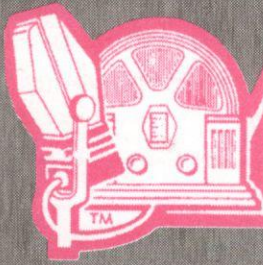


ELECTION RESULTS • SO FAR AWAY AND YET IN FOCUS • GO AHEAD CALLER...ARE YOU THERE? • READERS HAVE THEIR SAY

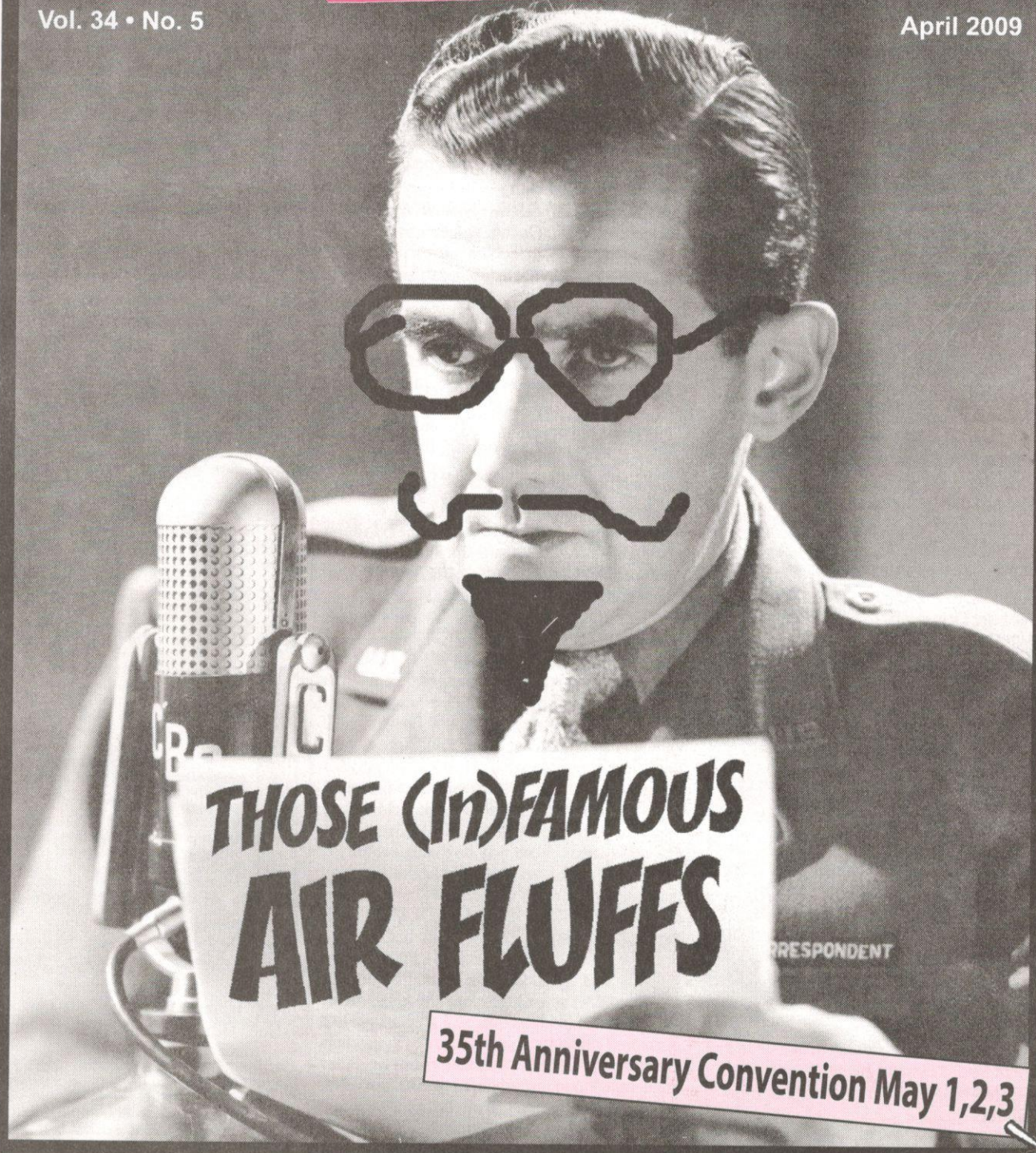
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RADIOGRAM

Vol. 34 • No. 5

April 2009



**THOSE (In)FAMOUS
AIR FLUFFS**

RESPONDENT

35th Anniversary Convention May 1,2,3





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Volume 34 • Number 5 • April 2009



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Preserve and Encourage
Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy

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ADVERTISING RATES. Full page \$125; half-page \$70; quarter page \$40. Rates subject to change without notice.

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ELECTION RESULTS 2009

Steinmetz Re-elected President; Harmon, Aston 'Back on Board'

Treasurer Chester Allen Closes Ledger After 26 Years

In another election reversal, four current members of the Board of Directors of the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy will share the boardroom with two former members who had served in 2007. With just four candidates running for the seven-member board the remaining seats would be filled by write-in candidates according to their eligibility and their willingness to serve.

Bob Steinmetz, Dan Haefele, Glenda Kelly and Dave Struthers all retained their current seats garnering 92% of the vote. They then re-elected Bob Steinmetz and Dan Haefele as president and vice-president, respectively, and re-appointed Glenda Kelly as secretary. Chester Allen was again appointed treasurer but after 26 years as SPERDVAC's chief financial officer Chester declined the appointment. Dan Haefele was then named interim treasurer until the position can be filled permanently.

President Steinmetz was then charged with contacting the write-in candidates with the highest number of votes. Bobb Lynes with 36 votes and Barbara Watkins with 35 declined seats but Rex Quinn, with 26 votes, reversed his decision not to run this year and accepted the invitation to join the board as did Jim Harmon with 10 votes and Don Aston with eight votes, members who had served in 2007.

Of the 986 ballots mailed 253 were returned, making the 2009 election a 26% voter turnout, down 10% from the previous year. The election was tabulated at the annual election meeting held March 14 at the Mid-Valley Library in North Hills by election chair Neil Mitchell and election committee members Laura Mitchell and Gary Remson.

