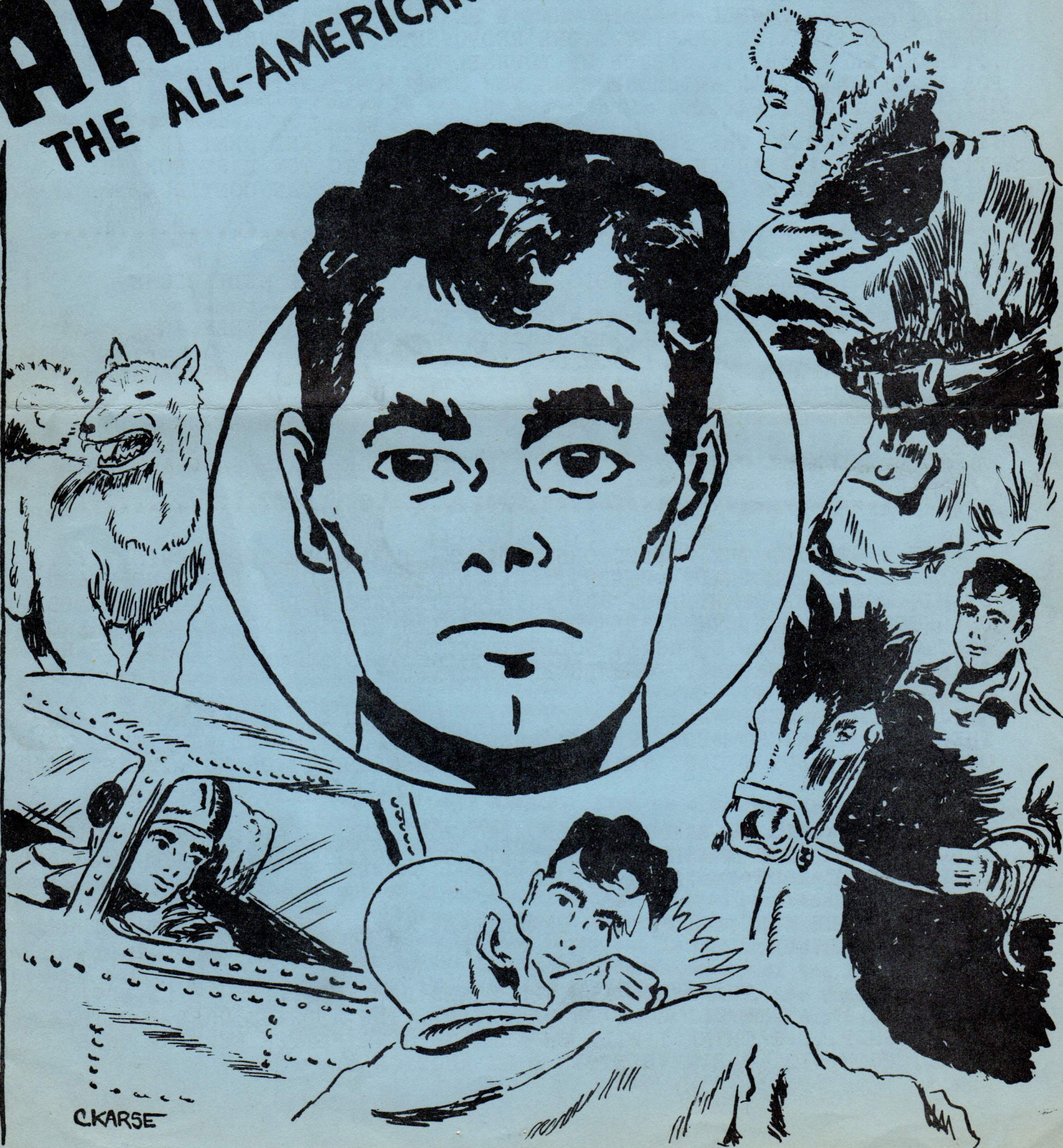


JACK ARMSTRONG

THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY OF RADIO FAME

Vol. 3 No. 2

RADIO PREMIUM COLLECTORS NEWSLETTER



CKARSE

THE RADIO PREMIUM COLLECTORS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED 6 TIMES A YEAR BY JACK MELCHER, 616 NORTH AVE., WAUKEGAN, ILL. 60085.

