

**Old Radio Times** 

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#### **Radio Bloopers** Jack French © 2007

The

It is not certain when the term "blooper" entered the broadcasting lexicon. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a blooper originally was applied in baseball to a short, weakly-hit, fly ball that carried just beyond the infield to drop in for a safe hit. That is still its primary meaning. But its secondary definition refers to a social blunder, and that's what developed into the "radio blooper."

A blooper can be a mispronunciation, an exchange of syllables, a malapropism, or simply a line delivered correctly, but in a context which gives it an entirely different meaning. And since most of the Golden Age of Radio was done "live", bloopers cropped up very often....and the best (or worst) are a rich source of unintended humor.

One that is known to most of us is the blooper that resulted from an announcer pitching a commercial for a bakery known "for the best in bread", except he muffed the line and the audience heard "for the breast in bed". This unintentional transposition in syllables is called a "spoonerism" and many of radio's bloopers fall in this category.

Jack Benny's writers actually loved spoonerisms, and if one occurred on the show, they would incorporate it into the next broadcast. One time, "Mary Livingston" took Jack's car in for a lube job and she said the station manager put the auto up on "the grass reek" (instead of the grease rack.) In the very next program, there was an announcement that a family of skunks had escaped from the zoo "and, boy, did the grass reek."

Sometimes entire words would be shifted in a line. An actress in a soap opera once read her line: "Mr. Lane is on the seat; would you please have a phone?" A sports announcer on

KCRB told listeners to a foot-ball game: "Nelson just a kicked a 35 year old field goal." Or pity the announcer at WLOA in Pennsylvania who read a commercial thusly: "Remember, folks, this is the highest priced, lowest quality piano available today!"

Even the classical music narrators were not immune to spoonerisms, such as the one who stated: "Our music of Sunday classics today included Mozart's Concerto for Flarp and Hoot....I mean, Flute and Harp." And could an announcer mispronounce his own name? One did, Gil Kreegle, who signed off his newscast, "This is Gil Speegle creaking."

Sometimes bloopers resulted not from what you said, but how and where you said it. For example, take the U.S. tourist being interviewed on the BBC radio in Westminster Abbey. "It is indescribably beautiful" he said, "I really thought I was in Heaven, until I saw my wife standing by my side." The beloved Kate Smith loved to ad-lib some of her commercials, which can be dangerous. On one radio show, she cooed, "We'll be right back after this word from Doeskin Facial Tissues....the very best Kleenex you can buy."

Occasionally the choice of words, even well-meaning, caused embarrassment. When Art Linkletter was hosting "World's Fair Party" (which was the forerunner to his "People Are Funny") the show was done live with a large audience. Finding a young engaged couple who were to be married the following week, Art impulsively offered, "Why not come back to our show and be married on our stage with millions of radio listeners in attendance?" The couple agreed and the audience applauded. When he was later signing off the program, Art reminded his listeners: "Now, don't forget, next week this wonderful couple will return to consummate their marriage right here on our stage!" Phone

calls from radio executives flooded Linkletter's office immediately, tartly explaining the difference between celebrating and consummating. "But, anyway, " Art said sheepishly, years later in his autobiography, "It sure helped our ratings for that week."

Arlene Francis did a lot of radio work before her TV successes, including hosting radio's "Blind Date" during WW II. It was done with a live audience where a serviceman was matched with a beautiful young starlet. Many of the GIs were nervous and part of Arlene's role was to calm them down. Pointing to the ribbons on one's uniform, Arlene gushed: "You must be very proud, you've even got a purple heart on." The soldier blushed, the audience gasped, but not until after the show did one of the engineers explain to Arlene the slang expression that she almost said.

Another blooper Arlene tumbled into occurred months later on that same show. One soldier's hands were shaking so with nervousness, she suggested he put them in his pockets. When he complied, she said innocently, "Now, have you got hold of yourself?" The entire audience roared in amusement and this time Arlene blushed.

Sports announcers are no stranger to radio's bloopers and that includes some of the best men at the mike. Vince Scully, who, during a Dodger game, was giving the scores of other baseball contests to his listeners. In announcing the results of the game between the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Chicago Cubs, Scully fluffed it completely by saying; "And in other games today, Pittsburgh beat the Pirates, 6 to 6. "Another sports announcer, who shall remain nameless, in covering the National League playoffs, said into the radio microphone: "We will now hear the Star Spangled Banner sung, as the players of both teams line up to view the wed, rite, and blue."

But the most outrageous blooper in the entire Golden Age of Radio came not from any radio cast member, but an innocent young wife of a serviceman. In WW II, Durwood Kirby hosted a radio show on the West Coast in which he interviewed the sweethearts and wives of military men fighting overseas. It was a sentimental show in which the young lady would talk about her boy friend or husband and how much she missed him. Near the end of one interview, Kirby asked a young woman, "What is your fondest dream for the future?" She replied, "I just want to wake up one morning and find my husband at the foot of my bed, holding his Discharge."

Kirby choked, snorted, and broke into peals of uncontrolled laughter. As the confused wife looked startled, Kirby's frantic announcer, tried to cover the incident. He motioned for the studio organist to begin playing as the announcer blurted into Kirby's microphone: "We will now have a short organ interlude...."

Jack French is the editor of Radio Recall, the journal of the Metro-Washington Old Time Radio Club. He is also the award-winning author of Private Eyelashes: Radio's Lady Detectives.

# Prizes to Be Awarded For Best Articles

We'd like to increase the number of great stories that 'The Old Radio Times', brings you, so we will be offering some interesting prizes for the best piece in each issue.

What did you like the best in this issue? Cast your vote by sending an e-mail to <u>oldradiotimes@yahoo.com</u>.

Here is a list of the prizes for articles in the October issue:

First prize - a collectors copy of 'The Journal of Popular Culture' Fall 1979. This was an allradio issue and featured some wonderful insights into old time radio. Second prize - an original autographed photo of Irene Dunne.