Glenda Kelly, Bob Steinmetz and Dave Struthers received the most votes with 233 each; Dan Haefele received 229. The next highest votes went to Bobb Lynes (36), Barbara Watkins (35), Rex Quinn (26), Ken Greenwald (20), Frank Bresee (18), Jerry Williams (12), Jim Harmon (10), Walden Hughes (10) and Don Aston (8). Bruce Miller received seven votes and Chester Allen, Stuart Lubin, Patrick Lucanio and Neil Mitchell all received five votes each. Catherine Passarelli received four votes and Gregg Oppenheimer received three. Receiving two votes each were Susan Crawford, John Gassman, Larry Gassman, Richard Glasband, Barry Opliger and Michael Plett.

Receiving one vote each were the fol-

lowing: Carl Amari, Jack Armstrong, Dick Brescia, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Lamont Cranston, Joe Crawford, Stella Dallas, Herb Ellis, Martin Fass, Barbara Harmon, Tom Heathwood, Lorenzo Jones, Don King, Nilan Kinkaid, Glenn Mueller, Barak Obama, Sara Palin, Peter Parker, Lee Reem, David Schwartz, Thomas Watson, Barbara Williams, Jim Worden, Kitt and Just Plain Bill.

AT-A-GLANCE

Official Election Results

Bob Steinmetz	233
Glenda Kelly	233
Dave Struthers	233
Dan Haefele	229

Write-in Candidates

Bobb Lynes	36
Barbara Watkins	35
Rex Quinn	26
Ken Greenwald	20
Frank Bresee	18
Jerry Williams	12
Jim Harmon	10
Walden Hughes	10
Don Aston	8
Bruce Miller	7
Chester Allen	5
Stuart Lubin	5
Patrick Lucanio	5
Neil Mitchell	5
Catherine Passarelli	4
Gregg Oppenheimer	3
Susan Crawford	2
John Gassman	2
Larry Gassman	2
Richard Glasband	2
Barry Opliger	2
Michael Plett	2
Carl Amari	1
Jack Armstrong	1
Dick Brescia	1
George W. Bush	1
Bill Clinton	1
Lamont Cranston	1
Joe Crawford	1
Stella Dallas	1
Herb Ellis	1
Martin Fass	1
Barbara Harmon	1
Tom Heathwood	1
Lorenzo Jones	1
Don King	1
Nilan Kinkaid	1
Glenn Mueller	1
Barak Obama	1
Sara Palin	1
Peter Parker	1
Lee Reem	1
David Schwartz	1
Thomas Watson	1
Barbara Williams	1
Jim Worden	1
Kitt	1
Just Plain Bill	1

Vivian Della Chiesa worked with Toscanini

Death Takes Celebrated Soprano



Lyric Soprano Vivian Della Chiesa

Vivian Della Chiesa, one of the last of radio's leading American singers of the 1930s and 1940s, died January 6 in Huntington, NY. Very few publications noted her passing at age 94. A lyric soprano, she started on an array of primetime network concert programs. Chicago born Vivian began a successful musical career when she won at 19 a countrywide contest for an unknown singer sponsored by CBS station WBBM in 1935. That prize led to a 13-week broadcast series, and a three-year contract with the Chicago Opera Company—and her debut as Mimi in *La Boheme*.

Then in 1937 Vivian regularly performed on *The Contented Hour* and with the broadcasts of the Rochester Philharmonic led by José Iturbi. In 1940 she was asked by conductor Alfred Wallenstein to sing on a Mozart series at WOR-Mutual in New York. A versatile quick study, she learned the score to *The Magic Flute* in four days.

That year radio czar Frank Hummert signed her for his top-rated NBC *American Album of Familiar Music*, sponsored by Bayer Aspirin. For nearly three years every Sunday evening she sang with tenor Frank Munn. During that time she also performed on Hummert's *American Melody Hour*. Toscanini invited Vivian as guest soloist on an NBC symphony airing of Brahms's Requiem in January 1943. Billed as "America's Great Lyric Soprano," she handled with ease a full spectrum of songs and arias from contemporary pop to Montemezzi's *L'Incantesimo*, which was a world premiere with the NBC symphony under the baton of the composer himself.

In July 1943 she left *American Album*, thinking she'd reach more audiences by con-

cert tours along with her own vocal choices rather than Hummert's weekly assignment of broadcast selections. This was a decision she came to regret.

However, radio lured her back for frequent guest appearances on *Highways of Melody* and its successor, *Cities Service Concert*. She virtually ended her work on the NBC net with guest spots on *The Voice of Firestone* and *The Railroad Hour* in 1950-51.

Vivacious Vivian entered a new phase by performing in supper clubs. She hosted a TV talk show on WLW Cincinnati with sidekick Nick Clooney. And she turned to teaching voice and presentation on Long Island.

Into her 80s she invited this writer to a student vocal recital, and concluded the evening with her own singing. It revealed she still had a pleasing voice and sparkling stage presence. — Thomas DeLong

Gag Writer Offers Look at Writing for Bob Hope

Bob Mills, one of Bob Hope's team of writers, offers a look inside the world of the gag-men in his new book *The Laugh Makers: A Behind-the-Scenes Tribute to Bob Hope's Incredible Gag Writers*. As Bob writes, "it's 350-pages of bygone era wonderful, illustrated by 82 candid and revealing photos of Hope, his writers and his guest stars gathered over my seventeen years writing and traveling with Hope from Sydney to Bora-Bora, Stockholm to Peking, with many exotic ports-of-call in between."

Gary Owens, the announcer with hand-to-ear for *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, notes in his foreword that "Bob Mills takes us on a delightful, side-splitting journey back to the slapstick sketch comedy of television's Golden Age—a long-ago era of variety, song-and-dance, brilliant patter and a seemingly endless parade of laughs—sprung from the genius of 'gag men,' that talented group of wit-blessed wordsmiths to whom the book pays well-deserved homage. It's a boatload of sketches, monologues, stories and anecdotes from a fondly remembered past that will have you chuckling from start to finish."

The book at \$24.95 is available from Amazon.com or from the publisher direct: <http://bearmanormedia.bizland.com/id370.html> or write to BearManor Media at PO Box 71426 in Albany, GA 31708. Phone orders at 760-709-9696 or fax: at 814-690-1559.

