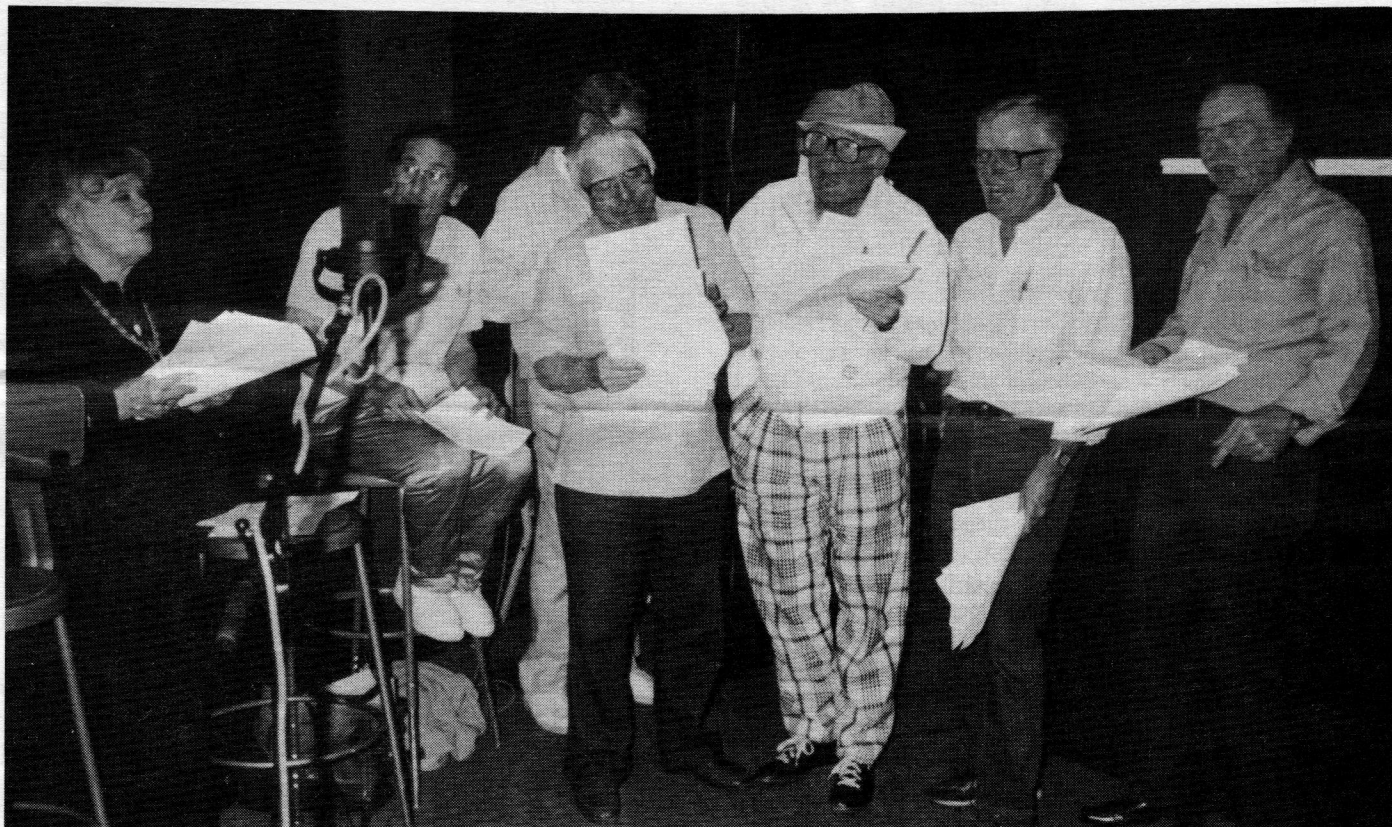


# SPERDVAC **RADIOGRAM**

Vol. XIV, No. 5 • The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy • October 1988



*Cast members of the California Artists Radio Theatre prepare for their ninety minute venture to "Treasure Island." Pictured from left are Jeanette Nolan, Lou Krugman, Shep Menkin (partially obscured), Vic Perrin, Rich-*

*ard Erdman, Richard Sheldon and John Carver. Peggy Webber's adaptation of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic aired September 24 on KUSC-FM, Los Angeles.*

## Treasure Island Airs

On September 24, 1988, KUSC (91.5 FM) aired California Artists Radio Theatre in a ninety-minute program "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson. The program starred Dan O'Herlihy, Jeanette Nolan, Sean McClory, Ford Rainey, Peggy Webber, Lou Krugman, Shepard Menken, William Woodson, Richard Erdman, Linda Kaye Henning, Parley Baer, John Carver, Kay Kuter, Vic Perrin, Richard Wilson, Kevin Tracy and Richard Sheldon. The story was adapted for radio and the entire production was under the artistic supervision of

*Continued on page five*

## NO OCT. MEETING

President Gassman regrets to report that there will be, for the first time in club history, no monthly meeting in October. A meeting could not be scheduled due to last minute torpedoing by Encino and difficulty in arranging for a new place due to cost and unavailability.

The folks at Encino Community Centre called on September 14th to say we could not meet this month due to, uh, other commitments. We learned this just three weeks before meeting time and one week before the *Radiogram* deadline. How "considerate" can they get?

