

March 2013



NOTE FROM PRESIDENT DEE

Hi Folks!

It's March 4, 2013, and Hamfest has come and gone. A light dusting of snow scared off some of the attendees, but I understand that BARC still had a good crowd. We certainly had a good showing at our tables. We sold a lot of QSTs and other ham publications.

All of our displays attracted a lot of attention. Marvin Shepherd had several radios and speakers from the 1930's. Mike Lord's "spy radio setup" always had a crowd gathered. Our own club set up two displays, a 1930's ham station and a 1950's ham station. Dave Johnson brought some WWII field radios. Gene Samples brought two televisions, a 1959 Predicta, and a 1949 Tele-tone set up to play old TV shows.



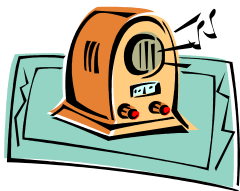
This picture was taken Friday afternoon before the crowds hit on Saturday.

The next thing on the agenda is the AHRS 2nd Annual Swap Fest, which will take place April 27th. Now is the time to start thinking about volunteering to help, as well as to sell some of your old radios or related equipment. Last year our parking lot was full, so if you want to sell items, let us know early. There will be no charge for a spot, and there will be free parking available. Gate will open at 0700 hours.

I guess that's enough for now. See you next month.

Dee Haynes

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LARRY'S OLD TIME RADIO BITS

I've got to admit that when it comes to Old Time Radio that I am partial to drama and science fiction. Even though I listen to comedy programs, there are very few that I really enjoy. However, there is one exception to this statement and that is the Jack Benny Program.

Jack Benny on the radio was (at least after his show was established) always 39 years old, a miser, and a bad violin player. His show ran from 1932 until 1955 on CBS or NBC and was always one of the highest rated shows, no matter the network. In addition to radio, he starred in several movies and had his own television show.

In this article I would like to focus less on Jack Benny and more on his supporting actors. Benny surrounded himself with many talented professionals. Most noticeably was his wife, Mary Livingston, who played the part of secretary and comic foil. On the show she and Benny were never romantically linked, except in a dream sequence. An interesting note on Mary was that even though she was born Sadie Marks, she changed her name to Mary Livingston due to the success of her character on the show.

The announcer for the vast majority of the shows was the jovial Don Wilson, who was a target for jokes about his size. The writers always found a way to write his commercials as an integral part of the show. There were no breaks for commercials as we see on television today.

Even though there were several bandleaders during the run, the one that most often comes to mind is Phil Harris, whose preference for alcohol was usually a major theme. Harris went on to have his own radio show with wife Alice Faye. Today he is most remembered for his vocal parts in Disney animations like Song of the South, The Aristocats, and Robin Hood.

Benny's valet and chauffeur was Rochester and was played by Eddie Anderson. A sign of the times was the stereotypical character that Anderson initially portrayed. As the show progressed, this image was changed to the point that Benny prohibited any racial references from being made on the show. In fact Rochester was more of a friend than employee, even though his low salary was always a source of comedic material.

Music was an integral part of the show. The initial tenor Kenny Baker was replaced by Dennis Day early in the run. Day, like Harris, went on to have his own radio show. The bands led by Harris or other bandleaders were also prominently featured.

There is an additional supporting actor who didn't get the credit associated with the other actors, but whose part is memorable. Mel Blanc, who is often associated with the voices in Warner Brothers Looney Tunes, was responsible for many of the sound effects as well as portraying several characters. The most notable roles were Benny's violin teacher, Sy the Mexican, Benny's parrot, and last, but definitely not least, Benny's Maxwell automobile.

Without these supporting actors and many others, it is doubtful that the program would have achieved near the success that it did. However, it must be noted that Benny was generous with the best lines and was willing to play straight man to the other actors. His unselfishness was a main reason the show prospered.

Selecting any shows to recommend is an almost impossible task. Pick any show and the chances are that it will be excellent. However, I will go with two shows that I have heard on streaming sites the last couple of days. The first is from April 24th of 1949 when Jack decides to trade-in the Maxwell. The show can be heard by clicking here - [1949-04-24](#)

The second show is from March 5th of 1944, where the show originated from Lemoore Air Force Base. The show can be found by clicking here - [1944-03-05](#)

For more shows in the series, visit my website and select OTR Shows on the left side of the page.

Larry Lokey

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MEETING TIMES

We meet nearly every Saturday of the month at 09:00 AM in the one-story building at the corner of 8th Avenue North and 18th Street (1801 8th Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203). Use the rear (Southeast) entrance.

It has also been decided to open the shop on Tuesday, as well as Saturday. We have a lot of projects going on and need the extra day to get it all done. So, until further notice, we will be open Tuesdays from 9am till...and on Saturday morning. Note that parking could be a problem on Tuesdays, because it is a business day, and the lot is usually filled, so you might have to find street parking occasionally.

Come to the Monday Night Meetings, TOO, on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 PM!

FREE ELECTRONICS CLASSES

Dwight Crider has taken over Robert's classes, and the first Saturday of the month, will teach electronics classes free to members. Topics include test equipment, Resistors and Capacitance testing, Inductors and coil winding, to name only a few subjects!

We hope to see you there!



Membership dues are \$25 a year, payable beginning in January. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact Tom at 205-967-7000.

Dues can be mailed to AHRS @ P.O. Box 131418, Birmingham AL 35213.

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