

# SPERDVAC

# **RADIOGRAM**

Vol. XVI, No. 4

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

April 1990

## Eddy King's Radio Recollections

*Radio announcer worked in Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles*



Eddy King, left, worked briefly as a newscaster at NBC's KPO, San Francisco in 1942. "I was getting up at two in the morning and preparing the news," he recalled at last month's SPERDVAC meeting. "I had my fill of that after four weeks." This picture was taken at 4 am. (Can anyone identify the two newsmen with him?) For additional stories and photos, see article beginning on page eight.



# MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

SPERDVAC has learned the sad news that honorary member Yvonne Peattie passed away. She was part of a panel discussion on San Francisco radio we presented at a SPERDVAC meeting several years ago.

We are also saddened to learn of the death last month of long-time member George Walter. George became our 57th member when he joined SPERDVAC in March 1975. He served as SPERDVAC historian for several years.

Bob Burnham, publisher of Listening Guide Newsletter, has been struck by a series of computer problems which may or may not be related to a virus. His newsletter subscriber list has disappeared from the computer's memory. He writes, "For each member who sends me a postcard verifying subscription and length of subscription, I will add a free one issue extension to their subscription. Alternately, if someone in your club can compile a list of same, the same deal applies. I also need all current addresses." Bob is additionally offering a copy of the latest edition free to those sending a self addresses legal sized envelope. He'll even pay the postage! His address is P.O. Box 2645, Livonia, MI 48151. Phone: (313)721-6070.

The General Library for cassettes 1001+ is still closed. We currently have no local volunteer to operate it for us. Archives Library reels 1-1000 are likewise unavailable. We are also handicapped by the problem created because the collection is on Ampex 291 tape, which turned out to be a time bomb for collectors because it began squeaking after several years elapsed.

A meeting for SPERDVAC librarians and those who would like to volunteer to assist them is being held in Whittier at 11 AM Saturday, May 5. For details, contact Carrolyn Rawski at (818) 944-8500.

Our gratitude should be extended to Lenore Kingston Jenson for the many kind words about SPERDVAC and the Radiogram she has published in the newsletter she edits for Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters. We're indebted to PPB for the many kindnesses they have extended to SPERDVAC over the years. It's been a wonderful relationship!

Thanks, too, to member Susan Crawford for her many appearances on the Paul Wallach program on KIEV radio. Sue presents OTR excerpts and tells listeners all about SPERDVAC.

Please note that we have changed the location of our MAY 12 SPERDVAC meeting. We will use the facilities of the United Methodist Church of Sepulveda. It's located at 15435 Rayen St. in Sepulveda. As usual, that meeting begins at 12 noon and is open free to the public.

Radio rebroadcaster Bud Carey celebrated his 20th anniversary in the business last month. He's been on the air in the San Francisco area. . . . Chuck Shaden's 20th anniversary presenting old radio over Chicago's airwaves

will be celebrated at the end of this month. Congratulations to both!

Bill and Teresa Harper, editors of Pow Wow, the publication dedicated the the **Straight Arrow** series, sent us an article regarding radio director Himan Brown's plans for a new radio series. This fall he plans to distribute twenty-six half hour episodes of a program called **We the Living**. The series' characters are all over 60 years old and "living their golden years to their fullest potential."

The Radio Historical Association of Denver is planning a one day convention for June 9 in Denver. Their invited guests for workshops and radio show recreations include SPERDVAC honorary members Willard Waterman, Shirley Mitchell, Ray Erlenborn, Sam Edwards and Tyler McVey. For more details contact RHAC at Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150.

SPERDVAC honorary member Jimmy Lydon will be our guest at the membership meeting of Saturday, April 21. We will meet at 12 noon at the Buena Park Library, 7150 La Palma Ave., Buena Park.

Our guest was a radio actor in New York in the thirties. He worked frequently on many of network radio's top programs, but did not have a running role on any series.

In Hollywood, Lydon worked on a variety of programs, including a regular role on **Young Love**, a comedy with Janet Waldo and Parley Baer.

The meeting is FREE and open to the public.

## SPERDVAC

*Friends*

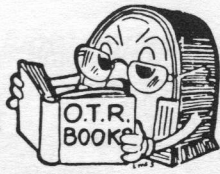


VEOLA VONN NELSON  
RUSSELL J. FOLSOM  
ROSS MURRAY  
AUDREY MARSH  
WILLARD WATERMAN  
PHIL COHAN  
BOB & VIRGINIA NEWHART  
CONRAD MEYER  
BLAKE EDWARDS  
LENORE KINGSTON JENSON  
ANDRE BARUCH & BEA WAIN  
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DICK JOY

*We are so grateful to the many Friends of SPERDVAC who have contributed \$50 or more to help defray costs of the society. The above members have donated funds during the past year.*

# Radio in Review



By Chris Lembesis

## DAVID STONE IN SUNSET VALLEY: The Story of the KSTP Barn Dance.

By Gerald Barfuss. James D. Thueson, publisher. (P.O. Box 14474, University Station, Minneapolis, MN 55414.) 1983. Clothbound. \$19.95.

For Midwest members, here is the story of a program some readers might remember. The **Sunset Valley Barn Dance** was a listening must for fans of country music. This book is about the creation of that program and David Stone, the MC who made the sound of country music an important part of the Midwest culture in the forties and fifties.

