

# SPERDVAC

# RADIOGRAM

Vol. XVIII, No. 1    The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy    January 1992

At the opening of our 1991 convention, SPERDVAC member Duane Harding presented Michelle Trudeau Clark with this pencil drawing of her husband as Nick Carter facing one of the many thugs Nick was always victorious over in the radio days. (Photo coverage of our convention begins on page 4.)



Entertaining SPERDVAC's Friday night convention banquet crowd were Tyler McVey, Sidney Miller, Herb Ellis, Amzie Strickland and Lon Clark. They performed a script from the **Nick Carter, Master Detective** radio series. SPERDVAC's audience of radio fans loved the show.



# Board election highlights lack of volunteers

by Dan Haefele

The faces behind SPERDVAC—and its decision-making body—continue to change. This year President Larry Gassman and his brother John, who have each spent several years on the Board of Directors, have decided not to run for elective office.

Another board member has indicated job responsibilities may prevent him from serving another term.

This turn of events could be the opening needed for others who wish to help guide SPERDVAC. Unfortunately, as with most hobby groups which rely heavily on volunteers, there seems to be a sparse population in the volunteer camp.

A lot of our members join because of the services we provide. They are understandably more interested in the programs and other services SPERDVAC can supply. Some of those who might help us live too far away. Others have constraints on their time and energy. The result is a handful of people carry the load.

Last year our Board of Directors' election didn't even offer seven candidates for the seven positions. Six members ran and one of the winners was unable to serve because of other commitments. That meant two members had to be appointed.

The deadline for declaration of candidacy is just a few days away and SPERDVAC could face the uncomfortable situation of again not having enough members wishing to serve on our board.

SPERDVAC and its members will benefit if more individuals can step forward and offer a few hours per month. In fact, if we had more volunteer assistance we could reduce the amount of time others need to contribute.

Board members meet every other month following the SPERDVAC membership meeting. At times, other decisions have been made by voting via telephone.

Those wishing to run for election to the SPERDVAC board must declare candidacy by contacting Catherine Passarelli, 10615 Butterfield Road, Los Angeles, CA 90064. Candidates may submit a campaign statement limited to 200 words for publication in next month's newsletter. (For complete details, see the Nov.-Dec. 1991 issue of the *Radiogram*.)

The BOD election is in March. Ballots will be distributed to paid members with their February newsletter. The deadline to declare candidacy is Jan. 11.



## SPERDVAC FRIENDS

Dorothy Geiger

*(In memory of Milton Geiger)*

Elliott Reid

*(In memory of John McIntire & Howard Duff)*

Kay St. Germain

*(In memory of Merl Bell Sharbutt)*

John Larch

*(In memory of Vivi Janiss)*

Art Hern

*(In memory of Herb Nelson)*

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 Hlestand, Elliott Lewis & John McIntire)*

### IN MEMORY OF DOUGLAS EDWARDS, PIONEER NETWORK NEWSCASTER

June Foray

Phil Cohan

Walter Staves

Bob Newhart

Bernard Katz

Casey Kasem

Chuck Benedict

John Wrisley

Naomi Lewis

Dick Murphy

Andy Russell

Audrey Marsh

Joan Banks Lovejoy

Alice Backes

Mary Jane Croft Lewis

Truda Marson & Richard Chandlee

Russell J. Folsom

John B. Daball

Vern Carstensen

Doris Singleton

Jonathan Hole

Roy Rowan

Lucla Silvestri

Garry Papers

Hy Averback

Henry Tchop, Jr.

Barbara Whiting

William Conrad

Lucille Meredith

Glenhall Taylor

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

# Volunteers needed to fill a void

*Six term SPERDVAC president will not run in upcoming election*

by Larry Gassman

**SPERDVAC president**

Many have proclaimed our 1991 convention the best ever! Thank you to all who made this event such a huge success: the Board of Directors, our volunteers, our wonderful radio performers and you who attended and supported SPERDVAC at its 8th convention. To those who missed it, we hope you will attend next year.

The hospitality from the hotel was tremendous. We can't thank the people at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza enough for their terrific service. We found the old axiom does hold true in this case: You get what you pay for.

To those able to attend, we would like to hear your comments about the convention, both positive and negative. We want your input.

We also wish to thank the many who were so gener-

***"I believe that if SPERDVAC is to survive and flourish it must seek out more volunteer help. Once I am no longer president I will work to add more workers to our already overworked staff."***

ous with monetary donations to SPERDVAC. Individual letters of thanks were sent to our contributors.

