

SPERDVAC **RADIOGRAM**

Vol. XVI, No.1 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy January 1990



KMPC Radio in Los Angeles presented a live drama on December 17. Pictured here are Robert W. Morgan, the announcer, Pat Buttram (who also performed in "Arsenic and Old Lace" at the SPERDVAC convention), and Rosemary and Newell Alexander. The Alexanders wrote and starred in "Christmas in El Paso." The program, which KMPC rebroadcast Christmas Eve, also featured Toni Moyers, Dennis Tuffano, Gregory Webb, Joyce Kurtz, Louise Charmis, Don Diamond, Terry Brannon, Bridget Sienna, E.J. Castillo, Mitch Carter, and Leslie Jordan. David Krebs performed the live sound effects. The broadcast originated from the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum. (Photo courtesy KMPC)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Larry Gassman

Thanks to everyone who made our sixth convention such a rousing success. Everything from SPERDVAC's end went smoothly. We wouldn't have changed a thing. The workshops and recreations went smoothly. We've had nothing but good comments from the many who attended our fifteenth anniversary celebration. A big thank you to the many fans and radio personalities who were in attendance.

A big thank you to John Brown and the Southern Pacific Railroad for their kind donation of 18 filing cabinets. They will be put to good use.

If you have office supplies of any kind and would like to donate them to a non-profit tax exempt, public benefit corporation, please consider SPERDVAC.

Election Declaration Nears

Remember that if you have any intention of being a candidate for the 1990 board of directors you must let Catherine Passarelli know by January 13th 1990. We look forward to seeing as many interested people run as possible. We need new blood on the board. The more the merrier!

SPERDVAC member Lee Munsick is writing a book on Arthur Godfrey. If you worked with or new Godfrey you might contact Lee. His phone number is: 201-386-1920. His address is: 20 Harriet Drive, Whippany, NJ 07981-1906.

Union Oil is sponsoring an exhibit in Santa Barbara, California and is interested in acquiring any shows sponsored by Union Oil in the thirties or forties. If you have any of these shows, please let me know by calling: 213-947-9800 or writing PO Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90605.

William Patterson is compiling information for a book on actress Inga Stevens. If you are aware of her radio work, he would especially be interested. Please let me know and I will pass the message along.

Radio collector Dave Siegel has recently acquired two uncirculated **Shadow** shows: "The Abbott and the Hoo Doo Ship," 10-19-41 and "The Altar of Death," 3-15-42. He would be willing to trade them for more uncirculated **Shadows**.

SPERDVAC member John Bruno is looking for copies of **Superman, The Green Hornet, and The Shadow**. If you can help him, please write to him at: 1336 West 19th St., Long Beach, CA 90810.

Joe Lenariene is looking for a show done by his mother and grandfather in November of 1952. The program, **Live Like a Millionaire**, aired on NBC the first year and then switched to ABC. The date of the specific show he is looking for is 11-11-52. If you can help, please write him at 317 NW Curtis St., Port Saint Lucie, FL 34983.

OTR Network Meeting

On October 22nd, 1989 the first meeting of the Old Time Radio Network was held in Newark, NJ. Representatives of most of the OTR organizations met to discuss an informational exchange whereby a system of communica-

tion between the clubs could be devised.

We decided to start slow and aim initially for a better form of communications between clubs. Hopefully we will share ideas, thoughts about our specific organizations, and in short promote each other and the hobby in general.

While the various organizations met to discuss the association, we found out that two radio enthusiasts hope to start their own clubs. If you live in the Miami area or in Rhode Island this next item may interest you.

Ron Metro is interested in anyone who wished to join him in the formation of a club in Florida. Write him at: 11141 NW 2nd St., Miami, FL 33172.

Fred Nicholas is also interested in forming an OTR organization. Contact Fred at: 354 South Pier Road, No. 108, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882.

Let's get behind these two gentleman. The more clubs the better. I understand that there is some talk about starting a club at a future date in Illinois. Let's hope so. It would seem that the Chicago area would be ideal for such an undertaking. Keep us informed. If there are others who hope to begin new clubs, please let us know.

You may have noticed the many kind donations to SPERDVAC listed in our "Sperdvac Friends" section. We recently received a donation from a member who also gave us a donation matching card. This means that this individual's employer will match the donation in question.

If you choose to contribute to SPERDVAC, your donation is tax deductible. Many companies will match their employees' contribution. Ask your employers if they have such a program. SPERDVAC would be grateful and appreciative for your efforts.

Until next month, keep in touch.

1990 SPERDVAC MEETINGS

Regular Meetings: 12:00 NOON

January 13 - Western Federal Savings
February 10 - Western Federal Savings
March 10 - Western Federal Savings
April 21 - Buena Park Public Library
May 12 - Western Federal Savings
June 9 - Western Federal Savings
July 21 - Buena Park Publix Library
August 11 - Thousand Oaks Public Library
September 15 - Buena Park Public Library
October 13 - Western Federal Savings
November 9 & 10 - SPERDVAC Convention

Locations:

Western Federal
12175 Ventura Blvd., Studio City

Buena Park Library
7150 La Palma Avenue, Buena Park

Thousand Oaks Library
1401 E. Janns Rd., Thousand Oaks



MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

SPERDVAC needs the assistance of a Southern California volunteer who can compile new Printed Materials Library data for catalog pages. We have a large number of scrips which must be sorted, checked for completeness, etc. The materials are currently in our storage facility.

SPERDVAC member Murray Schantzen has the following open reel equipment for sale. All are TEAC brand unless otherwise specified: 2300 SX \$275, 3300 SX \$375, 2300S (needs new heads) \$250, 3300 (needs new reel platform) \$325, 4100 \$174 (two available), 1500 SU \$100. Also, AKAI GX 220 \$250. Murray also has miscellaneous Ampex equipment available at rock bottom prices. He can be reached at (312)844-1335.

VOLUNTEER LIBRARIANS NEEDED

SPERDVAC needs to replenish its army of volunteers with up to four new librarians. We need Southern California members to serve in these capacities:

1. General Library, cassettes 500 - 1000
2. General Library, cassettes 1001+
3. Archives Open Reel Library

As the Archives Library continues to grow, we will eventually need to add a second Open Reel librarian by splitting the library between two librarians.

SPERDVAC also needs assistance replacing damaged and missing tapes from the General Library. The masters are on open reels and are used for both open reel and cassette loan copies.

Volunteers able to assist us may call the SPERDVAC phone line, (213)947-9800.



Robert Winckler

SPERDVAC Mourns Loss of Three Honorary Members

SPERDVAC regrets to report the deaths of three radio pioneers who have been made honorary members. Sound effects man Tom Hanley died in November and actress Betty Garde and former child actor Robert "Bobby" Winckler died last month.

Tom Hanley's radio work was primarily at CBS Radio in Hollywood. During the fifties he worked on most of the top CBS West Coast productions. He also wrote scripts occasionally, contributing stories for **Gunsmoke**, **Suspense** and **Have Gun, Will Travel**.

Betty Garde, whose radio work was mostly in New York, passed away on Christmas Day. She was 84.

Born Katherine Elizabeth Garde, she shifted from stage performances to radio work in the thirties. Her credits include work with Eddie Cantor and regular appearances on **Perry Mason**, **The Fat Man**, **Lorenzo Jones**, **Mrs. Wigs of Cabbage Patch** and **Theatre Guild on the Air**.

