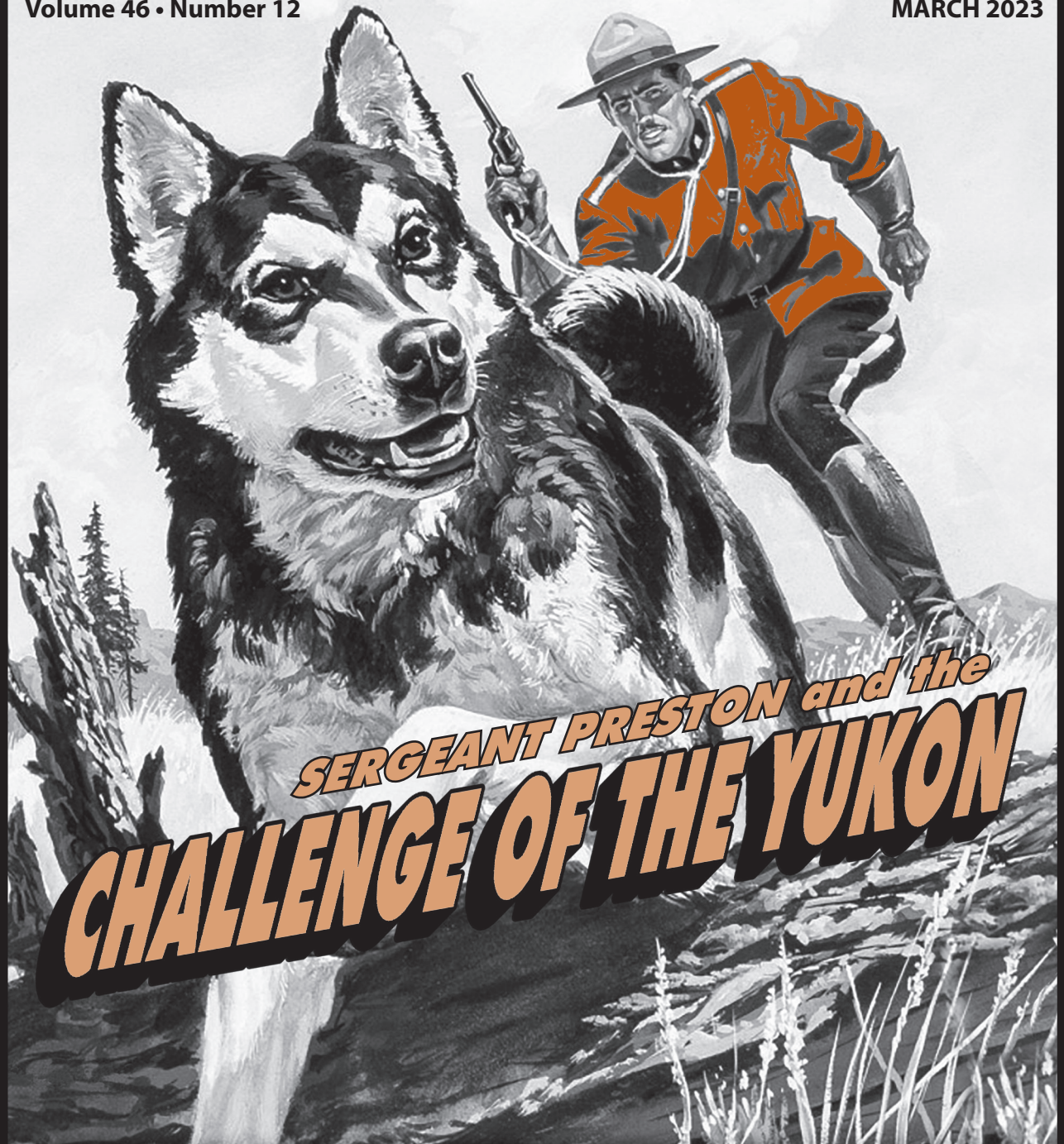


THE LONE RANGER: A MAJOR LIFE CHANGE • KNX's JACKSON WHEELER • FIBBER MCGEE RETURNS FOR GLO-COAT

sperdvac
RADIOGRAM

Volume 46 • Number 12

MARCH 2023





SPERDVAC graciously extends its gratitude to these individuals who have contributed \$50 or more to SPERDVAC during the past 12 months. If you wish to be a sponsor of SPERDVAC and join this select group your tax-deductible donation to SPERDVAC can be mailed to Alexander Chamberlain at 2625 Middlefield Road #171, Palo Alto, CA 94306-2516. Thank you!

- ALICE AKINS in memory of Glen Akins
- DAVE AMAREL in memory of Jim Harmon
- ARTHUR J.M. ANDERSON in memory of Orson Welles
- ERIC BAELEN
- JUDIE BARTELL in memory of Harry Bartell, Ben Wright and Vic Perrin
- PAUL M. BENNETT
- OLIVER BERLINER in memory of John Guedel, Martha Tilton and Lena Romay
- FRED BONDY in memory of the whole Gunsmoke gang
- TRISTA BRANT in honor of Larry Gassman and Walden Hughes
- GEORGE BRECKENRIDGE
- DAVID & LINDA BRENINGER
- FRANK & BOBBIE BRESEE dedicated to John & Larry Gassman and Walden Hughes for all they do for us
- BUD BRESNAHAN in memory of Jim and Marian Jordan
- RICHARD A. BROCKELMAN
- DENNIS B. BURK in memory of Phil Harper
- CHRIS M. BUZZARD to those who keep us alive for a new generation
- TROY CASEY to those great masked men of radio, Earle Graser and Brace Beemer
- XAN CHAMBERLAIN
- RICHARD CHANDLEE in memory of Truda Marsen Chandlee
- GEROLD M. CLEMENSEN
- WARD L. COCHRAN in memory of radio ad-man Burt Cochran
- BERT H. COHEN
- RICHARD F. COLAVECHIO in memory of Bryna Raeburn, Craig McDonnell, Bill Zuckert and Florence Robinson
- JOHN COLLINS
- THOMAS W. COLLINS in memory of William Conrad
- TOMMY COOK in memory of Arch Oboler
- IVAN CURY in memory of Bob Novak
- FRANCIS DALY
- DIX DAVIS
- LLOYD DE LLAMAS
- FREDERICK DENNIS in honor of "Mr. Radio" Elliott Lewis
- RICK DENNIS in honor of Gloria McMillan
- ROSEMARY DOBBS
- TED DONALDSON in memory of Rhoda Williams, June Whitley and Ben Cooper
- JUNE FORAY DONAVAN in memory of Hobart Donavan
- DOUGLAS DUE
- WIL DUFOUR
- BOB DUNCAN, JR. in memory of Martha Sleeper
- CHARLES DUNNWAY
- HERB ELLIS in memory of Larry Dobkin, Harry Bartell and Parley Baer
- PATRICIA W. ELLIS in honor of Charlie Lung
- JAY ELZWEIG in honor of the Long Island Radio & TV Historical Society, the WCWP-FM Alumni Association and Staff, John "The Movie Man" Carpenter and Eddie "The Old Philosopher" Lawrence
- HENRY C. ENGELHARDT III in memory of Michael Meredith
- CARMEN FINESTRA
- DAVID FOLKMAN
- ART FORSTER in memory of Gil Stratton and William Conrad
- JACK FRANCE
- GREGORY FRANKLIN

