



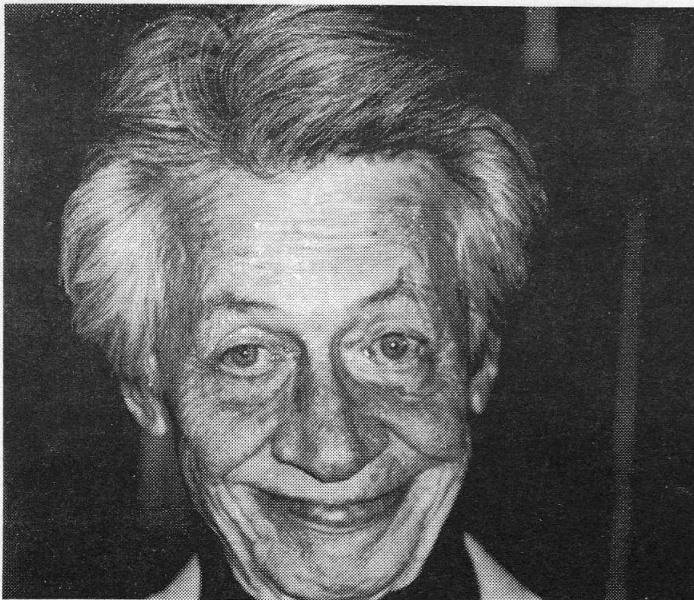
TWO WRITE-IN CANDIDATES JOIN BOARD

SPERDVAC's 1991-92 Board of Directors includes two who were elected by write-in votes. With only six individuals running for seven available positions, the Board already needed one additional member. However, Don Senecal found that job commitments will prevent him from serving on the Board and he withdrew shortly before election day.

Joining the Board are John Gassman and Richard Glasband. John Gassman had the highest number of write-in votes. Second and third place write-in winners Barbara Watkins and Dan Haeefele declined the opportunity to join the Board. Richard Glasband, who had served on the Board for several years, agreed to fill the vacant position.

The directly elected representatives are Larry Gassman, Carrolyn Rawski, Don McCroskey, Bobb Lynes and

VANCE COLVIG DIES



SPERDVAC honorary member Vance Colvig died March 4, following a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 72. He began his radio career as an usher at NBC's Hollywood studios, then moved to voice work behind the microphone. He appeared in the SPERDVAC recreation of *Suspense* in 1982 and, more recently, has been in radio productions by the California Artists Radio Theatre.

Michael Plett.

At its meeting following the March membership meeting, the Board elected Larry Gassman to the serve as president until the full Board can meet at its April 20 planning meeting.

The proposition to abolish the open reel portion of the Hollywood Museum Library passed 137 - 28.

Just 176 of SPERDVAC's 1557 eligible members voted in the annual election.

SPERDVAC ELECTION RESULTS

March 9, 1991

Membership - 1557
Ballots submitted - 175

Larry Gassman	167
Carrolyn Rawski	165
Don McCroskey	159
Bobb Lynes	156
Michael Plett	145
Don Senecal	144

Proposition
Yes - 137
No - 28

Write-In Votes

John Gassman - 13	Catherine Passarelli - 1
Barbara Watkins - 12	Jean Harding - 1
Dan Haeefele - 10	Jay Ranellucci - 1
Richard Glasband - 10	Pat McGee - 1
Bruce Miller - 7	Michele Ehrich - 1
Chris Lembesis - 3	
Martin Ehrich - 2	Masked Rider of the Plains - 1
Stuart Lubin - 2	Mr. Moto - 1
Larry Hand - 1	Colonel Stoopnagle - 1
Joe Crawford - 1	Jeanette Nolan - 1
Don Keith - 1	
Glenda Kelly - 1	
Harry Spitzer - 1	

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

This is a summary of decisions and issues raised at the SPERDVAC Board meeting of February 9, 1991:

☛ Cost of repair of the SPERDVAC storage building's roof is \$7,135. A new roof is needed to prevent rain damage to SPERDVAC materials.

☛ John Gassman asked the board to allocate funds to purchase 5000 C-62 cassettes. The Board decided they would like to scrutinize the cassettes before agreeing to buy them.

☛ Allocated moneys to purchase transcription discs of the Lum 'n Abner series. There are about 67 discs from the 1948 era available for \$6.00 each.

☛ Agreed to increase the maximum number of Hollywood Museum library cassette checkouts from five to ten at a time.

☛ Set policy that Radiogram ads must be paid in advance.

These are highlights of decisions and issues covered at the March 9 Board of Directors' meeting:

☛ John Gassman accepted appointment to the BOD.

☛ Larry Gassman was appointed to serve as president during the meeting. Officers will be elected at the April planning meeting.

☛ Treasurer Chester Allen reported SPERDVAC's income for the past fiscal year was \$82,690 and total expenses were \$54,150.