Robert Winckler, 62, died of cancer on Dec. 28. As a child star, he appeared on the **Bob Hope Show**, **Jack Benny Show**, **Lux Radio Theatre**, **Big Town** and **Screen Guild Theatre**. He also appeared in several motion pictures, including **Our Gang** films. Mr. Winckler worked as an attorney during his adult years.

* * * * *

Several other important radio pioneers passed away during the past few weeks: Actress Lee Allman, 81, died Oct. 8. She was Miss Case on **The Green Hornet** and the sister of WXYZ's Jim Jewell . . . Carmen Cabellero, died Oct. 12 at 76 . . . Actor Cornel Wilde, 74, died Oct. 15 . . . Musician Lud Gluskin died Oct. 13. He was 90. **Great Gildersleeve** writer Sam Moore, 85, died Oct. 13 . . . Actor Arnold Moss, 80, died Dec. 15. He worked many of the popular radio programs which originated from New York.



GEORGE PIRRONE

One non-proud moment I had in radio came after I got a call from Bob Redd for the very first Martin and Lewis radio show. My role was an NBC page boy.

My great line was "Get your tickets here for the new Dean Martin — Jerry Lewis Show," which I was to repeat over and over. Martin and Lewis were relatively new and had not yet attained the stature they later would.

So, on the opening night, I delivered my lines to a full house. Somehow the mike was turned around and I was facing the dead side, which threw me completely. My line came out "Get your tickets here for the new Dean Lewis — Jerry Martin Show!"

Not smile one did the audience crack since they were such new names then. Profound, however, was the expression of shock on the faces of Dean and Jerry. Needless to say, my career on that show was cut short.

JANUARY 13 GUEST

Radio announcer Vern Carstensen will be SPERDVAC's featured guest at our Jan. 13 meeting. Mr. Carstensen's radio credits include **Box 13** and **Damon Runyon Theatre**. During World War II he ran a mobile radio station in Italy.

The Jan. 13 meeting begins at 12 noon. We will meet at Western Federal Savings, 12175 Ventura Blvd. in Studio City. The presentation is free and open to the public.

ODE TO SPERDVAC

Happy birthday, splendid SPERDVAC,
Preserver of our ancient craft.
The doubters said you couldn't do it;
Some of them just laughed.
But, SPERDVAC, you hung tough in there,
And seeds began to grow.
That meant, of course, the time had come
For the doubters to dine on crow.
SPERDVAC had shouted loud and clear --
"Radio must not die!
It still has got a lot to say,
A lot of fish to fry."
You're fifteen years of age today,
And you're fourteen hundred strong;
Your members are as glamorous
As the list of them is long.
You gathered tapes, you garnered scripts
Of radio shows gone by.
No Golden Age, no broadcast trend,
Escaped your eagle eye.
You filed and sorted with great care;
You cataloged with expertise.
You spent more ardent energy
Than a hive of thyroid bees.
A librarian's dream is what you built,
And that is why it can no be said
That fabulous Old Time Radio
Is - well, brother, it sure ain't dead!

- Rozwell Rogers

CART STAGES "FRONT PAGE" PRODUCTION FEBRUARY 25th

A 60 minute radio production of the film "The Front Page" will be featured Feb. 25 as a fund raiser for the Greater Los Angeles Press Fund Foundation. Proceeds will go to a fund for former employees of the recently defunct *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* and scholarships for college students majoring in journalism.

Members of the California Artists Radio Theatre will stage the production at an evening banquet and record it for airing Sunday, March 4 at 6 pm on KPCC-FM, Pasadena. Their live performance will be at the Equestrian Center, 480 Riverside Drive in Burbank. The dinner is at 6 pm and the show begins at 7 pm.

Peggy Webber has adapted the popular story and will serve as producer and director. The cast will include Richard Erdman, William Woodson, Marvin Kaplan, Paul Keith, Jeanette Nolan, Robert Rockwell and Lou Krugman. Also scheduled are Marie Windsor, Jimmy Lydon, Linda Kaye Henning, Kathleen Freeman, Vance Colvig, Les Tremayne, Pat Buttram, Dan O'Herlihy, Sean McClory, Tom Hatton, Bob Legionaire, Shay Duffin and John Bliss. The music will be provided by Ean Whitcomb and his Roaring Twenties Band.

Reservations may be made by phoning the Press Club at (213)849-3737 or (818)846-2350. Tickets are \$50 per person.

Special People Enjoy Radio, Drama, Variety & Comedy

BEA WAIN & ANDRE BARUCH

I believe this to be true, especially for those folks who relish the Golden Age of broadcasting. Although it has been said that nostalgia is the longing to go back to the good old days when you were neither good nor old. Yet, there are those of us who can look back with pleasure and appreciate the talent, the resourcefulness, the competence and the hard work it took to be in the forefront of the entertainment industry. Most of all, members of SPERDVAC understand the soul, the history and the spirit of communications.

Lawrence Peter in his book, "The Peter Principle", stated "In a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence." Incompetence will get you no place in show business. Yes, you are an employee be you on staff or free lance, a group performer or a star. In fact, you are self-employed as far as the IRS is concerned. Actually, your audience is your employer. . . as if you didn't know. Those of us who have endured the slings and arrows of outrageous show business know this all too well.

SPERDVAC's membership is truly a tribute that attests to the value and interest in nostalgia. Bea Wain, my wife and close personal friend and myself present the epitome of nostalgia in music with a re-creation of "Your Hit Parade", a program that ran nationally on both radio and television for almost a quarter of a century. What amazes and intrigues us is the fact that our fan mail includes listeners who weren't even born when the program aired from 1935 to 1958. These fans are extremely curious about the music, the composers, singers and musicians who helped put songs into the survey's top ten every week.

Our good fortune is that we were there during that Golden Age. Bea sang the songs and I announced them. We worked with and were friends of such artistic musical luminaries as Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, Frank Sinatra, Dick Haymes, Ella Fitzgerald, ad infinitum.

Over a period of five decades we have been in contact with the greats of our chosen profession. . . Irving Berlin, Orson Welles, Bob Hope, Norwin Corwin, Al Jolson, Arturo Toscanini and the many others with whom we have worked.

Fads have been described as being short-lived — fads such as hula-hoops and zoot suits may sweep across the nation. . . or they may be limited to a particular community or era. But the history of our country is told in its music, drama and comedy which is why it should be preserved and is being preserved by SPERDVAC and its loyal members.

Congratulations on your 15th anniversary. Long may you preserve and persevere in linking the past to the present.



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE LIBRARIES?

By Bruce Miller

Archives Cassette Library Reels 1000 +

So why does a cassette library refer to "reels"? When the SPERDVAC libraries were first started in the mid 1970's, only reel-to-reel tape recorders were used. A seven inch reel could record one hour at high speed, resulting in the best sound quality for the Archives, or three hours at slow speed, and possibly lesser sound quality, for the General Library. That is why a General Library "Reel" consists of three C-60 cassettes and an Archives or Hollywood Museum "Reel" is just one C-60 cassette.

Today, all of our library tapes are available in either reel-to-reel or cassette format, and are handled by different librarian. Currently, members are borrowing three times more cassettes than reel-to-reel tapes.