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COLLECTORS...YOU WILL REMEMBER IN THE LAST ISSUE I ASKED A FEW QUESTIONS...RAREST ITEM IN YOUR COLLECTION, WHAT YOU CONSIDERED THE RAREST...SOME IDEA ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND FOR FUTURE ARTICLES ON YOU THE COLLECTOR...WELL HERE IS WHAT I RECEIVED IN ADDITION TO THE CONVENTION QUESTION....RARITY...ONE RESPONSE.....IN FAVOR OF THE CON.. ...THREE IN FAVOR.....SKETCH OF YOURSELF.....FOUR ANSWERS....NOT BAD FOR AN ORGANIZATION WHICH NUMBERS NOW OVER 129...WITH A PAID UP SUBSCRIPTION OF ONLY 64.....

MY MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING MEN WHO WROTE IN AND SENT IN THE ARTICLES THAT APPEAR IN THIS NEWSLETTER...AND TO TOM HART FOR THE NEW ARTICLE THAT HE SENT IN...A FINE JOB, HOPE WE CAN CONTINUE....

SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES OF RADIO PREMIUMS.....LAMONT MEDIANOCHE

MARGINALS.....BARRY STEELE, JR.

THE ULTIMATE PREMIUM.....SCHYLER MARRIGAN

RADIO PREMIUM COLLECTORS (WHATZIT ?) BOX...TOM HART

PLUS THE MANY COLLECTORS WHO HAVE ITEMS FOR TRADE SALE & WANTED

WHEN I STARTED THE COLLECTORS SOCIETY, I HAD ONE IDEA BEHIND IT... TO ELIMINATE THE SHADY DEALERS...REX MILLER FOR ONE..I HAVENT HEARD OF HIM FOR SOME TIME...NOW JOE FAIR WRITES AND TELLS ME TO WARN ALL COLLECTORS OF HIM, SEEMS HE SOLD JOE A FILM STRIP RING AND ONLY SENT PART OF THE FILM...SO AGAIN COLLECTORS..STAY AWAY FROM ITEMS OFFERED BY REX MILLER..USUALLY DOES BUSINESS AS SUPERMANTIQUES.

JIM SCANCARELLI WANTS TO KNOW WHAT DOES...C O B R A L H O F A ON THE CAPT. MIDNIGHT MEDAL OF MEMBERSHIP MEAN...SEEMS WE WENT THRU THIS ONCE BEFORE, BUT I CANT REMEMBER IF WE ANSWERED IT OR NOT...ANY IDEAS OUT THERE?

HY MANDELOWITZ.....HAS THE FOLLOWING FOR SALE...CAPT. MARVEL BUTTON OLD..\$18.00, SPY SMASHER BUTTON..\$12.00, SHEILD HANGER..\$18.00... WRITE HY AT 1806 1st AVE., N.Y.C. 10028

THERE ARE MORE COLLECTORS TRADE SALE & WANTED ITEMS SPREAD THRU OUT THIS ISSUE.

THANKS TO ALL FOR THEIR PATIENCE...YOU WILL NOTICE I AGAIN AM AT MY OLD HOME IN WAUKEGAN...THE ADDRESS USED FOR THIS IS MY SHOP....I THINK I WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE BETTER SERVICE THIS WAY., BOTH WITH THE NEWSLETTER & MY AUCTION..

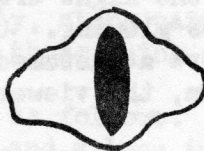
SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES OF RADIO PREMIUMS

by

Lamont Medianoche

Actually, only a few of the classic radio premiums advertised themselves as being based on scientific principles. Certainly, there are few "scientific" principles involved in, say, the secret compartment of a ring such as the Captain Midnight Mystic Aztec Sun God Ring; but there were a few premiums that either were based on such principles for their action, or whose actions were explained in solid scientific terms. Let's look at a few.