In March of 1992 I will conclude my sixth year as SPERDVAC's president. I began my work as a board

member and vice president in March of 1982. After a decade, it is finally time to take the pack off and stand at ease.

I have several reasons for stepping down and some of them are personal. I've learned that when you feel as if you're getting tired and the job is beginning to be full time, it's time to step back and take a look at priorities.

I have decided to pull back on my SPERDVAC activities. I will, if asked, continue to arrange our monthly meetings *provided we can get volunteers to help and eventually take over this job.*

If we hold another convention I will, if asked, chair it under the condition we get many more volunteers to help plan the work and eventually work the plan.

I believe that if SPERDVAC is to survive and flourish it must seek out more volunteer help. Once I am no longer president I will work to add more workers to our already overworked staff.

We need assistance with the planning of our monthly meetings and our conventions. I will be more than

willing to advise and consult in any situation which may come up but I must pull back on the enormous amount of time spent as a volunteer for SPERDVAC. To help realize this goal, *I will not seek another term on SPERDVAC's Board of Directors and will not be SPERDVAC's president.*

The board meets every other month after the membership meeting. Our next board meeting is Jan. 11. The board meetings, like our membership meetings, are free and open to all who wish to join us. Please make an effort to be there.

Remember that the last day to declare candidacy for a board position is Jan. 11. There will be at least two slots open for the 1992 SPERDVAC board.

I have enjoyed my time as a member of the board and as your president. Since I began as president in March of 1986 our membership has almost doubled. We are now financially very sound and we are recognized as one of the leading OTR organizations in the country in many fields, not the least of which is preservation.

I am exceedingly proud of any contributions I have made in this regard. I look forward to helping in any way the new board sees fit for SPERDVAC in the future. I thank you all for your support and good wishes.

One more thought before I close. Our attendance at SPERDVAC meetings this year has dropped. We are currently seeing forty to fifty people at the monthly meetings. SPERDVAC meetings are free and open to the public. Last year our membership meetings were held in South Pasadena and Buena Park. We will continue to have many of our meetings at those locations but will add several meetings again in the San Fernando Valley. We are currently looking at two Valley locations but nothing is firm yet. If you have ideas for Valley meeting locations, please let me know and we will pursue them.

Make sure you support SPERDVAC in as many activities as you can. This support includes our monthly meetings. We will see you in January at the South Pasadena Public Library.

## **SPERDVAC MEETING**

**Saturday, Jan. 11 - 12 noon**

South Pasadena Public Library

1115 El Centro, S. Pasadena

*Our guest was not confired at press time*

**Call for details: (310) 947-9800**

**It's Free! Guests are welcome.**

## SPERDVAC Convention '91

# Nick Carter, Master Detective

Actor Lon Clark starred as Nick Carter, a role he played on radio from the premier broadcast in 1943 until the last program in 1955. His work in radio began in 1929 when he appeared as a soloist in a Christmas oratorio for a Minneapolis station. In the thirties Clark was a Chicago radio performer and in 1936 he was employed by WLW, Cincinnati as an announcer, actor and newscaster. He also sang with the Cincinnati Opera. Lon was the announcer on the **Kate Smith Hour** and a regular on **The March of Time**. It was while working on **Twenty-Six by Corwin** he was offered the Carter role. Clark turns 81 on Jan. 12.



Above, Michelle Trudeau Clark and announcer Jack Brown presented comedy commercials. Jack subbed for Art Hannes, who was sidelined by a car accident earlier that day. Actor George Petrie, center, postponed a trip to San Francisco to join his radio colleagues in the program. SPERDVAC was also fortunate to have a musical assist from Esther Geddes McVey, right. She scored the music and performed it live during the **Nick Carter** recreation.



