“And now a word from our sponsor…”

Early Radio Announcers

by Brian Belanger

Radio Announcing is Invented

“Those who watch television in this last quarter of the twentieth century,” writes radio historian George Douglas, “cannot possibly imagine what an important individual the radio announcer once was. He was a genuine American hero who touched the lives of people everywhere....When commercial broadcasting began, the radio announcer was radio.”

In 1923, AT&T’s broadcasting manager, William Harkness, described the announcer at a broadcasting station as “its principal point of contact with the public.” He added, “The public know his voice and try to picture him to fit it. If he is not married or not well-balanced he is apt to become light-headed from the mash notes sent to the station by ladies of the audience or by the humorous notes sent in by men whose wives have fallen in love with the announcer’s voice and have neglected their household duties to listen to the radio.”

During the Golden Age of radio, well-known announcers were sometimes nearly as popular as the stars of the shows on which they appeared. By the 1940s and ’50s name recognition was extremely high for radio personalities such as Don Wilson.

Pioneer Pittsburgh radio station KDKA’s Harold Arlin was the first radio announcer to achieve nationwide fame.
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Jack Benny’s announcer) and Harlow Wilcox (who did the Johnson’s Wax commercials for Fibber McGee and Molly). Both had integral roles to play in each week’s script.

When radio broadcasting began in the early 1920s there were no announcer role models to emulate, nor did the stations know what skills to demand from their job seekers. Practitioners had to invent the job as they went along, and the new discipline evolved as broadcasting evolved. Most 1920s announcers became announcers more or less by accident—they happened to be in the right place at the right time. Of course there were no schools to train them. This was a period of trial and error to determine approaches that best satisfied the listening audience.

Naturally, having a mellifluous voice was an asset. Successful announcers enunciated clearly and had excellent diction. Douglas noted, “One announcer with splendid diction could have a more beneficial effect on the national literacy than ten thousand schoolmarm’s with their drills and chalkboard grammar lessons.” A congenial personality was also an asset. Radio is an intimate medium, and announcers who exuded a natural friendliness were more likely to achieve popularity than those who came across as “stuffy.”

Most early announcers performed other tasks besides announcing performers and programs. Often they took the lead in lining up live talent to perform on the station, and in some cases they performed themselves when the scheduled talent failed to show up. At smaller stations, they might have swept the floors and taken out the trash.

Harold Arlin

Westinghouse advertising employee Leo Rosenberg, who broadcast the Harding-Cox presidential election returns when Pittsburgh’s pioneer station KDKA came on the air late in 1920, let it be known that he did not wish to continue in that role. But Harold W. Arlin, a Westinghouse electrical engineer, was fascinated by radio and hung around the station during its initial weeks. He jumped at the chance to try announcing and earn some extra money, too. He became KDKA’s first regular announcer and program director early in 1921. Between phonograph records, Arlin read news headlines and community service bulletins. Like a number of other early stations’ announcers, he regularly wore a tuxedo, presumably to convince the guest performers that radio was a serious medium. Of course, unless listeners saw a photograph of the announcer in a newspaper or magazine, they had no idea that such formality graced the primitive studios.

For a short time KDKA’s initial studio was a tent on the roof of a Westinghouse factory building, which created special challenges for Arlin. Programs had to stop when a freight train passed. One night a bug flew into the mouth of a singer’s open mouth and Arlin had to snatch the microphone away as the tenor let fly with a string of obscenities. His popularity grew. “Harold Arlin became radio station KDKA,” claimed Douglas. In April 1921 Arlin became one of the first sports announcers when he broadcast a prize fight. As was common then, someone else at ringside kept in telephone communication with Arlin at the studio to feed him the blow-by-blow.

Tommy Cowan

Another early Westinghouse station, WJZ, located in a factory building in Newark, New Jersey, served the New York City area. This station launched the careers of a number of famous announcers, suggesting that its principal announcer and program director, Thomas Cowan, must have been an excellent mentor.

Before being hired by WJZ, Cowan had worked at Thomas Edison’s N.J. laboratory and in Westinghouse’s test department. He told the station management that he knew a lot about music, which was an exaggeration, but no one had the expertise to test him. WJZ, like most early stations, relied on live performances by local musicians to fill much of its air time, so announcers, like later disk jockeys, were kept busy introducing the performers and their musical selections. Traveling frequently from Newark to New York City, Cowan recruited singers, pianists, and violinists, who were not paid for performing, but enjoyed appearing on the air, given the novelty of this new medium called radio. When announcers could not find live performers, they substituted phonograph records.