Information on Radio Career of Lloyd Nolan Sought by Authors

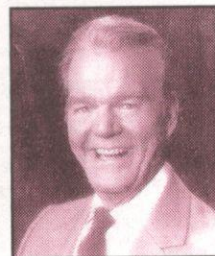
New York radio host Joel Blumberg and Sandra Grabman are writing a biography of the late actor Lloyd Nolan, who did quite a bit of radio work in California early in his very successful career. The authors are seeking members who worked with Mr. Nolan or new him personally for their book. As Sandra says, "I'd love to hear their memories of him."

If anyone can assist with this project contact Sandra Grabman at 210 North 28th Street in Duncan, OK 73533-2420 or call her at (580) 252-3547. Her e-mail address is srgrabman@cableone.net.

Sandra also has a website: <http://www.sandrgrabman.com>.

Paul Harvey Dies; Premier Broadcaster

Even though coverage has been comprehensive throughout the media, we would be remiss if we ignored the passing of premier broadcaster Paul Harvey.



Born Paul Harvey Aurandt in Tulsa, OK on September 4, 1918, he was descended from five generations of Baptist ministers. In high school he was a champion orator, and a teacher helped him get a job at KVOO in Tulsa when he was 14. He held various broadcasting jobs in the midwest before enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was honorably discharged after a training injury.

He then shortened his name to Paul Harvey and moved to Chicago where he began a twice-daily 15-minute news commentary. In 1951 he persuaded an advertising agency to take his program to the new ABC network where it became the success that it was. Indeed, a 1985 survey found that the four most popular radio programs on the air nationally were four of his broadcasts in different time slots.

In 2000, it was estimated that he had over 22 million listeners, and as a result ABC Radio Networks offered Harvey a 10-year, \$100 million contract.

Harvey consistently rated in polls as one of America's most admired personalities. His

Continued Page 13

Radio fact thrills more than fiction in new book

During the Cold War, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty broadcast uncensored news and commentary to people living in communist nations. As critical elements of the CIA's early covert activities against communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Munich-based stations drew a large audience despite efforts to jam the broadcasts and ban citizens from listening to them. Richard Cummings' *Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe 1950-1989* stations this history in the late Cold War era and reveals the perils the staff faced from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and other communist states. It recounts in detail the murder of writer Georgi Markov, the 1981 bombing of the stations by "Carlos the Jackal," infiltration by KGB agent Oleg Tumanov and other events that make for more thrills than any three espionage fictions.



Included in the 319 pages are appendices of security reports, letters between Carlos the Jackal and German terrorist Johannes Weinrich among other documents many of which have never been published.

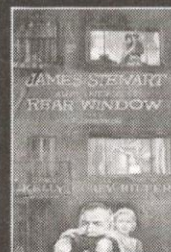
Richard Cummings was the director of Security for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for 15 years beginning in 1980. The trade paperback is \$45 and is available at Amazon.com and from the publisher at www.mcfarlandpub.com or 1-800-253-2187.

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SO FAR AWAY
YET SO CLEAR

BY
FRED ESSEX

D ID YOU ever look into the wrong end of a pair of binoculars? Curiosity leads most owners to try it at least once and it's a bit of a surprise to see everything seem so far away; just the opposite from the correct use of the glasses. Even more surprising is to discover, though it appears everything is far distant, everything is clear and distinguishable. And so it is with old-time radio. Though the years have long gone, never to be repeated, all is still quite clear in the minds of those who remember through the long tunnel of time. *Radiogram* is devoted to keeping it alive and for that reason we like to tweak your memory with such as the following.

For starters, how many daughters did Eddie Cantor have? And what was his comment about having another? That's an easy one. He and his wife had five and his comment? AI wouldn't take a million for any one of them and not give you a dime for another.

Better to omit the name but I was told a famous entertainer offered a huge gift to a non-profit organization in order to list the contribution on his tax return. However, its Board voted to decline the gift. Some members thought he would then try to influence their actions. He subsequently bought some shrimp boats with the money. Unfortunately, they mysteriously sunk or burned so he took the loss as a deduction. No, you won't learn who he was.

Do you remember *Amos and Andy* was a daily 15-minute program for years? When the decision was made to make it one half-hour weekly show I was assigned to direct it and move to the West Coast from the New York area. But a promotion resulted in my staying in the city. At times I did wonder what would have happened if I had gone. I know you would not have known about it, or cared less, but reminisces can be personal, too.

Then there was Wayne King who, in the early days, played saxophone with the Paul Whiteman orchestra before forming his own. He became enormously successful and was known as The Waltz King. Near the end of WWII, Wayne was discharged with the rank of major. Once out of the service he wondered if he formed a new orchestra could he pick up where he left off.

By chance, Lucky Strike was looking for a summer replacement for the Jack Benny show, and Lucky Strike always looked for opposites to their regular shows for replacement. For instance, recall when Frank Sinatra left *The Hit Parade* they hired a former opera singer Lawrence Tibbett who sang "Don't Fence Me In" week after week). Wayne's program was not only successful, his girl singer on the program was Dolores Gray who went on to star in Broadway and London musicals as well as a singer doing voice-over in some motion pictures. Wayne, a successful businessman in other fields, remained popular until he passed away in the mid 1980s.

How about that talented panel on *What's My Line?* moderated by John Daly with Bennett Cerf, Arlene Francis and Dorothy Kilgallen. That was one of the many game shows created by Goodson-Todman Productions along with *Beat the Clock*, *Password*, *Family Feud*, *To Tell the Truth*, *The Price is Right* and others. Several are still on the air.

The kids couldn't wait for their afternoon series and the opportunity to get a magic ring or some prized possession and the stay-at-home women had their emotional involvements with the soaps. Radio, then, was part of their respective lives before it succumbed to the top-40 syndrome.

The world was much bigger until radio suddenly made it small. Why, imagine this, at midnight on New Year's Eve we could actually hear live Big Ben in London tolling out the end of the old and start of the new. Often the signal would waver, get louder then softer as the E layer high above the earth undulated as it reflected the radio waves. Today we get the BBC radio news via satellite as if they were in the next room. Only when they give the Greenwich Mean Time, and on the Pacific Coast it is eight hours later, do we even think little of it.