Third prize - two original DVDs of movies. Fourth prize - one original DVD movie.

Winners will be announced in the November issue. We have some fantastic prizes in store for the best articles/stories, etc in each issue, so why not try your hand at submitting something on old time radio, a nostalgic piece, a otr website or blog, or just a bio of yourself and your interests. Pictures would be nice so we can put faces to names!

Send your submissions to <u>oldradiotimes@yahoo.com</u>, and you might be the next winner.



### OTR's Sweet Revenge CJ Kell

#### www.mystery-otr.net

I wish to propose the following supposition. Old Time Radio has achieved a state of revenge. Read on and hopefully you will agree with my assumptions.

When I say revenge, that's not to be taken as evil or mean spirited. No, more to the point, what is commonly called old time radio – audio plays from radio's golden age – have come full circle, thanks to the internet and pod casting!

When I started Mystery Play Internet Radio back in early 2001, there just weren't many listening resources for OTR available, especially not on traditional radio. Thus, my selfish reason for creating Mystery Play Internet Radio.

A few years later, hundreds of old time radio stations/streams appeared on the internet, broadcasting twenty-four by seven, and serving up a wide variety of those wonderful radio shows from times past. Of course there have always been niche stations broadcasting long before 2001. But they were not widely distributed or known.

Then we have satellite radio, broadcasting an old time radio channel, reaching millions of listeners per week. As before, they've been around awhile, but it's only been the past few years that their programming has come to light. At least in my conversations with office colleagues when I mention old time radio, satellite radio is where they've heard OTR.

However, OTR still has not reached revenge status! If you do a search on the internet today, the number of old time radio stations are actually fewer than four years ago. I personally believe the internet royalties' rate fight, and constant grouping of internet radio broadcasters with music file sharing, and continuous relentless law suits by the RIAA have frightened off many OTR broadcasters or would-be broadcasters.

But wait – I stated that OTR has had its sweet revenge, right?

Let's talk about pod casting. At first appearance, it simply looks like OTR file downloading (which has proven to be safe from RIAA attacks, provided the OTR is from the public domain).

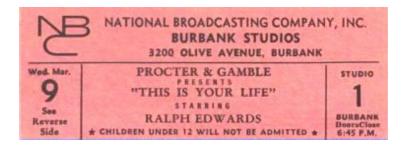
Yes, most pod casts are available for download from a web site or several. However, the real secret and success of pod casting is the RSS feed. Really Simple Syndication, I think that's what it stands for. Anyhow, basically each pod cast file is like a mini radio show. In the case of old time radio, maybe a brief introduction about the show or a recording of a live internet broadcast is encoded in the mp3 format and inserted into an RSS feed.

The technical why's and know-how for pod casting is for another article. Anyhow, listeners use either their computer or ipod or other portable mp3 player and subscribe to the RSS feed. I guess the best way to think of it, is a magazine subscription. You automatically receive your copy each month or week, or day. It's full of various articles, and items of interest. You may only read one or two or three articles, but the entire magazine comes to you. Well that's the concept of pod casting! You subscribe to an OTR RSS feed or several feeds. And each day or week, or month you receive several exciting old time radio pod casts.

Now back to my supposition. Combined with internet broadcasting old time radio, pod casts extends those wonderful old time radio shows to thousands and thousands of listeners on a daily basis. For example, the Mystery Play Internet Radio pod casts has reached more listeners on a daily basis than the live stream, at a fraction of the costs of streaming a live station. Yes, you still have bandwidth costs with pod casting, however national advertisers have taken notice of pod casts, and it's easier snagging a sponsor to help pay for the bandwidth costs. Last month during a three-hour period one of the MPIR pod casts feeds had over 6800 downloads!

Mystery Play Internet Radio is a big player in pod casting old time radio. However, there are hundreds of other players, and room for so many more. In fact there are days that I think I've created a Frankenstein monster. The more I feed it, the more it wants!

If you think about all the various web sites that sell old time radio cds or the even larger number of collectors that offer OTR free downloads, and internet broadcasting and now pod casting, then yes, Old Time Radio is having its sweet revenge, and all of the OTR pod casts are free of cost to subscribe.



# Television Tome: History of a Different Color A Book Review by Jim Cox

You've no doubt heard the expression turned into a song: "You can't judge a book by its cover." Now it can be carried a step further when applied to the title of a new release from McFarland & Company. Albert Abramson's "The History of Television, 1942 to 2000" isn't what you may think it is at first glance. The oversized 309-page softbound volume perhaps doesn't reflect the topical matter a lot of readers anticipate.

Rather than focusing upon the personalities and programs that made the medium ring with laughter, drama, adventure and myriad similar escape, it delves into the technological breakthroughs that allowed TV to produce those products for our amusement. So instead of Berle, Sullivan and Ricardo, you get GE, RCA and Sony and their phenomenal contributions to the medium.

The late author, for three decades a CBS cameraman, videotape editor and sound technician, produced an intensive introspection into television that pretty well covers the waterfront in developing technology in the final six decades of the 20th century. He leads his readers in a natural progression that helps them understand accomplishments such as moving from Kinescope film recording to videotape and pioneering developments in color, sound quality, solid-state cameras, hand-held remote devices, videotape recorders, camcorders and other riveting advancements. All impact what enters our living rooms on ever-enlarging screens with proliferating numbers of channels.

This comprehensive, well-documented, highlyillustrated compendium is the second of two parts by Abramson. The earlier work focuses on video's history between 1880 and 1941, a trailblazing volume issued in 1987. While the new tome was released originally in 2003, it's now available in paperback. "There are no other books in any language that are remotely comparable to either of these volumes," a publicist observed. "Together, they provide the definitive technical history of the medium."

The new release isn't completely devoid of personalities, of course. Although its focus on entertainers is reserved, within its pages readers are introduced to the sweeping achievements of pioneer experimenter Philo T. Farnsworth; David Sarnoff, powerful RCA executive dubbed "the father of TV"; and CBS visionary Frank Stanton, plus many not-as-well-recognized monikers.

