



The Old Radio Times

The Official Publication of the Old-Time Radio Researchers

Jan/Feb 2012 www.otrr.org 2356 Subscribers

Number No. 59



View of the Crowne Plaza from the Red Roof Inn

Cincinnati Convention April 13-14, 2012

We have a very special guest returning for a visit this year, Peg Lynch. Peg and Parley Baer entertained us playing Ethel & Albert for several years. Parley said doing the show was the highlight of his career, and wanted to take it on the road. For those who have not heard of or know little about the Ethel & Albert show and Peg Lynch are in for a real treat. When Parley could no longer come Bob Hastings took over playing Albert. Bob Hastings and Rosemary Rice will be returning also. Bob was missed last year because of health reasons, but is doing fine now.

Comments from people who have attended our past conventions.

The best thing about the Cincinnati Old Time Radio and Nostalgia Convention--and why it succeeds--is that it's everything the big conventions are not. There's not as many panels, workshops, and re-creations as in, say, Newark, but this gives the conventioneer

ample time to socialise with OTR friends.

You'll find dozens of OTR celebs at FOTR, REPS, and SPERDVAC, but only a handful at Cincinnati. Bob B. ususally brings back fan favorites such as Hal Stone, Bob Hastings, and Rosemary Rice. Not having lots of celebs brings about the best part of this convention: re-creation director Don Ramlow holds an open casting call for all us non-celebs to fill out secondary parts in the OTR programs to be presented, giving us fans a chance to act alongside some OTR greats.

One thing to recommend is that whatever hotel Bob employs is not as isolated as the Holiday Inn in Newark, which is located on an off-highway service road amidst a ganglia of jug-handles, cloverleaves, and overpasses. The Cincy venue is actually walkable to off-premises places to eat. Also, there is only one banquet during the convention--on Saturday night. Prices to

attend during the day and for the one banquet are quite reasonable. Pending any spikes in operation costs, one can attend both days' daytime events and the banquet for under \$50.00. (It's less now because there is no banquet.)

So, if you've never been, recommend it. Start saving your airfare now this might be your last opportunity for a great deal of friendly Midwestern OTR fun. **Derek Tague**

I had a great time at Cincinnati this year. Highlights include: 1) I got cast in a recreation this year! I was the announcer during the production on *Our Miss Brooks*. What a thrill to work with the professionals and the very talented non-professionals. I felt a little out of my league up there, but everyone was very nice and very helpful. They even tolerated my singing, which should qualify them for sainthood. (that song is still in my head - dream girl, dream girl... 2) Cleaning up during the raffle. I hit on 11 out of 30 raffle tickets - almost 37%. It was a little

embarrassing being so lucky, but I did win some great prizes. **Chris Holm**

I mused over the experiences there once it ended and came to a conclusion perhaps some others share: that the strength of this event is not in its programming per se, but instead in that very matter of fellowship, the opportunities to rub elbows with people of like persuasion from far and near who share a love for OTR. They feed off each other, and make for a pleasant reverie. I'm thankful Bob Burchett and Robert Newman continue to collect us and give us a venue where we can share the things that are important to us. The minor inconveniences really don't count; I think a good time is still had by all. **Jim Cox**

WHILE NEWARK IS FLASHIER AND HAS MORE OTR STARS, CINCINNATI HAS MADE UP FOR IT WITH THE WARM PERSONAL MIDWESTERN WAY THAT THE GUESTS ARE WELCOMED. BOB BURCHETT AND HIS SIDEKICKS ROBERT NEWMAN AND DON RAMLOW WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO THANK US FOR COMING. I'D LIKE TO THANK THEM FOR HAVING A CONVENTION THAT I WAS ABLE TO ATTEND. **FRANK BONCORE**



These comments were made a few years ago, but still hold true today. The Robert Newman mentioned used to man the front desk, and did a great job. He had to retire because of health reasons. He has been missed.

I think the future of conventions is the kind that Martin Grams puts on. The days of the radio conventions have passed. You can tell by the attendance over the last few years. We had good attendance over the years when we were able to bring in guests that everyone knew. Many of them are no longer with us. I used to meet the guest at Newark, and then invite them to Cincinnati. That's no longer possible with Newark holding it's last convention this year.

With the economy the way it is many don't want to spend (or have it to spend) to come to conventions, and there aren't enough young fans to make up for the older fans we have lost. I might add I'm not getting any younger either.

I'm sorry to say this will be the last Cincinnati convention. Not an easy decision to make. It's been a great run over the years. Have met a lot of really nice people and many of the old radio stars we listened to growing up.

Let's make this last one, one to remember. If you have been putting off coming to



Doug Hopkinson



Ryan Ellett



Jim Beshires, his sister and her family





Barb Davies & Lennell Herbert-Marshall



Trivia judges, Martin Grams
Neal Ellis



Trivia winners. Ryan Ellett, Don, Jim Beshires,
& Travis Conner. They lost by one point last year.



Penny Swanberg



Randy Larson

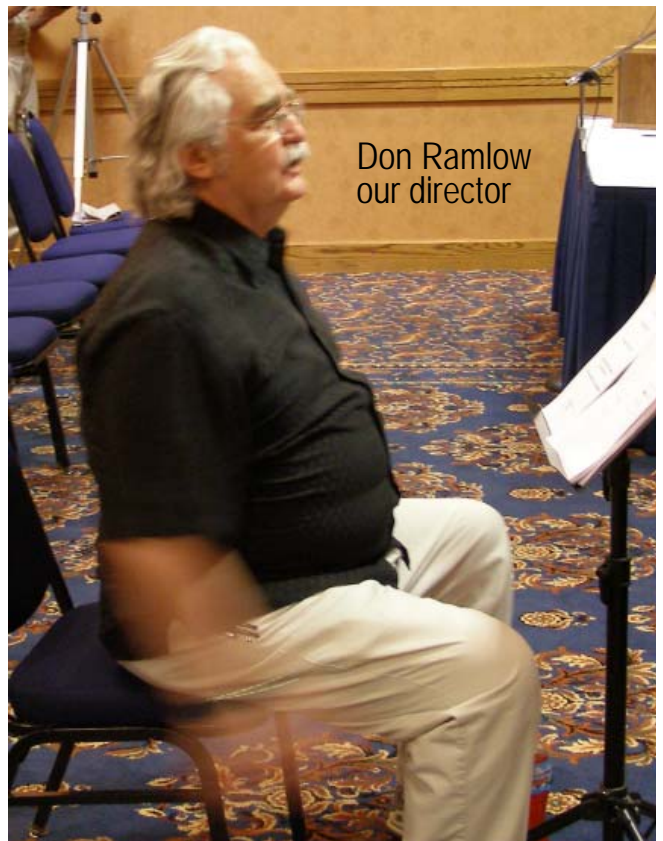
They won the Dave Warren award this year



Neal Ellis & Ken Stockinger conducting an interview live. They won the Stone/Waterman awards



Sound effects team: Dave Davies, Jerry Williams, Penny Swanberg and Mary Ramow.