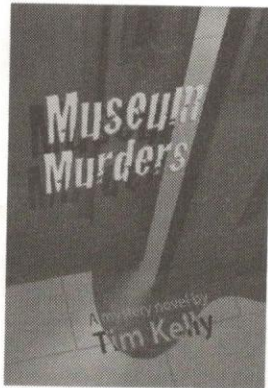
But in the 1940s, radio was king. It gave us the news and developed personalities with it. The range of entertainment ran from basic game shows to thoughtful and provocative drama. Without their awareness, radio was to become the stepping stone for many talented actors to eventually move on to television and/or motion pictures. Musical remotes from road houses promoted orchestras whose names we still recognize.

Of all things, radio was family entertainment. Could we name one program today where the family sits together to watch or listen? Inconceivable to today's generation and no one's to blame. Radio was a phenomenon of another era.

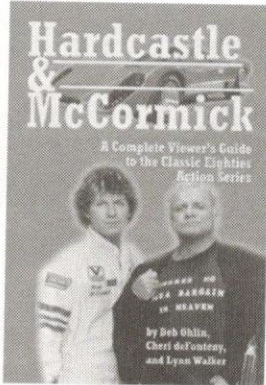
But not all is lost. If you're not old enough to recall those days, do yourself a favor and begin to use the SPERDVAC library and borrow a few tapes. If you do remember that decade, you, too, should consider reliving some of your old favorites. The price is so small compared to the satisfaction you will enjoy.

True, my recollections before motion picture and television involvements go back to the days of directing radio. Nothing was taped although 16-inch, 331/3 rpm discs were made of certain programs. Unfortunately, I don't have a one. I'm lucky my memories of Bob Ripley, André Kostelanetz, Wayne King, Charlie Chan, Ellery Queen, Quiz shows, the soaps—*Big Sister* and *Aunt Jenny* among others—and directing the spots for LSMFT, Rinso, Bromo Seltzer, G. Washington Instant Coffee, et al. They are still sharp although at the far end of my figurative binocular tunnel. So sit back, and with me, say thanks to *Radiogram* which makes it possible for us to remember when.👏

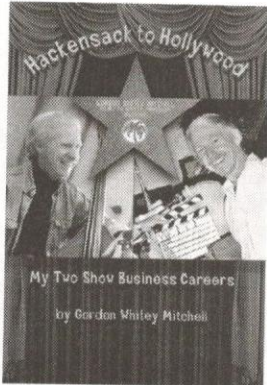
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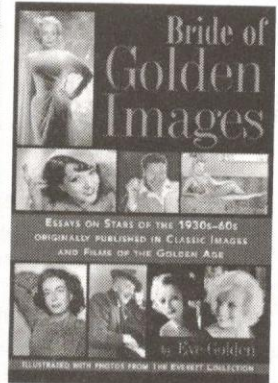
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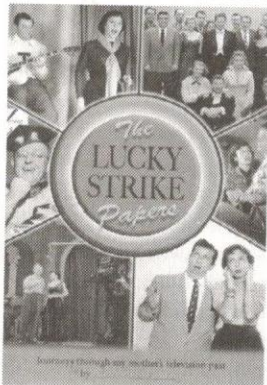
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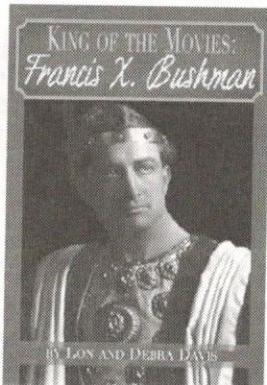
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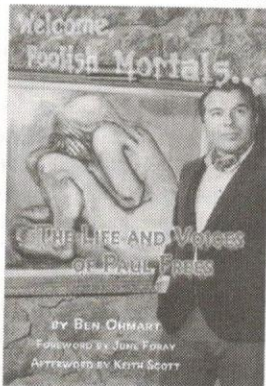
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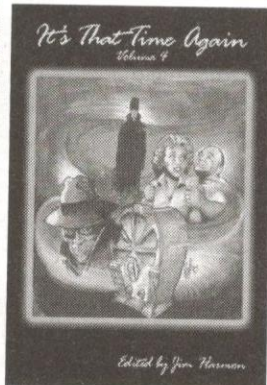
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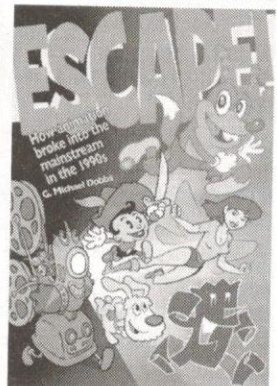
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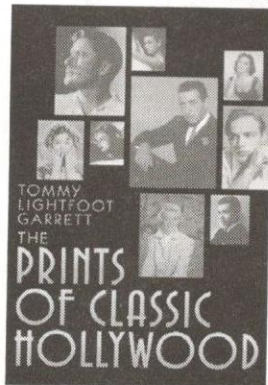
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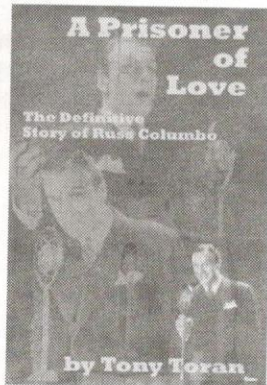
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Convention 2009 Celebrates SPERDVAC's 35th Anniversary

Galaxy of Stars to Celebrate OTR in Gala Convention in May

by Bobb Lynes
CONVENTION CHAIR

THE 2009 convention plans are continuing. Contrary to rumors circulating in the OTR world, I want to assure everyone that there will be a SPERDVAC OTR convention on May 1, 2 and 3 at the Beverly Garland Holiday Inn at 4222 Vineland Avenue in North Hollywood, CA 91602.

As convention chair I'd like to thank the small but dedicated committee of volunteers working to make this convention a success. But we need more volunteers.

To save costs we have decided not to have a dealers' room this year. However we will have a table for authors to sell their books.

SCHEDULE

Here is a list of the scheduled events, panels, and recreations:

Friday, May 1: Authors panel with Martin Grams, Bob Mills and Jim Harmon; *The Green Hornet* panel with Martin Grams, Jr.; *The Bickersons* re-creation; "Rudy Vallee Remembered" by Eleanor Vallee; and *I Love a Mystery* re-creation with live musical accompaniment by famed organist Bob Mitchell.

