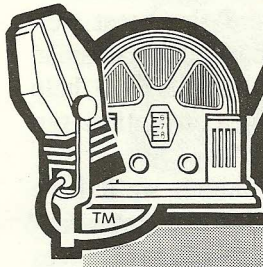


SPERDVAC

Vol. XVIII, No. 8

August 1992



# RADIOGRAM

*Ed "Archie" Gardner.  
See story on page 6.*  
PHOTO COURTESY STEVE JELF



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

# MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

Belated congratulations to our friends at the California Artists' Radio Theatre. They have been awarded a gold medal in the competition for *Best Radio Drama* by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The CART group, headed by veteran radio pro Peggy Webber, won the award for their presentation of *Macbeth*, which aired live on KPCC-FM, Pasadena. A second gold medal was

awarded them in the category *Outstanding Technical Achievement*.

Many thanks to member Geoffrey Brittingham of Nashville. He, after wondering how he might assist SPERDVAC when he lives so far away, sent us some art work to help dress up the pages of the newsletter. It's great!

A reminder that the General open reel library supplying tapes 500+ is still temporarily closed. We're hoping for two volunteers to split up the library and help serve the needs of our members.

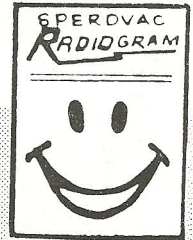
Have you registered for

SPERDVAC's 1992 Old Time Radio Convention? Use the enclosed form to reserve your spot. We are working on arrangements for workshops and re-creations. Already planned are re-creations of *Ethel and Albert* with Peg Lynch and Parley Baer plus *Dragnet* with Herb Ellis, Peggy Webber and Harry Bartell. Wayne Kenworthy, sound effects man on the series, is joining us also.

We can use the help of members willing to volunteer one or two hours during the convention. People able to supply a little manual la-

bor setting up before and/or breaking down after the convention are also most welcome. Phone Larry Gassman at (310) 947-9800 to help make our convention run smoothly.

Next month we'll have some stories and photos connected with the Armed Forces Radio Network, including coverage of the July meeting. Many thanks to guests Bill Sherman, Jud Denaut and Art Gault for the stories they shared of their work with the AFRS Orchestra.



## SPERDVAC FRIENDS

Art Hern  
*(In memory of Ed Prentiss)*  
William Froug  
*(In memory of Mort Fine)*  
Joe Thompson  
*(In memory of Earl Robinson)*  
Frank Bresee  
*(In memory of Andre Baruch)*  
Marty Halperin  
*(In memory of Dick Joy)*  
Harry Bartell  
*(In memory of Jack Johnstone)*  
Rita Perrin  
*(In memory of Vic Perrin)*  
Shirley Mitchell  
*(In memory of Howard Duff & Elliott Lewis)*  
True Boardman  
*(In memory of Bud Hiestand, Elliott Lewis & John McIntire)*  
Ezra Stone  
*(In memory of Sara Seegar Stone)*  
Cecella Joy  
*(In memory of Dick Joy)*  
Herb Ellis  
*(In memory of John Dehner and Jack Johnstone)*  
Lillian Buyeff  
*(In memory of Elliott Lewis & Jack Johnstone)*  
Bea Wain  
*(In memory of Andre Baruch)*  
Elliott Reid  
*(In memory of Howard Duff & John McIntire)*  
Veola Vonn  
*(In memory of Hanley Stafford & Frank Nelson)*  
Jerry Burling  
*(In memory of Bob Jensen)*

Audrey Marsh  
*(In memory of Meri Bell Sharbutt & Andre Baruch)*  
Dix Davis  
*(In memory of Verna Felton, Bea Benaderet and Frank Nelson)*  
Jeanette Nolan  
*(In memory of John McIntire, Elvia Allman, Howard Duff, Elliott Lewis & James McCallion)*  
Kay St. Germain  
*(In memory of Andre Baruch)*  
Estelle Oppenheimer  
*(In memory of Jess Oppenheimer)*  
Dr. Berne Surrey  
*(In memory of Rita Surrey)*  
John Wrisley  
Russell J. Folsom  
John B. Daball  
Hy Averbach  
Barbara Whiting  
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Lucille Meredith  
Glenhall Taylor  
Jack Brown  
Seaman Jacobs  
June Foray  
Chuck Benedict  
Richard Murphy  
Dennis Crow  
Bob LeMond  
Jack Younger  
David Richardson  
Walter Bunker  
Bob Newhart  
John Larch  
Rosemary DeCamp  
Mary Jane Croft Lewis  
Willard & Mary Anna Waterman  
Truda Marson & Richard Chandlee

SPERDVAC is very grateful to these individuals who have contributed \$50 or more to our organization during the past twelve months.



by Barbara J. Watkins

Congratulations to "Thirty Minutes to Curtain", the radio drama group broadcasting from the public radio station in Northridge, California, KCSN, 88.5 FM. They are celebrating their ninth anniversary this month. They first went on the air on Aug. 31, 1983, and have been presenting their radio dramas twice a month continuously for nine years, surviving several format changes of the station, and without benefit of any funding. This must be a record these days. Anyone know of any groups that have been doing it longer, with a regular broadcast schedule?

