

SPERDVAC **RADIOGRAM**

Vol. 18, No. 9

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

September 1992



PHOTO COURTESY AFRTS

The Armed Forces Radio Service, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, supplied about 100 transcribed radio shows for the entertainment of our fighting forces during World War II. The AFRS Orchestra supplied music for most of the programs, including the popular variety show **Mail Call**. See story beginning on page 13.

**Under
the
cover**

Convention update Stan Freberg, radio re-creations...page 3

Marsha Hunt She always started at the top...page 4

In memory The radio career of Lou Krugman...page 6

McGee's Closet Swap shows with other members...page 11

Memos for Members

Our condolences to our friend, actor Olan Soule. His wife of 63 years, Norma, passed away in July.

Jay Ranelucci tells us the Cable Radio Network airs syndicated OTR programs for an hour Monday nights at 7:30 and Tuesday-Sunday at 7 p.m. (Pacific time). Jay reports many cable tv customers can receive cable radio. He says you can screw

the 70 ohm round coax cable (which normally goes into the cable box or back of a tv set) into a matching transformer and attach it to the antenna leads on a stereo receiver. (If you don't know what you're doing, ask someone knowledgeable first.) Check with your local cable company to see if cable radio is available.

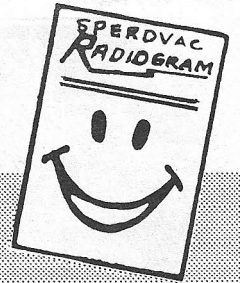
Several times throughout October HBO will air Jack

Benny: Comedy in Bloom. Check local listings for times and dates.

We are grateful to several radio veterans who allowed us to record interviews with them for inclusion in SPERDVAC's tape library. Editor Dan interviewed announcer Clancey Cassell, Page Gilman, Bill Lipton and Hy Averback last month. All four live outside the L.A. area.

Peggy Webber's California Artists' Radio Theatre will

broadcast a one hour radio play, "Curtain Call," Sept. 13 on KPCC-FM, Pasadena at 5 p.m. Miss Webber adapted it from the stage play "A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go" written by Jerry Devine, producer of *This is Your FBI*. It's the intimate story of a theatrical family.



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)

Cecelia 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)

Frank Barton

(In memory of Bob Jensen & Dick Joy)

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)

Parley Baer

(In memory of Mary Lansing & Howard McNear)

Phil Cohan

(In memory of Andre Baruch & Elvia Allman)

John Wrisley

Russell J. Folsom

John B. Daball

Hy Averback

Barbara Whiting

William Conrad

Lucille Meredith

Glenhall Taylor

Jack Brown

Seaman Jacobs

Alice Backes

June Foray

Chuck Benedict

Richard Murphy

Dennis Crow

Bob LeMond

Jack Younger

David Richardson

Walter Bunker

Bob Newhart

John Larch

Gary Papers

Rosemary DeCamp

Mary Jane Croft Lewis

Willard & Mary Anna Waterman

Truda Marson & Richard Chandlee

Charles Isaacs & Doris Singleton Isaacs

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

Satirist Stan Freberg, program re-creations planned for SPERDVAC's 1992 convention

A salute to Stan Freberg and three radio program re-creations will be highlights of SPERDVAC's old-time radio convention in Los Angeles.

The convention runs from Friday, Nov. 20 to Sunday, Nov. 22.

Friday night registration begins at 5:30 and the dinner/program starts at 7:30. We are arranging a re-creation of **Voyage of the Scarlet Queen**. To assist us, SPERDVAC is seeking leads to scripts and uncirculated recordings of the series. We have not yet cast the show.

Saturday morning registration begins at 8:30. At 9 a.m. we will have a book panel featuring Dick Beals, Tony Thomas, Thomas DeLong and Arthur Frank Wertheim. Later that morning we will feature a

workshop on radio sound effects.

Following the 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. lunch break, Peg Lynch and Parley Baer will star in a re-creation of **Ethel and Albert**. Then, long-time Denver radio/tv personality John Rayburn will entertain us with radio commercials and bloopers.

At 3:30 p.m. Saturday, SPERDVAC will present satirist Stan Freberg. Additional guests were not confirmed at press time.

A salute to Jack Webb will begin at 5 p.m. We will look at his series **Pete Kelly's Blues, Johnny Madero, Pier 23** and **Pat Novak for Hire**. At 6:30 p.m. there will be a cocktail hour. The dinner and banquet begin at 7:30 p.m. and will feature a re-creation of **Dragnet**. Radio

actors Herb Ellis, Peggy Webber and Harry Bartell will appear in the show. Sound effects man Wayne Kenworthy will join us also.

A comedy-oriented Sunday brunch program is in the planning stages. We expect to have complete details in next month's newsletter.

SPERDVAC encourages all who plan to attend our annual old-time radio convention to register early. There are usually over 300 at our conventions and we make seating arrangements in advance.

All of SPERDVAC's honorary members have been invited to attend. In addition to the many SPERDVAC members who are able to join us, we expect a number of non-members to attend our salute to early radio.

Attendees who would like to be seated with friends at our banquets should send in their registration forms together. It is difficult for us to rearrange seating during the convention, especially because we assign seating upon receipt of registrations.

SPERDVAC is also seeking assistance from members who can volunteer one or two hours just before, during or immediately after the convention. We need help setting up and taking down equipment. By using volunteer help, we are reducing the expenses of the convention for everyone. Those able to help are invited to contact convention chair Larry Gassman at (310) 947-9800.