## From the President

In the past months, this column has tried to focus on aspects dealing with SPERDVAC in particular. We will continue to do so. However, in the future we will take the minutes of BOD meetings and summarize them for you in this column. The minutes of our meetings are available to you upon request. Please write Richard Glasband who can be found in our directory. Richard doubles as our BOD secretary.

A thank you to Dennis McLelland of the Los Angeles Times Orange County Bureau who wrote a wonderful article about SPERDVAC and some of its members. We have had quite a bit of reaction from the article which ran in the Orange County section on September 3rd.

For a fascinating look at Orson Welles, see the October issue of American History Magazine which is available to subscribers. Also featured is an article about Old Radio in general, with mentions of SPERDVAC, The Friends of Old Time Radio, The OTR Club of Buffalo, The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland, plus special interest clubs like The International Jack Benny Fan Club and The Friends of Vic and Sade. This eight-page article illustrates how active the radio hobby is today and aids in stimulating interest from those who were previously unaware of its existence.

Thanks to Chuck Schaden for a chance to speak about SPERDVAC back on September 11th on WBBM Radio in Chicago. The interview lasted about twenty minutes. Thus far we have sent over fifty packets of information to those who called to inquire. I don't know, as I write this, how many people have written for information. Chuck Shaden's program can be heard nightly on WBBM News Radio (780 AM) beginning at 8 PM.

Have you heard the CBS Mystery Theatre yet? The LA market has not yet picked it up. The show was created by Himan Brown and can be heard now by much of the country. SPERDVAC applauds Himan Brown for his renewed efforts in keeping radio drama alive.

A big SPERDVAC THANK YOU to Dick Whittington and KIEV. On Saturday morning, August 20th, Joe and Sue Crawford spent three delightful hours remembering radio. Armed with information and audio radio clips, they helped spread the word about SPERDVAC and The Golden Age of Radio. The audience response was tremendous and we thank the Crawfords for their efforts on behalf of SPERDVAC. It was an extra treat to hear Joe again after all these years. Other commitments and activities have conflicted with his association with SPERDVAC. Joe was our second president. He served from 1977 through March of 1981. Once again, congratulations for a job well done.

SPERDVAC is in desperate need of an open reel tape machine capable of playing fourteen-inch reels at the speed of 30-inches per second. All donations are tax deductible. If you have questions, or answers, call SPERDVAC at (213) 947-9800. A donation of this kind will enable SPERDVAC to correctly transfer over a hundred reels of recently donated radio material.

### **2- SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM**

Please remember to tune in to the new broadcast of **War of the Worlds**. Howard Koch is rewriting his legendary program to be heard on public radio stations throughout the country. Steve Allen, Jason Robards and Douglas Edwards are included in the cast. It will air Sunday, October 30th on many stations with some outlets rebroadcasting the show on Halloween evening. We know of at least three stations in Los Angeles who will broadcast the program. At Five on Sunday, KUSC (91.5 FM), at six o'clock Bobb Lynes at KCRW (89.9 FM) will play the new show followed by the original, plus assorted Halloween shows. Beginning at six o'clock, KPCC (89.3 FM) will play the original, followed by the new show plus a few surprises! Residents of Riverside and San Diego should check with KVCR and KPBS to discover their intentions concerning the airing of this new program.

## **SPERDVAC DIRECTORY**

**SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM, Vol. XIV, No. 10.** All articles and artwork © 1988 by SPERDVAC, unless otherwise indicated. Published monthly by the **Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy**, a California non-profit public benefit corporation. Membership is open to all U.S. residents. Dues are \$25 for the first year and \$15 for renewals. Annual subscriptions to the *Radiogram* ONLY are \$15 in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and \$20 to other countries. **RADIOGRAM EDITOR:** Marty Kallenberger, 11782 Loreleen St., Garden Grove, CA 92641.

**SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS:** Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078 - (213) 947-9800.

**MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Duane Harding, 443 Appletree Court, Camarillo, CA 93010

### **LIBRARIES**

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**ACQUISITIONS: (Discs and Tapes):** John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90604 (213) 947-9800 for both the General and Archives Libraries.

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# November Convention **SPERDVAC Salutes CBS Radio**

SPERDVAC's *Salute To CBS Radio* is just a few short weeks away. As you read this column, workshop panels and radio re-creation casts are being finalized. For the latest updates in these areas you can always call SPERDVAC at (213) 947-9800. The machine answers only when a live individual is not available. The convention opens Friday afternoon on November 11th. The Collectors' Room will open at 2 PM. Radio related memorabilia will be on sale and available for display. Items include radio books, premiums, equipment, and authorized video recordings.

Our banquet and radio re-creation begin at 7:30 PM with cocktails served an hour earlier. Following our sit-down banquet, performers from radio's *Gunsmoke* series will re-create a memorable script from the award winning program. For the many who have asked, SPERDVAC is sorry to announce that William Conrad will NOT be able to re-create his famous Matt Dillon role. Mr. Conrad will be in Hawaii shooting television's *Jake and the Fattman* series. At press time, Parley Baer has been confirmed to play Chester and George Walsh will announce the program. The remainder of the cast is now being finalized. By the way, if anyone knows the whereabouts of *Gunsmoke* so soundman Ray Kemper, please call SPERDVAC at (213) 947-9800 at once. We would like to invite him to attend this once-in-a-lifetime radio re-creation.

