

# SPERDVAC

# **RADIO** **GRAM**

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Vol. 21, No. 8

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

August 1995

JOHNNY MODERO---PIER 23

MUSIC: OPENING - DISSOLVES INTO

SOUND: OFF MIKE FOGHORNS...PERIODIC RINGING OF FOGHORN BELL...  
AND LAPPING OF WATER...HARBOR NOISES IN BACKGROUND...  
FOOTSTEPS FADING INTO ON MIKE -- STOP

MODERO: Yeah... I'm Johnny Modero .. Pier 23.

MUSIC: UP AND FADE FOR

MODERO: You wouldn't build a rest home along Market street, but



## A spelling lesson

We've been spelling the last name of radio's waterfront detective incorrectly for years. The character portrayed by Jack Webb has been identified in contemporary literature as Johnny Madero. Barbara Watkins points out in "Information, Please" that radio magazines of the forties spell the name M-O-D-E-R-O. Here is additional evidence: a portion of the script from the broadcast of July 2, 1947.

*See story on page 8.*

## Remembering Gale Gordon

Radio-television actor Gale Gordon has died. Gordon is best remembered for playing characters with explosive tempers on comedy programs. But much of his radio work was on dramatic programs. *See story on page 6.*

## The Star Key

When I press the star key what unexpected delights appear  
 Clint Eastwood — Magnum sized — his elixir to quaff  
 Maybe Ted Lewis with a top hat to doff  
 A star-spangled Judy Garland Yankee Doodling away  
 Or Les Tremayne posing in formal First Nighter array  
 Bill Conrad's ever forceful basso beller  
 A glimpse of a fast ball by Bob Feller  
 Each special star lingers at poised finger tip  
 Taking me on a nostalgic trip  
 Down the rusted corridors of memory lane  
 Not without several doses of personal pain  
 For looking back has its risks  
 Along with a few tsk, tsks.  
 Re-burying those who have merged with the soil  
 Rewarded for their fulfilling lifetime of toil  
 Those long purged recesses of random accessible notes  
 Now cast their share of gut wrenching votes  
 Perhaps it's better to explore just the safeness of stars  
 Those pristine encapsulated memories — free from any mars

Billie Burke — who always looked for the "Silver Living,"  
 Lum and Abner with that Ridge they were always Pining,  
 Howard Duff from film to the ether —  
 With equal aplomb and hating neither,  
 James Stewart "Straight Shooting" into a Philco console,  
 Or a visit to "Hawaii Calls" — sponsored by Dole,  
 Irishmen make good cowboys — let William Boyd attest,  
 Portraying Hopalong Cassidy at his best —  
 Throw in three gravely yards of Andy Devine drawl,  
 To pick up Ronald Colman where Ivy has a Hall,  
 Lagoons of literacy lapped at our feet  
 If the 30s and 40s were your beat,  
 In old radio it was Broadway—  
 Placing a stethoscope on the Great White Way,  
 While Vincent Lopez's sweet music strains  
 Poured out of the Taft in tightly conducted reins,  
 Yes, reminiscing has personal  
 potholes to scale—  
 Sometimes the journey was to no avail.

- Dr. Stan Reyburn



## SPERDVAC FRIENDS

Bob & Ginnie Newhart  
 (In memory of Bill Quinn)

Walter Bunker  
 (In memory of Garry Moore & Pat Buttram)

Millie Morse  
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 (In memory of Hobart Donovan)

Naomi Lewis  
 (In memory of Dick Mack)

Dorothy Geiger  
 (In memory of Milton Geiger)

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 (In memory of Frank Lovejoy & Don W. Sharpe)

Jerome Lawrence  
 (In memory of Robert E. Lee)

Carl Boyer  
 (In memory of Don Ameche)

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Art Gilmore  
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Tippy Conrad  
 (In memory of William Conrad)

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 (In memory of Robert E. Lee)

George Ansbro  
 (In memory of Nora Marlowe & James McCallion)

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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. Tax-deductible donations, payable to SPERDVAC, should be mailed to Carolyn Rawski. (See SPERDVAC Directory.)

## Corwin radio special marks anniversary

Norman Corwin's updated version of the special program he wrote for CBS to mark the end of World War II will air next week on National Public Radio.

The original production, "14 August," was broadcast nationally in 1945 after the war's conclusion. Orson Welles was the narrator.

Charles Kuralt will narrate the 30 minute production, "50 Years After 14 August." Mary Beth Kirchner produced the program. Kirchner has produced two previous updates of Corwin's radio works.