Our Friday banquet will be emceed by Gary Owens and will feature re-creations of *The Great Gildersleeve* and *Burns and Allen* with Jack Benny, i.e., Eddie Carroll.

Chuck McCann, the "hi guy" fellow in the medicine cabinet for Right Guard and the voice of the "cuckoo for cocoa puffs" commercial, will star as Gildy. Co-starring will be Shirley Mitchell, reprising her role in the original radio broadcast as Gildy's lady love, Leila Ransom. Fans of *I Love Lucy* will remember Shirley as Marion Strong, Lucy's girlfriend with the distinctive laugh at which Lucy replied: "Quit cackling, Marion. I've been waiting ten years for you to lay that egg."

The production will also feature four additional original cast members: Janet Waldo, Dick Beals (the voice of both "Speedy Alka-Seltzer" and "Gumby"), Gloria McMillan ("Harriet Conklin" on *Our Miss Brooks* on both radio and TV), and veteran radio and TV actor Stuffie Singer.

Rounding out the cast will be Eddie Carroll, Gary Owens, and Dena Dietrich.

Our second re-creation will be *Maxwell House Coffee Time* starring *George Burns*

and *Gracie Allen*, with special guest star Jack Benny in the hilarious episode titled "How Jack Benny Became a Cheapskate." The incomparable Eddie Carroll will again reprise his award-winning—and uncanny—portrayal of Jack Benny.

Gifted impressionist Fred Travalena will star as George Burns with Janet Waldo, the voice of Judy Jetson and Josie of the cartoon series *The Jetsons* and *Josie and the Pussycats*, will portray Gracie Allen. Janet was also the star of radio's *Meet Corliss Archer*.

Saturday, May 2: *Lux Radio Theatre* panel; radio bloopers and outtakes; *I Love a Mystery* panel with Martin Grams, Jr.; talk radio panel; singers panel with Jack Jones, Gogi Grant, Peter Marshall and Marilyn King led by Chuck Southcott; *Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders* re-creation; and *The Life of Riley* re-creation.

The Saturday banquet will be emceed by Leonard Maltin with re-creations of *Dragnet*, *The Lux Radio Theatre* production of "Casablanca," and *The Baby Snooks Show*.

Herb Ellis, who played Frank Smith, Sergeant Firday's partner, on radio will direct and star in a 60th anniversary tribute re-creation of Jack Webb's *Dragnet*. Also appearing in the re-creation will be original cast members Peggy Webber, who appeared in more than 100 episodes, and Gladys Holland, whose first radio role was on *Dragnet*. Kenneth Mars will also be featured.

Next in line will be the 75th Anniversary celebration of *The Lux Radio Theatre* with "Casablanca." Radio personality Frank Bresee will direct a cast that includes Doris Singleton, known to *I Love Lucy* fans as Lucy's nearsighted nemesis Carolyn Appleby, and who played Hollywood correspondent Libby Collins in the original *Lux Radio Theatre* program.

The Baby Snooks Show, which starred the legendary actress, singer and comedienne Fanny Brice, will be directed by Gregg Oppenheimer, whose father Jess Oppenheimer wrote for the program. Mallory Lewis, daughter of famed entertainer Shari Lewis and who continues her mother's legacy by appearing with the puppet Lamb Chop, will star using that clever Lamb Chop voice that resembles Fanny Brice's Baby Snooks.

Co-starring as Daddy Higgins will be Harold Gould, who had played Mr. Morgenstern in *Roda*, supported by original cast members Gloria McMillan and Tommy Cook, who will reprise his role as Snooks' boyfriend, Alexander. Also featured will be Marilyn King, the King Sisters, and veteran radio and TV announcer John Harlan.

Sunday, May 3: Breakfast will be followed by "From Radio to Cartoons" panel with June Foray, Dick Beals, Gary Owens and Janet Waldo.

As always, all honorary members of sperdvac have been invited to the Saturday evening banquet as guests of SPERDVAC.

THE STARS

Among other guests and performers scheduled to appear at the convention are: Stuffie Singer, Gloria McMillan, Bob Hastings, Robert Easton, Susan Silo, Ron Cocking, Shirley Mitchell, Chuck McCann, Dena Dietrich, Fred Travalena, John Harlan, Frank Bresee, Barbara Fuller, Gladys Holland, Ira Fistel, Ray Briem, Chuck Southcott, Ivan Cury, Tommy Cook, Jan Merlin, Herb Ellis, Kenneth Mars, Peggy Webber, Gene Reynolds, Darryl Hickman, Karen Sharpe Kramer, Doris Singleton, Eddy King, Mallory Lewis and Harold Gould.

For details of times and casts and panelists, see <http://www.lucylibrary.com/SPERDVAC/>.

Please mail in your registration forms as soon as possible. If you wish to stay at the Beverly Garland, call 1-800-238-3759 and mention code OLD & SPERDVAC. For those not staying overnight at the hotel, to receive the discounted event parking of \$5.00, bring your ticket and pay fee at the sperdvac convention registration table.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

We need people to help on site in various ways: to pick up guests; to help at registration table; help with the raffles; assist the engineer in the panel room, etc. If you can help for even an hour or two, please contact volunteer coordinator Barbara Williams, 1-530-990-4231, mrj1313@sbcglobal.net For all other inquiries regarding the convention, please contact me at 1-323-256-5879, iairotr@hotmail.com

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THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE
BOBBY BENSON
THE LIFE OF RILEY
LUX RADIO THEATER
"CASABLANCA"
DRAGNET
BABY SNOOKS SHOW

PANELS

AUTHORS PANEL
GREEN HORNET PANEL
ELEANOR VALLEE
REMEMBERS RUDY VALLEE
LUX RADIO THEATER PANEL
RADIO BLOOPERS
I LOVE A MYSTERY PANEL
TALK RADIO WITH RAY BRIEM
SINGERS PANEL
WITH CHUCK SOUTHCOTT
JACK JONES, GOGI GRANT,
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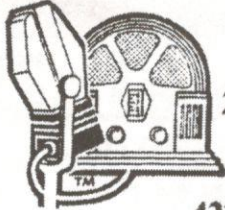
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STUFFY SINGER	KAREN SHARPE KRAMER
DICK BEALS	BOB HASTINGS
DENA DIETRICH	IVAN CURY
JANET WALDO	JAN MERLIN
RON COCKING	SUSAN SILO
FRED TRAVALENA	BOB EASTON
EDDIE CARROLL	JOHN HARLAN
MALLORY LEWIN	FRANK BRESEE
HAROLD GOULD	DARRYL HICKMAN
TOMMY COOK	DORIS SINGLETON
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Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn
4222 Vineland Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 818-980-8000

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Cancellation Deadline is April 22, 2009

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NOTE: If you wish to be seated with your friends, please send reservation forms and fees together. Convention tickets will be held at the Registration Desk. This is not a fundraiser and the full cost of tickets goes to cover costs. Therefore no part of the ticket price is considered a tax deductible contribution.