ROSEMARY RICE



ALL EARS THEATER GROUP



BARB & DAVE DAVIES



RICK PAYNE



BOB BURCHETT AND HIS 25 YEAR AWARD

Would like to again thank the Radio Researchers for generous contributions last year. Your help has made it possible for this event to continue. Any help this year would be greatly appreciated. ■

**CINCINNATI'S
26th ANNUAL
OLD TIME
RADIO
&
NOSTALGIA
CONVENTION**

Peg Lynch

Ethel and Albert
Couple Next Door

Bob Hastings

Archie Andrews, McHale's Navy

**SPECIAL
GUESTS**

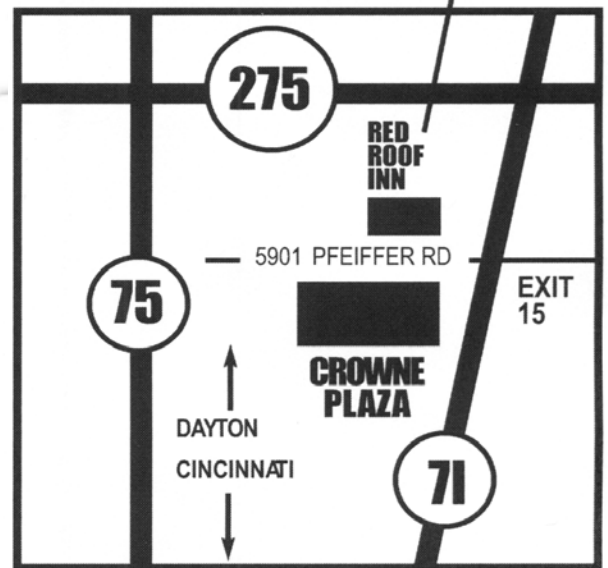
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A Beginner's Guide to Radio Research

by Ryan Ellett

I've had a number of interesting conversations over the past couple years as I've gotten more into radio research about strategies and methods individuals use for doing this kind of work. I thought I'd highlight ways I've gone about doing my research, what's worked well for me, what hasn't, and things I've learned as a guide to help others get into doing their own research.

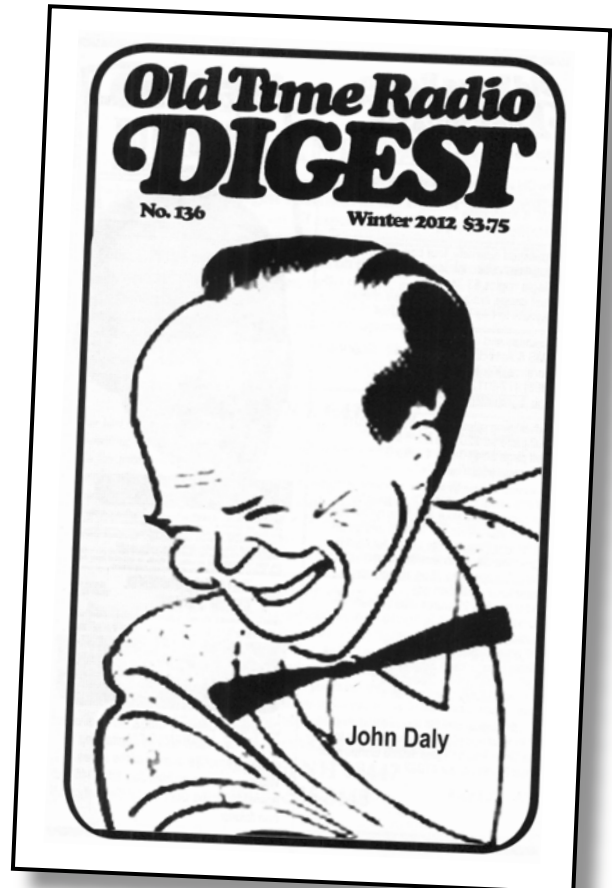
I was inspired to begin doing my own research after attending Doug Hopkinson's presentation at the 2009 Cincinnati old time radio convention where he effectively introduced *Cecil and Sally* to the hobby. Having known Doug for many years and somewhat "grown up" in the hobby with him, I began thinking that even us little guys could contribute valuable knowledge to the hobby, if not on the scale and volume of Martin Grams or Jim Cox. He's a regular working joe who doesn't have access to resources beyond what most of us have and I figured if he could do the great work embodied by that presentation then maybe I could do some, too.

The first question anyone interested in doing historical radio research has to answer is "What should I study?" There are different approaches to answering this question and each of you will have to answer based on your own specific circumstances.

Publishing

This question's answer depends to a considerable extent on whether or not you want to publish. Plenty of fans do research to satisfy their own curiosity and have no interest in seeing it published in any sort of venue. This essentially opens up any topic

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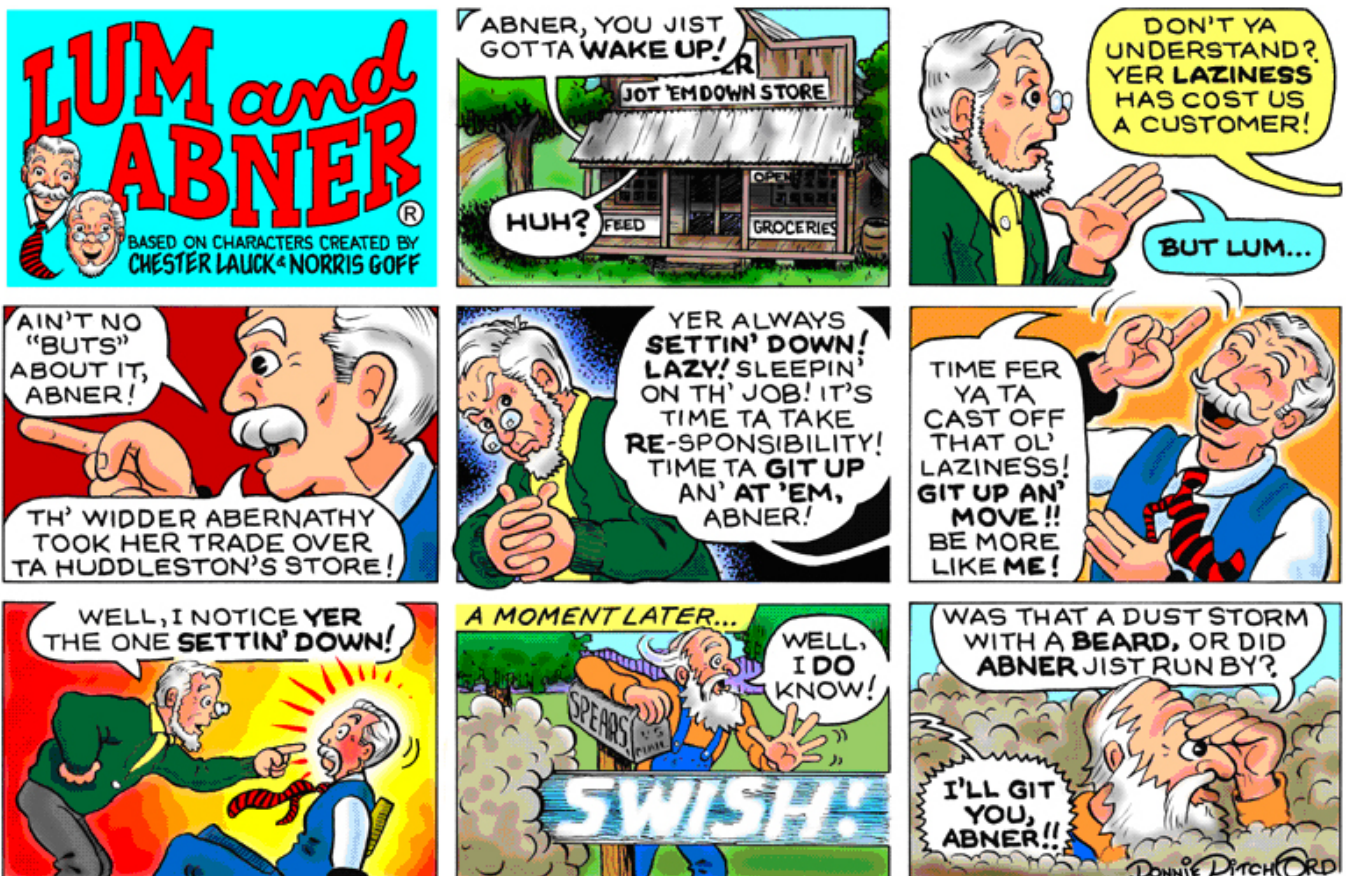
to you, constrained only by your financial ability and hobby contacts to access pertinent documents. If you'd like to publish your work – and I always encourage this – then you've still got some choices to make. Placing your work up on the internet is easy and free and an option for everyone with internet access (or with a friend with access).

