



RADIO RECALL

Metro Washington Old Time Radio Club

Visit our Club's web site at www.mwotrc.com



VOLUME 27

DECEMBER 2010

NUMBER 6

"MANY CALLS SCROOGE MADE THAT NIGHT..."

A Draft Log of Charles Dickens' *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*
on the American Airwaves (1922-2003)

By Craig Wichman ©2010

(Unless noted, all productions are direct presentations of the story, and multiple cast rather than single reader.)

12-22-1922 - WEA. 7:15-7:45pm. *Reader:* Charles Mills. *Music:* Grace McDermott, violinist; Mary Burgum, pianist.

12-24-23 - WEA. 11:20am-12pm. *Reading.* *W/Music.*

12-24-23 - WRC. 9:30-9:55pm. *Reading.*

12-19-24 - WGY. 8:15pm. *Reader:* Edward H. Smith. *Music:* WGY Orchestra.

12-19-24 - WOAW. 11-11:30pm. *Reading.*

12-22-24 - WOR. 9:30-9:45pm. (?)

12-24-24 - WEA. 7:30-8:15pm. *Reader:* Charles Howard Mills. *W/Music.*

12-24-24 - KDKA. 8pm. *Reader:* Prof. Wayland M. Parish.

12-24-24 - WCAP. 8:30-8:45pm. *Reader:* Elizabeth Field.

12-24-24 - WMAQ. 9pm. *PLAY NIGHT.* *Cast:* The WMAQ Players.

12-24-24 - WLS. 9:15-10pm. (*Drama?*) *Cast:* Wallace Amsbury.

12-25-24 - WGBS. 3-4pm. (*Drama?*) *Cast:* The Tri Players.

12-25-24 - KYW. 8pm. *Reader:* Rev. C. J. Pernin.

12-19-25 - WLW. 7:30pm.

12-23-25 - WLIB. 7pm. *Reader:* Bill Hay. *W/Music.*

12-24-25 - KDKA. 8:15-9pm.

12-24-25 - WNYC. 10:10-10:30pm.

12-24-25 - WEA. 11:30pm. *Reader:* Charles Howard Mills.

12-24-25 - WFBH. 4-4:15pm.

12-16-26 - WFBH, WGY, WMAK. Syracuse University program including a CAROL by the



Boar's Head Dramatic Society. Announcer, Ernest Chappell (?).

12-16-26 / 12-23-26 - WNYC. 5:15-5:35pm.

Reading: Harriette Weems.

12-24-26 - WGN. 8pm (?). *Reader:* Bill Hay.

12-24-26 - WLS. 8-9:10pm. *Reader:* Anthony Wons. *Music:* Little Symphony of Chicago.

12-24-26 - WBZ. 7:30pm. *Reader:* Dr. Delbert M. Staley. *W/Music.*

12-24-26(?) - KDKA. 7:30-8pm. *Reader:* F. P. Mayers.

12-24-26 - WOR. 10:30-11:30pm.

12-24-27 - WOR. - 3-3:30pm. *Cast:* The Playmakers. (*Drama?*)

12-24-27 - WRNY. - 7:30-7:45pm.

12-24-27 - 8:15pm. WNYC. *Reader:* Harriette Weems.

12-24-27 - WEA. 10-10:30pm.

12-22-28 - WJZ (NBC). 10:15-11pm. *GOLDEN LEGEND*

12-24-28 - WOR, WMAL (CBS). 10pm-12am.

12-23-29 - WOR. 7-7:30pm. *Reader:* E. Livingston Barbour.

12-24-29 - WEA (NBC). 7-7:30pm.

SOCONYLAND SKETCHES (Drama?). Cast: Parker Fennelly and Arthur Allen (?).

12-24-29 - WABC (CBS). 11pm-12am. *Cast:* Narrator, David Ross; Scrooge, Jack Soanes.

12-24-30 - WABC (CBS). *Cast:* Narrator, David Ross. (Re-performance of '29?).

12-23-31 - WJZ (NBC). 9-9:30pm. *Wr.:* Edith Meiser. *Cast:* Narrator, Leigh Lovell (?); Scrooge, Richard Gordon(?). (In the *SHERLOCK HOLMES* timeslot, with its stars.)

12-24-31 - WABC (CBS). 11pm-12am. *Cast:* Scrooge: Robert Vivian. *Music:* Harold Barlow

(continued on page 4)

RADIO RECALL, a journal of the MWOTRC, is published the first week of all even-numbered months. Respective deadlines for all submissions are the 20th day of odd-numbered months. Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor; enclose a SASE if reply desired. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of MWOTRC. Permission to reprint given upon request, author permitting. MWOTRC may be contacted through its business address, P.O. Box 2533, Fairfax, VA 22031, or by contacting any of the below listed representatives.

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MWOTRC was created in 1984 by Jim Burnette (1945-2001), our President Emeritus. Annual dues \$20 to locals and \$ 15 to others, and seniors. Regular meetings are held at Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbia Pike and Wayne St, Arlington, VA the 2nd Friday evening of every month, except Jun and Dec, when meetings are held Saturday noon at a local restaurant TBA.