Having been not only on the scene but an integral part

of the epoch about which he writes, Abramson is able to deliver the tale as he personally experienced it. As he reaches the conclusion of his journey from cathode ray tube to Federal Communications Commission oversight, he makes a few predictions about the future. Virtually all of his notions relate to the growing, absorbing place of the Internet and the powerful influence it will continue to radiate over much of what we do on planet Earth. Rather than live exclusively in the past, the author reveals some startling possibilities for us in the years ahead. Most of his conclusions, yet to be realized, seem plausible. Based on his thorough understanding of where we have been, it naturally appears that his assumptions about tomorrow have a fair chance of turning into reality.

The History of Television, 1942 to 2000, by Albert Abramson, with 364 photos, notes, bibliography and index, is available at \$75 from <u>www.mcfarlandpub.com</u> and 800-253-2187. For those whose interests run into communications development, this is probably going to be a major contributor to the expanding knowledge that currently exists.

> The History of Television 1942 to 2000



## The Infamous Electric Radio Mike Caper James J. Yellen

Harry Von Zell, Graham MacNamee, Harlow Wilcox. Do you remember these names? I do. But I had almost forgotten them until one day recently when they were brought back to my mind while browsing through a small used book and magazine store. As I was glancing over a stack of old movie fan magazines, I found something that brought back memories. It was a May 1944 copy of RADIO STARS magazine.

I picked up the ancient periodical and eagerly flipped through the pages until my eye was attracted to an advertisement on the inside back cover. "Glamour . . . Romance! BIG MONEY! Broadcasting offers you these and more." It was an advertisement for the WALTER WINCHELL SCHOOL OF BROADCASTING.

"Do YOU want to have YOUR voice brought into hundreds of thousands of homes all over the land? Out of obscure places are coming the future Don Wilsons, George Ansbros, Bill Sterns, and Floyd Gibbonses . . . WHY NOT BE AMONG THEM?"

No one can know better then I, that certain indescribable satisfaction that a person feels when he hears his own voice magically emitting from the speaker of the radio. That's right. I once shared the airwaves with those illustrious radio personalities.

I mulled over my checkered youth and fondly remembered that early summer afternoon when it had all started. It was an era of cautious optimism. World War II had been raging on for more than two years. People were growing tired of the fighting and were eager for it to end.

Just a few short weeks ago Eisenhower's armies had secretly crossed the English Channel and were now making a mad dash toward Paris. The war was practically won and it was swell to be an American. My father brought home a copy of the New York Daily News everyday, and everyday the headlines announced new Allied victories: U-BOATS SUNK BY CONVOY! YANK FLIERS DOWN 77 JAP PLANES IN BIGGEST PACIFIC AIR FIGHT! YANKS SMASH NAZI BOMBERS!

An end to the hostilities seemed to be at hand, and the men of power in the Washington added to the optimism by lifting the rationing restrictions on canned goods and meats. In barbershops and taverns across the land men formed betting pools to determine who could most closely guess the exact date of the final armistice Even my pious and non-gambling Uncle Ralph was consumed by the euphoric optimism and allowed my father to egg him into wagering that the whole thing would be over by Labor Day. The people wanted to believe that the war would be over in just a matter of weeks.

For me it was the beginning of the long hot summer between freshman and sophomore years in high school, and I was spending the afternoon with friends at the soda fountain of Seymour's Sweete Shoppe slurping a cherry coke and perusing the latest issue of Wonder Woman Comics, my favorite reading matter. One of the magazine's premiere features, besides the daring escapades of the curvaceous super hero, was the advertisement that regularly appeared on the middle page. Each month the same Chicago mail order house would take a full-page ad that described in detail a myriad of "Unusual Novelties and Fun Makers' which they offered for sale.

Each month I would drool over these ads and the goodies that they offered. "Midget Spy Camera . . . Less then half the size of regular cigarette package!" or a "Hypnotic Whirling Coin . . . Put others at your command!" Boy, what I could do to Audrey Marschalk with that! Sometimes they featured a book of "1000 Snappy Stories" or a fountain pen in the shape of a ladies leg, "Puts a kick in writing." Any normal fourteen-yearold boy would be proud to own any of these.

But this particular month their lead item was something special, a novelty that they had tempted me with many times before. This was not the first time that they were dangling this irresistible little item in front of me. I read the ad.

TALK, SING, PLAY, through your radio! Laugh, crack jokes from another room and your voice will be reproduced through the radio. Imitate Bob Hope or Bing Crosby. Excellent training in elocution or broadcast announcing . . . or for "Amateur Hour" practice! Table model ELECTRIC RADIO MIKE. \$1.50.

"Boy, I wish I had one of these." I sighed wistfully.

Boz, next to me at the soda fountain grunted, "Huh?" He was deep into his Betty Grable period and was busy ogling her photo in a HOLLYWOOD STARS magazine. There was just no getting through to him since he read somewhere that his beloved Betty slept "in the raw!"

"I said it would be real neat to have one of these."I repeated.

"One of what?" Duke asked, looking up from his chocolate soda.

"One of these here radio mikes." I answered sliding the magazine over the counter top to him. I watched his eyes widen as he read the ad.

"Yea! It would be keen. In the wintertime when it's snowing you could hook it up and announce that there'll be no school!" Duke considered his primary purpose on Earth to be to think of new ways of getting out of going to school.

The mention of no school had awakened Boz from his fantasies of Betty Grable and he snatched the comic book right out of Duke's grasp, "Let me see."

"Wow!" He exclaimed after his mind had grasped the significance of what we had been discussing. "We could even put on our own radio shows."

We all agreed that that was a truly awesome idea. "But where am I going to get a dollar and a half?" I grumbled.

"That's three months allowance for me" Noted Boz dejectedly.