In addition to Saturday's re-opening of the Collectors' Room at 9 AM, other panel workshops



**PARLEY BAER**, radio's *Chester on Gunsmoke*, will recreate his original role when SPERDVAC begins its next convention Friday, November 11. Actress Lillian Buyeff and announcer George Walsh will also participate in the program.

will include a radio related book panel featuring radio authors. Richard Hayes will discuss the radio career of Kate Smith who, on November 11th fifty years ago sang "*God Bless America*" for the first time on the radio. SPERDVAC will also present panels on radio westerns and a panel of actors and directors of various CBS shows. We will salute Columbia Square, from its beginnings in 1938 to the present. Panelists will include announcer Art Gilmore, KNX, CBS executive Harfield Weedin, and announcer and operations manager Alan Botzer. We plan to add a couple of names to this panel. We look forward to seeing Bill Froug from Hawaii and Jim Hawthorne from Denver, Colorado.

The Saturday entertainment begins at 6:30 with cocktails and banquet program an hour later. Following the sit-down dinner, and a few surprises, Norman Corwin and cast will re-create Mr. Corwin's radio play, *The Undecided Molecule*. In addition to Mr. Corwin, our cast of radio veterans will include Jerry Hausner, Lou Krugman, Stanley Waxman, Steve Franken, and sound effects showman Ray Erlenborn. For those familiar with the play you will remember that one woman is featured, SPERDVAC is proud to have Janet Waldo to fill that important role. This cast is also being completed with additional radio talent. Details will be announced in next month's newsletter and much sooner on the local radio shows in the Southern California area. Again, you can call SPERDVAC at (213) 947-9800 for information.

We look forward to seeing many of our SPERDVAC *RADIOGRAM* readers both in and out of the entertainment industry. For convention details, please refer to your convention flyer and registration sheet. If you lost your sheet, or never received one, just call SPERDVAC and we will send you one.

**SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM -3**

## **RADIOGRAM**

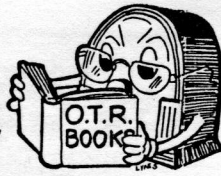
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*We are so grateful to the many RADIOGRAM friends and supporters who have contributed \$50 or more to help defray costs of printing our monthly newsletter. The above members have donated funds during the past year.*

# Radio in Review



by Chris Lembesis

Welcome once again! With our Convention rapidly approaching, final preparations are coming together to make my panel, *Meet the Authors*, an enjoyable experience. My guest authors should be confirmed in the next *Radiogram*, and I hope you can join me.

Before I begin, we have available two classic titles of OTR from ten years ago. If you don't have copies of **Don't Touch That Dial!** or **Radio Comedy**, you are missing out on two very important works to have in your collection. Copies will be available at this month's meeting and at the Convention, along with other titles to be announced ..... stay tuned.

Let I forget, let me express my appreciation for the cooperation of Dan Haeefe as your *RADIOGRAM* editor, and offer my thanks for a job well done. Our new editor, Marty Kallenberger, joins us after recently retiring from teaching in Long Beach, California. Marty was an excellent instructor and a wonderful person to work with. I know, I was one of his students in high school and introduced him to SPERDVAC years ago. Right now I feel like I am back in the classroom with a report due, so I had better get started.

**LAUGHTER ON RECORD: A COMEDY DISCOGRAPHY.** By Rev. Warren Debenham. Scarecrow Press, Inc 1988, 52 Liberty St., PO Box 4167, Metuchen, NJ 08840. \$35.00 clothbound.

Recently I reviewed a work called **COMEDY ON RECORD** and it came to mind when I received this latest book from Scarecrow Press. This title lists over 4300 comedy LP records and it is listed alphabetically by artist. A directory of the addresses of the record companies and sources of out-of-print records and an index to locate a particular artist makes up the balance of this work.

Once again, Old Time Radio Comedy is a large category. For those of us who wish to build up a complete library of OTR comedy albums, this is an excellent guide to see what was or still is available. But, you run into a problem also in tracing down some very obscure labels.

Here's an example: **THE CHASE AND SANBORN 101st ANNIVERSARY SHOW** was released one time on the SR 4M label. The directory indicates no other name or address so you must become a sleuth in tracing down this album. Perhaps if the author had briefly explained about the obscure or out-of-print manufacturers and indicated a direction to the collector, his work would not be so time consuming.

Except for the reader being aware of obscure labels and lack of its release year, Rev. Debenham's research is otherwise excellent in that even the obscure OTR artist is represented even if only one album was released. Other more known artists such as Jack Benny or Stan Freberg have complete pages to  
**4- SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM**

indicate their output.

The author has over forty years of comedy record collecting experience and this work is recommended if you wish to concentrate on one particular area of OTR collecting. My thanks to Aya Betensky of Scarecrow Press Marketing and Promotion for making this work available ...

**THIS... CBS: A CHRONICLE OF 60 YEARS.**  
By Robert Slater, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1988, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632. \$19.95 clothbound.

My final review for 1988 most appropriately ties-in to our Convention next month. Since its inception in 1927, the Columbia Broadcasting System has been the subject of many works, autobiographical and biographical. Each work written over the years has attempted to dissect or analyze a portion of this network, its successes and failures. Individual stars, the development of its news department, and other areas have been well chronicled, especially during the TV era, when CBS experienced its greatest growth.

With so much emphasis on CBS TV history in recent years, I was intrigued when I had heard about this title, for perhaps radio was finally getting its due. I was disappointed, though not completely. Here's why. As a reviewer, one tries to be as objective as possible when analyzing a work. But, as a fan and collector of OTR, like yourselves, I found it sad that many areas of radio history were not covered, but could have been.