UPCOMING OTR EVENTS



Dec 4-27, 2010 **Cinnamon Bear Cruise in Pacific Northwest**

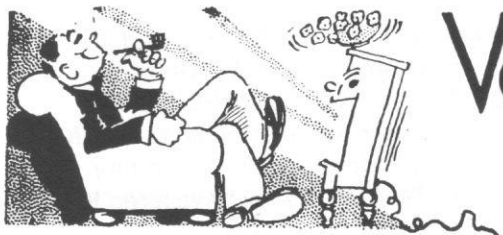
Come aboard the good ship Portland Spirit in Portland, OR for a two hour cruise with the Cinnamon Bear and Queen Melissa. Relive that wonderful 1930's Christmas radio show. Passage fare: \$ 25 adults, \$ 15 child. For specific cruise departure times go to www.cinnamonbearcruise.com or phone 800-224-3901. If you can't make the cruise, you can purchase gifts from their shop (503-224-3900) including Cinnamon Bear story book, coloring book, a toy Crazy Quilt Dragon, and Magician Presto's Bunny in a Hat trick. It's fun for the whole family and a renewal of a grand Christmas tradition.

May 20-21, 2011 **25th Annual OTR & Nostalgia Convention**

Crowne Plaza , 5901 Pfeiffer Road, Cincinnati, OH. Admission \$ 10 daily. Hotel Rooms, \$ 89, single or double. Reservations: 513-793-4500. Special Guests: Bob Hastings (Archie Andrews, McHale's Navy) Rosemary Rice (I Remember Mama, Archie Andrews), Esther Geddes (Magic Garden, Talk of the Town.) For more information, call Bob Burchett, toll-free 888-477-9112 or email him at <haradio@msn.com>

September 21-24, 2011 **6th Annual Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention**

Marriott Hotel, 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21031. A stellar lineup of guests, beginning with Norman Corwin (100 years old and still going strong) and followed by several Radio, TV, and Movie stars. Dozens of nostalgia dealers including our own Fred Berney of Satellite Media Productions. Panels and seminars on old-time radio, movie serials, cartoons, etc. Thrill to presentations by prominent experts like Maury Cagle on "The History of Buck Rogers" and Jack French on "Sky Gals: Lady Aviators in Real Life and Popular Fiction." More info at <www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com>



Voice of the Listener



Dear Editor,

Thanks very much for providing my office with a copy of Edgar Russell's book review of *Norman Corwin's one World Flight*. I will insure that Norman gets a copy of this review, which appeared in your October issue. We certainly appreciate your thoughtfulness in this matter.

Katie Gallof, Acquisitions Editor
Film & Media Studies
New York, NY

Dear Jack,

Please tell me the source of that fine drawing of Buck Rogers in Oct issue. This looks like one of Dick Calkins' better efforts. I always enjoyed that comic strip.

**John G. Fantucchio
Arlington, VA**

Dear Mr. French,

I've been in the OTR hobby since before SPERDVAC existed and my favorite program was "Bobby Benson." I have read all your stuff about the series so was delighted when Clive Rice told me about your association. Thanks for all you do for this wonderful hobby.

Robert "Bob" Brown
Edmond, OK

Dear Mr. French,

I enjoyed having dinner with you and your wife at FOTR convention in Newark. Loved your VOSQ presentation and hope that you can do one on "Ft. Laramie" at the 2011 convention.

**John Buxbaum
(via email)**

Dear Editor,

As a 76 year old Tom Mix fan, I enjoyed your articles on him on the Internet. Please tell me how I can get copies of his radio show and films.

Fred R. Egloff
<fredegloff@earthlink.net>

Dear Sir,

I am gathering props for a local stage play, "Improbable Frequency" and need to borrow or rent: 1940s radio microphone, WW II era amplifiers, receivers, and/or transmitters. Any help from you would be appreciated.

**Colin Dieck
(via email)**

Dear Jack,

Arthur Anderson gave me a copy of August RADIO RECALL. Enjoyed it all--kudos on a solid publication. I'd make one correction to Edgar Russell's review of Arthur's book: he did not appear in Mercury Theatre's "Christmas Carol" with Lionel Barrymore, although he did do a Carol broadcast with them. I'll clear this up in my log that will appear in your December issue.

Craig Wichman
New York, NY

Dear Jack,

I was recently contacted by Joe Riddle of station KFAQ in Tulsa, OK who wants to do a radio special on "Bobby Benson." He will interview me regarding my role as Bobby for Mutual and would like you to discuss the CBS version of the Thirties. His buddy, Bob Brown, is going to send me audio copies of my show.

**Clive Rice
Roanoke, VA**

Dear Jack,

Attached is my article about "looking for radio" in Europe last summer. Hope my take on Third Reich radio, and other aspects of that bad time, is acceptable. I couldn't help adopting my old GRTR style and I thought that the "forthright" idea I mention about the Vienna exhibits would fit. I leave it up to you.

Mark Anderson
Erie, PA

All letters must be signed, but name withheld if originator so specifies. Letters may be edited for brevity, but original opinion will not be altered. All requesters are urged to provide us with both a postal address and their email address. This is our policy since many potential responders do not have Internet access. However, if writers decline, their requests are still published.

12-24-31 – (NBC Syndication/Red?Blue? WEA? (40 min.?) *Prd.*: George P. Ludlam (Same as the program above? NYC newspaper program listing: WEA? "same as WABC").

12-25-34 CBS. 2:30am-5:15pm. CHRISTMAS PARTY (*Variety Special, including Lionel Barrymore's historic FIRST portrayal of "Ebenezer Scrooge" in Charles Dickens' A CHRISTMAS CAROL - 60min. ?*).

12-25-35 CBS. 5pm. *Sponsor*: Campbell's Soup. *Cast*: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore.

