



Volume 32, Number 12

December, 2007

## Retro-Views Suggested Listening for the Holiday Season

By Elizabeth McLeod

### Christmas By The Radio

*This month, I'm going to take a bit of a different approach -- rather than analyzing a particular program in depth, I'm going to get into the spirit of the season by offering up my own personal holiday favorites. Some may be familiar -- some may not -- but all have some bearing on this Festive Season Of The Year. (And here's hoping my list inspires you to offer in a few of your own -- I'm leaving plenty out!)*

*So hang your stocking and say your prayers -- and here we go...*



**The Cinnamon Bear** (Transco syndication, 1937 and in reissue ever since).

An obvious choice for the kiddies - but this is a series that also works well for the grownup listeners, with some surprisingly subtle comedy mixed in with the sugar and sweetness. And, for broadcast history buffs, the show offers a whose-who snapshot of

late-thirties LA radio talent -- you'll recognize many favorite voices. For me, Gale Gordon's just-enough-over-the-top performance as the Crazy Quilt Dragon steals the show.

**Santa's Sit Down** -- from "Town Hall Tonight" (NBC, 12/22/37).

Fred Allen and the Mighty Allen Art Players offer a topical Christmas fable, as Santa becomes fed up with all the injustice in the world and goes on a sit-down strike. Allen's Santa is a bit vinegary -- but all turns out fine in the end in a tale that's both funny and thought-provoking.



**Gracie's Christmas Carol** -- from *The Burns and Allen Show*. (CBS 12/23/36)

Everyone has a favorite satire of the Dickens chestnut, and this one's mine. George is haunted by the ghosts of Eddie Cantor, Fred Allen and Jack Benny, who rebuke him for stealing their jokes. The impersonations of Cantor, Allen, and Benny -- done by Tony Martin, Ken Niles, and Bill Goodwin -- are mediocre at best, but one could consider the piece a bit prophetic since, after all, George did outlive them all!

(Continued on Page 3)

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Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz	c/o RHAC PO Box 1908	Englewood, CO 80150	
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### 2008 Convention Schedules

**33rd Friends of Old-time Radio Convention**, Oct 23 – 26, 2008 Holiday Inn, Newark, NJ; For info: Jay Hickerson, 27436 Desert Rose Ct, Leesburg, FL 34748 (352) 727-6731, [JayHick@aol.com](mailto:JayHick@aol.com), web site: <http://www.fotr.net>

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**RETURN WITH US NOW...**

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**December, 2007**



**The Lord's Prayer** -- from "Amos 'n' Andy" (CBS, 12/24/41)

I'm frankly not a religious person, but I never fail to get teary-eyed during Freeman Gosden's line-by-line exposition of Matthew 6:9-13, perhaps because it manages to be both religious and secular at the same time, superseding any sort of sectarianism with its celebration of human brotherhood. And even more touching is the absolute sincerity in Gosden's performance -- making the piece seem less a sermon than a simple and genuine display of love by a father for his child.

**A Visit From St. Nicholas** -- (CBS, 12/21/39)

A fifteen minute adaptation of Clement Moore's poem by Nila Mack, featuring Betty Garde as the matriarch of a family of house mice (as in "no one was stirring, not even a mouse!") The young mice need to settle down and stop stirring so Santa can arrive in this cute, long lost and recently rediscovered piece of children's radio.

**"Orphan Ann"** -- from "Empire Builders" (NBC-Blue, 12/22/30)

The earliest surviving piece of Christmas radio, it's the story of a flinty old businessman whose cold heart is melted by an orphan girl at Christmastime. NBC had an outstanding staff of actors working out of Chicago at the turn of the thirties, and this program offers a rare chance to hear them in action -- and a rare chance to hear some of the great clichés of OTR Christmas Drama before they had become clichés. It's pure schmaltz -- but done so sincerely, you can't help but go along with it.