The founding of the network by William Paley and the development of early New York programming and the hiring of major artists like Bing

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

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# RADIO IN REVIEW

Crosby and Paul Whiteman is suburb. The Mercury Theatre production of "War of the Worlds" gets its own chapter, and the development and growth of CBS News is well chronicled. Edward R. Murrow, Lowell Thomas, H. V. Kaltenborn and other CBS journalists such as Eric Sevareid and Charles Collingwood are presented for their contributions, and I like that.

Where this work falls short is in two critical areas of CBS Radio history. One, there is virtually no discussion or examples of the development of CBS West Coast programming until we come to 1948 and the famous "Paley Raids." And, secondly, the author goes into the development of CBS TV at about the second half of this book, which is understandable, but he fails to mention in any detail, the demise of radio programming ... and that it can still come back, such as "The CBS Radio Mystery Theatre."

I find this area very critical because, with few exceptions, CBS Radio programs lasted longer than CBS TV shows. Lux Radio Theatre — 20 seasons, Suspense — 20, Screen Guild Players — 10, Arthur Godfrey — 27, many daytime serials between 10 and 25 years, and so on. We who are fans or collectors are aware of the demise of network comedy and dramatic programming, but my thoughts are directed at the young adults who were not born when this type of programming had already left us ... and perhaps have no idea that once-upon-a-time CBS had programs we enjoy on tape today ... and because this book reaches the general public, this information should have been included to make the history of CBS as *complete as possible* as a lasting document for us all.

I still recommend this book because of the areas of CBS Radio history it does cover well, as mentioned above. We hope to have this work available at the Convention. My thanks to Maureen Kelly, director of publicity at Prentice Hall, for making this book available.

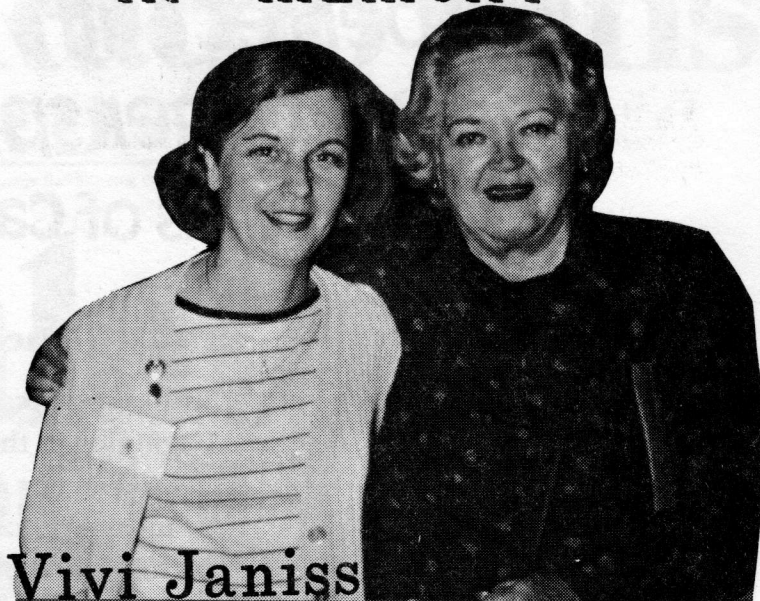
## Treasure-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Peggy Webber. Richard Wilson was Guest Director. Veteran sound effects expert Bud Tollefson assisted by David Krebbs, designed sound.

A half hour discussion followed the ninety-minute dramatization, led by stars from the program, and outstanding directors from the days of network radio drams. Appearing were radio/TV actors Stacey Keach and Cliff Thorsness. Richard Wilson, who was with Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre for fourteen years as a performer, stage manager, and associate producer. He was on Welles' broadcast, fifty years ago, "War of the Worlds," and remained with him through Welles' first seven major motion pictures. Jeanette Nolan, Dan O'Herlihy and Miss Webber also worked with Welles in film and radio. Writer Norman Corwin and actor Les Tremayne also appeared.

## IN MEMORY



Vivi Janiss

Radio actress Vivi Janiss died in early September. The SPERDVAC honorary member was part of the successful stock company of performers heard regularly on Hollywood radio's top dramas. Her credits include *Adventures of Phillip Marlowe*, *Suspense*, *Escape* and *Johnny Dollar*. She once told SPERDVAC she was amazed to find some of the *Gunsmoke* cast members running a card game and doing a radio show at the same time. She is pictured above, at right, with SPERDVAC's Susan Crawford.



Radio writer Phil Leslie died September 23 at age 79. The writer of *Fibber McGee and Molly* is pictured, second from right, at last year's SPERDVAC convention with Larry Gassman, Tom Kock and Elvia Allman.

Phil Leslie, main writer for the *Fibber McGee and Molly* show in its latter years, *Beulah* and the windbag *Major Hoople*, died this 23rd at the age of 79, in his home in Tarzana, California.

While working as an usher in St. Louis cinemas, he was sending scripts to Hollywood. He landed a writing job with comedian Al Pierce but, upon Pierce's retirement, had to return to free-lancing, doing work for Bob Hope, Roy Rogers and others. Among cast members of *Major Hoople*, for whom he wrote parts, were Arthur Q. Bryan, Frank Bresee, Patsy Moran, and Mel Blanc.