This coffee table sized volume presents in words and pictures a balanced look at the program and gives capsule biographies of some of the performers and songwriters who were part of it. Mr. Stone's career started in 1926 at WLAC, and he later became co-producer and one of the announcers on **Grand Ole Opry**. When KSTP wanted a country music show in 1940, David Stone was tapped to organize it. The rest is radio history. Many photos make this an enjoyable book to have.

**FIFTY-FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE MIKE.** By

Bob DeHaven. James D. Thueson, publisher. (P.O. Box 14474, University Station, Minneapolis, MN 55414.) 1985. Softbound. \$10.95.

From the same publisher we have an autobiographical work by one of Minnesota's most popular radio personalities. His career started in 1930 at WIBA, Madison, Wisconsin, as an announcer at \$20 per week.

Bob's career evolved into all sorts of programming, both local and network, which included audience participation shows and man-on-the-street interviews. Over the years he knew or worked with many luminaries from radio, and his reminiscences are touching, especially his thoughts on the passing of his friend Jack Carson. Here is a book laced with humor and keen insight about the early and hectic days of radio. Full of photos and fun to read.

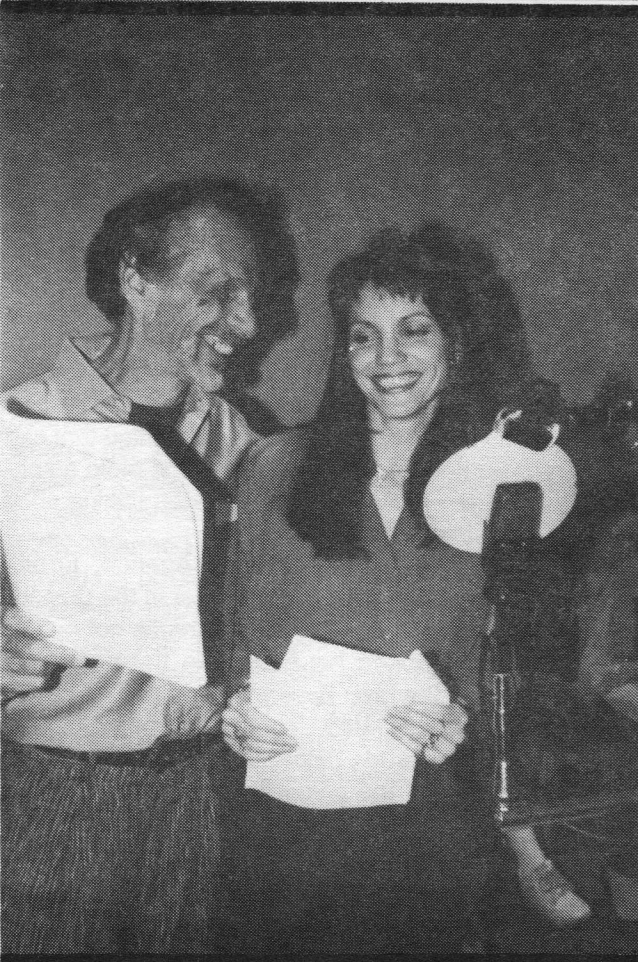
## ORSON WELLES: A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY.

By Bret Wood. Greenwood Press. (88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881.) 1990. Clothbound. \$39.95.

This bio-bibliography gives us a close look at Welles' radio career. The compiler has a few comments about each series Welles tackled and how he interpreted his roles in those productions. Comments range from a few words to over two pages on a single program. Accurate logs, in chronological order, of all his series and his guest appearances (with very few omissions) are included. Meticulously researched for accuracy and well presented.

The series presented and analyzed are **Mercury Theatre, Campbell Playhouse, Ceiling Unlimited, Hello Americans, Orson Welles' Commentar-**

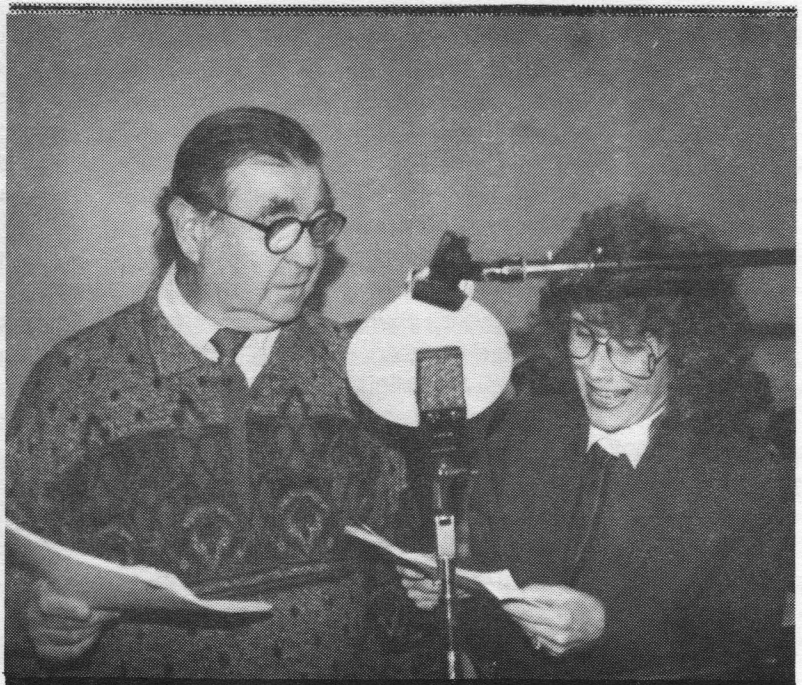
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## NEW RADIO COMEDY SERIES

