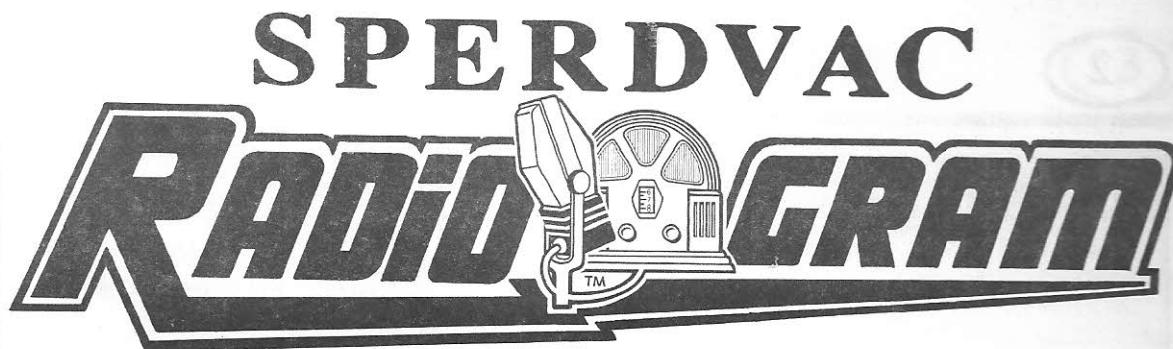


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Dan Haefele



Volume 20, No. 9 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy Sept. 1994

Radio Hall of Fame induction ceremonies set November 6

Induction ceremonies for the Radio Hall of Fame in Chicago will be broadcast live Nov. 6. Over 5000 ballots were cast by radio executives, broadcast historians and members of The Radio Hall of Fame to select the 1994 winners.

Garrison Keillor, creative host of **A Prairie Home Companion**, was selected winner in the contemporary network/syndicated personality *National Broadcasters Hall of Fame salutes radio pioneers Oct. 15*

The National Broadcasters Hall of Fame, which has moved to Anaheim Stadium, will hold a dinner and induction ceremony Oct. 15 at the Disneyland Hotel. Inductees will be Larry King, Art Linkletter, the McGuire Sisters, announcer Gary Owens and Los Angeles radio personality Robert W. Morgan. Former President Ronald Reagan will also be inducted, but is unable to attend.

Ted Turner will receive a lifetime achievement award.

Presenters will include Jane Fonda, Jonathan Winters and Don Imas. Lee Iacocca will induct the McGuire Sisters via a pre-taped introduction.

A cocktail reception will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 and induction ceremonies scheduled to begin at 8:15.

category. Legendary comedian Red Skelton has been selected as this year's inductee in the radio pioneer category.

The regional/local personality category winner is Gary Owens. Known to television audiences as the announcer on "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In," Owens established himself as one of Los Angeles radio's most popular personalities via his programs on KFWB and

Tickets for the gala event are now on sale. VIP tables of 10, which include preferred seating, admission to the pre-event, a VIP inductee cocktail party and a listing in the evening's keepsake journal are priced at \$5000. Individual preferred seats are also available at \$500.

Tickets entitling the holder to admission to a separate cocktail reception, dinner and the induction ceremony are available on a first come, first served basis for \$250 each.

To reserve seats or obtain additional ticket information, contact the National Broadcasters Hall of Fame at (714) 991-NBHF.

Dinner chair Gary Lycan can also supply details. His daytime work number is (714) 953-2203.

KMPC.

The Burns and Allen Show won this year's balloting in the radio program category. George Burns and Gracie Allen will be saluted for their radio work, which began in 1932.

The late radio programmer Gordon McLendon has been selected by the Radio Hall of Fame Steering Committee to receive the Emerson Award. McLendon and the late Todd Storz created the Top 40 music format. In 1959 McLendon introduced the "Easy Listening" (or "Beautiful Music") format at KABL, San Francisco. In the early sixties he introduced the all news format at XTRA, a powerful Tijuana, Mexico station heard throughout much of California.

"This year's class of inductees represents some of the medium's greatest legends, as well as a contemporary radio innovator who has served up **A Prairie Home Companion** to millions of radio listeners every Saturday night," said Museum of Broadcast Communications president Bruce DuMont. Mr. DuMont chairs the Radio Hall of Fame Steering Committee.

Charles Osgood will host the hour-long radio broadcast. Don Pardo will be the announcer. The program begins at 9 p.m. EST.