In 1943 he replaced Don Quinn on the *Fibber* show. He remembered his time with the Jordans as his most happy writing years. Later he did television: *Dennis the Menace*, *Hazel*, *Brady Bunch*, *The Lucy Show* among others.

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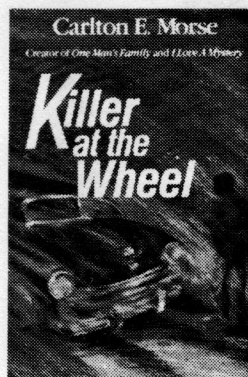
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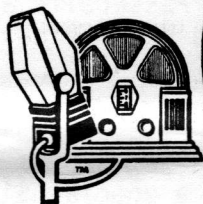
The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama Variety and Comedy



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# Salute to CBS Radio

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# Convention

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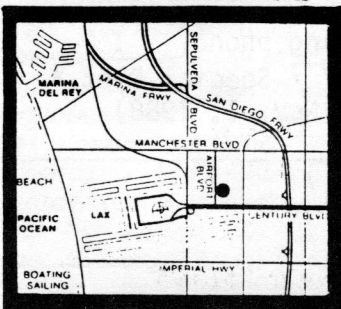
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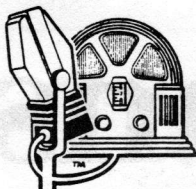
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# 1988 SPERDVAC

# Convention

The fifth annual SPERDVAC Old Time Radio Convention will be held Friday, November 11 (Veteran's Day) and Saturday, November 12 at the Viscount Hotel located near Los Angeles International Airport. This year SPERDVAC's focus will be "A Salute to CBS Radio." From the beginnings of the network to the end of radio's "Golden Age," SPERDVAC will examine CBS Radio with workshops and recreations of those well-remembered shows featuring many of the era's top performers.

Admission for the complete two day convention is \$65. (Registration and the Dealers' Room open at 2 PM Friday with a no-host bar beginning at 6:30 PM and the dinner and program at 7:30 PM. On Saturday, the Dealers' Room reopens at 9 AM and the first workshop of the day will also begin at that time. The convention will conclude at about 10:30 PM Saturday.)

For those unable to attend the entire convention, these are the individual event rates: Friday evening sit-down dinner and program: \$25; Saturday daytime workshops: \$15 (There will be no formal lunch served. Meals will be available at the Viscount and at nearby restaurants.); Saturday evening banquet and program recreation: \$30.

Dealers' tables will be available for those who wish to sell radio-related items. (Unauthorized sales of radio broadcasts are prohibited.) Dealer tables are available for \$30 each. Dealers wishing to attend events outside the Dealers' Room must register for those events. To reserve a dealer table, contact Catherine Passarelli at 10615 Butterfield Road, Los Angeles, CA 90064. The Dealers' Room will be open Friday 2-6 PM and Saturday 9 AM - 6 PM.

The Viscount Hotel has accommodations available for those who wish to stay overnight. The Special SPERDVAC Convention rate is \$56 per night per room. (With the 12% bed tax, the total rate is \$62.72 per room each night.) The Viscount also offers a special \$1 per day parking rate for those who specify they are attending SPERDVAC's convention. However, parking is free with ticket validation for those who stay overnight. Shuttle service from Los Angeles International Airport is available free by phoning the Viscount from the airport. To take advantage of these reduced rates, contact the Viscount Hotel directly and specify you are attending the SPERDVAC Convention. Make reservations by calling the Viscount at (213) 645-4600. Their address is 9750 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045.

## SPERDVAC 1988 OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  Non-member  Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Day phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Friday and/or Saturday meal seating:  Smoking  Non-smoking  Special Diet \*  
Diet restrictions \_\_\_\_\_ (\*Please notify us by Nov. 1, 1988)

With whom do you wish to be seated? \* \_\_\_\_\_  
(We cannot guarantee seating requests received after Nov. 1, 1988.)

### CONVENTION RATES:

1. Complete Convention package (Nov. 11 and 12): \$65.00 . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
2. Friday evening recreation and dinner: \$25.00 . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
3. Saturday daytime programs (9 AM to 5 PM) \$15.00 . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
4. Saturday evening recreation and banquet: \$30.00 . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks or money orders payable to SPERDVAC. Mail to: SPERDVAC Convention, c/o Chester Allen, 13415 Egbert St., Sylmar, CA 91342. For additional details, contact convention chairman Larry Gassman at (213) 947-9800.

\*If you wish to be seated with specified guests, please send all of the reservations together in one envelope.



# Hugh's Hues

## "War of the Worlds" Marks 50th Anniversary

by Hugh Anderson

October 30, 1938 — 8:00 PM, EST — ANNOUNCER: "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. From the Meridian Room of the Park Plaza in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra. With a touch of the Spanish, Raquello leads off with "La Cumparsita."

9:04 PM, EST — ANNOUNCER: "Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News. At twenty minutes before 8:00 PM, Central Time, Professor Farrell of Mt. Jennings Observatory, Chicago, Illinois reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars. The spectroscope indicates the gas to be hydrogen and moving toward the Earth with enormous velocity ....."

"This is Carl Phillips ..... we are speaking to you from the observatory at Princeton, New Jersey, where we are interviewing the world famous astronomer Professor Pearson ..... The Professor has just been handed a note ..... May I read the note to the listening audience, Professor Pearson?.....Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read you a message just received from Doctor Gray, Natural History Museum, New York. Quote. 9:15 PM, EST. Seismograph registers shock of almost earthquake intensity occurring within a twenty mile radius of Princeton. Please investigate. Signed, Lloyd Gray, Chief of Astrological Division. Unquote.

