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When Radio Stations Were Portable

Donna Halper

It was early 1923, and hundreds of entrepreneurs who had been bitten by the radio bug were setting up their own radio stations. Many of these pioneers had begun in ham radio, and were accustomed to building and creating the equipment they used. Unlike the stations owned by major corporations such as newspapers or department stores, these one or two person stations were practical rather than fancy – studios were on roof-tops, in offices, even in some living rooms (one owner set his up in the family bedroom, but forgot to inform his wife, who was quite surprised when she got home and found a radio program being broadcast).

Hours of these fledgeling stations were sporadic – few of the entrepreneurs could afford to broadcast for more than a couple of days a week. But despite frequent technical problems that took stations off the air without warning or made them difficult to receive, the public was willing to be patient – radio was new and exciting, and you never knew what you would hear on any given night.
Some cities did not even have a one-person station; for those places that still lacked a local broadcasting facility, one solution was a type of radio station called a "portable."

This was a radio station installed in a vehicle – often a truck; the owner would drive it to a town that had no radio station, first making arrangements with local merchants and city governments to appear at an event (a county fair, for example). To us in 2008, this doesn't sound very compelling, but in 1923 and 1924, the arrival of a portable radio station generated enormous publicity. The owner demonstrated the wonders of radio to people who had never seen a live broadcast, and everyone had a great time; some members of the audience even got on the air as performers, and local merchants sold lots of radio receivers.

In the late summer of 1923, the Edison Electric Illuminating Company in Boston decided to take advantage of the growing interest in radio and combine it with the increasing number of labour-saving devices and home appliances that used electricity. There were numerous electric shows, and the management at Edison felt they could get some good publicity by having a radio station installed at these shows. According to the company's monthly news magazine, Edison Life, a number of engineers at the main office were ham radio fans, and several had even volunteered at WGI (greater Boston's first professional station) in 1921 and 1922.

And so it was in September of 1923 that WTAT was built – a fully operational 10 watt station, mounted in a small truck; it was assigned 244 meters (1229 kc), and immediately began appearing at electrical and broadcasting exhibitions in and around eastern Massachusetts. The mission of WTAT was described in the September 1923 edition of Edison Life to give entertainment, music, and short talks by prominent people on electrical subjects.

Thus, for WTAT's first presentation at the Dedham (MA) Electrical Show, Edison employees sang and performed, news reports were read, and then Edison's Director of Advertising gave a talk about "Using Electricity in the Home."

The Boston newspapers found all of this quite interesting, and they were especially amused by the "Boston accent" of WTAT's chief announcer, Jack Caddigan (a long-time Edison employee with no radio background who was pressed into service to run WTAT). Caddigan became a local favourite, in fact, and when WTAT ultimately closed down, he still made occasional appearances on Edison's other station, WEEI. Meanwhile, the Edison engineers kept improving WTAT's equipment; power was boosted to 100 watts, and by 1926, the call letters were changed to a much more appropriate WATT. This roving ambassador continued to make the rounds at every show where Edison products might be sold; even though after September of 1924, Edison owned a permanent Boston radio station (WEEI), the company did not give up the license of WATT until the FRC cancelled all the portables in 1928.

Around the same time as WTAT emerged, two boyhood friends and school-mates from Providence RI, Harold Dewing and Charles Messter, were planning their own future in broadcasting. Dewing was into ham radio (1ATY) but while Messter enjoyed the amateur game, he decided to try his hand at putting a portable on the air. Given that he sold radio equipment for a living, this made perfect sense; many of the early stations were operated in stores where electronics or radio receivers were sold. What better way to demonstrate your product than by doing an actual broadcast for potential customers? This had generated lots of favourable publicity for Edison Electric Illuminating in Boston, and although Charles Messter didn't have the money that the electric company had, he was still able to build a serviceable little station.

WCBR went on the air with 5 watts at 246 meters (1220 kc), in March of 1924, but not long afterward, it was able to go to 50 watts. In an early 1925 article about him and his station, a reporter for the Providence Journal described WCBR this way "Mr. Messter's broadcasting equipment consists of a 50-watt standard Western Electric transmitter using 600 volts on the plate. He carries storage batteries and a charger so that he will not be caught without power. His three-wire outside antenna is 200 feet long and is usually erected on top of the building in which the outfit is being used . . . The entire outfit can be easily set up and taken down, and this makes practicable its shipment from place to place on short notice." (Providence Journal, 4 January 1925, p. E7)

WCBR spent much of its first year travelling all over New England. Messter was invited to appear in communities as far north as Portland, Maine, but most of his 1924 stops were in towns throughout Eastern Massachusetts. Since he had always loved the theatre, he especially liked to hook up his portable at vaudeville and movie houses. The delighted attendees not only got to see a movie and watch a stage show, but they also saw a radio broadcast. Messter was even able to persuade "big city" personalities to come out and appear at some of the theatres where he was broadcasting – in those early days, nearly everyone in radio was eager for more publicity.

When WCBR came to Lynn, MA (a city to the north of Boston), various radio singers from the Boston stations and several Boston announcers (including the popular "Big Brother" Bob Emery) appeared, as did the mayor of Lynn and assorted politicians. After driving his portable all over Massachusetts, Messter took his station back to Rhode Island, where he set it up at fairs, theatres, and amusement parks. When it broadcast from Rocky Point Amusement Park during the summer of 1926, WCBR had 100 watts and could be found at 210 meters (1430 kc). At some point later in 1926, Charles Messter returned to selling radio equipment (he also managed several small theatres); WCBR's appearances decreased as the novelty of portables wore off.

Meanwhile, Harold Dewing finally decided to try his hand at operating a portable, and after some delay, he put a station on the air with the call letters WCBS (don't forget, this is 1925-26, when there is no such thing yet as a radio network; those call letters were assigned to his portable by the Department of Commerce, and they were not the initials of anything). As his friend Charles Messter had done, Dewing travelled around Rhode Island, working at radio shows and local events. While he had a good time, WCBS unfortunately met with minimal success. By 1926, New England had lots of local radio stations and portables were not in as much demand; some of the permanent stations were even beginning to complain to the DOC that the portables caused interference.

Rather than give up on running his station, however, Dewing decided to take it on the road to an area where portables could still command attention, far away from highly promoted stations like the Edison portable with its state of the art equipment that made his little portable look amateurish. He headed for the Midwest, where portables were still alive and well; long after most parts of the country had ceased to support them, Chicago still had as many as six portables, and this was true as late as the spring of 1927. What was also true in 1927 was that the government, perhaps in response to the complaints that portables were interfering with the signals of the permanent stations, had assigned all the portables to one end of the dial – 205.4 meters (1460 kc) to 201.6 meters

(1490 kc) was now the home of what few portables still operated.

Packing his station and everything else related to it into his car, Dewing first stopped in Danville, Illinois, where his station attracted the kind of attention that his friend Charles Messter's once did. Dewing liked how friendly the people were in Danville, but soon, he was driving (now in a truck) to Springfield, where a big radio show was taking place – just the thing for a portable. He set up shop at the armory, and began broadcasting; his appearance went over quite well, and after appearing in several other Illinois cities (including Chicago, where he provided some publicity for some of the local politicians during an election), he decided to return to Springfield and set his station up there. It was a wise move – by 1927, the DOC gave way to the Federal Radio Commission (FRC), and in 1928, the commission issued General Order 30, abolishing all the portables.

Of course, those that wished to could apply for a license in a fixed location. Harold Dewing was by now perfectly happy in Springfield, and WCBS was no longer in the back of his truck – it was operating from studios in the St. Nicholas Hotel. Best of all, it was even beginning to make some money. His friend Charles Messter decided to make the trip to the midwest too, and by the early 1930s, he and Dewing were co-owners of WCBS. WCBS was a rare example of a station that made the transition from portable to permanent station. (For those who are curious about the call letters, in late August of 1946, permission was granted to change them to WCVS, so that the Columbia Broadcasting System could take the WCBS calls for their New York station.)

Most of the portables, such as WATT simply shut down in 1928 – since Edison was already operating WEEI, there was no need to maintain a portable anymore. Technology had improved, such that WEEI could, and did, do plenty of remote broadcasts. The gimmick of bringing a station into a town that didn't have access to radio was no longer very noteworthy. And while some of the rulings of the new FRC caused great debate, the ruling to eliminate portables caused little if any discussion or protest.

By the late 1920s, there were so many changes to the state of the industry that portables were rendered obsolete. In 1928, there were radios that didn't need storage batteries, two radio networks with stars who could be heard nationally, and that new innovation – talking pictures soon, you would be able to see and hear your favourite singers performing their hits on the movie screen. Putting a radio station into a truck seemed like a quaint idea, a relic from the days of crystal sets and headphones. Today, few people other than broadcast historians are even aware that portables existed. But in radio's formative years, these stations performed a valuable service. (They also did some amazing things – one west coast portable, KHAC, operated from an airplane; WTAT/WATT went out to sea on several occasions and broadcast from on board a ship.)

For a few years in the early to mid-1920s, portables were an exciting innovation that people flocked to see, part of an era when people had not yet lost their sense of wonder, when it seemed that everyone had caught radio fever, and when listeners were eager to find out what radio would do next.

My thanks to the nice folks at the Lincoln Library in Springfield, IL for the story of WCBS/WCVS; also, special thanks to the staff in the microfilm room of the Boston Public Library for their on-going assistance with all of my research

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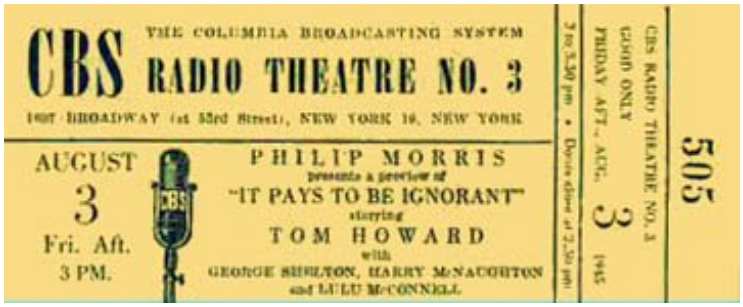

The NBC Pacific Coast Network

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http://users.adams.net/~jfs/nbc.htm

Introduction

The period of the 1930s and 40s has been appropriately called Radio's Golden Age. During these years, the nation was entertained and informed by a host of live coast-to-coast network broadcasts. Radio historians have correctly identified the importance of New York, Hollywood, and Chicago as network production centers during these years. However, little has been said about the role played by San Francisco.

The decade from 1927 to 1937 can easily be termed San Francisco radio's Golden Decade. It was during that ten-year span that San Francisco was a major origination point for many nation-wide network broadcasts, and that both NBC and CBS maintained production centers there.

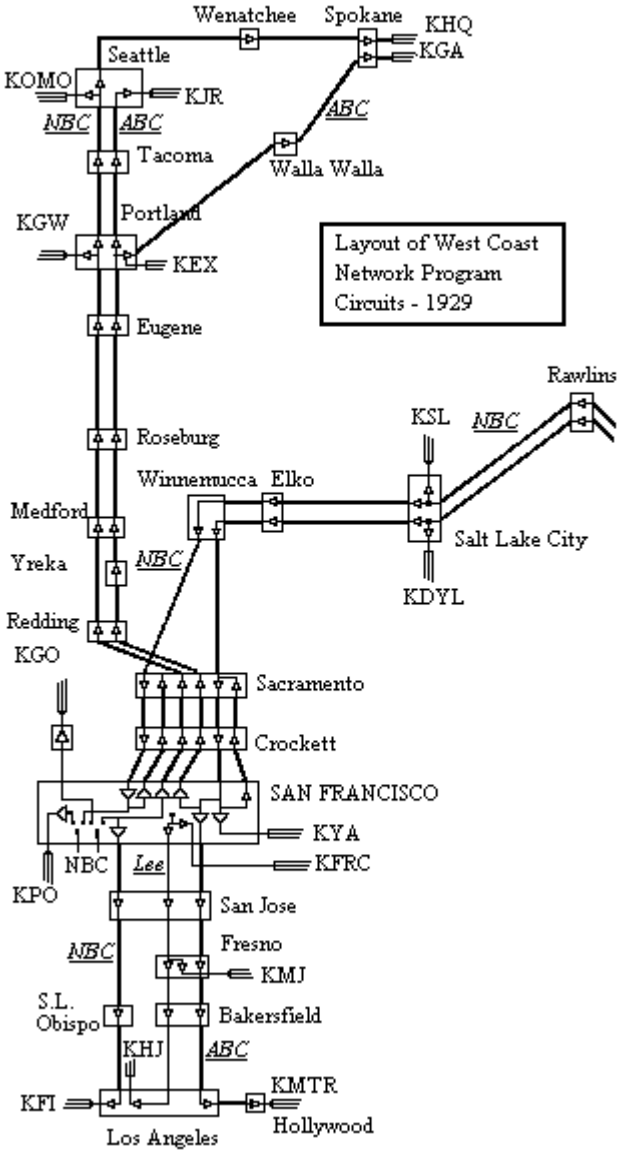
The NBC Orange Network

Early network broadcasting activities in the United States emanated from stations in New York City, and primarily served only the northeastern states. AT&T operated the first active network in the country from its flagship station WEAF, beginning in January of 1923. The first coast-to-coast broadcast took place in 1924, with KPO in San Francisco representing the western terminus of the effort. The most far-reaching of these early activities was on March 4, 1925, when AT&T arranged the broadcast of the Calvin Coolidge inauguration to a nationwide hookup of 22 stations. (The early network broadcasts to the West Coast were temporary, however, with connections made over ordinary voice-grade phone lines.)

The RCA Corporation also operated a more limited network operation in 1923 from its station WJZ. The broadcasts were transmitted over Western Union telegraph lines, which proved inferior to AT&T's telephone network. (AT&T maintained for itself the exclusive right to network operations over telephone lines, and would not lease its lines for this purpose to any other entity.)

In 1926, an agreement was reached between AT&T and RCA which would have a far-reaching effect on the business of broadcasting. This agreement resulted in AT&T's withdrawal from the broadcast business, and the sale of its stations and network operations to RCA. Also included in this document was an agreement by AT&T to lease its phone lines to RCA for network broadcasting purposes. RCA formed a new corporation on September 9, 1926, known as the National Broadcasting Company. The new company was owned by RCA, as well as two of its parent companies, Westinghouse and General Electric. NBC's first broadcast on the WEAF network took place November 15, 1926.