An order from the Archives or Hollywood Museum cassette libraries consists of five one-hour cassettes and costs \$5.00 (\$3.75 for blind or handicapped members who qualify for free mailing under Postal Manual Part 138).

Now for a few random thoughts from a mind that has been exposed to too many hours of "library dust":

- All librarians are volunteers who do the work in their limited spare time. Those who have more spare time may be able to give you faster service, but we all work hard at the job.

- When individual librarian ask you to do something in a certain way, do it! They have their reasons, and as long as they work for free, they run the library their way.

- Confused about how to order or have questions about a library? Send a short note and SASE to the librarian who is listed in the Directory section of the *Radiogram*, and you will get a note back as soon as they have time to answer.

- The current reality is that there are very few duplicate copies of the most popular shows, so you must send long lists of alternate choices. (My current record for filling a five tape order is finding the fifth tape to complete the order on the 59th tape on a list of 100 alternate choices). The most popular shows in the Archives Library are "**Suspense**", so if you want those send a long list of alternates or your order will be returned as impossible to fill.

- If you send me a SASE, I will send you a "Permanent Order Form" with space to list up to 100 choices. This form stays in your box and saves you the time of filling in your first choices and alternates on each order. It assures you of quick turnaround on repeat orders and makes my job easier since I can usually fill your order in one try. As your "Permanent" list ages, you will have a better chance of getting those last few popular shows that are still on your list.

- Returning library boxes don't have to be mailed at the Post Office. Put the same amount

of postage on the box as the librarian did, and then either give it to your mailman or mail it at a corner mailbox that has a full-width "hopper door" (yes, it fits).

- Please return all cassettes in the same condition as they arrived, or better. We use C60+6 cassettes, so when the show ends, the tape has not yet finished. Either let it play to the end or fast-forward it. The tape should be returned with Side One ready to play, and when you look at the bottom of the cassette you should see only clear or colored leader, not brown oxide recording tape.

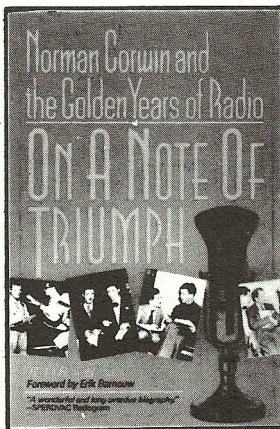
- Before playing a SPERDVAC cassette, please **PUSH YOUR REWIND BUTTON FIRST** (to take up any slack which may have been created during shipping), then push the play button.

- Please clean your tape recorder after every 20-25 hours of use. You can use Q-tips and isopropyl rubbing alcohol, or you can buy a cleaning cassette at your record store or Radio Shack. A dirty recorder gives you bad copies, degrades the SPERDVAC tape, and can cause a tape wrap or broken tape.

- If you play your tapes on an automobile tape player, please play a copy of the SPERDVAC tape, not the original. Don't leave tapes in a hot car in the summer or in direct sunlight at any time.

"A fitting tribute to a man who has given his all for the art of sound. Well done." —SPERDVAC Radiogram

ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH Norman Corwin and the Golden Years of Radio



At the center of the Golden Age of Radio was Norman Corwin, the writer-director-producer who brought great intelligence and eloquence to the medium. **On a Note of Triumph** tells the story of an idealist who valued quality over commercial prowess...the first writer to be admitted to the Radio Hall of Fame.

On a Note of Triumph is the long-overdue biography of a man who elevated the art and integrity of broadcasting, virtually creating the classic radio style during his years at CBS. More than the story of a great individual, it is a detailed, nostalgic remembrance of an unforgettable age, full of the voices and personalities that were part of our golden past.

To order the paperback book directly from the publisher, call toll-free 1-800/447-BOOK and charge to your MasterCard or VISA. Or send \$8.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling per book to:



Carol Publishing Group, 120 Enterprise Avenue,
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Hugh's Hues

By Hugh Anderson

A few weeks ago my wife and I were in New York City and we found our way to the Museum of Broadcasting which was founded by William S. Paley in November, 1976. But as luck would have it, the museum was closed for a private party. However, the next day, Ms. Dana Rogers, public relations, took time to give us a tour of the three floors open to the public.

The museum has twenty-three viewing/listening consoles which allow the use by two persons simultaneously. Each console has a VCR screen and a cassette tape deck, each with ear phones for two. There are two informal rooms equipped with Sony 72" video projection screens, each seating 40. One room was in use by a class of 10-11 year olds, watching the wonderful Gracie Allen. While we were in attendance, Gracie's pal asked Gracie when George's birthday was. Gracie answered, "It's at the end of the month. But I can't remember which end." They also have a very comfortable tiered 63 seat theatre with a 100 inch screen.

Their collection includes 15,000 radio programs, 10,000 of which are cataloged for listening plus 25,000 TV programs. The most popular radio programs are (in order): "War of the Worlds", John F. Kennedy's assassina-

tion, First Fabulous Fifty (NBC), Marx Brothers broadcast (no date) and Robert Trout (no date). The most popular TV program is the appearance of the Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show. The oldest radio program they have is a 1920 campaign speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt, then a vice presidential candidate running with James M. Cox.

Continued next page . . .

SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

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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

RADIOGRAM EDITOR: Dan Haefele, 4366-D, 136th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250, (213)973-5060

LIBRARIES:

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-499: Bob Steinmetz, PO Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 500 and up: John Madigan, Box 3777, La Habra, CA 90632-3777

GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 1 thru 499: Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221

GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 500 and up: Richard Glasband, 7700 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500: Barbara Cowin, 866 W. 4th St., Ontario, CA 91762

Cassettes 501+ - Gary Mollica, 135 N. Meredith Ave., Pasadena, Ca 91106

ARCHIEVES LIBRARY - Open Reels: Pam Hanson, Box 5205, North Hollywood, CA 91616

HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Open Reels: Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031

HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Cassettes: Michael Plett, PO Box 3101, Van Nuys, CA 91407

PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY - Jon Hughes, 7119 Owensmouth Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91303

AUDIO RADIOGRAMS: Send C-90 cassette in returnable mailer to Stuart Lubin, 627 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036, (213)653-2548

AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS: Contact Bob Herman, 1640 S.W. Old Clifton Rd., Port Orchard, WA 98366 (206)876-4809

MEMBERSHIP BADGES: Send \$5.00 each to Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221

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

CATALOG PAGE & LIBRARY ORDER FORMS: Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406

SPERDVAC MERCHANDISE: Michael Plett, PO Box 3101, Van Nuys, CA 91407

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Hughs Hues cont. . . .

In 1978 NBC donated its entire collection of 175,000 discs to the Museum and the Library of Congress. The discs are electrical transcriptions, heavier than regular phonograph discs, often with aluminum or glass bases and are played on oversized 78 rpm turntables using special styluses of cactus, bamboo or other fibers. The Library stores the recordings and the Museum is transferring this material onto 1/4 inch tape as master copies. The transferring is being done in real time and will take several years to complete.

The Museum will move into a new fourteen story building being built at 23 West 52 Street the latter part of 1990.

The opening, scheduled for November, will be accompanied by an in-depth study of the origin and development of Rock and Roll. A catalog will be offered, special listenings and seminars with Rock and Roll performers, D.J.s, historians, etc.