#### CALLING ALL CLUBS

Rob Imes, 1844 East Longmeadow, Trenton, MI 48183, has just published the first edition of *Tune In*, a fanzine which hopes to "spread the word about radio shows and bring fans together in discussion, debate, and

ideas." Included in the first issue are commentary by the editor (lots of thoughts you will agree with and more to take exception with, a good way to get letters!), an original script of the radio series *Hall of Fantasy*, written by Imes, some cartoons, and a short story. The 24-page publication is \$1.50 per issue. The second issue is scheduled for September. Send your money to Rob Imes at the address above. And tell him you heard about it here.

The *North American Radio Archives* (NARA) is a national radio organization offering tapes of radio shows, printed materials including books and scripts, and two different publications, one - the official newsletter, *NARA News*, published quarterly, and "Through the Horn", published irregularly to supplement the *NARA News*. Issue #6 of *Through the Horn* for summer 1992 has just arrived and is chock full of interesting reading. Always interesting are the editorial comments of its editor, John R. Pellatt of Ontario, Canada. Also included are radio information by Jack French; letters; reports on NARA libraries; and articles about Lauren Bacall on radio, British radio including *The Auntie Mary Lee Show*, and Carlton E. Morse's radio series. These publications are included with the membership fee of \$20.00 per year. To join, write to membership director Janis DeMoss,

*Continued on back page*

## Marsha Hunt guests Aug. 8



**Marsha Hunt**

Actress Marsha Hunt will visit SPERDVAC's microphones at our Aug. 8 membership meeting. She will discuss her work in early radio.

Our guest is best known for her portrayal of Blanche with Don Ameche as her ever-suffering husband, John Bickerson. Their Bickerson routines aired on the *Charlie McCarthy Show*.

Her radio credits include guest appearances on *Lux Radio Theatre*, *Screen Guild Theatre*, *Stars Over Hollywood*, *The Unexpected* and *The Smiths of Hollywood*. On *Silver Theatre* she appeared in the story "Child, Save My Fireman."

The SPERDVAC meeting begins at 12 noon. It will be held at the Thousand Oaks Public Library, 1401 E. Janns Road in Thousand Oaks. The meeting is open free to members and the general public.

After the meeting, visitors may want to see the special collections section, which is open 1-5 p.m. Saturdays. It is renowned for having one of the finest collections of books and scripts from radio and television.

# American radio soap opera begins on BBC

*British listeners will hear new show that isn't on the air in the U.S. yet*

by Dan Haefele

A new American radio soap opera will debut this month on the BBC. **Milford-Haven**, a weekly half-hour continuing drama, is not yet being aired in the U. S.

"It will be early next year before we're on the air here," says Mara Purl, writer and performer on the series. "I thought we'd be on the air here long before we were on overseas."

The story is set in the fictional city of Milford-Haven, located "somewhere in the central coast region of California," according to Purl. "It's north of Santa Barbara and south of Monterey."

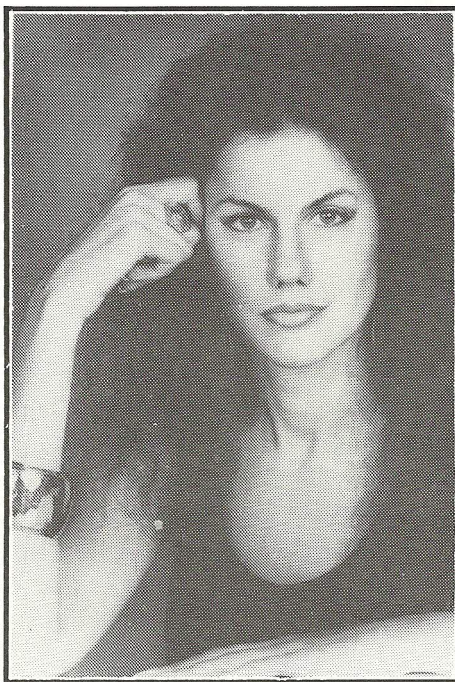
She got the idea after doing a play in the California city Cambria. "Cambria is the Welsh name for Wales. There is a town called Milford-Haven in Wales," she told SPERDVAC.

Purl describes the program as "a chronicle of life in a small town, an escape to California's gorgeous central coast." And it is only the second American soap opera on the air since 1962.

"It deals with the usual loves, intrigues, machinations, gossip, and adventure on which the genre thrives," she said. "But it also deals with current issues, the environmental scene and other problems that weren't issues in the fifties and sixties."

Environmental issues, in fact, will play a significant role in the series. Wildlife conservation, water shortages and earthquakes are some of the conflicts the actress-turned-producer has included in the story.