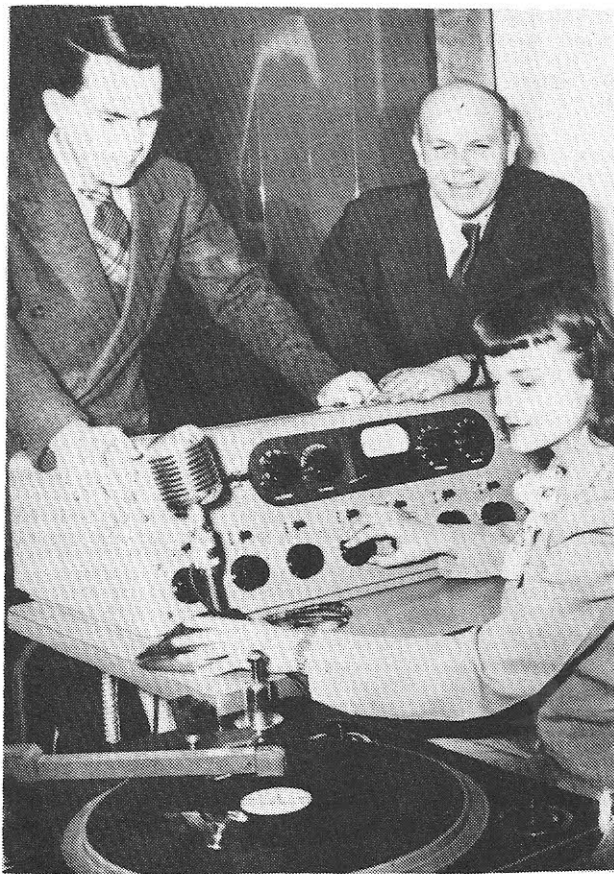
In the Los Angeles area, KPCC-FM will air the special broadcast Aug. 13 at 5 p.m. John and Larry Gassman, hosts of "Same Time, Same Station," will follow up with recorded comments from the late Douglas Edwards plus an interview with Bob Trout. Excerpts from the original broadcast will also be included.

## Plett rejoins BOD

The SPERDVAC Board of Directors has voted to add Michael Plett to the Board. He is replacing Carolyn Rawski, who had to step down from her position because of a family emergency.

Michael has already served three years on the SPERDVAC Board and is a former vice president of the organization.

# The news of Hiroshima



The author, left, at WCOU-FM in 1947. With him are station manager Miff Colton and broadcaster Nancy Jacobson.

by Dr. Walter Beaupre

World War II had become little more than a worrisome nuisance to most civilians in the state of Maine by early August 1945. I say "most" because I vividly remember my barber boasting that if the war lasted another year he would be a rich man. He must have had something going on the side because he didn't get *that* much shave 'n haircut business from the sailors at the nearby Brunswick Naval Base.

In a sense I was one of the "war profiteers" also. In 1943 graduation from high school should have meant induction into the Armed Forces. Much to my surprise I flunked the physical and was accepted as a college freshman without a cent to my name. But with a manpower shortage on campus I had no trouble lining up *five* part-time janitor's jobs to help pay the bills. My room next to the bell tower was free because I rang the huge bell for classes with my roommate Ed.

*Continued on page 10*

## Top stars salute Ray Bradbury

The works of Ray Bradbury will be honored Aug. 22 when the California Artists' Radio Theatre presents a special tribute to the famed science fiction writer at the Thousand Oaks Performing Arts Center.

Jonathan Winters, Rod Steiger, Bill Idelson, Stan Freberg, Norman Lloyd, Kathleen Freeman, Charlotte Rae, Shelly Long and Marvin Kaplan will star in a potpourri of Bradbury's works. Norman Corwin will host and direct.

The production will be at the Forum Theatre in the Thousand Oaks Performing Arts Center, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks.

Tickets are \$75 for the entire event; \$50 and \$25 for those attending the show and cake cutting afterwards. The reception begins at 6 p.m. with the program at 7:30 and cake-cutting ceremonies commencing at 9 that evening. Proceeds go to the Thousand Oaks Library. Tickets may be ordered through any Ticketmaster location or by calling CART at (213) 638-3422.

CART is also staging radio performances twice monthly at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. The shows are at 1:30 p.m. and admission for SPERDVAC members is \$10.

They will reprise the successful "Lost Letters of Robert E. Lee" starring Janet Waldo and Robert Rockwell on Aug. 9 and 12. David Warner and William Windom will star in "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" Sept. 13 and 16. Future CART radio plays will include Damon Runyon's "Three Wise Guys."

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

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for the  
Fiscal Year Ended Feb. 28, 1995

### Revenue:

Library fees	\$30,414
Membership dues	29,833
Convention '94	19,250
Interest income	6,040
Donations	3,711
Miscellaneous	806
Printed Materials sales	798
Merchandise sales	361

**Total Revenue:** \$91,213

### Expenditures:

Newsletter costs	\$26,797
Convention '94	18,300
Library expenses	5,005
Capital expenses	4,681
Printed Materials costs	569
Merchandise for resale	75

### Administrative expenses:

Membership	3,619
Phone	1,903
Donations	1,000
Postage	758
Rent	573
Miscellaneous	317
Supplies	224
Printing	180
Bad check expenses	148
Repair and maintenance	103
Tax and License	15

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES:** \$64,266

### EXCESS REVENUE

**OVER EXPENDITURES:** \$26,947

**TOTAL CASH 2-28-1994** \$165,870

**TOTAL CASH 2-28-1995** \$192,817

**INCREASE** \$26,947

## SPERDVAC Directory

All articles and artwork © 1995 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 91409-7177. (310) 947-9800.

**MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406-3041

**RADIOGRAM EDITOR:** Dan Haefele, 13720 Jefferson Ave., Hawthorne, CA 90250-7210 (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:** Peggy DeShazo, 1804 N. 39th St., San Diego, CA 92105

**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 - 1500:**

CLOSED

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 1501+:** Richard Novak, P.O. Box 33048, Riverside, CA 92519-3048

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500:** Vahan Ouzoonian, 1565 E. Highland Ave., Redlands, CA 92374

**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 Ln., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-5219.

**PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY:** Tom Brown, 1402 S. Kahuna Dr., Spokane, WA 99212.

**VIDEO LIBRARY:** Jerry Williams, 381 Table Mountain, Oroville, CA 95965.

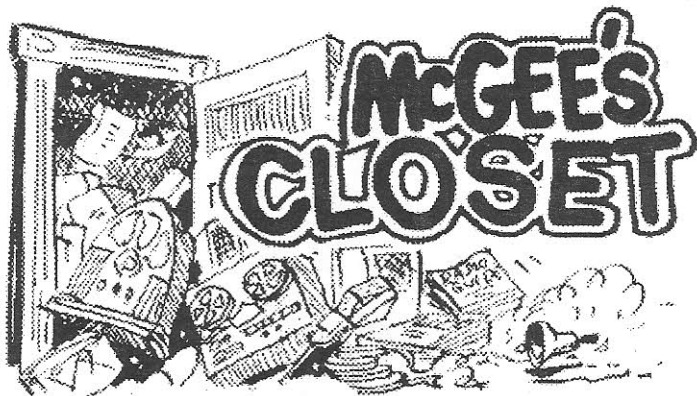
**AUDIO RADIOGRAM:** Send C-90 cassette in returnable mailer to Stuart Lubin, 627 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036. (213) 653-2548. (For blind members only.)

**AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS:** Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison Ave., Port Orchard, WA 98366-3321

**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.



*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, open reel or DAT).*

**WANTED:** Cassette recordings of shows that feature Orson Welles. Especially interested in **Orson Welles Almanac, Campbell Playhouse, The Third Man** and spoken-word recordings. Will buy or trade. Contact: Joe Ward, 820 South First St., Cottage Grove, OR 97424 or E-mail at: jward@efn.org

**WANTED:** To correspond re: informing us as to storyline **Pepper Young's Family**: what happened with Mr. Young in business with Chicago man about underprivileged children to live at the lake property of the Youngs? Contact: Don Manning, Box 82214, Portland, OR 97282, (503) 244-0748.

**WANTED:** Any Fred Astaire 1936 **Packard Show** recordings on cassette. Also, any **Good News** shows not available from SPERDVAC and any Al Jolson broadcasts not offered from the Jolson Society. These do not have to be complete shows. Contact: Marc Friend, 1914 8th St., San Fernando, CA 91340.

**FOR SALE:** 19 like-new 1200 ft., 7-inch reels of Scotch dull-backed tape, sold as package, as is, \$20 including postage. Boxes not included; Also, **WANTED:** Looking for logs of **Fibber McGee and Molly** and **Amos 'n Andy**. And, need dates for **The Fat Man** "Murder Plays Hide and Seek" and "Order for Murder" plus **Gangbusters** "The Golf Course Murder" and "Case of the Chicago Tunnel Gang." Need instruction booklet for Sony TC-355 open reel deck. Contact: C. Huck, 4 S. 230 River Road, Warrenville, IL 60555, (708) 393-9852.

**WANTED:** Articles from *Radio Mirror* or *Radio Guide* on **The Columbia Workshop**. Please send lists of articles with SASE. I'm also looking for the following people in connection with research I'm undertaking on **The Columbia Workshop**: Richard Goggin, Jack Mosman, Don Baker, Jim Matthews, Walter Pierson, Harry Clark, Paul Roberts and Edward Latimer. Contact: Patrick King, P.O. Box 20393, Waco, TX 76702-0393.

**WANTED:** Information on any AFRS pictures or cassette tapes of **Swingtime, Jubilee, At Ease** or whatever. Contact: Bill Sherman, 695 Temple Hills Dr., Laguna Beach, CA 92651, (714) 494-1359.

**WANTED:** OTR cassette trades, your lists for mine. Many, many shows, long-time collector. **Fibber McGee and Molly, Bergan/McCarthy, Tom Mix, Little Orphan Annie, Terry and the Pirates** especially, and those rare programs you and I have. Swap single or quantity. Contact: John Cooper, Route 1 - Box 371, Clarksburg, WV 26301.

**FOR SALE:** *All About Amos & Andy and Their Creators*, 1929, Rand McNally, 125 pages. Best offer. Contact: Darryl Henley, 827 Monte Vista Dr., Los Banos, CA 93635, (209) 826-0647.

**FOR SALE:** Hard-to-find reel-to-reel tape recorder. The classic Sony model TC-660, complete with instruction booklet and accessories. \$300 or ??? Call (213) 851-1817.