*Robert Fisher, whose radio writing credits include work for Groucho Marx, has written and will star in a radio comedy expected to air soon.*

*Three shows were recorded earlier this month. "One of the networks is quite interested," Fisher told SPERDVAC. Pictured at their April 2 recording session are, left photo, Fisher with Susie London. At right are SPERDVAC honorary member Marvin Kaplan and Cherry Davis.*



## Radio in Review cont. . .

ies, Mercury Summer Theatre, Adventures of Harry Lime and Black Museum.

Surprisingly, only 24 **Shadow** productions are listed, and with no comment on how Welles was selected for the part and how he interpreted the dual role of Lamont Cranston/The Shadow. It is interesting to note that the compiler lists 11 **March of Time** shows Welles appeared on, and comments that there are no doubt more, but his voice has to be properly identified to add to that list. To complete this compilation, the author provides a list of works written by and about Welles, and indicates what Welles radio programs are available on tape or disc. Welles' film and stage work is also given considerable coverage. Despite the cost, this is an important work well worth adding to your library.

**MEDIA AND THE AMERICAN MIND.** By Daniel Czitrom. University of North Carolina Press. (P.O.Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3561.) 1983. Softbound. \$8.95.

Here is an outstanding look at the total picture of the history of communications in American. The subject is broken down into its many categories and we draw our attention to part one, chapter 3, "The Ethereal Hearth: American Radio from Wireless Through Broadcasting, 1892-1940." In thirty pages the author has presented perhaps as concise and accurate history of the medium of radio that a scholarly work should present.

The classic shows, of course, are discussed. But we are also given insight into the sociological and psychological reasons that radio was what it was. Interesting statistics and charts show how Americans used radio in everyday life. This reviewer questions why this topic was not explored beyond 1940, when listenership grew and became more sophisticated in its choice of programs.

Perhaps to redress this omission, the author presents a detailed bibliography of notes from this chapter and additional readings. The entire book is fascinating, and it covers areas other than radio history, such as the development of the print and visual media.

**SPEAKING OF SOAP OPERAS.** By Robert Allen. University of North Carolina Press. (P.O. 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3561.) 1985. Softbound \$9.95.

Here is an interesting work on the development of the radio and TV soap opera. The author presents us with a detailed analysis of what the soap opera was, why it was created, and what it left us. Though it lacks photos, the commentary, supplemented by charts and interesting statistics, makes this excellent reading. Complete radio and TV scripts are presented, including **Today's Children** (Jan. 3, 1938), **The Guiding Light** (Jan. 10, 1950) and a unique script, **The Guiding Light** of March 5, 1956. This script was used for BOTH the radio and TV versions as it was on both mediums then. It is interesting to compare them. An excellent book worth adding to your library. Thanks to Lisa Dellwo of UNCP for these two fine titles.

★ ★ ★ ★

Author and radio historian Charles Stumpf tells SPERDVAC he has only a few remaining copies of **HEAVENLY DAYS - THE STORY OF FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY**, which he authored with Tom Price. They may be purchased from him by mail, postpaid, for \$16 each. He is also selling part of his private collection of OTR related memorabilia. All items are one of a kind. Some items are for mail auction with bid deadline set at Aug. 31, 1990. For a free list of all items, send a SASE to: Charles Stumpf, 123 W. Blaine St., McAdoo, PA 18237.

The long-awaited biography of the **Gunsmoke** radio and TV series has been published. Advance copies should be available at our April 21 SPERDVAC meeting. This is an 845 page volume, including many photographs.

The full title is: **GUNSMOKE: THE COMPLETE HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF THE LEGENDARY SERIES.** This hardbound work, written by Dr. Gabe and Susanne Barabas, is scheduled for review in the next issue of the *Radiogram*.

### //////////////////// "TWO RADIO ACTORS AND A TAXI RIDE" ////////////////////

*By Franklin Adams*

In the 1930's, two of Chicago radio's finest character actors were Norman Gottschalk and Charles Calvert. Charlie would remind one of Adolph Menjou, the dapper dresser of Hollywood movies. Like Menjou, Charlie always dressed to kill, had a flower in his buttonhole, and wore a little wax mustache.

It was a hot July day in 1933. The Chicago World's Fair was in full swing, and a special festive flavor filled the air. Norman and Charlie had done a soap opera that morning on NBC in the Merchandise Mart, then agreed to share a taxicab to the Michigan Avenue Bridge. Norman was to act on **Skippy**, then airing from the CBS studios in the Wrigley Building, and Charlie was to appear on **Little Orphan Annie**, airing from the WGN studios, then in the Tribune Tower.

Being July, all the windows were rolled down in that taxi cab. No air-conditioning in those days! And around Charlie's neck was a leather strap, at the end of which was a candid camera. This made him look sporty and chick.