- LISA FROUG-HIRANO in memory of William Froug
- BARBARA FULLER in memory of John Newland, Peggy Knudsen and Laughter
- JACK GAGNE
- BARRY GERBER
- STANLEY D. GINSBURG
- RICHARD GLASBAND in honor of Bobb Lynes and Barbara Watkins
- NICHOLAS GOODHUE
- KATHLEEN GRAMS-GIBBS in memory of Mary Grams
- FRANK GREGORY
- DON GREWE
- TOM J. GRIMSLEY in memory of Rosemary Dobbs, Art Linkletter and Stuart Lubin
- CHARLES GULLO, JR. in memory of Jim Bannon
- JOHN F. HALLEY
- BARBARA HARMON in memory of Art Hern, Jack Lester and Curley Bradley
- HELPING HANDS FOR THE BLIND
- RICHARD HERD
- KAREN HICKERSON
- BOB HICKS
- GORDON HIGBEE
- JAMES W. HILL
- DR. MICHELE HILMES
- STEPHEN E. HOLDEN
- GERALD A. HOLZMAN
- JAMES F. HORNER in memory of The KNX Radio Drama Hour
- SEAMAN JACOBS in memory of Fred S. Fox
- ROBERT JANOVICI
- SALLY JANUS
- DENNIS C. JOHNSON
- RALPH M. JOHNSON
- SAM KAMLER
- MRS. JAIMI L.C. KELLER in memory of Frank Lumbert and Roy Hunter
- CASEY KASEM
- GLENDA KELLY in memory of Stuart Lubin
- NILAN L. KINCAID
- DON KING in memory of Lowell Thomas and Paul Harvey
- ALBERT J. KOPEC
- DENIS KRAY in memory of my beloved parents, Norbert and Florence Kray, and in memory of Glenn, Ray, Marion, Tex and all the boys in the band
- RON LANGSETH
- DOREEN LEAF in memory of Jay Ranellucci... thank you, Grandpa
- JEFFREY J. LEBRUN in memory of all departed voice artists
- ALFRED LUCAS
- MICHAEL MAIURI
- LON MCCARTT in memory of Smilin' Ed (Froggy the Grem-lin) McConnell
- ROBY & JOYCE MCHONE
- ESTHER GEDDES McVEY in memory of my leading man, Tyler McVey
- JAN MERLIN in memory of Frankie Thomas and Mona Bruns Thomas
- MELVIN MOREHOUSE in memory of Brace Beemer
- MIKE MORITZ in appreciation for all our preservationists
- JAMES L. MORRISON
- MILLIE MORSE in memory of Jim Harmon
- BOB MOTT to all the SFX artists when radio was still radio
- GEORGE (BOB) & VIRGINIA NEWHART in memory of Bill Quinn

- CHARLES NIREN in memory of Dave Siegel
- JAN ELLIS O'HARE in loving memory of Antony Ellis
- J. PHILIP OLDHAM
- ROBERT OLSEN
- DR. WAYNE OTT
- FORREST F. OWEN
- GARRY PAPERS
- KEN PARKE in memory of Jan Merlin
- DAVE PARKER in memory of John Harlan and Fred Foy
- PHIL PROCTOR in memory of my Firesign partners Phil Austin and Peter Bergman
- BRUCE W. RALEIGH
- BRIAN E. RAMSEY in memory of Ken Darby and Rod Robinson and the King's Men
- CHESTER RAWSKI in memory of Carolyn Rawski
- MARIE RAYMOND
- RONALD M. REISNER, M.D.
- DICK RICHARDS
- DAVID RICHARDSON in honor of Herb Ellis and Peg Lynch
- D.W. RICHARDSON
- NORMAN L. SCHICKEDANZ in honor of Chuck Schaden
- STEPHEN K. SHUTTLEWORTH
- STUART & JANIS SIMON in memory of June Foray
- CHUCK SIVERTSEN
- LOREN SLAFER
- KENNETH L. SLEEPER
- LEE SMITH to my dad, Ray Newton, a big fan
- MICKEY SMITH in memory of my beloved wife, Mary
- C. W. STAUFENBERG in memory of Paul Rhymer and members of the "Vic and Sade" cast
- RICHARD STONE
- BOB SUMMERS in memory of Yogi Yorgenson & Harry Skarbo
- JON D. SWARTZ in memory of Jim Harmon
- PATRICIA RYAN SWINDLER in memory of Stuart Lubin
- RICHARD & MADELENE TEPERSON in memory of Gil Stratton
- JOAN TREMAYNE in memory of Les Tremayne
- EDMUND TOTMAN
- EUGENE J. WARD
- WASHINGTON OLD TIME RADIO CLUB in memory of Jim Harmon
- EDWARD C. WEAVER
- BETSY L. WEINBERG
- LESLIE C. WEST
- JERRY & BARBARA WILLIAMS in memory of Michael Rye
- JAMES C. WORDEN



Volume 46 • Number 12 • March 2023

spervac

A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION

2625 Middlefield Road #171
Palo Alto, CA 94306-2516

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

president

Timothy Knofler

...