12-25-1936 CBS. 9-10pm. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL *Cast*: Scrooge: John Barrymore. (Sub for brother Lionel, whose wife died the day before.)

12-25-37 – CBS. 5pm. *Sponsor*: Campbell's Soups. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-15-38 - NBC. 9-10pm. GOOD NEWS OF 1939. *Including a 20 min. CAROL.* *Cast*: Narrator: Lionel Barrymore & Scrooge: Reginald Owen. (Barrymore's health prevented his starring in MGM's 1938 film as Scrooge; he'd suggested Owen. So Lionel narrated this production, and bowed out of the broadcast below.)

12-23-38 – CBS. 9-10pm. THE CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE *Cast*: Narrator & Scrooge: Orson Welles (for Barrymore); Announcer: Earnest Chappell.

12-24-39 – CBS. 8-9pm. THE CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore; Narrator: Orson Welles.

12-20-40 CBS. 9:30-10pm. THE CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE *Cast*: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore. (Perhaps edited rebroadcast of the 1939 production?).

12-25-41 – NBC. 10-10:30pm. THE RUDY VALLEE SHOW (*Sponsor*: Sealtest) *Cast*: Host: Rudy Vallee & Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-24-42 - NBC. 10-10:30pm. THE RUDY VALLEE SHOW (*Sponsor*: Sealtest) *Cast*: Host: Rudy Vallee; & Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-25-42 – Syndicated. (15m.) TREASURY STAR PARADE - "A MODERN SCROOGE" *Cast*: Host: Fredric March; Lionel Barrymore.

12-22-43 – CBS. 9-9:30pm. MAYOR OF THE TOWN *Wr.*: Jean Holloway (?). *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore; Announcer: Harlow Wilcox (?).

(?) **12-24-43** - *Cast*: Scrooge: Basil Rathbone; Cynthia Rathbone. (Special broadcast to troops overseas.)

12-23-44 CBS. 7-7:30pm. MAYOR OF THE TOWN. *Cast*: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore.

(?) **12-25-44** - CBS. STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD. *Cast*: Scrooge: Basil Rathbone. (?)

12-22-45 - CBS. 8:30-9pm. MAYOR OF THE TOWN *Wr.*: Jean Holloway (?). *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore; Announcer: Harlow Wilcox (?).

12-21-46 – CBS. 8:30-9pm. MAYOR OF THE TOWN. *Cast*: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore.

12-24-47 - ABC. 8:30-9pm. MAYOR OF THE TOWN. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-23-47 (?) – (AFRS) GLOBE THEATER. (Repackaging of '44 [?] MAYOR "Carol.")

12-25-48 – CBS. 4pm-6pm. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL *Variety Special, including a CAROL (Length ?)*. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-25-48 – KYDL (NBC.) May have aired the Barrymore 1947 MGM Record (?).

12-24-49 – (Syndicated). FAVORITE STORY. *Cast*: Scrooge: Ronald Colman.

12-25-49 – MBS. 2:30-3:30pm (?). CAPEHEART CHRISTMAS HOUR *Included a CAROL*, plus 30 min. of music. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-22-50 – Syndicated (?). HOLLYWOOD THEATER OF STARS *Host, Nar., Prd.*: C.P. McGregor (?)(Rebroadcast?).

12-24-50 – MBS. 4-4:30pm. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-22-51 - CBS. 12:30-1pm. STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD. *Cast*: Scrooge: Edmund Gwenn.

12-23-51 - MBS. 4-4:30pm. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

1951 – BBC / WQXR. 4:30-5pm. *Cast*: Scrooge: Alec Guinness.

12-20-52 - CBS. 12:30-1pm. STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD. *Cast*: Scrooge: Edmund Gwenn.



Ebenezer Scrooge & Bob Cratchit
1843 woodcut by John Leech
Source: <www.victorianweb.org/art>

12-21-52 – CBS. 9-9:30pm. HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE. *Cast*: Scrooge: Lionel Barrymore.

12-19-53 - CBS. 12:30-1pm. STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD. *Cast*: Scrooge: Edmund Gwenn.

12-20-53 – CBS. 9-9:30pm. HALLMARK HALL OF FAME: *Last of Lionel Barrymore's 17 (or 18, depending upon 1940) portrayals of Scrooge.*

12-24-53 – BBC(?) / NBC. THEATRE ROYAL. *Cast*: Narrator & Scrooge: Laurence Olivier.

12-19-54 – CBS. 6:30-7pm. HALLMARK HALL OF FAME *Cast*: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore. (Barrymore died in November; rebroadcast of 1953.)

NOTE: From approx. 1955 – 1964, ABC aired Barrymore's 1947 MGM Records CAROL (?).
12-24-55 - MBS/WOR. 7:30-8pm. Cast: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore.

12-24-55 – WINS. 8-8:30pm. Cast: Scrooge, Basil Rathbone.

12-25-1955 – WABC. 12-12:30pm. Cast: Alec Guinness.

12-25-65 - NBC. 10:05pm (?) MONITOR. Cast: Scrooge, Lionel Barrymore. (1947 Record.)

(?) 1960's/'70's (?) - THE STINGIEST MAN IN TOWN. Cast: John Carradine. (?).

12-24-75 – CBS. (60m. w/spots) CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER. Prd., Himan Brown. Cast: Scrooge: E.G. Marshall.

1990 – NPR. Cast: Jonathan Winters, Mimi Kennedy.

