

# SPERDVAC

# RADIOGRAM

Vol. XVI, No. 10 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy OCTOBER 1990

## SPERDVAC Convention

## RECREATIONS, GUESTS, PANELS SALUTE EARLY RADIO



*San Francisco radio announcer Jimmy Matthews is afraid he'll have to do too much walking to the Viscount Hotel if he flies to the SPERDVAC convention via Los Angeles International Airport. Not to worry, Jim. Guests with reservations at the Viscount can call the hotel from the airport for a shuttle bus trip to our convention location.*

SPERDVAC's old time radio convention next month will feature special guests, including Jim Hawthorne, Les Tremayne, Ray Bradbury and Norman Corwin, and radio program recreations of **Tom Corbett, Space Cadet** and **Casebook of Gregory Hood**.

Ray Bradbury, author of numerous science fiction stories, will be on hand to discuss his radio-related work and participate in a salute to noted radio writer Norman Corwin.

### Friday Schedule

Following opening registration at 2 pm Friday, Nov. 9, SPERDVAC will feature two panel presentations. Gabor and SuzAnne Barabus will discuss **Gunsmoke** and the book they published last year on the radio-TV series.

That same afternoon Mary Lou Wallace and Walt Mitchell pay tribute to Mel Blanc and feature examples of his professional work.

Friday evening begins with a no host bar at 6:30 pm followed by a banquet at 7:30. After dinner, the SPERDVAC audience will be entertained with a recreation of **Tom Corbett, Space Cadet** featuring two of the program's original stars, Frank Thomas and Jan Merlin.

### Saturday's Daytime Activities

The doors reopen Saturday, Nov. 10 at 8:30 am for registration and our panel presentations begin at 9 am.

Radio sound effects artist Bob Mott will give a presentation on his craft for the audience. Mr. Mott has recently published a book about radio sound effects.

Radio storyteller Nelson Olmsted will join us in the early afternoon for a program we call "Readings by Olmsted." He will present readings of poetry and short stories, as he did for many years on network radio.

### Hawthorne Revisited

Radio comic Jim Hawthorne, a fixture on CBS station KNX, Los Angeles in the early fifties, will bring his brand of



*Actor Les Tremayne stars Saturday night.*

humor to the SPERDVAC audience. "Hawthorne Revisited" promises to be an unforgettable experience in comedy.

The Big Band Era's Kay St. Germain will serve as hostess of a presentation titled "Lady Singers on the Radio." Joining her will be Helen Forrest, Martha Tilton and Bea Wain.

*Continued on page 3 . . .*

# SPERDVAC Convention Salutes Early Radio

From Page 1

## Bradbury and Corwin

Famed author Ray Bradbury will join us to discuss his work as part of a tribute we will pay to the work of radio writer Norman Corwin.

## Les Tremayne Performs

After Saturday evening's no-host bar at 6:30, the SPERDVAC convention will conclude with a dinner and program beginning at 7:30 pm. Les Tremayne will star in a recreation of **Casebook of Gregory Hood**. Actor Herb Ellis will also perform in this recreation. We have selected this drama in part because it is a program which is not in general circulation among radio program collectors.

The evening presentations on Friday and Saturday are expected to end at about 10:30.

Many of SPERDVAC's honorary members, all of them veterans of radio's early days, have indicated they will join us at the convention. They include Parley Baer, Andre' Baruch, Richard Beals, Jack Brown, Phil Cohan, Clint Comerford, Dresser Dahlstead, Rosemary De Camp, June Foray and Art Gilmore. In addition, Marty Halprin, Art Hannes, Gladys Holland, Bernard Katz, Jack Kelk, Charles Michaelson, Mel Morehouse, Cliff Norton, Nelson Olmstead, Jay Ranellucci, Lina Romay, Bob Shannon, Kay St. Germain, Amzie Strickland, Frank Thomas, Veola Vonn, Bea Wain, Pat Walsh and Bill Zuckert have accepted our invitation.

The admission fee for the two day convention is \$70



Amzie Strickland, guest at last month's SPERDVAC meeting, knows she can call us during business hours for latest details on the Nov. convention. Our number is (213)947-9800.

and includes both dinners. The price at the door is \$75. For those unable to attend the entire convention, admission prices for selected events are indicated on the enclosed flier.

