

# SPERDVAC

# RADIOGRAM

Vol. XVI, No. 7

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

JULY 1990

## Radio Historical Association of Colorado

## Denver Convention Salutes Old Time Radio



Recreating *The Great Gildersleeve* for the RHAC convention last month were Sam Edwards, left, as Leroy, Mary Ryan, Shirley Mitchell (as Lelia Ransom) and Willard Waterman playing the lead.

(Photo courtesy Malitha King)

The Radio Historical Association of Colorado began its June 8-9 convention with a reception held for their radio guests and club members. Those present had the opportunity of mingle and get to know each other following a spectacular pot luck dinner/reception June 8.

The Saturday convention activities began with a **Jack Benny Show** panel presentation by SPERDVAC's John and Larry Gassman. Benny's career was highlighted with many excerpts and stories. The Gassman Brother's new log chronicling the comedian's radio career was also available.

Follow lunch John Dunning, author of the popular *Tune in Yesterday*, hosted a panel discussion by radio show collectors. Participants Barrett Benson, Glenn Ritter, John Adams and John Gassman discussed collecting programs, the open reel vs. cassette issue and sound

quality standards.

After the panel discussion concluded, John Adams demonstrated how transcription machines worked and illustrated his points by playing portions of several discs.

For the first time at any radio convention, RHAC presented a unique panel featuring wives of radio personalities.

Although not married to Tyler McVey at the time, Esther Geddes McVey did discuss her career at several independent radio stations in Oregon where she was an organist and pianist. She also gave the audience some insights into her husband's television career.

Meridy Erlenborn and Beverly Edwards spoke about husbands Ray and Sam respectively and their days in the television era. Marianna Waterman and Christine Elders reflected on marriage to a busy radio actor as husbands

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# More on FM and Facsimile Broadcasting

By Hugh Anderson

July 1st, 1936 was the day the FCC was first allowed to license stations according to technical feasibility, extend the licensing period from six months to one year, and to allow for the reservation of frequencies on the spectrum for "apex" (ultra-high frequency) broadcasting. So opened the way for FM radio to broadcast and grow. But so too could TV and facsimile transmitters. A battle for the new broadcast bands had begun.

Erik Barnouw in *The Golden Web* aptly details the beginning of the struggle between Dr. Edward Armstrong and David Sarnoff of NBC:

"In the spring of 1936, Armstrong presented to the FCC the case for spectrum allocations for FM. RCA, pressing solely for television allocations, was represented not only by Sarnoff but by C.B. Jolliffe, who a few weeks earlier had been the FCC chief engineer but was now suddenly as RCA executive. The RCA witnesses hammered at one theme: the readiness of television and its needs in the spectrum. They did not mention FM. The battleground was the upper frequencies, where both inventions needed elbow room."

The policies pursued by Sarnoff throughout this period were in the interests of RCA as he saw them. He saw television as an invention "about ready" to take its place beside radio as a feature in every home. RCA had invested in television large sums from radio earnings, and counted on continued earnings to carry the work forward. FM was viewed as an invention that could only disrupt the structure of radio and plunge it into years of readjustment and loss. FM posed a threat not only to the status quo in radio, but to funds needed for television. RCA was therefore not inclined to make any move helpful to FM. Because of RCA's position in the industry, its lack of interest loomed as a fatal road block. To Armstrong it was "sabotage" of a major invention.

"When he asked the FCC for a license for an experimental FM station," Barnouw continues, "the request was at first denied. With demonstration and argument, Armstrong persisted. He got his license. He cashed a block of his RCA stock and began to build a 50,000 watt FM station at Alpine, New Jersey, across the river from Yonkers. He himself climbed around the huge antenna tower, supervising each detail. It was the start of a long and bitter war. He was tackling a giant."

In October, 1938 the FCC authorized WGH, Newport News, VA, and WHO, Des Moines, IA (where Dutch Reagan was the top sports broadcaster in 1935), to begin facsimile broadcasts from midnight to 6 am.

The previous February, *Broadcast Magazine* published the first facsimile newspaper for the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Washington D.C. Also that month, station WHO, Des Moines, began regular facsimile broadcasting. During December, 1938, radio

station KSD and the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* began, as a combined effort, publishing a facsimile newspaper every afternoon.


John Shepard III, president of the Yankee Network began construction of a \$250,000 50kw FM station in Massachusetts in January, 1938. (*Broadcasting Magazine* notes it as being on Mount Wachusett and Eric Barnouw locates it on Mt. Asnebumskit.) This was quite a boost to Armstrong. He had begun low power testing in April using the call letters W2XMN.

In 1939, Powel Crosley, Jr., owner of Cincinnati's WLW, the only 500,000 watt superstation in the U.S. in the 30's, began marketing the Finch home facsimile receiver "Reado" for \$79.50. William G. H. Finch, assistant chief engineer of the FCC, was awarded his patents for his receiver in 1935. It weighed 14 pounds and was capable of reproducing half-tones as well as black and white images. *Broadcasting Magazine* states the Reado

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## SPERDVAC

*Friends*



JOAN TOMPKINS SWENSON  
(IN MEMORY OF ELLIOTT LEWIS)

VEOLA VONN NELSON	OLAN SOULÉ
RUSSELL J. FOLSOM	GEORGE ANSBRO
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CONRAD MEYER	ALICE FROST
BLAKE EDWARDS	ANDY RUSSELL
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ANDRE BARUCH & BEA WAIN	LUCILLE MEREDITH
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TRUE BOARDMAN	IRVING BRECHER
DIX DAVIS	TOMMY COOK
ART HERN	BETTY LUCKOW

(S. CALIF GAS CO. MATCHING FUND)

We are so grateful to the many Friends of SPERDVAC who have contributed \$50 or more to help defray costs of the society. The above members have donated funds during the past year.



