

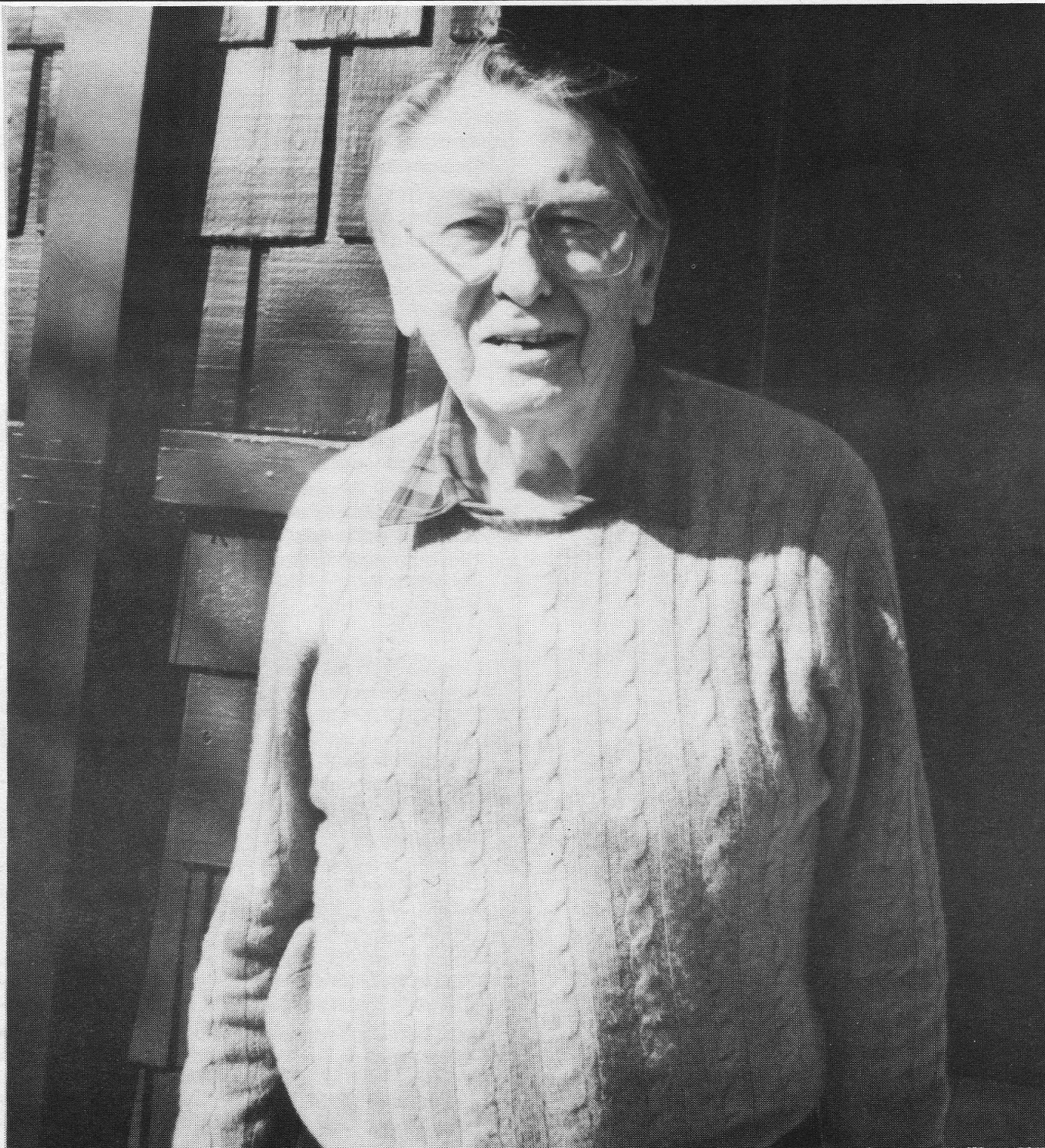
SPERDVAC

RADIOGRAM



Vol. XVII, No. 3 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy

MARCH 1991



Macdonald Carey was SPERDVAC's guest at our February meeting. . . See story on page 6 for details.



by Barbara
J. Watkins

RADIO DRAMA STILL LIVES!

Do you regret that you were perhaps born too late to be involved in radio drama? Well, here's your chance to be a radio writer. American Radio Theatre announces its 1991 Script Writing Competition. "Writing for the audio medium may be one of the most challenging things a writer can attempt," said American Radio Theatre president Eugene Shaw in announcing the organization's 1991 Radio Script Writing Competition. "You must depend on your personal ability to create pictures with word and sound in the minds of your audience."

Now in its 8th year, the Competition is held as a means of encouraging both established and beginning writers to create work for the radio theatre medium and to assist them in learning the necessary skills.

A \$500 prize is given to the entry making the most imaginative use of the medium. The winning entry is also produced as part of the A.R.T. PRESENTS... anthology series, which is made available to non-commercial radio stations.

Entries will be accepted between January 1, 1991 and June 30, 1991. To obtain entry forms and writers' guidelines, write to: American Radio Theatre, 1616 West Victory Blvd., Suite 104, Glendale, CA 91201. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed #9 envelope so materials can be returned. Good luck!

Another outlet for your radio scripts is KCSN's "THIRTY MINUTES TO CURTAIN," a group now in its 8th year of producing radio dramas which air twice a month on KCSN, 88.5 FM, in Northridge, California. If you have written a script that you think is really good and would like to have it produced, you may send it to the group for consideration. If it is approved and produced, you won't receive any money but you will receive an audio copy of the production and the chance to have your work heard. Plays must be in the form of a script for radio, and fit into a 30-minute time frame. PLEASE send a copy of your script, not the original. If your script is not accepted, it will not be returned unless you include return postage. Mail your scripts to: THIRTY MINUTES TO CURTAIN, KCSN, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WHERE?