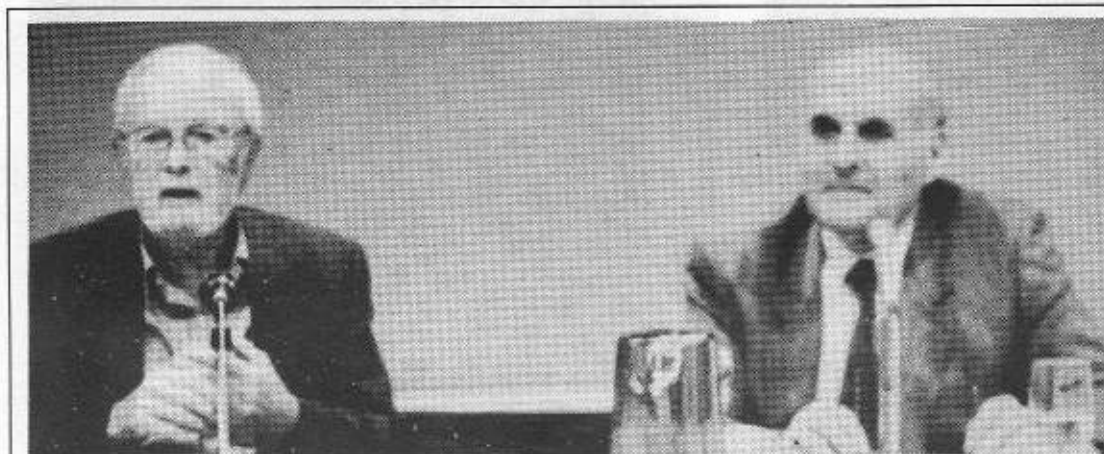
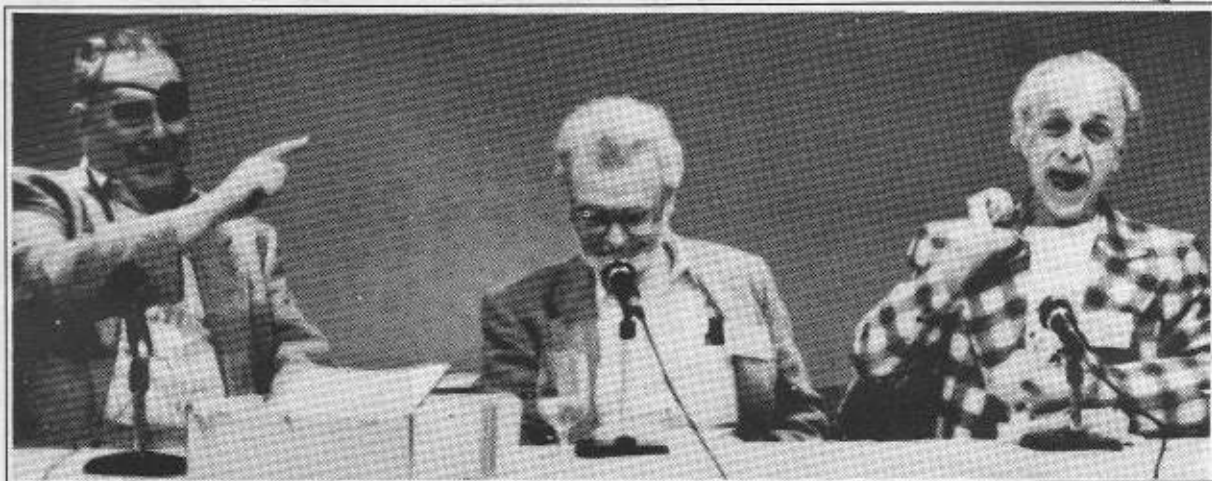
Actress Alice Backes congratulates Lon Clark following their **Nick Carter** performance for an elated SPERDVAC audience.

# SPERDVAC's Convention Panelists

*Guests from early radio told of their broadcast careers*



Telling SPERDVAC about life with Spike Jones' City Slickers were, top photo, writer Eddie Maxwell and Eddie Brandt; at right, moderator Cleve Hermann with Slickers Earl Bennett and Joe Siracusa.



At left, Bob Dwan and Irvin Atkins told stories of working with Art Linkletter and Groucho Marx when they discussed radio's audience participation programs. Below, announcer Roy Rowan, singer/actress Audrey Marsh and engineer William Murtough recalled a variety of anecdotes about their labors in network radio.



Recreating  
**Hollywood  
Star  
Playhouse**



**DOING DOUBLE DUTY** for SPERDVAC were announcer Eddy King and actor Herb Ellis. Eddy announced two shows for us. Herb acted in the **Nick Carter** show Friday night, then came back Saturday morning for rehearsal of **Hollywood Star Playhouse**. Herb cast the program and directed it.

During rehearsal actress Mary Jane Croft had a chance to renew long-time radio friendships. She is pictured here with Parley Baer.



**If looks could kill...**



Larry Dobkin, long a radio "heavy," played a mean, nasty tempered character who bullied his way into a hospital so he could orchestrate a murder. Larry's visit to SPERDVAC's microphones this year was to play the lead in "Quiet Zone," a story Milton Geiger wrote for the **Hollywood Star Playhouse** broadcast of March 9, 1952.