☛ Larry Gassman reported the roof of the SPERDVAC storage facility was repaired at a cost of about \$7135.

☛ Up to \$6000 was authorized for purchase of cassettes, plastic boxes and labels.

☛ Because librarians Bruce Miller and Gary Mollica have indicated they do not have requisite inventory to accommodate orders of ten cassettes, the Board will not proceed to implement the Feb. 9 action.

☛ A proposal to move the next SPERDVAC convention to the Crowne Plaza Holiday Inn was passed by the Board.



President Larry Gassman made CBS radio sound effects artist Ray Kemper an honorary member at last year's convention. He joined Suzanne and Gabe Barabas, authors of a book about Gunsmoke.

SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

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SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS: Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712 - (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: TEMPORARILY CLOSED

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 - 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



by Barbara
J. Watkins

Although most recent obituaries paying tribute to comedian George Gobel dealt primarily with his hit TV show of the fifties, some old time radio buffs recalled that Lonesome George also did a series of radio shows for NBC. More than 500 five-minute monologues and skits were aired on the network's weekend MONITOR between 1956 and 1958. All of the scripts were written by SPERDVAC honorary member Tom Koch, who also wrote the FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY series for MONITOR.

CALLING ALL CLUBS

SPERDVAC member Bernie Feitelberg writes to us as President of the *Radio Collectors of America* to share with us an idea his club is participating in: sending cassettes of old time radio programs to our troops stationed in the Persian Gulf. Fortunately, Desert Storm has been successfully concluded, since receipt of Bernie's letter. We will be interested to learn, however, if there has been any response from the service men and women who received cassettes from old time radio enthusiasts. If anyone has any information on this, please let us know.

LIBRARY UPDATE

As you have probably read on page 1 in this issue, the proposition to close the open reel version of the Hollywood Museum Library passed. The open reel version of the Archives Library Reels 1,000 and Up remains open and ready for business. Temporarily unavailable from this library are reels 1172, 1177, 1180, 1194, 1213, 1270, 1272, 1273, and 1326.

The new library postage rates are as follows:

- 1 lb. \$0.65
- 2 lbs. 0.89
- 3 lbs. 1.13
- 4 lbs. 1.37
- 5 lbs. 1.61

Please send your information, questions and suggestions for this column to Barbara J. Watkins, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Til next time, spaceman's luck!

AUDRY MARSH GUESTS APRIL 13

Radio actress-singer Audry Marsh will be our guest when we meet April 13 at the Buena Park Public Library.

Ms. Marsh began her radio career in 1931 in New York. Among her early credits is *Maxwellhouse Showboat*, on which she played the character Mary Lou.

She was the voice of the singing commercials on *The Second Mrs. Burton*, *Guiding Light*, *Portia Faces Life* and *The Aldrich Family*.

The SPERDVAC meeting begins at 12 noon. The library is located at 7150 La Palma Ave. in Buena Park, just a few blocks from Knott's Berry Farm.

SPERDVAC

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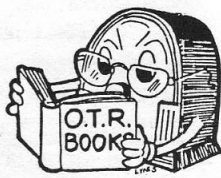
CASEY KASEM

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JUNE FORAY

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



THE DAYS OF MY LIVE By Edward Macdonald
"Mac" Carey, St. Martin's Press, Feb., 1991, 283 pages
plus appendix of his radio, TV, and film history. \$19.95.

To quote the jacket blurb, "77-year old Mac, a Sioux Citian, has won two Emmy awards for Best Daytime Actor and six Soap Opera awards, through a lifetime of a stormy and puzzling marriage, film work lost and won, affairs, a crushing divorce, alcoholism, recovery, father of a schizophrenic daughter, and expression of 'eternal gratitude to AA for turning my life around.' The 4th step of AA asks for a complete and honest inventory to be taken of one's past life, including the sins of omission and commission. This book is that inventory."

The Days of My Life is an open window to the inner world of stage, screen, radio, TV stars, AND DRINKING. It is packed with information, with a style that includes use of the past and present tense when relating past events; sections of short sentences in staccato beat; and an interspersing of blank verse. It passes through the formative years of schooling and theater, enters radio, stage, screen, and TV, and spends much time on marriage, WWII with the Marines in the Pacific, AND DRINKING. The autobiography has a mere 16 pages on the Golden Years of radio, and 16 on TV, but does offer a few insights:

LIGHTS OUT: "When we were on the air, all the lights were out except for the sound man's and a lamp by the mike in the center of that vast studio."

SOAPS: "I play the part (Dick Grosvenor in Stella Dallas) for 3 years and because I have hay fever, I am written out every Aug. 12 until the first frost. Every time I am written out my character commits suicide, once by jumping out a window, once by poison, and once I forgot how. Each October when my hay fever is over, I am miraculously revived."