".....This is Carl Phillips again, out at the Wilmot's farm. Grovers Mill, N.J.....I guess that's it! Yes! I guess that's the thing directly in front of me! Half-buried in a vast pit ..... What's the diameter, Professor Pearson?"

"About thirty yards. Ladies and gentlemen, this is terrific! This end of the thing is beginning to flake off! The top is beginning to rotate like a screw and this thing must be hollow!....."

POLICEMAN: "Keep back, there! Keep those idiots back!!"

PHILLIPS: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the most terrifying thing I have ever witnessed! Someone's crawling out — something I can see — coming out of that black hole — two lummiss — luminous discs, the eyes. That might be a face, might be almost anything under Heaven! Something wiggling out of the shadow like a gray snake! Now it's another one and another one and another one! They look like tentacles to me. I can see the thing's body now. It is large! Large as a bear! It is dripping like wet leather. Its face!! Ladies and gentlemen, it's indescribable!! I can hardly force myself to keep looking at it!! It's awful!!! Its eyes are black and they gleam like a serpent and the mouth — it's sorta V-shaped with saliva dripping from its rimless lips! They seem to quiver and pulsate. And, the monster, or whatever it is, can hardly move. It seems weighted down by, possibly, gravity, or something. The thing's

raising up now and the crowd is falling back ..... I'll have to stop this description until I find a new position. Hold on, will you, please. I'll be right back, in a minute."

STUDIO MUSIC — STUDIO ANNOUNCER: "We are bringing you an eyewitness account of what's happening on the Wilmot's farm, Grovers Mill, New Jersey."

If you were at home, tired from the day's work, quietly listening to the radio in the front room or living room or the kitchen, twenty years after WWI with it rather fresh in your memory, having been introduced to "Frankenstein" via the movies, having up-to-date radio news and being acutely aware of the rising war storm in Europe, with such graphic dialogue on the instantaneous news cut-ins, wouldn't you believe it?

In listening to that program, half a century after its broadcast, the simulated news broadcasts certainly sounded authentic for that time. I am certain that the listening public thought so.

Charlie McCarthy was a favorite at our house. So, on October 30, 1938, we listened to Charlie and Edgar. Who wanted to listen to the Mercury Theatre and its drama? We lived in my mother's parents' home, in two rooms and a bath, upstairs, and shared the living room and kitchen downstairs. Grandpa built it. He was quite a guy. Worked as the head of plant maintenance for the National Lead Company (Dutch Boy Paints), St. Louis, Missouri. I guess my parents wanted to listen to something funny. After all, the depression was with us. So, I missed hearing what was to become the number one radio program of all time!

Orson Welles was twenty-three at that time. He and John Houseman formed the Mercury Theatre the year before which was then well known for its Broadway modern-dress version of "Julius Caesar." Welles went to Ireland when he was sixteen, bounced around the world, finally meeting Thornton Wilder. He turned that meeting into one with Alexander Woollcott and that into a tour with Katharine Cornell which ended in New York where, backstage, he first met Houseman. That led to Welles playing the lead in "Panic," a play by Archibald MacLeish, produced by Houseman. This was the beginning of the Mercury Theatre Association.

Their first production was "Les Miserables" in 1937 for the Mutual Network. "Julius Caesar" was the first production to open in the old Comedy Theatre, renamed Mercury, on November 11, 1937. The Mercury Theatre was a hit and, in early summer of 1938, CBS came with an offer for nine sixty-minute dramatizations of classics from literature. "The Mercury Theatre on the Air" opened on July 11, 1938 with "Dracula" and ran 'til March 10, 1940 when it closed with "Craig's Wife" with Fay Bainter.

Continued on page eight

# Listen...Hear

by John R. Cooper

*(via the mind's eye and ear, you can both see and hear it, even now ... and it is as fresh today as it was originally broadcast .....)*

## BOB HOPE PEPSODENT SHOW, NBC 1940

(BOB HOPE) *"This is Bob Hope, advising you to use Pepsodent while your teeth are still underpups and they won't grow up to be 'Golden Boys.' I'm a little tired tonight. Been building my new house in North Hollywood. The other day the lumber came in ... the termites were standing around smacking their lips and applauding! It's got three guest rooms ... the green room, the blue room, and the jade room. It's really all the same room, we just change the lights for the first two and burn incense for the other! And, I've got a new idea in the bedroom ... the walls just pull out ... of the bed. I have a Murphy bed and a Morris chair in my room, and the room is so small though, the other morning Morris woke up with an Irish accent!*

*My architect keeps redoing my finished blueprints. He fixed it so every time you go upstairs to the second floor, you bump your head. He calls it 'stairway to the stars'! But, it's going to be nice. Who else around here will have a neon fence? It's really one of these houses with a government loan. Secretary Morgenthau called me up long distance from Washington the other day when it rained here. He told me to shut the windows! ... and here's our guest, Judy Garland!"*

(JUDY) *"Hello, everybody."*

(HOPE) *"Hello, Judy. Say, I want to thank you for that wonderful weekend we had at your place ..."*

(JUDY) *"Mother thought it was nice that you could come on such short notice you gave her!"*

(HOPE) *"But, Judy, everything was so nice. I'm going to send your mother a nice autographed picture of myself. And ... didn't I give your father my autograph for nothing?"*

