

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

2000

The Friends of Old-time Radio held its 25th Annual Convention from October 19 – 22, 2000 at the Holiday Inn – North, Newark, New Jersey. Celebrities who received awards were: **Eileen Farrell, Art Gilmore, Al Schaffer, Johnny Western, Rhoda Williams**. Other celebrities present were **Arthur Anderson, George Ansbro, Dick Beals, Ann DeMarco, Gordon Davis, Mary Diveny, Sam Edwards, Shirley Eggleston, Barry Farber, Harry Fleetwood, Fred Foy, Toni Gillman, Bob Hastings, Pat Hosley, Will Hutchins, Elaine Hyman, Ron Lackmann, Ruth Last, Rita Lloyd, Peg Lynch, Bob Mott, Bill Murtough, Bill Owen, Rosemary Rice, Rosa Rio, Ken Roberts, Larry Robinson, Lynne Rogers, Margot Stevenson, Gale Storm**. The guests socialized with fans, participated in panels and workshops and re-created 9 radio shows.

The convention began Wednesday Evening with complementary Wine and Cheese and informal visiting and music, provided by Ed Clute and Jay Hickerson. Thursday Morning the dealers opened at 10 am. There were two afternoon panels: **Bill Murtough** visited with the audience with **Derek Tague** hosting; **Tom Powers** and friends discussed Doc Savage on Radio and re-created an episode. We then had cocktails and dinner. 78 fans attended during the day. 145 fans and guests attended in the evening. **Arthur Anderson** directed **Michael Leannah's** parody of *Dragnet*; **Johnny Western** performed with many songs he sang over the years including "The Ballad of Paladin." Fans then acted in a funny *Molle Mystery Program* directed by **Dave Zwengler**.

Friday began at 9:00 with the opening of the dealers room. Sixty dealer tables were active during the convention. 236 people attended dinner with another 126 in the afternoon. Workshops and panels included the following: **Gary Yoggy** (Top ten comedy shows); **Sue Zizza** held a sound effects workshop, which she continued the rest of Friday and Saturday in a separate room. **Mitchell Weisberg** hosted a talk on Westerns with **Johnny Western**; **Max Schmid** with **Barry Farber** reminisced about Jean Shepard; **Peg Lynch** talked about her experiences in radio; **Mary Lou Wallace** and **Walt Mitchell** talked about Mel Blanc; **Gary Yoggy** led a panel about Father Knows Best and comedies in general. **The Gotham Players** directed by Steve Lewis presented *Escape "The Blue Wall."* This is one of the best radio-related repertory groups in the country.

On Friday evening we had 3 re-creations: "**The Glad Gladwyns**" starring **Rosemary Rice** and **Bob Hastings**; **Richard Diamond** with **Bob Hastings** and **Rosemary Rice**, directed by **Don Ramlow** and **The Six Shooter** with **Will Hutchins** and **Dick Beals**, directed by **Anthony Tollin**. **Rosa Rio** with the help of her husband **Bill Yeomans**, gave a nostalgic performance of radio themes and Gershwin melodies.

Saturday the panels and workshops included the following: "Who Wants to be and OTR Trivia Champion?" hosted by **Mitchell Weisberg**; **Derek Tague** with **Fred Foy, Dick Beals, Elaine Hyman** and **Jim Nixon** took a humorous look and *The Lone Ranger*; Andrew Sisters panel hosted by **Gary Yoggy** with author **John Sforza**. Also helping out were the **Boogie Woogie Girls** and **Ed Clute**; *The Hunterdon Radio Theater*, a local New Jersey repertory group performed an original production based on Edgar Allen Poe's *Tell-Tale Heart* called "The Broken Shutter;" **Jack French** talked about OTR gossip; **Anthony Tollin** with **Art Gilmore** gave an Amos 'n' Andy panel; The Singers/Musicians panel hosted by **Sty Weiss** and **Michael Henry** was the hit again; The panel consisted of **Gale Storm, Eileen Farrell, Johnny Western, Ann DeMarco** and **Rosa Rio**. It ended with a sing-a-long.

Saturday's events culminated with cocktails and buffet dinner for 331 people with another 186 coming for the day. After dinner **Peg Lynch** and **Bob Hastings** were **Ethel and Albert**; **Arthur Anderson** directed *Let's Pretend* production of "*Cinderella*" with **Rosemary Rice**. **Gary Yoggy** then directed *Father Knows Best* with **Rhoda Williams** and **Sam Edwards** from the original roles. **Ed Clute** supplied the music for this and other re-creations. **Bart Curtis** with **Bob Mott** supplied the sound effects.

Besides the awards mentioned earlier, the Allen Rockford Award was presented to **Nana Clute, Mary Ramlow** and **Steven Hiss** for their outstanding effort in keeping radio and this convention alive. The Ray Stanich Award was given to **Gary Yoggy** for all the excellent writing he has done. A special **Florence Williams** award was given to **Will Hutchins**. He has attended our convention for several years and have always been willing to help. Donations will be given to various organizations throughout the year.

Sunday morning found about 120 people having breakfast and listening to an entertaining and sometimes very hilarious panel consisting of **Toni Gillman, Peg Lynch, George Ansbro, Sam Edwards, Bill Murtough, Rhoda Williams, Art Gilmore**. It was hosted by **Anthony Tollin**.

I again want to thank all the guests who were very gracious in granting interviews and giving of their time to be with us.