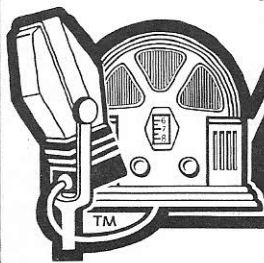


Have you registered yet for the convention? The prices increase at the door.



# SPERDVAC

# RADIOGRAM

Vol. 21, No. 11 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy Nov.-Dec. 1995

## Convention plans include 'My Little Margie' re-creation



Ed Kemmer, *Space Patroller Buzz Corry*, appears Saturday, Nov. 4 at 1 p.m. Lou Huston will also be on hand to present his new *Space Patrol* story "Time Traveler, Go Home!"

PHOTO COURTESY BOB HOLMES

Gail Storm and Gil Stratton Jr. will reprise their original radio roles in a re-creation of *My Little Margie* at SPERDVAC's 1995 Old-Time Radio convention. They are replacing Alan Young, who will be unable to attend. The re-creation, set for Saturday, Nov. 4, will include announcer Paul Masterson. Tyler McVey and Parley Baer will join the cast and Frank Bresee will direct the performance.

Steve Allen will host SPERDVAC's Saturday evening banquet. He will present one of his popular comedy monologues, including a visit to the piano and conversations with audience members.

Les Tremayne, the award-winning dramatic radio actor, will perform "Strike the Tent," a one-man radio play written by Milton Geiger. Esther Geddes McVey will accompany him at the organ.

SPERDVAC's annual convention opens its registration table at 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3. The San Fernando Valley-based amateur group *Thirty Minutes to Curtain* will present a re-creation of the *Escape* story "Three Skeleton Key" at 4:30. During the Friday evening banquet, SPERDVAC will present a re-creation of "One-Eighth Apache," one of the *Escape* broadcasts with no known available recording. Larry Dobkin and Parley Baer will play the same roles they had on the broadcast when it aired June 28, 1953. Peter Leeds and Frank Thomas are in the cast. Herb Ellis will direct and George Walsh will be the announcer.

Daytime presentations on Saturday will focus on several aspects of early radio. Larry and John Gassman will host a review of the *Phil Harris-Alice Faye*

*Continued on page 11*

## MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

Happy Holiday season to all of our members and readers! This is our final newsletter of the year (we don't publish in December) so this is our last opportunity to send our greetings. Look for your next *Radiogram* just after Jan. 1.

At press deadline we received the good news that Sandra Gould, Eleanore

Tanin and Sidney Miller will perform in the *My Little Margie* re-creation at our convention. . . Each year we have last minute changes in our conventions. Some of the radio pioneers planning to participate occasionally have last minute changes in their commitments, resulting in substitutions and cancellations. You might find a

surprise guest or two because some of the performers we have invited don't know yet if they will be able to attend.

Very belatedly, we received the sad news of the passing of honorary member Jud DeNaut. Jud was a musician with AFRS during World War II. He died in Oct. 1994.

Do you know of an available guest we might have at an upcoming SPERDVAC

meeting? Please let us know.

Coming in January: the re-opening of Archives cassette library 501-1000. We now have a volunteer librarian.

Do we have any volunteers to assist us during our move into our new storage facility? We'll be moving radio memorabilia from Whittier to Hawthorne and need workers at each location. Our number: (310) 947-9800.

# SPERDVAC FRIENDS

Bob & Ginnie Newhart  
(In memory of Bill Quinn)

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

Millie Morse  
(In memory of Carlton E. Morse)

June Foray  
(In memory of Hobart Donovan)

Naomi Lewis  
(In memory of Dick Mack)

Shepard Menken  
(In memory of Elliott Lewis & Jesse Goldstein)

George Petrie  
(In memory of Andre Baruch & John Zoller)

Richard and Truda Chandler  
(In memory of Cathy Lewis & Elliott Lewis)

Betty Lou Gerson  
(In memory of Lew Lauria)

Seaman Jacobs  
(In memory of Olan Soule & Pat Buttram)

Hy Averback  
(In memory of Bob Sweeney & Elliott Lewis)

Phil Cohan  
(In memory of Garry Moore & Jimmy Durante)

Betty Lackow  
(Matching fund in memory of Irene Tedrow)

Parley Baer  
(In memory of William Conrad, Howard McNear & Frank Thomas Sr.)