Washington group plans 1993 convention

The Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound has voted to hold an old-time radio convention next summer. It will be held June 26, 1993 in the Seattle suburb of Bellevue.

"We're a relatively new club, but we have been blessed with a high level of enthusiastic volunteers and generosity," said Mike Sprague, club president.

"For example, within the first week of our vote to have a convention, we had 22 volunteers for the committee," he added. "Even so, we are starting on a very conservative basis, with a tight budget and a one day program."

Their plans include a re-creation of an early radio broadcast. It will feature personalities from radio's golden age.

"We will also have at least one feature on current radio drama with a leading writer-producer," Sprague added.

REPS hopes to announce program details in October. At that time they expect to have hotel arrangements completed.

"Seattle is a wonderful place to visit, and June is especially nice," Sprague noted. "Perhaps some of our friends will plan a vacation around this gathering."

Sprague invites those interested in REPS or their convention to contact him at 11732 NE 148th Pl., Kirkland, WA 98034.

A flyer for the Friends of Old Time Radio convention in October is enclosed.

She started at the top!

by Dan Haefele

Marsha Hunt always started at the top. Her first professional stage performance was a co-starring role in a Broadway play. Her first film role was as the feminine lead in a Paramount picture. And her first acting job on radio was a major supporting part on **Lux Radio Theatre**.

A high school graduate at 16, Miss Hunt wanted to immediately begin training for a film career. "I found there was not one college that I could discover in the United States where I could major in drama before the third year. Since I knew what I wanted to do, I thought my first two years might be wasted," she told SPERDVAC last month.

"I wanted to train for movies. But there was no course in the land on cinema arts," she continued. "We learned to make movies by making them."

Instead of attending college, the aspiring actress attended the Theodora Irvine Studio for the Theatre. "The great thing about that school,"

Marsha

Hunt

she explained, "was that instead of spending a whole year working on the production of a full length play, we performed every Tuesday afternoon... We learned to face an audience every week, which was very good for the nerves."

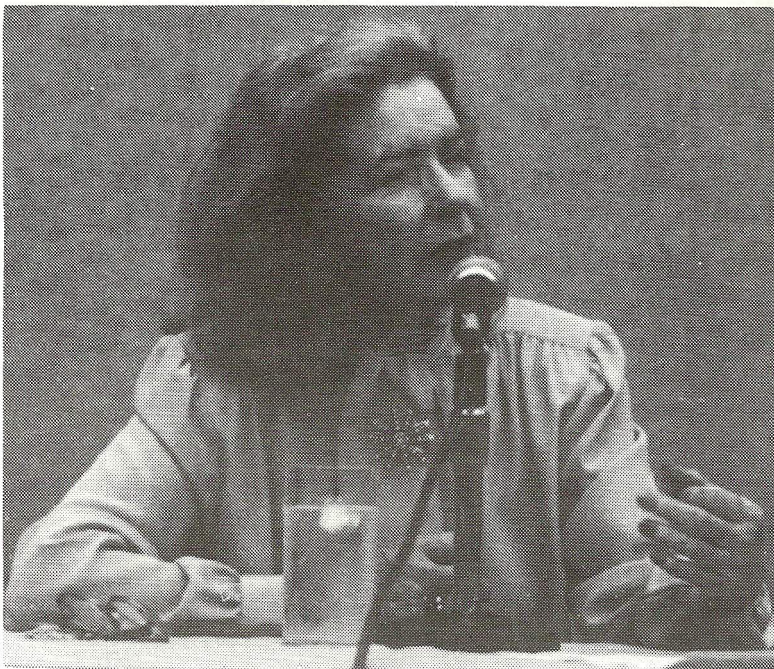
With no training in motion picture acting available, she decided to augment her stage training by getting into radio. She approached directors at NBC in New York several times. "In all I had three auditions over nearly a year," she said. "The first time they said, 'Thank you but that was so far removed from who you are, why don't you try to find a role for a sixteen year old? Let's get something that matches your voice.'"

During that 12 month period no offers came from the network. "I was packing to come west... when the phone call came from NBC to say that I passed my third audition and I was now being placed on the 'available for casting-dramatic staff list.'" She told them she was leaving the state.

Hunt came to Hollywood where she played leads in films shortly after her arrival on the west coast. She was 17 when she made the 1935 film "The Virginia Judge."

And radio beckoned again.

"They were going to do 'Alice Adams' on the **Lux Radio Theatre**. It was going to star Claudette Colbert." Hunt's role was the girlfriend of the character portrayed by
(Continued on next page)



"To me, radio was a disgracefully good time. It was so easy. You didn't have to sit under a hair dryer, you didn't have to have make-up put on or wardrobe fittings or handle props. You just read into a microphone. And I had the best time."

— Marsha Hunt

The radio life and times of Marsha Hunt



"We're having a slight problem. They are starring Claudette Colbert, Fred MacMurray and Walter Connolly. They're paying three star salaries and they just don't have much left in the budget for you..."

—Marsha Hunt's manager

PHOTOS
BY
JAY
RANELLUCCI

Fred MacMurray. "It was not the central role. It was a supporting role, but a principal part.

"I was thrilled to death," she continued. "This was going to be my first radio broadcast. Then my agent called and said, 'We're having a slight problem. They are starring Claudette Colbert, Fred MacMurray and Walter Connolly. They're paying three star salaries and they just don't have much left in the budget for you. We don't want to establish a low precedent salary because it will be hard to raise it later. So, instead of getting a low salary, would you accept a very handsome gift and next time you do a broadcast we'll get you what you should receive.'"

