

AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

Volume 15, Number 10, February 2006

DUFFY'S TAVERN

Martin Grams

[Edited from longer article on the internet by Martin Grams at www.radio-classics.com/mgduffeytaVERN.]

Eddie Gardner was born Edward Poggenberg on June 29, 1901, in Astoria, Long Island. At the age of fourteen,



Gardner secured his first after school job as a pianist at O'Bryan's cafe, a colorful neighborhood bistro that served partly as a model for Duffy's. Had Ed suspected

the significance of this position, things might have been different. As it was, his stay there was short lived. His mother happened to walk by one day, caught a fleeting glimpsed through the swinging door of her son at the piano, and that was that. Ed once remarked that this was one of the few jobs he ever left without being fired.

Gardner first found himself involved in the theatre business as a promoter in the publicity department of Crosby Gaige. This led to a position in the New York office of Jennie Jacobs where he promoted stock companies, signed actors, rented theatres, handled hotels and theatrical transportation, painted scenery, typed scripts, directed shows, acted as stand in and understudy and was casting director. This work would later come in handy when he would begin Duffy's Tavern, and apply the numerous trades the same time. *Collitch*, a skit about college life, was Ed's first producing job. Then came another classic entitled *Coast-Wise Annie* which lasted eight weeks at the Belmont. Gardner's supreme effort as producer was *After Such Pleasures* by Dorothy Parker, a Sunday night show which he produced at the Barbixon Plaza with an advertising agency in New York. "I was the guy who gave radio actors the brush off," Gardner.

Duffy's Tavern was in one aspect born back in 1939 when Gardner, who talks like Archie but is a good deal smarter, was producing shows for an advertising agency. He planned a show designed to contrast the cultural side of New York with the seamy side, and has set Deems Taylor as the protagonist for culture. When he listened to the playback of Taylor's audition record, for which Gardner himself had cued Taylor's lines, he suddenly realized that his own voice was just the one he had been looking for to play

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the other side of the coin. "That," he says gloomily, "is what becomes of bein' born in Astoria."

The character, Archie, was born more or less by accident. Gardner was director of the program and in one segment, needed the voice of a "typical New York mug" and couldn't find an actor to fill the bill. "There was a radio program called *This is New York*, " Ed recalled. "we wanted a guy to talk New Yorkese, but all we could get was voices that sounded like Dodger fans in the left field bleachers. There is as much difference between New Yorkese and Kings Count English as there is between Oxford and Choctaw."

Almost a year and a half after *This Is New York* went off the air, CBS began making plans for a short run summer series called Forecast. Two half hour presentations would be aired each week, and anyone interested in presenting ideas for new radio programs would be more than welcome to take advantage of the time slot.

Ed Gardner introduced Duffy's Tavern to the radio audience for the first time. Larry Adler and Mel Allen took supporting roles while Gertrude Nielsen and F. Chase Taylor (Colonel Stoopnagle) became the first Hollywood guests to walk through the tavern doors.

Letters poured into CBS and the board of directors took the program into consideration. Contracts were issued, offers were counter offered, and the end result? On March 1, 1941, Duffy's Tavern became part of the regular CBS lineup of comedies. Just three days before, Meet Boston Blackie premiered at the Rialto, the first of what would be fourteen Boston Blackie pictures for Columbia, based on the popular radio mystery series. [ed. note, most of these films are in the REPS DVD Library] Gardner didn't know it at the time, but Duffy's Tavern would become so successful, that four years later, a film adaptation of their program would also make it to the big screen

To begin with a touch of understatement, Duffy's Tavern was a wonderful place. It was so fine that, when the phone rang every Thursday evening at 8:30, Archie the bartender answered with "Duffy's Tavern - where the elite meet to eat," you knew a moment of paradoxical regret: You would like to find a place like Duffy's Tavern, at the same time that you were aware that, alas, it was too good to be true.