The old time radio hobby is blessed to have a number of print outlets considering the hobby's small size. SPERDVAC, REPS, Radio Historical Association of Colorado, the Old Time Radio Club of New York, the Metro Washington Old Time Radio Club and one of the Cincinnati clubs all have newsletters. The online group the Old Time Radio Researchers publishes this ezine, the *Old Radio Times*. Bob Burchett publishes the *Old Time Radio Digest*, an unaffiliated magazine. *The Nostalgia*

Digest, edited by Steve Darnell, usually publishes a piece or two focused on old time radio in each of its quarterly issues, and it pays! A huge range of material finds its way into the pages of these publications.

Still, you might not want to choose a topic that is too narrow in focus or too obscure. The *Old Radio Times* published a piece I did on early black radio entertainers from Kansas. That was probably pushing my luck and likely had very limited appeal to readers. I have a piece on a local Kansas radio station which has not been published as I feel it would have little interest to readers outside the area.

If you're thinking about a book, then you really need to think about and investigate topics as well as potential publishers. In this field McFarland, Bear Manor, and Scarecrow will probably be your first three places to



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query. For McFarland and Scarecrow, you need to identify topics which are going to have relatively wide appeal and be of interest especially to libraries, the main buyer of books from these houses. One of my proposals was rejected as being too regionally focused; they didn't know how they could market it to a national audience.

Notice that very rarely will McFarland and Scarecrow put out books devoted to a single old time radio series. *Mr. Keen* and *Gunsmoke* are two of the more prominent exceptions. More successful are books like many of Jim Cox's which concentrate on an OTR genre (quiz shows, soap operas, sitcoms, etc.). Bear Manor is open to a wider variety of subjects and puts out more material on individual series (especially if there are film or television cross-overs) and show business personalities. Their books are also much cheaper and aimed at individual buyers, not libraries like the other two publishers.

There is also the self-publishing route which has worked very well for Martin Grams. However, he has invested substantial time and effort into promoting his work and building up a following. He's essentially built himself into a "brand" in the old time radio, television, and film communities. Can you do all the grunt work in selling your own work and are you willing to invest the money upfront for printing?

Regardless of the outlet you choose, if you want to write a book and make a few bucks from your work, then the topic has to be unique and potentially interesting to a fair number of readers. A book on *The Coty Playgirl* (to pick a random short-lived series from Dunning) probably won't arouse much interest assuming you happened to somehow find a book's worth of material on the subject. On the other hand,

Editorial Policy of the Old Radio Times

It is the policy of The Old Radio Times not to accept paid advertising in any form. We feel that it would be detrimental to the goal of the Old Time Radio Researchers organization to distribute its products freely to all wishing them. Accepting paid advertising would compromise that goal, as dealers whose ideals are not in line with ours could buy ad space.

That being said, The Old Radio Times will run free ads from individuals, groups and dealers whose ideals are in line with the group's goals and who support the hobby.

Publishing houses who wish to advertise in this magazine will be considered if they supply the publisher and editor with a review copy of their new publication. Anyone is free to submit a review or a new publication about old time radio or nostalgia though.

Dealers whose ads we carry or may carry have agreed to give those placing orders with them a discount if they mention that they saw their ad in 'The Old Radio Times'. This is in line with the groups goal of making otr available to the collecting community.

We will gladly carry free ads for any other old time radio group or any group devoted to nostalgia. Submit your ads to: bob_burchett@msn.com

Edited by Bob Burchett
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Distributed by Jim Beshires
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the odds of getting many sales on a second book on a given topic, like another book on *Suspense* or the *Hummerts*, is slim. The small market is not going to support multiple volumes on a single subject, especially if the existing work is considered authoritative.

Realistically, websites and hobby magazines will be your likely outlet. Nevertheless, be aware of your audience and don't be afraid to let it influence your research choices. If given the choice between two topics, one being more popular than the other, you might as well choose that with the most potential popularity since it will attract more eyeballs. If you're going to the hard work of researching a piece you want to the community to pay attention and read it.

Getting Paid

Though no one does old time radio research to get rich, there can be monetary considerations. Depending on one's topic, research could entail considerable travel, which adds up fast, especially if it's cross-country. Few of us can fly across the country and make hundreds or thousands of copies with no thought to remuneration. All of my overnight research trips have been reserved for paying (or potentially paying) work, whether articles or books. I do usually pick up material on the trips for non-paying articles but that is secondary. You'll need to scrutinize your own budget and decide your limits for research purposes. If given the choice between two equally interesting topics, begin with the one that will be cheaper to research.

Okay, let's assume you've decided you'd like to get your first piece in a hobby magazine and you don't really want to spend more than the cost of a few photocopies. We still find ourselves right back at the question which started

this overview: What should I research?

Two Approaches to Research

The possibilities are almost endless. Here's where strategies can diverge; in fact, it's where Doug and I go our separate ways. Maybe you're really into a series or a specific actor or an event that influenced the history of old time radio. Or maybe, as is the case with Doug, you come across a rare or brand new show that is unknown to the hobby. You decide on a topic of interest and follow where it leads. Of course, it's easiest to stay engaged in a project in which you have a natural interest and curiosity. But there are drawbacks, namely who knows where your information might turn up? Many of Doug's research topics have turned out to be West Coast series which creates some logistical issues when he's based out of the Midwest.

