

# SPERDVAC

# **RADIOGRAM**

Volume 20, No. 6

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

June 1994



The Los Angeles City Council has awarded SPERDVAC a certificate of appreciation. Councilwoman Ruth Galanter made the presentation. Accepting for SPERDVAC are board members Bruce Miller, left, and Bob Steinmetz.

*General Library catalog pages 199-200 enclosed with this issue.*

*If your copy is missing, send a SASE to Editor Dan!*

## Open reel library fees will increase in July

SPERDVAC is raising the rental fees for the open reel versions of the General and Archives libraries. The new rates will help us keep pace with current postal fees.

Effective July 1, rental of five General Library tapes will be \$8.75 and rental fees for five Archives reels will be \$5.75. The cassette rental fees remain unaffected.

# SPERDVAC



Naomi Lewis  
(In memory of Dick Mack)  
Dorothy Geiger  
(In memory of Milton Geiger)  
Hy Averback  
(In memory of Bob Sweeney & Jerry Hausner)  
Herb Ellis  
(In memory of Bob Sweeney, Elliott Lewis  
and Jerry Hausner)  
Millie Morse  
(In memory of Carlton E. Morse)  
Joe Thompson  
(In memory of Jerry Hausner and  
Jimmy Lyons)  
Barbara Fuller  
(In memory of Bob Jensen & Lenore Kingston)  
Bill Lally  
(In memory of Lenore Kingston, Jerry  
Hausner & Lou Krugman)  
Veola Vonn  
(In memory of Hanley Stafford  
and Frank Nelson)  
Jeanette Nolan  
(In memory of Jerry Hausner and  
Carlton E. Morse)  
Bill Stulla  
(In memory of J. C. Lewis)  
Mary Jane Croft Lewis  
(In memory of Elliott Lewis, Howard Duff,  
John McIntire & Jerry Hausner)  
Lillian Buyeff  
(In memory of Lou Krugman & John Dehner)  
Betty Lackow  
(Matching fund in memory of  
Carlton E. Morse)  
Elizabeth Miller  
(In memory of Marvin Miller)  
Lew Lauria & Betty Lou Gerson  
(In memory of Lenore Kingston)  
Ace Bryson  
(In memory of Lenore Kingston)  
Mickey Smith  
(In memory of Richard "Peavey" LeGrand)  
Tony Randall  
(In memory of Charlie Warburton)  
Nathan Scott  
(In memory of Walter Schumann, Leith  
Stevens & Wilbur Hatch)  
Bea Wain  
(In memory of Andre Baruch)  
Lucille Meredith  
(In memory of John McIntire & Jerry Hausner)

# FRIENDS

Bill James  
(In memory of Tom Hanley & Virginia Gregg)  
Audrey Marsh  
(In memory of Andre Baruch, Mari Bell  
Sharbutt & Lenore Kingston)  
Chuck Benedict  
(In memory of Elliott Lewis and Howard Duff)  
Phil Cohan  
(In memory of Garry Moore & Lenore  
Kingston)  
Seaman Jacobs  
(In memory of Pat Buttram & Olan Soule)  
Willard & Mary Anna Waterman  
(In memory of Fran Carlon & Harry Elders)  
Ed "Speedy" Wianecki  
(In memory of Helen O'Connell)  
Fred Bondy  
(In memory of Elliott Lewis & Howard Duff)  
Walter H. Bunker  
(In memory of Garry Moore)  
William Froug  
(In memory of Walter Brown Newman)  
Jack Kelk  
(In memory of Ezra Stone)  
Henny Backus  
(In memory of Jim Backus)  
James Everts  
(In memory of Carlton E. Morse)  
George Fenneman  
(In memory of Bob Sweeney)  
June Foray  
(In memory of Hobart Donovan)

Russell J. Folsom	Jonathon Hole
Gary Papers	Dick Murphy
Alice Backes	Gil Stratton Jr.
William Conrad	Stuart Lubin
Jack Brown	Dan Healy
Lucia Silvestri	Art Gilmore
Bob Hite	Del Sharbutt
John Wisley	Sharon Douglas
Tom Seslar	Doris Singleton
Bob LeMond	Himan Brown
Ivan Cury	Roy Rowan
Betsy Weinberg	Amzie Strickland
Joan Banks Lovejoy	
Bob O'Sullivan & Joyce McCluskey O'Sullivan	

SPERDVAC is very grateful to these individuals who have contributed \$50 or more to our organization during the past twelve months. Donations, payable to SPERDVAC, should be mailed to Carolyn Rawski. (See SPERDVAC Directory.)