12-24-95 (9p.) / **12-25-95** (10pm.) - WBAI. QUICKSILVER RADIO THEATER Wr., Prd., "Scrooge": Craig Wichman; Dir.: Jay Stern.

1996 – Syndicated. FOCUS ON THE FAMILY RADIO THEATRE Cast: Host, David Suchet; Narrator, Timothy Bateson; Scrooge, Tenniel Evans.

12-12-2003 – WYRS. 7-8pm (approx.). QUICKSILVER RADIO THEATER Wr., Dir., Prd., "Scrooge": Craig Wichman. Music: Kyler Brown.



For more about the radio CAROLs, see the Autumn 2010 "Nostalgia Digest," and join us for the 12/3/2010 "Radio Once More" webcast.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Craig Wichman is an actor, writer, etc., living in New York City. He is the founder of Quicksilver Radio Theater, a veteran FOTR performer, the creator of the short film "A Christmas Carol – In Eight Minutes," and will soon be seen in the feature film "The Adventures of Paul & Marian."

SOURCES

Conversations with OTR veterans and experts; miscellaneous catalogs and magazines; books including "The Life and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge," "The Christmas Carol Trivia Book," "Damned in Paradise," "The Barrymores," and "On the Air"; plus online resources including the Old Time Radio Digest, the Digital Deli, the Olde Tyme Radio Network, and the Old Time Radio Researchers Group. Corrections and additions to this information, and questions about acquiring recordings of several of these broadcasts, are welcome at <QuicksilverRT@aol.com>

NEW YEAR'S RAFFLE (FREE) ; BROADCASTING BOOKS TO GO TO THREE LUCKY MEMBERS

Our last free raffle for club members, which was conducted by email, was so successful that our President has authorized a second one. But this raffle is bigger and better (involving three books) and entries will be accepted by email or snail mail.

Here's the way it works. Send in your choice of the below books (you may pick one, two or all three) and send your choices to the editor. His email and regular mail addresses appear on page two of every issue of RR. In the editorial offices, your name will be placed in one, two, or three of the bowls marked with the book's title. While you can have your name in each bowl, only one winner from one family can be chosen.

The drawing will be New Year's Eve and winners will be advised of the results by email or telephone. Books will be shipped to the lucky winners at the club's expense.

Here's the three prizes:

- 1) **Radios: The Golden Age** by Philip Collins (Black Dog Publ, 1987) Large 8 X 10, 119 pages of vintage radios in full color. All the classics: Air King, Emerson, Colonial, Fada, Crosley, Arvin, RCA, Westinghouse, and more.
- 2) **The Young and the Restless** edited by Mary Cassata and Barbara Irwin (Central Publishing, 1996) Enormous book 9 X 11, 285 pages of full color pix of every cast member of this popular TV series which ranked # 1 for over a decade.
- 3) **The 3rd Revised Ultimate History of Network Radio Programing** by Jay Hickerson (Privately printed, 2005) The bible of our hobby: a massive 548 page reference book that lists every network radio show by title, genre, stars, dates of airing, network, music theme, sponsor, copies in circulation, etc. You can buy the new 4th edition from Jay for \$ 60 or you can try to win this used one for free.

Don't delay in submitting your entries. The Christmas crunch is coming and soon the holiday activities will take your mind off this fabulous offer. So enter now while you can and clearly indicate which book: one, two, and/or three you wish to win.

Tonight –
Listen to
Alec
Templeton
Time with
Pat O'Malley



WEAF KYW WDEL WRC WBAL
7:30 P.M.
Sponsored by ALKA-SELTZER

March
1941

FADING FILES OR FAULTY FACTS

Congressional Audio Survey Leading Us Astray?

A lengthy study, co-authored by Sam Brylawski and Rob Bamberger on the preservation of sound recordings in the U.S., has concluded that new digital recordings of events in U.S. history and early radio shows are at risk of being lost much faster than older ones on tape. It also found many historical recordings already have been lost or can't be accessed by the public. That includes most of radio's first decade from 1925 to 1935.

The study was mandated by Congress in a 2000 preservation law, and was recently released to the media by the Library of Congress. According to this survey, recent history — such as recordings from 9/11 or the 2008 election — are at risk because digital sound files can be corrupted, and widely used CD-R discs only last three to five years before files start to fade.

As might be expected, this audio file survey hit the OTR hobby like a massive bomb. "The sky is falling" trumpeted the print media, as the claims of Brylawski and Bamberger were circulated throughout the country.

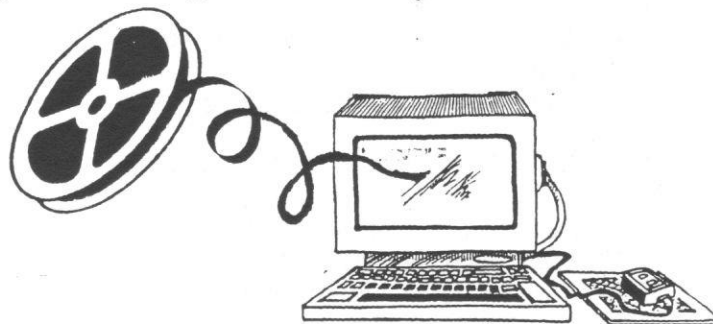
To gauge the accuracy of the main theme and specific allegations set forth in this survey, RADIO RECALL enlisted the services of **Jerry Haendiges**, a sound engineer in southern California who has decades of experience in audio sound files and duplication. He is the co-founder of SPERDVAC and a specialist in archiving vintage broadcasts.