Sean Dougherty • Zach Eastman • Corey Harker
Walden Hughes • Robert Tevis • Jerry Williams

Officers

Vice-President..... Robert Tevis
Treasurer..... Alexander Chamberlain
Secretary..... To Be Announced
Activities Chair..... Walden Hughes
Membership Chair..... Sean Dougherty
Acquisitions Chair..... To Be Announced
Elections Chair..... Sandi Hughes



Editor

PATRICK LUCANIO

RADIOGRAM is published monthly except December by SPERDVAC, the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, 2625 Middlefield Road #171, Palo Alto, CA 94306-2516. Dues are \$20 for first year and \$20 for renewals; \$30 American currency for Canadian members. Annual subscriptions to *Radiogram* only are \$15 in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and \$20 in all other countries. Editorial submissions are welcome, but the publisher assumes no responsibility for the return of unsolicited material. All editorial-related photographs and artwork received unsolicited become the property of SPERDVAC. SPERDVAC assumes first serial rights for all submissions accepted. Opinions expressed are not necessarily the opinions of SPERDVAC. All rights to letters sent to *Radiogram* will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication unless otherwise stated. The publishers make every effort to ensure the accuracy of information published in editorial material but assume no responsibility for inconveniences or damages resulting from editorial error or omissions. Publisher is not responsible for typographical errors. All photographs and illustrations are believed authorized for reproduction as set forth within. Entire contents are copyright © 2023 by the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy. All rights reserved. Nothing contained in this issue may be reproduced, in whole or in part, by any means, including the Internet, without prior written permission from the publisher.

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS should be sent to Radiogram, Patrick Lucanio, Editor, 743 Edgemont Way, Springfield, Oregon 97477; e-mail: radiogram@spervac.com. E-mail attachments in Microsoft Word are encouraged for all articles submitted.

ADVERTISING RATES. Sorry, we can no longer accept advertising at this time.

ADDRESS CHANGE. SPERDVAC at 2625 Middlefield Rd. #171, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

AUDIO RADIOGRAM is available. Contact Larry Gassman at (877) 251-5771. This service is for blind members only.



E-MAIL

radiogram@spervac.com



from the president

GREETINGS SPERDVAC MEMBERS!

WELL, we've made it to March of 2023. We are nearing our 50th anniversary as an organization. More than a few members have reached out and posed some questions about the upcoming event and related topics. Of course, "When is our next convention?" is amongst the most frequent topics raised. So here is where we are at with that:

There has been a lot of suggestions as to where and when to hold a convention. To sift through all the recommendations, we are putting a survey to our membership. At present, our plan is to make the survey available in an upcoming issue of *Radiogram* and on our website. Your input will guide how the event will come about. Please make sure to fill in the *write-in* sections if you have additional ideas or suggestions. We will be asking about your preference for the event location, which days of the week you would attend, the price range for attending, for rooms, etc. Everyone's feedback is important and greatly appreciated.

We know that a convention is much more than locations and cost. There is also the support component that makes the event work. Once a location is selected, we will let our members know which volunteer opportunities are available. Falling back on an overused cliché, "this is where the rubber meets the road," it takes many volunteers to make a convention come to life. Everyone from the registration table to the person who takes one of our star performers from the green room to the stage is equally important. Simply stated, we cannot do it without you.

Speaking of volunteers, we still in need to fill the position of secretary for our organization. This is an important role and it is essential to our 501(c)3 corporation. If you are thinking this is something you might be interested in, please email info@spervac.com. We will follow up with you as quickly as possible.

The time-consuming task of disc restoration and preservation trial continues. Slowly but surely, we plan to have our original discs cleaned, photographed,

and then put through a digital preservation process. We hope to make more of these files available to our members online soon.

On the digital script topic, we have some forward progress there as well. We expect to add an additional 1000 scripts to our archive in the next 30 to 60 days with more if possible.

We are also working on having a virtual all-members meeting in the near future. This would be an opportunity for members of our board of directors to give you updates and take down your suggestions. It would be generally a "State of our Organization" meeting. Sadly, the days of meeting at the Pasadena Public Library for our monthly get togethers is no longer available to us. The virtual meeting is the next best solution. Email notifications will be sent as soon as a date is set.

Please remember to fill out and return your ballots that you've recently received in the email.

That's it for the moment, I know our editor is looking at his watch waiting to me to deliver my column.

Until next time, stay safe and stay tuned!📻

Timothy Knofler



A BOY AND HIS

A Major Life
Change from
a Simple
Everyday
Experience

by
Everette
Humphrey

HIS FRIEND

A YOUNG LAD getting up on a Saturday morning before his parents are awake is nothing notable in most

cases. In rare cases, however, it can also lead to a life changing experience. The latter is the case with Tucker Thompson of Indiana. Who would think that an eight-year-old turning on a television set



could set in motion a life changing event? On this particular morning a young man coming across a Lone Ranger program did just that.

A few days later on a visit to a relative he posed the question, "Have you ever heard of the Lone Ranger?" That relative was none other than Diane Partee, a former Mt. Carmel, IL Chamber of Commerce executive director. As part of her duties she had organized the town's festival to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Lone Ranger program in 1993. Brace Beemer, the most famous of the radio personalities to play the part, was born in Mt. Carmel. I met Diane at the festival where I first displayed Brace Beemer's saddle. We soon became good friends. Diane was more than happy to help Tucker know more about the Lone Ranger and what he stood for.

It just so happened that shortly thereafter each member of Tucker's class in school was given the task of impersonating a famous person. Tucker wanted to impersonate the Lone Ranger but since he is a fictional character the teacher would not allow it. Tucker then decided to impersonate Clayton Moore,

We at *Radiogram* celebrate all things Lone Ranger (except modern incarnations which seem to be Lone Ranger in name only), and that includes the famed masked rider of the plains and his faithful Indian companion in all media. We also rejoice when hearing personal stories about encounters with the Lone Ranger such as this report about a young lad's discovery of a true friend forever.



the actor who played the part on the television show he had first seen on that Saturday morning. Tucker's mother made him a suit like the one Clayton Moore wore on the television series and Tucker did the research on Moore's life. Tucker's mother made a video of his performance in front of the class. It was very impressive for an eight-year-old. Tucker's mother was so impressed with his performance that she posted the video on the Lone Ranger Fan Club's Facebook page.

Now the tale gets really interesting. Who should see that video but Dawn Moore, Clayton's daughter. That alone is noteworthy but it gets even better. As most fans know, Dawn put one of the bullets from Clayton's gun belt on a charity auction for the City of Hope Hospital. I was the high bidder. In our online correspondence in making arrangements for her to ship the bullet she mentioned seeing the video of a young lad portraying her father as part of a class project. She said it brought tears to her eyes. This, of course, was of interest to me as I know Tucker and his family. I related to Dawn that I knew the young lad and that his birthday was only two weeks away. When I told her this she immedi-



ately asked if I had his mother's email address. I told her I did. She asked me to check with his mother and see if she could do something special for his birthday. What followed would make any Lone Ranger fan's birthday special. Dawn made a very professional video birthday presentation for Tucker and sent it to his mother. It was a surprise to Tucker when, at his birthday celebration at the church hall, he saw for the first time the daughter of the Lone Ranger wishing him a happy birthday on the big screen. Needless to say he was one very surprised and happy young man. That sealed it. Tucker is now a fan for life and now has a fine collection of Lone Ranger items himself.