A member from Massachusetts made the following comment when renewing his membership in SPERDVAC: "Please have more articles in the newsletter of interest to members who do not live in your area. I think you tend to forget all members who live far away are not as interested in your local happenings." That may be a valid criticism, but I hope it is equally obvious that if the members who live in all of those other areas of the country do not submit

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SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

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LIBRARIES:

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1 - 500: Bob Steinmetz, PO Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
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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

Have you voted in our annual Board of Directors' election? Historically, we have had low member participation in our elections and we'd be delighted to have an all-time high this time. Ballots may be mailed to Catherine Pasarelli, 10615 Butterfield Road, Los Angeles, CA 90064. Or, they may be delivered in person at the March 9 meeting at the South Pasadena Public Library by 12:15 pm.

We have upgraded the sound quality of general library tape 118. New loan copies have been made for the open reel and cassette libraries. It features six **Lights Out** broadcasts.

The **Saturday Night Swing club** program offered on Archives tapes 707 and 708 has been duplicated and members may order it from cassette librarian Gary Mollica.

Comic Jim Hawthorne, who began his "California Comeback" with an appearance at last November's SPERDVAC convention, is the new voice at KIEV radio (870 AM) in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale. His masterful use of timing and quick wit make for great radio listening.

Les Tremayne discussed his radio career with Larry and John Gassman on Bill Bragg's *Yesterday USA Superstation* program last month. The show airs nationally and can be received via satellite on Satcom 4, Transponder 15 and 21, Audio subcarrier 6.2 mhz, 24 hours per day.

When we wrote about the Metropolitan Washington Old Time Radio Club in a recent issue, we gave some misinformation. Annual dues in the organization are \$15 for members in the Washington, D.C. area and \$10 for those living out of the area. Their reason for charging lower fees for those outside the capital area: "Since they're too far away to attend our meetings and enjoy the programs, we think they deserve a break on the membership fee." Membership dues may be sent to their treasurer, Marsha Bush, 6437 Fifth St., Alexandria, VA 22312.

DAN O'HERLIHY GUESTS MARCH 9

Dan O'Herlihy, well known for his radio, film and television work, will be SPERDVAC's guest at our March 9 meeting.

Mr. O'Herlihy began his radio work on Ireland's Radio Eireann. He was an actor and announcer there. One of the highlights of his work in his native Ireland was announcing the end of World War II.

While studying to become an architect he became an accomplished actor/announcer, performing on eight to ten dramatic programs in a typical week plus announcing on an additional 15 weekly shows.

His American radio credits include the role of Nicky on *One Man's Family*. He also had a running part on *Aunt Mary* and was heard frequently on *NBC University Theatre*, *Screen Directors' Playhouse* and *Lux Radio Theatre*.

The next SPERDVAC meeting, which is open free to the general public, will be at the South Pasadena Public Library, 1100 Oxley St. in South Pasadena. The meeting begins at 12 noon.

SPERDVAC

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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 Executive Harry Ackerman Dies

By Dan Haefele

Harry Ackerman, long-time executive at CBS radio, died Feb. 3. He worked on many of network radio's successful shows, including **Our Miss Brooks** and **Gunsmoke**.

After graduating from college in 1935, Ackerman became an assistant to Raymond Knight and appeared as part-time announcer and comic poet on Knight's **Cuckoo Hour** at NBC. Later he became the assistant director of the **Phil Baker Show**.

From New York he moved to Detroit, where he was hired as agency producer for **The Lone Ranger**. Then he was hired to produce two Hollywood programs, **The Phantom Pilot** with Howard Duff and Elliott Lewis and **Landendoff News Dramas**, which he later described as a "kind of West Coast **March of Time**."

When Mr. Ackerman was SPERDVAC's guest in 1988, he recalled with pleasure his work on the **Gulf Screen Guild Theatre**, which featured performers who donated their earnings to the Motion Picture Home. "That was a dream experience," he observed. "In the three years I was producer/director. I had absolute carte blanche. I could do any script I wanted and cast it with whatever stars I could find available.

Ackerman was supervisor of programs, and later vice president in charge of programs, at Young and Rubicam in 1948, when CBS hired him to work as an executive producer in New York. There he was in charge of all CBS programs originating from New York. Six months later he was transferred to Hollywood to be head of West Coast programming for the network.

For a while, he continued to work as director of **The Aldrich Family** on NBC, even though he was a CBS executive.

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Harry Ackerman

Arthur, 5467 Parkmor Rd., Calabasas, CA 91320, (818)880-4524.

WANTED: Kitty Kallen radio and TV shows in which she made an appearance. Kitty sang for Jimmy Dorsey, Harry James and others. She worked on the Danny Kaye show, David Rose show and starred in her own show, **KITTY KALLEN CALLING**. Contact: Walden Hughes, 2527 Duke Place, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

WANTED: OTR traders. Select from over 12,000 radio programs on cassette. Especially wanted are serious collectors who can swap at least 10 hours of material at a time. Contact: Larry Siskind, 3725 131st Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA 98005.

WANTED: I am looking for back issues of "Variety" and "Radio Mirror" magazines from 1936-42, 1946-47, and 1956-57. I am also looking for "Variety" magazines from 1952 and 1960. Must be in good condition. Contact: Patrick King, Rt. 6, Box 477, Waco, TX 76706.

WANTED: To hear from anyone with **IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT** radio shows. Also, anyone who may have a copy of the 1949-51 TV show that **IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT** did. I would like to get in touch with anyone who worked on the show or knows how I can get in touch with people who worked on the show. Contact: Terence Goggin, 1777 N. Vine Street, #409, Los Angeles, CA 90028, (213)286-9825.



Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, % Barbara J. Watkins, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031

WANTED: Radio shows written by John Dickson Carr. I need a few of his **SUSPENSE** contributions, but perhaps someone has **APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR** programs from Great Britain? Also, Mr. Carr hosted some **MURDER BY EXPERTS** shows. Will trade copies from my JDC collection, along with other mystery programs I've collected. Please send your list of wants and haves. Contact: Lawrence Nepodahl, 1230 Vienna Blvd., DeKalb, IL 60115.

FOR SALE: OTR collection for sale: tape recorders, amplifiers, reels of tape, old radio magazines, books, old radios. All must go. \$500.00 negotiable. Contact: R.

HUGH'S HUES

By Hugh Anderson

The last few months of Hugh's Hues became a chronicle of FM's evolution. An important event passed without comment.

Recently, we lost actress Eve Arden. I saw her in person one time in a performance in 1946. Forty-four years later on November 12, 1990, "Our Miss Brooks" passed away. I wrote about her in my July '88 column. In a small way as a tribute to Miss Arden, I'd like to reprise a segment:

"In early November, 1946, I had the delight of being in the audience for **The Sealtest Village Store**. It was the first radio program I had seen even though I had grown up listening to radio. I was on my way to China and had a weekend pass which I spent in Los Angeles. I had seen Miss Arden in some of the terrific "B" movies that enhanced the silver screen and though she was quite a gal. So when the opportunity was presented to visit the big-time west coast stations, I went. Jack Haley was established as a comedian and Eve Arden was really coming into her own. There were other performers who I can't remember now but I still recall Haley's smiling, innocent look and Arden's long pause and a stare out into the audience a la Jack Benny, waiting for the laugh to come. Or better, helping it along.

"I remember her as slightly taller than Haley, thin and with the pseudo-indignant pose that went so well with her



John McIntire, one of American radio's polished actor/announcers, died Jan. 30. McIntire, left is shown with Glan Heisch at CBS station KNX, where they worked on **The Adventures of Bill Lance**. Photo was taken in 1944.

(Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Heisch)

asking stare. After forty-two years it's still a clear memory. Watching the entire program was quite an experience for me. . . . being seated in the studio, the ushers, the "ON THE AIR" sign, the announcer, the orchestra, the performers, men with ear-phones and wires leading off to somewhere, the control booth. Really a busy place."

Miss Arden was born in 1912 in Mill Valley, California, as Eunice Quedens. The story goes that her stage name was derived from cosmetic bottles on her dressing room table. "Evening in Paris" and "Elizabeth Arden." She landed a part in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1936 in which she was sung to by Bob Hope. Hope's song and his part led him to Hollywood. The following year Eve also journeyed to Hollywood and later to radio.

The **Rudy Valley Show** began on October 14, 1929, for Standard Brands on NBC as the first major network variety hour. After World War II began, more of Valley's time was required by the Coast Guard and he had but limited opportunity to tend to his radio duties. On July 8, 1943, Joan Davis became the proprietor of **The Village Store** and Jack Haley was hired as Joan's helper. In 1945, Joan left for her own show, Jack became the proprietor and Eve Arden hired in as the store manager. In 1947, Haley was replaced by Jack Carson who finished the run in 1948 with Eve.

John Dunning writes, "Her comic gifts had long been overlooked by filmdom, so it was in radio that she found her greatest success. She brought to the character a sarcastic wit that became its strongest trademark. . . .

"Radio comedy is often stilted and badly dated, but **Our Bill Brooks** is still funny and warm. So completely did Eve Arden assume the part that even today she is best remembered as the English teacher of Madison High."

★ ★ ★ ★

On March 1st, fifty years ago, we first heard "Duffy's Tavern where the elite meet to eat, Archie the manager speakin', Duffy ain't home - Oh, hello, Duffy. . . ." We never did meet Duffy but we knew Ed Gardner (born Edward Poppenberg, June 29, 1905, Astoria, Long Island) as Archie and Miss Duffy who for several years was Shirley Booth. Ed was Archie for ten years. Miss Booth eventually went to TV where she became "Hazel".

In a remote way, Gardner was responsible for Eve Arden having the opportunity to prove her merit. Gardner personally wrote "Duffy's" from rough drafts by Abe Burrows and his staff. He was an accomplished writer, director and producer by the time "Duffy's" was created. In early 1940, Rudy Valley's show as badly sagging in the ratings. Vick Knight, Valley's producer-director had moved to Fred Allen and \$1000 a week. Valley began searching for someone to revive his floundering show. Ed Gardner was his choice. It was Gardner as producer-director, who elected to employ a mature John Barrymore as a Shakespeare spouting comedian. The ratings soared. Valley's show as back near the top.

Gardner moved on the "Duffy's" a year later but Valley and Barrymore continued on under Dick Mack's direction. Barrymore died on May 24, 1942. Valley carried on for an

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Macdonald Carey's Radio Memories

By Dan Haefele

Macdonald Carey is best known for his many years on TV's *Days of Our Lives*, but he recalls the radio portion of his acting career with greatest pleasure. "This was perhaps the happiest I was ever in show business," he said. He was SPERDVAC's guest at last month's meeting.

His big break in the Chicago radio market came in 1937 when he auditioned for C.L. Menzer, who was "building up a stock company of radio actors."

"He liked my voice," Carey recalled. "He immediately gave me the **First Nighter Program** job and my own series, **Young Hickory**. It was a wonderful start."

The **First Nighter** series, one of the nation's top programs, gave Carey prime time exposure on the air. "I'd dress up in tails and top hat and warm up the audience, too," he added.