I've chosen a different strategy: look around where you live, see what radio resources are available, and develop your research around those topics. In other words, study what is right at hand. Being a Midwestern researcher and in a smaller market than Doug, I'm likely not going to stumble upon many resources about *Escape*, *Jack Benny*, or *Superman*, all series popular with old time radio fans but none of which had any origination from Kansas City. I have, however, discovered a number of series brand new to the hobby, most of which do not have surviving episodes in circulation. Primarily these programs were only heard in the region but some were picked up by the CBS network. Going my route limits your research options (unless you're in New York, L.A., D.C., or a similar area with a wealth of OTR material), but for those options which remain you're assured up front of a certain amount of source documentation.

Naturally, additional information may turn up in scattered places across the country, but that can be added at your leisure to the body of knowledge you construct from local and easily obtained resources.

Neither of these approaches is more right than the other and both have worked well for each of us. For the purposes of this article I'm going to focus on my own approach so you can see if it might work for you. I suspect you'll find that in the end the results of the two strategies are not that different, they just lead to exploring very different subjects.

Library Holdings

I'm a student at the University of Kansas so I started by investigating resources that might be available through the school. As I mentioned above, start with what's nearby, and the university libraries are just a few blocks from my front door. What could they have in their regular holdings that might be of interest? If you're lucky you might find a run of an industry magazine like *Broadcasting* from the

golden age of radio. The issues might be hard copies or they might be on microfilm. KU did not have any of these publications but they do have *Variety* on microfilm. This can be a source for fresh information but you'll devote a lot of time utilizing it. The magazine does not have any sort of index system so you must search each weekly issue page by page for any hits of interest. Outside of *Variety*, searching library holdings was pretty much a bust for me. I found no available historic radio publications.

Inter-library Loan

Don't despair if you don't find much. It's possible to find such material at other libraries which can be obtained via inter-library loan. Usually the loans will be microfilm, not original paper pieces, so be prepared to get well acquainted with microfilm readers. I've gotten scripts of popular series this way but the trick is finding loanable material. I haven't looked for microfiched versions of industry periodicals but if a library has them



somewhere there's a good chance I could get them on loan. Keep the loan option in mind as you're searching the resources described below. If it doesn't look like an item is loaned out by an institution, request it anyway. All they can say is "no" and you might be surprised with some "yeses" every now and then.

Databases

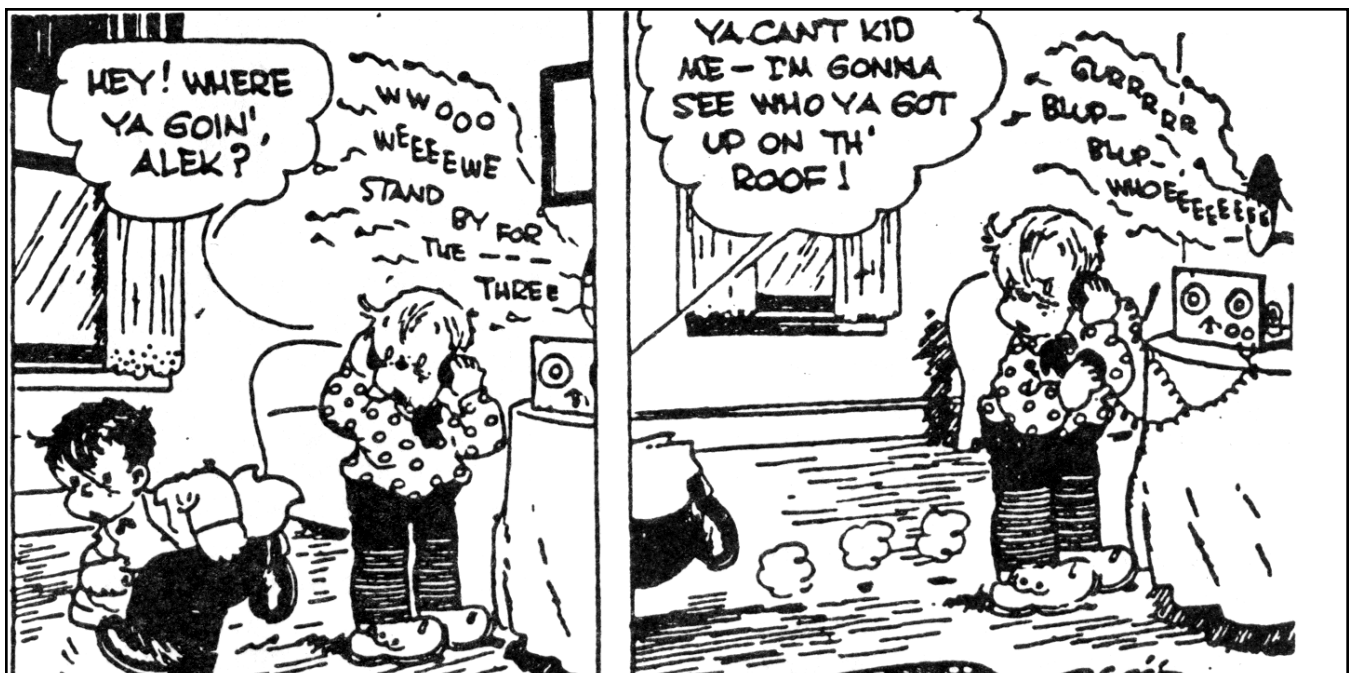
My first significant discovery was the ProQuest database, which is the searchable online newspaper database from which the newspaper logs at <http://www.ijonz.us/RadioLogs/> originally came. I believe the public can subscribe but it is very expensive and the choice of newspapers is very limited, although they tend to be the biggest of the biggest metro papers. With full access to the database you can dig through information found in the entire newspaper, not just the radio logs. Really, this strategy is just a more convenient way of pouring through old hard copy newspapers or papers on microfilm, a time-consuming method of OTR research that stretches back to the

hobby's earliest days. ProQuest is a wonderful resource, keeping in mind the limitations of newspaper research.

I also perused a dissertation search tool. One might be surprised what kind of radio-related dissertations have been completed since the mid-1970s, the time covered by this database. And the dissertations are fully retrievable in pdf format. KU also provides access to a number of other databases which search smaller newspapers and academic journals. There's even a database of databases. These have been of less value but still, nuggets of information have been mined from them. These tools have provided the basis for much of my first couple years of researching.

If there is a college or university near you, visit the library to see what kind of privileges you can get as a member of the community. It may not be full access to all their resources but some would be better than none.

After getting a feel for the school's holdings and online tools, I searched all their special



collections.

Special Collections

A note about special collections if you've never worked in them. Most libraries have some sort of special collections. It usually refers to material that is not available to circulate so must be examined in the library under the supervision of library staff. For public city libraries these collections usually consist of local historical items such as censuses, letters, business correspondence, genealogical records, etc. Larger urban libraries will have the resources to put together more diverse special collections that expand beyond local history. The Thousand Oaks library in California has an enviable collection of scripts. With municipal libraries you often have to dig to find these collections. They are infrequently used so staff do not devote a lot of resources to publicizing them.