*Recreating radio for SPERDVAC are Lou Krugman, Larry Dobkin and Parley Baer. They were three of Hollywood's top radio performers.*

## “Quiet Zone” by Milton Geiger



*This was the first time SPERDVAC had the opportunity to have Mary Jane Croft at one of our functions. She played two roles in the show and had a part in a commercial, too. It was her first appearance at a radio microphone in several years.*

*Actor Peter Leeds, who is at home with a comedy or dramatic script, performed in the “Quiet Zone” play with several of his long-time radio colleagues.*



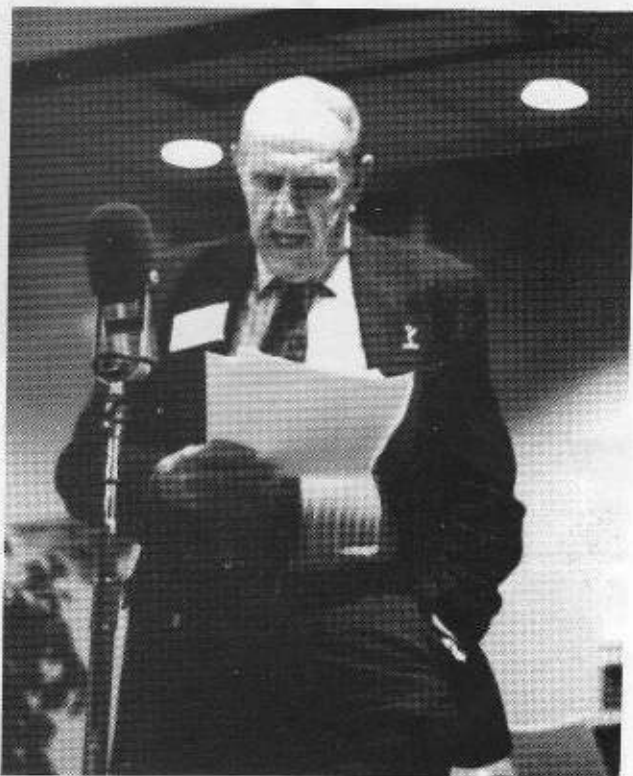
*Recreating*

# The Adventures of Archie Andrews

*Saturday night banquet concludes with comedy show*



*We radio fans are so used to thinking of Lon Clark as radio's Nick Carter, it's hard to imagine him doing anything else at a microphone. We watched him perform a comedy role during our recreation of **The Adventures of Archie Andrews**.*



*Bill Zuckert, another radio New Yorker, demonstrated the art of converting words in a script into an entertaining radio performance.*



*In a scene during the **Archie Andrews** recreation are Rhoda Williams, Bob Hastings, Parley Baer (in his second SPERDVAC recreation that day) and Hal Stone.*



# *Relax, Archie, Relax!*



Bob Hastings flew in from Texas to reprise his radio role of Archie Andrews and Harlan (Hal) Stone traveled from Arizona to portray Jughead Jones. Their Saturday night recreation drew a large crowd of radio fans.



Shirley Mitchell was a teenager again on the **Adventures of Archie Andrews**.

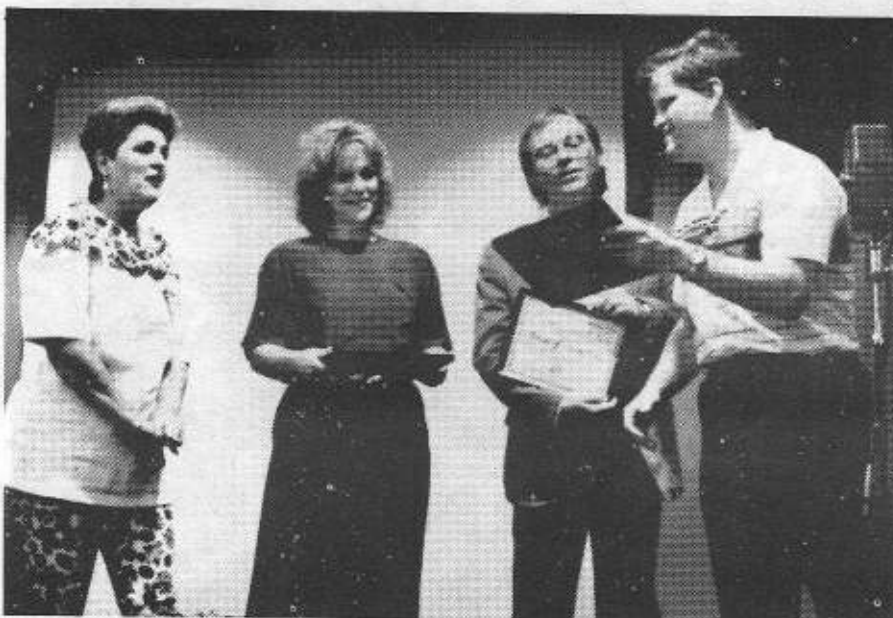


Pam and Ben Cooper were part of the **Andrews** recreation cast. That's sound effects man Ray Erlenborn at right.