That collection includes what no other fan has: a personal birthday wish from the Lone Ranger's daughter.

As I mentioned before, I won the bullet from Claytons' gun belt that Dawn placed in the charity auction. When Dawn asked what plans I had for it, I told her I would take it to Mt. Carmel and place it in the Lone Ranger display there. That pleased her as it would be there for all fans to see and enjoy. A plaque was made to hold this piece of Lone Ranger memorabilia. A special program was planned for the installation of the bullet. Dawn and I agreed that the perfect person to actually place the bullet on the plaque at the celebration would be who else but Tucker himself.

A lot has happened in Tucker's life since he turned on the television on that morning. The Lone Ranger has become a major part of his life and all indications are that it will be for a long time to come. He is a part of the younger generation that will carry the influence of our hero into the future.

Good Luck Kemosabe, you could not have a better hero.

Hi-Yo Silver!



TOP. Eight-year-old Tucker Thompson impersonating Clayton Moore as the Lone Ranger places one of Moore's silver bullets into its place of honor at the Lone Ranger museum in Mt. Carmel, IL during a special celebration honoring the masked rider of the plains.

LEFT. The author and Tucker discuss the Lone Ranger museum and the arrival of the silver bullet during a repast at their favorite pizza parlour.

KNX - "The Voice of Hollywood"
The Key Station of the
Columbia Pacific Network

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1/22/37

JACKSON WHEELER - KNX ANNOUNCER

It may have been from his father, former head of the United States Department of Justice and the Secret Service Bureau in Washington, D.C. that Jackson Wheeler, KNX announcer, learned the secret of how to get the judge's decision when debating with a trio of San Quentin convicts.

When Jackson was born in the nation's capitol on July 23, 1913 his father held the responsible post now occupied by J. Edgar Hoover. His father's duties took the Wheeler family all over America and when Jackson was three, his family traveled to London, England, where they remained for five years.

Back in America and settled on a West Virginia plantation, young Jackson's British accent soon changed to a Southern drawl. After a peripatetic decade, the Wheeler family finally came to California, where Jackson was placed in the Westlake Military Academy and later attended Glendale High School. Here he entered the finals for the national high school oratorical and constitutional contests held in Washington, D. C. and came out the national champion in both.

He punctuated his college career at Stanford with a fling at radio and, for more than a year, was on the announcing staff of a network station in Los Angeles. He knew nothing about radio but after waiting five hours to see the chief announcer, he was finally admitted and informed of the requisites of a radio announcer. He did nothing but observe for six weeks, but was soon announcing dance bands from the Beverly Wilshire and Ambassadors hotels.

JACKSON WHEELER

KNX's 'Voice of Hollywood'

-2-

JACKSON WHEELER - KNX ANNOUNCER (Cont'd)

During this time, he continued his study of law and also learned how to fly an airplane. After one hour and forty-five minutes of instruction, Jackson was permitted to make his solo test. He bought his own plane shortly after, and even today, he travels any long distance in his private plane.

Jackson returned to Stanford to finish his law course and for the next two years played football, tennis, was on the track team, did college dramatics and was captain of the university debating squad.

He says the most interesting debate in which he ever participated, was with San Quentin. This annual debate is looked forward to by all convicts as the highlight of the year and only the best behaved men are permitted to attend. The three opponents that Jackson and his two Stanford colleagues had to argue with had studied for months on the question which was to be argued. Two of the debating convicts were murderers with university degrees and Phi Beta Kappa keys.

The debate was held before 4000 convicts and Jackson says he found his opponents to be the smartest, most profound, analytical men he had ever encountered -- men possessed of the very keenest perception.

When the Stanford team won the judge's decision, it was the first time in San Quentin's debating history that they had ever been bested. A week later, Jackson received a scroll signed by 1500 convicts as a memento of his spectacular rebuttal which had won the debate for Stanford. He says he prizes this as highly as he does the golden debate key and Phi Beta Kappa key which his university later bestowed upon him.

(More)

-3-

JACKSON WHEELER - KNX ANNOUNCER (Cont'd)

When Jackson came down to Hollywood for a vacation a year ago, he was offered a position as announcer on a network station, but after ten months he came to KNX where he is now a member of the announcing staff and is heard on the Joe Penner, CBS show every Sunday.

Although Jackson has received numerous offers to go into motion pictures, his life's ambition is to be a lawyer. He expects to complete his law course at U.S.C. and to take a bar examination.

SIDE GLANCES:

Jackson plays badminton, swims two miles at a stretch, shoots golf around seventy and enjoys yachting, sailing and flying his plane... Although he has written four books, he is now writing his first fiction story. He is five feet, eleven inches tall, weighs one hundred, seventy-five pounds, has brown hair and eyes.

That's Ted Husing at the CBS microphone with Husing's announcer Jackson Wheeler standing and checking the scoreboard.



SERGEANT PRESTON and the
CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON



Now, as howling winds echo across the snow-covered reaches of the wild Northwest, the Quaker Oats Company, makers of Quaker Puffed Wheat and Quaker Puffed Rice, the delicious cereal shot from guns, present Sergeant Preston of the Yukon. It's Yukon King, swiftest and strongest lead dog of the Northwest, breaking the trail for Sergeant Preston of the Northwest Mounted Police in the relentless pursuit of lawbreakers. The adventures of Sergeant Preston and his dog Yukon King as they meet the challenge of the Yukon.



by Dave Parker

THERE WERE EIGHT of us standing around the microphone in the living room studio of the old Mendelssohn mansion in Detroit watching the sweep second hand on the wall clock creeping toward "straight up 6 o'clock followed by the red light and the cue.

And then the thrilling sounds that began the show . . .

ANNOUNCER: It's Yukon King, swiftest and strongest lead dog of the wild northwest blazing a trail for Sergeant Preston of the Northwest Mounted Police in his relentless pursuit of lawbreakers.

PRESTON (shouting): On King! On you huskies!

DOGS BARKING

For thrills and excitement nothing could match *The Challenge of the Yukon* except *The Lone Ranger*, which originated in the same studio with many of the same actors on the same three days per week schedule. Add some of the same writers, the same sound effects wizards, and, above all, the same show owner and producer and you have the same award-winning team that created the dramatic magic that claimed top spots on the country's radio charts for years.