Fred Foy  
(In memory of Brace Beemer)

Nathan Scott  
(In memory of Margery Wright Scott)

Chuck Benedict  
(In memory of Jimmy Lyons & Vincent Pelletier)

Mary Jane Croft  
(In memory of Elliott Lewis)

Harry Bartell  
(In memory of William N. Robson)

Tommy Cook  
(In memory of Arch Oboler)

Bea Wain  
(In memory of Andre Baruch)

Audrey Marsh  
(In memory of Andre Baruch, Nora Marlowe & Jimmy McCallion)

John Conte  
(In memory of Frank Morgan, Fanny Brice & Meredith Willson)

Jeanette Nolan  
(In memory of Jerry Hausner & Howard Duff)

Barbara Whiting Smith  
(In memory of Gale Gordon)

Henny Backus  
(In memory of Jim Backus)

Elliott Reid  
(In memory of John McIntire & Howard Duff)

Richard F. Colavechio  
(In memory of Bryna Raeburn & Craig McDonnell)

Tony Randall  
(In memory of Frank Behrens & Charlie Warburton)

Park Dingwell  
(In memory of Phil Harris)



Jack Brown  
Alice Backes  
Lucia Silvestri  
Bob Hite  
Betsy Weinberg  
Jonathon Hole  
Dick Murphy  
Himan Brown  
Amzie Strickland

Gil Stratton  
Gary Floyd  
Forest Owen  
John Wisley  
Dick Richardson  
Walter Staves  
Doris Singleton  
Garry Papers  
Bob LeMond

Russell J. Folsom

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.)

# OTR in Cyberspace

*The 90s: Today's technology provides new ways to access OTR*

by Walter J. Beaupre

Early on a Saturday morning in September, before the kiddies were awake to "surf" the "Net," I fired up the modem of my PC (as opposed to a MAC!) and went looking for old-time radio on the Internet. Actually, I had tried a few times before without much luck, using a more primitive search mechanism called "gopher." The host computer to which I am linked offers thousands of "newsgroups" where just about everything is discussed freely, but the nearest group I could find dealt with short wave radio listening.

But recently I stumbled onto some OTR home pages on the World Wide Web. At the time I was busy with another project and couldn't stop to check out the information. The thought did cross my mind: "I wonder what's on the 'Net' worth reporting to *Radiogram* readers?" You'll have to decide how much of it is worth your time, not-so-loose change, and energies.

Before we begin our quickie tour, let me issue one word of warning. Well, . . . make that two words of warning: [1] Copy the addresses (the URLs) exactly as they are printed with no spaces between groups of letters/numbers/symbols. The slightest deviation in an address will put you up against a blank wall (i.e., "file not found"). [2] Don't be surprised to find that a hot item this week has disappeared the next week without a trace. Information on the Internet is not written "in stone" but instead "in JELL-O." This information was fresh as of Sept. 1. Some of this information will not only be ancient history by early November — but also will have disappeared forever! So, if you find something on the "Net" that you want to see again, download it to a disk in your own computer for future reference.



Professor Marvin Besman's "home page" leads Information Superhighway users to a feast of OTR information.

Yes, there really is a discussion group on old-time radio at this World Wide Web address:

[http://radio.aiss.uiuc.edu/~RRB/OTR\\_ONLINE](http://radio.aiss.uiuc.edu/~RRB/OTR_ONLINE)

(Do not use a period at the end.)

Some of the topics include Jack Benny Irregulars (in this case, Sheldon Leonard), Tom C. Miller plugging his Wisconsin old-time radio program, Roy Trumbull's cautions against leaving tapes in a hot car or near a loudspeaker because of "print through," Andrew Green telling about recognizing Olan Soule's voice on a *Gunsmoke* episode, and Laura Lee of the International Jack Benny Fan Club defending Jack and Mary. Incidentally, the e-mail address for Laura's group is: [JackBenny@Delphi.Com](mailto:JackBenny@Delphi.Com)

Obituaries were on-line for Arnold J. Schweig as well as Phil Harris; people discussed how to get BBC dramas on tape. (Apparently the best source is NOT the BBC — their archives are very skimpy, we are told.) Tom Monroe in Lakewood, OH is identified as a much better source. Are you beginning to see what a *gold mine* the Internet can be?

But there are drawbacks to dropping

in on one of these discussion groups. For example: a number of people were discussing Mary Livingstone. Could they or could they not ever again enjoy listening to Mary? Apparently they were referring to some information about Mary Livingstone which must have been described in an earlier posting — but no longer available on the Internet. I'm not hip to the gossip about Jack Benny's wife, so I had no idea what they were talking about. In order to enjoy these discussion groups on the Internet you must check them out regularly *over a period of weeks* to catch the drift of the conversations. Nor does it pay to jump in and ask some stupid or rude or irrelevant questions. You can get yourself FLAMMED! It's best to follow the discussion groups for a while, then jump in when you have something to contribute.