Tyler McVey and Willard Waterman at the microphones during a **First Nighter Program** recreation. Seated are Mary Ryan, Shirley Mitchell and Sam Edwards.

Willard and Harry listened from the audience.

Carol Rayburn spoke about husband John, a long time Denver radio personality. She noted her husband frequently has six different projects going at the same time. Currently he has a touring old time radio show which features clips from radio programs plus a live big band. He has taken a lecture devoted to early radio aboard a cruise ship and he is now exploring the possibility of buying a radio station in Denver which would feature both radio programs and big bands.

Merwyn Smith, a graduate of Armed Forces Radio and current Denver air personality, served as MC for a panel discussion with Harry Elders, Willard Waterman, Tyler McVey, Ray Erlenborn and Sam Edwards. They recalled their beginnings in radio, favorite programs, mistakes and other outstanding memories of their work in the field. Their anecdotes were illustrated with excerpts Mr. Smith provided.

Ray Erlenborn provided an audience warm-up and sound effects demonstration following the Saturday evening dinner.

Two radio program recreations concluded the day-long convention. The radio performers involved were those who had participated in panel discussions earlier in the day. Assisted by RHAC members Mary Ryan and David Gatch, the radio veterans recreated **The First Nighter Program** and **The Great Gildersleeve**.

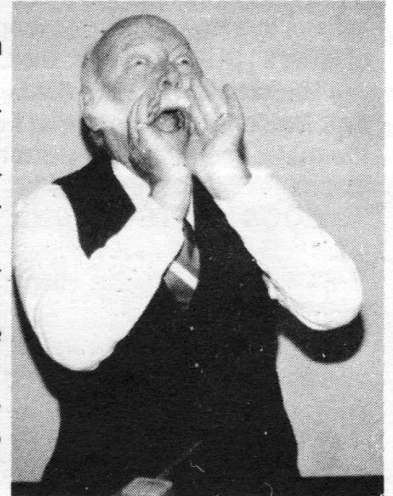
Sound effects artist Ray Erlenborn performed his craft, to the audience's delight, on both programs. Esther Geddes McVey provided many of the musical bridges for the shows.

Also joining in the recreations was Shirley Mitchell, radio's Leila Ransom. Because she was stricken by a bad cold that resulted in the temporary loss of her voice she was unable to participate in the earlier panel presentations. However, she was able to perform in both programs and received a warm round of applause as she

spoke her first line in her popular **Widow Ransom** drawl.

The RHAC convention's master of ceremonies was member John Rayburn. His enthusiasm, energy and wit were infectious and he kept the convention running smoothly.

The Denver organization prepared a classy souvenir program featuring large size photographs of their guest performers and biographies on each. RHAC is making them available by mail for \$5.00 each. Their address is P.O. Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150.



Ray Erlenborn provided sound effects for RHAC's convention.

## ART HERN GUESTS

Chicago radio actor Art Hern will guest at SPERDVAC's next meeting. We will meet at 12 noon July 21 at the Buena Park Library, 7150 La Palma Avenue, Buena Park (located a few blocks from Knott's Berry Farm).

Mr. Hern will discuss his performances on many of Chicago's soap operas and children's serials. His credits include **Today's Children, Road of Life, Romance of Helen Trent, Captain Midnight, The First Nighter Program, Authors' Playhouse, Tom Mix and Sky King.**

SPERDVAC's meetings are free and open to the public.

# RADIO IN REVIEW

By Chris Lembesis

This month, music fills the air, with a look at publications that showcase both the classical and popular vein.

**THE GLENN MILLER ARMY AIR FORCE BAND: I SUSTAIN THE WINGS.** By Edward Polic. Scarecrow Press, Inc. (P.O. Box 4167, Metuchen, NY 08840). 1989. Clothbound. Two Volumes. \$127.50.

This is a major achievement in research, writing and production. The author, a lifelong fan of Glenn Miller, has concentrated on a small but significant period of Glenn's life and music. The period is 1942, when Miller enlisted in the Army Air Corp, through 1945, after his death, when the band broke up and rejoined civilian life.

This two volume set has over 1300 pages of minute detail of Glenn's activities and of Miller band during those three years. Much of it involved radio, with programs originating here and in England. The first section is an overall history of the band. The following section showcases the day to day activities with a detailed index. The real surprise is the next section. Here we have the complete scripts, in many cases transcribed from the original discs, of Miller's I SUSTAIN THE WINGS series from NBC.

The scripts are not edited. It is interesting to see that Sgt. Broderick Crawford and Lt. Paul Dubov were among the many film and radio personalities who were a part of that series. Recommended!

**GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES & GENTLEMEN!** By Boris Goldovsky. Indiana University Press (10th & Morton Streets, Bloomington, IN 47405). 1984. Clothbound. \$15.95.

An event was inaugurated in 1946, when Boris Goldovsky first presided over *Opera News on the Air*, a quarter hour, first intermission feature of the **Metropolitan Opera**. His opening trademark is the title of this book, which represents a selection of some of his broadcasts. The highlights of *Opera News* were Goldovsky's own scholarly observations and personal reminisces of the opera being performed that day.

