



RADIO RECALL



Metro Washington Old Time Radio Club

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

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SIGNS OF LIFE AT FOTR 36

Convention Observations by Mark Anderson © 2011

The Friends of Old Time Radio rang down the curtain on the 36th and final convention on a cool and cloudy mid-October weekend in Newark. Host Jay Hickerson had been properly honored for his efforts all these years. As one fellow put it, to paraphrase: "...for thirty-six years Jay was determined that devotion to the cause would overcome the strife of putting it together." As Jay wrapped things up late that Saturday night with piano renditions of "Thanks for the Memories" and "We'll Meet Again," the crowd could only sing along and clamor for more. The question hung in the air: another song, or another convention in the future?



I had touched down in the lobby of the Ramada late on Thursday afternoon, and within minutes I was talking with conventioners from Connecticut, New York, Virginia, and Florida. I was soon engulfed in a hallway-full of happy people, greeting and catching up. Over time, I would meet people from as far away as Germany, the British Isles, and Australia.

Earlier that afternoon, Dr. Mike Biel had given a memorial talk about Norman Corwin, the brilliant writer and producer of radio, who had died earlier in the week at 101 years of age. By all accounts the crowd was in thrall to Biel's insight. His reflections, replete with audio clips were drawn from his friendship with Corwin and extensive research

on his life and work. People acknowledged feeling "sad, but satisfied," that Corwin had touched so many lives.

Thoughts of Corwin once again came to the fore on Saturday night in the form of an auction item. Michael Kacey, a filmmaker from Los Angeles, offered for bid a CD recording of a Corwin radio play called "The Undecided Molecule." Kacey had directed the play in May of this year with a cast of industry veterans, including, from our midst, Richard Herd and Ivan Cury. The occasion was the convention of the Association of Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC); the venue was the Grand Wilshire Hotel. That was also Corwin's last public appearance.

Between those bookends of tribute from Biel and Kacey, convention activities carried on with grand style and zest. The dealers' rooms were open; panels and presentations were well-attended. Often people had to scurry to a rehearsal or an interview.

My little quest was to ascertain that the interest in old-time radio was abiding, that groups would meet, scripts would be written and performed, even if people would no longer turn to October on their tire company calendars and scrawl "NEWARK" in block letters.

Yes, I found that the research will go on; the OTR niche in nostalgia is secure, in large part because fans and scholars already know that they must slide over and make room for that crazy little thing called TV. Like classic cars and (it must be said) baseball, new history will always be unearthed and will forever fascinate. The major difference, perhaps, is that now no one is quitting their day jobs to get in on it.

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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



December 3-27, 2011: **Cinnamon Bear Cruise**

Aboard the Portland Spirit, leaving from Portland, OR docks. Hosted by Paddy O'Cinnamon and joined with his pals, Queen Melissa, Preston the Magician, Captain Taffy, and even the Crazy Quilt Dragon. Fun, games and story telling of this classic Holiday adventure. Dec 3-18, weekends only, Dec 19-24 and 26 & 27, all weekdays. Two hour river cruise. Adults \$ 25, Children \$ 15. Complete information at web site: <www.portlandspirit.com>

April 13 and 14, 2012: **26th Annual Cincinnati OTR and Nostalgia Convention**

Crowne Plaza, 5901 Pfeiffer Road, Cincinnati, OH. Admission \$ 10 Daily. Hotel rooms available as singles or doubles. Reservations, call 513-793-4500. Many OTR dealers and vendors for your shopping pleasure. Interesting guest stars plus experts on panels. For more information, contact Bob Burchette toll-free at 888-477-9112 or email him at <haradio@msn.com>

August 9-11: **7th Annual MidAtlantic Nostalgia Convention**

Marriott Hotel, 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21031. (**NOTE: This event has been moved up one month, from September to August.**) Featuring a stellar lineup of celebrity guests, including Shirley Jones ("The Music Man") Ron Ely (Tarzan), Jay North (Dennis the Menace), James Darren ("T.J. Hooker"). Robert Colbert ("Cheyenne") and Veronica Carlson ("Dracula Has Risen") Exhibitors will include the National Capital Radio & Television Museum. Dozens of vendors with nostalgia products from OTR, TV, film, pulp magazines, comic books, silent films, Sci-Fi, and everything in-between. Due to the fact that this event takes place on the second Friday of the month, this corresponds to our regular monthly meeting of the Metropolitan Washington OTR Club. Discussions are ongoing to move our monthly meeting to this convention in Hunt Valley, MD to attract new members from the Baltimore area.



Voice of the Listener



Dear Jack,

Thanks for submitting your article on *Fort Laramie* which we'll run in next issue. Several years ago on a cross country trip to Boston, we visited Fort Laramie and the remaining buildings were the same as described in the radio show. I will never forget that Wyoming side trip.