She agreed to the unusual arrangement. "I would have done it for nothing—or paid them, maybe. I was pretty excited about the chance."

The gift was a Royal Dalton china service set for 12 "in a pattern I hated." There was another disappointment. There were no bread and butter plates.

Then, another phone call from her agent brought another disappointment. Explaining the show had a limit of three star billings, he asked, "Would you mind doing the show anonymously?"

Miss Hunt selected a pseudonym based on an old show business custom. "When an actor worked on stage in more than one role, he would put his own name beside the larger role he was playing and beside the lesser role... (he used the name) George Spelvin. I made my (radio) debut, with a set of dishes, as Georgette Spelvin." The program aired on CBS Jan. 3, 1938.

She was paid when she appeared on the *Lux* program several additional times. And it is fitting perhaps that she was once paid when she didn't appear on the show.

"I was signed to play opposite Alan Ladd," she recalled. "We had not yet started rehearsals when a call came from my agent. They had reconsidered the casting and I was going to be replaced. I said, 'That's fascinating. They haven't had time not to

like my work. I haven't even rehearsed badly. How come?' And he said, 'Because you are five feet, six and three quarters inches tall.'

"I said, 'I know, but this is radio. They're not going to see us.' My agent said, 'Ah, but there is a studio audience.'

"I offered to work on a separate mike," she continued. "I said, 'I can work stage left and he can work stage right.'"

Her offer was still not good enough. "I was paid off," she explained. "And a shorter actress was signed."

Radio acting was, she found, particularly easy.

"I had such a good time I was ashamed to take even the set of china (as payment)," she said. "To me, radio was a disgracefully good time. It was so easy. You didn't have to sit under a hair dryer, you didn't have to have make-up put on or wardrobe fittings, or handle props. You just read into a microphone. I had the best time."

How did she play various characters so easily?

"I remember taking on, subconsciously, the appearance of the character I was playing," she recalled. "I could become a swarthy, rather buxom brunette—none of which I

Continued on page 10

Radio character actor Lou Krugman dies at 78

by Dan Haefele



Lou Krugman re-created a radio broadcast for SPERDVAC at our 1991 convention.

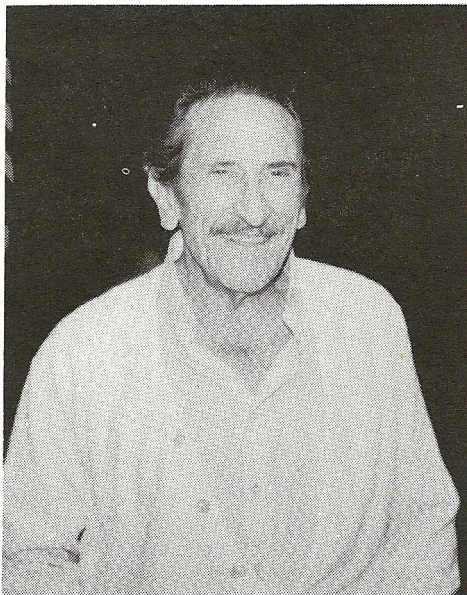


PHOTO BY BARBARA WATKINS

Lou Krugman at a SPERDVAC meeting in 1986.

Lou Krugman, noted radio drama performer of the thirties, forties and fifties, died Aug. 8.

The 78 year old actor was a victim of cancer.

Krugman was a 15 year old high school student in 1929 when he first faced a radio microphone. At WODA, Patterson, N.J., he performed excerpts from Shakespeare plays, and other dramatic scenes. "I was doing 'Dangerous Dan McGrew' and 'Face on the Bar Room Floor,'" he told SPERDVAC in a 1983 interview.

Following high school graduation the young actor took jobs on the live stage. He grew tired of the constant travel involved in the road shows he worked with so he decided to return to radio in the mid thirties. It was a major decision for him because he had been offered a part in Orson Welles' road company production of "Julius Caesar."

At WHN, New York he became part of a stock company working under contract. His peers there included Kenny Delmar, Gail Henshaw, Don MacLaughlin and Gil Mack (known also as Mack Gilbert). "We did about 40 to 45 shows a week, working seven days a week," he said.

Reflecting back on his career years later, Krugman said he felt his experiences at WHN were his acting lessons. It was there he learned the art of doing dialects.

His credits include *Voices of Yes-*

terday, a mid thirties series that originated from New York. He also appeared on *Short, Short Stories* about 1937.

While still at WHN, he began to pick up other radio jobs. One of his early ones was Norman Corwin's production of "Spoon River Anthology" on *Columbia Workshop*.

Mr. Krugman recalled the production of *The Goldbergs* was unusual. "Mrs. Goldberg used to do her own sound effects. She was cooking. She had the exact (cooking) items laid out there. She would beat the eggs and fry (food) and have a stove there," he said.

"That was my introduction to network radio," he added. "I was making sometimes five dollars, sometimes ten bucks for that show."

On the East Coast he performed on *Dick Tracy*, *The Shadow*, *Gangbusters*, *Big Sister* (where, at age 23, he played a feeble sounding elderly man), *Words Without Music* and *Pursuit of Happiness*.