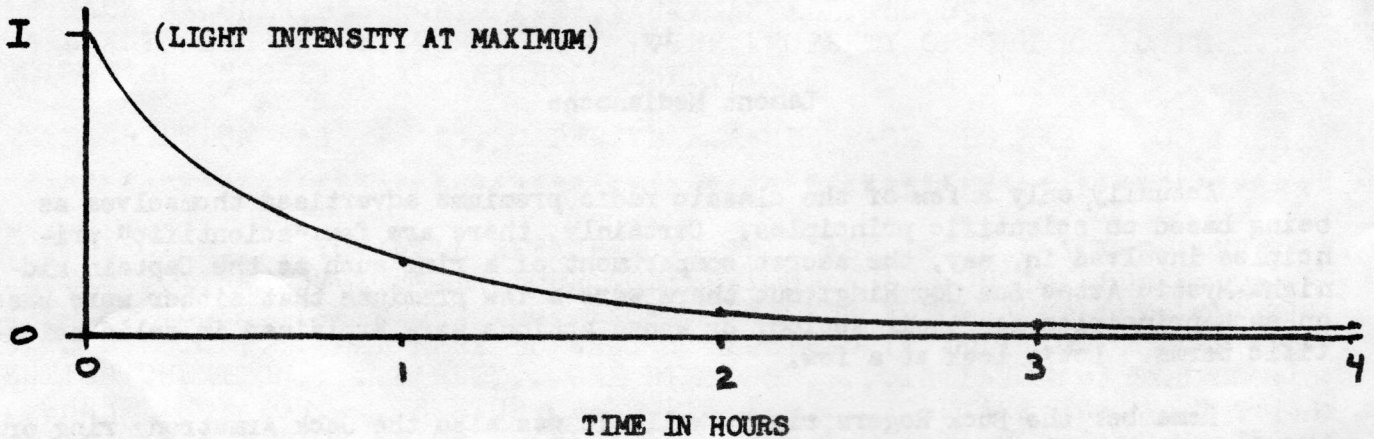
Remember the Buck Rogers ring? Well, it was also the Jack Armstrong ring or the Terry & the Pirates ring. It was the one with the twin alligators and the elliptical central stone. It looked approximately like this:



...I stress the Buck Rogers version for a specific reason. While all three versions of the ring glowed in the dark, it was the Buck Rogers version that explained just how the ring managed to glow. Admittedly, it did so in relatively general terms, but what it said was accurate, as far as it went. A printed sheet within the envelope that the ring was sent in explained that by exposing the ring to light caused (certain) electrons in the molecules of the substance making up the (luminous portion of the) ring to be affected. Light energy was absorbed by the electrons, which transferred themselves into higher orbits. In the dark, the explanation went on, the electrons in these higher orbits would drop back to their "normal" orbits, giving off light in the process.

As far as it went, the description was accurate. Of course, a lot of superstitions grew up about that (and other) glow-in-the-dark premium. To the average child, the relationship was simple: a premium "soaked up" light in the sun (or electric lamp) and gave it off in the dark. Thus, a child tended to reason, if you left such a gadget in the sunlight most of the day, it ought to have enough light "soaked up" to permit one to dispense with flashlights. I remember being told such things as a child from my contemporaries; alas, I was never able to duplicate the feats that they had "seen." The reason, of course, was that what they had "seen" they "saw" only in their imaginations.

What actually is involved is very simple. Even as electrons in the phosphorescent molecules were absorbing light energy, some were also giving off light; however, the "glow-in-the-light" phenomenon is so much dimmer than the light it is being bathed in that it is invisible by comparison. After a very short period of time (measured in thousandths of a second), the amount of light energy being absorbed has reached a peak, and any further absorption merely replaces that which has been lost by the "glow-in-the-light" (or "decay") phenomenon. What becomes important is not the length of time that a glow-in-the-dark item has been in the light, but the intensity of the light that the premium has been exposed to. Once the item is put into the dark, the intensity of the light it emits falls off with time, but the fall-off is not linear, but becomes more gradual with time. It looks something like this:



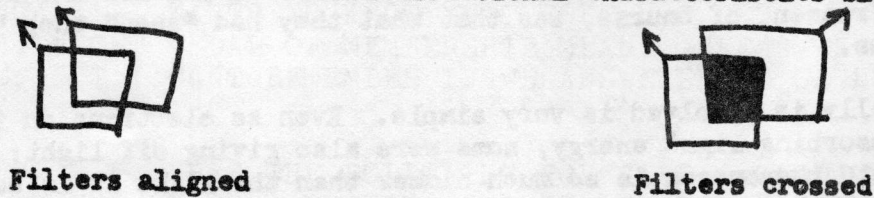
Although it can be seen that the light drops off smoothly, it is also evident that the premium never entirely stops glowing. Coupled with that, as a second factor, with time, a person's eyes become more accustomed to the dark, so that even though less light is being emitted by the premium, the viewer is able to see it easier.