## Jeanette Nolan honored



*Veteran radio actress Jeanette Nolan was honored in June by the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound for her work in early radio. She received the REPS Radio Achievement Award in recognition of her performances on numerous radio broadcasts originating from New York and Hollywood. Her credits include **March of Time, Gunsmoke, Crime Doctor, One Man's Family, Pursuit, The Lineup** and **This is My Best**. Many of her radio appearances were with her husband, the late John McIntire.*

## Veteran comedy and drama actor Gale Gordon dies

by Dan Haefele

Gale Gordon, the comic radio-TV actor known for playing characters with explosive tempers, died June 30.

Gordon used on television the same sort of personality he portrayed on radio comedy programs. On TV he projected an explosive temper as Mr. Wilson on "Dennis the Menace," Osgood Conklin on "Our Miss Brooks" (which originated on radio) and similar characters on several series starring Lucille Ball.

Those characters can be traced to comedy roles he played on **The Joe E. Brown Show** and on **Fibber McGee and Molly**.

"In my personal life, I never blow up at people," Gordon once said in an interview. "I get terribly cold and terribly quiet when I get very, very angry . . . Particularly when I get paid for it, I enjoy yelling. If people want to pay me for that, I'm doubly happy. I found that if somebody wants a loud voice and I give it to them, it impresses them. It's like being impressed by being hit by a hammer. You've got to pay attention."

Gordon was born Charles T. Aldrich, the son of actress Gloria Gordon. His first appearance on radio was at KFWB, Los Angeles in 1926. With new lyrics he had written for "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More," he accompanied himself on the ukulele in an unpaid performance.

His first paid performance was on **English Coronets**, a KFWB series written and directed by Kay Van Riper. For \$3 Gordon, then about 26, played a middle aged British man on an episode of the early thirties series.

The young actor was soon earning \$5 per show on **English Coronets**, then raised to \$7.50, "which they reluctantly gave me." Later he asked for a raise to \$10 per show and the producers decided he was too expensive and didn't rehire him.

"When we did **English Coronets**, it was often terrifying because she (Van Riper) was printing



Gale Gordon in 1990.

the pages while we were on the air," Gordon recalled. "We'd come to the last scene and an assistant would come in and hand us the next page. We were doing them literally without having read them over."

Fellow actors on that early series included Bea Benaderet, Barbara Luddy, Bret Morrison, Mary Jane Higby and Ted Osborne. Gordon helped Osborne get his first radio job.

He had already embarked on a career as a stage actor when he turned to radio. "Radio was a make-shift, a fill-in. Nobody really took it seriously. It was a new fad," Gordon recalled in a 1990 interview. "It was a toy and nobody took it seriously until the power of suggestion became so great that it caught on and people would listen to these wonderful operas and dramas."

In 1934 Gordon was a supporting actor on the syndicated **Tarzan** series. "I played one of the English lords," Gordon recalled. "And I always doubled as the dying native because I could

scream louder than anybody else there. Every scream you hear when a native gets speared by one of the lances, it's me."

Also in 1934 Gordon auditioned for a role on **The Mary Pickford Show**. He was selected over Hanley Stafford and hired to play opposite the famed movie actress. The following year Pickford took Gordon and other cast members to New York when her show moved to the East Coast. There, Gordon was hired for other New York-based radio programs, including **Gangbusters** and **Stories of the Black Chamber**, a popular mystery series. He played the role of Paradine, a "master spy" on the 1935 NBC series.

During his two years in New York he also worked on the syndicated **Flash Gordon** series and on **Death Valley Days**. It was there he met his actress wife, Virginia. They were married in 1937. Mrs. Gordon died about two months ago.

Gordon's first comedy radio performance was on the **Joe E. Brown Show** in 1939. A few years later Cecil Underwood hired him to play a part on a **Fibber McGee and Molly** show.

"Jim Jordan objected," Gordon said. "He said to Cec, 'But this is a dramatic actor.' And Cec said, 'Yes, but he will wait for laughs.' Jim was a little bit worried until the first show I did with them."

His first regular role on the **McGee** show was Foggy Williams, the weather man. Then he portrayed Fibber's nemesis, Mayor LaTrivia. "Don Quinn created Mayor LaTrivia for me," Gordon explained. "He wrote those alliterations for LaTrivia."

Earning \$150 a week on the  
*Continued on next page*

## Gale Gordon *conclusion*

McGee series, Gordon was advised by his wife to decline any jobs paying less. "I was out of work for a long time because no one would pay \$150," he said. When Larry Burns offered him the role of Osgood Conklin on **Our Miss Brooks**, Gordon asked for the then-high fee. He didn't get the part.

"We heard the first **Our Miss Brooks** radio show and when it was over my wife and I looked at each other and I said, 'Thank God they wouldn't pay \$150. That is the worse thing I've ever heard in my life.' They had the

principal barking like a dog for comedy effect. The next day Larry Burns called and said, 'We will pay the \$150. Show up next Sunday.'"