It's easier to find these collections at colleges and universities. Go to an institution's library webpage and there will very likely be a page dedicated to special collections. They may be a part of the university archives (generally documents from the school's history) or separate. These collections are a source of pride for universities so they're promoted more than in public library systems. Schools actively seek out unique collections of documents and historical artifacts so the items may or may not have a direct connection to the school. This is why Wyoming has such a massive selection of radio material: they have actively pursued the material over the last three or four decades. Often, though, there will be a link to the person or organization donating the collection and the college. These archives attract scholars (and prestige) so university librarians make every attempt to amass interesting collections, whether directly related to the institution or not.

Finding Aids

To effectively access archives and special collections you must become familiar with finding aids; they're your best friends. The contents of library and archive special collections frequently are not included in the institution's regular database. Usually the finding aid is a pdf document which lists the contents of the collection by box and by folder. Quality of finding aids varies widely and plenty of special collections are not cataloged and do not have such aids. I asked the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, a major repository of OTR documentation, about the papers of a particular actor. Unfortunately, there is no finding aid for the collection nor has it really been organized. Some finding aids will be online but if you don't see one, ask. Sometimes the aids are just not on a website but can be attached in an email. I just recently did this with the Gene Autry library in California. ■

To be continued next issue





by Dee Neyhart from the Digital Deli 2012©

Background

Philip Morris and Company was one of the most prolific sponsors of Radio throughout the Golden Age, bankrolling virtually every Radio genre heard during the era:

- 1934 The Leo Reisman Orchestra
- 1935 Johnny [Roventini] and The Foursome
- 1938 The Perfect Crime
- 1938 What's My Name?
- 1939 Breezin' Along
- 1939 Guess Where
- 1939 Johnny [Roventini] Presents
- 1939 Name Three
- 1939 Where Are We?
- 1940 Crime Doctor
- 1941 Great Moments from Great Plays
- 1941 Philip Morris Playhouse
- 1942 Author's Playhouse
- 1942 Purple Heart
- 1942 The Philip Morris Program
- 1944 It Pays to Be Ignorant
- 1945 Talent Theater
- 1946 Heart's Desire
- 1946 The Johnny Desmond Follies
- 1947 At Home with The Berles
- 1947 Horace Heidt's Youth Opportunity Program
- 1947 Kate Smith Sings

- 1948 Call for Music
- 1948 Everybody Wins
- 1948 Philip Morris Playhouse
- 1948 The Dinah Shore Show
- 1948 The Mel Torme Show
- 1948 This Is Your Life
- 1949 Against The Storm
- 1949 Casey, Crime Photographer
- 1949 Hogan's Daughter
- 1949 Ladies, Be Seated
- 1949 One Man's Opinion
- 1950 Candid Microphone
- 1950 Truth Or Consequences
- 1951 Philip Morris Playhouse on Broadway
- 1951 The Bickersons
- 1951 The Strange Romance of Evelyn Winters
- 1952 My Little Margie
- 1952 What's My Line?

The Eddie Cantor Show Business Show

Cigarette advertising played a major role in Radio of the 1930s to 1950s. One of the Advertising Industry's most lucrative sectors, the Ad agencies of the era ruthlessly competed with each other for Tobacco Industry accounts. Given the highly addictive nature of tobacco products of any kind, the Tobacco Industry was one of the United States Econo-

my's most recession-proof, inflation-proof, and depression-proof industries. And indeed, the tobacco industry of the era routinely poured a significant amount of its profits into both Print and Radio advertising throughout the period. The industry also ensured that tobacco products were routinely employed in all manner of Film productions of the 20th Century.

After the Golden Age of Radio had come and gone, Philip Morris acquired the Miller Brewing Company in 1970, General Foods in 1985 and Kraft Foods in 1988. One might well argue that Philip Morris, U.S.A. inherited the legacy for a lion's share of the most important sponsorships throughout the Golden Age of Radio--Philip Morris, Kraft Foods, and General Foods having sponsored over 300 popular Radio programs of the era. In 2003, the Philip Morris companies changed their name to the Altria Group.

But throughout both World War I and World War II, the tobacco industries routinely shipped millions of *free* cartons and pouches of tobacco products to the G.I.s overseas on every fighting front--the better to ensure that overseas G.I.'s wouldn't be forced by War to abandon their smoking addictions. And also to ensure that American tobacco products made even more significant inroads into the occupied countries on the fighting fronts. The Tobacco Industry was equally generous to the G.I.s during the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam Conflict. And in fact, it's been estimated that three times as many of the G.I.s of the era ultimately died of tobacco-related illnesses than the entire estimated 292,000 fatal American servicemen casualties of World War II.

Of course as history has revealed, Tobacco Advertising was also one of the era's most deceptive and misleading, routinely citing



Harry James, Dinah Shore and Johnny Mercer mug backstage before Call for Music

Shore-James Ainer Debuts February 13

HOLLYWOOD, Jan. 17.—Starting date of February 13 has been set for the new Dinah Shore-Harry James ainer, which replaces *It Pays To Be Ignorant* on CBS for Philip Morris cigarettes. Production and scripting chores will probably be given to the team of Jerry Lawrence and Bov Lee.

Still unsettled is the problem of star billing on the seg, but it is expected to be titled *Call for Music*, with both Miss Shore and James sharing equal star credits.

The Billboard teases the new Philip Morris program, Call for Music, co-starring Dinah Shore and Harry James (Jan 24th 1948)

the *health 'advantages'* of a particular tobacco brand over its competitors. The more naked and bald-faced tobacco campaigns of the era routinely employed doctors and nurses to endorse the health *efficacy* of a particular brand's tobacco products. And quite naturally, another huge portion of the Tobacco Industry's profits were plowed back into influence peddling and lobbying against any form of regula-

tion of tobacco products of the era--a practice that continued well into the 1990s.

Given the ruthlessly competitive and morally bereft nature of the Tobacco Industry of the era, it's no wonder that that same ruthless competition greatly influenced the Radio programming of the era. Indeed, to this day, most advertising historians and economists continue to cite the Tobacco Industry's influence peddling of the 20th Century to be the template from which most other deceptive corporate advertising practices achieved such illogical--and counter intuitive--success throughout the 20th Century.



Dinah Shore's rising star

While steadily increasing her popularity with one hit record after another, *Dinah Shore* got her first major boost from *Eddie Cantor* and his *Time To Smile* program between 1940 and 1942 and with frequent appearances on the long-running *Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street* with *Paul LaValle* during the same period. She'd also appeared over *The Revuers* during the same period while getting yet another boost from *Xavier Cugat* during 1940.