A second premium that depended upon scientific principles was the Sky King mystery picture ring. Two views of Sky King were visible on the "stone" of the ring, but not at the same time. By turning a dial, one picture faded into the other, like a motion-picture "dissolve." It was very mysterious, particularly because there didn't seem to be enough room inside the ring crown for any sort of projection mechanism.

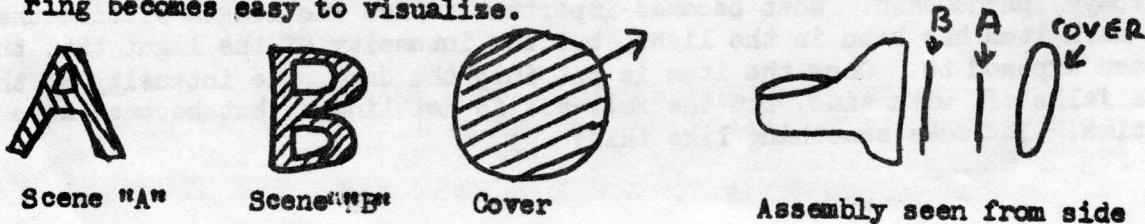
The secret of this ring was polarization. The effect of polarized light was not very well known in the 1940s, though it was employed rather spectacularly in the early 1950s during the wave of 3-D movies. Normal light is unpolarized, which means that its vibrations have no directional characteristics. Light passing through a polarizing filter have highly directional characteristics,



Polarized light can pass through other filters if they are aligned in the same direction, but filters with crossed directional characteristics block light.



A commercially available material, Polaroid^(R), is a plastic-based material that can form polarizing filters from thin sheets of plastic. Thus, the mechanism of such a ring becomes easy to visualize.

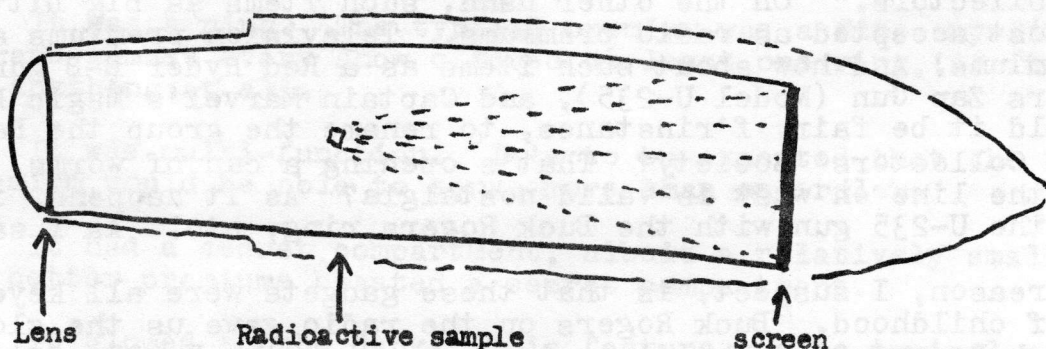


Perhaps the most exotically "scientific" of the radio premiums was the Lone Ranger Atom Bomb ring. Omitting the rather anachronistic thought of the Lone Ranger and fission bombs, the ring itself was described as being based upon scientific principles of atomic energy. The ring appeared to have a miniature bomb on its crown. The red-colored back, which was finned in the manner of a bomb, was removable. It was supposed only to be removed in the dark. Under those conditions, as one's eyes became adjusted to the dark, it was possible to see sparkling flashes through a lens that had been covered by the back. It was advertised as showing the effects of atomic reactions.

In point of fact, the advertisements were correct. During the early days of research into radioactivity, scientists developed a gadget known as a spinthariscopes. This was used to make radioactive "ray" action visible. Actually, there were three basic "rays" being studied: alpha, beta, and gamma rays. While gamma rays are actually "rays" in the classic sense (that is, are part of the electromagnetic spectrum, like X-rays, ultra-violet rays, light rays, and radio waves), both alpha and beta rays are actually atomic particles -- electrons for beta rays, ionized helium nuclei for alpha rays. Alpha rays (or more properly, alpha particles) were a favorite for studies and were the chief object of attention for those using spinthariscopes.