So if you live in New York City or nearby. . . go listen. And if the rest of you are ever in NYC and have an hour or two to spare, it's worth the trip.

I called Ms. Fran Carlon (Hugh's Hues, November, 1989) while we were in the Big Apple. She reported that she was quite busy making commercials, scurrying from one studio to another. She occasionally sees some of the people she worked with back in the Chicago days. Still full of pep with an ever excellent radio voice.

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

On January 21, 1923, WMC, Memphis, began broadcasting. In an oblique manor this beginning began a very popular country program that is still top rated on TV today. Owned by the *Commercial Appeal* newspaper, it needed a good announcer and one was found working for the *Appeal*. . . George Dewey Hay. While a reporter, he was assigned to a Marine's funeral in Arkansas. After the burial, he was invited to a "Hoedown" up the road that went on till morn'. He had a great time and noted that no one could have more fun than the Ozarkians. When he began broadcasting, he hosted a late night trip down the Mississippi River using a miniature steamboat whistle for sound effect. In 1924, he moved on to WLS (World's Largest Store), Chicago, owned by Sears and Roebuck and used a train whistle. He became the announcer for the **WLS Barn Dance**, to become known as the **National Barn Dance**. (Many a time I listened to that program when I was a boy.) Later that year, Hay won the *Radio Digest* "Gold Cup" announcer award. He was invited as a guest announcer for the beginning of WSN, Nashville, October 5, 1925 and was offered a job as a program director. He accepted and began to develop a rural show such as he remembered the hoedown a few years back. With his **WLS Barn Dance** background he began the **WSN Barn Dance** on November 25, 1925, using his trusty old steamboat whistle. The Barn Dance followed an NBC classical music program featuring Dr. Walter Damrosch. On December 10, 1927, he began the show by saying "For the past hour we have been listening to music taken largely from Grand Opera but from now we will present The

Grand Ole Opry."

One night in January, 1924, the dirigible "Shenandoah" broke loose from its mooring during a storm. As S.O.S. went out and WOR (New York) was used as a radio guide. Listeners called in when they heard the motors overhead and the radio station was able to tell the Shenandoah where it was. Eight hours after it broke loose it was moored back at Lakehurst. . . thru the help of radio. Fifty years ago, life began for **Women of Courage**, January 1, CBS; **Beat the Band**, January 28, NBC and Gene Autry's **Melody Ranch**, January 7, CBS. John Dunning notes that Autry began singing on radio in 1929 on station KVOO, Tulsa, moving to WLS, Chicago in 1930. He appeared on **The National Barn Dance** and **The Farm and Home Hour** and established himself as a cowboy movie actor by the late 30's. He told his weekly campfire stories until 1956, on one of the longest running shows on radio. Pat Buttram was a long time performer and Charlie Lyon was the announcer. It was a light show with Gene singing a western, Pat doing dialog with Gene, a story told 'round the campfire until it was again time to be "Back in the Saddle Again." Wrigley Gum was the sponsor. Quick now! What was the name of Gene's horse?

Fifty years ago, January, 1940, FM Broadcasters, Inc. was formed to lobby the FCC for more spectrum space. Their wish was granted in May when the FCC authorized commercial FM and reallocated space used for experimental TV channel 1 to FM radio. In September, some manufacturing of FM receivers had begun and in December, G.E.'s W2XOY FM station joined others for scheduled FM broadcasting.

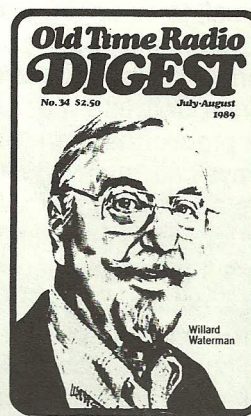
Gene's Horse? . . . His name was Champion.

We hope for a new year there will be no more Hugo's down our way and there will be no more earthquakes out SPERDVAC's way.

Once again, those seeking office will voice their opinions and goals and we will read and ponder. Vote time is coming up!

January's Giant Fact: Alaska became a state January 3, 1959; Henry Ford patents the first plastic car January 13, 1942 and the "Seeing Eye" is incorporated January 9, 1929, to train guide dogs for the blind.

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



**WE'RE
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By Olan Soule'

After seven years on the stage (having started on a tent show at age 17 in 1926) and with no decent jobs being offered on the stage because of the Depression, I was "forced" into radio in Chicago in 1933. I started with a five dollar job here and a ten dollar job there.

My first network radio part was "Aha," Daddy Warbuck's Chinese cook on the yacht, who didn't speak a word of English. To make him sound important (the show paid \$15!) I used to get scripts ahead, write dialog to fit the scene, got a Chinese waiter friend to translate it for me phonetically and rehearsed it in our one-room apartment, while our Pomeranian stared at me and barked.

Besides **Orphan Annie**, I became the second Coach Hardy on **Jack Armstrong**. Then came a real time conflict when both parts happened to be in on the same day, with **Armstrong** originating in Chicago's Wrigley Building at 3:30 and 4:30 pm (all live - no tape in those days) and **Orphan Annie** on the 19th floor of the Merchandise Mart at NBC - a mile away, at 3:45 and 4:45 pm - allowing me the time of closing commercial and opening commercial on the next program to get there!

My wife would bring a cab to the rear, lower level of the Wrigley Building - the cabbie would get me to the Mart as fast as possible - by prearrangement, the elevator starter would whisk me to the 19th floor - and I would rush (but quietly) through the studio door, as Pierre Andre would be stretching out his lead-in and director Max Waizman would have his nose against the control room window, wondering if I was going to make it this time. Fortunately I always did, but it was hectic and ulcer-producing.

My first series contract, now known as as "OTR soap opera" was on **Bachelor's Children**, a family show, 15 minutes twice a day, five days a week from 1935 through 1946. Our listeners were legion and loyal, our fan mail was heavy, and I still meet people who knew it well.

There were innumerable recurring parts in other radio series, as listed in Buxton and Owen's The Big Broadcast.

My most important, best known and best remembered series was Campana's **First Nighter Program**. It was a ten year run as leading man, co-starred with Barbara Luddy, from 1943 through 1953. The show had a fictitious New York origination, actually originating from Chicago until we were moved to CBS on Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood, in 1947. Original, three act plays were presented and the well remembered format featured "Mr. First Nighter" who invited listeners to join him in his ride up Broadway to Forty-second Street and into the "Little Theatre off Times Square" for a premier performance. It was an audience show that always had "standing room only."

Radio was an exciting medium, giving satisfaction to those who performed in it and to those who listened to it. In recent years it has again become popular through the efforts of clubs, notably SPERDVAC, in finding and making available recordings of programs.

You're doing a great job SPERDVAC. I've watched you grow from only a few members to over 1400. Congratulations and HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Many of our honorary members sent us nice messages marking our 15th anniversary. In fact, there were so many that we ran out of volunteer time and *Radiogram* space before they could all be included. In addition, a number of radio's professionals sent us background information on their careers which we plan to use in the form of newsletter features which will spotlight individual performers. SPERDVAC wishes to again thank all who aided us in our efforts. Some of the aforementioned articles appear within these pages; others will be used in upcoming months. We hope all of our readers will enjoy them as much as we did.