Was there any mention of SPERDVAC in any of these discussion groups? Yes, indirectly. Bob Burnham (whose e-mail address is [placecap@bbs.gatecom.com](mailto:placecap@bbs.gatecom.com)) talked about having John and Larry Gassman on as guests on his Collector's Radio Network

*Continued on page 10*

*These shows are now in our General Library*

**Tape 1850 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Valentine Matter" 10-31 to 11-4-1955
- b. "The Lorco Diamonds Matter" 11-7 to 11-11-1956

**Tape 1851 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The McClain Matter" 2-6 to 2-10-1956 Episode 3 missing
- b. "The Qui Bono Matter" 2-13 to 2-17-1956

**Tape 1852 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Matter of the Medium, Well Done" 5-14 to 5-18-1956
- b. "The Tears of Night Matter" 5-21 to 5-25-1956

**Tape 1853 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Reasonable Doubt Matter" 5-28 to 6-1-1956
- b. "Indestructible Mike Matter" 6-4 to 6-8-1956

**Tape 1854 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Laughing Matter" 6-11-1956
- b. The Pearling Matter" 6-18 to 6-22-1956

**Tape 1855 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Longshot Matter" 6-25 to 6-29-1956
- b. "The Midas Touch Matter" 7-2 to 7-6-1956

**Tape 1856 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Shady Lane Matter" 7-9 to 7-13-1956
- b. "The Star of Capetown Matter" 7-16 to 7-20-1956

**Tape 1857 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Open Town Matter" 7-23 to 7-27-1956
- b. "The Sea Legs Matter" 7-30 to 8-3-1956 Episode 5 (final installment) missing.

**Tape 1858 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Alder Matter" 8-6 to 8-10-1956
- b. "The Crystal Lake Matter" 8-13 to 8-17-1956

**Tape 1859 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Cranesburg Matter" 8-24 to 8-31-1956 (six episodes)
- b. "The Curse of the Kamashek Matter" 9-3 to 9-7-1956

**Tape 1860 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Confidential Matter" 9-10 to 9-14-1956
- b. "The Imperfect Alibi Matter" 9-17 to 9-21-1956 Episode 2 (9-18-56) missing

**Tape 1861 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Meg's Palace Matter" 9-24 to 9-28-1956
- b. "The Picture Postcard Matter" 10-1 to 10-5-1956

**Tape 1862 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Primrose Matter" 10-8 to 10-12-1956
- b. "The Silent Queen Matter" 10-29 to 11-2-1956

**Tape 1863 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Phantom Chase Matter" 10-15 to 10-25-1956 (nine episodes)
- b. "The Big Scoop Matter" 11-11-1956 (25 minutes)

**Tape 1864 YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR**

- a. "The Markham Matter" 11-18-1956
- b. "The Royal Street Matter" 11-25-1956
- c. "The Burning Car Matter" 12-9-1956
- d. "The Rasmussen Matter" 12-16-1956
- e. "The Missing Mouse Matter" 12-23-1956
- f. "The Squared Circle Matter" 12-30-1956 (25 minutes)

## 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.

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**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:** Robert Meeker, 2861 Main Way Dr., Rossmoor, CA 90720

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 1501+:** Richard Novak, P.O. Box 33048, Riverside, CA 92519-0048

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

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000:** **CLOSED**

**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 (Blind 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.

1995 convention plans

# Here's what you'll see at the SPERDVAC convention

**Friday, Nov. 3**

**4 p.m.** Registration opens in the hallway in front of the Moselle-Columbard Room.

**4:30 p.m.** Re-creation of the *Escape* story "Three Skeleton Key"

Performed by players from *Thirty Minutes to Curtain*: Stuart Lubin, Jim Walden, Gary Gillette and Ted Zaske. Bobb Lynes is host/sound man and Barbara Watkins directs.

**5:30 - 7 p.m.** Social Time in the Burgundy Room.

**7 - 10:30 p.m.** Dinner and banquet. Includes *Escape* "One-Eighth Apache" starring Parley Baer and Lawrence Dobkin with Peter Leeds, Frank Thomas, Frank Buxton and announcer George Walsh. Directed by Herb Ellis. Sound by Bob Mott and Ray Erlenborn. Barbara Schwarz of the Vic and Sade Society will also visit with us.

**Saturday, Nov. 4**

**9 a.m. - 5 p.m.** Daytime activities

**9 a.m.** Phil Harris-Alice Faye workshop hosted by Larry & John Gassman.

**10:30 a.m.** Tribute to Arch Oboler. Features Tommy Cook and True Boardman.

**11:45 - 1 p.m.** Lunch break

**1 p.m.** Tom Hatten hosts a tribute to *Space Patrol*. Ed Kemmer & Norman Jolley star in the *Space*

*Patrol* story "Time Traveler, Go Home!" by Lou Huston. The cast includes Conrad Binyon, Frank Thomas, Peter Leeds, Betty Lou Gerson, Dick Beals and Parley Baer. Dick Tufeld and Jack Narz are the announcers. Directed by Herb Ellis. Sound by Bob Mott and Ray Erlenborn.

**2:45 p.m.** Radio announcers panel with Jack Narz, Don Stanley and Art Gilmore.

**4 - 5:30 p.m.** Leonard Maltin hosts a tribute to *Lux Radio Theatre*. Guests include program announcer John M. Kennedy, Gil Stratton and actress Jo Gilbert.

