

# SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM

## CONVENTION PLANNED FOR 10th ANNIVERSARY

SPERDVAC's plans for celebrating our tenth anniversary continue to unfold. We are holding a convention November 9-11 at the Viscount Hotel, 9750 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles.

Specific events for the convention are still in the planning stages. We are organizing workshops, broadcast recreations and exhibits. Our honorary members have been invited and we are arranging for appearances by others who were involved in radio's history.

The convention will begin with a buffet dinner Friday, Nov. 9 and is expected to conclude following brunch Sunday, Nov. 11. We are offering a "Jack Benny Special" admission price of \$39 for the entire convention until Oct. 9. After that date the admission fee will rise to \$45.

For those able to attend only a portion of the weekend's events, SPERDVAC has established the following price structure: Friday evening (includes buffet dinner) \$12; Saturday daytime (includes workshops, etc.) \$7.50; Saturday evening (includes a banquet) \$20; all day Saturday - \$25; Sunday morning (includes brunch) \$8. These prices apply to members and non-members alike. The public is invited to join us in celebrating SPERDVAC's first decade.

Exhibitors, excluding radio broadcast dealers, may purchase



display space for \$15 (\$20 after Oct. 9).

Prior to the convention we will release a magazine saluting our tenth anniversary. We will feature articles by radio performers and a number of never before published photographs. Members with contributions are welcome to contact Dan Haefele at 6535 Repton St. #4, Los Angeles, CA 90042 or call SPERDVAC at (213) 254-8173.

SPERDVAC would benefit from some additional member assistance on both of these projects. We hope that several members will aid us in any way they are able.



# Ben Wright, Peter Leeds Guest April 14

Our April 14 meeting will feature the radio memories of Ben Wright and Peter Leeds. In addition to these two well known broadcast performers, author Tom DeLong will discuss his most recent book, a work on Paul Whiteman.

Ben Wright is probably remembered best by radio fans as Hey Boy on Have Gun, Will Travel. He also appeared frequently on Escape, NBC University Theatre and Mystery in the Air. Several hundred of his radio appearances are featured in the SPERDVAC libraries.

Peter Leeds' radio credits include Suspense, the Stan Freburg Show and Rogue's Gallery. On the latter series he was the voice of Eugor (that's Rogue spelled backwards), the imaginary resident of Cloud 8 Rogue conversed with whenever he was knocked unconscious.

The April 14 meeting will begin promptly at 12 noon. We will meet at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino (located near Balboa and Ventura). Those wishing to swap radio memorabilia are invited to come an hour early. The meeting is free and open to the public.

\* \* \* \* \*

For the benefit of those who plan their Saturday activities in advance, we are listing several of the upcoming meetings. Please note that the May meeting will be on the third Saturday of the month, and at the Buena Park Library. Information on upcoming meetings is also available on our 24 hour message tape.

NOTE: All meetings are held on a Saturday at 12 noon.

April 14- Ben Wright and Peter Leeds plus Tom DeLong  
Encino Community Center.

May 19- Willard Waterman and Tyler McVey.  
Buena Park Library

June 9- Sidney Miller  
Encino Community Center

July 14- Panel: Armed Forces Radio Service.  
Encino Community Center

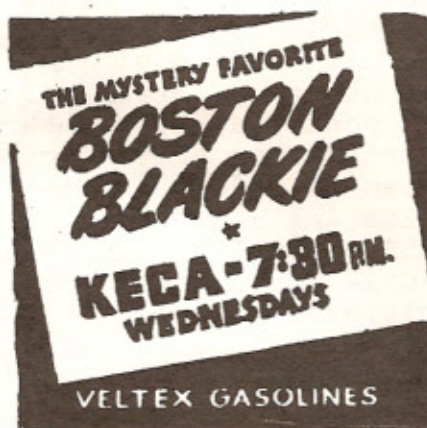
## S. PAVLOSKY & JOHN GASSMAN JOIN SPERDVAC DIRECTORS

The membership has reelected Larry Gassman, Bobb Lynes, John Tefteller, Ted Theodore and Barbara Watkins to the SPERDVAC Board of Directors. Also, John Gassman and Sol Pavlosky were added to the Board in the March 10 election.