Mercedes McCambridge and Mason Adams starred in "Child of Silence," a story from Hy Brown's new radio series *We, the Living*. They performed May 5 at the American Association of Retired Persons convention in Anaheim. Amzie Strickland also appeared in the program and Ray Erlenborn provided sound effects.

PHOTO © 1994 BY JORDAN R. YOUNG

## 'Alice in Wonderland' radio production set

SPERDVAC won't be holding a traditional meeting June 11 so that members may instead attend the California Artists Radio Theatre's production of "Alice in Wonderland" that afternoon.

CART has scheduled public performances of productions which are being recorded for broadcast on KPCC-FM. "Alice in Wonderland" will air Tuesday, June 14 at 10 p.m.

Roddy McDowall will star as Lewis Carroll and Stan Freberg as the Mad Hatter. John Astin, Ashby Adams and William Windom will be part of the cast.

Samantha Eggar will play the role of Alice. Also featured will be Marvin Kaplan as the White Rabbit, Don Messick as the Cheshire Cat, Norman Lloyd as the King of Hearts, Jeanette Nolan as the Queen of Hearts.

Kathleen Freeman is the Duchess,

Les Tremayne is the Mock Turtle and the roles of Tweedledee and Tweedledum will be portrayed by Parley Baer and Sean McClory.

The performances will be at the historic Roosevelt Hotel, 7000 Hollywood Blvd., across the street from Mann's Chinese Theater. Parking at the Hollywood Roosevelt is \$4 and is available across the street for \$3.

CART is offering reduced rates (\$10 per person) to SPERDVAC members. (The regular price is \$16.) The 90 minute radio shows begin at 1:30 p.m.

To make reservations at the reduced rate for SPERDVAC members, phone (213) 683-3422. At press deadline there were still a few tickets available for the June 11 performance. There will also be a performance on Wednesday, June 8.

**See ad on page 4 for more info.**

## Nordine appearance planned June 23

Ken Nordine, the baritone voice of **Word Jazz**, will make a one-night appearance June 23 at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood. The radio-TV voice man will present his unique show, sharing the bill with the pop duo Geggy Tah.

Nordine, 73, is making his first public performance in the Los Angeles area. He has recently performed in San Francisco and in his native Chicago.

The performance begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$23. Reservations may be made by calling (213) 466-1767.

Nordine will also have three live radio interviews on June 22. He will appear on KMPC at 8:30 a.m., KPCC-FM at 8 p.m. and KCRW-FM at 10 p.m.

## Video library users surveyed

For several years, SPERDVAC has been video recording our monthly meetings and the convention programs with the aim of eventually establishing a VHS tape library.

Some of the programs were recorded with multiple cameras and then edited. Most have been recorded with a single camcorder with no editing.

The handling fees would be comparable to the audio tape libraries' charges.

Before we activate a video library it is important to know whether there is sufficient demand to justify the purchase of equipment to produce these library tapes.

If you would be interested in using such a library on a regular basis, please send a postcard with your comments to SPERDVAC Video, P.O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712.



by Barbara J. Watkins

This month we will tell you about the upcoming convention for Lum & Abner fans, news about other clubs and newsletters, and review questions that have remained unanswered to date. First the questions:

Who played Jerry in *Jerry of the Circus*, and who played Speed Gibson in *Speed Gibson of the International Secret Police*?

Whatever happened to the proposed production of a new radio series based on the TV scripts of "The Untouchables"? It was scheduled to start production around the fall of 1990. Did it ever happen? If not, why not, and could it be done now?

Does anyone know what happened to the book that Richard "Captain Midnight" Webb was writing before his death? Was it published or will it be?

Whatever happened to singer Jack Baker who appeared on Don McNeill's *Breakfast Club*?

The mystery of the NBC series *Escape* remains unsolved. In the July 1993 column I surmised that the series was done in Chicago. If anyone has come across any written information on this series, please send it to this column to share with other members. That question generated this question the following month: Were the *Frontline Theater* shows original productions for AFRS or were they all repackaged from the networks' broadcasts?

In September 1993 member Bill MacDonald suggested we put together the names of the old-time radio stars who are now doing voiceovers for TV commercials. He'd also like their names matched with their early radio work. To

date, we've received no input on this. What do you hear in your area?