Twenty six scripts are represented, though the earliest is from April 9, 1960, (when *Parsifal* by Richard Wagner was performed). It is assumed the reader has a knowledge of opera as Goldovsky gets right into his commentaries, though for some of the more unfamiliar, he has added the plot summaries.

If you are a fan of opera, perhaps your favorite is included. Some of the operas commented upon by Goldovsky include *Carmen*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Idomeneo*, *The Magic Flute*, *Rigoletto*, and *Salome*. A well recommended title for many reasons. For opera fans, this is a chance to reflect on some of the classic performances, and for the casual OTR fan, a whole new world of art, history and music unfolds before the reader. Radio was a medium of entertainment. . . and culture, and through programs like **The Metropolitan Opera**, that culture

will be preserved.

**SPIKE JONES AND HIS CITY SLICKERS.** By Jordan Young. Moonstone Press. (P.O. Box 142, Beverly Hills, CA 90213). 1984. Softbound. \$14.95. Limited Edition Clothbound. \$19.95.

It has been 25 years since the passing of Lindley (Spike) Jones. In the years since then, his style of music has maintained its own popularity with a new generation of eager fans. There was nobody before Spike, and his style has and will stand the test of time.

That style of music was the comedy-novelty format, laced with wild sound effects and funny lyrics. Spike was a percussionist, his forte being drums, symbols, cowbells and other assorted instruments. In this well written biography, the author points out how Jones started in show business by paying his dues as drummer on Bing Crosby's **Kraft Music Hall**. After leaving John Scott Trotter's Orchestra, Jones formed his own band, developing the style we are all familiar with today.

This is an excellent bio, due in part to some fascinating interviews with those who worked with Spike, such as Doodles Weaver, George Rock, and Billy Barty. Spike's radio work is well documented, and there are some excellent photos, many taken from the **Spotlight Review** series, that will bring back memories.

To make this biography complete, Jones' personal life is interspersed with his professional. We find a savvy businessman and PR wizard who would go to any lengths to promote himself, yet he was also a hard working disciplinarian who demanded from his men, and himself, only the best. Here is a fine work to add to your library.

**THANK YOU, MUSIC LOVERS: A BIO-DISCOGRAPHY OF SPIKE JONES AND HIS CITY SLICKERS.** By Jack Mirtle. Greenwood Press. (P.O. Box 5007, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881). 1986. Cloth. \$55.00.

For the Spike Jones collector and fanatic, that is, one who wants to know everything about what the orchestra did on any given day, this is a book you will want, though it could have been organized better. For example, the various mediums of entertainment Jones did could have been broken down individually, rather than combined chronologically, which is what this author did. So if you want to research his radio work ONLY, it's there but so are the stage shows Jones did during the week between his weekly radio show.

Despite the price, it IS loaded with information not published in other sources. For readers wanting to initiate or complete a Spike Jones collection, this title is worth looking into.

**THE AL JOLSON DISCOGRAPHY.** By Larry Kiner. Greenwood Press. (P.O. Box 5007, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881). 1984. Clothbound. \$29.95.

Here is an interesting volume that documents the recorded works of Al Jolson. Included are all of his known recordings ever offered for sale commercially plus those recorded but as yet unissued. His radio work is well documented. Where known, each entry includes recording dates, locations, titles, songwriters, accompaniment,

Continued on page 6 . . .

# Actor Michael Raffetto Dies

By Dan Haefele

Michael Raffetto, radio voice on two of the most popular Carlton E. Morse creations, died at his Berkeley, CA home on May 31. He was 90.

The actor devoted most of his radio career to his portrayal of Paul Barbour, eldest son on **One Man's Family** and Jack Packard, the daredevil adventurer who teamed with Doc Long and Reggie York on **I Love a Mystery**.

Born Elwyn Creighton Raffetto on December 31, 1899, the Placerville, CA native received a law degree from UC Berkeley and practiced law in San Francisco. But life as an attorney wasn't satisfying enough and Raffetto took advantage of opportunities to perform in front of audiences larger than those found in a courtroom.

He acted in several silent films before his radio career began. His credits included "Tillie's Punctured Romance." In another film he played a lion tamer. "I got the job because they had to kidnap me," he once recalled. "I'm a rather small person and had to not weigh so much that this man couldn't carry me off the scene. I think that's why I got the job."

A 1925 graduate of UC Berkeley, Raffetto returned to his alma mater in 1928 when he was offered a job as the university's dramatic director. It was around this time he changed his name. "I didn't think Elwyn sounded like an

actor's name," he once told SPERDVAC, explaining that he adopted a nickname given him by Indians who worked for his uncle in Placerville.

Near the end of 1929 Raffetto proposed to NBC Radio a series of dramas centering around a defense attorney. Tom Hutchinson, then NBC program director in San Francisco, accepted the idea and Raffetto played the lead, wrote, produced and directed **Arm of the Law** in 1930.

Other NBC shows came his way in that early period of network radio. Among them was **Numb and Dumb**, a comedy program. He also wrote some comedy sketches for radio newcomer Mel Blanc.

It was at NBC he became associated with a young program writer named Carlton E. Morse. Raffetto was hired by Morse to play the lead in his new drama **Chinatown Squad**.

Raffetto became director of drama at NBC's San Francisco studios in 1930 and retained the position until 1933 when **One Man's Family** became a success.