On January 1, less than two months later, a second NBC network was inaugurated, originating from WJZ. To distinguish between the two separate telephone-line networks, AT&T technicians used red designators at their jack panels for the original network's connections, and blue designators for the newcomer. The names of these two networks were casually derived from these colored cables, so that the WEAF group became known as the Red Network, while the WJZ group was called the Blue Network.



In the beginning, NBC was “National” in name only, as its programs reached only as far west as Denver. In its first years, NBC was unable to set up a coast-to-coast hookup. AT&T had not yet installed broadcast quality telephone lines across the Rocky Mountains.[1] To alleviate this problem, the NBC Board of Directors voted on December 3, 1926, to establish a third NBC network: the Pacific Coast “Orange Network.”[2]

They assembled a full duplicate of the New York program staff in San Francisco, and the Orange Network began originating programs for seven Pacific Coast stations: KPO and KGO in the San Francisco Bay Area, KFI Los Angeles, KFOA Seattle (later the affiliation changed to KOMO), KGW Portland, and KHQ Spokane. The seven stations were connected by 1,709 miles of telephone lines.[3]

The inaugural program for the NBC Orange Network was held April 5, 1927, less than five months after the first NBC broadcast in New York. The program originated from temporary studios in the Colonial Ballroom of the St. Francis Hotel, as permanent studios in the new Hunter-Dolin Building were not yet ready for occupancy. The program opened with an address by Henry M. Robinson, the Pacific Coast member of the NBC Advisory Board and president of the First National Bank of Los Angeles. Robinson spoke from the studios of KFI in Los Angeles. The program was then turned over to San Francisco for the broadcasts of music by Alfred Hertz and the San Francisco Symphony, and by Max Dolin, the newly-appointed West Coast music director, conducting the National Broadcasting Opera Company.

On April 11, the network began regular broadcasting with the program *Eight Neapolitan Nights*, sponsored by the Shell Oil Company. The initial network schedule was 8 to 9 p.m. Monday and Saturday, and 9 to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, giving the network a total of six hours of programs weekly.[4] At first the networks operated only in the evenings because circuits could not be spared from the standard telephone service during the busy daylight hours.[5]

The Orange Network recreated the same programs heard in the east on the Red Network. At the conclusion of a program in New York, all of the program continuity, including the scripts and musical scores, would be shipped to San Francisco by Railroad Express, where it would be rehearsed for performance exactly a week later. Thus, the San Francisco cast was producing such well-known early network shows as *The RCA Hour*, *The Wrigley Program*, *The Standard Symphony Hour*, *The Eveready Light Opera Program*, *The Firestone Hour* and many more. At the conclusion of each program the announcer would say, “This program came to you from the San Francisco studios of the Pacific Coast Network of the National Broadcasting Company.” This would be followed by the traditional NBC chimes.

The chimes were a part of all NBC programs from the very beginning; however, they were considerably longer and more involved than the later three-note chime. Because they were so long and clumsy, they were shortened to the well- known G-E-C progression heard today. It is said that the notes G-E-C stood for the General Electric Company, a melodic tribute to one of the network's major parent corporations. The original NBC chimes were struck by hand, but they were replaced in the mid-30's with electronically-produced, perfect-pitch chimes.[1]

Shortly after the Orange Network's inaugural broadcast in 1927, the staff moved into its permanent headquarters in the new Hunter-Dolin Building, at 111 Sutter Street. The NBC studios occupied the entire 22nd floor, while the network offices were located on the second floor. The studio complex included three completely-equipped studios and an elaborate new pipe organ. It was in these studios that most of San Francisco's “Golden Decade” programs would originate.

The entire NBC complex was decorated in a Spanish motif; one of its more unusual features was a glass-enclosed mezzanine, decorated to resemble a Spanish patio. It was designed so that a small audience could watch the programs while they were being broadcast. Some of the heaviest users of the booth were the sponsors of the programs, and this experience sparked the establishment of sponsors' booths in network studios across the nation.[1]

To staff its new network in San Francisco, NBC drew primarily from the existing area radio stations. KGO and KPO (now KNBR), the NBC affiliates, were hardest hit, and as the network schedule was expanded this process continued. One of the most popular KPO personalities to make the move was Hugh Barrett Dobbs, who moved his *Ship of Joy* program to the network, where it became the *Shell Ship of Joy*, sponsored by the oil company of the same name. Another person to make the move was Proctor A. "Buddy" Sugg, who came to NBC from KPO as a technician and gradually moved up the ladder until he became the nationwide executive vice president of NBC.[1]

During the first few years of operation, program announcements were made by actors, musicians, or generally whomever was available. However, as the staff

continued to grow, the first full-time staff announcer was hired. He was also borrowed from a local station, and Bill Andrews moved from KLX in Oakland to NBC in 1928. Other announcers followed: Jack Keough came from KPO; Jennings Pierce was recruited from KGO; Cecil Underwood was imported from affiliate KHQ in Spokane. Many others were gradually added until there were seventeen at the height of the operation. Andrews became chief announcer in 1933.[1]

The entire NBC-Pacific operation was headed by Don E. Gilman, vice president in charge of the Western Division. Gilman had been recruited from a local advertising firmto manage the operation in 1927. Prior to that time, he had been one of the best-known advertising men in the West, and had been president of the Pacific Advertising Clubs Association.[7]

Initially, although the network provided several hours of programming to its affiliates, it otherwise had little impact over the day-to-day operations of the stations. KGO was operated by the General Electric Company, and KPO by Hale Brothers Department Store together with the San Francisco Chronicle. This changed in 1932, when NBC leased the licenses and facilities of both stations (they were later purchased outright). When this happened, the program staffs of KGO, KPO and NBC were combined into one collective staff of over 250 persons. This included complete orchestras, vocalists and other musicians (there were five pipe organists alone), and a complete dramatic stock company.

The entire operation was consolidated under one roof at 111 Sutter Street. It was there that all programming originated for the network, which then averaged about fifteen hours a week, as well as local programs for KGO and KPO. As a result, these stations lost their independent identities, except for their separate transmitter facilities.[1] (KGO operated at 7,500 watts from a General Electric factory in East Oakland. KPO transmitted from the roof of the Hale Brothers Department Store with 5,000 watts until 1933, when a new 50,000 watt facility was constructed on the bay shore at Belmont.)

Early Network Programs

The old KPO studio at the department store continued to be used for just one NBC program, *The Woman's Magazine of the Air*, with host Jolly Ben Walker. This was a morning home economics show popular in the West for many years. Reportedly, the first bona fide singing commercial – that is, one sung for the sole purpose of praising a product – was heard on this program. The commercial was for Caswell's National Crest Coffee, and, according to Bill Andrews, "went something like this:"

Coffees and coffees have invaded the West,
but of all of the brands, you'll find Caswell's the best.
For good taste and flavor,
you'll find it in favor.
If you know your coffees,
buy National Crest.[1]

Some of the other programs that originated from 111 Sutter Street during these years were *Don Amaizo, the Golden Violinist*, who played for the American Maize Company (the musician who performed for West Coast audiences was Music Director Max Dolin); *Memory Lane*; *Rudy Seiger's Shell Symphony*, broadcast by remote from the Fairmont Hotel; *Dr. Lawrence Cross*; and the *Bridge to Dreamland*, originated by Paul Carson and consisting of organ music by Carson intermixed with poetry written by his wife.[1]

Throughout all of these programs, even though the performers went unseen by their radio audiences, NBC required formal dress. This meant that actors and announcers wore black ties, actresses wore formal gowns, and musicians wore uniform smocks, with the conductor in tie and tails. This was done for appearance, in the event that the sponsor or some other important person should drop in unannounced.[1]

NBC Goes Transcontinental

Until September of 1928, there was still no such thing as a weekly "coast-to-coast" network program. Even then, the connection between Denver and Salt Lake City was a temporary one made by placing a long distance telephone call. Eleven sponsors reached the Pacific Coast with their programs using this method for a few months. AT&T finally completed the last link in the broadcast quality telephone network in December of that year. The first program to use the new service was *The General Motors Party* on Christmas Eve, 1928. Regular programming began shortly thereafter, and western listeners could now enjoy the original eastern productions for the first time. NBC now boasted a nationwide network of 58 stations, with the potential to reach 82.7% of all U.S. receivers.[8]

With the inauguration of the new transcontinental service, the process of duplicating the programs of the eastern networks in San Francisco was discontinued. Because only one circuit had been installed, however, the Red and Blue networks could not be fed simultaneously. Instead, a selection of the best programs from both networks was fed to San Francisco, where they were relayed to the western affiliate stations. Thus, the Orange Network continued to exist, although in name only.[1]

Even though the duplication of programs was no longer needed, the Western Division staff was not dissolved. It continued to produce additional programs for western consumption only, which were used to augment the eastern schedule. In addition, the trans-continental line would occasionally be reversed, and programs produced in San Francisco would for the first time be fed eastward to the rest of the nation.[1]

The first nationwide broadcast from the West Coast had been the Rose Bowl Game from Pasadena on New Year's Day, 1927, with Graham McNamee at the microphone.[5] But, this had been accomplished on a temporary hookup over normal phone lines. The first regular coast-to-coast broadcast from the West over high-quality lines took place in April of 1930, with the broadcast of the *Del Monte Program* sponsored by the California Packing Company. Other programs quickly followed. Soon the San Francisco staff was bigger than ever, simultaneously producing programs for local broadcast over KGO and KPO, for the Western hook- up, and for nation-wide consumption. All of these production activities were further complicated by the time difference between the East and West Coasts. This meant that a program for broadcast in the East at 7 p.m. would have to be performed in San Francisco at four, and then repeated three hours later for western audiences. Thus, it was not uncommon to have all three San Francisco studios in use at once: one producing a program for the East Coast, another for the West Coast, while a third was producing for one of the local stations.[1]

National Programs Originate in San Francisco

Several programs produced in San Francisco within the next few years quickly gained nationwide popularity. Programs such as *Death Valley Days*, *The Demi-Tasse Revue*, Sam Dickson's *Hawthorne House,* and many others became nationally known.

Dickson was one of San Francisco's best-known radio writers. He got his start there in the twenties at KYA, writing shows that featured the station manager and the switchboard operator as principal characters. In 1929, Dickson conducted a survey for the Commonwealth Club about radio advertising. Broadcast advertising had not yet come into its own, and there were many who voiced objections to radio being put to such a use. Dickson's survey was revolutionary, in that it discovered 90% of the city's radio listeners did not object to commercials, providing they were in good taste; and, virtually all of them actually said they patronized the few advertisers that were then on the air. The results of Dickson's survey were indeed revolutionary, but they also prompted a revolution he didn't expect – he was blacklisted by every station in town![9]

Sam Dickson fought the blacklisting as best he could. He was still doing some writing for KYA, and managed to do some writing for NBC under an assumed name. By the time NBC discovered his true identity, however, his work had become admired to the point where he was allowed to remain as a staff writer. He wrote scripts for many programs in the ensuing years, including two popular series, *Hawthorne House* and *Winning of the West*, as well as police stories and biblical stories for children.

He continued with NBC as one of its most prominent writers up into the sixties, and in later years was the author of *The California Story*, a series heard on KNBC (formerly KPO, now KNBR) for a quarter century.[9] Several other San Francisco programs were nationally known. One was *Carefree Carnival*, sponsored by the Signal Oil Company. This was a program of western music and skits broadcast from the stage of the Marines' Memorial Theater beginning in 1934. It was hosted by home- spun Charlie Marshall and featured Meredith Willson's Orchestra.

The most famous program to ever originate in San Francisco, however, was *One Man's Family*. This program was a national favorite on radio and television for 27 years, and was always among the ten most popular programs in the nation. Its author, Carleton E. Morse, was the biggest figure in San Francisco radio at the time.

Carleton E. Morse

Morse was a California transplant, born in Louisiana June 4, 1901, and relocated to California at the age of 16. Morse led a farm life as a child, and was the first of six children born to George and Ora Morse in Jennings, Louisiana. At the age of five, he and his family moved to a fruit ranch outside of Talent, Oregon, a town which Morse described as "a little wide place in the road". He lived on this ranch until 1917, when his father became the superintendent of a rice mill in Sacramento. "When we left the ranch," he later wrote, "I determined that never in my life again would I return to ranch life . . . I would starve to death on a city street."

After graduating from high school in Sacramento, Morse came to the Bay Area to attend the University of California at Berkeley. After two and a half years there, he decided that college was not for him and he returned to Sacramento, where he went to work as a reporter for the Sacramento Union. A year and a half later, in 1922, he went to the San Francisco Chronicle. The following three

years saw him move in quick succession to the San Francisco Illustrated Daily Herald, Seattle Times, Vancouver Columbian and the Portland Oregonian, before returning to San Francisco in 1928. It was there, while working at the San Francisco Bulletin, that he met a fellow staff member named Patricia Pattison De Ball. They were married September 23, 1928.

In 1929, the Bulletin was absorbed into the San Francisco Call to become part of the Hearst empire, and Carleton Morse was out of a job. He didn't know it at the time, but he had just ended his newspaper career.
A strange fascination with radio broadcasting had come about in the last year for Morse, and his face was frequently seen in the NBC window at 111 Sutter Street. He began casually taking notes on how he thought the NBC programs could be improved. And, when he was released from the Bulletin, Morse applied for a job with NBC. He later told of how he was hired: They had a show coming in from New York – it was called *The House of Myths*, dramatizations of Greek classics. They said, "We can't do these – they're terrible. Can you take them and rewrite them, or dramatize some myths that we could produce?

"So, they sent me home and I conceived the idea of doing the myths in modern vernacular with a heavy . . . tongue-in-cheek innuendo on the sex life of the Gods . . ." As he readied his script for NBC, Morse received a job offer from the Seattle Times. Faced with a crossroads decision, he decided the new medium of radio would be much more exciting, so he quickly polished his work and returned to the NBC offices, script in hand. Ten minutes later he was hired, just two weeks before the stock market crash of 1929.

Morse found writing for NBC most rewarding. In a later radio interview, he said: "During those days, the thing that was so very pleasant was that there were no standards of writing. You were turned loose to think of something and do it. And out of this maelstrom of confusion came many of the shows that later developed into Coast and National shows. It was a wonderful time. It was a new era in a new medium and everybody has his opportunity."