That's when I was struck by a truly inspired thought. "What if we all chipped in? That's only fifty cents each. I've got sixty-five cents that I was saving for a new catcher's mitt, but this is better. What about you guys?"

"Yea. We could form a radio club." Boz interjected. "My stupid sister owes me seventy five cents that she borrowed to buy a new lipstick for the Junior Prom. I'll get it from her if I have to break her stupid neck."

The enthusiasm of the moment gripped us and we each went our separate ways to gather the loot.

Twenty minutes later we met as agreed, on the stoop of Kirk's Drugstore, to pool our resources. All tolled we had \$1.93, more then enough. We bought a money order from Doc Kirk, wrote out the order form, and walked the eight blocks to the post office to mail it. We didn't want to trust our precious letter to an ordinary street corner mailbox.

There is nothing more frustrating than the hours spent idly between the point in time when a great idea is first conceived and the time when it is finally brought to fruition. For us, those hours turned into days, and the days dragged into weeks as we anxiously waited for our Electric Radio Mike to arrive. Each morning I eagerly waited for our mailman, and I was disappointed daily for more than a month.

We waited and waited while we indolently frittered away the summer by playing Monopoly on Chuck's front porch, or bowling at Budnicki's Bowling Alley on Van Houten Avenue, or by just hanging out on the street corner talking about girls. Once a week we took a bus to downtown Passaic where we saw all the feel-good war movies and cheered our heroes of the silver screen like Humphrey Bogart in *Action in the North Atlantic* and Tyrone Power in *Crash Dive* and Robert Taylor in *Bataan*.

Finally, almost six weeks later, with the long promising summer already on the wane, a pregnant brown envelope

with that mystical Chicago return address arrived. I excitedly carried the small bundle into the house and ripped and tore at the wrappings. Finally it was revealed in all its glory. It was beautiful! An orb of shiny black enamel attached to the ends of two eight-foot rubber coated copper wires, and a small set of instructions on tissue thin paper. I fondled it affectionately, running my fingertips over its cool, smooth surface. My scalp tingled with excitement.

I catapulted myself out of the house to tell my partners. They were ecstatic, and none of us could wait to hook the thing up and try it out. We decided to go to Boz's house since in both my home and Duke's our mothers would have their ears glued to the radio in order to hear the latest episode of their favorite afternoon soap opera, Mary Noble: Backstage Wife. At Boz's house we would have the whole place to ourselves. His mother worked during the day at the nearby packaging plant putting lids on pill bottles for our boys overseas, his older brother was working as a pinsetter at Budnicki' Bowling Alley, and his father worked a double shift at the propeller plant. Normally Mr. Boswell would have been home in the afternoon sleeping and resting so he could go back to work, but for the past week he had been spending most of his off-hours down at Teddy' Tavern with my father and the rest of their car pool celebrating President Roosevelt's lift of the whiskey distilling ban.

The Boswell family' Philco console radio stood in the corner of their parlor, and following the instructions that came with our wonderful electric radio mike, we were able to hook it up. The gadget worked perfectly and the fact that the wires were long enough to allow the performer to hide in the next room added to the illusion that the voice was actually emanating from the radio. After a few minutes of verbal mugging during which we all whistled, sang, cracked jokes, and shouted into the thing, Boz had an idea.

"Let's take turns. Each guy gets five minutes to put on his own show imitating whoever he want to and the other guys listen."

It was a truly brilliant idea, and for thinking of it we let Boz be first. He took the mike and disappeared into the next room. What Duke and I heard came as no surprise.

"Well it isn't Ma Perkins kiddies!"

Boz's admiration for Fred Allen was widely known in our neighborhood. Many times when you called to him, "Hey Boz," you heard back a response in a southern drawl. "Somebody, ah say . . . somebody knock?" Or with a heavy Jewish accent, "You were expecting maybe Nat King Cohen?"

Duke and I listened with amusement as Boz ran

through his repertoire of Titus Moody, Falstaff Openshaw, and Portland Hoffa, all members of that elite group known as Allen's Alley. We had heard them all a thousand times before, but hearing them come over the radio made them funnier than ever.

Duke was next and he was as fanatical a Jack Benny fan as Boz was a Fred Allen fan. This caused many strained moments in our little group. It was bad enough that one of them rooted for the Brooklyn Dodgers and the other for the New York Giants, but to have them also on opposing sides when it came to radio comedians made it at times almost unbearable for a third person to be with them. The feud between Duke and Boz over Allen and Benny rose to such a frenzy sometimes that it made the actual Allen-Benny feud insignificant in comparison.

We listened with delight as Duke did his usual, "Rochester! Now cut that out!"

It soon became my turn at the mike, and I took satisfaction in knowing that my imitation was on a higher plateau culturally. There were many people on the radio whom I enjoyed listening to, but only one whom I had any desire to emulate. My radio idol was Gabriel Heatter, the distinguished newscaster.

I took the microphone and with my two-man audience in the living room I went into a fictitious newscast using my best "Voice of Doom."

"Ahhhhh, there's good new tonight! BULLETIN! It has just been announced by President Roosevelt that the Axis has been brought to its knees. Today in Berlin and Tokyo, Adolph Hitler and Emperor Hirohito surrendered! Victory is ours! THE WAR IS OVER!"

I had barely completed my imaginary broadcast when a tremendous ruckus rose in Boz's kitchen.

"What's that?" I asked.

Boz looked puzzled. "I don't know."

We went to the kitchen and found Mr. Boswell hunched over with his head buried deep in the compartment under the kitchen sink. He was frantically rummaging through the pile of war scraps that Boz's mother, a true patriot, had stored there. Flattened tin cans potential tank armor; old nylon stockings - future parachutes; empty toothpaste tubes - unshaped bullets; and cans of kitchen fat, glycerin for black powder, all came flying out and crashing to the floor.