Purl has already written the first



*Mara Purl is the writer-producer of Milford-Haven, and is one of the new show's stars, too.*

90 scripts. Her current agreement with the British Broadcasting Corporation is to run 30 shows on the BBC-5.

Actor Lloyd Battista, who performed on the **CBS Radio Mystery Theatre** in the 1970s, will appear as the "irascible, unpredictable, and iron-willed" Jack Sawyer in the first episode. He will have several other roles on the new radio soaper, including the character Joseph Calvin, an oil magnate.

Battista has numerous film, television and Broadway stage credits. He was on the CBS-TV daytime drama *Love of Life* for five years and was also featured on *Search for Tomorrow* and *One Life to Live*.

Included in the cast is Colby Chester, who Los Angeles radio audiences met when he appeared in two comedy-drama productions of the **KMPC Radio Theatre**.

**AUGUST 1992**

Purl says she has a syndicator who will distribute the program in the U. S. She expects it to be on the air for U.S. audiences early in 1993.

## Letters to the editor

### VOX POP

#### Lack of voters

Editor,

I appreciate the front page photo [April 1992 issue] of the new directors of SPERDVAC. It is sad that there are 1603 members, but only 189 voted. But at least there are 189 interested in keeping things going in the right direction for this organization. I know there have to be more than 189 members who would like to voice their opinions.

*John Cooper  
Clarksburg, WV*

*Editor's note: Mr. Cooper airs old radio shows on a new FM station in central West Virginia. The call letters are, appropriately, WOTR.*

#### Bob Sweeney

Editor,

It would be remiss to not mention Bob Sweeney's delightfully villainous character as a "corny" huckster in "Toby Tyler." Also, I had the pleasure of being directed by Bob in an episode of "The Andy Griffith Show," where I was one of the "fun girls from Mt. Pilot." He was one of the best TV comedy directors I ever worked with, right up there with the best—Hy Averbach.

Bob was multi-talented and a lovely person to work with.

*Jean Carson  
Palm Springs, CA*

#### NOTICE

Please disregard the ad for California College of Dramatic Arts in last month's *Radiogram*. The school does not exist.

# Satellite superstation brings listening alternative

## *Yesterday USA uses modern technology to air early broadcasts*

Yesterday USA is a satellite superstation operated and run by Bill and Ruth Bragg of Richardson, Texas. The station is an outgrowth of Bragg's Museum of Communications. This national museum is non-profit and operates from Irving, Texas.

The superstation keeps its many listeners up-to-date with the activities of the museum.

Recently it was announced on YUSA that the museum had acquired the complete collection of **Lum and Abner** programs from discs and tapes. The collection goes back to about 1934 and is at present being catalogued and inventoried by the museum's staff and members of the Lum and Abner Society.

The YUSA superstation operates 24 hours a day. Its schedule consists of old radio shows, big band recordings, and many other forms of music.

The station operates on the following satellite frequencies; Sat Com 4, Transponder 15, Audio 6.2; Galaxy 3, Transponder 7, Audio 5.76; Space Net 3, Transponder 5, Audio 6.48. This service is also available on many cable outlets. Members who would like to receive YUSA may write the Braggs with the name, phone number, and address of their cable company. They will do the rest.

Bragg receives help from collectors around the country who volunteer their time and energy to the station. OTR hosts include Tom Heathwood from Boston; Bob Burnham, Michigan; Carl Amari, Illinois; Joe Riddle, Oklahoma; and John and Larry Gassman from California.

The Braggs do a live show on Sunday evening devoted to a wide variety of subjects. Many of their shows deal with old radio by way of interviews with the stars.

Past guests include Les Tremayne, Macdonald Carey, Olan Soule, Frank Bresee, Fred Foy, Janet Waldo, Shirley Mitchell, Lon Clark, Tom Lewis, Bob Bruce, and others.

For more information about this satellite service, write to: Bill Bragg at Yesterday USA, Richardson, TX 75083-6222 or call (214) 690-3636 or (214) 644-2473.

## SPERDVAC Directory

All articles and artwork © 1992 by SPERDVAC unless otherwise indicated. Published monthly except December by the **Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy**, a California non-profit public benefit corporation. Membership is open to all U.S. residents. Dues are \$25 for the first year and \$15 for renewals. Annual subscriptions to the *Radiogram* ONLY are \$15 in the U.S., Canada and Mexico and \$20 to other countries.

### SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL

**BUSINESS:** P. O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712. (310) 947-9800.

### MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Carrolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406.

**RADIOGRAM EDITOR:** Dan Haeefe, 4366-D 136th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250-7108 (310) 973-5060.

### LIBRARIES:

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500:** Bob Steinmetz, P. O. 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 1-500:** Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221.

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 501 +:** **TEMPORARILY CLOSED.**

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500:** Richard Korman, 2515 NE 37th, Portland, OR 97212.