SPERDVAC received a very nice telephone call from actress Betty Lou Gerson following our convention. She wanted to voice her support for our organization and thank us for saluting her craft and the network radio era. Because of her husband's ill health, Miss Gerson was unable to attend the November gathering.

The authors of a new book on the early days of radio currently under preparation have issued "a call for insightful facts, telling reminiscences and amusing anecdotes about the Golden Age by those who were there." Writers Robert Hilliard and Michael Keith add, "The more revealing of the medium and period the better." Those with submissions should also indicate their own backgrounds and forward them to Michael Keith, 19 Fisher St., Providence, RI 02906.



TREMAYNE'S RADIO DAYS

By Les Tremayne

My first radio was done beginning in 1930 in Chicago, where I lived at the time. From the very beginning I kept a log of every show I did, including the date, time, station, show title and every character I played. Unlike my dear old friend, Lurene Tuttle, I didn't keep track of money earned, mostly because there wasn't any for the first eight months I was in the business of broadcasting.

I even had to be told the difference between "sustaining" and "commercial" programs. At that time I was more interested in learning all I could about the performance end of it. Money was never the first consideration with me, fool that I am! However, through negotiating my own contracts the first twenty years or so, I learned that "economics is everything," especially with ad agencies and producers.

Poor as I was as a child and adolescent, I had been taught by my parents that there were a lot of things that made up a proper moral code that were important. That is what a great number of the poor are inculcated with from the beginning. Many of those that "have" don't seem to bother about sucker stuff like that. So, I learned. I also learned about faith and trust.

When I took over the lead on **The First Nigher** from Don Ameche, I was thrilled to be in such a position on a top coast to coast program. I also believed in my agency and my sponsor. Now they had lost Don to the movies. At this time, about 1936-37, other leading men in Chicago radio were also being wooed away from radio by the movies.

Many of the guys went to Hollywood but none were very successful, except Don Ameche. Some came back, beaten, broken, literally, and very disillusioned. Now, here I was on a top show. I was winning awards as the #1 dramatic radio actor in the U.S. and . . . *no one was coming to me with a Hollywood offer!* And friends were asking, "Why aren't you going to Hollywood?" Well, I had no answer to that and so I went along happily with **The First Nigher**.

In 1940 I was flown to Hollywood by Warner Brothers, made a test and went right back to the **First Nigher**. I never saw the test but, obviously, something went awry.

In 1943 I left **First Nigher**. My sponsor was upset about that (Ameche all over again) and gave no explanation about my departure to the listening audience. Years later I found out a lot of people thought I had died.

In Hollywood, during the War years, nothing happened for me in pictures. Practically all the leading men were in the service and the business needed men during this interim period but I didn't make one picture.

So I went to New York for eight years and did very well in **The Thin Man** as Nick Charles, replaced James Hilton as host of **Hallmark Hall of Fame**, as **The Falcon** and as half of **The Tremaynes** along with my then wife, Alice Reinheart. This was a six days a week, half hour talk show.

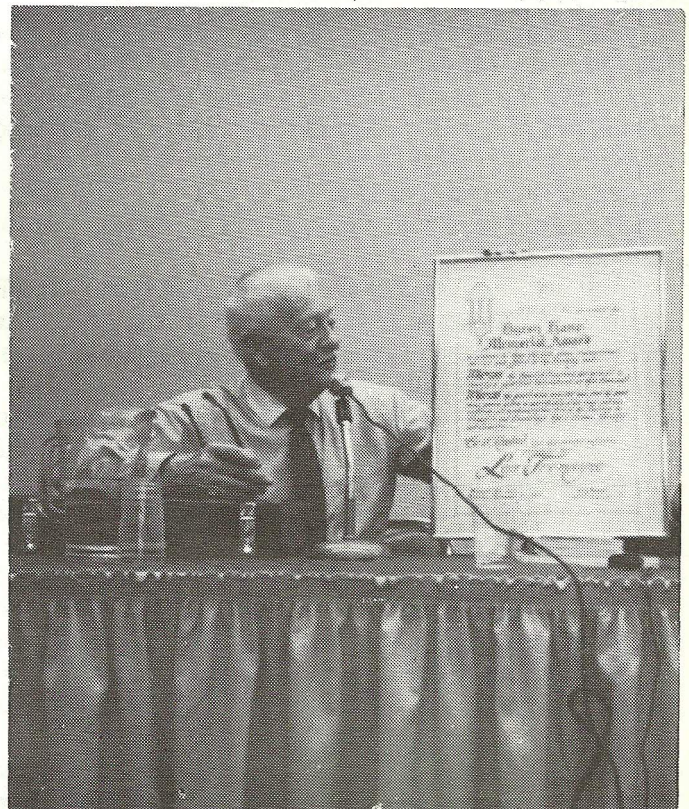
We did everything from singing and acting to theatre gossip to interviews with top archaeologists, stars, artists, explorers, etc. We reported on the *Fighting Lady* (aircraft carrier) in New York Harbor and the unwrapping of a two thousand year old mummy.

After a great deal of radio, live TV and theatre (including the entire 18 month run of *Detective Story* on Broadway), I headed for Hollywood again, driving across the U.S. in the dead of winter in my little 1949 MG roadster, with no heater! In Gallup, New Mexico, I received a telegram from George Fogle who was about to begin a new Carlton E. Morse radio show on NBC. They wanted me for the leading man. I had worked with Carlton in New York previously on **I Love a Mystery** and on the live TV version of **One Man's Family**. I answered the telegram, arranging for Alice to be included in the cast (playing my sister) and started on the show almost as soon as I arrived in town.

I did 35 or 40 pictures in Hollywood in the fifties, sixties and seventies - featured in some, starred in some and sorry I worked in some! Fade back to 1937, when I wondered why Hollywood didn't want me, then forward to about 1983. A friend, who shall be nameless, worked at 20th Century Fox. She called one day to tell Joan and me about something exciting, funny and weird she had run across in the dead files at the studio while she was searching for something unrelated. She saw the name Les Tremayne on one of the file folders and, because she was a friend, she was curious. She found two letters. One, from Darryl F. Zanuck, head of 20th during those years, asked my whereabouts because he was interested in discussing a contract with me to star in pictures at 20th. WITHOUT EVER DISCUSSING IT WITH ME, my agency and sponsor sent back a cursory note to Zanuck telling him Les Tremayne was under contract to **First Nigher** and was not interested in doing motion pictures, period!

True, I was under contract to **First Nigher**, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY! It was negotiable and, if they had not been so insular and paternalistic, the show could have

Cont. on next page . . .



ONE MAN'S OTR

by William N. Robson

It seems to me that the acronym SPERDVAC will depend on the acronym OTR so long as there are any of us still around who can recall Old Time Radio. A curious thing, OTR. Very personal. One man's "Old Time Radio" may be another's abomination.

So, it is with some trepidation, that I recall three episodes from my OTR.

On Election Day in 1920, radio station KDKA, Pittsburgh, went on the air for the first time. Its program consisted of reporting the election returns as Warren G. Harding defeated James M. Cox for the Presidency of the United States. The program originated in the East Pittsburgh garage of Dr. Frank Conrad of the Westinghouse Corporation. Its audience consisted of a half dozen or so wireless hams, whose equipment could receive more sophisticated material than dots and dashes.