If everyone contributes any knowledge they may have in any of the above areas, we can put these questions to rest within a couple of months. Thanks for your help!

**Calling All Clubs.** Let's see what's happening down in Pine Ridge. . . It's June and we find the boys the subject of the annual celebration of their work in radio and in the movies.

The *National Lum and Abner Society* holds its 10th annual convention on Saturday, June 25 at the Best Western Lime Tree Inn in Mena, Arkansas. 1994 marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the NLAS (July 30, 1984) and the 50th anniversary of the movie "Goin' to Town" starring Lum and Abner. The movie will be shown in the evening.

A schedule of daytime activities will be published in the June issue of the

*Continued on page 10*

CALIFORNIA ARTISTS RADIO THEATRE presents. . .

## CART at the HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT

See radio stars perform *in person* on an actual radio show for  
National Public Radio — heard locally over KPCC-FM, 89.3

— NEW VERSION —

June 8th & 11th - "Alice in Wonderland"  
Lewis Carroll's classic comedic fantasy.  
All star cast includes Roddy McDowall,  
John Astin and Stan Freberg.

— WORLD PREMIERE —

July 13 & 16 - "The Strange Affliction" by  
Norman Corwin. Mr. Corwin directs the  
premiere performance of his comedy on a  
double bill with his "My Client Curly."

— WORLD PREMIERE —

August 10 & 13 - "Oscar" by Richard  
Erdman. Richard Erdman directs his  
poetic new play which combines the wit  
of Oscar Wilde and authentic music of  
the period.

— SHAVIAN COMEDY —

September 14 & 17 - "Major Barbara" by  
George Bernard Shaw. Stars Samantha  
Eggar, David Warner and Norman Lloyd.

*Performances begin at 1:30 p.m.*

*Each production runs 90 minutes*

**Discount rates for AFTRA, SPERDVAC and PPB members: \$10**

**For reservations call (213) 683-3422**

**SPERDVAC**

**Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for  
the Fiscal Year Ended February 28, 1994**  
REVENUE:

Library fees	\$32,713
Membership dues	25,109
Convention (1993)	17,380
Interest income	4,888
Donations received	5,008
Printed Materials sales	737
Merchandise sales	1,234
Miscellaneous	1,124
<b>TOTAL REVENUE:</b>	<b>\$88,193</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Newsletter costs	\$13,933
Convention (1993)	15,045
Capital expense	7,944
Library expense	10,955
Printed Materials costs	710
Merchandise for resale	257
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>	
Printing	84
Phone	2,077
Membership	2,052
Miscellaneous	443
Postage	539
Supplies	548
Rent	660
Repair and Maintenance	574
Bad check expense	570
Tax and License	15
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$56,405</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$31,789</b>
TOTAL CASH Feb. 28, 1993	\$134,082
TOTAL CASH Feb. 28, 1994	\$165,870
<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>\$31,788</b>

**SPERDVAC Directory**

All articles and artwork © 1994 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:** Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406-3041.

**RADIOGRAM EDITOR:** Dan Haefele, 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 90266-0669.

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000:** Gene Ward, Box 635, Tujunga, CA 91043-0635.

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+:** George Lovas, P. O. Box 3757, Crestline, CA 92325-3757

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 1-500:**

**CLOSED BY EARTHQUAKE**

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 501 +:** Jim Allen, Box 500, N. Hollywood, CA 91603-0500.

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500:** Richard Karman, 2515 NE 37th Ave., Portland, OR 97212-2916.

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000:** Gary Mollica, 135 N. Meredith Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106-2207.

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001-1483:** Dan Lippiatt, P.O. Box 3514, Simi Valley, CA 93093-3514

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1484+:** Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-2725.

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

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Open reels 1001+:** Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031-0628.

**HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Cassettes only:** Glenda Kelly, 2323 Ralston Lane, Redondo Beach, CA 90278-5219.

**PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY:**

**TEMPORARILY CLOSED**

**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 Ave., Port Orchard, WA 98366-3321 (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.

**CATALOGS:** Ted Theodore, 1175 Brockton St., El Cajon, CA 92020-1706.

# Radio's acerbic wit Henry Morgan dies

by Dan Haefele

A memorial party was held June 7 during the cocktail hour at Sardi's Restaurant for Henry Morgan, the irreverent satirist known for taunting sponsors and network executives on his radio shows. He died May 19 of lung cancer.