(JUDY) *"Yes, and that reminds me. Daddy wants his pencil back."*

(HOPE) *"One thing I'd like to know, Judy, what was your daddy doing all night out in his blacksmith shop?"*

(JUDY) *"Daddy doesn't have a blacksmith shop. that noise you heard was just Daddy downstairs counting the silverware every hour and a half!"*

(HOPE) *"And that mattress, it was the finest mattress I ever slept on the floor next to."*

(JUDY) *"Oh, by the way, I meant to ask you before, Mr. Hope ... why did you stay in your room all Sunday afternoon?"*

(HOPE) *"Well, after all, Judy, it takes me a little time to ... understand the funny papers."*

(JUDY) *"Was it exciting?"*

(HOPE) *"Exciting! I'll say it was ... Dick Tracy almost caught himself!"*

(JUDY) *"And I liked your tennis outfit. But that sign, really!"*

(HOPE) *"Oh, my white flannel pants from high school graduation? Next time I'll just hook them over my kneecaps. And the sign ... I designed it myself, the*

*one I hung out on the street in front of your house ...you really kinda liked that?"*

(JUDY) *"Oh yes. Tennis game now going on ... starring Bob Hope."*

(HOPE) *"Now Judy sings 'Good Morning' written by Mickey Rooney, from their movie 'Babes In Arms' (ORCHESTRA AND JUDY)*

John R. Cooper published HeroHobby Magazine for thirty-six issues in the late 1960's covering OTR and related hobbies. At the time he was earning a living in radio and TV, and he still does. His first name really is "John", not "Jim" typo-errored in the September 88 issue. — preceeding words were put in Editor's mouth by John. Apologies — Ed.

## Hugh's Hues

The Mercury Theatre productions are excellent, even by today's standards. Everyone that I have met just won't let you go 'til it is over — well paced, excellent writing, top-notch radio acting. I am really a big Mercury fan. I would like to see SPERDVAC's General Library offer these shows to the membership. The ideal would be to have all in order; the complete run. I have 20 of the 74 sixty-minute programs, 2 of the '41-'43 series and the first 8 of the '46 Pabst half-hour shows. I would be happy to donate these to the library if those of you out there would help with donations of any you may have. It would take some time and some proding and asking but what SPERDVAC would have would be some of the best radio written. Board of Directors, whadaya think? Sound good? Wanta help? With 1300, more or less, members we ought to be able to come up with a whole bunch of good copies. If this sounds interesting, send me a line at PO Box 9327, Columbia, S.C. 29290. Wana hear from y'all, now!

*"I'm goin' back to the wagon, boys. These shoes are killin' me!"*

## On the Airwaves

Public Radio station WAMU (88.5 FM) in Washington, DC has added the classic adult western drama **Gunsmoke** to its OTR schedule. The program, which features William Conrad in the role of U.S. Marshall Matt Dillon, is part of a four-hour bloc of Sunday night vintage broadcasts, **"The Big Broadcast."** The **"Gunsmoke"** run began on September 18th with the series' first episode, produced and directed by Norman Macdonnell. The programming is produced by John Hickman.

**"Gunsmoke"** joins a number of other series being re-broadcast by WAMU, an FM station affiliated with NPR and licensed to The American University. The station's OTR schedule also includes **"Burns and Allen," "Lum and Abner," "Night Beat," "The Cavalcade of America,"** and other shows.

KSPC (88.7 FM), Claremont, California, runs OTR Dramas 2-5 PM on Sundays. September 29th, at 7:30 PM, was Nostalgia Night at NBC in Hollywood, California, MC'd by Art Gilmore.



Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, % Barbara J. Watkins, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91030

Michael Fields is looking for Gildersleeve memorabilia. Shows, scripts, premiums, etc. would be greatly appreciated. Contact Mike at 7925 Sangor, Colorado Springs, CO 80920.

Brad Ashton is interested in trading radio audio and video. He has a great deal of both, some from America and much from the BBC. Contact him at 7 Abbotshall Ave., Southgate, London N 14 7 JU, England.

Since there are only two ads this month, now is a good time to reiterate the policies of the McGee's Closet column. This space is provided for members, honorary members, and subscribers to the *Radiogram* to place want ads, free of charge, for items you want, or items for trade or for sale. These items must be radio-related. This is broadly interpreted, but does not include things which have no obvious or explained relation to the hobby. Don't try to sell your used couch or chairs here, unless they were originally used, for example, in a CBS radio studio and Hans Conried used to sit on them while waiting to go on the air.

The McGee's Closet column which appeared in the September issue was compiled by our new editor, who is busy learning about the many responsibilities involved in putting the newsletter together, and was not aware of SPERDVAC's policies regarding ads. SPERDVAC does NOT accept ads for the unauthorized sale of radio shows. We regret any problems or confusion caused by the one which appeared in last month's issue. If you do have authorization for the sale of radio shows, your ad is considered commercial and should be sent to Dan Haefele who handles advertising for the *Radiogram*.