One hundred ninety-four members voted in the annual election. The ballots were counted by Frank Tierney, Dan Keller and Richard Palmer. Election results were announced by Dan Haefele at the end of the March meeting.

At the Board of Directors' meeting held following the general membership meeting, Bobb Lynes was reelected president and Larry Gassman was again voted to serve as vice president.

Barbara Watkins	166
Ted Theodore	164
Bobb Lynes	162
Larry Gassman	154
John Tefteller	149
John Gassman	143
Sol Pavlosky	109
Martin Ehrich	95
Write-in:	
Michele Ehrich	1





# Archives Policy May Change Soon

The SPERDVAC Archives policy prohibiting trading Archives material, the subject of much controversy within radio collecting circles, will undergo reconsideration at the April 14 Board of Directors' meeting.

SPERDVAC's Board will vote on a proposed amendment to the by-laws which would permit trade of some Archives programs with the permission of the disc donators.

This is the amendment which will receive consideration:

## SECTION 4:

Miscellaneous - Permanent protection of established archival agreements.

A. As of the passage of this section, all previous archival restrictions will remain in force in all respects; unless written agreement is completed by the donor/lender to allow release to the General Library. Following passage of this section, archival policy will be amended requiring the Archives Chair to present all future donors/lenders with the option of allowing their material to be offered to the General Library, in addition to the already automatic inclusion in the Archives Library.

B. The requirements of Section 4A shall not be altered, amended or repealed in any manner, shape or form except upon the dissolution of SPERDVAC as a tax exempt, non-profit, public benefit corporation.

In addition, the Board will consider the following rewording of the Archives Restriction Statement enclosed with each Archives tape order:

WARNING: The enclosed programs are provided for the personal use and enjoyment of SPERDVAC members only. The programs contained in each shipment are compiled for the preservation of an historical and educational art form, radio. These programs are made available to SPERDVAC members by the generosity of the original artists, engineers, writers, technicians, agencies and others upon the ex-

press condition that they are to be for the SPERDVAC members' personal use and collection only.

The donors of the original discs from which these master tapes have been made have allowed us to use these only on the condition that they are to be neither sold nor provided free of charge to any sellers or commercial activity, put into the stream of commerce or used for rebroadcast purposes. These programs are to be retained by the undersigned at all times and may not be traded or provided to anyone.

Failure to observe this express condition may subject the violator to civil and criminal penalties and/or loss of SPERDVAC membership. It may also result in the permanent closure of the archives.

The amendment as currently worded would still not permit Archives programs to be traded per se, but would allow the same shows to be added to our General Library without restriction. Members with ideas and opinions to express on this issue are encouraged to write the SPERDVAC Board or phone a message to us. Member input will be presented to the Board prior to a vote on the amendment.

## Fees Will Change July 1

We've heard plenty of surprised responses when people learn our membership rate is only \$15.00 per year. But since we're a non-profit organization with no paid employees we don't need to charge you large sums of money to keep operating.

Our biggest expense in the area of membership services is supplying new members with the necessary catalogs. And since you don't need a new set of catalogs every time you renew your membership SPERDVAC's Board of Directors has decided to restructure our membership fees.

Effective July 1, 1984, a new membership will cost \$20.00 for the first year. Renewals will be \$10.00 per year. Sound fair?



## Information, Please

(Sound effect: distant sound of rooster crowing.) Wake up, America! Anyone have any ideas for a logo for this column that will evoke memories of that wonderful radio program of the same name?

First of all, the results of the contests printed in the February Radiogram. No one got all the states correct in either category, so the first entry with the most correct won in each case. Five blank cassettes are on their way to James Weber of Norco, Louisiana who guessed 4 out of 5 of the states with the most members after California: New York(32), Illinois(26), Massachusetts(22), and Washington(16). He missed Colorado(15). Robert Simpson of Hollywood, Florida also got 4 correct. Stanley Steinberg of Randallstown, Maryland gets 5 cassettes for naming 4 no-member states: South Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming and Alaska.

Information from members: Thomas Heeran of Van Nuys, CA writes that author Stephen King ("The Shining", "Christine", etc.) became owner of radio station WZON in Bangor, Maine last October. King said in an interview recently that he wanted to do some radio drama. Members in that area, keep an ear tuned. Pat Flannagan of Orlando, Florida teaches neuro-linguistic programming and uses modern radio drama to help her students develop their auditory faculties.