SPERDVAC' seventh annual convention will be at the Viscount Hotel, 9750 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles 90045. Guests wishing to stay at the Viscount should make arrangements directly with the hotel. Additional details are explained on the enclosed flier.

## LUM AND ABNER

experience. Rev. Bobs Watson joined the distinguished company (including Roswell Rogers, Clarence Hartzell, Jerry Hausner, Elmore Vincent and Wendell Niles) of Lum and Abner associates who have received the Lum and Abner Memorial Award.

Readers interested in becoming a member of the National Lum and Abner Society, should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Tim Hollis, Route 3, Box 110, Dora, Alabama 35062 for a brochure. Yearly dues are \$6.00 which entitles members to six issues of the NLAS newsletter, *The Jot 'Em Down Journal*, which is always loaded with photos and articles about Lum and Abner.

## Renewal Time???

The last two digits of your membership number indicate your **Renewal Month**. Renewals are just \$15. See Directory for Carrolyn Rawski's Address.

## CHUCK BENEDICT GUESTS OCT. 13TH

Chuck Benedict, a veteran of the Armed Forces Radio Service and long-time Southern California sports broadcaster, will be SPERDVAC's special guest at our membership meeting Saturday, Oct. 13.

Mr. Benedict's credits include work with Jim Hawthorne on radio and TV plus 38 years with the Los Angeles Rams. In the late sixties he was the sportscaster at Los Angeles station KLAC, where he frequently worked as fill-in for the late radio/tv talker Joe Pyne.

The meeting, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 12 noon at the South Pasadena Public Library, located at 1100 Oxley Street in South Pasadena. From the 110 Freeway, travel south on Fremont for six blocks, then right on Oxley.

# THE 1990 NATIONAL LUM AND ABNER SOCIETY CONVENTION

By Donnie Pitchford  
NLAS President

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first Lum and Abner motion picture, "Dreaming Out Loud", released by RKO-Radio Pictures. To honor that landmark, this year's National Lum and Abner Society Convention, held in Mena, Arkansas (the hometown of Chet "Lum" Lauck and Tuffy "Abner" Goff) on June 30, featured former child-actor Bobs Watson as special guest. In addition to "Dreaming Out Loud", Watson (now Rev. Watson, a United Methodist minister) appeared in "Boys Town", "On Borrowed Time", and numerous other films of the 1930's and 40's that are considered classics.

Following a luncheon on June 30, NLAS officers and some talented members introduced Rev. Watson to the audience by way of a new Lum and Abner script composed by two of the officers. The performance, complete with character makeup and a mock "Jot 'Em Down Store" set, commenced with a recreation of a Postum ad (L&A's sponsor in 1940, when they left the airwaves temporarily to shoot "Dreaming Out Loud"), which featured the prerecorded voice of versatile actor Jerry Hausner, veteran of thousands of radio and television programs. The play featured many of the L&A radio characters, all of whom welcomed home the character of "Jimmy", the little boy-grown-up, as portrayed by Rev. Bobs Watson. A toy sailboat, used as a prop in the movie, was presented to the NLAS archives by Rev. Watson.

Following the entertaining play, Rev. Watson presented videotape highlights of some of his finest work in films and television, and made himself available for questions and answers.

The evening segment of the NLAS convention was a special "50th Anniversary Premiere" of the film "Dreaming Out Loud", complete with a period cartoon, travel film ("The Southern Belle", in which Tuffy "Abner" Goff makes a cameo appearance), ten cent popcorn and nickel soft drinks.

The entertainment was all presented on film, not videotape, so that the capacity crowd of local Mena citizens as well as NLAS members were able to enjoy a "big screen" program. Rev. Watson was again available to address the audience and answer questions.

Before and after the films, the guests at the free golden anniversary showing were able to view a collection of original lobby cards and posters from the film. This was truly an event for the town of Mena, since "Dreaming Out Loud" had a premiere showing in 1940 at the Lyric Theatre, complete with Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff in person.