**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 - Open reels 1-1000:** CLOSED

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Open reels 1001+:** Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031.

**HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Cassettes only:** Glenda Kelly, 2323 Ralston, Redondo Beach, CA 90278.

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

**AUDIO RADIOGRAM:** 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, Port Orchard, WA 98366 (206) 876-5850. (For blind members only.)

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

**ACQUISITIONS: (Discs, tapes & printed materials):** John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603. (310) 947-9800 for both General and Archives Libraries.

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

# Duffy's Tavern

where the elite meet to eat...

and the staff toils until they're fired

*Ed "Archie" Gardner might have set a record for the number of firings on a network radio show*

*by Dan Haefele*

For a little over a decade Ed Gardner entertained radio listeners as the Brooklyn-accented Archie, manager of Duffy's Tavern.

The series had its Genesis in **This is New York**, a 1939 CBS show which Gardner starred on only because he could find no actor to satisfactorily give the vocal delivery he wanted. The following year CBS offered a thirty minute visit to Duffy's via **CBS Forecast**. The program became a regular series with its initial broadcast on March 1, 1941.

Archie was surrounded by off beat characters and a variety of big name guests who dropped in to partake of the weekly half-hour of comedy. Their lines were penned originally by Abe Burrows—and often rewritten by Gardner.

While America laughed at Archie, the man-hungry airhead Miss Duffy, Eddie the waiter and Clifton Finnegan, whose IQ was the negation of **Information Please's** Clifton Fadiman, there were much more serious moments on the production end. Preparing and producing **Duffy's Tavern** involved a combination of hu-

*"At first, the sight of an audience terrified me, and when I get out on a stage without a mike in front of me, I get positively sick."*

—Ed Gardner, 1943

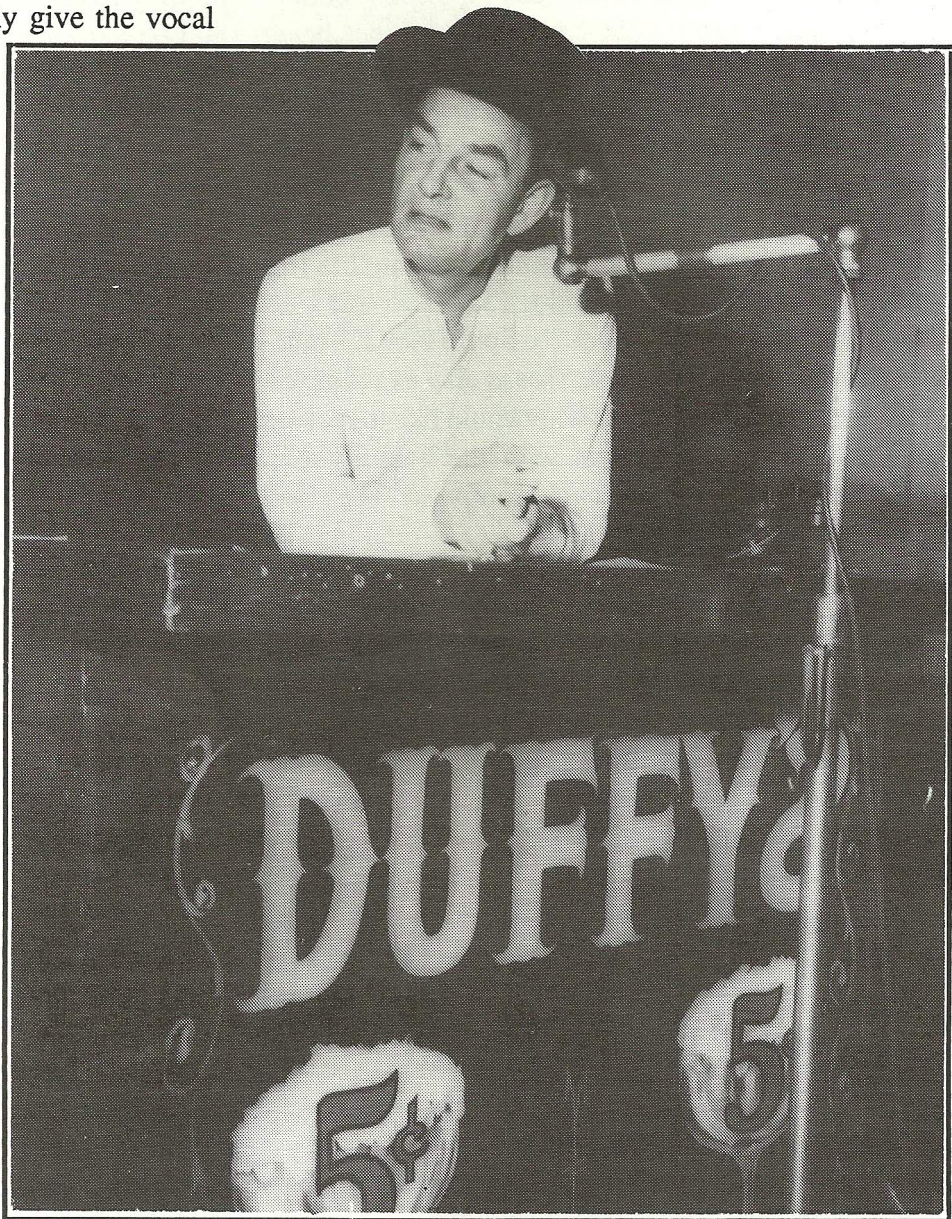
PHOTO COURTESY STEVE JELF

RADIOGRAM PAGE SIX

morous moments and frustration.