Information needed: Carl Ladd asks for information about books on old time radio and especially by or about the radio personalities. I'm sure many of us are interested in learning what has been written, what is worth reading, and where to buy it. There is a bibliography by Steve Jelf in the SPERDVAC Printed Materials Library. That might be a good starting point for someone with the knowledge and interest to compile an up-to-date list for other members. This could also be a very informative column for the newsletter on a regular basis. Any volunteers? You don't have to live in southern California to write for the Radiogram. If you'd like to do a column on books, or anything else, contact our editor Dan Haefele. Meanwhile, what are your favorites? Two basic reference books for our hobby are "The Big Broadcast" by Buxton and Owen and "Tune in Yesterday" by John Dunning. Also recommended is a newsletter "Hello Again" from Jay Hickerson, Box C, Orange, CT 06477 for \$6/year. It includes information on OTR publications, obituaries, East Coast convention news, contact with other collectors and other goodies. For more information, send Jay a SASE.

**ATTENTION MEMBERS:** Your Board of Directors has appointed a committee to investigate whether the General Library should start recording on all four tracks on the open reels (and double the amount of material) or stay



with left-channel-only recordings. The new format could NOT be played on half-track machines. It also might cause problems for members using the new stereo-only quarter track recorders. Please let me know your opinions. I will report your input to the Board.

The trade versus no-trade issue in the Archives Library may have found an acceptable solution. Be sure to read the proposed text of the by-law to be voted on at the April Board meeting. It's printed in this issue. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend the Board meetings which follow the regular meetings. Any member may address the Board either in person or by letter addressed to SPERDVAC Board of Directors, P.O. Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078.

Remind your friends, if they've been thinking about joining SPERDVAC, to do it soon. Dues for new members increase to \$20 for the first year, effective July 1st, but renewals drop to \$10 per year.

Thanks to all who filled out the questionnaires for the convention. The radio-related tour seems to be a popular way to spend Sunday afternoon and a fun way to end the convention.

If you have radio-related information you'd like to share or need some from other members, write to Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91030.

And send a logo!





Does your closet resemble Fibber's? Let SPERDVAC help. Put your radio-related items on our shelves below. List items you wish to buy, sell or trade and send to Barbara J. Watkins, P. O. Box 561, S. Pasadena, CA 91030.

**\*WANTED:** Am looking for Tallulah Bankhead monologues. Contact: Arnold Oshin, 432 Claremont Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666.

**\*FOR TRADE:** Would like to trade swell stories on old time radio programs. Interested in KNX Radio Mystery Theatre. Like Mandell Kramer, John Lithgow, Kris Tabori. Contact: SAE Donald Castelli, P.O. Box 236, Santa Ana, CA 92705.

**\*FOR SALE:** "Fibber McGee and the Whistle Vista Mystery" game made by Milton Bradley in 1940. Complete and in original box. \$20. Contact: Sheryl Smith, 6919 Rubio Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406.

**\*WANTED:** Reel to reel tape player that will operate in a car. It must take four track, 7" reels recorded at 3-3/4 ips. Also, would like a copy of SPERDVAC Magazine #3, even a reproduced copy would be appreciated. Contact: Tom Mastel, 1547 Arbutus Dr., San Jose, CA 95118.

**\*WANTED:** Who out there has the "Speed Gibson" chapters I need? Chapters 83, 84, 173-178. Will buy or trade. Contact: Newell R. Heacock, 14112 Calumet Ave., Dolton, IL 60419.

**\*FOR SALE:** RCA Studio transcription turntable, circa 1940's with Orthophon tone arm, original equization package. Needs new cartridge. \$200 to SPERDVAC members, \$250 to others. Contact: Roger Rittner, (818) 792-5449.

== FROM ==  
SPERDVAC  
PRESIDENT



Fellow Members,

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you who took the time to vote in our recent election. I would say that even if the results had turned out differently. I personally thank all who voted to return me to the Board of Directors, and thanks to my fellow B.O.D. members for their confidence in me, and selecting me to serve you all as SPERDVAC's President for the 4th consecutive year.