"If an actor wasn't busy at the microphone he'd get down on his knees. . . and beat on a carpet with half-coconut shells for horses' hoofs," he noted of that early broadcasting era.

Carlton Morse's **One Man's Family** began as an NBC West Coast offering on April 29, 1932. When the

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Pictured during a 1933 **One Man's Family** Broadcast are, from left, J. Anthony Smythe, Minetta Ellen; in control booth announcer Bill Andrews and creator Carlton E. Morse, Michael Raffetto, Kathleen Wilson, Page Gilman, Barton Yarborough and Bernice Berwin.

## Radio in Review cont. . .

record sizes and speeds, catalog numbers, and label identification. An index is also included.

**THE RUDY VALLEE DISCOGRAPHY.** By Larry Kiner. Greenwood Press. (P.O. Box 5007, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881). 1986. Clothbound. \$35.00.

By the same author, this is the first complete listing of Rudy Vallee's work. All known Vallee recordings that were ever issued or intended for issue are listed, and this includes his radio work. It is interesting to note that in an introduction, Vallee himself comments that he felt radio was his favorite medium for his unfolding career.

Along with his radio output, unissued recordings are also listed. Where possible, information is supplied such as recording date, type, and location of performance. Additionally we have record size and speed, label name, catalog and matrix number, and the various takes required.

Both the Jolson and Vallee discographies contain photos and/or illustrations, and are well indexed. Scholarly in appearance and purpose, they make a great pair of reference volumes, showcasing two of our legendary performers.

★★★★★★★★★★

A new fan publication has joined our ranks. *Past Times* is written and published by Randy Skretvedt and Jordan Young. It is nostalgic in nature, and includes a calendar of local events, commentary and book reviews covering classic films and animation, early popular music and radio's past. Record, CD and cassette reviews of the above are also included. Great format and fun to read.

### AN AFTERNOON WITH JACK MULLIN

Here is a delightful new video about the development of sound recording in America, from the acoustic to the electric era, with a special emphasis on the role of radio and how it was recorded. It is hosted by Jack Mullin, who was a pioneer in the use of tape for recording network radio shows after World War II. This fascinating 55 minute program is an opportunity to observe and hear the sights and sounds of the way we recorded and heard sound.

This video was recorded at the 85th Audio Engineering Society's Convention on November 4, 1988, in Los Angeles. One highlight of that show was the display of many of the artifacts of recorded sound history. Those who attended saw the workings of how the 16" electrical transcription disc evolved, the wartime uses of wire recording, plus the development and use of tape. All this and more make up this fascinating video.

The highlights are many, but one outstanding example is a comparison of an acoustic and electric recording of the same work side by side. A display of early microphones and radios is another high point. Mr. Mullin's on-camera narration along with anecdotes leave the viewer with an appreciation for our sound reproduction heritage.

It was Mr. Mullin who introduced the tape recorder to America after World War II, and his story of it is fascinating. He joined Bing Crosby Enterprises and was his recording engineer through the 1951 season for Chesterfields.

For more information, write to: PAST TIMES, 7308 Fillmore Drive, Buena Park, CA 90620. Single issues are \$2, or \$6 per year.

At the American Book Sellers Association convention held in Las Vegas June 2 - 5, there was word of six books set for release in 1990 which have an historical meaning to radio:

1. **The American Radio Industry and Its Latin American Activities, 1900 - 1939.** By James Schwoch. University of Illinois Press.

2. **Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable.** By Michele Hilmes. University of Illinois Press.

3. **Paley: A Life.** By Sally Smith. Simon & Schuster.

4. **Don't Shoot, It's Only Me.** By Bob Hope. P.G. Putnam's Sons.

5. **Fred Allen's Radio Comedy.** By Alan Havig. Temple University Press.

6. **Sunday Nights at Seven: The Jack Benny Story.** By Jack Benny with Joan Benny. Warner Books.

Bob Hope's new book has already been released and it is rapidly moving up the best seller charts. This work showcases Hope's fifty years of camp and USO shows, with a heavy emphasis on radio. The news on the Jack Benny book is that it is his unfinished autobiography, the only story of his life in his own words. His daughter completed the book, which is set for release in November.

All six of these publications should be reviewed by November.

Until next time, as always, Good Luck, and Good Reading!

The single high point of the video? The original tape of Bing Crosby's 2nd season premiere of **Phico Radio Time** of October 1, 1947 being played on the original German Magnetophon. It's only the first minute, of course, but there it is, the FIRST network radio program recorded entirely on tape.

Bing saw the value of tape right from the beginning, and his personal check for \$50,000 helped get Ampex started in the manufacture of audio and video recorders. As an interesting sidelight, the Ampex 200 was their first model, and it allowed Mr. Mullin's two original units to be retired, after some well deserved service.

From a technical standpoint, this video is professionally made; the color level, brightness, and details are correct and sharp. It was a team effort, and the results translate to a video viewers will want to share.

*An Afternoon With Jack Mullin* was produced by Ron Streicher, directed by Van Webster, with Donald Plunkett as Executive Director. Peter Hammer, formally Curator of the Ampex Museum, was historical consultant and co-host with Jack Mullin. Additional contributions were by Marshall Buck, Les Harrison, Shelley Herman, Judy Bennett, and Oliver Berliner. An outstanding job by all of the the above.