RADIO ACTING: "In radio, you must develop a recognition of emotion and character that is immediate even as you read the material for the first time. You are in a way improvising and recognizing the moment immediately. It is a tremendous challenge. The radio actor's ability has too often not been recognized for the talent it requires. . . . I didn't realize at the time how much training radio soap operas were giving me for my future."

"Live television is for me, as for most actors, the nearest thing to theater outside of theater. It is literally live, not taped, not filmed; we just have one shot at a performance. This makes it incredibly exciting."

The good news: this book is interesting if you like reading about the stars. The bad news: if you don't like that one dimension, then forget this book.

To sum Mac up, he says of himself:

"I won't positively say that this is an analogy of my life--

-asserting myself, overplaying it, and being chastised-- but it comes close. All my life, I have swung between the poles of introvert and extrovert, sensitivity and hardheadedness.

"Greed and reality temper my guilt, though it's always there in every actor's heart: 'Will somebody catch on today that what we're doing is really fun and we don't have to be paid for it?' Being preoccupied with the arts is a reward in itself. You always feel it's an extra bonus to be paid for doing what you enjoy."

For a last look at Mac, here's one of his poems:

*"You can go years
without realizing
Other people know things
About you
Than you don't*

*You could walk down
The street and
Pass yourself
Without knowing who
It was
You passed*

*It's hard enough
To catch up
With yourself*

*And then it doesn't
Do you any good
Because you don't know
Who it is
You've caught up with."*

- reviewed by Chick Meyerson

FUNNY WOMAN: The Life and Times of Fanny Brice. By Barbara Grossman. Indiana University Press. 10th and Morton Streets. Bloomington, IN 47405. 1991. Clothbound. \$35.00.

We remember Fanny Brice for BABY SNOOKS, that precocious brat we all loved. In this new biography of that gifted comedienne, we find that Brice was a major headliner in vaudeville, burlesque, and the Ziegfeld Follies long before she entered radio. The author has taken the time to explore the comic persona that was Fanny Brice.

With vaudeville dying in the early 1930's due to the Depression and movies becoming a hit with the public, Brice realized that she had to adapt to radio, and she did. After early appearances that did not appeal to the public, she caught on immediately as a part of the cast of the GOOD NEWS OF 1938. She refined the baby characters she played on the stage and became BABY SNOOKS on November 25, 1937.

This is a thorough and well written biography of Brice's entire career. Though she played only Snooks after 1937, perhaps more could have been written on how she prepared for a broadcast, with sample script excerpts included. But to make up for this deficiency the author does define the BABY SNOOKS character with a complete analysis.

Continued on next page

Sprinkled throughout are excerpts from Brice herself about her stage and radio career. Concerning Snooks, Brice commented in a 1946 interview: "She's got a lot of high spirits and loves good clean fun, but she is never vicious or mean, and if she is, it's all the fault of my script writers." You'll enjoy this book.

ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS: American Entertainers in World War II. SVS, Inc. VHS Hi-Fi, Color/Black & White, 90 mins. Copyright 1989. To order: (800) 345-6228. \$14.95 + \$4.00 shipping and handling.

Radio history from World War II finally gets its due in a marvelously produced video that was the subject of a recent PBS Documentary Special. It pays tribute to the entertainers from film, stage, and radio who gave their time to bring a touch of home to our fighting men overseas. Bond rallies, patriotic cartoons, and radio shows are showcased in a video you will want to add to your collection.

Interspersed with film and newsreel clips are contemporary interviews with Patty Andrews, Dorothy Lamour, Mel Blanc, and a reunion of the Bob Hope Troupe with Bob, Frances Langford, Patty Thomas, and Tony Romano. A highlight of this is a discussion of how Hope brought his radio show to military camps. Great reminiscences.

The KMPC Radio Theatre broke with tradition March 23 with the broadcast of a musical, "Smoky Mountain Suite." Unlike its old time radio counterparts, the program featured performers who did both the dramatic and singing parts. Perhaps more gutsy was the decision to disregard racial differences among cast members. It may have been the first radio program in which individuals of different ethnic backgrounds played members of the same family and they had the good taste to avoid dialect imitations.

Pictured from left are Tracy Coley, Brian L. Green, Beverly Nero, Ruth Davis and sound man David L. Krebs.

"Rocky Mountain Suite"

But the real highlights of this video are the film clips from **COMMAND PERFORMANCE**, **G.I. JILL**, **JUBILEE**, and **MAIL CALL**. The video sharpness is superb and this reviewer wonders if the producer-director had access to the 35mm camera negatives. These excerpts have been used in other programs, but not of this quality. The sad comment is that only highlights of these shows are presented. It is interesting to note that the facilities of CBS and NBC were used to present these Armed Forces Radio programs. It is gratifying also to realize that someone in the War Department had the foresight to film some of these shows for posterity, and that they were saved for us to enjoy later.