Frank Rosin, Editor
Air Check (of Puget Sound)

Dear Mr. French,

I recently bought some old issues of NARA NEWS, containing several articles by you. Is this still published? I can find no reference to NARA on the internet.

Bob Cockrum
(via email)

Dear Jack ,

October issue of RR was a blast! Abbott, Grams Jr., Wright, and Cox! What insight! What depth! It was like attending a great seminar. A first class act by all contributors. Our OTR re-creations in Florida are now booked solid for November and December and we'll be busy in Jan also.

Ralph Annan
Hudson, FL

G'Day Jack,

It was great catching up with you at FOTR Newark..I'll be sending you to the link to the Grace Gibson's bio. As you know, she was the American who syndicated so many U.S. shows in Australia. She is highly regarded in DownUnder's OTR period.

Ian Grieve
Australia

Hi Jack,

I'm making good progress on my article on Connie Boswell so will be able to submit it to you for the February 2012 issue of RADIO RECALL.

Cort Vitty
Davidsonville, MD

Dear Jack,

Dynamite Entertainment recently said that their new LONE RANGER comic book will have Andre Parks writing and art by Esteve Pols. It is set to debut January 2012. BTW, that LONE RANGER movie is still on track, but scheduled for 2013.

Martin Grams, Jr.
Delta, PA

Dear Mr. French,

I've posted the text of your MANC presentation of Lady Aviators on my web site. I would like to interview you for my blog on Old-Time Radio some time this month.

Barbara Peterson
(via email)

Dear Editor,

I took your advice and donated all of the scripts of Fielden Farrington (my dad) and his papers to Library of American Broadcasting in MD. Dad wrote radio scripts since the 1930s and worked with Hyman Brown in the 70s.

Mike Farrington
(via email)

Dear Mr. French,

I enjoyed meeting you at FOTR and having our picture taken together. It was great to meet another "Mr. French." I'll be seeing you.

Kathy Garver
Burlingame, CA

NOTE: Garver played "Cissy" on TV's *Family Affair*

Dear Jack,

I don't know if this web site has been around long nor how well known it is, but some of your readers may enjoy this slice of Chicago radio history:

www.scotchchilders.com/timecapsule/TCWMAQ.htm

Ken Neal
Kerrville, TX

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.

History is indeed great source material. So with great anticipation I headed for Friday's double feature: presentations by Jack French ("The Best of the West"), and Martin Grams Jr. ("Researching Cavalcade of America.") I hurried from the dealers' room with my handful of *Man Called X* cassettes, and settled in to hear French's presentation on three erudite Westerns from the Golden Age: *Gunsmoke*, *Fort Laramie*, and *Frontier Gentleman*. The scriptwriting in all three is robust and beyond compare. Pre-eminent writers such as John Meston (*Gunsmoke*) and Anthony Ellis (*Frontier Gentleman*) led the way with stories of risk, violence, and harrowing adventure on "the rim of Empire" to borrow that stirring phrase from the *Fort Laramie* introduction.

Importantly, but without much emphasis, French mentioned a key aspect of motivation in Western characters, which I believe applies in Western stories across the board: the fact that so many people moving west were "dealing with the residual pain of the Civil War."

Biography, invention, and pivotal moments in American history were sure-fire topics for DuPont's *Cavalcade of America*. Martin Grams Jr. augmented his encyclopedic history of the show (1998) with an entertaining slide show of black-and-white photographs he has collected from the DuPont archives and other sources. His commentary added greatly to the backstage aura and the live audience road-show venues that made the show so popular and a weekly lesson about America.

I didn't exactly faint when I found myself standing next to Simon Jones in a crowded hallway one evening. He's a headliner, a true star, I thought to myself, accessible, for goodness sake, just hanging out! That was yet another signature of the convivial nature of FOTR. I gathered my senses and told him that I enjoyed streaming BBC Radio 4; and he agreed that it was heartening that so much good writing for radio is still being produced. He gave me that key to the future and then had to hurry off to get his script, because he was in the evening's recreation.

New scripts as well as recreations were showcased over the three days and evenings. The annual script-writing competition was won this year by Michael Murphy. He wrote "King of the Beasts," in the style of *Escape*, and it was given a wonderful reading. The Dave Warren Players marked their 25th anniversary of FOTR recreations. In the midst of his patter, Dave Zwengler dropped this nugget on us, regarding recreations "It's a matter of scripts, innovation, and the friendships you find there."

Readers found their places and their voices. What a treat to hear the subtle, skewering naïveté of the actress who portrayed Jane Ace; and the Gotham Players fellow who announced their *Lights Out* episode ("The Giggler") had a voice so

deep you could swim in it.