The *Gangbusters* series was developed into a vaudeville stage show in the late thirties and Krugman was hired to play one of the roles. The show was a radio program recreation, complete with microphones and sound effects men on stage. Other cast members included Jim Backus and actor Chris Ford, father of Harrison Ford. "That's how I first landed in Chicago and decided that would be a nice place to stay," he said.

Continued on next page

Remembering Lou Krugman

He had another reason for deciding to move to the Midwestern hub of network radio. "When I was in New York I was just eking out a living," Krugman explained. "I had been to Chicago with the **Gangbusters** show and when I got back to New York I did some research as to how many actors there were in Chicago and how many there were in New York, how many (radio) shows there were in New York, and how many there were in Chicago." He quickly realized Chicago held greater possibilities.

Krugman and his wife moved to Chicago in 1940. He had just \$60 and a letter of introduction from writer-director Norman Corwin. "I went over to WBBM," he recalled "and ran into Blair Walliser. I showed him this letter." Walliser immediately gave him an audition. "I went to work fifteen minutes later," Krugman recalled.

His Chicago radio work included parts on **Woman in White**, **Bachelor's Children**, **Ma Perkins**, **Jack Armstrong**, **the All-American Boy** and **Captain Midnight**.

The successful Chicago radio actor had the role of Pvt. Ulysses Hink on **Dear Mom** until it was canceled shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He had a regular part on **Man Behind the Gun** when he was drafted into the Army during World War II. He returned to civilian life in 1945.

"By the time I got back, Chicago (radio) was beginning to move east and west. It was during that period I became associated with **Those Web-**

sters. I never played a regular character on **Those Websters** but I played a different character every week. When they decided to go to the West Coast...they asked me to come," he said.

In addition to Krugman and director Joe Ainley, **Those Websters** performers Eddie Firestone, Jane Webb, Bill Idleson, Constance Crowder and Willard Waterman also moved west with the show in 1946.

From Hollywood he appeared on comedy sketches for the **Alan Young Show**, **The Abbott and Costello Show** and **That Brewster Boy**. Krugman and John Dehner worked together on the **Buster Brown Gang** program.

He was employed constantly on the popular CBS shows of the late forties and early fifties. His ability to play character parts brought him roles on such shows as **Suspense**, **Gunsmoke** and **Escape**.

Krugman specialized in playing characters and doing dialects on radio programs. "Very often I try to picture the character (in my mind)," he explained in an interview at a SPERDVAC meeting. "I would try to picture the character and go with that where ever it took me." Psychologically, he became the character, he said.

An expert at villainous voices, Krugman was hired for parts in several movies and easily made the transition to television.

In recent years he was part of the California Artists' Radio Theatre, a stock company of professionals headed by Peggy Webber. Their productions have aired on KPCC-FM in Pasadena.

Radio in Review

THE PHOTO JOURNAL GUIDE TO COMIC BOOKS. *Compiled by Ernest and Mary Gerber. Two volumes. Gerber Publishing Company, Inc. P.O. Box 906, Minden, NV 89423. 1989. 806 pages.*

The influence of radio during its Golden Age was so great that it affected many other media. For many who enjoy collecting old radio programs, the collecting hobby has branched into other related areas, one of which is comic books.

Dozens of comic books were based on radio programs, but it is interesting to learn that, with few notable exceptions, the comics had less impact on children's radio programs than might be expected. While Archie Andrews and Superman came to radio from the comics, the best Batman could do was a few guest appearances on radio with the Man of Steel.

While this two-volume work might be worthwhile solely as a unique "coffee table" book, it is more valuable as the *definitive* work on the history of comic books from 1935 to 1965. For the majority of us who will never own any of the really valuable comics, it gives us a chance to at least see them by means of superb color reproduction of over 21,000 comic book covers.

For the serious collectors, the true value of this work lies in the "Relative Price Index" method for pricing comic books, and in the "Scarcity Index" for over 50,000 of them. This lets me know, for example, that while I could afford to buy that copy of Big Jon and Sparkie #1 that I'm looking for, the chances are I'll never be able to find one, based on its rarity. The first issue of Henry Aldrich comics is twenty times more likely to be available, and will cost half as much. If you want a comic based on a space travel program, **Tom Corbett, Space Cadet**, is five times more common than **Space Patrol** and only costs 15 percent as much.

In a hobby that has been dominated for a long time by one "price guide," the Gerber work is a welcome addition, and offers another point of view on pricing and grading.

—Bruce Miller



by Barbara J. Watkins

Over the last few years there have been announcements of new radio series to be produced. What ever happened to them? If anyone has any information on whether they were ever aired and how they sounded, please write a note to this column and let us know. One was a series of 26 plays produced by Himan Brown called "We, the Living." Another was a new version of a series like TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES. I haven't been able to locate the flyer I saw on it so I'm not sure of the title. Also, I've heard about new soap operas being produced and aired. It seems that in spite of the many radio stations in the Los Angeles area, we fail to broadcast most of the "good stuff" here.

Plans were afoot to make some "Jack Armstrong" movies in 1990, and a new LONE RANGER TV series. Any new updates on those?

Attention reel to reel collectors! It was proposed to the Board of Directors recently to discontinue our open reel libraries. No decision was made. If you have any thoughts on the subject, drop a note to the Board at the official SPERDVAC address, P.O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712. From May 1990 through March 1991, renewing members were surveyed about whether they would be using the open reel Archives Library, so that the Board could determine whether there was enough demand to justify re-recording reels 1 to 1,000 to replace the tapes that squeal. Of the 890 members who replied, 234 indicated they would use the library and 656

said no. The question now is, where are those 234 members? Only about 10% of you are using the open reel Archives Library 1,001 & up. Certainly not enough to justify redoing the library. But the question now is, is that enough to continue to add to the open reel library new material? Please order while you can, and justify the continuance of this library.