The cost of *An Afternoon With Jack Mullin* is \$29.95, which includes postage and handling. Available in VHS format from:

The Audio Engineering Society - 600 E. 42nd Street, Suite 2520, New York, NY 10165, (212)661-8528

## Michael Raffetto

show became a success the network carried the show coast to coast beginning in May of 1933.

"When it became popular I had to sign a contract, along with the rest of the original cast, that we wouldn't appear on anything else," the actor explained.

Most of the **Family** cast members were performers personally selected by Carlton Morse. The exception was Minetta Ellen, whose entire radio career was spent portraying Mother Barbour. Raffetto had directed her in a small group

of live stage performers prior to his radio days and he suggested Morse audition her for the part she would play until she left the program in 1956.

Morse selected Raffetto to play Paul Barbour, the widowed son who had been wounded in combat during World War I. His deep, commanding voice conveyed the aura of authority and strength listeners expected of Paul's character. In real life Raffetto was smaller in stature than his fictional counterpart so, in most publicity photos he either sat down or stood while taller co-stars sat.

The eldest Barbour son's marital status gave Morse plenty of opportunities to taunt regular listeners with various love interests for Paul. One of the early loves was Beth Holly, played by actress Barbara Jo Allen several years before she entertained America as the scatter brained Vera Vague on the **Bob Hope Show**. In their publicity photos, Raffetto recalled, he stood on a box to compensate for his short stature when posing with the much taller Barbara Jo Allen.

Twice during his radio career Mr. Raffetto was stricken with tuberculosis. On the first occasion, during the early thirties, he was forced to leave the program temporarily. "In those days," he explained in a 1985 interview with SPERDVAC, "the only cure was to have you out on a porch breathing a lot of fresh air."

The temporary loss of an important **Family** member was perhaps a minor challenge to author Morse. "Paul was always a kind of mystery," Raffetto pointed out. "Carlton would always have him doing some kind of government work."

During his lengthy convalescence the popular actor eventually became well enough to appear on the air again, but remained hospitalized. "Carlton would pick me up at the hospital and take me up to the studio," he recalled. "He'd drive me home or I'd take the train back to the hospital."

Occasionally, when Morse took a vacation, Raffetto took on the writing and directing chores. In the fifties, when Morse went to New York to work on the television



*On the air in 1932, One Man's Family was broadcast from NBC in San Francisco. The program never had a studio audience.*

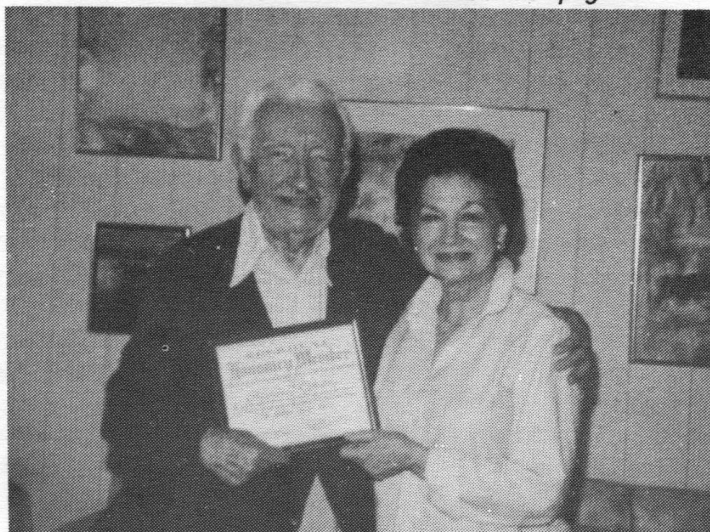
version of the successful series, Raffetto became director and he and Harlan Ware wrote the show.

It was during this era he was again stricken with TB. Confined to his bed, Raffetto wrote the program from his home. "I had a secretary come in every morning and I would dictate **One Man's Family** scripts," he recalled. "Harlan would come to my house in Hollywood and we'd talk over the week's shows. One week he'd write three shows and I'd write two, then visa versa." By this time the series had moved to Hollywood and changed to a fifteen minute weeknight format.

Some of the broadcasts were recorded in his bedroom, with Raffetto delivering his lines from his bed, surrounded by cast members.

In 1939 the exclusive contracts of Raffetto and cast members Barton Yarborough and Walter Patterson were altered because Morse wanted them to star in his new adventure series, **I Love a Mystery**. Michael Raffetto was radio's original Jack Packard. Yarborough became Doc Long and Patterson was Reggie York.

*Cont. on page 10 . . .*



*Michael Raffetto with his wife Connie after he was made a SPERDVAC honorary member in 1985.*



by Barbara  
J. Watkins

Is radio alive and well? It is not often that we see a press release regarding a new radio series, but that is just what we received! And here it is:

"Paramount Pictures and Charles Michelson Inc. Plan to join forces in producing and distributing a new half-hour radio drama program series, THE UNTOUCHABLES.

"The radio dramas will be adaptations from the hour long TV scripts of the highly popular video series produced by Paramount some years ago. This will be the first time that a new commercial radio drama series will go into production in several years. The sales and rating success of Michelson's classic radio drama programs on radio stations everywhere has attributed to this new production activity.

"Paramount and Michelson have been close business friends since the days of Desilu Productions when Michelson purchased much of the Paramount TV Library for the Australian TV networks NINE and TEN for whom he acted as U.S. program buying agent.