He started out by continuing with the *House of Myths*. The program got very good listener response on the Coast, although it drew little reaction in the East, where it was also performed for a while. When that series ended, he dabbled in several other ideas, all without any significant listener response. However, he received marked response when he tried his hand at mysteries. Several popular mystery series followed: *The Witch of Endor*, *The City of the Dead*, *Captain Post: Crime Specialist*, *The Game Called Murder*, *Dead Men Prowl*, and others. Especially well liked were a series of four programs based upon the files of the San Francisco Police Department, *Chinatown Squad*, *Barbary Coast Nights*, *Killed in Action* and *To the Best of Their Ability*. San Francisco Police Chief William J. Quinn worked closely with Morse in the writing of these episodes, and narrated all four series.

One Man's Family

By 1932, Carleton E. Morse was the biggest name in radio drama on the Coast. But he had tired of the continual diet of murder and violence. As an antidote to this, he began working on a series he called *One Man's Family*. Morse was appalled by what appeared to be a coming deterioration of the family life style in America. He later told an interviewer: "After the First World War, there was a beginning of a deterioration of the family, of parent-child relationships. I had been brought up with very strict, conventional home life, and it rather appalled me to see what was going on."

He decided to write a series giving "a down-to-earth, honest picture of family life". Further influenced by John Galsworthy's "Forsythe Saga", he began working on pilot scripts for *One Man's Family*.

One Man's Family told the story of the Barbour family, an affluent, moral family residing in the Sea Cliff district of San Francisco. This series did not fit into any previously-used program formulas – it was unlike anything that had been done on radio up to that time. It simply told the story of everyday life in a model family. Morse hoped it would become popular because the public would identify closely with its characters.[1]

He took four pilot scripts to the production manager of the San Francisco network operation, who soon came to Morse with them and said, "It's quite apparent that you're written out. This would never go, and I suggest – why don't you resign from NBC?" Morse was taken aback by this comment, but he felt a personal grudge against him

might be the real issue, instead of the quality of his scripts. So, he took them to Don Gilman, head of the West Coast operation. Gilman read the scripts, liked them, and approved them for production over the objections of the production manager. *One Man's Family* was on its way.

The program made its debut on Friday, April 29, 1932. It was carried from 9:30 to 10:00 p.m. on just three stations, in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle. However, after the first few episodes, the other West Coast stations requested that the program be opened to the entire network.[10]

Western listeners responded to the program almost immediately, and their response was overwhelming. *One Man's Family* quickly became one of the most listened-to programs on the coast. However, the story concept was new, and companies were reluctant to sponsor it. After almost a year as an unsponsored feature, an announcement was made at the end of an episode that NBC was considering dropping the program, and that audience response was being solicited. The thousands of letters that swamped the mail room overwhelmed everyone, especially Morse.

In a final, desperate attempt to woo a sponsor, the Sales Manager hired a suite of rooms in one of San Francisco's posh hotels and scattered the many letters over the floors, furniture, and every other horizontal surface. After wining and dining officials of the Wesson Oil Company in the hotel dining room, he took them up to the suite, where he showed them the scene and invited them to read just one letter. Needless to say, they bought the series; Wesson Oil and Snowdrift became the sponsors of *One Man's Family* January 18, 1933.[10]

Soon after, on May 17 of that year, the program became one of the first San Francisco programs to be piped through the trans-continental line to the East, where it was heard nationwide for the first time. Wesson Oil sponsored the Western production, while the version heard in the East was sustaining, or unsponsored. Separate scripts had to be utilized for nearly eight months, until eastern audiences could catch up with the story line and the two productions could be consolidated. [10]

The nucleus of the cast, the four main characters, were portrayed by the same actors for the entire 27 years the program was heard on radio. They were: Father Henry Barbour, played by J. Anthony Smythe; Mother Fannie Barbour, played by Minetta Ellen; Paul Barbour, who was played by Mike Raffetto; and Hazel, portrayed by Bernice Berwin. Other characters were the twins, Clifford and Claudia, played by Barton Yarborough and Kathleen Wilson, and Jack, who was played by Page Gilman (son of Western Division head Don Gilman). All of these actors had been hand picked by Morse at the start of the program. In fact, each charactcer had been created specifically with the actor in mind, encompassing his own personality traits so that, as Morse put it, they could really "get into their own parts".

Morse wrote all of the scripts himself at first, and insisted on directing each of the productions as well. After the first several years, Mike Raffetto frequently substituted for him, directing and writing while he was away. In later years, Harlan Ware wrote many of the scripts.

On a typical day, Morse would leave his rambling home in the Skylonda district of the San Francisco Peninsula, and be in his office hard at work by 5 AM. He preferred to do his writing at this time, when there was no one around to bother him. By the time the rest of the NBC staff arrived, he had already finished his daily script and would turn to the task of directing, producing and casting for the program.

Morse claimed that he could do his writing only in seclusion. He said he would go into an almost trance-like state, to the point where he would actually experience the situation in his mind, and the words would just flow onto the typewriter pages automatically. He said, "I would just sort of lose consciousness until I finished." If anyone would interrupt him in the middle of this process, he would usually have to scrap all that he had written and start again from scratch, as he found it impossible to pick up the thread of his thoughts. After he finished his script, he would hand it in, unread, to be typed, and would have completely forgotten what he had written until he received it at his director's chair. He would make any necessary revisions at that time.

The production of the program was complicated by the partial sponsorship problem. In 1934, the program was being performed three times: Fridays from 7:30 to 8:00 PM for the Mountain and Central time zones; 8:15 to 8:45, sponsored by Wesson Oil for the Pacific Coast; and again the next day at 5:30 for Eastern listeners. This complicated things to the extent that the West Coast Manager Don Gilman began looking for a full-time, nationwide sponsor. He found it in Kentucky Winners Cigarettes. The program was moved to Wednesday nights, and Kentucky Winners began sponsoring "One Man's Family" November 21, 1934.

The short sponsorship of Kentucky Winners is a good example of public morals in the thirties, and of the power of the broadcast audience. Joan Buchanan wrote in a Radio Life article: “The minute the (first) commercial was

over, long distance phone calls and wires began to pour in, protesting the use of such a product in connection with a wholesome, family program."

The public outcry was so great that the sponsor cancelled after only ten weeks on the air. The program was moved again, this time to Sunday nights, and went nearly two months without a sponsor. Finally, in March of 1935, Standard Brands, Inc., began a fourteen year sponsorship of the program, and during the remainder of radio's golden years, *One Man's Family* would be synonymous with Royal Gelatin Desserts and Tender Leaf Tea.

It was about this time that Morse began tiring of the repetitiveness of *One Man's Family*. Just as he had grown weary of continual murder-and- violence stories, he now tired of the sugar and syrup of his latest program. He needed to begin another series that counteracted this effect, and so *I Love a Mystery* was born. *I Love a Mystery* was a childrens' adventure series, featuring the trio of adventurers Jack, Doc and Reggie. It was a national favorite for nearly two decades, and was an NBC feature until network radio's declining years.

Profound Changes

NBC took two major steps in 1936 that had a profound effect on Pacific Coast radio. The first was the opening of a second Pacific Coast network. Now, for the first time, the entire compliment of programs from both NBC networks could be heard on a nationwide basis. The original NBC Orange Network, with the exception of KGO, became the Pacific Coast Red Network. KGO, along with KECA Los Angeles, KFSD San Diego, KEX Portland, KJR Seattle, and KGA Spokane formed the new Western Blue Network.[11] (The latter three stations had been a part of the "Gold Network" from 1931 to 1933, after the demise of the Seattle- based American Broadcasting Company, the first of several networks to use that name. The Gold Network was discontinued by NBC in 1933 to save line costs.[12] The West Coast Blue Network was inaugurated with the broadcast of the Rose Bowl Game from Pasadena on New Year's Day, 1936.[13]

The second major event of 1936 – the one that ultimately proved to be fatal for San Francisco's position as a broadcast center – was the breaking of ground for NBC's new Hollywood studios. This was in response to the American public's increasing desire for West Coast programs. The success of *One Man's Family* and other early coast offerings played a part in this process. But more important was the public's desire to hear their favorite Hollywood movie stars on the radio. Rudy Vallee apparently started the trend in the early thirties.

While in Hollywood for the making of a motion picture, he broadcast his weekly program from California and introduced his audience to film star guests.[6] This trend advanced rapidly, and there were no less than 20 network programs released from Hollywood over NBC and CBS during the 1934/35 season.

In the first years of the network, it had been necessary for Hollywood stars to travel to San Francisco to make a broadcast, a requirement that severely limited the frequency of their appearance. This had been necessary because AT&T's broadcast lines fed from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and not the other way around. Programs were fed nationwide from city to city on a serial hookup, and Los Angeles was the end of the line. In order for programs to be fed nationally from Los Angeles, they would have to be fed eastward by a separate circuit to Chicago, where they could connect into the network.

When Eddie Cantor moved his *Chase and Sanborn Program* to Hollywood in 1932, this aspect added $2,100 per week in line charges to the program's budget.[14] The limitations of the AT&T network began to be overcome in 1936, under pressure of the network's desire to satisfy the public's taste for Hollywood programming. The new circuit that was constructed to bring the Blue Network to the coast in 1936 terminated in Los Angeles instead of San Francisco. Further, AT&T had incorporated a new system called the "quick reversible" circuit.

Under this arrangement, the operation of a single key would reverse the direction of every amplifier in the line between Los Angeles and Chicago, so that the same line that formerly fed westward could now move programs from west to east. The circuit could be completely reversed in less than 15 seconds, well within the time of a station break.[15] Thus in 1936 it became economical to produce national programs in Hollywood on a wide scale for the first time. Big Hollywood names like Al Jolson, Bob Hope and Clark Gable were regularly heard on NBC after that year.

The new NBC Hollywood studios officially opened for business October 17, 1938. Sprawling over a 4-1/2 acre tract at Sunset and Vine, the $2 million facility became the new Western Division headquarters for the network. The West Coast executive offices that had been divided between San Francisco and Los Angeles were consolidated in a new three story executive building. There were eight studios, including four auditoriums that seated 350 persons each, the largest ever constructed for radio.[16]

The opening of the Hollywood studios and

improvements to the AT&T leased line system marked the beginning of a gradual exodus that, over a five-year period, saw virtually all of San Francisco's network programming move to Hollywood. By 1942, only a skeleton crew remained to program the local stations. One of the first programs to leave was San Francisco's beloved *One Man's Family*. Production of this program was transferred to Hollywood in August of 1937, even before the new studios had been completely finished. The first program from Los Angeles aired October 8.[10]

The program's author, Carleton E. Morse greeted the move with great displeasure, and he kept San Francisco as the locale of the program after the move. This bothered some Los Angeles area residents. Morse received a letter from the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce which deplored the fact that such a popular Los Angeles production had its locale as San Francisco. They politely invited the Barbour family to move to Southern California. But Morse declined, and the Barbours continued to live in San Francisco until the series finally closed in 1959.

Radio City

For a while, NBC intended to operate equal personnel and artist staffs in both cities.[17] To that end, NBC began to draw up plans for an elaborate new studio building in San Francisco to replace the outmoded facility at 111 Sutter Street and match the opulence of the new Hollywood facility. This was NBC's "Radio City", which drew national acclaim for both its architectural and broadcast features. And it was built by mistake.
Plans were drawn up and bids taken in 1940 for the construction of an ultra-modern four-story studio complex at Taylor and O'Farrell Streets. Meanwhile, NBC apparently changed its mind and decided to move all the remaining operations to Hollywood. According to one story, the ground breaking was set to begin when the West Coast vice president received a telegram from New York. It said a decision had been made to phase out the San Francisco operation, and that the new building must not be built. But, it was too late; the event, once set into motion, could not be reversed. The vice president himself officiated at the ground breaking ceremony that day, the telegram in his pocket.

The million dollar facility was formally dedicated April 26, 1942.18 It was an impressive edifice, four stories of pink, windowless walls with layers of glass brick outlining each floor. Over the marquee, at the main entrance to the building, was a three-story mosaic mural designed by C. J. Fitzgerald which depicted different facets of the radio industry. Inside, facilities included a 41-by-72 foot main studio, two 24-by-44 secondary studios, and four smaller studios. In addition, a parking garage occupied practically the entire first floor. One of the smaller studios, Studio G, was equipped with a false fireplace, fur rugs and comfortable furniture. It was reserved for V.I.P. guests exclusively, and Harry Truman, General Sarnoff and H.V. Kaltenborn were just a few of those who eventually used it.

Another feature of NBC's radio palace was a roof garden where Sam Dickson, Dave Drummond, James Day and other staff writers would produce scripts in their swimsuits and work on their suntans at the same time.[19] The building was a magnificent tribute to the state of the art. It was also San Francisco's last great fling as a radio center, for less than a year after its completion the southward exodus had ended, and most of the facility stood unused except for an occasional network sustaining feature. In the ensuing years much of the building was leased as office space, and the entire radio operation consisted of a disc jockey playing records in a third floor booth. KGO was moved to Golden Gate Avenue in the early 1950's, and KPO, by then known as KNBR, moved out in 1967. That was the year the building was sold to Kaiser Broadcasting Company, and it became the new home of KBHK Television. At last, it finally began to see extensive usage for the purpose for which it was built.[20]

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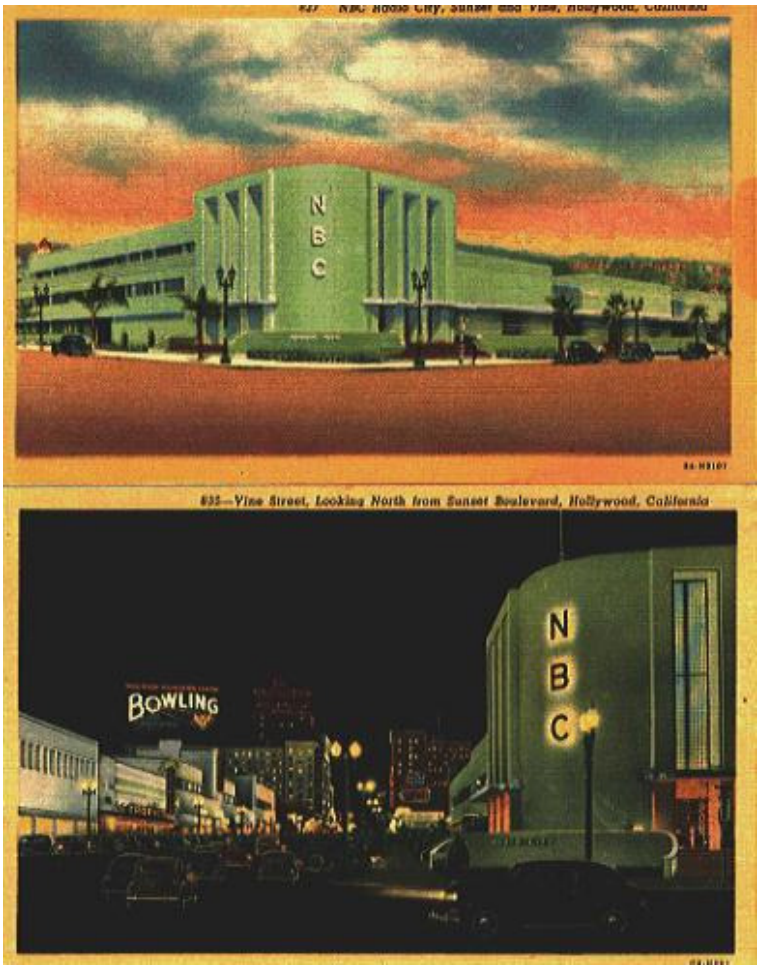


Before & After Radio, Other Formats Were Proffering Similar Wares

A book review by Jim Cox

Tim DeForest's newest scheme for a radio volume is a challenging diversion: he cites myriad forms of popular fantasy and its intersection with the aural ether. In doing so he sometimes extends the lives of comic-page, pulp fiction and cartoon characters while projecting more into film, television and video incarnations that helped preserve them for future generations. The cross-pollination in DeForest's just-released Radio by the Book: Adaptations of Literature and Fiction on the Airwaves invariably turns into insightful vignettes with more than two score of celebrated radio series at its core.