Calling all clubs!

Thanks to member Bill Smith for information on the *International Al Jolson Society*, which was founded in 1950 for the sole purpose of perpetuating the memory of Al Jolson. Members receive two consecutive *Jolson Journals* annually, plus periodic newsletters. The *Journals* contain more than 50 pages of stories and rare photographs of Jolson, with many interesting articles written by members, and special features such as comments of members, the buying and selling of Jolson memorabilia, reports on the latest audio and video items available, and news on activities of regional chapters. Each May the Society holds an annual convention/film festival in a major city in the United States. Each regional chapter also holds a film festival once a year. This year's national convention was held in New Jersey, May 22 through 24. It featured lectures, movies, exhibits, and live entertainment, with a Saturday evening performance by Clive Baldwin, who some say sounds just like Al Jolson. (He really does!) But Baldwin responds:

*People tell me constantly
Than an old-time singer sang
like me*

*Who is this guy from days gone
by*

*Whose voice was handed down
to me?*

*His name was Al
You know the rest
But that doesn't make me sec-*

ond best

*I don't mean to brag, but my
mother said to me*

*That I don't sing like Al Jolson
sang*

Al Jolson sang like me.

Membership is \$15.00 per year. Send your check payable to International Al Jolson Society, c/o James F. Brockson, Treasurer, 933 5th Avenue, Prospect Park, PA 19076.

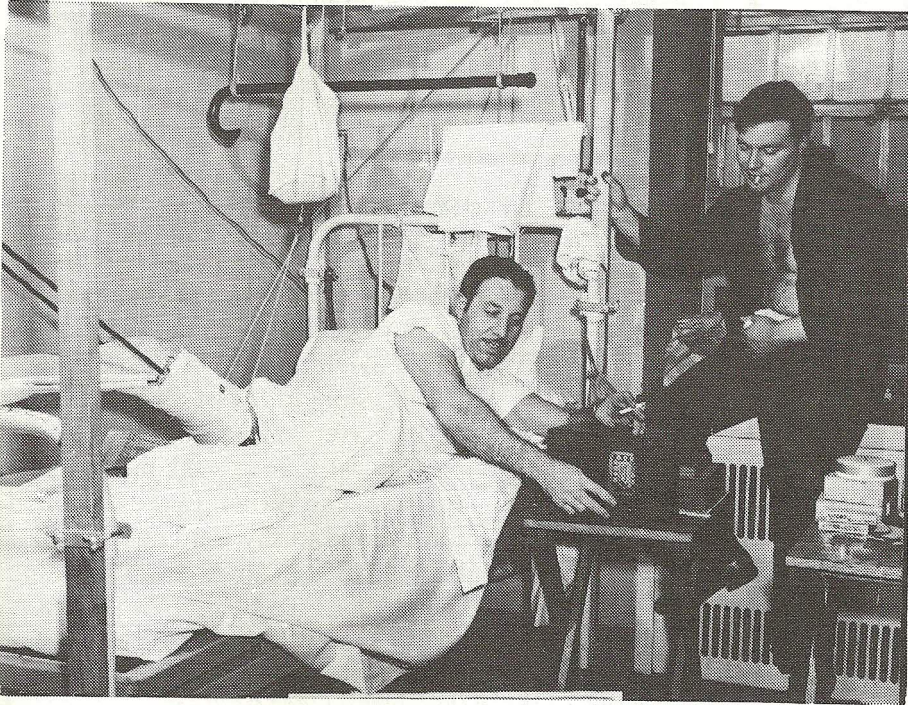
Send your information, comments, questions and suggestions for this column to INFORMATION PLEASE, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Til next time, spaceman's luck!

Pretenders sought by Arthur Anderson

SPERDVAC member Arthur Anderson, an actor since childhood, has written a history of the beloved children's show *Let's Pretend* and is currently discussing it with publishers. Anderson, who played enchanted frogs, fierce giants and many other character roles on the series, was on the show for 18 years.

Anderson is especially interested in locating former Pretenders Eddie Ryan Jr., who left *Let's Pretend* in 1941 to star in the motion picture "The Five Sullivan Brothers." He is also searching for the Mauch Twins—Billy and Bobbie, who starred in 1937 in "The Prince and the Pauper" with Errol Flynn. They later became members of the film cutters' union.

These actors, and any other Pretenders Mr. Anderson has not previously heard from, are asked to contact him at 13 West 13th St. #4G-S, New York, NY 10011.



The bedside network

The Armed Forces Radio Services provided injured soldiers with entertainment and a diversion from their physical and emotional wounds via the "bedside network." See photos beginning on page 13, part of SPERDVAC's salute to AFRTS on its 50th anniversary.

PHOTO COURTESY AFRTS

KCRW-FM plans Labor Day weekend radio show specials

Southern California radio listeners will be treated to many hours of drama and comedy Labor Day weekend by KCRW-FM.

On Saturday, Sept. 5 the station will carry a four hour tribute to Judy Garland beginning at 10 a.m. At 2 p.m. there will be an hour-long tribute to Jay Lacey, who aired OTR shows on KCRW for several years. At 3 p.m. there will be a two hour tribute to Orson Welles. At 6 p.m. the station will begin six hours of **Lux Radio Theatre** programs.