Irving Settel relates a story from bandleader Vincent
Lopez’s autobiography about a time in 1921 when Cowan had asked Lopez to bring his band to WJZ on short notice to fill in for a program that had been canceled. Cowan could not offer to pay, but told Lopez “There’ll come a day soon when we’ll both get paid—plenty. Wait and see.”

Lopez described how Cowan ushered him into the WJZ studio, housed in a shabby upstairs cloakroom in Westinghouse’s Newark factory. It was all the band members could do to schlep their instruments up the rickety narrow stairway. In 1921 programs were not precisely timed—as they would be later in the decade when national networks demanded accurate start and stop times. They began whenever the performers were ready, and ended when the performers felt like finishing. “If something were good, it went on and on. Our show lasted an hour and a half,” said Lopez.

Cowan introduced a number of performers who later acquired considerable fame on the radio, such as singer Vaughn de Leath, a soprano who had sung on Lee de Forest’s experimental broadcasts around 1916, and Billy Jones and Ernie Hare, a team who, as the “Happiness Boys” later became popular nationwide.

Cowan enjoyed a long career in radio, later becoming station manager at New York station WNYC.

**Major J. Andrew White**

In 1921, RCA’s station WDY in Roselle Park, New Jersey, hired the founder of *Wireless Age* magazine, Major J. Andrew White, to be its station manager. White had become one of the first sports announcers earlier that year when he broadcast from ringside the Dempsey-Carpentier fight from Jersey City through a jury-rigged transmitter and a temporary station in Hoboken licensed as WJY. White, wearing a starched white shirt and tie on a miserably hot and humid July day, endured a grueling initiation to the rigors of live sports broadcasting. As Douglas describes the event, Major White experienced a “moment of truth” when “he realized that he had never really given any thought to how to use words to describe a fight as it was going on. For a few seconds he was almost speechless, but then he managed to form a few words, and began to move onward gamely, getting into the spirit of the thing. In the fourth round, when Carpentier was on the ropes, White had reason to fear that he himself might be knocked out as well. When Carpentier was knocked down and fell against the single rope that separated him from the first row of spectators, there was a strong likelihood that the radio broadcaster, his telephone, and his cranium would be smashed by the heavyweight contender. Luckily, when Carpentier came down for the last time he fell in another direction. White calmly described the final count over the air and fell back in his seat, the broadcast over. Seconds later the transmitter in Hoboken blew, and one of the great broadcasts of early radio passed into history.”

But White continued. He had excellent contacts in the radio and entertainment industries as well as in sporting circles, so he was in an ideal position to line up top-flight talent for WDY. Eddie Cantor was one of his early “catches.” When RCA bought out rival station WJZ, and shut down WDY, White moved to WJZ. He and his colleague Norman Brokenshire made up one of the teams of announcers who provided radio coverage of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions in 1924. White later continued his radio career at CBS, when that nationwide network began.

**Milton J. Cross**

Announcer Milton Cross specialized in classical music. In August 1922, Cross, a young tenor looking for work, sang on station WJZ. Program Director Tommy Cowan realized that Cross’ voice was well suited to announcing and offered him a job at $40 a week (four nights). Cross wanted to be a musician, not an announcer, but he needed money to continue his musical education, so he became an assistant to Cowan. Having grown up in New York City’s Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood, he had to learn to suppress his harsh New York accent.

In addition to announcing musical numbers, Cross read the Sunday comic strips and sometimes played the organ to fill time slots. While he occasionally was called upon to report sporting or other events, classical music was his forte, and that is where he earned his place in radio history.

His long career broadcasting the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons beginning in 1931 set a standard of quality that was seldom duplicated.
Graham McNamee.

Another early announcer whose name became a household word, especially for sportscasting, was Graham McNamee. Beginning at AT&T’s New York City station, WEAF, he quickly became popular with radio audiences. Like several other early announcers, McNamee intended to be a professional musician and took the announcing job simply to tide him over until a better musical opportunity came along.

McNamee announced (and was a straight man for) Ed Wynn’s Texaco Fire Chief program in the 1930s. He was one of the reporters at the 1924 Democratic National Convention. For a number of years he broadcast the running of the Kentucky Derby. He described vividly for radio listeners Charles Lindbergh’s triumphal return from France following his trans-Atlantic flight, as well as Admiral Byrd’s return from an Antarctic expedition.