The broadcast was also received backstage at the Olympic Theatre on Fifth Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh. The house was packed, thanks to my father, who was press agent for Paramount Pictures. The picture playing that week at the Olympic was a Paramount release. So Dad had wangled a radio receiver from Dr. Conrad, set it up behind the screen and took notes on the election. Every few minutes he would step in front of the movie screen and inform the audience of the latest vote tally. Nowhere in town could you get the news more quickly. Everybody came out ahead that day, excepting James M. Cox of Ohio.

I guess you can't get more Old Time Radio than that.

The following year the Allegheny High School Band, in which I played trombone, accompanied the football team to the Tri-State Championship game in Dayton, Ohio. We won.

After the game I telephoned this news to Dad, as he had requested me to do, and I was surprised when he told me to have the band in uniform and ready to march when we arrived at the P & LE railroad station the following morning.

"Why?" I wanted to know.

"Because I promised you to WCAE, if you won," he explained.

That was my Dad. Best press agent in town. WCAE was one of his clients. Their studio was a large loft-like room, and the sound baffles were cheap pink-and-blue-bordered cotton blankets.

Of course, the music of the Allegheny High School Band wasn't much to rave about either. But it gave Dad the opportunity to plant a promotional paragraph or two where, in those days, it would reach more people than WCAE did - the newspapers.

You fade Out and you Fade In, and it's eight years later. And I'm in Hollywood working for OTM (a brand new acronym meaning Old Time Movies!) and living in a rented house in Laurel Canyon - a house which boasted a radio with a loudspeaker instead of earphones. And over that loudspeaker I heard my first radio play.

It was February 12, 1930, Lincoln's Birthday. But the setting of the play was Ford's Theatre in Washington,

D.C., on April 15, 1865, where President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth. It's an oft-enough-told tale, but what made this radio play memorable was the way President Lincoln was presented.

You heard the usher try to keep Booth from entering the Presidential box. You heard, off-mike, the on-stage performance. You heard the gun shot. You heard the sound of Booth's boots on the stage, the voice of Booth shouting "Sic Semper Tyrannis! The South is avenged!" You heard the sound of running feet, the slam of the stage door, the screaming of the audience - BUT YOU NEVER HEARD LINCOLN'S VOICE!

Of course, only you know what you may have heard in your mind's ear - the 'Theatre of Your Imagination:'

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here. . ."

or

"...increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

or

"...that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

or

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. . ."

Others ears heard other voices or made other associations as the radio stimulated a myriad of responses from an incalculable audience.

Three years later, I was creating OTR myself with **Calling All Cars** on the Don Lee Network and learning how to make the kind of radio which would last long enough in the listeners' memories to become OTR.

There was the **Columbia Workshop** and **Big Town** and **Conquerors of the Sky** and **Suspense** and **Escape** and **Man Behind the Gun**, and dozens of others filling 43 years of radio broadcasts.

Sure was a hell of a lot of broadcasts. Live and recorded. But it's only OTR now.

Copyright William N. Robson, 1989

TREMAYNE'S RADIO DAYS

Continued from page 9

been produced from Hollywood. They never once mentioned this correspondence to me and I found out about it almost 50 years later. Imagine what a shock that was. It was also a clear explanation why nothing ever really happened to me in Hollywood. Those men who ran the studio so well - and I mean that sincerely - were close buddies and kept each other apprised of situations such as mine. Hearing about this was a shocking surprise at first but quickly took its proper place in my life after all those years. It wasn't that important anymore. Besides, now I had Joanie and we are embarked on a new and rewarding way of life. I don't need that hassle anymore. I am grateful for all the good years in radio and the fact that so many people still remember me and love me for what I contributed in the Golden Days.

General Hospital brought back a lot of loyal fans who had thought I was dead and every day I receive fan mail from some of them. I am busy with AFRTA and Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters and work in Peggy Webber's California Artists Radio Theatre repertory company. What more can I ask?

STAY TUNED

A CONCISE HISTORY OF AMERICAN BROADCASTING

SECOND EDITION

Christopher H. Sterling
John M. Kittross

*The only single-volume book
covering the history of radio, TV
and cable in the United States!*

"There are those who now say that the 'gee-whiz' or 'glamorous something special' hallmark of broadcasting has dissipated. They say that broadcasting is only one small but inseparable part of our current culture and economy. The authors of STAY TUNED, however, are not convinced that we should dismiss the special nature of broadcasting that easily. We believe that it is special, even if its shape has changed."

—from the preface

Beginning with the development of print media and a short discussion of the telegraph, the telephone, and other related electrical communication industries, this book details the inventions and innovations that led to radio broadcasting after World War I and continues with changes and developments in radio, TV and cable broadcasting since that time. The authors use profiles of interesting people, inventions, and institutions to bring this historical book to life. Features include: a unique narrative glossary, a chronology of key events in broadcast history, research material, and historical statistics. An extensive guide to further reading is included at the end of each chapter. The lengthy bibliography contains more than 600 entries, a third of them from sources published in the last decade.

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Wanted: Any recordings of the radio show YOU ARE THERE, circa late '40's/ early '50's. Also, any listing of the YOU ARE THERE series, titles, dates, background info. Will trade my recording of the 1949 YOU ARE THERE "Battle of Gettysburg" for your other Y.A.T. program. Contact: Charles Switzer, 110 Whitfield Run, Peachtree City, GA 30269, (404)631-4449.

Wanted: Paper dolls and paper toys featuring radio, TV, and film stars. Would like to hear from other collectors. Contact: Kayleen Sybrandt, 3333 Morningside Road, Wilmington, DE 19810

Wanted: Book by John W. Swallow, Midwife to an Octopus, (Los Angeles, 1964). Will pay minimum of \$65.00 to \$75.00 for a fine copy. Will pay more for an autographed copy. (Swallow was a local program director of NBC in the late 1930's.) All quotations will be considered. Contact: David T. Rocks, 4034 Oceanview Street, Orange, CA 92665, (714)637-8019.

Wanted: I am carrying out research on the old ABC radio show, THE FAT MAN, and its star, J. Scott Smart. I would like to contact anyone having information about or interest in the show or the actor, and also find any surviving taped episodes not commercially available, articles about the show or actor, photos, publicity materials, etc. Contact: Dr. Charles Laughlin, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada K1S 5B6, (819)459-1121.

Wanted: COLUMBIA WORKSHOP programs, particularly "Air Raid" which was broadcast on October 27, 1938. Contact: Patrick King, Rt. 6, Box 477, Waco, TX 76706.

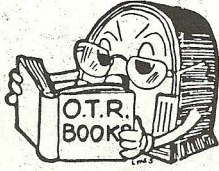
Wanted: I am looking for copies of BLACK MASS and information about the show. I have copies of "Flies" and "Rats in the Walls" from this show to trade. Contact: Scott Huguley, P.O. Box 350, West Point, GA 31833, (404)645-2944.

Wanted: I am interested in buying, selling or trading (mostly trading) 16 inch radio transcriptions of dance bands. I especially like AFRS shows like ONE NIGHT STAND, SPOTLIGHT BANDS, JUBILEE, etc. Also the dance bands on Langworth, Capitol, Thesaurus and other transcription libraries. Contact: Bob Loudon, 2574 Britannia Place, Eugene, OR 97405, (503)484-1506.