Morgan's radio career began in 1931 when he was hired as a pageboy at WMCA, New York. "I was fired as a page," he recalled in a 1985 interview. "And on the way out I took an audition because the chief announcer thought it was funny that this loud-mouthed page could be an announcer. I think I got a job as an announcer because I'd work for less than anybody else."

His weekly salary as a page was \$8. His announcer's paycheck was \$18.

Morgan was born Henry Lerner von Ost on March 31, 1915. When he became a radio announcer he changed his name, using the surname of a bouncer at a Harlem nightclub. When Morgan came to Hollywood to appear in a film, he had to join the Screen Actors' Guild. Told an actor had already registered under his name, Morgan insisted on keeping it. Henry Bratsberg, the actor using the Morgan name, then changed his stage name to Harry Morgan.

For several years he announced live band remotes, frequently covering several broadcasts each night. "I started to kid around (on the air) to keep myself awake," he said. "All of the bands wanted to play what was popular. So I might announce the same number four times in one night. In order for me to be interested I started to make up little jokes — for my own amusement, not anybody else's."

At WOR in 1940 Morgan was "kidding around" during remotes carried on Mutual. Other announcers around the nation followed his lead, he said, but were not very funny.

Management of stations throughout the country complained to WOR that they were permitting Morgan to do what they didn't want their own announcers doing. The solution: a 15 minute Saturday morning show that would give

the young announcer the opportunity to get his witty remarks out of his system.

Morgan, still on salary as a staff announcer, wrote his own material for the new show. "I wrote stuff out in longhand," he recalled. "Then I didn't write very much — I couldn't think of very much. I waited until I got into the studio and started to talk."

Ad libbing 15 minutes straight was difficult. "I began to put little odd records in between (comments) . . . while I thought of something else," he explained.

WOR soon gave him two 15 minute shows, then three, and finally his comedy program was on live six nights a week. He spent his afternoons writing material for his shows.

"They still weren't paying me anything (extra). I was on staff as an announcer," he said.

When the station began selling commercial time on his show, Morgan asked for additional compensation. But, he was told by WOR radio management, he would have to join the Artists' Bureau before he could be eligible for payment for his non-announcing performances.

"The station itself was the Artists' Bureau and took ten percent of what we made," he said. "Finally,

kicking and screaming, I joined the Artists' Bureau and found I was making more money than I was as an announcer. So I quit being an announcer."

When his quarter hour show was sponsored, Morgan decided to add humor to the commercials.

"I had a theory that people don't like to be hollered at. Most commercials then were hollering" he said. "I made

*Continued on page 7*

## Things I can't talk about on the radio

by Henry Morgan

from the NBC broadcast of Nov. 4, 1949

Do you know there are some things I can't talk about on the radio?

For instance, I can't mention names of other networks. There is another network around, known as C. B. mmmmm. (You see, I'm not allowed to use the last letter, but I can say 'C' and 'B' because those two letters are part of NBC.) Also, around here they don't like the first three letters of the alphabet. That's another network.

I know one vice president around here who taught his little boy that the alphabet goes 'N, B, C, D, E, F, G. . .'. There was no 'A' in his alphabet — or, as he called it, 'nophabet.' That poor boy came to a pretty bad end. He grew up and moved to Alabama and went nuts.

Around here you're not supposed to mention programs that are broadcast on other networks, either. Four of my best friends happen to be Charlie, Agnes, Irma and Mike. I can talk all I want about Charlie, Agnes and Mike, but I'm not allowed to mention my friend Irma. In fact, I'm not even sure I'm *allowed* to have a friend named Irma.

There's another thing here that they're very strict about in radio. It's personal messages. That is, from me to anybody. I'm not allowed to stand in front of the microphone and say, "Happy birthday, Mother." I don't mind that particularly because it's not her birthday. It happens to be my father's birthday. But I can't say anything to him either. So, Mother, would you say happy birthday to your husband for me!

Another thing, I'm not allowed to solicit money on the air. I can't ask the listeners to send me a dollar. Or — uh — *half a dollar?* My contract's very strict about that. Not only am I not allowed to ask the listeners for money, I'm not allowed to ask NBC for money.

# Henry Morgan dies *conclusion*

fun of bad advertising.”