Douglas says of McNamee: “A man of quick response and vivid imagination, McNamee could fill the air with constant and rapid chatter, even
during a slow-moving baseball game when nothing was going on between innings”.

**Norman Brokenshire**

While alcoholism later nearly ruined Norman Brokenshire’s career, he had a distinctive radio voice, was a terrific ad-libber, and consequently achieved great popularity. According to Settel, the Canadian-born Brokenshire was working for a New York advertising firm when he got his break in radio. His boss had sent him on an errand to “Broadcast Central” at 33 West 42nd Street, which housed the offices for stations WJZ and WJY. On a lark, he inquired about jobs in radio, but was told there were none. Fired by the ad agency shortly thereafter (in 1924), he noticed a “help wanted” ad for an announcer’s job at Broadcast Central. In spite of the fact that he did not meet the qualifications (college graduate, knowledge of musical terminology), he applied. Station manager Charles Popenoe asked him to read some news copy, read foreign dispatches with difficult-to-pronounce names, and ad lib. Impressed, Popenoe hired him.

Ad-libbing was a necessary skill. In those early years when performers were not paid, it was common for talent to fail to show up. As Douglas reported, Brokenshire had one awful day when three consecutive acts didn’t appear. He sang and played the ukulele and piano. Having exhausted his musical repertoire and desperate to fill the remaining time, with ingenuity and quick thinking, he pried open a window and dangled the microphone out the window. “‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ he said, ‘I give you the sounds of New York.’ Remarkably, a large number of people wrote in to say that they had enjoyed the city noises.”

In 1924 Brokenshire was paid $65 per week. When a deluge of fan mail began arriving, the station feared that his ego would become inflated, causing him to demand a much higher salary. So WJZ’s management withheld the bulk of his fan mail, giving him only samples. Suspecting that this was occurring, Brokenshire went to the post office and changed his address to a post office box, thereby ensuring that he received all of his mail from adoring radio listeners.

Gerald Nachman noted Brokenshire’s renowned signature greeting to his listeners—“How do you do, ladies and gentlemen, how DO you do?”

For some unknown reason, station WJZ initially did not allow its announcers to use their names on the radio. Instead, a three-letter code was used: Cowan was ACN, Brokenshire AON, Cross AJN. But announcers on competing stations like WEAF had permission to use their names, so WJZ eventually had to follow suit.

**Floyd Gibbons**

CBS’ Floyd Gibbons was one of the very first announcers to do on-the-spot remote broad-casting. He lost an eye as a correspondent in World War I and so wore an eye patch. He was noted for being an extremely fast talker. It was said that he could read copy at the rate of almost 220 words per
In 1930 Gibbons was a popular evening news broadcaster. One night Lowell Thomas substituted for him. Audiences responded so well that Thomas soon got a program of his own, and quickly became a radio star in his own right.

Ted Husing

Ted Husing is yet another early radio announcer whose name became a household word. He broadcast the arrival of the Graf Zeppelin over New York on its first trans-Atlantic flight, and he also reported the 1928 election returns.

Sports broadcasting was his forte, though, and especially prize fights. It was Husing who interviewed Joe Louis after the famous 1936 Louis-Sharkey fight.

Network Radio Announcers

During broadcasting’s infancy, when there were few stations on the air, powerful stations like WJZ and KDKA attracted listeners from far away. Still, it was not until NBC and CBS began nationwide network operations that announcers attracted loyal nationwide audiences. Around 1930, CBS established a school for announcers, headed by Professor Frank Vizetelly, who trained announcers to develop voices that were “clear, clean-cut, pleasant, and carry with them the additional charm of personal magnetism.” NBC published standard pronunciation guidelines for its announcers.

Announcer Andre Baruch recalled that NBC used to test potential announcers by giving them copy filled with tongue twisters and foreign names. For example, “The seething sea ceased to see, then thus sufficeth thus.” A candidate who could read that line without stumbling was likely to be a fine announcer! Another test during a job interview might be, “Describe the studio in which you are seated so that a listener can readily visualize it.”