The Radio Hall of Fame is located in the Museum of Broadcast Communications at the Chicago Cultural Center. All tickets to the black tie 1994 Radio Hall of Fame celebration are sold out.

Eleanor Tanin guests Sept. 10

Radio actress Eleanor Tanin will be SPERDVAC's featured guest when we meet Sept. 10.

Miss Tanin's radio credits include **The Hardy Family** and **That's Rich** with Stan Freberg and Daws Butler. She also appeared on **Meet Corliss Archer** (with Janet Waldo, Sam Edwards and Irene Tedrow), **Have Gun—Will Travel**, **Rogers of the Gazette**, **Gunsmoke** and many other top radio shows.

The SPERDVAC meeting begins at 12 noon. It will be held at the Orange Public Library, 101 North Center St. (at Chapman Ave.) in Orange. SPERDVAC's membership meetings are free. The public is invited.

SPERDVAC



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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 Carrolyn Rawski. (See SPERDVAC Directory.)

*Forrest Owen***Confessions of a radio agency man**

by Dan Haeefe

Forrest Owen began his radio career at WELL, Battle Creek, Michigan when he was still in high school. It was during the Depression and his work there helped finance his college education.

"I was a kid announcer," he explained at SPERDVAC's Aug. 13 meeting. "I got the job because they needed a janitor, they needed a kid to clean up at night."

One of the announcers, who covered baseball games, gave Owen his first on-the-air break. During the baseball broadcasts carried via a hook-up with Detroit's WXYZ, the announcer would slip out to vaudeville shows. "He would let me make the station announcements, which we were required to do every half hour. For that I got 25 cents and I was very happy to do it."

At Michigan State, Owen went to work at WKAR, the campus station. "We got 35 cents an hour to work a shift," he said. "I was able to work for four years there. I did everything an announcer did in those days: morning DJ, news, farm

reports, stock market reports — things we knew nothing about, really."

Those early days of his career provided many opportunities to do remote broadcasts. "I did remotes from the beginning in Battle Creek," he said. "Some remotes on campus would involve sports. I broadcast Michigan State football games. We also used to have a show called 'Man on the Street.' Every radio station had a 'Man on the Street' show. We would do 'College Student on the Street.'"

A medical problem kept him out of the service, so Owen was ready for the job market when he graduated in 1941. He was soon employed at WXYZ.

"It was a big jump," he recalled. "I went from 35 cents an hour to \$50 a week."

WXYZ was the origination point of the Michigan Radio Network, supplying shows to several stations throughout the state. And it was the home of **The Lone Ranger, The Green Hornet** and **Challenge of the Yukon**.

"I was a staff announcer," he said. "I

wasn't good enough or big enough to be on **The Lone Ranger**."

Staff announcers often auditioned for jobs on shows that paid a fee in addition to their weekly salaries. Owen and his fellow announcers found they had some stiff competition.

"One of the young announcers was Mike Wallace," he said. "He was winning every audition. . . He was aggressive and a nice guy."

Another early forties WXYZ announcer was Bob Hite, who later became a CBS Radio staff announcer.

"At WWJ (Detroit) there was an announcer that went on to do a great many shows on the networks. That's Hugh Downs," he said. "Hugh was quite smart, more intellectual than the rest of us. He had a different look at the world, and was a quieter type of individual."

After Owen had worked at WXYZ for about a year, he received what he believed was a better offer. One of his college friends, then working at WWJ, was enticed into joining them

"We were offered a magnificent opportunity," he said. Owen was going to be chief announcer "and my friend was going to be the news director of a brand new station in Waterloo, Iowa.

"The bait was, I wouldn't just going to be an announcer, I was going to be *chief* announcer. This was a 50,000 watt station, KXEL," he said. His college friend became the program director. "It was a disaster. It was awful. It was all over in three to four months."

Owen and his friend headed for Chicago, in search of radio announcing jobs. "I auditioned at WGN," he said. "I didn't make it. I wasn't able to catch on there. I honestly felt that I was not good enough to be big time in announcing. One of the problems with announcing is . . . you don't have a chance to be creative. I kept getting the idea I should go into production. I felt confident that I could do that."

Then Owen considered radio jobs outside of announcing. "I ended up at WTOL in Toledo as a production manager." From there he went to a small advertising agency in Toledo "as a producer of a show we did out of Ft. Knox

Continued on page 8



With Jack Bailey of Queen For a Day are Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Owen.