The Sixth Annual NLAS Convention was an enjoyable *Cont. on next page . . .*



National Lum and Abner Society officers San Brown as Cedric Weehunt, Donnie Pitchford as Lum and Tim Hollis as Abner at their organization's convention last June.





By Barbara J. Watkins

Over the years, members have sent in information to share via this column. One never knows where it may lead from there. A case in point is the information Tom Stanley sent in about the Lowell Thomas collection stored at Denver University (see July 1990 Radiogram). As a result, some members of our sister organization in Denver, the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, are investigating what they might do to help preserve the materials and make them available to the public. We wish them well.

Here is an update on the 15th Annual Friends of Old Time Radio Convention which will be held from Thursday through Saturday, October 18-20 at the Holiday Inn-North, near the Newark International Airport in New Jersey. The featured attraction for the Saturday evening dinner will be a recreation of "A Plot to Overthrow Christmas", directed by Norman Corwin and starring Burgess Meredith. For further details of the convention, see the flyer in last month's Radiogram or call Jay Hickerson at (203)248-2887 or Anthony Tollin at (201)575-6849. If you have never attended a Friends of Old Time Radio Convention, let this be the year. You'll be glad you did!

Thanks to Charles Ordowski for the news that radio station WWJ claims to be the first commercial radio station in the country, although it is not the only station who makes that claim. WWJ was licensed by the U.S. Commerce Department on August 20, 1920, as experimental station 8MK, with a regular scheduled broadcast, although only for a couple of hours per day. A spokesperson for the station said that that same month it became the first station to broadcast a news program and the first to broadcast election returns. Whatever its status in the list of "firsts", it certainly brought many hours of great entertainment to millions during the golden age of radio. What does it broadcast now? You guessed it. It is an all-news station, with traffic and weather reports every 10 minutes. Happy anniversary, WWJ!

From Stuart Lubin comes news of hope for new radio production. A new program in the greater New York area called "New Work, New Artists, New Voices" features the efforts of groups around the country who produce new radio drama. It provides a showcase outlet in New York to independent, non-commercial producers. The program airs Sunday nights from 10 to 10:30 pm on WRHU, 88.7 FM, Radio Hofstra University.

For Los Angeles area listeners, station KCRW, 89.9 FM in Santa Monica, has changed its drama schedule again. Evening Playhouse has returned Monday through Friday, from 10 pm to midnight. Matinee Playhouse airs week-

days from 2 to 3 pm, and Saturday Night Playhouse from 10 pm to midnight. On Friday, October 12, a special documentary commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dwight David Eisenhower titled "Remembering the Man from Abilene" will be broadcast.

**CALLING ALL CLUBS:** Members of the International Jack Benny Fan Club recently received a treat - 4 issues of "The Jack Benny Times", from January to August, all at once. The newsletters contain articles about Mel Blanc, an interview with writer Sam Perrin, and news about other Jack Benny-related happenings. If you are a Jack Benny fan, then this is the club for you. Annual dues are a modest \$6.39. To join, send your money to Laura Lee, International Jack Benny Fan Club, 15430 Los Valley Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46845.

Please send your information, comments, and questions for this column to Information Please, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Let us know what is happening in your area of the country. Till next time, Spaceman's luck!



**WANTED:** History in Sound by Milo Ryan, 1963, any condition. Contact: Thomas Stanley, Box 434, Wilder, VT 05001.

**WANTED:** Jimmy Durante on cassette: CHASE AND SUNBORN HOUR, 1933-34; TEXACO FIRE CHIEF, 1935-36; CAMEL COMEDY CARAVAN, 1943-45; plus early guest appearances with Jack Oakie, others. Contact: David Bakish, 2 Bay Club Drive, Bayside, NY 11360.

**WANTED:** A copy of The Shadow Scrapbook. Price negotiable, depending on condition. Also, will trade or buy episodes of THE SHADOW radio series. Send asking price on book and list of radio programs. Contact: Kurt M. Anderson, P.O. Box 700487, Tulsa, OK 74170.