Who could forget such stout-hearted men pursuing lawbreakers as these:

INSPECTOR: The reason I called you and King, Sergeant, is that we finally got a hot tip where Scar Jones is hiding and I want you to go get him and bring him in.

PRESTON: That's great news, Inspector, Scar's a killer and the sooner we get him the better so King and I will need to get going as soon as possible. Right King?

KING BARKS EXCITEDLY



With the setting in northwestern Canada, it's easy to see that *The Challenge of the Yukon* got its inspiration from the writings of Robert Service, whose poetry was the most commercially successful of his century. Such poems as "The Spell of the Yukon" and "The Law of the Yukon" among others created a romantic setting that equaled the wild west setting of the Lone Ranger. And here to give that setting "radio life" with howling wind and crunching snow was Sergeant Preston and his wonder dog, Yukon King, both to star in brand-new stories of the famed Northwest Mounted Police in the wild northwest itself. As writer Tom Dougall said, "the stories almost wrote themselves."

But not quite.

For one thing there was the dog, which needed a name and a personality. Someone suggested, I remembered, that the dog be called Mago at which boss George Trendle snorted: "That's ridiculous." And after a few more not-so-agreeable suggestions someone came up with King and then someone else added the designation Yukon and thus the dog was christened Yukon King. But to Sergeant Preston his companion was merely King.

But finding a name for the dog wasn't all from Mr. Trendle. He said the scripts had way too much talk and not enough action, a frequent criticism from the hands-on producer, but in the case of Sergeant Preston he doesn't talk as he should. Trendle asserted rightly that, "the dog's the star of the show; Preston counts on him at life-or-death times and so he should talk to him like another trail partner."

Frequent contributor Dave Parker appeared in numerous episodes of series produced by the George W. Trendle organization in the late 1940s including *The Lone Ranger* and *Challenge of the Yukon* later *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*. Dave offers a first-person history of the latter program from his own experiences playing young settlers among others in the "snow-covered reaches of the wild Northwest."



The 1937 Universal serial *Jungle Jim* featured future Sergeant Preston Paul Sutton as a villainous henchman named La Bat (second from right) here along with Al Bridge and Bryant Washburn receiving orders from Evelyn Brent and Henry Brandon.

Truly there never was such a dog as Yukon King. He was no sissy dog like Lassie with the beautifully groomed fur and dog show manners. King was a working dog, always at the head of the pack both willing and able to pull the sled and bite bad guys on Preston's command.

King could bark, growl, pant, struggle, fight, and give "dog voice" to a whole range of emotions, and as such required something more than what could be effected by some dumb sound effects record made in Hollywood. To give that dog personality Trendle hired an actor named Ted Johnstone, who had been a member of a vaudeville team that barnstormed the country in the 1920s and 1930s. Johnstone would become just as essential to the stories as the other performers.

In Detroit, when the *Yukon* series started, Ted told me that he auditioned for "some kind of dog" at station W XYZ. They liked the way I barked and growled, he added, and he was signed up immediately to play the part of a dog. Trendle was so impressed by Ted's talents that he offered him a human part as well.

Ted would play the Inspector, Preston's superior.

So Ted joined the cast, standing with the others around the microphone, taking cues from director Fred Flowerday, vocalizing alternately as the Inspector and a dog.

Fred Flowerday was an outstanding director. He was great with the actors, always helpful and with excellent suggestions, and we felt that Fred actually enjoyed his job in contrast to Chuck Livingstone. Chuck, directing *The Lone Ranger*, sat in the same room with us but with far more frowns than smiles. I was even told that some of the actors were afraid of Chuck.

But back to Fred. Just how do you direct a "dog?" Fred deferred to Ted and allowed Ted to direct himself. When the script called for King to be pensive Ted had the right soft response, which was a whimper of contemplation not sadness. But

most of all when the script required excitement Ted gave it his all. When Preston would shout, "There he is King—just ahead on the trail," Ted let go with an excited bark. And for the unique "dog quality," as Fred noted, Ted barked into a cigar box, which seemed a nutty idea but it worked.

Ted, however, was getting on in years and all that strenuous barking was wearing him down. Ted felt that he deserved more pay. After all, he was playing two parts—a human and a dog—and barking as the latter was straining his vocal cords. And so Ted called

upon the American Federation of Radio Artists in protest. The Detroit representative, Boaz "Buzz" Siegel, a hardnosed labor lawyer, heard Ted's grievance, namely that to play the Inspector and then after five seconds of music to bark like a dog in a fight was exhausting. Buzz agreed and took Ted's case to



Actor Ernie Winstanley gets credit for finding the theme music, which was another classical piece appropriated by Trendle at no expense called the Donna Diana overture by Emil von Reznicek.

Trendle, who was not a single bit happy about the situation.

After weeks of haggling with actors interested in the outcome, Trendle conceded. Ted should be paid for playing the Inspector and King, and with the happy ending for Ted and his fellow actors Ted's barking continued.

Sergeant Preston was played by Paul Sutton, a Hollywood actor with several films to his credit. When given half a chance Paul would share his movie career with us. It seems he had a busy time playing bad guys in minor films but also small parts in major movies like *Jesse James* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Perhaps not an A-list actor but a solid B-list actor who took his craft quite seriously, and he added much to the Preston characterization.

Paul was, indeed, a serious actor in a serious role, at least that is how Paul saw the character. Some of us thought Paul took it too seriously but in the long run Paul's performance was a solid one that put Sergeant Preston in the same category as his western brethren. And at six-fee-two Paul looked great in his Mountie uniform.

As so many old-time radio fans know so well radio's stage is the listeners imagination, and on dramas like *The Challenge of the Yukon* the imagination was hyped by sound effects like howling blizzards and crunching snow. The blizzards were created by sound effects records, but the crunching snow was by necessity done live. As we "walked through the snow" the sound effects crew walked upon Kingsford cornstarch, which amazingly sounded just like walking on snow when squeezed in a box. Of course there were other sound effects like slamming doors and squeaky sleds and always fists striking chins and gun shots. Gun shots were first created on the Trendle shows by slapping a big cardboard box with a yard stick. Later, the effects guys were able to create great gun shots by adding a bit of reverberation to the recorded shots. So realistic were these reverberated guns shots that other network shows wanted to know our "secret."

AND SO WE GATHERED around the ARCA 44BX microphone, the state-of-the-art microphone for studio shows at the time, and whatever our parts we were



Trendle was an interesting fellow. He wasn't especially friendly. If by chance we met him near the studio he might nod with a frown but that was it. But when it came to his shows he was deadly serious. He read every line of every script and if he didn't like something out it went, and his mantra seemed to be "too much talk—we need action, action, more action."