Remembering Robert E. Lee

Legacy includes Railroad Hour, Favorite Story and Inherit the Wind

by Dan Haefele

Robert E. Lee, the radio/television/stage playwright who collaborated with Jerome Lawrence for 50 years, died July 8. He was 75.

Lawrence and Lee brought radio listeners **Favorite Story**, **Hallmark Playhouse**, **Young Love** starring Janet Waldo and Jimmy Lydon and **The Railroad Hour**. They were also involved in the formation of Armed Forces Radio Service and wrote many history-making AFRS programs.

Lee's first radio appearance was on the **Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour**. He was part of a trumpet trio that won first prize. At 17 he was a radio announcer in his native Ohio.

"He would bicycle in from Elyria to Cleveland and work as an announcer at WHK," Jerome Lawrence, his writing partner of 50 years, told SPERDVAC.

"And he was writing, also. Sometimes he'd be announcing on one station opposite his **Flashbacks** or **Empire Builders** on WGAR,"

Lawrence said.

Lawrence and Lee grew up 30 miles from each other but did not meet until after their network radio careers began.

Lee's work took him to New York in the late thirties. "Bob was working, mostly as a director and assistant director, on a vast number of Young and Rubicam shows, including **March of Time**. Then he came out (to Hollywood) to be assistant to Tom Lewis on **Screen Guild Theater**," Lawrence recalled.

"In the early days, when we were all making the transition into theatre, none of us wanted to be characterized as just radio writers," Lee revealed in a 1991 interview. "That's because the New York critics thought that anybody writing for radio had to be a 'commercial hack,' forgetting the great writers in this medium like Norman Corwin and Archibald MacLeish, who wrote poetry and literature.

"Perhaps radio drama was much closer to the theatre than motion pictures or television turned out to be," he added. "Both radio and theatre depend on *words* to fire the imagination."

Lawrence remembers being in the same studio as Lee during broadcasts, but they hadn't yet met each other. "Actors we both had used said, 'You ought to meet each other,'" he said. When they did meet they agreed to have lunch the next day.

"While we were at lunch, we both took out yellow pads and he said 'Why don't we try writing some scripts together?' I said, 'That's a great idea.' In the next three months, we collaborated on eight freelance scripts. The first one was on **Columbia Workshop**," Lawrence said. "And the other seven were all sold. Bob was under contract exclusively but I was free at CBS to do an additional show sometimes. So the first scripts had to be credited 'by Jerome Lawrence and Ulysses S. Grant.'"

Continued on next page



Playwright Robert E. Lee in 1975.



PHOTOS COURTESY JANET WALDO

Rehearsing for an appearance on *Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour* are Jeanette Sheppard at the piano and young musicians Bill Hersh, Ollie Townsend and Bob Lee. They won first prize the night they appeared on the program.

Their first collaborative effort was "Inside a Kid's Head," a radio play which has appeared in many school anthologies. "By a fluke, all eight of those shows were on the air the same week," Lawrence recalled. The other scripts were aired on top series of the era, including *Lincoln Highway*, *First Nighter*, *Manhattan at Midnight* and *Silver Theater*.

It was May 1942 and Lee had decided to leave Young and Rubicam to join Lawrence in writing radio shows. "We drove across the country, pulling up to the side of the road to hear . . . on the radio one of our shows. When we got to California, there was a *Daily Variety* headline, 'Lawrence and Lee Take Over Radio.'"

Two weeks later Tom Lewis called

to ask them to join him in forming Armed Forces Radio Service. They joined Lewis, True Boardman, agency man Austin Peterson and Lewis' wife, actress Loretta Young on a train headed for Washington, D.C.

"We became two of the founding fathers of Armed Forces Radio," Lawrence said. Special Services had conceived the idea. "(The idea) was developed by Tom and True and Austin and Bob and me partly on the train and partly in the pre-Pentagon building during a very, very hot summer in 1942."

Once the network was established, Lawrence and Lee began writing dramatic segments for AFRS shows. An early assignment was writing dramatic sketches for *Mail Call*, which began production in August 1942.

During its first year the program used more dramatic material than it did later in the run. They dramatized and directed short stories on 76 productions of *Yarns for Yanks* transcribed in Hollywood from 1942 to 1945.

In December 1943 the team began work on *Command Performance, USA*, and remained with the popular show until August 1945. Earlier, they wrote 18 shows for *Personal Album*, airing from November 1942 to June 1943.