**WANTED:** Episodes of THE ALDRICH FAMILY, especially those starring Ezra Stone. I am also looking for an episode of MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER entitled "Knives of Death." I am very willing to trade. Contact: Andrew Steinberg, 366 UK Station, Lexington, KY 40506.

**WANTED:** ONE MAN'S FAMILY episodes prior to 1946. Also, THE VOYAGE OF THE SCARLET QUEEN and TERRY AND THE PIRATES. Will buy or trade cassettes. Contact: John L. Woodruff, 145 Park Avenue, Randolph, NJ 07869-3442, (201)927-0224.

**WANTED:** I LOVE A MYSTERY. Most stories were broadcast three times. Why are so few episodes to be found. Do you know where I can find more? Contact: Tobe L. Mintz, 811 D Tyler Circle, Hoover, AL 35226.

# I MARRIED A SINGER

BY ANDRE' BARUCH

Being married to a singer is not necessarily a bed of roses. In fact, sometimes it's a backseat of thorns. I learned this early on when I made one of America's favorite singers, Bea Wain, my wife. There is a specific protocol for singers of which I should have been aware since I've been in show business myself for a zillion years. Example:

Bea had been booked to star at New York's famed Paramount Theatre. Her first show was scheduled for nine AM and I had volunteered to help with her bags and gowns. (First mistake)

When we arrived at the stage door the doorman greeted Bea effusively. "Welcome to the Paramount Theatre, Miss Wain. I'll show you to your dressing room." Then with a disdainful look usually accorded a baggage handler, he said to me, "Follow us, buddy and watch those gowns - keep 'em up off the floor!" (Is this the way to talk to a top talker who is just filling in as an assistant to the star?)

Moving right along in my life as second banana in a two-performer family. . . Back on November 8, 1942, during World War II, I was involved with the massive Allied invasion of North Africa. Following a brief and successful encounter with the defending forces, we sat around Casablanca awaiting further orders.

During this boring time one of my men said to me, "Lieutenant, why don't we start a radio station?" I said, "Why not? You sound like Mickey Rooney in the movies. 'Hey kids - let's put on a Broadway show!'" However, I was talked into getting permission for the project from "genial" General George S. Patton. Thus began the Armed Forces Radio Service in Africa.

Among the problems that arose, in addition to *appropriating* the necessary equipment, was the matter of program material such as popular records. But all was not lost since one day one of my men reported breathlessly that a certain infantry captain had quite a few Bea Wain records in his possession - and perhaps we could borrow a few.

I dashed over to his billet and was amazed to find his walls covered with 8 x 10 glossies of Bea in gowns that showed a goodly amount of cleavage. A stentorian voice behind me suddenly said, "Lieutenant, can I help you?"

"Er . . . why . . . er . . . yes, captain. I see you're quite a Bea Wain fan." "Am I ever," he said proudly . . . and then proceeded to tell me with a leer what he'd like to do to this lovely lady. Since he out-ranked me, I was afraid to tell him she was my wife for fear he'd pull out his .45 and shoot off my butt.

When I got back to my unit I explained that the captain wouldn't loan us the records because he was afraid they would get damaged. The men smirked.

Upon my return from overseas, I reported to Headquarters in L.A. Bea came with me from the east and was promptly invited to entertain at the Hollywood Canteen. After I had finished my business at H.Q., I dropped by the Canteen to pick her up. I knocked at the stage door which



Long-time radio announcer Andre' Baruch and his wife, singer Bea Wain.

was opened by a civilian who snarled, "No officers allowed!" - then slammed the door in my face. Here I was, a Major with a fair amount of fruit salad on my chest and I was being brushed off unceremoniously by a civvie!

No way! So I knocked on the door again. Same guy opens up. In my best official tone I announced, "I'd like to see Miss Wain." "Sorry - no autographs." And he slammed the door in my face again.

That did it. This time I pounded on the stage door hard enough to knock it down. When it opened, before the guy could say anything, I grabbed him by his lapels and shouted, "LOOK, YOU CREEP! I AM MISS WAIN'S HUSBAND!!!" "Oh," he said with a quaver. "I'm terribly sorry. Come right in, Major Wain."