**"Red Ryder Nails The Cleveland Street Kid"** -- Jean Shepherd (WOR, 12/24/74)

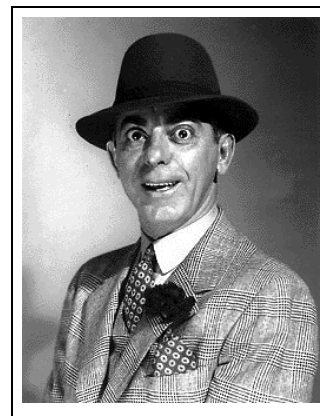
You've seen the movie, now hear the broadcast. Shep reads the short story that started it all, bringing Ralphie, Randy, Ma, and The Old Man vividly to life with just that magnificent voice. Maybe it isn't technically OTR -- but it's one of the most perfect

forty-five-minute-periods the audio medium ever produced.



**"A Christmas Carol"** -- from "The Campbell Playhouse" (CBS, 12/24/39).

The essential Lionel Barrymore version of the Scrooge story -- and perhaps the definitive Christmas radio drama. Barrymore is -- well, \*Barrymore\* in this faithful condensation of the original story, but for me what makes it outstanding is Welles' work as the narrator. The very essence of any Dickens story is in the narration, and Welles brings the master's words to life. In my house, we tend to chant out the lines along with the cast -- and if the power went out, we could probably do the show verbatim from memory without any need for the recording!



**"I Love Potato Pancakes!"** -- from "The Chase and Sanborn Hour" (NBC 12/13/31)

Sad to say there are virtually no Chanukah references in mainstream OTR -- so this is a real rarity, as Eddie Cantor sings an exuberant paen to the joys of latkes!

*And finally, here's one for the day after Christmas, when the kids are fighting over the last unbroken toy, when the tree is shedding brown needles all over the floor, when you're cursing the very soul of the inventor of "non dairy holiday nog" and when the mailman shows up with a fiendish smile and a fistful of bills....*



### **"Christmas at the Mammoth Department Store"**

-- from *"The Linit Bath Club Revue."*

(CBS 12/25/32) This is an unadulterated Fred Allen take on the holiday season -- as he plays a harried department store executive who is abuse by his staff, browbeaten by his customers, and finally stands by as Santa Claus is exposed as a fraud by a cynical New York brat (Santa and brat both hysterically played by the versatile Jack Smart). A little acid to cut the sweetness -- and the source of my all-time favorite Christmas signoff line: "No matter what other nations forget their war debts -- America certainly got even with Turkey today!"

*And with that, best wishes for a joyous holiday season for one and all from Retro Views!*

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Elizabeth McLeod is a journalist, researcher, and freelance writer specializing in radio of the 1930s. She is a regular contributor to "Nostalgia Digest" magazine and the Internet Old Radio Mailing List, maintains a website, Broadcasting History Resources, and is presently researching a book on Depression-era broadcasting. Elizabeth is always looking for 1930s radio recordings in all formats -- uncoated aluminum or lacquer-coated discs, vinyl or shellac pressings, or low-generation tape copies. You can contact her at [lizmcl@midcoast.com](mailto:lizmcl@midcoast.com)



**RETURN WITH US NOW...**

## **Substitution Codes Revisited**

By Jack M. Richards

For you readers that found reference to "The Shadow" last month, note the second line of the message. That is the second key which must be used to further decode the message. Use that key on the phase about The Shadow and you will find reference to "The Lone Ranger".

Never let it be said that codes must be one level deep.



## **New in the Tape and CD Libraries**

by Maletha King

This month we do not have new shows to offer, but we would like to take this time to call your attention to a great show that fits with the season - the "Dragnet" show "A Gun For Christmas" (reels 546 & 1651 in the RHAC library). This show, plus many others that Dragnet offered, are shows that should never be forgotten at Christmas or any other time of the year.

The shows offered during the war years of WWII just help to remind us of how great we have it now in this country. Although meat was rationed and very limited, there were many "Meatless" meals to help our country have the food for our troops. We are indeed very blessed with what we have and how we live in this country.

