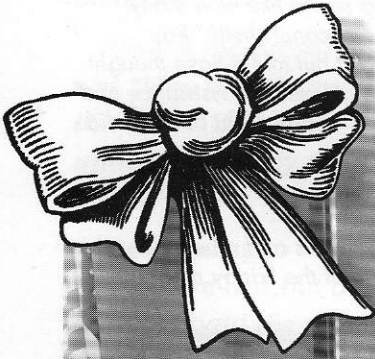


AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 2

"SHOWCASE V" ISSUE • 1997



"What a Christmas Gift!"



▲ *The Gift Givers.*

Front row, l to r: Art Gilmore, Harry Bartell, Merrill Mael, Norma Jean Nilsson, Rhoda Williams, Tyler McVey, Esther Geddes, Peg Lynch, Parley Baer.

At table, seated l to r: Peggy Jordan, Stewart Conway, Ray Erlenborn, Dick Beals, Gil Stratton, Jr., Herb Ellis.

Standing, l to r: Larry Dobkin, Ginny Tyler, Sandra Gould, Doug Young, Bob Hastings, Jim French, Pat French.

(Not shown-Frank Buxton)

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REPS RADIO SHOWCASE V- We were on the receiving end of great gifts!

"180 Days 'Til Christmas" - A theme chosen just for the fun of it. And then Showcase goes settled in to a tremendous weekend of talented performances all around them. They might not have been wrapped in fancy paper, but these performances and the people giving them made this something fans will always remember. The highlights are reported throughout this special issue of Air Check.

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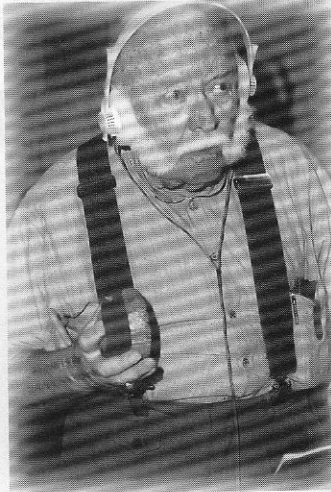
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Air Check Editor

Open



showcase V highlights



◀ "I'm supposed to sound like how many horses with just one coconut shell?" Ray Erlenborn didn't say it but might have thought it. There were some glitches on assistance and absent equipment on Friday night but Ray did a great job...as usual.

▼ A crew of OTR veterans and others does the read-through for one of the Friday night new radio shows.



FRIDAY NIGHT

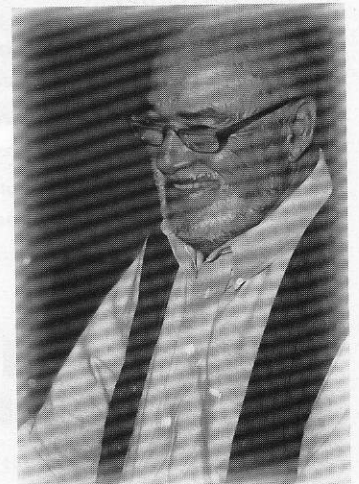
The KIRO Mystery Playhouse

This year's Showcase began with a taping of two new radio dramas written by Jim French to especially utilize the talents of our Showcase guests.

"*A Hole in the Sky*" was a tale concerning the U.S. President aboard Air Force One, along advisors and members of the cabinet. The second story, "*Back Door to Hell*" was told in flash back to focus on real life outlaw Sam Bass and a young boy.

Many of the folks pictured on the cover participated in one or both of these fine shows. There was something electric about watching those who made radio what it was, doing it again—as we knew these shows would later be on the air.

What was the old beer commercial?
"It don't get no better than this."



▲ Larry Dobkin is in fine form as he rehearsed on Friday evening.

SATURDAY MORNING

Just Sittin' Around and Visiting

Saturday morning was kicked off with a chance to hear from all of our actor friends together up front, talking about their lives and careers. As usual, they quickly began bouncing remarks of each other, typically to hilarious effect.

One of the prepared questions from host Mike Sprague was *"Who was the most underrated actor from your days in radio?"* Dick Beals' prompt response was *"All were underrated. They were highly disciplined and could do so much, so cold, so quickly."*

Responding to another question about a part you would like to have had, but didn't, Tyler McVey stated firmly *"The one that paid the most. That was always Lux Radio Theatre."*

There were many very interesting moments as we heard the performers talk about heroes/memorable people in their professional lives.

Capturing the flavor so often felt during JSAV, Herb Ellis reflected, *"We didn't know how lucky we were. There was a camaraderie there that didn't exist in any other form of entertainment."*

And it still shows when these wonderful people give of themselves to be with us. They like each other a lot.