In their spare time they wrote the stage play "Top of the Mark."

During part of World War II, Jerry Lawrence went overseas and Bob Lee remained in the states. Once, Theresa Helburn called Lee at Armed Forces
Continued on next page

Remembering Robert E. Lee *continued*



Close friends Jerome Lawrence, Norman Cousins and Robert E. Lee collaborated on the play "Whisper in the Mind."

"(Norman Cousins) had a quality-of-mind that I hope we have also: an enjoyment of life, an appreciation of the differences between people and the constructive interplay of those differences, the idea that living is a game, a contest which you sometimes win and sometimes lose. Out of that wonderful turmoil you find the real fun and laughter of living." — Bob Lee

Radio in Hollywood because she wanted to bring "Top of the Mark" to Broadway. "It seems I'm guarding this cannon at the moment," Lawrence said Lee told her. "and my partner is in Casablanca."

As the war came to a close, Lawrence and Lee were called upon to contribute their writing talents to the official Army-Navy programs aired on D-Day, VE-Day and VJ-Day.

In 1946, Lawrence and Lee began **Favorite Story** on KFI, Los Angeles. Famous people selected their favorite short stories and novels which the writing team scripted for thirty minute radio shows. The programs featured most of Hollywood radio's top talents. Ronald Colman served as host of the series, which was later syndicated by Ziv.

It was during this era they began alternating writing chores on their various radio shows. "We'd always say,

'by Lawrence and Lee,' but we'd never tell who wrote what," Lawrence explained. "Sometimes, when we were directing all of the **Favorite Story** shows, somebody would say, 'I'll bet you wrote that one because you were directing.' We wouldn't tell. And we always edited each other's scripts and talked it out before (making changes)."

Shortly after the Lawrence and Lee partnership formed they became good friends with writer/director Norman Corwin. "They wrote a script I directed on **Columbia Presents Corwin**," the noted writer told SPERDVAC. "It was called 'There Will Be Time Later.'"

With Corwin as narrator, Lawrence and Lee wrote a D-Day program aired on NBC, "Lord Haw-Haw Will Not Be Heard Tonight." It

aired June 20, 1944.

Corwin describes Lawrence and Lee's writing as having a "broad and generous view of life, with an obligation to make this a decent world for ourselves and a better one for those who will follow us.

"They were on the side of what I choose to regard as the angels. They were molded in the same matrix as the man they admired so much and wrote a play about, Henry David Thoreau," Corwin added.

"Bob lived through some of the most glorious and disgraceful eras of American history without once imperiling or abandoning his principles," Corwin told the audience gathered Aug. 1 at the James A. Doolittle Theatre in celebration of Lee's life. "Not once was he even faintly tempted to run with the hounds or cozy up to the fat cats. He was the kind of thinking and working citizen who fired off statements and letters and wires and faxes and put his name where his convictions were."

In 1948 the writing team began presenting musical theatre to American listeners on **The Railroad Hour**. With host Gordon ManRae playing the lead and leading ladies from the Metropolitan Opera and radio, the program featured broadcasts based on the works of Jerome Kern, Victor Herbert, Sigmund Romberg, Cole Porter and many others. Frequently they wrote the lyrics and librettos for new musical works, 60 in all, used on the show.

They avoided using the word adaptation to describe productions like **The Railroad Hour**. "'Adaptation' sounds like rendering lard, squeezing something down to the 'handy economy size,' in the manner of a *Reader's Digest* encapsulation. 'Musicalization' is a more apt word in some instances, and with our **Favorite Story** and **Hallmark Playhouse** series, we always used the word 'dramatization,'" Lawrence once explained.

"We preferred 're-creation' as if the original creators were writing and composing these works for the very first time," Lee said.

Continued on next page

Remembering Robert E. Lee *conclusion*

Lawrence credits Lee's wife, actress Janet Waldo, with part of the team's success. He describes her as "the greatest peacemaker, the greatest appreciator we ever had." Often she would read scenes for them moments after they were written, and helped give them view their work from the radio audience's view.

"We had a rule called the 'UN veto.' We also called it the 'positive negative,'" Lawrence recalls. "Either one of us had the inalienable right to say no to anything, but it had to be a positive no. We could say no to a title, to the name of a character, to punctuation, to a sentence, to an idea . . . But, the one who said no had the obligation to come up with something better that the other one would say yes to.