Edgar Farr Russell's original script turned to the World War II years and the *Any Bonds Today* series. Edgar called his episode "Radio Goes to War," with the notion of hometown boys responding to dire circumstances overseas. His cast was so numerous that he had to maneuver a landing craft onto an isolated stretch of beach near the Pulaski Skyway, and his characters stormed the stage, streaming water from their boots. Russell used a parade of radio characters in a salute to addled youth, world leaders, and everyone's mom and pop. We might add, "History sure is crowded!"

Mention of two rather entertaining panels will serve to augment the notion that FOTR indeed expanded its reach over the years to include the music industry and the world of comic artists. The "Funnies Friday" panel had well-known artists who gave us the lowdown about deadlines, knowing what was good, and slaving away in seeming isolation.

Editors were hated, it seems, right down the line, and were skewered, much to the delight of a packed room. It was their own fault, our artists maintained, starting when those guys gradually left the creative side (brainstorming stories, making suggestions) to go totally to marketing, like giving assignments and spending the rest of their time on the phone. I'm sure it was true.

Popular music held sway Saturday afternoon, as FOTR veterans Brian Gari and Stu Weiss hosted a panel of songwriters and singers. The ladies who sang as The Delicates, on radio and television, were honored by the panel. Also on hand was Tom Bahler, a great singer who did some quality work with Jan and Dean. But his enduring moments were acting in television commercials for Ford Motor Company. Those video clips carried the afternoon for me, the big garish Technicolor sets and dancers wearing outlandish clothes. Great car, too, I think!

Yes, boys and girls, the camel's nose is really under the tent now. Where else are you going to see clips like that? Where else will the great threads of American culture and nostalgia be gathered up and put on display?

Try the Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention, August 9-11, 2012, in Hunt Valley MD, not awfully far from Baltimore. Martin Grams Jr. and his crew have for six or seven years now put together a wonderful blend of personalities, presentations and artifacts of American popular culture and nostalgia. MANC (I had to learn that one in conversation) has been heralded in the press, and is on the inside back cover of the FOTR 36 commemorative booklet. So when you get your 2012 Blue Coal wall calendar, turn to August right away, and mark it up!



FAVORITE CHRISTMAS RADIO PROGRAMS

by Jack French © 2010



Most of my friends in the hobby usually have a consensus about their favorite radio programs with a Christmas theme. Any *Christmas Carol* with Lionel Barrymore (and there are several versions) usually tops the list, followed by the *Amos 'n Andy* program, repeated many times after first airing on 12-24-41, entitled "The Lord's Prayer." Another one with nearly universal praise is "The Ambulance" from *Grand Central Station*. And if we are to reach outside the period of the Golden Age of Radio, few programs can top Jean Shepherd in his "Red Ryder Nails the Cleveland Street Kid" which was first on WOR on Christmas Eve, 1974. Folks from later generations will instantly know this story from seeing the movie version with Ralphie being told repeatedly that he'll shoot his eye out if Santa brings him a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas.

While I like all the above programs, especially in the Yuletide season, I have a few others that I enjoy even more. My first choice is "Cowboy Christmas Carol", the 12-20-53 episode of *The Six Shooter*. This is a remarkable retelling of the Dickens classic with the lead, James Stewart, finding a runaway boy on the trail who is trying to avoid Christmas. Around his campfire, Britt Ponset spins this tale reset in the west of that era, but manages to convey the exact feeling that Charles Dickens did to his original London audience. It's truly a wonderful broadcast.

"Miracle on 34th Street" as aired by the *Screen Director's Playhouse* (12-21-50) does justice to the movie and Edmund Gwyn gets to reprise his role at the microphone. The rest of the cast was not selected from those screen actors who starred in the film, but instead some excellent radio actors took both leading roles and supporting cast. Lurene Tuttle is Doris and David Ellis plays Fred, with Ralph Moody, Bill Conrad, and Herb Rollinson backing them up. It adds up to one enchanting hour of radio.

If some of my choices seem a little quirky, so be it. And my next one is certainly not everyone's cup of tea....er, ah, mulled cider. In the early 50s, when *Fibber McGee and Molly* had been reduced to daily 15 minute programs, they had an interesting lineup of consecutive Yule Season shows that aired the week leading up to Christmas 1953. Each one of these shows had something entertaining to recommend them to their audience, including the Christmas Eve show when Fibber tells Teeny the story of the lopsided pine tree. But my favorite in that week's lineup was the one on December 22nd, because Jim and Marion Jordan were joined in this program by two unusual voices that were very well known to radio listeners

because of their leading roles in two other great programs. In supporting roles were Natalie Masters, our own *Candy Matson*, YU 2-8209, who portrays a Christmas tree salesperson whom Fibber contacts for a bargain. Also in a supporting role is Jack Moyles, a great actor who would later be "Major Dagget" on *Fort Laramie*.