Below are Jerry's responses and observations on the pertinent points raised in this survey (which points are printed in bold italics.)

>New digital recordings of events in U.S. history and early radio shows are at risk of being lost much faster than older ones on tape and many are already gone.

I totally disagree with most of the findings made in this survey and I'm speaking as an audio engineer with over 50 years of heavy experience in both analog and later digital audio and video. I don't think any of the conclusions reached in this survey actually came from the authors' experience, but rather from hearsay from other people. As far as I'm concerned, digital archiving is absolutely the superior method. Now when I mention digital audio, I'm referring to raw Wave file recordings, not to compressed formats such as mp3, which are far more susceptible to corruption.

>Even recent history — such as recordings from 9/11 or the 2008 presidential election — are at risk



because digital sound files can be corrupted, and widely used CD-R discs only last three to five years before files start to fade.

This is pure hogwash! I've heard this argument beginning some ten years ago. I began recording to CD-R in early 1997. Every single disc I recorded back then is still quite playable today. Then, a few months later, in an effort to try to save some money on the the discs that originally cost about \$2 each, I started looking around for something cheaper. Like so many others, I started using bargain basement no-brand discs. My first clue that this was not a good thing should have been the rather high reject rate. But I just wrote that off as being a lower quality control process.

Fortunately it didn't take long for me to realize that the dye used was highly important and really did make a difference in the longevity of the discs. Yes, I did have a lot of discs go bad due to the dye "fading" for that period of time. So I began looking into the dyes used by the various manufactures. I would then buy several brands of CD-r discs, record them and then hold them up to a very strong flood lamp. Some of the discs started displaying the fading problem in a couple of hours, many showed the problem in several hours, and a few showed little or no effect even after several days and then months. One of the brands that displayed no effect...ever, was Ritek. So I began using Ritek exclusively in 1999 and have done so ever since. No disc that I have checked since that time has ever been bad, and that's eleven years, not three to five as stated in the article.

>Shows by singers Duke Ellington and Bing Crosby, as well as the earliest sports broadcasts, are already gone. There was little financial incentive for such networks as CBS to save early sound files.

That's because they were never digitized. :-)

>Digital files are a blessing and a curse. Sounds can be easily recorded and

transferred and the files require less and less space. But they must be constantly maintained and backed up by audio experts as technology changes. That requires active preservation, rather than simply placing files on a shelf.

Why in the world is this a problem? Of course files need to be backed up constantly. But huge storage devices are available at dirt cheap prices. And excellent software is readily available at a low price...or even free that will do the backups automatically. I store all of my files in one and two terabyte hard drives, each with a mirrored hard drive that contains the exact same information as the original. The hardest part of setting this up was plugging in the USB cable to my ten-port USB hubs. Yes, hard drives do go bad, but using this method, all I have to do is swap the bad hard drive with its assigned backup and plug a new hard drive in it's place. Now the software backs up onto it's new drive...again, all automatically.

Although I am an engineer, this in no way requires any technical skill to do it...any one can! By the way, there is one other inaccuracy that statement. "Sounds can be easily recorded and transferred and the files require less and less space." Wave files take up exactly that same amount of space they did at their inception. The difference is that due to higher capacity storage devices, many, many more files can be stored on a single device.

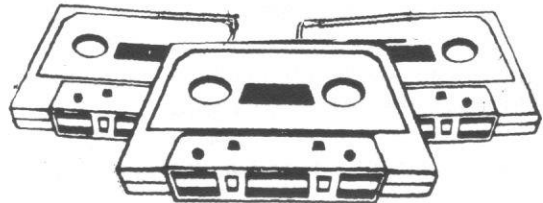
>Those old analog formats that remain are more physically stable and can survive about 150 years longer than current digital recordings. Still, the rapid change in technology to play back the recordings can make them obsolete.

I don't know how anyone with an ounce of experience could make that kind of irresponsible statement! In my restoration business, I deal routinely with studio master tapes and transcription discs. Most recording tape prior to 1970 was made from acetate or, prior to that, paper. As anyone using these tapes knows, you kind of hold your breath when opening an acetate tape box. First of



all, you are greeted with the strong smell of vinegar (acetone). Then you look to see, not whether or not the tape is curled or warped, but just how badly it's warped. And if you are lucky enough to be able to play the tape, you have to have the splicing block, tape and razor blade handy for when the inevitable break in the tape occurs. And usually, if you can get the tape to play, you need to have some way to hold the tape tight to the head, because of the warping.

Paper tape doesn't warp, but like any paper product, it dries out and becomes brittle, resulting in many breaks during playing. And for the same reasons stated above, many people would later use bargain basement tape, which started going bad in just a few years. So, best case scenario, under ideal conditions, recording tape can be expected to last maybe thirty or forty years. A far cry from the 150 years plus stated in the survey. And getting back to the loss of all the programs in the 1925 to 1935 era, could it just possibly be that all those transcription discs didn't quite make it to the 150 year mark either.



>Recordings saved by historical societies and family oral histories also are at risk. Audio cassettes are just time bombs; they're just not going to be playable.

Well, finally we do totally agree on something; cassettes are probably the worst method of archiving there is. It's one of the few things you can positively know will go bad eventually.