A spinthariscopes was built as follows. A light-tight box was constructed with a phosphorescent screen in one side and a lens in the other side. The focal length of the lens was the length of the box, so that the phosphorescent screen was in sharp focus. Between the lens and the screen, a portion of radioactive material that emitted alpha particles was inserted, so that a solid rain of alpha particles hit the screen. In the dark, where a particle hit the screen, a momentary flash of light could be seen. Since many particles could hit simultaneously, a number of flashes would be seen at any one time. The steady stream of alpha particles can cause the flashes to seem to dance.

The Lone Ranger Atom Bomb ring was a tiny spinthariscopes, and hence was a valid scientific gadget.



...and all for a boxtop!

Can any other RPCS members recall premiums that are based on solid scientific principles?

-LM

MARGINALS

by

BARRY STEELE, JR.

O.K., so we're (it says here) radio premium collectors. That's the name of the game. But let's ask ourselves: what's a radio premium, anyway? Many listings of collector's collections, if you will, seem to contain some not-exactly-radio premiums. Medianoche told us recently about Captain Video. Nice guy, Video, but for all the spirit-of-the-thing, the Video that Medianoche was talking about was a television show. The "CV" ring, and the rocket launcher ring, let's face it, were early television premiums, not radio premiums. So where does that leave us?

Another thing. Remember the Lone Ranger (or Kix) Atom Bomb ring? Sure it was advertised over the Lone Ranger show; it was also advertised in Sunday newspapers (comic section). Does that make it a newspaper premium? And how about the Tom Mix premiums advertised on the back of the Ralston boxes after the Tom Mix show went off the air? Where do they fit into the radio canon?

As a kid in the dear, dead days ago, there were radio-advertised premiums that were not obtained by sending boxtops, inner liners, etc. The Superman buttons that could be found in the bottom of Pep boxes spring to mind. Admittedly, they were advertised over the airwaves, yet anyone buying a box of Pep could adorn his beanie with Superman buttons. There were also some sort of postwar futuristic "jet planes" -- cardboard gliders assembled to fly canard fashion -- that memory tells me were obtained from the box, not the boxtop.

What the Hell is a "radio premium," anyway? Fellow collectors, I submit that a radio premium is a state of mind. Recall, those of you who have read Jim Harmon's Nostalgia Catalogue, that some radio premiums (that is, by rational definition: a premium offered solely to radio listeners) such as the Helen Trent Friendship Locket are not collected. At least not by "radio premium collectors." On the other hand, such items as Big Little Books seem to be almost accepted as radio premiums. Television premiums are accepted as radio premiums! And how about such items as a Red Ryder B-B gun, a Daisy Buck Rogers Zap Gun (Model U-235), and Captain Marvel's Magic Eyes?

Would it be fair, f'rinstance, to rename the group the Radio Premium and Nostalgia Collectors' Society? That's opening a can of worms, for where does one draw the line on what is valid nostalgia? As it happens, it feels right to group the U-235 gun with the Buck Rogers ring, etc. As I said, a state of mind.

The reason, I suspect, is that these gadgets were all keyed to a certain aspects of childhood. Buck Rogers on the radio gave us the glow-in-the-dark ring. Buck Rogers, via the dime store, gave us the U-235 pistol. And they both appeared at about the same time. The Lone Ranger gave us the pistol ring on the radio; the Lone Ranger gave us lunchboxes and pens in the dime store; both at the same time. So we associate them together, and as a result sort of classify them all as legitimate parts of collections.

Obviously, these items form the "gray area" of the radio premium collector's world. They are the marginally acceptable items that reinforce the luster of the genuine radio premiums.

Ah, for those lost days of yesterday. Those thrilling days of yesterday!

-END-

THE ULTIMATE PREMIUM?

by

Schyler Harrigan

If you look back on it, there were a devil of a lot of radio premiums. Tom Mix, Captain Midnight, Jack Armstrong, and the Lone Ranger were just in the vanguard. And we could spend reams of paper listing and discussing them all. However, it is possible to talk about them in categories -- and there was a lot of diversity within each category. There were, broadly speaking, the rings, the badges, and the Gadgets. Gadgets included devices like telescopes, pedometers, decoding devices, and compasses. Badges were identifiers, either directly (like the Dick Tracy badges) or indirectly (like the Straight Shooter medal); for simplicity's sake, I include buttons in the badge category. Rings were the most common premium, and in rings we find the widest variance of design and purpose. (I freely admit that my definitions are a bit arbitrary: is a ROA decoder a Gadget or a Badge? It serves both functions.)