His approach to advertising earned him the reputation of “radio’s bad boy.” He accused the manufacturers of Life Savers of cheating the public by putting a hole in the middle of their candy. Listeners were told Oh! Henry candy bars were a meal in themselves, “but you eat three meals of Oh! Henrys and your teeth will fall out.” And he explained the famous phrase “More doctors recommend...” really referred to the two doctors in More, Utah.

Other sponsors included Shick razors and Rayve Cream Shampoo, which he ribbed without mercy.

Another target of his jibes was Jesse Adler, president of Adler Elevator Shoes. On the air Morgan dubbed him “Old Man Adler.”

“He was outraged,” Morgan recalled. But Adler’s friends at a country club he belonged to thought it was a funny line. “Then he discovered the shoe stores were making money,” he added. Customers said they heard about the product on Morgan’s show.

Once Morgan said of Adler’s shoes, “You might like them, but I wouldn’t wear them to a dogfight.” Adler responded by canceling his ad and a radio executive had to calm him down. Then the shoe company president went on the program to defend his product. “You’re right, Mr. Adler,” Morgan said. “I apologize. I *would* wear them to a dogfight.” Under his breath he added, “but no place else.”

“The beauty of it was, audiences like stuff like that; clients do not,” Morgan observed. “Audiences like to be talked to as though they are people.”

Morgan’s opening catch-phrase, “Good evening, anybody. Here’s Morgan,” was a spoof of Kate Smith’s traditional program opening. “When she came on (the air) each evening, she’d say, ‘Hello, everybody.’ It used to annoy me,” he said. “I thought, ‘not everybody’s listening.’ So I started with ‘Hello, anybody,’ which I thought was more honest.”

His 15 minute program lasted until

the early part of World War II. Weather forecasts were not allowed on the air then, so Morgan devised his own: “Snow, followed by little boys on sleds.” Or, “Weather for Northern Scotland — high gales.”

“I’d do that in July. It had nothing to do with the (real) weather,” Morgan explained. “The commandant of the Third Naval District said that it had come to his attention that I do weather forecasts. The vice president of the station took the trouble to go down to the Third Naval District to explain. He brought some recordings with him... They made me stop it on the grounds that sometimes I might be right.”

Morgan joined the service in 1943. He was transferred to several locations, including the air base at Santa Ana, Calif. “I worked in the radio unit, which was the boondoggle of the world,” he said. “Even the guys on the base called it the country club.”

He wrote radio dramas for the Armed Forces Radio Service. He received the Kilroy Award for radio drama writing from AFRS.

ABC aired Morgan’s 15 minute show six times a week beginning Oct. 8, 1945. His program became a weekly show in 1946 and he remained with the network until 1948.

In 1949 **The Henry Morgan Show** returned to the air via NBC. Camel Cigarettes picked up sponsorship in summer of 1949 and Bristol Meyers sponsored the show beginning in early 1950.

During the McCarthy Era, Morgan was blacklisted. He said his name was associated with Communist activities because of his former wife’s political connections.

“I’ve always been a loudmouth and I’ve always made fun of anything,” he said. “I couldn’t live under their system. I couldn’t live under any restrictive system.”

Blacklisted in 1952, Morgan was unemployed for two months before he was hired to do a midnight to 3 a.m. interview show on a New York City

radio station. The program originated from Hutton’s Restaurant.

Radio-TV producer Mark Goodson, who often watched part of the show at Hutton’s, offered Morgan a spot as panelist on the TV show “I’ve Got a Secret.” Morgan remained with the show for 15 years.

Morgan hosted an interview program on WOR and did a comedy feature on WNEW in the 1980s.

His credits include two films, “So This is New York” and “Murder, Incorporated.”

*The interview quotes are from a radio interview recorded with Max Schmid and Jack Shug on WBAI, New York.*

## Jerry Devine dies

Jerry Devine, producer-director of **This is Your FBI**, died May 20. Devine was 85.

He wrote and directed episodes of **Mr. District Attorney** and **This is Your FBI**. He also wrote scripts for **The Shadow**.

Devine was a former child film actor. His first movie was the 1920 feature “Over the Hill to the Poorhouse.” He appeared in “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” with Will Rogers and “Sherlock Holmes” with John Barrymore. His credits include 25 silent films.

He said he was not a very good adult actor and turned to writing. “I realized that if I was going to make anything out of live I had better pound on a typewriter,” he said. “So I concentrated on trying to break into radio. I spent a year with a rented typewriter.”