**5:30 - 7 p.m.** Social Time in the Burgundy Room.

**7 - 10:30 p.m.** Dinner and banquet hosted by Steve Allen. Les Tremayne stars in "Strike the Tent." by Milton Geiger. Live music by Esther Geddes McVey. Features *My Little Margie* starring Gail Storm and Gil Stratton with Sandra Gould, Eleanore Tanin, Sidney Miller, Tyler McVey and Parley Baer. Directed by Frank Bresee. Paul Masterson and Don Stanley are the announcers. Sound by Ray Erlenborn and Bob Mott.

**Sunday, Nov. 5**

**9 - 10 a.m.** Breakfast in Ballroom Salons C and D.

**10-11:30 a.m.** Popular satirist Stan Freberg concludes the convention.

*Guests and presentations are subject to last minute changes. These plans were confirmed as of Oct. 27, 1995.*

**Jud DeNaut lives!**

In "Memos for Members"

on page two we have erroneously reported the death of musician Jud DeNaut. Former AFRS musician Art Gault, who became a SPERDVAC honorary member the same day Mr. DeNaut did, died Oct. 11, 1994. Our apologies for our error.

**Library reopening**

Nov. 15 is the target date Barbara Watkins has set for re-opening SPERDVAC's Archives cassette 501-1000 library. Barbara has volunteered to open the library following the resignation of former librarian Gary Molica. Barbara will also serve as librarian for Archives open reel 1001+. Members with orders should send them to P. O. Box 628, South

**Lynes receives award**

SPERDVAC board member Bobb Lynes is one of three OTR hobbyists to received the Alan Rockford Award at last month's Friends of Old-Time Radio convention. Also awarded was Joe Webb, a long-time collector and former co-chair of the Friends of Old-Time Radio convention. The third recipient was Art Schreiber, who established the Broadcaster Hall of Fame in Freehold, New Jersey.

**Who was it?**

One of our convention performers was a DJ in a German prison camp during World War II. Want to know who? You'll find out Saturday, Nov. 4 at the SPERDVAC convention. . . and in the January *Radiogram*.



by Barbara J. Watkins

It doesn't seem possible that another year is almost over. Don't forget to make some cassettes of some of your favorite old-time radio shows for friends and acquaintances. It makes an unusual gift but usually a welcome one, and they don't have to exchange it for a larger size or different color! And we may gain another radio fan to the hobby. In fact, it might be a nice idea to include information on some of the clubs and other activities related to the hobby.

The *Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound (REPS)* is sponsoring a script writing contest. The rules are: (1) Scripts will be a 30 minute original effort; (2) It must contain at least three female characters; (3) It can be in any category—western, science fiction, mystery, comedy, drama or ?; (4) Scripts may be based on any old-time radio shows/characters but are not limited to them; (5) Scripts must include all musical bridges and sound effects cues, as well as all spoken material; (6) Scripts must be arranged in standard radio script format.

A panel of REPS members, regular and honorary, will pick the winning script. Deadline for receipt by REPS is Dec. 31, 1995. The winner will receive \$150 in cash and the script will become the property of REPS. The show will be performed at the REPS Radio Showcase IV, in 1996. Please send entries to Joy Jackson, 3663 Car Pl. N, Seattle, WA 98103.

The book *The Adventures of Amos 'n' Andy: A Social History of an American Phenomenon* by Melvin Patrick Ely was mentioned a few months ago. Jim Weber writes to say that this book is available from Edward R. Hamilton, Bookseller, Falls Village, CT 06031-5000 for \$5.95 plus \$3 shipping. (Hamilton deals in publishers' overstocks and cutouts—the dust jacket may not be perfect.) Catalogs are available for regular customers.

Bob Burnham sent information on the *Collectors Radio Network, Inc.* This consists of three different collectables shows. One is the "Collector's Corner," a catch-all program covering everything from antiques and old radios to baseball cards and stamps. The second, and of most interest to us, is "The Radio Vault" hosted by Bob Burnham. It focuses on classic entertainment with special emphasis on early radio drama and comedy.

It will include excerpts, interviews and listener call-in discussions about classic radio. Bob's description: "My show is completely unlike anything else being done. We have a general focus or theme for each show, but they are spontaneous, and can easily be driven by listener interaction. Simply sitting back and playing shows is fine, but there are other people already doing that, and I have no intention of infringing on their territory. My approach is to get the collector involved, him or herself, on the radio and to stir the interest or memories of the listeners who aren't old-time radio fans yet."