Very well, fellow collectors: I'm starting a sort of challenge that some of you might like to respond to in the pages of the newsletter. Just answer in detail the following question: Which of all the Radio premiums do you feel came closest to being the ultimate premium? That is, which premium most nearly encompassed the ideal of the genus radio premium?

Naturally, I cannot throw down the gauntlet without mentioning my candidate. I suggest the answer is the Sky King Magni-Glow Writing Ring. My reasons are simple.

1. It was a ring. The typical premium was a fits-any-finger gadget, and almost every show offered at least one ring, if it offered anything at all.
2. It was multi-function. It's to be expected that the ultimate premium would be able to serve more than one role.
3. It had a secret compartment, albeit a relatively small one. All the better premiums boasted a secret compartment.
4. It glowed in the dark. This feature was so typical of so many radio premiums that Jim Harmon coined the term "firefly item" to discuss them as a class. From the Lone Ranger Belt (Gadget) through the Straight Shooter medal (badge) to the Shadow Ring (ring, of course), all classes of premium had its fireflies.
5. It had a magnifying glass. Magnifying glasses are dual-function items in their own right. You could use them to examine things more closely. And you could use them as burning glasses.
6. It had a ball-point pen. It could write, and more to the point, ball-point pens were relatively new items at the time.

The best part, all this complexity folded up neatly into a compact package that fit atop the ring's body. The design was so clever that, when folded, the glow-in-the-dark plastic was visible through the magnifying glass on the top, making the lend look like some form of inlaid pearl stone. The ring not only was compact; it actually looked rather good.

Now you other collectors might have other ideas as to what might constitute the Ultimate Premium. I invite you to submit all such speculations to Jack Melcher for publication in his magazine, so that your thoughts can be shared among the rest of the collectors. This isn't a contest, and I know of no prizes involved, but the results of the undertaking might be instructive to the rest of us. So, to play fair, let's establish a few ground rules:

A. The item to be discussed must be a genuine radio premium (no fair bringing in comic-book premiums like Captain Marvel's Magic Eyes).

B. The reason that the article should be considered as the ultimate premium should be explained in detail ("because" isn't sufficient, by the way), Reasons should be more than the fact that you happened to like the premium; I rather liked the Sky King mystery picture ring, but I'd be the last to classify that as an ultimate premium.

C. "Ultimate" doesn't represent a synonym for "most popular," Merely because "everybody in the neighborhood had one," the premium needn't be considered the epitome of the lot. The premium should best capture the essence of what radio premiums were all about.

Let's hear from you all.

-Schyler Harrington

MORE TRADE SELL & WANTED ITEMS.....

CHARLES SEXTON HAS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR TRADE...7,000 RADIO TAPES WITH THE COMMERCIALS, WILL TRADE FOR PREMIUMS. IF INTERESTED WRITE FOR DETAILS, NO LIST. 3245 CLAYDOR DRIVE, DAYTON, OH 45431

JOHN ERMOLA, 68-01 54th, MASPETH, NY 11378...WANTS THE FOLLOWING L.O.A., CAPT. MIDNIGHT, HOWDY DOODY & OVALTINE OLYMPIC SHAKE UP MUGS. MUST BE IN MINT CONDITION.