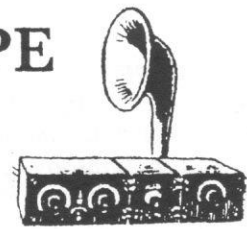
>There are few if any programs to train professional audio archivists, the study found. No universities currently offer degrees in audio preservation, though several offer related courses

This is nonsense. Anyone really interested in professional archiving can easily find many good resources. I've trained a few myself and all top professional software companies, that I know of, offer very extensive training. It certainly does not require a university class nor a degree.

The biggest problem that I see in today's archiving is that anyone with a computer and some sort of audio program thinks they are an expert in audio preservation and restoration. And sometimes they make it even worse. After over-processing with cheap equipment and programs, they end up "archiving" this already terrible sounding audio in low bit-rate mp3 format.

LOOKING FOR RADIO IN EUROPE

by Mark Anderson © 2010



Last summer I went to Europe and found the history of radio. It was wrapped inside my excursion to three beautiful cities on the Danube – Budapest, Bratislava, and Vienna. Some might say that I could have found that history at the renown Museum of Broadcasting in Bowie MD. I, however, have always enjoyed taking the great circle route, wherever I'm headed.

For twelve days I absorbed the culture and endured the heat wave that had the region in its grip. I learned the history of nations, both the vitality of present day life and their disturbing and beleaguered past. I traveled by water taxi between the cities. I got around on foot and by rail; and figured how to read the Celsius scale.

In Vienna, the Museum of Technology is a wonderful, ornate building. It looks like a palace; it's down the street from a palace; but since 1909 it has had its own pride of place and mission. A huge skylight arches above four levels of concourses, corridors, and the central courtyard.

I was aiming for Level Four – Communication and Transportation - where I would be at eye-level with a small plane suspended there. Took a while, but finally I was skirting the Kino exhibit and ambling past a horse drawn postal cart. The pneumatic tube exhibit gave way to a vintage mural size photograph of people sitting around a garden table. They were wearing headphones and listening to Radio Wien. The RUNDUNK exhibit had begun!



I read about Lee DeForest and his 1910 broadcast of Caruso singing at the Met. I looked at early receivers – antennas and crystals; probes and tuning coils. There were crystals kept in a box the size of an aspirin tin. Receivers from pioneering companies were on display – Telefunken, Max Böhnell, and a Newark NJ company, Martian Manufacturing, whose 1924 receiver (a tripod supporting a plate and a paneled drum) indeed had the look of something that had just landed.

By the early 1930s amplification was in, and people could listen without headphones. Stylish wood cabinet radios had dials and the cities-in-

range printed on the glass.

The grim reality of that era was thrust upon me when I found myself standing in front of a display case of a dozen or fifteen examples of the square black "Volksempfänger," the people's receiver. The dark photo-mural showed a crowded urban street. Radio was now a tool of the Third Reich. The cultural aspect of technology had turned malevolent. The exhibit narrative detailed the indignities heaped upon the populace: controlled broadcasts, inflammatory speeches, and the 1934 law prohibiting Jews from owning a radio.



The monstrous implications of the exhibit were still with me as I shuffled toward the colorful display of 1970s style portables. Transistor heaven proved to be a nice way to ease out of the Rundfunk corridor.

The stark tone and detailed explanation of the "people's radio" exhibit was found in other exhibits of the museum. Urban planning, for example, a great idea for Vienna in the 1920s, gave rise to ethnic discrimination in housing. And when the assessment of other needs of people in a civil society, (work, transport, leisure, for example), became sinister with the measurement of the human beings themselves, the guide book was no less clear about the horrible application of science gone wrong.

My wanderings from level to level brought me eye-to-eye with many more things. I spun the wooden wheel of probability, with its ball bearings and posts and chutes. I saw my first and only Theremin. I operated a bank of solar panels across a diorama landscape. Boats, bicycles, a bell-casting apparatus, it was all there. I was realizing how little I knew about technology and how much there is to learn about the nature of human beings.

Mark Anderson, a MWOTRC member in Erie, PA, is a regular contributor to *Radio Recall*. He is a retired librarian and a current college student. Mark ran the club's audio library for years and is a 1997 winner of the Stan Cawelti Award.

BOOK REVIEW



Radio's Morning Show Personalities: *Early Hour Broadcasters and Deejays from the 1920s to the 1990s*

by Philip A. Lieberman
213 pp. softcover 2009
McFarland Publ [1996]

Reviewed by Jim Cox

This is the kind of book that historiographers of old time radio savor, for it not only focuses on a field that was conspicuous back in the day but highlights scores that participated in it at local stations. It's a reminder, too, of the impact the "morning men" had on the industry (for most were men).

Some talented individuals went beyond spinning records by putting their brands on their assignments. Some were adept at special features, recognitions and awards, humor, singing, drama, playing instruments, supplying historical perspectives, contests, guest artists, interviews, dialoguing with sidekicks and other station staffers, introducing combos and orchestras and so forth. Before the memories of such notables fade, authors like Philip A. Lieberman are helping us recapture the sterling moments of a few interlocutors whose names might be missing in the annals of vintage radio otherwise.

Lieberman's work is *Radio's Morning Show Personalities: Early Hour Broadcasters and Deejays from the 1920s to the 1990s*. Issued as a hardback in 1996, it's been re-released in a handsome 204-page softcover edition by McFarland in the past year. Lieberman, a Sarasota, Fla., city planner, maintains that for a long while in contemporary America radio's "prime time" has been weekdays between 5 and 10 a.m. "In most markets, the morning show has the most listeners and carries the highest advertising rates," he insists.