We are going to make great progress during SPERDVAC's 10th year, and I am very proud to be a part of the decision-making process that will insure that progress.

Please, if I can be of service in answering any of your questions, comments, criticisms, etc., feel free to contact me at the Hollywood P.O. Box or phone (213) 254-8173, 24 hours a day.

Oh, by the way I'll see you at the SPERDVAC 10th Anniversary Convention November 9-10-11...wen't I?

Old Time Radio Lives!

**Bobb LYNES**

Bobb Lynes,  
President



# THANKS

SPERDVAC is extremely grateful to Candy Candido, Bob Purcell, Ken McManus and Pat Walsh for their recent appearances at our meetings.

In a delightfully humorous presentation in January, Candido recounted his adventures as a performer and radio comic. He demonstrated his wonderful rapport with a live audience, and his talent comes across quite well on the audio tape we made for inclusion in our library.

Bob Purcell's presentation in February was highly informative. A Chicago actor before his move to the West Coast, Purcell gave details of his work both in the Midwest and in Los Angeles. Also noteworthy were his management duties performed during KFVB's heyday as "color radio" in Los Angeles. His work there brought him in frequent contact with many well known personalities, including Gary Owens and the late Joe Pyne.

Last month we learned of radio as viewed by two men behind the glass when Ken McManus and Pat Walsh came to the SPERDVAC microphones. In an interview session conducted by Dan Haelele and attended by radio friends Vivi Janiss, Charlie Crowder and Bob Shannon, the former CBS associate director and engineer respectively re-

called events surrounding many of radio's popular programs and performers.

In keeping with SPERDVAC's goal to preserve the history of radio broadcasting, we are adding recordings of these meetings to our general library. SPERDVAC truly appreciates the time and effort our guests have put into their appearances.

## ACQUISITIONS NEWS

One of the most asked questions lately has been "What has happened to the recently donated Vic and Sade programs?" Well, they are still waiting to be dubbed. Unfortunately, these shows vary in sound quality; some are very good, some are only fair and others need some work. Equalizers and noise reduction units will be used in an attempt to salvage them.

They are not newly circulated shows. In fact, I'm sure that most avid Vic and Sade fans probably have them in their collections.

If you have donations of programs please feel free to write. And remember the new acquisitions phone number, good for both the General Library and Archives, is (213) 947-9800. You can also reach me in writing:

John Gassman  
P.O. Box 1163  
Whittier, CA 90604

ARCHIVES CASSETTES- Temporarily closed.

(Archives acquisitions should be directed to John Tefteller, 11621 Newgate Ave., Whittier, CA 90605. Or phone (213) 947-9800.)

PRINTED MATERIALS- Frank Finn, Box 2511, N. Hollywood, CA 91602.

AUDIO RADIOGRAM- (Available to blind members only) Send C-90 cassette in self addressed mailer to Lawrence Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90604. Cassettes should arrive by the first of each month.

RADIOGRAM- For contributions to our monthly newsletter contact Dan Haelele, 6535 Repton St. #4, Los Angeles, CA 90042. Or phone SPERDVAC. For membership information write to SPERDVAC, Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078 or phone the 24 hour message line (with information on upcoming meetings when available): (213) 254-8173.

# SPERDVAC

Information

Please use these addresses when ordering from the SPERDVAC libraries:

GENERAL REEL LIBRARY- (Divided into two parts) Reels 1-499: Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91201; Reels 500 up: Ted Cothorn, Box 1973, Simi Valley, CA 93062.

GENERAL CASSETTE LIBRARY- Pat Warren, 6373 W. 78th St., Los Angeles, CA 90045.

(Open reel/cassette acquisitions should be directed to John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90604 or phone SPERDVAC acquisitions at (213) 947-9800.)

ARCHIVES REEL- Pam Hanson, Box 5205, N. Hollywood, CA 91616.



# RADIO'S NO. 1 WRITER IS A WOMAN

By John W. Carlson

Irna Phillips writes 2,000,000 words a year to supply you with drama in fifteen-minute batches

from RADIO GUIDE MAGAZINE July 7, 1939

**T**O BE the parent of sixty children is quite a job. The old lady who lived in the shoe didn't know what to do, but Irna Phillips, whose busy typewriter creates life in fifteen-minute batches, who writes "The Guiding Light," "Woman in White," and "Road of Life" discovers no difficulty whatever.