"And it worked like a dream. We would never fight over it," he said. "We would have constructive fighting . . . We were always gentlemen."

In addition to their many dramatizations for radio and television, Lawrence and Lee wrote numerous stage plays. Their most popular work was "Inherit the Wind." The Bantam paperback edition of that play has sold nearly 2.5 million copies. Their other plays include "Auntie Mame," "The Gang's All Here," "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail," "Only in America," "First Monday in October" and "Whisper in the Mind."

Lawrence and Lee developed a philosophy to guide the creation of all of their works.

"We wanted to give people

something to chew on," Lawrence said. "We have to share (with the audience) the passion for what we want to say. It's never a sermon. It's done in human terms. That's what we tried to do with every radio script we wrote. It's got to be something (so important to us) we've got to say it. We hope the audience will receive it like food for the mind."

Editor's note:

The quotes from Mr. Lee which appear in this article come from an interview conducted by Nena Couch on Jan. 24, 1991. A transcript of the interview was published in 1992 in Volume 7 of the scholarly journal "Studies in American Drama, 1945-Present." It is published by the Ohio State University Press.

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Agency man Owen *continued*

for the troops. From that, I was able to work my way into Wade Advertising in Chicago."

In Toledo, Owen produced some radio shows. Later he applied by mail to four Chicago advertising agencies, and was hired by Wade Advertising. "The guy I replaced in Chicago was in the service," he said. "The deal was that when he came back from the service I was out."

He was hired to produce the **Quiz Kids** series for Miles Laboratories. "The agency bought the show from a packager. The packager was Louis G. Cowan. He brought the kids in, hired the writers, had an executive producer in charge and made sure that the client's needs were met. The

agency which got the package controlled the show and, on behalf of their client, we owned the show. Cowan was the subcontractor."

Owen was the agency producer. His job was "to get the show on the air, get the show off the air. . .and run the show from the (production) booth and do everything necessary to make sure that nothing went wrong for our client."

His role is a bit confusing to those not directly involved in the business. "I was a producer of the **Quiz Kids** show. That was my title. But Louis G. Cowan was the real producer. . .and the owner of the rights to the **Quiz Kids**. I would call it today a director's job, more than a

producer's job."

When **Quiz Kids** first went on the air in 1940, the producers experimented with several quizmasters. Finally they hired Joe Kelly, announcer on **National Barn Dance** — a man with a third grade education.

"Joe Kelly was one of the more interesting casting decisions that I know about," he said. "Joe was picked by the owner of Wade Advertising, Walter Wade, to be the MC of **National Barn Dance**. He wore the clothes, and did the act and was funny and loose. He understood rural people and was very, very uncultured and very, very easy to get along with."

Wade knew he was competing in a way with **Information, Please**, a show with a highly cultured and knowledgeable host. Cowan wanted an intellectual to host **Quiz Kids**. "Walter Wade said 'we will put on an unlettered, relatively uneducated nice guy who loves kids so the kids will be the stars of the show. He knew, in his gut, that a really great MC would put down the kids in some way or another even if he didn't mean to. So he forced Joe Kelly on the producers of the show," Owen revealed. "It worked like a charm."

The youngsters, some as young as age 4, had high IQs and had passed rigorous oral and written examinations before they could get on the show.

"Those kids could out think Joe six ways to Sunday," he said. "But Joe was quick witted. He didn't get humiliated. It really was the genius of Walter Wade and his sense of the public to put that kind of person on as MC."

Miles Laboratories was a small business, but their radio advertising efforts increased business tremendously. "There's no question," Owen says. "Radio took it from a little patent medicine company in the Midwest to a big-time national one."

In 1946 Owen had the opportunity to work with Chet Lauck and Norris "Tuffy" Goff, radio's Lum and Abner.

"Chet and Tuffy would come

Continued on next page



Martha Tilton and Curt Massey on *Alka-Selzer Time*. Recording of the show are on SPERDVAC Archives tapes 1620-1624.

Agency man Owen *conclusion*

into town once a year to meet with the client and take him to dinner. They were experts at doing the salesman-like things they needed to do prior to renewal time," he said. "I was assigned to be their temporary producer for two weeks. I didn't know it but I was being tried out."

For those two weeks, five nights a week, he produced the **Lum 'n Abner** show from Chicago.