Included in the clips are routines with Kay Kyser, Mel Blanc, Jerry Colonna, Lucille Ball, Bob Hope, Abbott & Costello, Dorothy Lamour, Frances Langford, Lena Horne, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Cass Daley, Red Skelton and Jimmy Durante. The big question to ask the producer, Robert Mugge, who compiled this material, is, are the shows on film complete? Imagine watching a 30 minute **MAIL CALL** or a **COMMAND PERFORMANCE** complete! Until we get the answer, enjoy this.

- Chris Lembesis

KMPC TAKES MORE CHANCES WITH "SMOKY MOUNTAIN SUITE"



was written by George S. Clinton and Sherry Landrum. Clinton, who leads the Radio Theatre's Western Heritage Band, also provided the music and lyrics. The program was narrated and produced by Newell Alexander and directed by his wife Rosemary. KMPC scheduled a rebroadcast for Easter at 5 pm.



Send your wants in
O T R - related
material to
McGee's Closet, %
Barbara J. Watkins,
PO Box 561,
South Pasadena,
CA 91030

FOR SALE OR TRADE: Both Rhymer books of VIC AND SADE: *Vic and Sade* and *Small House Halfway Up in the Next Block*, sold as set only. Best offer or will trade set for Dunning's *Tune in Yesterday*. Contact: Greg Seltzer, R.F.D. 2, Richmond, NH 03470.

WANTED: Looking for anything on THE SHADOW, WHISTLER, DRAGNET, MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER, Vaughn Monroe, on radio (or video). Also Four Aces and Joni James. Contact: Phil Kine, 708-795 Sunnyside Road, Janesville, CA 96114.

WANTED: Leon Belasco or Jack Crawford Dance Band Remotes or radio broadcasts. Also remotes of less

well-known dance bands. Have many hours of radio bands, will trade or purchase. Contact: Audrey J. Smith, 5709 Jewell Road, Paradise, CA 95969, (916)872-2355.

TAPE SQUEAL?: I will remaster your squealy Ampex 291, Strand, etc. tapes onto fresh tape without squeal for \$8.00 per reel, including tape and return postage. Contact: Randy Eidemiller, 7700 Lampson #37, Garden Grove, CA 92641 (714)373-5140.

WANTED: I have fourteen reels, containing 32 band remotes, 24 FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY, 16 LONG RANGER, 8 GREAT GILDERSLEEVE and the rest are miscellaneous, which squeal. I would like someone to transfer them to cassette for me. I will supply the cassettes. You may keep the reels. Contact John Lloyd, 2667 E. 99th Avenue, Thornton, CO 80229.

WANTED: Information concerning the career of Bertha Brainard, NBC's first director of commercial programs from 1926 at least into the 1930s. Any details of her career at NBC, involvement with specific shows or clients, and subsequent activities would be appreciated. Contact Michele Hilmes, 308 Brandy Run West, Mobile, AL 36608.

From Ireland to America



DAN O'HERLIHY

Actor Dan O'Herlihy began his radio career in his native Ireland where he announced on a station which was only on the air from 1 pm to 12 midnight. "The last tram left the center of Dublin at 12:03. I put on the national anthem but I had to bribe one of the porters there to take it off because as soon as I'd put it on I'd run to make the last tram," he told the audience at SPERDVAC's March meeting.

The conductor, he continued, "took a particular dislike to me." The result was frustrating. "He would wait until I'd shoot out of the door of the radio station. . . and he'd pull away grinning at me." The solution: "I ended up getting a bicycle," he explained. "I developed a good pair of legs during the early years of my radio career."

Once he was having an argument with a record-

ed music program host at the station. One Friday the host accidentally switched on his microphone while vehemently expressing his views of Churchill, Hitler and Mussolini, punctuated with explicatives. When the error was discovered, he uttered another offensive remark before turning off his microphone.

O'Herlihy found him at the station early the next Monday morning. "I came in early to catch the mail before it went upstairs," the announcer told him. Thirty seven letters had arrived. "I sent them on upstairs," his colleague continued. "They were all letters of enthusiastic congratulations."

"I was one of the most experienced actors there because I did about five shows a week and was the announcer," he said of his work in Ireland. "It was such a big industry here that all of the actors had far more experience than we had. . . There was a lot of work to do (in the United States) and I think the (acting) technique reflected that."

In addition to the radio acting and announcing, O'Herlihy worked by day as an architect. He took an offer to act in a film in England and soon learned that acting in America could provide him a much better income. He and his wife came to the U.S. in the late forties.

He worked on the stage production of "McDuff" for Orson Welles. His association with many radio performers there provided him with ways to enter American radio and he soon prepared audition material.

Soon he was working on **Mr. President** with Edward Arnold, the **NBC University Theatre** and on the many programs directed by Jaime del Valle. He also was heard on **Lux Radio Theatre** and **Screen Directors' Playhouse** and had continuing roles on **Aunt Mary** and **One Man's Family**.

His first American radio performance was on the Lawrence and Lee series **Favorite Story** with Ronald Colman. He was also an actor on **The Count of Monte Cristo**.