Gordon reluctantly took the role. "Then I was sorry I hadn't asked for \$200 because I knew they never would have paid that and . . . I was heartbroken because I thought it was the worst show I'd ever listened to," he said. He remained with the show for its nine year run on radio and television.

Don Quinn, writer of the McGee program, was also the creator of **The**

**Halls of Ivy**. "He wrote it for Edna Best and myself," Gordon said. "Don had this idea for **The Halls of Ivy** and he wrote this wonderful script. The audition was so good that the network decided to put the show on, but neither myself nor Edna were well known people. They took it to Ronald Colman and Benita Hume and they both fell in love with the show."

When Willard Waterman left **The Halls of Ivy** to concentrate on his new role on **The Great Gildersleeve**, Gordon replaced him as Mr. Merriweather.

Gordon played Mr. Potts on Frank Morgan's short-lived comedy **The Fabulous Mr. Tweedy**. Network censors, he said, objected to use of a character named Potts because they felt it was too closely connected with an item found under a bed, and bed references were forbidden. Finally, after Morgan argued there were numerous real-life people named Potts, the censors devised a compromise. "You can use the name if you spell it P-H-O-T-S," they declared. "From that day on my (character's) name on the script was P-H-O-T-S, pronounced pots," he revealed.

Other radio comedy roles Gordon played included Mr. Scott on **The Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show** and Texas billionaire Tex Judson on the **Burns and Allen Show**. His first radio work with Lucille Ball was on **My Favorite Husband**.

On the **Sherlock Holmes** radio series Gordon played Inspector Lastrade for two seasons with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. He had the lead for a season on **Casebook of Gregory Hood** and was Dr. Petrie on **Shadow of Fu Manchu**.

He played Father Leahy, the priest on **Johnny Modero, Pier 23** with Jack Webb. "I loved that part," Gordon commented.

Gordon and his wife both died at the Redwood Terrace Health Center in Escondido, California. He was 89.

## Radio dramas added to library

SPERDVAC is adding more **Mysterious Traveler** programs to the General Library plus the complete run of **Weird Circle**, 28 of the 15 minute **Strange Dr. Weird**, more **Sam Spade** adventures and a number of **Tales of the Texas Rangers** broadcasts.

The programs are included on General Library catalog page 217-218. It is enclosed with this edition of the *Radiogram*. For members planning to order these shows from the open reel or cassette versions of the General Library, here are some additional tapes which are ready and will appear on the upcoming catalog page:

### Tape 1849 TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

- "Room 114" 12-3-1950
- "The Lucky Dollar" 12-10-1950
- "The Cactus Pear" 12-17-1950
- "Christmas Present" 12-24-1950
- "The Devil's Share" 12-31-1950
- "Deadhead Freight" 1-7-1951

### Tape 1850 TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

- "Death in the Cards" 1-14-1951
- "Blood Harvest" 1-21-1951
- "Logger's Larceny" 2-4-1951
- "The Hatchet" 2-11-1951
- "Sweet Harvest" 2-18-1951
- "The Trap" 2-25-1951

### Tape 1851 TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

- "Blind Justice" 3-11-1951
- "Death by Adoption" 3-18-1951
- "Breakdown" 3-25-1951
- "Pressure" 4-1-1951
- "Bad Blood" 4-8-1951
- "Conspiracy" 4-15-1951

### Tape 1852 TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

- "Canned Death" 4-22-1951
- "No Living Witnesses" 5-6-1951
- "The Helping Hand" 11-4-1951
- "The Pick-up" 12-16-1951
- "Christmas Payoff" 12-23-1951
- "Birds of a Feather" 1-6-1952

### Tape 1853 TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

- "Prelude to Felony" 3-16-1952
- "Uncertain Death" 4-13-1952
- "Illusion" 4-20-1952
- "Address Unknown" 4-27-1952
- "Little Sisters" 5-4-1952
- "Unleashed Fury" 5-11-1952

### Tape 1854 TALES OF THE TEXAS RANGERS and GOLDEN DAYS OF RADIO

- "Smart Kill" 5-18-1952
- "Jailbird" 5-25-1952
- "Sellout" 6-1-1952
- "Illegal Entry" 6-8-1952
- Golden Days of Radio** Frank Bresee's guest is Sandra Gould. (55 min.)



by Barbara J. Watkins

Congratulations to our sister old-time radio clubs celebrating their 20th anniversaries this year.

*The Old-Time Radio Club* began as The Old-Time Radio Club of Buffalo in 1974. The January 1995 issue of their newsletter, *The Illustrated Press*, gave a short background on how it evolved from a general meeting of the newly formed Western New York Popular Culture Society, when a group of the members who were primarily interested in old-time radio decided to meet on their own. The club went through some growing pains the first year but emerged late in the year as the national organization it remains today.

Meanwhile in Northglenn, Colorado in June 1975 the *Radio Historical Association of Colorado* had its first meeting. Like SPERDVAC, which grew out of an announcement on an old-time radio show, "Don't Touch That Dial" on KCSN in Northridge, California, RHAC was formed by listeners to John Dunning's old-time radio show on KFML who heard an "on air" invitation for interested people to attend a meeting for the purposes of beginning a club. The club took the name Radio Historical Association of Colorado at its September meeting. The July 1995 issue of their newsletter *Return With Us Now* looks back at the early years of the club and also contains some reprints of articles that appeared in the earlier issues.

