library. "Baker told a lot of stories about Lum and Abner," says Bresee. "One time, he started the program at his standing microphone... he didn't use L&A's table... and the organist played the theme.. Baker read the opening announcement and commercial... and Lum and Abner were not in the studio! There was an empty table with a microphone, and two chairs, but they weren't there! But he read on anyway, and just as he finished the last word of the introduction the door burst open and they came running in... They had been waiting just outside the door, watching to see what would happen if they weren't in the studio! He said they were always doing things like that to people."

Another of Frank's L&A-related acquaintances was Wendell Niles, L&A's announcer during their weekly 30-minute show days, and guest at the 1989 NLAS Convention. "I was working for Ralph Edwards Productions on a TV show called *It Could Be You*," Frank explains. "It was a daytime show hosted by Bill Leyden, and he would pick people out of the studio audience to tell their stories and win prizes. One weekend, Wendell and Bill Leyden went hunting, and another hunter mistook them for a couple of deer and shot at them. They missed Wendell, but Bill Leyden got his eye put out... so for a couple of weeks Wendell Niles hosted the show instead of Bill, and he was very good at it."

During the 1940s, when Lum & Abner needed any sort of female



Wendell Niles at the 1989 NLAS Convention.

character, the actress they called upon was Lurene Tuttle. In existing shows she can be heard in such diverse roles as orphan Ellie Connors, the bombastic Sergeant Hartford, grouchy Nurse Lunsford, and the silky-voiced woman who left her baby with L&A (the baby's cries were, of course, provided by Jerry Hausner). "Lurene was a great friend," says Frank, "and she was called the 'First Lady of Radio' because she had worked with most of the stars. For example, if Spencer Tracy was supposed to appear on a radio show and play a love scene, they would always ask for Lurene Tuttle to do the show because she was such a very good actress. Of course she was Effie to Howard Duff's Sam Spade for the whole time that show was on the air. If you look in any of the radio books at the lists of shows people have done, there are two performers who have the longest lists. Lurene was one of them, and Marvin Miller was the other."

One great actor L&A used from time to time on their 30-minute series was Peter Leeds. "Most people know Peter from all the comedy work he did with Stan Freberg," says Frank. "But he could also do dramatic programs such as *Suspense* and the radio and TV versions of *Dragnet*. He had a funny, funny sense of humor. Once he was scheduled to be at the REPS old-time radio convention up in Seattle, and wanted me to go with him. He was great fun to be with, and funny all the time. That was one thing about radio people: They were never pretentious, they got along very well, and usually the same people were hired for every show. The reason was not that they didn't want outsiders, but they wanted people who got along... people who were happy all the time and would show up for work.

"Since radio shows were mostly live, that meant you had to be there for rehearsal. Near CBS's studios on Sunset Boulevard there was a restaurant called Brittingham's [this was one of the restaurants that added Lumburgers to its menu during 1947], and Brittingham's had a great bar. There was a show on Wednesday nights called *The Jack Carson Show*, with Arthur Treacher and a few other supporting actors. They did the East Coast broadcast from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m., then come back at 8:30 to do the live West Coast show. Well, where could they go for two hours? There wasn't time to go home, so they would go to dinner. But it was too early to eat dinner, so they would have a couple of



Frank Bresee in his 1978 OTR special for CBS-TV.

drinks at Brittingham's. The second Jack Carson show of the evening was always completely different from the first show... and usually much funnier!

"That's why radio actors who were able to control their drinking worked all the time, because producers knew they were reliable and would show up for the second show. A lot of actors wouldn't show up for the second program. That's why Lurene Tuttle would work all the time... I don't think I ever saw Lurene take a drink, and she probably didn't."

It goes without saying that Frank had many, many more stories about L&A's coworkers, but we are running out of space here. We will be bringing additional anecdotes to you from time to time; meanwhile, we should mention that during the Convention Frank Bresee was presented with one of the two 1998 Lum and Abner Memorial Awards for the work he has done to preserve radio's past. He promises that even more surprises are in store for the future, so keep watching *The Jot 'Em Down Journal* to find out about them!