CONVENTION RATES DEADLINE APRIL 15, 2009
CHECKS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THIS DATE FOR DISCOUNTED PRICE
 AFTER April 15, 2009 - TOTAL COST: \$175 (DAILY COSTS REMAIN THE SAME)

(Prices are per person; "Member" price applies to a member & guests on the same order form)

1. Discounted Convention Package	\$140 Member / \$150 Non Member	X _____ = _____
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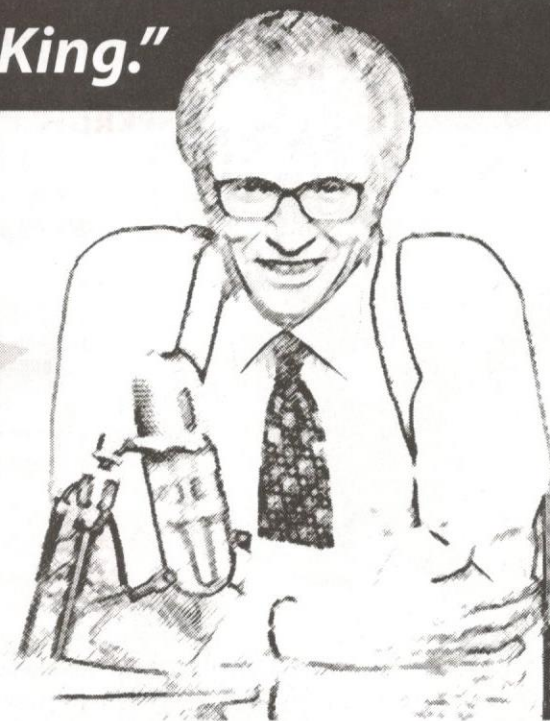
There will be a raffle and silent auction. Also Convention Program Ads are available (See last year's Convention Program at www.lucylibrary.com/SPERDVAC/program.pdf)
 Radio items are needed for the Raffle & Auction. If you have an item to donate or would like to place an ad in the Convention Program, please contact Jerry Williams Email: mrj1313@sbcglobal.net

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"I see you've met Larry King."

Go Ahead Caller ... Are You There?



by Bob Mills

IN THE WEEK prior to the scheduled air date of a special, Bob Hope would give scores of telephone interviews to television writers, critics and radio talk-show hosts across the country. Over the decades, he had established strong friendships with many of them, and he knew that he could rely upon them for strong plugs. In return, he was always available to them as a last-minute fill-in guest.

Logging as many as two dozen calls a day, Hope would spend hours giving listeners a preview of the guests, the sketches and even some of the jokes. He'd take call-ins and answer questions on the air. And always, he'd end each conversation with a reminder of the date and time our special was set to air.

When I joined the show as a writer in 1977, Hope thought that my background as a former lawyer was an interesting angle that might help promote the specials. So he had NBC's publicist send out a detailed bio with photos inviting newspaper columnists to use me as a subject. When requests came in, Hope's publicist, Ken Kantor, would set up phone interviews.

I did eight or ten of them each season and was heard on stations ranging from WXYZ in New York to KOGO in San Diego and KFI in Los Angeles. I appeared in newspapers from the *Washington Post* to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and in magazines like *The American Bar Association Journal* and *Writers Digest*. (As it turned out, I was way ahead of my time. Today, you need a law degree from Harvard even to land an interview for a writing job on *Saturday Night Live*.)

I was always happy to promote *The Bob Hope Show*, and in the fall of 1978, Hope asked me to help an old friend who

had a late-night radio talk show in Florida. I thought he meant one of my regular telephone interviews, but this time, instead of working from home, I'd be on the air live from his house in Toluca Lake. To an inveterate ham, it sounded like fun. And I wouldn't have to wear makeup.

When I arrived around quarter of seven (the show would begin at ten in the East), Gig Henry [a fellow writer] was already there. Hope's buddy, working without an engineer, had patched a telephone hookup to the studio in Miami; he had set up the microphones on a small, glass-topped coffee table in an anti-room outside Hope's office.

In his horn-rimmed glasses and white shirt with rolled-up sleeves, he looked more like an accountant or an insurance salesman than a radio personality. His gruff New York accent made him sound more like a cab driver than someone making his living on the radio.

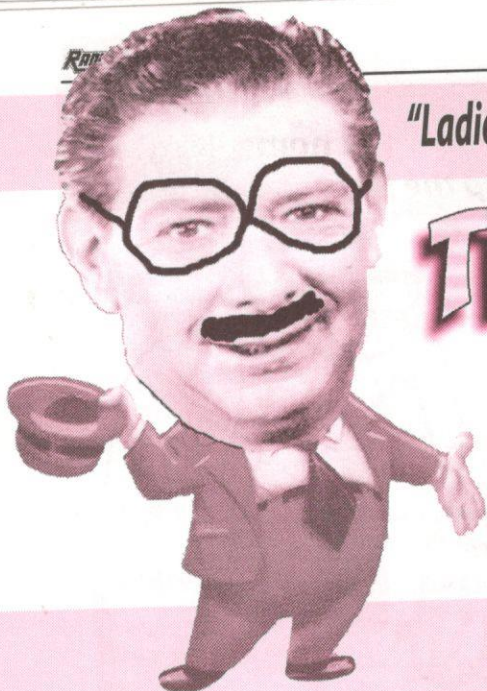
He began the interview, and soon, Gig and I were taking calls from listeners asking the usual questions about working with Hope. About a half-hour into the program, Hope came down from the house and quietly slipped in through the gate-house door.