Lights Out

During his tenure as a Chicago performer, Carey appeared on the **Lights Out** series prior to its move to Hollywood. Memories of doing the show remain with Mr. Carey decades later, especially because of the atmosphere created in the studio.

"The stage was the biggest stage at NBC," he recalled. "The director would put the microphone in the center of the floor and there'd be a floor lamp there and there'd be a light by the piano."

"Here's this big, big studio and this one little floor lamp with actors huddled around it in the dark reading their lines," he continued. "There was a feeling of mystery about the whole thing. The sound man was in this umbrella of light way off in the corner."

The program's high quality of production remains with him, too. "They were very, very spooky shows," he reflected. "I was scared when I was in college listening to them before I got in (the cast)."

Macdonald Carey, like so many of his fellow performers, recalls an era in which there were close, family-like ties among the audio actors. "I think that comradery goes into a spiritual kinship that exists forever, as far as people that are in radio are concerned," he observed.

Appointment Book Saves Friend

Carey's appointment book - a must for the radio performer of the day - was once the focal point of an unusual courtroom scene. A friend of his had been mistakenly accused of a theft but the actor's date book included an entry for the day in question indicated lunch at "12:30 - Craig and Marge."

"You are the only alibi I have, because we had lunch together that day," his friend, who was accused of stealing furs in another state, told him.

The defendant's lawyer put Carey on the witness stand and introduced his date book. The prosecuting at-



Macdonald Carey reads some of his original poetry during his interview at the SPERDVAC meeting.

torney, in an attempt to discredit the witness, quoted other entries from the book. "If you're going to believe Mr. Carey," he told jurors, "here is his day. '10 o'clock - Young Widder Brown. 12 o'clock - Craig and Marge. And at 3 o'clock John's other wife?'"

The case was thrown out of court when the judge learned Carey's profession.

His move to Hollywood led to more radio work, including **Jason and the Golden Fleece**. It also brought many film roles and, of course, his television career.

Already the author of three books of poetry, Mr. Carey has recently published his autobiography, *The Days of My Life*. In it he describes his personal and show business successes plus the disappointments and tragedies he has experienced. He forthrightly describes his battle with alcoholism and his daughter's mental illness.

In addition to his long-running role as Dr. Tom Horton, Carey is promoting his book in a tour of several major cities. SPERDVAC has several copies of the book, available at the March meeting.



President Larry Gassman made Macdonald Carey a SPERDVAC honorary member.

Religion on the Airwaves

The Microphone and the Pulpit

By Charles Stumpf

According to authors Jeffrey K. Hadden and Charles E. Swann, the world's first wireless broadcast was a "Christian religious program" sent from the New England coast on Christmas Eve 1906. Sailors working in the Atlantic that night though there was a ship in distress. But then came live voices, and suddenly there was a poetry reading and a violin solo, and finally, a sermon. Thus was electronic evangelism born.

From its earliest days, radio brought listeners inspirational programs as well as broadcasts of actual church services. This invaluable service was a special blessing to millions of listeners, especially the shut-ins.

Back in 1924, in the midst of the Roaring Twenties, listeners of station WQAO in New York City could tune in **The World's Oldest Radio Gospel Service**, conducted by the Rev. Dr. John Roach Straton. Rev. Straton was the Fundamentalist pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, whose radio sermons violently denounced atheism, evolution, corrupt politicians, divorce, the Ouija board, the shimmy and "Broadway orgies."

In 1927 the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick began his religious program, **National Vespers**, on station WJZ, New York. Another popular religious favorite was Rev. Charles E. Fuller's **Old Fashioned Revival Hour** which first aired from California in October of 1928. In 1933 more than two dozen Southern California religious leaders and businessmen formed a non-profit organization, The Gospel Broadcasting Association, to beam the program across the nation. The program's musical theme was 'Jesus Saves' and the announcer was Hugh Brundage. The program remained on the air through the mid 1950's.

'The Shepherd of the Air' was the title bestowed upon the Rev. Dr. Charles L. Goodell, who conducted **Sabbath Reveries**, which began on the NBC network on June 2, 1929 and continued for many years. Among the outstanding singers of hymns on the air was Edward McHugh, "The Gospel Singer," who was a native of Scotland. Another favorite was Joe Emerson, a 'dramatic baritone' who left college at the age of 19 to join the Chautauqua circuit as an "inspirational speaker." After the crash of 1929 Emerson turned to radio and originated his **Hymns of All Churches** program in 1934. It was heard on both the NBC and CBS networks via transcription. Oddly enough, Emerson was also heard on Cincinnati station WLW where he was billed as "The Bachelor of Song."

The **Lutheran Hour** first aired on October 2, 1930 when Dr. Walter A. Maier delivered the sermon titled "There is a God." That first broadcast originated from station WHK in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Maier continued with the program until his death in 1955. At the beginning the **Lutheran Hour** was also carried by CBS and the Don Lee Pacific Coast networks. It was forced off the air because of financial difficulties brought on by the Depression. However, it resumed in 1935 over stations WXYZ,

Detroit and WLW in Cincinnati. It later moved to KFUP in St. Louis, Missouri. Other speakers on the program have been Dr. Lawrence Acker, Dr. Armin C. Oldsen, Dr. Oswald Hoffmann and Rev. Wallace Schulz. Today the **Lutheran Hour** is sponsored by the Lutheran Layman's League and is carried on well over 1,000 stations in North America, as well as more than 800 foreign stations, broadcasting in nearly 50 languages, around the world.