Finally he emerged holding what he had apparently been searching for. It was a long wooden spoon and a large oval-shaped galvanized laundry tub. Smiling with satisfaction he spun on his heel and bolted out the door. The faint odor of stale beer lingered behind him. Bounding down the steps, Mr. Boswell bounced from rail to rail in excitement. At the bottom he lost his balance, caromed off the hall wall and tumbled out of the front door onto the stoop. Unhurt, he quickly recovered his strange paraphernalia and ran into the middle of Penobscot Street. As he rhythmically pounded the tub with the business end of the spoon, like a bass drummer in a marching band, he shouted happily, "It's over! It's over! The Japs and Nazis surrendered! The war's over! THE WAR'S OVER!"

For one long, long minute Duke, Boz and I stared at each other in disbelief. We realized that he had heard . . . and worse, he believed! A choking lump swelled up in my throat and slid down to my stomach where it festered.

"Lets' get out of here before he finds out!" Duke whispered in a quivering voice.

As we hastily unhooked the evil mike from the radio, we could hear the dull BONG-BONG of Mr. Boswell's galvanized drum. He was still shouting, "It's over! The war's over! YIPPEE!"

Then a second voice joined in. "YAHOOOOOO . . . YAHOOOOOO!" Then a third. Then an auto horn began to blare joyfully.

"Holy cow, it's spreading." I gasped swallowing hard. My knees were shaking and threatened to collapse. For the first time in my life my mouth went dry and I tasted fear.

We dashed down the backstairs, over the rear fence and through several backyards, leaving in our wake a series of yapping mongrels and trampled Victory gardens. We didn't stop until we had put several city blocks between us and Penobscot Street.

Finally we collapsed onto the stoop in front of Seymour's store. We were exhausted and sat silently. Coming from the direction of Boz's house we could now hear the sound of firecrackers exploding, and occasionally a Roman candle would streak over the rooftops and explode.

Boz looked at me. His face was as pale as Moby Dick's underbelly. "He thought that you were really Gabriel Heatter on the radio."

"Y-yea." I stammered. My stomach rumbled as a maelstrom of nausea eddied and swirled deep in my gut.

"Who's going to tell him?" Duke asked.

"He'll find out for himself soon enough." I gasped. The whole world was just a blur to me, like I was viewing it through the bottom of a used Coca Cola bottle.

"How can I go home?" Boz repeated over and over, his head in his hands.

No one had an answer.

"Boy, Herb," Duke said, "You'd make one heck of a radio announcer."

### Mama Bloom's Brood Released Jim Beshires

The Old Time Radio Researchers is happy to announce that *Mama Bloom's Brood* has now been declared an archival certified series. The group worked for nearly a year finding, encoding, and preparing what I think is one of the better situation comedy programs from radio's early years. Each episode is well made and funny.

There has been some discussion about the number of episodes in this series. We show 76 as the total number, with all available. Jerry Haendiges lists 78 and considers 2 missing. He feels that two shows should come between episode #50 "Back to Normal," and #51 "One Hundred Suits of Armour." Having encoded all the episodes, I think that perhaps one may be missing, but the story seems to flow well anyway. If you did not know it, you could not tell how many missing episodes there are.

This early series (circa 1934) combines elements of the soap opera with those of the situation comedy. The episodes are fifteen minutes long and serialized as well as having a domestic focus, tending to place the show in the soap opera genre. But the treatment of plot and character is light-hearted and humorous, similar to what is found in the myriad of sitcoms that sprang up during radio's golden age.

Papa Bloom (Jake) has reached retirement age, and with some astute help from Mama (Becky) sells his kneepants factory at a nice profit. Together with their "brood"-- daughters Yetta and Sarah and sons-in-law Harold and Sidney-- they embark on an automobile trip to Hollywood to enjoy their first vacation in twenty-five years. The party has various adventures along the way. They stop at a resort hotel in Michigan, where Jake stuns even himself by proving to be a fantastically lucky bridge player. In the Arizona desert they are terrified by "Indians" (actually movie actors), but escape with scalps intact and soon reach their destination. There Jake, who Becky says is never happy unless he is worrying about something, invests in the motion picture business even though he knows nothing about it.

Mama Becky Bloom is a delightful character, much like Molly in *The Goldbergs*, with which this series has been compared. She speaks with a heavy Yiddish accent and has trouble with both American English and history. In the desert, she tells Jake that they probably won't see any Indians because she's pretty sure that General Custer killed all of them! She also peppers her speech with fractured platitudes like "you can't make a zebra change his spots" and "you shouldn't go to the well with the same bucket once too many times."

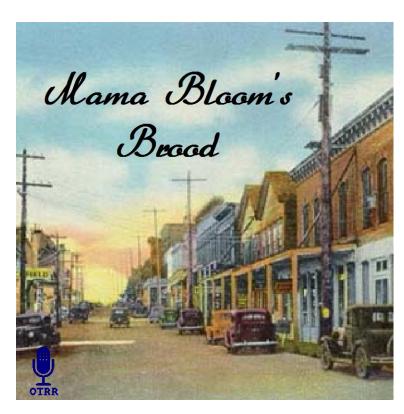
The program was syndicated about 1934 by Broadcasters Program Syndicate/Bruce Eells and Associates.

Those working on the series included -

Series Coordinator - Jim Beshires Quality Listener(s) - Jim Beshires, Clorinda Thompson Series Synopsis - Larry Maupin Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - Sue Sieger, Fred Bertelsen Artwork - Brian Allen

Members and friends of the group provided funds to purchase missing episodes. As always, any release by the OTRR is meant for free distribution to members of the old time radio community.

Watch the postings in your favorite Yahoo OTR group for announcements of distribution dates.



# The Old Time Radio Researchers Release *On Stage* As A Certified Series

*On Stage* appeared on CBS from 1 January 1953 until 30 September 1954, a total of 78 episodes. Only 41 of the 78 shows are in circulation today. The show was produced and directed by Elliot Lewis and starred the husband and wife team of Elliot and Cathy Lewis.