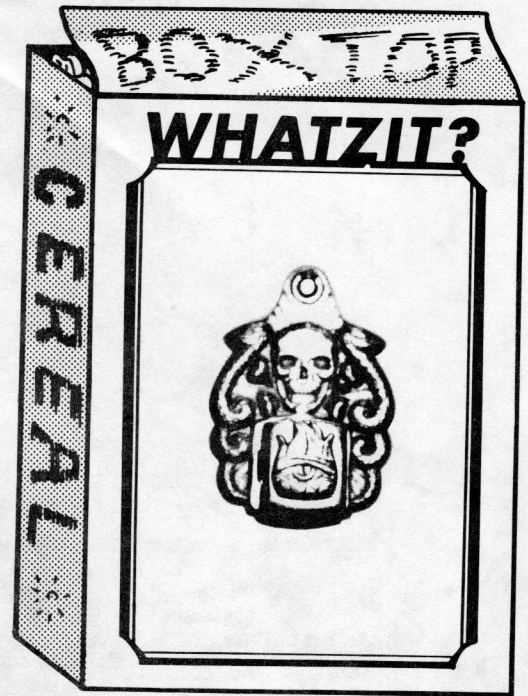
JOE FAIR 10 CRESTWOOD DR. NEWCASTLE, PA 16101...HAS BIG LITTLE BOOKS, RADIO CEREAL PREMIUMS TO SELL OR TRADE. SEND SASE FOR LIST.

CHUCK GUSTAFSON, 6635 BUCKINGHAM DR., GLADSTONE, ORE. 97027 IS LOOKING FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS...1940 ORPHAN ANNIE MANUAL, 42,45,48,49 CAPT. MIDNIGHT MANUALS.

TONY EVANGELISTA, 232 E. MAIN ST. FLEETWOOD, PA 19522 WANTS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS. 1938 R.O.A. SILVER STAR SECRET COMPARTMENT RING, TOM MIX WRANGLER BADGE, BUCK ROGERS ROCKET POLICE PATROL WINDUP SPACE SHIP, BUCK ROGERS HELIUM GUN, LR RANGE RIDER WINDUP TOY, AND UNIQUE RINGS...SEND YOUR PRICE OR WANTS.

Radio Premium Collectors' "Whatzit?"

AS A NEW FEATURE IN THE NEWSLETTER, WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A WHATZIT BOX. IF ANY OF YOU COLLECTORS OUT THERE HAVE A PREMIUM IN YOUR COLLECTION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE IDENTIFIED, SEND ME A PICTURE OF IT, OR A DRAWING, AND WE WILL PUT IT IN OUR WHATZIT BOX AND TRY TO GET IT IDENTIFIED FOR YOU. THE PICTURE WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU.



ALRIGHT YOU COLLECTORS OUT THERE, THIS MONTH LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN IDENTIFY THIS WHATZIT THAT WAS SENT IN BY TOM HART. IT IS A PREMIUM THAT HE HAS IN HIS COLLECTION AND HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT IT IS. THE PREMIUM IS SHOWN IN ITS EXACT SIZE IN THE WHATZIT BOX, IS A BRASS MEDALLION, EMBOSSED WITH A COILED SNAKE ON EACH SIDE AND HAS A SKULL'S HEAD AND CROSS-BONES IN THE CENTER WITH A SUNBURST ACROSSED THE TOP. IT ALSO HAS THE SEE BEHIND YOU MIRROR THAT IS SO FAMILIAR WITH THE TOM MIX RING AND THE ORPHAN ANNIE DETECTO RING. ANYONE KNOWING WHAT THIS PREMIUM IS CALLED, FROM WHAT SHOW IT CAME FROM OR THE YEAR IT WAS GIVEN OUT CAN WRITE TO TOM AT 1231 WILD ROSE LANE, NEENAH, WIS. 54956 OR TO ME AND THE ANSWER TO THE WHATZIT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.

COME ON YOU COLLECTORS, LET'S GET THESE WHATZITS IDENTIFIED FOR OUR FELLOW MEMBERS. AND BE SURE TO SEND IN A PICTURE, OR DRAWING, OF YOUR WHATZIT THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR COLLECTION. SOMEONE OUT THERE IN PREMIUM COLLECTOR LAND SHOULD KNOW WHAT IT IS.

NEW MEMBERS, CHANGES OF ADDRESS ETC.

JOE LAUPER #125
BOX 246
VINCENTOWN, NJ 08088

R. PLUMB # 128
1150 89 AVE. N
ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. 33702

MEL SIMMONS #126
37 BEVERLY RD.
BROOKLINE, MASS. 02167

JERRY FINLEY # 129
R.F.D. 1
WACO, NEBR. 68460

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.....

FRANK CHRIST # 127
3302 DRUID LANE
LOS ALAMITOS, CA. 90720

JACK COUPAL # 67
313 LOWRY LANE
LEXINGTON, KY. 40503

RICH GRONQUIST #14
5852 N.E. 17th
PORTLAND, ORE. 97211