The third show of the network is "Let's Talk Cars." The Collector's Radio Network is fed live on a digital DATS satellite channel each Saturday at 1 p.m. EST on Satcom C-5, Transponder 19, Channel 06-1. A demo tape is available for stations that may be interested in hearing the programming. For collectors who would like to get involved, call the network AND your local radio stations. The service is available free of charge to stations. For further information, contact Kevin Starks, Affiliate Relations Manager, Collectors Radio Network, Inc., 23400 Michigan Ave., Suite 114, Dearborn, MI 48124 (800) 739-7900 or FAX (313) 359-0331.

"The Jack Benny Times," May-Aug. 1995 issue, contains a great reprint of an interview with Phil Harris that Laura Lee, president and editor of the *International Jack Benny Fan Club* had with Phil Harris in 1990. Also included is news that Milt Josefsberg's book, *The Jack Benny Show*, is being reprinted by Monologue Publications and is due out by the end of

this year. If you can't find it, you can write to Monologue Publications at 7130 Harrison Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15218. For information on joining the Benny fan club, send a SASE to Laura Lee, International Jack Benny Fan Club, 3190 Oak Road #303, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

By the time you read this the Friends of Old-Time Radio Convention in New Jersey will be over. I hope I had a chance to meet some of you there or will at SPERDVAC's convention. Happy holidays to all of you and see you next year.

Send your information, questions or comments to Information Please, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P. O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. 'Til next time, spaceman's luck!



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:** Joe McDoaks radio show, audition of 7-5-1947, with George O'Hanlon; any Joe McDoaks radio shows on cassette or open reel. Contact: C. Huck, 4 So. 230 River Road, Warrenville, IL 60555.

**WANTED:** I am seeking audio cassette copies of the BBC radio play broadcasts of "Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy." This was a 12-episode radio play produced for (or by) the BBC. Contact: Peggy DeShazo, 1804 N. 39th St., San Diego, CA 92105.

**WANTED:** Any CASSETTE recordings of radio programs featuring Jeff Chandler (aka Ira Grosell), including *Our Miss Brooks*, *Frontier Town*, *Michael Shayne*, *Lux Radio Theatre*, *Screen Directors' Playhouse*, etc. Also need someone in the LA/Beverly Hills area who loves OTR and old films to gather some file information for me from the AMPAS film library in Beverly Hills. Contact: Jessica Clackum, Route 2, Box 2782, Bell, FL 32619 (904) 935-2130.

*SPERDVAC library tapes*

## Radio picks and pans

*Editor's note: In an effort to encourage additional member contributions to our newsletter, we are presenting a review of some tapes from the SPERDVAC libraries. Members are invited to share views of particular broadcasts or tapes in our collection. Tell our readers about your favorite shows they might check out from a SPERDVAC library.*

by Dan Haefele

Vintage radio shows are a lot of fun to listen to on a long drive — or perhaps while doing some dreaded housework. Entertaining shows distract us while we're doing something we might not want to do. Or they might be company if we are home alone eating a meal.

Recently I learned there are two SPERDVAC members in Michigan who listen to radio shows while sorting mail at the Post Office. They use OTR as a distraction while they're on the job.

The trick is finding the right shows for the occasion. Here are some of my personal picks.

*For laughs:*

**Screen Guild Theatre**  
"Champaign for Caesar" 10-5-1950. (General Library 983) Ronald Colman, Vincent Price and Art Linkletter are in the cast of this hour-long comedy. It's a nice story and well done. Great listening!

**Take It or Leave It** 10-20-1946 (Archives 1751). Somebody wrote some great material for Humphrey Bogart's guest appearance on this broadcast. It's a shame the writer(s) got no air credit. Fortunately, 49 years later, we have a recording available.

Most broadcasts of **Theatre Guild on the Air** were very well done, but their production of "The Great Adventure" aired 1-5-1947 (Archives tape 1124) has a great line that must have gotten past the censor. One character makes it clear that on her wedding night she could tell her husband

hadn't been married before. Sounds more like a quip on a contemporary TV sitcom, doesn't it?

*Outguessing the detectives:*

Are you proud of yourself for guessing the solution of a mystery? Or are you disappointed if you figure out "who did it" before the solution is revealed?

SPERDVAC's General Library is adding more of the popular five-part **Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar** shows on tapes 1850-1863.

"The Kranesburg Matter" (tape 1859) is a nice story with irony and a surprise combined by writer Les Crutchfield at the story's conclusion. We get some hints about the outcome, but Crutchfield cleverly distracts listeners from the complete solution until the final minutes. Another nice surprise: there are six episodes of this story. (As a rule, just about any story written by Les Crutchfield is well worth the listening. Crutchfield wrote some really great stories. He was still in his forties when he died in 1965 — robbing us of many more Crutchfield creations.)

With all these "picks" we must view one "pan." The story "The Matter of the Medium, Well Done" (tape 1852) doesn't live up to the **Johnny Dollar** reputation for well-written shows. Writer Jack Johnstone (producer-director of the series) didn't provide such a top quality story. He did, however, write a much better story a few months later when the series aired his "The Curse of Kamashek Matter" (tape 1859).