And this part of the Showcase continues to get rave reviews from attendees. We can never get enough of these types of moments.



▲ Ray Erlenborn (left) humorously laments over his perspective that there was small mention of sound effects artists in Frank Buxton's book. Frank offers rebuttal while Harry Bartell and Doug Young laugh along.



▲ Art Gilmore shares a story, flanked by Tyler McVey (left) and Bob Hastings (right).



◀ Animated Larry Dobkin (right) tells a story as Herb Ellis, Parley Baer and Peg Lynch listen in.

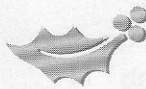


▼ Gil Stratton, Jr. and Sandra Gould share a microphone during "Just Sittin' Around and Visiting"

NEIGHBORS AT CHRISTMAS

Can you imagine Vic & Sade living next door to Ethel & Albert? That's what we did on Saturday morning. Each re-creation was so outstanding with its distinctive humor.

► There was no other show remotely like "*Vic & Sade*", and we were reminded of this again. Vic and Sade Gook are in a quandary as their Christmas cards were printed as Mr. and Mrs. Victor Gook, and son, Mush. Rush didn't take kindly to this and Uncle Fletcher floats through as well. To the right, we see Frank Buxton, director and Vic and Merrill Mael as Fletcher. Also in the cast, Anna Denton as Sade and Joy Jackson as Rush/Mush. Art Gilmore was the announcer.



◀ Both casts were on stage at the same time. At left, Merrill Mael as Uncle Fletcher in *Vic & Sade*, has Peg Lynch and Parley Baer in stitches with one of Fletcher's totally unrelated interruptions.



► Some of the great highlights of Showcase V came during the three episodes of *Ethel & Albert*. Here Albert (Parley Baer) is totally frustrated by Ethel (Peg Lynch) in one of their hilarious skits. These two work so well together. The audience held their sides in laughter through-out all three re-creations: "*Putting Up the Christmas Tree*" ... "*Nude Beach*"... "*Two Times Nothing*". Peg is the show's creator and sole writer, having written *E&A* for 60 years. It has never been funnier. Audiences all over the country attest to this fact. The smooth and enjoyable announcing of Art Gilmore set the scene each time.



FRENCH, LYNCH & BARTELL... IT'S NOT A LAW FIRM!

Harry Bartell always manages to bring out the best in any discussion, and he moderated this panel on the creative process with much insight and skill. He set the tone by giving us Webster's definition of creativity, and then adding "It's getting the marks on the paper."

Peg Lynch started writing in 1938, inspired by the performance of Jane Ace on "Easy Aces." "I realized that you don't have to manufacture something funny. All you have to do is look around. You can write about things that happen that aren't funny at the time. It's what happens." She later added "Now that I'm 80, I want Ethel and Albert to love each other. I don't want them sniping all the time."

Jim French said that he had "a burning desire since at least 1965 to get radio back on the air. It had been declared dead." Does he write for specific actors? "I can hear their mentalities in my head." There is so little new radio being done, REPS and the rest of the world are glad that Jim is still doing what he is.

Along the way, in addition to his questions, Harry Bartell added a few key insights gained from working on 10,000 plus radio shows and he wrapped up the panel right on schedule.



▲ L to R: Jim French, Peg Lynch and Harry Bartell. They examined the creative process from very different viewpoints. Peg Lynch has dealt with comedy and the mundane activities of everyday people, while French has written dramas. Harry Bartell was a superb moderator.



THE BICKERSONS MAKE A SURPRISE VISIT

Not shown on the program schedule was a brief surprise visit from Blanche and John, *The Bickersons*. Tyler McVey and Rhoda Williams were ready at the end of the creative panel above. They treated us to a short Christmas time episode and it was quite interesting to contrast this now 'em down, rapid fire relationship to the lives of Ethel and Albert.

In just a few minutes, Tyler and Rhoda brought down the house with the Bickerson humor, and with their own great timing. The audience headed off to lunch with much to talk about.

FATHER KNOWS BEST—AT CHRISTMAS

Quite a few of us sat around at lunch, listening to a Christmas episode of *FKB* from December 1950. Afterwards, we had a chance to hear Norma Jean Nilsson and Rhoda Williams talk about their lives as they worked on this fine show. It was obviously a very happy experience for them, and they have great respect for Robert Young. "His timing was impeccable." The crowd was large, entertained and satisfied. Bob Herman hosted. Norma Jean and Rhoda are shown in the photo to the right.



DUFFY'S TAVERN, WHERE THE ELITE MEET TO EAT...