Well, I have found out after more than fifty-two years of marriage to Bea that a singer is something special. But what about her spouse? As Oscar Wilde once wrote, "How can a woman be expected to be happy with a man who treats her as if she were a perfectly natural human being?"

*Bea Wain will be one of the guests at The Sperry Convention in November. She will be part of the panel presentation, "Lady Singers on the Radio."*

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Larry Gassman

Our seventh annual convention will be here in no time. November 9th and 10th will be a banner weekend for SPERDVAC. We will enjoy another convention with some wonderful entertainment old time radio style. See the convention story which begins on page one for the most up to date information we had a press time.

Please tell your friends, tell your local radio stations and contact local newspapers regarding our convention. If you work for the print or broadcast media and would like to help us publicize this event, please contact us at (213)947-9800.

## June Convention?

Several months ago the SPERDVAC Board of Directors voted to hold our 1991 convention in June. In order to hold such a convention we need our members' support. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions for us and send your responses as quickly as possible:

1. Are you in favor of a June convention (in place of one each November)? 2. Would you attend a convention in June? 3. Why or why not?

We want to hear from members, regular guests and honorary members. Please give us your name, address and phone number. Send your responses to Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406.

## Input Needed

We need your input if the June convention idea is to become a reality. Some members have already phoned us their opinions. We would like those individuals to again voice their views in writing.

For those who attend our November convention, we will have a questionnaire at the registration table.

We will need help from members if the June convention idea is to be a success. Many of the hard-working volunteers involved in November's convention will have to turn around and immediately plan for one in June 1991.

## Scripts, Programs Donated to SPERDVAC

How do you predict the frequency with which recordings and scripts are donated to SPERDVAC? Answer: You don't even try.

Sometimes months go by without a donation but within the past month several donations have been acquired. SPERDVAC wishes to thank the following individuals for their donations:

Gloria Wilkins for about 170 radio scripts which belonged to her mother, actress Noreen Gammill. Some of those scripts were written by the late SPERDVAC honorary member.

Steven Andrews for the donation of 30 reels of master tapes of broadcasts featuring his father, Dana Andrews. They include episodes of **I Was a Communist for the FBI**, which are being added to the Archives Library.

Del Kacher for the donation of a Sony open reel tape recorder.

Rita Perrin for her donation of discs of programs featuring

*Continued on page 10...*

# SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

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

**MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406

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

## LIBRARIES:

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1 - 500:** Bob Steinmetz, PO Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266  
**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 501 - 1000:** Gene Ward, Box 635, Tujunga, CA 91043-0635  
**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+:** Oran Marksbury, 2273 Colgate Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 1 thru 500:** Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221  
**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 501 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  
**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 501- 1000:** Gary Mollica, 135 N. Meredith Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106  
**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+:** Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90278  
**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Reels: 1-1000:** Temporarily closed  
**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Reels: 1001+:** Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031  
**HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Open Reels:** Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031  
**HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Cassettes:** Glenda Kelly, 2323 Ralston, Redondo Beach, CA 90278  
**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 (for Blind Members only)

**AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS:** Contact Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison St., Port Orchard, WA 98366 (206)876-4809 (for Blind Members only)

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

**ACQUISITIONS:** (*Discs, Tapes and printed materials*): John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603, (213)947-9800 for both the General and Archives Libraries.

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



# MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

Honorary member Bob Shannon, a long-time announcer and program host at CBS, has designed a three cassette study course titled *Break into Broadcasting*. It's available for \$24.95 plus \$3 postage and handling from Embassy Cassette, Inc., 3617 W. McArthur Blvd., Suite 500, Santa Ana, CA 92704. California residents should add appropriate sales tax.

Garrison Keillor's new radio series, *American Radio Company of the Air*, patterned after his successful *Prarie Home Companion*, returns to the air Saturday, Oct. 13. The two hour variety program is carried in Los Angeles by KUSC-FM beginning at 6 pm.

Copies of the book *Hollywood and Broadcasting* are available from SPERDVAC by mail and at our meetings, while supplies last. The cost is \$20.00 at our meetings and \$22.00 by mail. The book, which was reviewed in the *Radiogram* two months ago, is sold by its publisher for \$24.95.