Shirley Booth, radio's original Miss Duffy, divorced husband Ed Gardner in 1942 and left the program the following year. "The part was written around Shirley, originally," Gardner said in a 1943 interview. "I've auditioned about 100 girls in New York and here. If, by the grace of good luck, the right one comes along, fine. But we don't want to sell the part short. We'll probably have to develop a new girl character and write Miss Duffy out

*Continued on next page*



AUGUST 1992

## Duffy's Tavern and Ed Gardner continued

of the script.”

But he did hire another Miss Duffy. And another. And still others. Writers and staff members came and went, often dismissed by Gardner. But Duffy's remained part of America's comic relief.

At SPERDVAC's meeting in June we presented three people who were involved with the show in its later years. They are writers Bob Schiller and Larry Rhine and actress Hazel Shermet, the final Miss Duffy.

One important aspect of the Duffy's formula was that the character Duffy never appeared on the air. “Gardner always figured that (we should) leave that to the imagination,” Schiller explained. “He thought it would spoil everything if suddenly Duffy would show up.”

“One of the wonderful things about radio,” he continued, “was that you couldn't see it. In one of the shows, for example, Archie says, ‘What's our new waiter doing?’ ‘He's mopping the floor’ is the reply. ‘What's wrong with that?’ He says, ‘He's mopping it with a customer.’ Try to do that on television.”

“The characters were wonderful,” Larry Rhine added. “Archie was the illiterate bartender. Finnegan was the moron. Then there was Miss Duffy, the man hunter. Whenever she moved, she always sent a forwarding address to the Peeping Toms,” he said.

One happy memory of the Duffy's cast was actor Charlie Cantor, who played the dim witted Clifton Finnegan. “In our home, he would tell a dialect joke and he'd use three different dialect voices. He was wonderful. He was a little worried that Finnegan was a moronic character and he thought that maybe people might think he was in real life. He went for psychology and taught that on the side in some college,” Schiller said.

“Charlie was not really very funny off mike,” Hazel Shermet added.

One of the frequent visitors to Duffy's establishment was the famed character Col. Stoopnagle. “I had a lot of fun writing for Stoopnagle,” Rhine said. “He did spoonerisms. He said things like ‘Paul Revide's rear.’ He talked about these wonderful inventions. He had a lawn mower with a little bag of arsenic on it for people who would rather die than mow the lawn.”

Rumors that Ed Gardner frequently fired his employees were accurate, according to our guests. Performers and writers alike were often fired and sometimes rehired.

“He did that purposely, to keep us on our toes,” Bob Schiller observed. “He always felt that if we were

making a lot of money—which he didn't want to pay—we would get lazy and not write as well.”

Schiller explained one of Gardner's methods: “He would team people together. He'd say, ‘OK, you write with him, and you write with him, and *you*—there's nobody for you to write with so you're fired.’ ” And he wasn't joking.

Accounts of Gardner's actions might seem like exaggerations to an outsider, but they were serious business to the writing staff. “We were mortally afraid of losing our jobs. Most of us were beginners and we were afraid

*Continued on next page*

### Bob Schiller



PHOTO COURTESY JORDAN YOUNG

“When I got out of the Army I was told that Ed Gardner anybody a week's trial if they could show him some comedy material. So I showed him some of the (newspaper) columns I had written... I stayed up three nights in a row trying to write what they call a spot. It was not easy. When I brought it in I was still in my uniform. The head writers read it and they liked it. They called up Gardner, who at the time was living in a palatial mansion in Bel Air, and said, ‘I think we've found a writer.’

“We'd go out to Ed's house every Sunday. ‘How are you at pitching?’ one writer inquired.

“I said, ‘I used to play first base.’ They relayed this information to Ed and he said, ‘Hire the son of a bitch.’ They thought I was making a joke. I didn't know ‘pitching’ means pitching jokes.”

“He doubled my salary to \$100 the next week, and four weeks later he fired me. I was fired four times from *Duffy's Tavern*. I was on the show for four years.”

## Duffy's Tavern and Ed Gardner continued

to go home," Schiller told SPERDVAC. "We'd stay up all night working. I can remember many times taking my sleeping bag to the office. We worked around the clock. Had there been a canary in the room it would have died."