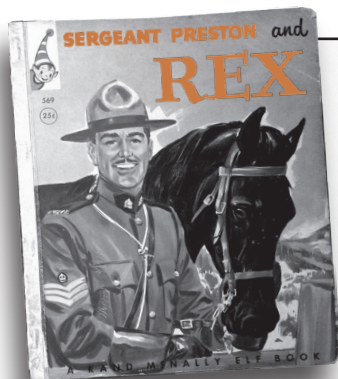
all believable with lots and lots of energy thanks to great direction and the exciting plot elements of the scripts.

Tom Dougall gets credit for most of the scripts, and actor Ernie Winstanley gets credit for finding the theme music, which was another classical piece appropriated by Trendle at no expense called the Donna Diana overture by Emil von Reznicek. Altogether, *The Challenge of the Yukon* was another triumph for George W. Trendle, who had the creative instincts necessary to launch three spectacular network series, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Green Hornet*, and *The Challenge of the Yukon*.

Trendle was an interesting fellow. He wasn't especially friendly. If by chance

we met him near the studio he might nod with a frown but that was it. But when it came to his shows he was deadly serious. He read every line of every script and if he didn't like something out it went, and his mantra seemed to be "too much talk—we need action, action, more action."

The WXYZ shows all featured action with plenty of gunshots, fist fights, and on *The Challenge of the Yukon* the ubiquitous barking dogs and racing sleds. For the actors, that meant using energy to create believable characters in dangerous situations, and all together we had about dozen great performers who brought life to the scripts. They'd all been on the show before so there were no surprises in the stories.



When *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* transitioned to television in 1955, Sergeant Preston's wonder horse, Rex, joined Yukon King as co-star with Richard Simmons in the role of the stout-hearted Canadian mountie.

From the first read-through to the dress rehearsal their energy was high with no studio hijinks. They were all professional performers, and it was Paul Sutton who set the tone. Once a newcomer from a soap opera found a scene funny and expressed his opinion, but the fellow's laughter was scorned by Paul and things settled into making our drama convincing for the listeners.

Most actors highlighted their scripts and carefully counted pages to make sure the script was intact and in sequence. Nothing destroys radio actors like discovering on the air that page 19 is missing.

The Lone Ranger was broadcast Monday, Wednesday and Friday as was *The Challenge of the Yukon*. Our rehearsals overlapped giving us time to play Canasta in the Mendelssohn basement. And a signature of the time was that everybody smoked thus filling the basement air with blue smoke. Everybody smoked, that is, except Ted Johnstone, who worried

loudly that the smoke would ruin his patented bark.

At the end of the show, everyone just threw away their scripts, leaving behind piles of paper, memories, and what is now cherished but lost history.

The program was sponsored by the Quaker Oats Company, makers of Quaker Puffed Wheat and Quaker Puffed Rice—"the delicious breakfast cereals shot from guns"—which prompted child actors to say, "Golly, mom, this is the best breakfast cereal in the whole wide world." Our commercials were actually little mini-dramas, and they were fun for our actors and paid them quite well.

The Challenge of the Yukon began as a 15-minute serial airing locally from 1938 to 1947 after which Quaker Oats sponsored a full 30-minute program on ABC where it stayed through 1949. It was then moved to the Mutual network where it ran from 1950 through 1955.

In 1950 the title was changed to *Ser-*

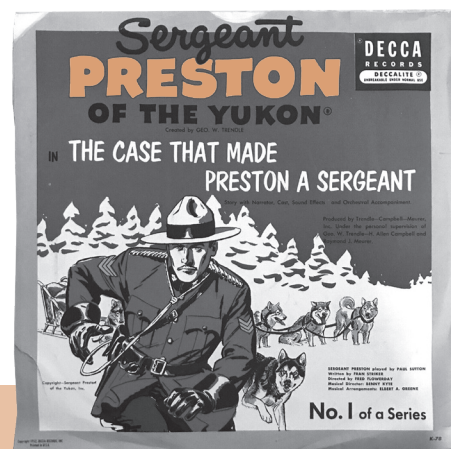
geant Preston of the Yukon for any number of reasons but recently OTR specialist Martin Grams, Jr., reported that the reason for the title change was to protect Trendle's intellectual property. Apparently, according to Grams, one cannot copyright-protect a generic entity such as a Mountie but one can own and protect a specific character such as Sergeant Preston of the Northwest Mounted Police. This assured Trendle that proceeds from *Sergeant Preston* merchandising would fill the coffers of the Trendle organization.

On a personal note, no matter the title, I loved the series and I loved the experience of working with so many talented and friendly performers. Moreover, *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* helped me buy my first new car, a 1950 Chevrolet.