The actors jumped into a taxi at the mart, and soon were riding east on Wacker Drive. Charlie wanted that cab driver to know for sure that he was a big time radio actor. So, with forceful voice projection, he started talking shop to make his great impression.

Soon the cab reached Michigan Avenue, turned left, went over the bridge, and came to rest in the unloading zone just south of Tribune Tower. Charlie got out on the right side, then poked his head into the right front door window area of the taxi. By leaning forward his camera was swinging from his strap. Then, in his best Shakespearian manner he asked: "How much cabbie!?" With that, the cab driver put the camera's lens to his lips and said, in HIS best Shakespearian manner: "Thirty-five cents!!"

*Franklin Adams was the voice of Skippy on the popular radio serial airing from Chicago.*

## Hugh's Hues *By Hugh Anderson*

This month we have radio's first news editorial; a couple fluffs; some name changes; a baseball commissioner; how Demosthenes (Greek orator) cured Jack Parr.

Ray Poindexter reports in *Golden Throats and Silver Tongues*: "H.V. Kaltenborn made the ferry trip April 4, 1922, from Brooklyn to picturesque Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor. He didn't go to visit the Statute of Liberty; instead, he went to do a radio broadcast on WVP, the station operated by the Signal Corps. It was one of the few government wireless stations that were used to broadcast general entertainment, speech, and music. Kaltenborn spoke extemporaneously. He felt very self-conscious because the microphone seemed so impersonal. The apparent complete indifference of the operators behind the glass didn't help either. He discussed current events, analyzing the coal strike that was underway at the time. His talk lasted thirty minutes. After it was finished, Kaltenborn realized he was covered with perspiration. His discussion was reputed to be radio's first news editorial."

Footnote: Irving E. Fang notes in *Those Radio Commentators* the date as April 14th. He also notes the probable first regular newscast was a nightly summary the *Detroit News* began in 1920 over an experimental station. The first daily network newscasts were by Floyd Gibbons in 1930.

Every announcer will eventually make a fluff on the air as did articulate Milton J. Cross. Once he introduced the "A & G Pypies."

Ben Grauer's real name was Bennett Franklin Grauer. Early in his career, Grauer handled a program which featured Carrie Chapman Catt. During the close, Ben gave out with the spoonerism: "Thank you, Mrs. Catt. We are deepful grately." He was the one (as the announcer) who suggested to Walter Winchell that he include in his closing "With lotions of love."

Larry Lesueur, in March 1943, said in referring to a statement by an admiral about lend-lease materials sent to Russia, it had "created a teapest tempot."

KFOX, Long Beach, California was knocked off the air at 5:50 pm, March 10, 1933, by an earthquake. Announcer Merwin Gouldthrite was making his way to work when it hit. He found announcer Jack Strock outside and a pile of rubble inside. They vainly attempted to clear the station. The chief engineer appeared and the three eventually resumed broadcasting. Once on the air, Merwin stayed his post at the mike for 52 hours. Gouldthrite was to become Ted Bliss.

Bliss was an assistant manager for the basement of a department store in 1930 when Forrest Rucker, an announcer at KFOX, called to see if Bliss could arrange for the Long Beach Community Players to present plays on the air. It didn't work out but Bliss became an announcer. He would eventually become the director of the radio programs **The Baby Snooks Show & Ozzie & Harriet**.

Forrest Rucker was to become a national radio personality. In 1936, he moved from KFOX to KNX, Los Angeles and married Pauline Stafford, an aunt of Jo Stafford, the singer. He later changed his name, dispensed infor-

mal chats and stories about daily topics interesting to housewives as Galen Drake of the Housewives' Protective League on CBS radio. Drake discussed his coverage of the Long Beach earthquake for KFOX when he spoke at a SPERDVAC meeting several years ago.

Paul Harvey's last name is Aurandt. He is heard on 600 radio stations and 120 TV stations. He is credited with coining the words "skyjacker" and "guesstimate."

Thomas Garrison Morfit decided to change his name in 1940. He announced a new name contest during his "Club Matinee" program heard over Ransom Sherman's Blue Network. A lady from Pittsburgh won \$50 according to John Dunning or \$100 & a trip to Chicago according to Ray Poindexter. I'm sure you know Mr. Morfit became Gary Moore.

Harry Jackson was a local young man who had been attending the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He had done part time announcing at WILL, Urbana and had asked to do a band remote while on summer vacation in 1935 for KTHS, Hot Springs. He became a full time announcer for the station in 1936. By 1939, he had stints at WLW, Cincinnati, and WHAS, Louisville, and was then employed by the Texas State Network. In 1943 he arrived as Allen Jackson at CBS where he gave his news broadcasts for 32 years.

Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick began a career in radio broadcasting in 1930 with a daily program on WOR, New York. In 1931, the radio editors selected Frick as the fourth best sports announcer in the nation. By 1934, he was with WINS, New York. He left early in the year and became secretary of the National Baseball League. He was succeeded at WINS by announcer Clem McCarthy. In May, Frick signed to be announcer for the Chesterfield series on CBS. That autumn, he was elected as National League President, but he still agreed to do some moonlighting by announcing the Columbia-Brown football game for WOR.