Wanted: Richard Lamparski's series WHATEVER BECAME OF... and CBS series BIOGRAPHY IN SOUND shows. Will trade from large collection. Contact: Greg Seltzer, R.F.D. 2, Richmond, NH 03470.

Wanted: OTR shows featuring Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. Exchange or purchase. Please send your list on reel or cassette with terms. Contact: George Vanderburgh, Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario, Canada, L0N1S0, (519)925-3022 (office) or (519)925-3494 (home).

Radio in Review



By Chris Lembesis

Welcome again and Happy New Year.

Have you heard. . . ? Burns Is Back! George's latest book, **ALL MY BEST FRIENDS** is rapidly moving up the best seller list. Watch for a review soon of a work in which Burns pays a loving tribute to his friends from all his years in show business. Radio is not overlooked. Stay tuned.

Actor Tony Randall has just written his autobiography called **WHICH REMINDS ME**, published by Delacorte Press. The actor, who was Reggie York on the New York broadcasts of **I Love A Mystery**, comments, "Sorry to tell you this, but I did not love radio. I never felt that radio acting was acting. And I didn't enjoy the gags actors played on one another."

Now, let's visit the OTR bookshelf:

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR: RADIO PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, 1929-1956. By Dr. Marilyn Boemer. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. (52 Liberty St., P.O. Box 4167, Metuchen, NJ 08840). 1989. Hardbound. \$25.00.

Of all the various types of radio programs of the past, perhaps the children's shows have a lasting image to many of us. Broadcast at a time when school was out, and weekends, these programs allowed us to enter a world of make believe and adventure. This book brings out that essence and more. As the author explains, this volume started out as a paper for a Broadcast History seminar in 1971 and the book itself starting coming together about five years ago. The history of this type of program and parents' concerns at that time are well chronicled. Excellent statistics bring out the importance of this type of programming, which ran on network radio from 1931 to 1956.

Dr. Boemer selected 47 programs from radio's Golden Age that were written and performed for the juvenile audience in mind. The familiar favorites are all chronicled, from **JACK ARMSTRONG** to **WILD BILL HICKOK**. These programs are broken down into six categories:

1. The Adventuresome Schoolboys and Girls.
2. The Aviators and the Adventurers.
3. Superheroes and other Crimefighters.
4. Westerns.
5. Space Adventurers of the Future.
6. Educational and Storytellers.

Each program is well researched, though more questions could have been answered, such as who were the cast members of Mutual's **THE ADVENTURES OF RIN TIN TIN** in 1955? It also could have included photographs to relate the program star to the reader, though leaving them out might have been at the discretion of the publisher.

All 47 entries are presented alphabetically, with at least one episode of that program described. There Boemer uses excellent discretion by showing an example

of an early show, and then a later one, to indicate the changes in writing style or content. Perhaps the biggest change was the live 15 minute format five days a week, or "across the board" as it was known then, to the once a week complete in itself 30 minute story, most likely pre-taped.

An excellent bibliography, followed by an appendix re-listing the programs discussed in the book, but showing network affiliation, years broadcast, and regular characters, concludes this book. It's unclear why these specific 47 children's programs were selected, as there were many others that could have been discussed, or added to this volume. But from this omission, there is the wonderful possibility of publishing a Volume 2 that would continue in this format, but go into detail on some of the less remembered or obscure programs.

Try this list. It should bring back memories to some and a curiosity to others: **Lone Wolf Tribe; Salty Sam; Desert Caravan; Flying Family; Sekatary Hawkins; Og, Son of Fire; Omar, The Mystic; Charlie Chan: Junior G-Men; Bud Barton; Mandrake the Magician; Sea Hound; Secret City; Flying Patrol; Road to Danger; Land of the Lost; Sparrow and the Hawk; Cimarron Tavern; Adventure Parade; Abbott & Costello Kids' Show; Hannibal Cobb; Black Hawk; Clyde Beaty; Howdy Doody; Gabby Hayes; Super Noodle; Fun Factory;** and many, many others.

Until such a book is compiled, enjoy this one. For additional information on this title, please see Scarecrow Press' ad elsewhere in the *Radiogram*. Printed on acid free paper, it is also well bound to allow for repeated use. An excellent, handy reference.

MINNESOTA AIRWAVES 1912 THROUGH 1939 AND RADIO TRIVIA. By Charles Ingersoll. Northern Printery (Order from the author: 315 1st Ave., SE, Aitkin, MN 56431). 1986. Spiralbound. \$9.00.

Here is a fun book to read about the growth of Minnesota radio during those pioneering years. The author, a Minnesota native and broadcaster, is well qualified to write about his state's growth in broadcasting. Each station's history is reflected in the statistics and anecdotes by those who were there when it started.

Another section profiles the personalities of those stations, including some who went on to work at the network level. A final section is Radio Trivia, reminiscing about the receiving sets, program firsts, dance bands, and so on. A final article is written by the author's mother concerning her early memories of radio around the house. Interesting work to have and enjoy.

LISTENING GUIDE TO CLASSIC RADIO PROGRAMS. By Bob Burnham. BRC Publications. (P.O. Box 2645, Livonia, MI 48151). 1986. Softbound. \$7.00.

Here is an interesting guide for those new to SPERDVAC and the hobby, or perhaps to veteran collectors who want to reassess their enjoyment of OTR tape trading and listening. Though published four years ago, the information in it is not dated, and a 30 year man like myself even learned something new about our hobby. When so much

Radio in Review cont. . .

material has been accumulated over the years about collecting, a guide has to be published to keep up with this new information.

The author has called upon other collectors, each specialized in a specific area, for expertise regarding that part of OTR collecting. Subject areas include History and Statistics; Computerizing OTR; Dealers; Logs; Art; Writing; Sound Quality; and so on. This 128 page book is divided into 18 diverse and interesting chapters, ranging from cassette vs. reel to using the computer to a panel rating and evaluating OTR shows for writing, production, and collecting value.

The printing could be a little larger, but the information makes up for that. Well recommended and available also at our meetings.

THE SONIC RESTORATION OF HISTORICAL RECORDINGS - 1990. By Michael Lane with assistance by Donald Holmes. Privately published (Order from the author: 1782 Manor Drive., Vista, CA 92084). 1989. \$12.50.

For those of us fortunate enough to have access to the original discs and tapes of radio's early days, the challenge presented is to do a transfer to tape, and to do it the best way possible. For years this hobby has never had a manual that reviews and explains the procedures required for producing top quality sound. This work comes closest, and the timing could not be better as audio today is undergoing a rapid change because of listening habits and advancing technology.

With the advances before us in recording and playback, there is no excuse for anyone who enjoys OTR to have a copy in poor quality. In this manual, the authors start right off with some important audio definitions, written in an easy to understand style. For example, SONIC PRESERVATION, SONIC ENHANCEMENT, and SONIC RESTORATION all have different meanings. Next, record condition, turntable speeds and pitch, cartridge and stylus size, tone arm and tracking, types of equalization and how they are applied, noise, resonance, parametrics, editing, recording, and other important considerations are discussed in detail. Many of these areas are accompanied by drawings or charts to help clarify the discussion. A final section called "Authenticity and The Art" allows the authors to present their points of view on sound and how it should be heard. And to wrap up this work, there is a list of names and addresses of manufacturers of equipment.