We would like to suggest that you may have a friend that would enjoy some of the many shows we offer and a gift membership might be a great solution for someone you know.

# Missing *Gunsmoke* 1952 Episode – "The Ride Back" Plotline Summary

By Stewart Wright

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*The following is a plot summary of the fifth and final 1952 Missing Gunsmoke episode.*

## "The Ride Back"

06/28/1952

Script by Antony Ellis

### EPISODE NOTE:

A few early *Gunsmoke* episodes had no titles on the scripts. The script for this episode was simply labeled *Gunsmoke* #10. This episode was assigned the title "The Ride Back" at an unknown, later date; perhaps by Norman Macdonnell.

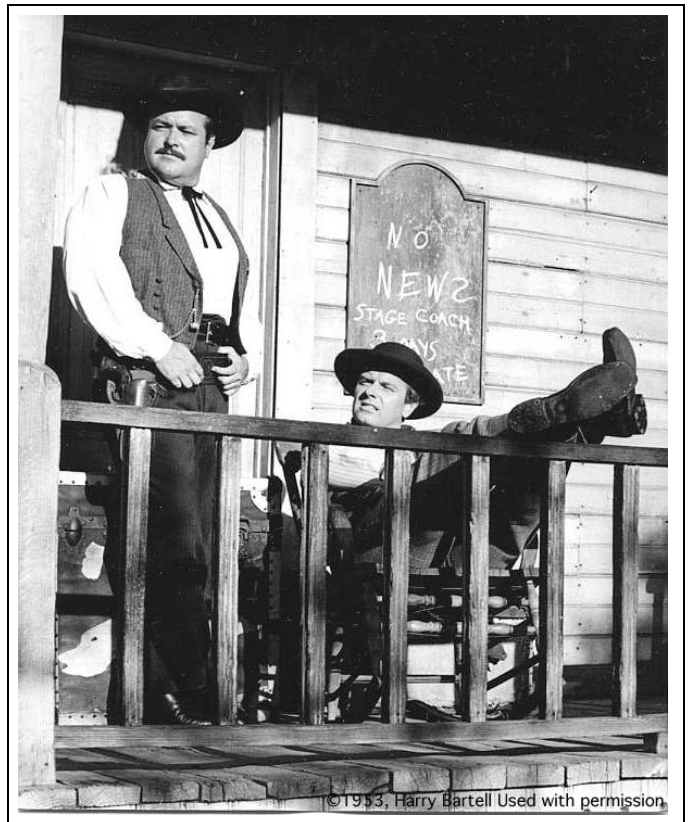
### PLOT

Matt is about three days out of Dodge City with his prisoner, Leeds Martin, when he spots three young Cheyennes nearby. They were probably planning to ambush the Marshall and his prisoner, but decided not to when they realized surprise was no longer on their side. Martin immediately demands a gun, the Marshall won't give it to him. From the clothing the Cheyennes are wearing, the items they are carrying, and the smell of liquor when they slowly ride by, it is obvious that they have been on a raid.

When they make camp that evening Matt and then Martin realize that they have been followed by Indians, probably those that they had seen earlier. The agitated Martin again demands his gun to protect himself and again Matt says no.

As the two men talk, Matt finds out that Martin has killed at least eight men including two Indians. Martin says he's always been forced into the gunfights. Doc Adams told Matt that the two men Leeds allegedly killed in Dodge were shot in the back.

Dillon and Martin hear noises that indicate that the Indians are moving in to attack. Matt moves off to one side, his gun ready, and throws to a rock to



draw the Cheyennes' fire. One goes for the trick and Dillon fires several rapid shots at the Indian's muzzle flash. They have no further trouble that night.

The next morning as Dillon and Martin resume their trip to Dodge, they see a dead Cheyenne, killed by Matt's shots. Once again Martin demand his gun and again Dillon refuses.

Later they arrive at a cabin and when they enter they find the mutilated victims of the Cheyennes' attack of the previous day: a man, woman, and their young daughter. Martin is particularly unnerved by the sight of the little girl.