Each week the writers gathered on Friday to begin a work session that lasted until Sunday afternoon, when Gardner arrived to read their "roughs." Once a writer, looking for some guilt on Gardner's part, told him of their rough working conditions. "Ed," he said, "do you

realize that no food has passed my lips for 24 hours?" Writer Larry Rhine jumped in: "You mean you haven't even vomited?"

Gardner's attitude towards his writers' welfare was apparent when, at the end of each season, he left town without telling them if they were going to be employed again in September. Schiller explained that Gardner did not give contracts to his employees.

The writers were also required to sit in the audience during the broadcast and laugh loudly at the jokes. "Gardner used to have a post mortem after each show," Schiller said. "Once he said to me, 'Schiller, I looked down and I saw that you weren't laughing.' And I said, 'Well, Ed, that may have been the one joke I didn't write.'"

"We were so underpaid in those days that we'd take the jokes we wrote for **Duffy's Tavern** and send them to *Readers' Digest* and put them in the mouths of our guests and we'd get five dollars," Schiller said. "One of the jokes I wrote when Henry Morgan was on the show was 'In Hollywood, if you look hard enough, underneath the false tinsel is the real tinsel.' It's subsequently been credited to Groucho, Fred Allen, and everybody else. But it was in Henry Morgan's mouth as a guest on that show."

Hazel didn't know much about Ed Gardner's habit of firing people from the show frequently when she received a call to audition for **Duffy's Tavern**. "When I did the audition, I not only read the script, but also I sang," she related. Her approach helped her win the job as Miss Duffy.

"We're going to send you tickets on Monday for the first rehearsal," she was told. "What do you mean? I have to have a ticket to go to NBC? I go there every day," she said. "No, a ticket to Puerto Rico," was the reply.

"I had never even heard of Puerto Rico," she said. "I was a kid out of college and I had never heard of it." She did not know that Gardner had moved there to take advantage of some income tax laws.

"Gardner, who was always after a buck, found out that there was a tax free deal in Puerto Rico for anyone who would establish an industry there. It was called the Puerto Rican Development Act," Rhine explained. "He brought a team of four of us down there. The second year I wrote the show alone."

"I took a girlfriend of mine with me," Hazel Shermet

*Continued on next page*

### Hazel Shermet Rhine



PHOTO COURTESY JORDAN YOUNG

"I started in radio when I was seven years old in Philadelphia on WIP doing fairy stories," Hazel Shermet Rhine told SPERDVAC.

After college she obtained a job writing commercials for an advertising agency. "I would write them and record them and do all of the parts because I was really writing them more or less for myself. But they would hire somebody else because I was a writer." She considered herself an actress and convinced a director at NBC to arrange an audition for her.

"I took the audition and the next day I did the **Henny Youngman Show**, which was a real thrill. The next week I sang on the **Milton Berle Show**. He held my hand. If you've ever worked with Milton, you know you can't lose him. I was trying to sing opera and he was holding my hand."

After that there were many calls for one-time character parts on many of the comedy shows originating from New York. She appeared on the air with Fred Allen, as well as on **The Henry Morgan Show**, **Mr. Ace and Jane**, the 1949 revival of the **Jack Pearl Show** and a series starring Maxie Rosenbloom. She was also on a number of soap operas.



## *Duffy's Tavern and Ed Gardner continued*

continued. "She said, 'Look, just pack (enough clothes) for two weeks. I hear he fires everyone.'"

Expecting to be fired after a short time, she looked upon the job as a vacation. "I did my first show there with Paulette Goddard. After the show he (Gardner) carried me around the stage on his shoulders," she said.

Gardner was pleased with her radio performances. "I was down there for three seasons," she recalled. "Then I came back to do...some scenes from **Duffy's** on **Monitor**."

Her work on the series paid an additional benefit. "I was smart enough to marry the head writer," she said, gesturing to husband Larry Rhine.

Hazel also had a short-lived career as a writer for the show. Gardner, after hearing her ad lib jokes during rehearsals, asked her to join the writing staff.

She was expecting to add to jokes during a "pitching"

session. Instead, she found the writers in unified silence as they tried to think of situations for the program.

Future husband Larry Rhine sent her to another room with a typewriter and paper, with orders to write a Miss Duffy spot. "I sat for two hours," she said. "I just wrote 'Duffy's Tavern' at the top of the page. For two or two and one-half hours I sat there. Then I came out and said, 'It's been a wonderful career. I'm going swimming.'"

"Ed Gardner had been hiring writers from bars and God knows where else," Larry Rhine told SPERDVAC's audience. "(Bob) Schiller said to Gardner, 'Why don't you have a real switch in your hiring plans? Hire a writer.'" Schiller brought Rhine in to join the writing staff.