While the vehicle used to project the reader into these pithy treatises is focused on the works of originators who didn't spend much, if any, time in radio, DeForest seamlessly makes transitions — and comparisons — after those who wrote for the ear and not the eye got hold of those concepts. In a few cases, the process is reversed as figures are introduced to listeners first while other modes expanded and extended their imaginary lives. The writing style is easy on the eyes, and the fact that each subject is presented in bite-sized portions makes the text attractive.

Most of the subjects from literature had many appearances prior to their radio embodiment. Not so with *The Falcon*; he materialized but once in a 1940 short story before going on the air in 1943. While every fictional character couldn't be included in DeForest's work, he attempted to corral most of the heavyweights. Surprisingly overlooked is broadcasting's most durable sleuth, Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons. An 18-year audio run (1937-55) was never surpassed, although his legend was also attributed to a single print outing, a 1906 novel by Robert W. Chambers.

To his credit DeForest goes to bat for the radio listener on occasion, clarifying situations and underscoring matters that we wondered about but never knew whom to

ask. He points out that a reformed Boston Blackie in radio (who aided the law there, having majored in debauchery in some previous modes), headlined a series with a recurring bad habit: "The one mistake the show made and never corrected was the character of Inspector Faraday . . . The poor policeman bumbled around annoyingly in every single episode, doing little to either advance the plot or entertain the audience . . . On radio, poor Faraday was reduced to a mere dunce. In nearly every episode, he storms up to Blackie and threatens to arrest him for a recent murder — whether or not he had any reason to actually do so . . It was contrived, predictable and unnecessary . . . It's too bad Faraday always remained such a stereotypical dunce; Boston Blackie could have been much better than it was." There were figures like Faraday on numerous shows; decades later, by banishing this one, DeForest stands up for Everyman, dismissing those trite characterizations that served no useful purpose.

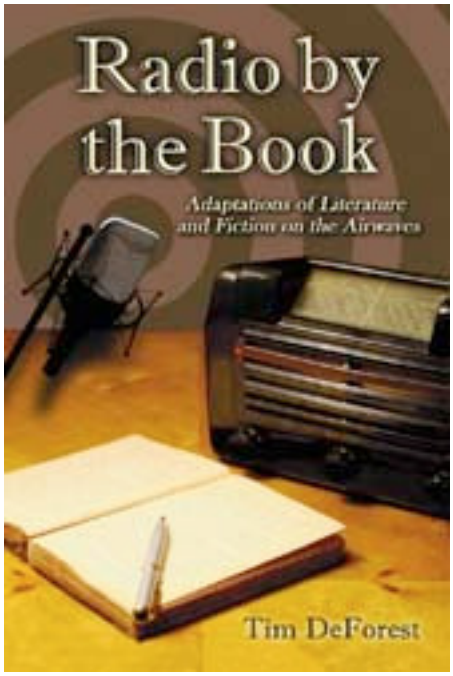
The author picks up on other realities inherent in the radio features. With regard to Mr. and Mrs. North, he observes that "Pam, Jerry and [Lt. Bill] Weigand all have their individual moments of sharp deductive reasoning, avoiding the trap of making a protagonist look smart simply by having everyone else look dumb." No individual stands head and shoulders above the others, he's saying, which probably didn't escape the notice of faithful listeners, either.

There are other times that it's difficult to accept everything DeForest states as fact. When he suggests "Perry Mason did better in the vast wasteland of television than he did on dramatic radio," he strikes a nerve. It's subjective, yet we disagree. He cites "the dearth of surviving episodes" as a handicap in fully comparing and appreciating the audio version, a logical explanation, and possibly a reason for the limiting assessment.

There are so many favorite shows and fictional folks in this book. For its inclusiveness, however, one wonders how two westerns — *Hopalong Cassidy* and *The Cisco Kid* — made the cut while so many of their venerated brothers did not. Think Bobby Benson, Gene Autry, The Lone Ranger, Red Ryder, Roy Rogers, Straight Arrow, Tom Mix and Wild Bill Hickok. Some pretty compelling law-and-order heroes there.

Awkwardly, we discovered more grammatical errors than customary for a McFarland release. While an occasional omitted word or incorrect term is anticipated, a series is disturbing, possibly hinting it was hastily proofed. Fortunately, this doesn't negate the obvious entertainment and educational benefits.

It's a delightful read, one that ought to be on every vintage radio collector's bookshelf. The 238-page softcover edition of Radio by the Book is available right now from www.mcfarlandpub.com and 800-253-2187.



Junior G-Men Badge from the 1930s

How Radio Was . . .

Randall Berry

AM Radio, Tune up your ears, close your eyes and let your imagination soar. An interesting look back at the golden age of radio through the eyes of a different generation. Many of us all have fond memories of AM radio, all age groups have most likely had an experience or two with AM. Do you remember those late nights listening to the Radio Theater?

How about the ball game, your favorite radio talk show, and, yes, the hours of music you have enjoyed. The static crashes blasting through as though they were meant to be there, it all became part of the atmosphere. As one from a younger generation recalls the memories of that classic era, I am sure it will arouse a few memories of your own. Young or old, all have had many joyous hours listening to radio. So break out that imagination and read an interpretation of what radio was to a young man and how much of a part of growing up it became as seen through his eyes.

I can remember many years ago as a child my parents got me my first transistor AM radio. It was in the early 70's when the invention of the silicon transistor was still relatively state of the art technology. As I recall it was a five-transistor radio. The manufacture was proud to announce that it had indeed five transistors.

I guess it spread from the predecessors when the number of vacuum tubes it incorporated judged the quality of a radio. A 9-volt battery powered it. As I remember the batteries back then also stressed the recent development of the transistor. They were not just any battery – they were transistor radio batteries.

I used to carry my little receiver everywhere I went, shopping with Mom, in the car and I would stuff it under the pillow. I could listen to my favorite hit songs while I was supposed to be sleeping. Or I'd listen to the *Adventures of Superman* or *Green Hornet* and *The Lone Ranger*. There were many more of those radio classics I used to enjoy.

Of course at my age many of these radio wonders were already re-runs from long before I came around. There were often re-runs due to a limited supply of a somewhat new episode. But all the same, they still brought that charm no matter how many times you had heard it before. Kind of like that bedtime story you would always beg Mom to tell you over and over again.

I grew up in Great Britain where I had become fond of a particular group of actors who seemed to be just as funny on Radio as they were on the Tele. Known as Monty Python's Flying Circus the group of gentlemen that entertained me for hours. Their style of theater could be enjoyed on both TV and Radio. Their skits were usually fictional and funny, arguments, somewhat tasteless comedy was a big part of the English culture. A lot of the comedy was dry to most American people but hilarious to the British. They seemed to have brought to the 70's what was so popular in the early years of radio. Although most of the group's popularity was on the TV they were still very entertaining on radio and records as well.

AM radio can still bring along with it the sensation of how radio used to be. The sensation is still there, that classic AM sound, there's nothing like it. The faint hiss like a slight breeze passing your ear. Can you remember when the family would gather around the RCA radio receiver and prepare to listen to the *RKO Radio Theater*?

It all begins with the familiar tune of the opening marquee, as you listen to the Morse code spell out RKO Radio at a moderate speed. Then the radio announcer that we all pretended to be at some point in time refreshes our memory on last week's show. Then it begins, as you pass through another dimension. Brace yourself for another adventure of sound and imagination. "Look! Up in the sky!" you would hear a man say as you hear the familiar rush of air. "It's a bird!" Someone would say "Its a plane, no its Superman!", and the story begins; "It sounds like a terrible storm is approaching Clark" Lois Lane would say, as the sound crew rumbles a steel sheet like the eruptions of a thunder clap. Whistling into the mike as you feel the gust of wind howling through your bones. "Yes Lois looks like a bad one" you hear things being tossed around giving the picture of a strong wind tossing garbage cans about. Little taps on a small cooking pot would remind you of dripping rain. The sounds and the voices were all it would take to let your own imagination take off.

As the show continues you find yourself deeper and deeper into your own thoughts and you don't need the pictures, you can see it in your mind. As the suspense builds and the glue between your pants and the chair begins to harden, the show reaches a climax and..."What will happen to Superman? Will the storm takes it toll? Tune in next week to another thrilling adventure of Superman . . ."

Radio has also allowed us to reach to deep into imagination. Like the classic Orson Wells story War of the Worlds. That was one of the proven factors as to how much radio can touch the lives of many. Radio has also brought us some of the saddest news you would want to hear. The assassination of our president or the death of a

beloved hero, The news that war has broken out and our sons will be sent away to fight. Of course Radio has given us some of the best news we would ever like to hear, The War is over our boys will be coming home. The Eagle has landed, a small step for man, Giant leap for mankind.

Today's television seems to have taken away the special talent of imagination. You hear, you see and now in some instances you even feel and smell the surroundings. As I listened to the radio shows and could see it all clearly. I can remember opening my mind and seeing Superman fighting that evil villain and bringing him to justice. I could see that masked man riding his horse Silver through the dusty plains of the Wild West. It was my thoughts and my imagination that portrayed the pictures I saw. With only my imagination nothing to block my path and show me what it was I should have seen. All that seems to be lost in today's society. Pictures showing you how you should see it happen, constantly distracting you from the use of your own mind.

It is always very hard for me to just listen to television. I find that television it constantly demands your fullest attention. The gestures and the situations all require you to watch at all times, no imagination allowed here.
Even the radio of today leaves little for one to open their mind and become part of the scene. The lack of listener participation is one of the downfalls. You won't find a radio show like those of yesteryear anymore. They seem to have gotten left behind and lost in the past. It used to be that the radio was based on what individuals wanted to hear. Requests were common practice at most radio stations. Now with the radio of today you are lucky if they ever play your request. In the golden age of radio even the commercials themselves were entertaining. The commercials had a style of their own, some acted out live by the actors and actresses in the studio. You never know what could happen live. Others were merely announcements brought out with that thunderous voice of the heavens that every announcer wishes he had. Some with that sweet feminine voice of a beautiful young lady telling you how white you're whites could be if you used her detergent. Today there seems to be the big rush for the best radio commercial ever made, all the while they have lost that appeal. Hardly any originality if any at all, stale ideas and canned announcements seem to be the most part of today's commercials.

The radio theater has become something only your Grandmother remembers. Today the radio studios have become a broom closet full of records and a chair. Instead of a studio with facilities to accommodate live performances. Shows like *Amos and Andy* are long gone. *The Life of Riley* seems to have died. Sherlock Holmes has solved his last case. As far as the music goes, Benny Goodman, Count Bassie, Les Brown, and Glen Miller all seem to be something you might hear about on a PBS special and very seldom on the radio. Few radio stations play the real "Oldies;" a few are lost in the 50's, some are stuck in the 60's and 70's. Most of the others can't make up their mind what time frame they're in. There is an entire Era of our history that seems to have faded away never to be seen again.

I would love to see someone bring back that radio style, that atmosphere. Bring back the realm of imagination that's been locked away in everyone's mind. I guess all this has gone away with the vacuum tube much like micro circuitry has replaced the transistor. What will we have next? Implanted radios that run from our own battery of life.

Still to this day with the cleanest quality noise reduction on that stereo FM station playing only the finest CD material. With the advent of AM stereo there seems to be a big part of radio that is missing. Radio seems to have lost that personality it once had. The static you heard on the record, that soothing voice of a person who made you feel a part of the show. The natural static crashes and that selective fading that all become part of the entertainment. After you listen to it for a while it just becomes part of that personality called AM radio.

AM always had a warm spot in my heart, call me old fashioned or out of date. But there is just that hidden enchantment about Amplitude Modulation. I can't explain why or how, I just enjoy that nostalgic style of entertainment. How I do love that old girl we so affectionately call "Ancient Mary".

So the next time you listen to your favorite radio show sit back and remember – or imagine - how it used to be. No Television to spread the news. No fancy pictures with the sounds, only the limitations of your imagination could stop you. The radio may have been the only connection you had to the outside world.

Farewell to all of the short-wave listeners, the shut-ins and all the ships at sea, Until next time we meet, happy listening and may you always stay in tune. Keep that Magic Eye locked in on your favorite station and open your imagination.

Randy is a strong advocate in the Amateur Radio community to preserve Amplitude Modulation. He holds an Advanced Class Amateur Radio license. His station can be heard on or around 3.885 MHz AM along with several other AM radio enthusiasts. His Amateur Radio call sign is N3LRX, email is rjberry@netsale.net .