The Marshal has decided to that he must kill the other two Cheyennes. Just as Matt and Leeds finish burying the family, it starts to rain and the Indians open fire, hitting Martin's horse. Dillon and Martin make a dash for the cabin. Inside the cabin the frantic prisoner warns Dillon, if the Marshal turns his back on Martin, he'll never turn it again. Later, Dillon decides that he must tie up Martin because he needs sleep and can't trust the prisoner. Martin tries to fight Matt, but is unsuccessful.

The next morning the two men restart their journey to Dodge, riding double on Matt's horse. As



they enter a canyon, the Cheyennes open fire from ambush. Matt kills one of them. A crazed Martin begs Matt to give him his gun so he can kill remaining one. Dillon doesn't give him a gun and orders Martin to stay under cover and goes after the last one.

While closing in on his target, Matt sees Leeds going after the Indian with some rocks. The Cheyenne and Martin kill each other. Dillon takes the dead prisoner back to Dodge.

Back in Dodge, Matt tells Chester about Martin and the fight. While Chester is going through Martin's effects, he finds a picture of a little girl. Perhaps the picture is the only thing that explains Martin's actions.

### CAST

Character names are from the script cover page followed by (full name or character description)

William Conrad as Matt Dillon

Parley Baer as Chester (Chester Proudfoot)

Larry Dobkin as Martin (Leeds Martin).

### COMMENT

The script for "The Ride Back" was greatly modified for a 1957 motion picture of the same name by Antony Ellis. The picture was produced by William Conrad. It starred William Conrad and Anthony Quinn. All references to *Gunsmoke* were dropped. It is well worth watching.

### SOURCE CITATION

*Gunsmoke* Script - "The Ride Back"

Box Number: 6

Folder Number: 2

Collection: Anne and Frank Hummert Scripts,  
1932-1958

Collection Number: 07867

Accretion Number: 00-00-00

American Heritage Center

University of Wyoming.

*Season's  
Greetings*

RETURN WITH US NOW...

## From the Desk of the Editor by Carol Tiffany



Happy Holidays to all from sunny (and HOT) Florida! We hope you will enjoy this issue of RWUN which marks the end of our series on the missing episodes of *Gunsmoke* by Stewart Wright and begins a new series of OTR crosswords from Dick Williamson. We also have an article from Elizabeth McLeod about OTR Christmas programs.

OTR's Christmas programming has always been a great favorite of your editor.

As a child, I remember sharing the experience of Christmas with the characters on my favorite shows, enhancing my own family's Christmas. This was, I feel, one of the great strengths of the medium.

Listeners tended to feel a part of the lives of the characters and the Holiday shows strengthened this connection. We understood when Andy had to take a part-time job as a department store Santa to buy a doll for Arbidella, when Ozzie and Harriet decided to be "sensible" and buy a family gift instead of gifts for each other, and when Betty's handmade gifts created a greater stir than Veronica's expensive (but somewhat inappropriate) items. During the war years, when we sat down around the radio to share the annual broadcast of

*A Christmas Carol*, we somehow felt closer to those missing members of our families who were fighting half a world away.

Again, the "theater of the mind" proved itself to be a powerful and wonderful influence on our lives; more than a mere entertainment or pastime. This is why, at this time of year, our family will take the time to listen again to some of these timeless shows and enjoy again the memories they evoke.

As we look forward to 2008, we are once again in need of articles and other items for inclusion in the Newsletter. It seems that RWUN has a voracious appetite for the written word, so if you have a little time and an idea, please write it down and submit it. In the meantime,

Good Listening to All...

**Klean Soap....**  
**The Unknown Sponsor**  
**"Try it for a dime.... it'll be the best and**  
**biggest 10¢ worth**  
**of fictitious soap you ever bought."**  
**by Danny Godwin**



Don't feel bad if you never heard of a "**product**" called **Klean Soap**. It was a brand name very few people knew about. It wasn't a regional product nor was it imported from another country. In fact, no one from the soap making companies in the United States had ever heard of **Klean Soap**--- or took credit in making it!