By 1941 *Dinah Shore* embarked on a long-running series of her own programs over three different networks and for six different major

sponsors:

- 1941 *Songs By Dinah Shore* for Bristol Myers' Sal Hepatica and Minit-Rub
- 1942 *In Person: Dinah Shore* for Bristol Myers' Mum Deodorant
- 1943 *The Dinah Shore Program* for Birds Eye Frosted Foods
- 1944 *Birds Eye Open House Starring Dinah Shore*
- 1946 *The Ford Show* for Ford Motor Corporation
- 1948 *Call For Music* for Philip Morris
- 1954 *The Dinah Shore Show* for Chevrolet

Throughout the entire period of headlining her own starring vehicles over both Radio and Television, *Dinah Shore* continued to make hundreds of guest appearances on other programs as well as performing in hundreds of AFRS and AFRTS programs of the 1940s and 1950s. And indeed her frequent appearances before military audiences both stateside and overseas endeared her to a generation of G.I.s and their families. *Dinah Shore* continued to be a favorite of G.I.s for the remainder of *Dinah Shore's* life.

Philip Morris teams Dinah Shore and Harry James over CBS

"*Call for Philip Morris*" had been the signature Radio tag for Philip Morris for going on fourteen years by 1948. 'Sung' by famous little person *Johnny Roventini* and his several 'stand-ins' over the years, it was a natural extension to refer to their new *Dinah Shore, Harry James* and *Johnny Mercer* vehicle as "*Call for Music*." And indeed the pairing of jazz vocalist sensation *Dinah Shore* with *Harry James* and his Orchestra would seem to have been an equally natural hit premise. The *Billboard* thought so as well, almost

weekly hyping the proposed series from its first teaser in mid-January 1948. By the time *Call for Music* actually premiered the two proposed leads were augmented by legendary Tin Pan Alley songwriter *Johnny Mercer*.

The concept for the series was something of a novelty as well. Drawing upon the preeminence of each of the co-stars in their respective entertainment fields, *Dinah Shore* represented the popular songs of the era, *Harry James* represented Big Band music of the era, and *Johnny Mercer* represented the Tin Pan Alley and Broadway songwriting of the era. *Call for Music* was specifically targeted to the 18-25 demographic of the era and Lawrence and Lee's [*Jerry Lawrence* and *Robert Lee*] *Call for Music's* scripts were heavily weighted with the popular 'jive talk' of the era, an aspect that apparently disturbed noted Radio critic *John Crosby* to no end. Here's a sample from the March 22, 1948 edition of *Oakland Tribune*

Dinah Shore Teams With Songwriter by John Crosby

Dinah Shore, the velvet-voiced lady from Tennessee, and Johnny Mercer, the songwriter, have teamed up on a new show titled "Call for Music" (8:30 p.m. California Daylight Time, Fridays) and, in all but a few details, it's a very happy arrangement. Unfortunately the two singers have brought along Harry James, who is Betty Grable's husband, the butt of a great many tiresome jokes and also a trumpet player of considerable reknown. James' trumpet, I understand, drives certain young ladies right out of their wits and has a somewhat similar effect on me. It makes a loud, assertive, insistent noise that gets under my skin, though probably not in the way James plans. To pass on to more pleasant matters, Miss



Johnny Mercer & Dinah Shore. The new radio vehicle made the cover of The Billboard of Feb 28th 1948

Shore occupies a rather special niche among feminine singers. Her voice is as recognizable as Jack Benny's. Her style is one of those patented and exclusive features the automobile manufacturers are always talking about and is so distinctively her own that she could cry for help in Times Square and be identified almost immediately.

Haunting Voice

This unique quality has a way of subtly altering the meaning of lyrics. When Miss Dinah--as I'm sure the family servitors refer to her--tackles "McNamara's Band," the whole character of Ireland changes. Magnolias start sprouting all over the ould sod. She has at various times transformed Sioux City Sue into a southern girl and rather casually placed the penthouses of Manhattan somewhere around New Orleans. In spite of these drastic geographical rearrangements, Miss Shore has a lovely haunting voice, her phrasing is among the most skillful to be found among popular singers, and I'm happy she's back on the air.

As for Mercer, he is perhaps second only

to Bing Crosby as a master of rhythm. Someone once remarked about Crosby that he sounded the way all men think they sound in the shower. The same remark might more aptly be made about Mercer, who sings as if he immensely enjoys the sound of his own voice and doesn't particularly give a hoot if anyone else does. His voice, if you can call it that, is foggy, hollow, casual and extremely self-assured. Mercer has been obscured by his songwriting, a more lucrative enterprise. Hollywood, in fact, is bubbling over with song writers who also sing and can hardly be prevented from singing if anyone is careless enough to leave a piano exposed.

IMPLANTS TUNE

Mercer's particular talent is an ability to implant a tune so thoroughly into your own mind that you find yourself whistling it the next day. He clings tenaciously to the melody rather than revising it to his own taste, a gesture of respect from one songwriter to the rest of the profession which I greatly admire. And, if that isn't enough recommendation, he is also a real, lowdown blues singer who can bring an air of conviction to some of the silliest lyrics ever written. Parenthetically I'd like to insert the observation that the blues seem to be reasserting some of the popularity they enjoyed back in the '20's. The other night Miss Shore embraced with magnificent courage "My Man," a song that I thought was buried with Helen Morgan. She sang it very well, too.

In spite of the excellence of its component parts, there are a number of things wrong with this show. It's badly written, and loosely put together. James, Mercer and Miss Shore are required to give tongue to some of the most ridiculous jive talk I ever heard. Miss Shore is forced, conceivably at the point of a gun, to

simper like a fourteen-year-old school girl and Mercer, an intelligent adult, is made to utter noises which most teen-agers of my acquaintance outgrew in the sixth grade. This sort of thing, I imagine, is aimed at the jukebox set and--I'm just guessing here--is written by men with one foot into middle age. All I can say is that they are insulting the intelligence of the teen agers. Jive talk is not exactly deathless prose but the real thing is a lot better than this. These writers ought to get out of the Brown Derby some night and do a little research near a jukebox. Copyright, 1946, for *The Tribune*

Dinah Shore's "Call for Music" May Be Slashed

NEW YORK, June 12. — Dinah Shore's *Call for Music* show this week appeared heading for extensive recasting, following sharp trimming of the budget for next season by the sponsor, Philip Morris. Altho deciding favorably about continuation of the show, the ciggie firm is set on slashing costs from \$11,000 to \$8,000 on its Tuesday night National Broadcasting Company (NBC) ainer, feeling that current ratings don't justify the high-priced offering. The result will be a pay cut for Dinah, dropping from the show of Harry James and his band and a probable elimination of Johnny Mercer as well.

Future of the show now rests on the acceptance by the thrush of the terms handed her attorney, Henry Jaffe, in New York this week. Should she okay the deal, the fall show, starting August 10, probably will feature name male vocalists as guests if Mercer is not retained. Several name bands, costing less than James, also are being mulled, with the possibility that la Shore's arranger, Ticker Freeman, might be brought in as batoneer. Dinah starts a five-week hiatus after the July 6 show.