## *Ivan Ditmars receives the Byron Kane Memorial Award*



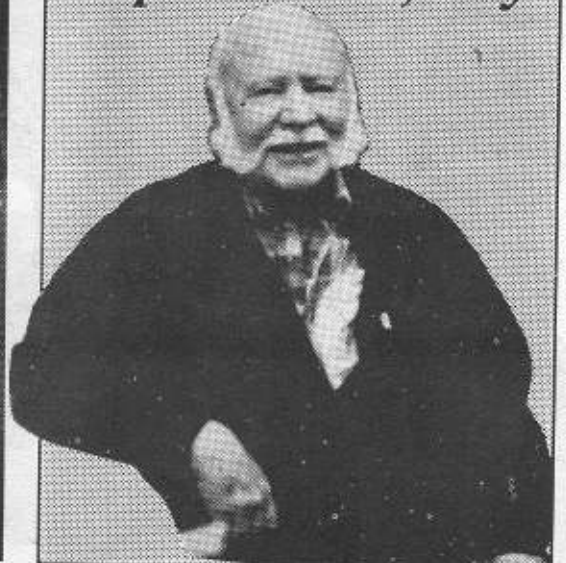
Actor Parley Baer, left, presented the Byron Kane Memorial Award to radio musician Ivan Ditmars. SPERDVAC's Board of Directors voted to present Ivan with the annual award this year in tribute to his work in radio and for all the help he's given us by providing music during several of our radio show recreations. We first met him when he performed music for a **Suspense** recreation in 1985. Since then he scored and played music for our recreations of **Sherlock Holmes** and **Casebook of Gregory Hood**. This year he scored and played live the music for our **Archie Andrews** recreation.



We concluded our convention with a Sunday morning brunch and delightful audio/visual presentation from the children of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello. Afterwards, President Larry Gassman presented the family members with Friend of SPERDVAC awards. From left are Vickie Abbott Wheeler, Chris Costello and Bud Abbott Jr. with Larry Gassman. Also with us for part of the weekend was Paddy Costello Humphries.

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## *Triple thanks, Ray!*



During each of the convention recreations, there was one man who kept making noise while the rest of us listened quietly. He's Ray Erlenborn, a true sound effects artist. Ray was kind enough to spend the weekend with us, providing sound for all three of our shows. Thanks again, Ray!

JANUARY 1992

# Radio in Review



# SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

**A HEART AT FIRE'S CENTER: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann.** By Steven Smith. 1991. The University of California Press. Clothbound \$29.95. 415 pages.

Bernard Herrmann was a genius. This has been the consensus of many collectors when a discussion of composition or scoring music for radio dramatic shows is brought up. Film music fan and scholar Steven Smith has written a solid, yet engrossing biography of a major figure in radio, film and TV history. It presents new insights into the composer and his work.

Utilizing previously unpublished information, the author explores Herrmann's turbulent personal life, his working habits and why we enjoy his music today. Here fact is separated from fiction.

Whether Herrmann utilized a full orchestra for such programs as **Campbell Playhouse** or a small group that did **Crime Classics**, we discover and appreciate the artistry and vitality of his music.

Fans of **Suspense** know that Herrmann composed the original theme, but may not realize that the theme for the **Mercury Theatre on the Air** was not his. (Until original music was used, early radio programs utilized the classics because they were public domain.) It was later when Herrmann worked with Norman Corwin that original themes were used to fit the program, such as the classic **We Hold These Truths**.

From his first film, *Citizen Kane*, to his last, *Taxi Driver*, Bernard Herrmann has left us a rich legacy of film scoring. Besides these films, there are many more, including *North by Northwest* and *Psycho*. In TV, we all remember the theme to the classic *Twilight Zone*.

Well researched and written, the book includes many photos. This will be a welcome addition to the libraries of those who are fans of music or radio.

**THE ADVENTURES OF AMOS 'N' ANDY: A Social History of an American Phenomenon.** By Melvin Ely. 1991. The Free Press. Clothbound \$22.95.