Rhine recalls an interesting discussion with boxer Maxie Rosenbloom, another guest on **Duffy's**. "I study

*Concluded on next page*

### *Larry Rhine*

*"I started in radio right out of college. I had a fraternity brother who became manager of KGB in San Diego," Larry Rhine said.*

*"He was a very good business executive and he wanted to cut down expenses at the station. Instead of paying announcers and also paying writers, he decided to hire an announcer who could write or a writer who could announce...He brought me down there for \$100 a month. I followed Harry Von Zell. In order to make room for me, the boss...had to fire the young announcer who was there because he could only announce. He was Art Linkletter. About six weeks later he brought Art back and we worked together."*

*From KGB, Rhine went to New York, where he freelanced as a radio comedy writer. There he was hired to write for the **Ford Evening Hour**, featuring Frank Crummit. He also wrote a radio series for Rube Goldberg. "We actually put a cartoonist's show on the radio," he said. "We described his crazy cartoons (to listeners)."*

*A friend sent him to Ben Bernie to interview for a writing job. "I'll give you six weeks," the musician told him. "If you catch my style, you stay with me forever. If you don't, we'll shake hands and part friends." Their association lasted six years, ending when Bernie died.*

*"The big bands (broadcasts) were turning into variety shows," Rhine noted. "We put the band leader on (the air)...Bernie said, 'Give me some funny stuff to say when I come on.' So I started writing a*

*monologue. The monologue grew and grew...Then they started doing sketches with the vocalists. The band became the background and the sketches, monologues and funny stuff became the actual show."*

*Rhine wrote many of Bernie's wisecracks employed during the musician's radio feud with Walter Winchell. "Everybody fell for the feud," he said. "Winchell was a really tough customer. He could malign you in his (newspaper) column, he could kill you in his column. Talking back to Winchell was like talking back to (Joe) McCarthy.*

*"This thing was staged," he continued, "because they were married to sisters—they were brothers-in-law."*

*A gag he remembers Bernie using on the air during the feud: "Winchell's eye was bloodshot this morning. It seems a chorus girl spit tobacco juice through the keyhole."*



PHOTO COURTESY JORDAN YOUNG



PHOTO COURTESY HAZEL SHERMET

On *Duffy's Tavern* in Puerto Rico are Arthur Treacher, Bert Gordon ("The Mad Russian") standing over Ed Gardner, Hazel Shermet and Maxie Rosenbloom.

## How 'Archie' Was Born

by Ed Gardner  
from *Radio Life*, May 3, 1942

**A**rchie was born in the middle of a dilemma... which is something like being a Giant roter in the Brooklyn baseball park.

It was during a rehearsal for the CBS program called "This is New York."

We wanted a guy to talk New Yorkese. All we could get was voices that sounded like Dodger fans in the left field bleachers.

There is as much difference between New Yorkese and Kings (Borough) English as there is between Oxford and Choctaw.

A New Yorker, for instance, would say, 'Laertes poizzined the point uv his foil.'

In Brooklyn they say: 'Lay-oytees purzined the pernt of his ferl.'

Well, as I was sayin', one guy after another gets up in front of the microphone and talks Brooklyn.

Finally I get tired and goes out in front of the mike myself, on account of I got one guy who shows promise. He is only half-breed Brooklyn, on the distaff side.

While I was demonstrating how it should sound to talk New Yorkese, the gang in the control room is havin' hysterics.

'Why bother with an actor?', they holler back through the studio mike. 'You read it yourself.'

It's 28 minutes before we go on the air, so who am I to argue with the fates—and the control room mob? So I do.

And thus 'Archie' is an overnight institution... like the accident ward in a hospital.

*Duffy's Tavern* conclusion people," the fighter told him. "Gardner is afraid he's going to have to take me out to dinner and pay. Joe (another writer) is a bit of an alcoholic. He can't wait to get out to the bar. And you and Miss Duffy are auditioning—so why don't you get married." Later he and Hazel Shermit did marry. "I got two things out of *Duffy's*," Rhine jokes. "A wife and an ulcer. I've found that with a little Maalox I could live with both."

Writing for Gardner's show held more dangers than unexpected unemployment. Once Rhine wrote a show during a hurricane. "Everybody else was running for the high lands and boarding up windows," he reported. "We were sitting there, as the wind was bending over trees, writing jokes."

## McGee's Closet

Send your requests for OTR shows and radio-related items to Barbara J. Watkins, P. O. Box 561, S. Pasadena, CA 91031. Please specify desired recording format.

**WANTED:** 16 inch transcription discs, LP's or tapes of big band remote broadcasts. Also looking to trade tapes of same. Contact: Steve Mallon, 3419 N. Nottingham, Chicago, IL 60634.

**WANTED:** To complete my X Minus One Collection, I need the following episodes: "The Veldt," "Almost Human," "Dwellers in Silence," "The Outer Limit," "A Logic Named Joe," "The Roads Must Roll," "The Parade" and "Mars is Heaven." Will buy or trade other X Minus One episodes. Contact Joe E. Holt, 1132 Bethel Drive, Bristol, TN 37620, (615) 323-4533.