Right after lunch, and following another funny, funny Ethel and Albert, we visited *Duffy's Tavern*. From the ongoing descriptions of the food at Duffy's, all were glad to have eaten elsewhere. Called "Slogan Contest" from December 1951, Archie enters a contest and wins a trip to Hawaii. The only problem is that the contest

was for children. The very strong cast is shown below, left to right Doug Young, Herb Ellis, Sandra Gould, Dick Beals, Gil Stratton, Jr., Merrill Mael, and Peggy Jordan. Sound effects were done by Ray Erlenborn and Stewart Conway, with special live music by Sean Bigler. Larry Albert directed.



► Sandra Gould...was she Miss Duffy here, or a scientist in the First Read Through? She was also the First Lady in Friday night's shows. Pretty diverse stuff. As an original Miss Duffy, Sandra brought great timing and humor to the show. And, there were a few moments after the re-creation to look back on the show, Ed Gardner and related matters.



◀ Merrill Mael as Uncle Rodney and Dick Beals as "Fats" in *Duffy's Tavern*. As always, first class performances by both. They make it more fun for everyone else.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU... BOB HASTINGS AND LARRY DOBKIN

An intriguing look into the careers and perspectives of two darn good actors and first time Showcase visitors, with moderator John Jensen. Larry and Bob did such different parts in their careers. Their styles were quite different. Bob was primarily East Coast and Larry was West Coast. All of that was quite interesting, and the audience was treated to the quick wit and camaraderie that these two used to spark up the auditorium. Bob, with humor, told the audience how happy he was to not be playing Archie Andrews at the Showcase. The strain on the vocal cords and credibility were at least two of the reasons. Larry told of Hans Conreid, as a director, wanting to correct something on each actor. After covering everyone Conreid came to Larry, and had nothing to correct, so he paused and stated "Be better." These two became part of the gang really fast. They are shown here, with Bob on the left.



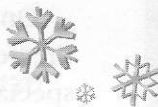
"180 Days 'Til Christmas"

▼ Sean Bigler performed skillfully on the electronic piano provided by the kind folks at Carillon Music, Ltd. Special thanks to Roy Hepworth of Carillon as he makes a major effort to loan us a fine instrument each year.

We actively encourage any shoppers to contact Roy at 1-800-668-4177.



◀ Norma Jean Nilsson, seated next to Herb Ellis and other dear friends, leads the applause



► A couple of our favorite people were on hand for their fourth Showcase. Here Tyler McVey relaxes for a moment while his wife Esther Geddes is attentive at the keyboard. They both are so willing to do anything to make the Showcase work. Esther even brought along blank music sheets, listened to a tape and wrote out the music for the re-creation.



FIRST COLD TABLE READ-THROUGH

X MINUS ONE- "\$1000 Per Plate"

Dick Beals in his directing debut (and quite good at it, thank you) with Bob Hastings back in his starring role (which of course he doesn't remember.) Add a great cast of Sandra Gould, Merrill Mael, Norma Jean Nilsson, Rhoda Williams and Gil Stratton, Jr. and you see the mix for a highly interesting time.

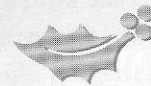
Director Beals distributed scripts and assigned parts to the cast as they did the very first read through, just as they would have done in the old days. They still have it! An impressive "rehearsal" right in front of the whole audience, who was wowed.

On the right, "scientist" Rhoda Williams puts a little pucker into her part during the read through, and Gil Stratton, Jr. waits to respond.



THEN CAME THE SOCIAL HOUR WITH LOTS OF WARM INTERACTIONS...

This is always a pleasant time of beginning to wrap up the day and getting ready for a great evening.



▲ President Terry Mahony presents Bill Brooks with the "Volunteer of the Year Award". Bill's unstinting efforts and long hours for REPS made him such a popular choice.

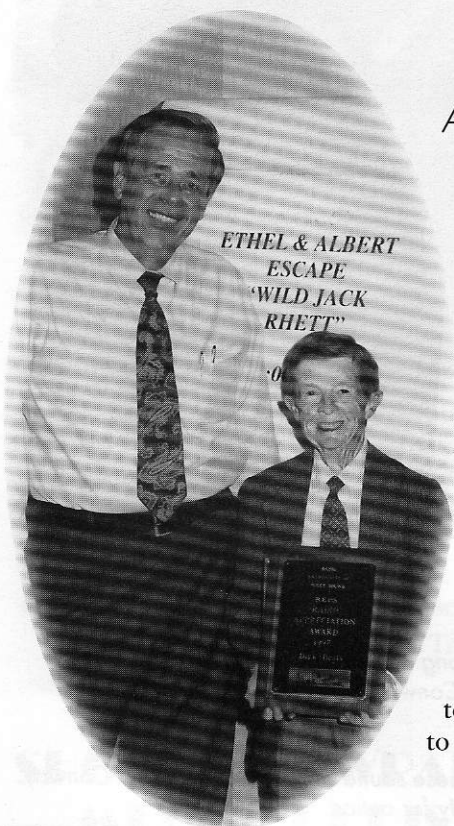
...FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER DINNER OF "HOSPITAL FOOD" & AWARDS