Chicago radio actress Sondra Gair, while visiting San Francisco in July, performed in a two hour radio presentation of "Angel Street," which aired Aug. 18 on "Old Radio Theatre" at KALW, San Francisco. Ms. Gair is currently heard on WBEZ, Chicago.

We also have a few remaining copies of the February 1988 issue of *American Heritage* with its interesting article on Fred Allen. It's available at meetings for \$4.50 and by mail for \$5.50.

Many thanks to the old time radio collectors' organizations which have helped promote our upcoming convention. SPERDVAC especially appreciates the efforts of Jay Hickerson, publisher of *Hello, Again* and the Radio Historical Association of Colorado for distributing our convention fliers with their publications.

Nadine Dreager, president of the National Radio Heritage Association, tells us that because of job commitments, she and her husband have had to limit their work preserving old time radio. Until their organization can become active again, they are recommending SPERDVAC and NARA as sources of information and program recordings.

## SPERDVAC

# Friends



RITA PERRIN  
(IN MEMORY OF VIC PERRIN)

JOAN TOMPKINS SWENSON  
(IN MEMORY OF ELLIOTT LEWIS)

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TRUE BOARDMAN  
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ART HERN  
LUCILLE MEREDITH

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.

# HUGH'S HUES

By Hugh Anderson

Edwin Howard Armstrong truly was a "Man of High Fidelity," as Lawrence Lessing titles his biography. Dr. Armstrong made three contributions to radio without which there would not be radio and sound as we know it today.

First was the regenerative or feedback circuit developed in 1912 "which took wireless telegraphy out of the spark-gap, crystal-detector stage into the radio era of amplified sound." Next, he developed the super-heterodyne circuit in 1918, "which underlies all modern radio and radar reception." Fifteen years later, in 1933, he developed the "wide-band frequency modulation or FM radio, a nearly static-free system of high-fidelity broadcasting that revolutionized the reproduction of sound and opened a development in communications and the auditory arts that is not yet ended."

His regenerative circuit was a outgrowth of Lee de Forest's audion tube which was developed from the Fleming Valve that was an improvement of the "Edison Effect." Thomas Edison noted in 1883, "in the course of investigating a troublesome defect in his early carbon-filament electric lamps. . ." that a tiny current was flowing outward from the hot filament - in one direction - to a metal plate (put there to detect the flow) which indicated it was in effect a rectifier or alternating current to direct current. Edison failed to see any significance to this, called it the "Edison Effect" and patented it.

London, University College, Professor J. Ambrose Fleming, 1904, took Edison's bulb, hooked it into a receiving circuit and discovered that the filament-plate arrangement responded to high-frequency waves by passing a current into the circuit. Fleming called it a 'valve' because the charge flowed one way and had it patented as the property of the English Marconi Company to which he was a consultant at the time. But it did not amplify or modify the current.

Lee de Forest added a wire grid to the filament-plate arrangement in 1906 and with a slight charge, controlled or modified the tiny current flowing across the gap. This was patented by de Forest and was labeled an 'audion tube.' It slightly strengthened the signal but neither he nor anyone else knew why. In 1923, de Forest tried his tube in telephone work as a relay device but when tuned into a circuit it emitted a howl that precluded its use. De Forest tried to rid the tube of the howl and thereby forfeited his chance at an important discovery.

In 1912, Edwin Armstrong pondered upon the problem of strengthening the wireless signal. He had gone through all the devices including the Fleming Valve and concluded none offered the ability to inflate the signal. He now engaged the audion tube. Going through the explanations given for the operation of the tube, he determined by analysis that all were erroneous. With the help of Professor Morecraft at Columbia University, he discovered that some alternating current was produced contrary to all previous thought.

It was commonplace to step-up AC current by tuning.

What would happen by turning the accepted tuning practice back into itself? The effect was to feed part of the plate's output current to the grid's input current. This increased the power of the incoming signal from the antenna to the grid's and thus boosted the power to the plate. And back around again and again. A thousand times. The regenerative circuit was born!