Ray Poindexter, in *Golden Throats and Silver Tongues*, tells another interesting story: "As a youngster, Jack Parr stuttered badly. This condition prevented his associating to a great extent with other children, so he read books. One contained the story of Demosthenes, the Greek orator, who also stuttered and who cured his speech difficulty by placing pebbles in his mouth and talking on the seashore. Young Jack Parr decided to try a similar treatment. He took buttons from his mother's sewing basket, hung a sign on the door of his room instructing others to stay out, and practiced speaking and reading aloud. Slowly, he made improvement. At the age of fourteen, he was confronted with another problem, tuberculosis. Spending most of the time in bed for eight months, he became well enough to return to school. In fact, he even went out for wrestling."

In April Pretty Kitty Keller became Queen For A Day on **Hollywood Star Playhouse** while **Mr. District Attorney, Nick Carter** and **Richard Diamond** questioned **John Steel, Adventurer**, why **People Are Funny**. **Little Orphan Annie** and **Lorenzo Jones** went over to **Studio One** to hear **Take It or Leave It**-but with the **Lights Out** they listened to **Fibber McGee and Molly** tell **The Big Story**. And on April

*Cont. on page 7...*



by Barbara J. Watkins

The first old-time-radio convention of 1990 will take place this month in Cincinnati, Ohio on April 20 and 21. This is the fourth annual get-together sponsored by our radio friends in the Cincinnati area. The site will be the Marriott Inn, 11320 Chester Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246, (513)772-1720. Special guests this year will be Parley Baer and Bob Hastings. For further information, contact Bob Burchett at (513)961-3100.

Member Bob Herman writes that now that MYSTERY THEATER has gone off the air and THE END OF THE ROAD is off the air as of February 25, it occurred to him that this column might be a good one for readers of the Radiogram to sort of swap information on what is and what is not on the air in a certain area. He is not aware of any radio drama, variety or comedy at this time which can be heard in the greater Seattle area. If anyone in the greater Seattle area knows of any that might be on the air, he would appreciate it if they would let everyone know by dropping a line to Information Please. Please be sure to include station, time and date.

Two SPERDVAC members, Art Pierce and Connie Billips, are busily at work on a history of LUX RADIO THEA-

TRE and LUX VIDEO THEATRE. They would like to hear from anyone who worked on either of those programs in any capacity whatsoever. They report that after considerable searching they have found that, in addition to the missing 83 New York shows, there are still about 150 LUX RADIO THEATRE shows they have been unable to locate. If you have a collection of LUX shows, they would appreciate hearing from you. Art offers to trade any LUX or other show in his collection for any that are missing. Please write Art Pierce, 339 Nassau St., Rome, NY 13440 or phone (315)337-2576.

Thanks to Jeffrey LeBrun for informing us about a live stage production of "The Spectacular Days of Radio" at the Trump Plaza Theater in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The action takes place at a fictional radio station, WTBN (World Trump Broadcasting Network), at the beginning of World War II. It is a variety show, complete with a 16-piece orchestra and featuring singer Julius LaRosa. The run is scheduled to end on April 15th, but you might call 1-800-523-2803 to see if there might be an extension or what future plans the company may have to tour the country.

If you are a Jack Benny fan, then you should know about the International Jack Benny Fan Club. Annual subscriptions to the "Jack Benny Times," the official club publication, are \$6.39 for six issues per year. Laura Lee, president, newsletter editor, and chief fan, keeps members informed of events concerning Jack Benny, shares interviews with various people involved with the Jack Benny radio and TV programs such as writers George Balzer and

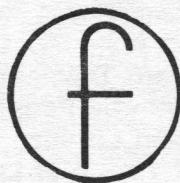
Cont. on page 10 . . .

## Behind the Tube: A History of Broadcasting Technology and Business

Andrew F. Inglis

496 Pages ★ CLOTH ★ \$37.95

*Written for both technical and non-technical readers, this new book traces the development of the major technologies employed in radio, television and cable broadcasting. It deals less with technical details, however, than with the personalities and controversies that contributed to the growth of the industry. As a participant in many of these technological breakthroughs, Inglis brings his expertise to bear on his chronicle of the complex technical, personal, economic and social factors that made modern telecommunications possible. He also considers the passage of technical leadership from American to Japan during the past decade, speculates on what's in store for the U.S. in the future and examines the new and revolutionary communications technologies. A finely written and absorbing story of who and what's "behind the tube".*



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## Hughs Hues cont. . . .

15, 1938, the following advertisement appeared: "All Chevrolet Master Delux models have 'Knee-Action'."

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

**WANTED:** I'm interested in THE GREAT GILDER-SLEEVE shows with Hal Peary only. I would like to hear from anyone with similar interest. Contact: Robert E. Crue, 4291 Falls Road, Baltimore, MD 21211.

**WANTED:** Cassette recording of THEATER 10:30 "Dandelion Wine" episodes 1 and 2, or complete set. Buy or trade. Contact: Geoff Brittingham, Rt. 2, Box 611, Dickson, TN 37055, (615)441-3210.

**WANTED:** 1940-1950's WAYNE AND SHUSTER radio shows from Canada and information about the late 1930's kid serial HOWIE WING and any shows, if available. Contact: Bill Dingwall, 1414 W. Central, Space 41, Brea, CA 92621.