Also celebrating their 20th anniversary is the *Milwaukee Area Radio Enthusiasts*. Obviously, 1975 was a very good year for old-

## OTR groups marking anniversaries

time radio! Congratulations to all and our best wishes for many, many more years filled with the joy and happiness that the old-time radio hobby brings to all of us.

Speaking of anniversaries, the August-September issue of *Chuck Schaden's Nostalgia Digest* has four pages of pictures of Chuck's 25th anniversary party for "Those Were the Days" radio show. Included are photos of special guests Fred Foy, Bill Idelson and Shirley Bell. And for members of the *Friends of Vic and Sade* club, there's a nice picture of founder and co-ordinator Barbara Schwartz with **Vic and Sade's** "Rush," Bill Idelson. Congratulations, Chuck, and we hope you'll still be on the air for the 50th!

The *Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound* (REPS) had a very successful convention in Kirkland, Washington this past June. If coverage is not included elsewhere in this issue of the *Radiogram*, I'll tell you all about my visit there this year in next month's column. Suffice it to say here that Jeanette Nolan received a very well deserved honor when she was awarded the REPS Radio Achievement Award, which is given in recognition of a body of work that made a major difference in radio history. The selection was heartily approved by the attendees with a standing ovation.

Occasionally in the old-time radio hobby a name gets misspelled somehow along the way and it seems to take on a life of its own, being repeated over and over until it becomes so common that it is no longer noticed as wrong. Two such instances come to mind. One is the spelling of the name of the Commander-in-Chief of the Space Patrol, Buzz Corry. It has been

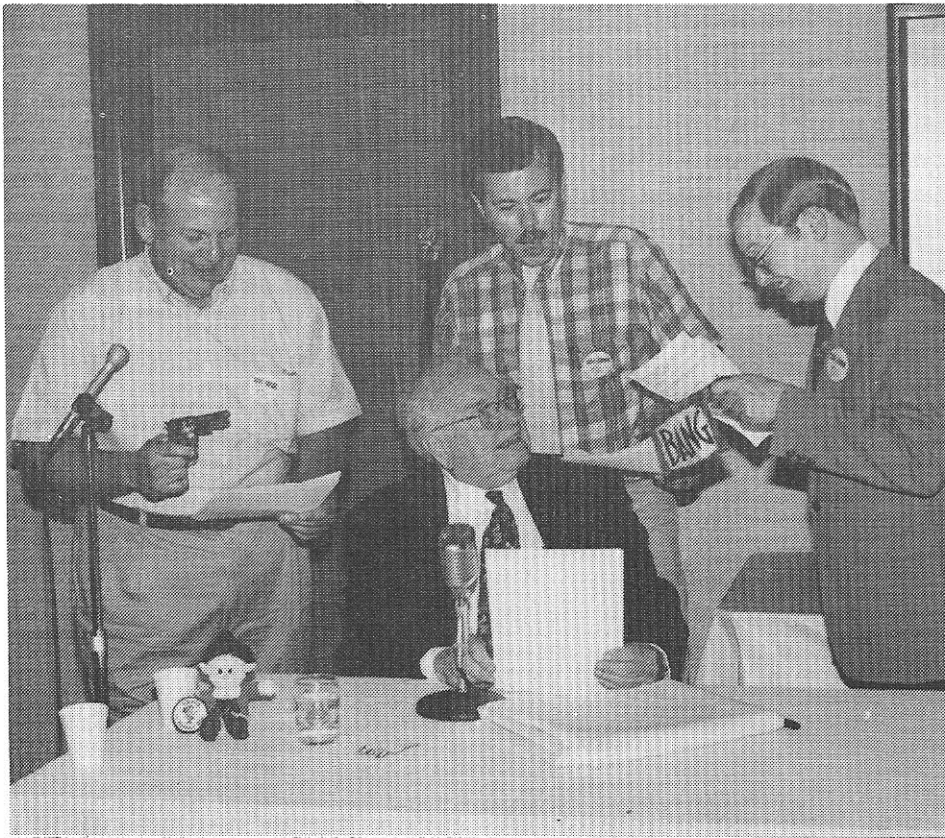
misspelled C-O-R-E-Y in many places over the years. The correct spelling is C-O-R-R-Y. We must learn this if we want to blast off with him in November at the SPERDVAC convention. Otherwise, you'll never graduate from cadet school.

The other misspelled name is the name of Jack Webb's character in **Johnny Modero, Pier 23**. You'll see it spelled M-A-D-E-R-O in just about every nostalgia-type publication, but if you check the listings back in 1947 you will see it consistently spelled M-O-D-E-R-O. It is more likely that they were correct and we are wrong today. Only an *original* script will answer this one for sure.