This amplification was to produce a hiss when a certain value was reached and prohibited amplification above that point. Armstrong investigated this phenomenon and detected beats in the tone and recognized the tube was putting forth oscillations of its own. Lessing writes, "Beyond a certain stage of amplification, with certain changes in the circuit, the audion became a modified Hertzian oscillator and powerful generator of high-frequency waves." Armstrong, at the age of 22, had found a way to make this new instrument work to mark "finish" to the dark ages of wireless telegraphy.

As Armstrong demonstrated his new development, he concealed it, not trusting anyone. He knew he needed it patented and asked his dad for the necessary \$150. John Armstrong was afraid all this was directing young Edwin away from getting his degree and refused. Uncle Frank Smith suggested that in lieu of a momentarily unobtainable patent he sketch his discovery and have it notarized. So it was done January 31, 1913, an extremely important date 8 years into the future.

But in finally applying for his patent he did so only for the receiving or feedback feature, not the oscillating features. His lawyer asked if more information was available but Armstrong was determined to keep the two features separate. October 29, 1913, was the filing date for "new and useful improvements in wireless receiving systems"; December 18, 1913, was the filing date for the transmitter aspect. The regenerative circuit patent was issued October 6, 1914.

Young Armstrong published papers in late 1914 and early 1915. In the fall of 1915 during the meetings of the Institute of Radio Engineers, Lee de Forest attacked all of Armstrong's conclusions as erroneous. De Forest offered arguments that he, de Forest, had observed the oscillating aspect sometime before. Armstrong was to hear this again.

Three claimants to Armstrong's patent appeared. First was the great research scientist of General Electric, Irving Langmuir. Next was a German, Alexander Meissner. Both were disposed of. Third was Lee de Forest, who had significant force to hold up Armstrong's second patent - The transmitting feature.

1917 arrived and Captain Armstrong was off to England with the Signal Corps where he met Captain Henry Joseph Round at the headquarters of the Marconi House in London. There Armstrong learned of the very high frequency ranges the Germans were suspected of using. Then he moved on the France, where he remained until September, 1919. It was in Paris he suddenly visualized his next great contribution - the superheterodyne - the core of all modern radio receivers. His patent was applied for and granted June 8, 1920.

While Armstrong was still in France, de Forest began at



# KNX CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY

(Excerpted from a KNX radio news release.)

Los Angeles station, KNX, whose beginning coincided with the birth of the radio industry, observed its 70th anniversary on September 10.

The station's growth has covered one of the most interesting and turbulent periods in American history. The era has witnessed the Roaring Twenties, Prohibition, Gangland wars, The Great Depression, FDR, World War II, the formation of the United Nations, the Nuclear Age, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Space Age.

The birth of KNX dates back to 1920, the same year the radio industry itself was born.

Fred Christian, an ex-Marconi man and shipboard wireless operator on the "Middlesex" in 1919, put together a five-watt transmitter, the forerunner of KNX, in his Hollywood home. He was granted the call letters 6ADZ, and on September 10, 1920, began broadcasting recorded music by borrowing records from music stores in return for plugs on the air.

He was the city's first disc jockey and his "studio" was a back bedroom in his home on Harold Way, located between Normandie Avenue and Mariposa Street.

Operating an amateur radio "station" was not Christian's vocation. He was manager of the Electrical Lighting and Power Company, which sold radio parts to people trying to build their own sets. Prior to 1923, says Christian, there were no commercial radio sets for sale. Westinghouse, Colin B. Kennedy of Oakland, and Federal Radio of Buffalo, New York, were among the first to come out with ready to operate sets, he recalls.

"People were buying parts to build radio sets. They had to have something to listen to, so I put the transmitter together," explains Christian.

When the Department of Commerce, then the regulating agency, made a new classification for radio stations engaged in broadcasting entertainment, Christian was licensed in November 1921 to operate on 360 meters (833 KC) with call letters KGC.

He then became intrigued with the idea of broadcasting "live" music and entertainment, moved his station to the California Theatre in downtown Los Angeles, and was assigned the call letters KNX in March, 1922. He built a new transmitter capable of broadcasting 50 watts of power. A year later KNX was operating on 500 watts.