**WANTED:** A cassette copy or script of a 1941 or 1942 broadcast of TERRY AND THE PIRATES, preferably a segment where the sponsor (Libby's?) offered the Terryscope periscope premium. I'll buy or trade. And I strongly wish to buy color photos of that premium from a Terryscope owner. Contact Phil Chavin, c/o Stenger, 1246 N. Hayworth Ave., Apt. 209, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

**WANTED:** Back issues of the Radiogram. Contact: David Diehm, Rt. 1, Box 60, Morrison, OK 73061.

**WANTED:** I would like to get a copy of a 2-hour all-star program starring Gene Autry. It was a Thanksgiving show which starred many stars. Contact Dex DuPont, 1401 W. Kenneth Road, Glendale, CA 91201.

**WANTED:** THIS IS MY BEST programs. Contact: Patrick King, Rt. 6, Box 477, Waco, TX 76706.

**WANTED:** Can anyone find the LUX broadcast of "Day the Earth Stood Still" from I think 1955? I have thousands of hours of radio programs and catalog. Will trade with any and all serious traders of OTR. Thanks to the traders who have helped me to get the shows I requested in my other ad from August 1989. Contact: A.M. Delgado, 2206 26th Street, Sacramento, CA 95818.

**FOR SALE:** Wonderful discovery! From the estate of an LA radio personality comes a stack of 12" and 16" acetate transcriptions discs. These appear to be mostly off the air recordings done by various studios around the LA area. I am currently sorting and compiling an auction list for SPERDVAC members. To receive this free list, please send two stamps. Contact: Tom Hawthorn, 2143-A Second Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95822.

*This is a free service for members and subscribers. If you would like to contact new trading partners, or are looking for some particular radio-related item, send your ad to McGee's Closet, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031*

## SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

All articles and artwork 1990 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.

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**AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS:** Contact Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison St., 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

# Eddy King's Radio Recollections

By Dan Haefele

Eddy King's earliest radio appearance was in 1930 at Portland's KXL, as a pianist. It changed his life. "I was a concert pianist when I was about 12 years old, doing recitals and concerts," he recalled at SPERDVAC's membership meeting last month. "I was going to become a doctor."

Right after he finished high school he was offered a temporary job as a pianist on a radio show. "Do you transpose?" the program's host inquired. "With all the training I'd had, I didn't know what he was talking about," King told SPERDVAC. "I said, 'Oh, sure.'" The gal there said to me, "You don't transpose, do you?" Confessing his dilemma, he received some helpful news. "He sings everything two notes lower," she explained.

"They put the music in front of me, I started playing it two notes lower and he didn't know the difference," he recalled.

## Announces Music Selections

Later he played music on a news show hosted by

Rollie Truitt, a well-known baseball announcer. Truitt had the young King announce his musical selections, and it was then his voice was first heard on the air.

When Truitt left the station, King was his replacement. "I started doing baseball, football, wrestling, ice hockey . . . and every sport you can possibly think of," he said. Sometimes, he added, wrestling matches became a challenge to broadcast. "Those were the days when Ed 'Strangler' Lewis and others would get a headlock and they'd be on the mat for 45 minutes and not move. And I would have to sit there and describe it." He also announced mud wrestling but gave it up because he was frequently splattered.

From KXL he went in 1933 to KEX, "where I played piano and sang." But about a month later he won an audition for an announcing job at competitor station KGW. One of his colleagues there was the not yet famous Chet Huntley.

King remained there until 1937. His coverage of two Russians who had just flown over the North Pole and an interview with Gen. George Marshall brought an offer from NBC in San Francisco.

In the Bay Area King worked with Frank Barton, Larry Keating and Howard Duff.

One of his San Francisco announcing assignments was an 11 pm news broadcast.

"One night I was reading the news and I heard the door to my right open, but I couldn't turn around," he recalled of his days at 111 Sutter. "I felt something tugging at my shoe lace and then my foot got wet. I started to laugh because I looked down and there was a little cocker spaniel. A friend of mine had opened the door and let the dog in. When I started to laugh, the engineer didn't know what I was laughing at because he couldn't see the dog." King's laughter



Announcer Eddy King and engineer Hal Haklik (who worked at NBC in civilian life) at Hachinohe, Japan in 1945.





*Eddy King and engineer Hal Haklik (who worked at NBC in civilian life) at Hachinohe, Japan in 1945.*

continued through the entire newscast.

Other San Francisco assignments King received included big band remotes ("I can remember announcing vocals by Perry Como.") and sporting events coverage.

"I remember one time I was standing at a railroad bridge which was the finish line of a crew race at the Oakland Estuary," he said. As the race came near completion, his colleague Hal Wolf switched to him for the final call. From his vantage point on a platform by the finish line, King began his portion of the coverage. "There were two crews that were neck and neck," he continued. "We couldn't tell who was going to win. And just as they reached the finish line, somebody dropped a checkered flag over my head and I didn't see the finish."

Another of the announcer's jobs in San Francisco was at General Electric's shortwave station, KGEI. "I'd have to be there at 2 or 2:30 in the morning," King explained. "When we read the news we'd have to read about three or four words and pause, then read three or four more words because the short wave broadcasts faded out. This was beamed to the Orient and South America."