- Tim Hollis

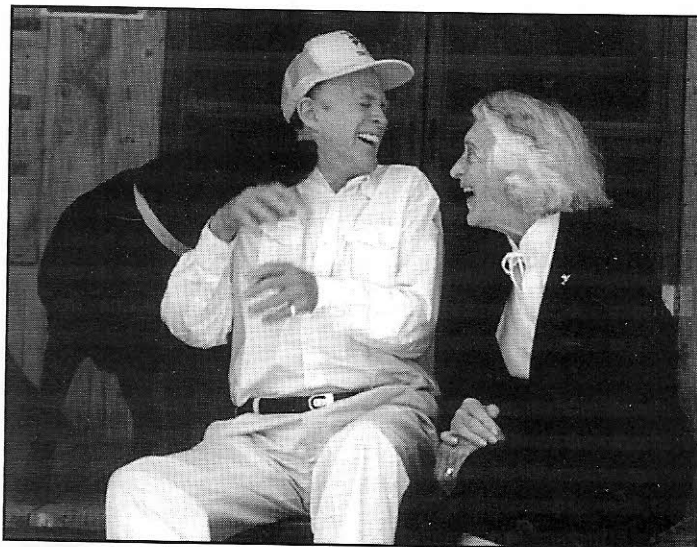


THE 1998 NLAS CONVENTION

Each June is a time of madness, at least for the "ossifers" of the NLAS. It is a wonderful type of madness, borne of the necessity to make all of the final preparations for our annual convention. June 1998 was certainly no exception, as the "three stooges of OTR" shifted into high gear to put together three separate programs "in thar at th' county seat" of Mena, Arkansas.

Our outstanding guest stars, actress/writer Kay Linaker (a.k.a. Kate Phillips) and actor-radio historian Frank Bresee, arrived in Pine Ridge on Thursday, June 25, chauffeured by "Singin' Sam" Brown, Tim Hollis and Kathleen Hollis (Tim's "that's my mom"). Following the grand tour and an evening meal with "Uncle Donnie" and "Aunt Laura," it was time to conduct read-throughs of two newly-written scripts, which were to be performed at Saturday's events. The weekend was so filled with activity, there was no time available for technical rehearsals for either script!

As many *Lum and Abner* fans know, Mena's Lyric Theatre was the location for a personal appearance by Lauck and Goff in 1940,



Frank Bresee and Kay Linaker get acquainted with the resident dog at the L&A Museum in Pine Ridge.

upon the screening of their first film, *Dreaming Out Loud*. During last year's convention, the NLAS was invited to that very building, now operated by the Ouachita Little Theatre, for an educational tour. Negotiations for the NLAS to produce a stage show resulted in "act one" of the 1998 convention, which was set for 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26.

Frank Bresee served as the master of ceremonies, opening the program with a humorous monologue. "Uncle Donnie's" 1990 Jot 'Em Down Store backdrop (transported by member Jim Temple and hung from the lofty catwalk by the vice-prez and prez) provided a temporary

hiding place for an imitation Lum and Abner, impersonated by Tim and Donnie, buried under layers of greasepaint, white hair spray, spirit gum and crepe hair. Introduced by Mr. Bresee, the two performed a recreation of "the letter routine," a bit of comedy actually performed by Lauck and Goff in their personal appearances. This, in addition to the references to Mount Ida on the half-hour *Lum and Abner* radio programs, served as inspiration



The "substitute" Lum & Abner continue their never-ending checker game at Mena's Lyric Theatre.



Dick Huddleston, Lum, and Abner "sing along" with Rev. John Morrison. Hard to tell they're all singing the same song.



Frank Bresee, Sam Brown, Kay Linaker, Tim Hollis, and Donnie Pitchford "see what's going on down in Pine Ridge."

to cast member Cliff Arquette in the late 1940s. Arquette later gave life to his character Charley Weaver, famous for his "letters from mamma" down in dear old "Mount Idy."