"Currently, Paramount legal is checking all their script rights and any other restrictions that could conceivably apply. Production is hoped to commence mid-August for September start-up. No casting has been nor will be discussed until all possible stumbling blocks have been overcome. Naturally, it is anticipated that the producer will have a talk with Robert Stack at the appropriate time."

Here is an idea for someone to check out. The popular TV series JEOPARDY would make a wonderful radio show! The soundtrack is already in a form to be broadcast on radio. Imagine sitting in your car, stuck in rush hour traffic, and being able to play along with the contestants. Radio can be more than a music box again.

When members send their renewal forms to our membership chair, the comments they make are compiled and sent to the members of the Board of Directors, and officers and librarians. This gives all of us feedback on how our Society is meeting your needs as members. Some of the suggestions and criticisms we have found to be helpful. But once in a while a comment is made that really makes us wonder. This happened recently. A member wrote, "Please publish monthly a list of librarians and addresses." As I hope you all know, all librarians and addresses, as well as other information IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY in the Radiogram and has been since 1985. You will find it in the boxed-in column entitled, cleverly enough, "SPERDVAC DIRECTORY."

The article last month about phasing out the open reel version of the Hollywood Museum Library has not caused any increased interest in obtaining tapes while it is still open. You have another six months to order these tapes.

Currently unavailable from open reel version of the Ar-

chives Library 1001 and Up are reels 1177, 1180, 1194 and 1213. We hope to have these reels available again soon.

Member Tom Stanley shares a most interesting article  
Cont. on next page . . .

## SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

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### LIBRARIES:

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1 - 500:** Bob Steinmetz, PO Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

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

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+:** Oran Marksbury, 2273 Colgate Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 1 thru 500:** Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 501 and up:** Richard Glasband, 7700 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90046

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500:** Barbara Cowin, 866 W. 4th St., Ontario, CA 91762

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

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+:** Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper, Redondo Beach 90278

**ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Reels: 1-1000:** Temporarily closed

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

**HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Open Reels:** Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031

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

**PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY -** Jon Hughes, 7119 Owensmouth Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91303

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

(for Blind Members only)

**AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS:** Contact Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison St., Port Orchard, WA 98366 (206)876-4809 (for Blind Members only)

**MEMBERSHIP BADGES:** Send \$5.00 each to Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221

**ACQUISITIONS: (Discs and Tapes):** John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90604, (213)947-9800 for both the General and Archives Libraries.

**CATALOG PAGE & LIBRARY ORDER FORMS:** Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406



**Information Please cont. . . .**

about Lowell Thomas. According to the article, Thomas left his \$3.5 million estate to Denver University to build a library in his memory when he died in 1981. Among the items that the University acquired are the entire collection of radio scripts, from his first broadcast in October 1930 to his last in May 1976. The unofficial curator of Thomas's memorabilia is the head of the alumni association, Phil Gauthier. He is quoted, "We have students here at Denver University who don't know who Lowell Thomas was." The collection is stored in a bare, concrete back room in the Lowell Thomas Law Building. There are no displays open to the public. Gauthier is often asked why the university even keeps the memorabilia. "People ask me, 'Who cares?' and I say a lot of people care. The older you get, the more you reminisce." Among the 700 photos left to the university, one is labeled, "Thomas with a man." The man is Arthur Godfrey. Gauthier would like to build a museum in memory of Thomas and display some of the mementos, but the school does not have the money nor the room.

Send your information for this column to: Information Please, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Til next time, Spaceman's Luck!

**1990 SPERDVAC MEETINGS**

*Regular Meetings: 12:00 NOON*

- July 21 - Buena Park Public Library
- August 11 - Thousand Oaks Public Library
- September 15 - Buena Park Public Library
- October 13 - Western Federal Savings
- November 9 & 10 - SPERDVAC Convention



**MEMOS FOR MEMBERS**

The American Masters television series will tribute the late Edward R. Murrow on the 25th anniversary of his death. The program will air the last week of July and first week in August on PBS.

An organization dedicated to keeping the fantasy adventures of **The Cinnamon Bear** formed about four years ago. In recent months *The Cinnamon Bear Brigade* has received nice coverage in the press, including an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. In the Portland area the Christmas fantasy airs daily beginning Thanksgiving. For more information on this unique organization write to Carolyn Kokibaba at 10419 NE Knott, Portland, OR 97220. Their annual newsletter will be published around Thanksgiving.

Member Robert Herman in Port Orchard, WA has been providing blind members with audio copies of the SPERDVAC library catalogs. Since several sighted individuals have requested copies, we want to point out again that this service can only be provided to our sight impaired members. The tapes are made for use on the 15/16 ips speed cassette machines provided by the Library of Congress. Mr. Herman is at this time unable to accommodate sighted members.

**Renewal Time???**

The last two digits of your membership number indicate your **Renewal Month**. Renewals are just \$15. See Directory for Carrolyn Rawski's Address.

**VOX POP**

**Tommy Cook on Radio**

Editor,

Noting the death of Elliott Lewis, whom I worked with in radio for oh, so many years and about 500 shows: I don't think anyone will debate that Elliott was the best all-around radio actor ever on the West Coast. He could do it all. Star, supporting role, dramatic, comedy, announcer - you name it. He was simply brilliant.

Also, I need to let go with a few words about Arch Oboler. I worked for the BIG 3 in the halcyon days of radio - Orson Welles, Norman Corwin and Arch. Yes, I'm prejudice because I was an integral part of Oboler's stock company of actors, playing most of the children's roles and was starred by Arch on five occasions. Just the same, he was truly the best dramatic radio writer and director, a true genius at his craft. And I believe his works have won more awards and commendations than any other radio playwright.