**WANTED:** Radio shows that featured Baby Rose Marie singing the popular songs of the day. Contact: Kayleen Sybrandt, 3333 Morningside Road, Wilmington, DE 19810, (302) 478-9529.

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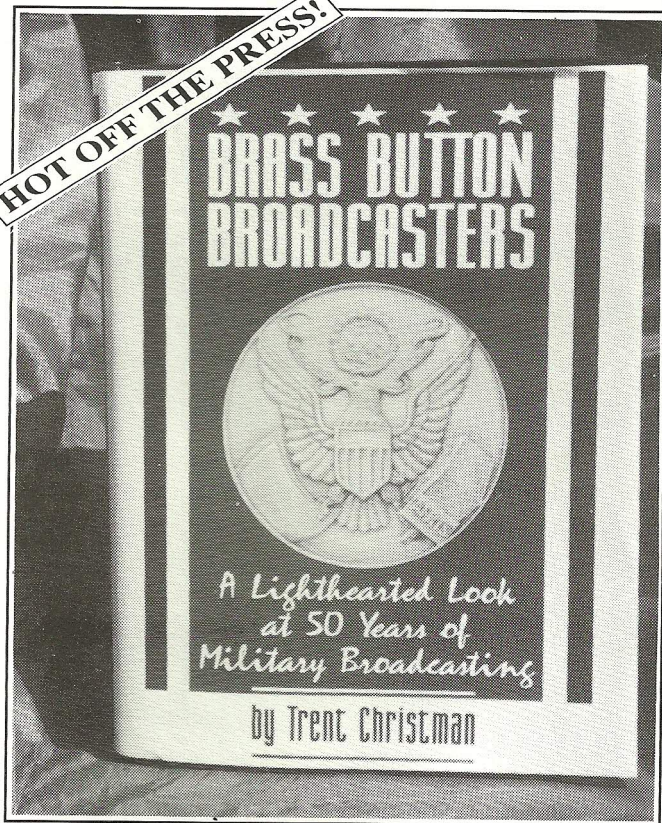


PHOTO COURTESY DONNIE PITCHFORD

Host "Cousin Cliff" Holman and actress Louise Currie at the National Lum and Abner Society Convention June 27.

### Lum & Abner club holds convention

Actress Louise Currie was the featured guest June 27 at the eighth annual convention of the National Lum and Abner Society. The convention takes place each year in Mena, Arkansas, home town of Lum and Abner stars Norris "Tuffy" Goff and Chet Lauck.

The NLAS convention featured a "Saturday Morning Matinee" showing of a chapter of *The Adventures of Captain Marvel*, which co-starred Miss Currie. Later that day the NLAS unveiled an eight-panel photo exhibit at Mena's historic Kansas City Southern Depot Museum. "The display case highlights all aspects of Lum and Abner history in photos and text panels," President "Uncle Donnie" Pitchford told SPERDVAC.

In the real town of Pine Ridge NLAS members visited with Mrs. Ethel Ball, daughter of the real-life Dick Huddleston, the Pine City merchant portrayed on the air by Goff.

Louise Currie, Mrs. John Good in private life, and her husband were joined by entertainer "Cousin Cliff" Holman and NLAS officers in a tour of the Jot 'Em Down Store and Lum and Abner Museum in nearby Pine Ridge.

"The concluding event of the convention was the evening's 50th anniversary screening of *The Bashful Bachelor*," Pitchford reported. Louise Currie was one of the film's stars.

"The film was preceded by a segment of *Hedda Hopper's Hollywood*, in which the audience was treated to rare footage of Chet Lauck and Tuffy Goff, with their children Chet Lauck Jr. and Gretchen and Gary Goff relaxing at home," he explained.

"Cousin Cliff" Holman, a veteran of Birmingham, Alabama radio and television, acted as host for the convention.

Membership in the National Lum and Abner Society is \$8 annually. For a brochure, send a SASE to the NLAS, Route 3, Box 110, Dora, Alabama 35062.

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## Information, Please

*Continued from page 3*

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### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Honorary member *Marvin Kaplan* has a regular role in "On the Air", a David Lynch TV series this summer about the making of a 1957 TV series, "The Lester Guy Show." It is seen Saturday nights on ABC. Check your local listings for time and station.

We heard from *Paul Wilcox*, retired broadcaster of Honolulu, who says he was Hawaii's first disc jockey when there were only two radio stations in Hawaii in 1942. He keeps busy giving talks to senior citizens, conventions, civic clubs, birthday parties, and just about anyone who asks, at no charge. He speaks on about 70 topics, including the long-running radio series *Hawaii Calls*, which he announced several times during its run from 1935 to 1975.

If you worked in radio, we'd like to hear what you are doing now. Please drop a note to this column.

For information about radio around the country, we rely on you to let us know. Send your information, comments, 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!