"They were incredibly entertaining. There were no sound men. They opened their own doors, they went out their own screen doors. They did their own footsteps. They did everything themselves sitting across from each other at a table," he said.

"After the shows were over, Jeff Wade offered me a chance to go to Hollywood to be the agency producer for **Lum 'n Abner** in Hollywood. The raise was \$15 a week," he added.

"One year they decided they would like to do the show for a week live from Las Vegas," Owen recalled. "They wanted to be there for the National Quail Hunting Festival. They were avid hunters.

"They had to pay the costs to do this

because the agency wasn't going to pay for it," he added. "They offered to send my wife and me to Las Vegas to produce the show. They paid our expenses and put us up at the Tropicana."

The show was broadcast from a small chapel.

While the agency had production responsibilities on **Lum 'n Abner**, they had a different arrangement when Miles Laboratories sponsored **One Man's Family**. "Carlton Morse, being a wily and very smart producer, sold his show to the network and the network sold it to us. We did not control the production of the show. That was because Morse's creative capabilities would not allow that," he said.

The agency purchased a 15 minute weeknight segment on CBS which they originally used for **Lum 'n Abner**. Later they aired an unsuccessful show starring Herb Schriner.

"Our people got the idea to put together a relatively light musical show. I think it was Jeff Wade's idea. The thought was that television was beginning to come, that radio was still important and that

everybody listened to the radio during drive time. The idea was that we should hang onto this time period," he said.

Jeff Wade wanted to put together a show starring Curt Massey, a former singer on **National Barn Dance**. "We created this show from scratch," he said. "We interviewed a number of singers and chose Martha Tilton."

Then they needed to select a band. "We wanted a band that would be folksy—not country-western, not wild," Country Washburn was chosen. Intended only as a summer replacement, **Alka-Selzer Time** ran for four years.

"We wrote it, produced it, directed it, hired the talent and everything on that show," he said.

Another show Owen was associated with was Jack Bailey's **Queen For a Day**. He was the agency producer.

"I was chosen to be the agency man on that show because number one, I didn't drink, number two, I was unmarried and number three, I was cheap," he revealed.

At the time, Jack Bailey did drink. "He got sober for the last 37 years of his life," Owen added.

See the guests you missed

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V-1 SPERDVAC Convention 11-12-1993. **Nightbeat** re-creation and songwriters Jay Livingstone & Ray Evans.

V-2 SPERDVAC Convention 11-13-1993. John Rayburn on sports & news.

V-3 SPERDVAC Convention 11-13-1993. **Jack Armstrong** re-creation plus Kids' shows panel.

V-4 SPERDVAC Convention 11-13-1993. Big Band panel with Kay St. Germaine, Van Alexander, Ginny Mancinni and Gisele MacKenzie.

V-5 SPERDVAC Convention 11-13-1993. Comedy panel, including **Bickersons** re-creation. With Peter Leeds, Hazel Schermet, Larry Rhine, Brad Ashton, Ray Erlenborn and

John Rayburn.

V-6 SPERDVAC Convention 11-13-1993. Banquet and performance of "We, the Living." Stars Jeanette Nolan, Burgess Meredith and Elliott Reid. Directed by Hy Brown.

V-7 SPERDVAC Convention 11-14-1993. Brunch with voiceover artists June Foray, Don Messick and Dick Beals.

V-8 SPERDVAC Convention 11-9-1990. Banquet and **Tom Corbett, Space Cadet** re-creation.

V-9 SPERDVAC Convention 11-10-1990. Banquet and **Casebook of Gregory Hood** re-creation.

V-10 SPERDVAC Convention 11-8-1991. Banquet and **Nick Carter, Master Detective** re-creation.

V-11 SPERDVAC Convention 11-9-1991. **Hollywood Star Playhouse** re-creation.

V-12 SPERDVAC Convention 11-9-1991. Banquet and **Adventures of Archie Andrews** re-creation.

V-13 SPERDVAC Convention 11-20-1992. Banquet and **Voyage of the Scarlet Queen** re-creation.

V-14 SPERDVAC Convention 11-21-1992. Banquet plus **Dragnet** and **Ethel and Albert** program re-creations.



by Barbara J. Watkins

More information about foreign radio broadcasts has been received. Thanks to Jack French, who sent along a copy of an article by Yamashita Moriyuki which was reprinted in the 1984 Summer issue of *NARA News*. Dr. Moriyuki was then head of the Department of Audio-Visual Communications at the University of Toyko and one of the foremost scholars of broadcasting in the Orient.