By now you might be wondering, "**Why is Klean Soap mentioned in an article on radio advertising, since hardly anyone had ever heard of it?**" Believe it or not, **Klean Soap** was indeed a radio sponsor--- and complete with commercials at that! I will add, however, that it was a completely different radio sponsor from the established products you may be familiar with. Confused? As you read on, it will make sense why this "**product**" and others like it were used in this type of "**radio advertising**."

The commercial was presented in the same way as the commercials were on the radio. The announcer described how wonderful **Klean Soap** was for its unlimited cleaning uses, yet it was as mild as toilet soap for the hands. The best news of all, **Klean Soap** did all this for only 10¢. It was a soap that was too good to be true--- and it really was!

The truth to the matter--- there is no such product

as **Klean Soap**! With this shocking revelation, why would there be an existing radio commercial for a product that didn't exist? The answer is simple and it makes a lot of sense. **Klean Soap** was an example of a fictitious sponsor that was used for an audition radio program. These were recordings of programs that were presented to potential sponsors or networks (much like a pilot episode for TV). The audition program was performed like an actual network radio program, complete with actors, an announcer, music, sound effects, and let's not forget, commercials\*. It gave the sponsor or radio network a general idea how the program was presented, and whether or not it was worth putting on the air. If it was, then **Klean Soap** would be replaced with an actual sponsor, and the work would begin to present the program in the sponsor's time slot on the network.

**Klean Soap** wasn't the only make-believe product that was used in sponsoring audition programs. There were many different products that supposedly were far superior in its ability to the popular brands, yet costs far less than those brands.

If you're wondering what was the name of the audition program **Klean Soap** sponsored--- **Klean Soap** was the proud sponsor of **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT**, a drama about a newspaper photographer. Although I have never heard of the actual radio program, *Radio Yesteryear's The Golden Age Of Radio* book mentioned that **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT** was on the air from April 28, 1946-October 19, 1947 on the **Mutual Network** and through **Syndication**. If that was the case, more than likely the program either had local sponsors or was sustaining. I don't know of any nationally known product sponsoring the program.