His agent would tell him of radio shows needing a writer, advising him to listen to specific broadcasts. Devine did listen, then stayed up all night writing a complete script. “I found out later that he never had connections to any of these shows,” he recalled. “But at least it was giving me great practice.”

Devine once said he preferred writing comedy. He wrote for radio comic Tommy Riggs in 1938-39.

*Continued on page 9*

# Stars, re-creations planned for 20th anniversary convention

Les Tremayne will star in a re-creation of **The First Nighter Program** and Arthur Anderson will be featured in a **Let's Pretend** re-creation when SPERDVAC celebrates its 20th anniversary in November. Our convention will be Nov. 11, 12 and 13 at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, 5985 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles.

Entertainer Steve Allen tentatively plans to participate in our Saturday Evening program. Other scheduled convention performers include announcer George Ansbro, actor-director Herb Ellis and actor Gil Stratton. We will have the sound effects expertise of Ross Murray and

Bob Mott. Esther Geddes will provide live music and John Rayburn will present his OTR stage show.

The SPERDVAC convention will begin in the afternoon on Friday, Nov. 11. Hobby-related workshop presentations are planned for that afternoon. Banquets with program re-creations are planned for Friday and Saturday evenings.

Convention plans are still being organized. We are considering re-creations of **Suspense** and **Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar**. SPERDVAC convention chair Larry Gassman expects to arrange four radio show re-creations. A workshop on the radio work of Ronald Colman

is also being planned.

## Can you help?

SPERDVAC's annual conventions are arranged by volunteers. We can always use extra help. We need a volunteer who can provide direct lighting for our stage. Additional lighting will help improve the presentations of our radio show re-creations.

We would like to use live organ music for three of our re-creations. We need the sound equivalent of a Hammond B-3 for the weekend. And we also need assistance scoring and playing musical themes and bridges during the programs.

Three volunteers are needed to video tape the convention. SPERDVAC will provide Super VHS and standard VHS tape and equipment.

We always welcome input from members planning to attend our functions. Please feel free to tell us what you would enjoy at the SPERDVAC convention. Contact Larry Gassman at (310) 947-9800.

## Convention rate packages

*SPERDVAC has established convention rates designed to encourage advance registration. We are better able to plan our annual convention if we have an accurate indication of the number of attendees.*

	Pre-registration	At the door
<b>Friday, Nov. 11</b>		
Afternoon presentations	free	free
Evening banquet/program	\$35	\$40
<b>Saturday, Nov. 12</b>		
Daytime activities	\$15	\$20
Evening banquet/program	\$50	\$55
<b>Sunday, Nov. 13</b>		
Brunch/program	\$15	\$20
<b>Entire convention package</b>	<b>\$110</b>	<b>\$120</b>

The Friday afternoon workshops and panel discussions begin at 1 p.m. Saturday's daytime activities run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Both evening banquets will conclude by 10:30 p.m. The Sunday brunch begins at 9 a.m. and will conclude at about 11:30 a.m.

*A registration form will appear in next month's newsletter.*

## SPERDVAC meetings

*Held the second Saturday of the month at 12 noon.*

June 11 - South Pasadena Public Library  
 July 9 - South Pasadena Public Library  
 Aug. 13 - Farmer's & Merchant's Bank, Seal Beach  
 Sept. 10 - Orange Public Library  
*(Meeting locations are subject to change.)*



## Jerry Devine *continued*

"We were on for 39 weeks (a year) and I had to write for 39 different (guest) comics," he said. "They would abuse me all week long and when the show worked they wouldn't say thank you."

Devine credited Ed Byron with the success of the **Mr. District Attorney** series. "He was a great ideas man and he had a great sense of what to do," Devine said.

"I was convinced in those days that I couldn't write anything until it was the last deadline," he recalled. "It enhanced the show enormously. We were on Wednesday nights. Sundays I would lock myself in a room and I'd go 24 hours with the *Sunday Times*. That's how we were that topical."

Writing **The Shadow**, he said, "was the most fun of anything I've done in my life."

Orson Welles and Margot Stevenson starred on the series when he wrote for the show. "The agency wanted me to write a 'kiss (up) script' for the sponsor. They'd supply the names of the vice presidents and general managers and heads of departments. Then I'd write a script using their names," he explained.

Devine wrote a twenty minute script which the cast was asked stay late one

night to record on transcription for the sponsor's in-house use. "I noticed, but the director didn't, the cast was slipping out of the studio. So it was down to Orson and Margot," he recalled. "The director asked, 'Where is everybody? They've gone!' I found out later that Orson told them to go because he wanted to play the 20 parts. And he did."