The **Catholic Hour** also began broadcasting in 1930. Its main speaker was Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. As a boy, "Spike" Sheen had played baseball with Jim Jordan, the future "Fibber McGee" of radio fame. Sheen became a parish priest in Peoria and went on to become one of America's most beloved clergymen. He was a warm, compassionate man with the quick wit of the Irish and his sermons were often sprinkled with funny stories.

In 1950 Bishop Sheen became a national director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, raising funds for foreign missions. Sheen turned out voluminous writings, including several inspirational books with titles such as '*The Way to Inner Peace*,' and '*Guide to Contentment*.'

In 1960 he published his biography, '*Treasure of Clay*.' In 1952 Sheen's slim build and deep-set eyes became familiar with television viewers through his weekly telecast, '*Life is Worth Living*.' The program drew an audience of 20,000,000 viewers each week for five years, despite strong competition from 'Uncle Miltie' Berle's comedy show. Some wag once dubbed Bishop Sheen 'Uncle Fultie.'

Pope Pius XI, on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of his coronation on February 12, 1931, broadcast for the first time over the Vatican's new short wave station HVJ. Guglielmo Marconi dedicated that station to the Vatican and personally tested it before the Pope's first broadcast. Marconi introduced the Pope on the air at 10:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. The Pope gave two speeches, one in Latin, and a second in Italian. Through coast-to-coast hookups and a number of associated short wave stations of the NBC, as well as the Columbia networks, joined in the transmission of the broadcast between Rome and the United States.

In New York, the NBC network preceded the broadcast with a special musical program by a choir and orchestra directed by Walter Damrosch, with Philips Calin announcing. Repeat broadcasts, translated into English, were aired later in the afternoon. In both of his addresses the Pope referred with gratitude to the invention of radio, which he said could be used to follow the precepts of St. Peter in "propagating the church." The invention, he declared, "serves the glory of God," and added that he meant to use it for that purpose.

Station HCJB ("Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings") first went on the air on Christmas Day 1931. The initial

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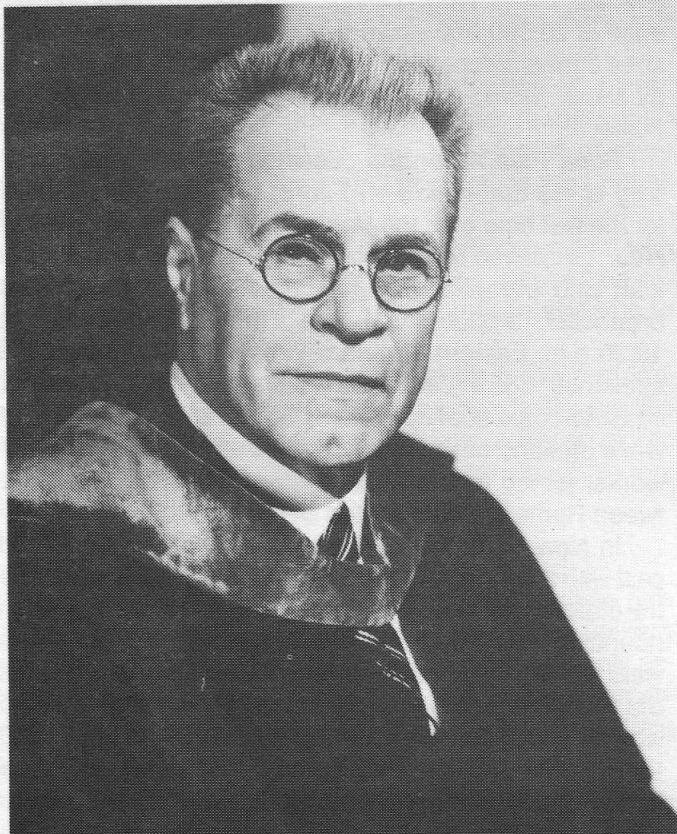
Religion on Airwaves cont. . .

program was aired from a 200-watt transmitter located in a sheep shed in Quito, Ecuador. The program was produced by Clarence Jones and Reuben Larson, aided by several other missionaries, and was picked up by the handful of primitive radios then in the South American country.

As it entered its 50th year of service in 1981, station HCJB engineers designed and built a one-of-a-kind transmitter increasing the station's power to a total of nearly one million watts - making it the most powerful Christian radio station in the world. The program airs in 14 languages, from 20 different countries, with a staff of over 200 missionaries. HCJB also operates two hospitals, heads a community health care program, offers correspondence courses through its Bible Institute of the Air, and produces a variety of television programs for Latin America.

Of the many powerful voices ever to speak out over the airwaves in the name of religion, perhaps none other was heard by more faithful listeners, nor had such a lasting effect, as that of the lady evangelist, Sister Aimee Semple McPherson. Born near Ontario, Canada, on October 9, 1890, as a restless eight year old, young Aimee found life on a rural farm torturously dull. She eagerly attended the Sunday morning services at the local Salvation Army headquarters, because she enjoyed the excitement of the trumpets and drums and tambourines, as well as the spirited singing and hell-fire preaching.

The impressionable child was awe-inspired and decided very early in life to become an evangelist. Aimee got herself a big Bible, and using a tree stump for a pulpit, she



Dr. Charles L. Goodell was known as "The Shepherd of the Air" to listeners of **Sabbath Reveries**, which first aired on NBC June 2, 1929. This photo was taken in 1936. (Courtesy Charles Stumpf)

practiced preaching to the farm animals. She encouraged some of her young friends to join her in singing the hymns, while they banged out the rhythm on old pots and pans.

In her late teens, Aimee married a missionary, Robert Semple and followed him to China where he died of malaria a month before the birth of their daughter. She then fled to New York and within a short time married Harold McPherson. He took her to live in his home town of Providence, R.I. and, in time, they had a son.