Commercial broadcasting became very popular in the late 1930s when low cost receivers became available throughout the country. Dr. Moriyuki's descriptions of the radio shows which gained popularity among the people make it difficult to believe that this article was anything other than a wonderful tongue-in-cheek put-on by editor French. You decide! Listen to this:

The Japanese version of "soap operas" were sponsored by various silk manufacturers and therefore called "silks." The programs were for and about women but women at that time were not allowed by custom to appear on radio. Their roles were filled by men. The "silks" that were popular were **Mama-san Perkins**, the poignant story of a woman who ran the Riceville Lumbar Yard; **When a Geisha Marries**, the story of a 6 foot 2 inch geisha seeking a suitable husband; and **Our Gal Sake**, which portrayed the trials and tribulations of a woman pearl diver (in Ise Bay on Honshu Island) who could only find worthless diamonds.

Adventure programs included **Little Orf 'n Fani**, the tale of two Okinawa refugees growing up alone on the Tokyo waterfront. Little Orf, according to "Dr. Moriyuki" was a tiny, thoughtful tyke who used her knowledge of kendo to stop evildoers. Her companion Fani was content to torture villains by reciting haiku poetry for hours on end until they confessed. Another program was **Judo Armstrong** which dramatized the daily adventures of a teenage crime fighter,

Early Japanese radio shows . . . or a put-on!

with Cy Pan in the title role. He battled evildoers throughout the Pacific, assisted by his modest, female companion, Su Kaiki, and he triumphed over merciless cut-throats from Australia, Alaska and Clintonville.

Perhaps in the future we will tell you about more of the programming lineup, including **Abie's Japanese Cherry Blossom**, **Just Plain Bamboo**, **John's Other Rice**, **Sam Murai**, **Private Eye** and **The Little Theater Off Tokyo Square**.

On a more serious note, Jack French will be presenting a panel on Old Time Radio Aviators at the upcoming Friends of Old Time Radio convention in Newark, New Jersey in October. He is looking for copies of the following shows: **Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen**, **The Flying Family**, **The Flying Hutchinsons**, **Flying Time**, **Howie Wing**, **Island Venture**, **Phantom Pilot Patrol**, **The Sky Blazers** and **Wings of Destiny**. If you can help with any of these, contact Jack at 5137 Richardson Dr., Fairfax, VA 22032, (703) 978-1236.

Member Walter Beaupre recently visited Italy and while there asked about radio drama. Every Saturday night there is a 2-hour radio drama, which can be anything from a Shakespeare play in translation to the "Lux Radio Theatre sort of thing," on RADIODUE (radio-2). The only other radio drama that he found is a simulcast on radio of a detective series **L'ispettore Derrick** which runs on Monday evenings at 8:40 on RADIOUNO (radio-1). (This is probably the same "Derrick" from German television which I discovered maybe 8 or 10 years ago in the middle of the night on a local Southern California TV channel, broadcast with English subtitles. It's a good show, if you ever have the chance to see it. By the way, does anybody know anybody in Italy who could make a cassette copy of the Italian radio version of this? I'd love to hear it.)

Member Thomas DeLong, along with co-author Rodney Steiner, received a 1994 Association for Recorded Sound Collections Award for Excellence for their biographical work on tenor Frank Munn in the category of general popular music.

The award was presented at the Lincoln Center, recognizing the highest standards of scholarship in respect to research involving sound recordings. The book, *Frank Munn: A Biodiscography of the Golden Voice of Radio* covers the unusual life and career of the pioneer broadcaster and recording artist, who sang on NBC's prime-time **American Album of Familiar Music** and **Waltz Time** in the 1930's and 1940's. Congratulations!

A new radio magazine is being produced by Ronald Staley. The difference is that this one will be oral — on cassette. *Vintage Radio Logue* will be a quarterly on-cassette magazine designed specifically for those persons who wish to hear about radio, the way it was, and those who just wish to get a glimpse of the past. It will feature interviews with vintage radio's stars, a feature on a product's history, along with actual broadcasts and commercials of the vintage radio age. To order a year's subscription, send \$35 check or money order to Ronald Staley, 5632 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 368, Van Nuys, CA 91401 or phone (818) 989-2137. VISA, MasterCard and Discover Cards are also accepted. A sample of this has not yet been heard here.

The Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago continues its Country Music on the Air series through Sept. 30. "Country Music Coast-to-Coast" will be presented on Thursday, Sept. 8 at 2 p.m. and "Music to Look at: Country Music Videos" on Thursday, Sept. 29 at 5:30 p.m. On both days, at 3:30 p.m., the radio show **Country Flashback** will be taped in the Lynne "Angel" Harvey Radio Studio. A live audience is welcome to these tapings. **Country Flashback** is an "hour-long journey through country's past." The program began in 1991 and is now heard on over 100 radio stations in the United States and Canada. For Museum information, call (312) 629-6000.

Thanks to all who contributed information for this month's column. Please send all questions, comments, and news items 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.



McGee's Closet is a free service to our members and honorary members. Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Please specify desired taping format (cassette or open reel).

WANTED: Any *Raggedy Ann* radio shows or books, especially "Raggedy Ann's Magical Wishes." Contact: Kayleen Sybrandt, 3333 Morningside Road, Wilmington, DE 19810.

WANTED: Information on jazz vocalist Joe Venuti's stint as musical director on *Duffy Tavern*: April 1941?; April/September 1944, including replacement by Matty Malneck. Recordings (any format), articles, background, etc. Contact: Bob Mohr, 21726 NE 22nd St., Redmond, WA 98053. (206) 868-9853.

WANTED: Articles on *Columbia Workshop* from *Radio Guide* or *Radio Mirror*. Contact: Patrick King, P. O. Box 20393, Waco, TX 76702-0393.

WANTED: Instruction booklet copy for Sony open reel deck TC-355 (I have repair manual). Contact: Charles Huck, 4 S. 230 River Road, Warrenville, IL 60555.

WANTED: I would like to locate old radio recordings of: *Jackie and Arlen Vaden*; *Don and Earl* - "Those Two Young Christian Singers"; *Randy Blake and The Supper Time Frolic* on WLS, Chicago; and WLW in Cincinnati such as *The War Years* (1941-1945), *Dolly and Millie* - "The Girls of the Golden West," *The Swanee River Boys* and newscaster Peter Grant. I can use cassette or open reel. Will supply tapes, postage, money, etc. Any help would be appreciated. Contact: Robert G. Hart, 47805 Greenwood Cemetery Road, Racine, OH 45771.

FOR SALE OR TRADE: Books on movie stars, radio and television. Send large, self-addressed stamped envelope for long list. Will trade for OTR on cassettes of anything I don't have. I'm interested in kid's adventure shows, science fiction, westerns, mysteries and others. Also would trade for old movies on VHS. Contact: Nancy Warner, 105540 County Line Road, Hinsdale, IL 60521.

FOR SALE: RCA model 44, and RCA model 77 microphones, in good working order. I'm looking for a good home for these treasures from radio! \$1,000 each or best offer. Contact: Jerry Johnson (209) 966-6641.

SPERDVAC Directory

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

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PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY:

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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.

SPERDVAC

Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy

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If you read the enclosed convention flier carefully, you will note there have been some changes made in our convention plans. Steve Allen has a performance in Las Vegas and will not be able to join us. Veteran actor Les Tremayne is recuperating from an arm injury and is not expecting to be able to participate in a radio show re-creation. We do plan *five* radio show re-creations, which are always popular with our audience. Please join us as we mark our 20th anniversary.

We're looking for a suitable meeting location in the San Fernando Valley. One of our top priorities is good acoustics. Can you help?

The Friends of Old-Time Radio will hold their 19th annual convention Oct. 20-22 at Holiday Inn-North, in Newark. Each year they have presented an entertaining weekend of panels, guests and re-creations from early radio. Many of the guests are East Coast performers who have been unable to join us on the West Coast for a SPERDVAC convention. For complete details, contact Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514. Phone: (204) 248-2887; Fax (203) 281-1322.

The California Artists' Radio Theatre will air their programs twice this month on KPCC-FM, Pasadena. The three excerpts from one-man shows performed in August will air Sept. 4 at 5 p.m. "Major Barbara" will be featured Sept. 25, also at 5 p.m.

Coming soon: The re-opening of the Printed Materials Library and a segment of the open reel division of the General Library. *We still need a volunteer librarian.*

Many thanks to Bobby O'Brien at WCSS, Amsterdam, NY and Chuck Schaden of "Those Were the Days" at WNIB, Chicago. Their recent publicity for SPERDVAC's activities has brought us many membership inquiries.