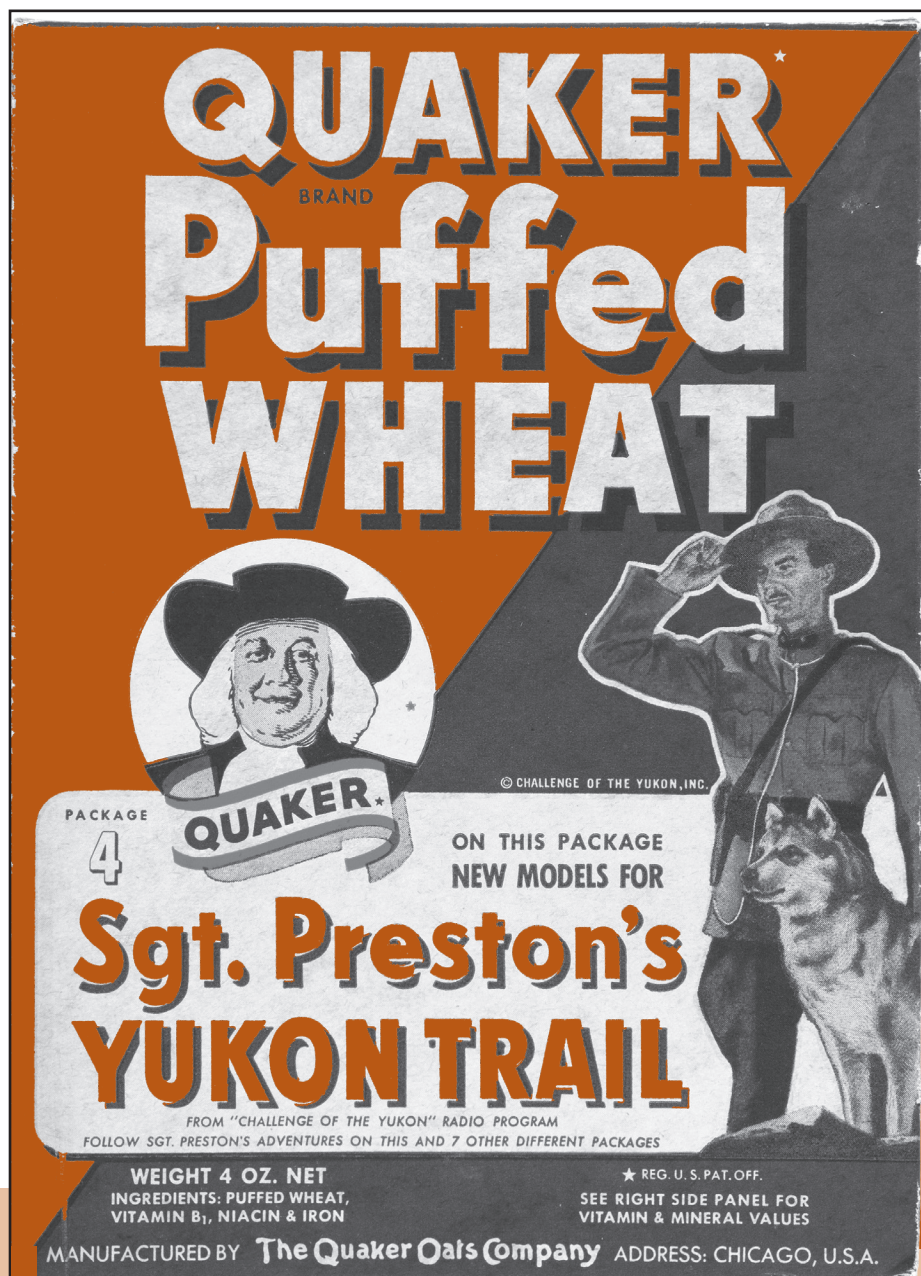
Sergeant Preston of the Yukon made the transition to CBS television in 1955 just as the radio series came to an end. As with most radio-to-television transitions a new cast was assembled with King played by, what else for the visual medium but an actual dog or dogs. Preston's horse, Rex, appeared in the first season but was replaced by a dog sled for the remaining two seasons set in the snow-covered Yukon. With an outlook toward rerun potential, the series was shot in color. Richard Simmons played the title role for the run of the series.

Much like the *Lone Ranger*'s "Hi-yo Silver" the *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* had its own coda, best illustrated in the following with emphasis added:

PRESTON (loud): All right, Scar, put that



Children's Decca record from 1952 tells the story of how mountie Preston became a sergeant as scripted by Fran Striker with Paul Sutton as Preston.



The program was sponsored by the Quaker Oats Company, makers of Quaker Puffed Wheat and Quaker Puffed Rice—"the delicious breakfast cereals shot from guns"—which prompted child actors to say, "Golly, mom, this is the best breakfast cereal in the whole wide world." Our commercials were actually little mini-dramas, and they were fun for our actors and paid them quite well.

gun down and throw up your hands!
 SCAR (surprised): What?
 PRESTON: You heard me!
 SCAR: Yeah, I heard yuh but I'm not goin' anywhere with you and that blasted dog -- not as long as I have this gun.
 PRESTON: You won't for long, will he, King?
 KING WITH FIERCE GROWLING ON THE ATTACK
 SCAR (screaming): That dog -- get that

dog off me -- he's got my hand --
 FIGHT CONTINUES BRIEFLY
 PRESTON: All right, King, he's had enough.
 SCAR (gasping): I'd have killed you, Mountie, if it hadn't been for that dog!
 PRESTON: Now you know how hard a dog can bite, Scar, and now you're coming with me back to the Inspector at headquarters.
 SCAR GRUMBLES
 PRESTON: *Thanks to you, King, this case is closed.*

KING BARKS HAPPILY AS MUSIC SURGES UP TO CLOSE

Yes, that's the way the stories were brought to a close: Sergeant Preston drew close to his closest companion and thanked him then stated affectionately if triumphantly, "Well, King, this case is closed."

AND that's the way it was at the Men-Adelssohn mansion every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. I was very happy to be a part of the program, and to this day I have a certain fondness for the frozen landscapes of radio's Yukon.

The Challenge of the Yukon and later *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* was a certified winner for the Trendle organization even if it didn't quite reach the success of *The Lone Ranger*.

But then nothing else did either.❗

Yukon King To Debut On September 29

Yukon King, Sgt. Preston's inseparable dog companion in CBS Television's new adventure series, "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon," is believed to be the first Malamute to be featured in any movie or television series. (The series bows Thursday, Sept. 29, 6:30-7:00 p.m., CDT.)

Malamutes, native to the arctic regions of Alaska and the Yukon territory in Canada, are the Percherons of dogdom. Stronger and possessed of more stamina than the famed Huskies Malamutes make ideal lead dogs for sled teams in the frozen north. They are capable of pulling incredible loads under the worst weather conditions all day without tiring appreciably.

Yukon King is a magnificent specimen, big-boned and heavy-shouldered, weighing more than 100 pounds. Despite his formidable appearance, he is gentle and completely trustworthy.

"He's one of the best natured dogs in the world," says his trainer, Beverly Allen, who trained such famous canine film stars as Buck in "Call of the Yukon" and Toto in the "Wizard of Oz."

Yukon King is an unusual Malamute because he likes and seeks the companionship of man, particularly Richard Simmons, who plays Sgt. Preston.

The breed, which is more akin to wild animals than any domesticated dog common in America, is not known as a "man's dog." A Malamute seldom attaches himself to any man, preferring the company of his own semi-wild companions.

Yukon King is not a "trick" dog as are so many television and movie canines. He is trained to learn new routines rapidly, and like any human actor, is ready for the cameras after a few rehearsal runs.

Radio Scrapbook

Bedford (IN) Times-Mail • September 24, 1955



Fibber McGee Returns for Johnson Wax

A GOOD YEAR for nostalgia was 1972; it would prove a particularly interesting year for Jim Jordan, radio's "Fibber McGee." Ensnared in semi-retirement in California, Jordan was still fondly remembered as one of the most beloved comedians of his generation. After Marian "Molly McGee" Jordan passed in 1961, Jim remarried and drifted out of the limelight.