The humor and drama of **Amos 'N' Andy** made it one of the most popular radio shows of all time. This is the entire story of the creation, success and aftermath of that radio and TV favorite. The author has painstakingly researched his subject, giving readers new information not presented in earlier works. Written for either the scholar or collector, this work explores the racial understanding—and misunderstanding—in America during that period.

Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll's contributions to radio and race relations are not overlooked. Though many African-Americans did not like the show because of the depictions of their race, the record will show that the creators always presented their characters in a humorous, but not demeaning manner. Many excellent photos supplement the text, and the references and other notes are numerous.

One area that would have made this a fuller volume would be a complete **Sam 'N' Henry** and **Amos 'N' Andy** radio log. To this day, none has existed. Otherwise, it's a thoroughly enjoyable book to own.

—Chris Lembesis

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## 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 Haefele, 4366-D 136th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250 (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 +:** Richard Glasband, 7700 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046.

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500:** Richard Karman, 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, 601 Sutton Lane #5, 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.

# Dick Joy, radio announcer and news broadcaster, dies at 75

by Dan Haefele

Dick Joy, best known as the announcer on *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, died Oct. 31. He was 75.

Joy entered radio in 1935 while a student at USC. Some of his early work was at the now defunct KEHE, the Hearst outlet in Los Angeles. He worked on programs through USC at KHJ and the Don Lee network.



Dick Joy was news director at KFAC, Los Angeles from 1951 to 1967.

he became the morning announcer at KNX, Los Angeles, when it was purchased by CBS.

He left KNX in 1943 to join the Navy. His post war credits

"I got my first paycheck as house announcer for the Wilshire Bowl and Sterling Young's fine orchestra—seven nights a week, \$50 a month," he wrote of the era in the *Radiogram*.

In 1938 he obtained his first network announcing job when he was hired to work on *Silver Theatre*.

The previous year

include *The Danny Kaye Show*, *Bell Telephone Hour*, *Nat King Cole Show*, *Spike Jones Show* and *The Adventures of Sam Spade*.

The *Sam Spade* series held many happy memories for him. He recalled once how cast members used to construct large paper airplanes during the show. "They poured lighter fluid on the airplane, set it on fire, and threw it at me" as he read the commercial, he recalled.

Another happy recollection for him was working with actor Sidney Miller. "He could read anything backwards," Joy said. "I'd start at the top of the middle commercial and Sidney would start at the bottom. He'd pull the chair out (from the microphone) to where, by very cleverly modulating, I was the only person who could hear him." What he heard was Miller reading each word of the commercial backwards as he read it on the air.

In 1946 Joy and engineer Don McBain opened KCMJ, the first radio station in Palm Springs. He worked weekdays as the station's program director and commuted to Los Angeles each weekend to do network announcing and news broadcasts. When there was a big earthquake in Palm Springs in 1948, he found the only damage to his apartment was in the bathroom. A bottle of Wildroot Hair Oil had fallen out of a cabinet and broke on the floor.

Ill health forced him to retire in 1969. He moved to Medford, Oregon in 1975. He is survived by his wife Cecelia, two daughters and three grandchildren.

## MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

Our new librarian for Archives cassettes 1-500 is Richard Karman. To order from his portion of our library, send your order form and check to him at 2515 NE 37th, Portland, OR 97212. Richard will supply patrons with the initial mailing labels since current members do not yet have them.

Local music collectors will be interested to know *Rare Records & New* in Glendale, Ca is going out of business early this year. Meantime, they are reducing prices on a variety of recorded material. Their address is 417 E. Broadway in Glendale 91205. Phone: (818) 242-0444 and (213) 245-0379. Ask for Alan.

A reminder: writer John Dunning still welcomes information on radio broadcasts for his upcoming revision of *Tune in Yesterday*. Changes, corrections, etc. are welcome. Address your correspondence to him at P. O. Box 18514, Denver, CO 80218.

SPERDVAC is still actively seeking loans and donations of material to help us document the history of radio broadcasting. We are especially interested in preserving programs on transcription discs and master tapes, scripts and photographs. If news of the availability of radio historical data comes your way

please contact us immediately. Our phone number is (310) 947-9800.

Occasionally, our preservation activities call for us to transport glass transcription discs. In the old days they were often placed in wood boxes specifically built to hold about twenty of the 16 inch (and sometimes even 18 inch) records. We would love to hear from any member who may possess unused wood boxes of this sort. . . or even from someone who would like to build us a few.