Radio presents no more interesting brain children. A young surgeon, Doctor Brent, healing the sick in a city hospital; a kindly cleric, Reverend Ruthledge, showing people how to live; and a grand Irish mother named Moran rearing her children. And almost sixty others.

Nor does radio present a more interesting writer. Or a more successful one. For producing three serial dramas at her Ontario Street office in Chicago, this slight, sharp-featured woman receives an estimated \$3,000 a week, which sounds like a lot of money—and is. After mulling over a few incidents, though, most people are inclined to say she earns it. For example, when they learn of the two million words she must write in a year just to keep her radio family alive, or of the headaches in the job of guiding the lives of sixty characters in their proper orbits. There is also the little matter of Miss Phillips' responsibility for weaving those sixty characters into a story which will keep ten million listeners interested.

Yet Irna Phillips does all of that, and enjoys doing it.

A most intriguing thing about her, though, is the story of how she got into radio script-writing. That is the story of her life.

On July 1, 1902, up on Chicago's North Side, a tenth child was born into the home of papa Phillips, every-day American, groceryman by trade. The new Phillips was a girl and they called her Irna. Irna didn't get to know much about the grocery store. A few bright recollections of "helping" her father keep store, of forbidden trips on the old horse-drawn delivery-wagon—then, when she was seven, her father's death.

**T**HE introvertish youngster wandered through Senn High School as in a dream, finishing in three years just to

get it over with. Turned down for a part in a school play, she was deeply hurt, crawled into her shell a little farther, and didn't try out again. The one class which did interest Irna was story-telling. There she did her first piece of writing, a hero-worship ditty about a brother who went overseas in 1917. Somewhat sentimentally, she broadcasts poems not unlike that first one at Senn every Memorial Day on her "live-script" shows.

High school left Irna with a negative outlook which she carried over into the first year of college. Living at home and commuting to Northwestern University in Evanston, she made few friends, reacted like the typical unsocial person. After a year of loneliness, she took the first bold, independent step in her life. It was an ultimatum to her family: Either she would go away to school next year or not go at all. She won.

Next September found her on the green campus of the University of Illinois, where she was to meet a personality whose influence would re-orientate her whole life and eventually lead her to the career she now follows. That personality was Dr. Charles Wolbert, head of the University speech department. As the months passed, a more society-conscious Irna budded under the guidance of Dr. Wolbert, whom she worshiped and intended to follow. Wolbert was a genuine scholar whose ideal was the happiness of man. Strangely, he took the trouble to practice his philosophy in his dealings with students.

Irna gained in charm and self-assurance, became president of her sorority chapter, decided to become a teacher of speech, chiefly because Professor Wolbert was a teacher.

At Fulton, Missouri, and later at Teachers' College in Dayton, Ohio, Miss Phillips, teacher of dramatics and public speaking, was apparently happy at her job, contented with an annual salary less than she now earns in one week.

That is, until 1930, when a new experience caught the school-teacher's imagination—stirred a dormant passion.

Visiting her family in Chicago, Irna thought it would be fun to visit a radio station, and if she could, to meet Pat Barnes, whom she liked on the air. When she came to Pat, he mistook her for an audition-seeker. Before she could explain, he had steered her through a

reading of "The Bow-Leg Boy," by Eugene Field. A week later, word came that the audition was good and that she could expect a call. She went back to Dayton, unimpressed.

But that chance audition began to stir her once passionate ambition to act. Perhaps radio could lead her, in some way she couldn't see then, to the stage. Less than a year later, she had resigned her teaching position, come to Chicago, and was acting on several WGN dramatic programs.

Then fate intervened—in the guise of a studio-director who asked her to write a Memorial Day program.

"But I can't write," protested Irna. "I've never even tried to write. I'm an actress, not an author."

The director insisted. What she wrote so impressed the station executives that they advised her to stop acting and concentrate on writing. Looking back, Irna Phillips recognizes that interview as the beginning of her real career.

**F**OR several months, she wrote a family serial drama for WGN. She was puzzled but happy. Puzzled to think that she—Irna Phillips, school-teacher—was now a writer! Happy in the thrilling experience of creative effort! Her mind was full of plots; everybody she met was potential character.