Announcers sometimes had to contend with station colleagues’ practical jokes. At Detroit’s WXYZ, trying to get an announcer to break up while on the air was a favorite game. Leonard Maltin relates a story about how announcer Fred Foy was in the middle of a 15-minute newscast when a colleague slipped into the studio. “Foy heard what sounded like rain on a tin roof; it was one of his colleagues urinating into a wastebasket. ‘I was finished!’ he later wrote. ‘Convulsed with laughter, I quickly cut off the mike and did the only thing possible to fill in the silence. I grabbed a record and in panic spun the turntable. Even to this day I remember the wild coincidence. The record I had so hurriedly picked up was April Showers.’”

During the first decade and half of radio, announcers frequently worked long hours, often six days per week. In 1936 announcers banded together to form the American Guild of Radio Announcers and Producers, essentially a union, that fought for, and eventually won, a 40-hour work week.

While there were a number of female announcers during the 1920s; by the 1930s and 1940s, they were extremely rare. Gender discrimination probably increased as announcer’s salaries increased.
Bertha Brainard was a successful announcer in the early years of WJZ. Judith Waller was the first announcer and station manager at Chicago station WGU, later WMAQ, even doing remote broadcasts of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

As network radio gave way to television in the 1950s, some popular radio announcers made the transition successfully, but others did not. A new generation of TV “star” announcers emerged. Johnny Carson’s Ed McMahon is a good example of a TV announcer known far and wide.

Popular announcers from the Golden Age of radio and the programs for which they are best remembered include:

- Mel Allen (sports, especially Mutual’s *Game of the Day* and New York Yankees broadcasts)
- Hy Averback (*Bob Hope*)
- Art Baker (*Bob Hope, Pot of Gold*)
- Jackson Beck (*Superman*)
- Andre Baruch (*American Album of Familiar Music, Andrews Sisters, many other shows*)
- Ken Carpenter (*Bing Crosby*)
- Bud Collyer (many soap operas, *Cavalcade of America*)
- Kenny Delmar (*Fred Allen Show*)
- Ralph Edwards (*Truth or Consequences, This is Your Life*)
- George Fenneman (Groucho Marx’s *You Bet Your Life*)
- Fred Foy (*The Lone Ranger, Challenge of the Yukon*)
- Art Gilmore (*Dr. Christian, Sears Radio Theater, many other shows*)
- Bill Goodwin (*Burns and Allen, many other shows*)
- Harry Von Zell (*Fred Allen Show, Eddie Cantor’s Show, Burns and Allen on TV*)

Some announcers’ voices are so firmly imprinted in the memories of those of us who grew up listening to the radio that decades later in our senior citizen years, when so many other things are hard to remember, their announcements have instant recall. As the theme song (Yankee Doodle Boy, blending into *Love in Bloom*) winds down, Don Wilson says, “It’s the Lucky Strike Program, starring Jack Benny, with Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Rochester, and yours truly, Don Wilson.” And who among us oldsters could ever forget Fred Foy’s Lone Ranger announcement—“A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty Hi-Yo Silver!” I can hear it now. Can you?

**Endnotes**


TV announcers seldom achieved the national celebrity status of some early radio announcers. The best-known TV announcer during the past fifty years arguably was Ed McMahon (left), shown here when he and Johnny Carson were beginning their long run on *The Tonight Show.*
Museum News

Election Results

The four candidates for election to the Board this fall (see the September RHS Newsletter, p. 5) were duly elected by the membership:

- John Holt
- Bill McMahon
- Rusty Wallace
- Tony Young

Our thanks to all four for their willingness to serve our organization for another term. All have been active contributors to RHS. Rusty Wallace is our current president. John Holt is our current secretary. Bill McMahon has organized a number of special events for us and is our liaison to the Metropolitan Washington Old Time Radio Club. Tony Young is our “Tube Czar.” (He spends considerable time sorting, testing, and selling donated tubes. Not only is this a good money-maker, it is a valuable service to the radio restoration community. Tony also is a regular volunteer at the museum during the week.)

The proposed bylaws changes on the ballot were also approved by the membership. Our current bylaws can be found on our Website: www.radiohistory.org

The Board appointed Connie Adams to fill another vacant position. Connie has had a long career in radio in the Washington area. For years she worked at WMAL with the popular radio personalities, Frank Harden and Jackson Weaver. Connie owned a radio station in Annapolis and has been successful in the field of advertising and publicity. She will definitely be an asset to the Board, and we welcome her.