King hosted **Sweetheart Swing Time**, a record show aimed at young couples tuned to KNBC radio. After about two years on that program he left on a three year war time stint for Uncle Sam. Following his return to civilian life, he hosted another record program, **Barbasol Hall**, from 1946 to 1948.

#### **Armed Forces Announcing**

During World War II King was stationed at Guadalcanal. After he had been there a short time he was summoned to a superior's office and was assigned to announce a baseball game for the Armed Forces Radio

Service station there.

"I did the play by play live," he recounted. "The next day I was on detached service with them. I was on Armed Forces Radio for 15 months at Guadalcanal."

He worked there with Hy Averback, Bob Lemond, Dick Sinclare, Alan Botzer and Spencer Allen.

Later he went to Japan, where he was reunited with Hy Averback. King worked there with actor Jack Kruschen, also. And, he reestablished contact with San Francisco actor Tal Ware, who had changed his name to Tal Avery. Several years later, Avery would serve as fill-in announcer for King on **Richard Diamond, Private Detective**.

#### **Unwelcomed Job Opportunity**

In 1948, while working in San Francisco, King had a then unwelcomed opportunity for a new job. "The program director came to me one day and said, 'They're having an audition for an announcer in Hollywood and they want you to take the audition.'" King, at the time hosting **Barbasol Hall**, resisted, saying he didn't want to lose his current job. "Take the audition," the program director advised. "If you win it, I'll explain that you can't come down there right now and it won't affect you in the future."

Two weeks the same program director sent him packing to Hollywood, employed as a network staff announcer at NBC. Larry Keating, Hal Gibney and Frank Barton were among his Hollywood co-workers.

About a year after his arrival in Hollywood, King be-



*Eddy King outside the palatial studios of the famous "Mosquito Network" at Guadalcanal in 1944.*

# Eddy King

came the announcer on a new detective show, **Richard Diamond, Private Detective**, starring Dick Powell. "June Allyson used to come down to the studio once in a while," he recalled. "She is now married to . . . the brother of my sister-in-law," he continued.

King remembers fondly his days working with Dick Powell and many of the **Richard Diamond** cast members. Among them were Virginia Gregg, Ed Begley, Bill Conrad, Herb Ellis, Charles McGraw and Jack Kruschen.

"Dick was one of the nicest, unassuming guys I ever worked with in my life. He was a wonderful man," King told SPERDVAC's audience.

## Practical Jokes

The topic of on the air mistakes and practical jokes comes up frequently at SPERDVAC meetings. Announcer King was witness and even victim to several.

Once during a rehearsal, actors Bill Conrad and Charles McGraw decided to upset director Bill Rouseau by pretending to have an argument that was about to turn into a fight. "Rousseau was turning purple in the booth," King said. "He didn't know what to do." When the director tried to calm them down, they began arguing with him.

On another occasion the director's clock was set ahead by actors who began an argument sprinkled with profanities when they received their on the air cue. The joke was revealed to the director just as they were really about to go on the air.

At NBC in San Francisco, our March meeting guest was once the target of a practical joke. "I was sitting in the announcers' office one day when I heard the (NBC) chimes. I went running out (into the hallway)," he recalled. "There was a little bench across the way and Frank Barton and another announcer moved it and they were sitting in front of the broadcast booth. I said, 'Get the Hell out of the way. I've got a station break!' They were trying to move the bench and couldn't.

The chimes he heard had been sounded by an engineer and were not really his cue to go on the air.

## Announcer's Delight

A mistake waiting to happen was the set of buttons used to channel programs to the proper NBC stations. Dubbed the "announcer's delight," the set of buttons were the responsibility of the announcers instead of the engineers. On occasion an announcer would push the wrong buttons - or not push ones that should have been pushed - bringing either silence or the wrong show to some stations.

SPERDVAC President Larry Gassman, who interviewed King as part of our March membership meeting, presented the radio and TV announcer with an honorary membership certificate. The meeting was recorded for future inclusion in our tape library.

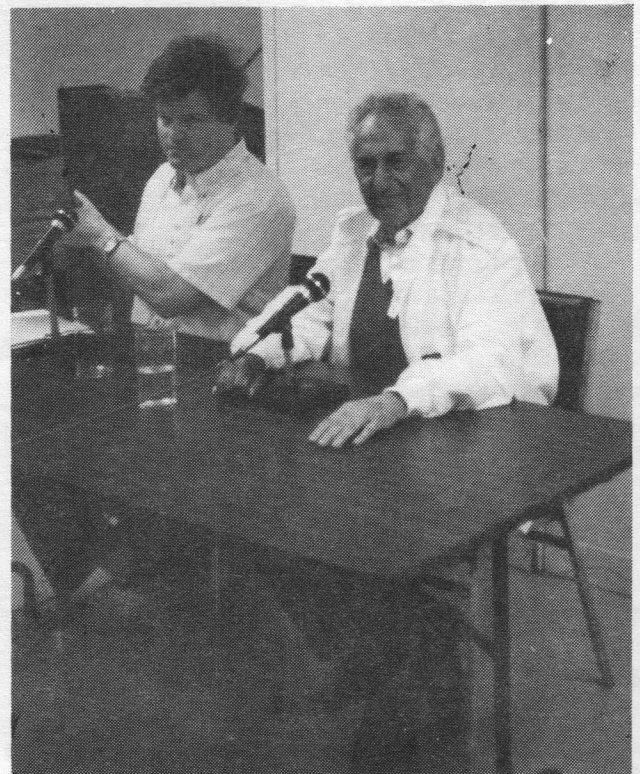
## INFORMATION PLEASE cont. . .