SPERDVAC has recorded his memories for inclusion in our general library.

HUGH'S HUES

By Hugh Anderson

"Here's Dick Powell as Richard Diamond, Private Detective." The date was April 24, 1949, NBC. For a little more than three years, first on Sundays and then on Fridays over ABC, we were treated to a bit of wise-cracking, rough and tumble, muggings, bombs and threats, and a song or two from the cherub boy singer of the 30's turned rough, glib modern private eye - Dick Powell. John Dunning describes Diamond thusly: "Powell has gone almost full circle, starting as a glamor boy singer in the 30's, graduating only through sheer stubbornness to the super hard-boiled Phillip Marlowe in the film 'Murder, My Sweet,' and finally arriving as 'Diamond' - a charming mix of slick sophistication and two-fisted action. As Diamond, Powell even managed to sing once in a while."

Powell was one of the few entertainers who was able to transport his various talents from band singing through movies, radio into TV. He finished his career as the guiding force in Four Star Productions, founded in 1952 by Powell, Ida Lupino, Charles Boyer and David Niven, for the purpose of producing for television. In the 30's and 40's, he did a great deal of work on radio, starring in series such as **Fitch Bandwagon**, **Hollywood Hotel** and **Rogue's Gallery**, a short-lived private detective program on Mutual, 1945 & 46, in which he was first cast as a tough private eye on radio after his success in "Murder, My Sweet."

Powell began singing and playing baritone horn and other instruments with his own band at age 17 while attending high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. His full name was Richard Ewing Powell, born in 1904 in Mountain View, Arkansas, where he sang in the church choir, going on to attend Little Rock College for a year and worked for the telephone company before going traveling with the Royal Peacock Band and Charlie Davis' Orchestra out of Indianapolis.

In 1930, he landed a job as singer, comedian, and Master of Ceremonies at the Stanley and Enright Theatres in Pittsburgh where he was noted by a Warner Brothers talent scout. He was given a tryout for "The Crooner" but David Manners was cast as the lead.

However, Powell was destined for a protracted movie career. The New York *Times* film reviews lists Powell as appearing in sixty films starting with "Street Scene" in 1931, and ending with "Susan Sleep Here", 1954, a May-September comedy with Debbie Reynolds. He appeared in three "Gold Diggers", "42nd Street", "Hollywood Hotel", "Hollywood Boulevard" and "Broadway Gondolier" in the 30's. David Shipman writes in *The Great Movie stars: The Golden Years* that he was 7th in 1935 and 6th in 1936 in the movie box-office top ten and that he sang to Ruby Keeler no less than seven times.

With all this movie popularity, Powell also worked the big time radio. In 1934 he was the male singer on the **Old Gold Cigarette Program** featuring Ted Fiorito's Orchestra. The show went from New York to KFRG, San

Francisco, but announcer David Ross had to remain in N.Y. Out west, 140 announcers auditioned for the show and Ken Niles of KHJ, Los Angeles, was chosen. KHJ staff announcer Bill Goodwin took Niles' place on CBS' **California Melodies**.

On October 5, 1934, CBS broadcast the 1st of **Hollywood Hotel** with hostess Louella Parsons and master of ceremonies Dick Powell. Ted Fiorito and Ken Niles were also part of the cast and stayed, as did Powell, until 1938. It was the first major network show from the west coast and was to change the radio broadcasting base in America.

John Dunning writes: "When the show went on the air in 1934, not one national program of importance was originating from the West Coast. The main reason was a telephone company policy that cost networks some \$1,000 to reverse circuits. New York and Chicago were the audio centers, and Hollywood - sitting out the early radio years boom with its priceless aggregation of film talent under wraps - hadn't yet arrived.

"It arrived with the opening of **Hollywood Hotel**. Miss Parsons' offset the high telephone rate by persuading the top stars of the era to appear free. That was easy enough for Louella; her power and influence as a coast-to-coast columnist were deeply felt in Hollywood. . . . It all ended in 1938 when the Radio Guild launched a campaign against radio "freebies." Miss Parson's well of free talent dried up overnight, and so did **Hollywood Hotel**.

"She dropped out of radio for a time to concentrate solely on her writing. . . . But California old-timers never forgot that it was the first, and that Miss Parsons-despite her reputation as a sometimes hated gossip columnist-had really brought radio to Hollywood. . . .By 1937, the Coast had a firm grip on radio's future. A few years later, Chicago was all but washed up, and even New York was playing second-string." April 5, 1935, was the radio debut on **Hollywood Hotel** of screen comedian Joe E. Brown in scenes from his upcoming "Alibi Ike." He was flanked by Roscoe Karns & William Frawley.

In 1935, Powell was a member of the cast on Los Angeles' KFVB's 10th anniversary night when the station's owner, Warner Bros., brought in its stars to be part of "the highest priced program ever broadcast." Some of the cast were Mr. & Mrs. Pat O'Brien, Phil Regan, Frank McHugh & Lyle Talbot. It was advertised as the show that cost "a thousand dollars a minute."