Finally, I would like to go on record and say that Dix Davis was probably the best all-around child radio actor. I like to think of myself as having contributed many memorable dramatic radio characterizations, but Dix was the complete child master of his trade.

*Tommy Cook - Encino, CA*



*Arch Oboler and ten year old Tommy Cook at NBC in 1941.*

## Hugh's Hues cont.

"pushed facsimile out into full view of the public eye and, in presenting a new form of entertainment to the public, he has also presented to the broadcaster the task of making facsimile interesting enough to keep the public entertained. . . ."

The summer of 1939 was of great importance for FM. Armstrong's system made its debut on the Yankee Network in July with a 16 hour daily service. Armstrong's station achieved full power in the fall. With these two events, plus Armstrong's demonstration in 1934, the surge of applications for FM stations began. By the fall of 1939, the FCC had received 150 applications including the Yankee Network asking for a station in New York City and CBS also requesting a station. General Electric and Bell Laboratories announced they intended to produce FM equipment. All this required more spectrum space than FM had assigned to it by the FCC. Another spectrum battle appeared on the horizon between the FM forces and TV interests - especially RCA.

FM Broadcasters, Inc. was formed in January, 1940, to lobby for additional spectrum space. Starting March 18, 1940, the FCC conducted hearings concerning FM broadcasting that lasted two weeks. This time Armstrong had the newly formed FM Broadcaster Association behind him and Armstrong won. In May, 1940, the FCC authorized commercial operation of FM, decided that TV sound should be FM and removed Channel 1 from the TV band and reassign it to FM. A core of reputable manufacturers was now ready to produce FM sets under license to Armstrong: Western Electric, Zenith, Stromburg-Carlson, Freed and Stewart-Warner. By September, 1940, some FM receiver production had begun. An FM network was projected. December saw General Electric's W2XOY join others as a regularly scheduled FM station. Armstrong rejoiced. He felt he had finally reached the triumphant climax of the struggle against the giant!

The use of FM receivers had built production to 1,500 sets a day in 1941. There were a total of 100,000 sets in use. The first network sponsor on FM was the Socony-Vacuum Oil Co., who signed to sponsor newscasts in 1941 on the American Network (owned by John Shepard III, of the Yankee Network) serving New England. But the European War in 1941 had an effect on FM. A lack of engineers and parts plus wartime priorities began to slow development of FM.

In next month's Action Packed Episode, learn how FM was to be married to "Wired Radio."

### THANK YOU, RICHARD TUFELD!

SPERDVAC wishes to thank Richard Tufeld for joining us last month to tell us of his radio and television announcing activities.

In addition to his work of *Space Patrol* and the television series *Lost in Space*, Mr. Tufeld discussed many other aspects of his announcing career. Because of space limitations in this issue of the *Radiogram* we are unable to give proper coverage of his appearance at the June meeting. However, we will cover his broadcasting career in the next issue of our newsletter.



Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, % Barbara J. Watkins, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031

**WANTED:** Information on how to acquire an 8" x 10" photograph of actor-director-producer Elliott Lewis. Contact: Doug Wood, 1202 E. 4th Street, Vinton, Iowa 52349.

**WANTED:** I'm looking for a copy of THE MAN CALLED X radio show where Ken Thurston is marooned on a Japanese-held island during the second world war. The only "weapon" he has is one phosphorous grenade and a German shepherd dog. He opens the grenade, empties the phosphorous on the dog who scurries around the Japanese ranks with the glowing phosphorous, thus scaring the foot soldiers. Please forward any information. Contact: Bill MacDonald, 9680 Madison St. NE, Blaine, MN 55434.

**WANTED:** Complete DICK TRACY stories. Also, will take single episodes. Contact: David Diehm, Route 1, Box 60, Morrison, OK 73061.

**WANTED:** Looking to trade for copies of SAME TIME, SAME STATION. Have large collection. Send list of which shows you have and what you're looking for. Contact: Greg Seltzer, R.F.D. 2, Richmond, NH 03470.

**WANTED:** SPACE PATROL shows on cassette in order (example: #1, #2, #3, etc.). The SPACE PATROL shows where they broadcast the winner of the big Space Patrol Club House rocket and the money. I only have two episodes of SPACE PATROL. I have a lot of OTR shows for trade. Anyone with sci fi kids shows? Contact: Alex Adams, 1533 Dab Ct., Walnut, CA 91789, (714)598-5417 evenings 6-8:30 pm.

## MICHAEL RAFFETTO DIES

(Cont. from page 7)

"Carlton loved his work and it came through in his writing," the actor observed. He credited Morse's writing abilities with the shows' successes.

During World War II Raffetto and Yarborough both decided to leave *I Love a Mystery*. Yarborough soon returned to the program and Raffetto was replaced by John McIntire.

Also included in his radio credits were *Death Valley Days*, which he produced, and *Attorney for the Defense*.

In 1948 he appeared in the film "A Foreign Affair" with Marlene Dietrich. He also had a small part in "Storm Center", which starred Bette Davis in 1956.

Mr. Raffetto left *One Man's Family* in 1956. He spent several years in Spain and Italy with his wife Connie and their daughter Pam. There he wrote a novel and a collection of short stories.