The idea for the show came about when someone suggested they work together in the 40's. CBS gave them the go ahead for the show in 1952 and they formed the production company Haven Radio Productions. Each show was written with a strong male and female part. Both were at the pinnacle of their careers. At the time Elliot was playing as Frankie Remley on the *Phil Harris and Alice Faye Show*, producing, directing and starring in *Suspense*, and *Broadway is My Beat*. Cathy Lewis was starring in *My Friend Irma* on both radio and television. However, the Golden Age of Radio was coming to an end. The big money was shifting over to television. This would be one of last good series on radio.

The Old Time Radio Researchers Group would like to thank the following people who helped on this series -Series Coordinator - Jim Beshires Quality Listener - Peter Risby Series Synopsis - Terry Caswell Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - Bob Hicks, Sue Debayg, Clyde J Kell, Fred Bertlesen Pictures, other extras - Terry Caswell Artwork - Brian Allen Stars Bios - Krys Building

This series will be released from the OTRR Distributing Center shortly. Look for the announcement. Additionally other old time radio groups will be circulating it among their members.

# **Treasury Report**

The Old-Time Radio Researchers currently has \$1108.13 in the treasury.

Disbursed during the month of September was \$323.00 to Audio Classics for a purchase and \$100.00 to Jim Beshires for reimbursements for items purchased on behalf of the group.

Many thanks to everyone who has agreed to make made a monthly contribution in 2007. They include Tony Adams, Del Ahlstedt, Dale Beckman, Jim Beshires, Robert Booze, Krys Building, Scott Carpenter, Pete Cavallo, Greg Coakley, John A Davies, Dee DeTevis, Lisa Fittinghoff, Allan Foster, Mike Galbreath, Gary Mollica, Allan George, David Gibbs, Archie Hunter, Roger Hohenbrink, Tony Jaworowski, Dave Johnson, Jim Jones, Ben Kibler, Robert Lenk, John Liska, Tom Mandeville, Henry Morse, Jess Oliver, David Oxford, Robert Philips, Leonard Price, Ron Schalow, David Shipman, Gary Stanley, Gregg Taylor, Daryl Taylor, Clorinda Thompson, Lee Tefertiller, Alan Turner, Joe Webb, Toby Levy and Gordon Whitman. If anyone has been left off please let us know.

One time contributors include Mike Galbreath, Bill Barille, Michael Moles, John Affayroux, Pat Patterson, William Hartig, Gerald Anderson, Archie Hunter, Keith Allan, Louis Shepherd, and John Liska.

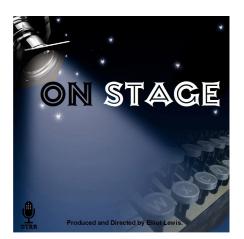
If you are interested in becoming a monthly supporter of the OTRR, please contact the treasurer, Tony Jaworowski at tonysenior@yahoo.com. Support is \$5.00 per month. Monthly supporters receive advance releases of all purchases, either encoded at 128, 64, or WAV.

If you would like to assist in bringing new series and better encodes to the otr community, or otherwise support the work of the Old-Time Radio Researchers, please mail any amount to:

> Tony Jaworowski 15520 Fairlane Drive Livonia, MI 48154

> or send via Paypal to

tonysenior@yahoo.com





For immediate release

August 3, 2007

### "And Now, Let's See What's Going on Down in Pine Ridge."

Lexington, KY—As Americans increasingly fell victim to the hardships wrought by the Great Depression, they looked for outlets capable of both entertaining them and distracting them from their ills. A proliferation of radio programs and musical numbers featuring farmers and small-town residents emerged to fill this need, offering laughter and characters sympathetic to Depression-era troubles. Though most of these programs have been forgotten, a few have persevered in the hearts of contemporary audiences nostalgic for a simpler era.

With its lovable and laughable title characters and famous opening phrase "And now, let's see what's going on down in Pine Ridge," *Lum and Abner* garnered attention from audiences across the country from its first broadcast on April 26, 1931. In *Lum and Abner: Rural America and the Golden Age of Radio*, author Randal L. Hall pays tribute to this brainchild of Chester "Chet" Lauck and Findley Norris "Tuffy" Goff, two businessmen from tiny Mena, Arkansas. Set in the fictional hamlet of Pine Ridge, Arkansas, the program featured the comedic adventures—and, more often than not, misadventures—of Lum Edwards and Abner Peabody, proprietors of the Jot 'Em Down Store. The program attracted a diverse audience, including northerners interested in the country way of life and southerners used to being the butt of the humor of the era.

Created by southerners and set in the South, Lauck and Goff's *Lum and Abner* humorously challenged the hillbilly stereotypes promoted by other radio programs of the period and addressed issues pertinent to rural people. The program became a vehicle for addressing the ills wrought by the Great Depression and audiences across America identified with the Pine Ridge community as they fought for political representation, struggled to earn enough money to participate in consumer culture, and strived to maintain community ties in the face of great social change.

The twenty-nine previously unreleased scripts included in the collection are an invaluable contribution to the *Lum and Abner* canon, particularly since audio recordings of these early broadcasts have not survived. Hall's lengthy introduction is essential reading material for both longtime fans and those embarking on their first foray with Lum and Abner, meticulously detailing the conception and rise of one of the period's most loved and remembered radio programs. *Lum and Abner: Rural America and the Golden Age of Radio* rediscovers a radio gem traditionally overshadowed by more popular and controversial programs and reinstates its place both in American society and in the contemporary American consciousness.

Randal L. Hall, managing editor of the Journal of Southern History at Rice University, is the author of William Louis Poteat: A Leader of the Progressive-Era South.

### LUM AND ABNER RURAL AMERICA AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO Randal L. Hall

Publication Date: September 7, 2007 • \$40.00 cloth • ISBN: 978-0-8131-2469-8

For additional information, please contact: Mack McCormick, Publicity Manager, 859/257-5200

## Wistful Vistas Ryan Ellett

Thanks to all who responded to Jim's challenge last month to submit fresh material for our virtual pages. We received several great pieces and have a nice pool of material to get us into the new year. However, being one of the very few OTR-themed publications with a monthly schedule requires a steady flow of new writing.