While holding open the door for a possible Fall Season of Call for Music, Dinah Shore apparently felt that the proposed downsizing of the popular feature didn't merit her return. (The Billboard of June 19th 1948)

As might be obvious from John Crosby's observations above, Crosby wasn't particularly hip to the 'jive talk' of the eighteen to twenty-five year-olds of the era. Given that *Call for Music* was specifically targeted to the 18-25 demographic of the era, Crosby's disdain for 'jive' was entirely understandable. Crosby wasn't particular enamored of Johnny Mercer either. But as history later proved, Johnny Mercer's songwriting talents became the stuff of Radio, Television, Film and Recording Industry legend. It's also true that Mercer had any number of other detractors of the era--but not among the target demographic.

Nor was everything sweetness and light



behind the mike of *Call for Music*. While the legendary writing/producing team of Jerome 'Jerry' Lawrence and Robert Lee had gotten *Call for Music* off to an entertaining start, the team soon became disenchanted with the heavy-handed tactics of Philip Morris and its ad agency--Biow--in controlling the pace and content of the program. At about the same time as the Lawrence and Lee kerfuffle came to a head, Philip Morris decided to move *Call for Music* from CBS to NBC.

The format of *Call for Music* changed somewhat with the series' shift from CBS to NBC. The move to NBC also brought a new writing and producing team--Bill Brennan at the helm and Robert Smith doing the writing. During the CBS broadcasts of the series, Dinah Shore and company had introduced several 'medleys' as a featured element of the program. Messrs. Brennan and Smith made the medley element a key feature of the entire NBC run. *Call for Music* continued to feature segments dedicated to Dinah Shore, Harry James and Johnny Mercer, but in a more structured, uniform format for the remainder of the run.

The CBS run of *Call for Music* comprised an audition for Philip Morris and ten weekly broadcasts between February 13th 1948 and April 16th 1948. NBC continued the broadcasts beginning on April 20th 1948 and running for eleven more episodes until June 29th 1948. The trade papers and newspapers of the era cited the break beginning July 6th 1948 as a 'summer hiatus,' for the popular program, signaling the possibility that the series would return in the Fall of 1948.

Another distinction between the CBS and NBC renditions of *Call for Music* were Philip Morris' promotion of its Philip Morris Cigarettes

during the CBS run and promotion of its Revelation Pipe Tobacco during the NBC run.

Philip Morris had determined to downsize the scope, talent, format and budget for *Call for Music*. Costing a reported \$11,000 per half hour over both CBS and NBC, Philip Morris proposed dropping both Harry James and Johnny Mercer from any future *Call for Music* broadcasts and reducing the budget to \$8,000 per half hour--at most. By the Fall of 1948 it had become apparent to all parties that the proposed new format simply wasn't attractive enough to continue the series.

As things actually transpired, *Call for Music* didn't return from its hiatus for a Fall 1948 Season. While continuing to appear with great regularity as a guest performer in both Radio and Television, Dinah Shore's Television offers began to consume most of her attention, as well as new exposure in Film. *Call for Music* was by no means Dinah Shore's last regular program over Radio, however. Dinah Shore's long association with Chevrolet brought her back to the radiowaves in 1954 with her last regular Radio program.



From the February 24th 1994 edition of the *Syracuse Herald Journal*:

Dinah Shore dies

TV, radio film star favored golf, animals.

The Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS,

Calif. - Entertainer Dinah Shore, whose career spanned radio, television and concert performances, died today. She was 76.

Miss Shore, who was recently diagnosed with cancer, died at her home here after a short illness, said publicist Stephanie Masters.



Miss Shore's grown children and ex-husband George Montgomery were with her when she died, said spokeswoman Connie Stone.

Her television career spanned the 1950s to the early 1990s, when she had a half-hour talk show, "A Conversation with Dinah," on The Nashville Network.

Miss Shore, who won 10 Emmy Awards, started in 1951 with "The Dinah Shore Show," a live, 15-minute musical show. The more elaborate "The Dinah Shore Chevy Show" premiered in 1956 and ran until 1963.

From 1974-79 she was in "Dinah," from 1970-74 in "Dinah's Place," and from 1979 to 1984, "Dinah and Friends."

Referring to the TV camera, she said in a 1989 Associated Press interview: "I don't know how to be afraid of that old red eye. It's one person to me. I don't visualize large num-

bers of people out there.

I'm comfortable with it." Prior to going into television, she was a singing star on radio known for such hits as "I'll Walk Alone" and "The Anniversary Song."

She occasionally appeared in films in the 1940s including "Follow the Boys" and "Fun and Fancy Free."

She was born Frances Rose Shore on March 1, 1917 in Winchester, Tenn.

A graduate of Vanderbilt University, she began her broadcast singing career in 1938 on New York's WNEW, joining the NBC network later that year and signing a contract with RCA Victor in 1940. A year later she joined Eddie Cantor's radio program; by 1943 she was starring in her own radio program, sponsored by General Foods.

She married Montgomery in 1943 and had two children, Melissa Ann Hime, born in 1948, and John David Montgomery, born in 1954. She divorced Montgomery in 1962. A second marriage to Maurice F. Smith in 1963 lasted only a year.

For more than two decades she had played host to the Dinah Shore Classic golf tournament in the Palm Springs area. She was also a champion of animal rights.

From the July 5th, 1983 edition of the *Syracuse Herald-Journal*

Bandleader Harry James dies of cancer in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (UPI) — Bandleader Harry James, who had one of the hottest trumpets in show business for more than 40 years, died Monday night. He was 67.

James, who suffered from lymphatic cancer, had been ill since April but had performed as recently as June.

He was born March 15, 1916, in Albany,

Ga., where the Mighty Haag Circus was pitched at the time. His mother performed on a trapeze until one month before his birth. His father conducted the circus band.

They proudly christened their son Harry Haag James.

By the time he was 6, James had begun his musical lessons under his father's direction. At 10, he was playing solo trumpet and at the age of 12 was given the job of conducting the No. 2 circus band.

When he was 15, he got tired of playing marches for the circus and began sitting in with dance bands around the Southwest. Within a few years he was offered a job with Ben Pollack's orchestra and he wrote a song, "Peckin" which started a dance craze among a newly spawned group of jazz music lovers who were known as jitterbugs.

But it was a trumpet solo on a Pollack record called "Deep Elm" that brought James his first real break, a recording of "Sweet King."

Benny Goodman heard the record and sent for James, who joined him in 1937. It was Goodman who encouraged James to form his own band and in 1939 he took the advice.

When James took off on his own he found the going tough. His band was good but there were no listeners.

Then James took advantage of his own horn and recorded the classic "You Made Me Love You" and the country sat up and listened. He had hit the big time. He followed



his original hit recording with "I Cried For You," "I Had the Craziest Dream," "Ciribiribin" and other hits with gaudy trumpet solos.

James' first marriage was to singer Lois Tobin and his third was to former showgirl Joan Boyd in 1967. They were divorced in 1970.

During his marriage to Miss Grable, James appeared in several 20th Century Fox movies, including "Do You Love Me," "Springtime in the Rockies," "Best Foot Forward," "Two Girls and a Sailor" and "Bathing Beauties" and he was technical adviser and played all the trumpet parts in "Young Man with a Horn."