He waited until there was a cutaway for a commercial and said, "Well, how are the boys doing?"

"Great, Bob. I'll introduce you next."

Then Hope turned to us and said, "I see you've met Larry King."☛

Excerpted from *The Laugh Makers: A Behind-the-Scenes Tribute to Bob Hope's Incredible Gag Writers*. Copyright © 2009 by Robert L. Mills, J.D. and used by permission of the author.



"Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States-Hoobert Heever."

THOSE (IN)FAMOUS AIR FLUFFS

by Jo Ranson

The *bite noire* of the radio actor and announcer is the fluff. It is the verbal mix-up, the phonetic difficulty which makes the performer feel like an All-American schlemiel. No matter how careful is his speech behavior during rehearsal, somewhere along the line he is apt to stick his big foot in his mouth and out will come a spoonerism the likes of which will make him the instantaneous laughing stock of his AFRA colleagues and the pity of listeners from the Borscht Belt to the African veldt.

Historians of such matters will tell you that it was William A. Spooner, the Warden of New College, Oxford, who established some sort of championship for slips of the tongue, among his gems being "Mardon me, padam, but I think you are occupewing my pie." Today, many of our announcers insist on introducing "Pewgrams of Moistic." The dictionary describes a fluff as "to forget one's lines" and "to play one's part blunderingly." It is far worse than that, judging by the wails heard from hapless fluff victims gathered at Colbee's and Kaufman-Bedrick's Pharmacy.

The psychological extent to which the damnable fluff can cause an actor to almost ruin a show was best demonstrated on a "Bulldog Drummond" show over WOR several semesters ago when the performer, playing the part of the villain, hissed through his kisser, "You're fluffing-er, I mean bluffing, Bulldog Drummond."

During the sizzling summer months, one of Gotham's ether outlets makes a practice

of plugging the city's outdoor attractions, including Coney Island, the peppery pastrami peninsula, in 20-second announcements sandwiched between programs. With rotarian-like civic pride, one of the announcements starts with this exciting line: "The greatest city in the world has the greatest beaches in the world." Assigned to the task of delivering this highly significant piece of intelligence, one of the announcers managed to slip up in his pronunciation of the word "beaches." This startling admission produced many phone calls demanding an explanation. The only exception was a realistically minded young man who said he had heard the announcement and would the station please be kind enough to forward him further particulars.

A phonetic difficulty of a similar nature had station moguls in a dither when a nimble-tongued emcee introduced a torch singer from a local night club with the following intro: "And now, folksies, here's a genuwine treat. We bring you, direct from the Hotsy Totsy Club, Miss Nedda Nasal, who swings those numbers like everybody's business, and believe you me, what a charming little bit she is!"

Nor are sportscasters immune to the pitfalls of speech. There was the sad case of the sports announcer in the Middle West who was called upon to spout about a rural sporting event. The copy stated that there would be a state-widehorse-shoe pitching contest on such and such a day. But what bounced off the announcer's tongue sounded more like a

clarion call for a Rabelaisian sporting event. Not quite as embarrassing, biologically speaking, but nonetheless upsetting to all concerned was the studio announcer who, without warning, cut off a blow-by-blow account of a prize fight in order to bring listeners the news of the sudden death of the mayor of the town. He then returned the mike to the unsuspecting sports announcer at the fight arena, who picked up where the studio announcer had left off with these remarks: "It was quite a blow, ladies and gentlemen, but it doesn't mean a thing." Hizzoner's family squawked plenty the next day.

A poll reveals that practically every announcer, at one time or another, has managed to get on the Fluff Parade. Milton J. Cross has added considerably to the lore of broadcasting boners. Assigned to introduce one of NBC's great symphonic orchestra leaders, he intoned: "Ladies and gentlemen, may we call your attention to an outstanding musical event to occur next Saturday night: The first in a new series of concerts by the NBC Symphony Orchestra." Cross paused significantly, and then went on to say, "under the direction of Ortosco Torganini." Since this was obviously incorrect, he tried it again. This time, it emerged as "Artosco Turanini." Finally, breathing like a Stanley Steamer, he charged forward with the words: "Arturo Toscanini." Legend also has it that the venerable Cross, called upon to introduce the onetime famed radio orchestra known as the A & P Gypsies, changed it to the A & P Pipsies. On another occasion, Cross described "The Prince of Pilsen" as "The Pill of Princeton."

Many recall the case of the soap-opera actor who was supposed to say, "I never liked you, and, I never will." Reading hurriedly, this is what emerged: "I never liked you, and, I always will." One of the feminine house-

Under the direction of Ortosco Torganini . . . Artosco Turanini . . . ARTURO TOSCANINI!

hold-hinters on the airplanes, giving advice to husbands, declared: "Don't let your wife do all the work at home. If she is mopping up the floor—mop up the floor with her." Introductions are bugaboos, as indicated earlier in this piece. One announcer on a Pennsylvania station introduced a baseball preview program as follows: "And now, ladies and gentlemen, we bring you the dope from the ball parks—Doug Arthur." Old-timers recall with glee the occasion when G. W. "Johnny" Johnstone was about to give an account of the goings-on aboard the Queen Mary on her maiden voyage. Johnstone went on the air with this extraordinary announcement: "Good afternoon, ladies and Johnstone." Closings, also, bother radio personalities. Sterling North, the *New York Post's* literary critic and presiding justice of WHN's *Books on Trial*, signed off the program recently with a dandy spoonerism: "This is Sterling Night signing off and saying good north and pleasant reading."