Duffy, the proprietor, was non-existent or rather, you know him only as the other party to those telephone conversations with Archie, the presiding genius. Miss

Duffy, the proprietor's daughter, liked almost every man who walked into the tavern, and she had a friend, Vera, who also liked men. Officer Clancy, (Alan Reed) was a sage whose legal knowledge is approached only by that of former Chief Justice Hughes. Clifton Finnegan (Charles Cantor) was about the intellect of Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*, but comical. Eddie Green, who would later find greater fame as Stonewall the Lawyer on *Amos n' Andy* [ed. and Brier Fox in Disney's *Song of the South*] played Eddie the waiter, gripper extraordinary at Duffy's, an apprehensive citizen of Harlem, and was in real life a well known Negro comedian. He was also in the food business and owned a chain of Harlem restaurants for a couple of decades.

The greatest of these, of course, was Archie. He held the show together not only as a bartender but he was always on hand and because he was a fellow capable of handling practically any given situation. He had some pretty close escapes, because he was not the brightest guy in the world but he was the brightest guy in Duffy's Tavern, and even when he hailed he saw to it that no one else was aware of it. All right, he was taken in by Mme. Cacciatore, the opera singer with the Greenpernt accent and her manager, the Duke, but who was it who installed the pinball game in a corner of the Tavern where the floor slanted and thus made it impossible for anyone to win" It was Archie.

Shirley Booth had already achieved a toehold for herself in the theatre, having appeared on Broadway as early as 1925. Her star fame rose faster than Gardner's. Booth loved the New York stage and Gardner, the California radio stations.

The role was so completely hers that when she left the show in 1942, the part never was filled on a permanent basis.



Gardner signed Florence Halop, [ed. note, Flo the balif on Harry Anderson's *Night Court*] a radio veteran at 20.

The famed apron is a specialty. Guests who signed the apron, Lucille Ball, Paul Winchell, Ginny sims, Ray Milland, Oscar Levant, were just a few. Each Guest star on the program during the rehearsals, would sign

the apron Gardner always wore for publicity photos and occasional rehearsals. Then Gardner would take the apron home and have his mother, or wife, embroider the famous names into the apron by hand. goto page 4

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

Dick Beals

Last year's Showcase was a winner. Right? It can't be topped. Right?

But...SURPRISE !!! You ain't seen nothin' yet.

Showcase 2006 will top 'em all.

Herb Ellis will join our stars of last year as will Ted Reid, the Herlingers, Dick Van Patten and Alan Young., just to name a few. (Sorry, Mr. Ed is questionable).

Of course the list of events speaks for itself. You know that show after show will feature the very best performers, as will the panels and workshops.

It is amazing how little preparation the star performers have before you are in your seats, the Red Light goes ON, and the director cues the theme music.

Sometimes there is a table reading in the Green Room, then on mike for a Production Rehearsal. Some directors just use a Production Rehearsal, then it's a GO.

In a Hollywood studio, years ago, when these actors were the busiest in town, it was totally different. Their day went something like this: Arrive, at say, NBC, 15 minutes early, find a parking place, then the studio, walk in, pick up a script with your name on it, sit down and begin marking the script with the other actors.

With scripts all marked the conversation begins about everything but acting, until the director enters. Now it's all business.

First there is a table reading with maybe corrections by the director. The corrections are usually in the copy, hardly ever correcting the reading. He has cast the best in the business and usually the actors make more out of the lines than the writer intended.

When finished, the director scurries into the Booth, the sound effects guys are ready, and the music, if live, is set. This is called the Production Rehearsal.

It starts from the top. The announcer, the actors go full tilt. The director interrupts only if something doesn't sound right. Sometimes the writer is in the Booth and asks that a line be changed. The director asks the actor to change it but if it isn't right, they leave it alone. Occasionally, an actor suggests a change, reads it both ways and the director decides. The same with music, sound effects, and dialects, pace, or effort, but not often. Then a break, then back to work, on mike, and GO.

In the early days, before tape, usually a Dress Rehearsal followed the Production Rehearsal, In Detroit it was always "Live Network" and the Lone Ranger, Green Hornet, and Challenge of the Yukon always had a

reading on mike, a Production then a Dress, then "live" network, then a "live" rebroadcast.

In Hollywood, before tape, there was a Dress Rehearsal if the show was difficult, but that was seldom. These guys were so good and there was no need to wear them out. Especially, for instance, The Railroad Hour with all the singing and full orchestra.

At Showcase, you are watching the best in action. There have been many moments after rehearsal and before the "show" when a star asks the director if he or she could change a dialect, or character to this or that. The answer



is "of course". So the star, sometimes, tells the other actors what is about to happen. With the Red Light ON, sometimes others in the cast change their character to "top" the others. And the battle rages.