Jack's second piece in as many months is a look at an always-entertaining field of OTR study; the blooper. I think Jack is one of the more underheralded writes of OTR history. If you've spent much time browsing our collection of scanned historical OTR fanzines, you'll find his work peppering their pages since at least the early 80s.

Clyde Kell's back this month with another relection on Internet-based distribution of old time radio programs. He's quietly had a lot of success with his efforts and has probably introduced more folks to this "new" entertainment medium than most of us.

Jim Cox sneaks in this month, this time as the reviewer rather than the reviewee. As usual, he brings an interesting book to our sights that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Thanks for your humor as we get settled into our

smaller, more intimate digs. We had some positive comments on last month's lower page-count and I was rewarded with a lowered stress level so I expect we'll keep this formate for the foreseeable future.

Until next month, let the old times roll.

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The Old Radio Times editorial staff celebrates another successful issue by the office pool.

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Here's To Veterans xx-xx-xx First Song - Lost Faces.mp3 Here's To Veterans xx-xx-First Song - Melody in Hobby Lobby 35-xx-xx.mp3 Hour of Musical Fun 39-06-04 First Show of Series.mp3 Human Side of the Record 48-06-08 Saluting Billy Murray.mp3 I Want To Come Back 41-xx-xx Finding Jobs For Convicts.mp3 Irene Castle 37-07-01 (4).mp3 Information Please 38-07-15.mp3 Information Please 39-12-12.mp3 Information Please 39-12-19.mp3 Information Please 40-11-15.mp3 Information Please 48-01-30.mp3 Let Yourself Go 45-06-06 Guest - Al Jolson.mp3 Listen to Grandma 4x-xx-xx.mp3 Lives Of Great Men 38-11-05 Theodoric the Great.mp3 Lives Of Great Men 38-11-12 St Francis of Assissi.mp3 Lives Of Great Men 38-11-19 Dante.mp3 It's My Lazy Day.mp3 Lone Star Jamboree 4x-xx-xx From North Side Coliseum.mp3 Louella Parsons 4x-xx-xx Guest - Spencer Tracy.mp3 Louella Parsons 48-12-05 Guest - Ethel Barrymore.mp3 Louella Parsons 49-12-25 Guest - The Alan Ladd Louella Parsons 50-07-09 Guest - Shelly Winters.mp3 Luncheon at Sardis 47-05-17 Guest - Susan Shayne.mp3 Magic Carpet 39-09-21 Guest - Mary Turner.mp3 Marriage Lines 65-05-21 The Threshold.mp3 Marriage Lines xx-xx-xx Georges Job Offer.mp3 Maggie's Private Wire 45-08-10 Guest - Enrico Carrusso Jr.mp3 Magic Key, The 36-07-28 Guest - Fibber McGee and Molly.mp3 Marine Story xx-xx-xx (1) Guest - Eddie Albert.mp3 Marine Story xx-xx-xx (2) Guest - Robert Young.mp3 Martha Meade Society Program 33-10-12 Women in India.mp3 Martha Meade Society Program 33-10-19 Halloween Parties.mp3 Mary Margaret McBride 45-01-12 Guest - Carol Landis ( First half Only).mp3 Medicine USA 52-02-29.mp3 Melody Puzzles 38-02-21 Musical Quiz Show.mp3 Missus Goes A Shopping 42-01-22.mp3 Mitch Miller Show 61-07-15 Guest - Jonathan Winters.mp3 Mitch Miller Show 61-07-29 Last Show of Series.mp3 Molly & the Captain 50-06-27.mp3 Molly and The Captain 49-11-02 First Show.mp3