The Kraft Music Hall

Excerpts from Bing Crosby — The Radio Directories Pt. 8 (out of print) compiled by Lionel Pairpoint. Reprinted by permission

In March 1933, nine men met in the offices of the J. Walter Thompson Company. Their objective was to fashion a show to introduce a new product called "Miracle Whip" for the Kraft Cheese Company. This was at that time when advertising agencies wrote and produced radio shows for their clients. Those present at the meeting were, John U. Reber, Vice-President in charge of radio for the Thompson Company; Carroll Carroll, writer for the *Burns and Allen/Guy Lombardo Show*; H. Calvin Kuhl and Robert T Colwell, two more of the Company's top producers; Abbott K. Spencer, producer of Eddie Cantor's highly popular radio series for Chase & Sanborn; George Faulkner and Gordon Thompson who, together, created the *Fleischmann Yeast Hour* for Rudy Vallee; Robert A Simon, at that time, music critic for The New Yorker and musical adviser to the Thompson Corporation and Sam Moore, another successful writer of radio shows.

In order to incorporate the brand name of the product and to establish an identifiable locale for the listeners, they decided to christen the yet "unborn baby," *The Kraft Music Revue*. The other prime decision made at the meeting was that the host should be Paul Whiteman whose orchestra and entourage contained sufficient talent and variety to sustain the show.

There was the up and coming young songwriter and comedy singer, Johnny Mercer; Ken Darby and The King's Men (Jon Dobson, Bud Lynn and Rad Robinson), a quartet so -called because they appeared with Whiteman - "The King Of Jazz"; Johnny House, a ballad singer and Ramona (Davies) the popular pianist/vocalist. In addition, the orchestra featured some of the best musicians of the day, in the shape of Joe Venuti, Oscar Levant, Tommy Dorsey, Frankie Trumbauer, Roy Bargy, Mike Pingatore and Jack Teagarden.

To inaugurate the series and to ensure a smash send-off, a two hour show from the New Amsterdam Roof starring Al Jolson was planned for 26th June 1933. Typically, the egocentric Jolson was still going strong at the scheduled close of the programme, obliging the Thompson Company to hurriedly negotiate for a further fifteen minutes of air time. The series, featuring Whiteman together with special guest stars, ran successfully for two years from New York with the name being changed to *The Kraft Music Hall* in 1934. Bing made a guest appearance on 15th August 1935. Later in 1935, it was decided that the *Kraft Music Hall* would move to Hollywood, following the more popular radio stars who were heading West to fulfil screen contracts.

The new host was named as Whiteman's former "Rhythm Boy," Bing Crosby and on 2nd January 1936 the *Kraft Music Hall* was presented from Hollywood. The show was produced by Calvin Kuhl and written by Sam Moore until the Spring of 1936, when Moore left and Carroll Carroll took up the writing chores. Carroll Carroll publicly claimed on many occasions to have been responsible for the development of the personality, which the world would recognise as Bing Crosby. The much maligned but nevertheless, informative book, The Hollow Man by Don Shepherd and Robert F. Slatzer recounts the familiar story of "Bing's reluctance to talk" and of how, "Guests were given 'wild' lines that were not in the script, thereby forcing Crosby to respond."

Bing's character has always been a matter of some contention, particularly since his death. In the 1940's, there were those who were unkind enough so say that he never played anyone but the character that appeared in his first Mack Sennett short - a theory that time proved to be palpably untrue. Further quotes from the same book, however, offer some sharp contrasts to Carroll's claims. For example, referring to the period when Bing was Master of Ceremonies at the Paramount Theatre in 1931, it notes, "his relaxed manner, together with his natural wit and humour were so popular that Paramount Publix extended his engagement for a further ten weeks and on his *Chesterfield Show* ("Music That Satisfies"), Bing began establishing a format that he would perfect later on the *Kraft Music Hall*, (pleasant banter, both written and ad –libbed; Bing was very sharp at ad-libbing) that would eventually make him one of the most popular radio personalities of all time."

The musical accompaniment for the re -located Kraft programme was supplied by the recently formed Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra and to counter -balance Bing's role as the worldly, hyper-articulate host, the perfect foil was available in the hillbilly humour of Bob Burns, The Arkansas Philosopher. Burns has achieved a claim to immortality by appearing in both Webster's and the Oxford dictionaries as the originator of the "bazooka," a curious instrument composed of a few lengths of piping from which he extracted tones, more amusing than musical and which later gave its name to an anti -tank weapon first used in the Western Desert during World War II.

For a short period, Don Wilson announced the

programme and there is also a mention of Roger Krupp but there is now, little doubt, that Ken Carpenter began performing this duty, much earlier than had been previously supposed. Carpenter's contribution to the *Hall's* popularity should not be underestimated. In addition to his announcing duties, he was, on occasions, encouraged to sing (never too seriously), played a wide range of characters in sketches and for the commercials, and became a student at Doctor Crosby's imaginary KMH University which had been created by Carroll Carroll. The college's colours were pomegranate and puce and the school poet was Edna St. Vitus Mitnick. Football games were contested with rival universities, rejoicing in such names as Tich Tach Tech and Pulse Normal. The school song, Hail, KMH, written by Carroll Carroll and John Scott Trotter, survived for many years as the closing theme of the show and could still be detected in the later series hosted by Al Jolson.

It was on 8th. July, 1937, that John Scott Trotter became the Musical Director for KMH and conflicting reasons are given for the departure of the Dorsey outfit. Dorsey's own version is that he felt that he was losing his identity and a weekly radio show was not providing sufficient exposure for the band. However, this may have been inspired to offset the implied slur in the other reason given, that the sponsors considered the orchestra inadequate when handling the mandatory classical spots in the programme.

Among the criticisms that have been levelled at Trotter's arrangements is that he was repetitive, and possibly there is some evidence which may support this. Students of Bing Crosby's recordings may well be surprised when listening to the existing Kraft material to hear for the first time, arrangements to which they had become familiar, as the opening bars in the recordings of East Side Of Heaven, And The Angels Sing and You Lucky People You respectively, serving as introductions for, I Get Along Without You Very Well (March 2, 1939), Hurry Home (December 8, 1938) and My Mind's On You (March 20, 1941) and there are other examples.

Others have denounced his work as unimaginative and it is true that one can detect slight acknowledgments to Rustle Of Spring in Sweet Little You (October 21, 1937) and more overtly, The Entry Of The Gladiators in Marie (October 28, 1937) but it would be naive to suppose that John Scott really intended to deceive with these tongue in cheek plagiarism's. A few, unable to express their disapprobation more coherently, merely labelled his accompaniments hackneyed or corny, but his prodigious workload for the *Kraft Music Hall* series cannot be denied. It included not only arrangements for Bing but also for the Music Maids' backgrounds, the various female singers' vocals and, at times, some of the guests.

Perhaps it would be as well to leave the last words on this subject to the person who was in the best position to judge. Bing maintained an association with Trotter which endured for twenty years of broadcasting and recording without, it is said, any formal contract. At the commencement of this comfortable alliance, he is quoted as saying, "I just know he is very good and he has marvellous taste" - and towards the end, that opinion had not changed when he described John's orchestrations as, ". . . never obtrusive . . . always in good taste."

To add a little romantic interest to the proceedings, a regular place was found for an attractive chanteuse who, on occasions, dueted with Bing in addition to having her own solo spot. Among those engaged to fill this role were Connie Boswell (her adoption of the name Connee coincided with her departure from the Hall), Mary Martin, Janet Blair, Marilyn Maxwell, Eugenie Baird and Trudy Erwin.

During his radio career, Bing Crosby seems to have found somewhat more affinity with a backing group than some other solo performers. He would probably have said, "I like somebody to share the blame!" but it is a personal belief that Bing enjoyed this dueting, relishing the competition and at times, taking the opportunity to indulge in musical ad -libs and asides, thus enhancing the laid back quality of the performance, to the benefit of the listener.

Appertaining to this, the previously mentioned Trudy (Virginia) Erwin had graduated from The Music Maids, a quintet which joined the programme in February 1939, replacing the Paul Taylor Choristers who had been providing vocal support for Bing until that time. Apart from Trudy, the other four members were June Clifford, Dorothy Messmer, Alice Ludes and Denny Wilson. Inevitably, the personnel altered over the years and the group was eventually reduced to a quartet, later still to become, variously, The Music Maids & (Hal) (Phil) (Lee) (Men). Other combinations who filled this role were, The Charioteers, a coloured group, composed of Wilfred "Billy" Williams, Eddie Jackson, Ira Williams, Howard "Doug" Daniel and James Sherman (Piano) who were, ultimately, to be carried forward by Bing to his *Philco Radio Time* series and The Kraft Choral Club (Society) (Group), originally composed of 90 employees from Kraft's home office in the East, who, invariably made featured contributions at Christmas and Easter.

Sometime scriptwriter and warm -up man for the Hall,

Leo "Ukie" Sherin found some measure of permanence, for a couple of seasons, playing a buffoon whose general dumbness was only exceeded by his ambitions to be the star of the show. One of KMH's outstanding discoveries was Victor Borge who came for a week and stayed for more than a year! On occasions, he hosted the programme, eventually progressing to his own, internationally acclaimed, one -man show.

Two other popular comics emerged from the ranks of the Trotter orchestra. Jerry Colonna, a trombonist, described by Bing as, "the only singer who started on his high note and then went up" went on to became an invaluable member of the Bob Hope troupe and appeared in several movies including two Road pictures. There was also Spike Jones who, together with John Scott and Perry Botkin, created the inimitable musical style of Spike Jones and his City Slickers, originally intended to accompany Bob Burns' efforts on the bazooka.

While not necessarily being regarded as the supreme accolade, it was considered a reasonably prestigious compliment to make a guest appearance on the *Kraft Music Hall* and indeed, some stars actually asked to appear even though the remuneration was below that of other shows of similar standing. There were, however, benefits in the form of minimal time spent on tiring rehearsals and a bumper hamper of Kraft products from the sponsors. A perusal of the relevant index reveals that the guest list was nothing short of breathtaking. Stars from Hollywood and the concert hall, top sporting personalities, as well as literary figures and even politicians dropped in.

There appeared to be a tacit rivalry between the Fleischmann show and KMH as to who could come up with the biggest and the best. While Rudy Vallee rubbed shoulders with Gertrude Lawrence, Noel Coward, Eddie Cantor and Tyrone Power, Crosby chatted to Leopold Stokowski, Amelia Earhart, Spencer Tracy and John McCormack.

In the beginning, the show was to have no audience, due, it is said, to Bing's reluctance to dress up and to wear his toupee but a compromise was reached when it was decided that an audience was needed to provide the essential laughter for timing gags. Members of the show were permitted to bring along friends who were allowed to laugh but not applaud. Very soon, On Thursday nights, these friends were forming extensive queues outside the NBC studios until, in the end, it became so difficult to prevent the audience from breaking into spontaneous applause that the rules had to be abandoned.

After Pearl Harbour and to some degree, even before, KMH became a typical wartime radio programme. Members of the armed forces and officials from government agencies were featured and in line with other leading radio shows, allocations were received from the Office of War Information. These allocations were in the form of broadcast appeals to the public to join in the war effort of the nation. The effectiveness of these propaganda plugs can be judged by the erroneous announcement (read by Bing), of a minimum age requirement which resulted in a flood of under -age volunteers having to be turned away on the very next day.

The musical content of the shows altered quite dramatically. To some extent, the more mawkishly sentimental songs were eschewed in favour of the rousing marching songs of the various branches of the armed services and the patriotic products of Tin Pan Alley, such as, Comin' In On A Wing And A Prayer, Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition, Vict'ry Polka, The Bombardier Song, A Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin, Ridin' Herd On A Cloud, etc., and musical invocations stressing the need to invest in War Bonds, as in The Road To Victory and Any Bonds Today?.

Possibly, the most poignant story connected with the show occurred very soon after the beginning of the war with Japan when General Douglas MacArthur and his troops were beleaguered by the Japanese invaders in the Philippines and a weary corporal in the Signal Corps felt lonesome for the voice of Bing Crosby. He sent a coded message requesting a short wave broadcast to the Philippines, "in order to divert our thoughts from the pressure of battle." The request was transmitted by MacArthur to Washington which resulted in a personal telegram being sent to Bing, saying, "General MacArthur is specifically asking you to broadcast to the men in the Philippines on Bataan Peninsula" and thus on the 29th January 1942, the complete programme was dedicated to the fighting men in that far -off Theatre of Operations.

The end of the war roughly coincided with the commencement of hostilities which presaged Bing's departure from the *Kraft Music Hall.* By this time, the programme was assured of its rightful place in the Golden Age Of Radio and this, surely, was also the Golden Age for Bing Crosby, when he was at the peak of his career, commanding a listening audience measured in excess of an astonishing fifty million!

Compiler's Notes

From a personal viewpoint, the *Kraft Music Hall* radio programme has been always been the Holy Grail of Crosbyana, covering ten years during which an emergent crooner with an agreeable personality rose to be a

Twentieth Century icon. Unlike the later Philco, Chesterfield or General Electric series of which complete copies exist, providing a perfect continuity and means of verification, the Kraft series (with the exception of some of the later shows) has no such continuity and relies on hearsay and (notoriously flawed) newspaper columns. Without being too critical of hearsay on which a great deal of the world's history is based, it is an accepted fact that a great proportion of the programmes do not survive in complete form, making it impossible for anyone to be certain of their exact content.

It would seem that even regular participants in the shows are not immune to confusion. A quote by Trudy Erwin appears in the sleeve notes for the LP issue Spokane 23. "One of the songs Bing and I sang together was Stay As Sweet As You Are. Strange as it seems, when I was a senior in high school, I had harmonised that very same song with a record of Bing, in a little recording booth at the World's Fair". Discographers would be as delighted to find this record, as I would to find a place for the duet in this Directory! Or, is Trudy remembering, The Way You Look Tonight which qualifies on both counts and has some vague lyrical resemblance.

Fifteen years ago, I produced a very limited edition of twenty-five copies of a Directory for this series. At that time, I bemoaned the fact that I still had a list of guest stars who were supposed to have appeared and songs that were alleged to have been sung for which I could find no place. Further research has resolved many of these queries but some remain and I have little doubt that there are copies of shows in existence that I have not had the benefit of hearing. For example, there is evidence that a copy of the programme of the 18th April 1940 endures, featuring a Crosby duet of Alice Blue Gown with Anna Neagle. (Come on, own up. Who's got it?). I am equally sure that there are those whose knowledge is greater than mine whocould add more detail to this Directory. In spite of these pitfalls, a strenuous effort has been made to avoid assumption and I have resisted including the names of even the most regular of the personnel, unless there is a modicum of evidence to support their inclusion.

There is no doubt that excerpts from the *Kraft Music Hall* were used in programmes generated by the Armed Forces Radio Service. The transcribed AFRS Music Hall series which was short-waved at noon on Sundays provides glimpses of shows which may no longer be available in their original form. Here the hazard to the researcher is that although they may have been based on an original Kraft programme, wild songs have been inserted, by Bing or others, from other shows in order to produce a full hour/half hour without commercials.

