



July 2008



### ***A NOTE FROM THE PREZ***

Celeste and I had a nice visit with Pete Sides on our way to Panama City, also on our return trip. Pete is looking forward to being 101 years young, and he certainly appears well enough to make it. He always asks about how our group is doing. Anyone who is heading south should stop in and visit.

Dee and I did our program for the Bluff Park United Methodist Church on the 19<sup>th</sup>. We had a good crowd, and they seemed to really enjoy the program.

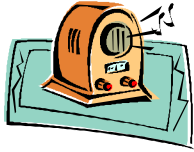
We have some new storage space downtown, into which we have already moved about 4 pickup truck loads. I think it will really help our space at Huffman to not look so crowded.

The program for June was a tribute to our founder, Don Kresge. Several members and two inactive early members helped those who did not know Don to understand how much he contributed to making this society as great as it today. Also, thanks to the ladies for the wonderful refreshments.

If you haven't seen the Philco model 570 Grandfather Clock Radio that Bill Shepherd has been restoring at the shop, be sure and make a special trip to see it....it truly is a beauty and museum quality.

I know it's vacation time, but try to join us as often as you can this summer and help with all the projects we have going.

*Dave*



## **DEE'S RADIO SHOWS**

Hello radio fans.

Tom Killian shoved a copy of **Senior Living** under my nose the other day and lo' and behold there was an article about Old Time Radio. I was beginning to think that the people of AHRS were the only ones interested in these old shows. And there before my eyes was an article written by Hoyt Harwell, retired Associated Press writer with whom I worked for many years before he retired. Hoyt writes a column for **Senior Living**, which is published monthly, and he says it's ok to reprint the article in our news letter. So, here goes.

### **Old Time Radio** by Hoyt Harwell

No one who was around back then can forget the loud noise caused by tumbling items whenever Fibber Magee opened that closet door.

The Johnson's Wax Show with Fibber Magee and Molly was one of those that kept listeners spellbound during the golden age of radio, before television brought pictures into our homes and before all of today's other electronic and ubiquitous toys of communication.

Radio so captured the public's imagination that it lent its name to such things as Radio Flyer wagons, Radio Pathé News and RKO Radio Studios. There has never been a Television Flyer wagon.

The old boys of the Bluff Park Migratory Coffee Club were reminiscing about the days when not everyone had a radio and when neighbors would visit people who did to listen to major boxing matches, such as Billy Cohn and Joe Louis, and major league baseball.

Jim Manning, Bob Collins and David Ponds kept popping up with the names of radio shows and I kept jotting them down, such as the Lux Radio Theater, Gangbusters, Major Bowles and the Amateur Hour ("brought to you by four great cars – Plymouth, Dodge, Chrysler and DeSoto").

A curious thing about radio was that most people, while listening, also were watching the radio set, as if we couldn't hear without looking at that magic box.

A major advantage of radio over television is that words become much more important. The pictures and situations painted by words without pictures provided nuances of and an appreciation of language that TV can, or doesn't have to, duplicate.

We just imagined what radio personalities looked like, and scary shows such as Inner Sanctum, Mystery Theater, I Love a Mystery and The Shadow ("Only the Shadow knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men") kept many a youngster from turning out the bedroom light at night.

We felt safer with Mr. District Attorney, "guardian of the people," on our side.

Then there were the comedians, such as the penny-pinching Jack Benny with his valet, Rochester; the acerbic Fred Allen, Amos and Andy, and Lum and Abner and their jot 'em down store.

Buck Rogers, long before real space travel, regaled us with his inter-planetary adventures. The Green Hornet's program was introduced by that whirring, ominous sound resembling a hornet's approach.

The radio brought big-time sports to us. One reason so many people in this part of the country became St. Louis Cardinals fans was that broadcasts of Card games were about the only ones to reach into the Deep South.

The Gillette Cavalcade of Sports ("blue blades, the sharpest edges ever honed") brought us Friday night fights during an era when the public really was fascinated by boxing.

People suddenly "lost" grandparents, uncles or aunts so they could stay away from work and listen to baseball's All-Star Game and World Series. There was the old story of the boss who asked his employee, "Just how many grandparents did you have? You've already lost five."

The Old West was brought to life by Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, and by the Lone Ranger and his faithful sidekick, Tonto. Some of the horses were almost as famous as their riders.

One member of our Coffee Club, Manning, has some background in radio work and he recalls that when radio preachers and their accompanying singers would show up at a station for their Sunday programs, they all would be dressed to the nines, as if people "out in radio land" could see them.

Many people want us to believe they are so sophisticated that they never tuned in on Saturday nights, before or after their weekly baths, to the Grand Ole Opry, but don't believe it. They loved Roy Acuff, Little Jimmy Dickens, Stringbean, Minnie Pearl and all the other regulars.

And, if you're not too proud, tune in again next month when I list many of my favorite country music (nee hillbilly) titles and phrases, such as:

"My wife ran off with my best friend and I sure do miss him."

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Hoyt Harwell is retired after 42 years with The Associated Press, the last 26 as the AP's north Alabama correspondent based in Birmingham. Harwell lives in Hoover.

*Dee Haynes*

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## ***MEETING TIMES***

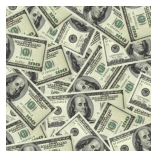
We meet nearly every Saturday of the month at 09:00 at the Alabama Power Building on Parkway East (aka Centerpoint Parkway) in Huffman. The organization's space is accessed from the rear of the building, so park around the back (by means of Huffman Road, which runs parallel to the Parkway). Entry is via the door on the right.

**Come to the Monday Night Meetings, TOO, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7 PM!**

## ***FREE ELECTRONICS CLASSES***

The first Saturday of the month, there are 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!



## ***DUES INFORMATION***

Membership dues are \$25 a year, payable beginning in January. If you have questions about the dues, you can contact Julian at 205-879-3619. **Dues can be mailed to AHRS @ P.O. Box 130307, Birmingham AL 35213.**

## ***WHO TO CONTACT***

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