Actor Dane Clark *should* have gotten an award for the closing act on the **Suspense** play "This Will Kill You." Joe Kearns, Gerald Mohr and Conrad Binyon did a great job in the wonderful story "Short Order," also on **Suspense**. These two stories are examples that demonstrate why **Suspense** lasted 20 years on radio and show why it's one of the most popular series in SPERDVAC's

libraries. When the Archives cassette library reopens, those **Suspense** stories will be available on tape 541.

Some readers may already know that I teach 11th grade English in a tough school filled with "unwilling learners." Occasionally I use a show in my classroom. I teach listening skills using the **Suspense** play "House in Cypress Canyon" (Archives 799) and **Molle Mystery Theater** story "The Creeper" (Gen. Lib. 1773). When I want to emphasize points about characterization, the **Escape** story "Macao" (Gen. Lib. 533) works well because the main character is such a "female dog." After we read the Ambrose Bierce short story "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," we follow up with either a version William N. Robson wrote for **Escape** (Gen. Lib. 521) or one of his versions broadcast on **Suspense** (Gen. Lib. 988) And an annual tradition in my classroom is the **Suspense** story "Variations on a Theme" by Antony Ellis (Archives 1281). I omit the concluding scene and have students write their own.

The purpose of this article is to establish a new feature in the *Radiogram*. Tell us what shows you enjoy — and why. If you don't have confidence in your writing abilities, write anyway and let your editor provide any necessary revisions. Maybe you'll inspire some other members to check out and enjoy some more of the great shows available in SPERDVAC's libraries.

### Library rental fees

**Archives & Hollywood Museum libraries** — \$5.50 for five cassettes.

**General Library cassettes** — \$8.75 for 5 reels worth of cassettes (usually 15 cassettes)

**General Library open reel** — \$10 for five reels.

**Archives Library reels** — \$7 for five reels.



Veteran radio-tv program host Steve Allen will serve as master of ceremonies Saturday evening at SPERDVAC's 1995 convention. The show will include a re-creation of *My Little Margie* and Les Tremayne's presentation of Milton Geiger's one-man radio play "Strike the Tent."



Back on the air is long-time radio conversationalist Ray Briem. His new show airs on KIEV, Glendale weekdays 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. beginning Nov. 6



Herb Ellis, long-time friend to SPERDVAC and supporter of our conventions, will direct the *Escape* re-creation Friday night and *Space Patrol* on Saturday afternoon.,

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# Twanging through time

*I got shoes, you got shoes,  
everybody's got to have shoes,  
but there's only one kind of shoes for me,  
Good Ol' Buster Brown shoes.*

by **Conrad Binyon**  
Former radio actor

Some of the following information is found in *The Big Broadcast* by Frank Buxton and Bill Owen, as well as from my own experience performing on the show. Back during the forties, weekend morning fare for the kids were speciality shows over the then only existing airwaves of radio, notably **Let's Pretend**, **Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Ranch**, **Tell It Again**, etc.

With actor John Dehner playing the role of "Ted," I portrayed his younger brother "Tad." We were a barnstorming duo every other Saturday in the dramatic adventure episodes presented on **Smilin' Ed's Buster Brown Gang**. We flew a World War II surplus twin-engine airplane over the jungles of South America and were involved in "Indiana Jones" type adventures.

On alternate Saturdays different actors in different roles, one of which was usually a youngster so kids in the radio audience could identify with, rounded out the schedule. Every story, written and directed by Hobart Donovan, was complete and lasted about 15 minutes of the half hour shows.

The show, when first aired in 1929, was called **Buster Brown**, later revived as **The Buster Brown Gang**, then **The Buster Brown Show**, and finally

**The Smilin' Ed McConnell Show**. During both periods on the air, the programs were sponsored by Buster Brown Shoes that used as its trademark a picture of Buster Brown and his dog Tige from the comic strip of the same name by R. F. Outcault. The show, featuring singer/musician Ed McConnell, started in 1943 on NBC, and was broadcast from Studio B at the NBC Sunset and Vine studios in Hollywood each Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 12 noon PST before an audience of mostly preteen kids and their parents or guardians.

Smilin' Ed was a genial, father figure type of man who sat at and played the piano during the entire show while emoting the voices for the imaginary characters "Froggy," an invisible gremlin frog, "Squeaky," the mouse and "Midnight," the cat who apparently never had any appetite for the mouse.

Ed, in effect, would talk to himself, his different-voiced characters bantering back and forth among themselves. The typical patter of "Froggy" and "Squeaky" consisted of them ganging up on Smilin' Ed, causing him to mix his words, making mistakes, to the delight of the kids in the audience who howled in laughter.