By broadcasting Carl Elinor's 60-piece orchestra from the theatre, KNX became the first station in the area to have "live" music. Conrad Nagel and Wally Reid were among the screen celebrities who appeared at the KNX

## Hugh's Hues Cont. . .

tacking Armstrong's patent application for oscillation in Washington D.C. His De Forest Radio and Telephone Co., along with other manufacturers, was using Armstrong's patented regenerative circuit without regard to royalty payments. Major Armstrong needed to return home.

Next Month: "The de Forest Trials"

microphone.

News was given first priority every night, Christian remembered. "At the time when I had KNX (1920-24), the general trend of thought was that news was just a novelty that would run its course and fade away. However, I felt differently about it. I believed in the future of radio as a prime news source, as well as an entertainment medium."

Sponsored advertising programs for a fee was not permitted then. Fred Christian's only return from endless hours of transmitter design and building the operation of the station and announcing, etc., (no commercial broadcast transmitters were available then) was the sale of radio parts with which receivers might be built to "listen in" on KNX.

By the summer of 1922, some 22 other stations in and about the Los Angeles area had been licensed to broadcast. These all shared the single wave length of 360 meters. The rivalry between these operators was intense, and it "took some doing" to determine the hours each station would operate. Christian, with his large orchestra and beautiful theatre organ, usually was able to function during the "choice hours" of 7 to 10 PM three times each week.

Christian sold KNX to Guy Earle, whose Los Angeles *Evening Express* newspaper then began operating the station in 1924 from the Hoffman Building at Hollywood Boulevard and Gower Street.

In 1929, KNX became a 5,000 watt station. In 1932, it won another power boost to 10,000 watts and was under the ownership of the Western Broadcasting Company, which broadcast from the old Paramount lot on Marathon Street, Hollywood.

Another power jump, this time to 25,000 watts, came in 1933 when KNX moved its studios to the Otto K. Oleson (subsequently Postmaster of Los Angeles) Building at Vine Street and Selma Avenue.

The year 1934 was a memorable one for KNX when it was granted 50,000 watts of power, which it still utilizes. A year later, KNX moved its operations to a new building at 5939 Sunset Boulevard.

Finally, in 1936, 16 years after its birth, KNX found a permanent home when CBS Radio purchased the station. Within a short time, eight network programs were originating from the KNX Hollywood studios.

Ground was broken in 1937 for the new KNX/CBS Studios on Sunset Boulevard. It was designed by William Lescase, one of America's most distinguished contemporary architects. On April 30, 1938, an all-day dedication of the multi-million dollar building was held.

The CBS Radio Network made its official debut on the night of September 18, 1927 with a program that originated in the studios of WOR in New York and was carried over a network of 16 stations. The program was an American opera, "The King's Henchman," by Deems Taylor and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Today the CBS Radio Network is comprised of some 454 stations.

# SPERDVAC

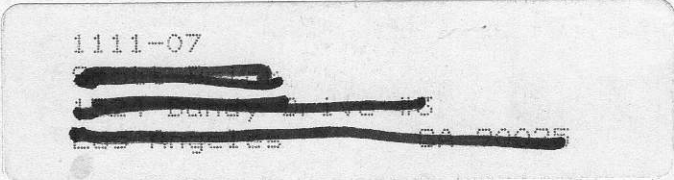
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## SPERDVAC Acquisitions . .

ing her late husband, talented actor Vic Perrin.  
Member Andy Anderson donated tapes of 21 **Space Patrol** shows and transcriptions of seventy-five more programs from that same series.  
SPERDVAC is happy to announce the acquisition of over 400 scripts from the **Lux Radio Theatre** series. The scripts originally belonged to John Gilman, who was vice president of advertising for Lever Brothers during the **Lux** days. The scripts, which were the agency's copies, chronicle **Lux** broadcasts from 1937 through 1948. The 400+ scripts are bound in 105 volumes. Many thanks to John Gilman Jr. for his important donation of radio history to SPERDVAC.

SPERDVAC also would be happy to accept discs, tapes and scripts on a loan basis. We will copy material for the owners and return the originals. If you have access to original discs, tapes or scripts to loan or donate to SPERDVAC, please contact John Gassman at (213) 947-9800 or write him at P.O. Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603.

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