Our 1991 convention was a success because we had help from several people. Thanks are due to our SPERDVAC Board of Directors. We also had help from Joe Bine, Catherine Passarelli, Jerry Williams, Shelley Herman, Chester Allen, Anthony Tollin, Barbara Watkins, Gary Mollica, Arlene Shultz, Jordan Young, Randy Skretvedt, Cleve Hermann and Glenda Kelly. Editor Dan assembled the convention program, and the front cover photo was supplied by our friend Jay Hickerson.

Our gratitude also to the Friends of Old Time Radio for supplying the script we used for our Archie Andrews recreation. It was a lot of fun!

SPERDVAC's pal Ezra Stone writes us there is a book he thinks we should

## Items of interest to radio fans & collectors

all put on our reading lists. It's *Next Time I want to Come Back as a Yellow Bird* by Richard S. Burdick.

"You will get to know several platoons of people whose lives he touched, and they his," Ezra writes. "Between these covers you will find a cornucopia of fascinating characters...from Tallulah Bankhead to Rev. Billy Graham and with Helen Hayes, Ethel Barrymore, Dinah Shore, Mae West, Burl Ives, Gary Merrill, Victor Borge, Dr. Timothy Johnson, Dick Cavett, Barbara Stanwyck and Irving Berlin, among many others."

*Yellow Bird* is 236 pages in length and is published by Axelrod Publishing of Tampa Bay. It sells for \$24.95. Says Ezra Stone, "I know it will tickle your funny bone many times and when you least expect it, Richard will touch your heart, your brain and your soul — assuming we all possess at least one of these erogenous zones."

PBS will air "EMPIRE OF THE AIR: The Men Who Made Radio" on Jan. 29. It's based on Tom Lewis' book of the same title.

The program reviews the development of the radio industry, 1906-1955. It looks at the work of David Samoff, Lee de Forest and Edwin Armstrong.

# Radio writer, director Jack Johnstone dies

by Dan Haefele

Jack Johnstone, whose contributions to early radio included writing, directing and announcing, died Nov. 17.

Johnstone became a co-writer of **Buck Rogers in the 25th Century** in 1931, earning him \$32 weekly. A few months later director Carlo de Angelo talked him into taking over the director's chores on the series. The new task increased his salary to \$300 a week.

Then, he replaced Paul Douglas as announcer on the popular children's show.

Johnstone credited sound effects man Irving Reis with much of the program's high quality. Reis later became producer and director of **Columbia Workshop**.

One of the **Buck Rogers** characters of the thirties was a dog named Tagalong. "Tagalong was a smooth-haired Fox Terrier I had," he told SPERDVAC in a 1987 interview. "I taught her to respond to two hand cues, one to bark and the other to 'talk' the way dogs do sometimes. In those days of live radio she performed beautifully."

As his reputation for writing and directing good radio spread, more shows came Johnstone's way. "There was a time when I was doing **Buck Rogers**, two **Philip Morris Playhouse** dramatic spots and **Smilin' Jack**. During the night I also recorded **Superman**," he said. "Those were busy days and nights. I left the house right after breakfast and got home between midnight and one o'clock."

Johnstone was known for a style of directing which differed from the standard practiced by his colleagues. He took more precise control over the productions.

"Most directors directed from the control room," he observed. "I directed in the studio, wearing a pair of earphones with heavy muffs on them so I couldn't hear the sounds directly. I'm thoroughly convinced it's the only way to direct a program... In the studio, right next to the actors, I could tell one actor to speed up just a little bit and another one perhaps even to slow down. If an actor was too close to the microphone, I could push him back gently or move him in (closer).

"Sound effects cues were never missed when I was in the studio," he continued. "It gave me much better control over the show."

Johnstone also directed **Crime Doctor**, which featured actor John McIntire. When McIntire left the program to move to Hollywood, Edwin Jerome replaced him. On his first **Crime Doctor** program Jerome misunderstood the time of the repeat broadcast and failed to show up. Director Johnstone filled in for him.

On another **Crime Doctor** show Johnstone, giving an emphatic cue to the orchestra, accidentally punched announcer Ken Roberts in the nose. An actor produced a handkerchief and Roberts delivered a Philip Morris message to the nation.

Johnstone moved to Hollywood to work on a ill-fated series with Orson Welles. He quit after just thirteen weeks on the program.