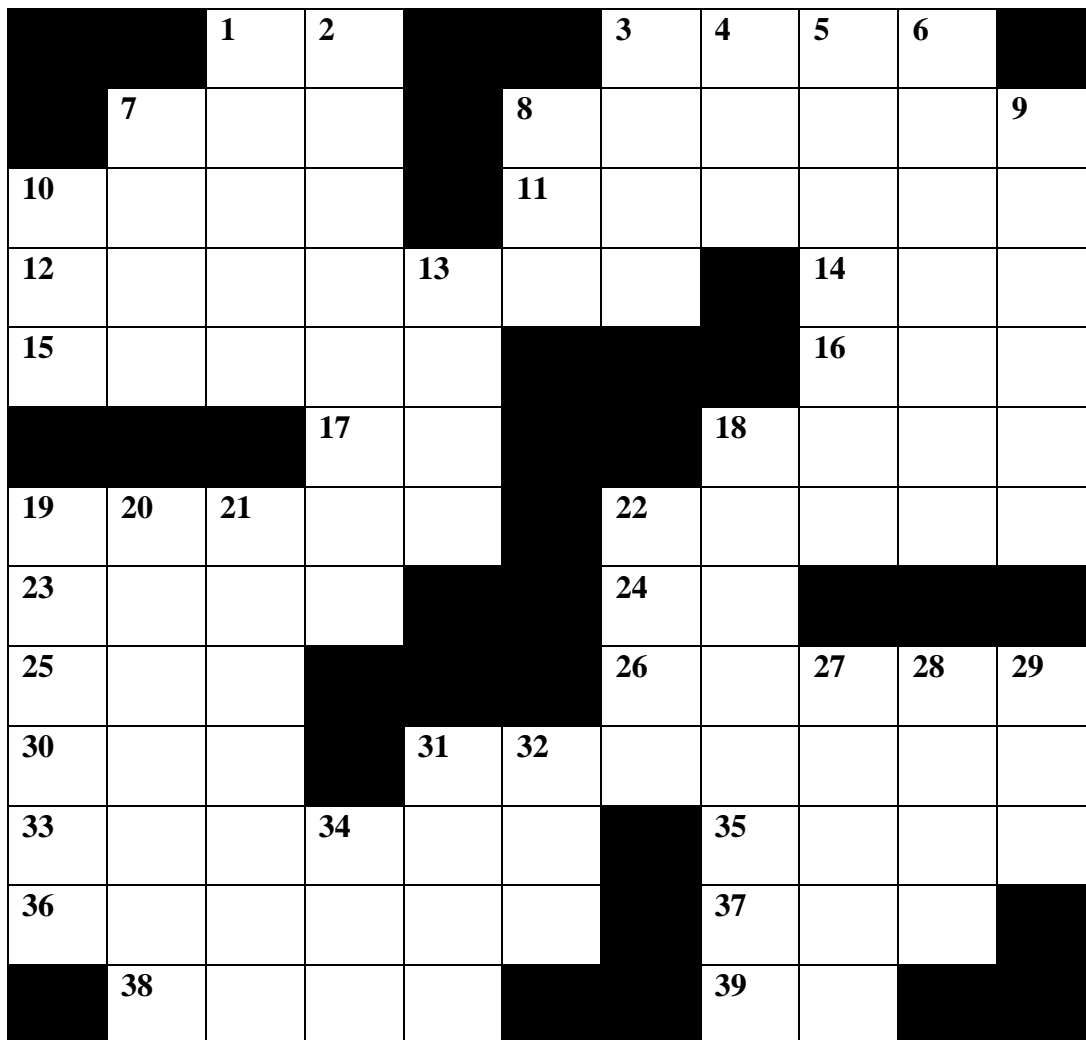
Audition programs have had their share of success and failure during radio's golden age. Whether or not the program made the actual airwaves, **Klean Soap** or another fictitious product would be used as the "**sponsor**" of the next program creation, whose creators hoped would be the greatest radio program ever presented.

*Author's note-\* Not all audition radio programs used commercials or even had a sponsor for that matter. I used Klean Soap and SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT as examples of how an audition program was presented complete with commercials.*

# Radio Memories Crossword #101

By Dick Williamson

(Answers on back page)



## ACROSS

1. Author Eliot's initials
3. Rily's daughter
7. Swab
8. Claghorn's workplace
10. Lavish attention on
11. \_\_\_\_\_ J. Dragon
12. OTR postcard price
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Gardner
15. Funnybooks (var)
16. Legal point
17. Do, re, \_\_\_\_\_
18. Penalty
19. Tom Corbett
22. Tasteless
23. So be it
24. In the matter of
25. Pittsburgh player

26. Donkeys

30. Every
31. W.C. Fields wore one
33. Aerial connector
35. Spouse
36. Star \_\_\_\_\_
37. Voiced hesitations
38. Search
39. Knute's University (abbr)

## DOWN

1. Tribal symbol
2. Sample
3. Bet it out Tucker style
4. Blackbird
5. Munich's locale
6. Kingfish
7. OTR broadcast format

8. Ricky to Ozzie

9. Cleans a tape
10. Gamble was one
13. Way out
18. Four sang on OTR
19. Intrigues
20. Charms
21. A ver
22. Rugged rock
27. Sliver of glass
28. Corrodes
29. Sault \_\_\_\_\_ Marie
30. (abbr)
31. Lum or Abner, e.g.
32. Rogers of the Gazette used it
34. Payable



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2 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 12 \_\_\_\_\_

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**RETURN WITH US NOW...**

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*December, 2007*

		T	S			B	A	B	S	
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**Answers to Radio Memories crossword #101**

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