In addition to his wife, the former radio performer is survived by four daughters and five grandchildren.

## SOULÉ RECEIVES RADIO AWARD

SPERDVAC honorary member Olan Soule' was among those honored June 6 at the Emerson Radio Hall of Fame awards luncheon. The affair was held at the Plaza Hotel in New York City.

The veteran radio performer accepted Hall of Fame award in the drama division of behalf of the program **Romance of Helen Trent**. The program began in Chicago in 1933 and, coincidentally, Soule' began his radio career that same year.

Soule' portrayed Eric Stowell, one of Helen Trent's love interests, on the famed radio drama.

Other winners included **March of Time** in the anthology/drama series category, the **Charlie McCarthy Show** in the Variety program category (Frances Bergan accepted for her late husband) **Little Orphan Annie** for the children's serial category (accepted by Shirley Bell, with whom Mr. Soule' worked on that series over 50 years ago) and Bob Hope was awarded in the comedy personality category.

"It provided a great climax for a 64 year career, which started as a \$35 a week juvenile man on a tent show in 1926 at age 17," Soule' commented after the presentation.

The award is a nine inch tall walnut reproduction of a cathedral style radio.

### From Gene Autry Museum

## RADIO DRAMA AIRS ON KMPC

Los Angeles station KMPC featured "Proving Up," an hour long drama, on July 4. The program was performed before a live audience at the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum. It was recorded in the afternoon for a live-on-tape broadcast later that evening.

The fiction story was written by Rosemary Alexander, who also starred in the production. It follows the plight of a Rhode Island woman who treks to Wyoming where she homesteads and fights many of the battles a woman in her position might face in the 1870's.

Elinor Day, the main character, was inspired by the true experiences of Patty Wilson Day, who in 1916 homesteaded a 322 acre claim in what is now Lusk, Wyoming.

KMPC morning man Robert W. Morgan served as the program's announcer. The station will also repeat the broadcast on July 8 at 6pm.

This is the first of four original radio dramas the station plans to air this year.

The programs are recorded before a live audience for airing later the same night.

All of their programs will originate from the Wells Fargo Theatre at the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum located in Los Angeles.



Olan Soule' and Barbara Luddy on the **First Nighter Program** in 1943.

## SPERDVAC LIBRARIANS READY TO FILL ORDERS

SPERDVAC welcomes Glenda Kelly as the new librarian for the Hollywood Museum cassette collection. Glenda has volunteered to step in to replace outgoing librarian Michael Plett, who very capably filled orders for many library patrons.

Glenda will fill orders sent her at 2323 Ralston Lane, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

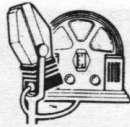
SPERDVAC also reminds members that we have a new librarian for the General Library cassettes 1001+. Orders for that library should be addressed to Oran Marksbury, 2273 Colgate Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

Before placing orders, please check the directory in each issue of the Radiogram to verify the address of the appropriate librarian. Former librarians have recently received orders for tapes they no longer possess.

### MOVING???

PLEASE SEND US YOUR ADDRESS  
CHANGES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

# SPERDVAC

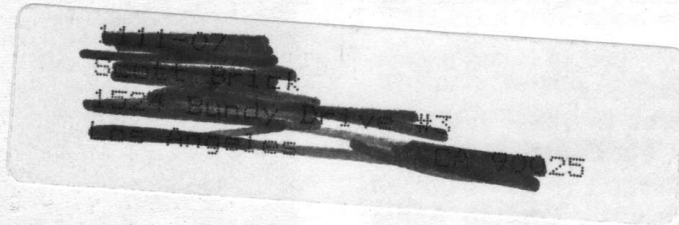


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**DEADLINE**  
AUG ISSUE  
July 27, 1990

## CARROLL CARROLL ON RADIO RADIO!

Congratulations to SPERDVAC on its 15th birthday. There are damn few teenagers these days who care about the past. Even in the past I guess there were only a rare few people who cared about the past.

Back when the past was the present...and I was writing Bing Crosby's Kraft Music Hall Thursday nights on NBC...one of those rare few was our engineer Murdo MacKenzie. Each week he would save the big electrical transcriptions of the show, for what use no one really knew. When he was called to war, about 1943 I guess, he put his complete set of recordings in a closet at the old NBC studios at Sunset and Vine in Hollywood. He put an extra padlock on the door and a sign, "Personal Property of Murdo MacKenzie. Do Not Disturb." After he and a few million others had secured the peace he came back to find his closet had a new door and was full of brooms and mops. NBC execs could only say "We needed the space."

So the ability of future generations to rehear the hundreds of hours of Bing and his guests...all the biggest names of the day...were in a sense just one more casualty of WWII.

The above tragedy and many other tales of early radio were in my autobiography None of Your Business or My Life with J. Walter Thompson (Confessions of a Renegade Radio Writer). The reason that the title is so long is found in my last book, Carroll's First Book of Proverbs or Life is a Fortune Cookie where I state on page 36... "If you have nothing to say stretch it out."

Unfortunately for old time radio buffs None of Your Business is out of print, but if SPERDVACers...SPERDVACians? would like the distilled wisdom of my four score and seven years: "A word to the wise is generally redundant", "Intercourse is the most productive form of body language", "A bore is anyone who says something before you have a chance to say it", etc. I'll be happy to mail them an autographed copy of Life is a Fortune Cookie for five bucks.

All the best of fortune to SPERDVAC.

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