One of his early radio writing jobs was on the **Kate Smith Show**. He wrote 12 minute dramatic sketches which would feature top stars. "Ted Collins paid the writers, the agency bought the material," he said. "Collins offered me \$50 a sketch without billing and \$35 with billing. I took the \$35 with billing because I was sensible enough to know that this highly rated show with my name on it would make me a marketable fellow."

**Passing parade:** Radio singer Ginny Simms, 81, died April 4 . . . Lawrence Spivak, 93, died March 10. He was the originator of **Meet the Press**. Singer Ken Carson, 79, died April 7. Samples of his radio work appear in the latest General Library catalog page. . . Actor Bill Quinn died May 1. . . Lew Lauria, 89, died May 10. We will run a review of his radio work next month.

## An actor's D-Day memory

by Conrad Binyon

It's said that people never forget where they were and what they were doing on special days in history. On June 6, 1944, a Thursday afternoon, I was sitting in the front row of the audience section of CBS-KNX Studio B, at 6121 W. Sunset Blvd. in a **Suspense** rehearsal.

It was during a scene being read that Wally Maher, a well-known Los Angeles area actor, interrupted the reading and spoke over one of the microphones in the control room where William Spier, the producer/director, his assistants, some agency

people, and the CBS engineer were conducting the rehearsal. He said something like, "The newswires just announced that the Allies have landed in Normandy, France."

I don't remember if Wally used the word "D-Day." The other actors made supportive comments about the news, then Mr. Spier pushed the talk-back mike button to resume the rehearsal.

That was it, and I've never forgotten the occasion — although I have forgotten the storyline of the show, who the star was and what part I was playing.

## HELP!

General open reel librarian Jim Allen is stepping down. Until we have replacement volunteers available, the library will not be in operation.

Members with General Library open reel tapes to return to the library should send them to P. O. Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-0669.

SPERDVAC would like to split the portion of the open reel library Jim Allen ran for us into at least two parts. This will reduce the workload of the volunteer librarians.

We are looking for Southern California member-volunteers who can devote a few hours per month by running a portion of the library. Volunteer librarians gain access to hundreds of OTR programs for their own collections.

Members interested in assisting SPERDVAC are welcome to contact us at (310) 947-9800.



Editor,

I read the election results of the BOD election with what could politely be called dismay. A better term could be disgust!

Of 1725 members only 193 voted — and then look at some who got write-in votes: Victor Gook, Masked Rider of the Plains, etc.

If this is all the interest some people have, why are they still in the club? It is obvious that they don't care one wit what is going on. We don't need those kind of people. They do no one any good.

Ron Sayles  
Milwaukee

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**Information, Please***Continued from page 4*

club's official publication, *The Jot 'Em Down Journal*. It is published bi-monthly and included with membership, which is \$8 per year. To join, send your membership dues to the executive secretary, Tim Hollis, Route 3, Box 110, Dora, AL 35062.

A special event this year will be a Lum & Abner postmark issued by the U.S. Post Office in Pine Ridge. The special mark was designed by Kathy Stucker, Pine Ridge postmaster, and will be used only during the Friday and Saturday of the Lum & Abner convention weekend.

For reservations at the Best Western Lime Tree Inn, call (501) 394-6350. This number is for room reservations only. For convention information, contact Tim Hollis at the above address.

*The Old Time Radio Club's* monthly publication, *The Illustrated Press*, has an article about Arthur Godfrey by Dom Parisi in the May 1994 issue. The club has open reel and cassette tapes, video tapes, records and a reference library for members' use. Annual dues are \$15 per calendar year, prorated depending on when you join: by June — \$12, July-September — \$8, October-December — \$5, plus a new member processing fee of \$5. For members in the area, there are monthly meetings. To join, write to Richard Olday, 100 Harvey Dr., Lancaster, NY 14086.

The third issue of *Thrilling Days of Yesteryear* contains articles about Frank Sinatra, Ezra Stone, "Mrs. Quiz" (Betty Earl), Rudy Vallee, **Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street** and other bits and pieces. To subscribe, send \$15 for six issues to Carol T. Rayburn, 7222 W. Stanford Ave., Littleton, CO 80123.

Send your news, comments and questions for this column to: Information Please, Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Til next time, spaceman's luck!

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