Lone Ranger 39-07-05 (1006) The Stage Line Challenge -Mrs Tucker's Smile Program 47-xx-xx (2380) First -Part 3.mp3 Linda.mp3 Lone Ranger 39-07-07 (1005) The Stage Line Challenge -Music From The Chalet 4x-xx-xx First Song -Part 4.mp3 Cherokee.mp3 Music From The Chalet 4x-xx-xx First Song - Johnny Get Lone Ranger 39-07-10 (1007) The Stage Line Challenge -Part 5.mp3 Your Girl.mp3 Lone Ranger 39-07-12 The Stage Line Challenge - Part NBC Short Story 51-03-07 (03) Crazy Sunday.mp3 6.mp3 NBC Short Story 51-03-28 (05) Shadow of Evil.mp3 NBC Short Story 51-04-18 (07) Beautiful Summer in Lone Ranger 39-07-14 The Stage Line Challenge - Part Newport.mp3 7.mp3 Lone Ranger 39-07-21 (1012) The Masked Outlaw.mp3 NBC Short Story 51-04-25 (08) I Want to Know Why -Lone Ranger 39-07-24 (1013) Twenty Five Years of I'm a Fool.mp3 Hate.mp3 NBC Short Story 52-01-04 (26) The Rocket.mp3 Lone Ranger 39-07-26 (1014) Ben Eates' NBC Short Story 52-02-01 (30) The Harness.mp3 Redemption.mp3 NBC University Theater 49-08-20 (54) The Lone Ranger 39-07-28 (1015) Trap for three Crusaders.mp3 Gamblers.mp3 NBC University Theatre 480730 001 Main Street.mp3 Lone Ranger 39-07-31 (1018) Smilin' Kid.mp3 Navy Star Time 50-xx-xx (23) First Song - Gypsy in my Lone Ranger 39-08-02 (1017) Tobin Brothers.mp3 Soul.mp3 Let's Talk About You 54-08-10 Guest - Gen Jimmy Nellie Revel Show 35-12-19.mp3 Doolittle.mp3 Sundial 39-09-21 Authur Godfrey.mp3 Lightcrust Doughboys xx-xx-xx\_xxxx (1265) First Song -Sundial 39-09-21.mp3 Newsreel Digest 50-02-06.mp3 The Name Of The Day xx-xx-xx Baldwin.mp3 Our Freedoms Blessings 52-xx-xx First Show.mp3 Theater Guild On The Air 46-11-17 (50) The man who Our House 45-10-30.mp3 came to Dinner.mp3 Our House 45-11-01.mp3 Theatre Royale 54-01-30 (17) Dr Jekyl And Mr Hyde.mp3 Our House 46-xx-xx Guest - Jimmy Durante, Gary Tillanook Kitchen 48-05-29.mp3 Moore.mp3 Tonight In Hollywood xx-xx-xx Guest - Lucille Ball.mp3 Owl Rexal Show 50-02-14.mp3 Tony Wons Scrapbook 41-02-11.mp3 People Are Funny 46-01-11.mp3 Tony Wons Scrapbook 41-02-13.mp3 People Are Funny xx-xx-mp3 Take It Or Leave It 4x-xx-xx.mp3 People are Funny 50-09-19 Glen Calhoun.mp3 Take it from There 46-09-05 First Contestant - Mrs. People You Know 46-01-13 Bakery With No Ovens.mp3 Jacobsen & Mrs. Williams.mp3 Pet Milk Cookbook xx-xx-xx.mp3 Talk Back 50-10-16 Goodnight Irene.mp3 Talk Back 50-12-21 Lending Money.mp3 Queen for a Day 45-08-10 Guest - Dorothy Graw.mp3 Real Story 47-08-14 Doorman.mp3 Talk Back 51-01-22 Army Chow.mp3 Red Cross Appeal 54-xx-xx Bob Hope.mp3 Ted Lewis Voice of the Army 50-xx-xx.mp3 Tell Your Neighbor 49-08-24.mp3 RFD America 48-xx-xx Guest - Elizabeth Steavamer.mp3 Ransom Sherman 50-08-10.mp3 Tell Your Neighbor 49-10-20.mp3 Texas Hall of Fame 40-09-22 First Song - Parade of the Report to the Nation 48-11-03.mp3 Request Performance 46-03-10 (23) Guest - Douglas Wooden Solders.mp3 The Town Crier 33-10-06 A Look Back to the Year Fairbanks.mp3 Rio Grande Valley Tours 47-xx-xx Host - Dr. H.C. 1913.mp3 Allison.mp3 Then and Now 36-09-17 First Program in Series.mp3 Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (03).mp3 To Stars and Stripes xx-xx-xx The Story of George Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (07).mp3 Washington.mp3 Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (08).mp3 Treasury Hour 41-10-22 Guest - Robert Montgomery ( Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (09).mp3 West Coast vers).mp3 Troman Harper 42-12-20 Are Troops Eating Alfalfa Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (10).mp3 Instead Of Vegetables.mp3 Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (11).mp3 Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (12).mp3 Virginia Marvin 47-11-13 Audition.mp3

Royal Hawaiian Hotel 34-xx-xx (13).mp3 Sagebrush Roundup 39-xx-xx First Song - (lo vol).mp3 Sagebrush Roundup 39-xx-xx First Song - A Hoedown.mp3 Sagebrush Roundup 39-xx-xx First Song -Arraowana.mp3 Sagebrush Roundup 39-xx-xx First Song - Pony Boy(op cut).mp3 Saint, The 51-02-04 (152) The Carnival Murder.mp3 San Francisco Unlimited 47-06-27 First Show.mp3 Sing It Again 49-03-0.mp3 Some Place To Go 44-10-20.mp3 Suspense 44-03-09 (82) The Defense Rests.mp3 Suspense 44-05-04 (90) The Dark Tower.mp3 Salute to Britain 39-xx-xx (01) Guest - Eddie Cantor.mp3 Salute to Britain 39-xx-xx (02) Guest - Jean Hersholt.mp3 Show World 40-01-08.mp3 Smokey the Bear 59-xx-xx Guest - Danny Thomas.mp3 Smokey the Bear 59-xx-xx Guest - Dick Powell.mp3 Smokey the Bear 59-xx-xx Guest - Lawrence Welk.mp3 Special 48-xx-xx Fort Worth Stock Show.mp3 Steve Allen Show 48-10-26.mp3 What's the Score 39-xx-xx (1).mp3 What's the Score 39-xx-xx (2).mp3 What's the Score 39-xx-xx (3).mp3 Win Place or Show 46-10-27 First Guest - Mrs. Agnes Hamilton.mp3 You Can Be A Star 49-01-24.mp3 You Can Be An Actor 46-02-06.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - By the light of the Silvery Moon.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Come Ona My House.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Have You Heard.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Jimmy Cracked Corn.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Let me hear that Music.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Lonesome and Blue.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Marriage Type Love.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - September in the Rain.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - Spring will be a little late this Year.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - The Ghunziet Polka.mp3 Your Rhythm Revue 53-xx-xx First Song - The Organ Grinders Swing.mp3

Walter Winchell 48-12-26.mp3 We Came This Way 44-12-15 (11) Valley Forge.mp3 We Came This Way 44-12-22 (12) Lafayette - Lamp Lighter of Liberty.mp3 We Came This Way 44-12-29 (13) The French Revolution.mp3 We Came This Way 45-02-02 (18) The Life of Joseph Mazzini.mp3 We Came This Way 45-02-09 (19) The Common Man Becomes a Citizen.mp3 We Came This Way 45-08-02 (5) Herzen - Fight Against Tvrannv.mp3 We Came This Way 45-08-09 (6) Garibaldi - Hero of two Worlds.mp3 Which is Which 46-01-31.mp3 Woman's Home Companion 39-09-21.mp3 Walter Winchel 41-05-18 Italy's Terms for Surrender.mp3 Welcome Travelers 50-08-29.mp3 What's Doing Ladies 47-10-30 What's the definition of a good housewife.mp3