It is generally thought that a person may reach for a dose of nostalgia much like they would reach for an aspirin or tranquilizer—to treat distress or anxiety. In 1972, voices seemed to be calling for Fibber McGee as part of the treatment. In January, Viva Records released an LP titled *Themes Like Old Times*, which consisted of nothing but opening themes from 180 old-time radio programs. *Fibber McGee and Molly* was number seven on the playlist.

In February, it was announced that Charles Michaelson, Inc., had successfully negotiated with NBC for the syndication rights to 52 half-hour episodes of *Fibber McGee and Molly*. The McGees would be returning to the airwaves, joining such luminaries as *The Shadow*, *The Green Hornet* and *The Lone Ranger*. Program Manager Biggie Nevins at WIOD in Miami explained why his station had recently elected to add the McGees to its schedule. Although Nevins was dubious about some of the old radio melodramas, he nonetheless admitted that, "comedy, really classic comedy, is something else." Nevins added that, "When we were treated to a recent spate of documentaries reviewing the great radio of the 40s and 50s, we were struck by the amazing freshness of the humor of *Fibber McGee and Molly*. So much of what was funny at 79 Wistful Vista remains universally funny."

Foremost among the "recent spate of documentaries" referred to by Nevins was the one aired on May 11, 1972, called *The Great Radio Comedians*. Produced for PBS, the telecast was a 90-minute retrospective of the golden age of radio comedy. Jim Jordan was there, prominent with an insightful segment to close out the show.

The ongoing nostalgia binge gave S. C. Johnson and Son, and their long-time advertising agency, Needham, Harper and Steers, an idea. Johnson Wax, of course, had sponsored *Fibber McGee and Molly* during much of its time on the air. The company had recently reformulated Glo-Coat wax and wanted to reintroduce the product to consumers. The question was Fibber McGee's lingering appeal to those consumers; would it be broad-based enough to have an impact? An interview

survey was conducted. It was discovered that 90 percent of women questioned over the age of 30 remembered the program and 68 percent of those under the age of 30 also knew of Fibber and Molly. With that confirmation in hand, it was decided that it was time to try and coax

Jim Jordan out of retirement.

It isn't recorded how much coaxing Jordan required, but a contract was duly signed, and plans were set in motion. There would be radio and television spots as well as print ads. Also, as part of the campaign, the Johnson Company would offer the public LPs of selected episodes from *Fibber McGee and Molly* aired during the Glo-Coat Years. Store displays were set up providing the details. There would be a total of four volumes in this *Glo-Coat presents* series. The back of each album jacket explained in part: "This recording is one of a series from the S. C. Johnson Collection of original broadcast transcriptions being made available to commemorate the introduction of new, Hi-Traffic Formula Glo-Coat."

The radio and TV ads began airing in November. On December 5, 1972, the Johnson Company arranged a lavish gathering at a Manhattan restaurant to kickoff their new advertising campaign. Billed as the "Fibber McGee – Glo-Coat Press Conference," the event featured interviews, re-creations, nostalgia, and lots of alcohol. Among the 300 invited guests were more than two dozen figures from radio's past. The list included Staats Cotsworth, Lon Clarke, Milton Cross, Parker Fennelly, Ben Grauer, Hildegard, Walter Kinsella, Gilbert Mack, and Minerva Pious.

Jim Jordan was there, of course. An official representing the City of New York was present to give Fibber a key to the city. Fibber reciprocated by presenting the official with a key to McGee's closet. Hal Peary was also in attendance. The two veterans performed an original *Fibber McGee and Molly* script. Manny Segal, the Jordan's old soundman, was on hand to handle the sound effects including opening McGee's closet with all the sound and fury that event always entailed.

Despite being the center of attention that day, Jordan seemed, as reporter Leo Seligsohn wrote: "like a man thinking about the fastest way to get back to Beverly Hills." There was Jim Jordan sipping his glass of milk, being bombarded by questions from all directions, trapped in a room with a "hard-liquor haze." Why did he agree to team up with Johnson's Wax again? "For old times" was the simple answer.☞



ORIGINAL CAPTION. FOND MEMORIES. Jim Jordan, known as Fibber McGee of the famous Fibber and Molly radio series. On the desk in front of him is a Silver Salute Award from AFTRA—American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. It says, "For keeping America's closet well stocked with laughter, good spirit and inspiration over 25 years of radio entertainment—that's no fib McGee." Fibber's back on the air waves in a TV commercial he made for his old sponsor, Johnson Wax,



Hollywood. August 3, 1949. Well, George and I are going to London to play at the Palladium. We were over there 15 years ago when both George and Europe were in better shape.

George told me he had had an awful time getting permission from the State department for me to go abroad, because it was afraid that, considering the condition Europe is again, I might upset the balance of power. But then I got the nicest farewell messages from President Truman and Secretary Acheson, and if they hadn't come collect I would never have suspected Jack Benny.

The papers in Los Angeles were very nice to me about my trip. It's too bad the headline in one got mixed up so that it read, "Gracie Allen going to Europe; 25 cops get leave of absence." 🗣️

BEHIND THE SCENES 24-7



We're here 24-hours per day 7-days per week for all your radio needs. The best shows and the best scripts for your listening and reading pleasure. You'll find us when you need us at

spervac.com

COMING SOON IN RADIOGRAM



McGee's Closet is a free service to our members and honorary members. Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, P.O. Box 125, Oroville, CA 95965 and include your membership number with your advertisement.

★ON-LINE EXCLUSIVE★

spervac
presents

UNIQUE RECORDINGS OF SPERDVAC MEETINGS WITH THE GIANTS OF OLD-TIME RADIO NOW AVAILABLE ON-LINE. ENCODED IN HIGH QUALITY 256 KBPS BIT RATE AND SAMPLED AT 44.1 KHZ

presented by Barbara Watkins exclusively at

spervac.com

RETURNING TO THE WEBSITE SOON
—WATCH FOR IT—



BEFORE COMPUTERS THERE WAS RADIO!

And the best place to learn all about the golden age of radio is *Radiogram*. Don't miss a single issue of *Radiogram*. Check the back of your *Radiogram* for your membership number and renewal date. You can also give this to your friends who

don't use a computer so they can join. New Members can just write the word *NEW* in the Member Number area. You can always renew your basic membership at www.spervac.com using PayPal, but you don't need a computer to be a member of SPERDVAC. Use this form and mail a check to SPERDVAC for \$20.00 to:

SPERDVAC
2625 Middlefield Road #171
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt. _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Member Number: _____



SPERDVAC
2625 Middlefield Rd. #171
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Presort Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albany, OR
Permit 188