Powell starred in **Campana Serenade**, 1943, first on NBC and then later that year on CBS. About this time, Powell was struggling to change his sweet glamour image but could only get such shows as this with Lud Gluskin's Orchestra and Martha Tilton, late of the Benny Goodman Orchestra. 1944-**The Fitch Bandwagon**: Dick Powell became the master of ceremonies with Andy Devine as the comedian and Bill Lawrence as producer. But in 1945 his perseverance brought a dramatic reversal of character: Phillip Marlowe in *Murder My Sweet*. No longer would Powell be considered the boyish singer of the 30's.

On radio, Powell was cast as Richard Rogue, starting on Sept. 27, 1945, Mutual and running during the summer of '46 as **Bandwagon Mysteries**. Then, in April

Continued on page 9



MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

New honorary member Chuck Benedict sent us clippings of many of his columns which appear in the *Glendale News-Press* which include references to early radio and radio performers. A recent one included memories of the old Hawthorne programs on ABC. Thanks, Chuck!

And while we're still thinking about Jim Hawthorne, we meant to mention last month that his new KIEV radio show airs Saturdays at 10 pm. Welcome to Glenhogan, Jim. (And thanks for the nice SPERDVAC mentions.)

H-E-E-E-E-Y, PRETENDERS! SPERDVAC member and radio veteran Arthur Anderson, a long-time member of the cast of the beloved CBS children's program *Let's Pretend* (1934-54), is writing a history of the program, and of Nila Mack's life. He asks that anyone who worked on the show, or knows anyone who did, and anyone who knew Miss Mack get in touch with him with details and reminiscences. His address is 13 West 13th St., 4G-S, New York, NY 10011.

The Time of Your Life Expo for seniors at the Los Angeles Convention Center will feature a salute to Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters at the Home Savings display. Live mini-recreations will be presented April 27, 28 and 29. They will include scenes from *This is Your FBI* with Peggy Webber, Parley Bear and Lou Krugman plus *The Thin Man* with Les Tremayne and Peggy Webber, both on April 27. Also on hand during the three day weekend will be Janet Waldo and Sam Edwards from *Meet Corliss Archer* plus Shirley Mitchell and Willard Waterman from *The Great Gildersleeve*. They, too, are scheduled to perform live.

Now we know Department: Last month we printed a picture of a radio show's cast and asked if readers could identify some of the personalities. Announcer Dick Joy called us from Oregon to tell us the second man at left is musical director Robert Armbruster, NOT Wendel Niles. Next to him is Virginia O'Brien, a singer of the era, and singer Bill Days. June Lockhart told us also of Mr. Armbruster's identity and added that the man to the right of Groucho Marx is Leo Gorcey, of the *Dead End Kids*. Jack French and Helen Heaton also wrote to identify Gorcey. Mrs. Heaton says the lady on Gorcey's arm was one of his wives, but June Lockhart recognized her as singer Fay McKenzie. (Or are they both right?) The photo was taken prior to a broadcast of *Blue Ribbon Town* starring Groucho Marx. It comes from the collection of Naomi Lewis Mack.

Next month we will issue a new General Library catalog page. It will include *Dimension X, X Minus One* and *The Great Gildersleeve*. And Coming Soon: Some truly vintage Jack Benny material. We can listen to the evolution of the Benny persona beginning with broadcasts from 1933.

RECOGNIZE THIS COUPLE?



Cary Grant's face is familiar to much of America, but how about the pretty young lady with him? Here's a clue: She was a successful Hollywood radio actress and appeared on many episodes of the medium's top shows of the forties and fifties. See page 11 for her identity.

THE NEW HOTEL - Convention Site Changes

By Larry Gassman

SPERDVAC has a new site for our annual convention. We will celebrate our 17th anniversary Friday, Nov. 8 and Saturday, Nov. 9 at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, located near the corner of Century and Airport Boulevards in Los Angeles.

The hotel has been open since 1984. It offers two restaurants plus a lounge with bar and possible buffet if numbers warrant. The Crowne Plaza offers a heated outdoor pool, hot tub, co-ed dry and steam sauna and exercise rooms. They also offer guests complimentary passes to a 25,000 square foot private local health club. And laundry and valet service are available six days a week.

For those who wish to stay at the hotel during the SPERDVAC convention, the SPERDVAC rate for sleeping rooms is \$73.13 per night (including the 12.5% bed tax). Reservations should be made directly through the hotel. Their address is 5985 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045-5463. The hotel's phone number is (213)642-7500.

SPERDVAC is working now to organize workshops, recreations and special guests. We would like to hear
Continued on next page

New Hotel for Convention Cont.

from members with ideas for our convention, as well as those who wish to volunteer to assist us. The convention chair is Larry Gassman. He can be reached via the SPERDVAC line at (213)947-9800.