Member Lee Kimmel writes that he (she?) was browsing in a second-hand bookstore in Chicago and came across a book on **Amos and Andy**. Although he was not a listener to **Amos and Andy** he bought the book because of his interest in Black history and OTR. He wonders if SPERDVAC ever developed a bibliography of books pertaining to OTR, other than those that merely categorize or describe programs, but rather those of scholarly interest. He'd be interested in hearing about books on the role of women or how adolescents, nurses, physicians, detective couples or the law/forensic issues were portrayed in radio drama. He'd like to hear from you if you have a similar interest: Lee H. Kimmel, 519 Martling Ave., Tarrytown, NY 10591.

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





Clowning around with the "Lum and Abner Meet Chester" radio script are Parley Baer (seated), Sam Brown (sound effects man who doubled as Pine Ridge's Dick Huddleston), Donnie Pitchford (Abner) and Tim Hollis (Lum, Marshal Dillon and writer of the script).

## Lum & Abner meet Chester

Actor Parley Baer was guest of honor at the National Lum and Abner Society Convention held in Mena, Arkansas on June 24.

Convention attendees were treated to a radio performance in which Lum and Abner meet Marshal Dillon and Chester in Dodge City. Tim Hollis wrote the script and portrayed Dillon.

Baer was featured in two commercials which spoofed the NLAS, SPERDVAC, Popeye Fan Club and Bill Bragg's Yesterday USA Radio Network.

The veteran radio and television actor also read for the audience a poem by Bob Flood focusing on a dream of Dodge City.

The annual convention highlighted the film "Lum and Abner Abroad" and featured a magic act by Alabama TV

personality "Cousin Cliff" Holman.

SPERDVAC member Ted Theodore performed "The Martins and the McCoys" and played guitar while NLAS member Troy Boyd joined in with his handmade fiddle during a sing-along of Lum and Abner's favorite song, "They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree." Performance of the song is the convention's traditional conclusion.

*The National Lum and Abner Society published a bi-monthly newsletter, "The Jot 'Em Down Journal," for its members. Dues are \$10. The NLAS has just published a new volume of unrecorded Lum and Abner scripts for 1936, and has a few back issues of script books still available. To join NLAS, write to Tim Hollis, Executive Secretary, #81 Sharon Blvd., Dora, AL 35062.*

## Scripts sought for 2nd annual contest

The Friends of Old-Time Radio is sponsoring its second annual original script writing contest. "We would like an original 30 minute script which must be based on any of the great radio programs of the past, such as *The Shadow*, *Jack Benny Show*, etc.," *Hello Again* editor Jay Hickerson said.

Scripts may employ characters originating in their original era or the story may be set in the present. Submitted scripts must include all music and sound cues, in addition to the narration and dialogue.

The winning writer will receive a \$150 cash prize and the qualifying script will be performed next year at the 1996 Friends of Old-Time Radio convention. The winning author has the option to direct the performance.

Scripts must be submitted by Sept. 3, 1995 to Dave Zwengler, 319 Plymouth Rd., North Brunswick, NJ 08902. "A distinguished panel of old-time radio buffs will pick the winning script," Hickerson said.

The winning script in FOTR's first contest was written by Michael Giorgio. It is based on *The Whistler* and will be performed Oct. 19 at the FOTR 20th anniversary convention.

### Who is Jack Elinson?

Radio/TV comedy writer Jack Elinson will be SPERDVAC's guest when we meet Saturday, Aug. 12.

Elinson began his radio writing career in 1945 on *The Ed Wynn Show*. He also wrote radio material for Jimmy Durante, Garry Moore and Walter O'Keefe.

His television credits include "Make Room for Daddy," "The Andy Griffith Show" and "Good Times."

SPERDVAC's meeting begins at 12 noon. The location is Farmers & Merchants Bank, 12535 Seal Beach Blvd., Seal Beach. There is no admission charge and the public is invited.

## The news of Hiroshima *conclusion*

Full-time clergymen were also in short supply, and my Sundays were soon put to good use at a Methodist Church in a nearby town. As their only pastor I earned an additional \$8 a week. How I also became a night announcer at a radio station during this period is a story told in the July 1991 *Radiogram*.

By the time of this particular event the war in Europe was over and the war in the Pacific seemed very far away. Rationing of meat, dairy products, shoes and gasoline was still in effect, although I wasn't personally affected. My food ration stamps were turned over to the college meal services; I couldn't afford to own more than one pair of shoes at a time; and I had walked or hitch-hiked wherever I needed to go. Sometimes on a subzero winter's night I took the last swing shift bus from WCOU back to the campus.

But now it was the beginning of the "dog days," and I walked through the deserted streets of Lewiston, Maine to the radio station at 223 Lisbon Street at seven o'clock on a Sunday morning. I carried a coat and tie which I would need later on in my role as minister.

No need to hurry. There was plenty of time before I had to sign on the 1240 kilocycles at 7:55. My heavy briefcase was a not-too-gentle reminder that I hadn't finished the sermon.