Other NLAS-sponsored acts included songs by Ted Theodore of El Cajon, California, accompanying himself on guitar and auto-harp. In addition to "The Martins and the Coys," *Lum and Abner* alumnus Marshall "Grandpa" Jones was remembered in Ted's performance of "Falling Leaves," which was composed by "Grandpa." Mr. Theodore also represented that fine OTR organization SPERDVAC (P. O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7177). Rev. John Morrison of Carthage, Texas (accompanied by "Lum" Pitchford on "geetar") led the audience in sing-alongs of "I Pine for the Pines in Old Pine Ridge" (written by the great E.M. Bartlett in 1936 for the Young Pine Ridge Quartet), "You Are My Sunshine," and "Amazing Grace."

Sam Brown offered his excellent portrayal of Pine Ridge's own Dick Huddleston, extolling the beauty of Arkansas, and offering some down-home humor. He introduced two strange characters he had observed "down at my fishin' camp." They turned out to be popular cartoon stars Popeye and Bluto, impeccably imitated by Mike Brooks (Chester, Illinois) and Leonard Kohl (Chicago, Illinois) respectively.

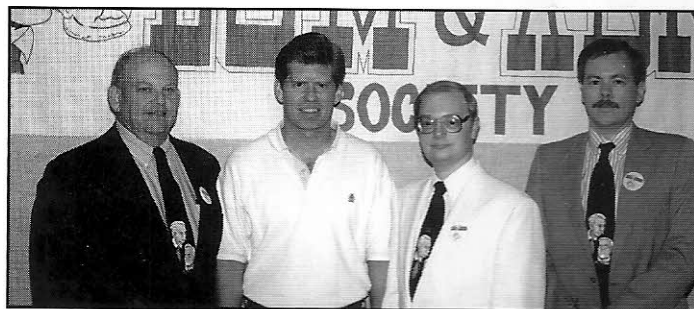
Three acts were added to the lineup by Mena residents. Rudi Timmerman, Rae Langford and Buddy Lambert performed a sketch loosely based on *Hee Haw* characters, while Jim Kincade appeared in a comedy monologue as a candidate for local sheriff. Ken and Nathan Sloan, a grandfather-grandson musical duet, proved one of the program's highlights with their guitar-fiddle rendition of "Arkansas Traveler," the song originally chosen by Lauck and Goff as their broadcast theme. (It had to be changed, since comedian Bob Burns reserved the tune earlier. "Eleanor" became the *Lum and Abner* theme for the 1930s and portions of the 1940s.)

The "unreasonable facsimile" of L&A reemerged to offer "the suit measuring routine," only to

be interrupted by "Dick Huddleston," who just happened to run into Troy Boyd, the Texas fiddler, who'd left two of his hand-crafted instruments (his fiddle and a guitar) in the feed room of the Jot 'Em Down Store. Since it was nearly time to end the show anyway, Mr. Boyd fiddled, "Lum" strummed, and everyone sang "They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree," the traditional NLAS "sign off."

It may have looked like a ton of fun, but the set-up for the stage show and Saturday's two regular programs required the efforts of many dedicated people. Eddie Huckaby and Rudi Timmerman of the Ouachita Little Theatre provided technical assistance needed for the stage production, while NLAS members Fred Toole, Jim Temple and family, and Rev. John Morrison pitched in with extra muscle. Popeye Fan Club representatives Mike and Debbie Brooks, Greg and Cindy Snyder, Chuck Anders and Leonard Kohl helped in numerous ways. We thank you all!!!

Phase two of the 1998 convention starred Frank Bresee, one of radio's finest historians. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Bresee's amazing career in radio continues to this day, with his *Golden Days of Radio* broadcasts nearing the half-century mark in duration. His program was the springboard for "Uncle Donnie's" newly-written L&A script, which took Frank Bresee on a fantasy trip to Pine Ridge, in a frustrating attempt to interview the Jot 'Em Down Store characters, portrayed by the three NLAS "ossifers." Mr. Bresee finds himself completely befuddled in his attempts to carry on conversations with Lum, Abner, Grandpap, Ulysses, Squire Skimp, Cedric and Ben Withers (only Dick Huddleston seems "normal!"). As was the case when



Scott Lauck ("Lum's grandson") visits with the NLAS Zekatif Ossifers.

Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve visited Lum and Abner in 1993, "Mr. Breezy" find his name being mangled by the two old fellows. Abner is certain that Frank and Bobbie (Mrs.) Bresee are the subject of his "fave-o-rite raddio show," *Fibber BRESEE and Molly*, as well as the song "Me and Bobbie BRESEE!" With L&A temporarily away from the feed room studio, Frank attempts



Member Budd Bergman of Manhattan Beach, CA, receives a TWO WEEKS TO LIVE movie poster for traveling the longest distance to be present.

to chat with Cedric Weehunt, who amazes him with heretofore hidden intellect! "I am the founding member of the Pine Ridge Chapter of Mensa," Cedric boasts. Naturally, when L&A return to the microphone, Cedric reverts to his former personality, which is enough to drive Frank Bresee "stark ravin' mad crazy!" Finally, he can take no more, and runs screaming from the store, leaving L&A to assume "Mr. Breezy" must be "tetched!"

Following the imaginary fun and games, Mr. Bresee conducted a fascinating discussion of many of the radio personalities who crossed paths with L&A, all of whom had been his guests on *The Golden Days of Radio*. We were treated to a behind-the-scenes videotape depicting a rehearsal for a *Golden Days of Radio* 1991 Christmas special, which included performances by 1930s L&A alumni Les Tremayne (Horlick's commercials) and Del Sharbutt (WFAA/WBAP Dallas-Fort Worth announcer).

After lunch, the "ossifers" participated in a rehearsal of a radio-style script featuring the *Thimble Theatre* comic strip cast. If that title is unfamiliar to you, substitute the name "Popeye!" The NLAS will lend two of its "actors" to the 1998 Popeye Picnic, to be held in Chester, Illinois in September. (Write to Mike Brooks, Popeye Fan Club, 1001 State Street, Chester, Illinois 62233 for more information.)

"Our Miss Kate" (Kay Linaker/Kate Phillips) was the star of the 5:00 p.m. presentation. Her film career was illustrated with video clips edited by "Uncle Donnie," including highlights from *Charlie Chan in Monte Carlo*, *Charlie Chan in Rio*, *Young Mr. Lincoln*, *Drums Along the Mohawk* and *Man About Town*. One of the audience's favorite segments was Miss Linaker's portrayal of Phil Harris' girlfriend in the classic Jack Benny feature, *Buck Benny Rides Again*. It goes without saying that the favorite NLAS Kay Linaker character was the evil Carmen, a.k.a. Madge, from the 1943 Lum and Abner film *Two Weeks to Live!* Finally, *The Blob* oozed its way onto the screen, complete with some good-natured Pine Ridge subtitles. The NLAS is grateful to film historian David Miller for supplying portions of our video montage.

Tim Hollis created a new L&A script designed to bring the mysterious Carmen back into the lives of our Pine Ridge pals once again. Upon visiting Dick Huddleston's post office, Carmen

learns the surprising fact that Abner Peabody was not blown to bits in her scheme to defraud an insurance company 55 years ago! She immediately sets out to "de-Abner" the world, fearing he could still pose a threat to her. All her traps and schemes fail, forcing her to produce her ultimate weapon. From deep within a Mason jar oozes the one and only BLOB! Good must triumph over evil, of course, and Mr. Blob attacks Miss Carmen, setting off a chain reaction, in which the villainess becomes the victim of her own traps: coffee grinder electrocution, washtub avalanche, etc.

Sam Brown handled the tricky live sound effects, creating the noises of electrical zapping, wood and nails being forced apart, doors opening, washtubs crashing, and Blob gurgling! Thanks to talented Chuck Anders, we now have a perfect "bell ringer" to recreate the familiar "party line" telephone of L&A!

Frank Bresee and Kate Linaker Phillips were the deserving 1998 recipients of the Lum and Abner Memorial Awards. In addition, they were given gift packs of Pine Ridge honey, sorghum and barbecue sauce by Kathy and Lon Stucker, curators of the Lum and Abner Museum and Jot 'Em Down Store in Pine Ridge. Ted Theodore received a package of these tasty products as well, being the winner of a special drawing. Loyal John "Grandpap" Knuppel was recognized as the "perfect attendance" member - he has been present at all 14 NLAS Conventions! Budd Bergman of Manhattan Beach, California won the "longest distance traveled" prize, a beautiful 1950 re-release poster from *Two Weeks to Live*. To close the program, Troy Boyd fiddled "...Down the Old Pine Tree" once again, and was presented with an original 1938 *Lum and Abner Almanac* in appreciation for his many years of musical contributions. Coincidentally, Mr. and Mrs. Boyd were married in 1938, 60 years ago! "Happy Annin-versity!"