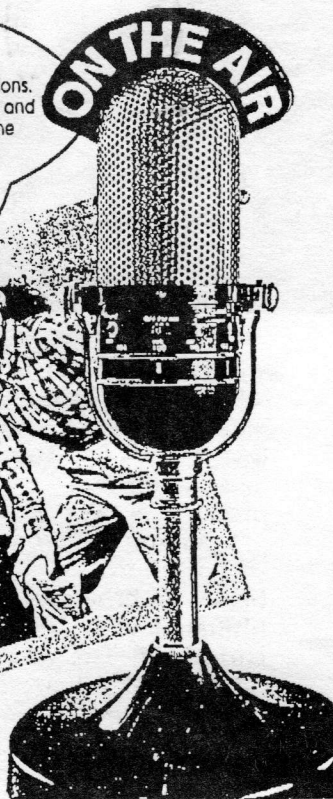
McGee's Closet is a convenient way to make contact with other members who may have something you are looking for, to establish trading relationships, or find a good home for that extra piece of equipment you may no longer want. Whatever your needs may be, we hope that we can be of service to you, the membership. If you have any questions, or want to place an ad, please contact me, your friendly custodian, at: McGee's Closet, % Barbara J. Watkins, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91030.

### SMITHSONIAN OTR EXHIBIT

The Smithsonian in DC is mounting an exhibit, "On The Air Pioneers of American Broadcasting," featuring memorabilia from such as Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, Bergen and McCarthy, Carlton E. Morse, Syd Caesar, et al. It is their first major exhibit on anything to do with radio and runs October 7th thru January 1989.

## To Fellow SPERDVAC Members:

**ON THE AIR**  
This Forties replica of a studio microphone plays your favorite AM or FM stations. Sign lights up when power is on. Solid chrome and brass with injection molded base portrays the highest quality standard of sound and appearance.



I saw this in a catalogue about a year ago and, because my hobby is old-time radio, I ordered it. It sits on my desk and whenever it is turned on to either AM or FM, the "On the Air" sign lights up in brilliant red. Everyone who sees it comments, and it has become a prized possession.

Just the other day, I thought about making it available to other SPERDVAC members, but it turned out to be a discontinued product, and I have sniveled all over the U.S. to gather together what remained in the inventories of those who purchased large numbers. I needed to get this advertisement in to this publication on a moment's notice and have used a FAX representation for the picture, thus the poor quality. We have scraped up only about 90 so far — but I'm still looking.

I can't even remember what I paid for mine — I think it was \$89.95. Frankly, it probably cost \$10 to make in Taiwan. But, it was worth it and has been a lot of fun for me. I listen at night and the "On the Air" sign is my night light. I think it will make a great Christmas gift for any old-time radio "buff."

I can't guarantee we won't run out, so it's just first come, first served. Use the enclosed form and return it with your VISA or Master Card number or a check and we will rush it to you.

Please send my "On the Air" AM/FM Radio to:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$90.00 plus \$5.00 shipping (CA residents add \$5.40 sales tax)

VISA # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

M.C. # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Check

Mail to: ZENITH PRODUCTS  
2545 North Forest, Santa Ana, CA 92706

# From Under the Green Eyeshade

With Convention time approaching rapidly it is hoped those who can WILL attend (see Convention News, this issue). It will be a good one.

Please note a Directory change; under Audio Radiograms, substitute for Ms Watkins, Stuart Lubin, 627 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036.

Barbara Watkins wonders "what's happening." McGee's Closet in eight years has never had fewer than three queries or offerings. C'mon, let's see some action, traders. Again, please note (which ye Ed did not) our policy re unauthorized radio shows. We DON'T handle 'em.

The following letter was received September 24, 1988: *To the Editor:*

*Is it just me? Or are there other SPERDVAC members who are shocked and outraged at the pricing policy adopted for the new index to the holdings in the several SPERDVAC libraries.*

*First, let me say a title index to our library holdings is long overdue. My thanks to the volunteers who prepared the database. As one who keeps information on his own collection in computerized form, I especially appreciate the work involved. But, note: these are volunteers who presumably were not paid for their efforts. And, SPERDVAC is a non-profit organization. So, why \$45 for the printed index, when \$10 should easily cover the reproduction and mailing costs (take the binder -- please!); and the*

*floppy disk version should sell for no more than \$5, certainly not \$30.*

*I really believe the index is such an integral part of the catalogs to the various libraries that an index should be included with the basic membership materials, as part of the membership fee. After all, what if the buyer of a reference book were dunned an extra charge, in excess of the original cost of the volume, for an index?*

*Thanks, again, to the volunteers but, please -- let's price this index at a realistic level.*

*Art Chimes*

*RESPONSE FORTHCOMING FROM PRESIDENT GASSMAN AND, THANKS TO YOU, ART - Editor*

Well, I'm getting the hang of it somewhat this time. Hopefully, fewer lashings will be received from Larry and Dan. Thanks to others for your notes of well-wishing, especially Mike Sommer who telephoned clear from Florida. We had a most pleasant and interesting chat. He suggested we use first class mailings (too expensive), or try second class (periodicals) for East Coasters since their *Radiograms* are often late, torn or never received. The post office boys and girls think it is just another piece of junk mail and neglect them.

Additionally, ye Ed would appreciate two things: 1) Get your masterworks in NO LATER than DEADLINE 2) Drop a note or telephone early if you know you are NOT going to feed me a piece. This way, we can better plan the issue with or without you -- just so we know. Thanx.

Read you next. Ciao, Sperds. RMK

## SPERDVAC



The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy

SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM

c/o Marty Kallenberger  
11782 Loreleen St.  
Garden Grove, CA 92641



### FIRST CLASS MAIL

## DEADLINE

NOVEMBER 1988 ISSUE  
October 15, 1988