In the later weeks of the series, the producers and writers, perhaps because of Ed's three voices being a source of confusion for the kids in the audience, introduced a more

visual aspect for playing to them. Arch Presby, the announcer for the show, donned a beautifully made costume frog suit much like those worn today by "Barney" and athletic team mascots. When Smilin' Ed would tell Froggy to "plunk" his "magic twanger," (in order to make himself visible), the sound effects man "twanged" the wire-strung sound box and Arch would jump out from the wings. The kids would roar seeing his cartoon frog-like figure jumping up and down in accompaniment to Ed McConnell's gravelly Froggy voice. After the show I'd see Arch getting out of that suit sweating like a pig. A concern

over his having a heart attack often entered my mind.

When I did the show I was basically a kid myself, just about 12 to 15 years old. I remember an additional duty of mine I enjoyed was helping Arch Presby egg on the kids to applaud and cheer at the end of the show. To aid in doing this we would lob out into the audience pieces of candy — much like throwing chum from a fishing boat to attract the fish to bite.

There are still people who no doubt remember hearing Froggy plunking his "magic twanger" so everybody could see him. Were it only that simple to twang one's self back to those happy radio times.



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# OTR in Cyberspace *continued from page 3*

show and gave a good plug for SPERDVAC. There was another positive testimonial by Jim Widner of Cleveland, who pointed out that SPERDVAC is a reliable source of tapes. He likes the *Radiogram* but isn't too thrilled with the fact that SPERDVAC waits months before processing checks. Neither am I, Jim!

Lew Genco has an attractive "home" page "Welcome to OTR" at this address: <http://www.crl.com/~lgenco/otr.html> He claims to be the first with home pages on the Web. Lew offers click-on links to very basic data: Reference Materials, Frequently Asked Questions, Trading Post, Shareware and Freeware Software, Stars of Yesteryear (pics of Agnes Moorehead, Basil Rathbone, etc.), Links to other WWW pages, his OTR Digest, and a Calendar of Events. In the Calendar you'll find the SPERDVAC convention listed for Nov. 3-5. Thanks, Lew. I personally found his "Frequently Asked Questions" a bit naive, and the answers were usually a sales pitch for his *OTR Digest*. No harm in that, Lou. His links to other home pages are right on target.

For my taste, the best source of information on OTR to date is the work of Professor Marvin R. Bensman, J.D., Ph.D., at the University of Memphis. The Web address is: <http://www.menst.edu/radio-archive/radio-archive-homepage.html>

The large images at the top of his *Radio Program Archive* require too much waiting time to download—but it's worth the wait. On the right is an ancient advertisement for a 20's radio with happy folks dancing on a graceful curved horn on a fancy box. The caption is charming. In the left in the shape of a fan are drawings around the edge of the fan of Jack Benny, Gracie Allen, George Burns (I think!), Bob Hope and Edgar Bergen. Guess who's in the middle? Our new friend Marvin! Modesty is not one of his many virtues; humor is!

Professor Bensman's "History of Radio" is not only fascinating reading as a text, it's organization demonstrates what is best about the Web. In the twinkling of an electron, you can click to whatever phase of history interests you. Readers

can follow the history of programming in a particular decade, or the history of network broadcasting, or history of various types of programs, or whatever. The visual presentation of the click-on buttons needed "work" when I viewed it last, but just click button after button for a feast of interesting information.

Dr. Bensman also includes a massive catalog of radio shows in the Memphis University collection, which I downloaded to a disk in my own computer in less than three minutes. It is now there for me to peruse at my leisure. I checked it quickly to see if there were shows not available in the SPERDVAC catalog. I stopped counting at 50!

Of course, there is good news and bad news about this catalog. The good news is that the Learning Center Lab at Memphis State will make copies of your requests for \$1 per 60 minute tape—if you provide the good-quality cassette. The bad news concerns the bad quality of reproduction. I haven't used the service personally, but one person who did reports that the high-speed copier didn't run at a constant speed. Consequently the sound seemed to speed up as the tape progressed. Dr. Bensman acknowledges that this indeed is a problem and that with budget crunches at Memphis State it isn't a problem that might be solved immediately.

The Professor of Communications wisely includes a click-on "wish list" of shows he would like to add to the Memphis State collection. I found the list fascinating. Elsewhere there is a history of radio show collecting, which is really more of a history of sound recording devices that shows how they developed. Much of the information was new to me. It mentions some of the major collectors such as Jay Hickerson in Connecticut. No mention of SPERDVAC. Sorry!