For the convenience of out-of-towners, there is shuttle bus service available from Los Angeles International Airport to the convention site

HUGH'S HUES Cont. from page 7

1949, Richard Diamond began badgering Desk Sergeant Otis (Wilms Herbert), solving all sorts of crimes for Lieutenant Walt Levinson (Ed Begley), and singing soft songs to his girlfriend, Helen Asher (Virginia Gregg). Diamond's crime fighting continued on radio into 1952.

It was in 1952 that Powell decided to try his hand in television; Four Star Productions was born. *Four Star Playhouse*, Sept. 25, 1952 thru Sept. 27, 1956, was a dramatic anthology. Powell played the only continuing character, Willie Dante, gambling house owner, on a rotating basis with the other Four Star owners. In 1960, Howard Duff played Dante in *Dante's Inferno* on NBC-TV. Next came the TV *Richard Diamond, Private Detective* on CBS-TV and later on NBC-TV, July 1, 1957 thru Sept. 6, 1960. David Janssen played Diamond. In 1959, Diamond began using an answering service staffed by a sultry voiced "Sam" who was seen only from the waist down to show her lovely legs. This was Mary Tyler Moore.

From Four Star came *The Rifleman, Wanted-Dead or Alive, The Detectives*. *Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theatre*, a western anthology, ran on CBS-TV from Oct. 5, 1956 to Sept. 20, 1960, with Powell as host and frequent lead on individual episodes. *The Dick Powell Show* ran Sept. 26, 1961 thru Sept. 17, 1963, Tuesdays on NBC-TV as a dramatic anthology series. "The Complete Directory To Primetime Network TV Shows" states: "In Addition to serving as host, Powell periodically appeared in individual episodes. During the first season he co-starred with his wife, June Allyson, in a play called 'A Time To Die.' It is not known whether Powell knew at the time that he had cancer, but by the beginning of the second season he was in declining health. His last acting role was in "The Court-Martial of Captain Wycliff," which was aired on Dec. 12, 1962, and his last appearance as host (on film) was on New Year's Day, 1963. he died the following day. In deference to his family, the filmed introductions that he had already prepared for future telecasts were deleted, and a succession of guest stars appeared as hosts for the remainder of the season. The title of the program was also changed to *The Dick Powell Theatre*.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This April, Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Person, Renfrew of the Mounted and Sergeant Friday listened to The Road of Life while The Fat Man, The Thin Man and Sergeant Preston tuned in I Love a Mystery, looking for the answer to the burning question, "Can Our Gal Sunday from the little mining town out west find happiness as the wife of wealthy Lord Henry?"

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

SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF THE AIR

By Charles Stumpf

Nearly forty years ago John Crosby, reviewer of radio and television for the New York *Herald-Tribune*, and known as "The Listeners' Critic" wrote a highly critical report on radio which was published in the November 6, 1950 issue of LIFE magazine. Extracted from that article, is the following:

Sin Number One: Radio sold its soul to the Advertiser. Broadcasting sold its beautiful white body to the advertiser, before it was old enough to know what it was doing. . . Back in 1926, when radio first went commercial on a large scale, the advertiser came nosing around, trying to buy time as he would buy space on a billboard. . . After a bit the advertiser got sick of hanging around waiting, and he went ahead and produced his own programs which radio stations were only too happy to broadcast in exchange for a certain amount of legal tender. . . So the advertiser got into show business up to his elbows.

Sin Number Two: Radio never fully exploited its enormous potentialities.

Its growth was stunted by the success of a few formulas: the big comedians . . . the family comedy; the soap opera; the whodunit; the audience-participation show; the dramatization of successful movies; the quiz show, and so on . . . Radio did its best to make neurotics out of a whole generation of housewives with its soap operas alone, an endless succession of unfortunate heroines stricken with 'hysterical blindness.' Hysterical blindness, incidentally, is one of the rarest ailments known to mankind (and womankind) but, at one time, half of the soap-opera heroines on the air came down with it at once as if it were measles. (One of them contracted it by eating chocolate cake). . . Radio's contribution to education was practically nonexistent.

Sin Number Three: Radio consistently pandered to the lowest tastes and almost ignored the highest.

As a mass medium radio had to try to please all sorts of ages and incomes and cultural levels at the same time. Eventually, though, its passion for bigness became a megalomania. By so conducting its operations, radio earned the contempt of the educated and cultivated people of the land. . . And, while the American people listened to radio in vast numbers, they never quite respected it.

Sin Number Four: Radio was morally irresponsible to the American people.