DuMont Special Event Well Attended

Author David Weinstein was at the museum on Sept. 18 to speak about his new book, The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television. The attendees thoroughly enjoyed his insight into DuMont history and had an opportunity to see TV programs from the early days shown on vintage sets, including a newly-acquired DuMont console.

Last Newsletter Problem

Some copies of the September Newsletter had the pages stapled together in the wrong order. If you were one of those unfortunate souls who received such a copy, we apologize for the inconvenience.

Donations

Some splendid donations arrived during the past quarter. A noteworthy item is a rare RCA engineering prototype receiver from the mid-1930s, donated by Allan Ropper and Steven Seeche. Leigh Bassett has volunteered to restore it to operating condition so we can hear this magnificent console play.

Unfortunately we have filled our storage space and have to be hard-nosed about what we can accept, especially large items. If you have (or you know someone who has) clean dry warehouse space and would be willing to donate the use of it to the museum, please let our curator know.

Donations received since the last newsletter:

Brian Belanger
Rockville, Md.
Philco Model 39-116 radio with remote control
Heathkit IT-18 transistor tester
Book – Inside ABC

Walter Crawford
Fairfax, Va.
Heathkit electronics course
Videonics switcher
Books

Juliette Dunard
Glen Burnie, Md.
RCA Model TC 167 TV set

Peter Eldridge
Alexandria, Va.
DVDs of old TV shows, old magazines
Dale Grant  
*Bowie, Md.*  
RCA Model 7-T-123 TV set

Dwight Heasty  
*Oxon Hill, Md.*  
Four boxes of old radio books  
Telephone practice key

William Janyska  
*Linthicum, Md.*  
Tape recorders and tapes of old programs  
Heathkit tuner  
Other radio items

James Mace  
*Gaithersburg, Md.*  
DuMont Model RA-103 TV set

Richard Marks  
*Gambrills, Md.*  
Ken-Tech TVP 45 TV set

Bill McMahon  
*Harpers Ferry, W.Va.*  
Grunow Model 589 console radio

Ken Mellgren  
*Rockville, Md.*  
Posters, radio station promotion items, transistor radios

Dorothy Milstead  
*Bowie, Md.*  
Philco Model 46-1213 radio/phonograph

John Patti  
*Ellicott City, Md.*  
Majestic Model 92 console radio

Craig Roberts  
*Greenbelt, Md.*  
Admiral Model 30B1 radio/phonograph/TV

Allan Ropper and Steven Seeche  
*Newton, Mass.*  
Circa 1936 RCA prototype receiver

Terrence Schofield  
*Chincoteague, Va.*  
14 radios (consoles, table models)

Mac Shawe  
*New Carrollton, Md.*  
RCA Volt-Ohmyst

Christopher Sterling  
*Annandale, Va.*  
Book – *TV Broadcasting* by Lohr

Joyce Utmar  
*Finksburg, Md.*  
17 radio and TV books

James Whitely  
*Concord, Ca.*  
Seven radio books and manuals

Other news

A couple of years ago, the museum program of the City of Bowie hired a weekend staff person to supplement our volunteer docents. That position had been discontinued due to budget shortfalls, but once again the city is helping us in this manner. The city recruited candidates, and Tony Young (who will still continue on as an active volunteer, as well as our Tube Czar) was selected to be on duty on Saturdays. Having this extra help will ensure adequate staffing.

The city also provided funds to repaint the exterior of the building this fall. All this help from the city is greatly appreciated! We could not have come as far as we have without its strong support. In addition to leasing us the building at modest cost, the city mows the grass, plows snow, and keeps the facility in good repair.

When you are visiting our museum, pick up a brochure about the other interesting museums in Bowie: The Bel Air Mansion, the Stables Museum, the Genealogy Museum, and the Huntington Railroad Museum.

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**Mark your calendars for the special Christmas event at the Museum on Saturday, December 18.**

Enjoy listening to old Christmas radio shows and watching vintage TV programs.
Remembering a Local Broadcast Engineer
Marianna Woodson Cobb

Marianna Woodson Cobb was one of only two female registered broadcast engineers in the D.C. area in the 1950s. She died earlier this year, and a March 28 obituary in The Washington Post (p. C10) lauded her.

When she began her career she worked for Kear and Kennedy, a local broadcast engineering firm. At the time, “female engineer” was almost an oxymoron. Far too often males viewed female engineers as intrinsically less competent than their male counterparts. Cobb did much to dispel such narrow thinking.