Many attendees asked the "ossifers" just how we are able to present such a convention, without charging an admission fee. As "Singin' Sam" has often said, our conventions are for you, the members. You make them possible, and I speak for Sam Brown and Tim Hollis in saying thank you. Stay tuned to *The Jot 'Em Down Journal* for details on our next convention!

- "Uncle Donnie" Pitchford



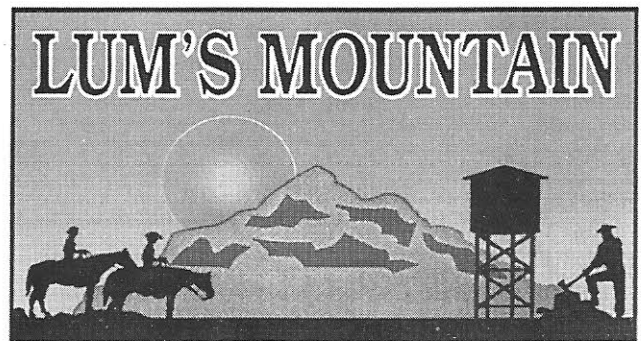
Frank Bresee and Kay Linaker were all smiles by the time the Saturday evening program was finished.



NLAS member Janet McMurrin of Harrison, AR, reports that a new tourist attraction has recently opened in her region of the state. Inasmuch as this new spot was given the name "Lum's Mountain," Janet was curious as to whether the reputation of Lum & Abner had anything to do with the choice of this name. She was assured that Lum's Mountain has no connection with the two old characters from Pine Ridge, instead being named after the owner, Lum ("short for Columbus"?) Ellis. We presume that Mr. Ellis is not half of one of the several pairs of twins who were named after Lum & Abner during their heyday on the air.

Even with no actual connection to L&A other than the coincidence of the name, Lum's Mountain sounds well worth checking into if any of you happen to be vacationing in the beautiful Ozarks. It is located on U.S. 65 between Pindall and St. Joe, AR, and 50 miles south of that hotspot of Ozark activity, Branson, MO. The Lum's Mountain complex features a craft and gift emporium (featuring over 50 shops), country cookin', live music and comedy (what, no L&A impersonators?), horseback trails and riding, RV hookups, campsites, and tickets and information on nearby Branson.

If you should want any more info on Lum's Mountain, you can contact them at (870) 439-2678. They also have a well-produced web page



at www.lumsmountain.com.

Every time we think we have done our last installment of "L&A and the Great American Roadside," something else comes to light that merits mention. You will recall that several issues ago we reported on the surviving examples of the many "Jot 'Em Down Stores" that were authorized by Lauck and Goff from the 1930s onward. Well, through some diligent research, we have located approximately four or five more that were previously undocumented. As soon as we can get the whole story from them, we will be bringing it to you here!

Happy Motoring!

1991 NLAS CONVENTION VIDEO RELEASED



We have just released the latest in our series of video tapes of the past NLAS Conventions. **The 1991 NLAS Convention** featured as its guest the legendary radio actor **LES TREMAYNE**, helping us celebrate the 60th anniversary of the *Lum and Abner* radio show by narrating the multi-media documentary *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF LUM AND ABNER*. Also available are the six previous conventions: 1985, with guests **ROZ ROGERS** and **CLARENCE HARTZELL**; 1986, with guests **ETHEL HUDDLESTON BALL** and **KATHY STUCKER**; 1987, with guest **JERRY HAUSNER**; 1988, with guests **ELMORE (Phinus Peabody) VINCENT** and **JERRY HAUSNER**; 1989, with guest **WENDELL NILES**; and 1990, with guest **BOBS WATSON**. Videos are \$19.95 each; order from the NLAS Executive Secretary, 81 Sharon Blvd, Dora, AL 35062.