His television activities included network appearance on the "Shower of Stars," "The Jerry Lewis Show" and the "Danny Thomas Show."

James had appeared in Syracuse several times, his latest being at the Jefferson Street armory in May of 1982. In May of 1962 his band played for the Police Benefit Association in the War Memorial. He also played at the Three Rivers Inn and in 1949 at the Syracuse University senior ball.

From the June 26th, 1976 edition of the *Syracuse Herald-Journal*

Song writer Johnny Mercer dies

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Johnny Mercer, whose haunting jazz and blues lyrics thrilled millions for half a century, won four Oscars and made him the highest-paid song writer in the world, has died at age 66.

The mellow-voiced Mercer, who wrote lyrics for such hit songs as "Laura," "That Old Black Magic," "Jeepers, Creepers" and "Moon River," died yesterday at his Bel Air home.



A family spokesman said his death was caused by complications from brain surgery performed last Oct. 25 to remove a benign tumor.

Mercer began his career as a performer, but gained world fame for his haunting lyrics for the 1944 movie mystery "Laura."

"I tried to be a singer and failed," Mercer once said. "Then I tried to be an actor and failed. So I just naturally fell into lyric writing."

He gave up his acting ambitions and began singing in New York cabarets, where he was noticed by Paul Whiteman.

Whiteman, impressed with Mercer's easy, untutored style, offered him a spot in the Whiteman Band and Mercer's duets with trombonist Jack Teagarden became a favorite of jazz buffs.

Mercer became a top radio personality after moving to Hollywood in 1935. He also made records and such duets with Bing Crosby as "Darling Clementine" and "Bob White" were big sellers. ■

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Eye on Ebay: The man of steel is golden by Doug Hopkinson

Once again it's time to take a stroll through the mall of cyberspace that is eBay. This time we are shopping for Superman collectibles. Superman first appeared in comic books but it wasn't long before he was a radio star. The Adventures of Superman radio show debuted in 1940 and left the air in 1951. The first item that we come across is a collection of the first 5 issues of Superman comic book from the late 1930s. For the paltry sum of just \$75,000, you could own these! I'm saving my money to buy the 1st issue of Action Comics from June, 1938 that featured Superman on the cover. Very rare, a nice one sold last year for a cool 1.5 million dollars (U.S.).



Next we see a very oddly shaped bound book of a Superman daily newspaper comic. At \$47,500 bucks, who couldn't afford it? I'm sure it's worth every cent. Notice that shipping is free!



Now here is a marvelous little item! A 1939, wooden Superman doll. It comes in its original box! The doll has maintained its high gloss finish and the box is said to be in great shape as well! Priced for a quick sale at \$5199.99. Really? The seller couldn't just say \$5200? Is that one cent reduction going to entice me to buy it? I don't think so. Would you pay \$5200 dollars for a 3" tall wooden doll that doesn't even have fingers? Let's move on.



Here we have a small cloth patch from the Superman of America Club. The seller claims it's very rare. I've never seen one before. Is \$995.00 too much to pay? If so, this seller lets you make a best offer for it. This seller did it right, unlike the doll seller. \$995 sounds like a much better deal than \$1000.00.



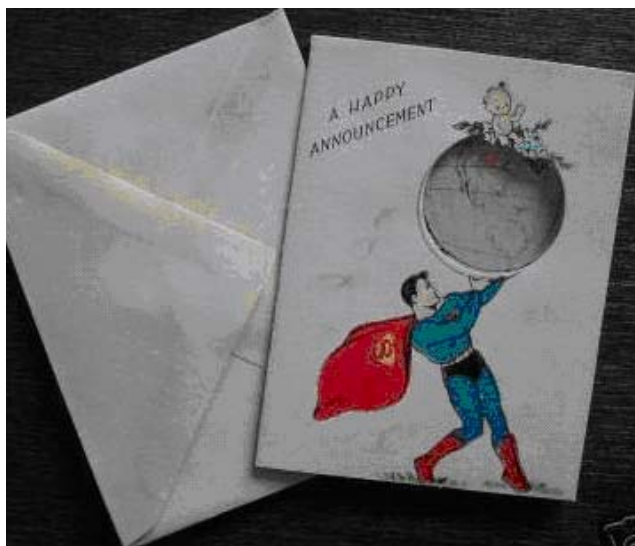
Next we have a vintage Superman children's watch. The hands are lightning bolts! If the hands were Superman's arms would this watch be worth more or less than the \$525 dollar asking price? I'm thinking less especially because it has a blue watchband.



This next item is a 1940s Superman ring put out by Kellogg's as a premium. It shore is shiny! And look at that price, \$409.99. 'Nuff said.



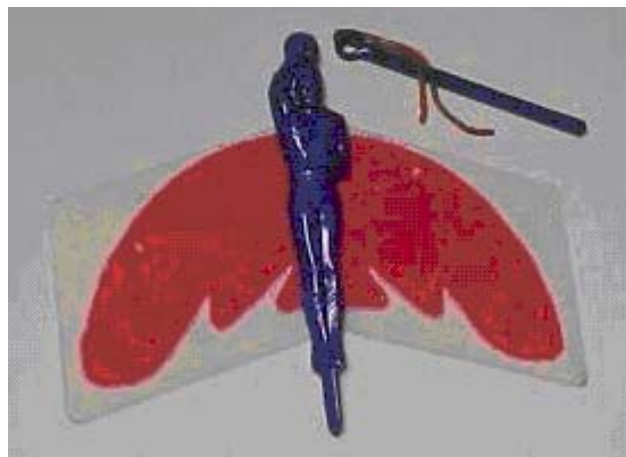
This next item is what I consider to be the value of the day. A single, unused, 1940, Superman birth announcement, with envelope! I am compelled to once again say, REALLY?! REALLY?! At only \$399.99 (there is that seller psychology at work again), you can't afford not to pick this little gem up.



Here is a reasonably priced (?) item. An unused, Superman-Tim Club membership card. In the early 1940's Tim Publications evidently acquired rights to the Superman image and printed monthly 2 color activity type comic books for kids. The Superman-Tim publication lasted 8 years. There were several different Tim clubs. Gene Autry - Tim Club as an example. This fine business card size membership card is a steal at \$325.00.



Next is an item you might remember if you're older than I am. It is another Kellogg's premium, this one from 1955. It's a flying Superman! Unlike most examples of this particular toy, this one has its original celluloid wings. Yes, wings. I'm not sure I like Superman with wings. Evidently, one would use the launching stick (included) to make Superman fly. I guess it was like a slingshot. For \$299.95 (that's less than \$300) I'd rather have a Superman that looks less like an insect.



And finally, we come to the Superman item that I bought. Nothing says I'm a Superman fan more than a Superman iron-on patch. You can put it on anything.



I ironed mine directly on my chest. At only 29¢ plus shipping (which is 10 times the price) this item screams "BUY ME!"

The bottom line is, you can ask a lot of money for anything pertaining to the man of steel. Whether or not people will buy it is up for debate. When it comes to buying vintage old time radio collectibles on eBay, Superman is my kryptonite.



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