Sundays usually meant getting radio station WCOU on the air, and then monitoring the network religious programs until I was relieved at 10 o'clock by Conrad Giguere who did a French language program. I then caught the local bus to Lisbon Falls for the 11 o'clock church service. Usually there was time between eight and ten to finish writing my sermon, picking out the hymns, etc. I generally started these tasks during the Saturday evening network shows such as **Chicago**

### Theatre of the Air.

Although the radio station signed off the air at 12:01 a.m. every night, the transmitter and studio consoles were left functioning. Management had figured that tubes and condensers and the like were less likely to burn out if left glowing during the silent hours. Don Mason would be the engineer at the transmitter a mile away, but the studio controls were my responsibility.

On Sunday mornings the usual routine was to check the "news room" on my way to the third floor studios. The "news room" consisted of a United Press International teletype machine which served both the radio station and the French newspaper *Le Messager* on the first floor. Teletypes in those days were noisy motor-driven typewriters which banged out news stories and feature articles fed to the machine via an open telephone line from a central source. Our UPI services came via Portland, Maine. The news was printed on continuous rolls of paper 24 hours a day.

If you happened to be the first one on duty in the morning the pile-up of news print could be enormous. That was the best scenario. The worst scenario involved running out of paper — or the teletype going haywire and printing everything in what looked like a secret code! The machine sported a loud bell which clanged to alert one and all to a particularly important story as it was breaking.

I let myself into the building at about 7:30. Before I reached the news room on the second floor I could hear the teletype bell clanging insistently. The usual pile of printed paper sat in graceful folds behind the waist-high machine. I read the story just being printed and couldn't believe my eyes. The United States had just dropped an "atom bomb" on a place in Japan called Hiroshima! Details were scarce but the story claimed that the bomb was equal to 20,000 tons

of TNT.

We were instructed to pronounce the city "HEE rhoh SHEE mah." Two weeks later the pronunciation was changed to "hee RAW shuh muh" with the accent on the second syllable. Eventually it turned out that the pronunciations experts had been right the first time.

I waited for the news summary to be completed, ripped it off the machine and ran upstairs to the studios to get the station on the air with the National Anthem, the sign-on notice, and the three minutes of headline news.

Then all was quiet. The religious programs were fed as usual from Mutual. There were no interruptions for special bulletins. I began to wonder if I had dreamed it — or if this was UPI's idea of a sick practical joke. Then Don Mason at the transmitter told me that he had heard a similar news bulletin on one of the Boston stations.

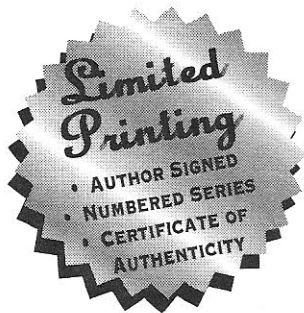
The horrifying story began to sink in. I took out the notes for my sermon and wrote what may well have been the first homily on the perils of an atomic age. Unfortunately, I didn't save it, nor do I remember what I said. My feelings were mixed as they are today: hopeful that perhaps the war would soon end, and fearful that mankind had come so close to destroying itself. There also was a secret pride that radio was at the cutting edge of history in the making, and I was a part of it.

Recently the property where those radio studios once functioned was sold at auction. Its call letters have been silent for many years. And those who remember those first stunning words about a place called "Hiroshima" have become a precious few.

*Editor's note: The author recently retired from his position as a university professor. Happy retirement!*

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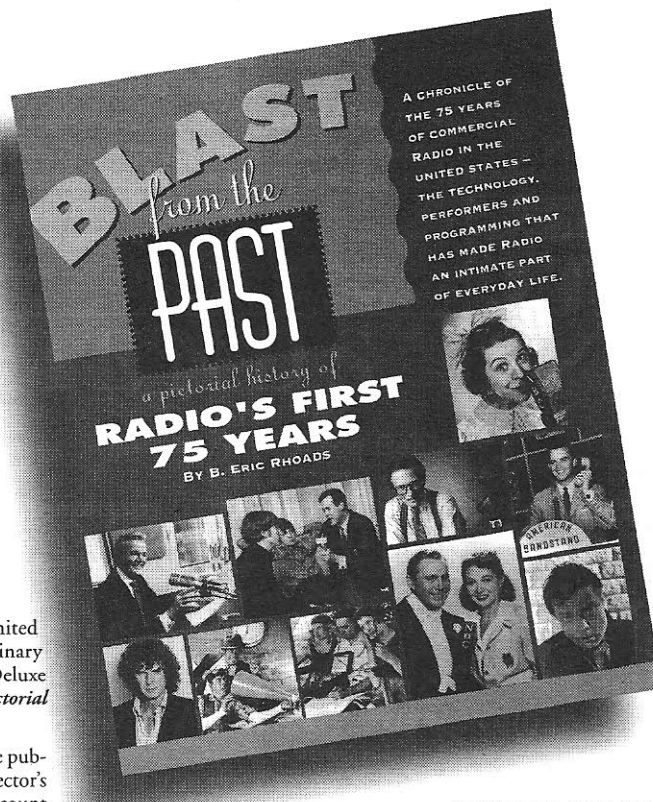
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