Sam Perrin, and is compiling a club library of **JACK BENNY** shows. Members may contact each other for trading programs through lists published in the "Times." If you would like to join, send \$6.39 to Jack Benny Fan Club, 15430 Lost Valley Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46825.

Tired of not getting your first choices when ordering tapes from SPERDVAC libraries? You can increase your chances of getting what you want by ordering from the open reel versions of the libraries. Even if you don't want to build your collection in the open reel format, having an open reel tape machine will add great versatility to your hobby. If you can find a good reel-to-reel machine, you can order open reel copies from the libraries and copy them onto cassettes for your collection. Most people who order from the Hollywood Museum and Archives Open Reel libraries generally get most of their first choices. I am sure that the situation is similar in the General Library. If you live in the southern California area, a good place to look for a used open reel recorder is the "Recycler", available at newsstands and most supermarkets.

Speaking of the Archives Library Open Reels 1001 and up, there were six tapes missing and unavailable when I took over in February. Five of those reels, 1036, 1055, 1118, 1126, and 1129 are now available but in great demand. Be sure to list plenty of alternates when ordering, especially if you list any of the above five. The sixth reel, 1058, is still unavailable but is on almost everyone's list. Keep trying and maybe you will be surprised one day when your order arrives.

Please send your questions, comments and information to share for this column to **INFORMATION PLEASE**, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Til next time, Spaceman's Luck!



*President Larry Gassman interviewed announcer Eddy King at the March SPERDVAC meeting.*



Announcing...

## A new publication for the old time radio collector...

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**The first issue is yours free!**

The **Listening Guide Newsletter** is a new concept in old time radio periodicals. It will feature useful articles for both beginning and advanced collectors, as well as regular features on select shows, topics, technical tips and more. It is edited and published by Bob Burnham, author of *A Listening Guide to Classic Radio Programs* and *A Technical Guide to Collecting Old time Radio*.

**Each issue of The Listening Guide Newsletter will feature:**

- \***Hobby news & views...**who's doing what in the hobby, new shows, catalogs, products, books, conventions...which ones are best.
- \***Shows you might have missed...**capsule reviews of good shows that may or may not have been circulating for a while that you might have overlooked.
- \***Exclusive on-going collector directory...**plus information on who has what to trade, or who is looking for which shows.
- \***Salute to clubs...**a multi-part series reviewing the various old time radio clubs across the country
- \***Tools of the collector** and a regular technical tips section
- \***Selected interviews with radio personalities** as well as other articles reprinted from "Collector's Corner," an old time radio hobby magazine published in the late 1970's and early 1980's.
- \***Editorials...**each issue will feature commentary from the editor on a current topic of concern to the old time radio enthusiast..opposing viewpoints and guest editorials will be invited.
- \***Feedback from readers...**a column planned for issue #2...Questions, comments and criticisms are invited.
- \***Outstanding collector honored...** presented to the individual who has done more than his share to promote, preserve or enhance the old time radio hobby for the general old time radio "public." Those named receive a free one year subscription to the Listening Guide Newsletter.
- \***Regular special articles from contributors to this new publication.**

The **Listening Guide Newsletter** will be published on a quarterly basis 4 times a year. It will be professionally typeset using the latest word processing and desktop publishing software, and professionally offset printed.

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News & views... *new logs, shows, an OTR calendar and an OTR legal battle are all part of the news column.*

Collector directory... *this issue covers many collectors from the east coast...an on-going feature!*

Cassette duplicators for collectors... *a revision of info originally published in the Listening Guide book.*

Clubs... *a partial listing, plus a special article on SPERDVAC...despite occassional controversy, their new positive image and quality services keeps them the biggest and among the best of the OTR clubs in the country... Also in this issue: an interview with a famed OTR personality of the past, Shows you might have missed, and more! **ISSUE #2** will feature the start of a multi-part old time radio computer series written from both a Macintosh and IBM viewpoint...that plus an Eve Arden interview, more helpful information, collector listings, sources for logs, articles and more.*

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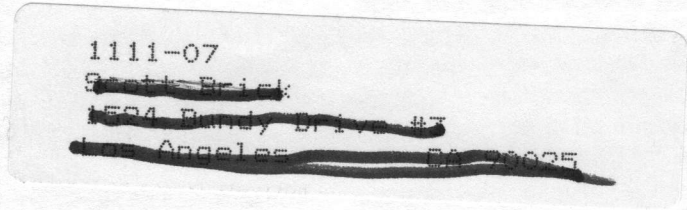


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BARBARA WATKINS	148
RICHARD GLASBAND	148
BOBB LYNES	143
MICHAEL PLETT	142

### WRITE-IN VOTES:

BRUCE MILLER	6
DAN HAEFELE	4
STUART LUBIN	3
JOHN GASSMAN	3
REX QUINN	2
CATHERINE PASSARELLI	2
RON SAYLES	1
JIM COONTZ	1
NEIL MITCHELL	1
JOE CRAWFORD	1
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