The result, as with last year's "Archie" for instance, a show that the regulars said was the best ever. And with just one reading on mike.

A suggestion....get your tickets early. Showcase 2006 is to be the best yet performing with the best yet.

AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

Published by the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound
9811 NE 139th St, Kirkland WA 98034-1806

Volume 15, Number 10

February 2006



from page 2 The writers for the series were never given contracts like the majority of radio programs. Gardner's attitude toward his writer's welfare was apparent when, at the end of each season, he left town without telling them if they were going to be employed again in September.

Sandra Gould, who played Miss Duffy, before Hazel Shermet, didn't have as strong feelings for Gardner by the time she up and left. One of the only Miss Duffys to quit and not get fired.



[She] took out an ad in *Daily Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter* and on the whole back page listed 378 writers. The *Writers Guild* gave [her] an honorary plaque which said *To Sandra Gould, aka Miss Duffy, for meritorious conduct above and beyond*

the call of duty for defending all the unsung writers of the Writers Guild in Hollywood.

Gardner, who was always after a buck found out that there was a tax free deal in Puerto Rico for anyone who would establish an industry there. Gardner moved from the old NBC studios on Sunset and Vine [September 29, 1949] to Puerto Rico and taped the shows from there. He was widely criticized for the move on the grounds he was ducking the income tax and the show's popularity, sadly, would soon fall of to the point where it would be dropped. The last show was on December 28, 1951.

Radio Archives News

<http://www.radioarchives.org/Newsletter.htm>

There's delightful news this month -- including the release of "The Big Show, Volume 2" a NEW collection of ninety-minute spectaculars featuring the biggest names in show business. You'll also find special discount prices on our "One Man's Family" Premier Collection and our twenty-CD Round Robin #17 - and, best of all, we'll send you a FREE MEMBERS-ONLY BONUS with every order. To view all of the CD sets available for purchase, visit the Archives CD Catalog page at <http://www.radioarchives.org/CDSets.htm>

Thank you for your support and enjoy the shows!

For Sale: Big Band Record Collection, excellent condition, 78's in sleeves, approx. 140 records. \$125 or best offer. Suzanne Johnson 360-491-5463

For Sale: Reel to Reel recorders. Michael Comstock 253-838-5873

Wanted:

The Adventures of Sam Spade Any Episodes 1951
Alias Jane Doe Any Episodes 1951
Hallmark Playhouse Any Episodes 1951
Stars Over Hollywood Any Episodes 1951
Theater Guild On the Air
"Prologue to Glory " 05/11/1952
Any live Television Drama
Transcription Disc Player
Advice on suitable software to convert OTR from tape to MP3. Ken Korhonen, 4022 41st Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116-3818, 206-932-9363, email: kinescope@qwest.net

Note about Duffy's Tavern.

Duffy's Tavern will be one of the shows in the lineup to be done at Showcase 06 on June 23, 24. The episode that has been chosen is from one of the Puerto Rico broadcasts on November 23, 1951. The title of the program is *The Tearoom*.

NOTICE TO ALL REPS MEMBERS

The REPS Board of Director's has been informed some members paid for recordings of Showcase 2004 events and possibly some prior year Showcase events and have not received them. Please send a complete description of the items you paid for by Email to: repsclub@aol.com or by letter to Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound; PO Box 125201; Seattle, WA 98115-0201. We would appreciate receiving your responses no later than February 28th, 2006 so we can compile the information and fulfill the requests.

Thank you.

EXPERIENCE DRAMATIC RADIO AT ITS FINEST SHOWCASE 2006

Presented by The Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound
June 23 - 24, 2006 at the Seattle Center

WHO IS COMING

Dick Van Patten and Alan Young will be part of the professional group on hand to re-create old time radio shows and to reminisce a lot. The cast will also include Dick Beals, Donald Buka, Herb Ellis, Elliott (Ted) Reid, Rosemary Rice, Harlan (Hal) Stone, Gil Stratton Jr, Larry Albert, Frank Buxton, Jim and Pat French, Paul and Ilana Herlinger, & Susan Hutchison.