Once again, the food was exceptional based on the "feed" back we received. Following dinner, each special guest was given an appropriate certificate, ranging from Honorary Membership in REPS for first time visitors to the "5'er Striver" that went to those who have been at all 5 Showcases. REPS feels a tremendous debt of gratitude to each that these little certificates just can't convey. Also, Bill Brooks was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year, following the great tradition of Joy Jackson and Donald Zongker, previous recipients.



SPECIAL MUSIC IS ALWAYS A HIGHLIGHT

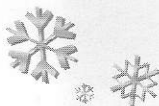
Each year, REPS has sought to have special music following dinner. In the past, attendees have enjoyed the almost unbelievable success of Jay Livingston, the blended harmonies of The Swing Set and this year the strong and beautiful voice of Ellen McLain. She has connections to the Big Broadcast done locally, and has an experienced Broadway and operatic voice. Jim French accompanied her and was totally professional as well. After some old songs, there was a sing along on "Silver Bells." At the conclusion of the entire program later in the evening, the audience joined in on "We'll Meet Again." Ellen and Jim are seen to the right.



AWARDS... *REPS is thrilled to attempt to honor our special guests each year with one of two awards. Each is our little way of saying thank you. As always, the biggest challenge is selecting just one for each award. There are so many deserving.*

◀ REPS Radio Appreciation Award

This award is voted on by the general membership. In most ways, this award represents a popular vote for a popular person who has demonstrated involvement with radio and with REPS. It goes to whomever the membership wishes it to. Previous recipients have been John Archer, Merrill Mael, Jim French and Herb Ellis. What a thrill it was to honor our friend Dick Beals who is the only out of town professional to make all 5 Showcases. And what a career he put together. Dick reflected on some input he gave REPS years ago before the first Showcase. It dealt with creating an appropriate atmosphere. He told us "And, you've sure done it." Dick and Showcase Co-chair Mike Sprague are to the left.



▶ REPS Radio Achievement Award

The REPS Radio Achievement Award committee consists of REPS board members, plus professionals who have experience in radio, past recipients, and a designated chair (John Jensen). This award recognizes a "body of work by an actor, director, producer or other individual whose work has contributed to the perpetuation and furtherance of radio theater, past or present." Previous recipients of this award were total professionals, Parley Baer, Ray Erlenborn, Jeanette Nolan and Harry Bartell. Joining that circle is one of the all time nice guys, Art Gilmore. Despite his significant career accomplishments, Art says "Why me?" Because you're someone special Art! That's why. To the right, Art receives the award from Showcase Co-chair Joy Jackson.



SATURDAY EVENING... PUT QUITE A CAP ON QUITE A DAY

After dinner, we were treated to the third and final of our Ethel and Albert sketches. This one featured what has become the signature piece for Peg Lynch and Parley Baer, the infamous "Two Times Nothing" bit. Zany as the logic is, you'll believe her if you hear this one.

ESCAPE RE-CREATION: WILD JACK RHETT

Okay, it's hardly a traditional Christmas show-but it was done in December. It was tied to our seasonal theme with a Christmas commercial. Directed by Herb Ellis, the powerful cast included Larry Dobkin, memorable as the menacing Rhett. Larry had been in the original, as had Parley Baer, but Parley had to withdraw this evening. Other OTR professionals doing such a good job were Doug Young, Tyler McVey, Merrill Mael, Ginny Tyler, Art Gilmore, Norma Jean Nilsson and Herb Ellis. Bill Brooks, Peggy Jordan (Fibber and Molly's granddaughter) and Larry Albert were active also. And in a surprise announced to the audience only during the credits at the end, Bill Conrad's son Chris did the famous Conrad deep opening "Tired of the everyday routine...?" Music was by the effervescent Esther Geddes and sound patterns by Ray Erlenborn and Stewart Conway. This show kept us on the edge of our seats and was a perfect conclusion to a wonderful Showcase V.



► Wild Jack Rhett himself, Larry Dobkin, confers with director Herb Ellis and Norma Jean Nilsson during rehearsal time.



◀ Ginny Tyler reads along as Bill Brooks concentrates and Stew Conway checks sound effects cues.

▼ Those sound artists Erlenborn and Conway, ready for action.



◀ Escape rehearsal with Tyler McVey, Ray Erlenborn, Harry Bartell, Chris Conrad and Stewart Conway.