Another show that won't appear on many lists was the *Suspense* program of December 1958 in which Raymond Burr (returning to his villain roles of the past) plays a felon who seeks revenge at Christmas time but fortunately ends up with a change of heart. If you like more Christmas shows that are offbeat, let me refer you to two that aired as part of *The Shadow* series: "The Stockings Were Hung" (12-24-39) and "Joey's Christmas Story" (12-22-40.) I'm not going to give away the plot or outcome of either, but both are in fairly common circulation if you wish to sample something in that venue.

As for Christmas comedy, few shows can best the writers on the *Jack Benny Show* and many of them were variations on Jack's Christmas shopping, exploring the ways a frugal man can fulfill the Yuletide expectations in gift giving. I'm sure all of us in the hobby have two or three of these programs they would pick as Benny's best and I won't quarrel with any choices. As for me, the 12-19-53 episode where Jack is in Palm Springs buying dates for Don Wilson is certainly as funny as any other....and maybe more so. The usual suspects are all in this program: Mel Blanc, Frank Nelson, and Sheldon Leonard. Give it a listen this Christmas time....

NOTE: This article was originally published in "Chattanooga Airwaves", Editor: Thomas Swafford



FRANCIS WHO? PAUL WHAT?

by John Abbott © 2011



When you think of radio detectives with the power to last over the decades, it is easy. Just think of Rex Stout's rotund *Nero Wolfe*, or S. S. Van Dine's dapper *Philo Vance*. Or perhaps Dashiell Hammett's gruff *Sam Spade* and socialites *Nick and Nora Charles* and last but not least, Raymond Chandler's tough guy *Phillip Marlowe*. All of these detectives were highly popular during the golden age of radio, and are still popular today via electronic copies of the programs – but they are programs from the golden age of radio.

However, one radio detective is still going strong, but you have to travel across the Atlantic to catch Francis Durbridge's *Paul Temple*. Who, you might ask, is Francis Durbridge, and who is *Paul Temple*? Both, it would seem, might be among the best-kept secrets in radio detective-dom.

Francis Henry Durbridge

Francis Henry Durbridge was born on November 25, 1912, in Hull, England. He was encouraged to write by an English teacher in high school, and continued to write while attending Birmingham University. After graduating in 1933, he worked for a short time as a stockbroker's clerk, before selling a radio play, called "Promotion" to the BBC at the age of 21.

In 1938, Durbridge fulfilled a personal desire to write detective fiction by creating the character *Paul Temple*, a crime novelist and amateur detective. For the next 30 years, *Paul Temple*, with the aid of his wife Louise Trent (aka "Steve"), a former Fleet Street journalist, solved crimes for Scotland Yard in the glamorous world of the leisured middle-class, first on radio, then films and novels, and in a television series.

Durbridge wrote twenty *Paul Temple* serials for the radio. The first was *Send for Paul Temple*, broadcast in eight episodes on the BBC in April of 1938. *Send for Paul Temple* was such a success that within a week of the serial's final installment, the BBC received 7,000 letters demanding more *Paul Temple*. The last serial was *Paul Temple and the Alex Affair*, which aired in 1968, six years after the close of the Golden Age of Radio in America.

The BBC has released CDs of the *Paul Temple* serials in their archives, as well as readings of *Paul Temple* novels by Anthony Head and Toby Stephens. Since 2006, the BBC has released several dramatized stories starring Crawford Logan and Gerda Stevenson. The first of these reproductions, "Paul Temple and the Sullivan Mystery", used the original 1947 script, vintage sound effects, music and microphones, and carefully reproduced 1940s upper-class accents. Most recently, the BBC has released "A Case for

Paul Temple" using the original script, which has not been heard since 1946, and for which no audio copy exists in the archives.

Over the entire live run of the BBC serials, Hugh Morton, Carl Bernard, Barry Morse (known in America for his role of Lt. Gerard in *The Fugitive* TV series), Howard Marion-Crawford and Kim Peacock played Paul Temple. However, the actor who came to epitomize Paul Temple was Peter Coke (pronounced Cook) took, who took over the part in the 1954 serial, *Paul Temple and the Gilbert Case*.

The actress Marjorie Westbury took over the part of Steve in 1945 and kept the part through the rest of the radio run. Peter Coke and Marjorie Westbury are the most widely identified Paul and Steve, and they did their job so well that many in England thought they were actually married in real life. Marjorie was a chameleon who could take her short "roundish" person and strident voice and transform herself into what everyone imagined was a tall willowy blonde.