Another interesting home page, "Radio Days," features "sound bytes" (actual snippets of radio themes, voices, etc.), but I wasn't sophisticated enough to get them to work on my computer. Frankly, I'm too much of a skinflint to squander the enormous amount of bytes on my hard disk that it takes for a few seconds of sound. However, for youngsters who have

never heard Jack Benny, Fred Allen, and company and don't know that organizations like SPERDVAC exist, it's probably a valuable information service. Try "Radio Days" at this address: <http://www.infinet.com/~jwidner/radio.html>

As you can see, there is much to be experienced out there on the "Information Superhighway." I personally find the Web as exciting and stimulating and challenging as I found radio broadcasting sixty years ago. It has the same magic—the thrill of communicating with an unseen audience out there in the dark. I don't say we must all rush to CompUSA to purchase a computer, modem and service contract with America On Line. I do suggest that you "sweet talk" your grandson, or niece, or the teenager next door who has a computer. Take along this article with the addresses (they are called URLs). Show him this article. Ask him (or her) to show you what's out there about OTR. Then, my friends, try not to get hooked.

## Moving?

*Please send us your new address at least 30 days in advance. Address changes go to Carolyn Rawski (see Directory)!*

## Radiogram advertising rates

- Full page — \$100
- Half page — \$50
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# SPERDVAC convention plans *continued from page one*

Show. Tommy Cook will appear in a tribute to Arch Oboler's radio work. True Boardman will join the discussion via tape. Leonard Maltin will host a panel discussion on **Lux Radio Theatre**. His guests will include program announcer John M. Kennedy, Gil Stratton and actress Jo Gilbert. A radio announcer's panel will include Don Stanley and Art Gilmore.

**Space Patrol** writer Lou Huston has prepared a new script for the occasion. Patrollers Ed Kemmer and Norman Jolley will star in a Saturday afternoon performance of "Time Traveler, Go Home." The cast includes Conrad Binyon, Frank Thomas, Peter Leeds, Betty Lou Gerson, Dick Beals and Parley Baer. Dick Tufeld and Jack Narz are the announcers and Tom Hatten will host the performance and interviews.

Sound effects artists Bob Mott and Ray Erlenborn will assist us during all of the program re-creations. They have spent

the past two months preparing for the program re-creations.

Stan Freberg returns to SPERDVAC's microphone Sunday, Nov. 5 during our brunch. Following the 9 a.m. meal, Freberg will treat the SPERDVAC audience to his trademark satire and memories of his radio career.

The SPERDVAC convention runs Nov. 3, 4 and 5 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 5985 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles. There is free shuttle service available from Los Angeles International Airport to the hotel. The "Social Time" on Friday and Saturday nights is 5:30 to 7 p.m. The banquets each evening will begin at 7 p.m. and conclude by 10:30. Saturday's daytime activities will run from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the Sunday brunch will conclude by 11:30 a.m.

The complete convention package for SPERDVAC members and their guests is \$110. The rate for non-members not

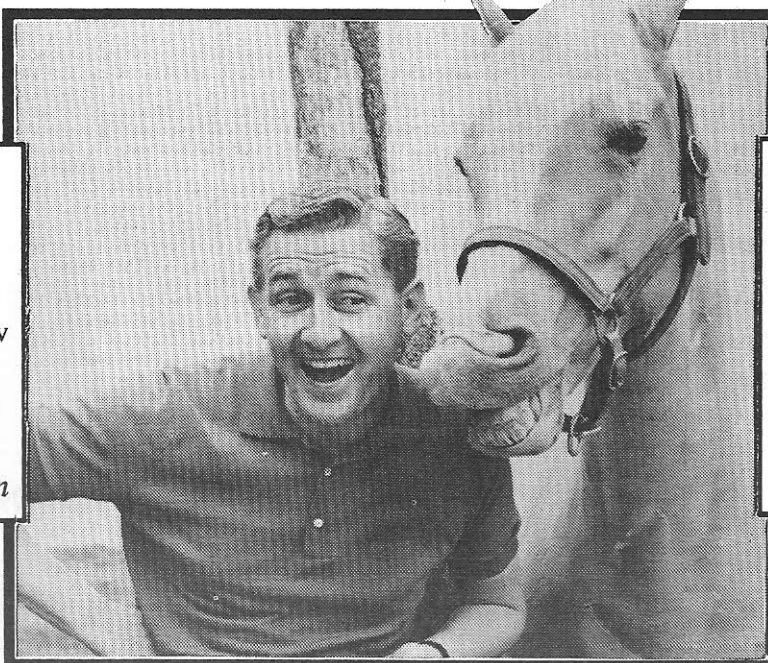
accompanied by SPERDVAC members is \$125. The price increases to \$145 at the door. For those unable to attend the entire convention, SPERDVAC has established rates for portions of the convention. They are specified on the registration for enclosed with last month's *Radiogram*.

The Crowne Plaza's SPERDVAC convention rate is \$78.66 per room per night for one or two persons. The nightly rate for three or four persons is \$90.06. The hotel also offers a special \$4 per day parking rate for tickets validated by SPERDVAC. Campers, motor homes and trailers may park in the valet parking lot behind the hotel. The valet parking rate is \$7 per day.

Because of the popularity of our guests and re-creations, we highly recommend advance reservations. SPERDVAC cannot guarantee seating availability for those who do not purchase tickets prior to the convention.

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