SHOWCASE TIDBITS

This newsletter does not attempt to detail the extensive biographies of our guests. Even the several pages devoted only to that in the Showcase packet failed to be complete enough.

- Bill Parker and Frank Denton did most of the reporting you've read here, with some other input.
- Mark Skullerud did most of the photography, with Bill Brooks and Chris Conrad adding in some.
- Norma Jean Nilsson did commercials for us, and Dick Beals wrote a clever Alka Seltzer take off involving Duffy's Tavern.
- Frank Buxton donated an autographed copy of his revised 'Big Broadcast.' In spirited bidding, Bill Buckley outlasted Bill Grandey and Donald Lackey to reach \$105!!! Thanks Frank. Thanks bidders, and thanks to Bill Buckley who paid on the spot.
- Model A shuttle again a big hit. Thanks Archie Cress and Frank Rosin.
- The winners of a set of Showcase re-creation tapes were Paul Secord, Susan Trent and Janet Conrad.

SHOWCASE WRAP UP ...MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The Showcase was closed with the traditional OTR Group photo shoot, with all the special guests up front at one time. We have always regarded this as a rare opportunity to capture a picture of so much Golden Age talent.

Ellen McLain and Jim French returned so we could all sing along to "We'll Meet Again." A hearty "Merry Christmas!" and all went their own ways.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

SHOWCASE FEEDBACK

Here are some samples of comments made by various attendees at the Showcase. Let us never grow complacent, but always seek ways to improve.

From the fans

Excerpted from a memo sent by member Norm Darrow to a number of his friends. "Radio is dead," thundered some younger members of society. Don't you believe it! It's alive and kicking in the Puget Sound area. In talking to a man from Chicago (attending for the first time) he said "We have a convention too, but it's not as good as this one."

Norm Darrow

"It was very impressive to see all of the organization and the comfortable atmosphere. I particularly enjoyed the Sittin' Around portion where all of the performers were up front at one time."

Bob Louden

"This was the first Showcase I've attended and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Kudos to everyone involved!"

David Pan

From the performers

"That was a heck of a show! Your members and guests have to be still buzzin' about the continuous entertainment you delivered"

Dick Beals

"This is a major point of enjoyment for me each year; to connect with old friends and to be involved with all of you. This truly was the best Showcase ever"

Norma Jean Nilsson

"What a wonderful weekend we had! Every one of you at REPS is so kind and generous and hospitable that it was a very special time for me, and I'm sure all of those who attended. Please tell all of your gang who worked so hard and so efficiently that I love 'em all! All my best to all of you-you are a very special loving group."

Art Gilmore

From REPS: "Thanks for your generosity fans and special guests. We received nearly \$600 in donations toward next year's Showcase. That's really special!"

"And, one more time...Thanks super volunteers. And you know who you are."



ALIAS GERARD

Dear Editor:
I noticed in your August issue of Radio Mirror the picture of Jerry Colonna. Is that his real name? Has he made any recordings lately?
Mr. F. C.
Erie, Pa.



Jerry Colonna

Jerry's legal name is Gerard Colonna; however, he changed it when he decided it was too formal for a comedian. His latest Capitol recordings, released a few months ago, are "Pass A Piece of Pizza, Please," and "Where Do You Work-a, John?"

!!!URGENT REPS NEED!!! AIR CHECK EDITOR

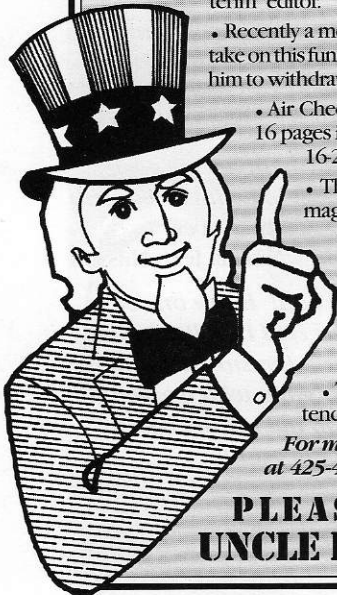
There is an urgent need for a volunteer to step forward to be the editor of Air Check. This is the last issue for our interim editor.

Here are some of the basic facts:

- Air Check is a benefit of membership and a communications tool that none of us want to lose.
- Mike Sprague has been the invisible "interim" editor for most of the life of REPS, spelled for a nice block of time by Tim Knowles.
 - Mike has indicated that he can no longer be the "interim" editor.
 - Recently a member stepped forward and was going to take on this fun job. Then changing circumstances caused him to withdraw.
- Air Check is published quarterly, and is typically 16 pages in length. The editor will probably spend 16-24 hours per issue.
- The club has many old newspapers and magazines from which to draw information, articles, pictures etc. And there are other resources and article writers available.
- The editor should be computer literate and have access to a Macintosh computer for the best coordination with Secord Printing.
- The editor will be active in the club, attending meetings and special events.