It is also an accepted fact that Kraft provided the source for many of the V -Discs that were issued during World War II. There is a school of thought which suggests that Bing performed the show twice, explaining the difference between the broadcast version of a song and that issued on V –Disc, but it has been established that many of these alternates were recorded from same-day rehearsals for the programmes. I would further suggest that these rehearsals were somewhat more formal than usual as it has been noted that, at a rehearsal, Bing might "la, la, la" his part, saving the lyric (and his voice) for the actual broadcast. Please note that I have chosen to link these V -Disc issues with either the original programme or its rehearsal, on occasions, pointing out the salient differences.

The 385 separate programmes, which comprise the *Kraft Music Hall* series, have been divided into seasons. Special mention is made because although the seasons may still, roughly, coincide with Bing's annual vacations, compared with other series they were slightly more unpredictable. It should be pointed out, however, that the *Kraft Music Hall* was a year -round programme and during Bing's absences, *The Hall* was hosted by other personalities, including Bob Burns, Mary Martin, Bob Crosby, Victor Borge, George Murphy, Frank Morgan etc.

John Scott Trotter

Bob Burns

Jimmy Dorsey

The History of Yahoo Groups in the OTR Hobby

Ryan Ellett

As many of you know, I enjoy documenting the history of the old time radio hobby. One wee bit of hobby history that has a special nostalgic spot for me is the Yahoo Groups, and I'd like to take a look at their notable and changing contribution to the hobby.

Sometime in the '90s fans began encoding old time radio programs to the mp3 format. I haven't read enough of the fan literature from that time to nail down an approximate period when this occurred, but by the turn of the millennium thousands – maybe tens of thousands – of shows had been transferred. That phenomena is its own story, but in 1998 (so claimed by Wikipedia) Yahoo organized the Yahoo Groups feature that many of us recognize today. Since the Groups' beginnings, old time radio has been the subject of multiple Groups. The first appears to be zekesoldtimeradio Group, founded in September, 1998.

A year later, in September 1999, what I consider the mother of all OTR Yahoo Groups was founded, oldradioshowsonmp3. It has always had the largest membership base of any OTR Group (though, of course, the number of active members fluctuates in every group). On a side note, I have a soft spot for this group because it was my introduction to the old time radio community. On November 12, 2000 I innocently inquired "I am new to the OTR world but would like to start building a collection of old shows. I've found several sites that sell shows on tape or CD but this seems like a pretty expensive way to build a collection. Is this how most of you get your shows? Any advice is appreciated."

For whatever reason, oldradioshowsonmp3 consistently had more members and more postings than any other Group for many years. It kept up its steam longer than most groups, too, peaking in amount of monthly posts at a whopping 1,477 in April, 2002, more than 2 ½ years after its founding. This is unusual, as we'll see when looking at other groups. Table 1 clearly shows the dominance of the oldradioshowsonmp3 Group (maroon) during the first four years of OTR Groups, from 2000 to 2004. The oldradioshowsonmp3 Group continues to this day, though participation is only a fraction of its glory days; August 2008 registered just 105 messages.

Several early Yahoo OTR Groups focused on a single program. Most failed to get noticeable attention, but the LumandAbner Group (Pale yellow on Table 1), founded in November, 2000, received 201 postings at its first peak in April, 2002, roughly 1 ½ years later. About a year later monthly postings fell to 2 (August, 2003) then the Group managed to do what few Yahoo Groups ever do: forge a comeback in interest. They hit their overall peak of 224 postings in November, 2004, a full four years after its founding. The Group amassed an impressive 515 members and in August, 2008, still got 10 postings.

Two other early Groups were otrcollections (founded February, 2001) and Radiowaves (founded March, 2001). The first was not wildly successful. otrcollections peaked at 122 messages just a few months after its founding in August, 2001. Last month it had a single message. Radiowaves fared better, peaking first at 180 messages in November, 2003, then much later a freakish 263 this past May despite not managing more than 50 posts a month the entire year and half before. Looking at that Group's monthly post counts for the past 7 ½ years indicates steady interest. August 2008 registered 17 posts.

2002 witnessed the birth of three Groups that would achieve sizable posting numbers. The theme-focused Detective-OTR arrived in April, 2002, and a year later reached an impressive 368 postings in February, 2003. Apparently interested wasn't sustained and it hasn't had a posting since January, 2007. Next was OTR_Personal_Collection in September 2002 (not on Table 1). Interestingly, this group was formed to distribute the "Ryan's Discs" collection which I originated via Streamload and which I wrote about in a past issue. It peaked in March, 2005 with 1,368 messages and still had 173 this past August. Its focus has changed to discussing and trading video as well as OTR, helping it to maintain member interest. One month after the Personal Collection Group appeared, the blind-otr-friends Group (not on Table 1) made its debut. A year later in December, 2003, it received 276 postings, its most ever. There were 17 this past August and it seems to have a small but steady group of contributors.

By 2003 file sharing and CD distributions were well established in the OTR community and most of the groups actively encouraged and facilitated these sharing methods. The most successful Group to emerge this year was the Old Time Radio Researchers (bright baby blue, Table 1), which premiered in November. It quickly peaked in March, 2004, at 1,077 messages but this is a bit deceptive because the Group began spinning off sub-Groups which lowers the post count for any individual OTRR Yahoo Group.

Another successful group, OTRDAYS (blue, Table 1), premiered in March, 2003. It started fast and reached 941

messages two months later, its highest all-time total. Interest in the group has been steady, consistently receiving more than 100 postings per month (117 in August). The third group, OTRFriends (very light violet, Table 1), was an immediate sensation, receiving an astounding 2,282 posts its second month, a peak of 800 more messages than any other group. In 2004, four months after the Group appeared on the scene, the Group noted an impressive 1000 postings and two other months that year had 700 plus. The Group inexplicably faded quickly after its first year and had only 7 postings last month. The fourth featured group founded in 2003 was OTRonDVD (dark blue, Table 1), appearing in November. Like OTRFriends it peaked in about a year, reaching 144 posts in December, 2004. Interest is now greatly diminished with only a single posting in August, 2008.

New Yahoo Groups in the past few years have been relatively few and far between. The most notable addition to the OTR Group family in that time is otronmp3distros (purple-pink, Table 1), a Group focused on distributions as opposed to general discussion. In its 28 months of existence it has exceeded 1,000 messages eleven times, 900 messages seven times, and 800 messages four times. The last few months have seen a downward trend for the group but it is still a very popular watering hole with 644 posts in August.

Table 1 shows that over the life of the Yahoo Groups there has been steady interest in the Groups with one Group receiving the majority of posts at a given time. From 2000 to 2003 oldradioshowsonmp3 was king before sharing top-dog status with OTRDAYS during 2003. In 2004 the Old Time Radio Reserachers and OTRFriends became the most popular Groups with OTRDAYS attracting steady attention in the background. Overall interest in the OTR Groups dipped through 2005 and early 2006 before otronmp3distros revived interest. Behind the numbers, however, Table 1 clearly shows that a handful of groups have represented the majority of interest in OTR Groups and even those ebbed and flowed in relation to each other, one becoming more popular at the others' expense.

Table 2 reflects the total number of postings to OTR Yahoo Groups, including groups beyond those featured in Table 1 but not including many groups whose monthly postings rarely exceed 2 or 3. This graph clearly shows interest in the Groups peaked in late 2003 with steady decline in participation since. If we were to throw out the otronmp3distros Group (whose postings primarily related to CD/DVD distributions and not general OTR discussion) the posting totals would be dramatically lower (~250 monthly postings over the last three years among all the major gruops).

Where has the discussion which used to run these Groups moved to? This is unclear, though a good guess would be more sophisticated Internet forums such as http://theflashingdial.forumwise.com/ and http://otrplus.com/index.php. These have proliferated greatly in the last several years, perhaps minimizing the attractiveness of the clunkier Yahoo Groups as a place for informal discussion. While Yahoo Groups will likely have their place in the hobby for some time to come, Table 1 indicates their use is increasingly for distributions (otronmp3distros) rather than as a meeting place of like-minded enthusiasts.

My original prediction was that the Yahoo Groups, while still utilized by OTR fans, are not nearly as active as they used to be, based primarily on my decreased use of the Groups and fewer mentions of them by friends in the hobby. The numbers highlighted above seem to support this idea. I also thought they would have a fairly quick start-up-to-peak average. The numbers here are generally supportive as well. The average time from Group founding to peak monthly postings (for all groups included in Table 2) was 15.2 months, a year and ¼. Included in that, of course, are a handful that took three years to peak and a handful that took just a very few months. The vitality of these groups is small; they tend to start fast and then fade, though several persevere and chug away month after month with a small but loyal readership.

For a few short years I think they were a vibrant entryway to OTR for many fans, myself included. While they still serve a purpose, especially in the coordination of material distributions, it seems that more user-friendly web forums have replaced them as social meeting places for most "online" OTR fans.

Note: OTR Yahoo Groups included in Table 2 but not shown on Table 1: OTRSCIFIFANTASY, OTR_HiQ_mp3, Vintageradioshows, Laterthanyouthink, Otrdropchute, Otrtradersassociation, Oldtymeradioman, Blind-otr-friends, OTRRDistroGroup.