At 11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 6 KCRW will carry the **Paul Temple** story "The Spencer Affair." It lasts until 3 p.m. Then, the station will broadcast **Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet** from 3 to 5 p.m.

Inspector West at Home airs Sunday from 6 until 9:30 p.m., when the **Lord Peter Wimsey** story "Whose Body?" begins.

On Monday, Sept. 7, KCRW will air Lacey's special **The Time Capsule: A Typical Day in the Golden Age** from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to midnight.

Acquisitions update

Radio transcription discs and scripts donated to SPERDVAC

by John Gassman
Acquisitions chair

SPERDVAC is particularly grateful to those who donate or loan radio transcriptions and scripts. We thank the following people for their very thoughtful donations:

Helen Gershen for scripts of the **Columbia Workshop** and **Whistler** programs as well as discs containing music for movie soundtracks.

Barbara Cowin for several syndicated musical program discs.

Dorothy Carruthers who donated about 385 discs, mainly network musical programs. Also included are one each of **The Green Hornet**, **Jack Armstrong** and **Captain Midnight**. Programs from this collection will be on an upcoming catalog page.

Don Westcott for several AFRS discs.

Warren Lewis for discs of **Fighting AAF** actualities and many boxes

of his film and television work.

Kim Stammer for discs including a couple of **Nightbeat** shows, plus one Mario Lanza program and one show from **This is O'Shea**.

Roy Thomas for an Akai open reel tape recorder.

Barbara Fuller for about one hundred empty seven inch takeup reels.

Harvy Tow for **Lux Radio Theater** discs containing mainly **Lux** rehearsals. The discs are on permanent loan.

Charles Isaacs and Doris Singleton for copy discs of a **Burns and Allen Show** and three broadcasts of **The Whistler**.

Doug Heyes for scripts and transcriptions of several radio shows he wrote.

And thank you to Mitch Waldo for over 300 glass discs containing radio's top classical music broadcasts.

Marsha Hunt

continued from page 5

am. I pictured myself as looking like that. Perhaps that helped the sound come out consistent with what I hoped the radio listening audience would conjure up in their minds."

When Phil Rapp's comedy routines involving John and Blanche Bickerson were added to the **Chase and Sanborn Show**, Miss Hunt was hired to portray Blanche. "I have no idea why anyone thought of me for Blanche Bickerson," she says. She had not done radio comedy before.

"Frances Langford, who is a gifted actress as well as singer, had established a kind of whining, metallic vocal tone as Blanche Bickerson," she observed.

"She could not do this series. I think she was touring with Bob Hope," she added.

"I thought it would be a mistake to try to approximate Frances Langford's voice. She was too good at what she had done. I thought I would try using my own voice, being bitchy. That's what I wound up doing," she said.

Because the program went off the air, her Blanche Bickerson role lasted only a few months.

She still remembers fondly working with Don Ameche. "He was wonderful to work with," she said. "Don was such a pro. It was a pleasure working with him. It was very easy work."

She also has high praise for Edgar Bergen, who she calls a "near genius in comedy" and the show's orchestra leader, Ray Noble.

"I remember one special broadcast when a young man who had just had one public appearance at the Hollywood Bowl was invited to do his first (radio) broadcast," she recalled. "And thus the radio audience of America first heard Mario Lanza."

In 1947, her career took a dra-
Concluded on page 12

Sins of omission in Duffy story

Editor,

I just read your article on **Duffy's Tavern**, and your sins of omission are overwhelming. I was shocked to note that I was never mentioned. Your information was so one-sided — and certainly needs some upgrading.

It was I who replaced Shirley Booth as Miss Duffy (to be more accurate) and went on to play the part for nearly five seasons when the show was broadcast from the old NBC studios on Sunset and Vine. Hazel Shermet played the part after the show moved to Puerto Rico. I had no desire to leave my husband and family, so I quit the show.

Yes — I quit! I was not one of the fired ones!

In interviews, Ed Gardner often told reporters that he wrote most of the story outlines and jokes, then got a couple of guys to put it into shape for radio form. I, knowing the list of illustrious "guys" who put **Duffy's Tavern** into shape, always resented his blatant disregard for the work those "guys" did.

After I left the show I took an ad in *Daily Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter* and on the whole back page



Sandra Gould re-created her Miss Duffy role last year on the 'Golden Days of Radio' Christmas 1991 special.

Mail Call

listed 378 writers plus one writer who unfortunately was incarcerated in San Quentin and sent in his gags under the number 3987! Ed Gardner was no slouch! After all, a joke was a joke! Hence the ad!

Naturally, it was the talk of Hollywood. The Writers Guild (of which I am proud to say I am now a member) gave me an honorary plaque which said "To Sandra Gould AKA 'Miss Duffy' for meritorious conduct above and beyond the call of duty for defending all the unsung writers of the Writers Guild in Hollywood."

And, let us not forget those "other" unnamed writers: Abe Burrows, and Larry Gelbart who wrote **Duffy's Tavern** for years, then went on to Writers Heaven — Broadway (where writers *do* get credit), and turned out many unforgettable big Broadway hits.

So, I guess I should be pretty happy to be one of the "forgotten ones" in your article about the old **Duffy's Tavern** gang. It isn't often that I get "forgotten" with such prestigious talents.