Durbridge was able to develop and use a formula to write his *Paul Temple* stories. A critical part of the formula was the use of misdirection and red herrings. Durbridge also became the master of the cliffhanger, ending one episode just when the going got interesting, but avoiding the classic ploys of discovering a body, or having a man with a gun walk into the room. Durbridge also incorporated two vital characteristics into his writing formula for the *Paul Temple* serials: nothing was as it seemed, and everyone was lying. The final part of the Durbridge formula is at the end of the investigation, when Paul Temple invites all of the suspects to a cocktail party where they will meet the perpetrator of the crime.

So good was the formula that, when the *Paul Temple* series were broadcast in Germany, they were called "Strassenfeger" ("street-clearers"), because they would empty the cinemas and leave the streets deserted while people went to their radios to catch the latest episode.

The original *Paul Temple* radio serials originally used the theme music from "Scheherazade" by Rimsky-Korsakov. The opening theme was later changed to Vivian Ellis' "Coronation Scot", and it was this theme that came to identify *Paul Temple*. Durbridge died at his home in London on April 11, 1998. In Durbridge's obituary in the London Times were these words:

"To children of the 1940s and 1950s, who grew up in the Radio Age, Francis Durbridge is the sound of Coronation Scot, that most compelling of descriptive light music pieces by Vivian Ellis which invariably heralded yet another Paul Temple serial. Just a hint of the first few bars - Der-derder-duhduhduhduhduh-der - is enough to transport anyone over the age of 50 to another world."

Durbridge was not content to write only *Paul Temple* radio plays. His entire catalog of writings includes:

27 *Paul Temple* radio plays between 1938 and 1968

11 other radio plays and serials

22 Television series (including a televised *Paul Temple* series between 1968 and 1971)

8 Stage plays

4 *Paul Temple* movies

14 *Paul Temple* novels

29 other novels

Of these radio plays and novels, the BBC has released 14 dramatized serials, many from the Peter Coke - Marjorie Westbury programs. Additionally, 11 of the *Paul Temple* books have been released as audio books. Most of these programs are available from either Audible.com or Amazon.com. Additionally, Amazon has started releasing versions of the novels for their Kindle device. If you live "across the pond", the available *Paul Temple* programs are available from the BBC Shop on the internet.

Paul Temple

So who was Paul Temple? Temple was middle-class writers, who lived in a world of luxurious Knightsbridge service flats, country estates, and fast open sports cars. In his world, all of the women were chic, svelte and elegantly appareled, and the men wore 3-piece suits, ties and overcoats, and addressed each other by their sir names. And most importantly, the police seemed to be wonderfully clueless. Temple was the son of a general, and lived a well-cultured genteel lifestyle with his wife Steve, and various valets and housekeepers.



Temple spent his time writing crime novels and plays (and even a book of poetry), and coming to the aid of Chief Commissioner Sir Graham Forbes

and Inspector Vosper of Scotland Yard. Whether cruising up and down the Thames in search of "Alex", tramping through the Scottish highlands looking for "Zed-4", or flying to Cairo with a mysterious pair of reading glasses, Paul and Steve traveled in luxury, stayed in the best hotels, drove their Rolls or their Frazer-Nash or flew on the most current aircraft.

Paul Temple was once described as "an arch-exponent of that most gruesome of all forms of male-chauvinist-piggery, the 'Don't-worry-your-pretty-little-head-about-it' school of detectives". Temple was self confident, knowledgeable, and always ready for a cigarette and cocktail, or one of Sir Graham's fine cigars. His investigations were replete with subtle clues, misdirection and clever obfuscations and red herrings, a well placed "by Timothy" and the necessary medicinal brandy when it was needed. It was only at the end of the last episode that the culprit was exposed.

Peter Cook once related that the cast members got their copy of the week's script well ahead of rehearsals, but NO ONE got the final episode until rehearsal on the day of the broadcast! No one, actor or listener knew "whodunit" until the last minutes of the last program.

No matter what his faults were, how transparent the story seemed or how hackneyed the clichés used in the stories, *Paul Temple*, and Francis Durbridge by extension, captured the imagination of the listening and reading public. Paul and Steve take the reader or listener back to an era where life was not so hectic and everyone stopped what they were doing for teatime. Perhaps that is why *Paul Temple* is still going strong, well after the demise of all the aforementioned detectives.

Sources:

BBC Resources for Francis Durbridge and *Paul Temple*
London Times Obituary of Francis Durbridge
BBC Background recordings
Listening to every available *Paul Temple* story

FIRST LADY COMMENTS ON LADY PRESIDENT

In September 1934, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt the First Lady of the U.S. resumed for the Simmons Company, the series of five broadcasts she didn't finish after her July 1934 show. (Money from these broadcasts went to American Friends Service League.) Commenting on everything from food to the Presidency, she said, "I do not think it would be impossible to find a woman who could be President, but it won't happen in the near future." This was her second broadcast since entering the White House. (The first was for Johns-Manville.)
Source: *Advertising & Marketing Magazine*, 9-34

CRUISE WITH THE CINNAMON BEAR

Holiday Adventures on the Sea



Okay, here's a question that should be very tough to answer (unless you've read the caption above.) What is the only radio show from 1937 that is currently the theme of a ship's holiday cruise, some 74 years later?