Table 1: Most Active Yahoo OTR Groups

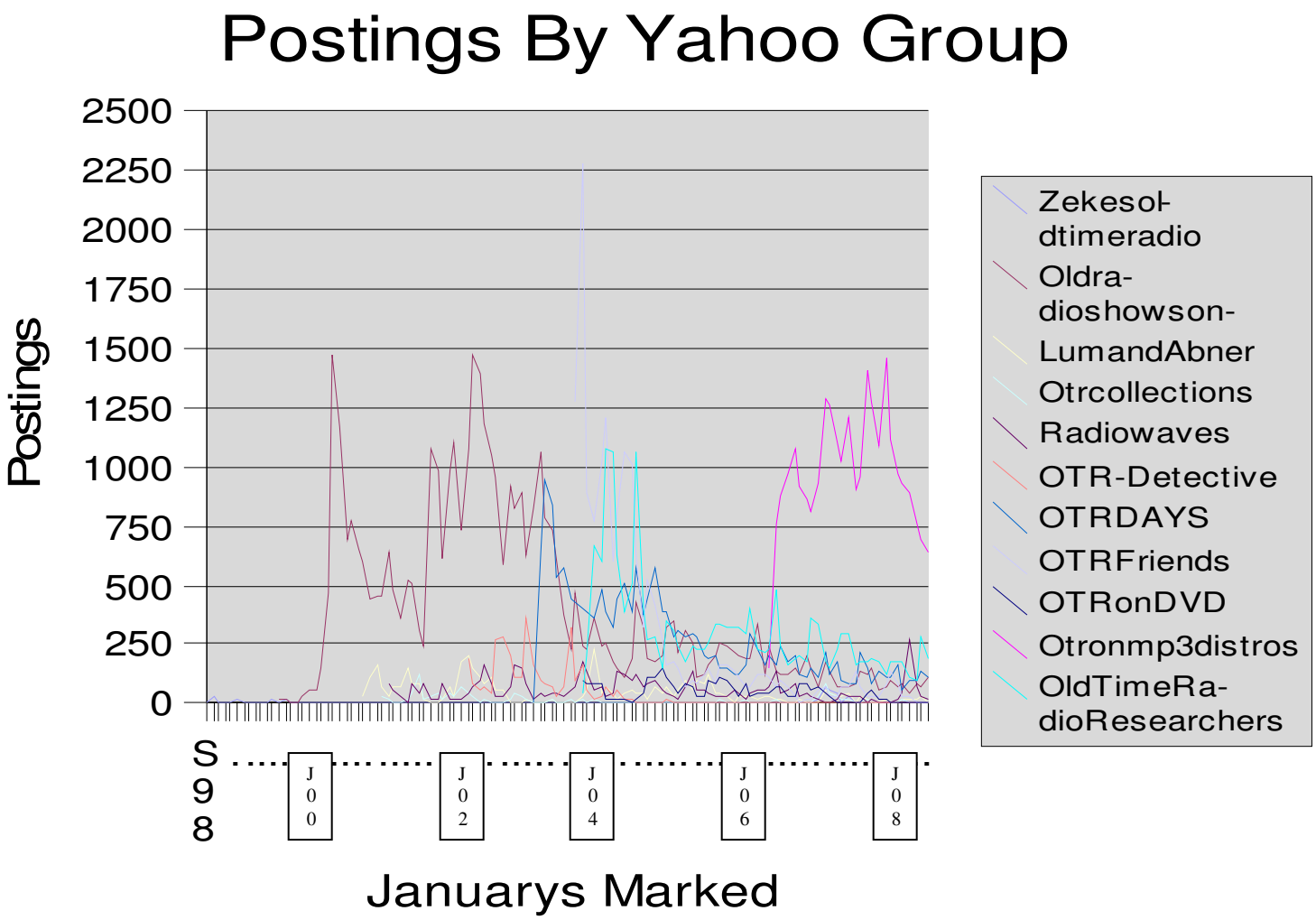


Table 2" Total Postings

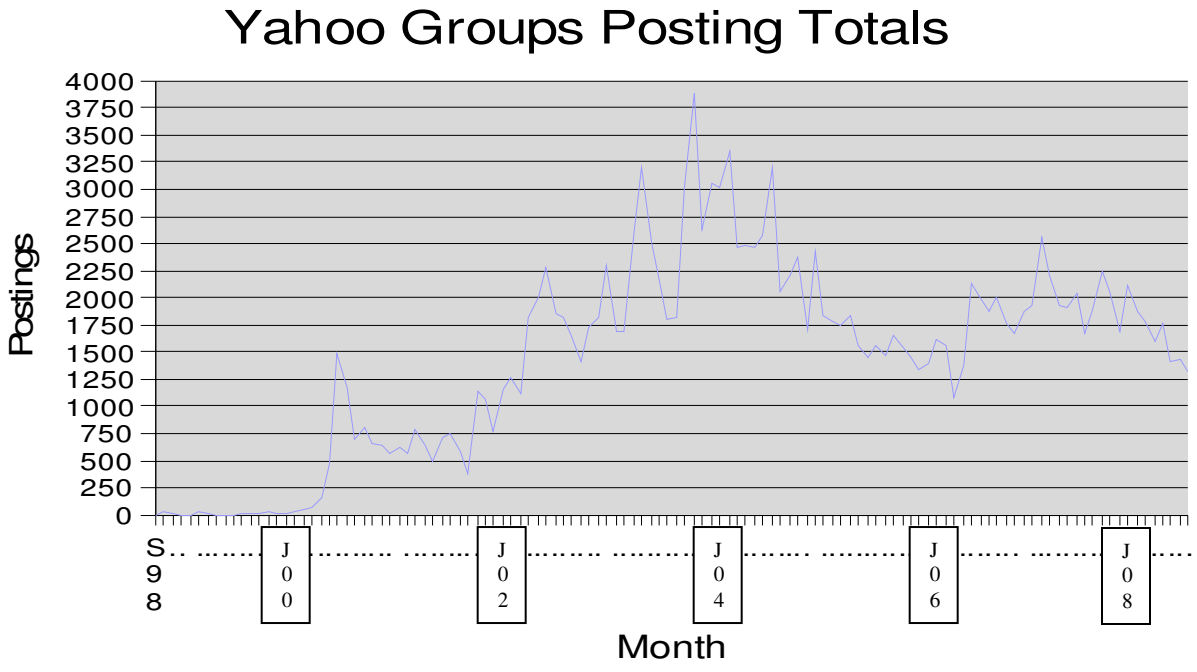
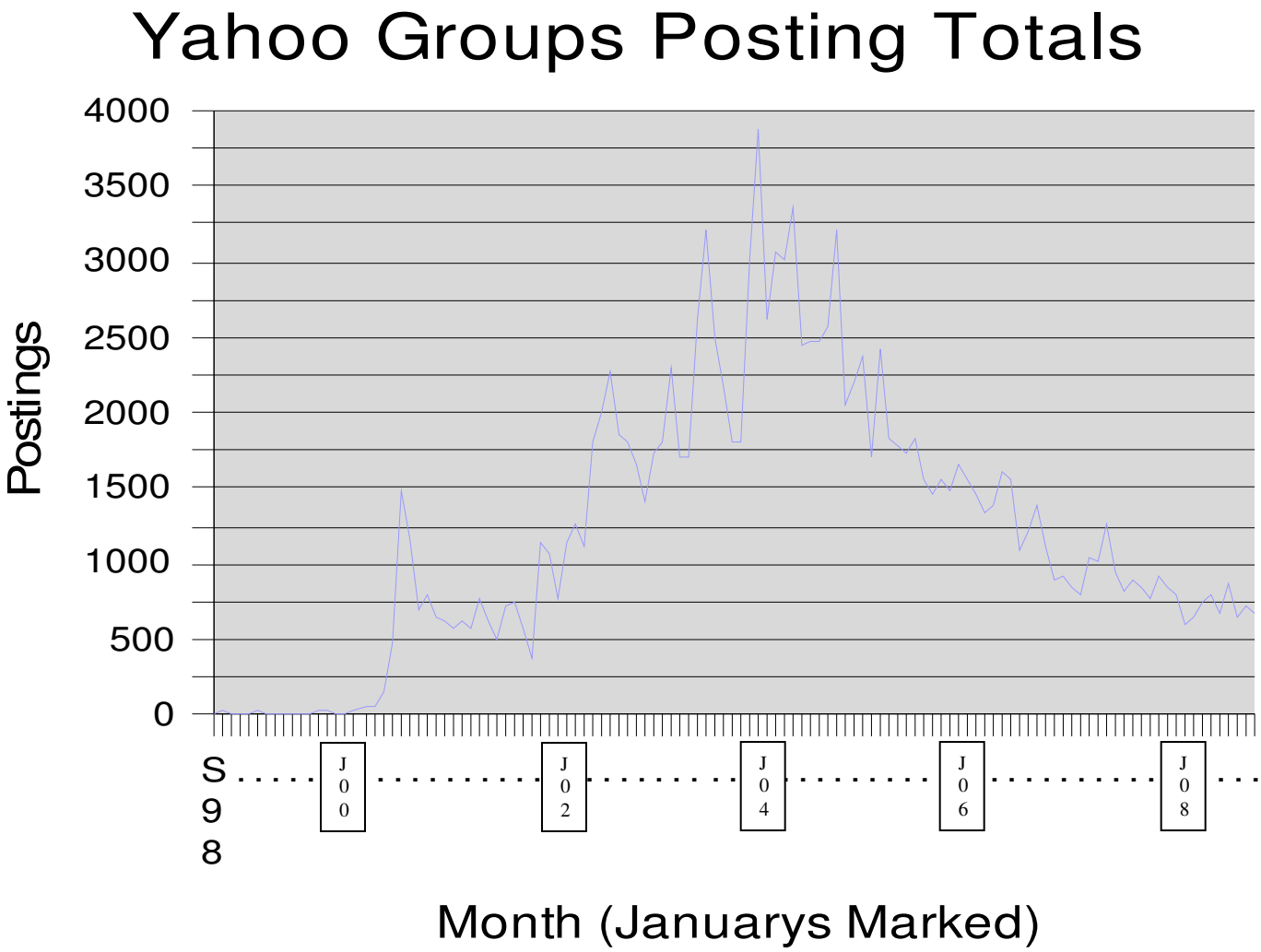
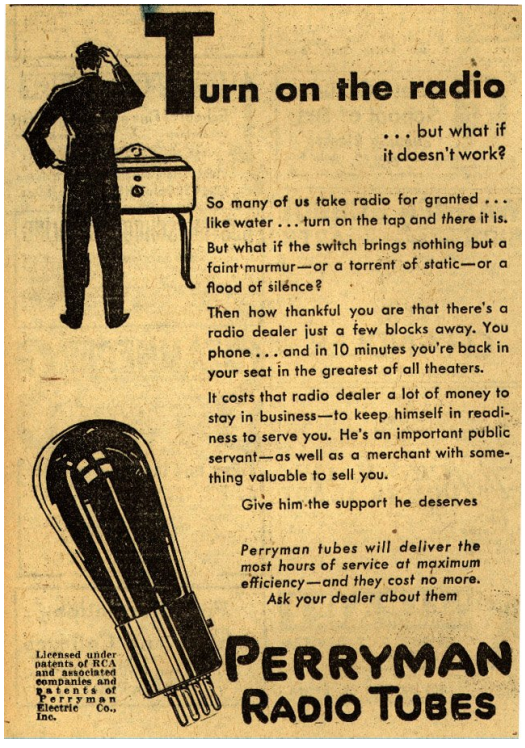


Table 3: Total Postings Without otronmp3distros

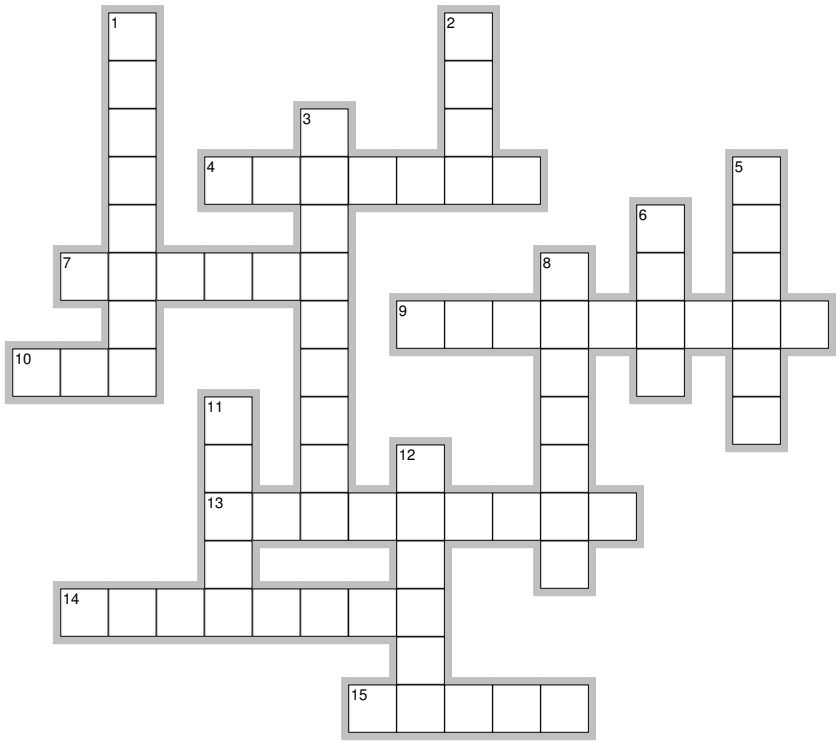




Casey, Crime Photographer

By

Fred Bertelsen



Across

4. Matt _____ was the first to play Casey.
7. Jim _____ played Casey for a few shows before 1943.
9. Often s picture snapped at a crime scene led Casey to play _____.
10. Casey débuted over ___ on July 7th, 1943.
13. John Gibson was _____, the sardonic bartender at the Blue Note Cafe, the favorite hangout of Casey.
14. Casey, Crime photographer was originally known as _____ Casey.
15. Jackson Beck was one of the actors who portrayed Inspector _____, the down in the mouth cop.

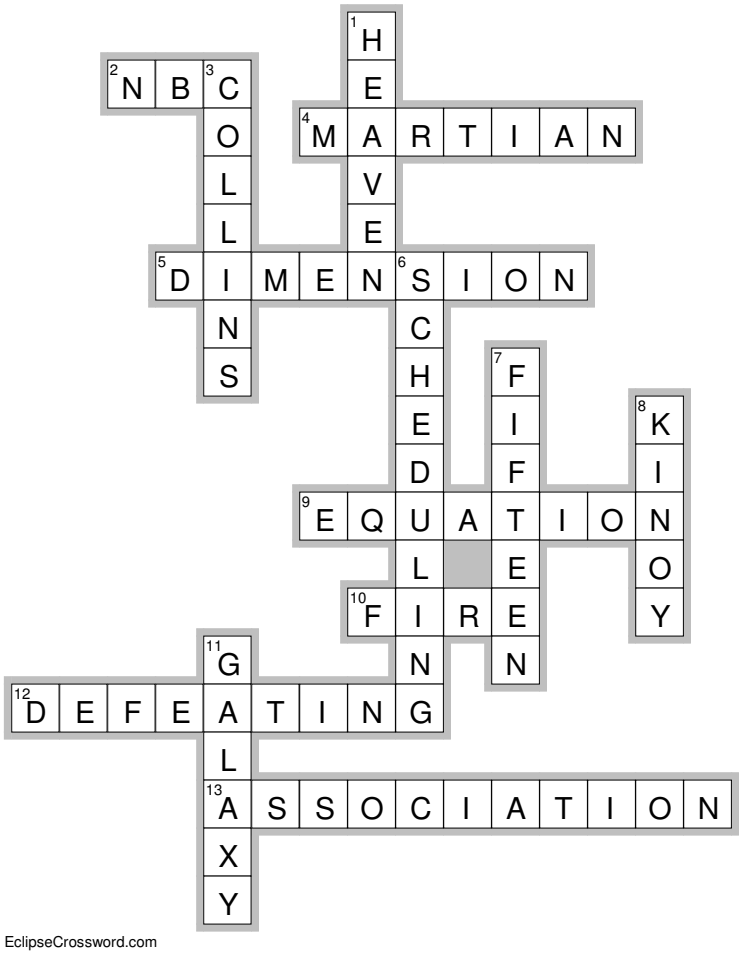
Down

1. Casey's girlfriend Ann _____ Was played by several actresses including Jone Allison, Alice Reinheart and Betty Furness.
2. Casey, Crime Photographer was based on the novels by George Harmon ____.
3. Staats _____ took over as Casey in 1943 until the end of the series in 1955.
5. Tony _____ was the announcer for Anchor Hocking when this series was sponsored by them.
6. Bob ____ was the announcer for the show.
8. Supporting players came from the ___ ____ (2 wds.) radio pool.
11. In it's second incarnation, Casey was known as Casey, _____ Photographer.
12. Casey was written by Milton J. Kramer, Gail and Harry Ingram and _____ Dean Cole.

X-MINUS ONE

By

Fred Bertelsen



News From the Community

Tom Mix Festival - Sept 27, 28, 2008 - Sponsored by the City of Dewey, OK. More info at website www.cityofdewey.com.
Annual Rex Allen Days Celebration - Oct 2-5, 2008 in conjunction with the 9th Annual Western Music, Cowboy Poetry and Rex Allen Film Festival Willcox, Arizona. Website: http://www.rexallenmuseum.org/
Western North Carolina Film Festival - Nov 12-15, 008, Best Western - Biltmore West, I-40 at Exit 44, 275 Smoky Park Hwy, Asheville, North Carolina 28806 Contact: Tommy Hildreth (828) 524-5251, or e-mail to: cowboys@cometwesterns.com

If you know of a old time radio, movie serial, or nostalgia convention, please let us know. We'd be happy to run a full page flyer at no cost for any convention. E-mail the editor.