For more details, please call Mike Sprague at 425-488-9518.

**PLEASE CALL AT ONCE
UNCLE REPS WANTS YOU!!!**



and they mirrored my own thoughts. This came not only from those of us in the audience, but from our special guests and performers. To a person, the acclamation was outstanding.

Once again, we are greatly indebted to Mike and Joy for putting together another superb Showcase.

This month we are also celebrating the return of the Tape Library to Vi and Darrell Anderson in their totally rebuilt home. Our appreciation to Joy and the many other dedicated folks who restored the library after the fire, and to David Speelman who maintained the library during the rebuilding time.

Have a good summer, and let's all look for more great programs from REPS.

AN APOLOGY FOR THE MISSING AIRCHECK, AND THANKS

It was the transition from Interim Editor to new Editor and the withdrawal of the new Editor that led to the absence of our Spring issue of Air Check. The membership was very kind and understanding. Thank you for that!

SOME OF IT IS INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

How many times do we get the opportunity to hang out with Norman Corwin? Never enough!

Therefore we have included the story on that meeting, along with pictures. And there are some selected other materials from the missing issue.

► 12/27/28

KOL

*Voluntarily
Off the Air
After Sundown
For a Few Days*

This action is taken due to a delay in receiving the proper equipment from the United States Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.

Resumption of night broadcasting will be announced.

KOL

Seattle

Wash.

**FROM THE
REPS
PRESIDENT
Terry Mahony**

The operative phrase for Showcase V was "the best ever." This may seem like a cliché because we've heard it each year.

But, the number of people who approached me with these words following the convention was truly amazing



INTERESTED IN OTHER OTR CONVENTIONS?

There are a number of very nice OTR gatherings around the country. Fans could tour, seeing excellent programs in Boston, Cincinnati, Denver, Arkansas and more. The two upcoming are the largest and you might want to check them out.

NEWARK IN OCTOBER

The Friends of Old Time Radio have been doing a convention for 22 years, so they've figured out how to do it. Their program starts on Thursday night October 23rd and continues through Saturday night October 25. The roster of performers includes many of our old Showcase friends and a large number of east coast actors we probably won't be able to have at our convention.

To register or obtain more information, contact Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514. 203-248-2887. E-mail JayHick@aol.com

LOS ANGELES IN NOVEMBER

The folks of the SPERDVAC club in Los Angeles have been like big brothers and sisters to REPS. They helped us get started and we've learned a lot from them. Each year, we've had 6-10 people come up to be with us during the Showcase. Their convention, this year on November 7, 8 and 9 is really a fun place to be. There are some REPS people making plans to go.

So get your info by contacting Larry & John Gassman, 15502 Sharonhill Dr., Whittier, CA 90604 310-947-1655.

ONE MAN'S FAMILY— EVERYWHERE

Mike Sprague tells us that The 'One Man's Family' Family special interest club is at these conventions too. "We were so thankful to SPERDVAC last November for sponsoring our first One Man's Family Reunion. Now the Friends of Old Time Radio are doing the same thing!"

There were 10 actors from OMF in Los Angeles and their part of the convention was a big hit. Now, another group of actors will be going to Newark for One Man's Family Reunion II.

For membership information, contact Sprague at P.O. Box 723, Bothell, WA 98041. Phone 425-488-9518 or e-mail at hrrmikes@aol.com.

REPS MEMBERSHIP

REPS welcomes into membership those who have an interest in Old Time Radio and/or current radio drama, variety, comedy, etc. There are three membership categories.

MEMBERSHIP	1ST YEAR	RENEWAL
Regular	\$22	\$18
Student	\$13	\$9
Vision impaired	\$13	\$9

Consider giving Gift Memberships For Christmas And Other Occasions



◀ 12/22/48

UPCOMING MEETINGS

AUGUST

August will be a re-creation by the REPS Radio Readers; a brief Showcase look-back and a look at the radio work of Jimmy Stewart.

SEPTEMBER

Janet Waldo to visit REPS on September 6th. Janet was almost here last year, but had to cancel. From Lux Radio Theatre to Red Skelton, she worked a lot. Perhaps Corliss Archer is one of her most familiar roles, but fans know that she was also a regular on *Ozzie and Harriet* and that she was Irene Franklin on the long running *One Man's Family*. In addition to all of the radio activity, Janet did plenty of voice work. Come hear Judy Jetson...Penelope Pitstop...Fred Flintstone's mother-in-law.