Aimee grew weary of the humdrum life in the country's smallest state, and one day while her dear husband was at work, she hurriedly packed her suitcase, tucked a child under each arm, and took a train back to her home town. Self-ordained, Aimee began to preach her own kind of hell-fire sermons in little churches throughout Canada until she felt she was ready for the "big time."

In 1918 she set out for Los Angeles with ten dollars, her big Bible and a tambourine. Sister Aimee had a dynamic personality as well as piercing brown eyes which were big and soulful, and her voice was similar to a trombone's blare. In short order Aimee began to gather a faithful flock of followers. She founded her Four Square Gospel, and in 1923 she had her own Angelus Temple in the city of Los Angeles, built at the cost of one and one half million dollars, with a seating capacity for 5,000 of her faithful followers.

The temple featured a gigantic rotating illuminated cross that beamed out a "welcome" to troubled wayfarers. The cross could be seen over a fifty mile radius.

Aimee's Angelus Temple gained more than 500 satellite churches. It also had its own broadcasting facilities, over which Sister Aimee began to air her Four Square Gospel sermons on station KFSG, Los Angeles beginning in 1923. She became "Radio Pastoress" to millions of American homes. Through her Sunday-night radio program, as well as mammoth crusades, Sister Aimee gathered hundreds of thousands of supporters. She gained great fame and tremendous power - and wealth. She built a palatial home next to her Temple.

The flamboyant lady evangelist drew headlines around the world. She was involved in a number of scandals including the time in the 1920's when she bobbed her hair, eloped with her mother's boyfriend, and was involved in a bogus kidnaping and miracle 'return from the sea.' Finally her followers became skeptical and she lost her grip. Court battles during a power struggle with her own mother finally brought about Sister Aimee's downfall.

During World War II Aimee tried to work her way back into the limelight. She sent two million Bibles to servicemen and called down Biblical plagues on the Axis powers.

On September 17, 1944 Sister Aimee died of an overdose of barbiturates. More than 10,000 attended her funeral. She was buried with a live telephone beside her in the coffin, so that she could communicate from the beyond. Some more recent television evangelists' scandals pale in comparison to Sister Aimee.

Another of the airwave's most fiery personalities during the Depression years was Father Charles E. Coughlin. Son of an Indiana-born seaman, Coughlin was born on

Continued on page 9 . . .



Father Charles E. Coughlin was the controversial "radio priest" who emphatically denounced FDR's New Deal. (Courtesy Charles Stumpf)

October 25, 1891. He studied theology in Canada and later taught religion for ten years. In 1926 Father Coughlin became the pastor of the Church of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan. On October 17th of that year he began broadcasting a weekly program over station WJAR in Detroit.

Father Coughlin's earliest broadcasts dealt with routine religious matters and home life. In 1928 he had a Sunday afternoon program especially for children. By 1930 he was known as "The Radio Priest" and his program was carried on a network of 18 CBS stations.

With the beginning of the Depression, Father Coughlin began to speak out on other matters, including politics. In addition, he launched a campaign to berate the bankers of America. When our country's financial system collapsed in March of 1933, The Radio Priest said the Federal Reserve Banking System, which had been established to prevent depressions, had "run to cover like a cowardly slut." He predicted a 'credit famine' and recommended the establishment of the National Bank of the US to be owned by the people.

Much controversy resulted. In April 1933 the Radio Priest's home was bombed, but he escaped uninjured. In the spring of 1934 he called for regulation of the Stock Market, stating "Wall Street performs a necessary function, but it is sick and wants to cure itself. Its shoulders must be slashed with the whip of public castigation. . . The cost of living is eating up the wages of the working man. . . the flow of money to foreign countries must be curtailed."

As world conditions worsened, Coughlin used his radio program to commence attacks on such subjects as Communism, unions, President Roosevelt, and especially FDR's 'New Deal.'

The Radio Priest skillfully combined the powers of the pulpit with broadcasting. He swayed his listeners with his fiery orations; his voice vibrant with emotion, opinion and his own political beliefs.

On November 11, 1934, Coughlin announced the formation of "The National Union for Social Justice," and defined 'Social Justice' as "the justice that one human being, or one group of human beings, should have toward another group of human beings, who make contributions to the well-being of total society, without which society itself would crumble." He headed the *Social Justice* weekly publication with more than one million paid subscribers.

Meanwhile, over the airwaves, his thunderous warnings continued against what he considered the "multiple evils of Communism, Capitalism, labor unions and Wall Street," as well as dozens of other targets. Coughlin was labeled by his detractors as being both Pro-Nazi and Anti Semitic.

During World War II, his *Social Justice* magazine was banned from the mails as a "systematic and unscrupulous attack upon the war effort." Fearlessly, the Radio Priest carried on his untiring crusade. When, in the mid 1930's, the CBS network had refused to carry his broadcasts, Coughlin quickly formed his own "broadcasting network" of some forty-seven independent stations across the country.

In 1935 a staff of more than 200 was required to handle the mail at his Shrine of the Little Flower. In March 1936 his church was destroyed by fire and plans to build another at a cost of more than \$750,000 promptly got underway. His political invectives boomed out across the airways until 1940, when he retired from broadcasting. Father Coughlin continued as a parish priest in Michigan, retiring from the pulpit in 1966. He suffered a heart attack in 1974, and died two days after his 88th birthday on October 27, 1979.

Ackerman Obituary Cont. . .

He was still in New York when CBS was about to bring **Our Miss Brooks** to the radio airwaves. He tried to get Shirley Booth to play the lead. "All she could see was the down side of the underpaid teacher. She couldn't make any fun of it," he observed. Following his transfer to California, Ackerman hired Eve Arden to play the lead.