Dick Van Patten

I Remember Mama
Eight is Enough

Alan Young

Mr. Ed
Alan Young Show



REGISTRATION

You can register for Friday only, Saturday only, or both. We are also offering a 3 hour 'sampler' on Friday afternoon and an Adventurers in Odyssey option on Saturday.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____
REPS Member Yes _____ No _____

_____ Sampler only @ \$19 per 1:30 - 4:30 Friday \$ _____

_____ Odyssey only @ \$ 5 per 1:15 - 2:15 Saturday (Adults free with child) \$ _____

_____ Friday Only @ \$49 per 10 am - 9 pm (no meal) \$ _____

_____ Saturday Only @ \$69 per 10 am - 9 pm, (includes dinner) \$ _____

_____ Friday Saturday everything @ \$118 per (includes dinner Saturday) \$ _____

Except for Adventures in Odyssey, prices shown are for REPS members and their guests. Non members please add \$5 for Friday or Saturday all day or \$10 for the Friday/Saturday everything.

Total \$ _____

Checks payable to REPS, Mail to:
REPS Showcase % Mary Fichtenberg,
109 NW 83rd St, Seattle WA 98117
206-789-2319 fichtenberg2319@msn.com

SCHEDULED EVENTS

I Remember Mama, The Adventures of Superman, The Cinnamon Bear, Adventures in Odyssey, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, The Adventures of Harry Nile, Duffy's Tavern, Improv Radio. Also panels, worksops, vendor room, and radio related displays.

WANT MORE INFORMATION

For details you can go to the website of the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound for more information or sign up.

www.repsonline.org

DVD Library

To avoid confusion, the CD, DVD, and Cassette libraries are completely independent of one another. A catalog number in one of them has no relationship to something in the other library. Be sure to indicate, CD, DVD, or Cassette as part of the catalog number when you order from the library.

Although CDs and Cassettes will play in almost any brand or model of player, the DVDs can be a bit fussy. There are some players that will not play our DVDs. If you experience this, we would like to know the brand and model with the problem. We know that some of our DVDs will not play on a Panasonic player.



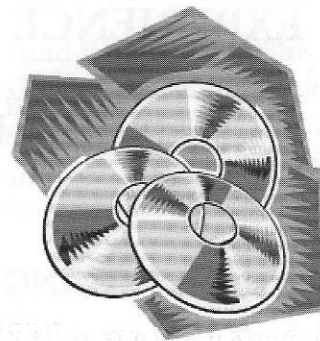
DVD 17
Burns and Allen TV
12-18-52 George's Little Secret
12-25-52 Jealous Husband
1-1-53 Master Moocher

DVD 18
Burns and Allen TV
1-8-53 Harry Loves Gracie
1-5-53 Neighbors Stay
1-22-53 Wedding Bell Blues

DVD 19
Burns and Allen TV
1-25-53 Tax Refund
2-5-53 Girl
2-12-53 Train Ride

DVD 20
Burns and Allen TV
2-19-53 Gracie Plays Cupid
2-26-53 Swamp Party
3-5-53 Burglar Scare

DVD 21
Burns and Allen TV
3-12-53 Gracie buys a Ranch
3-19-53 Gracie gets George in the Army
3-26-53 Gracie Reports a Stolen Car



DVD 22
Burns and Allen TV
4-20-53 Gracie Takes Spanish Lessons
4-27-53 Cleaning Woman
5-4-53 Harry VonZell's Girl Friend

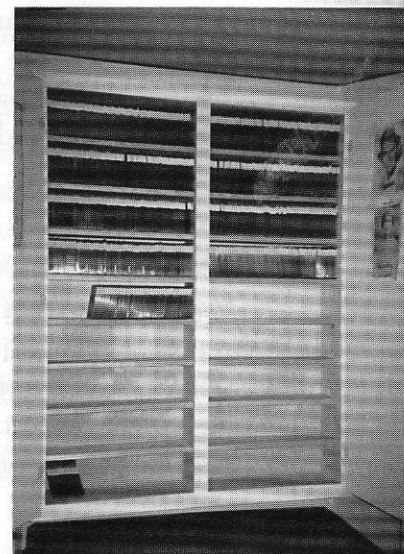
DVD 23
Burns and Allen TV
5-11-53 George Lectures at UCLA
5-18-53 Missings Persons Bureau
7-5-53 Surprise Party for Morton's