UPCOMING

Those involved with planning programs for REPS are actively pursuing several Old Time Radio performers to come and be a special guest at a REPS meeting. The next several months should be really exciting for anyone who loves OTR. Stay tuned, call your friends and special notices will be sent out if necessary.



LIBRARY UPDATE

Reporter Joy Jackson

The Andersons have moved into their newly re-built house, and are in the process of getting settled. In early March, Ron and Joy ferried the newly acquired metal cabinets (to contain the tapes), and put them into the Anderson's new basement office.

Starting in May, the circulating library will once again be operated by the team of Vi and Andy.

Many, many thanks to all our members who helped restore our library. Special thanks to Dave Speelman, for gallantly substituting for our librarians par excellence.

NEW SUPPLEMENT

There is a new supplement available. It hasn't been distributed in the usual way due to the incipient move of the circulating library. Some of you may have noticed that a few of the grab bags, available at the meeting, have contained some of the new library tapes.

As a cost saving measure, we've decided to offer the supplements on a request basis. If you want a supplement, just give Joy a call at (206) 632-1653. Leave your name and phone number, in case she has to get back to you. Or you can drop her a note at 3663 Carr Place North, Seattle, WA 98103. Joy will get one out to you ASAP.

UPDATED REPS TAPE CATALOG

Look for the newly updated version of the REPS Tape Catalog, available at our June convention. The price at this time will probably be close to \$10, depending upon the printing costs. This catalog will include all the information from all of the supplements, with all programs in alphabetical order. They can also be ordered from Joy Jackson, 3663 Carr Place North, Seattle, WA 98103.

ACQUISITIONS

We're always looking for shows that we don't have in the library. If you have any, in good condition, that we don't have, consider making a donation of a copy of them to the library. Catch Joy at the monthly meeting, or mail them to her.

VIDEO LIBRARY

Yes, we really do have some of our meetings and all of our conventions on video. You can rent them for \$4 for a month—to be mailed or picked up at the meeting. The most recent addition has been the tape of the meeting with Norman Corwin, Feb. 1997. Joy has these videos lurking in her house, as well, so send her a note, or leave her a message on her phone machine if you want to pick a tape up at the meeting.



TOUGH AND EASY...Old Time Radio Quiz by Larry Siskind

How well do you know your old time radio? Give yourself 20 points for each correct answer. Give yourself a 10 point bonus if you answer question 4 or 5 correctly, or a 20 point bonus if you answer both correctly.

1. Which is out of place?

Lone Ranger	Hop Harrigan	Hopalong Cassidy
Gene Autry	Tom Mix	Roy Rogers

2. Jokes were never made about Jack Benny's...

Blue Eyes	Weight	Age
Violin Playing	Toupee	Stinginess

3. Match the radio cry with the radio character

"Coming Mother"	Mollie McGee
"Well now, I wouldn't say that"	Jack Benny
"Silly boy"	Chester Riley
"Heavenly days"	The Mad Russian
"Now cut that out!"	Henry Aldrich
"What a revolting development this is!"	Mr. Peavey

Today's Toughies...

4. What was the theme music from 'Life with Luigi'?

"Just a Little Love, a Little Kiss"		
"Aphrodite"	"Oh Marie"	"Oh My Papa"
"Annie Laurie"		"Poor Butterfly"

5. Which famous radio pair was from Crooper, Illinois?

Lum & Abner	Ethel & Albert	Abbott & Costello
Martin & Lewis	Vic & Sade	Sweeney & March

(You'll find the answers on page 16)



A VISIT WITH NORMAN CORWIN

“Everyone said Norman Corwin was a wonderful person, along with being a genius. They were right!” So stated one enthusiastic fan after the February meeting of REPS where Corwin was the special guest.

by Bill Parker

One of the best attended and most rewarding REPS meetings ever was the February meeting with our special guest, Norman Corwin. In introducing him, Jim French remarked that *“meeting with Norman Corwin today is kind of like meeting at Monticello with the original proprietor.”* Or as another long time Seattle radio personality has put it, *“Norman Corwin is the Shakespeare of radio writing.”*

Corwin, a prolific writer-director, has done stage plays, television dramas, motion pictures, cantatas, and even an award winning opera, *The Warrior*. His screenplay for *Lust for Life*, the story of painter Vincent Van Gogh, was Oscar nominated. Our REPS meeting was conducted as an interview by Jim French and Larry Albert, to be edited and broadcast on d KIRO radio’s Jim French interview hour.