The Phantom "Miss Duffy"
Sandra Gould

Editor's note: The article was intentionally one-sided because it was basically a follow-up to a SPERDVAC meeting which featured three people involved with the show. It is correct that many writers and performers didn't receive proper credit for their radio work. We're glad Miss Gould took the time to acknowledge some of the unsung efforts of those who made Duffy's Tavern successful. And let's not overlook the other Miss Duffys, including Florence Halop, Gloria Erlanger and Florence Robinson.

SPERDVAC Directory

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Marsha Hunt's career conclusion

matic turn when she and her husband became involved in the Hollywood show business community's opposition to accusations against the entertainment industry. Witnesses had testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities that there was subtle, subversive Communist influence behind the writing of numerous films and television programs.

Nineteen others, labeled "unfriendly witnesses" were subpoenaed to Washington to testify. They were mostly writers, directors and producers.

"They acted unanimously," she indicated. "They elected to have the same attorneys advising them." They also refused to answer the oft-repeated question, "Do you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"

"Hollywood was so outraged at this attack on the content of our films and on freedom of speech," she recalled. "What we could all see down the line was censorship—idea control of what movies might contain.

"A bunch of us chartered a plane and went back to Washington and simply sat in the hearing room and witnessed what was going on. We also, before we went to Washington and after our return, recorded two broadcasts over ABC, called **Hollywood Fights Back**," she said. (See programs on Archives cassette 132.)

The programs were written by Norman Corwin, Millard Lampell and her husband, Robert Presnell Jr. "The three of them wrote all of the material for these two broadcasts," she said. "All of us who were on the flight were on both of them."

The group, The Committee for the First Amendment, submitted a petition to Congress for a "redress of grievances." Miss Hunt read part of that petition on the air. "We never got an answer to our petition," she told SPERDVAC's audience. "We never heard from them."

The publication *Red Channels* listed names of individuals they accused of Communist affiliations. "I had the dubious honor of being included in *Red Channels*," she said. "I think the reason I was so 'honored' as a suspect American citizen was because I was, in that time, based in New York doing plays on Broadway. I had probably done more television than any Hollywood actor at the time because dramatic television was then centered in New York.

"Because of that flight to Washington," she continued, "that is 'whatever happened to Marsha Hunt.'" Her film career came to an abrupt end.

"There were very sporadic exceptions," she said of her job offers, "but it never got going again after that."

Hunt's attitude about the incident is surprisingly upbeat. "I began to discover the outside world and found that there was life outside of sound stages. I got pretty fascinated with the world," she said.

In 1955 she and her husband embarked on a round-the-world trip. "We were never the same again," she said. "We began to understand that we belonged to one race—the human one. And I fell in love with the United Nations and decided that it was probably our last, best hope of a surviving, civilized planet.

"I made it my life's work for the next 25 years," she said. "I studied and advocated and spoke about the United Nations. It felt very good trying to inform my fellow Americans about this hope for a more peaceful and a better world. I wasn't interested in the political U. N., but in the World Health Organization and the Food and Agricultural Organization and in UNICEF for the children."

Early next year a book she has assembled will be released. It is a collection of photographs of her when she modeled clothes. "It's a research resource for designers, costumers and people who love clothes," she says. "It's interesting to see how many of these items from forty and fifty years ago look absolutely contemporary."

The book is titled *The Way We Wore*.



PHOTO COURTESY JERRY HAUSNER
Lena Horne and Count Basie during a rehearsal for *Jubilee*, a Black-oriented musical program on AFRS. See related feature beginning on next page.

Listening to the Armed Forces Radio Service Orchestra



PHOTO COURTESY AFRTS

*Music played a major role in nearly every program that originated from the Armed Forces Radio Service. Under the direction of Maj. Meredith Willson, the AFRS Orchestra provided music on numerous shows, ranging from their popular variety programs (*Command Performance*, *Mail Call*, *G. I. Journal*) to the strictly musical offerings (*At Ease*, *Music for a Sunday*, *Personal Album*, etc.). This month we are saluting the AFRS Orchestra, and are highlighting the careers of three former AFRS Orchestra members.*

Jud Denout

Denout was a musician for many network radio shows airing before and after his military service. His credits include **Father Knows Best**, **Bergen and McCarthy Show**, **The Autolight Show**, **Red Skelton Show** with the Ozzie Nelson Band, **Fanny Brice Show** with the Carmen Dragon Orchestra, **Jack Carson Show**, **Woodbury Program** with Bing Crosby, **Bob Burns Show** with musical conductor Bud Dant and the **Dinah Shore Show** with music under the direction of Gordon Jenkins.

He was on the **Burns and Allen Show** for a season with Paul Whiteman's Orchestra, another season with the Artie Shaw Orchestra and a third season on the

husband-wife team's show with music conducted by Meredith Willson.

On Mutual Radio he worked with the David Rose Orchestra on the weekly program **California Melodies**. "They usually had a great guest with them—Art Tatum," he said. "It was quite an experience to hear that great, great player."

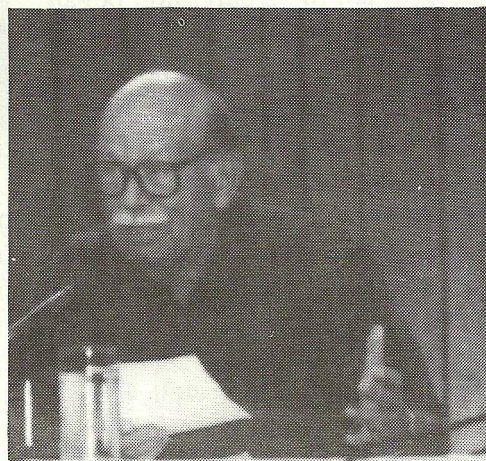




PHOTO COURTESY JERRY HAUSNER
 Martha Raye and Meredith Willson go over music prior to a recording session at Armed Forces Radio in Hollywood.