After bringing the **Adventures of Phillip Marlowe** to CBS, William S. Paley asked Ackerman to "develop a Phillip Marlowe of the early west." The result was **Gunsmoke**. At the first he and others at CBS were not sure what position the lead **Gunsmoke** character should have. "We experimented in writing scripts with him as sheriff for a while and I think in one version we had him as a private eye," Ackerman told SPERDVAC. "Then we finally settled on him being a marshal.

His job at CBS included responsibility for the continued success of the programs that moved from NBC to CBS during the famed 1948 talent raid. "When you're responsible to a boss like Bill Paley, you've got to turn out an excellent product or you'll lose your job," he commented.

Information Please cont. . .

articles and information about what is happening in their areas, there is no way for the rest of us to know about them. The Radiogram welcomes articles from everyone. We do not have a "staff" of writers. Let us know about your area and interests.

In the mailbag for this column comes news from Tom Grimsley of San Pablo, California that Bud Carey's Old Radio Theatre can be heard in the Bay area on Saturday mornings from 10 to 11 on KALW, 91.7 FM. And that's all that's in the mailbag. What's your news?

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Honorary member Arthur Peterson has donated a copy of "Robert Frost: Fire and Ice," the life, works and wisdom of America's favorite poet, performed by Arthur Peterson, on cassette. Arthur Peterson originally opened his one-man-show at the Pasadena Playhouse and has played Off-Broadway, and toured colleges and community theaters across the country. Now you, too, can enjoy his performance in the comfort of your own home on this commercially available cassette from Audio Editions' Books on Cassette for \$10.95. To order your copy call (800)231-4261

CALLING ALL CLUBS

I have just seen a copy of "Wavelengths", a 4-page newsletter published by a group called Revival of Creative Radio, P.O. Box 1585, Haverhill, MA 01831-2285. The issue contains obituaries, a review of Joan Benny's talk at the 1990 Friends of Old Time Radio convention in Newark, New Jersey, classified ads, and some information about Eddie Cantor on CD. "Wavelengths" is published quarterly and distributed free to members. Membership is \$12.00 per year. For more information, send a SASE to the above mentioned address.



Carroll Carroll, left, writer for Kraft Music Hall and Shell Chateau, died Feb. 5. He is pictured here in 1939 when NBC West Coast vice-president Don Gilman presented him with the NBC chimes. Joining them are Bing Crosby and Bob Burns.

Send your information, questions and suggestions 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!

HUGH'S HUES (Cont. from page 5)

other year until it was necessary for him to go full time with the Coast Guard. Joan Davis and finally Eve Arden followed.

No need to say any more beyond what has already been said or written about the actors who were cast with Eve on her show. Some were established and others were to go on to lengthy careers. That particular meld of writers and actors produced one of the last top comedy shows on radio. Thanks to Archie and his ability to make a grizzled old stage actor into an accomplished comic, America was to enjoy for many years, on radio and TV, the most famous teacher in the U.S., **Our Miss Brooks**.

March's Marvelous Events: Washington, D.C. has two this month. The first radio broadcast from the floor of the House of the 73rd Congress was permitted on March 9th, 1933. And on March 25, 1937, the *Daily News* printed the first perfumed advertising page.