CINCINNATI'S 23rd ANNUAL

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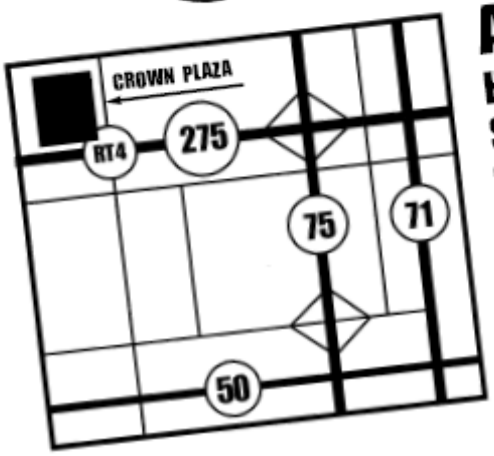

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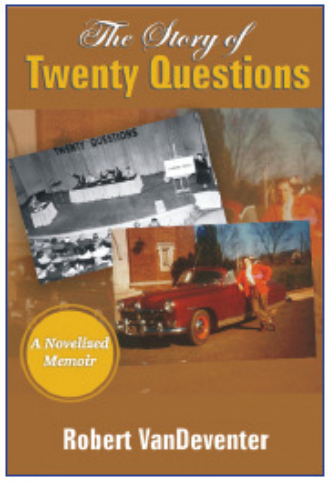
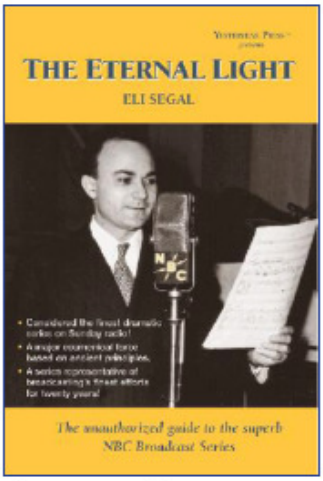
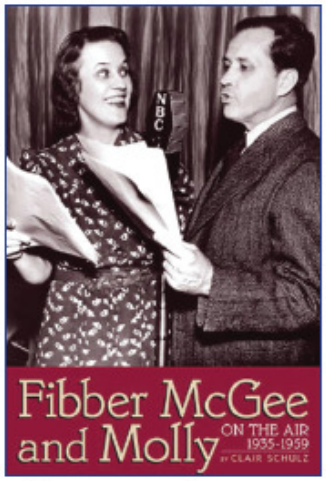


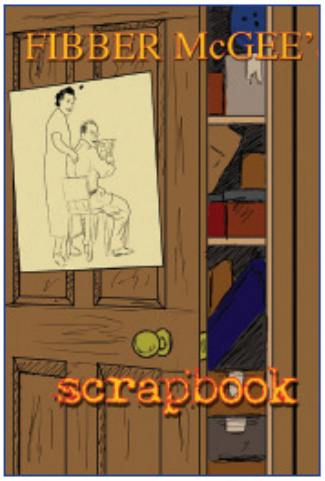
The Story of Twenty Questions
by Robert VanDeventer



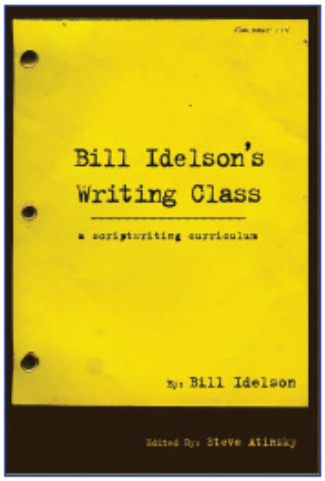
The Eternal Light
by Eli Segal



Fibber McGee and Molly
by Clair Schulz

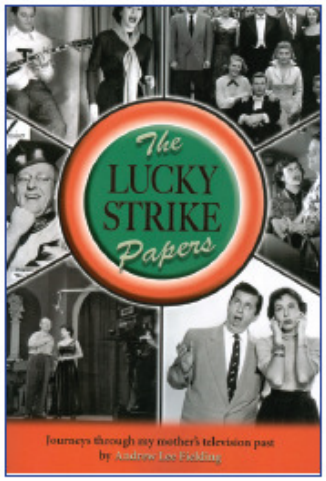


Fibber McGee's Scrapbook
by Clair Schulz

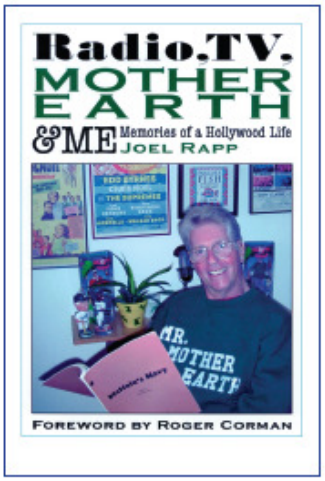


Bill Idelson's Writing Class
by Bill Idelson

Don't Wear Silver in the Winter
by Janet Cantor Gari



The Lucky Strike Papers
by Andrew Lee Felding



Radio, TV, Mother Earth & Me
by Joel Rapp

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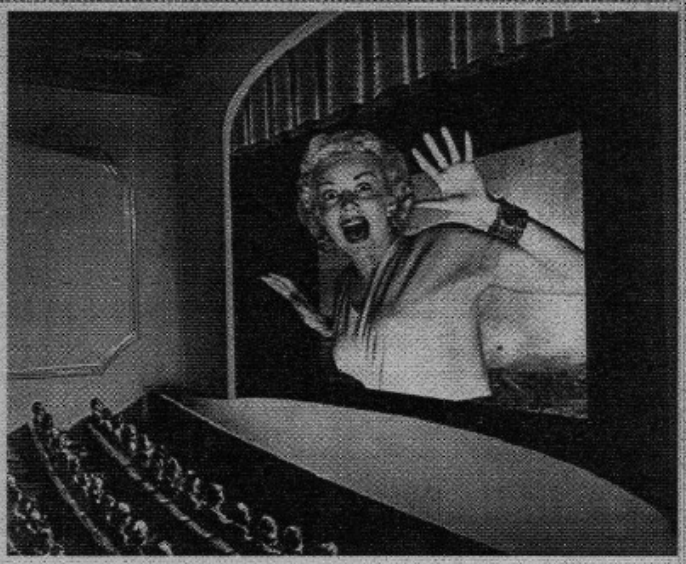
Kookie on *77 Sunset Strip*

Vince Fontaine in *Grease* (the movie)



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From The Treasurer's Corner

Tony Jaworowski

Over the past two years, The Old Time Radio Researchers has spent over $9800.00 in bringing new and better quality material to the OTR community. All material is released freely to anyone desiring it.

The Old Time Radio Researchers currently has $1208.66 in the treasury. Funds recently disbursed include $44.95 to David Oxford for a transcription disc purchase, $166.88 to Jim Beshires for OTRR web hosting services, and $330.50 to Esoteric OTR (Randy Riddle) for transcription discs purchased for the group. A detailed report of the treasury transactions is available to members of the Old Time Radio Researcher's purchasing group.

Many thanks to our monthly supporters who include : Tony Adams, Del Ahlstedt, Dale Beckman, Jim Beshires, Robert Booze, Larry Brist, Krys Bulding, Scott Carpenter, Terry Caswell, Pete Cavallo, Albert Christian, Greg Coakley, Gary Costel, Dee DeTevis, Scott Erickson, Allan Foster, Tony Galati, Michael Galbreath, Allan George, David Gibbs, Charlie Henson, Roger Hohenbrink, Archie Hunter, Larry Husch, Donald Husing, Tony Jaworowski, Dave Johnson, Robert Johnson, Jim Jones, Ben Kibler, Robert Lenk, Toby Levy, John Liska, Thomas Mandeville, Larry Maupin, Gary Mollica, Henry Morse, Jess Oliver, David Oxford, Robert Phillips, Lenny Price, Peter Risbey, Ron Schalow, Richard Sheckman, David Shipman, Charles St.George, Gary Stanley, Doug Stivers, Daryl Taylor, David Taylor, Gregg Taylor, Lee Tefertiller, Clorinda Thompson, Allan Turner, Eugene Ward, Joseph Webb, Gordon Whitman and Jim Wood. This monthly support assists us in bringing new and better quality old time radio programming to the entire OTR community.

If you are interested in becoming a monthly supporter of the Old Time Radio Researchers, please contact the treasurer, Tony Jaworowski via email : tony_senior@yahoo.com Monthly support dues are currently $5.00 per month, and monthly supporters receive advance releases of all purchases made, usually high quality MP3 files distributed on DVD media in a 'round robin' fashion. As always, one time contributions of any amount are also welcome and will greatly be appreciated. Donations can be made with PayPal by using the ID ajaworowski@ameritech.net or via cash, check, or money order made out to

Tony Jaworowski
15520 Fairlane Drive
Livonia, MI 48154

Wistful Vistas

Ryan Ellett

Fall has apparently come early to northeast Kansas; temperatures this month have only gotten into the 80s a very few times and it's even dipped into the 40s a couple nights. This does not pertain to the Old Radio Times except that autumn always puts me into an old time radio state of mind.

Why this is, I'm not sure. I discovered this great hobby in the fall so there's certainly a bit of nostalgia for me in that regard. Perhaps it's because there are so many holidays this time of year and many old time radio shows occurred in "real-time," following the seasons. Thus, there are many OTR shows with Halloween and Thanksgiving themes which then seque into winter themes. Maybe it's just because I find myself doing more yardwork which allows me to fill up the mp3 player and wile away the weekends with my favorite stars of years gone by.

In any case, my OTR listening seems to pick up after the summer ends. I've welcomed this fall by loading the mp3 player with *Suspense*, *Burns & Allen*, and *Vic & Sade*, three classic shows I haven't listened to nearly enough. There are so many I want to listen to but these three are a good start. One drawback to this hobby is it really makes you face up to your mortality; so much OTR, so little time. One could never listen to all the shows that have survived so choosing to listen to one show means potentially never listening to another show.

On a lighter note, we've brought you another great issue jammed with old time radio information. We're especially proud to bring you a great piece by John Schneider about the early west coast networks. I hope we can encourage John to make future contributions.

Our reprinting of Lionel Pairpoint's book on Bing Crosby continues and we open with a reprinted article by Donna Halper. I hope someday she collects all her essays into one volume for publication. Speaking of which, I hope Jim Cox does the same with his many articles spread across so many publications. While he's preparing another great feature for an upcoming issue we present his latest book review this month.

That's it for this month; Happy listening all!

OTRR Acquisitions and Upgrades

The following is a list of newly acquired series/episodes. They may either be new to mp3 or better encodes. They were purchased by donations from members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers. If you have cassettes that you would like to donate, please e-mail beshiresjim@yahoo.com. For reel-to-reels, contact david0@centurytel.net and for transcription discs tony_senior@yahoo.com

AFRS Presents xx-xx-xx (19) Accent On Music.mp3
AFRS Presents xx-xx-xx (21) The Reformer.mp3
AFRS Presents xx-xx-xx (22) Incident At Harper's Ferry.mp3

Adventures Of Zorro 57-xx-xx Imprisoned.mp3
Adventures Of Zorro 57-xx-xx The King's Justice.mp3

Cecil Brower and his Kilocycle Cowboys xx-xx-xx First Song - The Dill Pickle Rag.mp3

Columbia Workshop 41-06-15 Soliloquy To Balance The Budget.mp3
Columbia Workshop 41-07-20 Double Concerto.mp3
Columbia Workshop 41-08-03 Descent Of The Gods.mp3
Columbia Workshop 41-08-10 Samson.mp3
Columbia Workshop 44-05-02 Cliche Expert.mp3
Coumbia Workshop 41-09-30 Mary And The Fairy.mp3

Gisele Of Canada xx-xx-xx (09) Guest - Burns And Allen.mp3

Jack Smith Show, The 46-02-14 First Song - Give Me The Simple Life.mp3
Jack Smith Show, The 46-02-15 First Song - I'm Following You.mp3

New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (17) Masters Of Green Oaks.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (27) Portrait Of Suzanne.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (28) The Walls Are High.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (29) But Where Was The Groom.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (30) A Question of Eligibility.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (31) East To West.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (32) Luck Of The Roaring Camp.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (33) The Chair.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (34) Freedom Of The Press.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (35) 7900 Empire State.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (36) Take My Advice.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (37) Spirit of 76.mp3
New National Guard Show, The xx-xx-xx (38) Bells Of Saint Angelo.mp3
New National Guard, The xx-xx-xx (22) Skipper Of The Sea Wench.mp3
New National Guard, The xx-xx-xx (23) The Doctor's Patient.mp3
New National Guard, The xx-xx-xx (24) I Met An Angel.mp3
New National Guard, The xx-xx-xx (25) An Old Debt.mp3
New National Guard, The xx-xx-xx (25) Boy With The Green Thumb.mp3

Preview Theater Of The Air xx-xx-xx To Trap A Fox (Zorro).mp3

Reading Out Loud 431003 xxx The Sun Rising.mp3

Ripley's Believe It Or Not 38-04-09 Titanic.mp3
Ripley's Believe It Or Not 38-08-08 What Monarch Became A Citizen Of the US (wrong date).mp3
Ripley's Believe It Or Not 39-06-30.mp3
Ripley's Believe It Or Not Mother Goose Stories.mp3

Saturday Round-Up Of Sports 470705 xxx Larry Dolby Goes To Cleveland.mp3
Saturday Round-Up Of Sports 470823 xxx A House Cleaning For Boxing.mp3

Sportsreel 46-xx-xx (75) Guest - Tommy Harmon (AFRS).mp3
Sportsreel 46-xx-xx (76) 1917 World Series (AFRS).mp3

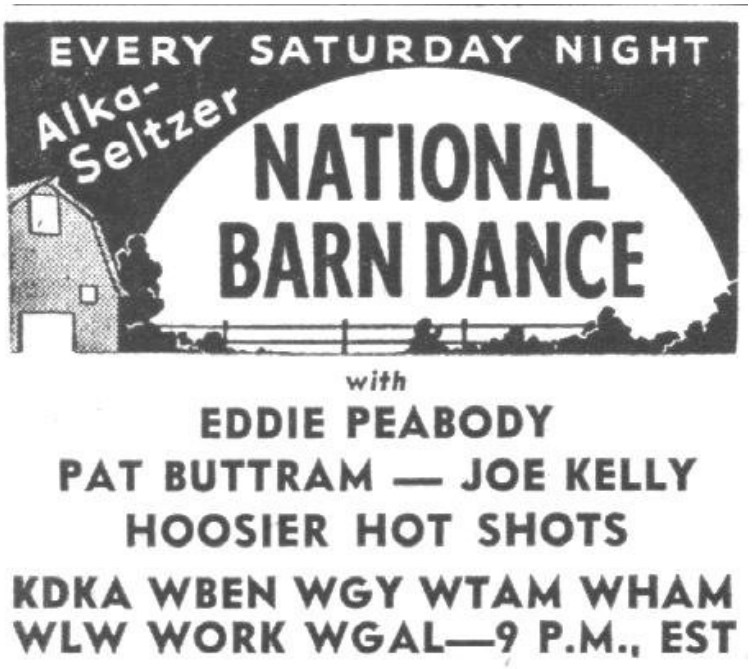
The Feeling Is Mutual 46-03-06 First Song - Kerry Dancing.mp3
The Feeling Is Mutual 46-03-18 First Song - Here Comes Heaven Again.mp3

The Feeling Is Mutual 46-04-15 First Song - I Get A Kick Out Of You.mp3
The Feeling Is Mutual 46-04-22 First Song - I've Got You Under My Skin.mp3
The Feeling Is Mutual 46-04-29 First Song - But Not For Me.mp3
The Feeling Is Mutual 46-05-13 First Song - You Go To My Head.mp3

The Fleishchmann Yeast Hour 34-09-13 Guest - Betty Fields.mp3

This Is My Best 450313 27 Heart of Darkness.mp3

To Be Perfectly Frank 53-12-08 First Song - They Can't Take That Away From Me.mp3



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Will Hutchins
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