Art Gault

"My first radio experience was in Cincinnati, where I was going to music school, with Frank Simon and the Armco Band," he said. "Frank Simon was a former coronet soloist with John Phillips Sousa."

"I was a very inexperienced oboe player at the time. I enjoyed sitting in and getting some experience with him because he had a lot of Sousa music," he continued. "I eventually got a job in the symphony there."

But when the Depression began in 1929 he was quickly out of a job. He went to Mississippi to become a teacher. There he also wrote music, and finally, in the early thirties, had a song he felt was ready for public presentation. It was a march, and Frank Simon's orchestra played it on their new radio program, the **Armco Hour**.

In the late thirties he was in the orchestra of the Maxwell House Coffee shows **Good News of 1938**,

Good News of 1939 and **Good News of 1940**. There he worked under Meredith Willson, who would later become conductor of the AFRS Orchestra.

"He used to have a great desire to get up to the microphone and entertain," Gault recalled. "He used to warm up the audience before a radio program. So to get the audience in a good mood, Meredith would get his flute up to the mike and talk about something he was going to play. He didn't smoke, but he'd light a cigarette and put it in the corner of his mouth so that it would dangle, and he'd hold his flute up and play while smoking a cigarette. I tried it several times myself and I can't do it."

Gault worked under Felix Mills on **Silver Theatre** and Louis Silvers on **Lux Radio Theatre**. "By this time I learned that the more instruments I played, the more work I'd get. So I graduated from oboe to flute, clarinet, English horn and saxophone. I had become what you

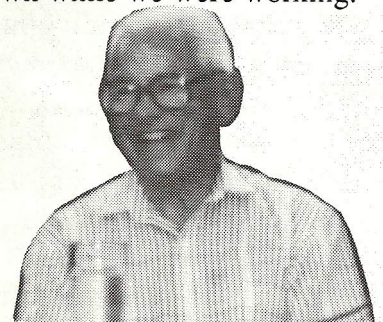
call a doubling woodwind player," he said.

"I also played at CBS, at KFI and NBC," he added.

When World War II began, he joined the service. "I was in Hawaii doing some pretty good duty but I was away from home and wasn't too happy even over there," he explained. Then came word that Meredith Willson was organizing the AFRS Orchestra, using musicians from every branch of the service. "We were making recordings for overseas consumption," he added. "We weren't making very much money. We were getting G. I. scale, of course."

Noting that many musicians were accustomed to working late at night, Gault remarked that the military often required its music makers to begin work early in the morning. "We'd have to get to the studio on Santa Monica Blvd. in Hollywood at 8:30 in the morning and start rehearsing," he said.

While some of the AFRS shows were recorded at the same time each week, many others were scheduled more haphazardly. "Getting up in the morning was like opening a box a Cracker Jack. We were wondering what the prize would be," he commented. "We'd show up and they'd start handing out some music. We didn't know if we were going to NBC or somewhere else, but we knew we were also going to see the sun go down while we were working."



Art Gault at SPERDVAC's July meeting.



PHOTO COURTESY AFRTS

Alveno Rey was one of the numerous professional musicians who provided music for service personnel during World War II.

Bill Sherman

"I was doing the **Jimmy Durante Show** in San Diego and this sailor came up and said, 'Hello, my name is Dale Eisenhouth. Would you like to come to Hollywood and work with Meredith Willson?' I said 'I'd love to' and a couple of the other guys in the band were approached too," Bill Sherman recalls.

"We did not buy that. We thought he was giving us a line," he said. "About a month later we all got orders to report to Hollywood. There were four of us out of this group and that's where I met *Capt. Meredith Willson*. We were thrilled to be introduced to this giant orchestra of about forty pieces," he said.



"They were the best people in Hollywood. I had a chance to sit in the saxophone section with a couple of my idols, Babe Russin, one of the greatest tenor saxophone players in the world, and Skeets Herford, who played lead alto with the Lawrence Welk Orchestra," he added.

AFRS musicians, who came from all branches of the armed services, were paid their regular military rate. "If we were getting paid like the civilians were paid for rehearsals, it (would have) amounted to several thousand dollars a week," he said. The rehearsals and broadcasts were done at the Hollywood studios of CBS, NBC, C. P. MacGregor and Universal Recorders.

After his release from military duty, civilian Bill Sherman returned to his musical career and was often employed by AFRS. "In the years right after the war a lot of my work was still with Armed Forces Radio," he told SPERDVAC. "They furnished quite a lot of my employment right after World War II."

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Comedy writer Gene Stone guests at Sept. 12 meeting

Radio comedy writer Gene Stone will guest at SPERDVAC's Sept. 12 membership meeting.

Mr. Stone was teamed with John Robinson in writing for *The Great Gildersleeve* and *Honest Harold*. They also wrote for Cass Daley's radio show for one season.

The SPERDVAC meeting is at the Buena Park Public Library, 7150 La Palma in Buena Park. It begins at 12 noon. All SPERDVAC meetings are open free to the public.

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