Structurally his book defines four distinct periods that focus on the progression of morning shows in local radio: early years, with spinning records a byproduct but not the main emphasis; golden age, with recorded music a concentration but not as much as the personalities playing it; top 40, giving music preference over personalities; and post top 40, channeling audiences into targeted

classifications. Examples are provided for each period.

Some of the better-known spinmeisters proffered are John B. and John R. Gambling (who presided at one point over what the author contends was "the most listened-to radio show in the United States"), Gene Rayburn, Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding, Jack Lescoulie, Arthur Godfrey, Jack Sterling, "Buffalo" Bob Smith, "Wolfman" Jack Smith, Don Imus and Howard Stern. Protracted vignettes of 28 of these are to be found there.



From a historian's point of view, the real meat is in the book's next 100 pages in which Lieberman offers a kind of biographical appendage of more than 200 morning showmen. While there's not a great deal on any one of them—usually two to four lines—their names, markets and stations are identified, many by eras they were in vogue. If they had unique habits on the air they are also there. Every book has its blemishes as does this one.

Its greatest limitation is its overriding absorption with the Northeast, especially in the 28 key figures presented in the early chapters. Only a couple can be identified as broadcasting from west of the Mississippi and south of the Potomac rivers. With few exceptions (like Chicago) almost all of the morning men receiving full treatment are in or near New York and Washington. Did those areas possess the only personalities worth celebrating?

While many from elsewhere are referenced in mentions at the back, a few extraordinary individuals who were "institutions" to vast numbers over wide territories for long periods are slighted. Among missing icons are Teddy Bart and the Waking Crew Orchestra, a live aggregate performing from the 1950s to the 1980s over Nashville's WSM; and Charlotte's Grady Cole, who woke millions of North and South Carolinians over WBT from the 1930s to the 1960s. The 1960s to the 1980s receives heavy emphasis, incidentally, while earlier decades don't fare as well.

Despite this, Lieberman's text supplies a historical gap that has existed in local radio. His writing style is enjoyable and it's an easy read. His narrative coupled with photos of featured personalities in the early section makes it a must for historians of local radio. *Radio's Morning Show Personalities* is available at \$38.50 at www.mcfarlandpub.com and from 800-253-2187.

OBITUARIES

Tippy Stringer, age 80, died in Los Angeles on October 1st at her home. Although she rose to fame in Washington, DC as TV's beautiful "Weather Girl" in the 50s, she was also known for her famous husbands. She married prominent broadcaster Chet Huntley in 1959. He is now remembered primarily for his work on television with David Brinkley on NBC's *Huntley-Brinkley Report* from 1956 until 1970. But he was a successful radio newscaster before his TV years.

Huntley was on the air in Seattle, Spokane and Portland before working at KFI in Los Angeles from 1937 to 1939. He next worked for KNX radio in Hollywood and on various CBS news programs. By 1943, he was also doing a 10-minute news analysis program on CBS Pacific Coast radio stations. He stayed with KNX and CBS West Coast until 1951, when he next worked at KECA radio and television in Hollywood (ABC network.) Mr. Huntley left ABC for NBC-TV in 1955 as a West Coast reporter for *The Today Show*. NBC then brought him to New York, pairing him with Brinkley.

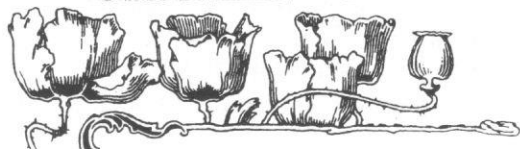
David Brinkley had introduced Tippy to Huntley and after their marriage, they lived in New York City. They retired to Montana in 1970, his home state, where he died in 1974.

In 1980 Tippy met and married William "Bill" Conrad, an OTR star of *Gunsmoke* and *Escape*, who was then acting on TV. (He had been widowed in 1977.) In Los Angeles, Tippy managed Conrad's career, including his role in the CBS show, *Jake and the Fatman*. Conrad died in 1994, leaving Tippy a widow again.

Lewis Tipton Stringer was born in 1930 in Illinois and her family later moved to Chevy Chase, MD. She was accepted at William and Mary College and assigned to a men's dorm, based upon her name. Instead she chose to attend the University of Maryland and changed her first name to "Tippy" to prevent further confusion.

In college she went from Homecoming Queen to Miss Summer Jubilee to Queen of the Seabees and many other honorary titles in beauty contests. She became well known in DC for her television roles, hosting cooking shows and later becoming the "Weather Girl" at WRC-TV. While in that job, she also was a singer at the Shoreham Hotel's swanky Blue Room. Life magazine featured her in a special article in 1955.

She ran, unsuccessfully for Congress in 1978 as a candidate from Montana. Tippy had no children; survivors include a brother.



Thomas A. DeLong died July 12th at age 75. He was truly, in the words of that revered adage, "a gentleman and a scholar."

For several years, vintage history fans have relied upon two of Tom's OTR reference books on a regular basis: *Quiz Craze: America's Infatuation with Game Shows* (Praeger, 1991) and *Radio Stars: An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary of 953 Performers, 1920 Through 1960* (McFarland, 1996.)

Your editor met Tom several times at FOTR convention in Newark and was struck by his love for OTR research, his humility, and his gentleness. In our hobby, which frequently attracts the loud and boisterous, Tom was a quiet, dedicated figure and a tribute to "speak softly." As former Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Westport (CT) School of Music and author of over a dozen well-researched books, he had plenty to brag about, but never did.