The list of slips that pass in the mike is endless. Here are a few from the horror roll:

- Andre Baruch: "Good Ladies Evening and Gentlemen." Also, in introducing a distinguished associate editor of a daily newspaper: "Mr. Blank, Acidity Editor of..." Announcing "Your Army Service Program," he said: "And now, the orchestra, with Warrant Officer Edward Sadowsky seducting."
- Frank Knight: "The weather report: Tomorrow rowdy, followed by clain."
- John Reed King (speaking of the Lindsay-Crouse hit): "The perennial 'Lice With Father.'"
- Mel Allen: "It's Smipe Poking Time, Gentlemen."
- Lowell Thomas, labeling the former Secretary of the Interior: "Mr. Iksie."
- Floyd Neale: "This is the Musical Broadcasting System."
- Art Whiteside (presenting the Crown Prince of Norway): "Today, it is our extreme pleasure to introduce the Brown Quince of Norway."
- Burl Ives, in accepting a scroll from Russel Crouse: "I want to thank Mr. Brussel Rouse."
- Ralph Edwards: "And here is one of radio's most charming and lovely young sinners."
- Jerry Lawrence: "You will know the King and Queen have arrived, when you hear a 2 i-sun galoot."
- David Ross: "We present Tito Guitar and his romantic Guizar."
- Bill Schudt: "We bring you the music of Freddy Martin, from the Maroon Reef of the Hotel Bossert." It's the Marine Roof, pardner.
- Mary Margaret McBride: "A lot of things you are supposed to eat, you just

"Don't let your wife do all the work at home. If she is mopping up the floor—mop up the floor with her."

don't like . . . especially children."

- Harry Von Zell: "Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States—Hoobert Heever."

- Ben Grauer: "This is W J Zilch."

You sure miss a whopping amount of tongue tripping if you don't listen to the dramatic shows on the airplanes. Devotees of this sort of thing recall the soap opera with the heroine on shipboard, in a dense fog, describing it as "thick as sea poop." In another serial, the actor was supposed to say, "We'll give the bell a pull," and, it emerged, "We'll give the bull a pill." Listeners to Mutual's Nick Carter heard an actor, portraying a German general, saying: "We are surrounded on all sides by the enemy—they come from the left, from the right—from the east, west, north, and south—and we are without food and water." His aide was supposed to reply: "Is it that bad?" but instead he muttered: "Is that bad?"

The late Lou Gehrig endeared himself to all levels of society when, interviewed on

Paul Harvey

program was part news and feature stories all spun in a folksy manner. Harvey's commentaries were distinctly conservative but not always. In the 1960s he editorialized against the permissiveness on college campuses and in the media and in support of the Vietnam war. But in 1970 he switched positions and called for President Nixon to bring the troops home and urged Nixon to reverse his decision to invade Cambodia.

Harvey's most famous segment of his program was "The Rest of the Story," a narrative that recounted the lives of major figures who remained anonymous until the "twist ending" when some coincidence or twist of fate made a difference in the person's life. The segment was the result of Harvey's self-professed passion for biographies. The segments were written by Harvey's son, Paul Aurandt.

Harvey wrote his own copy and insisted that he would not endorse a commercial product that he did not believe in. His "page two, etc." breaks in his reporting flowed seamlessly into commercials that he endorsed personally.

Harvey is said to have invented words that found their way into the culture, such as "guesstimate," "Reaganomics" and "sky-jacker."

Paul Harvey, 90, died February 28 in Phoenix, his winter home, surrounded by family. No cause of death was available. He is survived by his son.

the Grape Nuts program, he said his favorite breakfast food was Wheaties. But topping everyone was Cletus Elwood (Boots) Poffenberger, the baseball player. During an interview on a muscle-building cereal program, he was asked by the announcer: "Now tell us, Boots, what is your favorite breakfast, taken with cream, sugar, and some sort of fruit?" Looking the announcer straight in the eye, Poffenberger slammed out a home run by shouting: "Ham, eggs, and a couple of bottles of beer." ♣

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North Hollywood

•

June 13
Mid-Valley Library

•

September 12
South Pasadena Community Room

•

October 10
Mid-Valley Library • North Hills

•

November 14
To Be Announced

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The Readers Have Their Say

In the Twilight of the Zone

Thanks so much for your great piece on my late, great friend Rod Serling. I first met Rod in the spring of 1968 the day I took over as producer of *The Twilight Zone*. That same day I was informed by Rod and CBS that this was *Zone's* final season. As luck would have it I had signed as captain of the sinking ship.

Rod and I bonded instantly on the basis that we had both been radio writers. The jokes and good humor of our mutual radio writing background gave us a rich commonality which never left us doing our year-long warm and friendly relationship.

We were once heading for a meeting with CBS-TV president Jim Aubrey, who hated *The Twilight Zone* probably because Rod had a liberal slant in the series. Nonetheless, he wanted another Rod Serling series, and Rod had asked me to fly to New York with him for the Aubrey meeting which was scheduled for the same time and date Robert Kennedy was assassinated. Our meeting was cancelled, of course.

Rod and I finished off the series. It was a weak ending to a great series but I had completed my primary orders; I had brought the series in on budget for which everybody—including Rod, who owned a part of the series—was delighted. CBS immediately hired me as executive producer in charge of dramatic programming, but I knew I had to get back to my first love, teaching. I joined the UCLA faculty and taught four courses per quarter for the next 16 years until a heart attack ended my teaching career and very nearly my life. For the whole bloody story read my *How I Escaped from Gilligan's Island* (University of Wisconsin Press 2005).

Thanks for the great work.

William Froug
e-mail

Better Late than Never

This letter is two years late, but here goes. Recently, I was re-reading my collection of Radiogram and noticed Jim Cox's article "The Top Forty" in the September 2006 issue in which he listed old-time network radio shows that lasted more than 20 years. He omitted several long-running shows: CBS *World News Roundup*—1938-present (70 years); CBS *Face the Nation*—1953-present (55 years); NBC *The Eternal Life*—1944-1986 (42 years); *Smilin' Ed's Buster Brown Gang*—1929-1953 (off air 1941-44; 21 years); NBC/CBS *The Road of Life*—1937-1959 (22 years).

Finally, how could he have forgotten *The Shadow*—1930-1954 (24 years)? Also, Jim lists Amos 'n' Andy as 22 years but it actually ran 34 years (1926-1960).

I enjoy Radiogram. As a former journalist I know how much work goes into it. You're doing a great job as editor! Hi-Yo Silver!

Randy Woods
Arcadia, CA



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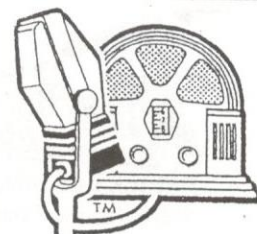


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