Her company was hired by station WBOK in New Orleans to do a field strength survey of its antenna system. When recent graduate Cobb reported for work, the shocked station managers complained to Kear and Kennedy about sending “a girl” to do the complex job, and requested a male engineer. The company told the station that Marianna was fully competent and that it would take a long time to bring in a replacement.

With great reluctance, the station agreed to allow her to begin. She donned rubber hip boots and with her instruments began wading through the murky snake-infested swamp where the antennas were located. She not only completed the project two weeks ahead of schedule, but she showed the initially incredulous station managers how they could re-adjust the phasing of their antennas so as to beam more of their signal toward the intended audience rather than toward the Gulf of Mexico. At the end of the project, the station, greatly impressed with her work, threw a “forgive me” party, and perhaps from that point forward eschewed negative gender stereotyping.

Cobb often had to scale high radio and TV towers to check antennas or make measurements, including the antennas atop the Empire State Building, 1,300 feet above the street. Not a job for the faint of heart! As a soft-spoken “ladylike” young woman with “Southern debutante looks,” she said the hardest part of her job was convincing station managers that she knew what she was doing.

For a time her family owned station WBCI in Williamsburg, Va., and WEMD in Easton, Md. Before her retirement, she worked for Moffet, Larson, and Johnson in Falls Church. She received a Broadcast Pioneers award in 1991.

December Milestones in Radio and TV

[Mike Koste has assembled a database of historic radio and TV events by month. Thanks to Mike for sharing this information with us!]

DECEMBER 25, 1906: Reginald Aubrey Fessenden sends the human voice by wireless from Brant Rock, Mass., and is heard by ships at sea.
DECEMBER 13, 1910: Dr. Lee de Forest makes an experimental opera broadcast from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, featuring Enrico Caruso performing segments from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

DECEMBER 4, 1923: National Carbon Company introduces The *Eveready Hour* on WEAF, New York—the first major musical variety program.

DECEMBER 3, 1928: Initial broadcast of the pioneering concert music program *The Voice of Firestone*. (Unlike most sponsors, the Firestone family took an active role in the program. Tire magnate Harvey Firestone appeared on the first broadcast.)

DECEMBER 1, 1931: According to a survey, two out of five American homes now have radio. Two weeks later, The National Association of Broadcasters reports that more than half of the nation’s radio stations are operating without profit.


DECEMBER 1, 1932: Feeling the heat from the Federal Trade Commission, GE and Westinghouse agree to divest themselves of their stock control of RCA, which becomes an independent company. RCA retains licensing rights for patents of all three.

DECEMBER 1, 1934: The Benny Goodman Orchestra gets its big break as one of three featured bands on the late-night Saturday broadcasts of *Let’s Dance*.

DECEMBER 25, 1934: In what was to become an annual holiday presentation, Lionel Barrymore stars in a radio adaptation of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*.

DECEMBER 5, 1937: Bill Stern joins the Blue network’s Sunday morning schedule as host of *The Colgate Sports Newsreel*.

DECEMBER 12, 1937: FCC’s first challenge of “indecent” programming follows a provocative exchange between Mae West and Charlie McCarthy.

DECEMBER 27, 1939: Replacing the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, Glen Miller’s big band stars on *Chesterfield Time*, remaining on the air until
Miller's induction into the Army in 1942. (The program was later known by Miller’s theme song “Moonlight Serenade.”)

DECEMBER 7, 1941: Radio goes to war as CBS newsmen John Daly announces the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

DECEMBER 11, 1944: Premiere of the daily Chesterfield Supper Club. Over the years, this fifteen-minute musical variety program featured vocalists Perry Como, Jo Stafford, and Peggy Lee.


DECEMBER 5, 1955: Combined radio and television revenues top $1 billion.

DECEMBER 1, 1957: Zenith unveils the Royal 1000, the first transistorized Trans-Oceanic radio.

DECEMBER 16, 1957: FCC approves use of CONELRAD for storm warnings. One week later, CBS shells out a record $20 million for Philadelphia’s WCAU-AM/FM/TV.

DECEMBER 19, 1966: NBC, ABC and CBS pool their money and pay professional football $9.5 million for four Super Bowl broadcasts.

DECEMBER 27, 1968: The final broadcast of The Breakfast Club with Don McNeill. In addition, the industry reports that 1967 sales of American-made color televisions outnumbered