In addition to the two books on radio of Tom's mentioned above he also wrote one on Frank Munn and five others: *Pops: Paul Whiteman, King of Jazz*, *The Mighty Music Box*, *The Telephone Hour: A Retrospective* and *The Golden Age of Musical Radio*.

We should all be sorry for his death but grateful for his enormous contributions to the hobby. His death marks the third OTR author who has passed away in the past year; the other two were Jim Harmon and Ron Lackmann.

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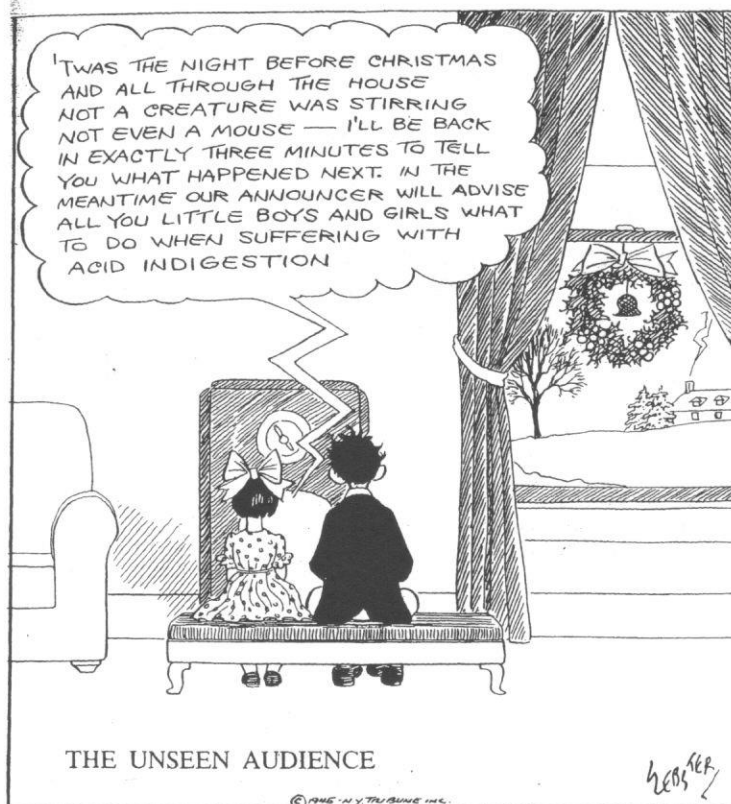
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An OTR Christmas Poem

by Adam Roslewicz

Christmas time on radio
Was always such a treat,
Listening to Crosby sing
The carols...oh so sweet
We'd gather 'round the Philco
And wish that we could
Be on the air,
With the Cinnamon Bear
Trimming the Christmas tree.
But one thing has me stymied,
Really, in spite of myself,
Golly gee!
How did Molly McGee
Hide the gifts on the closet shelf?



from the EDITOR'S DESK

email: jfrench@mwotrc.com



Our thanks to our December contributors, all of whom volunteered their submissions, with little prodding from your editor. Both Jim and Mark are regulars in RADIO RECALL, but this is Craig Wichman's first appearance. We've called on Jerry Haendiges a few times in the past and he always comes through in fine fashion.

We were surprised to learn that Thomas Edison was not the first to record sound. It turns out that in the mid 1800s, a French inventor, Edouard-Leon de Martinville discovered a method to record sound on a cylinder....similar to primitive photography. He called the new device a "phonograph" and while it did record sound, it could only be seen, not heard since it could not be played back. However in 2008 scientists in California found a way to retrieve this audio sound so his "records" were heard for the first time.

Get your entries in for the new free lottery with three broadcasting books as prizes. Complete details on page 5 of this issue.

Is there any local member of MWOTRC that does not know that OTR great, Arthur Godfrey, was responsible for the creation of the airport at nearby Leesburg? In the 40s and 50s Godfrey, who was working in New York but living in Loudoun County. He'd fly back every weekend, landing on a grass strip along Edwards Ferry Road, which he called "Leesburg International Cow Pasture." Years later Leesburg took over the area and expanded it into "Leesburg Executive Airport" the name it bears today. More than 200 private airplanes are housed in its hangars.

For those of us who look for an OTR connection in our postage stamps, we've had some recent issues to enjoy. Bob Hope's stamp was released in 2009 and this year Roy Rogers and Gene Autry were honored in 2010 as was singer Kate Smith. Archie Andrews just got his own stamp but it pays tribute to the comic book, not his radio show. So when you run out of your Holiday stamps, ask your postal clerk for some OTR stamps.

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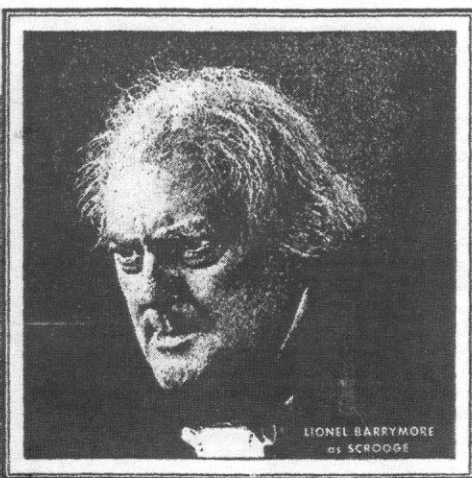
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Radio Recall



On the air Christmas Day

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