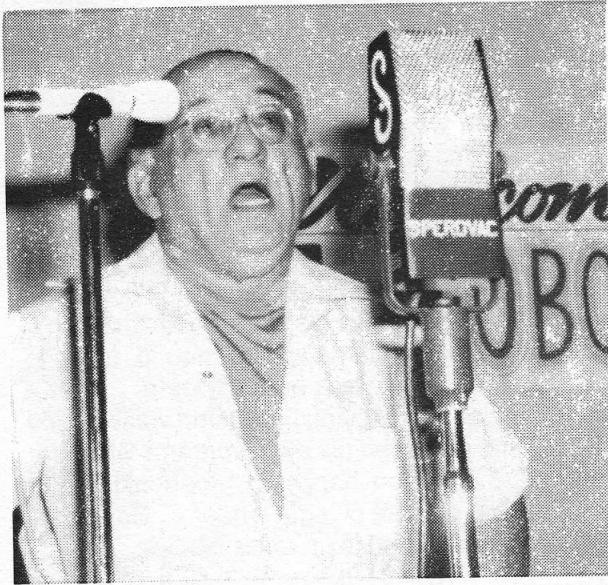
The radio broadcaster used to protest that radio was the mirror of the American people. Radio derived enormous, and I think wholly *false*, satisfaction from counting heads and assuming unwarrantably that they were *contented* heads. . . Automatic proof that it was doing a wonderful job.

Sin Number Five: Radio was avaricious.

Many sizable fortunes were made in radio. In two dozen years the advertisers poured billions of dollars into radio. Both the advertisers and the broadcaster had plenty

Continued on back page . . .

Reminisce with Scenes From



Arch Oboler told us stories of his *Lights Out* series.



Marvin Miller recreated the *Whistler* at one of our conventions.



Above, recreating *The Shadow* for SPERDVAC in 1986 are Leslie Woods, John Archer, Alice Frost.

At right, Herb Ellis and Herb Vigran shared their memories of radio's comedies and dramas.



The SPERDVAC Scrapbook



Jeanne Bates told us of her many appearances on radio dramas. She's the lady pictured with Cary Grant on page 8.



True Boardman recalled his years directing radio dramas at Mutual Radio.



George Fenneman told us why the secret word is Groucho.



Byron Kane and Lurene Tuttle treated us to our first opportunity to see a radio show recreation. They performed a Suspense play at the Capitol Records Studios in 1982.

SPERDVAC

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DEADLINE

MAY ISSUE

April 15, 1991

SEVEN DEADLY SINS Cont. . . .

of money to put in a new idea or a new personality on the air and keep it there until the public accepted it. . . (but) the old faces got richer, and there were no new ideas.

Sin Number Six: Radio created an insulting picture of the American people.

At the start some of the best radio programs emanated from Chicago, Cincinnati and a host of other communities.

When radio grew rich and famous it settled immovably in New York and Hollywood, two of the *least* characteristic cities in the country. . . so far removed from the mainstream of American life that the listener had to have a special frame of reference to understand the jokes. That was the stuff of which radio spun its dreams. It was not only trivia, it was *local* trivia.

Sin Number Seven: Radio was Cowardly.

Rich and influential as radio was, it was the most timid medium of them all. Radio was afraid to offend (ethnic groups). The only group radio ever stood up to was the atheists. Politeness is all very well but the thing can be carried too far. No one ever accomplished anything in this world without stepping on somebody's toes. The FCC has now given the broadcaster the right to harbor opinions.

"One final word", Crosby wrote, "Just because I dwell as such length on radio's faults, I'd like to make it clear that I am not unaware of radio's virtues. It has many of them. But this, after all, is about radio's Seven Deadly Sins."

VOX POP

Editor,

I read with interest Hugh Anderson's column, but one of the sentences opened a wound that I thought had long ago healed. In speaking of Ed Gardner, of **Duffy's Tavern**, he wrote, "Gardner personally wrote **Duffy's** from rough drafts by Abe Burrows and his staff." I was one of those included in "and staff."

At that time, radio writers were anonymous (except for rare exceptions such as the yearly review in *Variety* and Jack Benny who always gave his writers credit). The variety and comedy shows had what was referred to as a "stable" of writers, which was hardly complimentary when you realize the only other denizens of a stable and the usual ground cover.

We were also referred to as "the boys" as in "Let's get the boys in for a rewrite." We in radio comedy worked sixty to seventy hours a week and on some shows, of which **Duffy's Tavern** was one, we worked an all night session at least once a week. The script would be brought to the studio usually a matter of hours before show time, so if Gardner were so inclined he had little more than sixty minutes to "personally write" the script.

Without taking anything from Ed Gardner who was a talented and successful performer and producer, for the almost two years I worked on the show I had no evidence of any line he contributed.

On the radio series **Ozzie and Harriet** for which I worked in obscurity for three years our anonymity was excused by the explanation that mention of writers would dispell the illusion that the dialogue was spontaneous and the incidents were actually happening.

Today, writers receive much more acknowledgement and rewards, and the hope is that some day we might be considered as important as agents, or maybe even the girls who turn over the letters on audience participation shows.

- "And Staff" aka Sol Saks