Before he became the director of CBS' **Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar**, Johnstone had never heard of the show. Beginning in 1955 he wrote some 350 scripts for the series, in addition to his director's duties. Often he used the pen name John Dawson and at least once he wrote a radio script using the name Jonathan Bundy. "Bundy was my wife's (maiden) name," he revealed.

It was while directing **Hollywood Star Playhouse** that a script written by Frank Burt drew much attention and praise.

Jack Johnstone at a SPERDVAC meeting in 1987.



The script became the pilot story for **The Six Shooter**, which Johnstone would also direct.

"Because of the people involved, **The Six Shooter** was a very gratifying show to do," he said. "Jimmy Stewart fit the part so well and Frank Burt knew him well enough to write for him. Also, Jim loved to do the show. He said more than once that he enjoyed doing it more than anything else he'd ever done in his professional career."

## CBS announcer Dan Cubberly dies

by Dan Haefele

Former CBS announcer Dan Cubberly died Oct. 6. He had been in ill health following several severe strokes.

Cubberly was an Olympia, Washington high school student when he made a brief appearance in a school production on a local station in 1934. The following year he worked on a weekly half hour school program on the same station.

Then he did an early morning newscast gratis. "Eventually the paid me \$1.50 a week, which was really for vacuuming the studio floors and washing windows," he told SPERDVAC in a 1987 interview.

After a stint in the Merchant Marines he began hanging around radio stations. Cubberly earned his living by working in the men's department of a dry goods store while trying to break back in to the radio industry.

"I did an early morning wake-up program, went to the store, did a man on the street interview show on my lunch hour, did a newscast in the evening and once a week a quiz program where I was the announcer," he explained.

"The store manager indicated in rather strong terms that inasmuch as I preferred to write scripts on the Arrow Shirt counter, perhaps I should devote full time to the radio station."

After working summer relief at KVI, Tacoma, the young announcer took a job at KLO in Ogden. "Upon seeing that operation I made up my mind Ogden and KLO were not very long for me and six months later I was at KOY in Pheonix," he recounted.

"There I began to learn what radio was really about. The program director, Jack Williams, who eventually became governor of Arizona, was very handy in commenting and

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# SPERDVAC

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

## SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM

c/o Dan Haefele  
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## Dan Cubberly continued

instructing announcers what to do, how to do and leaving you notes in your mail slot about how you could improve," he said. "When you signed on in the morning sometimes you were there until midnight so it was a full day of learning good broadcasting.

"I got acquainted with network operations, not only as an employee of an affiliate station, but as an announcer on such programs as *The Kate Smith Show* and with Gene Autry I got some network experience and knew what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go," he said.

In 1942 Cubberly left Arizona to spend three years at WLS, Chicago. There he worked on the *National Barn Dance* program with Red Foley, Rex Allen and Joe Kelly. He also had moonlight jobs on some network broadcasts. He and Charlie Lyons did commercials together and Cubberly also was the voice touting Alka Selzer on John W. Vandercook's news broadcasts.

Moving to San Diego in 1945, Cubberly, sound man Larry Golding and Ira Lowe started a recording studio business. That project was terminated with he took an announcer's job at CBS station KNX, Los Angeles in the Spring of 1950.

At KNX he worked as announcer on many of the CBS dramas of the fifties.

One of his memories of his CBS days was working on *The Line-Up* under director Jaime del Valle. He once described del Valle's style of directing as unusually loose. "He'd give me a cue by gently nodding to me," Cubberly recalled.

For a while *The Line-Up* was done at the theatre used for *Lux Radio Theatre* instead of the KNX/CBS studios. "I was doing commercials for Edward R. Murrow about 5:15 in the afternoon and I had a 5:55 pm local newscast following Frank Goss, Monday through Friday," he said.

"The day of *The Line-Up* I'd leave the (CBS) building to go over to Lux for a dress rehearsal. I had to be back at Columbia Square for my commercial activity...My newscast ended at 5:59:30 and *Line-Up* started at 6 o'clock for the Eastern feed," he added.

"I would leave my script on the sound effects door open to the first commercial. Hy Averbach was ready to pick up the script and do a commercial if I didn't get back in time," he said. That still didn't solve the problem of doing the program

opening just thirty seconds after finishing his newscast.

"I'd take page one of my script to CBS...I just stayed at the table after the newscast and read the opening there," he explained. "I'd leave after reading that short paragraph, file my news copy, and walk back over to the Lux Playhouse."

Cubberly was the announcer on *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* through the eras of John Lund, Edmond O'Brien and Bob Bailey. His other credits include *Broadway is My Beat*, *Rocky Jordan* and *Nightwatch*.

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