If you plan on doing serious disc restoration or transfers, you need this manual. This is probably the best 40 page guide you will encounter on this subject. Personally, except for a couple of areas omitted, I completely agree with and enjoyed how this work was presented. Highly recommended as a guide to better sound.

ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH: NORMAN CORWIN AND THE GOLDEN YEARS OF RADIO. By Dr. R. LeRoy Bannerman. Carol Publishing Group." A Lyle Stuart Book. (120 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus, NJ 07094). 1989. Softbound. \$8.95.

Dr. Bannerman brings out the qualities of Norman Cor-

win as a man who was an idealist who valued quality over commercialism. Beautifully written, this work is more than a trip back into time. We find ourselves observing how radio programs came about, the network policy making decisions, writing and production deadlines and more. Corwin's career in radio shines brightly to this very day. His writing, directing, and production skills brought to radio drama an area it had never experienced before: eloquence and intelligence.

Advance copies of this book were available at our last convention, and quickly sold out. Additional copies will be available at this month's meeting, or please see the publisher's ad elsewhere in the *Radiogram*. Well written, and a great addition for your collection. My thanks to Jessica Black and Mike Lewis of Carol Publishing Group for arranging for us to have copies available at the SPERDVAC convention.

GREATER THAN THE BOMB. By Norman Corwin. Santa Susana Press. (University Libraries, California State University: Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, CA 91330). 1981. Clothbound. \$38.00. 6.75% tax (California published + new Earthquake Tax) + \$2.00 Shipping.

The above review presented a biography and overview of the works of Norman Corwin. This work presents for the first time (except for a prior edition in Japan) perhaps his finest program ever presented on radio.

On March 26, 1950, a program of immense importance, the repercussions of which are still heard today, was broadcast over Mutual. **PURSUIT OF PEACE**, also known as **DOCUMENT A-777**, was a program about the long and painful struggle for freedom and human dignity throughout world history.

The basis for this historic broadcast was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. One of the finest casts ever assembled for a radio docudrama created one of radio's finest moments we should hear again and again.

This book presents the text of that broadcast. But this is not just a typical book. The publisher, Santa Susana Press, has taken great care in presenting a work that is as beautiful to hold as it is to read. Published in a limited first edition of 300 numbered copies, each one is signed by the author, Norman Corwin. Published in 1981, this work has never been reprinted, and only about 40 copies remain.

This volume is hand printed and bound on deckle edged acid free paper and even though it is only 40 pages in length, this reviewer considers it one of the finest published volumes on radio history ever. And of course, it will become a very valuable collectors' item as the years progress. Consider sharing it with your children as a wonderful lesson in freedom and democracy.

A most prophetic broadcast! We are all aware of the events in Eastern Europe today. How wonderful that perhaps something that never should have happened, repression, will be no more. Thanks to the editor, Norman Tannis, for a beautiful foreword, and to Norman Corwin for making this work available.

Until next time, Good Luck and Good Reading!

LIVING LEGENDS NO. 2

By Jim Harmon

MURRAY MAC LEAN/JIMMIE ALLEN

I think of Jimmie Allen every now and then. Getting on a jetliner, I think of what a fabulous adventure it was to Jimmie and the pilots of his era to ply a prop passenger plane from Kansas City to Chicago. The memory of that radio character came to mind full strength a few months ago, August 1989, on a hot Summer Saturday, when I was piloting a 1932 airplane over the Queen Mary. Below me on a gray sea lay the great passenger liner. I was at the controls of a 1932 Ford Tri-Motor plane.

I only had a five to eight minute turn at the controls during a one hour flight contracted for at the Hawthorne Air Show, but it was a thrill.

We signed on - my wife Barbara and I - and got a turn at the controls because there were so many pilots on board who wanted to fly the historic plan and actually take the wheel (not a stick). There were four pilot-passengers on our flight (nine seats in all). Since they were giving them all a turn, they gave the other paying passengers the same treat. Even these later day aviators, some rather graying daring young men, didn't seem to like to have regulations for breakfast every morning.

I had no great trouble with the controls, for a total amateur, I think, although the pilot had to slightly lift the nose twice during my stint at the controls, with his own wheel. It was great to actually feel the outside air rushing against your skin and see out, without window glass between you and the outside - through the tiny passenger vents and the larger pilot vents. It was an experience I'll never forget.

The thought about Jimmie Allen reminded me that I needed some information for still another book on old time radio dramas I'm writing, some cast information about The Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen (1936-38). I knew the lead character, Jimmie, was played by Murray MacLean. I had met him a few times in the company of Curley Bradley ("Tom Mix", of course). But I had never heard the true name of the second most important character on the show, teenage Jimmie's adult mentor, Speed Robertson. It was in none of the standard references. I had a ten year old phone number on "Jimmie" (for a time, MacLean was known as "Jimmie Allen" on the air and off). I didn't know if he was still there, or even if perhaps he had flown off this planet entirely. But I tried it, and he answered.

I found out the older actor's real name was Robert Fiske. And I found out more about both "Jimmie" and "Speed".

Jimmie is retired from his job working at a real airport now. I think he used it to do a bit of everything. Maybe taught lessons, worked on engines, possibly even swept up. It wasn't like the old days. He and Speed Robertson had gone to Hollywood to make it big. Jimmie did all right for a time, even starred in his first picture, Sky Parade (1937), but the glory days didn't last for long.

Speed never did make it. He wasn't good looking enough. They cast him as a heavy in his own picture. A Hollywood face - William Gargan - played Speed Robertson. With a start like that, there were only more minor villain roles ahead for him, and not many of those.

Jimmie Allen doesn't go by that name anymore - it was his only name, public or private, for awhile, but his has reverted to Murray MacLean for a number of years. When I called him up to get Speed Robertson's real name, he couldn't remember it right off. He phoned back the next day and told me it was Robert Fiske. Bob or Speed has been gone a long time - died just after the end of World War Two. Though Jimmie - Murray - has some health problems, he sounded a lot more clear on a number of things than he did a few years ago. In a late middle age career move some years ago, he decided to become a stand-up comedian. I remember those days from meetings in Curley Bradley's company. Perhaps Martians could have appreciated some of the jokes Murray told. But not warm-blooded mammals of the Earthling variety.

Murray MacLean is 72. And his pal, Speed, has been gone so long he can't remember his real name very easily.

But for a time he was flying high, the first of radio's great aviation heroes, leading the way for Ed Prentiss as Captain Midnight, Jack Lester as Sky King, and many others. He is certainly one of radio's living legends.

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GENERAL LIBRARY CASSETTE UPDATE

Bob Steinmetz, librarian of General Library cassettes 1-499, has compiled a list of the most requested tapes from his section of the library. The top twenty-one, in order of popularity, are: 157, 429, 64, 9, 11, 158, 473, 4, 15, 375, 5, 10, 28, 104, 107, 237, 240, 242, 39, 65 and 253.

Members listing any of these on their request lists should be aware that they are particularly difficult to obtain because they are usually on loan.

In addition, these General Library cassettes are currently unavailable because they have been damaged or lost in the mail:

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94	105	111	134	135	137	138
139	140	144	148	154	163	166
167	174	175	178	192	193	194
208	209	211	244	245	246	247
251	254	271	272	273	275	276
277	278	281	282	293	292	312
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