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

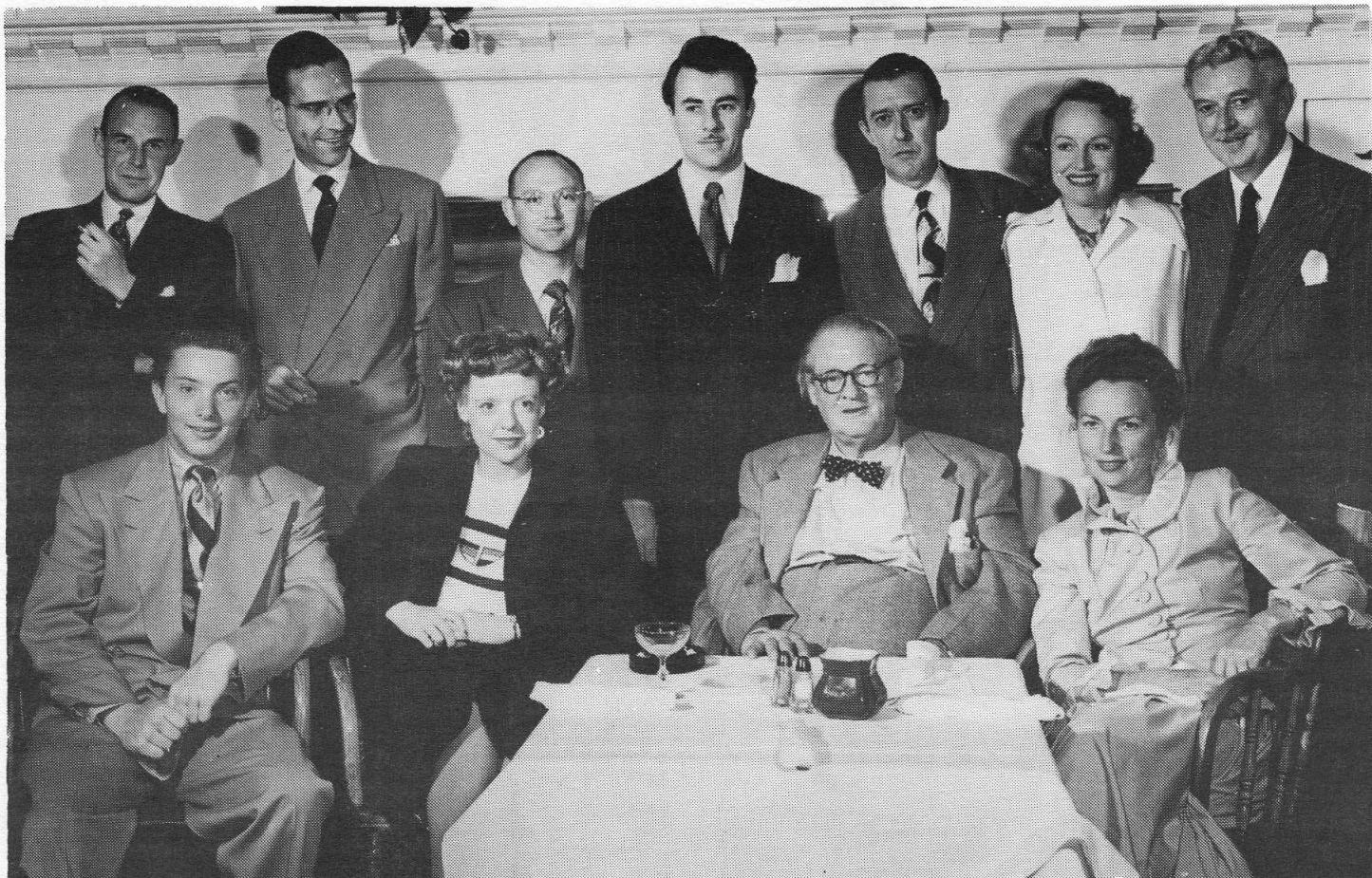
NEW LIBRARIAN NEEDED

SPERDVAC Archives cassette librarian Barbara Cowin has had to step down from her position. Because we do not as yet have a replacement for her, we are forced to temporarily close that portion of our library.

We need a Southern California volunteer member to aid us by running this important arm of our radio broadcast library. The job may take as much as 10-15 hours per week and the work can be spread out throughout the week.

Members able to assist SPERDVAC in this endeavor should contact Larry Gassman at (213) 947-9800.

MOVING???
PLEASE SEND US
YOUR ADDRESS
CHANGE AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE.



Gathering in the Colonial Room of Hollywood's Brown Derby are some of the faces behind the **Mayor of the Town** radio series. Seated in front are Conrad Binyon, Virginia Reed, Lionel Barrymore and Agnes Moorehead. In back are Don Stauffer (agency rep.), Frank Martin (announcer), Bernard Katz (musical director), Leonard St. Clair (writer), Jack Van Nostrand (director), Virginia Gregg (Noxema signature voice) and James Doanes. (Courtesy Bernard Katz)



We recognize director Dick Mack and Wendel Niles at left, Ken Niles at far right, and, of course, Groucho Marx. Who can identify the others?

SPERDVAC



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

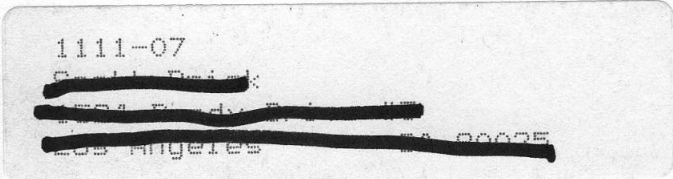
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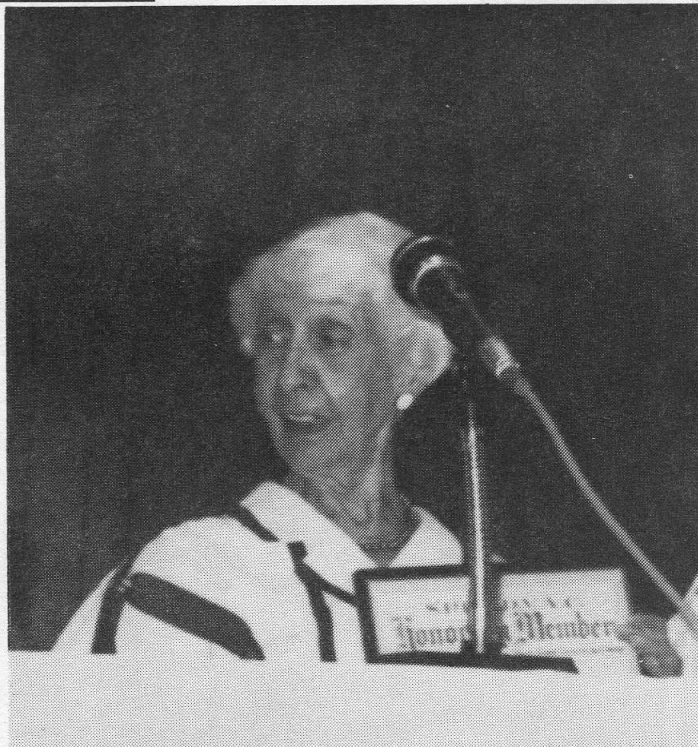
FIRST CLASS MAIL



DEADLINE
APRIL ISSUE
March 15, 1991



The **Captain Midnight** cast in Chicago: Jack Bivens (Chuck), Ed Prentiss (The Captain), Angeline Orr (Joyce), Sherman Marks (Ichabod Mudd) and Boris Aplon (The Mean, Nasty Ivan Shark).



Big Band era singer Meri Bell Sharbutt passed away Feb. 15 following a long illness. She was 78. She sang with the Gus Arnheim and Henry Busse Orchestras and on programs aired on CBS and NBC. Since her retirement to Palm Desert, CA in 1976, Mrs. Sharbutt worked actively for drug and alcohol recovery programs. She was a co-founder of the Awareness Hour at the Eisenhower Medical Center and worked with the National Council on Alcoholism. She was also active in the Betty Ford Center in nearby Rancho Mirage. She is survived by her husband, radio announcer Del Sharbutt, and three children.