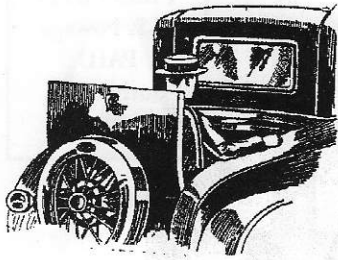
DVD 24
Burns and Allen TV
7-13-53 Sneak Thieves
7-20-53 Gracie doing a Movie without George
7-27-53 Gracie wants George to Take a Trip East

DVD 25
Burns and Allen TV
8-3-53 Gracie sees a Hold Up
8-10-53 Locked out of House
8-17-53 At the Department Store

DVD 26
Burns and Allen TV
10-5-53 Gracie Thinks George Needs Glasses
10-12-53 Gracie Helps Morton's
10-19-53 Gracie gets Jury Summons

Thank you Archie Cress for building and installing a cabinet to hold the REPS CD and DVD library disks. It is up and in use at Vi and Darrel Anderson's work room where the Cassette, CD, and DVD libraries are growing to over 1000 CDs now.





Rumble Seat

Franz

There are several things underway at REPS that are new.

The sign up sheet for Showcase 06 has been printed in this issue of the newsletter for all of you who have been unable to attend our meetings.

Starting in March we are going to make it possible to use your credit card to sign up for the Showcase and use it to purchase Silent Auction items you have bid on at Showcase. We also are going to have some items for sale at Showcase. We are not advocating using credit cards unwisely but some people do most of their transactions that way all the time. Besides, it is a way to build up your airline miles if your card provides that service. The Showcase sign up form with the credit card information will be available at the March meeting.

At the February meeting we passed out a question asking about our CD library. The question was: if you wished to obtain a copy of a CD from the library, rather than renting it, you would get the copy you want to keep, you need not return the CD, it would be yours. Most everyone thought it a good idea but the fee varied widely from nothing to twenty five dollars a CD. Those of you interested that are out of town and did not know this was possibly in the works, please let me know at >frankr@eskimo.com< what your thoughts are. In no way would this affect the regular CD rentals. It may be awhile before this can be done, we have 800 CDs to make backup copies of first. _____

Election Results for 2006

Vice President, Michael Comstock 64

John Jenson 1

Secretary, Bryan Haigood 64

At Large, Paul Secord 62

Joy Jackson 3

At Large, Liz Roach 62

one ballot abstain all slots

At Large, Vi Anderson 61

John Jenson 1

ByLaw Revision, Yes 62

No 2

Aircheck is created on a Mac G4 computer with Adobe Indesign CS and Adobe Photoshop CS. Most of the text is *Garamond* at 12 points with the headlines at 12, 14 and 18 points bold. If you would like a copy on a CD, write to Frank Rosin, 9811 NE 139th St, Kirkland WA 98034.



Quiz Time

Can you identify this handsome young man?

He has been a guest at one of our Showcases in the past and is still active in television and writing.



In one of his best known roles on radio, one girl, Bildred Tisdell, attracts and repels him all at the same time.

We have an extra special CD for the first four people at the March meeting to identify this person and name one radio and one television series he has been a regular cast member in.

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February 2006

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425-823-2812

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425-823-2547

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206-282-2544

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425-226-7005

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Shoreline WA 98133
206-542-2631

Showcase 2006

Mike Sprague
6726 S Four Peaks Way
Chandler AZ 85249
480-474-4480

Schedule

March 3, 2006 Board Meeting

March 4, 2006 Regular Meeting Norse Home Quiz Program, Larry Albert

March 31, 2006 Board Meeting

April 1, 2006 Regular Meeting Norse Home Radio Readers

May 5, 2006 Board Meeting

May 6, 2006 Regular Meeting Norse Home Harlan Zinck

May 31, 2006 Radio Readers at Kirkland Heritage Society, Kirkland

June 23 - 24, 2006, Showcase 2006 at the Seattle Center

Unless specified otherwise, Board Meetings are held in the Board Room of the Comfort Inn/Suits, Seattle, and start at 7:00 pm. Regular Membership Meetings are held at the Norse Home, Seattle, and start at 2:00 pm. That is the first Saturday of each Month.

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