When that first serial had run a year, the young script-writer accepted an offer to write for WMAQ, NBC's key station in Chicago. Collaborating with Walter Wicker, she launched "Today's Children" in 1932 as a local program over WMAQ. The story of Mother Moran and her children of "today," it was the serial which won her fame, and which, though discontinued now, is still considered by many to be her best.

After a long run as a sustaining show, WMAQ officials decided to drop "Today's Children" unless listeners protested. But protest they did. So indignantly and so volubly that instead of being scrapped the sketch was promptly put on the NBC network as a sponsored program.

Irna Phillips had arrived!

But she had yet to achieve the title *Fortune* magazine gave her in 1938—radio's No. 1 author. It was not until



## RADIO WRITER NO. 1

1937 that her radio family began to multiply. First came "The Guiding Light," tale of a clergyman in the melting-pot area of a large city. The Reverend John Ruthledge, its central character, expounded Miss Phillips' theory that ministers should show, not tell, people how to live. There must have been something in the theory, for the serial skyrocketed to popularity almost instantly. Adding twenty-one more characters to the author's quickly growing family, "The Guiding Light" also required ten thousand more words of writing a week.

The extra load seemed not to hamper Miss Phillips a bit. She took it in stride, breezed through reams of scripts with the ease of a thoroughbred. Before 1937 was over, in fact, she had introduced yet another serial—"Road of Life." This one, a story of young surgeon Doctor Jim Brent, upped her radio family another twenty-odd, meant another ten thousand words a week.

**B**UT Miss Phillips still had her trump card to play. In 1938 she persuaded her Pillsbury sponsors to junk "Today's Children," which had then run five years and was credited with the largest audience of any daytime serial. Junk it they did. Only to see their prodigious

writer come back with a substitute story, "Woman in White," which leaped to the same rank as its predecessor within three months.

Today, Inna Phillips organizes her work on a scale commensurate with its gargantuan proportions. Established in a suite of offices on Chicago's swank near North Side, she comes to work each morning at eight o'clock, most likely meets her "grand" secretary, Gertrude Prys, at the door. The suite has three rooms, all furnished in exquisite taste with colorful oriental rugs and Georgian furniture.

Darting back and forth across the workroom, Miss Phillips dictates the scripts of her three serials to Miss Prys, falling into character as she proceeds. Miss Prys identifies each character by the change of inflection, most of the time knows what sound-effects to insert without being told.

**T**HERE are lots of ways of illustrating the immense amount of writing Inna Phillips turns out. If you can't imagine two million words a year, break it into novels. Counted in novels, her production is twenty-two a year. Such a record puts most famous volume writers to shame. Carlton Morse, her nearest radio rival, has consistently trailed. Kathleen

Norris, who boasts sixty-six novels plus, isn't even in the running. But Inna Phillips isn't interested in mere bigness. What does interest her is life, and life—even in fifteen-minute batches—is just naturally big.

That is perhaps as good an explanation as any for the prodigious energy she lavishes on her huge family, for the thousand words she flashes through every working hour that its members might live for the enjoyment of a great listening audience. But it doesn't explain how Inna Phillips, quite unlike the old lady who lived in a shoe, obviously does know what to do and does it superbly well.

"Woman in White" may be heard Monday through Friday over NBC at:  
10:45 a.m. EDT ——— 9:45 a.m. EST  
9:45 a.m. CDT ——— 8:45 a.m. CST  
Not available to West Coast

"The Guiding Light" may be heard Monday through Friday over NBC at:  
3:45 p.m. EDT ——— 2:45 p.m. EST  
2:45 p.m. CDT ——— 1:45 p.m. CST  
12:45 p.m. MST ——— 11:45 a.m. PST

"Road of Life" may be heard Monday through Friday over CBS at:  
1:30 p.m. EDT ——— 12:30 p.m. EST  
12:30 p.m. CDT ——— 11:30 a.m. CST  
10:30 a.m. MST ——— 9:30 a.m. PST



## SPERDVAC

The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama Variety and Comedy

P.O. BOX 1587 HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90078



0180-12

~~Jessie H. H. H.~~  
~~200 E. 10th St.~~  
~~Brooklyn, N.Y.~~

NY 11542



FIRST CLASS