Of course, it's *The Cinnamon Bear* and he and his friends are onboard "The Portland Spirit" when it steams out for river cruises this December, as it has done for several years.

Every OTR fan is aware of this classic tale, transcribed by the west-coast based TRANSCO in 1937 as a 15 minute series to be broadcast in 26 daily episodes between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The popularity of this holiday story for kids has been aired every year since its original recording sessions.

It's a grand Yuletide adventure for little Judy and brother, Jimmy, as they search Toyland for the missing silver star, stolen by the Crazy Quilt Dragon. Barbara Jean Wong played Judy, but despite over a half century of research, the identity of Jimmy is still not positively known.

Granville Heisch wrote both the script and the lyrics to the songs. Director Lindsay Mac Harrie was fortunate to snag the services of some of the best vocal talent in the Los Angeles area. Among the popular voices heard as various characters in *The Cinnamon Bear*, are Joseph Kearns, Hanley Stafford, Howard McNear, Martha Wentworth, Gale Gordon, Elliot Lewis, and many more.

While hundreds of radio stations broadcast this syndicated show during the 40's and 50's, it has been heard on the air on relatively few stations in the past 30 years. However, virtually all OTR dealers keep it in stock and most fans have a copy of the complete set.

The show has probably remained most popular on the west coast so it was no surprise when a cruise ship out of Portland, OR began its "Cinnamon Bear Cruise." Each December the cruise is scheduled weekend the first three weeks and then daily for the week before Christmas.

Talented actors, portraying the main characters in the show (Queen Melissa, Captain Taffy, Presto the Magician, and of course, Paddy O'Cinnamon) are onboard to interact with the kids in games and story-telling. For those not in the Pacific northwest, the ship's gift shop, which sells many

Cinnamon Bear souvenirs, can easily be accessed on the web site of the cruise line. And to find out what fun you are missing, check out the video of an actual cruise which is also posted on their web site: <www.portlandspirit.com>

For additional details on dates and ticket prices, view page 2 of this issue under "Upcoming OTR Events."



SANTA CLAUS SAYS:



The fluffy Cinnamon Bear asked me to give you these songs. SOoo, every afternoon (cept Saturday and Sunday) when mommie tunes in the "Cinnamon Bear" over KFBK . . . you can hum with the Bear when HE sings. That's 4:45 o'clock. P. S. – Please come to see me often..and all my shiny toys

.. in WEINSTOCK-LUBIN'S AUDITORIUM, MEZZANINE

1940

SHORT LIFE OF PADDY'S FAN CLUB

In 1987, on the 50th anniversary of the Cinnamon Bear's debut, his fan club was organized by Don Jensen, Carolyn Breen Kolibaba, and Dennis Crow. It was called "The Cinnamon Bear Brigade" and its newsletter, *Bear Facts*, went to hundreds of members. At that time, over 120 radio stations were airing the program annually.. Despite its high hopes, financial problems and failure to get new members, forced the club into hibernation in December 1991. It was never resurrected and now lives on only in the cherished memory of those former members scattered a bout the country.

OTR REVIEWS

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BLACK RADIO IN THE UNITED STATES, 1921-1955

by Ryan Ellett

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Reviewed by David Siegel

+++BLACKS, AS THEY WERE REPRESENTED ON THE AMERICAN AIRWAYS DURING RADIO'S GOLDEN AGE+++

Ethnic studies, both in the academic world and in popular media have, in the past several decades, led to a veritable explosion of university courses, books and articles on the subject. More particularly, the subject of "black ethnicity" in that branch of the entertainment industry in which sound, not sight, determines the role that "being black" or pretending to be black, radio has not lacked for attention.

McFarland knows its business. At least half of the titles cited in the extensive bibliography included in Ryan Ellett's *Encyclopedia of Black Radio in the United States, 1921-1955* were published by McFarland. Nonetheless, Ellett succumbed to the lure and down right pleasure associated with uncovering lost treasures of radio's Golden Age.

In the process, he has produced perhaps the most comprehensive and valuable single volume reference work encompassing the role of African Americans in every phase of the broadcasting business. The book profiles about 300 African American (and a few white) performers, organizations and series, including numerous programs that today's students of radio history are not likely to be familiar with.