Born in Boston, Mr. Corwin first worked as a newspaper man in western Massachusetts, and as a “publicity flack” for 20th Century-Fox. His first opening in radio came when he sold New York station WQXR on the idea of broadcasting “15 minutes of poetry.” On the strength of his broadcast

- of Edgar Lee Master’s *‘Spooner Anthology,’*
- CBS offered him a director’s job. His first script,
- highlighting his talent for g o comedy and fantasy,
- was entitled *‘The Plot to Overthrow Christmas.’*
-

In 1941, Corwin was asked to write a script for a show commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Speaking to the leaders of the broadcasting industry, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had said: *“You should put this [Bill of Rights broadcast] on all four networks.”*



Meanwhile, at CBS, *‘The Plot to Overthrow Christmas’* led to Corwin being asked to take over the CBS Workshop broadcast for 26 weeks. *“I accepted it like a hungry salamander snapping at a gnat,”* Corwin told us. But the challenge of a show called 26 by Corwin was a daunting task. *“When I got home, I thought ‘What have I done?’”* He rented a place in the country, and spent the whole of two weeks on the first script, a 1/2 hour all-rhyme show called *‘Radio Primer,’* music by Lynn Murray. From then on, he was finishing scripts right at showtime. *“Some of the programs I*

*A deadline is the one thing I abhor,
So go away deadline, and don't come back no more,
Go away deadline, you are an awful pest,
There oughta be a law to put you under arrest.
A deadline is so hungry, a deadline must be fed
Some day I'm gonna get so mad, I'll kill the deadline dead.
From Corwin's 'Radio Primer' (1941)*

- *finished during rehearsal break.”* CBS scheduled
- his show opposite Bob Hope on NBC. He described
-
- *...continued on page 16*



NORMAN CORWIN...con't

it as "hoping against Hope," adding that "the network felt the shows had mutually exclusive audiences."

As part of his 26 shows, Corwin had written one called 'Between Americans,' which Orson Welles was lined up to do on December 7, 1941. As he traveled on the Super Chief between New York and Chicago, Corwin heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and wired CBS asking if the show was still on. It was, and was the first show aired when the networks returned to regular broadcasting after Pearl Harbor. President Roosevelt felt it was more important than ever to do the Bill of Rights broadcast (on December 15th), and Corwin had done much research at the Library of Congress - "research resources were pitiful in those days." The memorable broadcast, titled *We Hold These Truths*, included James Stewart, Walter Huston and Edward G. Robinson.



▲ Jim French (left) prepares to interview Norman Corwin.

During World War II, Corwin was a major source of inspiring broadcasts to the American people. In 1942, with the fortunes of the British at a low ebb and much anti-English sentiment in America, the White House wanted a program to build warm feeling between the two peoples, and Corwin created *An American in England*, with the help of Edward R. Murrow. Again in 1945, he was asked to

do a live program on the surrender of Germany, and later one on the Japanese surrender. In 1995, Corwin did a program on the 50th anniversary of that surrender.

Corwin, who has done decades of work in both television and radio, had some important things to say to REPS members. "You (people of REPS) are the aristocracy. It is your interest that keeps this once beautiful medium (of radio) unblemished in its quality. How important it is to bear images - to be our own set designers. TV is easier to assimilate. The viewer can be lazy. There is no term in radio comparable to 'boob tube' or 'couch potato.' TV is very seductive. It absorbs the attention of school kids. Radio didn't have that same effect." The great programs on TV are like "islands in archipelagos. (But) it's built into our psychology to be able to take sounds and make pictures."

Poetry has been Norman Corwin's greatest influence. He has a great passion for Whitman, Sandburg, Emily Dickinson ("I tried to date her, but it was too late!"). "To have great poets", he says, "you have to have great audiences. So I salute the people of REPS, who come to meetings, pay dues, and take part in this program." And the "people of REPS" thank Mr. Corwin a thousand fold for his wonderful presentation.

"REPS continues to have a very large appreciation for Jay Secord, owner of Secord Printing, Inc. in Redmond, WA. He and his staff do a totally professional job on Air Check, just like we were paying regular prices. We're not coming anywhere near regular prices because of Jay's kindness. Thanks Jay, Brenda and Keri!" Members...need printing? Call Jay at 425-883-2182.

(Answers to the Tough and Easy quiz on page 14)

- 1: Hop Harrigan (he used an airplane, the others used horses.)
- 2: Weight
- 3: "Coming mother", Henry Aldrich
- "Well now I wouldn't say that" Mr. Feavey
- "Silly boy" The Mad Russian
- "Heavenly days" Molly McGee
- "What a revolting development this is!" Chester Riley
- "Now cut that out!" Jack Benny
- 4: "Oh Marie"
- 5: "Vic & Sade"

If You Received

100 or over..... You are either a master or very old with a long memory.

70 to 90..... Superior

50 to 60..... Average

30 to 40..... You need to listen to more old time radio.

Less than 30..... You need to listen to a lot more old time radio.