Ryan also deserves kudos for skillfully weaving together a compendium of biographical identities, along with program titles and series that, when the station signal was strong enough, influenced big city ghetto dwellers, and where electricity was available, rural crop farmers alike.

A feature this observer found unique among

references of this magnitude is that one can actually read the book in a continuous fashion rather than simply putting it on the shelf waiting to check facts.

Learning about relatively unknown program titles and series such as *The Negro Achievement Hour* and *The Negro Art Group Hour*, both of which debuted in 1928, was particularly enlightening. In addition to the traditional theme of these two series, the book also provides the reader with a valuable episode guide to each of these programs.

Just looking at the number of additional program titles and trying to image their content excited this reviewer; it's the stuff that makes one hope that future radio historians will be challenged to uncover more information, sound, scripts and memories associated with the programs that now appear simply as titles taken from radio listings that were published in black oriented newspapers.

Readers with limited budgets should not be intimidated by the \$95 price tag for this 208 page, hard cover reference book as the only other reference work in print that approaches Ellett's encyclopedia is a two volume tome produced by a rival publisher that sells for \$395.00. While a well endowed public library should have both references on its shelves, a private collector, even after examining both references, will find the Ellett's volume a much easier to use reference work.

Radio Spirits Calendar This Day In Old-Time Radio in 2012

Radio Spirits (2011, photos, \$14.95)

Reviewed by Maury Cagle

Calendars are about as utilitarian as you can get, right? They have a page for each of the 12 months of the year, and each day is highlighted in a box, so you can write in reminders, such as Aunt Emma's birthday.

The folks at Radio Spirits have turned this simple device into something that will give pleasure each day of 2012 to OTR fans. Every day notes the birthdays of people who were important in the history of radio: performers, writers, musicians, producers, directors, inventors, and those who used radio in the course of their public careers, such as FDR.

The daily entries also include **Series**



Premieres, such as *Stella Dallas* (Oct. 25, 1937) **Series Finales**, including *One Man's Family* (May 8, 1959), **Memorable Moments**, example: Herbert Morrison's coverage of the Hindenburg disaster (May 6, 1937); and even **Marriages**, such as that of Eve Arden to Brooks West (Aug. 24, 1952).

The most striking aspect of the calendar is the large photograph for each month. They are uniformly excellent. Eleven are studio shots and one charming candid is of Jack Benny and Mary Livingston watching their adopted daughter, Joan, in their swimming pool. The most arresting photo is that of Sidney Greenstreet, just lighting a cigar and looking to the side in a typically menacing way. Each photo is accompanied by an informative writeup.

The pictures include: William Bendix; Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and W.C. Fields in an argument; Mercedes McCambridge; Lon Clark as Nick Carter; Bret Morrison; Jack Benny and Mary Livingston; Steve Dunne (*Sam Spade*) and Lurene Tuttle; Alice Frost (the lead in *Big Sister*); Don Wilson; Fred Allen and Portland Hoffa; J. Scott Smart; and Sidney Greenstreet.

The calendar has an interesting format, which allows it to highlight twice as many personalities. At the top of each calendar grid is a narrow banner, featuring a small photo and writeup of someone in radio tied to that month.

In fact, it was in this section for October that I found the only factual problem I encountered, in spite of the good work of the OTR historians involved in putting together the calendar. The section notes that Raymond Edward Johnson was the first host of *Inner Sanctum*, but also says the first show was heard on Oct. 5, 1952. Actually, this was the date of the final show in the series, long after Johnson was gone. John Dunning says the show premiered on January 7, 1941. I went to January 7 in the calendar, and sure enough, there was *Inner Sanctum* listed among the **Series Premieres**.

Even so, this calendar is a package that is both informative and entertaining. The calendar would make a great holiday gift for any OTR fan. It's available for \$14.95 from Radio Spirits, either from their web site ([www. RadioSpirits.com](http://www.RadioSpirits.com)), or their catalog.



THE PUZZLE CORNER by Adam Roslewicz

Here's your challenge: pick up a pencil and circle the eleven radio programs concealed in the puzzle square. Names can be written vertically, horizontally, or even diagonally.



- A WOMANS LIFE
- BIG SISTER
- BRIGHTER DAY
- GUIDING LIGHT
- JANE ARDEN
- LORENZO JONES
- ONE MANS FAMILY
- OUR GAL SUNDAY
- STELLA DALLAS
- THE GUMPS
- YOUNG DR MALONE

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E | N | O | L | A | M | R | D | G | N | U | O | Y | S | P |
| R | R | W | N | J | G | D | E | Y | J | N | Q | O | E | O |
| J | S | S | Z | E | V | F | V | A | E | B | S | T | N | B |
| O | Y | C | A | Q | M | J | A | D | N | P | O | T | O | R |
| J | V | P | A | L | X | A | R | N | M | B | H | W | J | I |
| B | A | C | W | X | L | A | N | U | A | G | K | B | O | G |
| L | I | L | O | Y | E | A | G | S | I | V | X | B | Z | H |
| O | U | H | M | N | B | E | D | L | F | H | N | I | N | T |
| M | U | Y | A | R | H | D | G | A | I | A | S | G | E | E |
| Q | T | J | N | T | P | N | Y | G | L | S | M | S | R | R |
| A | U | Q | S | D | I | S | X | R | D | L | N | I | O | D |
| I | Q | J | L | D | O | M | C | U | D | N | E | S | L | A |
| W | K | R | I | Q | R | J | E | O | O | A | P | T | U | Y |
| F | G | U | F | L | Z | X | Z | X | L | T | D | E | S | E |
| N | G | G | E | D | S | W | W | D | T | B | K | R | I | Y |

SHORTAKES

"Dr. Louis J. Berg, a New York psychiatrist and writer, began his crusade against soap operas in 1941. He believed that the soaps caused such symptoms as tachycardia, arrhythmia, emotional instability, and vertigo. These serials, he concluded, are dangerous, especially to middle-aged women, the adolescent, and the neurotic. Ironically, his name lives on today, only because of its association with the form he so despised."

Madeleine Edmondson & David Rounds
The Soaps
(Stein and Day, 1973)

"At breakfast, when I was six, my Dad would sit Charlie McCarthy on one knee and me on the other, and he'd put a hand on both our necks, and when he squeezed my neck, I'd move my mouth, and when he squeezed Charlie's neck, he'd move his. As Charlie and I yammered away at each other across my father, mouths flapping soundlessly, behind us, smiling proudly, sat my Dad, speaking

for both of us."

Candice Bergen
Knock Wood
(Linden Press, 1984)

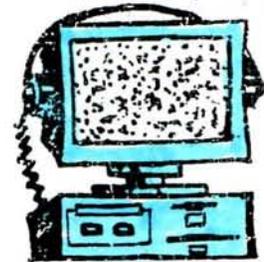
"*My Favorite Husband* went on the air July 5, 1948 as a sustaining, one-shot filler for *Our Miss Brooks*, which had its premiere delayed one week because of script problems. Both programs were summer replacements. Stage actor Lee Bowman portrayed Lucy's husband on the first program, but he had other commitments. So Richard Denning, a movie star whose career never recovered from his being miscast as a jungle Tarzan opposite Dorothy Lamour in *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, took over as George Cugat."

Warren G. Harris
Lucy & Desi
(Simon & Schuster, 1991)



from the EDITOR'S DESK

email: jfrench@mwotrc.com



Less than three weeks after FOTR ended in Newark, its coordinator, Jay Hickerson, took a bad fall. He and his wife, Karen, were attending a local college production near their home in FL, when Jay fell down the stairs, resulting in a very serious head injury. He was rushed to the hospital and was in ICU for about four days until he could be stabilized. Then he was moved to Neurology Unit. When the dizziness subsides, he can be moved to a rehab facility. It will be a long, slow recovery. Cards and expressions of support can be sent to him at 27436 Desert Rose Ct., Leesburg, FL 34705.

Since it's the Yuletide season, the Cinnamon Bear gets a big play in this issue. If for some reason, you don't have a good audio copy of all 26 episodes, our own Fred Berney can make your holidays bright with a set of the entire series. (\$10 for cassettes, \$ 15 for CDs, plus shipping.) Phone him at 800-747-0856 or you may email him at <fsberney@verizon.net> You can also order from

by clicking on "Cinnamon Bear" at his web site: <www.oldietv.com>

A new novel on OTR called "Rose in the Snow" has been written by old-time musician, E. D. Buddy Thompson. It's the story of two couples in the Tennessee hills, Bunny & Arnie and Ressie & Rose. This nostalgia book covers 70 years in broadcasting music history. For more details, go to <www.publishedbywestview.com> and click on author's name.

We have a number of fine articles coming up in the next issue. Kathy Hammel will bring us up to date on recent discoveries on the *Howie Wing* series. Maryland author, Cort Vitty, has an upcoming piece on singer Connie Boswell. An old time radio historian in Colorado, Stewart Wright, has done a lot of research on the radio career of John Dehner (*Have Gun, Will Travel, Frontier Gentleman*, etc.) and his article on "The Reluctant Westerner" will be in our February issue. Stay tuned.....

FIRST CLASS

Radio Recall
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Mike Taylor
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Laurel, MD 20723



THE CINNAMON BEAR

Music by
DON HONRATH

Lyric by
GLAN HEISCH



I'm the cinn - a - mon bear with the shoe but - ton eyes And I'm
cinn - a - mon bear with the shoe but - ton eyes And I'm